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EVA VERONA – A LIBRARY CAREER

Eva Verona was born on 1 February 1905 in Trieste, a city then under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, where her father was working. She spent her early childhood in Vienna and then attended grammar school in Zagreb. She studied mathematics and physics at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, graduating in 1928. The next year she began working in the University Library (today the National and University Library), and soon afterwards passed her librarian examination. She worked in the University Library until retiring in 1967, performing a variety of roles in various departments. She reorganized the natural sciences area in the classified catalogue and was involved with the foreign periodicals collection. She was responsible for choosing and purchasing works covering the natural sciences and technology and also for works pertaining to librarianship.

In 1939 she published her first paper on classified catalogues in *Nastavni vjesnik*. In 1940, with Branko Hergešić, Jelka Mišić and Nevenka Dragičević she compiled an up to date bibliography of books published in Banovina Hrvatska (the Autonomous Banovina of Croatia). The first issue appeared in 1941 and was titled *A Catalogue of books published in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia*. Following changes in the country's political situation, the bibliography changed its title to read *A Croatian Bibliography*. In cooperation with Jelka Mišić, Verona also compiled a list of the periodicals received by libraries in Zagreb, which was published by the Association of Secondary School Teachers in 1941.

In the forties she was an associate with the Croatian Encyclopaedia and wrote a contribution on bibliography for the collected papers *Naša domovina*. While she was to redirect her interests to other fields, she continued to be engaged in bibliography throughout her working life. From 1946 to 1965 she was an assistant to the editor-in-chief of the Croatian retrospective bibliography which was being prepared for publication by the National and University Library, though its first volume entitled *Material for Croatian Retrospective Bibliography* was published only in 1982. In the year 1947 she was in charge of the Department of Printed Books and became its formal head in 1954. From 1948 to 1959 she was entrusted with compiling the data required for drafting a request to Hungary, Italy and Austria for the restitution of cultural assets taken from the country during the First and Second World Wars. She was also interested in the history of Croatian libraries, and of the University Library in particular. A dozen or so of her works have historical themes and are based on original records.

Verona was one of several librarians, members of the Association of Librarians of Croatia, who launched the periodical *Vjesnik bibliotekara Hrvatske* in the early fifties. She was its editor-in-chief from 1960 to 1965. She continued to write and publish: from 1939 to 1987 she prepared or edited about sixty scientific or professional titles published in both domestic and foreign publications, and a large number of book reviews.

In the fifties she became active in the theory of alphabetical catalogues, the area that would become the main subject of her papers and for which she would become a

leading expert not only at the national but also at the international level. In her papers published in *Vjesnik bibliotekara Hrvatske* and the periodicals *Libri* and *Library Resources & Technical Services* in the English language she compared the different approaches adopted by individual foreign catalogues and cataloguing codes in treating anonymous works and corporate and form headings, and examined the history of their origins.

Such works and her participation from 1954 in the work of IFLA established her worldwide professional reputation. As a result, she was one of the experts appointed by the Organizing Committee for the *International Conference on Cataloguing Principles*, prepared by IFLA, who had to prepare a number of the “working documents” which were to be the base for drafting cataloguing principles to be acceptable at the international level. The Conference was held from the 9th through the 18th of October, 1961, in Paris. Around two hundred librarians from fifty three countries and twelve international organizations participated in the Conference.

The papers presented by Eva Verona and Seymour Lubetzky addressed the same topic: the function of the main entry in the alphabetical catalogue. They had very similar careers despite the striking differences in the environments within which they worked: both were leading cataloguers in the central library of their respective countries, reflecting excellent education and knowledge of foreign languages, both were exceptionally prolific writers and published widely, and both crowned their years of work by drafting national cataloguing codes. At a time when people normally, retire they began to teach. However, while Lubetzky worked in a rich country in the largest library of the world, Verona came from a small and poor milieu; when awarded a scholarship she would examine catalogues in international libraries and make numerous notes of interesting items in her notebooks.

The difference between their environments generated their different views about the topics they were assigned at the Paris Conference. Lubetzky deemed that the function of main entry was to represent a literary unit, which is quite understandable for an environment producing a large number of publications and a large number of original titles. On the other hand, Verona deemed that the main entry should represent a bibliographical unit, since this is practical and more convenient for a small multilingual country in which many translations are published. In addition, Verona deemed this treatment to be more convenient for modern works, particularly scientific and professional works. It is worth noting that the final draft of the Paris Statement of Principles, prepared on the basis of both approaches, provided for alternative approaches.

