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NEVER-ENDING STORY OF C – 4436 A.K.A.
THE SARAJEVO`S HAGGADA CODEX*

Summary The story of the rescue of Sarajevo's Haggada codex during the Second World War was put together by first checking archives and other reliable sources (State Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina), and thereafter contrasting the findings with the legend itself. It appears that a fictional story – or “splendid improvisation” of the Museum director dr. Jozo Petrović successfully performed in front of Nazi general Hans Fortner demanding the Haggada codex – has filled a gap in the historical record of the postwar years; the legend has protected persons involved in the salvation of the Haggada. Integrated in the article are the full texts of Derviš M. Korkut “Anti-Semitism is Strange to Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina” from 1940, and Vuk Jelovac “How the National Museum was saved from bombardment and with it the City of Sarajevo” from 1945, two rare sources describing the historical context of the Haggada rescue story.

The Haggada Codex - Parallels in the Events of 1941 and 1992

Since 1894, the rare manuscript codex known as Sarajevo`s Haggada has resided in the Library of National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina (founded in

* This is completely revised edition of my research on the Sarajevo`s Haggada (Library of the National Museum signature C - 4436). Previous research was published as follows:

- “Gdje se nalazila sarajevska Haggada u toku Drugog svjetskog rata”.
In: Muhemed Nezirović (Ed.) *Zbornik radova Sefarad 92*, Sarajevo : Institut za istoriju, 1995, str. 285-304 (on Bosnian);
- “Und jetzt, bitte, ubergeben Sie mir die Haggadah”.
- *Fantom slobode* (Sarajevo), 1995, no 3., pp. 43-46 (on Bosnian)
- “Derviš M. Korkut sarajevska Haggada i sarajevski Jevreji = Derviš M. Korkut, Sarajevo`s Haggada and Sarajevo`s Jews”.
- *Glasnik Jevrejske zajednice Bosne i Hercegovine* (Sarajevo), 1994, no. 6, pp. 23-26 (parallel on Bosnian and English);
- “The Haggada Story”.
- *Judaica Librarianship* (New York), vol. 9, no. 1-2 Spring 1994 - Winter 1995, pp. 135-143. (on English)

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1888).^{*} This Jewish manuscript, which is a masterpiece of Spanish illumination art from the 14th century (according to Narkiss¹ it is from Aragon, ca. 135-60) was brought to Bosnia in the 16th century. There existed several published artistic and historical studies on this richly illuminated codex; they are reviewed here within the context of a description of the period of the Second World War in Museum and analysis of some details regarding the rescue of the Haggada codex.

During the evacuation of the National Museum Library in early Spring and Summer of 1992, when the city of Sarajevo had become a target of the artillery attacks from the occupied hills that surround it, the Haggada codex was on my mind all the time. "Is it safe?" – was the question that presented itself daily, and I was afraid to learn the answer. Later, the empty rooms of the totally evacuated Library begun to echo my question, asking for the destiny of burned libraries:

- the Documentation center of the Museum of 14. Winter Olympiad held in Sarajevo February 1984 (burned April 21, 1992);
- the library, archive and manuscript collection of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo founded in 1950 (burned May 17, 1992)[♥] and
- the National and University Library in Sarajevo founded 1946 (burned August 25/26, 1992).[♦]

By that time there was no safe passage leading to anyone's home: every building, cultural monument, museum, library, church or a mosque was only two-dimensional target on a map intended to be destroyed. Like all the citizens enclosed in besieged Sarajevo ghetto, I had to risk going out from the shelter in suppressed freedom of a simple walk from home back to the Museum. The strangulation of Sarajevo will later become a world phenomena, a myth, a ref-

^{*} "Zemaljski muzej Bosne i Hercegovine" the name of the Museum is translation into the Bosnian language of German term "Landes-museum". Such term was used to denote a general type of museum with various collections such as archaeology, ethnology, natural sciences (National or State museum) for particular region (Provincial or Regional museum). These four terms were often in use as English language equivalents of the museum name. Term "National" Museum we find most appropriate.

¹ Bezalel Narkiss "Manuscritos iluminados Hispanohebrós". In: Elena Romero (Ed.) *La Vida Juda en Sefard*. Madrid, 1991, pp. 170-196

[♥] The loss of the Oriental Institute cannot be measured or ever repaired. In a less than two hours, 5.000 unique manuscripts, Turkish, Persian and Arabic, over a hundred plat books from Ottoman times (books that can no longer show that Slavs professing Islam have lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina for many centuries), other record of the Ottoman rule numbering some 200.000 pages, 300 microfilm files of Bosnian writers from other manuscript libraries, the 10.000 volumes of the Institute's research library, and 300 sets of periodicals... All lost in flame.

[♦] Twenty-five mortar shells struck the building, launched from four positions in the surrounding hills. In support of the attack, forty shells were dropped on adjacent streets, preventing the fire brigade from coming into action. The attack lasted less than half an hour. The fire lasted into next day. Approximately 1.200.000 book items and 600 sets of periodicals were destroyed. Administrative documents and the card catalog, computer equipment, microfilm and photograph laboratories, the rare book and other special collections, and the university library which was housed in the same building.

erence point of international diplomats and politicians in endless and unproductive efforts on its relief, a city with no way in and no way out. The city has lost almost everything: infrastructure, buildings, 10.000 of its citizens...

The jewel of the National Museum – Sarajevo's Haggada codex was – this story is repeating for the second time – evacuated from the museum building to one of the safe deposit boxes of the National Bank. More and more parallels can be drawn occurred as time passes – in particular a tragic similarity in the historical experience between Bosnian Muslim population in 1992 and the Jewish population in 1941. By the time of Av 2, 5753 by Jewish calendar, 500 hundred years after the great exile of Sephardic Jews from Spain, hundreds of thousand of Bosnian Muslims were expelled from their homes as a consequence of "ethnic cleaning" from the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the warring Bosnian Serbs occupation and control. Brutal aggression is clearly visible: massacres, refugees, concentration camps, burned towns, villages and the scorched earth. Should we conclude that nothing can be learned from the world's historical experience, and that such a question common to all of us sharing the Bosnian experience is a question of a difference between us and them, between the Good and the Evil?

At the "Sefarad '92" Convention held on September 11, 1992 in Sarajevo's Holiday Inn Hotel we were talking about half millenium tradition of our peaceful neighborhoods in Sarajevo called "Jerušalaim ketana" or "Jerušaliam chico" (Little Jerusalem)², watching the mighty artillery demolishing the front lines of Sarajevo - Old Jewish cemetery, just opposite the Hotel. We talked about Sarajevo's "Kortižo" (Great garden) dating from 1581 in Sarajevo; it was never a Jewish ghetto, just a city zone in the middle of the Old Town.³

The Haggada Story

There were a dozen stories describing the rescue event itself that claimed to be based on confirmed facts. Even this article is just another version of the Haggada rescue story that follows the actual events.

