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DOI: 10.35765/pk.2019.2603.11

The Sweet War, or How Military Campaigns of Alfonso V of Aragon Affected the Eating Habits in Early to Mid-15th Century*

ABSTRACT

Starting from the time of James I the Conqueror (1213-1276) the Kingdom of Aragon started its Mediterranean expansion. Following successive military expeditions, its conquests included: Mallorca and the other Balearic Islands (1229-1235), Sicily (1282) and Sardinia (1323-1324). The culmination of this process was the involvement of a Alfons V the Magnanimous (1416-1458) in the war for the Kingdom of Naples, which began in 1420. After 22 years of intermittent struggle, in 1442, Alfons V the Magnanimous eventually captured Naples, which in the years to come became one of the leading centers of the Italian Renaissance.

The appearance of foreign domination in southern Italy suddenly entailed the transfer of Catalan culture, language and customs. Among the latter, Catalan culinary traditions formed at the end of the fourteenth century also occupied an important place. It was during this period that a significant change took place in the Kingdom of Aragon regarding the role and the circumstances of eating sweets by its financial

* A shorter version of this article was presented at the conference *Wojna od kuchni – kultura kulinarna, aprowizacja i używki w dziejach wojska i wojen* [War from the kitchen – the culinary culture, food supply and stimulants in the military history], organized by the Pola Chwały foundation on 27-29 September 2018 in Niepolomice, Poland.

and political elites. Until then, confectioneries were served as part of dessert at the end of the main meal (dinner or feast), while in the period discussed their consumption considerably shifted in time. Initially, their consumption was still associated with the various elements of the feasting etiquette (e.g. dancing, amusements, other meals). With time, the ceremonial of eating sweets transformed into a separate meal of sweet snacks, referred to by the Catalan term of *col·lació*. It quickly became a solemn, independently functioning type of feast, with an established ceremonial and setting.

Under what circumstances were Catalan eating practices transplanted to Italian context? What influence did the ruler and his military operations have on the enrichment of Italian feasting with new elements of Catalan provenance? – Such questions define the direction of the considerations made by the author of the paper.

KEY WORDS: Alfonso V the Magnanimous, Kingdom of Naples, sweets, sweet snack (*colazione/col·lació*), fifteenth century

STRESZCZENIE

Słodką wojna, czyli jak wyprawy wojenne Alfonsa V Wspaniałomyślnego wpłynęły na zmianę zwyczajów żywieniowych w Italii w pierwszej połowie XV w.

Począwszy od czasów Jakuba I Zdobywcy (1213-1276) Korona Aragonii wkroczyła na drogę ekspansji śródziemnomorskiej. W wyniku kolejnych wypraw wojennych pod panowaniem jej władców znalazła się Majorka i pozostałe wyspy archipelagu Balearów (1229-1235), Sycylia (1282) i Sardynia (1323-1324). Kulminacją tego procesu było zaangażowanie się Alfonsa V Wspaniałomyślnego (1416-1458) w wojnę o Królestwo Neapolu, która rozpoczęła się w 1420 r. Po 22 latach zmagania toczonych z przerwami, w 1442 r. Alfons V Wspaniałomyślny ostatecznie zawładnął Neapolem, który w kolejnych latach stał się jednym z przodujących ośrodków włoskiego renesansu.

Pojawienie się obcego panowania w południowej części Italii pociągnęło za sobą transfer katalońskiej kultury, języka i obyczajów. Wśród tych ostatnich ważne miejsce zajmowały również katalońskie zwyczaje kulinarne, które wykształciły się u schyłku XIV w. To właśnie w tym okresie na terenach Korony Aragonii doszło do istotnej zmiany roli i okoliczności spożywania słodczy w kręgach elit władzy

i pieniądza. Dotychczas słodkości były podawane jako deser na zakończenie głównego posiłku dziennego (obiadu, uczyty, uroczystego przyjęcia), natomiast od wzmiankowanego okresu ich spożycie uległo wyraźnemu czasowemu przesunięciu. Początkowo ich konsumpcja nadal była związana z poszczególnymi elementami rytuału biesiadowania (np. tańcami, zabawami, innymi posiłkami). Z czasem uroczyste spożywanie wyłącznie słodczy przekształciło się w autonomiczny posiłek o charakterze przekąski, zwany z katalońska *col·lació*. Szybko stało się ono uroczystym, samodzielnie funkcjonującym typem przyjęcia, z ustalonym ceremoniałem i oprawą.

W jakich okolicznościach doszło do przeszczepienia katalońskich praktyk żywieniowych na grunt włoski? Jaki był wpływ samego władcy i prowadzonych przezeń działań militarnych na ubogacenie włoskich form biesiadowania o nowe pierwiastki proveniencji katalońskiej? – to pytania, które wyznaczają kierunek rozważań podjętych przez autora referatu.

SŁOWA KLUCZE: Alfons V Wspaniałomyślny, Królestwo Neapolu, słodczy, słodka przekąska (*colazione/col·lació*), XV w.

There are few moments in the history of a region in which eating habits were changed due to war. Of course, one cannot consider merely the issue of food supply, or even nutritional deficiencies that accompany every armed conflict. War is also aggression and occupation. In this case, the invaders' customs, culture and language are generally rejected by the conquered people. However, the aggressor may make some effort to win the conquered population over. This was the case both in the first half of the fifteenth century during the wars for Naples, and immediately after its capture by the ruler of the Kingdom of Aragon, Alfonso V the Magnanimous (1416-1458). And so, the appearance of foreign domination in southern Italy suddenly entailed the transfer of Catalan culture, language and customs. Among the latter, Catalan culinary traditions formed at the end of the fourteenth century also occupied an important place. One of them was a sweet snack called *col·lació* in Catalan (Latin *collatio*), the organization and celebration of which became one of the important forms of ostentatious display of social and financial position for the elites. Under what circumstances were Catalan eating practices transplanted to Italian context? What influence did the ruler and his military operations have on the enrichment of Italian feasting with new elements? There are the questions that shall determine the direction of my considerations.

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In order to tackle this problem, the first thing to do is to outline the historical context of the considerations.

The medieval Kingdom of Aragon was a country whose history begins in 1137. It was then that an agreement was reached between the heir of the Kingdom of Aragon, Petronella, to the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berengar IV. Their marriage, formalized in 1150, was a turning point in the history of both countries, because the union thus formed bound their history for the following centuries¹.

