

Kamenica Castle in the Croatian Zagorje region¹

Krešimir Regan 

The Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography, Zagreb
kresimir.regan@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: This paper examines the centuries-long history of the castle Kamenica, situated above the identically named settlement in the Croatian Zagorje region, not far from Lepoglava. It was first mentioned in writing in 1311. It was built in the second half of the 13th century at the latest, by an unknown Zagorje noble, as a fortified residence and centre of the identically named estate. Between 1399 and 1405, Kamenica became the property of Herman II of Celje, whose descendants held it until 1456. Although no source directly mentions the fall of Kamenica, it likely happened during the war for the Celje succession, and the castle was first mentioned as a ruin in 1459, when King Matthias Corvinus donated it to John Vitovac. During the time it was under the Vitovacs (1459–88), Kamenica was permanently abandoned, and its holdings were combined with the neighbouring Trakošćan estate into the joint Trakošćan-Kamenica estate, which was formally seated in Trakošćan, but factually in the fortified manor Klenovnik. The existing, meagre architectural elements suggest Kamenica was a small castle (*castrum*) dating from the second half of the 13th century. It consisted of a trapezoidal core at the top of a steep, conical eminence, formed of a walled, fortified house with a smallish courtyard protected by a wooden palisade, and a fortified, circular suburb, raised around the core with a combination of wooden palisades and earthen ramparts.

Keywords: Kamenica; castle (*castrum*); Middle Ages; Celjski; Vitovac; Croatian Zagorje

1. Introduction

During the high and late Middle Ages and early New Age, the Croatian Zagorje was protected by numerous defensive complexes. One of them was the castle Kamenica, whose modest remains lie above the identically named settlement near Lepoglava. Although the history of Kamenica has been written about in the past,² there has been no attempt to provide a more comprehensive overview of this topic.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1457-5126> [Krešimir Regan]

¹ This paper is an adapted and significantly expanded version of the works on Kamenica published in: Krešimir Regan, *Srednjovjekovne i renesansne utvrde Hrvatskog zagorja*, Donja Stubica 2017, 141–144; Ibid., *Utvrdne grofova Vitovaca u Hrvatskom zagorju, Jan Vitovec – češki vitez, zagorski grof* (exhibition catalogue), Gornja Stubica 2020, 95–96.

² Gjuro Szabo, *Spomenici kotara Ivanec, Vjesnik Hrvatskog arheološkog društva*, N.S., 14(1919) 14, 56; Ibid., *Sredovječni gradovi u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji*, Zagreb 1920, 84–85; Josip Adamček, *Trakošćan-*

Therefore, the basic goal of this paper is to present and, to a certain extent, expand the existing knowledge about Kamenica Castle as well as the urban agglomeration that existed and developed beneath it. Furthermore, we wish to show in broad strokes the formation and functioning of the identically named estate during the high and late Middle Ages, as far as the sparse available sources allow.

In order to achieve this, we have set down a series of research questions: first, who built this castle and when; second, what did this castle look like through the centuries; third, who were its masters; and, fourth, what did the Kamenica estate and settlement look like?

2. Historical records

The remains of medieval Kamenica Castle are found near the identically named settlement, not far from Lepoglava, above the gorge of the Kamenica stream, which is formed from the western and eastern sides by the southern slopes of Ravna Gora. It was the fortified centre of the identically named noble landholding, later part of the Trakošćan estate.



Location of Kamenica Castle and the access path, as viewed from the northeast (N. Milčić, 2008.)

sko vlastelinstvo, *Kaj*, 5(1971) 11, 16–26; Zlatko Kidjemet, *Župa Kamenica*, Zagreb-Kamenica 1986; Tomislav Đurić, Dragutin Feletar, *Stari gradovi, dvorci i crkve sjeverozapadne Hrvatske*, Koprivnica 1992, 119–121; Neven Budak, *Gradovi Varaždinske županije u srednjem vijeku*, Zagreb-Koprivnica 1994, 24–25; Spomenka Težak, »Klenovnik u „tami“ srednjeg vijeka«, *Klenovnik 750 godina 1244.–1994*. (chief ed. Martin Oreški), Klenovnik 1995, 34–38; Daniel Šantalab, Ostaci starog grada Kamenice, *Hrvatski kajkavski kolendar '99*, Čakovec 1998, 152–155; Branko Nadilo, Zamkovi i dvorci sjeverno od Ivanšćice, *Gradevinar*, 56(2004) 4, 235; Vjekoslav Noršić, Kamenica (priredio Stjepan Razum), *Tkalčić*, 14(2010), 281–308; Marijana Korunek, »Pregled utvrda, burgova i kaštela na području Varaždinske županije«, *Izdanja HAD*, 28(2012), 227–250.

As is the case with most Zagorje castles, we do not have reliable data for the year Kamenica was founded. In documents, it was first mentioned in 1311, as part of a the tithe Zagorje district (*castrorum: [...]Kemencha*),³ while the suburb and its church were first mentioned in the list of parishes of the Diocese of Zagreb in 1334, as the seat of a parish of the same name in the Zagorje Archdeaconate (*ecclesia de Kamennicha*).⁴ It is highly likely that this castle was named after the geological characteristics of the terrain on which it was built, i.e. the rocky ground covered by a thin layer of earth.

Since Kamenica is not mentioned in the charter of Croatian-Hungarian king and Holy Roman emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg of 29 January 1399, by which he granted the Zagorje County and the royal castles Krapina, Lohor, Belec, Oštrc, Trakošćan, Lepoglava, Kostel, and Cesargrad to Herman II of Celje,⁵ it is highly likely that it was then still a fortified centre of a smaller noble landholding, surrounded by royal, later Celje, lands.⁶ This state of affairs was preserved until no later than 1405, when Kamenica was first mentioned in the possession of the Counts of Celje.⁷

At an unknown time during the 1440s or the early 1450s, the Counts of Celje gave usufruct rights Kamenica to their steward, Martin Katzendorfer. This took place between 1443, when Kamenica is mentioned as a possession of Ulrich II of Celje,⁸ and 1458, when Martin was mentioned as the holder of usufruct rights for the last time.⁹

³ »et conclundunt ipse decime seu decimacio terras, loca et districtus castrorum: Koztel, Crapina, Oztruch, Lohor, Belec, Tracustian et Kemencha.« Ivan Krstitelj Tklačić, *Povjestni spomenici Zagrebačke biskupije XII. i XIII. stoljeća*, 2, Zagreb 1874, 58–59.

⁴ Franjo Rački, Popis župa zagrebačke biskupije 1334 i 1501 godine, *Starine*, 4(1872), 205; Josip Butorac, Popis župa Zagrebačke biskupije 1334. i 1501. godine, *Starine*, 59(1984), 51.

