



Mihailo Petrović

ALAS

Life
Work
Times



Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts







SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS

MIHAILO PETROVIĆ ALAS: LIFE, WORK, TIMES
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

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LIFE, WORK, TIMES

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 150th ANNIVERSARY
OF HIS BIRTH



SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS

Exclusive editions, such as this monograph, call for the engagement, enthusiasm and cooperation of a number of individuals and institutions. We would like to use this opportunity and extend our gratitude to everyone who has taken part or in any way contributed to, or supported the creation and publication of this monograph.

First of all, we would like to express our gratitude to the authors of papers for their effort taken to provide expert and high level insights into some main points of Mihailo Petrović Alas' life and work, at the same time preserving an important aspect of being easy to read and appealing to a broader readership. In addition, we would like to thank to Ms. Snežana Krstić-Bukarica and Ms. Nevena Đurđević from SASA Publishing Section for performing a thorough proofread of the papers, thus making the writing even more articulate.

The monograph features a number of photographs and the copies of documents that have been obtained owing to the kindness of the SASA Archive, SASA Library, SASA Mathematical Institute, Archive of Serbia, Mr. Viktor Lazić from the "Adligat" Society, Mr. Jovan Hans Ivanović and his "Mihailo Petrović Alas" Foundation, "Mihailo Petrović Alas" Primary School, "Svetozar Marković" University Library, Belgrade City Museum, Zavod za udžbenike (Institute for Textbook Publishing) in Belgrade, Virtual Library of Faculty of Mathematics in Belgrade and Digital Legacy of Mihailo Petrović Alas.

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S. Pilipović, G. Milovanović, Ž. Mijajlović

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

As soon as one first encounters the work of Mihailo Petrović, it becomes evident that he was a person that according to its numerous traits was a polymath. Above all, the academician Petrović was a gifted mathematician and a renowned professor at the University of Belgrade, but also a fisherman, writer, philosopher, musician, world traveler and a travel writer. He earned a degree in mathematics at the Belgrade Grand School and a licentiate degree in mathematics, physics and chemistry at the Sorbonne. At the age of 26, only a year after he had completed his studies, he defended his PhD degree in mathematics at the same university, as a student of the famous French mathematicians Henri Poincaré, Charles Hermite and Charles Émile Picard. In the same year (1894) he was elected to the position of professor at the Grand School to which he brought the spirit of the French mathematical school. It was at that point that his long and prolific journey through science began, whereas, owing to him, Belgrade achieved parity with other major European centers in mathematical sciences. He became an initiator and a leader of the Serbian mathematics and strongly contributed to the spirit of the modern European science in Serbia.

Petrović's expertise spanned several mathematical areas in which he achieved scientific results of world-class relevance: differential equations, numerical analysis, theory of functions of a complex variable and geometry of polynomials. He was also interested in natural sciences, chemistry, physics and biology, and he published scientific papers in these fields, too. In his scientific endeavor he managed to meet the most rigorous standards of the most developed European countries. In a brilliant rise, in a few years' time, up to the early 20th century, he wrote around thirty papers that he published in the leading European mathematical journals. It was due to this fact that he was elected a member of the Serbian Royal Academy as early as at the age of 30, and soon after he became a member of a number of foreign academies and prominent expert societies. He won the greatest respect of the global mathematical community: he was among few mathematicians (13) who delivered at least five plenary lectures or lectures as a visiting lecturer at the International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM). He delivered five such lectures (1908, 1912, 1924, 1928 and 1932). One such invitation has been considered by the mathematical community as an equivalent of an induction to a hall of fame. In addition, it has been considered that Petrović was a founder of new scientific disciplines, namely mathematical phenomenology and spectral theory. He invented several analogue computing machines, possessed technical patents and was the main cryptographer of the Serbian and Yugoslav Army.

Up to the Second World War he was the mentor of all doctoral thesis in mathematics defended at the University of Belgrade. Aforementioned is related to one of professor Petrović's greatest and most important achievements – he was a founder of the Serbian mathematical school that has produced a great number of renowned and successful mathematicians not only in Serbia but also around the world.

