



**ACTA HISTRIAE**  
*30, 2022, 2*



UDK/UDC 94(05)

ISSN 1318-0185  
e-ISSN 2591-1767



Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko - Koper  
Società storica del Litorale - Capodistria

**ACTA HISTRIAE**  
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KOPER 2022

ISSN 1318-0185  
e-ISSN 2591-1767

UDK/UDC 94(05)

Letnik 30, leto 2022, številka 2

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Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko - Koper / Società storica del Litorale - Capodistria<sup>®</sup> / Inštitut IRRIS za raziskave, razvoj in strategije družbe, kulture in okolja / Institute IRRIS for Research, Development and Strategies of Society, Culture and Environment / Istituto IRRIS di ricerca, sviluppo e strategie della società, cultura e ambiente<sup>®</sup>

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**Tisk/Stampa/Print:**

Založništvo PADRE d.o.o.

**Naklada/Tiratura/Copies:**

300 izvodov/copie/copies

**Finančna podpora/  
Supporto finanziario/  
Financially supported by:**

Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije / Slovenian Research Agency, Mestna občina Koper

**Slika na naslovnici/  
Foto di copertina/  
Picture on the cover:**

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Redakcija te številke je bila zaključena 30. junija 2022.

Revija Acta Histriae je vključena v naslednje podatkovne baze / Gli articoli pubblicati in questa rivista sono inclusi nei seguenti indici di citazione / Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in: CLARIVATE ANALYTICS (USA): Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), Social Scisearch, Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI), Journal Citation Reports / Social Sciences Edition (USA); IBZ, Internationale Bibliographie der Zeitschriftenliteratur (GER); International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) (UK); Referativnyi Zhurnal Viniti (RUS); European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS); Elsevier B. V.: SCOPUS (NL); DOAJ.  
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## THEODOR MOMMSEN IN MONTENEGRO (1862)

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## ABSTRACT

*This article addresses the issue of the 19<sup>th</sup> century image of Montenegro from the perspective of an educated European citizen, famous German ancient historian and Nobel Laureate Theodor Mommsen who visited Montenegro in May 1862 during the Montenegrin–Ottoman War. After spending a day in the capital Cetinje, he described his experience in a (hereby for the first time published) letter to his wife Marie Reimer in which he is trying to stay objective as a scholar, while nevertheless showing the supposedly superior point of view of a civilized European. Since the short text contains distinctive elements of 19<sup>th</sup> century travel writing, the objective of the interpretation is to construct its implied image of Montenegro.*

*Keywords: Theodor Mommsen, travel writing, image of Montenegro, 1862*

## THEODOR MOMMSEN IN MONTENEGRO (1862)

## SINTESI

*Questo articolo affronta la questione dell'immagine del Montenegro ottocentesco dal punto di vista dell'istruito cittadino europeo, famoso storico dell'antichità tedesco e premio Nobel Theodor Mommsen che aveva visitato il Montenegro nel maggio 1862 durante la guerra montenegrino-ottomana. Dopo aver trascorso una giornata nella capitale Cettigne, egli descrisse la sua esperienza in una lettera alla moglie Marie Reimer, cercando di rimanere oggettivo come studioso ma mantenendo il punto di vista superiore di un civilizzato cittadino europeo. Poiché il breve testo contiene elementi distintivi della letteratura di viaggio del XIX secolo, l'obiettivo dell'interpretazione è quello di costruire l'immagine del Montenegro implicatavi.*

*Parole chiave: Theodor Mommsen, letteratura di viaggio, immagine del Montenegro, 1862*



## INTRODUCTION

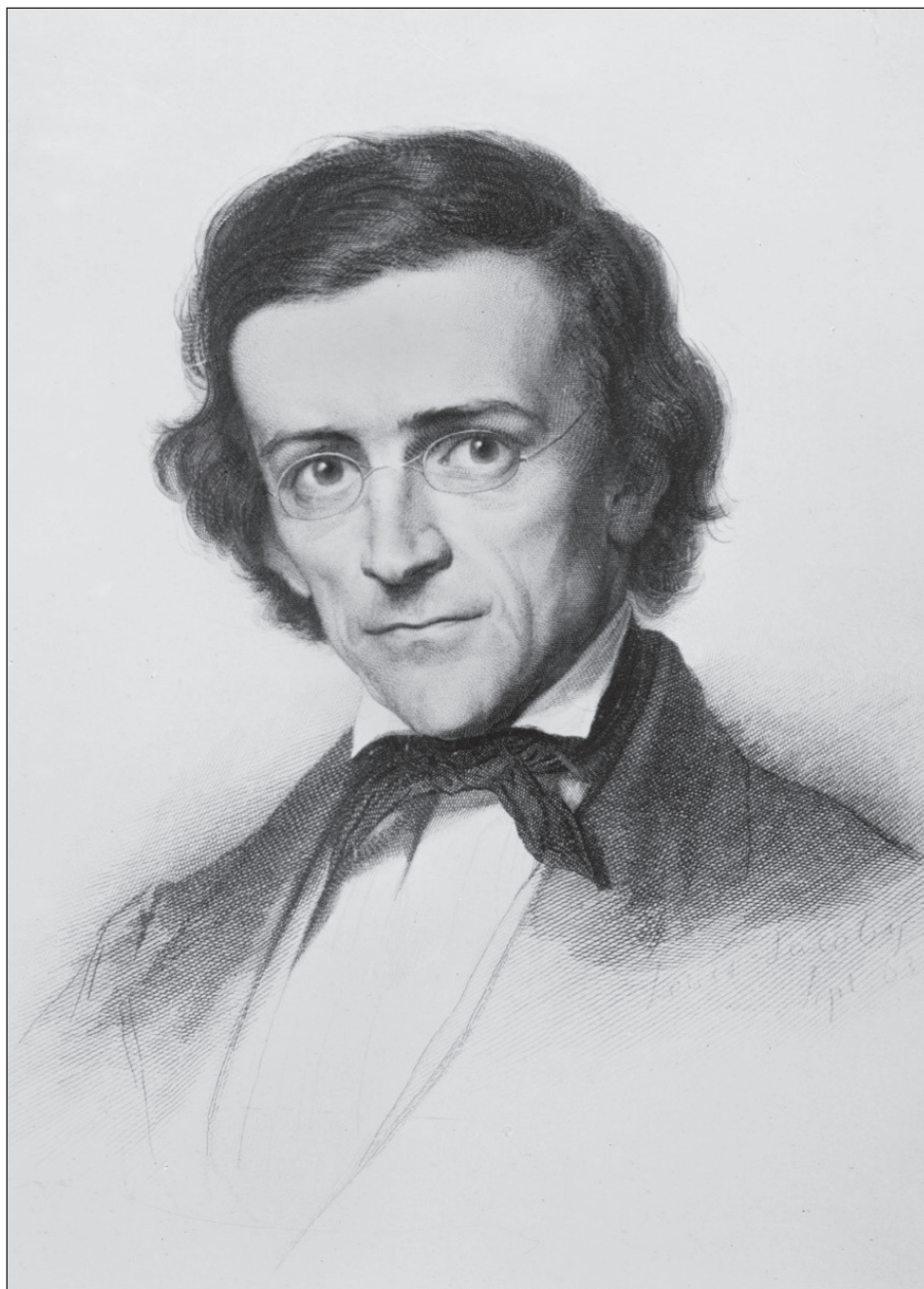
The famous German ancient historian Theodor Mommsen was by no means an armchair scholar. While his early fame was mainly a result of his popular *History of Rome* (*Römische Geschichte*, the first three tomes were published between 1854 and 1856, another one followed in 1885), his most important endeavor was the initiation of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* in 1853, resulting in a life-long work to gather as much Roman inscriptions as possible and to publish them in a scientifically useful way. Contrary to older historians, he was not satisfied with pooling lists of copies from other historians and laymen together; instead, he made it a principle that the historian had to seek out the inscription and inspect it for himself (Rebenich, 2002, 80–84). Obviously, this maxim made a lot of trips throughout the Mediterranean area necessary.

Only the especially magnificent inscriptions could be found in museums, the rest was scattered and not seldom reused in buildings like churches, houses, or even bridges. Therefore, the travelling historian had to have a sharp mind and strong legs, too. In 1862, one of those trips abroad brought Mommsen to the Eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea. While waiting for the next steamboat, he decided to use the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, his day off, to travel into the mountainous principality of Montenegro. Fortunately for us, the historian used to write travelogues for his family and friends. After his marriage to the daughter of his publisher, Marie Reimer (1832–1907), these reports came in the shape of letters to his wife. Nevertheless, Marie showed them to friends in Berlin and even sent them to friends and family abroad. We know of at least one case where these letters were copied, too.<sup>1</sup> Around 1200 letters of the correspondence between Theodor and Marie Mommsen are preserved and kept in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, their publication online is in work.<sup>2</sup> Among them is his letter from the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 1862 with his account about his journey to Montenegro, his meeting with the prince<sup>3</sup>, and his observations of the country and its people. Alongside its perceptions of the otherness of this foreign region and culture vis-à-vis “civilized” Europe (Lyberatos, 2017, 199), Mommsen’s letter has historical significance, too, because he witnessed the atmosphere in Cetinje during Omer

1 DLA, Marie Mommsen to Theodor Mommsen, 27. 11. 1857.

2 <https://www.propylaeum.de/themen/mommsen-wilamowitz-moellendorff> (last access: 2022-06-19).

