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Vinicije B. Lupis

A NOBLE FAMILY OF THE ARNERI AND THEIR INTEREST FOR THE REMNANTS OF ASSERIA

Summary

The Arneri, a noble family from Korčula, that appears in the 14th c. for the first time under the family name of Perušović / Peruzović (Latin version of Petri), while from the end of the 15th c. as the Arneri, played an important role in history of the island of Korčula from the 17th to the 20th century. Like other Dalmatian noble families the Arneri showed great interest for classical heritage collecting and copying the ancient classic writers, and decorated their country houses with Latin inscriptions. Beneath the entrance arch of the Arneri' castle in Blato there is the inscription: "OSTIUM NON HOSTI" (*Entrance not for ennemies*). The same inscription being found above the garden gate of the palace in Sutivan of the poet Jerolim Kavanjin (1634 -1714), and at a summer residence in Postira, also on the island of Brač.

At the end of the 19th c. Dr Vlaho Arneri, a public phisician in Blato, like many other members of his family, witnessed a longlasting tradition of collecting and studying ancient monuments. He was equally active as a member of "Kninsko starinarsko društvo" (Association of Archaeologists in Knin). The Korčula municipality was among the members – founders of the very "Kninsko starinarsko društvo" right in time of Roko Arneri's mandate as mayor of Korčula.

In 1968 the Arneri sold their family archive to the State archive in Dubrovnik. Among the archivalia of the Arneri there were the 18th c. graphics such as the representations of the Aztec deities, and ruins of Asseria. "Pianta della Mura della CITTA d'ASSERIA, che si vedono tuttora presso la picciola villetta di Podgraje, ventisette Miglia lontano da Zara, fra Bencovaz, e Ostrovizza", is the graphic of Asseria, accompanied by the eight pages of a baroque manuscript on the 18th c. paper (bearing VCR filigree stamp with a lily). On the basis of comparison it was very likely that it was Jeronim I. Rafo Arneri's handwriting. No doubt he showed a great interest for an archaeological site near Zadar after he got married to Ivanica Soppe, a noblewoman from Zadar in 1742. Equally interested were Vlaho IV Arneri, married to Jelena Brunelli from Zadar, and Vlaho III Arneri (born in 1753) who made friends to Giuseppe Danieli Pellegrini, also known after the collection of significant ancient artefacts gathered throughout Dalmatia. All in all the Arneri from Korčula were relatives to more or less all noble families from Kotor, Korčula and Zadar.

But let us come back to the main theme of this article. The comparison of texts established the copy of a chapter on Asseria from the 18th c. "Viaggio in Dalmazia" (Travel to Dalmatia), a travel book by Alberto Fortis. A. Fortis (1747 -1803) born in Padua, entered the Augustin order as a young man, studied theology in Rome, but most of all delt with natural sciences (geology excavations in particular). Attained fame with his travel book *Travel to Dalmatia* printed in Venice in 1774. The book was printed not only in Italian, but in French, German and English, and was considered the most interesting Italian travel book in Europe of that time. It should come as no surprise that a nobleman from Korčula was highly interested for such themes. This article deals with the text compared to the translation of the passage from the mentioned book, published in 1984 by Josip Bratulić. It has been stated that our text confirms to the original.

But unlike texts which are identical the Dubrovnik graphic differs considerably from the one accompanying the 1984 translation. Differences are numerous; first there is a legend in the upper right corner of the Dubrovnik graphic of Asseria which is missing in the 1984 representation, then, the rose of winds is at another place, Roman stelae and cippuses are not noted between the measuring scale and cartouche with ancient walls of Asseria. Furthermore the Dubrovnik graphic was far better designed if compared to the model used for the 1984 edition. Our graphic was signed by *Jac. Leonardis scul.* (Giacomo de Leonardis 1723 -1782/83).

The Venetian graphic designer worked uder the influence of Pietro Antonio Novelli and Giambattista Tiepolo. He was famous in Venice after his illustrations of the "Liberated Jerusaleme" by Antonio Graffi in 1760/6. He designed graphic representations according to Sebastian Ricci's pictures. He became famous illustrating scenes from the Venetian everyday life. Giacomo de Leonardis together with Giuseppe Fliparti and Francesco Batolazzi are among the most prominent Venetian graphic designers of the 18th c. generé scenes.

To conclude we have to state that the worse graphic was used for the 1984 edition, namely the German one from Bern, published in 1776. Most of those Bern graphics were signed by *J. Wocher del.* Alberto Fortis himself in time of publishing his book ordered his graphic papers from the most significant Venetian graphic designer Giacomo de Leonardis. It gives a special feature while dealing with cultural dimension of this important archaeological site.