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# Kitchen, Dining and Diet in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Aristocratic Palace – a Proposal for the New Permanent Exhibition in the Museum of the Town of Trogir

*The author in this article described the kitchen and the dining room of the Garagnin palace and, in connection to that, the typical 18<sup>th</sup> century diet of the town of Trogir. The house, which was simultaneously renovated and partially built in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is today the home of the Museum of the Town of Trogir. The author presented her own proposals for the establishment of the new permanent exhibition in the Museum which would present everyday life of the time and the region, concerning kitchen and dining.*

**Key words:** Museum of the Town of Trogir, the Garagnin family, kitchen, dining room, diet, museum exhibition

The Museum of the Town of Trogir is situated in the palace one wing of which was built in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, while another wing was being renovated in the same period. It once belonged to a prominent aristocratic family Garagnin which lived, as it was customary then, on sea trade and agriculture in a town which was connected by a sea route to Italy and by a continental road to the hinterland. Both routes influenced everyday life of the town not only in household inventory, clothing and pass time, but also in diet, kitchen utensils and dining. Since the Garagnin family were also passionate collectors, collecting everything and therefore preserving a rich family archive, including the palace drawings and maps, today we know the exact position of the kitchen,

the room where bread was made and preserved, where people were eating, or where the food was kept.<sup>1</sup>

## Kitchen

The kitchen was situated at the topmost floor of the palace. This position was established in the palaces since medieval times (Marasović 1994:197) because of the risk of fire and so that the kitchen smells would not spread around the house and disturb the house masters. The kitchen was furnished with chairs and armchairs, chests and drawers for preservation of food and a *feral* (Cega 1996:582, Cega 2005:95). Just for comparison, during the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the neighboring Italy people used to keep underwear and cheese all together in one chest (Sarti 2006:148). The 18<sup>th</sup> century was somewhat more pristine, but not too much, and hence all kinds of items could be found in the kitchen.

In the immediate vicinity of the kitchen there was a room which was called in the inventories *salvarobba*. It was used for making and preserving bread. It was noted that it contained a number of smaller tables for placing bread rolls, a large table for making dough, chests in which flour was kept, elliptic dishes and wooden shovels, etc (Cega 2005:95-96).

The fireplace which was used for cooking can be seen in the preserved drawings in the Museum of the Town of Trogir (Picture 1) (Cega 2005:54). In the preserved archival material from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many household items that were used in the kitchen were enumerated<sup>2</sup>: coffee grinders, *broštulin* for roasting coffee beans, bronze candlesticks and lamps – *lumette*, *lume*, pots (*kace*) and the accompanying large soup spoons – *kacjole*, pastry wheel – *rodela*, cake moulds – *tortiere*, pots – *pinjate*, coffee pots – *kogome*, chocolate pots, sifter, kitchen scale, water bucket, dish washing container, funnel, wooden spoons, graters, pots (*bronzini*), different kitchen utensils made of iron, pudding mould- *budin*, iron mould for *ročada*, iron frying pan – *padela*, etc. According to the archival material it seemed that there were a lot of ceramic pots in the house that year – cups, plates, pots – *pinjata*, used for butter, etc.<sup>3</sup>

The Garagnins were buying their kitchen tableware from either domestic producers or they were importing them from Italy, together with other household supplies.

There were several rooms in the basement that were used as food storages. They were mainly used for production and preservation of wine, as storages for oil or cheese in

<sup>1</sup> More details on the family and the palace can be found in the 2005 book written by Celio Cega (check the reference list at the end of this article) and from the extensive bibliography found at the end of that book, pages 189-199.

<sup>2</sup> DAS, AFG, PO 2/I „A”

<sup>3</sup> Detailed explanations of specific names can be found in Geić – Slade – Šilović, 1994.

brine (*salamura*) and they contained various tools and pieces of equipment for manufacturing wine and oil (Cega 2005:96).

