

Max Dvořak and the founding of the 'Ljubljana School of Art History'

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Initially, students from the Slovenian ethnic territory studied at Italian universities, including the oldest one in Padua; from the mid-14th century onward, more and more of them decided to study at the universities in Prague, Krakow and Vienna.¹ Even though the March Revolution of 1848 resulted in the demand to found a Slovenian university in Ljubljana, the latter was not realized, for various reasons, until the dissolution of Austria-Hungary.² Until its establishment in 1919, Slovenian intellectuals continued to study mainly at the above-mentioned universities and at a few other higher education institutions. In the period between the reform of Austrian higher education in 1848 and the dissolution of Austria-Hungary in 1918 Vienna was not the only traditional higher education centre; the other was the University of Graz which was mostly chosen by Slovenes from Styria.³ It was at these two universities that the first two academically trained Slovenian art historians received their PhD degrees: Josip Mantuani received his PhD degree in Vienna in 1894 under the mentorship of Franz Wickhoff,⁴ while Avguštin Stegenšek received his in Graz in 1906 under the mentorship of Josef Strzygowski.⁵

¹ Vasilij Melik and Peter Vodopivec, 'Slovenski izobraženci in avstrijske visoke šole 1848-1918', *Zgodovinski časopis*, 40: 3, 1986, 269.

² Melik and Vodopivec, 'Slovenski izobraženci', 269-270.

³ Melik and Vodopivec, 'Slovenski izobraženci', 274. Slovenes from Carniola and Carinthia mostly studied in Vienna, while Graz was chosen by Styrian Slovenes, as mentioned above. Venetian Slovenes went to Italian universities, while the Slovenes living in the Hungarian part of the monarchy went to Hungarian universities; Melik and Vodopivec, 'Slovenski izobraženci', 274. For more on Slovenian students at Austrian universities see also Peter Vodopivec, 'Slowenische Studenten und Wien vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg', in Tone Smolej, *Etwas Größeres zu versuchen und zu werden. Slowenische Schriftsteller als Wiener Studenten (1850-1926)*, Göttingen: V&R unipres and Wien: Vienna University Press, 2014, 11-21; Alois Kernbauer: 'Slowenen als Professoren und Studenten an der Universität Graz. Ein Überblick über die Entwicklung', in Alois Kernbauer and Tone Smolej, eds, *Gemeinsamkeit auf Getrennten Wegen. Die Slowenischen Doktoranden der Grazer Philosophischen Fakultät im Zeitraum 1876-1918 und der Gründung der Universität in Ljubljana*, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 2021, 15-56.

⁴ Luka Vidmar, 'Doktorske disertacije s področja umetnostne zgodovine', in Tone Smolej, ed, *Zgodovina doktorskih disertacij slovenskih kandidatov na dunajski Filozofski fakulteti (1872-1918)*, Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2019, 248-249; for the list of dissertations see also Tone Smolej, 'Seznam doktorskih disertacij slovenskih kandidatov na dunajski Filozofski fakulteti (1872-1918)', in Tone Smolej, ed, *Zgodovina doktorskih disertacij slovenskih kandidatov na dunajski Filozofski fakulteti (1872-1918)*, Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2019, 412.

⁵ Stegenšek finished his doctoral dissertation in 1905 and defended it a year later; Marjeta Ciglenečki, 'Stegenškovo umetnostnozgodovinsko delo', *Studia Historica Slovenica. Časopis za humanistične in družboslovne študije*, 7: 3-4, 2007, 610. Stegenšek's studies at the University of Graz were also discussed by Luka Vidmar: 'Josef Strzygowsky und seine Doktoranden



Figure 1 Josip Mantuani (1922), National and University Library, retrieved from <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:IMG-3CJ8YOOV>

Figure 2 Avguštin Stegenšek (1910-1920), National and University Library, retrieved from <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:IMG-HYKS5QUQ>

Both continued their careers similarly to most Slovenian scholars back then: they returned home and devoted themselves to scientific or professional work.⁶ However, Mantuani began his career in Vienna by working at the Graphics Department of the Imperial Court Library; afterwards, he managed the newly founded Music Collection. After returning to Ljubljana in 1909, he took up the position of director of the Provincial Museum of Carniola; he was a member of the Council of the Central Commission and also lectured at the newly founded University of Ljubljana.⁷ Even before leaving for Graz, Stegenšek taught at the

Avguštin Stegenšek und Avgust Žigon', in Alois Kernbauer and Tone Smolej, eds, *Gemeinsamkeit auf Getrenten Wegen. Die Slowenischen Doktoranden der Grazer Philosophischen Fakultät im Zeitraum 1876-1918 und der Gründung der Universität in Ljubljana*, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 2021, 241-249.

⁶Melik and Vodopivec, 'Slovenski izobraženci', 279-280.

⁷ For more on Mantuani see Ana Lavrič and Blaž Resman, 'Josip Mantuani – starosta slovenskih umetnostnih zgodovinarjev', in Edo Škulj, ed, *Mantuanijev zbornik. Simpozij ob 60. obletnici smrti*, Ljubljana: Družina and Cerkevni glasbenik, 1994, 87-100; Gašper Cerkovnik and Janez Höfler, 'Josip Mantuani: med umetnostno zgodovino in muzikologijo', *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, n.v. XLVIII, 2012, 167-175; Gašper Cerkovnik, 'Rokopis avtobiografije Josipa Mantuanija iz leta 1927 v Glasbeni zbirki Narodne in univerzitetne knjižnice v Ljubljani', *Arhivi*, 35: 2, 2012, 463-479; Katja Mahnič, 'Josip Mantuani in moderni muzej. Prispevek k razumevanju Mantuanijeveih prizadevanj za reorganizacijo Deželnega muzeja



Figure 3 Izidor Cankar, France Stele and Vojeslav Mole in Vienna (1912), National and University Library, retrieved from <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:IMG-X06V9T9J>

Theological College in Maribor; he too was appointed an honorary conservator in 1908.⁸ Despite some of Mantuani's influential art historical studies⁹ and the fact that Stegenšek is still considered the pioneer of Slovenian art historical topography,¹⁰ the founders of Slovenian art history as a modern scientific discipline are nevertheless considered to be France Stele, Vojeslav Mole and Izidor Cankar, three PhD students of the University of Vienna.¹¹

za Kranjsko', *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, n.v. LII, 2016, 199-220; Katja Mahnič, 'Razstava slik v Deželnem muzeju za Kranjsko 1914. Poskus rekonstrukcije razstavne strategije in njenega pomena', *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, n.v. LIII, 2017, 167-189; Katja Mahnič, 'Josip Mantuani in njegovo poročilo o kulturnozgodovinskih zbirkah na slovenskem ozemlju iz leta 1918', in Mojca Smolej, ed, *1918 v slovenskem jeziku, literaturi in kulturi / 54. seminar slovenskega jezika, literature in kulture, 2.-13.7.2018*, Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta, Oddelek za slovenistiko and Center za slovenščino kot drugi in tuji jezik, 2018, 90-97; Katja Mahnič, 'Josip Mantuani, First Slovenian student at the Vienna School of Art History and his long obscurity within Slovenian art Historiography', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 21, December 2019, 1-15.

⁸ Ciglenečki, 'Stegenškovo umetnostnozgodovinsko delo', 607 and 614.

⁹ For more on the attitude of the Slovenian art history profession towards Mantuani and an assessment of his work see Katja Mahnič, 'Josip Mantuani, First Slovenian student'.

¹⁰ Ciglenečki, 'Stegenškovo umetnostnozgodovinsko delo', 595-596.

