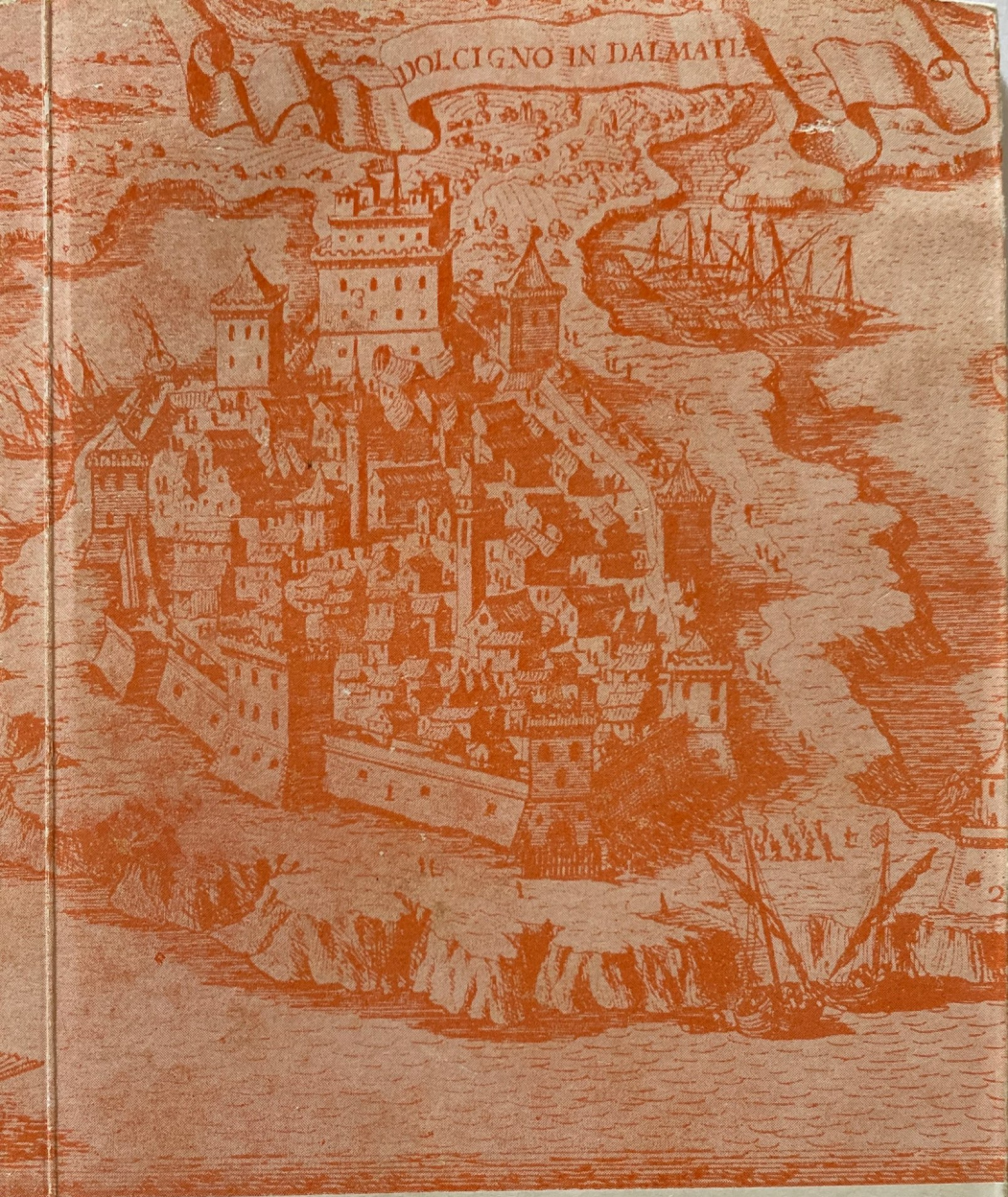


DOLCIGNO IN DALMATIA



U L C I N J



Fortress of Ulcinj on the  
coins of Ulcinj from the  
XVth century



U L C I N J

# MUSEUM OLCINIUM

Guides — 1

Pavle Mijović

# ULCINJ

Guide through its history and culture

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## COAST AND KLIMATE

Ulcinj<sup>1</sup> is situated between the parallels running a little north of 41° 59' and 41° 52', between the cape of Ancient Ulcinj in the north-west and the mouth of the Bojana river in the south-east. The southern branch of the Dinaric mountain system ends in Ulcinj and in its immediate surroundings in three ridges, to wit: Možura — Brivska Gora, Radeč — Bijela Gora and Mendre — Pinješ, separated from one another by depressions. Contrary to this Dinaric directions in which the mountains stretch, from the north-west, there begins the Field of Ulcinj in the south-eastern part of the region, comprised within the boundaries of the Littoral of Ulcinj. The seaside ridge in the south-east reaches the height up to 123 m above the sea level and the continental one up to 622 m, whereas the altitude of the plain varies from 1 to 10 m. In the same way as they are different as regards the altitude, the two parts of the Littoral of Ulcinj differ also from each other by their principal geographic characteristics. Ulcinj lies opposite the deepest and, at the same time, the oldest part of the Adriatic Sea having existed as early as in Miocene. The Littoral of Ulcinj, by its composition and its structure, consists of Upper Cretaceous and Eocene limestones, of Eocene and Oligocene flysch sediments, of Middle Miocene sands and limestones, of terrace conglomerates and of recent deposits. The folding of the ground occurred three times: after the Upper Cretaceous, after the Lower Oligocene and after the Middle Miocene. The depressions Valdanos — Pristan Milena and

4 Kruče — Field of Ulcinj are composed of impermeable rocks and separated from each other by low watersheds. By the action of erosion and accumulation were formed, in the Middle Miocene, in the place of the present Field of Ulcinj, bays with sands containing the rests of fossils and with conglomerates on the terraces in the Pliocene and the Pleistocene.

