The notary book – source for exploration of the population of the town of Buzet (1492-1517)

Summary
This article attempts to encourage researchers to analyze published manuscripts such as notary codes of Medieval and Early Modern Age cities. It specifically points to an approach and possibilities to research certain aspects from the history of
Buzet through records from a notary book of Martin Sotolić 1492-1517 published by Mirko Zjačić in the late 1970s. His publication of the book is decent, with an excellent professional introduction, copy of the text and the list of names and terms and the list of places, but there is no list of records with summaries. The author of the publication has analyzed a series of data in the introduction and made note of several directions of possible research, but he mentions the economy of old Buzet only briefly.

The article uses the name-term list Zjačić wrote as a guide which facilitates reading of the notary codex. Through family names, nicknames, and first names and the origin of newcomers we gain insight into the population of Buzet. Some unused data of the records are recorded and this shines a light on the history of economy in Buzet. While conducting research on history of economy we cannot simply mention the specific professionals of certain businesses. The existence and scope of a business is evident in all products a certain branch of economics (potentially) produces. This is especially important for areas where there is less commerce and where the possibility of acquiring a product from outside is limited. Possible research of these kinds of economy branches are roughly mentioned in the order: agriculture, crafts and serving industries, commerce, transportation and banking. Each of these fields can be researched separately with detailed analysis of the entire corpus of the codex.

On the other hand, the notary entries are cumulatively enabling microresearch of the population, especially members of families who run a certain business, their professional and social status, their properties and assets, family ties and connections, and the frequency of everyday work in the business life which point to the family’s reputation and its members. Using the members of the Germani/Iermani family, which was mentioned most frequently, as an example from Sotolić’s book, the article attempts to encourage microresearch of certain families who own a business.

In short: the notary books, in this case over a three decade old publication of records written by Sotolić, offer almost endless possibilities for research one can not give up on.