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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

**Architectural Landscape at the Periphery of Carolingian
Empire. Croatian Historical Territory and Marca Hispanica**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Exactly 1220 years ago, on Christmas Day December 25, 800, the old continent got the first formal heir of the ancient world, the new unifier of Europe - Charlemagne. This transformed the powerful Frankish Kingdom into the Empire that at the time of its inception would cover about 1,112,000 square kilometres - from the area on the south side of the Pyrenees to the River Elba in present-day East Germany, and south across Bavaria and Carinthia to the eastern Adriatic coast. The first and the last of the mentioned territories motivated the following dissertation. Although more than 1,300 kilometres stood between them, at that time in history, they were the neighbours of the same ruler, and as such witnessed the expansion of the Frankish territory in almost simultaneous chronological stages. At the foot of the Pyrenees, the border eventually descended to the river Llobregat, next to the Roman Barcino, while on the eastern side it encompassed the Istrian peninsula.

The research presents a comparative analysis of architectural models on these peripheral territories of the Carolingian Empire: Istria and *Marca Hispanica*. However, in order to complement this research and offer an expanded view of the context of both the historical and the architectural processes, the territories of the Principality of Croatia (*Ducatus Croatiae*) and the Kingdom of Asturias (*Regnum Asturorum*) have been included in the discussion. Therefore, two essential parts form the backbone of this comparative analysis - the geographical zones of the southwest and the southeast of the Empire, as well as the territories just outside of it. Examples of the early medieval architecture dated to the period of the Carolingian expansion (end of the 8th and during the 9th century) from Istria and the Principality of Croatia were taken as models which were confronted with Catalan and Asturian examples through a synchronous approach. All of the four mentioned regions had been in direct contact with two superpowers of the time - the Eastern Roman Empire in the east and the Arab world in the south. The complex processes of interaction and permeation have resulted in survival and change, as well as the disappearance and emergence of new forms and motifs, which was precisely one of the key subjects of this research.

During the past couple of decades, the sacral architecture related to the Carolingians has attracted more and more attention in the scientific circles. It was primarily due to the new archaeological findings, as well as numerous reinterpretations of long-known monuments.

The significant momentum in this research happened twenty years ago with the great European museological project *Charlemagne. The making of Europe* carried out at the turn of the millennium, between 1999 and 2001 in five cities of different European countries (in German Paderborn, in Barcelona, Brescia, York in England and Croatian Split).

While the architectural heritage in the centres of the Empire has been rather clearly defined (see for example C. Heitz, *L'architecture religieuse carolingienne: les formes et leurs fonctions*¹ and K. J. Conant, *Carolingian And Romanesque Architecture 800-1200*²), so far there have been no attempts for the comparative analysis of the events on the very edges of the Empire. Such research, not only of the architectural but also of other categories of cultural heritage, can provide a wide range of data, as well as numerous possibilities for the (re)interpretation of our knowledge.

In the last couple of years, the question of the south-eastern borders of the Carolingian Kingdom, and later the Empire, has become viral, especially from the historical perspective. It is worth mentioning two recent books published in 2018, which focus is on the 8th and 9th centuries in the eastern Adriatic: *Imperial Spheres and the Adriatic Byzantium, the Carolingians and the Treaty of Aachen (812)*³ and *Migration, Integration and Connectivity on the Southeastern Frontier of the Carolingian Empire* (within East-Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, volume 50).⁴ The book *Fortified Settlements in Early Medieval Europe. Defended Communities of the 8th-10th Centuries*⁵ is relevant to the issue of fortified settlements in early medieval Europe, while one of its chapters focuses on the problems of *Carolingian Istria*. On the other hand, the last example of systematisation of the Carolingian expansion in the southwest can be found in the book *Carolingian Catalonia: Politics, Culture, and Identity in an Imperial Province, 778-987*⁶ by C. J. Chandler, published

¹ HEITZ, C., *L'architecture religieuse carolingienne: les formes et leurs fonctions*, Paris, Picard, 1980.

² CONANT, K. J., *Carolingian And Romanesque Architecture 800-1200*, Yale University Press, 1992.

³ ANČIĆ, M., SHEPARD, J., VEDRIŠ, T., *Imperial Spheres and the Adriatic Byzantium, the Carolingians and the Treaty of Aachen (812)*, New York, Routledge, 2018.

⁴ A bit older, but still fairly recent publication is the one published by P. Štih, within the same series published by Brill - East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, but in 2010 (volume 11). ŠTIH, P., *The Middle Ages between the Eastern Alps and the Northern Adriatic*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2010.

⁵ CHRISTIE, N., HEROLD, H. (eds.), *Fortified Settlements in Early Medieval Europe. Defended Communities of the 8th-10th Centuries*, Oxford - Philadelphia, Oxbow Books, 2016.

⁶ CHANDLER, 2020, C.J., *Carolingian Catalonia. Politics, Culture, and Identity in an Imperial Province, 778-987*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020.

in 2020. This book relies heavily on the works of R. d'Abadal i de Vinyals, F. Mateu Llopis and J. M. Salrach.

Given the quality and the level of analytical approach offered by the most recent publications, my intention will not be to delve deep into the problem of historical events. On the contrary, I will try to summarise certain historical events and processes that preceded and followed through a synchronous approach and by the observation of both areas, all with the aim of better understanding the development of artistic ideas and their realisations on both sides of the Mediterranean basin.

Furthermore, the basic literature for the monuments and the architectural landscape of the historical territory of Croatia still are the catalogues of the exhibitions *From Nin to Knin (Od Nina do Knina)*⁷ and the *Croats and Carolingians (Hrvati i Karolinzi)*.⁸ The latter was published in 2000 and, with the addition of a volume with discussions and sources,⁹ continues to serve as the essential literature for the study of monuments both in Istria and in the territory of the historical Principality of Croatia (as well as other areas not included in this research). The same exhibition, titled *Charlemagne. The making of Europe*, was held in Barcelona in the same year, and resulted in a catalogue as well as a series of papers on the history, art and culture of Europe and Catalonia during the 9th and 10th centuries (*Catalunya a l'època carolíngia: art i cultura abans del romànic (segles IX y X)*).¹⁰ The leading authority on the synthesis of the architecture of the 9th and 10th centuries remain the works of X. Barral i Altet, led with the book *L'art pre-romanic a Catalunya* written in 1981¹¹, E. Junyent's publication *L'arquitectura religiosa en la Catalunya carolíngia*¹² and *L'Arquitectura religiosa a Catalunya abans del romànic*¹³ as well as the opus of J. Puig and Cadafalch.¹⁴ In

⁷ JURKOVIĆ, M., *Iz hrvatske spomeničke baštine od 9. do 11. stoljeća, od ninske biskupije do katedrale hvarskog biskupa, Od Nina do Knina*, Zagreb, 1992.

⁸ MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio II, Katalog*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000.

⁹ MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio I, Rasprave i vrela*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000.

¹⁰ CAMPS, J. (ed.), *Catalunya a l'època carolíngia: art i cultura abans del romànic (segles IX i X)*, Barcelona, Museu nacional d'art de Catalunya 1999.

¹¹ BARRAL I ALTET, X., *L'art pre-romanic a Catalunya*, Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1981.

¹² JUNYENT, E., *L'arquitectura religiosa en la Catalunya carolíngia*, Barcelona, Reial Acadèmia de Bones Lletres de Barcelona, 1963.

¹³ JUNYENT, E., *L'arquitectura religiosa a Catalunya abans del romànic*, Barcelona, Curial: Abadia de Montserrat, 1983.

¹⁴ PUIG I CADAVALCH, J., *L'arquitectura romànica a Catalunya*, 3 volums, Barcelona, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1909; PUIG I CADAVALCH, J., DE FALGUERA, A., GODAY, J., *L'arquitectura cristiana preromànica a Catalunya. Edició facsímil i textos d'actualització*, Barcelona, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2016.

addition to these examples, two other projects unite the discussions of medieval art production in the historical region of Catalonia. The first is set of 27 volumes of encyclopaedias about the Romanesque art in the area of the Catalan counties (cat. *comtats*) published from 1984 to 1998. In addition to the exhaustive inventory of monuments, an unnumbered volume from 1999 *Del romà al romànic* presented a review of the art that preceded the Romanesque period.¹⁵ A similar approach to the issue, but to a lesser extent, is presented in a series of volumes *Atles dels comtats de la Catalunya carolíngia*.¹⁶ Composed of 10 volumes (from 1998 to 2018), it is focused on the period of the Carolingian presence in the already mentioned Catalan counties. These two encyclopaedic projects are certainly the most significant step in the study of the historical and cultural landscape on the southwestern edge of the Frankish realm.

The other two contact zones, the Kingdom of Asturias and the Principality of Croatia have been studied by the numerous researchers, for the most part through the perspective of the traditional historiography. The examples are the encyclopaedic volume dedicated to the Asturian art of the pre-Romanesque period, published in 2007 (*Enciclopedia del Prerrománico en Asturias*)¹⁷, the book by L. Arias Páramo, *Prerrománico asturiano: el arte de la monarquía asturiana*¹⁸ and the volume I. of Bango Torviso, *Arte prerrománico hispano: el arte en la España cristiana en los siglos VI al XI*.¹⁹ Finally, there are the works of M.A. Utrero Agudo (*Iglesias altomedievales en Asturias: arqueología y arquitectura*)²⁰ and S. Schlunk (*Arte Visigodo. Arte Asturiano, Ars Hispaniae*).²¹ Equally relevant for the Croatian principality is the almost encyclopaedic project of T. Marasović, *Dalmatia Praeromanica*, published in four volumes from 2008 to 2013, which included the architectural heritage of the eastern Adriatic coast.²²

¹⁵ DE PALOL I SALELLAS, P., PLADEVALL I FONT, A. (eds.), *Del Romà al Romànic. Història, art i cultura de la Tarraconense mediterrània entre els segles IV i X*, Barcelona, Edita - Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1999.

¹⁶ BOLOS, J., HURTADO, V., *Els Atles dels comtats de la Catalunya carolíngia*, 10 vol., Barcelona, Rafael Dalmau, 1998-2018.

¹⁷ GARCÍA GUINEA, M.A., PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ, J.M. (eds.), *Enciclopedia del Prerrománico en Asturias*, Fundación Santa María La Real. Centro de Estudios del Románico, 2007.

¹⁸ ARIAS PÁRAMO, L., *Prerrománico asturiano: el arte de la monarquía asturiana*, Gijón, Trea, 1993.

¹⁹ BANGO TORVISO, I., *Arte prerrománico hispano: el arte en la España cristiana en los siglos VI al XI*, Madrid, Espasa Calpe, 2001.

²⁰ UTRERO AGUDO, M.A. (ed.), *Iglesias Altomedievales en Asturias. Arqueología y arquitectura*, Anejos de Archivo Español de Arqueología, LXXIV, Madrid, CSIC, 2016.

²¹ SCHLUNK, H., *Arte Visigodo. Arte Asturiano, Ars Hispaniae*, vol. II, Madrid, 1947.

²² MARASOVIĆ, T., *Dalmatia praeromanica: ranosrednjovjekovno graditeljstvo u Dalmaciji. Vol. 1. Rasprava*, Split - Zagreb, Književni krug Split, 2008; MARASOVIĆ, T., *Dalmatia praeromanica: ranosrednjovjekovno graditeljstvo u Dalmaciji. Vol. 2. Korpus arhitekture: Kvarner i sjeverna Dalmacija*, Split

While the architectural heritage in both areas is monitored and updated by relatively recent research results, the theoretical foundations of the study are still being based mainly on old hypotheses, both in Asturias and in the Principality. One of the tasks of this dissertation is to try to decompose these theses and confront them in order to point out the possible fresh perspectives of the future research.

Finally, the main objective of this dissertation is to lay the foundations and provide the parameters for further reflections on the models of functioning of the early medieval urban and rural landscape through several particular problems which will be presented in the following chapters. The complex processes of cultural interactions and permeations will be analysed, as well as the transfer of new ideas, practices and ideologies resulting in architectural and artistic accomplishments. Special attention will be given to the mutual impact and the level of its intensity between the Carolingian expansionistic concept of *renovatio imperii* and the local historical substrates (Byzantine and Visigothic) which have shaped the landscape, as well as the society, during the centuries prior to the Frankish campaigns.

- Zagreb, Književni krug Split, 2009; MARASOVIĆ, T., *Dalmatia praeromanica: ranosrednjovjekovno graditeljstvo u Dalmaciji. Vol. 3. Korpus arhitekture: Srednja Dalmacija*, Split - Zagreb, Književni krug Split, 2011; MARASOVIĆ, T., *Dalmatia praeromanica: ranosrednjovjekovno graditeljstvo u Dalmaciji. Vol. 4. Korpus arhitekture: Južna Dalmacija, Bosna i Hercegovina, Crna Gora*, Split - Zagreb, Književni krug Split, 2013.

1.1. Workplan

This doctoral dissertation does not intend to provide a catalogue and a definitive overview of the architectural heritage and historical events of the period of the Frankish expansion across the European continent. This task would be, above all, an unrealistic undertaking, and at the same time a frivolous goal, since such a topic requires a systematic synchronous study of matter that far exceeds the time limit of a doctoral programme. With this in mind, my goal is to offer a new ("new" at least in the context of art-historical studies of the early Middle ages) approach to the so-called 'global' history. In this case, the history of tangible, architectural heritage.

The dissertation is divided into two basic parts. In the first part, which is also the central element of the work, two geographical and political areas from the border of the Frankish state, (later the Carolingian Empire), are opposed: the Istrian peninsula and the Catalan counties, or Marca Hispanica. First of all, it was necessary to provide a historical-spatial context, a basis for further study of the key interest of the dissertation - the historical and architectural landscape. The relationship of the Carolingians with Byzantium, i.e. the Eastern Roman Empire in Istria, and with the Muslims and the Visigothic tradition in the area at the foot of the Pyrenees, will be presented in this chapter. The basic moments of the stages of the Frankish conquests from the middle of the 8th century to the beginning of the 9th century are synchronously studied, which will prove to be an interesting step from a historical perspective, precisely because of the apparent coincidence in historical processes.

At the end of this introductory chapter, the focus will be shifted to the historical landscape seen through the prism of architectural achievements. Istria, as the geographically smaller area, was chosen as the main element of the story. It would be compared to the considerably more vast, but historically and contextually in many ways similar territory of Catalonia. Precisely such 'new', or at least 'more fresh' manner of observing the historical landscape of the Frankish realm's peripheral zones could and will indicate the need for a broader perspective in the study of both Istria and Catalonia.

For a more transparent overview, the urban context will be opposed to the rural one. The episcopal centres were chosen as the central points around which the surrounding landscape

was organised and to which it gravitated. In Istria, three coastal towns have been taken as examples: Novigrad, Poreč and Pula. The focus will be on Novigrad primarily because of its specific symbolic position in the Carolingian *imaginarium*, but also because of the richness of the artistic production that is associated with its early medieval period. On the other hand, Girona will be approached in the same manner. As the first city south of the Pyrenees to be annexed to the Frankish state, it will be involved in the discussion on a more profound level than Urgell, Vic and Barcelona. In the latter, the amount of preserved monuments from the time of the government's enthronement that would indicate a Frankish, i.e. Carolingian presence is unfortunately insignificant; they are presented mostly because of their indisputable significance in a broader context, just as is the case with Poreč and Pula.

While in the artistic production of the urban layout the Carolingian idea has not yet been defined to such an extent, the rural landscape of Istria of the studied period of the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century seems to be an inexhaustible source of new discoveries. That is why this segment was taken as a model for further study and was ultimately opposed to the Catalan one. Such an approach required a deeper involvement with the issue, so the Istrian cultural landscape, as a geographically defined territory, will be presented from its earliest formative moments in the prehistoric period. The upper chronological limit is the beginning of the 9th century since the largest number of new architectural interventions in the rural configuration of the landscape was defined at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century. Here the previously studied urban centres will act as the centres of the episcopal territories, which will be presented in both Istria and Catalonia through a macro-regional perspective complemented by a more detailed overview of the communication routes. The last chapter of this section will observe the monuments as individual points in the organised network of the new government through a micro-regional perspective.

Finally, the second part of the dissertation will cover the territory of the Principality of Croatia. The selected examples relevant for this discussion will be compared to the cases from the area of the Kingdom of Asturias. The dual analytical approach will not be applied here as a method, as it would be in the examples of Istria and Catalonia. The intention is not to provide a detailed insight into the broad picture of the historical and architectural landscape, but instead to try to raise new questions and new possibilities for further reflections on the role of tradition versus innovation and import of forms and functions.

1.2. Methodology

Such (I dare to say) pioneering comparative analysis asks for a well-established complex methodological framework which will include all the traditional methods of art history and related disciplines, but also modern technologies which offer the possibilities for an efficient categorization and analysis of the processed material. In order to approach the comparative analysis of the two opposing contact zones, it was necessary to process all the material through the questions that are relevant to the research. Thus, the first goal of this dissertation was to lay the foundations for further reflections on the model of functioning of the early medieval rural landscape through several concrete hypotheses.

The process of the analysis of the historical landscape implemented in this dissertation consisted of three phases. The first one, the inventorial phase, focused on two sets of data which were gathered for further analysis: the spatial data, i.e. the spatial context of the historical sites, and the information about the monuments themselves - their historical context, the state of the preservation of the historical layers, their morphological features and characteristics. In order to maximize the efforts and to secure that the results were to be relevant, well-organized, comprehensible and suitable for future studies²³, the methods and data from different fields were implemented in the workflow: art history, archaeology, history, geography and land surveying. The specific nature of this dissertation which, among other, surpasses or even confronts different regional research practices, has conditioned such an interdisciplinary approach.

The analysis of the spatial context and the spatial distribution of the sites included in the work has also relied on the results of the *remote sensing* approach. Spatial data has been uploaded, organized and processed in GIS (*Geographic Information System*) software, a powerful tool which has become an irreplaceable asset in the landscape analysis.²⁴ Besides the exact

²³ The idea is to incorporate segments of this study within the projects CARE. On CARE project see: JURKOVIĆ, M., Le Corpus CARE en Croatie – état des recherches, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 18/1, 2012 p. 123-132; RIPOLL, G., CARRERO, E., RICO, D., TUSET, F., VELÁZQUEZ, I., LÓPEZ BATLLE, A., MAS, C., VALLS, M., CAU, M.A., La arquitectura religiosa hispánica del siglo IV al X y el proyecto del Corpus Architecturae Religiosae Europaeae – CARE-Hispania, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 18/1, 2012, p. 45-73; BEHAIM, J., JURKOVIĆ, M., CARE Croatia, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 24, 2018, p. 31-35.

²⁴ It is worth mentioning just a few examples of papers which deal with the application of GIS softwares in the heritage research: HUGHES, L., CONSTANTOPOULOS, P., Dallas, C., Digital Methods in the Humanities:

position of historical sites, a broad set of information has been taken into account as well, all in order to acquire as much data as possible for the reconstruction of the original spatial context of the historic sites in the landscape. This data involved toponymic data, geographical information, morphological characteristics of relief, water, soil and vegetational resources etc. GIS has also offered the opportunity for a direct comparison of the cartographic sources, both contemporary and historical.²⁵

Parallel to the study of the spatial distribution analysis and the geomorphological features of the terrain, the sites of interest and the heritage buildings were subjected to the systematic categorization. The data was gathered through the classical research of the available scientific publications and the research reports, analysis of the written historical sources, comparative study of the available cartographic sources, as well as work in the field which involved field reconnaissance and direct documentation of the monuments through 3D digital documentation methods. Particular sites of interest were documented using aerial

Understanding and Describing their Use across the Disciplines, in: SCHREIBMAN, S., SIEMENS, R., UNSWORTH, J.M. (eds.), *A New Companion to Digital Humanities*, Chichester-Malden, Blackwell, 2016, p. 150-170; VERHAGEN, P., Spatial Analysis in Archaeology: Moving into New Territories, in: SIART C., FORBRIGER M., BUBENZER O. (ed.), *Digital Geoarchaeology. Natural Science in Archaeology*, Springer, 2018, p. 11-25; VALENTE, E., COZZOLINO, M., GIS Mapping of the Archaeological Sites in the Molise Region (Italy), *Archeologia e Calcolatori*, 30, 2019, p. 367-385; KRLEŽA, P., BEHAIM, J., KRANJEC, I., JURKOVIĆ, M., Recreating Historical Landscapes: Implementation of Digital Technologies in Archaeology. Case Study of Rab, Croatia, *2018 International Conference on Intelligent Systems (IS) Proceedings*, p. 132-133.

²⁵ The Q-GIS software offered the opportunity to work with a broad set of cartographic sources and terrain models, both Croatian and Spanish, via online geoservices of the State Geodetic Administration of the Republic of Croatia (Državna geodetska uprava Republike Hrvatske: <https://dgu.gov.hr/vijesti/mrezne-usluge-prostornih-podataka-drzavne-geodetske-uprave/5015>), Catalan Institute of Cartography and Geology (Institut Cartogràfic i Geològic de Catalunya: <https://www.icgc.cat/Descarregues>) and the National Cartographic Institute of Spain (Instituto Geográfico Nacional: <https://www.ign.es/web/ign/portal/inicio>). The map sets used in the work involved topographic maps of Croatia, scale 1:25000, Croatian base map 1:5000, digital ortophoto maps of Croatia 1:5000, historical ortophoto map of Croatia from 1968, topographic map of Catalonia 1:5000, ortophoto map of Catalonia 1:1000, topographic map of Spain 1:25000, ortofoto map of Spain and the historical aerial and ortofoto images of Asturias, as well as Spanish and Catalan digital elevation models (DEM) and LiDAR data. In the case of Croatian territory, the Mapire online service (<https://mapire.eu/en/>) has been of utmost help, where digitized historical maps of Habsburg and Austro-Hungarian Empire from 18th and 19th century are available. The topographic maps of the First and the Second Military Survey of the Empire were used. For more about the Mapire project and the maps, see TIMÁR, G., MOLNÁR, G., SZÉKELY, B., BISZAK, S., VARGA, J., JANKO, A., *Digitized Maps of the Habsburg Empire. The Maps Sheets of the Second Military Survey and their Georeferenced Version*. Budapest, Arcanum, 2006; BISZAK, E., BISZAK, S., TIMÁR, G., NAGY, D., MOLNÁR, G., Historical topographic and cadastral maps of Europe in spotlight - Evolution of the MAPIRE map portal, in: LIVIERATOS, E. (ed.), *2017 12th ICA Conference Digital Approaches to Cartographic Heritage Proceedings*, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2017, p. 204-208.

photography²⁶. Furthermore, SfM (*Structure from Motion*) photogrammetric imaging technique has been used on several exemplary sites,²⁷ while the structures were georeferenced using a differential GNSS device²⁸, resulting in a highly detailed digital 3D models of structures and/or terrain which could be imported in GIS, positioned in a global coordinate system with centimetre precision and complemented with various attributive data based on the study of the architectural heritage.²⁹ It is important to note that such an approach is not something new; it has been used since the 2000s, but there still exists a significant level of discrepancy between various research and documentation practices, especially when we compare different countries. Unfortunately, an international consensus about a consistent application of various methodological approaches (especially the ones which use modern and ever-changing technological tools) has not yet been reached. Hence, the implementation of the methods and methodologies still relies almost solely on the experience and the judgment of individual researchers.³⁰

The preliminary catalogization and categorization of the sites have permitted the second, analytical phase of the work. It included the analysis of the areas of research through two different perspectives of view which have served as an analytical backbone of the

²⁶ A private UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle - model DJI Phantom 4) was used, which has helped in comprehending the spatial context of the sites, primarily of those which have been neglected and lost in vegetation or contemporary construction. Aerial imaging has also been used for the photogrammetric documentation (see footnote no. 5).

²⁷ SfM photogrammetric technique involves making a series of overlapping digital photographs which are postprocessed in order to create an accurate 3D digital model of structures, objects or terrain. Such approach offers a great cost-efficient alternative to the expensive laser scanning while retaining substantial level of detail needed for making a precise architectonic documentation of the monuments. For more information about the digital photogrammetry, see HUGHES, CONSTANTOPOULOS, DALLAS, 2016: 152; VERHOEVEN, G., DONEUS, N., DONEUS, M., ŠTUHEC, S., *From Pixel to Mesh - Accurate and Straightforward 3D Documentation of Cultural Heritage from the Cres/Lošinj Archipelago*, *Istraživanja na otocima. Izdanja Hrvatskog arheološkog društva*, 30, 2015, p. 165-176; CAMPANA, S., *3D Modelling in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage - Theory and Best Practices*, in: REMONDINO, F., CAMPANA, S. (eds.), *3D Recording and Modelling in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage. Theory and Best Practices. BAR International Series 2598*, Oxford, 2014., p. 7-12; PAKKANEN, J., BRYLSBAERT, A., TURNER, D., BOSSWINKEL, Y., *Efficient Three-Dimensional Field Documentation Methods for Labour Cost Studies: Case Studies from Archaeological and Heritage Contexts*, *Digital Applications in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage*, 17, 2020.

²⁸ Revisional GNSS positioning was required since a number of sites have been published during the 20th century when the common practices of graphical documentation often did not include general positioning or even scalebars next to the floor plans.

²⁹ Q-GIS software offers the opportunity to join personalized numerical and descriptive data („attribute data“) with the graphical and spatial data. This feature has proven to be extremely useful because it was possible to include the necessary information about the sites besides their exact position in space. Also, the dissertation was recognized as an opportunity to continue the work on the CARE project so the categories of the attribute tables needed for the analysis were made to be fully compatible with the requirements of the official CARE catalogue forms.

³⁰ KRANJEC, I., *Digitalne tehnologije u istraživanju materijalne kulturne baštine. Primjer recentnih istraživanja na otoku Rabu. Zbornik Dana Cvite Fiskovića*, 15 (in print).

dissertation. From a broader, macro (regional) perspective, some aspects of the historical-architectural rural landscape in space are considered, such as their correlation, relative position in the landscape, as well as the relationship to urban centres. This perspective encompassed broader macroeconomic links, trade, geopolitical zones, waterways and land routes - a 'large-scale' connection between other, neighbouring regions. Through a macro prism it is possible to determine the schematic layout of the initial impulse of the expansion of the new ruling authority which has presented itself in the form of a ramified infrastructure: from roads, through settlements, monasteries, and ultimately the estates of the ruling elite. The particular issue with this perspective is that it was impossible to define it in a narrower chronological sense since a much broader time spectrum was needed to understand the continuity of the elements in the landscape. In this particular case, the macro (regional) determinants of the Istrian landscape which were taken into account date roughly from the prehistoric period, through antiquity and late antiquity and with the main focus on the early medieval period. It is precisely the period of Istrian history, i.e. of its diocese, which is placed in a provisional comparison with Catalan counties and diocesan seats in this dissertation. The concrete results of this part of the research are, among other, presented through cartographic visualization where the basic analytical data is clearly visible.

In order to understand the implementation of this new, Frankish, i.e. Carolingian government and the scope of its power, it was necessary to metaphorically descend one step closer to the specific subject of the research, to a level from which it was possible to analyze the dynamics between individual elements and the points in space inside the narrower, microregional perspective. This step is the final, third phase of the research of the historical landscape. Fortified settlements in the rural landscape, monasteries and churches were again placed in correlation, this time with each other - for example, searching for the relationship between the settlement and the church within the walls, or the relationship between the settlement and the church outside the walls.

Within that same perspective, the ultimate element of the landscape, in this case, the monument, is analysed. From the 'closest' distance and with the insight of the macro and microregional approach, the problem of form (the morphology and the typology) of individual examples of sacral architecture arose. In this way, the monument could be positioned in a rural architectural network of historical landscape, which with all its

characteristics and norms represents an ultimate manifestation of power, the enthronement of government and ultimately the control of the territory, in this case, the Frankish state.

The basic comparative analysis of the two peripheral zones of the Frankish state - Istrian and of Marca Hispanica could be realized only after the primary research. Models of enthronement, control of territories, self-representation of elites and transfer of forms and ideas were studied through the method of comparative analysis on architectural models. While elaborating this problem, a specific situation has arisen related to the issue of available materials and historical sources, which will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on the state of research and historical overview.

The aim of this doctoral dissertation is not to go into a detailed overview of each historical site. Instead, the objective is to study the Istrian peninsula through a synchronous approach, on several different analytical levels (from micro to macro perspective) in order to be able to position it in relation to another peripheral area of the Carolingian state, the Catalan one.

At the end of the dissertation, the research zones of Istria and Marca Hispanica would be placed in a broader context. Thus, the relationship between the next contact zone - the Principality of Croatia and the Kingdom of Asturias - was included in the discussion. Two opposing models were studied: how and in what way Carolingian models arrived in the principality through Istria and what was the situation with the models from the Kingdom of Asturias. In the analysis, one question established itself as the most significant: the question of the antimony between the local tradition and the incoming innovations.

2. THE BORDERLANDS OF THE CAROLINGIAN WORLD – ISTRIA AND MARCA HISPANICA

2.1. Historical and spatial context

The area of the Istrian peninsula at the end of the 8th century witnessed a series of events that were the prelude to one of the most significant changes of power in its rich history. This is the beginning of the peak of Frankish expansion, which resulted in the reshaping of the post-Roman world, but also in the unification of part of the European continent whose peripheral spaces, i.e. contact zones (see the definition of Parker's 'borderland matrix'³¹) were places of direct opposition of powerful forces, traditions, culture, history and finally ideas. These places have become the cradle of diversity and changes where their historical-spatial context has played a crucial role.

At the same time, at the other end of the continent, on the north-eastern side of the Iberian Peninsula, another Mediterranean area was the scene of the Frankish expansion. While in Istria the paradigm shift meant opposing Frankish domination to that of the Eastern Roman Empire, today's area of Catalonia, once under Visigothic rule, and at that time under relatively short domination of Islam, witnessed ideologically similar processes of transformation of the cultural landscape that also took place on the Istrian peninsula. Of course, the comparisons and examples that will be presented here are by no means intended to create assumptions about the direct links between the two regions. However, the historical contexts of events can indicate similarities in the thinking and ultimately functioning and implementation/construction of individual elements of the cultural landscape, thus providing broader insight into historical events and artistic production of these two peripheral areas.

* * *

³¹ DŽINO, D., MILOŠEVIĆ, A., VEDRIŠ, T., A View from the Carolingian Frontier Zone, in: DŽINO, D., MILOŠEVIĆ, A., VEDRIŠ, T. (eds.), *Migration, Integration and Connectivity on the Southeastern Frontier of the Carolingian Empire*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2018, p. 3.

The period of the last quarter of the 8th century is considered to be the time of the penetration and eventual installation of the Carolingian rule in both areas. This also manifested itself through artistic production, from architecture, painting (frescoes), sculpture, through objects of applied art. Although this doctoral dissertation focuses precisely on that period, the question that logically arises is what preceded that time, both in the Istrian as in the Catalan area. Therefore, in order to gain a better insight into the issue of Carolingian expansion along the south-eastern and south-western edges of the Kingdom, it is necessary to step back several decades and look at the broader geopolitical context that ultimately resulted in the Carolingian presence in these two remote corners of the Mediterranean basin.

Furthermore, to present this development as clearly as possible, and finally to comprehend it completely, it is also necessary to expand our impression of space, geographically and politically, and to deprive it of today's understandings of 'national' determinants, primarily contemporary country borders. Since I am fully aware of the potential danger that the scope of the topic could imply its additional, exponential amplification if not strictly limited, I have decided to take the 8th century as a starting point in time, without going into too much detail in earlier periods. In the case of both areas, the period of the 8th century represents the period that just preceded, and in many ways determined the further events of the Carolingian expansion.

