

# Fundamental Restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split (1866–1872)

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## ABSTRACT

*The aim of this study was to investigate the progress of the fundamental restoration and enlargement of the Civic Hospital in Split between 1866 and 1872 on the basis of the previously unexplored materials, such as Shorthand reports of the Dalmatian Parliament in Zadar kept in the Split University Library, and the archival documents about the completion of this renewal preserved in the State Archives in Zadar. The right author of the restoration project and the name of the building manager were found. The data of the renewal beginning were corrected. The findings showed that the renewal of the Civic Hospital in Split started after the decision of the Dalmatian Parliament about its enlargement and restoration on February 9, 1866, according to the project drafted by the Provincial director of the public buildings doctor Ivan Lucchini. On October 7, 1871, the Dalmatian Parliament determined about the way for the continuation of these works. The complete restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split finished in 1872. The study revealed the realization of longtime efforts for the enlargement of hospital capacity in Split. With this restoration and appropriate organizational structure, the Civic Hospital in Split could offer better treatment to the patients, parturient women and foundlings.*

**Key words:** history of medicine, public health, history of hospitals, Civic Hospital in Split, 19th century, Split, Croatia

## Introduction

Project for building of the Civic Hospital in Split (*Spalato*) started with the philanthropic idea of a rich citizen Ante Ergovac, who wanted to establish an institution for the care of the poor. For that purpose, in 1784, he bequeathed 1,000 zecchins in his testament and authorized his brothers Frane and Petar Ergovac to its realization. The construction of the hospital building, which was located outside the Split city gates inside the bastion Corner, finished in 1797. Hospital organization had a charitable character, which was evident from the distribution of the rooms exclusively towards the sex of the patients, but not according to their diagnosis. On the one hand, the Civic Hospital in Split had to function as a shelter for the lower social strata, and on the other as an institution with the medically-trained staff. Its first Plan for the organization and management was composed on April 12, 1797<sup>1</sup>.

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the capacity of the Civic Hospital in Split became insufficient compared to the constantly growth of inhabitants in Split and its surroundings, so Dalmatian government decided, around 1840, to enlarge the existing hospital building. Doctor

Ivan Lucchini, the principal district engineer in the service of District office in Split, made the restoration projects of the Civic Hospital in Split in 1841, which he was completed on the basis of the remarks of Dalmatian government in 1844. Enclosed expense-account exceeded the financial means which state gave for the Dalmatian hospitals at that time, so the District office considered that the restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split had to be delay<sup>2</sup>. Only small adaptations were made on the hospital building in 1846<sup>2,3</sup>. Even though the Split commune and the Provincial government worked on the establishment of a new hospital building in Split since 1854<sup>4</sup>, this idea was not realized.

Doubtlessly, one of the most important moment in the development of the Civic Hospital in Split was the period of its fundamental restoration and enlargement between 1866 and 1872, which I reconstructed on the basis of the previously unexplored materials, such as Shorthand reports of the Dalmatian Parliament in Zadar kept in the Split University Library<sup>5–8</sup>, and the archival documents about the completion of renewal works preserved in the State Archives in Zadar<sup>9</sup>.

## Importance of the Dalmatian Parliament in Zadar

Although Dalmatia, Istria and Governor's Croatia (*Banska Hrvatska*) with a part of Military province (*Vojna krajina*) found themselves within the Austrian Empire after the Viennese Congress in 1815, these provinces were mutually isolated administratively-wise<sup>10</sup>. On October 20, 1860, the Emperor Franz Joseph I published the October Diploma which announced the fall of the absolutism and the introduction of the constitutionality<sup>11</sup>. The decision was to create the provincial parliaments within single provinces in addition to the Empire Parliament<sup>10</sup>.

