

Čiovo

Drvenik Veliki

Šolta

Brač

Hvar

Vis

Biševo

Palagruža

  
**CROATIA**

  
**A Cultural and Historical Guide  
to the Islands of  
the Split-Dalmatia County**

COVER PHOTO: MARIO BRZIC

# The **ISLANDS**

Joško Belamarić

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# The **ISLANDS**

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Historical Guide to  
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the Split-Dalmatia  
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## The **ISLANDS**

### A Cultural and Historical Guide to the Islands of the Split-Dalmatia County

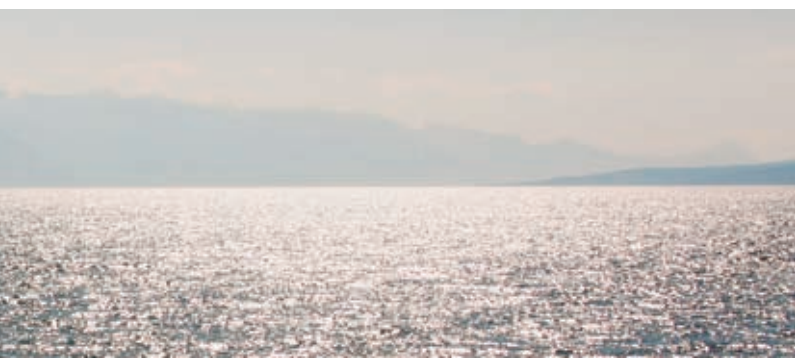
After the treatment of the cultural, historical and landscape heritage of the classic patriarchal hinterland of the thousands of years old cities of this county, of Trogir, Solin, Split, Omiš and Makarska, in this volume we give a glossary of the hundred essential facts about the islands of the Split-Dalmatia County, essential knowledge for every inhabitant and every visitor interested in the culture.

This is a space that, probably even more than the coastal towns, has practically at all times manifested that striking and extremely original synthesis of the sustained strength of local cultural patterns overlaid with Mediterranean influences that have taken hold of all the islands stretched out along the ancient Adriatic navigation routes.





This is a space which has a particular strength and beauty of landscape, from the outer islands to the sea encased in bays outside any of the routes, from the terraces of the interior of Brač (itself a whole little continent) and the shady hills scrawled with thousands of stone cairns cleared over the slender fields of Šolta, Hvar and Vis, to islets that are as lonely as Pacific atolls.











But this is a story of human labour by which, over the thousands of years of history, this landscape has been humanised, a tale of the efforts of the island people that finally perfected a landscape of absolute beauty, as told equally eloquently by the plains in the interior of Drvenik, and the Greek chora or Roman ager, the medieval campus sancti Stephani, in a word, the Stari Grad plain, the oldest and best preserved example of Antique land division in the Mediterranean (and recently on the UNESCO World Heritage List) in which, in spite of the turbulent events of history and the hundreds and hundreds of changes of ownership within the plain, the basic structure and production have remained practically the same for 2400 years. It is also a story of the work skills of shipbuilding, fishing and quarrying that have developed for centuries and been handed down over the generations.







Ćiovo





## ČIOVO

The island is linked with the mainland via bridges supported by the little islet that is occupied by the city of Trogir, the historical suburb of which lies on the north west part of Čiovo. The other settlements are Arbanija and Slatine on the north east coast, Žedno in the interior and Okrug Gornji and Okrug Donji on the western shore.

Unlike the names of the other populated islands that the Croats regularly took over from the Romans, merely altering their form to some extent, they gave Čiovo a brand-new name, which appears in the historical sources for the first time in 1552. The Romans called it Bua, Boa and Bavo (as written in the 1<sup>st</sup> century by Pliny the Elder), the roots of which are in Illyrian. The Croatian name of Čiovo is derived probably from the proper name Čih, which might in turn be a contraction of the name Vulčina or Vučina.

Even today, Cape Čiovo is still called Jove, suggesting perhaps some vanished temple of Jupiter, which, together with the temple of Diana on Marjan Point, at the very end of the peninsula of







Split, just across the way, might have marked the entrance into Portus Salonitanus. In the first centuries of Christianity, apostates were expelled to this island (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries).

In a series of important heritage units, the Renaissance Franciscan monastery of St Anthony (here the statue of St Magdalene by Trogir Renaissance sculptor Ivan Duknović is held) and the Dominican monastery of Holy Cross (with a wooden Late Gothic crucifix renowned for the miracles it works) on the north east shore are of particular interest. The famed pilgrimage church of Our Lady of Prizidnica (the main day of pilgrimages is the feast day of the Immaculate Conception, December 8), with hermitage buildings built in 1546 beneath the cliffs, lies on the southern side of the island, 2 km from Slatine. In the last mentioned church, since time out of mind, they have revered a Byzantine icon and a painted wooden crucifix ascribed to Paolo Veneziano of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (kept today in the Parish Church in Slatine).

In the archipelago of picturesque little islets, the most important, culturally and historically, is Fumija, named after the ancient Benedictine monastery of St Euphemia.













## DRVENIK VELIKI

In Roman times, this island was called Tariona. From this same time, and from Late Antiquity, in Solinska Bay and on the nearby islets and on the mainland, several farm or religious complexes have been found, in, for example, Stari Trogir Bay, on the islands of Arandjelovac, Stipanjska, Fumija and Orudo. The name of Drvenik was first mentioned in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and the island was then referred to as Gerona or Ziruna (probably from Illyrian sources). According to a document of 1409, the inhabitants of Drvenik came from another Drvenik, near Makarska. In 1639, Veliki (big) and Mali (little) Drvenik were sold to the patrician families of Zadar, the Soppas, the Lantanas, the Califfis and the Borgos. By that time a small settlement in the biggest bay of Veli Drvenik had already come into being, the Parish Church of St George being sited on an elevation; in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it obtained aisles and a bell tower. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in front of the modest facade of the existing church, a grand Baroque facade of a segmented gable was put up (Ignacije Macanović II, builder). But the works were soon halted because of shortage of funds, which led to it remaining just an interesting example of a church within a church.

In the settlement, the complexes of the Tironi and Kostović, Kvar-





antan and Bašić families, built in a rustic Baroque style, are dominant. The detached unit of the houses of the Rušinović family developed alongside Grabule Bay, dominated by the large communal water cistern and the square called Brce. The complex of houses of the Trogir ship owners the Morettis, with aristocratic features, recalling, for example, the castle of the Gligo family in Bobovišća on Brač, is particularly picturesque. On the top of the hill above the bay, a votive church for sailors was built in 1715, dedicated to their patron, St Nicholas. The rural complexes of houses in the hamlets in the interior of the island are extremely picturesque.









## ŠOLTA

Pseudo Scylax (4<sup>th</sup> century BC), Greek geographer, mentions the island under the name Olyntha. The Romans called it Solenta, and in the Split Statute of 1312 it is referred to as Šolta. The learned Abbot Fortis recalls that Šolta honey was reckoned the best of all; today, it is Šolta olive oil that is particularly famed.

There are several hill forts from Illyrian times: Gradina by Donje Selo and Vela Straža by Gornje Selo; Gradac between Grohote and Gornje Selo. In a whole series of sites, there are traces of Roman farm and leisure structures, harbours and moorings. South of the Parish Church in Grohote, alongside the Church of St Helen (Jela) by Donje Selo and on the island of Stipanska, off Maslinica, the remains of Early Christian basilicas have been found.

For centuries Šolta was an important estate of the city of Split, for breeding livestock and a source of farm goods, a place that yielded excellent lime, and an island that was also looked upon as a potential refuge. In the Middle Ages it was attacked by the pirates of Omiš (1240) and the Venetians (1387 and 1418). In the Gothic Church of St Michael between Grohote and Gornje Selo there are still frescos of the 14<sup>th</sup> century showing the Deisis in the apse, and St Michael on the triumphal arch. In the Church of Our







### Castle of the Martinis Marchi Family

In 1706-1708, the Split polymath Ivan Petar Marchi and his brothers Juraj and Ivan put up a fortified palace in Maslinica, a bay until that time quite wild. It was conceived in architectural terms with reference to the southern prospect of Diocletian's Palace; just at that time, Marchi was sending information and drawings about the palace to the famed Austrian architect Fischer von Erlach. The castle was a refuge for sailors and protected the peasants who had been brought from Poljica and Bosnia to work on the Marchi vineyards and in the olive groves carved out of the karstic scenery of the western end of the island. On the hill, the Marchi brothers also put up the Church of St Nicholas. Recently, the castle was luxuriously reapointed, according to all the necessary conservation standards, remodelled as a summer place for a distinguished German businessman; partially it is open to visitors.

The inscription over the main entrances evokes the scale of the Marchi brothers' undertaking:

QVO NAVTIS AD OLIVE POR  
TVM APVLVS TVTIORFO  
RFT TEMPLVM RELIGIONI  
AQVARVM RECEPTACLVM  
NECESSITVDINI SVE FOSSO  
MONTE DEDVCTIS COLONIS IM  
PENSIS INGENTIBVS ... TRVXE  
RVNT COMS FRATRES  
ANNO DNI MDCCVIII

For the more secure mooring of sailors in Maslinica, the rectors and brothers raised a temple to the faith, a collector of water, digging up the hill for their requirements, planting newcomers, at vast expense, in the year of our Lord 1708.

Lady beneath the Pines over Stomorska there was once a Benedictine convent mentioned in 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century. As for other churches on the island, the neo-Renaissance St. Stephen in Grohote (after a plan by Ć. M. Iveković) and St John the Baptist in Gornje Selo (19<sup>th</sup> century) and St Martin (consecrated in 1750) in Donje





Selo are particularly worthy of attention. The parish church in Srednje Selo (central village), St Nicholas' in Stomorska and the Church of the BVM in Nečujam have bell towers that are more modest and yet also interesting.

The old settlements of Šolta, which have a considerable ambience value, with their string of picturesque assemblages of vernacular architecture, were once defended with towers, like the three patrician-owned towers extant in Grohote, and the ruined Baroque towers in Gornje Selo and Rogač Bay. Particular interest attaches to the settlements in the interior, located alongside the northern edge of fertile Srednje polje or Central Plain. These are Grohote (the main settlement on Šolta since Antiquity), Srednje Selo and Donje Selo, as well as Gornje Selo, located in the eastern part of the island. These four settlements, which acquired their current form on the whole in the Renaissance and Baroque period, as well as during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are on the whole older than those on the shores. The nucleus of Stomorska, the harbour for Gornje Selo, consisted of a Baroque castello and *casella* or quarantine for the disinfection of ships and the storage of equipment, just as the port of Grohote, Rogač, in a nicely ramified bay, developed alongside the castello that provided protection to the first agglomeration of fishermen's houses of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



In Nečujam, alongside the Late Gothic Church of St Peter, Dujam Balistrić once had a house that was often summer home to Marko Marulić. In front of this house is a memorial pillar to Petar Hektorović, who in his *Fishing and Fishermen's Conversation* (see *Stari Grad, Hvar*), described a three-day voyage to Marulić's summer place ("the father of Croatian literature" was however already no more by that time).



Milna

Brač







## BRAČ

Specialists in the origins of place names think that Brač is an ancient Illyrian name, deriving from a word for the deer, cult animal of prehistoric man: the Illyrian was *brenton*, and the Greek *elaphos*, and hence the references under the name of Brentista and Elaphusa, just as even today the Dubrovnik archipelago is called the Elaphite Islands. Roman encyclopaedist Pliny the Elder refers to it as the island opposite Trogir and Čiovo, famed for its goats: *capris laudata Brattia*. During the whole of Antiquity, the Brač quarries between Splitska and Škrip were being worked; here laboured the Roman slaves who were *condemnati ad mettala*.

On Brač, after the twenty-year war with the Goths was concluded in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, a series of basilicas came into being in the bays of Supetar, Sutivan, Postira, in Lovrečina, Povlja and Bol, in Mirje over Postira. But soon they gained firsthand news about the destruction of the capital of Dalmatia, Salona, on the mainland just over the channel, from the refugees who came to the island to make a new life. The revival of life on the island after the disaster of the 7<sup>th</sup> century was slow, and in reduced forms. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Constantine Porphyrogenitus mentions Brač and other Neretva principedom islands south of it,



## Brač quarries

The quarries of Plate, Oklade, Zastrazišće and Rasohe between Splitska and Škrip on the island of Brač, in this archaic landscape with its exceptionally rich archaeological and artistic stratigraphy, were at work the whole of Antiquity, under direct state and military supervision. The biggest reference that can be given for the stone of Brač is the Palace of Diocletian. In the time of the Early Renaissance, quarries around Pučišća were started up, and in them, throughout the whole of the Renaissance and Baroque, whole dynasties of stone carvers and masons were trained. As well as George of Dalmatia, Andrija Aleši and Niccolò di Giovanni, dozens of their assistants also worked on the carvings in the quarries.

The excellent stone enabled a number of brilliant buildings, and not always on a monumental scale, from Early Christian and Early Croatian, from the Renaissance and Baroque, to the booming Brač 19th and 20th centuries, when on the island, more than anywhere else in Dalmatia, a lively feeling for the harmony of architectural composition and building of even the most modest houses was preserved. In the past century, stone from Vrnik stone was incorporated into the parliament building in Budapest, from Seget into the Hofburg in Vienna, Hvar stone into the Berlin Reichstag and Brač stone into the White House in Washington.

The stone carving school in Pučišća, in which a hundred pupils a year have a complete course, is one of three such schools in Europe; it has been at work continuously since 1909. It is toured by 6000 visitors a year, always fascinated by the range of traditional tools and techniques, which are as alive here as they were in the Renaissance, as well as by the enthusiasm of the teachers, who transfer their knowledge to the youngsters, as the carvers of the Bokanić dynasty in the Renaissance and Baroque taught their skills to their own successors.



with the ravaged cities and the pagans who inhabited them, living from livestock rearing. But he also mentioned it for the first time by its Croatian name, if in the Greek form, of course: *he Brátza, ho Brátzes*.

The centre of government was in Nerežišća from the year 1000, when Brač for a short time was ruled by Venice, and through all the medieval centuries that, in spite of the many political reversals, did not change the rhythms of life on the island. While Venice was truly the governing power on Brač (1420-1797), social and political conditions brought four population groups into being: the patricians, the privileged families, the new inhabitants and the commoners.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, the space of the island was blessed by human labour, to the very last square foot. The period of 104 years during Austrian rule was characterised by a gradual strengthening of economic and cultural life, the reflection of which is preserved



in all the island ports, the paths and roads, the cadastre, and the multitude of (only apparently) modest monuments of the life style. But after the economic crisis of the 1900s, many people from Brač set off across the seas, to Patagonia, Antofagasta and Australia, always to places where it was hardest to work. Today the island has the same number of families as in 1900, but only half the population.



