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# Development of Museological Thought in Croatia and Vladimir Tkalčić's Place in It

The paper first provides an overview of the historical level of museology and the history of museology as its special aspect because researching the work of a personality from the history of museums in Croatia belongs exactly to this level and aspect of museology. Next, successive stages of the development of museological thought are given, and persons who made contributions in Croatia are identified. In conclusion, it is determined that although Tkalčić cannot be called the initiator of the Croatian museology, as provided in the entry in the Croatian Encyclopaedia, he was an expert on basic theoretical museological concepts, even more so in the field of practical museology, who not only kept track of foreign thought but also laid in practice many foundations related to the furnishing of museum buildings, the principles of good exhibition, and the use of various means of communication, all with an aim to allow also the least educated audience to find museums to be places of education and learning.

Key words: historical museology, socialist museology, popular education,

Vladimir Tkalčić, Baltazar Bogišić

## INTRODUCTION ON THE HISTORICAL LEVEL OF MUSEOLOGY AND OUR PERSPECTIVE

By taking part in a conference dedicated to our prominent cultural figure, we are pursuing one of numerous practices reflecting and reproducing social memory. In the case of Vladimir Tkalčić (1883-1971), the practice at issue is the one lived by a small-sized interpretation community of experts who, at the end of 2021, committed to re-constructing the bases for transferring

memories about an exceptional personality in the field of the history of both museum activity and museological activity in Croatia. Having written this, we have sided with those who see history as a social construct that is always created in the present moment. To anchor it, we have additionally researched certain forms of Tkalčić's activity and written this text, which, after its translation into a foreign language, will enter the general information stream. All of this can also be interpreted as actively dealing with historical museology. Accordingly, several paragraphs will be dedicated to this very level of museology.

We have found the basis for interpreting historical museology in the circle of the European theoreticians of museology that are close to us, in particular, Peter van Mensch who really laid firm foundations for understanding museology as a science already while preparing his doctoral thesis at the University of Zagreb (van Mensch 1992 b). Taking into consideration the general methodological and didactic understanding of every field of knowledge, he proposed that the museology be divided into five parts, the central part being general museology, with associated fields of theoretical, special, practical (in Croatia still called museography), and historical museology. The latter was shortly defined as the one that provides the protection of historical thought (van Mensch 1992b: 65). Ivo Maroević (1937-2007), founder of the Museology Department and of the separate Museology Graduate Programme with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, decided to accept and spread this model but also, in his own way, assessed the historical museology itself as a level at which the essential reach of museological thought was not achieved (Maroević 1993: 12). Nevertheless, we have been conducting researches at this very level for years in an attempt to show that its reaches are inspirational for theoretical museology as well, specifically in the segment of historiography of museology, and, above all, usable in the modern museum practice (Vujić 2003: 145-165).

At the beginning of our work, we tried to define as accurately as possible the area of the mentioned researches, using four basic parameters of the museological methodology: museum or heritage object or section (collection), museological functions, institution where functions take place, and society (community) giving full meaning to the functions (van Mensch 1992b: 105). It should be noted that we have not examined the issue of the scope or positioning hierarchy of these parameters, which can also serve as a basis for demonstrating the differences in the understanding of the discipline in both a certain time period and a certain social or academic community. Hence, researches at the historical museology level should include:

- a diachronic examination of the relationship towards heritage objects and sections and a research on values attributed to such objects, which communities assigned those
- a diachronic research on collection and forms of collection
- a diachronic research on protection and researches on heritage objects
- a diachronic research on the communication of heritage objects (to the society)
- a history of museological institutions (in particular, museums)
- a history of museology as a science and of education for museum work as a special aspect of this level that connects historical museology with the theoretical one. (Vujić 2003: 152).

Such a stand within the historical epistemological position was also taken by the representative of critical museology Anthony Shelton in his paper "Critical museology. A Manifesto". 2013. Museum Worlds 1: 8.

In addition, we have emphasised that when researching a selected phenomenon or a group of phenomena in a certain period of time, a synchronic approach should be applied as it compares phenomena that take place in the same time slice but in different social circumstances and communities. Finally, with a view to deepening the methodology of researching historical museology, we have taken over the considerations of the Austrian museologist Fridrich Waidacher, that is, his typology of questions that a researcher should ask themselves in the course of a diachronic research in the mentioned area. These are the following groups of questions:

- diachronic temporal: When did something occur?
- diachronic local: Where did something occur?
- · diachronic modal: How did something occur?
- diachronic causal: Why or for what reason was something like this? (Waidacher 1998: 81).

We have listed them here as an activating framework that served for researching and interpreting Vladimir Tkalčić's activity.

# THE MAIN PERIODS OF MUSEOLOGICAL THOUGHT AND THEIR VISIBILITY IN CROATIA

Deliberating on the development of museological thought and pointing out important events (conditions) and actors (agents) that were capable of initiating changes, characterised all theoreticians who strived to have a comprehensive view of museology as a scientific discipline. Among them was, in our environment, Ivo Maroević, from whom we have taken over the four main periods in the development of museological thought (Maroević 1993: 50), to which we have attributed the current knowledge about the Croatian contribution within them.

The long period from the publication of the first museological treatise on the representation of knowledge through objects and images organised in the form of an amphitheatre by the Belgian physician Samuel Qiccheberg (Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi... 1564), through Jencquel's Museography or Guide for the Proper Understanding and Useful Creation of Museums and Chambers of Rarities from 1727, which is considered symbolic for the profession, to the beginning of the 19th century, is considered the beginnings of museological thought. That period was marked by the emergence of texts related to the oldest museological phenomenon - a collection of objects as a result of gathering, its content, and structuring in spaces intended for that purpose, including also presentations and lists of such collections that were called museums. In 1753, the book Instructio musei rerum naturalium... or Instruction for a Museum of Natural Objects was published, in which Carl von Linne and David Hultman applied the classification of natural species to the organisation of natural scientific collections, that is, museums. Evidently, the earlier scientific paradigm, reflected in the so-called cabinets of the world and based on the similarity of things, changed, while variety and a difference-based classification started to have an impact on the design of collections<sup>2</sup>, which at the beginning of the 19th century expanded to also cover archaeological and other collections. In that period, the connection between the

<sup>2</sup> This a simplified understanding of Foucault's Renaissance and modern episteme in the context of creating collections, presented for the first time by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill in her book *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* from 1992.

design of (both institutional and private) collections and the development of certain sciences was strongly emphasised. That period was also marked by encyclopaedic projects, the Enlightenment, and, eventually, by the creation of the concept of a public museum, as we know it today, for the purpose of community.

