

GRAD GROBNIK

Grobnik is a small littoral hilltop town situated at the most advantageous military, economical and traffic point of Vinodol area. From one side, Grobnik's millenarian walls get caressed by Mediterranean climate and kindly disposed Kvarner bay, topped with entwining, fairy-tale hills covered in the plenitude of medicinal herbs with their characteristic Mediterranean scents. On the other side Grobnik faces the so called Grobnik Alps, a forecourt to Gorski kotar, a mountainous region providing freshness of continental climate. Here we find the most westward Frankopans' castle of ex-Vinodol County, a heavenward Grobnik Castle that was constructed around the 1000 AD atop the Roman foundations. From the northeast of Grobnik Castle one can see a branch of limes.

The ancient Town of Grobnik is an old urban core of the present Commune of Čavle. Town of Grobnik has been inhabited since the prehistoric times. The later Illyrian settlers of Grobnik were conquered by Romans who constructed a more robust fortification for defense against barbarians, during the great movement of the peoples. Subsequently the town fell into the hands of Goths and Franks. From the 10th century onward it has been a part of Croatian state. In 1225 it came to be ruled by the Counts of Krk, that have called themselves Frankopans ever since the 15th century. The names of Grobnik and its representatives are mentioned in 1288 within one of the most significant legal documents of feudal Europe, the Vinodol Code, that was composed in Glagolitic alphabet and written in Croatian language. During the 15th and 16th centuries, life in Town of Grobnik is characterized by the numerous Ottoman incursions. Town of Grobnik now came to be ruled by Zrinski family, actually the relatives of Frankopans. In 1671 then very rich Town of Grobnik was robbed and turned over to Austrian-Hungarian chamber.

Grobnik Castle has been designed in a form of triangle, belted by walls, strengthened by towers and semi-towers, and additionally protected with another belt of walls. Fortifications were mainly constructed in a period from the 15th to 17th century. At the ground floor of southwestern tower there is St. Helen chapel with a preserved renaissance portal. Castle's yard encloses a gothic well with carved crests of Frankopans and Counts of Krbava, dating from the 15th century.

At the immediate proximity of Castle, one can find St Philip and Jacob parish church, that was first mentioned in 1105. Beneath the castle extends Grobnik Plain where in 1241 Croats prevailed over Tartars, hence the subsequent Tartarian raids in the region are mentioned nowhere in the history.

Since 1932 Grobnik Plain has had a sport airport, and since the 1970s there's also Grobnik Motordrome. By a present territorial division, Town of Grobnik is surrounded by Municipalities of Čavle, Jelenje and City of Rijeka.

Since 1992 Grobnik Castle has been a seat of Chakavian Department of Grobnik that sponsors year-round scientific and expert researches and gatherings, along with various cultural and entertainment events, both in Croatia and abroad. Grobnik Castle is also a site of Homeland museum with ethnological collection and one of the most beautiful galleries in Primorsko-goranska County, namely Gallery of Contemporary Art. Since 1996 Grobnik Castle has become a seat of International Visual Arts Colony, with few hundred artworks, whose authors include the visual artists from Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia,

Austria, Germany, France, Netherlands, Spain, China, Brazil and Japan. In 1998 Grobnik Castle has also become a site of unique festival for young singers – Grobnik Scale Festival. There's a restaurant at the Castle's ground floor.

Grobnik Castle became a peculiar cultural centre of Grobnik Area and a site of big events with numerous programs including Croatian and international participants, especially during the summer and autumn.

Frankopans arose on the island of Krk during the first half of the 12th century, as the Counts of Krk. After acquiring estates on the mainland they became known as the Counts of Modruš, Vinodol, Senj, Ozalj, Brač, Brinj, etc. Besides in Croatia, they owned estates in Austria, Bosnia, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Sweden, etc. They were related to the ruling dynasties and are the most long-lived and most famous family at the whole of Adriatic Sea. In the 15th century they lost the island of Krk and oriented to their estates throughout the Habsburg Monarchy. Frankopans were eradicated by Habsburgs in the second half of the 17th century, sharing their faith with Zrinskis, another renowned Croatian noble family.

Frankopans' fruitful activities provided them a very high position in both Croatian and European history. They were the Croatian viceroys/Bans, Danish royal governors in Sweden, bishops in Hungary, generals and captains of Military Frontier, city mayors (e.g. of Split and Muggia). They were defenders and cultivators of Old Croatian divine service of St Cyril and Method, Croatian language and Glagolitic alphabet. Their cultural, ecclesiastic, legal, educational, linguistic, building, political, diplomatic and military heritage is very rich. It was through efforts of Frankopans that Vinodol Code was passed in 1288, as one of the most progressive European code of the time.