

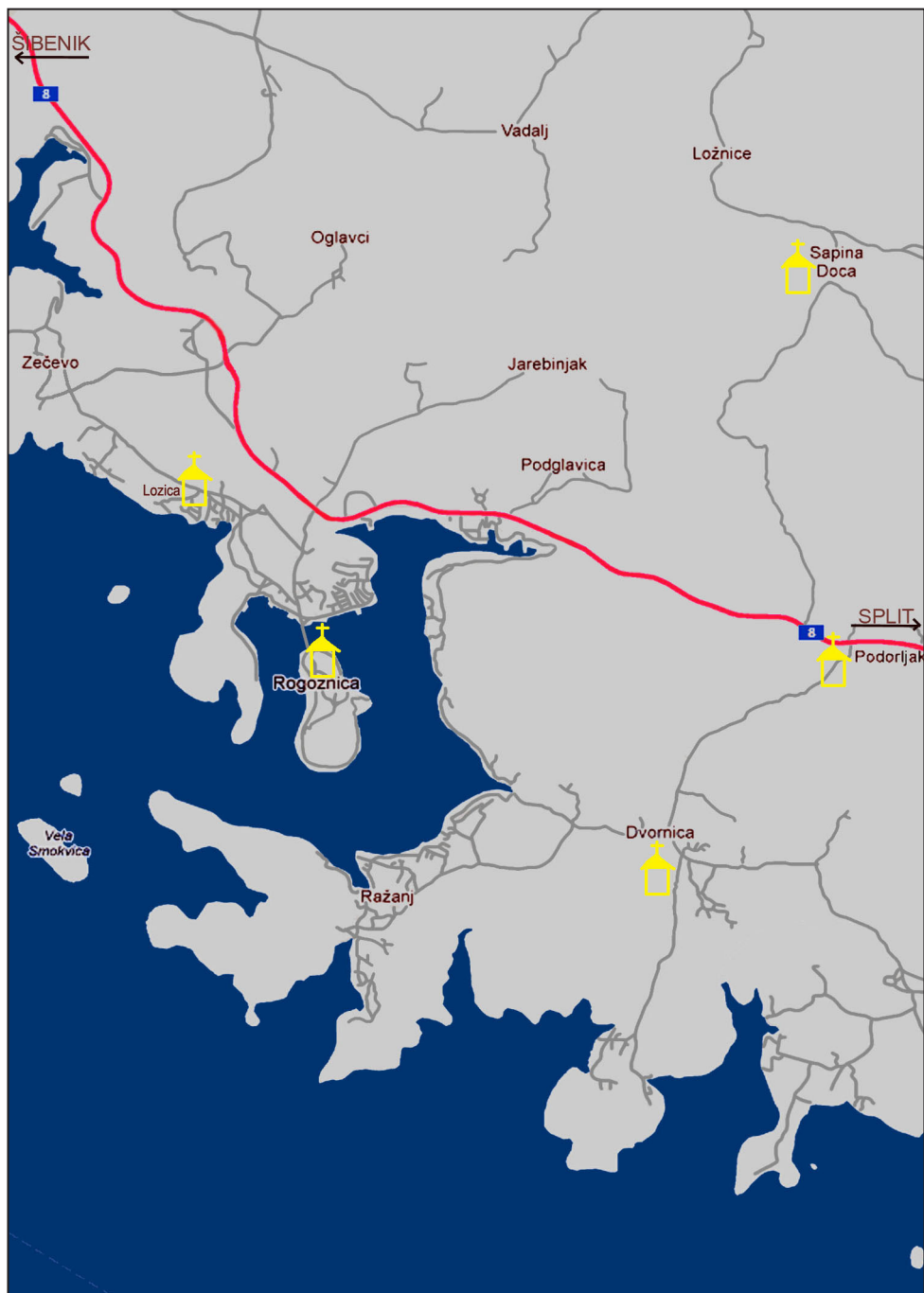
CHURCHES IN AND NEAR ROGOZNICA

Rogoznica Primary School
2012

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When you are fed up with the sun and the sea, the noise and the crowds in Rogoznica, you can go to the nearby places and visit some of the churches. Every church has its own story to tell. The first one to visit is in Sapina Doca.