In 2018, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and mathematicians in Serbia celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mihailo Petrović Alas. Throughout this year, the Academy has organized a large exhibition dedicated to Petrović, alongside a solemn gathering and a conference. This monograph commemorates this important jubilee of the Serbian mathematics. Given the fact that a lot of articles on Petrović have already been written, and that his collected works were published at the end of the last century, the editors and authors of the papers in this monograph were faced with a daunting task of finding some new details from professor Petrović's life and career. Even more so given that his body of work is immense, spanning different scientific areas and encompassing topics that at first glance one finds difficult to combine. As Dragan Trifunović, Petrović's biographer and a man who most thoroughly studied his life and work, noted on one occasion that almost an institute was necessary that would encompass professor's entire body of work. Therefore, we set a relatively modest goal to ourselves to shed light upon some main points of Petrović's life and work, times and circumstances he lived in, as well as to elaborate on the present developments in relation to the Serbian mathematical school, through a selection of papers. The authors of the papers steered clear of technical details and excessive use of mathematical language. Hence, the monograph is intended for a broader readership, in particular to those readers who are interested in the history of Serbian science and its evolvement at the turn of the 20th century, but also to those who want to gain a deeper insight into the life of a brilliant mathematician and a polymath, and, we can quite freely say, an unusual personality.

Ž. Mijajlović, S. Pilipović, G. Milovanović



MIHAILO PETROVIĆ ALAS:
LIFE AND WORK

TRAVELS AND TRAVELOGUES*

Milan BOŽIĆ

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Mathematics

Even a brief insight into the biography of Mihailo Petrović Alas suggests he was a man constantly on the move. Even properly written biographies can at times be misleading as biographers, sometimes even unconsciously, delineate events in the person's life which can be interpreted in different ways. On the other hand, what travels are if not events?

Moreover, very few readers would read lengthy descriptions of a hero's everyday life. Occasional anecdotes may make a biography absorbing, but without such details the narrative remains vapid. The biography of Mihailo Petrović Alas doubtless confirms our starting assumption. This is evidenced both in literal and metaphorical sense.

In literal terms, the most important part of his life were his, rather serious journeys. In the epoch in which he grew up, his travel to Paris to continue his education after completing the Great School in Belgrade, was not an insignificant endeavour. As years passed by, he was an unremitting, incessant traveller. He went around present-day Belgrade suburbs and Danube backwaters, where he caught fish and earned money, was striving to stay alive or performed important state duties during the world wars, was visiting Paris to which he would always return, or was travelling to “ordinary” scientific conferences and meetings. In his

* A revised and supplemented version of the paper initially published in the catalogue *Mihailo Petrović Alas: the Founding Father of the Serbian School of Mathematics* (SASA, 2018).





A Laplander, around 1930
(SASA Archive, 14188/13-5)

advanced and working age, he visited a number of world capitals, discharging his scientific and war-state duties. He was also a coder of the Serbian and later Yugoslav Army.

Still, the travels we dwell on in this article are rather special, in terms of time, place and circumstances.

A significant turnabout took place in the fourth decade of the 20th century and the seventh decade of Petrović's life. Between 1931 and 1939, he spent almost every summer on long journeys, often scientific exhibitions. He travelled practically across the entire world, from the North to the South Pole. It is worth reiterating that Petrović embarked on these journeys in his advanced age, when people rarely cross their thresholds. It not usual even today that someone would go above and under the two great polar circles, let alone then, almost one hundred years ago.

Finally and most importantly, after these journeys, Mihailo Petrović became a travel writer. He published a number of books, voluminous travelogues, which make up two comprehensive volumes of *The Collected Works*.

The secrecy imbuing these Petrović's journeys is further deepened by his labelling them "scientific expeditions", without stating the motives (which, ultimately, can be a personal matter) or the sources of funds and connections with explorers that he travelled with.

