

MARKO ŠTUHEC**TWO ASPECTS OF MATERIAL CULTURE AND EVERYDAY LIFE OF THE NOBILITY IN THE DUCHY OF CARNIOLA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 18TH CENTURY: READING AND CONDUCT AT TABLE**

The aim of this paper is a brief presentation of some aspects of everyday life and material culture of nobility in the duchy of Carniola¹ around the year 1700. More precisely, we are going to deal with two aspects: reading habits and conduct at table and eating habits. The everyday life of the nobility in Slovene lands at the beginning of the 18th century is rarely described with clarity in written sources. Evidence, however, does exist and is not so scarce, but it is dispersed, incoherent and hidden behind other, more conspicuous, data. Among especially valuable sources are probate inventories because they are relatively numerous, meticulous and manifold.

A probate inventory² is a list of all kinds of property compiled by an appointed committee after the death of the owner. The main purpose of this

¹ The duchy of Carniola, a Habsburg crownland since the 13th century, was situated in the central part of today's Slovenia. Its capital was Ljubljana, the actual capital of the republic of Slovenia. For basic historical information on Carniola in the 17th and 18th centuries see: A. Dimitz, *Geschichte Krains, Vierter Theil: Vom Regierungsantritt Leopold I. (1657) bis auf das Ende der französischen Herrschaft in Illyrien (1813)*. Laibach, 1876.

² On probate inventories, material culture and everyday life see: V. Bužek (ed.), *Život na dvorech barokny šlechty (1600–1750)*, Česke Budejovice, 1996; M. Baulant, "L'utilisation des inventaires après décès villageois. Grille de dépouillement et apports." In: B. Vogler, *Les actes notariés. Source de l'histoire sociale*. Strassbourg, 1979; M. Baulant – A. J. Schuurman – P. Servais (eds.), *Inventaires après-décès et ventes de meubles. Apportes à une histoire de la vie économique et quotidienne (XIVe-XIXe siècles)*, Louvain, 1988; L. Burquin, "Les objets de la vie quotidienne. Paris, première moitié du XVIe siècle." *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 36, 1989, juillet-septembre; J. Cornette, "Le Paris des inventaires après décès, XVIIe-XVIII siècles." *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 36, 1989, juillet-septembre; B. C. Daniels, "Probate Court Inventories and Colonial American History: Historiography, Problems, Results", *Histoire sociale – Social History*, 1976; R. Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag in der Frühen Neuzeit, I, II*, München, 1990, 1992; H. Feigl, "Heiratsbriefe und Verlassenschaftsabhandlungen als Quellen zur Alltagsgeschichte", in: O. Pickl – H. Feigl (eds.), *Methoden und Probleme der Alltagsforschungen im Zeitalter des Barocks*, Wien, 1992; B. Garnot, *La culture matérielle en France aux XVIe-XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles*, Paris, 1995; T. Grotum – T. Werner, *Sämtliches Hab und Gut. Die Analyse von Besitzstandlisten*. Göttingen, 1989; R. E. Mohrmann, *Alltag im Land Braunschweig. Städtische und ländliche Wohnkultur vom 16. bis zum frühen 20. Jahrhundert*. Münster, 1990; D. Moreno – M. Quaini, "Per una storia della cultura materiale", *Cuaderni storici*, 31, 1976; P. Münch, *Lebensformen in der frühen Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, 1996; A. Pardailhé-Galabrun, *La naissance de l'intime. 3000 foyers parisiens XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles*. Paris, 1988; J. M. Pesez, "Histoire de la

document was to protect the interests of orphans who had not yet reached their majority. The inventories of the nobility in Carniola³ were divided according to groups of items.

More or less constant entries include: real estates, cash, documents, silverware, gold items and jewelry, books, paintings and mirrors, wainscots, carpets, clothing, weaponry, bed and table linen, canvas, yarn, bedclothes, pewter, brass, copper and clay vessels, kitchenware, furniture, tools, horses, cattle and food stocks. These lists and descriptions of recorded items reflect the material, intellectual and spiritual world of the people and their daily living environments. Our analysis is based on all preserved probate inventories of the carniolan nobility, listed in the period 1695–1710.⁴ In addition to the inventories we used other sources as well such as wills, private letters, diaries, family chronicles, official decrees, literary works etc.

Before dealing with material culture and aspects of everyday life let us briefly analyze some social characteristics of the carniolan nobility. As elsewhere in Europe,⁵ the nobility in Carniola were a specific social group,

culture materielle”, in: J. Le Goff (ed.), *La nouvelle histoire*, Paris, 1976; D. Poulot, “Une nouvelle histoire de la culture materielle?” *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 44, 1997, avril-juin; D. Roche, *Histoires des choses banales. Naissance de la consommation XVIIe-XIXe siècles*. Paris, 1997; D. Roche, *La culture des apparences*, Paris, 1989; R. Sandgruber, *Die Anfänge der Konsumgesellschaft in Österreich*, Wien, 1982; R. Sandgruber, “Leben und Lebensstandard im Zeitalter des Barocks. Quellen und Ergebnisse.” In: H. Feigl – O. Pickl (eds.), *Methoden und probleme der Alltagsforschungen im Zeitalter des Barocks*, Wien, 1992; R. Sarti, *Europe at Home. Family and Material Culture 1500-1800*. New Haven, London, 2002; A. J. Schuurman – L. S. Walsh (eds.), *Material Culture: Consumption, Life-style, Standard of Living, 1500-1900*, Milano, 1994; L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, London – New York, 1988; A. Van de Woude – A. J. Schuurman (ed.) *Probate Inventories. A New Source for the Historical study of Wealth, Material Culture and Agricultural Development*, Utrecht, 1980;

