

ETHNOGRAPHY IN EUROPEAN MUSEUMS: THE INTERPRETATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF TRADITIONS

UDC: 39+06(069)

DOI: 10.33876/2311-0546/2025-3/7-29

Original article

© Marina Martynova

CONTEMPORARY ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEOLOGY IN SERBIA: CULTURAL CONTINUITY AND THE SEARCH FOR NEW CONCEPTS

The article focuses on the modernization of ethnographic museums, as well as their significance in the contexts of identity, and cultural and social memory. Through an analysis of ethnographic exhibitions in museums of the Republic of Serbia, the article analyzes how these are presented, which topics are chosen for display, and how the collections are influenced by the concepts of 'new museology,' the anthropologization of ethnology, and an expanded understanding of the ethnographic field. Furthermore, the political changes have been an additional influential factor in Serbia. The reforming state showed interest in ethnology and ethnographic museum collections not only in terms of culture, but also for socio-political engineering. Consequently, in Serbia, the conceptual paradigm of ethnographic museums at the beginning of the 21st century required transformation. The article describes debates within Serbian academic circles, including criticism from colleagues, regarding the state of museums in Serbia. It assesses the role of the Ethnographic Section of the Museum Society of Serbia, the Ethnographic Museum of Belgrade, the Open Air Museum 'Old Village' in Sirogojno, and other museums with ethnographic departments, and describes the practical steps and examples of innovative exhibitions in the country's exhibition halls. In the author's opinion, Serbia's experience can be considered successful in many respects.

Keywords: *ethnographical museums, Serbia, new museology, identity, tradition*

Author Info: Martynova, Marina Yu. — Dr. of History, Professor, Head of the Department for European Studies, the Russian Academy of Sciences N. N. Miklouho-Maklay Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (Moscow, Russian Federation). E-mail: martynova@iea.ras.ru ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7280-7450>

For citation: Martynova, M. Yu. 2025. Contemporary Ethnographic Museology in Serbia: Cultural Continuity and the Search for New Concepts. *Herald of Anthropology (Vestnik Antropologii)* 3: 7–29.

Funding: The study was carried out as a part of the research plan of the Russian Academy of Sciences N. N. Miklouho-Maklay Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology.

References

- Bezzubova, O. V. 2016. Muzej i politika pamjati [Museum and the Politics of Memory]. *Mezhdunarodnyj zhurnal issledovanij kul'tury* 13(26): 76–84.

- Ćirjaković, I. 2024. Zbirka Mlekarstva u Narodnom vuzeju Čačak — industrijsko nasleđe I muzeji u sastavu: problem i perspective novih vidova predstavljanja i izlaganja [Dairy Collection in the National Museum of Čačak — Industrial Heritage and Museums in its Composition: Problems and Perspectives of New Forms of Presentation and Exhibition]. *Muzeji. Nova serija* 11: 133–152.
- Findrik, R. 1983. Tri godine rada na izgradnji muzeja narodnog graditeljstva u Sirogojnu [Three Years of Activity on the Construction of the Folk Architecture Museum in Sirogojno]. *Glasnik Društva konzervatora Srbije* 7: 61–65.
- Gavrilović, L. 2004. Etnografska muzeologija: da ili ne [Ethnographic Museology: Yes or No]. *Rad Muzeja Vojvodine* 46: 317–325.
- Gavrilović, L. 2007. *Kultura u izlogu: ka novoj muzeologiji* [Culture on Display: Towards a New Museology]. Belgrade: Ethnographic Institute SASA. 220 p. (Special Editions 60).
- Gavrilović, L. 2009. *O politikama, identitetima i druge muzejske priče* [On Politics, Identities and Other Museum Stories]. Belgrade: Ethnographic Institute SASA. 201 p. (Special Editions 65).
- Huyssen, A. 1995. Escape from Amnesia. The Museum as a Mass Medium. In *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, by Huyssen A. New York: Routledge. 13–263.
- Ivković, M. 2012. Konzervacija i restauracija u muzeju na otvorenom “Staro selo” u Sirogojnu [Conservation and Restoration in the Open Air Museums Memoir]. In *Muzej na otvorenom. Zbornik* [Open Air Museums Memoir. Collection of Articles], ed. by N. Krstović, L. Gavrilović, J. Toskić. Sirogojno: Muzej na otvorenom „Staro selo“. 93–109.
- Jakovljević-Šević, T. 2014. Redeinisanje etnografske muzeologije: odgovor na izazove savremenosti. Primeri muzejske prakse u Srbiji [Redefining Ethnographic Museology: A Response to Contemporary Challenges. The Case of the Museum Practice in Serbia]. *Etnoloska istraživanja* 18/19: 147–161.
- Jovanović-Gudrić, I. (ed.). 2023. *Traditsija vashara u Srbiji* [The Fair Tradition in Serbia]. Belgrade: Muzejsko društvo Srbije. 164 p. (Fact Sheet 15).
- Kovačević, I. 2011. Muzeji i modernizacija: dres, traktor i plastična lutka [Museums and Modernization: a Dress, a Tractor and a Plastic Doll]. *Etnološki problemi* 6/2: 365–379.
- Krstić, D. 2004. Materijali za učvršćivanje ili konsolidaciju kamena [Materials for Strengthening or Consolidating Stone]. In KONKAM 2004: zbornik radova *Seminar i radionica o konzervaciji kamena (20–23 listopada 2004)* [KONKAM 2004: Collection of Articles. Seminar and Workshop on Stone Conservation (October 20–23, 2004)]. Split: Umjetnička akademija Sveučilišta u Splitu, Odsjek za konzervaciju i restauraciju. 70 p.
- Kuklinova, I. A. 2020. Novaia muzeologii: sovremennoe osmyslenie kontsepta [New Museology: Modern Conceptualization of the Concept]. *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo instituta kul'tury* 3(44): 68–72. <https://doi.org/10.30725/2619-0303-2020-3-68-72>
- Malešević, M. 2005. Tradicija u tranziciji: u potrazi za ‘još starijim i lepšim’ identitetom [Tradition in Transition: In Search of an ‘Even Older and More Beautiful’ Identity]. In *Etnologija i antropologija: stanje i perspektive* [Ethnology and Anthropology: State and Prospects], ed. by D. Radojičić. Belgrade: Ethnographic Institute SASA. 219–234. <http://www.etnoinstitut.co.rs/files/zbornik/21.pdf>
- Marković, Z. 1976. Etnografski muzej u Beogradu [Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade]. In *Etnografski muzej u Beogradu 1901–1976* [Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade 1901–1976], ed. by N. Gvozdenović. Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Science and Arts. 7–24.
- Martynova, M. Yu. 2023. Restavracija i konservacija predmetov stariny v Etnograficheskom muzee Belgrada (Respublika Srbija) [Restoration and Conservation of Antiquities in the Ethnographic Museum of Belgrade (Republic of Serbia)]. In *Sovremennoe sostojanie i perspektivnye podhody k restavracii i konservacii hudozhestvennyh proizvedenij: Sbornik nauchnyh trudov II Vserossijskoj nauchno praktičeskoj konferencii (s mezhdunarodnym uchastiem) (24 maja 2023 g.)* [Current State and Prospective Approaches to Restoration and Conservation of Artistic Works: Collection of Scientific Proceedings of the II All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference (with International Participation) (May 24, 2023), [ed. by V. V. Safonov]. Moscow:

- Rossijskij goudarstvennyj universitet imeni. A. N. Kosygina. P. 123–128.
- Martynova, M. Yu. 2025. Sohranenie i konservacija tradicionnyh predmetov byta v Etnograficheskom muzeu pod otkrytym nebom (na primere muzeja «Staroe selo» v Srbii) [Preservation and Conservation of Household Traditional Objects in the Ethnographic Open Air Museum (on the Example of the Museum “Old Village” in Serbia)]. In *Sovremennoe sostojanie i perspektivnye podhody k restavracii i konservacii hudozhestvennyh proizvedenij: Sbornik nauchnyh trudov IV Vserossijskoj nauchno praktičeskoj konferencii (s mezhdunarodnym uchastiem) (22–23 maja 2025 g.)* [Current State and Prospective Approaches to Restoration and Conservation of Artistic Works: Collection of Scientific Proceedings of the IV All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference (with International Participation) (May 22–23, 2025), [ed. by V. V. Safonov]. Moscow: Rossijskij goudarstvennyj universitet imeni. A. N. Kosygina. P. 17–23.
- Romelić, Ž. M. 2017. Odevni predmeti kao symbol jedne generacije iz etnološke zbirke narodnog muzeja Kruševac [Clothing Items as a Symbol of a Generation from the Ethnological Collection of the National Museum in Kruševac]. *Muzeji. Nova serija* 5: 83–97.
- Rosić-Božanović, B. 1984. Osnovna koncepcija privređivanja u Muzeju narodnog graditeljstva u Sirogojnu sa posebnim osvrtom na izradu zlakuske grnčrije [Basic Concept of Management in the Museum of Folk Architecture in Sirogojno with Special Emphasis on the Production of Zlakus Pottery]. In *Zaštita spomenika narodnog graditeljstva; Zbornik radova sa Savetovanja o zaštiti spomenika narodnog graditeljstva* [Protection of Folk Architecture Monuments; Proceedings of the Conference on the Protection of Folk Architecture Monuments]. Belgrade. P. 175–179.
- Savić, A., and S. Vrzić. 2024. *Muzeji i komunikacija s publikom u 21. veku — savremene prakse* [Museums and Public Communication in the 21st Century — Contemporary Practices]. Belgrade: Muzejsko društvo Srbije. 211 p. <http://www.mdsrbija.org/dokumenta/Muzejiikomunikacijaspublikom.pdf>
- Selenić, K. 2021. Izložbe akvizicije u Etnografskom muzeju u Beogradu, 1981–2020 [Acquisition Exhibitions at the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, 1981–2020]. *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja* 85: 103–125. <https://etnografskimuzej.rs/wp-content/uploads/Гласник-Етнографског-музеја-85>
- Selenić, K. 2024. Od 1904. do danas: stalne postavke Etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu [From 1904. to Today: Permanent Exhibits of the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade]. *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja* 88: 149–180. <https://etnografskimuzej.rs/wp-content/uploads/Гласник-Етнографског-музеја-88>
- Tanacković, J. 2019. Antropoloshka muzealizacija nematerijalnog kulturnog nasleđa u Muzeju Jadra [Anthropological Musealization Of Intangible Cultural Heritage At The Jadra Museum]. *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja* 83: 11–32. <https://etnografskimuzej.rs/wp-content/uploads/Гласник-Етнографског-музеја-83>
- Tomić-Joković, C. 2002. Tkane pokrivke i prekrivke [Woven Covers]. In *Katalog izložbe Muzej na otvorenom “Staro selo”* [Exhibition Catalog Open-Air Museum “Old Village”]. Sirogojno.
- Zec, T. 2001–2002. Izložbena delatnost Etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu 1976–2001 [Exhibition Activities of the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade 1976–2001]. *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja* 65–66: 319–332. <https://etnografskimuzej.rs/wp-content/uploads/Гласник-Етнографског-музеја-65-66>