

Establishment of the Ethnographic museum of Istria in the context of postwar politics and museum practices

- The article focuses on the process of establishment of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria in the nineteen-sixties. The establishment of the Museum is partly associated with the fact that the period in question was distinguished by the disappearance of traditional culture objects from rural areas due to accelerated industrial development and greater migration of the population to towns. This brought about the need to collect and display objects in a museum. However, the collection of objects, the creation of collections and, eventually, the foundation of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria were also closely linked with the political situation after the Second World War and the process of definition of the border between Italy and Croatia/Yugoslavia in Istria. The minutes of the meetings of the Society for Istrian History and Culture (Pazin Branch) show the influence of museum professionals, but also of politicians, on the foundation of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria in Pazin in 1962. Moreover, the article also shows that the *Kaštel* (Pazin Castle) was also used for residential purposes and constituted a part of the family history of the citizens of Pazin who lived in Kaštel or the surroundings.

Key words: Ethnographic Museum of Istria (Pazin)
Society for Istrian History and Culture
Kaštel [castle] (Pazin)
museum establishment, ethnographic museums,
the political context

INTRODUCTION

Like any institution, the Museum also has its past, present and future. In this paper I wanted to show the beginnings of museum activity in central Istria, the collection of museum material required to form the collections in the Museum, and the creation of the permanent Ethnographic Museum display developed in several stages. I also wanted to demonstrate how the political context of the incorporation of Istria into Croatia and Yugoslavia, and the long period spent on the definition of the border between Italy and Croatia/Yugoslavia also influenced the founding of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria and its collection policies.

In my research I have used a variety of sources, primarily the minutes of the meetings of the Society for Istrian History and Culture (Pazin Branch), the Museum registers, documentation and studies written in Pazin in the early days of the Museum, and articles in yearbooks, newspapers and other media. So far nobody has published anything about the history of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria as a museum in its own right. I collected data on the past of the Museum and the exhibitions staged there in the State Archives in Pazin, the records of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria and the Museum Documentation Centre, where I found the decisions regarding the founding of the Museum, the changes of its names and the plans for the its future. These sources have been precious because they make it easier to follow the history of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria (but also of the Pazin City Museum), and follow the endeavours of the museological profession in the second half of the 20th century.

(ETHNOGRAPHIC) MUSEUMS

The ICOM¹ definition of museums of 1974 is the most commonly used one: “A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.” (Maroević 1973: 74)

The first mention of a collection as a museum dates from as early as the Renaissance and Mannerism. In that time objects were collected in private premises; in most cases they included objects found during archeological excavations, and old books and medals. Interest in collecting developed along two

1 International Council of Museums.

lines: collection of artistically defined cultural and historical material, and the collection of natural science material (Ibid. 24). In the 18th century museums became accessible to the public (Ibid. 28), while the 19th century, the age of museums as many have called it (Bazin 1967: 195 acc. to Maroević 1999: 35) was distinguished by museum collections which underwent transformation into specialized museums exhibiting specific museum objects owing to the appearance of new scientific disciplines.

Ethnographic museums began to appear because of the increasing interest in traditional culture preserved primarily in rural areas, and interest in the culture of extra-European countries. Museums were also founded along with the appearance of ethnology and cultural anthropology as sciences. The first ethnographic museums came into being after 1875, mainly because of stepped-up industrial development and urbanisation, which brought about a fast decline of rural culture. The *Museum für Volkenkunde* was founded in Vienna in 1876, and the Danish *Folkemuseet* in Copenhagen in 1885. The first anthropological museum, *Musée de l'Homme* (Museum of Mankind), was founded in Paris in 1877 (Maroević 1993: 40).

Ethnographic museums founded by countries which had colonies in Africa and Asia often collected and exhibited objects of “primitive” peoples which the Europeans found at least exotic. Today the objective of these museums is to include into their extra-European collections and exhibitions the community which co-creates such activities in order achieve cultural dialogue. Unlike such institutions, other museums were more dedicated to the study of the traditional culture of their own people, and the collection of objects to be exhibited in museums was of a local character (Nikočević 2013: 13).

In Croatia the acquisition of ethnographic objects began in 1874 when the National Museum in Zagreb purchased Srećko Lay's collection of folk art. The first ethnographic museum in Croatia was founded in Split in 1910 after an exhibition of folk art. The Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb was founded in 1919 and opened in 1922 (Maroević 1993: 40).

Museums of both types currently review their own culture and past object collection policies which has also depended on specific periods among other things (Nikočević 2013: 13).

ISTRIAN ETHNOGRAPHY BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM OF ISTRIA

Drives focused on saving the “popular treasure” – a term which is still preferred in public – started as early as the 19th century during the awakening of national awareness. After the revolutionary movements² “the disappointed intelligentsia turned to the relatively unchanged rural areas, idealizing simple rural life in the past” (Lozica 1979: 38). The accelerated changes in urban culture and everyday life of the urban population, instability and continuous change were compared with the apparently static rural mode of life.

After the second half of the 19th century, the newly-built railway made travel to Istria simple and fast. Of course, this was available to higher social classes in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but also to ethnographers. Both were enthusiastic about the “traditional and authentic character” of Istria (Kappus 2002: 37). It was precisely this “backwardness” of Istria that made it a rich source of material and an evidence of the past for the ethnographers of the time. “Here we can trace the development of a primeval European people through quite a few cultural stages resembling our own” (Hoernes in Stadner 1897: 97, acc. to Kappus 2002: 41), “or perceive, explain the state of the primordial mind in its natural form...” (Haberlandt in Wörner 1997: 400, acc. do Kappus 2002: 41). It was in such terms that the ethnographers of the time regarded Istria. The basic task of the Austrian ethnographers was the study and the recording of all information, and the preservation of objects collected in the field. The objective was the protection of Istrian traditional culture and its preservation for the future (Ibid. 42). All that also concealed the political connotation of those studies, promoted by the Empire in order to present the picture of the quality of all peoples in the Monarchy (Ibid. 43).

