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CRAFTS AND TRADES PRACTISED BY WOMEN IN URBAN SETTLEMENTS IN THE TERRITORY OF SLOVENIA DURING THE MIDDLE AND EARLY MODERN AGES

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ABSTRACT

The contribution presents the role of women in crafts and trades in Middle and Early Modern Age urban settlements in the territory of the modern Slovene state. Women asserted themselves primarily in trades dealing with production of food and in various retail services. They further contributed towards the family budget with sewing, weaving and similar activities carried out at home. Master tradesmen's wives bore an exacting burden of house-keeping for their large families.

Key words: woman, craft, trade, Middle Ages, Early Modern Ages, Slovenia, town

ARTI E MESTIERI PRATICATI DALLE DONNE NEGLI INSEDIAMENTI URBANI NEL TERRITORIO DELLA SLOVENIA DURANTE IL MEDIO EVO E GLI INIZI DELL'ETÀ MODERNA

SINTESI

Questo contributo illustra il ruolo delle donne nelle arti e nei mestieri durante il Medio Evo e il principio dell'età Moderna negli insediamenti del territorio del moderno stato sloveno. Le donne si dedicavano principalmente a mestieri concernenti la produzione di cibo e vari servizi di vendita al dettaglio. Esse contribuivano inoltre al budget familiare con lavori di cucito, tessitura e attività simili realizzate in casa. Le mogli dei mastri commercianti avevano l'arduo compito di badare alla gestione della casa e alla famiglia.

Parole chiave: donne, arti, mestieri, Medio Evo, inizio età Moderna, Slovenia, città

I. Towards the inner structure of the article

In order to make the article easier to follow, let us begin by saying a couple of words about the article's separate segments: the introductory thoughts about the division of life roles and activities according to sexes in the past will be followed by a short description of the mediaeval town itself; for a better understanding of the towns which originated in the Middle Ages in the territory of the modern Slovene state, we shall interpret their typological characteristics, on the basis of which the towns can be divided into two groups: the "littoral" and the "continental". We shall then present the great variety of crafts and trades practised in the towns on the territory of Slovenia until the beginning of the Modern Age, and the sources that have enabled a thorough study of these professions. Later on we shall present the women's direct and indirect participation in trades as known in littoral towns and in those in interior. The concluding assessment shall be that women affirmed themselves, in the territory of Slovenia during the considered periods, much more as wives, mothers and housewives in the environment of their homes rather than in trade.

II. The former role of wives

In the past, the role of women and their activities were much more one-dimensional and limited than today. The position of European women was to a great extent influenced by the Catholic Church, in accordance with the teachings of Catholic thinkers and philosophers. Theoretically, a wife was respected in her spiritual world, while socially she was never considered equal to man – either within the church community or in secular life (Mihelič, 1978, 23-24).

The activities of man and woman were defined by a kind of silent and consenting division of labor between the two sexes which was, as far as the woman was concerned, quite obligatory. She had an important role in family life (childbearing, upbringing) and housekeeping, while elsewhere mainly husband could take part and eventually assert himself. The wife took care of cooking and preparing food for her family and the domestic animals, as well as doing the washing and house maintenance; she gave birth to children and brought them up during their tender years; she worked in the garden and was allowed to carry out simpler field work; she did some handicrafts, like spinning, weaving, and sewing for family members, and she also probably did her share of the production of earthenware pottery for domestic needs.

The rise of mediaeval town settlements changed, to a certain degree, the role of wives in the economic life outside their families. Here we are interested particularly in to what extent women in the territory of Slovenia participated, actively or passively, in some of the major town activities – crafts and trade.

III. Mediaeval urban settlements in the territory of Slovenia

When talking about mediaeval boroughs or towns, we are referring to settlements of a new economic and social category within agriculturally oriented feudal society. The European mediaeval borough or town was mostly a non-agrarian settlement with a certain degree of autonomy. It was inhabited by free citizens engaged in crafts, trade, financial transactions, etc.

In the territory of Slovenia this kind of settlement began to spring up in the early 13th century, many as late as the 1470s as fortifications against the Turks who attacked Slovene territory from southeast and east. In the territory of the present-day Slovenia, 23 towns developed in the process of urban settlement formation: Kamnik, Kranj, Ljubljana, Kostanjevica, Škofja Loka, Metlika, Novo mesto, Črnomelj, Kočevje, Krško, Lož, Višnja gora and Radovljica in the Carniola (Kranjska) region; Koper/ Capodistria, Izola/Isola and Piran/Pirano in the Littoral (Primorska) region; Slovenj Gradec in Carinthia (Koroška); Ptuj, Maribor, Slovenska Bistrica, Brežice, Ormož and Celje in Styria (Štajerska) (with the addition of the frontier towns of Radgona/Radkersburg towards Austria, and Gorica/Gorizia/Görz, Milje/Muggia and Trst/Trieste/Triest towards Italy, there were 27 in all) as well as some 70 urban settlements of a lower rank (Blaznik et al., 1970). In the Middle Ages, the territory inhabited by early Slovene stretched across the present-day northern and western borders of the Slovene state. Some urban mediaeval settlements originated there as well.

IV. Typology of mediaeval towns in the territory of Slovenia

The towns were small, numbering only a couple of thousand inhabitants. A typological duality is noticed in them: the towns in the South-Littoral region differed in a number of characteristics from the "continental" towns as well as from the Northern-Littoral urban settlement of Gorizia as a result of its historical fate which caused the main differences between the two types of towns (Vilfan 1974a, 1974b, 1975). The majority of the differences stem from the fact that the peoples that crossed the central area of Slovenia during the great migration of peoples during the late antiquity and early Middle Ages totally destroyed the ancient towns they found there. Mediaeval urban settlements in this area were erected anew in modestly portioned out places let by seigneurs. On the coast the old urban settlements survived and adapted, economically and socially, to mediaeval needs. By tradition they were not only limited to the urban settlement but covered – contrary to the towns in the interior – the extensive agrarian hinterland.

This fact as well as the towns' coastal position, which enabled various traffic-trade activities as well as

fishing and salt-making, are the reasons for a number of differences which emerged between the economy of the littoral and that of the "continental" towns in the territory of Slovenia. The economy of littoral towns included all agrarian and non-agrarian branches of the economy in a fairly extensive agrarian town setting, while the economy of the towns in the interior was limited to the typical urban activities of the narrower urban settlement, whose territory practically ended within the town walls.

V. Crafts and trades in mediaeval towns in the territory of Slovenia

The range of crafts and trades practised in the towns prior to the mid-16th century is quite diverse (Mihelič, 1993, 1995). The towns' smallness, however, is the reason for lesser trade specialisation than that known in larger European towns.

We shall look at the trades in towns in the territory of Slovenia during the considered period. For a better understanding we shall divide them into food, leather, textile, metal, timber, building and other trades, service trades, and atypical (trade) activities.

