

Darija Kuharić, senior lecturer of German language

Faculty of Agriculture Osijek

HR-31000 Osijek, 1d P. Svačića

Phone: +385 (0)31 554-940 Fax: +385 (0)31 554-800

E-mail address: dkuharic@pfos.hr

Ines Hocenski, teaching assistant

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

The Department of Information Sciences

HR-31000 Osijek 9 L. Jaegera

Phone: +385 (0)31 494-655 Fax: +385 (0)31 212-514

E-mail address: ihocenski@ffos.hr

Tatjana Mioković, director of foreign languages

Pučko otvoreno učilište Osijek,

HR-31000 Osijek 6 L. Jaegera

Phone: +385 (0)31 212-808 Fax: +385 (0)31 212-805

E-mail address: tatjana.miokovic@os.t-com.hr

**A GIFT OF THE PAST TO THE FUTURE: A KEEPSAKE OF HOME
COOKBOOKS AND SOME FRAGMENTS OF HISTORY OF NUŠTAR**

**POKLON IZ PROŠLOSTI ZA BUDUĆNOST: OČUVANJE PRIVATNIH
KUCHARICA I NEKIH FRAGMENTA POVIJESTI NUŠTRA**

ABSTRACT

This topic offers an excellent window onto the notion of everyday life that anthropologists wish to understand theoretically and examine ethnographically in the last two decades not only all over the world, but also in Croatia. When it comes to our country, it is all about grandmothers' cooking. Grandmothers are recognized as the highest authority when it comes to cooking. They have lived through hard times and devoted their lives to feeding their husbands and children. When they are gone, valuable links with the past will vanish with them unless their children or grandchildren take time to learn from them. Therefore, their recipes represent a time capsule of generations gone by, but not only from kitchens. A very precious source of information, private collections of handwritten recipes passed down from generation to generation, deserve serious study. There is, namely, a strong connection between the home cookbooks and their historical and social framework. This paper presents the first part of the private collection of recipes collected and written by two or more female family members who according to some sources served at Nuštar nobility mansion (Khuen-Belasi) at the end of the 19th and in the beginning of the 20th century. Personal recipe collections may be considered not only as texts, but also as artifacts, which leads to a material culture approach. This methodology calls for inductive research, including a three-step process of description, induction and speculation. Establishment of a historical, geographical and cultural context for each collection allows the scholar to formulate an appropriate hypothesis and test for conclusions. To demonstrate this process, this paper describes the step-by-step implementation of this methodology with a specific example. This

is a study of a private late 19th/early 20th manuscript collection, which examines the impact of the Habsburg Monarchy and the serving at Nuštar nobility mansion.

Key words: *handwritten recipes, private manuscript collection, culinary tradition, German, Nuštar*

SAŽETAK

Ova tema pruža izvrstan uvid u pojam svakodnevnog života, koji antropolozi žele teoretski protumačiti i etnografski ispitati u posljednja dva desetljeća, kako širom svijeta, tako i u Hrvatskoj. Što se tiče naše zemlje, naglasak je na bakinoj kuhinji. Bake predstavljaju najviši autoritet kad je riječ o kuhanju. Živjele su u teškim uvjetima i posvetile svoje živote hranjenju svojih supruge i djece. Kada one umru, s njima nestaju i bitne veze s prošlosti, ukoliko njihova djeca ili unuci ne pronađu vremena da uče od njih. Stoga njihovi recepti predstavljaju svojevrsnu vremensku kapsulu prošlih generacija, ali ne samo iz kuhinja. Vrlo vrijedan izvor informacija, a radi se o privatnim zbirka rukom pisanih recepata koji se prenose u nasljeđe, zaslužuju pomno istraživanje. Postoji, naime, vrlo uska veza između privatnih kuharica te njihovog povijesnog i društvenog okvira. U radu je predstavljen prvi dio privatne zbirke recepata koju su prikupile dvije članice jedne obitelji, a prema nekim izvorima služile su kod obitelji Khuen-Belasi u dvorcu u Nuštru krajem 19. i početkom 20. stoljeća. Privatne zbirke recepata mogu se gledati ne samo kao tekstovi već i uporabni predmeti, što je zapravo na pristup materijalnoj kulturi. Ova metodologija zahtijeva induktivni pristup istraživanju, a uključuje proces koji se sastoji od tri faze: opisa, dedukcije i razmatranja. Utvrđivanje povijesnog, geografskog i kulturnog konteksta za svaku zbirku omogućuje istraživaču da postavi odgovarajuću hipotezu i provjeru zaključka. Spomenuti postupak opisuje se u radu implementacijom metodologije po fazama na specifičnom primjeru. U radu se istražuje privatna zbirka rukom pisanih recepata s kraja 19. stoljeća/početka 20. stoljeća u kontekstu Habsburške monarhije i služenja u dvorcu u Nuštru.

