THE EPISCOPAL PALACE AT POREČ - RESULTS OF RECENT EXPLORATION AND RESTORATION

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The author gives a brief account on the results of recent explorations of the episcopal palace in Poreč (identification of the original wall structures and subsequent adaptations), and the restoration project. He also deals with the function and dating of the building, comparing it to other reception halls in early Christian architecture.

Many scholars have written about the episcopal palace in Poreč during the last one hundred years, but it is still true that this is the least explored part of the early Christian complex of the Poreč cathedral. The reason for this is the fact that this part of the complex, unlike the church, the atrium, the baptistery and the cela trichora, was not open to researchers or visitors. This building has always been (that is probably for 1,300 years) the permanent residence of the Poreč bishops, who performed all their official and private functions there. Previously unknown facts came to light when major interior adaptation works were undertaken at the beginning of this century and when D. Frey prepared schematic but very accurate documentation based on partial archeological excavations and removal of the wall plaster. Most of Frey’s conclusions were correct, especially those concerning the identification of the original, extremely well preserved basic architectural structure. A clear and simple architectural structure consisting of a rectangular wall system is easily recognised in this building, with chambers added to each other in a symmetrical order. Originally, the episcopal palace was a once-stored building with a representative spacious central hall on the first floor. Smaller and lower chambers were located on both sides, and on the south side there was a one-storied narthex which led into the building. On the other, northern side, the chambers ended in semicircular apses. The central hall had a tribelon in front of the apse, of which one column with a capital and arches with stucco and marble decorations has been preserved (Fig. 1). The layouts of the ground floor and the first floor are the similar.

In 1989, an extensive and probably long-lasting conservation and restoration programme was introduced. It will be completed when the main parts of the building are restored, which means when the building regains, at least partly, its original architecture and sculpture. The crucial moment in the project was the decision to move the bishop and episcopal offices to a new residence built close by, at the edge of the episcopal gardens. The restoration project has been progressing in parallel with the programme of exploration of the building. The interpretation of the episcopal palace is becoming more accurate and better documented, with new elements revealed at each stage of the exploration, following the removal of the recent massive structures. Experts of the Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Rijeka entered the building in 1990. Their accurate archeological drawings helped to solve some basic dilemmas, which was to be expected since until recently we only had schematic drawings to rely on (Fig. 2). Here are some of them. The window on the east wall of the central room on the ground floor led A. Sonje to hypothesize that the wall remained from an earlier building. According to this interpretation, the episcopal palace had been erected on parts, or on the remains, of an older building. When we entered the room, clear traces of a large door to the exterior were discovered (Fig. 3). Since this space was directly linked with the south side of the ground floor narthex, we can now say that the building originally had some sort of porches on the south and the west side, from which light penetrated through the windows to the central ground floor hall. Besides, explorations so far have failed to reveal traces which could prove the hypothesis of an earlier phase of the building. Correctly observed and documented, the sole remnant of the blind arcades enabled us to reconstruct the external apse surface (Fig. 4). Precisely focused, limited and carefully carried out removal of the wall plaster at fifty different points in the interior and the exterior yielded the most important results considering the understanding of the original structure of

Fig. 1. Poreč, Episcopal Palace, remains of the tribelon
Fig. 2., Poreč, Episcopal Palace, a) ground plan; b) first floor plan; c) longitudinal section; d) transverse section.

Fig. 3., Poreč, Episcopal Palace, longitudinal section, view of the inner face of the east wall.

Fig. 4., Poreč, Episcopal Palace, north facade.
the building. I shall describe some of the results, but it is necessary to say first that they mostly prove, or provide physical evidence for the reconstructions suggested by earlier researches, notably by Frey.

The removal of the plaster from the base of the tribelon column and the opposite wall at the bottom of the door-post at the main entrance to the first floor gave us the exact information about the original floor levels. It also proved that most of the stone corbels supporting the wooden beams of the ground floor are original, from the time of the construction (Fig. 5).

The question concerning the level of the roofs over the lower side rooms was also answered after the removal of the plaster. The remains of an ancient roof are preserved on three sides of the building continuously and on the same level (Fig. 6). The line of the tegulae and the imbrices embedded into the walls and forming continuous eaves was broken when the side rooms were elevated. Part of the roman eaves inside the wall are fully preserved and will be presented.

