

= Prince Marko =

Marko Mrnjavić (Serbian Cyrillic : ????????????? , pronounced [mârko mr ? ? a??t ? e?it ? ?] ; c . 1335 ? 17 May 1395) was the de jure Serbian king from 1371 to 1395 , while he was the de facto ruler of territory in western Macedonia centered on the town of Prilep . He is known as Prince Marko (Serbian Cyrillic : ????????????? , Kraljević Marko , IPA : [kr??e?it ? ? mârko]) and King Marko (Bulgarian : ????????? ; Macedonian : K??a?? ?????) in South Slavic oral tradition , in which he has become a major character during the period of Ottoman rule over the Balkans . Marko 's father , King Vukašin , was co -@-@ ruler with Serbian Tsar Stefan Uroš V , whose reign was characterised by weakening central authority and the gradual disintegration of the Serbian Empire . Vukašin 's holdings included lands in western Macedonia , Kosovo and Metohija . In 1370 or 1371 , he crowned Marko " young king " ; this title included the possibility that Marko would succeed the childless Uroš on the Serbian throne .

On 26 September 1371 , Vukašin was killed and his forces defeated in the Battle of Maritsa . About two months later , Tsar Uroš died . This formally made Marko the king of the Serbian land ; however , Serbian noblemen , who had become effectively independent from the central authority , did not even consider to recognise him as their supreme ruler . Sometime after 1371 , he became an Ottoman vassal ; by 1377 , significant portions of the territory he inherited from Vukašin were seized by other noblemen . King Marko , in reality , came to be a regional lord who ruled over a relatively small territory in western Macedonia . He funded the construction of the Monastery of Saint Demetrius near Skopje (better known as Marko 's Monastery) , which was completed in 1376 . Marko died on 17 May 1395 , fighting for the Ottomans against the Wallachians in the Battle of Rovine .

Although a ruler of modest historical significance , Marko became a major character in South Slavic oral tradition . He is venerated as a national hero by the Serbs , Macedonians and Bulgarians , remembered in Balkan folklore as a fearless and powerful protector of the weak , who fought against injustice and confronted the Turks during the Ottoman occupation .

= = Life = =

= = = Until 1371 = = =

Marko was born about 1335 as the first son of Vukašin Mrnjavić and his wife Alena . The patronymic " Mrnjavić " derives from Mrnjava , described by 17th @-@ century Ragusan historian Mavro Orbin as a minor nobleman from Zachlumia (in present @-@ day Herzegovina and southern Dalmatia) . According to Orbin , Mrnjava 's sons were born in Livno in western Bosnia , where he may have moved after Zachlumia was annexed from Serbia by Bosnia in 1326 . The Mrnjavić familyn.b.1 may have later supported Serbian Emperor (tsar) Stefan Dušan in his preparations to invade Bosnia as did other Zachlumian nobles , and , fearing punishment , emigrated to the Serbian Empire before the war started . These preparations possibly began two years ahead of the invasion , which took place in 1350 . From that year comes the earliest written reference to Marko 's father Vukašin , describing him as Dušan 's appointed župan (district governor) of Prilep , which was acquired by Serbia from Byzantium in 1334 with other parts of Macedonia . In 1355 , at about age 47 , Stefan Dušan died suddenly of a stroke .

Dušan was succeeded by his 19 @-@ year @-@ old son Uroš , who apparently regarded Marko Mrnjavić as a man of trust . The new Emperor appointed him the head of the embassy he sent to Ragusa (now Dubrovnik , Croatia) at the end of July 1361 to negotiate peace between the empire and the Ragusan Republic after hostilities earlier that year . Although peace was not reached , Marko successfully negotiated the release of Serbian merchants from Prizren who were detained by the Ragusans and was permitted to withdraw silver deposited in the city by his family . The account of that embassy in a Ragusan document contains the earliest @-@ known , undisputed reference to Marko Mrnjavić . An inscription written in 1356 on a wall of a church in the Macedonian region of

Tikve? , mentions a Nikola and a Marko as governors in that region , but the identity of this Marko is disputed .

