Images of Montenegro in Anglo-American Creative Writing and Film

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By

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INTRODUCTION

"Let's do an experiment!" Peter suggested and started knocking on doors of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Nottingham. It was in 2000. Marija mostly stayed out of view. "South America, no?" "In Portugal!" "Isn't it near Morocco?" One cannot stay indifferent even if one is a sworn cosmopolitan. Later in the United States her daughters were explaining: "It's just across Italy." Finally, in 2009, the three of them were in an Albuquerque shop, when a very friendly assistant asked: "And where're you guys from?" When they replied, he exclaimed: "Montenegro! I know exactly where it is. I saw the last James Bond."

Across the ocean, in Montreal, Neil says that he first heard about Montenegro reading a novel that appeared almost a whole century before the said movie—F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Chapter IV, Part 1:

> "Then came the war […] I was promoted to be a major, and every Allied government gave me a decoration—even Montenegro, little Montenegro down on the Adriatic Sea!"
>
> Little Montenegro! He lifted up the words and nodded at them—with his smile. The smile comprehended Montenegro's troubled history and sympathized with the brave struggles of the Montenegrin people. It appreciated fully the chain of national circumstances which had elicited this tribute from Montenegro's warm little heart. […]
>
> He reached in his pocket, and a piece of metal, slung on a ribbon, fell into my palm.
>
> "That's the one from Montenegro."
>
> To my astonishment, the thing had an authentic look.
>
> "Orderi di Danilo," ran the circular legend, "Montenegro, Nicolas Rex."

As a child, Neil might have put it aside as another fictional land. And he did not think of it before the war started in 1991, when, being a news addict and a lover of maps, he became capable of actually pinning down its very small size on the map. In 2011 he was on a tour in Korea when a colleague texted that they were invited to a conference by the University of Montenegro—wherever it was!

We contemplated this subject over the years and eventually decided to write down our thoughts on this paradoxical presence of Montenegro on the maps of Anglophone travellers. We've looked in the travel writing, journalistic reports, and fictional depictions of Montenegro starting from the late eighteenth century until today. Although there are claims that the first mentions of the region appear in Shakespeare,[1] in 2016 Montenegro is still a well-kept secret of Europe. We also noticed that these observations were sometimes written by persons who never stepped on Montenegrin soil, but relied on second-hand information. Thus, the great Romantics, who so much praised the simple and the natural, never once set foot in Montenegro whose tourist slogan is still "Wild Beauty." However, numerous tourist websites recently quoted Lord Byron saying:

> At the moment of the creation of our planet, the most beautiful merging of land and sea occurred at the Montenegrin seaside... When the pearls of nature were sworn, an abundance of them were strewn all over this area.

A 2006 article is even titled "Jewel that thrilled Byron and Bond."[2] But Byron, just as James Bond, never came to Montenegro. Byron did not even sail by it. His trips did take him via Gibraltar or Naples to the Ionian, Greece and Albania, but stopping in the Montenegrin sea would be a huge detour for his famous yet still short presence in the area.[3] Donald B. Pram does mention that Byron was whimsically looking at *Montenero*, where he used to have a lover, but it must have been the one in Leghorn, Italy.[4]

In the early nineteenth century, visitors were usually politicians, military officers, journalists, and a few scientists, who visited the country on an already full itinerary, usually on their way to Constantinople. During the process known in European history as the "Eastern Question," few saw

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[1] Cf. Peter Preston, "Imagining Montenegro: From Illyria to James Bond," in M. Knežević, A. Nikčević-Batrićević, eds., *Recounting Cultural Encounters* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009). In "Echoes of Saint Vladimir in Shakespeare's *Tempest* and *Macbeth*," Anđelka Raguž argues that *The Legend of Vladimir of Duklja*, which tells of the revival and rebirth of this patron saint of Montenegro, parallels the plots of *The Tempest* and *Macbeth* (research presented at the XII International Conference on Anglo-American Literary Studies, *Renaissance*(*s*), American Corner, Podgorica, September 15-16, 2016).

[2] Nik Pollinger, "Jewel that thrilled Byron and Bond," *The Telegraph* (Nov. 11, 2006). http://www.telegraph.co.uk-/finance/property/expat-property/4202029/Jewel-that-thrilled-Byron-and-Bond.html.

[3] Norman Page, *A Byron Chronology* (London: MacMillan), 1988.

[4] Donald B. Prell, *Sailing with Byron from Genoa to Cephalonia (1823)* (Palm Springs, CA: Strand Publishing, 2009).

Montenegro other than as part of an unsettled region whose boundaries had yet to be determined by the Great Powers. Between the Berlin Congress in 1878 and the end of World War I, Montenegro made a brief appearance on the world stage as an independent country, even a recognized kingdom, and this time gave us plenty of written records. After the Great War, however, Montenegro faded into the background as a province in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and remained so until it gained independence in 2006. These decades of its absence from political maps might count for the many misconceptions about the country. As such, Montenegro provided an almost perfect dramatic setting for fantastic books and movies.

As was the case with the Balkans as a whole, Montenegro would usually appear or reappear in the West's consciousness with the outbreak of wars. When it comes to the Anglophone world, even then it remained marginalized on the larger Balkan map because of its peripheral political influence. It was so even with the mushrooming of travel and other fictional and non-fictional writing about Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the outbreak of civil war in Yugoslavia. When travellers, writers, reporters rushed to the Balkans to understand for themselves the reasons for the atrocities and make their urgent social and political stand, even when, as Goldsworthy explains, "some of the dullest backwaters in the former Yugoslavia have acquired a dubious romantic resonance,"[5] Montenegro, which did not suffer major calamities, did not provide much allure. Paul Theroux, in his much praised narrative of his Mediterranean tour *The Pillars of Hercules* (1995) does not bother to cross the border from Croatia into Montenegro on his way to Albania, but goes back to Split wherefrom he ferries to Ancona and then to Durrës. Other acclaimed travel writers, like Bill Bryson, in *Neither Here Nor There*, 1998, and Tony White, in *Another Fool in the Balkans: In the Footsteps of Rebecca West*, 2006, do not even mention Montenegro. Robert D. Kaplan in his—notorious in the Balkans[6]—*Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, 1993, mentions it only as a part of King Dušan's empire and the birthplace of communist dissident Milovan Đilas.

However, travel narratives about Montenegro cannot be looked at

[5] Vesna Goldsworthy, "Invention and In(ter)vention: The Rhetoric of Balkanization," in D. I. Bjelić, O. Savić, eds. *Balkan as a Metaphor*: *Between Globalization and Fragmentation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts-London, England: MIT, 2002), 29.

