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Why were the first Croatian picture-books lost?

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE BETWEEN THE BOOK AND THE TOY

- This paper, from a dual perspective, that of the history of legal deposit copies and the history of the definition of children's literature, tries to answer the question why almost all Croatian picturebooks published during the first two decades of production of the genre (1863 - 1885) are now lost. Instead of being seen as a problem, the lost picturebooks are approached as a stimulus for research on the relationship between games, children's literature and material culture, in this case, books and toys, which is, as it was proposed by Robin Bernstein (2013) with a slightly different emphasis, the path to understanding literature as a complex and dynamic historical and cultural phenomenon, but also the opening for the research of children's literature into the insights, approaches and perspectives from other disciplines.

Keywords: picturebooks, book history, history of legal deposit copy, Croatian children's literature

Researchers of children's literature sometimes refer to picturebooks as a "super-genre" (e.g. Lewis in Anstey and Bull 2004: 328), as the most characteristic form of children's literature (Nodelman 1992: 130) which "should be given first place in the study of children's literature" (1967: 10) as it was pointed out by Milan Crnković a long time ago. Studying the picturebooks is burdened by numerous problems, from the fundamental questions about the proficiency of researchers of children's literature for visual analysis to the "technical" problems such as the problems of dating or availability of picturebooks. Štefka Batinić and Berislav Majhut (2001: 9, 36-37 *et passim*) dealt

with problem of dating in a study *Od slikovnjaka do Vragobe* [From Slikovnjak to Vragoba], a key work about the history of Croatian picturebooks before 1945. This article will deal with the problem of the unavailability of books, wherein the problem will be attempted less to be resolved but more to be presented as an “epistemological” stimulus.

The circumstances that today many, especially the older Croatian picturebooks, are unavailable, Majhut in another paper (2013) associates with the usual life course of children’s books. Picturebooks, and children’s books in general, writes Majhut, “if they manage to survive the heavy use of their direct users,” will be, as part of the childhood, “discarded as soon as the children grow up and will certainly end up in the attic or in the basement” (2013: 20). On a somewhat more abstract level, the loss of a large number of picturebooks was interpreted in the literature as a symptom of their under-valuation (Batinić and Majhut 2001: 10) or, more particularly, as a result of their perception as toys (Hameršak 2001: 106; 2011: 150; 2012 : 73).¹

LOST PICTUREBOOKS

What exactly is being discussed when it is pointed out that many older Croatian picturebooks are lost? Which period is included? Which number of lost and which number of printed picturebooks is included? Preliminary answers to these questions are found in the previously mentioned study *Od slikovnjaka do Vragobe* in which Batinić and Majhut mention two hundred and forty-five picturebooks published from the middle of the second half of the 19th century to 1945. Their results are based on the *Građa za hrvatsku retrospektivnu bibliografiju knjiga 1835-1940* [Material for the Croatian retrospective bibliography of books 1835-1940], different library catalogs, advertising lists published in books and picturebooks, lists of publisher’s catalogs and notices in periodicals. Batinić and Majhut had a chance to consult just one hundred and fifty picturebooks (2001: 9). In other words, ninety-five picturebooks or more than a third of Croatian picturebooks published before 1945 were not available to them because they were lost in the meantime.

Discussing a question when did the production of picturebooks in the Croatian language begin, Batinić and Majhut focus on the list of books by pub-

1 Batinić and Majhut also point out that older Croatian picturebooks were understood as “an anonymous product like other children’s toys” (2001: 39), but they base their conclusions on the production rather than documentation practices related to the picturebooks.

lisher Mučnjak i Senftleben [Mučnjak and Senftleben] that was published in the *Danica* popular calendar for 1880. On that list, among the newest books, Batinić and Majhut noticed books that they recognized as the first Croatian picturebooks. “A series of illustrated children’s books, including the *Nova slikovnica za malu djecu* [New picturebook for toddlers] by Ljudevit Varjačić can be found on that list. That picturebook however was not preserved, neither were seven other books on that list. We can still assume that at least one of them (and probably more) was a picturebook and that it was published before 1880” (Batinić and Majhut 2001: 33). A few years later Majhut (2006: 182; cf., and 2013) corrects the presented data and places the emergence of the oldest Croatian picturebook in 1863 when the picturebook *Domaće životinje i njihova korist* [Domestic animals and their value] was published. This picturebook is unavailable today and Majhut reports about it on the basis of a publishing catalogue by Lavoslav Hartman from 1874 (cf. *List* 1874). Based on the same catalogue, Majhut updates the bibliography of picturebooks that he prepared together with Štefka Batinić (2001: 90-94). He adds several more picturebooks and points out that Hartman published “*Mala zviernica* [Little menagerie] (Fig. 1/p. 326), 1864. and *Naravoslovni slikovni* [!] *Abcdar s poučnimi stihovi* [Natural pictorial almanac with educational verses] and perhaps the *Slikovna početnica* [Picture spelling book]. Unfortunately, those picturebooks were not preserved” (Majhut 2006: 182 and f4). The exception is, however, the Croatian-German edition of *Mala zviernicu* (1864) which is available within the collection of the Croatian center for children’s books (Zagreb). We should also add that Hartman, as it can be observed from the same catalog and other sources, in addition to picturebooks mentioned by Majhut, in the 1860s published the *Prvu slikovnicu za malu djecu* [First picturebook for small children], which is also unavailable today (cf. Hameršak 2011: 210, f 109; *List* 1874).

