

Baltazar Baldo Bogišić

A Man with a Systematic Approach to Collecting Ethnographic Material¹

In Bogišić's museum in the town of Cavtat, there is a rich collection of cultural-historical material, which contains 55 ethnographic items, mostly from the Dubrovnik region. Ethnographic items served Bogišić as a material basis in the research of legal customs and social life in Croatia and in the wider region inhabited by Southern Slavic population. From his field writings and collected items, the author concluded that Bogišić, a lawyer by education and scientific interest, had systematically collected material and left a small, but very valuable ethnographic collection.

Key words: Bogišić, Baltazar, ethnographical work, ethnographical collections, Cavtat

Introduction

In 1959, on the proposal of the Committee on folk life and customs of the Southern Slavs at the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences (today the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences - HAZU), ethnographic items from Bogišić's collection in Cavtat were identified and catalogued.

¹ Originally, this work was typewritten and not entirely adapted to formal standards that the editorial board tries to apply consistently to all works published in the *Ethnological researches*. Unfortunately, since the author passed away before the printing of this issue, we did not have the opportunity to agree on all the alternations, therefore some inconsistencies can be found. According to our estimate, these inconsistencies do not affect significantly the quality of this work so we decided to publish it despite its minor formal shortcomings. (*editor's note*) (*Nap. ur.*)

The collection consists of 55 ethnographic objects. Most of these objects are from Konavle and other regions around Dubrovnik while a smaller part of the collection originates in a wider Dinaric area (Herzegovina, Bosnia, Lika, Montenegro) as well in Skadar, France, Russia, etc.

Baldo Bogišić's ethnographic collection shows that he was not a mere collector. He tried to assemble his collection systematically, personally through his associates and he focused it towards specific issues from social life. The evidence of that is a manuscript kept in his archive where he listed all the items that had to be acquired from Konavle.

After the study of his scripts and objects in the collection, we find that he chose objects which determined the social status of an individual in a social environment. For instance, the collection includes variants of women's headgear from the 18th and 19th centuries and embroideries on women's shirts, also from the 18th century, which were worn on special social occasions in Konavle.

Archaic women's headgear - *hondelj* - was worn by married women from Konavle, *hondelj* with a colorful tassel wore older unmarried women (*spinsters*) or women with an illegitimate child while women that were engaged to be married wore a tied red cap. A cap called *zlatača*, paired with holiday clothes, was worn by young women and *pokrivača* for the head women had wore during a period of mourning, etc.

Ethnographic items served Bogišić as a material background when studying legal customs as well as the social life and relations here and among the rest of the South Slavs.

While studying the folk life, Bogišić noticed some social and economic changes in villages. He assumed that it was the period when a folk costume stopped being a characteristic of the social status of an individual. The greatest credit goes to him for preserving for later generations ethnographic items from the 18th and 19th centuries which are now rare and unique items in museum holdings.

We usually talk about Baltazar Bogišić as a legal writer who is a researcher of legal customs. And justifiably so, for Bogišić is primarily interested in legal institutions and traditional norms of social behavior and relations based on customary law in which he looks for fundamentals of contemporary legal system. At the same time, he notices that the positive laws are inadequate since in certain cases the lawmakers did not pay attention to some legal terms, views and needs of the population. Therefore, the enforcement of such laws encountered considerable resistance (Rihtman, 1984).

However, Bogišić's interest does not focus only on legal customs but the overall folk life, therefore his scientific work must be interpreted in a wider context and must be the center of attention of not only lawyers but scientists in numerous areas of social sciences such as ethnology, sociology and social psychology (Benc, 1971: 100).

In the Bogišić Museum in Cavtat a rich cultural and historical inventory is kept, which also contains a less famous ethnographical collection. Most of the items are

form the Dubrovnik region, especially Konavle while a smaller part is from Egypt, northern Africa, and the Levantine coastline, and the areas inhabited by Slavs, especially the area of the Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro). The items from the ethnographical collection were mostly collected by Bogišić himself or through his associates. A smaller part comes to the ethnographical collection as gifts from individuals, for example Pavlina Bogdan Bijelić² and her brother Đuro Bijelić, the district mayor in Cavtat, members of a high-standing family originating from Uskoplje in Konavle, who had friendly relationship with the families of Vlaho Bukovac and Baltazar Bogišić, and some items that came from the former collection of the District hall in Dubrovnik.