In the Middle Ages, the Kingdom of Aragon, after the victorious advances of the Reconquista on land in the 12th century, entered the next century of maritime expansion in the western Mediterranean. As a result of military actions taken by James I the Conqueror (1213-1276), the Balearics, led by Majorca, came into Aragon's sphere of influence. Further expansion was continued by his successor. And so, in 1282, Peter III (1276-1285) conquered Sicily, and Alfonso IV the Kind (1327-1336) conquered Sardinia in 1323-1324. These conquests were made at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The Kingdom of Aragon became one of the major Mediterranean countries, and its merchants effectively competed with entrepreneurs from Genoa and Venice.² However, in the middle of the century, as a result of the plague also called the Black Death, the state began to sink into social and economic crisis. With the seizure of power

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- 1 A. Giménez Soler, *La Edad Media en la Corona de Aragón*, Barcelona 1944, pp. 108-114; T.N. Bisson, *Història de la Corona d'Aragó a l'Edat Mitjana*, Barcelona 1988, pp. 37-38; *Diccionari d'història de Catalunya*, ed. J. Mestre i Campi, Barcelona 1998, p. 889; *Història de Catalunya*, ed. P. Vilar, Vol. II, Barcelona 1987, pp. 362-366, 368-369, 372-376; D. Ortiz Ruiz, *Breve historia de la Corona de Aragón*, 2012 (ebook) Ch. 3; C. Batlle, *L'unió amb Aragó*, in: *Historia de Catalunya*, ed. J. Salvat, Vol. III, Barcelona 1978, pp. 77-84; M. Tuñón de Lara, J. Valdeón Baruque, A. Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia Hispanii*, Kraków 1997, pp. 103-104.
 - 2 A. Giménez Soler, *La Edad Media*, op. cit., pp. 127-144, 146-172; T.N. Bisson, *Història de la Corona d'Aragó*, op. cit., pp. 68-82, 97-100, 103-104; *Diccionari d'història de Catalunya*, op. cit., pp. 171, 578-579, 807-808; *Història de Catalunya*, ed. P. Vilar, op. cit., pp. 21-30, 33-39, 42-47, 51, 58, 61-65, 69-73, 76-77, 80-81, 85, 96; M. Coll i Alentorn, *La Península i el Mediterrani en el regnat de Jaume I*, in: *Història de Catalunya*, ed. J. Salvat, op. cit., pp. 4-15; E. Belenguier, *Orígens del Regne de València: conquesta i poblament*, in: *Història de Catalunya*, ed. J. Salvat, op. cit., pp. 23-30; D. Romano, *Pere el Gran i el Regne de Sicília*, in: *Història de Catalunya*, ed. J. Salvat, op. cit., pp. 31-40; J. Sobrequés i Callicó, *L'expedició de la Gran Companyia Catalana d'Orient*, in: *Història de Catalunya*, ed. J. Salvat, op. cit., pp. 63-67; J.-F. Cabestany, *Diplomàcia i guerra durant el regnat de Jaume II*, in: *Història de Catalunya*, dir J. Salvat, op. cit., pp. 53-62; J. Cruanyes, R. Ortiz, op. cit., pp. 48-55; M. Tuñón de Lara, J. Valdeón Baruque, A. Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia Hispanii*, op. cit., pp. 133-134, 166; S. Runciman, *Nieszpory sycylijskie. Dzieje świata śródziemnomorskiego w drugiej połowie XIII wieku*, Katowice 1997, pp. 214-239.

by a representative of the Castilian House of Trastámara – Ferdinand I in 1412 – the crisis also took over the political sphere. The rule of Ferdinand I lasted less than four years. After his death, power passed to his son Alfonso V, who was given the nickname Magnanimous already during his lifetime.³

The emergence of the Castilian Trastámaras on the throne of the Kingdom of Aragon also contributed to the deepening of internal divisions in some parts of the country. The Catalan nobility turned out to be particularly active in this, by making a number of demands on the monarch in the spirit of negotiations. Catalan pretenses were aimed at significantly limiting the scope of the monarchy's power and subjecting it to the will of the representative body, the Cortes. Deepening enmity between the ruler and his subjects made the monarch, discouraged by the internal situation in the country, set off on a path of Mediterranean expansion and embarked on a plan to occupy the Genoese Corsica. Unable to conquer it, he turned to the southern parts of the Apennine Peninsula, the Kingdom of Naples.⁴

Despite the opposition of the Catalan and Valencian Cortes, in May 1420, Alfonso V organized a sea expedition, which eventually headed for Naples. The following year, the ruler of Naples, Joanna II, appointed him as his successor. Soon, however, as a result of some misunderstandings,

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- 3 J. Vicens Vives, *Evolución de la economía catalana durante la primera mitad del siglo XV*, in: *IV Congrès d'Història de la Corona d'Aragó*, Palma de Mallorca 1955, p. 5; R. Gubern, *La crisis financiera de 1381 en la Corona de Aragón*, in: *Congresso Internazionale di Scienze Storiche. Riassunti delle Comunicazioni*, Firenze 1955, pp. 236-238; P. Vilar, *Le déclin catalan du Bas Moyen-Age. Hypothèses sur sa chronologie*, "Estudios de Historia Moderna," 6, 1956-1959, pp. 1-68; J. Sobrequés Callicó, *La Peste Negra en la Península Ibérica*, "Anuario de Estudios Medievales," Iss. 7, 1970-1971, pp. 67-102; M. Del Treppo, *I mercanti catalani e l'espansione della Corona d'Aragona nel secolo XV*, Napoli 1972, p. 586; J.-F. Cabestany, *La crisi demogràfica dels segles XIV i XV*, in: *Història de Catalunya*, ed. J. Salvat, op. cit., pp. 166-171; T.N. Bisson, *Història de la Corona*, op. cit., pp. 158-167, 194-200; G. Feliu, *La crisis catalana de la baja edad media. Estado de cuestion*, "Hispania" Vol. LXIV/2, Iss. 217, 2004, pp. 435-466; M.-T. Ferrer i Mallol, *El comerç català a la Baixa edat mitjana*, "Catalan Historical Review," Iss. 5, 2012, 161-162; D. Coulon, *Barcelone et le grand commerce d'Orient au Moyen Âge. Un siècle de relations avec l'Égypte et Syrie-Palestine (ca. 1330 – ca. 1430)*, Madrid-Barcelone 2004, pp. 5-6, 607-612.
- 4 A. Giménez Soler, *La Edad Media*, op. cit., pp. 188-192; T.N. Bisson, *Història de la Corona*, op. cit., pp. 145-151; *Diccionari d'Història de Catalunya*, op. cit., pp. 442-443; J. Sobrequés i Callicó, *El problema successor i el Compromís de Casp*, in: *Història de Catalunya*, ed. J. Salvat, op. cit., pp. 151-154; *Història de Catalunya*, ed. P. Vilar, op. cit., pp. 190-195; *Diccionari d'Història de Catalunya*, op. cit., pp. 208-209; M. Del Treppo, *Aragon*, in: *The New Cambridge History*, Vol. VIII, c. 1415 – c. 1500, ed. Ch. Allmand, Cambridge 1998, pp. 588-591; M. Aventín, *Ferran d'Antequerra: el pactisme i la continuïtat de la política mediterrània*, in: *Història de Catalunya*, ed. J. Salvat, op. cit., pp. 154-158; M. Tuñón de Lara, J. Valdeón Baroque, A. Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia Hispanii*, op. cit., pp. 168-169.

she changed her mind. Withdrawing from previous arrangements with the ruler of Aragon, she transferred the rights to the Neapolitan crown to Louis III of Anjou. Moreover, in 1423 a revolt by the local population against Alfonso V broke out in Naples, forcing the ruler to retreat. Embittered by this turn of events, he destroyed Marseille belonging to Louis III on the way back.⁵

In spite of unfavorable circumstances and failures, the ruler of Aragon did not give up on the idea of taking over the Kingdom of Naples. His plan resumed in 1435. This time a coalition of Genoa, Milan and the papacy were formed against him. On 5 August 1435, Alfonso lost battle at sea with the Genoese fleet at Ponza and the king himself was taken prisoner. To get out of it, he had to pay a high ransom. Shortly afterwards there was a reshuffle among the allies. The ruler of Milan, Filippo Maria Visconti, took the side of Alfonso V, the latter waged war on Venice, Florence, the papacy and the party of the Angevin in Naples. Conducted with varying degrees of success, the warfare ended with the victory of Alfonso V in 1442.⁶

