URBANIZATION IN BULGARIAN LANDS UNDER OTTOMAN RULE DURING THE 19TH CENTURY (UNTIL 1878) (ABSTRACT)

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The dissertation is the first comprehensive and detailed research of the development of urbanization in the Bulgarian lands under Ottoman rule during the period from the beginning of the 19th century to the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878 year. The study is based on the processing and analysis of a variety of source material of Ottoman Turkish, Bulgarian, Greek, Russian, Western European, etc. origin.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, two main parts, consisting of seven chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography of sources and literature, and a list of abbreviations, in a total volume of 285 pages.

In the Introduction of the research, the development of urbanization in the Bulgarian lands under the Ottoman rule, in the conditions of significant upheavals of a socio-political nature - prolonged anarchy, a series of devastating Russo-Turkish wars, anti-Ottoman uprisings and the active migration movements at the end of the 18th and in the first decades of the 19th century, is studied.

The first part of the dissertation analyzes the impact of the Tanzimat reforms in the 19th century on the development of urbanization in the Bulgarian lands under Ottoman rule. Emphasis is placed on the impact, that changes in the Ottoman administrative-territorial structure, economy, transport and communications had on this process, as well as the impact of the measures, taken by the authorities to limit the spread of epidemic diseases and to improve healthcare in the empire.

The second part of the work is devoted to the study of the Ottoman urbanization policy in the Bulgarian lands during the Tanzimat era. The two main directions in this policy are outlined and analyzed: 1) the measures for the modernization and improvement of the cities in the Bulgarian lands; 2) the policy to increase the number of cities by granting urban status to the economically and demographically more important villages and forming new urban centers, built on the basis of modern urban plans.

In the final part of the dissertation, the data on the level of urbanization in the Bulgarian lands under Ottoman rule on the eve of the Liberation are analyzed and the pan-European dimensions and regional specifics of this process are revealed.

The processing and comparative analysis of the available source material show the presence of a distinct upward trend in the dynamics of urbanization in Bulgarian lands during the period from the beginning of the 19th century to the 1870s, thanks to which the share of the urban population is increasing more than twice. This finding makes it possible to correct the thesis, imposed in Bulgarian science that, in relation to Bulgaria, urbanization is a process, characteristic of the post-liberation era and especially of the period after the Second World War. The present research proves, that for today's territory of the country, urbanization is a process, that began in the 19th century under the influence of a complex of factors of a political-administrative, socio-economic, demographic, etc. nature.

The comparison with the development of urbanization in other European countries during the 19th century reveals that the level of urbanization in the Bulgarian lands on the eve of the Liberation was higher, than that in Russia and approached the values of the Danube and Central European countries, such as Romania and Austria-Hungary. This shows that with regard to one of the main modernization processes during the era - urbanization, the studied space is gradually coming into sync with pan-European trends.

The present dissertation work will contribute to the more complete clarification of a number of aspects not only of the demographic, but also of the socio-economic and cultural development of the population, inhabiting the Bulgarian lands during the Revival. As for modernity, the conclusions drawn in the research can assist the Bulgarian state institutions in making management decisions regarding the formulation and implementation of policies for regional development in the Republic of Bulgaria.