Although the topic of the role of computers had been addressed by one of the contributions to the Conference, it took twenty years before computers were introduced into Croatian libraries. Verona, however, as if sensing the future, had pointed out at several points that the relationships between the main entry and other entries in a catalogue, their roles and functions, depended on the technical aspects of the catalogue. This statement has remained undisputable right to the present. Verona in cooperation with F. G. Kaltwasser, P. R. Lewis and R. Pierrot made comments on the cataloguing rules adopted at the Paris Conference, accompanied them by examples and prepared them for publication. An edition of the Paris Statement of Principles, accompanied with comments, was published by IFLA in 1971.

As an acknowledged international expert, Eva Verona participated in the work of the International Meeting of cataloguing professionals in Copenhagen in 1969. At this Meeting were laid the foundations for drafting international bibliographic standards for describing various types of material, known by the acronym ISBD. Verona actively participated in drafting a number of ISBDs in her capacity as chairperson or as a member of working groups composed of international experts appointed by IFLA.

From 1974 to 1977 Verona was a member of the Consulting Committee of the International Committee for Bibliographical Control and the chairperson of the IFLA's Section for cataloguing. During this period she prepared a critical study on corporate headings entitled *Corporate headings: their use in library catalogues and national bibliographies: a comparative and critical study*, a work in which Verona had examined and compared the use of corporate headings in various catalogues and national bibliographies. The work was published by IFLA in London in 1975. This was the basis for Verona's PhD thesis which she defended at the University of Zagreb in 1980. The thesis was entitled *Corporate headings in the light of historical and comparative critical examinations*. She was the first person to be awarded a PhD degree in the field of librarianship by the University of Zagreb.

Verona applied her international experience to the domestic situation. Following the Paris Conference she focused the work of the Committee on Cataloguing of the Federation of Associations of Librarians of Yugoslavia, which she chaired for a long time, on the preparing of a cataloguing code which was published in parts during the period from 1962 to 1967. The first part of *A Code and manual for compiling alphabetical catalogues* was published in 1970 in book form by the Library Association of Croatia. The work on the part of the *Code* dedicated to the regulations of descriptions had been temporarily interrupted awaiting the adoption of international standards, so the second part was published only in 1983. The second, revised (and last) edition of the first part of the *Code* was published in 1986. In addition to the published manual *Alphabetical catalogue in theory and practice* (1966, 2nd ed. 1971), the *Code and manual for compiling alphabetical catalogues* is regarded as the most significant work of Verona's, in which her enormous knowledge, erudition and thoroughness were fully revealed. By preparing a cataloguing code, Verona had enabled the National and University Library to start computerization as early as the beginning of the eighties. In most of the other eastern European countries the drafting of a new cataloguing code, a prerequisite for computerization began only at the beginning of the nineties after democratic changes.

In 1976 Eva Verona was the first woman from Europe upon whom was conferred the prestigious *Margaret Mann Citation* award from the American Library Association. A year later, marking the 50th anniversary of IFLA, she was awarded a charter *Tabula gratulatoria* for her overall contribution to the work of this international library association. She was conferred with an Order of work with golden wreath for the restitution of cultural assets in 1961. In 1968 she was awarded a Kukuljevićeva povelja (Kukuljević Charter) by the Croatian Library Association and received a testimonial. In the year 1978 she was conferred with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Republic of Croatia.

The impact of Eva Verona on the education of generations of Croatian librarians was enormous. First she conducted courses and seminars organized for librarians by the

Library Association of Croatia; from 1968 to 1982 she delivered lectures to post graduate students studying librarianship, documentation and informatics at the University of Zagreb. She actively participated in the work of the Department for Librarianship at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, from its very establishment in 1977 as an external associate, and from 1980 as a full professor. She taught a course on the subject of *Library Catalogues in Theory and Practice*. At the beginning of the '80s she participated in the design of the first postgraduate programme in librarianship being prepared by the Department for Librarianship. For reasons resulting from unfavourable external circumstances the programme was not accepted at the time. During the last ten years of her life she was not actively engaged in librarianship, although she continued to communicate with her colleagues, discussing the situation in the Library Association of Croatia and the National and University Library, the two institutions to which she had dedicated most of her life. The contribution of Eva Verona to Croatian librarianship is enormous: due to her the small Croatian library community has become known worldwide to be the equal of those in many much larger and more advanced environments. She died on 19 May in 1996. Her death was marked by comprehensive obituaries in major American and European library journals.