[6] Cf. C. Simmons, "Baedeker Barbarism: Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* and Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts*," *Human Rights Review*, Vol II. Issue 1 (2000), 109-124.

separately from those produced on the Balkans in general. Like the rest of the region, it was a target of generalisations and reductionism. Montenegro is almost unapproachable, barren, wild; its people, like their mountains, are massive, fierce, and they, as Maria Todorova effectively phrases it, "do not care to conform to the standards of behavior devised as normative by and for the civilized world."[7] Vesna Goldsworthy notes that

> [p]robably the most commonly used words of Balkan origin in the English language—"bugger," "balkanization" and "vampire" […] reflect the dread of insidious and—more worryingly—compliant pollution' of Western Europe by the Balkans.[8]

So insidious became its name "the Balkans" that, as Božidar Jezernik argues, it was not advisable to use it in decent company.[9]

The literature and a few films that we have considered can easily go under the category of, depending on the time of their publication, founders or followers of Balkanist discourse. As such they have been assessed through postcolonial critical tools and mostly judged as prejudiced and unjust, sharing, thus, destiny with the largest part of travel writing since postcolonialism popularized travel writing in academia. Most of the critical writing about the travelogues on the Balkans is under the direct influence of Edward Said's theory on Orientalism, and as such it tends to point out to these travelogues being formatted by the Western hegemonic and essentialising discourse. The Balkan stereotypes, therefore, are seen as a product of this discourse and agents in textual colonisation of the region. The Balkans is understood as a myth, a metaphor, an idea. Historically, it was displaced back in the past, mostly in the Middle Ages. Some of the images are developed exclusively on a systematic accumulation of negative characteristics of the place—circling around the semantic fields of violence and incivility. Others, on the contrary, celebrate its noble primitivism, simplicity, honesty, hospitality, and mourn to see it lost under an aggressive materialist culture. Often this latter group would complain after coming back to "civilisation" or coming onto something modern and inauthentic in the Balkans. But, as Andrew Hammond argues, this adoration equally places the Balkans in the realm of backwardness.[10]

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[7] Marija Todorova, *Imaging the Balkans* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 3.

[8] Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*: *Imperialism of Imagination* (New Heaven-London: Yale UP, 1998), 74.

[9] Božidar Jezernik, "Europe and its Other (i.e. The Balkans)," *periferia*, no. 6 (June 2007), 3. www.periferia.name.

[10] Andrew N. Hammond, *The Debated Lands: British Travel Writing and the Construction of the Balkans*, doctoral thesis (University of Warwick, 2002), 145-

As the primitive Other, the Balkans also became a mirror in which the travellers "saw themselves and noticed, first and foremost, how advanced and civilised they were."[11] Jezernik further states that "[i]n this respect, we can argue that there can be no Europe without the Balkans,"[12] just as there would never be Occident without the Orient. This, logically, produced a lot of contradictions. As the "doorstep of Europe," to use Tony Blair's metaphor, the Balkans was at the same time in Europe and out of it. It was an embodiment of the lost, though primitive, values to be encouraged into civilising, and, at the same time, an abhorrent Other, which is better to be subdued and ignored.

In both cases, the travellers' perspectives tended to be superior, i.e. the travellers could not avoid looking through, what M.L. Pratt dubbed, "imperial eyes."[13] Those who travelled with altruistic intentions would soon become the stars in the region, and were even called queens and saviours. And many of them insisted on their heroism in surmounting difficult and wild Balkan tracks to endear their "gentle readers" at home for their intrepid endeavours. Indeed, this trend continued until recently, when some of the travellers explicitly want to avoid associations with these early trends, especially being pronouncedly aware of their oscillating between fiction and nonfiction.[14] No one can claim what part of the original impression was later censored by both the authors and the publishers. Similarly, as all the authors find it important to talk about the history of this little known place, one cannot help wondering how reliable their records were, especially in those early attempts—yet attempts very much formative of the convention of travelling and writing about the region. At their best, these accounts were combinations of what the travellers learned from histories and other travel narratives written mostly by their compatriots, and sometimes also from the native oral tradition.

When looked at chronologically, A. Hammond defines three distinctive phases of Balkanist discourse—a denigratory phase before World War I, romanticizing between the world wars, and "a return to denigration in the 1990s."[15] He equally argues that these paradigms have not depended only on the conditions in the Balkans, but also on the travellers' own cultural

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146. http://go.-warwick.ac.uk/wrap/1284.

[11] B. Jezernik, *op. cit*., 4.

[12] *Ibid*.

[13] M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 1992).

[14] Cf. Lauren Gieseke, *"The World Outside": Images of the Balkans in British Travel Narratives, 1903-1907*, *Su Scholar* (2015), 14; https://suscholar.southwestern.edu/bitstream-/handle/11214/114/World%20Outside.pdf?sequence.

[15] A. N. Hammond, *op. cit*., 5.

background. Having explored the links between these phases, Hammond concludes:

> pre-1914 denigration reveals close similarities to colonial discourse, […] inter-war romanticism reflects the modernist quest for exoticism and psychological escape, and […] the reappearance of denigration coincides with the advent of postmodern scepticism.[16]

We will also follow these vignettes chronologically to point out how the rhetoric they share dangerously builds a caricatural image of the country. However, we are still provided a very lively mosaic of landscapes, history, people, their costumes, houses, everyday life, which are only sometimes distorted. No one can claim that these descriptions were not influenced by the ideologies the travellers inherited at home and were not filtered through their own cultural grids, but in a significant number they evoke places that are now forever lost—destroyed in wars, by earthquakes, faulty development planning, or simply by time.

When the first articles about Montenegro appeared in European papers and journals, Montenegrin Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović Njegoš read them attentively and considered the English to be more impartial in their portrayal of Montenegro than the French and Germans. Once, in Vienna, in the company of European politicians, he said that it might have appeared unexpected, but the English "observe and with great attention note down and evaluate everything, and, unless somebody deceives them, they are accurate in their descriptions."[17]

Finally, our intention is to avoid politicizing, essentialising, and self-stigmatization and to conclude that the absence of the country as a real historical, socio-political, and cultural complexity[18] in the imagination of the "outside world" has been conditioned by its long and manifold isolation. As the last two decades produced an abundance of literature on the Balkans in contemporary travel writing, we are consciously stepping out of the essayistic tradition and, except from this introduction, we are leaving most of the theoretical part of our research out of this book.