Our analyses led to a fairly accurate identification of the original wall structures and subsequent adaptations (Fig. 7). The suggestions for the architectural restoration of the building were based on research conclusions and architectural analyses. The aim was to reveal the original structures and spaces, but we also had to take into account all the valuable elements of the episcopal palace that were added over the centuries. All parts of the restoration and integration project had to be based on exact evidence, leaving no room for imaginative speculation or "creation" (Fig. 8).

Fig. 5. Poreč, Episcopal Palace, transverse section, view to the south (the original position of the floor is marked)

Fig. 6. Poreč, Episcopal Palace, remains of the antique eaves

Fig. 7. Poreč, Episcopal Palace, a) original early christian structure; b) later additions and repairs; c) not yet explored

It will be possible to restore the authentic atmosphere of the architectural space of the central hall almost completely. We are planning to reopen the original high windows in the west and north walls of the hall to produce the typical "basilica-type illumination" (Fig. 9). The tribelon, as well as the original door, will have to be dismantled in order to restore the missing parts. As for the exterior, the east facade will partly regain its authentic outlook when the second and the third floor of the side chambers are pulled down. The complete ground floor facade surface will be revealed then, but there still remains the problem of reconstruction of the side apse (Fig. 10).

The partial reconstruction of the main halls of the episcopal palace, especially the central first floor hall will raise the question of the authentic function of the building. The richly illuminated central hall was probably appropriately decorated, as the remains of the marble and stucco work on the tribelon suggest. We can easily imagine a bishop on the cathedra inside the apse opening towards the hall through a ceremonial triple arch. That is the fastigia - a scenic frame set to stress the extreme importance of the person bearing a distinctive honour and function. The analogy with the architectural elements on well-known Late Antiquity buildings, such as the protiro of the Peristylo of Diocletian's palace or the prospect of Théodoric's palatio, does not imply exactly the same significance, but the resemblance is indicative (Fig. 11).

Thanks to Picard's anthology of literary works about reception halls in early Christian cathedral complexes, there is no doubt about the name of such a hall. It is a salutatorium or secretarium (in the late 6th century the two expressions were almost synonyms). The
name denoted a hall in which the bishop met the clergy, guests and congregation for non-liturgical ceremonies. In such halls religious councils and meetings of the clergy were held, it was the scene for the *audientia episcopalis*, but also a place where the bishop exercised his magisterial functions according to the right ceded to him by the emperor. It is well known that in Late Antiquity bishops frequently arbitrated in secular cases. So it is easy to imagine Bishop Euphrasius, the exponent and symbol of the Justinianic reconquest, seated underneath the *tribelon* and giving instructions on the running of the diocese and the *municipium*.

This brings us to the question of the time when the episcopal palace was built. The simplest and most attractive answer offered by some scholars is that Bishop Euphrasius had it built in the mid-6th century. Some of the details support this view, as does also the analogy with St. Agnes's church at Muntajana near Poreč, dated to the same period. Differences in the construction technology used to build the episcopal palace and Euphrasius's adaptation of the basilica provide clear evidence that the buildings were not built in the same time. One of the ways to solve the problem of the chronology is based on morphological analysis and the analysis of the type of work, as well as comparisons with similar examples. The closest and basically related in type are the episcopal buildings erected in the High Justinianic period at Stobi and Carćin Grad, as well as *Comnes Pleiers’s* palace at Polače on the island of Mljet. The latter can be dated to the beginning or first half of the 6th century, judging by Odoaker's deed of donation from the end of the 5th century (Fig. 12).

It should be noted that the main episcopal building at Carćin Grad (*Justiniana Prima*), like the one at Poreč, was originally also one-storied. The researchers suggest that the official ceremonial area (hall) was on the ground floor, while the first floor served as the bishop's residential premises. The Poreč palace had the ceremonial hall on the first floor. Piero’s palace on Mljet shows that the episcopal palaces were built in the form of a *palatium*, which is understandable since they were primarily used for official functions. The main difference between the *palatium* and the *villa* is the presence of space for public functions (*audientia*).

