

# Virginity Retrieval Ritual

Motopista is a mythical site in the skirts of Vitoša Mountain enclosed in the territory of the medieval city Sredec nowadays called Sofia. This area transformed from a public venue for racing and recreational activities in the 80s to an abandoned zone in the 90s, where instances of misconduct reportedly increased. Historical accounts indicate that it became a high-risk area, particularly perceived as dangerous and taboo.

Despite warnings, the area increasingly attracted dark tourism. Due to this development, we have a first record of an unusual local secretive practice.

In midsummer 2021 British travelers observed and documented unusual movement within the enclosure. A female figure was identified crawling toward the highest elevation, where she began to move rhythmically, contorting her body, throwing herself on the ground, emitting unintelligible sounds which were described as inhumane. One of the eyewitnesses with basic knowledge of the local lingo claimed to have clearly recognized a phrase sounding like: {furnishe blabla rakijo}. The female was also holding an reflective object, later determined to be a primitive, self-crafted hatchet typical of the region (not displayed for safety considerations). The whole procedure lasted for approximately half an hour. Then the female disappeared into the undergrowth.

Considering the photographical material of the observed practice, the eyewitness testimonies, the Byzantine, Osmanic and more recent historical sources and the solar altitude, researchers concluded that the female was performing a sacred primordial ritual for virginity retrieval. Further examination of the site revealed some other artifacts displayed here: two vessels with unidentified spirit fluid (remain sealed for safety reasons), pieces of cloth, burnt-down objects, organic tissue. The items were discovered on site. They were placed within an elliptical earth formation (recreated here) and are assumed to be a part of the ritual.