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ETHNOGRAPHIC OBJECTS AS MATERIAL CULTURE AND AS CULTURAL HERITAGE: ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITS IN SLOVENIA UNTIL THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY¹

The article presents the development of Slovenian museum collections from their beginnings to the end of the 20th century. The main point of interest is a museum (especially ethnographic) object, which is still considered as one of cornerstones of museology. The author follows major shifts in some most important museum collections; Auersperg collection, Valvasor's collection in the castle Bogenšperk in the 16th and 17th century, early ethnographic collections at the Regional museum of Carniola during the 19th century and the first ethnographic collection in the first half of the 20th century in which ethnographic exhibits were considered as cultural heritage.

Key words: cultural heritage, ethnographic collections, ethnographic exhibits, historical museology, museum

Susan Pearce, the author of famous and frequently quoted statement "Objects are the heart of museums", said at the beginning of March 2010, when she was holding a lecture for the Slovenian museum workers, that she still thinks that objects and collections represent the base of museums and their cultural mission and that she firmly believes in that. She is by no means alone in her belief. Zbynek Stransky who was putting forward his definition of museology as a new and independent academic science in the 1960's and 1970's set the issues of museum objects and their function in museology as one of the most fundamental issues dealt with in

¹ This article is based on the author's book *Slovenski muzeji in etnologija: Od kabinetov čudes do muzejev 21. stoletja* [The Slovenian Museums and Ethnology: From Cabinets of Curiosity to Museums of the 21st Century] (Hudales 2008), which represents the most comprehensive review of the historical development of museums in Slovenia so far. Although some data were already used in the book, this article points out new perspectives and presents some new data.

museology. Likewise, one of the leading theoreticians of museology and museums Peter van Mensch defined museum objects as “the smallest element of material culture which has a recognizable and recognized identity in itself” (van Mensch 1992:110), and said that museums and museology are (pre)occupied with preserving and using the selected parts of our material environment and with structured (scientific) approach to new information value of these objects. Anyhow, in his opinion the issue of museum objects “is the cornerstone of a museological methodology” (ibid.:112).

Furthermore, there have been clearly stated opinions for many decades now that (some) museums have been losing their cultural mission and have become dusty and ossified institutions due to their predominant orientation towards collecting, interpreting and representing collected and preserved material culture. The role of museum objects, which have been collected throughout the centuries, when they “were seen as essence of culture” or as “material ideograms of crystallizations of collective representations” was criticized already at the beginning of the 20th century (Fischer 1989:214). At that time the first criticism appeared against museums and collected museum objects, which for many do not have any sense and explanation power anymore; in short “museums become object cemeteries” (ibid.).

Such different opinions on the role and significance of museums are not in the least unusual; the objects which were included in the collections by different collectors and thus made “museum objects” did not always present artefacts of the same kind or objects from nature. Consequently these objects did not have the same meaning for the visitors on the one hand and for the collectors, who spent all their time and money for their collections, on the other. The notions about what is worth collecting in these museum collections and what the collecting criteria are have been changing constantly; this “fashion” of collecting has been quite precisely defined and documented for the period from the renaissance to the present time, especially in the works by Russell Belk (Belk 1995). By the end of the 18th century and also later, many collectors, who were above all the representatives of social elites, at first aristocratic and then also civic elites, the so-called “well-to-do persons collected rocks, minerals, fossils, insects, skeletons, animal skins, Indian artefacts, and so on, for their aesthetic appeal or mystical connotation. Their fragmentary and miscellaneous collections incited wonder and admiration in those privileged to see them while communicating a narrative of the prestige, esoteric knowledge, and adventurous spirits of the collector. Referring to aesthetic and mystical rather than scientific criteria... The rare, abnormal, bizarre and the old were especially valued” (Jenkins 1994:242).

Even in the 19th century it was similar in many places: “but in 1816..., a museum was still often a collection of unicorns and alligators, elks, mermaids, mummies, witches, satyrs, and twenty other stranger matters” (Sejdel 2010).

Today such “strange mixtures” of objects, which to a great extent reflected bad taste, passions and knowledge of their collectors and owners seem unreasonable at first sight, but on the other hand we should be aware of the fact that precisely these cabinets of curiosity and artistic objects collected in them, naturalistic rarities and other wonders or rarities reflected general opinion that only by studying such and similar objects it is possible to acquire knowledge, which is powerful and enables “strengthening human control of nature and the development of innate human intelligence and superiority” (Jezernik 2009:17).

What cabinets of curiosity or the first Slovenian museums were like is still relatively unknown area. Although first important considerations about museums and museology were dedicated to the history of museums and museum works during past centuries (Petru 1971; later Tavčar 2003; Hudales 2008; Jezernik 2004; 2009) their contributions still did not establish a special field of special museology called historical museology.² But as the present state of researches show, the first museums were probably not very numerous, although it is true that in the past few years we found a lot of new data on such collections, which were before almost unknown, or some already known collections revealed themselves in a new light being of much bigger importance than we thought before (Hudales 2008; Jezernik 2004; 2009). But still, there is relatively little data on the character of collections and particular objects in them; the descriptions of collections are very general and up to the 19th century we are not familiar with the detailed collection descriptions of any of the existing museum collections, which could tell the most about the character of collections. Perhaps the most comprehensive is the oldest document which presents us with the origins of Auersperg museum collections, i.e. the legacy inventory of possessions by Wolf Engelbert Auersperg in his castle in Žužemberk from the year 1558 (Žvanut 1994:192), which mentions that “in the long closet near the new room” there were twenty chests full of precious Turkish and other rugs and blankets, a closet drawer, where jewellery, gloves and other personal items were kept in the boxes, a big mirror, coloured in blue and with golden flowers (undoubtedly Venetian product), a red leather chair with pillow, a chest with silverware, a virginal,³ a clock which stroke at quarter and full hour. There were also military trophies displayed: one big and two medium Turkish tents, a red Turkish flag made of taffeta, which had a golden flaming garland with golden letters on one side, three turbans and a pair of boots for a bed, a flag, etc.

