

# LEGISLATIVE ACTS IN AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT IN NOVI VINODOLSKI (CROATIA) IN THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Željko BARTULOVIĆ,<sup>1</sup> Daniel HAMAN<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Rijeka, Faculty of Law, Rijeka, Croatia

<sup>2</sup>Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Agrobiotechnical Sciences Osijek, Osijek, Croatia

**Abstract:** The authors analyse urbariums of the entire Vinodol for 1593 as well as Novi's urbariums from 1606 and 1653 as legal acts that regulate the mutual rights and obligations of feudal lords and serfs. Urbariums are usually researched exclusively from the legal side, leaving unprocessed data on agriculture and animal husbandry, the use and protection of uncultivated land (pastures and forests), which can be determined on the basis of the mandatory payments of subjects - serfs to feudal lords, their work obligations, etc.

## • Introduction

Urbairiums are legal acts that used to regulate the relations between feudal lords and serfs in Croatia, from the 13<sup>th</sup> century until the confirmation of the abolition of feudalism in 1848. Urbairiums are usually not unilateral acts of the feudal lord imposing obligations on the serfs, but the term contract is also used originally because the consent of both parties is required, regardless of the fact that the subjects are in a weaker position. Urbairiums can be compared with modern acts of labor law, i.e. collective agreements.



Vladimir Potočnjak:  
*Proclamation of the Vinodol Law, 1957*

## • Material and method

The Vinodol Law from 1288, written in Glagolitic script in the Croatian language, is the oldest legal act that contains some data for the analysis of the history of agriculture in Vinodol. Certain data about the municipalities in Vinodol are contained in the income and expenditure accounts of the manager of Vinodol Marko Oršić from 1593 and they can be usefully compared and conclusions can be drawn about the situation in Novi. The urbariums of Novi from 1606 and 1653 contain the obligations of serfs-commoners and general legal customs for the status groups of freedmen and settled Vlachs who had different obligations.

## • Results and discussions

The most important object of ownership in the Middle Ages was land. The understanding of divided ownership is reflected in the fact that the supreme ownership (*dominium eminens*) over all land belongs to the ruler. There is a difference between the direct ownership (*dominium directum*) of the feudal lord to whom the land was assigned, for example by gift or as a fiefdom. The peasant who cultivates the land is entitled to beneficial ownership (*dominium utile*).

## • Conclusions

Urbairiums contain important data for the history of agriculture and the economy in general in the area for. The area of Novi and Vinodol is well-known for the Vinodol Law from 1288, while the urbariums and related contracts, income and expenditure accounts, etc. are still insufficiently processed. These legal sources represent a treasury of information on various agricultural crops (wheat, vines), livestock, beekeeping, fishing, trade in agricultural products, etc. In addition, urbarium records prove that serfs did not only have obligations to feudal lords. They were paid for certain jobs that were not considered part of feudal obligations, so the feudal lord treated them like workers, and this means that urban workers are the forerunners of modern labor law regulations, i.e. collective agreements and individual employment contracts as well.



Simon Bening: *A man with a moldboard plow*,  
Book of Hours (detail), ca. 1530–35