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A PROJECT FOR THE DIGITISATION OF A MANUSCRIPT BIBLIOGRAPHIC UNIT – OPPORTUNITIES FOR AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VIRTUAL CONTEXTUALISATION OF TEXT

Summary: This paper presents the project “Digitisation of old and rare material from the Bauer Collection” of the library of the Museum Documentation Centre (MDC), which in the first phase relates to the digitisation of the manuscript bibliographic unit *Bibliography and material for art and similar disciplines*. The unit comprises 31 books that combine bibliographic, biographic and documentary records from the area of cultural history, particularly the history of the fine arts and historical museology from the 19th century to the 1950s from Croatia and other parts of the former Yugoslavia. These records are a unique document of exhibition events and a point of departure for diverse investigations in culture studies, art history and museology. A description will be given of the first realised phase of the project, published in 2008 on the MDC Web site (<http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/>) with accompanying texts, search engines and digital copies. The second phase, currently underway, will be presented; this relates to Web presentation and virtual contextualisation of a unique manuscript about stechaks of 1949 by Ivan Rengje and the connection of the MDC project with other heritage portals of similar depository/digitised records.

Key words. Library of the Museum Documentation Centre, Digitisation project, manuscript records, Bibliography and records for art and similar disciplines of Dr Antun Bauer.

1. Introduction

1.1 In brief concerning the project *Digitisation of the old and rare book holdings of the Bauer Collection of the MDC Library*. The project *Digitisation of the old and rare book holdings of the Bauer Collection of the MDC Library* is devised with the objective of preserving the intellectual contents of the old and rare book material that is kept in the library of the Museum Documentation Centre (MDC), the central library in the domain of museology and knowledge about museums. The project covers publications unique in terms of their museological theme and one-off in terms of the number of preserved specimens in other Croatian heritage establishments as well as publications that because of their age are worn-out and liable easily to be damaged.

In the first phase of the project, some of the manuscript material of the oldest library collection was digitised: the Bauer Collection, organised in the foundation of the MDC in the 1950s. The Collection comprehends the donation of the MDC founder, Dr Antun Bauer, prominent archaeologist, museologist and collector, as well as the initiator and founder of and donor to numerous museum institutions in Croatia. With its valuable and rare museum and museological editions, the Bauer Collection constitutes an essential segment of the national written history concerning museums and the museum activity in Croatia.

The digitised material is available on the MDC Web site¹, and is constantly updated with new contents.

By “virtual contextualisation” we understand putting our material into a meaningful context of the virtual www-world. We achieve that by setting links to the contents within the project, other contents on the MDC Web site, outside Web contents and with other repositories of digitised material.

The project was implemented by officials of the MDC in collaboration with external partners. The head and author of the project is Snježana Radovanlija Mileusnić, senior librarian of the MDC. She is also the author of the metadata and accompanying text. Digitization of manuscript material was carried out by the Central Laboratory for Photography, the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb. Design, programming and web development was done by the company (R)evolution, and website maintenance was entrusted to the company Novena from Zagreb. The project was implemented as an additional work of the MDC and was financed by the Croatian Ministry of Culture. Therefore it is published on the web site of the Croatian Cultural Heritage²

The project currently has 14 fully digitized books. It contains 2754 digitized copies (pages) in jpg format (resolution 800 dpi, 8 bit grayscale).

All services are hosted on Windows server located in the Netherlands. For website development we have used MySQL 5.0.45 and PHP Version 5.2.5.

1.2 In brief about the *Bibliography and material for art and similar disciplines*. In the first phase of the project, part of the unique MS bibliographic unit *Bibliography and material for art and similar disciplines* (Zagreb, 1951-1958) has been digitised. The unit is made up of 31 numbered books that combined bibliographic, biographical and documentary material from cultural history, particularly the fine arts and historical museology from the 19th century to the 1950s, from Croatia and the whole of the former Yugoslavia

The books were cyclostyled, as uncorrected manuscripts, in ten copies only; today it is the most integrally preserved bibliographic unit in the MDC library.

In the Bibliography, edited by Antun Bauer, material collection in the Archives for Fine Arts is published; the archives once worked as a department of the Gipsotheque /Plaster Casts Collection (today the Croatian Academy Glyptotheque) in the period from 1944 to 1952.³ The material in the Bibliography is a unique document of exhibition events and a point of departure for varied cultural, art history and museological researches.

