

**Од скрола до скенирања – семиотички аспекти  
националне историје и културе у контексту  
савремених медија**

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**From Scroll To Scan – Semiotic Aspects of National  
History and Culture in Contemporary Media Context**

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**От свитък към сканиране – семиотични аспекти  
на националната история и култура в контекста на  
съвременните меди**

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***Abstract:** This paper deals with different layers of cultural heritage of town of Kruševac and the ways of their communication with modern readers through its Local History Collection. Public cultural actions of a contemporary library (media – institutional) via new media possibilities allows us to experience the archetype inherited from certain layers of culture as a piece of art in our time and that topos, a social pattern, connects with new issues. Connecting history and oral line as a frame of communication and the continuation of a matrix has been a basis of Serbian spirituality for centuries. By joining the signs in time we get the new life of an old story, actualize prince Lazar (1329–1389) in modern media, which makes the basis of all information and cultural actions from the first works to imagination of bonds with the former readers who find sense, the readers who search for the matrix. The new life of an old story for the latter readers will be an old story.*

***Keywords:** cultural heritage, local history collection, communication science, libraries and the media*

***Сажетак:** Предмет овог рада су различити слојеви културног наслеђа града Крушевца и начини на који комуницирају са савременим читаоцима кроз завичајну збирку библиотеке. Јавно културно деловање*

савремене библиотеке (медија – институције) кроз нове медијске могућности омогућава нам да архетип наслеђен из појединих слојева култура доживимо као уметничко дело у нашем времену и да повежемо топос, друштвени модел са ново порекло. Веза историје и усмене линије као оквира комуникације и трајања матрице кроз векове је основа српске духовности. Повезујући знакове у времену, добијамо нови живот старе приче, ажурирамо кнеза Лазара (1329–1389) у савременим медијима, то је основа информативне и културне делатности од првих дела до маште свих наредних читалаца прво чуло, читаоци који траже матрицу. Нови живот старе приче за скорашње читаоце биће стара прича.

**Кључне речи:** културно наслеђе, завичајна збирка, комуникација, библиотеке и медији

**Резюме:** Предмет на тази работа са различните слоеве от културното наследство на град Крушевац и начините, по които те комуникират със съвременните читатели чрез родната колекция на библиотеката. Публичното културно действие на съвременната библиотека (медия – институция) чрез новите медийни възможности ни позволява да преживеем архетипа, наследен от определени слоеве култури като произведение на изкуството в нашето време, и да свържем топоса, социалния модел с нов произход. Връзката на историята и устната линия като рамка на общуване и продължителността на една матрица от векове е в основата на сръбската духовност. Свързвайки знаците във времето, получаваме нов живот на старата история, актуализираме княз Лазар (1329–1389) в съвременните медии, тя е в основата на информационната и културната дейност от първите произведения до въображението на всички следващи читатели на първото чувство, читатели, които търсят матрицата. Новият живот на старата история за последните читатели ще бъде старата история.

**Ключови думи:** културно наследство, родна колекция, комуникация, библиотеки и медии

### ***Cultural identity of the town of Kruševac***

Cultural identity of the Town of Kruševac spans in continuity for 650 years, since Lazar's foundation of the capital in 1371 up to this day. Today Kruševac is a modern town with a developed industry which inherits cultural past through many layers of culture and, although it is not the oldest, the medieval cultural layer is the most dominant.

Prince Lazar the most beloved ruler of the Middle Ages founded the capital, built the palace and the palace church dedicated to St. Stefan the Protomartyr, better known as Lazarica in 1377–1378, which together with the Ravanica church, represents the beginning of the Moravian style in architecture. Until this day the church has been preserved, as well as the remains of the walls of Lazar's town and rather damaged Lazar's tower (Donžon Tower) in the Archaeological Park in Lazar's Town. On this place a monument to Prince Lazar was erected, too, in 1971, the work of the sculptor Nebojša Mitrić.

The battle of Kosovo in 1389 decided the destiny of the town – it was the event which fatefully affected the history of the town, as well as the Serbian people. The battle of Kosovo, its myth, legend and reality make the barebones of the town's identity, its past, present and future.

### ***The context of nativity***

The concept of nativity should not be observed only with the relation to the local community, but also in a wider cultural context with the national identity and the entire national written cultural heritage. Public cultural acting of modern library (media – institutional) via new media possibilities allows us to experience an archetype inherited from certain cultural layers as a piece of art in our time and to connect that topos, the social pattern with new issues.

In this context local history collections is a media transfer of the message from the past times into the present moment, and a communication channel is a media – institutional action of the library in the public space.