Gljučne riječi: *rukom pisani recepti, privatna zbirka pisanih recepata, kulinarska tradicija, njemačk, Nuštar*

1. Introduction

Not long ago, according to Nives Rittig-Beljak, the examination of food preparation and recipes would not be appropriate. But today, the historical, ethnological, cultural, communicational and sociological impacts of food is not only comprehensive, but it has also brought about great interest in the field of linguistics.

With regard to culinary skills, a long tradition in both oral and written knowledge transfer has been present for a long time in the cultural context. For over a decade, two of the authors of this paper are in possession of the collection of three valuable handwritten recipe books: they inherited it from their (great) grand mother Marija Palčić (born Nagy), who was born and lived for some time in Nuštar. This paper is dedicated to the first and oldest manuscript collection: it will serve as an example for analyzing personal recipe collections as historical and cultural artifacts. One may ask himself, why study personal recipe collections if they are so difficult to read? When it comes to the study of personal recipe collections, Julia Child thought they were a good source: "Cookbooks are the history of an epoch. They show how people prepared and ate the ingredients available to them. Cookbooks provide answers to social, political, and economic questions about the society for which they were written. They are an essential ingredient to preserving our past and enhancing our future." (Rotger, 2013, 2)

A key concept in developing a methodology to work with personal recipe collections is the idea of looking at such collections as artifacts, rather than documents or texts. This approach does not call for looking for narrative elements, since recipe collections may have a story to tell but they are not stories. J. D. Prown defines material culture as a “the study through artifacts of the beliefs -- values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions--of a particular community or society at a given time.” Therefore, he proposes a scholarly approach to the study of artifacts that is broken down into three steps: description, deduction, and speculation.

2. Description

Description includes an account of the physical dimensions of an artifact, a description of the materials, an inventory, notation of content (such as motifs and inscriptions) and an analysis of the form of the artifact. Applied to the study of a personal recipe collection, description would include measurements of the object at hand (the recipe box, manuscript book or scrapbook), notation of its overall condition, a description of the materials of construction (wood, paper, metal, magazine clippings, product labels) and a notation of the form of the collection (Prown, 1982, 7).

2.1 The first part of our collection can be described as a manuscript recipe book according to B. Rotger's definition, since it is exclusively filled with handwritten recipes. The proposed methodology for studying personal recipe collections begins with the physical description of the object.

Our manuscript recipe book dimensions are 10 cm wide by 16 cm tall and approximately 0.25 cm thick. There are neither front or back covers, just sheets of paper bound with a piece of natural linen thread. It is the most common type of sewn bookbinding that falls into the category of longstitch binding. The collection is in an extremely fragile state. Since there are no covers, it is unclear whether it was set apart from a (note)book or these were separate sheets of paper bound together. The pages of the book are horizontally lined in blue, and divided vertically into 3 columns with red ink. The pages are browned and crumbling. All recipes were written in fountain pen (dip pen?), except for the last page: there are traces of a recipe written in pencil, but it is absolutely illegible and almost invisible.