Marija and Neil
September 2016

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[16] *Ibid*.
[17] Bojka Đukanović, "Njegoš and England," *Encyclopedia Njegoš*, translated by Marija Knežević (Beograd: Pitura, Podgorica: Foundation Njegoš, 2006), 385.
[18] We make this point in "Towards Montenegro: A Land of Giants and Panthers" (*Facta universitatis, Linguistics and Literature*, Vol. 13, No1, 2015).

PART ONE

MONTENEGRO IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

From Illyria to Crna Gora

The name Crna Gora officially appeared in one of King Stefan Uroš II Milutin's charters from 1296, in its old Slavic plural variant as *Црне Горе*, relating to the region around Lake Skadar and named by the thick dark conifer forests under Mount Lovćen. Soon after, it appeared in its Latin version in the Italian sources as *Montagna Nero*, *Monte Negro*, and *Montenegro*. Some sources say that those were first the Venetians to name the country Montenegro after the steep black cliffs they faced when approaching it from the sea.

The oldest archeological site in Montenegro, Crvena Stijena, near the border of Bosnia and Herzegovina, shows that people lived here sixty thousand years ago. Settlements from the stone, bronze and iron ages are found all around the country. In the Classical world, it was a part of the Illyrian territory. King Agron of the Labeates founded Shkodër, which in the third century B.C. became the Illyrian capital. The Labeates lived from piracy and for that reason often battled with Rome. Eventually, Rome subdued the Illyrians and occupied their territories west of the Bay of Kotor. Their Queen Teuta moved the capital east, to Risan, Montenegro. Eventually, *Bellum Batonianum*, as the Romans recorded the war with the rebelling Illyrians in the 6-9 year B.C., marked the conquest of the whole Balkans.

The Docleates, the Illyrian tribe neighbouring the Labeates, found their town *Docleata*, Duklja, near today's Podgorica. The town gave the name to the province, which in Diocletian's time became a part of the *Praevaliana, Prevalis* of the Eastern Roman Empire. It had the towns of Rhisium (Risan of today), Butua (Budva), and Olcinium (Ulcinj) on the coast, as well as Adarba (Anderva, Nikšić) in the interior. The Balkan provinces shared the destiny of the empire, and when attacked by the northern tribes the autochthone population fled either to the well-fortified coastal towns or in the mountains.

Slavic migrations started in the fifth and sixth centuries, and already by the ninth they had its recognized Princedom Duklja. Its famous ruler

Vojislav Vojislavljević managed to withstand attacks from the powerful Byzantium. His son Mihajlo became the king of Duklja. In 1077 Duklja was named Zeta. Mihajlo's son Bodin, who ruled from Shkodër, united the Slavic lands of Raška, Bosnia, and Zahumlje. However, at the end of the twelfth century, the Grand Prince of Raška, Stevan Nemanja conquered Zeta and gave it to his son Vukan. Vukan was succeeded by Đorđe, then Uroš I, but around the middle of the thirteenth century, the law of succession was abolished, and after a century of dynastic fights the throne was passed to the Balšić family. The first three generations of the Balšić dynasty incessantly fought against the Venetians for the coastal towns. These struggles were inherited by the Lazarevićs until the mid-fifteenth century when the Lower Zeta and the coast became Venetian.

Their successors, the family Crnojević, were Venetian vassals, but were recognized as the rulers of Zeta. In the time of Ivan Crnojević, however, Ottoman troops flooded the region and Ivan had to escape from his capital Žabljak on Skadar Lake to Cetinje, where he built the Cetinje monastery. In 1492, Ivan's son Đurađ founded the first printing press in Cyrillic, and in 1494 it printed its first book *Oktoih.*

Montenegro was conquered in 1499 but remained recognized as an autonomous villayet within the Ottoman Empire and as such its tribes were freed of taxes and numerous other obligations towards the Sultan. However, the tribes continuously raised rebellions and fought. Their fight was especially empowered by the succession to the throne of the Petrović Njegoš dynasty, which ruled Montenegro from 1696 to 1918.

Before the mid-nineteenth century, Montenegro was an almost absolutely isolated country, surrounded by hostile neighbours, Venetians, Austro-Hungarians, and Ottomans. Only the rare politicians, journalists, scientists, and usually spies, visited it. Montenegrins, except for their rulers, were rarely seen abroad and even their neighbours knew little about them. Although it played an important part in the warring Balkans, depictions of the country were rare and random, even in the field of cartography. Because Montenegro did not have its school of cartography, a series of maps were produced by foreign scholars in which Montenegro was shown only

> as the border region of the Great Powers, which either extended up to its borders or controlled certain parts of the country. Some maps appeared as sketches or the recollections of its territory by intentional travellers or chance visitors who were passing through the area for other reasons.[1]

[1] Goran Barović, "Montenegro on Old Maps," *The Balkans in Travel Writing*, ed. Marija Krivokapić (New Castle: Cambridge Scholars), 67.

Therefore, it remained practically unknown. As Peter Preston discussed in 2009,[2] a wider frame to this isolation has been provided by the absence of any significant traces of Hellenist, Roman, and Renaissance heritage that also determined the perception of Montenegro as a culturally empty space. While the great Romantics, Byron and Shelley, rushed to Greece and Albania for the allure of these countries' otherness, their contrast to the cold judgemental north, and their fight for freedom, Montenegro remained unsung in England until the late nineteenth century—and even then was only partially known. For this reason, like the Balkans in general, as Vesna Goldsworthy elaborated in her seminal *Inventing Ruritania*, 1998, Montenegro has appeared especially suitable for the projection of various Western fantasies. Preston argues that Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, from 1601, set in exotic Illyria, "an imaginative realm, an evocative but remote location, unvisitable and unverifiable,"[3] in which the author let his characters dream their exhilarating dreams, may be considered to be the first literal reference to the country and to have pioneered a long tradition of imagining Montenegro as an almost inaccessible and fantastic realm.

> The plot occupied my thoughts a great deal […] less for its historical veracity or the details of the production, than for Feste's cry that nothing that is so, is so. As the play moves towards its denouement, its disguises cast off and its stratagems explained, Feste and other characters will have much more reason to doubt the certainty of what they thought they knew or felt.[4]

Šćepan Mali

In his book on the history of Yugoslav and British cultural relations between 1650 and World War II (1990), Branko Momčilović[5] writes that the first references to Montenegro to appear in Great Britain were three official reports published in the eighteenth century. The first two were published in *The Annual Register* in 1767 and 1768, and they deal with the controversial figure of Montenegrin ruler Šćepan Mali. The third was by an Irish poet and traveller, Eyles Irwin.