² History of museums, museum work and museology became an important part of museological thought in the seventies and eighties of the 20th century. The five-fold structure of museology (since 1982 used by the Reinwardt Academie) consists of general museology, theoretical museology, applied museology, special museology and, finally, historical museology, provides the overall historical perspective (van Mensch 1992:46–48).

³ A virginal is an instrument similar to a piano from the 16th and 17th century, a variation of harpsichord (Vrbinc 1987:757).

For the later period and up to the 19th century we are only familiar with brief mentionings of some objects, which have in these collections attracted most attention by describers and visitors. Thus, according to Valvasor's descriptions, the Earls of Auersperg created various collections in the second half of the 17th century: the library and the collection of antiques as well as wonders in the prince palace in Ljubljana, the collection of precious and rare items in the castle in Žužemberk, and with the collection in the Castle Turjak they "triumphantly boasted also with the Turkish weapons, with all kinds of shields, spears and swords; and among them hanging ensigns, looted Turkish flags and tents which made them even more remarkable" (Valvasor 1969:328–9). The particularity of this collection was "the wooden chest where the inestimable valuables were hidden [...] two human heads". Valvasor explains that those were not skulls, but mummified skin with hair and beard from the heads of the two heroes – Herbert Turjaški and Friderik Višnjegorski, who were both killed by the Turks in the battle at Budačko on September 21, 1575. The heads were cut by the Turks after the victorious battle and then tanned and sent to the Turkish emperor in Constantinople; "the nobility of Turjak arranged everything to get them back to Turjak (for which they gave an abundant payment) – for everyone to see and to remember forever" (Valvasor 1969:330). The last sentence particularly emphasises the public nature of the collection and the significance of such museum objects – the source of pride, memory and admonition. Similarly interesting is Valvasor's mentioning of the collection of "different freedoms and beautiful privileges", where Carniolian townspeople in the same period kept "ancient coins, and also old Carniolian cups and other silver and gold vessels beside many other antiques, which could be of a great pride to the Carniolian townspeople, if the collection was public and open to entertain visitors" (Valvasor 1969:335–6).

The biggest collection of that period was created by Janez Vajkard Valvasor himself in the second half of the 17th century; beside extremely affluent library, in this collection he placed abundant collections of different scientific instruments and more than 8000 copper engravings, also minerals and fossils as well as rare and unusual specimen of alive nature, which he collected during his travels around Europe and Carniola. For one of those rarities, famous "chamois balls", as Valvasor names bezoars,⁴ he reports that he sent some, and among them one which was big as a hen egg, to his good friend abroad, where these museum objects were extremely appreciated and valued. As far as it goes for antiques Valvasor collected

⁴ These are the balls which come into existence by licking different kinds of goats (Bezoar goats – Aegean wild goats, rock goats, chamoises); the hair is agglutinated in a stomach into regular, firm and completely round balls. The biggest ones (by the name of bezoar or "kotsteine") were covered by gold, silver or precious stones; and they were kept by all larger cabinets of curiosity. In the well-known museum collection of the emperor Charles V (1500–1558) there were four bezoars mentioned; they were covered with gold and represented talismans against plague and poisonings (Jezernik 2004:55).

objects from pagan graves (Roman oil lamps and brass clips), and a few thousand old coins, mostly Roman, which he got from the peasants on domestic archeological sites (Valvasor 1969:496; Horvat 1994:16–18). Therefore, the appreciation that Valvasor “in Bogenšperk created the collection (which was characteristic for the collecting phase of that period) in which the owner polyhistorically incorporated exhibits from all possible areas, all kinds of rarities and particularities” seems justifiable (Horvat 1994:16).

Despite of the seeming confusion of all kinds of objects, the classification of objects somehow reflected a certain “order”. The criteria used by them to establish that order are hard to estimate from today’s perspective. The renaissance and also later baroque collections of rarities and wonders were simply the products of their time, therefore we can only understand them in the context of that period, because only in this way they can help understand us the context of the renaissance and baroque world, when each collection aimed at systematic collecting and connecting everything that was possible to find in nature with the results of human skills and knowledge. According to Ivo Maroević (1993:28). the collections of that period represented “the integration of the world of art and imagination with the world of symbolism, and a display of reality with the help of collected objects from material world, which made possible to connect material and immaterial world in the integrated theatre of life. The renaissance was the time when the parallel world of museum was created”.