⁵ »Corpona, Labar, Oztroch, Beelth, Trakkenstayn, Lepaglawa, Caztal et Chazar« (Krapina, Lohor, Oštrc, Belec, Trakošćan, Lepoglava, Kostel i Cesargrad). Croatian State Archives (further: HDA), HR-HDA-25, Ugarska dvorska komora, Hrvatske plemićke obitelji i vlastelinstva (Neoregistrata acta), vol. 1592, no. 15.

Codex diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae (further: CD), vol. XVIII, collected by Tadija Smičiklas, edited by Duje Rendić-Miočević, expanded and prepared by Miljen Šamšalović et al., Zagreb 1990, 413–418.

⁶ An almost identical situation appeared on the southern slopes of the Ivanščica and the northern basin of the river Krapina, where a series of small noble landholdings formed, with seats in the castles Sutinsko, Mače, Zlatar, Šćrbinec, etc. Nada Klaić, *Zadnji knezi Celjski v deželah Sv. Krone*, Ljubljana-Celje 1991, 29–30.

⁷ The chronicle was written between 1435 and 1456. Ibid.

⁸ J. Adamček, Trakošćansko vlastelinstvo, 16; Nada Klaić, I. Srša, Veliki Tabor, 8.

⁹ In 1406, Martin Katzendorfer was first mentioned in the documents as a vicar in the worldly goods of Zagreb's bishop, Benedict. Since he was a confidant of the Counts of Celje, it is highly likely that he received Kamenica in recognition of his faithful service. On the Celje servitors of German origin, see: Suzana Miljan, Grofovi Celjski i Nijemci, službenici njihovih utvrda u Zagrebačkoj i Križevačkoj županiji u kasnom srednjem vijeku (1385. – 1456.), *Godišnjak njemačke zajednice*, 20(2013), 11–22.

Next, it formally became the property of Katarina Branković, the widow of Ulrich II of Celje,¹⁰ but already on 6 July 1459 King Matthias Corvinus granted it to John Vitovac.¹¹ It was first mentioned as a ruined castle (*castelli Kamennycza abolitorum*) in that document. This grant was recognised by Katarina Branković on 1461. Among other things, she sold John Vitovac her rights to the then still-ruined Kamenica for 62,000 forints.¹²

What happened between 1458 and 1459? Although the sources do not directly describe the fall of Kamenica in that period, it is highly likely that it fell victim to the period of anarchy that occurred in the Hungarian-Croatian kingdom in 1456, after the death of Ulrich II of Celje and his political rival, John Hunyadi, and continued in full force after the death of King Ladislaus the Posthumous in 1457, when Matthias Corvinus and Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg were fighting for the Hungarian-Croatian crown.¹³

Be as it may, Kamenica was mentioned once again as a ruined castle (*ca-stellum Kamenycza abolitum*)¹⁴ in a document issued by the new Hungarian-Croatian king Matthias Corvinus in 1463, in which he granted the Zagorje County with all its castles to Vitovac and his sons. Kamenica was again mentioned as a ruined castle in the confirmation of said charter, which was issued by Matthias Corvinus at Vitovac's request on 31 March 1464.¹⁵

¹⁰ N. Klaić, *Zadnji knezi Celjski*, 44.

¹¹ Mirjana Matijević-Sokol, *Transkripcija i prijevodi dviju isprava vezanih uz djelovanje i život Jana Vitovca, Jan Vitovec – češki vitez, zagorski grof* (exhibition catalogue), Gornja Stubica 2020, 53–60.

¹² By summer 1461, Katarina Branković still held only a small part of the large Celje heritage: Zagreb's Gradec, Medvedgrad, Rakovec, Varaždin, Vinica, Veliki Kalnik, Mali Kalnik, Koprivnica, ruined Kamengrad near Koprivnica, and half of the income of the estates of the castle Čakovec, Štrigova, and Đurđevac. N. Klaić, *Zadnji knezi Celjski*, 44. Borislav Grgin, *Jan Vitovec i njegovi sinovi u Hrvatskoj, Jan Vitovec – češki vitez, zagorski grof* (exhibition catalogue), Gornja Stubica 2020, 27–52; Mirjana Matijević-Sokol, *Transkripcija i prijevodi dviju isprava vezanih uz djelovanje i život Jana Vitovca, Jan Vitovec – češki vitez, zagorski grof* (exhibition catalogue), Gornja Stubica 2020, 61–62.

¹³ One of the main characteristics of this time of anarchy was the struggle for the Celje heritage, which took place from 1456 to 1463 between the Holy Roman emperor Frederick III of Habsburg and the Hungarian Hunyadi dynasty, i.e. Matthias Corvinus, who was elected as the new Hungarian-Croatian king in 1458. Borislav Grgin, *Počeci rasapa. Kralj Matijaš Korvin i srednjovjekovna Hrvatska*, Zagreb 2002, 24–26; *Ibid.*, Jan Vitovec i njegovi sinovi, 34.

¹⁴ Archive of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (further: AHAZU), Zagreb, Republika Hrvatska, collection: Diplomata, series: Documenta, D-XIII-95; Jakov Stipišić and Miljen Šamšalović, *Isprave u Arhivu Jugoslavenske akademije: nastavak – do smrti Matije Korvina, Zbornik Historijskog instituta Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, 3(1960), 597, regesta br. 2498, 2505; G. Szabo, *Spomenici kotara Ivanec*, 56; *Ibid.*, *Sredovječni gradovi*, 85; Josip Adamček, *Trakošćansko vlastelinstvo, Kaj*, 5(1972) 11, 16.

¹⁵ AHAZU, D-XIII-97; J. Stipišić and M. Šamšalović, *Isprave u Arhivu Jugoslavenske akademije*, regesta br. 2521.

It is intriguing that, in documents dating from the 14th and first half of the 15th century, Kamenica was first mentioned as a *castrum*, and later, from 1459, as a *castellum*, which leads us to logically conclude that a change in its status occurred no later than the late 1450s.¹⁶ Although it is difficult to draw a firm conclusion from this fragmentary data, Kamenica's change of status was very likely linked to its loss of geostrategic importance compared to the neighbouring castles owned by the Counts of Celje.¹⁷ And this means that it is possible that Kamenica did not fall victim to the Celje succession clashes, as we have mentioned earlier, and was instead simply abandoned.¹⁸

The extant documents do not hint at how long Kamenica lay abandoned. According to Budak, it was rebuilt because the minutes of the »court proceedings concerning the Lepoglava fair« note that »the transgressors from the monastery area were taken away for punishment to Kamenica«, which implies that the castle remained functional.¹⁹ However, no later document confirms this thesis because Kamenica was no longer mentioned as an intact castle, but only as a district (*castra nostrum Wynecze et Thrakostain cum districtu Kamenicza vocato*).²⁰ If Kamenica still existed as a castle in 1494, it is highly likely that it would have been listed together with the castles Vinica and Trakošćan.