Today we can only assume the content and appearance of picturebooks published in the 1860s in the editions by Lavoslav Hartman, as well as of picturebooks advertised in *Danica* for the year 1880. In that the publishers and book trade catalogs, reviews and advertisements published in the press are of special importance. From one of these review (Tomšič 1868) we found out that the *Naravoslovni slikovani Ab/e/c/e/dar s poučnimi stihovi* contained thirty two images, written and printed letters, numbers up to one hundred and verses in the Croatian language, while the *Slikovana početnica* [Pictorial primer] was bilingual, Croatian-German and had different types of letters and numbers, as well as sixteen colored images.

Given that the fact that picturebook *Mala zviernica* only recently became part of the collections of public libraries, the picturebook *Domaće životinje* [*Domestic Animals*] (by a foreign illustrator, with the lyrics of local author Josip Milaković), which was published in 1885 in the edition of the Sveučilišne knjižare Franje Župana (Albrecht and Fiedler [University bookstore of Franjo Župan (Albrecht and Fiedler)]) and which Batinić and Majhut refer to as the oldest preserved Croatian picturebook (cf. 2001: 33, f 32) can still be considered as a milestone because with that picturebook the inflow, albeit irregular, of picturebooks in the National and University Library in Zagreb began. In this article I will, from a dual perspective of history of legal deposit copy and history of the definitions of children's literature, dwell on the question why Croatian picturebooks were not included in the collection of the national library until 1885.

PICTUREBOOKS AND LEGAL DEPOSIT COPY

If we add two additional, also lost, picturebooks from the early 1880s that Batinić and Majhut (2001: 92) cited in their bibliography of Croatian picturebooks before 1945, to the ones mentioned so far in the article, we can conclude that today, with the exception of one subsequently obtained picturebook (*Mala zviernica*), the entire production of the first two decades of Croatian picturebooks was lost, numbering fifteen titles.² This number is even higher if you take into account those publications which by today's criteria wouldn't be classified as picturebooks (cf. Batinić and Majhut 2001: 11-17) but that were probably not clearly delimited in relation to the picturebook.

2 In alphabetical order those are the following picturebooks: *Domaće životinje i njihova korist*. Zagreb: L. Hartman, 1863 [20 pages of text]; *Domaće životinje i njihova korist*. Zagreb: L. Hartman, 1864 [22 pages of text and 19 images]; *Mala zviernica*. Zagreb: L. Hartman, 1864 [simultaneously several editions of this picturebook were published, in various languages, possibly in various alphabets, one of which is now owned by the Croatian Center for Children's Book, Zagreb]; *Milodarke dobroj djeci: nepoderiva slikovnica za malu djecu*. Zagreb: Hartman, 1885; *Milodarke: slikovnica i pripoviedke iz životinjstva*. Zagreb: Hartman, 1885; *Milovanka*. Zagreb: Mučnjak i Senftleben, before 1880; *Naravoslovni slikovani Ab/e/c/e/dar s poučnimi stihovi*. Zagreb: L. Hartman, 1860s; *Nova slikovnica za malu djecu*. Zagreb: Mučnjak i Senftleben, before 1880.; *Priča o crvenoj kapici*. Zagreb: Mučnjak i Senftleben, before 1880; *Priča o pepeljugi*. Zagreb: Mučnjak i Senftleben, before 1880; *Priča o ružici*. Zagreb: Mučnjak i Senftleben, before 1880; *Priča ob obuwenom mačku*. Zagreb: Mučnjak i Senftleben, before 1880; *Prva slikovnica za malu djecu*. Zagreb: L. Hartman, 1860s; *Slikovana početnica*. Zagreb: L. Hartman, 1860s.

