

# The Role of Vladimir Tkalčić in the Establishment of the Ethnographic Museum Record-Keeping System

*The paper presents an overview of Vladimir Tkalčić's activity and role in the establishment and management of museum records of the Ethnographic Museum. Immediately after its founding, approximately 20,000 objects entered the museum's holdings, therefore, one of the first tasks was their expert processing, inventorying and cataloguing. Thanks to Tkalčić, the foundations of museum's professional and scientific activity were laid, with an effort to abide by the museological principles of the time. The paper emphasizes the form and method of museum record-keeping, which was maintained even after Tkalčić's directorship, albeit with minor modifications, and to a significant degree corresponds to the contemporary practice of museum record-keeping of the Ethnographic Museum, as well as to the current regulations.*

Keywords: Vladimir Tkalčić, museum documentation, Ethnographic Museum, expert processing of ethnological material

## INTRODUCTION

Museum record-keeping in the Ethnographic Museum began immediately after its founding in 1919, when Vladimir Tkalčić (1883 – 1971), as the first curator of the Ethnographic Museum, laid the foundations of expert and scientific work through the creation of the first collections of objects, the holdings inventory and the formation of record-keeping databases.<sup>1</sup> In this process,

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1 Vladimir Tkalčić was the curator of the Ethnographic Museum from 1919 to 1925, and later its director from 1925 to 1934.

the documentation on museum objects and documentation material were created – the inventory book, main and auxiliary database, and records on the entry of objects into the museum. The organised system of museum documentation laid the foundations for quality record-keeping that has been upgraded to this day.

The text focuses on the processes and procedures of the creation of records on museum objects, in the period from its founding in 1919 until Tkalčić's departure from the museum in 1934. Topics related to the history of documentation of the Ethnographic Museum, especially those related to the very beginnings of museum record-keeping, have not been investigated until now. The literature on Museum history and its functioning does not provide information about the nature of the record-keeping process, nor about when and which documentation was created, that is, when inventory books and inventory cards were introduced. In addition, apart from Vladimir Tkalčić, in the literature, there is no mention of persons alongside him responsible for shaping the system and creating museum documentation in the beginnings of the Museum's activities. When the documentation of the Ethnographic Museum is mentioned in literature, it is mostly in the context of the organization of the museum and its collections when the museum became operational, or the data refers to newer practices and methodologies (Gabrić 1954, Gjetvaj 1989, Zorić 2015). Therefore, an effort was made to obtain data on the mentioned topics by researching archival and documentation materials of the Ethnographic Museum stored in the Croatian State Archives (HR-HDA-512, Ethnographic Museum, General records, box 1-5; in the period from 1918 to 1924) and in the Museum Records (records on museum objects – inventory books, catalogues; correspondence and files created during the first years of museum operation).

An important source of data were the documents created in the period from 1935 to 1939, when the director of the Museum was Ivo Franić (*Records of the handover of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1935; *Report of the Commission on determining the state and operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1936; *Statement of V. Tkalčić according to the Report of the Commission on determining the state and operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1936; *Orders of the Museum Manager, 1935–1939*).

The archival and documentation materials, in addition to being an important source of data, also served in the handwriting analysis, which enabled the identification and dating of individual sections of museum records. The handwriting samples that were analysed were determined using the inventory book, which was concluded at the end of each year, starting with 1928, with the signature of the Manager and head of the inventory. In this way, a timeframe was determined for the research of archival sources, in order to determine, based on the handwriting, which persons participated in the process of creating the records about museum objects,<sup>2</sup> and when certain segments of museum documentation of the Ethnographic Museum were created.

Based on the results of the research thus far, this paper for the first time presents data and provides answers as to which documentation was created during the period of Tkalčić's activity in the Ethnographic Museum, what the process of documenting museum objects was like, from the moment of their entry to being catalogued, who was responsible for shaping, managing and creating museum records of the Ethnographic Museum, and what their role was in this process.

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2 Records about the persons who wrote the information in the inventory book or on the item cards were not kept through the documentation on museum objects. This information was entered on the item cards starting with inventory number 19,000.

## DOCUMENTATION ON MUSEUM OBJECTS

During the first years of the museum's operation, Vladimir Tkalčić laid the foundations of professional and scientific work, primarily in terms of systematization of museum material, the formation of collections and the mode of museum record-keeping. With the foundation of the Ethnographic Museum in 1919, all larger ethnographic collections of the Croatian National Museum in Zagreb were unified, and at that moment, about 20,000 items entered the museum holdings.<sup>3</sup> All items obtained from the Croatian National Museum or acquired for the newly founded Museum needed to be systematized, inventoried and catalogued, which entailed designing a museum record-keeping system. When he addresses museum activities, Tkalčić emphasizes the importance of expert treatment of objects. In the *Statement* that he had to write regarding the surpluses and deficits of museum objects, at the request of the Commission after the handover of the Ethnographic Museum performed between Božidar Širola and Ivo Franić, Tkalčić states that it must be:

“...kept in mind that inventorying museum items is not the same as e.g., the inventory of a trade, factory or some warehouse, but that it is a special expert, in fact, scientific task, which must be undertaken as accurately and exhaustively as possible, both for the purpose of identifying the object in question, and for purely scientific purposes. Of course, such a task also requires a great deal of time.” (Documentation of the EMZ, *Statement* of V. Tkalčić according to the *Report of the Commission on determining the state and operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1936)