And exactly from such collections thrived “the modern museums”, which were for the greatest expert on museums at the end of the 19th century, David Murray, closely connected with scientific specialization and scientifically responsible classification. Murray believed in science, progress and history. According to his opinion the museum should illustrate the growth and development of civilization and the arts. Murray regards the museum as a humanistic storage depot for “human” knowledge and skills, conveying the best of the best to humanity in an orderly, methodical fashion. He was convinced: “The museum of 1897 is far in advance of the museum of 1847; but it in turn will be old-fashioned by the end of twenty years and when the coming century is half-way through its methods and arrangements will probably be wholly superseded by something better. We are ever moving onwards, but we do not reach the goal” (according to Seijdel 2010).

Murray’s perspective of museums as the embodiment of knowledge, science and wisdom, could be found in Slovenia as early as at the end of the 18th century (and later at the beginning of the 20th century) in perspectives of a few Slovenians living in the Age of Enlightenment, when they strongly strived to establish the first public museum in Slovenia. The significance of museums, as seen by one of the most important Slovenians of the Age of Enlightenment, Valentin Vodnik, is discernible in his report in the year 1797 when he gave an account of the foundation of the well-known Naturhistorische Museum in Vienna, which shows

everything “that nature creates: in the sky and universe, animals on the ground, and art(ificial) contributions of humans”; in addition he particularly emphasised the significance of the exhibition “for young men in order to educate themselves about things which can significantly help reducing hardships; since ignorance is a mother of all kinds of harmful stupidity” (Vodnik 1890:173). Vodnik therefore believed that education is one of the most important tasks of museums; and museum collections with museum objects in them are one of the most important means for enlightening actions; to oppose stupidity and all harmful beliefs, superstitions, etc. On the other hand we should not overlook Vodnik’s opinion that such learning and acquired knowledge is only intended for men – “young men”, which remained for a long time – until the end of the 20th century – one of the biggest mistakes of museum related thinking; “women’s museums” are namely the result of the newest theoretical museum reflections.

Likewise, when the first Slovenian public museum – Kranjski deželni muzej [Regional museum of Carniola] (today Narodni muzej Slovenije [The National Museum of Slovenia]) in Ljubljana was founded in the year 1821 and then established in the year 1826, it definitely belonged to “new museums” of that period, which followed the principles of scientific specializations and classifications in order to organize a myriad of museum objects in such a way that they gave comprehensible and clear picture of scientific perspective of the world (Murray 1904:2). However, the strict scientific nature of the “new” museums of the 19th century would have led those museums to tediousness and boredom, if in the entire 19th century there had not been the remainders of “premodern museums”, based on the tradition of cabinets of curiosity, which did not only educate and enlighten visitors, but also tried to cause amazement, admiration or surprise (Bennet 1995:2). Namely, good museums were considered those museums which could offer collections organized by scientific principles and “show the amazed audience a few huge bones, mummies, human skin and a horn of unicorn, which was supposed to have miraculous qualities” (Murray 1904:2).

Kranjski deželni muzej [Regional museum of Carniola] shows a characteristic passion of museums of the 19th century, a passion for sorting, organizing and classifying. Many museum collections of the Slovenians, who lived in the Age of Enlightenment, were formed according to these classifications even before they got into the Regional museum of Carniola (Kidrič 1929:190–191). Žiga Zois and followers of his enlightenment circle were, for instance, well-acquainted with and used “Linne’s ideal museum classification” (Murray 1904:3), which was famous and was used starting from 1735. Resembling other places, the museum material in Ljubljana museum was accurately classified according to adequate scientific criteria stated mainly in museum guidebooks. On the other hand, though, there were exhibits in the museum as late as in 1888, of the skeleton of “the giant”, cave bear, two embryos of deer and numerous other museum objects, which still

remind us of the museum principles of exhibiting from the time when there was real “confusion of rarities from the world of nature and human world” (Murray 1904:3) and which were selected for museums mainly on the grounds of deviation from the usual.

In the museum guidebook from the year 1888 the curator of that time, Karl Deschmann, set up, at the opening of the new museum building, the cultural and historical collection in four museum halls as explicit “mixtum compositum” of different kinds of vessels, tableware, illuminants, keys, weapons, clocks and similar objects of very different origin – Slovenian, European and Non-European (mainly Chinese, Indian, Turkish), etc. Let us enumerate some exhibits, for example: in one of the glass cases in the first exhibition hall we can find, among 84 objects, which got into the museum mostly in the 1930’s, a tray with a bottle, wine and liqueur glasses as well as fruit bowls made of Czech crystal, a miniature of coalmine made of corked bottle, a church illuminant made of Venetian glass, a sand watch, a portrait medallion of Pope Paul II (pope from 1464 until 1471) made of marble, a bowl made of coconut, a metal pipe for opium smokers, a glass cut in prisons in the Ljubljana castle, Chinese tableware, an invitation to the doctoral promotion of Jakob Sandrin in Vienna in the year 1696, a wooden beggar carved by the miller Šubic from Hotavlje, an ancient glove made of human skin (which had allegedly originated from torturing somewhere in Carniola), a penitent whip with interweaved iron tines and bronze stars, a chastity belt made of brass wire, a cupping glass [der Schropfköpfung] – a cow horn from Krapina for cupping blood, three sheets of sacred Indian book – a paper, made of palm leaves, into which the text was engraved with an iron liner, the Chinese comb, a clay filter barrel for cleansing water from the Nile, gold-plated insignia of freemasons, a Nürnberg egg with a mechanical clock, etc. (Deschmann 1888:131–40).