In the late 19th century Austrian ethnography began to “discover” the specific character of Istria, and Istria had a special place in the Austrian Ethnographic Museum opened in 1895. The so-called “Istrian kitchen” occupied a separate place at the first exhibition of the Ethnographic Museum in Vienna. “The exhibition space was envisioned as the interior of an Istrian house with the typical open hearth in which the hunter found shelter from the stormy *bora* and where the country woman cooked *polenta* for him; typically, the hearth had a *prijeklad* (log rack), a copper kettle, a *žara* (ceramic cooking pot) and a *cutora* (canteen), while killed game hung on the walls” (Exhibition space 1910, p. 224, acc. to Plöckinger, Beitl 2002: 30).

2 The Congress of Vienna; revolutionary developments in Central Europe in the eighteen-thirties; the 1848 Spring of Nations; revolutionary movements in Spain in the eighteen-fifties and – sixties; the Paris Commune in 1870; national revolutions in Europe in the eighteen-sixties and-seventies.

The different elements presented in the kitchen exhibit cannot have belonged together at all. The hearth, about 70 cm, does not belong to the rural but to the urban Italian type. The benches along the hearth vary, from simple rural ones to richly decorated urban types. This is only a superficial analysis based on the photograph illustrating the earlier described museum reality (Ibid. 39, 31).

Such a hearth kept appearing “in publications, illustrations... and actually became a synonym for the whole kitchen, and the kitchen as a synonym for the whole country, for all language and social groups” (Ibid.).

The objects acquired by Austrian ethnographers and high society enthusiasts (and most of them became part of the “Istrian kitchen” display) were collected on the basis of esthetic criteria and, thus exhibited, made up the picture which the ethnographers of the time wanted to paint about Istria. In particular, it should be noted that the image of traditional Istrian culture was sustained in the museum until the years following the Second World War, and influenced thereby the image of life in Istria in the public but also among the researchers of traditional culture (cf. Grieshofer 2002: 11, 12).

The Ethnographic Museum of Istria is situated in the Pazin *Kaštel*.³ The Fortress, one of the best preserved fortifications in Istria, is mentioned for the first time as *Castrum Pisinum* in the charter of emperor Otto II in 983. Over the centuries many noble houses were the masters of the Castle; the most outstanding, of course, were the Habsburgs (after 1374). The last masters of the *Kaštel* were the Italian family Montecuccoli (18th ct. – Second World War) (Kocković-Zaborski 2013: 19).

Between 1920 and 1943 the *Kaštel* housed the private collection of the Montecuccoli family. The objects found in the *Kaštel* at the timewere described by the Uršić brothers (1953: 15), who listed the old Baroque stoves and fireplaces, and old weapons and fittings. Josip Milićević recorded the narratives of the Pazin townspeople who were allowed, on 5 August after mass, to visit the *Kaštel* premises. On the second floor the visitors could also visit the kitchen with the hearth, and about a hundred copper vessels and other kitchen utensils on the walls. Weapons and fittings were exhibited in other rooms. According to the narrators, after the capitulation of Italy German soldiers took over the *Kaštel* and threw the objects into the Pazin Pit (Ibid. 10).

Initiatives focused on the collection of traditional Istrian objects and on the foundation of an ethnographic museum in Istria appeared already in the late 19th century. Inspired by the many private donations which supported the foundation

3 Along with the Pazin City Museum and part of the Croatian State Archives in Pazin.

of a museum in Poreč,⁴ the editors of the Croatian journal *Naša Sloga* (Our Unity), published in Trieste, invited the readers – in an article entitled “The National Museum in Zagreb”, on 1 June 1872 – to collect and send in objects “which would confirm the continuous existence of the Croatian population in Istria” (Miličević 1976: 7).

The same journal published in its issue 11-13 in 1890 proclamations of the parish priest Josip Ptašinski⁵ advocating the foundation of an ethnographic museum in Istria. Such endeavours did not lead to any concrete consequences. In the early 20th century some traditional clothing items were collected by Austrian ethnographers for the *Volkskunde Museum* in Vienna. The systematic acquisition and collection of material for the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb did not start until 1948 (Ibid.).

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN ISTRIA AND YUGOSLAVIA AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The foundation of the museum in Pazin calls for a brief review of the political situation in Istria and Yugoslavia after the Second World War.⁶

Immediately after the end of the war, the so-called “Trieste crisis” broke out, requiring the solution of the Julijska Krajina (*Venezia Giulia*; “Julian March”) issue. Italy and the Western Allies did not want Tito to get the whole Juljska Krajina. The idea of the Soviet Union reaching the Adriatic coast through alliance with Yugoslavia did not suit the British. The liberation of Istria was of exceptional importance for the Croatian side, i.e., Yugoslavia and Tito. Therefore, after very difficult negotiations and lot of pressure applied on Tito by all the interested parties, a provisional solution was agreed by the Belgrade Accords of June 1945, when the region was divided into Zone A and Zone B. Zone A was administered by the British and the Americans, and included Trieste, Gorica and the city of Pula, linked with the remaining Zone A territory by the

4 The editors of the journal *Atti e memorie della Società Istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria*, published in Poreč, called upon their readers to donate objects to enrich the holdings of the museum in Poreč (Miličević 1976: 6).

