

Music Documentation in Libraries, Scholarship, and Practice



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Project RISM Croatia – The Last 10 Years

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Abstract

Contemporary cooperation between Croatia and RISM has a rich history and significance. From the first impulses of Albe Vidaković, then the diligent fieldwork of Ladislav Šaban, to the project “Arranging, cataloging, and elaboration of music sources in Croatia,” headed by Dr. Stanislav Tuksar, the study of music collections and archives in Croatia has been presented on several occasions. The work of S. Tuksar, Vjera Katalinić, and Vedrana Juričić should be pointed out in particular.

V. Katalinić presented the history and present state of the project at the 50th anniversary RISM conference in March 2002 where she pointed out both the problems concerning work on the project as well as guidelines for future work. Although since then most of the problems have remained, and some plans for various reasons have not (yet) been realized, in this paper I will present the current state of the project, as well as point out some problems and specific issues the Croatian RISM team is facing as it introduces the Kallisto program to the RISM project in Croatia. Kallisto has been in use worldwide for some time now, but due to specific organizational and financial issues in Croatia, it was more appropriate to use an existing (variant) program ISIS which resulted with a kind of gap when dealing with specific work tasks and problems (e.g., conversion issues); such problems and dilemmas will be presented in the paper. Finally, I will focus on the importance of the RISM project in Croatia, especially in terms of its pedagogical function in working with students.

The collaboration between Croatia and RISM already has its history and significance. Since the first impulses in RISM A/I from the early 1960s coming from Albe Vidaković and Josip Andreis, then the valuable fieldwork by Ladislav Šaban during the late 1960s and 1970s, who entered Croatian music collections as part of the RISM A/II project, and the enquiry from the early 1980s effectuated by Stanislav Tuksar (through which some 220 locations with music materials were identified) and his endeavours at systematically arranging and cataloguing these materials in scholarly projects, there have been several occasions of their presentation in public.¹

¹ Special attention should be drawn to articles by Stanislav Tuksar, Vjera Katalinić and Vedrana Juričić (for example: Stanislav Tuksar, “Music Research Libraries, Archives, and Collections in Croatia,” *IRASM* 23:2 (1992), 119-140; Vedrana Juričić and Sand Bakija, “Conversion of Musical Data Sources from ISIS to PiKaDo,” *Arti musices*, 29:1 (1998), 91-99; Vedrana Juričić, “From Music Archives to the Database: Croatian Experience,” in *RISM: Academic and Technical Challenges of Musicological Source Research in an*

The cataloguing of manuscripts in Croatian music archives and collections has been carried out so far in different ways (see articles by Juričić and Katalinić). Without entering into the details of these changes in collaboration with RISM (for example, introducing the Croatian version of the ISIS programme and related articles by Vedrana Juričić), we will refer on this occasion only to the last ten years of the work on the project within the framework of the Croatian RISM branch.

Three institutions have been involved in the realization of the RISM project so far:

1) The Croatian Musicological Society, the current referential point for the Croatian project, which has been supporting it since its foundation in 1992 as part of its research and documentation projects;²

2) The Department of History of Croatian Music of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, where RISM makes up part of its research project: Within the digitization project, a series of 44 inventory books of music collections in Croatia [have been digitized](#); the digitization of acquired microfilms from various libraries worldwide dealing with Croatian music is in the process of being described using metadata, but they will be password protected and accessible only from the library of the Academy/Department; and

3) The Zagreb University Academy of Music, where part of the project is being carried out within the students' education programme at the Department of Musicology, which will be reported on later.

The work of RISM Croatia³ includes collecting data on music preserved in various archives and collections; building up the central database, along with an information service for domestic and foreign researchers on items registered in RISM and preserved in Croatia; collaborating with the RISM Zentralredaktion in Frankfurt; and providing services in the education of students and young scholars in programmes of cataloguing.

During the last ten years, the work on RISM Croatia has undergone significant changes: on the one hand, the decline in the number of records sent to the Frankfurt central office might indicate a certain level of stagnation, or some problems in field work, but on the other hand, the Kallisto programme has been recently introduced, pointing to progress and improvements.

In this, one should point out the problems encountered during work (some of them also having been present ten years ago):

- The question of financial support for arranging music collections, in which two exclusive but not completely reliable sources could be named:
 - a) The Croatian Ministry of Sciences, Education and Sports in financing the project “Arranging and Cataloguing Music Sources in Croatia”, led by Stanislav Tuksar from 1992 until 2012; the support has been quite modest, and the project was conceived quite broadly – from Medieval sources up to beginning of the 20th century, encompassing various sources – scores, books on music, libretti, etc.; for the moment the project will continue until May 2013, but with such reduced funding that it is not possible to employ anyone for the RISM tasks.
 - b) The Croatian Ministry of Culture, via its support given to arranging the Dubrovnik Franciscan Monastery collection by the Croatian Musicological Society; it had backed the musicology students' two-week workshop in

International Framework, ed. Martina Falletta, Renate Hüsken and Klaus Keil (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2010), 331-342; Vjera Katalinić, “RISM in Croatia: Present State, Perspectives, and Tasks,” in Falletta, Hüsken, and Keil, *RISM: Academic and Technical Challenges*, 95-100; see also a short presentation by Tatjana Mihalić, “Music Collections in Croatia,” *Fontes artis musicae* 56:1 (2009), 51-65.