The 8th century on the Iberian Peninsula is a rather turbulent period. A time when Islam, a new culture from the east, is penetrating the European continent across the African north. The Iberian Peninsula, ruled by the Visigoths, was the first to witness these changes. On the other hand, in the Pyrenees, a vital role in that period was played by the historical region of Septimania, the former Roman and later Visigothic province of Gaul Narbonensis, today part of the French administrative region of Occitanie.³² During the Visigoth period, this region was the most prominent point of the Kingdom, with the city of Narbonne as the cultural and political centre. Furthermore, it was the only area of former Roman Gaul that remained under

³² About the relations between the peninsula and Septimania in the period from the 5th to the 8th c. see in: RIPOLL, G., Las relaciones entre la Península Ibérica y la Septimania entre los siglos V y VIII, según los hallazgos arqueológicos, in: FONTAINE, J., PELLISTRANDI, C., *L'Europe héritière de l'Espagne wisigothique*, Madrid, Casa de Velázquez, 1992, p. 285-301; RIESS, F., *Narbonne and its Territory in Late Antiquity: From the Visigoths to the Arabs*, London-New York, Routledge, 2016.

the Visigoths after the Franks, at the beginning of the 6th century, expelled the Goths from their former base in Gaul Aquitaine, a region bordering Narbonensis.³³ Nevertheless, given the size of the Visigothic Kingdom, the idea of centralizing power in Toledo could not be fully realized. Therefore, although still under the watchful eye of the central government, power games took place at the local level, far from the centre of Toledo. This was a practice that will be repeated in the centuries to come. This local, regional government was controlled by the counts who had fiscal and military powers and were based in cities,³⁴ one of which was Narbonne.³⁵ In the discourse of the research of today's Catalanian early medieval context, the topic of Septimania is of great importance – even more when placed in relation with the Istrian peninsula that had a similar role to that of the northern, Lombard part of the Apennine Peninsula, more precisely the Lombard Friuli duchy, later Carolingian margraviate.

Continuous unrest and constant turmoil in the area together with its unstable border with the territory of the Frankish realm resulted in the fact that in the early 8th century most of the Visigothic military forces were located in the north-eastern provinces – in Gaul Narbonensis and Tarraconensis. At the same time, the penetration of a new culture from the south of the peninsula – Islam, took place in the year 711. The conquest progressed quickly, and by 714 Muslim forces had already conquered the cities of Tarragona, Barcelona, Girona, and Lleida, paving their way to Septimania.³⁶ Narbonne came under Muslim rule in 719 or 720,³⁷ while

³³ CHANDLER, 2020: 24.

³⁴ COLLINS, R., *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400-1000*, New York, Macmillan Press, 1995, p. 162.

³⁵ One example cited in the sources is that until the beginning of the 8th century there was a mint situated in Narbonne, the seat of the Count of the Province of Gaul Narbonensis. ARDO, Vita Benedicti Anianensis, in: WAITZ, G. (ed.), *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores*, 15, Hanover, 1887, p. 201; LEWIS, A.R., *The Development of Southern French and Catalan Society, 718-1050*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1965, p. 7; MATEU LLOPIS, F., De la Hispania tarraconense visigoda a la Marca hispánica carolingia, *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia*, 19, 1946, p. 21.

³⁶ The general overview regarding the Muslim conquest of the peninsula: COLLINS, R., *The Arab Conquest of Spain, 710-797*, Oxford - Malden, Wiley, 1995, p. 23–36; CHALMETA, P., *Invasión e islamización: La sumisión de Hispania y la formación de al-Andalus*, Jaén, Universidad de Jaén, 2003, p. 31–68; SÁNCHEZ MARTÍNEZ, M., Catalunya i al-àndalus (segles VIII-X), in: CAMPS, J. (ed.), *Catalunya a l'època carolíngia: art i cultura abans del romànic (segles IX i X)*, Barcelona, Museu nacional d'art de Catalunya 1999, p. 29-36.

³⁷ KATS, J. M. J. G. *Chronicon Moissiacense Maius: a Carolingian World Chronicle from Creation to the First Years of Louis the Pious*. Prepared and revised by D. Claszen, 2 vols. (MPhil thesis, Leiden, 2012), p. 112; P SÉNAC, P., Las incursiones musulmanes más allá de los Pirineos (siglos VIII-XI), in: *El Islam y Cataluña*, Barcelona, Institut CATALA de la Mediterrània - Lunweg - Museu d'Història de Catalunya 1999, p. 51-56; BALANÀ I ABADIA, P., *L'Islam a Catalunya (segles VIII-XII)*, Barcelona, Rafael Dalmau, 1997, p. 16.

five years after Nîmes also surrendered, placing almost the whole Septimania under the domination of the Muslims.³⁸

The more severe entry of the Franks in the struggle for the domination of the province, and consequently the area on the south side of the Pyrenees, today's Catalonia, began in the early 730s with Abd al-Rahman's victory over Aquitaine Duke Euda (or Odo) who then sought help from Charles Martel, the Frankish ruler. So although the request for help has paid off and Carlo Martel along with Eud defeated the army of the Emir of Cordoba Abd al-Rahman somewhere between Tours and Poitiers, the next two decades in the area will be marked by numerous coups that will mostly benefit the Muslims. It was not until the middle of the 8th century and the beginning of Pepin the Short reign when the Franks intensified their activities in the south and finally in the late 750s established rule over Septimania, ushering in a new era for the old Gothic region.

* * *

At the same time, at the other end of the Frankish state, the period of the reign of Pepin the Short, Frankish ruler and future king, is considered to be a kind of overture to the arrival of Carolingians in Istria, following the events in the Apennine Peninsula and then Istria itself. It is the time of the beginning of the creation of the Western European superpower under Pepin's leadership. The strong connection of Pope Stephen II and Pepin the Short proved to be one of the main motives or causes of the recent Frankish presence on the Apennine Peninsula. The question is – what preceded these events?

The year is 751 and the Lombard king Ahistulf has conquered Ravenna, the seat of the Byzantine exarchate. This event will be marked as a direct threat of a possible Lombard conquest of almost the entire peninsula. In relation to the conquest, the question of the possible Lombard conquest of Istria in the following years also arises. However, it remains unanswered, as there is no concrete evidence to help argue it.

³⁸ CHANDLER, 2020: 41.

Yet for Pepin and his realm, the real danger was not the eventual Lombard expansion along the Apennine Peninsula, but its possible consequences in the form of the unification of the pope and the patriarch. In other words, although the pope at that time was a fierce fighter and critic of the church policy of iconoclasm pursued by Constantinople, there was still a remote but real possibility for Byzantium to bow to its western brother – the pope. Especially given its inconvenient position after the Lombard conquest of Ravenna. Therefore, it can be assumed that one of Pepin's key goals was the preservation of papal independence in relation to Byzantium, which would ultimately ensure the internal stability of the Frankish state, based precisely on the ecclesiastical unity. Nevertheless, the Lombards were here, standing on Pepin's path to stability.

Still, the desire for reciprocal protection seems to have been mutual. By the mid-century, at a time of turmoil, conquest and change along the Apennine Peninsula, the role of a supreme ecclesiastical father was played by Pope Zachary, the last pope elected by the Byzantine ruler. The fact that the pope himself "agreed" to Pepin's help can be read from the diplomatic moves that in 751 resulted in the removal of the previous Merovingian dynasty and Pepin's coronation as king. This event was done following the direct Zachary's order, by apostolic authority.

Three years later, in 754, Zachary's successor Stephen II will come to regain the favour by visiting Pepin in person in Gaul, and asking him for help in defending the Roman Church from the Lombards. Back in that same year, and then again in 756, Pepin set out on a campaign against the Lombards and took the Exarchate of Ravenna and Pentapolis (Rimini, Pesano, Fano, Senigalia and Ancona) and then gave it to the Pope (*donatio Pippini*). This event is significant also in terms of strategic territorial politics since it marked the moment when the papal estates took over the area of the western Adriatic coast. It is interesting that, in order to secure his territory, Pepin decided not to destroy the Lombard state, but to create a kind of "sanitary cordon" between Franconia and Byzantium.³⁹ The 770's and the coming to power of Pepin's son Charles will disrupt and change these somewhat pacifist plans.

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³⁹ MARGETIĆ, L., Neka pitanja prijelaza vlasti nad Istrom od Bizanta na Franke, *Acta Histriae*, 2, 1994, p. 6.

During the time of the strategic movement that Pepin has made on the Apennine Peninsula, his interventions can also be followed in the southwestern part of the Frankish state, more precisely in Septimania, the area which his predecessor Carlo Martel failed to conquer. Pepin's conquering *modus operandi* can be read in both cases, in the Apennines and the Pyrenees. Due to his excellent diplomatic skills, which he had already proved in his relationship with the supreme church ruler, and instead of trying to besiege cities (which proved to be a difficult task, as witnessed by Carlo Martel),⁴⁰ Pepin was primarily relying on connections with the local population, with the church authorities and the political elite.

One of the most interesting connections made with the local population, which also proved to be extremely profitable, was the one with Ansemund of Septimania, in sources known as the Goth.⁴¹ This high-ranking member of the Septimanian political elite led negotiations with Pepin, which in 752 resulted in the surrender of the cities of Nîmes, Agda, Beziers and Maguelonne to the Franks.⁴² The conquest of Narbonne in the year 759 was the next step.⁴³ This event also marked the beginning of the end of the autonomous rule of Septimania.⁴⁴

Although the independent administration in Septimania was no longer present, Pepin took advantage of the already existing model of governance that he had applied on the case of the Lombard kingdom, just a few years earlier, when he has formed a type of "sanitary cordon" between Franconia and Byzantium. He implemented the same model in Septimania. This region, on the other hand, was sharing a border with the mighty Caliphate of Cordoba. By repeating this "sanitary cordon", he once again allowed the native population to keep its traditional Gothic code, and besides that also its leader – Duke Milo. At the same time, he included the local Gothic elite in Frankish political networks.⁴⁵ This act must have been well-received by the local population while on the other hand, it was the method to keep them under control. By doing so, he had peacefully ensured an easier integration of Septimania

⁴⁰ LEWIS, 1965: 23; FOURACRE, P., *The Age of Charles Martel*, London, Routledge, 2000, p. 88–89.

⁴¹ KATS, 2012: 118. CMM names him 'Ansemundus gotus'.

⁴² CHANDLER, 2020: 50.

⁴³ KATS, 2012; GEARY, P., Un fragment récemment découvert du Chronicon Moissiacense, *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 136/1, 1978, p. 69-73; SALRACH, J. M., Carlemany i Catalunya en el marc de l'Europa carolíngia, in: CAMPS, J. (ed.), *Catalunya a l'època carolíngia: art i cultura abans del romànic (segles IX i X)*, Barcelona, Museu nacional d'art de Catalunya 1999, p. 19-27.

⁴⁴ CHANDLER, 2020: 50-51.

⁴⁵ *Idem*, 51.

into the Frankish kingdom whilst creating essential allies for the eventual future battles and penetration on the territory of the historical *Hispania*, at that time predominantly under Islamic domination.

During the same year (759), Pepin annexed Roussillon to the Frankish Kingdom, with its centre in Ruscin, near present-day Perpignan, and with the bishop of Elna, which would soon become part of the Carolingian Hispanic Marche.⁴⁶ At the time just before Pepin's conquest, the area was ruled by Muslims who conquered it from the Visigoths in 721. During almost four decades of Muslim domination, the area of Russillon was practically abandoned. With the arrival of Pepin the Short, the old Visigothic system of the county was re-established with its centre in Ruscin and with the diocese in Elna. Pepin's mission ended in 768 when he established control over almost the entire former Roman province of Gaul (Gothic Gaul) – at that time Nustria, Aquitaine, Burgundy and Gascony,⁴⁷ and finally and formally defined the border between the Frankish kingdom and *Hispania*.

Here, as well as in Lombardy, Pepin seems to have been satisfied with the current borders and the extension of the Kingdom he had formed. However, his death in 768 and the rising to power of his ambitious and widely known son Charles will change Pepin's image of Europe and at the same time make Charles one of the greatest and most powerful rulers of the old continent, often called *the father of Europe*.

Although during the first few years he was ruling alongside his brother Carloman, his death in the year 771 opened a new possibility for Charles. He was now offered to rule the entire Kingdom independently, the size of which was already impressive at the time. In the southwest the Iberian massif marked the border with Muslim *Hispania*, the Lombard kingdom formed a buffer zone on the Apennine Peninsula; to the east, there was Bavaria, then Moravia and Bohemia, and to the north Saxony.

⁴⁶ J. Bolos however notes that the year when Muslims relinquish control of Roussillon should be reconsidered with regard to a coin of Arab origin found minted after 759, when Narbonne allegedly fell into Frankish hands. See in BOLOS, J., HURTADO, V., *Atlas dels comtats de Rosselló, Conflent, Vallespir i Fenollet (759-991)*, Rafael Dalmau, Barcelona, 2009, p. 76.

⁴⁷ CHANDLER, 2020: 51., D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, R., *Catalunya Carolíngia*, volum I, El domini carolíngi a Catalunya, Barcelona 1986, p. 43.

2.1.1. The time of Charlemagne

At the time of Charles' rise to power, there was already a strong and well-established alliance between the pope and the Frankish / Carolingian rulers, which has existed for over twenty years. Probably the strongest expression and the manifestation of this alliance was demonstrated with the support for the coronation of Pepin the Short for the king of the Frankish state in 751. This event also marked the end of the previous Merovingian dynasty and their ruler. Pepin's successor Charlemagne continued with a similar practice. He also considered the church as his main ally in the task of controlling the rapidly expanding territory of the Kingdom. That was more than a logical move since it was impossible to rely solely on a secular system of territory surveillance. On the other hand, the network of organizational units and personnel available to the Church was ensuring and almost guaranteeing the successful control of the authorities along with different and even in most remote areas of the Kingdom.

* * *

The year is 774 and the successor of Stephen II – Hadrian I, has been sitting on the papal chair for two years now, firmly supporting Charlemagne. The Lombards are being conquered by Charles in June 774, following the occupation of Pavia and the triumph over the last Lombard independent king Desiderius. Charlemagne is now naming himself the King of the Lombards.⁴⁸ At the same time, Benevento has recognized its full independence, thus creating an interspace between the Byzantine estates that were pushed to the south and the central and northern part of the peninsula, a role that until recently has been played by the Lombard kingdom.⁴⁹ A similar situation can be observed on the eastern border of the Kingdom where

⁴⁸ ŠTIH, P., *Imperial politics and its regional consequences. Istria between Byzantium and the Franks 788-812*, in: ANČIĆ, M., SHEPARD, J., VEDRIŠ, T. (eds.), *Imperial Spheres and the Adriatic Byzantium, the Carolingians and the Treaty of Aachen (812)*, New York, Routledge, 2018, p. 58. C. Wickham has stated that in year 772-3 Desiderius has attacked the papal states, whilst Charlemagne came to help the pope Hadrian I. (772-94). See in WICKHAM, C., *Early Medieval Italy. Central Power and Local Society 400-1000*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1989, p. 47.

⁴⁹ WICKHAM, 1981: 49.

it allows the then Duchy of Friuli to be ruled by the Lombard Duke Hrodgaud. That decision will backfire to him two years later, in 776, when he would have to stop the military uprising led the Hrodgaud himself.⁵⁰ Charles then took over the mentioned region and named it a margraviate, similar to the spatial determinant that the northeastern Hispanic region soon would have. The capital remained Forum Iulii, today known as Cividale. He installed Marcarius as the margrave, the same one who will be mentioned in the letter of Pope Hadrian I to Charlemagne from 778, which is extremely important for understanding the situation on the Istrian peninsula at that time (text of the letter in the chapter with sources).⁵¹ With the final takeover of the border county, the Carolingians for the first time came into direct contact with the Avar Kaganate, a state that controlled the Sava Valley in present-day Slovenia all the way to the karst mountain passes in the west.⁵²

As for the Byzantine territories, within the borders of the newly conquered Lombard area, there were still isolated enclaves that continued to recognize the rule of the Eastern Roman emperor in Constantinople. Any attempt to conquer these parts of the Kingdom would mean a direct conflict with the Eastern Roman government, which was still the greatest force of the Mediterranean area.⁵³ Indeed, Charles' conquest of the Lombard territories and eventually the formation of the Friuli Margraviate, in addition to the frontier with the Byzantine enclaves on the Apennine Peninsula and the Avar state, also opened the possibility for another contact with Byzantium – in the Istrian peninsula and within the northern Adriatic basin. The conflict for the domination over these territories had just started.

⁵⁰ ŠTIH, 2018: 58; KRAHWINKLER, H., *Friaul im Frühmittelalter. Geschichte einer Region vom Ende des Fünften bis zum Ende des zehnten Jahrhunderts*, Vienna, Böhlau, 1992, p. 119-43.

⁵¹ ANČIĆ, M., Izvori, pisma, zakonski tekstovi i pečati, u MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio I, Rasprave i vrela*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000, p. 271.

⁵² ŠTIH, 2010: 191; ŠTIH, 2018: 58.

⁵³ ANČIĆ, M., U osvit novog doba. Karolinško carstvo i njegov jugoistočni obod, in: MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio I, Rasprave i vrela*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000, p. 71.

2.1.2. Change of government on the Istrian peninsula

It is still unknown who had the real authority over Istria during a couple of decades before the arrival of the Carolingians – the Lombards or still the Byzantines. There are different hypotheses, but none of them has a strong background in historical sources. One of the evidence⁵⁴ which could support the theory of Lombard rule over the Istrian area is a letter from the Patriarch of Grado from around 771 who complains to the Pope that the Lombards have endangered church estates in Istria by not recognizing their old privileges. Nevertheless, it is necessary to refrain from premature conclusions since it is known that during the 7th and the 8th century the Patriarchate of Grado has often been labelled as Province of Istria, which could indicate that the letter actually describes the events in the part of its province in the north-western Adriatic coast.⁵⁵

Currently, there is no concrete evidence of Lombard rule in Istria, although it cannot be ruled out. However, historical sources (?) suggest that the Franks inherited Byzantine rule in Istria, and even if the Lombards did rule Istria for some time, it remains unclear at what point and in what circumstances the recovery of Byzantine power took place. There are no concrete data on the exact year of Carolingian arrival on the Istrian peninsula, and even less on the course and the progress of the conquest.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, there are two documents, one from the end of the 8th and one from the very beginning of the 9th century⁵⁷, that give a certain insight into the period of the penetration of the new power from the west and the changes it has introduced, from social and economical to legal. Each of these written sources is interesting primarily because it indicates the way in which the natives of Istria coped in situations with newly arrived citizens.

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⁵⁴ See in LEVAK, M., Istra i Kvarner u ranome srednjem vijeku, in: NIKOLIĆ JAKUS, Z. (ed.), *Nova zraka u europskom svjetlu. Hrvatske zemlje u ranome srednjem vijeku (oko 500.-oko 1150.)*, Zagreb, Matica Hrvatska, 2015, p. 396.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ One possibility is that Charles conquered Byzantine Istria in 788, at the same time as he occupied Bavaria. See in ŠTIH, 2018: 59.

⁵⁷ All are unfortunately transcripts, none of them preserved in the original.

It is probable that during the last quarter of the 8th century the Carolingians tried to come to power in Istria by diplomatic instead of military action, as Pepin the Short himself did in Septimania about a quarter of a century earlier. As it has already been mentioned, thanks to the good relations and peaceful negotiations with prominent members of the Septiman elite, he soon took over the cities of Nîmes, Agde, Beziers and Maguelonne. Charlemagne tried to implement a similar policy on the Istrian example through church leaders, in this particular case through Mauritius – the "self-proclaimed" Istrian bishop of Novigrad, the main protagonist of the letter that Pope Hadrian I sent to Charlemagne in 778. At that time Novigrad was still a diocese "from the shadows", but after the final Carolingian conquest of Istria it will become the seat of his secular and ecclesiastical authority with the duke (*dux*) and bishop in the service of Charles' governors. Novigrad's counterpart at a higher level of executive power that of the Friulian Margraviate was Cividale. At that moment, Margrave Marcarius was sitting there as a representative of the secular government, while Patriarch Sigwald (tal. *Sigualdo*) was in Aquileia.⁵⁸

In a letter from Pope Hadrian I, he reports to the king on the failure of his efforts to take control of the northern Adriatic area through the church leaders. The Pope writes to Charlemagne that the Byzantines (Greeks) from Istria punished Bishop Maurice by gouging out his eyes after they had suspected that he intended to hand over Istria to Charlemagne *ipsum territorium Istriense*. It is evident, and I repeat that Istria of the time was still not under Carolingian rule, so the background of this letter is even more important because it gives an insight into the diplomatic events which took place behind the scenes. The pope then

⁵⁸ The next patriarch, Paulino, moved the church headquarters to Cividale. See JURKOVIĆ, M., Istria under the Carolingian Rule, in: DŽINO, D., MILOŠEVIĆ, A., VEDRIŠ, T. (eds.), *Migration, Integration and Connectivity on the Southeastern Frontier of the Carolingian Empire*, Leiden - Boston, Brill, 2018, p. 126. More about the crypt in Aquileia in following chapters. On the other hand, 10 km away was Grado, a sandy islet that in 568 served the Aquileian patriarch Paulino to take refuge from the Lombard conquest of the Apennine Peninsula. This settlement temporarily became the seat of the Aquileian patriarchs. However, the course of events in the 7th and 8th centuries will result in a newly elected patriarch under Lombard rule in Aquileia whom the Pope himself will acknowledge in 700. The Patriarchate in the city of Grado will survive and will continue to exist in parallel with Aquileia while remaining firmly connected to the Byzantium. At the same time, the Patriarch of Aquileia would be under the authority and protection of the Lombards and later the Frankish and Carolingian rulers, which would eventually have its direct consequences in the way of managing the Istrian area: the Istrian bishops during the 8th century were suffragettes to the patriarch in Grado, since he represented the Byzantine government. The situation would become more complicated by the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century with the arrival of the Carolingians in the area of the northern Adriatic area which will increase the influence of the Patriarch of Aquileia.

sent the blinded Maurice to Marcarius, the Friulian Margrave, in the hope that he would be able to return him to the episcopal position in Istria.⁵⁹ P. Štih, on the other hand, states an interesting theory. Charlemagne's move to place Mauritius in Istria in the role of a spy-diplomat whose task was to "prepare" the ground for the new government violated the agreement he had with the pope before he was crowned as the King of Lombards.⁶⁰ He states that, according to the writings of the papal curia, the Istrian region should have been annexed to the papal estates.⁶¹

One of the key elements for a better understanding of the reasons and ultimately the consequences of this unfortunate event, but also the processes which preceded it, is the ciborium of the Novigrad Cathedral (Fig. 28), which will be discussed below; here I only consider necessary to refer to it. Hadrian's letter indicates that the bishop of Mauritius (*episkopus Histriensis*) was sent to Istria on the orders of Charles himself, allegedly to collect *pensiones beati Petri*.⁶² We can only speculate whether this was the only reason or not, as the preserved sources do not provide answers to these questions. The aforementioned vagueness of historical sources is perfectly complemented by the artistic production of that time, as an equivalent document in the understanding of political events.⁶³

While on the subject of diplomatic ties and espionage tasks, a number of questions arise about the nature of Byzantium's relations with the newly arrived Franks in Istria – why is it not mentioned or maybe linked to Mauritius' blinding, and whether this is an indication that its power did not exist in practice. Furthermore, the efforts that the Pope was making in order to convince Charles to return the blinded bishop to his (!) Istrian diocese have continued, which

⁵⁹ BRATOŽ, R., Istrska cerkev v 7. in 8. stoletju: (od smrti Gregorija Velikega do Rižanskega placita), *Acta Histriae*, 2, 1994, p. 60.

⁶⁰ ŠTIH, 2018: 59.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² ANČIĆ, 2000: 271; CUSCITO, G., Antiche testimonianze cristiane a Cittanova d'Istria, *Atti del Centro di Ricerche Storiche Rovigno*, 19, 1988-1989, p. 68; JURKOVIĆ, M., BASIĆ, I., Élités ecclesiastiche e renovatio: tradizioni tardoantiche nell'arte di VIII e IX secolo in Istria, in: CAMPANATI, F., RIZZARDI, C., PORTA, P., AUGENTI, A., BALDINI LIPPOLIS, I. (eds.), *Ideologia e cultura artistica tra Adriatico e Mediterraneo orientale (IV-X secolo). Il ruolo dell'autorità ecclesiastica alla luce di nuovi scavi e ricerche*, Bologna, Ante Quem, 2009, p. 289.

⁶³ A hypothesis was recently presented in the literature regarding the diplomatic games on the eastern Adriatic coast, between Byzantium and the Franks, which are reflected in the achievements of stonemason's workshops along the coast, primarily, and logically, related to sacral art production. See JURKOVIĆ, M., Quando il monumento diventa documento. Una bottega lapicida del Quarnero, in: CHAVARRÍA ARNAU, A., JURKOVIĆ, M. (eds.), *Alla ricerca di un passato complesso. Contributi in onore di Gian Pietro Brogiolo per il suo settantesimo compleanno*, Zagreb-Motovun, 2016, p. 231-242, with bibliography.

could also imply the absence of the Byzantine sovereignty over Istria.⁶⁴ This hypothesis was somewhat supported by L. Margetić who assumed that the "Istrian Greeks" and the local Istrian landowners in the time before the Carolingian arrival on the peninsula enjoyed complete independence and only formally recognized Byzantine sovereignty.⁶⁵

If that was the case, it is not unrealistic to assume that the supposed Lombard occupation and the eventual arrival of the Franks went unnoticed in the eyes of the Byzantines. On the contrary, and as can be read from the Pope's letter, the local population considered this new and mighty neighbour as a significant threat, which ultimately proved to be justified. The seriousness of Charles' ambition to rule Istria is also evident in the fact that Mauritius was sent by Charles personally and not by the Pope.

2.1.3. Events at the foot of the Pyrenees

The situation at the other end of the Kingdom, on the border with the Iberian Peninsula, at least as the Frankish expansion is concerned, more or less corresponding to the Istrian example. The year is 777, and the envoys from al-Andalus led by Sulayman al-'Abari, the governor of Barcelona and Girona are visiting Charles at his court in Paderborn in order to persuade him to intervene in the Ebro valley and to fight the Emir of Cordoba.

It is obvious that Charles' ambitions for further conquests (the situation in Saxony was in his favour, the Lombards were already conquered, 773-774) were strong. In the spring of 778, backed up by rebellious inhabitants - *walisa* from the so-called Upper March⁶⁶, he embarks on a campaign against the cities south of the Pyrenees. It targeted the historical region of Tarraconensis, a territory then ruled by the Umayyad Caliph of Damascus. His desire to

⁶⁴ MARGETIĆ, 1994: 10.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* The author makes another argument in favour of the claim that Byzantine rule in Istria exists only in theory. Namely, none of the Istrian sources mentions the decision to persecute the worshipers of pious images, made at the synod in Hiereja.

⁶⁶ The administratively and militarily separated northeaster province of al-Andalus, which in geographical terms roughly corresponds to the area of the Ebro river valley and its associated Mediterranean coast, together with the cities of Barcelona, Girona and Zaragoza.

extend his rule to Christian communities along the Iberian Peninsula, which he believed should have been freed from the Muslim domination under which they found themselves, was simply not enough to avoid an utter defeat in the first campaign.

Two military formations composed of men from different parts of the Kingdom have set out on a mission. The first one with Charles himself and soldiers from Burgundy, Austria, and Bavaria going to Zaragoza via Pamplona, and the other one with men from Septimania, Provence, and Lombardy, most likely taking the Roman Via Augusta.⁶⁷ We can only assume that this second group should have met at a given moment with Sulayman's rebel army and then proceed further towards Lleida, Huesca, and Zaragoza.⁶⁸ After initial success in Pamplona (Pompaelo), which they allegedly conquered without a fight,⁶⁹ Charles' forces took the Roman road to Medina al-Baida Saraqusta – today's Zaragoza,⁷⁰ which they failed to conquer and decided to return to the Kingdom.⁷¹ On their way back, while crossing the Pyrenees, Charles' army was attacked and defeated at the Roncesvalles pass, northeast of Pamplona, on August 15, 778.⁷² This battle, held only ten kilometres from today's border with France, near the old Roman road connecting Bordeaux and Astorga,⁷³ served as an inspiration for the legend of the hero Roland, sung a few centuries later in the epic poem *The Song of Roland*.

This defeat was also the last Charlemagne's personal expedition to the Hispanic territory. Further expansion and control of the area over the next few decades will be left to his son

⁶⁷ CHANDLER, 2020: 54. See also BAUTIER, R.H., *La campagne de Charlemagne en Espagne (778): la réalité historique*, in: *Roncevaux dans l'histoire, la légende et le myth: Actes du colloque organisé à l'occasion du 12e centenaire de Roncevaux, Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, 1978*, Bayonne, 1979, p. 1-47.

⁶⁸ CHANDLER, 2020: 54; Cf. D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, 1986: 48–50, where the author offers a reconstruction of the routes taken by the divisions of the Frankish armies. This view, from the early twentieth century, has largely remained the accepted account of events. See SÉNAC, P., *Les carolingiens et al-Andalus (VIII-IX siècles)*, Paris, Maisonneuve et Larousse, 2002; SÉNAC, P., *Le monde carolingien et l'islam. Contribution à l'étude des relations diplomatiques pendant le haut Moyen Âge (VIIIe-Xe siècles)*, L'Harmattan, Histoire et Perspectives Méditerranées, Paris, 2006.

⁶⁹ CHANDLER, 2020: 54, 56.

⁷⁰ Visigothic Cesaracosta; Roman Caesaraugusta; Iberian Salduie.

⁷¹ For possible reasons for such a quick withdrawal and return, see the *Annales d'Aniane* and the *Chronicle of Moissac*. Chandler and Abdal on the contrary: CHANDLER, 2020: f. 173.

⁷² The defeat of Charles' army is mentioned in the following sources: *Annales Regni Francorum* (p. 51), Einhard's *Vita Karoli* (MGH SS rer. Germ. 25, 12–13), and the Astronomer's life of Louis (c. 2).

About Astronomer – anonymous author of the text known as *Vita Hludovici imperatoris* (Deeper study of the Astronomer and his work can be found in Noble, Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, 219–26; Ernst Tremp's introduction to the text in MGH SS rer. Germ. 64 (Hanover, 1995), 53–152; Tremp, *Die Überlieferung der Vita Hludowici imperatoris des Astronomus* MGH Studien und Texte 1 (Hanover, 1991); W. Tenberken, *Die Vita Hludowici Pii auctore Astronomo* (Rottweil, 1982). It seems that he was associated with Louis's court in Aquitaine before 814 and that he was close to the ruler during his reign. He may have been an aristocrat.

⁷³ CHANDLER, 2020: 55; D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, 1986: 65, and the cited bibliography.

Louis,⁷⁴ born just at the time of the first Carolingian attempt to conquer Hispanic lands. In 781, the three-year-old Louis was appointed the King of Aquitaine,⁷⁵ which would greatly affect the future of the southwestern territories of the Kingdom. But since he could not yet fulfil this role due to his age, the territory would be governed by the Counts of Toulouse – first Chorso (known as Chorso dux Tholosanus in Astronomer's life of Louis), and after a few years Chorso's successor William of Aquitaine,⁷⁶ also known as the founder of the convent of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert. Both counts were Charles' nephews.

During this first attempt to conquer the area south of the Pyrenees, the Frankish army passed through part of present-day northern Catalonia where it gained allies among the Hispanic-Gothic population, in sources called *Hispani*. Given that Charles' campaign resulted in failure, the most endangered among them left the peninsula and sought refuge and protection across the Pyrenees, along the border region of Septimania. Charlemagne gave them land and public goods for use, exempting them from taxes, and asking them in return to serve to him in defence of the area.⁷⁷ Only a few years later, Charles' move turned out to be successful, as it is likely that the *Hispani* played an important role in the conquest of the cities south of the Pyrenees. The changes in the power relations between Muslims and Carolingians on the Iberian Peninsula have definitely begun. What Charlemagne's father Pepin the Short started with the takeover of Elna in 759, Charlemagne continued a quarter of a century later, together with his counts/dukes.