¹¹ For basic information about the life and art history career of Stele, Mole and Cankar see e.g. Andrej Rahten: *Izidor Cankar. Diplomats dveh Jugoslavij / A Diplomat of Two Yugoslavias*, Mengeš: Center za evropsko prihodnost and Ljubljana: Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti, 2009; Tone Smolej, *Etwas Größeres zu versuchen und zu werden. Slowenische Schriftsteller als Wiener Studenten (1850-1926)*, Göttingen: V&R unipres and Wien: Vienna University Press, 2014, 91-100, 137-138 and 183-185; Vidmar, 'Josef Strzygowsky und seine Doktoranden', 241-249.

At the University of Vienna, Stele, Mole and Cankar attended the lectures of various professors; all three of them attended the lectures of the two major ideological opponents of the time, Max Dvořak and Josef Strzygowski, and wrote their doctoral dissertations under their mentorship – Stele and Cankar under Dvořak, and Mole under Strzygowski.¹² Though their opinions of Strzygowski differed,¹³ Dvořak was undoubtedly a professor that made the biggest impression on these young Slovenian students. He also played an important part in shaping their future careers. It is therefore not surprising that over the next few decades the idea gained ground that Dvořak's conceptual thoughts and methodological approach were a foundation of the so-called Ljubljana School of Art History. France Stele played a central role in its formation.



Max Dvořak, Austrian National Library,
retrieved from
<https://onb.digital/result/10DDEF84>

Traces of the relationship between Dvořak and his three Slovenian students and of his influence over them can be found in different types of sources. Firstly, in the personal and intimate documents – their mutual correspondence and autobiographical and biographical texts –, in which we learn a great deal about Dvořak as a person and teacher, and also a detail or two about the studies and situation at the University of Vienna. These sources are also interesting because they provide an insight into the reception of individual topics, concepts and methodological approaches which prospective art historians came across during

¹² Vidmar, 'Doktorske disertacije', 248-254.

¹³ Though Stele was not a fan of Strzygowski's ideas, he did attend his lectures. Mole did not agree with the professor's ideas either, but was nevertheless enthusiastic about certain aspects of his approach to art history. Cankar disliked Strzygowski's ideas the most, which is a paradox of sorts. After all, he enrolled in the study of art history because of the professor's reputation, Vidmar, 'Doktorske disertacije', 244-248; Stanko Kokole, 'Vojeslav Molè in začetki umetnostnozgodovinskega študija grško-rimske antike na Univerzi v Ljubljani – I. del', *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, n.v. LIII, 2017, 200.

their studies; moreover, they also provide an insight into how they remembered their professor and his lectures later in life. The second source is 'historiographical' texts. Stele's texts hold a special place among these; in them he outlined the process of forming the 'Ljubljana School of Art History' and defined the origins of its conceptual and methodological framework – one of its key foundations is said to have been the ideas of Dvořak. No less important are the texts of Stele's students and members of younger generations of Slovenian art historians, who discussed Dvořak's influence on Stele, Mole and Cankar and, more broadly, on the development of the Slovenian art history profession from their own perspectives. The third source is the theoretical and art history texts of Stele, Mole and Cankar, in which we must carefully discern traces of their teacher's ideas, while maintaining the required historical distance, as well as potential deviations from these ideas. In this article I will focus mainly on the first two types of sources.

As regards the intimate sources, which shed light on the relationships between Dvořak and his three Slovenian students, the discussion should begin with the preserved correspondence. It is especially important because it provides an insight into how they personally experienced their studies at the University of Vienna and the professor himself in the earliest letters, while newer letters also reveal the relationship between each writer and their former teacher/mentor or, in the case of Stele and Mole, also briefly their superior in the Monument Protection Service. A considerable portion of the preserved correspondence consists of letters addressed to Stele. As pointed out by Vesna Krmelj, his love of letters and his awareness of their importance encouraged Stele to hold on to all the letters he had received, collecting them, publishing them and critically commenting them. That is why his legacy comprised a substantial amount of correspondence; however, only a few letters are his own.¹⁴ The letters that are relevant to the topic in question are those written to him by Cankar during his studies in Vienna, and those he received from Dvořak during his war captivity in Siberia.¹⁵ Information about how Cankar perceived his studies and individual professors can also be discerned from Cankar's correspondence with other addressees, including his cousin Karel. It was to him that he wrote in November 1911, that is, just after he transferred to the University of

¹⁴ Vesna Krmelj, 'France Stele v luči mladostne korespondence z Izidorjem Cankarjem', *Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica*, 23: 1, 2018, 133-134.

¹⁵ His correspondence with Cankar was critically examined by Vesna Krmelj. According to her Stele corresponded with Cankar all his life but the frequency of their contacts varied: they corresponded the most during their student years, when the Department of Art History was founded at the new University of Ljubljana, and when Stele became its chair; Vesna Krmelj, 'France Stele', 135. It is clear that Stele and Cankar corresponded more often and more extensively when one or neither of them was in Ljubljana. Stele himself published his preserved correspondence with Dvořak, along with a short text about his teacher; France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', *Varstvo spomenikov*, X (Steletov zbornik), 1965, 30-38. On the topic of Stele's moulding into a professional art historian, his correspondence with the somewhat older Stegenšek is also interesting; it has been critically examined by Alenka Klemenc; Alenka Klemenc, 'Stegenškova korespondenca Francetu Steletu', *Studia Historica Slovenica. Časopis za humanistične in družboslovne študije*, 7: 3-4, 2007, 649-666. As the contents of the correspondence do not refer to Dvořak directly, they will not be discussed in the paper.

Vienna, reporting that he was enrolled in two seminars and that he had a ton of work because the professors, by which he meant Dvořak and Strzygowski, were 'beasts among scholars and acted beastly', giving him 'art historical dreams every night'.¹⁶ By the end of the first year of studies in Vienna, Strzygowski had apparently disappointed Cankar because in May or June 1912 he wrote to his friend, priest and popular Slovenian writer Fran Finžgar saying that the professor 'spoke so stupidly and all over the place as if he had escaped from a madhouse.'¹⁷ Dvořak's lectures made a better impression on Cankar; the professor also had a positive personal attitude towards his student, as can be detected in the preserved letters. After Cankar had already chosen his doctoral dissertation topic under Dvořak and he stopped at the congress of art historians in Rome in October 1912 during his study tour across Italy, he ran into Dvořak at the congress and 'wanted to drop down on my knees and kiss his shoe'. When he told the professor that he would be spending only two weeks in Rome, the latter advised him to not waste time at the congress because all the lectures will be published and that he should use the time more wisely.¹⁸ Less than six months later, Cankar wrote to Fran Finžgar that Dvořak offered him a job in Vienna as soon as he would complete his exit examinations.¹⁹

The professor's fondness of his students is also revealed in one of the rare preserved letters Stele wrote to Cankar in 1912 when the latter was in Rome on the aforementioned study tour. In the letter he says that he is angry for not having received a reply from the ministry and that Dvořak comforted him.²⁰ The affectionate relationship between Dvořak and Stele is also evident from their mutual correspondence.²¹ The contents of three letters written by Dvořak towards the end of 1913, that is, soon after Stele had taken over the position of provincial conservator for Carniola, refer to everyday official matters.²² In the letters Dvořak sent to Stele over the following years to Siberia where the latter was being held in war captivity, he also reported about what was going on at the Monument Protection Service. However, it is perfectly clear from these letters, especially in the first two years of their correspondence, that the aim of his brief reports about how work was being carried out smoothly at home, i.e. in the Central Commission, was mainly to reassure him.²³ He informed him about staffing changes²⁴ and regularly included

¹⁶ Tone Smolej, 'Dunajska študijska leta Moleta, Steleta in Cankarja', *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, n.v. XLVIII, 2012, 184.

