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DIVČIBARE

BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY

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DIVČIBARE

BETWEEN MYTH AND
REALITY

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE VALJEVO MOUNTAINS

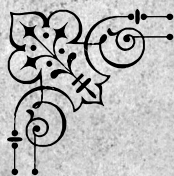
Like many before us, through our work, we try to find a hidden place for ourselves in the history of the world. And life itself is like a mountain. With every step we take, we steal a part of its beauty and change it forever. Will we know how to preserve all that gives it meaning and makes it attractive to the generations that follow? We must believe that we can protect the natural resources entrusted to us as the very source of life. And we must learn to understand their harmony, which is the essence of knowledge and the true value of what we have inherited. And then, with all our strength and the skill that has been granted to us by the Lord—we must work to protect it!

The mountain Maljen was, at different times, taken from the Serbs by Hungarian, Austrian, Bulgarian, Ottoman, and German rulers. The area was often not only the border of the Pannonian Sea and its shores, but also the front line of many empires and armies. Rulers came and went, leaving behind traces of their presence and the battles they fought. The Romans left Lastva and the foundations of the Bela Stena fortress; the Hungarians and Austrians Strazara; the Nemanjic dynasty, the monastery Manastirica and Kraljev Sto; the Ornjavcevic family, the village of Krmar and Markovi Cani; settlers, Niksicko Field, Kosjeric, Uskokovine...

This book is not a scientific document, yet it is based on available sources, and it will certainly contain omissions that future authors and enthusiasts will correct. Here, we will record and explain, wherever possible, the origins of many Maljen and Divcibare toponyms, and revive the memory of their sources and the myths that permeate them. We will also list all the toponyms of the modern age, though they will have to withstand the test of time. These stories are intended to help the people and entrepreneurs of Maljen spark their imagination and enrich the region's tourist offer—bringing prosperity to our homeland, and rest and delight to its visitors. There will be new books, and there will be new toponyms.

May these writings contribute to the preservation of the beautiful Valjevo mountains, and may they serve as a kind of covenant and a foundation of knowledge for future generations, just as the works of earlier authors have been for us.

Enjoy.



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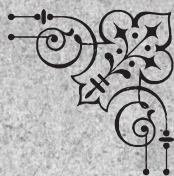
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THE LEGEND



THE LEGEND OF THE DIVČIBARE FAIRY



The story is based on historical records, existing legends, and archaeological research. The fairy is a fictional character that connects them and gives them new meaning

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DIVČIBARE RAZVIGORA

In the heart of Maljen¹, sheltered by the warm breath of the fairy Razvigora², the gentle flowering meadows of Divčibare came alive—"Divine³ waters" (Božanske vode), as Noah⁴ himself named them in gratitude, when on a stormy night of the Great Flood⁵, Razvigora's winds guided his Ark toward the safe harbor of Povlen⁶. Throughout the turbulent ages and wars that have never ceased upon the Earth, Divčibare has been a refuge and a shelter for people fleeing the towns, while its healing winds⁷ carried hope of recovery and long life. So it remains to this day.

Hidden from mortal eyes, Razvigora dwells deep within the forest, in the Fairy Grove⁸ beneath the former Beli Manastir (today the Church of Saint Nicholas⁹), near the Skakalo

Waterfall¹⁰. No one knows exactly where she lives. The waterfall is nearly impossible to reach¹¹, and many who dared seek her fell from the cliff and vanished into the whirlpools of the river Manastirica¹² upon seeing her.

When great suffering struck upon the world,
And Noah strove to save it with his Ark,
The sea rose upward, reaching to the heavens,
The waves struck fiercely, smiting at the clouds.
Then Noah called upon his God in prayer,
And raised his hands unto the throne up high.

While Noah bowed before his God in faith,
A breath divine directed him to safety.
The divine fairy, goddess Razvigora,
With saving winds bore forth the Ark,
And moored it safely on the isle of Povlen.

The waters spread through the Pannonian Sea,
A boundless flood that covered all the world.
Yet there remained the guardian, the fay,
And Noah named the land Divčibare,
To keep remembrance of the mighty Flood,
And of the fairy's breath that brought salvation.

IMPERIAL ROADS

Since ancient times, the Imperial Road¹³ has led across Divčibare toward the capitals of empires¹⁴. With their armed garrisons and fortified towns, rulers controlled the transport of ore from nearby mines, protected merchant caravans, and often charged tolls.



Around the road stretched dark, dense forests, because of which the wider region of Maljen—extending all the way to the mountains of Povlen and Suvobor—has long been called Crna Gora¹⁵ ("Black Mountain"), with its Crni Vrhovi¹⁶ (Black Peaks) and Crne Reke Kamenice¹⁷ (Black Stone Rivers). In earlier times, this was the site of military strongholds of the Illyrians, Celts, Romans, Avars... Fortifications were torn down and rebuilt again in the times of ceaseless wars.

THE FORTRESS OF BELA STENA OF TSAR DUŠAN

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The Serbian king, later Tsar Dusan the Mighty¹⁸, with the aid of the fairy Razvigora, rebuilt¹⁹ the Beli Grad near the present-day village of Krcmar²⁰. Dusan's city was called Bela Stena²¹, after the cliff where it was founded, and it guarded the entrances to the empire from the north. The fairy promised him that no one could destroy the city, save the hand of a Serbian ruler. She gave him a signet ring, which would grant any future ruler the right to destroy the fortress and the power to summon her aid if the town needed defense. Dusan brought mighty eagles, Nemanjic white-headed vultures²², to watch over and warn the knights of lurking dangers while he reigned in imperial Prizren²³.

Razvigora was the king's favorite, bestowing strength upon his invincible army, and he, in return, protected the people of Divcibare from harsh levies, evil, and suffering. The king was so mighty that he bound the demon of the underworld and death, the cursed Morana²⁴, who tormented the people with magic. With the prayers of Mount Athos monks, he shackled her with silver and buried her in the shaft of the old Divcibare mine beneath Golubac²⁵.

Through Divcibare wound the ancient paths,
The Roman roads, then Dubrovnik's in their time.
From ages past they stretched on every side.
Towers rose, and fortresses were built,
Miners dug, and strong foundations were laid:
Some cities fell, while others took their place.

When Bulgars plundered Krcmar in their wrath,
The old and young, all fled in haste,
Fled onward, seeking shelter in the hills.
There Razvigora, fairy good and kind,
Received them in the bosom of the mountains,
To guard their souls and grant them peace and rest.

The gentle fairy struck Beli Grad down,
With breath that mortals call the raging wind,
And leveled it upon the darkened earth.
The Bulgars turned and drew their armies back,
While all the folk came forth from Divcibare,
To live their fates in quiet and in peace.

Then came the mighty host of Serbia,
The countless legions of the mighty Tsar,
Dusan the Mighty, king of all the Serbs.
At the great table sat the sovereign lord,
While lynxes paced in watch about his throne,
And vultures soared in flocks across the sky.
He fortified Bela Stena, both town and mount,
And spoke these words unto the fairy Razvigora:
"This city I shall guard from every harm,
From Morana's curse and other sorrows dire.
But grant me, fairy, thy immortal power,
That I may hurl the Hungars o'er the Sava."



The fairy gave her strength into his hand,
And Dusan pressed the Hungars back in flight.

Mighty Dusan with his noble knights
Took Belgrade swiftly, conquered it with ease:
He drove the Hungars o'er the Sava wide,
By fairy wind unto the plains of Srem.



KRALJEV STO AND THE BATTLE OF GOLUBAC

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During Dusan's reign, a powerful invading army led by the Hungarian King Charles, numbering over 80,000 soldiers, swept into Sumadija and dealt heavy blows to the Serbian army. At the king's call, Razvigora came to aid the troops, and with her breath, she infused strength into the brave knights and their horses, spurring them into a counterattack. Pushed back by the Serbian forces, the Hungarians retreated all the way to the Divcibare border, to the Golubac Field, where the most important battle took place. King Dusan and his command oversaw the battle from the heights that locals now call Kraljev Sto ("King's Table") in memory of his rule in the region. The invaders regrouped with reinforcements arriving from Hungary and began pressing the Serbian forces in a decisive battle. When the fairy unleashed her destructive winds, forcing the Hungarians to falter and retreat into the dense forests of the Golubac peaks. There, to their misfortune, they became easy prey for the brave Serbian knights. The Hungarian king survived the battle with severe wounds and withdrew to his kingdom.

Thus ended one of the most important battles of Dusan in the 14th century with a Serbian victory. At Bela Stena, the Serbian king reviewed his victorious army and richly rewarded them. Following this defeat, the Hungarians lost Macva and Belgrade.

PRINCE ANDRIJAŠ MRNJAVČEVIĆ

After the sudden death of Tsar Dusan and the defeat of the Serbian army at Marica, fate placed the responsibility on Prince Andrijas, son of King Vukasin Mrnjavcevic and brother of the later greatest Serbian hero, Prince Marko²⁶, to govern the city of Bela Stena and protect the northern lands from further Hungarian invasions²⁷. He carried with him Tsar Dusan's signet ring, which opened the royal gates of the city and gave him the power to summon the fairy Razvigora for aid whenever he wished.

The prince and the fairy grew fond of each other. She granted him her power, and Andrijas became invincible in battle. No one could conquer Bela Stena.

THE CURSED TRIBE OF OSMAN AND THE BATTLE OF KOSOVO

The powerful Ottoman Empire²⁸, with its overwhelming force, relentlessly conquered lands and peoples across Asia, Africa, and Europe. After the destruction of the Serbian army and the death of King Vukasin Mrnjavcevic at the Marica River²⁹, Holy Prince Lazar³⁰, himself perishing in the terrible Battle of Kosovo³¹ in 1389, dealt a severe blow to the Ottoman Empire along with his knights.



The Ottomans took the next fifty years to recover from this defeat. Yet even this could not stop the wave of people and armies advancing from the south. Relentlessly pushing northward toward Europe and Serbian towns, the Ottomans repeatedly laid siege, albeit unsuccessfully, to Prince Andrijas and to Bela Stena.

When Mighty Dusan perished from this world,

Then Detos ruled upon Divcibare's field,

Illustrious lord in service to Lazar.

He christened all the land beneath his hand,

Gave Hilandar abundant gift and grace,

And sought the favor of Saint Panteleimon.

But from the south the Turks in fury came,

They plundered villages and ruined towns

With Morana, to bring the empire down.

Upon the Marica, the fatal stream,

Many Serbs perished in sorrow and pain,

Drunk with wine, they fell and knew no dawn.

They were avenged by Obilic the brave,

Who struck and slew the sultan Murat there,

On Kosovo, the field of crimson bloom.

Yet Lazar too was slain by Turkish hands,

Betrayed to death by wrathful Osmanlis:

They set his holy head upon a stake.

Then Stefan, wise Despot and Lazar's son,

Inherited the Morava's domains,

With Detos' field of fair Divcibare,

And under it Beli Grad and Stena,

Which Razvigora, fairy, guarded well

From the beginning to the end of time.

The flowery meads of lovely Divcibare

The Despot gave in dowry to his kin,

His son-in-law, the king of Hungary.

Yet not long after Stefan perished as well,
Then Brankovic family received the land,
And gave the town to Andrijas the king.

The brother of Marko, the princely lord,

Andrijas, son of Vukasin the king,

Began to raise the towers and the walls,

To guard the empire from the Hungarian threat.

Then fairy Razvigora, flew to his aid,

And offered him the gift of her power.

To Andrijas, the master of the town,

Beli Grad, and the fortress, Bela Stena,

She spoke: "Go Dusan once I gave my vow,

That I would aid the city in its need,

To shield it well, to keep it unconquered:

Call me, and I shall come when thou hast need."

Andrijas raised the towers high anew,

Set strong the ramparts of fair Bela Stena,

And bound in stone the fortress walls of old,

Of Beli Grad lying under Divcibare,

And in his labor Razvigora helped,

The noble spirit, fairy merciful.

And many times the Hungars made their charge,

They stormed the walls to take the city down,

But Andrijas would summon forth the fay,

And she in battle lent her strength to him,

The more she fought beside him,

The dearer to his soul she grew.

When he would sleep, he dreamed of her alone,

When he would sing, his songs were all of her.

Her lips became for him a draught of wine

That overcame his senses every night.

Until one morning thus he spoke to self:

"Go, find her now, and let her be thy love."