### ***Local history collection***

Dejan Vukicević in the book *Local history funds the jobs connected with native department funds* divides into those directed to itself (procurement of native department materials, the way of a new book – physical processing, catalogue processing and classification of the material, the use of data gathered from statistics and loans) and those directed from itself (collaboration with the local cultural and educational centres, different styles of work on popularization of the local history collection, of one's hometown and hometown authors,

the work on native bibliographies) (2011:9). Observed for the purposes of this paper, the jobs grouped towards the fund are traditionally librarian like, and the jobs defined from it may be seen from the aspect of communication science.

The development of local history collection and communication with the readers may be divided into two periods. The first period spans before the Internet in Serbia until the 1990s of the 20th century and the communication channel between the book and the user represents the library catalogue and bibliography (national, specific and personal). The second period after the Internet invention is characterized by development of library funds and collections, among others of local history collections in a new network environment, open and dynamic, in which the very funds become open and available on a click. The development of information technologies had an impact on the changes in the behavior of users and „the horizons of expectations“.

Communication between library catalogues and the users takes place not only in a physical space but also in a virtual space. On line communication channel connects library catalogues and a bibliographic description of the publication and in time it becomes „deeper“ and directs to the very publication in electronic form.

Digitalization of library collections changed the way of communication with the users, which is now happening 24/7, not depending on geographical location of a fund or a user. In this way cultural heritage stored in local history collections starts the interaction with the users ([www.nbks.org.rs](http://www.nbks.org.rs), [www.krusevljani.com](http://www.krusevljani.com)).

### ***The communication science fields in the local history collection of Kruševac public library – from scroll to scan***

Thematic conception is a coherent story (storyboard) and a conceptual frame of the native department collections of Kruševac Public Library makes a theme of the battle of Kosovo – its myth, legend and reality its central point, in fact, actualization of the events from the past and makes connection between different communication channels and the today reader. Kosovo myth is the town's identity. Within this story there are three projects which in different ways realize communication with wider audience, citizens and library readers.

The project „From Scroll to SCan“ is related to the presentation of the material which is thematically connected to Kruševac, the battle of Kosovo and its contemporaries. Communication takes place in several communication fields: physical exhibition of materials which the library owns in its collection and the presentation of digital copies of documents which are physically arranged in different collections through interactive showcases and kiosks.

„The Click“ is a virtual part of the local history collection and is actually an online base of information on well-known natives of Kruševac available on [www.krusevljani.com](http://www.krusevljani.com) with the tendency to grow into an encyclopedia.

In 2021 a project „650 Years of the Town's History on the Shelves“ was realized and it consisted of many different segments. One part of the activities was related to organizing a literary contest for elementary and secondary school pupils, which was successfully realized. As a result of this literary contest a publication with awarded works and the ones that were shortlisted was published.

On the realization of these phases many different partnerships were made as well as the communication between different groups of users. Communication science fields are made of communication processes and they convey the message since the time of the battle of Kosovo until today and they can be recognized and positioned. The main motive is the battle of Kosovo in legends and historical sources, then the period of oral communication, the epic poems of the Kosovo Cycle and its main participants: prince Lazar, princess Milica, despot Stefan Lazarević, Miloš Obilić...

### ***The period of oral communication***

A communicational code had been developed from the 9th till the 19th century with entropies. A frame of Serbian medievalship consists of oral and written traditions. The period of oral culture that lasted for many centuries, the meeting of Slavonic-Serbian and Old Slavonic, Slavonic literacy, Cyril and Methodius, St. Sava, prince Lazar and despot Stefan. General climate which is connected to historicism is a quest for identity, and it experiences the positivism of the 19th century through the prism national identity frame.

„The life of Kosovo legend was shaped for four centuries through oral tradition and written texts and history and it intertwined history and tradition with real and fictional characters. The legend was created and developed in the space from Old Serbia, Dubrovnik to Slovenia and Poland, and in its creation participated many well-known and unknown South-Slavic authors. Miroslav Pantić points out that the legend of prince Lazar and the battle of Kosovo „was preserved in oral tradition, in the tellings of the historians and poetic compositions of literary educated poets, and it was also diversified and expended itself, gained new details and often got whole new courses“. One field of communication science researches is made of the epic poems of Kosovo Cycle, inexhaustible source for the researchers and they always produce new interpretations. Second field of communication science research is made of historical sources on the actual event. The battle of Kosovo and legend are described in the historical sources of the contemporaries.

### ***Contemporary media***

Stuart Price in his book *Media Studies* specifies three alternative models of communication, i.e. „types of communicational relationships“: commanding, service and associative type which had been defined before by Denis McQuail. According to this typology a library may realize service and associative type of communication. Service type of communication is „mostly“ used in the form applied in mass media: for the news, entertainment, ideas, etc. Associative type is an example in which „common believes connect a certain group and the audience with certain media sources, and it can be brought into connection with the mass media since it is related to the types of communication which existed before“ (2011:47).