Du?an 's death was followed by the stirring of separatist activity in the Serbian Empire . The south @-@ western territories , including Epirus , Thessaly , and lands in southern Albania , seceded by 1357 . However , the core of the state (the western lands , including Zeta and Travunia with the upper Drina Valley ; the central Serbian lands ; and Macedonia) , remained loyal to Emperor Uro? . Nevertheless , local noblemen asserted more and more independence from Uro? ' authority even in the part of the state that remained Serbian . Uro? was weak and unable to counteract these separatist tendencies , becoming an inferior power in his own domain . Serbian lords also fought each other for territory and influence .

Vuka?in Mrnjav?evi? was a skilful politician , and gradually assumed the main role in the empire . In August or September 1365 Uro? crowned him king , making him his co @-@ ruler . By 1370 Marko 's potential patrimony increased as Vuka?in expanded his personal holdings from Prilep further into Macedonia , Kosovo and Metohija , acquiring Prizren , Pristina , Novo Brdo , Skopje and Ohrid . In a charter he issued on 5 April 1370 Vuka?in mentioned his wife (Queen Alena) and sons (Marko and Andrija?) , signing himself as " Lord of the Serb and Greek Lands , and of the Western Provinces " (????????? ????? ????????? ? ?????? ? ????????? ?????????) . In late 1370 or early 1371 Vuka?in crowned Marko " Young King " , a title given to heirs presumptive of Serbian kings to secure their position as successors to the throne . Since Uro? was childless Marko could thus become his successor , beginning a new ? Vuka?in 's ? dynasty of Serbian sovereigns , and ending the two @-@ century Nemanji? dynasty . Most Serbian lords were unhappy with the situation , which strengthened their desire for independence from the central authority .

Vuka?in sought a well @-@ connected spouse for Marko . A princess from the Croatian House of ?ubi? of Dalmatia was sent by her father , Grgur , to the court of their relative Tvrtko I , the ban of Bosnia . She was supposed to be raised and married by Tvrtko 's mother Jelena . Jelena was the daughter of George II ?ubi? , whose maternal grandfather was Serbian King Dragutin Nemanji? . The ban and his mother approved of Vuka?in 's idea to join the ?ubi? princess and Marko , and the wedding was imminent . However , in April 1370 Pope Urban V sent Tvrtko a letter forbidding him to give the Catholic lady in marriage to the " son of His Magnificence , the King of Serbia , a schismatic " (filio magnifici viri Regis Rascie scismatico) . The pope also notified King Louis I of Hungary , nominal overlord of the ban , of the impending " offence to the Christian faith " , and the marriage did not occur . Marko subsequently married Jelena (daughter of Radoslav Hlapen , the lord of Veria and Edessa and the major Serbian nobleman in southern Macedonia) .

During the spring of 1371 , Marko participated in the preparations for a campaign against Nikola Altomanovi? , the major lord in the west of the Empire . The campaign was planned jointly by King Vuka?in and ?ura? I Bal?i? , lord of Zeta (who was married to Olivera , the king 's daughter) . In July of that year Vuka?in and Marko camped with their army outside Scutari , on Bal?i? 's territory , ready to make an incursion towards Onogo?t in Altomanovi? 's land . The attack never took place , since the Ottomans threatened the land of Despot Jovan Uglje?a (lord of Serres and Vuka?in 's younger brother , who ruled in eastern Macedonia) and the Mrnjav?evi? forces were quickly directed eastward . Having sought allies in vain , the two brothers and their troops entered Ottoman @-@ controlled territory . At the Battle of Maritsa on 26 September 1371 , the Turks annihilated the Serbian army ; the bodies of Vuka?in and Jovan Uglje?a were never found . The battle site , near the village of Ormenio in present @-@ day eastern Greece , has ever since been called as S?rp S?nd??? (" Serbian rout ") in Turkish . The Battle of Maritsa had far @-@ reaching consequences for the region , since it opened the Balkans to the Turks .

