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**MICRO-HISTORY AND *LEBENSWELTEN*  
AS APPROACHES TO LATE MEDIEVAL DALMATIAN HISTORY.  
A CASE STUDY OF KORČULA<sup>1</sup>**

*Abstract:* The article discusses micro-history as approach for analyzing the question of Venetian rule in Late Medieval Dalmatia. Thick description of local conflicts on the island of Korčula reveals a complex network of personal economic and political dependencies and demonstrates the limits of Venetian power.

*Key Words:* Dalmatia, Venice, Korčula, Micro-History

While most medievalists dealing with Late Medieval Southeastern Europe are trained to analyze in detail a rather restricted number of documents which were actually produced in the region (this observation does, obviously, not concern Dubrovnik), relying usually heavily on a documentation from outside the area or even stemming from later periods, the archive of Korčula represents the very rare example of an almost complete source collection of a minor island at the crossroads of the Balkans and the East Mediterranean world. This paper discusses the question whether some methods of the so called New Cultural History help analyzing the Korčulan society of the 15th century. It is divided into several steps:

1. It will try to give a short methodological overview of the methods in question
2. It will describe in a few words the political and social framework of the Korčulan society at the eve of the Venetian domination

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<sup>1</sup> This article was read as a paper at the University of Belgrade in October 2009; it was probably one of the last lectures Sima Ćirković could attend. I remember our conversation on that occasion, and it is the subject of our discussion which I dedicate to his memory.

3. It will present several case studies which shall illustrate how a micro-historical approach can be applied in historiographical reality, thus bridging the common gap between theoretical wishful thinking and the thorny task of integrating it into a scientific narrative.

1. The methods referred to above are neither new nor can they be called particularly innovative, since they have already been firmly established in European history. Micro-history is an emanation of the so called New Cultural History which introduced methods and questions from anthropology to history; it is not necessary to evoke here the *Annales* school, its interests for mentalities and daily life which was also intensively discussed in Serbian historiography - I mention here only the multi-volume synthesis on private life in Serbian history. Micro-history represents probably an extreme case of this new Cultural history and a strong opposition to the German concept of „*historische Sozialwissenschaft*“ of the Bielefeld school, because it puts the *individuum* in the centre of history and scientific interest. The classic studies of this current were written by Italian and French scholars, all well known names as Carlo Ginzburg, Carlo Levi, Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie or Natalie Zeamon Davies<sup>2</sup>. They all tried to focus on the „extraordinary normal“ which they analyzed on the basis of a particularly rich source documentation. This documentation allowed them to focus on individuals and to describe their mental and social environment, to analyze their perception and interpretation of their surroundings, of society and religion. This historiographical current makes also implicitly or explicitly use of the often cited method of thick description developed by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz<sup>3</sup>. The individual case studies are put in a second step into a wider social and cultural framework. This second level of interpretation is of key importance for answering criticism that micro-history is unable to make any statement on past societies that transcends the horizon of individual and therefore limited case studies. Micro-history has not really developed a coherent theoretical system; it has preserved the *charme* of individualism which is reflected in the choice of the subject. It sometimes provoked angry reactions by classical social historians for whom the analysis of single biographies did not contribute to a better

<sup>2</sup> C. GINZBURG, Hexensabbat. Entzifferung einer nächtlichen Geschichte. Berlin 2005; N. ZEMON DAVIS, Die wahrhaftige Geschichte von der Wiederkehr des Martin Guerre. Berlin 2004; A. LÜDKE, Alltagsgeschichte, Mikro-Historie, historische Anthropologie, in: H.-J. GOERTZ (ed.), Geschichte. Ein Grundkurs. Reinbek bei Hamburg 2001, 547 - 578; S. BURGHARTZ, Historische Anthropologie/Mikrogeschichte, in: J. EIBACH - G. LOTTES (ed.), Kompass der Geschichtswissenschaft. Göttingen 2002, 206 - 218.

<sup>3</sup> C. GEERTZ, Dichte Beschreibung. Beiträge zum Verstehen kultureller Systeme. Frankfurt/M. 1987.

understanding of major social developments but simply risked to lose itself in the ocean of sources. This discussion about the heuristic value of this approach might explain why it has not become one of the major currents in modern historiography. Even famous examples of the method as E. LeRoy Ladurie's *Montaillou* were criticized because they failed, in the eyes of the critics, to put the evidence from case studies into a wider spatial, chronological, social and cultural context - in the concrete case: to present *Montaillou* as an isolated case study - or because they fell into the trap of believing too much in their sources, in the case of *Montaillou* by taking a report of the inquisition as the voice of illiterate peasants from the beginning of the 14th century. In the particular case of *Montaillou*, this criticism seems to be unjustified, but in general it reminds historians of the dangers of an approach exclusively from below.

In order to avoid these shortcomings, the concept of *Lebenswelten*, „living worlds“, was developed, in the field of East European History, it was conceptualized particularly by a specialist for Modern Russian and East Jewish history, Heiko Haumann in Basel<sup>4</sup>. This approach combines the approach from below with structural history, i.e. it uses the same source material as micro-history, but attributes the same intensity of research to larger developments, especially structures of power, society and culture. In this perspective, micro- and macro-perspective are not seen as opposed, but as complementary levels. This approach seems particularly helpful when making use of sources like the archive of Korčula.

If we briefly consider the state of the art in regional studies, i.e. Southeast European history, we notice a strong interest in New Cultural history; the most serious obstacle however is the lack of relevant sources. The only exception probably is the archive of Dubrovnik. It is therefore not by chance that one of the most innovative and theoretically challenging studies, Zdenka Janešković Römer's „Maruša ili sudenje ljubavi“ relies on a court process from 15th century Dubrovnik<sup>5</sup>. Janešković Römer made use of a wide range of methods, stretching from anthropology to gender studies, and provided a thick description of gender and social relations in Renaissance Dubrovnik. It is not necessary to mention here that a similar study for neighbouring Hercegovina or Bosnia would have been impossible; but it would have been impossible also in the case of most other Dalmatian towns, because their notaries are silent on human interaction which does not directly

<sup>4</sup> H. HAUMANN, Geschichte. Lebenswelt, Sinn. Über die Interpretation von Selbstzeugnissen, in: B. HILMER, G. LOHMAN; T. WESCHE (ed.), Anfang und Grenzen des Sinns. Für Emil Angehrn. Göttingen 2006, 42-54.

<sup>5</sup> Z. JANEŠKOVIĆ RÖMER, Maruša ili sudenje ljubavi. Bračno-ljubavna priča iz srednjovjekovnog Dubrovnika. Zagreb 2007.

concern economic activities. But to the case of Dubrovnik, we are able to add the example of Korčula now.

