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## THE MEDITERRANEAN IDENTITY AND CONTINUITY OF MONTENEGRO. A VISUAL CULTURE PERSPECTIVE

**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to confirm Montenegro as a paradigm of Mediterranean — multiethnic, multiconfessional and multicultural dynamic system — through the lens of visual culture which is not only a passive component but always an active participant in the shaping of civilizations. Since the focus of my research is the early modern visual culture, the artefacts that I will present had been made during the period between 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main methodological point of this paper implies that paintings, architecture, urban areas and other artefacts are not closed, autonomous entities, but dynamic, changeable structures, created by means of trans-cultural interaction.

Contemporary research very convincingly show that Mediterranean should not be seen only as a coherent and panoramic image (proposed by Fernand Braudel),<sup>1</sup> nor as an area of confessional divisions (as was argued by Henry Pirenne).<sup>2</sup> Latest studies, especially those written after 2000 (based on Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell's arguments),<sup>3</sup> tend to approach history of Mediterranean through the combination of three elements: the

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<sup>1</sup> F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Époque de Philippe II*, Paris, A. Colin, 1949 (F. Brodel, *Mediteran i mediteranski svijet u doba Filipa II*, Vol. I i II, preveo M. Đorđević, Podgorica: CID, Beograd: Geopoetika, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> H. Pirenne, *Mahomet et Charlemagne*, Bruxelles: Nouvelle Société d'Éditions, 1937.

<sup>3</sup> P. Horden, N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001. See also: *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, W. V. Harris Ed, Oxford University Press, 2005; *Can We Talk Mediterranean? Conversations on an Emerging Field in Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, B. A. Catlos, S. Kinoshita Eds, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; J. Erdeljan, *Mediteran i drugi svetovi*, Novi Sad: Mediterran Publishing, 2015.

diversity of its landscape, instability of climate which demanded high level of resourcefulness, and, above all, the exceptional tradition of interdependence and communication. Understood like that, Mediterranean is seen as a web of local micro ecologies, usually very conflicted, although marked with a great potential of connectivity.

Just as Mediterranean is neither an area of harmonious coexistence of three Abrahamic religions, nor it could be reduced to the single ideal picture, Montenegro, similarly, could not be comprehended as a monolith unit within a progressive chain of history. It stood “at the crossroads of great circles of civilization”<sup>4</sup> that made Mediterranean. During its rich history, from the Bronze Age to the present times, Montenegro evolved as a sophisticated network of micro regions, instable and unpredictable, but also unified in interdependence and communication, similar to other Mediterranean states.

For a long time Montenegrin history and culture have been studied through the system of nationally oriented historiographies. Western and Byzantine, Orthodox and Catholic, as well as Christian and Islamic identities of the state were considered irreconcilable and mutually exclusive. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, romanticized stereotypes made a great part of historiographies of Balkans, denying Mediterranean identity and continuity to Montenegro. Dominant paradigms of its history were military and political, and ruling norms were ones of bravery and celebration of death. Due to them, very vivid tradition of cross-cultural coexistence was deeply repressed. The foundation of those historiographies was imperialistic one with its clear-cut separations and binary systems (West-East, Catholicism-Protestantism etc.). Firmly established system of separations seemed impenetrable for a long time. However, over the last few decades, slowly but surely, its foundations begin to crackle. Hopefully, the most recent notion of contemporary world, oriented toward the peaceful multiculturalism, together with the restoration of Montenegrin statehood, will provide strong base for modern research, as well as its implementation into the educational programs. Those ideas could reinforce Mediterranean and Montenegro as areas of interaction and cross cultural exchange.

Traditional historiography influenced the methodology of studying Montenegrin visual culture as well. Since it was perceived as a variety of non-coherent socio-cultural elements, visual culture was reduced exclusively to stylistic and iconographic approaches, relentless search for attributions and artists originated from “the center” versus “periphery”. The label of “provinciality”, among others, was further restrictive. Fortunately, the effort

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<sup>4</sup> D. K. Vukčević, *Iza normi. Sociološki i pravni eseji*, Podgorica: CID, 2003.



