

## **In search of art for Croatia Lecture BCS 12. 6. 2019.**

I must point out that I was only a facilitator and researcher in a quest to enrich the Croatian collections with works of art and important written documents and that the credit should go primarily to the excellent cooperation with the Croatian Ministry of culture and to the other institutions who managed to find the funds for all these purchases. In London even the great museums, which one would think already have vast collections, are eager to purchase new works of art and sometimes have to appeal to the public to help them finance the new acquisitions.

My first adventure into finding works of art and returning some of them to Croatia started with my interest in the opus of master Fortezza who was born around 1530 and died in May 1596 in what was then Sebenico in Dalmatia, part of the Venetian Republic, and now Šibenik, Croatia. It goes back to 1977 when as the Keeper of the Metalwork Department in the Croatian Arts and Crafts Museum in Zagreb I was for three months a visiting curator in the Metalwork Department at the Victoria and Albert museum in London.

### **1. V&A salver 1562**

In the Primary Galleries of this museum my attention was drawn to the signed and richly engraved brass salver from 1562, signed by Horacio Fortezza in Šibenik. It first appeared at the Paris market but the Victoria and Albert museum bought it through a dealer at the Sotheby's sale in 1899 for £120.15/.

### **2. V&A Ewer**

In the V&A I also discovered Fortezza's most accomplished work, a cast, moulded and engraved bronze ewer. It has a masterly sculpted handle in the shape of a dragon. Researching it I have learnt that the museum bought it for £60 at the sale of the collection of French lawyer Jules Soulages (1803 - 1857). Clive Wainwright, a Senior Curator at the V&A, wrote a detailed account of the struggle and determination by the then director Henry Cole and his energetic curator John Charles Robinson to

acquire the Soulages collection. I quote: 'It was a story of imaginative private sponsorship, the skills of an antiques dealer and the ambition of a museum director triumphing over government parsimony'. The government purchased the collection for the museum in instalments from 1859 to 1865 with the assistance of 73 subscribers described in *The Times* as "noble, gentle and industrial, and not the less noble because gentle and industrial".

It was an encouragement to me that it is worth battling if I ever come across the works of Šibenik master who was highly esteemed in the 19th century, but less known in the 20th.

### 3. British museum salver and signature

In the store of the **British Museum** I also admired his earliest known work in brass which he signed as still an apprentice in Šibenik in 1555. His forty years career as a goldsmith, engraver, miniaturist and restorer coincided with the golden age of the Venetian Republic; his clients were members of some of the most distinguished Venetian nobility. I wondered how it was possible that so few of his works in this non-precious and durable material have been preserved and more particularly, that not a single such object was to be found in his native country.

I was jealous. And jealousy is a strong feeling and motivator!

Thus, began my quest to find out more about him and try to find some of his work. In Apollo magazine there was an advertisement for a Sotheby's auction in Zurich in December 1981, with a small illustration of a salver. With a help of a colleague Eric Turner from the V&A I got detailed photographs and a catalogue description.

### 4. Šibenik salver

It was signed: ORATIO FORTEZZA DA SEBENICO FECE, with the coat of arms of the patrician Venetian Grimani family. It was probably made for Alvise Grimani, who was the Governor General for Dalmatia from 1572 to 1575. In addition to Fortezza's typical repertoire of motifs from Roman history and portraits of Roman leaders, this plate is distinguished by three central scenes of the battle of Kosovo in 1389.

## 5. Detail of Šibenik salver

With these he was referring to the perennial threat of an Ottoman invasion in the region, which was particularly relevant during the Fourth Ottoman-Venetian War (1570-1573). The provenance of the salver was not revealed in the catalogue of the Sotheby's sale. Tim Clarke, the Sotheby's expert who wrote the entry for this lot, was not at liberty to reveal the identity of the seller, but hinted to me that it came from the collection of a well-known archaeologist.