There are 47 (+1, see the sentence above) recipes written on 30 pages (Table 1). The formation of capital letters, vowels, and the common consonant combinations look very different from what we are used to, since the old handwriting is used. It took time and a lot of patience to decipher old handwriting techniques and characters.

Table 1 List of the recipes from the first and the oldest manuscript collection

Kompot - Šljive	Kifle od šećera	Getrokene
Breskve - u tvrdi saft	Bečka torta	Mandeltorte
Pradajzl	Bišof brot	Mandel - Bögen
Piškoten torte	Štefani torta	Haselnuss - Brot
Griz torta	Fil od doboš torte	Nuss - Brot
Vanilije kiffeln	Magdalena kiffeln	Napoleon - Schnitten
Muškacondel	Mandel begen	Kaffecremetorte
Pušl!	Schokoladeschifteln	Schokoladekiffeln
Mak torta	Mandelcrème	Vanilije nokl (kano- koh)
Blitz torta	Nußbrüserln	Vanilijen nokl (ili koch)
Pušlice	Čokolad torta	Epfl pita
Vanilija torta	Weichesel - Torte	Doboš torta
Šokolad štangeln	Kastanien - Torte	Gesundheits kugluf
Fil od doboš torte	Buscuit - Torte	Carigradska torta
Bischof brot	Chocolade - Eis	
Kiten kess	Weißer Zucker Glasur	
Gebunte mandel torte	Biscuit - Roulade	

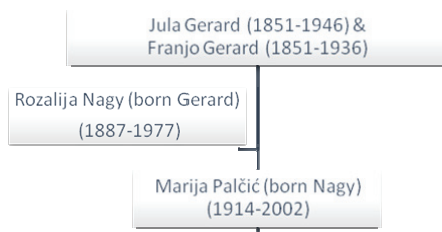
Source: authors' private handwritten recipe cookbook

3. Deduction

The second stage of analysis moves from the object itself to the relationship between the object and the perceiver and is divided into three steps: sensory and intellectual engagement and emotional response (Prown, 1982, 8), i.e. the perceiver engages with the artifact to assess what the object can or cannot tell. The observer may consider what it would be like to interact with the object, consider its touch, feel and smell (to which the food scholar would add flavor) and consider his or her own emotional response to the object (Prown, 1982, 13).

The oldest manuscript recipe book from our collection contains recipes for 3 preserves and 44 desserts (a combined total for all cakes, pastry, ice creams, frostings, pies). 40 recipes are written in Croatian, 6 in German, whereas in the "*Chocolade-Eis*" recipe both languages are combined. When it comes to the language used in Croatian kitchens in the 19th and the 20th centuries, the influence of the German can be seen both in published and hand written recipes passed from towns to towns, places to places, especially in the areas where the influence of German language was significant within the frames of cultural and historical context (Rittig-Beljak, 2003, 43). Surprisingly, desserts make up almost the entire collection. But, according to B. Rotger's opinion it is quite common. "The predominance of dessert recipes is characteristic of most recipe collections. Cooks use written recipes for baking and candy making because success in this kind of cooking requires precise measurements, temperatures, and methods; written recipes serve as a memory aid for these procedures." (Rittig-Beljak, 2003, 22). As mentioned previously, the collection was inherited from our (great) grand mother. When taking over our collection of three handwritten recipe books, we were informed by a close relative that the recipes were not only taken down by Marija Palčić (born Nagy) and her mother, Rozalija Nagy (born Gerard), but that there was a probability that a tiny part of manuscript was handwritten by the oldest known female family member, Julia Gerard (Table 2).

Table 2 *A part of family tree (parentage)*



Source: Years of birth known to the authors

4. Speculation

Having progressed from the object itself in description to the interaction between object and perceiver in deduction, the analysis now moves completely to the mind of the perceiver, to speculation: development of a hypothesis and testing for conclusions (Rittig-Beljak, 2003, 9).