= = = After 1371 = = =

When his father died , " young king " Marko became king and co @-@ ruler with Emperor Uro? . The Nemanji? dynasty ended soon afterwards , when Uro? died on 2 (or 4) December 1371 and Marko became the formal sovereign of Serbia . Serbian lords , however , did not recognise him , and divisions within the state increased . After the two brothers ' deaths and the destruction of their

armies, the Mrnjavčević family was left powerless. Lords around Marko exploited the opportunity to seize significant parts of his patrimony. By 1372 Đurađ I Balšić took Prizren and Peja, and Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović took Pristina. By 1377 Vuk Branković acquired Skopje, and Albanian magnate Andrea Gropa became virtually independent in Ohrid; however, he may have remained a vassal to Marko as he had been to Vukašin. Gropa's son @-@ in @-@ law was Marko's relative, Ostoja Rajaković of the clan of Ugarčić from Travunia. He was one of Serbian noblemen from Zachlumia and Travunia (adjacent principalities in present @-@ day Herzegovina) who received lands in the newly conquered parts of Macedonia during Emperor Dušan's reign.

The only sizable town kept by Marko was Prilep, from which his father rose. King Marko became a petty prince ruling a relatively small territory in western Macedonia, bordered in the north by the Šar mountains and Skopje; in the east by the Vardar and the Crna Reka rivers, and in the west by Ohrid. The southern limits of his territory are uncertain. Marko shared his rule with his younger brother, Andrija, who had his own land. Their mother, Queen Alena, became a nun after Vukašin's death, taking the monastic name Jelisaveta, but was co @-@ ruler with Andrija for some time after 1371. The youngest brother, DMITAR, lived on land controlled by Andrija. There was another brother, Ivani, about whom little is known. When Marko became an Ottoman vassal is uncertain, but it was probably not immediately after the Battle of Maritsa.

At some point Marko separated from Jelena and lived with Todora, the wife of a man named Grgur, and Jelena returned to her father in Veria. Marko later sought to reconcile with Jelena but he had to send Todora to his father @-@ in @-@ law. Since Marko's land was bordered on the south by Hlapen's, the reconciliation may have been political. Scribe Dobro, a subject of Marko's, transcribed a liturgical book for the church in the village of Kaluđerica, n.b.2 and when he finished, he composed an inscription which begins as follows:

Marko's fortress was on a hill north of present @-@ day Prilep; its partially preserved remains are known as Markovi Kuli ("Marko's towers"). Beneath the fortress is the village of Varoš, site of the medieval Prilep. The village contains the Monastery of Archangel Michael, renovated by Marko and Vukašin, whose portraits are on the walls of the monastery's church. Marko was ktitor of the Church of Saint Sunday in Prizren, which was finished in 1371, shortly before the Battle of Maritsa. In the inscription above the church's entrance, he is called "young king".

The Monastery of St. Demetrius, popularly known as Marko's Monastery, is in the village of Markova Sušica (near Skopje) and was built from c. 1345 to 1376 (or 1377). Kings Marko and Vukašin, its ktitors, are depicted over the south entrance of the monastery church. Marko is an austere @-@ looking man in purple clothes, wearing a crown decorated with pearls. With his left hand he holds a scroll, whose text begins: "I, in the Christ God the pious King Marko, built and inscribed this divine temple ...". In his right hand, he holds a horn symbolizing the horn of oil with which the Old Testament kings were anointed at their coronation (as described in 1 Samuel 16:13). Marko is said to be shown here as the king chosen by God to lead his people through the crisis following the Battle of Maritsa.

Marko minted his own money, in common with his father and other Serbian nobles of the time. His silver coins weighed 1 @-@ 11 grams, and were produced in three types. In two of them, the obverse contained a five @-@ line text: ????? / ??????? / ??????? / ?????? / ??? ("In the Christ God, the pious King Marko"). In the first type, the reverse depicted Christ seated on a throne; in the second, Christ was seated on a mandorla. In the third type, the reverse depicted Christ on a mandorla; the obverse contained the four @-@ line text: ????? / ?????? / ?????? / ?????? ("Pious King Marko"), which Marko also used in the church inscription. He omitted a territorial designation from his title, probably in tacit acknowledgement of his limited power. Although his brother Andrija also minted his own coins, the money supply in the territory ruled by the Mrnjavčević brothers primarily consisted of coins struck by King Vukašin and Tsar Uroš. About 150 of Marko's coins survive in numismatic collections.

