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stoljeća: Stato da Terra – zapadni Stato da Mar

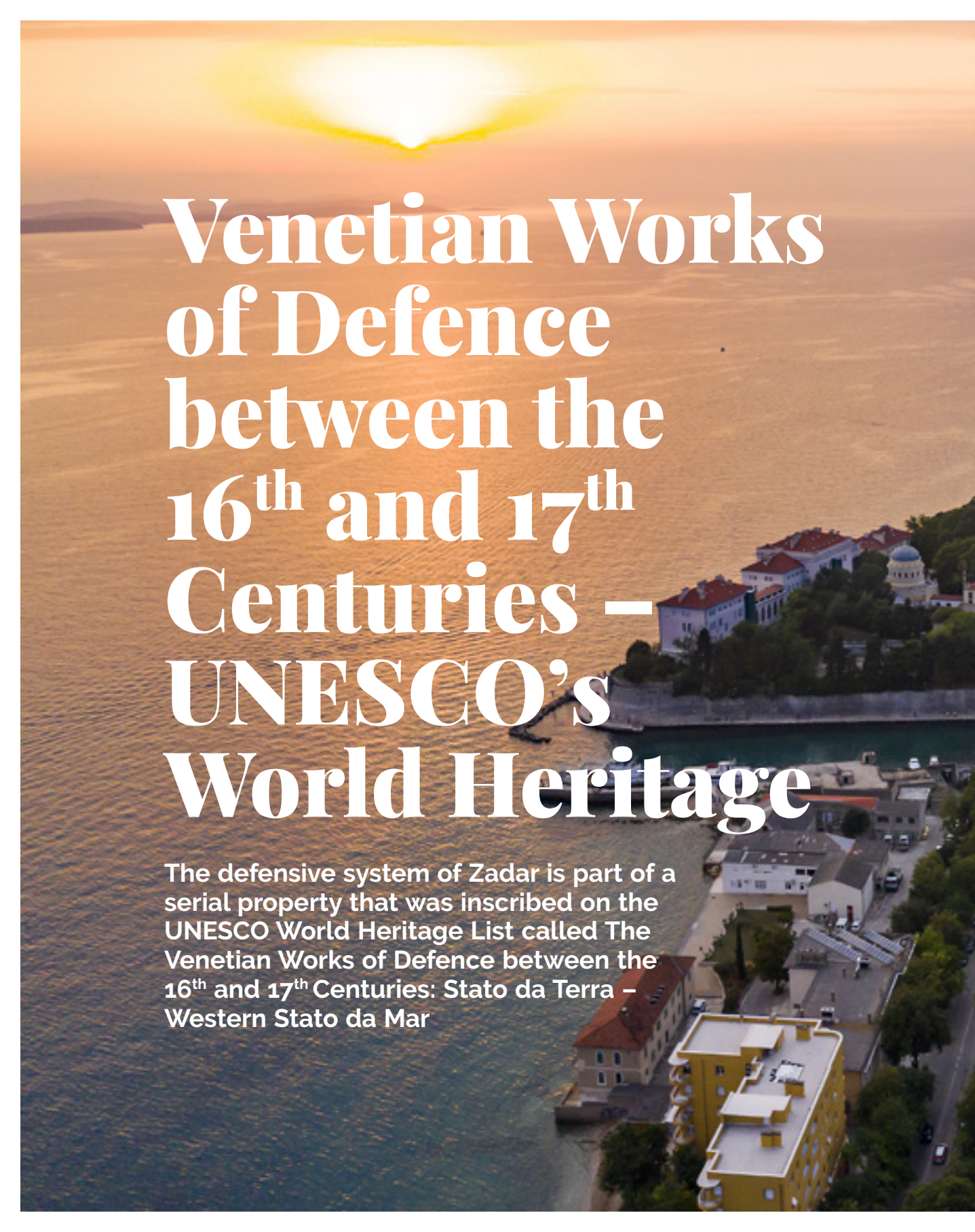
Venetian Works of Defence
between 16th and 17th centuries:
Stato da Terra – western Stato da Mar
inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2017

Zadara

The
Defensive
System of
Zadar –
UNESCO's
World
Heritage

ZADAR REGION





Venetian Works of Defence between the 16th and 17th Centuries – UNESCO's World Heritage

The defensive system of Zadar is part of a serial property that was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List called The Venetian Works of Defence between the 16th and 17th Centuries: Stato da Terra – Western Stato da Mar



Built in the Renaissance and recognised as a cultural property of outstanding universal value, the city's fortification system stands out among the numerous cultural and historic monuments of Zadar.

