

Projekt MITSKI PARK

Skupna čezmejna turistična destinacija za ohranjanje, varstvo in promocijo dediščine mitske krajine prostora
Zajednička prekogranična turistična destinacija za očuvanje, zaščito i promicanje baštine mitskog prostora

T 1.1.3 A collection of documentary material about the traditional culture of Rodik (Mythological Park – Interreg)

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The White Snake on Tabor / Robida

A large and mighty castle once stood in Robida. An arrow struck the castle and the roof caught on fire, soon collapsing and falling to the ground. Only the castle ruins remained. Underneath these ruins, a large and beautiful white snake lived. It was once believed that the snake was black and was in fact a haunted countess. Everyone was afraid of this snake, whether black or white, and parents told their children who were going to Robida: “Watch out for the snake. It’s dangerous over there”.

One day, Babudrov Pepček went off to get some wood. He chopped firewood and cut a few branches. He then went to a hornbeam bush to saw off a branch that was protruding. He reached into the bush for a branch and did not see anything out of the ordinary. However, a snake was wrapped around the branch. In an instant, it wrapped itself around his arm and started to squeeze it really hard, so hard that the boy was soon gasping for breath. Although the boy was holding an axe in his other hand, he was in such panic and so scared that he was unable to hit the snake. He managed to wrestle the snake off and saw it drop to the ground. The snake then wrapped itself around the boy's arm and neck so that in the end its head was level with his eyes. At this point, the snake made eye contact with the boy and was flicking its darting tongue. It was now squeezing his neck so tightly that he went completely numb. He thought he was done for. With his very last ounce of strength, he muttered to himself: “Dear Lord and Mother of God! Save me from this evil snake”. Believe it or not, it helped, and he was saved!

Kobilja Glava and “Vedamc” (the Seer)

There was once a seer (“vedamc”). He came into the world feet first. That’s why he was able to read other people’s thoughts. And he was able to use this gift while talking to people and in his meddling. He could look a man in the eye and read his mind. This is how he became rich and ultimately the richest man in the village.

He had heard that you could understand the sounds animals make if you placed fern seeds under your pillow. So, he went off into the woods to gather some fern seeds. On St. John’s Eve, he woke up and listened intently. He could hear voices that he had never heard before. And he could also understand what they meant.

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The seer got up and walked towards the stable. He heard an ox and a horse talking together.

The horse said: “If our master, who says he is a seer, really knows everything, then he should also know that a treasure is buried at Kobilja Glava next to the pole where the skull of a horse is hanging. He would go out at midnight on the first Sunday after the first full moon after Easter and dig the treasure up”.

The ox said: “But then he would become even more greedy than now. We’re so starving now that we can hear our stomachs rumbling. The good thing is that the harvesters have threshed the grain coarsely and left five bushels in the straw. This is how we’ll survive this year and not die of hunger”.

The seer heard this and the next day immediately ordered the harvesters to thresh the grain once again. They were not to give up until they had threshed out all of the fine grain.

The ox and horse ate the straw all winter and grew so thin that they became all skin and bone, with their bones squeaking and creaking and only the skin hanging off their backs. On Easter night, they were so hungry they could barely stand up.

The horse said to the ox: “I can hardly wait for the first full moon. Then we’ll be saved”. That evening, as the full moon was gleaming, the first after Easter, the seer went on a treasure hunt. He started digging at Kobilja Glava, near the pole on which the skull of a horse was hanging. As soon as he began digging, witches came flying in and started to dance around both the pole and the seer. They grabbed the greedy seer, whirled him around in a spin, then dragged him off to tear him up and slice him into quarters. They then dug a pit next to the pole and buried his limbs and body beside the pot of money.

The ox asked the horse: “Why did the witches tear him apart?”. The horse said: “I knew that the seer had some fern seed, but I didn’t tell you that he if he had tied a bunch of flowers to the pole then the witches would have lost their power and the treasure would have been his. So that’s why it’s still there”.

