

# FROM ORIENTAL CUSTOMS TO EUROPEAN MODELS

One day you will become an old Belgrader, with many memories of what has been and passed in Belgrade – writer Duško Radović wrote to future Belgraders. To those who aren't Belgraders, but are its guests, we offer this story from Belgrade's past, that they may better understand its present.

One of the most important changes in Belgrade's turbulent history occurred during the "long" 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the city and country was gradually liberated from Turkish rule.

In the pauses between the struggle to establish a state, Belgrade was gradually and painstakingly turning into a modern European city. Having made a "seven-mile step", it reached the end of the century with urbanised streets, electric lamps, new schools and hospitals, a water supply system and streetcars. It succeeded in shedding from itself and its citizenry Oriental clothes and furniture, thus transforming into a modern European city that followed the social life models of Vienna, Budapest and Paris.

Influences from the West had gradually penetrated Belgrade's traditional and patriarchal environment, a fact that was reflected in Belgraders' new way of life. Until then, Belgraders had been used to hurrying home before dark and conducting most of their social life during the day. The elder citizens frequented the cafes for Muslims and Christians, but celebrations were organised at home within the family circle and

among neighbours. After 1830, when general conditions improved, they began to seek entertainment outdoors. One of the "places for entertainment" was the café Manojlo's Garden, located in Zelenci Venac at the end of a deep pool where vacationers enjoyed themselves in rowboats.

The first balls in the new capital were held in a place known simply as the "Building" (King Peter's Street), which was built by Prince Mihailo in 1840 and intended for foreigners "accustomed to comfortable surroundings". The following year, the prince organised a ball that was attended by ladies clad in party dresses with *tepelik* (a type of headwear) and *bayadera* (a small kerchief), but also in crinolines. The prince wore a tailcoat, and other gentlemen wore oriental, urban, official or military suits. This ball was remembered as sensational due to its illumination with *millykerze* in candlesticks and chandeliers. After that ball, no formal event or ball could be imagined without them.

### In the style of Vienna and Paris

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, entertainment in Belgrade was on the order of other European capitals. Social life in the higher class



Order of Dances from a royal ball



year affair with the Duke of Ahremberg. The prince couldn't forgive her and on the 4<sup>th</sup> July, 1865 he escorted the princess to Vienna. Although separated, their marriage was not annulled. After her departure, Anka's influence at the court became much stronger.

In contrast to the balls held by Princess Julia, Anka organised the best gatherings in Belgrade. She divided them into three groups: for women, women's artistic meetings and "mixed" (female-male) parties. She was an excellent organiser and dictated the style of entertainment in an attempt to make court life as jovial as possible.

As a young girl, Anka had fallen in love with her cousin Mihailo, but her mother Tomanija had put a timely stop to this affection. However, she was willing to marry off her other daughter, Katarina, to the prince and forced her to write him love letters. She convinced Katarina that she was entitled to become the princess, and in fact the prince fell in love with his young cousin, as is reflected in his verses from 1861: "Why do my thoughts swarm", which in turn became very popular only after he had fallen in love with Katarina. Prince Mihailo and Katarina were within a fifth degree of kinship (the Serbian Orthodox Church allowed marriage only from the sixth degree), and because of this incestuous relation, many were against this tragic and, for both, fatal affair.

flourished at lavish court balls held regularly after the arrival of Prince Mihailo and Princess Julia.

Prince Mihailo Obrénović ruled the Principedom of Serbia in two terms (1839-1842 and 1860-1868). Together with his father Miloš, he spent 16 years in exile, living in Vienna. Owing to his father's fortune, he had been regularly invited to many elite events, even to balls held at the court of Emperor Franz Josef. At one of these balls, Prince Mihailo fell in love with Julia Hunyadi, marrying her in 1853 in the Russian Chapel.

During the second rule of Prince Mihailo, Belgrade's social and court life underwent significant change. The Princess had encouraged building a new palace, in which the royal family never resided. However, the prince transformed Prince Miloš's old residence into a European-style court. New court protocols and etiquette were introduced, which were binding for everyone at the court and which governed overall social behaviour.

The royal balls held at that time by the prince and princess were examples of class and refinement.

The ball held at the residence in January, 1865 was long remembered for the heavy snow that fell

that night, stranding carriages and guests. "Finally, someone had the idea to engage the cavalry, and the garrison commander ordered cavalry troops to ride several times in a wide formation from the Court to the Stambol Gate and back to Manjež – until the horses had crushed and stamped down the high snow blanket with their breasts and legs" (K. Hristić, *Notes by an old Belgrader*). This action formed a path to the Palace so the ball could be held.