The Croatian book and manuscript heritage does not have any authorial texts that could be classified as belonging to the beginnings of museological thought, however, the analysis of the books held in private libraries at the time testifies to the fact that literature that presented individual European museums was obtained and read, as well as books used by the collectors of coins and natural scientific rarities. Here, we would draw attention in particular to the great edition Armamentarium Heroicum by Jakob Schrenk from 1601, which is considered one of the earliest catalogues of a collection in Europe, in this case, a catalogue of the collection of pieces of equipment of heroes collected and exhibited in a special building in the Ambras Castle by Archduke Ferdinand II of Habsburg. The book was kept in the Library of the Counts of Zrinski in Čakovec3 because a family member, that is, Nikola IV Zrinski, who defended Sziget against the Turks, was represented in the collection by symbolic objects of the hero cult - a helmet and a sabre - and a graphic depiction, accompanied by a biographical text. Furthermore, Romani Collegii Societatus Jesu Musaeum Celeberrimum, a museum description and catalogue by the polymath Atanasius Kircher of Rome from 1678, is also to be pointed out. The catalogue refers to one of the best-known museums at the time and was held in the library of the Bogenšperk Castle in Slovenia owned by the Slovenian polymath and publisher Janez Vajkard Valvasor. Valvasor's library was purchased at the end of the 17th century and became a part of the holdings of the first public library in Zagreb, founded by the Bishop Aleksandar Mikulić.

Out of a number of numismatic titles that can be found in libraries, and which at the time of the great enthusiasm for numismatics served as sources for learning about own specimens of currency, and also of virtual collections themselves (a similar motivation was behind the collection of numismatic books), the one that stands out for its scientific content organisation is Numismata imperatorum romanorum compiled in Paris in 1718 by Anselmo Bandur, born in Dubrovnik. The book is not only a representative of the catalogue of the group of currencies of a certain period but also a work of an exceptionally rich scientific apparatus that includes a bibliography, numerous indices, and a list of two hundred numismatic collections known to the author.4 The second period of museological thought, called the proto-scientific period, also covers a relatively long time slice, that is, the entire 19th century until 1934 and the Madrid conference of museologists initiated by the directors of art museums. The term museology also appeared in that period, particularly in the German-speaking area, which was also the space of knowledge and cultural practice transfer for most of Croatia. Recent foreign researches into this phenomenon required that certain quotations of I. Maroević (Maroević 1993: 52-53) be corrected as given below. Thus, Structure of Dutch History and Museology from 1839 by Georg Rathgeber, librarian and curator of the numismatic collection of the Duke of Gotha, is mentioned as the first book that had the word museology in its title, with museology actually meaning the intro-

<sup>3</sup> That was one of the largest aristocratic libraries, a part of which has survived to the present day and is kept in the National and University Library in Zagreb as *Bibliotheca Zriniana*.

<sup>4</sup> The mentioned titles were addressed by the author of this text in her book *Sources of Museums in Croatia* from 2007.

duction of an academic systematic approach to the preservation and description of works of art in catalogues (Waltz 2018: 8). However, far more important is the interpretation of museology given in the 1845 work by Alexander Held, curator of the Royal Bavarian Cabinet of Naturalia in Munich, Demonstrative Natural History or Experiences and Instructions on the Collection, Preparation, Classification, Exhibition, Storage and Demonstration of Naturalia. Held explained in his book that museology was a separate area connected with other sciences and arts, with a focus on collecting and preserving natural curiosities for the purpose of scientific education, but also to serve as a (heavenly) delight for the eye (Waltz 2018: 9-10). In 1879, Johann Georg Theodor Grässe started up the *Journal of Museology and Antiquarianism and Related Sciences* in Dresden. The Journal was also mentioned by Maroević for its definition of museology in Grässe's contribution Museology as a Vocational Science from 1883 (Maroević 1993: 52), however, the article did not provide an actual definition, in particular as given by Held (Waltz 2018: 10). In 1905, Julius Leisching, Director of the Moravian Trade Museum, talked about fictional museum science and thus became the first one who directly connected the museum institution with science, wandering whether it existed (Waltz 2018: 10). However, this is actually a question that has been raised by some museum professionals and museologists to the present day.

In that proto-scientific period, researchers expanded their interests to the history of collection and creation of collections and museums, the publishing of museological journals intensified, as well as the establishment of museum associations, the primary function of which was to enhance expertise and strengthen the position of museum professionals. This was supported by the beginnings of organised education, where, at least for now, the primacy was held by École du Louvre (from 1882), which would be the place where some of the Croatian museum professionals and museologists received education in the 1930s.

