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# The Role of Vladimir Tkalčić in the Establishment of the Museum of Arts and Crafts Record-Keeping System

*This paper will attempt to provide an insight into the creation and evolution of the foundation system of museum records of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, which was developed during the directorship of Vladimir Tkalčić (1933–1952) and to a certain extent maintained even after the end of said period. A comparative analysis will show what corresponded and what differed in the mentioned system in managing the museum inventory (or with museum documentation) from the foundation of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (1880) until 1933. Also, special emphasis will be placed on the creation of a central or unique inventory book of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, which (albeit in digital form) is still maintained in the Museum of Arts and Crafts today.*

Keywords: museum, museum documentation, system, central inventory book

## INTRODUCTION

Vladimir Tkalčić was the director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts from 1933 to 1952. During his directorship at the Museum of Arts and Crafts, certain changes in the structure, direction of activities and the operation of the Museum were introduced, both due to changing times and differences in the understanding of the museum's function and purpose, as well as due to the affinity of Vladimir Tkalčić, all of which manifested itself on the institution and museum documentation. Until 1933, the Museum of Arts and Crafts in the documentation context kept inventory books of museum objects, inventories of growth, books of filing records and inventories of museum objects (1920–1930). After 1933, changes in the structure of the Museum of Arts and

Crafts occur, in terms of the number and type of collections of museum objects, the number of museum employees and the introduction of a systematic inventory of museum objects through systematic and organized museum documentation, which was a turning point in that area of expert museum activity. Regarding the policy of collecting and acquiring objects for the Museum at the start of Vladimir Tkalčić's directorship, it was initially not clear how and with what type of objects the existing holdings would be expanded, however, they were gradually expanded in two basic ways, through gifts and purchases, mostly from individuals who belonged to the cultural and artistic milieu of the City of Zagreb in the interwar period. This collection policy was accompanied by a modern and uniform way of inventorying museum objects, which was a *sine qua non* condition for a museum that exponentially increased not only its holdings, but also its entire institutional scope, thus expressing a clear vision of what a specialized museum such as the Museum of Arts and Crafts should be. This also meant that the "skeleton" of the documentation systems<sup>1</sup> was developed during the time of Vladimir Tkalčić in the Museum of Arts and Crafts, through the active application of primary museum documentation<sup>2</sup> (the start of keeping a central or unified inventory book of museum objects), secondary museum documentation (the Photographic and the Diapositives documentation) and museum archives, all to the extent that it is assumed was necessary in the mid-1930s (although not legally binding), and which has been maintained to a certain degree in lieu of its evolution to this day.<sup>3</sup>

The paper will attempt to demonstrate how the initial holdings of the Museum of Arts and Crafts were documented, along with providing explanations about the types of documentation (books) that were preserved for the period from 1882 to 1933, as well as what changes occurred within the institution after the specified period, with an emphasis on the formation and development of the museum's documentation systems and the Museum's central inventory book.

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1 System (Greek: σύστημα: organised whole; body). In general, a set of elements (natural, organic, technical, abstract, cognitive, etc.) connected into a functional whole (e.g. Solar system, digestive system, energy system, coordinate system, philosophical system); the totality of principles, rules, regulations, procedures that regulate a certain area (school, political, economic, transport system) or strive to achieve a certain goal (defendant system). Source: <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?ID=58904>

2 Primary and secondary museum documentation are terms that contemporary museum practices recognize and use more extensively in scientific writing since the *Regulations on the Content and Methods of Keeping Museum Records on Museum Materials* were adopted in 2002.

3 Documentation Service of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (until the time of writing) continuously maintains a central inventory book, introduced by Vladimir Tkalčić. Today, the book is in digital form, which is a change in terms of how data is entered, compared to the time of its creation when it was kept in printed form and written by hand. The *Photographic Archive* is also kept (where changes have also been introduced in line with new technologies), while the *Diapositives Archive* is no longer maintained. It is important to note that Vladimir Tkalčić also started collecting materials for the "museum archive", which (although the nomenclature is identical to today's registry, i.e., archive), was supposed to represent a completely different entity, assumed to have been separate from the documentation system of the Museum. However, given that the unit was formed in the late 1930s, it was necessary to mention it, even though the development of the whole idea is unknown today.

In general and in brief, it was written about the museum archive: "The museum archive collects information about artists and works of art, photographs of works of art, newspaper articles and various material related to history of art and culture." Museum of Arts and Crafts, Archive, "Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb", folder History of the Museum, typescript, unknown date and authorship, p. 4, and in: BACH, Ivan. 1940. *Šezdesetogodišnjica Hrvatskog narodnog Muzeja za umjetnost i obrt u Zagrebu 1880. – 1940*. Zagreb: Tisak Narodne tiskare (special print from journal *Alma Mater Croatica*, god. III., br. 6-7), p. 7.

