

INSTYTUT ARCHEOLOGII I ETNOLOGII
POLSKIEJ AKADEMII NAUK
DAWNIEJ INSTYTUT HISTORII KULTURY MATERIALNEJ PAN

KWARTALNIK
HISTORII KULTURY
MATERIALNEJ

ROK LXVII

WARSZAWA 2019

NR 3

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Druk i oprawa:

MAZOWIECKIE CENTRUM POLIGRAFII
ul. Słoneczna 3C, 05-270 Marki

Nakład 300 egz. Arkuszy wydawniczych 8,5. Papier offset 80 g.
Oddano do składania w październiku 2019 r., druk ukończono
w listopadzie 2019 r.

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Dorota Dias-Lewandowska

From the cellar to the table. Modesty, moderation and economy
of Polish nobles' drinking culture in the second half of the 18th century
(based on inventories of drinks served in noble
and aristocratic households)¹

Key words: drinking culture, early modern alcohol consumption, wine cellars
Słowa kluczowe: kultura picia, konsumpcja alkoholu w nowożytności, piwnice na wino

“Za króla Sasa jedz, pij i popuszczaj pasa” (During the Reign of a Saxon king, eat, drink and loosen your belt), is the saying that probably best reflects the characteristics of the drinking culture in the first half of the 18th century Poland. The publications on the history of alcohol consumption, however, do not include any subtle differentiation of periods of excessive drunkenness and sobriety, depicting the entire Old-Polish period as a constant carnival of toasts made with cups filled with the best and most expensive wines².

Studies on old Polish customs have preserved this image of excessive and festive consumption to a large extent. In these works, the term “alcoholism”³ is often used to describe the phenomenon of excess consumption, which in fact was not introduced into official scientific discourse until the middle of the 19th century⁴. However, it is worth analysing how this consumption was limited and what everyday, non-festive consumption of alcoholic beverages among the nobility and aristocracy looked like.

Although the clergy and moralists have been admonishing people to reduce alcohol consumption, especially the expensive imported wines, since the 16th century⁵, the first signs of change in the drinking culture only began to appear around the middle of the 18th century.

The number of publications devoted to alcoholic beverages was growing gradually, from a dozen or so issued in the 16th century, to several dozen in the 17th century, and then to over a hundred published by the end of the 18th century. In the 19th century, mainly due to the development of science, medicine and movements promoting abstinence the number of publications on alcohol and drunkenness reached hundreds⁶.

¹ The article was written as part of research financed by the National Science Centre, application no 2016/20/S/HS3/00107.

² A few examples of works in which the topics of feasting, alcohol and drunkenness appear, illustrated with the example of excess consumption: Kuchowicz Z. 1957; Czaplinski W., Dlugosz J. 1982; Besala J. 2015.

³ Ex. Wichowa M. 2015; Kalinowski E. 2017; Pietrzak J. 2016.

⁴ On early work on the conceptualization of alcoholism at the end of the 18th century see: Porter R. 1985; Rush B. 1790; Trotter T. 1804; Huss M. 1852.

⁵ Rycheicki M.J.A. 1850.

⁶ Jasińska M. 1993; Krasińska I. 2018.

Excessive alcohol consumption at the end of the 18th century Poland is seen more as a problem than a social norm. This kind of behaviour is perceived as a direct cause of the country's collapse⁷. From the perspective of the lost independence and unsuccessful uprisings, the dissipated life of the nobles and aristocracy appears to be the main reason of Poland's problems. Such a standpoint seems to be quite uniform, to the extent that one may be under the impression that be it baroque or enlightenment, the same beverages were drunk for the same reasons.

What we know about drinking in Poland of the past is usually derived from reports describing feasts, banquets and special events. However, we seldom have a chance to take a closer look at the everyday, less spectacular consumption. The aim of this paper is to show in more detail this daily, ordinary consumption rather than to construct an image of Polish drinking based on reports and information concerning festive and special times.

Such an approach is possible thanks to the preserved sources, which document daily consumption of drinks at the courts of aristocracy and nobility⁸. It should be noted that the image of drinking based upon it obviously does not concern the entire society, but the elite only. In the research I conduct I focus mainly on grasping the moment when the culture of drinking changes and new models of consumption begin to emerge. These new models were formed in the elite circles and then spread among the other social classes. The choice of aristocracy and nobility is also caused by the peculiar character of sources. With regard to this social group the available source documentation makes it possible to present both the everyday, ordinary consumption and the one related to special events in a comprehensive way. In this group we can also observe the most diverse assortment of beverages, particularly wines which, being imported goods, remained prestigious drinks practically throughout the whole studied period⁹.

