

“There were banquets and parties every day”: the importance of British female circles for the Serbian Enlightenment

This paper deals with the important influence of the British female circles on the main figure of the Serbian Enlightenment – Dositej Obradović. When Obradović arrived in England in 1784, he had the opportunity to frequent the Scottish community in London and to get acquainted with Mrs. Livie and her sister Mrs. Taylor who participated actively in the British cultural life of the day. It was those women who advised him about the titles of the recently published books, about the authors, and about the current topics of interest. They also suggested that he should translate the stories of Elizabeth Carter and Anna Laetitia Barbauld, two very popular figures of the British Enlightenment.

Keywords: Dositej Obradović, British female circles, British Enlightenment, Scottish Enlightenment.

This paper deals with Dositej Obradović (1739/42-1811), the main figure of the Serbian and probably also the Balkan Enlightenment, and it focuses on his meetings with women as well as his thoughts and writings on women. On the cultural time line of Serbia, Obradović marks the key period of transition from the old to the new period, the enlightenment and the opening towards Europe. In this sense, his journeys, which lasted for decades, are very important. In these journeys that he himself financed, Obradović both taught others and learned himself: driven by the desire to discover the knowledge of other nations, Obradović finally, after 25 years of traveling made it to England, where his spiritual formation was culminated. He recounts this experience in his central work, *The Life and Adventures of Dimitrije Obradović who as a monk was given the name Dositej* (1783; 1788), that marks the beginning of a new era in Serbian literature and culture.

Traveling from country to country, Dositej Obradović had a chance to meet many women and in each country he visited, he found the women to be even more beautiful than they had been in the previous one, or at least they seemed to impress him more. Apart from being increasingly impressed by their beauty, Obradović also found that they were of great help to him in his quest for knowledge. In fact, it could be said that when he arrived in England he had reached the furthest northern point of his peregrination and also the culmination of a spiritual development made possible by the women he met there. It is not surprising then that his decision to publish books in vernacular was inspired by

(his thought of) women: “What profit have we from a language which, taking our nation as a whole, not one person in ten thousand understands properly and which is foreign to my mother and my sisters!”¹ However, strictly speaking, the motivation for his writings were women, we can say that in the trajectory of Obradović’s life that rose upward in ascending circles, women played a central role in this upwards progression by helping him find the knowledge that he sought. In the Enlightenment the role of women shifted into that of the subject and it was thanks to English women, he could bring to his nation “that golden and prosperous time when Serbian daughters and wives” could for the first time read “*Pamela, Télémaque*, the tales of Marmontel, and other books like them, in their own common speech.”²

In *The Life and Adventures* the author’s evaluations and gradations of beauty are initially what strikes the reader most. Eyes are made for seeing and so it is not strange that Obradović noticed and appreciated the physical features of the women he met. Yet it is more than clear that he was searching for something that went far beyond physical beauty itself.

That is clear from his remembrance of his little sister Julijanka who died young; he says that “she was distinguished even in her fifth year by exceptional beauty and quickness of intellect, and if she had lived she would have been the perfect likeness of our mother.”³

When Obradović was fifteen his benefactor apprenticed him to a master quilt maker in Timișoara so that the boy would be discouraged from his love of travel, but even more importantly from the monastic life. Mingled amidst the servants of his master’s house, Obradović was able to listen to the conversations of his master’s guests and he understood the bishop’s opinion on women. The bishop’s words testify to the then current understanding of the role of women, as expressed in the concepts both the Enlightenment and natural theology. They trace out the conceptual space in which Obradović’s attitudes were formed. The bishop’s opinion is summarized in the following quote from Genesis (3:20):

My daughters, if you reflected and judged correctly concerning the high destiny for which God created you, never could there possibly occur to your minds the beauty of your eyebrows, your eyes, and the rest of your bodies; you would be ashamed of seeking any distinction in silken garments of many colors. ‘And God called the name of the first woman Life, because she is the mother of all who live on the earth.’ Such is your glory and your high distinction, which causes all cultivated and enlightened nations to show you high respect of every sort and to bow down before you!⁴

Yet in spite of his benefactor's attempts to discourage him, Obradović set out on his travels with his friend Nika. He planned how they would cover up their tracks, by telling a lie to his mistress that they were going fishing for the whole day. The mistress perfectly understood that he was going to go away: "[...] I know mighty well that your fish will never reach my pan."⁵

So the young man started forming and developing his plans for studying, in Kiev or in Moscow (where he had always hoped to study from the time he was a young man), and while doing this, he dreamt occasionally about the daughter of Peter the Great, the Empress Elizabeth, and in one dream "I saw the empress, who seemed clothed in the sun from head to foot, seated on her throne; she gave me with her own hand an open book written in various languages and said to me, 'Study!' When I awoke I interpreted my dream according to my own desire."⁶ Obradović's dream testifies to the acceptance of the female figure as a symbol of newfound spiritual aspirations, together with other layers of symbolic meaning related to Russia.