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE INVENTORY MANAGEMENT OF THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND CRAFTS FROM 1882 TO 1933

The Museum of Arts and Crafts was founded on 17 February 1880, thanks to the enthusiastic activities and commitment of the Society of Arts and its members. The Society had multiple cultural and social goals, however, the establishment of the Museum of Arts and Crafts and the Craft School during the 1880s provided the basic impetus to the work of the Society of Arts. In its initial period, the museum was located in private spaces in Zagreb, first at the corner of Gajeva Street 26 and Kukovićeve Street 8 (today the corner of Gajeva and Hebrangova streets), where the Museum's holdings were presented to the public for the first time, and in Marija Valerija Street 3 (today Praška Street), where it was moved after the Zagreb earthquake in 1880.<sup>4</sup>

Details about the opening and the first permanent exhibition of the Museum of Arts and Crafts are known from the press of the time; one of the reviews with a detailed description was written by Izidor Kršnjavi.<sup>5</sup> For this earliest time of the formation and operation of the Museum, there are no traces of record-keeping that would have the function of organizing the holdings of the new museum. Also, there are no written records on whether the members of the Society of Arts, as initiators of the museum, were familiar with the process and method of keeping an inventory of museum objects, or with the process of assigning inventory labels to objects.

After the earthquake in the autumn of 1880, the Museum of Arts and Crafts was forced to move to a new location, where a second permanent exhibition was formed in a downtown apartment, in the already mentioned Marija Valerija Street no. 3. At that point, the Museum was housed in five rooms or halls, where the objects were arranged according to collections, so the first room or room I received ten collections, while room II or the room with the ceramic collection contained nine collections. In the third room, there were slightly fewer objects arranged into seven collections. Three collections were located in the fourth room, and the last room (room V) was designated for nine collections of products of Croatian domestic craft.<sup>6</sup> The assumption is that in fact after the relocation of the Museum, the first documentation record (inventory book of museum objects) was formed, the content of which can provide some explanations, for instance, which objects were donated and purchased for exhibiting purposes of the "young" museum. In this period, not only is the first significant written source of information based on documentation created (the already mentioned inventory book), but also the first inventory labels of

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4 On the first location of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, see: BAGARIĆ, Marina. 2013. „Zgrada Muzeja za umjetnost i obrt na pozornici zagrebačke zelene potkove: ikonografska studija“. In: *Zbornik radova drugog kongresa hrvatskih muzealaca*. J. Galjer, ed. Zagreb: Hrvatsko muzejsko društvo, p. 43. Also in: GALIĆ, Anđelka i Miroslav GAŠPAROVIĆ, ed. 2010. *Muzej za umjetnost i obrt Zagreb: 1880. – 2010.: vodič*. Zagreb: Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, p. 10.

5 See more about the opening of the Museum of Arts and Crafts and its first permanent exhibition in: DESPOT, Miroslava. 1960. *Historijat postanka i razvoja „Muzeja za umjetnost i obrt“ od 1880. – 1919.: povodom 80. godišnjice*. Zagreb: NSK, Zbirka rukopisa, br. 7536, p. 13.

6 All rooms or halls of the second permanent exhibition of the Museum of Arts and Crafts were marked with Roman numerals. However, in addition to the numbers, two rooms also had their individual names according to the type of material from which the objects exhibited were made (room II – ceramic room and room V – collections of products of Croatian domestic craft). The remaining three rooms of the museum exhibit did not have individual names.

museum objects are formed,<sup>7</sup> which can be interpreted as a manifestation of the awareness of the need to keep (some sort of) list of what comprised the Museum of Arts and Crafts at that time, which will be discussed in more detail below.

## BOOKS OF THE DOCUMENTATION SERVICE OF THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

The documentation records of the Museum of Arts and Crafts from 1882 to 1933, until the time of Vladimir Tkalčič's directorship, take the form of books and inventories, i.e. lists, and testify to the way the inventory of the Museum of Arts and Crafts was kept; today they are located within the Documentation Service of the Museum.

Their dating covers the time interval between the last two decades of the 19th century until the time between the two world wars, approximately from 1882 to 1933. Among the books, inventories and lists that are kept at the Documentation Service of the Museum that will be mentioned in the paper, the focus will be on the early inventory books of museum objects, the so-called "First" and "Second" inventory book, while the rest of the materials will be described only in summary form. According to the time of creation of the inventory book, the lists of the Documentation Service of the Museum of Arts and Crafts that have been preserved to this day are: the "First" inventory book of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (1882/1883 - ?),<sup>8</sup> List of files 1883 - 1885,<sup>9</sup> Inventories of the expansion of museum holdings (1892 - 1902),<sup>10</sup> Book of filing records (1909 - 1927),<sup>11</sup> "Second" inventory book of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (1909/1910 - 1919),<sup>12</sup> Inventory of current expansion of museum collections in the years 1906 - 1919,<sup>13</sup> and inventories (lists) of museum objects (from the 1920s to the 1930s)<sup>14</sup>.