² Cf. *Arti musices* 23:1 (1992).

³ The current leader of RISM Croatia is Vjera Katalinić, while Vedrana Juričić was recently replaced by the assistant Lucija Konfic at the Croatian Academy's department.

Dubrovnik each year since 2003; since 2012 the Ministry is no longer supporting such projects.

- One of the substantial problems in Croatia is the fact that there is no single full-time researcher dealing with the RISM project. For example, part of the duties of Lucija Konfic, a researcher who also works on the RISM project with Vjera Katalinić at the Academy of Sciences, includes taking care of the Department's library and she has to work on her PhD project at the same time.
- Data on music material has been gathered exclusively at locations where they have been preserved, i.e. in archives, libraries, or museums located on private, church or state property. This situation dictates the following working conditions:
 - Most locations are outside Zagreb, which results in increased financial costs – travel costs, accommodation and per diem payments – in order to organize properly the fieldwork, and usually there are no trained musicologists on site.
 - Access to the collections is mostly limited due to the opening hours of the library or museum, and extended fieldwork depends on the goodwill of the director of the institution; when an agreement is achieved on the arrangement of the collection (or a smaller logical unit such as somebody's personal collection), it is necessary to include all types of material – printed music and manuscripts, as well as other types of documentation: correspondence, newspaper clippings, notes, letters etc.
 - Furthermore, most institutions usually have no digital or even paper catalogues of their music materials and their interest is in obtaining any type of arrangement of their collections or records; thus, they mostly prefer a card catalogue in paper form in Croatian. On the other hand, those institutions that use some kind of digital cataloguing programme expect that the newly arranged database be compatible with their already existing programme.

The last aspect mentioned above is the main reason that the modified version of the CDS ISIS cataloguing programme is still in use in Croatia.⁴ Its advantage lies in the fact that it is adapted to various types of music material, both manuscripts and prints, is highly suitable for searching by single words, and enables a relatively quick elaboration of manuscript and printed music catalogues and their indexes. On the other hand, when data were sent to RISM, the programme had to be converted to Pikado (the conversion was done in 2003), but – as a consequence of rather modest financial circumstances and the lack of computer-skilled personnel – it was done in a rather clumsy way. In particular, the conversion process has to go through three additional programmes, a procedure in which only two musicologists in Croatia (Vedrana Juričić and Tatjana Devčić Stefanović) are well versed, and they are both now professionally engaged outside the RISM project. In addition, taking into account that the ISIS programme has not been improved, the newer versions of the widely used Windows operating system, for example, do not accept it, and the younger generations of computer-educated students consider it too impractical. Therefore, the ISIS form used for the description of data in the Dubrovnik workshops over the last decade (as described by Vedrana Juričić in her article; see note 1) was replaced in 2011 by an electronic version compiled in Microsoft Access in order to accelerate the entry of data into the database. However, since the great majority of data – about 7,000 of the entries – of the Dubrovnik Franciscan Monastery collection was done in the ISIS programme, it is doubtful whether the last several hundreds of records can be entered into the Kallisto programme. After all, the initial most important 1,000 records from this collection were reported to RISM in paper form as early as the late 1970s.

⁴ See articles by Juričić, and Juričić and Sand.

It was asked that the Kallisto programme be sent to Croatia by the Frankfurt RISM office in 2008.⁵ The installation of the programme does not pose any problem, and the same is true for the instructions in its operation, for which we are thankful to colleagues in Ljubljana for their workshop organized in June 2011; however, the entry of new data has still not started because of organizational problems. We will come to that later.

Now, however, let us consider some positive results of RISM Croatia's activities.

The main purpose of doing research with historical music materials has its practical dimension: the extension of the repertoire that becomes known and accessible to music performers. Those among them who are more adventurous use this unknown or "forgotten" material, which makes their performances more attractive. Some of them have even specialised in such material; thus, for example, the amateur (Social) Orchestra of the Croatian Music Institute in Zagreb presents from time to time music material from the Algarotti collection, housed by the institute. They have already performed three concerts and recorded two CDs with pieces by Sarti, Pichl, Hoffmeister, Dreyer, P. Wranitzky, Vanhal, Piccini, etc.