As to texts in the Croatian language that could be described as texts on museological phenomena from the second period of the development of museology, the first ones should be, for now, attributed to Mijat Sabljar (1790-1865), Austrian army officer, collector, curator of the private museum of antiquities of the commander Count L. Nugent in Rijeka, and later also curator at the National Museum in Zagreb. Sabljar's text The Basics on How to Record Collections of Naturalia in the Main Regimental Places on the Croatian and Slavonian Military Frontier was published in 1853<sup>5</sup> and turned out to be a forerunner to a small opus of texts and manuscripts in which Sabljar addressed the mission and organisation of the National Museum in Zagreb and analysed the protection of movable heritage in Croatia in general. As to The Basics, the text was based on Sabljar's practical officer and collector activity and habitus, allowing him to create natural scientific and cultural collections already during his military service. He found support for the content of The Basics in the booklet Instructions for Beginners on How to Create Natural Scientific Collections by the German natural scientist August Emanuel Fürnrohr from 1852 (Sabljar 1990: 34). On that basis, Sabljar eventually shaped his original idea that natural scientific collections - of minerals, plants, and animals - should be created at schools and regimental military centres, that is, in their libraries with the educational aim to learn about the area where students and soldiers were located. Following the German author, Sabljar also provided instructions for listing materials and mentioned preferred data categories for that purpose (sci-

<sup>5</sup> The text was published in the *Monthly Paper of the Croatian and Slavonian Economic Society* for 1953 and reproduced in the 1990 themed issue of *Museology* dedicated to M. Sabljar – Vol. 28: 34-36.

entific and popular term, place of finding, the purpose for which materials were used among the population, etc.). It is interesting that he held the opinion that only natural scientific specimens should be gathered in the form of local collections, while numismatic specimens and antiquities would be better suited for the Zagreb-based Natural Museum, most likely on account of the economic value of the latter. In the text, Sabljar also pointed out the need to supervise and protect collections, a topic which he repeatedly addressed in his later works as well.

What particularly holds our attention in those texts is Sabljar's understanding of the ethical aspect of museum activity. Namely, he took a clear view that a museum curator must be responsible for the collections in their care (and proposed that a financial guarantee be deposited for the event that objects went missing) and suggested the implementation of annual audits of the museum holdings to prevent an uncontrolled outflow of objects, which he had the opportunity to witness and record while working on the holdings of the National Museum in Zagreb (Sabljar 1990: 42).

The issue of refurbishing of the National Museum in Zagreb and the need to establish a special type of a general museum - an all-Slavic one - along the lines of the Germanic National Museum in Nürnberg, were addressed by the doctor of philosophy and law, member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (JAZU), and Slavic law professor at the Odesa University Baltazar Bogišić (1834-1908). While, when it came to the refurbishment of the National Museum, his focus was primarily on developing a comprehensive museum library<sup>6</sup>, his 1866 text on the need to establish an all-Slavic museum, which was marked as the best possible form for establishing, determining, and developing (the identity of, author's note) a broader Slavic community (Bogišić 1867: 15), can truly be considered a museological text. In the text, Bogišić developed, in a very detailed and serious manner, the mission, goals, organisation, and activities that such a museum would pursue in a large community of Slavic peoples, applicable also to other museums, either at a local or other level, which would be based on the research and representation of identities of communities and peoples. What should be particularly emphasised is Bogišić's commitment to a scientifically based museum activity – (l)ook everywhere for materials, describe them scientifically, acquire them, and, if this is not possible, make copies (pictures or excerpts) and place them in the museum, and spread the knowledge of the Slavic past and present around the globe by scientific, periodical, and other means (Bogišić 1867: 25), which he considered a complete opposite to the museums that were, at the time, based on acquiring an abundance of objects and showing rara and unica (Bogišić 1867: 24). It has to be noted that Bogišić was not original in developing such a museum concept but, rather, relied to a large extent on detailed Memoranda of the Germanic National Museum, that is, on the comprehensive publication Das Germanische Nationalmuseum: Organismus und Sammlungen<sup>7</sup> from 1856, although, according to his biography (law studies in Vienna, Berlin, and Munich, study visits to Paris, Heidelberg, and Giessen in Germany, and later to London and Odesa, etc.) and his own words - I have not only managed to see but also study almost all more important museums and other collections of that kind in western Europe (Bogišić 1866: 6) - it can be assumed that he also visited that museum and personally learned about the functioning of certain points.. Both his and the Bavarian concepts were based on the Renaissance understanding of the museum as a scientific centre, the work of which should be

<sup>6</sup> Bogišić himself worked for a while as a librarian in the Slavic Department of the Court Library in Vienna at the beginning of the 1860s.

We could not find the publication in our libraries but were able to access it thanks to digitalisation: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89099463234&view=1up&seq=1 (accessed on 10.5.2022).

based not only on collections of materials but also on libraries and archives and the so-called repertorium, which, nowadays, can be understood as a database of literature and sources for *history, language, ethnography, arts* (Bogišić 1867: 28).

However, to those four departments in Nürnberg, Bogišić added, in accordance with his interests and scientific work, a fifth one - the ethnographic department - which should have dealt with representatives of folk material culture but also the collection of customs and spiritual creations. Namely, Bogišić figured out very early that ethnographic materials were a valuable source for studying folk customs, an integral part of which were also customs of a legal character with which he had dealt his whole life. In the same year when both his museologically coloured texts were created, he published the Instruction for Describing Legal Customs and sent it, after extending it to 360 questions on various areas of social life, to a number of his associates in the territory of the Balkan Peninsula and, based on systematised and interpreted answers, issued the Collection of the Current Legal Customs of South Slavs in 1874. Its research content and methodology<sup>8</sup> also made a significant contribution to social sciences. In conclusion, although Bogišić was not original when it came to his vision of the mission and organisation of an all-Slavic museum but, rather, used tenets on which the Germanic National Museum was established, he left a mature museological text, written in the Croatian language and Cyrillic alphabet, addressing all aspects of museum work, including an in-depth coverage of the user aspect on which so much emphasis is placed today. The position of museum visitors, users, and departments was elaborated, in particular in relation to making sure that materials were accessible and that research results were well received through various publications.