The warfare in which the king of Aragon took part required constant expenses related to the food supply for the court. This is evidenced, *inter alia*, by the treasury accounts held at the Archive of the Kingdom of Valencia (Arxiu del Regne de València) in Valencia and the State Archive of Palermo (Archivio di Stato di Palermo) analyzed by Jacqueline Guiral and Mohammed Ouerfelli.⁷ On their basis, we can conclude that among

5 Basic biographical data on Alfonso V the Magnanimous: Alfonso V El Magnánimo, biography in *Diccionario Biográfico Español*: <http://dbe.rah.es/biografias/6367/alfonso-v>; Alfonso V d'Aragona, biography in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alfonso-v-d-aragona-re-di-sicilia-re-di-napoli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alfonso-v-d-aragona-re-di-sicilia-re-di-napoli_(Dizionario-Biografico)); *Diccionari d'història de Catalunya*, op. cit., pp. 25-26; general works on Italian politics of Alfonso V the Magnanimous can be found in numerous articles collected in the conference in conference papers of the IV, IX, and XVI Congress of the History of the Kingdom of Aragon: *IV Congreso de Historia de la Corona de Aragón. Ferran I d'Antequera i Alfons el Magnànim*, Vol. I, Palma de Mallorca 1959, Vol. II, Barcelona 1970, Vol. III, 1976; *IX Congreso di Storia della Corona d'Aragona. La Corona d'Aragona e il Mediterraneo: aspetti e problemi comuni da Alfonso il Magnanimo a Ferdinando il Catolico (1416-1516)*, Vol. I, Napoli 1978, Vol. II, Napoli 1982, Vol. III, Palermo 1984, Vol. IV, Zaragoza 1984; *XVI Congresso di Storia della Corona d'Aragona. La Corona d'Aragona ai tempi di Alfonso il Magnanimo*, vol. 1-2, Napoli 2000. In determining the basic facts of the Italian expeditions these works proved to be particularly useful, among others: E. Sáez, *Alfons el Magnànim i la idea imperial*, in: *Història de Catalunya*, ed. J. Salvat, op. cit., pp. 159-161; A. Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous. King of Aragon, Naples and Sicily, 1396-1458*, Oxford 1990, pp. 45-115; G. Cardini, *Alfonso il Magnanimo. Il re del Rinascimento che fece di Napoli la capitale del Mediterraneo*, Napoli 2019, pp. 58-84.

6 E. Sáez, *Alfons el Magnànim*, op. cit., pp. 161-163; A. Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous*, op. cit., pp. 175-251; G. Cardini, *Alfonso il Magnanimo*, op. cit., pp. 117-211.

7 J. Guiral, *Le sucre à Valence aux XV et XVI siècles*, in: *Manger et boire au Moyen Âge. Actes du Colloque de Nice (15-17 octobre 1982)*, vol. 1: *Aliments et Société*, Nice 1984, pp. 119-129;

a number of products necessary to supply the king and his immediate surroundings, there are also references to sweets. This is surprising inasmuch as various types of sweets almost accompanied the monarchy at every stage of the warfare: before, during and after the war for Naples.

For example, as early as April 1420, one month before the start of the expedition, it was noted in the Treasury accounts of the Kingdom of Valencia – one of the components of the Kingdom of Aragon – that green ginger, candied peel of green lemons, candied calabash, quince jam, pastilles and bonbons with pine nuts, aniseed, almonds in sugar and pistachios from Egypt and Persia were purchased for the King and his court.⁸ A new order for this ruler, this time in the amount of 130 kg, was completed in July 1420. As indicated, the sweets were sent to Sardinia, where the monarch was then staying in preparation for the attack on Corsica.⁹

The sweets accompanied Alfonso also after his return from the first expedition to Naples. It is also known that 5 years later, confectioner Pere Dezpla provided 116 kg of sweets to the court, and the *especier* Macia Marti – 10 kg of sugar in 6 heads. In 1425, a separate supply of sweets for the needs of the royal court was provided by Nicolau de Santa Fe.¹⁰

The beginning of the next stage of the struggle for control over the south of Italy was an opportunity to continue buying sweets for the warlike king and his entourage. This time, successive purchases of sweets were recorded in the accounts of the Sicilian treasury in Palermo from 1435-1436.

Thus, on 15 September 1435, sweets worth 15 ounces, 9 tari and 2 played were bought for the king's needs, while three times more was spent in less than a month, amounting to 47 ounces, 5 tari and 16 grana. The importance of this type of product is reflected by the composition of special orders for specific types of sweets. For example, in a document of 12 March 1435, an official purchasing for the court listed precisely: candied almonds (50 rotolos), coriander candies (*seliandre*, 70 rotolos), aniseed candies (*batafalua menuda*, 50 rotolos), *cugusta cuberta de zuccharo* (20 rotolos), candied pears (40 rotolos), apples and pumpkins (60 rotolos). Also, in the following years they made purchases of sweets. For example, on account of 8 October 1436, next to goods such as cloth, candles or

M. Ouerfelli, *Le sucre. Production, commercialisation et usage dans Méditerranée médiévale*, Leiden–Boston 2008, pp. 637.

8 J. Guiral, *Le sucre à Valence*, op. cit., pp. 119-120, based on: Arxiu del Regne de València, Maestre Racional, Vol. 39, fol. 241: 1419; Vol. 40, fol. 273: 1420.

9 J. Guiral, *Le sucre à Valence*, op. cit., p. 120, based on: Arxiu del Regne de València, Maestre Racional, Vol. 40; fol. 285: 30 July 1420.

10 J. Guiral, *Le sucre à Valence*, op. cit., p. 120, based on: Arxiu del Regne de València, Maestre Racional, Vol. 45, fol. 309v: 17 July 1425, fol. 330: 7 August 1425; J. Sanchis Sivera, *Íntima vida de los valencianos en la época foral*, Valencia 1993, p. 28, n. 15.

torches there were also sweets, for which it was paid a total of 21 ounces, 17 tari and 16 grana.¹¹

The information extracted from the treasury accounts clearly shows that sweets were an integral part of Alfonso V's menu, even during the hardships and dangers of warfare. Depending on the area of fighting suppliers were merchants of Valencia and Sicily. Moreover, a detailed analysis of the purchased quantities made by Jacqueline Guiral and Mahhamed Ouerfelli shows that Alfonso's successes on the battlefield, the demand for sweets grew. What is more, the upward trend significantly intensified after the conquest of Naples in 1442.

So how to interpret the fact that different kinds of sweets accompanied the Aragon king at every stage of the warfare?

To answer this question, it is necessary to identify the role played by sweets in the late medieval food system of the Kingdom of Aragon in the first place.

In the light of the principles of nutrition of the era, which was the so-called humoral theory, each type of food was attributed specific properties. Honey, and from approx. 8th century, also sugar mixed with other ingredients in a final product was considered as hot and dry. Hence, jams, candied fruits, nougat, sugared almonds, etc. were seen as an excellent remedy for humoral imbalance, which took place in a situation where cold and damp products, e.g. different types of meat products were consumed in excess. In a word, they were considered digestive aids.¹²

With time, however, the consumption of sweets was determined not only by their availability or price, but also became a type of products consumed for pleasure. It is the taste, shape or method of preparation that determined the size of consumption in the first place, rather than the therapeutic properties previously attributed to them.¹³

In the light of the available sources, it can be assumed that in some countries of Latin Europe this process took place under the influence

11 C. Trasselli, *Sul debito pubblico in Sicilia sotto Alfonso V d'Aragona*, "Estudios de historia moderna" Vol. VI (1956-1960), pp. 101-102, 104; M. Ouerfelli, *Le sucre*, op. cit., p. 637, based on: Archivio di Stato di Palermo, Archivio di Stato di Palermo, Patrimonio, n. provv. 61.

