

- 1 Older parts of Sv. Martin parochial church (frescoes from 1431)
- 2 St. Martin parochial church (1910)
- 3 Belltower (1903.)
- 4 Stone cross (1728.)
- 5 Remains of medieval town walls
- 6 Calvary (1901.)
- 7 "Smal gate"
- 8 Vladimir Gortan birth house
- 9 Vincent of Kastav monument (by Vanja Radauš 1974.)
- 10 St. Mary of the Rocks
- 11 Office premises of Beram town committee
- 12 Vladimir Gortan memorial mausoleum
- 13 "Gortanovci" monument
- Wine cellar Bačac (reservation obligatory, phone 091 131 8345)

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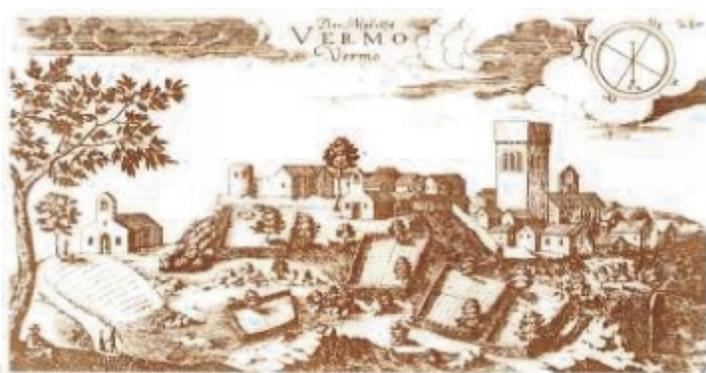


Beram

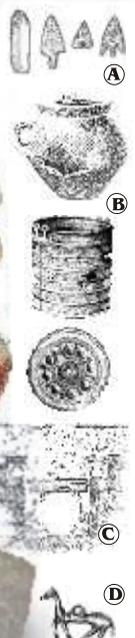
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Beram is one of the oldest continuously populated settlements in Istria. Besides the artefacts from stone age found in the area **(A)** later explorations of the prehistoric necropolis on the south slopes of Beram have shown with certainty that during the iron age a settlement already existed here. A conical hill above a fertile valley was an ideal place for a hill-fort type settlement, surrounded by a simple rough wall following the terrain configuration. Over the ruins of these walls Roman forts and medieval castles were later built. A radial street pattern founded in some ancient times has been preserved in Beram until today. The Beram hill-fort of the first phase (until the VIII.cent. BC) enclosed about the same area the town includes today. Entrance is at a place that is still being used as an auxiliary entrance, and local people call it „the small gates“ **(D)**. Outside the hill-fort wall, at the southern hillside, was the necropolis – a place to burn and burrow the dead. As the hill-fort settlement was later spreading down the southern hillside the necropolis kept moving to be beyond the outside wall. Explorations of the Beram necropolis were the **first real archaeological research in Istria**, and they provided



an ample amount of material that clarified not only the prehistoric era of Beram, but of the entire Istria. The Beram necropolis was explored in 1883. by three archaeologists, independently one of another: Carlo Marchesetti, Karl Moser, and Andrea Amoroso, who altogether explored over 170 graves, and deposited the findings in museums of Vienna and Trieste.

At the necropolis, remains were burned at a special place, and afterwards the ashes put in urns **(B)** would be placed into square niches **(C)** deep up to 60cm, sometimes carved in live rock, and covered with stone plates. Different accessories **(D)** would also be laid in the graves together with the remains of the deceased. It was precisely this research that gave us the most information about Beram of the past and its inhabitants. In the prehistoric age population of Beram lived in organised communities that were farming the land, gathering fruits, and breeding live stock. They bred cattle, horses, sheep, and pigs, not only as a source of milk and meat, but also for making clothes and weaving. It is interesting that sea shell valves brought from the sea coast were also found, and findings of deer and roe-buck horns show that they also practiced hunting.

Beram was first mentioned in a written document in the year 911., in a deed of gift by king Berengar to the bishop of Trieste. In the middle ages it was fortified with defensive walls above which was rising, at the place where the parochial church stands today, a square watchtower, from which there was a secret underground passage leading to Jamorina cave next to the creek at the hillfoot. Although in parochial sense it belonged to Poreč diocese, Beram was part of the lands belonging to the counts of Gorizia, and

later to Pazin principality, and it had a status of castle, and beginning with 1578. of a small town. During numerous armed conflicts between the Pazin principality, enclosing the central part of Istria with center in Pazin, and Venice, which reigned over neighbouring Motovun and the entire Istrian coast, the Beram castle played an important role, but due to that it also often suffered attacks and destruction.

