



The Uskoks of Senj: Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic

Catherine Wendy Bracewell

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In this highly original and influential book, Catherine Wendy Bracewell reconstructs and analyzes the tumultuous history of the uskoks of Senj, the martial bands nominally under the control of the Habsburg Military Frontier in Croatia, who between the 1530s and the 1620s developed a community based on raiding the Ottoman hinterland, Venetian possessions in Dalmatia, and shipping on the Adriatic.

Drawing on a broad range of sources, including the archives of the Dalmatian communes under Venetian rule and military frontier records, Bracewell provides the first comprehensive analysis of the uskoks as a social phenomenon, examining their origins, their military and social organization, their plunder economy, their mental world, and their relations with other groups in this borderland between three empires. The uskoks lived on the Christian-Muslim frontier, and they invoked Europe's struggle against Islam to justify their often bloody deeds. As Bracewell demonstrates, however, their actions were also shaped by the maze of local political and economic rivalries, social conflicts, and confessional antagonisms. In a book that tests the concept of the social bandit, the author analyzes the motives that guided the uskoks and distinguishes these from the factors that impelled various elements of the local population to support them.

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