THE DEATH OF ANDRIJAS

Then peasants of the village Kremar said:
"Razvigora dwells within a hidden cave,
Near by the waters of the waterfall Skakalo,
The rushing stream that plunges from the cliff.
Men say that lynxes keep her company,
And vultures serve her as her vassals."

When Andrijas had learned where she abides,
He girded on his sword with shining eyes,
His bow whose arrows fly as swift as birds,
His mace of gold that gleams as bright as sun,
To light his path through darkness of the night,
And set his course to seek the fairy maid.

Through Crna Gora and the Mount Maljen
Andrijas wandered for many days:
Save for the stag and for the eagle's cry,
He met no man upon the lonesome path.
But on the seventh day he heard the stream,
And thought: "The Fairy Grove is near at last."

He made his way down through the forest,
A steep descent of manyfold perils,
And there he saw the fairy at her bath,
Beneath the torrent of the Skakalo.
Her robe lay folded on the river's bank,
Beside it shone her golden fairy veil.

He seized the veil and robbed her of her might,
And led the fairy with him to his hall.
He decked her out with silver and with gold,
Arrayed her in a gown of emerald hue,
And crowned her with the diadem of love:
Each day with her was greater joy anew.

Through Divcibare oft they walked in peace,
They stamped their love upon the flowery meads,
And every blossom breathed their sweet emotions.
He wove for her white garlands out of narcissi,
And set the wreaths of white flowers in her hair.
Thus Razvigora loved Andrijas in return.

Learning that the fairy gave him strength, the Ottoman beys went to imperial Edirne³² to find a Sihirbaz (a man who practices black magic) to, by the Sultan's orders, perform a spell that would strip Andrijas of his fairy powers and kill him. Unable to oppose the fairy with his own magic, the Sihirbaz directed them to the old mine on Divcibare, where the cursed Morana was imprisoned. He gave them magic to lull the royal lynxes guarding the mine entrance and told them where to dig up the mine and find Morana. "...To reward with gold worthy of a Sultan and promise vengeance, and in return she would reveal the secret of Andrijas's vulnerability and help them kill him." And so they did. The cursed Morana accepted the gifts and the sweet taste of revenge. She revealed the secret: the fairy veil he wore around his neck gave power to Andrijas, and the weakness the Mrnjavcevic family could not resist was the red wine, with which she had already deceived them at the Marica River. She told them: "...gather 13 of the greatest Ottoman warriors, kill the old innkeeper along the road to Bela Stena, and lie in wait at the inn for Andrijas." And so they did. The cursed Morana transformed into a beautiful innkeeper, Mara, with flowing hair and ample bosom. She emerged from the dug-up mine past the sleeping lynxes and headed to the crossroads where the inn stood. The unfortunate innkeeper had already been killed by the Ottomans, and Mara, seeing the hero Andrijas returning to town on horseback, ran to meet him and deceived him, claiming a message from his brother Marko: "...that he had arrived from distant Prilep³³ and to wait for him at the inn until he returned from the battlefield." Andrijas, delighted to hear from his brother, entered the inn, and the enchanting Mara brought red wine and quickly got him drunk. She removed the fairy veil from his neck and gave a signal to the Ottoman assassins, disguised as Dubrovnik merchants³⁴, to kill him. And so they did.



Then a white-headed vulture cried out from the sky
so loudly it could be heard all the way to imperial
Prilep, signaling that misfortune had fallen upon
the white town and the peaceful Divcibare fields.
Prince Marko, hearing the cry, immediately saddled
his horse Sarac³⁵, took up his six-bladed mace, and
rode to aid his brother, unaware of the tragedy. The
Ottomans hid Andrijas's body under the fairy veil so
that neither gods nor demons could find him while
they waited for the army from Edirne to attack the
fortified town of Bela Stena.

When the Turks encircled the city,
Beli Grad beneath Bela Stena,
They besieged it time and again
At Krcmar, under Divcibare's heights.
Yet the city never fell to their hands,
And their mighty host was struck down.

Just as the Turks began to lose faith,
Into their camp there came a youth,
A youth from the city of Stambol.
A plume fell low across his brow,
Daggers gleamed at his girdled waist,
He tilted his fez and spoke to them:

"In the heart of the silver mine
The cursed Morana has dwelt for ages.
Her powers are many and terrible,
Her gaze can bewitch the bravest knight,
Her smile can drain the strongest one.
Yet bound in silver, her might is broken."

When Osman Jusuf Aga heard this,
He summoned forth his scouts at once,
And among them the spahi Radoje.
Thus spoke the mighty Jusuf Aga:
"Seek the silver mine of Divcibare,
Bring forth to me Morana in chains."

Swiftly rode the Turkish scouts,
Across the slopes of Mount Daljen,
To seek the mine of silver deep,
Where the cursed Morana dwelt.
When they reached the Crni Vrh peak,
There Radoje found the silver mine.

They drew forth Morana from the shaft,
The cursed one, bound in silver.
And the Ottoman warriors cried:
"Slay for us the king Andrijas,
And we shall grant you liberty,
From the will of our great Sultan."

When she heard the words they spoke,
Morana answered with her voice:
"Bring me thirteen chosen warriors,
Strike down the innkeeper at Krcmar,
And I shall bring you Andrija,
Andrijas, son of King Vukasin."

The Turks heard and swiftly scattered,
Each to gather men of war.
They brought six of their heroes,
Among them mighty Sulejman,
Who struck down the Krcmar innkeeper,
And cast his severed head before her.

Then Morana took another form,
She became Dara, slender and fair.
From her eyes the sunlight poured,
From her lips sweet honey flowed,
About her brow, golden hair unbound,
Her breasts like ripened apples shone.

Dara knew the curse of the Mrnjavcevic,
Who sought their solace in red wine,
Cursing their cruel and bitter fate,
So she awaited King Andrijas.



Beside the tavern by Dobroska River,
With pitchers of wine within her hands.

The sun sank behind Bela Stena,
And down the road came King Andrijas,
Riding forth toward Beli Grad.
Passing by the radiant Mara,
He beheld the sunlight in her eyes.
And she called to him with gentle words:

"Rest a while, O King Andrijas,
Rest but a moment, King of Bela Stena.
Thy brother Marko sent me with his word,
To bring thee tidings from far Prilep,
Of thy father, King Vukasin,
And of thy mother, Queen Jelena."

Deceived, Andrijas halted his horse.
Mara poured him crimson wine,
And with her smile she bewitched his gaze.
From her lips sweet honeyed words flowed,
Enticing the king to drink still more,
Until Andrijas fell into a dream.

Then from the tavern the Turks leapt forth,
They struck the king down by treachery.
They took from him his veil and rings,
And bore them to Osman Jusuf Aga.
He gave Mara a measure of gold,
And freedom in the name of the Sultan.

TERRIBLE NEWS

The fairy Razvigora searched in vain for her beloved Andrijas. She moved cliffs and forests with her strong winds, gazing at the distant horizon and the silhouette of her lost beloved. Even today, the most beautiful viewpoints are where she once moved mountains. She rejoiced when, in the

distance, she saw Prince Marko riding toward the town and flew to meet him, full of hope. When Marko dismounted his horse Sarac, he embraced her, said he had heard of the danger, and asked about his brother.

Then imperial vultures descended and told them of the terrible fate of Andrijas. The fairy burst into inconsolable tears, from which springs on Daljen³⁶ boiled (some still call them the viline suze (fairy tears)), and Marko swore by the name of the Drnjavcevic family that he would take revenge on the innkeeper Mara and the Ottomans for this crime.

PRINCE MARKO AVENGES HIS BROTHER

As the all-seeing imperial vultures had told them, they went to the abandoned mine. They found broken chains and confirmed that Morana was free again and had transformed into the beautiful Mara. Razvigora gave all her powers to Prince Marko, making him an invincible hero³⁷. But she warned him that it was impossible to kill Morana outright: first, he had to cut her with a sword and then strike her chest with a mace. Once she fell, he had to set her on fire with lamp oil to subdue her and then drown³⁸ her in water. Marko obeyed the fairy and, now an invincible warrior, set out to take revenge on the Ottomans and Morana. Recognizing him from afar as he rode toward the inn, Morana transformed into the beautiful innkeeper Mara and appeared before him with a goblet of red wine. She invited him inside to rest from the long journey along the imperial roads. Marko sat at the table but secretly did not drink the wine; instead, he pretended to be asleep from drunkenness. Seeing that his head had fallen on the table, Morana summoned the Ottomans, but Marko sprang up and, with his mace, struck them all down with a single blow.



The innkeeper Mara, terrified, twisted in fear and began to flee across the field. Marko caught up to her at the place now called Rastava³⁹ and struck her for the first time with his sword. This is where the cursed soul of Morana separated from Mara's body through the nose and flew toward the Krema River⁴⁰. Marko mounted his horse Sarac and, with fairy strength, spurred it. Sarac leapt across the Divcibare field toward Pehar⁴¹ and Morana, who was flying above them.

Sarac's hooves struck a rock with such force that sparks flew, and the fairy's tear boiled (today the spring is called Markovi Canci⁴² (čanci means basins)) and formed a river to drown the cursed Morana. Marko met Morana in flight, struck her with his mace in the chest, and knocked her to the ground. He poured lamp oil over her and set her ablaze with heavenly fire. With a demonic scream, Morana ran into the river, which boiled from her presence. The river's waves dragged her to its depths and drowned her. Even today, that shore is called Mara's Bank⁴³.

When they came to the field of narcissi
On Daljen, by the slopes of Divcibare,
The white vulture called for Razvigora,
The dear beloved, of the dear king,
And to her spoke the brief, terrible news,
Pouring forth a bitter tear like wine.

"Razvigora, my dearest sister,
Tell Marko, your beloved's one,
That they have slain his brother treacherously,
By foul deceit, in the dark of Krema,
Slain by the Turks, the Ottoman foes,
With the help of the innkeeper Mara."

The fairy's face was wet with tears,
She fell upon Marko's chest in grief,
"They have slain your brother Andrijas,
Slain him though innocent before God,
Slain him in Beli Grad the stronghold,
Beneath the mighty Bela Stena of Divcibare."

When Prince Marko heard this tale of woe,
He drew his saber and grasped his mace,
A shining armor girded his body,
He mounted Sarac and rode toward Bela Stena,
There came behind him the fairy Razvigora,
And thus she spoke to Prince Marko:

"Here I grant you a portion of my power,
The mighty wind that carries to the heavens,
The honey that turns water into wine,
The dragon's breath of burning fire,
The thunderbolt gaze that breaks stone,
Take the oil, and avenge your brother."

Marko descended to the Dobroska river,
Where the Turks, the Ottomans, had gathered,
And among them stood Mara the innkeeper,
Pouring wine, with a smile upon her face,
But when she beheld Marko Kraljevic,
Mara began to flee up the steep hill.

She spread her arms as if to take flight,
Fleeing the field and running to the river,
Then Sarac leapt, borne by fairy winds,
And flew across to Bela Stena,
Where his hooves struck and made a spring,
Markovi Canci, at Pehar, where the waters flow.

At Rastava Marko caught Mara,
With his mace he struck her breast,
He tore her from Yusuf's treasure,
And the beauty that adorned her face,
Her garments scattered across the field,
And through her nose her spirit fled,
Only the soul of Morana remained,
That fled across the sky toward the river,
Sarac leapt and carried Marko forth,
They overtook the soul of Morana,
Which Marko struck with thunderous power,
And with his mace he pinned it to the earth.

Then as the fairy had spoken before,
Marko poured the oil from the lamp,
And set it aflame with his breath of fire,
Morana rolled across the field,
And fell into the spring waters,
There she plunged, and there she drowned.

Marko drew Morana from the water,
And the fairy gave him her hand in aid,
They bound her soul within the silver mine,
So it would no longer wander free,
So her curse would never smother men.

With Marko the fairy melted gold,
Gold from the sacred lamp of flame,
Forged the chains to bind the cursed Mara,
They chained her in the depths of the mine,
Buried the cursed mine beneath the earth,
So her soul could never rise again.

When the Turks, the Ottoman host,
Fled forever from Maljen's fields,
Never more to return, pray God,
Yet Razvigora spoke to Marko this:
Marko, you better build a church of stone,
Upon the awful place your brother fell.

And Marko built the holy church,
In Krcmar beneath Divcibare's heights,
He laid his brother's tomb in the wall,
The left-hand wall beside the altar,
In the foundation, forever to be known:
This is the church of King Andrijas.