What museum message was supposed to be conveyed through museum objects in this museum? In 1821, the museum was defined as “national” or “native”; in the first museum programme everything that was important from the “area of national literature” and everything which reminded of the “country’s fate and merits of its inhabitants” was supposed to be included into the collection. The name “national museum” did not mean the (Slovenian) national identity in the year 1821, because it started to form not sooner than two decades later. After the year 1826 the museum explicitly, formally and functionally became a provincial museum (Petru 1971:21). From then on, museum objects told a story about beauties and exceptionality of Carniola – and allegedly especially foreigners could not believe that “such geographically small country, with limited means and in such a short time set up such opulent museum” (Landes-Museum 1838:3). At its opening in 1831, the first curator Hochenwart (1832:4) emphasised in his opening speech the “remarkable history” of the country’s capital Ljubljana, which “every day grows bigger and more beautiful” as well as the growing prosperity of the

provincial towns and villages, which at every step prove “diligence, hardwork, persistence and spirit of enterprise” of the country’s inhabitants – which can be evaluated as the basis on which the museum could build the identity of the country. History was shown in the museum using the remainders of stone monuments from the Roman times and Middle Ages, which were exhibited in the entrance hall; “diligence and spirit of enterprise” were exhibited by cultural and historical objects, which had an important role in establishing country’s identity. In his opening speech, Hochenwart talked mainly about the yellow and red country’s flag, “a symbol of Carniolian chivalry, under which the country’s army very often had to pay with bravery and death for its victory over the Turks” (ibid.). With this he placed himself among “the creators” of the country’s tradition, which was until then mainly connected with his own family tradition and the tradition of some other Carniolian aristocratic families. He thought at that time that precisely those “respectable monuments” and (aristocratic) country’s tradition could induce young visitors of the museum to “solemnly swear that they will, as faithfully, devotedly and bravely as their predecessors, respond to their emperor, if he called them under arms” (ibid.).

Ethnographic objects were modestly represented in the museum. The first objects, which according to the opinion of the creators of the museum belonged among ethnographic objects (e.g. a shepherd’s flute or parts of women’s rural costume), could not have possibly played an equal role in creating traditions and (country’s) identity as the before-mentioned symbols of the country. The first curator of the museum, the count Hochenwart, took care of making inventories of the museum objects, which he regularly published from the beginning of the year 1832 in *Laibacher Zeitung* [Ljubljana news] and *Ilyrisches Blatt* [Illyric paper]. In the latter he, in April 1836, mentioned among the new museum objects “a very old headband” and thanked an unknown donator from Upper Carniola “for this contribution to the ethnographic collection” (Žargi 1994:75). In 1839, among museum objects of the provincial museum, Hochenwart placed “figurines” robed in the national costume of White Carniola. He invited women to create “miniature models” for each Carniolian region and thus “save national costumes” (Rogelj Škafar 1995:213). Hochenwart’s perspective on the ethnographic objects in the museum is also evident from the fact that in the year 1833 he asked the missionary Friderik Baraga for “the objects of ‘savages’ – the autochthonous inhabitants of North America” (Golob 1997:16). Many count exactly this acquisition of Baraga’s collection in 1837 as the actual beginning of ethnographic collections in Slovenian museums. Today this collection is designated as the “first complete ethnological collection” and is characterized as an extremely important acquisition of the museum, since with its help a visitor could form his relation to his own culture – by meeting and having contact with different notions (Terčelj 1997:2–3; Golob 1997:16–7).

Exactly with this collection Baraga's objectivity and "scientific approach to ethnological and linguistic area" is particularly emphasised, since it by far surpassed church and religious framework of his profession (Terčelj 1997:2–5). The quality of the collection and the objects, as well as its historical and museum value, is definitely increased by Baraga's scientific research, which resulted in his book on history, character, manners and customs of North American Indians (ibid.:11–2). Similarly rich possibilities of contextualization, connection of an object with its verbalization, material and non-material heritage ("tangible and intangible heritage") are not present in any other Slovenian museum collections in the 19th century and are very rare even in the 20th century. Irrespective of the issue of adequacy of naming Baraga's collection as ethnographical, ethnological or anthropological,⁵ as is exposed by Šmitek and Jezernik (1992:265), who named Baraga's scientific work as anthropological mainly because his patterns and incentives originated from American anthropological literature, we should, when evaluating those early ethnographical museum objects, draw attention to the fact that Baraga's collection too has the weaknesses and a more or less concealed colonial context of Non-European collections, which came into the European museums from the end of the 18th century onwards. They came into existence during numerous systematic research travels and included also collecting, studying, describing and bringing back cultural artefacts (*arteficialia*) and naturalistic specimen (*naturalia*), which should have served mainly for the advance in science and were thus different from the older collections of wonders, which were "acquired" in the Non-European countries as curiosities. Big museums of colonial great powers of that period placed a myriad of "objects from the field of anthropology and ethnography", which came in from big and successful research travels, e.g. North-American travels Malaspine from 1789 to 1794, from travels with famous James Cook⁶ and from travels with Archibald Menzies, a botanist, who studied "native customs" and gathered the collection of "ethnographic specimen" which came to the British museum in 1869 as a pedagogical collection, which shows different levels of craft development (Barfield 2000:332–3).