Texts by Izidor Kršnjavi (1845-1927), painter, art historian, lawyer, and politician, also belong to the second period of museological though and were already the subject of our careful study and interpretation at an earlier point in time (Vujić 2009). He particularly addressed the issue of conceptualisation and establishment of the museum of arts and crafts in Croatia as a new type of museum of the second half of the 19th century. Kršnjavi presented it to the public as a contrast to traditional museums that were based on collections of individual disciplines and scientific work of curators (as evidenced by the strong connection between the university positions and the museum ones). The vocabulary and discourse used to describe the new type of museum at the time (e.g. an alive, active museum) are similar to the description of eco-museums and other types of museum that are process-oriented rather than object-oriented in the last quarter of the 20th century. Kršnjavi did not address the concept and definition of his area of interest and pragmatic work, however, in an earlier text, he mentioned the notion of museum science<sup>9</sup>, which we have understood as the Croatian equivalent of the German notion *Museumskunde*, used as a synonym for museology in the German-speaking area from A. Held onwards.

Vladimir Tkalčić, a personality dedicated to museums and heritage who we will discuss below, started his activity at the beginning of the 20th century. Another name to be mentioned here is Gjuro Szabo (1875-1943), Director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (MUO) and the Zagreb City Museum and, until the end of his life, active Secretary of the National Committee for the

<sup>8</sup> According to Strohal, the *Instruction* was translated into the so-called Little Russian (read: Ukrainian) language in Lviv, as well as into the Czech and Bulgarian languages in Prague. See: STROHAL, Ivan. 1908. Dr. Valtazar Bogišić /nekrolog/. *Ljetopis JAZU* 23: 91.

<sup>9</sup> Kršnjavi's text "Our 'Archaeological' Museum". 1879. Obzor 113: 2.

Preservation of Art and Historical Monuments in Croatia and Slavonia, namely, in the context of the protection of immovable and movable heritage, of the assembly and creation of private collections, and also of questioning the status and role of Zagreb-based museums in general. According to T. Stahuljak, it was Vladimir Tkalčić himself who took on the role of Szabo's advisor of a sort in the matters of museum activity (Stahuljak 1995: 189), and, thus, it should come as no surprise that Szabo also considered museums to be not only scientific institutes but also intermediaries to the audience (Szabo 1934: 89). Szabo deserves a mention also for being the first heritage professional who was publicly presented in Croatia as a museologist.<sup>10</sup> In the mid-1930s, Antun Bauer (1911-2000) appeared on the cultural and museum scene. In 1967, he organised a post-graduate museology programme, held an inaugural university lecture on museology, took part in the establishment and work of a number of museum institutions in Croatia (especially worth mentioning is the unique institution of the Museum Documentation Center (MDC) in Zagreb), expressing the whole time his understanding of the world through the assembly and creation of personal collections. It is Bauer to whom we owe the fact that Croatian museology found, for the first time, its place on the international topographic map of this social science and its actors.

We are also indebted to Bauer for highlighting the role of two museum revolutions and for observing the development of museology, that is, the boundaries of the third empirical and descriptive period, for which he also gained international recognition (van Mensch 1992a: 2-3)11. Both revolutions can be temporally and socially related to the crisis of the museum institution. And while we have always been aware of the second one, which was a factor in the emergence of eco-museums and the heritage movement for the active preservation of community heritage known as New Museology, we have almost forgotten the first one despite it being valued in our territory by Bauer and Maroević. According to Bauer, it was in Paris where, in the early 1930s, a generally interested but "non-professional" audience (Bauer 1976: 54) expressed widespread discontent with the exhibition (unsystematised and cluttered presentation) and activity of Louvre and other French museums. This sparked a general discussion on museums, which was met with very little interest from the International Museum Office. However, the Paris-based cultural magazine Revue then conducted a four-question survey on museum exhibitions at the time (Are present-day museums overcrowded with objects, confusing, and ugly?), their problems, and potentiality for change, especially in France (Bauer, 1976: 55). The art dealer Georges Wildenstein sent the questionnaire to the most prominent international museum experts, museum directors, university professors, cultural professionals, art historians, and architects. Around forty answered and sent their written opinions, which resulted in the edition Musées: Enquête internat. sur la réforme des galeries publiques (Paris, 1931). The survey and publication sparked a slew of reactions, and that creative initiative12 led to the organisation of the first conference in Madrid in

<sup>10</sup> See: ESIH, Ivan. 1937. "Muzejsko pitanje u Zagrebu. Mišljenje muzeologa prof. Đure Szabo-a u Matasovićevoj "Narodnoj starini". *Jutarnji list* 262: 11.

<sup>11</sup> Please note that the doctoral thesis of the Dutch museologist underwent changes in the later *online* publication. Namely, the original doctoral thesis, which is kept in the Library of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, there is no mention of Bauer in the context of revolutionary changes, while the *online* edition regularly includes his thesis of two revolutions.

<sup>12</sup> It was Wildenstein who, in the introductory text of the mentioned publication, called the Survey and everything going on around it a revolution, not a reform, which Bauer took up from him four decades later.

1934, marking the beginning of the third period of museological thought, that is, its empirical and descriptive phase, accentuated by the process of the professionalisation of museum work and the emancipation of museology in relation to the basic disciplines. The first part of that period in Croatia was marked by Vladimir Tkalčić's activity, while the second, post-war part, when museology started to develop within the bloc of socialist countries, was represented by the thought and activity of Antun Bauer, who was also a topic of interest of the museum community at a conference organised by the end of 202113. Antun Bauer should be seen as the initiator of the understanding of museology as an interdisciplinary science within the information sciences, although he did not use their theoretical platform for his understanding of the basic concepts. Namely, he was the one who, in co-operation with the library and documentation departments, organised a Post-Graduate Museology Programme in 1967. Although he most often remained at the practical level of museology (Maroević 1993: 25), while seeking to strengthen documentation as an essential heritage activity (he founded the MDC and the Fine Arts Archives) and the mission and profession of museum educator, to raise awareness about the user aspect, and to motivate early involvement of Croatian museums in the informatisation process, he also contributed to the theoretical understanding of the phenomena of museum collection and museum object as an object and a subject at a museum exhibition. He owed the latter to Fedor Ivanovich Schmidt (1877-1937), Russian historian and art theoretician, Byzantologist, and museum professional, whom Western museology remembers mostly for his opinions expressed in an article on Soviet museums, where the mentioned museum activity, especially in Kharkiv and Kiev, is nowadays illuminated by modern Ukrainian museology<sup>14</sup>.