By 1379, Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović, the ruler of Moravian Serbia, emerged as the most @-@ powerful Serbian nobleman. Although he called himself Autokrator of all the Serbs (???????????? ?????? ?????????), he was not strong enough to unite all Serbian lands under his authority. The Balšić and Mrnjavčević families, Konstantin Draga (maternally a Nemanjić), Vuk Branković and

Radoslav Hlapen continued ruling their respective regions . In addition to Marko , Tvrtko I was crowned King of the Serbs and of Bosnia in 1377 in the Mile?eva monastery . Maternally related to the Nemanji? dynasty , Tvrtko had seized western portions of the former Serbian Empire in 1373 .

On 15 June 1389 Serbian forces led by Prince Lazar , Vuk Brankovi? , and Tvrtko 's nobleman Vlatko Vukovi? of Zachlunia , confronted the Ottoman army led by Sultan Murad I at the Battle of Kosovo , the best @-@ known battle in medieval Serbian history . With the bulk of both armies wiped out and Lazar and Murad killed , the outcome of the battle was inconclusive . In its aftermath the Serbs had insufficient manpower to defend their lands , while the Turks had many more troops in the east . Serbian principalities which were not already Ottoman vassals became such over the next few years .

In 1394 , a group of Ottoman vassals in the Balkans renounced their vassalage . Although Marko was not among them , his younger brothers Andrija? and Dmitar refused to remain under Turkish dominance . They emigrated to the Kingdom of Hungary , entering the service of King Sigismund . They travelled via Ragusa , where they withdrew two @-@ thirds of their late father 's store of 96 @.@ 73 kilograms (213 @.@ 3 lb) of silver , leaving the remaining third for Marko . Although Andrija? and Dmitar were the first Serbian nobles to emigrate to Hungary , the Serbian northward migration would continue throughout the Ottoman occupation .

In 1395 the Turks attacked Wallachia to punish its ruler , Mircea I , for his incursions into their territory . Three Serbian vassals fought on the Ottoman side : King Marko , Lord Konstantin Draga? , and Despot Stefan Lazarevi? (son and heir of Prince Lazar) . The Battle of Rovine , on 17 May 1395 , was won by the Wallachians ; Marko and Draga? were killed . After their deaths the Turks annexed their lands , combining them into an Ottoman province centred in Kyustendil . Thirty @-@ six years after the Battle of Rovine , Konstantin the Philosopher wrote the Biography of Despot Stefan Lazarevi? and recorded what Marko said to Draga? on the eve of the battle : " I pray the Lord to help the Christians , no matter if I will be the first to die in this war . "

= = In folk poetry = =

= = = Serbian epic poetry = = =

Marko Mrnjav?evi? is the most popular hero of Serbian epic poetry , in which he is called " Kraljevi? Marko " (with the word kraljevi? meaning " prince " or " king 's son ") . This informal title was attached to King Vuka?in 's sons in contemporary sources as a surname (Marko Kraljevi?) , n.b.3 and it was adopted by the Serbian oral tradition as part of Marko 's name .

Poems about Kraljevi? Marko do not follow a storyline ; what binds them into a poetic cycle is the hero himself , with his adventures illuminating his character and personality . The epic Marko had a 300 @-@ year lifespan ; 14th- to 16th @-@ century heroes appearing as his companions include Milo? Obili? , Relja Krilatica , Vuk the Fiery Dragon and Sibirjanin Janko and his nephew , Banovi? Sekula . Very few historical facts about Marko can be found in the poems , but they reflect his connection with the disintegration of the Serbian Empire and his vassalage to the Ottomans . They were composed by anonymous Serbian poets during the Ottoman occupation of their land . According to American Slavist George Rapall Noyes , they " combine tragic pathos with almost ribald comedy in a fashion worthy of an Elizabethan playwright . "

