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## OVERVIEW OF GINGERBREAD AND WAX CRAFTS THROUGH THE CENTURIES

When writing about the history of mead- and candle-making crafts in Europe, the author analyzes the origin of the word *licitar*, and quotes the information about the beginnings of this craft. Later in the text, the author discusses the beginning and the development of this craft in Croatia, the forming of brotherhoods, guilds and craft associations. As a typical example of the development of gingerbread and candlemakers, she analyzes the work of the Lukinić family from the city of Karlovac. It covers the beginnings of the craft in Karlovac, the arrival of foreign masters of the craft, their influence on the local population, the development of local crafts and the founding of the first factory for the making of mead and candle products in Croatia. A detailed description of wooden moulds is given, moulds that reflect the age and different style periods, and which were the basic craftsmen's tools from the very beginnings.

Key words: history, gingerbread makers, wax makers, wooden moulds, Europe, Croatia

I belong to those ethnologists who often do field work and enjoy doing it. I find this way of doing things intriguing and I gather a lot of interesting information through the contacts with local population and their way of life. As most of the field explorers, I also record my data by writing it down, or recording it on a voice recorder and photo or video cameras. One of the subjects that has occupied me for many years are the crafts and craftsmen, masters who have the skill to make objects, a skill that sometimes evolves into proficiency, although they may not always have the formal education for it. Mead- and candle-makers, often called *licitari* and wax-makers, have been the object of my research through the years. In my field work and research, I have come to the conclusion that this centuries-old craft is disappearing. The fact is that at the end of the twentieth century, their number has dropped from more than a hundred to about thirty, and all of them are in a limited area of Panonia cultural region between Karlovac and Osijek. Most of these craftsmen are situated in the region of Hrvatsko Zagorje, in the pilgrim town of Marija Bistrica and its

surroundings. This should not sound surprising since these craftsmen have always been connected to the Church and its festivities. Through my research, I have come to new conclusions, as well as to some new questions. What do we know today about the mead- and wax-makers? What is their role in the modern, contemporary society? Can they survive in the age of new technologies? What is their future, especially in respect to education? These questions make us researchers think and they raise some new questions. First of all, the history of this craft needs to be explored, its development from the origins in middle Europe, and then its beginnings in Croatia. By which part of the society was it practised (the influence of the clergy on its development). What was the role of *licitar* and wax-makers until the beginning of the twentieth century, until the peak of industrialisation? Mere field work was not enough to find the answers to these questions, so I also had to use historical documents available in libraries, museums and archives. This article will focus only on the overview of this craft in Europe, on its influence as it spread to the Croatian regions and its development until the beginning of the twentieth century. Other topic that is most closely connected to this period is the topic of the wooden moulds that reflected the age and the style period in which they were made, and which were the basic tool in this craft. These moulds were made by roaming master wood carvers or mould makers, who were often folk artists who, following the current fashion, transferred the shapes and motifs all over Europe.

### **The European framework**

From times immemorial people have known bees and their products — honey, honeycomb and wax. In early times they used them for food but with time the usage spread for other purposes, and bee products became basic ingredients for gingerbread and candlemaking crafts.

The Hungarian ethnologist, Laszlo Beliczay (1979:190), gives an interesting description of how gingerbread makers and wax-chandlers used to get the raw materials for their products: "Gingerbread makers and wax-chandlers bought their raw materials from beekeepers who used to sell straw beehives that had been filled with wax and honey during spring and summer. Wax-chandlers and gingerbread makers would drive away the bees using sulphur and empty the contents of the hive (containing other things besides honey and wax) into the casks. When they found the time, they heated the casks and closed their openings with birch twigs, which were at the same time used as a kind of sieve. Honey for gingerbread making was the first to come through the opening. The rest was then covered with boiling water and left to stand for a few hours. Then the honey solution would pour out and it was used for honey biscuits. Finally, a less sweet liquid would come out, to be used for preparing beverages." In addition to the above description it should be mentioned that by separating honey from honeycombs we get wax, so it is no wonder that gingerbread

makers united with candlemakers to become the practitioners of a single craft.

As a result of their work, since the beginning of the craft in the Middle Ages, the basic products of gingerbread makers and wax-chandlers were bleached beeswax, wax — candles, honey biscuits and honey beverages. Owing to its durability, wax was often used as a means of trade, besides being used in candlemaking. Votive figures were also made of wax. The Church, fraternities and nobility were great wax consumers, and since it was very expensive, common people could not afford it in their households.