Fig. 1 *A trial in Perast*, an unknown artist, beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Perast City Museum)

to recontextualize Montenegrin visual heritage within the frame of wider Mediterranean cultural area was also present,<sup>5</sup> although to a lesser extent. Paintings, visual artefacts, architecture, urban areas etc. in Montenegro are not closed, autonomous entities, but dynamic, changeable structures, created by means of trans-cultural interaction.

The drawing called “A trial in Perast” shows the citizens on piazza in front of the Saint Nicholas church in the city of Perast and a representative of Venetian republic who raises the stick to strike a Montenegrin who stole the ham (fig. 1). This image was considered a very eloquent example that proves a foreign character of Venetian government, and, indirectly, the very similar nature of the Bay of Kotor especially to generations educated in Serbo-Croatian poetry of 19<sup>th</sup> century, which harshly accused Venetian Republic of being the enslaver of Southern Slaves, as well as in verses of Montenegrin leader and poet Petar II Petrović Njegoš and his poem *The Mountain Wreath*. Njegoš’s witty but mocking lines depict the Republic (“which had gone mad with riches”, v. 1410) and Venetians from the perspective of

<sup>5</sup> Especially in: P. Mijović, *Ozloglašeno nasljeđe*, Cetinje: Obod, 1971.



Fig. 2 The winged lion of St Mark and St Tryphon, beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Maritime museum of Montenegro, Kotor)

*Others* — foreign people of different physiognomies and ethical features from those Montenegrin. That negative stereotyping stemmed from Njegoš' heroic ethos, but also from European, especially English poetry of that period.<sup>6</sup> Common perspective of that time which, although unburdened with adverse national memories, supported the idea of Venice ruined due to its own decadence.

But, previous to 19<sup>th</sup> century the Venetian Republic was rather reputable political entity, shaped as a combination of republic and oligarchy, liberal thinking and rigorous social control. The citizens of Bay of Kotor, especially Catholic, were, actually, proud of their *venezianità*. According to these sources, it was a feeling of belonging to powerful *Serenissima* that fashioned their identity. Political icon of Venice, a winged lion of Saint Mark, was integrated into city walls, palaces and churches, from where it forged the urban character of towns that belonged to the Bay.

The relief from Maritime Museum in Kotor, created at the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century unifies symbols of Venetian dominance and local tradition of

<sup>6</sup> About Njegoš's perception of Venice: S. Brajović, *Njegošovo veliko putovanje. Meditacije o vizuelnoj kulturi Italije*, Podgorica: CANU, 2015.



patron saint of the city (fig. 2). Saint Tryphon's cult was the epicenter of civic awareness and the keeper of rich collective memory that commemorate Byzantine Empire and states of Dioclea, Serbia, Hungary and a long government of Venetian Republic (from 1420 to 1797). Devotion to Saint Tryphon was especially developed in Byzantine Empire. According to the legend, in the 809 the storm forced Venetian merchants, who stole his body from Constantinople, to stop their ship near the Bay of Kotor. After several unsuccessful attempts to move the holy body, they decided to leave the saint's bones in town. It was a *furta sacra* (holy theft),<sup>7</sup> encouraged by a competition between confessional diverse towns, although unified in the shared Mediterranean background, that shaped the identity of Kotor. The construction of town cathedral, dedicated to this saint, commenced in 809.<sup>8</sup> The most important sacred object in Kotor is reliquary of Saint Tryphon's head, made from silver, gold and jewels, with the crystal opening above the martyr's skull.

Social organization, the way of living, verbal and visual culture, were shaped in accordance with Venetian standards. Belonging to Venice determined the behavioral and representational techniques of the inhabitants of the Bay, as attested by portraits.<sup>9</sup>

The architectural landscape of the Bay of Kotor was modelled after Venetian norms, and many profane and sacral buildings were created by Venetian architects: for example the palace of conte Vicko Bujović in Perast, designed by Giovanni Battista Fonte and the church dedicated to the Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary above the sea of city of Prčanj, the most representative sacral structure in the Bay, designed by Bernardino Macaruzzi (fig. 3). However, this architectural *venezianità* had to be adapted to the morphology of the terrain and the specific living conditions.

