



# History Museum

Permanent Collection Display



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MONTENEGRO



The oldest traces of human activities on the area of Montenegro originate from period 180 000 years ago. Much earlier than the times when the first letters recorded human thoughts, hunters gatherers had had their living form abundant forests, rivers, lakes and sea in a world a lot different from the present one. Over the process of neolithisation a revolution in the way of living among the people on the territory of Montenegro occurred. New socio-economic relations were formed, founded on development of new industrial branches, first of all agriculture and cattle breeding. The first inhabitants of the picturesque land, which were mentioned by the historians, belonged to Illyrian tribes. Ethnogenesis of the Indo-European cluster, whose culture expanded over the territory of the West Balkans at the beginning of the first millennium B.C, can be monitored through the abundance of archaeological matter characteristic for the Iron Age. The complex world of the Illyrian tribes was enriched by the arrival of Greeks and forming their colonies on Montenegrin coast. Although many legends mention Phoenicians, archaeological traces indicate that actually Greeks, possibly from Colchis, were those who founded the first colonies and outlets, among which, the most important were Ulcinj and Budva. The influence of Greeks, first of all, through intensive commercial contacts, brought to the development of Illyrian culture and advancement in metal processing. Fortifications with megalithic walls were being built and the first powerful kingdoms were formed. However, the Illyrian world was shaken by upraise of the first empire in the West. Over three centuries, the Roman republic tried to impose domination over Illyrian tribes, and control over eastern Adriatic coast. Finally, forming its administration, new invaders, starting from the 1st century B.C. established new towns, fortifications, bridges, roads, and water supply lines. They would inhabit the veterans of their armies, and after 5 centuries of Romanisation, very little of Illyrian culture was left. To which extent the Roman culture penetrated into arduous mountain regions is still not familiar; however, in coastal and lower regions it achieved its full expansion. With appearance of Christianity, impress of the powerful empire became immanent. Still, after the fall of Roman Empire, in the 5th century of New Era, under the pressure of barbarian tribes – Goths, Avars and Slavs, the remains of Roman civilisation and were reduced to coastal enclaves and very few lighthouses of culture in the hinterland.



Differring from the rest of the barbarians, who past the Balkans with the intention to gather salvage, the Slavs arrived with the intention to stay there.

Period between V and X century got the title "dark Middle Ages". The history of the early middle ages carries that title because there are few written traces left from the period. That was unsteady, outrageous period during which all the inheritance of the Roman civilisation disappeared. On the territory of the present Montenegro, ahead of barbarians' invasion, the survived population of Roman, at that moment already Byzantine, civilisation retreated towards coastal enclaves and renewed old, arduous Illyrian fortifications in the inland, while the Slavic sea was expanding over the surrounding territories. It is not known for how long the separation between the natives and Slavs lasted, but it is undoubtable that the main role in sweeping barriers had christianisation which took place in several turns between VII and IX century. Byzantine Empire managed to regain these areas under its control in IX and X century, while the political formations on the territory were referred to as Sclavinias by the chroniclers. The first Sclavinia in this area was Doclea (Duklja), according to the biggest, with the same name, Roman town in the area. The name itself of the first Slavic state tells about the symbiosis between the old and new population.

Over the time, Slavic rulers left the legends, and entered the history. At the same time they rejected Byzantian titles and moved into battle to create their kingdoms. From XI to XII century, in stead of Doclea name Zeta appeared. In that period, the rulers from the Vojislavljevic dynasty managed to withstand Byzantines and the other Slavic rulers and to establish independent kingdom. Following the disruption of Christian church, in 1054, the Vojislavljevics approached the West and Pope. In XII century, decades of internal turmoils in Zeta impaired the kingdom, which was defeated by Serbia around 1185. Zeta belonged to Serbian kingdom until the middle of XIV century when a new dynasty, Balsics, independently took the reign over these territories. With Serbian conquest, Orthodoxy expanded.

Venetian conquest of Montenegrin coast and constant threat from Serbian and Bosnian magnates impaired Balsics' position. In XV century, rulers from Crnojevic family took the reign over the state, from that time named Montenegro (Crna Gora). Regional political instability opened the door to the invasion of the new eastern invaders, the Ottomans. Montenegro under the reign of Crnojevic dynasty was the last Balkan state to fall under the Ottoman governance.