3 Nikola I Petrović Njegoš (1841–1921) was proclaimed prince on the same day his uncle Danilo I (1826–1860) was assassinated in Kotor on 13<sup>th</sup> of August 1860. Nikola I. ruled as prince from 1860 to 1910 and as king from 1910 to 1918, when Montenegro was incorporated into Yugoslavia – Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Bartl, 1979a).



*Fig. 1: Theodor Mommsen in 1863 (Louis Jacoby, Wikimedia Commons).*

Pasha Latas<sup>4</sup> campaign against Herzegovina and Montenegro. At the time, his army had suppressed the uprising in Herzegovina and already confronted Montenegrin fighters in Canyon Duga. By the end of May 1862, his troops started the general invasion of Montenegro (Pavičević, 1963, 290) and Montenegrins bravely defended themselves despite a serious lack of armaments and supplies after two months of resistance (Roberts, 2007, 232). Although Mommsen's letter does not offer a detailed account of the political events, it sketches two characteristic situations and the overall readiness for war. In this paper, we will point out those historical markers as well as the authors inevitable perceptions of "the other", "the exotic", "the Slavic".

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, travel was no longer the privilege of young aristocrats. In Germany, it had become an integral part of bourgeois culture (Brenner, 1989; Kaschuba, 1999). Many traveling "Bürger" wrote about their experiences in foreign countries and published their travelogues in newspapers, magazines, or as monographs, thereby modifying the ever-shifting *mental maps* (Schenk, 2013) of foreign countries and peoples. These travelogues, however, are not just sources about the contemporary image of the foreign other, but of the writers' origins and intellectual background, too.

Therefore, in the following, our interest lies not only in the image of Montenegro, as Mommsen constructs and conveys it to his readers, but also in the question of what this can tell us about the constructor himself. First, the letter will be identified as travel literature. Subsequently, we will discuss important areas of content, in order to finally be able to draw a preliminary conclusion.

## THE LETTER AS A DOCUMENTARY TRAVEL DESCRIPTION

"What would you say, dear Marie, when you hear that I hiked up to Montenegro yesterday?" (T. M.).<sup>5</sup> While Mommsen addressed the letter directly to his wife, it's important to know that he used the letters to her often as a form of diary, that would be read by other members of his family and friends, too (Köck, 2021, 327). Four very densely written pages long, Mommsen's letter contains distinctive features that instantly identify the text as belonging to the genre travelogue, following its "thematic-structural rule" that distinguishes itself by autoptic, „exposition of a descriptive layer", and subjectivity (Kšivi,

4 Ömer Lütfi Paşa – Latas (1806–1871) was a Christian born Ottoman general, who commanded Ottoman armies in several wars and crushed numerous rebellions throughout the Ottoman Empire, among them also the resistance to the Ottoman reforms in Bosnia in order to impose imperial control in the entire region (Temizer, 2018). In 1853, he defeated a Montenegrin army under Prince Danilo. After putting down the revolt in Hercegovina in 1861, he defeated the Montenegrins on Lake Skadar 1862, which was considered a difficult feat (Pavičević, 1963, 273; Roberts, 2007, 232).

5 Unless otherwise stated, the quotations from Mommsen's German letter as well as quotations from other texts originally in German, Montenegrin or Serbian are translated into English by the authors. The quotations from Mommsen's letter are marked with T. M.

2016, 850). It fits also into “modern attempts to limit the genre to true accounts of actual travels” (Sherman, 2002, 31). Written in the form of a letter – an often-used form for travel writing (Schuster, 2007, 640; Sherman, 2002, 30) – it is basically a documentary travel report which combines “a chronological narrative of movements and events with geographic and ethnographic observations” (Sherman, 2002, 30). Also typical is the consecutive structure of Mommsen’s text, which is structured by chronologically ordered episodes of the one-day hike from Kotor to Cetinje and back.

The first-person voice of the letter introduces a strong sense of individual experience and brings the veracity of the message into focus. Mommsen’s carefully crafted letter provides his readers with a sense of his interaction with the mountainous principality. And although he did not originally intend to publish his travel text, he used “complex rhetorical strategies” and “traditional imperatives of persuasion and entertainment” (Sherman, 2002, 31) like any travel writer trying to meet his addressee’s expectations. He balanced the familiar and the unknown, and conjoined eyewitness testimony with second-hand information.

Furthermore, the reality of Mommsen’s perspective as a researcher and his individual encounters with Slavic people<sup>6</sup> also shaped his writing in a particular way. From its first line, the letter gives us reason to believe that, beyond the daily news about Montenegro in the papers, he must have known some of the travel accounts published in German in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

6 In 1857, Mommsen traveled through Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, and Transylvania. In his long letters from the journey, he pictured the different Slavic people, Hungarians and the Romanians as more (Croatians) or less (Hungarians, Romanians) civilized nations. Albeit Mommsen’s own early support for German nationalism and the revolution of 1848, he had no sympathy for the awakening national consciousness in Southeast Europe. Especially the civil wars following the Hungarian revolution in 1848 were sharply criticized as frivolous race wars (Racenkrieg, DLA, Theodor Mommsen to Marie Mommsen, 23. 09. 1857.). The different endeavors to strengthen the local languages incurred his strong disfavor, too, as in his view only the orientation towards Western European and classic culture would lead to a higher civilization in “Halb-Asien” (Glar, 2001, 22). His views were quite typical for a German liberal in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Lammich, 1978; Köck, 2021).

7 The very first and widely received book about Montenegro in German is the one of Serbian language reformer Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, *Montenegro and Montenegrins (Montenegro und Montenegriner)* published in 1837. In 1853 followed the *History of Principality of Montenegro* by Aleksandar Andrić (*Geschichte des Fürstenthums Montenegro*) published in Vienna. In the meantime, a respectable number of articles about Montenegro and its people appeared in daily papers like *Das Ausland* and other journals like *Die Grenzboten*, in which Mommsen published, too (Krause, 2003). Moreover, within the first few decades of the century, the literature of travelers became a valuable source of the popular knowledge about the small Balkan country. The first travelogue in German was the translation of the travel account of Bartolomeo Biasoletto who visited Cetinje in 1838, accompanying King Frederick Augustus II. of Saxony on his botanical journey. The German translation of the book appeared in 1842. By the time Mommsen visited Cetinje, at least five German travelers had published their books about Montenegro based on their own travel experience, while a few more books about geography, ethnology and anthropology of the country were written built up on previous texts and travel reports (Knežević & Minić, 2019; Minić, 2020).

Although his letter does not contain already systematized geographical or ethnographical facts and does not refer directly to any of the existing travelogues, Mommsen treats most of Montenegrin topoi as known. Most landmarks were already described by different German authors of travel accounts that visited Montenegro before 1850, in the time of growing interest for the county and its ruler, Petar II Petrović Njegoš.<sup>8</sup> It's highly likely that Mommsen must have had some knowledge of this literature, as he recapitulated almost all common topoi of Montenegrin nature and culture. This knowledge, however, was supplemented by his own observations and by at least one local source, too. He mentions that his guide was a born Montenegrin, then living on the coast and thus speaking Italian. An example for this is his description of the lone stone chapel he saw on one high summit of mount Lovćen (Mommsen writes "Loptschen", spelling it phonetically). Not a single known German or Italian travel account published prior to Mommsen's visit mentions the church or its story. His guide told him about the wish of Montenegro's last prince-bishop, the enlightened ruler and famous poet Petar II Petrović Njegoš (1813–1851), to be buried where no Turk would be able to desecrate his corpse.<sup>9</sup> Presumably, the guide provided further background information for Mommsen. While Mommsen only mentions the guide as a source once, it's likely that some of the traveler's assessments, especially about things that could not be observed, were influenced by the opinions of the nameless Montenegrin born guide. Again and again, we find passages in which Mommsen must have combined prior knowledge, information from the guide, and his own observations. One example may suffice: As a hiker with a good sense of the field, Mommsen expresses the dimensions of the plain of Cetinje not in kilometers but in walking hours and depicts, with admiration, the view overlooking the valley, snow-covered mountains and a part of the Lake of Skadar, precisely naming them.

As a trained scholar he managed to observe a lot of cultural traits in a short time and as an excellent writer<sup>10</sup> he succeeded to present them in an entertaining and aesthetically pleasing fashion. As such, he restrained from

8 Only to mention five travelogues whose authors visited the country: Stieglitz 1841, 1845; Ebel 1842–1844; Müller 1844; Kohl 1851; Neigebour 1851. There are at least three others from the same period based only on the second-hand information, and at least five travel accounts translated from other languages (e. g. Italian and Serbian).