His first, immediate desire was to do something useful for Jelena, the daughter of Father Avram Simić in Knin, who asked him "to write out for her" some passages from Chrysostom's *Sermons on the Acts of the Apostles* "in the language of the Serbian people"⁷. And the fact that Obradović began his literary work by creating a reading book for a woman greatly anticipates his later activities and experiences. Then, says Obradović, "I translated into the popular language all that I had already copied for myself, and in order to make it more pleasant reading for this beautiful girl I divided it into sections, each beginning with a different letter of the alphabet, arranged in their proper succession."⁸ That text became famous throughout Dalmatia under the name of *Ižica* or *Dositejeva bukvica*, circulating as a manuscript, published only later (1830), thanks to the interest of the Serbs in Dalmatia.

Many years later, Obradović would move to Vienna, where he spent "six useful and joyful years" that "passed by like six days."⁹ Here he managed to gather a number of pupils. And since his days "seemed rather long only on Sundays and holidays" when he was not giving lessons or taking them himself, he often went sightseeing in the imperial city and noticing, among the various beauties of the capital of Austria, also that "in all the aforesaid places I might freely gaze on all the foremost and fairest ladies of Vienna as much as I desire"¹⁰.

In Paris too, Obradović went sightseeing during his three weeks. When summarizing all that he had seen there he advised his readers to consult a book containing description of Paris and Versailles, "*Opisanije Pariza i Versalja sa svima znamenitima veštma u njima i naokolo*"¹¹, probably thinking of the ten volumes of Jean-Aymar Piganiol de la Force's (1673-1753), entitled *Description (historique) de la ville de Paris et de ses environs* (Paris: Chez la Veuve Delaulne, 1742). The reader,

underlines Obradović, “in it [...] will find everything that I saw.”¹² However Obradović also mentions that he saw “the King of France, Louis XVI, and his wonderful queen”, Marie Antoinette (1755-1793): “even *her*, the daughter of our most glorious empress and mother, Maria Theresa, of blessed memory, I saw in Versailles.”¹³

II

And when he finally managed to come to England¹⁴, “a country famous for ages, which I had long desired to see”, the women seemed to him to be the most beautiful:

I gazed at the women and girls: they are such beautiful creatures that it is impossible to see or even to imagine anything more beautiful in the world. If I had had a thousand eyes, I could not have gazed sufficiently at them in a thousand years. The more you look at them the more beautiful they seem. If you wish to stay whole, go your way and do not look at them; for if you raise your eyes and look, then you cannot go on: you will stay there forever. There is beauty in other countries also, but everywhere the beautiful women are mostly of a haughty sort, and when a man sees that they are proud and think wonderful things about themselves he pays no heed to them: let them go their way! But here, oh! marvel of marvels, you might say that they care not, think not, know not that they are lovely, but look at everybody with such natural and simple eyes, and at the same time with open, friendly, and kindly countenances, as if they had known that person for a long time.¹⁵

When his Greek friend Lusignan happened to bring him to the Livies’ home for the first time, it was precisely in this way that Mrs. Livie greeted Obradović, as if she had known him for a long time:

Keeping on with her sewing, she began to chat with Mr. Lusignan about what she had read in the newspapers, which were still lying on the table, about parliamentary affairs, the India Company, the ships that had come in from India, the state of trade; and finally about recently published books: what the titles of them were, what kind of men wrote them, and their favorite topics. Of all these things she spoke simply, easily, and clearly. Had I not seen with my own eyes that she was sewing, I should certainly have thought that she was reading something out of a book. I could not understand it all, but owing to her clear and precise utterance little escaped me.¹⁶

Later on, however, Obradović emphasizes that it was not her beauty that struck him:

This whole time I could freely gaze at her, since she hardly looked at anything but her sewing. She was not an English beauty in the precise sense of the term; but on the other hand, if some Apelles or Raphael had wished to depict innocence, kindness, and that blessed calm of the heart and absolute spotlessness of the soul, he certainly could never have found such a model as in the face and the expression of that Englishwoman.¹⁷

How is it that Obradović devoted so much space in his autobiography to this woman, calling her, in a letter that he wrote to her after departing from England, “my benefactress”¹⁸ and even “my sister, my mother, and my most gracious and beneficent Minerva”¹⁹? In what way was she so different from many other women that he met on his numerous journeys? How did she earn all his attention and gratitude? What did she do for Obradović? What did she do for the Serbian Enlightenment?

The key to Obradović’s impression of Mrs. Livie is found in the above mentioned passage where he describes the first moment when he saw her, and more precisely in the fact that she was so very well informed about recently published books: “*what the titles of them were, what kind of men wrote them, and their favorite topics*”. Nothing strange: Mrs. Livie’s husband, described by Lusignan as “a dealer in English porcelain, bur [...] learned man and a great lover of the ancient Greek language and literature”²⁰, was actually the much esteemed classicist, John Livie (1729-1798), “a gentleman well known in the literary world, for his deep and accurate knowledge of the learned languages.”²¹ Obradović’s host John Livie, and his other benefactor William Fordyce (1724-1792) were actually part of the Scottish community in London, dedicated to the improvement of knowledge, participating actively in (academic) patronage and philanthropy!²²

Moreover Mrs. Livie herself, just as Lusignan explained to Obradović, and as Obradović himself confirmed²³, was also a great lover of Greek language and literature, and so it is not surprising when Obradović accounts that “with the aid and under the instruction” of Mrs. Livie “I would read aloud something for the sake of the pronunciation, and then I would translate one of Aesop’s fables from Greek into English.”²⁴ For this lady was very well educated and she was actually part of the circle of friends of the journalist, philosopher and novelist William Godwin (1756-1836)²⁵, whose wife was Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. His daughter was Mary Shelley. Mr. and Mrs. Livie frequently visited Godwin’s house, which many very well-known poets and writers such as Percy

Bysshe Shelley, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles and Mary Ann Lamb, Richard Brinsley Sheridan and William Wordsworth used to visit frequently.

It was a period of intense socializing and clubbing and there were many associations, clubs and circles. These places of cultural exchange were often the *antecamera* of scientific exchange²⁶. The most famous of these groups was Samuel Johnson's *Club*, whose members were Christopher Nugent, Topham Beauclerk, Bennet Langton, Oliver Goldsmith, Anthony Chamier, John Hawkins, David Garrick, Adam Smith, William Jones, George Steevens, James Boswell, Charles James Fox, George Fordyce, James Caulfeild, Agmondesham Vesey, Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, Edward Gibbon and Thomas Barnard. But there were other clubs, societies and associations as well, such as *The Spalding Gentlemen's Club*, *The Ivy Lane Club*, *Wise Club*, *Poker Club*, *Friday Club*; *Mirror Club*; *Select Society*, *Student Medical Society*, *Society of Antiquaries*, and of course *The Royal Society*, and many others.

Just as men had their clubs and associations, so did women, and the first and the most important of these was *The Blue Stockings Society*, founded in the early 1750's by the patron of arts, social reformist, literary critic and writer Elizabeth Montagu (1718-1800) and the wealthy intellectual Elizabeth Vessey (1715-1791). They gathered to discuss literature and other cultural topics and men were welcome as well. Other female members of the circle were Margaret Cavendish Bentinck (1715-1785), Mary Delany (1700-1788), Sarah Fielding (1710-1768), Catharine Macaulay (1731-1791), Hanna More (1745-1833), Clara Reeve (1729-1807), as well as Samuel Johnson himself, James Beattie, Edmund Burke, David Garrick, Joshua Reynolds and Horace Walpole.

