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Digital Travelogue Collection in the National Library of Serbia

Abstract: Within the Digital National Library of Serbia, there is a digital collection titled Travel Literature, consisting of 26 publications. This paper presents the collection, its content, the digitization process, OCR, and finally, the promotion of digital content. The books in this collection were created during the 19th and 20th centuries, covering the period from 1845 to 1940. They describe various journeys across Serbia, as well as Switzerland, America, India, Palestine, Africa, Siberia, Germany, Italy, and many other countries. The authors of these fascinating travel records include Serbian writers, diplomats, and cultural figures, such as Jelena Dimitrijević, Milorad Rajčević, Joakim Vujić, Ljubomir Nenadović, and others. The books are mainly in Serbian, in both Cyrillic and Latin scripts, but there are also three books by Milorad Rajčević translated into French. The collection has been developed within the Europeana project The Rise of Literacy, which ran from September 2017 to February 2019. The project's goal was to showcase the development of literacy across Europe from the 4th to the 20th century, emphasizing the power of the written word and its influence on people and society. Through this collaboration, the digitization process, scanning quality, and metadata have been significantly improved. The visibility of the collection has also been enhanced, with all 26 publications available on the Europeana portal. Blogs are another important aspect of promoting digital objects and presenting rich cultural heritage. They highlight specific parts of the collection in an engaging way, making them interesting to users worldwide. On the Europeana portal, there are two blogs focusing on the works of Jelena Dimitrijević and Milorad Rajčević. Digitizing this collection is significant for its documentation of cultural and historical events in Serbia and abroad. Furthermore, it offers a unique perspective from some of Serbia's earliest travel writers. For instance, Jelena Dimitrijević, in her book *Sedam mora i tri okeana*

(*Seven Seas and Three Oceans*), reflects on the travelling: "I still roam the world to see more of this wide world." [1]

Keywords: digital library, digitization, blogs, National Library of Serbia, travelogues, Europeana.

Introduction

Today, digital libraries represent a key tool for the preservation, promotion, and accessibility of cultural heritage around the world. They enable easy access to digital objects such as books, documents, photographs, audio and video recordings, which all belong to a country's cultural and historical legacy. By digitizing them, they are not only preserved from further deterioration, but more easily accessible. Digital libraries operate 24/7, and thanks to the development of digital tools and various programs, unimaginable just a few years ago, reading books from the comfort of one's home has become a reality. With the tools developed in the meantime (and continuously being improved), various types of searches are possible, making it much easier and faster to find the desired information. These platforms are not only a resource for researchers and students but also a powerful medium for promoting culture, tourism, and national identity. Digital objects in libraries can illuminate the richness of cultural heritage in a way that is accessible to a wide audience. Digitized collections of books, old manuscripts, works of art, postcards, maps, and photographs allow people to virtually explore the cultural past and present of a country.

Digital libraries often contain guides, brochures, and travelogues that can be used for planning trips and exploring specific geographical areas. Virtual exhibitions showcasing specific regions and cultural events – such as festivals and traditional holidays – use digital library materials to spark greater interest among international visitors.

Digital objects not only preserve cultural heritage but also inspire people to explore certain destinations in person. For example, photographs of cultural monuments, manuscripts, or old cityscapes can motivate tourists to visit those locations. These digital resources also enable comparative analysis, demonstrating the evolution of monuments and cities by contrasting past and present appearances, documenting changes in people and architecture, and preserving records of vanished landmarks.

[1] Dimitrijević, Jelena J. 1940. *Sedam mora i tri okeana: putem oko sveta*. Beograd: Državna štamparija Kraljevine Jugoslavije. https://digitalna.nb.rs/view/URN:NB:RS:SD_C29C437A1DC24AB3050BCBD330D798BC

A compelling example is the "Picture This!"[2] exhibition created on Europeana, which used vintage postcards sourced from digital libraries across eight Southeastern European countries. Each postcard was accompanied by descriptive texts providing cultural and historical context for the featured locations. The exhibition included an innovative contest challenging users to locate the real-world sites depicted in the historical postcards, photograph them in their current state, and submit the images to Europeana. This approach generated striking visual comparisons between historical and contemporary views of the same locations. The contest's winning submission featured the National Assembly building[3] in Belgrade.