Monasteries were the places where common people could learn different skills. Gifted individuals were taught crafts and artistic skills by priests. Nevertheless, well-kept secrets of monastery delicacies and their recipes eventually reached the populace. Cakes made of honey with different spices spread beyond the monastery walls not only because of their delicious taste but also because they testified to the skills of the master craftsmen.

Gingerbread and candlemakers worked in cities, near the King's court, and sold their wares at kermises and church festivals and at important road junctions. This way they could also get their raw materials more easily, especially spices from far-away tropical countries brought to Europe by merchants. Those places were also suitable for selling products. How important it was to use spices in making the products can be clearly seen in the example of Germany where the term *Lebekouche* was used for both honey biscuits and pepper-cakes since the thirteenth century. In England, the word gingerbread was used from the twelfth century onwards, meaning bread made with ginger (the French call it *pain d'epice*, meaning bread with spices). Ginger was always one of the basic ingredients in gingerbread dough. In Heidelberg, a recipe for "good gingerbread" from 1450 was preserved, recommending six *lots*<sup>1</sup> of ginger and clove, nutmeg and coriander, and just half a *lot* of pepper (Hansen 1968:129).

There have been frequent discussions about the origin of the word *Lebzelter* but the most probable one is that *Leb* came from the German root and meant bread baked in a frying pan. The word *Zelt* came from *Teld*, meaning to cover something flatly or stretch widely. The term *Lebzelten* was used mainly in Austria, while *Lebkuchen* was used in Germany (Duden 1989:937). As gingerbread makers and wax-chandlers came to Croatia from the eastern Alpine regions, it is no wonder that the above-mentioned terms are still used today, although in a somewhat changed form. In Croatian the word *licitar* is used, and in Slavonia people sometimes call it *leceter*, which comes from the word *lecet*, i.e., *leb* + *zelt*.

For centuries gingerbread cakes have been famous as tiny cakes throughout all European countries. Since times immemorial their dough

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<sup>1</sup> Old german weight measure (1/32 pound, ie 17,5 g) (Klaić 1990:818).

has been left to rest overnight, and by using sugar concentration the mixture becomes firm thus obtaining necessary lightness and looseness. The basic raw material has been honey and recently syrup and sugar have been used together with obligatory spices. The secret of gingerbread making has been known only to specialised master craftsmen — — gingerbread makers who have tried to keep it in their families. Their assistants have been the only persons to whom it has been revealed.

Honey, rye flour and spices are the basic ingredients of that famous bakery product. The dough was kept in cellars or any other cold room for weeks. Before baking spices were added — fat, eggs, almonds, walnuts, and potash (*calcium bicarbonate*) which was used instead of bakery powder. After that the dough was mixed with the help of *brehalica* what required a lot of physical strength.

Some European cities developed the craft very early, as we can see in the archival documents: Basel in 1294, Oberzeiring in Styria in 1294, Frankfurt am Main in 1326, Vienna in 1384, Nürnberg in 1350. There is an interesting record about 34 registered gingerbread makers in Basel in 1393 (Hansen 1968:130-132).

Gingerbread and candlemakers were often among the most respectable and richest citizens and sometimes even members of town councils. Their products were esteemed and favoured by the members of all classes. Most of the craftsmen demanded the founding of the trade's organisations — guilds — in order to protect the craft's interests. First gingerbread makers often joined the bakers' guild and they founded their own guilds not earlier than the sixteenth century. The first known guild, together with bakers, was founded in Augsburg in 1276, and the first separate guilds were established in Nürnberg and Dion in 1530, in Reims in 1571, in Paris in 1595, in Budapest in 1597, in Graz in 1597, in Vienna and Bratislava in 1619 (Beliczay 1978:189).

### **Development of the gingerbread and candlemaking craft in Croatia**

The beginning and development of the gingerbread and candlemaking craft in Croatia is connected with the development of crafts in general. Croatian and Hungarian kings settled foreigners in Croatian territories, especially in towns. In this way, in the thirteenth century, some market towns had already been made stronger with settled craftsmen and were developing into economic centres which soon became the strongholds of the King's power. To encourage the crafts, they were given the guild's privileges. In Croatia, the first guilds were granted the royal charters with privileges between the second half of the fifteenth and the mid-sixteenth century (Bičanić 1951:51).