Bogišić saw early that the ethnographical inventory is as valuable a source as written documents when researching the folk life. Some ethnographical items, like headgear or jewelry, he used as a material base for the research of legal customs, the social life and relationships within the traditional family units.

A lawyer by training, and a man from Konavle by birth and upbringing, he understood the country life perfectly, whether in a peasant family or cooperative, and the relationships between the members of large cooperatives (Čulinović-Konstatinović, 1993: 23).

In 1866 Bogišić published the *Instruction about the description of legal customs*³, which was broadened in 1867 up to 360 issues involving different areas of social life. As he sent it to many associates in all areas of the Balkan peninsula, he received many written replies which he systematized and presented in the voluminous book *The Volume on the contemporary legal customs among the South Slavs*. The contents of the Volume and the Instruction go far beyond just the research of legal customs, and can be used as a base for humanistic sciences research. On the other hand, the Instruction and the scope of the field research, the methodology of it as well, are a model and the beginning for modern research in the humanistic sciences (especially ethnology, sociology and social anthropology). Nevertheless, it is not known among the wider public that Bogišić devoted his interest towards this material, especially clothing items in the folk life, which denote some characteristics of their owners. Although it doesn't contain many items, Bogišić gave it lots of attention which is attested by the notes found with certain items, left by Bogišić himself or his sister Marija Pohl Bogišić, who was well acquainted of Bogišić's scientific interests.

² Pavlina (Lina) Bogdan Bijelić (Cavtat, Oct 29 1855 – Dubrovnik, Jan 18 1944), a collector of ethnographical material. She was most interested in Konavle embroidery. She was a longstanding associate of the Committee for folk life and customs and the author of many works. She had exhibitions in Paris, Vienna and Graz.

³ The first Instruction by Bogišić («Književnik» 3, Varaždin 1866/7) contains 347 issues. The second edition was published in Vienna in 1867, and the third, identical to the second, was published on with JAZU financing in 1867 in Zagreb.

On the initiative of the Committee on the folk life and customs of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences, (today the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences – HAZU), the work of which was then directed by its president Academy member Branimir Gušić, the items from the Bogišić collection were identified, museologically processed and catalogued in 1959. the collection consist of 55 items which were individually catalogued and classified by their nature and origin (Bošković, 1960).

Nineteen items come from the Konavle region. These are old clothing items and ornaments and archaic women's' headgear (*hondeljs* and caps) from the middle of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, which are unique. Precisely the use of this headgear in Konavle, which showed the social status of the individual, show that Bogišić was not a mere collector, but that he tried to systematically add to his collection, directing it to various issues of social life. This is attested by a note from his archive, where he writes: 'As I see that I will need to add to my collection, which is still small, it will have to be added to before I read anything about it. Here's the list of items:

- *hondelj* for a married Konavle woman with a white tuft
- *hondelj* with a colorful tuft, like the one older girls wore
- *bareta* of a Konavle girl
- britva od latuna od prednjašnjem s kordunićem
- razor with a *vežilica* (these two in a box like the one that disappeared recently)
- two photographs (Bogišić's archive)

About the use of female headgear in Konavle, Bogišić writes in the *Volume*: 'It was a custom (at the beginning of the century) before that a girl, when she's passed the age when she could get married, and didn't marry, had to wear a *hondelj* with a colorful tuft (because wives wore white tufts) and without the rounded needles which can't be seen on the heads of those yet to be married. Now that custom has disappeared (Bogišić, 1974: 129). Or another detail in the volume: 'The girl who lost control of herself with someone can now wear the young woman's clothes, but couldn't before, when she had to wear a *hondelj* on her head like married women, or without needles that decorate the *hondelj* and instead of the white tuft she can wear a colorful one' (Bogišić, 1974: 632).