Tales and stories are always based on both reality and imagination. An attempt to distinguish the verified details from the work of imagination is, strictly speaking, is a task for the historian. All the facts should be scrutinized including the work of historian himself.

² Muhamed Nezirović "Mjesto i uloga sefardske zajednice u sefardskim zajednicama Europe" (= The place and ther role of the Bosnian Sephardic Community in the Sephardic Communities in Europe). In: Muhemed Nezirović (ed.) *Zbornik radova Sefarad 92*, Sarajevo : Istorijski institut, 1995, pp. 13-32

³ Moric Levy *Die Sephardim in Bosnien : Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden auf der Balkanhalbinsel* (¹) Sarajevo : Štamparija Danijel A. Kajan, 1911; (²) reprint ed. Kemal Bakaršić, Klagenfurt : Wieser Verlag, 1996

There are two legends about the Haggada codex told by Ladislav Šik in an article in the newspaper "Jewish Voice" (Sarajevo) in 1931.⁴

- The first legend is of a young Jew from Bosnia, a student in Padua (Italy), who had fallen in love with a beautiful girl and received the Haggada codex as his wedding present.
- The second legend regards a Jewish merchant from Sarajevo has saved his Italian companion from a bad business deal in Florence (Italy) and received the Haggada as reward.

As a student of library and information sciences working on my semester paper in National and University library in Sarajevo, I accidentally came across these legends. It reminded me of a story that I had heard from my father when I was a child. Every Sunday my father used to take me to a walk to the Museum, where we visited its exhibitions. I called these visits "expeditions", an exciting experience of exploring and revealing the secrets of the Museum, and mystery of the Haggada rescue during the World War II was the greatest of them all.

Essentially the same story as my father had told me was related by my colleague dr. Vlajko Palevestra 25 years later when I was chief librarian of the National Museum Library.

The Haggada Rescue Story

The story of the rescue of the Haggada was analyzed in details in Palevastra paper presented at the Sefarad '92 Convention.

As a young scientist on Ethnological department, he had started to collect the legends of the Haggada codex from older colleagues who had witnessed the Second World War years in the Museum.

Before the capitulation of Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Spring 1941, the Jewish community in Sarajevo numbered 10.550 and 14.000 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The new pro-fascistic regime of the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna država Hrvatska) that was brought into power by the German occupation started the radical extermination of Jews in Nazi fashion, first through anti-Semitic propaganda in local regime newspapers, then with mistreatment of Jews and robberies of their property followed by vandalism of Jewish temples and graveyards and forced labor.

The Old Jewish Temple in Sarajevo was completely demolished a few days after the Nazi troops entered the City on April 15, 1941. German solders and local city gangs destroyed this monumental building, the sacred objects in it, and a large library collection including the archive of the Sarajevo Jewish community. In Autumn of the same year several university professors from Leipzig (Germany),

⁴ Ladislav Šik "Zašto skrivamo sarajevsku Haggadu" (= Why we are hiding Sarajevo's Haggada). - *Jevrejski glas* (Sarajevo), April 1, 1931

accompanied by Gestapo officers, visited Sarajevo and took away the famous "Pinnaces" - Annals of the Sarajevo Jewish Community.⁵

The director of the National Museum at that time was an archaeologist, Dr Jozo Petrović (1892-1967), who came from Belgrade (Beograd Sebija), where he had been curator of the Prince Paul's Museum. Dr Petrović was a Croat from Travnik (Bosnia) and was adored by the Sarajevo intellectual community; he was cheerful and very personable. The National Museum was opened for public daily until the evacuation in November 1943. Limited scientific research was being performed; the Museum Library was working regularly; and even the acquisitions of museum material was proceeding normally. Members of the local military and political establishment often visited the National Museum and its exhibitions.

After the War, during the coffee-breaks, the rescue of the Haggada codex was the key subject of conversation among the Museum personal. The Haggada story, according to Palevestra, is as follows.

The visit to the National Museum high ranking German and Croat officers with general Fortner at their lead, was announced in 1942. Dr. Petrović was designated to guide them through the museum exhibitions. The visit lasted about one hour, and on his departure General Fortner addressed Dr. Petrović as follows:

"Und jetzt, bitte, übergeben Sie mir die Haggadah!" (And now, please, give me the Haggada!)

Dr. Petrović had, according to this account, expected such a demand of the General and, pretending to be surprised, he answered:

"General, Sir, it is not possible! Just two hours before your visit one of yours lieutenants was in my office demanding the Haggada codex, and I gave to him!".

General Fortner was upset and had started to shout, "Who is that lieutenant? Give me his name! His unit! With whose authorizations did he do this?"

Dr. Petrović was confused and stated that he thought that the lieutenant was sent with Fortner`s authorizations. Petrović did not identify the officer, nor did the officer introduce himself. General Fortner continued to protest and make remarks to his officers regarding the discipline of German soldiers and on director Petrović's carelessness; then he quickly left the National Museum. An additional investigation was not undertaken.

While this was happening, the Haggada codex was in Dr. Petrović office in his briefcase. After everything calmed down, Dr. Petrović told this story to his colleagues, emphasizing the urgent need to evacuate the Haggada from the Museum. It was agreed that the curator librarian,

⁵ Avram Pinto *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine* (=Jews in Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Sarajevo : Veselin Masleša, 1987, pp. 56

Derviš M. Korkut, should take the Haggada codex and with the help of a reliable Islamic priest, hide it under the threshold of an isolated mounting village house near Sarajevo; it was kept until the War was over.

Palavestra remarked that the account should and should not be treated as true. I have discovered two facts that may be considered true which were in a way a consequence of the Haggada story.

First fact concerns the general who is mentioned in the preceding story. He was Johann Hans Fortner, born in Zweibrücken (Germany) in 1884, died in Belgrade in 1947; he was an active German officer from 1903. During Second World War he was a commander of 718th division (from May 3, 1941) and later (from February 18, 1942) the commander of both German and Croats troops in Eastern Bosnia including five battalions of Croat "Black legion". Fortner left Bosnia on March 14, 1943 and retired in 1944. In February 1947 he was summoned before the Yugoslav War Crimes Court, condemned to death, and executed in Beograd. During the court proceedings he try to argue that his authority had been limited, and he emphasized the help he had given to people in Bosnia. The court rejected these claims Fortner appealed that Dr. Petrović should appear in front of the court as a witness to testify to his activities.⁶

The second fact is that after the war, Dr. Petrović spent several years in prison on charges of "cultural collaboration" with the Germans. Later he returned to the National Museum where he worked as curator of the numismatic collection until his retirement.