Be as it may, John Corvinus transferred the Kamenica area with Trakošćan and Vinica to the Gyulay family in 1503.²¹ After the Gyulays died out in 1567, the

¹⁶ Karbić believes that »historiography has not fully determined the degree of this difference (author's note: between *castrum* and *castellum*) and whether it was constant and how much it meant on the field. It appears that the difference was mostly due to some aspect of their legal status rather than their architectural characteristics and importance«. Damir Karbić, Povijesni podaci o burgu Vrbovcu (1267.-1524.), in: Tatjana Tkalčec, *Vrbovec u Klenovcu Humskome. Deset sezona arheoloških istraživanja*, Zagreb 2010, 214, note 47.

¹⁷ An almost identical situation occurred with Vrbovec Castle. D. Karbić, Povijesni podaci o burgu Vrbovcu, 214.

¹⁸ The easiest way of abandoning a castle was to burn its wooden elements, which formed large parts of every castle (guard paths, trusses, constructions between the floors of buildings, doors, etc.).

¹⁹ N. Budak, *Gradovi Varaždinske županije*, 121.

²⁰ Namely, when James Székely returned the castles Varažin, Krapina, Oštrc, Lohor, Veliki Tabor, Mali Tabor, Vrbovec, and Greben to John Corvinus in 1488, in exchange John Corvinus gave him as security the castles Vinica and Trakošćan with the Kamenica district, to cover the expenses of capturing the Zagorje County, which amounted to 16,000 florins. E. Laszowski, Grad Lohor, *Prosvjeta*, 13(1905) 20, 635; Ferdo Šišić, Rukovet spomenika o hercegu Ivanišu Korvinu i o borbama s Turcima (1473-1496), *Starine*, 38(1937), 73–74; Nada Klaić, *Medvedgrad i njegovi gospodari*, Zagreb 1987, 185; D. Karbić, Povijesni podaci o burgu Vrbovcu, 214; I. Srša, Veliki Tabor, 11–13.

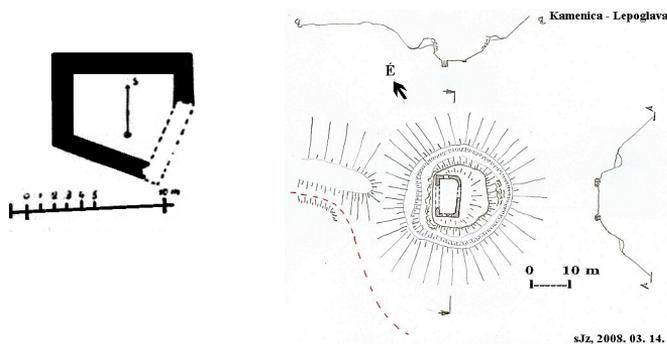
²¹ According to Nada Klaić, John Corvinus left the Kamenica market town for himself, and, after his death, it was inherited first by Beatrice Frankopan in 1504, and then by Margrave George of

Kamenica area was taken over by the royal fisc in 1568; it was first pledged to *Ban* and Bishop Juraj Drašković together with Trakošćan in 1569, and then transferred according to a royal charter to the full ownership of the Draškovići together with the neighbouring Trakošćan landholding in 1584.²²

Since Kamenica was again mentioned as abandoned in 1573 and 1584, the Draškovići transferred the seat of that part of the Trakošćan-Kamenica estate to nearby Klenovnik, where they had built a fortified manor in the meantime.²³

2.1. The Kamenica estate and settlement

The Kamenica castle was the seat of the identically named estate, which was formed no later than the early 14th century in the northern parts of Zagorje County.²⁴ At first, the Kamenica estate bordered the holdings of the Vinica castle (and later the Vinica estate) in the north, the Maruševac estate and Klenovnik noble landholding to the east, the Trakošćan estate in the west, and the holdings of the Knights of St John and Lepoglava Paulines to the south. Before the 15th century, the neighbouring Klenovnik noble landholding was annexed to this estate.²⁵



Floor plan sketch of Kamenica
(G. Szabo, 1919. – left; L. Keserű and T. Szabón, 2008.– right)

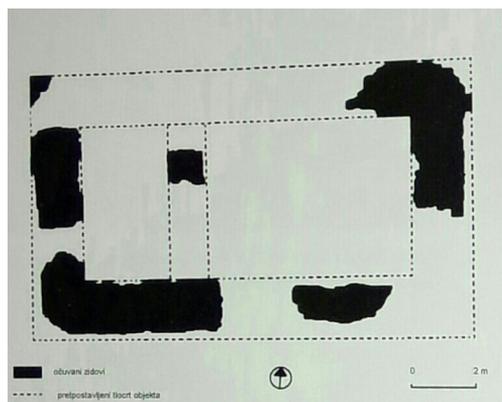
Brandenburg in 1510. Nada Klaić, *Medvedgrad i njegovi gospodari*, Zagreb 1987, 185.

²² Ferdo Šišić, *Hrvatski saborski spisi*, Knjiga treća: od godine 1557. do 1577, Zagreb 1916, 236–237; J. Admaček, *Trakošćansko vlastelinstvo*, 18.

²³ J. Admaček, *Trakošćansko vlastelinstvo*, 18; N. Budak, *Gradovi Varaždinske županije*, 121; Zdenko Balog, *Dvorac Klenovnik – rezidencija obitelji Drašković, Klenovnik 750 godina 1244.–1994.* (chief ed. Martin Oreški), Klenovnik 1995, 47.

²⁴ I. K. Tkalčić, *Povjestni spomenici Zagrebačke biskupije XII. i XIII. stoljeća*, 2, Zagreb 1874, 58–59.

²⁵ *Hrvatski povijesni atlas* (chief ed. Vlatka Dugački, Krešimir Regan), Zagreb 2018, 424–425.



Floor plan sketch of Kamenica (M. Korunek, 2010.)

It retained this form during the time it was under the Vitovacs (1459–88), Hungarian-Croatian king Matthias Corvinus (1488), James Székely (1488–94), John Corvinus (1490–1503), and finally the Gyulay family (1503–67). It was united with neighbouring Trakošćan into a single estate under the Drašković family (held as security in 1569, and fully owned from 1584).²⁶

According to the preserved tax registers from the late 15th and the 16th century, the Kamenica estate was rather small, encompassing around a dozen villages and hamlets (*Dobrawa, Jeryhowczy, Rudnicza, Dragowancz, Bedenczy, Wranowcz, Chernkowcz, Vilennczi, Podgorye, Superior Kamenicza, Sarownicza, Verhowczy, Veperniak, malechkowycza, Klenownyk* and *Nova Dubrawa*) as well as around 140 peasant landholdings and the identically named market town (*oppidum Kamennicza*) under its jurisdiction.²⁷ From the 15th century, the estate was part of the Tithe District of Zagorje (*Cultellus de Zagorie*). The main economic activities of the estate were viticulture, cattle rearing, and apiculture,²⁸ while the tollbooth near Kamenica and the profits from the fairs in the identically named market town were a further source of income for the owner.²⁹

As we have already mentioned, the centre of the estate was Kamenica, which, apart from the castle, included a small surrounding settlement, formed during the

²⁶ J. Adamček, *Trakošćansko vlastelinstvo*, 16–18; Zdenko Balog, *Trakošćan i Klenovnik-dvije rezidencije Draškovića*, *Kaj*, 28(1995) 1/2, 81–92; Pál Engel, *Magyarország* (interactive map).