One of the most active members of the Society was Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806) whose story *Religion and Superstition*, appeared for the first time in *The Rambler* n. 44, on 13 August 1750 and was translated by Obradović as *Blagočestije i Sujevjerje u jednom videniju*²⁷ and published in *Sobranije* (1793). The work is written in the form of a vision along the lines of Addison's *Choice of Hercules*²⁸, which was a translation of a work by Prodicus of Ceos. *Religion and Superstition* was also in part modeled on Spencer's poem *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596). Elizabeth Carter, writer and translator, was considered to be "the most learned lady in England"²⁹, famous for having translated *All the Works of Epictetus, Which are Now Extant* (1758). She was a female *pendant* to Samuel Johnson and he had great respect for her:

Their friendship continued as long as Johnson lived, and he always expressed the greatest esteem and regard for her. Notwithstanding the rudeness of his manners occasionally, even to women, I have frequently heard her say, that he never treated her but with civility, attention,

and respect. Nor indeed is this surprising; for the winning gentleness and politeness of her conversation and address were such, as to disarm even brutality itself.³⁰

III

Elizabeth Carter was a role model for Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865) and her novel *Cranford* (1851–1853), and for another member of *Blue Stockings* circle, a successful writer, poet, literary critic and children's author Anna Laetitia Barbauld (née Aikin, 1743-1825).

IV

The importance of these women in British society of that time is well depicted in Richard Samuel's painting, *Portraits in the Characters of the Muses in the Temple of Apollo / The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain* (1778), representing nine English ladies as nine muses of ancient Greece: Elizabeth Carter, Angelica Kaufmann (1741-1807), Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Catherine Macaulay (1731-1791), Elizabeth Montagu, Elizabeth Griffith (1727-1793), Hanna More (1745-1833), Elizabeth Ann Sheridan (1754-1792) and Charlotte Lennox (1720-1804).

V

Anna Laetitia Barbauld was known for her reading primers, *Lessons for Children* (1778-1779) and *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781): "she gave prestige to the writing of juvenile literature, and by not lowering her standard of writing for children, she inspired others to write on a similar high standard".³¹ She advocated religious freedom and the abolition of slavery and openly criticized her government for declaring war on France in 1793. Her best known poem was *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* (1812), in which she criticized Britain's participation in the Napoleonic war. Scholars consider Barbauld's posthumously published poem *The Rights of Woman*³² to be the author's response to Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* since it challenges Wollstonecraft's strident feminism³³:

Yes, injured Woman! rise, assert thy right!
Woman! too long degraded, scorned, opprest;
O born to rule in partial Law's despite,

Resume thy native empire o'er the breast!

Go forth arrayed in panoply divine;
That angel pureness which admits no stain;
Go, bid proud Man his boasted rule resign,
And kiss the golden sceptre of thy reign.

Go, gird thyself with grace; collect thy store
Of bright artillery glancing from afar;
Soft melting tones thy thundering cannon's roar,
Blushes and fears thy magazine of war.

Thy rights are empire: urge no meaner claim,—
Felt, not defined, and if debated, lost;
Like sacred mysteries, which withheld from fame,
Shunning discussion, are revered the most.

Try all that wit and art suggest to bend
Of thy imperial foe the stubborn knee;
Make treacherous Man thy subject, not thy friend;
Thou mayst command, but never canst be free.

Awe the licentious, and restrain the rude;
Soften the sullen, clear the cloudy brow:
Be, more than princes' gifts, thy favours sued;—
She hazards all, who will the least allow.

But hope not, courted idol of mankind,
On this proud eminence secure to stay;
Subduing and subdued, thou soon shalt find
Thy coldness soften, and thy pride give way.

Then, then, abandon each ambitious thought,

Conquest or rule thy heart shall feebly move,
In Nature's school, by her soft maxims taught,
That separate rights are lost in mutual love.

While Johnson clearly held Elizabeth Carter in high regard, he did not have the same admiration for Anna Laetitia Barbauld whom he believed had betrayed her early promise by marrying badly:

Too much is expected from precocity, and too little performed. Miss [Aikin] was an instance of early cultivation, but in what did it terminate? In marrying a little Presbyterian parson, who keeps an infant boarding school, so that all her employment now is “To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.” She tells the children, “This is a cat and that is a dog, with four legs and a tail: see there! you are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak.” If I had bestowed such an education on a daughter, and had discovered that she thought of marrying such a fellow, I would have sent her to the Congress.³⁴

That same Anna Laetitia Barbauld was the author of the story that Obradović published as *Gora vežestva i istine. Jedno aligoričesko ili inoskazajemo videnije* (1793). Barbauld published this story with the title *The Hill of Science: A Vision* in her *Miscellaneous Pieces* (1773)³⁵. It was republished several times in Vicesimus Knox’s *Elegant Extracts: or, useful and entertaining Pieces of Poetry, Selected for the Improvement of Young Persons: being similar in Design to Elegant Extracts in Prose* from which Obradović had taken other fragments and texts³⁶. Knox said of Barbauld:

Gray and Mason will hardly be classed among the minor Poets. To speak indeed of living writers with freedom, is in general an invidious task. It is however happy, that the most impartial critic may concur with the world in praising a Glover, the Wartons, an Ansty, a Roberts, an Armstrong, and a Barbauld. These and several more would have shone with very distinguished splendour, if they had not obscured the separate glory of each other, by the general lustre of their radiance.³⁷

The Hill of Science received mixed critical reviews, one of which faulted the author with imitating the style of Dr Johnson too closely:

The Public are not unacquainted with the elegant pens of these Literati. This volume consists of ten essays, specimens of which our Readers will find in our present, as well as our last number. While we willingly pay our tribute of applause to the chastity and correctness of these pieces, we cannot help confessing that the imitation of the style of other Writers is rather a blemish than a beauty in them. The utility of it does not appear; and the self-gratification arising from our being able to write like other people, is so temporary and fruitless, that it ought to be despised. The style of one essay is written in imitation of Dr. Johnson: but all styles have their faults; and we should act more prudently, at least, in correcting the blemishes of our own, than in copying those of another style.³⁸

Indeed, Anna Laetitia Barbauld had imitated Samuel Johnson's style, for her model had been Johnson's story *The Vision of Theodore: The Hermit of Teneriffe, Found in His Cell* (1748), which, in turn, had been modeled on Joseph Spence's translation *The Picture of Human Life: Translated from the Greek of Cebes, a Disciple of Socrates* (*The Museum*, 20.06.1747).

It is of interest here to note that Anna Laetitia Barbauld was a friend of Mrs. Livie's sister. Obradović says:

A few weeks later Mrs. Livie's sister, Mrs. Taylor, and her brother, Mr. Coke [*sic!*], came from Harwich for a visit. After that there were banquets and parties every day, either in their house or with some of their friends, and excursions to the most beautiful spots of the city and its environs, in which I was nearly always forced to join. This made me waste considerable time, but on the other hand it was pleasant and useful for me, since it gave me chance to become better acquainted with the most amiable qualities and the unaffected, simple, and sincere manners of the English.³⁹

Obradović mistakenly states that Mrs. Livie's sister, "mistres Telar", as he calls her, came from Harwich, she was actually from Norwich, as was Mrs. Livie herself. The maiden name of "mistres Telar" was Sus[s]an[nah] Cook (1755-1823); in 1777 she married John Taylor (1750-1826), famous hymn writer and poet. John Taylor was the second son of John Taylor (1694-1761)⁴⁰, theologian and Hebrew scholar, author of numerous speeches and moral treatises⁴¹. Susannah and John Taylor had seven children and some of them subsequently became famous as for example the publisher and naturalist Richard Taylor (1781-1858)⁴² and the editor and translator Sarah Austin (1793-1867).

VI

Hers was a famous name in the cultural life of England of the eighteenth century: “Susannah Taylor’s house in Norwich was known for its central place in the brilliant literary and political society of Norwich.”⁴³ Among her regular guests were Sir James Edward Smith the botanist, Robert Southey poet laureate, and some early supporters of the French Revolution such as Edward Rigby, Sir James Mackintosh, John Alderson, John and Amelia Opie, Thomas William Coke, and many others. Mrs. Taylor shared her husband’s liberal ideas and friends used to call her “Madame Roland” because, besides sharing that lady’s ideas, she seemed to look like Marie-Jeanne Roland de la Platière (1754–1793) known as Madame/Manon Roland, of whom it is said that before the clay statue of Liberty in the Place de la Révolution, she declared: “Oh Liberté, que de crimes on commet en ton nom!”

John Taylor was a trader, a Unitarian⁴⁴, and was member of Norwich Anacreontic Society, and was famous for having written *Hymnes Intended to Be Used at the Commencement of Social Worship* (1802). In Norwich there was a so called *Octagon circle* or *The Circle of Norwich*, associated with the Octagon Chapel⁴⁵ where the father of John Taylor preached. It was the meeting place of rational Dissenters, who were equated with Unitarians because they shared literary and cultural interests. Often at their meetings they discussed the abolition of slavery⁴⁶.