In his *Letopis života i rada Mihaila Petrovića Alasa* (*Chronicle of the Life and Work of Mihailo Petrović Alas*), Petrović's most notable biographer Dragan Trifunović¹²¹ thoroughly covers the fourth decade of the 20th century, but mentions nowhere the motivating factors behind these Petrović's grand journeys. As meticulously noted by Trifunović, Petrović left behind him an enormous number of letters and notes, in which he addressed his friends, relatives, colleagues (either in the fields of science or fishing), government and paragovernment authorities and many others.

However, even a most thorough insight into his legacy does not reveal how he embarked on his journeys. Dragan Trifunović wished to believe that Petrović undertook them for scientific and thus state purposes, in order to decipher the earth's magnetic field and ice movement on the poles so as "to study the possibilities of ship navigation". Of course, the question immediately arises as to



Eskimo shamans, around 1931 (SASA Archive, 14197/II-3-6)

why a country, impoverished and without a significant influence such as Yugoslavia, would have played any role in such expensive research.

Still, it is known that Petrović had numerous friends and acquaintances, whom he gained primarily during his education abroad, notably in Paris, who were, in their advanced age, wealthy enough to undertake such expeditions and invited their friend Mihailo Petrović to join them as well. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that, for instance, a six-member French expedition set off on the first journey to the North Pole from Dunkirk, joining a Norwegian expedition that numbered around twenty persons. For those less familiar with the history of the period, France was a superpower at the time, contrary to Norway. The author of this paper is more inclined to the second theory, but would also like it to turn out that Mihailo Petrović dealt on these journeys with important inventions which were put to use in the oncoming war. Even if it had not been so, he left to future generations voluminous travelogues with numerous comments which we will cover by the end of this paper. If someone thinks this was not a great achievement, they should consider the fact that the Serbs do not seem to be particularly fond of travels.

The first journey (summer 1931)

Northward Ho!

From France to Greenland and almost all the way to the North Pole.

The first expedition started from the historically famous Dunkirk. This journey is well-documented, which attests to Petrović's degree of diligence, typical of natural scientists and less common among mathematicians. He also shows, in a way, his second nature, reflected in his scientifically grounded curiosity towards the sensory world around him. Before setting



Personal possessions of Mihailo Petrović, his loyal traveling companions: a leather suitcase with initials, a metal cup in a leather casing with initials, the mechanically powered dynamo flashlight (Luzy), a photo camera (Hutig A:G Dresden, 1908). I. Marković, 2018 (“Mihailo Petrović” Foundation)

off, he took a picture of himself in the uniform of a reserve officer, with binoculars and in boots¹²². They took extremely difficult routes, even measured by present-day standards. They even went beyond modern standards as living people would today be replaced by drones and satellites.

In his travelogue, based on which a precise map of the journey was made, Mihailo Petrović first gives a short overview of the route. He then focuses on the pictures that left on him the greatest impression. He writes about icebergs, polar bears, and outlines the tasks of scientific expeditions. Just like an anthropologist, Petrović analyses Eskimos, their economy and style of life.

“Of everything I have had the chance to see on this unusual journey, my meeting with the most primitive man living today on the planet excited me the most – it was the first roaming Eskimo that we came across. It was a creature clad in bearskin. When it saw us, this creature suddenly stood up, grabbed its short spear and hesitated for a moment whether to run away or stay. This was the first Eskimo that we came across, a real Eskimo nomad, who for months, until a real polar night sets in, is roaming and hunting, incessantly eating and sleeping on ice wherever he finds himself at the moment. Nomadic families usually roam together. They leave on ice, together with dogs and small children, the sledges pulled by dogs, in which they carry their most necessary things. The men, women and older children go their separate ways looking in ice for a hole that a seal made beforehand with its mouth, and then – the hunt takes place... The hole widens up to half a metre. Lying on ice and holding his head above the hole, the Eskimo waits for a seal to appear, which, swimming under the ice, uses each hole to pull its head through it and breathe.