These publications are also mostly lost today. Like lost picturebooks, they had a small number of pages and a impressive number of illustrations for that time. The most important of them are, above all, eight *Pričalice* [*Taletellers*], richly illustrated volumes of fairytales and tales which were published in the early 1880s by a publisher Albrecht i Fiedler [Albrech and Fiedler] from Zagreb, as well as several richly, though mostly black and white, illustrated booklets of tales selected from *Tisuć i jedna noć: arabske priče* [*Tales from the One Thousand and One Nights*] by Dušan Lopašić inand published in 1881 by Ivan Sagan from Karlovac).³ These booklets are entirely lost today, while only five volumes of *Pričalice* are preserved from eight (cf. Hameršak 2011: 63 f 64; 149-150).

The fact that today almost two first decades of production of picturebooks in the Croatian language are lost, as well as several related books, the question arises why they, unlike some other publications from this period, were not stored in the National and University Library in Zagreb (from 1850 The Library of Law Academy, and since 1874, the Royal University Library in Zagreb), since that library at that time already had the characteristics of a national library and was focused on the systematic collection of national publications. Namely, already in 1837 the principal headmaster of the Croatian schools, Antun Kukuljević, sent an official letter to public and military regional school authorities and individuals in which he warned about the national character of this library. According to Matko Rojnić, in that official letter Kukuljević, “warned that The Academy’s Library serves not only teachers and school youth, but also the public, with thousands of their books and a collection of coins and natural objects. In this situation he called the library a national public library - *Nationalis Academica Bibliotheca*” (Rojnić 1974: 21). Defining that library as a national one is linked to the introduction of the institute of legal deposit copies, a key mechanism for achieving the aspiration “that books and other printed products of a country or nation be gathered into one, or more libraries, in order to be permanently preserved and used in

3 Something more about the design and content of today lost Lopašić’s booklets, which were until recently, at least partly, deposited in the National and University Library in Zagreb, can be assumed by the insight into the book *Tisuć i jedna noć: arabske priče* [*One Thousand and One nights: Arab stories*] that Lopašić published in the same year and by the same publisher. This book, until a few years ago, was also considered lost, but from 2009, through the donation of the private library Gotthardi-Škiljan, it became part of the library collection of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences and is now once again available to the public.

the interest of culture and science” (Rojnić 1973: 55).⁴

From 1863 until 1885 i. e. in the period during which first fifteen, albeit today lost, Croatian picturebooks were published, several legal regulations about the legal deposit changed. According to the first of them, that was integrated into the press law, precisely *Tiskovni red* [Law of the press] from May 1852:

“From everyone in this country and from any edition that had been printed, the publisher is obliged to hand in legal copies as follows: one to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, one to the supreme policing authority, one to the imperial and royal court library, and one to the University or Provincial library, which is determined with a special rescript in every crown land or district, as the one to be provided with a legal deposit copy. [...]” (*Cesarski patent* 1852, §. 4)

For the Croatian crown a “special rescript” which precisely marked the receiver of an obligatory copy, was sent already on October 25th 1852 when according to the ban’s order, the antecedent of today’s National and University Library in Zagreb was marked as a receiver of a legal deposit copies of publications from Croatia and Slavonija. (Rojnić 1974: 28).

Tiskovni red closely defined the execution of the rule of legal deposit copy, implementing the deadline of its delivery (“eight days the longest, counting from the date of publishing the letter”), the subject (“the publisher”), the way of delivery (“the shipping is free of charge”), eventual amends (“if the print is extremely expensive, it will be paid for according to the accounting price deducting a appropriate percentage”). Finally, *Tiskovni red* precisely defined the print that didn’t fall under the clause about obligatory legal deposit copy:

„Printing products, serving for business and private use, as post it ads, recommendation letters, leaflets, and similar low value printing products are not obliged to send in the legal deposit. Illustrated papers and decorated examples, with a purely manufacturing use and having no text, depictions, as well as the labels and tickets, are absolved from observing formalities as written in §. 2. and 3.” (*Cesarski patent* 1852 §. 4)

4 Regulations about the legal deposit were initially associated with the operation of censorship, but since the 19th century they assumed, as pointed out by Matko Rojnić (1973: 55), more distinct national characteristics. The oldest regulation about legal deposits related to National and University Library in Zagreb was in accordance with the contemporary primary educational function of a library. It is a regulation from 1816 by which the University printingpress from Budapest should send free copies of their publications to the library in Zagreb (cf., Verona 1981).

