

ETHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN CROATIA: 1919 TO 1940

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The paper presents the fragments of scientific history of Croatian ethnology from 1919 to 1940, and pays special attention to the institutional (museum and academic) atmosphere in which individual authors (Tkalčić, Matasović, Kus-Nikolajev, Gavazzi) were working. Certain changes in the perception of the subject-matter (the history of peasant tradition culture) are also being considered, which is presented using the example of the research of clothing and textile.

Introduction

Between 1919 and 1940 ethnological research in Croatia entered its second phase, which can be characterized as being more diverse than the first phase between 1896 and 1919 (Bonifačić, in press/a). This was largely due to new institutional activities, which were made possible by the establishment of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb in 1919, and the creation of the Department of Ethnology at the University of Zagreb in 1924. The Ethnographic Museum created conditions for conducting different types of research in order to support the Museum's collection and exhibition programming, as well as additional publishing activities.

The Department of Ethnology, on the other hand, focused on developing teaching and research programming that would serve the formal education of Croatian ethnologists. In the process of shaping the new museum and educational programming, various authors associated with these two institutions introduced new research models or approaches to the study of rural culture. The questionnaire prepared by Radić as a tool of collecting ethnographic data was no longer used in producing comprehensive monographs of selected communities or regions in rural Croatia, such as those that were published in the *Journal of Folk Life and Customs of South Slavs* between 1896 and 1919 (Chapter IV). Instead, as Čulinović-Konstantinović (1984) reports, immediately after the First World War, within the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the Committee for Folklore at the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, which was in charge of publishing *The Journal of Folk Life and Customs of South Slavs*, discussed how to alter their activities in order to "improve the quality of their work" (p. 78). This change took a direction in favor of "better quality of researchers, who now came mostly from the ranks of ethnologists, musicologists, historians, lawyers, and other professionals, who through ethnographic records wanted to *preserve certain aspects of traditional culture* [italics added]" (p. 78). Croatian ethnology was obviously changing and redefining itself as an academic discipline.

In this chapter, this second phase of ethnological research will be analyzed with a focus on publications dealing with clothing and textiles. It must be mentioned, however, that the intention is not to give an exhaustive analysis of all the publications on textiles that were published during that time. Instead, only those authors and their selected activities and publications that best represent different research approaches which were used in the study of textiles during that period of time will be discussed. These are Josip Matasović, Vladimir Tkalčić, Mirko Kus-Nikolajev, and Milovan Gavazzi. Since all of these authors were associated with the Ethnographic Museum of Zagreb at some point in time during the 1920s and the 1930s, the Museum's activities will first be briefly described in order to facilitate later discussion of individual authors and their work.

The Ethnographic Museum of Zagreb and its research activities

The Ethnographic Museum of Zagreb was established in 1919, immediately after the First World War, within the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The initial collection of the Museum consisted of 20,000 textile artifacts which had been assembled from several smaller museums and private collections. The largest collection was

acquired from Samuel Berger, a collector and textile merchant, who also became the Museum's first director (Gjetvaj 1989). Over the years, Berger collected textiles from rural regions of Croatia with a specific purpose in mind; namely, to serve rural home industries of textiles, both as a source of design ideas, and as an aid in displaying and marketing home industry products. Berger continued to engage in such activities in his new capacity as the Museum's director. In collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Museum actively participated in organizing displays and promoting home industry products on international and domestic exhibitions and trade fairs (Bonifačić, in press/b).

However, from its very beginnings, the Museum had a mandate to create much broader public programming, as described by the Museum's first curator (1919–1925) and later its director (1925–1934), Vladimir Tkalčić (1922b).

The goal of... the Museum is to represent all life and culture of our nation, above all peasants, who to this day have best preserved our national characteristics... The Museum's... aim is to serve scientific research of the characteristics of our people, as well as man in general. Also, to advance all school instruction and public education; to be a source of inspiration for arts and crafts; and finally as a high culture institution to represent... [this aspect] of our culture... [to] the international community and [people] from other parts of our nation, who were prevented for centuries to learn about each other (p. 347).

From this description, it is obvious that the Museum's primary mandate was to pursue research activities and create programs that will serve to educate and inform the public about rural aspects of Croatian culture, and especially peasant culture. It was an attempt by the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to use peasant arts and culture on the territory of Yugoslavia as a symbol in creating a new supra-national identity, emphasizing the common pan-Slavic identity of its peoples. At the same time, however, as the Museum focused mostly on preserving peasant arts and culture from the territory of Croatia, the intention of the central government could easily be subverted. As will be seen in the subsequent sections of this chapter, some of the publications in the Museum's journal *National Heritage* simultaneously served to affirm the specificity of Croatian nation.

It is instructive to note that Tkalčić used a more specific term *peasant culture*, rather than the term *folk culture* that Radić used when he defined the focus of ethnological research. Radić's definition of folk culture was indeed somewhat broader, as it referred to the totality of life and culture of rural communities at the turn of the century. As will be seen in the subsequent sections of this chapter, during the 1920s and 1930s,

Tkalčić and other authors often explicitly used the term *peasant culture* and *peasant arts*, instead of *folk culture* and *folk arts*. This change in terminology reflected the shift in ethnological studies towards historical research in general, and more specifically towards "traditional" or "authentic" aspects of rural culture, which were perceived as remnants of the once pristine peasant way of life on the land.

According to Vladimir Tkalčić, the intention of the Museum was to create new collections of artifacts and archival data that would be assembled on the basis of scientific research. The goal of assembling new collections and archives was to recreate "the totality of folk life of our people" (Tkalčić 1922a:74). While this statement appears identical in its formulation to the one given by Radić when he first defined the goal of Croatian ethnological research in 1897, the intentions behind it were markedly different. Radić wanted to document and interpret the totality of folk life or folk culture as it was both practiced (the way people live) and experienced (the way people think) at that time in rural communities. He also considered it important to document and understand what impact the ongoing processes of "modernization" had on rural communities (Bonifačić, in press/a). By contrast, the intent of the research program of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb was quite different, as revealed in the concluding passage of the same article by Tkalčić (1922a):

We need to make up for the missed opportunities in the past. Because traditional spirit (- part of our national being, carrier of our own most beautiful characteristics, which we need to place as our most beautiful gift at the altar of the progress of our culture -), harmonious spirit, with which our popular creations were made until now, that spirit is vanishing day by day in front of all of us... (p. 75).