Before discussing the case studies, the island and the general framework it provided have to be described.

2. As many Dalmatian islands, medieval Korčula has not enjoyed great interest on the part of historians. There are very few studies dealing exclusively with it, notably Vinko Foretić's monograph which appeared in 1940; a second monograph by Serđo Dokoza was recently published by the Književni krug in Split<sup>6</sup>. Both books concentrate on the pre-Venetian period which ends in 1420. Both used the same source material, the first five boxes of the *Arhiv Korčule*. But even a brief glance at this archive reveals that the pre-Venetian period constitutes - from the perspective of the material - only a prelude to the Venetian administration which produced 400 boxes of material until the end of the 18th century, of which about 35 concern the 15th century. These boxes seem to be almost completely untouched - a history of Korčula in the 15th century, even in its general lines, has therefore still to be written<sup>7</sup>. Research mainly relies on the *Statuta* of the town, published by Hanel 130 years ago, especially on the annex with the most important decisions by the Venetian Senate<sup>8</sup>; nine years ago, Ermanno Orlando published a book on Korčula within the framework of the series *Corpus statutario delle Venezie* directed by Gherardo Ortalli who himself dedicated an article to the constitutional bounds that linked the two communities<sup>9</sup>.

At the beginning of the 15th century, Korčula was part of the Hungarian kingdom, administrated by the Balšić family who had been invested by King Sigismund of Hungary. The social structures - the division in patricians and *populares* - resembled those of other Dalmatian communities; with them Korčula had much in common: a written constitution, self-government by the patricians, a loose control by the Hungarian crown. Townspeople, patricians and citizens (*cittadini*), looked down on the villagers (*villani*), the population of the main villages of Lumbarda, Žrnovo, Smokvica, Čara and Blato who

<sup>6</sup> V. FORETIĆ, Otok Korčula u srednjem vijeku do g. 1420, Zagreb 1940; S. DOKOZA, Dinamika otočnog prostora, Split 2009. Cf. IDEM, Prilog proučavanju unutrašnjih prilika na otoku Korčuli u srednjem vijeku. *Radovi zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 39 (1997) 117-140; IDEM, Obrambeni sustav Korčulanske komune u srednjem vijeku. *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 49 (2007) 205 – 220.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. O.J. SCHMITT, Mondes de vie d'une île adriatique: Korčula au 15<sup>e</sup> siècle (Editions du Collège de France) Paris 2011.

<sup>8</sup> J.J. HANEL, Statuta et leges civitatis et insulae Curzulae (1214 – 1558). Zagreb 1877.

<sup>9</sup> E. ORLANDO, Gli accordi con Curzola 1352 – 1421. Rome 2002; Gh. ORTALLI, Il ruolo degli statuti tra autonomie e dipendenze: Curzola e il dominio veneziano. *Rivista storica italiana* 98/1 (1986) 195 – 200.

began to raise their voice in order to obtain more political rights on the island. As for the demographic structure, the western part of the island was better suited for agriculture and it also housed bigger villages than the eastern part in the vicinity of the only fortified settlement, the town of Korčula.

Overshadowed by its powerful neighbour Dubrovnik, Korčula's trade was of limited stretch and importance; it was mainly confined to local and smaller regional links with the Balkan hinterland, Southern Italy and - for the import of grain - Albania. There was of course some fishing as well. Most Korčulans were active in agriculture and cattle breeding. With its vineyards, olive plantations, almond-trees and fig-trees, the island represents an example of a typical Mediterranean agriculture. Pasturing was of great importance and closely linked with the nearby mountains of Pelješac and the Neretva valley, where quite a few pastors came from.

The integration into the Venetian overseas empire radically changed this situation: a new frontier was drawn immediately in front of the harbour of Korčula in the midst of the channel of Korčula. The small centre of local traders and fishermen became one of the most important towns in the Venetian trading system<sup>10</sup>: in fact, Korčula was the first port of Dalmatia which Venetian ships could call at. While before 1409/1420, Durazzo and on a much smaller degree Dulcigno had been the last major Venetian strongholds, Korčula offered henceforward a thorough maritime infrastructure to Venetian ships. At the same time, Korčulan traders were integrated into the Venetian overseas trading network which heavily relied on local ships for transport not only in the Adriatic sea, but also in the Eastern Mediterranean in general. Young men found jobs in Venetian galleys, and we soon see them in Alexandria and other major ports of the Mediterranean. Contrary to the opinion of the older Croatian historiography, Venetian domination did not destroy trade in Dalmatia; it rather transformed it, by damaging certain areas as salt-producing Pag, but at the same time by boosting trade in islands like Korčula<sup>11</sup>. Korčulan entrepreneurs ventured not only in the Eastern Mediterranean, they also broadened their activity in the Balkans, especially in the seigneurie of Stipan Vukčić<sup>12</sup>. Venice animated trade and economy also in

<sup>10</sup> Cf. SCHMITT, *Mondes de vie*.

<sup>11</sup> For a thorough revision of old research opinions s. the groundbreaking articles of T. RAUKAR, Jadranski gospodarski sustavi: Split 1475-1500. *Rad Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 480 (2000) 49-125; J. KOLANOVIĆ, Izvori za povijest trgovine i pomorstva srednjevjekovnih dalmatinskih gradova s osobitim osvrtom na Šibenik. *Adriatica maritima* 3 (1979) 63-150; J.C. HOCQUET, Fiscalité et pouvoir colonial. Venise et le sel dalmate aux XV et XVI siècles, in: M. BALARD (ed.), *État et colonisation au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance*. Lyon 1989, 277 – 316.