The women's headgear *hondelj sa bijelom kitom* which women wore up to the end of the 19th century, disappeared almost completely so that quarter of century ago there were just two to be found in the area, and which were not used. Nowadays one *hondelj* is owned by the Ethnographical museum in Dubrovnik, one by Ethnographical museum in Zagreb, and the Folk house of Konavle in Čilipi. Nevertheless, the *hondelj* with the ornamental tuft made of colorful silk worn by older unmarried girls (*usidelice*) and girls with babies born out of wedlock no museum has possession of. One piece is in Bogišić's collection. Even the memory of its use has vanished in Kon-

avle. Therefore, thanks to Bogišić, this unique headgear, in use from the second half of the 18th century, has scientific and ethnographical value.

The same unique value is shared by a red cap (*bareta krestača*) or an attached cap with a higher border, which was belted with a cloth on the top and border. This kind of cap was worn by engaged girls from better-off houses in Konavle up until the end of the 19th century, when they got a *malo obilježje*, rich golden jewelry, a gift from the groom's household. This cap is not owned by any museum, neither was it later found in the field.

There is also a red cap *zlatača* from a more recent source, ornated by golden embroidery which girls wore on festive occasions.

The antique female *čermica*, a waistcoat made from black homespun, ornated by srma and a fragment of the white *pokrivača*, a square cloth that Konavle women put on their *hondelj* at the time of mourning, are from the 19th century.

From the Konavle jewelry, there are two huge silver knives which were used as old sizable razors and in the special costumes by engaged girls and women. According to Bogišić's note, this item was given by the boy to a girl when they get engaged, at the same time as *malo obilježje*. (Bogišić's archive).

A metal hairpin with asps and dry leaves called *korunica* is also from Konavle, and it was used as an ornament for the bride on the day of her wedding.

From the items belonging to the Konavle dress the specimens that have scientific and cultural value are the ted *poprsnica* and *orukavlje* from women's shirts that were made with the method called *mrki* embroidery (10 items). These embroidered ornaments were given, with her handiwork and family correspondence by Pavlina Bogdan Bijelić to the Bogišić museum which was opened a year after his death (1909) by his sister Marija Bogišić-Pohl in their birthplace in Cavtat (Dubrovnik XVIII; Kulušić). These are, as far as we know, the oldest and the best kept specimens of the Konavle embroidery. Other than donated items, Pavlina Bogdan Bijelić left data on the use of *poprsnica*. So in the written legacy, which is stored in the Archive of the Committee for folk life and customs of the HAZU, it is cited that the *poprsnica zlatnica*, made in different colors of home made silk and with a golden thread and a wide *ošva* on the rim of the sleeve, were worn on the wedding day, the *poprsnica žutica* by engaged girls and young women until their first child was born, and the *poprsnica bijelica* during mourning (Bogdan Bijelić).

From Župa Dubrovačka we have decorative hairpins made of gold plated silver, like *mačica* in the shape of the sword and a flat hairpin, and two pins connected by a silver chain. These decorative items were the work of the goldsmiths of Dubrovnik in the 17th century, and they were worn by the women from Župa with their special dress.

A silver ring with a heart-shaped plate with small glass particles is also a product of Dubrovnik, made for the population of the Dubrovnik region, or the Dubrovnik littoral.

From Lika there is a male red cap with black fringes.

Three rings and four chest ornaments that women wore with the special dress came from Bosnia, while headgear and decorative items came from Herzegovina: a cap made from orange-red homespun with a large tuft made of black silk, a red cap with a shim and a cotton tuft, a bride's headgear made of artificial flowers, glass particles and asps, brass ornaments which would be attached to the plaits, a pendant the female fez ornated with golden filigree and Austrian-minted small silver coins. Two massive leather belts with a metal brace and large *kamioli* were also part of the bride's dress, and came from Herzegovina too.

From the wider dinaric area there are few decorative items in the collection: seven rings, a fragment of the metal chest ornament with silver Austrian-minted coons, brass belt buckles and a leather belt with a brace. An extraordinary specimen of silk weaving, a bride's veil, is of Oriental origins.

There are four red caps of the Montenegrin type – one female and three male. A male cap is especially interesting because it has a Croatian coat of arms on top embroidered with white and red silk and trimmed with golden embroidery (tersian embroidering). The coat of arms is framed on the sides with shorter additions of red and white flags, while on top of the coat of arms there is a crown-shaped ornament, and a herbal one is below. This cap belonged to Baltazar Bogišić, and was given to him by Đuro Bijelić. Since it was used, it can be assumed that Bogišić wore it on various occasions when he was in Montenegro, wishing to fit in with his clothes and to clearly show the symbols of his national origins at the same time. Apart from these Montenegrin items, we can find a *jelek* waistcoat and an embroidered collar in the shape of *stola* from a male cloak from Skadar.