The fourth period, called the theoretical and synthetic phase, in Croatia was almost fully characterised by the activity of Ivo Maroević, whose thoughts and achievements – establishment of the Museology Department as part of the Information Sciences Division at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, establishment of four-year and two-year museology programmes, development of a museology system – are well known in the domestic and international community, especially through his book *Introduction to Museology : The European Approach* from 1998. However, at the same time, the philosophy of New Museology advocates was represented, albeit not as systematically and consistently, in the work of Tomislav Šola, while nowadays we are in an era of critical examination of the basic concepts of museology and taking into account of critical studies of heritage and social semiotics.

Hence, against this background, Vladimir Tkalčić's activity is a chronological link between the second and the third period of museological thought in Croatia, however, in the next chapter we will try to answer the question whether this applies also to the content of his thought.

<sup>13</sup> Scientific and Professional Conference Prof. Dr. Antun Bauer – Museumist and Donor, Marking his 110<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary, held in Zagreb on 3 December 2021.

<sup>14</sup> We refer here to the works by Tamara Aleksandrovna Kutsaeva from the Kiev-based National Ukrainian History Museum.

### VLADIMIR TKALČIĆ – A MISSING MUSEOLOGICAL LINK OR SOMETHING ELSE?

The interpretation of his published texts aimed at painting a picture of Vladimir Tkalčić's museological thought. In those efforts, we have encountered the interesting fact that there are very few such texts, which in itself can indicate that Tkalčić was primarily focused on practical work. It should be remembered that he managed the then two oldest and largest museums in the Croatian territories (in addition to the natural scientific ones) - the Ethnographic Museum and the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb - at the time between the two World Wars, and was also active in the National Committee for the Preservation of Art and Historical Monuments in Croatia and Slavonia. Likewise, an analysis of museologically relevant texts has confirmed that those were contributions mostly created as an intellectual support to the institutions in which he worked (reviews on the work and history of individual museums and representation of individual collections) or with which he co-operated (for example, the photographing of the Zagreb Cathedral Treasury in 1913 under a project implemented by the mentioned National Committee could have affected him when he later wrote about the opening of the Diocesan Museum in Zagreb at the end of 1942). Thus, in the study of Tkalčić's museological thought we have decided to analyse in more detail only two texts, one of which chronologically belongs to the second and the other one to the third period of the development of museological thought. The first text was published in the first issue of Zbornik za pučku prosvjetu (Popular Education Collection), a journal launched and edited by the Croatian philosopher and pedagogue and later academic and practitioner in the field of people's education Albert Bazala (1877-1947). Bazala himself is credited with the establishment and work of the Public University in Zagreb from 1912, which had an open form and actively strived to educate all levels of society, that is, to raise people of that time from the so-called state of confinement and to set in motion their hidden forces which, eventually, were to create the culture itself (Bazala 1922: 4-5). In the editorial prolegomenon to the mentioned Collection, Bazala presented the popular educational movement which, in order to produce results, was supposed to make use of various means of education - lectures, book publishing, slide shows, presentation of artistic performances and organisation of folk festivities, organisation of travels, and museum activities<sup>15</sup>. It is precisely for the purpose of elaborating on the latter that Bazala hired Vladimir Tkalčić who at the time worked at the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb.

Tkalčić's short text Muzeji kao sredstva pučke prosvjete (Museums as a Means of Popular Education) (Tkalčić 1922b) had a relatively prominent place in the Collection. The notion of museology was neither mentioned nor used in any other form in the text. However, in that same year, in a presentation on how the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb came to being, which was published in the museum journal Narodna starina, Tkalčić used the adjective museological in the following statement: How much time and effort a systematic organisation of a museum collection requires is known to anyone who has had an opportunity to learn about the difficulties faced by the current management. They know very well what it means to organise a museum in accordance with the modern museological principles! (Tkalčić 1922a: 75). Clearly, the museological principles related to the principles on which a modern museum operates, meaning that Tkalčić indirectly confirmed that, in his opinion, museology actually dealt with museum activity.

<sup>15</sup> A Foreword by the Publisher and Editorial staff, behind which was Albert Bazala himself.

In the context of popular education, Tkalčić at first provided his view of the cause of the problems faced by museums in Croatia. According to him, that was "inadequate organisation" of museums which was still based on a linkage between universities and museums, resulting in employees not being able to only focus on museum work. He also noticed shortcomings in the exhibition of objects, the lack of a sufficient number of museum employees, and the lack of funding. In addition, he gave an interesting criticism of museums in Croatia with regard to their social role: Each museum, as a factor of social life, must be active in that life and must not live for itself as if the society had nothing to do with it... All our museums have too little contact with the outside world... (Tkalčić 1922b: 16). Already a short analysis of these lines shows that Tkalčić correctly identified the basic characteristic of museum institutions in times of crisis, followed by the questioning of the mission and role of museums, and, eventually, either by the creation of a new museological thought, as in the case of New Museology, or by the development of a new museum concept, as, for example, with arts and crafts museums in the 19th century or eco-museums in the 1970s.

He then touched upon the definition of a museum. In his opinion, museums are *institutions, that is, establishments that all together aim at giving a clear insight into the development of all life and its material and spiritual forms* (Tkalčić 1922b: 16). He also provided their basic division according to the type of materials (created either with or without human intervention) and according to their organisation. The next question that he asked was what direction museums should take in order to fulfil their purpose. Scientific and research activity and securing the conditions for such activity and for understanding aesthetic values were first, while the popular educational purpose, which was in the focus of his interest in the contribution at issue, came at the end. The fulfilment of the aforementioned purposes required the use of various means. It is interesting that, at the time, he alone managed to accomplish the following in the Ethnographic Museum: establish the institution of the representative of the Museum, Museum archives and library, a folk music section which made phonographic recordings, a small photographic laboratory, and a restoration workshop; moreover, folk practices were filmed in the Museum (Tkalčić 1922a: 75). Following his personal experience, and, most likely, certain German sources, in the following text he could discuss means that would allow museums to reach the widest layers of society.