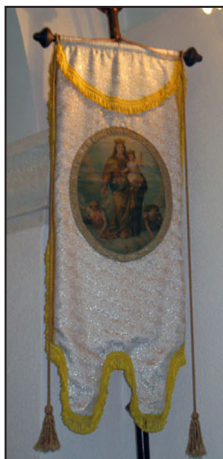
To get to Sapina Doca first you have to go to the main road and turn right in the direction of Split. After about one kilometre you will see a sign telling you to turn left. Drive up this road until you come to Sapina Doca. On the way there are old stone walls, olive trees and bushes. From the top of the hill, just before you come to Sapina Doca, there is a lovely view of islands and Rogoznica. You can enjoy the view of the clear crystal blue sea. On the way you will also see some very small and very old, deserted villages: Milinkovica and Mahale. In those places there aren't many houses, but the ones which are left, are built in the traditional Dalmatian way, in stone.



After this short and enjoyable drive you will find yourself on a hill overlooking a little valley, and on your right, quite isolated, is the church.



The church was built in 1857 and it was dedicated to Our Lady of Carmel on 16th July 1906. Inside the church, on the side altar, there is a statue of Our Lady of Carmel. It is a marble statue of the Madonna and the Baby Jesus. The main altar is classical. It is made of wood and stone with a lovely picture of Our Lady. Across the picture there are gold chains and other jewellery, as well as little banners given as votive presents by people. This altar is the only one where the priest serves Mass with his back to the parishoners, as used to be done in the past.



Every year on 16th July there is a procession through the village. The statue of Our Lady is carried through the village and, after the procession, returned to the church where the Holy Mass is served. On this day many people take vows: some for example, walk barefoot during the whole procession, while others vow to give up their vices. The church is built of stone which the parishioners themselves brought from the quarry in Peleš, a hill near Primošten.



On the entrance into the church you can still see these stone blocks. On the other walls the stone was covered when the church was renovated. Above the brown wooden door into the church there are two little bells. Both are the same size and their chimes are lovely.

When you enter the church ground, you can see it is very neat and well kept. It looks like a park because there are many trees, trimmed bushes and benches. Around the church it is very silent and comfortable. You can sit on a bench and enjoy the quiet and find your inner peace.





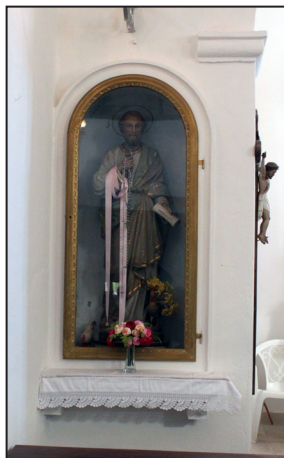
If you want to visit the church in Podorljak, you go on the main road and turn right. When you come to the first crossroads, turn right again and park your car. Watch out! You are on the main road.



The church in Podorljak is called the Church of Saint Peter. It is built of stone and it is rather small. Above the entrance you can see two small round windows, which remind us of rosettes. Above the windows there are two small bells. It is also interesting to note that there is a small square window on the left side of the main door. The area around the church is paved with stones. The surroundings are not very interesting because there are not many trees. The disadvantage is that it is too close to the main road.

The church was built in 1886. It was renovated in 1921. The main altar is made of wood. On it there is a painting of Saint Peter with a rooster. The mass table which is in front of it is made of marble. On the right side of the altar there is a banner with the painting of Saint Kajo, who is also celebrated in Podorljak. On 22nd April there is a procession to celebrate this martyr. Young men carry the banner around the church and the priest blesses the fields.





On the left of the main altar you can see the statue of Saint Peter, and on the right the statue and the banner of Saint Kajo.

One interesting thing about this church is that 80% of men and only 20% of women are inside the church during the service, while it is regularly the other way around in most Dalmatian churches.

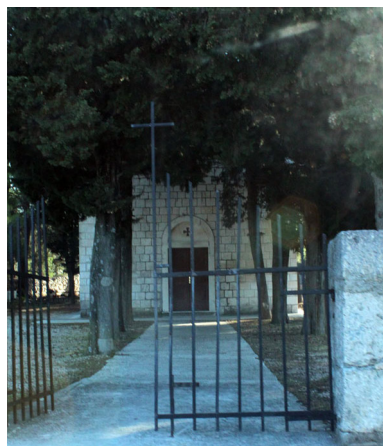


Inside the church there are two holy water fonts. Both are made of marble. One is on the wall of the church and the other one stands at the entrance and looks very old. It was painted in the past, and now we can see traces of paint on it. On the wall you can also see a scroll with the words of the Croatian National Anthem.