When the church was finished by Marko,
He mounted once more his steed Sarac;
And rode away to the town of Prizren,
At Rovine fell the noble Prince,
Yet his grave was covered by the Danube,
Go rest with the Serbs forevermore.

THE BURIAL OF ANDRIJAŠ

They found Andrijas's body, but neither King Dusan's signet ring nor the fairy veil he had been given to protect him were found with him. Marko and the unfortunate fairy buried Andrijas in a monastery⁴⁴ near Bela Stena, so that the cold waters of the river Manastirica could soothe his wounds and remind him of

the first fairy's kiss by the Skakalo Waterfall.

They bound Morana with the gold she had received from the beys and left her in the mine to suffer for eternity until the end of the world. When they hurried to defend the city from the anticipated Ottoman attack.

THE BLESSING OF SAINT PANTELEIMON

Prince Marko found himself in a difficult situation. He could not stay and rule Beli Grad because he had to care for the people of his kingdom⁴⁵, nor could he leave the weeping fairy, whose soul was torn with grief for Andrijas.

Marko went to the monastery and prayed to Saint Sava⁴⁶ to console the fairy and to enable him to return to his Prilep courts. Saint Sava listened to Marko. Sava then asked his spiritual father, Saint Panteleimon⁴⁷, who had blessed him into monastic⁴⁸ life in his monastery on Mount Athos when he was young, to comfort the unfortunate fairy. "For Divcibare is a metochion of his monastery on Mount Athos⁴⁹, and the good people have fed the monks with their toil, protected by the fairy Razvigora."

Saint Panteleimon took pity and appeared in a dream to the kind fairy. He could not bring Andrijas back, but he could raise him from the earth for a day "so that you may see him and exchange vows, awaiting the resurrection of the dead." But afterwards, Andrijas would have to follow Marko to guard the faith and defend the Serbian Empire, and to find Tsar Dusan's signet ring so that the fortified city of Bela Stena would not suffer. In return, the fairy had to vow not to show herself to humans again, nor to interfere in human destinies. Razvigora agreed and spent her last day among humans with Andrijas.

When Andrijas departed for the heavens
And his brother Marko rode toward Prizren.

The fairy then spoke unto herself:

"Alone I remain, for I cannot die.

Alone I remain on Mount Maljen.

Forever shall I mourn my beloved."

Her tears streamed down the stony slopes.

Her sigh of sorrow veiled Divcibare.

Wherever she gazed the mountains shifted.

That she might behold Andrijas from afar.

All the brooks were but her flowing tears.

And every spring the eyes of Razvigora.

Prince Marko's heart was moved with pity.

And in prayer he called on holy Sava:

"Holy Sava, king of the Serbian kin.

Grant to Razvigora faith and hope.

That she too may find her true beloved.

That her soul be healed of bitter grief."

Then spoke Saint Sava of the Serbs:

"Hear me well, Marko Kraljevic.

For still on Maljen lingers Detos' protector.

Holy Panteleimon out of Nicomedia.

To him my word I shall now send.

That the fairy may be restored to peace."

Not many mornings nor days had passed.

When on the meadow by the weeping spring

Appeared the saint to the fairy maiden.

The sun shone bright upon his brow.

His right hand with three fingers joined.

From calm lips his voice resounded:

"O my fairy, dearest Razvigora,

What sorrow has so beset thee.

That thy tears have drenched the spring?

The winds sweep across Divcibare.

A black cloud has veiled the sun.

No laughter sounds, only weeping."

To him replied the weeping fairy:

"Grant me aid, O holy Panteleimon.

Revive my Andrijas, my beloved.

That I may see him and rejoice.

Make me no longer a fairy.

But a maiden for my cherished one."

"O Razvigora, my dearest fairy.

I cannot wake Andrijas.

Cannot rouse nor wed him.

From his eternal slumber.

Yet I may rouse his soul once more.

For but a day, that thou may see him.

If thou would behold thy beloved.

Yet one vow must thou undertake:

Swear, O fairy, to keep thy distance.

From the gaze and touch of mortal men.

Neither to be seen, nor felt again."

The fairy gave her vow to the saint.

For love's sake renouncing her own self.

Then spake holy Panteleimon:

"Razvigora, come at dawn tomorrow.

To the ancient tree of covenant.

Where thy Andrijas shall await thee."

At early dawn, ere the rising sun.

Set forth the fairy Razvigora.

Set forth as a maiden.

Flying above the fields of Divcibare.

To greet her Andrijas once again.

By the old and sacred covenant tree.

Upon her brow she wore a wreath.

A white crown of narcissus bloom.

Her gown fluttered in the gentle breeze.

Her feet were bare, as slender as a doe's.

When she beheld her Andrijas.

With tender hands she stroked his face.

Then Andrijas spoke unto the fairy.

"By the tree they named the covenant:

Wait for me here, I shall one day come to thee."

But when the sun drew toward the west.

The spirit of Andrija turned to Kreemar.

And the fairy dissolved into the air.

In the springtime, when the sun shone bright.

When rains refreshed the meadows.

Razvigora walked through Divcibare.

In the embrace of her king Andrijas.

Behind her footsteps blossoms sprang.



Each step she took bore a flower of narcissus.

THE VOW OF ETERNAL LOVE

For a long time, they walked through the fields of Divcibare as they once did. They again counted timeless hours on Crni Vrh, speaking tenderly to each other. Under a tree canopy, they made a vow to one another, whispered in a voice carried today by the gentle Divcibare wind, that they would love each other even after the end of the world. Andrijas also promised Razvigora that every day he would send royal vultures to bring her his letters from afar, whatever fate might befall him, and that she would scatter the white narcissus flowers⁵⁰ over the meadows of Divcibare each spring as a sign of her eternal love.

30 Even today, on Crni Vrh, the silent witness to their vow of love blossoms. Many after them met and loved there: Jovana and Milan, Spasenija and Nikola, Bozana and Zivojin⁵¹... They say this unusually special Tree⁵² will never wither as long as there is love among humans. Some claim to have seen the fairy and Andrijas embraced in the shadow of its canopy. Who can say.

HEAVENLY BATTLES

Prince Marko and Andrijas were solemnly sent off to battle by the people of the Kremar, Divcibare, and Bela Stena. From Divcibare, they were accompanied by the royal lynxes⁵³, and the white-headed vultures⁵⁴ took flight. Razvigora asked her sister Raviojla⁵⁵ to follow and protect them along the path of glory. Many battles and much time have passed since their departure, yet Dusan's ring was not found. Their earthly battles ended⁵⁶ long ago, but their heavenly ones are eternal, as is Razvigora's love. The people of Divcibare say that when thunder strikes above Daljen⁵⁷, it is Andrijas

and Marko dueling again with Hungarians, Turks, and Germans. And one day, when the white-headed royal vultures return to Orlovac⁵⁸, they too will return in their glory with all Serbian knights to reclaim the Serbian Empire and raise Bela Stena once more.

THE FALL OF BELA STENA

Bela Stena was the last Serbian fortress⁵⁹ to fall during the mighty campaign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent⁶⁰ toward Europe. His grand vizier, Mahmud Pasha, stood for a long time with the conquering army before the magnificent and seemingly invincible city. In his hand, adorned with Tsar Dusan's signet ring, he tightly held the fairy veil, hesitating to begin the assault. In his shadow stood the cursed and unbound Morana, revealing her demonic face.

Despite the large army surrounding him and threats of executing the population, the city refused to open its gates to the Grand Vizier. Confident in the power of the fairy's judgment, by which only a Serb could destroy Bela Stena, the Serbian army mounted fierce resistance. Morana's terrifying scream set off a fearful charge by the Ottomans.

To the astonishment of the fairy, who observed the battle from the reflection of the clear Manastirica River, hidden from human eyes, the advancing army of the Grand Vizier broke through the fortress walls, to the horror and cries of the inhabitants. Only the few residents who had taken shelter in the Divcibare refuge before the battle survived.



MAHMUD PASHA ABAGOVIĆ (ANDJELOVIĆ)

32

Mahmud Pasha Andjelovic⁶¹ was the first Serbian Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire. Together with his sultan Mehmed II, he conquered eternal Constantinople⁶², while his brother Mihailo handed him the Smederevo fortress⁶³ in 1458 before the campaign against Bela Stena. His family originated from Krusevac, and he was born in the largest and wealthiest medieval Serbian city, Novo Brdo, in 1420. He was the brother of Mihailo Andjelovic (an official at the courts of Serbian despots Djuradj and Lazar Brankovic), who, as a boy, was captured by the Turks along with two other Serbian children and taken to Edirne as part of the dreadful "blood tax" (danak u krvi). Having been Islamized as a child, he received the Muslim name Mahmud, while his two friends were named Ayas and Abdulkерim. After completing his education in Edirne as one of the most capable students, the Turkish Sultan Murad II took him into service at the court, where he became close with the then-heir Mehmed II the Conqueror. Soon after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 (when the last Roman Emperor, Constantine XI Palaiologos Dragas, son of the Serbian princess Jelena Dragas, was killed), Sultan Mehmed II appointed him Grand Vizier. Thus, a Turkified Serbian came to power, replacing the Orthodox half-Serbian last tsar of what had once been the world's most powerful empire. In the ruined towers of the city of Bela Stena, Janissaries⁶⁴ found the letters Andrijas had sent to Razvigora and handed them over to the Grand Vizier. The letters were beautiful poems of love and longing. Mahmud Pasha glanced at them briefly and feverishly pressed them to his chest as if caught stealing. It is said he did not destroy the monastery with Andrijas's tomb⁶⁵ because, upon entering, he was confronted by Saint Sava and Saint Pantaleimon⁶⁶ at the altar. Some say that because

of this, Sultan Mehmed II strangled him. Mahmud Pasha is recorded in the history of Persian culture as one of the most significant poets⁶⁷ of the 15th century. Others claim that a curse fell upon him because of the theft of love.

DEAR⁶⁸

Adni (Mahmud Pasha Andjelovic)

When I beheld the hair of my beloved
Blossomed like a narcissus,
How it fluttered across her face, I thought:
Strange, as if the moon had halted
Among fragrant flowers...

A fallen strand of yours across the face,
Which is like that of a young bride,
In many curls hidden like a serpent
That rests by day,
Gathering its strength.

From your face,
Roses and tulips indeed
Stole both color and fragrance,
And now, as a wondrous bouquet,
They carry them around the bazaar.

Oh dear one, the purpose of the song is to marvel
at beauty!

How many wise men were sent to madness,
By the spell of your eyes!

Now they have captured me: May God help me!

Beloved, my head, my soul, at your feet
I now lay down.
By law: a slave with his property
Belongs to his master...