The culture of the Middle Ages on the territory of Montenegro experienced its ascent in sacral architecture, catholic and orthodox; while symbiotic climax was reached with building renaissance monastery in Cetinje in 1484. Some of the most beautiful and important pieces of medieval Slavic literature were created here, both Latin and Cyrillic manuscripts, which culminated with opening the first printing house by South Slavs at Obod near Cetinje in 1493.

Montenegro entered the New Age divided between Venetians, who controlled its coast and Ottoman Empire with firm governance in the inland. The Venetian possessions were completely integrated into the world of the Western ideas, while on the Ottoman possessions islamisation was slowly taking its place

On one side, Europe was entering the era of large geographic discoveries; on the other, the Ottoman Empire was becoming the most powerful world empire. On the forgotten borders between the western and eastern civilisation, social vacuum, which emerged due to the fall of feudalism, was filled with the society of tribes and clans which had been suppressed for centuries. When the last feudal governor of Crnojevic family left the throne in 1496 and Ottomans were not able to establish firm governance in arduous territories of Montenegrin mountains, a doorway for creating a unique democratic system was opened. The system was Popular Assembly. By the time, the metropolitan appears as a representative of the Assembly, called Vladika among the people. Du-



ring the XVI and XVII century, at the Assembly it was decided to initiate war with Venetians against Ottomans. The idea of unification of all tribes because of common combat for freedom and creation of independent state appeared with the beginning of Vladika Danilo's governance, in 1697; he was from the Petrovic family of Njegusi. With Venetians leaving the scene of international strong powers, the role of the largest Montenegrin associate had Russian Empire. Officially, active help from Russian emperor and empresses began in 1711, not only with the aim of establishing independent state of Montenegrins, but with the aim of reinforcement of orthodox religion and expanding the ideas of Enlightenment as well. The ideas were pervading slowly and it was hard to break barriers of the tribes, busy with constant internal and external wars.

Vladika Danilo Petrovic Njegos was founder of the Petrovic dynasty. From his times the practice of electing vladika from different tribes was abolished. The exquisite right to the title of sacred and political governor of Montenegrins belonged to the Petrovics. In total economic and political blockade, squeezed between, at that time hostile Venetians and still powerful Ottomans, vladika Sava and Vasilije, even trying hard, could do a little to make peace between tribes and to lead people into battle for liberation. Even the short governance of an intriguing person named Scepan the Little (Scepan Mali, 1767-1773) did not change the situation significantly. Not earlier than the beginning of reign of Petar I Petrovic Njegos (1782-1830) did the Montenegrin people unite to final battle for liberation.

Apart from the Ottoman Empire weakening at the international scene and internal turmoils, conditions for united Montenegrin tribes to move into battle for independence were made. In summer 1796, Ottomans initiated two campaigns against Montenegro. They were defeated both times, at battles at Martinici and Krusi. The two big conquests brought to unification of Old Montenegro and Highland (Brda) and Ottomans were disabled to reach Cetinje ever again. The same summer, Oath of Montenegrin leaders to loyalty and battle, turned into legal act consisting of 6 articles, known as Discipline (Stega). In 1798, at the assembly in Cetinje, General Code of Montenegro and Highland (Zakonik Opšči Crnogorski i Brdski) was adopted; in its content articles of Discipline were incorporated. The Code confirmed establishing Court of Montenegro and Highland (Praviteljstvo suda Crnogorskog i Brdskog), as well as permanent Body of central administrative, judicial and executive authority. The General Code had a significant role in development of state authority and creation of legal awareness among Montenegrins.

Big conquests over Ottomans and establishing foundations for creating modern state reinforced the governance of Petar I Petrovic Njegos; they made overbalance before the rival family of governors – Radonjic. This also involved reinforcement of Russian influence in Montenegro which promoted the Petrovics, in comparison to the Venetian, later the Austro-Hungarian influence, impersonated through the governors family Radonjic.