Prince Mihailo, dressed in a tailcoat across which he wore a ribbon with the Russian White Eagle, welcomed his guests in the salon. Princess Julia sat on the sofa with one of her ladies-in-waiting.

The whole court life was permeated with female influences and intrigues. The strongest influence at the Prince's court was, naturally, Princess Julia. However, she never felt fully at ease in Belgrade. Being a foreigner she wasn't welcomed, and a part of a court cabal headed by Anka Obrenović Konstantinović, the first cousin of the prince, was hostile towards her. Through skillful court intrigue, the prince learned of his wife's infidelity and seven-

Belgrade panorama from the 19<sup>th</sup> century







По Налогу Ћихових Величанстава  
КРАЉА И КРАЉИЦЕ

Маршале Двора има част позвати  
Катарину Ћихову Католичку Крстовац  
са Ћиховим и Ћиховом  
на бал који ће бити у Двору 20 Октобра  
1884 у 10 и ¼ сати у вече  
у Београду 20 Октобра 1884

Свакоме поштом до Бал доносиће или Српско  
или Ћихову Парохију, дуриће панталоне.

Милан Обреновић

Invitation to the 1884 ball, from the king and queen

However, the Prince decided to marry Katarina as soon as his first marriage became invalid and convinced the Metropolitan (Orthodox church official) to bless his new marriage. Three days before his assassination, the Prince and Katarina were betrothed. On May 29<sup>th</sup> 1868, during a stroll in Topčider, Prince Mihailo and Anka were stabbed; he fatally while Katarina was only wounded. Her later life would be quite interesting, filled with tragedies and scandals.

### Balls at the Royal Palace

King Milan Obrenović (1868-1889) and Queen Natalija continued the tradition of court balls, which became important social obligations, conferring respect to the invited, requiring a formal toilette. Preparations for a ball lasted several months, as ladies who followed fashion trends had to order dresses from Vienna, Paris or Budapest. Men wore tailcoats and the members of military wore dress uniforms.

Every lady at the ball had her "order of dances", a booklet with the dance programme, into which she entered the name of her partner and dance. At the ball's "Order of Dances" the first place was always reserved for the dance *Srbijanka*, after which followed a waltz, then the *dance of Queen Natalija*. Serbian and "foreign" dances followed one after the other, yet the Serbian dance was the most distinguished at every ball in Belgrade. A ball had two parts: the first part, until midnight, and the rest. The programme usually included about twenty dances, and the printed programme ended with the words, "Get up dear, dawn is here". At midnight, after the exhausting dances that followed a formal order, the most distinguished

guests withdrew and a more relaxed atmosphere ensued, marked by less strict etiquette. During breaks, the cavaliers and ladies circled the dancing hall arm in arm; this was foreseen as courtship, because nobody was supposed to talk during the formal dances.

After returning from abroad in the winter of 1895/96, Queen Natalia once again initiated the court salon gatherings. The Queen organised two big and two small balls that winter season.

Every Sunday afternoon, the Queen held parties attended by Belgrade's most distinguished citizens, who were accompanied by their sons and daughters. All the ladies of the court were also present.

At these parties began the romance of Queen Natalia's son Aleksandar and her lady-in-waiting Draga Mašin. When she left Belgrade for Biarritz on the French seaside, the queen took her lady-in-waiting with her. Although ten years her junior, King Aleksandar became close to Draga in Biarritz, and she became his mistress upon returning to Belgrade. This unusual love between a king and a common citizen was crowned with marriage.

Prince Mihailo and King Milan had both married foreign wives of lesser rank from the Hungarian and Wallachian nobility. Both marriages were unsuccessful and both Princess Julia and Queen Natalija eventually left Serbia. The wedding between King Aleksandar and Draga was therefore presented as an advantage, though it stirred up public opinion and lessened the popularity of the Obrenović dynasty.

Similar to previous rulers who had introduced new habits and customs, the arrival of a new queen also brought changes, and the court began



During the reign of King Milan Obrenović (1868-1889), Serbia became a modern European state. It became independent, extended its territory and in 1882 became a kingdom. The constitution from 1888 was one of the most advanced in Europe of that time.

to function as a traditional Serbian household. Queen Draga introduced the Lent fast from the Holy Week onwards, even though the custom had been to fast only on Good Friday until then. The royal table no longer offered luxurious French products.

