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Herdsmen as a Socio-Professional Community in Late Medieval Dalmatia
I pastori come comunità socio-professionale nella Dalmazia tardo-medievale
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Abstract

This paper explores herdsmen as a socio-professional community in late-medieval Dalmatia by focusing on the case study of Korčula (Curzola) in the 15th century. As sedentary villagers, Korčula's herdsmen predominantly guarded sheep, goats, and other cattle as professionals on a contract basis on behalf of wealthier islanders. Thus, herdsmen enjoyed a special legal status in the island's communal statutes, regulating their pasturing rights, legal obligations, and herding contracts. Moreover, as a socio-professional community, Korčula's herdsmen shared a common seasonal routine that activated communitarian solidarities in professional practice, social interaction, and cases of conflict.

Against this background, the paper first analyses the statutory framework and contractual practices, upon which herdsmen acted as a socio-professional community within a heterogeneous fabric of communities on late-medieval Korčula. Based on administrative and juridical documents compiled under Venetian suzerainty, the paper then assays the vibrant dynamics of professional practice and communal life of herdsmen. Furthermore, the paper highlights communitarian dimensions of everyday conflicts and examines the versatile interplay between socio-professional communities and Venetian governance.