<sup>12</sup> S. ĆIRKOVIĆ, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*. Belgrade 1964; IDEM, Stefan Vukčić Kosača i njegovo doba. Belgrade 1964; O.J. SCHMITT, *Contrabannum. Der adriatisch-balkanische Schmuggel im ausgehenden Mittelalter*. *Südost-Forschungen* 67 (2008) 1 – 26.

a rather unwilling way: by imposing its severe custom system on the island and the surrounding waters, by banning imported salt, limiting the import of iron from Styria via Rijeka and Senj, but penalising trade with weapons and powder, it tried to cut old economic networks. Thus it provoked smuggling which began to flourish immediately after the installation of Venetian office holders on the islands. The main profiteurs were Korčulan patricians who bypassed the Venetian sea police and even sold weapons to the Ottomans in Greece during the Veneto-Ottoman war. While the maritime part of the Korčulan society was thus mobilised by the change of political power, the economic structures in the hinterland of Korčula, in the villages of Lumbarda, Smkovica, Čara and Blato, remained mainly unchanged; that this is not true for the social structures, will be shown in the next part of this paper. Until the first Ottoman raids in Dalmatia, Korčula only had to face the danger of Catalan raids from Southern Italy which were however, until the end of the century, mostly contained by the Venetian sea police. Serving as an important transit port for Levant trade, being integrated into a wider economic space, Korčula evidently profited from the integration into the Venetian state: it could balance the overwhelming economic power of neighbouring Dubrovnik and it enjoyed Venetian protection for its traders in the Neretva valley<sup>13</sup>. This situation changed with the intensification of Ottoman attacks; we have fascinating descriptions of how pastors fled with their cattle from the mountains of the Hercegovina to the coast; although data on a massive immigration from the hinterland are still rare. As long as a relative peace reigned in Albania, Korčula could import large amounts of grain from the south; but heavy warfare between approximately 1460 and 1480 made the island more depending on grain from Southern Italy. Korčula's trading activities can be quantified on the basis of the port registers which have been almost completely preserved, a unique case in the Venetian overseas empire; it is evident that the regional, i.e. Adriatic, trade was still prevalent, but the attraction of Venice as an economic centre of the Adriatic drastically increased. The old relations with South and Central Italy were not interrupted, neither the trade with the Hungarian (and Habsburg) littorale around Rijeka, Bakar and Senj. The most notable change occurred in the South where merchants from Korčula increasingly called at ports on Corfu, in Morea and even in Crete - since Korčulans were excluded from Levant trade with luxury products, they concentrated on mass products such as wine, fish, figs, cheese, salted meat, hides and others products of cattle breeding, but also on iron and timber<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Đ. TOŠIĆ, *Trg Drijeva u srednjem veku*. Sarajevo 1987.

<sup>14</sup> SCHMITT, *Mondes de vie*.

3. While the main conjunctures can thus be sketched at least in their main lines, as it is possible for other Venetian overseas possession as well, we have to turn our attention to the particularities of the Korčulan archive and our methodological interest as discussed above. What this paper proposes is to apply the concept of *Lebenswelten* on the Korčulan source material. That means that we have to formulate a general question which will then be approached from below and from above - and this paper brings forward an apparently very traditional topic, the reality of Venetian domination in its overseas empire. The character of Venetian domination in Dalmatia and Greece has long been controversially discussed by Italian, Yugoslav and Croatian and Greek historiography<sup>15</sup>: Idealisation of Venice as empire of peace and civilisation here, a grim foreign occupation there. Both perspectives rely on a rather limited sample of sources, i.e. official documents emanating from the Venetian central authorities, mainly the Venetian Senate. Local archives as those from Korčula offer, as we will see, a very different image of the reality of the Venetian presence in Dalmatia.

Let us start from above, with a short analysis of the Venetian power structure on Korčula: When we will have a closer look on these realities, one has to bear in mind, as banal as it may sound, that Venice did not colonise its Dalmatian possessions, that it never sent Venetian settlers and that it respected the Dalmatian communities as political and constitutional partners which belonged to the same cultural world, also to the same political culture, i.e. the Italian style communal system.<sup>16</sup> The physical presence of Venice on Korčula was rather symbolical: the governor, a chancellor (often not a Venetian citizen), a handful of servants, altogether not more than about ten persons who had to face an island community of possibly 4000 persons. There was no major Venetian police force, no Venetian judges, no Venetian soldiers except in times of open warfare (mainly against Naples). There were also almost no permanent Venetian residents in Korčula. The governor was replaced every two years as in other Venetian possessions - there was little personal continuity

<sup>15</sup> G. NOVAK, Prošlost Dalmacije. 2 vols. Zagreb 1944; G. PRAGA, Storia di Dalmazia. Reed. Varese 1981; cf. E. IVETIĆ, Dalmazia e Slavi negli studi di Roberto Cessi. Archivio Veneto s. V, 164 (2005) 125 – 144.

<sup>16</sup> T. RAUKAR, Zadar u XV stoljeću. Zagreb 1977; IDEM, Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje. Zagreb 1997; IDEM, Studije o Dalmaciji u srednjem vijeku. Split 2007; D. FORETIĆ- M. SUIĆ- N. KLAJĆ- T. RAUKAR (ed.) Prošlost Zadra. 3 vols. Zadar 1981-1987; J. KOLANOVIĆ, Šibenik u kasnome srednjem vijeku. Zagreb 1995; I. BENYOVSKY LATIN, Srednjovjekovni Trogir: prostor i društvo. Zagreb 2009; Cf. A. MALZ, Frühneuzeitliche Modernisierung als Sackgasse: Die dalmatinische Städtewelt vom 14. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert. in: C. GOEHRKE – B. PIETROW – ENNKER (ed.), Städte im östlichen Europa Zurich 2006, 103 – 133; Gh. ORTALLI – O.J. SCHMITT (ed.), Balcani occidentali, Adriatico e Venezia fra XIII e XVIII secolo/Der westliche Balkan, der Adriaraum und Venedig, 13. - 18. Jahrhundert. Vienna - Venice 2009.

in the very small Venetian administrative apparatus<sup>17</sup>. The governor was obliged to observe the local *Statuta* and to cooperate with the local elite. Although he was the highest judge on the island, he could not act without local judges elected by the Council of Noblemen; he was again and again remembered to respect and to apply local law; he was controlled by regular inspections by the so called *sindici* - there were quite a lot of formal restrictions which the central state had imposed on its representatives on the spot. The governor was head of the security forces - but in fact, they were almost inexistent outside the city walls; inside he disposed of four or five policemen. The defense of the island was cared for by the local population. Fighting against smugglers and criminals on the sea was partially the duty of the Venetian Adriatic fleet, in daily business, local people were charged with persecuting smugglers or guarding the coastline. Korčula had its own galley which served in the Venetian fleet - it was manned by local men whose recruitment was a constant subject of conflict between patricians and non-patricians. On the countryside, the Venetian state was almost completely absent; local authorities, as the *gastaldiones* or the *pudarii*, looked after public security, investigated damages on fields and crops and settled minor conflicts between local peasants. Not all Venetian governors ventured out of town, visited the villages and administrated justice in the rural world; usually, countrymen had to go to Korčula town in order to plead their cause in front of the governor. In general, Venice did not touch the old administrative system; it did not interfere in local affairs of the villages. Venice would certainly have preferred to ignore local politics which only caused the governors trouble. However the beginning of its domination on Korčula coincided with the sharpening of the power struggle between Korčulan patricians, citizens and villagers who all saw in Venice their protector and their ally - Korčula is therefore no exception of the well-known rule that the Republic of Saint Mark acted not as an occupation force but as a mediator between competing local groups. The power struggles are only known when they reached the ears of the Venetian central authorities; the best known case in Dalmatia is the so-called popular uprising on Hvar in 1510<sup>18</sup>. Minor conflicts however are only documented in local archives, which for most Dalmatian towns have not survived from the 15th century.