The "First" inventory book of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (1882/1883 - ?)<sup>15</sup> is the basic documentation "tool" used for the interpretation of the composition and structure of the Museum's holdings in its beginnings. The time of creation of the "First" book is approximate, and likely

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7 Some of the earliest inventory labels that have been preserved to this day and that have been observed on objects from the holdings of the Museum of Arts and Crafts are assumed to date from the time of the formation of the second permanent exhibition.

8 The nomenclature "First" is a colloquial, not a formal name.

9 The list of files 1883-1885 is a bound list of registry files of the Society of Arts (the founding organisation of the Museum of Arts and Crafts until 1886), which the Society sent and received in 1883, 1884 and 1885.

10 Inventories of the expansion of museum holdings (1892-1902) were kept throughout the decade and had the following entry categories: *current number / catalogue number, object and its description, number of pieces, price (for./nč.), when and from whom it was acquired (donated) and observation.*

11 Book of filing records (1909 - 1927) is a bound book of registered museum documents that were sent and received, composed of three sections.

12 The nomenclature "Second" is a colloquial, not a formal name.

13 Inventory of current expansion of museum collections in the years 1906 - 1919 was a book kept concurrently with the "Second" inventory book and in which all new objects in the Museum's holdings were entered.

14 Inventories (lists) of museum objects are related lists of Museum items created in the interval from 1920 to 1930; about twenty of them have been preserved, bearing in mind that the lists do not have the final number, therefore, their total number is unknown. Some of the lists were printed, while others were handwritten.

15 Hereinafter this will be referred to as the "First" book.

originates from the early 1880s. It was the mode of record-keeping in the first inventory book, i.e., the method of assigning (later defined as such) inventory labels to items and their successive entry into the inventory book, that was the basis for the assumption that preceded its dating. The structure of the first museum inventory labels that were then assigned to museum objects corresponds to the arrangement of these objects in the so-called second permanent display of the Museum of Arts and Crafts<sup>16</sup>. The inventory label<sup>17</sup> was a multi-part designation composed of: the (Roman) number of the room of the Museum's permanent display, a slash, followed by the specific (individual) collection within the room, also indicated in Roman numerals, and the number of the object within the group, i.e., the collection, which was at the end of the label. The number of rooms and collections was fixed, while the number of objects within each collection was changeable, depending on the number of objects that entered an individual collection of each of the rooms in the permanent display over the years.<sup>18</sup>

There were seven fields in which data about the objects was entered, and the title of each field began with a capital letter. The titles of the fields according to the nomenclature at the time were: *inventory number, object, material, date acquired, origin of acquisition, price and ownership*.

What is generally interesting is the choice of fields or, in modern terms, the choice of metadata, that were important in describing museum objects in the second half of the 19th century. The assumption is that the structure of the inventory book is not random or separate, but that the information about the items that was entered was as important as it is today, which consequently renders the structure binding, especially if we take into account that the book was written by hand, while the structure in which it was written was printed.<sup>19</sup> It is possible to conclude that, the ordinal number of the object's entry, was followed by a mandatory description of the object. However, when examining the inventory book, it is evident that these descriptions were short, mostly reduced to what would today be considered metadata "item name", e.g., cup, painting, table, etc. There are descriptions such as: "Statue of a holy bishop carved in wood" or "Jesus. An extraordinarily beautiful carving, the most beautiful in that collection", however, more extensive descriptions of objects were very often not provided.

Also, the measurements of the objects were not recorded, and neither was the age of the object, while very often an itemised list materials from which the object was made was omitted as well. It is interesting to note that very often data related to the provenance and ownership of the object was entered: from whom the object was acquired before entering the Museum of Arts and Crafts (regardless of whether it was acquired through the process of purchase or donation), as well as in whose possession the objects were after entering the Museum, i.e., to whom they belonged. Thus, the objects that were acquired for the museum holdings during the 1890s were

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16 Due to a large number of collections within each room, only two or three collections from each room of the Museum's permanent exhibition are listed here.

17 How inventory labels (assigned to museum objects) were created in terms of their "format" is still unknown and requires further research.

18 One of the examples of the old inventory object label is: 1/IV 7. Today, this inventory mark is attached to the object "Samovar" from the Museum's metal collection with the inventory number MUO-453.

19 The method of forming the structure of the inventory book in terms of when and how it was created, as well as what determined the number and type of entry fields is not known and requires extensive further research.

most often either owned by the Society of Arts or the Royal High Government,<sup>20</sup> which needs to be interpreted in the context of determining under whose management the Museum was during the creation of the inventory book of museum objects.

