

for distribution throughout Servia. The customs, which were usually farmed out to Ragusans, were a source of considerable revenue to the Servian kings. Here, as in some other mining towns, was also a mint, where the *grossi di Brescova* were coined.¹ The Ragusan colony was numerous and influential, containing members of some of the noblest families.² Beyond Brskovo came Peč (Ipek in Turkish), an archiepiscopal, and later patriarchal, see (until 1766). Peč, too, enjoyed considerable traffic, and had a Ragusan colony in the fourteenth century.

The post from Venice to Constantinople went by this route in the sixteenth century. As soon as the ship arrived the despatches were handed to the messengers (they were always natives from two Montenegrin villages), who rode off with them *via* Plava, Peč, Novoselo, Priština, Samokov, and Philippopolis, reaching the Bosphorus in eighteen days.³

Throughout Servia, Bosnia, Hlum, the Zeta, and Bulgaria there were thus numerous Ragusan colonies. As a rule mining was the chief industry, and it was in the mining districts that the commercial settlements were to be found. In Roman times the mines of Illyria were well known; they were abandoned at the time of the barbarian inroads, and it was not until the twelfth and

¹ The Servian king imitated the Venetian ducats, but with a considerable amount of base metal, whence Dante's allusion to the punishment awaiting "quel di Rascia, che mal aggiustò il conio di Vinegia," *Paradiso*, xix. 140-141.

² Ragusan consul at Brskovo mentioned in 1280. Its importance ceased with the Turkish conquest.

³ Jireček, p. 71, Bolizza.