As the first ones, he pointed out the quality of a museum room, systematically organised museum collections, and high-quality exhibitions based on a transparent but also aesthetic display and accompanied by object guides. In particular, he emphasised the achievement of aesthetic harmony in exhibitions, the prevention of displaying numerous objects of the same kind, the arrangement of exhibited objects in a visitor-pleasing manner (not above 250 cm and not below 80 cm), and the use of various aids, such as maps and models, all aimed at preventing visitor fatigue. Tkalčić seems to have been familiar with Gilman's 1916 research into the physical behaviour of art museum visitors and, likewise, with the notion of museum fatigue<sup>16</sup>, however, we find that his orientation towards visitors and their experience came from his personal observation during his practical work but also, possibly, from a literature that we have not been able to identify so far. Finally, in the context of overcrowding of objects in museums, Tkalčić was also familiar with the nowadays often-quoted description of Louvre by Mark Twain – *miles of paint-*

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Ives Gilman published the results of his research under the title *Museum Fatigue* in the journal *The Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Jan., 1916.): 62-74, however, this edition has not been identified in our territories. Available on: https://www.jstor.org/stable/6127?seq=1 (accessed on 10.5.2022).

ings by the old masters – from his travel book *The Innocents Abroad*<sup>17</sup>. Other important means that could have contributed to the education of museum visitors were certainly interpretations and guided tours of exhibitions, organisation of popular lectures with the use of various technical aids, organisation of periodical exhibitions (a more detailed display of parts of the holdings or new acquisitions, etc.), and issuing of museum journals and other publications.

As the last method, Tkalčić pointed to the establishment of local museums, that is, museums based on different identities of a place and its surroundings. They could not only educate and raise the members of their community but also prepare them for a visit to and the understanding of the tasks and missions of large museums. To establish a vivid contact with museums at different levels and by different means, which would be possible when people understand that museums offer a presentation of the whole world and, thus, an account of its life (Tkalčić 1922b: 19), was, according to Tkalčić, the essence of the educational activity of museums. Such an understanding was completely the fruit of Bazala's thinking, who believed that education was the main instrument of culture and a precondition to an active cultural action.

As already mentioned, at the time of writing his text, Tkalčić had a certain museum experience, however, we believe that he consulted a German handbook. Namely, next to guided museum tours, he also wrote the German version of this expression – *Museumsführungen* (Tkalčić 1922b: 18) and likely was also familiar with Bogišić's text on the concept of a Slavic museum that relied on the aforementioned comprehensive *Memoranda of the Germanic National Museum in Nürnberg*. <sup>18</sup> Namely, the majority of means described by Tkalčić that could have been used to fulfil the educational role of the museum had already been described there.

Narodna starina, which was edited by the culture historian Josip Matasović, was launched in the same year as the journal Zbornik za pučku prosvjetu. Tkalčić was also very much present in the infancy stage of Narodna starina. Naputak za povjerenike Etnografskog muzeja u Zagrebu (Instructions for Representatives of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb), compiled by Tkalčić in 1921 and officially adopted by the governmental Commission for Education and Religion in that same year (Naputak 1922), is particularly interesting in the context of museology. Indeed, the institution of the museum representative has existed in Croatian since the activity of I. Kršnjavi, it is also mentioned by Bogišić in his text and, without doubt, is owed to the practice of German museums. In addition to having been an official document of the Commission, the Instructions also brought a clearly established mission of the Ethnographic Museum and, within the framework of listing the activities of representatives, in the segment on collection, the collection policy itself of the Ethnographic Museum, specifically in relation to both original materials and materials that would contribute to the improvement of the museum professional aids. What was being referred to were the descriptions of folk life, as well as other materials on folk life and customs, accounts of journeys by representatives, illustrations of folk life on media of all kinds, models and copies of non-transferable materials, and literature from the described

<sup>17</sup> Louvre is described in Chapter XIV of this book. See: TWAIN, Mark. 2010. The Innocents Abroad. Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd.

<sup>18</sup> Bogišić's texts were found in the Library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU), however, no museum library in Zagreb has them. We thank the librarians of the Archaeological and Ethnographic Museums and the Museum of Arts and Crafts for providing us with the information that helped us write this text.

area. At the end, a procedure for collecting museum materials was described, thus rounding up the mentioned policy (*Naputak* 1922: 349-351).

In 1933, Tkalčić transferred to the Museum of Arts and Crafts as its Director. At the time, the museological thought of the second period was at its peak and the third period had just begun, marked by an important professional gathering in Madrid. So far, we have not identified any participants in the gathering from Croatia, and, likewise, we have not found in our museum libraries any publications produced during both the aforementioned Paris survey and the Madrid conference<sup>19</sup> that could serve as conduits for receiving their content and, thus, effecting change in the professional opinion and conduct. By the end of the 1930s, according to the museum advisor Stanko Staničić, Tkalčić had introduced new forms of museum work in the Museum of Arts and Crafts. On Fridays after working hours, expert meetings were held to discuss various expert topics, in the first place those related to working with the audience - promotion of visits to the Museum with expert guided tours of exhibitions, organisation of new events such as evening visits to the Museum, and organisation of thematic periodical exhibitions, but also working with materials, with the topic of inventorisation and organisation of the library figuring prominently (Staničić 2007:97). At the time, the Museum employed Zdenka Munk and Zdenko Vojnović, a leftist-oriented intellectual couple who, while staying in Paris (where Munk attended a one-year course at the *École du Louvre* in 1938), opened a Francophone channel of a sort for bringing European museological thoughts to Croatia.