In 785, after half a century of Islamic domination (from 717/719), Girona (Gerunda) came into the hands of the Carolingians. This event is incidentally mentioned in the Chronicle of Moissac where it is stated that *eodem anno Gerundenses homines ciuitatem Carolo regi tradiderunt*, and also in the Annals de Barcelona⁷⁸ - 'the inhabitants of Girona handed over the city to King Charles', although he did not personally participate in the venture.⁷⁹ This event also formally marked the beginning of the Carolingian expansion into the Hispanic territory. The first county which was founded was Girona, headed by the aristocrat

⁷⁴ CHANDLER, 2020 : 55.

⁷⁵ AUZIAS, L., *L'Aquitaine carolingienne*, Toulouse, 1937.

⁷⁶ CHANDLER, 2020: 56.

⁷⁷ SALRACH, 1999: 19.

⁷⁸ NOLLA, J. M., *Carlemany i Girona*, Barcelona, Institut d'estudis Catalans, 2018, p. 10. See also D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, 1986: 83, f. 80.

⁷⁹ KATS, 2012: 125; MARTI, R., L'organisation territoriale en Catalogne entre antiquité et féodalité, *Annals du Midi (revue de la France Meridionale)*, 21/266, 2009, p. 177-197.

Rostagnus.⁸⁰ Shortly afterwards, the Carolingians took power over Urgell, Cerdanya, Pallars and Ribagorça.

2.1.4. Charles' letter to his wife Fastrada

Although we do not know the exact time of Carolingian arrival on the Istrian territory, it seems that this happened at about the same time when the Carolingian army at the other end of the continent penetrated the area at the foot of the Pyrenees and conquered Girona (785). It happened under the leadership of the Count of Toulouse, and nominally under the then minor Aquitaine king, Charles' son Louis. As it was the case of the southwestern edge of the Kingdom, in 781 Charlemagne left the conquered Lombard kingdom to his son, this time to the second-born Carloman, who became the King of the Lombards.⁸¹

It is possible that the Carolingian invasion of the Istrian peninsula came at the same time as they took power over Bavaria in 788, overthrowing the last Bavarian duke, Tassil III, who rebelled against Charlemagne and found an ally in the Avars.⁸² Although there is no concrete evidence or historical sources, it is likely that the Carolingians conquered Istria by the end of the summer of 791. Thus, the Istrian peninsula, along with the Friuli and Bavaria, became the first line of defence and expansion of the Carolingian kingdom. Such a situation will result in a constant state of readiness and mobilization for military campaigns, as directly testified by the document from 791.

In a letter to his wife Fastradi, Charlemagne wrote about the attack on the Avar Khaganate, in which the Istrian duke (*dux*) and his military contingent also took part.⁸³ The Friulian Margrave Erik was taking part in the attack, together with Charles' son Pepin and the

⁸⁰ See SALRACH, J.M., *El procés de formació nacional de Catalunya I.: El domini carolingi*, Barcelona, J. Sobrequés i Callicó, Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1978; D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, R., *Dels visigots als catalans*, Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1970. The main source is Astronomer. Vita Hludowici imperatoris, in MGH SS, 2. Hanover, 1829, p. 612.

⁸¹ ŠTIH 2018: 59; ANČIĆ, 2000: 73.

⁸² LEVAK, 2015: 397.

⁸³ ANČIĆ, 2000: 271-272. Istrians will finally verbalize their dissatisfaction on the so-called Plee of Rižana held in 804.

Lombard army. In the context of the aforementioned letter of Pope Hadrian I and the events related to Bishop Maurice and the extremely inhospitable character of Istrians, it should be emphasized that before the military campaign there was certain disbelief in ruling Frankish circles about how the Istrians would behave. The fear, at least in this case, proved unfounded,⁸⁴ but it indicated in which direction the mood of the Istrians regarding their new rulers would stream. As for the attacks against the Avars, they will continue for the next two decades, while at the same time the newly conquered territory – from Bohemia to the Dalmatian hinterland and from the Friulian March to the Danube in Pannonia, will still be out of control.⁸⁵

Historical events in the north-western Mediterranean and the Adriatic during the last decade of the 8th and the very beginning of the 9th century, reveal us all the power of the Carolingian Kingdom and its expansion. This is the time when Charles, primarily due to the campaigns of his subordinate counts, dukes and sons, expanded his Kingdom deeper both into the Hispanic area and into Istria and the northern Adriatic basin. Not only did this move push the boundaries of the Caliphate of Cordoba in the southwest and the Byzantine Empire in the southeast, but it has drawn closer the Carolingians to the new territories, still rich with Classical and late antique tradition, in historical, legal and cultural terms. This will greatly influence and determine further development and historical landscape of these areas.

* * *

It is the end of the 790s, and Louis, now able to participate directly in the military campaigns, has been spreading Carolingian domination deeper into the interior of present-day Catalonia. He burns Lleida, ravages the area around Huesca, and plunders Tarragona and Tortosa before returning to Aquitaine. However, these attacks have not ultimately resulted in the conquest of

⁸⁴ ŠTIH 2018: 62-63. In one of the campaigns in which he took part, the Friulian Margrave Erik was killed by the inhabitants of Trsatika, somewhere near that town. N. Labus analyzes written sources that speak of this event, "Einhard's Annals of the Frankish Kingdom", Einhard's "Life of Charlemagne" and a poem written around 800 by the Patriarch of Aquileia Pauline, on the occasion of Eric's death. LABUS, N., Tko je ubio vojvodu Erika, *Radovi Zavoda povijesnih znanosti HAZU u Zadru*, 42, 2000, p. 1-16.

⁸⁵ CHANDLER, 2020: 66.

the cities, but they contributed to the impression of Frankish strength and power.⁸⁶ In order to secure and strengthen the borders, in 798 Louis ordered the construction of a defence system along the Ter River further west, towards Vic, Cardona and Casserres. He entrusted the task of governing the defence system to Count Urgell-Borrell.⁸⁷

The last point of Carolingian interest south of the Pyrenees was Barcelona, which was only seemingly taken over from the Muslims in 797 through negotiations. However, the reality was somewhat different, and Barcelona would come into the hands of Carolingians only at the dawn of the new century, in 801. In the meantime, in 800, Charlemagne was crowned as the emperor in Rome. This would have no effect on the area below the Pyrenees, because the territory was already controlled by his now-grown son Louis, king of Aquitaine.

The battle for Barcelona, which was to become the new centre of power in this new Hispanic border area, began in 800. Since the hopes of Barcelona's surrender (as Narbonne's and Girona's) were quickly dismayed, Louis strategically divided his army into three groups. He led a group waiting north of the Pyrenees, at Roussillon, while the other two headed south, one led by Count Rostagnus of Girona and apparently Bere of Roussillon, and the other under William and Ademar of Narbonne. Their task was to prevent a possible penetration of the Muslims via old Roman road from the direction of Zaragoza, in which they eventually succeeded.⁸⁸ Barcelona finally surrendered in the spring of 801, and sources state that King Louis, after arriving from Roussillon 6 weeks earlier accompanied by his military forces, triumphantly entered the city on Easter.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Urgell was probably already under Carolingian rule in the early 790s, as his bishop attended the Synod of Regensburg (Ratisbon) in 792, convened by Charlemagne. CHANDLER, 2020: 66; COSTA, M.M., *Les genealogies comtals catalanes, Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 23, 1991, p. 447-462; ZIMMERMAN, M., *La formació d'una sobirania catalana (785-988)*, in: CAMPS, J. (ed.), *Catalunya a l'època carolíngia: art i cultura abans del romànic (segles IX i X)*, Barcelona, Museu nacional d'art de Catalunya 1999, p. 41-47. Also see CARRERO SANTAMARÍA, E., *La Seu d'Urgell, el último conjunto de iglesias. Liturgia, paisaje urbano y arquitectura*, *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 40/1, 2010, p. 253-254.

⁸⁷ CHANDLER, 2020: 66-67.

⁸⁸ CHANDLER, 2020: 67. Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 13 MGH SS 2, 612–613; CMM, 142, which places the campaign in 803. SALRACH, 1978: 14–24. D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, 1986: 183–216. ARF s.a. 801, MGH SS rer. Germ. 6, 116 mention a two-year siege, which is surely an error. Frankish chroniclers, like Ermoldus Nigellus, write about the military resistance that greeted the Carolingians in Barcelona. In ZIMMERMAN, 1999: 41-47.

⁸⁹ Contemporary researchers believe that during the 16th and 17th centuries the concept was used for ideological purposes with the aim of exercising the rights of the French crown to Catalan territory, but also to seek the roots of Catalan identity. SABATÉ, F., *La noció d'Espanya a la Catalunya medieval*, *Acta historica et archaeologica mediaevalia*, 19, 1998, p. 377-378. ZIMMERMANN, M., *Le concept de Marca Hispanica et l'importance de la frontière dans la formation de la Catalogne*, in: SENAC, P. (ed.), *La Marche supérieure d'al-Andalus et*

This territory of the Carolingian Empire (empire from 800 AD), expanded during the last quarter of the 8th and the very beginning of the 9th century, would later be mentioned in sources and known as the Hispanic Marches. The term 'territory of the Carolingian Empire' is being deliberately used to emphasize only the spatial designation of the territory on the border with the 'other' area.

There has been a lot of controversy about the term 'Marca Hispanica'. It is first mentioned as a term in the *Annales regni Francorum* and in the *Annales Bertiniani*. During the 20th century, J. A. Maravall and R. de Abadal y de Vinyals argued that the Hispanic Marches as a territorial or administrative entity has never officially existed, which was accepted by many other historians, such as F. Sabaté and M. Zimmerman; they argue that the mention of the term 'march' in Carolingian sources (annals) had the purely linguistic purpose of marking the border of both historical Spain and Carolingian territory.⁹⁰

Although aware of the fact that the architectural landscape, the central topic of this dissertation, is arising as a result of historical events, a deeper introduction to the issue of historiographical understandings of these events and interpretations related to the Hispanic syntagma would mean moving away from the main idea. Therefore, I leave aside the question of the original meaning of this term, understanding it and using it exclusively as a geographical, i.e. spatial determinant of the newly conquered area located on the edge of the empire, hence the term 'march'.⁹¹ The attribute 'Hispanic' logically refers to the area of the Iberian Peninsula, in this case to the only part of the former *Hispania* conquered by the Carolingians. Nonetheless, the areas on the "other side" of the border on the Iberian Peninsula, an area under Muslim rule, were also called marches. Originally named *tagr*, they referred to the territory along the border with the Christian areas in the north of the peninsula: al-Tagr al Adna (Lower March), al Tagr al-Awsat (Middle or Toledo March) and al-Tagr al-A'l Upper or Zaragoza March).

l'Occident chrétien, Madrid - Zaragoza, Casa de Velázquez - Universidad De Zaragoza, 1991, p. 29-49; MATEU LLOPIS, 1946: 63-81.

⁹⁰ Equally different marches were funded along the entire border of the Carolingian kingdom, i.e. the empire (from 800 AD).

⁹¹ Historians dealing with this period point out that the population of the counties was called Hispanic (*hispani*) and that they did not consider themselves to live on the border of *Hispania*, but in its very core, wanting to somehow restore its old splendor. See LALINDE ABADÍA, J., Godos, hispanos y hostelenses en la órbita del rey de los francos, in: *Symposium internacional sobre els orígens de Catalunya (segles VIII-XI)* II, Barcelona, Real Academia de Buenas Letras, 1992, p. 35-74; SALRACH, J.M., *Catalunya a la fi del primer mil·leni*, Vic, Eumo - Pagès, 2004, p. 255.

The newly conquered area of the northeast of the peninsula, geographically defined as the debatable Hispanic Marches, was administratively divided into counties. Such a system existed as early as the time of the Visigothic rule and is known throughout the Carolingian Empire. One of the duchies was the Istrian one, which was ruled from Novigrad at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century by Duke Ivan (*dux Joannes*), and which was also part of a larger spatial unit - the Friulian March.

The counties most often corresponded to episcopal centres, and in the late 8th and early 9th centuries south of the Pyrenees there were: Pallars-Ribagorça, Urgell, Cerdanya (it is not known which was the capital?), Girona, Osona (diocese of Ausona – with Vic as its capital) and Barcelona.

2.1.5. The Plee of Rižana

During the last decade of the 8th century, on the other side of the Empire, the southeaster one, Istrians under the leadership of their duke Ivan participated in the already mentioned attacks against the Avars. It is logical to assume that during this period, the peninsula has beard the full burden of war. Military campaigns required, among other things, constant readiness for possible attacks and defences, and of course manpower and material resources, which ultimately had to be reflected in the economy and the population.⁹² With the already known general dissatisfaction of Istrians with the new rulers, it is not surprising that in 804 it was finally and officially verbalized and written in the so-called Plee of Rizana (*Placitum Rizianense*).⁹³

It is precisely this document that historians consider to be the key to understanding the changes and the new administrative system that befell the Istrians after the arrival of the

⁹² ŠTIH 2018: 63-64.

⁹³ The entire version of Plee of Rizana with Croatian translation see in: MARGETIĆ, L., O nekim pitanjima Rižanskog placita, *Zbornik Pravnog fakulteta u Zagrebu*, 43/4, Zagreb, 1993, p. 426–437.

Carolingians. The original record of the Plee of Rizanae⁹⁴ was composed in 804 at a court hearing on the Rižan River near Koper, where representatives of 172 Istrian towns and castles spoke out against Istrian Duke (*dux*) Ivan, Patriarch of Grado and Metropolitan of the Istrian Church Fortunato and five Istrian bishops.⁹⁵ The assembly was convened at the urging of Charlemagne and his son Pepin, the King of the Lombards, to resolve the complaints of Istrians against the alleged abuse of power by the Frankish governor of Istria, Duke (*dux*) Ivan and the city bishops. The hearing was also attended by many Istrians, and the interests of the emperor were pleaded by the priest Izzo and the comei Cadolao and Aio. The conclusions were compiled by the deacon of the Grado church – Petar, and between 814 and 821 they were confirmed by Louis the Pious, Charles' son, and then the emperor himself.

Complaints against the rulers varied, from those against the bishop's actions to the complaints against Duke Ivan, which were the basis of the whole process. Just over a decade has passed since the beginning of the Carolingian presence on the peninsula, but the changes that had been introduced have greatly changed the way of life. From the abolition of local self-government and the appointment of local administrators (centenaries), the imposition of new benefits that residents were obliged to respect, which were then taken away from cities and redirected to the imperial treasury, through the settlement of Slavs on their and church's land, to changes in military service and, for example, the use of their own ships for missions to Ravenna, Dalmatia and Venice.⁹⁶ All these socio-political changes ultimately resulted in dissatisfaction, which was more than obvious. One of the indicators is the fact that during those ten years of rule, the arrival of imperial envoys was not too frequent, since they were not welcome guests on the Istrian territory.⁹⁷

Yet the artistic production of the period testifies that select members of the Carolingian elite still managed to find ways to position themselves within a rather hostile area. The games of power and control along the peninsula, waged in the name of Charlemagne and Pepin by these high-ranking Carolingian lords have obviously, at least formally, given concrete results.

⁹⁴ The document is saved only in transcripts. As the most reliable one M. Ančić cites the Codex Trevisanus (f. 21-32), from the first half of the 16th century (today in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia). ANČIĆ, 2000: 272-277.

⁹⁵ KRAHWINKLER, H., Patriarch Fortunatus of Grado and the Placitum of Riziano, *Acta Histriae*, 13/1, p. 63-78. The bishops Teodor, Lav, Stauracije, Stjepan and Lovro (probably the bishops from Pule, Poreča, Trsta, Pićan and Novigrad, although their affiliation cannot be determined).

⁹⁶ ANČIĆ, 2000: 72.

⁹⁷ MARGETIĆ, 1994: 11.

At the beginning of the 9th century, the Carolingians did not yet nominally occupy the Istrian episcopal centres. The entire ecclesiastical and secular power was still concentrated in Novigrad. Moreover, the Patriarch of Grado formally acknowledged the authority of Byzantium, while the Aquileian was on the Carolingian side. However, the situation was far from simple. One has to be aware of the fact that the Istrian representatives of the towns and castles (in total 172 of them) were speaking out against the Patriarch of Grado, the Metropolitan of the Istrian Church Fortunato and five Istrian bishops. Understandably, they also opposed Duke Ivan, but this is not so surprising since he was a literal personification of the Carolingian government on the peninsula. On the other hand, surprising was the revolt against the still formally acknowledged Byzantine representatives of the (church) government who, in reality, was obviously far from having a predominant position. It is known that Fortunatus, whilst officially under Byzantine, at that time was working in favour of the Carolingians. In 803 he even defected to Charlemagne, for which the church in the city received certain privileges.⁹⁸ Fortunato's work is also interesting in the context of later events, during the decades to come, which will be discussed in the chapter on the Croatian principality. For now, let it remain recorded as another example of the successful politics and diplomacy of Charlemagne and his son Pepin in the first decades of the Carolingian presence in Istria.

Of course, what is also symptomatic is the complaint against the five Istrian bishops who, it is now certain, also at least partially ignored the Byzantine governmental principles. Objections against them and Duke Ivan were raised as opposed to the situation on the peninsula before the Frankish conquest when the dominant power was that of the Byzantine emperor. The "Byzantine" era was presented quite idealized in relation to the processes which have struck them during the Carolingian expansion – the abolition of the Byzantine administrative system (*tribunatus*), the introduction of Frankish regulations and customs, the transformation of church organization, Slavic colonization, etc.⁹⁹ Since the similar early-medieval historical sources regarding that region are almost non-existent, Rižanski placit is of exceptional value. Not only does it provide a "cross-section through the half-century experience of the life of one region that formed an integral part of two great political rivals, two empires completely different in their roots, traditions and organization,"¹⁰⁰ but allows

⁹⁸ ŠTIH, 2018: 64.

⁹⁹ ANČIĆ, 2000: 273.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

researchers to do a comparative study of different practices related to the functioning of both kingdoms. One of these practices that have been directly reflected in artistic production is the one related to church customs and their role in the society of the time. Another, equally interesting and important is the one about the relations between the political centre and the political periphery.¹⁰¹ It is this process, viewed through the perspective of artistic creativity of the period that forms the fundamental part of the question of the historical and cultural landscape of the peripheral areas of the Istrian peninsula and the former Croatian principality and today's Catalonia and northern Spain.

* * *

The period of the beginning of the 9th century in Istria, at least according to written sources, has passed without direct conflicts. The only thing left for the Carolingians to conquer in the formal sense were the urban centres, i.e. the dioceses. The rural landscape with newly established monasteries, fortified settlements and estates of elites simultaneously became an essential protagonist in the control of the territories as the border with Byzantium, and the Avars were closer than ever. The strength of the Carolingian Empire was at the height of its power, and Charles' ambition on the other side of the continent, here still in the hands of his son Louis, did not stop at the conquest of Barcelona in 801.

The years that followed were marked by Louis's efforts to expand the territory to the Ebro Valley, south of Tarragona. What until a few years ago, just before the conquest of Barcelona was the river Ter, in 801 became Llobregat. At one point in the early medieval history of this area, both Ter and Llobregat have played the role of delimitation of the mighty Carolingian territory from the predominantly Muslim peninsula. Both rivers were rising in the Pyrenees, only twenty kilometres away from each other. Furthermore, they were both ending at the Mediterranean coast, each near "its" ancient city, Empúries and Barcino, today's Barcelona. Just before Vic (ancient *Ause*, Visigothic *Ausona*) Ter is turning east, passing through Girona and finally, fifteen kilometres south of Empúries flows into the sea, while Llobregat descends further south and only ten kilometres from Barcelona forms a delta. The importance of these

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

rivers throughout history is unquestionable – they were used as waterways and natural boundaries, while their banks in various places were surrounded by fortifications to control the surrounding territory. The same model of functioning and exploitation of river flows is applicable throughout Europe, and relevant to the topic of this study is certainly the example of the Istrian peninsula whose inhabitants and conquerors also knew how to take advantage of the river benefits. The topic will be further discussed in the following chapters.

The conquests of the area south of Llobregat, with the ultimate goal of creating a new frontier on the river Ebro, where the terrain configuration – the valley covered with swamps – provided better conditions for the defence of the Empire than Llobregat, did not prove successful.¹⁰² The first of the three attempted incursions took place in 805 when the defensive walls of Tarragona were destroyed, and much of the surrounding area was set on fire. The second attack was aimed at Tortosa in 809 when the Carolingians defeated Muslim forces but failed to capture the city. The last attack against the same city occurred in 810 when Louis managed to surround it. However, the campaign has ultimately failed, and the Carolingians had to retreat back north. That same year, the agreement between the two sides regarding the border of Carolingian territory and Christianity was reached. The frontier has been returned to the coast of Llobregat, right next to Barcelona.¹⁰³

In theory, peace may have marked the cease of direct conflict, but historical sources show that it was often only an illusion. Turmoil, rebellion, and renegotiation, both with the Basques on the western frontiers and with the Muslims, marked the second decade of the 9th century. In practice, the act of conquering the territory was a lengthy process, by no means an isolated event.¹⁰⁴

* * *

The crown of the Istrian rebellion was the Rižanski placit in 804. The claims from that event were officially confirmed sometime between 814 and 821 by Charles' successor to the

¹⁰² Astronomer, Vita Hludowici, c. 14 MGH SS 2, 613–14; CHANDLER, 2020: 68.

¹⁰³ ARF, s.a. 810, MGH SS rer. Germ. 6, 130; CHANDLER, 2020: 68.

¹⁰⁴ CHANDLER, 2020: 69.

position of emperor, his son Louis.¹⁰⁵ It is possible that this decision somewhat increased Istrian's self-governing rights, but regardless of that, in the long term, the changes that have begun could not have been stopped.¹⁰⁶

The main strongholds of the Istrian resistance against the new government and Duke (*dux*) Ivan were the cities that were still formally under Byzantine rule during the first decades of the 9th century. At the same time, the Carolingians dominated the suburban areas, that were consequently witnessing the greatest architectural momentum since Justinian's time. The Istrian rural landscape became a chessboard on which the new government was laying the foundations of a new system while gradually weakening the coastal, ancient urban communities. Manors were established and a network of newly founded and renovated monasteries, private, parish and cemetery churches, fortified towns and estates of dignitaries are being formed. A new Carolingian elite was created. The (re)Christianization of the population has resulted in changes in the architectural and cultural landscape, gradually transforming it into a historical narrator for future generations and researchers to come.

The bedrock of Carolingian rule was by no means the relation between the ecclesiastical and the secular authority. In Istrian case, this was somewhat complicated, especially given the parallel domination of Byzantium and Carolingian entities. This situation has partially arisen from the conflict between the Patriarchates of Aquileia and Grado, since the influence of the latter, the Byzantine, in Istria gradually weakened with the growing influence of Aquileia, under the direct protection of the Carolingians. This problem of the division of church and political jurisdiction over the Istrian area was resolved at the Synod of Mantua in 827. Since then, the Istrian dioceses have belonged to the Aquileian Patriarchate, with Pula as the capital, even though the seat of political and ecclesiastical authority was still in Novigrad.¹⁰⁷ Istria was thus officially incorporated into the Carolingian Empire as a whole.

¹⁰⁵ LEVAK 2015: 400.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Idem*, 402.

2.2. New and old: Carolingian input and continuity of place. Istria as a model of continuity of urban and rural landscape

The history of Istria is a story that goes far back in time; the millennial continuity of its society and culture is unquestionable. This premise is fully applicable to the area of present-day Catalonia. Although located at the opposite ends of the continent, these two regions will on several occasions form part of the same political, social and cultural whole, while of course having in mind local specific manifestations of the historical phenomena.

Even in the prehistoric times (older Neolithic), the so-called 'horizon of impresso-ceramics' spread from the western Mediterranean and the coast of the Iberian Peninsula to today's coast of Albania on the Ionian Sea.¹⁰⁸ In ancient Greece, it will leave its mark on both areas. While in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula Greek colonies were founded - the cities of *Emporion* (today Empúries) and *Rhode (s?)* (today Roses),¹⁰⁹ research of the Istrian area has not yet indicated a direct Greek presence. At the same time, numerous findings testify to trade links with the Greek world.¹¹⁰ In the centuries that followed, both regions would form part of the Roman Republic and later the Roman Empire. Structural changes occur with the migration period, which has changed the previous borders. The dividing of the old continent was again to begin.

The arrival of the Carolingians on the European historical stage will mark the beginning of the reunification, a reminiscence of the ancient, Roman world. The Istrian peninsula and the northeastern part of the Iberian Peninsula will once again find themselves within the same political idea, and thus to a certain degree forming the same cultural circle. The border areas of the mighty empire will remain its last point of control and defence - the peripheral

¹⁰⁸ On the prehistoric period in Istria, see BURŠIĆ MATIJAŠIĆ, K., Neki aspekti naselja i nastambi u Istri u prapovijesti, *Tabula*, 10, 2012, p. 7-38, with accompanying bibliography.

¹⁰⁹ BARCELÓ, P., Notas sobre la presencia griega en el litoral hispano, *Cuadernos de prehistoria y arqueología castellanenses*, 13, 1987-1988, p. 171-180; IZQUIERDO-EGEA, P., Fluctuaciones económicas en la Ampurias del siglo V antes de nuestra era, *Arqueología iberoamericana* 16, 2012, p. 3-10; BUSCATÓ I SOMOZA, L., *La colònia grega de Rhode*, Figueres, 1999.

¹¹⁰ The exhibition "Ancient Greeks in Croatia" took place in 2010/2011 in the Klovićevi dvori Gallery in Zagreb. For this occasion, 33 archeological objects from the prehistoric collection were borrowed from the Archaeological Museum of Istria, which show the contact and influence of the eastern Mediterranean on the Bronze Age population of Istrian hillfort settlements, and then the contact of Greeks with Iron Age Istrians. Catalog of the exhibition "Ancient Greeks in Croatia", Klovićevi dvori Gallery, Zagreb 2010.

space and at the same time, the contact zone with the 'other'. Such geopolitical background, paired with their rich tradition, would result in different solutions to the diverse artistic production of the early Middle Ages at the two opposite ends of the Carolingian kingdom, soon to be the empire. It would be the last time that Istria and the area at the foot of the Pyrenees formed part of the same political entity, up until the 20th and the 21st century when the creation of the European Union took place.

While the historical landscape at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century in Istria experienced a flourish of architectural production, primarily encouraged by the newly arrived rulers from the northwest, the situation in Catalonia was somewhat different. Bearing in mind that the scale of the dimensions of the space studied of so-called Carolingian Catalonia to the Istrian peninsula is approximately 5:1, and the fact that the breakthrough of Carolingian rule occurred almost simultaneously, it is surprising to know that the number of preserved buildings of the 9th century in the Hispanic mark is insignificant compared to the ones from the 10th.

But rightly so, this situation of the 9th century in the historical territory of the old Catalonia, with its striking lack of remains of material architectural heritage, vividly testifies to the often thought and spoken thesis that the historical landscape as we know it today has changed drastically over the centuries. The landscape, together with its historical, cultural and social elements is a 'living' organism. Moreover, it is subject to changes conditioned by its context, and it should be studied as such. It is on the Catalan example when we see that, although this is the period when Carolingian domination in this region has been present for several decades, historical events, moreover riots, have resulted in reduced preservation, as well as the production of architectural forms.

* * *

There are two fundamental aspects of studying the historical and cultural landscape - urban and rural. Each of them witnesses its own development, tradition, characteristics and moments of intertwining. Synergy is inevitable and constant, sometimes to a greater,

sometimes to a lesser extent. Context is what defines, connects and separates them, makes them unique or completely opposite - studying the change that the urban and rural landscape experienced during the early middle ages can provide a much broader insight into understanding the models of construction and cultural productions. It becomes particularly interesting when we are dealing with two spatially distant, but in time, historically and ideologically in many ways similar regions - the Istrian peninsula and parts of present-day Catalonia.

Already at the very beginning of the Carolingian story, a somewhat different pattern of occupation of territories is clearly visible in these two areas. While the main points of the Carolingian government in Catalonia were from the beginning its urban centres - the dioceses of (Elna), Girona, Urgell, Vic and Barcelona, the Istrian situation is somewhat different, at least according to the current state of research. After the Central Carolingian government has established the so-called Istrian diocese and the central administrative authority in Novigrad, further Carolingian expansion was directed to the rural area. Was it the reason that the tradition and domination of Byzantium along the coastal towns of Istria were still too strong? It has not yet been confirmed with certainty. Nevertheless, the fact is that the Byzantium was their formal ruler during the past centuries, hence its importance and influence are not surprising. On the other hand, the urban centres of the northeastern Iberian coast and its hinterland have been under the rule of a new culture - Islam - for just over half a century. This fact, of course, in no way diminishes its strength. Still, at the same time it is symptomatic that during the second half of the 8th century, during the moments of the initial wave of Carolingian conquest of Catalan cities, they fell into the hands of the new conquerors relatively quickly. Yet, the course of the 9th century and the events that took place in these urban centres will indicate the strength and influence that the Muslims still had in the old Catalonia. However, the focus of the dissertation is the correlation between Carolingian Istria and Catalonia during the last quarter of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century. More precisely, it is the response of their urban centres towards the mighty Carolingian power and what this power brings with it – architectural constructions and artistic production.

2.2.1. A model of establishing power on two opposite edges of the Kingdom. Urban centres at the end of the 8th century – example of continuity, resistance, acceptance and ‘new’ creation

As it has been pointed out on several occasions, more than a millennium of history and continuity of life - political, economic, legal and finally cultural - has greeted the Carolingians both at the foot of the Pyrenees and in the northern Adriatic basin. When we turn our attention to the element of sacral architecture and the historical landscape of these two areas, the thesis on the Carolingian idea of the Renaissance, and the renewal of antiquity - *renovatio imperii* - becomes easily applicable. The landscape of these historical regions during the period of the early Middle Ages, each with its own specifics, traditions and cultures, but within the common thinking of the ancient and late ancient world, resulted in a rich architectural and artistic production.

Urban centres played a significant role in both cases, even though, by observing both situations simultaneously, the circumstances and the course of their occupation by the Carolingians proved to be somewhat different. Although the sources that could further clarify this part of the history of the Istrian peninsula are extremely brief and often insufficient,¹¹¹ some aspects of construction and artistic activity could partially complement them, and sometimes even speak for them.

¹¹¹ For more about the topic, see ANČIĆ, 2000: 271-289.

2.2.1.1. Novigrad

In these scarce sources, the last quarter of the 8th century will remain recorded as the time of the first successful Carolingian campaigns on the Istrian territory. These initiatives will inevitably result in the beginning of changes in the urban and rural landscape. The first such example recorded in the sources from the last years of the eighth decade¹¹² is directly related to the new Carolingian centre, the so-called seat of the Istrian diocese - formed on one of the many peninsulas on the northwest coast of the Istrian peninsula - in Novigrad. Located in a strategic position of paramount importance, although bearing the name 'new', it was also known in earlier centuries. However, only the Carolingians will make it one of the most important cities in Istrian history, the centre of the newly established Istrian diocese and the centre of the Carolingian rule on the peninsula. The Bishop Mauritius will be the main protagonist of the first known diplomatic move of the powerful Carolingian rulers, but also the first known stumbling block and intruder in the eyes of the domicile population, apparently still under direct Byzantine rule, subject to the Patriarch of the Grado.

There is no written source as to why Novigrad was chosen as the starting point of the Carolingian idea on the Istrian peninsula. It is known that at the dusk of the 8th century, along the Istrian coast, bishops sat in Trieste, Koper, Umag, Novigrad, Poreč, Rovinj / *Cissa* and Pula, and in the interior of the peninsula - in Pićan.