⁵ I use the term "ethnographic objects" for all museum objects that were acquired in different museum collections from the 18th to 20th century in order to present and represent the people and their customs, their culture etc., no matter what designation they got in time of their acquiring. The first reason is that this was the oldest and most common term in that time; but still today in museological and anthropological literature this term is used very frequently; and acquiring such objects is the most frequent consequence of field work (ethnographic work). When I use term ethnological or anthropological object this is a kind of tribute to the authors which often use those terms because they consider themselves as ethnologists or anthropologists (also ethnographers). Also according to Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett ethnographic objects did not begin their lives as objects: "Ethnographic artifact are objects of ethnography. They are artifacts created by ethnographers when they define, segment, detach, and carry them away" (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998:2).

⁶ Even today we can find more than two thousand objects attained by him in the museums all over the world (Barfield 2000:332).

In such explosion of collecting and alienating ethnographic objects, when in the 19th century ethnology and anthropology are actually attaining independence as disciplines, the important role is also played by the so called colonial context, where characteristically objects from the colonial countries poured into the countries of origin and also to a small extent into other European museums, which were not a part of the great colonial powers. The cultural significance of these objects was relatively low for the museums and collectors of the 19th century (and this also applies to the 20th century), which was frequently evident in the fact that the objects of “others” were more often placed among naturalistic collections than in “cultural and historical collections” of the museums up until the middle of the 20th century (Barfield 2000:333).

Despite of frequently expressed high opinions on scientific efforts of Friderik Baraga and his excellent achievements as well as his compassionate and respectful relation towards “originality and human dignity” of oppressed, dying out Indian tribes (Novak 1970:7), we have to doubt his objectivity and neutrality at least for methodological reasons. His stereotypes and prejudices are expressed already in the introduction of his book, where he writes about “barbarian self-deception of pagan savages” and “cruel paganism” when referring to religious beliefs of people he lived with (Baraga 1970:13). And that exact “colonial context” is reflected also in the collection itself, since in it there are no “talismans or other symbols of the Indian spiritual tradition”. It is also known that Baraga burnt wooden statues of pagan symbols when one of the Indians was baptized (Terčelj 1997:12). This is also evident in Kranjski deželni muzej and its ethnographical collections of Non-European cultures (Baraga’s collection is not the only Non-European collection of the 19th century in this museum), which present a part of the history of Western imperialism and defend the right to economic and cultural appropriation which was taken for granted by the colonial nations, whereas today we should consider the fact that most of those objects were confiscated from their owners, furthermore, in this “colonial context” of the Non-European collections we should also raise an issue of collector’s relation to “others”.

The other characteristic of museums of that period is also that curators of the 19th century acted strongly from the position of power. As the experts and specialists in the museums they elevated the museum objects from their collections (also in their articles and books) into the symbols of culture of their own and others’ culture, with which they crucially influenced the creation and definition of local, regional and national identities as well as the relation towards one’s own culture and the culture of others. At that time, such scientific deeds seemed very important and praiseworthy and only in the past few decades have anthropologists and ethnologists become aware that these identities were created by (and many times based on) the invented traditions which are seemingly old, and were accepted, naturalized and became “original” if the museums promoted them successfully

(Barfield 1997:338; Jezernik 2002:30). Willing or not, we have to agree with the opinion that the museums in the 19th and 20th century were also “usurping preservers of the objects (material) of other people and usurping interpreters of ‘history’ of the others” and also always reflected presumptions, point of views and prejudices of their creators, administrators and curators, which were later passed over to the visitors of the museums. It is them who articulate messages of national identities, relations to “others”, their and our position on the evolution scale, and differences between them and us (Barfield 1997:332). The Slovenian museums of the 19th and 20th century were no exception in these processes, taking into consideration that it held true for a long time that “in ethnographic museums in Europe there were until the modern period [i.e. until 1890’s, author’s remark] usually almost all objects from the overseas nations.” (Murko 1896:75) And as Murko also noticed: “only gradually the interest in one’s own nation spread and increased immensely in the last decades”, (ibid.). Namely, active power and authority of the curators at the Regional museum of Carniola in relation to the museum objectification was mainly directed towards building Carniolian country’s identity with ethnographic museum objects which is very evident in the lack of objects from rural culture of that and previous times – from 1830’s to the end of the 19th century the Slovenian culture of rural inhabitants is presented in Kranjski deželni muzej only by pipes from Gorjuše, parts of women’s costumes (belts, women’s head-cover and blouses), wooden spoons, wooden shoes and similar (Deschmann 1888:152).