Each group and each collection in the group had a specific “entry space” within the inventory book; thus, it was relatively easy to count the rooms/halls as well as collections and the number of objects within the collection, since the objects were entered according to the *numerus currens* of entry into the holdings. Seen from a different perspective, such a system was problematic for every collection that exceeded its designated “entry space” in the “First” book of the Museum of Arts and Crafts. Given that the basic element of the book was actually a printed sheet subsequently bound into book form, the structure had to have been proposed before the printing process. The origin of such a structure requires additional research, not only due to the period of its creation, but also in order to determine why the Society of Arts (which managed the Museum from 1880 to 1886) decided to use such an inventory format, especially considering that the Society consisted of a number of private persons, which can be interpreted as having certain freedom in decision-making related to the young institution. Also, it raises the question of the museum collecting policy, since this inventory book reveals not only the decision to “organize” objects into collections, but also the conscious selection of the types of collections that the Museum boasted at that time. The Society of Arts probably selected objects according to certain criteria to serve as “samples” and develop the tastes of the audience of the time, while at the same time presenting them to their visitors as meaningful units, but this actually represents a topic beyond the scope of this paper.

## THE “SECOND” INVENTORY BOOK OF THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND CRAFTS (1909/1910 - 1919)

“The second inventory book of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (1909/1910 - 1919)” received its name in the same way as the so-called “First” book.<sup>21</sup> It was created after the Museum was relocated to a purpose-built building in 1909 and was conducted according to the departments that were formed at that time: *the furniture department, ironworks department, department of stone objects, department of ecclesiastical art I and II, the department of jewelry and objects from bronze, pewter and ivory, ceramics department, department of gypsum casts, miscellaneous, furniture, objects exhibited in the museum owned by third parties, collection of collection of glass objects and collection of folk embroidery and weaving*. The importance of this inventory book is twofold: firstly, it is a document about all objects that were an integral part of the Museum’s holdings up to the beginning of the 20th century, as well as a document of the location of museum objects within the third permanent exhibition of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, and if “read” correctly, it is possible to obtain a general idea of the Museum’s third permanent display. It includes: all objects that made up the Museum’s initial holdings since the founding of the institution (1880), objects that were donated to the Museum in the following two decades or were purchased for

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20 “The school and the museum developed so much that in the spring of 1886 the Society of Arts handed over the Museum’s collections and library to the government, which merged them with the School of Crafts.”

21 As with a number of other segments and details of this inventory book, additional research in the form of a series of clarifications is needed.

the Museum, as well as objects that were specifically purchased for the new museum permanent exhibition in the first decade of the 20th century (e.g., objects in the property of Natalija Horvath or the Frank Collection). The structure of the inventory book had the following entry fields: *current number/catalog no., object and its description, number of pieces, price (current value), when and from whom it was acquired/donated, remark, purchase price*. An interesting feature of the structure is that it constitutes a combination of printed and written sections, whereby it is assumed that the latter were added subsequently. In the printed format of the structure of the inventory book, the following changes were made by hand throughout: the entry field “price” was modified by hand to “present value”, the field “remark” was modified to “current location”, and the section “purchase price” was added as a completely new field at the end of the entire printed structure. Each department started with entry no. 1, after which the numbers within each collection were ordered sequentially, according to the *numerus currens*. This made it possible to easily determine the number of objects within a particular collection, however, in order to obtain the total number of objects in the holdings, all individual sections needed to be tallied together. For the purpose of inventorying items, a completely new inventory label was created, which now contained the following elements: ordinal number of the item entry – slash – name of the collection (letter); however, it is interesting that the inventory labels of objects that were acquired earlier were also entered in the book, which is a practice that fully corresponds to modern record-keeping reasoning.<sup>22</sup>

The dating of the “Second” inventory book is “clearer” than that of its predecessor, while its entries start from 1909/1910, ending with 1919. The structure of the books could have been created earlier (as is visible in other books preserved at the Museum’s Documentation Service), since the same structure was employed on several occasions, however, as is the case with the “First” book, it is unknown according to what template it was created, i.e., what the source was for the selection of this sort of metadata, used to describe objects for several years prior to World War I. The object description is similar to the previous book, however, the difference is evident in the entry slots (the book is hand-written); the objects entered in 1909 or 1910 into the inventory of the Museum of Arts and Crafts were largely inventoried. In general, that the processes related to museums and museum collections were in existence at the start of the 20th century is evidenced by a document from the museum archive containing terminology still in use today: inventory, catalogue, item description, written records, museum organisation, etc.<sup>23</sup> The names of the collections according to which the objects were classified are interesting, because it is obvious that the fragmentation of the holdings now developed not only according to the type of material (glass, stone, metal), but this approach was also combined with the classification of objects belonging to applied arts (ecclesiastical art I and II, furniture, jewellery).