Njivice

There was once a village in Njivice. People had lived there for a long time and then moved on to Brezovica. Gypsies then moved into their houses. One of these gypsies was a blacksmith who used to chase away any travellers who were walking past and stopping to feed their horses. To anyone arriving at his house in the evening, he’d say: “I’ll give you free accommodation”. Travellers usually accepted this invitation and decided to stay overnight.

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When a traveller entered his room, the blacksmith showed him a beautifully forged bed. When the traveller lay on his bed, the blacksmith nailed him onto it and shortened the bed by using a special handle.

“You’re too big for my bed”, he announced. He then took an axe and lopped his head and feet off.

He buried the dead man’s parts behind the blacksmith’s forge. Then he re-painted and re-shoed the horses, and later sold them. And around the town of Pivka he sold everything they had with them.

Many years passed by. At night, people would still avoid the old forge. They used to say that it was haunted and a place where the souls of the dead roamed. So, no one ever walked past.

Once, however, the Empress was on her way back from Rodik to Artviže. She had stopped for a chat with Marija Dudkova and was rushing home before it got dark. As she approached Njivice, she saw flames coming from a fire burning on the ground. The flames were around half a metre high. When the Empress moved closer, they started to go out. When she tried to step on them, they died right down.

She took a branch and tried to extinguish the fire. However, the more she beat it, the more the fire grew bigger. It was the earth that was burning, not the wood or the bushes, making her very anxious. She wasn’t able to step across the fire so she returned to Rodik. She ran all the way back to the village. She reached the village all frightened and went and told everyone about what had happened.

People listened to her and told her that the fire came from another world and that the souls of the dead were roaming around.

Križendrev: Beside the road, 1 metre from the border stone

Križendrev is no ordinary place, but a place where a mighty, great green oak is growing. At night, you can also see blood-covered, severed thighs. A place not to visit at such a time.

Tine from Artviže often went to Rodik to try to find a woman to marry him. And he went there every day, dancing and drinking, eating sour cabbage and sausage, and was quite merry as befits a young man. On one occasion after he had been there quite a while, a girl came up to him and said: “It’ll be midnight soon. Stay here, don’t go home”.

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But he went back to Artviže anyway. He had drunk a lot, and ended up stumbling from one place to another, lighting his way home with a burning torch.

On his way from Vrhovlje to Križendrev, he saw a giant man hanging from the sky on a rope.

Suddenly, one leg was torn away from the hanging man. Then another leg dropped. Then his right hand split off. After a while, his left hand tore off. And then his torso came crashing down. Only his head remained hanging on the rope.

On the ground, the various parts of the hung man began to reassemble themselves and, still without a head, began marching towards Tine. He moved closer and closer, and when he got right up close Tine saw that the monster was headless, hairy and had bloody thighs.

Tine sobered up instantly. He quickly crossed himself and called on God for help.

Jajdešna/ Ajdovščina

On the highest peak at Jezero near Rodik is a place called Ajdovščina which giants once called home. It is said they were unlike us; their skin was taut and their hair was black and curly. These giants resided in the large town of Ajdovščina which had an enormous wall and three mighty doors that were always kept locked: the first door was made of gold, the second of silver and the third of bronze. It is said that the giants were experienced blacksmiths and could forge anything imaginable. These people had everything they needed apart from fields to work, meaning they were often hungry. They cultivated little gardens in Njivice and Štihterca on Gura, but were unable to produce many crops.

These giants gave the inhabitants of Rodik quite some trouble. At night, as the Rodik locals were asleep, the giants visited the fields in Čelevo to steal their turnips and carrots. When the locals woke up in the morning, they found everything had been taken.

They did not dare fight these giants because they had neither weapons nor anything else to use. They were quite afraid of them so they started to plant turnips in the field near Rodik. They pulled out the blackthorn bushes and made the field as it appears today (“Rodiško polje”).

The giants continued to live in Ajdovščina. Then one day an army came to take recruits and all the best men went off to war. Before leaving, they buried their treasure, leaving only children, wives and old men at home. And these giants were no longer in the valley.

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Before they left, they asked Lintver the snake to guard their treasure. As long as Lintver was alive, no one would steal the treasure. The treasure continues to be safe today and is still there. Except that older people and children could not live there, so they slowly moved on to Podluza to build new houses there. Thus, today's inhabitants of Podluza are the descendants of those who once inhabited Ajdovščina.