Food trades in urbane settlements included miller's, baker's, butcher's, oil-making, distiller's and honey trades, while the cheese trade was practised in provincial and mountainous areas. As far as **leather** trades are concerned, tanning, shoemaking, belt making, bag making as well as the fur, tawer and saddler's trades were practised prior to the mid-16th century. **Textile** trades included weaving, drapery, cutting and dyeing of cloth, tailoring and hat making, and the manufacture of blankets, sails, ropes and nets. Those working in the **metal** trades were blacksmiths, nail- and needle-makers, locksmiths, file-cutters, armourers (sword cutlers, cutlers, gunsmiths), whitemiths, tinmen, bellfounders, gunfounders, goldsmiths and gilders, while those working in the **timber** trades were most often sawyers, bow makers, carpenters, cartwrights, joiners, chest makers, coopers, hoop makers, boat makers, turners, clog makers, brush makers and wickerworkers. The most common **building** trades were general construction, masonry, stonecutting and stonemasonry. **Other** trades were brickmaking, the potter's trade, the glazier's trade, pitch making and lime-burning. Those working in **service** trades were barbers, barber-surgeons, doctors, pharmacists, painters and prostitutes. The name "master" also denoted the rare teachers or school masters.

The people dedicated to **atypical** (trade) activities were owners of inns, lodging houses, hospices, hospitals and kitchens, those selling and roasting chestnuts, peddlers and costermongers. While, in a way, merchant activities, the salt-making trade was nearer to agriculture and mining, and fishing nearer to gathering and hunting.

After the mid-16th century, the range of trades once known in the territory of Slovenia became even more

varied due to greater specialisation within trade groups.

Apart from all the above mentioned crafts and trades, various **domestic trades** flourished in the Middle Ages and later on in the Slovene countryside, in which women were involved to a great extent, namely thread spinning, canvas making and the cloth trade. In the late Middle Ages goods were made by family at home from raw materials supplied to them by tradesmen. Women were making lace, simple clothing and bedclothes. They also took to making earthenware, stoves, wooden riddles, sieves, hoops and, later on, straw hats. This participation of women in domestic trades in the territory of Slovenia deserves special historical research.

VI. Sources

Sources for the study of crafts and trades are direct **material remains**, such as tools and products, and indirect material remains, such as preserved symbols of professional tradesmen associations (storage chests, banners, seals, travel booklets used by tradesmen's apprentices, etc.), paintings and written sources, which are sometimes accompanied by illustrations.

In the **artistic depictions** of various trades we often find ourselves in an awkward situation, not knowing whether we are dealing with provincial/domestic or urban/professional trades. We are also faced with this dilemma when studying women participating in trades as depicted in numerous frescoes found in churches all over Slovenia, outside inner town environments.

The fresco from the Church of St. Primus above ("continental") Kamnik from the early 16th century depicts two women engaged in weaving and sewing (Fig. 1), while the fresco (dated to the second half of the 15th

Fig. 1 / Sl. 1: St. Primus, detail. / Sv. Primož, detajl.

century) on the façade of the Church of the Annunciation of St. Mary at Crngrob near Škofja Loka presents the iconographic complex of the holiness of Sunday, in which many of those everyday jobs are depicted that are not supposed to be carried out on Sundays and feast days. Here a woman engaged in "textile" activity appears a number of times. One of the scenes shows a man soaking flax, while a woman is drying it. In another scene we see a man behind a spinning wheel and three women: the first one is winding a ball of thread on the spindle, the second is holding the yarn, while the third one is weaving at the loom (Fig. 2). A woman is also depicted as a helper during the process of cloth bleaching: she is pouring liquid on cloth spread on the ground, while two men are hanging another piece of cloth on a tree for drying. This fresco also includes a guest house scene with a woman bringing drinks to the table.

The little church at Hrastovlje from the end of the 15th century is situated in the agrarian hinterland, which belonged to the coastal town of Koper. The wall painting in connection with our topic delineates a somewhat provincial environment: Adam hoeing the soil, and Eve breast-feeding her twins and spinning at the same time (Fig. 3).

The depictions on frescoes mostly show women participating in textile activities and innkeeping.

As far as **written sources** are concerned, there are, particularly, records of the activities of professional tradesmen associations – brotherhoods and guilds, master's books and ledgers, police and tradesmen's orders – that are most eloquent regarding trades practised in towns of the interior part of the territory of Slovenia (and Gorizia), and municipal tax registers for the range of various trades.

Some precious data on the coastal towns of Slovenia are found in notarial and *vicedominus'* registers, into which the essence of the concluded agreements was entered. These towns (with Koper, Izola, Piran and the nearby Trieste being taken into consideration) had their mediaeval codes – statutes which stipulated the rules of town administration, economy and everyday life (publi-

Fig. 3 / Sl. 3: Hrastovlje, detail. / Hrastovlje, detajl.

cation of statutes: Margetič, 1993a /for Koper/; Morteani, 1888, 1889 /for Izola/; De Franceschi, 1960; Pahor, Šumrada, 1987 /for Piran/; De Szombathely, 1935 /for Trieste/. The only town in the interior with comparable statutes was the Styrian Ptuj (Bischoff, 1887; Statut mesta Ptuj 1376; Statut mesta Ptuja 1513).

The image offered regarding the issue of women's participation in crafts and trades by the surveyed remains – predominantly the above mentioned wall paintings and written sources – is quite modest. For the coastal towns it is more detailed as well as more integral, while for the towns in the interior of the country it is quite dispersed. As the two images differ from each other in certain details, it is reasonable to present them separately.

Fig. 2 / Sl. 2: Crngrob, detail. / Crngrob, detajl.

VII. Women in crafts and trades in mediaeval towns in the territory of Slovenia

VII. A. Coastal towns (Mihelič, 1997; 1999; 2000)

VII. A. 1. Childhood

As far as life in the coastal towns of Slovenia is concerned, certain patriarchal rules were in force. The head of the family was always a male – either father or husband. In their tender years, children of both sexes were treated without any substantial differences. Those who had parents and lived with them under the same roof were under their rule. Parents were responsible for their behaviour and deeds.

Any minor who lost his/her father or mother had a guardian appointed, normally the surviving parent. The mother's guardianship, however, had further conditions, for she was allowed to remain a guardian only as long as she honourably lived in her widowhood (*donec caste vixerit viduata*) (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. II, Art. 55; Morteani, 1888, 1889, Vol. II, Art. 25; De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. VII, Art. 23).

Children were supposed to be obedient, humble and gentle towards their parents (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. II, Appendix to Art. 47). Sons or widowed daughters were liable for the care of their enfeebled fathers or mothers (Morteani, 1888, 1889, Vol. II, Art. 87; De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. VI, Art. 33). Statutory regulations, however, also refer to disputes, cases of offences and conflicts among relatives of both sexes, and to cases of family members being maltreated by the male head of the family (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. III, Art. 13; Pahor, Šumrada, 1987, Vol. VII, Art. 5, 528-530 /edited statutes from 1384/; De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. II, Art. 23, Vol. III, Art. 1).