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22 Some of the examples of inventory labels and versions entered in the “Second” book are: 150/P, 1220/K, 585 Bronze, 583/Nakit (Jewellery), 566, 59 Crkv. Art. (Ecll. Art.), even 590/VI (Jewellery).

23 “In order to eliminate the state of the inventory, the representative of the accounting office suggests: in order to organise the museum, firstly, it would be necessary to create an accurate list of all museum objects, using the existing catalogue and various records; then, objects should be systematically classified according to group, type, technique, colour harmony, etc., and placed accordingly, and an appropriate catalogue should be created, in which each individual item would be described according to its form, origin and technique, along with its purchase price or estimated value...”. More on this is available in: Museum of Arts and Crafts, Archive, doc. no. 636/1907.

All the preserved and mentioned records of the Museum of Arts and Crafts reveal a certain mode of recording the quantity of objects in the museum holdings, the expansion of the holdings, as well as the record-keeping activity of the institution itself. Each of the cited documentation books demonstrates a certain method of recording the Museum's inventory that differed according to the period of its creation, which also reveals the changes that occurred in the record-keeping process itself, for which more detailed research is necessary in order to provide comprehensive explanations. The fact is that the Museum employed a certain method in recording the objects that constituted its holdings, if not from the moment of its founding, then soon after. However, the evaluation of the extent to which this method was compatible with the period, in terms of how it corresponded to the inventorying system in other museum institutions in the city of Zagreb and beyond, as well as answers to a series of questions raised earlier in the text, constitute a different topic.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE RECORD-KEEPING SYSTEM SINCE 1933 AND THE CENTRAL INVENTORY BOOK OF THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

At the moment when Vladimir Tkalčić assumed the directorship of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the institution did not possess a developed documentation system in terms of coherent and unified documentation "units". What existed (interpreted from what is preserved in Museum Documentation, i.e., the archive) indicates that individual inventory books of museum objects (related to certain time intervals) were kept and they were accompanied by inventories of the expansion of museum holdings, though not entirely. If inventory cards of museum objects or perhaps photographs of objects did exist, no trace of them has been preserved within Museum Documentation, i.e., the museum archive. Of the last official museum inventories or lists prior to the directorship of Vladimir Tkalčić, the lists created in the interval between 1920 and 1930<sup>24</sup> have been preserved. An inventory book that would reflect an attempt to encompass the holdings of the Museum of Arts and Crafts after World War I did not exist in the autumn of 1933,<sup>25</sup> which is extremely important considering the fact that a large portion of objects of ethnographic nature was extracted from the Museum of Arts and Crafts holdings after the establishment of the Ethnographic Department of the National Museum in Zagreb. The exact number of objects is not known today, but the existence of said book from that period of the Museum's operation would be extremely useful in clarifying the occurrence which, from a museological stance, influenced the subsequent direction of the institution's development in terms of the type and quantity of museum materials that remained in the museum's holdings after 1919 when the objects were removed, as well as the later "organisation" of these materials. In this regard, the initiation of the formation of the central inventory book as the elementary information source about the holdings is all the more important, and although it was created later, it represents the core of the documentation system of the Museum of Arts and Crafts from the time of Vladimir Tkalčić until today.

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24 Said lists have already been analysed in the paper.

25 In 1933, there was a change in the directorship of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, whereby its previous director, Antun Jiroušek, was replaced by Vladimir Tkalčić. The handover of museum agendas was conducted on 31 August 1933. For more about this, see: Museum of Arts and Crafts, Archive, doc. no. 286/1933.



## THE CENTRAL INVENTORY BOOK OF THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

The central or unified inventory book of the Museum of Arts and Crafts has not been the focus of research by museum staff until now (except in one instance).<sup>26</sup>

