

Summary of doctoral thesis

Magdalena Dolińska

Ethnographic collecting in Małopolska

Thesis supervisor: prof. dr hab. Jan Świąch

22 XI 2021.

This thesis is devoted to the issue of ethnographic collections in Małopolska. Its aim is to present the process of establishing and shaping the ethnographic collections, both private and museum, with the territorial scope covering the area within the borders of the present Małopolska Province. The time range of the work covers the 19th and first decades of the 20th century, until the outbreak of the Second World War.

The dissertation is divided into nine chapters. The first two are a kind of introduction to further considerations, while the other seven discuss the different trends of ethnographic collecting, distinguished due to their underlying inspirations and motivations or due to the thematic scope of the collections.

The first chapter presents collecting as a cultural phenomenon, consisting in accumulating, storing and viewing things. The first part of the chapter is an attempt to answer the question of when we are dealing with collection, why they are created and what needs they respond to. The second part tries to indicate the existence of a relationship between the development of ethnography as a science and the formation of ethnographic collections.

The second chapter outlines the development of collecting in the territory of Małopolska from the Middle Ages to the 19th century, taking into account the broad background of the remaining Polish lands and the impact that the existing economic and social conditions could have had on it, as well as the ideas and views that dominated in a given era.

The third chapter discusses the scientific inspirations for the development of ethnographic collections, in Małopolska coming mainly from the Academy of Learning, which is the heiress and continuator of the Cracow Scientific Society. Despite the limited financial resources, the Academy managed to create an extensive network of scientific cooperation, to which it attracted numerous researchers from even the most distant parts of the former Polish state, giving them the opportunity to participate in the development of science and, in the case of little-yet-known fields, such as ethnography, providing appropriate instructions and guidance.

The fourth chapter is devoted to slavophilic and patriotic-national themes, inspiring ethnographic collecting or revealing itself in them. The appearance of both is associated with the end of the eighteenth century and the fall of the Polish state, which awakened the romantic longing for a lost homeland, and then a patriotic desire to preserve the memory of it and pass it on to future generations by collecting testimonies of the greatness of one's own nation. These

threads are constantly intertwined with others, so they also appear in many places of this work; therefore here are only examples of those collections that have not been discussed in other chapters, and which show well how such ideas influenced their formation. the ethnographic collections.

The fifth chapter discusses the significance of world and local industrial exhibitions, which were fashionable throughout the nineteenth century, for the development of ethnography and the emergence of Polish ethnographic collections. The next chapter presents a similar meaning for the Polish ethnographic collecting of the Museum of Technology and Industry, established in Krakow in 1868 and being the first Polish institution that programmatically collected ethnographic specimens.

The seventh chapter presents the issue of the influence of two important movements, regional and sightseeing, on the creation of ethnographic collections at the end of the 19th and first half of the 20th century. They were created by people operating in different organizational structures, but with the same love of their own – smaller or larger – region, connected without conflicts with love for the great homeland. The legacy of their activities are not only collections, but also regional museums that exist to this day, which are important cultural centres of a given region.

Chapters eight and nine discuss the formation of two types of collections, distinguished not by the motivations of their creators, but by the type or origin of the specimens that compose them. In the first case, these are collections of folk art, containing only specimens that are the works of ancient and contemporary folk artists. This chapter discusses, apart from painting and folk sculpture, the development of collecting woodcuts, Easter eggs and folk cut-outs. In the second case, these are collections separated according to the territorial origin of the specimens that constitute them, containing items collected in non-European countries. Both categories of collections appeared in Polish ethnographic collecting relatively late, because folk art was not only become interested in the beginning of the 20th century, mainly due to the inspiration of artists, and the culture of exotic peoples in the second half of the 19th century, largely thanks to numerous Polish travelers, wandering around the world for various reasons.

The dissertation is based on the literature on the subject, relating to the phenomenon of collecting and to individual issues raised in it, as well as on rich published and archival source materials, including museum documentation, showing the variety of collector motivations behind the creation of ethnographic collections that have survived to this day.

Margdalena Dolińska

Jacques