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REMEMBER ME WITHOUT MEMORIES – SOUVENIRS BOOKS

Abstract. In the Educational Museum in Belgrade there is a collection of nine scrapbooks, which are from the first half of the twentieth century. As albums` of friendship scrapbooks point the certain movement in society. They are recorded youthful thinking, sincere feelings, but also the misconceptions, stereotypes and unconditional acceptance of finished forms of behavior. It seems to us that, with scrapbooks, adults wanted to impose religious and social norms, to create personal and social identity.

Keywords. Scrapbooks Collections, Digitalization, Educational Museum, Childhood

1. Introduction

The Educational Museum is one of the oldest institutions of that kind in Serbia. It was founded in 1896, at the initiative of The Association of Serbian Teachers and with *the aim to collect and preserve teaching means and all other materials of historical value for primary schools and teachers*.¹ During more than one century of existence, several tens of thousands of textbooks, teaching aids, photographs and documents have been collected to testify about the work of Serbian schools from the beginning of 19th century up to the present time. In this period, the Museum changed its premises several times, and from 1969, it has been settled in the building of Belgrade modern school (Real school), built around 1840, a former house of Cvetko Rajović, the town governor.

In The Educational Museum in the Department of archive materials and documentation, written samples of educational plans and programs, school regulations, school documentation, certificates and diplomas, appointment reports, invitations for school performances and other archive material that concerns the history of Serbian schools and education in Serbia are stored. The funds – legacies of eminent pedagogues and other educational workers whose lives and work were connected to the Serbian school system appear as a special part of museum materials. These funds are divided into segments that consist of the following items: final diplomas, appointment reports, official papers and other archive material concerning promotions, awards and medals, written samples of textbooks and other written works, official and personal transcriptions, as well as the photographs from periods of their life and work.

There are few scrapbooks collections, which are kept in museums or in private collections. In the Educational Museum in Belgrade there is a collection of nine scrapbooks, which are from the first half of the twentieth century. All scrapbookshave been digitized and thus preserved from decay. In addition, they are easily availablefor research in the field of history education, culture and society.

¹ Resolutions by the Board of the Association of Serbian Teachers regarding founding of the School Museum, *Teacher, Pedagogic and Literary Journal*, Belgrade, 1896/97, vol. 12, 125-126

But, there are only few articles about the book of school memories, or scrapbooks. Some more information I found with help of my colleague Dr. Branko Šustar, museum advisor from the School Museum in Ljubljana who pointed me the texts from Tanja Tomažić, the curator at the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum.

2. Scrapbooks

As part of the spontaneous culture of Serbian youth the first scrapbooks appeared in the eighties of the 19th century. They were created as an expression of the need for the growing up, understanding, friendship, love and defining future. Some of them had a crucial role – there are the words of first true love, so the girls' scrapbooks were kept until the marriage. Verses and sayings were recorded in special notebooks with hard cover, or in the decorated notebooks with the inscription *Souvenir* or *Poesies*. As guardians of the common childhood and school days there were popular among the girls, among the students of the final year of primary or high girls' schools, but they were the poems from boys and young man, mostly brothers and other relatives. The friends, parents, relatives, teachers and professors have expressed their most sincere feelings, friendship, love and affection by verses and drawings.

When several generations in Serbian society were literate the scrapbooks have appeared. It was a nice decoration gifts that were donated for Christmas or a birthday. In them the older subscribed the advice about the overcoming the youthful error, and those who grow, in order to retain the most beautiful memories of school days, recorded a verse and sentence taken from oral tradition. The secret of the childhood and adolescence were hidden in a short but rich life expressed experience. The scrapbooks were recorded the desires, secret, intimate world of the ancestors, songs, thoughts, dreams and romantic messages which were longer remember than ones which were just spoken. It was not only the group memory, but it was the ability to say something indirectly.

As one of the segments in the formation of personality Scrapbooks were a privilege of the middle class and better and wealthy students. These written memory fragments represented the link between two worlds - the world of adults and those who will become. They represented communication between the students of the same generations, and future relationship between the present and the past.

