

# 4 ELEMENTS

## Legends

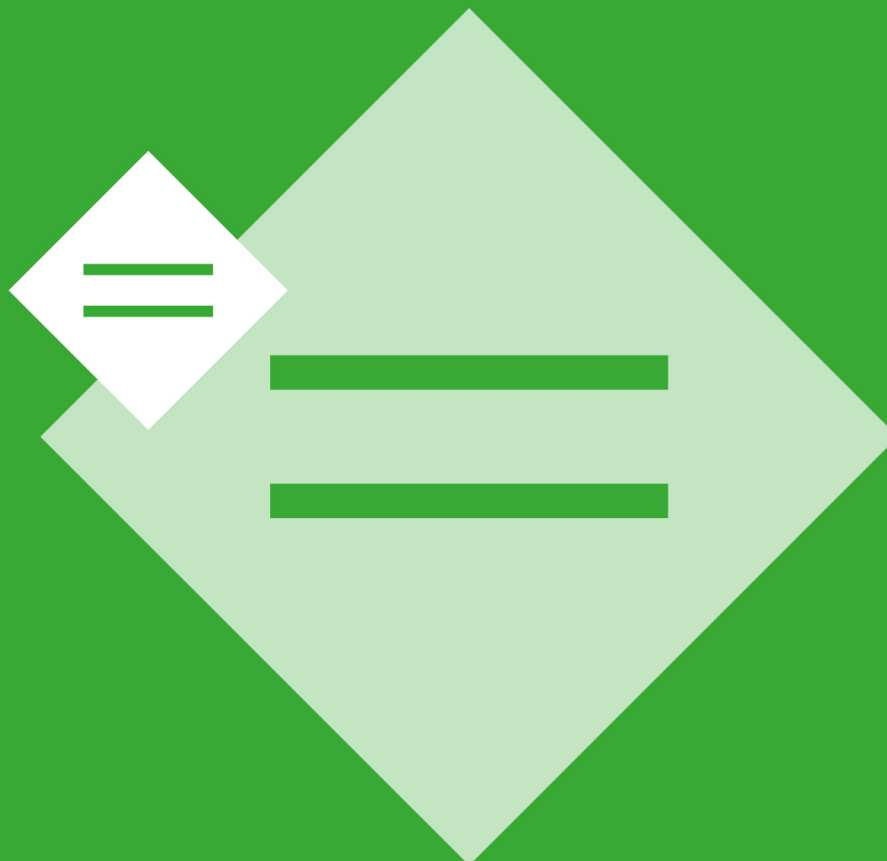
EARTH



# 4 ELEMENTS

## Legends

EARTH



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Improve the foreign language  
learning and intercultural  
competences of adults through e-  
learning

## The project

FOUR ELEMENTS is an initiative called to raise awareness and appreciation of the importance of culture and heritage as well as to train educators working with adult learners who want to improve their skills and competences necessary in today's EU labour market.

The project will take advantage of the potential of the common European cultural values associated to the 4 elements (earth, water, air and fire) to empower adults to improve their digital, foreign language and intercultural competences.

The partnership expects to develop and deliver innovative teaching materials presented in a culturally accessible E-book consisting of European legends and stories – giving visibility to the underlying

common EU values and principles, especially adapted to learners with special needs.

To achieved such objectives, partners will develop:

- An interactive map: a collection of legends and stories related to earth, water, air and fire, in different EU countries.
- Digital Books with national legends and stories related to the four elements.
- Methodological recommendations for adult educators.

To find more information, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

## **Digital books**

The nations of Europe all have rich cultures of myth and folklore which give the different regions their particular individual flavour. Here we have grouped traditional stories from Belgium, Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Slovenia and Spain according to the four elements: earth, air, wind and fire.

They are specially adapted to adult learners and can be used to develop language or ICT skills among your students while enhancing intercultural understanding.

Alongside the stories, this digital book contains interactive exercises and is in Easy Read format. All the material in it can be downloaded and printed. Teachers and trainers will find tips and suggestions for how to use it on the Recommendations section of this site.

## European partnership

Four Elements is an Erasmus+ KA204 project designed to highlight the importance of culture and heritage at European Union level. It aims to train educators working with adult learners to enable them to acquire the skills and competences, including linguistic and digital skills and competences, required in the European labour market.

