

# REPORT ON STUDY VISIT

IN ŠALEK CASTLE, SLOVENIA

Version 1  
10/2017





# REPORT ON STUDY VISIT IN ŠALEK CASTLE

**COMPILED BY:**

Rok Poles



## Table of contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>1. AGENDA OF STUDY VISIT TO RUINS OF ŠALEK CASTLE IN VELENJE .....</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>2. LIST OF STUDY VISIT PARTICIPANTS.....</b>                            | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>3. HISTORY OF ŠALEK CASTLE.....</b>                                     | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>4. SURROUNDING AREA.....</b>  | <b>14</b> |
| <b>4.1. Velenje and the surrounding areas - the current condition.....</b> | <b>14</b> |
| <b>5. THE CASTLE AND ADJACENT AREAS.....</b>                               | <b>19</b> |
| <b>6. CASTLE'S STATE OF PRESERVATION.....</b>                              | <b>25</b> |
| <b>6.1. Studying and analysing ruins.....</b>                              | <b>25</b> |
| <b>6.2. Documents concerning ruins.....</b>                                | <b>26</b> |
| <b>6.3. Structure reinforcement.....</b>                                   | <b>27</b> |
| <b>6.4. Buildings.....</b>   | <b>27</b> |
| Buildings - reconstructions.....   | 27        |
| <b>6.5. Protecting external face of the walls.....</b>                     | <b>28</b> |
| <b>6.6. Drainage and rainwater discharge.....</b>                          | <b>28</b> |
| <b>6.7. Protection of architectural detailing.....</b>                     | <b>29</b> |
| Stone detailing.....   | 29        |
| Plaster.....   | 29        |
| <b>6.9. Other buildings and elements of the premises.....</b>              | <b>30</b> |
| <b>6.9. Vegetation.....</b>  | <b>32</b> |
| Cultivated compositions and loose vegetation.....                          | 32        |
| Unwanted vegetation.....   | 34        |
| <b>7. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>  | <b>35</b> |



## 1. AGENDA OF STUDY VISIT TO ŠALEK CASTLE RUINS IN VELENJE, 24. 8. - 25. 8. 2017

### Part I: Multimedia presentations:

1. Ms. Mateja Medved, museum curator - GENERAL OVERVIEW OF ŠALEK CASTLE RUINS
2. Ms. Danijela Brišnik, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia – (State of the art of medieval Šalek Castle ruins (state of the art on protection, state of the art on management and state of the art on use-reuse of medieval Šalek Castle ruins)
3. Mr. Rok Poles, architect - Architecture and promotion, Training session: Commercial functions of ruins



**Part II: Presentation of technical condition of the ruins of Šalek castle**



**Part III: Guided tour - The other side of Velenje (association with HICAPS project)**





## 2. LIST OF STUDY VISIT PARTICIPANTS

1<sup>st</sup> day, August 24<sup>th</sup> 2017

| Name                | Surname       | Organization          | Signature |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| ROK                 | POLES         | BERIVKA, diorica      |           |
| JIRI                | BLAHA         | ITAM CAS              |           |
| Jakub               | NOVOTNY       | ITAM CAS              |           |
| IVAN                | MURIN         | UMB B. RISTRIKA       |           |
| Grajewski           | Grajewski     | ICOMOS POLAND         |           |
| Anna                | Fortuna-Marek | ICOMOS POLAND         |           |
| BOGUSZAN            | SZMYGIM       | POLIBCHANSKA LUDSKA   |           |
| BARTOSZ             | SZOSTAK       | POLITECHNIKA LUBERZKA |           |
| LIDIJA              | PERIC         | ZADRA NOVA            |           |
| IVANA               | VRBAJUKO      | GRAD ZADAR            |           |
| GIAMPAOLO           | PECCOLO       | AICCCE                |           |
| URŠKA               | GABERSEK      | MESTNA OBČINA VELENJE |           |
| Daniela             | BRISNIK       | ZVEZDS, OE Celje      |           |
| Mateja              | MEDVED        | MUZEJ VELENJE         |           |
| Katja Vebur         | VEBER         | PREVAJALKA            |           |
| DATRICIJA HALILOVIC | HALILOVIC     | NOV                   |           |

2<sup>nd</sup> day, August 25<sup>th</sup> 2017

| Name          | Surname  | Organization          | Signature |
|---------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| SZMYGIM       | BOGUSZAN | POLIBCHANSKA LUDSKA   |           |
| FORTUNA-MAREK | ANNA     | ICOMOS POLSKA         |           |
| GRAJEWSKI     | GODEGORZ | ICOMOS POLSKA         |           |
| SZOSTAK       | BARTOSZ  | POLITECHNIKA LUB.     |           |
| Jakub         | Novotny  | ITAM                  |           |
| JIRI          | BLAHA    | ITAM                  |           |
| IVAN          | MURIN    | UMB SLOVENSKO         |           |
| IVANA         | VRBAJUKO | GRAD ZADAR            |           |
| LIDIJA        | PERIC    | ZADRA NOVA            |           |
| URŠKA         | GABERSEK | MESTNA OBČINA VELENJE |           |
| ALMA          | JAVORNIK | MUZEJ VELENJE         |           |
| DUSKA         | MERC     | MUZEJ VELENJE         |           |
| NINA          | CASL     | -11-                  |           |
| MATEJA        | MEDVED   | MUZEJ VELENJE         |           |



### 3. HISTORY OF ŠALEK CASTLE

#### 1. History of the area, property and reconstruction stages

##### PREAHISTORY

The Šalek Valley and the surrounding hills has attracted settlers from the Early Stone Age onwards. At the eastern edge of the Šalek Valley in the cave called Špehovka (above the river Paka on the slope of Mount Tisnik) the remnants of visits or brief period of habitation by ice-age man were discovered. Objects made of stone and bone belong to the Aurignacian period. The settlement of the cave was supposedly roughly simultaneous with the settlement of the Potočka Zijalka cave at the northern edge of the valley. Later finds of little knives and bone blades belong to the Gravettian culture. Even in Mesolithic humans visited Špehovka.<sup>1</sup> Three polished stone axes from the Late Stone Age (Neolithic) and Copper Age were found in the valley. The Bronze Age is represented by fragments of hand-worked and poorly-fired ceramics from Šalek castle, though it is uncertain, if there was also a contemporary building on the later-to-be castle hill. The Iron-age finds are spear points from the village Bevče nearby Šalek and bronze bracelet from Špehovka.

##### ROMAN TIMES

With the intensive Roman conquest of the present-day Slovenian territory in 35-22 BC, the Šalek Valley fell under the administration of the Noric kingdom, being included into the state as a Roman province in 41-54 AD. Near Šalek, the remains of Roman bricks were found in Stara vas (Old village) & Šmartno (St Martin's), where also the Roman grave-tablet of Publius Aelius Speratinus and the wife Candida, erected by the son Sperat, was found. Numerous Roman coins were found throughout the valley. On the map of Roman empire, Tabula Peutingeriana, the mail station of Upellae is depicted, with the distance of 13 Roman miles from Celeia (Celje) & 16 Roman miles from Colatio (Slovenj Gradec) – two settlements, Velenje and Vitanje are found today on corresponding distances. Numerous historians developed the theory of Upellae being located at Škale or Stara Vas near Velenje at the vicinal Roman road leading from Celje, entering Šalek Valley near Šalek, through Upellae/Stara vas, via Mislinja valley to Stari Trg near Slovenj Gradec and further to Carinthia.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Mitja Brodar: *Ice-age man in Šalek Valley*. In: Velenje, razprave o zgodovini mesta in okolice, Mestna občina Velenje, Velenje, 1999, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Danijela Brišnik: *From stone axe to terre sigillate*. In: Velenje, razprave o zgodovini mesta in okolice, Mestna občina Velenje, Velenje, 1999, p. 69.





## Upellis

Drawing 1 Depiction of Upellis in Roman Noric, supposedly Stara vas near Velenje/Šalek on the roman map Tabula Peutingeriana.

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/50/TabulaPeutingeriana.jpg>, 7. 10. 2017.

### MIDDLE AGES

The knowledge about the period of Late Antiquity, times of Great Migrations & the Early Middle Ages in Šalek Valley is very poor, however some pottery from Late Antiquity was found here. Maybe on the hill Gradišče there was a hill fort. Supposingly the settlement Družirje was named after a Slav lord/leader called Tresmir. The Church of St George in Škale, mentioned in early 12<sup>th</sup> century, had the status of "prafara" (original parish), only held by the oldest churches and centres of colonisation.