Education was considered important by the people living on the coast. Towns had master-teachers who taught children the basic skills of writing. Schools were attended primarily by boys. At the end of the 17th century, however, there was a case of the converted Jewish woman Perla, who was able to write: she wrote a personal complaint to the Piran Podestà about her relatives who objected to her conversion (Piran Archives, Charters – copies, Box 1/4 /1283–1610/, folio 56 verso).

A free hand in dealing with property, the possibility of getting married, as well as legal capacity and responsibility were obtained by the young inhabitants of the above mentioned coastal towns when attaining their majority or "legitimate age" (*aetas legitima*) and through their emancipation (*emancipatio*); orphans were granted this sooner than children living with their parents.

The Koper and Izola statutes stipulated the age at which children were able to have property at their free disposal, i.e. 20 years. The Koper statutes retained this age limit also for independent transactions by orphans.

The Izola orphans and the Piran male orphans, however, were allowed to alienate property when 18 years of age. According to the statutes, parent-less Piran girls were supposed to mature at an earlier age, for they were allowed to deal with property when 15 years old. Trieste children who grew up within the family circle reached their "lawful age" only at 25. Even if they still lived under the auspices of their fathers, they became fully responsible at that age. Trieste orphans under 18 were not allowed to alienate property, to go into debt or to conclude agreements, barring exceptional circumstances (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. II, Art. 57; Morteani, 1888, 1889, Vol. II, Art. 28; De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. VII, Art. 26; De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. II, Art. 32, Vol. II, Appendix to Art. 32).

Koper and Izola male orphans remained the responsibility of their guardians until turning 15, female orphans until turning 14; if they were sick they were allowed to make a will when reaching 14 years of age. By consent of their guardians, relatives or Podestà they were allowed to marry: boys at 14, Koper girls at 13. Married Koper girls were able to make a will at 13. In Piran, an orphaned boy could marry, with his relatives' consent, at 14, an orphaned girl even at 12. At this age they could make their last will (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. I, Art. 19, Vol. II, Art. 57; Morteani, 1888, 1889, Vol. II, Art. 28; De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. VII, Art. 26). At the age of 14, Izola and Piran boys were liable to swear the oath of allegiance to the Podestà, which from a social-legal aspect formally distinguished their further role from that of the girls (Morteani, 1888, 1889, Vol. I, Art. 92; De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. I, Art. 2).

VII. A. 2. Maturity

In her youth, a girl lived under the protection of her father, mother, brother, some of her relatives or other guardian, while after marriage she was subjected to her husband's "rule". In Trieste, a wedded couple was legally considered next-of-kin. A Trieste man was free in the treatment of his wife, and was even able to cause her bodily harm without being punished for it. Any reports made by wives at being cruelly treated by their husbands were not accepted by the Trieste justice administration, which means that no criminal proceedings were instituted against their violent husbands (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. III, Art. 1).

In Koper, Izola and Piran, the most common manner of concluding wedlock was in the way of owning property "like brother and sister" (*sicut frater et soror*), in the form of "fraternal society" (*fraterna societas*), which in view of the married couple's attitude towards the property had similar characteristics as marriages in Trieste (Margetić, 1993b). In Trieste, each partner brought into marriage part of their property, on which they then built their further prosperity. The original property of each of

them was comprehended as his. The property gained by them during their marriage belonged to both of them (on a half-half basis). The debts contracted during marriage were also shared (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. IV, Art. 41, Vol. II, Art. 57, 58).

When a Koper wedded couple was burdened with debt for the benefit of both, the husband was able to settle the debt without his wife's consent from their shared property. The creditor could confiscate the wedded couple-debtors' shared property or could demand a settlement to be made from the property of one of them. The husband, however, who had an agreement with his wife in "fraternal society", was not able to pledge property and real estate in court in her name without consent of the wife's solicitors. Without her husband's consent, a married Koper woman was not able to alienate, sell or pledge her property to incur debt. Without her husband's consent she could not sell or alienate movable and immovable property. Without a lawful husband's authorisation or without his presence she was not responsible to the creditor for her husband's and their shared debts (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. II, Art. 2, 3, 47, 70, 75, 86).

If a husband in Izola contracted a debt without his wife's consent, she was not responsible for this debt. When he put up part of their shared property for auction, he was liable to offer her certain indemnity. Neither could an Izola man marry off his child and give her/him a dowry without his wife's consent, or, if he did, the wife did not need to participate in payment of the dowry. A husband could not alienate his wife's property without her consent. In business transactions, a married woman had her hands tied: she was not able to sell movable or immovable property without her husband's consent. And neither could she alienate property exceeding the value of 20 pounds (*librae*; 1 *libra* = 20 *solidi* = 240 *denarii*) without explicit permission of the Podestà. (Morteani, 1888, 1889, Vol. II, Art. 4, 6, 11, 12, 16).

A Piran man, who contracted a debt without his wife's consent, was liable to square the debt from his own property. If he was unable to settle the debt, he was liable to be exiled. In case a married couple contracted a shared debt and was then unable to square it, it was only he that was liable to be exiled. A Piran woman who was in her husband's power could not contract a debt on the account of her property, except by consent of the Podestà and two or three relatives (De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. IV, Art. 18, 19).

In Trieste, a husband was the possessor, beneficiary and manager of the wife's property – both the property she had brought into marriage and the property attained during their marriage. He had free use of his wife's and his own property. When he was in debt, a creditor was allowed to confiscate, in return for the debt, his wife's property as well as his, except that the creditor had to

leave, for her and her children, enough for food and clothing as well as the costs of cultivating the land. The only "safety valve" for the wife's (and their own) property benefits lay with her relatives, who controlled her and her husband's business activities. A Trieste husband could sell or alienate his wife's property only by her consent, together with her father's or mother's approval. The interests of the wife's family were also protected with the regulation that the wife could not give her husband part of her property but could only bequeath it. The Trieste women were able to contract debts with the approval of their husbands and by consent of their fathers or mothers or by two adult male relatives, or by two "good men" (*boni homines*) stipulated by the authorities. Those married in accordance with the old Venetian custom could, however, not incur debts at all (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. II, Art. 56, 57, 58).

A married woman in Izola, Piran or Trieste was allowed to make her last will only in the presence of two adult relatives. Of the shared property, the following items automatically belonged to wives in the towns of the Littoral region: clothing, rings, silver belts and pearls, while their husbands were automatically entitled to horses, arms and money (Morteani, 1888, 1889, Vol. II, Art. 9, 17; De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. VII, Art. 9; De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. II, Art. 47).

A Trieste woman, who lived apart from her husband from whom she had separated by common consent, returned to the supervision of her family. She was able to make agreements only by consent of her father or mother, or by consent of two relatives if she had no parents (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. II, Art. 59).

VII. A. 3. Women's professions

Koper, Izola and Piran wives' business activities were limited, although they owned movable and immovable property, including ovens, water-mills, olive presses (*torcellarium*) in which olive oil was made, as well as boats.