There are two elementary theses related to the process of its creation, whereby according to the first thesis, the central inventory book was created during the time of Antun Jiroušek, director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts from 1926 to 1933; while according to the second thesis, the inventory book was created during the directorship of Vladimir Tkalčić.<sup>27</sup> The change introduced by the establishment of this type of inventory was in the fact that the object was inventoried upon its entry into the holdings, i.e., the number of its entry, regardless of the type of collection to which it belonged, so that the ordinal number of the entry in the inventory book also represented the inventory label/inventory number of that museum item, which also meant that the inventory labels (in contrast to earlier ones) were single-format. This way, the quantity or the number of objects that the Museum of Arts and Crafts had in its holdings was always known. The advantages of the central inventory book were all the more significant since it was written after the new inventory of the Museum was carried out at the start of Vladimir Tkalčić's directorship. Even though the central inventory book was a complete novelty for the institution itself, Vladimir Tkalčić was already familiar with this sort of organized set of documentation records; namely, he arrived at the position of director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts from the same position at the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, where he was a curator (and later director) of the new museum. Similarities can also be found in the structure of the inventory book of the Ethnographic Museum,<sup>28</sup> which had an identical number of entry fields as the central inventory book of the Museum of Arts and Crafts<sup>29</sup>. The only difference is in the nomenclature, so instead of the fields – *current number* and *remark* (Ethnographic Museum) there are *serial number* and a *note* (Museum of Arts and Crafts). The other fields are identical: *item, where, when and how it came to the museum, number of pieces, location, purchase price*. Also, both sets of books actually consist of a series of hard-bound printed forms with a printed interval of entered inventory numbers and the serial number of the book on its spine. It bears noting that the employees of the Ethnographic Museum started entering objects in the inventory book earlier<sup>30</sup> than the employees of the Museum of Arts and Crafts.

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26 The documentation system of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb was processed in 2001 in a written paper by Andrea Klobučar to obtain the title of curator, titled *Historical Overview of the Documentation Management of the Museum of Arts and Crafts*.

27 The first thesis is supported in the above-mentioned paper by Andrea Klobučar. The author of this text supports the second thesis.

28 The Ethnographic Museum was founded in accordance with the order of the Ban of Croatia and Slavonia issued on 17 October 1919.

29 In this type of inventory book, the item description fields were filled in in different ways and it is difficult to highlight a certain field as more dominant, however the "item" metadata is often more extensive compared to earlier inventory books.

30 Given that research into the creation of the inventory book of the Ethnographic Museum is the purview of the employees of that museum, the topic is not elaborated in this paper.

The origin of the structure of the central inventory book (even if the great similarity with the structure of the book of the Ethnographic Museum is taken into account) currently remains unknown/unclear, not only in terms of local provenance, but also in a wider context, especially considering that the structure of all the inventory books kept at the Documentation Service of the Museum and analysed in this paper exhibit certain similarities even though the materials are of different ages (19th compared to 20th century) and different provenances (the area of Austria-Hungary vs. the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). The Museum's archival documents only contain a request issued by the Museum, for the printing of printed forms for the museum inventory, i.e., the central inventory book, however, the form itself has not been preserved, while research of the successors of the designated printer has not yielded new information.<sup>31</sup>

In general, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the entry of museum objects into the central inventory book was initiated, given that the museum archive does not contain significant consistent traces about it, apart from isolated and often unrelated decisions, that could serve to trace the process of creating the principal book and, accordingly, the start of inventorying the Museum's holdings. There are various reasons why the process of creating the central inventory book of the Museum of Arts and Crafts is dated during the directorship of Vladimir Tkalčić. During the handover, as evidenced by the records of 31 August 1933 (see note 25), the retired former director Antun Jiroušek handed over the museum's business agenda with museum acts and stamps, cashbox diary without cash and cashbox diary of museum entrance fees, while the "handover of the museum library and museum collections and the Modern Gallery will be done successively and special records will be drawn up on it".

At the time of the transfer of management, no list of materials, i.e., objects the Museum had in its holdings, was compiled. Shortly after taking over the Museum's agenda, Tkalčić begins a sort of preparation for (what will later become) the process of inventorying the Museum's entire holdings, by sending a request to the Narodne novine printing company for the printing of 1000 museum inventory forms, and soon including Ruža Zanon<sup>32</sup> as a volunteer in the museum's activities, who will prove vital in organizing the museum's library and collections.

Ruža Zanon began working as a volunteer on the inventorying and organisation of museum collections at the start of 1934, while the process lasted until April of the same year, when a number of key protocols were signed on the handover of the objects of the Museum of Arts and Crafts<sup>33</sup> from Antun Jiroušek to Vladimir Tkalčić. The typewritten records were compiled according to the following groups of objects: *Paintings and sculptures (works of older and more recent domestic and foreign painters and sculptors)*, *Collection of miniatures, silhouettes, daguerreotypes and enamel paintings*, *Fans*, *Small objects of artistic craft*, *Objects/vessels made of pewter, copper and brass*, *Objects of oriental artistic crafts*, *Collection of jewellery*, *Bosnian inlaid objects*, *pipes and powder horns*, *Collection of glass objects*, *Library*, *Collection of ceramics*, *Collection of iron and metal objects*, *Collection of furniture (originals)*, *Collection of ecclesiastical antiquities (without textiles)*, *Collection of textiles (A. ecclesiastical and B. secular)*, etc. It is not known how the decision came about to perform the inventorying process (in fact, a revision of the Museum's entire

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31 The document in question is kept at the Museum of Arts and Crafts Archives, no. 300/1933.

