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– Academic

*The exhibition*

# Light of the Glagolitic

by Željka and Boris Rogić, National and University Library, 23.II.2012

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It is a great pleasure for me to be given this opportunity to say a few words on the occasion of the exhibition of the 'Light of the Glagolitic', which has been granted to us by our humble artists from Rijeka – the dear couple: Željka and Boris Rogić.

My first meeting with the artists was a virtual one: just a few sequences from their exhibition in Rijeka, shown in the late hours on channel one of Croatian national television convincing me that these artists had inspired and enchanted me with the beauty of the Glagolitic script in a way very dear to me. This was reinforced by the catalogue of the Rijeka exhibition and then, clearly with the original at this, the Zagreb exhibition.

And this brings me closer to their artistic interpretation of the Glagolitic script: in that they are recognisable, that they have a foothold in the Glagolitic reality - in the Glagolitic manuscripts and printed materials, which are also beautiful. I have already written about the title of the exhibition in Glagolitic in the spirit of the Glagolitic tradition: in the words of light – which is written with one sign, which in Glagolitic is called "jat". The artists have, therefore, in their work managed to convey the spirit of one letter, which is a sign, the symbol of one nation and its cultural identity.

This Glagolitic letter is a sign of Croatian cultural identity which was well known to our sculptor Ivan Meštrović, who had his remarkable sculpture's title, *Povijest Hrvata*, inscribed with Glagolitic letters. In order that the letters were faithful, closer to the sources, Meštrović chose the philologist Stjepan Ivšić, the then leader in Glagolitic letters and everything that had occurred in Croatia about the Glagolitic alphabet. With these words:

'The History of the Croats' Ivšić succeeded to summarize the essence of the Glagolitic written form, the orthography as well as the grammar of the Croatian language. A ligature was used, a joining letter, which is one or more common elements, using old hard semi-vowels after a consonant in the middle and at the end of words, characteristic for orthography, which is the spelling in the oldest period of Glagolitic literacy. "Jat" was used for "ije" in the words from history. Ivšić used the old Croatian form of the genitive plural for Croat. So in the title of Meštrović's sculpture "The History of the Croats", inscribed in Glagolitic, in some ways is also inscribed the history of Glagolitic letters of our land.

However the Rogićs' letters contain all the elements of originality, which is neither simple nor easy to achieve when we consider the very demanding material from which the artists shaped and created the Glagolitic letters. It is a hard (expensive), but also a miraculous so-called artistic glass which must be obtained from distant lands. The processing of such artistic glass requires aesthetic professional and technical skills, which the Rogićs continuously acquire and perfect. Through the material which they are using they create their art, which today have become unique. With their art the authors of the "Light of the Glagolitic" exhibition have succeeded to show the beauty and splendour of the Glagolitic alphabet.

And for this we are all very thankful.