In line with other ethnographic museums across Europe, the intention of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb was to "preserve" and study only what remained of "traditional", and obviously idealized, aspects of peasant culture that was destined to vanish in the face of "modernization". In fact, collections of artifacts of Croatian and other Slavic peasant cultures were displayed in the Museum side by side with a large collection of artifacts of non-European, mostly "primitive" cultures from Asia, Americas, Africa, Australia, and Oceania donated to the Museum by Croatian collectors and explorers.

Tkalčić, who received training in museology during his specialization in Paris and Vienna, immediately set out to create conditions for conducting ethnographic research in rural regions of Croatia. He set up basic technical laboratories and acquired equipment for recording different kinds of data: phonograph for recording music, and photographic equipment for recording objects and people in situ. He also

planned to organize film recording of dances and other customs and rituals (Tkalčić 1922a:75).

Soon after Tkalčić secured the equipment, the Museum curators¹ set out to conduct fieldwork in rural regions. For example, in the summer of 1923, Vladimir Tkalčić, Milovan Gavazzi, together with eight other friends and enthusiasts, organized a rather spectacular month long expedition in Pokuplje. They took with them the necessary provisions, heavy phonographic and photographic recording equipment and, traveling by kayaks along the river Kupa, collected artifacts and other data in numerous villages situated along the river (Muraj, Eckhel & Zorić 1993). Among other data, they brought back photographs of clothing and textiles, some of which were documentary, others obviously staged for the purposes of being photographed (Muraj, Eckhel & Zorić 1993:60–68). Over the years, numerous photographic and phonographic records were collected from many regions of Croatia. Gjetvaj (1989) writes that "the first several thousand photographs represent the most valuable part of the Museum's Photographic Archives, and they were taken during the first few years after the Museum was founded" (p. 21).

When it comes to written ethnographic records, the great majority of them were collected during ethnographic fieldwork conducted by the Museum's curators and later by professors in the Department of Ethnology at the University of Zagreb, as well as other scholars. These professionals pursued their own specific research interests and projects with the help of local informants. Tkalčić initially proposed that the written data be also collected by local informants in various regions, and recommended that they use the questionnaire prepared by Antun Radić (Tkalčić 1922b:349). However, while numerous fragmentary reports from different regions continued to be submitted and published in various journals, no comprehensive monograph based on Radić's questionnaire, and written by someone from the region, was published either in the *Journal of Folk Life and Customs of South Slavs* or in the Museum's publications between 1919 and 1940.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb started its own library, and engaged in the following publishing activities between 1919 and 1940: *National Heritage* [Narodna starina] (1922–1935) (only partially associated with the Museum); *Ethnological Library* [Etnološka biblioteka] (1925–1934); *Collection of Yugoslav Ornaments* [Zbirka jugoslavenskih ornamenata] (1925–1934);

¹ Božidar Širota joined the Museum in 1920 as a volunteer, and in 1925 as a curator in charge of ethnomusicology; Milovan Gavazzi became a curator between 1922 and 1927; and Mirko Kus-Nikolajev in 1925 (Gjetvaj 1989).

Ethnological Research and Data [Etnološka istraživanja i građa] (1934—1942); and *Journal of the Ethnographic Museum of Zagreb* [Vjesnik Etnografskog muzeja u Zagrebu] (1935—1938). The main editor of the journal *National Heritage*, Josip Matasović, who played a significant role in Croatian ethnology between 1922 and 1935, will be discussed in the next section.

Josip Matasović: a historian of everyday life and culture

Aleksandra Muraj (1993) has already discussed the unique contribution of Josip Matasović to Croatian ethnology. Muraj described Matasović as a politically active youth who, during the early 1900's, propagated the idea of independent Croatia not only by means of political separation, but also through the active creation of national identity among Croats; that is, "through both political and cultural emancipation of Croats" (Muraj 1993:12). A historian, Miroslava Despot, found in these early political ideas the origin of Matasović's general cultural-historical orientation which marked all of his later work (Muraj 1993:13). Matasović, a broadly educated intellectual, studied geography and history at universities of Zagreb, Zürich, and Vienna where he received a doctorate in 1915. While in Zürich, he attended lectures of Dr. Otto Stoll, a medical doctor, ethnographer, geographer and anthropologist, who likely brought ethnology into Matasović's sphere of interest (Muraj 1993:12). This helps to explain why Matasović, both as a scholar and as the editor of *National Heritage*, maintained an open and multidisciplinary approach to the study of both elite and popular cultural history. In retrospect, his contribution to academic disciplines, history and ethnology, has been hailed as truly original for his time (Janeković-Römer 1993; Muraj 1993).

Matasović published and edited the journal *National Heritage* between 1922 and 1935. The journal simultaneously served three cultural institutions: Ethnographic Museum of Zagreb, The City Museum of Zagreb, and Graphic Collection in Zagreb. It therefore brought together a broad spectrum of historians of culture. This fact alone contributed to the multidisciplinary nature of *National Heritage*. They brought together publications on a great variety of topics, a variety of research approaches to the study of cultural history, as well as numerous documentary and fragmentary reports relevant for both urban and rural cultural history. Perhaps more importantly, Matasović's own interests as a historian gravitated towards social, economical, and cultural history, rather than political history. In other words, he was interested in the "little history" of professional and everyday life of both elite and non-elite segments of

population.² Muraj (1993) writes that Matasović showed in both his scholarly and editorial work "how historiographic research can be useful to ethnology, and how... ethnological knowledge can complement historical [knowledge]" (p. 31). Matasović can therefore be seen today as anticipating the later developments during the 1970s, when the interdisciplinary dialogue became part of the international scholarly debate, and changed the research practice of the disciplines of history, ethnology, and anthropology.

