

## FROM THE HISTORY OF THE HOSPITAL IN DUBROVNIK

From Domus Christi (14<sup>th</sup> century) to New hospital (1888)

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### SUMMARY

*There are two distinctive periods in the development of hospital services in Dubrovnik. The first began in the 14th century, when a poorhouse was set up to become a real hospital Domus Christi in 1540, and lasted until 1888, that is, until a new hospital was built in Boninovo.*

*The Dalmatian authorities paid for the new hospital 200,000 Austrian florins.*

*The new hospital complex in Dubrovnik consisted of five buildings of different sizes. Near the main building there was the uterus, a smaller building for childbed women; further away there was the solitary for contagious diseases, and still further the morgue, the chapel and the stable.*

*The hospital disposed of 104 beds in eight large rooms; two midsize and four small rooms for patients whose treatment was paid for by communes or provinces; four beds in three rooms for those who paid for the first class service; six beds in the solitary; ten in the uterus; fourteen for newborns and six for wet nurses in the maternity section.*

*The doctors who worked there and who deserve special mention are: Roko Mišetić, Jere Pugliesi, Emanuel Luxardo, Ivan August Kaznačić, Ante Brešan, surgeon Kobliska, Dr Neumar, and Dr Martinis. Since 1878, fourteen sisters of the order of St Vincent de Paul had worked there. From 1888 to 1919 the hospital was under the supervision of Land Committee of the Kingdom of Dalmatia whose seat was in Zadar.*

**Key words:** Croatia, Dubrovnik; history of medicine, 14th to 19th century; hospitals

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Figure 1. The present look of the building in which the old Dubrovnik hospital *Domus Christi* was active until 1888

The author for this occasion has chosen the subject about development of hospital service in Dubrovnik. After having examined abundant literature about history of medicine in Dubrovnik and having checked the original archive contents, it can be concluded that many opuses were proclaimed in the period between the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and because of that that period will be briefly presented here and the emphasis will be on the inauguration of the new hospital in 1888 and its work.

### DOMUS CHRISTI – THE OLD HOSPITAL OF DUBROVNIK

Although we don't have precise information we still know that its beginnings are related to the period between 1347 and 1352 when it was *Shelter for poor* and we know that in 1420 it had its own pharmacy. As a real hospital, called *Domus Christi*, it worked since March 17, 1540. It was situated inside the city walls until 1888 when it was moved to a new building in Boninovo and the name *Domus Christi* wasn't in use anymore.

By the decision of the Great council of March 17, 1540 that hospital was organized as a public state hospital. The old hospital of Dubrovnik by Senate's conclusion of February 26, 1540 and March 17, of the same year for its objective had "*to bring together poor people, sick of curable sickness and who sometimes die just because there isn't anybody to take care of them or to help them*" – "*de faciendo ad cultum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi unum cenochodium seu hospitale pro usum pauperum infirmorum*".

Therefore, the "*Domus Christi*" worked for more than 350 years. When it was established it was accentuated that "*patients who need to be cured and who will have attention of physicist and surgeons, barbers, priest and nine people more will be placed there*".<sup>1</sup>

In 1878, charitable sisters of St. Vincent de Paul order were introduced to the hospital. The Land Committee said that they were "*real blessing*" because they took care of patients, neatness, nutrition, medicines and entire economy. There were fourteen of them.

The old abandoned building got its original purpose and it became *Shelter for poor* again.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Bačić: "Stazama medicine starog Dubrovnika", Dubrovnik, 2002.

## THE NEW HOSPITAL OF DUBROVNIK

On its meeting in 1880 *Dalmatian congress* decided about the construction of the new regional hospital in Dubrovnik. Before that decision Congress financial committee gave a detailed report where it was shown that the hospital of Dubrovnik comparing to the other Dalmatian hospitals was in worst condition.

### THE LAND COMMITTEE REJECTED “THE INITIAL IDEA OF FIXING THE OLD HOSPITAL (DOMUS CHRISTI)”

Investments for the building mostly came from Dubrovnik itself. Those who already in 1870 supported its building were: Miho Klaić, Ivan Vranković, Pero Čingrija, Ante Ivellio, Rafo Pucić and many others. They were members of the Land committee. But those who should be mentioned in the first place are Dr. Frano Lopižić, Dr. Ivan August Kaznačić and pharmacist Drobac.

The initial idea in 1871 was to built the hospital in Ploče, on the place of so called *Han of old Lazaret* but because of many reasons building dragged on and only in 1884 it was decided to built the hospital in Šiškovu , that is to say in Šiškovu between Pile, Gradac and Boninovo.

Many donors helped the building and to thank them their names were written on marble stone that was moved from *Domus Christi* to the new hospital where it was kept on the right side, near the stairs at the entrance of the main building.

