

Oldest Croatian Journals: Continuities, Challenges and Future

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On 19 October 2022, a symposium entitled Oldest Croatian Journals: Continuities, Challenges and Future was held in the National Hall of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The symposium was jointly organized by the Department of Medical Sciences and the Division for the History of Medical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, as well as the Croatian Medical Association. It was dedicated to two Croatian scientific journals which are being published in continuity to this day: *Rad HAZU (Rad CASA)* initiated in 1867 and *Liječnički vjesnik*, established in 1877.

From its founding until today, 564 books of the journal *Rad CASA* were published. Every Academy's department has its own series within *Rad CASA*, with all of them respecting the continuous numeration. However, their output varies widely, with some departments much more productive than others. The first presentation about *Rad's* history was being held by Martin Kuhar (in co-authorship with Marko Pečina) in which an emphasis was on the socio-political context of the appearance of first Croatian scientific journals in the second half of the twentieth century. The presentation, which was supplanted by statistical data and graphs on *Rad's* publishing history, demonstrated that *Rad CASA* was founded during the intense process of nation-building, when major cultural and scientific institutions in Croatia were established.

A presentation about *Rad CASA – Social sciences* was held by its editor Dragutin Feletar, who showed the most important data about the journal and the challenges of being editor-in-chief in the contemporary context. The most recent series, *Rad CASA – Technical sciences*, was being explored by Jelena Bolkovac from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture (in co-authorship with Ivo Senjanović). The authors set out to give a detailed historical overview of what is a long tradition of scientific publishing in the field of technical sciences even before the establishment of *Rad CASA – Technical sciences*. The editor of *Rad CASA – Mathematical sciences*, Andrej Dujella, emphasized in his presentation the challenges of fulfilling difficult criteria for the inclusion of the journal in internationally-relevant citation bases. The final lecture dedicated to *Rad CASA* was given by Marko Pečina (in co-authorship with Vida Demarin) in which impressive data on the 70-year tradition of *Rad CASA – Medical sciences* were presented, together with the recent efforts by the current editorial board to make the journal internationally visible and to increase its quality.

The second part of the symposium was dedicated to *Liječnički vjesnik*, the official bulletin of the Croatian Medical Association. Given the fact that the journal was established 40 years before the School of Medicine in Zagreb was opened in 1917, the journal



performed a crucial role in the dissemination of medical knowledge among physicians, their class struggles and in the development of Croatian medical terminology.

Its current editor, Branimir Anić, gave a presentation about the mission and the role of *Liječnički vjesnik*, which was (and still is) an indispensable literature for generations of Croatian physicians. Anić forcefully argued for the need to preserve a nationally-relevant general medical journal as a reflection of local professional and scientific problems, as well as a platform for younger researchers learning their trade in scientific writing. From a similar viewpoint, but with more emphasis on medical education, Nada Čikeš gave a presentation on *Liječnički vjesnik* based on her substantial experience as its editor (from 1992 to 2005). As an expert in contemporary European regulations and trends regarding the scientific publishing, Čikeš also contributed to the discussion regarding the limitations of metric data in evaluating the quality of individual journals. The final two lectures were devoted to the historical aspects of *Liječnički vjesnik*. Stella Fatović-Ferenčić gave a visually

rich presentation in which she traced the diachronic changes in its editorial practices, contextualized main features which were slowly added throughout its history and presented data on the sometimes-neglected elements which ultimately form an identity of a journal. Silvija Brkić Midžić argued about the importance of visual elements of the journal by critically evaluating its past practices in this aspect, and by carefully examining the balance between aesthetic and functional criteria when designing the front page of the journal.

Taken as a whole, the symposium was devoted to two extremely important scientific journals in Croatia, their continuity and development, but also the challenges which their editorial boards need to tackle in order to secure their long-term relevance and survival. The rich discussion at the end of the symposium demonstrated the depth of other, still unexplored topics, which will hopefully stimulate future public events about these or some other journals and their place within Croatian as well as European scientific community.