## 6. Another detail of Šibenik salver

I tried very hard to persuade the relevant institutions to bid, but unfortunately, they did not react in time. I must remind us that at that time, in 1981 there was no fast communication by internet and Croatia was one of the Republics of Yugoslavia, with a strong central administration. There was also a huge difficulty for payments in foreign currencies. Fortunately, the salver was not sold and in a post auction settlement with Sotheby's head office in London and after a fierce battle at home and with many unorthodox moves in January 1982 I was able to bring the salver as far as the customs at the Zagreb airport. Only to be told that it has to stay with them because I have not got a right paperwork. I have tried to argue that the salver was made and signed by the Croatian master in Šibenik and is returning home to the city museum. But to no avail, the custom officer insisted that it has not got the export licence from Croatia so it cannot be considered as returning home. My argument that he lived in the 16th century and was not aware of the current customs regulations, did not make any difference. Fortezza should have known better. I was terrified, because Sotheby's director has given me the salver only on the trust of my signature as a senior curator of a Croatian National museum, in short it had not yet been paid for. To cut the long story short it was imported as a sample with no value for the metalwork factory in Šibenik and I organized an exhibition in Zagreb.

## 7. Me and Fortezza salver

There was never an exhibition of only one object accompanied by detailed photographs that attracted such a huge interest. The small gallery in the former Jesuit monastery has got a permanent name Fortezza after this event. The news was covered by all state media and made a front-page sensation. Among the enthusiastic public response there was a letter by a Croatian collector living in Holland who explained that

he was not successful in securing this salver for Croatia and congratulating me on my “commando style action” adding that since not all commando’s actions end well, if something similar happens in future he is ready to help.

After Zagreb the salver finally found its proud place in the permanent collection of the City museum in Šibenik.

### 8. Cover of the museum leaflet

It seems that the vast majority of Fortezza’s artefacts have remained in anonymous private ownership, or have been lost. I am still searching for a salver which is illustrated and described in the Sotheby’s catalogue lot 70, 17 July 1936, also signed as the Šibenik salver.

### 9. Page from the catalogue

Please let me know if you have seen it somewhere.

Recently in the store of the Victoria and Albert Museum I have attributed a similar salver to Master Fortezza. In the centre is a coat of arms of the famous Venetian

Foscari family surrounded by a scene of an equestrian Roman battle.

### 10. Foscari salver

I believe that in one of the medallions that were wrongly identified in the old museum inventory is a self-portrait of Fortezza flanked by his initials OF.

### 11. A detail of Fortezza’s portrait

In the other medallion is an image of a painter:

### 12. Detail Schiavone Meldola portrait

which I have attributed to his older contemporary Andrija Medulić, Andrea Meldola, also known as Andrea Schiavone, born in Zadar 1510/15 - and died in Venice in 1563. He gained fame in Venice as a very successful painter and inventive graphic

artist. This attribution was confirmed by a great Schiavone scholar dr. Enrico Maria Dal Pozzolo.

And this brings us to the acquisition of this Schiavone drawing:

### 13. Schiavone St. Andrew

This small drawing (132 x 91 mm) is painted in black chalk, pen and brown ink, heightened with white on ochre prepared paper. It represents St Andrew with a cross. It is attributed to Schiavone's prolific period around 1553 to 1559.

The figure relates to the fresco of St Andrew in the nave of the church of San Sebastiano in Venice where Schiavone worked as an assistant to Veronese.

Schiavone's drawings do not come often on the market and I was delighted that courtesy of the Christie's I was able to inspect this drawing in their office and speak to the specialists well ahead of the auction which was on the 8th of July 2008. After consultations and researching the relevant literature I submitted a proposal to the Croatian ministry of culture which accredited me to bid on their behalf. It was a very busy auction and as always, a tense time, but I was successful and delighted that I managed to secure it within the limit.

### 14. Giulio Clovio The Last Judgement with the frame

When this remarkable, finely framed painting appeared on the market I did not believe that it could be possible to compete for it, but I was not discouraged and announced this exceptional event to the government of Croatia. The inscription on the frame reads: "The Last Judgement/ Giorgio Giulio Clovio-called Macedo 1498 - 1578 / This miniature on vellum is said to have been presented to Pope Clement VII (Giulio de Medici) by Clovio, upon his accession to the Papal throne in 1523. From the collection of the Earl Lindsay."

