Forts and castles

Čakovec - Jastrebarsko - Karlovac
Koprivnica - Krapina - Samobor - Sisak
Varaždin - Velika Gorica - Zagreb
Contents

4 ČAKOVEC
6 JASTREBARSKO
8 KARLOVAC
10 KOPRIVNICA
12 KRAPINA
14 SAMOBOR
16 SISAK
18 VARAŽDIN
20 VELIKA GORICA
22 ZAGREB
The history of continental Croatia, the interesting Late Middle Ages in particular, has not yet been exploited sufficiently for tourist purposes.

The end of the 15th century, and especially the entire 16th century, were the times of discovering new worlds and West European growth and progress. The area of modern day Croatia was suffering persistent persecutions from the Turkish Empire in its heyday. One of their principal targets was the royal Vienna, which they tried to reach by a series of forceful invasions through Hungarian Empire and Croatia.

Towns of Eastern Croatia are succumbing to forceful sieges on a daily basis, and the survivors are running towards the west, to the so-called ‘Bulwark of Christianity’ or even further towards the countries of the Habsburg Empire.

The area of ‘Bulwark of Christianity’ stretched from the Adriatic to Ukraine, and a vital part of that long geographical belt was Northern Croatia. The most important strategic points were surely fortified cities and castles which could be found all over the area. While western Europeans were building summer houses, churches and profane objects, Croats had to build fortifications - fortified castles and cities, most of them in Northern Croatia. Locations and the grids of the palisades, walls or trenches were bases of development and expansion of almost all of the towns in this area, while some of them are still well preserved and generally represent the oldest and historically most valuable constructions. As such they are definitely arousing the interest of visitors, imagination and curiosity for mystical times long gone.

Most of the towns and forts in this brochure are predominantly burg type, located on stone cliffs or hills (e.g. Gradec, Kaptol, Medvedgrad, Samobor, Krapina etc.), and a smaller number are the so-called ‘Wasserburg’ type, towns and forts perched over a wetland surrounded by water (e.g. Koprivnica, Varaždin, Karlovac etc.).

Various manifestations and re-enactments of historical events are being held regularly in some of these towns. Namely in the village of Dubovec, and in the towns of Samobor, Veliki Tabor, Đurđevac. The biggest historical re-enactment takes place in Koprivnica, on a Renaissance fortification. This brochure aims to demonstrate only the history of larger towns and the nearest and most prominent forts in order to present the possibility of tourist excursions for individuals or groups with a taste for this kind of culture tourism.
In the very centre of Međimurje region, where ancient Romans built the Aquama resort, the town of Čakovec found its place. Historical yearbooks from the 13th century mentioned the wooden ‘Tower of Čak’, as the predecessor of the town and its name. The Zrinski noble family and other 16th and 17th century lords made it a luxurious, yet invincible fort, one that later became the origin of a free royal city. Sheltered by the green embrace of the Zrinski garden from 1901 which reminds us of old Italian gardens on properties of the Zrinski family, the heart of nature and history in this accommodating town still beats vigorously thanks to top-notch communications, cutting-edge infrastructure, astonishing horticulture, propulsive economy, dynamic cultural and sport contents, all perfect reasons for a comfy life of twenty thousand inhabitants.

## Fun Facts

Around the entire old town complex there is a spacious garden, known as the ‘Zrinski Garden’. Alongside town’s historical nucleus, tourists can enjoy an excellent gastronomical offer, sports and excursion activities, exciting night life and attractive events all year long, which has been recognized from various sides so Čakovec received the ‘Green Flower’ award for the tidiest continental town in 2008 from the Croatian National Tourist Board.

