

ZAGREB'S MEDAL CASTERS AND ENGRAVERS

The Medals and Plaques Collection (medals, plaques, pins) of the Modern Gallery in Zagreb shows the works of Zagreb's medal casters and engravers, and its largest part is taken up by the Dragutin Mandl Collection. The medals, plaques and pins provide insight into the intensive period of Croatian medal production from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century. In the middle of the 19th century Zagreb became the Croatian capital, the centre of all social, cultural and economic life. Zagreb medal makers and engravers designed fine metal plaques to commemorate many important events in the city and its environs. They also gave shape to the artistic ideas of many important Croatian sculptors and medallists. Because of the abundant production, the article shows only the signed works. The first artistic crafts-shop was Franjo Kares's from 1860. Josip Radković continued on the same the level of quality as his teacher. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century many goldsmiths and engravers made small medals for special occasions. The Collection has signed works of the Zagreb engraving firms of Engelshrat and Šimić, Svečenski and Levinger and Ignjat Justitz. Major medal production began with the firm of Griesbach and Kanus, from 1925 to 1946. Using the necessary equipment, expertise and business acumen they made medals of the highest quality and cooperated with Croatian artists, most of all with Professor Ivo Kerdić. His student and associate for many years was Teodor Krivak, a skilled art engraver, chaser and medal designer. The medals, plaques and pins of Zagreb's medal casters and engravers are well made products fashioned in accordance with the time in which they were made. They also have a history-of-culture value as they are direct testimony of social changes from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century. Their number and variety is amazing. The medals of Zagreb craftsmen are valuable commemoration of many political, cultural, sports, economic and many other social events from those dynamic times, both in the city of Zagreb and in Croatia.

²⁰ *Dušić, R.*, Desetgodišnjica poduzeća "Ikom", Industrije i kovnice "Marko Orešković" u Zagrebu, Numizmatičke vijesti, Zagreb, 1957., br. 10., str. 33.-34.