The multidisciplinary character of *National Heritage* is also evident in the articles focused on clothing and textiles published in the journal over the years. Firstly, one can find ethnological studies of textiles which were mostly written by authors associated with the Ethnographic Museum and the Department of Ethnology in Zagreb (Gavazzi 1922a, 1928a; Gušić 1930; Kus-Nikolajev 1934; Tkalčić 1925). Some of these publications will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections of this paper. Secondly, a number of publications described historical documents or books by 18th and 19th century travelers, who painted rural costumes while traveling through various regions of Croatia (Ibrovac 1935; Novak 1930; Zega 1923), while several publications described painted images of peasant costumes that were found in anonymous religious paintings in rural churches (Tkalčić 1931, 1934). Thirdly, Matasović himself wrote several publications in *National Heritage* in which he discussed historical documents that contained valuable information about rural life, including clothing and textiles, in the regions of military borders in Croatia during the 17th and 18th century (Matasović 1923a, 1923b, 1931). For example, Matasović (1923a) described a document from Slavonia, written by Relković between 1782 and 1786, from which we learn about male and female dress in *zadrugas* in one of the regions of Croatia's military border, as well as data about state promoted production of silk:

"The promotion of material culture [consumption] which started during the rule of Maria Theresia, continued during the period of Joseph's rule. At the end of 1782, [in Babina Greda] there were, numbered according

² Janeković-Römer (1993) comments that Matasović always strove for the total perception of social conditions in a given period, and gives an impressive list of the themes Matasović addressed in his scholarly publications: social consciousness, culture of living, material culture, aesthetics, civilization traits, way of life and mentality of urban society, Illyric Movement, customs, germanization, fashion, arts, language, food, hunger, medicine, police force, leisure activities, political topics, patriotism,... home life, furniture, guilds, emotional life, plotting and gossip, trade, literature written in [kajkavski] dialect, professional problems, clothing, manners, etc (p. 159).

to their size, 219.828, and 10.355 trees for raising silk worms. Silk manufacturing was done in Vinkovci" (p. 52).

Finally, a number of publications discussed economic history relevant for both urban and rural history of clothing and textile in Croatia. For example, Popović (1927) published his findings about a collection of letters and business books of one Bosnian Serb family in Sarajevo, Budimlić. This family was involved in long distance trade between Turkey, Bosnia, Dalmatia, and Italy in the first half of the 19th century. Popović (1927) writes that "the most important good, which was transported on this route, was cotton" (p. 60). In the section in which Popović lists all the goods that were imported or exported, one finds that, among other items, Budimlić traders imported cotton from Trieste, scarves and trims from Dubrovnik, while they exported washed wool (from Bosnia and Mostar) and fur to Trieste (p. 68). Popović (1927) concludes that, already in the early 19th century, Bosnian Serbs appear to have been well versed in domestic and foreign trade:

"The number of Yugoslav merchants, their agility, their mutual connections and their presence on all important surrounding trading centers in nearby countries (Vienna, Trieste, Dubrovnik, Split, Brod, Skoplje) their understanding of merchant's work and particularly their participation in the cotton trade... suggests that the period when Serbs switched from other occupations such as crafts to trade must be moved much further back in time...

The results which we have obtained about the cultural and economic history of our people during quite a long period of time and over a wide territory, out of a single, and not even extensive, document, make us think how much precious materials such private archives contain, and how much of it has already been lost...

Our urban communities, their past, the origins of their populations, the development of their crafts and trade have not received as much attention as rural communities. Such research would emphasize and solve many interesting historical, economic, and social questions... Merchant's archives offer accurate picture not only about trade efforts but also about the intimate life and culture of the whole social setting" (p. 69).

These eloquent words by Popović can also be taken as a tribute to Matasović, as a scholar and as the editor of *National Heritage*, for his pioneering efforts to begin recreating a historical record of everyday life in both urban and rural regions of Croatia. The interdisciplinary approach to the study of both rural and urban history that Matasović advocated and practiced so consistently, ended in 1935 due to financial difficulties, when he was forced to stop publishing *National Heritage*. Unfortunately, in the subsequent years his perceptions of ethnology as a historical science did not become a dominant approach in Croatian ethnological research,

especially in the domain of clothing and textiles. The importance of the work that Matasović initiated in the area of clothing and textiles cannot be overestimated, and is awaiting to be further developed by Croatian ethnologists.

Vladimir Tkalčić: a historian in a museum setting

As described in the section on the Ethnographic Museum of Zagreb, Vladimir Tkalčić was one of the central figures in developing the research program of the Museum, both in the capacity of its first curator (1919—1925) and later its director (1925—1934). When it comes to his formal education, Tkalčić received a degree from the University in Zagreb, with a major in geography and history and minor in archeology and art history. He later specialized in Paris and Vienna in museum work. When reading his main publication "Seljačke nošnje u području Zagrebačke Gore" [Peasant Costumes in the Region of Zagreb Mountain], one can detect a tension in his research between his museological orientation and his background education in history, which makes his work both interesting and to a certain extent original (Tkalčić 1925).

In the introduction to the article, Tkalčić (1925) states that the goal of his museological research was to learn about origins and development of peasant costumes in Croatia. Since hardly any historical documents about peasant costumes existed, he writes that it was imperative to collect ethnographic data through oral interviews, in order to "reconstruct the history of peasant costumes" (p. 133). He goes on to say that he used the "ethnographic method in preparing this descriptive monograph, and it was therefore necessary to go - mostly by foot - from village to village" (p. 133). His orientation as a museologist is also evident in his careful analysis of the artifacts themselves, including drawings of clothing construction, as well as attention to detail in ornamentation.

