FABRICS WITH ‘BIZARRE’ MOTIFS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CROATIA

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During the eighteenth century Croatia had a modest level of textile production and expensive fabrics came to Croatia via trade with larger European centres. Fabrics with ‘bizarre’ motifs will be used as an example to show the growth of these trade networks in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Croatia, through which Western fashion influences arrived in Croatia.

Fabrics with ‘bizarre’ motifs (Fig. 1) were very popular in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Europe, especially in Italy, England, and France. Cora Ginsburg describes these motifs as a group of designs of Asian-like inspired motifs and Baroque ornaments that were sometimes woven in the East to suit the demands of the lucrative European export market.¹ Vilhelm Slomann applied the term in Bizarre Design and Silk (1953) to categorise a large number of silk fabrics (German. Bizarre Seiden, English. Bizarre silks). A decade later Peter Thornton identified the period in which these designs were made as 1685 to 1720, while another decade later Barbari Markowsky suggested a period of 1695 to 1720. According to Ackermann (2000), the term was first used by Ernst Scheyer in his doctoral dissertation on Chinoiserie in 1928, but without proper definition. Ackermann also said that ‘bizarre’ fabrics were woven for a relatively short period of time, between the very end of the seventeenth century and the first twenty years of the eighteenth century. They were produced mostly in Europe for wealthy clients. He also points out that the term ‘bizarre’ fabrics means a specific style of pattern, not a specific weave. ‘Bizarre’ style was described as a flowery décor filled with abstract elements. A dynamic composition gives the full ‘bizarre’ effect. Luxurious ‘bizarre’ motifs were emphasized with gold and silver threads, while floral decoration was made out of coloured threads. It is assumed that production of these fabrics was influenced by Chinese and Indian textiles that were imported into Europe. Ackerman describes two categories of ‘bizarre’ fabrics. The first category, ‘pre-Bizarre’ (Vorstufen), shows fabrics more typical of the Baroque style, while his category of ‘semi-naturalistic flowers with Rocaille elements’, such as those with ‘vertical stripes’ and

‘lace-patterns motifs’, presents fabrics decorated with typical elements of Rocaille-Rococo style, dated between 1710 and 1740.\(^2\)

The Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb acquired a skirt made from silk fabric in gold and yellow with ‘bizarre’ motifs (Fig.2) on 10 December 1936 from Jovan P. Leman, a clerk at the Agrarian Commission in Bitolj. It had belonged to the Lamuelli-Kačić family from Blatoon, the island of Korčula. On the brocaded yellow satin background we can see branches, leaves, flowers, and vases in pink, green, and blue. Among these are meandering decorative motifs made from metal thread. The textile was probably manufactured by the French in Lyon at the beginning of the eighteenth century (Ivoš 2010:31). The skirt is made up of seven panels of silk. Its overall width is 3.5 meters and the length is 1 meter.

A similar use of colour and the use of metal threads can be found in a dalmatic (Fig.3), the fabric of which is believed to have come from a weaving workshop in Lyon. It has been dated to 1730-1735 (Ivoš 2010:121). It is a mix of multicoloured brocade and light brown silk satin with some parts made from ivory and white silk damask. The main motif is a tree trunk that floats surrounded by big light-green leaves, that end as a grand flower with dynamically turned petals in different hues of pink. There is also a blue brocaded apple motif (Ivoš 2010:121). One of the dalmatic’s sleeves raises new questions because the fabric is pieced together on the shoulder. This may indicate that the fabric was originally used for a different purpose, as it resembles the area around the waist of women’s dresses. Since noblewomen, in most cases, are known to have bequeathed their precious fabrics and gowns to ecclesiastical orders as a way of atoning for their sins, one can make an assumption that this dalmatic may have been remade into church attire after its original use.\(^3\) Fashionable dress was altered by skilled tailors who respected the mirror composition of patterns and hid the piecing of the garment by clever use of the fabric’s pattern. On the other hand, evidence found in eighteenth-century church records shows that ecclesiastical orders also bought both plain and patterned new French silk from Venice. There was a tradition of embroidering both plain and patterned foreign silk fabrics in domestic workshops (Horvat 1994:139).