The mere sight of the terrain configuration and the coastal dioceses location (not forgetting Pićan in the interior), clearly indicates the importance that these settlements have had over the centuries. Trieste, Koper, Umag, Novigrad, Rovinj and Pićan are located either at the mouths of rivers that continue into the interior of the peninsula or in their immediate vicinity, at their sources in the heart of the headland (Pićan-river Raša). Poreč is conveniently and strategically located halfway between the course of the river Mirna (Novigrad) and the Lim Channel (Rovinj), on a peninsula which coast is surrounded by islets, bays and capes. The west coast of the Istrian peninsula ends with a diocese centred in Pula, a city which history began more than two millennia ago, on a hill above a rich source of drinking water, in a bay off the indented coastline. The location rhythm each of these episcopal centres is playing

¹¹² Letter of Pope Hadrian to Charlemagne.

repeats an uninformed rule. Probably due to both the favourable configuration of the terrain, and the geopolitical organization of the territory.

Although it might be irrelevant, it is still interesting that Novigrad has three dioceses to the north and three south of it, which *de facto* places it at the very centre of the political events on the western Istrian coast. Therefore, bearing in mind the exceptional Carolingian ability of strategic planning to subjugate and control its territories, it does not surprise the fact that Novigrad was chosen as the point that would become both the ecclesiastical and political stronghold of the new power on the peninsula.

This new stronghold is located right next to the mouth of the longest Istrian river, at that time still navigable Mirna (lat. *Ningus Flumen*). With over 50 km in length, this river led to the very centre of the peninsula, deeper and further than other transversal Istrian roads, thus giving additional geopolitical significance to the city that stands at its end, i.e. the beginning - Novigrad.

And finally, the symbolism of the name can hardly be accidental. Historians have recognized the mention of this city on several occasions, but its name, i.e. names, leave the possibility of doubt. Under the ancient name, it is mentioned as *Emonia / Aemonia*, which for a long time has led researchers to look for its origin in earlier periods, but also to connect it with the pre-Alpine ancient city of *Emonia* (today's Ljubljana). The researchers have seen the confirmation of its ancient origin in the news of a certain bishop *Maximus emonensis* presence at the Council of Aquileia in 381. However, his episcopal see has not been confirmed with certainty, while archaeological evidence of the Novigrad diocese possible existence in the 4th century is still out of sight.

There are traces of a Roman villa known to be dating from the antiquity. Its position on the small Novigrad peninsula was surely suitable for defence, while in late antiquity, it was converted into a castrum, just as will be the case with the nearby *villa rustica* above Tarska vala, on the south side of the bay.¹¹³ The claim that there was no significant urban Roman horizon in the area of today's Novigrad is supported by the fact that it was located aside of the main Roman road - the ancient *Via Flavia*. Although the same can be said for almost all

¹¹³ ŠILJEG, B.: Arheološko-konzervatorska istraživanja lokaliteta Stancija Blek kod Tara u 2008. g., *Annales Instituti archaeologici*, 5, 2009, p. 113-115; ŠILJEG, B., KONEŠTRA, A., Arheološko-konzervatorska istraživanja lokaliteta Stancija Blek kod Tara u 2011. g., *Annales Instituti Archaeologici*, 8/1, 2012, p. 103-106.

coastal urban centres except Poreč and Pula, the absence of any mention of the settlement in the works of ancient cartographers is indicative.

Another name, the one from which it is derived today – Novigrad / *Neapolis* is mentioned by Pope Gregory the Great in a letter sent to Bishop John of Pannonia. He allegedly sought refuge in a *castrum* called *Novas* in 599 during the Avar breakthroughs.¹¹⁴ Modern researchers agree that in late antiquity there really existed a civilian settlement, *castrum* (*castellum*). A cartographic source - *Cosmography (Geographii)* of the cartographer “Unknown Ravennese”, created in the 7th century, probably based on data from 6th c.¹¹⁵, could confirm this hypothesis. Indeed, the name *Neapolis* is mentioned among other towns along the west coast of Istria.

Over time, the *castrum* would become more urbanized. Still, it would not be even close to what it had experienced at the end of the 8th century. The fact remains that it is a city without a proven ancient urban history, and with relatively peaceful centuries immediately preceding the arrival of Carolingians. Furthermore, the name it bears in the early medieval period symbolically represents a new beginning. It could even be said that it was fulfilling, even from a linguistic perspective, all the conditions that the new rulers of the old continent could set before it.

Novigrad became an Istrian Carolingian centre in which the unbreakable symbiosis of church and secular authorities were manifested evidently. The secular rule was subjected to the margrave in Cividale, while the ecclesiastical to the patriarch in Aquileia. In one of the most important strategic positions on the peninsula, entirely surrounded by Byzantine urban centres, it was indeed a bridge to the Friulian Carolingian centres. Furthermore, it was the wellspring of new ideas which then spread capillary through the surrounding landscape, eventually penetrating all pores of the social, political and cultural life of Istria.

¹¹⁴ JURKOVIĆ, M., *Novigrad istarski između 7. i 12. st.*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 1996, p. 5; BRADANOVIĆ, M., NEFAT, N., *Istria. I centri storici delle città*, Pula, Regione Istriana - Istarska županija, 2011, p. 36.

¹¹⁵ MATIJAŠIĆ, R., Anonimni Ravenjanin, Istra i biskupska središta, *Acta Histriae*, 9/2, 2001, p. 288.

* * *

The artistic production of early medieval Novigrad is closely tied to the figure of a bishop – Mauritius. It was the same one whom the local population, aware that the bishop was a direct personification of the Carolingian rule in their territory, formally still Byzantine, so badly accepted that they eventually blinded him. Pope Hadrian himself wrote about this event to Charlemagne in 778. The re-mention of 'some' Bishop Mauritius can hardly be a coincidence. Moreover, his name is permanently engraved in a ciborium of the baptistery, the parts of which were found in Novigrad, the presumed place of conflict between the blinded Istrian Bishop Maurice and the resentful “Greeks”.¹¹⁶

A detailed analysis of what was left of the ciborium was presented in 1995 by M. Jurković. By the method of comparison, many researchers have already linked Novigrad ciborium to the phenomenon of the 'Liutprand renaissance',¹¹⁷ finding analogue examples within the same political and cultural circle - in Cividale, Aquileia, Valpolicella, Sedeglian, etc. Such analyzes eventually resulted in a hypothesis that has once again revealed the strong ties between the centre of the Margraviate and the Istrian area. In addition, for the first time, a demonstration of Carolingian authority on the peninsula was clearly manifested in a sculptural medium. It is the only Istrian monument found and documented so far that was made by a workshop outside the peninsula. More precisely, it is connected to the Friuli area, which further emphasizes the strength and sends a clear political message about who the new rulers were and what were their intentions, as well as their artistic preferences. Furthermore, in further analysis, Jurković cited different motifs from the Novigrad ciborium. He emphasized that in the entire *corpus* of the Istrian sculpture of that period, there is not a single example that would have at least two such common motifs, thus further emphasizing the hypothesis of the 'outer' import, in this case, foreign workshops.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ CUSCITO, G., Il ciborio e l'epigrafe del vescovo Maurizio a Cittanova d'Istria, *Ricerche religiose del Friuli e dell'Istria*, 3, 1984, p. 111- 134.

¹¹⁷ The Liutprand Renaissance is a term referring to court production in the time of the Lombard king Liutprand and his successors when early Christian themes were used in stonemasonry.

¹¹⁸ JURKOVIĆ, M., Il ciborio di Novigrad (Cittanova d'Istria), *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 1, 1995, p. 141-149.

The concept of symbolism can also be related to the example of the ciborium. From all liturgical furniture that could have been carved for a sacral building, the ciborium was chosen for the baptistery, a place that more than any other metaphorically indicates rebirth. This new beginning, in this case, is brought about by the Carolingian rule, most probably with the already well-known Bishop of Mauritius at the head of the ecclesiastical authority. Although blinded, he triumphantly returned to Novigrad to fulfil the Carolingian plan of actions. It seems that it was Mauritius who was the main patron of the ciborium; for its production, he hired the masters of the Friulian stonemason's workshop¹¹⁹. In Friuli's creative centre - Cividale - he probably found himself after the attack recorded in the letter of Pope Hadrian.

Nevertheless, since there are no written sources for the mentioned events related to the production of the ciborium, the question of Mauritius' journey and a possible return to Istria remains debatable, although very realistic. The aforementioned analysis of the fragments of the ciborium almost certainly contextualizes the dynamics of events and changes from the end of the 8th century, hinting at the flourishing of architectural and artistic production throughout Istria.

The appearance of the baptistery in which the ciborium once stood is now evidenced only by a draft. More precisely, from a reconstruction by engineer and draftsman L. Dufourny dated in the second half of the 18th century, created at a time when the baptistery was already in ruins, and later published by J.B. Seroux d'Agincourt in a monumental collection of drafts of European architecture.¹²⁰ The exact location is still unknown, as the bell tower built at the end of the 19th century probably covered the foundations of the baptistery. Its octagonal shape with a six-sided baptismal pool follows the already established early Christian type known along the northern Adriatic bay, from Poreč to Concordia.¹²¹ But the question that researchers began to ask twenty years ago is whether it is possible that the baptistery was built specifically to receive the ciborium of Bishop Maurice in the late 8th century. While bearing in mind the Carolingian idea of *renovatio* and imitations of late antique models, this hypothesis becomes even more interesting.¹²²

¹¹⁹ JURKOVIĆ, M., Monumentalni pejzaž Novigrada nekoć i sad, in: JURKOVIĆ, M., MATEJČIĆ, I., ZIHERL, J. (eds.), *Novigradski lapidarij*, Novigrad, 2006, p. 15.

¹²⁰ MATEJČIĆ, I., Ranosrednjovjekovni spomenici Lapidarija i novigradska katedrala, in: JURKOVIĆ, M., MATEJČIĆ, I., ZIHERL, J. (eds.), *Novigradski lapidarij*, Novigrad, 2006, p. 21-34.

¹²¹ JURKOVIĆ, 1996: 21.

¹²² JURKOVIĆ, 2006: 11-18.

Only the spatial disposition and windows above the central nave (which were reopened there during the restoration works) could point to the existence of an earlier building since today's cathedral has been enveloped in the baroque-classicist appearance. The church was initially dedicated to St Pelagius, a Novigrad martyr from the 3rd century. According to a legend, he was executed outside the walls of Novigrad, right on the site where the church was later built. The hypothesis of an early Christian building that would logically stand next to an early Christian baptistery (if it had existed at the time) was widely accepted during the 20th century. B. Marušić implies its early Christian original by stating that at the time of construction the church was located outside the walls of a late antique *castrum*. Furthermore, Jurković (in the 1990s) indicated the possibility that a small building of a memorial character related to the powers of St Pelagius was hidden in the foundations of today's church.¹²³ If this was the case, the church was later apparently enlarged to the size of today's building, and this is the only thing known about its eventual early Christian appearance. The original function is unknown, but it is speculated that it was a cemetery, primarily due to the finding of graves and sarcophagi next to the church, especially behind the sanctuary.¹²⁴ Undeniably, the church underwent a series of significant interventions in the early Middle Ages. However, the only question is whether a possible new church with a crypt completely replaced the older early Christian one? Or the one in the form it has been considered until recently never even existed?

A strong impulse to these new reflections was given by the research of the crypt of the church of St Pelagius in the late 90s of the 20th century under the leadership of I. Matejčić. The analysis of the walls indicated that the Novigrad crypt was built at the same time as the sanctuary of the church and that it is almost a direct copy of the crypt of the Aquileian cathedral, spatial relations considering.¹²⁵ Particularly interesting, therefore, seems to be the question of its, i.e., their dating. By processing more than a hundred fragments of the sculpture of liturgical furniture found in the Novigrad crypt and church, which were mostly used as *spolia* during later repairs and adaptations, their early medieval expression was established. In his analysis, Matejčić states that these fragments do not originate from one artisan or workshop and adds that they were probably made in a longer period, from the middle of the 8th to the end of the 9th century. Early medieval chronology is supported by the original stone transept ribbon, which was discovered on the north of three reopened crypt

¹²³ JURKOVIĆ, 1996: 15.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ MATEJČIĆ, 2006: 21-34.

windows. If we add to these arguments the fact that a new dating of the Aquileian crypt has been accepted for twenty years - at the end of the 8th century, more precisely during the reign of Patriarch Pauline, the hypothesis of early medieval dating of the Novigrad crypt and sanctuary above, is yet more probable.¹²⁶

What is indisputable in any case is that at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries in Novigrad there was a large church equipped with lavish liturgical furniture in which, apparently, the Bishop of Mauritius sat. The solid analogy with the crypt of the Aquileian Cathedral, as well as the proven thesis of the Friulian provenance of the ciborium of that same bishop is just another in a series of arguments pointing to the importance of Novigrad on the European map of that period. Ivan Matejčić put it elegantly, saying that if we look at this precious artistic endeavour in a historical context, it reveals itself to us as a great non-verbal historical document, a real archive in time.¹²⁷

Although geographically on the periphery of the Carolingian Empire, there are many elements of artistic production that testify not only to the value of Novigrad's early medieval sculpture but also to the architectural production and reflection and planning of both urban and rural space.

The fortified settlement of Novigrad is only one in a series of settlements that in the early medieval period of Carolingian domination over Istria functioned, either as renovated, taken over or newly founded fortified settlements. Of course, the place it occupies in the Carolingian idea of ruling the peninsula is unique since it is where the ecclesiastical and secular authorities meet. It is the place of the first mention of the so-called Istrian diocese from which various Carolingian ideas, construction and art forms have spread throughout Istria.

One of the common characteristics of many of the fortified settlements of the Carolingian period in Istria, which will be discussed later, is the existence of cemetery churches around 500 meters from the settlement. In this context stands the St Agatha's Church in the cemetery just outside the early medieval city centre and the city walls of Novigrad, only about 500 meters away. Although its spatial characteristics do not coincide with other cemetery churches of Istria in the early Middle Ages, its position in relation to Novigrad's urban core

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

repeats the already known model of correlation between urban space and the church near the walls during Carolingian domination over the peninsula. The church is located south of the road that continues to the axis of the main city communication,¹²⁸ and today it is a three-nave building with the spatial layout that has undergone several alterations over the centuries. After the completion of the conservation works carried out in 1992 by the Rijeka Conservation Service, M. Bradanović published the results and updated the floor plans, side section and cross-sections. Initially, the church was one intercolumn longer and is believed to have had a bell tower at the front. The eastern part ends with three semicircular apses, of which the central one is protruding. Bradanović points to the similarity in spatial planning - three-aisled and rhythmic masonry columns - between the then Cathedral of St Pelagius and the St Agatha's Church.¹²⁹ As for the issue of the chronology of the church, its formal characteristics suggest a wide medieval time span. Unfortunately, the lack of any stone furniture and/or graves makes it impossible to define it chronologically more precisely. However, Jurković briefly notes that perhaps a slight deviation of the central apse from the main axis of the church and the specific shape of the sanctuary with an elongated choir space could indicate a possible early medieval phase of construction.¹³⁰ In this sense, Jurković is somewhat complemented by Bradanović, who also brings several relatively close floor plans of churches dating from the early Middle Ages to the period of mature Romanesque, mostly from the area of today's Germany and Belgium.¹³¹ In the absence of more concrete claims and in anticipation of future analysis of this church and its surroundings, we have to focus on considering the possible use of the model of functioning of the cemetery church in relation to the fortified settlement - in this case Novigrad, then the centre of Istrian Carolingian rule. Because what is certainly interesting in the context of the general image of the architectural landscape of that period is its already mentioned position regarding the fortified city. This fact could, more than typological determinants, encourage some new questions, especially while bearing in mind the historical and political context of Novigrad from the end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th century.

¹²⁸ BRADANOVIĆ, M., Crkva sv. Agate u Novigradu nakon konzervatorskih istraživanja, in: ZIHERL, J. (ed.), *Novigrad - Cittanova: 599.-1999.*, Novigrad, Pučko otvoreno učilište Novigrad-Cittanova, 2002, p. 88.

¹²⁹ BRADANOVIĆ, 2002: 93.

¹³⁰ JURKOVIĆ, 1996: 26-27.

¹³¹ BRADANOVIĆ, 88-97.

2.2.1.2. Girona

Chronologically almost simultaneously, yet on the other border of the Frankish realm, the 780s will mark the beginning of Carolingian domination in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula. Girona, a city on the ancient road of *Via Augusta* and at the confluence of four rivers - the Ter, Onyar, Güell and Galligants, the former centre of the diocese after a short period of Muslim domination, will renew its role. The area between the Albera Mountains and the Tordera River will unite under its episcopal jurisdiction, which means that, in addition to its former territory, it will also include the one that was ruled by the ancient city of Empúries in the Visigothic era.

Unlike the Istrian case, the exact year of the Carolingian invasion in Girona was written in the *Cronica de Moissac* and in the *Annals Barchinonenses*. According to the records from these two sources, the takeover of the city took place in the 785, 68 years after it came under Muslim rule. The inhabitants themselves surrendered the town to the Frankish army without a fight. In addition to Girona, the Carolingians automatically took control of the surrounding territory, from Tordera in the south all the way to the Pyrenees in the north and from the Mediterranean coast to Guillerics and Garrotxa in the east. This territory, with an area approximately equal to Istria (approx. 2500 km²) will soon be organized as a county with the *pagus* of Girona, Besalu, Vallespir, Peralada and Empúries, which for many historians would mark the cornerstone of future Catalonia.¹³² Girona would regain its role as a diocese and become the second diocese of then historical Catalonia, along with Elne of Roussillon. For the next 16 years, by the time the Carolingians incorporated Barcelona into their Empire (801), Girona would be the centre of the Frankish state's borderline. Its already mentioned position at the confluence of four rivers and on one of the most important roads of ancient and medieval times of the area - the then *Via Augusta* highway, certainly allowed the Carolingians easier control of the territory and enabled the planning of further expansion to the south.

Although there is a number of historical documents preserved from this period, certainly far more than in the Istrian example, there is no concrete evidence of the existence of a bishop's

¹³² The first duke to rule the territory from Girona was Rostany, apparently Carolingian.

palace/residence at the time of the Carolingian rule of the city (since the last quarter of the 8th century). But the intense archaeological research the city has witnessed over the past twenty years shows considerable progress in understanding the way its space has functioned throughout its rich history.

Archaeological results have so far pointed to the fact that the origin of the city of Girona should be traced back to the time of the Roman Republic, in the first quarter of the 1st-century a.C.¹³³ The orthogonal grid of streets with a total area of 4.6 hectares was surrounded by walls that underwent several changes in the 4th century. Five square towers from that period have been preserved to this day.¹³⁴ Right next to the walls of the ancient city was an episcopal complex with a basilica and a necropolis. It probably rested on the site of martyrdom, erected on the tomb of St Felix, a Christian martyr persecuted and sentenced to death in 303 by Diocletian and Maximilian. It was the central place of Christianity in the area of Girona and the only well-documented sacral object in the town before the arrival of the Arabs. The first city centre of the diocese, dating between the 3rd and 4th century, was located on this site.¹³⁵ In the Visigothic era (between the 6th and 7th centuries) the older building was replaced by a basilica,¹³⁶ while today's church is a late medieval building. The 8th century witnessed two changes of government. Archaeological evidence for the first, during the Muslim period, is almost non-existent, except for a few necropolises whose chronologies indicate the time between the 7th and 9th centuries.¹³⁷ These alterations are most clearly preserved in the outer membrane of Girona: its defensive walls (northern and eastern parts) were expanded during the 9th century. Such a decision by the new rulers is not surprising given the already mentioned evident defensive character of Girona and its position on *Via Augusta*, the road that connected the north and south of the peninsula. Some authors believe that the same wave of construction, as part of the strengthening of the eastern segment of the walls, belonged to

¹³³ SUREDA JUBANY, M., L'església en la Girona medieval, in: CANAL DE DIEGO, E. (ed.), *Girona medieval. La clau del regne*, Girona, 2014, p. 27-56; NOLLA, J. M., La defensa de la ciutat. Les muralles medievals de Girona, in: CANAL DE DIEGO, E. (ed.), *Girona medieval. La clau del regne*, Girona, 2014, p. 57-70; AMELA VALVERDE, L., Sobre la fundación de *Gerunda* (Girona, prov. Girona). Unas notas, *Tiempo y Sociedad*, 30, 2018, p. 10. See the related bibliography.

¹³⁴ NOLLA, J. M., La ciutat tardoantiga de Gerunda, bressol del cristianisme gironí, *Revista de Girona*, 240, 2007, p. 62-66; NOLLA, J. M., PALAHÍ, L., SAGRERA, J., SUREDA, M., CANAL, E., GARCIA, G., LLOVERAS, M. J., CANAL, J., *Del forum a la plaça de la catedral. Evolució historicourbanística del sector septentrional de la ciutat de Girona*, Ajuntament de Girona, 2008, p. 23-31.

¹³⁵ DE PALOL I SALELLAS, PLADEVALL I FONT, 1999: 78, 96-97.

¹³⁶ NOLLA, J. M., PALAHÍ, LL, *Els orígens de la basílica de Sant Feliu de Girona. Dades documentals i arqueològiques. Estat de la qüestió*, Estudis Arqueològics 9, Girona, 2011.

¹³⁷ NOLLA, J. M., SUREDA, M., El món funerari antic, tardoantic i altomedieval a la ciutat de Girona. Un estat de la qüestió, *Annals de l'Institut d'Estudis Gironins*, XL, 1999, p. 13- 66.

the still missing Gironella¹³⁸ fortification, of an around 1,200 square meters triangular floor plan with a large circular tower.¹³⁹

Another significant intervention confirmed from the time of the Carolingian rule (although only by written sources) during the first half of the 9th century is the construction of the church of St Mary.¹⁴⁰ The question remains whether there was an earlier sacral building in its place since it is the most representative location in the city, the site of the ancient forum - the civil, economic and political centre of Girona. The impressiveness of the place was further contributed by the fact that part of the forum with the temple rose on a terraced platform approximately 14 meters higher than the rest of the ancient square. It is precisely this place where the monumental Gothic Cathedral is located today. It is possible that, although still unproven, the Cathedral may preserve the yet undiscovered remains of the Carolingian predecessor. The symbolism of this place is unquestionable and absolutely corresponds to the Carolingian idea of *renovatio*, whether it is a remodelling of a late antique or an unlikely undertaking to build an entirely new church, on the site of a former ancient temple.

A document from 841-842 indicates the construction of the church. There it is mentioned as the centre of the diocese of Girona next to the already existing church of St Felix (*sancta Maria et sanctus Felix sedis Gerundae*).¹⁴¹ The archaeological evidence that would indicate the phase of the church of St Mary from that time is still missing, but that does not mean that its remains are not hidden under or within the dimensions of today's church.¹⁴² In addition, the document enables us to conclude that the new Cathedral, within the city walls, became a co-cathedral together with the former church of St Felix.

The continuity of use of the Ducal Palace from the time of the Visigoths has witnessed modifications in function. Archaeological excavations in the cathedral square, where 20 silos were excavated in the cellar of the *cellarium* have shown that in Carolingian times they were

¹³⁸ First mention is from 1052. See in MARTÍ, R., *Col·lecció diplomàtica de la Seu de Girona (817-1100)*, Barcelona, Fundació Noguera, 1997, doc. 272, a. 1054.

¹³⁹ CANAL, J, CANAL, E., NOLLA, J. M., *Girona, de Carlemany al feudalisme (785- 1057). El trànsit de la ciutat antiga a l'època medieval*, Vol. 5, Ajuntament de Girona, 2003, p. 123-131.

¹⁴⁰ MARTÍ, 1997.

¹⁴¹ MARQUÈS, J. M., *Cartoral, dit de Carlemany, del bisbe de Girona (ss. IX-XIV)*, Fundació Noguera, Barcelona, 1993, doc. 4, a. 842.

¹⁴² So far, certain structures of the Romanesque cathedral have been defined under today's church. See in: NOLLA et al., 2008: 108-114. In addition to the finds inside the city walls in the period of the mature Middle Ages, see also about the excavations outside the city walls in AUGÉ, A., FRIGOLA, J., *La plaça de Pallol de Girona. Troballes arqueològiques des del segle I-II DC fins al segle XIX-XX, X Jornades d'Arqueologia de les Comarques de Girona*, Arbúcies, 2010, p. 639-647.

used for food storage. Also, they were connected to the Cathedral of St Mary.¹⁴³ Until modern times, the only churches within the city walls were the Cathedral and two other smaller churches, the church of Santa Maria de les Puelles and the church of Sant Genis, which are also thought to be the result of Carolingian architectural interventions.¹⁴⁴

Besides these interventions in the tissue of the late ancient city *intra muros*, on the site of today's church of Sant Martí Sacosta there was a much earlier cemetery outside the city walls ("*juxta murum Gerundae civitatis*"), on the old road to the south leading to Via Augusta. This information is known from documents from the 898.¹⁴⁵ Recent research on this site indicates the continuity of the sacral area since the time of the Visigoths, which should be supported by the found fragment of the altar railing (Fig. 1). There is no information about the appearance of the church from the time when the Carolingians ruled the city. So far, we can only wait for possible archaeological research that could shed light on this problem. The position of this church is additionally interesting in the context of the relationship between the fortified town and its sacral cemetery buildings since it is located approximately 300 meters away from the city centre and the Cathedral of St Mary.

In the direction to the north, again around 300 meters from the Cathedral, another cemeterial church was built. It was right next to the banks of one of the four rivers of Girona - Galligants, on the site where the Romanesque church of Sant Nicolau was built.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ NOLLA, J. M., PALAHÍ, L., SAGRERA, J., SUREDA, M., CANAL, E., GARCIA, G., LLOVERAS, M. J., CANAL, J., *Del forum a la plaça de la catedral. Evolució historicourbanística del sector septentrional de la ciutat de Girona*. Ajuntament de Girona, 2008, p. 128-130.

¹⁴⁴ NOLLA, J. M., SAGRERA, J., Girona. La ciudad carolingia, in: CAMPS, J. (ed.), *Catalunya a l'època carolíngia: art i cultura abans del romànic (segles IX i X)*, Barcelona, Museu nacional d'art de Catalunya 1999, p. 79.

¹⁴⁵ G. Oura i Güibes, *Catalunya romànica*. Vol. V. El Gironès, la Selva... Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1991.

¹⁴⁶ NOLLA, SAGRERA, 1999: 77-79.

2.2.1.3. Poreč and Pula

The transformation of the structures and the layout of the two urban centres, Poreč and Pula, took place in the early Christian era. It was the period when the cathedrals, usually having been located on the outskirts of the cities, gained primacy over the Roman forums. In the 6th century, the monumental Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč (Fig. 2) and the church of St Mary Formosa in Pula (Fig. 3) were built. The forms and ideas of these monuments were later one used as one of the main sources of inspiration for the investors and the builders of Istrian churches at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century. It is also important to note that there were no extensive changes in their appearance, or at least we do not know about them; these churches have continued to be one of the most glorious expressions of the past. The only exception from Pula is the inscription of Bishop Handegis (Fig. 4).¹⁴⁷

Almost nothing is known about the urban character of these two episcopal centres at the time of the Frankish conquests of Istria. So far the only confirmed architectural intervention in the urban layout of Poreč is the transformation of a part of the episcopal cathedral complex of the northern basilica. However, this change probably did not happen before 827, when Poreč saw its formal incorporation into the territory of the Carolingian Empire. This new built chapel carried a strong Carolingian signature. It followed the well-known architectural model of the triapsal hall church, which will also be discussed in detail in the following chapters. This programmatically strong intervention shows that even Poreč – a city of indisputably strong Eastern Roman tradition, acknowledged this new architectural solutions imported from the neighbouring territories under Carolingian governance. However, it did take a bit longer for the new trends to enter into the urban area, since it is assumed that the rural Istria, has already been largely covered with the network of the with newly built, or at least transformed monuments which carried a strong message of the new elites.

The architecture of the first half of the 9th century in Pula is as unknown as that of Poreč. While in Poreč there is at least one structure preserved (in ruins), there have been no architectural witnesses of that time found in Pula. One of the rare relics of the Carolingian

¹⁴⁷ JURKOVIĆ, M., Arhitektura karolinškog doba, in MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio I, Rasprave i vrela*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000, p. 168.

era is the inscription of the Bishop Handegis (Fig. 4), which indicates that the era marked by the change of government in the 830's was very alive and artistically fruitful.¹⁴⁸ The northern wall of today's cathedral, which resembles a kind of an open-air lapidarum, confirms this assumption at least to some extent. In the wall, next to the gable with Handegis' inscription, several dozen fragments of sculpture from the early Middle Ages were built in (Fig. 5). Of course, there are the examples of the unfortunately lost architecture. However, there have been a few lost, but at least documented examples, such as the church of St Michael, St Clement and the church of St Catherine (Fig. 6) on the islet of the same name in the Bay of Pula. Yet this two (or three) examples have survived only in the notes of researchers from the beginning of the 20th century. Today it is presumed that the churches of St Clement and the one of St Catherine should be considered as the architectural accomplishments of the Carolingian idea. On the other hand, while there is no monumental architecture left within the city layout, many examples have been discovered in the vicinity of Pula, in its rural environment. It is where the architectural landscape was experiencing its real renaissance.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ MATEJČIĆ, I., Pula, in MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio I, Rasprave i vrela*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000, p. 60-61.

¹⁴⁹ For examples, see about the continuity of sites on the islands of Brijuni. BEGOVIĆ DVORŽAK, V., Rezidencijalni kompleks u uvali Verige na Brijunima, *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu*, 26-27/1, 1994, p. 25-46; BEGOVIĆ, V., DVORŽAK SCHRUNK, I., *Brijuni - prošlost, graditeljstvo, kulturna baština*, Zagreb, Golden marketing - Tehnička knjiga, 2006; BEGOVIĆ DVORŽAK, V., DVORŽAK SCHRUNK, I., TUTEK, I., Crkva Sv. Marije, građena uz castellum u uvali Madona, Brijuni. Kasnoantičko i bizantsko razdoblje, *Prilozi instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu*, 24, 2007, p. 229-240.

2.2.1.4. Urgell, Vic and Barcelona

The duality of two geographically completely opposed areas of Catalonia and Istria was clearly visible on the example of just mentioned dioceses in Istria and Catalonia – Novigrad, Girona and Poreč, as it will be discussed in the following pages on the examples of Urgell and Vic. While the already well-known story of the lack of written sources is again actual with the problem of Poreč, where on the other hand there is at least one preserved monument that “writes” history instead of written sources, in Urgell and Vic the situation is diametrically opposite. Several documents, almost as narrators, recount events from the end of the 8th century and the arrival of the Franks. Unfortunately, there is yet no material evidence in the form of architecture or sculpture remains.

