

Strand 5: Crafts in the Origins of Design

SLOVENIAN TASTE FOR ART NOUVEAU FURNITURE

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Slovenia, cuddling the Eastern peaks of the white Alpine mountains, reaching right down to the blue Adriatic Sea and in a volley of green hills to the plains of Pannonia in the Southeast, for countless centuries has been welcoming immigrants from all over, that together have been forging a singular character of its own. By the turn of the century in our beautiful little home between the Romanic, Germanic, Slavic and Hungarian entities the polyglot Slovenians found ourselves in the midst of dynamic economic, political and cultural rivalries in- and outside of the Habsburg empire, which were also intensely resounding in the arts.¹ This was the time of an ever stronger middle class involved in local and foreign enterprise, increasingly becoming confident of achieving an independent political status for our nation. After the 1895 Easter earthquake the medieval city of Ljubljana gave way to gay new style buildings according to the modern urban plan. Ljubljana metamorphosed into a proud national capital with every required financial, social and cultural institution. The cosmopolitan city of Trst (now Trieste in Italy), the main Austrian all-state maritime doorway, featuring the second largest Slovenian population, engaged our people in import and export industry and trade. Austrian interests in that era lay to a large degree in Egypt with its Western-style Suez Canal transit trade and exotic tourism. At the other end of the key railway line Trst-Dunaj (Triest-Vienna) which was diagonally crossing Slovenia, reaching Ljubljana in 1849 and Trst in 1857, was our bustling metropolitan capital. In Vienna for centuries the Slovenians had felt at home and by the 1890s many in all walks of society divided their time between this long-time seat of various state authorities, all kinds of businesses, the main university etc. and their homeland. In spite

¹ Cf. Elizabeth CLEGG: *Art, Design and Architecture in Central Europe 1890-1920*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 2006.

of, or perhaps precisely because of, the pending disintegration of the huge state, Vienna was experiencing a building boom largely paid by taxes from the provinces. Yet pouring towards the metropolis were not only taxes, there were also hosts of talents, which profited enormously to become an extraordinary melange of divergent mini-universes of national temperaments and historical experience, hard work, open-mindedness, orderliness and *joie-de-vivre*. Vienna evolved into one of the few global cultural and scientific nerve centers, attracting, to live and work there, not only Austrian citizens belonging to the many nationalities but creative people from all over the world. Vienna therefore was by far the main influence on artistic life in Slovenia of the late nineteenth century. Among top masters of the arts, in music, theatre, literature, painting etc. there were also top architects, urban planners, furniture designers as well as makers. It had been the Viennese artists and artisans who had launched the Empire-Biedermeier lifestyle in Central Europe affordable to various levels of society through the early steps of industrial production. It was in Vienna that in mid-nineteenth century the Thonet family² stepped on the world stage to become the principal bentwood furniture manufacturers in the world. By the last third of the nineteenth century it was also machine-made historicist furniture attached to the building boom of the Neorenaissance/Neobaroque Ringstrasse-style that made the most impact in our part of the world. And finally, in the 1890s it was the young generation of visual artists who, following their French and Belgian peers, broke away from the overabundance of the historical academic approach to art. Vienna produced the unique blend of Nature-inspired linear finesse and Japanese-like airiness. The »new art« was pioneered by the genius of Prof. Otto Wagner and his students at the Academy of Arts, as well as by several future engineers-architects at the Vienna Polytechnic, and was taken over by the state central Arts and Crafts School with the main figure of Prof. Josef Hoffmann.

² Eva B. OTTILLINGER: *Gebrüder Thonet. Möbel aus gebogenem Holz*, Wien-Köln-Weimar, Böhlau, 2005.