By historical view, these memory marks reflected the social status of the individual and the identity of the wider social community. Trying to fulfill social and religious norms and cultural standards, owners of Scrapbooks and their friends, with selected verses and drawings, tried to show their commitment and good intentions. So, Scrapbooks become the records of years and experiences, sign of social and family status and other personal characteristics. Recording their memories young transmitted the specific cultural meanings, and quoted verses in French or German pointed to the standards of educational policy. So, their reflections were represented educational system. The characteristic of Scrapbooks is repetition, the express of the same opinion related for the several generations. This was in line with tradition of patriarchal society, which was tied with the established moral rules.



Figure 1: The scrapbook, owner Valeria, Belgrade 1939

The largest affection was the reading scrapbook, which had been provoked various emotional states. Owners were sure that someone loves them and wants for them happy childhood and life, and in wise phrase they find the support were relying for future life forms. With the connection of different records each reader could create the own way of understanding the symbols.

2.1. Who Writers? It is usually that at the beginning of the scrapbook there are the verses or life messages written by the parents of the owner or the owners:

The memories for my sweet Nada
Mother, January 15, 1904.²

Or

Who felt for me the flames of love?
Whoever loves me and who follow me breathing
Let these words well remember
And in this scrapbook shall be sign

Veli³

After that there are the memories of various girls' comrades, the students of final grade in primary school or female high school. Then come the records of teachers,

² Nada was a pupil of the third grade of primary school in Belgrade.

³ The scrapbook is from 1929-1931, owner Valeria, or Vera, the student of Trade Academy in Zemun. In the scrapbook there are the memories from Belgrade and Ljubljana. We found that in 1929, owner was in Ljubljana in Lichten Pandev institution, in a private school for women, which was established in 1878.

professors, and class masters. We so that the scrapbook mainly occurring female names. It was result of the social relations and the education system because, until the Second World War, the classes or whole schools were only for girls.



Figure 2: The scrapbook from 1929-1931, owner Valeria, the student of Trade Academy in Zemun

However, they are not rare boys` signatures, usually brothers and some relatives, but also young men - cadets of military academies or medical student. Thus, in one of the scrapbook one Pierre posted the love by the verses:

*I dare from the middle of the Prague valley
You, dear Veli, say I love you,
To meet the longings of my pain,
And my feelings in rough words.*

Pier⁴

As evidence of great intimacy and friendship in the books of memories there are the verses without signatures. Probably the handwriting discovered a nameless best friend or a young man whose name was not supposed to know. The name of owner was hidden in the message, while to the family name and other general information can only come in the midst of the way.

2.2. When it writing? Based on the analysis of collected scrapbook we can conclude that they are created in a carefree time, but in the time of war.

⁴The same.

The memories are usually recorded at the end of the school year, on St. Vitus Day, or in the leave, at the end of schooling. In some cases the lyrics are written day by day, and in that case a scrapbook takes the form of an intimate diary. They are written in the summer, in Paraćin, in 1929, or on holiday as recorded in Bosa's scrapbook in Ribarska Banja, in 1911. The arrival in the new environment and school was a problem for many students. The students have used the scrapbooks as an option to become more familiar with new colleagues. In some of them there are the records of farewells, and going to other cities or abroad.⁵ Or those in which they are enrolled memories from several cities, and even countries.⁶



Figure 3: Scrapbook of Bosa, 1916

The wartime, especially for young people, always represented the unpleasant period in life, a time that cannot be forgotten. However, even in this time the scrapbooks are playing a role. In Bosa's scrapbook is recorded the opinion of Radmila Andjelković, the student of philosophy. During the 1916 she and her family was in exile in Kruševac, where the life was in fear of war, poverty and disease. She wrote about love, ideals, perfection and war; she pointed that it is need the strength and the will for achieving life goals.

2.3. What and how to write? We can conclude that the topics in older scrapbooks are serious - the memories are full of advice and messages, especially parents, relatives and teachers.