That is the reason why the provincial museum deserved, some years after the opening, the first (known) criticism, which primarily related to the issue of creating national identities in Ljubljana museum as well as the role of “ethnographic museums” and contents of their creations. The reproaches were done by Emil Korytko, a foreigner, who did a lot for the Slovenians and among other things also for the development of the Slovenian ethnology during his short stay in Ljubljana (1835–1839). The critical remarks were written in the unpublished manuscript article, which was prepared in November 1838 by Korytko for the periodical *Ost und West* and where he announced the publication of his collection *Slovenske pesmi kranjskiga naroda*; the collection was published (1839–1844) in four volumes after Korytko died. We find the first modern critical views of the provincial museum in Korytko’s manuscript (according to Novak 1986:168–9):

Each and every friend, who is interested in national issues in Carniola, is shown the museum in Ljubljana. Each friend of the Slavic culture, who endeavors in researching national issues, dispositions and customs is usually rejected by the words: in vain is this effort, national customs have lost their Slovenian national character. The language and customs are deformed or Germanized [...] I visited the provincial museum and I mixed with the people; the museum will perhaps in future have merits for the country in scientific and industrial sense and will strive more for the national issues and will try to improve regarding its Slavic issues, but for now it

does not have such function – it is only at the beginning of its formation. The Roman antiques are mixed with the rare Slovenian objects and remarkable objects from Cincinnati and from the French times. There is no sign of any system or familiarization with any Slavs. I praise efforts done by natural scientists, who gather collections of stones, animals and plants in it, but these are not the only objects that should be saved and preserved. Heaps of stones cannot decay – animals cannot perish and although winter stops flowers from blooming on meadows, they will be born again in the next spring! But this is not the case with authentic national characteristics, customs, dispositions, language, myths and folk poetry! If we confuse and corrupt people then we confused their thinking, their spirit; if we rob people of their manners and customs then we committed a sin against these people, we robbed them of their virtues, their happiness, their joy.

Korytko's opinion therefore goes towards a direction where the rare symbols of the Slovenian (Slavic) culture should be inevitably added to "authentic national things" – awareness and knowledge of manners and customs, dispositions and language, myths and poems represent the only option for offering museum objects an opportunity to become medium for our awareness of the domestic and the culture of others.

At the end of the 19th century ethnographic museums or extensive ethnographic museum collections in national museums appeared in many countries in Europe, whereas in our country there were only fragmentary ethnographic collections, represented only by individual objects, which were wrenched out of cultural contexts. Ethnographic objects were mostly presented in natural history museums, which tried to "sort the world systematically into drawers, glass-fronted cases, bottles, and filing cabinets. This represented a shift from delighting in the world's strange offering and the appeal of subjective involvement to an attempt to master and control the world's diversity through new forms of conceptualization." (Jenkins 1994:242) They were inspired by "science notions of classification", inspired by Darwin's reorganization of evolutionary theory and strongly connected with universities or leading scientists – which was the reason why they soon left off aesthetic and mystical criteria for collecting and exhibiting. Instead, "museums began to emphasize the summary relationships among objects, the sense that this or that specimen metonymically suggested a larger and coherent whole, and that a general understanding of the world could be inferred adequately by a collection of things removed from their context of origin" (Jenkins 1994:243).

But museum scene also changed in other ways. Peter van Mensch (1995:3–4) puts the entire first museum revolution in the period between 1880 and 1920, when some radical changes appeared in museums due to a movement for modernization of museums, which emphasised the educational role of museums and put lower emphasis on their upbringing role. This led to a concept of a museum which became a kind of "umbrella" under which many scientific disciplines were gathered. What was even more important for a museum revolution was a synergy,

which was formed by realizing that museums share many common problems that can be solved in a similar manner. The growing consciousness of a new independent scientific discipline – museology (van Mensch 1995:7), which was in its “proto-scientific stage” (Maroević 1993:52) slowly formed by numerous descriptions and guidebooks in European museums, by developing systems for museum classifications and generally by descriptions of museum work. It was connected with numerous theoretical, critical and practical discussions (the emphasis in that period was on the practical level of museum’s functions). At the end of the 19th century museology was quite commonly accepted as an independent science concerned with museums.

The esteemed contemporary authors and museum experts could not perceive the extensiveness of changes happening in front of their eyes, but they definitely noticed the extremely fast growth in the number of new museums. David Murray, who wrote the first book on the development of museums (which remained the most comprehensive work on museums for at least half a century ahead) at the beginning of this period (Murray 1904), was convinced that this “museum boom” was a result of realizing that museums as institutions, which present “the best of the best” and show everything that is possible to see and know about the (constant) growth and development of civilization, are indispensable. For him a museum was an institution which is a humanistic warehouse of all human knowledge, skills, etc.

Museums at the beginning of the 20th century represented for him the advanced and progressive cultural institutions and their activities in relation to preserving and protecting nature and culture were in his opinion noble deeds and the only possible compensation (and solution) for mass destruction of “old”, which was caused by “global” modernization (Boekbinder 2002).

The rapid increase in a number of museums in the Western civilization was in that time in fact connected with demographic inflow from rural areas to urban centres rather than with the growing significance of museums as educational institutions. Museums represented some kind of “urban cultural need and good” in such rapidly growing centres, which were mass developed and established by local authorities. In Great Britain, for example, before World War I, there were around six new museums founded per year, in Germany there were unimaginable 2000 “patriotic museums” established between two World Wars, which is approximately one hundred every year. In the USA the process was similar regarding the number of new museums; however, there, the development of museums was more in the hands and under the patronage of local groups of citizens, private persons and associations. In more centralized countries (e.g. France and the Soviet Union) controlled and managed state museum system was developed, which was later supported and encouraged also by Lenin’s philosophy of state protection of cultural heritage, which should be accessible for public (Lewis 1994:16).

