

INTEREST IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN RAGUSA ON THE EVE OF THE FALL OF THE REPUBLIC

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ABSTRACT: After the end of the great period of economic, maritime and other relations between the Republic of Ragusa in England after 1650, cultural links between the two states were almost completely severed for nearly a century. The paper discusses some signs of revival of interest in English language and culture in Ragusa in the latter half of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth century. There were people in Ragusa who took pains to learn English, who were anxious to obtain English books and who were interested in the philosophical, historical and literary works of English authors. Evidence of this interest can be found in the private correspondence of some Ragusan intellectuals, in the translations of English works made in Ragusa, and, particularly, in the catalogues of some family libraries that have been preserved. The author analyzes this evidence and comes to the conclusion that it extends considerably our knowledge of the presence and influence of English culture in this region.

Key words: English-Ragusan cultural links, English books in Ragusan private libraries, Toma Bassegli, Ossianic poems, John Milton, *The Spectator*, Alexander Pope, John Locke

After the great period of economic and maritime links between Ragusa and England which ended around 1650, the cultural contacts between these two states also became quite tenuous, so that the years from mid-seventeenth to mid-eighteenth century represents mostly empty pages in the history of these relations. In the second half of the eighteenth century certain contacts

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between Ragusan scholars and the English Royal Society were established, the most important of which was the visit of Ruder Bošković to England in 1760. Bošković's stay among the English has been treated well and thoroughly by Josip Torbarina,¹ and therefore his visit and its significance in the history of English-Croatian cultural relations will not be discussed here. Attention will be focused instead on some less known aspects of the Ragusan-English literary and cultural relations in the latter half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

We might begin with two letters written in English by the Ragusan author Džono Rastić (Junije Resti, 1755-1814) and addressed to his friend, the well-known Ragusan intellectual Miho Sorkočević (Miho Sorgo, 1739-1796). The first of these letters dates from 1786, and the other is from 1789. It is quite possible that there were more letters in the English language in the correspondence between the two friends, but only these two by Rastić have been preserved.² Their content is not particularly interesting, but they are important as indubitable testimonies of the knowledge of English among at least some members of the Ragusan learned circles.

We cannot say with certainty how extensive that knowledge was since the available sample is very meagre. These two letters give us, nevertheless, ground for at least some inferences. One is that Rastić commanded a comparatively rich store of English words and employed some turns of phrase rarely used by beginners, such as *fast asleep* or *this family of mine*. He also made use of some uncommon words—for example, *inticing* (*enticing*), *to exert*, *to convey*. Another conclusion is that Rastić makes some grave mistakes in the fields of morphology, syntax and style, which require a higher level of mastery of a foreign language. Some of these mistakes are probably the result of the “negative transfer” from Croatian or, more likely, Italian, such as *I am just now returned* or *he was arrived*. Others reveal uncertainty in the construction of negative statements—for instance, *you shall no such labour* or *my duty shall no be bound*. There are also some awkward stylistic turns, as *I will not lose the opportunity of telling it you*. Some of the words which appear in the letters simply do not exist in English, and Rastić presumably used them as he remembered them wrongly, such as *I supprime*, which might mean, judging by the context, *I suppose* or *I surmise*. One conspicuous and recurring mistake is the devocalization of the ending *-ed* in the formation of the past tense of verbs which end in *d* in the infinitive—which

¹ Josip Torbarina, »The Meeting of Bošković with Dr. Johnson«. *Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabienzia* 13-14 (1962): pp. 3-11; *idem*, »Bošković in England«, in: *Actes du Symposium International R.J.Bošković 1961*. Beograd: Conseil des Academies RPFY, 1962: pp. 255-261.

² Published at the instance and with the assistance of J.Torbarina in Josip Vlahović, »Dva pisma Džona Rastića na engleskom jeziku«. *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 4-5 (1958-1959): pp. 491-498.

is a spelling not only unknown in the eighteenth century English orthography (which was exceptionally prone to devocalization in some other instances), but also phonetically unfounded. Thus Rastić writes *a ship bound'd for Ancona* or *This is intend'd*. Still, the general impression after a reading of Rastić's letters is that he had been learning English for some time before writing the first of them and that he continued to study it in the interval between it and the later letter.

Rastić's letters also give us some idea of the books he and his correspondent Sorkočević were interested in. Thus Rastić asks his friend to send him some of his English books and mentions specifically *The Idler*, a series of essays which Dr Samuel Johnson had originally published in the *Universal Chronicle, or Weekly Gazette* between April 1758 and April 1760. These essays were later collected and reprinted in book form,³ and Rastić probably had in mind one of these collections. Judging, however, by his phrasing, he thought that *Idler* was actually the name of some English author.⁴

We have some other testimonies of Rastić's interest in the English language and the works of English writers. They can be found mostly in the introduction which his friend F. M. Appendini wrote for the Paduan edition of Rastić's poems. Appendini speaks of Rastić's motives for the study of English:

He turned from Greek to English in order to read without the mediation of any translator (he had used French versions earlier) and thus get better acquainted with the works of those authors whose fame had reached the Ragusans. However, since English words, as they say, inspire readers with a certain seriousness, I am quite sure that Džono, serious by nature, assumed as a result an even graver disposition. It is namely amazing how much he enjoyed reading the best English books, with which he had enlarged, at considerable cost, his library. He, who found the form and excellence of English government admirable, did not want to pass over a single work of the British nation worth knowing.⁵

³ For example, London, 1761; Dublin, 1762, London, 1793 (enlarged edition), etc.