I shall now consider certain questions that the skirt and the dalmatic raise. Was the skirt (Fig.2) made by a domestic tailor with an imported fabric or was it imported as a finished product? Was the dalmatic recycled from a gown into a liturgical vestment and where was each made? If we consider it an imported fabric used by domestic tailors, we


\(^3\) There are a large number of liturgical vestments with similar indications that they were redesigned from fashionable attire.
need to think about trade. According to archival data trading routes in Croatia were established and fabrics held a significant place in trading. An outline of the geography of trade offers a clearer view of the circumstances that led to trade in fabrics with ‘bizarre’ motifs.

In this region trade largely depended on political circumstances. In the eighteenth century, what is now modern-day Croatia was divided into a territory governed by the Venetian Republic (Istria, Dalmatia and Albania-Boka), the Kingdom of Croatia, and the Independent Republic of Dubrovnik. The skirt was found at the border of the Venetian Republic and the Independent Republic of Dubrovnik. The dalmatic (Fig.3) was found in the territory of Kingdom of Croatia (map 1-4). Croatia has always been at the crossroads of the most important trade routes between East and the West. For centuries Croatia has been the last realm of Christian civilization and cultural influences came primarily from the West. Indeed, there are many historical records and travellers’ accounts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which testify to the dynamism of trade in Croatia: Filip de Diversis (1440) and Serafin Razzi (1595). Even the eminent historian Fernand Braudel in his work *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1949) noted the importance of the area as a market.

Until the fall of the Republic of Venice in 1797, the coastal areas of Croatia remained under the strong influence of Italy, when the eastern Adriatic coast became the subject of dispute between France and Austria. Dalmatia was the least inhabited area of Croatia, in contrast to Slavonia and Central Croatia. The most significant role in economic, cultural, and educational development was played by Maria Theresa (1717-1780), Empress of the Holy Roman Empire, for in the second half of the eighteenth century she ordered many reforms. By then Croatia had eight royal cities: Zagreb, Varaždin, Koprivnica, Karlovac, Požega, Rijeka and Bakar, and forty-four smaller centres of trade.

**Fabric trading in the territory of Kingdom of Croatia**

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4 Turkish incursions were suppressed entirely during seventeenth century (Valentić, Mirko. Gradiščanski Hrvati od XVI stoljeća do danas, Povijesni muzej Hrvatske, Zagreb, 1970.)

5 Maria Theresa was the only female ruler of the Habsburg dominions and the last of the House of Habsburg. She was the sovereign of Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Bohemia, Mantua, Milan, Lodomeria and Galicia, the Austrian Netherlands and Parma. By marriage, she was Duchess of Lorraine, Grand Duchess of Tuscany and Holy Roman Empress.

6 Varaždin was the fashion centre, with numerous social events, until 1776 when a big fire ruined the city and most manufactures, moving social gatherings to Zagreb.
During the seventeenth and particularly in the eighteenth centuries Zagreb became a very powerful trading centre by making the most of its geographical position on the River Sava. Numerous court documents tell of cities from which fabrics and other clothing goods were imported and to which they were exported. Using the River Sava goods came into Zagreb from Germany, Austria, and Italy. Ships from Venice to Senj or Rijeka transported the goods. From there they were delivered to Zagreb and Varaždin by coaches via Karlovac: the road from Karlovac to Rijeka was called Karolina (1726-1728); from Karlovac to Senj was called Jozefina until 1779. At Karlovac the goods were loaded onto riverboats and shipped via the Sava, Drava, and Danube to Budapest and further north, and vice versa.