There were a number of characteristic urban professions in which women took part. Of the "decent" trades in which they were involved, bread baking is mentioned in all the considered towns. In Koper, female millers were also known (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. I, Art. 6, Vol. II, Art. 98). Of the "indecent" trades, so branded by the public, the profession of public mistresses (*meretrices publicae*) is mentioned in Piran and Trieste. In Koper, Izola and Trieste, women sold fruit and vegetables at the markets, in Koper and Izola they were tavern keepers, in Koper they sold milk, grapes, wine, oil and other goods (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. I, Art. 30, 31, Vol. II, Art. 75, Vol. III, Art. 32, 33), while the Koper female millers sold corn and flour (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. I, Art. 6). The Koper statutes speak about a Jewish man and woman who wished to open a financial transaction business there

(Margetić, 1993a, Vol. II, Art. 76). Some women's activities were connected with the sea and the agrarian hinterland. Many Koper and Piran women worked in salt-pans as salters (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. I, Art. 25, 26; De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. IX, Art. 12). The Koper statutes also refer to fishermen of "both sexes" (*utriusque sexus*) as well as to Slavs of both sexes whom they equate with peasants (*Sclavus vel rusticus utriusque sexus*) (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. III, Art. 44, 46, Vol. IV, Art. 26, 35). All the considered towns knew the profession of maidservant hired for money (*mercenaria, famula*), while in Koper "slaves" were also known (referred to as *servi utriusque sexus*) (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. I, Art. 10) to work for wealthier town families. One of the honoured avocations, in connection with which a couple of women from Trieste and Koper are mentioned, was that of nun.

Let us now have a closer look at some of the "women's" professions. Bread was an essential component of the townspeople's diet. This is why towns normally reserved, in connection with **bread baking**, the exclusive right to sell it, which brought them regular income. A town gave the right of bread baking annually at auction and on lease. The annual implementers of bread baking owed rent to the town authority. Bread baking was carried out (for male leaseholders) by professional female bakers who used communal ovens for the baking from cereals given to them by the administrator of the town granary (*fonticum*). In some towns, even the place where bread was sold was specially stipulated.

Koper female (and male) bakers had to bake bread of strictly prescribed weight, or they were fined; unsuitable bread was given to prisoners or paupers at the St. Nazarius hospital (*hospitalis*) (Margetić, 1993a, Vol. III, Art. 43). The leaseholder of the right of baking bread for sale in Izola was liable to supervise the work of at least five or six female bakers, who then carried out their trade directly (Morteani, 1888, 1889, Vol. III, Art. 24).

The outer appearance of the Piran bakeries was regulated. Due to the fire hazard, the buildings in which ovens were built were covered with tiles, bricks or boards, and not with straw or twigs (De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. VIII, Art. 23, and Vol. VIII, Art. 20 /edited statutes from 1332/). In the stoves, firewood (*lignum*) and fagots (*frasca*) were burnt. Bread was baked in special pans (*cucolum*). In Piran, bread for sale could be baked only by the female (and male) bakers commissioned for this work by the Piran Podestà and the judges. There were supposed to be eight officially appointed female bakers. They were allowed to bake bread only from corn and flour supplied from the Piran granary. Its warehouseman and his assistant were liable to give them large enough quantities of corn for the needs of the town, and every month they checked the accounts of their business operations. From the corn that came from the Piran granary, bread for sale was allowed to be baked also by the leaseholders of guest houses (*hostaria*)

(De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. IX, Art. 13 /edited statutes from 1332/). During bread baking, the female bakers had to stick to a fair weight. Business operations of Piran bakeries were supervised by the town officials (*extimatores, iusticiarii*). Piran female and male bakers who baked bread which was too light, were fined. A female or male baker who committed an offence three times in a single year and did not use the corn from the granary or cheated on weight lost the right to practice her/his profession. In the early 14th century, the female and male bakers were allowed to sell bread only in their own homes or in front of them, and in the square of the *Campo* quarter. At the request of the Podestà, they were liable to deliver certain amounts of bread to *loggia* (De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. I, Art. 6, 7, Vol. VIII, Art. 26, 27). Later editions of statutes no longer stipulated the places where bread could be sold (De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. VIII, Art. 28 /edited statutes from 1332/). Among the Piran originals we also find some concrete agreements, which bound the female bakers to the prescribed baking of bread as well as to how they should supply the town of Piran with it (Mihelič, 1986, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 198, 199).

Trieste, too, maintained rights to use baker's ovens in the town; each year they were attained by those offering the highest rent for them. The buildings in which these ovens were located were maintained and repaired by the town authorities, while their equipment was taken care of by the current leaseholders. They were allowed to bake and sell bread, though this right belonged, according to the town statutes, to the professional female bakers. The latter and the innkeepers brought dough to the leaseholders, paying them one groat (*denarius/grossus*) and a half (i.e. 48 pennies - *denarii parvi*; 1 *denarius grossus* = 32 *denarii parvi*) for the baking of every quarter of bread. The greater part of bread for sale in Trieste was baked by professional female bakers. In January each year they swore that they would carry out their work conscientiously all year round. They baked the bread in town (communal) ovens and sold it under the new *loggia*. They bought corn and flour in the town granary, but were allowed to purchase wheat and barley from importers as well. Bread was prepared in accordance with the rules of the baker's trade and branded by special supervisory clerks. If the bread was of bad quality or not well baked, it could be confiscated by the town judges and used for feeding the poor and prisoners. Unauthorised bakers were not allowed to bake bread for sale, but were able to make an agreement with the female bakers, according to which the latter could let them have some of the bread to be sold retail on the market. When bread baked by "town" female bakers ran short eight days in a row, the judges could allow bread to be baked and sold by everybody and not merely by the official female bakers (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. I, Art. 53, 54, Vol. IV, Art. 9, 14).

The original of the Trieste statutes from 1350 contains two miniature depictions of a female baker and a female oven owner (BCT, AD, Statuti di Trieste del 1350, Vol. I, Art. 77, Vol. IV, Art. 78 /in the original erroneously marked with No. 68/). The female baker is wearing a tight white head-covering, which also covers her shoulders and the neck. It is fastened with a turban with red and blue trimmings. She is clad in a long dress pleated at the waist, and in a long overcoat of a dark petroleum blue colour flowing like a train along the floor behind her. She is holding something irrerecognisable in her left hand, possibly a little lump of dough (Fig. 4). The female oven owner is depicted only down to her shoulders. She is wearing a tight light head-covering reaching over the neck towards the shoulders. It is embellished with a narrow red edge that encircles the head around the forehead and the crown. Judging by the part of the sleeve seen in the little picture, her clothing is red. In her right hand she is holding three twigs (or a single branched out twig).

The records on women in **other trades** are very few. In the records from 1336 and 1337 we can see a Piran woman in the role of a supplier of barrel spare parts (staves and bottoms). The widow called Blanča replaced her late husband, Rainerius Peroni, a Florence immigrant, in this trade (Piran Archives, Vicedominaria /Vicedominaria/, Vol. 6, folio 155 verso; Vol. 7, folio 66).

The majority of the rest of the above mentioned women's professions are mentioned in the statutes more or less casually, without any detailed particulars. Quite common, however, are statutory mentions of "**the oldest (service) trade**" practiced in the Littoral towns by public mistresses (*meretrix publica*).