On the basis of visual analysis of costume construction, Tkalčić divided women's costumes from that region into three different types, and compared them to the construction patterns of elite women's costumes dating from pre-renaissance, renaissance, and more "modern" times. The fact that Tkalčić resorted to a mere visual comparison of objects from such vastly different contexts and periods of time, suggests that in this particular aspect he was not applying the methods of a historian. Instead, Tkalčić was obviously influenced by the cultural-historical research model that Gavazzi was introducing to Croatian ethnology at that time. In the cultural-historical model, material, visual, or functional characteristics of peasant material culture are compared with historical and even archaic material culture, in order to speculate about their possible origins and

geographical diffusion patterns. Peasant material culture is therefore perceived as a survival of much older forms and elements which persisted, albeit at times in a modified form, within autochthonous peasant culture. Cultural-historical research aims to develop such classifications of possible origins and diffusion patterns of cultural forms, and does not inquire into socio-historical context within which the cultural forms were transmitted in time and space (Wolf 1982).

Tkalčić, however, did not use this kind of comparative method in the rest of his analysis, and I believe this is where his background as a historian became evident. Instead, Tkalčić introduced into his analysis the available historical documents (three citations) and literature (four references), as well as socio-historical data he assembled from oral interviews and his personal knowledge about the region. For example, he found that he could further divide women's costumes from that region into eight different types according to decorative and design elements (p. 138). He immediately noted that these eight types of costume decoration overlapped with the past administrative borders of feudal land holdings, and present day borders of parishes, which he suggested must have influenced these regional differences in costume decoration (p. 133).

Tkalčić further indicated the importance of learning more about textile trade in rural Croatia before drawing conclusions about archaic origins of peasant costumes. For example, he cited an example when trade of certain industrial materials quite arbitrarily influenced changes in costume decorations (p. 133). Also, when describing how women from Bistra used to cover their head with a "large or small scarf decorated with embroidery... which they used to buy from *Toti* (traveling Slovak merchants)" (p. 153), he added the following note:

"... *Toti*, Slovak [merchants] who sold cloth and lace, have long been, and continue to be, an important factor on fairs and trade posts in Croatia and Slavonia (Csaplovics, Slavonien und zum Theil Croatien, Pesth 1819, p. 196). By bringing goods from their regions they also introduced new elements into our ornamentation, and this is how we could have come to think about the continuity of some forms from as far back as pre-Slavic social communities" (p. 153).

Tkalčić also indicated that older styles of peasant costume may persist in spite of intense interaction between some villages and the city. When describing the Šestine type of costume, for example, he noted that peasants from Šestine and three other different parishes (Remete, Gračani, Markuševac) wore the same costume. He went on to say:

"The city squares in Zagreb, especially during the mornings, are filled with men and women from Šestine (in Zagreb they consider everyone with such costume to be from Šestine) who come to the city because of

trade or washing of laundry [for Zagreb citizens]... It is significant for the peasant, especially from the northern surroundings of Zagreb, that in spite of such close and continuous interaction with the city, he retained his costume almost untouched by the foreign spirit, and at the same time did not stagnate in his cultural progress" (p. 138–140).

From this description one can speculate that this particular costume persisted not *in spite of*, but precisely *because of* trade with the city; Šestine costume likely persisted because it became the trademark of the quality of peasant services for Zagreb citizens.

In his conclusion, Tkalčić lamented that the lack of data, especially of historical documents, made that particular work only an incomplete, preliminary, and merely descriptive document. Nevertheless, he ventured to propose a few tentative yet perceptive conclusions. First, he suggested that in the past the costumes in this whole region were likely the same, or at least much more similar; hence, he thought that pronounced differences in clothing styles in these regions were of relatively recent making. Among the reasons for increased regional differentiation in costumes, he gives the dissolution of the feudal order in 1848 and consequent increase in "general, and therefore also peasant, moral and economic individualism" (p. 163). He would return to support this view in his later publications, in which he presented evidence of relatively simple peasant costumes in anonymous church paintings from the first half of the 19th century (Tkalčić 1931, 1934).

Another conclusion that Tkalčić tentatively drew from his research concerned the historical change of peasant costumes:

"... just as differentiation is now evident among different regions... there are also differences among costumes in a historical sense; every period gave also its mark to peasant costume. We must not forget, that even though peasant costume is conservative and full of traditional forms, it is still subject to constant and gradual change. It, too, has its "fashion", only it has less upheavals than it does in city life. The less developed individualism among peasant people corresponds to less differentiation in their costume" (p. 163).

Tkalčić initially approached this particular project as a museologist/ethnographer of his time. However, in the process of doing his research, he obviously combined ethnographic methods with those of a historian, and on the whole demonstrated his preference for historical documentation rather than speculation about the history of peasant costume. His keen interest in the multiplicity of urban-rural interactions and their effect on peasant costume, also shows that he was more interested in reading material culture as an index of social and historical processes, than in doing diffusionist type of classification of origins and cultural layers of

various elements of costume according to a certain schema. One can only regret that Tkalčić did not leave behind more publications.

Mirko Kus-Nikolajev: a theoretician of peasant visual arts

During the late 1920s and 1930s, Mirko Kus-Nikolajev introduced to Croatian ethnology a new kind of theoretical discourse concerning the study of peasant visual arts, including textile arts (Kus-Nikolajev 1929a, 1929b, 1935). In his publication "Expressionism in Peasant Art", Kus-Nikolajev (1929a) for the first time articulated the basic outline of what he called a *sociological* approach to the study of peasant visual arts. Even though in this first publication he did not give full references to any sources of literature, he mentioned the names of several authors (Naumann, Picard, and Walden), thus indicating that he had developed his model on basis of works already published in German speaking countries. In the same year he published "Croatian Peasant Baroque" in which he applied this research model to Croatian materials (Kus-Nikolajev 1929b). Then, in 1935, he published "Peasant Ornamentation: Contributions Towards a Sociology of Peasant Art of South Slavs", where he further elaborated upon his proposed research model, this time situating it more precisely within the German ethnological and art historical scholarship of that time.³