The defensive system of Zadar is part of a serial property that was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List called The Venetian Works of Defence between the 16th and 17th Centuries: Stato da Terra – Western Stato da Mar. It is a transnational inscription comprising six sites spread across three countries – Italy, Croatia and Montenegro. Croatian sites, the Defensive System of Zadar and the Fort of St. Nicholas in Šibenik are inscribed on the list along with the Fortified City of Bergamo (IT), the Fortified City of Peschiera del Garda (IT), the City Fortress of Palmanova (IT) and the Fortified City of Kotor (MNE). The inscription of Zadar and Šibenik on the list was coordinated by a team of experts led by conservator Miljenko Domijan. The Decision on inscription was adopted at the 41st session of the UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, convened in Kraków (PL) in 2017; the representatives of the City of Zadar and Mayor Branko Dukić were present. The partners in serial inscription have established a joint secretariat in Bergamo and a Coordination Team, which represents the working body that manages the requirements of the site. The City of Zadar has taken over the presidency of the Team since 2021, while the Administrative Department of Culture and Sport partakes in its work.

The inscribed cities, i.e., their city walls and fortifications represent the organisation, design, adaptation and implementation of the innovative model of military architecture known as the *alla moderna* fortified system, with the task of creating a network to defend trade routes and harbours in the Adriatic and the Eastern Mediterranean. The defence works built by the Republic of Venice from the 16th to 17th centuries span more than one thousand kilometres, from the Lombard region in Italy to the very south of the eastern Adriatic coast. Land fortifications known as Stato da Terra, protected the Republic of Venice from other European powers to the northwest, while those called Stato da Mar protected the Venetian sea routes and harbours in the Adriatic Sea to the Levant.

The introduction of cannons and gunpowder in the methodology of warfare at the beginning of the modern era led to significant shifts in military techniques and architecture. Instead of medieval flat high walls with crenelation at the top, massive walls are built with the space between the outer and inner side filled with tons of earth, which absorbs the impact of cannonballs. These fortifications are distinguished by their curved walls, which is precisely the feature of the so-called *alla moderna* system, supplemented by bastions and other characteristic design elements that were to spread throughout Europe.

1 Branko Dukić, Mayor of Zadar, Miljenko Domijan, conservator, and Goran Pauk, governor of the Šibenik-Knin County during the announcement of the inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List in Kraków, 2017

2 Map of the site The Venetian Works of Defence between the 16th and 17th Centuries inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List





World Heritage site

Venetian Works of Defence
between the 16th and the
17th Centuries: Stato da Terra
- Western Stato da Mar

The defensive system of Zadar

Throughout history, the city of Zadar was the capital of pre-Roman Liburnia, then of the Byzantine theme of Dalmatia, and afterward of Venetian, French and Austrian Dalmatia. The impressive history of the city's fortifications is more than two millennia old.

In the period of Venetian rule, Zadar was the largest and strongest fortification in Stato da Mar. Due to its strategic location on the eastern Adriatic and an important position for maritime routes, Zadar was the main foothold of the Venetian fleet from Venice to Corfu; it served as the bulwark of Serenissima to control navigation, supply the fleet and halt the advance of

- 1** View from the Citadela bastion to the curtain wall, Land Gate and Foša harbour
- 2** Part of Forte fortress, east view



pirates in the mid-Adriatic. As an extremely significant city of ancient tradition, very favourably situated on a peninsula with a protected harbour, Zadar had medieval fortifications even at the time when Venice came into possession of Dalmatia at the beginning of the 15th century. However, due to the new method of warfare, i.e., the introduction of artillery, they needed to be replaced with new ones; that is why extensive construction work was carried out during the 16th century to build a new system. The defensive system of the city of Zadar is an example of the *alla moderna* fortification and consists of two basic elements: the city walls with bastions, and the outer Forte fortress, which defended the city at the point where the peninsula connects to the mainland.

In 1537, Venetians sent Michele Sanmicheli to Zadar, who was the chief military architect of the Venetian Republic at the time. He modified the original project designed by Francesco Maria della Rovere. Michele Sanmicheli is also the creator of the basic layout of

bastions and curtain walls. It was he who decided on the location of the main city gate Porta Terraferma, while his nephew Giangirolamo Sanmicheli, also a famous Venetian builder, supervised the construction process. After Michele and Giangirolamo Sanmicheli, Sforza Pallavicino works in Zadar. He is the author of the Forte fortress southeast of the old city centre. On each side of the fortress, a channel filled with sea water was dug, which strengthened the city's defences.

With the described interventions Zadar got a sufficiently powerful fortification that did not need supplements till the end of the Venetian period.