The history of culture is the history of customs takeover. There are multiple ways in which the recipe illuminates the cultural worlds in which it appears and constitutes a textual form worth of study. The historical range also helps us in uncovering the ancient roots of accepting food, dishes and recipes. In this sense, both Croatian and Austrian culinary traditions are based on the old Germanic dietary habits. The very first cook books were published for noblemen and townsmen, for rich population (or, better to say, their professional cooks and servants). But the exchange of recipes either orally or handwritten, was not discontinued by their appearance. The recipes published in the Habsburg monarchy were copied in the home cookbooks; they were translated, changed or simplified (Rittig-Beljak, 2003, 44). In this sense, Croatian cuisine made a significant contribution to the development of Middle European cuisine.

Unfortunately, we are unable to precisely establish the period, in which the recipes from our first and oldest manuscript collection were taken down, since there are no data regarding year(s). Nevertheless, if we compare them to the example given by N. Rittig-Beljak, we may determine the approximate age of it. In her book "Švapski kulinarij - dodir tradicija u Hrvatskoj" (2003) talks about a manuscript collection from Zagreb. "(...) below the title **Linzer teig**, there is a recipe written in Croatia, but in the same handwritten cookbook one can find **Oranšen Torte** and **Osijeker Torte** written in German. Obviously, these recipes were rewritten. The owner of this cookbook rewrote the text, using the orthography she was skilled in. Such kind of recipe copying can be found in family archives from other Croatian towns." N. Rittig-Beljak's example and our manuscript collection are parallel in the following feature: among other recipes *Haselnuss-Brot*, *Getrockene Mandeltorte*, *Napoleon-Schnitten* were also written in Croatian, whereas *Kaffeecremetorte* or *Schokoladekipfeln* were taken down in poor German, unlike *Schokoladeschiffeln*¹ or *Mandelcrème*. According to N. Rittig-Beljak's opinion, the Zagreb manuscript collection dates from the beginning of the 20th century, because the owner was born in 1884. Since our (great) greatgrandmother, Rozalija Nagy (born Gerard) was born in 1887, we may assume the same.

¹ Schiffel = an Austrian sort of sweet pastry

4.1 Could Julia Gerard be also be one of authors?

As previously mentioned, an additional option must be taken in account: there are vague possibilities that the oldest recipes were written by Julia Gerard (born in 1851). This is based on several assumptions. First of all, N. Rittig-Beljak claims that several generations of housewives used to take down recipes in a home cookbook. There are more than two different handwritings available in the first manuscript collection. Even calligraphy is used in the titles of a couple of recipes.

Secondly, only the first three recipes are for preserves (*Kompot-šljive*², *Breskve - u tvrdi saft*³, *Paradajzl*⁴), the rest are desserts. In her "Kulinarij" N. Rittig-Beljak mentions some open-ended interviews led with persons of German origin, which she used in order to gather information with regard to the fundamental importance of traditional German food culture in Croatia (Rittig-Beljak, 2003, 101). Additionally, she prepared a standard interview for a twenty interviewee group, who were presented with exactly the same questions (22) in the same order. The person (initials R.K.B., male) gave an interesting answer to the question number 4:

"4. *Did you exchange recipes with your neighbours (Croats, Hungarians...Czechs)?*

Absolutely, starting with winter food preservation such as fermenting sauerkraut, compote⁵, kittenkes, pickle⁶, cooked tomato sauce/juice etc." (Rittig-Beljak, 2003, 112).

At this point we can draw an analogy between the interviewee's recollection and recipes from our manuscript collection. The sentence structure, the lack of punctuation as well as everyday speech, in which the above mentioned recipes are taken down (there is also a recipe for *Kiten kess*, but we prefer to categorize it as a dessert rather than preserved winter food), shows that they were previously heard and memorized, i.e. that they were exchanged. Therefore, we assume that our ancestors were of German origin and learned some new techniques from their neighbours how to preserve food for winter.