¹⁷ Smolej, 'Dunajska študijska leta', 184. Cankar's negative attitude towards Strzygowski is also clear from the many quips that have been preserved – one such quip can be seen in Cankar's letter to Stele from 1911; Krmelj, 'France Stele', 171 (Attachment 7) – and from Cankar's description of the professor's book on modern art in his travelogue *S poti* [On the Way]; cf. Smolej, 'Dunajska študijska leta', 186.

¹⁸ Krmelj, 'France Stele', 177-178 (Attachment 25).

¹⁹ Smolej, 'Dunajska študijska leta', 185.

²⁰ Krmelj, 'France Stele', 176-177 (Attachment 24).

²¹ That the relationship between him and his teacher was personal, affectionate or even friendly was pointed out by Stele himself. Firstly, by quoting from Gustav Glück's obituary of Dvořak at the beginning of the text and, secondly, in his presentation of Dvořak; France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 30 and 31. This presentation will be discussed below.

²² France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 32-33 (letters 1-3).

²³ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 32-34 (letters 4-7).

information about other members of the Monument Protection Service, especially about friends and acquaintances of Stele who were either in the army or shared his fate of a prisoner of war. Dvořak's undoubted affection is clearly evident in his concern for Stele's well-being after he had not received a reply from him in a long time,²⁵ and in the statement that he often thought of him and Mole, hoping they were well.²⁶ After two years of correspondence, Dvořak increasingly began to mention how much work was waiting for Stele at home as if he wanted to 'speed up' his return or at least direct his thoughts toward a better future.²⁷ He was glad that Stele, similarly to Mole, was permitted to study during his captivity, which at least partially mitigated his situation.²⁸ He informed Stele of the publication of Gnirs's book on church bells in Carniola and the Littoral,²⁹ and wanted to send him a copy of his own work *Katechismus der Denkmalpflege* [Catechism of Monument Protection] but did not know how.³⁰ Dvořak wrote his last two letters to Stele after the war had ended and Austria-Hungary had dissolved. Their contents clearly show that even in this new situation Dvořak kept in touch with his former students or colleagues, and continued to foster an active interest in their professional work.³¹ His detailed knowledge of events in Slovenia surprised even them, as will be shown later on.

²⁴ In his letter from January 1917, he wrote that the Central Commission lost two members: Robert Eigenberger who went to the Paintings Gallery of the Academy of Visual Arts, and Antonin Matějček who went to the School of Arts and Crafts in Prague; France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 35 (letter 10). Two months later he informed him that a new protector of the Monument Protection Service had been appointed; France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 35 (letter 11).

²⁵ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 34 (letter 18).

²⁶ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 35-36 (letters 10 and 13).

²⁷ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 34-35 (letters 9 and 11-12).

²⁸ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 35, 36 (letters 12 and 14).

²⁹ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 35-36 (letters 12 and 13). He was referring to the publication by Anton Gnirs *Alte und neue Kirchenglocken als ein Katalog der Kirchenglocken im österreichischen Künstenlande und in angrenzenden Gebieten mit Beiträgen zur Geschichte der Gußmeister*, which was published in 1917. Gnirs was the first provincial conservator for the Littoral and was based in Pula. The circumstances during the war forced him to move to Ljubljana where he also took over the job of provincial conservator for Carniola in Stele's absence; France Stele, 'Dr. Anton Gnirs', *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, XII, 1933, 98-99.

³⁰ Dvořak's *Katechismus der Denkmalpflege* was published for the first time in 1916. In his letter, written in October 1917, Dvořak informs Stele that the first edition of his publication has been sold out and that it will soon be reprinted; France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 35-36 (letter 13). The reprint indeed came out in 1918. Stele was apparently very touched by the wish Dvořak expressed in the letter. Half a century later, in an accompanying text to the published correspondence, he explicitly pointed out the professor's regret along with the information that he surprised him with a copy of *Katechismus* in September 1919, that is, a few weeks after Stele had returned from Siberia; France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 32.

³¹ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 37 (letters 15 and 16). That maintaining personal contacts after the dissolution of Austria-Hungary left an important mark on the development of monument protection in Austria and in other former parts of the common state, which were now independent or incorporated into new multi-ethnic states, has already been pointed out by Eva Frodl-Kraft; Eva Frodl-Kraft, *Gefährdetes Erbe. Österreichs*

Stele not only kept Dvořak's letters but also published them because, in his opinion, they were 'an interesting contribution to Dvořak's human attributes despite their succinctness.'³² Together with brief comments, they form an interpolation into the short presentation of Dvořak as a conservator and reformer of Austrian monument protection,³³ with which Stele paid tribute to his 'fatherly teacher, a guide into the world of monuments, and the most inspiring role model.'³⁴ Dvořak's presentation is an integral part of the longer paper entitled *Iz konservatorskih spominov* [From the Memories of a Conservator], in which Stele reminisced about his monument protection practice.³⁵ That was not his only autobiographical text. A typescript of his text entitled *Moje življenje* [My Life] has also been preserved.³⁶ With these two texts by Stele I will now move on to discussing the second type of intimate sources, which shed light on the relationship between Dvořak and his three Slovenian students, i.e. various autobiographical texts. An essential difference between these sources and the correspondence lies in the fact that they were written after a certain amount of time had passed. That means that the narrator provides information about his/her life from a different angle. Without a doubt, the time lag leads to many things being inadvertently lost in such texts, while some are often deliberately left out. The reason for that is not necessarily the desire to conceal or alter the past but is often merely a reflection of the purpose behind the writer's reminiscing. Moreover, we should also be aware that an autobiographer (un)knowingly assesses his/her past life, of course in retrospect, i.e. from the viewpoint of someone who already knows how things worked out. After all, this is also reflected in the narration itself, i.e. in the way the events are articulated or in the causal relationships that have been established between them. Regardless of the historical facts contained in the text or the writer's commitment to maintaining the highest level of objectivity in 'reminiscing', we should stem from the fact that an autobiographical text is to some extent a work of fiction.³⁷

Denkmalschutz und Denkmalpflege 1918-1945 im Prisma der Zeitgeschichte, Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau, 1997, 4-5. Dvořak's second post-war letter to Stele shows how important, in this context or at least in this specific case, was the purely personal relationship established by the former professor with his students owing to his professional and scientific authority. Although Stele was already a conservator for Slovenia at that time, Dvořak nevertheless kindly advised him in his letter which provincial monument protection services he should visit on his way to the consultation of monument protection experts in Munich in autumn 1921, and instructed him that he and his associates should oppose any construction works in the immediate vicinity of Diocletian's Palace in Split, claiming that they would be utterly barbaric; France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 37 (letter 16).

³² France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 32.

³³ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 30-37.

³⁴ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 30.

³⁵ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 13-38.

³⁶ The text was published with a few editorial comments; France Stele, 'Moje življenje', *Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica*, 2, 1997, 161-174.

³⁷ That the authors, distinguished by a high degree of self-reflection, were well aware of this is demonstrated nicely by Vojeslav Mole in the introduction to his autobiography; Vojeslav Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1970, 7-8.

When analysing the two above-mentioned autobiographical texts by Stele, we should take into account that the text *My Life* was written as a lecture, which Stele held in January 1939 for the Rotary Club of which he was a member.³⁸ It is therefore not surprising that he gave a thorough presentation of his career, his schooling and his choice of profession, in the process highlighting individual persons and teachers who had influenced his choice of career. The second text came out in the so-called *Steletov zbornik* [Stele's Miscellany], a special issue of the Slovenian conservation journal *Varstvo spomenikov* [Journal for the Protection of Monuments], in which the authors paid tribute to Stele's eightieth birthday. Stele's autobiographical text comes second, right after the introductory paper with the telling title *Lik slovenskega konservatorja* [Figure of the Slovenian Conservator],³⁹ in which the author briefly introduces the jubilarian. In his paper, Stele gave a highly detailed portrayal of his career as a conservator but also outlined the establishment, development and greatest achievements of the conservation profession in Slovenia. In both cases, Stele had a clear goal ahead of him as an autobiographer, which is reflected in the selection of the people and events presented.