With Josef Maria Olbrich,³ Kolo Moser and others, Hoffmann formed an artistic group called the Secession, with two extraordinary Slovenian architects Maks Fabiani (1865-1962)⁴ and Jože Plečnik (1872-1957) also joining in.⁵ In the last years of the nineteenth and the first of the twentieth centuries both were – apart from producing a number of iconic Secessionist Viennese houses - involved in interior and furniture design. After having completed the Portois & Fix furniture makers' seat in the center of Vienna, Fabiani designed the Emperor's reception room furnishings, made by the same firm, at the Paris World's Fair in 1900. While this seating suite was decisively French in spirit, the matter-of-fact furniture of the Palais Artaria art-publishing house building of 1901 was typically Viennese.⁶ In 1910 Fabiani was awarded doctorate and became one of the youngest professors at his own school, The Polytechnic.

Jože Plečnik, seven years junior to Fabiani, a cabinetmaker's son from Ljubljana who had trained as furniture maker at the Arts and Crafts School in Gradec (Graz in Austria), became Wagner's closest assistant at the Academy. After having designed his masterpiece - the Zacherl Haus, between 1901 and 1909 Plečnik was also busy with several Secession-organised and other art exhibitions. In 1902 he was responsible for part of the 15th Secession's exhibition where he presented a stunning crescent desk.⁷ In the same decade he provided a series of furnishings for homes of well-to-do clients, executed by the best Viennese cabinet makers, such as the Ungethüms, both in refinely

³ He, incidentally, unsuccessfully entered the competition for the new Provincial Government building in Ljubljana.

⁴ *150 Jahre Technische Hochschule Wien*, Wien, 1965, p. 307; Marko POZZETTO, *Maks Fabiani – vizije prostora*, Kranj, Libra, 1997.

⁵ Damjan PRELOVŠEK: *Frühe Möbelentwürfe und Inneneinrichtungen, Josef Plečnik. Wiener Arbeiten von 1896 bis 1914*, Wien, Tusch, 1979, p. 76-80; Andrej HRAUSKY, Janez KOŽELJ, Damjan PRELOVŠEK: *Plečnik's Ljubljana*, Ljubljana, Dessa, 1997; Andrej HRAUSKY, Janez KOŽELJ, Damjan PRELOVŠEK: *Plečnikova Slovenija*, Ljubljana, Dessa, 1997; Andrej HRAUSKY, Janez KOŽELJ, Damjan PRELOVŠEK: *Plečnik v tujini*, Ljubljana, Dessa, 1998.

⁶ Eva B. OTTILLINGER: »Die Wiener Moderne um 1900«, in Monika WENZL-BACHMAYER (Ed.): *Pariser Esprit und Wiener Moderne. Die Firma Portois & Fix*, Wien, Wagner-Werk, Museum Sparcasse, 2008, p. 19, 72, 73, 88.

⁷ Kosta STRAJNIČ: *Josip Plečnik*, Zagreb, Čelap i Popovac, 1920, p. 27 and Interieur fig. 5; D. PRELOVŠEK: *Josef Plečnik...*, fig. 48; A. HRAUSKY, J. KOŽELJ, D. PRELOVŠEK: *Plečnik v tujini...*, p. 38-42.

undulating lines as well as in the angular architectural variety.⁸ When entrusted with the design of the sitting room dedicated to the deceased Empress in the Austrian Government Pavilion at the Louisiana Purchase International Exhibition in St. Louis in 1904, Plečnik decided upon massively luxurious darkwood armchairs around a table of polished granite with matching wainscoting of delicate concentric quadrangles and the remaining walls covered in heavy yellow silk.⁹ After Prof. Wagner's proposal of Plečnik as his worthiest successor at the Academy was not accepted, Plečnik moved to Prague to the Arts and Crafts school and after WWI took up post at the University of Ljubljana while at the same time renovating the Prague castle furnishings for President Masaryk.