Čuk / Jezero

Čuk is a hill that sits behind the village and watches over it night and day. Čuk is an unusual hill. The hill is covered by rocks and earth, yet it is hollow and full of water on the inside. At the base of that water lies a big castle. In that castle a snake from Rodik lives called "Lintver".

Every morning, the snake goes out and roams the area. It floats on the water up to the top, where the water flows out of Čuk. As the water flows out, it warms up and Lintver heats himself in it.

He then returns to the water within the hill. Every day he clogs up all the holes and makes sure the water does not leak away.

So, what is he like? He's no ordinary snake, he is big and green and has a flower on his head, a bit like a rooster. He has small ears and a tongue like an ordinary snake. His teeth are different; his mouth is full of them. And when he comes up the mountain, he looks around. If he gets angry, he can hit out with his tail to get Čuk to calm its water-filled centre so that the water won't carry Rodik away.

Therefore, people are careful not to anger Lintver; moreover, because he can also bring lightning. As soon as you say the word "lightning", you get hit. It's not safe! Lintver blows his poisonous breath out, big clouds form, hail and sleet begin to fall. There are flashes, deep thunder and many people are killed.

That is why people hold a great deal of respect for Lintver.

Baba

Giants once lived here. Their mother was a giant woman. The children made a statue of her and placed it on a raised area in Debela Griža. First, they made a big belly for her, then a navel, two wide hips, a big fat backside, two breasts, and a head.

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This giant mother had many children and should anyone annoy her or climb on her head, she would then grab, crush and then devour them.

And so today, God-fearing men do not tease Baba. You can climb on her belly and hips, but do not climb on her head, it's not safe!

Baba is like a woman, the best, although they say she is horrible. Such a horrible woman like Baba cannot be found anywhere in Rodik. And she is so disgusting! Before she comes to the village, she stops at Čelevo and Kراسić. She places one foot on Čuk, turns towards Slope, exposes her bottom to Rodik and says: "This fart is annoying me, it doesn't pay any rent, it must leave!".

She repeats this three times and then emits a fart. She farts for a long time while her breath is like a shower of acid. Then she turns and pees out a liquid like sour rain. And that's why the locals of Rodik describe her breath as "piss-like" and the rain as "pisser's rain". When Baba is finished, she heads off down the lowlands, towards Milan. When she is far away, she turns back to Rodik, lifts up her skirt and shows all that she has below. This is when clouds rise up. And the Rodik locals say: "Baba has lifted her skirt up, the sky will be clear, and it won't rain!". Simple as that!

Origins of the caves of Rodik (Remeščica, Fukova, Šlavrova and Cikova caves)

Jesus and Saint Peter were walking around the world. Jesus was skinny and fragile, always fasting and starving. Yet, St. Peter was fat and strong because he liked to eat. He was always eating and always hungry. Peter was really brave, and well aware of it. He liked to brag about being a decent man. While walking around the world, he always followed Jesus. Peter believed that he was still nicer and stronger than Jesus, even though Jesus was the son of God. He observed the work of Jesus and thought he could do it better, faster and more elegantly.

One day, they arrived at Luza, where they sat down on the peak. Peter, always hungry, took some bread out from the saddlebags for a snack. He then cut off a slice of pancetta and offered all that he had to Jesus. Jesus thanked him but did not take anything. He instead dug around for some fern roots and chewed on them. They each ate their own food. St. Peter then turned to Jesus and said:

"You see, Jesus, if you ate pancetta and sausage and drank another quart of wine, you'd be as strong as I am. Hey, look at this!"

He picked up an enormous rock and hurled it from the heights of Luza. It flew through the air all the way down to Debela Griža, where it hit the ground with a loud thud. The rock burrowed itself deep into the earth, forming a large and wide cave.

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“Jesus, look at the cave (Remeščica) I have made?”, Peter boasted.

But Jesus said: “You’re truly strong, Saint Peter. But I too can make a cave. I will throw these stones and you can measure how deep the pits I make are”.