12 R. Kuhne-Brabant, *Le sucre et le doux dans l'alimentation d'al-Andalus*, "Médiévales," Vol. 33, automne 1997, p. 60; eadem, *El azúcar: usos dietéticos y farmacéuticos según los médicos árabes medievales*, in: *1492: lo dulce en la conquista de Europa. Actas del cuarto seminario internacional sobre la caña de azúcar, Motril 21-25 septiembre 1992*, Granada 1994, p. 41; E. Savage-Smith, *Medycyna*, in: *Historia nauki arabskiej*, ed. R. Rashed in collaboration with R. Morelone, Vol. 3: *Technika, alchemia, nauki przyrodnicze i medycyna*, Warszawa 2005, p. 171; Z. Gajda, *Do historii medycyny wprowadzenie*, Kraków 2011, pp. 106-108; R. Hryszko, *Media aeva dulcia: analiza produkcji i konsumpcji słodczy w Koronie Aragonii w XIV i XV w.*, Kraków 2013, pp. 39-41.

13 R. Hryszko, *Media aeva dulcia*, op. cit., pp. 212-229.

of contacts with the Islamic world, where in the late Middle Ages, various types of sweets moved from the medical-pharmaceutical sphere to the culinary sphere. One of the first areas of Europe where this process took place was the Kingdom of Aragon.¹⁴ This stemmed from the fact that the areas of Aragon there was no shortage of honey and sugar. Honey was obtained in Catalonia, while in Sicily and Valencia sugar canes were cultivated. The development of agriculture and horticulture meant that fruits, vegetables and nuts were readily available, and their relatively low price. In turn, thanks to the involvement of the thirteenth century Catalan merchants in the Levant trade, Aragon had a secure supply of different spices, to be included in the various sweets.¹⁵ Moreover, spice merchants (Catal. *especiers*) and who in fact worked as pharmacists who manufactured them, thanks to their necessary knowledge and skills, enjoyed a monopoly position for many decades.¹⁶ The recipients of sweets were representatives of the local elites. In the first place, it is the rulers and their surroundings. Preserved sources clearly indicate that the predecessors of Alfonso V the Magnanimous, i.e. Peter IV the Ceremonious (1336-1387), John I (1396-1410), Martin I the Humane (1387-1396) were also consumers of sweets. We don't know if they were eaten by the first of the Trastámaras on the Aragon throne – father of Alfonso V, Ferdinand I (1412-1416), although this cannot be ruled out.¹⁷ The popularity of sweets at the courts of the above-

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- 14 Abū Marwān 'Abd al-Malik b. Zuhr, *Kitāb al-Agdiya*, ed. E. Garcia Sanchez, Granada 1996, passim; A. Huici Miranda, *La cocina hispano-magrebí durante la época almohade según un manuscrito anónimo del siglo XIII*, Somonte-Cenero 2005, passim; Ibn Razīn al-Tuġġibī, *Relieves de las mesas, acerca de las delicias de la comida y los diferentes platos*, estudio, traducción y notas M. Marín, Somonte-Cenero 2007, passim; M. Marín, *El sucre a la gastronomia andalusina a partir de la Fadāla de Ibn Razīn*, in: *Sucre & Borja. La canyamel dels ducs. Del trapig a la taula*, ed. J.A. Gisbert, Gandia 2000, pp. 52-57; R. Hryszko, *Media aeva dulcia*, op. cit., pp. 40-45, and particularly pp. 45-59.
- 15 M. Gual Camarena, *Vocabulario del comercio medieval. Colección de aranceles aduaneros de la Corona de Aragón (siglos XIII y XIV)*, Tarragona 1968, passim; A. Riera-Melis, *Il Mediterraneo, crogiuolo di tradizioni alimentari. Il lascito islamico alla cucina catalana medievale*, in: *Il mondo in cucina. Storia, identità, scambi*, ed. M. Montanari, Bari-Roma 2002, pp. 3-43; D. Coulon, *Barcelone et le grand commerce d'Orient au Moyen Âge. Un siècle de relations avec l'Égypte et Syrie-Palestine (ca. 1330 – ca. 1430)*, Madrid-Barcelone 2004, passim; R. Hryszko, *Media aeva dulcia*, op. cit., pp. 107-120.
- 16 M. Suñé Arbussà i X. Sorní Esteve, *Barcelona. Baja Edad Media ¿Especieros o boticarios?*, “Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Historia de la Farmacia,” 136 (1983), pp. 130-150; C. Vela i Aulesa, *Ordinacions, privilegis i oficis la regulació de l'art de l'especieria (s. XIV-XV)*, “Anuario de Estudios Medievales,” Vol. 36/2, julio-diciembre 2006, pp. 839-882; J.-P. Bénédet, *Pharmacie et médicament en Méditerranée occidentale (XIII–XVI siècles)*, Paris 1999; pp. 62-64; R. Hryszko, *Media aeva dulcia*, op. cit., pp. 121-159.
- 17 J.M. Roca, *Johan I d'Aragó*, Barcelona 1929, pp. 253-254; E. González Hurtebise, *Inventario de los bienes muebles de Alfonso V de Aragón como infante y como rey (1412-1424)*, “Anuari. Institut

mentioned rulers is evidenced by the fact that they were eaten on a daily basis, because in the private apartments of the monarchs there were always dishes with sweets, and the relevant court officials were responsible for making up any shortfall continuously. Sweets were also present during feasts and celebrations, such as weddings and accompanying receptions, taking in strangers, and even during the monarch coronations, which was clearly noted in the extremely meticulous coronation ceremony of Peter IV the Ceremonious.¹⁸

The popularity of sweets was not limited to court circles. The surviving accounts of the Barcelona spice merchant Francesc de Ses Canes from 1378-1381 clearly show that his most important clients included both lay aristocrats and high church dignitaries.¹⁹

Certainly, the customers of other *especiers* were also rich townspeople active in the trade industry, both within and outside the Kingdom of Aragon. Among them, the leaders would be Barcelona merchants. The latter, thanks to their capital, constantly multiplied in the profitable Levantine trade, as well as enjoying extensive rights and privileges since the times of James I the Conqueror (1213-1276), were an important group of sweet confectionery consumers in the Kingdom of Aragon. It can be assumed that originally the consumption of sweets among the burghers was limited to the private sphere. Over time, it became both a part of public activity of the representatives of this social class and an important factor determining new patterns of feasting culture. On the other hand, the circumstances, the way and the setting of confectionery consumption shaped new planes of emphasizing one's social position at the representative or propaganda level. This process was gradual and could originally be linked to the social life of the members of the Barcelona patriciate sitting on the municipal authorities.²⁰

It is believed that the participation of Barcelona councilors in private parties organized by influential public figures in the Catalan capital in the late 1370s and early 1380s played an important role here. It is from

d'Estudis Catalans," a. I, 1907, pp. 169, 172, 174; D. Girona i Llagostera, *Itinerari del rey En Martí I*, "Anuari. Institut d'Estudis Catalans," a. V, 1913-1914, p. I, p. 553; I. Maranges, *Dolços medievals per avui*, Tarragona 1998, p. 29; R. Hryszko, *Media aeva dulcia*, op. cit., p. 225.