Serbian epic poetry agrees that King Vuka?in was Marko 's father . His mother in the poems was Jevrosima , sister of vojvode Mom?ilo , the lord of the Pirlitor Fortress (on Mount Durmitor in Old Herzegovina) . Mom?ilo is described as a man of immense size and strength with magical attributes : a winged horse and a sabre with eyes . Vuka?in murdered him with the help of the vojvode 's young wife , Vidosava , despite Jevrosima 's self @-@ sacrificing attempt to save her brother . Instead of marrying Vidosava (the original plan) , Vuka?in killed the treacherous woman . He took Jevrosima from Pirlitor to his capital city , Skadar , and married her according to the advice of the dying Mom?ilo . She bore him two sons , Marko and Andrija? , and the poem recounting these events says that Marko took after his uncle Mom?ilo . This epic character corresponds historically

with Bulgarian brigand and mercenary Momchil , who was in the service of Serbian Tsar Dušan ; he later became a despot and died in the 1345 Battle of Peritheorion . According to another account , Marko and Andrija were mothered by a vila (Slavic mountain nymph) married by Vukasin after he caught her near a lake and removed her wings so she could not escape .

As Marko matured , he became headstrong ; Vukasin once said that he had no control over his son , who went wherever he wanted , drank and brawled . Marko grew up into a large , strong man , with a terrifying appearance , which was also somewhat comical . He wore a wolf skin cap pulled low over his dark eyes , his black moustache was the size of a six month old lamb and his cloak was a shaggy wolf pelt . A Damascus sabre swung at his waist , and a spear was slung across his back . Marko 's pernach weighed 66 okas (85 kilograms (187 lb)) and hung on the left side of his saddle , balanced by a well filled wineskin on the saddle 's right side . His grip was strong enough to squeeze drops of water from a piece of dry cornel wood . Marko defeated a succession of champions against overwhelming odds .

The hero 's inseparable companion was his powerful , talking piebald horse Šarac ; Marko always gave him an equal share of his wine . The horse could leap three spear lengths high and four spear lengths forward , enabling Marko to capture the dangerous , elusive vila Ravijojla . She became his blood sister , promising to help him in dire straits . When Ravijojla helped him kill the monstrous , three hearted Musa Kesić (who almost defeated him) , Marko grieved because he had slain a better man than himself .

Marko is portrayed as a protector of the weak and helpless , a fighter against Turkish bullies and injustice in general . He was an idealised keeper of patriarchal and natural norms : in a Turkish military camp , he beheaded the Turk who dishonourably killed his father . He abolished the marriage tax by killing the tyrant who imposed it on the people of Kosovo . He saved the sultan 's daughter from an unwanted marriage after she entreated him , as her blood brother , to help her . He rescued three Serbian vojvodes (his blood brothers) from a dungeon and helped animals in distress . Marko was a rescuer and benefactor of people , and a promoter of life ; " Prince Marko is remembered like a fair day in the year " .

Characteristic of Marko was his reverence and love for his mother , Jevrosima ; he often sought her advice , following it even when it contradicted his own desires . She lived with Marko at his mansion in Prilep , his lodestar guiding him away from evil and toward good on the path of moral improvement and Christian virtues . Marko 's honesty and moral courage are noteworthy in a poem in which he was the only person who knew the will of the late Tsar Dušan regarding his heir . Marko refused to lie in favour of the pretenders ' his father and uncles . He said truthfully that Dušan appointed his son , Uroš , heir to the Serbian throne . This almost cost him his life , since Vukasin tried to kill him .

Marko is represented as a loyal vassal of the Ottoman sultan , fighting to protect the potentate and his empire from outlaws . When summoned by the sultan , he participated in Turkish military campaigns . Even in this relationship , however , Marko 's personality and sense of dignity were apparent . He occasionally made the sultan uneasy , and meetings between them usually ended like this :

Marko 's fealty was combined with the notion that the servant was greater than his lord , as Serbian poets turned the tables on their conquerors . This dual aspect of Marko may explain his heroic status ; for the Serbs he was " the proud symbol expressive of the unbroken spirit that lived on in spite of disaster and defeat , " according to translator of Serbian epic poems David Halyburton Low .