The next important component of RISM Croatia is the education of young people. Students in musicology start to be acquainted with RISM in their first year of undergraduate studies, and they become involved with it through concrete tasks in their music history seminars (work on sources, preparing music editions for performing) within courses on music archival research. Practical fieldwork has been done as part of summer workshops for students of musicology since 1996, and they have been participating in cataloguing and computer elaboration of the two Dubrovnik collections: the cathedral archives and the Franciscan Monastery collection.⁶ It is precisely regarding the work on the Dubrovnik Franciscan Monastery collection that some of the main characteristics of the RISM Croatia project can be identified:

- The workshop is held during the last two weeks of August – access and working hours are limited; all verification, unclear situations and similar issues can be solved only in the following year by re-examining the material, while access depends on the goodwill of the personnel, general disposition, and free time of one of the friars (among only four in all) in this otherwise huge monastery with an enormous general collection of rarities (Mediaeval manuscripts, incunabula etc.).
- The project is permanently dependent on rather expensive external financing, covering the costs of journey to Dubrovnik during the high tourist season, which is the only period when both the students and the leaders of the project have free time to work on it.
- Although the monastery is situated in the heart of the old town, because of its thick walls and construction the internet signal is not available in all places, thus preventing the use of the new Kallisto programme. In Croatia, we have a similar situation in numerous monasteries, both in urban surroundings and in locations where no signal is available at all.
- On the other hand, the great advantage is that the great majority of students have their own laptops at their disposition, which they willingly use in the workshops; however, monastery locations often do not have enough rooms or electric sockets for concurrent use of several laptops (up to twelve in the case of Dubrovnik).

Owing to such training, students of musicology at the Zagreb Academy of Music are prepared to arrange and describe individual music collections for their M.A. and PhD theses,

⁵ It should be pointed out that the Croatian Musicological Society and the Department of History of Croatian Music have twice asked for additional financial help for buying any of the RISM programmes, but without success.

⁶ All 15 workshops up to 2011 were led by Stanislav Tuksar and Vjera Katalinić.

applying therein the RISM standards. Eight collections were thus recently catalogued in monasteries and nunneries, as well as libraries and museums in Zagreb, Bjelovar, Varaždin, Pag, Ronjgi, Kloštar Ivanić and Dubrovnik:

- the operetta collection of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb (by Helena Borović);
- the Town Museum music collection in Bjelovar (by Tatjana Devčić; available on the [Croatian Musicological Society website](#));
- music prints of the Ursuline nunnery in Varaždin (by Janja Gašpar Vađon);
- the music collection of the Benedictine nunnery in Pag (by Anita Vidović Medved);
- the collection of the composer Tihomil Vidošić at the Croatian Music Institute (by Lucija Konfic);
- the collection of the composer Ivan Matetić Ronjgov in Ronjgi (by Lovorka Ruck, M.A.);
- the Franciscan Monastery collection at Kloštar Ivanić (by Nataša Badrov);
- the libretti collection of the Scientific Library in Dubrovnik (by Marinela Rusković Krištić, PhD thesis in progress);

In all these individual projects, the Croatian version of the ISIS programme has been used because in most of these collections various types of material had to be arranged (manuscripts, prints, music, books on music, librettos), which is still not possible using the Kallisto programme.

In defining clearly the prospects of further work with RISM Croatia, the following should be borne in mind:

1) First, all of the previously catalogued data still remains in the ISIS database (about 14,000 entries in all). The question is whether to transfer them to the Kallisto programme, and if so, how. Specifically, there is always a certain danger of losing some data during the conversion process. Another less attractive and certainly not cheaper option would be to engage a skilled musicologist to enter these 14,000 items into Kallisto by hand. Such copying from the paper form into the Kallisto programme would be done with two previously partly arranged collections and would start as soon as the financial situation permitted: the cathedral collection in Trogir (cataloguing was stopped due to the war in 1990) and the cathedral collection in Dubrovnik (arranged during the late 1990s, with additional newly discovered material, with some 3,000 items in all). In this respect, the help of European funds would be most welcome.

2) Second, the other possible solution to the above-mentioned problems should take into account three important points:

- First, further development of the Kallisto programme towards all-encompassing cataloguing of various types of sources (beside manuscripts, also prints, librettos and books on music),
- Second, enabling offline input and online transmission of descriptions, and
- Third, the possibility of producing independent catalogues and indexes of individual music collections on demand.

This would enable quicker input and more efficient description of data, not to mention the important psychological advantages of faster and a more concrete presentation of the described material to their custodians and owners.

We really do hope that the RISM project in Croatia and Kallisto will find a mutually acceptable mode of operation, leading us to our common goal: preserving still unknown and valuable music sources, and their adequate presentation to the scholarly community at large. In that sense, any suggestions and comments would be more than welcome.