



Legends of places where we grew up
Hungarian, Italian and Spanish legends



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The Legend of the Mythical Stag

The wife of Ménró(Nimród), king of Szittyaland, Enéh had 2 children: Hunor and Magor (or Magyar, which means Hungarian). According to the legend the 2 boys went hunting with 50-50 other valiant hunters. While hunting they suddenly saw a stag. They chased it for several days, but they couldn't catch it. They followed the animal to Dúl's and Belar's land, but there it disappeared forever. The hunters stole Belar's daughters and Hunor and Magyar got the most beautiful girls: Dúl's daughters. Hunor's children became the Huns' and Magyars' children, who became the Magyars(Hungarians),and then they populated Szitty'a's land.



The Legend of Saint Gellért

He was born in Italia, in Velence. When he was 5 years old, he got ill seriously, as a result his parents sent him a monastery. After his recovery he stayed there as a monk. At age of 15, his father died and shortly he lost also his mother. A few years later he gave up his plan to go to the Holy Land, because he was persuaded to go to Hungary to visit King István. After arriving he celebrated a high mass onto the respect of Szüz Mária (Virgin Mary) ascension. In the end of this mass according to the legend - in his soul he saw himself dead among the rocks. He understood the Lord's message that he had to stay here to die as a martyr. After the mass King István entrusted Gellért with teaching his son. He had been living for long years as a hermit in Bakonybél. As the legend says, diseased animals looked up him and he healed them in a miraculous way.

In 1028 King István appointed Gellért a bishop.

After King István's death bishop Gellért, the defender of the christian values, faced against with the pagan lords. He refused to crown Aba Sámuel and predicted his death. The rebellion of pagans was getting stronger, they killed the clerics, and destroyed the churches.

Bishop Gellért saw in his dream that all of them would die, except bishop Beneta. Later it came true.

On 24 Sept 1046 the bishop arriving to the pagans' reception was attacked. They put him in a cart and pushed him down of the mountain of Kelenföld. Inasmuch as he was still breathing, they speared him at his chest and beat his head with a stone.

The water of Danube couldn't wash his blood down even under 7 years, that's why the stones were pulled up and took over to Csanád on shrine of bishop Gellért. At his grave there happened wonderful events and unusual recoveries. The mountain of Kelenföld has kept the name of bishop Gellért since then.



Gellért's figure in the Hungarian-Anjou Legend Collection

The Legend of Saint Margit

In the spring of 1241 the Tatars began to come to Hungary. The Mongol groups attacked the country from three sides. King Béla IV made a resolution that if God led his people back into the country, he would give Him his only daughter, Margit (Margaret) and bring her up to become a nun. So the ten-year-old Margaret was sent to the monastery of Nyulak szigete (Island of rabbits). Later the island was named Margit-sziget (Margaret-island) as a tribute to her.

As the king's daughter was growing, she gradually became devoid of negative human characteristics like vanity, and her life was all about the teachings of church. She refused to marry the greatest aspirants. Princess Margaret lived a very holy life: she did service to her sisters, she was working hard all day, she only ate worthless food, she dressed in a scruffy manner, she tortured herself with a whip and stood every case of mortification. She turned down every offer which could make her life easier.

Her blessed life was accompanied by unusual happenings. It happened once that that one of the nuns dropped the pot into the fire while cooking, and the arriving Margaret held it with her bare hands, but neither her hands, nor her clothes got burnt.

As a result of not bothering about making herself sick and of being short of food and sleep, she died early at the age of twenty nine. She foresaw her death, and when she was dying, her face and her eyes were gleaming, as if they were covered with gold.



Unknown hungarian artist's illustration from the 16th century

The Legend of Gül Baba

Gül Baba's tomb can be seen on the Hill of Roses in Buda. (He died in 1541 in Buda.) He was an Ottoman Bektashi dervish poet and companion of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent who took part in a number of campaigns in Europe. Zelki dervis, it was his original name, roamed about the Turkish land, the land of the Muslim religion 24 times. During his long pilgrimage he always slept in the open air, he liked trees, flowers, he washed in crystal-clear rivulets and sources, he extremely loved roses, so he was called Gül Baba, which means Father of Roses. He is said to have introduced the flower to Hungary. This is likely a misunderstanding, because it might refer to his deep mystical knowledge of Allah. Different kinds of roses, wild and domesticated had already been in Hungary by the time of the Ottoman invasion.

According to a legend he was staying in Kandahar when he felt his death coming. He washed again according to the Muslim formalities, said his prayers, then reflected.