³ On probate inventories in Carniola see: M. Štuhec, *Rdeča postelja, ščurki in solze vdove Prešeren. Plemiški zapuščiniski inventarji 17. stoletja kot zgodovinski vir*. [A Red Bed, Cockroaches and Tears of the Widow Prešeren. Probate Inventories of the Nobility from the 17th Century as a historical Source.] Ljubljana, 1995.

⁴ There are 112 inventories. Inventories of the higher nobility and inventories of the men are overrepresented.

⁵ On nobilities in Europe see: *Adel in Wandel. Politik-Kultur-Konfession. 1500-1700*, Wien, 1990; F. Bluche, *La vie quotidienne de la noblesse française au XVIIIe siècle*; Paris, 1973; O. Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist. Leben und Werk Wolf Helmhards von Hochberg, 1612–1688*. Salzburg, 1949; M. L. Bush, “An Anatomy of Nobility”, in: M. L. Bush (ed.), *Social Orders and Social Classes in Europe since 1500*, London, New York, 1992; M. L. Bush, *European Nobility, I-II*, Manchester, 1982; G. Chaussinand-Nogaret, *La noblesse au XVIIIe siècle. De la féodalité aux Lumières*. Bruxelles, 1984; J. Dewald, *The European Nobility 1400–1800*, Cambridge, 1996; R. Enders (ed.), *Adel in der Frühneuzeit. Ein regionaler Vergleich*. Köln, Wien, 1991; Les noblesses à l'époque moderne, *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 1999, 46/1, janvier-mars; J. P. Labatut, *Les noblesses européennes de la fin du 15e à la fin du 18e siècles*, Paris, 1978; J. Meyer, *Noblesse et le pouvoir dans l'Europe d'Ancien*

distinguished from other social groups by a few fundamental privileges.⁶ The nobility were in fact a very thin social stratum. In 1689, Janez Vajkard Valvasor, in his detailed topographical description of Carniola entitled *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* enumerated 208 noble families.⁷ It is estimated that altogether they counted approximately 1200 members. The share of the nobility in the entire population of Carniola was round 0.4 per cent.⁸ Regardless of their small number, the nobility were a leading social group that held in their hands almost entire social power and a large share of social distinction, prestige and richness. However, amongst themselves, the nobility were considerably thorn apart. The status of particular noblemen and their families was determined by a combination of factors: rank, title, reputation, prestige, age of lineage, rootedness in the land and property. It made a difference whether a nobleman belonged to an ancient noble family with territorial supremacy, who had loyally and efficiently served the territorial prince for a long period, or to a family whose title was of more recent date, bestowed upon them thanks to official merits, or even bought with money earned through trade. "It is no prejudice to hold a family in high esteem thanks to their ancient lineage", can be read in the 18th century genealogy of the Carniolan baronial family of Mordax.⁹ In the early 18th century, Count Lichtenberg defended himself from intrusive parvenus who might have aspired to marry into his family by specifically determining the social parameters of potential sons-in-law in his last will and testament. The suitors had to be counts or at least barons issuing from ancient baronial families. Had his will not been obeyed, his two daughters would have suffered the consequences in their inheritance.¹⁰ The position of a particular nobleman and his family in the hierarchy of the provincial nobility was demonstrated by the coat-of-arms, the seal, the predicate and protocol priority, by education and extravagant or modest way of life.

Régime, Paris, 1973; J. Panek, "Šlechta v rane novoveke Evrope z pohledu českého a evropského badání", in: V. Bužek, *Život na dvorech barokny šlechty (1600-1750)*, České Budejovice, 1996; H. M. Scott (ed.), *The European Nobilities in the 17th and 18th Centuries, I-II*, London, New York, 1995. On nobility in Carniola see: M. Žvanut, *Od viteza do gospoda [From a Knight to a Gentleman]*, Ljubljana, 1994; M. Preinfalk, *Auerspergi. Po sledeh mogočnega tura [The family of Auersperg. On the Traces of a mighty aurochs]*, Ljubljana, 2005.

⁶ On privileges of the nobility in Carniola see: A. Globočnik, "Der Adel in Krain", in: *Mittheilungen des Musealvereins für Krain*, 12 (1899/ 1) p. 2.

⁷ J. V. Valvasor, *Die Ehre des Herzogthums Krain, IX*, Nuerenberg, 1689, p. 101–120.

⁸ On population in Slovene lands see: F. Zwitter, *Prebivalstvo na Slovenskem od XVIII. stoletja do današnjih dni [Population in Slovene Lands since the 18th century]*, Ljubljana, 1936.

