
Aida Brenko

Ethnographic Museum, Zagreb
abrenko@emz.hr

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32458/ei.27.17>
UDK 069.6(497.521.2):39]”1919/1934”
069.01(497.521.2):39]-051Tkalčić, V.
069.01(497.521.2):39]-051Berger, S.
Preliminary communication
Received on: 24th May 2022
Accepted on: 26th June 2022

Economy or Ethnography? Vladimir Tkalčić’s Role during the First Phase of Work of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb

The text depicts the role of Vladimir Tkalčić in the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb from 1919 to 1934, a period characterised by the so-called diarchy between him and Salamon Berger. Various museological and expert concepts that they represented and implemented were a reflection of new ideas and inherited concepts in turbulent times after World War I and the establishment of a new state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Tentatively, we can speak of a “scientific” approach and a “commercial” approach that juxtaposed, intertwined, and complemented each other. The data from the museum documentation show that S. Berger understood the activities of the Museum as a continuation of his previous trade and craft practices, while V. Tkalčić sought to introduce museological and scientific principles in the museum work.

Key words: Salamon Berger, Vladimir Tkalčić, cottage industry, Ethnographic Museum, management policy

INTRODUCTION

The period at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century is known in the European historiography as a time of intense national movements and the use of objects of rural culture for political purposes. In Croatia from the mid-19th century the ideas of nationality and cultural self-awareness inspired the establishment of many an institution with a national character which encouraged the voluntary collection of objects illustrating Croatian tangible and in-

tangible culture (Peić-Čaldarović 2012). At the time, selected objects used in rural communities gained the status of folk art or Croatian national art with the Croatian public and, as such, the National Museum, established in 1846, began to collect them.

In spite of a number of initiatives undertaken by individuals (F. Rački, I. Kršnjavi, B. Bogišić, J. Purić, S. Berger, V. Deželić, A. Jiroušek), the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb (EMZ) was established only in 1919, after the end of World War I, in the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Tkalčić 1922, 1930; Kus Nikolajev 1927; Gjetvaj 1989; Eckhel 1999; Muraj 2001, 2006). It was opened in a 1904 building of the Trade and Crafts Museum in Zagreb.¹ After the moving in of the Ethnographic Museum into the building of the Trade and Crafts Museum, some ideas seemed to still be present, and thus we will briefly reflect on the history of the institutions which stored ethnographic materials up to 1919 as this is important for understanding disputes that marked the work of the Ethnographic Museum during the initial period of its operation.

In an article celebrating the 140th anniversary of the Croatian Chamber of Crafts, the historian Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević showed how the Trade and Crafts Museum had turned into an ethnographic one by World War I. In addition to adverse political and socio-economic conditions that, in her opinion, had led to that, she considered the purchase of the Home Crafts Collection of Salamon Berger in 1905 a significant reason for that transformation, revealing that behind that name was actually ethnographic material.

When I started with my museum work as a manager of one of the textile collections of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, I could not explain why the Textile Collection of - Salamon Berger in the Museum of Arts and Crafts, which included, among other things, folk costumes, applied textiles, and ornament fragments from the mentioned materials, was purchased for the Trade and Crafts Museum in Zagreb. The decision to purchase the Collection seemed contrary to my understanding of traditional costumes in the ethnographic context but also to the mission of the Trade and Crafts Museum, as given by Mira Kolar - Dimitrijević, that the Museum would serve as an information centre where business people could learn about the possibilities and requirements for opening new factories and craftspeople about technical innovations, as well as find support for product placement (Kolar-Dimitrijević 1992: 72).

The same applies to textile folklore materials which, after the restructuring of the National Museum in 1880, were removed from that institution and added to the Trade School as a collection of textile samples intended to serve as a teaching aid to the students of that school (Gjetvaj 1989; Bonifačić 2008; Brenko 2019). Since 1880 such materials have been collected in the Museum of Arts and Crafts.

FOLK COSTUME AS AN INDUSTRIAL COMMODITY

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, researches into folk culture focused on material culture, in particular, costumes and textiles (Stoklund 1994; Houze 2015). The significance given to those objects in the ethnological context at the time was related to importance that folklore textiles represented in the economic arena. Folk costume has been much discussed in the eth-

1 For more about the topic, see the text by K. Bušić in *Etnografska istraživanja (Ethnographic Researches)*.

nological literature as a symbol representing a nation, while its significance and role in a wider social and economic context have been frequently disregarded (Geering 2021: 1-20). Although peasant material culture is most often considered an expression of tradition, it should be noted that many contemporary authors present folk costume as a commodity of the industrial age, linking its symbolic meanings with the role of capitalism, industrialisation, and nationalism (Houze 2015; Geering 2021; Kale 2021). An examination of the way in which rural material culture was made, collected, and exhibited in the mentioned period reveals social and economic processes that took place during the modernisation of the society. Those processes promoted production, technological innovation, and the industrial education of women, which eventually has also shaped the modern history of textiles, including folk costumes. Namely, the then definition of industry implied factory production, crafts, but also making products at home, the so-called cottage or domestic industry (EMZ Documentation, Home Crafts 1889-1950). Hand-made textiles were thus considered industrial commodities in the broadest sense, so folk costumes belonged to the same group of industrial products as machine-made items. In that context, the Austrian state issued a decree in 1911 providing that the preservation of folk costumes was to be ensured by financing public courses that were intended to educate peasant population in traditional product-making techniques rather than by preserving authentic historical objects (Geering 2021: 16).

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the issue of how to connect disappearing production methods with new emerging technologies was the subject of an ongoing public debate. A sudden and unprecedented interest in traditional clothing can thus be linked to the belonging to a modern society. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, objects produced in rural households were increasingly placed within regional and national frameworks, which is considered crucial for the process of their commodification. Classification, typology, and standardisation of objects and ornaments were a precondition for their market placement (Stoklund 1994; Houze 2015; Geering 2021).