Croatia is one of the countries in which beekeeping and honey trade were developed already in the Middle Ages. Such products were not only

sold in Croatia but were also exported to the neighbouring countries.<sup>2</sup> Since the fourteenth century honey was sold in Zagreb at daily, weekly and annually held markets in St. Mark's Square (Tkalčić 1889:81).

Peasants brought honey to the market in honeycombs, and market-women and peddlers were selling sieved honey. The first written documents which mention candlemakers in Croatia date from the fourteenth century. In Zagreb, two ceroplastics makers or wax-chandlers were mentioned: Gregor from 1357 till 1393 and Damjan from 1359 till 1365 (Tkalčić 1897:109-355).

In the Middle Ages, the northern Croatian towns of Zagreb, Varaždin and Osijek were the crossroads of important trade routes, with significant populations, churches, and market places. They were the places where nobility lived and fraternities<sup>3</sup> were active; and they were great consumers of gingerbread and candlemaking products. Every association had its own patron for whom candles were lit on the altar at the church. Those candles were often called *duplire* — big, nicely coloured wax-candles, often specially made for this purpose. Candles were often presented as gifts, regarded as one of the most expensive presents for respectable persons (Horvat 1994:120-123). Although beef tallow candles had already been made by women for some time, the first records on organised candlemaking were written only in 1589, when, at the house of the butcher master craftsman who was also the Master of the guild, butchers and their journeymen met to make candles for the guild's altars. They were called guild's candles or "*duplire*" (Filić 1968:104). From those records we conclude that there were no gingerbread and candle makers in Varaždin at that time, but since the butchers in Varaždin continued making candles even after gingerbread and candlemakers came there, we cannot say with certainty that there were no specialised craftsmen in the sixteenth century. In 1636, the butcher guild's accounts reported the expenditure of 1 *forint*<sup>4</sup> and 44 *denars*, which the Master of the guild<sup>5</sup> paid to the gingerbread and candlemaker for candles (Filić 1968:196). Some documents have been preserved with the names of gingerbread makers who worked in Varaždin in the seventeenth century. They were *Kristofor Raistrom* in 1664, *Kristofor Stiberg* in 1665, *Blaž* and *Baltazar* in 1670 (Hrelja 2000:8). The gingerbread makers from Varaždin were the first to join the Styrian gingerbread guild in the second half of the seventeenth century and the union made them obey the strict rules of the guild.

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<sup>2</sup> Abolishing the guild organization, crafts cooperative is founded which many years later still nurtured the guild tradition and custom, preserving many guild objects (Šercer 1991:24).

<sup>3</sup> Association with religious or crafts characteristics.

<sup>4</sup> Silver or gold money in different countries and times (in Croatia till 1892) (Klaić 1990:443).

<sup>5</sup> Guild superior.

With time, craftsmen also grew in number in Croatia. During the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they became the strongest class of citizens in terms of economics. They were joined together in guilds in order to protect their interests more effectively, but they were also constrained by the regulations which allowed them to work only within the boundaries of their craft. At the beginning fraternities were based on nationality, but later guilds joined craftsmen in a new way — in a common trade. They accepted as members master craftsmen of the same or similar trade. No craftsman could practice the craft independently, without being a guild member. Each craftsman had to join the guild if one was established in his area. This became the rule in the sixteenth century, and it remained in force until the abolition of guilds in 1872.

Guilds regulated production, established quality standards, and supervised their members' products. They made purchases of raw materials easier, protected their members, ran training schemes for journeymen and assistants, and regulated the market. In the guild strict hierarchy prevailed, based on the mediaeval pattern: master, journeyman and apprentice. Guilds set working conditions for assistants and regulated the relationship between the master and his journeyman and apprentice. According to the guild's statute, master craftsmen chose from among themselves the guildmaster who held the post for a year. He had special duties and was a mediator between the guild and the town government. Master craftsmen were also members of the church fraternities and they did some humanitarian work as well (Bičanić1951:51).

Symbolically, guild meetings took place around the guild's chest (*ladica*), which was probably one of the oldest objects connected with guilds, used as a strong-box and safe for the guild's documents. The guild's seal was also kept there. The guild's tablet was used to call the members to the meetings and it was the official emblem of the guild. It was carried slung over the arm or on the chest. Guilds kept trade records — so called protocols or minute-books (Šercer 1991:17-18). The guild was formed by the craftsmen of the same trade, but if there were not enough members, as in Croatia where the towns were rather small in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, an association was made by joining together similar trades. This was the case with gingerbread and candle makers. Gingerbread makers frequently joined the guilds of bakers, millers, pastry-cooks and butchers, i.e., the trades connected with food. Wax-chandlers joined together with soapmakers, barbers, furriers, saddlers and other trade guilds.