According to the available data from the Internet, the family name Gerard originates from France and Germany (Table 3) .

² *Kompot Šljive*

2 kile šljiva tri fritlja kile šećera i litru i pol vode i pol litre polak vinskog sirćeta i krupnog cimeta i kvircnelkn u krpicu zavezati skupa kuvat i 7 dana sas istim saftom prelivat šljive 8 dana da provre - šljive sve na 5-6 mesta probosti-

³ *Breskve - u tvrdi saft*

2 ili 3 kile bresaka jedna kila šećera i pol litre vode pa šećer špinovati a breskve se ogule i jedan mali komad kreča nezagašenog metne se u vodu i breske postoje za jedan fritalj sata u vodi sa krečom onda se izvade iz kreča i metne ih se u čistu vodu i dobro se isperu onda se metne i špinovani šećer i lepo polako da kuva onda se breske povade u flašu a saft ako je odviše redak mora se pustiti da malo ... da bude kao med onda se taj saft prelije preko breske-

⁴ *Paradajzl*

Metne se u vodu vinskog sirćeta, da je prilično kiselo a paradajzl se izseče na šnitove kao što se dinje reže onda se metne u tu vodu pa se kuva a u drugu rajndliku metne se šećer na 2 kile paradajzla 1 kila šećera i jedan lemun se izseče na okrug i pol litre vode se prelije na taj šećer onda kad je paradajzl kuvan onda se iz te vode povadi i onda se metne u taj šećer i kuva dok paradajzl nije sladak onda se ostavi ... se metne ...paradajz u flaše

⁵ a dessert of fruit cooked in syrup

⁶ pickled cucumbers

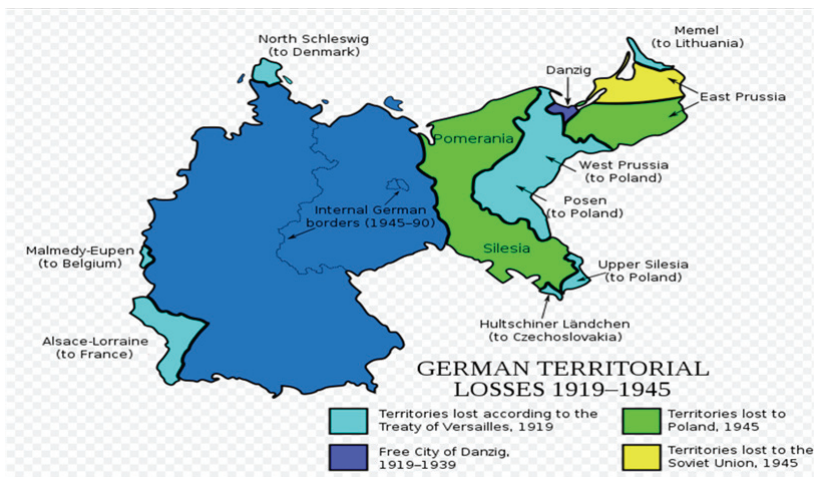
Table 3 Number of individuals with the family name Gerard in the states that it originates from

France 973,101	•Lorraine	269,171
	•Champagne-Ardenne	107,331
Germany 3,758	•Saarland	580
	•Rheinland Pfalz	362

Source: <http://www.heraldryinstitute.com/cognomi/Gerard/Germany/idc/781147/lang/en/>

The old, from the historical point of view interesting province of Alsace-Lorraine⁷ seems to be the cradle of the family (name). A lot of research was carried out in order to describe and explain the ways and waves of migration of Germans (along with Hungarians, Slovaks and Ruthenians, and to a significantly smaller extend Frenchmen, Italians, Spaniards) over a two century period down the Danube towards the southeast. The largest number of immigrants came from this region in particular.