Palavestra concludes: every account of an historical event for which one cannot obtain authentic documentation "floats between reality and imagination, and in minds of the people who share such a legend it becomes part of their historical conscience." But as the time of original event passes, persons who communicate a particular subject or story frequently consciously or unconsciously add and modify the original core of the tale with their personal views⁷.

The Haggada rescue story could, therefore, be placed in the category of verbal communication of a narrow circle of people that share common past, and in their repeated remembrances of the event, the story become rich with new forms and meanings. Such a tale has not yet become a fully formed historical story (legend) as it is known in theory and history of literature, with the strong likelihood that in a future such a tale may become standardized verbal communication pattern on the past events.

⁶ Cf. Jovan Popović *Vjašala za generale* (= Hangtrees for Generals), Zagreb 1986

⁷ Vlajko Palavestra "Pričanja o sudbini sarajevske Haggade" (=Tales on the destiny of the Sarajevo's Haggada). In: Muhamed Nezirović (Ed.) *Zbornik radova Sefard 92*. Sarajevo : Istorijfski institut, 1995, pp. 305-312

Verbal communication tends to ignore the substance of the original event, e.i. "how it really happened" and "why it happened". The main interest on the event is due to the fact that it is unusual and interesting, and, of course, that the tale has its audience. Reality and imagination are the compound parts of the tale itself.

The Haggada Rescue Story – Sources Revisited

There were at least two printed editions of Sarajevo's Haggada codex: the first was published in 1962 in an edition of 25.000 copies, with an introductory study in the Bosnian, English, German, French and Hebrew languages. Cecil Roth, who wrote the introduction briefly repeated the story:

"The reputation of the Haggada was worldwide, and one of the first actions of Nazis when they occupied Sarajevo in April 1941 was to send an officer to the National Museum to seize the manuscript. Thanks to the splendid improvisation of the Museum director this was not possible, and during the War the Haggada codex was put into a safe place in a mountain village near Sarajevo".⁸

Several years later, the pirated edition of the facsimile of the Haggada became available in several European cities; it was presumably identical to the original, and it was published in an edition of more than 10.000 copies. The second edition of the Sarajevo Haggada was issued in 1984 with the introductory study by Eugen Verber in the Bosnian, Spanish, French and German languages, and published in 10.000 copies. Verber, writing of the Haggada during wartime tells a story almost identical to Roth's:

"There were a different stories of Sarajevo's Haggada, but most of them are unreliable... In 1941, shortly after occupation, one German Nazi officer came to the National Museum demanding from the museum's director extradition of the Haggada codex from the rich museum's collections. By various excuses the director delayed extradition and in the meantime managed to smuggle the manuscript from the Museum buildings to a mountain village near Sarajevo. After the liberation of the city this treasure of the National Museum was returned to a museum safe box."⁹

These almost equivalent statements of Cecil Roth and Eugen Verber do not cite any reliable sources, such as archival document or an official report. Moreover, the context of the story's appearance in introductions was informal. The story of the Haggada rescue without new details could be found in Avram Pinto

⁸ Cecil Roth "Sarajevo's Haggada and its importance in the history of art". *Sarajevska Haggada* (reprint), Sarajevo : Svjetlost, 1962

⁹ Eugen Veber "Sarajevo's Haggada - An introduction". *Sarajevska Haggada* (reprint), Sarajevo : Svjetlost, 1988

articles^{10, 11}; it is also repeated in Muhamed Karamehmedović's article.¹² Pinto and Karamehmedović, like Roth and Veber, dated the salvation of the Haggada codex in the first days of German occupation of Sarajevo in April 1941.

The Haggada Rescue Story – Some New Details

During my research on the subject, I found the above quotations intriguing. I tried to find a document that might confirm the core of the Haggada rescue story, or at least to explain the context of the story prior and after the event itself.

Some new details on the war years in the National Museum were brought to light by Almaz Dautbegović (former director of the Museum 1980-1992) in the introduction of 100 Anniversary Yearbook of National Museum:

"... it is most important to draw attention on activities of museum personal, particularly of director Petrović, that have done a tremendous work in the rescue and evacuation of Museum collections. Several attempts were made by occupation forces to transport museum collections, first to Zagreb (Croatia) and after to Berlin (Germany). The most valuable museum objects were packed and transported to the National Bank safe box in 1943, while the other Museum collections were hidden in specially built shelters in the basement of the National Museum."¹³

New information on the evacuation of the Museum during 1943 was introduced from archive document found by Dautbegović. It was entitled "Report on Museum objects evacuated in 1943" written by director Vejsil Ćurčić, and dated 1945. This report describes in details the entire operation on collection evacuation.

¹⁰ Avram Pinto "O herverijskim i ladino tekstovima" (= On Hebrew and Ladino texts). In: Alija Isaković (Ed.) *Pismenost u Bosni i Hercegovini od najstarijih vremena do 1918. godine* (= Literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina from its beginnings to 1918), Sarajevo : Veselin Masleša, 1982, pp. 195-214

¹¹ Avram Pinto "Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine" (= Jews of Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Sarajevo : Veselin Masleša, 1987

¹² Muhamed Karamehmedović "O Sarajevskoj Haggadi" (= On Sarajevo's Haggada) In: Samuel Kamhi (Ed.) *400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u Bosnu i Hercegovinu 1566-1966* (= 400 Years from Jewish arrival in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1566-1966), Sarajevo 1966.

¹³ Almaz Dautbegović "Uz stogodišnjicu Zemaljskog muzeja" (= Hundred years of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina). In: Vlajko Palevestra (Ed.) "Spomenica stogodišnjice rada Zemaljskog muzeja Bosne i Hercegovine 1888-1988" (= 100 Anniversary Yearbook of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1888-1988), Sarajevo, 1988, pp. 13-56

The investigations of Mrs. Ljubinka Petrić were also based on archive and other sources. The following statement was published in article in 100 Anniversary Yearbook¹⁴ and previously in book¹⁵ :

"The Museum library was rescued mostly as a result of the activities of Derviš M. Korkut who has hid and camouflaged the most valuable books among other books in the basement of the Museum Library, so that the use of the card catalog of the Library to get to access to any of the books was impossible ".

A footnote following this quotation emphasizing the role of Derviš M. Korkut in the Haggada rescue was taken from two postwar sources: an archive documents from the State Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1945 and 1946¹⁶ and a newspaper article from 1946.¹⁷ These reports are, no doubt, original, presented to the authorities referring to performed activities earlier. The first journal article appeared in Sarajevo based newspaper "Oslobodjenje" with more than intriguing title "How the National Museum was save from bombardment and with it the City of Sarajevo".*

According to Mrs. Petrić both sources confirm the following:

"Commission inspection (April 11, 1945) show that call slips on the Haggada codex and the King Tvrtko Chart were with the curator Korkut, who had evacuated them on safe place outside the Museum building. Korkut also kept the keys of the Museum Library and Balkan-Institute as well as the keys from the basement, to which where evacuated library's inventory books, rare books and incunabula collection, along with the most valuable collections from Balkan-Institute, including the archives of Museum."