It is interesting that gingerbread makers in Croatia were connected with the Styrian craftsmen of the same trade. Although the Styrian gingerbread makers were mentioned for the first time as far back as 1294, it is probable that the gingerbread craft started in Styria in the fifteenth century. In the second half of the seventeenth century, 60 workshops were mentioned as belonging to the Styrian guild headquartered in Graz. The town of Varaždin also belonged to that guild. In the eighteenth century

Zagreb and Koprivnica joined the guild and remained in it until the guilds' abolition towards the end of the nineteenth century (Walter 1970:454-455).

Those craftsmen had to obey the Styrian craftsmen's book of regulations, which was granted by Ferdinand II on 1 December 1597. The book of regulations was confirmed by Ferdinand III on 10 March 1638 and Leopold I on 4 March 1661. Joseph I improved it with some minor changes on 16 May, 1708 and it was confirmed again by Charles VI on 16 September 1713. The preserved book of regulations from the year 1713 contained 37 provisions, and the master craftsmen from Croatian towns had to obey them and behave according to them.

Walter offers an interesting piece of information according to which all craftsmen who were the guild's members had German names, so we can conclude that they had moved into Croatia bringing their knowledge with them and teaching the native populace (1970:455).

On 22 February 1766 a guild was founded in Koprivnica bringing together gingerbread makers, butchers, millers and bakers. It had 23 members. The gingerbread makers' guild was founded in Koprivnica in 1821 and the proof that the guild existed is its seal. It is round, with a beehive with flying bees in the middle and a lion on each side holding the beehive with their front paws. Above the beehive, between the crossed torches, there is a crown with the inscription going around: K. [aiserlich] K.[önigliche] PRI [vilegierte] VER[einigte] LEBZELTERZUNFT. IN. D. [er ] K. [öniglicher] FR. [eier] ST. [adt] KOPREINITZ. AN. [no] 1821 (Brajković 1980:57).

Guilds were abolished in 1859, when practising the trade became free. The King's proclamation was issued and put into effect in 1860. According to the law, everyone could practise the craft in every place, without any restrictions, and without a master's certificate examination. But the law was not implemented in all Austrian countries, including Croatia. It was in 1872 when Franz Joseph I passed the law that abolished guilds and replaced them with craft cooperatives that kept the guilds' traditions alive for years (Šercer 1991:24) After the guilds' abolition, butchers, strap-makers, saddlers, bakers, candlemakers, soap-makers, millers, barbers and furriers founded a cooperative in Križevci on 13 July 1880. It had 16 members.<sup>6</sup>

This is one of the rare examples of a small craft workshop becoming a factory for the production of wax candles and gingerbread products. Contribution list for city of Karlovac for the year 1791 *Alojz Dugenn*, a gingerbread master craftsman, was mentioned for the first time. He became a member of the Great or Noble Guild whose members in the eighteenth century were master craftsmen and a few assistants. A Frenchman, *Alfonso*

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<sup>6</sup> Regulations of butchers, strap-makers, saddlers, bakers, soap-makers, millers, barbers and furriers cooperative in Križevci, 1880.

*Duquenois*, later called *Dukvinos*, settled in Karlovac at the time of Napoleon and opened the gingerbread and wax-chandler's workshop in 1812 and he also ran a soap-making workshop. He worked until 1838, when he left the workshop to his son-in-law *Ivan Reicherzer*, who ran the business until 1850. Then the shop was taken over by *Gjuro Wendauer*, a Hungarian by origin, who had opened the gingerbread and candlemaking workshop in Karlovac in 1845.