The Trieste statutes talk about public mistresses as being totally inferior. Quite often they refer to them as to worthless people (*personae viles*). Rape, forceful detention or abduction of such women was excluded from the list of offences committed against "decent" Trieste women. Their complaints were dealt with negligently, for they did not have the same weight as complaints filed by "honourable" people. Even the statutorily stipulated prohibition of torture with the aim to extort guilt did not apply to them: they were allowed to be thrown into jail, tortured and pilloried. Using the insulting expression of *meretrix*, similar to "whore" in these days, was a punishable offence. The statutes also refer to other insulting words, such as impostor, swine, cow, she-ass, harlot (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. III, Art. 31).

Female pimps (*ruffiana*, *lena*) were also known in Trieste. Regarding the manner of dress as far as public mistresses and female pimps were concerned, the Trieste statutes stipulated that they were not allowed to wear silver, gilt or gold belts. They had to live only in prescribed places, or they were sentenced to exile. A male pimp (*leno*) who lived with such a woman was not allowed to settle in Trieste or its vicinity. He could only stop on his way from one town to the other. He and she were allowed to spend only a single night in a brothel.

The fact is that the public sale of love in Trieste was fairly well affirmed. The records speak not only of pimps but also of brothels (*postribulum*, *burdellum*) and public baths (*balneatoria*), which were a breeding ground of debauchery. Nobody was allowed to be a pimp of a public mistress or an owner of a brothel, except in the place stipulated for these purposes, i.e. behind the Trieste town palace (!). The public bath owners in Trieste were not allowed to entertain either men (clients) or public mistresses at night, i.e. between the evening and morning chiming. During this time, the brothels were not allowed to operate either (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. III, Art. 1, 3, 31, 58, 85, Appendix to Art. 85).

"Sweet life" (*la dolce vita*) practices were most probably available in the Piran guest houses as well. This may be presumed on the basis of the stipulations written in the Piran statutes, according to which a communal guest house could be leased only to honest people. A guest house was not allowed to have a brothel nor to maintain a public mistress (De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. IX, Art. 13 /edited statutes from 1332/).

The statutes also refer to **retail** and **peddling**. The Trieste statutes dedicated some time also to female costermongers (*venderigola*, *tricola*) at the markets. They were not allowed to purchase goods before nine in the morning and could only do business in prescribed places. A vivid picture of their dealings is roused by the directive that they must be quiet and dedicated only to the sale of their goods. During their work they should not do any spinning, neither could they have children under two years of age with them. – Such markets, however, were clearly

Fig. 4 / Sl. 4: Trieste statutes, miniature depiction of female baker. / Tržaški statut, miniatura pekarice.

very lively, full of the daily hurly-burly; the female costermongers were obviously not quiet, and they were clearly not dedicated only to the sale of their goods but to other things as well, even to babies that could clearly not be left elsewhere. The statutes attempted to introduce some order into the existing practices and some truly drastic punishments were prescribed for women violating the provisions: they were to walk around the palace with a stone weighing 25 pounds (*librae*; i. e. nearly 12 kilograms: 1 *libra* = 477 grams) around their neck (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. I, Art. 56).

Provisions in connection with retail are also referred to in other Littoral towns but are fairly scattered. A man or a woman who wished to sell milk in Koper was not allowed to mix it with water. Men or women could not cart foreign wine or grapes to Koper for the production of wine. In Koper, wine could not be made "nobler" by various additives, such as honey to make it sweeter (Margetič, 1993a, Vol. I, Art. 30, 31, Vol. IV, Art. 34). In Izola, wine could be sold retail only with prescribed measures (Morteani, 1888, 1889, Vol. III, Art. 21). In Trieste, women are at times mentioned as purchasers of worked wood at the town market and as chestnut gatherers – it is not clear whether for domestic use or for roasting and sale (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. II, Appendix to Art. 64, Vol. III, Art. 96).

Business activities practised by women are also evident from some environmental violations. In Koper, persons of "both sexes" are referred to as violating or threatening public order by having carts or wood beside the church or having unsuitably tethered pack animals. People of "both sexes" were prohibited from digging or accumulating soil or manure at certain localities (Margetič, 1993a, Vol. IV, Art. 5, 36). In Izola, neither men nor women were allowed to dig worms (*vermi*) from piers or embankments, possibly for the needs of fishing (Morteani, 1888, 1889, Vol. III, Art. 68).

Monetary transactions by women are mentioned in the Koper statutes dealing with a Jewish woman (and a Jewish man) wishing to lend money at interest and having a bank (Margetič, 1993a, Vol. II, Art. 76).

Some statutory decrees refer to the rules of men and women **trading in** "the gifts of the sea", i.e. **fish and salt**. Fishermen of "both sexes" in Koper were not allowed to bring or sell putrid fish in the town fish market, and fish not sold on the same day had to have their tails cut off as a mark of not being fresh (Margetič, 1993a, Vol. III, Art. 44, 46). The Koper male and female salt-pan workers were not allowed (except at the time of harvest) to go to their own or other salt-pans after sunset (Margetič, 1993a, Vol. I, Art. 25). The Piran male and female salters were allowed to give, alienate or bring salt only in the presence of those entitled to collect taxes (De Franceschi, 1960, Vol. IX, Art. 12).

In the towns of the Littoral region, **hired labour** was also known. The range of activities of hired female

workers – maidservants (*mercenaria*) is not known in greater detail. A Koper maidservant/manservant was not allowed to leave her/his master without his consent and to go and work for somebody else for higher wages. When she/he finished her/his service and wished to leave the master, she/he had to demand, within two months, her/his wages from the employer. If she/he left the employer before the expiration of the contract, the employer was not liable to pay her/him any wages. If a woman or a man in the Koper area received a certain amount of money for work in advance from a male or a female but then did not turn up to do the service, she/he was considered to have perpetrated a penal act (Margetič, 1993a, Vol. I, Art. 10, 11, Vol. II, Art. 100).

The Trieste statutes treated maidservants in a way similar to public mistresses. Punishment for raping, detaining or abducting such persons was much milder than for the Trieste women of a more respectable social position. Here the statutes stipulate very concretely that no Trieste townswoman can be dealt with as a person hired for money. Also milder than in the case of townswomen was the punishment for an offence committed against a woman hired for money, for example, if she was detained or taken away against the will of her relatives or as long as a man did not resort to force and she consented to sexual intercourse (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. III, Art. 58).

Women in the role of a **nun** (*monialis*) is mentioned once in the Trieste statutes – in connection with rape. If she was a townswoman, a Trieste resident, a resident of the Trieste surroundings or a stranger, such offence against her was punished with death, while attempted rape was punished with a fine of 200 pounds (*librae*) (De Szombathely, 1935, Vol. III, Art. 58). *Religiosa* is in Koper referred to in connection with family property (Margetič, 1993a, Vol. II, Art. 37).