By paraphrasing McLuhan's idea that medium is a message, a long time ago Sheer noticed that, by being the means of transferring of certain kinds of messages to the recipients, the libraries themselves become a medium, and the library as a medium incites thought processes in a man and considerably excludes the possibility of censorship or manipulation.

The perception of the libraries as physical objects and as symbols by a new generation of readers is an important component in the domain of reconceptualization and animation of reading the analogue books.

### ***Media transposition of semiotics in the sphere of a modern reading room***

An initial space for public and cultural actions of native collection funds is the very collection, in which publications as layered segment of cultural heritage make effects in different spheres of interests. The native collection is a physical and virtual space for searching of the toponyms of the very place in the transferring of the message from the past into the present, and which in some following moment becomes the integral part of a new text.

In this context the process of transposition of the identity code can be observed as:

a message is a connection with a historical paradigm, a context of transposed material; a sender – the local history collection; a communication channel changed its nature, apart from its physical shape it functions on line in the virtual space: classical library catalogues, printed bibliographies, electronic catalogues, exhibitions, printed publications, media; a recipient is a user of the services of a public library, i.e. recipient who uses some of the above mentioned channels of communication; a reception is an acceptance of the terms that are generated and revised, they become available to the social reality.

### ***The ways of communication between the local history collection and the audience***

Instead of a term reader, the term audience is used because it implies a wider context than the term reader, and it directs the user of library services. The auditorium covered with the communication by means of different communication channels are not only the readers and the users of library services, but they are a wider social community, and among them there are even those who do not use the library services and do not read. This is the way to communicate with the group of so called „unreachable users“ by giving them the classical library services, e.g. the basic book loans.

Local history collection in different ways communicate with the audience. The way of communication is conditioned by the type of the library-information material.

1. Printed collections – physical collections of library-information materials, which are bound for one user only in a single time spell on the linear searching and determined by a physical location of library sources and users, in a limited time interval – the opening hours with the users of a certain institution;
2. Digital collections – digital surrogates of physical collection, available 24/7, without geographical limitations of the place where the user or the place of the collection are, the possibility of using of the same document by numerous users in the same time interval. A dynamic interaction between the user and native collection contents is established and it can enrich his experience and contribute to his research, studying and entertainment. Projects „The New Readers of the Old Newspapers“ and „Yesterday Papers“ are directed to digitalization of the newspapers and intended for potentially different users. By reading old newspapers they create new relations between the users and the newspapers, users and the library and new relations among the very digital objects.
3. Communication through social networks – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube as communication channels to the contents offered by the library. Almost all the organizations have these channels, not only the heritage institutions of culture. Communication through the above mentioned channels is simple both for a sender and for a receiver of the message. Many cultural institutions do not have the possibility to maintain the web site and they communicate with their users by Facebook, so that they can find, among information about the opening ours and different events, the video recording of the happening that is on at that moment or it was on before. Short video recordings on a YouTube channel play the role of an archive.

In the theory of communication, the mass communication that is created when a communicator communicates with a numerous audience, we can look at the library as having the role of a communicator. Millennials, so to say the Generation Y, born in the beginning 1980s, until the early 2000s, more precisely, those born and raised in the era of new information-communication technologies which primarily shaped their everyday life, and

who are often called digital natives or the Net generation, are the targeted users. The new generation differently processes information when compared with previous generations, who dominantly grew up by analogue media. The Net generation has developed hypertextual ways of thinking, has a tendency to jump from theme to theme, their members are very well networked and do several things at once. Their characteristics are having technological skills, relying on the browsers while searching for information, great interest in multimedia, creating Internet contents, multitasking in everything, short time lapse of holding attention, visual communication, quick reaction and expecting of quick answers and preferring typing to writing...

4. Reprinting editions from the local history collection, a publishing activity of the library, is a communication channel that connects a literary work which is not visible on the library shelves with a new generation of users. However it is a big question if such a publication will be up to date for a today's reader. The publications like these are characterized by intertextuality and coordination of texts from different time epochs.
5. The library communicates with different subjects in order to improve and expand the spectrum of library services. Communication with the faculties results with organization of scientific conferences. This organization connects the Library with narrowly professional category of scientists and explorers with a goal to present new data and researches on a certain subject which is in mutual interest. The result of these symposiums is usually a journal of papers presented at the symposium. In the Kruševac Public Library two symposiums were held after which the journals were published. In 2017 in collaboration with the department of Serbian language and literature in the Philological Faculty of the Belgrade University and with many other participants, a symposium was held on the subject of literary work of Dobrica Ćosić. Apart from the initial exposes, the following topics were processed: the theory of Ćosić's poetics, the reception of Ćosić's poetics, the stylistics of Ćosić's poetics, methodology of Ćosić's poetics and the sociology of Ćosić's poetics.