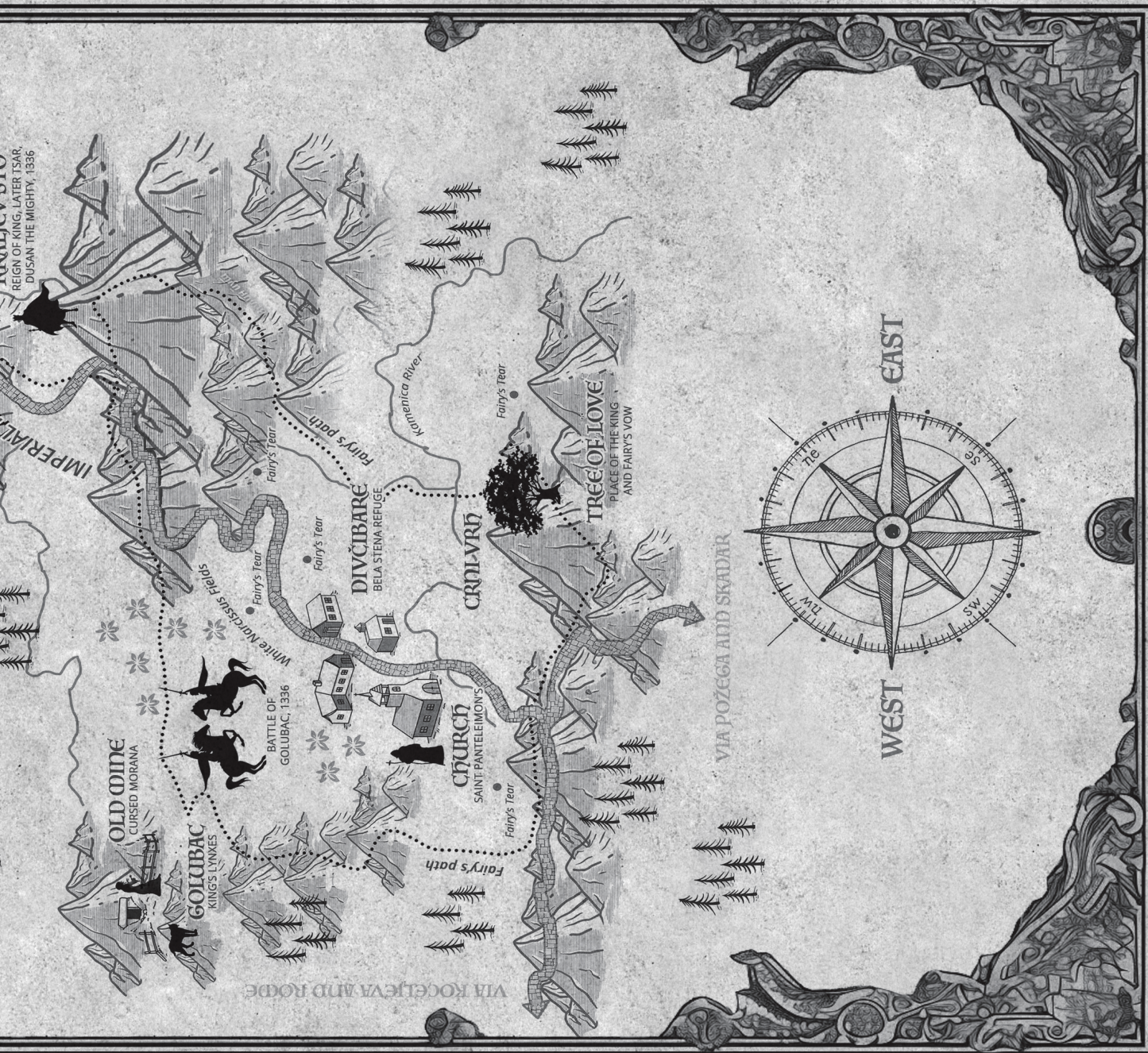


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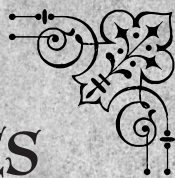
DIVČIBARE 1300-1400

VIA VALJEVO AND KONSTANTINOPOLIS









FOOTNOTES

Razvigor is also the name of the wind that begins to blow in early spring. This wind awakens nature, both plants and animals, and stirs maidens' and youths' hearts alike.

3. DIVA, THE DIVINE: The word diva, as both a name and designation, can be traced back to pre-antiquity with the meaning Div—a god, while Diva denoted a goddess, a divine being, a fairy, revered by people. Today, it carries the meaning of "celebrated" or "famous."

4. NOAH: The tenth and last of the antediluvian patriarchs, best known for the Flood that occurred during his lifetime. He was the eleventh generation after Adam and lived for 950 years, dying 350 years after the Flood. While the Flood and the Ark are the most famous elements of his story, he is also remembered as "the first farmer" and the discoverer of wine. According to biblical testimony, Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They were regarded as forefathers of the three great groups of peoples or races: Semites (yellow, peoples of Asia), Hamites (black, peoples of Africa), and Japhethites (white, peoples of Europe).

5. THE GREAT FLOOD: The myth of the Great Flood appears in many traditions, including the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh, the Greek tale of Deucalion, the Jewish story of Noah's Ark, the Indian Mahabharata, and of course, the Bible. According to Judeo-Christian teaching preserved in the Old Testament, the Flood was "sent by God upon sinful earth to drown the wicked race of men, so that only eight souls within the Ark would be saved." Based on biblical sources, the event occurred around 3246 BC.

The waters raged for five months, covering the hills by fifteen cubits. Afterwards, the waters began to recede, and on the 18th day of the seventh month, the Ark came to rest upon Mount Ararat. After three more months, the mountain peaks became visible. Forty days later, Noah released a dove three times: on its last flight it returned with an olive branch (today a symbol of peace), which was a sign that the waters had abated. In the 601st year of his life, on the New Year's Day, on the 27th day of the second month, Noah left the Ark with his family and the animals (each species being represented). He offered a sacrifice of gratitude. As a sign of the covenant between God and the earth, God placed a rainbow in the sky.

6. POVLEN HARBOR: According to tradition, when the Great Flood ended, Noah's Ark landed in this region, and the evidence of that are the iron rings (alke). The first natural association of a man encountering such a ring carved into a mountain rock, and long having lost its original function, is that it served as a mooring for some kind of vessel, whether a raft, a boat, or a ship. Modern man most often sees such objects in that context. If we also take into account the presence of fossilized sea creatures (shells, worms, fish, etc.) found in these rocks, the idea of the rings once serving such a function seems even more plausible.

7. HEALING WINDS: Air currents from the Mediterranean reach Divcibare and collide with the masses coming from the Carpathians and the Pannonian Plain, which explains the presence of iodine in the air. Thanks to its exceptionally favorable conditions, the climate of Divcibare, according to the conclusion of the Balneoclimatology Institute of Serbia, can be used for healing purposes. The Institute has determined that the following conditions may be treated at Divcibare: pulmonary diseases (bronchial asthma, chronic bronchitis, pulmonary emphysema of any etiology, bronchiectasis when not in acute

exacerbation): diseases with neurovegetative disorders (neurocirculatory asthenia, hyperthyroidism); recovery states (after acute infectious diseases, tubercular pleuritis, tubercular peritonitis, pneumonia and bronchopneumonia, surgical interventions); general disorders (asthenia and underweight, hypochromic or normochromic anemia); dermatoses requiring heliotherapy.

8. FAIRY GROVE: A small forest, protected from cutting, with a spring or flowing water. It is the place where fairies gather and dance their circle dances. The name Gaj is Old Slavic, derived from gajiti ("to nurture, to cherish"). Among the Serbs, sacred groves existed as the abodes of gods in the old faith, and people believed that the souls of ancestors also resided there.

9. FORMER MONASTERY: TODAY THE CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS: A medieval church near the fortress of Bela Stena by the river Manastirica, once a monastery. According to legend, it was built by Prince Marko in memory of the murder of his brother, Andrijaš, who was buried there.

10. SKAKALO WATERFALL: A 30-meter-high waterfall on the river Manastirica, in fact a complex of cascades on rugged, hard-to-reach terrain. It received its name from the "jumping" of the water over the river rocks. It is one of the greatest natural attractions and beauties of Divčibare.

11. IMPOSSIBLE TO SAFELY APPROACH THE WATERFALL: According to the Law on Forests and the Decree on the Proclamation of the Landscape of Outstanding Features "Maljen," the public enterprise Srbijazuma and the Forestry Administration Boranja (Loznica) warn citizens and visitors of the Maljen (Divčibare) area that access and movement at the site of the Skakalo waterfall, which is under first-degree protection, is strictly forbidden for safety reasons.

12. MANASTIRICA RIVER: A river that springs below the peak Kraljev Sto and flows past the Church of

St. Nicholas near Bela Stena in Krcmar, a reminder that the church was once a monastery.

13. THE IMPERIAL ROAD: A Roman road once passed over Maljen, leading through Valjevo to Nepricava and further on to Sirmium—and back to Rome. It was secured by a system of fortresses, upon which medieval towns were later built.

14. EMPIRE CAPITALS: The Roman magistral road connected Rome with Constantinople and all the major cities of the empire. Today, many modern highways follow these Roman routes, leading to cities that are now the capitals of different countries.

15. CRNA GORA: The name once given (up until the 19th century) to the mountain ridge of Suvobor-Povlen-Maljen.

16. CRNI VRH: The second-highest peak of Maljen. It was named after the coniferous forest that once covered it.

17. CRNA KAMENICA RIVER: On several spots below the eastern side of Golubac springs the small river Crna Kamenica, which flows through Divčibare. Two source branches meet in the center of Divčibare, then run further through a gorge full of rapids and cascades, in a beautiful setting of black pines. In the Gometa Field, it joins with Bela Kamenica, from which the river Kamenica is formed, eventually flowing into the Western Morava.

18. TSAR DUSAN THE MIGHTY: Stefan Uros IV Dusan Nemanjic, better known as Dusan the Mighty, was the penultimate Serbian king from the Nemanjic dynasty. He held the title of king from 1331 to 1346, after which he became the first crowned tsar of the Serbian state, crowned on Easter Day, April 16, 1346, by the first Serbian Patriarch, Joanikije II. Dusan ruled over the newly established Serbian Empire for more than 9 years until his death on December 20, 1355. Tsar Dusan is described as an energetic ruler, of strong character and temperament, which is why

he is often referred to in sources and literature as "Dusan the Mighty."

19. **REBUILT**: The fortress was frequently destroyed and rebuilt, as it was primarily a military stronghold located on the border of powerful states that rose and fell over time.

20. **KRCMAR**: A village on Daljen, named after the inn (krčma) in which Prince Marko's brother was killed.

21. **BELA STENA**: A medieval fortress near the village of Krčmar. There is a spring of the same name nearby. Both were named after the characteristic white rock on which the fortress was built. Close by, there once also stood the medieval town Velika Bela Stena.

22. **THE NEMANJIC WHITE-HEADED VULTURE**: The largest bird of prey in Serbia, a symbol found on the coats of arms of the Nemanjic dynasty. This protected species is recognizable by its white head. The place Orlovac was named after it. Once a dominant presence, today the bird is rarely seen on Daljen.

23. **IMPERIAL PRIZREN**: Travel writers of that era often referred to Prizren as the "imperial city," and in epic poetry it was even called the "Serbian Constantinople," since it occasionally served as the capital of Tsar Dusan and Tsar Uros. This is confirmed by their charters from the 14th century.

24. **CURSED MORANA**: Morana (also known as Mora, Morena, Morzana, Marana, Dara, Darena, Marzana) is, in Slavic tradition, the symbol of death and winter. She appears in various forms – most often as a beautiful maiden, very pale, with wolf-like fangs and claws. Her other form resembles Baba Yaga, the ugly old witch.

25. **SHAFT OF THE OLD MINE**: A silver mine, later producing magnesium carbonate, located under Golubac, which was closed before World War II. It is believed that mining in this area began as early as

the Illyrian period.

26. **PRINCE MARKO**: Marko Kraljevic will awaken when the Serbian people are in need, and until then, his horse Sarac will feed on moss and his sabre will slide out of the beam where it rests.

27. **HUNGARIAN INVASIONS**: Hungarian kings, under orders from the Popes, carried out constant raids on the northern borders of Serbian territories, threatening the very existence of the state.

28. **OSMANLI**: The term Ottoman Empire is an Anglicism, a concept borrowed from English and coined by historians from the English-speaking world. More precisely, it should be referred to as the Osman dynasty, whose first ruler was Osman I, after whom both the dynasty and the empire were named. In Serbian language and tradition, the expression Turci Osmanlije (Turkish Osmanlis) is well known, derived from this ruler's name.

29. **RIVER MARICA**: The longest river of the Balkan Peninsula, or Hēlm. It flows into the Aegean Sea and today runs along the border between Bulgaria and Greece. During the time these regions were part of the Nemanjic Empire, the Drnjavcevic kings suffered a decisive defeat there in the Battle of Marica against the Ottomans, while inebriated. According to some legends, the accursed Morana turned the water into wine and, appearing as the beautiful Mara, offered the wine to the Serbian knights, deceiving them into believing the battle was already won. Perhaps as a fateful omen of ruin, the river came to be called Marica.

30. **HOLY PRINCE LAZAR**: This great martyr and servant of God, Tsar Lazar, was born in 1329 in the city of Prilep. Gifted and virtuous, he attracted the attention of the rulers and was taken into the court of Tsar Dusan, where he became renowned and respected for his integrity, chivalry, and piety. He married the Tsar's relative, Milica, daughter of Prince Vratko, who descended from the Nemanjic line. His greatest concern was to reconcile the

Serbian and Constantinopolitan Patriarchates. He sent the monk Neania as his emissary to the Patriarch of Constantinople to request the lifting of the curse (anathema) from the Serbs, which was indeed done. He fought valiantly against the Turkish invasion and, in the battle of June 15 (June 28 by the new calendar), 1389, against Sultan Murad, he was slain. His body was first laid to rest in his endowment, the Ravanica Monastery (near Cuprija), later transferred to Ravanica in Srem, and in 1942 brought to the Cathedral Church in Belgrade. Today, his holy and miraculous relics are kept in the Ravanica Monastery near Cuprija, where many wonders and healings occur. He acted out of purely Gospel motives, as the folk song says: "The earthly kingdom is for a brief time, while the heavenly kingdom is forever and eternal."