5 Of Slovak origin.

6 Without wishing to enter into a deeper analysis of the political conditions in Yugoslavia and Istria, I wanted to present a context of the time during the visit of the International Allied Commission, the opening of the Exhibition *The Slav Character of Istria* in 1946, and the foundation of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria and object collection policies in the period immediately following its opening.

Pula – Trieste road. Zone B was under Yugoslav military administration. The demarcation line was called the *Morgan Line* (Mikolić 2003: 369, 370; Ivetic 2009: 612).

Since the matter of demarcation was not fully settled by the Accords, on the eve of the Peace Conference held in Paris in 1947, the Allies set up an Inter-Allied Commission which was supposed to establish in the field the actual ethnic/national and economic conditions. The US, French, British and Soviet delegations visited Julijska Krajina between 7 March and 5 April 1946 (Ivetic 2009:574). The arrival of the demarcation Commission in 1946 sparked cultural and political events in Istria; in specific terms this meant the revival of many cultural institutions (Dukovski 2006: 266). On 21 February 1946 *Glas Istre* (The Voice of Istria) published an article entitled “Folks songs, dress and customs prove that Istria is Croatian”. The accompanying description of the so-called Istrian musical scale and cooperatives demonstrated the difference between the Italian and Croatian traditions.

According to the available records of the District People’s Committee in Pazin,⁷ the population (although dissatisfied because of the food shortages in Istria in the period under consideration) was urged to be united in declaring their wish for annexation to Yugoslavia by decorating homes, roads and villages, wearing the (Croatian) tricolor on clothing, removal of Italian flags and signs (or, at least in the Italian villages, hoisting Yugoslav flags next to Italian ones), and by using exclusively the Croatian language in talking to the members of the Commission.

The visit of the Commission produced four demarcation options (suggested by the American, French, British and Soviet delegations in the Commission); the French proposal was accepted (Mikolić 2003: 370-373; Ivetic 2009: 572-574; Dukovski 2006: 254).

The Peace Agreement was signed in Paris in February 1947, and entered in force in September of the same year. As agreed, the Free Territory of Trieste⁸ was formed under provisional Angloamerican and Yugoslav military administration; the remaining part of Istria with Pula became part of Yugoslavia (Mikolić 2003: 372; Ivetic 2009: 613).

The political situation became additionally complicated when Yugoslavia lost the support of Stalin, and the Allies were interested in “steering Yugoslavia and Tito toward the West” through economic and military aid (Ivetic 2009:

7 State Archives in Pazin, HR-DAPA-87, District People’s Committee; 1945-1955, Minutes of the District People’s Assembly, 17 February 1946; box 1.

8 Also divided into Zone A – Trieste and Zone B – Kopar Izola, Piran, Umag, Buje, Novigrad (Mikolić 2009: 613).

614). After a period of greater political tension, a protocol was suggested according to which Zone A, the Free Territory of Trieste, would be handed over to Italian civil administration, and Zone B to Yugoslavia. This was signed in the London Memorandum on 5 October 1954. It created a provisional state border between Italy and Yugoslavia (Mikolić 2003: 373; Ivetic 2009: 614). The final border agreement was reached in November 1975 in Osimo near Ancona with the signing of the Treaty of Osimo. The Treaty did not enter into force before 1977 (Mikolić 2003: 370-373; Ivetic 2009: 572-574; Dukovski 2006: 256).

Before any other museological activities in Pazin, after the Second World War an exhibition, *Testimonies of the Slav Character of Istria*, was staged in the building of the diocesan seminary in 1946. The exhibition was prepared by the regional People's Liberation Committee for Istria during the visit of the Inter-Allied Commission (as mentioned in the catalogue of the exhibition). The catalogue presented the meaning and the message of the exhibition, intended to display at least partly "...all the documents related to Istrian life which confirm its belonging to the Slav world" (*Catalogue* 1946). Among other things (documents, monuments, photographs, birth, marriage and death registers) the exhibition displayed ethnographic material; unfortunately, the items were not listed individually in the Catalogue, and the exhibits cannot be traced. Most probably those were objects from the Pazin region, either purchased or donated (Milićević 1976: 14).

THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM OF ISTRIA

The process of establishment of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria can be followed through the minutes of the meetings of the Society for Istrian History and Culture (Pazin Branch), a group of people enamoured with the cultural heritage, who started as early as 1952 with a collection drive for the future museum and a drive for the adaptation of the *Kaštel* into a museum (Ivetic, Pavić 2007: 7).

The Pazin Branch was set up after the foundation of the Society in Pula in 1951, and stopped working in May 1966. It has 32 members, notably Vjekoslav Zidarić, Vladimir Hvala and Prof. Tugomil Ujčić (Rimanić 2012: 7). At its first meeting the members laid down the guidelines for the functioning of the future museum and suggested the foundation of the following collections: 1. archeological; 2.

historical; 3. ethnographic, to be “displayed in a typical setting and very close to the Istrian folk which provides by its proximity the greatest quantity of ethnographic material”.⁹

As already mentioned, the basic tasks of the Society included the arrangement of the *Kaštel* for a museum, and the attention devoted to the premises in which the museum would be accommodated is also visible in the minutes of the Society meeting in 1955: it highlights the change of the roofing, the layout of the halls, the installation of water and power supply, and the reconstruction of the flat for the caretaker. The plan included the need for providing premises for the curator and for the work of the Society.¹⁰

A typical feature of the cultural life in Istria in the period under consideration was the chronic lack of funding and the search for financial support, as recorded by Dukovski (2006: 277). It is also reflected in the dedicated work of the Society, which collected the money and cleaned the *Kaštel*, room after room, for accommodating the exhibitions and the collections.

