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CASTLE STUDIES

ANTI-TURKISH CASTLES IN BANOVINA
AT THE END OF THE 15TH AND THE BEGINNING
OF THE 16TH CENTURY

KAŠTELOLOGIJA

PROTUTURSKI KAŠTELI NA BANOVINI
KRAJEM 15. I POČETKOM 16. STOLJEĆA

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Publishers: UPI-2M PLUS and the Faculty of Architecture,
University of Zagreb, Zagreb, 2020181 pages, preface, catalogue, literature,
about the author
[26×21 cm, b/w, paperback, Croatian]Reviewers: Zlatko Karac, Milan Kruhek, Ariana Štulhofer
Editor: Ariana Štulhofer
Design: Saša Stubičar
Proofreader: Mira Pavlica-StojčevićISBN 978-953-7703-48-6
CIP 001065766 [NSK Zagreb]

At the end of the 15th century, due to the appearance of gunpowder and artillery, the previous ways of warfare with cold weapons were abandoned. New types of fortifications, now designed for active defence against invaders, were built. The fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia in 1463, and the impending Ottoman aggression on Croatian lands coincided with new fortification needs and constructions, especially between Velebit, Una and Kupa. The Hundred Year's Croatian-Ottoman War, beginning with the defeat in the Battle of Krbava Field in 1493 and ending with the victory at the Battle of Sisak in 1593, marked a period when the Croatian nobility was building a series of new or remodelling old fortifications to defend their estates. The lower nobility built numerous lost wooden castles or masonry pseudo-castles intended primarily for defence against smaller *martolos* troops, while the higher nobility built larger and better-equipped castles or improved older *burgs* (medieval noble towns) to protect and defend from major Ottoman attacks. In the middle of the 16th century, the Military Frontier defence system was consolidated. The War Council in Graz sent Captain Ivan Lenković on a tour of the new castles and old *burgs* in the Croatian Military Frontier. Based on military logic, Lenković concluded that some smaller *burgs* and castles should be abandoned and demolished in order not to fall into Ottoman hands and be used in further warfare. The new fortifications had to be built in strategically important places and be large enough for the concentration of military force. That is why, for example, the renaissance fortifications of Sisak and Karlovac were built. The Croatian Parliament opposed the abandonment and destruction of smaller fortifications because that would leave the local population without any protection.

All these circumstances led to the dynamic architectural changes in the Croatian border areas facing the Ottoman Empire. In a relatively short period of time, from the end of the 15th and during the 16th century, a large

number of fortifications were built and improved. Those fortifications are mostly neglected today, but they still convey the identity of previously mentioned border areas.

All these changes in fortification buildings are described in Zorislav Horvat's new book called "Castle studies - Anti-Turkish Castles in Banovina at the End of the 15th and the Beginning of the 16th Century". This book is the sixth authors' book and can be seen as a direct temporal continuation of the previous "Burg Studies" (2014) in which the author analysed a period from the 13th to the end of the 15th century, i.e. the period of cold weapons and the construction of *burgs*. "Castle Studies", as well as its literary predecessor, makes systematic presentation of the theme of fortification architecture, only this time from the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century and, once again, provides excellent graphic design and presentation of the theme thanks to designer Saša Stubičar and editor Ariana Štulhofer.

The introductory chapter of "Castle Studies" provides a synthetic insight into the peculiarities of castles. An overview of architectural models in Italy and Central Europe, and an overview of the first appearances in Croatian regions are provided. Defense specifics, which now place emphasis on active defence with the development of long-range combat and the defence of the building from the security of towers and walls, are thoroughly analysed. Defenders from the safety of the castle secure the surrounding terrain with cross-bows or firearms so that each point of the surrounding terrain is defended from at least two openings of the castle. An overview of the building elements of the castle is given, and a typological classification is provided.

The foundation of the book lays in the following seven chapters, which are structured according to the previously published scientific articles by the same author. The articles were published continuously from 1993 to 2014, and were supplemented and adapted for the

purposes of this publication. In those seven chapters, the author thematically deals with individual sites (such as Hrastovica and castles on the northern slopes of Zrinska gora or castles of the Zrinski family in the late 15th and 16th centuries in the Pounje region), people (such as the fortifications of Bernardin Frankopan), or types of building (such as pseudo-castles). In the last chapter, a catalogue of twelve castles not mentioned in earlier chapters is given. The castles of the author's interest are located in the areas of Banovina, Kordun, Pokuplje and Lika. Each chapter is well equipped with historical maps, field photographs and architectural drawings (which sums up to the total of 191 illustrations in the book). The author's decades-long field research of the presented sites is of exceptional value, which is reflected in the author's architectural documentation presented in the book.

"Castle Studies", like the author's previous publications, shows an immense architectural erudition based on a lifelong study of the feudal fortification architecture of the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance. The defensive structures presented in the book provide a view of the materialization of ideas from an important part of Croatian history when Croatia was the *Antemurale Christianitatis*. Castles and other fortifications are a testament to the spirit and perseverance of builders and defenders on the border between the two worlds. The book targets, not only architects, but also art historians, archaeologists, general historians, conservators, and also students and the general cultural public.

Castle Studies makes an exceptional contribution to the potential reconstruction of the Banovina region which was hit by the recent earthquake. Numerous castles analysed in the book have been rapidly deteriorating even though they represent an immeasurable cultural, economic and tourist development potential. May this book lead the light to uncover their full potential.