The Unitarian Sarah Meadows Martineau (ca 1725-1800), who sent her children to Anna Laetitia Barbauld’s school in Palgrave, also lived in Norwich. Martineau was a relative of the Taylors, and thanks to her Anna Laetitia Barbauld was able to meet Susannah Taylor. So the Aikins and Barbaulds used to come to Norwich to the Taylors where John Aikin used to read his books to Mrs. Taylor; later Susannah Taylor’s son, Richard Taylor published Anna Laetitia Barbauld’s *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*⁴⁷. “Mrs John Taylor of Norwich,” was “perhaps the most intimate and most highly valued of all her [Barbauld’s] distant friends”⁴⁸. That friendship is evidenced by their correspondence⁴⁹ where they exchanged words of kindness and respect for one another. On the 1st September 1785, for example, Anna Barbauld wrote to Mrs. Taylor: “Allow me, dear madam, again to thank you for your kindness to us at Norwich, and the pleasure we enjoyed in that short but delightful intercourse with you and your family. On that family may health and every blessing ever rest!”⁵⁰ And much later (18 June 1810) Mrs. Barbauld expressed her respect for Mrs. Taylor:

My dear Mrs. Taylor – A thousand thanks for your kind letter; still more for the very kind visit that preceded it; though short, too short, it has left indelible impressions on my mind; my heart has truly had communion with yours, – your sympathy has been balm to it; and I feel

there is no one now on earth to whom I could pour out that heart more readily, – I may say, so readily, – as to yourself [...].⁵¹

When Mrs. Taylor died in 1823, Anna Laetitia Barbauld described the character of Mrs. Taylor to one of her daughters saying: “Never will she be forgotten by those who knew her!”⁵²

The others who knew Mrs. Taylor⁵³ said in fact that: “Her life was spent in the simplest fashion. She stayed at home, she darned with wool, she read philosophy and poetry, she spoke her mind and she thought for herself, while she stitched, and marketed, and tended her children.”⁵⁴ In *Three Generations of English Women*, the author Janet Ross gives a portrait of Susannah Taylor:

Mrs. John Taylor, the first subject of these Memoirs, was a remarkable woman, whose house at Norwich was the resort of many of the most cultivated men and women of her day, whose friendship was prized and valued by them. People used to say it was worth a journey to Norwich to spend an evening with her. She brought up her children with an unflinching love: of truth and a horror of debt. Not ashamed of being poor, she attended to all the small details of daily life, in the midst of which she found time to read and appreciate philosophy and poetry, and to think for herself.⁵⁵

Probably the best description of Mrs. Taylor is given by the Scottish jurist, historian and politician James Mackintosh (1765-1832), when addressing her from Bombay, 10 October 1808:

I ought to be made permanently better by contemplating a mind like yours, which seems more exclusively to derive its gratifications from its duties, than almost any other. Your active kindness is a constant source of cheerfulness; and your character is so happily constituted, that even the misfortunes of those who are dear to you, by exciting the activity of your affection, almost heal the wounds which they would otherwise have inflicted. The gladness naturally produced by the efforts of ingenious and active kindness, is the balm appointed to be poured into the wounds of sympathy. This is one of the most beautiful processes exhibited by the healing force of nature. It leaves barren sensibility without remedy, and reserves the cure for useful kindness. Selfishness, foolish and shallow, knows no such joys. Indolent pity is not worthy of them. They are to be enjoyed only by industrious benevolence, which requires a vigorous understanding and a decisive character.⁵⁶

Here, between these two sisters, Mrs. Livie and Mrs. Taylor lies what the Serbian enlightener had been looking for years and decades(!). These two English women, together with their circles of cultural acquaintances were actually responsible for the works of English literature that Dositej Obradović had the opportunity to read, translate and adapt for the Serbian people. After years and years of peregrinating Obradović had arrived at his destination: these women and their female (and male) circles were the precious source of information about the latest books and knowledge that were circulating in British society which was in fact the principal cultural and scientific society of the modern era. They were exactly the right persons to provide him with all that he craved for. It must also be noted, however, that while Obradović was delighted to have made the acquaintance of such extraordinary thinkers he nonetheless considered all of the social gatherings, the daily “banquets and parties” as a waste of time.