In addition to the Society, one of the persons deserving the greatest credit was Vjekoslav Zidarić, headmaster of the Agricultural School in Pazin and Chairman of the Museum Council. He cleaned the *Kaštel* with his students, guided the curators on their countryside trips and assisted the museum staff in the acquisition of objects for the museum (Kocković Zaborski 2013: 20).

The National Museum in Pazin opened its doors in 1955.¹¹ It was administered by the People’s Committee of Pazin, and the archeologist Ante Čatlak became the first head of the Museum. Through his efforts the Museum engaged Dr. Antun Bauer,¹² then director of the Croatian School Museum and the head of the Museum Section of the Museum and Conservation Workers’ Society of the People’s Republic of Croatia, to write the “Proposal for the Organization of the National Museum in Pazin” (Ivetić, Pavić 2007: 7).

9 State Archives in Pazin, HR-DAPA-623; Society for Istrian History and Culture – Pazin Branch; series a) Minutes of meetings 1954-1963; Minutes of the first meeting, 1952.

10 State Archives in Pazin, HR-DAPA-623; Society for Istrian History and Culture – Pazin Branch, series a) 1. Minutes of meetings 1954-1963; Minutes of the 3rd meeting, 1955.

11 In his text, *Existing Condition and Prospects of the Ethnographic Museum in Pazin*, Josip Miličević referred in 1973 to the same piece of information. In his master’s thesis on *Istrian Museums, Exhibitions and Collections*, the same author recorded the information that the Museum was founded in 1955 and that the relevant decision regarding its foundation was lost sometime between 1964 and 1972 when most of the files of the Society for Istrian History and of the Museum were destroyed. On 12 June 1956, according to Miličević, the People’s Committee of the Municipality of Pazin issued the decision on the foundation of the institution called “the Pazin City Museum” (Miličević 1976: 76).

12 Bauer deserves credit as ideational originator and promoter of many museum institutions in Croatia.

In his Proposal, submitted to the Education and Culture council of the People's Committee of Pazin, Dr. Bauer expressed his agreement with the accommodation of the future museum in the *Kaštel*, which was in keeping with the museological principles applied in the design of the Sisak Old Town and Varaždin Old Town museums. He suggested the foundation of a central museum for the cultural-historical development of Istria, and highlighted in particular the collections which would demonstrate the "autochthonous character of the Croatian element in Istria throughout the region and not only in the area of the Pazin district... This opportunity ought to be used for the purpose at all costs". "In current conditions such a museum would play an important political and national role", continued Dr. Bauer. He suggested the collections and the material the future museum should exhibit and collect. The main and the most important collections would include the collection of historical monuments (Glagolitic monuments, medieval frescoes, epitaphs), the ethnographic collection as a complement to the collection of historical monuments, the archeological collection, the cultural-historical collection, and the collection of the People's Liberation War (Bauer 1955). Dr. Bauer emphasized that ethnography was an acute issue in latter-day museology, and that comprehensive collections should be one of the major tasks in the first phase of museum operation. The importance of the ethnographic collection was highlighted because of the "national and political contribution" of ethnographic and "historical" material which would demonstrate in the easiest way the autochthonous character of the ethnic element in Istria. This would provide evidence, according to Bauer, "supporting our claim to the ethnic belonging of Istria". The planned collection of ethnographic material, said Bauer, was of great significance "because of the essential changes of the social and economic structure" but also because ethnographic objects had already become "trade and export items" (Ibid.).

Interestingly, the minutes of the 5th meeting of the Society show the wish to found the museum of the People's Liberation War, unlike, as mentioned, Zagreb which thought that an ethnographic museum ought to be founded. Those were the responses of the members of the Society to Dr. Bauer's Proposal for the Organization of the National Museum in Pazin.¹³ At the meeting of the Society held on 30 May 1955, the members commented on Dr. Antun Bauer's proposal regarding the organization of the Pazin Museum presented to the Education and Culture Council of the People's Committee of the Pazin District. They

13 State Archives in Pazin, HR-DAPA-623; Society for Istrian History and Culture – Pazin Branch, series a) 1. Minutes of meetings 1954-1963; Minutes of the 5th meeting, 1955.

noted that preparations had already started for founding the exhibition on the People's Liberation War, and that it would be followed by the acquisition and collection of ethnographic material.¹⁴

Professor Vjekoslav Zidarić, Vice-Chairman of the Society, sent a letter to Milovan Gavazzi, the leading Croatian ethnologist and the founder of scientific ethnological research in Croatia. Gavazzi replied on 18 April 1956. He welcomed the foundation of the “central museum of Istria (in Pazin)”, and advised the founders-to-be that the best way to complete the holdings of the museum would be the collection of objects in the field or, possibly, the loan of objects from ethnographic collections in other Istrian museums. In the same letter Gavazzi provided advice for the selection about the best Istrian ethnologist fit for high quality work in the museum. He also commended the suggestion, in the decision, to appoint a person from Istria for the purpose (Gavazzi 1956).

At the 5th meeting of the Society the members pointed out that preparations had started for the exhibition about the People's Liberation War. As a result on 9 May the People's Revolution section was opened honouring the anniversary of the liberation of Pazin. The author of the display was Pavle Franjković,¹⁵ then curator of the Museum of the Revolution of the Peoples of Croatia, and the exhibition was designed by architect Vjenceslav Richter.

The exhibition was dedicated to the People's Liberation War in the Pazin area and Istria, and included photographs, documents and objects – primarily weapons. In the period under consideration the director of the Museum and its curator was the archeologist Ante Glavičić (Ivetić, Pavić 2007: 8,9; Rimanić 2012: 7).

