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## A FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOUR OF TATJANA APARAC-JELUŠIĆ

### **Tatjana Aparac-Jelusic, Croatia, and the World of Libraries**

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Croatia long has played essential roles in the world of libraries, and of libraries around the world. In the mid-1970s, Croatia came to host a series of international conferences about the role of libraries through collaborations between the University of Zagreb and the University of California, Los Angeles. Founded by Bozo Tejac of the University of Zagreb and Robert Hayes, then Dean of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at UCLA, the conferences were among the first to be held at the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik. The Inter-University Centre (IUC) was founded in 1972 by the University of Zagreb and a small group of cooperating institutions from around the world. UCLA was among the early partners, and the Centre continues to thrive with academic conferences organized by more than 170 university partners (“Inter University Centre Dubrovnik,” 2015). East met West in Dubrovnik throughout the Cold War, building partnerships, friendships, and social networks that continue through succeeding generations of scholars and librarians.

The conferences were suspended during the Yugoslav war, and begun anew in peacetime under the leadership of Tatjana Aparac-Jelušić, then of the University of Zagreb. She convened those of us who were long-term partners in the conference, and injected new energy by involving large cohorts of young scholars and librarians from Croatia and well beyond. These conferences, renamed post-war as *Libraries in the Digital Age* (LIDA), have attracted hundreds of participants from dozens of countries in the last two decades. They mix scholarship and practice, blending people and ideas that rarely occur in other venues.

The influence of these conversations, and the opportunity to have them, is profound. Young students, scholars, and librarians are introduced to the most advanced trends, as presented by senior scholars from around the world. Perhaps more importantly, those senior scholars are introduced to information concepts rooted in centuries of library history, and to innovative practices pioneered by those who have access to far fewer resources.

Those exchanges of ideas do not end with the final acknowledgements at the conclusion of conferences. They continue year-round, online and by visits to and fro. UCLA has hosted Croatian scholars of the information sciences since the 1970s. The authors of this

chapter have often visited Croatia to lecture in the information schools established under the leadership of Professor Aparac-Jelušić. We always learn more than we can teach, no matter what the topic.

A couple of anecdotes will serve to illustrate the influence of Professor Aparac-Jelušić on our respective work. Prof. Hayes brought a series of Croatian scholars to teach and study at UCLA during Prof. Borgman's early years on the UCLA faculty. These visitors included Velimir Srica, Nenad Prelog, and Mirna Willer. Each came early in his or her career, and became distinguished scholars, librarians, and diplomats in later years. Prof. Borgman's studies of library automation led her to pursue a Fulbright scholarship to explore the pioneering Yugoslav work in building information infrastructure in the 1970s (Tell, 1973). She received the Fulbright award to spend 6 months at the University of Zagreb in 1991. Unfortunately, the award was granted just as war broke out, suspending all official U.S. travel to the region. Twice postponed by the U.S. State Department, her Fulbright was transferred to Hungary in 1993. Prof. Borgman used Budapest as a base to teach and to study the development of library networks in six countries, before and after the 1989 political changes. She made several trips to Zagreb from Budapest in 1993, while the city was occupied by U.N. peacekeeping troops. She made other trips to Croatia throughout the 1990s, working with the Regional Library Program of the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundations). Professor Aparac-Jelušić was a primary point of contact during this period, providing extensive information resources and referrals to other people and institutions. She also provided multiple opportunities to present the findings of this body of work to Croatian audiences, through presentations and disseminating publications (Borgman, 1996b, 1996a, 1997). She also commissioned and published the translation of the monograph resulting from this body of work, funded by a grant from the Soros Foundation (Borgman, 2000). The Croatian monograph, translated by Koraljka Golub, was released in an inaugural event at the historic public library in Dubrovnik, and introduced by Velimir Srica, then Mayor of Zagreb. Hungary may have claimed the Fulbright award, renewing tensions from the Hapsburg era, but Tatjana made sure that Croatia got the last word on this project.

Prof. Hayes remained committed to these conferences after his deanship and his retirement from UCLA, driving from Zagreb to Dubrovnik on many occasions. When flights to Zagreb were suspended in 1991, he drove from Munich to Dubrovnik, and was stopped multiple times on his journey by warring factions. The conferences were suspended thereafter, as access to Dubrovnik became infeasible and unwise during the war. The Inter-University Centre was bombed, destroying much of the building and its library collections, and reconstructed after the war. When Tatjana took the lead in reestablishing these conferences at the IUC, they were among the first renewal of tourist business to the area. Prof. Hayes returned as an honored guest of the series, heartily welcomed by the new generation of scholars and students. He also returned to Croatia to teach in the programs founded by Prof. Aparac-Jelušić, as a Visiting Professor at Strossmayer University in Osijek in 2006 and at the University of Zadar in 2007.

Within a few years, Dubrovnik had become such a popular and expensive tourist destination that Prof. Aparac-Jelušić moved LIDA to Zadar. Today, Zadar is the

charming walled city on the coast that Dubrovnik was in the early days, an ideal place to study, convene, walk, and talk.

*Libraries in the Digital Age* continues in Zadar, beyond the retirement of Prof. Aparac-Jelušić. Her legacy and that of Prof. Hayes are intertwined – as are those of Croatian universities and UCLA – laying the foundations for international scholarship in libraries, information, practice, and policy for generations to come.

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