The type of sources forming the basis for these analyses are the daily selections of drinks for the tables of nobility and aristocracy. For the purpose of this article I shall analyse one of the documents of the type, compared to others, related to it with regard to the form and content.

As examples I have chosen reports on daily consumption at the courts of Aleksandra Ogińska in Siedlce, Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski in Sieniawa, Izabella Branicka in Białystok and the royal court of Stanisław August Poniatowski in Warsaw. All these documents register at least a few months of alcohol consumption at each court. They were also chosen in view of the similar period in which these documents were created.

The analysis of serial documents provided information on trends and consumption statistics. Qualitative research embedded the data on alcoholic beverages in a cultural context. It also allowed to understand the role of alcohol in diet and everyday life. The serial documents was supplemented with single documents on consumption at the particular household, which enabled an analysis of how alcoholic beverages were administered and to what extent savings policies were implemented.

Conducting the research project concerning changes in the culture of drinking in Poland of the 18th century¹⁰, including the research results presented in this paper, I would like to examine the changes being made in the way alcohol is consumed and perceived. Therefore, I focus on investigating a set of practices related to drinking, attitudes towards alcohol and the roles its consumption fulfilled in society.

⁷ Wybicki J. 1777–1778, p. 122.

⁸ On the role and potential of this type of documents in research on drinking culture: Dias-Lewandowska D. 2018.

⁹ Dias-Lewandowska D. 2014.

¹⁰ Dias-Lewandowska D. 2017.

Still, I presume that both the nature of consumption and the choice of drinks itself is subject to a change in the middle of the 18th century. What is also being changed are the definitions of alcohol itself and ideas such as drunkenness and sobriety.

The clash of these two worlds, drunkenness and sobriety can be observed over nearly three centuries. Beginning from the 16th century, opinions of foreigners concerning Polish drinking are quite clear. Getting drunk is called a glorious habit, proof of being sincere or even well-bred. Being sober at the table was seen as a sign of rudeness, lack of good breeding and the abstainer was even perceived as secretive and insidious¹¹.

Throughout the next decades this monolithic image of Polish hospitality, which deems it improper to refuse to drink a toast to the health of the king, host or other guests does not change much. Even at the end of the 17th century, John Worlidge, wrote in the preface to his treatise on cider, about the Polish way of drinking in the same way it was thought before. "In Poland, he is most accounted of that will drink most healths and held to be the bravest Fellow, that carries his Liquor best; being of opinion, that there is as much valour to be found in drinking as in fighting"¹². This long-lasting image of Polish drinking is surely supported by particular reports on Polish customs being copied without verification, which can be exemplified by guides to Europe authored by Cloude Jordan de Colombier, who, at the beginning of the 18th century, copied quite freely the reports of Gaspard de Tende¹³ from the middle of the 17th century¹⁴.

Let us however look at the later writings on festive table customs. In the second half of the 18th century we may hear opinions stating that drunkenness in Poland is slowly declining and that there are places, especially in the so-called elegant world, where the consumption of alcohol is being reduced. Johan Erich Biester recalls that in the old days not a single deal could be made in Poland without feasting and drinking to the excess, although this custom begins to decline, mainly because of the royal court which sets an example of abstinence¹⁵. This is confirmed by George Burnett, an English journalist who writes, at the beginning of the 19th century: "Poles [...] generally drink less. It is rare that anybody drinks more than two glasses of the stronger wines during dinner (and nothing is drunk afterwards). Many persons drink none at all"¹⁶.

In fact, the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski brings about a certain variety after the previous Saxon era. The king is well known for his abstinence, which, as he claimed, had been instilled in him by his parents when he was a child. In his diaries we read:

¹¹ Cudzoziemcy o Polsce. 1971, p. 140, 169.

¹² Worlidge J. 1678.

¹³ Tende G. de, 1686.