Travelogues held in the digital collection of the National Library of Serbia (NBS) are part of the *Serbian Travel Literature*[4], which was developed as part of the Rise of Literacy project.

About the Collection

In addition to other activities, the National Library of Serbia is engaged in the digitization of selected materials. The Digital Library Department is responsible for the entire digitization process. In order to increase the visibility of its collections and the availability of digitized materials, the NBS has collaborated with many institutions and participated in numerous projects.

In cooperation with Europeana, the National Library of Serbia has initiated several digitization projects. Europeana[5] is a portal that preserves metadata and enables users (enthusiasts, cultural workers, professors, students, researchers) to access and view more than 63 million digital objects held by institutions across Europe.

The platform showcases cultural heritage from over 2,000 institutions, and it is important to note that Europeana does not collaborate

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[2] Europeana, "*Picture This: Vintage Postcards of Southeastern Europe*," Europeana Exhibitions, accessed April 1, 2025, https://www.europeana.eu/en/exhibitions/picture-this-vintage-postcards-of-southeastern-europe

[3] Europeana, "*Winners of Picture This Competition*" Europeana Stories, accessed March 31, 2025, https://www.europeana.eu/en/stories/winners-of-picture-this-competition

[4] National Library of Serbia, "*Putopisna književnost,*" *Procvat pismenosti,* accessed March 25, 2025, https://digitalna.nb.rs/sf/NBS/TematskeZbirke/procvat_pismenosti/NBS7_putopisna_knjizevnost

[5] Europeana, "*About Us*," Europeana, accessed March 25, 2025, https://www.europeana.eu/en/about-us

with each of these institutions individually. Instead, there is a developed network of aggregators through which metadata is sent to Europeana. Since 2018, the National Library of Serbia has been an accredited Aggregator for Europeana[6], one of the few aggregators outside the EU. Through its collaboration with Europeana, the visibility of NBS collections has also increased, making them accessible to a wide range of users. Through millions of digital objects, including images, audio recordings, and texts, the platform offers a glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of Europe. Europeana also offers thematic collections that further promote the content published on its portal.

The Rise of Literacy project[7] is one of the initiatives the National Library of Serbia has undertaken in collaboration with Europeana. The project[8] ran from September 2017 to February 2019. A total of 13 partners from across Europe participated in the project, and its goal was to showcase the development of literacy in Europe from the 4th to the 20th century, as well as the power of the written word and the impact of literacy on both individuals and society.

As a result of the project, the NBS formed 10 digital collections:

1. Early Printed Books
2. Serbian Travel Literature
3. Yugoslav Avant-Garde Magazines
4. New Europe
5. WWI Periodicals
6. Diary Entries and Memoirs of WWI Participants
7. Lyricism of Serbian Moderna
8. Handwritten Periodicals
9. Vuk Stefanović Karadžić's Collected Works
10. Božidar Knežević's Manuscripts.

The project required collaboration among colleagues from different departments of the National Library of Serbia to find the appropri-

[6] Butigan-Vučaj, Tamara. 2019 "Nacionalni agregator za Evropeanu u Srbiji: mali korak bliže Evropskoj uniji". *Bibliozona*, 7: 15-19.

[7] Europeana, "*Rise of literacy*", *Europeana Pro*, accessed March 25, 2025, https://pro.europeana.eu/project/rise-of-literacy

[8] National Library of Serbia, „*Procvat pismenosti*", accessed March 25, 2025, https://nb.rs/procvat-pismenosti/

ate materials, digitize them, and then upload them to the Digital Library of NBS. It was necessary to combine different knowledge and skills to create the final product as it is today. During digitization, the project followed Europeana's established standards (subsequently adopted and enhanced in related work). For the digital objects to be delivered to Europeana, the digitized photographs had to meet specific criteria. They had to be in JPG format with a minimum resolution of 0.95 mpix[9], and for textual material, the mandatory format was PDF. Additionally, the PDF had to be OCR-processed (optical character recognition).

