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Abstracts

VITO RICCI, Coltivazione, produzione e commercio dello zafferano in Terra d'Otranto tra XV e XVI secolo

Saffron in the Middle Ages was the most precious spice, a luxury good with an important international trade. Italy was the main producer in Europe, together with Spain and, to a lesser extent, France; Italian saffron was among the most valuable and sought-after qualities. In the Peninsula, the cultivation of saffron was practiced in some territorial contexts, including Apulia, the second center in the Kingdom of Naples after the Abruzzi. This contribution will deal with the cultivation and trade of this spice in Terra d'Otranto between the 15th and 16th centuries. The purpose of the paper is to show the importance assumed by saffron in the economy of this province, a periphery at the center of international commercial circuits, a crop often marginalized by historical research, to the advantage of olive growing. Different sources will be used (fiscal, notarial, historical-geographical, commercial) to illustrate the spread of crocus cultivation and its presence on foreign markets thanks to the presence of foreign merchants, especially Germans. After examining the phenomenon in the province, Casalnuovo in the 16th century was taken into consideration as a case study, for which some notarial deeds were examined from which interesting details emerge. Ultimately, the fiscal aspects of the saffron trade were exposed.

Keywords:

Saffron

Terra d'Otranto

International Trade