

# MUSEUM GUIDE

Museum of Intangible Heritage

## TREASURY OF MEĐIMURJE

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# Heritage Code of the *Land Between Two Waters*

From the beginning of the world until today, the area between the rivers Mura and Drava, Međimurje, pulsates vividly. It consists of fertile and miniature fields, forests, meadows, pastures, wine-growing hills and a hundred settlements inhabited by warm and diligent people.

From ancient times, Međimurje valleys and hills are woven by folk songs, writings, compositions, artistic creation, decorations, playing and dancing. Life in Međimurje was enriched by many small details, hundreds of them, invisible to the eye of a modern man. Over time, during work days and holidays, exceptional heritage values were created, imprinted in the cultural code of the spirit, mind and heart of Međimurje.

Collected from all parts of the land between two waters, in 2021 they found their unique home in the Museum of Intangible Heritage "Treasury of Međimurje", under the roof of the renewed fortification of the Old Town of Zrinski in Čakovec.

# The Essence of Intangible Culture is Created by Living People

The rich cultural heritage of Međimurje under the label of intangible cultural heritage, used to be called spiritual heritage, folk traditions, beliefs, folk wisdom and traditional crafts. Important and interesting data on their origin, use, special features, the method of production and their creator were added to the collected objects, the material expression of culture. Stories of intangible culture are marked by living people, bearers of skills.



# 70 Years of Museums Curators Precious Mission

The intangible heritage of Međimurje is an essential upgrade of the long-term work of all curators in the Ethnographic Department of the Museum of Međimurje Čakovec from the 1950s to the present day. The Treasury of Međimurje is a place "Where the past takes on a new dimension", a home where ordinary and at the same time unusual wealth is stored for a wider national and international audience, a home where every Međimurje woman and man can proudly say:

*My people of Međimurje,  
you have treasures and riches.*

## **The Treasury of Međimurje**

The invaluable treasure and wealth of the intangible heritage of the people and the land between the two waters is exhibited on 2426 m<sup>2</sup> of attractive, multimedia and interactive museum exhibition in the Treasury of Međimurje under the revitalized fortification of the Old Town in Čakovec. The exhibition consists of of two permanent exhibitions: "Miniatures" dedicated to the intangible and oral heritage of Međimurje and "Centuries of the Fortress" focused on Čakovec's Old Town, its development and original purpose, and special emphasis is placed on imprisoning people from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to recent history.

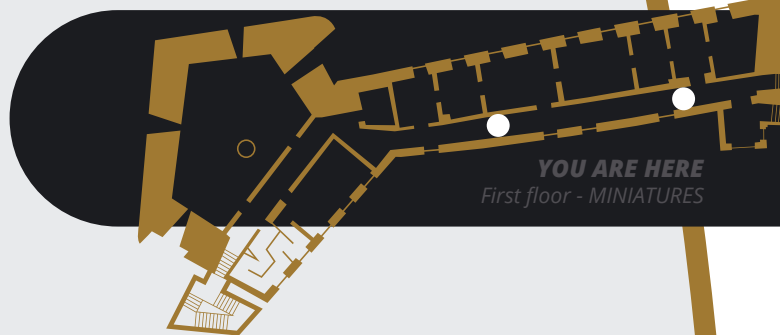




# Register of Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Croatia and UNESCO

Fifteen cultural goods located in the area of Međimurje are entered in the Register of Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Croatia. The art of making traditional children's toys and gingerbread crafts from the area of northwestern Croatia and Međimurje folksong are also inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Međimurje folksong is the only cultural good that originates from the areas of Međimurje.





# The World Class of Međimurje Folksong

The Međimurje folksong consists of verses that are sung with an accentuated sensitivity to the melody (*viža*), forming a song (*pesem*). It is sung in tonal strings with elements of pentatonics. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was sung unaccompanied by instruments. Today, singing is most often accompanied by brass music, cymbals, tambourines, violins or traditional string instruments called *bajs*, *bugarija* or *brač*. It is sung in all occasions, in solitude or in company. Folksong from Međimurje have a great diversity in motives and content, the most beautiful ones are dedicated to love and homeland.