In battle , Marko used not only his strength and prowess but cunning and trickery . Despite his extraordinary qualities he was not depicted as a superhero or a god , but as a mortal man . There were opponents who surpassed him in courage and strength . He was occasionally capricious , short tempered or cruel , but his predominant traits were honesty , loyalty and fundamental goodness .

With his comic appearance and behaviour , and his remarks at his opponents ' expense , Marko is the most humorous character in Serbian epic poetry . When a Moor struck him with a mace , Marko said laughingly , " O valiant black Moor ! Are you jesting or smiting in earnest ? " Jevrosima once

advised her son to cease his bloody adventures and plough the fields instead . He obeyed in a grimly humorous way , ploughing the sultan 's highway instead of the fields . A group of Turkish Janissaries with three packs of gold shouted at him to stop ploughing the highway . He warned them to keep off the furrows , but quickly wearied of arguing :

Marko , age 300 , rode the 160 @-@ year @-@ old ?arac by the seashore towards Mount Urvina when a vila told him that he was going to die . Marko then leaned over a well and saw no reflection of his face on the water ; hydromancy confirmed the vila 's words . He killed ?arac so the Turks would not use him for menial labor , and gave his beloved companion an elaborate burial . Marko broke his sword and spear , throwing his mace far out to sea before lying down to die . His body was found seven days later by Abbot Vaso and his deacon , Isaija . Vaso took Marko to Mount Athos and buried him at the Hilandar Monastery in an unmarked grave .

= = = Epic poetry of Bulgaria and Macedonia = = =

" Krali Marko " has been one of the most popular characters in Bulgarian folklore for centuries . Bulgarian epic tales in general (and those about Marko in particular) seem to originate from the southwestern part of the Bulgarian region , primarily in the present @-@ day Republic of Macedonia . Therefore , the tales are also part of the ethnic heritage of present @-@ day Macedonia .

According to local legend Marko 's mother was Evrosiya (???????) , sister of the Bulgarian voivoda Momchil (who ruled territory in the Rhodope Mountains) . At Marko 's birth three narecnitsi (fairy sorceresses) appeared , predicting that he would be a hero and replace his father (King Vuka?in) . When the king heard this , he threw his son into the river in a basket to get rid of him . A samodiva named Vila found Marko and brought him up , becoming his foster mother . Because Marko drank the samodiva 's milk , he acquired supernatural powers and became a Bulgarian freedom fighter against the Turks . He has a winged horse named Sharkolia (" dappled ") and a stepsister , the samodiva Gyura . Bulgarian legends incorporate fragments of pagan mythology and beliefs , although the Marko epic was created as late as the 14 ? 18th centuries . Among Bulgarian epic songs , songs about Krali Marko are common and pivotal . Bulgarian folklorists who collected stories about Marko included educator Trayko Kitanchev (in the Resen region of western Macedonia) and Marko Cepenkov of Prilep (throughout the region) .

= = In legend = =

South Slavic legends about Kraljevi? Marko or Krali Marko are primarily based on myths much older than the historical Marko Mrnjav?evi? . He differs in legend from the folk poems ; in some areas he was imagined as a giant who walked stepping on hilltops , his head touching the clouds . He was said to have helped God shape the earth , and created the river gorge in Demir Kapija (" Iron Gate ") with a stroke of his sabre . This drained the sea covering the regions of Bitola , Mariovo and Tikve? in Macedonia , making them habitable . After the earth was shaped , Marko arrogantly showed off his strength . God took it away by leaving a bag as heavy as the earth on a road ; when Marko tried to lift it , he lost his strength and became an ordinary man .

Legend also has it that Marko acquired his strength after he was suckled by a vila . King Vuka?in threw him into a river because he did not resemble him , but the boy was saved by a cowherd (who adopted him , and a vila suckled him) . In other accounts , Marko was a shepherd (or cowherd) who found a vila 's children lost in a mountain and shaded them against the sun (or gave them water) . As a reward the vila suckled him three times , and he could lift and throw a large boulder . An Istrian version has Marko making a shade for two snakes , instead of the children . In a Bulgarian version , each of the three draughts of milk he suckled from the vila 's breast became a snake .