In order to collect as much quality data as possible, for the purpose of professional processing and documentation of objects entering the museum, soon after the foundation of the museum, the office of museum trustees was established. One of the primary goals of the network of museum trustees was the effort to collect, in addition to ethnographic materials, various data on tangible and intangible heritage.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the *Instructions for the Trustees of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* (1922) were compiled, which contain a series of questions to which the answers must be recorded when acquiring objects. Through his museum activities, Tkalčić strived to record “the representation of folk life of our nation in its entirety”, relying on Radić's *The Basis for Collection and Study of Material on Folk life* (1897), which he considered an excellent method for collecting descriptions of material on folk life<sup>5</sup> (Tkalčić 1922: 74; Tkalčić 1930:134). In his correspondence with colleagues, Tkalčić also very often gives instructions about which data about an item is important or asks for additional data about already obtained items. The above is confirmed from correspondence with donors and associates in the field, which can be found

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3 The Ethnographic Museum was founded in 1919 by the Order on the Establishment of the Ethnographic Department of the Croatian National Museum. See A. Brenko and K. Bušić in this publication for more about the establishment and beginnings of the museum's operations and early expert activities.

4 Museum trustees were associates who contributed to the work of the museum, primarily by collecting material for museum collections and data on tangible and intangible heritage. The service of museum trustees was established by the Order on trustees of the Ethnographic Department of the Croatian National Museum in Zagreb, which was passed by the Commission for Education and Religion in 1921.

5 In *The Instructions*, it is stated that the task of the Ethnographic Department of the Croatian National Museum is to demonstrate *the life and culture of our people, primarily the peasants, who have preserved to the highest degree our national characteristics to this day* (Narodna starina 1922: 350-351), while the structure in *The Instructions* reflects the influence of Radić's *Basis*.

in the materials stored in the Croatian State Archives and the Ethnographic Museum. Thus, for instance, in a letter from 1921 addressed to Milovan Gavazzi, he states: "To satisfy my conscience, I remind you, although I believe that you indeed undertake these measures, to record exactly the provenance, the method of manufacture, the names of individual parts of the object and all other information about them, so that we may obtain as complete as possible a picture of their presentation." (HR-HDA-512, Ethnographic Museum, General documents; Stipančević, 2005:63) The questions listed in *The Instructions* and Tkalčić's instructions from the letters largely reflect the structure of the records of the Ethnographic Museum at the time.

Aware of the scope of the work related to the organisation of the collections and the description of the objects, Tkalčić states in a text from 1922: "Everyone who is aware of the difficulties that the current administration is facing, knows how much effort and time the systematic organisation of the museum collection requires. They know very well what it means to organise a museum according to modern museological principles!" (Tkalčić, 1922:75)

The material assumed after the foundation of the museum is systematized into five collections according to the source from which the collection came:

- Collection UO (Museum of Arts and Crafts of the Royal Crafts School in Zagreb)
- Collection B (National Collection of Salamon Berger)
- Collection ŠM (Croatian School Museum at the Pedagogical and Literary Choir)
- Collection BK (Chamber of Commerce and Crafts)
- Exotic collection (Archaeological-historical department of the Croatian National Museum)

The five initial collections were combined into the Ethnographic Collection, into which the collection of ethnographic objects donated or purchased for the Museum continued. In this way, Tkalčić also conceived the documentation on museum items, while a separate inventory book and catalogue was introduced for each of the five core collections.<sup>6</sup> In addition to the records on the items from the initial collections, an inventory book and catalogue of the Ethnographic Collection were introduced, where the first five numbers refer to the initial collections as a whole, while the inventory number six and onwards refers to newly acquired objects for the museum holdings.<sup>7</sup> This organization of museum records, with minor modifications, has been

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6 The inventory books of the initial collections were assigned a label according to the source from which the collection came (AH - History and Archaeology Department of the National Museum, UO - Museum of Arts and Crafts, B - Berger Collection, ŠM - Croatian Museum of Pedagogical and Literary Choir in Zagreb, BK - Chamber of Commerce and Crafts in Zagreb).

7 During the time that Vladimir Tkalčić worked at the Museum, in 1928, an inventory book was introduced for the Collection of the City of Zagreb, in which items purchased with funds from the City of Zagreb were entered (Zorić 2015: 54). According to the data from the *Report of the Commission on determining the state and operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1936, the inventory book with the label ZGZ was filled up to inventory number ZGZ 228. This inventory book ends with inventory number ZGZ 1036. According to the handwriting, in the period of Vladimir Tkalčić, the data was entered by Jela Novak (ZGZ 1 to ZGZ 71) and Tereza Paulić (from ZGZ 72 to ZGZ 228).

maintained until today when the museum holdings are systematized by means of 45 museum collections.<sup>8</sup>