⁹ "Es ist kein Vorurtheil, familien ihres Altherthums wegen hoch zu preissen." Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (further ARS), Genealogical tables, fsc. G-O (Mordax).

¹⁰ "Wan eine oder ander ins Closter gehen oder sich in khein guettes grafliches oder wenigstens altes haus freyherr standes nicht verheiraten solte, ihro nicht mehr als die legitima mit 5000 gulden gegeben." ARS, Testaments II lit. L.

The basic division of the provincial nobility classified aristocrats according to their noble rank in two groups: the major nobility – counts and barons (*Herrenstand*) – and lesser nobility (*Ritterstand*). On the political level, the stratification of the nobility was reflected in the structure of Carniolan Provincial Estate. In the Estates, which had four benches, each of the two noble strata had their bench and elected their representatives into provincial bodies.¹¹ On the level of prestige, the difference was demonstrated through the fact that honorary functions were the heritage of families belonging to the major nobility.¹² On the level of social power, the difference between lords and knights was reflected in the division of functions in provincial and state administration. In the second half of the 17th and in the first half of the 18th centuries, the most influential positions were still held by the major nobility. The difference between the two groups of nobility was also seen in the design of family strategies and social network, which connected but also delineated and structured the Carniolan nobility. The most obvious strategy was marriage.

What was the ratio between the two groups? Towards the end of the 17th century, slightly more than 30 per cent of noble families belonged to the major nobility.¹³ An analysis of registers of deaths¹⁴ for the 1751–60 decade shows that the ratio changed slightly in favor of the lesser nobility. The change was due to the fact that more officials and free professionals, especially lawyers, were elevated to the ranks of the lesser nobility than members of the lesser nobility to the rank of the major nobility. In general, the number of the nobility stabilized after 1700. The disturbance following the banishment of protestant aristocrats and the emergence of new noble families from the thirties of the 17th century onwards, calmed down at the end of 17th century. In the first half of the 18th century the Carniolan nobility was a quite closed social group. Among adult noblemen of male sex, who died between 1741–1760, slightly less than 10 per cent were ennobled.¹⁵

In addition to differences already mentioned we can see also enormous differences in wealth. We cannot make a quantitative analysis of the sizes and values of the properties at the beginning of the 18th century, but analysis for the middle of the 18th century shows for example that 10 per cent of the richest noblemen possessed 45 per cent of the entire value of the properties listed in

¹¹ See: S. Vilfan, "Pravna ureditev Kranjske po Valvasorjevi Slavi" [Legal system of Carniola according to Valvasor's Glory] in A. Vovko (ed.), *Valvasorjev zbornik*, Ljubljana, 1990.

¹² The list of honorary functions can be found in: C. S. Perizhoff, *Erbhuldigungsactus in herzogthum Krain*, Laibach, 1739, p. 4–7 and 93–122.

¹³ The data for the calculation are taken from: Valvasor, *Die Ehre*, IX, p. 101–120.

¹⁴ Calculated on the basis of the data in: L. Schiviz von Schivizhoffen, *Der Adel in den Matriken des Herzogtums Krain*, Görz, 1905.

¹⁵ M. Štuhec, *Materialna kultura plemstva na Kranjskem v prvi polovici 18. stoletja. Doktorska naloga. [Material Culture of the Nobility in Carniola in the First Half of the 18th Century. Doctoral thesis.]*, Ljubljana, 2000, p. 53.

probate inventories. In comparing the size of property we can notice a large difference between the major and the lesser nobility, and a distinct difference between men and women. The base of richness was landed property, houses and capital in form of bonds which yielded interest. Considerably less value was contained in jewelry, silverware and even less in coaches, clothes, furniture and household equipment.¹⁶ Records of the property listed show that even the richest aristocrats¹⁷ were in fact not very rich in comparison with the richest noblemen in the Lower Austria, Styria, Bohemia or Hungary. The results obtained with the analysis of inventories listed in the middle of the 18th century in generally applied to the nobility at the beginning of the 18th century.

An analysis of the structure of property and of objects listed shows that despite this big differences the fundamental structure of aristocratic material culture was the same. In other words: in spite of drastic differences in the size of property the inventories of poorer, or better relatively poorer noblemen, contained almost the same types of objects but of course in smaller number and of lesser quality. In the inventories of relatively poorer noblemen we find in general more modest material and decoration, more old and worn out goods in comparison to new ones, and considerably smaller number of fashionable novelties or expensive objects like coaches. This means that the fundamental behavioral patterns and life routines, which can be discerned from the functional objects listed in the inventories at the beginning of the 18th century, and other sources were basically similar.

Let us now deal with the books listed in the inventories. A good half of the inventories from the period 1695–1710 (55%) contained books. In the average library of an aristocrat we can find approximately 25-30 books, while a library containing more than one hundred or even two hundred titles was a very large one. Such large libraries were rare but they contained the majority of all recorded work in the studied sample. They mostly but not exclusively belonged to learned doctors of medicine and law, who had recently got the noble title. Judging by the number of books and their distribution, one may conclude that approximately a quarter of the nobility had advanced reading habits. As to the rest, it seems that books other than prayer books, the *Bible*, the statute of the province, books about medicinal herbs for treating people and horses, and Valvasor's *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola*, found their way to their reading desks only more or less accidentally. This conclusion holds especially true of women, whose inventories¹⁸ contain less than 4 per cent of all recorded books.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 193–211.

