

The original was written in Latin and has survived in several transcriptions. It was first published in 1882 by Vitaliano Brunelli according to a copy kept in Zadar, the latter being translated into Croatian by Ivan Božić and published in Dubrovnik in 1973. The State Archives in Dubrovnik houses the oldest transcription of Diversi's *Description*, which was transcribed, translated into Croatian and published in a bilingual edition by the historian Zdenka Janeković Römer in 2004.

Diversi and his work can also be traced in Russian historiography. The first to introduce this Italian humanist to Russian historians, though in fragments, was V. V. Makushev in the second half of the nineteenth century. As a secretary to the Russian consul, Makushev spent almost four years in Dubrovnik, where in the Franciscan library and the private collection of Medo Pucić he found the manuscripts of Diversi's *Description of Dubrovnik*, wrote about them and published excerpts from the original work. Thanks to Makushev, many Russian historians such as I. N. Golenischchev-Kutuzov, I. G. Vorobjova, M. M. Frejdenberg, N. N. Podoprigorova and others studied and cited Diversi's work.

N. P. Mananchikova, lecturer in historical sciences at the State University in Voronezh, focuses her scholarly attention on the history of Dubrovnik and has written a number of studies and books about its social and political development. By leaning on Božić's Croatian translation from 1973, she has translated Diversi's *Description* into flawless and refined Russian language. In the preface she elucidates Diversi's work as a valuable historical source, the translation itself being supplemented with most detailed interpretations and commentaries. Mananchikova is to be commended for taking upon herself the challenging task of translating this book into Russian and thus further contributing to the study of Dubrovnik's past.

Mihaela Vekarić

Niko Kapetanić, *Mlinovi na rijeci Ljutoju Konavlima* [The Mills on the Ljuta River in Konavle]. Gruda: Društvo prijatelja dubrovačke starine i Matica hrvatska Konavle, 2012. Pages 192.

Until recently, a traveller through Konavle had no chance of experiencing the watermills as one of the traditional landmarks of this region. Apart from the earlier renovated mill housing the *Konavoski dvori* restaurant, scarcely anything reminded of the once lively activity of the fifteen mills on the Ljuta River, and the whole infrastructure surrounding them. Today, the fact that the basic phase of their renovation has been completed (funded by the Society of Friends of Dubrovnik Antiquities and private investors) and with the publication of Niko Kapetanić's monograph, we have reason to believe that this unique heritage complex has been saved from dilapidation and that it has mainly managed to restore its original function. Hopefully, the mills will find their way to the all-year-round cultural tourism, and will appeal to travellers seeking authentic places, solitary paths, close contacts with the local inhabitants and their daily lives and activities, including the tasting of home baked bread made of flour ground in these old mills, that is, the tourism targeted at visitors who will take their time midst this tranquil retreat and will not be tempted by low-cost holiday destinations. That, however, is another story, hopefully, with a happy ending.

Niko Kapetanić's monograph *Mlinovi na rijeci Ljutoju Konavlima* (The Mills of the Ljuta River in Konavle) is a serious scientific work whose content will equally appeal to a broader readership. A mere glance at the book reveals that it is the fruit of the author's long-time interest, his 'field' research and his own evolution in understanding the complex water system and the technology of its operation. Medieval archival documents as well as those from the later periods provide fairly scanty and scattered evidence on this topic, which the author clearly collected as an outgrowth of his other studies of Konavle, bit by bit. The material includes photographs from private collections, records and oral accounts,

the type of sources disappearing before our very eyes. I would like to specifically underline the exemplary plans reconstructing various phases from the fifteenth century to the present, which offer firm guidance to a reader unfamiliar with engineering and the use of hydropower.

The book reconstructs the centuries-long tradition of the use of water power for grinding grain and some other materials (e.g. fine crushed stone) and for fulling. The study affords a detailed description of all the components of watermill (including the local terms for each component) and their function, with an insight into the role of watermills in the supply policy and resources management of Dubrovnik (from as early as the Statute of 1272). With the acquisition of Konavle in the fifteenth century, the Ragusan state inherited an established system of watermills. The exploitation of the Ljuta and its resources was enhanced over the centuries to be finally designed on nine levels, so that some mills were driven by high cascades and others by diverted canals (*jaže*) up to several hundred metres long. In that way the water power was fully optimised, complemented by elaborate engineering solutions in case of dry seasons.

Shortly after the acquisition of the mills on the Ljuta, the Dubrovnik Republic regulated their work on the basis of 'fair competition'. Like the mills located in the suburb of Dubrovnik, next to the city walls, the watermills of Konavle were also state owned, and during the Republic they were leased out in biddings. In fact, the lease-holders were usually businessmen who hired millers for the job or even sub-leased the facilities, while the contracts they made—as documented in the book—contained all essential elements of partnership, terms regulating the share of profit and losses, warrant terms and penalty agreement. Among the lease-holders there were members of the Ragusan nobility, but also local inhabitants of Ljuta. In the finances of the Dubrovnik Republic, the complexity of which we still know little about, the rents collected from the mills were among the relatively stable incomes, like, for example, the rents from communal houses, though not particularly high.

It was not until the nineteenth century, when the Austrian rule regulated the property relations, that the state transferred the mills to private ownership. Some of the mills operated until the middle of the twentieth century. Their general neglect may be accounted by the lack of economic justification for their operation, but the final blow came with the 'economic policy' of the socialistic regime, which in these traditional technologies saw 'backward' forms incompatible with the industrialisation that was relentlessly promised. Thanks to the agility and foresight of the then office for the protection of cultural monuments, the watermills were entered into the state register of the protected heritage in 1969, but remained virtually unprotected: the forces of nature further contributed to their decay—canals blocked with gravel, buildings collapsed and overgrown with vegetation. Devastation has also been at work over the years, a widespread practice of helping oneself to the carved stones—a 'traditional' local habit of stone gathering—has dramatically changed the condition of some mills into sad ruins. This could have been their end. Fortunately, a spark of enthusiasm initiated the salvation and preservation of the 'remaining remains', and the Society of Friends of Dubrovnik Antiquities helped not only restart the blades of the waterwheels, but the wheel of their fate as well. The book of Niko Kapetanić ought to be credited for providing the mills on the Ljuta with their 'collective biography', an exhaustive and interesting account of their centuries-old history.

Nella Lonza