9 The small round church was built in 1845 and Petar II Petrović dedicated it to his ancestor Petar I Petrović (1748–1830) who was canonized by the Orthodox Church as Saint Peter of Cetinje. Seriously ill, Petar II asked his brother and confidantes to bury him "on Lovćen, at the new church" (Rastoder & Andrijašević, 2006, 749). Since the chapel was bombarded and partly destroyed by Austrian artillery in World War I, it was rebuilt in 1925 by the Yugoslav king Aleksandar from the Serbian Karađorđević dynasty. In 1974, a grand marble mausoleum complex dedicated to Petar II was built there, which became a very popular and internationally well-known tourist destination. Cf.: Komatina & Alihodžić Jašarović, 2018.

10 Mommsen received the Nobel Prize for his *Roman History* and until today is one of the very few non-fiction writers to receive the Nobel prize in literature (Rebenich, 2002, 85–97).



Fig. 2: The Principality of Montenegro in 1862 (Heinrich Kiepert, *Journal of the Berlin Geographical Society*, Wikimedia Commons).

using judgmental characterizations, his convictions and cultural background, however, became visible. There are some very clear markers of Mommsen’s European civilian identity that decisively influenced his perspective: the condemnation of war, aristocracy and power demonstrations, and the open advocacy for secularity and universal power of law show his background as *bildungsbürger* (educated citizen). And although he never claims his cultural,

political or moral superiority, this provides a specific lens through which the historian interpreted the read, heard and seen facts from Montenegro's recent history.

His report is systematical but free from encyclopedic detail, brief, precise and altogether marked with the clear intention to bring his experiences and newly gained knowledge as close as possible to his readers. Mommsen used genre-specific rhetoric to create objective but picturesque and powerful images of an impressive and rough landscape and of the small Slavic nation, recognizable not only by the imposing stature of its men and its hospitable and kind people, but also by its rebellious spirit that had continuously opposed domination of conquerors. Although based on his rational intellectual background and basic openness, Mommsen's image of Montenegro hardly goes beyond the simplifying construct of the *non-European exotic other*.<sup>11</sup>

Following, we try to highlight some important thematic aspects of the letter.

## COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE

Before even leaving Kotor and setting foot in the mountains, Mommsen notices the clothing of his guide (together with three different types of weapons) as a specific Montenegrin ethnographic feature: "He appeared in national costume, with a white coat open at the front and a belt, a rifle on his back, a dagger and pistols in his belt." („er erschien in Landstracht, mit dem weißen vorn offenem Rock und Gürtel, die Flinte auf dem Rücken, im Gürtel Dolch und Pistolen“, *T. M.*).<sup>12</sup> Climbing towards Cetinje, he notices not only the extraordinary beauty of the panorama, which is again a common place in the foreign travel accounts about Montenegro, but also the changes in the vegetation and the landscape „up there“. („oben“ *T. M.*). During his first break in village Njeguši, Mommsen gets to know Montenegro's simple cuisine: bread and good sheep milk cheese, wine. The modest food offer, but kind welcome in peasant houses whose doors were

11 By the *exotic other* here is to understand a construction of otherness, a superficial image of people from a non-western-European culture which is not necessarily repellent, not even fixed, but rather ambivalent. It fits into widely discussed concept of the Other and Otherness in anthropology, sociology and psychology as well as history teaching. Within the context of post-colonialism and orientalism as *exotic* can be understood "any form of orientation on Foreign" (Badenberg, 2007, 220). The East Europe was brought into focus within the concept of Other by Larry Wolff and Maria Todorova. Following the Said's concept of orientalism, Wolff (1994) wrote about the invention of Eastern Europe in the period of Enlightenment by Western intellectuals, while Maria Todorova elaborated "*balkanism* as discourse about an imputed ambiguity" (Todorova, 1997, 17). Cf.: Duncan, 1993; Mason, 1998; Buchowski, 2009; Jezernik, 2007.

12 There is almost no travelogue about Montenegro without description of the national costume (Ford, 1959, 373; Bulonj, 2002, 75; Popović 2015, 135, 142, 182; Krivokapić & Diamond, 2017, 42). For the majority of travel writers, national costume is in opposition to civic clothing and it is a symbol of loyalty to tradition, while only rare travel writers mention national costume in the context of expressing patriotic feelings and the national identity of Montenegrins (Popović, 2015, 135).

always open to foreign travelers created a reputation of outstanding Montenegrin hospitality in many travelogues from that time.<sup>13</sup> Along with comparison of Montenegrin heroism to those “of Homer’s days” (Kol, 2005, 96), some later travel writers compare also the way of dining in Montenegro to that “of Homer’s time” while watching “the whole rams turned on the spit” (Baldacci, as cited in Popović, 2015, 110).

During his travel from the Dalmatian coast into the Montenegrin mountains, Mommsen naturally correlates both areas. He stresses that the houses and the basic living conditions of the Montenegrins are similar to those of the Morlachs, members of a rural Christian community in the Dalmatian hinterland, which were comprehensively described in travel accounts of Italian authors (first of them Alberto Fortis in *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, 1774) who associated the term with the stereotype of a noble savage (Popović, 2015, 33–34).<sup>14</sup> Further comparison with Dalmatia concerns the local houses built from stone and with straw roofs, some with shingle<sup>15</sup> – “no worse” (“nicht schlechter”, T. M.) or as good as in Dalmatia – and suggest the perception of the region as geographically but also culturally very similar.<sup>16</sup> However, wandering through the “immense massif” (“ungeheure Bergmaße”, T. M.). Mommsen started to notice the uniqueness of the Montenegrins. In contrast to his rather negative notes on Romanians, which he described as having faces alike to city gangsters (“großstädtische Lumpengesichter”)<sup>17</sup> or beast-like appearances (“häßliche thierische Physiognomien”),<sup>18</sup> he portrays the

13 Cf.: Štiglic, 2004, 54; Popović, 2015, 183, 218.

14 The first German translation of Fortis’ Travelogue *Reise in Dalmatien* appeared in 1776 in Bern.

15 Exactly the same description of rural architecture can be found by the 19th century British travelers (Wilkinson, Trevor, Denton) that compare Montenegrin huts with those in the Scottish Highlands or in the Irish countryside. (Ford, 1959, 353). The description of the French doctor Boulongne, in his book *Le Montenegro, le pays et ses habitants*, published in Paris in 1869 and written during his stay in Montenegro from summer 1867, testifies that the houses were made from the same material and in a similar way also in the town Cetinje a few years after Mommsen’s visit (Bulonj, 2002, 26–28). The influences of Western European architecture will reach Montenegro in the second half of the reign of prince Nikola, after the Congress of Berlin. Cf.: Đurašević Miljić, 2015, 373.

16 Since the end of the 18th century Austrian and German travel writers present Dalmatia predominantly as a land of unusual vegetation and geographical features (Pederin, 1989, 44). Most of them idealize the natives in the spirit of Rousseau often testifying to the poor conditions in which they live, but changing slowly the western image of Dalmatia as “partibus infidelium”, a wild and remote province with a bad climate and full of outlaws (Pederin, 1989, 118). Dalmatia, however, also enjoyed the reputation of an area rich in cultural and historical monuments, which was the original reason for Mommsen to visit it, but also for Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (1797–875), British archaeologist and author of “Dalmatia and Montenegro” (1848). For J. G. Kohl, who also travelled through Montenegro, Dalmatia is primarily a geopolitical term, “the edge of the barbaric Greek-Slavic peninsula, which differs from it in everything, including the climate, and constantly wants to separate from it” (Pederin, 1989, 164). Still, he was deeply impressed by the Slavism in Dalmatia that appeared in the cultural form of “Vlachs”. Giving a detailed picture of their everyday life in the mid-19th century, he established a romantic-exotic image of the Vlachs living in, however, wild and neglected country and a patriarchal society (Pederin, 1989, 171).