¹⁴ Cloude Jordan de Colombier, author of the work *Voyages historiques de l'Europe*, written between 1692 and 1700, the eight volumes of which contain guidelines for travelers to France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, the British Isles, the United Provinces, Germany, Moscow and Poland. The last, eighth volume contains notes for travelers to Poland, on the state, system, customs and accounts of recent political events in this country. Particularly interesting are the remarks concerning the customs prevailing in Poland at the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries. The last volume of the series concerning Poland, Lithuania, as well as Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland was published in 1700. More than 15 years before Gaspard de Tende published his *Relation historique de la Pologne*, containing observations of a courtier Maria Ludwika Gonzaga, who went to Poland in 1646. What do these two valuable sources, relating to life in Poland, have in common? In the guide by Jordan de Colombier you can find excerpts from the book by Sieur de Hauteville. Descriptions of consumption, table behavior, including those related to alcohol consumption, are basically copied (partially shortened) from *Relation historique de la Pologne*. Also repeated are, e.g. fragments regarding the Polish custom of not having breakfast, the popularity of expensive Hungarian wines and the conduct of the ladies during toast raising: Jordan de Colombier C. 1700, p. 42–52.

¹⁵ Polska stanisławowska. 1963, p. 229.

¹⁶ Burnett G. 1807, p. 220.

“My parents demanded from me, like they did from my older brothers before, that I gave my word of honour not to gamble, taste wine or any strong drink, and not to marry before the age of thirty. I have kept faithfully to these promises, the second of which (as my parents thought) was to protect me in the future from the immeasurable use of beverages at all the nobles’ assemblies, and even in our homes, to such an extent that one could expose oneself to the enmity of the most needed people by refusing to drink as much as was requested, unless he could prove that he had never drunk with anyone. The example of my upbringing, although less closely imitated in the homes of other Polish magnates, perhaps contributed to a clear reduction in this addiction in our home, which August II had popularized, especially in Poland”¹⁷.

This is not, however, the uniform image of drinking depicted in the previous centuries. We may clearly observe that authors of these opinions speak mainly of the Polish elites and the beginnings of changes in the culture of drinking. There are also remarks contradictory to those speaking of this Polish awakening from drunkenness. Frenchman Hubert Vautrin¹⁸ does not seem to notice the difference between feasting in the 17th or 18th century. For him, the Polish eating and drinking culture has nothing to do with sophistication, elegance and responsible disposal of drinks. In the world seen through his eyes, the Polish nobleman still raises toasts until he falls over, disregarding the costs, and keeps treating his guests to more and more glasses of Hungarian and other expensive wines¹⁹.

The opinions may also differ depending on the place from which a given commentator observed reality. Thus, there is a widespread belief that abstinence and giving up of the old Sarmatian feasts with hectolitres of beverages is becoming fashionable in Warsaw because of the example set by the court of king Stanisław August Poniatowski.

Registers of alcohol consumption are the best evidence of daily alcohol use. The scrupulously kept records of the particular tables where the alcohol should be served together with the quantities thereof, provide an excellent material not only for quantitative analysis, but thanks to numerous annotations and comments, also for a qualitative one.

Reliability of the source and meticulousness with which the serving of particular drinks to the table was recorded are confirmed by numerous instructions for cellarers found in archive sources. One of such instructions for a royal cellarer speaks e.g. of: meticulous cataloguing of wines disposed and received, being prudent in selecting drinks for particular persons and occasions, keeping order in confirmations of drink purchases, accurate portioning of the beverages, informing of any changes in the selection of alcohols, taking good care of the order, cleanliness in cellars and good preservation of wines and other strong drinks, limiting the number of servants having access to cellars²⁰.

Sources which concern the serving of drinks to the tables of Polish nobles at the time are characterized by a peculiar layout, which can be noticed in the following examples. Usually the content layout itself does not change: types of drinks are being distinguished; it is worth men-

¹⁷ “Rodzice wymagali ode mnie jak przedtem od starszych braci słowa honoru, że nie będę grał w gry hazardowe, nie skosztuję wina ani żadnego gorącego trunku i nie ożenię się przed trzydziestym rokiem. Docho- wałem wiernie tych przyrzeczeń, a których drugie (w myśli moich rodziców) miało być dla mnie ochroną na przyszłość od niepomiarkowanego u nas używania napojów we wszystkich zgromadzeniach szlacheckich, a nawet i w domach, do tego stopnia, że można się było narazić na nieprzyjaźni najpotrzebniejszych sobie ludzi, odmawiając pić tyle, ile proszono, chyba iż kto mógł dowieść, że nigdy z nikim nie wychylił kieliszka. Przykład mego wychowania, chociaż mniej ściśle naśladowany w domach innych magnatów polskich, przyczynił się może do widocznego zmniejszenia u nas tego nałogu, który August II, szczególnie w Polsce rozszerzył”, Poniatowski S.A. 1870, p. 10.

