

## Stilske



The unique historical and cultural complex Stilske that comes from the VIII – mid XI century is situated in the Lviv region near the Mykolaiv town and Stilsko, Iliv, Dubrava villages. Despite of its greatness and historical significance this area is still insufficiently explored. The capital of Great (White) Croatia was located right here. The city at that time was really giant: fortified area reached 250 ha, the length of arbors and defensive walls were about 10 km. It is proved out by the strong earthen arbors, surrounded by the moats and artificially constructed terraces, which created the several rows around the ancient city. The wooden walls and towers were located directly on the arbors. Dozens of the houses and outbuildings were linked to them inside the city. They were built in the middle of many residential buildings with commercial and military purpose. More than that, the stone paving has been digged out at the place of the main entrance to the city. It used to be called as “The White Road”.

According to the legends, an underground city could exist under the site. The scientists affirm the existing of the underground mazes. They could be even of artificial origin. It is very likely that they could be used as cave temples or tombs of the feudal nobility and clergy. Due to the lack of funding for the scientific discoveries these legends remain a mystery.

The citizens (traders, artisans and clergy) lived around the fortified stronghold. It is proved by the several found housing objects and homesteads of wealthy citizens. The numerous examples of stucco, utensils, items of everyday use and weapons were found on the floor of the digged out houses.

As the legends say, the city was destroyed after the long siege. The enemies could not conquer this city. That's why they decided to use their cunning. One evening the warriors pretended that they were stepping back. The citizens saw the troops retreating and opened the gates. At the same time the masked garrison broke into the city from the hider and set a fire. The army, which was retreated, saw a signal – blaze of the burning city, quickly returned and burned it down to the ground. A few people that survived after this attack did not renew it. They settled down in the valley of the river Kolodnytsya. That is why the village Stilske is located on the banks of this river and its' name has an etymological connection with the word “capital”.

The remains of the strong earthen fortifications have preserved on the dominant hight at the centre of the site. The wooden walls of the city did not remain but the local people kept the names of the separate city parts in their stories: “Golden Gates”, “Iron Gates”, “Tower”, “Prince's Well”, “Khymyn' Valley”, “Cellar”, “Under the Cellar”, “Dam”, etc. What is more interesting, the scientists made sure that these names describe the real objects.



The “White Road” can be a quite good example. Also you can easily notice the remains of the sluices on the banks of the river that were used for the ships. That is why the name “Dam” appeared. The biggest problem for the scientists of the White Croatia history is almost the full absence of the written memories about these tribes and their country. It was located at the footstep to the Carpathian Mountains on the territories of the current Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, southern parts of Ternopil, Lviv regions and partly Poland, Zakarpattya. White Croats are mentioned three times at the “Primary Chronicle”: the first time in the list of the other East Slavonic tribes, the second – as the participants of Prince Oleh campaign to the Byzantium at 907, the third – during Volodymyr Velykyi campaign to their lands at 992. There is also a written memory in the book of Kostyantyn Bahryanorodnyi (the emperor of Byzantium, historian, politician and cultural figure of X century) “De Administrando Imperio”. It is written that the baptized Croats (those living on Balkans) come from the non-baptized Croats who lived beyond the Hungarian Mountains (that means on the territory of the current Pre-Carpathian region). In substance, these are all written memories that we have nowadays.

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## Rozhirche



Rozhirche site is definitely one of the historical and cultural values of the Lviv region. It is located near the village Rozhirche. The site includes a cave monastery - a unique example of rock sacred architecture of XIII-XVI centuries. Such a construction is not typical for territories of Galicia.

The main rock massif is located at the foot of the ridge on its northern slope and in 200 m from the south-eastern outskirts of the village. Besides the main rock massif, there are also two small rocks in 50 m from the main site. These two rocks were the entrance to the territory of the monastery. There is also the rock with a cave and the crosses reflected on the walls. It is located on the northern slope of the ridge and almost in 200m southwest from the previous two rocks.



The most interesting and explored is the main rock massif, where the monastery itself is located. Right here you can watch a magnificent landscape on the river valley. The settlement could be not big in size with wooden churches and chapels, cells and various housing buildings. It could have also a defensive role.



The caves of the monastery form two tiers: at the lower tier were the housing quarters with an adjacent room; on the top tier - a church. Now there is a small icon on the same place where the church existed. The icon was set in 2003. The traces of the wooden construction were found on the wall opposite to the church entrance. They are the horizontal and vertical notches, used for the strengthening of a wooden frame. The formed wall covered the nave wall, damaged with the cracks and corrosion.