The material culture from Late Middle Ages and later, obtained largely also by protective archaeological digs on the Šalek Castle in 1991 & 1992, is rich in quantity & form: all kind of kitchen pottery (different types of pots, bowls, dishes and plates), simply designed & unglazed from early periods and those from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, being richly glazed in various colours & artistically decorated. One of the most interesting items is the "Šalek drinking cup", a goblet with series of imprints made with 4 different small geometrical seals. Numerous are fragments of glazed tiles of various designs, variety of motifs and colours, coins are rare, as well as window glass & glass goblets. A very special luxurious item is the folding ivory sundial from the Šalek castle.<sup>3</sup>

*»Šalek castle is one of the most important buildings in the history of the Šalek valley. Sufficient proof of its significance lies in the fact that not only the settlement at the foot of the castle, but also the entire valley, was named after it. The first, although vague, record of the castle dates from the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century when knights bearing its name appear in historical sources. Although there are still plenty of unsolved riddles surrounding its first known occupants, Šalek castle was undoubtedly built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, on which point both art historians and an analysis of historical sources agree. The relative significance of the family who built the castle is indicated by the fact that they also built their own church, which they consecrated to St. Martin. However, the free knights of Šalek who built the castle died out in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the castle must have become the property of the Gurk diocese. Not long before, the bishops of Gurk had built*

<sup>3</sup> Danijela Brišnik: From late Antiquity to Šalek drinking cup. In: Velenje, razprave o zgodovini mesta in okolice, Mestna občina Velenje, Velenje, 1999, p. 87, 88.



the castle of Ekenštajn in the immediate vicinity of Šalek, from where they ruled over their dominions in the eastern parts of the Šalek valley (the present-day area of Bevče, Lipje and Vinska Gora). After the acquisition of Šalek, the diocese did not merge the respective dominions of the two castles. Instead, the bishops of Gurk granted Šalek castle as a feudal estate to the counts of Haimburg-Vovbre, who in turn had the property managed by ministerials. The first ministerial family at Šalek castle probably left the property as early as the second decade of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and was replaced by the ministerial family who managed Ekenštajn for the Haimburg-Vovbre counts and who in turn were replaced at Ekenštajn by the Mörtinger family.



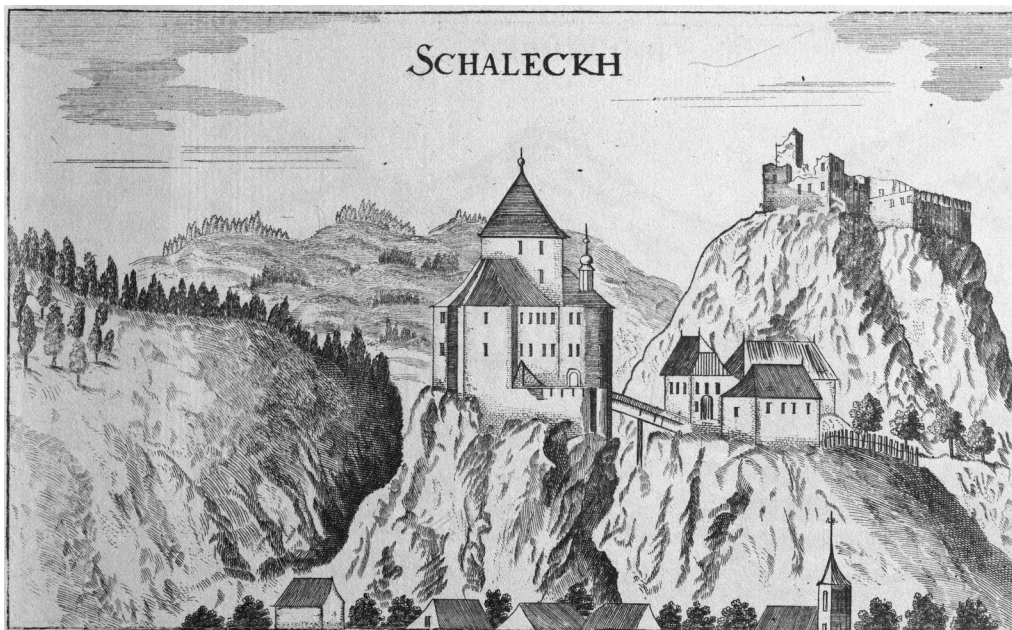
Picture 2 Šalek castle on the Map of G. M. Vischer, 1678: *Styriae Ducatus Fertillissii Nova Geographica Descriptio*.

The two towers – the triangular defence tower on the right and the palatial tower with on the left are clearly visible (enhanced in orange). Thow castelologist Ivan Stopar comments the drawing to be “completely unreliable and possibly being created “ad hoc” (Stopar, 1972, p. 418), as he was still referring to the castle as a castle with a central tower – not the central courtyard, as it was found out later, by the archaeological digs in 1991/92.

When the Haimburg-Vovbre counts died out in 1322, the Šalek ministerials seized the opportunity and with the consent of the Gurk bishops, the castle became their feudal estate. However, they soon had to acknowledge the authority of the much more powerful lords of Žovnek (Sovnekk). In 1335 the bishop of Gurk granted both the Šalek and Ekenštajn castles as a feudal estate to the Žovnek lords. As a result, the Šalek lords became vassals of the Žovnek family. Soon after, they left the castle to manage other estates (Podčetrtek) for the Žovnek lords, who by that time had already become the counts of Celje. Other feudal lords managed the castle for the counts, such as the families of Osterwitz-Ojstrica and Rifnik. But it was only in the 15<sup>th</sup> century that Šalek castle again became a permanent home for its occupants, the Sebriac lords, from whose ranks later emerged the Trieste bishop and a renowned European humanist, Ahaz of Sebriac. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the castle became the property of the Raumschüssel family, who kept it until the late 17<sup>th</sup>



century. During this time, in 1635, there took place the only peasant uprising which spread to the Šalek valley. In these events, one Erazem (Erasmus) Raumschüssel played an unusual double role of both a supporter and an opponent of the uprising. Because of this he was tried, although his guilt was never proven. In 1676, while it was the property of the Raumschüssels, the castle burnt down for the first time, but was rebuilt. Following the Raumschüssels, the castle became the property of the Gabelkhovens, who made it a part of their Turn estate. After a second fire in 1770, the castle was abandoned and left to decay.



Picture 3 Depiction of the Šalek, graphic of G. M. Vischer, *Topographia Ducatus Styriae*. 1681

Archaeological research has in part verified Vischer's copper-plate depiction of the castle, in which residential buildings and a chapel are clustered around the central keep. The only preserved architectural remains are the triangular keep with walls up to two and a half metres thick, foundation walls of the residential wing, and several smaller buildings and defence walls. Excavations have revealed that the defence walls and the central triangular keep, to which were added the residential wing, chapel and structures along the eastern wall of the keep, were built upon the remains of an older building (SE 99) which was elevated and included in the castle's ground-plan. This foundation, which could have belonged to an older structure, was necessary to create a terrace on the small rock upon which the castle was built. According to architectural elements, well preserved quoins and merely indicated ashlar stonework, the construction of the castle can be dated to the first half or the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This has been confirmed by only a few of the small finds, which become more frequent towards the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. However, the castle rock must have been settled long before this, as is evident from the discovered fragments of hand-painted ceramics and a pot made according to the coil method."<sup>4</sup>

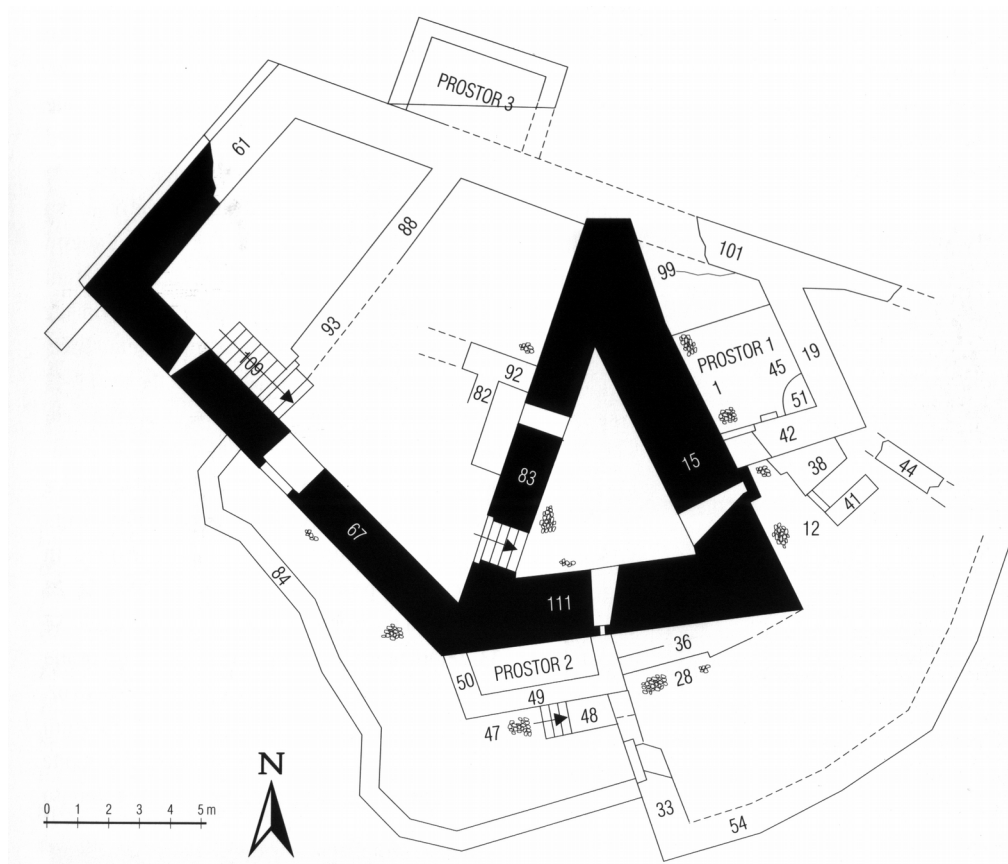
<sup>4</sup> Danijena Brišnik, Tone Ravnikar: *Grad Šalek*. Kulturni center Ivana Napotnika Velenje, Založništvo Pozoj, Velenje, 1999. p. 73-78.