The period that followed the Frankish conquest and the peaceful takeover of Girona in 785 was strategically crucial for further Frankish expansion throughout the territories of the “old” Catalonia. The Pyrenees have been crossed, and the border of the Frankish kingdom from the mountain peaks will soon be extended further south to the Iberian Peninsula, to the Cadí mountain range in the pre-Pyrenees. At the same time, the counties along the east coast all the way to the Tordera River have been ruled by new rulers from Central Europe for several years, albeit in constant turmoil and opposition to a powerful force from the south, Islam. The centre of the diocese was re-founded in Girona, a city on the ancient highway that connected one of the eastern Pyrenees passes (Panissars) with the south. It is quite clear that the Frankish desire to expand could not stop at Girona. Barcelona and ancient Tarraco (Tarragona) were the next great goal that would only be partially achieved in the centuries that followed. However, to the strategically well-organized Frankish force, it must have been clear that it was necessary to secure both the central and northwestern areas of Catalonia, through which the ancient roads from the Pyrenees also have descended to Barcelona and Tarragona. It was on one of these roads - *Strada Francisco*, which took the already incised ancient direction, where the city of Vic, ancient Ausona, was located. The dominance that this city had in the territory is unquestionable. It was located on the river Meder, approximately 6-7 kilometres from the course of the river Ter, which connected the interior of Catalonia with Girona and finally the coast. The role of Ter in the period was undeniable, primarily because it represented the then border of the Frankish realm. Thus, Vic also had

the function of a 'checkpoint', completing the defensive network of nearby fortifications along the Ter meander, among which L'Esquerda de Roda is up until now perhaps the best explored.¹⁵⁰

Eighty kilometres of direct aerial distance northwest of Vic, deep in the Pyrenees, there was another centre of the diocese - Urgell, the continuity of which also goes back far into the centuries preceding the tripartite of power between the Visigoths, Muslims and Franks. The organization of the Urgell urban area in the period before the enthronement of the Carolingian government in the 9th century is still under debate. There are two conflicting opinions - the traditional one states that the ancient Roman and later Visigothic city was organized on the hill Castellciutat (similar as in Vic), descending along the banks of the river Segra only at the turn of the 8th to 9th century, as evidenced by the newly built cathedral complex. The second, more recent thinking is based upon the latest archaeological discoveries indicating a possible late antique necropolis in the area of today's centre of Urgell, right next to the cathedral complex.¹⁵¹ This indeed calls into question the original claim that the part along the river was built *ex novo*. However, just as in almost all cases so far, but also in those that follow, the results of the future and systematic researches are the only ones which will offer a stable basis for any further conclusions.

As for the organization of the church government authority, the arrival of Muslims in the area of Urgell did not mark any rupture in its way of functioning. The diocese continued to exist continuously¹⁵² until 793 and the attack of 'Abd al-Malik's army when both the former Visigothic cathedral and the city itself suffered irreparable damage to most of the buildings.

¹⁵⁰ On the control of the border area on the river Ter more in following chapters.

¹⁵¹ CARRERO SANTAMARÍA, 2010: 251-291. With the accompanying bibliography: RUF, M.A., VILLARÓ, A., L'església romànica de Santa Eulàlia de la Seu d'Urgell, *Urgellia*, 11, 1992-1993, p. 487-509; VILLARÓ I BOIX, A., La ciutat de la Seu i la muralla, in "Catalunya Romànica", VI, L'Alt Urgell, Andorra, Barcelona, 1992, p. 311- 313; VILLARÓ I BOIX, A., *Hèrcules i la ciutat: Un passeig per la història de la Seu*, Barcelona, Caixa Catalunya, 1995, p. 18-45; VILLARÓ I BOIX, A., Intervencions arqueològiques a la Seu d'Urgell: cap a un horitzó romà tardà, *Revista d'Arqueologia de Ponent*, 8, 1998, p. 193-196; VILLARÓ I BOIX, A., Excavacions d'urgència a la ciutat d'Urgell: una aproximació als seus orígenes tardoromans, in: *Comerç i vies de comunicació (1000 a.C.- 700 d.C.). XI col.loqui internacional d'arqueologia de Puigcerdà. Puigcerdà, 31 d'octubre i 1 de novembre de 1997*, Puigcerdà, 1998, p. 435-447; VILLARÓ I BOIX, A., Ciutat d'Urgell, in: DE PALOL I SALELLAS, P., PLADEVALL I FONT, A. (eds.), *Del Romà al Romànic. Història, art i cultura de la Tarraconense mediterrània entre els segles IV i X*, Barcelona, Edita - Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1999, p. 94-95; ADELL I GISBERT, J.A., BESERAN I RAMON, P., SIERRA I REGUERA, A., VILLARÓ I BOIX, A., *La catedral de la Seu d'Urgell*, Barcelona, Angle, 2000, p. 23-24.

¹⁵² The first recorded bishop of Urgel was Sant Just mentioned among others as a participant in the Council of Toledo in 527. See in: BARAUT OBIOLS, C., Urgell. La ciutat i el bisbat durant l'època carolíngia, in: CAMPS, J., (ed.), *Catalunya a l'època carolíngia: art i cultura abans del romànic (segles IX i X)*, Barcelona, Museu nacional d'art de Catalunya 1999, p. 73-76.

The last quarter of the 8th century in Urgell (786-799) was marked by the reign of Bishop Félix d'Urgell (autochthonous Hispanic - *natione hispanus*) and the reign of Duke of Urgell and Cerdanya - Borrell I, also probably of autochthonous Hispanogothic origin. Although the cooperation of the two local rulers at the level of management and organization could have been more than successful, at the end of the 8th century Urgell became famous throughout Europe precisely because of his bishop - Félix d'Urgell. Due to his heretical doctrine of adoption,¹⁵³ he eventually had to abdicate from the position. The schism with the Hispano-Gothic / Visigothic system occurred at the macro level of the church organization as well, as the diocese of Urgell ceased to correspond to the Tarraconensis metropolis. It came under the administration of the archdiocese of Narbonne which corresponded directly to the Carolingian rulers.¹⁵⁴

The consequences of Félix's heretical belief can be seen in one of the arguments that go in support of the hypothesis of building a new episcopal complex right along the Segra River, at the foot of the ancient and late antique Castellciutat. Some researchers believe that such a decision was due to the desire for 'complete reconstruction', the reform that was carried out along this zone after the departure of Félix. Moreover, it was undoubtedly further encouraged by the fact that in 793, the city was attacked and partially destroyed. The bishops Leidrad of Lyon and Nebridius of Narbonne, representatives of the Frankish / Carolingian government that had ruled the area of Girona for some time, and from 788 nominally Urgell, were to carry the aforementioned reform.¹⁵⁵ It is believed that this renovation did not refer only to the new building constructions, but also to what the sacral architecture in its essence has been representing - a new Church organization.

Nevertheless, such interesting, but not easily provable arguments should be taken with a dose of caution, especially since the same situation has repeated in Vic. It is also possible that the whole area, with Urgell and Vic as centres, was subject to the same system reform since in Vic the construction of the new cathedral complex has been led by a bishop sent from Narbonne, although at least a quarter of a century after the death of Nebridius.

¹⁵³ The teaching that Christ as a man is only a stepson of God and that he is not of a divine nature. This teaching originated on the Iberian Peninsula, and in addition to Félix, it was also supported by Archbishop Elipand of Toledo.

¹⁵⁴ BOLOS, J., HURTADO, V., *Atles del comtat d'Urgell (v788-993)*, Rafael Dalmau, Barcelona, 2006, p. 13.

¹⁵⁵ *Idem*, 14.

The first mention about the new cathedral in Urgell dates back to 840, almost at the same time as the new Girona cathedral is mentioned. It is a document donated by Duke Seniofred I of Cerdanya-Urgell, which states that the old church was destroyed by infidels and rebuilt by believers in the time of Charlemagne.¹⁵⁶ In addition to the Cathedral of Santa María, the church dedicated to the apostles Peter and Andrew was also mentioned. It is believed that this building corresponds to the later mentioned church of Sant Miquel, located next to the cathedral.¹⁵⁷ But the possibility that there were three churches remains - dedicated to Mary, Peter and Miquel, just as was the case in Terrassa. Documents from the time of Bishop Ermengol (1010-1035) tell us about the changes in the cathedral complex, upgrades, construction of new churches and their consecrations.¹⁵⁸ It was Ermengol who in his three decades of the ruling gave the cathedral complex a new look. Thus it happened here again in Urgell, as well as in other urban centres throughout Catalonia. The possible phases witnessing the construction of the cathedral complex from the time of Carolingian domination over that area were again annulled. Therefore there is not much left but to hope for future archaeological research that might shed new light on the forms of the mentioned buildings.

Furthermore, the name of the heretical bishop Félix d'Urgell is associated with the monastery of Sant Sadurní de Tavèrnoles, built a bit more than 3 km from the centre of Urgell, where he resided as a monk before he was appointed bishop. The architecture of this monument today again (unfortunately) only testifies later periods, from the 11th century onwards, just

¹⁵⁶ See in: RIU I RIU, M., *La formació del patrimoni de la catedral i les actuacions dels seus bisbes*, in *L'Alt Urgell*. Andorra, Barcelona, 1992. It was also mentioned a year earlier, in 839, in a document on the consecration of the church, which researchers are not sure is completely credible. See in: CARRERO SANTAMARÍA, 2010: 254; Cf. PUJOL I TUBAU, P., *L'acta de consagració i dotació de la catedral d'Urgell, de l'any 819 o 839*, *Estudis Romànics*, 2, 1917, p. 92-115; BARAUT, C., *La data de l'acta de consagració de la Catedral carolíngia de la Seu d'Urgell*, *Urgellia*, 7, 1984-1985, p. 515-525; BARAUT, C., *Les actes de consagracions d'esglésies de l'antic bisbat d'Urgell (segles IX-XII)*, La Seu d'Urgell, Societat Cultural Urgel·litana, 1986, p. 53-56.

¹⁵⁷ The old church of San Miquel was located on the site of today's Gothic church of Santo Domingo. It is first mentioned in 1021 in the will of the priest Vives, and from the document of Bishop Ermengol from 1033 it can be assumed that he had it built. Without going into further developments regarding the analogy with the church dedicated to the apostles Peter and Andrew, it is worth mentioning that during the 2nd half of the 14th century, the church of San Miquel was donated to the community of Santo Domingo, who then (at that place?) built a new church dedicated to St Dominica. Researchers state that the title San Miquel was then transferred to a church dedicated to the apostles Peter and Andrew (in the literature known as San Pera). See in: CASAS Y LOSCOS, L., *Sant Miquel de la Seu d'Urgell (abans Sant Pere)*. Història, in: "Catalunya Romànica", 1992, VI, p. 362 and CASAS Y LOSCOS, M.-L., Ramos i Martínez, M.L., *Sant Miquel de la Seu d'Urgell*, "Catalunya Romànica", 1992, VI.

¹⁵⁸ See in: CARRERO SANTAMARÍA, 2010: 255-256 with related bibliography.

like almost all the examples of monuments from urban centres or their immediate surroundings in the area of Catalonia. However, the importance of this monastery for the period of Carolingian domination over the studied area is unquestionable. Among other things, it is because at the beginning of the 9th century the monastery went through a transition from Visigothic (Hispanic-Gothic) liturgy and organization to accepting a new Benedictine model conducted primarily by the Franks themselves. It is thus documented as the first Benedictine monastery both in the province of Urgell and in Catalonia.¹⁵⁹

* * *

Vic was conquered by the Frankish army as early as the end of the 860s.¹⁶⁰ It was only then that Duke Guifré el Pelós began the reintegration of the central parts of 'old Catalonia' into the Carolingian Empire. As for the re-establishment of the diocese of Vic, it will be realized somewhat earlier - in 855, with the arrival of Bishop Gotmar to power, sent from the metropolitan Narbonne. But it was not until three decades later, in 888, that the first serious construction work was documented in Vic. A cathedral complex consisting of three churches was dedicated to St Peter, St Mary and St Miquel. These churches would have fully corresponded in their patron saints to those of Urgell. Again same as in Urgell, there were not located on the site of a former cathedral from the Visigothic era. The new cathedral complex was built in the lower part of the city, while the upper areas, where the Roman temple was located since ancient times, were converted into the castle of the rulers of the city - the Montaca family, for whom the temple was the central part of the fortress.¹⁶¹

Based on previous archaeological excavations, researchers assume that the church of St Sadurní was built along the edge of the fortification in the late 8th or early 9th century, in the service of the duke's private chapel, while continuing the cult of the place from ancient

¹⁵⁹ More about the monastery Sant Sadurní in the following chapters.

¹⁶⁰ JUNYENT I SUBIRÀ, E., *La Ciutat de Vic i la seva historia*, Vic, Curial, 1976; OLLICH I CASTANYER, I., Vic. La ciutat a l'època Carolíngia, in: CAMPS, J. (ed.), *Catalunya a l'època carolíngia: art i cultura abans del romànic (segles IX i X)*, Barcelona, Museu nacional d'art de Catalunya 1999, p. 89-94.

¹⁶¹ OLLICH I CASTANYER, 1999: 92. For example, the central *cella* became the central courtyard around which the fort was built.

times.¹⁶² Although this is not a monastery as in the case of Urgell, the cult of St Sadurni, a 3rd-century martyr from Toulouse, is an obvious pattern repeated in both cities. Nothing has been preserved from the early medieval building in this case either; only the Romanesque façade points to the medieval history of the site.¹⁶³

As for the cathedral complex, to this day no archaeological remains that would indicate the existence of an early medieval complex have been found.¹⁶⁴ Researchers state that the reason for this, among other things, was the fact that they were built of weak materials that required constant intervention. It was so until the Romanesque era and Bishop Oliba (11th century) when significant changes in the cathedral complex took part. Up until today one of the three churches (that of Sant Pere, today's cathedral) has been preserved.¹⁶⁵ The question of the fate of the other two churches that formed the cathedral complex remains open. The location of the church of Sant Miquel has not been defined to this day, while there are certain indications that the church of Santa Maria was located in front of the church of Sant Pere, in the foundations of today's Placa de la Catedral.¹⁶⁶

As already stated in the first sentences, understanding of the architecture in both Vic and Urgell during the period of the first contact with the Frankish realm is insufficient and still full of gaps. With such a premise, there is nothing left but to wait for new research that may reveal new structures, both architectural and sculptural. They could eventually complete this hardly-known picture of the architectural landscape of urban centres from the time of Frankish / Carolingian rule around the area of the Catalan counties.

The last successfully conquered urban centre on the route of the Frankish expansion south of the Pyrenees was Barcelona (Fig. 7).¹⁶⁷ This border town near the river Llobregat, which will officially become the new borderline of the mighty Carolingian Empire, was finally incorporated into the Empire in 801. Barcelona of the 9th century continued to live its late

¹⁶² More about the history of archaeological research in Vic see in: OLLICH, I., DE ROCAFIGUERA, M., *L'arqueologia a Osona: 1952-2002*, *Ausa*, 148-149, 2002, p. 35-52.

¹⁶³ OLLICH I CASTANYER, 1999: 92.

¹⁶⁴ OLLICH I CASTANYER, I., DE ROCAFIGUERA, M., *La Catedral de Vic i els orígens i formació de la ciutat. Una aproximació arqueològica*, in: CRISPÍ, M., FUENTES, S., URBANO, J. (eds.), *La Catedral de Sant Pere de Vic*, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2019, p. 41-51.

¹⁶⁵ The oldest finds related to the Cathedral of Sant Pere date back to the 10th century and refer to the caliphate capitals found during the discovery of the Romanesque crypt. OLLICH I CASTANYER, 1999: 92.

¹⁶⁶ Also, only the remains of the Cloquer necropolis with anthropomorphic burials, dating to the period between the 9th and 10th centuries, point to the early medieval chronology (from the time of Gotmar). See OLLICH I CASTANYER, 1999: 92.

¹⁶⁷ BOLOS, J., HURTADO, V., *Atlas del comtat de Barcelona (801-993)*, Barcelona, Dalmau, 2018.

antique history, marked by the continuity of secular and sacral rule from the Visigothic period.¹⁶⁸ But the city would have to wait a couple of decades for its renovation as an episcopal centre after the Carolingians had forced the Muslim government out. Only the arrival of the Frankish bishop Frodoí at the beginning of the seventh decade of the 9th century will mark the true renewal of the episcopal idea. Frequent historical turmoil and sporadic looting during the 9th and 10th centuries will ultimately result in extremely poor preservation of any structures from the period. While some researchers believe that the looting of the city (985) contributed to this lack of preserved monuments, others point to the archaeological results that have not yet indicated the material evidence of any drastic destruction.¹⁶⁹ The fact is that the findings are negligible. Nevertheless, in this context, an interesting sculpture from the church of Sant Pere de les Puelles could point to the possible remains of that time (Fig. 8-9). Although the church was first mentioned in 945, there are indications that the church of Sant Sadurní de Tolosa already existed on the site at the time, which is mentioned in a dedication document from 945.¹⁷⁰ Just as Sant Pere, the church of Sants Just and Pastor is also of a much older date than its present appearance reveals. It is even assumed that it may have had the function of a cathedral during the Muslim rule of the city.¹⁷¹

The similar absence of material from the time of the Carolingian rule of this city coincides with the situation in almost all urban centres of the peripheral areas of both Istria and the Catalan counties. The only example that to some extent stands out from this group is the Istrian town of Novigrad. Of all the episcopal centres studied, his tradition, which preceded the era of the Carolingians, had been the least significant, at least according to our current knowledge. It is logical to assume that it was, therefore, easier to implement there.

¹⁶⁸ About the history of ancient Barcelona see GURT, J. M., GODOY, C., *Barcino, de sede imperial a urbs regia en época visigoda*, *Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 25, 2000, p. 425-66.

¹⁶⁹ DE HEREDIA BERCERO, J. B., *Barcino, de colònia romana a sede regia visigoda, medina Islàmica i ciutat comtal: una urbs en transformació*, *Quarhis* 9, 2013, p. 76. On the other hand, see ZIMMERMANN, M., *La prise de Barcelone par Al-Mansûr et la naissance de l'historiographie catalane*, *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 87, 1980, p. 191-218; FELIU I MONTFORT, G., *La presa de Barcelona per Almansor: història i mitificació; discurs de recepció*, Barcelona, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2007.

¹⁷⁰ BARRAL I ALTET, 1981: 253, with the related bibliography.

¹⁷¹ DE HEREDIA BERCERO, 2013: 70.

2.2.2. Rural landscape. Model of expansion of Carolingian power at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century

The state of research in landscape archaeology in Croatia is still in its commencement. In front of this relatively young discipline, there is a long and rich road ahead. A synthetic review of current knowledge is more than necessary - research is unfortunately still mostly fragmented, and the approach in practice rarely follows the methodological paradigm of perceiving space through the prism of at least two different levels - macro and micro.

The availability and increasing use of modern technologies for the purpose of documenting the historical landscape has greatly facilitated and complemented research practices. However, it should be borne in mind that this modern digitization is still just one in a series of instruments by which we in one way or another permanently document newly discovered or revalued monuments. The use of modern technologies such as photogrammetric imaging for orthophoto documentation, three-dimensional terrain models, monuments and sites, storage of a series of data in various databases and/or programs offering georeferencing capabilities has not yet resulted in a new methodology that could provide in the near future answers to some of the key questions.¹⁷² That is why it is now perhaps more necessary than ever to deeply and carefully re-examine certain generally accepted hypotheses and to reflect on the results we obtain.

¹⁷² See one of many papers questioning digital art history and digital humanities in general: DRUCKER, J., Is There a "Digital" Art History?, *Visual Resources: An International Journal of Documentation*, 29/1-2, 2013, p. 5-13.

2.2.2.1. Introduction to the study of the historical landscape on the example of Istria

If we were to look exclusively at historical sources relating to the area of Istria and Catalonia for the period from the 8th to the 10th century, the picture would be completely different from the one we have. There are many historical sources for the area of today's Catalonia in that period. For example, until the year 991 more than 600 documents relating to the area of the counties of Rosselló, Conflent, Vallespir and Fenollet have been preserved. To the contrary, historical sources concerning the period of the late 8th and the beginning of the 9th century are almost non-existent. Nevertheless, the image of the historical landscape in the Istrian case somewhat compensates the lack of written sources.

The event from 804, known as Rižanski placit, is of great significance for understanding the situation in which Istrian society was at that time. The fact that representatives of 172 Istrian towns and settlements were recorded at the mentioned assembly speaks in favour of the fact that Istria was very lively and inhabited at that time. While only seven cities were named, there were many other settlements around Istria defined as urban places in the historical landscape of the early Middle Ages. During the 20th century, and mostly in the past twenty years, to the already known settlements/towns of Pula, Rovinj, Poreč, Trieste, Albona-Labin, Pingvente-Buzet, Montona-Motovun and Cancellarius Civitatis novae several new ones were added to the list.

Thanks to historical-archaeological and geomorphological research, it has been established that in most cases these settlements were created and functioned long before the Byzantine-Carolingian change of government, since the time of prehistoric forts and late antiquity. Continuation of these researches, with the help of other auxiliary disciplines, will undoubtedly result in an even longer list and a richer virtual map of existing, renovated or newly established settlements, primarily in the still insufficiently researched rural spatial context of Istria.

2.2.2.2. From prehistory to romanization

The whole history of human existence testifies to how a man changed himself and his environment, the landscape. The area of the Istrian peninsula has been inhabited since prehistoric times, and the continuity of life has certainly been contributed by the position in the zone of temperate, Mediterranean climate, richness of water sources and favourable geomorphological characteristics of the terrain in general. While the first habitats during the Paleolithic and Mesolithic were mostly in natural shelters that corresponded to the nomadic life of prehistoric man, the period that followed - the Neolithic, and changes in lifestyle resulted in the construction of the first settlements with permanent housing.

A new change, the one that will remain woven into the image of the Istrian landscape to this day, dates back to the Bronze Age (2000-1000 BC) and the Iron Age (1000-100 BC). It was when the primary type of settlement became hillforts, fortified settlements built on naturally protected positions, most often hills. Field prospecting, geomorphological and finally in some cases, archaeological research have indicated a complex network of 423 prehistoric forts (Italian *castellieri*, Croatian *gradine*), of which 231 are located based on material evidence, and 192 hypothetically.¹⁷³ It is believed that primarily the geomorphological characteristics of the Istrian area with many elevations of 20-40 meters of relative altitude served as suitable places for the construction of easily defensible settlements.¹⁷⁴

A large number of modern Istrian towns draw their origins in these Bronze and Iron Age forts. Nevertheless, the Roman era will bring significant changes in the appearance and functioning of the landscape. In connection with this, prehistoric forts will be largely abandoned. The network of Roman villas will cover the Istrian peninsula. They will entirely

¹⁷³ BURŠIĆ-MATIJAŠIĆ, K., *Gradine Istre. Povijest prije povijesti*, Pula, Žakan Juri, 2007, p. 563-564; BURŠIĆ MATIJAŠIĆ, K., MATIJAŠIĆ, R., *L'Istria - dai castellieri al sistema delle ville romane, dalle ville ai villaggi altomedievali ed oltre*, in: CUSCITO, G. (ed.), *Le modificazioni del paesaggio nell'Altoadriatico tra pre-protostoria ed altomedioevo*, Trieste, Editreg, 2013, p. 182.

¹⁷⁴ An insight into the problems of settlements and dwellings in Istria in prehistory can be found in BURŠIĆ MATIJAŠIĆ, 2012. The issue of dwellings and habitation from prehistory to the Middle Ages, but in a wider area, see the issue of *Histria antiqua: Histria antiqua*, Vol. 20, No. 20, 2011. About settlements in the landscape see in: BURŠIĆ MATIJAŠIĆ, K., MATIJAŠIĆ, R., *Istria, Croatia. Ancient settlements in landscape*, in: KOŁODZIEJCZYK, P., KWIATKOWSKA-KOPKA, B. (eds.), *Cracow Landscape Monographs, Vol. 2: Landscape in the past and forgotten landscapes*, Krakow, Jagiellonian University - Cracow University of Technology, 2016, p. 309-318.

adapt to the landscape, being built in more accessible places, in lowlands, hill slopes, and only rarely in highlighted points of the terrain. This new form of architecture will dominate the rural landscape, primarily its coastal belt. At the same time, urban centres will be fortified cities - colonies (*Pola, Parentium, Tergeste*) and municipalities and civitates (*Nesactium, Aegida, Piquentum, Rotium*), partly on the coast, partly in the interior of the peninsula.

A new change would come at the time of the twilight of the Roman Empire, in the time of late antiquity. For centuries, forgotten prehistoric forts would often be reused and re-established¹⁷⁵. Society transformations have resulted in a series of adjustments and changes in villas. The pattern has been echoed both in Istria as in the rest of the Mediterranean horizon.¹⁷⁶ The rural landscape would eventually get a kind of dual perspective, with revitalized hilltops together with the continuity of use and population of the former Roman villas in the lowlands. As such, it will welcome the Carolingians and a new change of government, one that will reunite Istria with the of the former (western) Roman world.

* * *

The Roman era in Istria, then inhabited by the Histrians, formally began with the Roman conquest and the fall of the Histrian fortress of Nesactium in 177 BC. But for the next 120 years, the Romans primarily controlled both the sea routes and the conquered Histrians. Yet, without too much interference in the daily life of the population.¹⁷⁷ The Histrians probably continued to live the normal Iron Age life in their forts. However, given that the coastal belt

¹⁷⁵ BURŠIĆ MATIJAŠIĆ, MATIJAŠIĆ, 2016: 314-315.

¹⁷⁶ RIPOLL, G., ARCE, J., The Transformation and End of Roman villae in the West (Forth-seventh century): Problemes and Perspectives), in: BROGIOLO, G. P., GAUTHIER, N., CHRISTIE, N. (eds.), *Town and their territories between late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Brill, Leiden–Boston–Köln, 2000; CHAVARRÍA ARNAU, A., Transformaciones arquitectónicas de los establecimientos rurales en el Nordeste de la Tarraconensis durante la antigüedad tardía, in: *Bulletí de la Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi*, X, 1996, p. 165-202; CHAVARRÍA ARNAU, A., Villas en Hispania durante la Antigüedad tardía, *Anejos de AEspA XXXIX*, 2006, p. 17-35; BROGIOLO, G. P., CHAVARRÍA ARNAU, A., El final de las villas y las transformaciones del territorio rural en el Occidente (siglos V-VIII), in: FERNÁNDEZ OCHOA, C., GARCÍA-ENTERO, V., GIL SENDINO, F. (eds.), *Las villae tardorromanas en el occidente del Imperio: arquitectura y función*, IV Coloquio Internacional de Arqueología, 2008, p. 193-214. en Gijón, Ediciones Trea, Gijón 2008, p. 193-214.

¹⁷⁷ However, a tax was imposed on the Histrians, part of their land was confiscated, and they were forbidden to carry weapons and pirate. See in: MATIJAŠIĆ, R., *Starija povijest Istre i neki njezini odrazi na novije razdoblje*, Društvena istraživanja, 1, 6-7, Zagreb, 1993, p. 569-585.

and sea routes were already an essential element of Roman control of the territory at that time, access to the coast for the Historians was undoubtedly tricky.¹⁷⁸

It was not before the founding of the Paul and Parentium colonies when the Romanization of both the population and the landscape has started.¹⁷⁹ Matijašić summarized the notion of Romanization as a slow, non-violent process of acculturation of the indigenous population under the influence of the newly colonized inhabitants of Istria.¹⁸⁰ A vital characteristic of this new paradigm was the change in lifestyle, primarily conditioned by the change in economic activity and the transition to agriculture and the cultivation of new crops. Areas previously covered by forests and pastures would be replaced by olive groves and vines that eventually have greened the lowland, flatter areas of the peninsula. The main export product was olive oil, along with wine and grain.¹⁸¹ The coordination of its production was organized from a new type of housing and economic complexes - *villa rustica*, rural constructions which romanized the landscape itself. In a way, it was a rural counterpart to the Romanization of urban centres. The population begins to 'descend' from the forts on the tops of the Istrian hills to their foothills. They started forming settlements near rivers, next to the sea coast and waterways, or in the valleys, on the communication corridors through which the roads were passing.

Along with *villa rustica*, the so-called suburban and maritime villas were built, whose name itself determines the position in space. The abandonment of 'safer' settlements on the tops of hills has gradually started. They have been replaced with the less safe settlements, more

¹⁷⁸ BURŠIĆ MATIJAŠIĆ, MATIJAŠIĆ, 2016: 312. See also MATIJAŠIĆ 1993: 576, which summarizes previous conclusions and notes that in support of the non-violent and slow infiltration of the existing historical population is the fact that in Istria in Roman times there are epigraphic monuments with indigenous historical names, as well as the names of pre-Roman local deities. Cf. DEGRASSI, A., *Culti dell'Istria preromana e romana, Adriatica praehistorica et antiqua, Miscellanea Gregorio Novak dicata*, Zagreb, 1990, p. 615-632.

¹⁷⁹ MATIJAŠIĆ, R., *L'Istria tra Epulone e Augusto: archeologia e storia della romanizzazione dell'Istria, Antichità Altoadriatiche XXXVII*, Preistoria e protostoria dell'Arco Adriatico, EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, Trieste, 1991, p. 235-251; BURŠIĆ-MATIJAŠIĆ, K., MATIJAŠIĆ, R., *La penisola istriana. Gli insediamenti, dalla protostoria alla tarda antichità*. in: MARION, Y., TASSAUX, F. (ed.), *AdriAtlas et l'histoire de l'espace adriatique du VIe s. a.C. au VIIIe s. p.C.*, Actes du colloque international de Rome (4-6 novembre 2013), Scripta Antiqua, 79. Bordeaux: Ausonius Editions, 2015, p. 293-304; BURŠIĆ MATIJAŠIĆ, MATIJAŠIĆ, 2016: 312.

¹⁸⁰ MATIJAŠIĆ, 1993: 576.

¹⁸¹ More in MATIJAŠIĆ, R., *Gospodarstvo antičke Istre: arheološki ostaci kao izvori za poznavanje društveno-gospodarskih odnosa u Istri u antici (I. st. pr. Kr.-III. st. posl. Kr.)*, Pula, Žakan Juri, 1998; CAMBI, N., *Antika*, Zagreb, Naklada Ljevak, 2002.

challenging to control, but certainly more suited for the comfortable living.¹⁸² The landscape again has become the scene of transformation.

When it came to organizing territories and exploiting natural resources, the Romans were virtuosos. The Romanization of rural Istria can be considered a moment of 'awakening' of the landscape and all that it brings and ultimately provides to its inhabitants. It is highly probable that nature and its resources have become truly profitable for the first time in history. Stone has been actively exploited and salt harvested, clay has been extracted, and amphorae and building materials made.

During the period of intensive Romanization, about 300 sites of Roman rural architecture are known in Istria.¹⁸³ It is a slightly smaller number than there were forts in the Bronze and Iron Ages.¹⁸⁴ Landscape transformation and the question of continuity/discontinuity of place, are among the most intriguing issues related to the relationship between forts and new, Roman architecture, just as it will be the case in later periods with other types of architectural heritage. However, the continuity of place is hardly applicable to the example sites dating from this period. It is primarily due to the so-called period of *Pax Romana*, characterized by the slow disappearing of the need for a strategic-defensive function of the fortified settlements.¹⁸⁵ The forts are gradually being abandoned, and previous research has shown that this is primarily the case on the west coast belt. However, it should be noted that places such as Pula, Poreč, Labin and Buzet, which are still the urban centres of the peninsula, have recorded continuity since the Bronze and Iron Ages; they were not abandoned in Roman times. The area of the west coast at the time of the Romanization of Istria was divided into regular rectangular or square plots by the method of centuriation, in order to distribute the land to the colonists during the establishment of new settlements (colonies).¹⁸⁶ It is in this coastal area (up to 15 kilometres inland, approximately to the main road - *Via Flavia*, restored

¹⁸² BURŠIĆ MATIJAŠIĆ, MATIJAŠIĆ, 2016: 313. Contrary to the rule of leaving the forts, there is the example of Flanona (today's Plomin). The local population continued to live in parallel on the hill, but also at the foot.

¹⁸³ BULIĆ, D., *Rimska ruralna arhitektura Istre u kontekstu ekonomske i socijalne povijesti* [Roman Rural Architecture in Istria in the economic and social context], Doctoral Dissertation, University of Zadar, 2014, p. 319-369.

¹⁸⁴ BURŠIĆ-MATIJAŠIĆ, 2007: 582; BULIĆ, 2014: 319-369; BURŠIĆ MATIJAŠIĆ, MATIJAŠIĆ, 2016: 313.

¹⁸⁵ BULIĆ, 2014: 78.