¹⁸ Vautrin H. 1807, p. 184–331.

¹⁹ Dias-Lewandowska D. 2015.

²⁰ AGAD, AK, signature III/578, “Instrukcja dla Piwnicznego Łożego”.

tioning that the grouping of beverages in each of these sources is quite varied (see tab. 1, 2, 3); next, there is a list of persons, occasions and purposes for the particular beverages; each list is accompanied by calculations regarding the global consumption of alcohol in a given day, week and month.

Table 1.
Type of beverages in daily consumption at Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski's court in Sieniawa in February 1795*

Tabela 1.
Typy napojów w codziennej konsumpcji na dworze Adama Kazimierza Czartoryskiego w Sieniawie w lutym 1795*

Wines				Arak	Vinegar	Spirit	Local beer	
Hungarian table wine	Hungarian old wine	Hungarian acid wine	Austrian wine				Noble	Strong

* Source: BC, AKC, signature 10584, vol. 2

Table 2.
Type of beverages in daily consumption at Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski's court in Sieniawa in March 1795*

Tabela 2.
Typy napojów w codziennej konsumpcji na dworze Adama Kazimierza Czartoryskiego w Sieniawie w marcu 1795*

Vodka		Hungarian wines		Austrian wine		Vinegar	Beer	Local beer	
from Gdańsk	Spirit	Old	Table	Red	White		English	Strong	Noble

* Source: BC, AKC, signature 10584, vol. 2

Table 3.
Daily consumption at Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski's court in Sieniawa in May 1795

Tabela 3.
Codzienna konsumpcja na dworze Adama Kazimierza Czartoryskiego w Sieniawie w maju 1795

Spirit	Vodka		Hungarian wine		Austrian wine		Vinegar	Foreign beer	Local beer	
	Gdańsk	Ordinary	Old	Table	Red	White		English	Strong	Noble

In some cases, we can observe a much varied methods of gradation of wine quality: from their age (young wine, old wine) through its purpose (for the table, wine for her ladyship), to quality (good, ordinary), up to determining specific names, e.g. champagne, burgundy wine, frontignac wine or even a vintage year of the wine (tab. 4 and 5).

Table 4.

Type of beverages in daily consumption at the Royal court of Stanisław August Poniatowski in January 1793*

Tabela 4.

Typy napojów w codziennej konsumpcji na królewskim dworze Stanisława Augusta Poniatowskiego w styczniu 1793*

Hungarian table wine	Rhine wine	Champagne	Burgundy	French wine	Muscat de Frontignac
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* Source: AGAD, AK, signature III/1459, fol. 1

Table 5.

Type of beverages in daily consumption at the Royal court of Stanisław August Poniatowski in January 1795*

Tabela 5.

Typy napojów w codziennej konsumpcji na królewskim dworze Stanisława Augusta Poniatowskiego w styczniu 1795*

Wine essence	Maślacz 1788	Old hungarian wine	Rhine wine	Champagne	Burgundy	Muscat	French wine	English beer	Porter beer
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* Source: AGAD, AK, signature III/1459, fol. 2

Let us now take a closer look at the individual registers of alcoholic beverage consumption. The first one is the register of drinks selected for the table of Aleksandra Ogińska between October 1788 and February 1789²¹. The document is quite peculiar, since it includes the period in which Ogińska leaves her summer residency in Siedlce for her Warsaw palaces in winter. This gives us the opportunity to trace the consumption of alcoholic beverages for a significantly limited group of courtiers. Meticulously kept notes for the full five months allow us to observe consumption in the ordinary period, fasting, carnival and Christmas. During the first 2 weeks of October, while Ogińska is in Siedlce, she hosts more guests, as compared to November, when we can observe the scale of consumption at the court during her stay in Siedlce and Warsaw.

Thanks to the detailed notes it was possible to demonstrate, e.g. the general consumption of all drinks in a given month, as well as the trends in consumption of particular alcohols throughout the whole month (tab. 6).