Šćepan Mali, Steven the Small, or Stefanino Piccolo by his Venetian name, is also known in Montenegro as the imposter king. He ruled the

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[2] P. Preston, *op. cit.*, 11.
[3] *Ibid*., 27.
[4] P. Preston, *op. cit*., 27-28.
[5] Cf. Branko Momčilović, *Iz istorije jugoslovensko-britanskih kulturnih veza od 1650. godine do II svetskog rata* (Novi Sad: Institut za strane jezike, 1990), 10-11.

country in the period between 1767 and 1773 under the name of the Romanov Tsar Peter III and was credited for strengthening the central government and the subjugation of tribal will. He is said to have successfully fought against the Ottoman Empire and is believed to have been murdered by his own servant who was paid by the pasha of Shkodër.[6] However, the origin of Šćepan Mali is still unknown. Some say that he must have come from Dalmatia or Bosnia, sometimes by the surname of Raičević and sometimes of Teodorović. Many still believe that he must have been the said Russian emperor who was allegedly assassinated in 1762 in a conspiracy organised by his wife Catherine II, but who, actually, managed to escape and hide among Montenegrins. There was also a Cossack from around Don valley named Emelian Pugachov who raised a rebellion in 1773 and who also named himself Peter III.

Before this, Montenegro was ruled by an old and peaceful prince-bishop Sava Petrović Njegoš (1735-1781), who was a successful diplomat, when it came to both internal politics and international affairs, and who signed numerous peace treaties with European powers. He was succeeded by Vasilije Petrović Njegoš (1750-1766), who had few of his predecessor's negotiating skills and who was always disposed to fight, trusting too much the tactless tribal leaders. The country was, therefore, ready for the appearance of Šćepan Mali, and the Assembly of All Nations promoted him to Tsar on October 17, 1767. His appointment presented a short but an important break in the succession of the Petrović dynasty. Among other things, he separated the ecclesiastical from the secular government over the country, founded the first permanent court of justice and the first permanent royal guard, prevented numerous intertribal fights and outlawed blood feuds. He started building roads and conducted the first national census. Šćepan Mali is said to have spoken German, Italian, and French, apart from Montenegrin and Russian. He was so much appreciated by Montenegrins that the tribes even denied supporting their big sister nation Russia in one of its wars against Turkey because of Russian animosity towards Šćepan. Neither were other great powers of the time, Austria, Turkey and the Venetian Republic, happy with the empowerment of the central government in Montenegro.

[6] Shkodër is Albanian name for the town. It also appears as Scutari in English texts. The Montenegrin version of the town and the lake is Skadar.

Eyles Irwin

Eyles Irwin was a poet of Irish origin. He was born in Calcutta and grew up in India, serving, like his father before him, the East India Company. He travelled much indulging in social and literary pursuits. Irwin was a minor poet in the history of Irish poetry, but his oriental travels were rich. Among them is his piece of writing devoted to Montenegro, with a descriptive and wordy title that was the fashion of the time: *Some Account and Particulars Relative to the Natives of Montagna Negro, on the Coast of Dalmatia, at the Head of the Gulf of Cattaro, from a Voyage from Venice, to Lutichea, Being a Supplement to a Series of Adventures in the Course of a Voyage up to the Red Sea, etc*. (1788). Irwin stopped in Kotor, as Momčilović narrates, on his journey from Venice to the East along the Adriatic Sea.[7]

In the collection titled *The Georgian Era: Voyagers and Travellers. Philosophers and Men of Science*—originally published in 1924 as a reproduction of important historical works, in memory, as it says on the original cover "of the most eminent persons, who have flourished in Great Britain, from the accession of George I to the demise of George IV"—it is said that Irwin's life was full of adventures. In early April 1777, for example, he travelled to Suez.

> [I]n his way whither, he was compelled to anchor on the coast of Arabia, at a place called Yambo, where no European vessel had ever before touched, and where he was seized and imprisoned in a tower; from which he was only enabled to escape by bringing the commandant with a rich present. After paying a large sum for a vessel to convey him to Suez, he left Yambo on the 10th of June; but instead of making for the former port, the treacherous Arabians sailed to Cosire, in Upper Egypt, where he was compelled on land on the 9th of the following month. Towards the end of July, he joined a caravan, with which he proceeded to Guinah, where he was detained a prisoner for some time, robbed of several valuable articles, and compelled to make expensive presents to the vizier.[8]

Even for such an adventurer, cognizant of different climes and cultures, used to roaming around the Arabian deserts, "the natives of Montagna Negro" appeared as "a parcel of banditti," a "ferocious tribe [that] acknowledge no

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[7] B. Momčilović, *op. cit*., 21-22.

[8] *The Georgian Era: Voyagers and Travellers. Philosophers and Men of Science* (London: Vizetelly, Branston and Co., Fleet Street, MDCCCXXXIV): Vol. III, p. NNN. Google Books, https://books.google.co.in/books? …Irwin%20Eyles%-2C%20Irish%2C%20Calcutta&f=false

master." And, who "being equally out of reach of the Venetians and Turks, serve as an impenetrable barrier to those nations in this quarter."[9] Living in "almost inaccessible mountains,"[10] they, therefore, managed to keep their freedom, but, as Irwin observes, under the terrible condition of losing their humanity:

> They preserved, indeed, their liberty by this desperate step; but lost, what is, perhaps, of more consequence to the happiness of mankind—the manners, the morals, the laws, which form and preserve, unbroken, the bonds of society.[11]

Irwin sees Montenegrins as regressing back to the condition of nature, having destroyed all the traces of civilization their predecessors had built up. Yet, he argues, there is a big difference between these savages and those of the modern age—he had in mind Native Americans and Arabs—to the benefit of the latter. The Montenegrin has virtues mixed with the vices of unenlightened minds. Like Arabs, he writes, Montenegrins also practices blood revenge, but their thirst for revenge is "bloodier and unquenchable," and is encouraged by mothers. The young man, who is to seek revenge, is continually reminded of this obligation by his mother, who constantly waves her dead husband's bloody shirt around the house. And when this "hungry leopard" exits his "dark cave" he gets terrible satisfaction in killing his father's murderer, who has usually—paradoxically for a country led by blood revenge—forgotten about it already. It clashes, Irwin says, with all the dictates of reason and humanity, but, unfortunately, it is not in contrast with human nature, for which reason Irwin feels ashamed. He is even ashamed of having these thoughts because they pay no respect to the character of civilised peoples, their virtues of education, and the beauty of their philosophy.[12]