Staničić expressly stated the following: French and German works on museography that were available at the time were studied together, and the participants concluded that the discussions on theses from the used literature would be (...) the first ever theoretical course in museography in our territories. (Staničić 2007: 97). The first course was held for museum custodians (at the time, those were doormen and museum building watchmen who resided on-premises in museums) at the turn of 1942 and 1943, but was attended by all professional employees of the Museum of Arts of Crafts, and also of the Ethnographic Museum that was previously managed by Tkalčić At the time, he started problematising the permanent exhibition of the MUO, which he saw in fifteen departments. In addition to departments that classified systematic collections according to materials, there was also a mention of technological presentations of arts and crafts, of a department of modern arts and crafts, and a department for the conservation and restoration of "creations of art" (Staničić 2007: 97).

World War II postponed a more intense dive into the communication aspects of heritage and imposed an extremely difficult period of vulnerability on the whole world, while making heritage employees deal with protection. The media have only recently started presenting how that looked in terms of protection of movable materials. Vladimir Tkalčić could be definitely said to have participated in the saving of extensive metal materials, specifically, of church bells during World War I, and to have led a sort of domestic version of the Monuments Men Squad in the territory of Croatia of that time, which included the saving of materials from the monasteries of Fruška gora, Gomirje, and Plaški (Bach 1955: 1-2; Sunara 2012: 44-45).

At the end of summer of 1947, amidst working on the organisation of the museum and the opening of new permanent exhibitions, Tkalčić gave a lecture under the heading *Museum Exhi-*

<sup>19</sup> The reference here is to the two-volume publication *Muséographie; architecture et aménagement des musées d'art* from 1935, which we have not been able to detect in any library in Croatia.

bition and Presentation of Objects as part of a Course for Museum and Conservation Employees in Zagreb.<sup>20</sup> The approximately two-hour long lecture was based not only on the interpretation of a prepared text but also on the use of about a hundred illustrations, all of which speak in favour of a great personal practical museographic experience and his conviction that visual information was important. Three years later, that is, in 1950, Tkalčić published perhaps his most important museological text under the heading On the Path of Socialist Museology in the magazine Urbanizam i arhitektura. It should be noted that, in the same year, Zdenko Vojnović started giving lectures at the Museology Course as part of the Art History Graduate Programme with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, while his students did their summer and winter museum internships at his home Museum of Arts and Crafts (Staničić 2007: 101).

The mentioned article clearly shows that Tkalčić was very much a pragmatist. Namely, in the first part he almost completely reproduced what he wrote in 1922 and then in the following text elaborated on the elements of a good exhibition, using the mentioned lecture from 1947, and on basic considerations about museum architecture, which was included in view of the context of the publication of the article. Of course, he first adjusted to the new social order by offering a few ideologically coloured sentences. For example, he wrote in the introduction that the civil social order did not allow for paying attention to the cultural advancement of the broad masses... the authorities today hold the view that museum institutions are one of the most powerful weapons in the fight for the people, that is, for its educational advancement and improvement of its standards of living (Tkalčić 1950: 57). Likewise, at the beginning, Tkalčić gave an amended version of the definition of museums, which at that point, that is, three decades later, were institutions that collected, kept, scientifically studied, and exhibited objects used to interpret, in a perceivable manner, phenomena in all areas of human knowledge and activity. He also extended the museum topology. As to the general task, that is, the mission of museums, he believed, as in 1922, that it was twofold - scientific (scientific research and processing of materials) and educational (Tkalčić 1950: 57). Museums that were operating without fulfilling those tasks were not museums. Only then did Tkalčić clearly stated his position on what museology was and what it addressed - all the issues that concerned museums and their exhibitions in view of their scientific and educational tasks, external and internal organisation, building, setting, the way of exhibition and interpretation of exhibits, etc., and, in general, everything connected to the life and work of the museum (Tkalčić 1950: 58). Thus, he was of the opinion that museology, as a museum praxeology of a sort, neither dictated nor prescribed but, rather, simply provided direction and represented management for action.

Tkalčić's statement on the phenomenon of museum object, which would later become the central interest of theoretical museology, was entirely museological in its nature. According to him, museum objects were monuments of the time and circumstances of their origin, they must not become dead witnesses to neither the past or present but, rather, serve the function of actively attaining knowledge because, if looked at and seen in the correct way, they must, through their permanent worth,... enrich them (viewers, author's note) with new knowledge in an interesting and easy manner (Tkalčić 1950: 58). To that effect, Tkalčić gave in the text his full attention to a meaningful presentation and the realisation of exhibitions, as they were considered exceptionally important, and used his previously written text only to a negligible extent. And while his

<sup>20</sup> We thank the Senior Curator Jasmina Fučkan from the Museum of Arts and Crafts for the information on and the scanned manuscript of the lecture.

1947 lecture was very concise and brought five principles of exhibition that were common to all types of museums - scientific principles, mise en valeur (placement of objects, author's note), aesthetic principles, technically refined aids, and finances (Tkalčić 1947: 5), the printed text was very descriptive, most likely because illustrations could not be used. For example, as to thematic breakdown, it was considerably more detailed than in 1922, mentioning genetic (with objects classified and shown according to their origin and development), chronological, technological, stylistic, and historical-sociological breakdown systems, of course, in addition to historical and artistic classifications by author, school, topic, etc. (Tkalčić 1950: 58). This was followed by practical instructions on how to exhibit meaningfully. It is interesting that Tkalčić first mentioned the need for using only essential objects, without overcrowding them, on the grounds that experts must be provided with study collections. On this point, he was much clearer than in 1922 when testifying that he was familiar with the concept of a so-called dual museum, that is, the division of museum exhibition materials into the ones included in the exhibition and the ones held in study collections. The concept was brought by the French archaeologist and museumist Salomon Reinach in a short 1909 article Museums, Libraries, and Catacombs (Reinach 1909).21 As in his earlier article from 1922, Tkalčić mentioned visitor fatigue, now already distinguishing between physical and psychological fatigue (Tkalčić 1950: 58).