Based on the data from Tkalčić's *Statement* from 1936, it is possible to reconstruct the mode of museum record-keeping, i.e., the inventory and cataloguing of museum items, introduced during the first years of the Ethnographic Museum. According to this source, the items were inventoried in the order of their receipt, with a note that, for the sake of accounting, an effort was made to inventory purchased items first, followed by donated ones. In his *Statement*, Tkalčić states that an item is first entered in the *index card catalogue* with all the data about the object that were available at that time: "about provenance, material, meaning, name, usage, age, size, manufacturing technique, etc." This is followed by an entry in the *inventory*, that is, the inventory book, under the same number and with a full description of the item, i.e., most often with repeated data that the item was attributed according to the *index card catalogue*. In parallel with the entry in the inventory book, *index cards* for auxiliary catalogues were made – according to provenance and type of object. (EMZ documentation, *Statement* of V. Tkalčić according to the *Report of the Commission on determining the state and operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1936)

In continuation, individual segments of the documentation referring to museum objects are presented in more detail, starting with the inventory book, which represents the "legal document of the entire museum property" (Gabrić, 1954:41). Followed by the index card catalogue and an index card that contains the same information as the inventory book, and "represents scientific data that is easy to handle without the risk of possibly losing the legal content" (Gabrić, 1954:41). Lastly, records on the entry of the object into the Museum is presented.

## THE INVENTORY BOOK

Based on the data from the *Record of the Handover of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1935, and the *Report of the Commission on determining the state and operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1936, in V. Tkalčić's time, the following inventory books of museum items were created:

- Inventory of the ethnographic collection I, II, III (three volumes – inventory numbers from 1 to 5000, 5001 to 10000, 10000 to 10945)

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8 After Tkalčić, several separate inventory books were introduced with the following labels: ES stands for Ethnological Seminar (objects that were partly owned by the Ethnographic Museum and partly by the Department of Ethnology of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Zagreb, and were used for teaching purposes), Va (Varia, perishable objects and those subject to damage), Ex (Exota, introduced in the 1970s, with the intention of inventorying materials of non-European provenance from the collection of the History and Archaeology Department of the National Museum in Zagreb (AH), but that principle was not always implemented consistently, so part of this material continued to be recorded in the joint inventory book, and part in the book Ex), G (items that came to the museum through the mediation or gift of Prof. Gavazzi, but were previously inventoried in Ethnographica), Arcana (only three inventory numbers were entered for items closely related to intimacy) (Zorić 2015: 54). Since 2007, the entire documentation on museum items has been maintained in digital form through the primary documentation management module M++.

- Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb inventory of the exotic collection (inventory numbers from 1 to 1321)<sup>9</sup>
- Inventory book of the Collection of the City of Zagreb, from inventory number 1 to 228.

According to the above-mentioned currently available sources, inventory books for objects from the *collection of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the School Museum, Berger, Berger-Chamber* were not yet formed during Tkalčić's time, while objects from the collections were recorded in lists and index card catalogues.

The inventory books of that time were written in ink, in handwriting. According to the *Record of the Handover of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb*, the inventory books were written on *inventory sheets*, i.e., *printed forms for ethnographic inventory*, measuring 47 x 31 cm. The sheets were subsequently bound in a hardback binding, a combination of cloth with a leather spine and corners. Bound inventory books from that period measure approximately 48 x 34 cm. When binding the inventory sheets, care was taken that the volume was not thicker than 4 cm, so that it would not be too heavy and awkward to handle (Gabrić, 1954:39). After binding, each volume was certified by the competent authority, the Sava Financial Directorate in Zagreb.<sup>10</sup>

The information about an item entered in the inventory books was mainly transferred from the cards in the main index card catalogue through the following eight categories:

- *Current number (Ordinal number in the third volume)* – item inventory number
- *Object* – the type or name of the object, the information is underlined in order to emphasize it in relation to the description of the object that follows, which also contains information about the ornament, marked with the letter O, and the manufacturing technique, marked with the letter T, and ends with dimensions and possibly additional information about the purpose
- *From* – locality or origin of the object
- *When and how it came to the museum* – source of the acquisition with data that mainly contains the name and surname of the person and the address or place of origin of the person from whom the object was acquired and the method and date of acquisition
- *Number of pieces*
- *Located* – usually not filled in, except for information on storage of objects outside the museum

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9 In addition to this, in the *Report of the Commission on determining the condition and operations of the Ethnographic Museum*, the book *Inventory of the Ethnographic Collection of the Archaeological Department of the National Museum in Zagreb* (inventory numbers from 1 to 1163), stored in the Museum, is listed at the end with the note "Items marked in the rubric 'Remark' are included under a marked number in The inventory of the 'Ethnographic Collection' of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, under the numbers: 1./1.-1314. / In Zagreb, 15 June 1926" after which there are V. Tkalčić and S. Berger's signatures.

10 The volumes of the inventory book of the Ethnographic Collection were certified: the first and second volume dated 25 January 1933, the third volume dated 24 August 1933. The inventory books of the initial collections are not certified.