From the promontory in which the ridge Mendre — Pinješ ends, the coast stretches in the south-east to the mouth of the Bojana river. It sinks under the sea and is composed solely of sands. It was formed by the action of the sea current and of the waves. According to Philippon's classification it belongs to the type of thalassogene coasts and has entirely different properties from those of ridges and depressions in the Littoral of Ulcinj. The sea current, which moves along the north-eastern coast following the direction SE — NW, has brought volcanic pumice (liparite), deposited sand and built the beaches. The sedimentation near the coast has been also influenced by processes, due to the action of three small rivers in the Field of Ulcinj, cut into the flysch sediments at the expense of the shallow cove. The waves drive the grains towards the north and north-east giving the coast a Dinaric direction. The coast from the promontory of the ridge Mendre — Pinješ to the mouth of the Bojana river is 14.725 km long and in the air line 12.625 km. The north-eastern parts of the beach remained outside the reach of waves and there was formed, at a distance of 50 km from the sea, a dune stretching in the direction of Dinaric mountains, 2—3 m high, overgrown with bushes and shrubs.

Ulcinj has a maritime-subtropical climate. The average temperature of the year amounts to 16° 4; in January, however, it is 8.5° and in July 25.5° on an average. In autumn the temperature is higher than it is in spring (17.3° in October, 14.2° in April). In winter there are considerable differences between the continental regions and the lower maritime ones. The winds which blow most frequently are the north-east and east winds (in winter) and the east and north-west winds (in summer). Both in winter and in summer there

blow here also winds from opposite directions, but only with lesser frequencies (553:91). Both winter and summer winds originate from the difference of atmospheric pressures on the continent and over the sea level. In summer there blow short north-west and west wind »danik« (mistral) and east and north-east wind »noćnik«. Under the influence of the humid south wind Ulcinj receives 1290 mm of rainfall on an average in a year. The largest amount of precipitations falls in December (187 mm) and the least one in July (22 mm). The cloudiness shows also similar oscillations.

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Climatic conditions have created in Ulcinj mainly two seasons: summer — from the beginning of May to the end of September and winter — from the beginning of October to the end of April. In summer the air temperature is high, except when lowered by »danik« (day wind) and »noćnik« (night wind) and in winter it is the lowest after the winter solstice. From the beginning of October there begins to blow the south wind, which lasts sometimes from two to three weeks, when heavy rains begin to appear. The land gets cooler then and from it there begins to blow towards the sea the east wind which has the characteristics of a gale.

The sources and streams in the Littoral of Ulcinj do not abound in large quantities of water on account of permeable limestones, but the water in wells is to be found at 2—3 m below the surface of the ground. The water courses are insignificant. The most important streams are Čelinski, Ulcinjski and Valdanos and among the little rivers are Bratička and Brdela. The most characteristic hydrographic feature of the Field of Ulcinj is the Zoganjsko Lake, 2.5 km long and 0.5 km wide. It has been formed in the place of a former cove which was filled up by the streams from the land and filled in with sand by the sea current and the waves from the side of the coast. On account of an unequal distribution of rainfall in the course of the year, the amount of water in the sources shows important oscillations; during the summer heats many sources and streams dry up, and even the river Bratička. For the needs of water supplying for Ulcinj, there have been piped the waters from course below Možura, those of the river Bratička as well

6 as underground waters in the place where the Brdela passes from the porous limestone zone into the impermeable flysch zone. The coast of Ulcinj abounds in sulphureous sources which lie on the fault line separating the maritime ridge from the Adriatic depression. The sulphureous sources have not been impounded and they can be used but partly for curative purposes.

The sea is of the greatest economico-geographic importance for Ulcinj and its surroundings. It is appropriate for the transport, it abounds in various fauna and it is the principal agent of the touristic economy. In summer, the temperature of sea water is lower than that of air, the air above the sea is very pure, the long and sandy beach of Ulcinj is very convenient for bathing and the sea and its huge catalytic properties, the scents of subtropic and mountain plants are favourably stimulating the recreative capacity of the human organism. The salt content in front of the bay of Ulcinj amounts to 3.5 p. c. and when the sky is clear enormous quantities of sea water evaporate. The sun shines in the course of the day 7.2 hours on an average in a year — in July and August 11.6 resp. 11.0 hours. Owing to a great number of sunny days, of the rapid evaporation, of the gentle rise of the Field of Ulcinj (between 0.3 and 1 m) through which water could be conducted into the salt pans on an area of 8,412,000 sq m — there developed a salt industry. By letting the sea water from one salt pan into the other (every 25 days approximately, the quantity of salt reaches 25 p. c. Then the remaining water is pumped out and the crystallized salt is collected and piled into large heaps which are covered as a measure of protection against possible rains. When the summer is dry, the »harvest« of salt reaches up to 41,140 tons (1952).