We cannot confirm this claim, but a thorough analysis of the miniature by specialized scholars of the opus of famous miniaturist Georgius Julius Clovius, Croata or Juraj Julije Klović, as he is known in Croatia, supported the attribution in the Sotheby's sales catalogue.

### 15. The Last Judgement Clovio

I was appointed by the Croatian government to bid on their behalf, but before that I consulted some of the leading specialists in the field of illuminated manuscripts and talked to some dealers pleading my case that the best place for it would be in the collection of the artist's homeland. Clovio was proud to be born in Grižane, Croatia since he signed his self-portrait Iulius Clovius Croatus. (In the picture gallery of the Kunshistorischer Museum in Vienna). His fame as one of the most significant miniaturists of the Renaissance has not diminished through the centuries since his biographer Vasari wrote: "There has never been, nor perhaps will there ever be for many centuries, a rarer or more excellent miniaturist". I was happy that Croatia was enriched with one of his very fine works after my successful bid at Sotheby's London on the 5th of July 2006. After the sale I was approached by Sandra Hindman, one of the leading scholars and collectors of Medieval and Renaissance art with galleries in Paris, New York and Chicago who identified herself as the underbidder. She congratulated me and asked if I am at liberty to say where this Clovio will be. I was very happy to tell her that it is not going to some secretive private collector, but that thanks to the Croatian Government Clovio is going home.

Another Croatian born Renaissance artist who made a successful career abroad was Francesco Laurana, known in Croatia as Franjo Vranjanin, born in Vrana near Zadar arr. 1420 and died in Avignon in 1502.

### 16. Francesco Laurana, Franjo Vranjanin sculpture portrait Baresi

I was working as a journalist and editor of arts programmes at the BBC World Service when I learned that a significant work by Laurana is offered at the Sotheby's sale on the 7th of December 1995 from a private collection where it had been for 20 years. Laurana's sculptures are in major public collections or in situ in Italy and France, but unfortunately Croatia did not have any of his works. I have broadcast about it in the Arts programme in the Croatian language pointing out that it was a rare opportunity, but also a great challenge to find funds in a short time, (estimate £80.000 to 120.000) I also sent a letter to the Ministry in Zagreb, and to my surprise got an answer that Dr Werner Daum former political adviser at the UN German Mission in Geneva who is a well-respected art connoisseur has drawn attention to the UN Permanent Croatian Mission in Geneva to this very important auction and stressed the rare opportunity for enriching

Croatian art collections. But nothing was done and they thought that the sculpture was sold. I was not lightly put off and my further investigation revealed that the market was slow and a number of works of art did not reach their reserve. I published an article in a Croatian Arts newspaper "Vijenac" announcing that it would be an opportunity for the Croatian side to enter the negotiations with the owner via Sotheby's. I was asked to help with the negotiations, that lasted more than a year. By the time we successfully concluded the purchase I was appointed as a Cultural Counsellor in the Embassy and organized a viewing and a lecture by a distinguished art historian Dr Anthea Brooks who is sadly no longer with us. She was enthusiastic about this portrait of Antonio Barresi, illustrious commander whose heroic exploits are recorded on the sculpture. She emphasized that it is rare male portrait by Laurana who is best known for his sculptures of beautiful Renaissance women. It is dated circa 1470-71 published in the most comprehensive monograph and well documented as made in Palermo. (H.W. Kruft, 1995).

I accompanied the bust on the flight to Zagreb.

My search for works of art is not limited only to the auction houses but I also search the collections of the most reputable dealers and at the Antique fairs. When I visited a Danny Katz in his office I was mesmerized by the marble relief of a Madonna and Child hanging on his wall.