Tiskovni red from 1852 was replaced with *Zakon o porabi tiska* [*The law of using print*] from 1875 which defined the legal deposit copy almost identically. Like *Tiskovni red* which addressed the use of “printing products”, as well as “products of the mind and educating arts (all the work of literature and art), multiplied, either with rock, metal or wood, carving, by ink or pick, or any other mechanical or chemical means” (*Tiskovni red* 1852, §. 1), *Zakon o porabi tiska* was the relevant for all the printing products (print, press), as well as the multiplied art and library products in general.⁵

Like the law from 1852, this law also excluded those print products that “serve only to needs of trade and traffic or needs of domestic and social life, such as forms, price lists, departure tickets and so on” from the legal deposit rule (*Zakon* §. 7). These two laws, on the other hand, somewhat varied in relation to the legal deposit copy. *Zakon o porabi tiska* increased the number of obligatory, official copies to five, and the Royal University Library in Zagreb, today’s National and University Library in Zagreb, was explicitly listed as a recipient of one of these copies (*Zakon* 1875 §. 7). This law, moreover, precisely determined the implementation of the provision of the legal deposit, foreseeing the mechanisms of its implementation. If the publisher had not been specified on the publication, the obligation of sending was transferred to the printer, while ignoring of the obligation of sending a legal deposit copy risked a fine in the amount of 50 forints as well as execution of the obligation of sending (*Zakon* 1875 §.7).

For a discussion of the lost picturebooks, it is important to note that legal deposit copies, despite the legal provisions mentioned, often did not come to the library. The correspondence of Matija Smodek, the principal and the only librarian in the period during which *Zakon o porabi tiska* from 1852 was in force, indicate, as pointed out by Eva Verona, the continuing problems with the delivery of legal deposit copies. In the years following the adoption of the ban’s regulation from 1852, Smodek, in fact, regularly mentions the negligence of particular printers in his reports, at first only those outside Zagreb and then even those in Zagreb (cf. Verona 1987: 26). The situation did not change significantly even after the adoption of the *Zakon o porabi tiska*. According to the information given by Dora Sečić (2007: 123), in the school year 1879 / 1880 out of 1345 publications in total only 82 were received

⁵ According to the law: “Whatever is ordered about printing offices by this law is valid for not only the printing products but also for all literature or art products, multiplied by any mechanical or chemical means.” (*Zakon* §. 2)

through the institute of legal deposit in the library, while in the school year 1883 / 1884 out of a total of 2308 new publications only 127 were received as legal deposit copies.⁶ Therefore the mere information that this library does not have a picturebooks and related books published before 1885, does not necessarily suggest that the publishers or the libraries were these who excluded the picturebooks from the category of legal deposit copies and who placed them with the prints of business and private character as labels, business cards, etc. As Verona writes, about other types of publications, but comparable with picturebooks, Smodek's reports include "volumes, brochures and maps, but never mention any kind of graphic prints, posters or other products of visual artists. But it is now difficult to determine if it's just the printer's and publisher's guilt or it has to be assigned to the carelessness of the Academy's library itself for this kind of prints. At that time, when the tasks in the library were performed by the professor of the Academy along with his regular duties, without financial compensation and with a few part-time assistants, it was really difficult, and perhaps impossible to take account of such products which have emerged in Croatia and Slavonia and to advertise them" (Verona 1981: 228).

Considering the fact that also after 1875, when Ivan Kostrenčić⁷ took Smodek's place, the library functioned the same, as well as the fact that the inflow of legal deposit copies was relatively low at that time, based on legal documents and insights into the basic guidelines of the work of the library, one cannot unambiguously answer why that library did not include picturebooks in its collection before 1885. It is possible that the oldest Croatian picturebooks are not a part of the national library collection because the publishers simply did not send them to the library, as it was with many other publications at the time. It is also possible that the publishers did not send the pic-

6 It should be emphasized that the librarians tried to implement and expand the rule of legal deposit during the period between 1863 and 1885 which is in the focus of this work. Smodek tried to encourage a more regular inflow of legal deposit copies by repeatedly reminding irregular senders of the obligatory copy, even by notifying the Academy Directorate, sometimes with a request for the notification to be forwarded to the Government's Department of Religion and Education (Verona 198: 228). Quickly after taking Smodek's place, in 1876 Ivan Kostrenčić arranged a regulation by which the legal deposit copy applied to the church, school and other reports (Sečić 2000: 17).

7 Before 1887 Kostrenčić was the only expert employee of the library where his co-workers were one clerk, a part-time attendant and occasional part-time academically educated assistants (Sečić 2000: 18-20).

turebooks to the library because they classified them as *inferior print products* (*Cesarski patent* 1852 §. 4). It is also possible that the publishers sent them, but the library did not receive or catalogue them since the librarians did not find them relevant for the national library collection.