The project is coordinated by : CVO EduKempen (Belgium). The partnership also includes DomSpain Consulting (Spain), The Central Library of Võru County (Estonia), Les Apprimeurs (France), Istituto dei Sordi di Torino (Italy), Slovenian Third Age University (Slovenia), MyArtist (Greece).

## Erasmus+ project



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# Black Kate

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Dutch

**Date of origin:** 16<sup>th</sup> century

**Origin of the legend:** Regional legend in the Kempen.

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

About 400 years ago, Bruno, a big strong man with red hair, and his wife Black Kate, a woman with long black hair, thin lips and a big pointy nose, were sitting in a poor small house. They were the leaders of a gang of outlaws who terrorized a region in the province of North Brabant called the Kempen. Their den was called Hellenend or Hell's End.

Suddenly there was a knocking on the door. Three long knocks and three short ones, that meant "a friend". Another gang member, Terus, entered the house. He sat down by the fireplace and told them that on the Ten Vorsel farm a baby had been born. Lord Ten Vorsel had sent all his servants out to tell everyone the good news, so the house was as good as unprotected. This was the perfect moment for Terus to rob the farm.

The farm was south of Bladel, in the middle of the forest. In this farm lived Dirk Ten Vorsel, his wife Elizabeth and their son Floris. The

farm was very quiet and as good as abandoned.

Bruno called for reinforcements and two other members of the gang came. They all stormed into the farm and stole many things. As Dirk tried to protect his family, he was hit hard with the infamous club of Bruno and Elizabeth was forced to see how the robbers took her baby out of his crib and left. The gang fled to the Abbey of Postel.

The next morning a garrison of soldiers, who had already been warned, went to the Abbey of Postel and arrested the four gang members. Bruno, Terus and the two other gang members were sentenced to death and were hanged the next morning, but there was no trace of Black Kate. Floris took the baby back to the Ten Vorsel farm. A short time later the family heard a loud screech and a dirty, ugly old woman with a black cape jumped out of the bushes: Black Kate! She screamed that the baby was her son and that he should have brought the gang luck, but they got continuous misery instead. She tried to attack the family but Floris stopped her assault by tackling her and she fell into a ditch. She stood up and ran into the woods.

Black Kate was found the next day and they imprisoned her. She was sentenced to death and they beheaded her the next morning. She couldn't have a cross on top of her grave, so instead they planted a shrub. Because the shrub never grew normally, it grew into a tree that everyone in Ten Vorsel and the surrounding area still knows as the Witch's Tree.

# Till Eulenspiegel and Lamme Goedzak

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Dutch

**Date of origin:** 15<sup>th</sup> century

**Origin of the legend:** The first known chapbook on Till Eulenspiegel was printed in c. 1510–1512 in Strasbourg.

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**Belgian author Charles De Coster gives Till Eulenspiegel a girlfriend, Nele, and a best friend, Lamme Goedzak in 1867. His novel follows many historic events in the Eighty Years' War.**

Till Eulenspiegel is a Flemish/Belgian folk hero who uses his intelligence and comedy to fight against the Spanish occupation during the 16th century. In this story Till Eulenspiegel also gets a new background. He is born in the Flemish village of Damme on the same day as Phillip II, the Spanish king who later will lead the Eighty Year's War against the Netherlands. Eulenspiegel's father is Claes, who is later burned at the stake by the Spanish occupiers, and his mother is named Soetkin. She later turns mad because of Claes' death. All these events motivate Eulenspiegel to fight against the Spanish oppressors. He is also given a girlfriend, Nele, and a gluttonous but jolly sidekick named Lamme Goedzak. Eulenspiegel is seen as the incarnation of

the spirit of Flanders, Lamme as that of the stomach of Flanders, and Nele as that of the heart of Flanders. In a classic Eulenspiegel story Till is walking the tightrope for money, when suddenly some spectators cut the rope, causing him to fall in the river across which he had tied the rope. He climbs ashore, tells the audience he enjoyed the joke and informs them that he will make his rope trick more complicated the next day. Out of curiosity the spectators return again the following day to see what he will do. Till then explains to them that he will climb the rope while holding two bags full of shoes. But since he hasn't got that many shoes he asks the spectators to give him one of their shoes for the act. Everyone does so, but once he is on the rope Till threatens to throw the shoes in the water if the audience doesn't pay him double what they paid him the day before. The frightened spectators pay up and Till disappears, after throwing the shoes randomly in the crowd, causing the spectators to fight for their possessions.