The call slips mentioned here may be of an importance in reconstructing the sequence of event in the rescue. Unfortunately, the sentence construction is ambiguous: the meaning of the words "were with custodian Korkut" is unclear.

¹⁴ Ljubinka Petrić "Djetatnost naučne biblioteke Zemaljskog muzeja" (= Scientific Library of the National Museum). In: Vlajko Palevestra (Ed.) *Spomenica stogodišnjice rada Zemaljskog muzeja Bosne i Hercegovine 1888-1988* (= 100 Anniversary Yearbook of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1888-1988), Sarajevo, 1988, pp. 366-384

¹⁵ Ljubinka Petrić *Biblioteke i bibliotekarstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini 1918-1945* (= Libraries and librarianship in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1918-1945). Sarajevo : Veselin Masleša, 1985, pp. 56

¹⁶ Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ABH) (Ministry of education - War damages no. 248 and 250/1945 ff. 10-12; and WD no. 989 /1946)

¹⁷ Vuk Jelovac "Kako je sačuvan od bombardovanja Narodni muzej a sa njim i Sarajevo" (= How the National museum was saved from bombardment and with it the city of Sarajevo). - *Oslobodjenje* (Sarajevo), May 26, 1945, vol. 3, no. 54

* The full text of this article from a rare original of *Oslobodjenje* (found in the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in late 1997) is attached in the Appendix.

Were this call slips signed by custodian Korkut (e.i. that he was a last person in possession of the Haggada codex), or did Korkut rescue the Haggada codex and keep the call slips (signed by other persons) as a testimony of the library transactions of this most important book?

Some more details on Korkut's role in the Haggada rescue can not be found even in Alija Bejtović's biography of Derviš M. Korkut, where it is simply mentioned that:

"together with Dr. Petrović, people say, Korkut had on time evacuated the Haggada codex ... and rescued the codex from Nazis who were after it."¹⁸

The New Fact Revealed

I could not find a single sheet of call slips in Balkan-Institute archives, State archives, nor in documentation of the Museum Library. The only reliable information on the call slips for the Haggada was found on the margins of library's inventory book.

Inventory no. (rev.) 9034 (e.g. 9313)	Signature C 4436	Sarajevo's Haggada - medieval Spanish-Jewish manuscript 22:16 cm, 34 free illuminations* , 104 pages with miniatures on p. 1-48, pages 49-104 without miniatures, p. 105-107 blank. Parchment, modern binding.
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The left margin was filled with handwritten notes:

- The first marginal note: "Received the Haggada codex and deposit the codex in the Museum safe box Vladislav Skarić" is not dated. It was written between 1926 and 1936 when Skarić was director of the Museum.
- Next marginal note was dated January 5, 1937; on the date when new Museum director Mihovil Mandić received codex from Skarić.
- Then there is a gap - there were no additional notes on the Haggada until October 29, 1943 when director Vejsil Ćurčić received the codex from curator Derviš M. Korkut.
- The last note in the inventory book was dated August 1, 1945 when Dimitri Sergejevskii received the codex from Vejsil Ćurčić.

This is the only primary information on the movement of the Haggada codex. Other archive documents do not even specify the codex at all.

¹⁸ Alija Bejtović *Derviš M. Korkut*. Sarajevo : Bakije, 1974 pp. 36

* "Free illuminations" (i.e. the illuminations were not interpolated in the text)

Two interesting and confusing facts came to light following the transfer of the Haggada. In year 1941 there was no handing over of the Haggada by director Mihovil Mandić to Dr. Jozo Petrović, nor was there such a transfer in 1943 between Dr. Petrović and the new director Vejsil Ćurčić. Obviously, some crucial elements are missing from the record.

World War II in the National Museum – Chronology

On April 30, 1941, shortly after occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Mihovil Mandić became “Director with a Special Competencies” of the National Museum.¹⁹ A few months later, on June 24, 1941 he retired²⁰ and Dr. Jozo Petrović assumed the position the director on August 18, 1941.²¹ On the same day Dr. Petrović and Mandić (both archaeologists) initiated a review of the prehistoric department of the Museum, as well as other museum collections and museum equipment.²² When they finished this review, on September 4, 1941 Manić was fully discharged of his directors duty.²³ In a cited document from August 18 the Haggada codex was not mentioned in any of the official National Museum documents. It essence this means that by that date the codex was not in the Museum's safe box.

The question arises at this point: Was the Haggada codex already in possession of the curator librarian Derviš M. Korkut (somewhere safe in mountain village) or deliberately not mentioned in any of the documents? This surely might point to another parallel activity in progress.

The relation of Dr. Petrović to the Jewish community in Sarajevo can be inferred from the following confidential letter which he addressed to high official Jozo Dumandžić minister in charge of Bosnia of the Independent State of Croatia Government in October 1941. "In Sarajevo, as You know" - writes Dr. Petrović -

"there is no office of Croatian Society of Restores so that I am in charge of all activities of restorations and conservation of historical monuments as follows: Old and New Serbian Orthodox Church as a monuments of Russian-Orthodox propaganda, Old and New Jewish Temple including their Libraries. ...

The Old Jewish Temple has been already devastated; even the cooper roof was taken for military needs. The monumental building of New Jewish Temple is now deserted.

I kindly ask Your permission for taking this building under the control of the National Museum so that we can establish Judaica Museum. The

¹⁹ ABH - Zemaljski muzej Bosne i Hercegovine u Sarajevu (ZMBH) 2/1941 (May 2, 1941) and 112/41 (April 20, 1941)

²⁰ ABH ZMBH 438/41 (September 4, 1941) and ABH ZMBH 25.729/41

²¹ ABH ZMBH 406/41 (August 25, 1941) and ABH ZMBH 43.499/41

²² ABH ZMBH 430/41 (September 2, 1941)

²³ ABH ZMBH 438/41 (September 4, 1941)

collection is so famous that several scientists from Berlin had already taken some of the precious pieces. It would be of a tremendous importance and our benefit if we - the Croats - were to give these treasures to Germans. ...

I also kindly ask your permissions to take the libraries of Campus Michael and private libraries of Menehem Romano and Jave eff. Baruh former members of the Turkish parliament. It is most important to obtain the library of Dr. Moric Levy who researched the Spanish Jews Sephardic history and Spanish-Jewish romances in Bosnia and Herzegovina and had a contact with the National Museum authorities as a possible editor of his scientific works. ...