Accordingly, the Dalmatian Parliament (*Dieta Provinciale Dalmata*) with the headquarters in Zadar was established in 1861<sup>10,11</sup>. It had a restricted juridical authority. Its first session was called by an order of Emperor for April 6, 1861, and the last one for January 24, 1912. Official language of the Dalmatian Parliament till 1883 was Italian. The developing needs of Dalmatia in the fields of economy, culture, education, health and administration were matters of discussions on the sessions of the Dalmatian Parliament<sup>10</sup>.

The National Committee (*Giunta Provinciale Dalmata*), which was founded on April 22, 1861, was the administrative and the executive body of the Dalmatian Parliament<sup>10,11</sup>. The president of the Dalmatian Parliament was at the same time the president of the National Committee<sup>10</sup>.

The government transferred the management of the Dalmatian hospitals to the Dalmatian Parliament on September 20, 1861, and the National Committee took over the care about their administration and control on November 1, 1861<sup>12</sup>.

## Restoration Project of the Civic Hospital in Split drafted by Doctor Ivan Lucchini

Problem of the insufficient capacity and inadequate working conditions of the Civic Hospital in Split were the topics on the session of the Dalmatian Parliament in Zadar in 1863. At that time, Split district with 37,000 inhabitants had one hospital with only 60 beds. From the description of the hospital organization, we find out that its ground floor was reserved for the parturient women, foundlings and psychiatric patients who were situated in the unhealthy and deplorable rooms whereas the first floor was intended for the ordinary and contagious patients who were separated only with the partitions. Even though the Dalmatian Parliament decided to restore the existing hospital building<sup>13</sup>, it was not acceded to its renewal.

The significant year for the history of the Civic Hospital in Split was 1866. Doctor Ivan Lucchini, the Provincial director of the public buildings, delivered his project for enlargement and restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split, and on February 5, 1866, on the session of the Dalmatian Parliament, the Committee for the examination

of this project was founded. One member of this committee was physician Antonio Bajamonti (1822–1891)<sup>5</sup>. Bajamonti became the mayor of Split in 1860, and with the interruption between 1864 and 1865, he stayed on this function till 1880<sup>14,15</sup>. He determined to advance at that time neglected Split<sup>4,14,15</sup>. In 1859, before its election, he built the public theatre (*Teatro Bajamonti*) with his own money. During his administration gas lighting was installed instead of oil, the Society of the construction and embellish of Split (*Associazione Dalmatica*) was established, west wing of the representative building on the square Prokurative was built and the old Diocletian's water-works was reconstructed<sup>15</sup>.

The existing building of the Civic Hospital in Split consisted of northern, western and eastern wing with the yard in the middle, while its southern side was closed off by a wall.

Towards the project drafted by the Provincial director of the public buildings doctor Ivan Lucchini, the construction of a building on the southern side of the hospital was planned. In this building, the ground floor would be intended for a pharmacy and an administration, whereas the first floor would be reserved for the physician's and chaplain's room, and for a small church between them.

Four annexes, with the capacity of 16–18 patients, were planned on each corner of the hospital building, in order to enlarge its lateral sides. With this project, the Civic Hospital in Split would have six halls for the patients, three for men and three for women. It would be the halls for treatment, for surgical and syphilitic patients. A room for surgical interventions, ten cells for the psychiatric patients, four rooms for parturient women, a modest accommodation for the prioress of the foundling's home, a morgue and some storage halls were also planned. Towards this project, the hospital would be accommodated around 100 patients. In case of the contagious diseases, an isolated section in the posterior part of the building would be established, so the epidemic would not spread onto the other hospital parts.

From the description of this restoration project, we can see the prosperity of the organizational structure and the strategy of the isolation towards the existing condition in the Civic Hospital in Split, which means that such renovated hospital would offer better accommodation and treatment to the patients. The accommodation of the hospital staff would also be improved, as one of the conditions for its better work.

## Authorization for Enlargement and Restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split on February 9, 1866

The Committee for the examination of the restoration project of the Civic Hospital in Split informed the Dalmatian Parliament on its session on February 9, 1866, about the results of its activity, dividing the report into the hygienic-technical and financial part.

