

Ivan Lupić and Irena Bratičević»ALAS, POOR YORICK«: CRITICAL EDITIONS, CRITICAL TRADITIONS,
AND GUNDULIĆ'S *OSMAN*

In the editing of Gundulić's *Osman* a mythical place belongs to Ivan Luka Volantić (1749-1808), long-term notary and undersecretary of the Ragusan Republic as well as a worthy, steadfast worker in the linguistically diverse but considerably devastated literary field of his native city. According to some testimonies, Volantić spent twelve, and according to others twenty years struggling to extract from a multitude of conflicting manuscript witnesses a reliable text of Gundulić's poem and to furnish it with an editorial introduction, an account of the historical material underpinning Gundulić's poem, explanatory notes, and a glossary of unfamiliar words. Very little of Volantić's work has survived, for the most part limited to the editorial introduction and the explanatory apparatus. Volantić's own manuscript of *Osman*, preserving the record of his work on different manuscript copies, their comparison, and the establishment of a critical text, has remained unknown to scholars because it was presumed lost for good. What is known, however, is that after Volantić's death Ambroz Marković, editor of the first complete print edition of Gundulić's *Osman* (1826), had access to some of Volantić's manuscript materials, of which he had found, as he puts it, »one not very great part, and even this disjointed and scattered among various bits and pieces of abandoned and discarded volumes.« It has never been ascertained what it was exactly that Marković had found. Soon after its appearance, his edition gave rise to the first great controversy in Croatian literary studies over the misappropriation of other people's editorial efforts. Although it was not known to a single student of *Osman* from Marković until this day, the Volantić manuscript that Marković used has survived in its entirety. This essay provides a detailed account of this newly discovered document as well as of other hitherto completely unknown manuscript witnesses of Volantić's work on the first, and in some ways still unsurpassed, critical edition of Gundulić's *Osman*. After reviewing the critical tradition, the authors conclude that a new and comprehensive study of the surviving manuscripts of Gundulić's masterpiece is in order.

Key words: Ivan Gundulić (1589-1638); *Osman*; Ivan Luka Volantić (1749-1808); Dubrovnik; manuscript studies; textual scholarship; critical edition