Jesus took three small stones and threw the first one far off into the distance. The stone travelled all the way to Boršt, where it lodged in the ground next to the marshlands. The second stone was thrown towards Malagrišce where it formed a cave. He then threw the third stone towards Lesnjac, also forming a cave there.

They went off to measure how deep these caves were. Remeščica was really wide, but shallow and you could see the bottom. The caves at Šlavrova and Fukova were measured using ropes. They were unable to locate the bottom of the Cikova cave. St. Peter announced: “I’ll go into the cave and see how deep it is”. Jesus interjected: “Peter, don’t be a fool. Don’t go in there! You know the cave is deep and that it goes all the way to hell”.

Peter stopped and turned to say: “Jesus, what have we done? We have opened up a way for the devil to enter this world”.

The dwarf in the Cikova cave

Not many dwarves can be found in Rodik, although clearly one of them is more than enough. This one lives in Lesnjac in the Cikova cave.

One day, some shepherd boys were wandering through meadows at Drobna Griža and ventured into the deep valley of Lesnjac. They suddenly came upon a little man wearing green pants, with a very wrinkled face and a long grey beard. The man laughed out loud, jumped up and offered them some white bread. When the boys said they wanted something to eat, he invited them into the cave. The boys stopped when arriving at the cave. One boy was a little bolder and moved towards the cave entrance.

Suddenly, the dwarf pushed him inside.

The boy was falling and falling until a big “bloop” as he plunged into water. He looked around and saw a beautiful pond on the cave floor and gorgeous halls full of wonderful statues around him. The dwarf pulled the boy out of the water and gave him something to eat and drink. He offered grapes, raisins, breadcrumbs, roast meat and bread. As much as he could eat.

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The boy sat down at a table and ate. The dwarf then took him to sleep on a bed of soft ferns.

And so it went on, day after day. They ate and slept, then ate and slept....

One day, however, the boy looked sad.

“I'd like to go home now!”, he told the dwarf.

“What are you missing here while you're with me?”, the dwarf enquired.

“I don't miss anything! I miss my mum and dad and my brothers and my sisters!”, and he began to cry; the dwarf took pity on him and carried the boy out of the cave.

When the boy returned to the village, everyone looked at him in astonishment. No one knew him anymore. And he also no longer knew anyone there!

He asked: “Is this the village of Rodik? Do you know who is my father?”. They then told him that his father had been dead for a long time and that their house was no longer part of the village. And they added that their forebears had been telling the truth when describing how a shepherd had once fallen into the Cikova cave, although much time had passed since then.

The boy thus no longer found himself in this world. He went off to Istria and instead grazed his sheep there.

Fukova cave / Majakavc

Close to the road leading to Kranj one finds a large cave which the locals of Rodik call the Majakavc or Fukova cave. It's not such a good idea to go into this cave. Who knows what goes on in there! They say that wizards and witches come to gather here. They come from all around and God help a poor soul who comes across them! They take all the milk from the cows, leaving no milk for anyone else. The wizards drink it all. But it's not just about milk and cows... The worst part is when the wizards and witches get hold of a human. This is what once happened to a boy from Rodik. The enclosure near the cave belonged to the boy's family, and he had gone there to cut hay. But what did he see?

Wizards had flocked to the cave from everywhere, and a coven of old witches had followed on behind. They were all drinking some magic potion from a bottle, and you can hardly imagine what pretty girls they became! And then the wizards and witches were starting to dance and jump around the cave. The boy was hiding behind a wall and watching them. There was so much to see! What

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the wizards and witches were doing left him stunned. The wizards were chasing each other, but then they all came together. The boy was so interested in what they were doing that he raised his head up to get a better look, but he lifted his head a little too high above the wall and they suddenly saw him. The witches made a terrible noise and dragged him into the middle of the meadow. They began to make fun of him. With a slight build, the poor boy was bit of a weakling. But they seduced him so much that he ended up behaving like a real womaniser and then they pampered him so that he felt like he was in heaven.

But he had been away from home for three days.

After the third day, he came home shabby, sweaty and without any hair. He was laughing as if he were stupid. And then he began to tell his family and friends what had happened to him. No one believed him! They called him Fukec, and today they still call his house “Fuk’s house” and the cave “Fuk’s cave” – it is no longer called Majakavc cave.