In his lecture he pointed out that he had the chance to meet Wickhoff, the founder of the Vienna School of Art History, just after enrolling in the Institute of Austrian Historical Research in the 1909/1910 academic year. Although he also mentions Strzygowski among his lecturers, pointing out his antagonism with 'our school', and Julius Schlosser, from whom he had allegedly received 'much encouragement', he explicitly mentions that he was a student of Dvořak's.⁴⁰ Dvořak is said to have taken a fatherly interest in his future. In autumn 1912 he got him a job at the Central Commission even though Stele was more interested in getting a scholarship to travel to Rome. But, he continues, 'the future showed that Dvořak had been right and so [I] he became a conservator'.⁴¹ According to the original plan, he was to be educated to become an expert in auctions and appraisals; to that end, he was sent on study tours to Munich and Berlin. When the protector of the Austrian Monument Protection Service, Archduke Franz Ferdinand requested that the new position of provincial conservator for Carniola be filled as soon as possible, Stele returned to Ljubljana where he then worked as a conservator for the next quarter-century.⁴² He makes another mention of Dvořak when alluding to his years of effort to learn the essence of art. Surprisingly, he mentions him alongside Strzygowski.⁴³ He points out his secondary school teachers, Felician Aprisnig and

³⁸ Stele, 'Moje življenje', 161.

³⁹ Mica Černigoj, 'Lik slovenskega konservatorja', *Varstvo spomenikov*, X (Steletov zbornik), 1965, 5-12.

⁴⁰ Stele, 'Moje življenje', 165.

⁴¹ Stele, 'Moje življenje', 166.

⁴² Stele, 'Moje življenje', 166-167.

⁴³ This is surprising in light of the previously highlighted antagonism with 'our school'. This part should probably be construed to mean that Stele was also aided in his search for the meaning of art by ideas that were foreign to him. On the divergent attitudes of Stele, Mole and Cankar towards Strzygowski cf. fn. 12.

Avgust Žigon, as the first to guide him along this path.⁴⁴ Afterwards, he explicitly mentions Dvořak and Strzygowski as the two teachers in Vienna who began to reveal to him the secrets of art but he was unable to fully grasp them back then. He claims to have achieved that during his captivity in Russia when he came in contact with representatives of living, revolutionary modern art.⁴⁵



Figure 5 France Stele (1963), Photo by Ernest Adamič, National and University Library, retrieved from <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:IMG-FYR2DZOE>

Stele began the memories of his time as a conservator by presenting his schooling and the beginnings of his career. Again, we find the same highlights and mentions of the important figures who guided him through the years. Dvořak is again mentioned as the one who took over the role of his teacher after Wickhoff's death. This time, he did not present him as a successor to the founder of the Vienna School of Art History but as the founder of art history as the history of the spirit.⁴⁶ Afterwards, he pointed out that his association with him had steered him towards the conservation profession.⁴⁷ Following the reform of the Central Commission in 1911, there were to be many new job opportunities for art historians. Dvořak, who was in charge of the reorganization, allegedly decided that Stele would become a conservator after he had completed his studies. Thus, Stele familiarized himself with the profession of a conservator and immediately took to it. Dvořak was apparently very skilful in realizing his idea. Stele was originally meant to specialize in the antiquities trade and collections registry. When the protector demanded that the

⁴⁴ Stele describes Žigon, who taught him the subject of Slovenian Language, as 'the first art historian I ever met'. Although his explanation of art was rather materialistic, he nevertheless made it more understandable; Stele, 'Moje življenje', 164. For more on Žigon see Vidmar, 'Josef Strzygowsky und seine Doktoranden', 249-259.

⁴⁵ Stele, 'Moje življenje', 170.

⁴⁶ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 15.

⁴⁷ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 15-16.

new position of provincial conservator for Carniola be filled as soon as possible, with Michelangelo Zois having applied for the post but found unsuitable, Dvořak sent Stele to Ljubljana.⁴⁸ As has been mentioned, Stele included a short text about Dvořak in his memories of a conservator, which was equipped with commented letters that Dvořak had written to him between 1913 and 1921. Although it was meant to be a presentation of Dvořak, it mostly highlights their personal relationship and Dvořak's influence on Stele's career. Stele began the presentation with the above-mentioned quote from Gustav Glück's obituary of Dvořak, which emphasizes the friendly relationship with the deceased,⁴⁹ and with the statement that Stele considered Dvořak 'a fatherly teacher, a guide into the world of monuments, and the most inspiring role model'.⁵⁰ He continues by saying that in 1911, at the time of the reform of the Central Commission, Dvořak, who had initiated the reform, was already counting on Stele becoming the first provincial conservator for Carniola.⁵¹ He wanted Stele to first build on the professional knowledge he had gained and use a scholarship to take a study tour of Rome. When that plan fell through, he appointed him as an unpaid apprentice in Vienna in 1911 and then two years later, when the protector demanded that the provincial office be staffed as soon as possible, he nominated him for a provincial conservator.⁵² Later in the text, Stele pointed out Dvořak's concern for the professional development of young conservators. Thus, in autumn 1913, Dvořak conducted an inspection visit in Ljubljana – during the three-day visit, he and Stele visited the ongoing conservation projects in Carniola –, and afterwards he organized a ten-day instructive trip to South Tirol for Stele, Robert Eigenberger and Josef Garber.⁵³ This trip is said to have acquainted Stele with the basic principles and methodology of the conservation profession, for he encountered many valuable examples of conservation practice on the trip. Though very important as regards theory, Riegl's book *The Modern Cult of Monuments* contained no practical instructions, which Dvořak apparently noticed, leading him to draft the *Catechism of Monument Protection* in which he would discuss Riegl's principles in a popular way.⁵⁴ Before the part that contains the letters by Dvořak, Stele again pointed out that he and Dvořak were bound by a friendly

⁴⁸ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 16.

⁴⁹ See fn. 20. For the full text by Glück see Gustav Glück, 'Max Dvoraks Tod', Neues Wiener Tagblatt, Jg. 55, Nr. 40, 10. Februar 1921, 2.

⁵⁰ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 30.

⁵¹ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 30-31.

⁵² France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 31.

⁵³ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 31-32. At that time, Robert Eigenberger was an apprentice at the Vienna Central Commission, while at the time of the tour Josef Garber was an assistant and later the provincial conservator for Tirol; Theodor Brückler and Ulrike Nimeth, *Personenlexikon zur österreichischen Denkmalpflege*, Wien: Bundesdenkmalamt, 2001, 58 and 78.