17 DLA, Theodor Mommsen to Marie Mommsen, 23. 09. 1857.

18 DLA, Theodor Mommsen to Marie Mommsen, 23. 04. – 27. 04. 1862.



Montenegrins as a “stately” and “clever” appearing people that are “ausgearbeitet” (literally: carved out) by the omnipresent war. All throughout the letter, Mommsen stresses the warlike character of Montenegro; inter alia, by mentioning the all-present weaponry of the men, by using the coeval Montenegrin way of counting village sizes by number of “flintlocks”,<sup>19</sup> by describing fortresses, cannons and prisoners of war, by terming houses as barracks, by citation of a folk song about a dead husband. Without losing much words on gender roles, he, at least, hints at the rather low position of women and, vice versa, the strong patriarchy of a warrior-society. He observed not only that corn was mostly not brought up into the mountains by beasts of burden or men, but on the back of women (“wimmelte von Montenegrinerinnen, die theils auf Lastthieren, meistens aber auf dem Rücken Korn hinaufschleppten”, T. M.). Unlike some of later Italian and British visitors, Mommsen does not comment the image of Montenegrin women bent under a heavy load along steep roads, which became a stereotype in the representation of the small Balkan principality in the second half of the 19th century.<sup>20</sup> Rather than condemning the subordination of women or lack of emancipation that was however typical for patriarchal societies also in Europe of that time, he gives the sharply formulated assessment of the Montenegrin attitude towards the feminine in general. At the end of the letter, interpreting the anecdote from the Prince Danilo’s time, he mentions correctly that to be treated as a woman was the ultimate dishonor for a Montenegrin man, worse than death.<sup>21</sup>

Describing the capital Cetinje, Mommsen does not miss to mention the custom of exposing the abrupted Turkish heads on the round tower above the monastery. The custom was, in fact, one of the most frequently mentioned motifs in the travelogues about Montenegro written before and after Mommsen’s visit.<sup>22</sup> From

19 Doctor Boulongne also describes the Montenegrin army as a loose formation, “a huge mobile guard that includes all the able-bodied population in the country, i. e. all healthy men from 17 to 60 years old. He estimates that there are 30,000 men under arms who could gather for the defense of the country, if necessary and provides a detailed description of arms typical for an individual fighter (Bulonj, 2002, 89). Also British travelers devote “inordinate amount of space” in their travel accounts to the Montenegrin as a warrior (Ford, 1959, 361) and see war in Montenegro as “the business of life” (Mackenzie and Irby as cited in Ford, 1959, 361).

20 Fifteen years later Alfredo Serristori described with pity almost the same picture of women under heavy burden (as cited in Popović, 2015, 90). Also, Mackenzie and Irby in 1877 notice that “carriage of burdens fell to the lot of women”, while Trevor in 1913 remarks that the „treatment of women was the single worst mark against Montenegrins (as cited in Ford, 1959, 365). Baldacci (1886) also feels sorry for the Montenegrin women for carrying the burden, noticing though that despite this “they possess a beauty that is rarely found in Italy”. In 1899 Manfredo Cagni criticizes Montenegrins for leaving hard physical work to women, thus allowing them to “humpback and grow old before their time” (as cited in Popović, 2015, 106, 170).

21 Phrases like “živjeti pod maramom (lit. live under a kerchief; wear a kerchief (like a woman))” and “pri-pasati žensku opregljaču (lit. to put on a woman’s apron – to be dishonored)” (Mrkaić, 2020, 73) are good examples. For this topic cf. Mrkaić, 2020.

22 For example: Neigeubaur (1851, 59), Wilkinson, Wyon and Prance (as cited by Ford, 1959, 362), Baulongne (Bulonj, 2002, 61), Stieglitz (Štiglic, 2004, 110), Kohl (Kol, 2005, 295).

a Western European perspective this custom was seen as an atavism, representing the ‘savageness’ of South Eastern Europe. Interestingly, Mommsen decided to place the custom in the far past (“vor Zeiten”, T. M.), although the custom was suspended less than five years ago, during the rule of prince Danilo I Petrović Njegoš (1826–1860), and most likely under the influence of his wife, Darinka (Holeček, 2002, 120).<sup>23</sup> According to Guillaume Lejean, the custom was suspended after the battle of Grahovac in 1858 (Jovanović, 2016, 120). Unlike most prior German travelers in Montenegro (especially Stieglitz), Mommsen does not go to great lengths to paint the Montenegrins as an especially aggressive or savage nation by nature. It’s interesting that he does not mention the concept of the blood feud, together with the beheading of enemies one of the most known stereotypes of the country (Darovec 2017, 82–86; Darovec 2019, 719, 729). Also, he witnessed the celebration of Saint Mark – an “impressive procession” – indicating accurately three distinctive elements of the event: flags, priests with missal, and the community with icons. Further, Mommsen describes the cultural landscape – streets, fields, water basins – and its management as more than sufficient (Köck, 2021, 359). Again, this stands in opposition to his earlier comments about the supposedly lazy and disorderly Slavs in Eastern Europe. The description of the Montenegrin capital is complemented with information about the new and the old residence<sup>24</sup>, “the monastery attached to the rock it has been hanging on” (“am Felsen hängendes befestigtes Kloster”, T. M.) and small number of houses inhabited by officials and servants. Those houses Mommsen compares with barracks. Only few years later Alfred Boulongne, the French doctor and the secretary of Prince Nikola gave more detailed but very similar description of the buildings in Cetinje that Mommsen mentioned (Bulonj, 2002, 24–29). Boulongne will use the same comparison with barrack to describe the prince’s former residence that Mommsen referred to as new, but that Prince Nikola had already moved out in 1867 (Bulonj, 2002, 25).

## COURT AND WAR

Beside his guide, the first Montenegrin Mommsen could speak with was prince Nikola I himself. As a foreign guest, the traveling historian was kindly received at court and invited to lunch with the royal family. Mommsen uses his description of the meeting to put alien and familiar elements in contrast. Interestingly, the

23 Darinka Petrović Njegoš (1838–1892), born and educated in Trieste, was the wife of Montenegrin prince Danilo Petrović Njegoš who married her in January 1855 (Rastoder & Andrijašević, 2006, 1012), after he in 1852 renounced the spiritual title of bishop and took the secular title of prince (Jovičević, 1994, 51).

24 “The new residence” mentioned by Mommsen is Biljarda, built in 1838 by Petar II Petrović Njegoš and not (as Mommsen states) by Danilo I Petrović Njegoš (1826–1860). The palace served as a ruler’s residence also for Njegoš’s successor Danilo I and Nikola I until 1867, when the Montenegrin princely family moved to prince Nikola’s palace. “The old one” is the Monastery of Cetinje which was used as the royal residence until 1839.

description has no parallel in other travelogues. The narration could be taken straight out of an adventurer's tale: it starts with the prince holding court under the open sky, around him the "powerful" ("kräftigen", T. M.) figures of his host. Mommsen stresses that the prince was the sole judge and decided everything for himself, possibly to invoke the picture of an Asian despot. Since 1855, the Code of Danilo has been in force in Montenegro. It regulated the position of the court and judges in the state government, but the prince, as the holder of supreme power in the country, had the exclusive right to cancel death sentences and declare an amnesty, but also to decide at last instance on appeals of the citizens (Rastoder et al., 2006, 1204, 1168). In his book on Danilo's Code (1994) Jovičević refers to the verdict of the Montenegrin Senate from March 25, 1862, claiming that the judiciary also worked during the war in 1862 (100), so the scene that Mommsen saw may have been one of the many appeals in a civil case.

A year later Viscountess Strangford describes almost the same scene in which "the prince holds court" and comments that every peasant had a right to personally approach the prince for judgement and that their affection for the prince was so great that "no one would dream of questioning his justice" (as cited in Krivokapić & Diamond, 2017, 44). The custom left a strong impression on the Italian travel writer Carlo Yriarte fifteen years after Mommsen's visit (Popović, 2015, 71) while at the end of the century William Miller stressed "traditionally intimate and personal leadership of the Princes in Montenegro" in the same context (as cited in Ford, 1959, 368).

The diner, then, followed the European fashion ("ganz in europäischer Art", T. M.)<sup>25</sup>. Although the guest does not specify what kind of food was served, this concise description suggests that both the food and the manners at the prince's table were something common and familiar to him, unlike the meal in the peasant's house to which he had previously paid more attention. Mommsen talked to the Parisian educated Nikola I<sup>26</sup> and his French secretaire and doctor. Although the doctor introduced Mommsen to the prince, he does not give his name, but it was, no doubt, Jacques Toussain Pankrazy that stayed in Cetinje between 1861 and 1865.<sup>27</sup>

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25 Soon after her arrival in Montenegro in 1855, Princess Darinka arranged life at court in the French manner, trying to introduce European customs to Montenegro. In 1862 her influence at court was still very strong (Jovanović, 2016, 116, 202).

26 From 1856, Prince Nikola I spent four years of schooling at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris, where he easily learned to speak and write French and managed to read all the French classics (Jovanović, 2016, 132).

27 Brajović mentions Pankrazy as one of three French doctors-secretaries that stayed in Cetinje between 1858 and 1888 (2019, 148). Pankrazy was a medical corps 2<sup>nd</sup> class major and beside his medical duty at the court he also accompanied Montenegrin diplomatic missions to Belgrade, Dubrovnik and Vienna. Cf.: Vujović, 1974.