During recent roof repair work and renovation, it was confirmed that the kitchen was situated exactly at the same position which was specified in the old building plan (Cega 1998:110). Chimney remains were found on the third floor in the low attic space and the whole attic was blackened by soot. After the Museum restoration will be completed, the new permanent exhibition should be designed and the reconstruction of the old kitchen should also be included in the project. The original palace kitchen inventory is, unfortunately, gone, but similar items could be collected, according to the descriptions of the original ones found in the preserved documents, then bought off or purchased, and, to a certain level, they could present the original outlook of the kitchen of that period.

A new trend in the museum science is to present the original interiors of different castles. For example, in the renovated royal palace in Višegrad, in the creation of which the famous Croatian sculptor, Ivan Duknović, participated, the kitchen was reconstructed on the basis of hypotheses and ideas as to what the kitchen looked like in its original outlook. The palace was destroyed during Ottoman raids on Hungary and it was renovated on the basis of the preserved documents, writings and literature. The presented kitchen inventory is very modest, but the introductory museum descriptions contain the drawings of the original kitchen and the ways in which food was prepared (Buzás 2001:11-15).

## Dining room

The dining room was situated on the first floor of the palace, between the basement and the kitchen, and it was richly furnished. A large dining table with fourteen chairs (*careghine*)<sup>4</sup> occupied the central position in the room. Two coffee tables, a bigger and a smaller one of the *tavolin* type, two chests of drawers and one sofa were also there. Next to the dining room, there was a smaller room with shelves and closets used for cutlery, porcelain and glass (Cega 2005:64). At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Garragnin house there was a rich collection of Flanders damask tablecloths with matching napkins, sets for 12 and 24 people with large one-piece tablecloths, tablecloths made of Venetian *telah* with matching napkins, tablecloths for chests, flax tablecloths and napkins, etc.<sup>5</sup>

Porcelain, glass and cutlery were regularly shipped from Italy. European countries were importing there products from China at the time and the main import center was London (Sarti 2006:124, 146-147). Coffee was also commonly used in Trogir. Therefore coffee cups, together with tea and chocolate cups were important household

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<sup>4</sup> Detailed explanations of specific names can be found in Boerio, 1971.

<sup>5</sup> DAS, AFG, PO 2/I „A”

items (Cega 2005: 100-101, Božić-Bužančić 1976:60). Black coffee was enjoyed in smaller cups, and café latte in larger cups. Special cups were used for drinking tea. Next to coffee, chocolate was the most favorite drink among the members of the high society of the period (Sarti 2006:209). For example, there is a preserved list of porcelain and china dating from 1801 which enumerates a number of octagonal plates of different sizes, a soup bowl with a lid, a number of round plates, also of different sizes, white wash-basins, jugs decorated with flowers, majolica chamber-pots decorated with flowers, the so-called *gatti di Boemia* (porcelain figurines shaped like cat), also made from crystal. Many crystal items are also enumerated: *bocuni*, salt-cellars, smaller crystal bottles (*bocete*) with or without lid which were kept on the table, fruit bowl (*sortu*) with the matching bottle (*boceta*) with a lid, liqueur bottles shaped like cat with horizontal base – *Boemia*, one *bocun* and different types of bottles. Cups with matching plates decorated with small red flowers are also enumerated, chocolate cups decorated in the same way, as well as coffee cups, the matching sugar dish, *kogome* for coffee, octagonal plate with the golden rim, large cups with or without lids, wooden trays, brass candlesticks (*di otton*), oil lamps, lanterns and hanging lamps (*ferali*). In the same year, 1801, the Garagnins made a list of their family silverware which contained: bread baskets, sugar-dish, small spoons with long handle for juice, another smaller sugar-dish, small spoons, sugar clamps (*molettine*), candle sticks, large kitchen knife with a handle, salt-cellars, fruit bowl for the table (*sortur*), inkpot, flower vase, small soup bowl with the plate, hand heater (*škaldaman*), lamp (*fioretina*), bottle pads, two cutlery sets: spoon, knife and fork (*trinzanti*), smaller ladle, fish spoon, two soup spoons, cutlery with protective cover for twelve, another one for twelve persons and two for six persons<sup>6</sup> (compare Pictures 2,3,4, and 5).