Today status of the picturebooks in library collections suggests that it could be the last example. Even today in the National and University Library in Zagreb the picturebooks with little or no text are defined, but this time processed unlike before, as small print (c. f. Buzina and Salaj Pušić 2012: 6, 40) which is a concept that in the meantime in Croatia replaced the concept of ephemeral material in a broader sense (Lešković and Živković 2011: 124-125).⁸ While today efforts are made to process and increase the availability of that kind of material, *Pravila za biblioteku kr. sveučilišta Franje Josipa I* [*The rules for the library of the Christian University of Franz Joseph*] from 1876 explicitly stated that the purchasing of writings with strictly ephemeral character and value are not allowed.⁹

In order to answer the question whether the first two decades of Croatian picturebooks production are lost today just by accident or by a generally

8 According to the current manual for cataloguing, quoted in a text, small print is considered to be “the library archive mainly of advertising, informative or propaganda context made for temporary applicability and current matters. The material classified as small print is in general of a small scope, non-standard format and uneven design made for specific, current purposes. In the National and University Library in Zagreb, brochures, flyers, folds, prospectuses, address books, wall and pocket calendars, short adverts and announcements, notifications, catalogues, guides, concert, theatre and other programs, printed matters and forms, different kinds of tickets, price lists, menus, recipes, propaganda material of political and other campaigns, greeting cards, postcards, posters, pocket and wall calendars, book labels, stickers, prayer books, picturebooks with little or no text, color books, teaching material from first to fourth grade of elementary school (working notebooks, *practice books*, tests, working maps and similar) are included in the collection of small print. Also a part of the grey literature” is comprised with the small print (Buzina and Salaj Pušić 2012: 6). These are the publications which are extracted from the legal deposit in that library and systematically processed since 1998 in order to make them more available to the users. For the area of children’s literature the relevant information is that according to the same manual in addition to the above mentioned genres, comics and graphic novels are listed as the small print too without any significant distinction between those genres (compare Buzina and Salaj Pušić 2012: 13, 26, 45). On the history, problems, status and perspectives of the small print and ephemeral material in the 20th century, with the emphasis on the collection for National and University library in Zagreb, see more at Rojnić 1973.

9 The copy of *Pravila za biblioteku kr. sveučilišta Franje Josipa I* is published in Sečić 2000: 121-138.

dispensable relationship of the publisher towards the legal deposit, or maybe because the modest conditions the library was functioning in at that time, or maybe because the publishers and /or the library perceived them as publications that were classified as writings of ephemeral character and equalized with publications *for private use, with inferior print products* (*Cesarski patent* 1852 §. 4) which are intended only for the *needs of domestic life* (*Zakon* §. 7), besides texts about the activity of the library and the history of legal deposit, it is also necessary to take other kinds of texts from the same period into consideration, especially the texts about children's literature and picturebooks, considering the fact that they were thematically directed towards the publications that it is all about.

PICTUREBOOKS AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Historically, the scope of the concept of the literature is extremely inconstant and variable. Literature, for example, in the 18th century, was encompassing very different kinds of books and texts, and not only those that we call literature today (Williams 1983: 185). As we learned from the historical *Rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika* [*Dictionary of the Croatian or Serbian language*], also known as *Akademijin rječnik* [Academy's dictionary] (hereafter ARj), the concept of literature in the Croatian context in the 19th century was used in the sense of all books "in general, or those written about some particular things" (ARj V: 129). In other words, literature encompassed all that was printed or written, but also knowledge (texts) in general or on a particular topic. In line with this, the magazine that dealt with, as stated in its subtitle, *the language and history of Croatian and Serbian and science* in the second half of the 19th century was called *Književnik* [*The Writer*]. Similarly, neither did the magazine *Književna smotra: mjesečna priloga Napredku* [*Literary revue: monthly contributions to the Progress*], which was published a little later, also in Zagreb (1883-1894), deal exclusively with literary texts in today's terms. Instead, the *Književna smotra* was focused mainly on literature for teachers and pedagogues, and only partly on the fiction.

The notion of children's literature in the Croatian context during the 19th century meant books or, in the terminology of that time, the writings for children in general: novels or collections of songs and tales, as well as publications of a predominantly utilitarian nature. Josip Kirin (1886) in probably the oldest review of the history of Croatian children's literature, for example, lists novels and collections of short stories, but also instruction books (eg. Franjo

Klaić's *Mali ratar* [*The small farmer*], *Mali stočar* [*The small cattle herder*], *Mala gospodarica* [*Little mistress*]), books about math (Hübner's *Slikovana računica* [*Pictorial calculus*]), natural sciences (Vjenceslav Zabož Marik's *Věnac* [*Garland*]) or historiography (Krempler's *Prošlost Hrvata* [*The history of Croats*]).¹⁰ In his review Kirin mentions the titles of several picturebooks, a genre that other texts of this type, as a rule, completely omitted until the second half of the 20th century (cf., eg. Filipović 1885; Krajačić 1914; Magjer 1906; Magjer 1907; Peroš 1942) or mentioned only indirectly and incidentally (cf. Širola 1896: 33).