Folk costume was an integral part of commercial exhibitions, starting from 1867 in Paris, where “national pavilions” were introduced as an exhibition novelty (Stoklund 1994: 39). The process of transforming the peasant material culture into a commodity took place through printed publications, catalogues with ornament samples, illustrations, postcards, and exhibitions. Those new ways of presentation contributed to its attractiveness. The fascination with those objects, in particular, with their ornamentation and provenance, generated great interest among the public, especially the bourgeoisie, which at the time became a new elite. The objects, having been removed from the rural environment and placed in exhibition spaces of urban centres, gained other functions as well, one of them being the promotion of the national economy. In his review of the Applied Art Section at the 1873 Vienna World’s Fair, Jacob von Falke 1825- 1897), who was later appointed the Chief Curator of the Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna, stated that the cottage industry exhibits were a special kind of work that was not only of ethnographic interest because the production of such objects had stopped the exodus of population from rural areas (von Falke 1875: 138-139; Geering 2021: 4). The focus was not on the objects, instead producers, promoters, and consumers were in the foreground. Miroslav Hroch, Czech political scientist and historian, emphasises the role of craftspeople and traders in the mobilisation of national sentiments during the modernisation processes in east and central Europe (Stokes 1986: 595; Geering 2021: 13). He shows how, at the time, craftspeople and trad-

ers started to understand their work within national frameworks. On the other hand, promoters linked national cultural objects with the place of their origin and thus endowed them with the stamp of uniqueness or, transposed to today, provided them with a brand. This allowed for the so-called national types of folk costumes to be integrated in the global market (Umbach 2005: 114).

SALAMON BERGER AND HIS COTTAGE INDUSTRY

The last decades of the 19th century saw in Croatia the beginning of the activity of Salamon Berger (1858-1934), collector, wholesaler, and industrialist, later also the Director of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb. Some of his activities prior to coming to the Museum fully fit into the aforementioned trend. On the one hand, he worked towards creating a collection of ethnographic objects and artistic crafts and, on the other hand, on encouraging cottage industry that was mostly related to weaving and carpentry. When the business was at its peak, Berger employed 1 600 women (Franić 1935). His cottage industry products stood out for high aesthetic and technical quality, allowing for their successful placement on international markets through 96 exhibitions in Europe, America, and Australia (Franić 1935; Gjetvaj 1989; Bušić 2009). All bore the marking *Hrvatska seljačka kućna industrija* (*Croatian peasant house-works*) as some kind of brand.

With the popularisation of peasant craft and cottage industry objects through exhibitions and by means of other visual media, the boundaries between the industrial activity, the cottage industry, and the folk art with ethnical and national connotations became more and more fluid (Rampley 2013). Following an 1894 study by Alois Riegl on folk art, handicraft industry, and cottage industry (*Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*), festive peasant clothing was begun to be considered an object of folk art and, as such, collected in museums of applied arts, whose mission was mostly based on the idea of using tradition to create something new.

Materials that are nowadays considered ethnographic were, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, mostly treated in economic terms. It is likely for this reason that the idea of establishing an Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb did not succeed prior to 1919 given that peasant material culture collections already existed in the Trade School, and later on in the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the Trade and Crafts Museum, and the School Museum, in other words, at places where production of such objects and the education of people to produce them were promoted.

Dr. Milan Rojc, as the Head of the Religion and Education Department, tasked Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska, writer and vocational teacher, with cataloguing and thus consolidating various ethnographic materials located at the aforementioned institutions (Peić-Čaldarović 2012: 105). Between 1906 and 1910, two parts of *Katalog hrvatske narodopisne zbirke Trgovačko-obrtnog muzeja u Zagrebu* (*Catalogue of the Croatian Ethnographic Collection of the Trade and Crafts Museum in Zagreb*) and *Katalog tekstilne zbirke zemaljskog umjetničko-obrtnog muzeja u Zagrebu* (*Catalogue of the Textile Collection of the National Arts and Crafts Museum in Zagreb*) were published. The introductory texts are imbued with patriotic feelings and clearly show that, although mentioning the scientific importance of the collected items, she considers them primarily in the economic context: "... because only from a greater understanding a respect is born for these important branches of our national heritage which can serve our nation as a new

and lucrative source of rich economy, both in the form of crafts and industry” (Belović-Bernadzikowska 1906).

Such perception of ethnographic objects had far-reaching consequences for the Ethnographic Museum, reflecting in different understandings of the role of the museum and its objects, which was represented, on the one hand, by S. Berger and, on the other, by V. Tkalčić. The EMZ Documentation stores the 1936 Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, including statements of Vladimir Tkalčić and Božidar Širola on accusations made by Ivo Franić, who was appointed the Director of the Ethnographic Museum in 1935. He accused them of shortages and surpluses of items determined after the 1935 audit of materials, as well as of improper accounting. He also wrote:

“On arrival, the undersigned found this museum in a state of disarray. Collections were not arranged in an expert or orderly manner and were displayed in shop - windows rather than in a museum and scientific way. Instead of an ethnographic museum, we would rather say it is a folk textile art museum with several storerooms for woodwork and pottery. The inventory of obtained objects is several years behind. Whole collections have not been inventoried at all since 1919” (EMZ Documentation, Historical Files No. 10/1935).