Travelogues represent a distinctive literary genre in which authors share their impressions of visited places. More than mere catalogues of sights and events, these works reflect the author's artistic sensibilities, worldview, emotions, taste, and cultural breadth. Through travel writing, authors simultaneously portray landscapes and reveal themselves. A genuine travelogue serves as an expression of creative passion, a reflection of the author's personal perspective, and testimony to their aesthetic sensitivity and worldly experience. Throughout the genre's evolution, the purpose of travel literature has shifted from educational and didactic functions to informative, and ultimately to entertaining ones. The genre is characterized by the author's spatial displacement and encounters with the new and unknown, while narrative style adapts to the intended audience.

The Digital Collection of Serbian Travel Literature (Figure 1) includes works from the 19th and 20th centuries, specifically works published between 1845 and 1940, as materials from that period are in the public domain. This collection features travelogues in various forms – letters, diary entries, dramatic dialogues, as well as documentary, narrative, or memoir-style prose. It contains works by prominent Serbian writers, diplomats, and cultural figures from the 19th and 20th centuries such as Joakim Vujić, Ljubomir Nenadović, Milorad Rajčević, and Jelena Dimitrijević, who presented their travel impressions in diverse ways.

Material collection and textual analysis for this project uncovered remarkable, sometimes forgotten individuals whose work and ideas played crucial roles in societal development. The following section presents several of these significant figures:

[9] Europeana, "*Publication Policy*," *Europeana Pro*, accessed March 25, 2025, https://pro.europeana.eu/post/publication-policy

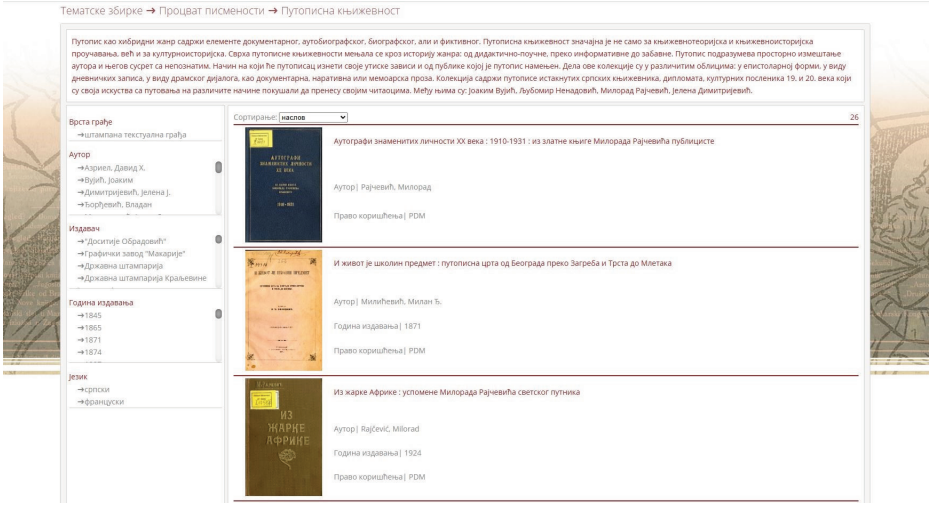

Figure 1. Thematic Collection of Serbian Travel Literature

Milorad Rajčević (1890–19??):

The first Serb to travel around the world. Back in 1910, he came up with the idea for a world tour in a very interesting way. By making a bet with the owners of the Belgrade newspaper *Mali žurnal*, he set off on a journey around the world that was originally supposed to last two years. However, due to his love for travel, it continued for the next twenty years. Interestingly, when he set off, he brought with him a notebook in which the most important figures of the time would sign their names.[10] That book became the most valuable and largest collection of autographs of prominent individuals, including signatures of kings, princes, government officials, and other distinguished people. Here is what Rajčević says about the autographs: "As is well known, almost all world travelers carry a book in which notable individuals sign their names. This is the entire capital of these modern wandering knights, and the more distinguished the signatures in the book, the more interesting it becomes. My books, in that regard, represent true museum value."[11] At the beginning of his book *Iz žarke Afrike,* Rajčević includes excerpts from contemporary newspapers (the book was published in 1924). In

[10] Rajčević, Milorad. 1932. *Autografi znamenitih ličnosti XX veka: iz zlatne knjige Milorada Rajčevića publiciste: 1910-1931*. Beograd: Štamparija Globus. https://digitalna.nb.rs/view/URN:NB:RS:SD_63A61C5F06ADF3B611241CB8966EDD62

[11] Ibid.

one interview quote from the newspaper *Vreme,* Rajčević explains that, due to public skepticism about his extensive travels, he brought back diverse souvenirs – ranging from snake skin to ivory and Moroccan knives – and displayed them in a shop window on Terazije Square in Belgrade.