The late Dr. Moric Levy left a large number of original documents on Turkish and Arab languages, which may be valuable for the future economic and cultural relation of the Independent State of Croatia and Spain. The custodian librarian of the National Museum Derviš M. Korkut has good relations with the Jewish Community in Sarajevo, and some years before I personally investigated old Jewish Synagogue in Stobi (Macedonia)*. These proposals I have presented here could easily become operational with your permission."²⁴

There are several interesting details in this letter. Derviš M. Korkut was an intimate friend of director Dr Petrović. His connection with the Jewish Community in Sarajevo was close and long-lasting. Korkut translated from Turkish a famous "Kafileme defter"[♦] from 1848; it is one of the most important documents of strong Jewish tradition in Sarajevo, and publish it in the "Jewish Voice" in 1928.²⁵ At a beginning of 1941 in his library office in Museum he also wrote a memorandum to the Government on problems of ethnical cleaning of Gypsies in Bosnia and short article on Jews of Sarajevo entitled "Anti-Semitism is foreign to the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina."²⁶ Her is a complete text of this article:

Derviš M. Korkut
kustos Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu

Derviš M. Korkut
Curator of the National Museum in

* Jozo Petrović "O Stobima danas" (= On Stobi Today) - Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja (Sarajevo), 1942, vol. 54, pp. 463-525

²⁴ ABH ZMBH 537/41 (October 15, 1941)

♦ Official Court records containig a List of Jewish families in Sarajevo who witnessed or guaranteed legal transactions

²⁵ Derviš M. Korkut "Sarajevski Jevreji u godini 1848" (= Sarajevo's Jews in year 1848). - *Jevrejski glas* (Sarajevo), vol. 1, no. 12, 13 (April 4, 1928); no. 27 (June 20, 1928); no. 49 (October 9, 1928); vol. 2, no. 1 (January 4, 1929); no. 17-18 (April 24, 1929) and no. 21 (May 24, 1929)

²⁶ Derviš M. Korkut "Antisemitizam je stran muslimanima u Bosni i Hercegovini" (= Anti-Semitism is strange to the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina). In: Mića Dimirićević i Vojislav Stojanović (Eds.) *Naši jevreji i jevrejsko pitanje kod nas.* (=Our Jews and Jewish question), Beograd 1940, pp. 53-54

Baš sada kada je propaganda tako intezivna treba ovo pitanje [jevrejskog pitanje kod nas] objektivno prikazati.

Pokušaje da se našim osjećajima nakalemi antisemitizam treba osujetiti, jer je to nama muslimanima strano. Antisemitizam o kome se ovdje govori, unesen je sa strane.

Kod nas, koliko postoji neko antisemitski orijentisan, to je on sigurno takav iz razloga poslovne konkurencije. Njihova povika na Jevreje treba da odvraća pažnju od njih samih. To je čisto čaršijski antisemitizam koji sa momentalnim nema ničeg zajedničkog.

Po svemu je tome jasno da antisemitizam kod nas nema korena i da on kod nas nije samonikao...

Specijalno za bosanske Jevreje se može reći da su oni postali više domaći nego što i sami misle. Naš svet njih ne oseća kao neko strano tijelo.

U drugim zemljama je antisemitizam često puta samo gromobran kojim se narodu vraća pozornost sa važnijih problema.

Pošto kod nas ne postoje uzroci za antisemitizam, to nisu potrebne ni nikakve naročite mere za suzbijanje. Ali ipak moram da istaknem da je potrebno da se jevrejskoj sirotinji u Sarajevu i Bitolju, vodi više brige nego li je to do sada bio slučaj. Ta sirotinja živi vrlo bedno i ima je više nego što se obično misli.

Ovde je od ranije i od skora bilo više pokušaja, i to iz nemuslimanskih krugova, da se muslimani angažuju kao avangarda protiv Jevreja. Svi su ti pokušaji redom propali, jer ni muslimanske mase ne mogu da se pridobiju za dva morala, jedan za

Sarajevo

At this particular moment when the propaganda is so intensive this question [the Jewish question in Yugoslavia] needs to be objectively discussed

The attempts aimed to graft the anti-Semitism should be rejected, because it is strange to us the Muslims. Anti-Semitism here discussed was imported from the outside.

Within us [Muslims] if there are some anti-Semite oriented, they are most certainly for the reasons of business concurrency. This is purely "market place" type of the anti-Semitism, and got nothing to do with recent [rise of anti-Semitism].

It is undoubtedly clear that within us the anti-Semitism does not have roots, and was not self grown...

Especially for the Bosnian Jews could be said that they become more domestic, than they themselves thing it is. Our people do not feel them as the foreign body.

In the other countries the anti-Semitism is more often only the lightning rod with whom some redraw peoples attention from more important problems.

Because within us the reason for the anti-Semitism do not exist, there is no need for special measures for its suppression. But I must emphasis that it is necessary to provide help to poor Jewish population in Sarajevo and Bitola [Macedinia], and take more care about them than it was done before. Those poor people lives in a misery, and their number is much higher than we think.

Here there been and recently were, several attempts, coming from non Muslim circles, that the Muslims should be engaged as the avant-garde against the Jews. All these attempts have failed, because it was impossible that the Muslim

sebe, a jedan za druge.

Bosna i Hercegovina su klasičan primer verske tolerancije. Ni našim širokim krugovima to nije dovoljno poznato. Ali mnogi inteligentniji stranci sa udivljenjem čitaju sa kamenih spomenika ovaj retki primer verske tolerancije. Za to je dokaz i jevrejsko groblje u Sarajevu koje spada među najstarije u Evropi, a koje do sada nikad nije oskrnavljeno.

Prva sinagoga u Bosni sagrađena je na vakufskom zemljištu. A kao najlepša kruna, i kao najsjajniji dokaz verske tolerancije u Bosni je to: da su sve četiri bogomolje domaćih vera sagrađene baš jedna pored druge.

population should be adopted for two level moral: one for them, and other for all the others.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a classical case of the religious tolerance. This is not sufficiently know to our wide population. But many wise intelligent foreigners with a respect read from a stone monuments this rare example of the religious tolerance. The Jewish cemetery in Sarajevo, one of the oldest in Europe, is a proof of it, and it was never desecrated.

The first synagogue in Bosnia was build on the Vakuf property. And as most beautiful crown and most brilliant proof of the religious tolerance in Bosnia is the following fact: all of four domestic religions places of worship were build exactly one beside the other.

I have also found an interesting document dating from 1946 which may shed light on Korkut's activities in 1941.²⁷ During the opening of the previously sealed offices of the Balkan-Institute and the National Museum Library in presence of Derviš M. Korkut (who kept the keys of these offices and Museum basement), the Museum Commission proved that the contents of a archive box labeled "Archiv der Familie Kapetanović - Türkisch Urkunden") included several manuscripts that Dr. Vito Kajan had left to Korkut on October 17, 1941 few days before he was send to Jasenovac (Croatia) concentration camp. Korkut had deliberately introduced an error into the record to protect the Jewish manuscripts²⁸.