Phytogeographical zones of Ulcinj — evergreen (up to the altitude of 300 m), mixed (up to 500 m) and submontaneous (above 500 m) correspond to the temperature zones, but they depend also on the composition and humidity of the soil and on the orientation of economy. In the first zone there prevail the olive-trees, the fig-trees, the orange-trees and the lemon-trees, in the second one the chestnut-trees

and fig-trees, the pomegranates and mulberry-trees, vine and cereals and in the third zone cereals, tobacco, pears, apples and plums. Ulcinj and its surroundings are particularly rich in olive-trees. They constitute the forest called Maslinada (Oliveria) on the sides of the Valdanos depression. The olive growing in Ulcinj is of a very old standing and it was particularly carried on in the course of the last three centuries. Ulcinj has very favourable conditions for hunting and fishing — in the flysch depression Medurječ — Šasko Lake there is a very dense hydrophilous vegetation, whereas the lakes Zoganjsko and Šasko become in winter, when the temperature is comparatively mild, the stations for the flocks of wild ducks, wild geese, snipes and other migratory birds. When in the Zoganjsko Lake water grows colder under the influence of winter winds, the »skakavice« (mulletts, zipoli) leave the lake for the sea and they are fished in a channel, full of primitive fishing appliances, and this is one of the attractions of the tourism of Ulcinj.



Fortress of Ulcinj, bird's-eye view, 1925



Ancient castle of Ulcinj

## PAST AND REMNANTS OF THE ANCIENT CASTLE

The territory on which the prehistoric Ulcinj has come into being belonged to Illyrians (Illyrioi in Greek, Illyrii in Latin), group of tribes of Indo-European origin having inhabited the present-day Yugoslav provinces from Istria to the Bojana river and farther to the south to Epirus in Albania and in Greece. From the mature bronze age there has been discovered accidentally the axe of the so-called Skadar (Scutarine) type and scientific research work and excavations conducted by the Archaeological Institute of Belgrade<sup>2</sup> have shown that the past of Ulcinj can be traced back to the time of foundation of the Greek colonies on the Adriatic. Plinius already wrote that Ulcinj had been called first *Colchinium* (Naturalis hist. III, 144) and from this it has been deduced



View from the east

that it was a colony of Colchidians and that it was known to Argonauts, too. The Georgian scientists deduce the name *Colchinium* of *Colchion* — *Colchis* — *Qulha* (Urtian) — *Qilhi* (Assyrian), but there are also opinions that the name Ulcinj draws its origin from the Indo-European stem *\*ulkas* — wolf which ought to corroborate that this Illyrian town, like others, too, has got its name by the animal which was its totem. Whereas the solution of the problem of the name *Olcinium* has to be left to further studies, a find in the fortress of Ulcinj speaks incontestably who were the people having built it. On a sacrificial altar has been preserved the inscription: ΤΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΛΑΤΟΜΟΝ ΑΡΤΕΜΙ (ΔΙ) ΤΙ ΕΛΑΦΑΒΟΛΟΙ — «Community of stonemasons (erects) to Artemis Elaphavolis». The conclusion can be drawn from this that the Cyclopean bulwarks had been built by Greek masons, in all probability from Epirus, where Artemis, goddess of deer hunt, was most honoured. Epirus is a

10 region bordering on Illyria, and the relations between the Illyrian kings with those Aeacidian (*Aeacides* — descendant of the mythological king *Aeacus* in the island *Aegina*) were corroborated also by other sources.

The so far obtained results of archaeological excavations confirm the fact that *Ulcinj* had its acropolis on the highest plateau of the Ancient castle, encircled by the ramparts of Cyclopean blocks of local stone, both on the outer and on the inner side. Numerous finds of fragments of large vessels made of baked clay — amphorae, pythoses, hydriae — and particularly fragments of small pottery with ornaments painted in black or red colour and with reliefs — show that the town maintained a lively connection with Greece. It developed gradually as an emporium where the trading was done with the products of a highly developed antique civilization and with the semi-raw materials and merchandise produced by the Illyrians. It is certain that the Illyrians held *Ulcinj* at the time of decline of the Macedonian state and at the beginning of Roman conquest of our Adriatic coast. The past of *Ulcinj*, however, is better known since Illyrian tribes formed an alliance and later also their own state with a view to offering resistance to the Roman conquerors. At that time, from the political scene had already disappeared the *Labeates* — a tribe living round the *Labeatic Lake* (*Lake of Skadar*) to which belonged also the original inhabitants of *Ulcinj*. The Roman authors designated smaller groups of tribes by their respective seats. Thus, *Titus Livius* (45, 26, 13, ed. J. Theophilus), enumerating the tribes which, after the Roman occupation were exempted of taxes, mentions also the inhabitants of *Ulcinj* (*Olciniates*), and *Pliny* (l. c.) includes among the *oppida civium Romanorum* — towns with special privileges — also *Olcinium*. *Ulcinj achieved the greatest progress during the time of the free Illyrian state.*

