

Brinje, Sokolac Castle

The castle in Brinje, also known as Sokolac, is one of the most important preserved castles in Croatia, and the former seat of the Counts of Krk. According to historical events and representative buildings, it is a valuable part of Croatian cultural heritage, as well as the political, economic, and cultural centre of Lika.

Archival documents mention Brinje for the first time in 1343, in letters of Bartol VII, and it has been associated with the Frankopan family ever since. At the beginning of the 15th century, Nikola IV built a new fort on the hill in the centre of the settlement. Archaeological excavations have confirmed the remains of a hillfort settlement from the early Iron Age, as well as a residential building from the first half of the 13th century. Frankopan castle was entered from the west through a high entrance tower. The central area consisted of an irregular courtyard with a *palas* on the north side, outbuildings on the south side, and the Gothic chapel of the Holy Trinity on the east. Over time, a settlement developed under the fortified town, probably protected by a wall or palisade.

Brinje was the property of members of the Frankopan family until 1528, with a brief interruption during the reign of King Matthias Corvinus. In 1536, it became part of a system of forts of the Military Frontier. The architecture of the castle changed over time and adapted to new military needs and functions. A smaller, square tower was erected at the entrance to the settlement below

the fort, and the entire ring around the hill was fortified with walls and half towers.

Despite its primary defensive purpose, residential and religious spaces were built in the city in the 17th century. In 1663, a wooden, carved and gilded altar in the Mannerism style was built in the shrine of the Holy Trinity Chapel. A particularly valuable Gothic statue of Virgin and Child, attributed to the Czech cultural circle and dated around 1420, the era of “soft style” and “beautiful Madonnas”, was added to the second storey niche. The sculpture probably arrived in Brinje through family ties between high nobility and contacts with the royal house of Sigmund of Luxembourg, and the origin of the stone polychrome gothic *Pietà*, located on the late Renaissance altar dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows in the side chapel, is interpreted in the same way.

The castle of Brinje was abandoned even before the Military Frontier was abolished at the end of the 19th century, and it started to deteriorate quickly. It was also severely damaged in the 1917 earthquake, and in the collapse of the western façade of the chapel in 1963.

The renovation of Sokolac Castle and the chapel of the Holy Trinity has been under way since the 1960's. In addition to archaeological and conservation research, and documentation, the funds of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia in cooperation with the Conservation Department in Gospić and the Municipality of Brinje were used for demanding construction and restoration carried out since 1984 by the Conservation Institute of Croatia (later Croatian Conservation Institute). The reconstruction of the chapel was completed in 2009, and a permanent exhibition. The reconstruction of the Frankopan tower and the conservation of the movable inventory from the chapel of the Holy Trinity was completed in 2019.

All work that will be carried out in the future, based on the valorisation of the results of all the research that has been carried out, will be used to present other parts of the Castle in Brinje, which will contribute to the preservation and recognition of the valuable immovable cultural property.



Brinje, Stari grad Sokolac

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Stari grad u Brinju, poznat i kao Sokolac, jedan je od važnijih sačuvanih plemićkih gradova u Hrvatskoj, sjedište krčkih knezova. I prema povijesnim događajima i prema reprezentativnoj gradnji, vrijedno je kulturno dobro, ujedno stoljećima političko, gospodarsko i kulturno središte prostora današnje Like.

U arhivskim dokumentima Brinje se prvi put spominje 1343. godine u pismima Bartola VII., i od tada je povezano s obitelji Frankopan. Početkom 15. stoljeća Nikola IV. na uzvisini u središtu naselja dao je izgraditi novu utvrdu. Na tom mjestu arheološkim su istraživanjima potvrđeni ostaci naselja gradinskog tipa iz starijeg željeznog doba, kao i stambenog objekta iz prve polovice 13. stoljeća. Frankopanskom starom gradu pristupalo se sa zapada, kroz visoku ulaznu kulu. Središnji prostor činilo je nepravilno dvorište koje je sa sjeverne strane zatvarao palas, na južnoj strani nalazile su se gospodarske zgrade, a na istočnoj gotička kapela Svetog Trojstva. Ispod utvrđenoga grada s vremenom se razvilo podgrađe, vjerojatno zaštićeno zidom ili palisadom.