# Why are they called that way?

Why are The Settlements, Hills, Valleys, Rivers, Lakes, Seas and Islands Called That Way?

Toponyms are the names of settlements, hills, valleys, rivers, lakes, seas and islands. In special focus are the names of the smallest localities of certain parts of settlements, fields, forests, villages and water areas. The toponymy of Sveta Marija is the Cultural Good that tells us about historical change of the name of this locality.



## Protected Speeches as Everyday Cultural Goods

Speakers of the Štrigova and Kotorba speech groups use speech on daily basis in their families, with acquaintances and even colleagues at work. They have a common denominator of oral tradition and expression, including language as a transmitter of intangible cultural heritage. This is where the process of preserving something for daily usage comes to the foreground.





K 04

## Heavenly Music Coming From The Wooden Table

The art of making and playing cymbals is the name for playing musical instrument which consists of a trapezoidal wooden resonant box on which strings of different thicknesses are stretched. It is played by alternately beating with wooden sticks wrapped in cloth (*cape*) on strings using the *arpeggio* technique. The interesting thing about the skill is the combination of making and playing an instrument. The cymbal is usually made by self-taught woodworkers. Sometimes the musician himself makes cymbals. *Cape*, wooden bats with which it is played, are usually made of plum wood, by hand. The most important factor in making cymbals is the choice of wood. Each cymbal player can adapt the tune of the strings to himself, depending on the repertoire he performs. Cymbal is mostly played in Podravina and Međimurje, but also in the Bjelovar and Zelina regions.