# The Krawaten of Lille

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Dutch

**Date of origin:** 17<sup>th</sup> century

**Origin of the legend:** One hundred Croatian horse riders were staying in the village of Lille during the Eighty Years' War.

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**The Krawaten of Lille: the nickname of the people of Lille (near Turnhout).**

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century a Croatian prince asked for directions in the small village of Lille, near Turnhout. The villagers sent the prince and his entourage straight into a swamp. They were mugged. Everyone, except one man, was killed. The survivor returned to Croatia and told the king what had happened. The king wanted to avenge his son and tried to kill and burn the entire village but he changed his mind after a priest pleaded with him. Instead he gave an enormous fine to the village which took the villagers many years to repay.

# The Origin of Haanja Hills

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Estonian

**Date of origin:** 1926

**Author:** J. Gutves

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**Judas in this legend is used as the nickname of Devil or Satan.**

The hills of Haanja county were not in their place when the world was created, they were born long after that - the men of Haanja had been living there for a long time already, ploughing fields with oxen and bringing home carts full of hay. They were working hard and forgot all about the God Almighty and Judas\*. So Old Judas and God started to make plans how to change things - it was not acceptable to them that the peasants did not remember them anymore. So Old Judas told God: "Why don't you pick up one edge of the land, I will pick up the other and let's squeeze it together, so that there would be hills and valleys - then everything will change."

And that's exactly what they did. Now there are plenty of hills and valleys in Haanja. When a local peasant is in the bottom of the valley and his cart is stuck in the mud, he drags his horse and curses: "What's the matter with Old Judas! I'm about to break the wheels of

the cart. I myself have had enough of the pushing and pulling, and so has the animal!"

When he finally gets to the hilltop, he praises the Lord: "Thank God, we finally got out from the pig's wallow!"

So the men of Haanja will always remember and use the names of God and Judas, not like the men in flat country, who until this day keep forgetting about these two. For them neither God or Judas exists anymore.

# The Danish King's Garden

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Estonian

**Date of origin:** 1219

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**The symbol depicted on that piece of material has remained the national flag on Denmark – the "Danneborg", the longest serving national flag in the world. The place where this symbol fell from heaven is also marked in the Tallinn Old Town and is known as the Danish King's Garden.**

In 1219, Valdemar II, the Danish King, invaded Tallinn with his fleet. After initially overcoming the Estonian fortress without much effort, the King sat back and embraced the gifts bestowed upon him by the Estonian emissaries. Foolishly, the King saw this as a sign of surrender and declared the fortress conquered. While the Danish forces were celebrating that night, the Estonians unexpectedly unleashed an attack in which many Danish troops lost their lives.

The situation looked hopeless for the King as he and his forces had been driven back considerably by the unexpected nature of this attack. In an act of desperation, the King fell to his knees and prayed

to the heavens for divine help in defeating the superior Estonian forces.

Just as all hope was dwindling, the heavens opened and a tiny piece of material floated gracefully downwards, landing in the King's arms. The material depicted a white cross on a red background. Inspired by this divine intervention, Valdemar and his men found within themselves the strength and courage to fight back and defeat the Estonian resistance.

# The Death Valley

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Estonian

**Date of origin:** 2002

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

Those who know what to look for when walking along the banks of the Piusa River can see a small patch of grass and stream that joins the river between two sombre walls of forest. In spring many globeflowers bloom here, and the whole meadow shines forth at the onlooker as if wishing to forget the terrible events of the past.

According to the legend a very evil and inhuman squire lived in the area. There was not a person on the estate who had not been unjustly punished at his behest. The coachman, who had been the witness to many cruel punishments, harboured a particular hatred for his master. Once before dusk the coachman was on the way home with the master and they were caught in a powerful thunderstorm. Just as they reached an outcropping the thunder clapped so loudly that the horses spooked. Without further thought, the coachman turned the horses abruptly to the right, gave a crack of the whip and jumped off. The carriage and the cruel master plunged into the ravine. After several days of searching the body was found in the valley by the stream. From that time on the valley has been called Surmaorg

(Death Valley). On long dark autumn evenings one can hear moaning and the grinding of teeth. This is the spirit of the wicked master, who can find no peace.

# The Carnac's stones legend

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** French

**Date of origin:** 1912

**Author:** Zacharie Le Rouzic

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

Saint Cornely was Pope in Rome but was driven out by pagan soldiers who pursued him. He walked ahead of them, alongside two oxen that were carrying his baggage. He first wanted to stop at a village, but he heard a young girl insulting her mother and decided to continue his journey toward the mountains where there was a very small village.