*Edo Lukinić* from Karlovac was the first to start a gingerbread and candlemaking workshop in his native town in 1863. He had modest beginnings but then surpassed *Gjuro Wendauer* in business and made him leave his gingerbread and wax-chandler's craft in 1873. Thus *Lukinić* succeeded the business founded by *Duquenois* and he also bought *Slavoljub Grahovac's* workshop. The former owner had a short and unsuccessful business in Karlovac. Soon *Lukinić* founded "The First Croatian Steam Factory of Beeswax Candles and Gingerbread Products M. Lukinić,"<sup>7</sup> named after his wife *Marija*. He worked successfully for thirty years until 1893 when he suddenly died. After his death his wife overtook and led the work and their younger son *Rudolf* helped her. In 1896, after he mastered the work, he took over the job and expanded it. He decided on larger production of candles encouraged by the shortage of those products. At that time Croatia produced a small number of candles made of pure beeswax although the Church used those candles according to the liturgical regulations. Due to the shortage, people bought paraffin candles or they bought church candles abroad. In that way they broke the strict Church regulations on using wax candles only. A large amount of homemade beeswax was exported for low price and more expensive imported candles came back to the country. *Rudolf Lukinić* was familiar with the problem and he was advancing his candlemaking business from year to year. In 1900 he bought the first steam boiler for distillation and heating wax. After being used continuously for 12 years that boiler became too weak to match the production. A new boiler was bought, made by special order in the "Scharer und Gross" factory in Nurnberg. It was distinguished by the material and construction and was one of the best boilers of the time. At the same time the candlemaking foundry was rebuilt and enlarged. Old copper boilers were replaced with new iron ones with enamel glaze.

Until then the factory was situated in *Kupeljska Street* where it stayed until 1919. Afterwards the street was renamed first into *Lukinić Street* and then into *Domagoj Street*. In 1901 another building was bought nearby the above mentioned factory where the place for bleaching wax was made. About 700 to 800 kilos of wax were bleached in the house and the garden each year. In summer wax was bleached in the sun; the upper layer was being bleached for four days, then its was turned and the other side was

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<sup>7</sup> Certificate of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "First Croatian steam factory of wax candles and gingerbread products M. Lukinić", Karlovac, 1913.



being bleached. Next to the bleachery, a steam distillation and warehouses for raw and cleaned wax were built. In the same period the gingerbread workshop was renewed, a press for wax was bought together with the equipment for boiling honey juice i.e. for making hydromel. In the cellar there was storage for hydromel and honey in barrels.



Sticker "The First Croatian Steam Factory of Beeswax Candles and Gingerbread Products M. Lukinić" (City Museum, Karlovac)

In 1898 Rudolf Lukinić overtook the little workshop from the gingerbread maker *Antun Podner* who had been working in Karlovac for 18 years. It became a branch-office of the "M. Lukinić" firm. The Lukinićs bought another two small workshops between 1896 and 1903 in Ogulin and Jastrebarsko.

In 1919 Rudolf Lukinić moved his factory from Gaza into Domobranska Street where he bought a new building while his assistants continued living in the old building until 1935 when the house was sold. Rudolf Lukinić died in 1929 and the job was taken over by his wife *Beata* and the eldest son *Radoslav*. Unfortunately the house did not stay their property for long. In 1937 *Dragutin Jauk* took it over and renamed into the "Union" factory for producing candles and wax products while the ex-owner Radoslav Lukinić became his head clerk. Beata Lukinić led the gingerbread workshop till December 1942 and then she was forced to stop working because during the war in Karlovac most of her property was

snatched. While it was working, the firm exhibited the products at various exhibitions inland and abroad receiving a series of medals and recognition.

With time, the gingerbread and candlemaking craft developed in other Croatian towns. The old guild's rule that obliged an apprentice to go on a three-years journey or "wandering" brought young men, future master craftsmen to Croatia, where they often found a new homeland. Native craftsmen also went abroad to learn the trade. There was a lot of information on gingerbread and wax-chandlers in the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century. But in the second half of the twentieth century the interest in the craft waned, often due to politics, the way of learning and training, and the appearance of industrial products and raw materials.

The trade was male-dominated for centuries. Men learnt the craft for four years, and then for three years. If they wanted to start their own business, they had to spend some more years practising the trade at respectable master craftsmen's workshops. Only then could they take the master's certificate examination. The way of learning the trade for craftsmen and masters has changed with educational legislation, so most of the presentday younger gingerbread makers finished the trade school and then they learnt the gingerbread trade at their parents' workshops. They took their master's certificate examination in front of the professional committee. There were some examples (increasing in number in more recent times) of widows continuing the work of their late husbands, sometimes marrying the journeyman who worked in her workshop. Sometimes the gingerbread craft was taken over by the owner's daughters.

### **Wooden moulds**

As gingerbread and candlemakers came to Croatia from the neighbouring countries, in most cases from Austro-Hungarian states, wood — carvers probably followed their example in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century since they made wooden moulds for gingerbread and votive figures.