V. Tkalčić and B. responded with statements saying that they did not feel guilty about the state of the Museum at the moment of handover of duties and then describing how the Museum was managed from its establishment to Berger’s death in 1934 (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936). That document was used as the main source for analysing the conflict that took place in the Museum over that period.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM IN ZAGREB

The establishment of the Ethnographic Department of the Croatian National Museum was preceded in 1918 by the purchase of the National Collection of Salamon Berger after Dr. Josip Brunšmid and Dr. Viktor Hoffler from the Archaeological Department of the National Museum gave a favourable assessment. The National Museum could not accommodate the Collection due to lack of space. Vladimir Tkalčić, who at the time worked at the Archaeological Department of the National Museum, became its keeper, that is, its Curator, while S. Berger became its manager. They found that the best option for accommodating the Collection was the Trade and Crafts Museum on account of a lull in its activity at the time. Consequently, they proposed that “superfluous” exhibitions of crafts and industrial products be removed from the Trade and Crafts Museum and that objects be returned to companies or stored in the attic of the building to make room for the much more valuable ethnographic collection of Salamon Berger (Peić-Čaldarović 2012: 106). In the aforementioned text, Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević takes a negative stance on the role of Vladimir Tkalčić in moving the Berger’s collection to the Trade and Crafts Museum, holding that his professional knowledge and authority of a competent museum expert were instrumentalised to dismantle the institution that operated towards improving and developing the domestic (national) economy, which had far-reaching consequences for the Croatian economy. In her opinion, the trivialisation and downplaying of the role of the Trade and Crafts Museum is particularly evident in the Tkalčić’s explanation of that act, stating, among other things,

that craft exhibitions can continue to be held in the Department of Arts and Artistic Crafts of the National Museum (Kolar-Dimitrijević 1992: 71).

The Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb was established by a decision of Ban Ivan Palaček on 22 October 1919. Although this resulted in the Trade and Crafts Museum being shut down, the new Museum had an important social role because its establishment: "...led to a specific part of the valuable cultural heritage – of mostly national but also universal, multicultural, and transnational significance – being unified into a new and conceptually much broader institution" (Peić-Čaldarović 2012: 106-107).

Namely, in 1919 the National Collection of Salamon Berger was merged with the Ethnographic Collection of the Historical and Archaeological Department of the Croatian National Museum in Zagreb, the Ethnographic Collection of the Chamber of Trades and Crafts in Zagreb, the Ethnographic Collection of the Museum of Arts and Crafts and the Royal Trade School in Zagreb, and the Ethnographic Collection of the Educational and Literary Association in Zagreb. Thus was born "the Ethnographic Department of the Croatian National Museum in Zagreb", or the Ethnographic Museum for short. Salamon Berger was appointed Director of the Museum, and Vladimir Tkalčić its Curator (Gjetvaj 1989: 15).

Collections that with the creation of the Museum became a part of its holdings would have a considerable impact on the concept of its operation. The majority of objects included in collections at the time was perceived by the public as popular, national, folk, or peasant arts or crafts. A part of the materials was produced by the cottage industry or crafted at home, however, at the time there was still no firm boundary between home-crafted objects and objects produced by peasants for own use (Bonifačić 2008; Brenko 2019).

MISSION OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM IN ZAGREB

V. Tkalčić sought from the outset to introduce museological and scientific principles in the museum work. His understanding of the role of the Museum is manifested in his definition of its mission:

"... to show all life and culture of our people, in the first place of peasants, in particular, from Croatian regions; furthermore, to paint a picture of the life and culture, with special emphasis on peasants, of all other civilised peoples, in particular the Slavic ones, and the life and culture of half-civilised and primitive peoples, which as such would be used for scientific study of our nation and of man in general; in addition, to improve educational programmes and general spreading of education and serve as a source of inspiration for arts and crafts; and, as a role-model institution, to represent a part of our whole national culture" (Tkalčić 1930: 139).

The part of the mission relating to the role of the Museum as inspiration for arts and crafts can be linked with the very prominent activity of the Museum in that field during the office of S. Berger and V. Tkalčić. Namely, although the Trade and Crafts Museum no longer existed, the newly established Ethnographic Museum partly continued carrying out important duties of the closed museum as over the following years it intensely dealt with the improvement and restoration of peasant home crafts and domestic industry. That activity was particularly fostered by S. Berger as a continuation of his previous practices. His understanding of the museum, as given in an obituary written by an anonymous author after his death in 1934:

“... was not of a cabinet, university, ethnological, or, let us say, museological nature. The deceased appreciated market life... Even in the museum, he kept his mercantile spirit that guided his efforts to bring benefits to peasants. His connections with ministries, at world exhibitions of decorative arts, with a number of companies as former business colleagues had only one purpose... As far as he was concerned, the museum should have been the centre of a new (mostly textile) movement that would continue his previous work as a merchant“ (Malin 1934: 173-174).

Apart from conceptual differences, there was also a legal problem. Namely, following the entry into force of the 1923 Officials Act, due to the lack of qualifications S. Berger could not be classified into any category of officials, instead he became the contractual Director of the Museum. However, he continued to act as the actual Director of the EMZ until his death on 11 January 1934. Prof. Tkalčić was appointed Manager of the Ethnographic Museum by Decree of the Ministry of Education No. 806 of 26.1.1925. As the Ministry neither removed S. Berger from the position of Director nor defined the relation of the new Manager V. Tkalčić towards the previous Director S. Berger considering their competencies, V. Tkalčić, in his own words, was the Manager only in title, on paper, as he continued working in his capacity of the Curator as before, and the entire competence remained in the hands of S. Berger, who managed all the affairs of the Museum. V. Tkalčić became somewhat more independent only from April 1928, and this position persisted until he was appointed Manager of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb on 13 July 1933 (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936).

