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BETWEEN GLOBAL AND NATIONAL: REPRESENTATION OF MONTENEGRINS IN THE 19th CENTURY

Abstract: The paper examines different models of visual presentation of Montenegrins in the 19th century — Orientalistic, national, European. Orientalistic representations of Montenegrins were at the same time shaped very precisely by direct observation, and in accordance with already established concepts of Romantic historicism and Orientalistic imaginarium. This is why these *re-presentations* have to be observed as constructions which meaning is diverse, because they can be interpreted as truthful or as a domain of fantasies. That kind of combination can be found in Théodore Valério's drawings, paintings and etchings. On the other hand, when Montenegrins wanted to be represented themselves, and when they could participate in the creation of their own image, they tried to be presented with precise national marks. Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović Njegoš's use of a Montenegrin national costume at Anastas Jovanović's lithographies and talbotype emphasizes his nationality and becomes a stronghold of construction of the national visual identity. The national idea as the basic form of representation was the pivot of Njegoš's successors, Prince Danilo I and Prince/King Nikola I Petrović Njegoš. But, Prince Danilo I Petrović established traditional European portrait codes which were completely accomplished in his portrait from 1852. In the lithography of Anastas Jovanović, the national idea is present, but also subordinated to the universal postulates of a representation of the European ruler.

Key words: *Montenegro, 19th century, Orientalism, national idea, European portrait codes, Théodore Valério, Petar II Petrović Njegoš, Prince Danilo I Petrović Njegoš, Anastas Jovanović*

INTRODUCTION

Great topics of the modern world, and this conference — globalism vs nationalism, were very current and topical in the 19th century. These issues always touch on the issue of identity, and, thus, the manner of presenting it as well. That is why my work is concerned with different models of presentation of Montenegrins during the 19th century — Orientalistic, national, European. Albeit different, these presentation models cannot be completely separated, but rather act in

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mutual correspondence. The Orientalist discourse was an expression of a sort of 19th-century globalism. The strategy of constructing images of people from the East following Western concepts also included the presentation of Montenegrins. On the other hand, the national idea — one of the main motors of 19th-century European society, influenced the construction of images of Montenegrin rulers as well as of other representatives of the Montenegrin people. From the time of intense military and diplomatic battles waged as part of the campaign to define the borders during the reign of Prince Danilo I, by which Montenegro was *de facto* confirmed as a state, representations of Montenegrins took on the features of traditional presentation of European rulers and nations.

THE ORIENTALIST MANNER

The Orientalist discourse — however it is formulated: as a universal group of ideas of the West about the *Orient*,¹ or as an expression of supremacy of the imperialistic and colonial West² — also encompasses the Balkan discourse, i. e. the idea of the Balkans as “no man’s land, not European at all, but not Asiatic at all”.³ Within them there is also an awareness of the continuous struggle of the Montenegrin people for freedom and belonging of Montenegro to the cradle of the European civilization, the Mediterranean, which shaped representations of Montenegrins and in accordance with heroic codes of the topmost type of European literature — the epic, and the most praised in the hierarchy of fine arts genres — history painting.

Western European representations of Montenegrins during 19th century were at the same time shaped very precisely — by direct observation, and by imagination — in accordance with already established concepts. This is why these *re-presentations* have to be observed as constructions with diverse and instable meaning, because, depending on the point of view of the observer they can be interpreted in different ways: as truthful or as a domain of fantasies, affirmative or critical, full of respect but also loathing *the Other*.

Some of such instable images can be found in *Voyage historique et politique au Monténégro*, an illustrated travelogue of a French colonel, commander of Boka Kotorska, Violla de Sommières, from 1820.⁴ De Sommières at the same time com-

¹ G. G. Lemaire, *L’Univers des Orientalistes*, Place des Victoires, Paris, 2012.

² E. W. Said, *Orijentalizam*, transl. by D. Gojković, Biblioteka XX vek, Beograd, 2008 (1978).