It is exactly at this point that the Korčulan source material becomes relevant - and at this point, our investigation has to change its perspective. Micro-historical case studies are usually bound to a single person who becomes in a way the „hero“ of an analytical narrative: our „heroes“ are two brothers, Čanin and Čuanin Dragačić from the village of Čara. Let us hear their history:

<sup>17</sup> M. O'CONNELL, Men of Empire. Power and negotiation in Venice's maritime state. Baltimore 2009.

<sup>18</sup> A. GABELIĆ, Ustanak hvarske pučana (1510 – 1514). Split 1988.

on 22 April 1444, Radašin from Ston, *habitor* of Korčula since his infancy, accused Čuanin Dragačić that he broke in his newly built house and violated his daughter Franuša who was sleeping on the second floor in absence of her father and her brothers. Franuša confessed that she had given life to a baby and that one of Dragačić's relatives, the presbyter Luka Marinić, had assisted her and brought the baby to Ston where it should be nursed.<sup>19</sup> The presbyter confirmed that he had been called to Franuša and that he had found her alone in her house with a baby which she had wrapped up in some clothes.<sup>20</sup> On the 25th of April, the governor summoned Dragačić who did not show up; on the 10th of May, this call was repeated on the camp of Polud in presence of many Korčulans<sup>21</sup>. Taken as an isolated case, this process would not be of major interest, since sexual violence was quite common on Korčula and accusations of violation or sexual harassment occur frequently. But the story does not end at this point. On 12th of May, Marko Bogdanić accused Čanin and Čuanin Dragačić, Grgur Tonisić, Jakov Skrobotić and Mileta of Krajina of having stolen one of his goats on their way to Venice.<sup>22</sup> Mileta explained the governor that they had tried to call a pastor, but that nobody had answered them; Jakov Skrobotić explained that they had looked after the brand of the goat and saw that it belonged to a man from their own village of Čara; they decided to pay him after their return from Venice.<sup>23</sup> This second case might as well have happened by pure coincidence. But the following development showed that both accusations were closely linked. The governor condemned Dragačić *in contumaciam* to six months of prison. But Dragačić had not fled. In July 1444 he returned from Venice; and this news alone was sufficient to stir up different feelings. The non-patricians were all in arms, especially in Dragačić's village Čara, and according to some patricians, they threatened „*that they would make chopped meat out of the patricians and drink their blood*“; Čara resembled a fortified stronghold. The governor decided to send a Korčulan patrician, *ser* Ivan Mikšić, judge of Korčula, to proclaim that Dragačić had to appear in front of the court immediately. Mikšić left a report of his journey from Korčula to Čara. On his way, he met Mihailo Radomilić, field-guard of the village, who implored him not to risk his life by setting a foot in the village. Mihailo was told early that morning by his wife that Čuaninus had come back from Venice and that the governor wanted to arrest him in Lumbarda, but the Dragačić had entered together with twelve bodyguards the village of Čara, that seven of these men

<sup>19</sup> Državni arhiv u Zadru. Arhiv Korčule 10/13/1 f.47v (all references to archival material are from this collection).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. f.48r.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. f.48v.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. f.49.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. f.49r and 50r

had slept in the church of Saint Peter and four others slept in the same room with Dragačić in order to prevent his arrest; Mihailo left his house when it was still dark and approached Čara at dawn; he was frightened by what he saw: Ćuaninus stood there with a sword, a knife and a tended cross-bow with 13 arrows; he was accompanied by his brother Ćaninus, by Frane Marinić and Grgur Tonisić (afterwards, Mihailo was not prepared to give the governor the names of the bodyguards, because, as he said, the villagers did not reveal him their secrets<sup>24</sup>). He told the patrician that twelve young men had sworn to defend Ćuanin till the death; Mikšić and the field-guard approached the village. Dragačić shouted at them: „Who is that beak who wants to arrest me...?“ and turning himself to the field-guard he mocked him „Make your public proclamation, but no one will dare to arrest someone of us if he does not want to die“; some of his followers took their swords, Ćaninus grasped Mikšić and said „Take me if you want“; and he then declared that nobody will obey to the governor's order. The trembling field-guard read nevertheless the proclamation four times announcing that the whole village will be punished in case of disobedience. The situation became very tense; one of the few ennemis of Dragačić in the village, Franul Tatar Živojević approached Dragačić together with the field-guard; Dragačić warned them „If you come to me, no one of you will return“; Franul asked the judge to go ahead, but he refused; at that moment Dragačić showed two *Ducali*, official documents from the Doge's chancellery.<sup>25</sup> The judge, the field-guard and the two men who were ready to arrest Dragačić had to retreat. The whole village had defended Dragačić, whom they had expected like a God and who was a guest in the house of the village priest don Marko Komarić; his twelve bodyguards did not let him alone a single minute, they ate with him, they slept close to him and accompanied him all the time. Villagers told that there had been festivities celebrating the return of Dragačić and his followers, rumours said that Dragačić would invite the mortal enemies of Venice, the Catalans, to take over the island and town of Korčula.<sup>26</sup> The next act of the drama, a real show down, happened three weeks later

On 7th August 1444 Ćuanin Dragačić brought an action against Franuša's father, and this action revealed very soon that the process of April and Dragačić's condemnation by the governor had a much wider dimension: Franuša's father had simply invented the accusation by instigation of local patricians in order to destroy Ćuanin's political career. Ćuanin was in fact the leader of the Korčulan villagers who defended their rights in front of the Venetian

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. f.56r.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. f.56r.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.f.57r.