The majority of contemporaries and historians had been of the opinion that, through his improper marriage, King Aleksandar Obrenović had brought about a total disaster to the nation – the end of the dynasty. The Obrenović dynasty disappeared from the historical stage on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1903 in an event known as the May coup. That night, a group of 28 officers broke into the palace, murdered the king and queen and threw their dead bodies through the window. The bloody change on the throne incited more alarm in Europe than in Serbia. When the chief of the Savamala Quarter informed the city administrator about the event, he explained that, "aside from the usual city occurrences, there was nothing new".

The great 19<sup>th</sup>-century drive towards modernisation was not to be a continuous development, as it would experience set backs from turbulence, dynastic change, the collapse and reshaping of the state, as well as by wars (both the Balkan and the First World Wars).

### ■ JOVANKA VESELINOVIC

Sourced from material from the Historical Archive of Belgrade

## STARI BEOGRAD | ZABAVE I BALOVI U BEOGRADU XIX VEKA

# OD ORIJENTALNIH NAVIKA DO EVROPSKIH UZORA

Jednom ćete i vi biti stari Beograđani, sa mnogo uspomena na ono što je u Beogradu bilo i prošlo – poručio je naš pisac Duško Radović svim budućim Beograđanima. Onima koji to nisu, a koji su naši gosti, nudimo ovu priču iz prošlosti Beograda, kako bi bolje razumeli njegovu sadašnjost.

Jednu od najznačajnijih promena u svojoj burnoj istoriji Beograd je doživeo u „dugom“ XIX veku, tokom koga se postepeno oslobađao od turskog jarma.

U predasima između borbi za stvaranje države, Beograd se postepeno i mukotrпно osavremenjavao i evropeizovao. Korakom od sedam milja došao je do kraja veka, regulisao ulice, fenjere zamenio električnim osvetljenjem, saziđao škole i bolnice, uveo vodovod i tramvaj. Uspeo je da sa sebe i svog stanovništva skinе odelo i pokušstvo orijentalne civilizacije i preobrazi se u savremenu evropsku varoš u kojoj se društveni život odvijao po uzoru na Beč, Peštu i Pariz.

U konzervativnu i patrijarhalnu sredinu Beograda uticaji Zapada prodirali su postepeno, što se odražavalo na sveukupni život Beograđana, koji su žurili da pre mraka stignu kući, tako da se društveni život odvijao uglavnom danju. Stariji su se okupljali u kafanama za muslimane i hrišćane, a veselilo se kod kuće u krugu porodice i sa komšijama. U povoljnijim uslovima, posle 1830. godine počeli su tražiti zabavu i van svojih domova. Jedno od „uveselitelnih mesta“ bila je kafana Manojlova bašta. Ona se nalazila na Zelenom vencu, na kraju duboke bare po kojoj su izletnici vozili čamce.

Prvi balovi u novoj prestonici priređivani su u „Zdaniju“ (zgrada u ul. Kralja Petra) koje je knez Mihailo saziđao 1840. godine upravo za strane ljude, „naviknute na udobne prostorije.“ Sledeće godine knez je priredio bal na kom su se mogle videti dame u odelu s tepelucima, i bajaderima, ali

Queen Natalija Obrenović (1859-1941), the wife of King Milan. She organized the Serbian court life according to the models of Vienna and Paris







During the rule of Prince Mihailo Obrenović, balls became more refined

Isto i u krinolinama. Sam knez bio je u fraku, a ostala gospoda su na sebi imala orijentalno, građansko, činovničko ili vojničko odelo. Ovaj bal ostao je zapamćen i po senzaciji koju su izazvale milker sveće, koje su gorele u svećnjacima i polijelejima. Svečane proslave i balovi od tada se nisu mogli ni zamisliti bez njih.

### ŽIVETI U STILU BEČA I PARIZA

U drugoj polovini XIX veka u Beogradu se zabavljalo kao i u ostalim evropskim prestonicama. Društveni život viših slojeva odvijao se na raskošnim dvorskim balovima koji su redovno priređivani od dolaska kneza Mihaila i kneginje Julije.

Knez Mihailo Obrenović dva puta je vladao Kneževinom Srbijom (1839-1842, i 1860-1868). Zajedno sa ocem, knezom Milošem, posle progona koje je trajalo 16 godina, nastanio se u Beču. Zahvaljujući očevom bogatstvu bio je rado viđen gost na mnogim elitnim zabavama, čak i na balovima koje je priređivao car Franja Josif. Na jednom od tih balova knez Mihailo se zaljubio u Juliju Hunjadi, sa kojom se venčao u ruskoj kapeli 1853. godine.

