

The Royal Housekeeper Brita Larsdoter At the Nyköping Castle

In the summer of 1587 **Brita Larsdotter** (d. 1639) married **Jöns Mårtensson** (1560 -1639) one of Duke Carl's bailiffs. He was the bailiff of State demesne Julita 1582 – 1587, of the Nyköping County 1588 – 1591 and of the Vibyholm County 1595 – 1624.

The Duke, as always, cared for his employees so he paid for the wedding dinner - "all what was needed" as it is written in his letter. Already one year after the marriage Brita Larsdotter advanced in rank and became the Royal housekeeper of the Nyköping castle.

Cooking in 1564

The Royal housekeeper was the leader of about a dozen of maids. Economic and social she was just below the bailiff. Brita was the Royal housekeeper at the Nyköping castle 1588 – 1593.

(See the menu of a grand dinner at the Nyköping castle)

Brita also was the wet nurse of Carl IX daughter Kristina, who died only a few months old.

In the preserved inventory and the book of receipt forms we understand that the Royal housekeeper also was able to write:

1. Will have to spin wool, linen and hemp.
2. Will have to weave rugs, bed covers, travel covers, sheets, bedtickings for the depository, spun cloth for the people, tow cloth for the people.
3. Will have to pick wheat and rye.
4. Will have to sow cabbage seed, and put them in the soil and cut the cabbage and the mustard plants.
5. Will have to mould candles and "tärtisser"
6. Will have to clean all chambers, clean the halls, clean the chancel and the Dukes dishes and plates.
7. Will have to wash cloths, sheets and towels.
8. Will have to make hard- and soft soap.

(About the Royal housekeepers work tasks. From the Duke Karl IX catalogue of interest chamber)

The Royal housekeeper's salary was in money or grain.

But she could also have tow cloth and spun cloth, a couple of shoes with double soles or a perhaps a cow.



(Model of Brita Larsdoter at the Nyköping castle, photograph by Anna-Lena Hagsell)

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