ORGANISATION OF WORK IN THE MUSEUM

During the initial operation of the Ethnographic Museum almost all actions were organised by Vladimir Tkalčić, who also provided the main concept of work. A library, documentation, and archives were established, and a substantial publishing activity was started. All contemporary technical aids from photo and film cameras to phonographs were used for research purposes. In that initial period, besides Vladimir Tkalčić, the Museum also employed Dr. Milovan Gavazzi², Dr. Božidar Širola³, and Dr. Mirko Kus Nikolajev⁴. The academy-trained painter Zdenka Sertić made drawings in addition to exhibits, while the textile expert Tereza Paulić prepared drawings

2 Gavazzi, Milovan (1895-1992), Croatian ethnologist. He studied philosophy and Slavistics in Zagreb and Prague and obtained a doctorate degree in 1919. The Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb employed him as a Curator from 1922 to 1927 and as its Director from 1939 to 1941. From 1927 to his retirement in 1965 he was a professor at the Ethnology Department of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. He laid the foundations of scientific ethnological work in Croatia and raised many generations of Croatian ethnologists (Mokos 2009).

3 Širola, Božidar (1889-1956), Croatian composer and musicologist. He graduated in physics and mathematics from the University of Zagreb (1913) and studied musicology at the University of Vienna, where he took his doctorate degree in 1921. He worked in Zagreb as a secondary school teacher, the Curator and Director of the Ethnographic Museum, and the Administrative Director of the Music Academy (Mokos 2009).

4 Kus Nikolajev, Mirko (1896- 1961), Croatian ethnologist and sociologist. He studied natural sciences and philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, where he earned his doctorate in 1924. At the University of Berlin, he attended classes on ethnology, sociology, and economics. He was the Curator of the Ethnographic Museum (1925-1933) and wrote the first museum guide *Šetnja po Etnografskom muzeju u Zagrebu (A Stroll in the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb)* in 1927 (Mokos 2009).

of textile article patterns (Gjetvaj 1989). We also see that the Museum employed experts holding a high academic degree, while the library, documentation, and archives represented the basis for the expert and scientific work of the Museum. The Museum's Documentation from that period has field data provided by V. Tkalčić and T. Paulić from all over Croatia. The photo documentation stored on plates is also of great value.

V. Tkalčić often emphasised, as opposed to scientific criteria on which the collection policy of the newly established Museum was to be based, the aesthetic criterion that served as a basis for collection practices pursued by private collectors, whose collections became a part of the initial holdings of the Museum. Berger often pointed out that he found the most valuable items of his Collection by chance, fishing them out of the garbage, and gathered objects for the Collection "because he was mesmerised by their beauty" (Berger 1914). As the new holdings were to a large extent composed of Berger's collections, putting emphasis on the scientific and the aesthetic as two opposites was also how the Museum through its new policy distanced itself from the previous Berger's practices and underlined its direction towards "the scientific". This was to be achieved in the collection policy by applying systematic field research of all regions and by carrying out targeted acquisition campaigns. The fact that the results of acquisition campaigns were regularly published in *Narodna starina*, Museum's gazette at the time, is indicative of the importance attached to the acquisition of new objects. In his review of the work of the Museum in the first two years, V. Tkalčić underlined as its main shortcoming the fact that the new Collection consisted of five separately created collections whose collectors did not have the same goal in mind. Apart from that, he took issue with old inventories of collections, which were for the most part missing or lacking. An ethnographic museum is required to provide: "a clear presentation of the entire folk life of our people", and therefore, according to Tkalčić, there must have been "no system at all or, at least, no system for a scientifically managed ethnographic museum" (Tkalčić 1922: 74).

Field work was supposed to allow for: a) the procurement of objects for the Collection from regions and areas that were least represented or not represented at all; b) the collection of missing materials for the purpose of illustrating the entire life of our people; c) learning about materials in the field to identify objects that already exist in the Collection; d) scientific research of a certain region; e) establishing connections with individuals who could be suppliers or trusted persons for the Museum⁵ (Tkalčić 1922: 193). All collected materials were inventoried in accordance with the then modern methods.

Catalogue cards were hand written for each object and contained the following information: inventory number, number of pieces, name and location of origin of the object, the way and date of its procurement, storage, and purchase price. A description of the object, including data on materials, making techniques, ornament, and dimensions, accounted for the largest part of the card. The back of the card often contained a drawing of the object or decorative motif. Of great value are also records of dialectal names of individual parts of objects. V. Tkalčić and S. Berger took different approaches to the processing of materials. V. Tkalčić believed that objects needed to be collected in the field while recording information necessary for their inventory:

5 A trusted person could be anyone who could contribute to the progress of the Museum in any way. Also, an instruction on the work of trusted persons was issued. (*Narodna starina* 1922: 347-352.)

“It must be borne in mind that the inventory of museum objects is not the same as the inventory of a trade, factory, or other warehouse but, rather, a special expert and scientific work which must be done as accurately and exhaustively as possible both for the purpose of identifying the object at issue and for purely scientific purposes” (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936).

S. Berger did not see the importance of such expert and scientific work. In listing adverse circumstances in which the museum work was performed, V. Tkalčić indicated, among other things:

“... that the Director of the Museum S. Berger was scientifically illiterate, and, for this reason, each expert on the museum staff (in addition to V. Tkalčić, in particular Dr. Milovan Gavazzi, Dr. Božidar Širola, and Dr. Mirko Kus Nikolajev) had been in a constant, albeit covert, battle with him not turn the museum collection into shop-windows or even a carnival and not to cause confusion while proper inventory is being done by insisting that procured objects are to be exhibited before they are given an inventory number and a proper description” (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936).

S. Berger procured objects most often through suppliers with whom he co-operated prior to coming to the Museum. The status of many objects that came to the Museum that way was uncertain. As to Berger’s relation towards the Museum and its objects, Tkalčić said that Berger:

“... arbitrarily disposed of the objects of the Collection, replaced, lent, and gifted them, took them home and kept them in his apartment as recently has been determined by the commission at the reception of his legacy following his death” (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936). Moreover, the Museum was constantly receiving objects obtained by S. Berger:

“...through his incessant trading, while other different objects have remained in the museum since individual exhibitions in which the museum took part, both in the country and abroad, or have been given to the museum for storage, or gifted by certain parish offices, or were many-time repeated duplicates of the existing museum objects” (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936).