⁵⁴ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 32. For a comparison of Riegl's and Dvořak's text see Ernst Bacher: 'Alois Riegl und die Denkmalpflege' in Ernst Bacher, ed, *Kunstwerk oder Denkmal? Alois Riegls Schriften zur Denkmalpflege*, Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 1995, 33-41; Sandro Scarrocchia: 'Denkmalpflege und Moderne: Die Lehre Max Dvořaks', in: Max Dvořak: *Schriften zur Denkmalpflege. Gesammelt und kommentiert von Sandro Scarrocchia*, Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2012, 133-51.

relationship and that Dvořak kept himself informed of what was going on in his life in a fatherly and friendly way. He considered Dvořak's numerous letters, which he had written to him during his years of captivity in Siberia, as proof of that.⁵⁵ Dvořak's early demise after Stele had returned from Siberia prevented him from paying him a visit and thanking him, which hurt Stele deeply.⁵⁶ Stele concludes his text by stressing that Dvořak's spiritual legacy, in addition to Riegl's, was what guided his conservation work and helped him even with the most complicated cases.⁵⁷

In the discussion of the autobiographical texts of the three Slovenian students of Dvořak's, the comprehensive book by Vojeslav Mole *Iz knjige spominov* [From the Book of Memories] holds a special place.⁵⁸ There are at least three reasons for that. Firstly, considering the time frame of the creation of both autobiographical texts by Stele and their content, Mole's is the only true autobiography. Secondly, because the text actually came out in book form, it was already critically reviewed at the time of publication.⁵⁹ And thirdly, as demonstrated by Gašper Cerkovnik, the book that was published in 1970 was not identical to the text originally drafted by the author.⁶⁰ Thus, Mole's autobiography was already the subject of a historiographical discussion. As pointed out by Cerkovnik, doubts as to whether the book was the entire text written by Mole were already expressed at the time of its publication.⁶¹ Based on the analysis of the preserved documentation, which was created when preparing the text for publication, Cerkovnik has discovered that the text was shortened partly because it was too lengthy (parts believed to be of less interest to Slovenian readers were left out) and partly for political reasons (the descriptions of certain events or the author's opinions about certain prominent figures from Slovenian post-war cultural and political life were omitted).⁶² However, he also stresses that firstly, Mole did not oppose these changes to the text and that to some extent he even gave the publishing house free rein,⁶³ and that secondly, the deleted parts of the original text do not add any significant biographical information but do,

⁵⁵ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 32.

⁵⁶ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 37.

⁵⁷ France Stele, 'Iz konservatorskih spominov', 37. Stele later points out another conservation theoretician, besides Riegl and Dvořak, whose ideas had a significant impact on him, i.e. Fernando Forlati. For influences on Stele's conservation doctrine see Sonja Ana Hoyer, 'Konservatorska doktrina na Slovenskem', in Sonja Ana Hoyer, ed, *Umetnostna zgodovina in spomeniško varstvo. Posvetovanje ob 75-letnici ustanovitve Slovenskega umetnostnozgodovinskega društva*, Ljubljana: Slovensko umetnostnozgodovinsko društvo, 1997, 37-38.

⁵⁸ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*.

⁵⁹ Tomaž Brejc, 'Poezija v spominih', *Sodobnost*, 20: 7, 1972, 741-743; Jure Mikuž, 'Vojeslav Mole: *Iz knjige spominov*', *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, n.v. IX, 1972, 167-168; Rajko Ložar, 'Vojeslav Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*', *Medobdobje*, 14: 1-2, 1974, 132-144.

⁶⁰ Gašper Cerkovnik, 'Neznana *Knjiga spominov* Vojeslava Moleta. Izpadli deli iz tipkopisa za Moletovo avtobiografijo *Iz knjige spominov* v Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani', *Arhivi*, 38: 2, 2015, 401-412.

⁶¹ Cerkovnik, 'Neznana *Knjiga spominov*', 402.

⁶² Cerkovnik, 'Neznana *Knjiga spominov*', 403 and 407.

⁶³ Cerkovnik, 'Neznana *Knjiga spominov*', 405.

however, shed light on the author's personality.⁶⁴ At the time of its publication, the reviewers of Mole's autobiography drew attention to another matter: namely that it was an intimate narrative in which the author explained and assessed the events within the context of his experiences and knowledge in retrospect,⁶⁵ or in 'a uniform model of perception'.⁶⁶ It should be pointed out that Mole himself emphasized in the preface that it was 'the autobiography of a humanist' in which he focused on his own path and quest,⁶⁷ which was also mentioned by certain reviewers.⁶⁸



Figure 6 Vojeslav Mole, National and University Library, retrieved from <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:IMG-DICCLIOJ>

Mole's first mention of Dvořak relates to his stay in Rome.⁶⁹ There he met the classical archaeologist Mihovil Abramić, a holder of a scholarship from the Austrian Academy of Sciences, with whom he got into an earnest conversation about his future. Abramić allegedly told him that he was wasting time in Rome because it did not have the right conditions for the study of art history and told him that Vienna was looking for 'young people, art historians who were systematically and methodically educated'. Dvořak, a professor at the University of Vienna and head of the Austrian Monument Protection Service, which was undergoing a reorganization,

⁶⁴ Cerkovnik, 'Neznana Knjiga spominov', 408.

⁶⁵ Franc Jakopin, 'Moletovi spomini', *Jezik in slovstvo*, 17: 3, 1971/72, 82. In his assessment of individual events as recalled by Mole, Rajko Ložar also points out that it was a matter of 'subsequent reflection'; e.g. Ložar, 'Vojeslav Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*', 136.

⁶⁶ Brejc, 'Poezija v spominih', 741.

⁶⁷ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 8.

⁶⁸ Jakopin, 'Moletovi spomini', 82; Brejc, 'Poezija v spominih', 741.

⁶⁹ In 1906 Mole enrolled in the University of Vienna. In 1908, after completing his military service, he continued his studies at the University of Krakow and then in 1909 took up studies in Rome. In the first years of his studies, he was unable to choose a field of study – he was excited about literature, linguistics and art history; Jakopin, 'Moletovi spomini', 83. It was his stay in Rome between 1909 and 1910 that Mole recalls in his autobiography as the decisive moment when he realized that his 'true profession was indeed art history'; Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 69.

was supposedly looking for 'Yugoslavs to appoint in South Slavic provinces'.⁷⁰ Abramić then offered Mole to speak with Dvořak on his behalf and said that he would let him know his answer. Mole soon received a letter from Abramić who informed him that Dvořak had invited him to Vienna. Thus, a new chapter in his life began.⁷¹ Mole returned to Vienna in autumn 1911 'as a new man in many ways'.⁷² However, it was precisely then that the art history community was 'experiencing a profound crisis' related to choosing a successor for the late Professor Wickhoff. Although Mole describes the political and professional background of those events in his autobiography, he also points out that it took him a while to understand what it was all about. He was particularly confused because he was attending the lectures of Dvořak and Strzygowski who each lectured the same subject matter but in different ways. He had therefore come across professional problems already at the beginning of his studies and was still unable to solve them when he was writing his autobiography.⁷³ Also intriguing is Mole's description of the student population attending the seminars of both rival professors. He claimed that Dvořak's students were primarily German and rarely Slavic,⁷⁴ while Strzygowski's students were more ethnically mixed; his lectures were also attended by a greater number of foreign students in addition to Austrian ones.⁷⁵ There were also differences in the atmosphere created by the professors in their seminars: the atmosphere in Dvořak's seminar was 'calm, dignified and serene', whereas Strzygowski's seminars were full of solving controversial problems that required superhuman wisdom to solve.⁷⁶ Afterwards, Mole gives a rather thorough definition of the art history that he came to know under both lecturers and points out that Dvořak nevertheless made a deeper impression on him, especially on account of his prominent humanism.⁷⁷ Both professors apparently saw a promising art historian in Mole and gave him the opportunity to conduct independent research work even before completing his studies. Strzygowski entrusted him with an art historical interpretation of a 17th-

⁷⁰ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 75-77.

⁷¹ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 44.

⁷² Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 81.

⁷³ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 88-89.

⁷⁴ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 84.

⁷⁵ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 90.

⁷⁶ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 90-91.