¹⁷ The greatest analyzed property out of 132 from the period 1751–1760 was worth 133000 florins, and only one other exceeded 100000 florins.

¹⁸ The sample of inventories listed between 1695-1710 contains 39,2% of inventories belonging to women.

Which themes did the Carniolan nobility actually read? The contemporary paradigm of the natural sciences, which was being newly articulated in the 17th century, barely touched them. The nobility was interested in the astrology rather than in new physics. On the other hands they exhibit a keen interest in the world around them and in events. Travel diaries from all around the world are frequent item in almost every decent library along with historical and current political literature. In addition to books that reveal the interest in the wider world, those celebrating the Austrian empire and its rulers began to accumulate in these libraries at the beginning of the 18th century. These books indicate the shaping of certain notions intended to link disparate Hapsburg provinces beyond their relative independence. Yet titles such as *Immeregruenender Kayserlicher Lorberkranz Roemischen Kaysers Leopoldi* or *Oesterreich ueber alles wan es nur will* do not testify to the introduction and positive reception of the ruler's house into the conceptual world of the Carniolan nobility in the second half of the 17th and early 18th century as much as do the paintings listed in their probate inventories. The portraits of the emperors, usually Leopold and his three wives, make up an iconographic motif whose frequency of occurrence closely follows that of images of the Virgin Maria and the portraits of the nobles themselves.

Portraits of emperors could be found anywhere in the house, either in big rooms intended for joyful get-togethers or in silent, private rooms, in an insignificant room "next to the last room facing the courtyard", or in a more exquisite "upper room facing the street" which had at least three windows and two doors.¹⁹ Ferdinand and Joseph, but especially Leopold could be found everywhere. With his characteristically protruding Hapsburg jaw and a thick lower lip, thin moustache, with an "allonge" and not-at-all imperial but rather shy look in his eyes, Leopold became the ideological bond of the nobility. The emperor who occupies the top of the aristocratic hierarchy thus becomes the topos which enables identification and integration across and beyond the provincial borders.

And what about interest in the home country? The readership for topics relating to Carniola is considerably larger than the readership for other topics: 37 of the libraries contain books written by native Carniolan writers. The leading place belonged to the book *Die Ehre des Herzogthums Krain (The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola)* by Janez Vajkard Valvasor, the Carniolan scholar and member of the Royal Society in London.²⁰ In addition to a few dedicated bibliophiles, many other nobles leafed through this book who otherwise considered books an unnecessary expenditure. In short, among books dealing with secular topics *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* is most frequently listed

¹⁹ ARS, Probate inv., fsc. 31 lit. M, numb. 101; fsc. 6 lit B, numb. 89.

²⁰ On Valvasor see: B. Reisp, *Kranjski polihistor Janez Vajkard Valvasor [Carniolan polyhistor Janez Vajkard Valvasor]*, Ljubljana, 1983;

book in probate inventories and, in fact, was the only true bestseller of its time. Just as emperors' portraits did not have a purely decorative function, the subject matter of this book is not simply an impartial description of some province or other. Here, a Carniolan noble could find the graceful image of his castle and coat-of-arms, the names of his relatives, description of their celebrated deeds, and also expression of love for the home country. "Yes!" cries Valvasor in the opening sentence of the dedication to the Carniolan Estates – and who are Estates if not the nobility in the first place – "if the law of the most learned Plato has any value, than love for one's home country should come before love for one's father and mother."²¹ Along with the records of corporative rights of the nobility,²² the work also frequently found in the libraries, *The Glory* thus represented for the nobility a second point of identification: Carniola as their home country.²³

Traditional sciences, namely law, theology and medicine, are well represented in aristocratic libraries. Law and theology in particular constitute the conspicuously major part of the recorded works. In addition to theoretical works, the libraries were not short of books that could be of help in certain everyday situations. These books contained more or less strict instructions on how a nobleman should behave, talk and write, what moral principles he should follow, how to resolve religious issues, how to preserve health and live long, what to put into his cooking pot, how to arrange his garden, breed his horse and manage his property. This "reference" part of the library more clearly demonstrates the fundamental mechanisms of the self-image and functioning of the late 17th century noble than do the theoretical works. The new scientific paradigm, after all, had significance only for a narrow circle of people. On the other hand, questions such as what to do in case of an illness, what medical plant should be used to cure an injured horse, how to choose a nurse, or how to exchange views in company – these were the issues that affected everyone. Whether books such as *Arzney buch*, *Kunst lang zu leben*, *Kochkunst undt Wunden Buch*, *Lustgarten zierlich zu reden und zu schreiben*, *La civile conversazione*, *Von adliger Tugendt* and others gave the right answers or not was not really important. People's behavior is not so much based on the objective truth as on what they understand and feel to be the truth. It is not important if the opinions of Adam Sebastjan Siezenheim, the administrator of the provincial Estates, contained in his 1659 book about the etiquette and education of young noblemen are objective. He states, for instance, that mother's milk is a boiled blood, that a choleric nature makes one suitable for studying mathematics, or that rounded cheeks show

²¹ Valvasor, *Die Ehre*, Dedication, s. p.