¹⁸⁶ Traces of centuriation in modern times were discovered by P. Kandler, and then by J. Bradford, M. Suić, V. Krizmanich, E. Imamović and R. Chevallier. More about this topic in MATIJAŠIĆ, R., *Ageri antičkih kolonija Pola i Parentium*, Zagreb, Latina et Graeca - VPA, 1988.

in the 2nd half of the 1st century AD¹⁸⁷) where the largest number of sites of Roman rural architecture has been discovered. Most of them have been connected by a dense network of roads and paths, which in some cases were in use until the Middle Ages, and sometimes even today, as field roads.¹⁸⁸ The density of rural architecture within the west coast belt is not at all surprising given the dependence of the Roman economy on waterways. At the same time, the places in the interior of the peninsula (crossing *Via Flavia*) remained somewhat isolated for a long time, and outside the direct influence of Romanization. It resulted in the preservation of the local, historical tradition up until the end of the 2nd century.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ JURKOVIĆ, M., Fortified settlements in Carolingian Istria, in: CHRISTIE, N., HEROLD, H. (eds.), *Fortified Settlements in Early Medieval Europe. Defended Communities of the 8th-10th Centuries*, Oxford - Philadelphia, Oxbow Books, 2016, p. 249. The road is named Via Flavia after Emperor Vespasian who had it repaired in 78 AD. Ancient inscriptions found between Galižana and Fažana in the Pula region prove this thesis. See ŠONJE, A., *Putevi i komunikacije u prethistoriji i antici na području Poreštine*, Poreč 1991, p. 9. Šonje cites a source from FORLATI TAMARO, B., *Inscriptiones Italiae*, vol. X, fasc. I, 1947, p. 705.

¹⁸⁸ For the area south of Novigrad see BENČIĆ, G., Arheološki lokaliteti na području Tara, Frate i Vabriga, in: RATKOVIĆ, D.L. (ed.), *Tar/Frata/Vabriga - kulturna baština*, Poreč, Zavičajni muzej Poreštine, 2006, p. 299-322; BENČIĆ, G., Nastanak Tara - od kule do naselja, in: RATKOVIĆ, D.L. (ed.), *Tar/Frata/Vabriga - kulturna baština*, Poreč, Zavičajni muzej Poreštine, 2006, p. 304-305. The author cites two examples of still relatively passable field roads: in the north-south direction, the Bumbusel road stretches, connecting the *villa rustica* Blek with the one in Vabriga; the second road intersects it, and follows the east-west line connecting the rustic villa Tar with the one in Valletta. Refers to further bibliography: ŠONJE, 1991.

¹⁸⁹ BURŠIĆ MATIJAŠIĆ, MATIJAŠIĆ, 2016: 312.

2.2.2.3. Landscape transformations in late antiquity

It has been a long time since the period from the 3rd to the middle of the 8th and the 9th century has started to be an inexhaustible source of questions. Primarily it was so in the context of continuous functioning and/or transformation of villas and about the re-transformation of the rural landscape, both in Istria and Europe. In the narrative of the early Middle Ages, this continuity would play one of the key roles. The process of understanding the early medieval image of the landscape, choosing the forms and following the functions, is impossible without an insight into the situation that preceded these changes. The Istrian early medieval landscape, together with its artistic and architectural expression, fully testifies to this rich continuity that overflows from idea to realization at different moments. After all, the very philosophy of Carolingians, the most important rulers of early medieval Europe, is based on the concept of the re-awakening of the ancient and late ancient world, in many ways the pre-Renaissance.

Numerous settlements that still function today were originally ancient villas. For example, Civitas Nova was created on the site of one such villa, later transformed into a fortified settlement. It is a town that in few centuries would become a key place of secular and ecclesiastical authority, a connection with centres of the kingdom/empire and the origin of the Carolingian imaginary for further expansion on the peninsula. The time of the late antique transformation is a time of uncertainty that has gripped the provinces of the Roman Empire, resulting in the fortification of ancient villas.¹⁹⁰ This reorganization model, the formation of fortified settlements, but also the continuity of the place, has been proved for Koper,¹⁹¹ Piran, Izola, Umag (Humagum), the already mentioned Civitas Nova and Rovinj, Sipar and castrum on the island of Brijuni.

The question that remains is at what point and on what occasion did the transformation take place. In his latest text on fortified settlements in Istria,¹⁹² Jurković hypothesizes two possible points. However, he is aware of the fact that archaeological or other historical evidence is insufficient to confirm this thesis with greater certainty. The first moment is connected with

¹⁹⁰ BENČIĆ, 2006b: 330.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² JURKOVIĆ, 2016: 249.

the defence system of the limes - *Claustra Alpium Iuliarium*, which has from the 4th century connected the northeastern Italian area and the Adriatic. He considers the period that followed to be the second phase in the increase in the number of fortified castra throughout the Istrian peninsula. For Marušić, this period corresponds to the 4th and 5th centuries. It is when, according to his analysis, Roman villas were gradually abandoned, and settlements formed, which in some cases were erected on the ruins of these Roman buildings.¹⁹³

However, it was not only the villas that were fortified. New times, new political doctrine and riots caused by massive migrations of the population resulted in the re-establishment of the hilltops that in the centuries before, in the pre-Roman world, have served the Histrians as strategic places for the defence and control of the surrounding territory. Among them were the settlements of *Ursaria* (Vrsar), *Ruginium* (Rovinj), *Piranon* (Piran).¹⁹⁴

Although the premise of the continuity of the place and the 'intentional' connection between prehistoric forts and late antique fortified settlements is initially the most logical solution, it is equally possible that late antique society would choose the peaks of hills even beyond prehistoric forts. The math is simple - hills in times of political turmoil and uncertainty, along with numerous fortified villas that also played a crucial role in controlling and defending territories, were the only logical (and possible) places to set up checkpoints in the landscape. Whether or not late antique fortifications were formed in these places for the sake of the already existing remains of previous inhabitants or not will hardly ever be known. Personally, I do not consider the eventual and final conclusion on this subject to be so important. What is certain is the model of human functioning in the rural landscape, how he interacts and uses the landscape, especially in the times when he must be able to defend himself and/or when he must control the territory around him, whether he was a resident of the prehistoric horizon, late antiquity or the early Middle Ages.

¹⁹³ MARUŠIĆ, B., Neki problemi kasnoantičke i bizantske Istre u svjetlu arheoloških izvora, *Jadranski zbornik*, 9, 1975, p. 342.

¹⁹⁴ JURKOVIĆ, 2016: 249. Cf. MICLAUS, L., I borghi d'altura istriani: dinamiche insediative tra tardoantico e altomedioevo, in: CUSCITO, G., MASELLI SCOTTI, F. (eds.), *I borghi d'altura nel Caput Adriae. Il perdurare degli insediamenti dall'età del ferro al medioevo*, *Atti del convegno internazionale di Trieste. Antichità altoadriatiche*, 56, 2004, p. 225-238.

2.2.2.4. New migrations. From the end of the 6th to the 8th century

The duality of Istria would once again stand out when studying the period of new population migrations. This change started at the end of the 6th and during the 7th century. While the area of the west coast would remain relatively stable, the central parts of Istria were to be inhabited by Slavs, who will revive some of the prehistoric hillfort settlements in order to form their own places to live.¹⁹⁵ The question of the functioning, the transformation, abandonment or survival of ancient villas is very relevant for this period as well. As seen many times, and in this case also, the premises that clearly and strongly declare that the concept of the villa in the period between the 6th and 8th century came to an end and that what followed resulted in the abandonment of villas in order to 'fortify' or 'militarize' landscape, should be understood only as possible guidelines in further thinking, by no means as a final conclusion. The research of a Roman villa conducted at the beginning of the century near the early medieval ruined settlement of Guran indicated the continuity of existence from the 1st century when it was built, through late antiquity until the Middle Ages. Its continuity was followed by several changes, the sequences of which prompted new reflections on the model of functioning of ancient villas in the rural landscape. But more on that below.

Returning to the moment of the Slavic infiltration into the Istrian area, the researchers agree that their main goal was not a military campaign, but the occupation of land and fields for cultivation.¹⁹⁶ Simplified and schematically speaking, the dividing line between the nominally Slavic and Roman, later Eastern Roman Istrian world would remain *Via Flavia*. The Romanized population continued to live in the coastal area, both in cities and in somewhat reformed villas. That villas in some cases, such as the already mentioned Novigrad or for example Umag, already had developed or still were developing into semi-urban and urban settlements. So far, researchers have not been able to determine whether the Slavs had any form of political or military organization. There is also no indication of the existence of the elite, the social stratum that was most often the main driver of both the creation and transformation of the urban landscape. Precisely the lack of this class, the creators of social

¹⁹⁵ Researchers as the earliest examples cite Buzet (Piquentum), Roč (Rotium), Labin (Alvona) and Plomin (Flanona). BURŠIĆ MATIJAŠIĆ, MATIJAŠIĆ, 2016: 315.

¹⁹⁶ LEVAK, M., *Slaveni vojvode Ivana. Kolonizacija Slavena u Istri u početnom razdoblju franačke uprave*, Zagreb, Leykam, 2007, p. 45.

change and initiators of construction and artistic productions enabled Byzantium to regain control of the Istrian peninsula probably in the second half of the 7th century.¹⁹⁷ Only the end of the 8th and 9th centuries will attest the new rulers from the centre of Europe - Carolingian. Their dominance on the peninsula will bring a new culture and viewpoints and will soon result in the re-transformation of the rural landscape.

¹⁹⁷ LEVAK, M., Žminj i Žminjština u ranom srednjem vijeku, in: KRAJCAR, S. (ed.), *Žminjski libar II*, Žminj, Katedra čakavskog sabora, 2008, p. 47.

2.2.3. Carolingian era on two edges of the Carolingian state. An overture and expansion of power. Look through two ‘scaling’ perspectives (map 1-7)

Previous research, or perhaps more correctly the study of medieval Istrian settlements, has on several occasions provided a concrete early medieval chronology. However, there is almost no systematic and planned research of the early medieval fortified settlements, except for the examples of Guran where the research is still going, and Dvigrad, which was last explored at the beginning of the century. The successful and long-lasting campaigns of these two settlements were certainly favoured by the fact that life in them ended at the end of the Middle Ages and that today only ruins, unfortunately mostly buried underground and covered with dense vegetation, conserve stories about their history. Apart from Guran (Fig. 10) and Dvigrad (Fig. 11), the early medieval phase has been confirmed for the settlements of Stari Gočan (Fig. 12) and Gusan (Fig. 13), which have also been abandoned and annulled by vegetation. A bright example is certainly the research of the ancient site Stancija Blek, where archaeological excavations have been carried out for the last 12 years, and which, judging by the results of the analysis, has functioned in a modified form during the early Middle Ages.¹⁹⁸

Even at the other end of the Carolingian Empire, at the foot of the Pyrenees, the historical and cultural events of the period have not yet been explored on a sufficient level. Of course, there are exceptions, such as Roda Civitas, a site above the banks of the Ter River that has been the subject of systematic historical and archaeological research for the past few decades. The almost uninterrupted continuity of habitation of this site dates back to the Late Bronze Age, through the Iberian, Visigothic, Carolingian, and finally to the late Middle Ages, when it was abandoned.¹⁹⁹ This corresponds to the model of Istrian early medieval studied settlements such as Dvigrad and Guran, which also ceased to function as organized entities at the end of the Middle Ages.

¹⁹⁸ BENČIĆ, 2006a: p. 300.

¹⁹⁹ It is interesting that just like many Istrian examples during the Roman occupation, it was abandoned for several centuries. OLLICH, I., ROCAFIGUERA, M., OCAÑA, M., The Southern Carolingian Frontier in Marca Hispanica along the River Ter: Roda Civitas and the archaeological site of l'Esquerda (Catalonia), in: CHRISTIE, N., HEROLD H. (eds.), *Fortified Settlements in Early Medieval Europe. Defended communities of the 8th-10th Centuries*. Oxford-Philadelphia, Oxbow, 2016, p. 205-217.

Just as is the case of the Istrian peninsula, here too a large number of assumed and confirmed sites are directly related to the flows of rivers. In the period of the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century, this primarily refers to the flow of the river Ter, which springs in the Pyrenees, descends south and just before Vic moves east and on the way to the Mediterranean coast passes through Girona. This natural line was also the earliest border of Marca Hispanica, before it was moved to the river Llobregat. It is believed that the site of Roda Civitas (L'Esquerda) was the centre of a network of fortifications that followed the course of the river, whose main task was to defend the hinterland of Vic and Girona.²⁰⁰ Early medieval, or more precisely 'Carolingian' chronology, is also presumed for the fortifications of Castell d'Orís, Duocastella, Besora, Torelló, Sarreganyada (Bellmunt), Milany, Cabrera, Voltregà, Manlleu, La Guàrdia, Savellana, Savassona, Casserres, Sant Llorenç del Munt i Querós.²⁰¹

As far as the visual traces of historical periods are concerned, the prehistoric foundations of settlements are mainly revealed by its primordial oval shape. On the other hand, the early Middle Ages will remain 'recorded' to this day, mostly only by fragments of stone remains - parts of sacral buildings and related sculpture, and only sometimes in frescoes and objects of applied art. So although the architecture of that period is in most cases altered, transformed, or hidden, the continuity of the place where the early medieval phase has played an important role in numerous examples will prove to be the rule rather than the exception.²⁰² This is clearly evidenced by several smaller towns which still live today, and which, primarily thanks to the findings of sculpture and/or architecture, confirmed the early medieval chronology. The most famous among them certainly are Istrian settlements of Bale and Sveti Lovreč.

The real state of research of early medieval rural heritage and historical landscape in Istria, unfortunately, does not follow the cultural and historical richness that this region offers. Of the total number of 172 early medieval towns and settlements recorded in the Plee of Rizanaus, not even ten per cent have been confirmed so far. With the name of eight documented, mostly urban centres with a centuries-old tradition (Pula, Rovinj, Poreč, Trieste, Albona-Labin, Pinguente-Buzet, Montona-Motovun and Cancellarius Civitatis novae), only six rural settlements have been explored at least to some extent and added to the list of early

²⁰⁰ *Idem*, 214.

²⁰¹ *Idem*, 215.

²⁰² Settlements such as Sveti Lovreč, Dvigrad, Bale, but also many others prove in the best way, which will be further discussed.

medieval sites. These are the already mentioned Guran, Dvigrad, Stari Gočan, Gusan, Bale and Sveti Lovreč. Other settlements, such as Midnjan or Maružin, only with a few early medieval fragments of sculpture built into churches from later periods indicate the possible existence of rural settlements. In these somewhat marginal cases, there is nothing left but to wait for future research. However, at the same time, due to the certain models of functioning, urban organization of the architectural landscape and the relationship between its individual elements, it is possible to assume the early medieval phase of certain settlements that do not yet confirm this with their material remains. Therefore, in this chapter, the emphasis will be on the possible archaeological and art-historical potential that some of these Istrian settlements carry. The bearers, i.e. the bases in this historical-spatial puzzle, are already confirmed settlements with an early medieval chronology, coastal towns and fortified settlements in the hinterland and inland, monastic complexes and elite estates. Previous analysis of their material remains, as well as their historical-spatial context seen from a broader perspective, pointed to the just mentioned models of functioning and the organization of the processes of construction production that can be applied to still unknown parts of this puzzle. The aim of this review, therefore, will not be to go into details of each site, but through a synchronous approach, on several different analytical levels (from micro to macro perspective) to study the Istrian peninsula in order to finally place it in relation to other peripheral territories of Carolingian states, the Catalan ones.

2.2.3.1. From Novigrad to the interior - a model as an example. Network of communication directions in the context of the study of the historical landscape

The starting point of the Carolingian expansion to the Istrian peninsula was Novigrad, a city in a strategic, controlling position at the mouth of the river Mirna, a waterway inland. The Carolingian idea of the duality of power, the secular and the ecclesiastical, was completely accomplished here. Together with the Carolingians, Novigrad became the ecclesiastical and secular centre of the future border zone of the kingdom/empire, the diocese which was the only one in Istria corresponding to the patriarch in Aquileia and the seat of the count who was subjected to the margrave in Cividale. Until the end of the third decade of the 9th century, when other Istrian coastal towns and dioceses officially came under Carolingian rule, this coastal town was a key decision-making place for the entire Carolingian territory of Istria.

The approximate borders of the diocese, apart from the immediate area around the town of Novigrad, included the settlements of Buje and Opatalj and stretched from the Dragonja river in the north (today's border with Slovenia) to the Mirna river valley in the south, where the Poreč diocese began.²⁰³ Although there is not enough evidence yet about the direct connection of early medieval Novigrad with the rural landscape in its hinterland and its architectural, artistic and ultimately administrative function, it is logical to assume that this connection was very much alive. For this reason, in the continuation of this chapter, the overview of the rural landscape will be presented starting with the surroundings of Novigrad, including, of course, the peripheral areas of the neighbouring dioceses. Finally, the overview will, following the main communication routes, as social and economical vessels of the rural landscape, cover the entire area of the Istrian peninsula.

On the other side of the empire, Catalonia will follow similar patterns of penetration of the new government, but of course, in a much larger geographical area. To be put in a simplified analogy, the case of the Istrian peninsula in administrative terms will multiply across several cases of Catalan counties ('comtats') from the County of Barcelona in the south to the

²⁰³ The diocese of Poreč originally corresponded to the area of the Roman ager of Poreč, from Limska draga to Butoniga and the valley of the river Mirna. During the early Middle Ages, it was extended to the area of Pazin and Žminj, and after the closure of the Cissan diocese (Rovinj, Bale, Savičent and Dvigrad) to the Rovinj area.

Counties of Rosselló, Conflent, Vallespir and Fenollet in the north, on the other side of the Pyrenees. Therefore, there will be several wellsprings such as Istrian Novigrad in 'Catalonia' - each will correspond to one county. Aware of these parameters and the logical limitations they impose, my intention is nothing more than to point out the sequences of the expansion of power and how this expansion was manifested in the historical landscape and its architectural production.

* * *

There are many still existing settlements of the former Novigrad diocese that are still waiting to be systematically studied and analysed. In a number of examples, their position, the complex of the historic city centre and the continuity of life, which has its origins in prehistory, testify to their role in the early medieval, Carolingian era of Istria.

There are two currently known communication routes that passed through the Novigrad diocese. Along the vertical axis, descending from Trieste through Koper to the south of the Istrian peninsula, stretched the ancient road *Via Flavia*. Along the transverse axis, penetrating deep into the interior of the peninsula, natural communication stretched along the river Mirna, from Novigrad on the coast to Buzet in the interior. It is to be assumed that this direction has functioned since pre-Roman times. Its ancient use is most clearly presented by the existence of numerous sites that follow the course of Mirna. Apart from these two routes that directly touch the Istrian mainland, there was also traffic along the coast, by the sea. Settlements built at almost regular rhythmic intervals vividly testify the importance of maritime communication, which to this day preserve to a greater or lesser extent the material traces of past times, from prehistory, through antiquity to the Middle Ages and modern times.

On the transverse route that runs from Novigrad along the Mirna River into the interior of the peninsula towards Buzet, there were a number of fortified settlements, some of which are still inhabited today. Although their early medieval phase has not yet been clearly proven, their position along the waterway and their importance in space speak in favour of the continuity of existence. The first of them is the abandoned and ruined *castrum* of St George

("Santi Quaranta") which dominates the northern fertile fields of the river Mirna, at the same time controlling both the river and part of the sea route (Fig. 14). The strategic position of St George had a visual communication across the river Mirna, and also with the fortified settlement of Nigrinjan, formally on the territory of the diocese of Poreč,²⁰⁴ near the Roman road Via Flavia (Fig. 15). Even though the literature mentions the early medieval phase of the settlement, it is still waiting for systematic research.²⁰⁵ Not far from Nigrinjan, about 5 km away, was the monastery of St Michael *sotto terra*, one of only three confirmed from the early Middle Ages in Istria.²⁰⁶ On the northern side of the fertile valley of the river Mirna, skipping a series of currently lost, but potentially prehistoric forts and possibly later settlements, the town of Grožnjan has been preserved on the edge of the plateau to this day. Although its nucleus still testifies a medieval idea of space, it remains questionable how it has functioned during Carolingian times. It is known that in Roman times the surroundings of Grožnjan were very lively,²⁰⁷ which is not surprising considering that the area is located on two communication routes, the transverse one that followed the course of the river Mirna and the axial one that descended from Trieste (Via Flavia). The historical sources mentioned it for the first time in 1102 when the fort (*castrum*) together with the whole feud was donated to the Church of Aquileia. Given its prominent position in the landscape, Grožnjan certainly deserves a more thorough study in the future analysis of the early medieval Istrian landscape. Perhaps the patron saints of the church right next to the outer edge of the walls - St Cosmas and Damian - can serve as an indicating element to the existence of the continuity from the post-Roman era? The same applies to the already seen model of the cemetery church at a distance of approximately 300 meters from the centre of the settlement. Unfortunately, without concrete and systematic research of this area, any further speculation currently has no purpose.

²⁰⁴ Named after the river Mirna which in Roman times was called Ningus or Ningon. More on this subject in IVETAC, J., *Korijeni istarskih gradova*, Pazin, Josip Turčinović, 2002.

²⁰⁵ The position of the foundations of a certain early medieval church of Saint Cross (Sv. Križ) should certainly be explored and defined in more detail. It is located east of Nigrinjan and mentioned by Šonje in ŠONJE, A., *Crkvena arhitektura zapadne Istre: područje porečke biskupije od IV. do XVI. stoljeća*, Zagreb-Pazin, Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1982, p. 170.

²⁰⁶ It was founded by the supposedly wealthy landlord Telmon. See ŠONJE, 1982: 5, OSTOJČIĆ, I., Benediktinci u Panonskoj Hrvatskoj i Istri, Split Benetiktinski Priorat TKON, 1965, p. 108; ŠONJE, A., Novi nalazi starokršćanske i ranosrednjovjekovne arhitekture u Poreštini, *Histria archaeologica*, 2, 1970, p. 55-77; JURKOVIĆ, 2018b: 133. In addition to the monastery of St Michael in Istria, in Carolingian times there was also the monastery of St Mary the Great near Bale and the monastery of St Andrew on an islet near Rovinj.

²⁰⁷ STARAC, A., Unutrašnjost Istre u vremenu rimske vlasti, *Histria archaeologica: časopis Arheološkog muzeja Istre*, 26, 1997, p. 90.

In the entire area along the Mirna River, with the exception of Novigrad, only three early medieval sites have been confirmed so far. The first is Ružar, where its early medieval chronology is proven by a specific architectural model of the church. Above the south side of the river, visually communicating with Motovun settlement, the remains of a rampart were found on the hillside, and 60 years ago the church was excavated to an extent. The spatial concept of the so-called *Dreiapsidensalenkirche* (three-apse hall church) indicated that it could be an early medieval chronology (Fig. 18), and an additional impetus to this hypothesis was the discovery of a fragment of a sculpture with a braid motif. In 1970, A. Šonje warned that the local vintners have allegedly been finding "fragments of decorated stones" built into the walls of nearby *kažuns* (dry stone wall circular huts used by shepherds)²⁰⁸. No additional material, however, has been documented up to date. I dare to say that perhaps, fortunately, the exceptional potential of this site still lies underground, being only partially explored. Given its value, further research should certainly be approached in such a way that it is not studied in fragments but in a broader context - spatial, political, historical and cultural. For another site, Motovun, the Carolingian chronology was confirmed in the Plee of Rizana in 804. It is located on the edge of the ancient *ager Parentium* (Fig. 16-17). Along with Dvigrad, Bale and perhaps Stari Gočan it is one of the larger fortified settlements that were formed in late antiquity on the edges of two ancient agers, Parentium and Pula.²⁰⁹ The last in the series of significant settlements along river Mirna is Buzet, also mentioned the Plee of Rizana.

Another land axis that largely determined the intensity of construction activity and was in close correlation with settlements, monasteries and estates was the ancient road - *Via Flavia*. It descended from Trieste via Koper to the Istrian territory, and many settlements in its vicinity still testify to their rich and continuous past. In the area of the Novigrad diocese, one of them is Buje, a small town on a hill, again on a prehistoric hillfort. Less than 5 and 7 kilometres away, towards the north and northeast of the peninsula and above the southern bank of the Dragonja river, there are two other settlements with a possible early medieval phase that have yet to be explored - Kaštel (also known as *Castrum Veneris* or *Porto Venere*²¹⁰) and Momjan. Following the road to the south, the next settlement is the already mentioned Grožnjan, and by crossing Mirna over the bridge, Ponto Portone, on the way to

²⁰⁸ ŠONJE, 1970: 70.

²⁰⁹ BENČIĆ, 2006a: 330.

²¹⁰ MILOŠEVIĆ, B., Kaštel (Castelvenere), *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* (2012), 9, 2013, p. 438-439.

Poreč stood at least another fortified settlement Ružar and the monastery of St Michael *sotto terra*.

* * *

During the Carolingian era, the maritime routes in combination with the configuration of the terrain of the western Istrian coast resulted in the further continuity of habitation and further development of coastal settlements and some monasteries, both confirmed and unconfirmed by the researchers. The advantages of protruding peninsulas, protected bays and scattered islets were well known to Istrian residents long before the arrival of Carolingians. But it is precisely then when many of the sites were experiencing a resurgence of artistic and architectural production, last seen several centuries earlier, in late antiquity.

Apart from Novigrad, at least two other coastal settlements certainly functioned in the diocese during the early Middle Ages, which would be looted and destroyed in 876 by *dux* Domagoj - Umag and Sipar, about 5 kilometres apart. While the archaeological excavations in Umag in 2004/2005. g. discovered an early medieval church below and in front of today's parish church²¹¹, findings that would indicate changes in the architectural heritage of Sipar at the time of the arrival of the Carolingians in the late 8th century remain unknown for the time being.²¹²

At almost the same distance from Umag, 5 kilometres to the south, the site of St John of Cornet (Sv. Ivan Kornetski) stands.²¹³ The development of this archaeological site can be

²¹¹ Unfortunately, the only 'drawing' of the found structures is a shameful sketch originally published in *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* (2005), 2, 2006, p. 248-250, then again in BOLŠEC FERRI, N., *Zaštitno arheološko istraživanje na Trgu slobode u Umagu 2004./2005.*, in: JURKOVIĆ, M. (ed.), *I. Porečki susret arheologa - Rezultati arheoloških istraživanja na području Istre*, Poreč, Zavičajni muzej Poreštine, 2008, p. 105-109. Later, the draft was included in the BOJIĆ, B., MILOŠEVIĆ, B., LUČIĆ, I., DEŽJOT, S., *Gradsko groblje Sv. Petra Damijanija u Umagu. Studiji povijesnog i prostornog razvitka – smjernice za očuvanje memorijalne cjeline, Svezak I.*, Umag, Muzej grada Umaga, 2016, p. 12.

²¹² In the catalogue of the exhibition *Croats and Carolingians from 2000*, only two finds from the 8th and/or 9th century are listed, a gilded bronze belt and a bronze fitting. See in UJČIĆ, Ž., *Sipar kraj Umaga*, in: MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio I, Rasprave i vrela*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000, p. 71.

²¹³ KATUNARIĆ, T., *Sv. Ivan Kornetski*, *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* (2008), 5, 2009, p. 373-376; KATUNARIĆ, T., *Sv. Ivan Kornetski*, *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* (2009), 6, 2010, p. 395-397.

traced from prehistory to the Middle Ages. Although previous research has yielded the largest number of finds from the prehistoric and Roman period, a fragment of a transept is mentioned, which M. Guštin and M. Sakara Sučević only vaguely mentioned as a part of Branko Gajšek's collection and dated to the early Middle Ages without further explanation.²¹⁴ On the other hand, historical sources speak of the end of the castle at the site of St John at the beginning of the 12th century when the border count Ulrich II had it demolished.²¹⁵ However, given the insufficiently detailed analysis of the early medieval context of the site, I consider it wrong to draw any further conclusions. What is certainly indicative is its location, on one of the many small peninsulas of the Istrian west coast, in a somewhat protruding position between two protected bays. In addition, its distance from Umag in the north (approx. 5 km) is interesting, but also from the possibly early medieval Benedictine monastery in the south (approx. 6.5 km)²¹⁶, and finally Novigrad (approx. 5 km). Even a cursory glance at the sites of the western Istrian coast gives the impression of almost equal distance from each other, which in real time represents about an hour's walk, and which is repeated in rhythmic intervals along the coast.

The geographically closest site to Novigrad which has at least been somewhat explored is the site with the toponym Torre (Tar, *Turrim*). It is located on the outskirts of two dioceses, Novigrad and Poreč, about an hour's walk (6 km away). The early medieval chronology has only recently been proven. The area is rich with archaeological remains, with the continuity from prehistory, through the Middle Ages and to the present day. So far, there are at least five confirmed fortified sites, several ancient *villas rusticas* and *villas maritimas*, as well as several (early) medieval sites.²¹⁷ The first mention of an early medieval settlement and tower (hence the toponym) is recorded in the document of Otto II. written in 983: "...*praedium (... Turrim quae est supra piscatione None*"²¹⁸. Today, only a hundred meters from the house of Stancija Blek, the site testifies to a long continuity of existence, since late antiquity. It is located on the opposite side of the mouth of the river Mirna, above the southern bank of

²¹⁴ The authors also bring a drawing of the fragment. More in GUŠTIN, M., SAKARA SUČEVIĆ, M., Sveti Ivan kraj Umaga, *Histria Antiqua*, 11, 2003, p. 95-100.

²¹⁵ *Idem*, 95.

²¹⁶ MATEJČIĆ, I., *Novigrad, Savudrija, Umag i Dajla. Korpus ranosrednjovjekovne skulpture 3*, Split - Pula, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika - Arheološki muzej Istre, 2018.

²¹⁷ G. Benčić is working intensively on the landscape archeology of this area. In 2006, in a monograph on the cultural heritage of Tara, Frata and Vabriga, he presented previous research and knowledge in several articles, starting with the prehistoric period. See RATKOVIĆ, D.L. (ed.), *Tar/Frata/Vabriga - kulturna baština*, Poreč, Zavičajni muzej Poreštine, 2006.

²¹⁸ BENČIĆ 2006b: 323. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Ottonis II. Diplomata* 301, 1956: 356-357.

Tarska vala²¹⁹, at an altitude of 79 meters where at least three communications intersect: the road Poreč - Novigrad, the river which flows to central Istria²²⁰, and the third one, the northernmost transversal road of the *ager Parentium*. At the foot, on the bank of the bay, there was allegedly a river crossing by boat that connected the two banks of the Mirna estuary.²²¹

Its origins date back to the late antiquity, during the last phase of the construction of coastal summer houses (*villae*) when the first fortified centres were already being built in the inland areas. A fortification was built on this site in the early Middle Ages. The favourable position of the villa, and later the castle, provided its inhabitants with excellent control of the surrounding area and the Mirna waterway. The same situation of the transformation of an ancient *villa* into a late antique, i.e. early medieval fortification object was analysed in the case of Novigrad.

2.2.3.2. From the northern slopes of the Pyrenees south towards *Hispania*

The idea of this macro and micro-regional review, in addition to a direct insight into the problems of both the Istrian and Catalan areas, is to draw attention to the different research practices of these two marginal areas of the most significant empire of Europe in the early Middle Ages.

Almost two decades before the Carolingians most likely invaded the Istrian peninsula (778), the area north of the Pyrenees - the region of Rosselló (Conflent, Vallespir and Fenollet) was incorporated into the Carolingian state (759). Their 'carrier' was the Rosselló region, the area

²¹⁹ In the Middle Ages Tarska vala was known for its ponds. More in BASIOLI, J., Ribarstvo porečkog područja u prošlosti, *ZP*, 2, Poreč, 1987, p. 226-229. Also in BENČIĆ, 2006a: 306.

²²⁰ See in BENČIĆ, 2006a: 304, 318. On the south side you would leave from Cape Rigadio, and on the north side from Cape Piscine.