Irwin writes how the young Venetian Republic had to build a huge fortress on the naked rock above Kotor to repel these savages. A few highlanders were allowed in, but only for trade on Sundays. They sold beef, lamb, poultry, game, eggs, vegetables for cotton, wool, gunpowder, and some trifles. While in Kotor, Irwin continues, women did all the work—that is why they were very ugly, unpolished, and always tired—while the men would normally spend their time drinking, smoking, and

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[9] Qt. in Ljiljana Mijanović and Saša Simović, "The Ex-Yu as the Other in Anglo-American Travel Writings," *The Balkans in Travel Writing*, ed. Marija Krivokapić, 128-129.
[10] *Ibid*., 128.
[11] *Ibid*., 129.
[12] Qt. in B. Momčilovic, *op. cit.*, 23.

wrestling. They reminded Irwin, as he watched them from above the fortress, of Milton's fallen angels in hell. But, to be safe, there was always a cannon ready to defend against them. For only this reason he and his fellow travellers dared approach one of these groups, while escorted by a Venetian officer, count Zanawich. This wild group was happy to talk to the strangers and one of them told, in Italian, of how he had once travelled all the way to England on a Venetian ship. Out of sheer curiosity, Irwin accepted their invitation to visit their homeland because he was sure that savages, both those in Arabia and these in the "Greek" mountains, would never molest the innocent.[13]

Irwin calculated the number of Montenegrins. If it was said that they could field 14,000 warriors, and a warrior to a barbarian race being every male capable of holding a gun, then there must have been at least three times more women and children, adding up to 50,000.[14]

Momčilović supposes that Irwin may have used unreliable sources while drawing conclusions about the country. It may be that Irwin was only noting down the stories he might have heard among the citizens of Kotor who were not friendly towards Montenegrins. N. Čagorović and C. Carmichael also assume that early records about Montenegro were highly dependent on the prejudices of the citizens of Kotor "who described the highlanders in the harsh limestone mountains that surround their bay as 'barbaric'."[15]

The most amusing of Irwin's claims is the one that Montenegrins are of Greek origin, but, alas, only "wretched remains" of a once splendid nation.

> [W]hen Greece declined from her former greatness, mouldered by degrees from the Roman hands, and because a prey to the barbarous nations, these wretched remains of a celebrated people forsook their fertile plains and valleys, and took refuge amidst barren and almost inaccessible mountains.[16]

However, Irwin's narrative certainly started a long standing tradition of placing Montenegro among the primitive tribes of the world, those who were still to be conquered, and within fantastic realms, among the giants and Spartan warriors, filled with numerous other exaggerations.

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[13] *Ibid.*, 24.
[14] *Ibid.*, 23.
[15] Nebojša A. Čagorović and Cathie Carmichael, "Constructing and Rethinking Montenegrin National Identity," *Nar. umjet*. 43/1 (2006), 61.
[16] Lj. Mijanović and S. Simović, *op. cit.*, 128-129.

PART TWO

MONTENEGRO IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Old Borders

The representations of Montenegro in early maps differed in relation to those who had the power to make maps and who always projected the current politics of the mapmakers' countries. Thus they would normally neutralise geographical orientation markers and invalidate the status of the Montenegrin state by presenting it only as a border zone of the great powers.[1] Yet, these borders were both real and metaphorical. Even in the mid nineteenth century Prince Bishop Petar II Petrović complained about the flaws in the existing maps and called them "[p]oems, poems, one doesn't draw a map without taking measures in advance."[2] The same tendency was evident in the travel, journalistic, political and other narratives of the time.

When it comes to real borders, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Montenegro was still as small as the old Zeta, also known as Old Montenegro or the Villayet of the Black Mountain. It consisted of four districts, called *nahija*: Katunska, Riječka, Lješanska, and Crmnička. Its eastern border with the Ottoman Empire was delineated by the river Morača. Northwest it spread almost along the river Zeta. The western border was approximately the mountain Orjen, and the coast was held first by Venetians, then the French and, after the Napoleonic wars, Austrians. After 1830 Montenegro gradually started spreading over the central part of the country to include the region around the river Zeta, the towns of Danilovgrad and Spuž, as well as Ostrog and its north-east mountain region towards Kolašin. It was only to resemble the country as we know it today after the Berlin Congress in 1878.

In his book *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*, Tim Youngs defines the most important aspects that determined the nature of the nineteenth-century travel writing:

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[1] Goran Barović, *op. cit.*, 67.
[2] Qt. in Bojka Đukanović, *op. cit.*, 384.

> First, […] there were still, in the last quarter of the century, large uncharted parts of the world. Second, […] a motivation of travel was to fill those blanks (though they were not, of course, blanks to those who lived there). Third, […] once "discovered," many of those places would be exploited for their commercial potential. Fourth, […] ideologies of race impacted on the representation of those places, as well as on dealings with those who inhabited them.[3]

However, because of the unsettled borders and unwelcoming neighbours, in the first half of the nineteenth century, Montenegro was still a blank space to British travellers. Or, half-blank at least—an imagined zone mostly, still remaining in the domain of Joseph Conrad's "fabulous geography." And the travellers' expectations were naturally coloured by a few vague stories about an almost unapproachable country and its wild people. At this time, it was still of no special ideological or political importance. Seen in a global context—with vast regions in the Americas, India, Australia, Africa to be conquered—Montenegro was a Christian villayet threatening no one, too small and of an uninviting natural setting for anyone to practically wish to invest in exploiting it or exerting control over it. Besides, it was in the middle of the region that had just received the name "the Balkans," which increasingly stood for primitivism, lawlessness, and violence.

Montenegro was nowhere on the Grand Tour map, because it contained no important classical monuments. It had few roads and, therefore, was avoided by pilgrims going to Jerusalem, or diplomats travelling to Greece or Istanbul, for instance. Plus, it was hardly approachable and did not offer any commodity for the mass tourism that would appear in the second half of the century. Montenegro was also far from the *Orient Express* route. The first railway appeared in Montenegro only at the beginning of the twentieth century. As Youngs writes, drawing from H. Perkin's *The Age of the Railway*,

> [i]t has been said that "the modern world began" with the railway; that "the first conquest of physical distance by mechanical power was the revolution in communications from which all the rest have stemmed."[4]

The absence of the nineteenth century and its mechanical power in Montenegro was an agent which initiated a series of social and political

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[3] Tim Youngs, "Introduction: Filling the Blank Spaces," *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*, ed. Tim Youngs (London-New York: Anthem, 2006), 2.
[4] T. Youngs, *op. cit.*, 7.

events that have kept her "undiscovered" almost until today.