The other participants, however, couldn't speak French nor Italian.<sup>28</sup> Mommsen mentions (again, without giving their names) the future Queen of Montenegro and mother-in-law of the Italian and Yugoslavian kings Milena Vukotić (“a very lovely sixteen-year-old child” / “ein allerliebstes sechzehnjähriges Kind”, T. M.) and Nikola's father Mirko Petrović Njegoš, the brother of the last prince-bishop.<sup>29</sup> The scene of the prince's hospitality is interrupted by the news of recent distant shootings around the Lake that forced the prince to leave the guest immediately after lunch and lead a party to investigate the incident. As was already seen, Mommsen illustrated Montenegro as a country in constant war against the Ottomans. However, it seems that he was not aware that his visit in Montenegro was in the middle of a conventional war, the Montenegrin-Ottoman War of 1862<sup>30</sup> and shortly before the start of a general Ottoman campaign led by Omer Pasha Latas into the principality. Mommsen's visit took place in one of the armistice days shortly before the Montenegrins led by Petar Vukotić, the prince's father-in-law, assaulted the city Nikšić,

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- 28 According to the testimony of the Russian consul Petković, even after the death of Prince Danilo in 1860, French was mostly spoken in the court, when Princess Darinka, who spoke four foreign languages, and her brothers were in Cetinje (Jovanović, 2016, 118). After two years of absence, princess Darinka returned to Cetinje during Omer Pasha's second campaign in 1862 (Rastoder & Andrijašević, 2006, 1012), but apparently not before the day Mommsen visited the country.
- 29 Mirko Petrović Njegoš (1820–1867), the Father of Prince Nikola's older brother of Prince Danilo I was well-known as a decisive freedom fighter, one of the best Montenegrin military commanders, also as revengeful and brutal. He won important battles against the Ottoman forces in previous wars as well as the title of the Grand Duke after the victory by Grahovac in 1858. He also he commanded the Montenegrin army in Montenegrin–Ottoman War in 1862. Since he was the one the Ottomans blamed for encouraging the uprising in Hercegovina prior the war, within the peace negotiations the Turks demanded Duke Mirko's exile, but gave up that request later. He openly influenced the decisions of his son and factually ruled Montenegro until his death in 1867 (Rastoder & Andrijašević, 2006, 1016).
- 30 In the first years of his rule prince Nikola was decidedly influenced by his father Duke Mirko (1820–1867), the brother and advisor of Danilo I. They steered the country into open conflict with the Ottoman Empire by territorial expansion and a forced national struggle for international recognition of Montenegro's independence from Istanbul. Eventually, Montenegro's permanent support of the uprising in Herzegovina and constant attacks on Turkish posts along the border led to an ultimatum by the Ottomans to stop those practices. After Nikola refused to accept the Sublime Porte's terms the war became inevitable. (Pavićević, 1963, 173–298; Andrijašević, 2006, 103–104; Pavićević, 2007, 605–609). Porte's ultimatum to Prince Nikola and his reply at the beginning of April 1862 were merely formal diplomatic documents; events overtook them and made them remain without much effect; war operations had already begun on all fronts around Montenegro (Pavićević, 2007, 608). The Montenegrins defeated an Ottoman army in Canyon Duga near Nikšić on April 13, while suffering great losses themselves. After the Montenegrin assault on Nikšić in May, Omer Pasha's army struck back and started an invasion from three directions (Pavićević, 1963, 288, 298; Pavićević, 2007, 621). For two months the Montenegrin commanders Mirko Petrović and Petar Vukotić were able to hold out. In August, however, Omer Pasha struck again and the Montenegrins suffered a decisive defeat on Lake Skadar. Both sides had suffered heavy losses and the war ended under terms dictated by the Ottomans with the Convention of Scutari of August 31. Turkish army left Montenegro on September 8, 1862. (Pavićević, 1963, 360; Roberts, 2007, 233).



*Fig. 3: Montenegrin rebels on the eve of Montenegrin-Ottoman war 1876 (Wikimedia Commons).*

held by Ottomans.<sup>31</sup> The shootings he mentioned came from the disputed border area on Skadar Lake, where the Ottoman forces were grouped earlier that spring in order to invade Montenegro. That was one of three directions from where the Ottomans planned the invasion (Pavićević, 1963, 288) and also where, later in August, Montenegro suffered a decisive defeat. Mommsen also mentions the prisoners of war he saw in the capital. These Albanian farmers were pressed by the Turks to fight and were supposed to be released soon. He stated that rather as a matter of fact but for his German readers, this must have been extraordinary; not because of a lack of wars in middle Europe, obviously, but because of the commonness of these ongoing conflicts and how they shaped, at least in Mommsen's eyes, the whole Montenegrin culture: "everything here is war" ("alles ist hier Krieg", T. M.).

A dozen of captured cannons in the main square recall battle won in the previous war and the medals and decorations took from the defeated enemy evoke

<sup>31</sup> According to Pavićević, Nikšić was assaulted on the anniversary of the Battle of Grahovac (1963, 299), i. e. the 13<sup>th</sup> of May (Rastoder et al., 2006, 122–123), only few days after Mommsen's visit in Cetinje.

the sense of national pride. The prince had brought the medals for his visitor to admire not the medals themselves but the heroism of the small nation in the decisive battle. Writing here about the Battle of Grahovo Mommsen makes a material mistake claiming that the battle took place in 1859. It was most likely a slip of the pen because in the further lines the historian shows that he was informed about the battle at the time it was fought, apparently from articles in the German press, since he interprets the Montenegrin victory as won by means of treachery (“niedrige Treulosigkeit”, T. M.).<sup>32</sup> The omnipresence of war in the country made such a strong impression on Mommsen – he hears it also in dirges of Montenegrins who he met during his arduous descent back to Kotor. Indeed, in such a world of constant conflict there would be no place for the uncivilized and rather evil laziness he thought to recognize in other Eastern nations.<sup>33</sup> The constant struggle between Montenegro and the Ottomans was by no means unknown in central Europe and was prominently discussed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century German literature about Montenegro.<sup>34</sup> Now the historian witnessed it himself, if only indirectly and with the perspective of a foreign visitor in a certain historical moment. This puts his descriptions of the warlike character of Montenegro somewhat into perspective. However, it’s saying that the Montenegrin court entertained guests in such a critical moment, making the guest believe that all things were in order.

Mommsen’s representation of Prince Nikola’s is one of the earliest in travelogues about Montenegro.<sup>35</sup> Despite his friendly welcoming, the German historian voiced a rather bad opinion of Nikola I, describing him as somewhat of a dandy, only interested in his command of the kitchen and the shininess of his shoes (“und beschäftigt sich selbst mit der Direction seiner Küche und mit Glanzstiefeln”, T. M.). Obviously, there is a sharp fracture in Mommsen’s letter: at first, the prince is described as a deciding figure, leading his men into the field, then, at the end

32 E. g. *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28. 05. 1858.

33 In another letter to his wife, he laments about the “Werthlosigkeit der Zeit” (worthlessness of time) in the East and the fact that even servants were late risers (DLA, Theodor Mommsen to Marie Mommsen, 04. 09. 1857).

34 Cf. also Fn. 12. Vuk Karadžić points out that for Montenegrins any profession beside warrior was “not enough dignifying” (1837, 64). Karadžić was the one who stressed the warrior tradition of Montenegrins above all other characteristics and traditions, influencing future travelers and writers. Robert Cyrien (1844, 71–72) calls the Montenegrins a “warlike people”, while Stieglitz describes Montenegrin culture as a “monolithic tradition of warriors, sheepmen and farmers” (Štiglic, 2004, 53). Ebel praises Montenegrins fighting for their freedom (2006, 87) and Kohl emphasizes the heroic nature of Montenegrin warfare (Kol, 2005, 138). That can be seen as a part of a heroic discourse that arose in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Šistek, 2009, 265).

35 Only a year after Mommsen British Viscountess Strangford was welcomed by Prince Nikola in the royal palace. She described Prince Nikola as a very pleasant and jolly young man, who looks older than his years and tells a few interesting stories about his and his family’s kindness (Krivokapić & Diamond, 2017, 40–41). Also in the later travel accounts the representation of Montenegrin ruler is often associated with images of him receiving guests in the royal court or greeting them in the field. (Popović, 2015, 71, 85; Krivokapić & Diamond, 2017, 82, 93; Tatar-Andelić, 2017, 15, 40, 228).

of the letter, he is transformed into the illustration of a spoiled princeling. The image of a Parisian schooled prince only interested in superficial comfort fits into the narrative and mirrors the liberal German mythos about the dualism between earnest citizens struggling for a more civilized nation and the backwardness of ignorant princes. That image could also be an expression of Mommsen's doubt in the prince Nikola's ability to continue the reforms of his implacably determined predecessor in order to *civilize* and emancipate the nation. Emphasizing the fact that the prince is strongly influenced by his father, Mirko Petrović Njegoš, the historian does not take into account his youth and inexperience. But how should Mommsen have known these things? It seems almost certain that after meeting the prince for himself, an unmentioned source must have influenced Mommsen and reshaped his first impression, e. g. with some backward information not only about the prince and his strong-willed uncle Danilo I, but also about his father, who he describes as "greedy and cruel" ("habgierig und grausam" T. M.).<sup>36</sup> It is revealing that Mommsen's apodictic formulations reveal no doubt about his sources. The Prussian professor made no effort whatsoever to take a differentiated or source-critical view, but judged over what he had seen, just as he was accustomed in his historical works.