Although the members of the Society, at its meeting on 21 September 1956, noted explicitly the wish to found the *Central ethnographic museum in Istria in Pazin*, and discussed the guidelines for the future work of the Society and of the Museum, Boris Bačić, head of the Archeological Museum in Pula and member of the extended Society Board, emphasized “that the ‘history of pottery’ ought to be presented in one room” (referring explicitly to the traditional pottery of Rakalj) and noted, along with photographic documentation, the highly essential documentation regarding the original names of the objects to be recorded from the rural population by the researchers in the field. Bačić stressed in particular the need to peruse ethnological publications. It was decided at the same meeting not to charge admission to groups of school students

14 State Archives in Pazin, HR-DAPA-623; Society for Istrian History and Culture – Pazin Branch, series a) 1. Minutes of meetings 1954-1963; Minutes of the meeting on 30 May 1955.

15 In his article *Opening of the People's Revolution Section in the National Museum in Pazin*, Pavle Franjković noted the great importance of the funding provided for the adaptation of the Kaštel for the National Museum in Pazin “...as the central ethnographic museum in Istria” (Franjković 1956: 71).

and soldiers. The adults were to pay 10 dinars, and individual school children 5 dinars. The Museum was to be open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, and from 10 to 12 a.m. on red-letter days. A plaque with the text “National Museum Pazin” would be placed on the *Kaštel*, and signs showing the way to the Museum posted throughout the town.¹⁶

As the minutes of the Society meetings show, the idea to turn the Pazin Museum into the central ethnographic museum was accepted, but the idea could not be realized because of the lack of funding (Rimanić 2012: 7).

According to the minutes of the October 1956 meeting of the Society, Vice-Chairman V. Zidarić suggested the purchase of a “comprehensive rural kitchen” from the Lindar area for exhibition in the Museum, and the provision, in one of the new premises, of a “room for the farming collection”.¹⁷ As a result, the Ethnographic and Archeological Exhibitions/Collections, realized with items loaned by the Archeological Museum in Pula, were opened on 29 November 1957. The Ethnographic Exhibition was exhibited on the second floor of the *Kaštel*; it displayed the hearth of a rural home with about twenty items. This collection/exhibition was the nucleus of the future Ethnographic Museum in Istria in Pazin (Ivetić, Pavić 2007: 10).

The first discovered inventory of the objects of the National Museum in Pazin, drawn up on 2 June 1958 when curator Ante Glavičić handed over his post to the new director Milan Šurman, provides information on the number of objects in the ethnographic collection of the Museum. The Museum included the following departments: Department of the People’s Revolution; Collection of old paintings, sculptures and furniture; Collection of old weapons; Archeological collection and Ethnographic collections. The museum had 344 objects, 59 of which were displayed in the Ethnographic collection (Ivetić, Pavić 2007: 12).

Throughout this time the public remained concerned about the future of traditional culture items. Thus, according to Josip Malić, professor in the Pazin Grammar School and later long-time director of the *Školska knjiga Publishing Co.* in Zagreb, published on 15 September 1958 an article in the *Gazette of the Educational Assembly of the Pula District* stating that “because of the wish of the owners for economic, health and technical progress and modernization... traditional costumes, instruments, customs and tools... are slowly disappearing from our homes and villages... and we do not have the possibility to keep

16 State Archives in Pazin, HR-DAPA-623; Society for Istrian History and Culture – Pazin Branch, series a) 1. Minutes of meetings 1954-1963; Minutes of the 6th meeting, 9 October 1956.

17 State Archives in Pazin, HR-DAPA-623; Society for Istrian History and Culture – Pazin Branch, series a) 1. Minutes of sessions 1954-1963; Minutes of the 1st Society Board meeting on 9 October 1956.

all that for the future generations as our cultural heritage... This is why the museum envisioned in this is faced with the urgent task of determining, noting, recording, collecting and processing all the ethnographic material in Istria.” Furthermore, Malić presented an exhaustive analysis of achievements to date, emphasized what the Museum should exhibit from the rich cultural heritage, and provides a detailed financial analysis of past expenses and future requirements until 1958 (Malić 1958; Rimanić 2012: 7).

In the same year a regional collection, the Memorial Vladimir Gortan Collection, with ethnographic and biographical items, was opened in Gortan’s native home in Beram (Ivetić, Pavić 2007: 14). In 1959 Ljubomir Petrović became the director of the Museum; he was also the director of the Historical Archives. The first ethnologist – Marija Križmanić (Milićević 1937: 2) also became member of the Museum staff.

Pursuant to the Decision of the People’s Committee of the Municipality of Pazin of 15 June 1960, the National Museum of Pazin became an independent institution administered by the Museum Council consisting of nine members. The Council became responsible for the administration and use of the *Kaštel*. The task of the institution was the collection, conservation, professional processing, and exhibition of objects and material related to folk life and customs, i.e., ethnographic activities, but also other cultural history topics and topics related to the “people’s revolution in order to disseminate knowledge about the subject and bring it closer to the people”,¹⁸ as indicated in the decision.

On 21 September 1960 the Museum Council adopted the Rules concerning the organization and operation of the National Museum. The Rules laid down the scope of the Museum’s activity: in ethnography the Museum was responsible for Istria in general; for historical and people’s revolution topics the Museum would collect material within the boundaries of the former Pazin District. In the period under consideration the only employees of the Museum were the director and the charwoman, and the need arose to engage a curator (Ivetić, Pavić 2007: 14).

The *Kaštel* building was used for the Museum and the (then) Historical Archives; it also housed a handicraft company, *Proleter*, which operated a tapestry shop on the first floor; part of the basement was occupied by a textile firm (the future *Pazinka*), and a plastics processing company, *Istraplastika*. The activities of these companies hindered free visitor access (Milićević 1973).