Tokom druge vladavine kneza Mihaila društveni život u Beogradu, kao i na dvoru, znatno se promenio. Uz podršku kneginje, sagradio je novi dvor,

u koji se nije uselio, ali je od starog Konaka kneza Miloša, stvorio evropski dvor. Uvedena su i nova dvorska pravila koja su morali svi da poštuju, kao i etikeciju, kako na dvoru, tako i u ophođenju u društvu.

Balovi na dvoru tog vremena, koje su knez i kneginja priređivali, postali su mnogo otmeniji i gospodstveniji.

Ostao je zapamćen bal u Konaku iz januara 1865. godine po jednom spoljašnjem događaju. Pao je veliki sneg, fijakera za iznajmljivanje nije bilo te se postavilo pitanje kako uopšte doći do dvora i prisustvovati balu. „Najposle je po nečijoj srećnoj ideji, garnizonar naredio: te je eskadron konjice u širokom frontu projahao nekoliko puta od Dvora do Stambol kapije i gore do Maneža – tamo i natrag, sve dotle dok konji grudima i nogama nisu debeli, visoki sneg rasprtili i ugazili.“ (K. Hristić, Zapisi starog Beograđanina). Tako je napravljen put ka dvoru i omogućeno održavanje bala.

Knez Mihailo dočekivao je svoje goste u salonu obučen u frak preko kojeg je bila lenta sa ruskim ordenom Belog orla. Kneginja Julija sedela je na kanabetu sa nekom od svojih dama.

Čitav život na dvoru bio je protkan ženskim uticajima i intrigama. Najveći uticaj na kneževom dvoru imala je svakako kneginja Julija. No, ona se nije najbolje osećala u Beogradu. Osim toga što nije bila omiljena jer je bila strankinja, protiv nje je bio i deo dvorske kamarile predvođen Ankom Obrenović-Konstantinović, kneževom sestrom od strica. Spretnom dvorskom intrigom knez je saznao za neverstvo svoje supruge koja je sedam godina bila u vezi sa grofom Arenbergom. Knez nije mogao oprostiti supruzi neverstvo i 4. jula 1865. ispratio je kneginju u Beč. Iako je došlo do razlaza, zakonski brak nije bio poništen. Posle njenog odlaska, Ankin uticaj na dvoru i na kneza još više je ojačao.

Za razliku od balova kneginje Julije, Anka je organizovala najbolja posela u Beogradu. Podelila ih je u tri grupe: ženska, ženska umetnička i "šarena" posela (muško-ženska). Bila je odličan organizator i diktirala je način zabave, trudeći se da dvorski život bude što veseliji.

Još kao mlada devojka Anka je bila zaljubljena u svog brata kneza Mihaila, ali je to na vreme prekinula njena majka Tomanija. No, sada je imala ideju da uda svoju ćerku Katarinu za kneza, i terala ju je da mu piše ljubavna pisma. Ubedila je Katarinu da joj pripada mesto kneginje. Knez se zaljubio u svoju mladu rođaku, a pesma „Što se roje misli moje“ koju je napisao još 1861. (komponovao Kornelije Stanković) postala je popularna tek od njegovog zaljublivanja u Katarinu. Knez Mihailo i Katarina su bili u petom kolenu srodstva (Srpska pravoslavna crkva dopuštala je brak tek od šestog kolena), i



zbog rodoskrnavljenja, mnogi su bili protiv te tragične i za njih oboje kobne veze.

Međutim, knez je odlučio da uzme Katarinu, očekujući da okonča brak sa Julijom i privoli mitropolita za blagoslov novom braku. Tri dana uoči ubistva knez se verio sa Katarinom. Za vreme šetnje u Topčideru, 29. maja/10. juna 1868. godine ubijeni su knez Mihailo i Anka, a Katarina je ranjena. Njen život i dalje će biti interesantan, praćen i tragedijama i skandalima.

### BALOV I NA KRALJEVSKOM DVORU

Kralj Milan Obrenović (1868-1889), i kraljica Natalija nastavili su tradiciju održavanja dvorskih balova. Njihovi balovi predstavljali su važnu društvenu obavezu, na njih se išlo samo uz pozivnicu, a balska toaleta bila je obavezna. Pripreme za bal trajale su i po nekoliko meseci, jer su dame pratile modne trendove i naručivale haljine iz Beča, Pariza i Pešte. Muškarci su na balu nosili frak, a vojna lica paradne uniforme.

