



Mariovo

Mariovo (Macedonian Cyrillic: Мариово) is a mountainous region in southern Macedonia known for its traditional white costume. The area is somewhat large but since there has been no urban development in these spaces over the past century, the region contains no actual towns, only rustic villages.

The largest village in Mariovo is Vitolište, situated in Prilep's municipality. Mariovo now is divided in three municipalities. Konopishte is in Kavadarci municipality, Vitolishte in Prilep municipality, and Staravina in Novaci municipality, as a part of Bitola's county.



It is said that Mariovo was named after the beautiful and brave girl Marija. The legend says that some turkish Pasha who has conquered the villages of Mariovo, has fallen in love with this girl and, enchanted by her beauty, was prepared to do everything to gain her love.



But Marija's father was not approving on it, because his daughter was a Christian, and the Turk was a Muslim. The Pasha would not give up. Marija answered his persistence with one condition: she would become his wife, but the entire region, from the Poloski monastery, Selecka mountain, to the village by the name of Brod, then the Bitola region, the Nidze mountain and to the reach of Kozjak, to remain Christian and that not a single Turk should be inhabited there. The Pasha agreed to this condition, signed papers on that decision and took Marija with him.





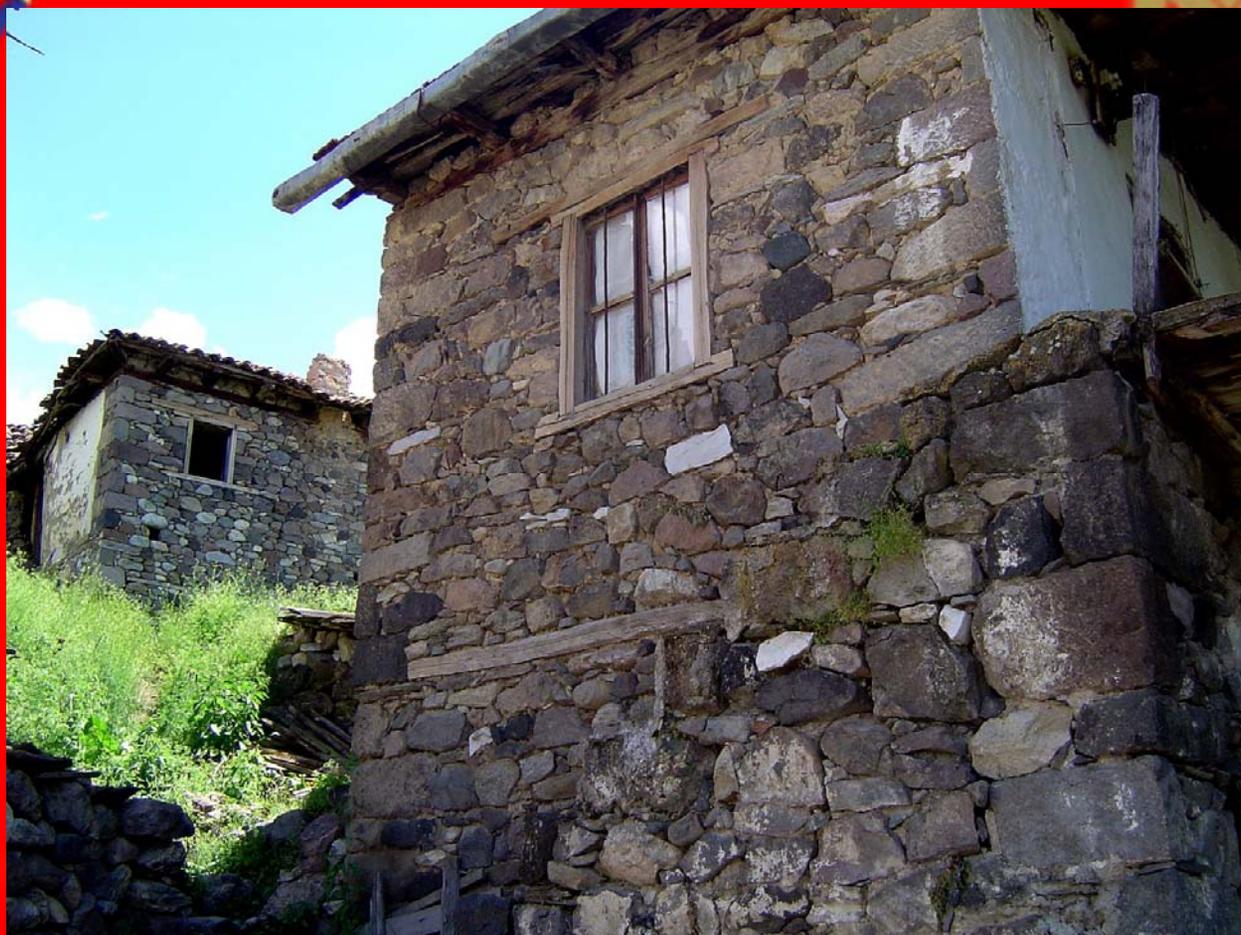
He took her on the road leading to the village of Dunje, Marija suddenly took the knife from her folds, and forcefully killed herself. Taking away her life, she did not surrender to the pasha, who later, although he wanted to, could not annul the contract he previously signed.

By the power of this document, the guarantee that the entire region should remain Christian was respected. In the honor of the girl and her courageous act, the region was named Mariovo.

Mariovo is today almost completely deserted. Among the stones that make company to the large and fertile plains, among the many markings and directions that point the way to a temple of God or a shrine that once existed here, from time to time a fireplace can be observed, a house once in a while, the home to the most persistent who, besides everything, could not resist the extraordinary attractiveness of this picturesque region.

And amid these fairly devastated houses from which the curious and a bit puzzled eyes of the shepherds greet you, in one of the old villages, Manastirec, a real surprise awaits you. Among the fragile buildings and unmentioned yards, almost in the center of the village, there is the opulent basilica, the monastery church St. Nikola, an elegant beauty that reminds of the past times of wealth and well-being.

Surrounded by the mountains of Selechka, Nidze, Kozjak, and Babuna, the region of Mariovo is one of the most interesting and most inaccessible areas in Macedonia. Its morphological features include barren and dry hills, deep stone river gorges, but also magnificent woodland areas in the higher regions of the mountains of Nidze, Kozjak, and Babuna.



In Vitolishta, Dunje, Staravina, and other villages, the ambience depicts the scenes and pictures of another, ancient time. Wild and cruel, yet quite picturesque, Mariovo land awakens interesting, pleasant, and mystic feelings in all who visit it.

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