Doge exactly at the moment when Franuša's father had accused him. He was an immigrant from Ston who hoped to be recompensed by the Korčulan elite for his services; the main instigator of the intrigue was *magister Juraj Grupšić*.<sup>27</sup> Radašin was under double pressure, since both of his daughters, Franuša and her sister Katuša tried to prevent him from accusing Dragačić. He explained to the *comes* that his plaint was made only to satisfy his desperate daughter who had become pregnant after the violation. The Venetian governor summoned Franuša and heard a completely different story: several years ago, she had fallen in love with Dragačić; and as *postillon d'amour*, she had sent Pribislav from Krajina to take him into her house - and into her bed; she never had been violated by Dragačić, on the contrary, she had given birth to two children. She supported the plaint of her father because master Grupšić and the predecessor of the actual governor had blackmailed her: she would be arrested, if she did not denounce her lover; she also admitted that she had had other love affairs before and that she had had no intention to marry these men. The whole story was confirmed by several testimonies: the patrician Ante Stanojević informed the governor that Dragačić's affair with Franuša was widely known, that her father had called her several times „*Çuanin's whore*“ and that he had seen one day governor Marco Gradenigo reading in the Korčulan *statuta* and saying to a Korčulan nobleman „*This chapter is against Çuanin Dragačić who has a love affair with the daughter of Radašin from Ston*“. The *postillon d'amour*, Pribislav from Krajina, added his memories: in a cold night, when it was snowing and raining, and people feared an attack by Catalan pirates, the whole male population gathered on the main square; when he, Pribislav, passed by Radašin's house, Franuša asked him to invite Dragačić to come to her; he in fact met Dragačić in front of the church of Saint Mary; he served in the same function several times; two and half a year ago, he met Dragačić at noon at the city gate and took him to Franuša. Ante Košić, finally, told the governor that Franuša had sexual intercourse with Dragačić since almost four years, that Dragačić had had several angry disputes with master Grupšić, and that it was rumoured that Dragačić's predecessor in Franuša's bed was Dabišiv the blacksmith. Soon after the process, Franuša disappeared; the governor issued a proclamation that no one was allowed to hide her, but in vain. Only in February 1445 Radašin of Ston found out who had helped her; he accused before the governor Frane Marini de Tomko and Marin's widow *dona Francesca* who had given shelter to Franuša in a house outside of Korčula town; when the field-guard and other men arrived and searched the house, they found one of Franuša's hankerchiefs, but Franuša could escape to other

<sup>27</sup> 10/15/3 f. 97r.

friends (we even have a inventory of Franuša's wardrobe (*una gonela de pavonazo valoris duc. 8; una tovalia magna a tabula valoris duc. 2, unum fustagnum d.2; 9 fazolos a manu novos d.2; cedimentum filli line d2; unum par linteonis d2, tole brachia 4 s 32; unum par manicarum de cundato s.32; unum cusmelum folatum s.60, unum fazolum cum serico s.60*) - Frane Marini de Tomko explained he had not known the proclamation since he had been working in his vineyards, and he added that Franuša had slept one night in his house and had left on the next day - the governor however did not believe him and sentenced him to 15 days in prison which he left on 30 April 1445).<sup>28</sup>

Our starting point is thus a political intrigue which coincided with an escalation of the power struggle between patricians and villagers of Korčula: the Dragačić brothers played a decisive part in conflict. What is evident is the fact that a Venetian governor and a group of patricians decided to eliminate one of the Dragačići from political life by an intrigue - this alone is remarkable. They did not dare to arrest him, since they had no legal instrument to stop his political activities. Venice explicitly encouraged petitions of his subjects, and the central authorities received numerous delegations from the overseas possessions. The governor had his hands bound; and the patricians as well feared the political and, as we shall see very soon, also the physical power of the villagers. Apart from this political aspect, the story offers us insights into social patterns of Korčula; the power struggle was fought with all means, mainly by the criminalisation of non-patricians by patricians. Patricians tried to destroy their enemies by transforming them into thieves and violators; they tried to destroy their honour in the eyes of the local society and especially in the eyes of the Venetian government. Honour was a key concept of behaviour: judge Mikšić and his field-guard insisted that they defended their and the state's honour in the dangerous moments in Čara. Dragačić as well defended his honour against unjust accusations and a possible arrest by his enemies in the village. The villagers and especially the twelve bodyguards protected their protector, since Dragačić had represented them before the Doge in Venice. Words and gestures express honour and dishonour: Dragačić humiliated judge Mikšić when he grasped him at the arm; his gestures were violent and impressive: he stood at the entrance of the village, surrounded by his bodyguards and the population. He showed off his arms and challenged thus the representatives of patrician power on the island and their monopoly of violence. Loyalty was another key factor in the power game: the villagers supported their leader, and the attempt of the governor and the patricians to intimidate them utterly failed; they stood as one man behind their leader. Emotions ran high, the accusations and intrigues of the patricians hit at the

<sup>28</sup> 10/14/1 f.29.

most vulnerable point of their adversaries, honesty, honour. But we have also elements which illustrate gender relations on Korčula: that concubinage was tolerated, that in this small town nothing could be kept secret, but that certain social conventions were observed (Franuša could not directly invite Dragačić because of the social control in the public space), finally that a father could not enforce a marriage when the lover of his daughter was a powerful and aggressive man. Another path of research is offered by the use of space, public and private: Dragačić, a villager of Čara, came often to Korčula town and could be seen at the main square and the gates; his quarrels with local townsmen were well known as well as his private life; the same is true for minor persons as the blacksmith or master Juraj Grupšić. We know that in villages as well public space was used for assemblies and for the *mise en scène* of social relations and political power. The armed demonstration of villagers showed the patricians the narrow limits of their power - and it marked also the helplessness of the Venetian governor.

The real micro-historical research has to start after the analysis of these documents which alone would offer us an interesting glimpse into Korčulan society, but not more: the extremely dense source material however allows us to reconstruct the complex network of personal, social and economic relations between the main players of the power struggle in Korčula in the 1440ies.

Çanin and Çuanin Dragačić, sons of Frane and therefore also called Franetić, appear in 1438 in the social life of Korčula: in October 1438 they contended a testament of Don Nikola Marinić, an uncle of the Dragacići; their plaint was accepted by the governor and the patrician judges Ante Rožen und Marko Paperčić<sup>29</sup>; soon afterwards they instituted legal proceedings against the nobleman Marko Goriglavić who had occupied a house which Tomko Milošević had given them by his testament.<sup>30</sup> Since the Dragačić brothers defended the rights of two Ragusans, they were accused by Goriglavić of offending the Statuta of Korčula which did not allow Korčulans to act as representatives of foreigners against other citizens of Korčula. The brothers were condemned, but appealed in Venice against this judgment, at the court of the *Auditori novi* which quashed the decision of the Korčulan court.<sup>31</sup>

A third lawsiut involved Çanin Franetić in April 1441; the patrician *ser* Negoje Bogdanić claimed that Çanin had promised to marry his daughter. In his plaint his described how the marriage was arranged in August 1440 in the village of Čara; the Dragačići had sent their cousin, don Luka and two

<sup>29</sup> 7/9/I-II f. 151, 158.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. f. 160r.