With respect to the themes represented and the structure of the contents, books from this bibliographic unit can be divided into four basic thematic units:⁴

1. Gipsotheque collections⁵,
2. Chronologies of exhibitions (the books contain chronologies of individual and collective exhibitions held in Croatia, in the towns of the former Yugoslavia and a chronology of important exhibitions of Croatian artists held abroad from 1840 to 1952⁶),
3. Biographies and autobiographies of visual artists (the books also contain a list of and biographies of fine artists from the card index system of the fine artists of Yugoslavia of the Fine Arts Archives, and autobiographies of fine artists collected in the Archives of the Federation of Fine Artists of Yugoslavia⁷),
4. Bibliographies of articles (retrospective bibliographies of articles from specialised periodicals, papers, dailies and reviews issued in Croatian and the former Yugoslavia and abroad since their first appearance up to the 1950s⁸); about 30,000 selected bibliographical entries related to artistic and cultural life, listed from 72 periodical titles⁹).

2. The objective and purpose of the digitisation and Web presentation of *Dr Bauer's Bibliography and material for art and similar disciplines*.

2.1 Why digitisation. The careful selection of the *Bibliography and material for art and similar disciplines* for digitisation took into account several basic criteria.

With respect to the content, context and meaning of the original of the *Bibliography* we identified:

- the exceptional value of the content of the bibliographical unit that is a resource for research in art history, museology and culture studies,
- a high degree of information value deriving from the structure and organisation of the contents (featuring the forms of bibliography, lexicon and timeline),
- the one-of-a-kind cultural history and bibliographic importance in the contemporary context.

As well as all of this, the *Bibliography* has a high collateral value for its editor is Dr Antun Bauer, also the founder of the MDC and the donor of many books, including the *Bibliography*. Similarly, over the course of time, the *Bibliography* has taken on emblematic significance, which contributes to the recognition of the uniqueness of the MDC library holdings.

In addition, considering the criterion of the physical features of the original and its contents, the *Bibliography* is made distinctive by its:

- one off nature and the authenticity of the MS material,
- rarity with respect to the small number of identical specimens preserved in other establishments,
- the physical threat level because of the very thin paper and the carbon copy that in time resulted in a text that is in places faded or totally illegible.

The bibliographic unit also meets the criterion of the orderliness and organisation of the library material for the originals have been professionally processed and catalogued and are available via the library information aids of MDC library¹⁰.

Also considered were the needs of users and the possibilities of contributing greatly to their satisfaction with the services of the library. For the interest and satisfaction of the users of *Bibliography* contents in analogue form had been recorded, as had their difficulties in reading the faded parts of the text.

These criteria determined the objectives and reasons for the digitisation of 14 books¹¹ from the bibliographical sequence *Bibliography and material for art and similar disciplines*¹². Their content is so protected and thus taken out of the way of further physical deterioration by being transferred into digital format, and the basic precondition for improving accessibility has been attained by their publication on the Web site of the MDC. As well as this library material, the digitisation process included the ancillary material of documentary photographs from the MDC photo collection and the covers of exhibition catalogues and specialised periodicals that are related in theme and content to the digitised content of the *Bibliography*.

2.2 The objective and purpose of Web presentation. In order to avoid the limitations on the use of the *Bibliography* through the recommendations of librarians or through searches of the catalogue of the library and physical presence in the library, and the search for the necessary information by turning over the pages of 33 volumes or consulting the 14 volumes in electronic form, we decided to make it all accessible via Web presentation. This at the same time created a new and enhanced service of the MDC library with the new digital contents and electronic services.

But enabling free examination of the original MS via digital copies on the Web was not our ultimate objective. The point of Web presentation was seen in the addition of value that with text and image and references would contextualise the contents of the entire bibliographic unit, and of each individual volume, explain them in detail and, enriched in this way, offer them to the users of virtual contents.