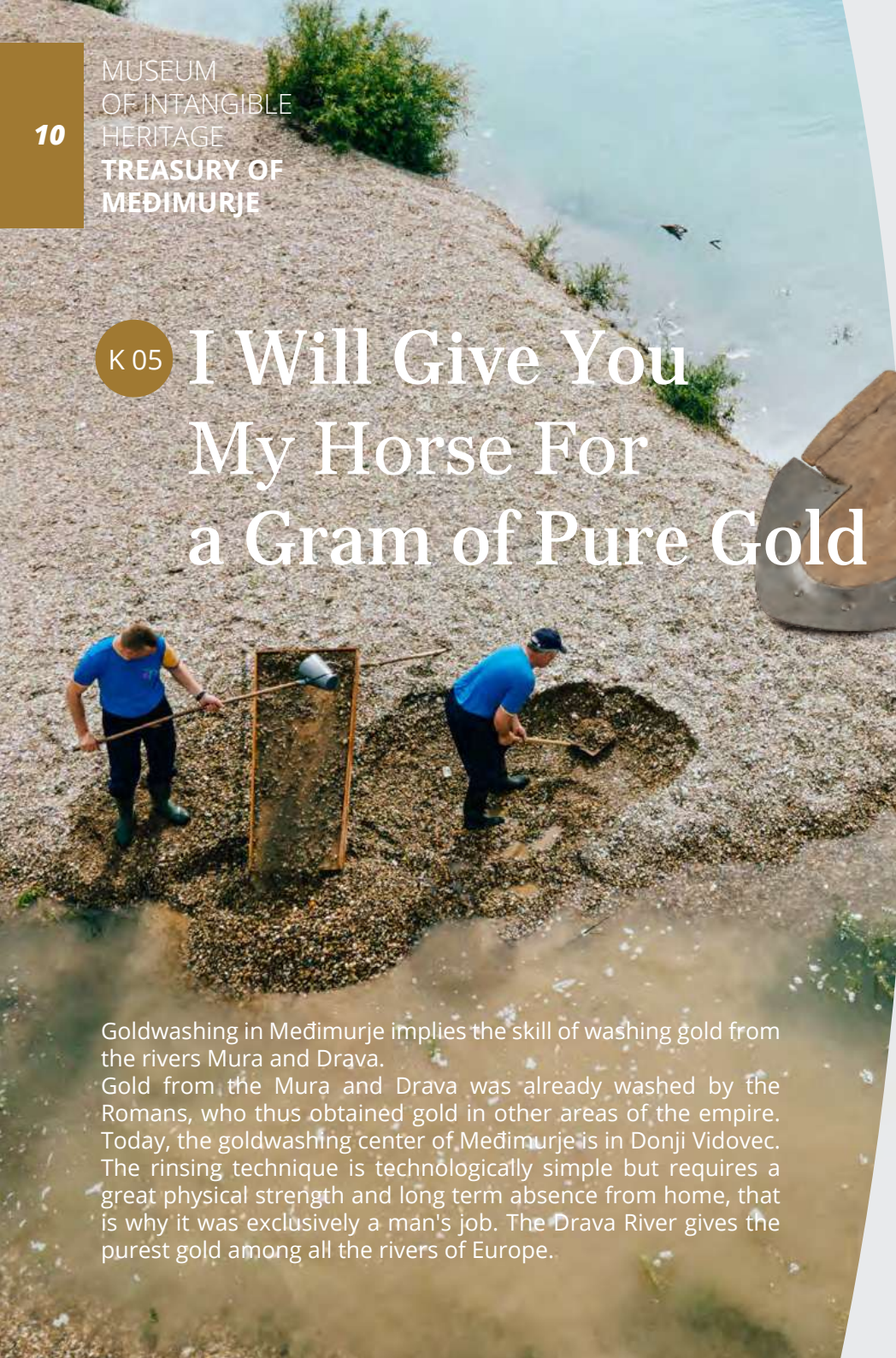


K 05

# I Will Give You My Horse For a Gram of Pure Gold

Goldwashing in Međimurje implies the skill of washing gold from the rivers Mura and Drava.

Gold from the Mura and Drava was already washed by the Romans, who thus obtained gold in other areas of the empire. Today, the goldwashing center of Međimurje is in Donji Vidovec. The rinsing technique is technologically simple but requires a great physical strength and long term absence from home, that is why it was exclusively a man's job. The Drava River gives the purest gold among all the rivers of Europe.





