

Registers of the parish of Dubrava from 1708-1946: the lost witnesses of our past

Summary

The article presents the results of research based on the analysis of archive sources about the church parish registers of Dubrava in Herzegovina, from its foundation in 1704 until the destruction of the registers in 1985. The author describes the importance of registers as the most relevant sources for historical, demographic and genealogical research, their history, origin and development. The paper delivers details on the oldest preserved registers in the world, then in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the area of Trebinje-Mrkan, including the area of the parish of Dubrava. A brief history of the parish, its territorial scope and the church divisions, i.e. the establishment of new parishes that split from the Dubrava parish are also described. The main part comprises the historical facts of the parish registers of Dubrava. According to sources, their destiny had been traced before 1832, when they were destroyed in fire. However, what was unknown refers to the records kept after this year, when the Communist authorities confiscated the registers from the parish office in Prenj and deposited them in the Registry office of Crnici. There they suffered the same fate as the older registers, they were mostly destroyed by arson in 1985. Having followed the traces of the register remains which were not completely burnt but were, more or less, charred, the author conducted interviews with the then registrar, police investigators and other eye witnesses of the event and on the basis of their testimony tried to track the rest of the registers.

Keywords: the parish of Dubrava, register books, registry office of Crnici, historical demography.