<sup>31</sup> 7/9/1-2, f. 199v-200v.

noblemen, *ser* Bogdan Radić and *ser* Ante Jurjević to Negoje and asked him „*Would you be prepared to give your daughter Jakovica as wife to Çanin, son of Frane?*“; he answered: „*If the Lord wants it, this can be so, and if you and my other friends give me this advice, I will gladly accept it*“. After that, the two Dragačići appeared and Çanin accepted the deal. When Çanin wanted to dissolve the marriage, the governor and his judges forced him to accept his bride.<sup>32</sup> In December of the same year, both brothers were condemned to pay two ducats to don Ivan Božin.<sup>33</sup> The Dragačići were thus active members of the Korčulan society who did not hesitate to travel to Venice to defend their interests; the impression that they were rather unruly men is confirmed by another much more serious process which opposed them to the leading men of the island, and this time, it was for political reasons.

On 27th May 1441 the legal councilors of Korčula, the patricians Frane Obradović, Marin Ivanić, Stipan Junjević and Gabriel Angeli together with Forte Antonii and Ivan Petrović appeared in front of the governor Michele Michiel and raised heavy accusations against the Dragačići. They exposed that Korčula had always lived in peace and social harmony, but that this times had gone, since Franul Mariović and Jakov Baničević had began to agitate the common people; that they had been joined by Frane Marinić, Pavao Glavić, Çanin and Çuanin Dragačić, Antic Blažetić and others who had stirred up popular emotions, first in the village of Smokvica, later in other villages of the island; they had contaminated the peaceful peasants and organized public meetings; master Pavao Glavić from Lumbarda, paid by the enemies of Venice, had visited the village of Blato by night and agitated the uneducated villagers - for this purpose, this group obtained the authorization to represent the villagers' interest in Korčula town and even in Venice. These men were a „*bad seed*“, „*they make noise as they like it*“, insulted the noblemen, formed sects and congregations and threatened to destroy the whole island.<sup>34</sup> These were serious accusations which attest how deep the social division was on the island: the patricians defended their political monopoly not against townsmen, but against the rural elite, composed by peasants and artisans; Pavao Glavić, a leading figure was a shoemaker. It is evident that villagers had made their own assembly and elected their own political representatives and challenged thus directly the *Statuta* and the patrician council of Korčula. The patrician discourse which addressed the Venetian authorities accused them of having violated the good old order and depicted the rural leaders as troublemakers and criminals. Obviously, the patricians tried to use Venice to crush internal strife on the island.

<sup>32</sup> ibid. 182r-184r.

<sup>33</sup> ibid. f. 198v.

<sup>34</sup> 7/10/1 f. 30v-34r.

The Dragačići were not impressed - on the contrary, in September 1441, they gathered many followers on the camp of Polud where they met the leading patrician Dobroslav Obradović with his brothers, all in arms; both sides began to insult each other. When Čuanin provoked Obradović „*Don't attack me all in a body; but he who wants to fight with me, shall go out of the town, I will wait there*“<sup>35</sup>, the patrician refused an open fight, saying that „*I am not stupid and I won't fight with you*“.<sup>36</sup> Čuanin had challenged a leading nobleman who avoided open conflict; this was an evident symbolical victory of the Dragačići. Another incident demonstrates how insolent they had become against the traditional authorities: when the governor ordered Čuanin not to leave the town, he complained about the governor's violence and added „*Neither the governor nor the judges have enough power to put me in jail*“<sup>36</sup> - Dragačić not only challenged the Korčulan elite, but he seriously provoked the Venetian governor - who was incapable to punish him; the only means to contain Dragačić's temper was to force him to present more documents in his lawsuits against various patricians.

But popular unrest was not appeased. On 10th October 1442, in the middle of the night, Ivan Bogojević, a peasant from Smokvica, asked the *plazarius* of the village, Marko Vitković, to proclaim that all villagers who complained about new taxes should descend the following day to the town of Korčula in order to demonstrate against the Venetian governor - and this despite the severe order of the government which banned all unauthorized assemblies on the island, an order which was once again read aloud in Korčula on 7th December<sup>37</sup> - in fact three leading patricians, Stanko Obradović, Marin Žilković, Ante Radetić and Forte Antonii had immediately after the uprising set sail for Venice and obtained a decision from the Doge in their favour (November 1441<sup>38</sup>). In the following years, the conflicts between noblemen and peasants were not calmed down, taxes and the obligation of villagers to serve as guardians in the town of Korčula - where they were given order by Forte Antonii to do compulsory services (*angarie*<sup>39</sup>) - caused repeatedly new tensions. Since these could not be resolved on the island, the villagers chose to submit the whole cause to the central authorities in Venice; in March 1444 they elected the Dragačići brothers as their representatives and sent them to the Doge in Venice where they stayed for three months. The reactions of the patricians show how high tensions ran - and how close some patricians came to high treason. They demonstrate as well how limited the

<sup>35</sup> ibid. f.37r-39r.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. f. 36v.

<sup>37</sup> 10/14/1 f.78r-v.

<sup>38</sup> HANEL 161-62.

<sup>39</sup> HANEL 168.

prestige of the governor could be: *Magister Zore Grupšić*, whom we have already met as the main instigator of the Franuša affair, threatened the villagers in August 1444: „*You have made these days a council; this had never happened in this place, and this council will be for nothing; your heads will be cut and our lord governor will be sent in jails to Venice by the state inspectors because he had allowed this assembly*“; he even dared to say: „*He allowed this assembly in a bad moment, but he will perhaps return (to Venice) without his head, and if he returns with his head, he will return covered with shame*“; he called the governor a stupid (*stultus*) man and compared him with his wise predecessor (who had supported the patrician).<sup>40</sup> - it was not by chance that Zore’s ennemis accused him as a traitor before the governor; Ratko, a stone-mason, declared on the camp of Polud „*Zore, I will prove that you are a traitor*“<sup>41</sup> (it seems that Zore had reproached Ratko with his idleness; he would only work half a day, the other half of the day he would walk around; Ratko had answered: „*Traitor, now I will work to put shame on you*“).