Picture 4 Reconstruction of the appearance of the Šalek castle from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, placed in modern environment. Computer 3d model by Rok Poles, based on reconstruction drawings of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (ZKDS OE Celje) by Ivo Gričar.



Picture 5 Current state of the ruins.



Drawing 6 Floor plan of the archaeological research & preserved structures on the Šalek castle, drawing by Ivo Gričar, The Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (ZKDS OE Celje).  
Source: Danijena Brišnik, Tone Ravnikar: *Grad Šalek*. Kulturni center Ivana Napotnika Velenje, Založništvo Pozoj, Velenje, 1999. p. 35.

99 – the oldest wall on the castle-hill, expanding beneath the north corner of the triangular tower

“prostor 1” - place 1, leaning on the east sidewall of the triangular tower, with walls 101, 19, 42, paved with the stone pavement. Minor water cistern (51) and animal bones were found near the wall 19

“prostor 2” - place 1, smaller object (walls 49, 50), adjacent are the 115 cm wide stone stairs (48) between the inter-wall area with the stone pavement (12, 28, 47) and the passage in the wall (33), connected with the south defence-wall (54, 84). On the site of the stairs, supposedly there was primarily a paved ramp. The wall 84 – south-west defence wall – is built directly on the rock & thus of irregular shape and is nowhere preserved in its original height

between the walls 38 & 41 there is a part of stone window/door lintel used as a doorstep

111 south side of the triangular tower

67 south foundations of the palatial tower with a passage & loophole, connected with the poorly preserved south-west part of the wall, supposedly continuing toward the wall 101 – the relationship between the two walls is not clear, as the north corner of the triangular tower was badly damaged / partly completely ruined.  
109 – cca 1,5 m high stone stairs into the stone paved basement of the palatial tower.

88, 93 poorly built stone wall of the basement of the palatial tower

82, 92 stone feature in function of the stairs in front of the northern entrance in the triangular tower

15 west side of the triangular tower. Fragments of the hand-made (prae-historical) pottery were found on the east side of the wall.

## 2. Adaptation of the castle

In general, the castle is a permanent ruin. In the 1990s the archaeological excavation followed by the reconstruction works were carried out overall the ruins of the castle, stabilizing the built structure, creating new entrance with stairs and adding fencing to prevent visitors from falling-off the ruins.



Picture 7 Castle ruins during tge archaeological excavation in 1991s  
(Source: Danijela Brišnik, Šalek Castle ruins – protection, management, use-reuse, presentation, Velenje, 24. 8. 2017)

## 3. Other buildings and castle surrounding areas

In the south-east area adjacent to the castle, there was a group of supposedly 3 ancillary buildings with garden & the orchard, depicted on the Vischer's and later graphics & photographs. Currently one building is turned into private apartment building, one is ruined & overgrown with the forest, the third was supposedly destroyed by expanding other buildings on the site. The primary access route, leading to the bridge into the castle, is still used by the stonemasonry as their internal access/courtyard.

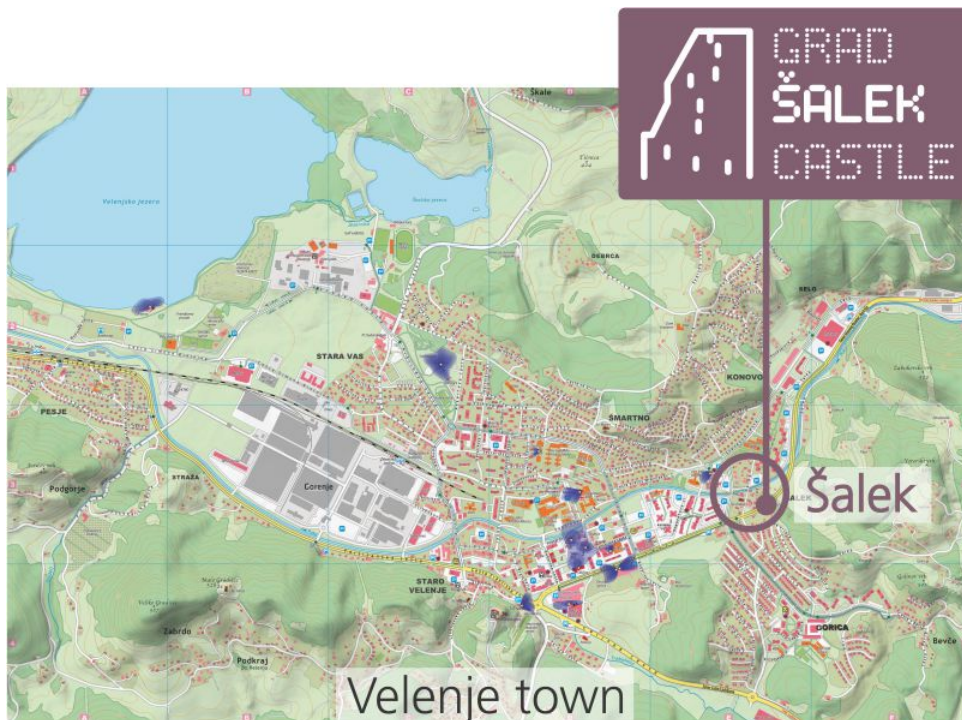
The entire area around the castle was treated as the rocky area without trees as late as until the times after the WW2, but later it was overgrown with herbs & trees, changing the appearance of the castle in the landscape. The deforestation of the castle hill is desirable.

## 4. SURROUNDING AREA

### 4.1 Šalek/Velenje and the surrounding areas - the current condition



Picture 8 Location of Velenje / Šalek (source: [http://www.osnovnasolasostro.si/ucenci/08-09/9a\\_Dremelj\\_Rok/galerija.html](http://www.osnovnasolasostro.si/ucenci/08-09/9a_Dremelj_Rok/galerija.html))



Today the Šalek village is a part of Velenje town, but the settlement Šalek is much older than the modern post-second-world-war-II town, being established under the Šalek castle-hill near the ancient passing over the Paka river and the church of St Andrew. Picture 9 Location of Šalek settlement & castle in relationship towards the town Velenje (source: <http://www.velenje.si/za-obiskovalce/turisticna-karta-velenja>, 7. 10. 2017)

The Šalek village is seated at cca 398 and the castle at 434 metres above the sea level<sup>5</sup>.



Picture 10 Location of Šalek castle & village  
(source: <https://www.geoprostor.net/piso/ewmap.asp?obcina=VELENJE>)

Velenje is located between the cities Celje and Slovenj Gradec, nord-east from the Ljubljana (cca 55 km air-line) and south-west from Maribor (cca 46 km air-line), the two major cities of Slovenia. The town

<sup>5</sup>Data from: <https://www.geoprostor.net/piso/ewmap.asp?obcina=VELENJE>, 7. 10. 2017.





developed rapidly from the minor settlement under the Velenje-castle hill in post world-war-II Yugoslavia as the “socialist miracle” of moder urbanism and architecture, built as the modern settlement for the coal-miners. All important public functions in Šalek Valley were in that period transfered from former centre of the valley, town Šoštanj, to Velenje. Officialy it gained the town status 1959 with the opening of the new city-centre & Tito square.

City of Velenje is 6th biggest Slovenian city and is centre of Municipality Velenje with approx. 30.000 inhabitants. Strong economy with mayor subject "Gorenje" (domestic appliances) and "Coal mine Velenje" are along with youth of the town main reasons for pleasant and healthy living conditions<sup>6</sup>.

The Šalek castle is one of two castles, dominating Velenje, thus being a beloved visiting point by locals and tourists. The church of St Andrew in Šalek was established by the lords of the Šalek & Ekenštajn castle and also the local guilds and is one of the finest examples of gothic-style churches in the area. In the outhur church wall there was a gravestone of the Rosina Ursula Rambschisl, supposingly from the chapel of the Šalek castle (now in the Velenje Museum). The votiv picture above the sacristy door and an old bell shoud have the same origin.