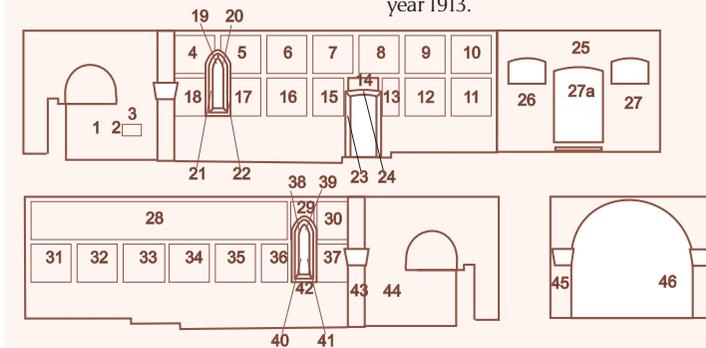
Beram was one of the most important centres of medieval **Glagolitic literacy**. Students („žakans“) from most parts of Istria would come to study with Beram Glagolitic priests. They left testimonies of it written in Glagolitic script on the margins of Beram liturgic books, or carved with a sharp object into fresco-painted walls of the little church of St. Mary „na Škriljijinah“ (of the Rocks). Several illuminated XIII. and XIV.cent. Glagolitic manuscripts come from Beram, including a fragment of a homiliary (collection of sermons), and a richly painted missal and a breviary from the XIV.cent. **(E)**

Few know that the Beram **parochial church of St. Martin**, **(I)** rebuilt in neoromantic style in the beginning of the XX. century, has a perfectly preserved gothic sanctuary of an older church from 1431. with frescos **(F)** older than the Škriljine ones behind the present-day main altar. A baptismal font with a Glagolitic inscription **(G)** is also kept in that sanctuary, while a late-gothic relief with an image of St. Martin **(I)** made in a folksey manner is built into the wall. The altar canvas painting in the new part of the church was made by Celestin Medović, a Croatian painter, in the XIX.cent.

Sveta Marija na Škriljijinah

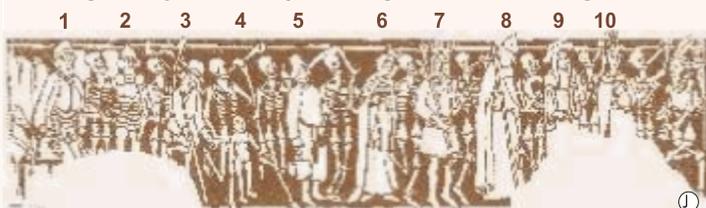
The cemetery church of **St. Mary of the Rocks** **(10)** situated 1km to the north-east from Beram, within itself holds one of the most valuable accomplishments of Istrian medieval painting. Well preserved late-gothic frescos almost entirely cover the inner walls of the church, and they were made by master Vincent of Kastav. The paintings were commissioned by Beram confraternity of St. Mary, so most of their space is dedicated to scenes from lives of Mary and Jesus.

The strongest impression leaves the fresco called „Dance of the Dead“ where in front of our eyes kings, merchants, cardinals, even the Pope himself dance hand in hand with death. In the XVIII.cent., during the baroque period, the church was expanded and renovated, which caused most of the frescos to be damaged or destroyed. All the frescos were painted over and hidden at that time, and rediscovered and renovated in the year 1913.



1–2. Two saints; **3.** ornament; **4.** Birth of Mary; **5.** Presentation of Mary at the Temple; **6.** Betrothal; **7.** Annunciation; **8.** Visitation; **9.** Nativity of Jesus; **10.** Presentation of Jesus at the Temple; **11.** Massacre of the Innocents; **12.** Flight into Egypt; **13.** St. Sebastian; **14.** Gothic inscription with the Year and the name of author; **15.** St. Michael; **16.** Finding in the Temple; **17.** Baptism of Jesus; **18.** St. John the Evangelist and St. Florian (in a window); **19.** King David, **20.** Old Testament prophet; **21.** St. Ursula; **22.** St. Katherine; **23.** Grotesque; **24.** ornament; **25.** Dance of Death; **26.** Original sin; **27.** Wheel of Fortune; **27a.** Veronica's Veil (above the entrance); **28.** Adoration of the Magi; **29.** Austrian coat of arms; **30.** Last Supper; **31.** Temptation; **32.** St. Apollonia; **33.** St. Martin; **34.** St. Georg; **35.** Triumphal entry into Jerusalem; **36.** Agony in the Garden; **37.** Juda's kiss; **38.** St. Gregory Pope; **39.** St. Jerome; **40.** St. Augustin; **41.** St. Ambrosius; **42.** ornament; **43.** St. Stephen; **44.** Daniel, Moses, Ellyah; **45.** bordure (fragment); **46.** fragments

Dance of death: 1. merchant; **2.** knight; **3.** beggar; **4.** child; **5.** innkeeper; **6.** queen; **7.** king; **8.** bishop; **9.** cardinal; **10.** Pope



(I)



konoba "Vela vrata"

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Find out more:

dr. Branko Fučić – VINCENT IZ KASTVA, Kršćanska sadašnjost / IKD "Juraj Dobrila", Zagreb / Pazin 1992.