40 31. THE BATTLE OF KOSOVO: The Battle of Kosovo took place in 1389 on the Christian holiday Vidovdan, near Pristina, between Serbian and Ottoman forces. The Serbian army was led by Prince Lazar Hrebeljanovic, including troops of his relatives and allies, while the Ottoman army was commanded by Sultan Murad I and his sons Jakub and Bayezid. Prince Lazar managed to kill Sultan Murad and force the Ottoman army to withdraw from Serbia. During the retreat, his son Bayezid, under unclear circumstances, captured Prince Lazar and executed him. Under pressure from Hungarian attacks and their contacts with Vuk Brankovic, Lazar's heirs made peace with Bayezid in the first half of 1390 and recognized Ottoman suzerainty. With the help of Bayezid's troops, they pushed back the Hungarians and recovered lost territories in western Serbia, including Divcibare.

32. IMPERIAL EDIRNE: Edirne is a city in the fertile Thracian plain, at the confluence of the Tunca and Marica rivers. The city was founded and lavishly decorated by Roman Tsar Hadrian as Hadrianopolis, and in 1362 it was conquered by the Ottomans under Sultan Murad I. The Turkish name Edirne evolved

from the original name. It served as the Ottoman state's capital palace from 1365 to 1453.

33. DISTANT PRILEP: In 1334, Prilep became part of Dusan's Empire and became one of its most important centers, where Tsar Dusan built his palace and frequently stayed. After 1365, the city belonged to King Vukasin, and later to his son, the famous Prince Marko, who was born there. Known as the "City under Marko's Towers" due to the nearby fortress that belonged to him. In 1395, the Ottomans captured Prilep.

34. DUBROVNIK MERCHANTS: The Dubrovnik merchants were primarily nobles and wealthy citizens from the Old Republic of Dubrovnik. During the medieval period, they developed a successful trading network across the Mediterranean, establishing special trade agreements with other states. Trade with Serbian lands first flourished during the Nemanjic dynasty and again during the Serbian Despotate, fostering monetary economy and mining development. Dubrovnik colonies were established across Serbian lands, including Valjevo, mentioned in their charters of 1398. After the fall of medieval Serbian states, Dubrovnik merchants continued trading with Serbian lands under Ottoman rule until the republic's fall in 1806.

35. HORSE SARAC: The most famous Serbian horse is the legendary Sarac of Marko Kraljevic. Just as Marko is the greatest hero of Serbian tradition, Sarac is THE horse of horses, a mythological marvel, a divine being. Though a horse, Sarac may be the most beautiful metaphor of the Serbian epic. "The Serbian poetic genius gave Sarac human traits, even those of a king, his master, which impressed Goethe, who once, enchanted by this spiritual parable, said that all world-famous legendary horses are mere foals compared to Sarac." Sarac had supernatural powers. He was primarily winged like Jabučilo, but his wings were invisible, used only in desperate cases or when Marko fought fairies, dragons, and other

monsters. Sarac excelled in strength, speed, and skill. There are many versions of the deaths of Marko and his horse. One says Marko did not die but sleeps with Sarac in a cave for six hundred years. In front of Sarac is moss that he slowly eats, and Marko's sword protrudes from a beam. Marko will awaken when the Serbian people need him, meanwhile Sarac will keep eating the moss and the sword will emerge.

36. SPRINGS OF DALJEN: Daljen is unusually rich in springs, some of which are medicinal.

37. INVINCIBLE HERO: After the defeat at Marica and missing the Battle of Kosovo, Prince Marko gains the power of Razvigora and becomes Marko Kraljevic, an invincible hero and avenger of the Serbian Empire, whose tales are still told to this day.

38. DROWNING IN WATER: People ritually submerged a doll representing Morana, burning it and sinking it in water. Traces of this custom are still found today in the legend of the "drowned girl" of Divcibare.

39. RASTAVA: The place where the innkeeper Mara parted with her soul, a hill on Daljen near Krcmar.

40. KRCMAR RIVER: The river that flows through the village of Krcmar today.

41. PEĀAR (PEAR/PEJAR): Actually a region above Krcmar, above the source Markovi Canci.

42. MARKOVI CANCI SPRING: According to legend, Prince Marko noticed this spring near Krcmar along the road. Thirsty, he tried to drink but failed. Seeing his master in distress, Sarac pawed at the source, creating two hollows in which water collected, allowing Marko to quench his thirst. As the hollows resembled small containers (canci), the spring became known as Markovi Canci.

43. MARA'S BANK: The bank of the Krcmar river under Mara's hill, where the burned Morana fell.

44. BURIED IN THE MONASTERY: The sarcophagus of Andrijas is, according to records,

built into the left wall of the monastery.

45. KINGDOM: Marko Drnjavcevic was a Serbian king from 1371 to 1395, ruling territories in western Macedonia. The capital of King Marko's state was Prilep.

46. SAINT SAVA: Saint Sava (secular name Rastko, monastic name Sava) was the youngest son of Serbian Grand zupan Stefan Nemanja, a Mount Athos monk, hieromonk, and archimandrite of Studenica, the first Archbishop of the autocephalous Serbian Archbishopric, diplomat, lawgiver, writer, and pilgrim. He is widely regarded as one of the most important figures in Serbian history, and the Serbian Orthodox Church venerates him as a saint. His influence on medieval Serbian literature and culture was immense, and his cult has been preserved among the Serbian people for centuries.

47. SAINT PANTALEON: Protector of Divcibare, healer, and Christian saint.

48. MONASTIC BLESSING: In 1192, Prince Rastislav Nemnjic fled the court to Mount Athos and was tonsured in the Russian monastery of Saint Pantaleon, receiving the monastic name Sava.

49. MOUNT ATHOS: Mount Athos (the Holy Mountain) is a mountain and peninsula in northeastern Greece and a major center of Orthodox monastic life. It has autonomous governance within Greece. Mount Athos hosts 20 monasteries under the direct jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, including the Serbian monastery of the Nemanjic dynasty, Hilandar.

50. WHITE NARCISSUS FLOWERS: The vow of Razvigora, a flower that decorates the fields of Divcibare. See the glossary.

51. BOZANA AND ZIVOJIN: A more recent legend told in Divcibare, confirming the miraculous powers of the tree of love, Razvigora and Andrijas.

52. SPECIAL TREE: An unusual tree on Crni Vrb,

associated with the fate of two lovers. Today it is a natural and tourist attraction. Long ago, Bozana and Zivojin grazed their flocks nearby. Spending time together, they fell in love, and Zivojin soon proposed. However, Bozana's father opposed the marriage, as Zivojin was poor and she had older sisters who should marry first. Eventually, seeing his daughter's suffering, he relented. On the eve of the wedding, Bozana had a dream in which an unknown voice told her to announce that on the clearing where they fell in love stands a pine—the "tree of love"—which would help people find happiness for eternity. She shared her dream with her eldest sister, who immediately went to the tree and made a wish. Shortly afterward, the wedding took place, and since then, many people have sought happiness under the Tree of Love.

53. IMPERIAL LYNX: Formerly dominant inhabitants of the Divcibare forests, last seen in the 1970s.

42 54. RAVIOJLA: The most famous fairy of our region is Raviojla, a companion of Prince Marko, who resides on Mount Miroc and, like the Greek Aphrodite or Roman Diana, is armed with a bow and arrow.

55. THE BATTLES ENDED LONG AGO: Far from the protection of fairies, Marko and Andrijas have finished their earthly battles and await the fateful moment to once again bring glory to the Serbian people.

56. THUNDER STRIKES OVER DALJEN: The name Daljen is linked to lightning rods and their hammers.

57. ORLOVAC: A mountain peak named after the former nests of the white-headed vulture.

58. THE LAST SERBIAN FORTRESS: After the fall of the Smederevo Fortress, Bela Stena remained the last Serbian fortress not captured by the Ottoman Empire.

59. MEHMED THE CONQUEROR: Mehmed II the Conqueror was Ottoman Sultan from 1451–1481. He

is regarded as one of the most famous, influential, and strategic military leaders and rulers in the history of the Muslim world. He was capable, brave, and enterprising, fundamentally changing the map of the Balkans.

60. MAHMUD PASHA ANDJELOVIC: The first Serbian Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, a diplomat, warrior, and poet. See the glossary.

61. CONQUERED ETERNAL CONSTANTINOPLE: Constantinople remains a global metropolis today, having changed many names but retained its eternal splendor. The last Byzantine ruler perished within its walls: his mother was the Serbian Jelena of the Dejanovic family.

62. SMEDEREVO FORTRESS: With the construction of Smederevo Fortress in 1430, Smederevo became the capital of the Serbian Despotate, after Belgrade, the previous capital, was returned to Hungary in 1427. The fortress was founded by the Serbian despot Djuradj Brankovic and represented the largest lowland fortress in Europe at the time.

63. JANISSARY: Janissaries were Turkish infantry units serving as the personal guards of Ottoman sultans. They originated in the 14th century, founded by Murad I, and were disbanded (and massacred) in 1826 by order of Sultan Mahmud II. Initially composed of Turks, later of Christian children taken from their parents, often from the Caucasus and parts of the Balkans, who, upon converting to Islam, were eligible to serve in Janissary units.

64. MONASTERY WITH ANDRIJAS'S TOMB: Today the Church of St. Nicholas. See the glossary.

65. SAINT PANTELEIMON: Protector of Divcibare. See the glossary.

66. POET OF PERSIA: The poet Adni Mahmud Pasha Andjelovic (1420–1473) is considered one of the greatest poets of the 15th century, originating from

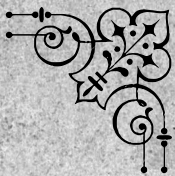
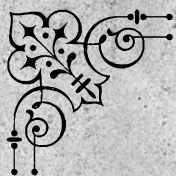
Serbia. He wrote in Turkish and Persian and left behind a collection of poems, letters, and a scholarly treatise. He died in the Jedikule prison, strangled by the executioners of Mehmed II by his order. Eastern literature contains many instructive and entertaining works dedicated to Mahmud. A full cycle of panegyrics was composed in his honor, and numerous legends are associated with his name.

67. DRAGA: "Dear", a translation of one of the poems by Adni Mahmud Pasha Andjelovic.



GLOSSARY

45



VALJEVO'S CRNA GORA



SUVOBOR – POVLEN – MALJEN

46

Since ancient times, our people have called the mountains Povlen, Maljen (where Divcibare is located), and Suvobor, which surround Valjevo, by the common name Crna Gora. This is best seen in old Serbian records. In old records of the monastery Mrksina Crkva, which in the 16th century was also engaged in printing, it is written that the monastery is located at the foot of Crna Gora. The Turkish travel writer Evliya Çelebi, in his extensive 17th-century work *Travelogues*, referred to this area of the Ottoman Empire, with its dense forests and enormous trees, as Karadag – "Black Mountain" translated into Turkish. During their rule over this territory (1718–1839), the Austrians recorded the area in their maps as Karadaschke or Montes Nigri, or Zerna Gora. A priest from the village of Gvozdenovici near Slovac wrote in 1781 that snow had fallen in May on Crna Gora, while the chronicler of the monastery Celije on Gradac described in his records that the monastery was located at the foot of Crna Gora. Prince Miloš Obrenović, during his reign, established a new administration of free Serbia, abolished the existing

Ottoman districts, and created new, Serbian ones. Thus, by the late 18th century, the Ottoman Karadag lost its name as the designation for the mountains Povlen, Maljen, and Suvobor, and the area was divided into the Crnogorski and Kolubarski districts. Today, only a few smaller areas near Kosjerić have preserved the memory of the name Crna Gora. By its location and roads, Valjevo's Crna Gora strongly connects the Valjevo and Užice regions. The destiny of the Serbs is deeply interwoven with both forced and voluntary migrations due to wars and the search for better living conditions. Migrations carried with them the old names of abandoned settlements, from the Danube to the Adriatic, and gave them to newly inhabited lands. Often, these migrations followed the same old routes, and later generations would return to the burned and deserted homesteads. Thus, today on what was once the Crna Gora Povlen, we have the river Cetinje, as well as the city of Cetinje on Mount Lovćen. The Vlach Church in Cetinje was built by shepherds from the area around Luzica (Užice), who founded the town. On Maljen, we find Nikšić Gradina and Kosjerić: in present-day Montenegro, there is also Kosjerić. It is therefore difficult to determine where a place name was originally born, and which was carried away by fugitives in times of turmoil.