⁴ "So I beseech you to oblige me with some of your English authors, such as the *Idler*, or if you have some other still better of [*sic*] him" (J. Vlahović, »Dva pisma Džona Rastića na engleskom jeziku«: p. 497).

⁵ *E Graeca ad Anglicam linguam se convertit, ut scilicet nullius interpretis indigens (Gallicis antea versionibus utebatur) legeret et degustaret propius eorum opera, quorum fama apud Ragusinos quoque percrebuit. Ac si Anglorum litterae, ut perhibent, gravitatem quamdam legentibus conciliant, profecto non dubito, quin Junius, qui gravis natura, severiores inde mores induerit. Optimis enim Anglicorum scriptorum libris, quibus haud modico sumptu auxerat bibliothecam suam, mirum in modum delectabatur. Qui Anglici regiminis formam et excellentiam admirabundis praedicabat, noluit Britannicae nationis res ulla et vicissitudines scitu dignas ignorare. Junii Antonii Comitis de Restis Carmina. Patavii: Typis Seminarii, 1816: XIII.*

Referring to the English books commended by Rastić, Appendini mentions Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*,⁶ the first two volumes of which were published in 1759 and immediately made its author famous, and the *Spectator*. The second title refers to the popular essays which originally appeared in the well-known periodical of that name in the course of 1711-1712 and which were later often reprinted in book form. Appendini points out that Rastić borrowed the entire subject of his Eighteenth Satire from an essay in the *Spectator*.⁷ Rastić himself mentions the English poet John Gay (1685-1732) in his verse letter addressed to Đuro Ferić⁸.

Several years later Rastić became a member of an academy founded by Miho Sorkočević at the beginning of 1793 and modelled on similar learned societies in Italy. The other members of this academy were Vlaho Stuli, Appendini, Toma Basiljević and Julije Bajamonti, a philosopher, historian and composer from Split.⁹ There is direct and indirect evidence that some of them were also acquainted with the intellectual currents in England and that they wished to introduce at least some English intellectual achievements into their own cultural milieu. A paper read in the academy on 16 March 1793 was entitled *Of the Education that Is Appropriate for Our Nobility in the Present Circumstances*. The manuscript of that paper is preserved,¹⁰ and it shows that the author (probably Appendini) was familiar with John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693).¹¹

The founder of the academy, Miho Sorkočević, one of the most learned Ragusans of his time, was also interested in English literature and had translated an English poem into Italian several years before the establishment of the academy. This translation was published, together with the original, in Ragusa in 1785 under the title *Idillio inglese trasportato in verso italiano*. The name of the poet is not mentioned, and the translator signed himself with the initials M.S.P.R. only

⁶ Appendini misspells the title "Fristum Ghandy" (*Junii Antonii Comitis de Restis Carmina*: XVII).

⁷ *Junii Antonii Comitis de Restis Carmina*: XVII and 119. The essay referred to was published in the *Spectator* no. 281. Rastić's Anglophilia and interest in Sterne and Addison is also discussed by Milivoj Šrepel, »O latinskoj poeziji Junija Restija«. *Rad JAZU* 37 (1893): p. 114.

⁸ *Junii Antonii Comitis de Restis Carmina*: 2, Epistola I, Ad Georgium Ferrichium, verse 33.

⁹ Cf. Žarko Muljačić, »Dva priloga povijesti dubrovačkih akademija«. *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 4-5 (1958-1959): pp. 319-340.

¹⁰ Published by Ž. Muljačić in the paper cited above (*Del educazione che conviene ai nostri nobili nelle presenti circonstanze*).

¹¹ *Monsignor Loke nella sua eccellente opera dell'educazione dei fanciulli* (P:I; C: 7) *esaminando le ragioni che militano in favore, e contro i pubblici Collegi li accusa come scuole di malizia, di impudenza, e di affacciatagine, e per domestica educazione se dichiara*" (Ž. Muljačić, »Dva priloga povijesti dubrovačkih akademija«: p. 332).

(*Michele Sorgo, patrizio raguseo*).¹² Sorkočević's original was a poem by John Byrom (1692-1763), now a forgotten poet, which was published in the *Spectator* No. 605.¹³ The original is in ten stanzas with lines rhyming in pairs, while the translation is in Italian unrhymed verse (*versi sciolti*), grouped also in ten sections, which are of unequal length, but are mostly longer than those of the original.