### INFO

Čakovec Tourist Board  
Kralja Tomislava 1  
Tel: 040/313-319  
Fax: 040/310-991  
E-mail: tzg-cakovca@ck.t-com.hr  
Web: www.tourism-cakovec.hr
The name Čakovec was first mentioned in 1334 legal dictum. Supposedly, its location is a place where Dimitrije Čak, the count of the Međimurje region in the 13th century, built a wooden fortress. In the year 1350, ban Stjepan 1st Lacković of Čakovec becomes the governor of the Međimurje region. Later, in the year 1546, the region fell into the hands of the Zrinski family, which gave birth to numerous bans and warlords, politicians, diplomats, distinguished poets, writers, architects, fine art and science connoisseurs, collectors. Nikola Zrinski of Sziget and Nikola Zrinski of Čakovec were European famous for their endeavours in and beyond Croatia. Becoming the headquarters of numerous Zrinski family members, marked the beginning of a construction revolution in Čakovec, which brought forth the Castrum (formerly the property of the Ernušt family that was transformed into a modern Renaissance fort and a cosy home for the Zrinski counts). The palace and the fort were thoroughly renovated by the Bohemian Althan counts, after the Earthquake in 1738. The new monumental two-story palace with inner courtyard maintained its baroque appearance until today. Count Feštetić of Tolna and his family who reigned until 1923 were the last feudal lairs of the Čakovec manor and utilised a part of the palace as a sugar factory. In the World War II, the north wing of the palace was severely damaged so between 1945 and 1948, repairing the devastation was performed. By opening of the museum in 1954 and later expansion to the rest of the palatial grounds, the Međimurje Museum became the proprietor of the old town and now takes care of its renovation.
The town of Jastrebarsko, often popularly called Jaska, is located around 30 km south-west from Croatian capital Zagreb, on the slopes of Plešivica Mountain in the Zagreb County. Together with related settlements, Jastrebarsko counts just over 17,000 inhabitants. It was first mentioned in the year 1249, as the County’s judicial and trade centre. Already in 1257, king Bela IV of Hungary proclaimed it a free royal market. Jastrebarsko and its countryside are a popular excursion destination thanks to its wonderful scenery, natural reservations, cultural and historical monuments, famous wines by winemakers of Jaska and region’s gourmet specialties. The traditional manifestation of tourism and economy, ‘Jaska wine festival’ promotes the region’s wine-making and winemakers for over two decades and announces the forthcoming vintage.

Oršić Castle

In the tame, green corner of Slavetić, a region laced with orchards, vineyards and flowery meadows, across the 400 years old parish church of St. Anthony the Hermit stands the Oršić counts’ castle. The old town was first mentioned in 1294 as part of Podgora County, and after changing several owners, becomes the Oršić’s property from 1468 to 1869, when Levin Rauch becomes the next owner.

What was originally built as a medieval burg with a protection tower and a palace became a spacious castle in further refurbishments and upgrades from the 16th to the 18th century. The Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque elements show different phases in construction. This intricate complex comprising several buildings of different purposes boxes in a large common inner courtyard. The year 1639 is carved above the entrance.

Some of the historical treasures preserved in the castle are a 17th century furnace, a framed fireplace and valuable portraits. Today, the castle is a private property.
Fun facts

The city museum of Jatrebarsko takes pride in its castle exhibition and the collection consisting of Erdödy family’s historical items, such as photos, hunting utensils and a trophy collection of count Stjepan Erdödy, a passionate huntsman and a pioneer of Jaska photography. Jastrebarsko is the first Croatian continental town with a website where you can take a look at digital landscape photos, so apart from the photos of the castle and the park taken in bird’s eye view, you can take a virtual walk around the park and the Erdödy castle, a park architecture monument.

Erdödy castle is the oldest preserved culture monument in Jatsrebarsko. Originally it was a ‘Wasserburg’ - a type of a lowland fortification, surrounded by water, embedded and planted with greenery today, but still visible in the shape of the landscape. The Erdödy castle witnessed the time of feudal shifts from medieval burgs on the hills and a brand new lifestyle organisation in the lowlands. According to archive data, the kaštel (castle) was built by Matija Gereb, the ban between the years 1483 and 1489. The building of the castle removed the headquarters of the governors from Lipovac manor to Jastrebarsko. The Erdödy family became legal owners of the castle in the first half of the 16th century along with the rest of the Lipovac government, until the year 1922. The castle dwells in the middle of a beautiful old park, a park architecture monument. The structure of the castle is rectangular, perched over a hill slope and was once surrounded by trenches. The wings of the castle are of different heights with two impressive circular towers boxing in the highest one. Inner courtyard with amazing acoustics is decorated by an arcade porch and Baroque pillars. Croatian ban Toma Erdödy put up a placard hung at the left side of the exit in 1592.