MALJEN



THE MOUNTAIN

The Valjevo mountains – Medvednik, Jablanik, Povlen, and Maljen – belong to the ore-rich mountains and are the final massifs of the Dinaric mountain system in northwestern Serbia.

This mountain chain is characterized by the fact that, with the exception of Daljen, they are closely connected to one another. Daljen is distinguished by its unique relief, which has created favorable climatic conditions and a diverse, specific plant and animal world. The massif of Daljen is especially characterized by largely preserved forest stands, among which coniferous forests represent the only natural conifer forests of this kind in northern Serbia. Until the 20th century, Daljen was home to the lynx and the capercaillie, species that typically inhabit only dense forests. By decree of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, this area has been placed under protection and declared a protected natural area under the name "Daljen", as a natural good of regional, i.e. great, significance, and is classified in the II category of protection, as a landscape of exceptional features.

THE NAME

The origin of the name Daljen is unknown. The name may derive from the Illyrian word Dal ("hill, elevation"), as is still said today in former Serbian settlements in Moldova and Albania. Dal or Dalj also means the club of the thunder god, who, by striking the ground with lightning, creates hills and mountains, and rolls them into plains. This is also attested by the thunderous spring GORONJA, which would resound once a year when the holy thunderer Perun, Ghor/Godor, or Ilija struck the earth with thunder in spring. Another theory is that the name comes from the old Slavic word Dalj, related to the verb pomaljati se ("to emerge, to jut out"), with the meaning "a height that rises, that protrudes." This interpretation connects with the mythological explanation of the origin of elevations. A third theory is that Daljen is one of the many ancient names that, over time, were phonetically altered and adapted to linguistic changes, stemming from the root VALJ- (Bal, Val,

Vali), from which derive the place name Valjevo, the mountain Valjen (Daljen), and nearby Povljen (Povlen), as well as words like valjati ("to be good, chosen, to roll"), povaljati ("to defeat, to flatten"), val (a rolling wave of water), Valjarica... The truth lies somewhere in between, hidden among our ignorance, fear, prayers, and imagination.

DALJEN IN RECORDS

According to current knowledge, the name Daljen was first mentioned in 1725, during the Austrian occupation, as Daglian, one of the highest peaks of the Crna Gora mountains. Vuk Karadzic included it in the second edition of his Dictionary (1851) in two forms, Daljen and Malen. There are only assumptions that can be found in various records and stories. Prince Diloš, who knew this mountain very well from his earliest youth, and later, due to cattle grazing, often stayed in the "lord's huts" at Divčibare, always used only the name Daljen when speaking of it. In all writings from the 19th century, Daljen has its present name.

THE RULERS

The turbulent history of this region has concealed its traces, and many curiosities still await discovery. The antiquity of the Valjevo settlement is confirmed by the remains of prehistoric communities, while this area has always lured conquerors with its wealth of forests, waters, and game. The gentle mountains still hide in their depths rich deposits of chromium, iron, manganese, nickel, copper, lead, zinc, lithium, silver, cement marl, and zeolite. Clearing of dense forests and the creation of fertile pastures, as well as the settlement of the area, were surely accelerated by Roman roads, watchtowers, fortifications, and perhaps most of all, the now-closed mine beneath Golubac.

The thousand-year domination of the Byzantine Empire over Illyrian, Pannonian, and Dalmatian tribes, and later over the Slavs, was often disrupted by incursions of neighboring tribes and armies. With the strengthening and independence of Avar, Hungarian, and Serbian nobles and warriors, the Romans withdrew their legions far to the southeast, leaving behind the roads, foundations of fortresses, and the territory of Crna Gora and Daljen as spoils of war and battlefields for centuries to come.

THE NEMANJIC DYNASTY

The holy ruling line of the Nemanjic dynasty ruled this area for a long time: Nemanja, Stefan Uros the First-Crowned, then his son Dragutin (who had a known court on the Sava river), followed by Milutin, Stefan Decanski. His son, King and later Tsar Dusan, waged his wars in this area, most often against the Hungarians who threatened the northern border. After the death of the last Nemanjic, Uros the Weak, in 1371, power was assumed by Prince Lazar Hrebeljanovic.

THE LAZAREVIC AND BRANKOVIC FAMILIES

The Serbian nobleman who left the most striking traces in medieval records concerning the Daljen area was Lazar's nobleman Detos (before 1389). In his possession was land in the valley of the Dragobilj river with a Church of the Holy Mother of God, which by the end of the 14th century became the property of the Monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mount Athos. The Battle of Kosovo and the death of Prince Lazar in 1389 significantly influenced the fate of this area. In the following 70 years, Daljen was exchanged by various

agreements between Serbian and Hungarian nobles until it fell under Ottoman rule in 1458. Two years after the death of Prince Lazar at Kosovo, Hungarian Ban of Macva Nikola Gara, Lazar's son-in-law, ceded in March 1392 to the Hungarian king his estates "in the territory of Raska land, our Lower Banat," that is, the counties of "Kalabar, Lygh, Gopplika, Gemla, Ragys, Jezuyk, Debrechenm, Abnya et Umbelleke vocatis", and in return received other estates in Hungary. Between 1392 and 1426, the fortresses Nepricava and Debreceen (Dobracin) were destroyed in conflicts with Hungarians and Turks. On the sites of their destruction appeared the marketplace Valjevo, beneath Debreceen (or Dobracin), at the end of the 14th century, and the marketplace Nepricava at the beginning of the 15th century, near the ruins of Jerina's town. The Treaty of Gata (in today's northwestern Hungary), concluded in 1426 between the Hungarian King Sigismund and Despot Stefan Lazarevic, son of Lazar, contains a charter from 1392 in which the area of Daljen is mentioned as part of the Macva Banate, as the former possession of nobleman Detos (Dettosfelde). With the fall of the fortress Bela Stena in 1459 and of Smederevo in 1458, the Serbian holdings on Daljen fell into Ottoman hands. Daljen became a borderland, a frequent target of attacks, and a prize for the powerful. During Austrian rule in part of Serbia (1718-1739), the border between Austria and Turkey ran across Daljen. By the Treaty of Belgrade in 1739, Austria lost Daljen and was obliged to destroy all border fortresses, so only the names of watchtowers remained.

PRINCE MILOS OBRENOVIC

During the Serbian uprisings, almost the entire Divcibare area belonged to the Turk Deli-aga Sercesma, originally from Srebrenica. Prince Milos bought the Divcibare plain from him for cattle breeding and later divided the land and

livestock among the inhabitants of Kremar.

IMPERIAL ROADS



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ROMAN LEGIONS

Across Daljen passed the Roman road (highway) from Salon (modern Solin in Dalmatia) to Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica), once one of the capitals of Rome. It was secured by Roman fortifications and garrisons guarding the road and the border (limes) of Dalmatia and Pannonia. Time has left few traces, such as an inscribed plaque with names of military officials found at the Petnica spa, probably in the civilian settlement below the fortress. It is reliably known that already in Roman times a road passed across Divcibare, connecting today's Valjevo and Uzice regions. From Pozega, to the north, the road followed the left bank of the Skrapez River to the village of Zaselje. There it crossed into the western branches of Crna Gora, more precisely onto the slopes of Crnokosa, by means of a Roman bridge, whose remains were still visible in 1907 but have since disappeared. North of the village Kalenic, Roman inscriptions were discovered, proving that a Roman road passed there. North of Bobija on Crnokosa lies the site Grad, and nearby are localities called Gradina and Carina. On the right bank of the Gairovac stream, a tributary of the Skrapez, are the remains of a larger medieval town known today as Zlostup. Following the position of gradinas (fortified settlements) and remnants of medieval fortresses, the direction of the route further north can be traced. The road passed by the gradina in today's village of

Popovic, then south of the remains of the medieval town Paramun, toward the medieval town Gaor, and across Daljen toward the medieval market town of Valjevo. There is still an area on Daljen that has preserved its Roman name Lastra (meaning: stone slab), which in Serbian today is also called Samari.

This Roman road remained in use during the Middle Ages. It was used by pre-Nemanjic prince Caslav in his expansion of Serbia to the Sava River, and later the same road served armies and trading caravans all the way to Debre on the Sava River, where King Dragutin Nemanjic had his court. Serbian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Turkish conquerors renewed or built new fortifications along the road to control traffic and the conquered territory of Daljen, which throughout history often lay on the borders of states. Many of today's main roads follow this route of Roman roads, extraordinary feats of construction in the history of the world.

49

THE FORTRESS OF BELA STENA



THE LOST CITY

The medieval fortified town of Bela Stena is located in the village of Kremar, not far from the town of Mionica. The fortress stood on the medieval trade route from Valjevo to Pozega, which connected this region with the Morava Valley, that is, with central Serbia. In the Middle Ages, the territory of northwestern Serbia

was an important economic and trading area, as evidenced by the written records of numerous Dubrovnik merchants. As a border town, it also had a permanent military garrison. In historical sources, it is first mentioned in a charter of Hungarian king Sigismund in 1392, as *Castrum Belasztana*. That same year, the Hungarians reported that they had conquered "the fortress of the Serbian King Uros." The fortress itself measured 85 meters in length and 45 meters in width. Today, its remains can barely be discerned in the dark beech forest. It was built on older Byzantine foundations, as evidenced by a few ceramic vessels. It is assumed that Bela Stena was once the center of a larger medieval district, and in 1426 it is mentioned along with its urban surroundings. While earlier fortifications served as strongholds of the nobility and rulers, in the 14th century they were increasingly built to protect mines, roads, and more important settlements. The fortress was conquered, destroyed, and rebuilt several times. It was last restored during the rule of Despot Stefan or Djuradj, in a final attempt to stop the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. At that time it was given the name *Velika Bela Stea* in contrast to several smaller fortresses of the same name. It was taken by the Ottoman army in 1459, one of the last Serbian cities to fall, since the following year, after the fall of Smederevo, medieval "Serbia" ceased to exist. From the old town, which Grand Vizier Mahmud Pasha demolished in 1459, a section of the curtain wall, one tower, and its stone gate are still preserved. After its destruction, life never returned to the fortress, and the town is not mentioned in later historical sources.

THE CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS UNDER MOUNT ORLOVAC

Associated with the fortress and its settlement is a nearby small church dedicated to St. Nicholas, which is mentioned

as a monastery in the 16th century, suggesting that Bela Stena had been a true medieval town. Although by its foundation the church could date back to the 14th century, its first recorded mention is from 1572, when it was noted as the Monastery of St. Nicholas. According to folk tradition, the origin of the church reaches back even further, to the golden age of the Nemanjic dynasty and Marko Kraljevic. The shrine lies at the foot of Mount Orlovac. It was built of tufa stone, with very thick walls. The stone was quarried nearby, by a stream which, in memory of the monastery, is still called *Manastirica* ("little monastery stream"). Today the church is plastered on the outside, so the yellowish, porous tufa, which gives old churches an air of dignity and antiquity, can no longer be seen. Once a mighty and famous fortress, Bela Stena fell into oblivion: today only its foundations remain, covered by rubble and centuries-old leaves.

A

ROYAL SOVEREIGNTY



THE BATTLE OF EAGLES AT GOLUBINJA FIELD

The mountain of Maljen and the important medieval fortress of Bela Stena are also linked to a folk legend about a battle between King (later Tsar) Dusan and the Hungarians. As the people recount, based on the testimonies of travelers and chroniclers: "Mighty Tsar Dusan came with his glorious army to Mount Maljen and remained there, sending his troops down the

slopes against the cursed Magyars. Our holy Tsar, throughout the time until joyful news arrived of victory over the Magyars, stayed at Kraljev Sto, watching the battle. The mountain peak was named after him and his stolovanje ("sovereignty, rule"). When the Mighty One received word of the battle's outcome, he descended into the fortified town of Bela Stena, where he awaited his invincible army, inspected and richly rewarded them, and, after resting, returned to his imperial city of Prizren." Locals say the battle took place somewhere on Golubacko Polje, where remnants of weapons were once found. Historical records confirm that the Hungarian king Charles Robert took advantage of Dusan's stay in Byzantium in 1334/35 to invade Serbia from the north and advance as far as Zica. When Dusan learned of the invasion, he made peace with Byzantium and marched north with his army toward the Monastery of Zica. The Hungarians, however, did not wish to face the main Serbian forces led by King Dusan and withdrew across the Sava River. According to the account of Danilo's Continuator: "When the Hungarians heard the truth, that Lord King Dusan was approaching and wished to fight against them, they were thrown into confusion all at once... and began to flee... When they came to the river called Sava, they had no means prepared to cross such a river, nor knew where they could ford it, so they all rushed into it together. And the Lord raised His hand against them... and the waters swallowed them, and only a few escaped such a terrible death." After making peace with Byzantine Tsar Andronikos III, Dusan halted his campaigns in the south. The danger in the north, however, persisted for several years after the Hungarian defeat of 1334-35. In his attack on the Serbs, the Hungarian king operated south of the Sava in the Valjevo region, where he issued a charter in September 1338. At that time, in a letter sent by Pope Benedict XII to King Charles Robert, it was written that the Hungarian king was constantly at war with "pagans and schismatics"—the

derogatory terms used by the pope and intolerant Catholics for the Orthodox Serbs. In later conflicts, fought again in 1338 and 1345, the Hungarians likely managed to capture only a narrow strip of land south of the Sava and Danube, including the towns of Macva, Belgrade, and Golubac..