For the same reason, as Goldsworthy argues, if there were two kinds of travellers in the Balkans in the nineteenth century, the Philhellenist one and the other interested in the Oriental Balkans, Montenegro offered almost neither. She quotes Reverend William Denton's *Montenegro, Its People and Their History*:

> Their life is one of the primitive, and but for the warfare to which they have been compelled, of almost Arcadian simplicity… Their history is one long epic, in which the deeds of heroism, wrought out in their mountain home, seem more fitted for the verse of the poet than for the sober pen of the historian.[5] [Ellipses and emphases are original unless otherwise noted.]

It seems that Montenegro could not even carry the Balkan badge of "an always-liminal, insufficiently European Europe, the not-quite-Oriental Orient,"[6] but it was the "Other" even in and to the Balkans.

At this time there were still only a few eager to fill in this blank with signs and stories. Bojka Đukanović[7] notes that the first official encounter between Montenegro and Great Britain took place behind the massive wall of Mount Lovćen that separated Montenegro from the coast. This was during the Napoleonic wars when the British fleet, fighting alongside Russia in the Bay of Kotor in 1812-1813, was supported by the Montenegrin army. The English noticed the courage of the gigantic and unflinching Montenegrin warriors and found them comparable only to Homer's. This political and military endeavour was conducted by one of the central diplomatic figures of Great Britain of the time, to become later its prime minister, and certainly one of the great world travellers, George Hamilton Gordon, Lord Aberdeen. Yet, Lord Aberdeen instructed his admiral Freemantle not to involve Montenegrins in the battle for Kotor, because their wild and lawless behaviour might inflict animosity towards the British soldiers among the peaceful citizens of the Bay.[8]

After victory over the French on January 5, 1814, English frigate captain Sir William Hoste left with his troops without establishing any further political, cultural, or even personal links. Although Montenegro claimed its right over the freed territory, the natives of Kotor pleaded for the European powers to give it to Austro-Hungary instead. And so it

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[5] V. Goldsworthy, "The Balkans in the Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing," in *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*, ed. Tim Youngs, 20.
[6] *Ibid.*, 32.
[7] Bojka Đukanović, *op.cit.*, 375.
[8] *Ibid.*

happened that in 1843, three decades later, Charles J.S.M. Lamb wrote that Montenegro is one of a few nations in the world about whom one knew so little and that the name of Montenegro could be hardly found on maps.[9]

Apart from the notorious barbarity of its tribes and its constant warring with Turkey, Austrians propagated calumnious accusations against Montenegro and its rulers because it was in their immediate political interest to keep her isolated and unprotected. E.L. Mitford complained in 1839 that Austrians in the Bay of Kotor and Dubrovnik intentionally thwarted many attempts at visiting these parts, "presenting Montenegrins as barbarous banditti; who scrupled at no crime, and who were amenable to no laws." [10] They constantly impeded the import of goods to Montenegro, especially military equipment. They would allow only cigarettes, wine and other luxuries ordered on behalf of Montenegrin prince-bishops. The interposition of Russia in favour of Montenegro was another serious impediment to any direct show on Britain's part, as John Gardner Wilkinson wrote in 1844.[11]

Such attitudes of foreign governments saddened and embittered Montenegro's rulers. Ljubomir P. Nenadović—one of the first internationally educated Serbs, who served at the court of the Petrović Dynasty—wrote how Njegoš once met an English lord in Naples. The lord asked Njegoš for a photograph with a dedication written in verse. Njegoš took the pen but except for his signature could write nothing. He explained:

> My verses are all gloomy; and I have stopped writing them!—In front of me I can only see a tombstone thus inscribed: Here lies the Montenegrin Prince Bishop; he died having not seen the day of his people's salvation. And we have reason enough to thank your compatriots for this, Sir. Because they wouldn't even let the dead Turkish hand relax under our throat. Whenever you see this picture, remember the million Christians, who are my brothers and who, deprived of any rights, writhe under the Turkish arm; and it is you who defend the Turks. When you go back to rich London and show this picture to your friends, don't tell them: This is a ruler of a happy people: but tell them: This is a martyr of a people fighting a martyr's fight for freedom. Tell them: the Serbs could have fought Turks, could they but propitiate you—the Christians.[12]

[9] *Ibid.*
[10] *Ibid*., 376.
[11] *Ibid*., 375.
[12] *Ibid*., 376.

The Old Roads

Apart from political circumstances and the border impediments in the Bay, once a visitor landed in Kotor—usually on an Austrian steamer from Trieste—there was a real physical obstacle in approaching Montenegro. Until the late nineteenth century, there was only one narrow, steep zigzagging path that led from Kotor over the formidable mountains to the Montenegrin capital of Cetinje. This road still exists. Although it is now broader and paved, travelling it remains a breathtaking adventure. Back in the nineteenth century, A.A. Paton described his experience as follows:

> [B]ut to ascend a face of rock 4000 feet high, and very little out of the perpendicular, was certainly a trial to our nerves. There could not be less than fifty zigzags, one over the other, and, seen from above, the road looks like a coil of ropes. As we passed one tower of the fortress after another, the whole region of Cattaro was seen as from a balloon; the ships were visible only by their decks.[13]

Although, as we have pointed out, not many travellers came to Cetinje during this period, the few who travelled did not fail to describe the road. It remained so prominent in their texts that Edith Durham, who first visited Cetinje in 1900, commented ironically that despite the fact that its description could be found in almost all the foreign sketches of the region, she herself could not help but write about this almost gothic fascination.[14]

Montenegrins used this old road every day, carrying along it their goods to trade in the Montenegrin market in Kotor, but they did not have the means to invest in its maintenance. Montenegro's constant fight for survival was continually exhausting the state and hindering its progress. However, the economic developments in Kotor imposed on its highlander neighbours' modern and more efficient communication channels. The existing road was sufficient for pedestrians and horsemen, but was impossible for carriages and especially automobiles that were soon to become a new reality in the region. In 1873 Austro-Hungarians enacted a new law on infrastructure. Reconstruction of the existing and building of the new roads was also to serve employment of a large part of the population of this part of the monarchy, while another incentive on the improvement of the road was the visit by Franz Joseph in 1875.[15] On the Montenegrin side, Prince Nikola invited the renowned engineer Josip

[13] *Ibid*., 375.
[14] Cf. also Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania: Imperialism of Imagination* (New Heaven-London: Yale UP, 1998), 163.
[15] Snežana Pejović, "Lovćenske serpentine," *Matica*, br. 59 (jesen 2014), 270.

Šilović Slade from Trogir, Croatia, to help the infrastructural development of the country. Slade accepted and during his two decades in Montenegro many roads were built.