He thought of his long-long wanderings. He remembered the countries, towns and villages he had known, and had walked over. He remembered Hungary where he had had the nicest pilgrimage. He recalled the castle of Buda, the Danube, the beautiful towers of the city, He sighed and his eyes filled with tears. "Oh, Allah, work a miracle! Let me see the wonderful castle of Buda once again!"

The miracle was done. The dying Gül Baba started from Kandahar and within two hours arrived at Buda. He threw a glance over the beautiful castle, collapsed and died.

He was buried on a hill (later it was named the Hill of Roses after Gül Baba) near Buda castle and the Danube.



Tiles inside Gül Baba's tomb

Gül Baba's tomb on the Hill of Roses



The Legend of the Mulberry Tree of the Castle of Buda

The Turkish power was decreasing in Hungary, but the Turks could still keep the beautiful castle of Buda. In 1868 an enormous Christian army besieged the fortress, launched an attack against the Turks. The leader of the first troop was the Hungarian sub-lieutenant, Ramocsay Ede.

The little troop attacked the Fehérvári gate of the Castle, they could enter and set up the Hungarian flag and reached the St. George Square.

Go ahead, go on! - shouted Ramocsay Ede while his soldiers remained behind. He ran ahead alone and fought alone with the enemy. Suddenly he was surrounded by the Turks, his sword was hit from his hand, a rope was tightened around his neck, and he was hanged up on the lowest branch of a mulberry tree. The Turks didn't notice that the branch had bent and Ramocsay's feet could touch the ground. When his soldiers arrived and noticed what had happened, they attacked again, made the Turks retreat, and unbound Ramocsay.

So his life was saved by his soldiers but he always said: " My life was saved by the Mulberry tree of Buda.

He appreciated the Mulberry tree very much, surrounded it with a fence, prayed under it every day until his death.

The tree lived for 105 years.



The siren Parthenope

The origins of the city of Naples, *maritima urbs*, as Tito Livio referred to it, are firmly rooted in the myth of the Siren Parthenope.

The story begins on the island of Megaride where the original nucleus of the city called Parthenope originated. According to ancient sources, this small settlement lay near the tomb of the young siren who had lived in the seas around the Sorrento peninsula. Legend has it that Parthenope, devastated at her inability to make Ulysses fall in love with her on his way back from Troy, was washed up on Megaride. It was only later that the first Greeks settled there. Some experts say that these were sailors from Rhodes and others link them to the Greeks in Cumae. Later, during the Norman period, the Castel dell'Ovo fort was built.



A statue of Parthenope in Naples

Virgil the magician

Publio Virgilio Marone (70-19 B.C.), the great Latin poet, acquired legendary status during the Middle Ages when he became associated with mysticism and magic powers.

Virgil, a magician and benefactor of Naples, is said to have hidden an egg somewhere in the Castel dell'Ovo. This egg was put in a glass jar and then inside an iron box. The fate of the city was linked to the egg: if it ever got broken, disaster would strike.

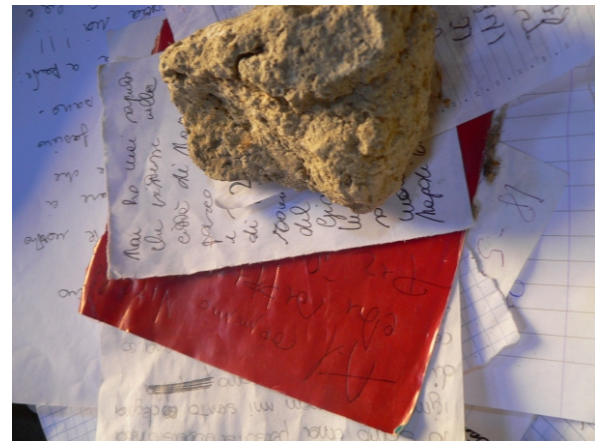
Virgil also had a remedy for safeguarding the city from volcanic eruptions. He built a statue of a man with bow and arrow poised ready to fire and aimed at the mouth of the volcano.

Another legend has it that the magician was able to carve out the Crypta Neapolitana, the long tunnel through the tuff in the Piedigrotta area, in the space of just one night.

The Neapolitan origins of the Virgil legend was linked to the fact that Virgil was supposed to be buried here according to tradition. His tomb, which was traditionally identified in the remains of a Roman Columbarium on *Via Puteolana*, was already attracting hosts of pilgrims in the Roman Imperial Age, and continued to be the basis and venue for local cults and ceremonies which gradually changed from Pagan to Christian.



Virgil's tomb in Naples



Messages to Virgil inside his tomb: even today locals turn to Virgil for help with their problems

The legend of the Castel dell'Ovo

Castel dell'Ovo stands on the small island of Megaride, where the Siren Parthenope is said to have been washed up, and is one of the oldest and most characteristic castles in Naples. Its name is linked to the legend of the magic egg which originated in the Middle Ages. This egg is capable of protecting the city and its people from disaster or danger. Virgil is supposed to have hidden it in some secret place in the castle, preserved in a glass jar placed inside a metal cage.