⁷⁷ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 94-95. As regards Mole's definition of the art historical frames of both professors, it is difficult to distinguish between the first impression both had made on him during his studies and Mole's subsequent exploration of their hypotheses. These definitions should be construed as his understanding of the development of the profession of art history in the broader sense or of the Vienna School of Art History in the narrower sense, as has already been pointed out by Jure Mikuž in his review of Mole's book; Mikuž, 'Vojeslav Mole: *Iz knjige spominov*', 168. Some of Mole's statements clearly indicate not only Mole's attitude towards both professors, but the attitudes of all three Slovenian students. Mole says that he did criticize Strzygowski's ideas but was nevertheless a member of his seminar and attended his lectures; according to him, Stele was not a fan of Strzygowski but attended his lectures regardless, while Cankar allegedly paid no mind to the professor's lectures; Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 96.

century Serbian illuminated manuscript.⁷⁸ Dvořak, on the other hand, offered Mole the chance to go to Dalmatia for a few weeks over the summer, where he would collect archival material for the study on the cathedral in Šibenik by Dagobert Frey.⁷⁹ Mole received his PhD in 1912 under the direction of Stryzgowski with a topic with which, according to Mole, Dvořak had agreed.⁸⁰ As soon as he completed his doctoral studies, Dvořak offered him a one-year scholarship for a study tour of Italy. He explained to Mole that he was to take up the position of conservator in Dalmatia which would be available the following year, so he thought it wise for Mole to make good use of the time by learning about Italian artistic monuments. After a minor complication, the money for his trip came from the fund for establishing the future Slovenian University in Ljubljana. In the spring of 1913, when Mole was in Ravenna, Dvořak wrote to him that his appointment was ready and that he should return. After his return, he waited three months to be called to the Vienna Central Commission as a temporary apprentice; in early October he finally started working as a conservator in Split.⁸¹ While working in Dalmatia he came across an interesting find, allegedly a painting by Titian, of which he wrote to Dvořak. The latter advised him to write an article about the find but Mole was prevented from doing so by the outbreak of World War I.⁸² Mole then devotes a considerable portion of his autobiography to the next chapter in his life, i.e. his call-up and, above all, the time he spent as a prisoner of war. Among other things, he mentions that he was extremely grateful to Dvořak for his correspondence, not only because he sent him news of life back home but even more so because he gave him Stele's address in captivity.⁸³ After the war, Dvořak again played a vital role in Mole's life. On returning home, Mole stopped by the professor's home in Vienna, who welcomed him and his wife with the utmost warmth. As they discussed the future of Mole's career, Dvořak told him that he had three options: to return to Split, where his post of conservator was waiting for him; to go to Belgrade, where he could take up the post of general conservator for all of Yugoslavia; or to get a job at the newly founded University of Ljubljana, where a post was said to be waiting for him. The latter post entailed a minor problem: the Department of Art History was already chaired by Cankar, so Mole would have to chair the Department of Classical Archaeology. In the end, Dvořak advised Mole to choose the third option, claiming it would provide him with the best chances of success and satisfaction.⁸⁴ Mole concludes that Dvořak was right, however, he kept wondering for the next five decades where Dvořak got such detailed information about events in Ljubljana or Yugoslavia.⁸⁵ Although Dvořak's warm attitude towards Mole, firstly as a student and later as a subordinate at the Monument Protection Service, and, vice versa, Mole's positive attitude towards and admiration of the professor were evident, they were never expressed

⁷⁸ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 96-97.

⁷⁹ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 97-99.

⁸⁰ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 100.

⁸¹ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 100-101.

⁸² Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 111-112.

⁸³ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 184.

⁸⁴ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 293.

⁸⁵ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 293-294.

more clearly than in Mole's memory of his death. When mentioning his death, he writes that Dvořak was like a father to him and was his dearest guide through art history and everything art related.⁸⁶

As has been pointed out in the introduction, the principal 'historiographical' texts in which Dvořak's students connected the professor's ideas with their own work are those written by Stele. He devoted two longer texts that I will discuss to the process of the shaping of Slovenian art history, which he viewed as closely connected with the Vienna School of Art History in the broader sense or with Dvořak's work in the narrower sense; the first text was published in 1952/53, and the second in 1970.⁸⁷ Stele devoted the text from 1952/53 to the establishment of art history as a historical discipline and to the presentation of Slovenian art history within this general development. As regards Slovenian art history, he mentions that it began to establish itself around 1920 and later expanded in two directions, through the newly founded University of Ljubljana and through the Monument Protection Office.⁸⁸ As a scientific discipline it was founded on the principles and traditions of the Vienna School.⁸⁹ He pointed out Riegl and Dvořak as the key representatives of the Vienna School and as 'the apostles of monument protection'.⁹⁰ By mentioning Dvořak several times, he established a clear context of the transfer of conceptual, theoretical and practical ideas between Vienna and Ljubljana, for he explicitly pointed out two of his students, i.e. Cankar and himself, as the founders of the first Slovenian art history programme; he also emphasized that the Monument Protection Office laid down its tasks based on Dvořak's initiative.⁹¹ Stele substantiated his understanding of the dependence of Slovenian art history or of the 'Ljubljana School of Art History' on Dvořak even more clearly and comprehensively in his text from 1970.

⁸⁶ Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*, 305-306. Mole described Dvořak as 'my unforgettable teacher' shortly after his death in the opening sentence of his short paper on the topic of the teaching of art history in secondary schools. In the paper he presented Dvořak's curriculum which he had prepared three years earlier. The curriculum manuscript was provided for publication by Karl Swoboda, who was in charge of Dvořak's legacy; Vojeslav Mole, 'Umetnostna zgodovina v srednjih šolah', *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, I: 1-2, 1921, 107.

⁸⁷ The younger text is a Slovenian translation of a supplemented transcript of a lecture Stele had held in 1966 at the University of Graz, which was then published two years later in *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Institutes Universität Graz* (1968/69); France Stele, 'Slovenska umetnostna zgodovina po l. 1920', *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, n.v. VIII, 1970, 42.

⁸⁸ France Stele, 'Umetnostna zgodovina – zgodovinska stroka', *Zgodovinski časopis*, VI/VII (Kosov zbornik), 1952/53, 802-803.

⁸⁹ Stele, 'Umetnostna zgodovina – zgodovinska stroka', 815-816.

⁹⁰ Stele, 'Umetnostna zgodovina – zgodovinska stroka', 814.

⁹¹ Stele, 'Umetnostna zgodovina – zgodovinska stroka', 816. Stele was primarily referring to the historical orientation of the Vienna School and its commitment to monument protection. As far as the 'methodological and systematic' aspect is concerned, Cankar's systematics and the system of West European art history – the two desiderata of the Vienna School – even vitally complemented the school's repertoire; Stele, 'Umetnostna zgodovina – zgodovinska stroka', 816.



Figure 7 Izidor Cankar, National and University Library, retrieved from <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:IMG-ED8JN94S>

He pointed out the founding of the Department of Art History at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, as the decisive factor in the establishment of the Slovenian art history profession. The department's scientific orientation was, in Stele's opinion, due to the fact that its founder was Cankar, Dvořak's student. Just before it became operational, Cankar had attended 'further training' under Dvořak in Vienna; it was with his help that he designed the methodological framework of the operation of the Ljubljana department. According to Stele, Slovenian art history should therefore be understood as a direct descendant of the so-called First Vienna School. Though the latter had been founded by Wickhoff as an exact historically oriented school, his student Dvořak is said to have been the one who 'enriched it with a spiritual and scientific orientation'.⁹² As Stele, the first provincial conservator, was also a student of Dvořak's, the origins of Slovenian art history seem to be tied to the Vienna School via two parallel paths.⁹³ Afterwards, Stele thoroughly presented the main trends in the development of Slovenian art history. He devoted most of his attention to Cankar and his book on the systematics of style *Uvod v likovno umetnost* [Introduction to Visual Art], for which he says that the author combined Wölfflin's basic concepts and Dvořak's idea of art history as the history of the spirit.⁹⁴ In Stele's opinion, Cankar's art historical overview *Zgodovina likovne umetnosti v Zahodni Evropi* [The History of Visual Art in Western Europe] also contains clearly identifiable traces of Dvořak's ideas that were pursued by his student.⁹⁵ In his discussion of the works of Mole, Stele likewise pointed out that Mole had been Dvořak's student and that he too emphasized the idea of art history as the idea of

⁹² Stele, 'Slovenska umetnostna zgodovina po l. 1920', 27-28.