A few years later, in 1805, Venetian possessions on Montenegrin coast were conquered by the army of Napoleon's France. What stayed recorded were romantic depictions of courageous defence of highland people against the most powerful army of Europe of those times, as well as the subtle influence of revolutionary French ideas on Montenegrin tribes. The French were replaced by Habsburg Monarchy, and the border between Montenegrin mountains and Mediterranean coast, the region which at the same time represented the door of Montenegro to the western world, became one more battle field where Montenegrin independence was to be defended.

The efforts for establishing the state authorities in Montenegro were seriously imperilled during the last decade of governance of Petar I. Internal turmoil, hunger and constant conflicts at the border were threat to the new state administrative apparatus. Therefore, the new governor, Petar II Petrovic Njegos (1839-1851), already in 1831 passed reforms which brought to establishing Senate, Guardia and guardians called Perjanici. The reforms, started by Petar I and Petar II, were completed by Prince Danilo Petrovic Njegos (1852-1860). With adopting the Laws of 1855, the legal system of Principality of Montenegro was defined. While Petar II dedicated his life to literary work and composed the most beautiful pieces, of Montenegrin and South Slavic history as well, Prince Danilo had his vision of priority to modernize Montenegrin society and acquiring full international recognition. Firstly, he gave up the sacred title of vladika and proclaimed himself as prince and Montenegro as Principality. Again he animated Montenegrins to fight and after the big victory at Grahovac in 1858 he expanded the state on the west towards Herzegovina. He established firm relations with French czar Napoleon III and tried to alienate Montenegro from Russian influence and turn it to the west. He was assassinated in Kotor in 1860. The Ottomans did not peacefully watch the expansion of Montenegro and growth of its influence among Christians in the Balkans. They tried twice (1852/1853 and 1862) to reach Cetinje with huge army from three directions. Only after several months of bloody defence and pressures from the international community, Ottomans, who also had suffered enormous losses, retreated from Montenegrin borders. The fourteen years long peace followed, which enabled Montenegro and its young ruler Nikola I Petrovic Njegos (1860-1921) to reinforce its authority, to reorganize national army and to make preparations for the crucial battles that were upcoming.

The Great Easter Crisis, known as Great War in Montenegro (1876-1878), brought the last and the greatest conflict between Montenegro and Ottoman Empire. After the victories at Vucji do and Fundina the Ottomans never threatened Montenegro again. The Easter Crisis was ended at Berlin Congress of 1878, where Montenegro gained full international recognition.

At Berlin Congress of 1878 Serbia, Romania and Montenegro gained full international recognition, with one difference: Serbia and Romania were recognized by all the great European powers, while Montenegro was recognized by those which had not done so up to that moment. Russia and Austro-Hungary, together with their associates France and Germany, declared that they had recognized independence of Cetinje from Istanbul before the Congress. Small Montenegro, apart from international recognition achieved one more goal – it made the exit to the sea. Having expanded the territory and with the army which ended the last war without defeat, Montenegro and its Prince gained a great reputation, especially among Slavic people in the Balkans. The second peace in the Balkans, between 1878 and 1913, Prince Nikola utilized for modernization of his small country and for upbringing its reputation at the European courts. The modern government and local administration were established, army was reorganized, educational system, health care, infrastructure and communications were advanced. Montenegro got its currency – Perper, and the most contemporary telegraph system. Nevertheless, centuries long disability for development and frequent wars as a consequence had being behind the developed states of the industrial west. One of the most important Prince Nikola's moves was ensuring equal rights to member of all religions in the state. The rights were confirmed by international treaty with Ottoman sultan and by Concordat with Pope in 1878 and 1886 respectively. Alignment and ensuring the rights of all the citizens of the Principality made the foundation to multireligious and multicultural Montenegro. Prince Nikola tried to ensure reputation in international politics through marriages of his daughters at Serbian, Russian, German and Italian courts. The father-in-law of Europe still stayed the most attached to his biggest and the most powerful ally – Russian Empire, therefore no wonder that Montenegro was the last one in Europe after Russia to adopt Constitution in 1905, which opened door to democracy and parliamentarism.