# It Takes a Special Skill for Production of Sveta Marija Lace

K 05

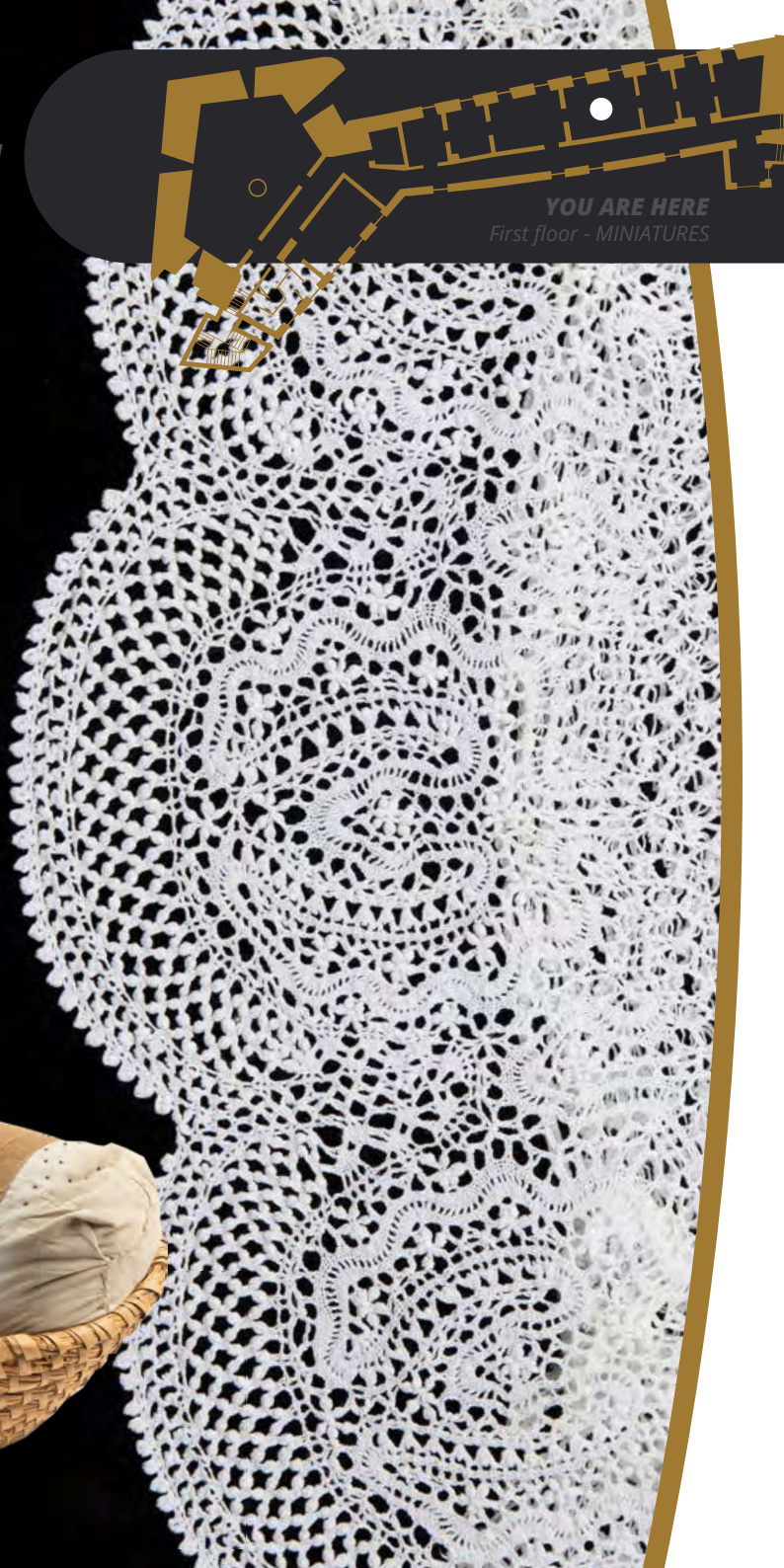
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Lace was made by young girls/women who learned this skill from early age by observing their mothers and grandmothers. The best time for lace making was winter time. Needed materials for making lace are: a *balo*, *batići* (bobbins), thread, cardboard, sewing pins, a needle and thread. All the equipment was usually carried by the girls as their wedding dowry. The specificity of Sveta Marija lace is the non-existence of a pattern according to which lace is made. The whole lace motif is continuous.

There are four lace motives specific for Međimurje: *jagnješće*, *krogljica*, *lastavička* and *katruža*.

They are made with the ornament of tendrils, and at its end there may be a final decorative border called *cifra*.

There are two ways of making lace: by the needle or by the bobbin (*batić*). In Međimurje bobbin lace, originating from Belgium, is produced.



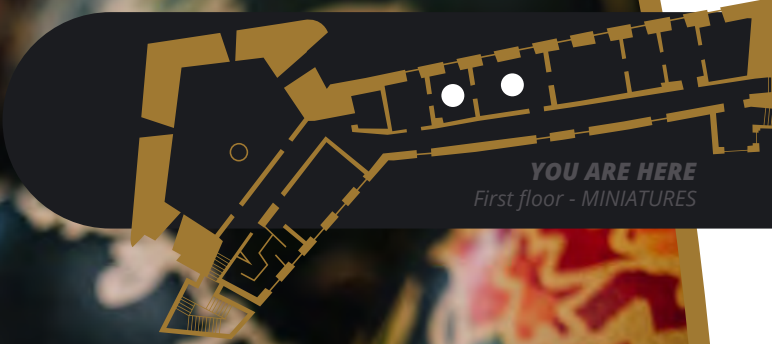
YOU ARE HERE  
First floor - MINIATURES

K 06

# Potter's Wheel Brought by Celts

The production of pottery in the area of Međimurje dates back to prehistoric times. Five centuries before Christ Celts came to Međimurje and they brought a potter's wheel. It works on the principle of a rotating plate moved by the foot pedal. Such potter's wheels, along with the introduction of technological innovations, are still used today and are the fundamentals of traditional pottery. Men, master potters, usually made objects, and their wives decorated them. Pottery products were the only ones that could be found in the kitchen. *Štumbleki, vrčeki, vajdlingi, tepsije, loboške* - all of them were multipurpose items used for food preparation, bringing and storing liquids or food and cereal storage.





