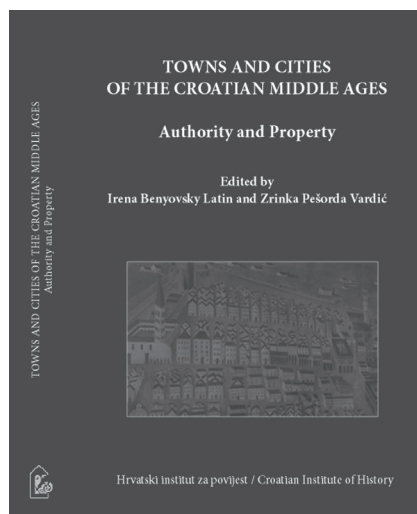


Town and Cities of the Croatian Middle Ages, Irena Benyovsky Latin and Zrinka Pešorda Vardić (ed.) (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2014)

About the volume

There is hardly a topic that has been more inspirational for the medievalists than urban communities. In order to understand the life of cities and towns in the Middle Ages, it is important to define authority and property as related to urban space, and see the interplay between these two notions. These issues are not new in the European historiographies, especially in the recent years, when scholars have been investigating the legal aspects of ownership and the operation of urban real-estate market. Yet there are very few comparative studies on the European cities, and those that exist do not include the Croatian ones. Moreover, not too much research has been done on the relationship between property and the different levels of authority. This book is a result of an international conference that focused on this issue, based on the example of Croatian medieval towns and cities. The conference titled “The Town and the City of the Croatian Middle Ages: Authority and Property” took place in Zagreb (Croatia) in November 2010 at the Croatian Institute of History.¹ Our intention was to stimulate discussion on some of the fundamental questions of urban history: What did it mean to own a town or a segment of urban space in the Middle Ages? What was the role of the owner, or the holder of an urban estate, in the development of a town? What did changes in ownership entail? Which sources should we use and which methods should we apply to investigate the relationship between authority and property? What was the legal nature of property over urban land? This volume focuses on urban estates, as



¹ Besides authors who have published their papers in this volume, there were other prominent scholars participating at the Zagreb conference: Peter Johaneck (Institute for Comparative Urban History, Münster), Sarah Rees Jones (Department of History, University of York), Danko Zelić (Institute of Art History, Zagreb), Damir Karbić (Institute of History at the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Zagreb), Mladen Ančić (Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zadar), Darko Darovec (University of Primorska, Science and Research Centre Koper), Marija Mogorović Crljenko (History Department at the Faculty of Humanities, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula), Katalin Szende (Central European University, Budapest), Neven Budak (Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb), Goran Budeč (Institute of History at the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Zagreb) and Darko Vitek (Department of History, Studia Croatica, Zagreb). All these excellent and inspirational papers resulted in fruitful discussions and brought new insights.

they were the key elements in urban structure. They reflect urban politics and institutional organization, individual interests and their economic and social status, church regulations, and a wider political framework. Croatian medieval towns are barely represented in the international surveys of medieval and early modern urban culture. The aim of this volume was also to address this specific imbalance and to emphasise the entangled nature of local, regional, and international urban histories. For all these reasons, it seemed important to bring together prominent scholars who study the history (in the first place Croatian, but not only) urban development.