Although Kus-Nikolajev clearly articulated and described his sociological research model for studying peasant textile arts, neither he nor other Croatian ethnologists continued to use his model in the subsequent years.⁴ Nevertheless, I consider that through his publications Kus-Nikolajev influenced Croatian ethnology in an indirect but still important way: namely, he gave a scholarly legitimacy to the notion of the

³ In the 1935 publication, Kus-Nikolajev cites twenty eight references of mostly German scholars, as well as German translations of few works from France, Britain, and Italy which were already incorporated into German scholarship of "primitive" arts. Among them are Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, München 1919, and Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, Stuttgart 1922. He seemed to have particularly relied on the work of Herbert Kuhn, *Die Kunst der Primitiven*, München 1923, as evident from this comment: "Kuhn went further. Guided by the methods of dialectical materialism he examined all art expression of primitive man in relation to the material conditions of his life, and in this way penetrated to the core of the origin and expression of the artistic life in general" (Kus-Nikolajev 1935:25).

⁴ Only recently, Reana Senjković (1994) has returned to examine the theoretical discourse of Kus-Nikolajev, focusing mostly on the concept of a "peasant baroque" that Kus-Nikolajev introduced in the study of Croatian peasant textiles in 1929. Senjković considered Kus-Nikolajev's definitions of "peasant baroque" too narrow, and proposed her own broader definition.

autochthonous Croatian peasant arts. I shall therefore examine more closely this aspect of his work.

Back in 1897, Antun Radić already introduced to Croatian ethnology a well established notion in European and especially German scholarship, namely the notion that European culture lost its singular place among world cultures as a measure of absolute values; other cultures were not to be evaluated by the standards of European high culture, but should instead be studied within the parameters of their own historical circumstances (Chapter IV). Kus-Nikolajev (1929a) again introduced this notion, only as interpreted within a narrower concept of peasant art. He stated that **although** European peasant art was in principle equal to European high art, it should neither be evaluated by the same standards, nor studied from the theoretical perspectives developed for high art: "It is to be expected that metaphysical and purely psychological interpretation of peasant art could not have resulted in a correct analysis, since the starting point of such analysis was the individual, artistic person" (p. 1). Only after "sociological methods began to be applied in the study of evolution of art and art forms... could the problem of peasant art be resolved" (p. 1). Peasant art, according to Kus-Nikolajev, could only be compared with "art of primitive or half-cultured peoples of prehistoric and historic periods and [those that still exist] today" (p. 2). The main characteristic of both peasant and primitive art was its collective artistic expression, so an "aesthetic ideal" is common to the whole ethnic group and is not expressed individually, but collectively" (p. 2). Other characteristics that were common to both peasant and primitive art, according to Kus-Nikolajev, were the limited number of art forms, and simple technology (p. 2).

Kus-Nikolajev further developed the thesis that *ornamentation*, characterized by harmony and rhythm of its geometric elements, was the main *collective expressive form* of peasant art. In the early stone age, such ornamental art replaced the figurative art of primitive hunters, and ever since that time continued to persist among agricultural populations of Europe (p. 4). Among urban population in Europe, by contrast, the development of technology, change in property laws, and formation of wider economic and political formations, led to the development of new art forms. "Urban development and its economic structures became the carrier of new cultural and artistic values. Its most visible artistic manifestations appear in architecture and in the representation of man in art" (p. 5). Therefore, peasant primitivism expressed through ornamentation "is the result of certain spiritual qualities... An agricultural way of life... creates a specific spiritual life with strong reflexive qualities,

which are not known to a realistic and active life of hunter, worrier, and merchant" (Kus-Nikolajev 1935:46).

Kus-Nikolajev stressed that peasant art was not to be taken as a mere repository of European high art that lagged behind in time and in the process became deformed and vulgarized. Instead, it once developed and existed in its pristine form and genuine peasant expression. Thus Kus-Nikolajev (1935) writes:

"... to take an example from our own peasant art - there are many traces left by cultured arts. So, for example, influences of antique, Byzantine and Western-European (particularly baroque) art are well known. But these assimilated influences of cultured art can in no way be taken as standards for fixing the inner qualities of peasant art in our country. In our peasant art many traditional elements are preserved which testify that our peasant art has retained in itself several ancient forms, some of which date as far back as the prehistoric times... It is in these old traditional forms, preserved from generation to generation, that one must look for the archetype of our peasant art... As long as the old artistic forms live in a nation, the nation instinctively resists all foreign influences, and in so far as it assimilates them, it splits them up in its spiritual prism and weaves them into the texture of its artistic life as integral parts of its very own art... Ornament is the typical form through which the artistic life of the peasant manifests itself; ornament is his means of expression" (p. 47).

According to Kus-Nikolajev, the essential conditions for the development of peasant art were certain economic forms, namely the special type of "collective economy" of corporate estates. In contrast to the rest of Europe, this type of economy survived much longer in the Balkans, in the form of the well known multiple family unit, *zadruga*. According to Kus-Nikolajev, the division of labour in *zadruga* allowed women to devote their time to textile arts, and thus develop textile ornamentation into the most elaborate and "true" expression of peasant art (Kus-Nikolajev 1935:48). As long as a "collective economy" in *zadruga* prevailed, outside influences were assimilated into peasant art without disturbing its essential, autochthonous qualities. Only when *zadruga* began to gradually dissolve, as was the case in Croatia after 1854, the autochthonous peasant art was destined to disappear. Kus-Nikolajev (1935) thus concluded:

"National handiworks were the product of a *special spiritual attitude which resulted from particular economic and social conditions...* To him [peasant] this minute decorative art was that which for cultured nations were monumental buildings. Instead of huge architecture he produced his tiny little ornaments in needlework, weaving, woodcarving and other handicrafts.

One must bear in mind that along with the process of modernization of our villages goes also the decay of peasant art... This

decay is the result of a historical necessity and of an economic transformation. Conditions for prosperity of peasant art are linked with the economic forms of the life of the peasant. With these economic forms peasant art lives and with them it dies" (p. 48).