Soon to be completely renovated, the Erdödy Castle is surrounded by a lovely English style park, a much beloved Jaska promenade.

INFO

Jastrebarsko
Tourist Board
Vladka Mačeka 1,
10450 Jastrebarsko
Tel: 01 6272 940
Fax: 01 6272 940
E-mail: info@tzgj.hr
Web: www.tzgj.hr
Karlovac is a central Croatian town, located only 56 kilometres from Zagreb and 130 kilometres from Rijeka. It is an intersection of vital road and rail routes of Pannonia and maritime Croatia, at the juncture of 4 rivers, which made it an important geographic station in the course of history. The town of Karlovac is a relatively young settlement and its date of birth is July 13th 1579. It was erected with a purpose of defence from the Turkish conquerors, and it was given the former name Karlstadt honouring its founder Charles, the vice duke of Austria. The unique city core, shaped like a six-pointed star with regular geometrical plan of the streets and city-blocks and a central square, is the top of the contemporary architecture and fortification art.

The government of Karlovac town was formed in 1778, and in 1781, Emperor Joseph the second presented it a free royal city bull. At the transition of 19th and 20th century, it was decided that urban palaces, parks and promenades are to be built around the rim of the fortress. That appearance remained until today and they are a much beloved gathering site of the citizens as well as an astonishing sight to look at. Karlovac is truly a rare sight and a phenomenon in European history as an ideal Renaissance town formed and a symmetrical hexagon bastion fortress, all in one.
Old town Dubovac

Dubovac Old town is perched on the top of a hill overlooking modern day Karlovac, representing one of the most beautiful and best preserved feudal architecture monuments in Croatia. Although it came into existence a bit earlier, it was mentioned for the first time in the year 1339 in historical church documents, and 14th century onwards, it became a property of different aristocratic families. Most prominent proprietors were the Frankopan family, who gave the town its latest renaissance appearance of a gothic castle in the period of their reign from 1442 to 1550.

The layout of old town Dubovac is an asymmetrical shape with three circular towers and one rectangular tower on which the entrance was high above ground so people would enter with the help of a ladder, as was traditional in medieval towns. The ground floor of the Dubovac defence tower was once used as a dungeon. The old town had many roles throughout history, and has undergone various transformations and renewals, so nowadays it is as an attractive tourist excursion site, providing the opportunity for tours of the interior, lookout escalation and visiting the museum exhibition in the highest of towers.
The Koprivnica fortification may not be best preserved, however it is the most utilised fortification when it comes to events. Each year at the end of August and beginning of September, the biggest historical event and a spectacular show for the tourists in this part of Europe, takes place on the remains of Koprivnica fort. The RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL lasts for a few days and nights over which more than a thousand performers all over Europe collaborate to give an accurate re-enactment of life in the Late Middle Ages, Renaissance to be exact. You will see numerous knights, their tents and an amazing number of medieval manufacturers, merchants, feudal lairds and peasants, inn-keepers, cooks, thieves, fools, musicians, entertainers and other astonishing characters that will take you on a time travel into a mystical era long gone and somewhat forgotten. Unique nettle dishes and products of a plant that gave the name to this town are a special treat for all the festival visitors and travellers that come to Koprivnica on any given day of the year.
Market-town Koprivnica has become the most important settlement of the region already in the Middle Ages, all thanks to its convenient location on the intersection of ancient Roman routes extending in the valley of the Drava River and routes coming all the way from Hungary and the gate of Lepavina towards maritime Croatia.