Other historic monuments in Velenje are amongst others:

- the parish church of “St. Martin in the suburb” - originatings as the primary chapel of the Šalek castle, has the core from the romanic period, baroque aditions and a large modern-time nave&presbitery.
- the parish church of Our lady of the Mount Karmel (St Mary) in Old Velenje, originating as the chapel of the Velenje castle, serving as a protestant religion object, rebuild in renaissance time & barock
- the funerary chapel of the Fišer family in neo-gothic style
- Velenje castle, grounded in the romanic times, rebuild in gothic and renaissance, thus gaining a specific outlook with powerful fortifications and inner arcade-court
- there are three villas from the time of historism: Villa Bianca (Schloss Neuwollan), built by the counts of Harnoncour-Unvezagt and the family von Adamovich, Villa Herberstein (Schloss Neuschallegg), built by the and later owned bz the contess Herberstein, and Villa Gorica (Eggenstein).
- There Velenje town centre is protected as the heritage of urbanism and there are many fine examples of buildings in the style of “modern architecture” from the late 1950es and 1960es (the tower block, skyscraper, Cesar Villa, community health care centre, general secondary school, glas head office, cultural centre, Kristl's block, etc.)
- in the surroundings there are manny exaples of fine rural building, small chapels, other castles and caste ruins and a lot of natural heritage elements.

There are the Museum Velenje and the Coal-mine museum in the town.

---

<sup>6</sup><http://www.velenje.si/en/>, 7. 10. 2017., <http://arhiva.velenje.si/0-www-4/Datoteke/2015/Arch-guide%20Velenje-Poles.pdf>



- **Access to Velenje**

Velenje can be reached in various ways: by bike, by car, motorcycle, taxi, bus or train, and different combinations of some of these.

**By car:** Velenje is 84 km (1 hour drive) away from Ljubljana, and just 15 km from motorway A1 (Ljubljana – Maribor). Chose the motorway exit Žalec/Dravograd/Slovenj Gradec/Velenje/Dobrna/Arja vas and turn left. Drive about 15 minutes and stay on the priority road. The GPS coordinates of the Tourist information center: N: 46,3571 E: 15,1116

**By bus:** Regular bus connections allow you to arrive in Velenje from all parts of Slovenia.

**By train:** Velenje can be reached by train from Ljubljana or Maribor.

**By plane:** We don't have an airport in Velenje. But you can fly with different airlines to Ljubljana Jože Pučnik international airport and continue your journey with other means of transport. Even airports in neighbouring countries (Austria, Italy, Hungary and Croatia) are relatively close and allow you a great platform to start your holiday adventures. [Ljubljana airport](#) (SLO): 86 km, 1 hour, [Klagenfurt airport](#) (A): 105 km, 1,5 hour, [Zagreb airport](#) (CRO): 180 km, 2 hours, [Trieste airport](#) (I): 207 km, 2 hours, [Venice airport](#) (I): 315 km, 3 hours.<sup>7</sup>

Generally Velenje is accessed from the A1 / E 57 highway, leaving it at Žalec and there is a state road No 4 via Velika Pirešica, Črnova, Vinska Gora and Pirešica to Velenje.

Šalek is accessed from the Šaleška cesta (main road through Velenje), turn left in the junction just before entering the tunnel under the Šalek castle. There are some public parking spaces in Šalek.

The castle ruins alone are accessible only by foot, the path leading from the centre of the old Šalek settlement, opposite the St Andrew church, directly up to the castle. The path is partly in asphalt, partly paved with timber beams (stairs).

- **Adjacent towns and villages**

In the Šalek Valley in direct vicinity to Velenje there are:

The town Šoštanj, well-known for the largest thermal power plant in Slovenia. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there stood one of the largest leather factories in Austro-Hungarian empire, owned by the Woschnagg family. There are the ruins of the Šoštanj castle above the town, fine examples of building with ornate facades from the time of historicism (the management building of the leather factory, the palace Kajuhov dom, formerly Hotel Austria) and in the renovated Villa Mayer, housing some artistic and historical collections, to be visited.

In the Šentlj area, the castle Šarčenštajn and the parish church of St Ilj are worth visiting.

In the Vinska Gora there is the parish church of St. John the Baptist, supposedly built on the site of the ancient baptismal chapel at the border of the old St George in Škale parish. It has fine vaults in gothic style with coats of arms of the lords of the near-by castle in Dobrna.

In Bevče there is the church of St. Nicolaus with baroque-style altar statues of good quality.

In Šembric there is the church of St. Brictius.

In Škalske Cirkovce there is the church of St. Oswald with a fine renaissance altar.

---

<sup>7</sup><http://www.velenje-tourism.si/en/velenje/arrival-to-velenje>



In the Zabrdo region there is the church of St. Jacob, depicted in the main altar venerating Our Lady of the Pilar.

- **Accommodation and restaurants**

There are two hotels in Velenje, named Paka (52 rooms) & Razgoršek.



Picture 11 Accommodation in Velenje (source: maps.google.com)

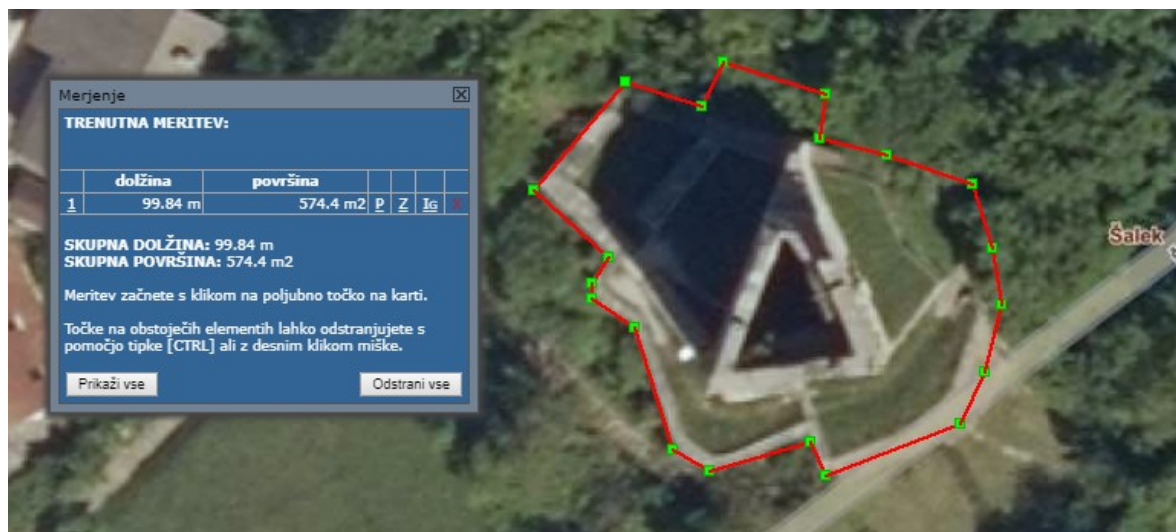


Picture 12 Restaurants and bars in Velenje (source: maps.google.com)