Janez Jager (1871-1957),¹⁰ a year senior to Plečnik, worked for a spell as Fabiani's assistant (for instance on the for the steamship Austria built in Trst with furnishings by Portois & Fix). In the aftermath of the 1895 Ljubljana earthquake Jager hoped in vain for building commissions to materialize. On the basis of an intensive field research, he was in 1898, however, able to create an interior on the lines of the so called national style, inspired by Slovenian and other Slavic folk arts and already embraced by a group of our painters. In juxtaposition to German coffeehouses, the interior of the National Coffeehouse in Ljubljana, frequented by the proponents of the national emancipation, was gaily colorful and ornated with carved and painted folk motifs. **FIG 1** His plans for highly modern built-in sideboards and open spaces, on the other hand, reveals a detailed description of a non-realized interior of a country house in 1899. On his way to the

⁸ K. STRAJNIČ: *Josip Plečnik...*, p. 26-27 and Interieur fig. 1-4, 11-14 ; D. PRELOVŠEK: *Josef Plečnik...*, p. 75-78; Vera J. BEHALOVA: Two dining rooms from Graz, *Furniture History*, 27, 1991, p. 158-171: 162-165, 170-171.

⁹ K. STRAJNIČ: *Josip Plečnik...*, p. 27 and Interieur fig. 10; D. PRELOVŠEK: *Josef Plečnik...*, p. 78; Christopher LONG: »The Viennese Secessionstil and Modern American Design«, *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, XIV/12, spring-summer 2007, p. 6- 44: 13.

¹⁰ Damjan PRELOVŠEK: »Janez Jager in slovenska arhitektura«, *Sinteza*, 26-27, 1973, p. 67-72; *Janez Jager* (exhibition catalogue), Ljubljana, Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1976; Damjan Prelovšek: »Jager Ivan (John)«, *Enciklopedija Slovenije*, 5, 1990, Ljubljana, Mladinska knjiga, p. 247-248; Mirko KAMBIČ: »Arhitekt Ivan-John Jager (1871-1959). Sodelavec biroja Purcell & Elmslie«, *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, n.v. 35, 1999, p. 247-265; Breda PAJSAR: »Knjižnica Ivana Jagra v fondu biblioteke SAZU«, *Sedemdeset let biblioteke SAZU*, Ljubljana, Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 2008, p. 167-197. I would like to thank Mrs. Pajsar for the information on some furniture designs, now in the Ljubljana Jager archives (e-mail of April 8, 2013).

States to join his brother, Jager rebuilt the Beijing Austrian Embassy house and spent a few months in Japan.¹¹ Settling in Minneapolis at the peak of the Gilded age, he joined the group of ardent advocates of modern architecture, furnishings and urban planning, headed by Louis Sullivan, George Elmslie, Frank Lloyd Wright and William Purcell.¹² Jager (besides another Vienna Polytechnic graduate Carl B. Stravs) in fact represents one of the early direct links between the principal Viennese Modern architect-designers and the Prairie school of architecture in the American Mid-West.¹³ The City of Minneapolis and St Paul main exhibit at the St. Louis Exhibition of 1904 was Jager's large painted mural featuring a large scale aerial view of the twin cities with an extended street car system plan. In his productive career Jager designed several churches and a number of homes in natural surroundings, together with their built-in furnishings.

There were at least eight highly gifted Slovenian architects and furniture designers who spent their formative years in the *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, each with his own creative genius and temperament. Three were natives of the Slovenian Karst – southwestern region, and unmistakably Mediterranean in their creations. Apart from Fabiani of Kobdilj and Jager of Vrhnika, Anton Laščak (1856-1946)¹⁴ of Gorica, an architect and furniture designer, was another graduate of the Vienna Polytechnic. He made his fortune

¹¹ Franci DOVČ: »Francis Jager – duhovnik in čebelar«, *Vrhnški razgledi*, 4, 2003, p. 126-134; Pavel MRAK: »Naš rojak – arhitekt Ivan (John) Jager, *Vrhnški razgledi*, 4, 2003, p. 135-139.

¹² Jager was a life-long personal friend of William Gray Purcell and is credited with safekeeping his archive. Cf. Mark HAMMONS: »Biographical Notes; John Jager (1871-1959)«, *Guide to the William Gray Purcell Papers*, 1985, <http://www.organica.org/pejager1.htm>, April 2013; http://www.organica.org/pemn1900_1.htm, April 2013; and a ppt presentation »The R. T. Giles House by Jager and Stravs«, the home page of R.L. Kronick (gothic revival church furnishings for St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral in Minneapolis, 1908-1911). I would like to thank architectural historians Mr. Richard L. Kronick and Dr. Richard M. Rothaus, both of Minneapolis, for their ample information on Jager's work (several e-mails in April 2013). The John Jager Papers at the Library of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis in the Northwest Architectural Archives, the Manuscripts Division, might yield further information on his revival and modern furniture designs.

