

Gradac History

The Gradac area was inhabited even in prehistoric times. An evidence of this are the numerous stone piles dating back to the Bronze and Early Iron Ages. In Roman times, the Gradac area was most probably the seat of the Roman civitas Biston, which as a coastal center belonged to the colony of Narona, an important Roman stronghold on the nowadays Croatian territory. At the locality of Gradina was found a cornice fragment of the monumental building from the 2nd - 3rd century, as well as the Roman coin pieces. Near the Laguna hotel were found many tombs, hence it is thought that on this location there was once a Roman necropolis. On the territory of the today's Gradac there was also situated a medieval town of Lapcan or Labinac, which was mentioned by the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, mid 10th century, under the name of Labineca. Under the present name Gradac is mentioned for the first time in 1649. It was named after the stronghold which was situated on the elevation above the present-day church of St. Michael, and which was built probably during the Kandyan war (1645.-1669.). According to the drawing made by the Venetian military engineer and cartographer Giuseppe Santini, representing the naval and continental battles between the Venetians and Ottomans at Gradac in the year 1666., the tower is shown in flames. In the abandoned hamlet of Cista above Gradac, the seat of the then Fragostin's district there may be still found the remnants of the old tower from the 16th century. Surrounding it, there are still the remnants of rows of abandoned houses with typical architectonic features of the region. One of the oldest existing edifices in the territory of Gradac is the chapel of St. Pasquale on the Mt Plana, with a barrel shaped vault, and a saddle roof. Next to the old parish church of St. Antonio there is a local cemetery and the new parish church of St. Michael built in 1852., precisely in the zone of Gradina, the ancient Roman locality. In the church, there are three marble altars with statues. The most interesting among them is the old wooden statue of St. Rocco. In the church there is also the old baptismal stone font, originating probably from the old church.