The Venetian central authorities were already acquainted with the internal strife on Korčula. In November 1441, a delegation of *populares* had complained about the political monopoly of the patricians, about legal discrimination of *populares* and abuse of power; Venice had shown considerable comprehension for these demands, but was not prepared to change the Korčulan statutes, it cancelled however all decisions of the Korčulan council which had not been confirmed by the central authorities, satisfying thus the interests of the non-patricians<sup>42</sup>. On the other hand, Venice did not fulfill the patricians’ wish to prohibit popular assemblies; in March 1444, the Doge decided that gatherings for weddings, burials and the election of ambassadors to Venice were explicitly allowed - but they had to be communicated within three days to the local governor.<sup>43</sup> The patricians did not remain idle and tried to hit the Dragačići on another point: *magister Juraj Grupšić* (the man who had forced Franuša to accuse Dragačić) and Dobroslav Obradović (who fled from a fight with Dragačić) obtained in October 1443 the confirmation of a decision of the Korčulan council concerning Jakovica’s marriage with one of the Dragačići.<sup>44</sup>

This was the situation when the two Dragačići exposed the complaints of the villagers in the Doge’s palace in July 1444<sup>45</sup>: they immediately accused Forte Antonii as their main enemy and enumerated the

<sup>40</sup> 10/14/1 f.16v.

<sup>41</sup> ibid. f.11r.

<sup>42</sup> HANEL 157-161.

<sup>43</sup> HANEL 162-63.

<sup>44</sup> HANEL 165-66.

<sup>45</sup> Hanel 166 – 173.

abuse of their privileges by the patricians with the compliance of the governor. Their mission was a complete political victory, since the Doge and the Senate confirmed their privileges and ordered the governor to observe them. On the other hand, however, in November 1444, the Doge banned the New Council which the Dragačići and their followers had established as concurrence to the patrician town council of Korčula.<sup>46</sup> It became evident that Venice aimed at containing the aspirations of both sides; it limited the patricians' power by protecting the villagers' interests, but it prevented also a take-over of power by the Korčulan peasants. Dragačić's self-confidence was nevertheless enormously boosted, and his position as a popular leader was not challenged any more. He established himself as one of the leading men of the island who acted as representative of local businessmen<sup>47</sup>, defended the real property of the presbyter Marko Lovrenić in Čara against the dean Marin Jurjević<sup>48</sup> and dared to challenge Venetian power in Korčula town itself: when in February 1456 two *gastaldiones*, local policemen, arrested a thief and conducted him through the streets of Korčula, the Dragačić brothers stopped them alleging that the arrested was a honorable man. Local patricians who were playing (cards or chess) in the nearby loggia observing what happened intervened immediately. First Matija Obradović approached them and said: „*Do you want to protect thieves, you who built your house with the blood of this people which you have swallowed?*“ He was joined by ser Marin Žilković who pushed the Dragačić aside; others followed and shouted „*You have always been the worst enemies of the noblemen of this town and you have always wanted to destroy us*“. Ser Antun Sainier reproached them to molest those who do justice. One of the Dragačići replied: „*When I will go to Venice, you will learn who I am and you will pay your debt to the Venetian state*“, to which Sainer responded „*My clothes are torn, try to repair them!*“. The struggle escalated, and patricians accused Dragačić of having threatened the Venetian governor with death.<sup>49</sup> Once again, the public space served as the theatre of social conflicts; the roles were divided as in 1444. Dragačić acts on the street in front of the loggia, the latter being a space with a clear social connotation as *chasse gardée* of the patricians. When patricians leave the loggia, they enter the arena of public and social contention; they show their readiness for conflict and become vulnerable at the same time. Occupying public space was an important symbolical act as well as touching another person: the Dragačići stopped the *gastaldiones*, Marin Žilković pushed the

<sup>46</sup> HANEL 174-75.

<sup>47</sup> 9/2/2 f.3r.

<sup>48</sup> 10/14/4 f. 188v.

<sup>49</sup> 14/26/2 f. 10r-11v.

brothers aside; testimonies describe also that, when and whose voices became louder. Both sides were reinforced by patricians and townsfolk running at their support; there was, according to the priest Stipan, no difference in the „*verba grossissima*“ which both sides exchanged, i.e. there was apparently no attempt of keeping a certain socially distinctive behaviour on the side of the patricians. Players and their discourses are remarkable as well.

Both sides invoked Venice; the patricians accused Dragačić of violating state justice, Dragačić reminded one of his adversaries of open accounts with the central authorities. No one openly challenged Venice which in fact was absent at this moment - the *gastaldiones* did not play a major role, and the governor intervened much later when he started an investigation. No one dared to use physical violence - it was a conflict fought out with words: and these show how deeply the social conflicts were rooted in social conscience on the side of the patricians who still claimed to be the only representatives of the community; both sides accused each other of having derived financial profit from the conflict; they tried to calumniate their enemies, and above all, Venice acted as invisible mediator and point of reference for a conflict ridden island society.

The Dragačići succeeded in establishing themselves as popular leaders: their social position becomes evident from several attributes of power: they did not serve on the Korčulan galley, but sent a paid substitute - by the way it has to be noticed that the recruiting commission was composed only by patricians, among them Matija Obradović (1452)<sup>50</sup>. The two brothers also acted on behalf of the local lower clergy, for instance in 1460, when Ćuanin appeared before the bishop as representative of a presbyter called Radoslav.<sup>51</sup> They defended the rights of local cattle breeders against the bishop who tried to introduce new taxes; this time, they cooperated with local patricians in a mixed commission.<sup>52</sup> In 1457, a Johannes Dragačić was notary of Korčula.<sup>53</sup> The *populares* continued to send them as ambassadors to Venice (1461).<sup>54</sup>

Finally they still were known for their love stories and passed for womanizers: in April 1456 Cristina, wife of Radić Galjenović, accused Milisava, wife of Cvitan Cauzota, of having insulted her and her daughter of being Dragačić's whores who had become pregnant by the latter.<sup>55</sup> And last but not least, the old power struggles had not ended. The Dragačići, meanwhile well-to-do property owner, began in 1463 a process against the

<sup>50</sup> 13/23/6 f7. r.

<sup>51</sup> 15/28/6 f. 17r.

<sup>52</sup> 15/29/4 f.42.

<sup>53</sup> 17/32/3 f.9v.

<sup>54</sup> 16/31/1, f.6r.

<sup>55</sup> 14/26/2 f. 60.

Sainier family, patricians of Korčula; both sides demanded a camp called Plitvice on the territory of Čara. Once again, Dragačić invoked old privileges and the *statuta* of Korčula; their noble enemies mocked them as „wise men“ who pretended to know the law better than the social elite: patricians considered knowledge of written law as attribute of nobility and tried to hinder *populares* to use the common law for their own interests.<sup>56</sup> Both sides developed also historical argument telling the story of this real property back to 40 or even 60 years and explaining exactly means of land use (whether it was fallow land, wood or arable land, and how fallow land could be used as forest).