²⁷ Josip Adamček and Ivan Kampuš, *Popisi i obračuni poreza u Hrvatskoj u XV i XVI stoljeću*. Zagreb 1976, 512–513.

²⁸ Josip Adamček, *Agrarni odnosi u Hrvatskoj od sredine XV do kraja XVI stoljeća*, Zagreb 1980, 194.

²⁹ Isto, 326.

14th century along the road at the exit from the gorge. The centre of this settlement was located near the parish church of St Bartholomew, in the northern part of today's settlement. Thanks to the favourable economic conditions after the end of the decades long war for the Hungarian-Croatian throne in the early 15th century, as well as the protection of powerful feudal lords, it developed during the first quarter of the 15th century into a small market town with the right to hold a fair (*oppidum Kamennycza*), which was first mentioned in a document of King Sigismund in 1435.³⁰ In the late 15th century, it was inhabited by 23 burgher families.³¹ Although we know almost nothing about the time the Kamenica fair was held and its type, it appears that it was simultaneous with the fair in neighbouring Lepoglava.³² However, the rise of Kamenica as a market town was short-lived. Although it was mentioned as a market town in 1598, the status of its inhabitants was then completely identical to that of serfs.³³

Like many other ruined medieval castles in Croatia, Kamenica is mentioned in several legends. The most famous among them speaks of the Ottoman siege of Kamenica and the cunning of its starving garrison, who filled their last heifer with wheat and lowered it down the walls, fooling the Ottomans into thinking that there was still plenty of food in the castle and prompting them to abandon the siege. The next legend about the Kamenica castle mentions a buried treasure inside, while the final legend mentions the key of its gates, which the peasants saw hanging from a beech tree.³⁴

3. An overview of pictorial sources

Pictorial sources are first-rate sources for researching the building structure of any castle, especially those that, due to neglect or systematic devastation, have met the contemporary era in a much poorer state of repair than at the time said sources were created. Although we divide the sources according to type into plans, drawings (perspective sources, vedutas), and photographs, in Kamenica's case only field sketches of its layout dating from the early 20th to the early 21st century have been preserved.

³⁰ HDA, Neoregestrata acta, vol. 1594, no. 3; J. Adamček, *Trakošćansko vlastelinstvo*, 16; S. Težak, *Klenovnik*, 34.

³¹ J. Adamček, *Agrarni odnosi*, 164.

³² N. Budak, *Gradovi Varaždinske županije*, 77–78, 86–87.

³³ J. Adamček, *Agrarni odnosi*, 400.

³⁴ D. Šantalab, *Ostatci starog grada*, 155.

The oldest plan was made by Gjuro Szabo before 1919, and was published in his work on the monuments of the Ivanec District.³⁵ On this drawing, Kamenica is depicted as an irregular pentagonal castle, i.e. tower, terminating in a salient angle pointing towards the south. Four of the tower's walls were preserved at the time the sketch was made, with only the southeastern wall being depicted as ruined. The total length of the castle on that plan is 10 metres from west to east, and 9 metres from north to south.

The second, much newer sketch of the remains of Kamenica was made by Hungarian researchers László Keserű and Tibor Szabó at the webpage www.varak.hu.³⁶ On 14 March 2008, they visited the locality and created not only a detailed sketch of the castle's remains, but also a detailed depiction of the topographical characteristics of the terrain on which it was situated.

In addition, the sketch is accompanied by two profiles of the castle and the terrain, which excellently complement the plan and help us understand the current state of the remainder of the castle. Unlike Szabo, who depicted the stone construction of the Kamenica castle as a pentagonal tower, i.e. a keep of approximately the same length and width, Keserű and Szabó draw it as an elongated and narrow trapezoidal construction, 11 metres long and 6 metres wide at the southwestern end, and 7 metres at the northeastern end, with a very rounded eastern corner. Apart from the different layout, these two drawings of the rest of the stone construction of the Kamenica castle differ in the depiction of the preserved walls. While Szabo's plan depicts only the eastern wall as ruined, the middle parts of all the walls are missing in the second plan.

The final sketch of the layout of the stone structures of the Kamenica castle was published by Marijana Korunek in her paper on the medieval fortifications and castles in the Varaždin County.³⁷ On this sketch, the stone building on the plan is depicted as a trapezoidal building with two rooms.

4. The Kamenica architectural complex

The ruins of Kamenica lie several hundred metres northwest of the parish church of St Bartholomew, immediately above the northern part of the village called Gradiški or Gradeški, at the far southeast, and also the highest part of the ridge that is

³⁵ G. Szabo, *Spomenici kotara Ivanec*, 53.

³⁶ <https://varak.hu/Znamenitosti/index/1379-Kamenica-Stari-Grad/>, accessed 7 March 2021.

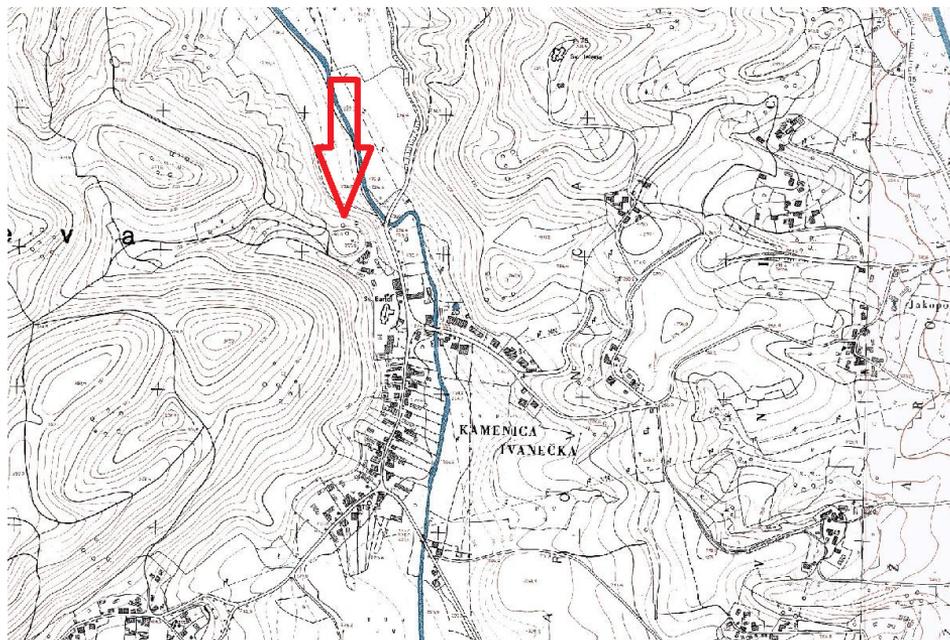
³⁷ M. Korunek, *Pregled utvrda, burgova i kaštela na području Varaždinske županije*, 244.