- *Purchase price* (K/f listed as currency in the first volume, in the second volume K/f changed to D/p up to page 1018, and from page 1019, as in the third volume, D/p is printed) – amount related to purchase price<sup>11</sup>
- *Remark* – usually a note about the condition of the item

According to the data from available sources, and by analysing and comparing the handwriting of Museum employees, it has been established that, during the first twenty years of the Museum's operation, the descriptions of museum objects in the interval of inventory numbers from 1 to 199 were entered by Vladimir Tkalčić. Filling in the inventory book from number 200 to 411 was continued by Jela Novak.<sup>12</sup> Inventory items from number 412 to 470 were entered from the collection of Franjo Ksaver Kuhač, which were entered into the book by Božidar Širola.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, item descriptions in the first volume of the inventory book from numbers 471 to 5000, and in the second volume from numbers 5001 to 7506, were entered by Jela Novak, who was signed as inventory manager, as of 31 December 1929, with the signature of director Vladimir Tkalčić. Jela Novak was succeeded as inventory manager by Tereza Paulić,<sup>14</sup> who is also signed in the second and third volume of the inventory book.<sup>15</sup> The handwriting in which the descriptions of objects from inventory numbers 7507 to 10000, and from 10001 to 10591 were written, most likely belongs to Anka Varlaj<sup>16</sup>, who, according to the data from the museum archive, participated in the inventory process, which is also confirmed by a comparison of the handwritings from the library's inventory book that she kept in the period from 1928 to 1933. This assumption is also confirmed by Tkalčić's letter sent to the Ministry of Education in 1931, in which Tkalčić mentions the tasks of professional and detailed description and inventory of collection items, running the library, etc., in which A. Varlaj, "although she is an excellent force",

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11 The mentioned currencies confirm that the first books were certainly created by January 1923, given that until then, the nostrified, i.e., stamped and then marked krone was used in Croatia (Kolar-Dimitrijević 2013:138, 142).

12 Jela Novak (1874–1945) graduated from the Girls High School and the School of Arts and Crafts, and was employed at the Ethnographic Museum from 1919 to 1932, initially mainly on administrative tasks, and then performing expert tasks related to acquisitions, protection of objects, setup of exhibitions and especially those related to museum documentation (Mokos, 2009:9).

13 Božidar Širola (1889 – 1956) received his doctorate in musicology in 1921 from Vienna University. He worked at the Ethnographic Museum since 1921, first as a volunteer, then as an associate, and as a curator since 1933. After Tkalčić's departure, from 1934 to 1935, he was acting director of the Museum, and then director in the period from 1941 to 1945 (Mokos, 2009:10).

14 Tereza Paulić (1887 – 1971) graduated from the College of Arts and Crafts. She was employed at the Ethnographic Museum from 1923 to 1948, first as a museum clerk, then as a restorer and curator, and in the period from May 1945 to March 1946 she performed the duties of director. In addition to administrative and expert tasks, especially those related to textiles and documentation, she participated in numerous field researches and realisation of exhibitions and permanent exhibits (Mokos; 2009:13).

15 The first volume of the inventory book of the Ethnographic Collection was not concluded or signed by the director and head of the inventory at the end of the year. In the third volume of the inventory book on 31 Dec. 1932, the current year was concluded with the number 10025, and Tereza Paulić was signed as the inventory manager, along with director Vladimir Tkalčić. The year 1933 in the inventory book ends with inventory number 10597, it was not concluded or signed at the end of the year, and with the number 10592, the handwriting changes. The year was concluded with 31 Dec. 1934 and inventory number 11027, but without the signature of the manager and head of the inventory. Širola was written in pencil as the manager's signature, and Paulić under the inventory manager.

16 Anka Varlaj (1896 – 1936) teacher and museum employee. She worked as a librarian in the Ethnographic Museum from 1928 to 1933 (Mokos, 2009:16).



cannot, due to frequent illness, be sufficiently instructed and informed (Documentation EMZ, *Predmet: Hrdy Agata, učiteljica gradjanskih škola*, Pov. Br. 5/1931, 21. 8. 1931.).

## INDEX CARD CATALOGUE

According to the same sources, along with inventory books, index card catalogues were kept, whereas in the *Record of the Handover of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1935 and the *Report of the Commission on determining the state and operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1936, the catalogues for the following collections are mentioned:

- Ethnographic Collection – most likely undertaken from inventory number 1 to 14049, since in the *Report* there is a note that cards from 10763 to 14049 should be copied into the inventory, while an auxiliary catalogue according to locality was also maintained
- Art and Craft Collection: 1 to 4503<sup>17</sup>
- Collection B.K. /Berger Chamber/ with the label “collection number 3, ordinal number 1 – 1206”
- Collection II / Berger Collection, from number 1 to 7346
- Exotic Collection

From the above catalogues, currently, a portion of the cards of the Ethnographic Collection and the Exotic Collection has been found. The catalogue for the Ethnographic Collection is kept on cards measuring about 11 x 11 cm, written by hand with an ordinary pencil on several different types of thicker paper. These cards were written by Jela Novak and Tereza Paulić.

Cards were then introduced that are still kept in the catalogues maintained for the Ethnographic Collection, the five initial collections, the Collection of the City of Zagreb and the Ethnological Seminar. According to the currently available sources, by analysing and comparing the hand-writings, it can be assumed that these cards were most likely introduced by 1930.<sup>18</sup> The cards are 15 x 10 cm in size, with printed fields for entering several categories of data, filled in by hand, with ordinary pencil, and only a portion is written in ink.<sup>19</sup> These cards are designed based on previous experiences, and as a rule, follow the old cards format in terms of content

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17 The *Report of the Commission on determining the state and operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1936, does not mention the catalogue for Collection 5, i.e. the collection taken from the Museum of Arts and Crafts, however, in the *Record of the Handover of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1935, when items are listed from this collection that were given new inventory numbers after entering the holdings of the Ethnographic Museum, it is stated that they were assumed according to inventories and index card catalogues, so it is possible to assume that a catalogue of this collection existed at that time, and maybe even an inventory book, completed by Tereza Paulić for Collection 5.

