

Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne

An International, Interdisciplinary, Bilingual, Online Journal
Međunarodni, interdisciplinarni, dvojezični, online časopis

A Decree Arrived from Istanbul

Ballad

A decree arrived from Istanbul,
An order from Travnik,
Right to the city of Sarajevo,
Delivered into the hands of Dizdar-aga:
To capture the two Morić brothers,
The two Morić brothers, the two young
men,
Ibro Morić and Pašo Morić;
To capture them, to bind them,
To bind them, and to condemn them to
death.
And furthermore the sultan was angered
by them,
Hearing complaints from Travnik,
From the vezir in Travnik:
that the Morić brothers were outlaws,
That they accepted the rule of neither the
sultan,
Neither the sultan, nor the vezir,
Nor of any lord,
But only of themselves as lords,
And that they acted like lords, and did
as they pleased.
When Dizdar-aga saw,
What the order informed him,
He called for his soldiers,
To capture the two Morić brothers,
To capture them, to bind them,
To bind them, to lead them
Straight to the city, to the prison,
Where Dizdar quickly made plans:
Who entered the prison would not
emerge alive!
The two Morić brothers were captured,
They were captured and bound,

They were bound and led,
 Just when their mother was making
 pita.¹
 In one hand was a rolling pin,
 And in the other a gold jug.
 News came to their aged mother
 That the Morić brothers had been
 captured,
 And had been led to the prison.
 When their aged mother heard this,
 The poor woman threw everything
 Into the courtyard, on the cobblestones:
 She broke the rolling pin,
 Dented the gold jug,
 Then she rushed out of the courtyard,
 Barefoot, with uncovered head,
 She shrieked and pulled out her hair,
 All of Hat-Square burst into tears.²

Here she reached Sarači St.³: 3

Shame on you, all of you
 leatherworkers,
 That you gave the two Morić brothers
 up,
 Why did you not save one of them,
 Or somehow plead for his life?
 Who will console me?
 Who will look after an old woman?!

She hissed like a snake,
 And the leatherworkers burst into tears.

From there she went up Kovači,⁴
 She twisted her hands, and spoke:

Shame on you, all you ironworkers,
 That you gave the two Morić brothers
 up,
 Why did you not save one of them,
 Or somehow plead for his life?
 Who will console me?
 Who will look after an old woman?
 Woe is me, a poor mother!

Then the aged mother rushed again

Straight up the hill above Kovači,
 Until she reached Dizdar-aga,
 Who was leading both her sons,
 Both of her sons, who were bound
 With thick chains.
 Alone the poor mother approached
 them,
 Alone she approached them, and fell
 before them,
 She fell before them, and began to
 plead.
 Eloquently pleaded the aged mother:

Brother-in-God, Dizdar-aga,
 Release one of my sons to me,
 Release to me either Ibro,
 Either Ibro, or Pašo!
 Ask for something, for whatever
 you want!
 Either a feudal village, or slaves?
 Or do you prefer pure gold?
 Only give me one of my sons!
 If you don't release one of them,
 By my faith, I curse you,
 And by the fast of Ramadan,
 I will swear by the sky, and by the
 earth,
 I will pray a mighty prayer.
 There will never be peace
 For either the sultan or the vezir,
 While they rule over Bosnia,
 Nor will things be good for you!

When Dizdar-aga heard this,
 He said to the aged mother,

I will release both sons to you,
 Both sons, and without any
 payment.

The aged mother was deceived,
 She was deceived, and returned
 home.
 The fetters and chains rang,
 The two Morić brothers were led

out.

When they reached Jekovac,⁵
Ibro Morić spoke:

By God, Dizdar-aga,
Stop the guards,
Free my white hands,
And give me a little tambura,
So that I can look out over
Sarajevo,
So that I can ease my mind!

When Dizdar-aga heard this,
He stopped the guards,
The nearby guards,
Freed his white hands,
Gave him a little tambura.
Just see Ibro Morić!
When he took hold of the little
tambura,
He stretched the fine strings,
Then he began to pluck and to
sing.
Ibro Morić finely plucked,
He finely plucked, and loudly
sang:

O world, you are wide!
Sarajevo, you are beautiful to
look at!
Baščaršija, you are wealthy!⁶
Ćemaluša, you are long!⁷
Latinluk, you are flat!⁸
Tališhan, you are wide!⁹
Beautiful Mara, you are
beautiful!
Many times you brought me
drink,
And sheltered me from my
enemies.
My hour has come, and I must
die!

Ibro was again bound,
 He was bound and they were
 led,
 Ibro Morić and Pašo Morić,
 And they were led into the city,
 And imprisoned in the jail.
 When it was dusk,
 Dizdar-aga said:

Lead out the two Morić
 brothers,
 And bring a silken cord!

The two Morić brothers were
 led out,
 A silken cord was brought,
 Pašo Morić was strangled.
 Ibro Morić watched all of this.
 Dizdar-aga spoke:

By God, Ibro Morić,
 Are you sad for your brother?

Ibro Morić spoke:

Yes, I'm sad for my brother,
 And even sadder for our aged
 mother!

The two Morić brothers were
 strangled,
 Their bodies were thrown in
 front of the gate,
 And two cannons were fired.
 When their aged mother heard
 this,
 Their aged mother rushed out;
 When she reached the gate,
 There lay both sons,
 Both sons, strangled:
 On their legs were fetters,
 On their arms were handcuffs,
 Around their necks, a silken
 cord.

When their aged mother saw
this –
Her heart burst from grief.

(Maglajlić, br. 2/1995: 151-156)

Maglajlić, Munib. *Usmena balada bošnjaka*. Sarajevo: Preporod, 1995, pp. 151-156.

Translated by Masha Belyavski-Frank
© 2012 Masha Belyavski-Frank

Notes

1. Pita is one of several types of filled pastry, and one of the most common dishes of Bosnia. Savory pita is eaten for breakfast, for snacks, or for any meal of the day. Pita can be savory (filled with any one of a number of fillings, such as ground meat, cheese, spinach and cheese, or potatoes) or sweet (filled with cherries, apples, etc.). In the latter case, it is eaten as dessert. [←](#)
2. Hat-mejdan ('Horse-Square') is by the Miljacka River, near the center of Sarajevo. [←](#)
3. Sarači St. ('Leatherworkers St.') is one of the streets in the Baščaršija, the main marketplace. [←](#)
4. Kovači is the area in Sarajevo above the Baščaršija, below the Vratnik neighborhood. [←](#)
5. Jekovac is the area in Sarajevo above Kovači, on the road to the fortress. [←](#)
6. Baščaršija is the main marketplace in Sarajevo, with a number of streets, each devoted to a different craft. [←](#)
7. Ćemaluša is a street in the center of Sarajevo, where wealthy families lived. [←](#)
8. Latinluk, along the Miljacka River, is the area of town where Catholics from Dubrovnik lived. [←](#)
9. Tašlihan was the largest inn in the city of Sarajevo, made of stone, and located in the center of town. [←](#)

The preceding text is copyright of the author and/or translator and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License.