He also provided proof through autographs collected from notable figures: "from the Patriarch of Constantinople to the Sultan of Zanzibar, and even a Black king from Togo."[12]

The following books by Rajčević are part of the Serbian Travel Literature collection: *Na dalekom istoku*, *Autografi znamenitih ličnosti XX veka: iz zlatne knjige Milorada Rajčevića publiciste: 1910-1931*, *Iz žarke Afrike: uspomene Milorada Rajčevića svetskog putnika*, *Iz žarke Afrike: uspomene Milorada Rajčevića svetskog putnika, Deo. 2* (one copy in Cyrillic, the other in Latin script). As well as three books in French: *Du Caire au Cap: 8 planches hors texte et 1 carte*, *Sous le soleil de l'Afrique: 30 planches texte et 1 carte*, and *Les autographes des personnes illustres du XX siècle: 1910–1933*.

Jelena Dimitrijević (1862–1945):

Here is what Isidora Sekulić said about Jelena Dimitrijević:

> "She is not merely a traveller by instinct but, one might say, a travel writer by instinct as well. Dimitrijević has a remarkable gift for observing and interpreting the human experience across all faiths, customs, and civilizations. She embodies the explorer-writer archetype, demonstrating extraordinary persistence and determination as she ventures wherever she wishes, establishes connections with whomever she chooses, and – most importantly – fully immerses herself in each experience."[13]

She is considered the first Serbian woman writer to have written and published a prose travel work, *Pisma iz Niša o haremima*. Her works, alongside vivid, clear descriptions of the places she visited, always had one dominant theme – the position of women in society. Her insight into the lives of women (Muslim women) in harems was possible due to her respected and esteemed personality. Her first book, *Pisma iz Niša o haremima*, as well as her later letters from Thessaloniki, India, Egypt, and America, represent a powerful and moving testimony about the status

[12] Rajčević, Milorad. *Iz žarke Afrike: uspomene Milorada Rajčevića svetskog putnika. Deo 1*. Beograd: Grafički zavod "Makarije", 7, https://digitalna.nb.rs/view/URN:NB:RS:SD_077946EEFCFBEEC0EBFD77E8DA3CEFDF

[13] Dojčinović, Biljana, Stanišić, Mirjana. 2022. "*Staze, spone, spoznaje*". Beograd: Narodna biblioteka Srbije.

of women in different societies. With deep empathy and without a trace of judgment, the author illuminates the complex lives of women trapped between tradition, culture, and their personal struggle for freedom. Particularly striking are the comparisons between women's experiences in Turkey and America, which clearly show how deeply ingrained cultural patterns are and how difficult it is to introduce even the smallest change within the frameworks of traditional communities. She traveled through Europe, Asia, North America, and North Africa. The Serbian Travel Literature collection includes her following travelogues: *Sedam mora i tri okeana, putem oko sveta, Pisma iz Indije*, *Pisma iz Misira,* and *Novi svet ili u Americi godinu dana.*

Ljubomir P. Nenadović (1826–1895):

Nenadović's most valuable literary works are his travelogues written in epistolary form – that is, as letters. As a great admirer of Dositej Obradović's work, he adopted a simple and witty style, avoiding deeper philosophical reflections because his ultimate goal was to cultivate a reading public and help shape a modern literary language.[13]As a pioneering Serbian mountaineer, Nenadović wrote about mountain peaks both in Serbia and throughout other European countries.

Within the Serbian Travel Literature collection, there are two digitized books: *Pisma iz Italije Ljubomira Nenadovića* and *Pisma iz Nemačke*.

Nenadović's *Pisma iz Italije* conveys his impressions of several major Italian cities through an epistolary format. He chronicles his journey from Naples to Rome, then Livorno, and finally Florence. The largest portion of *Pisma iz Italije* describes his encounter and time spent with Montenegrin Bishop Petar Petrović Njegoš, providing unique testimony to Njegoš's final days. The digitized edition of *Pisma iz Nemačke* features an extensive foreword by Pavle Popović about Ljubomir Nenadović as a travel writer. On his journey to Germany, Nenadović wrote first from Hamburg, then from Wiesbaden and its surrounding villages.