The dwarf in the cave at Boršt / Šlavrova cave

The cave at Boršt is awfully deep. It is also known for taking all of the Rodik locals’ worries away. When someone has a problem and finds it hard to identify a solution, they go to the cave for some advice: there, he decides on his future steps; if not, he jumps into the cave.

They say a dwarf is living in the cave and that, before him, there used to be a three-headed dragon. When the dragon was slayed, the cave remained empty. That is when the dwarf moved in, a dwarf who is the master of souls, who understands everything that is going on. And he’s smart and helps by giving advice, if he can. If he is unable to help, he then calls the advice-seeker to come with him and keep him company inside.

This is what happened to my uncle’s wife. My uncle was a good-looking womaniser. There were never enough women for him. He always managed to find some sort of woman for himself, a girl or a widow. Yet he also had a wife who was suffering a lot so she decided to visit the cave at Boršt.

She untied her scarf, placed it on an oak branch and began to cry and sigh while shouting into the cave: “Dwarf, please come, please come and help me. Tell me what to do so that my husband will love me and not chase after other women. He’s now got this drunkard of a woman. He brought her home and I’m so embarrassed that I no longer know what to do”.

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After a while, the dwarf emerged from the cave. He grabbed my aunt's arm and said: "I can't help, aunt. He was born a womaniser and a womaniser he will stay. He won't change for as long as he is alive".

"But I can't stand it anymore; I can't bear this suffering and this shame". The dwarf pointed into the cave. He caressed my aunt, kissed her and said: "Listen, come with me into the cave. I'll always be good to you. You will know everything. You'll be fine there". And my aunt replied: "Listen, listen, you know I can't. I have children". The dwarf talked to her and finally convinced her till the point that she had forgotten everything. And she went into the cave with him.

My uncle's family searched everywhere for her and repeatedly called her name out, but were unable to find her. When spring came, a girl from the Šlavrov family was grazing cows in Boršt. And there she saw that scarf hanging on the oak tree. She went back home and immediately told her family. Several men then went off to the cave, descended into the pit on a rope and there they found my dead aunt. The dwarf was nowhere to be seen. In the more than 100 years since then, however, he has not lured any more women into the cave.

Šembilja and Hudičev stol (Pod lisično)

The devil was a regular visitor to our village. At our boundary stone he created a race track. The devil used to race through Rodik almost every day. He made himself a special vehicle, which they used to call the "Šembilja". This racing car lumbered, grunted, rattled and poured smoke and smelt of sulphur as it thundered along. As the devil came close to the houses, the earth shook and everyone hid from the lightning bolts that shot out from under the Šembilja's wheels. The devil, however, sat with his legs astride the Šembilja, growling and roaring loudly.

While racing about, he liked to go over to Pod lisično where there is a deep stream. Above it, one finds a large wall with deep cracks running along it.

As far as those cracks are concerned, an old man once told me that they were formed when the devil came racing past. He usually drove from Čuk down by Greščina to Prelovc. From there, he made his way to the Pod Koriti creek and down to Malni. On one occasion, he was moving at full speed towards Brce but his brakes failed.

The Šembilja was racing at such speed that even it was frightened. It pressed on the brakes and continued to press, but nothing helped. The Šembilja murmured and roared while racing towards Pod Lisično. At that point, only one brake was working. The vehicle hit the smooth wall and made cracks which are still visible today. Then it rolled over, dug deeper and deeper and finally carved

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out a deep ravine. Now all the water that comes from the Devce and Stršinov vrh peak flows into the deep stream. The Šembilja roared and roared down to Dane, where it broke through the earth and plunged along with the devil into hell. A hole remains where the Šembilja disappeared. It is a big gulley and all of the water, instead of flowing into the river, now flows into hell. And today the dry valley is called Sešica.

The devil liked to take a rest at Pod Lisičino. When tired, he carved for himself a stone chair there and sat down and dozed off. His tail was bothering him. When he swished it while nodding off, it started to itch. So, he took a drill and created a hole in the chair. It's still there today.