The whole story has to be put in a wider framework which remains however a local one: in the 1440ies, it became obvious that social groups which were excluded from political power challenged the political monopoly of the Korčulan patricians: in July 1445, the patrician judge Bogdan Radičević was settling legal conflicts in the village of Blato in front of the church of Saint James when Mikula Jurjević began to insult him (*Asine, homo nullius valoris*) and threatened him with his sword; only the intervention of several men from Blato prevented a more serious incident.<sup>57</sup> In September 1445, a spontaneous demonstration of peasants broke out, when the Venetian governor and Korčulan patricians tried to levy a new tax - when the news spread over the island, 70 peasants from Smokvica came down from the hills to Korčula and vociferated their protest; Andreas Cijebranović and Franul Ivanović both hold speeches and announced that they would kill any tax collector who dared to come to their houses; the villagers were joined by some citizens; it was only after this demonstration that the comes began an investigation, on the demand of a local patrician.<sup>58</sup> In March 1445, a man from Smokvica was brought to Venice to trial, because he had not only refused an order of the governor, but said, that the governor should be put in irons and sent back to Venice.<sup>59</sup>

Both sides tried to use the Venetian legal system as a weapon to overwhelm their political enemies: the patricians started the power struggle with the accusations we had discussed above. But as we have seen, the *populares* also knew their rights and turned the *statuta* against the patricians who believed them to be their political property. Non-patricians did not hesitate to bring patricians and their followers to trial; we have mentioned the stone-mason Ratko; and we can add here another case, Pavao Glavić, one of

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<sup>56</sup> 18/33/7 f.49r-51v.

<sup>57</sup> 10/13/1 f. 7r.

<sup>58</sup> ibid. f. 13v.

<sup>59</sup> 10/14/1 f. 40v.

the leading *populares*, accusing Franuša's father; Glavić was in charge of looking after some stolen vine; Radašin told him, that he would crush his shoulders if he dared to investigate in his cellar<sup>60</sup> - Radašin explained, that Glavić and another official had entered with violence into his cellar and had treated him harshly; the governor quashed the accusation - it was evident that the two *populares* had abused their office to harass their political enemy (15.9.1444).

### **Conclusion**

It is hardly exaggerated to say that in Late Medieval Balkan history we rarely come so close to single persons and their behaviour as in the case of Korčula. We have focused in this paper on politically active persons – we could have extended our attention to fishermen, peasants and pastors who were not involved in politics, and we would have found a similar wealth of information. But story telling alone, although it is fascinating enough, was not the goal of this paper: its aim was to put a micro-historical approach into a broader framework – and it is time to come back to the starting question about the character of Venetian statehood: from our case study it becomes clear the Venetian presence on Korčula was symbolical and fragile at the same time. The governor was almost alone in his interactions with a politically divided local society which saw in him a mediator, the representative of a spatially remote central state. Governors had to build up their own network in order to maintain stability on the island, and since they were obliged to respect local laws and constitution, they relied on the patricians, giving thus support to one of the conflicting social classes on the island. The non-patricians bypassed the governor and appealed directly to the Doge who gave them his political support: Doge and governor, patricians and non-patricians represented thus different political tendencies within their own political system, Venice and Korčula: there was no opposition Korčula vs Venice, but internal strife on the island was regulated on the higher level of the Venetian state which neither acted as a single and coherent force. Venice did not oppress rural opposition against local patricians, but at the same time it prevented a takeover of power by the Dragačić clan. It becomes evident that the Republic tried to secure, with a minimum of budget and personnel, a vulnerable social and political balance on the island. Its power resided in the enormous prestige and the potential threat of armed intervention (as in Crete in the 1360ies) – but the

<sup>60</sup> ibid. f.10r.

case of Hvar, some 70 years later, shows that Venice was extremely reluctant to use military pressure against its subjects. On a more local level, our case study demonstrates that Venice did not penetrate into the rural hinterland of Korčula; the Republic was represented by local officers, elected by local communities. And these communities proved to be surprisingly self-confident; free men with a communal autonomy, men who negotiated directly with the Doge and who with their explicit recognition of Venetian domination obtained substantial political concessions. Micro-history shows how honour and power were lived and demonstrated in daily life, how symbolical gestures and the occupation and new connotation of public space aimed at transforming local power structures. We have also learned which means were used in this fierce struggle for influence and power. A micro-history of Korčula speaks thus to large issues: it offers us the unique picture of a complex society at the fringe of the Mediterranean and the Balkan worlds.

Оливер Јенс Шмит

## МИКРОИСТОРИЈА И *LEBENSWELTEN* КАО ПРИСТУПИ ДАЛМАТИНСКОЈ ИСТОРИЈИ ПОЗНОГ СРЕДЊЕГ ВЕКА. АНАЛИЗА СЛУЧАЈА КОРЧУЛА

### Резиме

Новим приступом, кроз метод Нове културне историје, односно микроисторију као његову еманацију, и кроз концепт *Lebenswelten*, дата је анализа друштвено-политичког живота Корчуле у првим деценијама млетачке власти. На основу изузетно богатог и до сада готово сасвим нетакнутог фонда *Arhiv Korčule* који се налази у Државном архиву у Задру, могу се пратити континуитет и промене у социјалном уређењу овог далматинског острва. Извори пружају значајно различиту слику у односу на стереотипне погледе досадашње историографије. Млетачка власт била је на Корчули представљена кроз симболичан број личности – гувернера и неколико његових пратилаца. Општински статут је и даље важио, а и политичко устројство, друштвене поделе и економска структура остали су исти. Млечани нису антагонизовали властелу и пучане, већ су њихови сукоби били спонтан израз борбе пучана за јачање свог политичког положаја и властеле за очување сопственог монопола. Обе стране су се позивале на статут и обраћале централним млетачким властима, које су настојале да одржавају равнотежу између сукобљених сталежа. Гувернери су често били довођени у незавидан положај, пошто су се Корчулани директно обраћали Венецији, уместо њима. Локалне странке на тај начин су контролисале острво и највећи број јавних служби, док је улога млетачке државе била медијаторска. Страх од могуће интервенције, дубока сталешка подељеност и наставак неспутаног економског развоја одвраћали су Корчулане од побуне против страних власти, које, и онако, нису имале пресудну улогу на острву. Јачање политичке самосвести сељака и пучана, као и отпор властеле њиховим предводницима одлично су приказани кроз делатност браће Драгачић из села Чара и кроз монтирани процес који су против њих повели њихови ривали, на челу са властелином Јурјем Групшићем. Сукоби представника друштвених група говоре и о значају јавног простора, те о употреби традиционалног морала и старих закона и обичаја у настојањима да се дискредитују политички противници.

*Кључне речи:* Далмација, Венеција, Корчула, Микроисторија

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СИМЕ ЂИРКОВИЋА**

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