VII. B. "Continental" towns

VII. B. 1. Brotherhoods and guilds

In contrast to the Littoral, the tradesmen in the interior of the territory of Slovenia used to associate in brotherhoods and guilds (Blaznik, 1940). Guilds were associations of tradesmen of the same profession with the exclusive right to carry out the profession in urban settlements or in their surroundings. In the territory of Slovenia they began to spring up in the 14th century. Outwardly they protected the rights of their members from the rivalry of foreign urban and provincial tradesmen as well as from competition by laymen. Inwardly they regulated the issues of production: they stipulated the manner of production, working hours, quality, prices of products, number of assistants and apprentices per skilled worker, their wages, conditions for attaining skilled worker status, etc. They also took care of the re-

ligious and social affairs of their members. Among the oldest guilds in the country's interior were those of the tailors, furriers and shoemakers in Ljubljana, furriers in Kranj, Gorizia and Škofja Loka, shoemakers in Gorizia, Kranj and Škofja Loka, and blacksmiths in Škofja Loka, Maribor and Kranj.

Membership in a guild was compulsory not only for masters, assistants and apprentices, but also for the masters' wives. That is, the masters had to be married: this was in fact one of the conditions for becoming a master (apart from the fact that a master candidate was obliged to get citizenship and to demonstrate suitable knowledge). As members of trade brotherhoods, "brothers and sisters" are thus often mentioned, such as of the two bakers' brotherhoods in Ptuj, tailors' brotherhood in Maribor, and as female members of the guild of barber-surgeons in Radkersburg (Popelka, 1950, Nos. 93, 159, 124).

Wives had an important (non-production) role in the 17th century when the restriction of entry limited the number of masters in a guild to the existing one. From then on the master title was transferred according to the family tradition: a father was followed by his son or son-in-law. An assistant – a non-descendant of the master – could become a master only by marrying the master's widow or daughter. – The practise of transferring the right of carrying out the trade through the female line had indeed been known before. The certificate and the renewal of the old rights of the Leibnitz butchers in 1402 contained the stipulation that the butcher's legitimate daughter could transfer the right of mastery to her husband (Popelka, 1950, No. 42).

Guilds controlled the moral life of their members: wives are in this context referred to as persons against whom an offence was perpetrated. A master locksmith from Škofja Loka who lost his self-control over a girl had to pay a fine allotted in wax. A Celje master potter who left his wife was forced to give up his trade until ready to return to the honest wedded life (Blaznik, 1940, 11). According to the rules of the Radkersburg guild of barber-surgeons, a Radkersburg master barber-surgeon or assistant was not allowed to publicly whistle at married woman or virgin. In these rules, the female members are also referred to as possible violators of rules of behaviour. If female members called each other names or were otherwise badly behaved, they were bound to pay a *viertel* (140 grams) of wax. If a master, assistant or wife acted against their guild's rules, they were excluded from it until certain satisfaction was obtained from them (Popelka 1950, No. 124).

VII. B. 2. Property issues in marriage

The same as in the Littoral, also in the "continental" Slovene territory the husband was the head of the family. In Ptuj, the father could choose his children's

spouses or state their guardians according to his own free will (Statut mesta Ptuj 1376, Art. 141, 144, 145; Statut mesta Ptuj 1513, Art. 62, 63).

A widowed Ptuj woman was entitled to a "suitable" and "fair" indemnity, stated by her relatives or property possessors (Statut mesta Ptuj 1376, Art. 151, 152; Statut mesta Ptuj 1513, Art. 65, 66). She was not responsible for her deceased husband's debts even if she remarried a wealthy man. However, if a Ptuj widowed man burdened by his deceased wife's debt remarried and acquired new movable property, he had to settle his deceased wife's debts, in compliance with the law which defined that *der man weibes vogt und auch maister ist* (the husband is his wife's representative and master) (Statut mesta Ptuj 1376, Art. 156, 157, 158; Statut mesta Ptuj 1513, Art. 69, 70).

According to the statute, a widowed Ptuj woman was entitled to movable property: wine, corn, cattle, bedclothes and other household objects in the house. But trade articles, pawns, money and cash debts were not classed as movable property (Statut mesta Ptuj 1376, Art. 154), nor were later trade articles, pawns, money and cash debts, jewellery and mills (Statut mesta Ptuj 1513, Art. 68): after the husband's death, property of this nature belonged to his children and creditors.

Despite the above mentioned facts, wedded couples often used to arrange property issues jointly. The fact that a wife could have joint ownership together with her husband or joint right to their production plants is evident from an agreement on lease, according to which a certain Lienhart Fuchs, a Maribor miller, took on lease a hospital (*spital*) mill and all the appertaining accessories along the river Drava together with his wife in 1454 (Popelka, 1950, No. 87). In 1489, a Ptuj miller gave, together with his wife Gertrude, a mill, house and half of a vineyard to the Dominican monastery and the bakers' brotherhood. The agreement includes his wife's statement about the event in the first person: *So bechenn ich Gedraut des bemelten Valtein Mulner eliche Hausfrau, das solchs Geschefft alles, wie oben bestimbt, mit meinem gueten Willen und Wissen ist geschechen ...* (Popelka, 1950, No. 130).

VII. B. 3. Women's professions

Women affirmed themselves in "continental" towns of Slovenia as well, particularly in food trades, the most common among them being – as in the Littoral – the **baker's trade**.

In Celje, female bakers are referred to in connection with cheating. While cheating male bakers were punished by being thrown into the Savinja river, the cheating female bakers were, on the other hand, tied to a pillar (Blaznik, 1940, 8).

In Ljubljana (Ljubljanska obrt, 1972), the 16th century (male) bakers associated in guilds. The places

where bread was sold were strictly prescribed. In the first half of the 16th century, bread was being sold under Tranča, at the junction of Ljubljana's Town ~ (Mestni ~) and Old Square (Stari trg). As the crowds buying bread obstructed the traffic there, its sale was transferred to the Old Square. The bakers had their own stalls in the baker's shop, and bread was allowed to be sold only there. The use of the rooms in the baker's shop was stipulated by special rules. The events in the shop were supervised by a special watcher or keeper who was being paid some sort of fee for his services.

Bread was also allowed to be baked by the so-called bread-women, who were given a permit for this activity by the town hall in view of their material (financial) means. According to the ancient custom, poor widows were permitted to bake and sell brown buckwheat bread, even though they had not qualified for this trade. The bread-women were allowed to bake brown bread, while baking of white bread was reserved for professional (male) bakers. In 1570, a bread shop watcher could demand one thirtieth of the bread's value from bread-women due to the increasing costs of living: two kreutzers (*kreuzer*) from every florin (*gulden*) worth of sold bread (1 *gulden* = 60 *kreutzers* = 240 *pfennigs* /pennies/). In 1596, nine or ten bakers and six to thirteen bread-women were selling bread in the Ljubljana bread shop. For the first four decades of the 17th century, no bread-woman is mentioned as paying a duty for the bread shop: it is obvious that they were not selling bread there any more, most probably bread-women were ousted from it by the male bakers. In 1659 the bakers complained that women, too, were baking white bread, a right which was supposed to be only theirs. The town hall decreed that women selling white bread on the town territory would have their goods confiscated.