From the hygienic-technical part, this committee concluded that the restoration project was entirely satisfactory, because the internal distribution of spaces was made in a proper way. With this restoration, all hospital rooms would be comfortable and spacious, and the health conditions with a good combination of air and light would be ensured. It was concluded that the entire project was drafted with the competence of its author, the respected doctor Ivan Lucchini. For these reasons, the committee recommended the approval and realization of this project, if the financial means would not represent a difficulty.

The planned costs for accomplish of this project amounted 38,980 forint. In the regional fund, a total sum of 20,000 forint, which was saved in the past years by the administration of the Civic Hospital in Split, was set aside for this renewal, so it was impossible to accomplish immediately the whole project of the hospital restoration.

Antonio Bajamonti spoke in favor of an urgent restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split: »Our sane mind speaks in favor of the Split Hospital. The restoration was demanded 15 or 16 years ago, so the duty of the Dalmatian Parliament is to finally realize it. Gentlemen, this is a humanitarian issue. We can not abandon our people, without offering them the means they need in these moment when life fights with death. Gentlemen, I call you to visit the Split Hospital on your way home and I am convinced that, when you see 30, 40, 50 unfortunates placed one on top of the other, who are uncomfortable situated on the unhealthy lofts where they dwell now, you will be more in favor next year to support the National Committee in its efforts to satisfy towards the needs of Split district and these people who suffer«<sup>5</sup>.

Finally, on this session, the Dalmatian Parliament approved the enlargement and restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split according to the project drafted by the doctor Ivan Lucchini. The National Committee was authorized for immediately start with the most convenient works with the available 20,000 forint, to keep the costs at a minimum and to make a detailed report of the work progress.

From these decisions, we find out that the Dalmatian Parliament determined to accede towards the hospital restoration on February 9, 1866<sup>5,6</sup> rather than five years later as stated in previous historiography<sup>3,16,17</sup>.

### Progress of Renewal Works of the Civic Hospital in Split

Besides the regular repairs, the fundamental restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split, which was assigned by the public sale to the building manager Bartolomeo Ganza, started between November 1866 and July 1868. Preparation works and supervision over the construction works were entrusted to the Committee of the esteemed citizens, which could contribute, with its competence, to the better performance of these works<sup>7</sup>. Thanks to the activi-

ties of this committee, between September 1868 and September 20, 1869, the works on restoration of the hospital building were satisfactorily accomplished<sup>8</sup>.

On the session of the Dalmatian Parliament on September 16, 1871, the report of the work progress of the Civic Hospital in Split was submitted. It was decided by the National Committee, after consulting the doctor Ivan Lucchini, to start the works on the southern and eastern wing of the hospital building with the available amount. During these works, no real savings could be achieved regarding the costs, but they could not really be expected, because this project was already long for the biggest savings. Thanks to the qualification of the building manager Bartolomeo Ganza, and the care of the Supervising committee conducted by Antonio Bajamonti, these works were done in excellent quality and earned general approval. It was also necessary to make some additional works to maintain the stability of the hospital building. During this restoration, the patients were badly accommodated in the old parts of the hospital.

Whereas the Dalmatian Parliament did not meet in spring 1871, on January 7, 1871, the National Committee independently gave the authority to continue the works of the hospital restoration. For the reasons of this decision, the National Committee mentioned, besides the