Nonetheless, the old Prince still held the reign and on the 50th celebration of his governance, in 1910, he proclaimed Montenegro as monarchy and himself as king. The pompous ceremony of coronation in Cetinje, attended by representatives of almost all European dynasties, confirmed the reputation which the small Balkan state enjoyed on the Old continent. The long peaceful period was coming to its end, and circumstances were favourable for final dislodging the Ottomans from the Balkans. The Balkan allies: Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro started Balkan war in 1912, in which Montenegro again traditionally moved its army. In cooperation with Serbian army, Montenegro again expanded its territory, but the situation in the world scene did not allow the Balkan winners to enjoy the fame of victory. Shooting in Sarajevo was the first sign of the beginning of World War I, which Montenegro, exhausted by the previous Balkan wars, entered on the side of the Entente powers. Serbian and Montenegrin armies were holding the southern front for 18 months opposing a lot more powerful enemy. When Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central powers, exhausted Serbian army was in hopeless situation and was forced to withdraw over the territory of Albania. The retreat was defended by one of the smallest armies which fought one of the most unusual battles in the history of wars. In battle of Mojkovac on 6th and 7th January 1916, Montenegrins defeated Austro-Hungarians. A few days later Montenegro, without possibility to withdraw, was forced to handover the armour. King and partially the Government, a bit earlier managed to escape to Italy, and then to France, while revolting troops were fighting guerrilla battles in Montenegrin highland against the occupant. However, very few knew that at that time a new map of Europe was being created. On that map there was no space for Montenegro.

After the end of the World War I, winning states draw new borders of Europe in Versailles. It was decided a state of south Slavic nations to be formed with Serbian dynasty Karadjordjevic at the head. Those plans did not include space for monarchy of Montenegro. King and the Government in exile, as well as the remains of Montenegrin army and the part of international society, referring to the international law were trying, but in vain, to raise awareness of civil Europe about the small nations' rights to self-determination. Empty chairs in Versailles, in front of which there was caption "Montenegro", remained a symbol of a winning state's lack of power to get its rights. The Monarchy of Montenegro in 1918 entered the common state with Serbia, under the Karadjordjevic dynasty, and as such it was integrated into Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which was later called Kingdom Yugoslavia. Only a few months later, on 7th January 1919, uprising of King Nikola's loyalists emerged. They tried in armed battle to draw attention of the international society not only to the breach of the international law had been breach but to the more and more frequent crimes of peacekeepers. The battle was significant until the death of King Nikola in 1921 in France at the dissolution of the last Government in exile. Montenegro between two wars was a poor territory of the new Kingdom. In era of Big depression, the state was slowly recovering from the devastation of World War I. During the whole first decade of its existence, the authority in Belgrade was not able to achieve significant support among local people. After introducing dictatorship, with firm control and greater connection of citizens to budget, Yugoslav authorities managed to create favourable climate for their action. However, a vacuum appeared with disappearance of the old elite and with constant political disagreements; the vacuum was filled by new political power in Europe – communists. At the end of 1930's dissatisfaction was growing, protests and strikes were frequent, and old national divisions were emerging. In such circumstances, the territory of Montenegro entered the World War II.



Kingdom of Yugoslavia was defeated in 1941 after short April war. What followed was division of the state between nacist Germany and fascist Italy and their allies. The territory of Montenegro was occupied by Italy and soon, High Civil Commissariat was established. Some parts of the nowadays' Montenegro were directly adjoined to Italy while the others were incorporated in the Great Albania, a new quisling creation.

Soon after the capitulation, Yugoslav armies started with preparations among the people of Montenegro, for initiating uprising. Communists and ex officers of the army were outstanding in the organization.

On 13th July 1941 on the territory of Montenegro the most massive uprising emerged against the occupant in enslaved Europe. More than 30 000 people took their weapon in battle for freedom and only in couple of days managed to liberate almost the entire Montenegro. Bringing new forces Italians managed to extinguish the flame of the rebellion, but the peace was not assured. Fascist authorities imposed Military Government; towns were fortified, while in rural areas civil war was outraging. Both Italy and Germany utilized and supported numerous collaboration fractions. Many of them were having mutual conflicts, and the only thing in common was fight against partisan movement. All of these made the World War II in Montenegro, and in the rest of Yugoslavia to gain the characteristics of fratricidal war. In September 1943 Allies managed to force Italy to capitulate, so soon after, soldiers of nacist Germany appeared in villages and towns of Montenegro.