It was the trading in the Museum with which V. Tkalčić took the greatest issue when it came to Berger’s management. S. Berger considered the trading a continuation of the activities that he pursued prior to coming to the Museum. The trading activity was his private endeavour which he performed within the Museum business without abiding by the existing laws:

“From the very onset of the Ethnographic Museum, he started trading ethnographic and other objects in the museum itself, in particular, selling them to various foreign and domestic visitors or exchanging them for others, and, over a short period of time, the Ethnographic Museum had become known in Zagreb and further as a kind of store for folk costumes and other handicrafts. Various prospective buyers contacted the museum either personally or by phone to find out: ‘at what price this or that costume, embroidery, etc. can be bought.’ Hence, a very unpleasant and rather unseemly display for a scientific institute, as well as unacceptable in legal terms, of which S. Berger was constantly reminded by V. Tkalčić. However, S. Berger did not give up on his busi-

ness until his death” (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936).

Berger’s private correspondence shows that he considered “the bringing together of producers and consumers” one of the Museum’s functions. Such concept was crucial for trade and crafts museums. The EMS Documentation holds letters in which different persons contacted S. Berger to help them procure objects like the ones they had seen in an exhibition because they had learned from the museum custodian that duplicates could be obtained from the Auxiliary Fund. Tkalčić explained in detail how that fund was created:

“From the revenues generated by miscellaneous trading and accrued interest on official cash, S. Berger established the so-called ‘Auxiliary Fund of S. Berger’, which he used to procure – as he himself expressly stated – only various objects for museum collections and museum equipment” (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936).

The data available today in the Museum show that the fund held objects that were used for exchange with other museums, gifted to persons of standing, or sold to interested individuals and institutions. Their purchase and sale values were written on the attached labels. V. Tkalčić further wrote about the Museum:

“As to this trading, he adopted a hard-line stance and took to the practice of depositing all credits and aids that the museum received from the authorities to the bank for yield, first to the current account and later to the savings account, even though all this was contrary to the legal regulations. Against the advice and frequent warnings by V. Tkalčić not to do that because it was not allowed, he was adamant and ordered that that was how the money was to be handled. That practice was put to an end only in 1926” (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936).

The original policy of the Ethnographic Museum had parallels with the concept of the Trade and Crafts Museum and the Museum of Arts and Crafts. However, S. Berger was the only one who did not support that policy. In addition to collecting the objects of peasant material culture, the example of the planned collection of samples from different industrial companies and domestic factories is indicative of that period of the Museum’s work. Following such policy of the Museum, on 28 October 1919 V. Tkalčić sent a circular letter to the following addresses: Fiedlorova tvornica lana (Fiedler’s Flax Factory) in Osijek, Tvornica pređenja i tkanja pamuka (Cotton Spinning and Weaving Factory) in Duga Resa, Tvornica svijeća Rudolfa Lukinića (Rudolf Lukinić’s Candle Factory) in Karlovac, Zagrebačka tvornica papira (Zagreb Paper Factory), and many more. In the letter he commended their previous work and asked them:

“... to give the Ethnographic Department their products as representative samples of the domestic industrial (that is, craft) production, as they did earlier for the Trade and Crafts Museum, which clearly shows the efforts of the newly established Ethnographic Department to continue (in some part) developing the activities of the previous Chamber Museum” (Peić Čaldarović 2011: 145-146).

In addition to collecting the material culture, from its very beginnings the Museum had paid attention to the non-material aspect of the culture as well, in particular through two sections whose activities are considered modern even by today’s standards: Folk Music Section and Sec-

tion for Applying Peasant Craftmanship for Artistic and Craft Purposes, which was a link between the existing Museum collections and different professional audiences, where one of the roles of the Museum was to encourage, develop, and promote home handicrafts and make sure they were of good quality. According to Tkalčić, the purpose of that section was: "... to provide everyone with the opportunity to use museum collection materials and, in that respect, offer support in word and action" (Tkalčić 1926: 40).

The way in which Tkalčić described the EMZ Collection is telling as to the importance that he attached to the co-operation with craftspeople and artists but also to the general understanding of ethnographic materials at the time. Tkalčić emphasised that the Collection: "represented almost all by now known weaving and embroidery techniques and all types of main Yugoslav costumes" and that: "our interest and enthusiasm are aroused by the aesthetic composition of ornamental shapes and colour harmony" (Tkalčić 1924: 3).

The publishing activity also partly developed in that direction. Thus, 1924 saw the launch of *Zbirka jugoslavenskih ornamenata* (*Collection of Yugoslav Ornaments*), an edition announced by Tkalčić as the first "critical publication of our national heritage which has been so far known only through 'Die Sudslavischen Ornamente', an actually and technically poor edition by Srećko Lay" (Tkalčić 1926: 39).

EXHIBITION ACTIVITY

The exhibition activity was in the beginning also based on the Museum's co-operation with craftspeople, as evidenced by guest visits of the academy-trained painter Srećko Sabljak to the Museum in 1922, 1924, and 1931. His exhibitions displayed artistic and craft wood-carving works modelled after the museum materials made by Srećko Sabljak together with his students. The exhibition was opened in 1922, only three days after his exhibition at the Department of Arts and Artistic Crafts was closed, which is a testimony to the similarities between the museum missions of the two departments of the National Museum. Wood-carving objects made by Srećko Sabljak and Lepoglava inmates were lent in 1926 to the Ethnographic Museum with the approval of the Lepoglava Penitentiary for the purpose of: "exhibiting and promoting our folk crafts and arts" (Peić-Čaldarović 2012: 159).