What lies beneath the buildings and public areas on the surface of old Koprivnica town holds great secrets of this somewhat undiscovered town, at least when it comes to the Middle Ages. What used to be a medieval settlement holding the name of the Koprivnica creek and the omnipresent herb (nettle – cro. kopriva), carried immense importance for this part of North Croatia. Despite the lack of monumental forts, there was still an aristocratic castle, or the so-called kaštel, just like in any other significant settlement, market place or town. The town itself was first mentioned in 1272, whereas the Koprivnica creek goes back in documents to the year 1207. At that time, the town was probably still entrenched and surrounded by fragile wooden palisades, which were presumably the construction material of the aristocratic castrum itself. In time of the Mongol invasion in 1242 in particular, but also after that, when the long-lasting age of peace in almost entire Northern Croatia was about to end, such weak defence wasn’t sufficient against ruthless invaders.

The overall situation changed thoroughly in the 16th century, when the Turkish threat took an extraordinary turn. Existing fortifications, mostly made of wood at the time, are deconstructed according to plans into a modern renaissance fort which was supposed to avert the Turkish seizure, but also to protect the surrounding area, meaning the town of Varaždin, and eventually Graz and Vienna. So Koprivnica, once a magnificent Wasserburg type fort, came down to one bastion surrounded by walls in ruins, a trench and two ravelins with an armoury, which used to be called ‘Turska Vrata’ (Turkey’s door).

The anti-Turkish renaissance bastion fort in Koprivnica was, in the time of its construction, one of the biggest and most significant fortifications in the area between the Adriatic and Northern Hungary.

**Durđevac old town**

Durđevac old town is one of the best-preserved fortified towns in Croatia. The shape of the fort as it is today was obtained in 15th and 16th century, made famous by the legend of the cockerel. According to the legend, in 1552, the town defenders fired from the cannon the last remaining cockerel intended for dinner and thus drove away the starved Turkish soldiers.

**INFO**

Koprivnica Tourist Board

Trg bana J. Jelačića 7
Tel: 048/621-433
Fax: 048/623-178
E-mail: tzg-koprivnica@kc.t-com.hr
Web: www.koprivnicatourism.com
www.renesansnifestival.hr
The medieval burg on a steep rock above the Krapinčica river is a place where the legend about three brothers Čeh, Leh and Meh and their sister Vilina came about. It is a tragic love story about an unhappy romance between the Roman warlord and Vilina, who was punished by her brothers and later murdered by being immured to a stone wall of the Old Town. Out of vengeance, Romans drove the brothers away to the north of Europe, where cruel brothers founded the Slavic countries of Bohemia, Poland and Russia. The notorious fortress was shifted from one owner to another throughout history, the reasons being a purchase, a wedding or a donation. The dukes who reigned from that fort were the dukes of Celje, The Keglević family, the Drašković family, and the final proprietors, the Lichtenbergs and the Ottenfels. In the time of heaviest Turkish invasions (end of the 16th, beginning of the 17th century) this was the historical stage of five sessions of Croatian Parliament.
The writer Marija Jurić Zagorka spent her childhood in Šanjugovo, near Sveti Križ Začretje, because her father was an agent of the baronial lands. Wooden cottage Puhakovec, where the nobleman and distinguished politician Ivan pl. Kukuljević Sakcinski died, was also in close proximity of the estate. Baron Janko Vranyczany-Dobrinović kept his parade horse stables known throughout northern Croatia and beyond, nearby.

Veliki Tabor is a first-class monument of zero category, one of the best preserved medieval castles in Croatia and a representative of late-medieval fortification architecture, which has been dominating the Zagorje landscape for over 500 years and has its authentic appearance to thank for being one of the most famous symbols of Croatian Zagorje region.
Samobor Old Town

Samobor Old town is situated on the Tepec hill, albeit in a ruined state. It was built by the adherents of the Bohemian king Otokar around the year 1270. Out of all the parts of the old town, only the defence-tower is still standing. In the third decade of the 16th century the city started to be divided while during the 17th and the 18th century gets rebuilt and upgraded. Thus was formed the courtyard in the upper section whose two-sided fronts divided by porches in Tuscan style, while the interior is being luxuriously furnished. All that reconstruction helped the town in becoming closer to the appearance of a Baroque castle.