After the renovation of the Museum is completed, there is also a possibility of reconstructing the dining room. The original furniture is not preserved, but there is another set of furniture which has been bought off for the Museum and which could be used for the exhibition. The central table could be decorated with porcelain and glass used in formal occasions during the summer months and during winter periods it could be decorated in a more modest fashion, with, for example, ceramic plates, etc. In this way a certain variety would be achieved and the permanent exhibition would not appear monotonous.

## Diet

According to the Garagnins' household bills, nobility in their diet used all kinds of meat that they could obtain: beef, veal, pork, lamb or mutton, kid, chicken, and venison, prepared in various ways. Fish was used according to the fishing season: sea bass, gilthead, grouper, bamboofish, anchovies, Atlantic bonito, surmullet, hake, sole, etc, squids and various types of crabs (*scampi* or blue crabs for fish soups). Eels were also

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<sup>6</sup> DAS, AFG, ADS 12/V

commonly used as food and they were also used in wells to purify water. Codfish was also commonly found on their menu, prepared *bianco* or as fish soup with dried raisins. They frequently ate pasta: spaghetti, macaroni with different types of sauce, like tomato sauce, then *tagliatele*, *lasagne* (with broad beans) etc. Vegetable was prepared according to the season – potato, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, asparagus, tomato, artichoke, lettuce, chicory, etc. The main seasoning was olive oil which was abundantly used. Other types of oil were unavailable, there was only pork fat. Small pork sausages called *luganige* were made right after the pig was slaughtered and the meat was mixed with rice and offal. This type of sausages was mentioned by the famous architect Tomas Graham Jackson.<sup>7</sup> There was also prosciutto, bacon and different types of salami which was imported from abroad. They ate seasonal fruits, fresh, bottled or dried fruits (as a side dish or in cakes). The fruits that were mentioned were: apples, pears, plums (or prunes), figs (fresh or dried), grapes, quinces, oranges, lemons, almonds, hazelnuts, etc. Different spices were used, mostly pepper, clove and cinnamon. Milk and dairies were also common in their diet, especially different types of cheese, butter, curds, etc. They drank white wine during summer months and red wine during winter months. They enjoyed cherry brandy, wormwood wine, brandy, prosecco, etc. (Cega 2005:105-110). The diet was very similar in the neighboring town of Split and in other Dalmatian towns (Zglav – Martinac 1997).

The sweets were baked according to the occasion. For All Saints' Day they would prepare *fave*; for Christmas almond and honey cake (*forte*, which were called *buzzolai* in the town of Split), *kotonjate* made of quinces or must (cooked together with sugar and spices and poured into moulds; when cold it was removed from moulds and placed on laurel leaves and preserved in that way on large wooden planks in cupboards together with quinces and fruits), *rafioli*, *kroštule* (in Trogir they were called *kokrlame*, and they originated from the Venetian carnival), *fritule*... For Easter they prepared cheese cakes and *garitule* (type of dough filled with cheese and shaped like a plait with a hard boiled egg placed in the center). Over the year they also baked other types of cakes, for example, the famous Trogir cake and different types of biscuits (Cega 2005:110-112).

## Conclusion

In order to present the diet common in the Garagnin house, the models of food made of natural materials (paper, plaster, and wood) could be placed in the kitchen and the dining room of the permanent exhibition in the Museum, in the original palace interior. The exhibited meals could be changed according to season, so as to avoid monotony. Food is very similarly presented at the above mentioned royal castle in Višegrad as well as in some other museums in Northern Croatia.

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<sup>7</sup> Dalmatia, the Quarnero and Istira, Oxford 1887., T.II:117.

The exhibition site organized in this way could be used not only for presentation - it could be revived by organizing formal dinners which would imitate the ones held at the palace in the 18<sup>th</sup> century for rich clientele (for example, just for one family at the time). The dinner could be served by the appropriately adorned 'servants' and the guests could also wear clothes and garments of the time. However, here it would be important to consider the purpose and the scope of such activities, because the primary aim of the museum should not be jeopardized.

## **Abbreviations**

DAS, AFG = Split State Archive, Archive Fanfogna - Garagnin

*Translated by Tanja Bukovčan*