Marko was associated with large , solitary boulders and indentations in rocks ; the boulders were said to be thrown by him from a hill , and the indentations were his footprints (or the hoofprints of his horse) . He was also connected with geographic features such as hills , glens , cliffs , caves , rivers , brooks and groves , which he created or at which he did something memorable . They were often named after him , and there are many toponyms ? from Istria in the west to Bulgaria in the

east ? derived from his name . In Bulgarian and Macedonian stories , Marko had an equally strong sister who competed with him in throwing boulders .

In some legends , Marko 's wonder horse was a gift from a vila . A Serbian story says that he was looking for a horse who could bear him . To test a steed , he would grab him by the tail and sling him over his shoulder . Seeing a diseased piebald foal owned by some carters , Marko grabbed him by the tail but could not move him . He bought (and cured) the foal , naming him ?arac . He became an enormously powerful horse and Marko 's inseparable companion . Macedonian legend has it that Marko , following a vila 's advice , captured a sick horse on a mountain and cured him . Crusted patches on the horse 's skin grew white hairs , and he became a piebald .

According to folk tradition Marko never died ; he lives on in a cave , in a moss @-@ covered den or in an unknown land . A Serbian legend recounts that Marko once fought a battle in which so many men were killed that the soldiers (and their horses) swam in blood . He lifted his hands towards heaven and said , " Oh God , what am I going to do now ? " God took pity on Marko , transporting him and ?arac to a cave (where Marko stuck his sabre into a rock and fell asleep) . There is moss in the cave ; ?arac eats it bit by bit , while the sabre slowly emerges from the rock . When it falls on the ground and ?arac finishes the moss , Marko will awaken and reenter the world . Some allegedly saw him after descending into a deep pit , where he lived in a large house in front of which ?arac was seen . Others saw him in a faraway land , living in a cave . According to Macedonian tradition Marko drank " eagle 's water " , which made him immortal ; he is with Elijah in heaven .

= = In modern culture = =

During the 19th century , Marko was the subject of several dramatizations . In 1831 the Hungarian drama Prince Marko , possibly written by István Balog , was performed in Budim and in 1838 , the Hungarian drama Prince Marko ? Great Serbian Hero by Celesztin Perg? was staged in Arad . In 1848 Jovan Sterija Popovi? wrote the tragedy The Dream of Prince Marko , in which the legend of sleeping Marko is its central motif . Petar Preradovi? wrote the drama Kraljevi? Marko , which glorifies southern Slav strength . In 1863 Francesco Dall 'Ongaro presented his Italian drama , The Resurrection of Prince Marko .

Of all Serbian epic or historical figures , Marko is considered to have given the most inspiration to visual artists ; a monograph on the subject lists 87 authors . His oldest known depictions are 14th @-@ century frescoes from Marko 's Monastery and Prilep . An 18th @-@ century drawing of Marko is found in the ?ajni?e Gospels , a medieval parchment manuscript belonging to a Serbian Orthodox church in ?ajni?e in eastern Bosnia . The drawing is simple , unique in depicting Marko as a saint and reminiscent of ste?ci reliefs . Vuk Karad?i? wrote that during his late @-@ 18th @-@ century childhood he saw a painting of Marko carrying an ox on his back .

Nineteenth @-@ century lithographs of Marko were made by Anastas Jovanovi? , Ferdo Kikerec and others . Artists who painted Marko during that century include Mina Karad?i? , Novak Radoni? and ?ura Jak?i? . Twentieth @-@ century artists include Nade?da Petrovi? , Mirko Ra?ki , Uro? Predi? and Paja Jovanovi? . A sculpture of Marko on ?arac by Ivan Me?trovi? was reproduced on a Yugoslavian banknote and stamp . Modern illustrators with Marko as their subject include Alexander Key , Aleksandar Klas , Zuko D?umhur , Vasa Pomori?ac and Bane Kerac .

Motifs in multiple works are Marko and Ravijojla , Marko and his mother , Marko and ?arac , Marko shooting an arrow , Marko plowing the roads , the fight between Marko and Musa and Marko 's death . Also , several artists have tried to produce a realistic portrait of Marko based on his frescoes . In 1924 Prilep Brewery introduced a light beer , Krali Marko .