³ V. Neumann, *The Temptation of Homo Europaeus*, Boulder, Columbia University Press, East European Monographs, New York, 1993, p. 17. About ‘Balkanist discourse’: M. Todorova, *Imaginarni Balkan*, trans. by D. Starčević, A. Bajazetov-Vučen, Biblioteka XX vek, Beograd, 2006 (1997), pp. 5–36. About the picture of the Balkans: N. Makuljević, “The Picture of the Balkans between Orientalism and Nationalism”, D. A. Noris, “Mind the Gap! The Balkans as Literary Trope”, *Europe and the Balkans. Decades of ‘Europeanization’?*, Eds. T. Zimmermann, A. Jakir, Königshausen&Neumann, Würzburg, 2014, pp. 107–118, 22–38.

⁴ About De Sommière’s travelogue: D. Lekić, *Francuzi o Crnoj Gori u XIX vijeku*, Kulturno prosvjetna zajednica, Bar, 1985; S. Burzanović, “Djelo Viale de Somijera kao istorijski izvor o Crnoj Gori”, *Istorijski zapisi* 3–4 (2009), pp. 149–164; D. Bogojević, *L’imaginaire du*

pares Montenegrins with Hottentots because they have “all flaws of an incomplete civilization and all virtues of untouched nature”, but also with antique Greek heroes, due to “the same courage, fearlessness and endurance”.⁵

The same combination of precision,⁶ but also Enlightenment principles, Romantic historicism celebrating heroism, patriotism, egalitarianism, devotion to religion and tradition –everything that was perceived as a shortcoming of the materialistic and decadent West — and the feeling of superiority due to the “discovery” of the Arcadian simple, strong, durable knights, integrated in their natural habitat and disinterested in constructs of the modern civilization, can also be found in visual representations of Montenegrins.

Théodore Valério, a French painter-traveler, whom Théophile Gautier celebrated as an artist-ethnographer who insisted on documentary and, then very popular, physiognomic approach,⁷ visited Montenegro in 1864.⁸

In his album *Le Monténégro* there is an etching *Montenegrin family mourns for those who died in a battle in front of the entrance to the Cetinje Monastery* from 1864, reprinted for several times by Valério and other graphic artists. His painting on canvas with the same title was exhibited at the 1865 Paris Salon (Picture 1, Théodore Valério, *Famille monténégrine pleurant ses morts après un combat à l'entrée du monastère de Cettigne*, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Inv. 20586).⁹

Valério's representations of Montenegrins were especially popularized by Charles Yriarte, French travel writer and graphic artist, who also visited Montenegro and in 1878 published an illustrated travelogue *Les bords de l'Adriatique et*

Monténégro dans la littérature de voyage au XIXe siècle et au début du XXe siècle, Editions Le Manuscrit, Paris, 2012, pp. 8, 9, 11, 12–13, 15–46.

⁵ V. de Somijer, *Istorijsko i političko putovanje u Crnu Goru*, trans. by M. Adžić, Izdavački centar Cetinje, CID Podgorica, 1995, vol. I, p. 14, vol. II, p. 166.

⁶ About such a character of the picture of Montenegrins have been written extensively in: T. Brajović, *Crna Gora u delima likovnih umetnika drugih krajeva i naroda XIX i početkom XX veka*, Obod, 1967; N. V. Martinović, *Crna Gora u slikarstvu XIX i XX vijeka*, Oktoih, Podgorica, 2007, pp. 5–26.

⁷ T. Gautier, “Album ethnographique de la monarchie autrichienne par Théodore Valério”, *Moniteur universel*, 11 et 18 mars 1854; Idem, “Album ethnographique de M. Théodore Valério: les populations des provinces danubiennes en 1854”, *Moniteur universel*, 7 mai 1855; Idem, *L'Orient*, tome premier, G. Charpentier, Paris, 1884, pp. 21–22, 32–33; C. De Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, *Histoire des Oeuvres de Theophile Gautier, avec quatre portraits et deux autographes*, tome second, Slatkic, Genève, 1968, p. 84; M. M. Aubrun, *Théodore Valério, 1819–1879*, Catalogue d'exposition Galerie Pierre Gaubert (22 octobre au 24 novembre 1980), Paris, 1980; C. Peltre, “Les ‘géographies’ de l’art: physionomies, races et mythes dans la peinture ‘ethnographique’”, *Romantisme* 35/130 (2005), pp. 67–79.

