

SUMMARY

This work analyses everyday life of *popolani* in late medieval Split on the example of the craft class. At first, it presents briefly the foundation, urban expansion and economic topography of the city in the 15th century and furthermore it explores the social development of late medieval Split. The central part of this work explains the economic differentiation of commoners and describes the economic activities of its craft part. At the end, this text analyses everyday life opportunities of Split craftsmen showing, in short, its housing culture, clothing and nutrition in Dalmatian Middle Ages.

So, this text shows that medieval Split was small, relatively well-regulated city with established rules of every day life and economic activity. This was the town of class divided society in which all social and political power belonged to city patricians, and the rest of society had no influence into city management. However, like other communes on the east Adriatic coast, at the beginning of the 15th century Split became an integral part of the Venetian *Stato da Mar*. Since then, the interests of formerly autonomous commune were submitted to strictly centralized policy of the new authority. So, the Venetians set up at the head of the city its own man, a Venetian duke and captain, and to a local government they added a new services that supposed to ensure the implementation of Venetian interests in the peripheral areas of the state.

Over the time, the social and economic ties were established among the Venetian newcomers and local residents, and some of them eventually resulted with family ties between the Venetian and local nobility. In that way the Venice created a class of itself loyal nobility.

However, these changes were not the only news that had affected Split society in late Middle Ages. At that time actually started the unstoppable process of restructuring the Split society, and a new government encouraged it. Beside a closed class of urban nobility and the class of the poor commoners, at the 15th century finally appears the layer of wealthy citizens as the middle class of this society. It was formed primarily by big traders who managed to expand their businesses and acquire a great wealth into terms of changed socio-political and economic situation of the 15th century. The wealthy citizens imitated aristocratic lifestyle by accumulation of land property, the expansion of business, education, housing and dressing.

Actually, they were constantly aspiring to social position of patricians, but not belonging to the city Council permanently allocated them from the class of the most powerful men in the city. However, in the era of Venetian rule the noble Council had no real power, but even then the Split patricians carefully preserve the remains of former authority which permanently separated them from the rest of medieval society.

Apart from the rich merchants, the wealthy craftsmen also belonged to a class of rich citizens. These craftsmen were primarily rich jewelers, painters, wood carvers, textile dyers and shipbuilders whose activities were at a higher level of technological development or had a larger range of production. These artisans also passed through long-term education and they had to invest more seed capital to start a business, so their products were more expensive and they were able to generate more profit than other artisans. Thus, the key factors in determining the profitability of craft production are the master profile and the level of initial investment. Like the rich traders, these artisans also tried to expand their businesses, to create a land property and to accumulate as much as possible profit, and in that way to imitate the aristocratic life style.

The rest of the poor craftsmen, however, belonged to the bottom of hierarchical scale of society. Completely excluded from any form of political power, extremely disempowered in social terms, and often socially marginalized, the majority of craft population in late medieval Split was every day fighting for bare existence. Therefore Split craftsmen its home budget usually filled with financial resources from other economic activities, for example from agriculture. In fact, this research showed that most of Split craftsmen was buying or renting the small plots to provide the food for their families, and only the richest masters created big land properties as a sign of representation and social prestige.

Beside the craft production and agrarian economy, the Split artisans were also engage in trade of craft products, raw materials and services. Their shops were usually situated in the business centre of town, around the St. Lawrence Square and in the street that connected the northern entrance to the city, the gate of Pistura, and the southern entrance to the city, the Sea Gate. Namely, the economic topography of the city in the 15th century shows a strong concentration of craft workshops, stores and warehouses in this area. Furthermore, as the preserved sources confirm, the Split craftsmen also preferred to live in economically most

active parts of the city, so their favorite neighborhoods were also near the Split business center. They lived in modest conditions, rarely in stone houses but more often in small wooden houses that they sometimes shared with several members of the extended family. In the upper part of the house the craft family lived, and in the ground floor of house were usually situated shops and other commercial rooms. The interior of that space was small, but extremely functional, and it usually contained only the basic necessities of life. Actually, the preserved craft inventories indicate extreme poverty of commoners, and lists of craftsmen goods with a rich asset represent only a rarity among the survived sources.

In the last part of this text, which explores the everyday life of artisan class, social subordination and poverty of commoner class is the most expressed. Differences of welfare are reflected already in premarital agreements and dowry gifts that are much poorer in commoner class than in citizen or patrician families. Actually, the entire system of inheritance shows differences among different social classes. While the patrician families keep their land property for male successors that will continue the kindred, the daughters in commoner families still sometimes inherit the family real estate and even houses. However, these were the rare cases, but they are still recorded in preserved sources. And finally, social inequality of Split society in the late Middle Ages was also manifested in other aspects of daily life, in dressing, for example, or in nutrition. At that time, actually, people were convinced that everyone should dress or eat according to his or her social status. That practice confirms even preserved documents, especially inventories which record much more clothes, dishes and kitchen utensils in houses of wealthy craftsmen than in those of poor artisans.

So, at the end we can say that the Split society in the late Middle Ages was deeply socially divided. While the social elites enjoyed the luxury and easy life, the majority of Split society barely satisfied their basic needs. However, differences in social status were not expressed only in the material conditions of everyday life, but they were legally guaranteed with different levels of social and political rights. So, formally disempowered, commoners were trying to follow the behavior patterns of nobility by keeping the fraternity meetings and imitating the work of noble Council. However, such attempts were only a reflection of the general inequalities and social divisions. Actually, in the Middle Ages society is naturally

divided into classes and each individual knows where is his place in the hierarchy scale. Attempts to change this condition were only rare and exceptional appearances.

