

DRNIŠ 1494-1994

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Five hundred years since Drniš was first mentioned in documents is an important period that deserves to be celebrated in which forgotten, well-known and newly discovered facts provide the basis for an exhibition - a story about the Town and Homeland.

The original motiv and guiding principle was to speak of its museum since of the four that were occupied (Vukovar, Ilok, Knin and Drniš) the other three museums and regions (were remembered in various ways: donations of works of art, exhibitions, monographs ...).

Nevertheless, already at the beginning the framework broadened and events and visions became more complex: new figures and events sprang up, becoming indispensable in considering all aspects of this area's existence.

From a standpoint where one has a grandstand view of it all (through binoculars though), and with a period of nearly three elapsed years - it seems as a childhood memory: we are not sure whether we remember it by our own memory or if the scenes appear from the photographs, repeated narrations and descriptions of the older generation? Everything seems to be misty and shimmering as if a reflexion in the water.

Today when many beautiful places and dear people can only be seen on pictures, we regret the opportunities we missed and remember them with longing. We never paid them a visit thinking there was plenty of time ahead of us. Even yesterday ...

The smoke from the sites of fire, tears in exile, photographs that were not brought along - prevent us from proving reality and each of us will therefore remember what is in its heart.

A Small Town in Croatia

History mostly keeps records of great events, falls and turning-points. A calm and steady flow of life in all its aspects, permanent patient renovations and efforts in maintaining an appropriate standard is still insufficiently known beyond professional reach. Daily events in the lives of our ancestors (those that are not so far) are beyond interest proved by a number of smaller areas.

What is the area between the metropolis (capital) and the "dead" outskirts; what makes it so significant?

Those interspaces unite versatile elements chosen sometimes by inconceivable choice all fit into harmonious mosaics of peripheral areas. It is the very choice of specific elements from wide-spread patterns of general civilizations and their fitting into local frames and criteria that form a whole which we feel as our own.

There is a number of smaller towns in Croatia that like Drniš were under positive influence of European centres, accepted, adapted and spread them further onto the rural environment.

Each such town is a result of impact coming from the environment and sometimes from a very far centre.

Each crossroad of such kind, be it registered as a "traffic intersection" or "industrial centre" was significant for the development of its surroundings and helped in reaching a higher level of civilization.

Although in the time of socialistic system it was hard to believe that these towns one had lived according to urban rules and principles, they once truly were mirrors of Europe, branch offices that spread civilization to the furthest outlets, connecting and enriching them.

The structure of large countries enabled by means of general employment systems (court, post, railroad, industry) employment clerks, craftsmen and army (from Bohemia, Slovakia, Austria, Bavaria and Italy) in our regions.

The liveliest fluctuations and improvements occurred in the 19th century when peace was restored in this marginal area where wars were everlasting.

In a cyclis where viewpoints intertwine, concentration and dispersion of population exchange: foreigners settling here employ our staff, workers, apprentices, marry here, while local wealthier and the most sophisticated population travels abroad for summer and winter holidays (e.g. from Vrlika to Egypt), staying in Italy for the opera season, silverplate in Vienna the shoes the child wore at baptism (Metković). Such class in their homes have maids and nursing women that spread the civilization into the village.

Such people are extremely important in refining Our Beautiful Homeland.

People educated at the finest universities, speaking several foreign languages, mastering in business, everywhere and always act as a basis and originators, while in their home contry they were neglected and afterwards exterminated. Today our country lacks such class, not counting the *nouveau riche* of the war and transformation in economy.

In the time when qualities are measured by quantities (the more factories the more employees) it was undesirable to express one's civilised cultural tradition.

In not as much as two (pre-war) years since national self-confidence has been revived, social groups have started to regain their positions: village and town people dispersed due to preferential treatment (and the over-production) of the working class. Family and public customs and values are restored and encouraged, good manners and refinement are once again appreciated.

Here and Now

The crowded claustrophobic standardized hotel room as a home; replacing a house, garden, animals and flowers. Instead of a church a conference room whose windows are not decorated with stained glass, without a touch of "something" - there is no belfry that steadily audio-visually welcomes and sees off travellers. The meal is just plain food, its taste cannot bring into memory any festivities.

All days are the same, TV programme and restaurant working hours dictate the tempo of living, neighbours are separated by being accommodated in different hotels, there

is no leaving for work, all microworlds of settlements exist and live in a circle: women, children, the elder. The common denominator of exile settled down under one roof and at the same table various ways of living, customs, habits.

Everyone is deprived: some of a care-free childhood, some of a safe old age, some lost a dear person, some the other part of themselves - everyone lost the present.

How is it possible to reach levels of enrichment when we are constantly surviving and reviving the most essential, experiencing two wars in a lifetime.

It is mainly the religious-social framework that is torn apart, the cultural microclimate of thousands of small communities; each village is a unique and unrepeatable materia created through a centuries-old weaving of tradition.

It is the very ethnographic heritage that is most difficult to restore due to compulsory migrations of the people dispersing thus in small communities that once in a new environment cannot preserve their particularity.

(Translated by Lada Gamultn)