## Supetar

Archaeological finds in the harbour and on the Sv. Nikola point (the cemetery by the coast) show that the bay of Supetar was settled by the Roman period at the latest. The parish church of St Peter (hence the name) was built in 1733 on the site of a burned-down predecessor (1729) and extended in 1887. On the same site there was an Early Christian basilica with nave and two aisles of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the foundations and parts of the mosaics of which can be seen around the present-day church. Alongside the church is a museum of religious artworks. In the cemetery alongside the Chapel of St Nicholas is the mausoleum of the Petrinović family, the work of the sculptor Toma Rosandić (1878-1958), and several monuments made by Ivan Rendić (1849-1932), who lived a number of years in Supetar. Not far from the road on the bor-



## Early Christian Basilicas

On Brač, probably after the middle of the 6th century, when the twenty-year-long Byzantine-Gothic war ended (as late as 548, Totila's general took Muccurum, across the way from Brač), a series of basilicas was to spring up in the bays of Supetar, Sutivan, Postira, in Lovrečina, Pučišća, Povelja and Bol, alongside the convent on Mirja above Postira. They are particularly characteristic for their well preserved baptisteries, the existence of which can be surmised even where they have not yet been excavated (Sutivan, Supetar, Pučišća).

Of the original structure of the basilica in Povelja, the baptistery is still in existence; this the only Early Christian baptistery in Croatia, has been preserved up to the level of the acroterion on the roof. Outside it has a square and inside an octagonal plan. In the cruciform font there was once, in the Middle Ages, the grave of St John of Povelja, whose body was taken as a kind of trophy and kept in the church of San Giovanni Elemosinario on the Rialto (where they also exhibited the relic of the arm of St John of Trogir, removed in 1171 from the ravaged cathedral in Trogir). Legend said that it walked across the sea and with some unintelligible formula ("shukadar, bukadar...") drove the plague away from Brač. The same tradition says that it is really to do with St John the Charitable, Alexandrian patriarch of the early 7th century, who, according to the Brač chroniclers, spent several years in Povelja doing penance.



der of the territories of Supetar and Hum is the Early Croatian Chapel of St Luke (ca 1100), with a depiction of an early medieval ship scratched into the rendering.

In 1827 the village became the administrative centre of the island. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a fine stone waterfront was created, with a continuous tract of Revival-style facades, which was defaced by the destruction of the building of the court, after a fire of 1990. There are a number of important residential units in the municipal centre.

## Mirca

A rural centre steeped in gardens and orchards, inspiring the poem of Tin Ujević *Discovering Mirca* (1929). The name (coming from *murus*, wall) shows that there might once have been an Antique settlement. The Parish Church of Our Lady of the Visitation of 1579 was extended at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.





## Sutivan

Looked at from the sea, Sutivan on the whole looks just as it did a hundred years ago: around the little port is a sequence of the tight complexes of what were once patricians' villas, the Castle and the parish church. Along its axis is a deep valley on the slopes of which, on both sides of Blato, there are compact vernacular assemblages of small farmers' houses and courts. At the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, newcomers from Donji Humac moved in to the bay; then came the Ivanovičs from Podgora (1477). Soon after that, summer residence complexes were put up around the narrow harbour by patricians from Split: the complex of Jakov Božičević-Natalis, with its three Renaissance towers in the core (1505), two of which are still visible in a Baroque-treated complex (until recently – Ilić); the Dražoević-Marjanović castle (1777); the late Baroque Definis complex. A particularly important villa is the fortified Kavanjin complex in Port. This was built by order of the poet Jerolim Kavanjin, who meticulously prepared his poem *Riches and Poverty* in this country retreat; this was a kind of encyclopaedia of Dalmatian history and the main figures in it. With later rebuilding and additions, the external and internal disposition of the complex was very largely modified. But still, the entrance foyer with the Baroque chapel in its prolongation is preserved.





The Renaissance parish church (1579) was several times enlarged and rebuilt during the Baroque. Then a bell tower of classical proportions was added to it (by the sculptor Petar Pavao Bruttapelle, who was also the artist responsible for the high altar in the church); it was recently adroitly restored after the appear-





ance of complex structural problems in the final loggia. The votive Church of St Roch comes from 1629, with the old municipal cemetery (1829). The new and probably the most beautiful cemetery on Brač was built from 1909 to 1813 according to designs by Alfred Nonveiller.

On Bunta, the foundations of a trefoil Early Christian church of the 6<sup>th</sup> century have been excavated; this was reshaped during the Early Croatian time (11<sup>th</sup> century; remains of wall with lesenes), within which the small Late Renaissance Church of St John was erected.

## Bobovišća

This port was very much frequented in Antiquity. In the nearby and equally quiet Vičja Luka, a mythological setting, and on the Rat hill fort above it, many important Bronze Age remains have been found, as well as Greek and Illyrian weaponry (exhibited in the Split Archaeological Museum). On the southern side of the bay is located the fortified Renaissance-Baroque complex of the Gligo family, and across the way a number of houses of the Nazor family, with the house in which the poet Vladimir Nazor (1876-1949) spent his childhood. On the crag above this he built a lookout tower with a concrete triple column and a frieze that he



### Vitalac

In a number of distinctive recipes from Brač (like the famed “hrapačuša” torte, the name suggesting its rough and craggy exterior) an indigenous food that is particularly well known is “vitalac”, which is made from the offal of lambs or kids that have not yet eaten grass. They are roasted over a slow fire on a slender spit for about three quarters of an hour, and afterwards wrapped up in the peritoneum, which, crispy after additional roasting, gives the food its characteristically bitter-sweet flavour.



called the Three Sisters. In Bobovišća he met a shepherd called Loda, from whom he got the inspiration for his classic novel.

The old Bobovišća village nestled in on the sunward side over the sea, with the Church of St George, put up in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (though with parts that are older, from the 17<sup>th</sup>). A major feature of the cemetery is the neo-Classicist mausoleum of the Gligo family (1898). Above the village is the Early Croatian Chapel of St Martin, with a Gothic bellcote, and a stone Renaissance relief of St Martin on the altar, in which echoes of the style of Niccolò di Giovanni can be seen.

In the Split strait or channel, in the middle of the sea that between Brač and Šolta and Čiovo has the character of a lake, is the island of Mrduja, with a fortified Renaissance-Baroque chapel (including a trace of Early Christianity), which features in many a humorous tale about people from Brač and Šolta.



## Ložišća

On the steep position in the bare karst 5 km above Milna, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century a village that was settled by the inhabitants of Bobovišća took shape, also called Velo Selo. A parish church, with a three lobed gable of belated Baroque style of 1820, was later on enlarged. The Revival-style bell tower built after a design by Ivan Rendić dominates the picture formed by the compact settlement with its sequence of harmonious houses of vernacular architecture of the late Baroque and 19<sup>th</sup> century. North east of the village is the Early Romanesque Chapel of Our Lady of Stomorica (12<sup>th</sup> century). A picturesque 19<sup>th</sup> century stone bridge lies along the way to Stomorica.

## Milna

is one of the most graceful little towns of Baroque town design on the Croatian coast and must be the best harbour on Brač. The bay forks into two smaller bays, Žalo and Pantera, with a wide cape with houses around the church. The core developed around the castle of the Cerinić family, which at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century put up the little church of St Mary. A story about a certain English lord grew up around the castle, hence the name of *Anglišćina*. The handling of the wide elevation of the Parish Church of Our Lady of





the Annunciation (1783) is a classic of its kind; this church “adopted” the little church for its sacristy. The church contains an Annunciation of one of the more pronounced painters of Late Baroque Venetian work, Gaspare Diziani. Also interesting are some rococo stucco work and the statues of Ivan Rendić on the high altar.

In Osibova bay lies the old Gothic and the modern Church of St Joseph. On the edge of the town to the west a low French battery is to be seen. The “Battle of the Two Emperors” took place here in 1806, between a Russian reconnaissance ship and a small French fleet abetted by the battery on Zaglava in the Split straits, after which Milna became for one year the centre of the Russian government on the island. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in the Milna shipyards in Pantera Vlaša 16 sailing ships were built. The characteristic *brazzera* or *bracera* (Italian and Croatian, both from the Italian name for the island), which was omnipresent in the Adriatic, acquired its prototype in these shipyards.



## Dračevica

This settlement was founded by refugees from Poljica at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. As observed by the linguist with a European renown Petar Šimunović, of Dračevica descent, the settlement was built harmoniously according to an intuitively grasped spatial planning design. Broad routes spread out radially from the spacious local square, the centre of which has a well. No other place in the island has as many wells as there are here. The little church of the holy physicians SS. Cosmas and Damian was built in 1674, while the parish church building dates from 1738. The building of the bell tower is described by Ante Cettineo in his novel *Master Ivan*. The biggest Brač windmill used to occupy a place over the village.



## Donji Humac

One of the oldest island settlements (it is mentioned under this name for the first time in 1375), on the site of the earlier Gomilje. In the Middle Ages it owned the whole of the north west part of the island. Not far off there is an Early Croatian church, of St Elijah, built on the whole of ashlar, recycling material from a Roman mausoleum the remains of which are in the immediate vicinity. The Parish Church of St Mary is an exceptionally





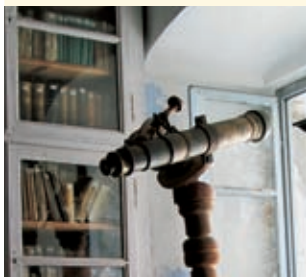
## Blaca

There is a convenient access via the broad route from Blaca bay, or by footpath from the interior of the island, over Nerežišća and Dragovoda (with the houses of the one-time Blaca serfs and shepherds. In the cave called Ljubitovica on the steep dale on the southern side of the island, in 1551 two Glagolite priests from Poljica found an abode that soon developed into a hermitage that was kupt up by generations of priests, right until the final priest of the line, Msgr Niko Miličević Jr, who died in 1963, with a fine reputation as an astronomer (the Blaca telescope is the third most powerful in Croatia). Making the way from cave to observatory, turning the meaning of being a hermit upside down, from introverted cave-dwelling to business extroversion (which developed with their sailing ships in the circuit from Milna to Makarska and Trieste), Blaca seems to have epitomised and repeated the whole of human history in those four centuries.

Nikola Miličević Sr set out the history of the hermitage in a book that he printed in 1897 in the printing shop of the monastery itself (the first numbers of the Split daily Slobodna Dalmacija were run off on this machine in 1944). The first church was dedicated Our Lady of the Assumption and was completed in 1614; after a major fire, it was rebuilt in 1757. The complex developed through the 18th and 19th century, its spirit best being reflected by the fireplace in which the flame was put out and rekindled again on Maundy Thursday, when the fire would be blessed. There are 11,000 books in the library of the monastery, a considerable number from before 1800, while the archives show that over the generations, all economic and everyday farming activities, the beginning of flowering, growth and harvesting of the fruits on the Blaca domains were meticulously recorded. The inventory of the monastery is exhibited today in a museum display. The astronomic bequest of the last hermit of Blaca, Msgr Niko Miličević Jr, is particularly worth seeing.

complex building. Originally a characteristic Early Croatian church, it was remodelled into a Late Romanesque edifice, on the triumphal arch of which, at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a depiction of the Deesis (an enthroned Christ with Mary and John the Baptist interceding) was painted. The place became the biggest island pilgrimage site, because of the story that the fresco shed tears every January 20 (the feast day of the local patrons, SS. Fabian and Sebastian). The cult carried on to the shrine of the mother of the Virgin, St Anne, July 26. The church was extended in the Baroque (the fresco has remained part of the new altar complex), enlarged (with two aisles) and deepened (with an impressive engineering operation worthy of the Brač stone masons in which the flooring of the whole of the space of the church was renovated). Alongside the church, Ignacije Macanović, an important Trogir but also Brač architect of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, erected a picturesque onion-dome tower, recently thoroughly restored.

Msgr Niko Sr, who reconstructed the hermitage after a terrible flood that on the night of August 28 to 29 destroyed vineyards, orchards and gardens, organised the first public works at the end of the 19th century, building access roads to Dragovoda, Smrka and Obršje, regulating the water that endangered the Blaca canyon. The drawings of a vast beehive and for the making of mobile hives are still in existence; a dossier of each skep is preserved, and there is a whole file about the techniques of dividing swarms, based on the observations of many years of experimentation. Tarca, the biggest olive grove on the Croatian coast, of some 40 hectares, was recently renovated.





Twenty minutes' walk north west of Donji Humac you come to the cave called Kopačina, the most stratified prehistoric archaeological site on the island, and indeed in Dalmatia (8<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> millennia BC).

### Nerežišća,

on the border of the upper and lower, eastern and western parts of the island, was the seat of government in Brač until 1829. In 1277 the place was sacked by the pirates of Omiš, and then it was decided that Nerežišća should be girt with city walls, a plan that never came to fruition. It was here in 1305 that the Brač Statute was passed, later regulating life on the island for centuries. On the square alongside the parish church, where there was the court of the Brač rector with the municipal loggia, a commune building with the rector's office, the notary's, and council chamber (an interesting medieval building demolished in 1903), there was a pillar for spears, with a flag and relief of the lion of St Mark with an inscription of 1545. The contrast of farm workers' single storey cottages on the foothills of the mountain and the patrician complexes characterises the architectural heritage. Some of the finest houses are the "Garafulić" house, which was used by the rector's guard; the Nigojević-Smrtić house; the Bohan house; the court of Harašić Babilonov; the Avancanić house with a still visible part of the one-time Baroque gardens, the



Defilippis house with its family chapel and the Harašić house with the long Baroque balcony, alongside the steep stony road that leads from the square in front of St Margaret's to the parish church and the one-

time rector's palace. One house close to the vicarage bears the classic declaration *Parvula sed mea – Small but my own*.

The Parish Church of St Mary is mentioned in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and was rebuilt in 1583 and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The interior houses an Early Baroque altarpiece by Carlo Ridolfi and an organ by Petar Nakić of 1753. The monumental bell tower with fine loggias was built by Ivan Macanović in 1746. Also in the settlement are the Gothic churches of St Margaret and St Peter (with a relief by the Brač sculptor Nikola Lazanić, 1578). At the top of Jurjevo brdo (George's Hill) there is a Romanesque chapel in which there is a Renaissance stone altar with a relief of St George, probably the work of Nikola Lazanić.



## Škrip

Underneath this settlement, the name of which comes from the Latin *scrupus* or sharp stone are the famed quarries of Plate, Stražišće and Rasohe, in which, under the protection of Heracles, and military supervision, stone was taken for the buildings of Salona and for Diocletian's Palace. Alongside them worked the Late Antique stone carving workshops that exported their characteristic sarcophaguses to Ravenna and Aquileia. The blocks of stone and carved objects were let down to the port in Splitska on a ramp; in the sea, it is still possible to see monumentally worked stone that fell off during lading into the galleys.



Around the picturesque complex of the Radojković castle, which houses Brač Museum, there are well preserved megalithic stone walls that once girt the Illyrian settlement (a space of about 0.8 ha). The find of Mycenaean ceramics tells how strategically important this island was in the developed marine trade in the middle and later Bronze Age, when a whole system of hill forts developed in the interior of Brač. The dominant position and the never-failing spring of water enabled the prehistoric fort in Škrip to develop into an Antique oppidum and perhaps even a civitas. The remains of the grids of ancient complexes on several places



of the plateau indicate the regular orthogonal structure of Roman Škrip.