Dvornica is a little village close to Rogoznica. When you are on the main road, you have to turn right in Podorljak and then just follow the local road. It's brand new. In Dvornica there are about 200 people. The church is just outside the village, in the East. Not difficult to find, at all!

The church is small. We do not know when it was built, but we know that it was renovated in 1923 and dedicated to Our Lady of Assistance. It is made of stone from the Peleš quarry, as are all the churches in this region. When you see the church from a distance, the first thing you notice are the gigantic pine trees surrounding it. The pines are really huge and give the whole area a feeling of calm and quiet. Because of this, this church is also called Our Lady in the Pines. It is lovely to sit in the shade of these trees in hot summer days and enjoy the peace and quiet.

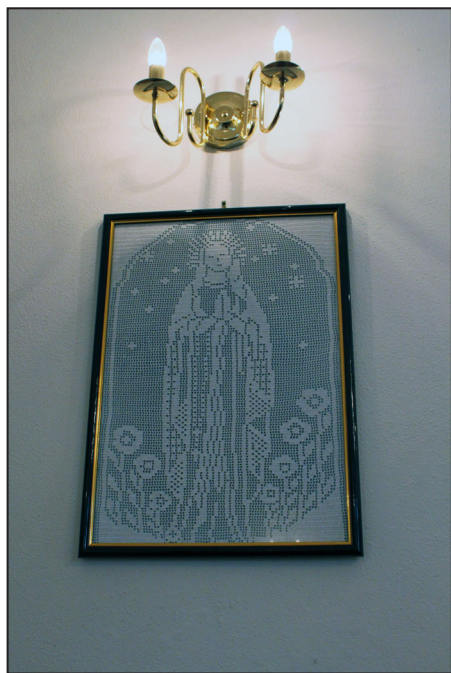


Above the wooden church door there is a stone arch and a cross. This reminds us of Romanesque architecture. When you come inside, you can see a simple altar with the statue of Our Lady with Baby Jesus. There is a golden crown hanging above her head. The altar is made of marble.



In the corner, on the right side of the altar, there is a banner with the picture of our Lady. Every year on 24th May Our Lady of Assistance is celebrated in Dvornica. Young parishoners carry this banner in the procession. The cross which is on the left of the altar is also carried in the procession when the fields are blessed. On the walls of the church you can also see two hand-made lace pictures of Our Lady. The pictures were given as a present to the church by local women.

The church is built in two levels – the ground floor where the pews are and the choir upstairs. The church has two small bells above the entrance. They are automatically set to play every hour and half hour. They make a lovely sound.





The Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is situated on top of the hill in the middle of Rogoznica Peninsula. It is the parish church. If you want to see it, and you really should, after crossing the bridge, go straight along the sea and when you pass the post-office, turn left and you will see lots of stairs. Just go up, it is definitely worth it, because in front of you is probably the most beautiful and interesting church in the area. If you are by car, park near the restaurant at the bottom of the stairs. There's always a free place!



The church is very old, built in the baroque-neogothic style characterized by lots of ornaments. It was first mentioned in 1615. At that time it was called Saint Nicholas but later it was given the name the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was consecrated in 1746 by bishop Donadoni, which can be seen in the inscription above the main entrance. In 1800 the north nave was added and then the south in 1894, so the church now has three naves.



When you walk in, you have the impression that its width is bigger than its length from entrance to the main altar. It is very impressive and no wonder people often refer to it as a basilica.

In 1892 there was a fire in the church and all the furnishings were destroyed. The cause of the fire were candles and the legend has it that during the fire, a wax wave came down the stairs in front of the church. It was rebuilt and then about thirty years later there was another fire and this time the furnishings and the sacristy were destroyed.



After the fire, the church was completely reconstructed. A new roof was built, a belltower, which is on the south side of the church, was also added, and two statues, one of Saint Peter and one of Saint Paul were made at the top of the stone columns standing at each side of the entrance going up to the church roof.

When you come inside the church and look up you can see a wooden ceiling with three beautiful paintings, all painted by the artist Josip Šonja. They show Saint Anton preaching to the fish, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the shipwreck at Planka Point near Rogoznica.

There are five altars in the church. They all date from the 19th century. The main altar is quite impressive. It has a lot of ornaments, which is typical for baroque. The tall pink marble pillars almost touch the blue vault which is decorated with gold stars. On the main altar there is a painting of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the work of a Venetian master from the 18th century. The tabernacle looks like a small replica of the altar.