In the 20th century it frequently happened that new museum projects were victims of new social circumstances and were used for political propaganda of governing regimes. This undoubtedly applies to the majority of German “patriotic museums” [Heimatmuseum], which were under great influence of Nazi ideology. Similarly, a new Central Lenin’s Museum in Moscow was at its opening in 1936 described by Pravda as a “new powerful propagandistic weapon of Leninism” (Lewis 1994:16). What was characteristic for general development of European museums in the first part of the 20th century was constantly growing state influence and stronger ideologization of museums, connected with the appearance of two great totalitarian ideologies – communism and Nazism with fascism, with the first continuing in some European countries also in the second half of the 20th century.

In these countries it was unambiguously demanded that museums should become an instrument of regimes. Museums in such situation transferred the emphasis of their work to the interpretation of museum objects and interpretation of knowledge and information which was kept and presented by them. In such museums a new concept and orientation prevailed – a communicative role of museum became more and more important, a role of an object as an artefact started to decrease and a message of an object, its story, and information potential which it had become of greater importance. This trend changed many museums in many places into an instrument of ideologization of museum contents, whereas on the other hand the emphasis on interpretation at the same time meant the introduction of a “museum story” (a narrative, a tale) into museums.

Thus the “ideologization” of museums meant also a more philosophical approach to museum work, which resulted in subsequent⁷ rapid development of museology in some socialist countries – e.g. Jirý Neustupny and Zbynek Stransky in Czechoslovakia, Wojciech Gluzinski in Poland and Antun Bauer in Croatia (Maroević 1993:42, 54–56; van Mensch 1992:7).

In the provincial museum Kranjski deželni muzej these incentives and European models in relation to a more independent role of ethnography and ethnology were not met with a wide response and neither were the beginnings of museology. The non-defined status of ethnography continued to remain sealed up to the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Ethnography (as well as anthropology and ethnology), among all other authentic museum disciplines (at first natural sciences and archeology and then history and art history), which used a museum as the most important polygon for their development, remained in a subordinate position until the beginning of the 20th century. A curator – an ethnographer or anthropologist were thus not needed and even decades later (until

⁷ Mostly immediately after the second world war: in Czechoslovakia 1950, in the Soviet Union and Zagreb 1955, and in Poland 1963 (Maroević 1993:54–55).

the mid-20th century) ethnographic collections in Slovenia were created, managed and processed by art historians, historians or archeologists. According to the opinion by Niko Zupanič, who could not get a job in the Carniola Provincial Museum at the beginning of the 20th century, and consequently employed himself in a museum in Belgrade, the obstacle for “systematic ethnographic studying of the Slovenians was the former Austrian regime, which did not have any interest in the development of the Slovenian or Yugoslav ethnography. The museum in Ljubljana ‘Rudolfinum’ had to limit itself and be satisfied with one single room for exhibiting ethnographic objects, which in addition had to be limited to the territory of former Carniola Dukedom in accordance with legitimist-provincial German politics. Consequently, in this museum room there were no objects representing the Slovenian culture from Styria, Carinthia, region of Eastern Slovenia, region of Western Slovenia, Venetian Slovenia, Trieste and Istria exhibited – let alone could a visitor see handicraft made by the Croatian or Serbian peasant.” (Zupanič 1926, according to Jezernik 2010b).

Nevertheless, at the end of the 19th century a few more Slovenian profiled museums were founded with more prominent role of ethnography. Equally, a more promising museum concept was formed, which was partly accomplished in the Maribor National Museum at the beginning of the 20th century and then grew in the first part of the 20th century into the most serious and museologically mature presentation of ethnological heritage in museum environment.

The concept was developed by Matija Murko, who at first described Czech provincial exhibition in Prague in the year 1891, and then in his famous description of the ethnographic exhibition of the Czechs and Slovenians, which was in Prague in 1895 (Murko 1892; 1896), he thoroughly developed the concept of benevolent and successful ethnographic museum, which could be considered as the basis for museum development in Slovenia. The concept was based on numerous museological reflections on the exhibition in Prague, which lasted more than 5 months in 1895 and had more than 2 million visitors, i.e. on average approximately 13.000 a day. On some occasions (e.g. Whitsuntide and St. Venceslav Day) more than 73.000 visitors came to the exhibition (Murko 1896:124), which is utterly unattainable even for the biggest modern museums today.

Murko’s more detailed enumeration of numerous museum approaches and “museum products” explains the reasons for such great public success of both exhibitions. Murko also described in details the aforementioned “Czechoslovakian village”, where visitors could find a variety of characteristic houses from different Czech, Moravian and Slovakian landscapes; he was particularly enthusiastic about a mill, an old wooden school, a blacksmith’s workshop, a Moravian wine cellar and a fishermen hut with pond, where an experienced fisherman was fishing. He was enraptured with a series of landscape house types, where

in rooms, small rooms, kitchens, attics and in the courtyards everything looked as in reality. Real people go around and there are also figurines everywhere. A Moravian grandmother shows us how to paint houses, some people decorate Easter eggs, others offer us home-made pastry, and often we go to inns, where people merrily play, sing and dance. In one of the huts we even find a newborn baby, who was born in the exhibition [...]. And things get so realistic that in one of the courtyards we also see a piglet tied to a hut [...]. In the village there is also theatre in the evening among all other kinds of entertainment [...] with marionettes (Murko 1896:92–4).