### 17. *Giovani Dalmata Ivan Duknović, Madonna and Child*

His attribution was to an anonymous North Italian Renaissance sculptor. Another art historian and collector Carlo Milano was there and we discussed the possible attribution to the Croatian renaissance sculptor Ivan Duknović who worked in Italy where he was known as Giovanni Dalmata, Giovanni da Trau or Ioannes Tragurio, because he came from Trogir where he was born around 1440. He died after 1509. To establish this possible attribution, we asked international specialists in Renaissance sculpture who were familiar with the opus of Dalmata to examine this beautiful marble relief:

(from the UK Tony Radcliffe, Italy Prof Gentilini, US Eieke Schmidt and of course from Croatia, J. Belamaric, I. Fiskovic, M. Domljan, I Babić, F. Meder.)

They all agreed that it is a remarkable discovery which should find a place in a public collection. Dalmata worked in Italy and Hungary but also in Dalmatia and is best known for his contribution to the Chapel of the Blessed Giovanni Orsini in

the Cathedral in Trogir, one of the finest sculptural ensembles of the Renaissance. Knowing the importance of this sculpture for the opus of Dalmata and the Croatian Heritage The Ministry of Culture and the Town of Trogir joined forces and acquired the relief for the City museum.

### 18. Report about the purchase from Croatian newspaper

Dr Josip Belamarić, pointed out that the relief is incredibly important in the opus of this extraordinary sculptor and represents the link that was missing in the understanding of his work. After making this acquisition we exhibited it in the embassy and then I accompanied it all the way to the sculptor's birthplace Trogir.

During my term in this Embassy we organized many exhibitions and lectures on diverse subjects and thanks to David Davison and Rajka Makjanic and their knowledge and contacts in the world of archaeology some of them were covering a wide spectrum of Croatian archeological research.

After one of these lectures I was approached by Diana de Vere Cole, artist and writer, but also the managing trustee of the Cook trust

### 19. SOCRATES

She has told me that she has a sculpture, a portrait of Socrates which could be of interest to a museum in Croatia. She has researched the life of the famous British artist Frank Brangwyn (1867-1956) and in 2006, published a book *Brangwyn in perspective*. Her family bought and lived on the Brangwyn's estate where the sculpture of Socrates was held. Here it is what I learnt about the interesting history of the sculpture. I quote:

“This head was discovered in Spalato by Professor Fradletto who was an MP in Venice in 1907. It was being used as an anchor and has an iron ring in its cranium for this purpose. Sir Frank Brangwyn admired it and took it in part lieu of payment for his work designing the British Pavilion for the 1907 Venice Biennale. He took it back to his house in London, then, in 1918, moved it to Ditchling in Sussex, where he displayed it in the open air in a small Italianate garden. Following Brangwyn's death, the estate with its contents, was sold to his assistant Crosby Cook. Cook's daughter,



Diana de Vere Cole, the managing trustee of the Trust asked the opinion about the sculpture of Socrates some of the most distinguished British scholars and I have selected a quote from their expertise:

Doctor Martin Haigie wrote: “It would be a wonderful centre-piece for the new Ashmolean. It is indeed Socrates of ‘Type B’ common in Roman times, but this is very late, 4<sup>th</sup> century I think, and if from Spalato rather than Salona nearby- perhaps part of the décor of the palace of the Emperor Diocletian”.

Professor Michael Vickers, then of the Ashmolean, sees it fitting to return the head to the Museum in Split.

Roger Stephens, a distinguished sculptor in Salisbury who initially trained as a stonemason at Salisbury Cathedral, believes the that head is made of Dolomitic Limestone. Diana is here with us tonight and is wonderful to be able to revive the memory of the happy event when Zrinka Buljević, Director of the Archaeological museum in Split, announced to us that the museum enthusiastically accepted the offer. It was soon purchased by the museum and returned to Split.

Another museum in Split was enriched by the purchase of a collection from England, and also following an event in this very room in the Croatian embassy.