The last sentence of the letter, however, refers not only to prince Nikola and could be understood as Mommsen's universal critic of aristocracy: "So quickly one gets used to be a prince" ("So schnell gewöhnt man sich ans Prinzenwesen", T. M.).

## DISCIPLINING AND CIVILIZING

However, there was one kind of prince, Mommsen admired greatly: those that created nations. For him, nations were the senseful product of the historical development. In this, he was a true Hegelian (Köck, 2021, 363), understanding history as a "perpetual revelation" ("dauernde Offenbarung", as cited in Flaig, 2005, 185). For the development of a nation, a strong state with an equally strong leader – subduing any drive for particularism – was necessary. Therefore, the liberal historian and parliamentarian was able to praise despots like Sulla and Caesar (Rebenich, 2002, 92, 86).

This must be seen as the background of his narration of the development of a Montenegrin nation, starting with the countless reforms of Danilo I. By comparing Danilo I directly to Peter the Great, Mommsen invokes the prevalent

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36 A possible source of information about the Montenegrin prince and his father could have been an anonymous article from 1861 in the journal *Grenzboten*, published by a friend of Mommsen and where he also periodically published some of his articles. About the Montenegrin prince it says: "He takes care of the government only as far as his father, the Senate President Mirko, allows him. Mirko, a very energetic, strict man with a certain degree of administrative talent, who also distinguished himself as a warrior against the Turks, is the actual regent" (Anonymous, 1861, 134).



*Fig. 4: Montenegro's Prince Nikola I Petrović Njegoš in Vienna 1865 (Photo studio Mr. Victor Angerer, Pinterest).*



myth of Peter civilizing Russia by Europeanizing it. Mommsen's colleague in Breslau, the historian Heinrich Rückert, formulated the mythos exemplary: only by Peter's modernization could Russia have been saved from the fate of the other Slavic nations, which were only touched by European culture in the Middle Ages without becoming properly cultivated (Rückert, 1858, 2, 679). Mommsen treats this mythos as a conversant topos on the West and Middle European mental maps of Eastern Europe.<sup>37</sup> In the case of Montenegro, he reframes it by constructing the narrative of a nation of brave and battle-tested men that had to be reformed. Mommsen stresses Danilo's "unheard strictness" ("unerhörte Strenge" T. M.), his mass executions of bandits (even men of his own household), and emasculating punishments for thieves.<sup>38</sup> Evidently, the Prussian professor thought the cultural assimilation to Western Europe necessary for the improvement of Eastern nations like Montenegro. However, this cultural assimilation had to be accompanied by the implementation of law and order. The development of a brave and warlike but uncivilized nation "becoming more disciplined and civilized" ("zu disciplinieren und zu civilisieren", T. M.) can be seen as the core of Mommsen's narrative about the people of Montenegro: to become a modern nation, the people must learn to voluntarily submit to the state's power and its law. It's interesting that he obviously was convinced that this "noteworthy little country" ("merkwürdiges kleines Ländchen", T. M.) was potentially able to become a nation and, thus, part of Europe and modernity, while he made no such assumptions for other people in the Eastern Europe. For them, from his point of view, only cultural enhancement through German influence within the framework of a multi-ethnic state was conceivable (Köck, 2021, 362–365).

## CONCLUSION

Theodor Mommsen was not a fiction writer but a scholar whose travels were fundamental to his research. Cetinje provoked his curiosity and he used the opportunity to visit the principality of Montenegro although it was irrelevant for his mission and costed him almost twelve hours of hiking into a potentially dangerous region. He wrote a private letter about it without any intention of

37 Cf.: Schenk, 2013 to the concept. To the East in Western European mental maps cf.: Wolff, 1994 and Neumann, 1999.

38 The short story about prince Danilo I at the end of the letter Mommsen illustrates with concise anecdotes about his way of establishing the law and order in the country by applying the Code in a very radical way. Among them, the anecdote of the thief, who stole from the lead that the prince had bought for ammunition. For a punishment, the thief had to appear in the gatherings with a lead around his neck and "degraded" to woman, with a woman's belt and a spindle. Surprisingly Mommsen claims that this was one of the reasons that led to the murder of the prince in 1861. The historiographical works do not provide that information. Danilo I was assassinated in Kotor by the political emigrant Todor Kadić (Rastoder & Andrijašević, 2006, 1006). Several different reasons for that murder have been preserved in the collective memory of Montenegrins. The relevant historical sources have not confirmed any of them yet.

providing a rounded image of Montenegro as a scientific, historical, geographical, ethnic, linguistic and geopolitical term, but rather to present what he could see during a short visit to the country famous for its warrior reputation. As a scientist he tends to be objective, and as a writer to compose an interesting reading. His image of Montenegro is undoubtedly influenced by his personal perspective and attitudes of educated and well-read, informed citizen of his time, which is especially evident in the second part of the letter, when he moves from the geographical and ethnographic characteristics to the sketch of the social and political reality of Montenegro.

The travelogue is strongly characterized by a mixture of at least three levels of knowledge: 1. the obvious but unspecified knowledge from previously read publications, 2. the direct view of the experienced traveler and observer, and 3. conversations with presumably several unnamed interlocutors. Unfortunately, we can make certain statements exclusively about the second level. His prior knowledge and what he may have learned from conversations remains unclear. Nevertheless, it becomes obvious that the historian has sensibly structured his account to offer more than just a string of tourist observations. Thus, he created a short, but stringent narrative about Montenegro's past, present and, potentially, her future. It obviously reflects the mental map of a German of his time, only counting the Romanic and Germanic nations as truly European. However, we can detect another grounding of his narrative in his thinking about peoples and states. Arguably, it is this intellectual background that allowed Mommsen to look past supposedly bizarre and foreign customs and helped him to integrate all three levels of knowledge into one meaningful story about this "noteworthy little country".

The center of Mommsen's narrative is the evocation of the myth of the virile mountain people on the edge of the civilized world. His description stands out from other travelogues in that he emphasizes the influence of the constant conflict with the Turks as positive and clearly refrains from portraying the population as particularly bloodthirsty or barbaric. Even more, Mommsen implicitly credits the principality with the possibility of advancing into the circle of civilized nations by its own efforts. It is by no means an exaggeration to state that Mommsen's image of the people of Montenegro is clearly more benevolent than his opinion of all other Eastern European peoples. This applies not only to the impression the population made on him, but also to the infrastructural and agricultural situation.

Obviously, such a short travelogue does not allow to draw a serious character picture of its author from it. However, the apodictic description, which does not reveal any doubts on the part of the author, is strongly reminiscent of Mommsen's *Roman History*.<sup>39</sup> Based on sources that are not discussed further,

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39 Rebenich (2002, 88) rightfully writes about Mommsen: "Er brachte die Akteure vor das Tribunal seiner Geschichtsschreibung und sprach über sie Recht nach seinen Gesetzen."

the gifted writer creates a congruent narrative that interweaves his own observations, foreign opinions and supra-temporal motifs. It is therefore possible to formulate the assumption that Mommsen engaged with the present in the same way he wrote about history.

Mommsen left us a convincing, vivid, and authentic literary miniature of Montenegro and its place in Western European imagination in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We may ask if this perception really has made progress in the last 120 years, or – in other words – if Montenegro is still only seen as on the steps of becoming ‘truly’ European?

Following, Mommsen’s letter is printed for the first time, without modernization of orthography and punctuation; it’s written in German hand, only the words in italics were written in Latin hand, additions are in < >. | indicate a linebreak in the autograph, || a new site.

Cattaro<sup>40</sup> 8 Mai 1862.

Was wirst Du dazu sagen, liebe Marie, daß ich gestern nach Montenegro hinauf- | gegangen bin? Aber wie die *vapori*<sup>41</sup> liegen, von denen meine Reise zum | guten Theil abhängt, blieben mir für Cattaro zwei Tage, also ein Tag frei und da ich unter- | wegs hörte, daß man in sechs Stunden in Cetinje, der Hauptstadt<sup>42</sup> von Mon- | tenegro, sein könne, so entschloß ich mich rasch zu dieser freilich nicht besonders | archäologischen Expedition. Ein jüdischer Kaufmann von hier, deßen Bruder ich unterwegs | kennen gelernt hatte, und der hiesige katholische Bischof<sup>43</sup> verschafften mir Füh- | rer | und Empfehlungen. Früh Morgens kam denn jener, ein geborener Montene- | griner, aber jetzt in Cattaro ansäßig und des Italienischen, das heißt des hiesigen | schlechten Venetianisch, ganz kundig; er erschien in Landestracht, mit dem weißen | vorn offenem Rock und Gürtel, die Flinte auf dem Rücken, im Gürtel Dolch und | Pistolen. Cattaro liegt hart unter einer himmelshohen Felswand; diese ging es zuerst | hinauf, zwei volle Stunden lang; auf der halben Höhe liegt das österreichische Fort | S. Gio- | vanni. Die Aussicht ist wundervoll; man sieht den Golf von Cattaro wie | einen See, davor den größeren von Castelnuovo<sup>44</sup> und das freie Meer. | Oben angelangt ist alles verändert: Maulbeeren und Feigen hören auf, | man sieht nur Kornfelder zwischen den Felsen und auf den Abhängen den |

40 The old Italian name for Kotor (Loidl, 2014, 131).

41 I. e. the steamboats that were the backbone of commute on the mountainous Eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea.