Dr Petrović supported Korkut. There is a document dated December 3, 1942 that indicates the nature of their professional relation:

... During my inspection of the Library of which you are in charge I have find that a great number of books were not recorded in the inventory book and card catalog. Books and periodicals come to Library daily, so it is my decision, for the benefit of our Museum and your personal interest, that You should temporary hand over the management

²⁷ ABH ZMBH 580/46 (May 30, 1946)

²⁸ Kemal Bakaršić "Derviš M. Korkut sarajevska Haggada i sarajevski Jevreji" (=Derviš M. Korkut, Sarajevo's Haggada and Sarajevo's Jews). - *Glasnik Jevrejske zajednice Bosne i Hercegovine* (Sarajevo), 1994, no. 6, pp. 23-26. This box was empty from 1918, when dr. Karlo Patch had to returned manuscripts purchased from Kapetanović family for his "Literary Archive of Bosnians and Herzegovinians"; cf. Kemal Bakaršić "The Oriental Manuscript Collection of the Institute for Balkan Studies (1904-1918)". - *Middle East Librarians Association Notes* (Ann Arbor), Autum 1999, no. 67, pp. 23-34

of the library to Josip Korošec so You could finish your scholarly research."²⁹

That situation lasted until the new director, Vejsil Ćurčić, became a person in charge of the Museum on October 25, 1943.³⁰ Dr. Jozo Petrović was removed from his duty shortly after the capitulation of Italy during strong political turbulence, and the crisis in the military and intellectual establishment of the Independent State of Croatia in Zagreb concerning the influence of Italian politics on the Croatian fascistic regime. Petrović had some influence on actual political changes, and that was, in a way, related to the Haggada codex.

Two archive documents and one personal statement give us more details on Dr. Petrović's relation with the Italian sovereign King Victor Emmanuel III. On December 20, 1942 in a letter addressed to the Ministry of Education in Zagreb (Croatia) Petrović wrote about the lead seal of Bulgarian King Grgur from his private numismatics collection, which he is willing to present as a gift to:

"His Majesty the King who is like a father to me and whose concern for my private numismatics collection is enormous".³¹

On the Christmas eve Petrović wrote a report on some initiatives for establishing an "Institut Croaticum" in Rome (Italy) suggesting following:

"... it will be of a great importance that we present a series of Bosnian coins to the Institute. With such an exhibition we will be able to draw attention of the Italian sovereign King Victor Emmanuel III, and that will be benefit to our enterprises on its opening."³²

A year prior to his death in an interview given to Muhamed Karamehmedović, Petrović expressed a similar statement emphasizing that the National Museum was under the protectorate of the Italian King shortly after he had become a director of Museum, e.i. that the Museum collections - including the Haggada codex the jewel of the Library - were safe and protected from a highest possible rank.³³

This particular statement must be taken with a grain of salt. It was politically and administratively impossible that the Italian King had the patronage of the National Museum, simply because of a fact, that the city of Sarajevo was

²⁹ ABH ZMBH 1644/42 (December 3, 1942)

³⁰ ABH ZMBH 1109/43 and ABH ZMBH 413/43 (October 25, 1943)

³¹ ABH ZMBH 1833/42 (December 20, 1942)

³² ABH ZMBH 1719/42 (December 25, 1942)

³³ Muhamed Karamehmedović "Sarajevo's Haggadah". (Unpublished manuscript - original on English)

included into the German occupation zone, and that the Ministry of Education of the Independent State of Croatia was ruling the National Museum - precisely, The State Museum of Croatian Lands of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo (Državni muzej hrvatskih zemalja Bosne i Hercegovine), as it was named under that regime.

The lack of reliable facts and information about the Haggada codex and its war years, as well as a narrow circle of persons involved in it (Dr. Petrović, Korkut, Ćurčić), creates a confusion on the subject; the “facts” remain highly controversial. Let us therefore continue to follow the path of available archival documents.

The situation has changed with a new director Vejsil Ćurčić, at the end of 1943, and next year, witnessed the evacuation of the Museum collections. As a result of an executive order issued on November 19, 1943, by the Director, the Haggada codex, numismatic collections and the most valuable Museum items were evacuated to the National Bank safe box on December 9. The Museum Commission included Dimitri Sergejevskii, Dr. Mihoivil Mandić and Vejsil Ćurčić. Previously on October 29, Vejsil Ćurčić received - after the long silence into the library's inventory book - the Haggada codex from Derviš M. Korkut.

But the evacuation of the National Museum Library and Balkan Institute was not performed according the schedule. It cannot be determined what were the specific reasons that slowed the process; the only thing known for certain is that there was more than one delay. Derviš M. Korkut was supposed to hand over the library, but he deliberately delayed his task under various excuses.³⁴ Finally on November 11, 1943 the Library and Institute were closed and sealed without his presence, according to a confidential report by director Ćurčić to Ministry of Education in Zagreb. This document is of a great importance and states the following:

"... I have ordered an urgent “en block”^{*} evacuation of libraries to a basement. It was a high time to replace curator librarian Korkut from his duties as librarian. For his 11 years of work in the Library he did nothing for the Museum at all. He will not hand over the Library because of some ridiculous reasons, but the main thing was hidden behind his words: he is hoping that this War will soon be over and that he and his Belgrade friends including Dr. Petrović will run the Museum as they had done it before I become a director".³⁵

³⁴ ABH ZMBH 312/44 (March 30, 1944) and ABH ZMBH 374/44 (April 18, 1944)

^{*} e.i. “wholesale”

³⁵ ABH ZMBH 19/44 (November 10, 1944)

Vejsil Ćurčić was in fact angry on Dr. Petrović's article on Museum (and the thing surrounding the Museum), published in the first issue of the cultural magazine "Croatian Ideas". From the report it is obvious that Ćurčić had a poor opinion of Korkut, too. Korkut was constantly refusing to evacuate the Library and hand over the keys from libraries which Ćurčić repeated demanded repeatedly but would not get until the War was over.³⁶

Ćurčić refers to the mysterious "Belgrade friends"; this may be allusion to Derviš M. Korkut's political activity within Mustafa Mulalić circle (the supporters of the Yugoslav government in exile) or Korkut's protection of Bosnian Jews, together with a group of intellectuals from Belgrade³⁷. In any case, the Haggada rescue was an episode in daily routine of Life, War and Politics in the National Museum.

The main fact still missing is a firm proof of the exact location of the Haggada codex. All the documents cited in this article have shown that Derviš M. Korkut, not Dr. Jozo Petrović, was a key figure in the Haggada codex rescue. The Haggada was under a threshold of a lonesome mountain village house or hidden in a labyrinth of Museum library basement. According to the principles of the construction of legends and my personal experience of the National Museum Library evacuation in Spring of 1992, this second scenario may also be possible.