Vladan Đorđević (1844–1930):

Vladan Đorđević was a highly significant and influential figure of the 19th century. He was a Serbian politician, diplomat, physician, officer, writer, President of the Ministerial Council of the Kingdom of Serbia, sanitary colonel, and the founder of the Red Cross of Serbia and the Serbian Medical Society. He founded the journal *Srpski arhiv* for compre-

hensive medicine and the journal *Otadžbina*, which became the premier magazine for literature, science, and culture in the second half of the 19th century. He also established the First Belgrade Society for Gymnastics and Wrestling. The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts declared 2020 as the Year of Vladan Đorđević, when the exhibition "Vladan Đorđević: portret neumornog stvaraoca" was held at the SANU Gallery.[14] The digitized edition of *Putničke crte* by Vladan Đorđević contains Đorđević's descriptions of Trieste and Miramare Castle, followed by his journey and experience of Studenica, as well as the travel novella *Dva dana kroz Češko–Sasku Švajcarsku*.

Milan Đ. Milićević (1831–1908)

He was a writer, politician, ethnographer, librarian at the National Library of Sebia, and state councilor.[15] He was born in Ripanj, spending part of his childhood in a monastery where he learned to read and write, and studied theology in Belgrade from 1845 to 1850. He primarily spent his working years as a state councilor but wrote or translated about 100 books. His work focused primarily on ethnography, pedagogy, and travel writing, and he left behind a significant body of scholarly works in these fields.[16] Within the Serbian Travel Literature collection, there is the work *I život je školin predmet: putopisna crta od Beograda preko Zagreba i Trsta do Mletaka*, where the author describes his official journey through the scientific and historical sphere.

Jovan Mišković (1844–1908)

He was an officer, military writer, general, Chief of the General Staff, and Minister of War.[17] He is considered one of the most educated Serbian officers. Born in Negotin, he graduated from the Military Academy in 1865, ranking fourth in his class. Even during his time at the academy, he demonstrated a scholarly inclination, focusing primarily on geogra-

[14] Dipos, "*Srpske diplomate: Vladan Đorđević*," Dipos Blog, accessed April 1, 2025, https://dipos.rs/blog/srpske-diplomate-vladan-dordevic/

[15] Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, "*Milan Đ. Milićević*", accessed April 13, 2025, https://web.archive.org/web/20081227182747/http://www.sanu.ac.rs/Clanstvo/IstClan.aspx?arg=338

[16] OŠ "Milan Đ. Milićević", *"Ko je bio Milan Đ. Milićević?"*, accessed April 13, 2025, https://www.osmilandjmilicevic.edu.rs/ko-je-bio-milan-dj-milicevic/

[17] Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, *"Jovan Mišković"*, accessed April 13, 2025, https://web.archive.org/web/20111009045417/http://www.sanu.ac.rs/Clanstvo/IstClan.aspx?arg=349,

phy alongside military tactics and theory, and developing a passion for describing the landscapes he encountered during his military travels.[18]

Within the Serbian Travel Literature collection, there is his work *Putovanje po Srbiji: geografske, vojničke i istorijske beleške*, presenting his own experiences, as well as those of the soldiers he commanded during their travels across Serbia. The work contains vivid descriptions of the landscapes and terrains through which the army advanced.

Hadži-Mile A. Popadić

He was a parish priest from Ključ, a village in Bosnia, and the author of several religious texts.[19]

Within the Serbian Travel Literature collection, his digitized work *Opis putovanja i hrišćanskih svetinja na istoku u Palestini* describes his journey to the Middle East and the Christian holy sites he encountered. The work features rich descriptions of historic Christian sites – Jerusalem, Jericho, Bethlehem, Hebron, and others. Initially, the author had no intention of publishing this work, as he felt dissatisfied with the limited material he had gathered. He had written these notes primarily for personal use, as a private record of his travels. However, he ultimately chose to publish the work, believing that even in its current form, his observations might benefit others. His decision has proven worthwhile, as the work now holds a valued place within this collection.

Aleksa M. Stojković (1863–19??)

