

## 2. ECOLOGICAL CRIME OVER TRSTENO AND THE AREA ROUND DUBROVNIK

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There has been a crime over a park - the top-level monument of the renaissance park arranging art. The news, coming from the newly opened battlefield of Dubrovnik at that time, was disastrous, not only regarding civil and historical objects of Dubrovnik but also the vegetation in its neighbourhood. This rich vegetation, especially picturesque cypress-three lines, created that magnificent unique atmosphere of southern Adriatic, Mediterranean landscape.

"Enemy firing caused numerous forest fires that literally devastate the whole of Dubrovnik area. THE SITUATION IS THE MOST DRAMATIC IN TRSTENO WHERE THE FIRE CAUGHT THE PROTECTED NATURAL PARK. In Župa Dubrovačka the fire is spreading in the way that the whole area from Brat across Kupari and Plat is, in fact, burning. Fire is devastating the land round Cavtat, Konavle, above Rijeka Dubrovačka and elsewhere. Dubrovnik itself is wrapped by thick smoke and ashes, brought by the wind from the fire stricken area of the narrower city core. The strong wind favours the spreading of fire, and the extinguishing is almost made impossible by the constant enemy firing." ("Vjesnik", October 4th, 1991, reported from Dubrovnik by Saud Ahmetović under the title "The Forests round Dubrovnik on Fire").

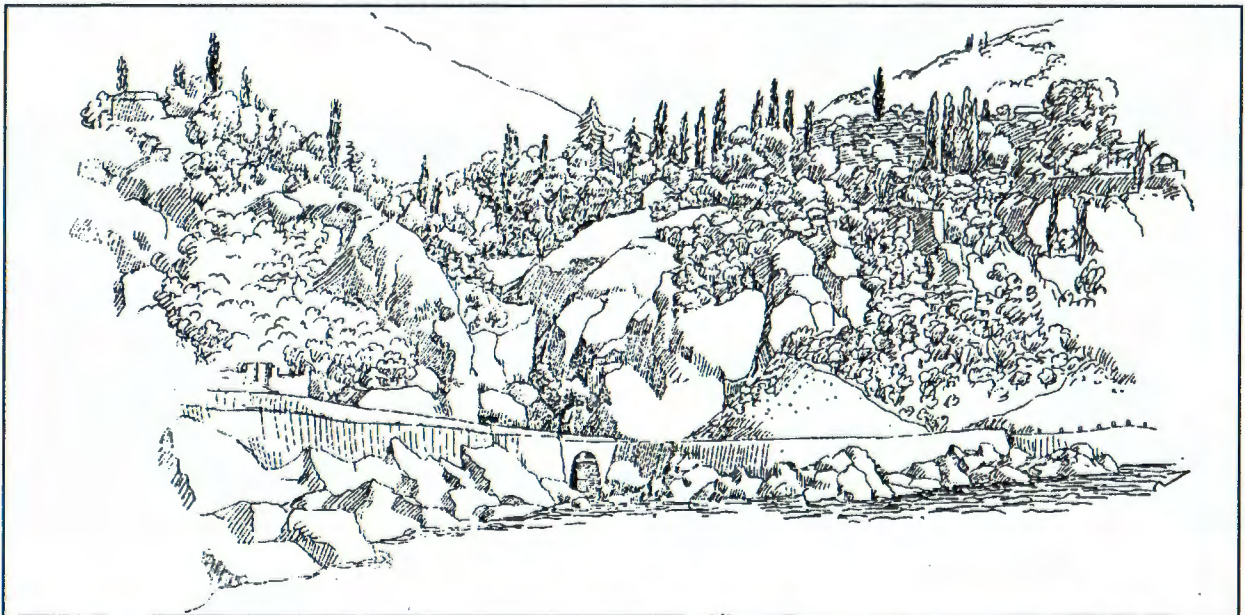
Among the destroyed natural features, THE FAMOUS ARBORETUM IN TRSTENO SUFFERED THE GREATEST DAMAGE.