On congress meeting of December 14, 1885 it was recommended “to begin the building of Dubrovnik’s hospital as soon as possible”.

The foundation stone was laid on April 21,1886.

During the whole period, from the time when it was decided to build the new hospital until the end of its building, the old hospital *Domus Christi* continued to provide its medical services.

Thanks to pleading of Miho Klaić and *Dalmatian congress*, the new modern hospital was built in Šiškovu in 1888.

*Dalmatian autonomous government* without any help from Austrian central government or those in Zadar and Šibenik built the hospital. It cost 200.000 florins, 50.000 florins were earned when, thanks to Kosto Vojnović, the old hospital *Domus Christi* was sold.



Figure 2. The new hospital, built in 1888 on Boninovo

The new-built structure in Dubrovnik had five edifices of different sizes. Near the main building there was “*uterus*” – smaller building for women in childbed; more remotely there was “*solitary*” – an edifice for contagious diseases; there were morgue, chapel and an edifice for stables. All around there were parks and gardens.

In the new hospital there were 104 beds in eight large rooms. Two middle-size and four small rooms for patients whose recovery was paid by communes or provinces; four beds in three rooms for those who wanted the first class; six beds in “*solitary*”; ten beds in “*uterus*”; fourteen beds for new-born children and six beds for wet-nurses in new-born children section.

Although existed, operation rooms aren’t mentioned anywhere.

People of Dubrovnik were so proud with their new hospital and the one who was especially proud with it was Dr. Miho Klaić, congressman and the leader of *Dalmatian national party* who pleaded more than anybody else to obtain that important property. While he was having a discussion in Dalmatian congress among other things he said: “*Dubrovnik really got a magnificent building and a decent hospital. So far as I am concerned, as a man from Dubrovnik I declare that it will be the most beautiful memory for me and I’ll proudly remember that as a member of Land commit-*

*tee I had an opportunity, although with my weak forces, to participate in making my own town richer and ornamented with that beautiful building.*

When the hospital was moved to the new building the old name *Domus Christi* was abandoned. Treatment conditions and everything related to the hospital life and service was improved in the new hospital.

There was a new pharmacy too, it was founded in 1889 and it had an official admission "*Pharmacy*". Pharmacies like that that worked with Dalmatian regional hospitals were proclaimed regional establishments and as regional establishments they started to work on January 1, 1896.

The phone was introduced into the hospital and even into the flats of doctors in 1899; the electricity was introduced in Dubrovnik in 1900 and in 1901 into the hospital too.

The old hospital called *Domus Christi* was totally moved to the new building on June 28, 1888. That was accomplished during the mandate of principal chief of the staff Dr. Roko Mišetić and his associate Dr. Jere Pugliesi.

Before Dr. Mišetić, Dr. Emanuel Luxardo was a chief of the staff and associate of Dr. Ivan August Kaznačić after whose death (1883) Dr. Luxardo worked as a principal of the hospital until the arrival of Dr. Mišetić in 1887.

### **DR. IVAN AUGUSTIN KAZNAČIĆ (1817 – 1883)** **DOCTOR AND WRITER**

Ivan Augustin Kaznačić, the son of Antun was born in Dubrovnik in 1817. He finished his primary and secondary school in Dubrovnik. After gymnasium he continued his schooling in lycée of Zadar. In 1836 he entered the Medicine faculty in Vienna, and he proceeded it in Padova in 1839 where he was awarded a doctor's degree at the end of September, 1846.

As a "fanatic Slavic", Kaznačić was undesirable to Austrian regency in Zadar and he had to wait for two years to start working as a city doctor in Dubrovnik; by imperial decree he was nominated for the principal of the hospital of Dubrovnik and he did that job until his death (1883).

*"But the science isn't enough to content difficult duties of medical knowledge"* - said Kaznačić aware of all those doubts and limits in front of which medical knowledge remains without an answer. *"Human knowledge is*



Figure 3. Ivan August Kaznačić

*restricted and virtues are so many. When a doctor can't help with his knowledge must help with the mercy of his heart. If his soul doesn't feel sorry about a poor man who asks for medical help and he treats him with careless disregard, then medicine is selfish occupation and not a holy vocation."*

Dr. Kaznačić was always there for his patients, especially when it regarded sick children. *"He was bringing serenity to a patient's house and on his way out he was leaving hope there."*

In the seventies cholera decreased but other sickness' epidemics (like typhoid fever and smallpox) appeared.

Kaznačić considered indecent and inappropriate for a doctor to *"make fun of those who didn't consider it contagious. It terrifies a man, especially because of some recent tragical events and not studying cholera has already cost the whole humanity too many tears."*

He died at the age of 66 on February 19, 1883; as a principal Emanuel Luxardo inherited him.