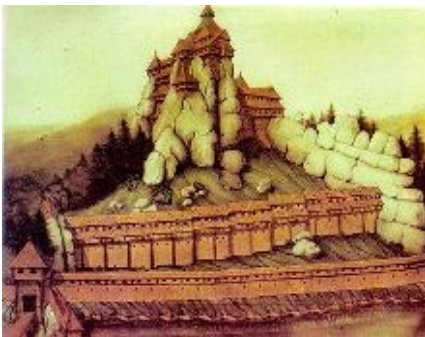




The church had two doors. It is evidenced with the notches for the massive door hinges. The windows had wooden frames with bars and probably were covered with round stained glass. From the bottom to the church you can get along the hewn in the rock 18 stairs with vertical holes. These holes have been used for fastening the wooden railing. Historian V. Karpovich treats the church as the three-part construction. He shares the space respectively on the porch, nartek, the main nave and presbytery (chancel area). Two niches, slotted on the edges of the chancel, functioned as credences. The three niches – arcosoliums - on the opposite side functioned as the hiding places for the vestments. The walls of the cave monastery are painted with various inscriptions, the oldest of which belongs to 1675. Once the cave complex had a long wooden extension or the walls above the rocks. In its development the monastery has undergone some changes related to its formation likely in the XIII-XIV centuries. It is possible the caves were also used in pagan times. It is evidenced by the marks on the rocks and detected here in 1990 agricultural settlements in VIII-VII centuries BC.

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## Tustan Fortress (Urych)



The fortress structures of log construction were built atop the series of rocky-mountain outcrops overlooking the present village of Urych in the Carpathian Mountain district of the Lviv region, Ukraine. The studies of Tustan have led to the discovery of a new type of medieval rock fortification previously unknown to the scientific world. The height of known wooden walls reaches from 13 meters to 15.27 meters, and interior structures reaching the height of 17.5 meters. This evidence survives at several sites as cut slots and grooves on the stone outcrops and cliffs. The absence of analogous examples of such wooden fortifications from the same period elsewhere in Europe places the sites in a unique position. Among the identified sites of cliff-side buildings, one of the most systematically researched and excavated is the fortress of Tustan from the ancient Kyiv Rus period.

The primary sources are the first written records of Janko of Charnkow and Jan Dlugosz from the 14th century. Although they do not mention Tustan by its name, the place they refer to in their writings could only be Tustan. At that time Tustan was the center of an administrative district that occupied a considerable territory and controlled the Voritskyi, Skotarskyi and Uzotskyi Passes (the latter was also called "Ruskyj Put"). Because of its location on an important international trade route, which has yielded Arab coins (dirhams) from the 9th-11th centuries, Tustan became a significant fortification early in its history. It was also a customs point on the salt route from Drohobych to central Europe, collecting duties from passing caravans. The subsequent development of salt mines in the central Europe eliminated the demand for salt from the Pre-Carpathian region, and Tustan lost its strategic and economic importance. The town-fortress fell into decline, ceasing to exist as a fortified complex during the 16th century.



The first scientific interest in the Urych village dates back to the late 17th-early 18th centuries. B. Hacquet, a professor at Lviv University, identified the location of ironworks in the vicinity of the village of Pidhorodtsi and Urych during his systematic investigation of the Carpathian Mountains region. A. Bielowski and A. Petrushevych were among the first to identify the rock outcrops near the village of Urych as the remains of the fortress Tustan itself. The slots and grooves chiseled into the cliff-face and rock surfaces to anchor and receive the wooden building elements have been remarkably well preserved.

More than 80 % of these scars on Kamin, the largest of three fortified rock outcrops in the Tustan complex, are clearly visible on the cliff-sides. During archaeological excavation of the courtyard, a surviving stone wall was investigated. This wall, constructed of lime mortar and stone, was 2.5 meters wide and was built on a four-meter-wide foundation. Chiseled slots, grooves and a series of postholes in the cliff-faces and courtyard floor indicated that wooden buildings flanked the courtyard on three sides. On the northern edge of the courtyard, a cistern was chiseled into the solid stone of the outcrop to a depth of 14 meters. The earliest of the remarkably well preserved wooden architectural elements recovered from this cistern was dated to the 9th-10th centuries. A second cistern constructed high above the courtyard was built of mortared stone and dated to the 12th-13th centuries. This cistern was located at a height of 60 meters above meadow level. On the western side of Kamin a 30-meter-deep and 2-meter-wide well was discovered. To a depth of 22 meters the well was filled with preserved wooden architectural elements, utensils, tools, etc. Because so few wells have survived at all from the medieval princely period, this one has provided unparalleled information on methods of construction, water delivery and preservation. The exterior wooden fortification walls were constructed of closely aligned, parallel walls and were tied together by crosspieces joined with dove-tailed cut. Such construction allowed the building of curved walls that are evident from surviving, curved slots chiseled into the cliff-faces. A layer of burned and fire-hardened clay 18 meters in width was discovered on the slope below the rock outcrop and fortification remains. Recovered archaeological materials (ceramics, metal, leather, wood) permit the studying of the social structure. On the territory of Tustan fortress only male population was evident. This contrasts with evidence from other frontier fortresses, where garrisons lived together with their families and were occupied with farming as well as their military duties. Materials recovered from the surrounding fortified settlement indicated the existence of several types of craft workshops in the area outside the fortress.

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