Svaka dama na balu je dobijala „red igara“, knjižicu sa programom, u koji je upisivala partnera kao i igru koju je odigrala. Na balskom „redu igara“ uvek je stavljano na prvo mesto kolo Srbijanka, zatim neki valcer, pa kolo kraljice Natalije. Naizmenice je išla jedna srpska pa jedna „strana“ igra. Srpsko kolo predstavljalo je najzapaženiju igru na svakom balu u Beogradu. Bal se delio na dva dela: do ponoći i od ponoći. Obično je na programu bilo dvadesetak igara, a na kraju

štampanog programa je pisalo „Ustaj diko, zora je“. U ponoć se otmeniji svet povlačio, a posle iscrpljenog reda igara nastajao je najburniji deo igranke bez stroge etikecije. Za vreme odmora, kavaljeri i dame su išli pod ruku salom u krug, i to su bili trenuci predviđeni za udvaranja, jer se za vreme igre nije uopšte razgovaralo.

Kraljica Natalija je, po povratku iz inostranstva, u zimu 1895/96 vratila u dvorske salone posela. U toj zimskoj sezoni kraljica je priredila dva velika i dva mala bala.

Svake nedelje posle podne organizovala je posela na koja su dolazili najugledniji građani tadašnjeg Beograda, sa svojim sinovima i kćerima. Na poselima su bile prisutne i sve njene dvorske dame.

Na ovim poselima započela je i romansa njenog sina Aleksandara sa dvorskom damom Dragom Mašin. Po odlasku iz Beograda kraljica je u Bijaricu, na francuskoj obali, povelila i svoju dvorskiju damu. Deset godina mlađi, kralj Aleksandar se bliže upoznao s Dragom u Bijaricu, koja je po povratku u Beograd postala njegova milosnica. Neobična ljubav između kralja i obične građanke krunisana je brakom.

Knez Mihailo i kralj Milan bili su oženjeni strankinjama iz nižeg ugarskog i vlaško-bojarskog plemstva. Oba ova braka nisu uspela, i kneginja Julija i kraljica Natalija napustile su Srbiju. Venčanje kralja Aleksandra sa Dragom bilo je zbog toga predstavljeno kao prednost,

iako je ono uzburkalo javno mnjenje i umanjilo popularnost dinastije Obrenović.

Kao što su prethodne vladarke uvele svoje navike i običaje tako je došlo do promena i dolaskom nove kraljice, koja je dvor uredila po uzoru na tradicionalnu srpsku kuću. Kraljica Draga je uvela Vaskršnji post od Velike nedelje, iako se do tada postilo samo na Veliki petak. Sa kraljevske trpeze nestali su luksuzni francuski proizvodi.

Većina savremenika i istoričara, smatrali su da ih je ovom neprikladnom ženidbom kralj Aleksandar Obrenović poveo u sigurnu propast – gašenje dinastije. S istorijske pozornice Kraljevine Srbije Obrenovići su sišli 3. maja 1903. (događaj poznat pod imenom „Majski prevrat“). Te noći grupa od 28 oficira nasilno je prodrila u dvor, ubila kralja i kraljicu, a njihova tela bacila kroz prozor. Krvava smena na prestolu izazvala je više uzbuđenja u Evropi nego u Srbiji. O ovom događaju starešina Savamalskog kvarta obavestio je Upravnika varoši da se sem poznatih događaja u varoši „ništa novo desilo nije“.

Veliki modernizacijski uzlet u XIX veku nije imao dug kontinuiran razvoj, jer će biti ponovo prekinut naglim promenama, dinastičkim smenama, raspadom i preoblikovanjem države, ali isto tako i ratovima (balkanskim i svetskim).

■ JOVANKA VESELINOVIĆ  
Po građi Istorijskog arhiva Beograda

- Menu of the formal dinner at the court from 1899. The influence of western cuisine was first visible at the court. Dishes were prepared according to German recipes, but the meal ended with Turkish coffee. Serbian dishes were rarely on the menu at the court, mainly it offered western, i.e. French cuisine.

- Jelovnik svečanog ručka na dvoru 1899. Uticaj zapadne kuhinje u prvo vreme opažao se na dvoru. Jela su pripremana prema nemačkim receptima, ali se ručak završavao turskom kafom. Na dvoru se tada retko koristio srpski jelovnik; uglavnom se prešlo na zapadnu, i to francusku kuhinju.