In the baker's trade, too, the right of practising the profession could be transferred from husband to wife. One of the more interesting cases is that of the wife of a Ljubljana baker who had committed a crime. The wife went to the town hall and asked for a permit to be issued to her to engage in the trade, and eventually she was granted it.

Women often engaged as **costermongers** or **peddlers**. According to the provisions of the Ptuj statutes from 1376 and from 1513, there were four of them (*fragnerin*, *standlerin*) and each had to pay 6 *pfennigs* for a stall on St. Michael's Day (September 29th) and Candlemas (February 2nd). On market day, which was held on Tuesdays, a town judge was supposed to ensure that the townswomen provided themselves with everything needed, before female costermongers were allowed to buy the goods and eventually resell them (Popelka 1950, No. 28; Statut mesta Ptuj 1376, Art. 43, 56, 57, 176; Statut mesta Ptuj 1513, Art. 133, 175).

The rights of the Maribor town judge at the end of the 15th century bound each of the four female costermong-

ers to pay 71 *pfennigs* to him. This amounted to 10 *schillings* of *pfennigs*. The estimate does not tally: a *schilling* of *pfennigs* comprises 30 *pfennigs*, 10 *schillings* equals 300 *pfennigs*, that is, 16 *pfennigs* more than received by the judge from the costermongers (4 times 71 *pfennigs* = 284 *pfennigs*). In order for the figures to tally, each of the four costermongers would have had to pay 4 *pfennigs* more than stated in the source, i.e. 75 *pfennigs*. Of each costermonger's payment, the town "whistler" received 26 *pfennigs* (Popelka, 1950, No. 146).

The judge's income from people selling food is also referred to in the Maribor town book from 1520. Salt-sellers (*Salzhacker*) ate three times a year with him: on Whitsun, St. Michael's Day and Candlemas. On the first occasion they had to contribute 14, then 13 and finally 12 *pfennigs*, while each time his wife had to be paid the so-called "*trinckpfening*" for her drink. Female costermongers and women selling suet (*Unnsleiterin*) ate together with salt-sellers and on the first occasion had to pay 23, then 22 and finally 21 *pfennigs*, apart from contributing a *pfennig* for the drink of the judge's wife. If people wished to carry out the profession of costermonger or peddler, they were liable to pay, according to the tradition, a florin to the judge. For each peddler's basket (*Fragnerhutte*) they had to pay an extra 3 *schillings* and 14 *pfennigs* to him. The Maribor town book also refers to women selling cheese; on Candlemas each of them was liable to pay 50 *pfennigs*. Every chestnut woman (*Khesstenpraitterin*) roasting chestnuts owed 60 *pfennigs* to the town judge (Popelka, 1950, No. 167).

In the Ptuj statutes, female salt-sellers (*Salczandlerin*) are also mentioned. According to the statutes from 1376 there were supposed to be 24 of them, in the statutes from 1513, however, only 14 female salt-sellers are mentioned. They had to pay 10 *pfennigs* on September 8th (the Virgin's birth) and the same amount on Candlemas. In Ptuj, there were supposed to be 8 candlewomen or wax traders (*Waxhandlerin*). Only they were allowed to sell wax in quantities smaller than a pound (*pfund*; 1 pound = 560 grams) after 1376 and smaller than half pound after 1513. On St. Michael's Day and Candlemas each of them was liable to pay 6 *pfennigs* (Popelka, 1950, No. 28; Statut mesta Ptuj 1376, Art. 38, 42, 61; Statut mesta Ptuj 1513, Art. 85, 170, 174).

Women were also able to engage in a service trade, that of **barber-surgeons**. In 1483, the Radkersburg barber-surgeons founded the Brotherhood of St. Florian and adopted a set of rules for their members. Those who wished to become members were liable to personally attend, for 14 days, the actual practise of this trade (Popelka, 1950, No. 124).

Women also engaged in some **other trades**. Among the taxpayers for real property in the statutes from Ptuj from 1513 a female tawer (or perhaps a tawer's widow? – *Ircherin*) is mentioned (Statut mesta Ptuj 1513, Art.168). In Gorizia in the Northern Littoral region we

find a female furrier (or furrier's widow?). This was *Kathrein kürsnerin von Görzcz*, who in 1472 enfeoffed a cellar and a homestead (*einen keller vnnnd hofstatt zu Görzcz*) (Kos, 1926–1927, 31). As assistants, women appeared in the construction business. This supposes a stipulation of prices for the services of bakers, smiths, shoemakers, masons and joiners that were proclaimed in 1460 in Graz for the Styria region after the introduction of new coins. A man bringing stones and mortar during construction of walls was supposed to get 8 *pfennigs*, while a woman carrying out the same work was paid a *pfennig* less (Popelka 1950, No. 97).

Non-professionally, women **at home** practised other trade services as well, which brought some extra money to the family coffers. In his application for a New Year award in 1613, a Ljubljana town gates watchman stated that he could not make a living out of his wage, had he not earned some money together with his daughter through sewing and knitting (Ljubljanska obrt, 1972, 82). Considering that he had a regular job, the responsibility for casual earnings most probably rested mainly on his daughter's shoulders. The manufacture of Dutch and Venetian lace was quite widespread in Ljubljana as well.

The "continental" towns, too, knew women as householders and implementers of various women's professions, e.g. **maidservants** and **nuns**. Maidservants (*di/e/rn*) are mentioned for Ptuj (Statut mesta Ptuj 1376, Art. 121, 124, 125, 179; Statut mesta Ptuj 1513, Art. 55). From 1286 we have some details of a certain *Sophia de Goritia* who apparently lived as a nun in the Convent of St. Mary near Aquileia (Kos, 1924–1925, 4).

The available sources refer to these professions/avocations only rarely.

VIII. Conclusion

In the end we are left with the conclusion that in view of the scattered and rare data on the participation of women in trades and crafts in the territory of Slovenia we may surmise that their participation was more or less negligible and that they were mainly limited to food trades. It is true, however, that the wives of master tradesmen bore, in connection with the activities of their husbands, an exacting burden of housekeeping, in which they had to take care of their own families as well as of their husbands' assistants and apprentices.

The fact that women – and not only tradeswomen – anonymously supported "three corners of their houses" is also reflected in the self-assertive text of a Slovene folk song depicting a wife's "kind" reception of her drunk husband on his night return home: "Oh, you drunken, dirty drone, all the day I've worked alone, you decide to get back home, when no longer you can roam. I shall take the biggest stick, and shall give you a good flick. I shall swing it on and on, until my strength at last has gone." (*O, ti mrha grda pjana, cel' dan moram delat' sama, nič poprej te ni domov, kot zvečer de b' ležat šou. Eno pal'co bom uzela, k'tera bo najbolj debela. Tol'ko časa čem mahat', dokler bo kaj v rok' držat'.*) – Even without participating in business life outside their homes, there were probably quite a few of the women who "wore the trousers" at home.