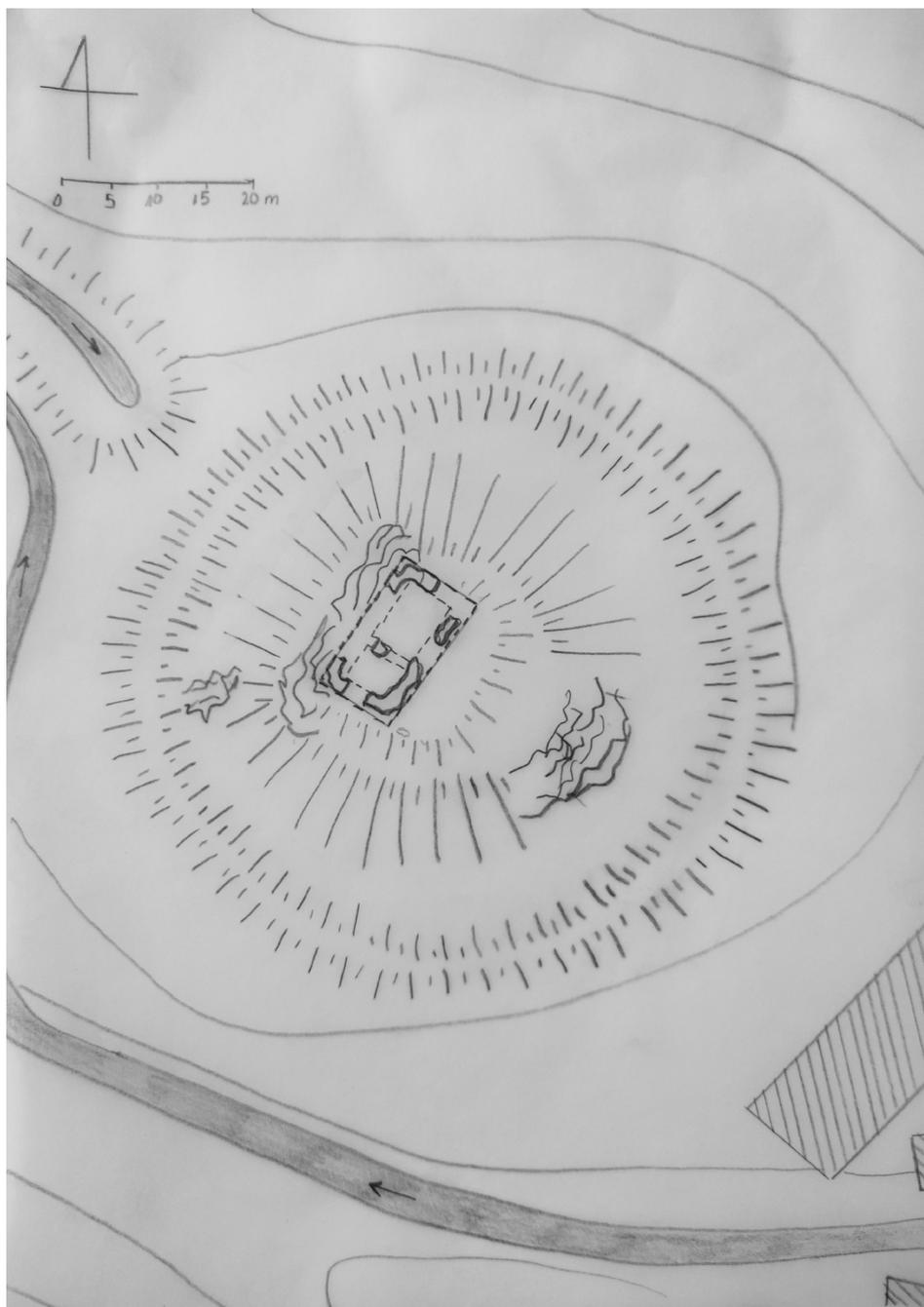
Location of Kamenica Castle as viewed from the southeast (N. Milčić, 2008.)

steep on three sides and marks the end of the eastern part of Ravna Gora, called Črešnovec.

The remains of the castle lie on a conical mound, formed by the cross-section of the ridge of the hill with two deep ditches. This section was shaped into a steep conical mound, and the resulting material was used to raise a defensive rampart around the mound, forming a steep defensive ditch.



Location of Kamenica on base map of Croatia – extract (www.geoportal.hr)



Floor plan sketch of Kamenica
(Krešimir Regan, 2021.)



Inner defensive rampart/wall and ditch, viewed from the west (N. Milčić, 2008.)

The configuration of the terrain upon which the remains of the castle lie conditioned its layout in the form of an irregular oval, which stretches from the northwest to the southeast to a width of 51 metres, and from the northeast to the southwest in a width of 47 metres.

The castle itself consists of a core in the centre of the complex and a bailey, of which an defensive rampart and ditch has been preserved, completely surrounding the core.

Apart from the core and bailey, the Kamenica castle includes a defensive ramp or footbridge at the brow of the hill, allowing access to the remains of the castle from the northwest.

4.1. The core

The core of the castle in Kamenica is formed from the remains of a smaller polygonal, almost trapezoidal castle, approximately 17 metres long from northeast to southwest, and around 15 metres from northwest to southeast. The layout is relati-



Defensive ditch and core, viewed from the northeast (N. Milčić, 2008.)

vely regular. At the highest point of the castle lie the remains of a stone building, upon which a small semicircular fortified courtyard leans from the southeast, gently inclining from northwest to southeast.

The configuration of the ground upon which the core of Kamenica was built conditioned a vertically indented composition, so that the difference between the tallest and lowest parts of the core is almost ten metres. The vertical indentation is further accentuated by the remains of the stone building, which in its original height must have been the most prominent part of the whole castle due to its volume.

The stone building is the most impressive and also best-preserved part of the entire complex. Its remains lie on the tallest part of the castle's position, the bedrock, which was shaped into an almost vertical cliff from the northwest. Although only the foundations of its walls have been preserved (they are approximately 4 metres long and 1.5 metres tall), the existing remains are sufficient for a reconstruction of the building's layout as an irregular trapezium 13.7 metres long and 8.5 metres wide. A partition divides its ground floor into two chambers. The smaller is located in the southwestern part of the building, and the larger in the central and northeastern part.