Children's literature in the 19th century, moreover, as it is explicitly stated in article by Ivan Filipović from 1858, primarily involved school books, and then the "other applicable entertaining and instructive writings for children" (1858: 72). Decades later, at the end of the century, Stjepan Širola (1896) defined scope of children's literature in the same way. Even for Širola the concept of children's literature, or rather, in his terminology, *young adult literature*, primarily related to school books (Širola 1896: 34). It is interesting that neither Širola nor Filipović dealt with school books in their articles. Filipović excluded school books from his consideration with the argument that they are cared for "by our government" (1858: 72), while Širola omitted them because of the substantial dissimilarities in relation to other books. School books, according to Širola, were simply not the same as the books with "entertaining and educational content, that were written for our youth and in a way they are what nice books are in general for literature" (1896: 34).

Filipović and Širola's articles pointed to the difference between the theoretical and the operable scope of literature, which very clearly shows that the concept of children's literature in the second half of the 19th century had a significantly broader scope on a theoretical level than today, whereas in practice, however, it was narrower, though still wide compared to today, and it typically did not include school books. Their articles are furthermore important because they show that the scope of the term (children's) literature was variable not only diachronically, but also synchronically, sometimes even within the framework of the same conception of literature. It is interesting to note that the school books in the second half of the 19th century were

10 In the Croatian context of the late 19th century instruction books, books about nature, mathematics etc. were placed in a separate group of *writings purely educational*, *writings with instructive content* or *educational children's literature* (cf., eg. Filipović 1885: 10) or were completely excluded from the discussions on children's literature (cf., eg. Belović-Bernadzikowska 1897).

sometimes included in discussions about children's literature in the Croatian context. Kirin, for example, in the aforementioned survey lists the *Male pripovĕsti* [Short stories] by Imbro Antolić which was, as noted by Majhut (2005: 14), offered as a stand-alone book for the mid-19th century customers and readers, which if necessary could have been used as a reading book for elementary school. The example of *Male pripovĕsti* shows that in the Croatian context of the second half of the 19th century the difference between school and extracurricular books was discerned on the basis of differences in the use of certain publications (in school or out of school), and not necessarily on the basis of genre featured in the texts it included.¹¹ The same book, namely, depending on its use, could be a textbook, and literature in the narrow sense (all the books, except school books), which indicates that the demarcation of publications of that time was made along other lines than it is today. In this sense, we see a division of the utilitarian or non-utilitarian publications, or in the terminology of Robert Escarpit (1972: 43-61), the functional book with a clear utilitarian function and nonfunctional books that meet the non-utilitarian cultural needs, which was expectedly only conditionally applicable to the children's books from that period. To illustrate this point, it is enough to mention that the first Croatian children's novel *Mlajši Robinzon* [The younger Robinson] by Antun Vranić (1796) had the goal "none other than to teach children, to bring their heart and desires closer to education with nice opinions, and to marry their youth to it in a discreet way" (Vranić 2012: 117). The book, which is today, following an understanding of the novel as a non-functional genre, recognized as the oldest book of the nonfunctional Croatian children's literature had, therefore, a very strong utilitarian function.

Similar, quite utilitarian expectations were put in front of children's literature in the period in which the picturebooks discussed in this paper were published. As I have already written (cf. Hameršak 2011: 114-115), the Croatian children's literature in the second half of the 19th century preferred the entertaining-educational or instructive and entertaining texts. In this approach literature was important for its fictional ingredients which draped the moral principles "in the way pills are given to children enveloped in sweets to make them easier to swallow" (Dvorniković 1893: 532). The recipe was:

11 Similarly, Raymond Williams (1983: 185) warned that, at the end of the 18th century in the English context, certain publications or texts were excluded from literature not on the basis of their inclusion in a particular type or genre, but because they were considered below the level of polite learning and educated mind.

“that what is both pleasant and helpful, it is always twice as recommended” (Slivarić 1876: 41). Or, as Filipović elaborated in the aforementioned article:

“The purpose of our literary drive is not and cannot be any other than to use it to awaken and develop the mental and moral consciousness of the people. This is the main purpose; it is the sum of all the other purposes. Education and enlightenment are therefore the purpose, and literature is a means. [...] The house is not built from above, but from the ground up; and we must, therefore, begin cultivation and processing of popular literature rather than classical. [...] In the processing of popular literature we should begin [...] to write and translate writings for the youth” (1858: 59-60).