²² *Landshandtsvest des loeblichen hoerzogtumbs Crain*, Laibach, 1687.

²³ On forming of regional patriotism see: V. Simoniti, *Vojaška organizacija na Slovenskem v 16. stoletju* [*Military Organisation in Slovene Lands in the 16th Century*], Ljubljana, 1991, p. 246-260.

arrogance, and sunken cheeks are a sign of treachery.²⁴ What is important is that such answers were constituent parts of some conceptual pattern which could have directed and sustained certain kinds of behavior and that concepts resulting from different discourses simultaneously found practical application. By the deathbed of Baroness Ana Maksimilijana Moškon in autumn 1699 in the small village Črni potok, there competed a doctor of medicine Wolf Andrej Vidmajer, and a village quack, both assisted by Augustinian father Nikolaj. The difference between the status of both doctors is of course evident. The trembling voice of the dying woman first addresses the learned doctor, not to ask for a leach or enema treatment but to focus his attention on her last will: “Dear father, doctor, and also you Quack, remember my will ...”.²⁵ Yet both discourses, that of the doctor, and that of the quack, meet, complement each other, overlap and are confronted by her deathbed. This concrete example is not the only occasion when two discourses appear side by side – they also share the same compartments of aristocratic libraries. Vidmajer’s discourse is found in books written in Latin by learned doctors, some of them from Carniola, for example *De modo sudendi in medicina* or *Intricatum – Extricatam medicum sev tractatus de morbis complicatis*. Hints of layman’s (quack’s) discourse²⁶ are, if only partially, found in the aforementioned books about medicinal plants written in colloquial German.

Let us now finish the discussion about books and see what we can ask probate inventories about eating manners and what the probate inventories can tell us about this issue. For this purpose, we will combine items that appear in the inventories under the headings silverware, table linen, pewter, copper and brass vessels, majolica vessels, and furniture. More or less differentiated cutlery, vessels, table linen and pieces of furniture provided a material basis for the consumption of meals, dictated the method of handling them and proper occasion for their use, but also showed the internalization and personalization of a certain behavioral code observed while enjoying food.

How did food traveled from the kitchen to the dining-room, from iron pans, roasting spits and baking grids, iron or clay pots, from copper cake pans and cauldrons to large oak, walnut or pinewood tables where it paused for a moment for all to see and delight in and then disappeared into the mouths of the nobles? The complexity and indirectness of this route is a conspicuous sign of the characteristics of a particular culture. In the homes of the nobility, food was prepared in a special room – the kitchen. Chopping, grating and mincing,

²⁴ A. S. Von Siezenheimb, *Speculum generosae Juventutis oder Neubeglaenzter Zuchtspiegel der Adlichen Jugend*, Muenchen, 1659, p. 53, 58, 32, 265.

²⁵ “Herr pater, Doctor und auch Pader merkht meine Wille...” ARS, Test. II lit. M, numb. 15.

²⁶ On popular medicine see: H. Neunteufl, *Hausarznein im Barock*, Graz, 1978; E. Grabner, “Volksmedizin–Wesen, Begriffe und Grundzuege”, in: H. Valentinitich, *Hexen und Zauberer*, Graz, 1987, p. 75–84.

whisking, kneading and rolling out, wiping stirring and grinding, frying, baking and boiling – all were hidden from the eye, nose and ear of outsiders. Food arrived at the table completely prepared and ready for consumption. In the kitchen, which was dominated by relatively modest ironware and copperware, food came into contact with more expensive pewter and majolica and was taken to the dining – room table in bowls or on trays of various sizes. The table was spread with a cloth – a damask one for more solemn occasions, otherwise it was ticking or hackling linen. In addition to the tablecloth, regular items were towels and a dozen of napkins. The contrast between festive and everyday table articles is evident from the records of an inventory from 1710, where six damask tablecloths and seventy-two napkins are followed by the same number of ticking cloths and napkins “zum ordinari gebrauch”.²⁷ Once on the table, the food was transferred to pewter plates, where it was chopped into slices, salted, seasoned or sweetened according to one’s personal taste. It was carried in silver spoons or on forks from the plate to the mouth. As with knives only the handles of forks were silver, while the prongs were made of iron. In general, the table was the place for silverware. In addition to cutlery, other table articles included goblets and other drinking vessels, soup tureens, salt-cellars, vinegar flasks, silver bottles of various sizes and shapes, and candlesticks. Apart from silver, other materials found on the table included pewter used for jugs, salt-cellars and vinegar flasks, and majolica, which was also used for jugs, bowls, vessels and cups for fruits and sweets.