A confirmation of Bogišić's interest for the social status of an individual in a particular area we find in the items that he got from various European and Slavic countries. Thus in the still unprocessed ethnographical collection there is a 'coronal made from artificial orange flowers worn by women in France at their wedding and a black coronal form Linz that was used at weddings by women that were not virgins any more.'⁴ A few female festive caps from Russia, as well as the ceremonial jewelry, points to a deliberate selection of items which women wore on various occasions of social life.

When Bogišić's collection was looked at and processed in 1959 it was found that many items were very damaged and decaying, so it was necessary to restore and conserve them. But it was as late as 1978 when, authorized by the JAZU administration and the then existing Institute for scientific works in Dubrovnik, that 12 of the most endangered items were restored and conserved in the Restoration workshop of the Ethnographical museum in Zagreb, and those were parts of dress, head gear and jewelry (Eckhel, 1983).

⁴ This data on the ethnographical items from Europe is in the first inventory book written by Pavlina Bogdan Bijelić and her brother Đuro Bijelić with notes for every item.

Finally, it should be pointed out that Baltazar Bogišić, a lawyer by calling and profession whose first interest was there research of the customary law as the basis on which to build the contemporary legal system, left us a rich legacy of folk life which can still be used for research. In the scope of his interest he left as a small but significant ethnographical collection with some items that are unique, which deserves care and protection as any other museum collection would because it not only shows the method and the scientific work of Baltazar Bogišić, it is also a vivid document and material evidence of folk life and culture of an age pushed into oblivion by the modern civilization.

Catalogue descriptions of the ethnographic items from the Dubrovnik area

1.

Inv. nr. 1

Zlatnica, an embroidered *poprsnica* from a woman's shirt, Konavle, 19. century; 2x26x13 cm; the length of the fringes 2,5 cm

On a fine linen cloth a *mrki vez* is embroidered with a small askew stitch, by *pisanac* and a flat stitch in homemade silk in black, dark red, green and blue color with the addition of a golden thread. The *poprsnica* is made up of two equal parts and a collar which is made up of two narrow bands called *ogrov*. The equal parts of *poprsnica* are connected in the upper part by stitches. The *poprsnica* is ornated by silk yellow fringes with the addition of the same color which are in the *ošva* of the *poprsnica*. On the rims it is rimmed by a *lančanac* stitch in yellow silk. The ornament of the needlework is geometrical: rhombs and triangles densely filled with motifs of the cross and stylized geometrical leaves. The needlework is so thick it completely fills the cloth basis. The golden thread is used to fill a *ošva* on the inside of every half of the *poprsnica* in the width of 4,5 cm, with stylized geometrical motifs of the cross and the branch, as well as the larger part of the space on the collar for which the item is named *zlatnica* (zlato = gold).

Poprsnica zlatnica was stitched to a shirt by the brides from the well-off Konavle families on the day of their wedding, and it was worn as part of a special robe until their first child was born.

Poprsnica was given to the Bogišić museum by Pavlina Bogdan Bijelić on the occasion of its opening in 1909.

2.

Inv. nr. 2

Žutnica, an embroidered *poprsnica* from a female shirt, Konavle, 19th century; 2x25x13 cm; the length of fringes 5 cm

Poprsnica žutnica is made of two equal parts and a collar. On a fine linen cloth a *mrki vez* is embroidered with a small askew stitch, by *pisanac* and a flat stitch in homemade silk in red, black, green and blue color with the addition of a yellow thread. Two equal parts of the *poprsnica* are connected at the lower part by sewing. At the bottom the *poprsnica* is decorated by silk yellow tufts with an addition in the same colors that are in the complete embroidery, and on the rims it is rimmed by a *lančanac* stitch in yellow silk. On the inside of every half of *poprsnica* an *ošva* is sewed in yellow silk. The ornament of the needlework is geometrical: rhombs and triangles filled with motifs of the cross and stylized geometrical leaves. The center of the rhomb is emphasized by a rosette. The needlework is so thick it completely fills the cloth basis.