⁸ About Valerio's presentations of South Slavic peoples first was written by Miodrag Ibrovac 1935: M. Ibrovac, “Teodor Valerio i Teofil Gotje, slikari naših narodnih tipova”, *Narodna strana*, Zagreb 1935, pp. 33–58.

⁹ The drawing is in Département des Arts graphiques in Musée du Louvre: cfr: *Base Joconde. Portail de musées de France*.



Picture 1. Théodore Valério, Famille monténégrine pleurant ses morts après un combat à l'entrée du monastère de Cettigne, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Inv. 20586

le Monténégro.¹⁰ Yriarte's adaptations of Valério's Montenegrin topics were published in numerous journals.

As early as 1940, Andrija Lainović asked the question of whether Valério truly saw "groups of people beside the Cetinje Monastery praying and kissing the monastery wall", or if this should be explained as "some curiosity that can be compared with Jewish wailing against the Wailing Wall", even though this would mean "going too far in search for the exotic".¹¹

Valério certainly saw Montenegrins wailing and whining for the deceased. It remains an open question whether he ever saw Montenegrins praying and wailing against the wall of the church. Women are dressed in ceremonial costumes while being bare-footed because the Orientalist imaginarium prescribed taking off shoes before a holy place, regardless of religion and its customs. Valério did not copy representations of Jews in front of the wall of Solomon's Temple, but they could have aided him in creating the composition, because that was another exotic theme of the time (represented, e. d. by Alexandre Bida, Valério's contemporaries and compatriots circa 1850).

Apart from that, wailing was a great topic of the European myth, epic and Christian iconography, which gained exquisite popularity during 19th century and went through distinguished aesthetization.¹² The West was fascinated by representations of lamentation of ancient and remote peoples, because they shaped the desired image of the paternalistic society with rituals which offered security and brought catharsis. Hence, it can be claimed Valério built a unique construct being guided by direct impressions, the Romantic sentiment, established academic codes and Oriental fantasies.

NATIONAL IDENTITY

When Montenegrins wanted to represent themselves, and when they could participate in the creation of their own image — and these were, for a long time, only Montenegrin rulers and senators — they asked to be presented with precise national marks.

Therefore, Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović Njegoš, who had complete insight into the process of creation of his portraits created by a Serbian lithographer and photographer Anastas Jovanović in Vienna in 1847, asked not to be presented as a church dignitary, but instead in the Montenegrin costume (Picture 2, Anastas Jovanović, *Petar Petrović Njegoš Prince-Bishop of Montenegro*, Belgrade City Museum, AJ 121).

¹⁰ M. Bertoša, „Jadransko priobalje: Reporterski zapisi i romantične vizije Charlesa Yriarte", C. Yriarte, *Istra&Dalmacija*, transl. by V. Mirković-Blažević, Antibarbarus, Zagreb, 1999, pp. 5–9.

¹¹ A. V. Lainović, „Francuski umjetnici o Cr. Gori u 19 vijeku", *Zeta*, 7. januar 1940, pp. 11–12, p. 11.

¹² M. Sandy, *Romanticism, Memory, and Mourning*, Ashgate, London, New York, 2013.



Picture 2. Anastas Jovanović, Petar Petrović Njegoš Prince-Bishop of Montenegro, Belgrade City Museum, AJ 121

In 1847 in Vienna, Njegoš wore the Montenegrin costume¹³ all the time, as attested to by documents.¹⁴ However, this was not the only reason why he presented himself in it. The national idea — one of the main driving forces of the European society during the 19th century — shaped the manner of representation of European rulers. The use of a national costume emphasizes the nationality of the ruler and becomes a stronghold of construction of the national visual identity. Having been interested in rulers' portraits and familiar with their power for a long time,¹⁵ Njegoš chose to be remembered in the clothes of the Montenegrin people he lead and represented.