18 Further research is needed to determine when exactly these cards were introduced and written. According to current knowledge, it can be assumed that they were introduced in 1930, perhaps a few years earlier, if we can confirm that the handwriting on the cards of the BK collection and part of the UO collection is that of Jela Novak, who worked at the Museum until 1930 (retired in 1932). They were definitely in use by 1938, because Ivo Franić, in his letter sent in 1938 to Stanoj Mihaldžić, the assistant and acting ban of the Sava banovina, states that it is necessary to illustrate the 50,000 museum objects with drawings and photographs in the new index card catalogues (Dokumentacija EMZ, *Gospodinu Pomoćniku i Vršiocu dužnosti...*; 628/1938.). This card form was used up to inventory number 19000, when, in the 1960s, at the suggestion of Paola Gabrić, a new form of cards filled out on a typewriter was introduced.

19 From inventory number 1 to 8232 and from 11921 to 19000, the cards are written in ordinary pencil, and from number 8233 to 11920, written in ink.



and structure. They contain the following categories of data: inventory number; name of the object; origin; description of the object – starts with the name of the object which is underlined; dimensions; procurement data; number of pieces (underlined). In addition to the above, the cards often contain information about the condition, a separate description of the ornament and technique, a note about the local name and the price, if the item was purchased. Although the new cards do not specify which categories of data the provided fields refer to, it is important to point out that a certain structure appears that has contributed to the transparency of the card and the attempt at standardization.

It should be highlighted that V. Tkalčić believed that the documentation about museum items, in addition to basic data and sound descriptions, should contain good sketches and drawings of the object or its characteristic motifs. Thus, Tereza Paulić and Zdenka Sertić<sup>20</sup> enriched numerous cards of the newer type with their drawings, which constitute incredible illustrative material.

## ENTRY RECORDS

During the first years of the museum's operation, in addition to the aforementioned documentation on museum objects, record-keeping was also introduced about the acquisition and entry of objects into the museum. The oldest entry record of items acquired for the Museum is the book *Gifts* kept for items donated in the period from 1919 to 1929, followed by the book *Donors* kept from 1929 to 1941.<sup>21</sup> These books were written by hand, in ink. The data in these records are not structured into columns, but are entered in a single line, in specific order. First, the information about the donor is listed – the surname and first name are underlined in order to emphasize this information, and sometimes the information that defines the donor in more detail is entered, such as: pastor, teacher, master mason and the like. Then, the place of origin of the donor, and most often the origin of the object, is stated, as well as information on whether the gift came through an intermediary, for example a museum trustee. Also, information on the type or name of the donated object is provided, possibly with a brief description and the inventory number assigned to it.

Along with the abovementioned books, there is also the *List of Acquired and Donated Items* that starts with inventory number 7789 and includes items that have entered the museum since 7 June 1930.<sup>22</sup> The dimensions of the book are 22 x 33 cm, it is written by hand, in ink. Items do-

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20 Zdenka Sertić (1899 – 1986) graduated in painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in the class of prof. Ljubo Babić. She was employed at the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb from 1921 to 1959, where she was responsible for creating drawings and illustrations and describing museum objects, as well as for creating illustrations for museum publications and exhibitions. In the period from 1939 to 1941, she was acting director of the museum (Mokos, 2009:11).

21 According to current knowledge, it is assumed that this documentation was most likely filled out by Anka Varlaj and Tereza Paulić. Donated objects with inventory numbers ranging from 8 to 7409 are entered in the book *Gifts*, while items with inventory numbers ranging from 7418 to 13789 are entered in the book *Donors*. Further research is needed to determine when record-keeping on the entry of objects was introduced.

22 In the first book, *List of Acquired and Donated Items*, items up to inventory number 10758 were entered. This method of keeping records on the entry of items continued during until 2015, ending with inventory number 52885.

nated or purchased for the Museum are entered in this record. The data in the book is structured into six categories:

- *Ordinal number* – starts with the number one
- *Inventory number* – starts with inventory number 7789
- *Item* – information about the name or type of object
- *Provenance* – information on procurement
- *Date* – information about the date of procurement
- *Note* – information about the act on the basis of which the object entered the Museum and the amount if the object was purchased.

Although Tkalčić in his *Statement* from 1936 does not mention these books when describing the inventorying process, it can be assumed that, when this documentation was introduced, the objects upon entering the Museum were first marked with the appropriate inventory number and entered in the book *List of Acquired and Donated Items*, and only then into the index card catalogue and inventory book (EMZ documentation, V. Tkalčić's *Statement* according to the *Report of the Commission on the state and operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb* from 1936).