42 From the late 15<sup>th</sup> century until 1918 and again from 1941 to 1944, Cetinje was the capital of Montenegro. Today’s capital is Podgorica (Rastoder et al., 2006, 197–198, 1035–1037).

43 Marko Kalogjera (1819–1888) was the bishop of Kotor from 1856 to 1866 (Annuario Pontificio, 1870, 216).

44 The old Italian name for Herceg Novi (Gjonovic, 1902).

schönen maifrischen Buchenwald. Die Spitzen der höheren Berge haben noch Schnee. | Bald zeigt sich eine größere rings von Felsen umschlossene Ebene, darin das | erste montenegrinische Dorf Njegusch<sup>45</sup>, eine stattliche Ortschaft von 500 Flinten<sup>46</sup>, | mit drei Kirchen. Hier frühstückten wir in der ersten Bauernhütte; es gab Brot, | Wein (der von unten kommt) und guten Schafkäse. Die Häuser sind nicht schlechter als die ordinaeren | morlakischen<sup>47</sup>, von Stein, gewöhnlich ohne Fenster, aber mit einer offenen | Halle vor der Thür, mit Stroh oder schlechten Schindeln gedeckt. Die Leute sehen stattlich | und klug aus, besonders die älteren Männer, die das Kriegsleben ausgear- | beitet hat. Erst von hier an beginnen die eigentlich für dieses Land charakteri- | stischen Berge. Die grauen furchtbar zerklüfteten und malerischen Felsen | bilden lauter kleinere und größere Trichter, die wie Bienenzellen an einander | hängen; die Kronen sind nackt, die Abhänge oft malerisch mit Laubholz, beson- | ders Buchen bewachsen; unten bildet sich häufig ein kleiner zirkelrunder Grund | von fruchtbarer Erde, der wo irgend möglich bepflanzt wird, wenn auch nur | mit Kartoffeln. Das Land ist überhaupt nach Verhältniß zu seiner Beschaffenheit | gut angebaut, wenigstens ebenso gut wie Dalmatien; jene Trichter sind oft | mit kreisrunden Steinwällen ausgesetzt, um möglichst viel Platz zu ge- | winnen. Fließendes Waßer fehlt gänzlich; diese Gründe aber sind durch Schneemaßen, || die hier sich anhäufen frisch gehalten. Der Weg führt auf dem | Rande jener Trichter; man geht beständig auf den harten Steinen und | steigt auf und ab, ohne daß doch der Boden sich im Ganzen hebt oder senkt. | Uebrigens ist die Straße gut gehalten, so weit sie es sein kann; man trifft | mehrere gefaßte Brunnen, namentlich ein schönes gewölbtes Baßin, das | vom Schneewaßer der nahen Berge gespeist wird, angelegt im J<ahr> 1841. Nach zweistündigem Marsch erblickt man rechts auf gewaltiger Höhe die einsame Kirche von | Loptschen<sup>48</sup>, von wo man (sagte der Führer) die ganze Welt sieht und wo der der letzte Fürstbischof (Vladikai) von Montenegro<sup>49</sup> begraben liegt. | Er wurde zuerst in der Kirche von Cetinje beigesetzt, aber konnte keine Ruhe | hier finden – drei Monate nach seinem Tode er-

45 A Germanized form of Njeguši.

46 Here, Mommsen uses the German word for flintlock; it's unclear if he used the term to illustrate the warlike character of the Montenegrins, or if he just repeated the word choice of his guide.

47 "Morlaken" was a frequently used German term for the Serbo-Croatian people of the Kingdom of Dalmatia that belonged to the crone of Austria. In a frequently used lexicon, the "Morlaken" were characterized as a "great, strong type of people" on a "very low cultural level" (Meyers, Sp. 151).

48 Mommsen speaks about the already mentioned burial chapel of prince-bishop Petar II (1813–1851), situated on one of the peaks of mount Lovćen.

49 Petar II Petrović Njegoš (1813–1851) was very involved in the modernization of Montenegro; inter alia, he established the first regular school in Montenegro and installed a modern system of taxation. His poetic work *Gorski vijenac* (*The Mountain Wreath*) is still well known in South-Eastern Europe. "Vladika" is the highest clerical title in Montenegro (Bartl, 1979b).

schien er seinem Nachfolger<sup>50</sup> | und bedeutete ihm, daß er jene Kirche für sich zur Grabstätte erbaut | habe und daß er da liegen wolle, wo er sicher sei, daß die Türken nicht | hinkommen würden ihm den Kopf abzuschneiden; und so geschah es. So | erzählte der Führer. Bald nachher kamen wir an den Rand dieser un- | geheuren Bergmaße und konnten hinabsehen in den von allen Seiten von | Felsen umschloßenen Thalkeßel von Cetinje, der über eine Stunde lang und | eine halbe breit ist und fast ganz flach; ein einziger | Höhenzug durchschneidet sie zur Hälfte, und hinter diesem liegt die Hauptstadt | von Montenegro. Die Aussicht von oben ist prachtvoll. Man sieht über das Thal von | Cetinje weg einen großen Theil des Sees von Scutari<sup>51</sup>, links | von diesem die mächtige jetzt noch von Schnee bedeckte Kette der alba- | nischen Berge, rechts auf den See zu laufend drei oder vier | Parallelketten, die von dem akrokeraunischen Küstengebirge<sup>52</sup> gegen den | See zulaufen. Etwas nach 10<sup>53</sup> waren wir im Thal und um 11<sup>54</sup> in Cetinje. Das Thal zählt etwa 600 Waffenfähige; die Wohnungen sind aber meist | an dem Felsrand zerstreut und das eigentliche Cetinje, die Hauptstadt des | Landes, besteht nur aus der alten und der neuen Residenz und einer geringen | Anzahl kasernenartig aufgeführten Häusern, in denen die Beamten und | die Dienerschaft wohnt. Die ehemalige Residenz ist ein am Felsen hängen- | des befestigtes Kloster, drüber ein alter runder Thurm, an dem vor Zeiten die Türkenköpfe | angenagelt wurden. Die jetzige, gebaut von dem verstorbenen Fürsten | Danilo, dem ersten, der nicht mehr Bischof sein wollte und der sein Land ganz umgestellt hat, liegt in der Ebene, ein Viereck mit vier runden Thürmen | an den Ecken, gegen einen Angriff ohne Artillerie allenfalls zu vertheidigen, durch- | schnitten von einem langen zweistöckigen Gebäude, in dem die Wohnungen || sich befinden. Der französische Militärarzt<sup>55</sup>, der bei dem Fürsten<sup>56</sup> ist, nahm | mich freundlich auf und der Fürst lud mich zu Tische ein, was sehr an- | gemeßen war, da seine Hauptstadt kein Wirthshaus aufzuweisen hat. Ue- | brigens war es da interessant genug. Es war gerade das Fest des heiligen | Marcus; eine stattliche Prozeßion mit Fahnen an der Spitze, die Popen | mit den Meßbüchern, das Publicum jeder mit einem Bilde in der Hand, | zogen hinauf zum Kloster. Den Fürsten fand ich auf dem Platz, im Halb- | kreis

50 Danilo I Petrović Njegoš (1826–1860) was Petar II's nephew and the founder of the secular principality Montenegro. He followed his uncle's course of rapid modernization and state-building (Bartl, 1974, 371).

51 Lake Skadar (ital. Scutari, Alb. Shkodra) lies on the border between Montenegro and Albania.

52 An old name for the coastal mountain range on the Eastern Adria (Anonymous 1854).

53 10 o'clock am.

54 11 o'clock am.

55 In the "Pfälzer Zeitung" from 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1865 a "French military doctor Dr. Pancrazi" is mentioned as the prince's personal secretary (Cf. Fn. 3).