On the left of the altar there is a gothic cross, perhaps the most valuable object in the church, speaking from the point of view of art historians.

On the right side of the main altar is the altar of Our Lady of Health. It is beautiful with the portrait of Our Lady and silver votive gifts around it. Under the portrait we can see St. John of Trogir and St. Rocco. Around them there are silver stars and two silver angels are holding the portrait of Our Lady.

Further on the right is the altar of Saint John of Trogir. At the bottom of the picture we can see St. John of Trogir saving castaways.

On the opposite wall there is the altar of Saint Blaise. We can see the saint curing a child's throat.



Next to this altar is the altar of our Lady of Rosary. Along with its beauty, it also draws your attention because of the crown like structure at its top. From this crown, during a two week period from 2nd July to the first Sunday after the day of Our Lady of Carmel (16th July), there hangs the picture of Our Lady of the Chapel.

The legend says that in 1722 a fisherman found a painting of the Visitation of Our Lady under a rock on Gradina Point. He was attracted by a light and took the painting home. The next day when he wanted to show it to other people, it was gone and to his surprise he found it again in the same place on the rocks, where he found it the first time. He told the people and the parish priest what happened and soon a votive chapel was built on Gradina Point on the very spot where the fisherman found the painting. Today the Chapel of Our Lady, housing the famous painting, stands there.



The altar of Our Lady of Rosary

Every year on 2nd July the people carry the painting by boat across the Rogoznica Bay from the chapel to the parish church where it adorns this altar for about fourteen days, more precisely until the first Sunday after Our Lady of Carmel which is celebrated on 16th July. On that Sunday it is returned to the Chapel by boat accompanied by hundreds of other boats and people swimming in honour of Our Lady. While the painting is in the parish church, Holy Masses are held every day.



The painting of the Visitation of Our Lady

The fifth altar, which is on the left of the main altar is the Altar of Souls in Purgatory. It is made of black marble. Aside from these impressive altars there are many other valuable objects in this church. If you look at the top of the walls, just below the ceiling, you can see the frescoes of the four evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) which were discovered when the church was renovated.



Along the walls you can also see the Stations of the Cross painted in oil on canvas. Since this technique is quite rare for the Way of the Cross, it makes this one even more interesting and valuable.



The south wall of the church is also adorned by two fantastic vitrails. One depicts the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and on the other one we can see Saint Nicholas.

The light which comes through the vitrails is beautiful.

If you look above the entrance you will be surprised when you see a magnificent organ in the choir. It was made in Germany in 1908. It has been fully restored and organ concerts are held in this church quite often.



Before leaving the church, there is another treasure you must see – a marvellous baptismal font made of stone with a beautifully decorated wooden enclosure. It is on the right side of the entrance



Everything in the church has been recently restored under the strictest supervision of conservation experts and art historians. Around the church there are graves dating back to the beginnings of this settlement on the peninsula. The first settlement was on the mainland, in what is now called Lozica, or Old Village (Staro selo). In the 1500's when the Turks invaded this area, the people fled to the island and the earliest graves around the parish church date from this period. Now we can see some interesting gravestones dating back to the 15th and 16th century.



Before leaving Rogoznica you simply must visit this remarkable church.



Saint Nicholas



Saint Nicholas is the church which is in the oldest part of Rogoznica. It is the only remaining building from the so called Old Village, the first settlement in this area. This part of Rogoznica is now called Lozica. The church is dedicated to Saint Nicholas the patron saint of sailors and children.



The church was built in the early 14th century in the Romanesque and Gothic styles. This can be seen from the rough stone used in its construction, the stone door frame, the dome on the apse and the pointed arches.

The church has one nave. The apse is semi-circular with a stone dome. It is made of stone on the outside and plaster on the inside. The original roof's angle was changed because it was too steep, so we can see the old, original stone and the added part. On the right side of the door there is a stone holy water font and on the left there is one of the two consoles on which a wooden board was put and used as an outside altar.



In the church, on the walls you can see traces of frescoes. They haven't been restored yet. On the walls you can also see some stonework decorations in the form of the Old Croatian 'pleter'-interlace, one of the most used patterns in romanesque Croatian art.



On the left of the apse we can see the original tabernacle.

