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Abstract
The buildings erected previously at the site where now Hvar Observatory is located, their history and fate, are described.

The hill, where Hvar Observatory, is located lies in the centre of a prehistorical settlement zone which spread from the brow of Vela glava in the east to the cove Vira in the west. It is amazing, that this top is the only one in the chain of crests with no prehistorical traces of permanent settling are found there so far. Actually, while the crest Fortica, westward, and the crest Vela glava eastward are extraordinary rich with artifices of ceramics from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages, this very peak has no such findings, which leads to the conclusion that it was not inhabited through the prehistoric period, the Old and Middle Ages (Kirigin, 1996).

At the end of the Middle Ages, the small church of St. Nicolaus was built on this crest. Its title-holder, the protector of passengers and sailors, provided evidence about the votive character of the church. The first direct mentioning of the church originates from the 15th century when the church situated at the place of today's cemetery in Hvar was called the church of St. Nicolaus Inferioris, from which it can be deduced that even than there was already the division to St. Nicolaus Inferioris and Superioris, at Napoljun, which appeared in later centuries. The churches are not mentioned in the reform of the Statue from 1331 so generally speaking we could say that it was built in the second half of the 14th century (Kovačić, 1982).

Unfortunately, neither the remnants of the church nor descriptions or presentations from this time are preserved.

This extraordinary convenient position enabling to watch the ships on their way through the Channels of Koržula, Vis and Hvar was certainly known and used already in ancient times, but the observation post by the church was mentioned for the first time on 9. June 1466. It was mentioned within the frame of the permanent topic associated with the municipal history of Hvar: the conflict between plebeians and nobility. The plebeians requested that professional watchmen should be appointed instead of 40-50 land workers that were on guard fulfilling thus their annual obligation to the municipality, The answer of the Venice authorities was negative with the explicit demand that everything should remain unchanged (Zaninović, 1977).

The church of St. Nicolaus the Superior was shown on the oldest known panorama of Hvar, the one by Conrad Gruenemberg in 1443 (Figure 1). On the hill eastward from Fortica one can see a smaller building having a bell-tower or a round tower, but since the picture is rather unreliable, we cannot be sure about the original appearance. Anyway, this panorama brings the evidence about the existence of the church, as well as the fact that it was recognisable as a church at the end of the 15th century which was not the case later on.
The perimeter of the fortification had a square ground-plan with the size 30x27 meters. The fortification there is a spacious camp surrounded by a wall (Figure 4) with smaller towers. In the middle there is a tower of square ground-plan, 10x11 meters in size.

The famous altar builders of Bertapella from Vrboska l'ennemi..." (Duboković, 1958). Finally the new fortification was built at the place of the observation post and the church of St. Nicolaus Superior, probably because it was more close to the town. It was named after the rectangle ground-plan oriented in the north-south direction and with a bastion in the north. During the Napoleonic wars, the interests of great powers were for the first time defended by strong fleets of Great Britain, the Russian in Boka Kotorska with occasional departures to Koržula.

The panorama of Hvar as seen from St. Nicolaus Superior was drawn by G. Santini in 1668 and Justi's panorama of Hvar from 1704 shows, rather vaguely, a ground floor building with a twofold roof oriented in the west-east direction, at the top of Napoljun. This panorama, although presenting the observation post and the church as a small detail, can be regarded as a reliable evidence. It had no bell and its rope, no door..." (Mardešić, 1986). This written evidence provides a significant information that there were no bells or their ropes on the entire hill used to be called after the title holder of the church. The church of St. Nicolaus Superior church at the 6th December 1627. He wrote in his visitations: "The Honourable Sir, the canon from Chioggia, apostolic vicar of the Hvar bishop Cedulina, Petar Morari visited the Island of G. Rossacio. The fact that the church was not mentioned in the visitation of the apostolic visitator Valiero from 1579 proves that the church was out of usage since the middle of the 16th century. By putting the non-existant bell-tower with the facade, the author wanted to indicate that it was a sacral building, but he describes it only as the observation post (guardia) in the report made by Gianbattiste Giustiniana in 1553 (Novak, 1972).
After the fall of Napoleon in 1815, the Croatian fortifications were taken over by Austria, which reconstructed and fortified the fortifications on Hvar in the 19th century as a part of the measures to be taken for the defence of the eastern Adriatic coast from the threats of Italy. The importance of the fortifications on Hvar declined in 1866 after the defeat of the Italian fleet in the sea battle of Vis, and also along with the rapid development of arms in the second half of the 19th century. At the end of the century, the fortification became the property of the family Machiedo, which sold it to the Department of Navy in 1929. From 1941 to 1945 the fortress was under the authority of the Army of the Independent State of Croatia. After the World War II the fortification was used also for military purposes, as an observation post, until the year 1964. From 1972 the fortress is the seat of the Hvar Observatory which was erected and equipped in collaboration between the Faculty of Geodesy, University of Zagreb and the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.