Saint Cornely was quickly forced to stop his journey. Beyond the mountain was the sea and behind him was the army of soldiers in battle array. He hid in an ox's ear and turned the army of soldiers into stone, so he could escape.

Farmers passing by stood still in front of the inconceivable image that was before them. Where a large army had been held, stones rose in several rows to the east, as far as the eye could see.

Since then, to the north of Carnac, one can see long lines of standing stones. These soldiers, transformed into stones, only move

once a year: on Christmas Eve, to drink in the nearby stream. Legend has it that many treasures are to be found under these stones, but that all those who tried to seize them have died.

# Merlin and the forest of Broceliande

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** French

**Date of origin:** Medieval Times

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**Merlin the enchanter is a legendary character, both druid and magician. His legend was born from Welsh Celtic mythology though he's indivisible from the Arthurian legends of Chrétien de Troyes.**

Merlin the enchanter, son of the devil and a woman, is a very powerful magician, who tries to unify the kingdom of Brittany alongside King Arthur. He is very attached to the forest of Brocéliande, where he feels at home amongst the lakes and the magnificent trees.

One day, Merlin decides to go to the heart of the forest, where there is a splendid fountain. There, he encounters the most beautiful young girl he has ever seen. Daughter of the lord of Quimper, her name is Viviane and the young people get along famously.

To seduce her, Merlin uses his powers, bringing out many wonderful magic things. Viviane, amazed by Merlin's powers, asks him to teach her everything he knows about sorcery and magic.

Merlin, who can not refuse her anything, accepts but makes her promise they will be friend for eternity. She agrees and Merlin has to go back to King Arthur to continue their duty of unifying Brittany and repelling the enemy. He commits to teaching Vivianne magic when he returns.

When his duty is done, Merlin hurries to go back to the heart of the forest of Brocéliande to meet the beautiful Viviane again. The latter is so happy to see him again, that Merlin falls more deeply in love with her.

As promised, Merlin teaches her all he knows about magic, the mastering of all four elements, the art of metamorphosis and the spell which makes one fall into a deep sleep. Viviane, whose thirst for knowledge is insatiable, asks Merlin to teach her more. The latter is so in love that he meets all of her demands and builds her a marvellous crystal castle that only she and her court can see. Thus, she will be safe during Merlin's absence as he has to meet King Arthur one last time.

Before he leaves, Viviane makes him promise that he will teach her the imprisonment spell when he returns. He agrees and then goes to help King Arthur. Then, Merlin announces to the latter that he will leave definitely for Brocéliande where the beautiful Viviane awaits impatiently.

When Merlin meets Viviane, he keeps his promises again and teaches her the imprisonment spell, but he then suddenly falls into a deep sleep. When he wakes up, he realizes that he is in a fabulous place but enclosed with an impassable wall of air. At his side, Vivianne explains lovingly that they are forever reunited and that she

belongs to him as much as he belongs to her. That is how the most powerful magician of Brittany gave up his freedom for love.

Today in Brittany, one can still find rocks called “Merlin’s grave” in the forest of Brocéliande. Legend has it that the enchanter still lives in his gilded cage that no-one can see.

# Hop-o'-My-Thumb

## TALE

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** French

**Date of origin:** 1867

**Author:** Charles Perrault

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

***Hop-o'-My-Thumb*** is a tale by Charles Perrault, one of the most important author of French literature in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He is well-known for his "*Contes de ma mère l'Oye*": transcriptions of tales from the French oral tradition. He is one of the author behind the fairy tales literary genre.

Hop-o'-My-Thumb tells the story of a lumberjack, his wife and their seven children. The youngest one is so little that they all call him Hop-o'-My-Thumb. But the family is so poor that the parents are no longer able to support their children. One evening, the parents plan to abandon them in the wood the following day, so they won't see them starving to death.

However, Hop-o'-My-Thumb overhears his parents and the next day he collects small white pebbles from a river. During the evening, when the lumberjack and his wife lead their children into the wood,

the small boy uses the stones to mark a trail that enables him to successfully lead his brothers back home.

However, days later, the parents decide to lead their children into the wood one more time, making sure that Hop-o'-My-Thumb hasn't collected pebbles. The little boy uses breadcrumbs instead, which the birds eat up without him noticing it. The brothers are lost in the wood. They come at last to a house where they ask for shelter and learn that it belongs to an ogre.