The successful co-operation of the two departments of the Croatian National Museum is also represented by their joint appearances at world exhibitions, for example, the exhibitions of modern decorative and industrial arts in Paris in 1925 and 1927. At the 1925 exhibition, as indicated in its catalogue, the new state represented itself with objects from the territory of the entire Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes showing, on the one hand, modern arts and, on the other, folk arts and cottage industry products intended for sale, which was also a broad presentation pattern for other exhibitions of the same type. In co-operation with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Museum took an active role in the organisation of exhibitions and promotion of cottage industry objects at international exhibitions and fairs, as well as at the Zagreb Assembly. The lists of periodical exhibitions held in Croatia and across the globe in the period from 1925 to 1932 (Srećko Sabljak 1922; 1924; 1931; Paris, 1925, 1927; Barcelona, 1929; The Hague, 1929; Calgary, 1930; Copenhagen, 1930; Belgrade 1930; Saarbrücken, 1931/1932) showed museum objects defined as folk art or folk handicraft or applied folk art and applied folk handicraft (Gjetvaj

1989: 94; Bušić 2009; Brenko 2019). This type of exhibition is characterised by equal treatment of museum objects and objects that have the status of “commodity”. Transferring from the category of “commodity” to the category of “handicrafts” or “arts” was a constant thing. S. Berger, in particular, fostered such exhibition activity and applied the same logic also to the treatment of museum objects. Tkalčić complained to the competent institutions that, on account of being engaged in exhibitions and the Zagreb Assembly, the small Museum staff did not have time for other expert museum activities (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936).

The *Cultural and Historical Exhibition of the City of Zagreb*, organised in 1925 to celebrate the 1000th anniversary of the Croatian Kingdom, must be pointed out as a departure from commercial exhibitions in which the Museum participated in co-operation with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, where materials were selected and exhibited in accordance with the criterion of the type of material or following a regional or national key. All departments of the National Museum took part in that exhibition, with the Ethnographic Museum presenting a peasant room set up in the Art Pavilion in Zagreb. The exhibition was based on the results of the expert and scientific work of the Museum employees. It was interesting because models wearing folk costumes were shown on the basis of Tkalčić’s typology of peasant folk costumes in the territory of Zagrebačka gora, while the text in the catalogue was officially signed by Milovan Gavazzi, who explained that the exhibition attempted to present what peasant communities inherited from the old times and what they adopted from upper classes or from the population of the neighbouring regions. A particular emphasis was put on the influence of authorities, state institutions, and traders as well as peasant craftspeople on the shaping of costumes of the Zagreb surroundings. Besides, almost all exhibition clothes were contemporary, with legends describing the work of individual craftpersons (Gavazzi 1925: 28-37).

PERMANENT EXHIBITION

The Museum was opened to the public on 19 June 1922. The guide for the first permanent exhibition, titled *Šetnje kroz Etnografski muzej u Zagrebu (Strolls in the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb)* writes that the task of the ethnographic museum is: “... to collect all cultural elements in their most various forms and build on their foundation a developmental and historical sequence of human culture” (Kus Nikolajev 1927: 8-9). These views are consistent with the evolutionist approach also characteristic of other anthropological and ethnographic museums of that time. However, this can be hardly discerned from the description of the exhibition itself. The collection criteria and existing materials directed the exhibition towards a material classification of objects rather than an evolutionary presentation (Brenko 2019). The likely reasons for this were the Museum’s lack of adequate holding rooms and Berger’s insistence to include as many objects as possible in the exhibition. “To classify and place all collections, a geographical principle was applied, which, however, could be only sporadically taken into consideration for the placement of individual types of objects into separate rows (the so-called “ethnologische Reihen”) for the purpose of ethnological comparison” (Tkalčić 1930: 142). “Peasant art” objects, which were also considered the most representative part of the exhibition, were placed in the best section of the exhibition space: “From the beginning, the main part of the collection (textile, in particular, costumes, jewellery, weapons, Easter eggs, decorative woodwork, interiors) has been placed on

the first floor, which is reached by a wide bright staircase” (Tkalčić 1930: 135). Less representative objects were exhibited on the ground floor (Technological Collection and Collection of Non-European Culture).

The permanent exhibition included a variety of themes which were represented by a large number of objects, covering different aspects of the traditional culture in the entire territory of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, as well as neighbouring areas, including non-European cultural objects. Almost all branches of the traditional economy and different crafts were presented. A part of the materials was grouped by intended purpose, making technique, and decoration technique or arranged by regional and local principle. The photographs and lists of themes of the first exhibition indicate that exhibits in some sections were displayed in a similar way as in commercial exhibitions at the end of the 19th century. There was no difference between the cottage industry products and the objects that peasant households produced for own use. Objects were exhibited as commodities, e.g. twenty pieces of the same ceramic items, wooden chests, or sheepskins (Gjetvaj 1989; Bušić 2009; Brenko 2019), and could be sold, where, as already mentioned, the management of the Museum received orders and took on the role of middleman between buyers and producers (EMZ Documentation, Berger’s Archives).

As to the educational role of the museum, we have learned that: “... the museum staff was expected to interpret the Collection to each visitor, which took at least half of working hours because the Ethnographic Museum is one of the most visited museum institutions in Zagreb. Museum collections were always open to the public for visits, even when certain parts of collections were occasionally cleaned or rearranged” (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936).

After 1928 Berger ceased to have influence in the Museum that he need to carry out his activities. Thus, in 1930 he contacted the Ministry of Trade and Industry and proposed to establish an autonomous Trade Museum where expert technical staff would be supplemented by a sales person. The museum would mediate between producers and consumers and work on the revival of ceramic and wood-carving folk art or maybe, even better, “serve as a collection point for cottage industry products” (EMZ Documentation, Home Crafts 1889-1950). In other words, that was the very thing that he advocated in the Ethnographic Museum.