¹³ Preceding them was architect Adolf Loos who crossed the Atlantic to visit the Chicago Centennial Exhibition in 1893, met Wright and did not return to Vienna until 1897.

¹⁴ Ranieri Mario COSSAR: *Storia dell'arte e dell'artigianato in Gorizia*, Pordenone, Arti grafiche f.lli Cosarini, 1948, p. 364-366; Silvia BIANCO, Marco CHIOZZA, E. GODOLI (Ed.): *Da Gorizia all'Impero Ottomano. Antonio Lasciac architetto*, Firenze, Alinari, 2006.

as architect to the royalty in Kairo at the height of the Egyptian Western-oriented transit Suez-canal and exotic tourism boom. His furniture designs, in Art Nouveau as well as Neo-Islamic styles, were executed in Belgium, Germany and Austria. In the after-earthquake Secessionist remake of Ljubljana there were, apart from the main Dr Maks Fabiani, primarily two names, Ciril Metod Koch (1867-1925),¹⁵ a native of Kranj and a graduate of the Vienna Academy of Arts, and Josip Vancaš (1859-1932),¹⁶ a Croatian working a lot in Sarajevo, Bosna in Hercegovina, who built the most. The youngest two Slovenian architects of this first generation were born in the 1880s, Ivan Vurnik (1884-1971)¹⁷ of Radovljica who after the WWI together with Plečnik ran the School for Architecture at the new University in Ljubljana, and Miha Osolin (1888-1956)¹⁸ of Šentvid near Lukovica who was another assistant of Fabiani's in Vienna and whose several early floral furniture drawings survive in our museum. **FIG. 2**

Internationally widely accepted bentwood and wicker furniture was ubiquitous. As far as is known, none of the Slovenian architects, contrary to e.g. Josef Hoffmann and Gustav Siegel for the Viennese J. & J. Kohn, further Henry van de Velde, Frank Lloyd Wright, Peter Behrens, Richard Riemerschmid or Bruno Paul,¹⁹ designed any bentwood furniture, so typical for the *fin-de-siècle* period. Bentwood furniture manufacturers in Slovenia,²⁰ **FIG. 2** active since the 1870s in the Styrian Pohorje hills, later in and

¹⁵ Robert SIMONIŠEK: »Ciril Metod Koch. El prolífic arquitecte esloveno: A prolífic Slovenian architect«, *Coup de Fouet: Revista de la ruta Europea del modernisme: Art Nouveau European Route Magazine*, 13, 2009, p. 36-41.

¹⁶ Jelena BOŽIĆ: *Arhitekt Josip Vancaš. Značaj i doprinos arhitekturi Sarajeva*, Sarajevo, Zavod za udžbenike in naučna sredstva, 2006.

¹⁷ Janez KOŽELJ (Ed.): *Ivan Vurnik: slovenski arhitekt, Arhitektov bilten*, Ljubljana, 24, 1994, p. 119-124.

¹⁸ Fran ŠIJANEC: *Sodobna slovenska likovna umetnost*, Maribor, Obzorja, 1961, p. 433.

¹⁹ Christian WITT-DÖRRING: »Bent-wood production and the Viennese avant-garde: The Thonet and Kohn firms 1899-1914«, and Graham DRY: «The development of the bent-wood furniture industry 1869-1914«, *Bent-wood and Metal Furniture: 1850-1946* (Ed. Derek E. OSTERGARD), New York, The American Federation of Arts, 1987, p. 95-120 and 53-93.