In Zagreb a certain quantity of goods was sold at fairs.\(^7\) In the eighteenth century the number of international fairs in Zagreb grew to seven. The merchants who came to these fairs did not have to pay taxes or duty and so these fairs were very well attended.\(^8\) *Hrvatski sabori* (Croatian government meetings) had a huge influence on the growth of trade in Zagreb and between 1700 and 1770 there were 118 meetings that took place. Nobles, representatives of the counties and free towns, attended these meetings often bringing their families along. In big towns the consumers at the fairs were usually rich citizens and residents of neighbouring towns. Nobles purchased goods abroad as well as at fairs, and they organized the events - formal receptions, parties, and dances - that were attended by richer citizens at which competitive dressing in luxury fabrics became the norm. Such events attracted foreign traders who traded in variety of fashionable goods. Even ordinary citizens aspired to join in the ‘competition’. Domestic craftsmen (tailors) tried to compete with foreign supplies of fashion goods. Tailors’ guilds formed at the end of the seventeenth century fell into two categories: *Horvatski* (Croatian) tailors who made suits out of cheap fabrics, and German tailors who made expensive suits. Despite the apparent geographic origin of these two groups, all of them were Croatian and kept books in the Croatian language (Horvat 1936:38).

Merchants were called *mercator* (from the Latin) or, in Croatian, *trgovac*. Wholesalers were called *mercators* and retailers were called *caupo* or *kramar*. In the eighteenth century even women started trading and they were called *mercatorisae*.\(^9\) A merchant could be domestic (*Mercator domesticus*) or foreign (*mercator extraneus*), the latter being allowed to trade only during fairs while domestic traders had no such

\(^7\) Zagreb hosted fairs since 1256.

\(^8\) The Free Fair charter that was organized yearly was granted by Ferdinand III on 22 September 1655.

\(^9\) *Modiskinje* (women merchants) who traded with finished goods, distinct from craftsmen, appeared in the first half of the nineteenth century.
restrictions.\textsuperscript{10} Certain merchants specialized, so there is a whole range of terms for them. For example, \textit{sagarius} was a merchant who sold ready-made garments; \textit{metaxa} was a merchant in silk and silk goods; \textit{manufacturer negotiator} traded in fashionable fabrics and goods and is a term that only begins to appear in the eighteenth century; and \textit{rukavičar} \textit{hančomohar} (in German \textit{Handschuhmacher}) was a merchant in footwear.

At the Royal Fair in Zagreb in the middle of the eighteenth century there were forty-three merchants represented. Some were domestic but a large number were foreign (Herkov 1987:208).\textsuperscript{11} The price of merchandise had increased because of the consumption of fashionable and luxury clothing, which resulted in more money being taken out of the Kingdom of Croatia. The government believed that this had to be stopped. On several