## 20. Invitation to the exhibition of watercolours by T G Jackson

I am delighted that Sir Nicholas and Lady Jackson are here tonight, because it was due to their generosity that we were able to exhibit here the original watercolours by Sir Thomas Graham Jackson, that most distinguished Victorian architect, artist and historian, grandfather of Sir Nicholas.

## 21, 22, 23, Images of Jackson’ s watercolours

These were the preparatory watercolours and drawings for his beautifully illustrated three volume book *Dalmatia the Quarnero and Istria* published in Oxford in 1887. In them he not only revealed to be an exceptionally talented artist but also a connoisseur of art and architecture and applied arts in the Croatian coastal region making him the leading English authority on Istria, Quarnero and Dalmatia in the UK. Due to the popularity of this first exhibition and subsequent

exhibitions in the Rector's Palace in Dubrovnik and Zagreb Museum of Arts and Crafts in 2009, Sir Nicholas generously agreed to part with 40 drawings and watercolours. Some of them have images on both sides. They are now in the permanent collections of the City museums of Split and Zadar.

### 24, 25, 26. Watercolours

It was in Zadar that Sir Thomas Graham Jackson made his most important contribution to the Croatian Heritage. He donated free of charge to the town his project for the restoration and the completion of the bell tower of the Cathedral which was left unfinished from the 15th century. To the delight of the clergy and the citizens the campanile was completed in 1893. I quote from his diary: "I had been astounded at receiving an Address from the Fabriceria of Zara, expressive of their gratitude for what I had done for them, and with it a gold medal struck in my honour. "He and his wife were welcomed by the city dignitaries; the flag was run up in their honour and "God Save the Queen" was played on the newly installed five bells. Signor Filippi, a Chairman of Board, took them to visit the Archbishop. Our next item brings us to the Benedictine nunnery in Zadar and connects us with the family Filippi.

### 27. Manuscript of St Grisogono

When I meet some of the dealers in London, they most probably know which question I am going to ask them while browsing through their collection: "Anything to do with Croatia?" And that was the question I asked Sam Fogg at the Grosvenor House antique fair in 1996. He invited me to visit him in the next few days in his treasure trove, a splendid gallery in Mayfair.

I still remember the feeling when, with a trembling hand, I was turning the pages of a 13th century manuscript written in Latin and illuminated in the scriptorium of Saint Chrisogonus (in Croatian it is Sveti Krševan) in Zadar. It describes the Passion and miracles of Saint Chrisogonus, Sveti Krševan, and it is of great importance for the study of the cult of this protector of the town of Zadar.

### 28. Detail of the manuscript margin with a note by the scribe, Zoilus

I was particularly stunned when on the ninth page there was a comment in the

margin written in red ink and signed by Zoilus Johannei, monk in Jadera (Zadar) in 1498. He writes that he has restored this valuable old manuscript which was fading away. There was no doubt in the authenticity of the manuscript and its great age. In addition, there were two transcripts from the 17th century and inside the wrapping paper was tucked a letter from obviously an Italian connoisseur Vico De Gobbis who has seen it in the collection of professor Filippi in 1946. He writes to professor Filippi that it is such a rare manuscript which could be dated even earlier than the 13th century and if he ever decides to part with it he will be happy to purchase it. The collector was probably Professor Natale, Lino Filippi, born in Zadar in 1895, but emigrated to Italy in 1943, teaching Natural Sciences in Bologna and Venice. He lived in Venice until his death in 1959. When he emigrated, he took with him some valuable archive material related to the history of Zadar, including books and manuscripts. He was the grandson of Donato Filippi, (1832-1919), the Chairman of the Board for the preservation of the cathedral who was the host of the Jacksons on that glorious day celebrating the completion of the campanile.

After researching the content of this manuscript and consultations with Croatian historians, I submitted the case for the acquisition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Presidents office, Ministry of Culture, to the Archbishop Ivan Prenda and the Mother superior of the Benedictine convent of St Mary in Zadar, which houses the permanent exhibition of Zadar's religious art. The Mother Superior was the quickest to answer and decided that with the permission of the Archbishop they will use their own funds to buy this manuscript that once was in the archive of the convent. Sam Fogg was very pleased that the manuscript he has purchased at auction will be back home and was prepared to wait for months until they sorted out the payment.