⁹³ Stele, 'Slovenska umetnostna zgodovina po l. 1920', 28.

⁹⁴ Stele, 'Slovenska umetnostna zgodovina po l. 1920', 28-29.

⁹⁵ Stele, 'Slovenska umetnostna zgodovina po l. 1920', 30.

the spirit, although his understanding of style was allegedly closer to the French School than to Cankar.⁹⁶ When presenting his own work, Stele again explicitly mentioned that he had trained under Dvořak.⁹⁷

Stele elaborated on his understanding of the connection between Dvořak's ideas and Cankar's systematics of style in the accompanying study to the second edition of Cankar's *Introduction*, which had been published more than a decade earlier. In the first, biographical section of the foreword, he highlighted that Dvořak's lectures had been quite an event for the Viennese intelligentsia, as they had been not only professionally thorough but also formally perfected. They had made a profound impression on Cankar and provided him with a solid foundation for the stylistic criticism of artworks. The latter guided his subsequent scientific work.⁹⁸ Dvořak's influence on Cankar is said to have strengthened further just before the foundation of the Ljubljana Department of Art History, when Cankar was preparing for his teacher certification exam under the guidance of his former professor. According to Stele, the renewed physical contact 'created Cankar's scientific physiognomy'.⁹⁹ While Cankar was studying under his supervision, Dvořak allegedly finalized his idea of art history as the history of the spirit, which Cankar then brought to Ljubljana and incorporated into his scientific work and his teaching. In his systematics he laid the methodological and systematic foundations of a new understanding of art history, thus bringing the efforts of the Vienna School to fruition.¹⁰⁰

The two historiographical texts discussed above were not the first instances of Stele putting the conceptual foundations of the work of Slovenian art historians into the general development trends in art history – he did that in some of his older reviews of the publications of his two classmates and, as has been shown, in the foreword to one of them. Moreover, his definition, which is mentioned in both texts, of the origins of the development of Slovenian art history as a scientific or professional field, whose shaping was strongly influenced by Vienna, is likewise not unprecedented. Namely, he began outlining the framework of the development of Slovenian art history almost two decades before publishing the older historiographical text I discussed. This can be seen in the introductory part of a text he published when taking over the Department of Art History in Ljubljana after Cankar had taken up diplomacy in 1936. In the introduction he first highlighted the fiftieth anniversary the three Viennese students were celebrating that year, followed by the departure of Cankar, the most important of them all, from the Ljubljana Department. He perceived the latter as a 'turning point', which, on the one hand, demanded a retrospection and, on the other, the development of future plans.¹⁰¹ Stele then gives a brief outline of the development of Slovenian art history, which he

⁹⁶ Stele, 'Slovenska umetnostna zgodovina po l. 1920', 31.

⁹⁷ Stele, 'Slovenska umetnostna zgodovina po l. 1920', 31.

⁹⁸ France Stele, 'Izidor Cankar', in Izidor Cankar, *Uvod v likovno umetnost (Sistematika stila)*, 2. edition, Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1959, 233.

⁹⁹ Stele, 'Izidor Cankar', 236.

¹⁰⁰ Stele, 'Izidor Cankar', 236-237, 256-257 and 272-274.

¹⁰¹ France Stele, 'Na razpotju prve generacije slovenske umetnostne zgodovine', *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, XIII, 1935 (1936), 95-96.

divides into a kind of preliminary phase (the work of J. Mantuani and A. Stegenšek) and the first phase, which could not be established until the Monument Protection Office began operations and the Ljubljana Department was founded. Its operation as an independent profession is tied to the work of the so-called first generation of Slovenian art historians, i.e. of Stele, Cankar and Mole, who had 'on account of their natural orientation and manner of scientific preparation ... happily divided up their roles' (organization of higher education studies, monument protection activity, international operation).¹⁰² The character of Slovenian art history is believed to have been decisively influenced by the fact that all three representatives were students of the Vienna School as founded by Wickhoff, Riegl and Dvořak. In the second part of the text, Stele outlines the work of Cankar and introduces him as the lead member of the first generation or as the one who laid the foundations of Slovenian art history with his *Introduction* and *History*. He describes Cankar, whom he mentions as Dvořak's student on two occasions, as a consistent follower of the Vienna School and his work, though the fruit of independent research and by no means a compilation, its most mature manifestation.¹⁰³ In the concluding part of the paper, devoted to an outline of the work of Vojeslav Mole, Stele again explicitly mentions that his research was essentially based on the 'solid method' of the Vienna School, with which he had become acquainted in Dvořak's seminar.¹⁰⁴

The preserved mutual correspondence, the autobiographical texts and Stele's historiographical texts undoubtedly draw a clear picture of the personal and professional relationship between Dvořak and his three Slovenian students. All three held their professor and future superior in high regard not only because of his expertise, rhetorical skills, and perfected conceptual frameworks, but also because of his attitude. He stood up for all three during their studies and upon their completion. He helped Stele and Mole get their first jobs and maintained contact with them even throughout their captivity during World War I. Allegedly, he also had a job lined up for Cankar in Vienna after he would complete his studies. He continued to show an interest in the development of their careers even after the dissolution of Austria-Hungary and was even better informed of certain aspects of events in Ljubljana than they were. Although all three viewed the ideas of their former teacher positively, Stele was the one who portrayed Dvořak in his autobiographical and historiographical texts as the key figure, not only in his own professional development but, even more importantly, in the development of the conceptual framework of the young Slovenian art history, as it was developing within scientific research and monument protection activities.

It is not unusual that Dvořak made such a great impression on his students. On the contrary, as highlighted by Vasilij Melik and Peter Vodopivec, some distinguished professors also had a lasting influence on other students of Austrian universities, not just on Slovenian ones. This influence was already noticeable at the general level – in the new world views, political orientations and literary views they imparted to their students –, but was even more important in the professional

¹⁰² Stele, 'Na razpotju prve generacije', 96.

¹⁰³ Stele, 'Na razpotju prve generacije', 98.

¹⁰⁴ Stele, 'Na razpotju prve generacije', 100.

sphere. Through their theoretical and conceptual ideas, the professors had a considerable impact on the scholarly literature and terminology¹⁰⁵ developed by their students during their professional work. With some students the professors also built strong personal relationships that were especially important in the first two decades of the 20th century. As the situation at universities was deteriorating just before the outbreak of the Great War – there were various pressures and a strengthening national chauvinism – and after their common state had dissolved, it was this affection between the professors and students that served as a foundation for their kindness and assistance, whether in the form of professional advice or more concrete forms of assistance.¹⁰⁶

A historiographical discussion of the influence of each professor on the development of the scientific or professional field, as evident in the work of individual Slovenian students, and of the potential consequences of their interpersonal relationships, is founded on scholarly publications and 'commemorative material'.¹⁰⁷ However, one must be careful when analysing such texts. Whereas the personal nature of 'commemorative material' (preserved correspondence, autobiographical texts) is rather self-explanatory, the problem of 'bias' is less obvious in scientific and scholarly publications and, as such, calls for a more thorough examination. We should pay special attention to the type of text, when the text was created, and who the author is. This applies especially to texts in which the authors express their own views of the historical development of a field or profession. Regardless of the degree of objectivity the author wishes to achieve, he/she is always influenced by the familiarity of the events being described and by the nature of the relationships between the persons involved.