The structure and diversity of articles used for meals evidently show the specialization and individualization of their use. A set of cutlery and napkins, and plates intended for a single person, are standard at the beginning of the 18th century. To have one’s own set of cutlery, to eat from one’s own plate, to drink from a personal cup, mug, goblet or pewter vessel meant avoiding close bodily contact with other people at the table, especially contact with intimate parts such as mouths. The creation of barriers, the reduction in touching and better defined personal space was also made possible by means of numerous chairs. The chairs were especially intended for use at the table. In the inventories they are referred to as *taffelsessel* and as a rule they were cushioned chairs with the back enabling a rather free choice of sitting pose. At the same time, in contrast to benches, they define the person’s space and separate their occupant from the neighbor at the table. The change in table etiquette in the circles of the European nobility, which from the 16th through the 17th and into the 18th centuries led from the modest cutlery and dishes used in the Middle Ages, and from the habit of scooping food from the common bowls, of picking hard pieces of food with fingers and from drinking beverages and soups from common drinking vessels to the clearly differentiated eating tools and sophisticated, ritualized conduct at table was in

²⁷ ARS, Probate invent., fsc. 52 lit. Z, numb. 20.

full swing in Carniola, too. Yet the process was not completely finished. The number of inventories from the mid-17th century which listed forks allows for the assertion that this relatively new eating tool was quite a familiar one in the province. Furthermore, the share of inventories from the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries that listed forks increased by a further 15 per cent.²⁸ In the mid-17th century, however and at the beginning of the 18th century, inventories containing carving knives, serving spoons or serving forks are exceptionally rare. The serving cutlery which most consistently prevents intimate contact with neighbours at the table was only beginning to be introduced in this period.²⁹ Yet the Carniolan nobility obviously did not lag behind the nobility in Styria or other Austrian provinces as regards conduct at tables. At 1651 banquet in Graz, on the occasion of the provincial estates swearing an oath of fidelity, forks were not used, and they are equally absent from Leopold's 1671 sumptuary law which, in addition to restricting luxury clothes, also attempted to restrict the use of silverware.³⁰ In the same way they didn't lag behind other European elites either.³¹ The change in table etiquette was a long and gradual process. Along with the control, balancing, concealing, restricting and secluding of different bodily functions such as urination, defecation, spitting, sneezing, or conspicuous gesticulation, new table manners elevated the threshold of social tolerance and forced the individual to restrain his emotions and establish self-control. Norbert Elias's study of the manners established from the 15th to the beginning of the 19th century points out these processes and shows how long it takes for behavioral patterns originating in the upper classes to become a generally accepted norm. Judging by the cutlery, tableware and table linen contained in the probate inventories and on the basis of the aforementioned Siezenheim's manual on the etiquette and education³² we can assert that the Carniolan nobility from the 17th century was deeply involved in these processes.

²⁸ The share of inventories from 1695–1710 which listed forks is 60 percent. See: M. Štuhec, *Rdeča postelja*, p. 116.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ R. Sandgruber, *Die Anfänge der Konsumgesellschaft in Österreich*, Wien, 1982, p. 219; see also: G. Jontes, "Steirisches Leben in der fruehen Neuzeit", in: H. Valentinitzsch, *Hexen und Zauberer*, Graz, 1987, p. 32 and further. Compare: M. Štuhec, "Kranjska suita za zrcalo, vilico, nož, žlico, kavno ročko, čajnik in njuhalni robec" [Carniolan Suite for a Fork, Knife, Spoon, Coffepot, Teepot and Sniffing Handkerchief], in: *Zgodovina za vse* [History for everyone], 1, 1994/1.

³¹ See: N. Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation, I*, Frankfurt am Main, 1978, p. 111–171; J. L. Flandrin, "La distinction par le gout", in P. Aries – G. Duby, *L'histoire de la vie privée, III*, Paris, 1986, p. 268 and further; H. Ost, *L'art et la table*, Neuchatel, 1982. C. Marengo, *Manières de table, modeles de moeurs. 17e-20e siècle*, Cachan, 1992. A. Pospiech, "Majatek osobisty w swietle wielkopolskich posmiertnych inwentarzy ruchomosci z XVII wieku" in: *Kwartalnik historii kultury materialnej*, 29, 1981/4;

³² See the footnote numb. 24.

In the above analysis, I rely on the constant and generally accepted scheme of items needed and used at the table. A personal spoon and knife and increasingly a fork, than plate, drinking vessel, napkin, and chair became the norm in the second half of the 17th century, as is evident from almost every studied inventory. On the other hand, just as certain standards became evident, so different practical applications found their expressions. Items made of silver, pewter, canvas or majolica do not serve their fundamental purpose alone and do not point exclusively to polished manners; nor do they indicate merely usual habits which were characteristic of the time place or social group. They also testify to the person's wealth, social position and tastes, and point furthermore to a need to show off and create the image of real or presumed wealth and status. Indeed, almost every nobleman had a silver spoon, but not all had 81 or 76 of them as did around 1700, respectively Baron Rudolf Paradajser or Count Jurij Andrej Trilek. It is true that almost every noble had a silver spoon, but not all of the spoons were gilded and *von erhoebter arbeit* nor did all have the stamp of Augsburg silversmiths. After all, the tables of the nobility were dominated by pewter. Big items such as plates and bowls were made of pewter, while smaller items – cutlery, cups and goblets – were silver. In general tables did not bathe in luxury. Among the nobility in the studied sample only Count Thurn Valsassina could lay a really exquisite table. In his inventory there were not only 36 plain silver spoons, 12 silver forks and 12 silver knives – all the items were gilded – nor were there merely 10 silver goblets 2 large salvers, a Spanish salt cellar, 5 small vessels for vinegar or 6 spits for roasting birds, there were also 12 silver plates an 27 silver bowls. His tableware weighed 65 kilos and was worth approximately 2500 florins.³³ To tell the truth his silver plates and bowls are an exception in the studied sample. Anyhow, silverware, which frequently came from Augsburg, sometimes from Vienna, Graz, Nüremberg or Venice, was expensive and represented luxury for the average Carniolan noble. He was willing to unfasten his purse for such items but before he had to think twice about how to spend his *kreutzers* and what to sacrifice for the sake of this expenditure.