32 See: Museum of Arts and Crafts, Archive, doc. no. 182/1937.

33 The records have ordinal Roman numerals I to XIII; it is not clear how many there were in total, nor what each of the sections were titled because not all records have been preserved in the Museum's archives. For more, see: Museum of Arts and Crafts, Archives, doc. no. 64/1934.

holdings), however, by comparing and analysing the content of the aforementioned records, it is possible to observe that they are identical to the central inventory book of the Museum of Arts and Crafts: the order of serial numbers and the content of the records is completely identical to the order of items and their inventory numbers in the central inventory book, which can only be interpreted as being the result of simultaneous work on both segments. Given the date of completion of the audit of the Museum's holdings, as well as the accompanying records, the entry of all items that were in the holdings at the time could only have been performed during the directorship of Vladimir Tkalčić, which consequently implies that the central inventory book of the Museum of Arts and Crafts was commenced in the same period. Also, by comparing and analyzing the handwriting of the person who wrote the first entries in the central inventory book (focusing on the first and second volume), with some of the archival documents, it is possible to conclude that museum volunteer Ruža Zanon<sup>34</sup> wrote them, which leads to the conclusion that the central inventory book was commenced in the first half of 1934, several months after Vladimir Tkalčić assumed the position of director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts. In that time interval, the process of inventorying all objects that remained in the Museum's holdings after the extraction of objects in 1919/1920, as well as all donated or objects purchased later (during the 1920s and 1930s) was completed and all items ending with inventory number 4176 were registered. In parallel with the creation of the central inventory book, inventory cards of museum objects were also created; first they were written on paper by hand, however they were subsequently typewritten in three copies on A5 format printed forms. Based on the handwriting on the first version of the inventory cards, it is assumed that, like the central inventory book, they were written by Ruža Zanon simultaneously with the museum inventory. The second, typewritten version, was probably made in the late 1930s, perhaps early 1940s. It also appears that the handwritten inventory cards did not go beyond serial number 4176, which corresponds to the last inventory number written in said handover records.

The record-keeping system developed by Vladimir Tkalčić contained, in addition to the central inventory book, two repositories that supplemented the central inventory book or the museum inventory: the *Photographic Library* and *Diapositives Library*.

The *Photographic Library* (today the Secondary Documentation database) was a repository initiated at the Museum of Arts and Crafts as part of the new documentation system, in symbiosis with the *Diapositives Library* and the museum's photographic laboratory. The *Photographic Library* is already mentioned in a 1940 publication<sup>35</sup> in the context of "founding of an archive of photographic negatives of objects in the museum collection, as well as other monuments of art and artistic craft", which approximately places the date of its creation within the interval between 1933 and 1940. The functioning of the *Photographic Library* was the same as the functioning of the main museum inventory in terms of entering the photographs (positives) in the inventory book of the library according to the *numerus currens* system and searchability

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34 During the directorship of Vladimir Tkalčić, approximately five inventory books were written, however, the emphasis is on the first, that is, the second volume, given the date of the start of writing the core museum inventory: I (1 - 1976), II (1977-4176), III (4177-8299), IV (4286-7682 - Berger Collection), V (8300-9986). To what extent Ruža Zanon was later included in the museum inventory process is not relevant to this topic. Generally, for more on Ruža Zanon's work, see: Museum of Arts and Crafts, Archives, doc. no. 575/1937.

35 Cf.: BACH, Ivan. 1940. Šezdesetogodišnjica Hrvatskog narodnog Muzeja za umjetnost i obrt u Zagrebu 1880. - 1940. Zagreb: Tisak Narodne tiskare (special print from journal *Alma Mater Croatica*, y. III., no. 6-7), p. 7.

through the book or inventory cards. These were written in three copies: according to the type of material (of the object pictured), locality, type of object. The structure of the inventory book had several entry fields: ordinal number (of the positive), object (description of the object pictured), type (sometimes film size, e.g. 10 x 15 cm or inventory label of positive, e.g. 28-IV-10 or both pieces of information together), recorded when and by whom, and remark (often the inventory number of the photographed object or several of them was listed), which "linked" the photographic repository to the museum objects, i.e., the central inventory book. Just like the central inventory books, the inventory books of the *Photographic Library* were bound in hard-cover binding, with serial numbers written on the spine, while the inventory label of the positives was threefold: the ordinal number of the entry in the inventory – the size of the negative – the ordinal number within the size. "Reading" the *Photographic Library* reveals the focus of photographic work: recording museum objects, museum interiors and exteriors, as well as museum employees, which today constitutes an indispensable and valuable source for interpreting the history of the Museum of Arts and Crafts. After creating the positives, "the photographs were glued onto cardboards sized 22 x 25.5, with the ordinal number of the photograph written on the same side, which was also the serial number of the negative, and the description of the object, who recorded the photograph and when, and the inventory number, on the back (later cards with the same information were glued)" (Klobučar 2001: 19). On the other hand, "the negatives (on glass or film) were placed in bags with the inventory number of the negative and stored in drawers according to size..." (Ibid.). The organization of the *Photographic Library* remained almost the same, with data being written by hand in all the museum inventory books, until technological changes prompted a switch to computer processing of the materials in the second half of the 20th century. However, until the end of Vladimir Tkalčić's directorship, the *Photographic Library* kept its original form created in the 1930s.