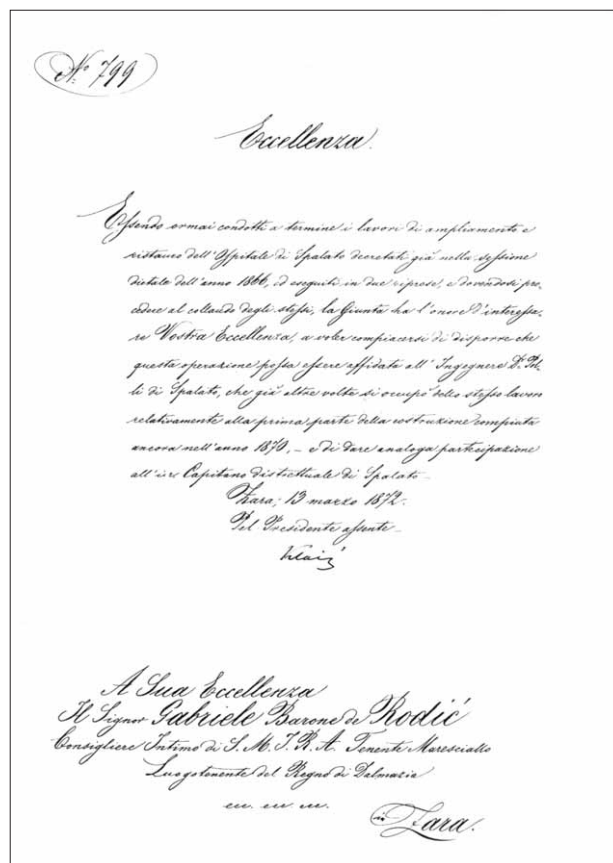


Fig. 1. The completion of the renewal works of the Civic Hospital in Split in 1872.

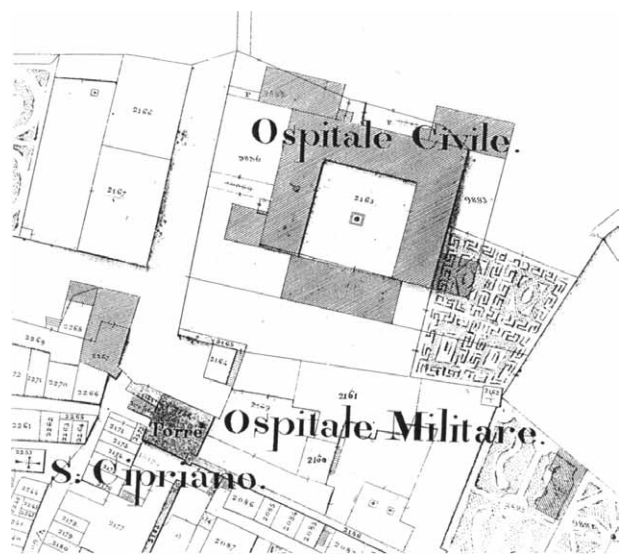


Fig. 2. Civic Hospital in Split after its fundamental restoration on the revision of Split cadastral plan.

humanity, faster and easier recovery in the new part of the hospital building and accordingly a decrease of treatment costs, the need to increase the number of cells for the psychiatric patients, and the possibility to pay further works to the building manager Bartolomeo Ganza within three years without fixed terms and amounts. For the remaining two hospital wings and possible additional works, the National Committee provided the sum of 20,000 forint.

On October 7, 1871, on its session, the Dalmatian Parliament approved the decision of the National Committee for the continuation of hospital renewal<sup>6</sup>.

A document kept in the State Archives in Zadar, dated March 13, 1872, informs that the works on enlargement and restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split were completed. The National Committee reported that a colaudation would be entrusted to the engineer doctor Polli from Split, who already did same task on the first restoration phase which was completed in 1870 (Figure 1)<sup>9</sup>.

The final form of the Civic Hospital in Split after these restoration works we can see on the magnified detail of the revision of Split cadastral plan (Figure 2)<sup>18</sup>.

## Discussion

In this study, I reconstructed the progress of the fundamental restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split between 1866 and 1872 on the basis of the previously unexplored materials. Consequently, I corrected the data in the older historiography.

Previous scholars of the Civic Hospital in Split mentioned several possible authors of the restoration project.

Towards them, in the earliest studies, this project was drafted by the Provincial director of the public buildings doctor Ivan Lucchini<sup>3,16</sup>. Later, they discussed about Austrian architect Kuno Weidmann<sup>2,19</sup>, and as a most probable author, even in the last monograph of the Civic Hospital in Split published in 2004, they mentioned Trogir's architect Josip Slade<sup>2,19–22</sup>.

