

Between Memory and History: Kogoj's Collection of Photographic Portraits and Honorary Charters, Glyptothèque of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 16 March – 18 April 2021

AUTHOR:

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On March 16, 2021, exhibition *Between Memory and History: Kogoj's Collection of Photographic Portraits and Honorary Charters* was opened in Glyptothèque of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (CASA). The exhibition is the brainchild of Mrs. Silvija Brkić Midžić, Director of the Croatian Museum of Medicine and Pharmacy CASA, and Prof. Stella Fatović-Ferenčić, Director of the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science CASA and Deputy Head of the Museum, made in collaboration with the Department of Dermatovenerology, University Hospital Center Zagreb and School of Medicine, University of Zagreb.

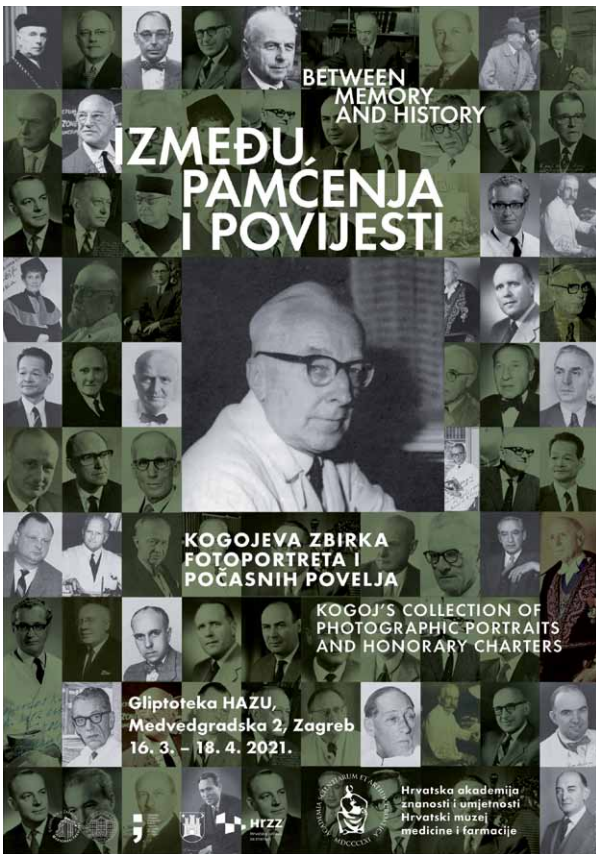
The exhibition was opened in front of twenty guests in the courtyard of the Glyptothèque under strict epidemiological measures. The moderator of the ceremonial part of the opening was Mrs. Brkić Midžić, while the following guests were invited to talk about the contents of the exhibition: Davor Miličić, Fellow of the Academy and Vice-President of CASA; Vida Demarin, Fellow of the Academy and Secretary of the Department of Medical Sciences CASA; Marko Pečina, Fellow of the Academy and Head of the Museum; Prof. Branka Marinović, Head of the Department of Dermatovenerology, University Hospital Center Zagreb; Prof. Zrinka Bukvić Mokos, Chair of Dermatovenerology, School of Medicine, University of Zagreb; Mirna Šitum, Fellow of the Academy and reviewer of the Catalogue accompanying the exhibition; and Prof. Marijan Klarica, Dean of the School of Medicine, University of Zagreb, who officially opened the exhibition.

The basis for the exhibition was part of the material heritage of an eminent Croatian dermatovenerologist Franjo Kogoj (1894 – 1983), long-standing Head of the Department of Dermatovenerology of the University Hospital Center Zagreb, which was transferred to the Division for the History of Medical Sciences CASA at the end of the 1990s. Upon the founding of the Museum in 2014, this collection came under its jurisdiction and served as the basis of both the exhibition and the accompanying bilingual catalogue published by the CASA and the School of Medicine. The project was conceived as a celebration of one hundred years of the Department of Dermatovenerology, and also an homage to the building in which the Department was situated, and which was heavily damaged in the earthquake that devastated Zagreb in March 2020.

In contrast to the earlier historiography of the Department of Dermatovenerology, this exhibition attempted to demonstrate the international status of Croatian dermatovenerology through Franjo Kogoj's cosmopolite spirit. The basis was a collection of

photographic portraits of eminent international dermatologists that Kogoj kept in his office, and a collection of diplomas and charters that testifies Kogoj's international reputation. In front of us, therefore, is a less-known world of Kogoj's international connections and social networks, a *facebook* of global dermatology. Although the portraits are dated from 1931 to 1976, they provide a penetrating insight into the history of dermatovenerology from the end of the 19th well into the second half of the 20th century.

Kogoj's contribution to dermatovenerology was the topic of a number of publications, while his work inspired a plethora of Croatian dermatovenerologists. Still, Kogoj's material heritage had insofar not been in the focus of researchers exploring the history of Croatian dermatology. This exhibition demonstrates the scientific and museological potential of material heritage in the presentation of the life and work of renowned representatives of Croatian medicine. Photographic portraits and charters represent not only a foundation for historiographical work, but an interesting starting point in the exploration of the role of photography in individual and collective cultures of memory. In the hope that the Museum will soon reach its full potential in its own premises, we invite the visitors to follow its guest exhibitions in the future, and the readers to check out the vivid review of the Catalogue by Mirna Šitum on the next few pages of the journal.