Poprsnica žutica was stitched to a shirt by the women from the well-off Konavle families.

Poprsnica was given to the Bogišić museum by Pavlina Bogdan Bijelić on the occasion of its opening in 1909.

3.

Inv. nr. 3

Objelica an embroidered *poprsnica* from a female shirt, Konavle, 19th century; 2x25x12 ,5cm; the length of fringes 2,5 cm

Poprsnica objelica is made of two equal parts and a collar. On a fine linen cloth a *mrki vez* is embroidered with a small askew stitch (half-crosses), by *pisanac* and a flat stitch in homemade silk in black, brick red, black, light green and blue color with the addition of a yellow thread. Two equal parts of the *poprsnica* are connected at the lower part by sewing. At the bottom the *poprsnica* is decorated by silk yellow tufts with an addition in the same colors that are in the complete embroidery, and on the rims it is rimmed by a *lančanac* stitch in yellow silk. The main motif of the ornament of the needlework is geometrical: rhombs and triangles filled with motifs of the cross, while at the angles there are stylized geometrical leaves. On the inside half of the embroidery of the *poprsnica* an *ošva* is stitched measuring 4,5 cm in width with motifs of the Greek cross and a rosette. In the *ošva* and the collar the embroidery is not so dense to completely fill the cloth base, so white cloth is showing, because of which the *poprsnica* was named *objelica*. (bijelo=white).

Poprsnica žutica was stitched to a shirt with the holiday robe during the mourning (korota)

Poprsnica was given to the Bogišić museum by Pavlina Bogdan Bijelić on the occasion of its opening in 1909.

4-10.

Inv. br. 4-10

Pločice sleeves, wide *ošve* on the rim of the sleeve of a female shirt, Konavle, 19th century average length around 40 cm, average width around 12 cm

Pločice sleeves are made on a fine linen cloth in homemade in black, red, blue and green color. *Ošva* are made in a few smaller motifs which follow one another in a

predetermined order. These are always geometrical and geometry motifs (squares, stripes, rosettes). *Pločice*, the narrow black stripes are usually vertical to the other embroidered motifs, thus giving these sleeves a name. On some specimens the ornament is expressed with stylized herbal motives (buds and leaves). The lower openings of the sleeve are rimmed by a *lančanac* stitch in yellow silk, and through the rest the yellow homemade silk thread are woven.)

Pločice sleeves were given to the Bogišić museum by Pavlina Bogdan Bijelić.

11.

Inv. nr. 11

Čermica, the women's special waistcoat, Konavle, 19th century, length 38 cm.

Čermica, a female waistcoat made of lack homespun without sleeves falls to the waist. On the back and chest it is richly decorated with *sрма* in a stylized herbal ornament. The branches with flowers can be seen. The rims and stitches of the waistcoat are sewed with two to four gold-covered cord. Before it was found, the *sрма* went darker, and the filigree buttons are missing.

Čermica was acquired by B. Bogišić.

12.

Inv. br. 12

Ondej, hondelj, headgear of a married woman, Konavle, 19th century; diameter at the base 30 cm, height. of *hondelja* 13 cm; cloth 70x55 cm

Ondej, hondelj is made up of an oval base made from a little bundle of linen stems bended into two arcs of elliptical shape with a trapeze extension over the forehead on the backside of the base there were tufts, kite made of linen threads. The base is covered by a square napkin made of white homemade weaving, while on the brinks of the narrower sides there are black stripes. The napkin, ubrusac is folded so that the black stripes frame the base and make a 90 degrees angle at the nape, and are fixed with needles. The two free arms of the napkin are tied into a knot at the forehead, but are lifted so that they wouldn't cover the trapeze. The black stripe is emphasized here too. Into that part, lifted above the forehead, 24 decorative needles with heads of colorful murano glass are stuck.

Ondej, found in a very damaged state, was restored and partially reconstructed (ubrusac) in the restorative workshop of the Ethnographical museum in Zagreb.

Ondej was acquired by B. Bogišić. The item is rare, there are just three. One is stored in the Konavle country memorial house in Čilipi, and the others in the ethnographical museums in Dubrovnik and Zagreb.

13.