This type of documents not only gives us an idea of the daily consumption, but also of the nature of the drinks being served, their roles and prestige. Ogińska's lists provide information concerning the particular persons and tables which the wines were meant for. Therefore, we know that Ogińska was served Siedlce beer and French wine, the cook received 2 quarts of double beer for the period of 4 months, while the writer — only 1 quart. The marshal's table (although we do not know how many persons sat at it received from 1 to 3 quarts of Siedlce beer and 1–2 carafes of French wine. An interesting element, although not appearing throughout

²¹ BKC, DS, signature 11481.

Table 6.
Monthly consumption at the Alexandra Ogińska's court in Siedlce*

Tabela 6.
Miesięczne spożycie alkoholu na dworze Aleksandry Ogińskiej w Siedlcach*

Year	Month	Double beer from Siedlce (quart)	English beer (bottles)	Hungarian table wine (bottles)	Rhine wine (bottles)	Burgundy (bottles)	White champagne (bottles)	French old wine (bottles)	French ordinary wine (quart)	French ordinary wine (carafes)	Arak
1788	October	955	23	24	3,5	4,5		15	13	664	
1788	November	661	4	54,5	1	1		2	9	370	
1788	December	860	2	12	2			2	6	391	1
1789	January	812	1	49			3	14	5	377	
1789	February	438		5	2			1	3	196	

* Source: BKC, DS, signature 11481

the whole period which the lists include, is the information concerning the alcohol served at the children's table. Usually it were 2 quarts of Siedlce beer and 2–3 carafes of French wine.

The records from the Ogińska's household are one of the few that document the dispensing of alcohol to the children's table²². The issue of the diet of children and adolescents at the end of the old Polish era is discussed in Aneta Bołdyrew's publication. The author points out that at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries it is forbidden to give children alcohol, strong coffee and tea, which are considered too stimulating²³. However, this view appears earlier in the first half of the 19th century. In "Teaching customs for children" by Julian Horoszkiwicz we read: "The same but even stronger effects are caused by some drinks, such as vodka, wine, beer and others, not only when used excessively, but even in small quantities and drank often, namely in youth, add hotness to blood and may cause various diseases and corruption [...] Coffee, tea and other beverages, which have been introduced by fashion and the desire to distinguish oneself, and which parents in their ignorance perceive as something very good and necessary for their children, have an equally detrimental effect on the young body"²⁴.

Another category are the drinks served for travel. These are predominantly French wines, both table wines and those named as old ones, Bourgogne wines. English beer appears in this category as well, being served generally during holidays and important events.

The lists provide us also with the knowledge concerning spirits meant for those at court who were ill and the beverages which were to serve as ingredients for medicine. Again, the most popular wine here is the French one, with the Rhine wine appearing only once.

²² In early modern period alcohol was a necessary component in people's diet see: Gentilcore D. 2016, p. 157–183.

²³ Bołdyrew A. 2008, p. 101–107.

²⁴ "Te same skutki, lecz w mocniejszym jeszcze stopniu sprawiają niektóre napoje, jak na przykład: wódka, wino, piwo i inne, nie tylko nad miarę użyte, ale nawet w małej ilości a często używane, a mianowicie w młodości, dodają gorącości krwi i mogą przez to stać się rozmaitych chorób i zepsucia przyczyną [...]. Równie szkodliwy wpływ wywierają na młode ciało kawa, herbata i inne napoje, które moda i chęć odróżniania się w użytek wprowadziły, a nieświadomość rodziców jak coś bardzo dobrego i koniecznego swoim dzieciom podaje", Horoszkiwicz J. 1848, p. 121.

French drinks also rule in the kitchen, which received 2 carafes of this wine a day. There is also more precise information concerning French wine meant for preparing pike — fish with a well-established position in the Polish traditional cuisine.

“Pike with Sauerkraut. Chop good sauerkraut finely, cut your pike, scraped but with scales on, into portions, boil them in broth and boil the sauerkraut separately. pour out the broth in which your pike seethed and put sauerkraut into it. pour in some wine, vinegar, add small raisins, olive oil or butter, add pepper, cinnamon, and sweetening. Give it a boil and serve forth. you can cook loach in the exact same manner”²⁵.

Additional servings of drinks are given to those members of Ogińska’s court who celebrated e.g. name day. On this occasion, the customary local beer and ordinary wine were supplemented by English beer, though in limited amounts; usually one bottle. The only record concerning a grander feast is from the 24th of December, when additional six bottles of Hungarian table wine were served for six persons at Christmas Eve. This may be surprising, since neither Christmas, nor the period of celebrating the New Year are an occasion to increase the consumption of drinks or replace the table alcohols with more prestigious ones. This is probably related to Ogińska’s stay in Warsaw at the time; nevertheless, the image of consumption which we may observe having analysed the list of drinks being served, does not reflect at all the belief concerning excessive consumption at Polish courts.