Naturally, this also applies to researching the relationship between Dvořak and his three Slovenian students, and his influence over them. Special attention should be paid to Stele's historiographical texts or to his understanding of the relationship between the 'Ljubljana School of Art History' and the Vienna School. All three historiographical texts presented above reveal an increasing desire to connect both schools as closely as possible; over time, Stele's idea of an alleged conceptual unity¹⁰⁸ in the practice of all three members of the first generation of Slovenian art historians strengthened, as did his insistence that Dvořak's ideas played a crucial role in the formation of the 'Ljubljana School of Art History'. In this regard, it should be pointed out that Cankar himself denied any influence of the Vienna School on his own work or at least on his systematics,¹⁰⁹ and that recent detailed analyses of his

¹⁰⁵ Melik and Vodopivec, 'Slovenski izobraženci', 279. The authors mention Dvořak as the most influential art history professor; Melik and Vodopivec, 'Slovenski izobraženci', 279.

¹⁰⁶ Melik and Vodopivec, 'Slovenski izobraženci', 280.

¹⁰⁷ Melik and Vodopivec, 'Slovenski izobraženci', 279.

¹⁰⁸ In one of his texts Stele talked about an 'illustration of the same basic thought', which represents the basic orientation of Slovenian art history to date; France Stele, 'Vojeslav Mole, *Umetnost. Njeno obličje in izraz*', *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, XVIII, 1942, 142.

¹⁰⁹ Cankar mentioned the impact of the Vienna School on the shaping of systematics during his lectures in the 1931/32 academic year; Izidor Cankar, 'Sistematika arhitekturnega stila', in Izidor Cankar, *Uvod v likovno umetnost (Sistematika stila)*, 2. edition, Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1959, 207. He pointed out that this connection was often discussed by his 'friend',

texts have confirmed as much.¹¹⁰ As Tomaž Brejc has pointed out, Stele's texts make it perfectly clear that he began to point out Dvořak's influence on Cankar at a specific moment in time; Brejc wonders what made him leave out Dvořak in his earlier reviews and historiographical texts.¹¹¹ In light of Rajko Ložar's opinion that Slovenian art history has mythicized the so-called first generation of Slovenian art historians, emphasizing their exceptional importance and highlighting their alleged spiritual unity,¹¹² perhaps it would be more sensible to ask ourselves the opposite. Namely, not why Stele did not specifically mention Dvořak in his early texts in which he presented and assessed the work of his two classmates (and his own), but the opposite: when and why did he start mentioning him as the central figure whose ideas had framed the development of the 'Ljubljana School of Art History'.

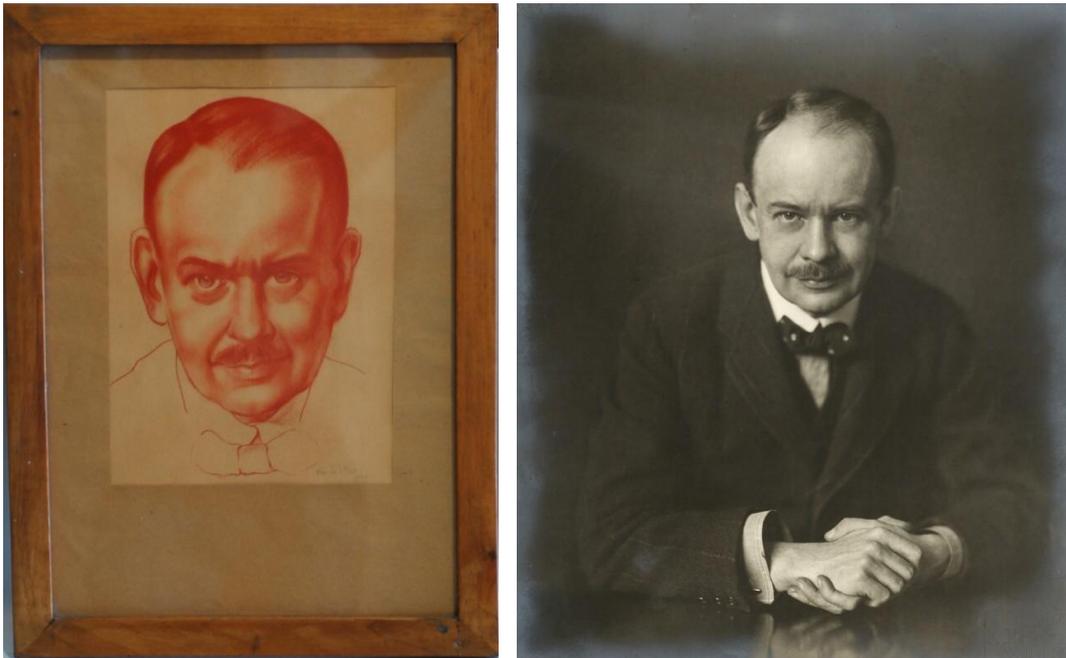


Figure 8 France Stare: Portraiture of Max Dvořak, Photo by Gašper Cerkovnik, Department of Art History at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Photodocumentation

Figure 9 Max Dvořak, Photo by Grete Kolliner, Austrian National Library, retrieved from <https://onb.digital/result/10DDF061>

Just how personal Stele's view of Dvořak's contribution to his own shaping into an art historian, or even more so into a conservator, and to the establishment of the 'Ljubljana School of Art History' was is probably revealed most clearly in one of

making it clear that he was referring to Stele; see also Tomaž Brejc, 'Pro et contra. Osemdesetletnica znamenite knjižice', *Umetnostna kronika*, 13, 2006, 15.

¹¹⁰ Cf. e.g. Brejc, 'Pro et contra'; Tomaž Brejc, 'Terminologija Izidorja Cankarja. Geneza štirih pojmov: umetnina kot organizem, umetnostno hotenje, forma in stil', *Umetnostna kronika*, 20, 2008, 2-25; Rebeka Vidrih, 'The Scope and ambition of Izidor Cankar's 'systematics of style'', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 22, June 2020, 1-31.

¹¹¹ Brejc, 'Pro et contra', 16.

¹¹² Ložar, 'Vojeslav Mole, *Iz knjige spominov*', 133.

the rare original works of art kept by the Department of Art History at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. It is a portrait of Max Dvořak painted by France Stare in 1946. Cerkovnik mentions the possibility that Stare was commissioned or at least encouraged by Stele to paint Dvořak's portrait, as Stele was the department chair at the time.¹¹³ Consequently, we should ask ourselves whether Stele's personal attitude towards Dvořak or, more precisely, Stele's understanding of Dvořak's influence on his own career had subconsciously imbued his understanding of the establishment of the 'Ljubljana School of Art History'. While that is understandable to some extent, we should scrutinize the fact that Slovenian art history had held on to his interpretation for decades without really reflecting on it.

As Janez Höfler pointed out some fifteen years ago, Slovenian art history has never undergone a historiographical review. Only a few short reviews have been written, including Stele's historiographical texts discussed above, whereas an in-depth and critical analysis of its conceptual foundations and development has never been conducted.¹¹⁴ A hundred years after the establishment of the Ljubljana Department of Art History it is probably high time to conduct such a historiographical review. However, it should not only involve an in-depth view of the development of the concepts, methodologies and contents of Slovenian art history, but should also involve a reflection on previous understandings of this development, on their authors, and on the reasons behind them.

Translated by Urška Žitnik

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¹¹³ Gašper Cerkovnik, 'Portret Maxa Dvořaka na Oddelku za umetnostno zgodovino v Ljubljani', *Bilten SUZD*, 8, June 2010. France Stare who in 1946 was a student at the department probably based his portrait of Max Dvořak on one of his photographs.

¹¹⁴ Janez Höfler, 'Slovenska umetnostna zgodovina nekdaj in danes', in Barbara Murovec, ed, *Slovenska umetnostna zgodovina. Tradicija, problemi, perspektive*, Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2004, 51; Janez Höfler, 'Devetnajsto stoletje: pota nastajanja umetnostne zgodovine na Slovenskem', *Studia Historica Slovenica. Časopis za humanistične in družboslovne študije*, 7: 3-4, 2007, 464-465.