Another interesting fact may, perhaps, change a perspective of both the historian or the storyteller. By the end of 1943 the Haggada codex was deposited in the National Bank safe box. The director of the Bank was Aleksandar Poljanić a passionate collector of antiquities, rare books and coins. Only minimal information on his collections and activity relating to the salvation of Jewish property during War are known.³⁸ Another gap thus exist, and the gates of another story may be wide open for researches to come...

Dimitri Sergejsvskii was first director of the National Museum (shortly renamed the State Museum) after the World War II. On August 1, 1945 the Haggada codex was returned from the National Bank into the Museum safe box. Some of Poljanić's numismatic items and part of rare book collections were given as gifts to the National Museum by the Government authorities in 1963.

³⁶ ABH ZMBH 1177/44 (December 18, 1944). With this document the statement in Bejić biography of Derviš Korkut on his absence from Sarajevo between October 6, 1944 to April 6, 1945 could be rejected.

³⁷ Cf. Rasim Hurem "Pokušaji nekih građanskih političara da Bosnu i Hercegovinu izdvoje iz Nezavisne države Hrvatske" (= Attempts of some Politicians to separate Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Independent State of Croatia). - *Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine* (Sarajevo), 1965, vol. 16, pp. 191-221; Rasim Hurem "Konceptije nekih muslimanskih građanskih političara o položaju Bosne i Hercegovine u vremenu do sredine 1943. do kraja 1944. godine" (= Some Ideas of Muslim Politicians on the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the middle of 1943 until the end of 1944). - *Prilozi Instituta za istoriju* (Sarajevo), 1968, vol. 4, pp. 533-548)

³⁸ ABH ZMBH 714/45 (s.a.), and ABH ZMBH 1455/46 (November 15, 1946). Cf. also Ljubinka Petrić *Biblioteke i bibliotekarstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini 1918-1945*. Sarajevo, 1985, pp. 124

Hidden Documents and Events of the Spring of 1992

I shall return to the sentence from introduction where the position of an historian or storyteller is related to his own perspective and experience, a fact that cannot easily be redrafted or ignored. The following contradictions can be noticed:

- Someone wanted the Haggada codex - and yet the National Museum was planning to open an additional Judaica collection;
- Someone secretly hid the Haggada codex outdoors - and yet someone gives his private collection to the Museum Library;
- The Museum including its library had to be evacuated - and yet a librarian was not in favor of this.

The story of the Haggada's rescue is obviously aimed to somehow protect the Museum personnel and to mold public opinion regarding "the great things" done in wartime with the rescue of Museum items and collections. Crucial documents mentioning the Haggada codex are dated several years after the war was over, while the main actors in its rescue (Dr. Jozo Petrović and curator Derviš M. Korkut) were accused of being collaborators with the Germans. Drs. Petrović and Poljanić have spent some years in prison; Korkut did not. Files of these trails are still inaccessible.

The postwar years of silence were filled with the Haggada rescue story. And as imaginative pattern could not be limited until a reliable document appears to oppose it, a new episode was about to appear, based on some yet unconfirmed rumors pointing toward Masonic activity of dr. Petrović, Korkut and dr. Poljanić in the rescue not only the Haggada codex, but of a large number of Jewish treasures and properties. In this story dr. Poljanić was the mastermind of a secret action, and the Haggada mystery a cover-up.

Nobody ordered the evacuation of the Library of the National Museum in Spring of 1992. The existing evacuation plan could not be put in practice for various reasons. One of the most important was a fact that the logistic of this mission were to be carried out in a close cooperation with special military unit of JNA (Yugoslav Peoples Army), which turned out to be the main force of aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina. A second problem was: were to evacuate collections of 250.000 items in town under siege?. The notion of evacuation "on free territory" on the basis of a useless evacuation plan was fictional at the time. All of the Museum staff did only what they are supposed to do: to take a personal responsibility derived from a term curator - e.i. to take all possible steps to protect the Museum collections. The daily routine of evacuation included the ritual of kissing the doors of the Library with a simple pray "Please God! Don't let my Library burn down!"³⁹.

³⁹ Kemal Bakaršić "The Libraries of Sarajevo and the Book that Saved Our Lives". - The New Combat (New York). Autumn 1994, pp 13-15 (also available on Internet <http://www.soros.org.ba/~cuprija/>)

After two years of dangerous living in Sarajevo and my obsession with the Haggada my nightmares resumed, as I ask myself, "Is it safe?", I still can not suppress the question. The National Museum, the Library and the Haggada codex must be saved for the sake of memory that can not be easily destroyed. And the answer - it must be safe - was not at first a wish, but hopeless order issued by one of its curator librarians.

"Where danger is, / There salvation also grows" verses from Fridrich Holderlin's poem "Pathmos" often cited by Martin Heidegger and "There is always a little bit of Haven in the Disaster area" echoed from the Woodstock soundtrack, were my halfway serious halfway ridiculous comfort in the night and my mystical horizon of hope that the Library will survive.

Post script of January 15, 1995*

From my perspective, there was nothing much to tell regarding the Haggada codex evacuation in the Spring of 1992. But I was wrong. At the time this article was nearing completion, the story of the rescue of the Haggada in 1992 appeared in a local newspaper⁴⁰. Two shocking details presented there urgently demand comment.

The first is:

"During the two years aggression, "drunken primitive constructors of the older and finer history and culture"♦ completely destroyed the treasures of the National Museum, one of the world's most valuable museum collections".

This simply is not true. The National Museum collections were hopefully evacuated on time. The building of the National Museum, its roof particularly, and the botanical garden are seriously damaged, however.

The second statement in the same article requiring comment is:

* Written in Sarajevo on 1,014 day of its siege; equivalent to the following dates: 14 S+evat 5755 A.H. and 14 S+a`ban 1415 anno H.

⁴⁰ Aida Kalender "Ako uskoro ne dođe stručna pomoć Zemaljskog muzeja više neće biti" (= Without professional help the National Museum will soon be dead). - Slobodna Bosna (Sarajevo), April 23, 1994, vol. 1. no. 7, pp 22-23

♦ Construction often used in press for the description of Bosnian Serbs leaders and Serb aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“Afraid of the thieves (whose knowledge of the museums is limited, with the presumption that the gold and treasures can be found there), Enver Imamović, together with some policeman from the Ministry of the Interior on the day when the JNA finally left the barracks in the central city zone, made a heroic action to rescue golden objects and other treasures from the Museum. In the bushes, about ten meters from one of the side entrances of the Museum, he finds the Haggada - a sacred book of the Jews, one of the most valuable codexes on earth.”

In this part describing Imamović`s actions we have the motif, the action taken, and the story. According to the principles of the construction of legends discussed above this, story has also filled the gap. This time it was the gap between the Spring of 1992 and the Spring of 1994 when all things in Sarajevo pathetically look like the aggression is over and in fact almost nothing has changed yet.