On the basis of the Shorthand reports of the Dalmatian Parliament in Zadar, I argue that the author of the restoration project was the Provincial director of the public buildings doctor Ivan Lucchini. In 1866, the Dalmatian Parliament approved the renewal of the Civic Hospital in Split towards his project, and the National Committee was authorized for immediately start of these works<sup>5,6</sup>. The complete restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split finished in 1872<sup>9</sup>.

It is obvious that the fundamental restoration of the Civic Hospital in Split meant the significant progress towards the existing condition in this hospital, not only for the enlargement of its capacity which was necessary for the better accommodation of patients from Split and its surroundings, but also for the changing of its organizational structure and strategy of isolation which were correlated with the perception of disease.

Soon after the renewal of the Civic Hospital in Split, in 1880, the Dalmatian Parliament decided to build new hospitals in Šibenik, Zadar and Dubrovnik because the existing hospital buildings in these Dalmatian cities had also insufficient capacities and inadequate working conditions<sup>12,23</sup>. The projects of these buildings were drafted by an architect Kuno Waidmann<sup>24</sup>. He was born on March 8, 1845 in Tiegerfeld in Germany and died on October 4, 1921 in Graz<sup>25</sup>. In 1877, he came in Croatia as an architect for the construction of Psychiatric Hospital in Stenjevec (Vrapče)<sup>24,25</sup>.

The Hospital and the Mental Asylum in Šibenik were completed in 1883. With its nine pavilions, it was the largest and the most beautiful hospital in Dalmatia<sup>23</sup>. The Hospital in Zadar, which was opened in 1887, consisted of five principal and a few secondary pavilions<sup>26</sup>. Finally, the Hospital in Dubrovnik, composing of the five buildings of different size, was opened in 1888<sup>12</sup>. It is evident that Šibenik, Zadar and Dubrovnik got their new hospital buildings at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while the Civic Hospital in Split at that time was still situated in its primary building which Ergovac brothers established for the care and treatment of the lower social strata at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The most probable reason why Split did not get its new hospital building at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the fundamental enlargement and restoration of the existing hospital building, which was finished in 1872. Therefore, the Civic Hospital in Split with its larger capacity and appropriate organizational structure, could offer better treatment to the patients, parturient women and foundlings.

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## TEMELJNA OBNOVA CIVILNE BOLNICE U SPLITU (1866–1872)

## SAŽETAK

Cilj ovoga rada bio je ispitivanje tijeka temeljne obnove i proširenja Civilne bolnice u Splitu u vremenskom razdoblju od 1866. do 1872. godine na temelju prethodno neistražene građe, primjerice Brzopisnih izvješća Dalmatinskog sabora u Zadru koja se čuvaju u Sveučilišnoj knjižnici u Splitu i arhivskih dokumenata o završetku ove obnove koji su pohranjeni u Državnom arhivu u Zadru. Pronađen je točan autor projekta obnove i poslovođa gradnje, te su korigirani podaci o njenom početku. Dobiveni rezultati su pokazali da je obnova Civilne bolnice u Splitu započela nakon odluke Dalmatinskog sabora o njenom proširenju i obnovi dana 9. veljače 1866. godine prema projektu pokrajinskog upravitelja javnih zgrada doktora Ivana Lucchinia. Dana 7. listopada 1871. godine Dalmatinski sabor je odredio način nastavljanja ovih radova. Cjelokupna obnova Civilne bolnice u Splitu završena je 1872. godine. Ovaj rad otkriva realizaciju dugogodišnjih nastojanja u cilju proširenja bolničkog kapaciteta u Splitu. Civilna bolnica u Splitu je sa ovom obnovom i odgovarajućom organizacijskom strukturom mogla pružiti bolje uvjete zbrinjavanja pacijentima, roditeljama i nahočadi.