The *Diapositives Library* was also a repository (in today's vocabulary: database) of secondary documentation that began to be maintained in the Museum of Arts and Crafts as part of the new record-keeping system. The method of managing the repository corresponded to a certain degree to the *Photographic Library*, in terms of the structure of data entered in the inventory books, writing the information by hand, however, without the three-part card system. The entry fields of the inventory book were: serial number (of the diapositive), object (description of the recording), type, when and by whom it was recorded, and remark (most often containing the inventory number of object depicted), which "linked" the repository to the central inventory book. The difference between the repositories of the *Photographic Library* and the *Diapositives Library* is reflected in the quantity of inventory books of the repositories, since there were two separate inventory books for the *Diapositives Library*: one for black-and-white slides (*leica* size and 6 x 6 cm), and the other for colour slides. Both kinds of diapositives were framed; the black-and-white diapositives were stored in a cabinet according to the current number (*numerus currens*), which was also the inventory number of the diapositive, while colour ones were stored in boxes (marked with Roman numerals) and also arranged according to the current number system.<sup>36</sup> It is interesting that (according to the date of the entry in the book) the use of colour diapositives

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36 The last slides (black and white and in colour) were inventoried ten years after the end of Vladimir Tkalčić's directorship; therefore, this paper focuses on only a segment of the material created before the end of said period.

began in the 1940s,<sup>37</sup> while the black-and-white ones started to be used later, around 1950.<sup>38</sup> While a larger quantity of slides (both types) were used to display the objects of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the repository also contained images of objects outside the museum environment, such as master sculptor Radovan's portal of the Trogir cathedral (no. 24), or the church of Saint Mary of the Snows from Belec (interior, no 25). The reasons for creating diapositives of such diverse topics are today unknown (except perhaps for educational purposes), and it is also unclear why they ceased to be entered in the inventory books in 1960s, approximately a decade after the end of Tkalčić's directorship of the Museum.<sup>39</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to gain insight into the creation and development of the fundamental system of museum documentation of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, which was formed during the directorship of Vladimir Tkalčić (1933–1952). A comparative analysis attempted to demonstrate whether this system contained an element that corresponded to the museum inventory record-keeping at the time the Museum of Arts and Crafts was established (1880), while also stating the basic characteristics specific to given periods of museum activity. The comparative analysis demonstrated that the documentation system developed by Vladimir Tkalčić was the first of its kind since the founding of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, to a certain extent maintained even today, and further developed in line with the needs of the times and technological developments.

In addition, considering the complexities of the entire paper, the general conclusion is that a series of new research undertakings is still needed, which that would not necessarily be related only to the history of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (by means of its archival sources), but would also be directed towards the broader position of the institution within of the cultural and museum community of that time. For the context of Croatian institutions during the second half of the 19th century, the area of Austria-Hungary represents the primary source for research and examination of museological topics and influences that were assumed from this milieu over time and employed according to the needs and demands of individual institutions, including the Museum of Arts and Crafts.

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37 The first entries in the inventory book of colour slides date back to 1943.

38 In the *Diapositives Library* slide no. 16 depicts the museum object "Sewing Table", with inventory number MUO 9387, which entered the holdings in 1949. Given its low current number, the repository was likely started after that date. As the inventory book was first concluded in 1951, it was probably started within that time interval.

39 Entering items in the *Diapositives Library* was reinitiated in contemporary times, but this surpasses the scope of this paper and will not be further elaborated here.



Picture 1. After creating the positives, the photographs were glued onto cardboards sized 22 x 25.5, with the ordinal number of the photograph written on the same side, which was also the serial number of the negative, Museum of Arts and Crafts

Šegreb 1955. Istraživač. odjela Akademije prim. umjetnosti u najst.  
rodinici Vukste Hladušića.  
Ispit na dio inoibensy prostora.  
Foto: Mihov Zvonimir 1955.

Prilog 1.a. The inventory number, on the back (later cards with the same information were glued) and the description of the object, who recorded the photograph and when, Museum of Arts and Crafts

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## SOURCES

- a) Books (inventories) and lists of the Museum of Arts and Crafts
- b) Documents from the archives of the Museum of Arts and Crafts