The same is with the sculptural decoration — for example the altar created by the Venetian sculptor Francesco Penso, called Cabianca in the church of St. Clare in Kotor, or destroyed statue of the Venetian governor Pietro Duodo in Kotor. The system of painted decorations, shapes, colors, coffered ceiling — so called *soffitto veneziano*, testify that paintings from the church Gospa od Škrpjela created by the painter from Perast, Tripo Kokolja, at the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century are based on Venetian models (fig. 4).

<sup>7</sup> About *furta sacra*: P. J. Geary, *Furta Sacra. Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, Princeton University Press, 1991.

<sup>8</sup> About St. Tryphon and his cathedral: I. Stjepčević, *Katedrala sv. Tripuna u Kotoru*, Split: "Novo doba", 1938; A. Belan, *Sveti Tripun i njegova katedrala*, Perast: Gospa od Škrpjela, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> S. Brajović, „Identitet i prezentacija Bokelja u barokno doba”, in: *O identitetu*, D. K. Vukčević Ed, Podgorica: CANU, 2015, pp. 357–371.



Fig. 3. Church of the Nativity of the of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Prčanj,  
18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century





Fig. 4. Painted decoration in the church of Our Lady of the Reef, Perast, Tripo Kokolja, the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

The icon of Our Lady of the Reef was the most venerated sacral object in the Bay of Kotor and the focal point of catholic Marian devotion (fig. 5). According to the legend the icon arrived from the East by the sea, demanding for the church to be built for her in the middle of the Bay. Soon she performed miracles having corporeal qualities which gave her the ability to swim, move, talk, weep or be injured and be the injurers, and was truly present in the lives of community and the individual.<sup>10</sup> Similar legends

<sup>10</sup> P. Butorac, *Gospa od Škrpjela*, Sarajevo: Bosanska Pošta, 1928; S. Brajović, *Gospa od Škrpjela — marijanski ciklus slika*, Perast: Gospa od Škrpjela, 2000; S. Brajović, J. Erdeljan, "Praying with the Senses. Examples of Icon Devotion and the Sensory Experience in Medieval and Early Modern Balkans", *Zograf* 39 (2015), pp. 59- 65.





Fig. 5. The icon of Gospa od Škrpjela (Our Lady of the Reef), Lovro Dobričević, circa 1450



surrounded all well-known Mediterranean icons. A study of the legends is a useful tool for reconstructing not only the story of Marian piety, but also the overall history of shaping the identity and integrity of the whole region of Boka Kotorska.

The icon was painted in 15<sup>th</sup> century by the Renaissance painter from Kotor, educated in Venice, Lovro Dobričević.<sup>11</sup> The Hodegetria iconographic type was developed in Constantinople. The inscriptions are both Greek and Latin. The motive of a crescent moon is Western — it is a symbol of Virgin's Immaculate Conception and her triumph of evil. Similar to other holy objects, the structure of this icon combines Eastern and Western elements. Archival sources prove this stance by describing the icon as *graecanico opere expressam*, suggesting that it was made by the hand of Saint Luke or that it swam from the Black Sea, fleeing from the Ottoman occupation. The “Eastern trademark” of this holy image boosted its aura especially from the Post-Tridentine period, which insists on the tradition of the defense and veneration of sacred images.<sup>12</sup>

The citizens of Perast fulfilled her desire stealing from the sea foot by foot of firm ground and building an artificial island on a small surface of an underwater ridge (the term *škrpjel* is a vernacular term for sea reef), at central spot overlooking Perast. Legend specifies that the history of the church began on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1452, immediately before the creation of the icon.

Those were the examples of early modern creative agency shaped by Catholic humanists, priests, preachers and sailors. The early modern art made and consumed by Orthodox population was deeply related to previously described artifacts. After a period of restrictive politics towards Orthodox residents and newcomers from Montenegro, Venice gradually had allowed them certain privileges, including raising monasteries on important strategic spots in the Bay. A big church of Savina monastery was built by Nikola Foretić, a master from the island of Korčula in Croatia. Architectural elements are of different origin, but the whole structure of the church resembles other sacral buildings found along the eastern coast of Adriatic Sea. Veneration of holy images, performance of rituals and processions, as well as the custom of votive offerings, shared the same structure among

<sup>11</sup> V. J. Burić, „Ikona Gospe od Škrpjela”, *Anali Filološkog fakulteta* 7 (1967), pp. 83–89. Cfr: I. Prijatelj Pavičić, *U potrazi za izgubljenim slikarstvom. O majstoru Lovru iz Kotora i slikarstvu na prostoru od Dubrovnika do Kotora tijekom druge polovice XV. stoljeća*, Dubrovnik: Matica Hrvatska — ogranak Dubrovnik, 2013, pp. 126–137.