At the right moment, the spear tied to the hunter's hand pierces the animal, which gets instantly pulled from the water and killed”.

Petrović notes down all morphological features of this group of Eskimos in a coherent and systematic way.

“All of them were smaller people, whose height did not exceed 1.50 metres. They have large, elongated skulls, with the upper parts of their foreheads narrowed. Their cheeks are wide and plump, noses flat, eyes small, black and barely open, probably due to severe weather they are constantly exposed to from their childhoods, and due to the sparkling whiteness of the snow and ice in which they spend their lives. Their hands and legs are small commensurately with their bodies, and the upper parts of their bodies are strongly developed; most of them are fat. They are dark red in the face. These are, doubtless, the specimens of the human species that today most resemble a primitive man, at least in terms of the way of life... They rarely live up to 50, perhaps due to their great voracity for meat. An Eskimo, as soon as he catches an animal, seal, walrus, polar bear etc. starts immediately, on the spot, to eat, ingesting even up to seven kilograms of meat per meal. However, such short lives seem not to apply to women, who very often live up to 60–80 years. This can probably be put down to their less arduous lives than pursued by their men. Women entirely resemble men. They are not more beautiful than them, behave in the same way, and therefore cannot be distinguished. Apart from raw meat and raw fish, they do not eat anything else. They know not of salt, they do not particularly need it because the animal food that they exclusively use contains sufficient salt for the needs of their organisms.”

Petrović describes the Eskimos' abodes in a picturesque and documentary way.

“When in their settlements, the Eskimos live under tents or in huts made of ice blocks, which they sometimes cover with snow. Their tents are made of sealskin, propped by wooden poles and stones; the cracks are plugged with Greenland moss. There are no windows and the entrance is closed with a curtain made of seal intestines, split and stitched one to another; such curtain does not let in wind and lets in some light. The huts are made of ice blocks cut by knife and assembled into semi-spherical cupolas (called the “igloo” in their language). A narrow tunnel 3–5 metres in length, through which they squeeze on all fours, connects the interior of the igloo with its exterior. When I tried to enter an igloo through such tunnel, I almost fainted halfway because of the indescribable stench coming from the entrance of the igloo and, going on all four backwards I returned to the exit faster than I came in. During long polar nights, a primitive lamp burns in the igloo, chiselled in the soft stone, with the wick made of spun moss. The lamp lets in faint light and a bit of warmth. They very rarely use fire as they have no fuel, and are used to eating only raw food. While sitting in their huts, they are well clad in skin. When they want to go to sleep, they lie one next to another, completely naked, on the spread skin of the polar bear and cover themselves with long skin. Their clothes are made of the skins of seals, deer or the polar bear, or their combination. They are sown by women with needles made of fishbone. Both men and women wear trousers, often decorated, as well as coats with woven or etched images. They usually put on two pairs of clothes; when at the open sea, they put on one more sealskin, which preserves the bearskin underneath from becoming wet. They put on their heads skin hoods,

which leaves only their eyes, nose and mouth open. They often pull over their eyes little seal-skin with two thin horizontal slits to look through; they thus save themselves from snow needles which can cause eye inflammation, and from the reflection of the snow and ice. They have on their legs some sorts of socks, in the form of bags made of skin of polar rabbits, over which they pull sealskin boots.”

The Eskimos from eastern Greenland, about whom Petrović wrote, never quarrelled or fought.

“They have phlegmatic temperaments, they are open and good-natured, but without excitement and exuberance. Once they stop looking upon a foreigner with mistrust and realise they have nothing to be afraid of, only they care about is how not to make him angry or sorrowful. No one has ever heard them complaining of their tough life or anything else. They have a very poor notion of ownership. They believe everything can be shared with others apart from women, clothes and tools. When one of them catches a seal, all those nearby can eat as much as they want. This, however, also implies the duty that each of them must hunt or assist in hunting and preparing tools and gear when it is requested from him.”

Understandably, in his descriptions of the Eskimos’ lives, Petrović devotes most attention to their hunting practice.