ŽENA V ROKODELSTVU IN OBRTI MESTNIH NASELBIN NA SLOVENSKEM V SREDNJEM IN ZGODNJEM NOVEM VEKU

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POVZETEK

Razmišljanju o delitvi vlog in dejavnosti po spolih v preteklosti sledi opredelitev pojma srednjeveško mesto; za boljše razumevanje okolja srednjeveških mest na ozemlju sodobne slovenske države so pojasnjene njihove tipološke značilnosti. Sledi predstavitev obrti, ki jih zasledimo v mestih na Slovenskem do začetka novega veka, ter virov, ki omogočajo preučevanje teh obrtnih strok. Nato je prikazana neposredna in posredna udeležba žena v obrteh v primorskih mestih ter v mestih v notranjosti slovenskega prostora.

V srednjem veku je imela žena pomembno vlogo v družinskem življenju (rojstvo, vzgoja otrok), v gospodinjstvu in gospodarstvu družine, zunaj hišnih zidov pa se je poslovno udejstvovala in uveljavljala moški. Žena je opravljala nekatere obrti za domače potrebe.

Srednjeveški trg oz. mesto je bil neagrarna naselbina z določeno stopnjo avtonomije. V njej so živeli svobodni tržani oz. meščani, ki so se ukvarjali z obrtjo, trgovino, denarnimi posli ipd. Tovrstne naselbine so na Slovenskem nastajale od začetka 13. stoletja. Na ozemlju Slovenije je v procesu oblikovanja srednjeveških mestnih naselbin nastalo 23 mest in okrog 70 trgov. Mesta na Slovenskem so bila majhna. Štela so do nekaj tisoč prebivalcev. Pri njih opazimo tipološko dvojnost: mesta v primorju so se po vrsti značilnosti razlikovala od "celinskih", h katerim smemo zaradi njene podobne zgodovinske usode šteti tudi severnoprimorsko Gorico.

Paleta rokodelstev in obrti, ki jih zasledimo pred sredo 16. stoletja v mestih na Slovenskem, je pestra. Majhnost tukajšnjih mest pa je razlog za manjšo specializacijo obrti, kot jo srečujemo v večjih evropskih mestih. Glavne skupine obrti na Slovenskem so bile prehrabne, kožarske, tekstilne, kovinarske, lesne, gradbene, nekatere druge proizvodne ter storitvene obrti. Vzdevek "mojster" je označeval tudi redke učitelje oz. šolske mojstre. K netipičnim (obrnim) dejavnostim smemo šteti gostilničarstvo in gostiščarstvo, ki se spogledujeta s trgovino, medtem ko je solinarstvo blizu poljedelstvu in rudarstvu, ribolov pa nabiralništvu in lovu. Po sredi 16. stoletja je na Slovenskem znotraj obrtnih skupin prišlo do večje specializacije. Ob mestnih obrteh so v srednjem veku in kasneje na podeželju cvetele domače obrti.

Viri za preučevanje rokodelstev in obrti so neposredni materialni ostanki kot orodje in izdelki, posredni materialni ostanki kot ohranjeni simboli poklicnih združenj obrtnikov, likovne upodobitve in pisni viri, ki včasih vsebujejo tudi ilustracije.

V življenju v primorskih mestih so veljala patriarhalna življenjska pravila. Dekle je v rosnih letih živelo v varstvu očeta matere, brata, koga od sorodnikov ali drugega skrbnika, po poroki pa je bila žena v zakonu podrejena moževi oblasti.

Poslovno udejstvovanje žena v Kopru, Izoli, Piranu in Trstu je bilo omejeno, čeprav so imele v lasti premično in nepremično imetje, obrtne objekte kot peči, mline, oljčne mline in plovila. Srečujemo več mestnih poklicev, v katerih so se udejele žene: Od "dostojnih" obrti, ki so jih opravljale, se v obravnavanih mestih omenja peka kruha. V Kopru so poznali ženske mlinarice. Od potrebnih, ki jim je javnost prilepila pečat nedostojnosti, se v Piranu in Trstu omenja poklic javnih ljubic. Žene so bile v Kopru, Izoli in Trstu branjevke na trgu; v Kopru in Izoli krčmarice, v Kopru so prodajale mleko, grozdje, vino, olje in drugo, koprške mlinarice pa žito in moko. Koprski statuti govorijo o Judu in Judinji, ki bi se želel(a) v Kopru ukvarjati z denarnimi posli.

Nekatere dejavnosti žena so bile povezane z morjem in agrarnim zaledjem. Koprčanke in Pirančanke so bile solinarke. Koprski statuti omenjajo ribiče "obeh spolov", pa tudi Slovane in Slovanke "obeh spolov", ki jih enotijo s kmeti.

Vsa omenjena mesta poznajo poklic plačane dékle, v Kopru tudi "sužnje" pri premožnejših meščanih. Čaščen poklic, v katerem srečamo Tržačanko, je bil redovnica (monialis), v Kopru pa naletimo na religioso.

V nasprotju s primorjem so se v mestih v notranjosti obrtniki povezovali v obrtne bratovščine ali cehe, združenja obrtnikov iste stroke z izključno pravico do opravljanja poklica v mestnih naselbinah. Na Slovenskem so se cehi pojavljali od 14. stoletja. Varovali so pravice članov pred konkurenco in urejali vprašanja proizvodnje. Članstvo v cehu je bilo obvezno tudi za žene obrtniških mojstrov. Ti so namreč morali biti oženjeni. Ko je v 17. stoletju prišlo do "cehovske zapore", ki je omejila število mojstrov na obstoječe stanje, se je mojstrstvo prenašalo po družinski tradiciji, tudi po ženski liniji.

Tudi v "celinskih" mestih na Slovenskem so se žene uveljavljale predvsem v prehrabnih strokah. Od slednjih je bila – kot na Primorskem – na prvem mestu pekarska obrt. Žene so se ukvarjale z branjarjo oz. krošnjarstvom. Bila jim je odprta možnost udejstvovanja v storitveni obrti – padarstvu in nekaterih drugih obrteh.

Žene so doma nepoklicno opravljale tudi druge obrtne storitve, ki so prinašale dobiček v družinski proračun (šivanje, pletenje, čipkarstvo). Tudi mesta v notranjosti so poznala ženske kot hišne posestnice ter razne ženske poklice, npr. dékle, redovnice.

Za zaključek preostaja ugotovitev, da smemo iz raztresenosti in redkosti podatkov o udeležbi žene v rokodelstvu in obrti v srednjeveških in zgodnjemnovoveških mestih na Slovenskem sklepati, da je bila ta bolj kot ne zanemarljiva. Omejena je bila predvsem na prehrabne dejavnosti. Pač pa so žene obrtnih mojstrov v zvezi z dejavnostjo svojih mož nosile breme gospodinjstva, v katerem so morale skrbeti tako za lastno družino kot za možovo obrtniško ekipo: za pomočnike in vajence.

Ključne besede: žene, obrt, rokodelstvo, srednji vek, zgodnji novi vek, Slovenija, mesta

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