<sup>12</sup> S. Brajović, *U Bogorodičinom vrtu. Bogorodica i Boka Kotorska — barokna pobožnost zapadnog hrišćanstva*, Beograd: Plato, 2006.



Fig. 6. A silver votive plaque from the Church of Our Lady of the Reef

Catholic and Orthodox believers. The same were the shapes, materials, artists and artisans.

From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, generations of Montenegrin historians researched a great deal of archival documents in the Bay. In spite the significant contribution made by their effort, many claimed that liberation from the Turks led the Bay of Kotor to economic prosperity. However, this statement is not quite correct. Firstly, the very word “liberation” should be reevaluated. Naming the exile of Ottomans from the northern part of the Bay “liberating”, after the 200 years of their presence, should be at least considered ambiguous. The second thesis that should be re-examined is the one of economic expansion in 18<sup>th</sup> century, seen as a direct consequence of the same “liberation”. The way I approached the same sources is slightly different — the economic growth coincided with the Ottoman rule of the northern parts of the Bay, due to very developed maritime competitiveness. The capital that was accumulated in these years continued to grow.

The very eloquent example of this dynamic is evolution of Perast. It was a small fishing village that for decades had belonged to the noblemen from Kotor. However, its status changed after the Ottomans settled in Risan in 1482, the oldest town in Bay, mentioned in historical documents since 4<sup>th</sup> century B. C, and in Herceg Novi, the youngest town of the Bay. From

the middle of 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Perast has grown to be an important shipyard.<sup>13</sup> Overlooking the narrow entrance into the inner part of the Bay, called Verige — a spot that shaped a border and separating northern Ottoman and southern Venetian part of the Bay — Perast was an ideal area for the maritime economy development. Ancient, medieval and aristocratic Kotor was surrounded by walls, while Perast remained opened. Town offered tempting earning possibilities to the newcomers — mostly Orthodox Montenegrins and Albanian Catholics.

The main source of income was piracy,<sup>14</sup> an important economic branch of the Mediterranean world. Permanent conflicts with Turks, often portrayed as “cross and crescent” conflict, had a predominantly economic background: the pirates seized the people who were supposed to belong to the “other” group, in order to sell them, demand a ransom (fig. 6), grain and other goods. The willingness to participate in those fights provided citizens of Perast with various privileges from Venetian Republic, which was the most important European trading partner of the Ottomans. Despite reality, treatments of Veneto/Perastine- Ottoman relations tend to be sketched in stark binary outlines (East/West, Muslim/Christian), which assume antagonism and hostility. Behind those abstract generalizations there has always been present a prevalent interaction and coexistence.<sup>15</sup> These were also determined by the configuration of the terrain.

The church of Gospa od Škrpjela represents one of the greatest treasures of ex-voto in Mediterranean.<sup>16</sup> Among them are silver votive plaques with presentations of the Virgin Mary in Turkish cross-legged seating on pillows, so called *alla sultana* (fig. 7). Local tradition claims that Our Lady of the Reef was also respected by the Muslims. These votive gifts may not have been donated by the Turks, because the idea of Virgin Mary as Sultana has a complex and long history, but orientalist Madonnas are among those presentations which cannot be categorized as belonging to just one

<sup>13</sup> P. Butorac, *Kulturna povijest grada Perasta*, Perast: Gospa od Škrpjela, 1999.

<sup>14</sup> M. Milošević, *Pomorski trgovci, ratnici i mecene. Studije o Boki Kotorskoj XV–XIX stoljeća*, V. Dokic Ed, Beograd: Equilibrium, Podgorica: CID, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> E. Dursteler, “Commerce and Coexistence: Veneto-Ottoman Trade in the Early Modern Era”, *Turcica* 34 (2002), pp. 105–133.