The existing walls of this building were built completely from roughly cut stones of various sizes, and levelled using smaller and finer stones; average width is 1.3 metres. However, due to centuries of devastation, the outer rock face has been completely eroded, preventing any stylistic analysis or dating. Regarding architectural details, we can, however, highlight the fine large carved pieces of stone of various height, length, and width, which are embedded into the corners of the peasant houses at the foot of the castle. Due to their size and degree of processing, it is highly

likely that they were also used to strengthen and decorate the corners of this building.

Since this building had a relatively small floor area, we can suppose that, through analogy to other, similar buildings in other castles, apart from the ground floor, there were several other stone floors, and a further floor at the top of the building, between the stone part of the building and the roof construction, which took the form of a wooden patrol corridor beneath the corbels.³⁸ The roof construction of this building was certainly done as a large, four-pitched tent roof with a long ridge.³⁹

Unfortunately, because it is poorly preserved, the building's function is not clear. Its layout and supposed height are reminiscent of the fortified houses (Turmpalas, Fest Haus, Turmburg, Hochhaus)⁴⁰ of the Romanesque castles in Croatia (Vrbovec, Židovina, Lipovec, Velika, Zelingrad) and in neighbouring Slovenia Pišece, Valdek, Vrbovec, Gamberk, Mirna, Kebelj, Rogatec, Sevnica),⁴¹ but also of the keeps

³⁸ According to Lazius's map of Hungary (1556), wooden defensive galleries in the attics of defensive buildings, especially towers, were a common fortification element in castles in hilly and lowland Croatia from the Middle Ages until the 19th century, and somewhat rarer in mountainous and littoral Croatia. Miljenko Lapaine, Ivka Kljajić, Lazius, Wolfgang, *Hrvatski kartografi*, Zagreb 2009, 332–334. A wooden defensive gallery was also drawn by Zorislav Horvat and Krešimir Filipanec in their reconstruction of Konjščina Castle. Zorislav Horvat, Krešimir Filipec, *Novija saznanja o kaštelu Konjščina*, *Opuscula archaeologica*, 25(2001), 181–182.

³⁹ A roof of this sort has been preserved on the Žitnica fortified house in Ozalj, and an almost identical one was once found on the fortified house of the castle of Bosiljevo until it was rebuilt in the Historicist style in the mid-1830s and again in 1910. Zorislav Horvat, *Primjena drva u gradnju burgova od 13. do 15. stoljeća u kontinentalnom dijelu Hrvatske*, *Prostor*, 13(2005) 1, 13–14.

⁴⁰ Zdeněk Měřinský, *Přehled dosavadního stavu výzkumu fortifikaci II. až počátku 16. století na Moravě a ve Slezsku (hradiska a hrady)*, *Archaeologia historica* 6/81, Brno 1981, 147–197; Ratko Vučetić, *Prilog razvoju i tipologiji kurija u kontinentalnoj Hrvatskoj*, *Međunarodni znanstveno-stručni skup Dvorci i ljetnikovci. Kulturno naslijeđe kao pokretač gospodarskog razvoja* (conference proceedings), Zagreb 2006, 418; Alexander T Ruttikay, *Befestigte Anlagen aus dem 11.–17. Jh. in den ebenen Teilen der Slowakei*, *Castrum Bene* 9, (*Burg und ihr Bauplatz*), Praha 2006., 377–408.

Duško Čikara, *From a Hypothesis on the Development of the Layout of Poklek Manor in Zagorska Sela, towards a hitherto Unknown Type of Residential Architecture in Continental Croatia*, *Ars & Humanitas: revija za umetnost in humanistiko/Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 11(2017) 1, 171–188; Tatjana Tkalčec, *Arheološka istraživanja na srednjovjekovnome arheološkom kompleksu Osijek Vojakovački – Mihalj u 2018. godini*, *Annales Instituti archaeologici*, 15(2019) 1, 155–163; Duško Čikara, *Single-Space Manor Houses in the Context of Defense and Possible Genesis of the Post-Medieval Nobility Countryside Architecture in NW Croatia*, *Fortifications, defence systems, structures and features in the past/ Fortifikacije, obrambeni sustavi i strukture u prošlosti* (eds. Tkalčec, Tatjana; Sekelj Ivančan, Tajana; Krznar, Siniša; Belaj, Juraj), Zagreb 2019, 381–392; Marin Emić, *Kasnosrednjovjekovna plemićka kurija kraj Orahovice – Uvod u razumijevanje kasnosrednjovjekovne kurije u kontinentalnoj Hrvatskoj*, *Prilozi Instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu*, 38(2021) 2, 115–155.

⁴¹ Ivan Stopar, *Razvoj srednjeveške grajske arhitekture na slovenskem Štajerskem*, Ljubljana 1977, 74–94; Dieter Barz, Joachim Zeune, *Das »Feste Haus«*, In: *Burgen in Mitteleuropa. Ein Handbuch*. Band I: *Bauformen und Entwicklungen*. Stuttgart 1999; Katarina Predovnik, *Arheološke raziskave najdišč mlaj-*

of the castles Židovina on the Ivančica, Počitelj in Lika, or Paka on the western slopes of Mount Kalnik.⁴² However, the data is not clear enough to draw a reliable conclusion. Therefore, we leave this question open.

Before the southeastern facade of the stone building lies a smallish semicircular plateau, which stretches gently from the stone building in the northwest to the edge of the plateau in the southeast. This was once the fortified courtyard of the core. Since there are no traces of stone architecture on the rock base, it is highly likely that this part of the Kamenica defensive complex was enclosed with a wooden wall or palisade.⁴³

The entrance into the courtyard was likely located next to the southern or eastern corner of the stone building, so as to give it further protection from the top of the tower. Namely, an entrance next to the stone buildings (keep, fortified house) was one of the most common types of castle entrances in the second half of the 13th century.⁴⁴ The door was likely accessed via a wooden construction with a stairway from the top of the walls, which was perhaps connected to the core by a drawbridge.

4.2. The bailey

Unlike the core, the bailey has preserved its earthen rampart almost completely; it encircles the core of Kamenica. When it was built, a deep defensive ditch was formed on its inner side, while the hill became much steeper on its outer side. The rampart or wall looks like the letter V in profile, and its top was wide enough to fit an access trail, which led in a semicircular pattern from the end of the ramp to the core's entrance.