Another interesting testimony showing that the intellectuals gathered in Miho Sorkočević's academy were interested in English culture is a manuscript of Džono Rastić which has been preserved in the State Archives of Ragusa.¹⁴ The manuscript forms part of a bundle marked *J. Restis Epistolae et Poesies Varias* and is in fact a translation into Italian of the first two epistles of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*. Pope's work, written in the 1730s, attained great popularity and was translated into many European languages. There are more than ten translations of this poem, or parts of it, into Italian alone. The translation of the *Essay* preserved among Rastić's manuscripts was not done by him; it is a copy of the Italian version published by Creofilo Sminteo in 1788.

There are other indications that Alexander Pope was esteemed by the Ragusans. When Ruđer Bošković was in England in 1760, he made, as he recorded himself, a special visit to Twickenham to see the place where Pope had lived.¹⁵ Pope's works, and the *Essay on Man* in particular, were also to be found in some Ragusan private libraries of the time.¹⁶

It is more difficult to identify the author of a translation, also in manuscript, of another English work, which is kept in the State Archives of Ragusa. It is the essay on Pliny's life by Pope's friend John Boyle, 5th Earl of Orrery (1707-1762), which Boyle published together with his translation and comments on the letters of Pliny the Younger, and dedicated to his eldest son.¹⁷ Boyle's translation was considered very reliable and it went through five editions in less than twenty-five years after its first publication; it continued to be used long afterwards, and was replaced by a more modern version only in mid-twentieth century.¹⁸ Boyle's

¹² The initials were deciphered by Josip Vlahović, »Jedna dubrovačko-engleska književna veza u 18. stoljeću (Prvi engleski književni tekst s prijevodom tiskan u Hrvatskoj)«. *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zadru* 1 (1960): p. 257.

¹³ J. Vlahović, »Jedna dubrovačko-engleska književna veza u 18. stoljeću«.

¹⁴ *Arhiv Bassegli*, B₂/13 (State Archives of Dubrovnik, hereafter cited as: SAD).

¹⁵ J. Torbarina, »Bošković in England«: p. 259.

¹⁶ For example, in the library of Rafo Andrović (*Memorie*, ser. 21.2, vol. 25, p. 71, SAD).

¹⁷ *The Letters of Pliny the Younger with observations on each Letter and an essay on Pliny's Life*, 2 vols., London, 1751.

¹⁸ *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, ed. Peter France. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000: pp. 539-540.

original *Essay on Pliny's Life*, published as an introduction to his translation of the letters, was praised as late as the early nineteenth century as the work of a man of "an accurate classical taste; a vein of philosophy, if not deep, at least rich and glowing; and a congeniality with his author".¹⁹

The text on the title page of the Ragusan translation of this essay runs: *Osservazioni, o Saggio sulla vita di Plinio adriizzato al Signor Carlo Boyle Da Giovanni Conte d'Orrery. Traduzione dall'Inglese*. The title on page 1 is slightly different: *Saggio Sulla vita di Plinio di Giovanni Conte d'Orrery al Signor Carlo Boyle*.²⁰ It is not possible to say anything about the date or occasion of this translation. There is a published Italian translation of Boyle's work printed in Leghorn in 1753-55,²¹ but the Ragusan version is independent of it. It is somewhat simplified and it omits some Greek and English verses, but it is generally fairly accurate.

Although these individual examples show that there were people in Ragusa in this period who knew English and were interested in the works of English authors, the most copious evidence of the presence of English literature and culture in old Ragusa is to be found in the catalogues of books in the libraries of the better educated Ragusans or in their correspondence regarding the provision of books.

One of such records is an undated catalogue of books belonging to Miho Lukin Giorgi-Bona.²² The majority of the books listed in it were published in the second half of the eighteenth century, but one of them was printed in 1816, so that it may be assumed that at least some parts of the catalogue date from around 1820. It shows that the holdings of Miho's family library included an Italian translation of Milton's *Paradise Lost* published in 1742.²³ Miho also possessed Newton's famous treatise *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* in a four-volume edition published in Geneva in 1739. Among the items in his library was also Sorokočević's translation of John Byrom, mentioned above. John Locke was represented by his best known work, *An Essay on Human Understanding*, in

¹⁹ »Literary Gleanings II«, *The European Magazine and London Review* 59-60 (1811): p. 177.

²⁰ *Memorie*, vol. 29. The wrapper of the bundle bore the (now faded) words *Zlataric Mar. Dominkov* and *holograf*.

²¹ *Le Lettere di Plinio il Giovane tradotte in Italiano dal canonico G. Tedeschi. S'aggiungono in questa nuova edizione un saggio sulla vita di Plinio, e le osservazioni sopra ciascuna lettera tradotte dall'Inglese di Milord G. Orrery*. 2 vols., Livorno: presso Anton Santini e compagni, 1753-1755.

²² I c 63 (3), Arhiv HAZU.