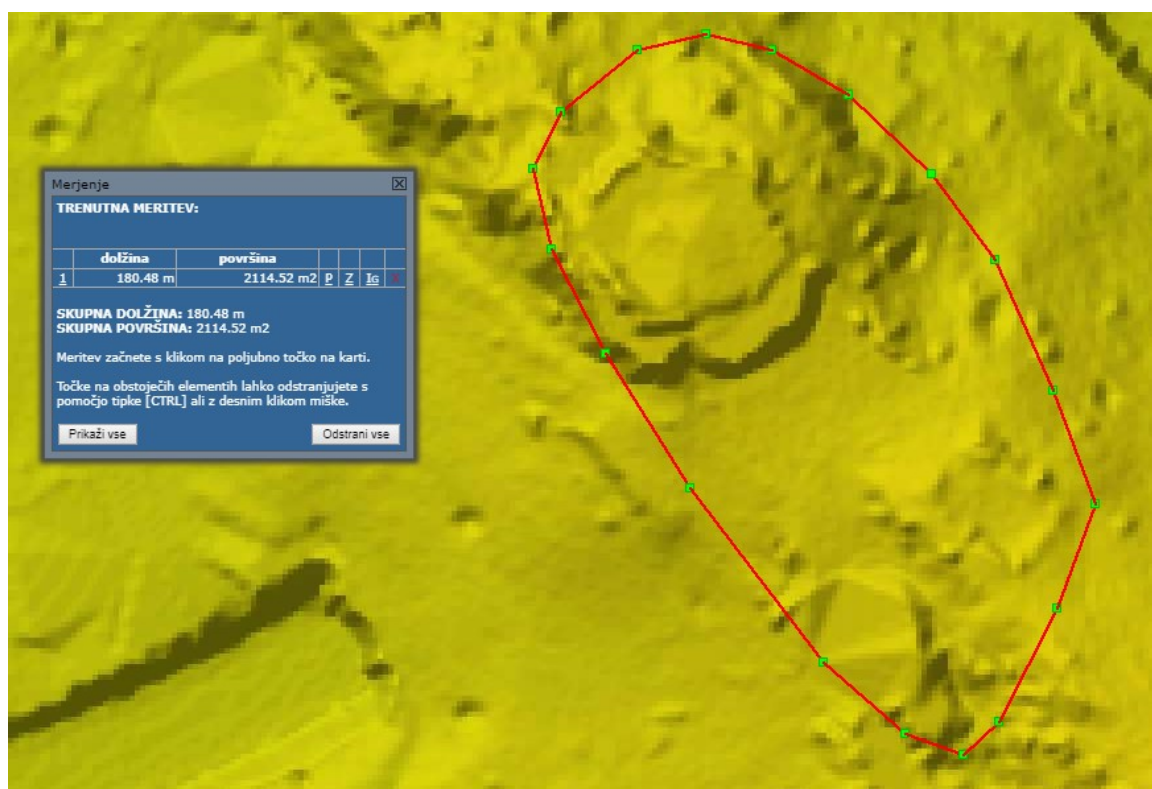


## 5. THE CASTLE AND ADJACENT AREAS

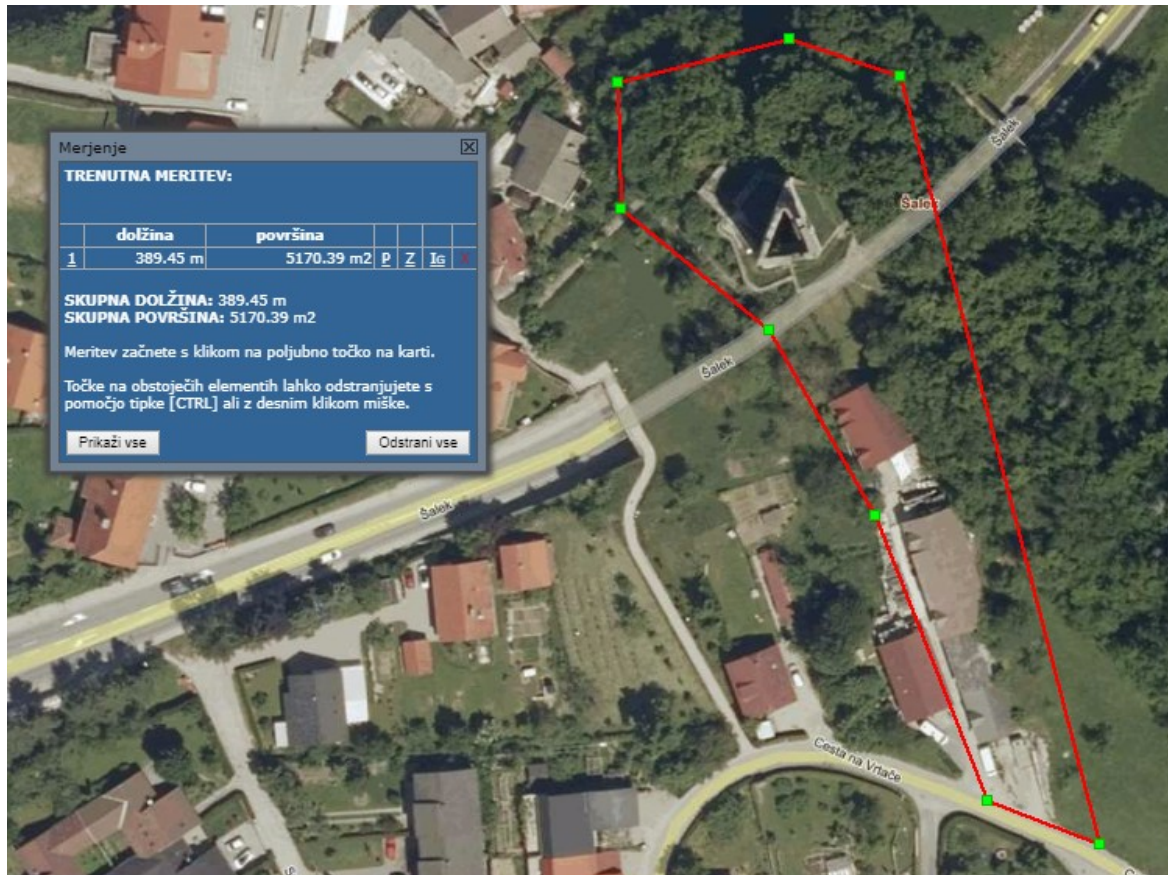
The ruins of Šalek castle are located on the north-eastern edge of the Šalek valley. The castle was built on a ridge at the bottom of the valley, next to where the Paka River exits a ravine between Paški Kozjak and Tisnik. Strategically located high above the Šalek valley, the castle was well protected and dominated the valley. The central area of the Šalek castle-ruins covers cca 575 m<sup>2</sup>.



The area with the ancillary buildings in front of the castle and the former bridge covers cca 2.115 m<sup>2</sup>.



The area embracing the former/authentic access-route to the castle and the rocky-area around the ruin, that should (in long terms) be the part of the managed area, covers cca 5.200 m2.





Currently the access path to the ruins is a timber-paved pedestrian path with steep steps. There is no car access to the castle, as the area of the primary path is currently in private possession (stonemasonry).



- **Entrance area**

The Castle ruins are accessed through the iron door at the end of the timber-paved foot-path. There is a board explaining how the key for the door is to be obtained, as the doors are locked.



Photo 1 The door into the castle and the way the ruins are usually accessed without the key.



Photo 2 The annotation (only in slovene language): For the access to the ruins of the Šalek castle you will be needin the key, you can obtain in Turist & information centre in Villa Bianca, address: Stari trg 3. Contact phone: 03 896 18 60, e-mail ...

- **Open areas and car parks**

The area of the Castle ruins are not provided with a special car park. There are some public parking spaces in the Šalek settlement. There is an open area (grass) in front of the castle entrance & an even smaller open area in the former inner castle courtyard.



Photo 3 The board of “The Dragon's Castle Trail around Velenje” in front of the castle (source: [http://kraji.eu/slovenija/saleski\\_grad/slo](http://kraji.eu/slovenija/saleski_grad/slo), 10. 10. 2017)



Photo 4 Whoever wants to obtain the sticker of “The Dragon's Castle Trail around Velenje” must visit 5 castle-sites in vicinity of Velenje and rub the stamps on the boards adjacent to the castles.

- **Tourist paths**

The castle ruins have free access. The path to the castle is marked with the “marcation of Alojz Knafeljc” = red circle & white centre as the part of the Šalek mountain-path (Šaleška planinska pot).

Some information about the castle are provided on www:

[https://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grad\\_%C5%A0alek](https://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grad_%C5%A0alek)

[http://kraji.eu/slovenija/saleski\\_grad/slo](http://kraji.eu/slovenija/saleski_grad/slo)

[http://www.gradovi.net/grad/salek\\_grad](http://www.gradovi.net/grad/salek_grad)

<http://ks-velenje.si/salek/page/znamenitosti-saleka/>

Scientific monographies about the Castle are for instance:



- Danijena Brišnik, Tone Ravnikar: *Grad Šalek*. Kulturni center Ivana Napotnika Velenje, Muzej Velenje, Založništvo Pozoj, Velenje, 1995.
- Danijena Brišnik, Tone Ravnikar: *Grad Šalek*. Kulturni center Ivana Napotnika Velenje, Založništvo Pozoj, Velenje, 1999.
- Ivan Stopar, *Grad in naselje Šalek*. Turistično društvo Velenje, Velenje 1975.

Inside the castle ruins, there are no signs, as there is only one path from the entrance to the inner courtyard.



- **Street furniture**

There are neither toilets nor sitting-benches, tables, parasols, bicycle stands or other street furniture on the castle. There are some trash-bins, but are vandalised frequently.

The entire area is fenced / equipped with access restriction rails, but nevertheless there are still some dangerous areas.



Photo 5 The fencing of the ruins



Photo 6 The fencing is designed in an aggressive way

- **Properties in the castle premises**

There are no properties in the castle premises.



## 6. CASTLE'S STATE OF PRESERVATION

### 6.1. Studying and analysing ruins

In order to commence conservation, preservation and construction works in any property, appropriate studies and analyses must be conducted. Through the years, a considerable number of studies of the castle-ruin was carried out, mostly about the history and archaeology of the castle.

Using the architectural drawings from the the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (ZKDS OE Celje), the three-dimensional reconstruction of the current state of ruins and of the appearance of the castle in the 14<sup>th</sup> century was created.