The rustic Renaissance Radojković tower with its musket slits and machicolation at the top was erected over a Late Antiquity mausoleum (from AD 300s), the western face of which used part of the megalithic wall of the prehistoric rampart already mentioned.

Several Early Christian sarcophagi are kept in the nearby Late Renaissance fortified castle of the Cerinić-Cerineo family (1618). In the cemetery, there is the little Church of Holy Spirit, the one-time parish church, which was turned into the mortuary chapel of the family. It was created on the foundations of part of an Antique complex alongside which, judging from the inscriptions found and the grid of the walls explored, there was a temple devoted to Cybele. The church went through a number of transformations from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The first phase might be connected to



the documented but today vanished inscription in which Škrip is called a former city (*olim civitas*), revived by the refugees from Salona on the island. It was written by Brač chronicler Dujam Hranković. An equally important phase is related to the form of the Early Croatian basilica, the only church with nave and two aisles so far discovered on the island. Alongside it is the Late Renaissance Chapel of St John (once a baptistery, today a mortuary chapel), also built on the megalithic wall of the Škrip Illyrian rampart. It holds a fine altarpiece of Palma the Younger (1544-1628), now in the parish church, for which this same pupil of Titian painted three more altarpieces (two were stolen in 1977).

The Parish Church of St Helen the Crusader is dedicated to the cult of the mother of Constantine the Great, whom local tradition turned into an honorary woman of Brač. It was believed that she was admired and married by the Constantius, governor of Dalmatia during the time of Diocletian, who was once lost in his hunt in the forests of Brač. Staying the night in a shepherd's stone hut, in the morning he found that his imperial cloak, the previous night in tatters, had been perfectly restored by the daughter of his host, who also won his heart with her beauty. A reflection of the legend of Helen (Jelena) and Constantine is to be seen in the Gothic reliefs in the Dragon's Cave (Drakonjina Špilja).



## Dol

Dol was mentioned as early as 1137, in a fertile shaded valley, 3 km from Postira and the sea. The parish church in the same place was built in 1866. It holds a celebrated Baroque crucifix, the *Dol Cross*. On the slope in the vicinity there are two picturesque residential complexes. The fortified manor of the Gospodnetić family is now being restored. Close by is the opening of a tunnel (8.5 km) along which water from the Cetina River once flowed through Brač.

In the neighbourhood there are several exceptionally important medieval chapels. On the way out of the town is the little Church of St Peter (with the oldest bell on the island), while on a neighbouring hill is the little Church of St Vitus (Vid). St Michael's on Mihojrat, one of the most evocative historical points in the landscape of Brač, on a peak above stone barrows and olive groves, was built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in a form similar to the famed chapel



Brač

of St Peter on the mouth of the Cetina, across the channel. It had, then, a dome over the central part, and the doors are marked with an almost over-obtrusive theological symbolism: the portal is made out of an Early Christian sarcophagus that had the bottom beaten out.

## Splitska

This was formed as a Roman port for loading stone blocks from the quarries of Škrip, Plate, Zastrazišće and Rasohe, which for several centuries supplied a good part of Illyria, particularly the palace of Diocletian. The Rasohe quarry preserves a relief of Heracles carved into the stone, perhaps the work of one of Diocletian's carvers. The name of the settlement, the port for Split, might have been acquired in the Middle Ages when the ancient quarries were reactivated. Today's settlement was formed around the well-preserved castle of the Cerinić-Cerineo family, put up in 1577. On the wooden high altar in the Parish Church of the BVM Stomorena (primarily renovated by seven Škrip families, with permission from the rector of Brač, Dražina) is an altarpiece signed by Leandro Bassano of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The remains of the little Church of St Andrew (Jadre) on the way to Škrip derive from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries.







## Postira

The settlement was first mentioned in 1347, when it was referred to as Postirna, from the Latin for pasture – *pastura*. A foot below today's Parish Church of St John the Baptist (16<sup>th</sup> century; given Baroque treatment, with a massive apse supplied with musket slots) the walls of an Early Christian church with baptistery were recently found. Above Postira the site of Mirje is now being investigated; an Early Christian monastic complex with a cloister originally dedicated to St Stephen has been found here. A little to the east, in the sandy bay of Lovrečina with a spring of water, investigations have found the remains of one more Early Christian church, with a nave and a transverse transept and baptistery the font of which, with its ciborium, has been reconstructed. At the head of the bay the important remains of an earlier Roman villa rustica are being excavated. In the series of stone houses of the one-time Brač big landowners in Posti-



ra port, particular attention goes to the Renaissance castello of the Lazanić family, supplied with Humanist quotes of a devotional nature, in which the great Croatian poet Vladimir Nazor (1876-1949) was born. Also from Postira by descent are Pavao Gospodnetić, sculptor and builder employed on Šibenik Cathedral around the 1600s, and Nikola Lazanić, sculptor in Rome, Dubrovnik and Brač itself.

## Pražnice

The old medieval settlement in the interior of the island, 6 km to the south of Pučišća, is mentioned as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Its name comes from a verb, *pražiti*, meaning burning off land before tillage can take place. In the cemetery is a little Romanesque church, of St Cyprian, with a stone Renaissance relief of 1467 (workshop of Niccolò di Giovanni the Florentine). The Parish Church of St Anthony the Abbot of 1400, enlarged in 1776, has a high altar with a somewhat later stone relief, and a Late Renaissance relief with a depiction of St Jerome on the side altar (probably by Nikola Lazanić). In 1638, the little Church of All Saints was built on the square in Pražnice, including elements of the earlier Gothic style.

By the ruins of the medieval settlement of Straževnik, which died





out, the inhabitants moving to Pražnice in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the little Renaissance Church of St Clement is still extant. There is a stone relief of its patron saint dated to 1535. The Chapel of St George on the way to Straževnik was mentioned for the first time in 1111; it is perhaps the first Early Romanesque building to have preserved its bell cote. In it too there is a stone Renaissance relief placed on the altar.



## Pučišća

The name of Pučišća derived from the Latin *puteus* or well, which meant springs with brackish water meant for the watering of cattle. In Stipanska port, one of the three bays of Pučišća, there was once a settlement of dry stone wall built dwellings the remains of which were visible until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century; in the Middle Ages the inhabitants were forced to move inland to Straževnik. Here, in a picturesque cemetery, the Early Christian Church of St Stephen with its baptistery has been excavated and presented; it underwent major modifications in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, when the Benedictines put up a monastery alongside it. In the Baroque it was completely remodelled, gaining a new dedication, to Our Lady of Consolation. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century to 1762, the church was used by an Augustine monastery.

Today's settlement with its characteristic houses and stone roofs developed around the castello of Ciprian Žuvecić (1467) and a number of other towers. As many as 13 were built, the most important being those of Žuvecić, and the Akvila castello, and the castello of the Dešković family alongside the parish church. The stone churches are all grouped around and facing the port, as if in an amphitheatre. The waterfront belonged in the past only to the nobles and the "artists" or masons. Farming people had no





### **Povlja Charter and medieval churches**

When we are talking of Brač – alongside the extraordinarily interesting vernacular building and the number of examples of polished units of little towns that drop down into its northern bays, and alongside the striking complexes of hermitages that nested above its southern shores - what picks the island out from a number of others is the exceptionally rich stratum of the architectural heritage of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages: some 30 buildings, spread over the whole island, many of which are intact up to the roofline. The monument that speaks most eloquently of medieval Brač, though, is made of parchment. This is the famed Povlja Charter of 1184, the baptismal certificate of the island, a historical integration of Brač dates, Croatian names and places.

In a series of extraordinary monuments of religious architecture, perhaps the most eloquent paradigm is constituted by the Parish Church of St Mary in Donji Humac, in which to this day the Romanesque fresco with a depiction of Our Lady that has a reputation for miracle working is revered. In the Baroque period, the church was extended and lifted, widened, and even deepened by the lowering of the floor of the whole space, so that in practice it was only the miraculous fresco that stayed in the same coordinates: all was done by an impressive engineering operation truly worthy of the masons of Brač.

access. Here in 1516 the island's first private school was opened, and in 1868 the first reading room on Brač. Pučišća was burned by the Italian army in 1943, the biggest disaster of the settlement in its history. Even today houses with traces of charring are to be seen.

The great quarry of Veselje, north east of Pučišća was throughout the whole history of the place its most important source of income. Revenues also derived from the vineyards and the olive groves, and learned Abbot Fortis in his description of Baroque Dalmatia observed near the place a vast bee hive.

From Pučišća came the excellent chroniclers Vicko Prodić (1628-66) and Andrija Ciccareli (1759-1822), the writers Jure Žuvetić (16<sup>th</sup> century) and Msgr Sabe Mladinić (17<sup>th</sup> century), Ivan Puljizić, an engineer at the papal court in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, a whole dynasty of masons and stone carvers with the Bokanić family in its van, sculptors of the last century





Branko Dešković and Valerije Michieli, as well as present-day Vatican diplomat Nikola Eterović.

In the parish church (1566, remodelled 1750), over the high altar is a wooden relief with a depiction of the patron of the place, St Jerome, the work of Franjo Čučić, 1578; also important is the picture of St Roch by the Titian pupil Santa Peranda with a picture of Split in the background (early 17<sup>th</sup> century). The parish office keeps the famed *Povaljska Listina / Folio*, found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in a stove, a piece of parchment used to fan the flames. In 1631 the bell tower was completed. In a completely imperceptible structural repair operation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century one original storey of the bell tower was replaced with a storey with a new clock mechanism, a masterpiece of the Pučišća masons' art. The church was enlarged in 1750, the well-known architect Ignacije Macanović working on it.

There is considerable interest in the Renaissance Church of the Assumption with a stone relief of Our Lady on the altar, put up in 1533 with resources of Ciprijan Žuvetić, who is interred within, alongside the graves of the Brač stone workers the Radkojkovićeš, the Akvilas and Bokanićeš. Above the settlement, on Bračuta, lies the Romanesque-Gothic church of St George, with an almost





surprising monumental and slender elevation. There is a fine Renaissance stone relief of St George on the altar (1568), perhaps the youthful work of Nikola Lazanić.

## Povlja

This name was derived from the Latin adjective *paullia* (vallis). At Žalo at the head of the bay you can still see remains of an Antique villa rustica. Today's parish church was built on the ruins of a monumental Early Christian basilica, nave and two aisles with transept, (5<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> centuries), from which the apsidal part with a large three-light window protrudes. The church was part of the Benedictine monastery in the Middle Ages, protected by a massive tower. The Benedictine monastery that kept the continuity of the cult was sacked in a Venetian surprise attack in 1145, and was renovated by the Abbot Ratko in 1184. The lintel of the church is preserved, mentioning in this same year Rector Brečko



and Master Radonja, the first Croatian name of a known master craftsman ever recorded. This is an inscription in the most ancient Croatian verses, written in Cyrillic in duodecasyllabics. (The original of the doorsill is shown in the Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments in Split). There is a list of the estates of the abbey, from 1184, transcribed in 1250, December 12, in the famed *Povlja Folio*, which is kept in the parish office in Pučišća and represents a first rate linguistic and historical monument.

The Benedictines abandoned the monastery in 1357, and the Brač patricians restored and enlarged the church several times. The bell tower was built from 1858 to 1872. The settlement around the church was developed from refugees from Bosnia, who after the Cretan War of 1645-69, came to Brač via Poljica, mingling with the old settlers, which can be seen in the very particular amalgam of Shtokavian and Chakavian dialects. The settlement underwent an economic upturn particularly after the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the First Dalmatian Oil Cooperative was founded there.

## Novo Selo

Only since 1907 has there been a curacy here, made independent of Selca, with the Church of Our Lady of the Annuncia-





tion. Close by is the prehistoric hill fort of Gračišće, below which there were once, in Antiquity, the unexplored Bunje, and the settlement of Podgračišća, defunct after the plague in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which, in 1405, Dujam Hranković, the first Croatian geographer, writer of the “Description of Brač” from depopulated Gradac on the plateau, mentions among the 12 Brač medieval settlements.

### **Selca,**

town at the eastern end of Brač, mentioned the first time in 1184 as a pastoral settlement, and later as centre of stone working in the island. It was created by old inhabitants who moved in from Podgračišća, Gradac, Dubravice and Mošuje, which were killed by the plagues of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, and partially from the fleeing Shtokavian speaking population from the mainland during the Venetian-Turkish wars. In the monumental neo-Ro-



manesque church of SS. Cyril and Methodus, a kind of demonstration of the stone-working skills of the local carvers from the time after World War I, is a sculpture of the Heart of Jesus, a gift from Ivan Meštrović (1956), done in bronze cast from the remaining artillery cartridges after the war in the area. There is an interesting string of monuments in the place: to Leo Tolstoy (by Jaroslav Barta, Czech sculptor, 1911, put up after the writer's death), to Stjepan Radić (August Augustinčić, 1938), Hans Dietrich Genscher, German politician who was an active supporter of Croatian independence (Jose Gomez, 1994), Pope John Paul II (Kuzma Kovačić, 1995), Alois Mock, Austrian prime minister who also furthered the cause of Croatian independence, and Dr Franjo Tuđman, first president of independent Croatia. For a long time the famous Slovak writer Martin Kukučín (Matej Benčur, 1860-1928) worked in Selca, writing here his novel *House on the Clearing*, in which he described the old fashioned patriarchal life of Brač and Selca from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

On Smrčevik (449 m a.s.l.) there are three Early Croatian churches: SS. Cosmas and Damian, St Thomas and St Nedjelja on Gradac.



## Sumartin

This port (at first known as Vrhbrač) at the south east end of Brač was founded by refugees from the Makarska coastal strip. Hence this is the only Shtokavian speaking place on the island. Since the land was already all shared out on the island, they had to devote themselves to fishing and shipbuilding. The foundations of the Franciscan monastery were laid in 1747 by Fra Andrija Kačić Miošić, author of the very popular Baroque work *Pleasant Conversation of the Slavic People*, according to his own design (it is exhibited in the monastic museum, along with a copy of Ortelius atlas and so on). Also preserved in the monastery is a chronicle of 1758, in which the arrival of the population in Sumartin in 1645 is described; they had fled the mainland before the Turks, led by the Franciscans who settled down by the pre-Romanesque church of St Martin. It was demolished for a Baroque church to be built; in



turn, it was replaced by a new church built in 1913 according to plans by Ćiril Iveković.

A particularly suggestive site is that of Glavica, on the way to Selca, on which there is the Early Croatian Church of St Nicholas (11<sup>th</sup> century) with a dome over the central part, erected over the abandoned quarry.

## Gornji Humac

is a characteristic shepherds' settlement that was created in the early Middle Ages. It was mentioned for the first time in the Povlja Folio of 1184 under the Croatian name of Hlmačane. A preserved Late Gothic stone triptych created in the workshop of George of Dalmatia, who (like Andria Aleši and Niccolò di Giovanni too) had a quarry on Brač in which stone was taken for Šibenik Cathedral shows that the Baroque Parish Church of Our Lady of the Visitation replaced an earlier building. Also exhibited here is a stone relief triptych of the school of di Giovanni brought from the little Church of SS. Cosmas and Damian on Smrčevik.