The national idea as the basic form of representation was the pivot of Njegoš's successors — Prince Danilo I and Prince/King Nikola I Petrović.

However, on the mentioned lithography from 1847, and also on the talbotype Anastas Jovanović created in June 1851, Njegoš also wears a shirt with a high collar and a black tie. It is common knowledge that he sometimes wore completely civil clothing. John Gardner Wilkinson, an English Egyptologist, noted that Njegoš wore "two somewhat unusual accessories" — a tie and black leather gloves.¹⁶ The shirt and the tie, essential characteristics of a modern European man, were not covered, nor "unusual", but rather clearly visible below the national costume. On the lithography, a cloak which was worn over the civil suit is also emphasized. The photography shows a glove in Njegoš's hand. Njegoš clearly expressed that, like in his entire life and all activities, he was also loyal to tradition and inclined towards modernity, dedicated to Montenegro, but also aware of its European stronghold.¹⁷

EUROPEAN TRADITION

Traditional European portrait codes were completely accomplished in the portrait of Prince Danilo I Petrović Njegoš from 1852. In the lithography of Anastas Jovanović, the national idea is very present, but also subordinated to the universal postulates of a representative portrait of European rulers, respected from the time of creation of the first absolutist states during the 16th century (Picture 3, Anastas Jovanović, *Danilo I Petrović Njegoš Prince of Montenegro*, Belgrade City Museum, AJ 126).

Prince Danilo is in uniform, with a saber that has a sword knot, a medal, ribbon and a large bicorn with feathers. This was the first time he was signed as a

¹³ About Montenegrin national costume: Z. Mrvaljević, *Crnogorska narodna nošnja*, Obod, Matica crnogorska, Cetinje, 1999, pp. 103–146.

¹⁴ L. A. Frankl, „Knez — Pjesnik (Vladika Rade)”, *Zapisi XI/XX*, 1–6 (1938), pp. 27–35, 75; *Savremenici o Njegošu*, Eds. V. Latković, N. Banašević, Novo Pokolenje, Beograd, 1951, pp. 134–135.

¹⁵ S. Brajović, *Njegoševo veliko putovanje. Meditacije o vizuelnoj kulturi Italije*, CANU, Podgorica, 2015, pp. 62–64, 117, 127, 226.

¹⁶ *Savremenici o Njegošu*, p. 113.

¹⁷ S. Brajović, @„Portreti Petra II Petrovića Njegoša Anastasa Jovanovića”, in: *Identitet i mediji: umetnost Anastasa Jovanovića i njegovo doba*, Eds. I. Borozan, D. Vanušić, Muzej grada Beograda, Matica srpska, Beograd, 2017, pp. 141–159.



Picture 3. Anastas Jovanović, Danilo I Petrović Njegoš Prince of Montenegro, Belgrade City Museum, AJ 126

Prince. It is precisely from Russia, where the Tsar Nikolai I confirmed his title as the secular ruler, that he arrived to Vienna in the beginning of 1852. He obtained a ceremonial uniform, like the ones worn by Russian generals, in Saint Petersburg.

Representation of a ruler-soldier is one of the key toposes of ruler representation from as early as the age of Renaissance. During the 19th century, it is very popular and, due to new cheaper media, primarily lithography, omnipresent. In representing himself as a soldier, Prince Danilo continued the tradition of his ancestors. However, the ceremonial uniform also conveys the message that his military role will be very organized. He fulfilled this visual promise quickly by reorganizing the army and ordering precise visual identification of each military group.

The Prince wore a *moiré* ribbon, with a large cross on its end, and a large tassel. On the left hand side of his chest there was a medal star. The shape of the eight-pointed star confirms that he was already decorated with the Russian Tsar medal of St. Stanislav of I degree.

On the wall there is the Montenegrin coat of arms, to whose appearance, like to the entire Montenegrin heraldic imagery,¹⁸ Prince Danilo devoted his complete attention. The pillar and the wall on ruler portraits are symbols of power, steadfastness and self-control of the ruler. Around them there is always a drapery, loaded with messages and a painting element that enhances the figure of the ruler, and hence, his importance.