Map 1 Alsace-Lorraine in the historical context



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorial_evolution_of_Germany#/media/File:Germanborders.svg (accessed 11 February 2015)

The German immigration was motivated by economic reasons (Geiger, 1997, 10). The biggest wave of the German immigration to the Hungarian part of the monarchy came to Banat,

⁷ Alsace is located on France's eastern border and on the west bank of the upper Rhine adjacent to Germany and Switzerland. The political status of Alsace has been heavily influenced by historical decisions, wars, and strategic politics. The historical language of Alsace is Alsatian, a Germanic (mainly Alemannic) dialect also spoken in part of Lorraine and across the Rhine, but today most Alsatians primarily speak French, the official language of France. 43% of the adult population, and 3% of those 3–17 years old, stated in 2012 that they speak Alsatian.

Bačka and Baranja. They were more sparsely distributed throughout Croatia, Slavonia and Srijem. Most of the German townships were in Slavonia around Osijek, Vinkovci, Vukovar, and smaller townships in the vicinity of Đakovo, Požega, Garešnica, Daruvar i Virovitica (Geiger, 1997: 13). The Germans who inhabited the area of the former South Hungary mostly belonged to the peasantry, living of agriculture, and came to the fertile Danube area motivated by imperial patents and royal proclamations, looking for a way to fulfill their basic existential needs. Interestingly enough, another N. Rittig-Beljak's interviewee (initials Ž.H.Z., female) provided us with a useful information when asked

"2. Do you know where (when) did your family move to Croatia?"

According to some research done (...), the family originates from the French-German border (Alsace). They settled in Vukovar and Sotin." (Rittig-Beljak, 2003, 103)., which is not far away from Nuštar (15 km). Why Nuštar? In this village in eastern Croatia two of the our ancestors were born and lived, whereas two of them were buried at the Nuštar cemetery.

4.2. Desserts prepared for Khuen- Belassi family at the Nuštar Mansion

Fertile plain, rich in game and fish, drew the first settlers in ancient time to the Nuštar area. The name Nuštar comes from a monasterium, because a Benedictine monastery of the Holy Spirit existed there in 1263. One of the owners of Nuštar's estate was the Austrian lieutenant colonel, military constructor and Alsaic (sic!) nobleman, Maximilian Eugen count Gosseau d'Henef, who was buried in the mansion's chapel. When he died in 1741, the estate was brought by Franjo baron Trenk. From the end of 18th century (1782) till the first half of 20th century the Nuštar nobility mansion was closely connected with the name Khuen-Belasi. It was an old noble family that originated from Tyrol.

The nobility became established as native and had a close contact with local population. Noblemen hired local talented young girls, who proved to be very good cooks. N.Rittig-Beljak mentions that some information on "high level" cuisine may be gathered from numerous both rural and urban households, which own hand written cookbooks: it was their greatgrandmothers who worked in the nobility mansions. There were no problems in spreading new meals and their acceptance, because the local population was not infrequently trilingual, especially when it comes to spoken language, due to the German settlers. (Rittig-Beljak, 2003, 93). Therefore, we strongly believe that at least one part of the recipes for desserts were not only handwritten by the previously named ancestor(s), but also prepared by her/them for the members of Khuen-Belasi family in the mansion. The content of recipes demonstrates the fanciness and richness of desserts. After all, desserts were the part "high level" cuisine in Middle Europe.

5. Conclusion

The structures of modern society take as their basic unit the individual rather than, as with agrarian or peasant society, the group or community. Modernity must be understood, in part at least, against the background of what went before. Since almost every single aspect of society has been investigated nowadays, no one should be taken by surprise that there has even been a widespred interest in everything related to food. Fancy desserts were prepared at noble courts, in the kitchens of distinguished clergymen, as well as in monasteries, but when it comes to Croatia, this part has been neglected in investigations. Thanks to handwritten cookbooks, they found their way to the table of upper classes. Today, the inherited

manuscript collections serve as highly valuable sources of information and the basis for further investigation in terms of history, culture, sociology and linguistics.

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