“As soon as, in early spring, the sky clears up so that it is possible to hunt, and the time allows them to survive outside, the Eskimos go hunting in groups – some of them on sledges, others in boats or dinghies. [...] Sledges are pulled by large and strong Eskimo dogs, wild and sanguinary almost like wolfs, but very obedient to the Eskimos. [...] They use for navigation large boats and light dinghies. [...] Large boats with wide sails of sealskin, which carry 6–12 persons each, are used for entire families with their luggage, or for whale hunting. Much more interesting for them are light dinghies for individuals, called “kayaks”, which play a very important role in the Eskimos’ lives. They obtain primarily what they need for everyday life and food: meat and fat, skin for clothes, footwear and tents, bones for tools and other. Kayaks are made of tanned sealskin, stretched over wooden bars and tightly tied to the bars with straps and strings of skin or intestines. They are entirely closed, covered and waterproof. The Eskimos get used to handling them from their earliest childhood. They use them to navigate the seas, look for prey and brave strong winds, even storms, because kayaks cannot sink unless pierced by solid objects.”

Petrović’s overview of the method of hunting and adequate equipment is rather exhaustive and detailed, but he did not stop there. He also devoted particular attention to the spiritual life of the Eskimos, their customs and beliefs.

“Above all, the Eskimos have their own language which, although poor, has expressions even for things going beyond everyday life. They have their beliefs, superstitions, even their naïve explanations of what is happening around them. Their language is very poor in words and expressions, and can therefore be very quickly and easily mastered. One word often expresses an entire idea, but as the number of ideas is small, the number of such words is also very limited.



Mihailo Petrović's passport.
I. Marković, 2018 ("Mihailo
Petrović" Foundation)

Sentences are very short, often consisting of one word only. The Eskimos' religious ideas are highly undefined and vague. They believe in monsters and evil spirits that only their sorcerers can influence. Natural phenomena such as: the northern polar light, thunders, very rare in those regions, become a good or evil will of those monsters and spirits. The land of the dead is entirely similar to the land of the living – the Eskimo continues his hunt there and can die once again in that land. The appearance of sunlight after clouds suggests that a young man died somewhere in that moment, and the Great Spirit makes the sky and earth cloudy and shiny so as to solemnly receive his soul. The sky is a spacious earth with holes, and these holes are stars. This land is inhabited by people who left this earth to another world; when they pour down water, the water leaks through those holes to this world – this is rain. When a man or animal die, the moon carries the soul to the land upwards. When the moon is not seen, it carries the souls. A man's soul can be transformed into the soul of any type of animal. Good people become people again, and the evil ones become animals; everything that lives cannot be destroyed."

Finally, in the third layer, Petrović explains in detail various phenomena explored by polar expeditions and gives a highly in-depth overview of the main expeditions to the North Pole from which, at the time he was writing, less than a half a century elapsed. This travelogue – and the author applies the same method, in a highly meticulous way, in other travelogues as well – is, in fact, a true textbook on geography, demography and economy of the regions he visited. It may be possibly called the Encyclopaedia of the Arctic Circle.



The cover page of the book *On the Remote Islands* in which Mihailo Petrović describes the voyage of scientific expedition to the southern polar region in 1934–1935 (Library of SASA, C 7/12;9)

The second journey (summer 1932)

Eastward Ho!

Across the Atlantic to the Sargasso Sea, Caribbean islands, Antilles and Bermuda.

This journey could have the status of “a pleasure trip” both in Petrović’s time and today. Mihailo Petrović travelled with his friends to the islands of Central America, the Azores, Haiti, Bermuda... Being a good travel writer, he feels he must intrigue his readers. Apart from picturesque descriptions, the most interesting is his division of sea plunderers into regular and irregular, i.e. state and ordinary pirates. State pirates – this is how I began to read about famous sir Francis Drake who eventually became an admiral and defeated the Spanish Armada which attempted to invade England – looted their enemies, waging a sort of “a trade war”, though with somewhat more violent methods than today, but with similar consequences.