56 Nikola I Petrović Njegoš (1841–1921) was the nephew of Danilo I and ruled as prince from 1860 to 1910 and as king from 1910 to 1918. After the First World War, Montenegro was annexed by Serbia and later incorporated into Yugoslavia (Cf. Fn. 3).

umgeben von seinen Leuten; er hielt eben Gericht, denn er ent- | scheidet  
alles in letzter Instanz persönlich und sah stattlich aus in seiner rothen |  
Scharlachjacke unter all den kräftigen Gestalten. Vor und bei Tisch ging es  
| ganz in europäischer Art zu; außer daß weder der Vater<sup>57</sup> des Fürsten, der  
eigentlich | jetzt regiert, noch seine Frau<sup>58</sup>, ein allerliebstes sechzehnjähriges  
Kind, noch eine | von den andern Verwandten des Fürsten ein Wort  
französisch oder italienisch | verstanden und daher die ganze Unterhaltung  
französisch und sich auf den Fürsten, der | in Paris erzogen ist,<sup>59</sup> den Arzt  
und mich beschränkte. Während des Morgens hörte man | Schüße in der  
Ferne; es kam die Nachricht, daß die Montenegriner sich wieder einmal |  
mit den Türken herumschlügen in dem streitigen Gebiet gegen den See zu;  
| der Fürst begab sich nach Tisch selbst hin um sich danach umzusehen. So  
geht es hier | alle Tage und alles ist hier Krieg. Ein Haufen türkischer Ge-  
fangener liegt hier; | es ist freilich erbärmliches Volk, albanesische Bauern,  
die die Türken zum Mitgehen | gepreßt haben und von denen man die meis-  
ten schon wieder hat laufen laßen. Auf | dem Platz stehen ein Dutzend  
Kanonen, erbeutet 1859 in der (übrigens durch | niedrige Treulosigkeit)  
gewonnenen Schlacht von Grahovo.<sup>60</sup> Die damals | erbeuteten Türkenwaf-  
fen und die Tafel mit den Gefangenen und | Todten abgenommenen Medail-  
len und Orden (darunter auch die englische | Krimmedaille<sup>61</sup>) ließ der Fürst  
hereinbringen, damit ich sie bewundere. Ich schlen- | derte noch etwas in  
dem Thal herum, das baumleer und waßerarm | ist und großentheils nur  
eine mäßige Pferdeweide bietet und brach um 3 Uhr<sup>62</sup> | wieder auf. Gegen  
5 Uhr<sup>63</sup> waren wir auf der Höhe des Berges; dieselbe Scenen | gingen noch  
einmal, vermuthlich auf Nimmerwiedersehen dem Auge vorüber. | Als wir  
nach Njegos<sup>64</sup> kamen, bliesen die Hirtenknaben zum Eintreiben; | gegen

57 Mirko Petrović Njegoš (1820–1867) was the older brother of Prince Danilo I and an important powerbroker in Montenegro (Paunović, 1998, 195).

58 Milena Vukotić (1847–1923) was first Princess and later Queen of Montenegro, and mother of 12 children; among her children-in-law were the kings of Yugoslavia and Italia and a couple of Russian and German princes (Houston, 2002).

59 Nikola was educated at the renown Parisian Lycée Louis-le-Grand (Cf. Fn. 3).

60 Mommsen makes a material mistake here. In fact, the battle took place between 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1858. The Montenegrins routed the Turks under the leadership of Nikola's father Mirko Petrović Njegoš (1820–1867) (Rastoder et. al., 2006, 122–123). Following this important battle, the European crowns started to support Montenegro's claim of independence from the Ottoman Empire, which was officially recognized in 1878.

61 In the Crimean War, 1853 to 1856, British, French, Sardinian, and Ottoman troops fought together against the Russians. Mommsen seems to imply that one of the captured or killed Turks was in possession of the British Crimea Medal. However, the British Crimea Medal was only awarded to British personnel, whereas the Turkish Crimea Medal was also only awarded to the European allies of the Sublime Porte (Flatow, 1984, 100).

62 3 o'clock pm.

63 5 o'clock pm.

64 A Germanized form of Njeguši.

halb sieben waren wir auf dem andern Abhang, von wo man wieder | das Meer sieht. Einen herrlicheren Sonnenuntergang habe ich selten genoßen; al- | les, was ich den Morgen im Licht gesehen hatte, lag nun vor mir in den glühendsten | Farben. | Der steile Niederweg, auf dem man weit hinab sah, wimmelte von Montenegrinerinnen, die | theils auf Lastthieren, meistens aber auf dem Rücken Korn hinaufschleppten. Mehrere trafen wir, die | also schleppend Klagelieder sangen: Der Vater ist todt, wie wollen wir nun leben? oder auch bitterlich weinten. Auch hier der Krieg. | Der Abstieg war beschwerlich; ich habe nicht leicht einen steileren ge- || macht und stets von Fels zu Fels kletternd oder springend. Um acht | waren wir in Cattaro, wo mein Ruhm nunmehr gegründet war; denn | da die Leute hier weder wissen, was Fußwandern noch was Raschheit ist, | so erscheint es als ein Wunderding in einem anderen Tage diesen | Marsch zu Fuß hin und zurück gemacht zu haben. Ich habe viel Interessantes | über dies merkwürdige kleine Ländchen zu hören bekommen, das nicht bloß | seit Jahrhunderten sich auf seine eigene Hand der Türken erwehrt, sondern auch | seit ein paar Jahren angefangen hat sich zu disciplinieren und zu civilisieren. Der | vor zwei Jahren in Cattaro ermordete Fürst Danilo<sup>65</sup> ist der Peter der Große von | Montenegro und hat in seiner kurzen Regierung Merkwürdiges<sup>66</sup> geleistet. Es fing | damit an, daß er nicht Fürstbischof sein wollte, sondern Fürst ohne geistlichen | Beigeschmack und damit die alte halb aristokratische Verfaßung des Landes | umwarf. Dann stellte er Ordnung in seinem Land her. Bisher hatten die Monte- | negriner die an der Küste liegenden österreichischen Ortschaften beständig ausgeraubt; er | setzte durch unerhörte Strenge – er soll bei 500 Menschen haben erschießen lassen – es | durch, daß Raub und Diebstahl außer- wie innerhalb der Grenzen aufgehört | haben und dies währt selbst jetzt noch fort, obwohl sein Nachfolger ihm weit- | aus nicht gleichkommt. Man erzählt allerlei Geschichten von ihm, die recht cha- | rakteristisch sind. Er kommt nach Dobrota, einem Dorf bei Cattaro, und läßt ein | altes Bauernweib zu sich kommen, die von seinen Leuten ausgeraubt worden ist. | Sie verleugnet dies; darauf entläßt er das Gefolge, befragt sie allein und | wie sie nun den Schaden angiebt, aber sagt, daß sie sich vor der Rache seiner Leute fürchte, entschädigt er sie | und sagt ihr dann: nun sprich und jene, die Dich geplündert haben, sollen es büßen, | auch wenn der Blitz Dich erschlägt. – Ein Reisender verliert seine kostbare | Pfeife, kehrt um sie zu suchen und findet eben, daß ein Bauer sie dem Fürsten | bringt. Er will ihn belohnen, der Fürst aber ver-

65 Danilo I Petrović Njegoš (1826–1860).

66 In Mommsen's days "merkwürdig" meant "noteworthy" („merkwürdig, adj.“, Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm, digitalisierte Fassung im Wörterbuchnetz des Trier Center for Digital Humanities, Version 01/21, <<https://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB?lemid=M04236>>, last access: 2021-12-27).

hindert dies und der Reisende | hat alle Mühe es abzuwehren, daß der Finder nicht 25 Stockschläge dafür bekommt, | weil er die gefundene Sache nicht hat liegen laßen. Als von dem Blei, das der | Fürst gekauft hatte zur Munition, gestohlen wurde, mußte der Dieb in den Versammlungen erscheinen mit | dem Blei um den Hals und zur Frau degradiert, mit dem Weibergürtel und der | Spindel – für einem Montenegriner schlimmer als der Tod. Dies war eine der Ursachen | die zu der Ermord<un>g der Fürsten führten. Sein Nachfolger Nikolaus<sup>67</sup> läßt seinen Vater<sup>68</sup> regieren, | einen habgierigen und grausamen Menschen, und beschäftigt sich selbst mit der | Direction seiner Küche und mit Glanzstiefeln. So schnell gewöhnt man sich ans Prinzenwesen.

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67 Nikola I Petrović Njegoš (1841–1921) (cf. Fn. 3).

68 Mirko Petrović Njegoš (1820–1867) (cf. Fn. 23).



## THEODOR MOMMSEN V ČRNI GORI (1862)

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### POVZETEK

Članek tematizira podobo Črne gore v 19. stoletju s perspektive evropskega izobraženca, slavnega nemškega raziskovalca antike in Nobelovega nagrajenca, Theodorja Mommsena, ki je obiskal Črno goro maja 1862 med črnogorsko-otomansko vojno. V pismu, ki ga je naslovil na svojo ženo, Marie Reimer, živo opisuje, kaj je videl in slišal med enodnevnim obiskom Cetinja, kot učenjak skuša ostati objektivni, vendar ohranja superiorni vidik civiliziranega Evropejca. Pričujoča filološka interpretacija Mommsenovega pisma, ki so opira na teoretično literaturo o potopisih in tradicijo potopisne književnosti o Črni gori v 19. stoletju, je pokazala, da to kratko besedilo vsebuje vse elemente potopisne književnosti 19. stoletja in nakazuje značilno podobo Črne gore kot dežele neciviliziranih, a zdravih ljudi, kjer njihova pravila soočajo politiko z resnimi ovirami, ki jih povzročata geografska in politična pozicija dežele. Članku je priloženo Mommsenovo pismo, ki je na tem mestu prvič objavljeno.

*Ključne besede: Theodor Mommsen, potopisi, podoba Črne gore, 1862*

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