The situation on all battle fields was changing fast. Germany was withdrawing, while at the Conference of Teheran at the end of 1943, the partisan movement of NOP (National Liberation Movement) became the only recognized movement of defense in Yugoslavia.

The last German soldiers left the territory of Montenegro in January 1945.

Montenegro suffered great devastation during the World War II. Its towns were destroyed, villages were burnt down, and over 10% of the population, or 37 000 people died. Still, for its great sacrifice which Montenegro gave in anti-fascist battle, it managed to regain its statehood and as equal, federal republic became part of new socialist Yugoslavia.

The great number of NOP participants originated from Montenegro. At the end of the war out of the 23 members of the Supreme Headquarters of NOVJ (National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia), 8 were from Montenegro. Out of 18 partisan corpora at the head of 8 there were Montenegrins, and they made almost 19% of national heroes. Considering the percentage (only a bit more over 2%) of Montenegrin population in total population of Yugoslavia, it can be concluded that small Montenegro had a great role in battle against fascism.



## AS A PART OF SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA

Inside the socialist Yugoslavia Montenegro regained its statehood. It had the position of equal federal subject in Yugoslav federation consisting of six members. Montenegro got new borders inside of which it has been to date. Instead of the historic capital Cetinje, communist authorities decided the capital to be Podgorica, which in honour to Josip Broz Tito, was renamed Titograd.

After 1945 Montenegro passed through accelerated industrial development; education, health care and social protection became free of charge; for the first time Montenegro got higher education institutions. Transport infrastructure and maritime traffic developed. Disclosure of Montenegro brought to development of tourism, which became one of its most important industrial branches. Montenegro was part of Yugoslavia, the leading member of Non-aligned countries, and a state with impressive cultural scene in post-war Europe.

Industrial and cultural development was shut down for a moment by heavy earthquake in 1979. Due to great help, first of all given by the rest of Yugoslav republics, the suffering parts of Montenegro recovered fast.

After death of Josip Broz Tito and beginning of economic instability, Yugoslavia started to move slowly towards internal crisis and dangerous field of nationalism.

## ON THE WAY TO REGAINING INDEPENDENCE

Economic crisis of 1980's and incapability of socialist authorities to solve current life issues, brought to appearance of nationalism in all Yugoslav republics. Montenegro managed to preserve its internal peace in the flame of Yugoslav wars in 1990's, but it was not able to leave those times without spoiling its reputation. Chase of ethnic minorities, deportations and above all, attack on Dubrovnik without a reason, spoiled the image of multicultural and multireligious tolerant Montenegro, which was being built from the times of Berlin Congress.

After the decision at referendum in 1992 to stay in community with Serbia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) was founded. Because of the involvement in wars in surrounding states international sanctions were imposed to FRY. That caused destruction of Montenegrin economy, navy was burnt down and tourism extinguished.

The situation began to change in the middle of 90's when the idea of independent Montenegro again came to life among Montenegrin governing elites. After almost ten years of peaceful disintegration, dream about restoration of independence came true on 21st May 2006 at peaceful civil referendum. General Assembly of the United Nations on its session on 28th June 2006 decided to authorize the entry of the state. By this occasion Montenegro became 192nd member of the Organization of the United Nations.

Under the Constitution Montenegro was declared an independent and sovereign state with the republican form of government. Nowadays it is civil, democratic, ecological and the state of social justice, based on the rule of law.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT DATES OF MONTENEGRIN HISTORY