He then addressed important design and museological exhibition elements - mass and colour relationships, lighting, placement of objects (earlier measures had been corrected, now the objects were not to be placed below 75 cm and above 150 cm), showcases and other furniture, and interpretative means such as legends and inscriptions, as well as live guided tours and printed guides. At the very end, and before discussing in detail the museum architecture, where he pointed out the imperative of functionality, Tkalčić touched upon propaganda tools – the verbal, written, and visual ones - used as a psychological preparation to better understand exhibitions (Tkalčić 1950: 59) and talked about stop places, museum cafes, and parks where visitors could rest. At the time, he could have already come into contact with the translation of a 1929 booklet by Lazar Vladimirovich Rozental (1894-1990) Through the Halls of Art Museums: A Guide for A Museum Visitor, which A. Bauer had had translated from the Russian language for his personal use after World War II. It is an exceptionally interesting publication of a Russian museum and heritage professional who is associated with the beginnings of the research of users in the Soviet Union. The booklet elaborated on the best methods for visiting art museums in order for visitors to avoid fatigue and to enjoy works of art regardless of their prior knowledge and interests. However, Tkalčić's sentences did not suggest the important role of the translation to him, rather, paying attention to visitor experience seemed to have come from a long museum practice.

On the other hand, the text prepared for his 1947 public lecture finally revealed a name whose thinking might have influenced him. In the context of understanding and meeting the needs of all types of audiences, Tkalčić quoted a part of a speech given by Alfred Lichtwark (1852-1914) on the occasion of celebrating the first Museum Day in Germany in 1903<sup>22</sup>: *Museums that are* 

<sup>21</sup> The magazine *Revue archéologique* was received by the HAZU Library and later by the library of the Archaeological Museum, and there is no doubt that Tkalčić could have access to it.

<sup>22</sup> We have identified the source thanks to the lecture *Warum ins Museum? – Chancen und Möglichkeiten der Museen als außerschulische Lernorte* given by Gisele Weiss in 2008. https://www.bildungspartner.schulministerium.nrw.de/Bildungspartner/Veranstaltungen/Dokumentationen/080917-Fachtagung\_Bildungspartner\_Museum/vortrag\_weiss.pdf (accessed on 6.5.2022).

open to the whole nation, serving everyone and without differentiating among people, are a reflection of the democratic spirit (Tkalčić 1947: 2), which could only take root after the war in the museums of advanced countries, on both sides of the world. Behind the mentioned name was the exceptional personality of the German museum professional Alfred Lichtwark who at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries successfully influenced active teaching of arts in museums and turned the art museum that was founded and managed by him - Kunsthalle in Hamburg into a lively heritage place, especially for children and young people, through lectures, guided tours, and participating exhibition projects with teachers' associations, etc. It was a sort of a new art museum that was not object oriented and did not wear itself out creating representative collections but, rather, focused on fulfilling, in a high quality and systematic manner, its educational role in developing an eye and artistic taste of the general public (Priem, Mayer 2017). In doing so, Lichtwark ensured his role as one of the initiators of museum education in Germany. However, Tkalčić could have found him interesting on account of Lichtwark's interest in and high esteem of the medium of photography. He might have come into contact with Lichtwark's works indirectly but also during his studies given that two Lichtwark's important books are kept in the HAZU Library, which also served as a library for the students of the Art History and Archaeology Programme, which was first held in the premises of the HAZU's palace in Zrinjevac<sup>23</sup>.

But let us go back to the text from 1950 where, towards the end, Tkalčić successfully addressed certain details related to the aspect of museum management. He made an interesting point on a need for democratic decentralisation of museums and also put forward the idea that where there were no conditions for the establishment of a museum, the institution of a guest periodical exhibition and a so-called ambulatory, that is, mobile museum should be used, without further elaborating on it. At the end of the text, Tkalčić once again introduced a period-appropriate ideologisation and emphasised that museum professionals, himself included, were on their own because we have had no socialist museological role models either from the East or from the West (Tkalčić 1950: 60). Of course, that was not true because, during his several-decade-long work in the field of museum theory and practice, influences came through different channels and at different speeds from both sides of the world.

### TOWARDS A CONCLUSION...

Taking into consideration the described division of the development of museological thought into four periods and the detailed analysis of Tkalčić's museological texts, we can conclude that Vladimir Tkalčić was not the initiator of museology in our territories. For now, that spot has been taken by Mijat Sabljar, while, as to the practical side of the museum science, even more written records have been left behind by Izidor Kršnjavi. According to sources, Tkalčić was the first one who gave a written definition of museology, and that was after World War II, more

<sup>23</sup> The following Lichtwark's titles have been found in the HAZU Library: Grundlagen der künstlerischen Bildung: Studien from 1902, and Übungen in der Betrachtung von Kunstwerken: nach Versuchen mit einer Schulklasse from 1906. The library of the MUO holds Die Erziehung des Farbensines from 1902. Please note that Tkalčić enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb in the academic year 1905/1906 after studying for a short period of time at the Collége de France. We thank Ivan Kurjak and T. Petrović Les for the data from the Archives of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

specifically, in 1950, which fully coincided with the understanding of that science in Europe at the time. Also, he provided his understanding of the role of a museum object in an exhibition as early as in 1922. Although he did not address the notion of a museum collection, he was familiar with the terms museum mission (museum task) and collection policy and found them usable as a practical framework for museum activity. Likewise, he was familiar with and educated in his texts on all museological functions – collection as a part of building and protecting the holdings, scientific research of materials as an important function of the museum, and communication with visitors by various means.

Thus, he was a great expert in practical museology who not only kept track of foreign thought but also laid in practice many foundations related to the furnishing of museum buildings, the principles of good exhibition, and the use of various means of communication as well as of contemporary technology, all with an aim to allow also the least educated audience to find museums to be lively and active places of education and learning. This guided him throughout his heritage work.

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