## THE WORK OF MUSEUM EXPERTS ON THE INVENTORYING OF MUSEUM OBJECTS

The papers published thus far that relate to the museum documentation of the Ethnographic Museum do not provide detailed information on who, especially in the beginning, was in charge of keeping records on museum items and what role they played in the creation of these records. In determining the persons who participated in this process, the most important source was the museum's documentation and archival material, especially the documentation related to the then director Ivo Franić. Through the analysis of handwritings and data, it has been established that Jela Novak was in charge of museum documentation in the beginning. She worked "on current tasks", i.e., she was in charge of inventorying the museum's new acquisitions, objects received mainly through donations for the then Ethnographic Collection. After her retirement in 1932, these tasks were taken over by Tereza Paulić, who was also in charge of inventorying the collection of S. Berger when she came to the Museum in 1923, which she did along with providing descriptions for approximately 200 numbers. From 1932, in addition to the inventory of the Ethnographic Collection, T. Paulić occasionally worked on the inventory of items from the Artistic Craft Collection, which was managed by Mira Baldauf until 1928.<sup>23</sup> (Dokumentacija EMZ; Paulić, *Na Vašu višekratnu opomenu radi zaostataka u inventiranju...*, 12. 8. 1935.; *Zapisnik sastavljen s čin. IX grupe 1 stepena Paulić Terezom*, 14. 12. 1935.) A. Varlaj also participated in the process of inventorying items from 1930 to 1933.

The system of the Ethnographic Museum's record-keeping presented in this paper, devised and introduced by V. Tkalčić upon the foundation of the museum, was gradually expanded. Based on the information from the documentation, it can be determined that the new director of the museum, I. Franić, was not satisfied with the dynamics and mode of working on the mu-

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23 Mira Baldauf (1883 – 1932), teacher and museum employee. She worked at the Ethnographic Museum from 1922 to 1928 on administrative, as well as expert tasks (organising the library, the collection of objects turned over from the Museum of Arts and Crafts and S. Berger's collection) (HDA:512; Mokos, 2009:13).

seum's records, and often stressed that they were falling behind and that the museum's items were not professionally processed. Thus, for instance, in his letter to the Ministry of Education in Belgrade, he states that the objects were unprofessionally and superficially inventoried with insufficient data, and that for most of the items there is no information about the origin, technique, or place of creation (Dokumentacija EMZ, *Ministarstvo prosvete Opšte odelenje*, Pov. Br. 10/1935, 15.8.1935.). He informs the same Ministry about the backlogs in the inventory process and states: "New acquisitions lay there for weeks without being inventoried, and in the descriptions in the general ledger inventory, many things have not yet been described. They have only been entered in the book of ordinal numbers and have been given a number" (Dokumentacija EMZ, *Žalba čin. IX. Gr. 1 st. Paulić Tereze protiv naređenja upravnika i izvještaj, te predlog*, 923/1935, 16. 12. 1935.). Tereza Paulić also confirmed these inventory backlogs, stating in one of her answers to the then director Franić, that there were already significant backlogs when she arrived at the Museum in 1923, mostly with regard to the inventory of items taken over from the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the Chamber Collection, and the School Museum Collection (Dokumentacija EMZ, Paulić, *Na Vašu višekratnu opomenu radi zaostataka u inventiranju...*, 12. 8. 1935.).

Franić attempted to solve the problem of inventory backlogs by different redistributions of duties and working hours. Thus, after Tkalčić's departure, Zdenka Sertić and Ljerka Topali<sup>24</sup> were supposed to assist Tereza Paulić in fillin out the documentation. According to the order of the new director, I. Franić, they were supposed to help their colleague Paulić in sorting out inventory backlogs and writing catalogue index cards, while Z. Sertić was also supposed to create drawings of the inventoried items on the back of the cards and supervise the drawings on the cards created by other expert employees (Dokumentacija EMZ; Franić, *Odredbe za posvršavanje ostataka u službenoj dužnosti*; 23. 4. 1935.; *Naređenja Upravnika muzeja*, 17. 4. 1937., 23. 8. 1938.).