The life in the castle extended to the end of the 18th century, when the tenants started leaving. During the course of the century it changed numerous owners; the counts of Celje, The Frankopans, The Tržačkis, The Tahis, The Erdö dys, the Auerspergs, the Kulmers, the Kiepachs and the Montecuccolis from whom the council of Samobor bought the old town in 1902. Within the walls of the town there is the St. Anne’s chapel with a spectacular view of the Samobor town and its surroundings.

Okić Old Town

Okić Old Town was erected about 20 kilometres southwest from Zagreb, halfway from Samobor to Jastrebarsko, on the top of a pyramidal rock as one of the rare towns with such dominant position over a wide area. It is unique among other aristocratic medieval towns of continental Croatia not only because of its high level of preservation but also for its extraordinary importance for the architecture of Romanic era (11th-12th century).

The first time Okić was officially mentioned was in bishop Kalan’s legal documents, but it is assumed that the walls go back in time beyond that, all the way to the Illyrian tribes’ era, as an extraordinary watchtower for Roman legions and a primitive sort of alarming service, e.g. light and smoke signals.

Okić, the hometown of the Frankopans and the Erdö dys, was under the Turkish siege three times, under attack of different armies, but has never been conquered. Through eight centuries of its existence its sole rulers were the Croats.

Okić has an important role in Croatian mountaineering, literature, science, journalism and music, although this fact is not well-known among the Croatian folk. Today, Okić is an attractive destination for all forms of mountaineering, and is visited by numerous curiosity seekers, excursion lovers, huntsmen and mountaineers, the owners and keepsake holders of the town after the last member of the Erdö dys family passed away in 1922.
Fun Facts

In the year 1397 (or the year 1398 or even 1399, according to some sources), Old Town Samobor was governed by the Counts of Celje until 1496 (with the exception of year 1414, when they turned it over to Alben brothers, Ivan and Eberhard, for a short while), when the last count of Celje, Ulrich the 2nd was murdered. The legend has it that one of the governors was Barbara of Celje, known also as the Black Queen, a vicious countess able to get whatever she wanted and whichever man she desired. A progressive woman of the time was intelligent, sharp-witted and well acquainted with politics. According to the legend, Old Town was the place of many a wild party, and the Black Queen dabbled in alchemy. Bohemian alchemist Johann von Laaz was familiar with her activities which he published in his book Via Universalis, as well as with her tricking numerous merchants by paying them in fake gold instead of the real one.
Sisak is a historical town at the juncture of three rivers, the Odra, the Kupa and the Sava river. Sisak, whose traces of urban inhabitation go way back to the 4th century BC, falls unto the oldest settlements of Central Croatia. In a long line of famous people in the history of this town, the bishop and a Catholic martyr Quirinus of Siscia takes up the most important place as the patron saint of Sisak, his day befalling on June, 4th. Other famous symbol of this town is the old mill stone.

Tourist and historical events: Floral fair in May, Medieval tournament in June and the Celtic night in September.

Old Town fortress

The Old Town is a fortress where the Battle of Sisak took place. After numerous attempts of invasion, sieges and destruction, the Osman forces were stopped in the antic town Of Siscia on June 22nd, 1593, which disabled the Turkish invasion to other parts of Croatia and Central and Western Europe, thus Sisak became the most important defence point of North-West Croatia. The Old Town fortress is perched over the estuary of the Kupa river into the Sava river, its beauty amazing the visitors. The fortress is also a first class monument of zero category.
INFO
Tourist board of the city of Sisak
Rimska bb,
Tel.++385(0)44 522 655,
tel./fax++358(0)44 521 615
E-mail: tzg-siska@sk.htnet.hr
Web: www.sisakturist.com

FUN FACTS
The first wooden bridge on the Kupa river was built in 1862, connecting the civilian and the martial towns of Sisak (the right and the left bank of the Kupa). In the year 1934, another town symbol, the famous Old Bridge of Sisak made of traditional local construction material, stone and clay, was built.
VARAŽDIN

What makes Varaždin different from other towns is its extraordinary monumental and artistic heritage within the most preserved and exuberant Baroque urban whole. Besides the old town complex on a relatively small area, there are well-preserved Baroque, Rococo, Secession palaces and manors and one of the oldest town halls in Europe. On the intersection and in touch with each of the sides of the world, Varaždin is a bridge built by uncountable persons and their destinies. Noblemen, manufacturers, merchants and bourgeoisie – each of them contributed and put their stone in the wall to construct this astonishing town.