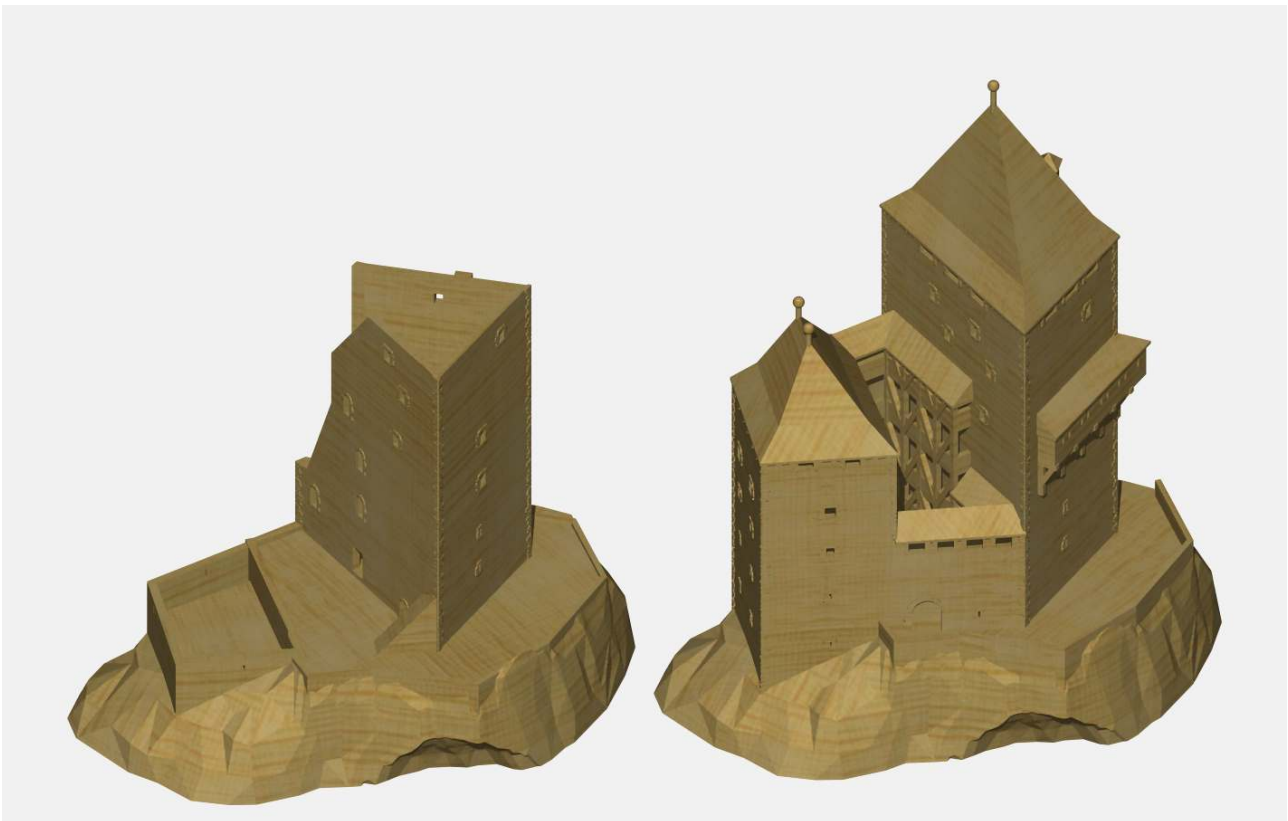
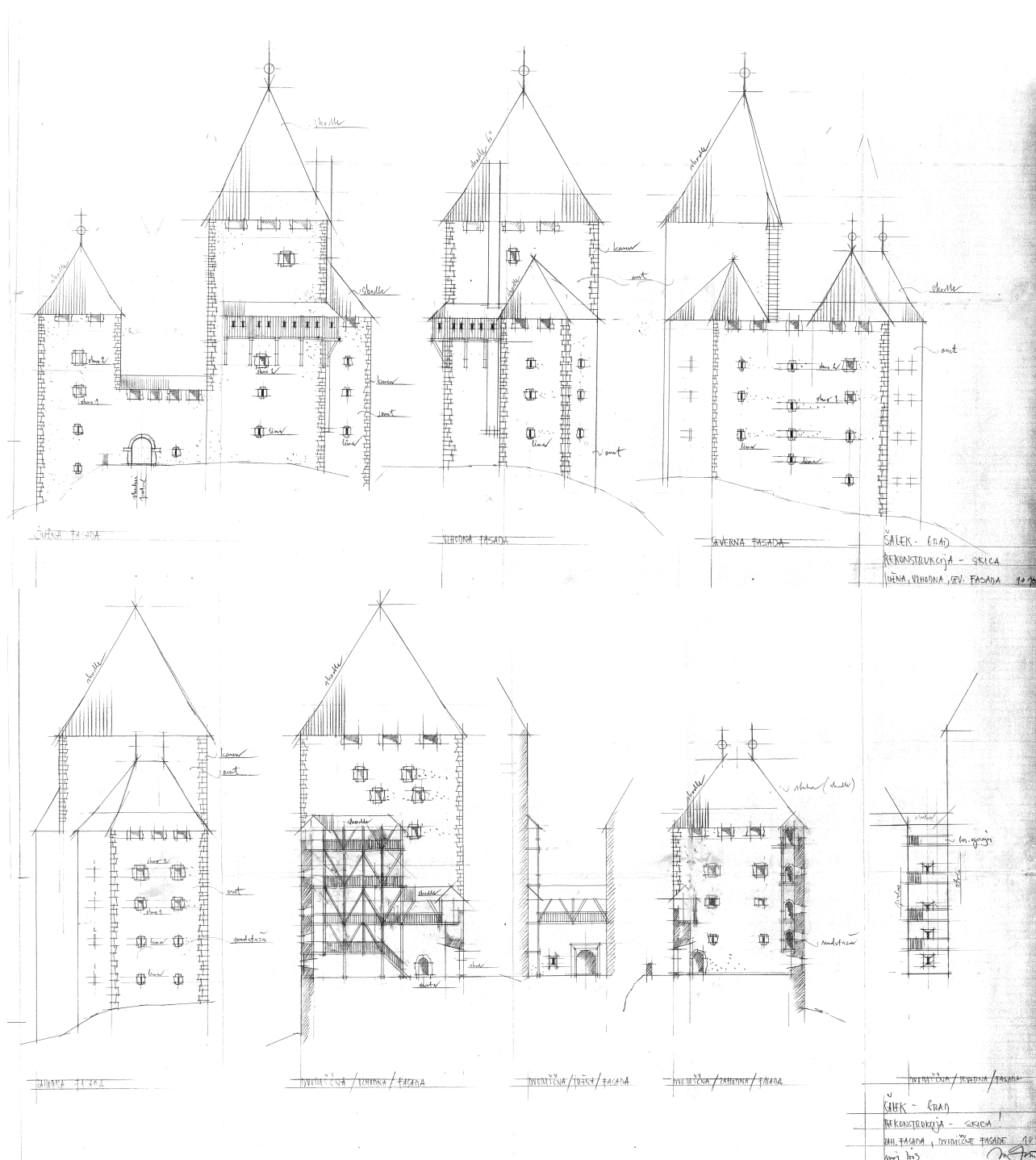


Photo 7 The computer 3D model of the current state of the ruins and the reconstruction of the appearance of the castle in the 14

th century, model and render Rok Poles.

## 6.2. Documents concerning ruins

As it is commonly known, property protection involves, for example, producing documents concerning the properties being protected. Available are historical study of the property and the surrounding area, archaeological documents and architectural documents.



Drawing 13 Facades and sections of the Šalek Castle, reconstructions, drawings from the archive of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (ZKDS OE Celje) by Ivo Gričar.



### 6.3. Structure reinforcement

Over the years, fire and weather conditions as well as human activity (using castle as a quarry for the building material for near-by buildings) have damaged the castle, turning it into ruin. Physical and mechanical properties of the walls have changed and their load-bearing capacity decreased. The ruin was stabilised in 1992/93, especially the basis of the north corner of the tower. The defence walls and the walls of the tower were partly reconstructed and on the top of the tower a reinforced-concrete crown was created to prevent water penetration into walls. The caverns on the walls were repaired as well as some door vaults.

### 6.4. Buildings

The most prominent part of the ruin is a triangular tower (Bergfried, donjon). From the second tower (palatio) only the cellar is preserved. The triangular tower had 5 stories, accessed using external stairs. The tower had a wooden roof.



Photo 8 Šalek castle - aerial view

### Buildings - reconstructions

The south-west walls are founded on original walls.



### *6.5. Protecting external face of the walls*

Contemporarily, general guidelines about preservation and conservation of the face of the walls of permanent ruins involve preventive conservation resulting in preserving the original design of the building. Because of some non-accurate works, done during the general structure reinforcement of the castle in 1990s, some building details were lost, especially the specific way of laying the beams into the walls, underlaying them with a plank. The reconstruction of the original design is desirable.



Photo 9 Šalek castle – same detail of the wall before & after the wall reinforcement (photo Rok Poles)

Also large portions of original plaster were lost/peeled off.

There were no borders emphasised between the old and new parts of the walls.

The face of the walls were protected by joining the loose stones, repairing the cavities and gaps in the walls, filling them with the limestones, joined with lime mortar, and left in permanent ruin.

Portions of ruined defence walls were rebuilt.

A concrete cap was added to the top of the tower.

Currently, walls provided with no protection are gradually being covered with perennial and annual vegetation, causing the stones to loose. The same problem is detected overall the castle-hill/rock, where the falling stones are a potential threat to visitors & locals, living in close vicinity = under the castle.