Behind the altar there is a small window. The window is typical for Romanesque architecture, which means that the window is narrow on the outside and wider on the inside so that light can spread and shine better on the altar.

On the floor below the altar we can find original stone slabs with traces of original paint on them.



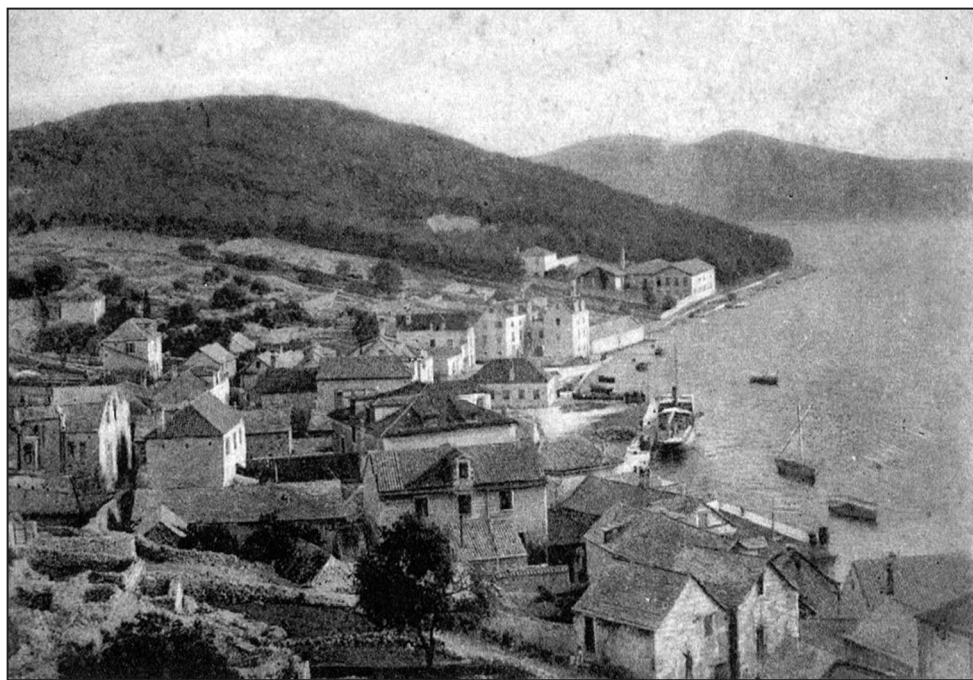
Around the church we can see the old cemetery dating from the 14th century. It is very interesting because of the decorated gravestones. They are called 'stećci'-stechak, which is a unique monolithic headstone found only in parts of Dalmatia and Bosnia and dates from the Middle Ages. The engravings show stellar and lunar symbols and symbols of what the person's or family's everyday life used to be. The oldest stone, seen above on the left, shows a star and a sickle. On some gravestones there are some inscriptions too.

In front of the church, on the drywall border which goes around the church grounds, there is an impressive cross from the 14th century.



The church of Saint Nicholas is under the protection of the Ministry of Culture as an invaluable part of Croatian cultural heritage. It has not been restored completely and the grounds have not been fixed up yet, but it has an incredible beauty worth seeing.

Today Holy Mass is only served here on 6th December, the day we celebrate Saint Nicholas.



A FEW WORDS FOR THE END

Rogoznica is a small seaside town situated in the middle of coastal Dalmatia. It is said that at Planka Point, a peninsula very near the town itself, the North meets the South. It has one of the most beautiful and safest harbours on the Adriatic Sea. The town of Rogoznica consists of two parts- the mainland and the island of Kopara, which was connected to the mainland by a bridge in the 19th century. Archeological finds show that the first settlements in this area date from the New Stone Age. Proof of this lies in the pottery fragments found in the remains of three "Gradina" in the Rogoznica area (a "gradina" is a prehistoric drywall fortification usually built on hill tops). Pottery fragments, coins and other artefacts dating from Greek and Roman times have also been found. Rogoznica was a Greek colony and it had its own money, and in Roman times it was called Heraclea. During the Middle Ages the entire peninsula was called Bosiljina and Rogoznica (actually Stupin, very near Rogoznica) was the border between the towns of Šibenik and Trogir. In the early 16th century the inhabitants of mainland Rogoznica fled from Turkish armies and settled on the island of Kopara. In modern times Rogoznica has evolved from a small fishing village into a well-known tourist destination.

(translated from texts in "Povid")

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