In the Web presentation of digitised contents enhanced with ancillary cataloguing and bibliographic details, ancillary texts, illustrative material and photographs as well as a search engine for the contents (i.e. the database), we endeavoured to:

- disseminate information about the existence of the Bibliography and its bibliographic and information contents to a wider circle of potential users,
- upgrade specialised and scholarly research work,
- provide support to tertiary level curricula,
- increase the attractiveness of the material to a broader circle of users with varied user needs,
- acquaint the public with the manuscript and unpublished book material important for the history of museology,
- enable distance-consultation of the Bibliography without restrictions as to time and place,
- reduce time spent to find sought bibliographic information
- enable the making of digital copies
- improve the quality of the information sought (for only some of the 33 volumes are accompanied by an index), and
- popularise the holdings of MDC library.

3. The structure, contents and data of the Web presentation of digitised contents

3.1 Contents. The scenario for the Web presentation of the Bibliography, which included digitised copies and the value added to them, covered a number of preparatory actions. They related to investigating the library and archival sources about the actual original, the writing of the texts, the choice of photographic material, the search for and selection of ancillary material as well as collaboration with many associates and experts of different profiles. This gave rise to additional information about the Bauer Collection, the Digitisation Project, Antun Bauer, the bibliographic unit, the thematic groups of the Bibliography and each one of the 33 volumes and their contents and authors, along with ancillary illustrative material. Through books grouped in terms of themes and search engines of their contents we have facilitated the search of individual books in the bibliographic unit. These ancillary texts occupy about 60 pages of text.

In addition, because of the physical characteristics of the originals it was impossible to carry out the digitisation of the material by OCR. Hence the whole contents of two books (nos. 23 and 24) were first transcribed. In order to preserve the authenticity of the document, the content was transcribed literally without any interventions into language or grammar. MS Excel was used, which resulted in tabular information useful for the preparation and making of a Web search engine. Such a procedure was also made possible by the structure of transcribed details in the original source, which are listed by given categories.

A standardisation procedure was partially carried out for the needs of the anticipated search engine for the list of names of the fine artists represented. The result of these prepara-

tions was a database that considerably facilitated and accelerated the search for defined data in the content of the original, in other words, a digital copy of it.

The last phase related to the design, programming and elaboration of interactive Web pages, which was outsourced. The Web presentation was produced as a component part of the site of the MDC.

3.2 Structure. These contents on the Web pages of the *Bibliography and material for art and similar disciplines of Dr Antun Bauer* are arranged into three linked but yet independent levels.

At level one it is possible to show the digitised contents of the 14 completely digitised books with 2754 digitised copies. They can be reviewed by scrolling, enlargement of the text or seeking a certain page number. This enables an unhindered inspection of the original specimen to every interested user of the world's virtual community.

At level two there is a static text with hypertextual characteristics. These are textual descriptions of individual components of the project (introductory texts; interpretative texts alongside each thematic unit and along with every individual book of the Bibliography; meta-data / cataloguing data about each book; more extensive textual representations of the individual books). By the use of hyperlinks within all these texts an interconnection between different kinds of digital contents was established. These connections were established:

a. among the contents within the project

(from a description of one book to that of another with cognate contents; from a single table with a list of periodicals and papers to books with their thematic bibliographies; from search results to the digital copy...)

b. among project contents and other contents on the MDC Web site

(links to data in the on-line Register of Museums, Galleries and Collections of the Republic of Croatia¹³; links to the Personal archives of museum professionals¹⁴ and to the MDC library catalogue)

c. to outside Web contents

(for example, the presentation of the book containing the MS of Ivan Rengjeo about stechaks (no. 8 of the Bibliography), which is also the most recent content within the project that we are showing for the first time, with all the stated links being set up as well as links to external Web contents that contribute to the virtual contextualisation of this MS, little known to the general public and never published – for example, a link to Rengjeo's texts in pdf. format published on other Web sites¹⁵);

d. connections with other repositories of digitised material

(links to the digitised repository of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts about certain contents in the project, e.g., a link has been established from the digitised catalogue of the exhibition 1st Spring Salon¹⁶, 1916 and to the digital copy from the Bibliography with information about this exhibition¹⁷).

The third level of Web presentation of the Bibliography is a search engine for the data base, which contains 1276 bibliographical entries from two books that relate to the chronology of exhibitions held in Zagreb from 1842 to 1952. The base is searchable according to the following criteria: artist, exhibition venue, year and name of exhibition. The results of each search are connected via the titles of the exhibitions to the digital copy from the Bibliography and supported with the currently available and digitised copies of the covers of the accompanying catalogues of the exhibitions from the holdings of the library of MDC.