To finish the analysis of the image of a nobleman's table let us glimpse at yet another aspect of the differentiation of tableware and table linen. All innovations in this area were not direct consequences of the acceptance or establishment of one or another new element of table etiquette. The introduction of forks may be related to the latter, but the appearance of coffee mugs and spoons, sugar bowls and teapots point to the introduction of new items for consumption, new tastes, pleasures and sociability. In the period under study, sugar, coffee and tea were expensive novelties. Sugar bowls, which we can find already in the inventories from the mid-17th century, are frequently listed in the

³³ ARS, Probate invent., fsc. 46 lit. T, numb. 7.

inventories 1695–1710.³⁴ Almost always they were silver. The preciousness of the material, from which they were made, and the fact that they often came from Augsburg silversmith's workshops stress the value of their contents. If sugar was well known in the homes of the Carniolan nobility around the year 1700, coffee only begun to appear in the inventories of this period. Yet its presence is not as much evident from the columns referring to table items or food. Although we find some coffee mugs and coffee spoons, it is usually hidden behind data about clothing. Coffee was actually ascribed an additional function, that of defining colour, as with other exotic fruits such as lemon, orange, and cinnamon that appeared even before coffee. Anton von Zanetti, a merchant who acquired the rank of nobleman possessed at the beginning of the 18th century *ein cave farber pelz, ein zitroni farber farben Rokh*, and another dark somewhat worn-out coat *samb der vesti von zimethfarben Tuech*.³⁵ Taffeta Spanish sleeves on Baroness Marija Ana Valvasor's coat from the mid-17th century are of orange colour, while one of the Baroness Marija Terezija Oršič's aprons from the beginning of the 18th century, otherwise interspersed with gold and worth 25 florins, was parrot green.³⁶ So coffee seems to have entered the conceptual world of the Carniolan noblesse through its colour rather than taste or smell. Yet can we wonder why this was so when we are familiar with all the warnings and even intimidating records of a provincial physician dr. De Coppinis, who was invited as an undisputed medical authority to contribute a short passage about coffee in Valvasor's *Glory of the Duchy of Carniola*. Writing in Latin, the language of science, which clearly set his contribution apart from Valvasor's text, he summarized the views of the Dutch doctor Simon Pauli and asserted that coffee feminizes men and as consequence "semen dries up because of sulphur contained in coffee."³⁷ The editor of the book, a cosmopolitan Erasmus Francisci, opposed this view, citing the opinions of other doctors and relating his own positive experience.³⁸ Yet while Francisci's view contrasts with De Coppinis's, and dr. Janez Anton Sumrekher von Liechtental finds it necessary to learn more about the issue from the book *Beschreibung der Coffe, Thee, Tschokholada, Tabagkhs und dergleichen*,³⁹ while Count Trilek thinks that the upper compartment of the white, thin plate home pharmacy is the most proper

³⁴ M. Štuhec, *Kranjska suita*, p. 6–8.

³⁵ ARS, Probate invent., fsc. 52 lit. Z, numb. 19.

³⁶ ARS, Probate invent., fsc. 54 lit. Z, numb.4; fsc. 39 lit. O, numb. 10.

³⁷ "... semen genitale exsiccet adeo ut maritale debitum et vectigal in thalamo persolvere, suppare vires non sint, ob ipsius exsiccationem sulphuris proprii. Quod per experientiam probatur, tum Persarum, tum Chinensium exemplo. Nam Persae, teste Oleario, a Coffe sterilesunt ..." J.V. Valvasor, *Die Ehre*, III, p. 333.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 339–341. On medical disputes about coffee see: W. Schievelbush, *Das Paradies, der Geschmack und die Vernunft. Eine Geschichte der Genussmittel*. Frankfurt am Main, 1990, p. 45.

³⁹ ARS, Probate invent., fsc. 43, lit. S, numb. 80.

place for three coffee cups,⁴⁰ Baroness Oršič and her mother Baroness Grimschiz were not bothered. Being women, De Coppinis's warning about the drying up of the man's semen could not affect them, and they complacently enjoyed the smell that spread from the two larger cups imprinted with blue flowers or two smaller, yellow *caffè peherlein*. Both ladies cherished intensely the culture of coffee drinking. The daughter had a coffee jug and 16 cups of various sizes, made of porcelain and majolica, while the mother had eight *caffè Boecherl*.⁴¹ Apart from them, a special attitude towards coffee was expressed by another six noble men and women. However we choose to process and arrange data about coffee, it is evident that around 1700, coffee slowly began to make its way into noble Carniolan homes,⁴² bringing along, in addition to the new taste, a more complacent, peaceful and intimate forms of socializing.