Decades later Filipović (1885) also required children’s literature to be pragmatic. “The writings for youth”, he wrote “are to entertain, or to enrich or to teach; but the first and foremost feature, which should be required of them, is to perform an educational function for the youth” (1885: 10). Filipović was also pointing out that:

“Educational function is not performed by those writings that go only for pure entertainment, and for nothing else; in which there are only various antics, without any juice and taste; in which there is nothing that could be combined with fun but would also enrich the heart of a child or widen the circle of a child’s knowledge; such writings are not good; they only disturb children, darken their views, and muddy the notions. So that any writing, even a simple story, works educationally, it should be established on a higher idea.” (1885: 10).

The already mentioned Stjepan Širola wrote at the time about the children’s literature similar to Filipović. “It is an indisputable truth”, pointed Širola, “that a good book is one of the best edifying resources, that it is the way to everyone’s heart. It is undoubted, that any reasonable parent and educator will use this rearing resource, and put a good book into the hands of youth” (1896: 11). Širola, like Filipović, excluded texts that did not have the educational dimension from the sphere of children’s literature: “I condemn any writing for the youth, which was written just to keep youngsters amused and to spoil their free time” (Širola 1896: 11).

Based on the texts themselves the subject of Filipović’s and Širola’s condemnation cannot be positively determined. Although the picturebooks could be filed under the class of writings written only to entertain young people, it is more likely that what they had in mind were the popular novels, perhaps of

the fairy tale genre, which had already been the target of direct criticism in those years (cf. Hameršak 2011: 61-64 et passim; Stipčević 2008: 264-294). However, Filipović's and Širola's negative attitude towards what they recognized as self-sufficient entertainment, suggests the evaluation of social values that placed publications such as picturebooks on the bottom, if not outside the cultural flows. In that context, the fact that the Širola touched on picturebooks only in passing, while Filipović ignored them fully, while at the same time extensively dealing with the design of children's books and illustrations (Filipović 1885: 49-50), can be interpreted as a signal that they perceived the picturebook form outside the scope of, and possibly below the level of, their consideration. Indeed, the picturebooks at that time were usually not discussed in the context of children's literature, but in the context of games and toys, practices and objects that, as will be discussed below, were then burdened with ambivalent, often negative connotations.¹²

The already mentioned *Naravoslovni Ab/e/c/e/dar s poučnimi stihovi* was, for example, at the same time described as “the booklet which is intended only to entertain the young, and not as much to teach” (A. 1867), and the *Slikovana početnica* as an “appropriate toy” (Tomšič 1868: 62). One of the earliest works in the Croatian language, which touched on picturebooks at all, was also dedicated to play. This was an article by Andrija Hajdenjak about “play as preparation for future life”, that generally described picturebooks as publications that are “complicated and shallow, and that don't prod a child's mind always in the right way”, and which at the same time, before the final note “Not all's gold that shines!” recommended the “‘Picturebook’, published in Zagreb by L. Hartman and other Croatian picturebooks” (1872: 9). At the beginning of the 20th century Marija Jambrišak also wrote about picturebooks in an article on children's play (more precisely children's toys), with a similar dose of reserve:

“Picturebooks are special types of toys. But such toys only have true value, if a mother, grandmother, father or anyone else sits with the child, and brings

12 As an exception, reference the article by Mihovil Pleše (1891) on how to stimulate children's reading in which the picturebooks are referred to as reading material for the earliest age (1891: 530), and also the article about the exhibition of education tools where in the context of the exhibits by the publisher Ferdinand Auer the picturebooks are classified as books (S. n. 1892: 385). It should, however, be noted that these are articles that were published at a time when the first picturebooks were, although sporadically, were started to be included in the collection of the National and University Library in Zagreb, and when changes in the perception of this type of publication are observed in this context.

dead images to life by live narration; children ask, answer, listen and watch so entranced, that they forget about eating and drinking” (1900: 97).

Picturebooks were then, even when named as “books”, lumped into toys (cf. Bartuš 1889: 258).¹³ The echoes of understanding of picturebooks as toys are finally found in the first focused considerations of that genre we have, primarily in the already mentioned study by Milan Crnković (1967). Crnković, who opts for a description of the picturebook as the first book that a child gets in his or her hand, and thus the genre which would therefore “be given first place in the study of children’s literature” (1967: 10), however, still shows certain doubts about whether the “picturebook - when it is good – is always a book and if it is always a part of literature. A picturebook can be a toy, can be a paper set for assembling, and often is the summation of images without text or with a text that interprets the pictures without literary pretensions” (1967: 9). Only after the first children’s literature critic’s meetings on picturebooks in Croatia, which related picturebooks to books even in the title of resulting proceedings (cf. Javor 2000; Skok 1972),¹⁴ and especially after the literary studies by Štefka Batinić and Berislav Majhut, where the picturebooks viewed for the first time as an example of an “eminently children’s genre” that is “part of the literary heritage” in the Croatian context (Majhut and Batinić 2001: 17).