THE PLACE OF ANDRIJAS'S DEMISE



KRČMAR

This mountain village lies directly beneath the northern slopes of Maljen, on both banks of the Krčmar River. The terrain is hilly, rather steep and wooded. Above the village rise these peaks of Maljen: Blagilja, Orlovac, Bela Stena (Bijela Stijena), Pehar and Cubrica, and further above them: Kraljev Sto, Crni Vrh, Strazara and Golubac. The village is very rich in springs, streams and rivers that never dry up, and by the extent of its land it is the richest village in the Valjevo district. The whole of Maljen is considered its property. In a decree of Prince Milos from 1837, all the peaks of Maljen with the precise borders of the entire territory were granted to Krčmar. The decree is still kept by the villagers, although disputed by the state authorities. The main estate of the village of Krčmar is on Maljen, known by the name Divcibare. Pitomina and half of Divcibare belong to the village of Krčmar, while the other half belongs to the neighboring Uzice villages. The meadows rank among the best in this region. They have fine, juicy and very sharp

grass that especially fattens livestock well. In forests too, Krcmar is the richest village in this region. The most beautiful coniferous forests are on Pehar, Strazara, Kraljev Sto and the slopes of Golubac. Krcmar is an old settlement, as proven by the fortress and the many ruins, as well as its old church. Already at the beginning of the 18th century, the name of this village appears in the list of border villages of this district, where the Austrian military command kept hajduk guards to protect the border. In that list, Kirzmar (Krcmar) is mentioned with 6 hajduk houses and 3 hours away from Valjevo. Among the older villagers of this region a strong memory is preserved that in those times there were few houses, and that many families, because of sudden levies and corrupt officials, emigrated to the neighboring Uzice district. On the hill of Strazara, between Pitomina and Divcibare, there was a border watchtower, where a border guard was stationed "when the German ruled this land," as the old people of this region say. There are no truly old families in this village that could be said to have been there since ancient times. The settlers came from the Uzice regions, from Lim, Rovci, Kosjer, Niksic and various parts of Herzegovina. The name Krcmar is tied to this folk tale, known not only to every villager, but also to many from the surrounding area. It is said that under Dobros, right by the river, there once stood a great roadside inn (mehana), kept by the innkeeper Mara, the same one sung of in folk songs. Because the village grew around this inn, it received the name Krcmar. At the lower end of the village lies the old church, under the hill of Orlovac. For the building of the church, the people tell this story: In this village Kraljevic Marko often stayed, and as a memory of him remain Markovi Canci on Pehar, of which it is said that Marko's horse Sarac dug them with his hooves when his master, thirsty for water, could not drink because there was no place for the water to collect. One time in the village inn of Innkeeper Mara, Marko's brother Andrija stayed the night, and when he became drunk, Mara

persuaded some men to kill him. When Marko heard that his brother had died, he came to Krcmar, killed Mara, destroyed and scattered all that was hers, and went to the Turkish sultan to obtain a decree allowing him to build a church.

PRINCE MARKO BUILDS THE CHURCH

As soon as he received the firman, on the very place where he had buried his brother Andrijas, he built a church, bringing all the material himself, since in that wilderness at the time there was not a living soul. The people say that even today Andrijas's grave lies in a sarcophagus in the right wall. The church is small and has been expanded over time: it is entirely of stone and painted inside, burned and abandoned several times. It was first mentioned in literature in 1736 as a monastery that had been restored. The villagers of this area proudly point out that during one of the restorations of the church, the walled-in sarcophagus of the great hero Andrijas, blood brother of Marko Kraljevic, was found, and walled in again after the parish priest of the time held a memorial service. Like many churches in this region, it was burned down during Koca's Frontier Rebellion in 1788. The last time it was rebuilt was by Protas Stevan Grbovic, who served as parish priest of this church and died in 1802. Records state that the monastery was restored in the first decades of the 18th century, but not long after it was burned down during Koca's Frontier Rebellion in 1788, when, on Easter, the monastic brotherhood and a multitude of people who had gathered to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ were massacred. At the close of the 18th century, the monastery was rebuilt from the ground up by brothers Nikola and Milovan Grbovic from the village of Dratisic, renowned dukes of Karadjordje's Uprising, and it was painted in 1802, shortly before the First Serbian Uprising. The many later cracks

in the walls and columns supporting the dome, as well as the incomplete fresco painting, testify that the new church was built hastily, most likely out of fear of the Turks. The rare surviving frescoes from the time immediately preceding the First Serbian Uprising were painted by Petar Nikolajevic Moler, the most important artist of Uprising-era Serbia. Several icons also originate from this church, most likely the work of the same artist. The Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker is listed among the cultural monuments of great importance for our country.

THE MYTH OF MORANA



The name of the Divcibare plateau is very old, and the people interpret it as "maidens' marshes," (devojačke bare) in the Old Serbian Ikavica dialect and pronunciation still preserved in Bohemia, Moldavia, Poland, and elsewhere. It is mentioned as early as 1476 as a village in the Ottoman census of the Smederevo sanjak, to which it belonged. Today, people tell the story of a shepherd girl who drowned by accident in the swollen waters of the Crna Kamenica River, and that her memory gave the place its name. But is that truly so?

THE DROWNING OF MORANA

Since ancient times there was a custom of drowning a straw effigy of a maiden in water. On St. John's Day, people would dance the

KOLO or CIRCLE DANCE, which they believed was mirrored by the dance of the heavens. A similar custom can still be seen in Kotor, where at the height of the carnival they burn effigies of witches and drown them in the sea. This rite is deeply rooted in Serbian folk tradition. Mora—or Morana—or, as the people called her out of fearful reverence, MARA, was a female demon who tormented people through life, pri(MOR)Avajući ("compelling") them to do even what harmed them, bringing suffering and pain. She brought winter, deceit, and death. That is why on great feast days, such as St. Elijah's Day (in which St. Elijah represents Perun the Thunderer, or Thor), people of Divcibare made a straw effigy, covered it with resin and tar, and after ceremonies and prayers ritually beat it with sticks, set it aflame, and drowned it in the river, so as to banish evil from themselves and secure MIR ("peace") instead of MOR ("nightmare, death") for their souls. How beautiful our language is: mir today, though somewhat forgotten in Serbian, still means "world", indeed "everything", in Russian. Peace is everything. In the Ljig region there is a place where, in ancient times, straw effigies of Morana (or as Western layman like to impose on us as "witches", who, by the way, were skilled women and healers in our country, unlike Morana) were drowned. And what is its name? Divcibare. The name of the innkeeper's daughter Mara is surely not accidental. With full bosom and unusual beauty, she lured weary travelers and laborers into the tavern, awakened their desires, filled them with drinks, and led them into ruin. She was always the daughter of an old innkeeper, virtually the lord of the underworld himself. And so Mara the innkeeper's daughter from Krčmar seduced Marko's brother Andrijaš and betrayed him to Turkish brigands, who killed him. As punishment for her treachery and his brother's death, one legend says Marko struck her with his mace (like Thor with his hammer or Elijah with his thunderbolt) separating her from her soul, on the Divcibare field RASTAVA ("separation"). A blind bard sang that he

cut her down with his sharp saber. Another witness claimed he did not kill her that way, but poured tar over her and set her ablaze. Unable to reach the bank of the Krmar River to quench the flames, Mara perished there. And thus the place on the Krmar River is still called (Darin Brijeg (Mara's Bank).

ANDRIJAŠ AND RAZVIGORA

54 For the old people of Divcibare and the surrounding villages, the spring equinox marked the end of hunger, illness, and cold—a time that in those days often meant death. It is no wonder they loved spring so greatly, celebrating above all its personification, the fairy Razvigora. For the festival of the Awakening of Spring to begin, embodied in the flower of the narcissus or daffodil (sunovrat), the symbol of the great love between Andrijas and Razvigora, the winter had first to be "killed." For them, winter was Morana: an evil witch, or a kind of goddess of darkness and cold. They believed frost, snow, ice, and death all came from Morana. On Mount Maljen, a custom of "burning Morana" survived. A straw effigy was dressed in colorful garments, representing Morana's transformation into the innkeeper's daughter Mara. The effigy of Morana, in the form of Mara, was carried through Divcibare. Along the way people mocked it, cursed it, and insulted it, only to throw it at last on the riverbank and beat it with stones and sticks. Then they set it aflame and cast it into the water to sink and "drown." The people of Divcibare believed Morana was a deceitful and bitter woman who delighted in causing pain to humans and animals alike. At night she entered homes through keyholes and tormented children, pressing down on them and stealing their breath as they slept. This evil and dangerous woman, Morana, mistress of darkness and ice, would die at the end of winter. Then the fairy Razvigora would descend over Divcibare, awaiting Andrijas. Nature would awaken, and with each step she took across the meadows, narcissus

flowers would bloom. After the burning of the effigy, the celebration continued with the Festival of the Narcissus Flower, symbol of the great love between Andrijas and Razvigora. Girls danced the kolo while young men adorned them with garlands of flowers, especially narcissus, and offered them sips of wine. Then boys and girls danced together, drank wine, and sang. And this story was reenacted year after year.

NARCISSUS



THE FLOWER OF LOVE

The most important writer of antiquity on medicinal plants was Dioscorides (Pedanios Dioskorides), a Greek from Anazarbus, who as a physician-apothecary in Nero's army studied medicinal herbs wherever he went with the Roman legions. Around 77 AD he wrote On Medical Material in Five Books (De Materia Medica Libri Quinque). Here is how Dioscorides describes the narcissus:

ABOUT NARCISSUS

Some call it Narkysos anydros, then Autogenes and Bolbos emetikos. The Romans call it Bolbus morbitarius, and some, like the lily, call the narcissus Leirion. Its leaves are similar to leek, but are tender, much smaller and narrower. The stem is hollow and leafless, about one foot tall, and bears a white flower with a yellow, sometimes red center (referring to pistil and stamens). The root is white inside, round, and onion-like. The fruit

is enclosed in a kind of husk, black and elongated. The best type of narcissus grows on slopes and is fragrant. Another resembles onion and smells like greens. If the root is cooked and eaten or drunk, it causes vomiting. Finely ground with honey, the narcissus is an excellent remedy for burns. Similar poultices were used for chronic joint and foot pain, as well as tendon injuries. Mixed with vinegar and nettle seed, it was used for whitening the skin. Because of certain substances it contains, narcissi repel mice and voles, but also squirrels, deer, and rabbits. Thanks to this property, narcissi have long been planted as flowers protecting houses and food stores from such pests.

HERALD OF SPRING

The narcissus is the herald of spring, and its bloom is a symbol of summer, warmth, and openness. It is one of the first flowers to bring color after the gloomy winter. It blooms from March to May, its blossoms having six petals and a trumpet-like crown. Usually one flower appears on a tall, hollow stem, more rarely two. Flowers may be monochrome or bicolored. Their shades include white, orange, and yellow. The leaves of the narcissus are light green, narrow, and elongated.