4. Concluding considerations

In the making of the web pages, we enriched the Bibliography and its fourteen digitised books with added contents – additional texts (descriptions, lists, transcriptions, catalogue data), image material (digitised copies of texts, covers, photographs), menus and search engines, which all resulted in a new electronic publication.

Through this added value we endeavoured virtually to contextualise the digitised contents, in which we perceived the basic objective and purpose of the Web presentation of this old MS material. This can best be understood from the presentation of the forgotten, unpublished MS of Ivan Rengjeo contained in the 8th volume of the Bibliography. This MS was a starting point for the exploration and publication of lesser known data from his life, his work with Dr Bauer on a number of projects, his work in the research into stechaks and his participation in the Exhibitions of the Medieval Art of the Peoples of Yugoslavia held in Paris in 1950 and in the Art Pavilion, Zagreb, in 1951. We also hope that the digitised MS will be a point of departure for research by the wider professional and scholarly community, for with its presentation of the Web, it will become accessible to all inheritors of stechaks and the common cultural heritage as well as other interested members of the world's virtual community.

The project has been conceived as an open form that can be constantly upgraded and updated with new knowledge, textual and imaged material, new digital copies and new hyperlinks.

We see the future of the project *Digitisation of old and rare material from the Bauer Collection of the MDC library* in the further linkage of contents of repository digital material on various portals, as illustrated by the links made between the Croatian Academy and the MDC portal.

References

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- [2] *Arhiv za likovnu umjetnost u Gipsoteci 1952*. Zagreb, 1952.
- [3] Digitalna zbirka Bauer - Bibliografija i građa za umjetnost i srodne struke dr. Antuna Bauera, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/>, 20.12.2011.
- [4] Hrvatska kulturna baština, <http://www.kultura.hr/Zbirke/Digitalna-zbirka-Bauer>, 20.12.2011.
- [5] *Prijedlog nacionalnog programa digitalizacije arhivske, knjižnične i muzejske građe /Proposal for a national programme for the digitised of archival, library and museum material*, Zagreb, Ministry of Culture of the RC, 2006
- [6] Register of Museums, Galleries and Collections of the Republic of Croatia, <http://www.mdc.hr/hr/muzeji-u-hrvatskoj/hvm-pregled-muzeja/>, 20.12.2011
- [7] Snježana Radovanlija Mileusnić, *Bibliografija i građa za umjetnost i srodne struke dr. Antuna Bauera ili kako dokumentirati kulturnu sadašnjost danas za sutra*, in: *Muzeologija*, 31, 1994, str. 97–101.
- [8] The Personal archives of museum professionals, <http://www.mdc.hr/hr/mdc/arhiv/personalni-arhiv-zasluznih-muzealaca/>, 20.12.2011

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Notes:

¹ Digitalna zbirka Bauer - Bibliografija i građa za umjetnost i srodne struke dr. Antuna Bauera, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/>, 20.12.2011.

² Hrvatska kulturna baština, <http://www.kultura.hr/Zbirke/Digitalna-zbirka-Bauer>, 20.12.2011.

³ The Archives for Fine Arts were founded in 1944 pursuant to a gift of Antun Bauer. In 1952, the Archives were hived off from the Glyptotheque and continued working as a special working unit of the Institute for Fine Art of

JAZU (today, HAZU). See: A. Bauer, D. Kečkemet, *Gipsoteka: Arhiv za domaću likovnu umjetnost*, Zagreb, 1948. (R-66); *Arhiv za likovnu umjetnost u Gipsoteci 1952*. (R-202).

⁴ The division is that of the present writer and was constructed on the division published in the text: Snježana Radovanlija Mileusnić, *Bibliografija i građa za umjetnost i srodne struke dr. Antuna Bauera ili kako dokumentirati kulturnu sadašnjost danas za sutra*, in: *Muzeologija*, 31, 1994, str. 97–101.