The perception of picturebooks as toys, meant – as shown by the quotes extracted so far – detachment and skepticism towards this type of publications, which in turn can be correlated with the contemporary social perception of games and toys. Academy’s dictionary, namely, describes toys as “the things children play with “, as well as signifying children’s games, “but somehow in the evil sense” (ARj III: 775). In the same dictionary the word game – with the caveat that “a lot of those games in which there are special rules, the consequences of which, and of the game itself can be serious” – lists as the first definition that it is “what a child (and an animal) does without serious intentions, just to have fun, to pass the time “, while in a broader sense the game is described as “all that is not serious” (ARj III: 773-775). Socially thus marginalized, and even stigmatized as childish and frivolous, games and toys were further problematized by the pedagogues when it came to “artificial

13 “The local small kids invited neighboring poor kids, to show them their beautiful, strong horses, brave soldiers, picturebooks and other toys” (Bartuš 1889: 258 – bold-faced by M. H.)

14 The proceedings of the symposium held in 1971 were entitled *Slikovnica prva knjiga djeteta* [*The picturebook as the first book of a child*] (cf. Skok 1972), while the proceedings from a symposium in 1999 were entitled *What kind of book is the picturebook* (cf. Javor 2000).

toys” (S. n. 1865: 96). In the mid-1860s, when Hartman published his first picturebooks, a Croatian magazine called *Bosiljak* [*Basil*], on the occasion of Christmas gifts for children, gave an in-depth argument about the economic, pedagogical and educational aspects of artificial harmful toys and called on “all our friends of youth and all the young parents” that “in the interest of our literature, in the interest of our young people and our national progress [...] in the approaching festivities for their children, especially those attending school, not to buy all sorts of useless toys, but rather let them stop at our bookstores, and let them seek appropriate gifts there for their loved ones” (S. n. 1865: 96). The same article, coming from the perspective of classifying picturebooks as toys inaugurated in those years, also, paradoxically, recommended “nice publications by our brave publisher Mr L. Hartman and printer Mr Dr. Albrecht” (S. n. 1865: 96), which then already featured picturebooks. This article, in their words, announced decades of ambivalent attitudes towards the picturebooks which have already been discussed; attitudes which meant that the picturebooks were formally included in book deposits copies, but did not arrive in the library as a legal deposit copy; relationship that meant that picturebooks, despite a broad-based definition of children’s literature, were not perceived as children’s books.

LOST PICTUREBOOKS: THE PROBLEM OR AN INCENTIVE?

In the second half of the 19th century, i.e. in the period in which publishing of the Croatian picturebooks began, children’s literature, as I have endeavored to show, was equated on a theoretical level with children’s books in general and included all kinds of children’s books. Although the school books were emphasized as a key segment of children’s literature, they were, in practice, more precisely in the deliberations about children’s literature, generally excluded from the discussion. Until the late 19th century, when artistic, not the pragmatic and pedagogical requirements, were articulated as foundations of children’s literature (cf., eg. Belović-Bernadzikowska 1897; Dvorniković 1893), the scope of children’s literature was much wider than today, and in addition to novels, collections of short stories, travelogues and diaries, it included instruction books, as well as publications in the field of mathematics, historiography and the like. In spite of that, picturebooks were not brought into connection with children’s literature, as a rule, but were equated with children’s toys. Accordingly, the published picturebooks today can’t be found where we would search for them first by the logic of the provisions of the le-

gal deposit rule, as well as the logic of today's understanding of the genre: in the collections of public libraries, and in particular in the National and University Library in Zagreb. Coupled with a range of at times autonomous, and at times networked factors ranging from the perception of picturebooks as toys, through attitudes of publishers to the legal deposit and those of libraries to ephemeral material, the oldest, but also many other Croatian picturebooks are not part of the national library collection today.

“The case” of lost picturebooks can be seen as a problem. However, it can be understood as an incentive. Precisely because they are unavailable, the picturebooks which were discussed in this paper have redirected the discussion to the issues of their materiality, and then to issues of the relationships between games, children's literature and material culture, in this case the books and toys, which is, as it was proposed by Robin Bernstein (2013) with a slightly different emphasis, the path to understanding literature as a complex and dynamic historical and cultural phenomenon, but also the way of opening the research of children's literature towards the insights, approaches and perspectives from other disciplines. This path can be trying and burdened with uncertainties, but it is, I believe, worth trying to follow.

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