SYMBOLISM AND COLORS OF THE NARCISSUS

Most narcissus varieties are yellow, white, or combinations of the two in various shades. Many people choose to grow narcissi or give them as gifts because of the special meanings associated with their bright, distinctive blossoms. For example, yellow narcissus flowers are believed to symbolize positive energy, happiness, new beginnings, and friendship, making them a popular gift for friends and colleagues, though not

necessarily suitable for a lover or spouse. White is widely associated with peace, purity, innocence, and spirituality, often connected to the Virgin Mary. This symbolic meaning may explain why white flowers appear so frequently at weddings and religious ceremonies. The prevalence of white narcissi perhaps lends extra weight to the idea that they carry religious significance, especially linked to Christianity and the Resurrection of Christ.

GIFTING NARCISSUS FLOWERS

The positive symbolism of the narcissus makes it an excellent gift choice for almost any occasion, especially when the giver of a splendid bouquet wishes to send wishes of happiness and love. Anyone sending narcissi as a gift should always make sure to send them in a bunch, as a single narcissus is considered an omen of bad luck. Interestingly, however, Prince Charles of England is traditionally paid one narcissus each year as rent for the Isles of Scilly. Narcissi are traditionally given to celebrate wedding anniversaries, especially the tenth. Still, they are not recommended for floral arrangements at weddings. The ancient Greek myth of Narcissus' self-adoration led to a widespread belief that narcissi at a wedding could doom the bride to a life of vanity and an unhappy marriage. Narcissi are also a popular gift for many birthdays, and they are the "official flower" for those born in March, as well as for December.

THE NARCISSUS FLOWER IN ART AND LITERATURE

The meaning of the narcissus is extensively covered in art, and it is one of the most culturally celebrated flowers, especially in British literature. Perhaps the most famous example is William Wordsworth's poem I Wandered

Lonely as a Cloud, in which the poet pays tribute to "a host of golden daffodils." Narcissi are also a common motif in visual art throughout history. Notable paintings include Bowl with Narcissi by Vincent van Gogh and The Metamorphosis of Narcissus by Salvador Dali, the famous surrealist interpretation of the death of the mythological figure Narcissus. However, narcissi and related species were celebrated in visual art long before the great artists of recent centuries. One of the earliest known examples is a mural discovered on the excavated wall of a building in Pompeii, preserved in volcanic ash.

SAINT PANTELEIMON



THE ALL-MERCIFUL HEALER

Saint Panteleimon (known among the people as Pantelija) was born into a noble and wealthy family living in Nicomedia, a city in Asia Minor. His father, Eustrogius, was a pagan, and his mother, Eubula, a Christian. He lost his mother early, and his father took over his upbringing. Panteleimon was extraordinarily handsome, kind, an excellent student with a special gift for medical science, and above all, merciful and good-hearted. His name, Panteleimon, meaning all-merciful, truly suited him. He studied medicine under the most famous physician of the time, Euphrosinos, who was also the imperial court physician. When visiting the court, Euphrosinos always brought along his most gifted and promising student, Panteleimon. Each day, Panteleimon passed by the house of Hermolaus,

an old Christian priest. In the young doctor's heart lived the memory of his mother's faith, so he grew close to the priest Hermolaus, who strengthened him in faith and later baptized him. In addition to the medical skill he acquired through study, Panteleimon was also granted the gift of healing through prayer. He healed a blind man whom all doctors had declared incurable, and restored his sight in the name of Christ. On another occasion, a desperate mother brought him a child bitten by a venomous snake. Calling upon God, Panteleimon healed the child, saving it from certain death. After his father's death, Panteleimon sold the family estate and distributed the proceeds to the poor and needy. He lived modestly and treated all who sought his help completely free of charge.

THE DETOCHION OF MOUNT ATHOS MONASTERY OF ST. PANTELEIMON

In the borderlands of the medieval Serbian state toward Hungary, near Valjevo, there was in the 14th century the estate of the Serbian noble Detos, with three fortresses (Bela Stena, Nepricava, Debrečen). Among his possessions was land in the valley of the Dragobilj River near the village of Dici by Ljig, with a Church of the Mother of God, which by the end of the 14th century became the property of the Monastery of Saint Panteleimon on Mount Athos.

THE CHURCH OF SAINT PANTELEIMON

As early as 1930, Archpriest Tripkovic advocated for Divcibare to have its own church. Even Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic of Zica visited to designate the location, but World War II disrupted the plans and halted construction.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Valjevo's archpriest Stojadin Pavlovic built a church dedicated to Saint Panteleimon on the left bank of the Zujan stream, in the very center of Divcibare. The church houses relics of this saint, a vozduh (cover for the holy gifts and relics) of Saint Basil of Ostrog, gifted to the Divcibare church by the abbot of Ostrog Monastery, Hieromonk Jovan, later Bishop of Diokleia. In the throne of Saint Petka lie relics of Saint Petka, donated by the abbot of Kaona Monastery, Archimandrite Milutin, later Bishop of Valjevo. Relics of Saint Nikolaj Velimirovic were gifted by the monks of the Monastery of Saint Nikolaj in Lelici. The iconostasis, as well as the thrones, are carved in wood. The church is adorned with frescoes, and its entrance wall is decorated with mosaics. Underfloor heating was installed, very important in mountain conditions and low temperatures. Through the sound system, spiritual music is played, making the church an oasis of peace and tranquility.

Beside the church, a Church Cultural Center is under construction, envisioned as a gathering place primarily for young people, for camps, lectures, seminars, exhibitions, concerts. The residence is designed to include space for a bookstore, a library with reading room, and guest accommodations.



1. DALJEN: A mountain near the town of Valjevo. There are several assumptions about the origin of its name, explained in the book.

2. RAZVIGORA, THE FAIRY OF DIVCIBARE: Razvigoras are fairies that call nature to awaken.

HISTORICAL RECORDS

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WHIRLWINDS OF TIME



THE TOWN OF BELA STENA

In the first half of the 14th century, during the reign of Tsar Dusan, and later his son Stefan Uros V Nemanjic, at the foot of Mount Maljen, near Krcmar, there was a settlement called Beli Grad, situated on the Roman and medieval Imperial and Dubrovnik trade route from Valjevo to Pozega.

This important economic and trade region was thus connected with the Morava Valley, that is, central Serbia. Above the town stood the fortress Bela Stena.

THE DESOLATION OF BELA STENA

When in the 9th century the Bulgarians under Emperor Samuil conquered all Serbian lands, the town of Beli Grad and the fortress Bela Stena were devastated and destroyed.

The population was killed or expelled, while a smaller group of inhabitants managed to flee and hide in Divcibare.

KING DUSAN'S WARS

In Sumadija, in 1336, the army of the Hungarian king Charles I, numbering 80,000 soldiers, defeated the Serbian army under King Dusan.

Soon after, however, Dusan's cavalry launched a counterattack which ended in a Serbian victory. In the battle, Charles I was wounded but survived.

After this defeat, the Hungarians lost Macva and Belgrade. It is believed that one of the decisive battles was fought near Beli Grad, in the Golubac Field, and that King Dusan commanded the battle from Divcibare, from the place later called Kraljev Sto.

TSAR DUSAN THE MIGHTY

Tsar Dusan suddenly died in 1355 and was buried in his endowment, the Monastery of the Holy Archangels near Prizren. In 1927, his remains were transferred to the Belgrade Patriarchate,

and in 1968 to the Church of St. Mark in Belgrade, where they remain today. Dusan's crown is kept in the Cetinje Monastery in Montenegro.

KING VUKASIN

After Dusan's death, during the reign of his son Stefan Uros V (1355-1371), royal authority began to weaken. As one of the most powerful noblemen in the divided Serbian Empire, Vukasin Mrnjavcevic was crowned king in 1365 to serve as co-ruler with Tsar Stefan Uros V.

After the conflict of Serbian nobles in Kosovo in 1369, Vukasin managed to force Stefan Uros to proclaim him heir to the throne. King Vukasin Mrnjavcevic and his wife Aljena had four sons: Marko, Andrijas, Dmitar, Ivanis, and a daughter, Olivera.



A fairy wed King Vukasin,
And bore him two sons:
The first, Kraljevic Marko.

The second, Andrija Pejaki.
Every Serbian hero.
Was nursed by a fairy.

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE

After the Battle of Kosovo against the Ottomans in 1389, the Hungarians took advantage of the death of Prince Lazar and entered the territory of Morava Serbia, clashing with the army of Vuk Brankovic near Beli Grad and the fortress Bela Stena. Vuk Brankovic was aided by Andrijas Ornjavcevic, son of King Vukasin, a Serbian nobleman ruling over Prilep since 1371.

After the Hungarians were defeated, Vuk Brankovic handed Beli Grad and the fortress Bela Stena to Andrijas, who began rebuilding the ruined town and fortress. During this period, the settlement grew and strengthened, protecting mines, trade routes, and important towns.

BELA STENA

Below the town, going down towards the river, at the spot where a stream from Cubrica flows in, remnants of the fortress walls and dry-stone defenses of the former Bela Stena can still be recognized. Locals still plow up fragments of pottery, old weapons, tools, and stones. Remains of the old town cemetery can also be found along the road uphill.

The town of Beli Grad and the fortress Bela Stena, ruled by the nobleman and knight Andrijas, are first mentioned in the charter of Hungarian King Sigismund in 1392 as *Castrum Belazstena*. *Divcibare* is later recorded as a village with 11 households and 6 watchtowers in the 1476 Ottoman census of the Smederevo Sanjak, and

it appears on Eschelwitz's map of Serbia from 1718, marked as a place on Mount Crna Gora.

THE DEATH OF ANDRIJAS

Under still unclear circumstances, most likely after a Hungarian incursion, Andrijas Ornjavcevic died in 1397. When his brother Prince Marko heard of his death, he came to Beli Grad and buried Andrijas. A record of this exists in the decree of Sultan Bayezid I (1389–1402) concerning the building of a church. It is believed that Andrijas's grave lies in a sarcophagus in the right wall.

MONASTERY, LATER CHURCH

The church was first mentioned in 1572, recorded as the Monastery of St. Nicholas. It was small and had been rebuilt several times. Constructed of stone, it was repeatedly burned and abandoned, and last restored by Prota Stevan Grbovic around 1780. It is recorded that the monastery was rebuilt in the early 18th century, but was soon burned again during the Austrian-Turkish War in 1788, when on Easter all monks and many gathered people were massacred.

At the end of the 18th century, the monastery was rebuilt from its foundations by the Grbovic brothers from Dratisici. Frescoes and icons were painted in 1802 by Petar Nikolajevic Doler, the most important artist of revolutionary Serbia.

MARKO KRALJEVIĆ

Marko Kraljevic was admired for his supernatural strength, believed to come from being raised by a dragon or a fairy.

As the son of King Vukasin (Ornjavcevic, he fought in the Battle of Marica in 1371 between Ottoman forces led by Lala-Sahin Pasha and the Serbian army of around 60,000 men. The Serbian army was led by King Vukasin and his brother, Despot Jovan Ugljesa. Both were killed in the battle. Marko inherited his father's lands but was unable to hold them and soon became an Ottoman vassal. Marko Kraljevic died as an Ottoman vassal in 1395 in Romania, at the Battle of Rovine between Sultan Bayezid and Duke Mirca.

He was buried near the Jiu River in Romania. Folk belief holds that his grave "flew" over the Danube and rests near the Koroglas Monastery. The famous 19th-century traveler and historian Felix Kanitz recorded seeing a stone wall in the monastery area engraved with: "Zdi zamce Kralje Mark" – "Here Prince Marko ceased to look upon the Sun." After building a church and the tomb for Andrijas, Marko Kraljevic left Beli Grad.

Watchtower, 7 m in diameter, stood at the western corner. It was used both for defense and daily life.

On a clear day, the view reached as far as Fruska Gora, while to the south stretched the silhouettes of the rugged mountains (Maljen, Suvobor, Povlen, and Medvednik, collectively known until the 18th century as Karadag, or Crna Gora. Inside the fortress were several smaller buildings housing a small garrison. The fortress was also equipped with firearms.

THE BRANKOVIC FAMILY

Djuradj Brankovic (1377-1456), son of Vuk Brankovic, his wife Jerina, and their son Lazar were buried in the Church of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin.

THE FALL OF BELA STENA

Bela Stena was one of the last Serbian towns to fall to the Ottomans. After the fall of Smederevo in 1440, medieval Serbia ceased to exist. In 1458, Mahmud Pasha Andjelovic destroyed the fortress completely during his campaign in Serbia.

BELA STENA

The fortress was 85 m long and 45 m wide, its foundations following the natural terrain. There were two approaches: one along the old road to the main gate, and another via the western tower. At the main entrance, carved stone steps leading to the gate are still visible. The most significant and largest tower, the