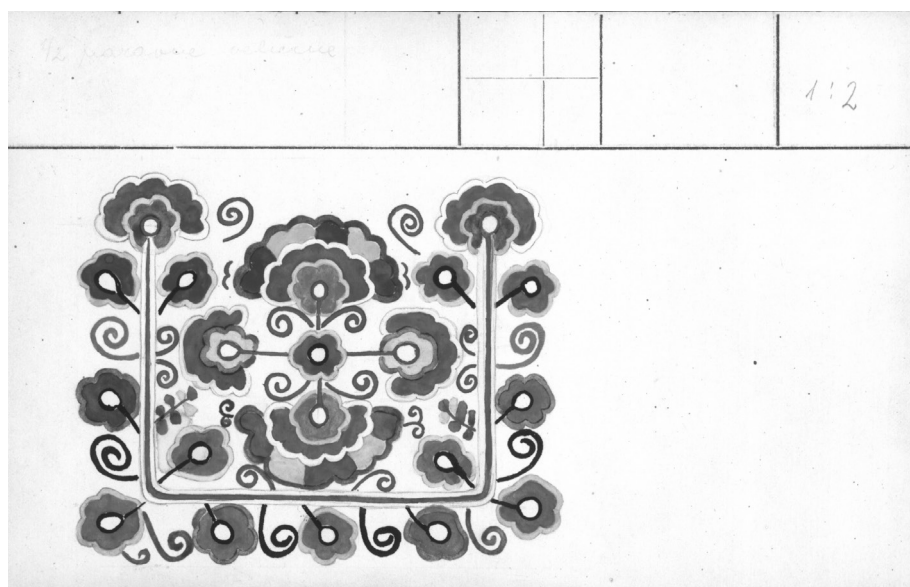
One of the main causes of the backlog was certainly the number of professional staff employed at the Museum at the time and the scope of the material, which in mid-1935 comprised 50,000 inventoried items (Dokumentacija EMZ; *Moli da se premjesti u Etnografski muzej u Zagrebu na rad*, 9/1935, 27. 6. 1935.). In the early 1930s, Tereza Paulić was the only person performing inventorying tasks, primarily of new acquisitions received for the Ethnographic Collection, and she also occasionally worked on inventorying the items from the initial collections. That is, from 1930 until her retirement in 1932, Jela Novak was absent due to illness; Mira Baldauf worked at the museum until 1928, when a teacher, Anka Varlaj, was assigned to the museum, who worked there until 1933, albeit with a short absence during 1930. In her reply to director Franić, Tereza Paulić tried to explain how extensive the inventorying task was, stating: "even if all three of us were working on the inventory, it would not be possible for us to compensate for such a backlog" (Dokumentacija EMZ, Paulić, *Na Vašu višekratnu opomenu radi zaostataka u inventiranju...*, 12. 8. 1935.). This problem is also confirmed by Tkalčić in his *Statement* written based on the *Report*

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24 Ljerka Topali (1911 – ?) graduated in 1934 in ethnology. She was employed at the Ethnographic Museum from 1935 to 1946 and during that period briefly spent time outside the museum, including at the Museum of Arts and Crafts (1939). At the beginning of her employment at the Ethnographic Museum, she performed various expert and administrative tasks, her tasks also including organised the library. Since 1941, she worked as a curator, as well as on the Exotic Collection and participated in field research. She also worked at the Völkskunde Museum in Vienna (1942), where she did her specialisation (1944-1945) (Mokos, 2009:16).



Picture 1. Inventory Book, Ethnographic Museum, Zagreb, Photo by Nina Koydl



Picture 2. Drawn example at the inventory card, Documentation of the Ethnographic Museum, Zagreb, Photo by Nina Koydl

of the Commission on determining the state and operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb from 1936, in which he writes:

“Many objects that were added to the museum collection could not be inventoried immediately, because there were not enough personnel for the task of inventorying. The museum developed rapidly, new items were constantly arriving, and the number of staff, rather than increasing, kept decreasing due to cutbacks in the state budget undertaken by the Ministry of Finance / thus, for example, from 1/IV-1928 the following posts were simply scrapped: that of director, 1 curator, 1 artist and 1 manipulative force, and 1 server/, despite the real needs explained in the annual State Budget proposal, provided by the museum management, and despite frequent oral interventions from museum management and some friends of the museum with the competent authorities” (Dokumentacija EMZ, *Izjava V. Tkalčića prema Izvještaju komisije o utvrđivanju stanja i poslovanja Etnografskog muzeja u Zagrebu iz 1936.*).

## MUSEUM ARCHIVE

The collection of documentation materials was initiated from the very start of the Museum's activities, concurrently with the museum's items, thanks to the relatively intensive and systematic field research conducted by Vladimir Tkalčić and Milovan Gavazzi, organized despite all the difficulties the Museum faced in those years.<sup>25</sup> The rich documentation material recorded in handwritten notes, drawings and photographs, as well as on phonographic and film recordings, formed the basis of the Museum's ethnographic archive, that is, the basis of the museum's ethnographic records in general. The Museum's archive as devised by Tkalčić, consisted of photographic archives, negatives, diapositives, phonograph recordings, film recordings, postcards and drawings, hand-written ethnographic material and a separate non-European archive (Dokumentacija EMZ, *Izjava V. Tkalčića prema Izvještaju komisije o utvrđivanju stanja i poslovanja Etnografskog muzeja u Zagrebu iz 1936.*; Tkalčić, 1924.). As with museum materials, Tkalčić introduced a system of record-keeping for the museum archive, hence an inventory book and auxiliary index card catalogues were also kept for a portion of the materials collected.

According to the data from the handover between Širola and Franić from 1935, there was an inventory book of photographs, negatives and slides in the archive. Inventory books were written by hand, in ink, bound in a hard cover and certified.<sup>26</sup> The inventory books of negatives and photo archives were kept on inventory sheets for photographic records measuring 24 x 37 cm, which contain six categories in which information about the item was entered: *Ordinal number* – inventory number; *Object* – the item recorded; *Type* – dimensions and medium in the inventory book of negatives (glass plate, film); *Recorded when and by whom?* – the date of the recording and the author of the recording, as well as information about the studio in the inventory book *Photographic Archive*; *Value* (in dinars) – category without entered data; *Note* –

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25 Among the more significant research activities in the first years of the Museum's operation, the Pokuplje expedition in 1923 certainly stands out (see: Muraj, Aleksandra; Eckhel, Nerina; Zorić, Vesna. 1993. *Pokup-ska sjećanja: ethnographic expedition 1923*. Zagreb: Etnografski muzej.) In later years, research of Zagreb surroundings stands out (Resnik 1969, Čučerje 1974, Ščitarjevo 1975, Markuševac 1976, Šestine 1979).