When the Romans defeated the Illyrian queen *Teuta* from 229 to 228, from Illyria was taken *Lješ* (*Lissos*) and in 220 *Hvar* (*Pharos*) in the north. Until the IIIrd Macedonian war in 167, the Illyrian state was confined chiefly to the territory of the present-day Montenegro and *Ulcinj* was situated in its centre. But after the victory gained over the Macedo-

nians in the battle near *Pidna*, the praetor *Lucius Anicius* announced to the Illyrian leaders who had gathered in the capital of Illyrians *Skadar* (*Scodra*) the decision of the Roman Senate on the abolishment of the Illyrian Kingdom. Then the country was divided into three provinces, one of which — the maritime province — comprised also *Rhizonites* (after *Risan*), *Agravotnites* (after *Agruvium* — *Kotor*) and *Olciniates*. 11

Though the slave-owners order had been introduced, under the Romans *Ulcinj* experienced, like other towns in the period of the Empire, further economic and cultural progress. The archaeological strata of that time in *Ulcinj* are still unexplored. But it is certain that the old Illyrian population of *Ulcinj* was rapidly romanized. The Romans constructed the roads through Illyria and a branch of the Adriatic road from *Epidaurum* to *Dyrrachium* led over *Olcinium*.

Through *Diocletian's* administrative division *Olcinium* found itself in *Prevalitana*, a province of the East Roman Empire. With the victory of Christian religion, the pagan cults disappeared in *Ulcinj* in the IVth century, and the *Prevalitanian church*, with the seat in *Skadar* (*Scodra*) propagated the Christianity among the romanized Illyrians until the destruction of *Doclea* in 602. According to the discoveries of fragments of a church building from *Justinians* time, it seems that *Ulcinj* was one of the towns which were restored and re-fortified by this Byzantine emperor. The administration of the renovated *Dioclean church* went to *Bar* and *Ulcinj* got the bishopric which remained all the time subordinated to the archbishopric of *Doclea-Bar*. The so far known written and archaeological sources can tell only a few things about *Ulcinj* and Montenegro in general from the VIIth and VIIIth centuries. In the title of the bishop of *Bar Zacharias* (743) it is said that he is also head of the church *Liciniatensi*<sup>3</sup> and *Constantin Porphyrogenitus* mentions the town named *Helcynio* (de adm. imp. c. 30). In papal bulls to the archbishops of *Bar*, *Ulcinj* is called now *Ulcini* (1076), *Ulcignum*, now *Dulcinium* (1089), *Dulcignum* (1149), now again *Licini* (1102), which will vary in later centuries, too: *ЛЪЦИНЪ* (1216) and *ОЦИНЪ* in Serbian texts;

12 Dulcigno — in Venetian dialect. A little church excavated at the lower plateau of the Ancient castle, built in the beginning of the IXth century with the rests of pre-Romance interlaced ornaments, testifies that Ulcinj, simultaneously with other maritime towns, was seized by the wave of Slav migrations, the second of which settled the Zetans (Dukljans) in a permanent way in this town. Probably at the same time as the Slavs, there moved to Ulcinj from its hinterland also the Albanians (*Albanoi* in Greek). In the course of a long life in common of the Roman colonists, romanized Illyrian inhabitants of seaside towns and Slav immigrants, the Albanian language, such as is spoken by the Albanians of Ulcinj<sup>4</sup>, like, after all, also the present-day speech of the whole North Albania, underwent a powerful influence and took over many borrowings, but it became neither romani-



Ancient castle, illyrian rempart

zed nor slaviced. Since the Slavs, on the occasion of their first migrations in the Vth, VIth and VIIth centuries, when they constituted the majority of the population from Boka Kotorska to Epirus, they left a huge number of their toponyms, on the territory where Ulcinj came into being, there prevails the Slav toponymy. The Albanians are mentioned as rebels against the Byzantine authority for the first time in the XIth century, in the surroundings of Drač, incited probably by the already revolted Zetans in the north, in the surroundings of Bar, Ulcinj and Skadar. On the basis of the data from the Genealogy of Bar, principal local written historical source of the XIIth century, in which is mentioned one of the Doclean kings with the Albanian name, Kočopar (páre, the first) who ruled about 1101—1102, it can be presumed that the Albanians in the Doclean state were, from all points of view, on an equal footing with the Zetans.

Archaeological research works at Ulcinj and in its surroundings show that at the time of the king of Zeta Vladimir, who had his capital in Krajina (near Ulcinj), but also later, the cults of saints spread to an equal extent both among the Zetans and the Albanians of Ulcinj. The story about how the Macedonian emperor Samuel attacked the king of Zeta Vladimir, how he besieged in vain the strongly fortified Ulcinj, how he enticed fraudulently the king and took him captive on the hill Oblik (between Ulcinj and Skadar), the idyllic narrative of the love between the emperor's daughter and the young prisoner, of his tragic end at Prespa, capital of Samuel's nephew Vladislav and of the lonely life she led after her husband's death and of the building of the monastery of the Blessed Virgin of Krajina to which she transferred his relics — is a real pearl of the ancient literature of Zetans, though it has been preserved in the Latin translation. In the mature Middle ages, Ulcinj, like Skadar, Budva and Kotor, made efforts to preserve its municipal autonomy, acquired long ago. When it had been conquered, about 1183, by the great župan Stefan Nemanja it became one of the most important commercial maritime centres of the Serbian state. In this period, too, like in that of the Doclean state, it had a mixed, Slav and Albanian character,