²³ *Il Paradiso Perduto di Giovanni Milton, tradotto da Paolo Rolli*, Parigi, 1742, *in foglio massimo, ben legato e conservato*.

two versions, integral and abridged, both in French.²⁴ Besides, Miho had a collection of Alexander Pope's poems in two volumes, also in a French translation.²⁵ Pope's contemporary Samuel Richardson, read much more widely at that time than in the later periods, was represented by two novels, *Clarissa Harlowe* and *Pamela*, both in French translations.²⁶

This catalogue shows that the owner of the library was interested mainly in those English writers who were generally known and read in Europe at that time, and that he probably did not know English and had to resort to Italian and, particularly, French translations.

The Ragusan priest Rafo Radelja (1769-1831) also had several books by English authors in his library, but none of them was in the English language.²⁷ They included several geographic and medicinal handbooks, the frequently reprinted life of Cicero by Conyers Middleton,²⁸ Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*, both in Italian translation, and John Barclay's Latin poem *Argenis*.

The most important figure in the circle of the Ragusans interested in English culture and literature was Toma Basiljević, whose life, inclinations and work are quite well known as a result of the extensive researches of Žarko Muljačić.²⁹

Toma Basiljević came from an old family which had moved from Kotor to Ragusa at the beginning of the fourteenth century. His father was Jakobica Basiljević (Bassegli), who held various public offices in the Ragusan Republic and managed the family estate. Toma's mother Kata Apolonija belonged to the Sorkočević family and was the sister of Miho Sorkočević, who has already been mentioned as one of the leading Ragusan intellectuals, a man with a considerable knowledge of English and the founder of an academy. Kata Apolonija herself was a learned woman and knew Latin.³⁰ Toma was born in 1756 and he left Ragusa

²⁴ *L'Entendiment Humain par M.Locke*, 4 vols., Amsterdam, 1758; *Abbrégé de l'Essay de M. Locke*, London, 1751.

²⁵ *Oeuvres diverses de Pope*, Amsterdam, 1754.

²⁶ *Histoire de Miss Clarissa Harlowe*, London, 1764 (at the time the catalogue was made there were only volumes V, XI and XII in the library); *Pamela ou la vertu récompensée*, Amsterdam, 1765 (volumes II and VII only).

²⁷ Ic 63 (4), Arhiv HAZU.

²⁸ Conyers Middleton, *The History of the Life of M.Tullius Cicero*, London, 1741. Radeaglia had an Italian translation.

²⁹ Žarko Muljačić, »Prinove u Dubrovačkom državnom arhivu, II«. *Arhivist* 2 (1952): pp. 77-83; Žarko Muljačić, *Toma Basiljević-Baselji pretstavnik prosvjećenja u Dubrovniku*. [Monografije, vol. CCXCIX, Odeljenje literature i jezika, vol. 8]. Beograd: SAN, 1958.

³⁰ Ž. Muljačić, *Toma Basiljević-Basselji*: pp. 4-6.

³¹ Ž. Muljačić, *Toma Basiljević*: p. 13.

when he was sixteen, on the advice of Alberto Fortis, a friend of his family, to study in Bern. Toma and Fortis departed from Ragusa together, and in June 1781 Toma stayed for some time in Fortis's house in Padua, where he met Melchior Cesarotti, the Italian translator of *Ossian*, and attended two meetings of the Paduan Academy. From Padua he proceeded to Bern, where he stayed almost two years and learned German and French. From Bern he went to Göttingen, which belonged to the Hanoverian Electorate at that time. In the period from 1714 to 1837 the town was ruled by princes who were also kings of Great Britain. Accordingly, Göttingen was an important centre of not only German, but also English culture.³¹ This probably contributed to Toma's wish to learn English. He wrote about it to his parents, and his father replied on 1 March 1784: "If you wish to take a teacher of the English language, do so, and I shall gladly pay for it. Let me know what it will cost, so that I can send you the money for that too".³²

Thus Toma began to learn English and already about a year later we find him quoting four verses in English in a letter. In the same letter he speaks of his admiration for Macpherson's *Ossian*: "My imagination is filled with it. It is the only book I have with me, and this night I read it until four o'clock in the morning".³³

After having spent about four years abroad, learnt three foreign languages (German, French and English; Italian he had already known, of course) and acquired a very solid knowledge in physics and mathematics, Toma returned to his home town. After a period he spent some time abroad again. Around 1792 he returned to Ragusa and soon afterwards he joined the Ragusan intellectuals gathered in Sorkočević's academy. His friends in Ragusa included Džono Rastić, so that the two of them, together with Miho Sorkočević, formed a small group of people who knew English and were interested in English culture. Unlike Rastić, who was a strong Anglophile, Basiljević was more influenced by French ideas. He was particularly interested in the problems of state administration and wrote an *Essay on the Republic of Ragusa* in French.³⁴

Basiljević's reflections on the reorganization of the Republic of Ragusa probably explain his interest in the renowned English statesman, orator, political

³² *Se volete prendere un Maestro di lingua Inglese, prendetelo, che volontieri ve lo pagarò, avisatemi de la spesa, acciò io possa fare la rimessa annor per questo (Arhiv Bassegli, C₂/9, No. 65).* Letter No. 66 also contains a reference to this.