⁵ Vol. VIII contains an extensive MS study by Ivan Rengjeo (1884–1962) *Srednjovjekovni nadgrobni spomenici - stećci*, and in vol. IX the work, collections and contents of the Archives of Fine Arts are described.

⁶ These are: vol. XXIII: Exhibitions in Zagreb: 1842–1931; vol. XXIV: Exhibitions in Zagreb: 1931–1952; vol. XXV: Exhibitions Osijek–Split–Sarajevo: 1873–1951; vol. XXVI: Exhibitions Belgrade–Ljubljana: 1860–1952; vol. XXVII: Exhibitions: other places in Yugoslavia: 1840–1952; vol. XXVIII: Exhibitions abroad: 1840–1952.

⁷ These are volumes nos. VII, XXI, XXII, XXIX, XXX.

⁸ List of journals and papers, URL: <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/bibliografije>, 1.2.2011.

⁹ Most of the books of the Bibliography, 20 of them (vols. I, II, III, IV (1,2), V (1,2), VI (1,2), X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX, XXXI).

¹⁰ The Web catalogue of MDC library, <http://www.mdc.hr/hr/mdc/knjiznica/katalog-knjiznice/>, 1.2.2011.

¹¹ With the use of outsourcing, the contents of the following books have been digitised: vol. IV.1: Časopisi 1893.-1910, http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/bibliografije/IV_1, 20.12.2011, vol. IV.2: Stručni časopisi: 1886.-1903, http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/bibliografije/IV_2, 20.12.2011, vol. V.1: Časopisi, http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/bibliografije/V_1 20.12.2011; vol. V.2: Stručni časopisi: kazalo, http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/bibliografije/V_2, 20.12.2011; vol. VIII. Ivan Rengjeo, *Sredovječni nadgrobni spomenici - stećci*, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/zbirke/VIII>, 20.12.2011, vol. XI. *Obzor: 191–1920 : sa kazalom*, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/bibliografije/XI>, 20.12.2011, vol. XXIII: *Izložbe u Zagrebu: 1842–1931*, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/kronologije/XXIII>, 20.12.2011, vol. XXIV: *Izložbe u Zagrebu: 1931–1952*, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/kronologije/XXIV>, 20.12.2011, vol. XXV: *Izložbe Osijek–Split–Sarajevo: 1873–1951*, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/kronologije/XXV>, 20.12.2011, vol. XXVI: *Izložbe Beograd–Ljubljana: 1860–1952*, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/kronologije/XXVI>, 20.12.2011, vol. XXVII: *Izložbe: ostala mjesta u Jugoslaviji: 1840–1952.*, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/kronologije/XXVII>, 20.12.2011, vol. XXVIII: *Izložbe u inozemstvu: 1840–1952*, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/kronologije/XXVIII>, 20.12.2011, vol. XXIX: *Autobiografski podaci likovnih umjetnika Hrvatske, Bosne i Hercegovine, Slovenije: iz Arhiva Saveza likovnih umjetnika*, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/biografije/XXIX>, 20.12.2011.

¹² Most of these reasons are stated in the document *Prijedlog nacionalnog programa digitalizacije arhivske, knjižnične i muzejske građe /Proposal for a national programme for the digitised of archival, library and museum material*, Zagreb, Ministry of Culture of the RC, 2006.

¹³ Register of Museums, Galleries and Collections of the Republic of Croatia, <http://www.mdc.hr/hr/muzeji-u-hrvatskoj/hvm-pregled-muzeja/>, 20.12.2011.

¹⁴ The Personal archives of museum professionals, <http://www.mdc.hr/hr/mdc/arhiv/personalni-arhiv-zasluznih-muzealaca/>, 20.12.2011.

¹⁵ For example: Ivan Rengjeo, *Simbolika štapa na stećcima* [Staff symbolism on stechaks], <http://www.plsavez.hr/hp-arhiva/194304.pdf>, 1.3.2011.

¹⁶ 1st Spring Salon, 1916, <http://hazu.arhivpro.hr/index.php?search=2&paging=1&query=proljećni+salon!>, 20.12.2011.

¹⁷ Digitalna zbirka Bauer - Bibliografija i građa za umjetnost i srodne struke dr. Antuna Bauera, <http://antunbauer.mdc.hr/index.php/static/flash/XXIII-083>, 20.12.2011.