²²¹ MATIJAŠIĆ, R., L'Istria tra l'Antichità classica e la tarda antichità, *Arheološki Vestnik*, 48, 1997, p. 203-218; BENČIĆ, 2006a: 329.

between and around the valleys of the two rivers that flow inland from the shores of the Mediterranean - the Tet and the Tech, where the network of land communication was intertwining.²²² In the context of the Istrian example of Novigrad, which only came under Carolingian rule at the end of the eighth decade of the 8th century, it is interesting to note that in the case of the Comtat de Rosselló (although historiography states that it belonged to the Carolingians in 759), the church centre of the Rosselló valley has not been officially constituted until 783.

The seat of the diocese was re-established in Elna,²²³ while the administrative centre of the county became Ruscino (Rosciliona).²²⁴ Ruscino, a settlement that rose above the southern bank of the river Tet, about 7 km away from the shore and right next to the ancient road Via Domitia, testifies to a long continuity of existence, but with noticeable oscillations. At the beginning of the 1st century, it received the title of a Roman colony, but soon afterwards, towards the end of the same century, it recorded a significant decline in population and deterioration. It continued to exist during the Visigothic county²²⁵ (which included Rosselló, Conflent and Vallespir) with its diocesan centre in Elna, but the settlement had no significant role except for a possible defensive function against Arab and Berber invasions and the fact that it was still lying on a major road communication.²²⁶ Only since the arrival of the Carolingian troops, Ruscino has been re-established as a centre of power for the entire area of the county and, finally, has been symbolically restored to its former ancient splendour.²²⁷ I say ‘symbolically’ solely out of caution as no remains of significant building structures have been found. However, the silos, fossae, fragments of pottery and coins support the dating of the Carolingian phase of the settlement.²²⁸

²²² The network of Rosellon roads is largely based on the ancient Roman organization of the area whose central artery was Via Domitia. More in BOLOS, HURTADO, 2009: 62.

²²³ MONSALVATJE Y FOSSAS, F., *El obispado de Elna*, Olot, 1911.

²²⁴ BOLOS, HURTADO, 2009: 76.

²²⁵ This is evidenced, among other things, by coins found minted in Barcelona and Narbonne, from the period of the Visigothic rule. See BOLOS, HURTADO, 2009: 76.

²²⁶ One of the proofs for the continuous existence of this locality is the fact that at the end of the 6th century it was mentioned several times under the name *Ruscino* by *Ravennatis Anonymi*. See in GEOGRAPHUS RAVENNAS; GUIDODI RAVENNA; PARTHEY, G (GUSTAV), *Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia et Gvidonis Geographica*, Berolini : in aedibus Friderici Nicolai, 1860, IV-28.

²²⁷ GEOGRAPHUS RAVENNAS; GUIDODI RAVENNA; PARTHEY, G (GUSTAV), 1860: IV-17, V-8. It is also mentioned in a poem by Venantius Fortunatus as one of the places on the road that Galswint, daughter of the Visigothic king Leovigild, went to the court of the Frankish king Chilperic in Chartres. More in ALESSANDRI, P., *Ruscino, des Wisigoths aux Francs*, in SENAC P. (ed.), *Histoire et archéologie des terres catalanes au Moyen Age*, Presses universitaires de Perpignan, 1995, p. 9-48.

²²⁸ Ruscino is mentioned in the context of Carolingian domination over the area as Roscilion in a document of Louis the Pious from 816. More on the document in ALESSANDRI, 1995: 11.

Traces of Carolingian presence in stone, sculpture and architecture are equally insignificant in Elna, the episcopal centre of Comtat Rosselló. Nonetheless, the lack of the physical, monumental traces is again richly compensated by the written sources which still, in the absence of more systematic research of monumental heritage, form the backbone of the study of the early medieval image of the historical Catalan landscape. There are numerous documents which offered the opportunity to reconstruct the road network, and which indirectly, by stating the estate borders, also mentioned the names of different roads.²²⁹ In addition, just as in the Istrian case, as well as south of the Pyrenees, a significant role in the construction processes and use and organization of early medieval space was played by the remnants of the Roman parcelization of centuriation. In this case, this centuriation referred to the area around *Narbo Martius*, the capital of the Roman province of Gallia Narbonensis.

Just as the administrative centre of secular authority - Ruscino, Elna, as the seat of the diocese for this region north of the Pyrenees, was located along the main longitudinal road - Via Domitia. In addition to this longitudinal communication, in relative proximity (slightly less than 2 km away) stretched (and still extends today) the course of the river Tech. It can be said that Elna and Ruscino, each with their role in the region, were in some way symbolic counterpoints in space - both on the main longitudinal road, each along its own river leading inland.

An extensive network of roads connected Elna, Ruscino and other settlements with monasteries and rural churches and with the estates of the elite, just as is the case of the area around Novigrad, although on a much smaller scale. I will mention an interesting insight into the spatial relations in the landscape. Just as it was and will be studied on Istrian examples, the case of the region/county Roselló (although so far only a rather limited area) also demonstrates an obvious, yet overlooked striking detail about the distance between objects in the historic landscape. It is the monastery of Sant Genís de Fontanes (founded around 800), located a little less than 5 kilometres south / southwest of today's church of Santa Maria del Vilar (former Santa Eulàlia), whose chronology could be traced back centuries before the year 1000.²³⁰ At the same distance from the monastery of Sant Genís de Fontanes, but to the east, is the monastery of Sant Andreu de Sureda. It was originally, around 800, founded

²²⁹ ALESSANDRI, 1995: 9-48.

²³⁰ Today's church was founded in 1089. See in: P. Ponsich, J. Badia i Homs, (1993). Santa Maria del Vilar. Catalunya romànica. Vol. XIV. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana.

approximately 7 km southeast of its present location, but as early as 823 it is mentioned at this 'new' location, far closer along the Tec River.²³¹ In addition, it is only an hour's walk (about 4.5 km away) from the already mentioned monastery of Sant Genís de Fontanes and at a similar distance from Elna, the episcopal centre of the region at that period. And while these two monasteries follow the river Tec and are located in the middle of fertile valleys, exactly halfway from the river and the northernmost slopes of Pyrenees (the Alberes range), the church of Santa Maria del Vilar sits at the beginning of the range. This model of creating a network of objects in space can be followed in further examples, and it would be of much use to re-examine it thoroughly in the context of a wider area. Is it possible that the fort/castrum Sancti Christofori was in continuous use,²³² which was first mentioned in 1075 and in earlier centuries? The position in the area is certainly significant: it is located at the foot of the Pyrenees, about 5 km away from the church of Santa Maria del Vilar, on one of the old communication routes and not less than 10 km away from the ancient Via Domitia which descended through the natural mountain col down to the Iberian Peninsula.

Since Rosselló, Conflent, Vallespir and Fenollet were presented thoroughly in the Atlas of the Comtat, while the network of communication paths through the historical-spatial paradigm was presented in *Catalunya Romanica*, I consider it redundant to enter into a more detailed analysis of this problem.

First of all, from a macro-regional perspective, this area is extensively studied in relation to the Istrian example. At the level of spatial-geographical relations, it can certainly serve as an example for further studies of this type. Of course, one should not ignore the fact that the mitigating circumstance for the Catalan territory is the exceptionally large number of written sources. However, as shown by the example of the Novigrad area, and the same applies to the cases of Poreč and Pula, the power of the written word is not absolute and irreplaceable. These Istrian regions, although modest in written sources, due to the findings of movable and immovable heritage proved that knowledge and understanding of historical events cannot and should not be perceived solely from the perspective of written documents. It is often the case that monuments, from the liturgical furniture to architectural achievements, can more than legitimately complete the picture of the historical period of a particular space, its society and culture and position within the wider socio-political composition.

²³¹ BOLOS, HURTADO, 2009: 120.

²³² <https://www.encyclopedia.cat/ec-catrom-1425601.xml>

2.2.3.3. Frankish expansion after the initial enthronement. Model of the functioning of the Poreč dioceses

Historiography of the Early Middle Ages of the Istrian peninsula has not studied the question of intervals so far, i.e. the stages of the penetration of the Carolingian rule into the territory. It is not surprising given that the initial penetration of the peninsula itself is still chronologically only provisionally dated to the late eighth decade of the 8th century. Nevertheless, this should in no way limit our consideration of the role of the landscape and possible models of conquest that the Carolingians, as well as their predecessors and successors, carried out along Istria or any other area. It is precisely the relationship between the landscape and architecture, in this case during the early medieval period, which is so far the only known indicator of the different sequences in the expansion of the Carolingian rule. Especially if we consider the absence of other historical sources. However, it needs to be emphasized that we should take this premise only as a new impetus in the study of the Istrian early Middle Ages. The research methodology has yet to be determined.

The example of the Novigrad area clearly shows the dependence of early medieval sites on waterways - either sea or river, and land/road communications. In all three cases, these roads existed long before the arrival of the Carolingians, with sites where the continuity of life often stretched back to prehistoric times. Therefore the communication network with its inhabited points already existed and functioned for the most part during the early Middle Ages. The question is, what would be the model of occupying the space and what changes and innovations have been introduced with the new government.

Although the position of Novigrad has been argued in detail on several occasions, the following has to be repeated. It is no coincidence that the future centre of the Carolingian rule in Istria is positioned at the mouth of the river Mirna, one of the most important Istrian waterways. Just like in the Catalan example, where the Ter River flowed along the borderline of the Carolingian conquest, Mirna might be considered as the first frontier of the Carolingian rule on the Istrian peninsula. However, there are still no concrete chronological determinants. Nevertheless, a number of fortified settlements along both of its coasts, with their early medieval phases confirmed, indicate the need for a deeper analysis of previously known data

that would possibly enrich our knowledge of the historical landscape and movement patterns, sequences of conquest and ultimately the control of the area.

This short and repeated digression on the subject of the Novigrad area was necessary as an introductory reflection on its neighbouring Parentium area, the central part of the western coast of Istria, which is largely determined by the *Ager Parentium*. Since the antiquity, it was a highly developed and densely populated agricultural area with the boundaries which have remained almost the same during the early Middle Ages. On two sides, north and south, it was bounded by waterways — the Mirna in the north and the Lim Channel in the south; on the west by the seacoast, and on the east it reached as far as Butoniga. On the river Mirna, it bordered the Novigrad area / diocese and the Trieste ager, while in the south, by the Lim Channel, it formed the border with the Pula ager, that is the diocese. The church organization of this area was united by the diocese of Poreč (lat. *Dioecesis Parentina*).

The continuous inhabitation of the Poreč area dates back to the Neolithic period, with numerous prehistoric hillforts on the hills in the hinterland. In ancient times, the centre of “Poreština” was *Parentium* (today Poreč). It stands on a peninsula, wherein the 1st century BC the Romans founded the *oppidum* of Roman citizens,²³³ it was also inhabited as early as pre-Roman times. This is evidenced by the remains of an Illyrian sanctuary from the 6th century BC, but also the records of Greek historians who write about a settlement with a fishing port. The status of the municipality will soon be replaced by that of the colony (Colonia Iulia Parentium).²³⁴

The urbanism of Parentium is characterized by a clear network of orthogonal system, such as the city of Iader (today Zadar), also a Roman colony (Fig. 19). Certainly, the geomorphological properties of the terrain have largely conditioned and resulted in similar urban solutions in these cases.²³⁵

Socio-political events and changes which partially began at the end of the 2nd century, during the governing crisis of the Empire, left their mark on the Istrian peninsula. One of the results of the new dissatisfaction and resistance of the population was the spread and strengthening

²³³ After conquering the Histrians along the Istrian peninsula a century earlier (178-129 BC).

²³⁴ ŠONJE, 1982: 1.

²³⁵ Both cities are located on relatively similar flat terrain peninsulas. See CAMBI, 2002: 52-53. An interesting comparison is, for example, with another Istrian ancient city, Pula, which will be discussed in more detail in following chapters.

of new religions, among which Christianity and the cult of Mithras were the most widespread in this area.²³⁶ Christianity, spreading through the Mediterranean from the east, eventually prevailed by infiltrating all levels of society. Its distribution in the *Parentium* before Emperor Constantine and the Edict of Milan in 313 is also evidenced by the inscriptions on the stone fragments. They mention the martyr Maur,²³⁷ the first known bishop of Poreč from the second half of the 3rd century. It is on one of the earliest confirmed inscriptions that Maur's name and his episcopal role are explicitly mentioned: *Hoc cubile sanctum confessoris Maur(i) // nibeum contenet corpus // Haec primitiva eius oratibus // reperata est ecclesia // (H)ic condigne translatus est // ubi episcopus et confessor est factus // Ideo in honore duplicatus est locus // /...m....s/. / actus //is.*²³⁸

Although the original boundaries of the diocese included the area of the *Parentium ager* (from the river Mirna to the Lim Channel and Butoniga), in the early Middle Ages it spread to the area of Pazin and Žminj and finally to the Rovinj area (Rovinj, Bale, Svetvinčenat, Dvigrad). The late antique and early medieval period were also marked by the question of the existence of the so-called The diocese of Cissano, with the centre on a certain island of Cissi,²³⁹ the position of which has not yet been agreed upon.²⁴⁰ One of the theories that would place Cissa on Istrian territory states that it was located on an island south of today's Rovinj, which in late antiquity was allegedly flooded by a devastating earthquake, after which the

²³⁶ On Mithraism in the Istrian peninsula, GIRARDI JURKIĆ, V., *Duhovna kultura antičke Istre. Knjiga I. Kultovi u procesu romanizacije antičke Istre*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 2005. On the emperor's estate in Vabriga, the freemen *Charitinus subprocurator* and *Sabinianus adiutor tabulariorum* built an altar to Mithras, the sun god, for the emperor's health. ŠONJE, 1982: 3. The author also states that an unpublished fragment of an altar dedicated to Mithras was found in Tarsko polje.

²³⁷ ŠONJE, A., *Starokršćanski sarkofazi u Istri*, Zagreb, Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1978.

²³⁸ Translated by A. Šonje: "This holy tomb contains the body white as snow of the martyr Mauro. This original church was rearranged by his prayer (by his intercession). He was honourably transferred here, where he became a bishop and a martyr. Therefore, in his honour the place is doubled." See ŠONJE, 1978. On the problem of worshipping the cult of the second Mauro (African martyr from the time of Emperor Numerian) from the Middle Ages, see CHEVALIER, P., MATEJČIĆ, I., *L'arca en marbre des saints Maur et Eleuthère de Poreč (1247), Le Plaisir de l'art du Moyen-Age: Commande, production et réception de l'oeuvre d'art; Mélanges en hommage à Xavier Barral i Altet*, 2012, p. 115-121.

²³⁹ This site is mentioned by the Roman writer Pliny the Elder in the 1st century AD in his work *Naturalis historia*. He mentions it twice - once while listing the islands of the northern Adriatic, *Insulae eius sinus cum oppidis ... Absortium, Arba, Gissa, Portunata* (the islands of that bay are Osor, Rab, Gissa, Portunata ... - III, 152), and the second time enumerating the more significant islands of the Illyrian coast: *iuxta Histrorum agrum Cissa, Pullariae et Absyrtides, ... iuxta eas Electrides* (to the land of Histria are Cissa, Pularije, Absirtidi and to them Elektridi ... - III, 129), pointing out that these islands are famous (*clarae insulae*). See in: PASINI, U. (ed.), *Plinije Stariji, Zemljopis starog svijeta*, c. III, IV, V i VI, Književni krug, Split, 2004.

²⁴⁰ See one of the latest reviews of the Cissa location problem with a summary of previous research and analysis in: ŠKUNCA, S. J., *Enigma biskupije Cisse/Cesse*, *Vjesnik Istarskog arhiva*, 18, 2011, p. 331-344.

administrative and ecclesiastical role was taken over by the newly founded city of Rovinj.²⁴¹ In the absence of exact data and/or material evidence, any further speculation about this problem is pointless. Nevertheless, the possibility of the existence of the proto-Rovinian ecclesiastical institution should not be rejected at first, primarily in the context of studying the continuity of population and the development of the historical landscape of the western coast of Istria.²⁴²

This digression on a possible Cissan diocese is indirectly related to the Poreč diocese. Researchers such as R. Matijašić support the theory that with the disappearance of a certain Cissa, the jurisdiction over the area was taken over by the Diocese of Poreč. Therefore, its territorial sovereignty surpassed the geographical determinants of the terrain that had been limited by the Lim Channel. I do not intend to enter into this discussion, although some theses certainly remain extremely unclear. If we cannot locate Cissa in the Istrian territory, and the recent researches speak in favour of that assumption, does this mean that the Diocese of Poreč took over the control of Rovinj?

The course of the early medieval period, marked primarily by the arrival of the Carolingians in the Istrian area, is poorly supported by historical sources, except for the case of the city of Novigrad, which is directly related to the character and the work of a certain Bishop Mauritius, thus it is somewhat chronologically defined. In the case of other Istrian urban centres, the historical events that preceded and/or were simultaneous with the affirmation of the Carolingian rule still have not been clearly defined. Historians can only claim with certainty that the year 827 marked the final and formal break-up of the Istrian dioceses with the Byzantine rule, making the Carolingians officially rulers of Istria.

It is in situations such as this one that an interdisciplinary approach and a broader view of the problems of the post-Roman world and early medieval historical events must try to give a slightly different perspective of study and analysis. I refer specifically to the study of the configuration of the terrain and landscape and to the transport infrastructure that has existed since prehistoric times.

²⁴¹ SUIĆ, M., *Cissa Pullaria – Baphium Cissense – Episcopus Cessensis*, Arheološki radovi i rasprave JAZU, 10, 1987, p. 185-219; KRIŽMAN, M., *Antička svjedočanstva o Istri*, Pula, Žakan Juri, 1997.

²⁴² Another possibility to locate Cissa is that it is on the island of Pag.

Just as in the Novigrad diocese, although in a more detailed fashion, it is possible to follow the main communication routes on the example of Poreč, which form an inseparable connection with the rural landscape and its architectural heritage. Furthermore, this area, just like Novigrad, still contains a number of sites (only some of them studied) that will one day certainly complete the historical and cultural picture of Poreč, but also Istria as a whole. The problem of Poreč (Parentium) will be discussed in the following chapters through the historical-artistic paradigm. Here, my intention is only to position it in space from the broadest, macro (regional) perspective.

Ante Šonje wrote about roads and communications in the area of Poreč from prehistory to antiquity, publishing Roman, but also some medieval roads throughout Istria.²⁴³ A number of routes which form almost regular communication network throughout Poreština area are well-known. The ancient road Via Flavia descended from the Novigrad area, and after crossing the river, Mirna turned towards of Poreč, one of the three main ancient urban centres of the western coast of Istria (Trieste, Poreč, Pula). The fact that its direction does not follow the orthogonal raster of the Ager Parentium has motivated some researchers to propose a theory that Via Flavia probably existed even before the Roman conquests of the western coast of Istria.²⁴⁴ However, bearing in mind that there are still no significant discoveries about pre-Roman life and an eventual settlement of today's Poreč,²⁴⁵ the question arises as to what would be the reason for such a significant turn towards the west coast. Until the place where this key Istrian communication route crosses the river Mirna, and then again after the Lim Channel to Pula (or maybe Nesactium?), its direction is quite straight.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ Even in the wider area of the former Yugoslavia. See in: ŠONJE, 1991. The author also wrote about *Via Slavonica*. See ŠONJE, A., Slavenska cesta u Poreštini (Istra) u svjetlu arheoloških nalaza i drugih podataka, in: MOHORVIČIĆ, A., (ed.), *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*. Odjel za likovne umjetnosti, 6, 1971, p. 35-64.

²⁴⁴ ŠONJE, 1991: 9-10, 39-59.

²⁴⁵ Except for the mentioned remains of the Illyrian sanctuary from the 6th century BC and records of Greek historians who write about the settlement with a fishing port on the site of today's Poreč.

²⁴⁶ It is not my intention to prejudge or draw any conclusions on this topic in any way. First of all, since this issue, which has just been briefly presented, goes far beyond the scope of my doctoral dissertation. Nevertheless, in the context of the continuity of the entire historical landscape of the Istrian peninsula, I think it is very interesting to think about this issue and study it in more detail as soon as possible. I also think that it is necessary to critically consider certain theses (for example the thesis that since the direction of via Flavia does not correspond to the orthogonal raster of the centurion implies its earlier origin) which, although interesting, are often deprived of deeper analysis of historical context.

The network of ancient roads along the area of the Parentine ager as suggested by M. Baldini, and referred by Šonje²⁴⁷, organized around the main Ager routes, coincides with the layout of the city streets of Parentium. The urban *Decumanus Maximus* is continued by the Agerian one - *Decumanus Maximus agri*, while the vertical direction of *Cardo Maximus agri* extended approximately through the middle of the ager. In addition to these two key roads, the ancient communication network consisted of several other transverse and vertical routes (see map). The comprehension of the organization of the communication network is extremely important for further understanding of the functioning and the study of the historical landscape. Although some of them are neglected, most of the routes can still be recognized on modern maps.²⁴⁸ It is, therefore, logical to assume that a large number of routes has continued to function during the later centuries, specifically during the early Middle Ages and the expansion of the Carolingian rule. The causal connection between individual roads and fortified settlements of Poreč and its peripheral areas that have survived and lived during the early Middle Ages has been proven by only a few examples. These are primarily the sites I have referred to in the previous chapter on the Novigrad area - Ružar (near Vižinada) and Motovun, and Sveti Lovreč - in the Poreč diocese and Dvigrad - in the Pula diocese. For future research and reflection on the changes that the early Middle Ages brought to Istria, or in this particular case, to the area of Poreč, it would certainly be worthwhile to conduct a profound research of the potential sites related directly with the directions of traffic routes. Although in most of the cases the communications are negated by vegetation or urbanization, the very fact that the old communication routes are still at least somewhat recognizable greatly reduces the scope of certain areas of interest, thus helping us to filter out the potential sites of particular interest. Above all, I refer to the initial research phase of field reconnaissance. I will cite only some of the possible examples and their correlation with traffic roads, as drawn by M. Baldini and published by A. Šonje in 1991.

The northernmost known transverse direction of the *Ager Parentium*, parallel to the central *Decumanus Maximus agri*, begins approximately at the site of Tar - *Turrim*, for which the existence of the early medieval phase has been confirmed (together with the Roman phase). This time, following the course of the river Mirna, it intersects with Via Flavia and is connected with the early medieval sites mentioned in the previous chapter - Nigrinjan

²⁴⁷ ŠONJE, 1991: Map No. 4.

²⁴⁸ In his book on ancient communications, A. Šonje states that in some places the routes of ancient roads are still visible. See in ŠONJE, 1991: 14.

(*Nigrignanum*), Vižinada, Ružar and Motovun. Furthermore, Šonje mentions another site which should certainly deserve a more detailed study, and which is also located on that road - the hill of Sveti Spas southwest of Kaldir, where a fortified settlement may have been located in the early Middle Ages.²⁴⁹

The next known transverse axis that connected the west coast with the interior of the ager, also intersecting with Via Flavia, passed along (i.e. most likely from) Červar Bay. This area, as well as the nearby Tar, proves the continuity of human presence since prehistory and Roman times when a large Roman production complex existed here.²⁵⁰ On the military map from the 19th century (source Mapire), on the position of today's settlement Červar, the site *Castello Cervere* (*Ceruara*) is marked. The church of St Ana (St Pelagius),²⁵¹ five hundred meters away, could also indicate the early medieval phase of this site. Although it has undergone numerous changes over the centuries, its position regarding the spatial/urban relations follows the well-known model of the early medieval settlement and the cemetery church outside it. The study of the site should certainly include the found fragment of the upper fragment of the pilaster from the church of St Anne, which also confirms the assumptions about the early medieval phase. Further direction of this Roman road has been generally confirmed, but so far there are still no proven early medieval sites which would accompany it.²⁵²

The central transverse route, the ancient *Decumanus Maximus agri*, started from the city gates of Parentium (*Porta di terraferma*) connecting it with the interior of the peninsula. This route is mentioned in 1030 as *Via Sclavorum*, since the medieval road took over the ancient route.²⁵³ There are numerous traces of early medieval graves and necropolises in the entire area of Poreč, and also along the road, which are associated with the inhabited Slavs (often

²⁴⁹ At the Krvar stream, the road forks - one goes towards Motovun, and the other towards the hill of the Holy Saviour (Sveti Spas). See: ŠONJE, 1982: 129. The reference on the Church of the Holy Saviour is written in the Istrian Divorce (Istarski razvod), a Croatian Glagolitic legal document originally created between 1275 and 1395.

²⁵⁰ See the pictures on the website of Istarsko povijesno društvo – Società storica Istriana: https://ipd-ssi.hr/?page_id=4731.

²⁵¹ B. Marušić writes about the church as probably an early Christian building. MARUŠIĆ, B., *Varia archaeologica secunda, Histria Archaeologica*, 13-14, 1982-1983, p. 49-50.

²⁵² Šonje only vaguely mentions 'an abandoned medieval settlement near the ancient pond Korneda, north of the village Anžiči'. ŠONJE, 1991: 15.

²⁵³ KANDLER, P., *Codice Diplomatico Istriano*, Trst, 1986, I – 7, VIII, 1030. The route of the Slavic road was described in detail in ŠONJE, 1971: 35-64.

called Croats) - hence the name *Via Sclavorum*.²⁵⁴ However, no early medieval settlements have yet been confirmed on the same route.

In the southern half of Poreština area, there are three remaining confirmed transversal traffic routes with antique foundations that have functioned in the following centuries. The first of these stretches north of the present-day settlement of Funtana, starting from a water source. The most important site on this road is certainly Sveti Lovreč, a fortified settlement built on the site of a prehistoric hillfort. Just as in many previous examples, but also the ones which will follow, it is possible to apply the model of the early medieval relationship between the fortified settlement and the (most often cemetery) church in the vicinity (in this case St Lovre, after which the settlement was named). Apart from Sveti Lovreč, no other early medieval settlements have been confirmed on this route so far. The absence of early medieval sites (the confirmed ones) is applicable to the remaining two crossroads of Poreština, except for the glorious Dvigrad which is located at the crossroads of three roads - it controlled not only the beginning, i.e. the end of the Lim Channel, but is located near the southernmost crossroad of Poreština, and also right next to the road that descended along the vertical axis from the Novigrad area through Mirna and Motovun to the south.

The name Dvigrad (Italian: Docastelli, Due Castelli, Latin: *Duo Castra, Duo Castella*) originated from the common name of two fortifications located on two adjacent hills.²⁵⁵ They were individually called Castel Parentin (Castel Parentin, *Castrum Parentinum*) and Moncastel (Monte Castel, Moncastel, *Mons Castellum*).²⁵⁶ The decline of Parentin settlement began in the early Middle Ages, while Dvigrad-Moncastello has been inhabited until the 17th century.²⁵⁷ The answer to the question of which castle is older is still unknown since Parentin has not yet been archaeologically excavated. However, it is assumed that it has been inhabited since prehistoric times.²⁵⁸ M. Levak makes an interesting assumption regarding the name and the position of Montkaštel (today's Dvigrad). He believes that such a name (Montcachel =

²⁵⁴ *Idem*: 42-44.

²⁵⁵ The name Dvigrad (in the singular) is probably the result of forgetting the existence of Kaštela Parentina among the local population.

²⁵⁶ LEVAK, M., Nastanak i povijesni razvoj ranosrednjovjekovnog Dvigrada, *Annales*, 17/2, 2007, p. 310

²⁵⁷ See the latest publication on this topic in JURKOVIĆ, 2016: 256-258.

²⁵⁸ The name Parentina is also interesting, because it almost completely corresponds to the name Parentium (Poreč). The choice of the name should not be so surprising since this area was the border zone of the Parentine ager and later the diocese of Poreč. M. Levak also notes that in the first known source in which Kaštel Parentin has been mentioned, it was mentioned before Monkaštel. Since it is unlikely that it was ever larger than Monkaštel, it is possible that it was of special importance to the Bishop of Poreč. More in LEVAK, 2007: 312.

the hill on which the fort is located) would not make sense if there were already a fortification of some kind on the adjacent peak. In addition, given that Monkaštel stands on a slightly higher position (147 m compared to 144 m of Parentin), it is possible to assume that Parentin's role was (only) to protect Monkaštel, which eventually evolved from a fortification into a settlement.²⁵⁹

But with the exception of Dvigrad, other early medieval sites in the vicinity have not yet been discovered.²⁶⁰ Such a situation is certainly interesting given that the southernmost traffic route stretches along the Lim Channel. Since this is certainly an important communication route that connects the central part of the western coast of Istria with its interior, it is a bit surprising that there still are no late antique and early medieval fortified settlements. Here I am primarily referring to the comparison with the situation along the course of the river Mirna, wherein several places the strategically controlled positions functioned both in the late antiquity and at the time when the Carolingians ruled Istria. Without any intention to draw any premature conclusions before more detailed and systematic research of this area, one should still ask whether we can question the Carolingian stages of the conquest of the peninsula in a slightly different manner. Was the further course of the occupation of the territories after the initial enthronement in Novigrad and along the Mirna River somewhat different?

But there may be a more straightforward explanation for this problem. The answer to the question of why the Lim Channel still does not have confirmed fortified sites, while there are many along the Mirna River, could be closely related to the configuration of the terrain. The Lim Channel is very inhospitable, a notch in the rock that is partly a defensive feature itself. On the other hand, the river Mirna flows through a fertile and wide valley. Movement through this area is much easier, both for the domicile population and for the potential invaders. Considering that it is the area which is also more difficult to defend because of what has just been said, it is not surprising that along the river valley the number of the identified sites is significantly higher than, for example, on the Lim Channel. However, an important question still remains open, and it concerns the percentage of potential late antique fortifications taken over during the Carolingian expansion across these two Istrian transversals.

²⁵⁹ *Idem*, 310-311.

²⁶⁰ The settlement of Calisedo (Castrum Calixedi), today known as Gradina, definitely deserves a more thorough study.

It is the example of Dvigrad that could be taken as an argument for such a claim. This fortified settlement, which has its origins in prehistoric times, is located in the area of Lim valley, not the Lim channel. Strategically, it is one of the key points for this part of the peninsula, necessary to control the road inland. Does this mean that in the future we could come across more checkpoints (both late antique and early medieval) that follow Limska valley, all the way to the very centre of the peninsula and Pazin, where the valley ends its journey? Approximately 5 km "upstream" stands the church of St Agatha, today known for its 11th-century frescoes.²⁶¹ The question is whether the present church was built on the remains of some former structures or not.

Further north, still following the valley, stands the monastery of St Peter in the Woods, which so far has not yet revealed its early medieval phase. However, the position next to the valley is by no means accidental. Finally, 6 km north, so again just over an hour's walk away, stands Tinjan. At 319 meters above sea level, on a hill above the fertile Lim valley, the site was likely used in early medieval times. The surrounding area is known to have been inhabited since prehistoric times and then in Roman times when it was the very edge of the Parentine ager.²⁶²

Before concluding this brief overview of the land routes of Poreština, it is certainly worth mentioning three more vertical ancient roads that also functioned in the Middle Ages.²⁶³ The central direction was *Cardo Maximus Agri*, and approximately in the middle of the ager it connected the Mirna and the Lim Channel. On one of the nearby hills stood (and still stands) the once fortified town of Višnjan, for which we do not know anything about its late antique and early medieval phases.²⁶⁴ The first mention dates back to 1203,²⁶⁵ and only its circular urban raster indicates that it was probably built on the site of a prehistoric hillfort. In addition, its position on the hill, which offers an unobstructed view of the western part of Poreština, is

²⁶¹ More about frescoes in Istria see in MARAKOVIĆ, N., *Zidno slikarstvo u Istri od 11. do 13. stoljeća. Revalorizacija lokalne umjetničke baštine u europskom kontekstu*, Doctoral Dissertation, Zagreb, University of Zagreb, 2009.

²⁶² DEPIERA, E., DEFAR, H., *Tinjan i njegova prošlost*, Tinjan, Općina Tinjan, 1997.

²⁶³ ŠONJE, 1991: 17-24.