The mountain landscape on the left hand side is a display of the ruler's domain and his power over it. During the 19th century, landscape was interpreted as a mark of the nation, and, at the same time, a reflection of national characteristics. Hence, the landscape behind the Prince, an especially stylized display of Lovćen as the symbol of Montenegrin freedom, clearly indicates Montenegro that the Prince defends and represents.¹⁹

The silhouette of mountains emphasizes the lean, but firm figure of the Prince, whose masculinity is underlined by strict lines of the uniform. Such appearance, but also the clear emphasizing of sovereign symbols and the attributes of ruler iconography proves that Prince Danilo wanted a representative portrait that displayed him primarily as a ruler of the European country.

European codes of representations will become prominent only later — in the representation of King Nikola and his family, which will be the topic of a future paper.

CONCLUSION

The different types of presentation of Montenegrins during the 19th century — Orientalistic, national, European — albeit different cannot be completely separated, but rather act in mutual correspondence. Orientalistic representations of

¹⁸ About Montenegrin heraldic imagery: A. Samardžić, M. Miljić, *Crnogorski državni i dinastički grbovi*, Istorijski institut Crne Gore, Grafo Crna Gora, Podgorica, 2006.

¹⁹ About this one, as well as other portraits of the Prince Danilo by Anastas Jovanovic: S. Brajović, „Portreti Danila I Petrovića Njegoša Anastasa Jovanovića”, *Identitet i mediji: umetnost Anastasa Jovanovića i njegovo doba*, pp. 161–182.

Montenegrins were shaped very precisely, by direct observation. An awareness of the continuous struggle of the Montenegrin people for freedom and belonging of Montenegro to the cradle of the European civilization, the Mediterranean, designed representations of Montenegrins in accordance with heroic codes of the topmost type of European literature — the epic, and the most praised in the hierarchy of fine arts genres — history painting. However, these representations are, at the same time, formulated in accordance with Enlightenment principles, Romantic historicism and Orientalistic fantasies. The combination of precision and Orientalistic “discovery” of the Montenegrins — Arcadian simple and durable knights, integrated in their natural habitat and disinterested in constructs of the modern civilization, can be found on drawings, etchings and paintings of Théodore Valério, a French painter-traveler. But when Montenegrins wanted to represent themselves, and when they could participate in the creation of their own image, they asked to be presented with precise national marks. Therefore, Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović Njegoš, who had complete insight into the process of creation of his portraits created by a Serbian lithographer and photographer Anastas Jovanović in Vienna, asked not to be presented as a church dignitary, but instead in the Montenegrin costume. Having been interested in rulers’ portraits and familiar with their power, Njegoš chose to be remembered in the clothes of the Montenegrin people he lead and represented. The national idea as the basic form of representation was the core of Njegoš’s successors — Prince Danilo I and Prince/King Nikola I Petrović. However, on the lithographies and on the talbotype from 1851 Njegoš also wears a shirt with a high collar, a black tie, a cloak which was worn over the civil suit and black leather gloves. Those essential characteristics of a modern European man clearly expressed that, like in his entire life and all activities, Njegoš was loyal to tradition and inclined towards modernity, dedicated to Montenegro, but also aware of its European location. Traditional European portrait codes were completely accomplished in the portrait of Prince Danilo I Petrović Njegoš from 1852. In the lithography of Anastas Jovanović, the national idea is very present, but also subordinated to the universal postulates of a representative portrait of European rulers, respected from the age of the Renaissance. Shown in a ceremonial uniform, with a saber, a medal, a large bicorn with feathers, Montenegrin coats of arms, Prince Danilo I chose a representational form of a ruler-soldier, very popular during the 19th century. The mountain landscape which presented stylized Lovćen as the symbol of Montenegrin freedom, clearly indicates Montenegro that the Prince defends and represents, while the pillar and the wall are symbols of his power and self-control. All elements proves that Prince Danilo, in the time of intense military and diplomatic battles waged as part of his campaign to define the borders, by which Montenegro was *de facto* confirmed as a state, wanted a representative portrait that displayed him primarily as a ruler of a Montenegro as European country.

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