Such crimes of intentional burning and destruction of the top-level works of nature and human skill have not been registered in the history of warfare so far. Special

burden in charging those that committed this crime is added by the fact that, historically looking, we are here dealing with the first works and objects of the park arranging art in Croatia, as well as on the Balkans. Thus, the destruction and burning of the age-old park, the killing of centuries-old trees, the transformation of the humanistic harmony in the monstrous site of fire means also the destruction of the most valuable substance of Croatian historical space.

General features of the park are: introducing the architectural order into nature (geometrically organized ground), as well as the symphony of water and the trimmed figure. In the case of our renaissance garden, water was used more as a fountain or a fish-pond connected to the sea. Fruit trees and vine (pergola and espalier) complete the useful part of the garden. However, besides the features of the renaissance park (spreading over 25,5 hectares) Trsteno is gradually becoming the arboretum, i.e. the collection of the live trees and bushes from all over the world, because, from the very beginning, the trees and bushes from the whole world arrived to Trsteno (probably brought by our sailors). We can thus mention the example of Opuntias or Indian fig - *Opuntia ficus indica* brought to Europe from South or Central America, whose specimen was planted in Trsteno only a few years later.

Trsteno was founded at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century and it is connected to the aristocratic family Gučetić. This family gave to Dubrovnik and, consequently, to Croatian state administration, to science, art and public life of Dubrovnik, the whole series



Ž.Hegedušić: Arboretum Trsteno - a view from the sea (reprint from the book of A.Ugrenović: Trsteno. -JAZU, Zagreb, 1953.).

Ž.Hegedušić: Arboretum Trsteno - pogled s mora (preslikano iz knjige A. Ugrenović: Trsteno. -JAZU, Zagreb, 1953.).

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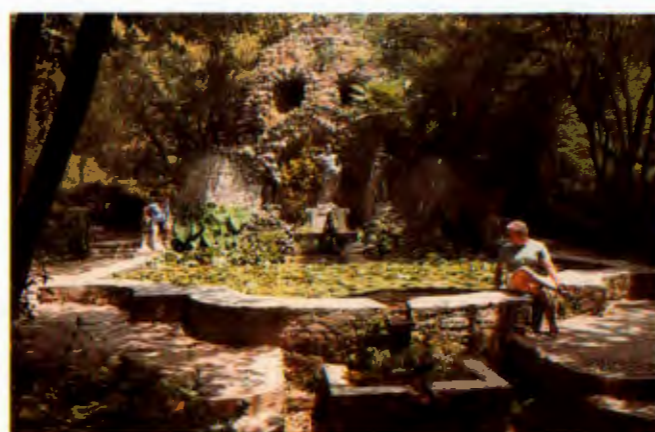
1  
Small port in the Arboretum Trsteno.  
Lučica u Arboretumu Trsteno.



2.  
Group of palm-trees in the Arboretum Trsteno.  
Skupina palma u Arboretumu Trsteno.



4.  
Over 400 years old plane-tree (*Platanus orientalis*)  
in the center of Trsteno.  
Preko 400 godina stara azijska platana (mokljen, platanj  
u lokalnom žargonu) u Trstenom.