In the medieval Church of Our Lady in the cemetery is a relief from the workshop of Niccolò di Giovanni (ca 1480). There is a nice wrought iron railing dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. But the place is best known for having the best cheese on Brač. Was it



At 780 m, **Vidova gora** is the highest peak in the Adriatic archipelago. The hike up from Our Lady of Carmel in Bol lasts two hours; however, a lot of people prefer the road approach from Supetar to Vidova gora by Nerežišća and Knežeravan (18 km long) because it enables a full cross section of all the varieties of the Brač karstic scenery with its endemic forests of black pine that quite frequently have the most bizarre tops. The hill obtained its name from the ruins of the Chapel of St Vitus or Vid a hundred metres from the top. But the name of the patron saint also suggests the ancient Croatian cult of the god of light, Svetovid, around whom so many legends were woven, as they were around St George (Juraj) who is revered as the patron saint of Brač (his day being April 23) and is to be found in the medieval coat of arms of Brač. Today, people leap from these rocks, off down towards Bol and past the Dragon's Cave on their hang-gliders and para-gliders.



perhaps tried by Pliny the Elder, who knew of Brač only that it was *laudata capris*, famed for its goats, or by Alberto Fortis, who in the 18<sup>th</sup> century praised the taste of Brač cheese and kid? The little Church of St Roch in the town (16<sup>th</sup> century) tells of the cult of this protector from the plague, which halted the life of many a little settlement in the interior of the island. The shepherds in Gornji Humac had in their flocks until quite recently several “St Roch sheep”, owned by this church. The settlement was burned to the ground on August 12, 1943, the Fascists shooting 24 male hostages.

The dense disposition of pools, barrows and hill forts from which they preserved the pastures of their sheep tell of the original Illyrian inhabitants of the Brač plateau. Here, around the settlements of Dubravice, Gradac, Mošuje, Pothum and Straževnik, the quiet history of medieval Brač developed. The entire region was however abandoned during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries because of the plague.



## Bol

is the only coastal town on the southern part of the island. It used to be known for the ships, and the famed Bol Plavac grape from the marly sun-oriented land, and yet today it lives off tourism. Over it is Vidova gora, the mountain chain Bolska Kruna with the fortified Koštilo – Illyrian hill fort that was later a refugium (660 m). The name comes from *vallum*, suggesting earthworks. The first settlement might have been at Podbarje, hamlet under the hills, a monument to Fascist reprisals against the island during World War II.

There are many traces of a Roman settlement in the general area of today's Bol, from the Antique cistern over Golden Point (Zlatni rat) to Glavica, at which, during the time of Byzantine rule in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, a castrum was built (a match to a similar feature on Gradina in nearby Jelsa). Later on here, the complex of the Brač and Hvar bishops, who resided in Stari Grad (Pharos) until the move to Hvar in the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century, was built. At this site, Biskupija, at the assembly of the Brač proprietors (from whom the medieval island aristocracy was to be created) the so-called *Povalja Listina* was written (called after the place



### Zlatni rat – Golden Horn

The real trademark of Brač is Zlatni rat (634 m long), under impressive Koštilo. It is little known that this golden tongue of gravel, which moves according to the currents and winds in turquoise blue Brač channel is a relatively recent phenomenon. It gained its current shape at the beginning of the 20th century. After the construction of the 1st Dalmatian Wine Cooperative in the town, during the excavations for the foundations, a great pile of spoil was tipped into the sea, which was washed by the south winds to the previously much smaller horn that, clearly, had been divinely predestined for this kind of undersigned human intervention by an underwater reef.



it was found and is kept), which is with good reason called the Brač baptismal certification, for it lists the many Croatian place names on the island. There is a little church dedicated to St John and St Theodore here; having a pseudo-basilica elevation, it was built upon an embankment 6 m high. Underneath it is an Antique cistern, in which in the 6<sup>th</sup> century a frescoed hall was “inscribed”, part of a larger Early Christian complex. These frescoes inspired a local painter, who in the 12<sup>th</sup> century painted the walls of the upper chapel, as can be seen from the frescoes confronted in the little museum, formed within the presented part of the complex.

In 1475 the Dominican monastery of Our Lady of Mercy was put up on Glavica. The Late Gothic single nave church was expanded in 1636 by the Chapel of St Roch. Once there was an altarpiece of Domenico Tintoretto on the high altar; now it is in the monastic museum,



which also has artefacts of marine archaeology, interlacing ornamentation, numismatics, manuscripts and incunabula, paintings and furnishings. On the panelled ceiling below the choir is an illusionist painting ascribed to the Boka Kotorska painter Tripo Kokolja (1713). The church's bell tower is from 1751. In the lapidary below the portico of the unfinished cloister marble fragments of the Early Christian furniture from the hermits' monastery of Dragonjina špilja are kept, along with other things.

In a sequence of interesting Renaissance and Baroque complexes above the little harbour (some of which were once fortified), a late Gothic villa right alongside the quay stands out, the Vužić-Vusio castello on the coast (now a hotel) and the Baroque palace in which the Branko Dešković Gallery is located; the gallery has one of the finest displays of Croatian modern art and is named after a sculptor who was born in Pučišća (1883-1939) and was one of the best sculptors of animals in Croatia. Some of the holdings are shown in the open and in the very centre of the town.

The Church of Our Lady of Carmel in the town (Baroque treated in 1668, finished in 1785) has an altarpiece of Feliks Tironi of Supetar on the altar (1790).





**Drakonjina špilja** (or in more recent times the “Zmajeva špilja” – both mean Dragon’s Cave, with Zmaj being a calque for Dracon, indicating an earlier pagan cult in the cave, which in the Early Christian perception was personified by a disgusting dragon) can be related to the well known remarks from the letters of St Jerome to Heliodorus in AD 396: “Like the Egyptian wildernesses, so are the solitudes of the Dalmatian islands full of pious folk who sing devotional songs to the glory of God” and to Julian: “You build monasteries and maintain a great multitude of pious

people on the Dalmatian islands”. The fragments of Early Christian marble furnishing found in the cave that has not yet been touched from an archaeological point of view, are exhibited in the Lapidary in the cloister of the Dominican monastery in Bol.

The reliefs in the Cave are particularly interesting (making a whole symbolic system), carved probably by some hermit in the characteristic Gothic style that might perhaps be compared with the relief on the facade of the Church of St Margaret in Nerežišća (1387).

The cave is 20 m long, while partition walls split off four spatial units, with cells and water reservoirs. In the first there is a church dedicated to Our Lady with an altar carved out of the bedrock. All around are reliefs, the most impressive of which is a depiction of a dragon. Outside the cave, in the maquis-overgrown rocks, there is a number of reliefs that are related to a particularly marked cult of the water that dripped down to them. Several stone beds for the hermits are carved out of the stone; apart from prayer and vigils in rain, frost and sun, the hermits could enjoy a spectacular view of Brač channel and the entry into the Stari Grad fiord from Kabal peninsula.

## Murvica,

6 km west of Bol, was mentioned for the first time in 1286. Under the karstic caves of Vidovala gora in the Renaissance time, but continuing from earlier traditions, several hermitages were founded; there was the female hermitage of Stipančić 1416 (with an apocalyptic candlestick in stuccowork on the facade); the Silvio hermitage (Dubravčić) of 1497; and a bit below it, closer to the sea, Dračeva luka, which was inhabited in 1512 by priests from Poljica; and finally there is Dutić, next to it, with Third Order Franciscan nuns, who came in the same year. There were still some hermits in Dračeva luka before the Second World War. A little of the inventory (lovely furnishing with Glagolitic inscriptions) was saved by being exhibited in the museum collection in the Dominican museum at Bol.





Hvar





## HVAR

The archipelago of central Adriatic islands is called the Hvar group, since Hvar (the longest island in the Adriatic) best shows the way it extends at an acute angle to the general lie of the mainland coast; the differences in the lies of coast and islands can best be seen from the fact that the eastern cape of Hvar is only 4.5 km from the land, while the western cape looks out onto the open sea. Down the central of the island there is a mountain chain dividing it into north and south. Between the peninsula on the northern side of the western part (Kabal, 125 m) and the main spur there is a drowned valley, Starigrad Bay, and Ravnice, with sediments of sand and loess, clearly extending on to the parts that are now below the surface of the sea. During the last ice age (the Würm), when the level of the sea was 96.4 m lower than it is now, Hvar was a mainland mountain (722 m) in a stormy position, with dry cold winds from the mainland, on the site of the Hvar Channel of today, blowing and dropping their fine sandy load onto the Starigrad Polje. This is the most fertile of all the Adriatic plains, and is the most important fact in the natural and cultural and historical inventory of the island. On the edges of the *polje*, or plain, there





### The Hvar Culture

Finds from Grapčeva spilja (from systematic excavations started in 1912) and from Markova spilja (both caves) enabled the definition of the Hvar Culture (of about 3500 to 2500 BC), a historical point of reference for the understanding of the development of the Later Neolithic in and around the Adriatic. The painted and incrustrated pottery (motifs of Aegean origin) are among the most decorative artefacts of the pre-Illyrian age on the Balkan sub-continent. Grapčeva spilja (225 m) lies on the southern slope of a mountain chain, below the plateau on which the hamlet of Hum lies, with a grand view off towards the forested island of Šćedro and the open sea. Up to 1000 BC it was used for cult purposes. Some contemporary writers, who look for Odysseus' itinerary (perhaps not ungroundedly) in the Adriatic archipelago, think that one of these caves was that in which the Cyclops Polyphemus greeted the Grecian travellers who must have anchored in Šćedro bay with such remarkable inhospitality.

are the three main island bays, as well as most of the important settlements.

The geographer Strabo records that the island was previously called Paros (clearly according to the island from which the Greek colonisers who founded the city in the fourth year of the 98<sup>th</sup> Olympiad came), and then Pharos, probably under the influence of the much better known Pharos, the island off Alexandria. From the Greek name the Romans derived their Pharia, ending in *ia*, which characterises the names of islands (like Brattia, for neighbouring Brač for example). From this the Dalmatian Romans produced *Fara* and the Croats in the Middle Ages the name Hvar. Interestingly enough, in medieval documents the Romans, clearly influenced by the Croatian pronunciation, wrote it as Quara or Quarra, while the Italians called it Lesina or in Venetian talk Liesena or Liesna, from an ancient Croatian neuter adjective, liesno, from les, forest, which



could well suit the picture the island had at that time. Placed at the centre of longitudinal and transverse routes, Hvar had a history richer than any other Adriatic island. In the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium the Illyrian Liburnians lived on the island. In the Illyrian period, Hvar was divided into seven smaller communities. A particularly important settlement (with fertile land and an abundance of fresh water around) existed at the site of the medieval fortress above Hvar, which as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC was part of a mercantile network of a considerable radius.

The Parians, Ionian Greeks who got rich on their famed quarries, founded Pharos, in 385/4 BC in the deepest cove of the northern side of the island, which in 229-219 became the power centre of Demetrius of Hvar, the biggest historical personality of the Adriatic of that time. However, Pharos fell in 219, when the Romans, led by consuls L. Emilius Paulus and M. Livius Salinator used a tactical ploy to draw Demetrius' defenders outside the city walls and then attacked them from the rear. Demetrius fled to the court of King of Macedonia Philip V, the walls were pulled down, and the whole of Illyria was subjected to Rome.

In the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, Pharos, now recovered, sent a mission to Paros and Delphi because of a certain epidemic.

### Pharos and its chora

Stari Grad Plain, the largest and most fertile plain on the Adriatic islands, is at the same time the oldest and best preserved Ancient cadastre in the whole of the Mediterranean and Europe. The plain was divided orthogonally in the Greek measuring system at the beginning of the 4th century BC, when the Greek colonists cast lots and divided the plain among themselves into 75 plots. The basic plot in this division was an elongated rectangle about 900 x 180 m, which can be easily rendered in Greek units of measurement. In this it differs from the cadastres of the later Roman cities on the Adriatic mainland (of Salona, Iader and Pola).

The division of the chora or plain can be dated with great precision. In the fourth year of the 98th Olympiad (385/4 BC) the Parians, Ionian Greeks, at the invitation of the tyrant of Syracuse Dionysius the Elder, founded a city in the deepest bay of the northern side of the island. Dionysius (founder of Issa, the first Greek colony in the Adriatic, on nearby Vis island) wanted to secure himself a base for broader military and mercantile expansion that could be completely independent of the mother state, i.e. Syracuse. This is shown by the first historically confirmed battle on the Adriatic, when, in 384-381, during the founding of the colony in Faros, the Greek fleet commanded by the eparch of Issa came to the aid of the Farans who were being attacked by the indigenous population of Liburnian Illyrians, from some of the nearby hill forts, with the assistance of Illyrians from the mainland. It was not only Parians who took part in the colonisation of Pharos, but a certain number of other Greeks, who responded to the call to "travel to an isle in the Adriatic", as evidenced

by an inscription on a lead tablet found in recent research in the famed Oracle of Zeus in Dodona; this was written in Greek writing of the first decades of the 4th century. The anonymous visitors ask the deity if it would pay them "to go together with the Parians to Par in the Ionian Gulf".

The Greek chora and the archaeological remains of Pharos, "polis dependent on the plain", and the earlier Illyrian settlement that was located in the same place, are a unique example showing how colonisation really went on, that is, the relation between Greeks between the previous and then coexisting non-Greek population, and finally the relation between polis and chora in Greek and Roman times. In other places, there is little to say about this relationship, for there is a polis with no chora, or a chora without any existing polis. The plan of Greek Pharos (hypothetically reconstructed) is close to the Roman town planning design with its square grid and straight lines of communications in both directions, the main lines stemming from the city gate. The central public space is located at their intersection. The first segments of the eastern and southern city walls have been discovered, reinforced by towers, and the eastern city gate protected by recessed tract of walls in the interior towers has also been partially excavated. A regular grid of city streets has also been discovered.

In summer 2008 the historical nucleus of Stari Grad and its plain were inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List, as the best preserved ancient cadastre in the Mediterranean, the basic structure of which has remained untouched for 2400 years, in spite of the turbulent events of history and the hundreds of transfers of property within the plain.



One inscription says that the Romans restored to the polis of the Farans the “laws of the fathers” and that for 40 years they let them use the fertile half of the plain between Stari Grad and Jelsa, which clearly, during the foundation of the colony, had remained in the hands of the indigenous population. Roman Pharia was promoted to the rank of autonomous municipality, perhaps even during the time of Octavian, who sailed here in 34 BC, when he subdued central Dalmatia. Through the whole of this time, Hvar was a classical island of grapevines, fishing and commerce.

