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Jelena Dimitrijević's Manuscripts: Workshop Report

On 4th December 2018, the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade hosted a workshop of the project *Knjiženstvo, theory and history of women's writing in Serbian until 1915*, dedicated to Jelena Dimitrijević's manuscripts. Following the opening address by Professor Ljiljana Marković, the Dean of the Faculty of Philology, the gathered were welcomed by the project's principal investigator Prof. Biljana Dojčinović, who is, at the same time, the main initiator of the whole decrypting endeavour.

The text motivating the organisation of this meeting is the second volume of Jelena Dimitrijević's travelogue *Seven Seas and Three Oceans – Travelling around the World (Sedam mora i tri okeana – putem okos sveta)*, which portrays the author's trip to India, Ceylon, China, Japan, and America. While the first volume has already reappeared in print in 2016, the second has, to our regret, remained unpublished. It is with the aim of further affirmation of Jelena Dimitrijević's oeuvre not only among academic audience but also among wider readership that we wish to bring to light the second volume, the manuscript of which is kept in the National Library of Serbia, under the signature P 540. A team of professors and investigators gathered around the journal and database *Knjiženstvo* have undertaken the formidable and responsible task of digitising the manuscript with a view to preserving it for future readings and interpretations.

The decryption was conducted by six members of the *Knjiženstvo* project: researcher Vladimir Đurić, scholarship holders Marija Bulatović, Višnja Krstić, and Radojka Jevtić, as well as by researchers Željka Janković and Snežana Kalinić. The job was split into three stages: from 15 May till 15 July 2017, then from 1 Sept. till 1 Dec. 2017, and finally from 27 Feb. till 27 May 2018. The original manuscript is in a rather deteriorating condition, with visible signs of damage, yellow pages, and blurry or faded ink. Despite these obstacles, the researchers have worked with well scanned material thanks to the National Library of Serbia. The workshop was attended by the representatives of this institution's "Special collection" department, who enabled the scanning of all 372 pages of the manuscript.

The meeting was thematically divided into four parts. The first and second part, which mainly concentrated on the decryption process itself, was reserved for researchers who have practically engaged with this piece of writing. First of all, Vladimir Đurić talked about multiple layers of decryption and different ways of reading Jelena Dimitrijević's manuscript;

then Marija Bulatović systematised various challenges that arise during decryption; Višnja Krstić focused on the problems of the graphic aspect; Radojka Jevtić talked predominantly about possible solutions to the decryption issues; Željka Janković based her presentation on archaisms, borrowings, and foreign words as a source of difficulties; finally, Snežana Kalinić talked about Jelena Dimitrijević's manuscript in the context of heterotopia.

The third part of the meeting, entitled "American transgressions", was more theoretical in nature. Presenters predominantly analysed the already published works of Jelena Dimitrijević. Prof. Magdalena Koh presented her paper on the subversion and transgression based on textual relations in two of Jelena Dimitrijević's works – "Amerikanka" (American Woman) and *Ha yик-енду код Мусиз Флаг* (A Weekend at Mrs Flag's). Jelena Milinković addressed Jelena Dimitrijević's America through the prism of periodicals dating from the first half of the 20th century. Biljana Dojčinović analysed gender transgressions in Jelena Dimitrijević's still unpublished verses written in the English language.

The fourth part of the meeting discussed the importance of digitation and the value of the preserved manuscript. What is more, the attendees had the opportunity to try decrypting themselves on a sample from Jelena Dimitrijević's poetry – written in Serbian, English, and French – which is still available only in the manuscript form. These poems not only fill in the gaps in Jelena Dimitrijević's notes from her travels, but offer an insight into new emotional landscapes of Serbian literature, thereby confirming the excellence of this author in the context of both Serbian and world literature.