Hop-o'-My-Thumb, fearing the wolves, decides to take the risk of staying in the monster's place.

The ogre allows the boys to sleep for the night, and provides a bed for them in his daughters' room. But the ogre wakes up not too long after, and prepares to kill them in their slumber. Hop-o'-My-Thumb, who is very clever, has anticipated that possibility. The young boy has already planned ahead and replaced the daughters' gold crowns with the bonnets worn by him and his brothers. As a result, the ogre kills his daughters instead, and goes back to bed. Once he is sleeping, Hop-o'-My-Thumb leads his siblings out of the house.

The ogre wakes up in the morning to discover his mistake. Absolutely furious, he puts on his seven-league boots, and races after the boys. Thanks to his boots, which allow him to hop over mountains and valleys in only a few steps, the ogre catches up with the boys quickly.

After hours of pursuit, the ogre, who is tired, happens to sit on the rock under which the children are hiding. Hop-o'-My-Thumb instructs his brothers to make their way home and, meanwhile, removes the boots from the sleeping ogre. He puts them on and runs to the ogre's

house. The small boy tells the ogre's wife that her husband was attacked by thieves who are demanding for all their fortune. He then explains that the ogre has charged him to collect the fortune and bring it back to them. The wife agrees and Hop-o'-My-Thumb takes the fortune to his parents.

Some other stories tell that Hop-o'-My-Thumb met the king's army on its way to the ogre's house and was charged to deliver a message to the king. The young boy became then the messenger of the king and came home to his parents and lived happily ever after.

# Gaia

## MYTH

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Greek

**Origin of the legend:** Greek mythology

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**A traditional story about the mother of every creature, the Earth.**

Earth was one of the first gods. In Ancient Greece, people thought the Earth was a creature that used to give birth all the time without ever getting tired. They could see on the Earth around them that trees, plants and animals were being born all the time. They thought that they were all Earth's children and that Earth was a goddess. Earth was the place that life was born and died.

The Ancient Greeks gave three names to Earth: Gaia, Dimitra and Rea. Earth's most used name was Dimitra.

During the creation of the world, Gaia was made first, before Love and Chaos. Gaia gave birth to the sky (Uranus), the mountains and the sea (Ponto). Uranus and Gaia had twelve children, the Titans.. People that used to live in Attica and Arcadia, thought that were aborigines and that they too were born from Gaia.

# The flood of Deucalion

## MYTH

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Greek

**Origin of the legend:** Greek mythology

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

## **A traditional story about how humanity was created.**

In Greek Mythology, Deucalion was the son of Prometheus and Pandora, the first woman that the gods created. He is closely connected with the flood myth, which resulted in the creation of people.

Zeus wanted to punish people because they become greedy and to punish Prometheus for stealing fire from the gods. He decided to cause a flood. Prometheus rushed to alert his son, Deucalion, to Zeus's plan. He suggested that Deucalion made a boat, filled it with supplies and animals and stayed in there with his wife Pyra until the flood was over. So when Zeus opened the waterfalls of the sky, Deucalion and his wife boarded their ship and waited nine days and nine nights for the flood to end. The water filled the rivers; they overflowed and drowned everything into their way, including people. The fields became lakes and the towns were lost under the waters. Eventually, only a few mountain peaks appeared in the vast sea. The

ship of Deucalion and Pyra came to rest against one of these mountain peaks.

When the rain ceased and the waters retreated, Deucalion and Pyra descended to the shore and the first thing they did was to make a sacrifice to Zeus (the protector of fugitives). Deucalion and Pyra wanted more people, so they went to the sanctuary of Thetis in Delphi to express their desire. The goddess heard them and replied with the following oracle: "If you want to create new people, cover your faces and throw your mother's bones behind your backs." When they had understood the interpretation of the oracle, they covered their faces and started throwing stones behind their backs. The stones were the bones of Mother Earth.

The stones thrown by Deucalion transformed into men, and the ones that Pyra threw were transformed into women. It is said that from the first rock that Deucalion threw came a man named Greek, who was the originator of the Greeks.

# The imprisoned giant

## MYTH

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Greek

**Origin of the legend:** Greek mythology

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

Once upon a time, when the gods were in charge of everything that happened on earth, the giants rebelled and tried to overthrow them. The gods had nothing to be afraid of, but the giants were enormous, ugly, had sharp teeth and were extremely strong.

