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# DEMIR BABA TEKE IN SBORYANOVO, BEFORE AND AFTER THE LIBERATION OF BULGARIA

BORIS ILIEV

(S u m m a r y)

The Teke (Islamic religious monument) of Demir Baba (The Iron Father) is situated in the Bulgarian region, called Ludogorie (Wild Forest), in the beautiful valley of Tchernodlanitza river. During the Medieval Age it probably was a Christian centre - monastery of St. George. After the Ottoman conquest it was turned to a sanctuary of the Alian sect. According to a legend presented, someone Kara Daut pasha had destroyed the monastery, but his cattle had become ill. So had Kara Daut pasha left the sacred place, which was abandoned for 100 years. Later, during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), here settled Hasan Pehlivan Baba — a dervish of the kisilbash sect. He founded his own teke, under the name Hasan Demir baba Pehlivan. After his death, probably in 1590, a beautiful stone tomb was made.

According to the historian Franz Babinger, the teke of Demir Baba was a centre of Shiites' doctrines, one of the most popular was that of sheik Bedridden Simavy — a scientist, humanitarian, reformist and revolutionary. The teke was in flowering in late 16<sup>th</sup> and in 17<sup>th</sup> century. It started to decline in late 18<sup>th</sup> century, as did the whole Ottoman Empire. It was connected with the anarchy in the time of kirjalias and ayahs, and with the Russian-Turkish wars in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is a legend, that sultan Mahmud II, who destroyed the Yanissary corps in 1826, had fired with artillery on the teke building. Then, during the war of 1828-1829, the teke was burnt, because it served as an asylum for some armoured units.

During the reign of sultan Abdul Azis, in 1861, the rights of the teke as a sacred place were restored and its property was returned. Some Ahmed ben Ali was appointed a steward, till the Bulgarian Liberation.

The Liberation of the Ludogorie region came after the truce between Russians and Turks on 19.02.1878. Together with the Turkish

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garrisons, Ahmed ben Ali left and did never return. Demir Baba teke was observed as an abandoned estate of refugees and its management was taken by the Razgrad district's permanent commission. Then the teke was assigned to the Razgrad Vakif commission (Gamiet). Later it was managed by the Razgrad Islamic common.

On 21.12.1906, with the decree Nr 462 of the Cabinet, Demir Baba teke was renamed Dimitrovo village, which name it kept for about half a century. During all that time it was visited both by Turks and by Bulgarians, who worshipped it as their sanctuary.

On 30.11.1951, with the decree Nr 107 of the Cabinet Dimitrovo was renamed teke Sboryanovo. On 30.11.1965 it was erased from the list of the settlements in Bulgaria.

In the early 80s in the region started researches and archaeological excavations of the inter-disciplinary programme "Getica".