Besides using hands, we can form rolls or cakes with moulds. In the gingerbread and candlemaking craft moulds are the basic tools used by the master when making dough, candles or votive figures. Moulds can be figurative or ornamental, they are always made in negative and are made of wood, clay, stone, metal or plaster. The form of the mould shapes the product.

Owing to the increased consumption in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a larger production of cakes made with moulds was recorded and the trend lasted till the end of the nineteenth century. Gingerbread was made from special dough pressed into wooden moulds of different motifs and shapes.

Votive figures are gifts i.e., objects offered to God, St. Mary and other saints addressing them for help or as a gratitude for the given assistance (Badurina 1990:586-587). A candle was often lit next to the votive figures and they are a part of religion and Church customs. It was a unique kind of prayer in which the worshipper not only asked for mercy but he also promised something in return as a present for God (Rebić 1983:222). Votive figures are made in wooden moulds consisting of two parts. The mould is cut in the middle so the two halves can be put together and paraffin is poured inside through a small hole. The mould filled with paraffin is immediately immersed in water with soap to prevent paraffin sticking. It is cooled in water and then taken out of the mould. Figures may represent some domestic animals (hen, cow, horse, pig), parts of human body (arm, leg, eyes) or the whole male or female body. Figures may also represent a house or a car as well as some other objects.



A wooden mould for votive figures — a horse  
(Karlovac, Etnographic Museum, Zagreb)

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the moulds were round or rhomboid in shape, and later more often rectangular. Since the seventeenth century wooden moulds were most frequently used for making pepper-cakes, marzipan cakes or gingerbread. They were made of pear or apple tree, cherry or plum tree, walnut, maple, alder, beech, oak, pine-tree or stone pine. At the end of the eighteenth century beech was frequently used. Wooden moulds for gingerbread and candle makers were made by wood-carvers while stone or clay moulds were made by medal-engravers, stove-makers or goldsmiths. Travelling from place to place moulders carried their motifs through whole Central Europe thus establishing the standards of their trade. Besides master craftsmen who only made moulds, some gingerbread makers were made to carve their own moulds for the products during their learning.

Moulds entwined religious and secular motifs. They depended on the market so some motifs were rather frequent while the others were made very rarely. It is not surprising that some moulds were made double. On one hand it saved quality-material and on the other a change of motifs was needed. Being practical, the master craftsman carved a new one on the other side, while the existing unpopular one was kept for better days. Moulds were not only decoration, they had a symbolic meaning as well (heart, baby, horseman, pipe).

In the last five centuries wooden moulds in Europe have been decorated with religious motifs from the Old and New Testament, images of saints, mythological and profane scenes, ornaments, coats of arms and a lot of other popular motifs: a child in its swaddling clothes, a cradle, a heart, bride and bridegroom, carriages, horsmen, horses, a stork, ABC-tablets, pipes, various occupations, animals. All those motifs, being necessary in the past, have become a tradition today. Three-dimensional gingerbread articles were also made, in the way that the single parts of the motif were carved on the mould and then, after baking, put together into a three-dimensional form. Mould making and the depth of the carving depended on the dough pressed inside. The marzipan dough required shallow carving because it was baked on light fire while the moulds for gingerbread were evenly and deeply carved because of the dough's weight (Kurth 1981:8).



A wooden gingerbread mould — a baby (a child in swaddling clothes)  
(Sv. Ivan Zelina, Ethnographic Museum, Zagreb)

Throughout centuries moulds' shape and size have been changed. In the Renaissance moulds were small while in the Baroque they became monumental (Weiss, 9). Extremely large moulds were not used in ordinary work but for making a masterpiece, a sample which was one of the conditions to pass the master's examination and to enter the guild. They were made occasionally on direct orders. (Scheybalova 1974:160).