He was a doctor from Užice. An official medical trip inspired him to write notes about his journey through Austria–Hungary – thus giving birth to his 1903 travelogue *Jedna higijenska ekskurzija: beleške sa putovanja kroz Austro-Ugarsku*.

In his work, he describes his travels from the unique perspective of a physician, offering a professional analysis of the hygienic conditions he encounters. A strong emphasis is placed on examining water sources and usage in the settlements he visits.

Marko Car (1859–1953)

He was one of the most renowned Serbian writers, literary critics, essayists, and translators. Born in Herceg Novi, the coastal region of

[18] Univerzitet odbrane, *"General Jovan Mišković"*, accessed April 14, 2025, https://www.uo.mod.gov.rs/lat/446/general-jovan-miskovic-446

[19] Zapadni Srbi, *"Manastir Treskavac"*, accessed April 14, 2025, https://stari.zapadnisrbi.com/pravoslavlje/manastiri-i-crkve/131-manastir-treskavac

his birth left a profound impression on him. He was educated in his hometown and in Kotor. He contributed to journal *Srpski list*. His literary fame was cemented with the publication of his translation of *The Lady of the Camellias*, which appeared in Dubrovnik's journal *Slovinac*.[20] His literary body of work is rich in descriptions of the coast, and one of the pieces featured in the Serbian Travel Literature collection is the travelogue *Niz rodno primorje: slike i utisci s Jadrana*, dedicated to his close friend Ljubomir Nenadović. In this work, he recounts his journey along the coast by steamship, vividly portraying the sea, islands, and coastal towns and landscapes of the Adriatic. Among the places described are Dubrovnik, the island of Lokrum, Herceg Novi, Split, Hvar, and others.

Vekoslav (Velimir) Cizel

He was a Yugoslav journalist, and his work *Putovanje u zadružnu Švedsku* is a part the Serbian Travel Literature collection. He wrote it while taking part in the Yugoslav Cooperative Expedition. The work features numerous travel descriptions and a wealth of photographs. Through his writing, he also bears witness to the wartime period.

Kroz Francusku kolevku velikih mislilaca i zadružnih učitelja is another work of his featured in the collection, where he documents his travels in France. Based on his writings, it is evident that he was a strong advocate of the cooperative movement, using his works to describe the activities of cooperative societies in Sweden and France.

Digitization procedures

The National Library of Serbia undertook a project to highlight its rich collection of travel literature. Collaborating closely with its team of experts, the library carefully identified 26 significant works from its holdings. These selected titles were then digitized and made available to the public through the Digital Library of the National Library of Serbia.[21]

After selecting the materials, the scanning process began. Epson WorkForce DS-50000 Flatbed Document Scanners were used to scan all publications in TIFF format, at a resolution of 300 dpi, and in color. These scanned images were then converted to JPG format and further processed using Photoshop software.

[20] PortaLibris, *"Da li znate ko Marko Car?"*, accessed April 14, 2025, https://portalibris.rs/da-li-znate-ko-je-marko-car/

[21] Digitalna Narodna biblioteka Srbije, https://digitalna.nb.rs

The final step before uploading the images to the Digital NBS platform involved converting them into a searchable PDF format. This crucial step enables users to search for text within the documents. Optical Character Recognition (OCR) was performed using ABBYY FineReader software, which is effective at recognizing text from scanned documents. However, the extracted text still required additional proofreading. Given the significant time and resources needed to correct the entire recognized text, a pragmatic decision was made: only main titles, subtitles, and author names were manually corrected. The rest of the text remained as generated by the OCR software. This approach is considered acceptable given that the OCR text recognition accuracy is approximately 90%. The result of this process is a fully readable PDF document with searchable text, just like any standard PDF file. Within the Digital Library of NBS,[22] each uploaded digital object is represented by a thumbnail (a reduced visual representation of the material) and a defined set of metadata. This metadata includes:

- URN (a unique identifier for each digital object)
- Title
- Author
- Year of publication
- Publisher
- Printer
- Place of creation
- Physical description
- Language
- Usage rights
- COBISS ID
- A link to the PDF document.