Although Matija Murko probably did not notice the very beginnings of the European museology, his writing was undoubtedly in the spirit of the museological revolution, since he was the first one, who precisely described a series of advanced museological concepts and the important parts of museum work. Aleš Gačnik (1995:68–69), who was the first one evaluating Murko's museological achievements, strongly emphasises, for instance, “contextualization of history with ambiental setting” and with setting up verist figurines, which were sometimes replaced by real people; he mentioned exhibited models, reconstructions, diorama, “secondary museum material”, which also served for “contextualization of museum objects”, and a concept of “theatrization and folklorization” of the exhibition. Beside that, according to Gačnik (1995:73), Murko emphasised an interest for contemporaneity and thus devised collecting politics, which requires studying and collecting material for the present time and about it as well as including “innovation processes”. It is worth mentioning above all that Murko was interested in studying all social classes and was careful about collecting material: “do not exaggerate in our love towards everything that is old, real or seemingly national” (Murko 1896:135). Murko's advice can be easily considered as an extremely early criticism of the invention of traditions, although it was not explicit and elaborated enough.

But somehow, Murko's extremely modern “museum advice” was immediately forgotten in Slovenia. An exception is probably only the Maribor National Museum (detailed chronology of the museum in Hudaes 2008:164–177), which was founded at the beginning of the 20th century under direct influence of Matija Murko, who was at that time a university professor in nearby Gradec (today Austrian Graz). There the “sublime” national goals were put above the “scientific” goals of the museum and the museum was formed mainly together with “Styria patriots” who were asked to collect and donate their “ancient and ethnographical collections” to the museum before and after its foundation (1909). The material culture or ethnographic objects in their collections were not entirely a subject of scientific approach by curators, who “produce” and later transfer their knowledge to elite museum public. Beside its strict scientific purpose museums have, as was emphasised by the founder of the museum in 1909, Fran Kovačič (1909:114–115), also “practical purpose for national education and upbringing”. This was consi-

dered by Kovačič as more important, since “knowing national history, country and people are one of the most important aspects in acquiring education”; and this is where a museum plays an important part because it “clearly presents past and present of the people and country, it encourages national consciousness and pride and thus morality of a nation, it keeps an aesthetic sense of a nation, it teaches to cherish antiques and art objects, which are frequently exposed due to a lack of historical and aesthetic sense, and is finally of great importance for civilized people, who are supposed to be leaders and educators of people” (Kovačič 1909:114). The ethnographic objects in the museum collection in Maribor therefore became cultural heritage, since it is characteristic for them that they respect the “heritage” which was left to us by our predecessors. We tell and collect stories with their help about “their victories and defeats, which connect us with our predecessors, we share our virtues with them and avoid their mistakes” (Jezernik 2010a:12–13). We preserve our heritage because it defines us in our relations to others and defines our identity.

The next peak period of this museum was in the time of Franjo Baš who took an active part in it from the beginning of 1930’s and developed his own museological concepts which put Maribor museum at the top of the Slovenian museum scene. Franjo Baš designed the “ethnographic exhibition” when he relocated collections into Maribor castle after careful consideration of functional and material aspects with which he above all wanted to emphasize “characteristic provincial ethnographic cultures” and at the same time the “social origin” of the objects (Baš 1939:245–6). Realization of this setting up occurred not before the end of the Second World War when Baš indicated real living environments, e.g. “with imitation of tools placed on walls of the smokehouse room” (F. Baš 1949:116; A. Baš 2002).

Similar thoughts were shared by Nikolaj Sadnikar, who founded a public private museum in Kamnik in 1891, which can still be seen and is similar as it was at its opening. The motto of Sadnikar’s collecting work is still written on the board as it was at the beginning: “We should respect and appreciate deeds of our predecessors as a proof of their virtues. Their skills and diligence should encourage us to advance!” Even at that time this collection had an unstoppable attractiveness of former cabinets of curiosity, which was also perceived by the co-worker of the Ljubljana Ethnographic Museum, Maksim Gaspari, who wrote that “this collection, although not arranged like tedious museum, rises interest due to its picturesque arrangement in such a way that you feel attractiveness and homeliness among all these antiques” (Gaspari 1933:80). This seems as a criticism of a too serious, “scientific approach” of most of the Slovenian museums of that period, in contrast with museums where they tried to create an atmosphere, picturesqueness of presentation and a manner of presentation, which are oriented towards the needs of museum visitors. Gaspari expresses enthusiasm over such way of

communication between the collection and visitors and shows his understanding for the exceptional importance of “narrativity” of museum objects, which were presented so frequently by Nikolaj Sadnikar and his wife when showing museum objects to visitors and telling stories about them; and still today we can hear these stories told by their 80-year-old son.

However, such exploitation and emphasizing information potentials of museum objects has changed the external image of museums, which resulted in big changes in understanding museum objects, which happened in the Slovenian museums not before than half a century later. At that time object oriented exhibitions started to change into people oriented exhibitions, where only selected object were exhibited, and only those objects were selected, which had the most important communicative and interpretative message as bearers of a museum narrative. And exactly at that time (at the beginning of the 1980's) the first demands for “humanization” and “ethnologization of museums” (Hudaes 1980:27–28) appeared – today the term “anthropologization” of museum collections is used.

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