Inv. br. 13

Ondej, hondelj, headgear of an unmarried older girl or an unmarried girl with a child, Konavle, middle of 18th century; diameter of the base of *hondelj* 32 cm, the height of *hondelj* 12,5 cm; cloth (napkin) 70x55 cm

Ondej, hondelj is made up of an oval base made from a little bundle of linen stems bended into two arcs of elliptical shape. On the other side of the base there were tufts, *kite* of red and yellow homemade spun silk. The base is covered by a square napkin made of white homemade weaving, while on the brinks of the narrower sides there are black stripes. The napkin, *ubrusac* is folded so that the black stripes frame the base by the face and make a 90 degrees *angle* at the nape. The napkin is fixed on the base with needles. The two free arms of the napkin are tied into a knot at the forehead, where the black stripe is also visible. This *hondelj* has no extension over the forehead with the decorative needles like with married women.

Ondej, found in a very damaged state, was restored and partially reconstructed (napkin) in the restorative workshop of the Ethnographical museum in Zagreb in 1978. The item is unique, because no other was preserved neither in the field nor in the museum.

Inv. br. 14

Bareta kartača s ubruscem od ondeja, Konavle, middle of 19th century; diameter of the cap 16 cm, height 8 cm; cloth 70x55 cm

Bareta kartača is a cap made of red homespun. Its rim is rimmed with a black cord. Above the cord a decorative stripe is embroidered with a tersian embroidery by a gold colored *srma* with curving motifs. The red cap is covered with an *ubrusac*, a cloth made of white homemade cloth with black stripes on the narrower sides so that the arms can be tied up over the foreheads into an ornamental knot.

Bareta was found damaged so it was restored, and the *ubrusac* reconstructed.

The red cap was acquired by B. Bogišić. It was worn till the end of the 19th century by the engaged girls from well-off Konavle houses after they received the *malo obilježje*, a rich gift from the groom's house. The item is unique because there is no other neither in the field nor in our museums.

15.

Inv. br. 15

Bareta zlatača, red cap for girls, Konavle, end of 19th century; diameter of the cap 17 cm, height 6 cm

Bareta zlatača is a cap made of red homespun. The rim of the cap is sewed with two rows of gold covered stripes above which there are horizontal and a floral *bordure* with leaves made with *srma*. Tersian work.

Bareta zlatača was worn as part of the holiday robe by girls from well-off houses, while it was last used by older girls.

It was acquired by B. Bogišić.

16.

Inv. nr. 16

Fragment of the cloth *pokrivača* which was put on a *hondelj*, Konavle, 19th century length. 45 cm

The two ends of the *pokrivač* were used as ornamental endings on a white *pokrivača* that was put on a *hondelj* as part of the holiday robe.

Fragments of *pokrivača* were repaired and added to by adding parts of sopent *pokrivača* while it was still worn so that the leftover white embroidery consists of three motifs. With the embroidered stripe there is lace embroidered by the *tehnika na batiće*.

17.

Inv. br. 32

Korunica, an ornament for a bride's head, Konavle, 19th century; length. 7 cm

Korunica is a metal hairpin with which the asps and dried Mediterranean flowers were attached to.

Korunice like these were worn by Konavle brides on their wedding day.

18.

Inv. br. 27

Velika britva sa sindžinom, Konavle, 19th century, length 20,5 cm; length of. sindžir 90 cm

The razor has a bent shape and is made of wrought steel, and is put inside the sheath made of silver-alloyed brass sheet on the cover of the sheath there is an ornament in the shape of the uneven dashes. *Sindžir* is a chain of silver made from S-shaped links.

The razor was hung from the neck or attached to the belt of engaged girls after they have received *malo obilježje* and married women.

The big razor was acquired by B. Bogišić.

19.

Inv. br. 29

Mačica, a hairpin, Župa dubrovačka, 19th century; length. 17 cm

Mačica is a decorative hairpin made of gold covered silver. On the upper part it has a shape of the sword with a relief bird.

20.

Inv. br. 30

Igla za kosu, Župa dubrovačka, 19th century; length. 14,5 cm

The hairpin is made of gold covered silver in a flat shape on whose upper part there is a protruding part on which there's a V shaped ornament. It was made by Dubrovnik goldsmiths using the molding technique.

Translated by Tanja Bukovčan