³³ Ž. Muljačić, *Toma Basiljević*: p. 18, note 73.

³⁴ Some parts of the material Basiljević gathered for this project have been preserved (*Arhiv Bassegli, B₂/12*).

theoretician and philosopher Edmund Burke. There is among Toma's papers the transcript of a French translation of the speech Burke delivered in the House of Commons on 9 February 1790. The transcript is preceded by a note in French written by Basiljević (the transcript itself is not in his hand), commending the eloquence and close reasoning in Burke's speech.³⁵ Basiljević also read carefully the *English Constitution*—an interest which was probably also associated with his project of the reform of the Republic.³⁶

Toma's notes and other papers also contain evidence of his interest in other English authors. References to Newton crop up quite often. They are chiefly allusions and passing mentions, always in a very laudatory tone. Basiljević may have got acquainted with Newton's ideas either directly, through his works, or indirectly, through Jean Senebier's book *L'art d'observer* (1775), which he read very carefully, as his notes show.³⁷

A very interesting note, written in Toma's hand, is headed "Suicide". It contains excerpts from Cicero, Plutarch and Montaigne, and a German prose translation of Hamlet's famous soliloquy *To be or not to be*.³⁸ The note is not dated, but it was probably written at the end of the eighteenth century. At that time Shakespeare was very little known in the South Slavonic countries, and this note is probably the earliest known quotation from *Hamlet* in Croatia.

Even more interesting testimonies of Basiljević's knowledge of English authors can be found in his *Florilegium*, a commonplace book which contains his reflections on various subjects and quotations from other writers associated with them, arranged in alphabetical order.³⁹ The *Florilegium* is in French, but some of the books from which the quotations were culled were in other languages as well. The section dedicated to freedom (*La liberté*) contains a detailed and accurate paraphrase of a fairly long passage from Milton's *Paradise Lost* (XII.79-104). The rephrasing of Milton's verse is precise, although there is some evidence that Toma read Milton in a German translation.⁴⁰

³⁵ *Arhiv Bassegli*, B₂/7, Cart. No. 10.

³⁶ *Arhiv Bassegli*, B₂/2, f. 11.

³⁷ Cf. *Arhiv Bassegli*, B₂/3.

³⁸ *Arhiv Bassegli*, B₂/8.

³⁹ MS-R-3 (Scientific Library in Dubrovnik). The notebook dates, as shown by a passage (f. 113), from around 1802. I am indebted to Prof. Miljenko Foretić for valuable help in the analysis of this notebook.

⁴⁰ The title is in English, but the term *book*, which Milton uses for the internal sections of his epic, is rendered as *Gesang* (MS-R-3, f. 110v).

Basiljević refers to Milton in another section, where he discusses the difference between monarchy and republic,⁴¹ but the precise passage he had in mind is difficult to locate since it was probably taken from one of the numerous prose works Milton wrote as the official apologist of the republican government during the Cromwellian Commonwealth. In two notes in the *Florilegium* Toma refers to John Barclay,⁴² and he also alludes to Francis Bacon's *De augmentatione scientiarum*.⁴³ Verses in English are quoted in two passages.⁴⁴ Toma also mentions some texts he read in English periodicals. One of them was published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*.⁴⁵ Another section of the *Florilegium* contains a precise French paraphrase of the concluding sentence of Chapter V of Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*.⁴⁶

Another notebook of Toma Basiljević, marked *Poesie di autori diversi* on the wrapper, includes a poem in the English language. It is written in four-line stanzas and contains a number of linguistic errors, which might mean that it was either copied carelessly or written by someone insufficiently familiar with English. The latter explanation seems more probable for the text is interspersed with corrections written in another hand, which improve the style and language, but not the spelling of the poem.⁴⁷

Toma Basiljević was also a great collector of books. His library was so rich and included such valuable books that it was known even outside the Republic of Ragusa.⁴⁸ He had already inherited a rich collection, for the origins of the library of the Basiljević family probably reached as far back as the sixteenth century.⁴⁹ The earliest written reference to it occurs in the will of Toma's ancestor Marko Basiljević (c. 1632-1705).⁵⁰ The exceptionally well educated Toma Basiljević enriched greatly the library he inherited. His preserved papers

⁴¹ *MS – R-3*, f. (105).

⁴² *MS – R-3*, f. 24v, (106).

⁴³ *MS – R-3*, f. 62. There is another reference to Bacon on f. (188).

⁴⁴ *MS – R-3*, ff. 23, 6v (160v).

⁴⁵ *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Societ* (Basiljević cites the year of publication—1798). *MS – R-3*, f. 145v.

⁴⁶ *MS – R-3*, f. 55.

⁴⁷ *Arhiv Bassegli*, B,3.

⁴⁸ Josip Bersa, *Dubrovačke slike i prilike*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1941: pp. 177-178.