The Greeks landed on the island of Megaride in VIII century B.C. They found it such a beautiful and strategically-placed island that a settlement grew up against the backdrop of one of the most wonderful bays in the world. With the arrival of the Romans, the island became part of the villa belonging to the roman knight and patrician Lucio Licinio Lucullo, and was called Castrum Lucullanum. It is believed that its grounds extended from Santa Lucia right down to the island of Megaride. It was on the island itself that Lucullus had part of his rich and extravagant villa built, and the gardens covered the rest of the site. Lucullus was responsible for introducing fruit trees like cherry and peach to the region. He imported them from Cerasunto and Persia which is where their Neapolitan names derive from; "cerase" and "persiche". Sumptuous feasts were eaten in the shade of these trees and other vegetation, and even two thousand years later Italians still picture these banquets in their use of the adjective "Lucullian" meaning sumptuous. With the death of Lucullus and his son, the villa lost its importance until the Emperor Valentiniano III decided to transform it into a fort.

This ancient pleasure palace provided the backdrop to a sad event in 476 A.D. Inside the villa, Odoacre, king of the Eruli, deposed the last Roman Emperor in the West, Romolus Augustolus, and imprisoned him in the fort until his death. At the end of V. century a small community of Byzantine monks of the order of Saint Basil settled there. They built the Church of San Pietro. It was with Saint Patrizia, however, that the place assumed a real aura of holiness.

Legend has it that she was promised in marriage against her will and so fled Constantinople in a small boat. After a long and eventful journey she landed on the island of Megaride where the monks took her in. It appears that her blood continues to liquefy like that of San Gennaro.



The Cumaean Sibyl

The Cumaean Sibyl was the priestess presiding over the Apollonian oracle at Cumae, a Greek colony located near Naples. The word *sibyl* comes from the ancient Greek word *sibylla*, meaning prophetess. The Cumaean Sibyl prophesied by “singing the fates” and writing on oak leaves. These would be arranged inside the entrance of her cave but, if the wind blew and scattered them, she would not help to reassemble the leaves to form the original prophecy again. The Cumaean Sibyl became the most famous among the Romans, because she was near to Roma. The Sibyl was a guide to the underworld (Hades), its entry being at the nearby crater of Avernus. Aeneas employed her services before his descent to the lower world to visit his dead father Anchises, but she warned him that it was no light undertaking:

*Trojan, Anchises' son, the descent of Avernus is easy.
All night long, all day, the doors of Hades stand open.
But to retrace the path, to come up to the sweet air of heaven,
That is labour indeed. (Aeneid 6.126-129.)*



The cave of the Sybil

The legend of Lake Avernus

Lake Avernus was of major importance to the Romans, who considered it to be the entrance to Hades. It gained its name from the Greek word *αορνυος* meaning "birdless", referring to the belief that birds flying over the lake would drop dead from the poisonous fumes that it emitted. The name Avernus was often used by Roman writers as a synonym for the underworld. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas descends to the underworld through a cave near the lake. It is unclear whether the lake actually was as deadly as its reputation held it to be it certainly holds no fears for birds today but it is possible that volcanic activity could have produced deadly fumes.

Despite the alleged dangers of the lake, the Romans were happy to settle its shores, on which villas and vineyards were established. The lake's personification, the *deus Avernus*, was worshiped in lakeside temples, and a large bathhouse was built on the eastern shore of the lake. In 37 BC, the Roman general Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa converted the lake into a naval base named the *Portus Julius* after Julius Caesar. It was linked by a canal to a nearby lake and from there to the sea. The lake shore was also connected to the Greek colony of Cumae by an underground passage known as Cocceio's Cave (Grotta di Cocceio) which was 1 km long and wide enough to be used by chariots. This was the world's first major road tunnel; it remained usable until as recently as the 1940s.