When the giants fought against each other, they used to throw whole mountains instead of rocks and they picked up islands with their hands to use them as shields. Every time a giant fell down on the ground, their mother (Earth) gave them more powers than they had before.

So the gods were a little bit anxious about how they were going to fight against them. The gods had a lot of weapons and shields that Hephaestus had made especially for them, but they were terrified about how they would be able to win the fight with the giants, whose powers were changing all the time. They asked Hercules for advice because he had defeated a giant before.

Hercules advised them to pick up the giants and kill them in the air, so that they would not be able to step on the earth and gain more powers. The gods followed Hercules' advice. They picked up and defeated all the giants in the air, until there was just one left. This was a giant named Earthquake. Athena was fighting him on an island in the Mediterranean, named Sicily.

They fought for many days, until Athena thought to use his own powers to defeat him. She picked up a mountain and threw it directly at the giant. Ever since that day, the giant has been trapped under that mountain. Every time he gains some power and tries to free himself from under the mountain, an earthquake occurs.

# The two horns of the Bisalta

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Italian

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**The Bisalta mountain is one of the nearest and most visible mountains looking from Cuneo. The inhabitants of Cuneo or the towns nearby can clearly see it and the mountain has become a symbol of the area.**

**Mountain Bisalta, 2231 m above sea level, composed by two peaks called "Besimauda" and "Bric Rosso".**

Somewhere between the hills that can be seen from the town of Cuneo is the mountain called the Bisalta, also known as Besimauda. It has a particular shape with two peaks, but this has not always been the case!

They say that one evening Baptist, a shepherd from a nearby valley, wanted to go back home across the mountains. This turned out to be very difficult for him because he had drunk too much at the inn in the village and was feeling more and more shaky. The moonlight showed him the way: he managed not to fall and could see the path. But at a certain point the moon hid herself behind the mountain and it got very dark. The poor Baptist couldn't see anything any more. He just

walked at random, until he realised that he was at the edge of a crevasse. The shepherd stopped and began calling the mountain names: "Bloody mountain! I would give my soul to the devil to make you fall down!" At that moment the devil appeared, laughing. The devil offered to flatten the mountain and bring back the moonlight in exchange for a simple signature on a ready-made contract. Baptist, like most peasants, could not read nor write and besides at that moment it was terribly dark and he could see nothing. The devil, wanting to show his power, made the earth tremble and divided the peak of the mountain into two parts. The moonlight returned and showed Baptist the way.

The shepherd decided to make a deal with the devil and traced a cross on the contract as his signature. The devil, seeing the cross on the contract, cursed and disappeared within a second.

Baptist was able to find his way home. Although the mountain hadn't been flattened, the moon shone between the two peaks. These two peaks of Bisalta remind us that the Lord lets the devil do some things, but not too many.

# The Ciciu of the Villar

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Italian

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

The regions of Italy close to the mountains are particularly full of legends and stories: they were imagined by people living there in order to give an explanation for natural phenomena.

The scientific explanation of the appearance of the big rocks was not known in ancient times. The rocks are shaped like men, with a head and body, and so villagers' imagination combined with their religious beliefs to create this story.

Near the town of Cuneo, there is a beautiful bush where you can find some big stones that look like huge mushrooms. They are the Villar St. Constantius' Ciciu. Today we know that they are a geological phenomenon, but a "non-scientific" explanation persists.

The legend tells us that the Roman army was on the march, but just near Cuneo the army split in two: one legion decided to cut themselves off from the rest of the army because they refused to renounce the Christian God. Among these soldiers was Constantius, who decided to become Jesus' apostle and preach everywhere with generosity and love the Christian faith. Unfortunately, this wasn't

easy at all for Constantius because the people of that region were conservative and didn't trust the new Christian faith coming from Palestine. Despite this, Constantius stuck to his purpose. In Villar he went from house to house talking about Jesus, but the people there were particularly pagan and very ready to fight. Constantius often had to hide in the woods. On one occasion the pagans decided to chase him and kill him. Constantius went into the woods to pray, ready to become a martyr, but at that moment a miracle happened! The pagans were turned into enormous stones and their large heads became the "hats" of these rocks.

Centuries later a church was built in honour of Constantius who had meanwhile become a saint.