Early Middle Ages Hvar (Pharos, Pharia, Fara) was part of the Central Dalmatian islands within the state of Neretva, under Croatian suzerainty, in the Byzantine Venetian sphere of interest. After taking Hvar, Venice managed in 1147 to set up a see that was subordinated to the Archdiocese of Zadar. After 1180 the Croatian-Hungarian King Bela III got back Dalmatia, including Hvar, but in 1278 the Venetians once again took the island, renovating the city on the position of today’s Hvar, on the site of the “city that was once”. But in 1358 the island once again came into the possession of the Croatian-Hungarian kingdom, and was ruled by the kings of Bosnia, even by Dubrovnik. In 1420 the Venetians took it, with the remainder of Dalmatia, keeping







it to the downfall of the Republic of St Mark in 1797.

The revolt of the commons on Hvar in 1510, led by Matija Ivanić, against the arrogant local gentry ended with the sack of Vrboska and the Venetian army being brought in: some insurgents had their eyes gouged out, others their arms lopped off; twenty rebel leaders were hanged on the mast of the Venetian galley in Hvar port. Rector Semitecolo reconciled the nobles and commoners in spring 1611. He confiscated the whole of a year's farm produce on Hvar and Vis in order to be able to finance the extension of the Arsenal.

At time of the Venetian-Ottoman wars Hvar became the main naval port on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. Apart from fortifying the city itself (sacked completely, like Vrboska and Stari Grad, in the pirate incursion of the Algerian fleet of Uluz Ali in 1571), Venice left the defence of the island up to the local inhab-



itants. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, churches in Vrboska and Jelsa were fortified, as was the monastery in Stari Grad above Hektorović's Tvrđalj; a small fort was put up in Sućuraj in 1613, and two towers in Zastražišća in 1624.

The island owed its flourishing thanks to thriving wine making, fishing and ship building. In the event of rough weather, Hvar was the port of choice anywhere down to Boka Kotorska. Just in 1853-54, 10,000 sailors under 17 different flags passed through the city; there were four consulates at work (Greek, Parma, Papal and Neapolitan). After the Treaty of Campo Formio, Hvar went to Austria, during the rule of which, particularly in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, the island underwent a new flowering. In 1858 Grgur Bučić opened up a weather station in the tower of the Veneranda monastery in Hvar – this was probably the oldest in Croatia. Familiarisation with the excellent weather conditions helped to promote Hvar tourism, and in 1868, the Hvar Hygienic Association was set up, one of the oldest tourist boards in Europe. At that time all the harbours of the island were put in order; the malarial inlets of the sea cut into the coasts of Jelsa, Vrboska, Stari Grad, Sućuraj were drained. New lighthouses were set up.





In November 1918, the island, after heavy fighting, was occupied by the Italian forces up to the Treaty of Rapallo in 1921, when it became part of the new creation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and after World War II part of the new socialist Yugoslavia. It was modernised with all the positive and negative features of the epoch. When the independent Croatian state was acknowledged (15.1.1991) the island had a more promising future, particularly with respect to tourism and farming.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the new belief in the positive importance of sunshine for health revealed to the world the Adriatic Madeira. Hvar has the longest insolation in the Adriatic, with as many as 2715 sunny hours a year, with small range of temperatures, almost without any really cold days (the January average in Hvar is 8.4 C). The stable marine climate has as a whole a therapeutic effect; and the elements have a catalytic effect; thalasso-therapy works



through heat, water and air. Hvar became particularly noted for its allergen-related tourism, connected with the Allergy Centre of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

## Hvar, the city

Above the city, on the site of the Venetian fort, there was once an Illyrian hill fort and settlement, with a substantial suburb, and then, perhaps, the still enigmatic *Heracleia*. This would be spoken of by the many coins found bearing the name of that city from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Archaeological test digs tell of the perimeter of a Late Antiquity *civitas* (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century) which spread out almost in the scope of medieval Hvar. A rampart that probably went along the southern side of the Arsenal has been determined.

Medieval Hvar developed on two hills, with two centres separated by the flat Pijaca, which was formed on the site of a swampy sliver of a bay that pushed in almost to the cathedral. In 1292 it was decided that around the city and Benedictine monastery (position of the cathedral) walls be built, an operation completed about 1450, although even then it was not possible to surround the whole town with the ramparts.



## Hvar Pijaca

Today's Pijaca must be the finest city square on the Croatian side of the Adriatic, for its direct contact with the sea, framed by a Renaissance harbour and quay, and on the other side vineyards that drop down practically to the very apse of the cathedral. It was developed by the gradual filling of a deep and originally marshy bay. In 1519, a public water cistern was built; the part in front of the loggia, where the flag stand is placed, was paved in 1537; the whole area was paved in 1780.

The monumental complex of the Venetian governor's palace (radically remodelled by the building of the Palace Hotel in 1903) had five towers (only the clock tower is extant). It was built in the 15th and 16th century by masons from Korčula, and the loggia by the workshop of the Brač Bokanićes (in the 1600s). The monumental Arsenal (with its fontik or granary onto Pijaca) started to be built in 1579 on the site of the earlier medieval predecessor. On the top floor, in 1612 the oldest commune theatre in Croatia was built (the appearance of the interior of today comes from the 19th century).

In 1554 Hvar obtained what was called the Fabrika, one of the longest stone waterfronts of the time. It was built along the marine edge of the city square, over a length of 310 metres, and was used primarily by the Venetian navy (which was transferred

to Boka Kotorska in 1750). The old quay (mentioned in 1459) was incorporated into the new construction, which is amazing in its engineering (of practically woodworking fineness) and solidity: the underwater part is made with stone ashlars in a stepwise slant, the face above sea level in big rough stone blocks in the typical Renaissance building style, the cornice in large ashlars fitted together with mortice and tenon joints.

At the bottom of the deep square, between the two parts of the town, rises the cathedral dedicated to Pope St Stephen (St Stephen the Pope), on the site of what was once the medieval Benedictine convent of St Mary. The bell tower, built by Marko and Nikola Karlić from Korčula in the 1520s was finished in the middle of the century. The cathedral, with a nave and two aisles, is a graceful synthesis of Renaissance, Mannerist and Early Baroque styles, a landmark of 16th and 17th century architecture in Dalmatia. It was built by local craftsmen led by Korčula's Nikola Karlić (1541-43, at work on the elevation) and Ivan Pomenić (1620-1637). The front elevation was subordinated to the givens of the urban design of the square and did not correspond with the wide nave-and-two-aisle space of the Baroque interior. In its tripartite gable it constitutes a reflection of the Renaissance facades like that of Šibenik Cathedral and Dubrovnik's Church of St Saviour.

The chancel of today's cathedral incorporated the nave of the earlier 14th century Gothic building. The high altar is the work of Baldassare and Melchisedech Longhena, with an altarpiece by Palma the Younger. The choir stalls were carved in 1572 (restored in 1888). The pulpits at the entry into the choir and several sculptures are from the 15th century and the eight altars were put up at the end of the 17th century by the workshop of Alessandro and Paolo Tremignon. In the Hektorović family chapel, the altar holds the Romanesque Our Lady of Biševo, renowned for its miracle working. In the northern chapel, the relics of the copatron saint of Hvar, Saint Prosper, are held. In the southern is the late gothic Crucifix with the "little cross" that shed blood on February 6, 1510, just before the insurrection of the commons. The bronze door and the main altar are the work of Croatian sculptor Kuzma Kovačić (who also designed the coins of the Croatian currency).

The cathedral's treasury holds medieval and Renaissance works of art, such as the crosier of Bishop Pritić (the work of the master craftsman Pavao Dubravčić of Knin) and a chalice and monstrance of Bishop Toma Tomasini, founder of the Chapter Library, papal legate to the kings of Bosnia, and icons of the Our Lady of Krivenica and Our Lady of the Hektorović altar in the church.





Only part of the nave (with a number of tombstones of Hvar patri- cians and commoners), the apse (with an interesting archaeologi- cal collection) and bell tower (work of the Bokanić workshop of the 1600s) have survived of the Dominican St Mark's Monastery (dissolved 1807) that stood over Lower Square and the harbour with jetty, opposite the complex of the Rector's Palace.

The little Church of SS. Cosmas and Damian alongside the city clock tower (known as Lerój) with a fine early Baroque carved ceiling was created by the remodelling of a Romanesque house site under the city walls. In the vicinity is the Baroque monas- tery of St Lucy, with the recently renovated church and collection founded within the complex that was willed to the Benedictine nuns by the poet Hanibal Lučić. The nuns are known far and wide for the lace they make out of agave threads.

The Franciscan monastery of Our Lady of Mercy was built in 1465-71 on Sridnji rat thanks to a vow of the captain of the Vene- tian fleet and several Croatian families. The complex was also used as a sailors' hospice. The relief in the lunette of the por- tal is the work of Niccolò di Giovanni the Florentine (ca 1470), pupil of Donatello. The polyptych of the high altar (1583) and two triptychs on the screen in front of the chancel were painted





by Francesco Santacroce, and the cycle of the Passion on the upper part of the screen by the Hvar patrician Martin Benetović (died in 1607), organist of the cathedral and comedy writer. Franjo Čučić of Korčula and Antun Spia of Zadar carved the wooden choir stalls in 1583. In front of the main altar, with an altarpiece painted by Palma the Younger, the poet of *Slave Woman*, Hanibal Lucić, is laid to rest. The altarpiece in the Chapel of Holy Cross is ascribed to Francesco Bassano. In the monastic collection, a Ptolemy Atlas of 1525 is exhibited, with a number of manuscripts and incunabula, while in the refectory there is the celebrated *Last Supper* of Matej Ponzoni-Pončun. Also very well known is the cypress growing horizontally in the garden.

Hvar bell towers can compete in their beauty with those of Rab and Trogir. The building of the Franciscan tower, over a graceful cloister (1489), was started by the Korčula man Marko Andrijić (who was also author of the prototype



of a number of Dalmatian Renaissance and Baroque campaniles), and finished in 1507 by his brother Blaž and his workshop. The Veneranda tower, callously demolished in 1831, was built after it.

In the town there are a number of important historical houses, complexes and palaces. Over the southern city walls, left of the main gate, lies the palace of the nobleman Nikola Užičić, started in 1463 but not finished until 2003. To the right is the Winter Palace of the Paladinić family with a monumental balcony over the city walls, and in front of it, on the very Pijaca, their Summer palace. In Burak, the suburb on the other side of the square, the palace of the Vukašinović family stands out, with its seven Early Baroque balconies on the facade, and several other houses and complexes behind the Arsenal.

Through the main gate of the city walls, a staircase leads to the city fort. The southern St Mary's Gate (1494) onto the Biskupija is equally picturesque, as is the western gate, renovated in 1625 by the poet Marin Gazarović. The fortress over the city was built with commune funds in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in the form of a quadrangle with a ravelin on the north east, and with a bastion on the north, south east and south west, but as early as 1579 a great powder explosion destroyed it and a part of Groda.





On the neighbouring hill lies the “Napoljun” – after Emperor Napoleon, put up in 1811, at the time of the French government of the island on the site of the medieval church of St Nicholas Upper, today the centre of the anthropometrical observatory of the Geodetic Faculty in Zagreb. The batteries from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century existed alongside the ruined complex of the Greek Veneranda monastery (16<sup>th</sup> century) on the peninsula that encloses the Hvar port on the west, and on the Križni rat that closes the port on the eastern side. The fort on Galešnik, built in the 1830s, served as both jail and for quarantine purposes, and as early as 1529 a lazaretto was built on this islet. Within the specific villa architecture of the Hvar commune, the most marked example is constituted by the villa of Hanibal Lucić (today the centre of the Hvar Museum Centre), built by Dubrovnik masons, very likely according to the poet’s own design, 1532.



## Pakleni islands

The name of this miniature archipelago that lies along the south west end of Hvar protecting the city port comes from the word *paklina* – the molten pitch used for protecting ships' hulls. The stones of the prehistoric mound on Sveti Klement suggest, perhaps, that the rock had a cult character (as island of the dead). An outstanding shelter, Palmižana (ACI Marina) is located on Veliki otok, which is also called Sveti Klement, after the church dedicated to the protection of sailors (restored to commemorate the Battle of Vis, 1866, and the sinking of the frigate *Radetzky* in 1869, 5 miles from Veli Vodnjak, with 325 young men, mainly Croats, going down). The family of the botanist Eugen Meneghello started to build the first houses for summer holidays in the bay called Vinogradišće. Today the site is a real arboretum, with a very distinctive tourist fare.

## Southern side of the island

In the gorges 5 km east of Hvar town lies Malo Grablje, an abandoned but picturesque village. In Milna, in a lovely bay beneath it, is the fortified Baroque villa of the Ivanić family. In Sveta Nedilja,



under a spur of the island's highest peak, Sv. Nikola, they make the best Hvar red wines, and in Zavala the island's finest whites. Zavala also contains the Biedermeier villa of Duboković Nadalini (about 1830). Below Zavala is a lovely beach with a cave. Gromindolac grew up around the tower of Ivan Obradić Bevilaqua (today Machiedo), who acquired the land for good service in the defence of Split, 1657.

The island of Šćedro has two deep and well protected harbours, hence its name (the ur-Slavonic adjective of "štedr<sup>b</sup>", means merciful), or perhaps from the monastery of the Dominicans, founded in 1465, with a hospice for sailors), abandoned in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the channel between Šćedro (Latin Tauris) and Hvar, in 47 BC there was a crucial naval battle for the Adriatic between the fleets of Caesar and Pompey, when the fleet of the first, under Vatinius, forced Marcus Octavius to withdraw towards Greek and Sicily.



## Stari Grad

Most up-to-date research shows that Stari Grad took over the role of the central settlement on the northern part of the island as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. In this pre-colonial phase, there is no reason to rule out the existence of a Greek emporium within this settlement, which the traces of the land division system in the immediate vicinity of Star Grad would tend to suggest; they could be of an even earlier date than the division that took place after the colony was founded. Whatever the case, the archaeological records – the remains of burning in the foundations of Pharos (and at the same time in the Hvar Illyrian settlement) clearly shows that the coming of the Greek colonists in 385 was accompanied by a fierce conflict with the indigenous population. The conflict was not of just a local character, and needs to be seen as part of a wider plan aimed at cutting the Liburnians down to size, and doing away with their thalassocracy in the central Adriatic.

It was not only the Parians that took place in the colonisation of Pharos but a number of other Greeks who answered the call to “travel to the Adriatic island”; this is shown by an inscription on a lead plate found in recent investigations into the famed oracle of Zeus in Dodona, written in Greek writing of the first decades of



the 4<sup>th</sup> century; the anonymous visitors asked the deity “would it be useful for them to go with the Parians to Par in the Ionian gulf (the Adriatic)”. Particularly interesting is that this record was written on a plate from which an earlier inscription had been erased, and this in some way or other relates to a city named Heracleia: the hypothesis has been raised that these people were would-be returnees to the mysterious Illyrian Heracleia (perhaps a ruined polis on the site of today’s Hvar) whose coins are found in great abundance in Pharos.