Current research and plans for the next few years envisage archeological excavations in parts of the building not yet explored. It is hoped in this way to define the actual stratigraphy and thus settle the chronological issue of the construction of parts of the cathedral complex. In 1994, the annex chapel built in 1884 on the east side of the episcopal palace was pulled down. Underneath the annex, the layers of two or three paved streets were discovered. One of them certainly dates from the period of the pre-Euphrasian basilica. We did not detect the layer that would match the floor level of Euphrasius's adaptation of the cathedral. Further research will extend to the passage situated between the episcopal palace and the north cult buildings (so-called pre-Euphrasian "basilica B"). The passage is actually a street—an extension of the roman *cardo*, so it requires no hypothesizing.

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Fig. 11. Ravenna, S. Apollinare Nuovo, mosaic showing a palatium

Fig. 12. a) Stobi, b) Cariclin Grad, c) Polače on Mljet
BISKUPIJA EUFRAZIJANE U POREĆU - REKAPITULACIJA PROBLEMA PRIJE NOVOM FAZOM ISTRAŽIVANJA

SAŽETAK

Zgrada Biskupije u Poreču prisutna je u znanstvenoj literaturi duže od sto godina, ali predstavlja najmanje istražen dio ranokršćanskog katedralnog sklopa u Poreču. D. Frey je početkom našeg stoljeća iskoristio priguđu velike adaptacije unutrašnjosti zgrade i izradio shematsku, ali vrlo točnu dokumentaciju temeljenu na djelomičnim arheološkim istraživanjima i sondiranju zbuke na zidovima. Veći broj njegovih podataka i zaključaka danas se može smatrati točnim, naročito što se tiče identifikacije izvorne, izneadanjuje dobro sačuvane arhitektonске zgrade. Razabrane se građevine jasno i vrlo jednostavno arhitektonске strukture ortogonalnog sistema zidova, te ranokršćansku arhitekturu. Prvih lučnih, prometnih stručnjaka na na zidove, na mjestima sa kojima je još vidljivi ostaci štuka i mramorne dekoracije. Tlocrta prizemlja ponavlja oblike na potCAM.


U unutrašnjosti zgrade bit će moćno skoro u potpunosti obnoviti izvorni ugajaj arhitektonskog prostora središnje dvorane. Čak će zapadne i sjeverne strane biti otvoreni visiši "bazičalne svjetle". U vanjskim će biskupije izvorni izgled djelomično povratiti na istočnom prizemlju. Tu će biti demonstrirati druge i treće kat bočnih prostora; potpuno će se otvoriti fasidno lice prizemlja, a rekonstrukciju bočne apside još treba raspraviti. Izgled rekonstruirano glavnih dijela Biskupije, a naročito sjedište glavne dvorane na prvom katu potiče pitanje o izvornom namjeri tih prostora. Zauvijek sađen Cushovoj, prahunje istraživanje arhitektonске izvora u dvoranama za primanje unutarnje sko planka ranokršćanske katedrale, nema više dilema o tome kako se takova dvorana naželila. To je salutatorij ili secretariat (krajevša č. st. ta su dvije izraze praktično sinonimi). Naziv označava dvorano u kojoj biskup prima kružnica, uznemire i vijenake u izvanlitijkim ceremonijama.

Postavlja se i pitanje kada je sađena biskupija. Najpričaona odgovor kojeg zastupaju određeni istraživači govori da je podignuta do bača i od biskupa Eufrazija, sredinom 6. st. Na to pučnuju i određeni detalji te analoge s crkvom svete Agnese u Mantuan raj strategi med. Ovo sune suda i isto doba. Razlika u tehnički zidanja Biskupije i izvora Eufrasije adaptacije velike uznemire gore, peta, da Biskupija i crkva nisu sađene u isto vrijeme. Tipološka i morfološka analiza te spravljanje s analognim primjerima vodi k razumijeoznani chronologiji. Zemljopisno najnije plane tipološké sredine građenje jesu zgrade episkopija nas tale upravo u punoj justinijskoj epohi u Stobina i Carinchi gradu, te palača Commesia Pietrovića Polačama na otoku Mljetu, koju na osnovu Ostakove darovnice s kraja 5. st. možemo datirati u početku ili prvoj polovicu 6. st.