Kus-Nikolajev also considered that applied folk textiles made in rural home industries for rural or urban consumption were not expressions of "true" peasant art. "Beautiful copies, but without inner expression" (Kus-Nikolajev 1934:185).

Kus-Nikolajev rightly brought attention to sociological and economic factors that, during the 19th century influenced the family division of labour and models of textile production in rural Croatia. However, the importance that he gave to *zadruga* for making the woman's labor available for the development of "true" peasant art,⁵ the idealization of the special kind of spirituality resulting from a closed collective life in *zadruga*, the narrow definition of the primitive or archaic origins and ornamental qualities of autochthonous peasant art, all these would likely not survive a close scrutiny of historical documentation. Also, from today's perspective, theories which defined high art and its figurative forms as psychological *individual expression* of an artist, and peasant and primitive art and their ornamental forms as a social-psychological *collective expression* of a group, would be considered inadequate for explaining historical dynamics of change in art forms. In contemporary research, (elite and non-elite, Western and non-Western) art is no longer considered to be either personal or collective *expression*, but a *sign* that mediates between producer and consumer; analogously, changes in art form are studied within the dynamics of the semiotic (poly)system (Even-Zohar 1990), or, in sociological parlance, the *field* of cultural production (Bourdieu 1991).

Nevertheless, during the late 1920s and 1930s, Kus-Nikolajev's publications exerted an important influence on Croatian ethnology; they contributed towards a scholarly legitimacy of the concept of the autochthonous peasant art, and therefore legitimized a scholarly distinction between the older (authentic) and modern (inauthentic) forms of peasant art. Consequently, his publications indirectly supported the shift from Radić's design for Croatian ethnology as a study of the totality of folk life and culture in the living rural communities at that time, towards Gavazzi's diffusionist model of the search for origins and cultural layers inscribed in the selected products (objects and behaviour) which could still

⁵ Rihtman-Auguštin (1982) offered a different "reading" of documentary accounts about life in *zadruga*, pointing out that women worked much harder in *zadruga* than has been usually presented in ethnological literature which, until recently, consistently idealized life in *zadruga*.

be found in rural Croatia, and which needed to be "preserved" as the only surviving documents of what was once an autochthonous Croatian peasant culture.

Milovan Gavazzi and the creation of a new research paradigm in Croatian ethnology

Milovan Gavazzi officially entered the stage of Croatian ethnology, so to speak, in 1922, when he was appointed a curator of The Ethnographic Museum of Zagreb. In 1927 he left that position to become a professor at the newly founded Department of Ethnology, and later also the leader of the Ethnological Seminar at the University of Zagreb. Gavazzi, however, continued to maintain close working relations with the Museum, and again served as the Museum's director between 1939 and 1941 (Gavazzi 1991:5).

Gavazzi received his doctoral degree in Slavic Studies from the University in Zagreb in 1919. During his studies he spent several semesters at the University of Prague where he "attended the lectures of the distinguished archeologist and comparative ethnologist of Slavic peoples, Lubor Niederle" (Belaj 1992). In 1925/1926, as a curator of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, he again went to Prague for specialization, during which time he "toured German and Polish museums" (Šestan 1995). While in Krakow, he met a Polish ethnologist, Kazimierz Moszyński, with whom he later collaborated. Muraj (1989) writes that Gavazzi's specialization in Prague, and "especially the contact with Lubor Niederle and Kazimierz Moszyński left a lasting mark on the subject of Gavazzi's investigations, theoretical orientation, and methods of research" (p. 23).

It was the diffusionist model (or cultural-historical model as it was called in German speaking and Eastern-European countries) that Gavazzi assimilated during his studies and later specialization in Prague, and that he consistently used in his research in later years. Yet, in his early publications in which he first outlined his research approach and methods, he did not refer to the available literature on that subject. Instead, he presented his approach as the only model for studying peasant culture. Such narrow yet authoritative methodological outlook was to characterize Gavazzi's teaching and research activities throughout his career. As Muraj (1989) writes, during a period of over half a century, Gavazzi never questioned or changed his research approach and methods, "remaining outside of all developments, schools, and directions that came (and left) European and world ethnology during the time of Gavazzi's active [professional] life" (p. 25).

Muraj (1989) also pointed out that Gavazzi wrote his review articles on the basis of previously collected ethnographic data that were published in Croatian ethnological and other journals, archival and ethnographic data collected by his students and curators in the Ethnographic Museum of Zagreb, as well as the data he himself collected while pursuing ethnographic fieldwork in many regions of Croatia (p. 24). That Gavazzi was well informed about all of the previously published and collected ethnographic data on the whole territory of Yugoslavia is evident from his publication, "The Development and Present State of Ethnography in Yugoslavia", which he published in the Polish journal, *Lud Slowianski*, edited by K. Moszyński (Gavazzi 1930, 1931). However, in his review articles, in which he must have relied on data previously collected or published by other authors, Gavazzi hardly ever directly cited the sources and literature references, or explained when and how he obtained his own data.⁶ Such a style was not typical of Croatian scholarship at that time; no other Croatian ethnologist, between 1896 and 1940, produced such an authoritative discourse as did Gavazzi. Perhaps he followed the example of Moszyński, who was criticized for not giving sources of his data in his work *Kultura Ludowa Slowian*. According to Šestan (1995), Gavazzi defended Moszyński in 1959 with these words:

"The main thing was... the lack of sources for all the given data... But who knew... Prof. Moszyński, was not confused or worried that he will be left without this scientific tool. The author wanted it that way, because of simplicity and because of tactical reasons (as he explained to his close friends), so that he could ask for funds to publish as the last volume... all of the sources for his data, notes, etc... Still what is here, even without sources of literature and without systematic bibliography, is today without doubt an unsurpassed compendium, the treasury of the whole Slavic ethnography" (p. 6).