Sve do 1528. godine Brinje je, uz kraći prekid tijekom vladavine kralja Matije Korvina, bilo u posjedu članova obitelji Frankopan, a 1536. postalo je dijelom sustava utvrda Vojne krajine. S vremenom se arhitektura staroga grada mijenjala i prilagođavala novim vojnim potrebama i funkcijama, pa je na ulazu u podgrađe podignuta manja, četverokutna kula, a cijeli prsten oko uzvisine utvrđen je zidinama i polukulama.

Unatoč prvenstvenoj obrambenoj svrsi, u gradu se i u 17. stoljeću uređuju stambeni, ali i sakralni prostori. U svetištu kapele Svetog Trojstva 1663. godine postavljen je drveni, rezbareni i pozlaćeni oltar manirističkih stilskih obilježja. U nišu njegova drugog kata uklopljen je osobito vrijedan gotički kip Bogorodice s Djetetom koji se pripisuje češkom kulturnom krugu i datira u vrijeme oko 1420. godine, u doba „mekog stila“ i „lijepih Madona“. Smatra se da je skulptura u Brinje dospjela najvjerojatnije putem rodbinskih veza među visokim plemstvom i doticajima s kraljevskom kućom Žigmunda Luksemburškog, a na isti način tumači se i podrijetlo

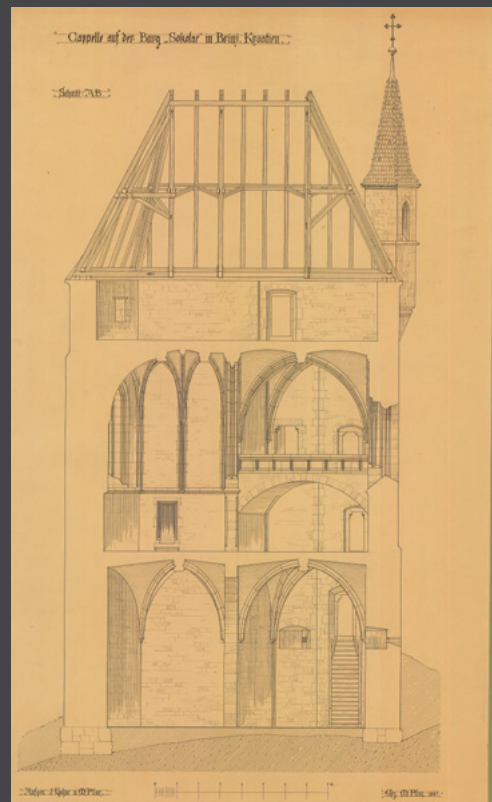
kamene polikromirane gotičke *Pietà*, koja se nalazi na kasnorenesansnom oltaru bočne kapele, posvećenom Žalosnoj Gospi.

Stari grad u Brinju napušten je još prije raspuštanja Vojne krajine potkraj 19. stoljeća i od tada počinje njegovo ubrzano propadanje. Znatno je stradao i u potresu 1917. te u urušavanju zapadnog pročelja kapele 1963. godine.

Obnova brinjskog Sokolca i kapele Svetog Trojstva kontinuirano traje od šezdesetih godina prošloga stoljeća. Uz arheološka i konzervatorsko-restauratorska istraživanja i izradu dokumentacije, sredstvima Ministarstva kulture RH i u suradnji s Konzervatorskim odjelom u Gospiću i Općinom Brinje, izvode se zahtjevni građevinski i restauratorski radovi, koje je od 1984. godine vodio Restauratorski zavod Hrvatske (poslije Hrvatski restauratorski zavod). Godine 2009. dovršena je rekonstrukcija kapele i u njoj je otvorena trajna izložba, a u 2019. godini dovršeni su radovi konstruktivne sanacije frankopanske kule te konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na pokretnom inventaru kapele Svetog Trojstva.

Budućim radovima, temeljem valorizacije rezultata svih provedenih istraživanja, prezentirat će se i ostali dijelovi Staroga grada u Brinju, što će pridonijeti očuvanju i prepoznatljivosti toga vrijednog nepokretnog kulturnog dobra.





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