It is clear that everyday life at court was marked by the consumption of local beer and table wine. Some of the beverages enumerated on the list of available drinks do not appear even once in the period of five months. It is only the arrival of guests at court or bidding them goodbye that allowed the cellarer to serve a more prestigious beer, e.g. the English one, or wine — Burgogne, old French ones. The most spectacular serving throughout nearly half a year was during the visit of prince of Wittenberg, who was served three bottles of champagne.

A certain difficulty in trying to determine how much alcoholic beverages had actually been consumed is the lack of information on the number of people sitting at the particular table. In the case of documents from the court of Aleksandra Ogińska, we do not find the exact number of persons. The documents from Sieniawa, however, contain information regarding certain days. For example, we know that on 2 September 1791, seventy people were served alcohol at the table. The menu included French wine for lunch and dinner — the total of twenty two bottles. Hungarian wine — eleven and a half bottles, four bottles of red wine. Among the beers there are seven bottles of the English one and six bottles of porter, five bottles of old Hungarian wine and two bottles of champagne²⁶.

Another source documenting the daily consumption of alcohol at the magnate court run by a woman can be found at the court of Izabella Branicka, the widow of Hetman Jan Klemens Branicki. Two documents of this type have survived: the first one from 1796²⁷, covering months from July to October, and the second one from 1801, regarding the period from February to October²⁸.

This is quite an interesting comparison, considering the radical change in the type of wines served at the hetman’s table. In 1796 the predominant beverages are the French table wines and from time to time more exquisite wines such as champagne or burgundy are served. They are

²⁵ Czerniecki S. 2014 (1682), p. 127.

²⁶ BC, AKC, signature 10584, vol. 2.

²⁷ AGAD, ABB, signature 9, “Rejestr kuchni piwnicy i inne pałacu białostockiego. (1771–1803): Registry miesięczne rozchodów wina 1796”, fol. 1–7.

²⁸ AGAD, ABB, signature 9, “Registry miesięczne piwnic pałacu białostockiego 1801”, fol. 1–9.

²⁹ Perhaps this was due to problems with the supply of French wines because of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe.

accompanied by Hungarian table wines. Five years later, the list of wines served at the table is already dominated by the latter²⁹.

In both registers we can see consumption at a rather stable level, slightly increasing in the summer months.

Records from the royal court of Stanisław August Poniatowski do not include daily but monthly censuses³⁰. Each month both the types of beverages, and the persons who receive them change. Tracking consumption within one year shows, among other things, the relationship between one's position at the court and the type and quantity of alcohol obtained. It is noteworthy that the strongest beverages were the ones least consumed during the year, with the exception of soldiers, for whom in April sixteen bottles of vodka were issued, six of which intended for "the blessing of the Easter baskets"³¹; in other cases, they are single bottles for deputy cup-bearer or sub-equerry³².

The analysis of consumption between the regular and festive periods provides us with some interesting conclusions. Easter of 1795 in royal cellars was spent on 'the blessing of the Easter baskets': Hungarian old — 10, *homargau*³³ — 8; liquor — 4, vodka — 6, wormwood (probably wine) — 10³⁴. Because only in the case of vodka we have to do with precise measurement (flashes) it is difficult to determine whether the wines were served in bottles, flashes or quartzes. If we are talking about wines of the champagne or *homargau* type, then taking into account the methods of importing and serving this type of wines at the time, these were definitely bottles.

The release of champagne or vintage year wine from the royal cellar is rather limited. Most frequently they were given to the royal master cook Paul Tremo (two bottles in January and two bottles in May 1795)³⁵. May 1795 is the month in which the most of this prestigious wine was consumed, including two bottles given by the king to Prince Repin³⁶.

Analysis of data from four manor houses indicates that the most common drink is local beer, followed by French and Hungarian table wines. The drinks served less frequently and only for important holidays or special occasions are quality French wines (champagne, burgundy), strong alcohols, vodkas and arrack, and are least noticeable in everyday consumption.