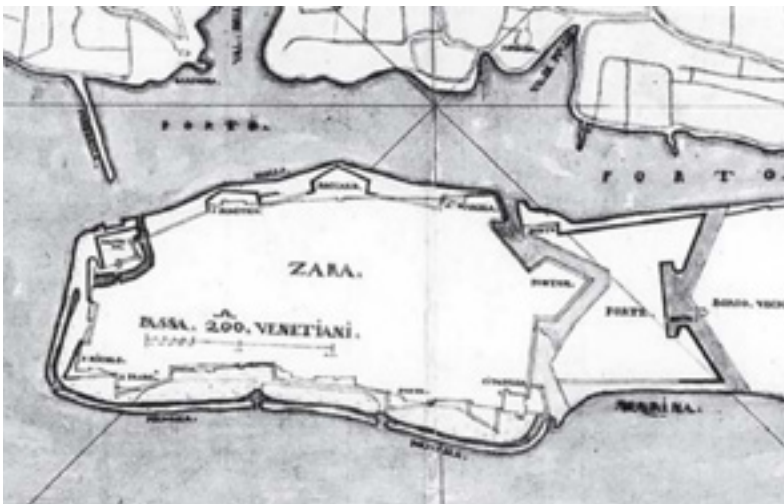
In regards to typology, the system consists of the most important fortification elements of the city's defence, built according to the designs of some of the leading representatives of the Venetian military architecture *alla moderna*. The defensive system of Zadar covers an area of 11,19 ha, and the total area with the buffer zone is 240,45 ha.



City walls with bastions

In the 16th century, the Venetian Republic initiated the construction of a new rampart wall that would replace the existing dilapidated medieval walls with modern fortifications adapted to defend against artillery attacks. The Renaissance fortification theory required the construction of a new fortification system equipped with polygonal bastions connected by curtain walls (a flat part of the wall) that were erected around the city on the peninsula.

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- 1 Zadar around 1570 (Kriegsarchiv, Vienna)
 - 2 Aerial view of the city from the south
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Forte Fortress: the fort outside the city

The Forte fortress was built in front of the city walls and the adjoining sea moat, in a place that was considered the most vulnerable spot in the defence of the city. The fortress was built from 1567 to 1570; the author of the project and the head of construction works was Sforza Pallavicino, a Venetian condottiere and builder. Towards the mainland the fortress features a front of two demi-bastions connected by a curtain wall: this is a form called tenaille (pincers). Previously the site housed the suburb Borgo, which was completely demolished, including the four churches that were on the site.



Ponton Bastion (Grimani)

The great central bastion is the main defence of the city on the east side, at the point where the peninsula connects to the mainland. This very important bastion was built before all others; its construction began as early as 1537. From the beginning, it was called Ponton (*puntone* – meaning pointed). In addition to this feature, it is also exceptional regarding the material used in construction, because it is built mainly of brick. Today, a beautiful park is situated on the site of the bastion, which was renovated in 1829 as the first public park in Dalmatia at the time.

- 1 Sforza Pallavicino's coat of arms
- 2 Aerial view of Zadar with the Forte fortress in the front
- 3 Aerial view of the city with the Ponton bastion in the front



Land Gate (Porta Terraferma)

In its original form, the city gate in Foša was constructed as a separate building. Only the front façade has remained preserved until today. The city's main gate was built in 1543. It is a masterpiece of Renaissance design, and the richness and quality of decorative stone-carving elements correspond to the importance of the city to which they belong. The project of an exceptionally accomplished composition of the façade and the entire building is attributed to the chief military engineer of the Venetian Republic, Michele Sanmicheli.

- 1 St. Mark's lion on the Land gate
- 2 View of the Land gate and a medieval tower in the background







Citadela Bastion (Barbakan)

After the acquisition of Zadar at the beginning of the 15th century, the Venetians built a stronghold in the southern corner of the walls as part of the existing defensive belt. The fort was called Citadela (Citadel); it replaced the previous medieval fortifications, and even today the remains of Romanesque fortifications from the 12th and 13th centuries can be seen. This bastion served as the main defence on the southeast side of the city. Due to its importance, it is decorated with inscriptions and a relief of St. Mark's lion.

- 1 View of the Citadela bastion and entrance to the Foša harbour
- 2 St. Mark's lion on the Citadela bastion



Bastion of St. Marcella (Moro)

This large bastion was constructed as the first in a series of bastions facing the city harbour. It is connected to the bastion of St. Roch, and originally a curtain wall (a flat part of the rampart) linked it to the Ponton bastion as well. This stretch of wall was subsequently removed and the School of Crafts and Trade (the so-called Bakmaz House) was built in its place. Until recently, the building housed the Technical School, and as of 2023 departments of the University of Zadar have been accommodated there. Two palaces were built on the bastion – Drioli and Cosmacendi (which nowadays houses the Museum of Ancient Glass).