### *6.6. Drainage and rainwater discharge*

There is no drainage applied on the area of the ruins.

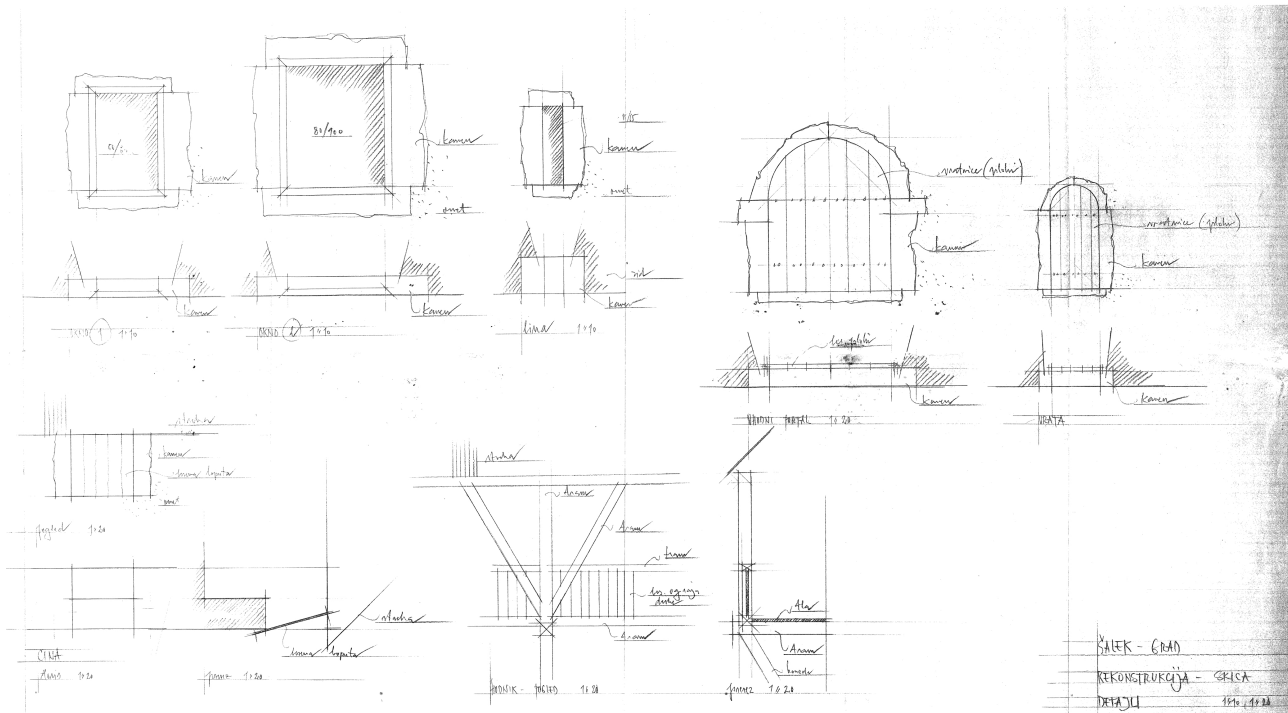


## 6.7. Protection of architectural detailing

There are two types of historic architectural detailing in Šalek Castle: stone detailing and plaster.

- **Stone detailing**

Romanesque & gothic stone window frames and door portals have been preserved.



Drawing 14 Architectural details and reconstructions, drawings from the archive of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (ZKDS OE Celje) by Ivo Gričar.

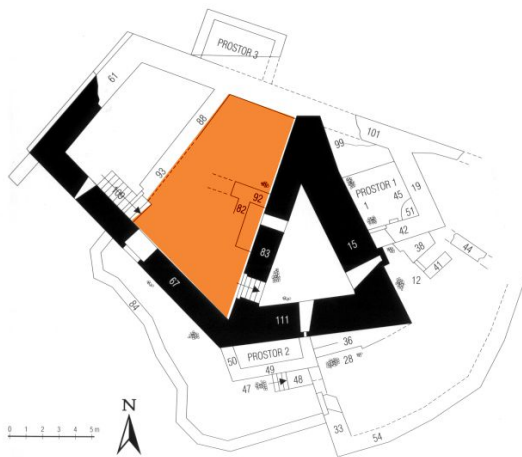
- **Plaster**

There are some portions of original plaster on the inner and outer wall-side of the triangular tower. The plaster on lower parts of the building is covered with historical & contemporary graffiti. No specific effort was made to retain original plaster. General condition of plaster is poor.

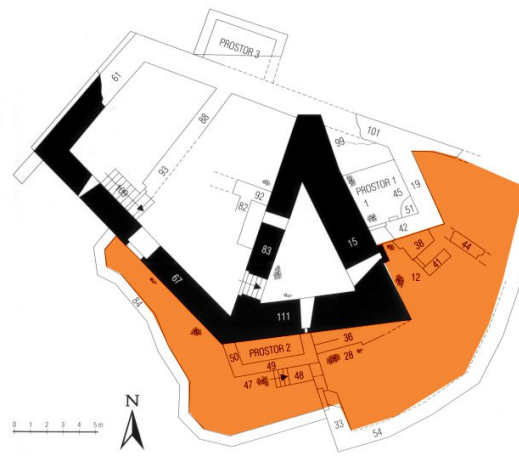
### 6.8. Other buildings and elements of the premises

Civil engineering structures include:

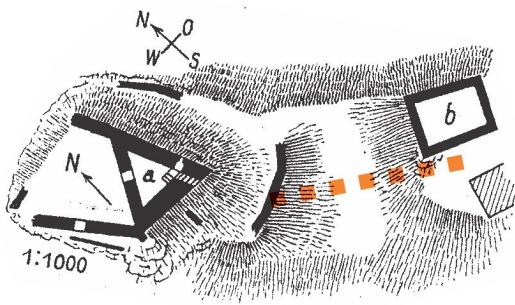
- courtyard
- roads/passageways - condition assessment covers both historic routes and the ones which were introduced in the spatial management process
- bridge
- moat
  
- **Engineering structures in the Šalek Castle**



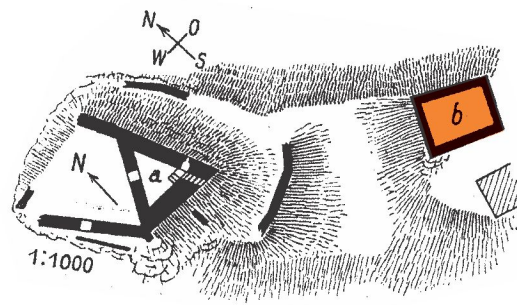
Picture15 The inner courtyard highlighted on the floor plan



Picture 16 The area between the external defence walls and the triangular tower ighlighted on the floor plan



Picture17 The supposed location of the bridge highlighted on the floor plan.



Picture 18 The ruined ancillary building highlighted on the floor plan

- **Courtyards**

The inner courtyard: Current condition: gravel & grass, protective fencing. No sewage inlets available.



Photo 10 The inner courtyard

- **Bridge**

Šalek Castle once had a bridge heading over the moat to the main gate of the castle. The bridge is completely gone, current entrance is on a non-original spot.

- **Well**

The position of the castle well is not known.

- **Moats**

Due to plot topography, it was not possible/needed to surround the entire castle with a moat, which can be therefore found only in the south-east. A dry moat is a broad ditch partly dug in the ground. Currently the moat is partly filled with soil and covered with plants & the access path to the castle.

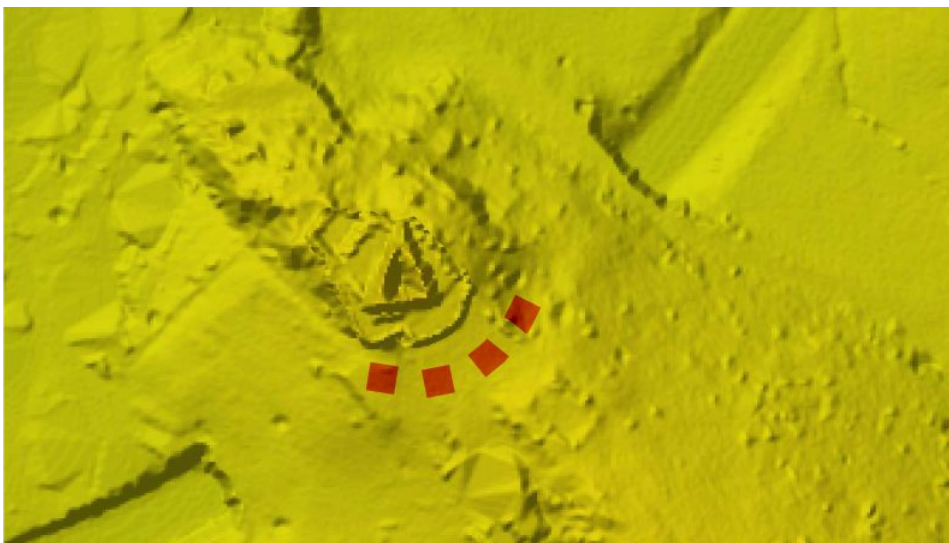


Photo 11 Castle moat on the LIDAR scan of the area,  
source:

<https://www.geoprostor.net/piso/ewmap.asp?obcina=VELENJE>.