Recent research shows that the area of the Greek polis was much larger than was earlier supposed, on the peninsula extending into the sea, with deeply incised bays on the eastern and western sides. The plan of Greek Pharos (in a hypothetical reconstruction) is quite similar to the Roman town planning pattern with its square grid and equal communications in both directions, of which the main lines stem from the city gates. The central public space is

## Tvrđalj

The best known Stari Grad monument is Tvrđalj, the fortified complex of the poet Petar Hektorović from the first half of the 16th century, an uncommon building within its architectural genre just as his Fishing and Fishing Tales (a complex fishing eclogue) breaks out of the typology of similar literary works. Tvrđalj is a fortified Renaissance villa with some of the characteristics of the monastery; in the revelin there were rooms that were open to the poor, reserved for the poet’s men and maids; in the fish pool there was a place open for the whole village for the washing of linen. The whole complex was furnished with several dozen inscriptions, of which more than a score are extant, mainly of a moralising nature. In the core of the Tvrđalj stands a tower, over the fish pond with the mullet. In the ground floor the poet kept hens; in a closed cell on the mezzanine lived Lucy, a Third Order Franciscan nun, daughter of one of his masons, praying for him and looking after him in his last days; at the top of the tower were the sparrow eaves and a dovecot. Hektorović, as *Deus artifex*, raised his castle in a vertical line from what swam in water and walked on the ground to divine creatures that swam in the air. He dedicated the whole complex to the Creator of All – *Omnium Conditori* – as the central inscription says, among so many that the poet put on his Tvrđalj. The whole complex underwent several changes and conversions in the 18th and 19th centuries, and minor restoration works in the last dozen years.





at their intersection. The first sections of the eastern and southern city walls, reinforced by towers, have been revealed; the eastern city gate, protected by a recessed tract of walls within internal towers, has also been uncovered in part. The regular grid of the city streets has been revealed. A tract of megalithic walls in the centre of town, always explained as the remnant of the Greek defensive wall, is in fact the rampart reworked in Late Antiquity out of reutilised stone blocks at the time the area of the city was reduced, a new Early Christian centre being simultaneously developed at the edge of it, the complex of the double basilica of St John and St Mary (with baptistery from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> century) decorated with mosaic floors.

There is some information about the transfer of the diocese from Muccurum (Makarska) to Pharia in AD 548, to which one can approximately date the construction of the cathedral church of St Stephen. The main portal of today's Parish Church of Pope St Stephen was made by Ivan Pomenić of Korčula in 1637. The interior holds a nice triptych of Francesco da Santacroce. The high altar was made by the workshop of the Venetian craftsmen A. and P. Tremignon. The detached campanile was put up by Franjo Škarpa in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.





The Dominican monastery of St Peter Martyr was founded in 1481. It was much damaged in the attack by Uluz Ali, pirate of Algiers, in 1571 after which defensive towers were erected on the eastern and western side of the monastery. The grave of Petar Hektorović was located in the church as well as his family chapel (1546), for which the poet commissioned J. Tintoretto to paint an altarpiece showing the Mourning of Christ. Local tradition has it that Peter had himself depicted in the figure of Nicodemus, in company of his only child, a daughter, and her husband. Now it is exhibited in the fine monastic museum.

The city experienced the culmination of its flowering in the boom for shipping and viticulture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the seafront with quay was remodelled.

Stari Grad painters familiar in the story of Croatian modern art are Juraj Plančić, Bartol Petrić, Jakov Bratanić, Juraj Dobrović and Ivo



Dulčić; see the collection of their works in the palace of Juraj Bjanikini, to the west of Tvrđalj, where there is also a permanent display of artefacts found in systematic archaeological investigations in Pharos. Here the headquarters of the international summer archaeological seminars is located.

## Settlements of the plain

The father of Croatian archaeology Šime Ljubić observed the regular division of Stari Grad Plain (800 ha), that is, the ancient cadastral network, as early as 1859. Stari Grad Plain, which was rationally divided and humanised two and a half thousand years ago, is the oldest preserved example of land division in the Adriatic. In the Middle Ages a good part of the plain was acquired by the Hvar diocese, which had its first seat in Stari Grad, and hence it got the name *Campus sancti Stephani* after the patron saint of the diocese, pope and martyr of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

To the west of Dol lies the elevation of Purkin Kuk (274 m high), with remains of Illyrian and Hellenistic cyclopean walls, from which there is a grand view onto the *chora*, *ager* or plain. Also important is the fort on Tor, south east of Jelsa. This is a rectangular tower composed (like the building on Purkin Kuk) of vast blocks of stone more than 2 m long, on the narrow plateau belonging to







### Plavac Mali

Wine, lavender and honey are the main products of the Hvar small farmers. In a wave of emigration in the first decades of the 20th century, the Hvar colonists became the pioneers of viticulture in California. The vineyards of Hvarska Plaža, the southern slopes of the island, the regions of Ivan Dolac and Sv. Nedjelja provide famed Plavac, with a deep colour, a full and rich bouquet, and a high percentage of alcohol. The quality is aided by the excellent combination of soil and position, the exposure to sea and sun. Of all the characteristic Hvar products, the greatest fame was experienced by rosemary oil – the queen's water – known as *Oleum Anthos* or *Rosmarinus officinalis* L.). Travel writers of the 19th century recommend it for the rinsing of eyes and throat, and against scurvy.



a still earlier Illyrian hill fort that watched over the plain, controlled the routes to the east of the island and the whole of the channel between Šolta and the Markaska coastal area. Perhaps it was once part of a larger building enterprise by Demetrius of Pharos, who in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC up to his defeat in battle by the Romans was to have his base just here.

The symbiosis of Pharos and its plain is just as impressive as the cohesion of settlements of shepherds' stone huts with the dramatically beautiful landscape of Hvar. Humac in particular is picturesque; this developed as a kind of shealing of **Visnik**, accessed by the ancient road from Our Lady in Jelsa, alongside the ancient fort of Galešnik. According to tradition, on the Castle, there was once the eyrie of the Slavogost family, which in 1310-11, in an alliance with the inhabitants of Omiš, led by Juraj and Galeša (meaning black) fomented the first uprising against the Venetians. This is well preserved fortification on the plateau of a rock



that can be approached only from the western side. It controlled not only the maritime approaches to the island, but also any possible incursion from the east into the central part. It is very likely a castrum of Late Antiquity, the walls of which are preserved up to a height of 4 metres.

## Vrbanj,

is the biggest village of the island, and is the home of the commoners' revolt leader Matija Ivanić, to whom local tradition has erroneously attributed the picturesque group called "Kings' Castle". In 1487, Vrbanj built the little Church of St Nicholas on the highest peak of the island, affording an impressive view.

**Svirče** – on the southern side of Gorica hill, village that was an offshoot of Vrbanj. The old cemetery Church of St Magdalene and the village church with the little Church of St Mary are particularly picturesque.

**Vrisnik** affords an outstanding view from alongside the parish church, of St Anthony the Abbot and the chapel of St Roch.

**Pitve**, 3 km from the sea, is situated below Samotorac hill and the slopes of Kaštilo, at the entry into Vratnik gorge, through which went the ancient winding route on the way to Zavala.





### Procession with the Cross

In the tradition of vernacular pieties that are held during Easter Week in Hvar the most authentic thing is the Procession with the Cross which is held in the night between Holy Thursday and Good Friday in a circle round six parishes: Jelsa, Pitve, Vrisnik, Svirće, Vrbanj and Vrboska. It arose probably as a penitential procession spurred on by the miraculous event with the Holy Little Cross that wept blood in 1510 in Hvar, before the commons' revolt. The processions move from the parish churches at midnight precisely. They may not meet, because this would, according to the superstition, be a sign of some bad luck. The processions of each parish are led by selected cross bearers who walk barefooted. The people in the procession sing Our Lady's Tears, with its ancient melodic line.



## Vrboska

Vrboska developed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in a deep and forested bay in the northern side of the island as the fishing settlement belong to Vrbanj and surrounding villages (Svirće, Vrisnik, Pitve), with a harbour that was gradually given shape at the foot of St Mary's. Part of the population, demanding secession from the main Vrbanj parish, built the Church of St Lawrence at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Vrboska suffered badly when the Venetian fleet attacked the insurgents in 1510, and in 1571 in the surprise attack of Uluz Ali, Algiers pirate. Soon after the fortress church of St Mary was built, and from the foundations up, the new St Lawrence's, furnished with masterpieces of the Venetian Renaissance and Baroque, as well as more recent domestic painting. Today it also contains pictures brought here from the fortress church because of the damp, and the statue of St Peter by Niccolò di Giovanni (1469)



from the little church of the same name put up at the beginning of the bay. Most important of all is the polyptych on the high altar painted by Paolo Veronese (1528-1588).

There is an interesting collection in the Fishing Museum (established 1972). The oscillations of water called *Šćiga* in the winding sea channel with a little island in the middle and a celebrated bridge, like a barometer, herald changes in the weather.

## Jelsa

Jelsa developed as the port of Pitve village (3 km from the sea), in a woody cove over which, as early as 1331, stood the Church of St Mary on Glavica, nucleus of the future town. Close by is the “*fons vocata Jelsa*”, the spring from which the settlement acquired its name. Another centre of Jelsa developed around St John’s, Baroque chapel of polygonal ground plan, decorated architecturally like some stone monsternace. The picturesque city square still has original Renaissance and Baroque houses of the Jelsa ship owners. On the site of the park of today, in 1605 lay a malarial swamp; this was drained in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and turned into one of the finest gardens in Dalmatia. At that time, a boom period for the strong fleet of Jelsa sailing ships, the whole port was put into very good order. The Parish Church of St Mary was remodelled into a fort in 1535. After it had





successfully defended Jelsa in 1571 it obtained a new surrounding wall. The facade was remodelled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a bell tower was added on. As in Vrboska, there was a Veronese altarpiece on the high altar (1576), destroyed in 1771 after a fire stemming from a lightning bolt. The miracle-working statue of “Our Lady of Sto-





morena”, transferred in 1539 from Čitluk (Gabela) in Herzegovina was also partially damaged. There is a particularly interesting carved altar polyptych, made by the workshop of Paolo Campsa (about 1500).

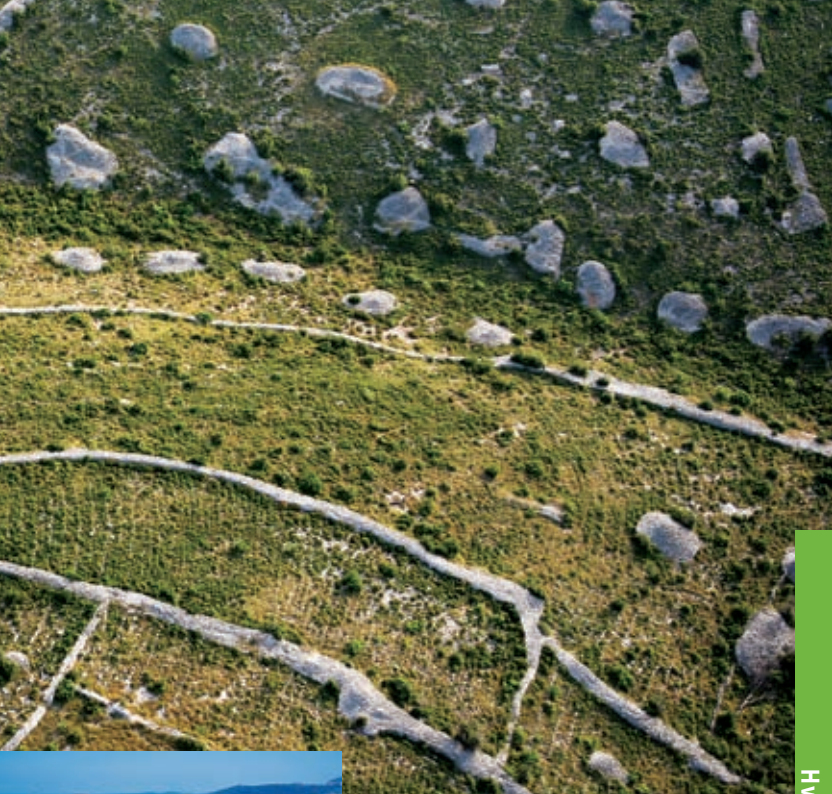
In Late Antiquity there was a Byzantine castrum on the peninsula called Gradina. An Augustine hermitage was founded here in 1599, but since 1807 the site has been occupied by the cemetery.

## Plame and Sućuraj

The eastern part of the island has a highly pastoral character, with no plain and no major settlement save for Sućuraj. For centuries, it has been called Plame, a word perhaps relating to its forests. The pastoral character has been kept down to this day. Unlike the characteristic Chakavian dialect spoken in the west of the island, in the east you can hear Shtokavian, the consequence of a wave of migration from the mainland during the 17<sup>th</sup> century Turko-Venetian wars.

Among the smaller rural settlements that are ethnographically interesting, Gornja Praparatna, Humac and Žrvanj cove on the southern side stand out. The name Zastrazišća (related to a root meaning watch, sentry) suggests the millennial watch-keeping function of the position at which the village came into being. The Gdinj church of St George (mid-16<sup>th</sup> century), with its old vicar-





age, is set in a suggestive ambience of a cypress wood. The bay of Smrska contains a fortified villa belong to the Angjelinović family, while the tower of rector Matija Bartulović (1700) is found in the nearby Kožija bay.

The road to Sućuraj leads through Selca Bogomoljska, alongside Zaglava, one more archaic settlement in a harsh setting. The tip of the island is much lower, bringing out still more the monumental character of the massif of Biokovo on the mainland across the channel. Sućuraj is named after the little church that existed here as early as 1331, related to the temporary fishermen's and shepherds' shealings and the village in which in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Augustinians developed their monastery (today the vicarage). At the beginning of the Cretan War, in 1646, friars from the priory in Zaoštrog led in refugees from the mainland coast. The Church of St Anthony was built in 1663; the fort of St George (1613) surveyed the Neretva channel and the territory of Dubrovnik. It was partially destroyed by Italian Fascists in World War II.









## VIS

Vis is the westernmost fairly large Croatian island (a population of about 4000). It is 27 miles from the mainland.

In a deep bay on the northern side of the island, in 397 BC, Dionysus the elder, general and tyrant of Syracuse, then the strongest state in the Greek world, founded the first Greek colony on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. But the history of the island goes back far into the past. Greek historian Theopompus (died in 323 BC) writes that the Ionian Sea (i.e. the Adriatic) got its name from Ionios, “an Illyrian from Issa who once ruled over these realms”; his figure is shown on the first coin of the colony of Issa, with a dolphin, symbol of the sea, on the reverse.

In the relatively narrow Dračevo polje, or plain, on Vis, a regular orthogonal division of the land has been noticed – characteristic of the Greek division of land – and the same thing must have existed in Velo polje, until an aerodrome was built there in World War II. Before it switched from Greek to Roman rule, Issa had already established its own colonies on the mainland: Tragurion (Trogir), Epetion (Stobreč near Split) and on the neighbouring island of Korčula, in Lumbarda, Korkira Melaina.