Until the beginning of the twentieth century wooden moulds were used in Croatia as well as in other parts of Europe where honey cakes were made. Some museums in Croatia have large collections of moulds, some dating from the seventeenth century (the City Museum of Zagreb). But it often occurred that the moulds passed from one gingerbread maker to another and that fact makes establishing the exact date more difficult. If there is no year carved we can hardly establish the exact date when they were made. The Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb has got one of the largest collection of wooden moulds. About one hundred and thirty pieces, often double-made, some with a year carved, large and small in size with various motifs and obviously done by master wood-carvers or mould makers. Some masters were very skilled and their moulds show maximal precision enabling us to see the themes popular with people of the time as well as fashion and clothing recorded in carvings. The most frequent

motifs were male and female figures, a child in swaddling-clothes, a horseman or a horse, a heart, Christ crucified or a saint, coats of arms, rosettes, knives. Votive figures' moulds often represent animals or parts of the human body. Some motifs were frequently repeated and can be found in all of the above mentioned museums — heart, baby, horse or horseman, sabre, floral motif. According to oral transmission the custom of making cakes from dough, especially heart-shaped ones, and wax votive figures came to Croatia from Germany and Austria in the seventeenth century. Since the religious representation of the Heart of Jesus could be found in Germany in the sixteenth century, thus being simultaneous with its appearance in Italy, we can make a conclusion that it was brought by the Counter-Reformation. It came to Germany and then from there, with the Society of Jesus, who were the main carriers of the Counter-Reformation and the Heart of Jesus' cult, it reached Croatia (Kus-Nikolajev 1928:135-140).



A wooden gingerbread mould — a heart with flower  
(Sv. Ivan Zelina, Ethnographic Museum, Zagreb)

The heart as the most frequent gingerbread motif is always well-decorated. Besides floral motifs, religious and secular themes (couples in love, birds symbolizing souls, the Tree of Life as a symbol of Good and Evil) appear inside the heart form. The baby or child in swaddling-clothes

is a common gingerbread motif. Swaddling-clothes were often made of rich materials decorated with lace as it was shown on the moulds. The figure was a symbol of a new-born child or baptizand and was often a gift for the bride at the wedding as a wish for a fertile marriage or it was given to girls as a doll for playing. They were popular New Year's gifts as symbols for a fertile year. The baby in the basket or cradle had the same meaning. At church festivities young girls were given a gingerbread with the baby in swaddling-clothes, older girls received hearts from their boyfriends and boys were given gingerbread horsemen. Christmas trees were also decorated with those gingerbread motifs but in smaller size. The motif of a horsman was frequent in the eighteenth century when officers wearing rich uniforms were sitting proudly on nicely dressed horses with a sabre in one hand. Watches made of dough symbolized time, past and future. It was a custom for confirmation sponsors to give their godchild a watch at the confirmation but since they often could not afford gold watches they bought gingerbread ones. Watches also symbolized growing up, they were given and put on Christmass tree at the New Year's time as a sign for the year to come. The Sabre, pipe, rifle and trumpet symbolized manhood. The wheel was a symbol of luck since the antiquity and it stretched into the Middle Ages. It is a symbol of the beginning, ephemerality, life and the current year. Several small figures on one mould represented children's toys which were sold to them. ABC tablets were famous in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; they had letters given in alphabetical order on separate lines. They were used at schools for teaching letters and they used to make reading and writing easier. Great number and variety of gingerbread motifs show the interest of the market as well as the skill and promptness of gingerbread masters to respond according to those needs.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, gingerbread makers cease to use the heavy wooden moulds, and start to use the metal gingerbread moulds called *šteheri*, they are made of copper sheet or stainless steel and are used for cutting the dough for gingerbread, which retain many of the motifs. The use of wooden moulds for the making of votive figures came to a similar end, but that will present the topic of another article.

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## POVIJESNI PREGLED VIŠESTOLJETNOG LICITARSKOG I VOSKARSKOG OBRTA

### SAŽETAK

Pišući o povijesti medičarsko-svjećarskog obrta u Europi, autorica analizira porijeklo riječi licitar i navodi podatke o začecima obrta. U nastavku teksta govori o nastanku i razvoju obrtništva u Hrvatskoj, osnivanju bratovština, cehova i obrtničkih udruga. Kao karakterističan primjer za razvoj spomenutog obrta analizira djelovanje karlovačke medičarske i svjećarske obitelji Lukinić. Obrađuje početke obrta u Karlovcu, doseljavanje stranih majstora, njihov utjecaj na domaće stanovništvo, razvoj tamošnjeg obrtništva te nastanak prve tvornice za izradu medičarskih i svjećarskih proizvoda u Hrvatskoj. Detaljno razrađuje osnovni alat, tj. drvene kalupe koji su kao odraz vremena i stilskih razdoblja od samih početaka bili osnovni alat majstora.

Ključne riječi: povijest, licitari, voskari, drveni kalupi, Europa, Hrvatska