The digital library's design allows for the efficient use of existing metadata from the COBISS bibliographic database for all digitized materials. The COBISS system offers the capability to export metadata for catalogued items in various formats, including COMARCXML. [23] This is a machine-readable metadata format built upon the COMARC-B standard. The metadata is stored in XML format, which allows it to be easily

[22] Petrović, Nataša, i Domazet, Tatjana. 2022. "Novi portal Digitalne Narodne biblioteke Srbije: pogled kroz ključaonicu", *Glasnik NBS* 24:133-148.

[23] Butigan-Vučaj, Tamara. „COBISS XML", Pregled Nacionalnog centra za digitalizaciju 15 (2009), 1–7, accessed April 1, 2025, http://elib.mi.sanu.ac.rs/files/journals/ncd/15/ncd15001.pdf

integrated into the Digital NBS application and converted into different display formats on the digital library's website. Using standardized methods for organizing metadata is important because it helps different digital systems, institutions, and users work together more effectively and share information.

In the Digital NBS, when viewing a thematic collection, in addition to the display of digital objects with metadata – which aids in searching and filtering – there is also a sidebar navigation on the left side. This allows users to further filter objects by the following categories:

- Type
- Author
- Publisher
- Publication year
- Language.

The Digital Library also allows users to organize all objects by: Title, Author, Publication Year and New (referring to the date the item was uploaded to the digital library) (see Figure 2).

Each digital object in the digital library is accompanied by information about copyright. When users first access the Digital NBS, they are presented with the general terms of use,[24] which are also included at the beginning of every PDF document. Copyright information is provided through international Creative Commons licenses,[25] which clearly explains to users how the materials available on the Digital NBS can be legally used.

Content sharing with Europeana has been carried out by providing metadata to the platform's administrators using the EDM XML metadata schema. The Europeana Data Model (EDM)[26] is a flexible data structure that allows data to be presented in various ways, in accordance with the practices of different domains contributing to Europeana.[27] Thanks to the shared metadata, Europeana can provide its users with a rich array of engaging content. This includes displays of digital objects, the-

[24] Narodna biblioteka Srbije, Uslovi korišćenja, https://digitalna.nb.rs/Terms.jsp

[25] Kasadeval, Arijadna Matas, and Vučaj, Tamara Butigan. 2020. "Evropeana kroz objektiv autorskih prava." *Glasnik NBS* 22:41–56.

[26] Domazet, Tatjana, and Nataša Petrović and Tamara Butigan Vučaj. 2022. "Evropeanin model podataka: ključ za saradnju sa Evropeanom." Infoteka - časopis za digitalnu humanistiku 22:73–87. https://infoteka.bg.ac.rs/ojs/index.php/Infoteka/article/view/2022.22.1.4_sr/264

[27] Europeana Foundation. "*EDM - Mapping guidelines*.", accessed March 26, 2025, https://europeana.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/EF/pages/987791389/EDM+-+Mapping+guidelines

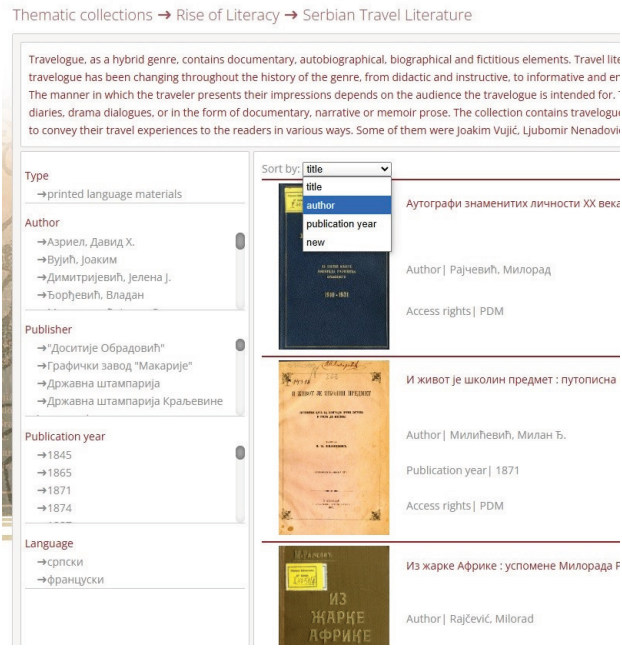

Figure 2. Navigation pane of the Digital NBS

matic collections, information on provenance, and related texts, along with diverse representations of digitized materials. Europeana's content spans millions of cultural heritage items, encompassing everything from books and images to 3D objects and audiovisual materials. Once the metadata is submitted to Europeana, the thematic collection on the Rise of Literacy becomes accessible on Europeana's website. [28]

As part of the Rise of Literacy project, and focusing on the theme of travel literature, Ana Stevanović from the National Library of Serbia wrote two blog posts. One blog is dedicated to Jelena J. Dimitrijević, titled *Jelena J. Dimitrijević – The Trailblaze*[29] (Figure 3), and the other is about Milorad Rajčević, titled *The Traveller – Story of Milorad Rajčević*[30] (Figure 4).

