

school, with poems in Latin, Tuscan, and Sicilian (295–302). The multilingual, multinational community even included some notable English graffiti-writing prisoners!

Christopher F. Black, *University of Glasgow, emeritus*  
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*Korčula: Ländliche Lebenswelten und Gemeinschaften im venezianischen Dalmatien (1420–1499)*. Fabian Kümmeler.

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This book is a study of rural society and communal life on the island of Korčula (Curzola), from 1420, when its inhabitants acknowledged Venetian sovereignty, to 1499 and the beginning of the third Venetian-Ottoman war (1499–1503). The island and its port were part of the mosaic of small territories that constituted the Venetian *Stato da Mar* and allowed Venice to maintain her commercial and political links with the Eastern Mediterranean, the Near East, and the Black Sea at the face of Ottoman expansion.

The author adopts a microhistorical approach in reconstructing the village community and its dynamic interaction with its political, legal, economic, and natural context. This work on late medieval rural society is quite unique because of the rich documentary material on which it is based.

The communities of Korčula are reconstructed through investigation of specific themes: social conflict; mediation for the settlement of disputes; and finally, a reenactment of interpersonal relations in conflict-free situations. The interplay between communal statutes and customary law on the one hand and the Venetian legal environment and jurisdiction on the other added to the complexity of the situation in late medieval Korčula. The author constantly converses with both Western and Dalmatian-Croatian historiography. The concepts of mutual agreements, commonwealth, integration, handling of internal conflicts, and commonality of economic interests take precedence over more colonialist approaches, representative of the Venetian *Stato da Mar* in previous decades. This shows the impact of the pioneering work of O. J. Schmitt.

Research on the concept of community (chapter 2) borrows from history, sociology, and anthropology. Communities are no longer conceived in the traditional way, as legal entities in urban centers extending to their hinterlands; instead, they are seen as rooted in religion, spatial proximity, common socio cultural practices, common juridical and legal status, and common work. There were multiple communities in one location, which overlapped and were subject to change, with alternative possibilities for affiliation and interaction with more extended social categories and political authorities. Simultaneously, the sense of community does not rely exclusively on the perception of cultural similarity or social contiguity but also on concepts of exclusion and

construction of otherness. Connected to the concept of community and to the microhistorical method is the notion of *Lebenswelt*, the milieu in which individuals and collectivities were active and shaped their environment. Individuals and groups could live in different, parallel, or overlapping *Lebenswelten*—of family, work, locality, etc.

Chapters 4 to 6 form the core of Kümmeler's research. Chapter 4 deals with the territorial organization and balance of power between the island's only town and its rural areas. A striking feature of Korčula was the strongly competitive relationship between the city and the rural space. Venice limited its presence to a governor and very few officials. The island's statutes remained in force, but when they did not provide the legal means for resolving a dispute, Venetian law took precedence. The network of local officials extended to the rural areas, in which the villages were the epicenters of their own administrative districts and were recognized as legal-administrative areas (*casalia*)—all visible signs of preexisting traditions of institutionalized self-government.

Various aspects of rural community life and interaction between these communities, the city, the urban patriciate, and local and city-based officials emerge from the local historical documentation, mainly from judicial minutes (chapter 5). Very important is the reconstitution of the village (*casale*) as a community of legal liability within the Venetian jurisdictional system, which is gradually recognized as a source of justice. The village of Blato, which seemed to challenge the primacy of the capital (as shown by the fact that it had its own *loggia* since 1488 at the latest), becomes the focus of an interesting case study.

Although there was no legally recognized shepherds' community, in chapter 6 the author plausibly claims that, through their professional activity, herdsmen slowly developed an awareness of common professional and social interests, based on the well-known pastoral seasonal routine and on provisions in the statutes, and comprised an informal collective entity encapsulated in the wider rural society. The contractual nature of the partnership between livestock owners and herders was another core element. Kümmeler's detailed analysis stresses once more how law was a crucial factor of rural community building. On the other hand, the significant number of lawsuits against herdsmen reveals a gap between statutory norms and everyday practice. According to the author, here as in other sections of the island's society, conflict emerges as an emotive stimulus for community building, strengthening internal solidarities and external boundaries.

Entrenched in solid archival research, Kümmeler's book is an excellent example of the advances the microhistorical, anthropological approach has contributed to historical research. The reconstruction of overlapping, competing, but coexisting collective entities in the rural areas of Korčula, and of their interaction with the island's urban society and the Venetian sovereign, is detailed and lively. Thanks to the rich documentary material, the author bridges a gap in late medieval rural history in this

corner of the Mediterranean, which could become a standard for similar investigative efforts in other parts of Europe.

Eleni Sakellariou, *University of Crete*  
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*Philip II of Spain and the Architecture of Empire*. Laura Fernández-González.  
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In her concise introduction to *Philip II of Spain and the Architecture of Empire*, Laura Fernández-González summarizes the copious scholarship on King Philip II of Spain (r. 1556–98), while justifying another monograph and distinguishing her contribution. Rather than following more traditional approaches that privilege singular individuals, static monuments, celebrated sites, and neatly classified styles, she instead addresses processes, syntheses, intersections, and multiplicities. Centering the concept of circulation, Fernández-González examines four case studies of Philip II and visual culture in the same number of chapters. She studies several visual forms (houses, archives, ephemera, ceremonies, drawings, frescoes) in relation to texts (regulations, documents, narratives, chronicles, elegies) in order to understand concepts (rulership, court, empire).

The first two chapters study the translation and adaptation of architecture in the pan-Iberian world. Chapter 1 sets aside celebrated palatial architecture in favor of lesser-known domestic architecture and regulatory legislation in Spain and Iberian America. Fernández-González uses this building typology to ask larger questions: How did architectural ideas, styles, materials, and technologies circulate in the Iberian world? What was the relationship between courtly architectural trends and local styles/practices? Her examples are many and wide-reaching (Madrid, Valladolid, Seville, Lima, Cholula, Cuzco, etc.), and the answers complex. Two important conclusions are that under Philip II, domestic architecture “employ[ed] a shared visual lexicon and at the same time project[ed] distinct identities that reflect the traditions of each particular locale or region” (41–42), and that efforts were made to regularize domestic building in Spain and its transatlantic empire. Though impressive in scope, one wonders if there might be a way to organize the comparisons more cogently in order to sharpen the broad points.

Chapter 2 continues with Philip II’s use of architecture for empire-building but focuses on a single edifice, the uncelebrated fortress of Simancas. She traces Simancas’s evolution from treasury-archive in a medieval fortress under Charles V to royal archive for the *patronazgo real* in the harmonious Austriaco style under Philip II (1540–98). Comparison to early modern European archives shows that the transformation reflects the growth of the Spanish Crown from a European kingdom