Museum Olcinium, Hellenistic ara with the dedication to the goddess Artemis-Elaphavolis

though there lived in the town many colonies of romanized Illyrians, Greeks and Levantines. Although it had not been a permanent capital, the rulers of Zeta and co-rulers of Primorje (maritime countries) had frequently their residence in it. The son of the king of Zeta, Vukan, the grandson of Nemanja, Đorđe, as »princeps Diocliae«, (held court at Ulcinj in 1252. The sister of the queen Helen of Anjou, Mary (widow of the Anselm de Chaour) lived here since 1281 as »domina Ulcini«. Her tomb was, until 1571, in the floor in front of the altar of the Blessed Virgin or Marko's church. Helen of Anjou, king Uroš's I wife, lived as a widow in Ulcinj. She built, with her sister Mary, in the town the Franciscan monastery in 1288. After the emperor Dušan's death, his widow, too, also Helen by the name, »imperatrix Slavoniae« governed this town, which, as it seems, served as a peaceful refuge of former rulers and their widows. In it, as in his capital, died »the master of the entire Zeta and Primorje«, Đurađ Stracimirović Balšić (1385—1403). His tomb with the Latin inscription was to be found in front of the portal of a church from the XIIIth century, the excavated



Ancient castle of Ulcinj, plan: 1 — rampart of the Illyrian Olcinium, 2 — citadel, 3 — Balšić Tower, 4 — Renaissance church transformed into a mosque, adapted for the Museum collection, 5 — foundations of churches from the IXth and the XIIIth centuries, 6 — mediaeval tower and part of the rampart, 7 — Turkish powder magazine on the foundations of a mediaeval church, 8 — entrance to town from the coast

- 16 foundations of which are to be seen on the lower plateau of the town.

From the XIIIth century on there are mentioned in Ulcinj many churches, among which the principal was the Blessed Virgin's Church (Sancta Maria mater ecclesiae), further the church of St John of Ulcinj (1290), the church of St Dominic and Sigurat (1394), the church of St Michael pod Gradom (extra muros, 1406) and St Peter's church (San Piero della rede, 1423). Archaeological excavations, carried out in Ulcinj, discovered the fragments of these cult buildings in ruins. By their rests it can be seen that they were nicely built with rectangular parallelpipeds of polished stone in rows, with the doors with profiled pilasters and doorposts, with rosettes and friezes of arcades or sculptures on the façade. The houses and palaces built by the regents, noblemen, rectors, captains and rich merchants did not lag behind them as regards the elaborateness. By the decorative elements of these buildings, which were discovered in the Ancient castle, one can see that Ulcinj, in parallel with Bar, Kotor and Dubrovnik, had gone in its architecture through the Romance, Gothic and Renaissance epochs. For the Romanic buildings, its inhabitants, renowned also as excellent architects, used wide archivolts, doorjambs and window posts of stone blocks from the old Cyclopean ramp-



Museum Olcinium,  
fragments of Hellenistic pottery

part which was being constantly demolished but never restored in the same building technique. For Gothic and Renaissance portals and windows, stone was brought most frequently from the quarries of Korčula and Brač, but very famous was also the red stone excavated in the local quarries under the slopes of the Rumija mountain. Nowadays there still can be seen on old houses of the town whole walls or parts of houses, built in the Middle ages, how they testify, by the beauty of their proportions and their workmanship, a culture of habitation, to tell the truth modest, but refined, of its citizens.

Economic and cultural development of the town was interrupted by wars and invasions of conquerors which were coming in waves since the large masses of oriental armies had been set into motion over the Balkan Peninsula toward the Central and South-West Europe. In a dash, as quick as a lightning, on their swift horses, there arrived, in 1242, from the distant regions of the Central Asia, also a Mongol horde to the very ramparts of Ulcinj. After an unsuccessful siege, the Mongols left Ulcinj in peace, but for that reason they razed to the ground the neighbouring town Svač, a bishop's see, and killed its inhabitants. Svač rose another time from the ashes in the XIVth century, but it was de-



Museum Olcinium, antique gem

18 stroyed for ever by a second invasion, Turkish, in the XVth century.

When the Turkish armies reached Skadar, towards the end of the XIVth century, for the fortress of Ulcinj began an almost two centuries long state of siege and of war. In the struggle against the Turks, the master of Zeta, Đurađ Stracimirović Balšić asked for help on every side and in 1391 he appealed also to the pope Boniface IX and even promised Ulcinj and all the towns on the Littoral of Zeta to him if there would be nobody to inherit them from him of his own family. The sultan Bajazet, however, captured Đurđe and dispossessed him of Skadar, Drivost and the harbour St Sergius on the Bojana river, leaving him Ulcinj only. Đurađ applied also to the Republic of Venice for help and was appointed member of the Great council, but all his plans aiming at the liberation of the regions in the river basin of Bojana were ended by its death. It was only after the intervention of the great vojvode of Bosnia, Sandalj Hrančić Kosača, that the Republic handed over Ulcinj to the son of Đurđe, Balša III in 1412. But Balša's death (in Belgrade 1421) gave again rise to the struggle between Venice and the heir of Balšić's region, the despote Stefan Lazarević. In 1423, the inhabitants of Ulcinj, in common with the inhabitants of Paštrovići and Lješ, were put under the protection of Venice and since that time they remained under its



Museum Olcinium, fragment of an antique vessel

power up to 1571 when Ulcinj fell definitively into Turkish hands.