Lake Avernus

The beginning of river Styx in a nearby cave



The moorish face

The legend says that during the Arab domination a prince cruel to Christians governed in "Medina Laquant". The prince adored his only and beautiful daughter Zahara. One night during a party, the princess who was fed up with the flattery of her lovers went out to the weapons courtyard to watch the sea. Suddenly, a voice sounded in the darkness. It was a young Christian who declared his love. She thought he was really brave as he dared to go to the castle and she warned him that he was in danger. She helped him to escape through a secret passage and she went back to the party more beautiful and shining than ever. When her father saw her so beautiful he decided to offer her as a wife to the Sultan of Damascus. The preparations for the wedding began and the princess was iller and iller. She was sometimes cheerful and sometimes very sad so, the wet-nurse decided to spy on her and discovered that she was meeting a young man who was called Ricardo de Onate. The father of the young man was a noble Christian, enemy to the Moorish prince. As the lovers knew that they would not be able to live their love, they decided to run away together. The wet-nurse discovered their secret and told the prince who, mad with anger, imprisoned him to be killed for being a spy. The princess became dumb and went pale, and her father moved, told her: "If tomorrow the land appears snowed I'll let you marry him, but if it isn't like that, he will die hanging from the highest tower in the castle. The princess could not sleep all over the night, hoping for a miracle. The next day the fields dawned snowed by the white flower of the almond tree, the young lady ran to tell his father who hadn't fulfilled his promise and had hanged Ricardo from the highest tower before sunrise. She ran towards her lover, hugged him and she threw herself towards the mountain of the castle. Her father, in despair, threw himself behind her and was shattered. Since then, the mountain range has the face of the evil prince slashed by the wind and condemned to see the snowed fields every year when the almond trees bloom ...



The giant Roldán and the Puig Campana

In ancient times lived a giant called Roldán. He was the lord and master of those solitary places he traveled freely. He had built a rough cabin for shelter when the weather required it. The powerful Roldán was unquestionably the king of the Puig Campana. When wild animals harass him enough to give him a couple of strides to get to safety. And just as easily reach the calm waters of the sea in the hot days of summer. Our hero was happy and carefree in this privileged corner. But despite everything, Roldán was not happy being a rather taciturn seemed almost sad. Wandered lonely wanderer in search of something that was missing in his life, looking for something that will explain their rationale. One day, while walking to the sea to have a swim, met a girl so beautiful as are all the heroes of legend. I was fiddling with the water and to perceive the presence of the intruder was returned quickly. His eyes, deep blue, he looked with curiosity but no fear. And with that gesture of eternal unconscious coquetry, offered him water in the bowl of his white hands. The couple laughed and laughed softly with a giant laugh, so powerful, it did shake the mountain. And laugh again joyful and happy as ever. In his laughter there was something beautiful, something like an accent of triumph and power. The giant had become a real human being! From this moment are no longer separated.

Roldán drove to his cottage, his great love, now it turned into a refuge for her pleasure. The two enjoyed a perfect happiness. Slept under the stars and find Roldán knew finest herbs and scented to serve as a bed for the couple. Bliss lasted a very short time. One day he returned to his cabin Roldán happy and confident, we went out to meet a stranger be a shadow rather, it appeared that something sinister and evil.

- Who are you? -he asked.

The shadow seems to have no voice heard and ice, which nevertheless guessed a depth of piety, said:

"Run if you want to find your companion alive since the day I die when their life ends. When the last ray of sun leaves your herd, will die. Roldán took fast to his cabin. The girl was actually dying, just as you prophesy that be wicked. Their grief and despair had no limits. Was stopped at the entrance and not daring to breathe for fear that the smallest movement could break the fragile thread that still connected to life. The colossus is irguió throughout his extraordinary stature and also threatens the fierce sun, indifferent to desperation, I walked into the sunset with the same brilliance as ever. Roldán was repeated again and again, the prophecy:

"When the sun sets, when the last ray disappears from the face of the earth, die ... die! And the sun was sinking more and more behind the mountain!

Crazed, blind with pain, went flying over running to the summit of the Puig Campana whose slope was hiding behind the star of the day. In a furious kick started a big piece that came through the air and was falling into the sea.

At that gap remained open so fantastically penetrating sunlight for a few more minutes. Few minutes of life for his beloved! The sun, then as a ruthless fugitive hid completely the ...death ... And those eyes closed for ever so beautiful!

With her arms continued to walk under the stars wandering less and less beautiful pale face that rested on his heart The output of the moon, marking a luminous trail in the sea, attracted his attention. Then he went over there like a somnambulist, who knows whether the mad hope that this light that the goddess of the night spilled on water could restore life to the blonde girl who seemed asleep.

The giant Roldán and the Puig Campana

With eyes fixed on the disc of silver went to the beach. Entered the water, always that way fluorescent, which allowed him to provide clarity over the beloved face. Our hero walked toward the sea has always held high the body until their march was stopped by the island newborn.

For a time, protected by a concavity of the island, he could still defend it. Then, completely overcome, deposited with the infinite care in the same place .. He did not want to return. How could I let so alone and so helpless? It hugged her body to follow its safeguard and protect for eternity

The Puig Campana, with its top broken, it is the most faithful crier of this beautiful and poignant romance. And I saw the same show that the island that even the stones are insensitive to the strength of a great love.