### DR. EMANUEL LUXARDO (1846–1905)

Before putting Dr. Luxardo into a group of principals of Dubrovnik's hospital it is necessary to present his biography because he worked eight years in Dubrovnik's hospital (1880-1888).

He was worthy of praise and we are going to see that from his biography. In the text we can find this: "*Although a child of Italian education he understood the importance of national renaissance and he helped a national cause*". Until the day he died he was one of those who faithfully frequented Croatian reading-rooms. During the elections he always gave his vote to *Croatian party*. He was broadly educated.

During the building of the new hospital the hospital service in the old hospital *Domus Christi* was orderly given and he worked there too.

From the beginning of November 1880 Dr. Emanuel Luxardo was the chief of the staff in hospital. The magazine "*Slovinac*", no 22 / 1880, informed citizens about the new doctor using these words: "*To Dubrovnik he followed a nice fame about himself that had already broken out in Zadar: Welcome!*"

Dr. Emanuel Luxardo was born on September 8, 1848 in Zadar, the son of Emanuel and Karolina Degiovanni.

He was booked in Zadar in *VIII book of born and baptised, ordinal number 149*. In the same book, beside that data, we can find that accouchement was done by midwife named Antonia Dialliti. The midwife is mentioned intentionally here because in Dalmatia, precisely in Zadar, the medical care that midwives provided was very important. Although the number of midwives was gradually increasing, it was still a small number. Schooled midwives mostly existed and worked in towns and communal centres, while women in villages gave birth helped by their mothers in law, neighbours or some other local residents who were capable to that job.

Like in villages, even in towns accouchements were done in family houses.

"Dr. Emanuel Luxardo, ex main doctor and principal of the hospitals in Dubrovnik and Zadar was educated in Italy. He belonged to a rare group of our intelligent people who while they were young gained beneficial influence of Italian culture and Italian renaissance.

He got his medical knowledge in Padova, where from the beginning he was an assistant on professorship chair for anatomy. For the love of his homeland he renounced that position and came back home, although, thanks to his oratory and artistic hands in anatomical actions – which were two rare features, he could've built a nice career there.





Figure 4. Dr. Emanuel Luxardo

Even Virchow praised his perfect production of anatomical outfit.

Extended knowledge and fine manners distinguished him from the others.

He was able to explain easily his opinions and ideas to other doctors when consulting and to the court when having some discussions.

When he worked he didn't distinguish a rich man from a poor man, he was always self-sacrificing. Educated and polite he was one of the rare doctors to whom his patients and colleagues gave implicit faith and who elected him for a president of *Medical society of Zadar* and vice-president of *Provincial medical council*."

"Since 1888 Dr. Luxardo was principal of the hospital in Zadar. He was a surgeon, intern obstetrician and oculist. He was particularly eminent for making anatomical outfit and for studying malaria and tuberculosis. He wrote: "*Metodo lento ipodermico per espellere anziché estrarre taluni corpi stranieri*" – Milano 1891.

He passed away when he was 57, after a long illness, as a principal of the hospital in Zadar.

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## SAŽETAK

Razvoj bolničke službe u Dubrovniku obilježuju dva razdoblja. Prvo započinje u XIV. stoljeću otvaranjem Zakloništa za siromahe koje 1540. prerasta u pravu bolnicu koja pod imenom *Domus Christi* djeluje do 1888., tj. do otvaranje nove bolnice na Boninovu. Bolnicu je sagradila "dalmatinska autonomna vlast", a stajala je 200.000 forinti. Novoizgrađeni kompleks sastojao se od pet zgrada različite veličine uz koje je izgrađena manja zgrada za roditelje zvana "Maternica", a podalje zgrada za zarazne bolesnike zvana "Osamica" te zgrada za mrtvačnicu i kapela. Bolnica je raspolagala sa 104 postelje u osam velikih soba, dvije srednje i četiri male sobe za bolesnike za čije su liječenje snosile troškove općine ili pokrajine, zatim četiri postelje u tri sobe za platitelje I. razreda, šest postelja u "Osamici", deset u "Maternici", četrnaest za nahode i šest za dojilje u nahodištu.

Od liječnika koji su u njoj radili, spominju se: Roko Mišetićo, Jere Pugliesi, Emanuel Luxardo, Ivan August Kaznačić, Ante Brešan, kirurg Kobliška, dr. Neumar, dr. Martinis. Od 1878. u bolnici djeluju i četrnaest sestara milosrdnica reda Sv. Vinko Paulinski. U razdoblju od 1888. do 1919. bolnica je bila pod nadzorom Zemaljskog odbora Kraljevine Dalmacije sa sjedištem u Zadru.

**Ključne riječi:** bolnice, Dubrovnik, Hrvatska, povijest medicine, XIV.–XIX. st.