3.  
Neptune-fountain in the Arboretum Trsteno.  
Neptunova česma u zelenilu Arboretuma Trsteno.



5  
Cypress-trees, St. Jacob in Dubrovnik.  
Čempresada iznad Svetog Jakova u Dubrovniku.

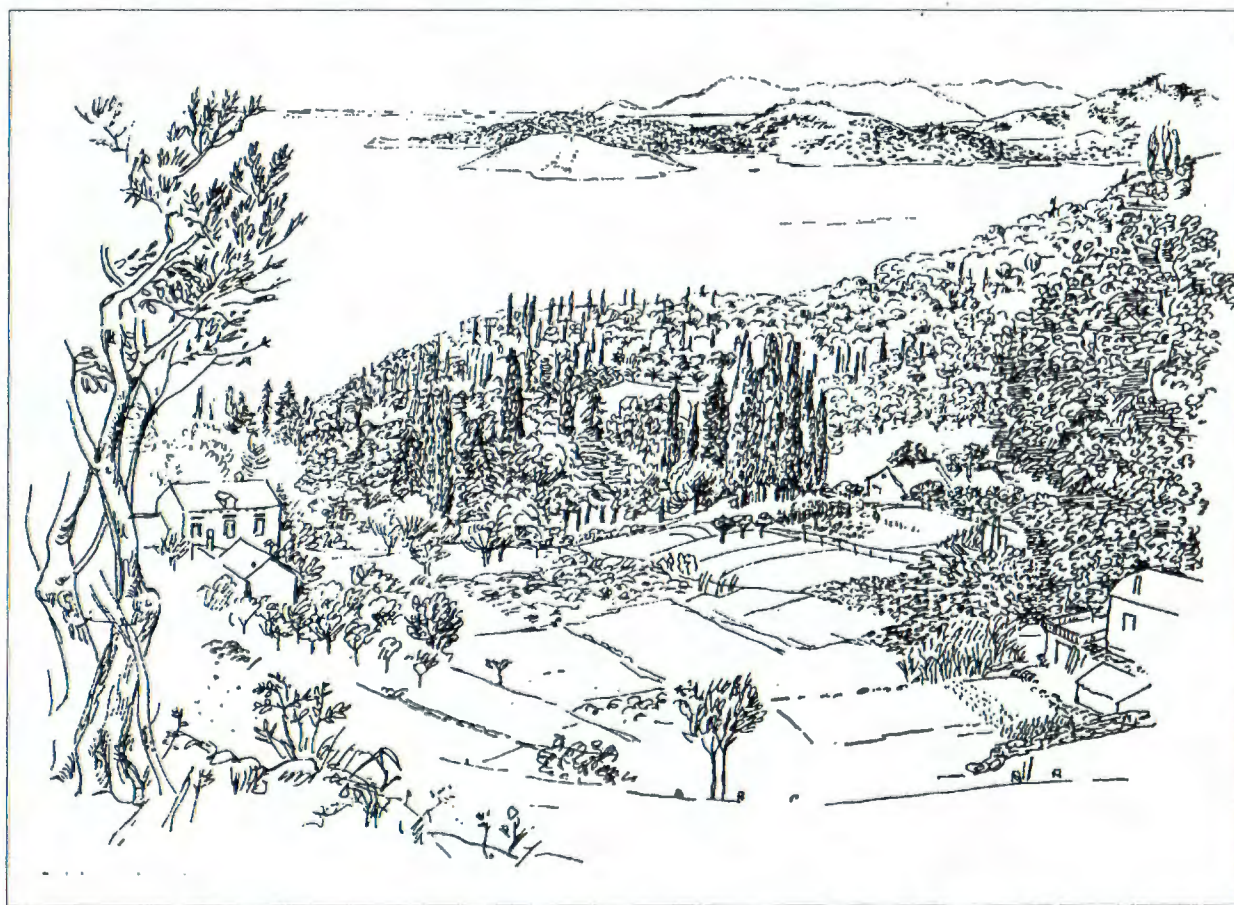
(Photo- Slike: I.Velić, D.Kiš)

of distinguished persons from the prince Klement Gučetić (year 1385) to Ivan Stjepan Gučetić. The latter is supposed to have founded Trsteno, but it could also have been the poet Ivan Gučetić, who lived in the period 1451-1502. Namely, the latin inscription on the stone tablet bears the year 1502 and the signature of Ivan Gučetić. The translation on the inscription is the following: "I am proud of my neighbours, but I am even more proud of the water, the healthy climate and the work of the diligent master. Traveller, here you can see evident signs of the human labour where the worthy skill perfects the wild nature". Could the noble lord Gučetić imagine that almost 500 years later, such a "neighbour and traveller" would come, who would, instead of recognized the skill of the worthy master, strike without any cause and in the most barbarous way, and kill the noble, historical park as well as the nature that surrounds it.