It is also possible that the top of the earthen rampart or wall was fortified with a palisade, as was the case with the medieval castles Budim near Karlovac,

ših obdobjih v Kostanjevici in okolici, *Vekov tek, Kostanjevica na Krki 1252–2002, Zbornik ob 750. obletnici prve listinske omembe mesta*, Kostanjevica na Krki 2003, 41–54; Katarina Predovnik, Des Landes Trost: Burgen am Rande des Reiches, *Archäologie Österreichs Spezial 2*, (ur. Martin Krenn, Alexandra Krenn-Lebb), *Castrum Bene 8*, Burg und Funktion, Wien 2006., 117–127; Igor Sapač, Verbindungen zwischen Topographie und Typologie der Burgen in Slowenien. Einfluss der Terraineomorphologie auf die Gestaltung und Entwicklung der mittelalterlichen Burgen in Slowenien, *Castrum Bene 9 (Burg und ihr Bauplatz)*, Praha 2006, 409–424.

⁴² Krešimir Filipec, Neznani srednjovekovni grad na gori Ivančici, Arheološki institut, *Opis-cvta archaeologica*, (1999) 23/24, 353–361; Zorislav Horvat, Fortifikacijska arhitektura 13. stoljeća i burg Paka, in: *Burg Paka*, Varaždin 2021, 163–188.

⁴³ An almost identical case is found in the castle Židovina. K. Filipec, Neznani srednjovekovni grad na gori Ivančici, 353–361.

⁴⁴ Z. Horvat, Ulazi u burgove 12–15. stoljeća, *Prostor*, 6(1998) 1/2, 49–50.

Prepoštija (Pogana Gradina near Doljanovac in Slavonia) and Blaguša and Gradišće near Kašina.⁴⁵

The entrance to the bailey was very likely build on its northern side, immediately below the northwestern facade of the stone building, since the fortified suburb is located on this site, separated by a deep ditch from the access trail with its artificially formed earthen access ramp.⁴⁶

4.3. The suburb

Apart from its defensive and residential buildings, every castle contained a series of economic buildings, usually made from wood. In large castle, these were found within the outer ring of their walls, i.e. their wards. In smaller castles, such buildings were found outside the curtain walls, along an access trail next to the castle. Due to the exceptionally cramped space of the Kamenica castle and the rather small width of its earthen access ramp, which was too small for housing buildings, it is highly



Stone building, viewed from the east (N. Milčić, 2008.)

⁴⁵ Zorislav Horvat and Ivan Mirnik, *Graditeljstvo srednjeg vijeka u Požeškoj kotlini, Požega 1227–1977*, Slavonska Požega 1977, 123–124; L. Dobronić, *Posjedi i sjedišta templara, ivanovaca i sepulkralaca u Hrvatskoj, Rad JAZU*, book 406, Zagreb 1984, 106–107; Lazo Čučković, *Autocesta naša svagdašnja, Karlovački list*, (1997) 25. IX., 49; Željka Švigir, *Važnija cesta nego baština, Večernji list*, (1998) 17 October, 22; Stanko Andrić, *Podgorje Papuka i Krndije u srednjem vijeku: prilozi za lokalnu povijest (drugi dio), Scrimia Slavonica*, 9(2009), 88–90; Damir Fofić, *Primjena digitalnog modela reljefa (dmr) u otkrivanju arheoloških lokaliteta, info brošura*, (2014) 31, 4–8; Mladen Obad-Šćitaroci, Marko Rukavina, Ksenija Petrić, Tin oberman, Damir Fofić, *Studija zaštite i prezentacijskog potencijala arheološkog nalazišta Kuzelin i bliskih arheoloških nalazišta* (elaborat), Zagreb 2015, 98–100.

⁴⁶ Similar access ramps are found in Blaguša Castle near Sesvete and Garić-Grad on Mount Moslavina. Zorislav Horvat, *Burgologija: srednjovjekovni utvrđeni gradovi kontinentalne Hrvatske*, Zagreb 2014, 326–328.



Stone building, viewed from the north (N. Milčić, 2008.) (*above*)
Defensive access ramp/footbridge, viewed from the southeast (N. Milčić, 2008.) (*below*)

likely that the economic buildings of the Kamenica castle (stables, barns, blacksmith's workshop, livestock food stores, etc.) were located at the foot of the castle, at the beginning of the approaching trail, which went in a semicircular direction over the eastern and southern slopes of the hill and towards the approaching ramparts.

5. Typology considerations

Although it is today impossible to determine a precise and comprehensive layout of the historical and architectural development of Kamenica Castle without clearing the terrain and conducting at least partial archaeological excavations, and therefore also impossible to clearly determine the type of the castle and the time it was built, certain conclusions can be drawn after analysis of the existing remains and analogies with other extant ruins.

Kamenica is a typical example of a castle with a courtyard castle type layout, of the kind that were often built during the 13th and 14th centuries in the Romanesque period on the brinks of extended ridges, in order to maximise the natural defensive characteristics of the terrain upon which they lay.

These were smaller castles, and their walls, together with their fortified houses, enclosed the space upon which they were built in the form of irregular geometrical shapes, usually squares, rectangles, and trapeziums.⁴⁷ This subgroup of castles includes the cores of Veliki Kalnik, Paka, Lobar, Stari Grad in Krapina, Vrbovec, Grebengrad, Trakošćan, Oštrc, Kostel, Mali Kalnik, Belec, and Cesargrad.⁴⁸ The second basic characteristic of these castles is their lack of a keep, which were substituted by fortified houses. The only exceptions are Trakošćan and Oštrc, which received keeps later.⁴⁹

However, while most such castles in the Croatian Zagorje had stone curtain walls and fortified houses, this was not the case in Kamenica, since the walls in its courtyard were most likely made from wood.⁵⁰ Despite this difference, the organisational scheme of Kamenica Castle is in no way different from the common scheme

⁴⁷ Z. Horvat, Položaji burgova, 45.

⁴⁸ Zdenko Balog, O najranijoj povijesti trakošćanske utvrde, *Muzejski vjesnik*, 15(1992) 15, 83–84; Zorislav Horvat, Pozicije burgova tijekom 13.–15. stoljeća, *Prostor*, 16(2008) 1, 22–39; Ibid., Stilska stratigrafija burgova 13.–15. st. u kontinentalnoj Hrvatskoj, *Prostor*, 18(2010) 1, 42–61; Ibid., Fortifikacijska arhitektura 13. stoljeća, 178–182.

⁴⁹ Z. Balog, O najranijoj povijesti trakošćanske utvrde, 83–84.

⁵⁰ Otto Piper, *Burgenkunde*, München 1912, 106–118, 236–247; I. Stopar, *Razvoj srednjeveške grajske arhitekture*, 24–45; Zorislav Horvat, Pozicije burgova tijekom, 27–28; Z. Horvat and T. Tkalčec, Arhitektura i arhitektonska plastika, 188; Z. Horvat, *Burgologija*, 42–45; K. Regan, *Srednjovjekovne i renesanse utvrde*, 385.