18 Decision on the foundation of the National Museum in Pazin, 15 June 1960: Files of the Pazin City Museum.

According to the decision of the Social Services Department of the People's Committee of the Pula District, the National Museum in Pazin became in 1961 the central museum for all Istrian collections acquiring ethnographic material (Milićević 1976: 78). Late in the same year the ethnologist Josip Milićević¹⁹ became a member of the staff, and started to collect ethnographic material. Later on he succeeded Ljubomir Petrović as Museum director (Milićević 1973: 3).²⁰

At the request of Museum director Ljubomir Petrović, Milovan Gavazzi applied in 1961 to the Culture and Science Council in Zagreb for funding required for the future work of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria (Kocković Zaborski 2013: 21). The result was the opening of the ethnographic collection, in two halls with approximately 80 sq. m., on 29 November 1961.

The already former employees Ljubomir Petrović and Marija Križmanić were responsible for the main design and object acquisition. The number of objects acquired for the event totalled 150; they were duly inventoried in line with museological rules and processed, and 145 were exhibited on the occasion. For the first time the exhibition presented traditional instruments and traditional costumes, but also the hearth, cooking and eating utensils, and traditional tools. The Museum holdings included about 250 ethnographic objects. Every object was accompanied by a "key"; the objects were also listed specifically for each exhibition area (Milićević 1973: 3, 1976: 78).

By decision No. S-71/1-1962 of 12 May 1962 the National Museum of Pazin was renamed to Ethnographic Museum of Istria. It became an independent institution as the central ethnographic museum for Istria, with the right to manage the *Kaštel*, the inventory and the museum material.²¹ The tasks of the Museum (as indicated in the 1960 decision) were extended to the processing or Museum material by scholars and experts, advanced museum staff training, research and promotion of the museum profession. At registration as a specialized institution the holdings of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria totalled about 800 objects; it had a conservation room, and a photographic laboratory for photographing museum objects. The curator also photographed important events for the Municipality of Pazin. Moreover, a number of embassies donated a considerable number of specialized books. The employees included the curator,

19 The first Istrian ethnologist to achieve a Ph.D. in ethnology on Istrian traditional handicrafts. He also pursued topics such as construction, customs, folklore, and history of Istrian ethnology (Nikolić Đerić 2013: 63, 64).

20 Ljubomir Petrović and Marija Križmanić became employees of the Historical Archive, but continued to provide assistance in the acquisition of ethnographic material and in other Museum activities.

21 *Decision on the establishment of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria*, Pazin, 12 May 1962; files of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria.

ethnologist Josip Milićević, who was also the director of the Museum, the guardian of the exhibition and the housekeeper Paulina Šepić (Milićević 1973: 4, 1976: 78).

As early as 1963 the Museum acquired new ethnographic objects, inventory books and inventory sheets, and the inventorying and photographing of the objects began. Late in the year Josip Milićević left the Museum and joined the staff of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Science in Zagreb, Ljubomir Petrović took over as acting director. The ethnologist Radmila Pavličević-Popović was the director of the Museum between 1964 and 1972, and ethnologist Marija Ugrin worked in the Museum between 1969 and 1972 (Milićević 1973: 4, 1976: 79).²²

The new permanent display of the Ethnographic Collection was opened in 1968 on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the annexation of Istria to Croatia and Yugoslavia. It was laid out in five halls on the second floor of the *Kaštel* on an area of 350 sq. m. (Ivetić Pavić 2007: 20; Milićević 1973: 6-9, 1976: 88). The opening was attended by eminent guests such as the politicians Savka Dabčević Kučar and Vladimir Bakarić.²³ The display of the objects from the People's Liberation War, until then in the same premises, was moved in order to provide space for the permanent display, and the space was adapted accordingly.²⁴ The exhibition presented objects related to farming, traditional clothing, musical instruments, urban and rural ceramics, and fishing implements (Milićević 1976: 88). A permanent museum exhibition was also staged in Buje with the professional assistance of the curators of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria and loan of part of the material.²⁵

Since its inception the Ethnographic Museum Has has staged several permanent displays; they changed over time depending on the quantity of collected objects

22 She systematically covered the area of Buzet and northern Istria (Nikolić Đerić, 2013: 63, 64).

23 According to Đ. Juričić, then secretary of the Ethnographic Museum.

24 According to Milićević, on the occasion the interior architecture of the *Kaštel* was destroyed because the original brick floors were overlaid with wall-to-wall carpeting, and the chandelier from the *Rotonda* was removed and replaced by fluorescent lighting (Milićević 1973: 6).

25 The display in Buje presented especially the weaving process, a blacksmith's shop from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, farming, livestock breeding, and typical rural and urban home furnishings from the Buje area (Pavličević-Popović 1968: 25).

and new trends in ethnology and museology. The latest permanent display still present in the Museum dates from 1986.²⁶

Istrian ethnographic material has been collected and exhibited from the very beginnings of the Museum activity. In 1957 the collection/exhibition in the present-day kitchen displayed a rural hearth and set up thereby the nucleus of the future Ethnographic Museum of Istria. Over time equipment for exhibiting and conserving exhibits was acquired or donated to the Museum, and that marked the start of activities focused on the collection and display of the rich Istrian ethnographic heritage. In the nineteen-sixties the ethnographic display was extended with themes such as viticulture, olive growing, oil production and wool processing. Ethnologist Josip Miličević, who started working in the Museum in the period under consideration, deserves full credit for all these activities.