The Arboretum in Trsteno was created gradually, completing the collection of exotic trees by building objects such as the baroque fountain with Neptune (1736). Among the trees and bushes of Trsteno, two plane-trees (*Platanus orientalis*), more than 400 years old, should be pointed out. Their volume of the trunk is 46 m. Fortunately, these two plane-trees have been preserved so far. Among other trees, which have mostly disappeared in the destructive, intentionally caused fire,

the following should be pointed out: among the dominant species that marked the wider landscape of Trsteno there are old cypress-trees. Hundreds of years will be needed to restore such a magnificent scene of the landscape. There is also laurel (*Laurus nobilis*), camphor-tree (*Cinnamomum camphora*), date plums (*Diospyros kaki* and *D. lotus*), all of them originally from China and Japan, then tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) from North America, magnificent magnolia with big flowers (*Magnolia grandiflora*) from southern parts of North America. There are also sorts of acacia (*Acacia cealbata*) and others from Australia by origin, Christmas-berry (*Photinia serrulata*) from China, casuarina (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) from the tropics, ginko tree (*Ginkgo biloba*), cork-oak (*Quercus suber*) and others, as well as different sorts of eucalyptus (such as *Eucalyptus globulus*, *E. rostrata* and *E. viminalis*) from Australia. Among old specimens of palms some should be mentioned: Canarian (*Phoenix canariensis*), date-palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*), Fortune's palm (*Trachycarpus excelsa*) and Dwarfs fan palm (*Chamerops humilis*), Washington palm (*Washingtonia filifera* and *W. robusta*), cycad (*Cycas revoluta*) as well as Latinia (*Latania lontaroides*).

Among coniferous trees the most important are: Greek fir (*Abies cephalonica*), Andalusian fir (*A. pinsapo*), Colorado fir (*A. concolor*), then cedar-trees (*Cedrus*



Ž. Hegedušić: Arboretum Trsteno - a view from the East (reprint from the book of A. Ugrenović: Trsteno. - JAZU, Zagreb 1953.).  
 Ž. Hegedušić: Trsteno - pogled na park i otoke (preslikano iz knjige A. Ugrenović: Trsteno. - JAZU, Zagreb, 1953.).

*atlantica* and *C. libani*), Arizona cypress (*Cypressus arizonica*) etc. There are also numerous citrus fruits (*Citrus* of different sorts). Among the numerous sorts of bushes we should stress the following: the collection of oleanders (*Nerium oleander*), caesalpinia (*Caesalpinia gilliessii*), Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*), bananas, bougainvillea, Trumpet creeper, Cross-wine (Tasco) and others. The forests of Aleppo-pine, olive-groves and especially groups of native pubescent oak (some of them, like the one behind the castle, reached the age of 500 years), were especially famous for their beauty. This does not exhaust the survey of the numerous species of trees and shrubs that formed the arboretum, which was renowned as one of the most valuable research - scientific objects of the Mediterranean, shaped in the course of 500 years.

In order to establish real values of the Arboretum Trsteno, it should be compared to other arboretums in Europe and throughout the world: the oldest French arboretum Tonvoye, founded by the bishop Renne du Bolla, originates from the 16th century (which is somewhat later than our Trsteno). The most famous French arboretum was founded in 1845 and it is Arboretum national de Barres. The biggest English worldwide known arboretum Kew Gardens near London was founded in 1840 by Hooker. The Arnold Arboretum within The University of Harvard in United States covering the area of 51 hectares has been founded recently. A few such comparative data are enough to confirm the conclusion: ARBORETUM TRSTENO IS AMONG THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN EUROPE AND IN THE WORLD, IF NOT THE FIRST.