* * *

A reasonable way to administer wine, described by Biester and exemplified by the royal court, can also be seen in the notes on the arrangement of tables. In one of the instructions from 1790's we can find information on reduction in expenses concerning the tables of vice-marshal and secretary. Serving coffee and sugar is limited, while the beverages which are deemed to be sufficient are a bottle of Hungarian wine and half a bottle of French wine to be drunk with water. Eliminating breakfasts and coffee served in rooms was also supposed to result in some savings³⁷. Therefore, it is clear that splendour and excess are definitely replaced with moderation in consumption, both with regard to alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

Naturally, the type of sources being presented does not provide us with the entire image of consumption at particular households, yet it still allows to examine it at least partially. The further stage of the research will determine the identity of persons appearing on the given lists. Next, it is necessary to establish) how many persons sat at a given table, as far as serving drinks

³⁰ AGAD, AK, signature III/1459.

³¹ AGAD, AK, signature III/1459, fol. 6.

³² AGAD, AK, signature III/1459, fol. 2.

³³ Probably a phonetic record of a French wine from the Bordeaux region, Chateau Margaux.

³⁴ AGAD, AK, signature III/1459, fol. 6.

³⁵ AGAD, AK, signature III/1459, fol. 3, 5.

³⁶ AGAD, AK, signature III/1459, fol. 8.

³⁷ AGAD, AK, signature III/578.

at a particular table is concerned (e.g. lordly table, table for children, marshal's table). What could be helpful in this case are scattered sources describing in detail the meals from a given day and enumerating the persons sitting at the table, although this knowledge, too, only concerns individual days or tables.

The challenge is also to compare the consumption of individual beverages, mainly due to the inconsistent measurement system and the use of absolutely non-convertible measurement units, such as the carafe.

Nevertheless, when analysing particular summaries in more detail and comparing them on a geographical (consumption in various parts of Poland) and personal level (e.g. we can analyse the differences in consumption depending on whether the court was run by a man or a woman) we can gain an insight into everyday consumption at the Polish court and compare it with ideas concerning Polish drinking.

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Z piwnicy na stół. Skromność, umiar i oszczędność w kulturze picia
polskiej szlachty w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku
(na podstawie inwentarzy trunków podawanych w siedzibach
szlacheckich i magnackich)

„Za króla Sasa jedz, pij i popuszczaj pasa” to powiedzenie, które najlepiej oddaje cechy kultury picia w pierwszej połowie XVIII wieku w Polsce. W wielu dotychczasowych publikacjach dotyczących historii konsumpcji alkoholu brak jednak subtelnego zróżnicowania okresów nadmiernego pijaństwa i trzeźwości, a cały okres staropolski przedstawiony jest jako stały karnawał tostów spełnianych przy użyciu kielichów wypełnionych najlepszymi i najdroższymi winami.

Badania nad staropolskimi obyczajami w dużej mierze zachowały ten obraz nadmiernej i świątecznej konsumpcji. To, co wiemy o picu w dawnej Polsce, wywodzi się zazwyczaj ze źródeł opisujących biesiady i bankiety. Rzadko jest możliwe odtworzenie codziennej, mniej spektakularnej konsumpcji. Celem artykułu jest bardziej szczegółowe ukazanie tego zwykłego, powszedniego spożycia trunków w kontraście do obrazu polskiego picia ukształtowanego na podstawie relacji z wielkich uczt i szczególnych wydarzeń.

Źródłem, na którym opierają się przedstawione analizy, są codzienne doборы napojów na stoły szlacheckie i arystokratyczne. Jako przykłady wybrane zostały raporty dotyczące codziennego spożycia napojów na dworach Aleksandry Ogińskiej w Siedlcach, Adama Kazimierza Czartoryskiego w Sieniawie, Izabelli Branickiej w Białymstoku i na dworze królewskim Stanisława Augusta Poniatowskiego w Warszawie. Wszystkie te dokumenty rejestrują spożycie alkoholu w okresie co najmniej kilku miesięcy. Poza tym powstały one w podobnym okresie, tj. w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku.

Analiza uwzględnionych archiwaliów dostarczyła informacji o trendach i statystykach konsumpcji trunków, zaś badania jakościowe pozwoliły dostrzec rolę alkoholu w diecie i życiu codziennym. Materiał seryjny został uzupełniony o pojedyncze dokumenty dotyczące konsumpcji na danym dworze, co pozwoliło na analizę sposobu podawania napojów alkoholowych i stopnia realizacji polityki oszczędnościowej.