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Decently Dining: Modernizing Dining Rooms in Lithuanian Nobilities Manor Houses in the 19th Century

In many Lithuanian Manor Houses, the Dining Room, center of the aristocratic social life, was modernized in the late 18th and 19th century. Included were adjacent related spaces. In a complex and plurimethodical approach, the PhD examines the formal changes by identifying the most frequent schemes. The aim is to insert these transformations in the frame of the particular sociohistorical development in Lithuanian on one hand and in the context of European modernisation on the other hand.

To achieve the aim, the thesis proceeds in three steps. The introductory chapter describes the European modernization process in 18th and 19th century and its impact on Lithuanian nobility, including the changing life conditions and consumption habits. The results are discussed in Chapter 2 within the architectural theory of the period, thus describing and explaining the changes in the general organisation of the *Apartment* and of the food consumption–supply–storage–production chains. The social background will be sketched out in Chapter 3, providing an outline of relevant examples in three categories of the nobility: (international) high aristocracy, wealthy (national) nobles and petty nobles.

The methodological and analytical approach. As architecture is a volumetric-spatial form of art, in-situ research is very important for its perception. Unfortunately, the architecture of manor houses, especially interiors, is one of the most abandoned fields of Lithuanian cultural heritage. The number of remaining objects is low. Therefore any analysis has to take into consideration historical sources as well. These include documents, inventories, projects and plans for the houses. To outline the sociohistorical frame, the study of the political situation (Lithuania as a part of the Russian Empire) is as important as the one of everyday's life in the manor houses in diaries, memories, contemporary fiction and books dedicated to the household. Thus the research is based on comparative and synthesis methods. In addition to a *social history of art*, the *new micro history* methods will be used.

Social history serves to explain not only the specifics of the noblemen, as the closed circle community, its interrelationships, but also the distribution of ideas according to hereditary and marriage strategies, as well as the links between craftsmen and customers, where often customer's recommendations or just network of estate owners played a crucial role. The *new micro history methodology* is used for the analysis of various adjacent rooms of the dining room (i.e. the still room, butler's pantry). Following Walter Benjamin's *Monads*

Theory, Carlo Ginzburg *clues method* and Michel de Certeau *margin, borderline concept*, we are able to describe the spread of the trends from the top to the lower classes.

The problems and questions I would like to address. One of the main problems of my PhD is the Lithuanian Historiography itself. As Matthew Rampley has emphasized at several occasions ("Modeling of National Art History and the New Europe" or "Contemporary Histories: Heritage and / or Past Modeling" (Contested Histories: Heritage and / as the Construction of the Past)), a national art and architectural history in Lithuania was and to a certain extent still is subject to political debates that strongly influence the perception of the problem as well as the scientific output. The aim of my PhD is, by placing the research theme into a wider, international setting, to develop criterias which bring the object (lithuanian manor houses) back to a global scientific exchange and make it comparable with similar phenomena in central Europe.

Keywords: modernization, manor house, house planning, dining room, nobility, Lithuania, nineteenth century