At the time of Nemanjić and Balšić, Ulcinj, on a high stone rock, thrusting into the sea and entirely built of stone, looked like a stranded ship. From all the sides visible Zetan-Byzantine domes of churches balanced the middle ridge with powerful towers on the ramparts which encircled the town from all sides. Often destroyed in the wars, the walls of the fortress were immediately repaired as soon as there was peace or a rest between the battles. They functioned extraordinarily well and at the same time they completed very harmoniously the natural protection of Ulcinj. Their circumference was not very much enlarged, for the narrow area of the ridge did not allow to do it, but in dependence on the needs of fortification they were made thicker on the most delicate parts — on the lower plateau towards the sea and high up on the approach from the land. On the upper highest plateau there rose the citadel with a mighty donjon tower. It has been preserved up to the present day and dominates not only over the town but also over the entire surroundings. It is attributed by the tradition to the last Bašićs, which can be proved also by historical data and the technique of building from the first quarter of the XVth century. One of its walls lies, however, on the hewn rock which served as the rampart of the antique Ulcinium. On



Museum Olcinium, early Christian plaster



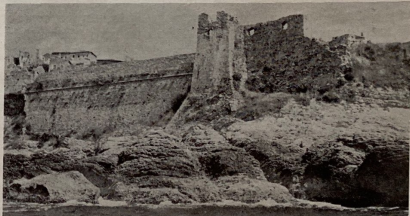
Museum Olcinium, fragment of the ciborium, beginning of the IXth century

that part of the citadel next to the upper gate of the fortress may be seen, in the excavated foundations, from their inner side, all the stages of fortification on the same profile — below on the rock the antique layers and above them, gradually Byzantine, Serbian, Venetian and Turkish layers of the wall. On other parts of the fortress such superposed layers are less conspicuous, but the prehistorical stages of the development of the fortress were predestined from the beginning by the same spatial frames.

On some coins of Ulcinj — called folars<sup>5</sup> — is represented on the obverse a fortress with three towers — two smaller ones and the third one, great, in the middle with the fortress gate in which a man stands with spread legs (in one emission) or a tree (in the other) and with the inscription CIVITAS DULCIGNI. On the reverse is represented a lamb, emblem of the town, or the Blessed Virgin, its protectress. That the lamb is the emblem of the fortress of Ulcinj is being proved also by a gold ring with the representation of the lamb, discovered in a tomb, in the floor of the church on the lower plateau of the fortress, where Đurađ Stracimirović Balšić had been buried.

The fortress of Ulcinj was quoted in the ancient itineraries in the most precise way on the Ibrizi's geographical map from the middle of the XIIth century. Since that time,

by its situation and the importance of its fortifications, it attracted the attention of topographers, particularly from the time of Venetian-Zetan and Venetian-Turkish struggles for the Littoral of Zeta. With exact data, though presented schematically rather than geophysically, the fortress of Ulcinj appears in *Camutio's atlas Isole famose, forterezze e terre maritime* from 1571, precisely from a time in which Ulcinj changed its master, and later in *P. Coronelli's album Città, fortezze ed altri luoghi principali dell'Albania, Epiro e Livadia* (1716). The main characteristic of the fortress of Ulcinj on these graphic representations is its situation on a promontory between two coves, elongated like the river bed in the south-east and as a breach into the land in the north-west. The urban agglomeration descends stepwise towards the sea and the houses look like as they were on the palm of the hand to someone who approaches the town by ship. The most dominant feature of its outline still remains the great Balšić tower on the highest plateau of the town. Three narrow streets of irregular direction cut the town between the upper and the lower town gates. They are, in their turn, cut transversally by lesser lanes, forming the insulae with groups of houses — in the Middle ages with



Fortress of Ulcinj, part of the mediaeval rampart with tower



Museum Olcinium, fragment of the decorative doorframe, XIIIth century

the main frontage turned toward the street and in Turkish period already with high walls which encircle the court yard. The old town of Ulcinj is a real treasury of material culture and it is of an exceptional importance for the study of the urban mediterranean civilization of the Montenegrine Littoral.

The Venetians set on Ulcinj the seal of their fortification and urban culture. They first restored the dilapidated city walls and particularly the entrance gates. In the course of their hundred and fifty years long rule over Ulcinj, they changed it to a considerable extent. The interior rampart which separates the core of the citadel from the rest of the area on the upper plateau of the fortress has been repaired several times by them, like, besides, all the ramparts and the towers of the fortress. From these days, there remained, until our time, on the remaining interior rampart, written by means of red bricks the name Johanni Bolani who, as the rector and captain of Ulcinj, had restored it towards the middle of the XVth century. In other places of the town, too, there were found the inscriptions with the names of rectors and captains who were sent by the Republic of Venice to govern, usually for a two years' term. In addition to these, the Venetian administrators of the town held also

the offices of governor and duke and before the town had fallen into the hands of Venetians, they had a consul in it. The domination of Venice in Ulcinj caused many destructions in the town, for the struggle between the »Mistress of the Sea« and the Turks took in the XVth and XVIth centuries almost incessantly place on the approaches of the southern Adriatic, for the former inheritance of Zeta.

