

Virtual Exhibition *Vladimir Tkalčić,* *Photographer of the Ethnographic* *Museum*

The virtual exhibition *Vladimir Tkalčić, Photographer of the Ethnographic Museum*, was organised to mark the centenary of the legendary field research conducted by the employees of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb. In the summer of 1923, a group of enthusiasts led by two curators – Vladimir Tkalčić and Milovan Gavazzi – went kayaking down the river Kupa from Karlovac to Sisak. In four weeks, they travelled around a hundred kilometres and visited 34 villages exploring ethnographic and cultural and historical heritage, and along with field records and collected museum objects, one of the most prominent results of this venture is a unique collection of anthological field photographs stored in the Documentation of the Ethnographic Museum, authored by Vladimir Tkalčić.

The first part of the virtual exhibition, titled *Vladimir Tkalčić, Photographer of the Ethnographic Museum: Pokuplje Excursion*, is closely linked with the previously mentioned collection. It was commemoratively “open” (perhaps it is better to say: published on the institution’s website) on 5th July 2023 as a part of the programme of the 57th Zagreb International Folklore Festival, an event that this year addressed the topic *Near the River Kupa, Coldish Water* also primarily marked the anniversary of the 1923 research campaign. All the digitised glass plate negatives (a total of 90 of them) were presented in the virtual space. Tkalčić filmed them during the research through units representing sections of the road, such as *Preparations for Departure, From Karlovac to Rečica, Luka Pokupska*, etc. Finally, the exhibition was accompanied by a digital “reprint” of the legendary catalogue of the exhibition by the Ethnographic Museum titled *Memories from Pokuplje* from 1993, published shortly after the death of its last participant Milovan Gavazzi.

Thanks to the initiative by Tvrtko Zebec, PhD, the artistic director of the Festival, on 6th July a specific virtual guide to the newly opened exhibition was organised within the International Folklore Festival at the Bogdan Ogrizović Library, where I held a short lecture on the topic of Pokupsko excursion. Because of a good audience response and their huge interest in the topic, I repeated this rather unusual concept of presentation of the virtual exhibition on 25th September, visiting the Sisak City Museum as a part of a one-day professional excursion of the Croatian Ethnological Society to Pokuplje.

In December 2023, the virtual exhibition was expanded with an additional 386 photographs from Tkalčić’s opus, whose digital copies are the result of this year’s digitalisation project *EMZ Online 2023*. The aim of the content upgrade was to speak about Vladimir Tkalčić as a photographer of the Ethnographic Museum, one of his professional habitus, which is often oversha-

dowed by the role of the first curator, the first educated museum professional at the Ethnographic Museum, the author of the permanent exhibition and subsequently the director. In addition to a brief glance at the personality and work of Vladimir Tkalčić, as well as the circumstances of the creation of the first audiovisual holdings of the Museum of which Tkalčić is the originator, the exhibition deals with his approach to portrait photography, recording customs *in situ*, conceiving the so-called human landscapes, i.e. a series of photographs portraying rural areas and their inhabitants at the crossroads of tradition and 20th century modernity, and especially his pioneering use of photography techniques used in early Croatian museography (from documenting museum holdings and exhibition activities to introducing reprophotography into work processes).

Finally, at the end of December 2023, the project was successfully concluded with the promotion of the exhibition's virtual catalogue, the first so-called EPUB edition of the Ethnographic Museum compatible with commercial e-readers such as Amazon Kindle, Kobo or Onyx Boox Tab. The virtual exhibition *Vladimir Tkalčić, Photographer of the Ethnographic Museum*, together with the catalogue that can be downloaded free of charge on personal devices, is permanently available to users on the website of the Ethnographic Museum, at the address tkalcic.emz.hr.



Pokupska ekskurzija

Pokupska ekskurzija, jedinstven je istraživački poduhvat Etnografskog muzeja koji se odigrao između 16. srpnja i 13. kolovoza 1923. godine, kada se mala skupina avanturista uputila čamcima u obilazak Pokuplja spuštajući se stotinjak kilometara nizvodno rijekom Kupom od Karlovača do Siska. Uz dvojicu kustosa Etnografskog muzeja – Vladimira Tkalčića (1883-1971) i Milovana Gavazija (1895-1992) – u poduhvatu su sudjelovala i dva akademska slikara – Srećko Sabljak (1892-1938) i Maksimilijan Vanka (1889-1963) – te petoro njihovih zajedničkih prijatelja – bračni par Bohaček, Maksimilijan (1891-1935) i Marija (1895-1980), bračni par Pijak, Matija (1894-1961) i Anka (1892-1984) te Matijin mlađi brat, Marijan (1900-1981).

Iako je primarni cilj istraživanja kustosa bio utvrditi granice pojavnosti u zbirkaama vrlo zastupljenih tipova narodnih nožnji s ovog područja, ono je rezultiralo dokumentiranjem znatno šireg raspona etnografskih, kulturno-povijesnih i umjetničkih tema.

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Pripreme za polazak

Zahvaljujući organizacijskom angažmanu i financijskoj potpori Srećka Sabljaka, koji je i predložio grupi zagrebačkih i leopoljskih prijatelja poduhvat istraživanja pokupskih sela spuštajući se niz Kupu čamcima, u svibnju započinju pripreme. Tkalčić i Gavazzi, kako i sami priznaju, nevljni vestinjske skupine se upućuju na Dravu kod Varaždina isprobati ratni isporučene gumene kajake remoniranog njemačkog proizvođača. Međutim, da nisu svi ekskurzisti bili bez veslačkog iskustva i interesa za avanturizam, svjedoče dvije staklene ploče na kojima se nalaze netipični koji prikazuju bračni par Bohaček kako u društvu Srećka Sabljaka sjede na sandalinama u Bednji. Prema raspoloživim podacima, vjerojatno su nastale godinu dana ranije, a izgledno je kako je i njih snimio Vladimir Tkalčić. Zahvaljujući ulogu su fotografiju narodnog poduhvata, koji su nastali prije i fotografiji Pokupske ekskurzije, kao

Figure 1. Screenshot of the virtual exhibition “Vladimir Tkalčić, Photographer of the Ethnographic Museum” (“Pokuplje Excursion” segment)