However, on the ship leaving England, he must have realized that he had had the most precious gift from those female circles, the knowledge and the books from the centre of academic life and culture of the day, because subsequently he wrote a letter to Mrs. Livie, full of gratitude for what she had done for him: “[...] what for me was the most desirable and the most precious thing in the world, that I have received through your gracious aid; and now, thanks to God and to you, I find myself qualified to understand the books of Addison and of other writers of your enlightened nation.”⁵⁷

And he did not forget to mention Mrs. Taylor: “To beautiful Mrs. Taylor, your charming sister, and to Mr. Coke [*sic!*], your brother, pray convey assurances of my eternal regard.”⁵⁸

In conclusion we can say that Obradović’s journeys were not limited to mere geographical movements but also involved a progressive discovery of female identity. While initially he knew only the women whom he personally taught (like Jelena), or that were known to the general public such as the Russian Empress Elizabeth (whom he dreamt of) and the queen Marie Antoinette, whom he saw in Paris, in England he came into contact with women who were completely different from any he had known before and who transformed his way of thinking. No academy had ever been able to provide him with the broadening of thought that these new acquaintances gave him. The women that he met within the Scottish community and among the Unitarians such as Mrs Livie and her sister Mrs Taylor, transferred to Obradović the knowledge they had gained from frequenting the feminist circles of Elizabeth Carter, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Elizabeth Montagu, Elizabeth Vessey, Margaret Cavendish Bentinck Sarah Fielding, Hannah More, Clara Reeve, Amelia Opie, Sarah Meadows Martineau. Their knowledge of the then current literary and cultural scene enabled Obradović to supply the works that he took from England and translated and adapted for the Serbian nation. Interestingly, while on the one hand Obradović began his literary activity by creating a book for a

woman, on the other hand it was a group of women intellectuals who completed Obradović's formation as thinker and writer and it was this formation that then reflected in the subsequent cultural development of the Serbs.

I



Georg Christoph Grooth, *Elizabeth of Russia*



Élisabeth-Louise Vigée-Le Brun, *Marie Antoinette*

III



John Fayram, *Elizabeth Carter*

IV



[John Chapman], *Anna Laetitia Barbauld*



Richard Samuel, *The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain*



Thomas Gainsborough, *Mrs. John Taylor*

¹ *The Life and Adventures of Dimitrije Obradović who as a monk was given the name Dositej: written and published by himself*. Translated from the Serbian, and Edited, with an Introduction, by George Rapall Noyes (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953), 134.

² *Ibid.*, 145.

³ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 263.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 264.

¹¹ Dositej Obradović, *Pismo Haralampiju. Život i priključenija* (Knjiga prva. Priredila Mirjana D. Stefanović, Beograd: Zadužbina Dositej Obradović, 2007), 135. George Rapall Noyes (*The Life and Adventures of Dimitrije Obradović who as a monk was given the name Dositej: written and published by himself*, 286) translates the title given by Obradović as *A Description of Paris and Versailles, with All the Notable Things in Them and in Their Vicinity*.