K 07

## Black Egg for Eternal Happiness

The production of black Međimurje Easter eggs in the batik technique is done on a washed shell of a hard-boiled or blown egg. Beeswax is applied to the shell with a *kljičica* - a pen. Messages such as: *Small gift, This egg is given for happiness, Gift from the heart or Happy Easter* are written on the shell. Black painted eggs play a vital role in the custom of "becoming sisters and brothers". Black Easter eggs got its name because of the black background on which the flowers are drawn or "written".

K 07

## Everlasting Flowers

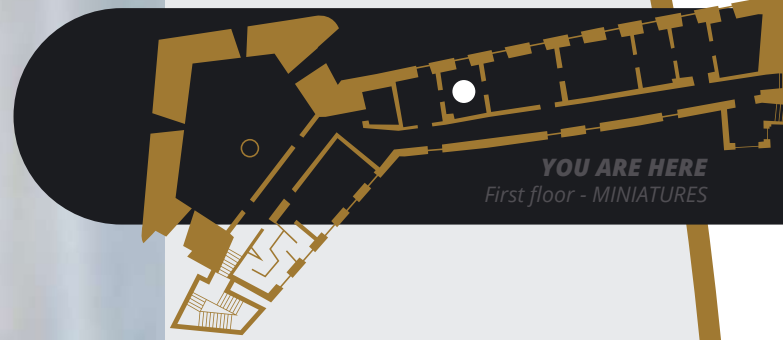


Crepe paper flowers are made in all shapes, colors and sizes. Materials needed for making flowers are crepe paper, a semicircular folded *drotek* (a piece of metal wire), wire and a special amount of skill. Flowers can be separate decorations or combined into wholes. One whole is called *partica*. *Partica* was placed on crucifixes that were usually in the corner of the room, they also decorated statues in churches or holy statues in villages. A similar wedding bouquet is made for the bride, wedding apples and a decorations for the wedding guests. A ribbon or garland is also often made.





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## K07 Light of a Christmas Chandelier

A Christmas chandelier made of crepe paper was used as a house decoration in the area of northwestern Croatia. It was made before Christmas and used to decorate the house, church and parish court. Chandelier is hung above the candle to give the impression that there is a light source inside of it. Making a chandelier requires great precision. In Međimurje, the chandelier is called *lampaš* a lamp.

### CHRISTMAS BALLS, BARBIE DOLLS, HATS AND CHRISTMAS TREES

Today, Christmas balls, barbie dolls, hats and entire Christmas trees are also made with crepe. Christmas balls are made by using the technique of folding paper at an obtuse angle. The feature of this technique is strength. Items are more durable so they can be outdoors and in the rain. There is no record that men made *kinč* or chandeliers.

# The Quiet Splendor of a Christmas Crib

The Christmas nativity scene, display of the birth of Jesus Christ in a stable, appears in the 13<sup>th</sup> century when it was envisioned by Francis of Assisi. Such depiction of the birth of Jesus spread throughout our region. The central figure is the newborn child Jesus in the cradle surrounded by mother and father (Joseph and Mary), mostly located in the ambience of the barn. Today, cribs are built of clay, salt dough, tree bark, paper or corn husk.





## THE STRAW TITAN

K 08

## Pikač

Pikač is a carnival mask made by wrapping the man's whole body into straw chains. Straw chains must be between 5 and 7 meters long. It takes up to a dozen chains to dress a man. Straw for the Pikač must be as long as possible, and the best straw is the one made from grain and oats. The mask is completed by a hive on the man's head and a burdock branch in the hand. The mask is preserved in the town of Selnica in upper Međimurje.





# Centuries of the Fort

The focus of the exhibition "Centuries of the Fort" is a monumental building in which the museum is located, that is the fortification part of the Old Town complex.