### **29. Mother Superior Anastazija Čizmin receiving the manuscript from Flora Turner in the Benedictine convent of St. Mary in Zadar on Good Friday in 1998.**

After nearly a year since the discovery I took the manuscript first on the plane to Zagreb, to be shown to the President and the Archbishop and then I took a bus to Zadar, all the time clutching my bag tightly on my lap and imagining that after a very long and tense journey from London to Zadar I will get some nice fish meal from the Convent's kitchen, but I was only offered as much water as I can drink,

because for Good Friday, the nuns were observing a strict fast. The adrenaline kept me going.

### 30. Vojkovic family coat of arms

Another important manuscript appeared at a Christie's auction in 2001 and I was holding it on a viewing day on the 3rd of June. Exactly on that date, but 346 years before Emperor Ferdinand the Third (1637-1657) signed the grant of arms in favour of John Voykffy of Klokocz and Voikovich, described as VOIKVIUS ILLIRII quondam celeberrimus Terror Turcarum; gloria gentis erat. He and his father were granted the arms for their heroic military achievements against the Ottomans in Croatia, Slovenia and Dalmatia in the 16th and the 17th centuries. The illuminated manuscript of nine pages on vellum included two full page miniatures. In addition, there were four other documents related to the family including a charter from Zagreb Bishop Alagovich. The family is described as being of ancient Croatian lineage.

The director of the Croatian national archive, in which some other documents related to this family are stored, was delighted when he read my report and sent me the authorisation to act on their behalf up to the sum of three thousand pounds which was enough to secure it for the National archive. Another manuscript to take to Zagreb.

### 31. Book by Ruđer Bošković.

The library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb was very interested in my announcement that at Bloomsbury auctions will be on sale, the first edition of the book by Carlo Noceti; *De Iride et Aurora Boreali Carmina cum notis Josephi Rogerii Boscovich*, printed in Rome in 1747, primarily because it included a text by the famous Croatian Scientist Ruđer Bošković which they did not have. I was happy to get it for the Academy.

### 32. Giovanni Batista Piranesi views of Triumphal Arches in Rome and other places.

Another good find at Bloomsbury auctions was a two-volume map of engravings

under the title: *Views of antiquities of Roman monuments* by the celebrated eighteenth century Venetian architect, draughtsman, engraver and archaeologist Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778). I was delighted that among them I have spotted some views of antiquities of Pula. Knowing that the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb have some of his graphic works I contacted them, and on the 30th of October 2008 I found myself bidding on behalf of the museum in which I used to work many decades ago.

I am lucky that due to the ongoing dialogue with the manuscripts specialist Tim Bolton I am able to give advance warning to Croatian libraries and archives about manuscripts and books of Croatian interest. With his help, combined with the expertise of scholars in Croatia and assisted with funds of The Society for the preservation of Dubrovnik Heritage, two rare manuscripts have enriched the Dubrovnik Historic Library.

### 33. Manuscript in Beneventan script at the press conference in Dubrovnik

Back in 2012 Tim emailed me that a Sotheby's sale included a rare fragment of the Gospel according to John, written probably in Dubrovnik in the 13th century in a special Beneventan type of script which was developed in the middle of the 8th century in the Duchy of Benevento in Italy. It was used exclusively in Southern Italy and Dalmatia, centred round Zadar, Trogir and Dubrovnik. The Dubrovnik scholar Rozana Vejvoda who did her PhD on the subject of Dalmatian Beneventan manuscripts considered that the fragment is very similar to the type of this script developed specifically in the Dubrovnik scriptorium and therefore recommended it for purchase. The Dubrovnik library enriched its special collection of Beneventan manuscripts and organized an exhibition with this newly acquired fragment as the central exhibit.