- ¹² *The Life and Adventures of Dimitrije Obradović who as a monk was given the name Dositej: written and published by himself*, 286.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ See: Persida Lazarević Di Giacomo, *U Dositejevom krugu: Dositej Obradović i škotsko prosvetiteljstvo* (Beograd: Zadužbina Dositej Obradović, 2015).
- ¹⁵ *The Life and Adventures of Dimitrije Obradović who as a monk was given the name Dositej: written and published by himself*, 287.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 294.
- ¹⁷ Ibid..
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 300.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 292.
- ²¹ *Monthly Magazine and British Register, Volume 5, Part I, 1798. From January to June, inclusive* (London: Printed for R. Phillips, n. 71, 1798), 388; S[ylvanus] Urban, *The Gentlemen's Magazine* (Historical Chronical, May 1798), 444; *Selection of Curious Articles from the Gentlemen's Magazine* (vol. IV, London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Pater-Noster-Row; and Munday and Slatter, Oxford, 1811), 436. Mr. Livie was particularly well known for his edition of Horace published by Baskerville of Birmingham and considered to be "the most correct of all Baskerville's editions of the classics; for every sheet was carefully revised by Mr. Livie, who was an elegant scholar." See: Josiah Henry Benton, *John Baskerville: Type-founder and Printer 1706–1775* (Boston: s. n., 1914), 40-41.
- ²² Roger L. Emerson, *Academic Patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment: Glasgow, Edinburgh and St Andrews Universities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).
- ²³ *The Life and Adventures of Dimitrije Obradović who as a monk was given the name Dositej: written and published by himself*, 296.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ <http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/diary/>.
- ²⁶ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Association World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- ²⁷ Pavle Popović, "O *Sobraniju* Dositeja Obradovića", in *Nova književnost. I. Od Dositeja do Vuka i Sterije*, prir. Predrag Palavestra (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2000), 98-99.
- ²⁸ *The Tatler*, n. 97, 22.11.1709.
- ²⁹ Priscilla Dorr, Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806), "Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature", 5/1, Spring 1986, 138.
- ³⁰ *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, with a New Edition of her Poems, Some of Which Have Never Appeared Before; to Which are Added Some Miscellaneous Essays in Prose, together with Her Notes on the Bible, and Answers to Objections Concerning the Christian Religion. By the Rev. Montagu Pennington, M. A. [...]* (London: Printed for F. C. and J. Rivington, No. 62, St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1807), 27.
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- ³² Lucy Aikin, ed., *The Works of Anna Lætitia Barbauld* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 2 vols., 1825, vol. 1), 185-187.
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- ³⁵ By J. and A. L. Aikin, London: Printed for J. Johnson, in St. Paul's church-yard.
- ³⁶ Vera Javarek, "Ogledi prevedeni sa engleskog u 'Sobraniju' Dositeja Obradovića", *Zbornik Matice srpske za književnost i jezik*, XXVI/3, 1978, 474-475; Vera Javarek, "Essays Translated from English in the *Sobranije* of Dositej Obradović, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 33/81, June 1955, 437-442.
- ³⁷ *Essays Moral and Literary, by Vicesimus Knox, M. A., A New Edition in Two Volumes* (London: Printed for Charles Dilly, in The Poultry, 1782, II) 280.
- ³⁸ *Westminster Magazine, Or, The Pantheon of Taste, Containing A View of The History, Politics, Literature, Manners, Gallantry & Fashions of The Year* (London: Printed for W. Goldsmith, 1773, 1 November 1773), 663.
- ³⁹ *The Life and Adventures of Dimitrije Obradović who as a monk was given the name Dositej: written and published by himself*, 296.

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- ⁴² W. H. Brock, A. J. Meadows, *The Lamp of Learning: Two Centuries of Publishing at Taylor & Francis* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1998), 19–58.
- ⁴³ Ruth Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England 1760–1860* (London: Routledge, 1998).
- ⁴⁴ John Chambers of Worcester, *A General History of the County of Norfolk: Intended to Convey All the Information of a Norfolk Tour, 1252–1253* ([s. 1.]: Printed by and for J. Stacy, 1829); Philip Meadows Taylor, *A Memoir of the Taylor Family of Norwich* (s. 1.: Privately printed, 1866), 9–13. See: Frank Leslie Cross, Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1671.
- ⁴⁵ The Octagon Chapel was projected (1754–56) by Thomas Ivory (?–1786). See: Randy L. Maddox, ed., *The Works of John Wesley Volume 12: Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises* ([s. 1.]: Abingdon Press, 2012), 122: “perhaps the most elegant one in all Europe”.
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Персида ЛАЗАРЕВИЋ ДИ ЂАКОМО
Универзитет „Г. д’Анунцио”
Кјети-Пескара

<https://doi.org/10.18485/knjiz.2016.1.8>
УДК: 37:929 Обрадовић Д.(410)"1785"
316.7:305-055.2(410)"17"
Оригинални научни чланак

Значај британских женских кругова за српско просветитељство

Овај рад анализира утицај који су британски женски кругови имали на главну личност српског просветитељства – Доситеја Обрадовића. Када је Доситеј стигао у Енглеску 1784. године, случајно му се пружила прилика да се упозна са неким представницима шкотске заједнице у Лондону те са госпођом Ливи и њеном сестром госпођом Тејлор, које су активно учествовале у британском културном животу. Те су га даме саветовале о објављеним књигама, ауторима, и актуелним темама. Такође су му предложиле да преведе приче Елизабет Картер и Ане Летише Барболд, две веома популарне личности британског просветитељства.

Кључне речи: Доситеј Обрадовић, британски женски кругови, британско просветитељство, шкотско просветитељство.