## 6. 9. Vegetation

Vegetation is an inherent element of permanent ruins. There is no cultivated vegetation on the Šalek castle. Practically the entire castle hill was originally a “wiped out” area with no trees because of the safety /defence reasons. Annuals & smaller perennial wild plants are of no harm to the castle, but shrubs and trees are unwanted, because they can deteriorate walls with their roots, causing water to penetrate deep into the structure and weakening it because of frost and rinsing the binding material out of the wall.

### Cultivated compositions and loose vegetation

- **Castle courtyards**

Castle courtyards are covered with grass, mown occasionally. The paths are covered with gravel.

- **Castle hill**

Originally, the moat and the slopes were covered only with grass and grass-like plants. After the castle was no longer used for defense purposes, it was becoming a ruin and trees started to grow on the slopes. The felling of trees should be considered and nearly all the trees growing on the hill could be downed. Consequently, the entire slope would be displayed. At the moment, both the dry moat and the slopes are covered with bush and small trees on the west and north side, with larger trees on the north-east side and with some fruit trees on the south side. It is necessary to carry out further maintenance works.

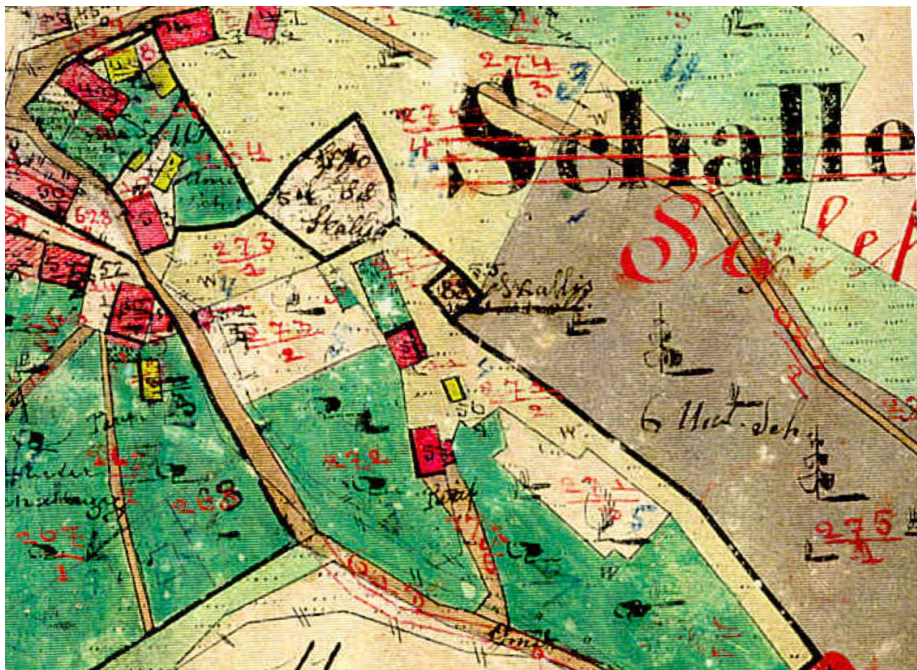


Photo 12 The castle area on the Franciscan catastral plan, showing the wood area in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

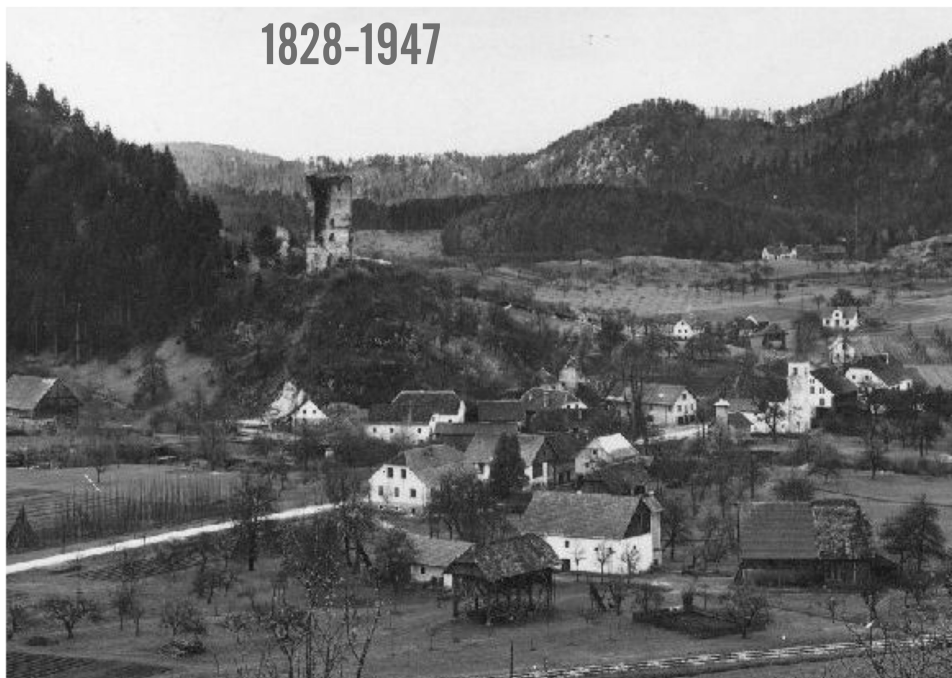


Photo 13 The castle ruins in the 2/4 of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the castle hill is still deforested (source: Slovene ethnographical museum (Slovenski etnografski muzej), e-photo collection, photo Vekoslav Kramarič, <https://www.etno-muzej.si/sl/digitalne-zbirke/vekoslav-kramaric>, 14. 10. 2017)



Photo 14 Trees overgrowing the castle hill reduce the visibility of the ruin & consequently the importance of the ruin as a landmark. (source: <http://www.geago.si/sl/pois/9021/grad-salek-velenje>, 14. 10. 2017)



Photo 15 The old orchard on the west slope of the castle hill.

## Unwanted vegetation

Even the slightest amount of hummus in wall cracks and coping results in plants spreading into there. At the beginning, these are predominantly grass and small annual and biennial plants. High humidity stimulates their growth. Their decay results in production of humic acid and increase in the level of nitrates. Over time, as humic layer gets thicker (plant decay, accumulation of drifted soil), perennial plants, bush, and trees start to grow. Both standard and dwarf plants exert similar impact on buildings. Additionally, roots can grow under walls causing cracks and lifting them up. In Šalek Castle, elements most seriously affected by unwanted plants are walls. Dwarf plants, bush, and small trees are present. Vegetation can be seen at the foot of the castle walls, thick high bush & trees also grows on the slopes of the castle hill.



Photo 16 The inner view of the triangular castle, the shrubs growing from the walls .

The castle walls were cleared of vegetation in the adaptation process in 1990s.

Currently, shrubs and smaller trees are attacking the walls again and should be removed on the regular basis.



## 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Danijela Brišnik: *From stone axe to terre sigillate*. In: Velenje, razprave o zgodovini mesta in okolice, Mestna občina Velenje, Velenje, 1999.
2. Danijela Brišnik: From late Antiquity to Šalek drinking cup. In: Velenje, razprave o zgodovini mesta in okolice, Mestna občina Velenje, Velenje, 1999.
3. Danijena Brišnik, Tone Ravnikar: *Grad Šalek*. Kulturni center Ivana Napotnika Velenje, Muzej Velenje, Založništvo Pozoj, Velenje, 1995.
4. Danijena Brišnik, Tone Ravnikar: *Grad Šalek*. Kulturni center Ivana Napotnika Velenje, Založništvo Pozoj, Velenje, 1999.
5. Mitja Brodar: *Ice-age man in Šalek Valley*. In: Velenje, razprave o zgodovini mesta in okolice, Mestna občina Velenje, Velenje, 1999.
6. Rok in Špela Poles: *The Dragon's castle trail around Velenje*. Mestna občina Velenje, Velenje, 2011.
7. Tone Ravnikar: *Šaleška dolina med 10. in 17. stoletjem*. Muzej Velenje, Velenje 2005.
8. Ivan Stopar, *Grad in naselje Šalek*. Turistično društvo Velenje, Velenje 1975.
9. Ivan Stopar: Grajski objekti z obočja Slovenske Štajerske na Vischerjeve zemljeidu iz leta 1678. In: Celjski zbornik 1971-72, description of depiction of Šalek caste on the map of 1678: p. 418.
10. Georg Matthäus VISCHER: *Styriae Ducatus Fertilissimi Nova Geographica Descriptio*. 1678 depiction of Šalek caste on the map.
11. Georg Matthäus VISCHER: *Topographia Ducatus Styriae*. Grätz 1681, depiction of Šalek caste .
12. The Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (ZKDS OE Celje) , *Architectural drawing of ruins Šalek*, drawings by Ivo Gričar.