The author's verses, folk proverbs, Latin quotes, love poems, philosophical texts or verses from the readers were recorded in the scrapbooks.⁷ All of them talk about happiness, friendship, loyalty, transience, love, humility, God, about faith, love and hope:

⁵ In a scrapbook from Belgrade in 1938 was recorded the parting with the girl who goes with her parents to Germany.

⁶ The memories from Prague, 1931, from high school in Sarajevo, in 1932 and in Belgrade in 1937 were recorded in Ljubica's scrapbook.

⁷ In one of the scrapbook there were recorded the verses which were written by the father, the brother and the sister.

*Faith, Hope and Charity
Virtues are three
With these young people live
With their old died.⁸*

The messages are written to stop the transience of youthful time, to highlight the importance of learning, hard work, honesty, kindness, loyalty, sacrifice, preservation of national feelings, faith in God. Also, there are the sentences about negative phenomena in society, the warnings and the ugly truth of life – because, the love does not always win, the life is full of thorns.



Figure 4: The scrapbook of Calliopa Nakić, the student of Girls' College, Belgrade 1901

Important moral personal characteristics have been recorded in them; questions related to the status of women and marriage, the significant messages about the nationalism - *Srbadija and you live with her.*⁹ Often, the content depended on times in which it occurred - during the wars they prayed for happiness, and in times of peace messages were bright and even funny. Because they talking about the universal human values the quotes, through the time, remained the same; only the lyrics of love songs were changing.

Written with the pencil or the pen and ink, by calligraphy at high school, or in capital letters at younger ages, the scrapbook memories are kept in Serbian, France, German, Slovenian and Czech. This richness of the language points to the higher education of Serbian youth, especially those who studied at boarding schools or women's pensions.

⁸The scrapbook of Calliopa Nakić, the student of Girls' College, Belgrade 1901.

⁹The scrapbook of Daca, Paraćin, 1929.



Figure 5: The scrapbook of Sara, Prague 1931

2.4. The need for illustrations. Did the most popular scrapbooks have the most beautiful decorated pages? In addition to the verses and text messages in scrapbooks are also drawings, real small masterpieces in ink and pencil, water or wooden crayons. Besides they gave the good looks of scrapbooks they were the part of the message also. Simple, complex or made by pattern, black and white or color the drawings represented the information about intimate moments of a whole generation of students, about the moments in which refract the social, religious, political and cultural sphere of life. Because of that we find the

drawings of birds, fairies, pigeons, roses, carnations, heroes of fairy tales, sunset, high seas, and before the Second World War the characters of Disney` heroes. At the beginning of XX century, in fashion were the sticky pictures, the secessionist motives, some pressed flowers, and later the pages were decorated by overturned angle in which they are hiding the secret messages. Each time had its dominant motifs, which were repeated, from generation to generation, but there were some original works like the works of art.



Figure 6: The scrapbook of Nadezda, Belgrade 1915

3. At the end

The scrapbooks were little things, which their owners and a whole generation meant a lot. The honest expressions of friendship are hidden secrets are recorded in them. Many years after, the scrapbooks become the dear memories of school days, of classmates, of youth sympathy and the first love. So, one girl from the Trade Academy in Zemun, wrote to her friend Vera, and pointed to the importance of the future memories: *then it will be appear, like through the dream, the most beautiful memories on the students` age and on the youth.*¹⁰

As albums` of friendship scrapbooks point the certain movement in society. They are recorded youthful thinking, sincere feelings, but also the misconceptions, stereotypes and unconditional acceptance of finished forms of behavior. It seems to us that, with scrapbooks, adults wanted to impose religious and social norms, to create personal and social identity.

The sociological and cultural studies indicate that needs stayed the same, but the media is changed. It locks, because of *to write down not to forget* appeared the Facebook.

¹⁰The scrapbook is from 1929-1931, owner Valeria, or Vera, the student of Trade Academy in Zemun.

Maybe that's the place where the past faces with the present; maybe it is the place where we create a future exploring.

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