18 E. González Hurtebise, *Inventario de los bienes*, op. cit., pp. 148-188; D. Girona i Llagostera, *Itinerari del rey*, op. cit., p. 553; O. Schena, *Le leggi palatine di Pietro IV d'Aragona*, Cagliari 1983, p. 140; *Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort de Pere el Cerimoniós*, ed. F.M. Gimeno, D. Gozalbo, J. Trenchs, València 2009, p. 94; I. Maranges, *Dolços*, op. cit., p. 29; R. Hryszko, *Media aeva dulcia*, op. cit., p. 225.

19 C. Vela i Aulesa, *L'obrador d'un apotecari medieval segons el llibre de comptes e Francesc Ses Canes (Barcelona, 1378-1381)*, Barcelona 2003, passim.

20 R. Hryszko, *Media aeva dulcia*, op. cit., pp. 74-86.

this period that we find the first references to ceremonial feasts, known as the Catalan *col·lacions*, organized by the municipal authorities of Barcelona on the occasion of visits by church and secular dignitaries.²¹

What were they and what formula was adopted for them? Before answering such a question, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of this concept.

The Catalan word *col·lació* (plural: *col·lacions*) is a vulgarized form of the Latin term *collatio*. In culinary terms, this term was used to describe a light afternoon snack eaten by monks on fasting days, during which fragments of *Collationes patrum* (*Conversations with Fathers*) by John Cassian (ca. 360 – ca. 435) were read. At an unknown time, the custom of eating this snack went beyond the monastic sphere and became established in secular circles, losing the character of a fasting dish. Originally, wine or water, bread, and other fastidious ingredients were eaten as a snack, and over time sweets were added to them, until their consumption dominated this kind of private consumption.²²

As you might think, at least since the 1370s that the *col·lacions* became an integral part of the celebration of the important festivities for the urban community of Barcelona at the time: official visits by high-ranking lay and clerical people, members of the royal family and, above all, the rulers themselves. Over time, the serving and consumption of sweets was incorporated into the official city ceremonies, and the information preserved clearly shows that offering sweets in public spaces was seen as an ideal element in ostentatiously emphasizing the position of the Barcelona patriicians, or a way of gaining favor for one's position.²³

21 P.J. Comès, *Libre de algunes coses asanyalades succehides en Barcelona y en altres parts format per Pere Joan Comes en 1583 y recóndit en lo Arxiu del Excelentíssim Ajuntament*, ed. J. Puiggari, Barcelona 1878, pp. 94-102; *Llibre de les solemnitats de Barcelona. Edició completa del manuscrit de l'Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat*, eds. A. Duran i Sanpere, J. Sanabre, Vol. 1: 1424-1546, Barcelona 1930, cap. 22, pp. 114-122; A. Adroer i Tassis, *Un convit reial a la Barcelona del s. XV*, in: *Actes del I Col·loqui d'Història de l'Alimentació a la Corona d'Aragó: Edat Mitjana*, Vol. II, Lleida 1995, p. 636; R. Hryszko, *Media aeva dulcia*, op. cit., pp. 218, 220-224; R. Hryszko, R. Sasor, *Średnio-wieczne słodczye ąatalońskie w ąródlach i literaturze (z wyborem teków z XIV i XV wieku)*, Kraków 2019, pp. 192-215.

22 C. Vela i Aulesa, *La col·lació, un àpat medieval poc conegut*, in: *La Mediterrània, àrea de convergència de sistemes alimentaris (segles V-XVIII), XIV Jornades d'Estudis Històrics Locals: realitzades a Palma del 29 de novembre al 2 de desembre de 1995*, Palma 1996, pp. 669-670; E. Carnevale Schianca, *La cucina medievale. Lessico, storia, preparazioni*, Firenze 2011, p. 168; S. Claramunt, *Dos aspectes de l'alimentació medieval: dels canonges a les 'miserabiles personae'*, in: *Alimentació i societat a la Catalunya medieval, Anuario de estudios medievales*, Anex 20, Barcelona 1988, p. 170.

23 More information about this is discussed in a separate work: R. Hryszko, *Media aeva dulcia*, op. cit., pp. 214-216.

The use of the sweet snack as a tool for ostentation of riches was transferred to the court of the monarchs of Aragon at a time unknown to us. On the basis of the current state of research it is difficult to say when this happened. However, it is highly probable that the custom of organizing ceremonial snacks with wine and sweets was widespread during the time of Alfonso V the Magnanimous and became one of the instruments of the monarch's political propaganda, both in the era of the struggle for the rule of southern Italy and after the conquest of the Neapolitan throne. What speaks for this hypothesis?

As shown above, the aforementioned ruler was particularly inclined to having sweets. Moreover, as the French historian Mohammed Ouerfelli notes, the expenditure on the purchase of sweet products increased significantly immediately after the occupation of Naples in 1442.²⁴ Thus, in the years 1441-1442, expenditure related to their purchase amounted to as much as 106 ounces, 4 tari and 1 grana, while in the following two years it was tripled and amounted to 302 ounces (in the years 1444-1445 it decreased and amounted only to 76 ounces, 16 tari and 14 grana). Although M. Ouerfelli points out that these quotas are incomplete and do not cover all purchases of sweets, they are still a clear indication of the preferences of the Aragon ruler.²⁵

Secondly, it seems that during and after the war on Naples in 1442 sweets were both an instrument for winning supporters and an important tool for confirming the power gained by Alfonso V the Magnanimous. This observation leads us to the question what form and circumstances were the sweet snacks purchased for the court of the warrior king?

In the first place, the answers to the problem formulated in this way are provided by the information contained in numerous accounts by representatives of the city of Barcelona, who, as part of their permanent mission, surrounded the monarch both during his second trip to Italy and after the seizure of Naples. In this material, which includes more than 544 letters from the years 1435-1458, published more than a quarter of a century ago by the eminent Catalan historian Josep M. Madurell Marimon, we find dozens of mentions of celebrations and feasts organized by Alfonso V

24 M. Ouerfelli, *Le sucre*, op. cit., p. 638, na podstawie Archivio di Stato di Palermo, Patrimonio, n. provv. 61.

25 It is believed that regular deliveries were made by the court's *aromatario*, whose duties included preparing sweets for the royal table. In the years 1449-1450 this function was performed by Bernat Figueres who earned at least 2,000 ducats for manufacturing the confectioneries: M. Ouerfelli, *Le sucre*, op. cit., p. 638, based on: Archivio di Stato di Palermo, Patrimonio, n. provv. 61. Expenditure on sweets at the court of Alfonso V in 1451 is provided by D. Santoro *Salute dei re. Salute del popolo. Mangiare e curarsi nella Sicilia tardomedievale*, "Anuario de Estudios Medievales," Iss. 43/1, enero – junio 2013, pp. 259-289, pp. 267-268.

the Magnanimous. Unfortunately, from our point of view, this information is very restrained. Apart from noting that a given reception took place, the authors of diplomatic correspondence do not provide a description of the feast itself, nor do they cite details related to it. The exception to this are three references that may be relevant in exploring the issue at stake.