Slade came to Montenegro in 1878, while the construction of the road leading up the mountain and including the famous twenty five serpentine turns was finished in 1884. Three of the curves make a very distinct "M," and it is believed, although no sufficient evidence exists, that this particular part of the road was a tribute to Princess Milena. Eighteen kilometres of this road was financed by the Austro-Hungarian government and twenty four by Montenegro. It is said that the price was "one golden ducat per meter."[16]

Interestingly, as Snežana Pejović mentions, one of the results of increasing concern about the road were a series of complaints received by the Municipality of Kotor about private individuals who used the road to sell their produce along it, namely *rakija* (grape brandy), wine, honey, and some carpenter and smith wares.[17] Today, these sellers are still to be found along the curves and their delicacies are praised by many a traveller.

Another interesting note from Pejović's research, which numerous travel writers would echo, is Slade's misfortune in mobilizing enough Montenegrin workers because most of the male population was under arms.[18] However, between the Berlin Congress and the First Balkan War (1912-1913), Montenegro is not known to have been involved in major military events. Maybe this minor detail speaks more of Montenegrin working and fighting habits at the time and supports the general comical image of a Montenegrin man who is not really lazy but may be too proud to work when there are always larger global issues to take care of.

Soon a new maintenance question arose about the unpredictable landslides due to the unfenced pastures of the natives' livestock, which made the road dangerous for travellers. Although this practice was immediately prohibited,[19] still, as one drives along the road one often has to break quickly to avoid collisions with farm animals.

At this time it took nine hours on foot and six hours by car to reach Cetinje from Kotor. There was a regular carriage that cost up to twenty florins, while a mail car travelled back and forth daily too, leaving Kotor at five in the morning to be in Cetinje around eleven. It was equipped for four passengers. It would make a rest stop at the Trojica Hotel, a small one-storey house, then at Krstac, at an inn that offered prosciutto, cheese,

[16] *Ibid.*
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] *Ibid*., 271.
[19] *Ibid*., 275.

olives, sardines, wine and beer, and then in Njeguši, where travellers were served warm meals and were offered accommodation.[20] About all of these we will read in the travel narratives that are to follow. Apart from this, the top of this snaking road stands as a natural border where the Mediterranean and the continental climates meet, so that few fail to perceive the sudden change in air and vegetation.

The first Montenegrins encountered on the road matched their formidable natural surroundings. Thus, even in 1908 *National Geographic* wrote:

> Physically the Montenegrins are among the largest and finest people in Europe… They are a race of warriors, always ready to take arms against external encroachments, and equally ready to defend at home what they regard as their perpetual rights… every man, even the poorest, has the bearing and dignity of a gentleman.[21]

Ten years later, in 1918, *National Geographic* described Montenegrins as

> of tall, large and erect figure. Their characteristics are those of liberty-loving mountaineers who have lived apart and distrust strangers. Their women are brave, loyal and as implacable as themselves. The word of a Montenegrin is never broken.[22]

Petar II Petrović Njegoš

Behind the Lovćen wall stood a world untainted by civilization, which inspired controversial responses. Some travellers admired it, while others expressed contempt. As Čagorović and Carmichael note, a journalist writing for the *New York Times* in 1882 "opined that "[w]e should have to go back to time before the Norman Conquest to find an Englishman of the same stamp as the modern Montenegrin."[23]

Petar II Petrović Njegoš, also called Vladika Rade by his people, is considered one of the greatest poets in the South Slavic languages and one of the most acclaimed rulers of Montenegro. He governed the country as both its spiritual and secular head from 1831 to 1851. He spent his childhood in his birth place of Njeguši and was first educated in the Cetinje monastery, where he wrote his first poems to entertain

[20] *Ibid*., 281.
[21] N. Čagorović and C. Carmichael, *op. cit.*, 59-60.
[22] Simon Winchester, *The Fracture Zone*, 1999. (HarperCollins e-books. Adobe Digital Edition September, 2009), 255,5/429.
[23] N. Čagorović and C. Carmichael, *op. cit.*, 65.

Montenegrin leaders. From here he moved to the Monastery Topla near Herceg Novi, where, apart from regular monastic subjects, he was taught Italian and mathematics. His uncle, Prince Bishop Petar I taught him Russian, French, German, and, some say, English, because Njegoš's private library contained Byron and Scott in their original versions, along with Shakespeare and Milton in French. One of the leading Serbian poets of the time, Simo Milutinović Sarajlija, whom Goethe praised, instructed Njegoš in history, literature, and philosophy.

As a ruler Njegoš faced threats both in the country and from without. He first sought to modernise the nation, establish courts and state taxes. To enlighten his primitive people, he started schools and a printing press. It is recorded that he thought of himself as a ruler among barbarians and a barbarian among rulers. Njegoš travelled extensively across Europe for various diplomatic purposes and often to gather financial aid for his country's liberation movement. He was a strong advocate for Montenegro and its reputation and astonished his European counterparts with his refined manners and knowledge of world affairs—when they expected to meet a wild bandit chief from "somewhere in the Albanian backlands."[24]

However, the isolation that this romantic and classical philosopher was feeling is poignantly expressed in one seemingly random note in his *Notebook* in which he writes that "the Crystal Palace is a prestigious building in London, it is 563 meters long, and 125 meters wide."[25] So far was his Montenegro from the bustling nineteenth century's the industrial age, from the coal mines and factory chimneys, from railway transportation, from free trade and colonial imports, from travelling libraries, as was true Njegoš's fascination and his urge to write down these facts about Prince Albert's Palace. As Preston argued, romantic barbarism might be alluring for a poet, but to a statesman it must also include a high personal and political price for sophistication and liberalism to be paid.[26] Charles Lamb noted this most effectively:

> [Vladika's] lot is in the whole not an enviable one. The only educated mind among the many—the most polished gentleman among simple peasants; he is indeed an isolated being. Handsome and in the prime of life, yet there must be none to cheer his lot or lighten his solitude, not any to whom he would love to submit his mountain throne.[27]

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[24] B. Đukanovic, *op. cit*., 378.
[25] *Ibid*.
[26] Cf. P. Preston, *op. cit*., 12.
[27] Charles Lamb, "A Ramble in Montenegro," *Blackwood Edinburgh Magazine*, 57/351 (January 1845), 50. Qt. in P. Preston, *op. cit*., 12.

