



Njegoš's Birth House in Njeguši



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MONTENEGRO





Njegoš's Birth House in Njeguši

Njegoš's house in the village of Erakovići, where he was born in 1813 and which is today a museum, represents a typical Montenegrin house of a well-to-do family. In this very house, Rade Tomov made his first steps, listened to epic songs sung along with the music of gusle, gained his first insights into the ways and temptations of the earthly life, and perhaps already dreamed about the place of his eternal abode atop Lovćen Mountain.

Among numerous accounts of Njeguši made by visiting foreigners, perhaps the most beautiful one comes from the pen of a Frenchman Violla de Somier, who after traveling through Montenegro in 1810, wrote: "Njeguši offer the most beautiful scenery; there is a single large circular plain in the middle of the mountain, with numerous and sizable houses populating the foothill of the mountain, rising as an amphitheatre, leaving one with very pleasant impression... The houses, almost all of which are two-storeyed, were built in the same way, from roughly carved stone, covered with unprocessed slabs and erected without some particular order. Everything says that art has been neglected or even forgotten here. There is no architecture, no rules, nor order that has been respected in the erection of these houses ... Everywhere you turn, you see a fire burning in the middle of a spacious chamber; stones or benches are placed around it, and people are seated in a circle. This is where the food is being prepared. The use of furniture is almost unknown to these people; one or two boards placed on unfinished wooden triangles serve as a shelf for dairy and meat for daily use. Clothes are hanging from a nail in the corner, while an occasional chest conceals the most precious possessions - a document, silverware, festive clothes, dishes or bowls that serve for family festivities. These very practical chests are used throughout this country ... Vain, like all belligerent folk, these men find the utmost pleasure in possessing weapons, the best

and the most ornate pieces in particular; these weapons represent a sign of national wealth; they are ready to sacrifice everything for it. Therefore, the collection of weapons is the most beautiful and most impressive household decoration - in most houses being the only one."

The house was renovated by Petar I and divided into three parts to three brothers. The southern part of the house was given to Sava, the middle part was given to Njegoš's father Tomo, while the third, the northern part, was given to Stjepo. The ground floor featured basements, while the first floor was used for living. During the past, several renovations took place, but the walls remained unchanged. The last rehabilitation of the building was made in 1973, when the museum itself was opened. The first room to enter features the following exhibits: various reproductions of Njeguši, Njegoš's bust, work of the Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović, Njegoš's portrait, work by Jovan Zonjić, The Petrović dynasty bloodline, by Mihajlo Jovičević, while the showcase below displays the works of Njegoš. The central place of the second room, which belonged to Njegoš's father, is occupied by a traditional fireplace with chains, a kettle, barbecue grill, a glowing scissor, a scarf, surrounded by chairs and small stools, and a small dinner table with small chairs used by children, and a bench. On the wall, there is a wooden shelf of the so-called skancijerna with small kitchen and household items (bowls, pots, pitcher, tea box, jar, and bowl with a lid), sač – traditional lid used for baking, and crepulja - shallow clay container used for roasting. Panjega (wall opening) features a clothes iron, so-called sumpreš above which we find a pipe (chibouk). The same room features both male and female national costumes, a cradle, a chest that belonged to Njegoš's mother, weapons and gusle, the traditional string instrument. In addition to the oil lamp and candelabra, the indispensable part of the interior is the famous icon of St. George and a cresset.





The third room, which used to belong to Njegoš's uncle Stijepo, features a Njegoš's portrait by M. Vrbica and several other pieces such as: "Njegoš and his entourage crossing the Krstac mountain pass" by M. Jovičević and "The Assembly of Montenegrins", by S. Vujović. The walls of this room also feature portraits of Petar I and Bishop Danilo, "The Oath of the Montenegrins" and "Chieftains appoint Njegoš", the Billiard-House model, various translations of the "Mountain Wreath", and Njegoš's documents.





The next passage leads to the cold and dark basements used for storing food preparation tools such as: millstone (a manual grinding device), wooden vessel used for keeping freshly cooked milk, water burrow, butter pole, and a prosciutto stand.

Then, there are also various agricultural hand tools such as scythe, grain shovel, hay-fork as well as wicker baskets and hives, together with several photos - reproductions from rural life, which, like the ambience itself, leave no visitor indifferent.

Even a short stay in Njeguši is sufficient to feel the harshness and sharpness of the Lovćen slopes, the abundance of dark clouds from which the thunder is echoing and bursting providing an insight into the laws of nature.

Address: Novice Cerovića bb, Cetinje
Tel: +382 41 230 310 | E-mail: nmcg@t-com.me
www.mnmuseum.org