

Shkodra statutes and Canon, as regulatory selfgoverning instruments of Shkodra and North mountain tribes in Middle Age

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Abstract

In a little-known period of development of history of the Albanian people, before the Ottoman invasion, the life of the residents of some Albanian cities and mountain provinces was self governed through a set of moral rules and norms of behavior accepted by all this population. There was a difference of these norms in urban areas, where these self regulating roles/norms were written and “codified”, examples are the Statute of Shkodra, Statute of Ulqin, Statute of Durrës and customary legal norms applicable in the mountainous regions of northern Albania. Statutes of the cities and the common law or Canon served as moral, ethical and legal foundation for Albanian communities. The rule of these norms was not imposed on these communities through force but through reason that these customary rules were “according to conscience and common needs of the people”. The diversity of these acts that regulate the legal and social organization of the city of Shkodra and life of the population in Northern Mountains show that these populations, although they lived under very different circumstances, had the common substrate and values of Albanian population, which was not lost after centuries of Ottoman rule.

Keywords: *Statutes of Shkodra, Canon, Self-government, North Mountains of Albania, Law.*

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