Čakovec Old Town is a historically and typologically multi-layered complex of feudal residential and fortification architecture. The private ownership of the Zrinski family resulted in the fortification features of the Čakovec fort, which make it one of the most interesting bastion fortifications in Croatia and an extremely valuable cultural and historical monument of fortification construction and cultural property of national importance. The permanent exhibition "Centuries of the Fort" focuses on Čakovec Old Town and the topics associated with it. Here the results of historical, archaeological and conservation research on the development and purpose of the fort, as well as the whole complex are presented. Each new study gradually completes the mosaic of our knowledge about its life throughout the centuries.







P 01

# Weapons, Equipment and Defense System of Čakovec Fort

The first room of the "Century of Fort" exhibition is located in the northern bastion. This bastion is the only surviving example of a retracted flanks bastion in Croatia, made by an ancient Italian fortification school from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and is also the best preserved original space in the complex.

The purpose of the bastion helped in the installation of an exhibition which shows the basic classification of weapons on protective, cold and fire, and its development from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century — from the time of the first mention of the medieval water fort in Čakovec until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the fort loses its basic, defensive function — their influence on the fortification architecture and vice versa.

In addition to multimedia, everything mentioned in the exhibition is presented also by hyperrealistic sculptures depicting a heavily armoured cavalryman and members of an elite Black army unit of Matija Korvin, pikeman, haramija and light cavalry, the so-called Croats from The Thirty Years' War.

P 02  
P 07

# Five Hundred Years of Dungeons

Premises in a building attached to the northern walls were most likely used as dungeons in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but prisoners depicted in them are the ones imprisoned in a time span of almost five centuries.

In the first room you can see the projection of dungeons in the Old Town. The next five rooms represent individual groups of people deprived of liberty and the reasons of their imprisonment. Ottoman captives of the Zrinskis, serfs who did not perform their feudal duties, women who were accused of witchcraft and prisoners from World War II and the postwar period are presented here.







P 09

## Life in Čakovec Old Town

Apart from defense and warfare, which were an important part of everyday life of the inhabitants of Čakovec Old Town in the period between 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the first room of the entrance bastion also shows other activities they were engaged in. Here lived a noble family, their courtiers and servants who communicated daily with the inhabitants of the suburbs - the "little" people shown on first floor exhibition, as well as with the most influential families of the Hungarian-Croatian Kingdom.

The exhibits point to earlier construction phases that prove high life culture of the lords of Čakovec Old Town in the Middle Ages, while the model shows a strong bastion fortress and the splendor of the Zrinski family home.

# Zrinski Family Defends Kingdom From the Ottomans and Builds The Chain of Watchtowers and Forts along the River Mura

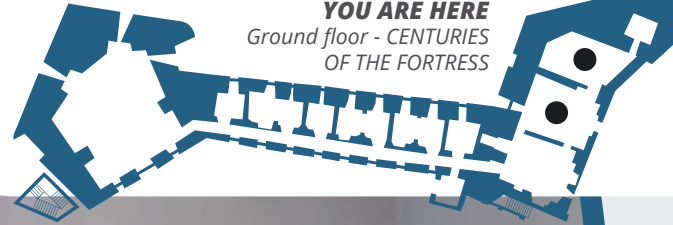
From the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century as landowners in Međimurje you can meet some of the most distinguished noble families of their time in the Hungarian-Croatian Kingdom, but also families of great importance in Central Europe. These families had great influence on political developments in the Kingdom, while some, such as Zrinski, played the main role in the defense of the Kingdom from the Ottomans.

Although the Ottoman threat was constantly present in Međimurje in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, due to the natural protection of the rivers Mura and Drava, Međimurje was seriously endangered only a few times. Due to climate change and small ice ages in the second half of 16<sup>th</sup> century, rivers and swamps froze and allowed for Ottoman army incursions throughout the year. For protection of their most important estate, the Zrinskis built in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century a chain of watchtowers and forts along Mura river. A model of one of those watchtowers (*čardak*) in a ratio 1:2 is also exhibited in the museum.





**YOU ARE HERE**  
Ground floor - CENTURIES  
OF THE FORTRESS



P 11

## Playroom

At the end of both exhibition setups you are welcome to spend some time in our carefully designed playroom. It is a place where all experienced content can be processed in an informal tone, and the best and most relaxed way to do that is through a play.



*Međimurje*  
on the move



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