Thus, in a letter to the Barcelona Council of the Hundred, dated 4 April 1443, a few months after the end of the war, envoy Antoni Vinyes reported that after diplomatic negotiations with the envoy of the ruler of Ferrara, Leonello d'Este (1407-1450) concerning the marrying of the latter to Eleonora, the younger daughter of Alfonso V (eventually the wife of the ruler of Ferrara was the elder Maria), a great sweet feast was arranged in the evening (*E fetes les cartes se féu aquí gran collació*).²⁶ This mention is interesting because the author, writing in Catalan, does not use any other term referring to the feast (e.g. *convit*, *diner*, etc.), but uses the term *col·lació* reserved for a sweet snack. What is more, it is preceded by an adjective “great” (Catal. *gran*).

The baptismal reception of the granddaughter of Alfonso – Eleonora, daughter of the monarch’s illegitimate son, Ferdinand, known as Ferrante, was also referred to in a similar way. The ceremony took place on 2 August 1450 at the castle in Capua. As one of the envoys reported, immediately after

supper, the Archbishop of this town, at the Capuan castle, discreetly baptized the infanta in question, who was named Eleonora. [...] Then the king came to pay a visit to his daughter-in-law and her daughter to give her his blessing. After a while, the said lord king solemnly passed into a great hall, and in the middle of the hall there was a great wooden throne with steps, and a beautiful canopy on the wall, with the seat on which [the king] sat in his majesty. On the right side of the bench where the Archbishop and we were sitting. And then came the great procession of the Neapolitan ladies, very beautifully maintained, and the above-mentioned gentleman prince [i.e. Ferdinand Ferrante, Prince of Calabria] addressed the ministers, and numerous bachelors and numerous ladies danced according to the custom of the land. And then there was a great feast of confectionery for everyone in this room. And then the said prince [again] turned to the ministers, and numerous ladies from our land. In the end, everyone danced according to our custom. And so, the ceremony came to an end.²⁷

26 *Mensajeros barceloneses en la corte de Nápoles de Alfonso V de Aragón*, introducción y texto por J.M. Madurell Marimón, Barcelona 1963, Iss. 169, p. 227.

27 “Ara per la present, vos certifficam, com digmenge, prop passat, a dos del present mes, après diñar, lo senyor archebisbe de aquesta ciutat, dins lo Castell de Capuana, batejá molt discretament la dita infanta, la qual ha nom Elionor. E fom compares nosaltres dos e lo dit mestre

The account given by one of the Barcelona diplomats mentioned above is not only a clear testimony to the transfer of the custom of Catalan sweet snacks to the Neapolitan soil, but also shows the context of its celebration. As noted in the cited source, before eating the sweets, Neapolitan dances took place, and after consumption there were Catalan dances. Such a location of a sweet snack clearly indicates that it became a kind of binder between the native Neapolitan tradition with its influx-Catalan elements.

In this perspective it is not surprising that two years later sweets played an important role during the visit of Emperor Frederick III and his wife to Naples. This time more information about the issue we are interested in is provided by the work *Dictis et factis Alfonsi regis* by Antonio Beccadelli, known as the Panoramite (1394-1471), one of the leading humanists associated with the Neapolitan court of Alfonso, and the Catalan translation of the work of the Neapolitan humanist by Jordi de Centenelles.

In his panegyric work about Alfonso V, Beccadelli wrote in general about the greatness of the imperial entourage and the celebrations associated with the visit of Frederick III.²⁸ Meanwhile, Jordi de Centenelles, author of the Catalan translation of Beccadelli's work, *Dels fets e dits del gran rey Alfonso*, does not limit the passage of interest to a faithful translation, but allows himself to add his own sentences, which in our view

racional, e comares dues comtessas e la muller de mossén Fonolleda, prothonotari. E fet lo dit bateig, nosaltres pujam dalt per visitar la senyora ducessa, e stiguem gran stona ab ella. E après vench lo senyor rey per visitar la dita partera, e la infanta, e donali la benedició. E a cap de stona, lo dit senyor rey devallasen en una gran sala molt bé empaliada, e al cap de la sala havie un gran sitial de fust, ab scalons, ab un bell dosser a la peret, ab una cadira aon sech la sua maiestat; e a la part dreta, un banch aon se segué lo dit senyor archabisbe, e nosaltres. E après, vingueren gran colp de dones napolitanes, molt bé arresades, e lo dit senyor duch féu tornar ministrés, e ab molts cavallers, e moltes dones bailaren, e dansaren a la usança de aquesta térra. En après, fou feta en la dita sala, gran collació de confits de sucre a tothom generalment. E après, lo dit senyor duch féu tornar ministrés, e ab moltes dones de nostra térra densaren a la guisa nostra-da. E axí pres fi la dita festa,” *ibidem*, Iss. 249, p. 311.

- 28 “Sileo hic ludos equestres ac christianos, omitto conuiuia ac potiones, transeo uenationes et reliquos ad honorem ipsius imperatoris tam magnifice excogitata, quantum nusquam essent, aut lecta, aut uisa, aut audita alias. Verum illud praetereundum non fuit, quod tantae huic multitudini non solum lautitia et impensa, ex regio fisco duos ferme menses fuerit opipere praebita, sed quicquid esse uestitu, quicquid uoluptati usui esset sine precio promptissime traditum. Audiui saepius ab regiae rationis scriba, uniuersam hanc in imperatorem hospitalitatem aureorum centum milium summam praeter ingentis pretii munera supergressam fuisse,” A. Beccadelli, *el Panoramita, Dels fets e dits del gran rey Alfonso*, Barcelona 1990, pp. 256, 258. The quoted edition of the Latin original of Antonio Beccadelli's work and its Catalan translation by Jordi de Centenelles. Both versions show slight differences resulting from minor adjustments of the original text by translators. In other passages Jordi de Centenelles introduced his own interpolations. More on this issue: *Introducció*, in: A. Beccadelli *el Panoramita, Dels fets e dits del gran rey Alfonso*, Barcelona 1990, p. 15-65.

deserve special attention. In the Catalan version of Beccadelli's work, Jordi de Centenelles writes in reference to Frederick III's visit:

I do not want to talk about celebrations, tournaments, performances and entertainment that were piously celebrated during the Holy Week. I wish to lose myself in the feasts, the preparations for the entire imperial entourage, arranged at great cost, the hunting in Estangol in such rich abundance that six thousand people ate meat in order and great quantity and wealth; mountains of hunting fowl were prepared, wine fountains everywhere, and various sweets covered the ground (*la col·lació de diversos confits cobria la terra*).²⁹

This account also leaves no illusions. The abundance of food, beverage and sweet snacks were intended to dazzle the emperor and his entourage upon their arrival to Naples.

In another place of his work, Beccadelli describes the event he witnessed with his own eyes. One evening while in Messina, Alfonso V the Magnanimous went into one of the rooms of the castle to listen to the reading of the works of Virgil. Children were allowed into the room where the monarch stayed and listened carefully to the lecture. At the end of it, instead of the customary summary and conclusions, as we read in the Latin version of the text, as was the custom of the king of Spain (*Hispaniae regum more*) drinks were served (*potio ... regi afferrebat*), probably wine. Then the monarch generously distributed apples and sugary confectionery to the guests (*poma seu confectioes zuchareas*).³⁰ In turn, in the above mentioned translation of Beccadelli's work into Catalan by Jordi de Centenelles,

29 "No vul dir les festes, les juntes, les representations e goigs que en la setmana sancta devotament foren celebrats. Oblidar-me vul los convits, los aparells per a tota la imperial gent ordenats ab magnífica e grandíssima spesa, les caces a l'Estangol ab tan richa sumptuositat, que sis mília presones menjaren viandes ordenadament e abundosa e rica; aparellades les muntayes de volateria, les fons de vi brollaven per diverses parts, la col·lació de diversos confits cobria la terra," A. Beccadelli el Panoramita, *Dels fets e dits del gran rey Alfonso*, op. cit., pp. 257, 259.