TKALČIĆ’S UNDERSTANDING OF THE CURATOR’S WORK

From the documents held in the EMZ Documentation is evident that V. Tkalčić, as well as some other departmental directors of the National Museum, opposed the 1921 Museum Bill that undermined the previous independent status of individual departments of the Croatian National Museum. The major issue was the proposed centralisation of the museum administration justified by the need for more control over its financial, expert, and overall operations. It was then decided that Dr. Fran Tučan, Director of the Mineralogy and Petrography Department of the Croatian National Museum, would participate on behalf of Zagreb-based museums in the meeting of museum representatives, which was supposed to be held in Belgrade. For that purpose, Gjuro Szabo, Director of the Department of Arts and Crafts of the National Museum, compiled an *Instruction*. Szabo proposed in the Instruction that each museum department (museum) continue to be managed by its manager reporting directly to the Ministry and, thus, that

work and budget management remain entirely at the discretion of the manager (Peić-Čaldarović 2012: 128). The Museum documentation holds the Instruction in which Tkalčić emphasised and commented on certain sections related to the organisation of the Museum and the role of the curator and director. He underlined the following sections in the comments:

“Sight should not be lost of the fact that the museum work has always been under the strictest control of the invited and uninvited public, which knows workers well and can tell them from all sorts of museumists who owe their position to favouritism and who, by trading things and pursuing similar activities, discredit the museum workers’ situation, which is not an easy one to begin with, and thus lead to such pernicious grounds. Removal of such persons is the most pressing task” (EMZ Documentation, Case: Dr. Fran Tučan representing Zagreb-based museums in Belgrade: No. 30/1921).

He also highlighted the part of the text related to the curator’s work:

“A museum employee’s work is twofold: on the one hand, he has to be a collector, assessor, conservator and, on the other, a scientific worker who will make a scientific use of collected materials, while absolutely having an artistic sense,... and the museum work will be considerably improved when workers are no longer burdened with the most basic care for their existence, or are at least less burdened with it, because the unpleasant phenomenon of museumists-merchants will be then gone” (EMZ Documentation, Case: Dr. Fran Tučan representing Zagreb-based museums in Belgrade: No. 30/1921).

Among the underlined sentences of the Instruction there are also those speaking of the need for complete freedom of museum workers in pursuing their scientific work, against strict working hours because they have never led to any results. It is written that complete freedom does not imply negligence and carelessness in carrying out museum duties but rather non-imposition of restrictions and obligations that prevent creative scientific work (EMZ Documentation, Case: Dr. Fran Tučan representing Zagreb-based museums in Belgrade: No. 30/1921). According to Tkalčić, S. Berger embodied the very opposite of those principles:

“Without S. Berger’s permission and order, nothing could be procured in the museum and not a single penny could be spent, his approval was required for any kind of work in the Museum, or scientific research, or any other action outside the Museum; moreover, without his knowledge, no writing was allowed, without mentioning his name, to arouse the interest of the youth in the newly established Museum. Generally, S. Berger was in every aspect a complete dictator, a true autocrat, as was common knowledge; he had little tolerance for criticism, let alone complaints, while being completely wilful in his work as he considered the Ethnographic Museum not only his creation but also, so to speak, his property” (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936).

CONCLUSION

Tkalčić’s efforts to make the Museum into a respectable scientific institution did not fully come to fruition due to a variety of circumstances, mainly on account of his disagreement with S. Berger on the role of the museum. Such divergent professional opinions can be simplified into the following oppositions:

- commercial approach vs scientific approach
- list of commodities vs inventory
- “collection point for cottage industry objects” vs “clear presentation of the entire folk life of our people”
- “bringing together producers and consumers” vs “source of inspiration for arts and crafts”
- aesthetic criterion vs scientific criterion
- commercial exhibitions vs expert and science-based exhibitions
- commodity advertising vs education
- unlawful vs lawful
- protection vs expertise.

V. Tkalčić emphasised expertise and merits rather than protection in selecting the director, scientific approach as opposed to the commercial orientation of the museum, scientific freedom, field research, and collection of data on objects as opposed to the aesthetic criterion and coincidence, curators as creative and expert employees rather than clerks. One of the main problems that he faced was determining the role of the museum in the society, an issue still current today. As he himself pointed out: “*The Ethnographic Museum was organised from scratch during the most severe turmoil of our new state when everything was more or less in a state of disarray*” (EMZ Documentation, Report of the commission on the state and business operations of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, 1936). During his mandate, he weathered various adversities, in particular, lack of funds and not being able to employ experts, inadequate space for work, the key problem being the non-existent holding rooms, and lack of showcases and modern mannequins to display costumes (Tkalčić 1930). He tried to balance all museum activities and give importance to the scientific and expert work of the Museum which was neglected in relation to the constant exhibition activity and work with external customers in order to make a profit. We can say that all the problems that he was facing are still similarly present nowadays.