# Devil's Bridge

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Italian

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

The legend of the Devil's Bridge is really popular and spread worldwide. In Piedmont, and elsewhere in Northern Italian regions, there are many bridges imputed to the Devil's doings. Dronero and Lanzo Torinese are the two main towns known for such story. Usually these kind of stories are born because people need to explain to themselves the failure. Finding just rational reasons could not satisfy them: for example, think about the breakdown of the gothic Cathedrals that are to be re-built.

The town of Dronero, in the region of Piedmont, is built on the banks of the River Maira which gave the valley its name. But for many years there was no bridge over the river and the inhabitants badly needed one.

Over the centuries the town got bigger. Proportionally its wealth was getting bigger too. So, the inhabitants decided to build a nice bridge. They employed an architect who started to build it in the spring: all were enthusiastic, but when in autumn, the bridge was almost finished, it collapsed. The architect was cast out and another

one was employed, more illustrious and more competent, but sadly the same thing happened. It was decided to call in a professional from abroad, from Paris, but this did not help! That bridge would not stand either.

The local priest, walking towards the church, was thinking, thinking and thinking, asking himself if the devil had a hand in this. And right then he showed up: Satan in person!

The two started to discuss the repeated collapses of the bridge and the devil proposed a deal: he would allow the bridge to be completed if the first living soul to cross it became his property.

The inhabitants of Dronero, people of common sense, accepted the devil's deal. Soon, a beautiful bridge had been built, and now the deal had to be honoured. The devil stood on the opposite bank of the river, waiting for his reward. The priest, who was standing on the other river bank, had a piece of cheese in his hands. He threw it over the bridge. A hungry old dog ran to eat it and was the first living soul to cross the bridge. The devil understood that he had been cheated, but the contract had to be honoured. So, the devil made the dog's soul his and disappeared.

The bridge is still there today, to the joy of the townspeople.

# The Devil's Hole

## TALE

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Catalan

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

Once upon a time, in the town of Falgars, in the forest of Cortiella, a greedy old knight gathered all his coins and gold together next to a tomb he prepared for himself, as he did not want to separate from his wealth even after death. On a cold and wet, the old knight –he was already 90 years old- got ill and died a few days after. He did not have offspring but he did have a goddaughter, Bepa, who was a farmer friend's daughter. He had only given her a 5-peso coin when she turned fifteen; this was the only thing he had given to someone in his whole life. Bepa, however, instead of keeping the coin for herself, used the coin to pay their labourers. When the knight died, she inherited a piece of land, where there was supposed to be a hidden treasure that nobody was able to find. Every night, people could hear a sound of chains coming from the underground. One dark night, a skeleton knight riding a horse's skeleton came out of the tomb and appeared in the middle of the forest. From that point on, all people around that area started to talk about "the devil's hole". One day, the spirit visited Bepa and told her that the old knight had been banned to go to hell because he had given that one coin to her, and that he

was doomed to wander around as a lost soul until his treasure was unearthed and distributed amongst the poor. Bepa found the treasure and did what the spirit had told her and the knight of the Clot was never seen anymore.

# Kingdom of Sobrarbe

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Spanish

**Date of origin:** End of the 15<sup>th</sup> century

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**It is said to have happened in the year 1499, when the tree and the cross appeared for the first time in the emblem of the kingdom, and when the Iberian Peninsula was occupied for Al-Andalus. The Christians established in the north of the Peninsula, where they were resisting the attacks of the Moors.**

Legend says that the kingdom of Sobrarbe resisted an attack thanks to a divine presence. Having recovered Aínsa -the village that became the capital of the kingdom of Sobrarbe- from the Moors, the new Christian inhabitants decided to fortify it to oppose enemies. In one of the battles, a man named García Ximénez tried to defend the town with a few arms they had, but it was not enough to resist the enemy attack. When the warriors were about to surrender because they were tired and wounded, they suddenly saw a red cross on top of a tree - an oak - and decided to continue fighting until they beat the Moors. Because of this battle and the courage fighting against the

enemies, García Ximénez became the first king of the Sobrarbe kingdom.

# Atland and the Lost Mount

## MYTH

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Spanish

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

An old myth has it that, at the slopes of Lost Mount (Monte Perdido), many years ago, there lived an old man who had a strange, abandoned and vagabond look; people from the valley even thought he was a bit insane. His name was Atland, and it is said that he descended from the mythical Atlantes, those who sustained the world. He had a very poor appearance and lived in a hut that he had built himself with old logs and natural materials.