### Archaeological remains of ancient Issa

Although preserved only in the lowest part of its material, one can clearly see the irregular rectangular perimeter of the city walls of the Greek colony, which was located in terraces on the southwest part of Vis Bay. The layout of the city inside, with directions of communication that went in parallel to each other, in one way down the slope to the harbour, was kept up in Roman times, when new buildings were put up outside the original area of the city. Between the retaining wall of the last terrace of the hill on which the city was built and the sea coast (perhaps at the place where before there was the southern tract of the city walls, demolished in Roman times), the remains of great public baths have been investigated. The baths, *thermae*, were built into two phases, the last one being in the centre of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Mosaics conserved in situ are one the floors of the halls.

At Martvilo and on the site of today's hotel there were antique necropolises (from the 4th century BC until the city was abandoned). Research has shown the great complexity of the funeral customs and the exceptional range of artistically treated objects: ceramics of Greek, Southern Italic and local manufacture, statues of terracotta (Tanagra figurines for example), lamps, stone sculpture. The particular burial gifts perhaps indicate a ritual related to the cult of Dionysus.

In the archaeological collection in Vis a lovely bronze head of the goddess Artemis is kept, fabricated according to the canon of the first half of the 4th century BC, that is, in the tradition of Praxiteles. It could be a cult statue of the Greek colony in Issa from the end of the 4th or beginning of the 3rd century BC, which also inspired Issan coins. Most of these monuments are kept in the Archaeological Collection and in Split Archaeological Museum.

During the civil war fought between Pompey and Caesar, the Issa polis chose the losing side of Pompey, and in 46 BC it lost its independence, becoming *oppidium civium Romanorum*, and was administratively dependent on Salona. At the time of Roman rule Issa did develop however, and a theatre, temple, a forum and *thermae* were built there. When Salona became the Roman capital of the province, Issa was left on the periphery of events, and was known only for the high quality of its wine. At the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, Greek historian and geographer Agatharchides (author of a geography and history of Europe in 10 volumes) wrote that there was no better wine in the world than that of Issa. Today, Vis including Biševo has about 700 ha of vineyards. Some biographers of James Joyce quote the writer as being fondest of drinking Plavac from Vis. Also well known from this area is Vugava, a high quality and potent wine, golden yellow in colour with a slightly bitter aroma that recalls honey.

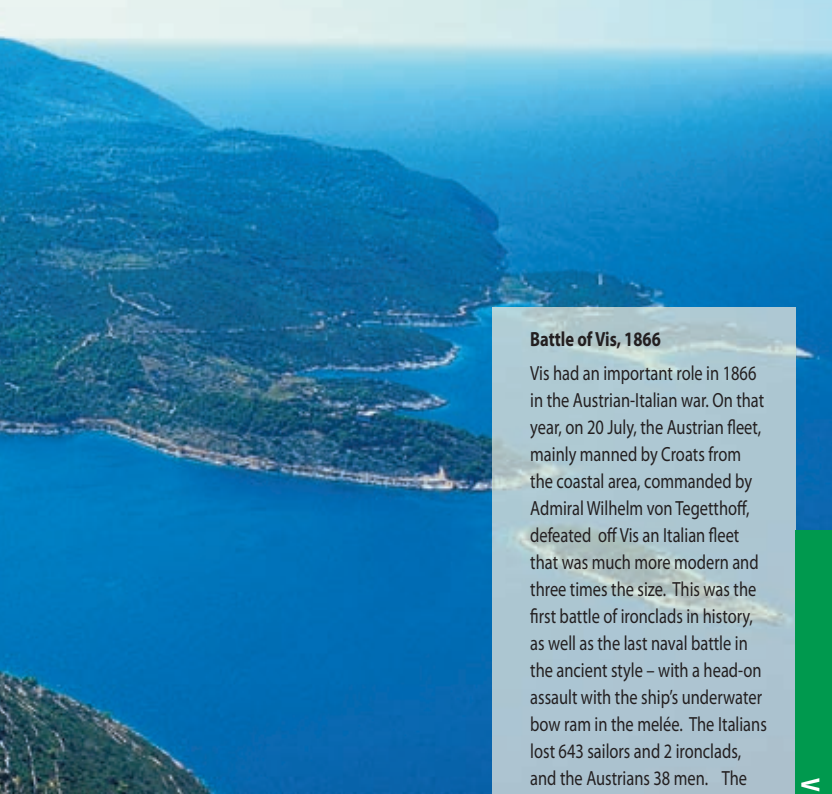
Almost nothing of this whole area has been archaeologically investigated. On the Pirovo peninsula, place that the Greek newcomers probably occupied before they founded their colony opposite it, lies the small Issan theatre. This is one of only four partially preserved ancient theatres on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. Of a theatre that was capable of seating up to 3,000 inhabitants, one can see part of the external walls of the one-time auditorium which, in line with Hellenistic tradition, faced the south.

The Archaeological Collection lies in the Batarija building. Through its exhibits of funerary architecture, finds of sculpture, money, vessels, ornaments, weapons, inscriptions and the finds of Vis productions outside the island, with a depiction of the town planning structure as preserved, the display aims at throwing light on the social life of Issa.



In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Issa was mentioned in the work of Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus. The island, which was taken by the Venetians in 997/998 was at that time part of the Croatian state. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries the island was alternately ruled by Venice, the Croatian-Hungarian king, the dukes of Krk and Omiš and from 1242 it was part of the commune of Hvar. When in 1409 Venice bought Dalmatia from King Ladislav, it also took control of Vis (1420), which continued to remain, until 1797, part of the Hvar commune.

After the fall of the Venetian republic, Vis was ruled by Austria and then by France. In 1811, after a sea battle between the British and the French fleets, the British set up a base on the island and built several fortifications. On entering the Austrian Empire (1815-1918), Vis became the stronghold of the Austrian navy in the central Adriatic. Austrian rule was replaced by the Italian occupation of 1918 to 1920. The Italians occupied the island a second time, on April 23, 1943. When Italy capitulated, Vis, protected by the allies, became Fortress Adriatic, the main marine base and the centre of the Supreme staff of the Partisan army of Yugoslavia. It was from here that Marshal Tito was to set off in late summer 1944 for talks with Churchill and Stalin; on Vis seafloor, on September 12, he spoke of the reannexation of the Croatian



### Battle of Vis, 1866

Vis had an important role in 1866 in the Austrian-Italian war. On that year, on 20 July, the Austrian fleet, mainly manned by Croats from the coastal area, commanded by Admiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff, defeated off Vis an Italian fleet that was much more modern and three times the size. This was the first battle of ironclads in history, as well as the last naval battle in the ancient style – with a head-on assault with the ship's underwater bow ram in the *melée*. The Italians lost 643 sailors and 2 ironclads, and the Austrians 38 men. The

key moment of the battle occurred when the Austrian flagship the *Erzherzog Ferdinand Max* used its underwater armoured ram to hole the ironclad *Re d'Italia*, the colours of which, the most precious trophy, were taken by the Croatian officer Nikola Karković from Hvar. The ship sank in a mere 2.5 minutes, taking 381 mariners down with it.

The outcome of the battle was probably predetermined by the Italian admiral, Persano, who, out of sheer funk and cowardice, just before the beginning of the battle, went aboard an unexpected ironclad without the admiral's colours being hoisted, which many of his commanders did not know; this produced total confusion in the command. The wreck of the sunk flagship *Re d'Italia* was found in spring 2005, stirring up once again the story about the alleged gold that the ship had carried.

and regions that according to the 1920 Rapallo Treaty had gone to Italy. After World War II, the island was completely closed to foreigners.

Vis was once the favourite summer spot of the Hvar patricians, who put up a number of Renaissance and Baroque villas and farms, some of which were fortified, like the Jakša house cum tower, with its corner sentry post, and like the Jakins' castle (also the Jakša family) alongside the sea in Kut, with a long building of the villa facing the sea, surrounded by terraces, gardens and a detached tower. This part of Vis port was created by the grouping of houses around the parish church of St Cyprian, mentioned in 1414, and its transformation into a "summer town" (in the 16<sup>th</sup> century), in which the poets Petar Hektorović and Hanibal Lucić both had houses. The villa of Marin Gazarović, on which the poet carved a coat of arms and verses in Croatian and Latin with his own hands, is also quite grand. His poems *Murat the Pirate* and *Ljubica* (maritime conversation) directly de-



scribed the beauty of Vis and the pleasant time the poet had there (early 17<sup>th</sup> century).

Also very worth listing are the Zamberlin house in Kut (the former villa of Lucić with a great courtyard and portico), the Renaissance group of the Prdvarićes along side the sea, the tower-cum-house with loggia in Luka, alongside which Vicko Diuli of Perast in 1617 built a freestanding tower, the house-tower of Gazarović-Farolfi, and the grand Baroque palaces of Radošević and Vukašinović, with long balconies in the middle of Luka. Among the Revival-style houses the building of the Croatian House in the middle of Luka and the Tramontana House with allegorical sculptures by Rendić on the facade, with the coats of arms of the owner and his motto (Work and Persistence).

The whole system of fortifications shows the strategic importance of Vis. The most important English ports are: Fort St George (Fortica) over the entry into Vis harbour; the round Bentinck Tower (named after the commander of British forces in Sicily) or Torunj over Svitnja bay; Robertson (after the commander of Vis); Wellington, on Jurjevo brdo (after the victor of Waterloo); Hoste, a lower battery on an islet in the entry into the port (after the commander of the navy in the Adriatic). The main fort that was built by Austria in the 1830s in the middle Luka, Levaman (Our



Lady's Fort), was surrounded by a moat, with a salient in the middle of the southern wall and a courtyard with wells. This fort played an important part in the Battle of Vis, a naval battle in which the Italian ships tried to mount a seaborne descent on the island.





## Churches in Vis

The Parish Church of Our Lady of the Cave (the Assumption) is in the middle of Vis Luka. The central and oldest part of the church, with nave and two aisles, with an elongated Gothic bell cote, was built in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was enlarged in 1740 by a Baroque sanctuary, the chapel of St Vicko and a sacristy (by Trogir master builder Nikola Passetti) and in the 1780s with aisles (Trogir builders Frano Cicindela and Antun Čudina). The polyptych of a wooden Late Renaissance altar, the work of Girolamo da Santacroce (mid-16th century) is partially preserved. There is a nice marble high altar with a tabernacle in the form of a classical semi-shrine (1834) Also classicist is the composition of the altar with the sarcophagus of St Vincent in the side chapel (1836). The picture of St George with a minute depiction of Vis harbour painted by the dilettante Antun Blažić in 1887 has documentary value. In front of the church was an old paved graveyard with a picturesque portal.

The Church and Bell Tower of SS. Cyprian and Justina, with a high and picturesque staircase, is located in Kut. It was put up in 1742 on the site of an earlier little Gothic church. The very abundant decorative motifs of architectural sculpting on the facade of the church and bell tower (with loopholes for defence against pi-







rates) show the capacities of domestic carvers in the Baroque period. The rich inventory in the interior belongs to the same Baroque unit. In the 1900s the church was used for the liturgical requirements of the Austrian naval units stationed in Vis harbour.

The Baroque Church of the Holy Spirit in the western part of Luka is partially built of stone from some nearby Antique tower. In the interior, particularly worthy of attention is the altarpiece of famed Venetian 18<sup>th</sup> century painter Niccolo Grassi, with a depiction of the Virgin, St Nicholas, St Cyprian and St Raymond Nonnatus, founder of the order of Mercedarian Order, set up in order to ransom Christians from slavery among the Moors of North Africa, into which many people of Vis were taken.

The church of the Conventual Franciscans' Monastery of St Jerome on Prirovo was built at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, partially with ancient stone blocks from the theatre, over the



vaults and external wall of which the monastery was built, thus obtaining a semicircular form. The structure of the theatre is best seen in the substruction of the monastery. The bell tower alongside the monastery was put up on the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although it retains a number of characteristic Gothic elements. Alongside the monastery is a cemetery with a number of important monuments, including one to the Battle of Vis, erected by the Austrian navy in 1867 (disassembled in 1918 and taken to Livorno), and the chapel of the Dojmi de Lupis family, with statues by Ivan Rendić.

The little Gothic church of St George on the peninsular in front of Vis harbour (which was called after it Port St George – Luka sv. Jurja) was erected on the walls of an Antique villa complex, perhaps also a late Antiquity church. Alongside it is the so called Czech Villa, a fine Revival-style complex, and the cemetery of the English sailors killed during clashes with the French fleet in 1811 and 1812.

## Komiža

Twenty two kilometres west of Vis town, population 2032. It was first mentioned in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, the



### Muster in Komiza

The St Nicholas Monastery complex (Muster – from monasterium) was erected over the bay of Komiza, on a hill that was fortified as early as prehistoric times, facing the Benedictine island of Biševo. It might well have been visited by Pope Alexander II in 1177 on his way to Zadar and Venice. In the core of it is an early Romanesque church with just a nave, today's northern aisle, on the façade of which was a tower – transformed into a bell tower in the 18th century. The Benedictines abandoned it in the 15th century. With additional building southwards, from the beginning of the 15th century up to 1634, a church with four naves/aisles was created, while northwards two chapels were opened up (see the picturesque Crib altar with a hundred of so wood figures of folk narrative provenance). On the floor in an extension behind the Altar of Our Lady (workshop of Bokanić, beginning of the 17th century) there is a nice Romanesque rosette (like that in the paving of the Benedictine church in Mljet Lake, but simpler and made of brick). In the sanctuary there is a large wooden altar from the mid-18th c., which is given a striking stage setting in the 40 hour vigil before Easter. In general the wooden altars in Muster and the other island churches constitute the most complete chapter of Renaissance and Baroque carving in Dalmatia. In the floor of the church, which has in time become a parish and cemetery church, there are gravestones of the ancient Komiza families of Vitaljić, Mardešić and Marinković. On the southeast peak of the whole complex there is a high defensive tower (13th century), which was in 1645 additional reinforced with a low fortification with an indented outline and four earth-filled bastions the better to resist the attacks of artillery.

leading fishing settlement in Dalmatia. On a little cape that divides the two coves of Komiza, in 1585 the squarish castello (Komuna) was built, with battlements, and slating walls to the ground floor. The northern and western parts rose up from the sea, and in the walls there are great stone rings for tying up galleys and sailing ships. It was built from earnings made by the Komiza fishermen at the position called Trešljevac (the best sardines in the world, as Venetian reporters said in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century), south of Biševo, as we can learn from an inscription on the northern wall (1592). After Vis was disarmed by the Austrians in 1873, the commune office was located in the castello, balconies were installed and a clock tower was built. The interior, with its Gothic vaulting, was turned into a local history museum in which there is a unique collection of seamen's knots (each with its own function and special name).



The stock of Late Renaissance and Baroque houses in Komiža is very interesting. The Zanko House group (first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) in the middle of the small square by the harbourmaster's is particularly interesting; it has a long balcony along the elevation, with an uncommon gable on the roof (slender pyramids at the ends and a sculpturally formed chimney in the middle). It was put up by Antun Zanchi, castellan of the Komiža castello; he also built a tower in Podšpilje.