²⁰ Maja LOZAR ŠTAMCAR: *Pohišstvo iz upognjenega lesa / Bentwood Furniture*, in Mateja KOS, Matija ŽARGI: *Gradovi umirajo, fabrike nastajajo. Industrijsko oblikovanje v 19. stoletju na Slovenskem / 19th Century Industrial Design in Slovenia* (exhibition catalogue), Ljubljana, Narodni muzej, 1991, p. 51-55 in 185-187; Maja LOZAR ŠTAMCAR: *Bentwood Furniture in Slovenia*, *Furniture History Society*, XXVII, 1992, p. 188-199; Maja LOZAR ŠTAMCAR:

around Vrhnika and in Ljubljana, stuck to the tried and tested shapes introduced by the Thonets and Kohns. The most vigorous was the Bahovec factory in Kamnik. Soon after it had been established in 1907, it was able to reach the Near Eastern markets and eventually evolved into the largest producer of bentwood furniture of the twentieth century in Slovenia and in the region. **FIG. 3**

Around 1900 there was no shortage of wicker furniture either. In homes and outside on verandas and gardens everybody loved lightweight comfortable, cheap and elegant woven-willow or rattan chairs. In Vienna itself fashionable wicker furniture was designed for the largest Prag-Rudniker maker by Wilhelm Schmidt, Hans Volmer, Kolo Moser and Josef Zotti,²¹ along with a number of anonymous Anglo-American, German and French style designs. Maks Fabiani used wicker furniture a lot in his interiors, for instance in the Club of Architects and Engineers in Vienna as well as in 1923 in the Gorica section at the First International Biennial of Decorative Arts in Monza. His art exhibition pavilion in Ljubljana, funded in 1908 by Rihard Jakopič, an eminent Slovenian painter, was also furnished with home-made wicker seating. Rapid growth of alpine, spa and seaside resorts in Slovenia produced more demand for this sort of furniture, for instance in the high-end seaside Palace Hotel in Portorož in 1912. The first weaving workshop opened in 1895 at the Ljubljana Arts and Crafts School, complete with willow plantations and additional itinerary courses on furniture-making. In 1908 the Radovljica workshop-cum-school was launched and, according to the surviving sales catalogue, it was producing various up-to-date rattan furniture. **FIG. 4** There were other workshops, in the Soča and Sava river valleys.²² Since the Austrian provincial network of arts and crafts schools were closely monitored by the Viennese school, museum and employment authorities, new saleable designs were constantly exchanged

Pohištvo iz upognjenega lesa in dokumenti iz zgodovine njegovega izdelovanja, *Argo*, XXXVI-XXXVII, 1994, p. 26-29.

²¹ Vera J. BEHAL: »Prag-Rudniker Korbwarenfabrik«, *bauforum*, 21/129, 1988, p. 37-39; Eva B. OTTILLINGER: *Korbmöbel*, Wien, Residenz Verlag, 1990.

²² Pupils with his teacher on a photo in the year of the foundation of the school, *Dom in svet*, Ljubljana, XXL, 6, 1908, p. 381; Maja LOZAR ŠTAMCAR: *Pleteno pohištvo v Sloveniji / Wicker Furniture in Slovenia*, Viri. Gradivo za materialno kulturo Slovencev, 7, Ljubljana, Narodni muzej Slovenije, 2008.

as well as teachers and pupils encouraged to participate in numerous inland²³ and further-afield exhibitions,²⁴ it is not surprising that some willow furniture from around 1910 surviving at the National Museum of Slovenia was inspired by Hans Vollmer's alternating open and closed chequered weaving pattern. There were also exhibitions organized by the Arts and Crafts Museum coming from Vienna.²⁵ Professors of the Ljubljana Arts and Crafts School were expected to tutor and deliver up-to-date designs to furniture producers. Prof. Tratnik, for instance was acting as design director of the eminent Naglas firm of Ljubljana.