<sup>16</sup> On the precise number of votive gifts (1 427), the manner of their production, workshops engaged in their making in the Bay and Venice, iconographic and stylistic analysis of individual examples: P. Pazzi, *Gli ex-voto d'argento del Santuario della Madonna dello Scarpello nelle Bocche di Cattaro per la prima volta esposti a pubblica universale curiosità*, Cattaro: Archivium Diocesanum Cathari, 2007. On votive gifts in Gospa od Škrpjela in the context of Marian piety in the Bay of Kotor: S. Brajović, *U Bogorodičinom vrtu. Bogorodica i Boka Kotorska — barokna pobožnost zapadnog brišćanstva*, pp. 2018–221.



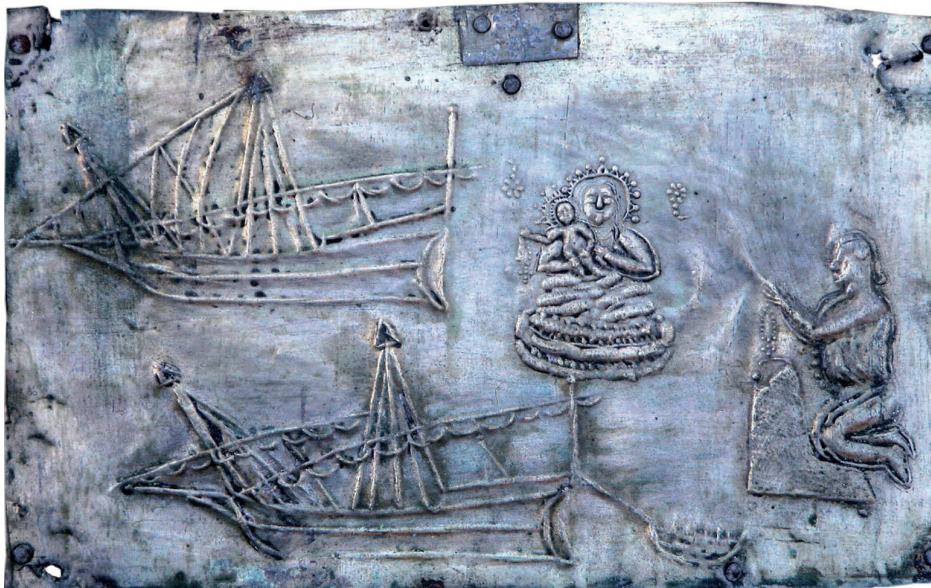


Fig. 7. A silver votive plaque from the church of Our Lady of the Reef

single culture.<sup>17</sup> They are a hybrid blend of two traditions and an expression of mutual living and coexistence of the Christians and Muslims in the Bay of Kotor.

In 1664 Herceg Novi has visited by Elvija Čelebi, an educated effendi, chronicler and writer. In his travelogue he says that most of the inhabitants of the city wear tight clothing such as Algerians, and “they board their frigates instantly and charge against the Montenegrins and rob the Apulian coast and Sicily”.<sup>18</sup> Despite this description of Herceg Novi as a savage place (similar to those recorded by Venetians about inhabitants of Perast, which is a typical form of the image of the other — even when that other is the same religion), documents and material remains testify about huge architectural activities of the Turks: the clock tower, fountain, fortress — Kanli kula; so called Španjola fortress — named after Spanish fleet who took the city in 1538, but after only nine months Turkish admiral Hayreddin Paşa (Hajrudin Barbarossa) ended Spanish possession of Herceg Novi — was

<sup>17</sup> S. Brajović, “Marian Piety as Devotional and Integrative System in the Bay of Kotor in the Early Modern Period”, in: *Beyond the Adriatic Sea: A Plurality of Identities and Floating Boarders in Visual Culture*, S. Brajović Ed, Novi Sad: Mediterran Publishing, 2015, pp. 126–150.

<sup>18</sup> E. Čelebi, *Putopis, odlomci o jugoslovenskim zemljama V*, transl. and ed. H. Šabanović, Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša 1967, pp. 428–434.



built by the order of Sultan Suleiman II; so called Forte Mare, was known as the tower of Abas Pasha.