- 180 000 B.C. – the oldest traces of human activities on Crvena stijena locality;  
I millennium B.C. – Illyrians inhabited these territories;  
V century B.C. – Greek colonies and outlets established in Montenegrin coast;  
I century B.C. – the Roman Republic/Empire established domination over the eastern Adriatic coast;  
I century – founding Doclea city (Duklja);  
III – IV century – the first expansion of Christianity;  
In 297 – Inside the Roman Empire province Prevalis was established, which included large part of the present Montenegro;  
The first half of VII century – Slavs inhabited the Balkan Peninsula;  
VII – IX century – baptizing Slavs;  
In 809 – building the Cathedral of Saint Tryphon in Kotor;  
IX – X century – Sclavinia Doclea existed. Its rulers bore title of Byzantine deputy, Archon;  
X century – Archon Petar governed Sclavinia Doclea;  
In 1016 – the first autonomous ruler of Doclea, Prince Vladimir died;  
In 1042 – battle of Tudemil, where Doclean army took victory over Byzantine army;  
XI – XII – dynasty Vojislavljević governed Doclea;  
In 1078 – Mihailo Vojislavljević was crowned king by Roman pope and addressed as the King of the Slavs;  
In 1089 – upraise of diocese of Bar to the level of archdiocese; XII century – The Chronicle of the Priest of Doclea (Ljetopis Popa Dukljanina) was written  
Around 1185 – county prefect of Rascia (Raska) Stefan Nemanja conquered Doclea;  
Around 1186 – Miroslav's Gospel (Miroslavljevo jevandjelje) was written;  
XI – XII century – term Doclea is being replaced with term Zeta;  
In 1219 – the first Orthodox episcopacy on the territory of the present Montenegro was established; the location has not been determined;  
In 1360 – Zeta was autonomous state under the rule of the Balsic dynasty;  
In 1421 – Zeta became part of Serbian Despotate;  
Middle of XV century – Crnojevićs appeared as governing aristocracy in Zeta;  
In 1482 – before conquest of Ottoman Empire, ruler of Zeta Ivan Crnojević established his court in Cetinje, by which the first capital was established. Two years later he built monastery as well.  
In 1493 – establishment of the first printing house by South Slavs at Obod near Cetinje.  
End of XV century – the state was named Montenegro (Crna Gora);  
In 1496 – Montenegro became part of Ottoman Empire;  
In 1500 – the first mention of General Montenegrin Assembly;  
1513 – 1530 – Montenegro was separate sanjak within the Ottoman Empire;  
XVI and XVII – beginning of islamisation;  
In 1573 – building Hussein-pasha's Mosque in Pljevlja;  
XVII century – Montenegrins took part, as Venetian associates, in Candian and Morean wars;  
In 1697 – vladika Danilo Petrović came at the head of the state; it was the beginning of Petrović dynasty;  
In 1711 – the first Russian emissaries arrived in Montenegro;  
In 1796 – in battles against the army of Mahmut-pasha Bushati, Montenegrins conquered its independence from the Ottoman Empire;  
In 1796 – Act named Discipline (Stega) was adopted;  
In 1798 – at the assembly in Cetinje, General Code of Montenegro and Highland (Zakonik Opisci Crnogorski i Brdski) was adopted;  
In 1847 – Petar II Petrović Njegoš published The Mountain Wreath (Gorski vijenac);  
In 1852 – Danilo Petrović Njegoš divided sacred from civic governance; Montenegro became Principality;  
In 1855 – the Code of Danilo was adopted;  
In 1859 – after the victory at Grahovac (in 1858) borders of Montenegro with Ottoman Empire were defined;  
In 1878 – Montenegro became internationally recognized state at the Berlin Congress;  
In 1886 – Concordat between Montenegro and Holy See was signed;  
In 1905 – Declaration of St. Luke's Day (Lucindanska deklaracija); with adoption of the Constitution Montenegro became parliamentary monarchy;  
In 1910 – Montenegro was proclaimed Kingdom;  
1912 – 1913 – Montenegro took place in the Balkan wars;  
1914 – 1916 – Montenegro took place in the World War I on the side of Entente powers;  
1918 -1914 – Montenegro was part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; later the Kingdom Yugoslavia;  
In 1919 – Christmas Uprising of opponents to unification with the Kingdom of Serbia;  
In 1941 – Uprising of 13th July against fascist Italy;  
In 1945 – Montenegro became republic as a part of socialist Yugoslavia, consisting of six member states;  
In 1992 - Montenegro became a part of new Yugoslavia, consisting of two member states;  
In 1992 – Montenegro was proclaimed ecological state;  
In 2003 – state community of Serbia and Montenegro was established;  
In 2006 – at the democratically organized referendum, citizens of Montenegro opted for internationally and legally recognized state;  
In 2006 – Montenegro became 192nd member of the Organization of the United Nations.