At the time a draft of this article submitted and reviewed by editors of “*Judaica Librarianship*”, I had an opportunity to read another testimony on the Haggada`s 1992 rescue⁴¹. The item from ha-Safran also includes the extracts from Dr. Marian Wenzel`s article from “*The Art Newspaper*” (London) with another set of Imamović`s testimony. A few of his statements are intriguing.

“I can be thanked for everything that we have succeeded in saving, not only in the archaeological, but also in the other departments of the Museum, because I rescued them under the heaviest fire”

This is an extract from an obvious partisan story of “heroic action” by the man who was at that time director of the National Museum. Details of the rescue were also presented.

“That day, June 6, was a most hellish ever in Sarajevo... We enter the Museum unnoticed. For six hours we hunted for the Haggada in all the places we thought it might be. We forced every museum safe and found it in none. Finally, we came to the basement. It was completely dark. We have a little torch, which lasted only two hours. We had to grope in the dark, and that way we found it... The basement was under water, which was rising fast because projectile shad punched the central heating pipes. The height of the floor were the book lay was just a little higher than the height the water had than reached. Had we found the Haggada only a few hours later than we did, water would already have reached it, and it would have been destroyed.”

⁴¹ Zachary Baker co-editor of the *Judaica Librarianship* has forward me ha-Safran (*Judaica librarians` newsletter*) disscution on this subject.

Here we have not only the story and the action, but also a mystical force - tension in the darkness - and finally, the climax and a happy ending.

As a witness to the events surrounding the evacuation of the national Museum, I find difficult to comment upon these statements. But what I must point out are the principles relating to the responsibility of making public statements regarding these conflicting pieces of information. Although they come from the same source or storyteller, they point to two different scenarios and locations of the Haggada codex. Therefore this narrative should be listed in the same category as the core Haggada rescue legend from 1942, or paraphrasing newspaper article from 1945 as "It was I who saved the Haggada codex, and with it a City of Sarajevo".

Never-ending story

My evocation of the Haggada codex and a story of its rescue in the Second World War was not intended to serve as a reply to anyone`s opinions. Should the reader understand my writing in his interpretation as re-constructive or de-constructive could not be judged or determined by authors point of view. My evocation of the legend is dedicated to the memory of the people involved publicly or anonymously in those actions. Although the goal of my narrative was partial historical reconstruction of the past events obscured by the horizon of stories that has filled the time gap, it turns out that it is impossible to prevent or stop simultaneously driven forces of another stories construction. The gap that exist between the fragment of a great story of history and the episode of a great narrative could not be narrowed, on a contrary this gap is widening. What I have tested here is a responsibility, that essential relations known and exercised so well by the librarians profession, and I hope that the Reader of this article will approve of the way I have handled this delicate matter. Also I must partly take the responsibility of the avalanche of news, events, question asked, doubts and interests followed.

Good story tend to kill a good history.

Appendix Vuk Jelovac "How the National Museum was saved from bombardment and with it the city of Sarajevo" (Kako je sačuvan od bombardovanja Narodni muzej a s njim i Sarajevo. - Oslobođenje (Sarajevo), May 26, 1945, year 3, no. 54, pp. 6

It is of an immeasurable value the fact that the National Museum, which is one of the biggest museum institutions on Balkans and the best in middle Europe, was saved from the bombardment and robberies during the occupation. In order to inform our general public on the ways how did Museum administration had managed to perform such a task we shall present several interesting facts about it.

Shortly after the arrival of Germans in Sarajevo they show specific interest for the treasures of the National Museum. Without any doubt they have made plans what should be taken to Germany from the huge Museum collections. When the first steps were taken leading toward this direction, the Museum administration make a gentile diplomatic move against it. It was said on that occasion that "it is impossible that the Germans will do any harm to the National Museum which was established and build in time of Austro-Hungarian rule over Bosnia". This statement have had positive effect - the Museum was spared from being robbed. But when this danger was removed, another treat was about to begun - the fear that during the bombardment of Sarajevo the Museum buildings could be destroyed.

The Museum administration used conspiracy channel via Switzerland and send detailed documented appeal to Allay forces with a pledge to spare the National Museum during the bombardment. The representatives of the partisan movement have order to their comrades - who have the task of preparing marked maps of Sarajevo on what should not be bombarded - to strictly exclude the Museum buildings. Late Hadži ef. Andžić the librarian of Gazi-Husrev Bey Library had managed to send an extensive letter to Egyptian King Faruk and prime minister Nahaš Pasha asking them to convey the Allay forces to spare Sarajevo from the bombardment.. King Faruk and prime minister Nahaš Pasha affirmatively answered to this pledge and promptly send diplomatic note to leaders of USSR, United States and Great Britain. They also informed Egyptian press on violent acts of Germans, Italians, Ustashas and C+etniks in this areas. With the permission of the Egyptian Government these reports were also used in world press. Special diplomatic note was sent to Ismet Pasha the president of Turkey to intervene that Sarajevo should not be target of the bombardment. Ismet Pasha promptly informed president Roosevelt and president Churchill during their meeting in Cairo held last year [1944], and got their guarantees that Sarajevo should not be - without urgent strategic necessity - the target of the bombardment, and if being so, that only selected military targets will be aimed.

With all these efforts and guarantees the Museum administration did not resume its activities. Valuable and moveable museum items were packed in wooden boxes and deposit in the safety area of the Museum basement, while larger unmovable items were protected with tick wooden frames. The same was done with the tombstones in the botanical garden of the Museum. Despite some broken glass from windows no other damage was done in a vast explosion of the military facilities filled with 17 tons of explosive at the location on the hill Hum facing the Museum. Also no damage was done when a avio-bomb explode near the Ethnology department of the Museum. A special contribution to the salvation of the Library of National

Museum and the Library of Balkans Institute has its librarian, who camouflaged most valuable items within book collections size of several ten thousand items, while he also hide the library card catalog in the basement, so that it was impossible for occupators to use a catalog, than chose and take from the collections most valuable items. Old coins from the numismatic collections, important books from Balkan Institute library and King Tvrtko Chart were deposit in the National Bank vault in Sarajevo, and from there - due to the fact that those items were in danger - there were secretly transported to the National Museum day before the liberation of the city of Sarajevo [April 6, 1945]. That was the way how all items from the collections of National Museum were saved and hand over to the Peoples Government of Federal [Republic] Bosnia and Hercegovina. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina jealously cherish the value of the National Museum. For a long time now a large number of people daily visit this institution, and that is the case only with a small number of the museums around the world. So it is not exaggeration on the and to say that successful intervention on salvation of the National Museum was also a salvation of Sarajevo itself from vast destruction.

Note that the Haggada Codex is missing from the list of saved items, the name of curator librarian Derviš M. Korkut also, and a year of the evacuation to the National Bank.