The material collected for the Pazin Museum after the Second World War included the inventory of a rural kitchen, locally made unglazed pottery, but also quite a few objects not produced in Istria. They included *sklede*, *sklede kranjice*, pottery sold in Istria by the Slovenes, and *faience* (tin-glazed) pottery which reached Istria mainly with seamen who bought them in workshops in Italy, France, the United Kingdom and Austria. These objects were part of the rural inventory (Kocković Zaborski, 2015: 42, 43).

These data reflect the need to collect ethnographic objects and found an ethnographic collection in the very first years of the Museum activity. As Dr. Bauer indicated in his proposal about the foundation of the National Museum, the collection was meant to justify, by material evidence, “our claim regarding the ethnic belonging of Istria”, i.e., regarding the autochthonous character of the Croatian population throughout Istria. Such proposals reflected the political circumstances in the period under consideration but also the endeavours of professionals, and resulted in the diligent collection of ethnographic objects, the display of acquired material and subsequent greater museum specialization in the acquisition and presentation of ethnographic material. Eventually,

26 Although occasional exhibitions were very successful in reflecting new museological principles and views, the permanent display of the Ethnographic Museum is obsolete, under-communicating and does not present sufficient information to the national and foreign museum public. It was staged more than twenty years ago and reflects the methods and reflections of the ethnologists and museum workers in the period under consideration. It presents exclusively rural culture without any reference to the transformation of specific customs and other cultural impacts. The permanent display provides no information on the specific features of life in the Čićarija, Labin and Žminj areas, life in other Istrian towns, or on differences and similarities between ethnic and gender groups. “Today, in line with new theories and approaches in ethnology as a science and with the cultural policy of the Istrian County and the general understanding of ‘political correctness’, Istria is also observed and interpreted as a multicultural space” (Nikočević 2007: 21).

the route earmarked for the museum led in 1962 to the foundation of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria as an independent, central institution and the central ethnographic museum of Istria.

KAŠTEL/THE MUSEUM AS PART OF PERSONAL HISTORIES

While being a space accommodating a museum and – earlier, a prison and a shelter during the Second World War – the *Kaštel* is also a part of personal histories. For the Pazin townspeople that lived close to the *Kaštel* or in the castle itself its architecture was part and parcel of their personal history, as were the various changes due to different and political situations in the building itself or in its immediate vicinity.

In the search for narrators capable of throwing light on the period immediately after the Second World War in Pazin, and describe more closely the significance of the Pazin *Kaštel* for the people that lived in its vicinity, two narrators were a true treasure trove of narratives: Zvonimir Juričić, who worked in the Museum and lived near the *Kaštel*, and Mirna Milanović, whose grandmother and grandfather lived in the *Kaštel* (the grandmother, Paulina Šepić, worked as a charwoman and sold admission tickets).

As a boy Z. Juričić lived near the *Kaštel* as a boy and, after the Second World War until the age of 14 (until 1954). According to his narrative, during the war German soldiers kept horses in the premises of the present-day *Jules Verne* café; children who lived near the *Kaštel* stole food from them because they were hungry and thus improved their daily fare. Medieval weapons and documents were kept in several rooms of the *Kaštel*. Since the rooms were not locked, boys played with swords and helmets, which vanished completely, while documents were left to decay.

After the Second World War (most probably in 1959 and 1950), some of the rooms in the *Kaštel* were used to store hazelnuts, juniper berries and some other fruits, purchased from farmers, and transported by truck to the railway station and further inland.²⁷ Because of major shortages, people lived off aid packages, and children resorted to all kinds of ways to get food: thus, most of the fruit-trees in Pazin were “harvested” before the fruit ripened. Boys gradually took away fruit stored in the *Kaštel* by drilling holes in the floor of the storerooms. Eventually, as adolescents they were even arrested and held in custody for six hours. At the time the prison was situated in the premises

27 Z. Juričić thinks the fruits were delivered to *Kraš*, the major confectionery manufacturer.

currently housing the State Archives in Pazin.²⁸ While in prison the boys were given a meal of beans with sausages and gorged themselves. Boys who lived near the *Kaštel* took goats to graze into the Pit;²⁹ soldiers on both sides had thrown cartridges, hand grenades, shells and even whole vehicles into the Pit. A river, Pazinčica, ran throughout the pit, and boys went there to swim there and fish for eel. Because of the great quantity of ordnance left over after the war, many people were killed, especially children who played with the stuff unaware of the danger.

Đ. Juričić returned to the *Kaštel*, i.e., the later Ethnographic Museum of Istria, as the secretary of the Museum in 1966, and worked there until 1971. In the period under consideration the director was Radmila Pavičević-Popović; Sonja Kontušić Prelac was the charwoman, and the handyman and caretaker was Karlo Blašković. Although employed as secretary, Đ. Juričić was also responsible for curator's duties because the Museum had no professional staff. This is why he accompanied the director on her field tours considering the main Museum task at the time – the acquisition of objects from the former Zone B. This involved especially visits exclusively to villages and acquisition of kitchen utensils and furnishings, plates, chests, as well as objects used by the Croatian rural population. Due note should again be taken of the fact that the field operators also collected quite a few objects not manufactured in Istria such as ceramic *faience* pottery, plates and other utensils used in the rural homes on special occasions. One of the main tasks was the acquisition of objects before blackmarketeers got hold of them and sold them in Italy; Italians also visited the area personally in order to acquire such objects. Unfortunately, after arrival in the Museum the objects were not properly registered and documented. The first member of the staff to take care was ethnologist Marija Ugrin who began to work in the Museum in the early nineteen-seventies. Because of this many important data were lost about the objects, workmanship and acquisition, and the route of their arrival in Istria (Kocković Zaborski 2015: 42).