For the romantic Europe of the time, the figure of Njegoš was the embodiment of wonder and adoration. Apart from being both a religious and state leader, he was also a warrior, a sublime poet, and a great lover. He was seen as a Byronic figure and he certainly added to Montenegro's mystique—a typical, gigantic and bearded Montenegrin, real and yet fantastic. As up to this time, Montenegrins were hardly known even by their neighbours, Montenegrin reality in the eyes of the others combined demonic images of brutish highlanders with those of noble bearing that placed the Montenegrins beyond criticism—images of unbeatable fighters for freedom, covered with a veil of magnificence that dramatically exceeded their real measures. "The nineteenth century Montenegro was far more than a loosely organised system of tribes—Montenegro was a myth," [28] says Đukanović. Concluding their research, Čagorović and Carmichael also argue that "Montenegro in some respects was clearly a nineteenth century idea, even a discursive creation."[29]

Njegoš's first encounter with an Englishman is believed to have taken place in 1829. It was Lord William Burnett, who was a physician in the Royal Navy and who must have visited Montenegro while he was serving with the Russian fleet. Burnett claimed that he was the first Englishman to visit Montenegro proper. However, sources [30] say that the Lord was delighted with this young man, his calm disposition and handsome appearance, his intelligence and his desire to learn. Burnett asked Petar I to allow him to take Rade to be educated in England, but Rade's uncle feared that upon his return Rade would not be suitable for his rugged homeland, neither would Montenegro be able to match him. Burnett was astonished by the nobility of the young prince and his followers and promised to make another visit the following year and to describe the people as they really were, "opposite of existing malicious and biased accounts."[31]

Montenegro must have appeared as wild and primitive, as distinct and "other," as were the Asiatic and African regions that the British were conquering, civilizing, and mapping around the same time. Those few courageous visitors who, against the advice of its neighbours, dared ascend into Cetinje must have hoped that their reports of these "noble savages" and their dramatic lands would be widely read, especially by the new and so far unprivileged audience who had been just offered free schooling by the government and affordable books and magazines to read.

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[28] B. Đukanović, *op. cit*., 381.
[29] N.A. Čagorović and C. Carmichael, *op. cit*., 69-70.
[30] Cf. B. Đukanović, *op. cit*.; Ljubomir Durković Jakšić, "Njegoš i Englezi," *Istorijski časopis*, knjiga V (1954-1955, Beograd 1955), 271-284.
[31] B. Đukanović, *op. cit*., 378.

So, suddenly, in Njegoš's time, thanks also to British internal affairs, stories about Montenegro started appearing in *Blackwood's Magazine*, later to be known as *Edinburgh Review*, and Njegoš certainly did not fail to meet their expectations. They describe him as beautiful, with long black curls cascading down his broad back; he was of a gentle face, with a moustache groomed in a pointed fashion and sometimes his beard was rounded; his eyelashes were so long that people wondered how his eyes could stay open; he was of an erect and noble stature—sometimes six feet, sometimes seven, sometimes even more, some claimed he was the tallest man they had ever seen; his voice was soft and musical but grew angry when he spoke of *ces diables Turcs*. He enjoyed passing the time with games of skill, being able to easily hit a lemon thrown into the air; he manoeuvred his royal scepter and his holy garments with the same elegance as he wielded his billiards cue and smoked his expensive cigars. He was dressed well but after no recorded fashion in Europe of the time; he wore a Greek fez and sometimes a Turkish fez; he was armed with two pistols decorated with gold; he wore white or black silk gloves, white socks with black shoes, sometimes Turkish sandals.[32] He would greet guests in perfect French and express regret that there were so few visitors.

Charles Lamb and his wife visited Montenegro in 1843 and were impressed to see the Prince Bishop waiting for them on a rise at the entrance to Montenegro. They recognised the master at once.

> For his colossal figure the bishopric mantle could not cover. Climbing down the steep hillside in his proud highland manner, dressed in scarlet and gold, he warmly welcomed and wholeheartedly invited [the visitors] to share breakfast. The Prince Bishop was thirty five […] with extraordinarily broad shoulders, his movements free and vivid. His face was broad with delicate features framed by an exceptionally dark beard and hair, which, according to the custom of Greek priests, he never cut. The Turkish scarlet coat he was wearing fell down to his knees, and was embroidered with gold and sable-fur. He wore a leather cap and the usual blue fold trousers and moccasins.[33]

The spot where they had breakfast was also intensely scenic, with Turkish bullets whirring over their heads. Njegoš, ever the poet, remarked how they almost sounded like beautiful music. Breakfast was a portion of cold meat cut in pieces and served with rum, which they drank from the same bottle. Njegoš hoped the English were bringing some official correspondence with them, but hearing they had not, sighed and concluded

[32] Cf. *Ibid.*
[33] B. Đukanović, *op. cit.*, 382

that "it was only curiosity that brought them to Montenegro, and a wish to brag afterwards in London pubs that they have seen the Vladika of Montenegro."[34] The Lambs also witnessed Njegoš leading an attack on Turks over the island Lesendro on Skadar Lake, an event "the whole world talked about," Charles believed.[35]

There is a story that three English women, dressed as men, travelled around the region with letters of recommendation from the governor of Zadar, Croatia, and the London minister of foreign affairs. They recorded on their map everything of interest and lunched with Njegoš, who instantly discerned their disguise, saying that it was the first time he had had lunch with three doves under falcon feathers.[36] No one ever learned who they were.

One of the sights that shocked visitors at the time was the notorious "Tablja," a tower with Turkish heads on spikes that served as trophies of victory and revenge. Rear admiral H.F. Winnington-Ingram, who visited Cetinje in 1844, counted twenty heads on stakes.

> Parts of heads, remains of past trophies, were scattered around its bottom, while all around its top a staked, decomposed heads could be seen […] while their distorted faces told the most terrible story of horrifying cruelties. Blood was still coagulated in the corners of the lips, while the eyeballs fell from their sockets and hung over writhed cheeks. During this atrocious spectacle, gusts of wind blew the Mohammedans' pigtails in all directions.[37]

Sir John Gardner Wilkinson, who met Njegoš in 1844, and wrote about the country in *Dalmatia and Montenegro* (1848), devoted a part of his mission to the termination of this barbarous practice adopted by both sides. Njegoš explained that if Montenegro ceased the atrocities, the Turks would take it as a sign of fear and would retaliate with more horrifying violence.[38] To persuade both parties to change the foul character of their wars, Wilkinson travelled to Ali-pasha Rizvanbegović, the vizier of Mostar, who expressed his will to stop the brutalities once the Montenegrin ruler gained enough strength to impose his will on his followers. In his zeal, Wilkinson did not accept the stalemate and immediately addressed the Porte's Effendi about this question, but the Porte refused to claim rights over the country they had never been in possession of.

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[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] *Ibid.*, 383.
[37] *Ibid.*, 387.
[38] *Ibid.*