⁴⁹ Ž. Muljačić, *Toma Basiljević*: pp. 106-109 (Appendix II: "Knjižnica Basiljevića").

⁵⁰ *Testamenta Notariae*, ser. 10.1, vol. 77, f. 204v (SAD). Marko specifies what he leaves to his son Ivan-Toma, and adds: *Li ricordo consevar, et augmentar li libri e le medaglie antichi... sicuro che nel maneggiarle, gli riuscirà di ricreazione, erudizione e reputazione*. Jakobica, the youngest son of Ivan-Toma was Toma's father.

include documents which show his interest in the acquisition of new books—orders for books and invoices of the Viennese bookseller A. Blumauer for books sent to Toma via Trieste in the 1790s.⁵¹ Some of these papers contain notes on books Toma intended to buy. They show that he wished to get some historical works such as Henry St John Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Study and the Use of History* (1752), William Robertson's *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*,⁵² as well as Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (first published in 1776-1788). Basiljević also intended to buy David Hume's multi-volume *History of England* (1754-1762), which was regarded as the standard history of the English nation and was in such a great demand that it went through more than fifty editions in a hundred years. The other books Basiljević intended to buy included a biography of Captain James Cook⁵³ and a discussion of quarantines by the well-known English philanthrope John Howard (1726-1790).⁵⁴

Not all the books which Toma wished to buy were actually bought, nor did all the books he did buy end up in the library of the Basiljević family in Ragusa. He acquired many books during his studies abroad or while he lived in Vienna, and it is not at all certain that he brought all of them to his native town.⁵⁵ We can form, however, a fairly good idea of those that did form a part of the family library during his lifetime on the basis of a preserved catalogue. There are also some later catalogues, for after Toma's death in 1806 the library

⁵¹ *Arhiv Bassegli*, C₂/10.

⁵² William Robertson (1721-1793), formerly a very esteemed and popular historian. His chief work, *History of Scotland*, was first published in 1759 and went through eleven editions by 1787. The book which Toma owned, *The History of the reign of the emperor Charles V, with a view of the Progress of Society from the subversion of the Roman Empire to the beginning of the sixteenth century*, was originally published in 1769 and was reprinted ten times by the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was also translated into French.

⁵³ Andrew Kippis, *Narrative of the Voyages Round the World, Performed by Captain James Cook: with an Account of His Life During the Previous and Intervening Periods*, London, 1788.

⁵⁴ *An Account of the Principal Lazarettos in Europe, with various papers relative to the plague*, London, 1789. Notes concerning Basiljević's intended purchase of books are in *Arhiv Bassegli*, B₂/11.

⁵⁵ During Toma's absence from Ragusa the library was looked after by his parents, who do not seem to have been particularly interested in its enrichment. The books were kept under lock and key, and Toma's mother, wishing to fend off requests for loans, spread a rumour that the majority of the books in the library were in German and English, languages not commonly known in Ragusa. Cf. a letter she sent to Toma, then in Vienna, in June 1790: *I vostri libri benché sentono la comun disgrazia nostra di non aver il loro lettore, però anno in me un diligente conservatore... Le chiavi stano da me, ne ad alcuno si prestano avendo fatto capire che il più parte sono libri Tedeschi ed Inglesi* (*Arhiv Bassegli*, C₂/6/62).

passed to Pavao Gučetić, the son of Toma's sister Deša, who incorporated it into the large library of the Gučetić family. This rich combined library existed until about 1840, when a large part of it was sold.⁵⁶ Some catalogues of this amalgamated library are extant, and they contain important evidence of the presence of English culture in Ragusa, but they are not considered here because they fall outside the chronological scope of this survey.

The original catalogue of Toma Basiljević's books dates, judging by the watermarks and some other indications, from around 1800. The catalogue is arranged in alphabetical order, and within this sequence the books are grouped by languages. Of books written by English authors or related to England, some are in English (17 items), and some are translations into some other language.⁵⁷ What can we infer of Toma Basiljević interests on the basis of these lists?

Of the books belonging to the Old English or Anglo-Saxon period, Toma had only one work by the Venerable Bede. Books by Elizabethan authors included a copy of the complete works of William Shakespeare. The edition Toma possessed was the one Lewis Theobald brought out in seven volumes in 1733. Another English writer from the second half of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century was Francis Bacon. Toma had his complete works in Latin. Shakespeare's and Bacon's contemporary John Barclay is less known today than in earlier periods and Toma owned, like Rafo Radelja, a copy of his political and historical poem in Latin *Argenis*, which he also refers to, as mentioned above, in his notes. Basiljević also had several other works by Barclay, including *Euphormionis Satyricon*. This work is a satire on the Jesuits and it is written in the form of a picaresque novel in two parts. The books from this early period included the once well-known history of the Wars of the Roses, which Ivan Franjo Bjundović (Giovanni Francesco Biondi), a native of Hvar and a courtier of James I, wrote in Italian during his long residence in England. His history was translated later into English, and Basiljević owned a copy of the Italian edition.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ž. Muljačić, *Toma Basiljević-Baselji*: p. 109. A large number of books from the Bassegli-Gozze library is now kept in Scientific Library in Dubrovnik.