In addition to his duties as secretary and on-the-job-trained ethnographer, Đ. Juričić was also responsible for guiding the few tourists who were thrilled by the *Kaštel* and by the permanent display of the Museum. He spoke Italian and French and communicated well with tourists, mainly Italians (especially people from Pazin who had left for Italy after the war), but also with Germans.

28 Across the road from the *Kaštel*.

29 The Pazin Pit under the Pazin *Kaštel* was used in the Middle Ages as a natural defence against invaders.

Another family is closely associated with the *Kaštel* is the Šepić family, who lived there between 1953 and 1966. They came to Pazin from Motovunski Novaki because Petar Šepić (1902-1983) wanted his children to attend school. They were assigned an apartment in the *Kaštel*. The family left their farm and moved with seven children to Pazin. Petar Šepić found a job as a welfare worker, and Paula Šepić (1904-1983), until arrival in Pazin was a housewife, was employed as a charwoman and caretaker in *Kaštel*. According to the minutes of the 1st meeting of the Society board in 1958, the formerly temporary charwoman Paula Šepić was employed full time as a charwoman, caretaker and Museum guide, and the Museum was open every day between 9 and 12 AM, and between 9 and 12 AM and 3 and 6 PM on Sundays and red-letter days.³⁰ The Museum could be open even twice daily on Sundays and red-letter days because Paula Šepić lived in the Museum.

It was in *Kaštel* one of the daughters of Petar and Paula Šepić³¹ met her future husband; she lived there and he worked in a carpenter's shop (in one of the rented *Kaštel* premises). They were married in the *Kaštel* in 1957.³² For a time the new family lived with their daughter³³ in the *Kaštel*.

After that they moved to another apartment, but kept visiting their family still living in the *Kaštel*. The narrator, Mirna Milanović, remembers the cosy and warm apartment³⁴ of her grandmother and grandfather, and the permanent Museum display, especially the *voz* (cart) and traditional costumes which made her uncomfortable (when she was a little girl) because they reminded her of witches.

CONCLUSION

Because of the many pressures of the Western Allies, but also of the Soviet Union, the agreement whereby the former Julijska Krajina was divided into Zone A and Zone B was signed in Belgrade in 1945. That was an attempt to deal, for some time, with the issue of the borders between Italy and Croatia/Yugoslavia. However, in practical terms all the agreements signed between the end of the Second World War and the nineteen-seventies did not bring any stability to

30 State Archives in Pazin, HR-DAPA-623; Society for Istrian History and Culture – Pazin Branch; series a) Minutes of meetings 1954-1963; Minutes of the first meeting, 1958.

31 Ana Krnjus, nee Šepić, mother of narrator Mirna Milanović.

32 Where another daughter of the Šepić family was married in 1965.

33 The narrator, Mirna Milanović.

34 Currently offices of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria.

the region. Along with continuous political security, this greatly influenced cultural activity in the region and, ultimately, the foundation of institutions such as the Ethnographic Museum of Istria in Pazin. Considering the arrival of the Inter-Allied Demarcation Commission, the exhibition *Testimonies of the Slav Character of Istria*, opened in Pazin in 1946, and the subsequent activities of the Society for History and discussion of the meetings of the Society, showed the prevailing³⁵ wish and need to prove and demonstrate the presence of material proof on the presence of the Slav/Croatian tradition and culture in Istria. Along with proposals coming from professionals in Zagreb (Bauer, Gavazzi), the members of the Society were also aware of the importance of acquiring and exhibiting of rural culture objects, stressing in their turn how important it was to channel museum activity along ethnographic lines. This resulted eventually in the founding of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria.

In addition to the political importance underlying the foundation of a central museum for Istria, another important point was the wish to present the life and culture of Istrian farmers “...which retained the autochthonous ethnic character...”, “The Museum is supposed to study farmers’ handicrafts, which are disappearing day after day and replaced by industrial goods... and collect objects from folk life: farming implements, home utensils...” (Malić 1958: 299). This was one of the frequently emphasized conclusions which could be found in the media during the period under consideration.

Although the argumentation drawing on the folklore and other traditional culture elements of Slav Istria was sustained up during the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies as the dominant line of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria, another fact also deserves particular attention, and that is the awareness of the Museum curators of the diversity of cultures in Istria. This can be seen in the documents on the acquisition of material from Rovinj and Vodnjan – objects of Italian urban culture like chests from Rovinj and a Venetian mirror from Vodnjan, and traditional Montenegrin women’s dress from Peroj (Nikolić Đerić, Orlić 2013: 32, 37).

Interpretations of culture are – obviously – subjective, and the exhibited (acquired and interpreted) ethnographic material can and must to be observed through the prism of time (and the political and economic situation) in which it was acquired for the Museum – whether it is an Austrian, Yugoslav or Croatian prism (Nikočević 2002: 100).

In addition to the review of the conditions and activities which resulted in the early museological activities in the *Kaštel* and the eventual foundation of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria, it should be noted that the *Kaštel* and its area

35 With the desire to emphasize the mass participation of the inhabitants of Istria in *NOB*.

are deeply embedded in the personal histories of families who lived in the vicinity of the *Kaštel* or in it. Their narratives provide insight into the time immediately after the Second World War, in a period of great penury, as well as insight into the conditions of the fortress. At the same time, the *Kaštel* became part of family history, the place where one lived, cooked, slept, fell in love and married. Therefore, the building that currently houses three institutions³⁶ can also be regarded in three terms as the home of noble families from the first mention in 983 onwards, a prison and shelter during the war, and until the nineteen-sixties as a place where one lived and worked there. All that is only a small part of its rich and singular history.

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