As soon as the Turks conquered the destroyed and devastated town in 1571, they fortified it again and transformed it into a powerful bastion for the further struggle against the Republic of Venice, the former communes of the Zetan littoral which were under its protection and against the Montenegrins who organized the liberation movements in the interior of the country. The churches were turned into mosques and the houses repaired and adapted to the Oriental concepts of the housing conveniences. Under the Turkish rule Ulcinj acquired another town planning and architectural heritage. In addition to fortifications and sacral architecture, they constructed buildings for public use, for the most part baths and fountains, almost always with inscriptions in Arab, on stone plates. However, while the building activity in the town was chiefly reduced to adaptations, in the suburbs were being built very harmoniously



Ancient castle of Ulcinj, towers looking towards the sea



Ulcinj, Museum Olcinium, Renaissance church transformed into a mosque and Balašić Tower

conceived mosques, tastefully composed baths, monumental clock towers, turbehs and vast houses with richly carved wooden ceilings and furniture. One of the most interesting acquisitions of these times was the market of Ulcinj which lost, through the recent alterations, all its Oriental specific features and charms.

The population of Ulcinj was completely changed as early as in the XVIIth century. In order to make their slave life more bearable, many Orthodox and Catholic citizens and peasants from the surroundings adopted the Islam. The Al-

banians adapted themselves more quickly and more easily to the new life, though they were, too, deprived of any influence on the public life of the town. Although the Albanians had for the most part adopted the Islam, it was only in the XVIIIth century, when they began to settle in the town, that they acquired stronger positions in the navigation and in the commerce. But the settlement of 400 Arab corsairs and pirates in the XVIth century led Ulcinj to a specific form of rebellion — piracy in the Adriatic and in Otranto. Together with their fellow-countrymen, Tunisians, Algerians and Tripolitans, the immigrated pirates of Ulcinj developed, in the course of the XVIIIth centuries, a great piratic activity against the ships of the Republic of Venice and of those which belonged to the communes of Boka Kotorska and Dalmatia. From this time have been preserved the frescoes representing the ships in a house at the entrance of the town, and the graffiti on the arched ceiling of the arsenal from the XVIIIth century. Except in those cases when it made herself use of them for the diversions on the sea, Turkey was obliged to persecute of Ulcinj, for they hindered the maritime trade of the Turkish citizens, too. Though the peace treaties (of Karlovci 1699 and of Požarevac 1718) imposed on them the duty to destroy them,



Museum Olcinium, capitel, XIVth century

26 the Turks favoured them always, at the time of greater liberation movements of Montenegrins, as their »armed forces on the frontier«. Only after the fall of the Republic and the coming of Austrian and Russian fleets into the waters of the Adriatic and after the successes the Montenegrins achieved in the wars of liberation, the pirates of Ulcinj disappeared. Those who had remained in the town and their descendants devoted themselves to the peaceful maritime trade, but nowadays they have almost disappeared.

The strong fortress of Ulcinj, which had been unconquerable for many centuries, could not resist the last blow — the attack of the Montenegrin army in the great Serbian-Montenegrin war of liberation in 1876—1878. It was liberated on the 11th of January 1878, but it was handed over to Montenegro only after the decision of the Congress of Berlin on the 28th of November 1880. The Turks left then Ulcinj and the Albanian aborigines came to settle in the dilapidated town. The Montenegrin veterans who had taken part in the struggle for the liberation of Ulcinj, were given former Turkish proprietries and settled chiefly in the suburb called Meterizi.

In the Ancient castle there was opened a Museum in which are collected all the movable finds. The archaeologi-



Museum Olcinium,  
vessels of baked  
earth

27 cal collection is displayed in glass showcases and along the walls in the former Renaissance church, which was built in 1510 and transformed into a mosque in 1693. By its syncretistic appearance, it is an interesting monument in itself, showing the life in common of the West and of the East. The objects in this collection, from prehistoric, Hellenic, Hellenistic, Roman, Mediaeval and Turkish periods — have been excavated in the town itself. Displayed are the ceramic products of local production and imported ones — from Illyrian pottery, Greek red figured vases and lecyths, Hellenistic hydriae, craters, amphorae, Roman vessels »*Gnathia*« and *terra sigillata*, Mediaeval bljudas, bowls, pots, to the Venetian pitchers, plates and Turkish jugs, waterpots and other kitchen and table vessel. Particularly deserve the attention: an antique pedestal with the inscription in Greek, dedicated to the goddess Arthemis and an antique cameo. On the walls and along them are arranged in rows the fragments of a doorframe from the late antiquity, a Ionian capital, parts of the ciborium from a little church of 815—820, the doorframe from the XIIIth century, capitals and columns from the cathedral and other churches from the XIIIth to the XVth century, as well as the monuments with the inscriptions in Latin and in Arab.



Ulcinj, entrance to the  
Museum Olcinium

## ANCIENT ULCINJ

The Ancient Ulcinj is situated on a rock between Bar and Ulcinj, which split off from the mainland and now resembles a little island. In the Middle ages when this name originated (*Dulcigno Vecchio* in Venetian documents) they thought that the antique *Olcinium* had been submerged and as between this little island and the mainland one can see the submarine rocks stretching longitudinally, which look like walls, this was considered as being the place of the ancient Ulcinj. Archaeological researches, however, allowed to establish that on this rock there was in antiquity a little signal station (*specula*) and in the Middle ages a fortress, which served as an observation post. Of the fortress have been preserved rather voluminous walls on the northern side and a small church with a built-in crypt in front of the entrance. South-east of the Ancient Ulcinj is situated a glen, called *Valdanos (Val di noce)* which served the ships as a shelter during the tempests. North-west of the Ancient Ulcinj is a very nice sandy beach, called *Velji pijesak*. These places — very suitable for excursions — can be reached by motor barks.