On territory of the northern part of the Bay there were nine mosques. For most of them we don't know the exact locations, as well as for medresas, tekis, bezistans, šedrvans which, according to the documents, existed.<sup>19</sup> The Muslim Herceg Novi has experienced a kind of urbicide in the Morean war at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Turks were expelled. Their land was occupied by citizens of Perast and hajduks /brigands/, as irregular Venetian troops. It was the same in the city of Risan, which flourished during Ottoman rule. But, the traces of Ottoman culture remained: pieces of stone with Arabic script, kaldrma, small river bridge...

According to the documents, the most active traders in Risan and Herceg Novi were Jews.<sup>20</sup> Grain trade was almost entirely in their hands. That the Sephardic community was significant and substantial, testifies the fact that in the city of Herceg Novi was a Jewish cemetery. The cemetery sank into the sea during the big earthquake in 1667. The available documents do not mention the existence of the synagogue. But it can be assumed that it existed.

Ottoman culture was highly significant in shaping the city of Old Bar (Stari Bar, Antivari) which was conquered by the Turks in 1571 without devastation (fig. 8).<sup>21</sup> Preserved and renovated structures include Omer Bašina mosque from 17<sup>th</sup> century, with fountain and turbe of dervish Hasan Šejh, marking the grave of one of the most famous Muslim missionaries in the area, a large bath /amam with water transported from the mountain Rumija over an aqueduct, tower clock, bazaar, Old Carsi with ambiental physiognomy shaped by centuries.

Like geological strata, visual culture of different states, faiths and confessions is built into the morphological structure of the town, the center of archbishopric from 11<sup>th</sup> century, a strong economic and cultural center of

<sup>19</sup> B. Agović, *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, Podgorica: Almanah, 2001, pp. 239–253.

<sup>20</sup> 20 Documents about Jews in Risan and Herceg Novi in: S. Ljubić, *Commissiones et relationes Venetae II*, Zagreb: JAZU MSHSM, 1876/77, p. 244.

<sup>21</sup> About Old Bar: D. Bošković, *Stari Bar*, Beograd: Vojno štamparsko preduzeće, 1962; P. Mijović, „Vječno na Krajini”, in: *Virpazar. Bar. Ulcinj*, N. Gažević Ed, Cetinje: Obod, 1979, pp. 11–57; S. Ćirković et al, *Bar. Grad pod Rumijom*, Bar: Izbor, 1984; T. Bošković, *Bar pod mletačkom vlašću (1443–1571)*, Bijelo Polje: Pegaz, 2004; B. Agović, op. cit, 191–224; M. Zagarčanin, “Stari Bar from prehistory to the Ottoman time”, “The Fate of Urban Architecture”, in: *Ottoman times /Osmanska vremena/. The story of Stari Bar, Montenegro /Priča o Starom Baru, Crna Gora/*, M. Gustin et al. Eds, Annales Mediterranea, Koper: Univerza na Primorskem, Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče, Založba Annales, 2008, pp. 23–34, 57–82, 83–89.



Fig. 8. Stari Bar (Old Bar, Antivari)

the Byzantine Empire, medieval state of Dioclea, Nemanjić's state, Venetian Republic, Ottoman empire from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the Congress of Berlin in 1878, which granted it statehood, Montenegro took over the city following a seven week bombardment which nearly destroyed it altogether.

Montenegrin mountains rise above the sea, forming an integral part of the towns on the Adriatic coast. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Mount Lovćen became the symbol of Montenegrin independence and freedom. It was celebrated as sacral domain throughout the early modern period. In the folk poetry Lovćen was described as a gathering place of fairies, 17<sup>th</sup> century, poets from the Bay of Kotor called it "a Lovćen pyramid" (during the early development of Egyptology, the pyramids were perceived as divine creations), and archival sources report that the finest rock crystal, used for the creation of reliquaries, originate from this mountain.<sup>22</sup>

The important political movement of liberation and unification of Montenegrin state was raised as a consequence of previous refusal to pay taxes to Ottoman Empire during the time of Metropolitan Danilo, at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup> Those complex political changes had its significant basis in the existence of so-called Montenegrin Road. The road began at the northern doors of the city of Kotor, near the river Škurda, and as a steep path, in the form of a serpentine (so called "kanice"), climbed the slopes of Lovćen to the village of Njeguši and to the Montenegrin capital of

<sup>22</sup> T. Cizila, *Bove d'oro*, NAP (Church Archive Perast) Fond XI, R XVI, 21.