Young and energetic, Gavazzi passionately engaged in extensive fieldwork, teaching, publishing,⁷ and other related public activities. Muraj (1989) writes:

"In contrast to Radić, the conditions were favorable [for Gavazzi] since through his appointments over several decades... he was constantly at the center of ethnological activities in Croatia, influencing not only the education of ethnologists but also research directions, the content and

⁶ For example, in the third and revised edition of collection of his review articles from 1928, 1940, and 1959, published in 1991 as *Croatian Village Heritage*, Gavazzi only gave a short bibliography at the end, referring to four relatively old works by Niederle (1911–1956); six of his own works; the journal, *Kultura Ludowa Slowian*, edited by Moszyński between 1929 and 1939; one work by the Croatian author Bratanić (1952); and one by the Slovenian author Korošec (1952).

⁷ Belaj (1992) reports that Gavazzi published the results of his work in books and various international journals, totaling over 240 publications.

the way of collecting ethnographic materials, as well as the manner of their presentation (in publications, on exhibitions, and folk festivals)" (p. 23).

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Gavazzi not only found himself at the center of ethnological activities in Croatia, but often actively sought to dominate them. Through the energetic pursuit of fieldwork, he accumulated knowledge about Croatian rural culture that could not be disputed. As a professor at the University, he largely determined the education of many generations of ethnologists. While he transferred to students his legendary knowledge and enthusiasm for his work, he did not encourage them to think independently, or to be open to other developments in Croatian and international scholarship in social sciences and humanities.

Since Gavazzi's research interests centered on older products (objects and behavior) of rural culture, he worked with great energy and urgency to "preserve" them in their "authentic" form in museums and archives (artifacts, written records, photographs, films, or sound recordings), as well as through staged public performances (Sremac 1978). As a curator, close collaborator, and later the director of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, he greatly influenced the Museum's collection, documentation, and research practice. He was also a main figure among Croatian ethnologists who pursued film documentation of various rural customs. In film projects, Gavazzi was both eager and confident to assume the role of a specialist/ethnologist who was qualified to direct the staged performances of "authentic" dances, customs, rituals, or demonstrations of craft production. In his report on the first filming project, Gavazzi (1922b) writes:

"Whenever there is a need for human endeavor to be captured and fixed in a certain form, and in this way forever preserved, one has to resort to film as the most appropriate medium... In order to give such filming a certain ethnographic value - yet not forgetting of course its marketability - our film organization "Jugoslavija" embarked to record a series of films about our folk life and customs. The first such filming took place... in Selišće and Greda near Sunja, with the help and direction of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb... so that the film could have a certain ethnographic value in the Museum's own archives. Typical wedding scenes from those villages were filmed... with the sad realization that pure folk customs, especially in details, no longer exist or are rapidly disappearing, and that "elite ways" are creeping in everywhere, especially into men's costume" (p. 85).

This quotation offers information not only about the event itself, but indirectly also demonstrates Gavazzi's own intentions, perceptions and attitudes as an ethnologist at the time. This particular film series was not

realized; instead, during the 1930s, Gavazzi acquired a simple camera which he could operate himself. His attitude to filmed documentation, however, hardly changed in later years. He considered a specialist/ethnologist to be best qualified to select the material and recreate the event by staging various "authentic" performances. His priorities always centered on those activities that were about to disappear, and therefore needed to be preserved on film in their "pure" form for purposes of teaching and museum documentation (Križnar 1992).

During the 1930s, Gavazzi also initiated the project of creating ethnological maps for the territory of Croatia (Gavazzi 1930:293). All of these various ethnographic records were to serve science in interpreting the way human culture developed in general, and within Croatian territory in particular. Let us now turn to examine how Gavazzi approached ethnological interpretation of ethnographic data, using his diffusionist or cultural-historical model.

In his first review article, "Cultural Analysis of the Croat Ethnography", Gavazzi (1928a) stated that the aim of ethnological research was: 1) to describe the ethnographic unit in its details and the distribution [of its elements] within a given territory; 2) to compare such ethnographic unit with analogous phenomena in other regions; and 3) to draw ethnological conclusions from comparisons about origins, about paths and ways that the ethnographic unit was created, developed, changed, how it was enriched, or how [some of its elements] waned and even disappeared (Gavazzi 1928a:115). He then stated that the "ethnographic unit" can be chosen according to different criteria, one of the criteria being that of an ethnic group. This was the criteria that Gavazzi employed in his publications, namely that of the ethnographic unit of Croats. Gavazzi hastened to add that the general ethnographic picture of Croats was by no means uniform; on the contrary, its structure was complex. The aim of ethnological research was to explicate the structure of the ethnography of Croats: its predominant Old Slavic elements and various other elements which have penetrated into it from other cultural spheres ever since Croats came to what is now Croatian territory. Gavazzi identified the following cultural stratas to be evident in the ethnographic materials that could still be found in various regions of rural Croatia at the beginning of the 20th century: Old-Slavic or Old-Croatian; Early Balkan; Early Mediterranean; Early Panonian; Oriental; Turkish-Oriental; Alpine; Magyar; and urban or high culture which descended to peasant culture from higher cultural strata of European civilization. Gavazzi stressed, however, that this complex structure was not a mere collection of disparate elements, but that it was held together by the predominance of old-Slavic or old-Croatian cultural elements. While Gavazzi, therefore, obviously

considered that Croatian peasant culture was a dynamic and complex structure of ethnographic elements, he continuously projected the value judgment that the older elements were more "authentic" than the more recent elements which were influences of the so called "modernization". It is also instructive to note that Gavazzi did not account in this publication for the presence of other ethnic groups in the territory of Croatia (Serbs, Italians, Slovaks, etc.).