⁵⁷ *Arhiv Bassegli*, B₂/10-11. The same folder contains a separate list of books in the English language.

⁵⁸ F. Biondi, *L'istoria delle guerre civili d'Inghilterra*, 3 vols., Venezia, 1637-1644. Bjundović's history is discussed in Veselin Kostić, *Kulturne veze između jugoslovenskih zemalja i Engleske do 1700. godine*. [Monografije, vol. CCCCLVIII, Odelenje literature i jezika, vol. 22]. Beograd: SANU, 1972: pp. 105-115.

Basiljević also had some English works published in the second half of the seventeenth century. One of them was a French translation of *The Travels* of the Scottish bishop Dr. Gilbert Burnett (1643-1715), a well known historian and theoretician of the Reformation.⁵⁹ Basiljević also owned a 1796 edition of Thomas Hobbes's Latin treatise *De Cive*, as well as a French translation of Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*.

The greatest number of English books in Basiljević's library date from the eighteenth century, which means that they were probably bought by him, and not by some of his ancestors. They include historical writings, such as Horace Walpole's *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of Richard III*,⁶⁰ and books on natural history and scientific subjects, such as a French translation of Newton's *Optics*. The notable works from the field of philosophy include a selection of David Hume's texts in French translation⁶¹ and A. A. Shaftesbury's *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* in the three-volume London edition published in 1746. This work, first published in 1711, was one of the most frequently reprinted English books in the eighteenth century and exercised a considerable influence on the intellectuals not only in Britain, but also in Europe. Particularly stimulating proved Shaftesbury's libertarian ideas of religion, which bordered on atheism, and the conception of reason and sensibility as the main foundations of ethics. As some of the titles mentioned above show, Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* was not the only book of this ideological orientation which this Ragusan intellectual, educated in Protestant Bern and accused in his native town of insufficient piety, kept in his library. To such works should definitely be added an English anti-Catholic treatise on transubstantiation.⁶²

As far as literary works are concerned, Basiljević was obviously interested in Macpherson's *Ossian*. This interest was probably originally stimulated by Toma's familiarity with Alberto Fortis, whose patron was John Stuart, Earl of Bute, one of the staunchest advocates of Macpherson's party in the Ossianic

⁵⁹ *Dr Burnet's Travels: or Letters containing an Account of What Seemed Most Remarkable in Switzerland, Italy, Germany, and France*, Amsterdam, 1687. Toma had in his library an abbreviated French edition, which contained only three letters on the conditions in Italy.

⁶⁰ Basiljević seems to have owned the first edition of this work, published in 1768.

⁶¹ *Oeuvres philosophiques de M.D. Hume*, London, 1764.

⁶² Samuel Johnson, *The Absolute Impossibility of Transubstantiation Demonstrated*. This work, first published in 1688, went through four editions by 1744. This Samuel Johnson (1649-1703), who was a protestant priest and author of numerous political and religious pamphlets, should not be confused with his later and much better known namesake, the critic, playwright, poet and lexicographer Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784).

controversy,⁶³ as well as by his acquaintance with Melchior Cesarotti, the Italian translator of *Ossian* and the author of an influential study of the Ossianic poems. Toma possessed a copy of the original text of Macpherson's forgery, published in four volumes in Paris in 1783, as well as Cesarotti's Italian translation published in Padua in 1763.

Basiljević was also interested in the English periodical literature of the early eighteenth century and kept sets of two periodicals in his library. One was the already mentioned *Spectator*, which he owned in an eight-volume set published in London in 1754, and the other was *The Guardian*, a short-lived periodical edited by Richard Steele. *The Guardian* was published seven months only, but its contributors included such eminent men of letters as George Berkeley, Alexander Pope, John Gay and Joseph Addison. A related item in his library was a collection of Joseph Addison's prose and verse in three volumes.

Another interesting collection in Toma's library was a fairly copious anthology of English poetry entitled *Choice of the Best Poetical Pieces of the Most Eminent English Poets*, which Joseph Retzer brought out in six volumes in Vienna in 1783-86. Of the works of individual poets from the first half of the eighteenth century Toma owned a book of poems by James Thomson, Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, and an edition of Pope's poems in the original, published in Paris in 1782.

Among the works by authors nearer Toma's time one could mention a French translation of Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* published in 1764. Young's poem was in great vogue throughout Europe, so that it is not surprising that Toma, too, was interested in it, but it is remarkable that he also possessed Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, a work of a completely different stamp. Toma's copy of that work belonged to the English edition published in Göttingen in 1779.

Toma Basiljević also maintained personal relations with some Englishmen. We know that he corresponded with an Englishman who resided in Venice.⁶⁴ Among Toma's papers is a letter addressed to him by the British consular and diplomatic representative in the Ionic Islands Spiridion Foresti towards the end of 1798.⁶⁵ The

⁶³ Cf. Veselin Kostić, »Alberto Fortis i njegovi britanski pokrovitelji«. *Zbornik Matice srpske za književnost i jezik* 46/1-3 (1998): pp. 5-23.