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MIRNA ŠITUM, ANTE ŠKROBONJA

I have accepted with pleasure the task of reviewing the catalogue that Prof. Branka Marinović, Prof. Stella Fatović-Ferenčić, Mrs. Silviya Brkić Midžić and Mrs. Dubravka Osrečki Jakelić prepared to accompany the exhibition of Franjo Kogoj's heritage entitled *Between Memory and History: Kogoj's Collection of Photographic Portraits and Honorary Charters*. There are two reasons for this. The first is that I belong to the Croatian and global traditional school of dermatovenerology whose foundations were set up by Prof. Franjo Kogoj in the Department of Dermatovenerology of the University of Zagreb School of Medicine, where I have acquired crucial professional experience and fundamental scientific knowledge. The second reason is that with my admission to the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts as a full member, I have become aware that the criteria of excellence instituted by Kogoj, as the first Fellow of the Academy among dermatovenerologists, are those that place us dermatologists on par with the representatives from other medical disciplines.

The catalogue is a richly photodocumented text and a high-quality monograph on the life, work and achievements of a great historical figure that indebted the global scientific community. Its ambition is not only to present Kogoj's collection of photographic portraits and charters, but also to be a guardian of Kogoj's legacy that communicates the authenticity of a man with photographs and other documents, faithfully reflecting the events and – through them – Kogoj's life filled with passion for dermatovenerology.

The catalogue consists of four logically connected parts. In the first, introductory, part, Prof. Branka Marinović, the Head of the Department of Dermatovenerology of the University of Zagreb School of Medicine, analyses Kogoj's role in the establishment of a new department that he had led for forty years. The period of his leadership laid the foundations not only for the Department's future, but for the Croatian dermatovenerology in general. During his mandates, the Department was among the best European

schools of dermatovenerology and an important place for education of most specialists in former Yugoslavia.

The second part of the catalogue is a particularly interesting and substantive chapter, written from a completely new perspective with great care and creativity, and with a brilliant sense of extracting information from a not entirely typical material. The very title of the chapter dedicated "To esteemed Professor Kogoj, sincerely and with respect: Kogoj's material cultural heritage as the basis in interpreting dermatologists' social networks in the first half of the twentieth century", implies a rapport with a great expert, a teacher and a scientist, but also a visionary. This chapter by Prof. Fatović-Ferenčić transcends common historiography about historical figures and reflects the undeniable effort put into attributions and dating of photographs, which are substantiated with numerous primary historical sources. The photographs tell the story of a man and his contributions, while their value and esthetic beauty are gifted to the entire World. Kogoj's work is best described with a term used by Prof. Fatović-Ferenčić – *professional ideology*. His relationship with science and profession obliterates the boundaries between the individual and the national. This relationship is a clearly shaped, value-laden guidance for such interpretations of the world that are equally concerned with epistemological issues as they are with social roles.

Via Franjo Kogoj's biography, the catalogue leads us through the history of dermatovenerology in Europe and in Croatia, the establishment of the Clinic and the Department, as well as the beginnings of professional associations. Systematically, from page to page, it weaves a message that Kogoj's heritage represents an openness towards learning from the highest authorities, but also that the acquired knowledge and experience must be unselfishly embedded into local professional settings. Through his scientific and professional expertise, Kogoj shaped the Department's organization and management, while his authority and social affirmation

had a long-standing impact on the development and prestige of dermatovenerology on a regional level.

Every page of the catalogue precipitates a new layer of content about a person who has introduced himself to the world in a rarely seen way, through his entirely individual legacy. The whole catalogue is littered with testimonies on the friendships that Kogoj kept with the protagonists of global dermatovenerology, all of them eminent name-givers to diseases, signs and syndromes in dermatology, who crossed the state boundaries and exchanged knowledge all over the world, and among which Kogoj also has a rightful place.

The third part of the catalogue, “Items from the legacy of the member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts Franjo Kogoj in the fund of the Academy’s Museum of Medicine and Pharmacy”, with its detailed analysis and personal reflection, is signed by Mrs. Silvija Brkić Midžić, museum advisor. She leads us in a very interesting way through the role of photography as a medium of individual and collective cultures of memory, thus giving us a chance – as far as photographic portraits are concerned – to reconstruct our own identities through social and professional networks. Yet, in a philosophical and even basic human reflection, photography is also a desire to overcome the transience. It is a tool of communication and a document of cultural and historical values. It should not puzzle us that Kogoj focused so much of his attention to photographs and that he recognized their historical role, because his photographs, diplomas and charters, seen as a unit, reconstruct a great part of the history of global dermatology and reveal international networking and collaborations of many eminent dermatologists, to which he undoubtedly belonged. The author of this chapter finds additional value in the photographs

through the analysis of the photographic technique – the analogue photographic technology, which from today’s vantage point belongs to the history of medium, as much as it represents a museum object such as a charter or a diploma.

In the fourth chapter entitled “The culture of memory – identifying Franjo Kogoj’s photo portrait collection”, Mrs. Dubravka Osrečki Jakelić, museum advisor, analyses the messages behind the rich heritage of Franjo Kogoj in a very logical and at the same time original way. The catalogue testifies about a cosmopolite spirit, an inclination towards teaching, and ultimately about a recognition of Kogoj’s place among chief protagonists of global dermatology whose research, through eponyms, entered the dermatovenerology mainstream and, ultimately, historiography.

This catalogue and exhibition of Kogoj’s heritage represents an effort to contextualize the insofar unknown legacy of Croatian dermatovenerology as part of the global history of medicine of the twentieth century. The vision of Franjo Kogoj is affirmed in one more fact: that in his own way, by collecting portraits, charters and diplomas, Kogoj shaped his selective autobiography and his cosmopolite auto-portrait which reflects his professional development and international connections that we would today call the social networks.

The catalogue is published both in Croatian and in English, which will make it accessible to international readership, just as Franjo Kogoj would expect it from us.

Mirna Šitum, Fellow of the Academy