In the domain of textiles, Gavazzi's research interests ranged from technologies of production of fibers, yarns, and cloth (Gavazzi 1922a, 1928b, 1938a); by way of decoration of cloth, and clothing construction; to older symbolic functions of cloth, for example, a symbolic function of a headcover for married women (Gavazzi, Tkalčić & Paulić 1938b). The diffusionist approach limited the research questions he posed to those of origins and various cultural layers and past influences inscribed in various aspects of production of consumption of textile artifacts. As Muraj (1989) pointed out:

"By faithfully applying the cultural-historical model, [Gavazzi] could not avoid the limitations of this school... While he searched for roots of separate phenomena, while he was creating synchronic and diachronic mosaics, in the total picture man remained in the background; man-creator, consumer and carrier - of separate phenomena - and of culture as a whole. It seems that in his foremost effort to penetrate the 'moving forces of culture', to determine 'cultural flows' and to document 'autochthonous forms', he somehow came to neglect the 'real life'" (pp. 30–31).

The diffusionist research approach that Gavazzi introduced to Croatian ethnology eventually became canonized as the "true" model for ethnological research in Croatia, or, as Čapo Žmegač (1995) put it, became a new scientific paradigm in Croatian ethnology.

Conclusion

This review suggests that the establishment of the Ethnographic Museum of Zagreb in 1919 influenced Croatian ethnology on several levels. Since the Museum's main goal was to preserve older forms of peasant culture, its collection and research practices shifted away from rural life and culture at that time, and inquired only into its past. It must be mentioned that the newly formed government in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, favoured the preservation of older forms of rural culture as a symbol of a common pan-Slavic identity. While Croatian peasant culture was the central focus of research and predominated in permanent displays, the

Museum also displayed objects of other South Slavic peasant cultures, as well as non-European collections.

The Museum also contributed to livelier publishing activities in the field of ethnology. The present review of ethnological publications shows that, during the 1920s and early 1930s, the authors who at the time contributed most to Croatian ethnology all worked for the Museum in different capacities. In their research they all focused on rural history, but used different research models and approaches, and therefore contributed to different interpretations of rural life and culture in the past. Matasović, and to a certain extent Tkalčić, favoured the conception of ethnology as a historical science, and therefore considered it necessary to use both ethnographic data and historical records in order to reconstruct the history of rural life, including production, exchange and consumption of clothing and textiles. Kus-Nikolajev and Gavazzi, on the other hand, used research models that were developed in German speaking countries specifically for studying peasant and other "primitive" cultures.

Kus-Nikolajev introduced the *sociological* model for studying peasant visual arts. This model defined "true" peasant art as having archaic origins stylistically characterized by ornamentation; it also considered such "true" peasant art to be a *collective* expression of peasants who lived in extended family households, *zadruga*. According to Kus-Nikolajev, the gradual dissolution of *zadruga* among Croatian peasants brought about the gradual but inevitable death of "genuine" peasant art. Kus-Nikolajev's research model was eventually not accepted or further applied among Croatian ethnologists. However, his discourse gave scholarly legitimacy to the concept of autochthonous peasant art that needed to be saved since it was destined to disappear in face of changes in land ownership and family structures that were affecting rural regions at the time.

Gavazzi introduced a diffusionist or cultural-historical model into Croatian ethnological research of the history of rural culture. This model was also developed by German ethnologists specifically for peasant and other "primitive" societies. It aimed at "reconstructing cultural history without written documents, starting patiently from the present state into the past" (Bratanić 1976). Gavazzi's model focused not only on peasant visual arts, but on all products (objects and behaviour) of peasant culture. This model also focused on older *autochthonous* products of peasant culture, although it did not define the term *autochthonous* in very clear terms, except for placing it in opposition to various influences of "modernization" and contemporary urban products. Gavazzi applied this model in his more specific studies of various elements of rural culture in Croatia. Importantly, however, in 1928 he also wrote his first review article on the main characteristics of "traditional forms" of Croatian peasant

culture, thus beginning to provide a more synthetic and totalizing interpretation of peasant culture for the whole territory of Croatia. This signaled a new direction and, from that time onwards, Gavazzi's model gradually prevailed in Croatian ethnology.

Matasović was forced to end the publication of his journal *National Heritage* in 1935. Tkalčić left the Ethnographic Museum of Zagreb in 1934 to become the director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb. Gavazzi, on the other hand, continued to participate in many aspects of ethnological activities in Croatia, eager to pursue his type of research much further. Perhaps most importantly, Gavazzi's position as a professor at the department of Ethnology enabled him not only to engage students in collecting necessary data, but also to educate generations of ethnologists exclusively in his theoretical approach and methodology. As a consequence, Radić's initially broad design for Croatian ethnology as a multidisciplinary study of the totality of folk culture was abandoned before it could be fully developed and articulated. Instead, the focus of ethnology as a discipline shifted towards the diffusionist study of only "traditional" aspects of rural culture which were perceived to be survivals of what was once an autochthonous Croatian peasant culture. In other words, the focus shifted from the study of people and their way of life to the study of selected cultural products (objects and behaviour) and their classification.

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ETNOLOŠKA ISTRAŽIVANJA U HRVATSKOJ OD 1919. DO 1940. GODINE

SAŽETAK

Razdoblje hrvatske etnologije od kraja drugoga do početka petoga desetljeća dvadesetog stoljeća obilježeno je djelatnošću Etnografskog muzeja u Zagrebu, naročito s obzirom na muzealsko shvaćanje predmeta koje istraživanje usmjeruje gotovo isključivo na prošlost tradicijske kulture, a što je u stanovitoj mjeri korespondiralo s ideološkom konotacijom *starijih oblika seljačke kulture* kao zajedničkog panslavenskog tradicijskog identiteta. Prinos autorskih ličnosti, kao što su Matasović, Kus-Nikolajev i Gavazzi, ipak označuje širenje teorijsko-metodoloških okvira, kao i estetičarskog i društvoavnog shvaćanja predmeta, što donekle nadomiješta napuštenu radićevsku multidisciplinarnu zamisao narodoznanstva i njezino sužavanje od proučavanja narodnog života na proučavanje pojedinih kulturnih čimbenika (predmeta i ponašanja) i njihove klasifikacije.