30 In the Latin version of the text, this passage reads as follows: "Memini, cum aliquando Messanae Virgilium legeremus, pueros uel humilimae conditionis, qui modo discendi animo accederent usque in interiorem locum, ubi post cenam legebatur, edicto regis omnes admissos fuisse, exclusis eo loco, ea hora amplissimis atque ornatissimis uiris, omnibus denique, qui legendi causa non adessent, exclusis. *Finita uero lectione, potio Hispaniae regum more regi afferrebat. Ministrabat rex sua manu praeceptorum ipsi, seu poma, seu confectioes zuchareas* [my emphasis – RH]. Condiscipulis uero purpuratorum maximi post autem potationem quaestio proponebatur, ut plurimum philosophiae. Aderant quidem doctissimi atque clarissimi uiri; extendebatur nox suauissimis atque honestissimis colluctationibus usque ad horam fere septimam. Exinde suam quisque domum repetebat lactus et regis gratiae et benignitate plenus," A. Beccadelli, el Panoramita, *Dels fets e dits del gran rey Alfonso*, op. cit., pp. 264, 266.

this meal is clearly defined by the term *col·lació de confits ... de fruita eleta*, i.e. as a snack of candied fruit.³¹

To a certain extent, the above accounts are accompanied by an account by Bartolomeo Faccio (1400-1457), another humanist associated with the Neapolitan court. The mentioned author in the work titled *De rebus gestis ab Alphonso Primo Neapolitarum Rege* (the Italian translation is titled: *I fatti d'Alfonso d'Aragona primo re di Napoli*) made a detailed description of a hunt organized by the ruler of Naples to honor the emperor and his wife. According to the message of Faccio, King Alfonso,

in a secluded place from which a good view stretched, had tents set up with secret rooms and a buffet equipped with gold and silver vases with a great abundance of all things to eat that no one else could find in a comfortable and prosperous palace. In front of the imperial tent there was a masterfully crafted fountain, which gushed with three types of wine, which everyone could quench their thirst with.³²

Although there is no direct mention of sweets, a description of the context (gold and silver vases!) seems to clearly indicate their presence.

In this way, the information contained in the quoted authors directly related to the Neapolitan court of Alfonso V the Magnanimous may be a further confirmation not only of the special attachment of the Aragon ruler to sweets, but also a testimony to the consistent practice of native customs related to their consumption. And these included the sweet treat.

Another humanist and thinker associated with the Neapolitan court of Alfonso V the Magnanimous, Giovanni Pontano (1426-1503) wrote in a similar tone in one of his treatises in which he extensively described the so-called citizen's virtues, *De convivencia*, contained in a work titled

31 In turn, the fifteenth-century translation of a passage from Jordi Centenelles Beccadelli reads as follows: "E yo'm recort que, essent en Mecina, legia lo Virgili a Sa Magestat, hi desigaven hoir los jóvens e fadrins de baxa conditió; la sua alteza manà que'ls fos uberta la porta, hi'ls acolia en lo loch de hon manava exir los grans hòmens qui no hoÿen la liçó. *Finida la liçó, axí com era costum de Sa Alteza, aribava la col·lació de confits hi de fruita eleta* [my emphasis – RH]. La sua magestat partia entre los hoÿdós y dexebles meus, après hoÿa disputar e al·legar de alguna qüestió de filosofia. La qual finida, cascú se'n tornava a sa casa alegre, content de la suavitat de tan virtuós príncep" *ibidem*, pp. 265-267.

32 "E fece drizzare in luogo separato, da cui ogni cosa si poteua uedere, i padiglioni con le stanze secrete, e la credenza fornita di uasi d'oro, e d'argento, con una grandissima abbondanza di tutte cose da mangiare, e quanto mai altro si potesse trouare in un ben commodo ed agiato palagio. Auanti al padiglione imperiale era una fontana maestreuolmente fatta, la quale gettaua tre sorti di vino abundantemente, oue ciascuno si poteua cauare la sete à fua uoglia: B. Faccio, *I fatti d'Alfonso d'Aragona primo re di Napoli*, [Venezia] 1590, p. 418; on the course of the visit of emperor Frederic III to Naples, cf. also G. Cardini, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-268.

Opera omnia soluta oratione composita, published in Venice in 1518. Pontano explicitly pointed to Alfonso V the Magnanimous as the one who contributed significantly not only to the introduction but also to the spread of the Catalan custom of snacking with sweets in Italy (*in comessatiunculis, quas hodie collationes vocant ... eiusque rei initium coepit ab Alfonso*).³³ Moreover, in the opinion of that humanist, the king of Aragon and Naples did it for a specific purpose. According to the author quoted above, the above-mentioned treats were not prepared solely for the sake of taste, but for the sake of admiration or delight (*non ad gustum solum conficiuntur, uerum ad oculorum, ac spectaculum uoluptatem*).³⁴ This was made possible by the spread of sugar, and in particular by the application of the principles of its plastic processing, which made it possible to obtain extremely sophisticated sweets. What is more, it seems that Pontano clearly indicates that it was Alfonso who appointed the *collatione* agenda, wherein the visual qualities of sugary products played a major role.

These and other examples clearly confirm the fact that the new ruler, after many years of struggle for Naples and its final conquest, consistently transplanted elements of feasting culture from his native land into Italy. Among them, both the confectioneries themselves and the way they were served as festive and sumptuous snacks, or *collatione*, played an important role. What is more, he gave them a new meaning and created a pattern of conduct that was soon adopted by both the rulers of the Italian Renaissance states and the local secular and clerical aristocracy. Thanks to Alfonso V the Magnanimous, in the late 15th century, the *collatione* became an integral part of the Italian culture of feasting.

33 “De secunda Mensa. Secunda mensa magnum affert conuiuuii splendorem, cui mihi uidetur magnopere intendendum. Namque ut optimo cuique poetæ ultimus actus mahnae est curae, sic ab iis, qui conuiuia parant, secunda mensa diligenter uidenda est. Ee inuento succaro, quod ad uarios conuersum est usus, magna conuiuuii, ac coenis, accessio facta est, eaque elegans, ac magnifica. Multa enim inde non ad gustum solum conficiuntur, uerum ad oculorum, ac spectaculum uoluptatem, ut ea, quae conferuntur in comessatiunculis, *quas hodie collationes vocant* [my emphasis – RH], quibus, quod magnificentiae locus in iis sit, principes ipsos studere magnopere video; *eiusque rei initium coepit ab Alfonso* [my emphasis – RH], cuius in hac, ut in coeteris splendoris partibus, magnum studium fuisse cognouimus: Ioannis Iouiani Pontani, *Opera omnia soluta oratione composita*, Vol. I, Venetiis 1518, p. 14. More about G.G. Pontano and his work: C. Benporat, “*De convivencia*”, *un trattato di etica conviviale di Giovanni Pontano*, “Appunti di gastronomia”, Iss. 36, 2001, pp. 10-16; idem, *La ‘collatione’, una nuova forma conviviale*, “Appunti di gastronomia”, Iss. 52, 2007, pp. 45-58; idem, *Feste i banchetti. Convivialità italiana fra Tre e Quattrocento*, Firenze 2001, pp. 93-99. On a *collatione* in Florence hosted by the Medici: idem, *Convivialità, cucina e decori delle tavole nella Firenze del’400*, “Appunti di gastronomia”, Iss. 28, 1999, pp. 15-16.