<sup>23</sup> Ž. M. Andrijašević, „Sedam Petrovića”, *Matica*, jesen/zima 2012, pp. 215–270, 215–221; Idem, *Istorija Crne Gore*, Beograd: Vukotić Media, 2015; Idem, *Dinastija Petrović Njegoš*, Podgorica: Narodna knjiga, Beograd: Miba Books, 2016.

Cetinje. Climbing the uphill is very difficult. The Montenegrins descended into Kotor through this south-western passage in order to sell their goods and buy salt — a product necessary for the existence of both humans and animals, and other articles. Therefore, this road was a crucial point of survival, but also the essential agent of the creation of Montenegrin statehood.

This path has been for centuries the sole exit from the mountains. Even when they travelled to Russia, Montenegrin rulers had to pass it in order to continue their trip by the Adriatic Sea, stopping in Split, Šibenik or Zadar, Trieste, and then through Vienna to Saint Petersburg. The road was the important gate through which cultural influences reached Cetinje.

Since its foundation in 1482 Cetinje has formed its appearance as a Mediterranean town. The founder of the capital city was Ivan Crnojević, who was a patron of the Old Monastery, dedicated to the Birth of the Virgin Mary, built in 1484. During his stay at the great pilgrimage center, church of Santa Casa in Loreto, he made a vow in front of the icon of Virgin Mary to build a church dedicated to her name, upon his return in Zeta. The church became the seat of the Eparchy of Cetinje. According to the archaeological findings, the church of the old monastery had a porch with simple semicircular arches, reminiscent of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance architecture. The capitals with the Montenegrin coat of arms are still preserved, decorated with two-headed eagles with the raised wings. Ottoman army destroyed the monastery during the War of Morea at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the church was rebuilt at the foot of the Orlov krš (Eagle Hill), using spolia preserved from the old monastery and castle. Owing to this effort, building kept the visual features of Mediterranean Renaissance architecture.<sup>24</sup>

Residency of Metropolitan Petar II Petrović Njegoš, the “new castle” called Biljarda due to the billiard game, first brought to Montenegro by Njegoš, was decorated in the same spirit. Throughout the next decades, Cetinje gained a character of Mediterranean town. Upon becoming a capital city of a state which borders were internationally recognized in 1860 and confirmed at the Congress of Berlin, architecture of Cetinje changed its

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<sup>24</sup> B. Borozan, „Rekonstrukcija crkve Rođenja Bogorodice manastira Crnojevića na Cetinju”, *Ars* 3 (1986), pp. 68–73; T. Pejović, „Dvorac i manastir Crnojevića i novi Cetinjski manastir”, in: *Cetinje 1482–1982*, D. Pejović Ed, Cetinje: CANU, 1994, pp. 295–299; R. Vujičić, *Srednjovjekovna arhitektura i slikarstvo Crne Gore*, Podgorica: CID, 2007; P. Malbasa, *Dva crnogorska manastira*, Cetinje: Društvo arheologa Crne Gore, 2003.





Fig. 9. Đukanović Palace, Cetinje, Mako Đukanović, 1910

appearance.<sup>25</sup> Instead of the previous fortified structure, town became distinctive by its elegant palaces that kept the spirit of Renaissance and Baroque Mediterranean features (fig. 9).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, presentation of Montenegrin rulers resembled European decorum. They were represented in national costumes, as national leaders. Montenegrin traditional costume, which elements were mentioned in wills as early as 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, by its basic shapes and colors belong to the Mediterranean world (fig. 10).

Although various and diverse, the elements of Mediterranean visual culture shared the same morphological essence in every part of Montenegrin

<sup>25</sup> P. Mijović, *Monodija o kamenu*, Kruševac: Bagdala, 1967; D. Martinović, U. Martinović, *Cetinje. Spomenici arhitekture*, Cetinje: Obod, 1980; G. Radović, *Arhitektura Cetinja od XV vijeka do drugog svjetskog rata*, Podgorica: CANU, 2012.





Fig. 10. Prince Danilo I Petrovic Njegos, Johann Boss, circa 1860

state. Rural stone houses, made in similar and simple shapes that blended into one with the steep mountain slopes and rough terrain, are, probably, the most eloquent visual trademarks of Mediterranean identity and continuity of Montenegro.