Of course, Petrović meticulously describes fishing and the economy of Central American islands, publishing even two travelogues about these journeys.

The third journey (summer 1933)

Northwestward Ho!

To Labrador and Newfoundland.

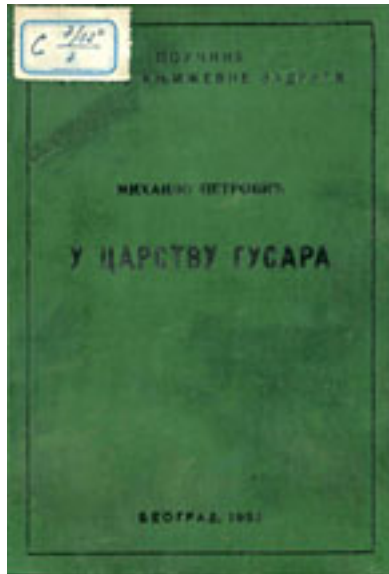
This route was also directed rather to the north, but already in a warmer place. People lived there, there was an economy mainly based on fishing and whale hunting. Being a passionate fisherman, Petrović did not miss any of the most important products of the region – the cod. While the northern route was coloured with ice, coldness and dangers, Petrović describes this route with many more human colours.

The fourth journey (summer 1934)

Southward Ho!

Towards the Antarctic via the Atlantic route.

If you thought that the South was warm and the North cold, you were wrong. Of course, it depends on how southward you go. On



In his book *In the Empire of Pirates*, Mihailo Petrović writes about notorious pirates, such as Charles Vane, who robbed the Antilles, the Bahamas and the Bermudas.

only imagine what Petrović would have made had he had, instead of his camera, modern multimedia recording devices!

The sixth and last journey (summer 1939)

Warward Ho!

The break in his journeys lasted for four years. We do not know the reasons. Tiredness, finance, the crisis in Europe on the eve of the war. This journey was somewhat shorter. It ended on the Azores, 1500 km northwest from Portugal. Petrović set off on this journey with the same French team with whom he had travelled across the world. As this journey was also “on the route of eels“, we can assume with certainty that it, along with the second journey, served as the basis and inspiration for the *Eel Novel*. As Petrović mentions at almost each his journey the sea flora, particularly fish, his narrative is imbued with his fishing sentiments as well. The journey routes suggest that other expedition participants were also highly interested in fish, notably eel movement. As the names or functions of members are rarely mentioned, we cannot claim with certainty that Petrović’s fellow travellers were interested concretely in eel. Still, it is not disputable that eels, passing through the entire Atlantic and the Baltic Sea to spawn and close their life cycle are still today intriguing to experts and us, laymen, alike. Mihailo Petrović returns to his country after this journey and goes to the war, approaching his final days.

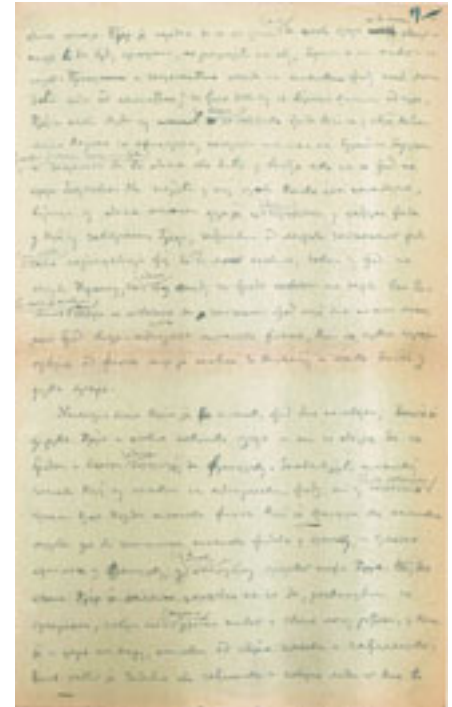
Travelogues

All descriptions of the grand journeys that Petrović undertook in the fourth decade of the 20th century are in fact his own. They are a part of voluminous manuscripts which, unlike his mathematical work, were created very suddenly.