Ulcinj, Turkish mosque

## MONASTERY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN OF KRAJINA

A modern asphalt road, leading from Ulcinj to Ostros, allows now to view from a saddle on Taraboš, a spur of the Rumija mountain, the Adriatic Sea, the Skadar Lake and all the country beyond the Bojana river up to Lješ (Lissus), as well as the entire plain of Zeta and Albania to the north-west of the lake. An old cultural monument, the ruins of the monastery of the Blessed Virgin of Krajina, known after its founder, Kosara, wife of the Duke of Zeta, Vladimir from the family of Vojislavljević, reminds of the first years of the state of Zeta. Vladimir was fraudulently caught by the Macedonian king Samuel and made prisoner. With him, as a captive, the king's daughter Kosara fell in love and, with the permission of her father, she became his wife. About these events has been preserved in the *Genealogy of Bar* a very beautiful mediaeval novel of the *chansons de geste* type. Kosara transferred the dead body of the Duke from Prespa, where her husband had been killed in 1016, to the monastery in Ostros.



Museum Olcinium, Balšić Tower, altar niche, XVIIth century

## SVAČ

This mediaeval fortress of Zeta near Ulcinj, on a clearing above the Šasko Lake, all in ruins, without any human habitation and without a single inhabitant — belongs to the most attractive »dead towns« of our Adriatic coast. In the part of the fortress, overhanging the lake, which abounds in fish, and thanks to its favourable situation in the fertile sunny field, on the Roman road *Olcinium* — *Scodra*, it was fortified in the times of the Illyrian rule over this region already. Not far from the fortress, in the village of Šas, there has been found an ovoid antique amphora which served for burying, and in the locality called Ceret near Zoganj the rests of a primitive Illyrian settlement. On the ridge above the lake there can be still seen the rests of a mediaeval wall and two gates — one for the entrance from the suburb and the other for the descent from the steep slope to the lake. On the coins minted in Svač in the XIVth century (see the sketch) is represented this fortress, all in Renaissance forms, with three storeys and colonnades and a donjon



Museum Olcinium, Turkish tombstone with the inscription in Arabic



Svač, cathedral church of St John, XIIth century

tower. The reproduced silhouette represents it as one of the most beautiful creations of the mediaeval architecture of fortifications.

Svač was mentioned for the first time in the bull of the pope Alexander III from 1067 as a bishop's see. About 1183 it was conquered by Stevan Nemanja and with other towns and fortresses of Zeta annexed to Raška (Rascia). It was destroyed by the Mongols in 1242 and restored at the end of the XIIIth century by the queen Helen. It was entirely devastated when the Turks had conquered it in 1571. According to a legend, recorded by Giustiniani (1533) and Bizzi (1610), Svač had as many churches as there are days in a year. But today, in the remaining ruins only foundations of eight churches can be distinguished, the two largest of which are the cathedral of St John the Baptist in the highest part of the town and the Franciscan church of St Mary on

- 32 a plateau in the suburb, which are still preserved up to the original height. The older one, cathedral, is built in the Romance style and the more recent one, Franciscan, in the Gothic style. Both are with one nave and divided in the middle by a low partition wall into two parts — for the choir and for the congregation. The first one, with the basis in rhomboidal form, has a semicircular apse built into the ground floor of the older Romance tower, whereas the second one, rectangular in shape, ends in a square in the east. Both were covered with a wooden ceiling. One smaller church in the suburb is double and with two apses, and the others are with one nave and with one semicircular apse each. All the churches of Svač were adorned by architectural decorations and frescoes. In some of them still can be discerned the colours on the walls.

On the cover: Ulcinj under the Turks (after 1571) on an engraving after Rosaccio's atlas

NOTES: <sup>1</sup> On geophysical characteristics of the Littoral of Ulcinj after B. Ž. Milojević, *Ulcinjско primorje*, Glas SANU, vol. 25, pp. 29—58; <sup>2</sup> Đ. Bošković, P. Mijović, M. Kovačević, (archaeological, historical and architectonic researches, in preparation for the print); Đ. Bošković, *Stratigraphie culturelle et ethnique d'une ancienne ville de l'Adriatique: Ulcinj*, Actes du 11e Congr. int. des Etudes du Sud-Est européen, vol., II, pp. 336—341; P. Mijović, *Vječno na Krajini* (A la frontière, depuis toujours), Miscellanea Virpazar—Bar—Ulcinj, Cetinje—Beograd 1974, 11—57; P. Mijović—M. Kovačević, *Gradovi i utvrđenja u Crnoj Gori* (Villes fortifiées et forteresses du Monténégro), Beograd—Ulcinj 1975, pp. 29—35, 42, 62, 131—133, 140—141, 143—146; <sup>3</sup> M. Sufflay, L. Thallóczy, K. Jireček, *Acta et diplomata res Albanie mediae aetatis illustrantia I*, Vindobonae 1913, pp. 57 ff; <sup>4</sup> K. Jireček, *Istorija Srba* (History of Serben) vol. I—II, Beograd 1922—1923, passim; *Istorija Crne Gore* (History of Montenegro), vol. I—II, Titograd 1967—1970; <sup>5</sup> S. Dimitrijević, in *Starinar* XV—XVI, 113—115.

Fortress Svač on the coins of Svač from the XVth century