⁶⁴ *Arhiv Bassegli*, C₂/6/2.

⁶⁵ The varied activities of this Greek in British service in the changing circumstances in the Eastern Mediterranean at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century are discussed in detail by C. I. Chessell, »Britain's Ionian Consul: Spiridion Foresti and Intelligence Collection«. *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 16/1-2 (2006): pp. 45-62.

letter was sent from Herceg-Novi, it is written in impeccable English and refers to Toma's English friends Hawkins and Grigg.⁶⁶ We do not know anything about Grigg, but Hawkins was probably John Hawkins (1761-1841), mineralogist, geologist, geographer, and fellow of the Royal Society from 1791. In the 1790s Hawkins spent considerable time on expeditions of exploration - either alone or in company with the Oxford professor and eminent botanist John Sibthorpe - in Greece, Mt Athos and the Levant.⁶⁷ We also know that Toma corresponded with a certain Steward, who was interested in numismatics and hoped that the Ragusan would help him obtain old coins from Macedonia and Greece.⁶⁸

Some testimonies of interest in English literature in this period are associated with an educated woman from Ragusa, Marija Giorgi Bona. She possessed several works by English authors, but it is hard to say whether she actually knew English. These works included Milton's *Paradise Lost* in an Italian translation, Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe* in a French translation, a work by Newton in Latin and Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* in French.⁶⁹

Among the Ragusan intellectuals interested in English culture were also the brothers Krša (Chersa, Kerša). The elder brother, Antun, was born in 1779, and Toma was three years younger. They were plebeians from Pelješac. Both studied philosophy and rhetoric under Appendini. After that they studied law, also in Ragusa. Having completed their studies they spent some time travelling in Italy, and after their return to Ragusa they became members of a liberal learned circle which included Rafo Andrović, Luka and Vlaho Stuli and Antun Kaznačić.⁷⁰ Both brothers Krša occasionally engaged in literary pursuits and published a number of poems in various collections in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Some letters sent from Ragusa by brothers Krša to their friend I. Bizzaro in Venice towards the end of 1801 and at the beginning of 1802 contain requests for

⁶⁶ *Arhiv Bassegli*, C₂/10.

⁶⁷ Some of the notes Hawkins made during his travels were published by Horace Walpole, *Memoirs Relating to European and Asiatic Turkey edited from Manuscript Journals*, 2nd edition, London, 1818: pp. 292-293 and 528-549. Cf. Veselin Kostić, »Sveta Gora viđena očima engleskih putopisaca (1750-1850)«, in: *Četvrta kazivanja o Svetoj Gori*, ed. Mirjana Milosavljević. Beograd: Prosveta, 2005: pp. 345-406.

⁶⁸ *Arhiv Bassegli*, C₂/8, draft of Toma's reply, written in French.

⁶⁹ The intellectual interests and the circle of Marija Giorgi Bona, as well as the holdings of her library, are thoroughly discussed by Slavica Stojan, *U salonu Marije Giorgi Bona*. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku 1996 (cf. esp. pp. 98 and 134 ff.).

⁷⁰ J. Bersa, *Dubrovačke slike i prilike*, pp. 169-170; I am indebted to Professor Miljenko Foretić for much information on the Krša brothers.

the purchase of English books. In a letter written on 22 December 1801 Toma Krša asks Bizzaro to buy, with the money provided for the purpose, in Venice or Florence good editions of English works from the list he attached.⁷¹ The list itself is lost, but it can be inferred from the subsequent correspondence that it included Milton's *Paradise Lost*, both in the original and in an Italian translation.⁷² A few months later Toma reminds Bizzaro of his request: "I hope that you keep in mind my wish as regards Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which I should definitely like to have in the original".⁷³

Toma's brother Antun made a similar request in a letter to Bizzaro written the same month; he seems, however, to have been more interested in English political philosophy: "There is in the shop of the Venetian Literary and Typographical Society a small work written in English and entitled *The Rhights [sic] of man for the use and benefit of all mankind by Thomas Paine*. Since this book has recently been much talked about, I should like very much to read it. Therefore I pray you to buy a copy for me and send it as soon as possible to Ragusa".⁷⁴

* * *

It is very probable that there were at this time other people in Ragusa who knew English or read English works, but even the fragmentary evidence presented in this paper shows beyond doubt that the English language and English culture were not unknown to its better educated citizens. Moreover, some of these testimonies push further back the date of the first mention, quotation or use of some English works in the South Slavonic lands.

⁷¹ *Arhiv Bizzaro*, 1.A-C, No. 11 (DAD).

⁷² *Arhiv Bizzaro*, 1.A-C, No. 11b. The letter is dated 10 February 1802.

⁷³ *Arhiv Bizzaro*, letter of 27 April 1802.

⁷⁴ *Arhiv Bizzaro*, 1.A-C, No. 68.