Already after his first journey, in summer 1931, Petrović addressed¹²⁷ his friend Pavle Popović¹²⁸, president of Srpska književna zadruga (Serbian Literary Cooperative), proposing that his travelogues be printed “to the amusement of the Serbian people”. Being a long-lasting Petrović’s friend, Pavle did not hesitate and published the first travelogue in the literary edition of Zadruga, regular circle, in the *Savremenik* (*Contemporary*) library, thus immortalising Petrović in another way, unexpected not only for us, but for Petrović as well. Thus, along with being a travel writer, Petrović became a literary author. The most important information linking Popović and Petrović is the fact that Popović was elected a professor of the Great School in 1904, along with Simo Lozanić and a few others. The following year, he was elected a professor at the newly founded University. The purge carried out by members of the Karađorđević Dynasty after the coup d’état was rather comprehensive. At most a third of those who were professors of the Great School in 1904 and later of the University survived. A similar age and favour they enjoyed with the new Dynasty created strong mutual connections among this small group of people. The Dynasty’s importance declined after the Great War, but personal connections remained, perhaps even becoming stronger, as the political background sustaining them disappeared.

Given the above, the assessments that Petrović imposed with his travelogues should be taken with reservations. Pavle Popović was most probably well informed about Petrović’s journeys, seeing in them not only a potential literary text, but also a connecting transversal of his generation. Such approach can also explain how the first travelogue of Mihailo Petrović, who was after all an amateur and beginner in literary profession, was printed in the *Savremenik* edition, where the works of the most eminent Serbian writers were published.

This cooperation continued. As many as five Petrović’s books were published by Srpska književna zadruga: *Kroz polarnu*



Manuscript of Mihailo Petrović for preparation of his book *In the Empire of Pirates* (“Adligat” Society)



In his book *With the Ocean Fishermen*, Mihailo Petrović writes about endurance, persistence and sobriety of the oceanic fishermen.

oblast (Through the Polar Region) (1932)¹²⁹, *U carstvu gusara (In the Empire of Pirates)* (1933)¹³⁰, *Sa okeanskim ribarima (With Ocean Fishermen)* (1936)¹³¹, *Po zabačenim ostrvima (Around Far-Flung Islands)* (1936)¹³² and *Roman jegulje (Eel Novel)* (1940)¹³³. Apart from the *Eel Novel*, the rest are travelogues¹³⁴, – the first from the first journey, the story about pirates and fishermen from the second, and far-flung islands from the third.

The *Politika* daily published “abbreviated editions” of Petrović’s travelogues, with his notes and reflections. *Politika* may have exerted a stronger influence on Mihailo Petrović becoming a paradigm of the travelogue genre among the Serbs than all publications of Pavle Popović.

It is also true, or at least it again seems so to the author of this article, that Mihailo Petrović understood well the power of the media, using his self-promotion gift to the utmost in his epoch. Others, however, believe this is not befitting for such a great man. The exact explanation probably lies somewhere “in the middle”, which makes it both tedious and irrelevant.



Of the fifteen volumes of *The Collected Works*, *Travelogues* make up the two largest. Slobodanka Petković (the foreword to book 13, i.e. second volume of *Travels*) wrote an excellent article where those who like curiosities can find a lot of information missing in this overview.

Being a descendant of men and women who built their reading careers on Petrović's travelogues, I read all his travel writings while still a child. Colleague Mihailo Pantić, who contributed to the exhibition catalogue and this monograph with an outline of Petrović's fishing activity and literary work, proposed that Mika's literary work be subjected to a serious analysis. The timeframe for such endeavour being too short for this occasion, I am confident that Pantić is right and that a separate "project", as it is said today, should be devoted to such task.

Petrović's travelogues and other works can be accessed in digital form in the Virtual Library of the Faculty of Mathematics¹³⁵.

