

FOREWORD

This issue of *Muzeologija* continues with the programmatic orientation of the journal, which, in one part, relates to the publication of results of historical/museological research in Croatia. The studies of Žarka Vujić, “Izidor Kršnjavi – Pioneer of Museum Science in Croatia” and of Martina Matijaško, “Plaster casts of ancient works of art in the premises of the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb”, are popular treatments of topics that systematically build up a picture of the assembly, study and presentation of museum material in a broader historical context. The journal has to date published studies at the centre of interest of this specialised orientation, related to the importance of some individuals in the constitution of the Croatian museum scene, such as Mijat Sabljarić and Antun Bauer, or, on the other hand, the results of research into the origin of and historical changes in such important museum collections as the Jelačić Collection.

These two papers reveal with great cogency new details concerning and convincingly expound the position of Izidor Kršnjavi (1845-1927) in the history of Croatian museology. At the same time, Kršnjavi’s vast contribution to the devising and foundation of museum institutions is recalled by the analysis of some of his numerous writings, and there is discussion of his immediate services related to the procurement of works of ancient sculpture, the Collection of plaster casts of ancient works of art, which with its “noble simplicity and quiet majesty” was for generations of people an aesthetic model, the very criterion of beauty.

Professor of museology Žarka Vujić has for a good number of years dealt with the history of the collection of artworks, with research into the origin of museum institutions and the phenomenon and function of the market for artworks in Croatia. In witness thereof are her many papers which are not just individually treated topics and cases, but extremely meticulous and serious syntheses: *The Origin and Development of Art Museums in Zagreb*, *The Sources of Museums in Croatia* and *The Ullrich Salon on its Centenary*. These are works that fundamentally and systematically include researches concerning the numerous achievements of individuals in the museum activity and their efforts to found museum institutions, and also analyse the point and functions of museums. In these books, of course, Iso Kršnjavi has an indisputable place because of his great projects in the domain of art, culture and education, as well as pursuant to his activity in the area of museology. In the paper that we are publishing here, the previous investigations of Žarka Vujić are supplemented with an analysis of writings of Kršnjavi, in which the author finds and interprets the museum dimension and thus, with justice, builds up a picture of him as “pioneer in the activity of the museum” in Croatia.

First curator of the Strossmayer Gallery, first editor of its catalogue, founder of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, for which he wrote the first statutes, organiser of fine crafts exhibitions in Trieste and Budapest – Izidor Kršnjavi had a clear vision of the museum as a dynamic and educational institution that has to be fulfilled in lasting

contacts with universities and schools. He thought that scholarly work in museums, which in many cases was unprofitable and opaque, should be of practical use to the museum itself... From practical, museographic solutions and ideas (exhibition design, the use of dolls as museum aids, considerations of lighting in a gallery) to the efficient organisation of museums – these were areas at which Iso Kršnjavi tried his hand.

In Kršnjavi's concept of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, Ms Vujić sees a revolutionary turn that she compares with the appearance of the eco-museum in the 1970s.

How powerfully the mission of Iso Kršnjavi affected the field of Croatian museology is told eloquently by the graduation thesis of Martina Matijaško, a student of Professor Vujić. The paper consists of research into the origin and a catalogue treatment of the collection of the plaster casts of the most important works of Greek and Roman art that were acquired for the Archaeological Department of the National Museum in Zagreb, today to be found in the premises of the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. It was Izidor Kršnjavi who enabled and initiated the acquisition of these casts.

From the idea of it being the foundation of a museum of plaster casts, the Collection, which is 120 years old, has undergone great degradation. In its frequent

transfers, from the Rector's Building of the University, to basement premises in Gundulićeva, in the building of the Academy, in Boškovićeve, the Collection underwent destruction, dissipation and deterioration. Had it not been for Antun Bauer, who founded the Gypsotheque and managed to move the collection of the archaeological institute to and exhibit it in the Gypsotheque, probably there would have been today no material for the making of a catalogue of the casts, some of which were moved to the new building of the Faculty of Philosophy in 1961. At issue are 128 catalogue entries of casts of slabs of the frieze of the Parthenon, 15 casts of metopes, four casts of decorative figures from the Parthenon's pediment and 16 casts of diverse works of ancient art. The casts that are today housed in the Faculty of Philosophy are parts of the original collection from the end of the 19th century, and it is actually quite amazing that the value of them was not recognised and properly evaluated during the development of the new library of the Faculty of Philosophy or during the celebration of the centenary of the study of archaeology at Zagreb University.

Perhaps this issue of *Muzeologija* will help the Collection to be properly presented to mark the 120th anniversary of that event, in 2013.

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