Slovenian architects mostly remained firmly connected with their own home lands and towns and were able to contribute widely to their features at large as well in the more intimate interiors. After the earthquake²⁶ and under the auspices of the patriotic mayor of Ljubljana Ivan Hribar, who saw the new architectural Secessionist style as an outward expression of our national aspirations in stark contrast to the German Neo-Renaissance, Maks Fabiani (along with another eminent Viennese Camillo Sitte) contributed the new city plan of Ljubljana as well as several modern public and residential buildings. He also worked a lot in his beloved Trst, helped by another Viennese graduate Josip Kostaperaria (1876-1951) who later also made his mark in

²³ In 1904 there were two interesting exhibitions in Ljubljana, the first of the latest work of the members of the Slovenian Fine art society Vesna (=Spring), later also shown in the first Yugoslav art exhibition in Belgrade, and the other of the Ljubljana Arts and Crafts School. In press the furniture of the latest style and wicker chairs in new styles were particularly praised. Cf. v.r.: »Šolska razstava c.kr. umetno-obrtne strokovne šole v Ljubljani«, *Slovan*, 1904, 9, p. 287-288.

²⁴ At an all-state art exhibition in Vienna in the school year 1900/1901 the Ljubljana Arts and Crafts School took part with a salon wardrobe in the Secessionist style; in 1907 at another in The Arts and Crafts Museum in Liberec in Bohemia it participated with a varnished salon mahogany wardrobe and a wall cabinet in the »modern style«. When in 1910 the school moved into its new building the cabinet-makers' department made all the modern furniture for the principal's and other offices. Cf. Jožef REISNER (Ed.): *Spominska knjiga 1888-1938. Ob 50 letnici izdala Državna tehniška srednja šola Ljubljana*, Ljubljana, Državna tehniška srednja šola Ljubljana, 1938, p. 99-100, 104, 105.

²⁵ J.Š.: Zur kunstgewerbliche Ausstellung im Mestni dom, *Laibacher Zeitung*, 12. junij 1903, p. 1147.

²⁶ *Ljubljana po potresu 1895-1910* (Ed. Fran GOVEKAR, Miljutin ZARNIK), Ljubljana, Občinski svet, 1910; Nace ŠUMI: *Arhitektura secesijske dobe v Ljubljani*, Ljubljana, Mestni muzej, 1954.

Ljubljana. For entrepreneurs, industrialists, wholesalers, bankers, lawyers, physicians, politicians, scientists etc. in the centre of Ljubljana new apartment houses were built and in the suburbs smart villas, for example to plans by Ciril Metod Koch in the office of the municipal architect. Josip Vancaš got the lucrative commissions for the vast first all-Slovenian Catholic Gymnasium in 1901 and for the elegant Grand Hotel Union in 1905. Some of the Art Nouveau furniture and other furnishings designed by Vancaš and made by the local Mathian firm survive.²⁷

Slovenian territories with vast woodlands had traditionally provided the great city of Venice with fine woods and when by the nineteenth century our territories became strategically highly important because of the access to the sea, from Slovenia it was again woods, as well as steel, rice, sugar, and furniture, that were exported through Trst, the sole Austrian seaport (Pulj at the end of the Istrian peninsula was the Austrian navyport, and Reka nearby the Hungarian seaport, both cities also populated with Slovenians). An Egyptian-inspired salon furniture suite of exquisite craftsmanship, dated 1906, now at the National Museum of Slovenia venue Snežnik Castle, might have come from Cairo as a present of a business partner. The main sea routes from Trst to the East were serviced by the Austrian Lloyd, the main European post-service provider to the Near East, based in Trst. The capital city of Vienna with its largest craftsman power and industry was export-oriented, on the one hand with its luxuryware, and on the other with the Thonet bentwood furniture and other consumer-ware. By 1900 Slovenia was very well connected indeed by rail and sea and profited from the port of Trst with its own large share of industrial development. Our furniture makers also managed to take their share of export profits. With sawmills since the fourteenth century and cabinet-makers' guilds since the fifteenth century there have always traditionally been excellent furniture makers in our country. Two furniture-making centres emerged - Ljubljana and Gorica. A year or two before 1900 both groups of cabinet-makers established their cooperatives, providing easier access to modern machines, joint

²⁷ Vesna BUČIĆ, Jasna HORVAT (Ed.): *Secesija na Slovenskem. Uporabna umetnost, umetna obrt in njej sorodni pojavi v obrtni in industrijski proizvodnji* (exhibition catalogue), Ljubljana, Narodni muzej, 1984, p. 23-34.

storages and advertising, in Šentvid-Višmarje²⁸ above Ljubljana and in Solkan,²⁹ respectively. Two largest independent Ljubljanian firms Mathian and Naglas also joined the competition, catering for the Austrian navy and Austrian Lloyd ship furnishings as well as for Egyptian hotels and residences. In the cosmopolitan Trst³⁰ itself there were a number of excellent cabinetmakers, one of the main was the Kante family³¹ originating in a Slovenian village in the hills above the city.