[28] https://www.europeana.eu/en/search?query=europeana_collectionName%3A%2833_RoL_NLSerbia_putopisi%29

[29] Europeana, "*The trailblazer: Jelena Dimitrijević, Serbia's First Feminist Author*", accessed April 1, 2025, https://www.europeana.eu/en/stories/the-trailblazer-jelena-dimitrijevic-serbias-first-feminist-author

[30] Europeana, "*The Traveller - Story of Milorad Rajčević*", accessed April 1, 2025, https://www.europeana.eu/en/stories/the-traveller-story-of-milorad-rajcevic

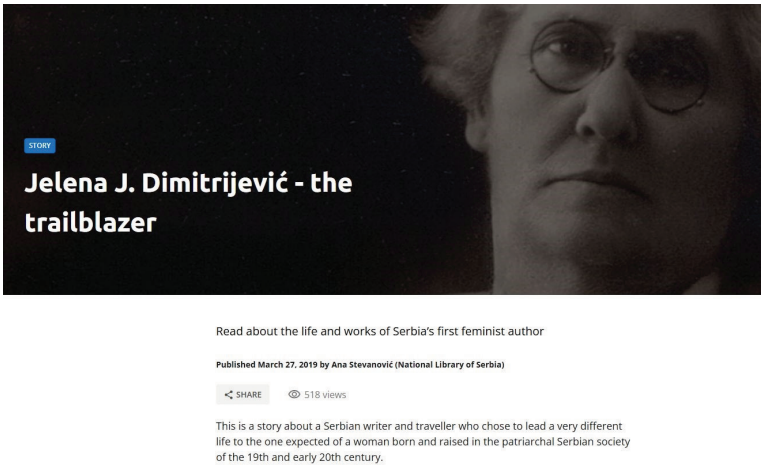

Figure 3. Blog about Jelena Dimitrijević on Europeana

Following the publication of these two blog posts on Europeana (among others created for various projects), a similar concept began to take shape for the Digital NBS. The idea of promoting digitized materials by placing them in a specific context – through blogs, galleries, and exhibitions – was compelling, as it aimed to spark public interest in cultural heritage.

Figure 4. Blog about Milorad Rajčević on Europeana

This method of promotion allows users to both learn and be entertained, and encourages those who are interested to continue their own independent research. An additional section has been developed within the Digital NBS platform. This new section has been envisioned as a space to showcase the most interesting photographs and postcards from the NBS collection in galleries, while blog posts and exhibitions would feature writers and artists from the region, as well as the extensive holdings of the NBS. [31]

Conclusion

Displaying digitized materials on digital library platforms provides an effective way for researchers and the general public to easily engage with Serbian cultural heritage. Easy access to texts, transcribed content, and publicly available metadata facilitates more efficient research, widespread knowledge dissemination, and strong support for open-data initiatives. By sharing and increasing the collection's visibility on Europeana through the creation of detailed, high-quality metadata for digital objects, the materials have gained a broader reach across Europe and worldwide. This particular collection highlights a fascinating historical period, with travel writing standing out as a prominent genre among authors from the region.

Digital libraries hold immense potential to serve as bridges connecting a country's past, present, and future. Through innovative use of digital objects, they not only preserve culture and tradition but also inspire people globally to explore, understand, and appreciate the cultural values and destinations they showcase. In an era of digitization and global connectivity, investing in digital library development has become a key factor in promoting national identity, culture, and tourism. By digitizing important historical documents and books that bear witness to Serbia's history, traditions, and culture, digital libraries act as vital resources for promoting the country on a global scale.

[31] Blog Digitalna NBS, https://blogdigitalna.nb.rs/index.php

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