6. Educational workshops with children are the way to bring small children closer to the library from the very early age, so that they can get into the habit of using the library.
7. The Library on the Main Square – a direct communication with the citizens at the public space, an attempt to send the message to the public on the importance of the library and on many things that the library has in its funds.
8. The exhibition – communicologically the most immediate form of addressing the public – it is an archetype which has an effect as a pattern, and always forms the models of communication in a new way.

### ***Connecting of the institutions***

The media should be observed as a support to the preservation of cultural heritage which is the main activity of the archives, libraries and museums. The implementation of information-communication technologies affected the modernization of all of these institutions and enlarged the possibilities for the cooperation in the environment of a global informational structure.

Libraries, archives and museums are traditional heritage institutions, so-called „keepers of memory“. The activities in performing their functions which are procedurally defined are mostly the same and refer to gathering, keeping and protecting the materials of the different formats. The archival activities are directed to original historical documents which essentially define them, while library-information activities have, so to say, a service character and rely on giving access to information, books, i.e. secondary documents.

### ***The charters of Prince Lazar and Despot Stefan Lazarević – official communication and different levels of communication***

Academician Aleksandar Mladenović (1930–2010), a linguist, professor of the University of Novi Sad (1963–1995) published two books of charters and their transcripts made and the cabinets of prince Lazar and despot Stevan Lazarević, who, like many other rulers, gave grants (deeds) to the monasteries and individuals. In such a way we can follow the official communication which had lasted for almost half a

century and took place in two different social contexts. The first context was at the time when Serbia was at its peak and The Charters of Prince Lazar (2003) present the official communication in order to exercise the privileges and powers, before the battle of Kosovo, issued by the rulers, the donors to the holder of the rights, i.e. their user. The Charters and the Letters of Despot Stefan (2007), written in the period 1392–1427, belong to the second social context, in which Serbia was a despotate and they were created in the first decades after the fall of the Serbian state. Apart from having characteristic of a historical document, they are also the examples of official communication among the rulers and their subjects, lords, towns and monasteries.

Old written charts are brought: (a) in original graphics, (b) in a cleared text given in today's Serbian alphabet and orthography, strictly preserving the original language, (c) translated into today's Serbian literary language and, finally, (d) the facsimiles of all the charters are given whether in the original writing or in transcription. Four levels of communication can be applied here and they were defined in the book *Media Studies* by Stuart Price. The first level of communication is reflected in the original graphics – original documents, whose content can be understood by a small number of researchers and scientists. Taking social circumstances in which they were created into consideration, more exactly, the number of literate persons, it is clear that those texts could have been understood at the times of their creation only by a very small number of members of ruling or clerical classes. The charters given as grants at the moment of issuing served for realization of rights, privileges and benefits. The second level of communication is a cleared text, given in today's Serbian alphabet and orthography, strictly preserving the original language, more precisely, a decoded text in translation to today's Serbian language. The translation to today's Serbian language actually represents the decoding. The cleared text communicates with a larger number of recipients. On this second level we can observe intertextuality, „the way in which the texts, not obligatory, but sometimes of the same type, reproduce recognizable elements or styles“ (2011:73). The third level of communication is actually a narrative, the ultimate process of storytelling, the process of story building, mental activity which organises the data into a pattern and the way of organizing space and time data into cause

and effect series of events. The fourth level of communication is visual – the original snapshots of the listed document are attached.

From this edition of the mentioned documents, with their contents can be familiar not only the scientists but also all the others who are not used to old Serbian alphabet and orthography, and who are interested into prince Lazar and whose name and work in general as well as in particular, and especially in the frame of Serbian and Kosovo memory that is strongly present and eternally up-to-date in each and every one of us. In this way we come up to a new reading and contextualization in another social experience.

### ***Conclusion***

In our search for the cultural signals, we can remark that the libraries serve as the means of sending certain kinds of messages to their recipients and that the very libraries are a medium.

Different layers of cultural heritage communicate with contemporary readers through communication channels with the help from the library, either in a written form of materials or in an electronic form of materials. The library with the help from traditional techniques of knowledge organization becomes a mediator between the present and future generations and the past. In the process of transition of codes of the past times into the age of digital media for today's generations, libraries tend to keep the perception of physical space.

Actualization of the events from the past and connecting of different topos depend on the ways of presentation. In the time of new information-communication technologies and mass media whose characteristics are sublimed by the Internet as the roof communication platform, should arose interest among the users for the events and the contents from half a millennium ago and put a book into the central place in the process of gaining media literacy among the new generations of readers born in the age of a digital technology. The readers should be trained to deconstruct reality which is determined by the media in today's world and in this process libraries should have an active role, to be the medium themselves.

*Translation: Gorana Rajović*

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