LITERATURE

- BELOVIĆ-BERNADZIKOWSKA, Jelica 1906. *Katalog Hrvatske narodopisne zbirke Trgovačko-obrtnog muzeja u Zagrebu*. Zagreb: Trgovačko-Obrtni Muzej.
- BELOVIĆ-BERNADZIKOWSKA, Jelica. 1907. *Katalog tekstilne zbirke zemaljskog umjetničko-obrtnog muzeja u Zagreb*. Zagreb: Zemaljski umjetničko-obrtni muzej.
- BERGER, Salamon. 1914. *Tragedija hrvatske tekstilne kućne industrije*. Zagreb: Tiskara Boranić i Rožmanić.
- BONIFAČIĆ, Vjera. 2008. „Etnološka istraživanja i kanonizacija „izvornih“ narodnih nošnji u Hrvatskoj 1930-ih“. *Etnološka istraživanja* 12/13: 9-27.
- BRENKO, Aida. 2019. „Politike sabiranja, interpretiranja i prezentiranja u Etnografskom muzeju“. U: *Kapa dolje! Priča o (ne) pokrivanju glave*. Mareta Kurtin, ur. Zagreb: Etnografski muzej, str. 9-51.
- BUŠIĆ, Katarina. 2009. „Salamon Berger i počeci izložbene djelatnosti zagrebačkog Etnografskog muzeja“. *Etnološka istraživanja* 14: 281-300.
- ECKHEL, Nerina. 1999. *80 godina Etnografskog muzeja*. Zagreb: Etnografski muzej.
- FRANIĆ, Ivo. 1935. „S. Berger – Etnografski muzej u Zagrebu – i naša pučka umjetnost“. *Vjesnik Etnografskog Muzeja u Zagrebu* 1: 1-14.

- FRANIĆ, Ivo. 1936. *Reorganizovani Etnografski muzej u Zagrebu 1935 godine = Das reorganisierte ethnographische Museum in Zagreb, 1935*. Beograd : Drž. štamp. Kralj. Jugoslavije
- GAVAZZI, Milovan. 1925. „Kultura sela oko Zagreba“. U: *Katalog kulturno-historijske izložbe grada Zagreba*. Zagreb: [s.n.], str. 28-37.
- GEERING, Corinne. 2022. “‘Is This Not Just Nationalism?’ Disentangling the Threads of Folk Costumes in the History of Central and Eastern Europe.” *Nationalities Papers* 50 (4). Cambridge University Press: 722–741.
- GJETVAJ, Nada. 1989. „Etnografski muzej u Zagrebu – u povodu 70. obljetnice“. *Etnološka istraživanja* 5.
- GRGACHEVITCH, Jacha. 1925. *L'art décoratif et industriel dans le Royaume S. H. S.* Beograd: L'Institut Graphique „Narodna Misao“
- HOUZE, Rebecca. 2015. *Textiles, Fashion, and Design Reform in Austria-Hungary before the First World War: Principles of Dress*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- KALE, Jadran. 2021. *Odijevanje naroda: nastanak narodne nošnje*. Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek.
- KOLAR-DIMITRIJEVIĆ, Mira. 1992. „Kako se trgovačko obrtni muzej u Zagrebu pretvorio u Etnografski muzej“. *Radovi zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta* 25: 57-72.
- KUS-NIKOLAJEV, Mirko. 1927. *Šetnje kroz Etnografski Muzej u Zagrebu: privremeni vodič*. Zagreb: S. Berger.
- MALIN, Franjo. 1934. „Nekrolozi 1934.: S. Berger, J. Kempf, F. Bulić, J. Vujić“. *Narodna starina* 13/34: 173.
- MOKOS, Jasna. 2009. *Djelatnici Etnografskoga muzeja u Zagrebu*. Zagreb: Etnografski muzej.
- MURAJ, Aleksandra. 2001. „Tragom Antuna Jirouška: etnografija u kulturnim i inim praksama“. *Etnološka tribina* 24: 35-46.
- MURAJ, Aleksandra. 2006. „Zamisli Velimira Deželića st. o osnivanju Etnografskog muzeja u Zagrebu. Jedna nevesela kronologija“. *Etnološka tribina* 36: 7-21.
- PEIĆ-ČALDAROVIĆ, Dubravka. 2012. „Razvoj građanskog društva i djelovanje kulturnih institucija u Hrvatskoj 1918.-1941. (primjer Hrvatskog narodnog muzeja)“. Doktorski rad, Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.
- RAMPLEY, Matthew. 2013. “6 Vernacular Cultures and National Identities: The Politics of Folk Art.” U: *The Vienna School of Art History: Empire and the Politics of Scholarship, 1847–1918*. University Park: Pennsylvania University Press.
- STOKES, Gale. 1986. “Review: How Is Nationalism Related to Capitalism?” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28/3: 591-598.
- STOKLUND, Bjarne. 1994. „The Role of the International Exhibitions in the Construction of National Cultures in the 19th Century“. *Ethnologia Europaea* 22/1: 35-44.
- TKALČIĆ, Vladimir. 1922. „Etnografski muzej u Zagrebu“. *Narodna starina* 1/1: 73-75.
- TKALČIĆ, Vladimir. 1925. “Seljačke narodne nošnje u području Zagrebačke gore”. *Narodna starina* 4/10: 133-164.
- TKALČIĆ, Vladimir. 1926. „Etnografski muzej u Zagrebu“. *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu* 1/1: 33-39.
- TKALČIĆ, Vladimir. 1930. “Etnografski muzej u Zagrebu 1919–1929. Povodom 10-godišnjice njegova osnutka“. *Narodna starina* 9/22: 132-148.
- TKALČIĆ, Vladimir. 1932. *Predlog za unapređenje naše narodne kućne radinosti povodom izložbe Zagrebačkog Zbora u jesen 1932*. Zagreb: Grafika.
- UMBACH, Maiken. 2005. “The Deutscher Werkbund, Globalization, and the Invention of Modern Vernaculars”. U: *Vernacular Modernism: Heimat, Globalization, and the Built Environment*. Maiken Umbach i Bernd Hüppauf, ur. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, str. 114-140.

SOURCES

- Dokumentacija EMZ, Kućni obrti 1889. – 1950.
- Dokumentacija EMZ, Pov. spisi br. 10/1935.
- Dokumentacija EMZ, Bergerov arhiv
- Dokumentacija EMZ, Izvještaj komisije o utvrđivanju stanja i poslovanja Etnografskog muzeja u Zagrebu, 1936.
- Dokumentacija EMZ, Predmet: dr. Fran Tučan, zastupa muzeje zagrebačke u Beogradu: br. 30/1921.