In the Carniola of the end of the 17th and of the beginning of the 18th centuries, tea was an even bigger novelty than coffee. It is listed only in three inventories.⁴³ In addition to implements used for drinking coffee and tea the inventories listed in the period 1685–1710 contain objects related to tobacco and indicate, compared with the inventories, listed in the mid-17th century, a more extensive enjoyment of tobacco among the nobility. Not only men, but also some women indulged into the pleasure of sniffing tobacco. Some silk and linen *schnupftuecher* and a couple of silver tobacco boxes from inventories of noble women mean that Carniolan noble women as well enjoyed this novelty and that at the turn of the 18th century the two sexes were equal regarding the use of tobacco which was otherwise true of almost the whole century.⁴⁴ As tableware and house equipment represented an excellent means for displaying at home, items related to tobacco represented an excellent means for showing off outside one's own home. Drawing out a silver tobacco box, pouring a measure of tobacco on the back of the hand, maybe offering it to the company and, as if unintentionally, disclosing the chain of the silver pocket or neck watch; all this attracts attention and points to wealth, taste and cosmopolitanism. The importance of the objects related to tobacco in self-fashioning and presenting oneself as a young gentleman of fashion is clearly discernible in a letter which in 1717 a young aristocrat Franc Henrik von Raigersfeld wrote from Paris to his father in Ljubljana: "My honorable father knows that I have not yet bought any fancy goods, so I could perhaps finally acquire a nice sword, a tobacco-box or

⁴⁰ ARS, Probate invent., fsc. 46 lit. T, numb. 25

⁴¹ ARS, Probate invent., fsc. 39 lit. O, numb. 10; fsc. 17 lit. G, numb. 61.

⁴² In this respect Carniola did not lag behind other austrian provinces and the rest of Europe. See: R. Sandgruber, *Die Anfänge der Konsumgesellschaft*, p. 192.

⁴³ M. Štuhec, *Rdeča postelja*, p. 122.

⁴⁴ M. Štuhec, *Materialna kultura plemstva*, p. 224–225.

something similar.”⁴⁵ Leaving aside the fact that the sword, once perhaps the most typical functional object of a nobleman is conceptually put together with tobacco box under the heading fancy goods, which clearly indicates the changing self-fashioning and self perception of nobility, we can conclude by saying that at the beginning of the 18th century the use of objects in every day life constantly produced signs and transmitted signals in complex verbal and non verbal interpersonal exchange of motivations, contents and influences.

Summary

The paper presents two aspects of every day life and material culture of nobility in the duchy of Carniola (the central part of today's Slovenia): reading habits and conduct at table. That means that the paper analyzes books on one hand and objects which are in this or another way connected with eating on the other hand. The analysis based on all preserved probate inventories from 1695–1710 first shows drastic differences between rich nobles and poor nobles. Despite this fact the fundamental structure of aristocratic material culture was the same. This means that the basic behavioral patterns and life routines, which can be discerned from the functional analysis of the objects, listed in the inventories were very similar. So, for example, ritualized and sophisticated patterns of conduct at table, discernible from variety and structure of implements used for eating, which began to emerge in the first half of the 17th century, were totally accepted by the nobility around 1700 regardless the fact, that some noble families owned only a couple of forks with horn handles, whereas others owned 9 dozens of silver forks. The objects like coffee cups and tee cups reveal various innovations, new taste and new forms of socializing in the castles, manors and other dwellings of the nobility. On the other hand the fact that the number of real swords decreased, whereas the number of silver walking swords often listed along with tobacco boxes under the heading “fancy goods” increased, reflects the changed function and self perception of nobility. As far as books are concerned we can find them in 55% of inventories. In an average noble's library there were approximately 25–30 books. Large libraries with more than one hundred books were rare. Perhaps a quarter of noble persons had advanced reading habits. As to the rest, it seems that books other than prayer books, the Bible and the *Glory of the Duchy of Carniola*, book written by a carniolan noble Valvasor, found the way to their reading desks only occasionally. Nobles who read more were interested in astrology and traditional sciences, namely law, theology and medicine, rather than in the new scientific paradigm. They exhibit a keen interest in geography, current political and historical literature, in the

⁴⁵ “... wie mein gnediger vatter weiss das ich noch nicht von galanteri sachen habe, und also koente ich mir etwas weniges allerzeit ersparren damit ich mir doch einen schoenen degen oder tabakbixl oder was dergleichen erkaufen koente ...” ARS, Manorial Archives, Dol, fsc. 213, p. 13.

home country and in the books dealing with practical problems such as how to behave, talk and write, how to preserve health and live long or how to manage one's property. This is a kind of literature which more clearly demonstrates the fundamental mechanisms of the self-image and functioning of the late 17th century nobles than do the theoretical works.