Hypothetical reconstruction of the castle in the first half of the 15th century
(Krešimir Regan, 2021.)

of this sort of complex in the Croatian Zagorje in the second half of the 13th and the early 14th century.⁵¹ Although we cannot at this stage of our knowledge of Kamenica Castle reliably determine that the remains of the stone building belong to the fortified house rather than the keep, judging by the ratio of the length and width of the building and the internal organisation of its space, it is more likely that it was a fortified house.⁵²

In time, the castles based on courtyard castles became too small, which forced their owners to extensively adapt them to the new way of life and war. This was not the case with Kamenica Castle.

Although we today do not know the reasons for this, the halt in the further architectural development of Kamenica resulted in its legal degradation from a *castrum* to a *castellum*, i.e. into a castle of the lowest order, in the mid-15th century. Was the cause of this a loss of geostrategic importance in relation to the neighbouring castles in Lepoglava and Trakošćan, fire damage after a lightning strike, or human neglect, i.e. neglect in its maintenance, which finally led to the disintegration of its curtain walls due to rotting, will remain indeterminable until archaeological research has been conducted.

However, while the core of Kamenica bears all the characteristics of the courtyard castle type, all of its other defensive components are akin to those of a motte-type castle.⁵³ Namely, these types of castles appear in the Croatian Zagorje at the same time as courtyard castles, and the impetus for their construction en masse may have been the Mongol invasion of the Hungarian-Croatian kingdom in 1240–41.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Zorislav Horvat, Stambeni prostori u burgovima 13.-15. stoljeća u kontinentalnoj Hrvatskoj, *Prostor*, 17(2009) 1, 34, 37 (fig. 6); Zorislav Horvat, *Burgologija*, 138–151; Zorislav Horvat, Fortifikacijska arhitektura 13. stoljeća 163–184.

⁵² Otto Piper, *Burgenkunde*, 236–247; I. Stopar, *Razvoj srednjeveške grajske arhitekture*, 74–94; Tomáš Durdík, Donjon, *Ilustrovaná encyklopedie Českých hradů*, Praha 2000, 117–118; Christopher Gravett, Christopher Gravett, *Norman Stone Castles (1)*, Oxford 2003, 10–22; Ibid., *Norman Stone Castles (2)*, Oxford 2004, 9–21; Tom McNeill, *Castles*, London 2006, 42–70; R. Vučetić, Prilog razvoju i tipologiji kurija u kontinentalnoj Hrvatskoj, 415–425; D. Čikara, Single-Space Manor Houses, 381–392.

⁵³ *Mottes* are typical medieval castles, which first became common on the territory of what are now France and the UK, and spread from there throughout Europe. László, Gerő *Magyarországi várépítészet*, Budapest 1955, 104–105; T. Tkalčec, *Arheološka slika obrambenog sustava srednjovjekovne Slavonije* (doctoral thesis), Zagreb 2008, 102; István Feld, Das burgentypologische System von László Gerő, *Castrum Bene*, II. Mátrafüred, 2009, 6–17; Tatjana Tkalčec, Earthwork Elements of Defensive Systems of Small Strongholds in the Kingdom of Slavonia, *Fortifications, defence systems, structures and features in the past/ Fortifikacije, obrambeni sustavi i strukture u prošlosti* (eds. Tkalčec, Tatjana; Sekelj Ivančan, Tajana; Krznar, Siniša; Belaj, Juraj), Zagreb 2019, 333–342.

⁵⁴ Erik Fügedi, *Castles and society in medieval Hungary (1000-1437)*, Budapest 1986, 42–64; K. Regan, *Srednjovjekovne i renesansne utvrde*, 385.

This group of castles is characterised by a man-made earthen eminence in the form of a truncated cone with an oval or circular base, encircled by one or more rings of defensive rampart and ditches. A fence of sharpened stakes (palisade) along the edge of the mound surrounded a smaller courtyard at the top of the cone, within which a large wooden tower, i.e. the keep, was located, while the economic buildings were located outside the castle or in the outer fortified courtyard.

These castles were of a standard type found throughout Europe.⁵⁵ Although they were small by area, their basic advantage compared to other types of castles was that a small number of people could build them very quickly because they were built from easily accessible materials: wood and earth.

Since Kamenica Castle has almost all the characteristics of both groups, it is not clear whether this complex was first built as a motte-type castle, with a characteristic conical eminence upon which a wooden keep stood, and was later replaced with a stone and timber courtyard castle, or was Kamenica first built as a courtyard castle on the edge of the eminence's ridge, and later enclosed by an earthen wall and defensive ditch with a fence made of sharpened stakes (palisade). It is also possible that everything was built at the same time, exactly what it looks like nowadays.

Unfortunately, the data is not clear enough for us to draw a definite conclusion. Therefore, the definition of the original Kamenica as a courtyard castle should be seen as a working hypothesis, which can only be confirmed (or refuted) after archaeological research has been done. Let us leave the question open.

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TVRDI GRAD KAMENICA U HRVATSKOM ZAGORJU

Krešimir Regan

Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, Zagreb

kresimir.regan@gmail.com

SAŽETAK: U radu se razmatra višestoljetna povijest tvrdoga grada Kamenice iznad istoimenoga naselja u Hrvatskom zagorju nedaleko od Lepoglave. U dokumentima se prvi put spominje 1311. Nju je najkasnije tijekom druge polovice XIII. st. izgradio nepoznati zagorski plemić kao utvrđenu rezidenciju i sjedište istoimenoga posjeda. Između 1399. i 1405. Kamenica je prešla u posjed Hermana II. Celjskog, čiji su potomci njome gospodarili sve do 1456. Iako nam vrela izravno ne svjedoče o propasti Kamenice, ona je vrlo vjerojatno stradala u ratu za celjsku baštinu prije 1459., kada se prvi put spominje kao srušena utvrda. Tada ju je kao ruševinu kralj Matija Korvin darovao Janu Vitovcu. Za vladavine Vitovaca (1459–88) Kamenica je zauvijek napuštena, a njezini posjedi sjedinjeni su sa susjednim trakošćanskim posjedima u jedinstveno Trakošćansko-kameničko vlastelinstvo s formalnim sjedištem u Trakošćanu, a stvarnim u utvrđenom dvorcu Klenovniku. Postojeći skromni arhitektonski elementi prikazuju nam Kamenicu kao manji tvrđi grad (*castrum*) iz druge polovice XIII. st. Sastojao se od jezgre trapezoidnoga tlocrta na vrhu strma stožastoga uzvišenja, koju je činio zidani utvrđeni palas s manjim dvorištem, utvrđenim drvenim bedemom (palisadom), te utvrđenog predgrada kružnoga tlocrta, podignutoga oko jezgre kombinacijom drvenih bedema (palisada) i zemljanih nasipa.

Ključne riječi: Kamenica; tvrđi grad (*castrum*); srednji vijek; Celjski; Vitovac; Hrvatsko zagorje



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