34 Ioannis Iouiani Pontani, *Opera omnia*, op. cit., p. 14.

Finally, the question is how the reception of the patterns described above looked like on the Apennine Peninsula? In light of the numerous accounts from the 15th century let us claim that since the time of Alfonso V, the custom of sweet snacks was rapidly gaining popularity in the Renaissance courts of the rulers of individual Italian states. This process is evidenced by numerous accounts from the era, which were collected by Claudio Benporat.³⁵

As the Italian researcher points out, a snack of sweets served during the wedding celebrations of Costanzo Sforza and Camilla Aragon in 1475 was recorded in the memory of posterity.³⁶

During the same party, another event took place, which, according to C. Benporat, went down in history as a symbol of extreme luxury. The guests were dazzled by the procession, in which

Immediately afterwards a camel suddenly entered the hall. It was such a good imitation and so skilfully made it seemed alive. It was life-sized and opened its mouth, stretched its neck and lowered itself to the ground just like a real camel. It was laden with two very large golden baskets brimming with various sorts of confectionery. [Riding] on top of the camel was a black Ethiopian boy who, putting his hands now into one and now into the other of these baskets, scattered and threw these sweets around the hall for everyone, which was a fine and amazing sight to see.³⁷

The ceremonial *collatione* were also organized to honor various dignitaries. Undoubtedly, this was the character of the treat served by Cardinal

35 C. Benporat, *Feste e banchetti. Convivialità italiana fra Tre e Quattrocento*, Firenze 2001.

36 "Et queste ceste erano tute piene de confectione, de confetti de più ranione, como e coriandoli de tre mainere, de grossi, polliti, et communi, avellane et mandorle, ranceti et cinamomi: Ordine de le nozze de lo Illustrissimo Signor Misir Costantino Sfortia de Aragonia et la Illustrissima Madona Camilla de Aragonia sua consorte nel anno 1475 ad infrascripto," Vicenza, Hermano Levilapide, 9 novembre 1475, in: C. Benporat, *Feste e banchetti*, op. cit., pp. 176-223 (ch. *Pesaro, 28 maggio 1475, Banchetto per le nozze di Costanzo Sforza e Camilla d'Aragona*), p. 210. More about the wedding of Costanzo Sforza and Camilla Aragon: J. Bridgeman, *A Renaissance wedding. The celebrations at Pesaro for the Marriage of Costanzo Sforza & Camilla Marziano d'Aragona (26-30 May 1475)*, London 2013.

37 "De drieto a questo in continente vene un Camello in sal si ben contrafacto, et cum tanta arte che pareva vivo e era grande, et apriva la bocha et destendeva el collo et colcavasse in terra como fano li veri cemelli: era carco de dui grandissimi cesti d'oro pieni, e colmi de varie confectione. Et in mezzo del camello era uno garzone ethiope negro, che metendo ambe due le mano, mo al una mo a l'altra de queste ceste spargeva et butava dicti confetti al populo, et per tuta sala, che era bellissima et Mirabel cossa da vedere: Ordine de le nozze...", p. 215; A. Cougnet, *L'evoluzione dell'arte dolciaria in Italia*, in: G. Ciocca, *Il pasticciere e confettiere moderno. Raccolta completa di ricette*, Milano 1923, p. LX; C. Benporat, *Note per la storia dei confetti*, "Appunti di gastronomia," Iss. 47, 2005, p. 86.

Girolamo Riario on Easter Monday 1473 on the occasion of the visit of Eleonora of Aragon, wife of the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole d'Este. At the beginning of the feast, two large vessels filled with sweets were served.³⁸ Having eaten, the guests washed their hands to be able to freely enjoy the successive delicacies. During the *collatione*, candy with coriander, anise, cinnamon and pine nuts were served, among other things.³⁹ There is no doubt that with such a lavish meal the host wanted to enchant his guests and make an indelible impression on them.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that some of the mighty ones generously distributed sweets also after the feast as gifts for the guests. We know that during the wedding of Ercole d'Este and Eleonora Aragon (4 July 1473), the wedding guests were given wooden boxes (*scattoles*), which were prepared by a certain *mastro Franceschino*, the local *scatolaro*. They were filled with sweets, made by local *speziari*.⁴⁰ Similar boxes, 161 of which were distributed to the participants of the wedding reception held in Bologna in January 1489 on the occasion of the wedding of Annibale II Bentivoglio and Lucrezia d'Este.⁴¹

According to A. Cougnet, the delivery of suitably packaged confectioneries at ceremonial receptions, both by the service and by the host himself,

was considered to be a manifestation of an extreme luxury that only the ducal houses could afford, not to mention on the occasion of an engagement, wedding, baptism, name days, etc., or to celebrate a solemn event, such as the reception of significant guests.⁴²

At the same time Cougnet notes that not all the guests received the sweets in decorative little boxes. Only those whom the host wanted to honor respectively would receive these gifts. The others could only *look with eyes bigger than the belly*.⁴³

38 A. Cougnet, *L'evoluzione dell'arte dolciaria in Italia*, op. cit., p. LXIII.

39 C. Benporat, *Note per la storia dei confetti*, op. cit., p. 86.

40 In "Diario ferrarese dall'anno 1409 sino al 1502 di autori incerti", ed. G. Pardi, in: *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Vol. 24, p. 7, Vol. I, Bologna 1933, p. 89, we read under the date of 4 July 1473: "Et fu facto una bella collatione quello giorno di 130 piatelli pieni de più confectioni come hedificj facti, castelli, damisele, animalni et altre cosse de zucharo, che fu bello da vedere; et fu messo a saccomano suso il tribunale, dove era la dieta illustrissima madama, per modo che ogni persona ne potea havere."

41 C. Benporat, *Feste e banchetti*, op. cit., p. 252.

42 A. Cougnet, *L'evoluzione dell'arte dolciaria in Italia*, op. cit., pp. LII-LIII.

43 *Ibidem*, p. LIII.

* * *

The above mentioned examples, which are also present in the literature on the subject to date, are the basis for the claim that the custom of *col·lació/collatione* in Italy did not become widespread until the 1470s. Researchers such as Claudio Benporat or Enrico Carnevale Schianca pointed out that the term was previously known in different Italian states, but mostly it was used to determine the end portion of a feast rather than separate meal or sweet snack.⁴⁴

As I have tried to demonstrate, the findings in place so far should be thoroughly reviewed. In the light of the available sources it can be argued that the dissemination of the customary separate sweet snack Apennine Peninsula happened no earlier than the 1440s and its gradual popularization was linked to the person of the king of Aragon and Naples, Alfonso V the Magnanimous. What is more, the Lord of Aragon gave a new meaning to the well-known and widely applied custom. Thanks to his actions the sweet snack became one of the instruments of the ostentation of wealth and prestige for the new rulers of the southern part of Italy, and soon other princes and lords of the area. Although this issue requires further research, it can already be assumed with a high degree of probability that if it had not been for Alfonso's decision to start the war on Naples, the persistence of the war and, above all, the ruler's attachment to confectioneries, the culture of the Italian Renaissance would not have been able to present itself in the next – this time sweet – version.

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44 C. Benporat, *La 'collatione'*, op. cit., p. 45-58; E. Carnevale Schianca, *La cucina medieval*, op. cit., p. 168-171.

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