VARAŽDIN Old Town

An invincible medieval fortress on the outside, a renaissance aristocratic palace on the inside. The old town was being upgraded non-stop from the 13th to 16th century. In the 16th century, the owners, the Ungnad family, brought the Italian Renaissance architect Domenico dell’Allio and with his help reconstructed the town to a ‘Wasserburg’ – a water-town. The walls around the fortress in its entirety are being built, and the water from the nearby Drava river channelled to the trenches. In the course of the next few centuries, the old town becomes an invincible fortress of the Kingdom of Croatia. The old town enabled its proprietors and the inhabitants to prosper thanks to the protection provided by its trenches, cannons, soldiers and thick walls. The longest reigning owners in a long line of others were the Erdödy family. Since they were hereditary administrators of the Varaždin County, their coat of arms was approved by Queen Maria Theresa of Austria in 1763 as an official coat of arms of the County. In the year 1923, the city government purchased the fortress and set up a permanent museum exhibition in several chambers. Nowadays, the entire area of the old town is overtaken by the City museum of Varaždin, a must-see for every visitor, and the medieval bulwarks and trenches became a lovely green promenade for all the Varaždiners and their guests.

Fun Facts

The replicas of the old iron workshop signs (popularly called ‘cimer’), can still be seen on the streets of Varaždin. The Turtle sign in Gunduličeva street, forged in the heyday of applied arts guild, marked a 19th century groceries store. The Iron man sign on the King Tomislav square represented the ironworks, the Mermaid on the same square the colonial goods shop, and finally, the Horseshoe on the Mišlenko Stančić square stood for the blacksmith guild.
Standing proud on the top of a hill, like a fantasy, facing its reflection on the water of a private lake, this really is a fairy-tale castle. Life went on continuously here from 1334. While centuries had been going by, the castle went from one owner’s hands to another eventually to end up in the ownership of the Count Juraj Drašković the 6th, who decided to build a summer house on the remains of the ancient Trakošćan fortress. The construction stretched from 1840 to 1862, resulting in a magnificent neo-gothic castle perched over an artificial pond, surrounded by an English style park.

What is today the best preserved castle, would not be the case without the hardworking and persistent Mr Vilim Leskošek. Often called the good ghost of Trakošćan thanks to his decisiveness, Vilim helped Trakošćan avoid the fate of many castles, palaces and manor houses of the Zagorje Region. Strolling through the corridors and chambers furnished by Renaissance, Baroque, rococo and neo-classic style furniture pieces, the visitor gets the opportunity to sneak a peek in the life of the world long gone. Portraits of the Drašković family members painted by Mihael Stroj, an astounding neo-classic painter, witnessed the relationships of the local noblemen between the royal Vienna and other cultural centres of the time.
The name Turopolje and the Velika Gorica coat of arms all contain and old Slavic word ‘tur’ which means cattle with long horns, and it was a symbol of ‘fertility’ and the ‘God of Sun’. It is also believed that it is the origin of the name of the region itself.

The Velika Gorica town day falls on December 13th, the St. Lucy’s day, the local patron saint. Competing among 5300 European cities, Velika Gorica gained The Silver flower of Europe award – an award of the European Association for Flowers and Landscape Entente Florale. It was received on September 9th, 2004 in the French city of Aix-les-Bains.
Once you cross the threshold with two lions holding the coat of arms of the Aristocratic Turopolje Municipality, you will find yourself in the Old Town where the history of this town has been created and defended. The town was first mentioned in 1256 as ‘Caput Lukavež’, but the exact year and place of its construction are not familiar. The original building was a wooden fort with the purpose of defence against the Turks. In the year 1482, the fort fell into the hands of the Medvedgrad lord Ivan Tusz. Only in 1553, the Turopolje people became owners of their town, already in ruins.