26 The inventory book of negatives was certified by the Sava Financial Directorate in Zagreb on 23 May 1933, while the *Photographic Archive* and *Diapositives* inventory books were certified on 26 January 1956.

annotation or entry information. The inventory book of diapositives was recorded on sheets for ethnographic inventory, measuring 48 x 34 cm, which contain the following categories: *Current number* – inventory number; *Object* – the object recorded and measurements; *From* – information about the author/studio; *When and how it came to the museum* – information about the source of acquisition; *Number of pieces*; *Located* – category without entered data; *Purchase price*; *Note* – comment.

## AUXILIARY RECORDS

In addition to the documentation presented thus far, during the first years of the Museum's operation, a system of auxiliary files was introduced, which comprised a set of index cards that can be classified from different perspectives. These catalogues were used both by museum staff in their work and by users. The auxiliary records of museum holdings, as well as of the negatives, photographic archive and slides were maintained according to the type of object and locality. The index cards were filled in by hand, in ink, and alphabetised according to the name of the objects and locality.

The index cards of the auxiliary catalogue according to the type of object for museum holdings, contained information about type written at the top, about locality written at the bottom, while inventory numbers of museum objects from a certain locality are written in the middle of the card. The index cards of the catalogue according to locality contain information about the place, followed by information on the inventory numbers and the type of object. Printed slips with the following data categories were created for the museum archive: *Ordinal number* – inventory number; *Object* – the object recorded, description; *Type* – medium (glass plate, film) and dimensions; *Place* – locality; *Recorded when and by whom* – recording date, author.

## CONCLUSION

The paper presents the results of research related to the history of museum documentation of the Ethnographic Museum, i.e., the beginnings of management and creation of the record-keeping system on museum objects during the period of Tkalčić's activity at the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb (1919–1934). Given that these topics have not been researched until now, the paper for the first time presents data on the nature of the record-keeping process in the beginning of the museum's operations, from entry in the museum to being catalogued, the documentation has been identified created in the period from the foundation of the Museum to Tkalčić's departure (inventory books, entry records, catalogues), as well as the persons, along with Tkalčić, in charge of designing, managing and producing museum documentation of the Ethnographic Museum and their roles in this process (Mira Baldauf, Jela Novak, Tereza Paulić, Zdenka Sertić, Božidar Širola, Anka Varlaj). In addition to the above, the paper also presents categories of data and efforts towards standardising the structure of museum documentation at the time.

The previous work on this topic has presented numerous questions that surpass the scope of this paper and require additional research. Perhaps the most dominant question is from where and to what extent Tkalčić assumed the management system and structure of museum records that he applied in the case of the Ethnographic Museum. Therefore, further research should be

Graphic 1: Comparison of Tkalčić's (left) and contemporary (right) system of museum documentation (prepared by A. Vlatković, 2022)

## DOCUMENTATION ON MUSEUM OBJECTS

- Inventory books of collections
- Main index card catalogue
- Entry records

## PRIMARY DOCUMENTATION

- Inventory book of museum objects
- Catalogue of museum objects
- Book of entry records

## MUSEUM ARCHIVE

- Photographic archive
- Negatives
- Diapositives
- Film recordings
- Manuscripts
- Non-European archive
- Postcards and drawings

## SECONDARY DOCUMENTATION

### Audio-visual repositories

- Photographic archive
- Negatives archive
- Diapositives archive
- Video archive
- Audio recordings archive
- Expert archive
- Expert archive/Clippings archive (Hemerotheque)
- Museum holdings

## AUXILIARY INDEX CARD CATALOGUES

- Catalogue according to locality
- Catalogue according to object

## TERTIARY DOCUMENTATION

- Tables for nomenclature supervision

directed towards museum records of related institutions created in the period leading up to the founding of the Ethnographic Museum. Research should certainly be directed towards the beginnings of keeping museum records in the museums derived from the National Museum, especially the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, where Tkalčić worked as museum assistant (1907–1918), and then as *keeper*, curator (1918–1919). It is also necessary to focus research on the following periods, that is, on the record-keeping system and legal framework after 1945, in order to determine to what extent the practices that Tkalčić introduced at the Ethnographic Museum have been retained and to what extent and why they have changed over time. Only then could we get a more comprehensive insight into the historical development of the Ethnographic Museum's records.



Not only did Vladimir Tkalčić as the first curator of the Ethnographic Museum lay foundations of professional, scientific and museological work in the very beginnings of this institution's activities, but he was also a key person in shaping the museum's record-keeping system. His approach to museum activities was comprehensive and unified. The continuity that can be traced for the duration of the Museum's century-long operations attests to the quality of the design and approaches to museum record-keeping. It should be noted that the system of museum record-keeping that Tkalčić introduced to the Ethnographic Museum largely corresponds with contemporary museological practices and currently valid regulations that divide museum records into primary, secondary and tertiary.<sup>27</sup> A more complete idea may be obtained by observing the chart with a comparative view of the system introduced by Tkalčić and the one currently in use. (Graphic 1)

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27 Regulations on the content and method of museum materials record-keeping (Official Gazette 108/2002).

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