### 34. Frano Gundulic Most recent manuscript Dubrovnik libraries

This manuscript is my latest successful involvement with an important acquisition for the Croatian historic collections and it is tonight that for the first time I am announcing that I successfully bid for it on behalf of the Dubrovnik Libraries, specifically for the Research Library. It happened at the Bloomsbury auction house in London on the 4th of December of last year (2018). In one compendium there were bound five 16th century political texts covering Central and southern

European events in the last three decades of the 16th century. Therefore, it was of interest for bidders from different countries and the bidding was intensive in the room, on the telephone and the internet. For us the most interesting aspect was the text in Italian signed by Francesco Gondola, Frano Gundulić, the famous Dubrovnik nobleman, skilful ambassador of the Republic of Ragusa/ Dubrovnik to Rome during the war of Cyprus (1570-1573) and later during the Venetian-Ottoman struggle over the Republic. Gundulić was writing to Pope Gregory XIII in Rome in 1574. The text is of great importance for the history of Dubrovnik, because in the rich Dubrovnik archive there are some earlier letters that Gundulić was writing to the Senate, but not this one in which he explains to the Pope the complexity of the threats to The Republic and the importance for Dubrovnik to protect its neutrality. In my further research I have found that the British library has a copy of this ambassadorial manuscript which is not a presentation copy, but probably a draft for the fine example that is now permanently in the Dubrovnik library.

There were several other manuscripts that I have proposed for the acquisition to the relevant Croatian institutions, and I was authorized to bid on their behalf, but unfortunately, I was outbid since the interest was much greater than anybody expected. Dr Timothy Bolton, has contacted me regarding a sale in December 2016. In it was included, a small book, a manuscript of 297 leaves in Latin. It was very precious for the history of the seminary of the archbishop of Split in the early 18th century. The textbook of set questions and answers on philosophy and science, with frequent reference to works of Aristotle was accompanied by the list of names of 18 students of philosophy in 1728. The estimate was £400 - £600 but it went for £1300 hammer price. It is always that horrible feeling and temptations that you have to resolve in seconds, asking yourself could I have gone just one more bid, although I had a firm limit of 1200 pounds. After the auction I have approached the successful bidder and introduced myself stating that I am not a dealer, but was authorized to bid by the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Split-Makarska region and asked if he was the lucky owner. No, he said "I am a dealer bidding on behalf of my client, an American library and I am sorry but I had an unlimited bid on this item I would have gone much higher if needed." That was supposed to make me feel a bit better.

But I was able to bring much happier news to the Archdiocese in Split when I spotted that in the Vienna auction house *Deutsch*, in February 2016 they were offering for sale a 19<sup>th</sup> century painting of the interior of Split Cathedral.

### 35. Interior of the Split Cathedral framed painting

Late that evening I sent an email with the image of this small oil painting to my dear friend dr. Joško Belamarić, Director of the Institute of Art History in Split. His prompt reply was incredible. He said: "You are a witch! Here I am in Italy in the villa I Tatti, putting a final stop to the text of my lecture for tomorrow and in despair that I do not have an adequate image of the interior of Split Cathedral before restoration with a wooden gallery still in place and at the same moment your email appeared on my screen!"

I was happy to oblige on my broomstick, well actually, a memory stick.

### 36. Interior of the cathedral with the gallery two details

It was an oil painting attributed to the Austrian painter Rudolf von Alt, signed with initials RA, Split, 27<sup>th</sup> of September 1884. The dean of the Split Cathedral reacted immediately and asked me if I can do them a great favour and bid, although I am in London. I had only an hour to register, but obviously with the help of Saint Domnius, sveti Duje, and his blessing I managed to buy it for their Cathedral Museum.

### 37. Arrival. The Dean Don Tomisla Čubelić receiving the picture in the vestry

I was not expecting that it was up to me to take a painting from Vienna to Split, but in the end I did it combining it with the task of looking after my grandchildren

### 38. Flora and Luka

in Vienna who can be seen here waiving me goodbye on my way to the airport.

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