The Aristocratic Turopolje Municipality gave the Lukavec ruin to the county governor Matija Slatinski. After him and his son Čora, the town of Lukavec becomes the property of Turopolje people, who reconstructed it in wood, in 1612. On St Lucy’s day on December 13th, 1613, the first Turopolje noblemen assembly took place. The town we know today was constructed in the 18th century and is the only stone fort in Turopolje. The castle is shaped like an irregular square and has four towers. Above the front door to the castle there is an engraved coat of arms of the Aristocratic Turopolje Municipality with two lines placed at the sides and the writing Insignia Universitatis nobilium campi Turopolya 1752. The ground floor had prison cells, the town keeper’s flat and stables. Upstairs there was St. Lucy’s Chapel, loopholes and a large hall for the noblemen assemblies. The Castle of Lukavec belongs to the group of valley castles that were surrounded by water and had towers for side defence.
Medvedgrad is an old town (fort, burg) built in the 13th century, after the Tatar invasion, on the hill of Mali Plazur, the south-western slope of the Medvednica mountain on an altitude of 593 m. It was one of the highest positioned burgs in Croatia. The early gothic chapel of St. Phillip and Jacob in Medvedgrad is a monument to fallen Croatian soldiers in the Croatian War of Independence. There is an astonishing view of Zagreb from the Medvedgrad mountain, and it is especially magnificent at night.

The most prominent character on the stage of Hungarian humanism, the ban of Slavonia, Janus Pannonius (cro. Ivan Česmički) died in Medvedgrad on March 27th, 1472. The Medvedgrad fort was built by the bishop Phillip of Zagreb on the slopes of Medvednica Mountain. Its purpose was the defence of the Kaptol Upper Town and bishops’ properties. Around the year 1260, king Bela the 4th entrusted prince Stjepko Šubić with the fort, after which numerous Croatian bans exchanged authority over it.

The fort changed lords very often (the Babonić family, the counts of Celje, Ivan Karlović, the Zrinski family, The Gregoričjanec family, The Erdődy family). The Medvedgrad fortress was severely damaged in the 1590 earthquake so it was vacated in 1602 by its final tenants.

After the Magnate conspiracy failure in 1671, Medvedgrad, already in ruins, was overtaken by the Royal Chambers. The final lords of the town until the year 1945 were the counts of Kulmer family.
**Fun Facts**

The Stone Gate connecting the Upper and Lower Town is the only preserved gate out of four previously existing gates. Although they were first mentioned already in the Middle Ages, the appearance they have today had been obtained in 1760, when they were last renovated. According to the legend, the Great fire of 1731 destroyed the wooden frame of the gate, but the only thing that remained intact was the painting of the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus. That painting is still the destination of many religious pilgrims where they pray to the Virgin of the Stone Gate and thank her for granting them grace and helping out in times of troubles. The golden crown with jewels was added in 1931, and the bars in front of the chapel come from 1758. According to the legend, the mace fitted above the gate in the 17th century, serves as a protection against the witches. The chains in the alley are supposedly coming from the Victory, a ship from the battle of Trafalgar commanded by Admiral Nelson himself, and were put in their place in 1878.

---

**Gradec and Kaptol**

Gradec or Grič is the name of the older part of the Zagreb town on the slope of Medvednica mountain which, together with Kaptol, constitutes modern day Zagreb. In the year 1242, King Bela the 4th granted it the Golden Bull, thus awarding ‘Zagreb town of the Zagreb Gradec hill’ a free royal town status. From 1242 to 1266 there were little or no changes in the shape of the town. There were four gates in the former city walls: the Mesnička gate (west), the Nova (later known as Opatička gate, in the north) gate, the Dverce gate (south), and the Stone gate (east). In the middle of Gradec is the St. Mark square, together with St. Mark’s church and the Head office of Croatian government and Croatian parliament. Gradec was adjoined to Kaptol on September the 7th, 1850, which signified the birth of contemporary Zagreb administration. By constituting the city administrative board after 1999, the town of Gradec fell into the district of Upper Town – Medveščak.