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Bagasia} (a fine, thin fabric)
\item \textit{Barchan} (cotton fabric with one hairy side: Ita. Barchane),
\item \textit{bombas} (cotton weaving)
\item \textit{flot, floth} (silk fabric)
\item \textit{maris} (fabric that was often used in the 18. century in Croatia)
\item \textit{septuh} (cotton fabric)
\item \textit{sericum cremesium} (red silk fabric, eg. \textit{sericum chermesinum}, ita. Chermesino, scarlet fabric)
\item \textit{sericum flot} (silk fabric)
\item \textit{sindon} (Ita. Sindone, thin fabric)
\item \textit{subducatura} (various fabrics used for undergarments)
\item \textit{pannua abba} (rough fabric, mostly from the town of Solin)
\item \textit{pannus brazlay} (fabric from Bratislava (Bresalu); Hun. bososzloi)
\item \textit{pannus dynckhespuebler} (fabric from the town of Dinkelsbühl)
\item \textit{pannus karasiae} (voluminous wool fabric from the English town Kersey)
\item \textit{panuus geller} (fabric from the Morovian town Iglave, Jihlave, Ger. Iglau)
\item \textit{pannus granath} (scarlet fabric Ita. granato, lat. granatus)
\item \textit{pannus flandrinus} (fabric from Flanders)
\item \textit{pannus hozzideonberger} (fabric from the town of Lavov; Hung. “Hosszu” long and «Leon-Berg», eg. Löwenberg)
\item \textit{pannus italicus} (various fabrics from Italy)
\item \textit{pannus Kern} (\textit{The best fabric} according to Ger. «Kern»)
\item \textit{pannus masztar} (?)
\item \textit{pannus lafer, lofer} (fabric from the town Lofer (near Salzburg))
\item \textit{pannus lyndathysth} (fabric from the town Lynda maybe Lunda?)
\item \textit{pannus meniher} (fabric from the Flandrian town Menina)
\item \textit{pannus mezupan} (fabric from Italy made from wool and linen)
\item \textit{pannus mornai} (fabric from the English town Morley)
\item \textit{pannus noronberger ili norinberger} (fabric from the town of Nürnberg)
\item \textit{pannus pergomar} (fabric from the town of Bergamo)
\item \textit{pannus pernis} (fabric from the town of Verone, Ita. Scarlet)
\item \textit{pannus taffotae} (shiny fabric for noble man’s garment)
\item \textit{pannus Venetianus} (fabric for Venetian Republic)
\item \textit{pannus vratislaviensis} (fabric from the town of Wroclaw; Breslav)
\item For luxurious clothes panicle or brushes were imported from abroad (\textit{scopulae pro purgandis vestibus})
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{10} Zagreb mostly attracted traders from Dubrovnik, Germany, Hungary, and the Czech and Ottoman Empires (mostly from Macedonia) who were followers of Islam. Many of them came via Trieste where they had temporary warehouses. Thus they could be seen as Christian traders, who enjoyed special privileges in Austrian and Hungarian countries, and therefore Zagreb had to acknowledge them as well.

\textsuperscript{11} The names of the fabrics that appear in Zagreb in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century:
occasions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sumptuary legislation limited the quantity of foreign luxury fabrics allowed to different consumers.\textsuperscript{12} When limitations were imposed noblewomen hid their expensive fashionable clothes in chests and, after their death, these clothes were inherited by the Church.\textsuperscript{13} Laws against luxury clothes did not include church attire and so expensive fabrics from fashionable clothes could be used to make these. The dalmatic (Fig. 3) is one such example.

**Fabric trading in the Croatian territories of the Venetian Republic (Istria, Dalmatia and Albania-Boka) and independent Republic of Dubrovnik**

In eighteenth-century Dalmatia there were two major ports that were used for trading between the East and the West: Split and Dubrovnik. When disease prevented the use of maritime sea trading routes during the eighteenth century, they were replaced by land ones which passed through Bosnia, at that time under the control of Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{14} Goods included leather, fur, and wool. At the beginning of the eighteenth century trading was led by Muslim merchants and in the second half by Jewish merchants. The port of Split grew in the sixteenth century, becoming one of the most important trading points between the Ottoman Empire and the Venetian Republic, particularly in the trading of fabrics. The Ottoman Empire used land (caravans) to travel to Split via Bosnia and then ships were used to transport goods to Venice. Because the Ottoman Empire decided to pave the road to Split,

\textsuperscript{12} Supervision of the trade of foreign goods declared as so-called exotic merchandise and labelled ‘foreign goods’. For that reason in 1774 Zagreb began to use the stamp ‘L.R.C.Z’ (eg. Libera regia civitas Zagriabienisis) (Herkov 1987:215). Quantity limitations:

- silk fabrics in purple and scarlet color and other expensive colors
- silk fabrics in inexpensive colors (blue, green, regular red)
- silk fabric of lower quality
- good quality English fabrics in expensive colors
- lower quality English fabrics in other colors
- scarlet fabrics (scarlet and granat)
- silk fabrics from towns of Padua, Naples (gros de Tour, gros de Naples, croise Damast (Croisee), Damast or Procabelle (brocatelle, low quality brocade or their imitations) and rassette (type of satins)
- fabrics called kepentuh, maris, septuh, mornay, raseta, burset, quinet, capiczol, tabin, tabinet (from franc. tabi – silk), boroszla (Bratislava fabric; hung. boroszloi), paju (flannel fabric) and taffeta (franc. tafetas, taffeta).
- pannus latus floret (franc. «fleuret», type of silk fabric) csinodo dictus, pannus latus perdonon (Bergam) vocatus and floretus simplex
- lodus sea gausape - (tufted wool fabrics, ger. Loden eg. rough Tirol cloth)
- konton and zic (Ciz-Cotten) – cotton fabric
- Pfeffer bandana (germ. Pfeffer-Tüchel)

\textsuperscript{13} Eighteenth-century Croatian noble families: Jelačić, Drašković, Erdödy, Hotković, Pejačević… Hrvatske plemičke obitelji tijekom 18. stoljeća: Jelačić, Drašković, Erdödy, Hotković, Pejačević…

\textsuperscript{14} This occurred three times in Split (1731-1732, 1763-1764, 1784).
the journey from Istanbul to Split took 43 days (Nataša Bajić-Žarko 2004:89). Eighteenth-century Split received two or three caravans per day with hundreds of goods loaded on horses. A list of goods dating from around 1752-53 reveals what arrived in Split and then left for Venice, and vice versa. The specific names of goods tell us about the origin of fabrics and shapes.

A more liberal approach to trade was especially noticeable in the eighteenth century. Besides Venetian ships and merchants in Split, there were also ships and merchants from Naples, Austria, and the Papal States. They all transported goods that came from the East.

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16 Commodity list dating c.1752-1753, referring to the goods that arrived in Split and then left for Venice:
- silk romaneta (130 bundles)
- bambosina shirt
- small silk tapes
- large silk tapes
- small and large buttons
- silk shirts
- boots
- slippers
- turchesca shirts
- mahrame – bandana from Turkish origin
- turchesca fabrics with 4 buckles
- belts
- silk
- leather: beaver, hare, ram, devilfish, ox, old cats, wild cats, goat, lamb, calf, bear, rabbit, badger, camel, panther, jackal, bulgaro (fine leather from Bulgaria)
- wool: fine and medium fine, bleached, washed, shorn and rough wool
- wool from Skadar, Skoplje, Sarajevo, Novi Pazar, Albania
- damashino canvas
- red bombaso canvas
- salonichio
- unusual clothes
- delo stato fabric
- serž / londrini fabric
- scarlet, red fabric
- zambeletto fabric
- silk: fine, rough, for coloring, unclean, loose

Goods that came from Venice to Split:
- fine fabric with Kalanka pattern
- calimani fabric
- fine French silk
- arrattine from England
- spagniolletti
- tamina from France
- kamelot from England, black silk with flower patterns
- black brussellini from England
- green fabric sempitterna landines from England
- fine French and English silk are often mentioned In many places

17 In 1787 six ships were docked: two from Trieste, one from Rijeka, one from Lovran, one from Volosko, and one from Ancona. There is information about fabrics being brought into Split from European centres via
During the seventeenth century Split had traded intensively with Venice while Dubrovnik traded with Ancona. The Venetians were not very fond of this market competition so they tried using their political powers to destroy the trade route between Dubrovnik and Ancona. However Ancona was at the intersection of trading routes and was the centre of trading for goods such as wool, leather, and cotton (the latter coming from Balkans). Moreover it had supplied the Adriatic ports with Florentine and Ottoman Empire fabrics, and expensive silk from France and England. During the eighteenth century Split also increased its trade with Ancona in order to compete with Dubrovnik. In 1716, out of a population of 2000 citizens in Split, 18 were craftsmen (1 hatter, 3 furriers, 10 tailors, 1 apprentice, 3 henpecks). In 1760 while the population remained the same, the number of craftsmen had increased to 26 (many of whom were tailors and shoemakers who had escaped from persecution in the Ottoman Empire (Nataša Bajić-Žarko 2004:164)).