The complex of the Church of St Mary is particularly picturesque; because of the pirates' theft of the picture of Our Lady in the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was dubbed "Pirate". In the Baroque, aisles were built onto the Renaissance nave, and the new unit had a facade with three gables. The interior features Baroque altars, painters and a wooden crucifix, as well as the often-repaired oldest extant Dalmatian organ, made in 1670 by the Polish monk Stefan Kilarević of Krakow. The central altar might be the work of T. Bokanić. It was erected above a spring of fresh water that goes through a channel under the paving of the church and flows into a well in the courtyard; over it is an octagonal well head with rustic Baroque reliefs (1705).

## The Falkuša

In the Commune building in Komiža is a history of fishing in the island, and an example of the last but one falkuša, which was sunk in 1988. Today this unique item of the heritage is much endangered for all falkušas get burned according to an ancient tradition in which the old boat is sacrificed in fire to the patron saint of sailors St Nicholas, a ceremony carried out below the walls of Muster.

In their search for better catches, the Komiža fishermen always headed to the open sea towards the outer Croatian islands of Palagruža, Svetac and Jabuka. These requirements led to the creation of an authentic type of the gajeta, a boat with five oars, 9 m long and 2.9 metres broad, with a 9-m high mast, and with their falks, wooden additions that were put on the side of the ship to protect it from waves on their way back with their rich haul. It was built of a special type of pine from Svetac island, its keel of oak and planking of larch. It was in use right up to the middle of the 20th century.

Under the aegis of the programme of the cultural institution *Ars halieutica*, this type of fishing boat has been thoroughly investigated, and after many years of research, a replica was built, with which Republic of Croatia was presented at the World Exhibition in Lisbon in 1999, the *Regata Storica* in Venice and the World Festival of the Sea in Brest.



The Baroque little Church of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows (the New Church) in the street behind the Commune building. It was commissioned in 1759 by Komiža parish priest Mihovil Milinković, who was also an author.

On the pass on the old road from Komiža to Vis, above Muster, the Early Romanesque chapel of St Michael (11<sup>th</sup>/12 c.) was constructed, with its Gothic bellcote. It was originally owned by the Benedictines of Biševo.

On the way that climbs from Vis to Komiža between St Michael's and St Nicholas' in Dol is the Baroque church of Our Lady of Planica (Mountain), with a circular plan (in an earlier life, perhaps a mill). The monumentality, although in the small scale of a church, is enhanced by the roof cornice of undulating courses of roof tiles and bricks shaped in the dog's tooth pattern, and the round lantern that surmounts the roof.



The Gothic chapel of Holy Spirit on Hum, on the highest peak of the island, was originally a Late Antiquity lookout point (see the bottom parts of the side walls). Today it is easy to get to this unique Adriatic lookout via a tarmac road from Borovik.

The group of the Church of St Mary in Poselje over Velo polje, by the biggest medieval settlement in the island (looted in 1483 by the army of King Ferrante of Naples and Aragon) developed gradually, probably on the site of a prehistoric sacred place. The oldest bit is the eastern part, today the sacristy, to the facade of which in the 15<sup>th</sup> century a wide nave was added. In it there was once a terracotta relief of Madonna and Child on a Throne, one of the finest specimens of Late Gothic sculpture (end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century) on the coast, much revered on the island. Today it is on the principal altar (work of T. Bokanić, ca 1600). At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the church was extended with a neo-Renaissance transverse nave, also acquiring a detached campanile.





### Vis salted sardine flatbread

The difference between the salted sardine flatbreads of Vis and Komiza (something like pizza then) is in that in the latter, while the onion is being sautéed, that essential ingredient, tomato is added as well. Then on rolled out dough, over the onions and tomatoes, fillets of salted sardine torn into shreds are placed, scattered with fresh parsley (perhaps capers too), and then nicely baked for half an hour at 180 C, afterwards eaten hot and lukewarm and cold – perhaps best accompanied by a tannic Plavac from Biševo.



Vis

### The Mediterranean monk seal

(*Monachus albiventer*), an animal species once numerous over the whole of the Mediterranean, but today the most endangered animal species in the Adriatic, lives only around the islands of Brusnik, Svetac and Šćedro. It grows over 2 metres long, and weighs up to 250 kg. The fishermen considered it their greatest enemy, blaming it for the damage done to nets and catch by the dolphins. There was also a popular superstition that the monk seal came out of the sea at night and laid waste to the vineyards.









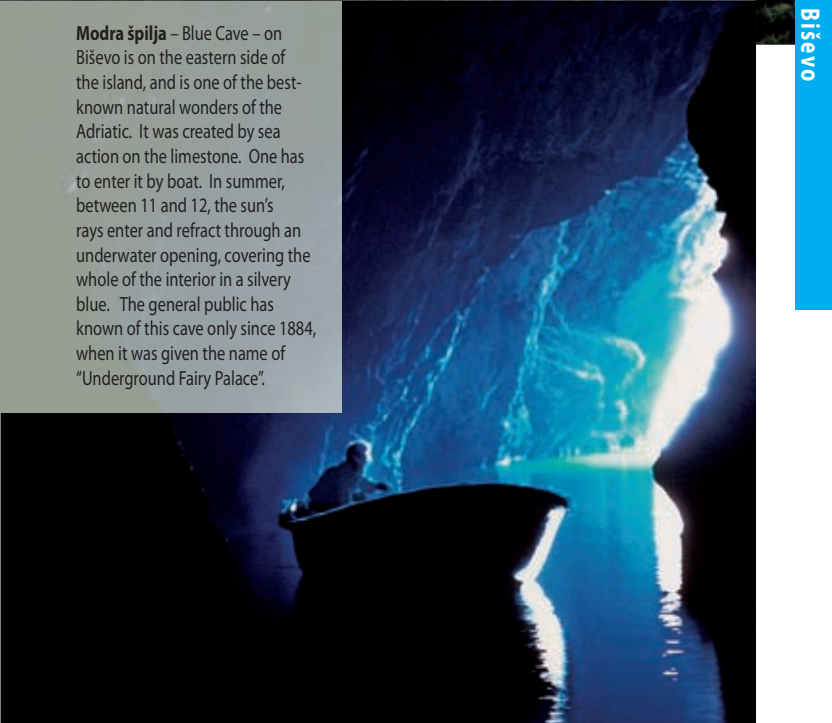
## BIŠEVO

On the island there are the remains of the Church of St Sylvester, built in 1050 on orders by Split priest Ivan Grlić and handed to the Benedictines. In the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century it was remodelled; the miraculous icon of Our Lady was revered there (now on the Hektorović Altar in Hvar Cathedral). Alongside the church there used to be a small monastery, but it was abandoned out of fear of the Pirates of Omiš, and the monks moved to Komiža. In a recent restoration, a mosaic was found, composed of *tesserae* taken from a dismantled Antique mosaic, from some complex that existed earlier on the same site.

**Sv. Andrija.** In the ruins of the church and Benedictine monastery of St Andrew on the island called Svetac (Saint), a fragment of Early Croatian interlacing ornamentation has been found (from the 11<sup>th</sup> century). As for the church, the remains of a Romanesque apse can be seen (from the 13<sup>th</sup>). In the upper part of the island are the ruins “Queen’s Castle” – a Late Antiquity castrum that controlled the sea route between Svetac and Vis. Alongside the sea there is a more recent St Andrew’s (15<sup>th</sup> century).

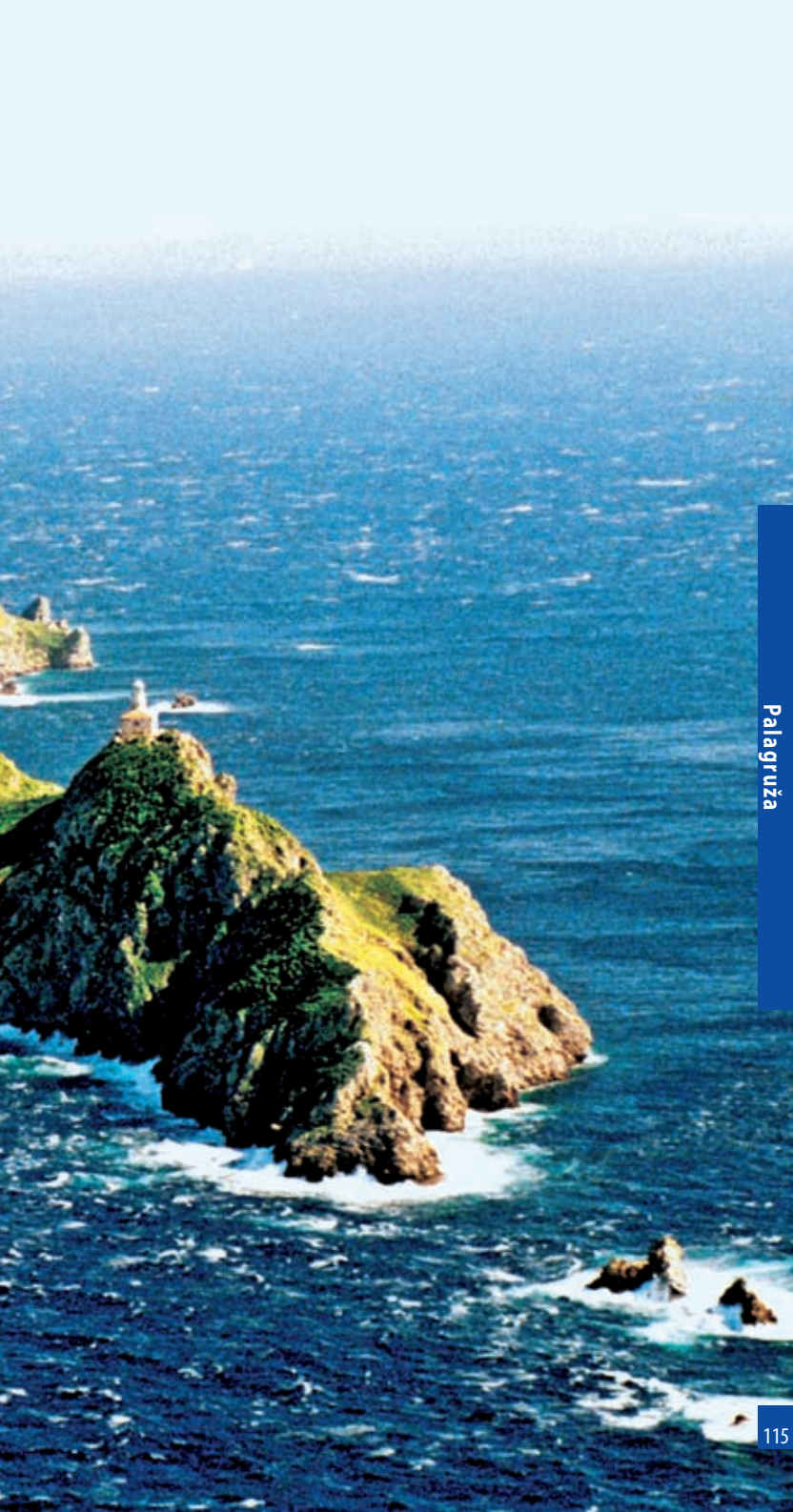


**Modra špilja** – Blue Cave – on Biševo is on the eastern side of the island, and is one of the best-known natural wonders of the Adriatic. It was created by sea action on the limestone. One has to enter it by boat. In summer, between 11 and 12, the sun's rays enter and refract through an underwater opening, covering the whole of the interior in a silvery blue. The general public has known of this cave only since 1884, when it was given the name of "Underground Fairy Palace".





Palagruža





## PALAGRUŽA

**Palagruža** is an archipelago in the middle of the Adriatic and is composed of some ten close islands and islets, the biggest of which is Vela Palagruža, actually a steep sided rock (1400 m long and 300 wide), among which there are two smaller sandy beaches, Zola on the south and Stara Vlaka to the north west. The island is a particular phenomenon because of its climatic characteristics, its subtropical endemic plants, and the architectural evidence of thousands of years of contacts of the two coasts of the Adriatic. The biggest Adriatic storm waves, up to 9 m high, have been measured around the island. Today on Palagruža there is a permanent population of lighthouse keepers, while there is a floating population of fishermen from Komiza, who have been fishing these grounds since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, for Palagruža was one of the highest yielding positions for pelagic fish like sardines and anchovies, as well as lobster and much appreciated white fish.



## THE OUTER ISLANDS

The Vis archipelago covers a large sea area of about 6,000 square kilometres between Vis and the volcanic islet of Jabuka to the west, and off down to Palagruža, the southernmost spot of Croatian territory. Vis is surrounded by islets: Budihovac, Ravnik, Barjaci, Biševo, and the outer islands and islets: Brusnik, Kamik, Svetac, Jabuka and Palagruža Mala, Palagruža Vela and Galijula. In 2003 the World Wildlife Fund proclaimed the whole area “one of the 10 last paradisaal oases in the Mediterranean”.

Since time out of mind fishing has been the most important way of making a living, and the city of Komiža was the centre of the traditional fisheries and the fishing industry right until World War II. Indeed, long the only deep sea fishermen in the Mediterranean, the Komiža people had fifteen processing factories for dealing with red fish – on Vis, along Dalmatia, in the Mediterranean and on the Atlantic coast of Spain. The many years of scientific research of Joško Božanić have shown the way this operation was matched by an outstanding skill in shipbuilding, fishing, navigation, making fishing tools, techniques for processing (salting, drying, canning), which was developed over the centuries and handed down over the generations. The exceedingly rich maritime lexis (*lingua franca*) that was part and parcel of the activity is still to a great extent living today, as well as the characteristic place names and anthroponyms, the traditional weather forecasting, navigation by the stars, ways of cooking fish, and various supplementary trades: coopering, making oars, sails, ropes, metal working and shipbuilding and the like.

This great operation, which for centuries included almost the entire population of Komiža from small children to old men in their extreme old age, based on the art of catching sardines in special nets that the Komiža fishermen inherited from the indigenous population of Vis, who had inherited the ancient art of catching sardines in drift nets.



PALAGRUŽA

KAMIK



# Split-Dalmatia County



**Split-Dalmatia County  
Tourist Board**

Prilaz braće Kaliterna 10/I  
HR-21000 Split CROATIA  
tel./fax: +385 (0)21 490 032,  
490 033, 490 036

e-mail: [info@dalmatia.hr](mailto:info@dalmatia.hr)  
[www.dalmatia.hr](http://www.dalmatia.hr)

Publisher: **Split-Dalmatia County  
Tourist Board of the  
Split-Dalmatia County**

On behalf of the publisher: **Joško Stella  
Mili Razović**

Editor: **Joško Belamarić**

Text: **Joško Belamarić**

Translator: **Graham McMaster**

Concept and design: **Mario Brzić**

Photographs: **Živko Bačić  
Tonko Bartulović  
Joško Belamarić  
Mario Brzić  
Andrija Carli  
Vanja Kovačić  
Ante Verzotti  
Archives of Split Photo Club  
Archives of the Tourist Board  
Split-Dalmatia County**

Pre-press and layout: **Studio Tempera Nova**

Printing: **TIPOMAT Tiskara**

Split, 2009





DALMATIA

CENTRAL