Atland had been sent by his family, the gods, to build a great palace that would serve as a place to rest during the journey to the afterlife of the dead. For centuries, he devoted himself to building this palace with elements that he himself selected and worked with. This myth also has it that Atland first used the most primordial elements (air, fire, earth and water), then essential elements (smoke, wind, rock and rain) and finally some more spiritual elements (such as words, tears, petals or music). As a result of his great efforts, he constructed a majestic and breath-taking palace which, apart from being invisible to humans who didn't have the gift of "double vision", it could only be reached by riding a winged horse.

Humans, witches, giants and many other creatures were forbidden to enter the palace. However, Aneto, a fearsome giant who lived in those mountains, full of envy and anger was determined to access the palace. After uncountable attempts, he shot Atland with a magic bow, and knocked him down while riding his winged horse. Atland's body fell down and, just as his lifeless body touched the ground, dark clouds filled the sky and all the mountains around began to tremble... until Aneto was drowned into the ground. Aneto, moving and tossing around trying to escape, ended up becoming one of the largest mountains in the Pyrenees. Still today, many believe that walking through these valleys, one can see the Palace of Monte Perdido hiding between clouds and high peaks.

# Little Sleepy Star / Twinkle Sleepyhead

## FAIRY TALE

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Slovenian

**Date of origin:** 1952

**Author:** Frane Milčinski - Ježek

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**Starting out as a hugely successful radio play in 1952 (still one of the most popular ever), continuing as a puppet show (translated into several languages and staged throughout the former Yugoslavia, in Russia, Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Italy, even Chile and Canada), the legendary Little Sleepy Star finally appeared in book form in 1993.**

Being one of the youngest stars in the sky, Little Sleepy Star badly needs to sleep long hours. Moreover, Little Sleepy Star is constantly late for work. So, the Moon decides to punish her, which makes him very sad. He persuades himself that “punishment has to be, that punishment is a good way to raise children”, imposing boundaries on them. So, the Moon sends the Little Sleepy Star down to the Earth. He promises her that she will be allowed to come back to the sky when she proves that she is a good, blameless girl. He is convinced, like most parents are, that if his child does what he does, if his child is

obedient, he or she will be protected throughout life. Among those whom she meets on the Earth is an outlaw, a brigand called Čeferin. His face is dark and hairy. His eyes are restless. He is cruel and likes stealing. He wants to steal her soft golden hair from her. Since Little Sleepy Star proves to be innocent and good-hearted the Čeferin's cruel stony heart starts melting and beating again. So Little Sleepy Star returns to the sky.

Little Sleepy Star is a fairy tale based on dichotomic thinking: that there is good opposing evil and vice versa. This is a naïve story presuming that if you are good, others will be good to you as well; but if you treat others badly, they will treat you badly in return.

# **The Buckwheat seed brought the slovenian people to the sunny side of the Alps**

## **LEGEND**

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Slovenian

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**A national tourist slogan “On the sunny side of the Alps” is currently popular in Slovenia. Moreover, buckwheat is still appreciated as a main dish accompanied by sauerkraut Hungarian-style. Please note, buckwheat is appreciated only by Slovenian people. Do not offer it to guests of other nationalities.**

Despite their mostly Austro-Hungarian culture (architecture, music, literature, cuisine, etc.) the Slovenians are Slavic people and Slavic people are believed to live in the East and to have come from the East.

So, once upon a time our Slovenian forefathers lived in a country far to the East. Over time, their country became too small for too many people, too crowded, so they set off to find another place to live.

Before they left, the goddess who loved them gave them buckwheat seeds, saying: “Wherever you go, plant this seed. Where it

comes up green in three days, there will be your future homeland.”

The Goddess’s seed did not come up on the shores of the Black Sea, on the Polish plains, or in the German mountains, but when they planted it on today’s Slovenian territory it grew green in three days.

# Saint Socerb

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Earth

**Language of the original:** Slovenian

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

Not far from the Slovenian village of Socerb is the only underground church in Slovenia, named The Holy Cave. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century the cave was a shelter of a young Christian, Saint Socerb. He was very religious and was only 12 years old when he heard the call of God and went to live in the cave. He lived there for several years, alone, drinking water and eating nothing else but bread. Later, he miraculously healed a lot of people and died as a martyr because the authorities in Rome were jealous and did not want him to exert such healing powers and to have such a strong influence on people. In 2006, an English healer showed up. He pretends that he is a reincarnation of Socerb. Allegedly, he performs miracles during his sessions in the cave and therefore attracts crowds.

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