Fashionable eighteenth-century clothes were expensive. They were made from imported silk, velvet, brocade, fine cloth, and lace. The style of dress was not far behind Italian fashions. Rich women would go to Ancona or Venice where they would order dresses and other decorative items like fans, gloves, scarves, handbags and other items (Stojan 1996:115). A great deal of importance was given to jewellery: silver and gold jewels and necklaces made from pearls and coral. Both women and men used them in the same way, as decorative items. The fashionable skirt in Fig. 2 was worn on the island of Korčula. The island was on the border of Venetian Republic and the Independent Republic of Dubrovnik. At that time Korčula was a cultural centre in which the bias was towards Western art and fashion, especially towards the fashions of the Italian cities. It is safe to assume that the simply-cut skirt was the work of a domestic tailor and that the fabric was a symbol of prestige imported from France through Italy to either Split or Dubrovnik.

This short review of trade in the area of modern-day Croatia reveals a rich culture that was not only nurtured in big towns and cities but also on islands like Korčula (skirt / MUO 6013). Indeed, the presence of fashionable dress in these areas demands further investigation of the dynamics of social and cultural life. The trade network and the financial power of the wealthy in this part of Europe, and their desire and ability to consume certain Jewish traders from Senegal. Decorative silk tapes, lace from Florence, and expensive silk fabrics are mentioned.
types of fabrics, are consistent with the demand for fashionable novelties in other major European centres.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{18} The influences on fashion of Kingdom of Croatia came from German Empire and Austrian Empire, while the Croatian territory under the Venetian Republic and independent Republic of Dubrovnik was influenced by Italy. At the end of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century most influences on fashion thanks to political circumstances came from France.
ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Silk fabric with ‘bizarre’ motifs (MUO 6013), Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb
Figure 2: Skirt (MUO 6013), Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb
Figure 3: A sleeve of a dalmatic (MUO 2904 / MUO 2911), Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb
1. Residentia Bassae;/POXEGA; CERNIK;/BIHAK; LIKA et CARBAVA; CLISSA;/HERCEGOWINA  Amsterdam, 1669. This map of Illyricum shows the territories between the Drava and the Adriatic with clearly marked historical borders of the Croatian provinces – Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, and the borders of mediaeval Bosnia. The territories under Turkish domination show the borders of Turkish administrative divisions – sandžakats. The map first appeared in I. Lučić De Regno Dalmatinae et Croatiae in 1668.
2. Johann Van Der Bruggen /REGNUM CROATIAE 1737, REGNUM SLAVONIAE 1737
   Vienna 1737

REGNUM DALMATIAE 1737
3. CARL SCHÜTZ. NEUSTE KARTE / DER / KOENIGREICHE /BOSNIEN SERVIEN /
CROATIEN UND SLAVONIEN / Samt den andraenzenden Provinzen /TEMESWAR;
DALMATIEN; HERZEGOWINA / RAGUSA; STEZERMARK; KAERNTHEN;
/KRAIN; FRIAUL; GRADISKA UN ISTRIEN/
Vienna 1788
This is entire Croatia and both Coratian and Slavonian. i.e. Austro-Hungarian, borders
with ottoman Empire towards the end of the 18th century. The maps also charts the
Venetian borders in Dalmatia with Bosnia, i.e. the Ottoman Empire. The land between
the Una and the Vrbas are still called “Turk Croatian” PMH 3821
This historical map of the “entire Kingdom of Croatia” shows the land which were formerly Croatian. These are: Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Turkish Croatia, Bosnia, Hercegovina, Montenegro (Zeta), a part of Albania to the Bojana river, Istria to the Raša (or to some sources to the Dragonja), Slovenska Marka, Celjska Žušanija between the Sava and Styria, and Međimurje. The same large area, with minor differences, is seen on the map number 1 (1699) NSB X-H-B-40.
BIBLIOGRAPHY