1 Bastion of St. Marcella and the Museum of Ancient Glass

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Bastion of St. Roch and Bastion of St. Demetrius

The bastion of St. Roch (also known as the bastion of St. Chrysogonus) and the bastion of St. Demetrius are two central bastions on the northern side of the city, which protect the harbour side of the peninsula. Inside them, as well as within the rest of the ramparts, there are tunnels and interior spaces that were previously used as shelters and nowadays serve partly as business premises. Some others, due to inadequate height and conditions are currently not in use. Nowadays, the bastion of St. Roch accommodates Zadar fish market and its storage facilities.

1 View of the bastion of St. Roch in the front and the bastion of St. Demetrius in the background



Kaštel Bastion (Castello)

At the entrance to the city harbour during the Middle Ages, a separate fortress called Kaštel was built, which was detached from the city by a moat filled with sea. During the construction of the new Renaissance system, its layout was changed and it was integrated into the entire system, while on the site of the former moat, a water tank was built (the Three Wells Square – *Trg tri bunara*). To this day, only the entrance part of the tower has been preserved, which also served as a gunpowder magazine, the so-called Small Arsenal.

- 1 Small Arsenal
- 2 Harbour gate, the inner face

Harbour Gate (Porta Marina)

One of the most important gates facing the city's harbour got its name after its purpose of connecting the market with the harbour. It is sometimes called the Sea Gate and is often referred to under the name of the nearby Church of St. Chrysogonus. It assumed its present form after the victory of the Christian army over the Turks in the Battle of Lepanto in 1573. On the inner side, the gate consists of an element of the Roman Arch (Triumphal Arch of Melia Aniana), above which is a large Renaissance plate recalling the aforementioned victory, with a relief of St. Chrysogonus on horseback situated above the plate. On the outer side of the gate, there is another relief of a winged lion, a symbol of the Venetian state.

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Five wells

The Renaissance Five Wells Square is, in fact, a paved area of a large water tank that was built in 1578 as part of the construction of a new defence system. Here, the preserved parts of the medieval city fortifications are still visible – the city wall and a tower. Since there had already been a moat in front of the medieval wall, it was used in the 16th century and converted into a cistern, so that the city could provide water to the citizens in the event of a Turkish siege. The square with its five well crowns is one of the most beautiful parts of the city.

Porporela

A vital element of Zadar's both medieval and modern system was the *porporela* (breakwater): a stone embankment rising to the sea surface level, which prevented ships from approaching the city walls. Parts of this defensive element are still visible at the south-eastern end of the seafront and along the large breakwater at the entrance to the city harbour. A large chain used to be strung across the harbour entrance, thus completely blocking the entry of ships.

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- 1 Remains of porporela (breakwater) at the entrance to the city harbour Jazine
 - 2 Five Wells Square and a medieval tower
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Contemporary interventions

- 1 Modern-day Vladimir Nazor Park was designed within the Forte fortress
- 2 Newly renovated promenade along the city walls near the city harbour

In the second half of the 19th century, the process of demilitarization of the city began. In 1868, the Austrian administration, which took over the governing of the city after the fall of the Venetian Republic, declared Zadar an open city. City ramparts with bastions were removed on the southwestern stretch of the peninsula. This changed the layout of the city from the seaside, and the works were accompanied by the renovation of the seafront, Zadar's famous promenade by the sea. The bastions on the north and east sides, as well as the Forte fortress, were converted into public parks.

More recently, after the inscription of the Zadar defensive system on the UNESCO World Heritage List, a revitalization of about 900 meters of the promenade on the Ramparts of Zadar Uprisings has been carried out, more precisely from the bastion of St. Marcella to the Kaštel bastion. The intervention was carried out by the City of Zadar with the project ZADAR BAŠTINI (From Zadar to its heritage), according to the design of architect Bogdan Marov. Traffic road and parking lot were removed from this area that the locals call Muraj, and interpretational and educational panels containing information about the Defensive System of Zadar were put on display along the renovated promenade.





Map Legend

1. Porporela (breakwater) remains
2. Kaštel Bastion
3. Chain Gate
4. Bastion of St. Demetrius
5. Harbour Gate
6. Bastion of St. Roch
7. St. Roch Gate
8. Bastion of St. Marcella
9. Forte Fortress
10. Bastion Ponton
11. Five wells Square
12. Land Gate
13. Citadela Bastion



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