The home market demand was also large. Cultivated buyers were on the look-out for Art Nouveau forms and ornaments, delighting in their naturally flowing lines emulating plant life or focusing on angular Secessionist geometrical stylisation. An extravagant drawing room suite was produced in one of Šentvid workshops. Few were able to procure the services of such a designer as Jože Plečnik, who created the furniture made at the Naglas's for a Ljubljana physician Dr Demšar. Much more furniture commissioned from high-end local cabinetmakers was inspired by designs of celebrities such as Josef Hoffmann. Peter Grasselli, ex Mayor of Ljubljana, furnished his home entirely with the cabinetmaker Mathian's pieces in Hoffmann's style.³² The average buyer of course did not seek architect-designed furniture. A number of sales catalogues of Viennese furniture manufacturers, such as the top-quality Julius and Josef Hermann or the Haas family, as well as less expensive Heinrich Merso, Ignaz and Josef Herlinger or Alois Stuppenger, were circulating. In Ljubljana retailers such as Lang and Pogačnik were offering furniture to order by rail from Vienna or Graz. Generally, the taste for

²⁸ Vilma BRODNIK: »Lesne obrti v Šentvidu in okolici s poudarkom na mizarstvu«, in Stane GRANDA (Ed.), *Župnija Šentvid nad Ljubljano skozi čas in prostor*, Šentvid, Župnija Šentvid, 2007, p. 484-499.

²⁹ Katja KOGEJ: »Solkanski mizarji«, in Branko MARUŠIČ (Ed.): *Jako stara vas na Goriškem je Solkan. Zbornik ob tisočletnici prve omembe kraja*, Solkan, Krajevna skupnost Solkan, 2001, p. 280-291.

³⁰ Luisa CRUSVAR: »L'interno in scena: 1820-1900. Mobili e arredi, stili e mobiliari a Trieste«, in *Abitare la periferia dell'impero nell'800* (exhibition catalogue), Trieste, Provincia di Trieste, 1990, p. 12-31.

³¹ Michela MESSINA, Lorenza RESCINITI, »Arredamento a Trieste nel periodo Liberty. I 'casi' di Giuseppe Cante e Vittorio Florit«, in Federica ROVELLO, Michela MESSINA, Lorenza RESCINITI (Ed.), *Trieste Liberty. Costruire e abitare l'alba del Novecento* (exhibition catalogue), Trieste, Comune di Trieste, 2011, p. 98-118.

³² Vesna BUČIČ: »Secesijsko pohištvo iz zapuščine ljubljanskega župana Petra Grassellija iz akcesije Narodnega muzeja v letu 1990«, *Argo*, 31/32, 1991, p. 3.4.

historicist-style furniture still lingered on, with a strong undercurrent of vernacular-sourced motifs. To choose from were also more or less happily joined historicist and floral-Art Nouveau solutions. Mostly one's furniture was preferred to be earnestly angular, only its surfaces ornamented with playful variants of floral carving, inlays or painting. Widely produced by skillful local cabinet makers, for example in the towns of Novo mesto or Škofja Loka and elsewhere were dining or bedroom suites.

After World War I the Slovenians, as had been hoped, were not united in one state: vast portions of our territories became Austrian and Italian, the rest was annexed to the kingdom of Yugoslavia. The vigour of the first generation of notable Slovenian architects and furniture designers passed to their students at the newly opened university in Ljubljana. The home market of well-to-do clients was still there, widened by the Yugoslav elites. Furniture makers continued to produce exquisite pieces, now mostly in the Art Deco and Modernist styles.