²⁶⁴ A. Šonje in his book on church architecture of western Istria (*Crkvena arhitektura zapadne Istre*) briefly and without bibliography mentions the church of St Catherine, which was allegedly located in the old Višnjan cemetery, and near today's church of St Roko. More about the church of St Roko, but also about the church of St Catherine in ŠONJE, 1982: 204. In some of the future research in this area, the issue of the church of St Catherine should certainly be studied in more detail, since the model of the relationship between the fortified early medieval settlement and the cemetery church could be repeated at a distance of approximately 500 meters, in this case in the old cemetery, i.e. near today's church of St Roko.

²⁶⁵ The Bishop of Poreč gave it to the Counts of Goričko (Pazin) as part of the Motovun feud.

also significant. East of the central *Cardo*, again from Mirna to the Lim notch, stretched a road that, except for Motovun in the immediate vicinity, passed by the cemeterial church of St Andrew. Apart from the fact that a number of fragments of early medieval sculpture²⁶⁶ are built into today's church, which indicates the existence of an early medieval phase of the church, its position in the landscape is also interesting, as well as the obvious cemetery function. Today it seems built in the middle of nowhere, at least a kilometre and a half away from the first inhabited place, but L. Kirac writes that west of the church, on the hills of Hadul and Grč, lie the remains of a prehistoric hillfort. In addition, it is believed that there was a late antique and early Byzantine fortress on Grč.²⁶⁷ Unfortunately, without a detailed analysis of the terrain and the current situation, there is currently no point in questioning the issue more closely. The question is clear, however - is it possible to expect that near the church, perhaps right on the hill Grč, there was an early medieval settlement to which the mentioned church served as a cemetery? In the absence of (any) information, it is necessary, and at this time sufficient to at least indicate the site as a potentially significant position on the map of the historical landscape of the early medieval period.

It is assumed that this road may have been connected with the already mentioned Dvigrad, the guardian of the Lim Channel and the valley, which is located on the outskirts, between the historical territory of Poreč and Pula.

Following the part of the western coast of Istria from the mouth of the Mirna to the entrance to the Lim Channel stretched the western secondary *cardo*. It is assumed that it passed through the Tar area (locality Torr / Tar, to which, among other things, the early medieval chronology has been proven), then Vabriga, and then the already mentioned Červar area (where the early medieval phase is indicated by the church of St Ana), continuing further down south to the Lim Channel.

Sea traffic in Poreč area certainly was very lively, just as it was in Novigrad area. The configuration of the terrain with an indented coastline and numerous easily habitable peninsulas and the fertile land of the coastal belt resulted in a rich Roman heritage which continued to live through late antique, (early) medieval period and later centuries, until nowadays. Parentium, one of the bearers of the ancient life and culture of the West Coast,

²⁶⁶ ŠONJE, 1982: 166 (and photos 112b and 112c).

²⁶⁷ KIRAC, L., *Crtice iz istarske povijesti*, Zagreb, 1946, p. 121; ŠONJE, 1991: 19.

once again revealed its full splendour in the time of Emperor Justinian. This is the period of partial transformation of ancient urbanism in which, among other things, the idea of public space of the ancient forum was reduced and transferred to the intimacy of cathedrals complexes. In the case of Parentium, just as in the case of *Pola*, these cathedrals would not annihilate the ancient forum. They would be built only a few hundred meters away, only slightly changing the urban layout of the city.

Upon arrival in Parentium, as well as in *Pola*, the Carolingians most probably have witnessed the uninterrupted continuity of life marked by two prosperous stages of Istrian history, culture and economy. The idea of *renovatio*, the renaissance of antique and late antique thought, weaved through the life here and as such welcomed the new rulers of the Istrian peninsula. The results of previous research indicate that the urban layout of the city in the early Middle Ages did not change, so the ancient idea and forms of spaces remained almost intact. So far, it is known that only minor changes have taken place at the micro-urban level, primarily to meet the demands of the new functions brought about by this new era. The exact dating is unfortunately still unknown to us, so we can only roughly speak of the period of the late 8th and early 9th century, i.e. the period that followed the Council of Mantua in 827, when both Parentium and *Pola* formally devolved to the Aquileian ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Further discussion on this topic will follow in the subsequent chapters.

Besides Parentium, there is only one fortified settlement of Roman origin in this part of the western coast - Vrsar. Right next to the shore of Vrsar Bay, which is closed by the island of St George, the church of St Mary of the Sea is positioned, i.e. the Basilica of the Annunciation. Although today's church is a large three-apsed, three-apsed basilica built in the 12th century (Fig. 20), it still hides the remains of earlier periods within its structures.²⁶⁸ First of all, such conclusions can be drawn out from the location of the church in relation to the settlement of Vrsar, which has been, just like many others, formed on a nearby hill during the Middle Ages. The church is about 400 meters away from the centre of the old part of the settlement, and its function was cemeterial. This case, and the many similar cases of the cemeterial churches on the edges of the settlement centres, seems to stand on the crossroad of the „micro-urban“ and rural. Indeed, this situation could prove to be one of the key items in the future of planning new research of the early medieval urban and rural landscape. A

²⁶⁸ ŠONJE, 1982: 142-143.

number of examples have already demonstrated a link between the 'politically' new stage of Istrian history and the processes of construction, reconstruction and/or refurbishing of sacral architecture.

Moving towards the south of the peninsula, the coastline becomes more rugged, which must have influenced the settlement models, of course since prehistoric times. Having this in mind, it should be mentioned that right in front of the Vrsar bay (at the nearest place only 35 meters away) lies the island of St George on top of which the namesake church stands. There was a hillfort on the islet in prehistoric times (the question was whether it was an island at that time or it was connected to the mainland) and during the Roman rule a *villa rustica*. In a study compiled at the beginning of the reconstruction of today's church, M. Baldini writes about different phases of the site. He mentions the existence of a church from the 4th century but also states that the oldest preserved parts of today's church date back to the 9th century. The spatial concept of the church is certainly interesting - it is a rectangular building with two shallow semicircular apses inscribed in the rear wall. This typological problem will be discussed in following chapters, while for now, it will be sufficient to emphasize the importance of the site for a better understanding of the early medieval period of the Vrsar area and the entire belt of the central part of the western Istrian coast and beyond. Fragments of a sculpture with motifs dating to the 9th century were (allegedly) found in the church, which indicates the continuity of the occupation of the site in the early Middle Ages and the possible Carolingian presence on the island. Thirty kilometres away, in the area of the diocese of Pula, there is another example of a two-apse church, a relatively common spatial model of Istrian medieval church architecture, also on the site of an ancient villa. It is the church of St Cecilia, only 850 meters away from the early medieval settlement of Guran (Fig. 21). Archaeological research and the analysis of the fragments of sculpture found on the site date on of the phase of the church in the early Middle Ages and the period of the Carolingian rule over Istria. The model of the occupation of existing Roman villas and the question of their continuity or discontinuity is one of the most intriguing topics in the study of Roman, late antique and early medieval heritage. Precisely because of this, sites such as St George are of exceptional importance. At the same time, without systematic research of the site, it is unfortunately impossible to move from this brief review to a constructive discussion. What is essential and crucial for this still initial phase of the analysis of the early medieval historical

landscape is to recognize sites such as St George and position them on the map so that they can be included in future research as soon as possible.

In the context of the possible presence of the Carolingian idea either directly through members of the elite or through ecclesiastical structures, which can also be considered a direct contact in some way, it would certainly be interesting to investigate the example of the island of St Nicholas across Poreč. As a natural breakwater of the Poreč peninsula, it was inhabited in prehistoric times, while the historical sources mention that in the 9th century the church of St Anastasia was built there, reportedly by “Greek” priests. The next chapter will discuss the existence of sacral early medieval architecture on the islands in front of Rovinj and Pula, dating back to the Carolingian era, which further indicates the need for analysis of the Poreč and Vrsar case.

2.2.3.4. Catalan counties. Empúries. Girona. Besalu. Urgell. Cerdanya and Berga

Since 759, the border of the Carolingian state has been a rather perilous area of the Iberian mountain range of Alber, a line that is still the border between two modern states - France and Spain (Catalonia). At that time the mentioned border divided the county of Rosselló, which already formally belonged to the Frankish rulers, from the future County of Empúries. The Franks passed through those territories in 778 when they descended towards the river Ebro by the Roman *Via Augusta*.²⁶⁹ The historical and social atmosphere of this border area during the last few decades of the 8th century is very well reflected on the example of one of the documents of the famous monastery. One of the numerous documents related to the period of Frankish expansion to the Iberian Peninsula,²⁷⁰ mentions that before 782 the abbot

²⁶⁹ BOLOS, J., HURTADO, V., *Atles dels comtats d'Empúries i Peralada (780-991)*, Rafael Dalmau, Barcelona, 1999, p. 14. See the chapter in this paper 2.1.3. Events at the foot of the Pyrenees.

²⁷⁰ In this case, it is a document of unknown date issued by Charlemagne in favor of the monastery of Saint-Polycarpe de Rasès. See in: BONNERY, A., *L'abbaye de Saint-Polycarpe et les origines de Sant Pere de Rodes*, *Mémoires de l'Académie des Arts et Sciences de Carcassonne*, 1999-2001, 5e série, T.VIII, p. 280-299.

Àtal (or Àtala) restored several churches in the vicinity of Magrigul. From such an act, it is evident that at that time there was already at least a partial control of the mentioned area by the Franks. This is evident from the fact that the monk Atala, accompanied by other members of the clergy, most likely came from Spain (at that time under the Saracens, in texts often called 'pagans') and built/founded a monastery in Magrigula, in the Serra de Rodes mountain range. The turbulent historical events in the years that followed resulted in Attalus leaving the monastery and moving his entire community over 160 kilometres to the northwest, to the *pagus* Rases where he founded the monastery of Sant Policarp around 780.

In the light of analyzing the stages of the Carolingian conquests, after the establishment of the border at Albera, the following major step was to move the border to the course of the river Tordera. This process was finalized in 785 with the transfer of Girona to Carolingian government, thus formally incorporating the areas of the counties of Empúries, Girona and Besalu into the Frankish state. This new political situation was also reflected in the architectural landscape, which was permeated by a network of monasteries and their associated smaller communities, the so-called monastery cells, in the following century. Although the remains of the following examples have not yet been defined (or will ever be found in some cases), as a result of numerous preserved documents from the 9th century it is now possible to partly recreate the spatial organization of the landscape of the end of the 8th and 9th centuries.

Here I consider it important to refer to the project of the University of Barcelona, led by prof. Gisela Ripoll, which has been running the project since 2014 and which in many ways represents a pioneering accomplishment in the study of the historical landscape and its components. Project entitled *Ecclesiae, coemeteria et loci (Saec. VIII-XI). Sancti Cirici de Colera, Sidilianum, Olerdola / Esglésies, cementiris i habitats (segles VIII al XI). Sant Quirze de Colera, Sidillà, Olèrdola*, includes three different sites, one of which is directly related to the topic of this particular chapter - the monastery of Sant Quirze de Colera. Previous research has confirmed that the monastery was founded at the end of the 8th century, as indicated by the necropolis associated with the first building. In addition, a document from 844 in which certain rights were recognized to the monastery and confirms the double consecration to St Cyricus and St Andrew, refers to the period of the end of the 8th century.²⁷¹ Finally, the

²⁷¹ RIPOLL, G., CARRERO, E., RICO, D., MOLIST, N., CENTELLES, Á.G., BENSENY, J., TUSET, J., BEHAIM, J., MARTÍNEZ, J., TUSET, F., Sancti Cirici de Colera/Sant Quirze de Colera (Alt Empordà,

position of the monastery at the foot of the Alber massif, on the one point of the road leading through the Pyrenees to Rosselló, again demonstrates the story told so many times about the organized network of monasteries, fortifications, churches and elite estates that the Franks have been spreading throughout their territories.

Another example of the group of monasteries founded or revitalized during the initial Frankish expansion in the sub-Pyrenees is the monastery of Sant Pere de Albanyà, located 12 km north of Besalú, on one of the transversal Catalan rivers - Muga . From a document from 844 in which the monastery received the protection of King Charles the Bald, it is possible to read, among other things, that the first abbot of the monastery was Dòmnuil. He founded the monastery with the help of the Duke of Barcelona Rampó, around 820.²⁷² The combination of ecclesiastical and secular authority is clearly visible, just as it will be the case for the whole period of the Carolingian Empire, but also later. As early as 869, the same monastery became the property of the monastery of Santa María de Arles, which was located north of the Pyrenees .²⁷³

In the spatial, macro-regional context, it is worth emphasizing the symptomatic location of five sites where the documents have confirmed their Carolingian phases. The northernmost of these five sites is the church of Sant Pere dels Vilars, which researchers date to the 10th century or later.²⁷⁴ The church of Sant Feliu de Carbonils is just 3.5 km away. The toponym Carboniles is first mentioned in a document by Louis Tartamut from 878, in connection with the monastery of Santa María d'Arles. It was stated that it had become the property of Sant Pere de Albanyà less than ten years ago, together with the smaller monastery cells belonging to it. It seems that one of them was the church of Sant Pere dels Vilars, while the other two were confirmed in writing: Sant Miquel de la Cirera and Sant Romà de Casamor. And while Sant Romà de Casamor is located on the road that then, just as today, connected the east coast with Besalú and the interior, the church of Sant Miquel de la Cirera was built near the monastery of Sant Pere, not even 2 km south of him. Exactly half the air distance from

Girona). Estudio preliminar del conjunto monástico, siglos VIII al XVI, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 23/2, 2017, p. 602-628.

²⁷² BADIA I HOMES, Joan (1990). Catalunya romànica. Vol. IX. L'Empordà II. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, R., Catalunya Carolíngia, volum II, Els diplomes carolíngis a Catalunya, Barcelona, 1926-1950, p. 6-8, with related bibliography.

²⁷³ PONSICH, P. (1996). Catalunya Romànica. Vol. XXV. El Vallespir, el Capcir, el Donasà, la Fenolleda, el Perapertusès. Enciclopèdia Catalana. Barcelona

²⁷⁴ CR – L'Empordà, BARRAL I ALTET, 1981: 272.

Albanyà to Besalu, stand the ruins of the monastery of Sant Llorenç de Sous, first mentioned in 871, again in a document by Charles the Bald, but this time describing the estates of the monastery of Sant Aniol d'Aguja, to which it apparently belonged.²⁷⁵ So although today it is impossible to define the traffic route that could connect these five sites, in no case should the possibility be ruled out that some kind of communication between them existed in the 9th century. The orientation towards Besalú is obvious and hardly accidental. By analyzing the terrain configuration, it is possible to notice that the imaginary vertical axis formed by these sites is located at the border of a deep plain that descends all the way to the coast (here the Via Flavia descends to the south of the peninsula) and the high Pyrenees which enter to the inland. A truly impressive organization of space through a densely intertwined network of monasteries, churches and fortifications is visible in the entire County of Empúries. Written sources and monuments *in situ* to this day confirm the network of buildings from that period. In many ways, this organization of space is analogous to the case of Istrian peninsula.

* * *

The political and ecclesiastical structure of these newly formed counties will show a partial deviation from the ancient and Visigothic eras. For example, the relation of Roman *Ager Parentium* area with its urban and social centre - Parentium, can be opposed to the Catalan case of the city of Empúries, which was the centre of the county of Ampuries.

However, the Carolingian era introduced a few changes. While Poreč retained the title of the diocese in the early Middle Ages, moving from Byzantine to Carolingian rule at the beginning of the 9th century, Empúries would lose that title, remaining only the capital of the County of Empúries and the residence of dukes. It should also be noted that the urban centre of the Carolingian era was not located on the site of an ancient city²⁷⁶ but some 900 meters north, following the coast, on the site of today's town of Sant Martí d'Empúries. On the other

²⁷⁵ COSTA BADIA, X., *Paisatges monàstics. El monacat alt-medieval als comtats catalans (segles IX-X)*, Doctoral dissertation, Barcelona, University of Barcelona, 2019.

²⁷⁶ Which in the 9th century was probably already a ruin. BOLOS, HURTADO, 1999:46.

hand, the centre of the diocese between the Albera Mountains and the Tordera River was re-established in Girona in 778, after the centuries-long continuity of the diocese was briefly interrupted by the Arab invasion. Girona, together with Elna from the previous chapter, as well as the other episcopal seeds of the Catalan counties (Urgell, Vic and Barcelona), belonged to the Archdiocese of Narbonne. The diocese of Girona included the counties of Empúries and Girona, and from the beginning of the 9th century Besalú, an area of the northeast coast and hinterland at the foot of the Pyrenees. The main traffic route, the “mother road” of the area since the Roman period was Via Augusta,²⁷⁷ a continuation of *Via Domitia* from Narbonne through the Pyrenees and Girona descending to the south of the peninsula. Apart from Via Augusta, several other historical roads, both Roman and early medieval, are mentioned in documents, but also known from material remains. Among them, it is worth mentioning the road that connected Empúries and Besalú, also known as the *camí d'Empúries*, which preceded via Augusta, largely following the course of the river Fluvià to turn south soon after Torroella de Fluvià, and then towards the east coast, ending in ancient *Emporiae*.²⁷⁸ Apart from these two roads, in the context of historical events in the territory of the diocese of Girona, perhaps the most significant one is *Via Francisca*, a communication route that largely followed the ancient via Augusta, also passing through Girona.²⁷⁹ Along the river Fluvià there are several monuments, such as the old parish church in Vila-Robau,²⁸⁰ right next to the riverbank, then the almost completely disappeared church of Sant Julià de Sant Mori²⁸¹ and the church of Santa Eulàlia in Palau Borrell.²⁸² Although their exteriors do not display early medieval origin directly, all of these churches bear at least some formal features which could date them to the period of the Carolingian expansion along this area.²⁸³ Even more, than these typological determinants, which do not always correspond to reality,

²⁷⁷ Via Augusta was built by Emperor Augustus at the end of the 1st century BC. n. e., after which it later got its name. It continued via Domitia, and even today this route is used as the AP-7 motorway. The subject of via Auguste has been present in Catalan historiography for many years. See for example the works of M. Golobardasa, J. Casasa, J. M. Nolle etc.

²⁷⁸ See CASAS, J., *El camí d'Empúries. Aproximació a la xarxa viària del Baix Empordà*, *Información Arqueológica*, 33-34, 1980, p. 59-63.

²⁷⁹ MUNDÓ, A. M., *De quan hispans, gots, jueus, arabs i francs circulaven per Catalunya*, discurs llegit el març de 2001 en l'acte de recepció pública. Reial Acadèmia de Bones Lletres de Barcelona, 2001, Barcelona, p. 23-24; FOLCH IGLESIAS, C., *Els territoris del nord-est de Catalunya durant l'alta edat mitjana (segles VI-XI d.C)*, Doctoral Dissertation, Autonomous University of Barcelona, 201, p. 57

²⁸⁰ BARRAL I ALTET 1981: 213, *Catalunya Romanica* ???

²⁸¹ BARRAL I ALTET 1981: 207, *Catalunya Romanica* ???

²⁸² BARRAL I ALTET, 1981: 204, *Catalunya Romanica* ???

²⁸³ Here I am referring primarily on elements such as the trapezoidal apse that is visible on the example of the churches of Sant Julià and Santa Eulàlia. More on the typology of the shape of the sanctuary in BARRAL I ALTET 2018: 84-87.

their positions in space, following both the land and river route of Fluvià and other communication routes, could indicate the need to create a new methodological framework.

The next few thoughts speak in favour of this statement. Not 10 kilometres south of Fluvià there is another river route - Ter - which connects the east coast with Girona and continues deeper into the hinterland. Along its coast, as it has been seen so many times both in Catalan and Istrian examples, there are medieval monuments, the histories of which through the monument itself or through the written sources, testify to the vibrant architectural activity in the early 9th century in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula. Starting from the coast inland, stands the church of Sant Julià de Boada,²⁸⁴ one of the most famous pre-Romanesque Catalan churches, which X. Barral did not date before the end of the 10th century when it was first mentioned. Exactly an hour's walk along the road that apparently existed in the Middle Ages (approximately 4.5 km) in the southwest direction still stands the church of Sant Esteve in Canapost. Although it has been altered to a certain extent, it is also basically an elongated rectangle with an irregular trapezoidal apse.²⁸⁵ South of Canapost, 7 kilometres away (an hour and a half of walking distance), lie the ruins of the old Benedictine monastery of Sant Climent de Peralta, documented as the oldest (first mentioned in 844 in the document of Charles the Bald) of these three examples of sacral architecture. Although X. Barral does not date it to the period before the second half of the 10th century, for any further conclusions, it is necessary to wait for the eventual results of archaeological research. It is a site of great importance, especially for the study of the early medieval monastic architecture of the territory of "old Catalonia".²⁸⁶ Exactly halfway from the coast to Girona is the Sidilianum / Sidillà site, the second of three sites to be explored in the past six years as part of the University of Barcelona's ECLOC project.²⁸⁷ It is a locality that has been functioning since ancient and late antiquity, whence its name Sidilianum. It consists of a mausoleum whose construction dates back to the end of the 4th century, and which is supposed to function at

²⁸⁴ <https://www.enciclopedia.cat/ec-catrom-0824001.xml>

²⁸⁵ BARRAL I ALTET 1980: 215-216.

²⁸⁶ <https://www.enciclopedia.cat/ec-catrom-0836801.xml>

²⁸⁷ *Ecclesiae, coemeteria et loci (saec. VIII-XI). Sancti Cirici de Colera, Sidilianum, Olerdola / Esglesies, cementiris i habitats (segles VIII al XI). Sant Quirze de Colera, Sidilla, Olerdola (ECLOC)*
Investigador principal: Gisela Ripoll (UB).

the same time as the ancient villa on the site of a later church that chronologically corresponds to the period from the 10th century onwards, just like the settlement .²⁸⁸

The network of these medieval monuments is completed by perhaps the oldest documented fortification from the time of the Carolingian conquest of this area - *castellum Uelloso*, built on the ruins of the Iberian city of Ullastret, albeit of questionable dating.²⁸⁹ In addition to the *castellum Uelloso*, another fortified site near Girona (approximately 5 km of air distance) and on the banks of the river Ter was documented in the 9th century - the *castellum Fractum* (Sant Julià de Ramis),²⁹⁰ with its expansion questionably dated to the Carolingian period.²⁹¹ Some researchers believe that the mentions of these fortifications in historical documents of the 9th century should not be interpreted as newly built fortified settlements, but should be associated with Iberian sites which from that time were called *castellum* or *castellare*, and which were also suitable as strategic places for building fortifications in the decades that followed.²⁹² While the question of whether and when the new construction took place at these sites remains unanswered, which can only be answered by future archaeological research, it remains an indisputable fact that these sites began or at least continued to function at the time of the new government from the centre of the continent - the Carolingians.

It is interesting to reconsider the somewhat broader, the macro-regional spatial context of this part of the “old Catalonia”. Here, as in the example of the sites on the north side of the

²⁸⁸ RIPOLL, G., TUSET, F., MESAS, I., BENSENY, J. y MOLIST, N., *Sidillà (Girona). From roman villa to medieval settlement*, European Association of Archaeologists / EAA / Annual Meeting in Barcelona (5-9 September 2018) (Session 565: Ecclesiastical landscapes in Medieval Europe. A comparative approach).

²⁸⁹ D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, 1926-1950: 121-123; In 2018 Folch Iglesias in his paper problematizes the conclusions on dating to the period before 800 proposed in the article CANAL, J., CANAL, E., NOLLA, J. M., SAGRERA, J., *El castellum Uellosos del puig de Sant Andreu (Ullastret, Baix Empordà): vida i mort d'una fortificació carolíngia*, in *Estudis del Baix Empordà, Sant Feliu de Guíxols*, 24, 2005, p. 5-54. See FOLCH IGLESIAS, C., *Fortificacions i assentaments en alçada a l'àmbit rural del nord-est de Catalunya durant l'Alta Edat Mitjana (segles VI-XI)*, *Treballs d'Arqueologia*, 22, 2018, p. 37-38.

²⁹⁰ D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, 1926-1950: 123.

²⁹¹ Folch Iglesias states that here, same as in the *castellum Uelloso*, the site was in use during the early Middle Ages, with the difference that the *castellum Fractum* also had a phase of Visigothic fortification. But at the same time, he warns that archaeological research has so far not provided data that would indicate the construction of a new fortification from the 'Carolingian' era. See in FOLCH IGLESIAS, 2018: 38. On the question of the fortification see also SUREDA I JUBANY, M., *Hagiografia i territori. La muntanya de Sant Julià de Ramis i Sant Carlemany*, *Annals de l'Institut d'Estudis Gironins*, 49, 2008, p. 543-559 and BURCH, J., *Excavacions arqueològiques a la muntanya de Sant Julià de Ramis 2, El Castellum, Girona*, Universitat de Girona, 2006.

²⁹² MARTÍ, R., *La defensa del territori durant la transició medieval*, *Actes del Congrés Els Castells Medievals a la Mediterrània Nord-Occidental*, Arbucies, 2004, p. 89-114; FOLCH IGLESIAS, 2018: 38. The latter also notes how such a 'practice' can be connected with the example of taking the so-called oppida deserts and castra in the regions of Cardona and Casserres from the end of the 8th century. See Vita Hludovici, cap. 8. u D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, 1986: 89 (f. 97).

Pyrenees and also the Istrian ones, it demonstrates the repetition of the pattern of organization of the network of (symbolic) points in space embodied in monuments which again, usually are approximately 5 kilometres away, i.e. about an hour's walk .

So far, the largest number of confirmed monastic estates in this area of old Catalonia belonged to the monastery of Sant Esteve de Banyoles, founded about 812, and mentioned in a document of Louis the Pious dated in 11 September 822,²⁹³ located northwest of Girona. Its estates include an imposing number of smaller monasteries/cells dispersed throughout the county. .²⁹⁴ In the meantime, in the middle of the 10th century, the monastery was completely destroyed and rebuilt. It is a destiny shared by numerous monuments of the Catalan early Middle Ages. The monastery of Banyoles participated, for example, in the founding of the monastery of Sant Pere in Basalú in 977. And while the architectural forms of the Besalu monastery do not speak in favour of the chronology that would have preceded 977, the archivolt framing the main portal could very well indicate the existence of some earlier building.²⁹⁵ I do not want to draw any conclusions from this somewhat randomly chosen example, but to point out the need for more detailed analysis and contextualization within the Catalan historical and artistic currents of this decorative element - three-bar crossed stripes, which are a frequent motif throughout Carolingian Europe, including historical territories of today's Croatia.²⁹⁶ The example of Besalu is additionally interesting especially bearing in mind the fact that the walls of the city, just like those in Girona and Peralada at the time of the arrival of the Franks, were further strengthened. It is an insight such as this one, together with the possible early medieval decorative material of the portal archivolt, which firmly supports the assumption that urban and episcopal centres, even if deprived of a clearly visible Carolingian historical layer, still demonstrate their early medieval phase from the time of the arrival of new rulers on the Hispanic stage, through their sub-surface levels and structures which correspond to the dimensions of later monumental churches.

²⁹³ A. Sanz i Alguacil, *Catalunya Romànica*. Vol. V. El Gironès, la Selva, el Pla de l'Estany. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1991. Apart from the monastery in Banyoles, it is possible that the church of Santa Maria de Porqueres, 2 km away, also existed in the middle of the 9th century, but again not in the form in which we find it today.

²⁹⁴ One of the 9th-century properties of the monastery in Banyoles was Sant Pere de Rodes, one of the four monastic cells at that time (besides Sant Joan Ses Closes, Sant Cebrià de Penida and Sant Fruitós de lo Vall de Santa Creu). For more about the early medieval structures of the monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes see the chapter 2.2.4.2.2. Traces of monastic architecture from the first period of the Carolingian presence.

²⁹⁵ <https://www.enciclopedia.cat/ec-catrom-0418901.xml>

²⁹⁶ See JOSIPOVIĆ, I., Radionica plutejâ zadarske katedrale, *Ars Adriatica* 4, 2014, p. 43-62.

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The Carolingian conquest of the future counties of Urgell, Cerdanya and Berga "closed" the belt around the centre of old Catalonia, around the region and soon the county of Osona, with Vic at the centre. Having conquered and formed the previously mentioned counties, the road to Barcelona was almost secured, and only the central part with the settlement of Vic remained to be conquered.

Although the material remains of structures built during the period of the Carolingian expansion have not been found almost anywhere, written sources offer an insight into the past. The corpus of the 8th/9th-century monuments documented only by the historical sources reveals a lot about the organization of the Carolingian conquest. The network of monasteries, churches and fortifications, which over time and new research will be supplemented with new data, is already extremely rich in information. It outlines the contours and logic of the new conquerors to subdue and secure the newly conquered territory. Along with one of the roads that was presumably active in the early Middle Ages, and which in parallel with the direction of the Pyrenees slowly descended from the present town of Puigcerdà to the urban centre of Seu d'Urgell and the neighbouring monastery of Sant Serni de Tavernoles, several sacral buildings were founded or renovated. Among them stand the churches of Sant Pere in the village of Alp, Santa María de Talló and the monastery cells of Sant Esteve y Sant Hilari de Umfred and Sant Andreu de la Quera which were related with the monastery of Sant Serni de Tavernoles . This traffic route descended to the south after Seu d'Urgell .

The route descending south towards Berga was also controlled in the 9th century through monasteries, churches and finally fortifications, with Casserres at its southernmost point.²⁹⁷ This route descended through Manresa until the ultimate goal of the Carolingian conquest - Barcelona. The importance of consolidating key roads is evidenced by the fact that within the space between them there were only a few sites with the confirmed early medieval chronology from the time of the Carolingian expansion, which was certainly contributed by the configuration of the terrain.

²⁹⁷ BOLOS, J., HURTADO, V., *Atlas dels comtats de Cerdanya i Berga (v788-990)*, Barcelona, Dalmau, 2015.

The number of the sites for which, based on written sources, it was possible to conclude that during the 9th century they formed an integral part of the historical and architectural landscape of these Catalan counties, is certainly substantial. Furthermore, their location in space, relational distances and the way they functioned in the territory could provide some new insights about the organization of the early medieval landscape, but also its role in the hands of conquerors and rulers.

Finally, as a short conclusion of the review of this area, it should be said that while in Istria, and Croatia in general, a modern revision of the ancient and medieval road network is undoubtedly needed,²⁹⁸ this problem is relatively well represented in the Catalan scientific literature (for example, in the already mentioned Atlases of Carolingian Catalonia), so I will leave the more profound examination of this topic aside. What is certain is that the road infrastructure, just as in the Istrian case, was mostly taken over from the Roman system and as such continued to function in the early Middle Ages. But what is different from the Istrian example is the amount of preserved documents instead of the architecture, sculpture and painting. For example, the records about the Diocese of Girona reveal us a rich history of the power relations between rulers/landlords, dukes and church authorities. This does not mean that there is no architectural heritage preserved. However, contemporary historiography still generally dates this architecture to the periods prior or posterior to the 8th/9th century. At the same time, a significant number of monasteries and their estates is mentioned in the context of the first half of the 9th century. We need to ask ourselves what could have influenced a complete annihilation of the structures from the beginning and course of the 9th century from the collective memory? Frequent attacks by Muslim troops certainly did not help in the process of preserving the monuments. The lack of almost any structures that could have been dated to the end of the 8th or the 9th century has often been attributed to the fact that the building materials and construction techniques were of insufficient quality to be able to survive for more than a century. However, it does not mean that there are no forms of sacral architecture and sculpture that could eventually be dated to that period. In the absence of a deeper analysis of the (scarce) available materials, it is also possible that one of the reasons could be a misinterpreted dating of the material.

²⁹⁸ For the example of Istria, more precisely the area of Poreč, the book by A. Šonje, *Roads and Communications in Prehistory and Antiquity in the Poreč Region and Their Relation to Other Traffic Connections in Istria* (1991) was used in writing this dissertation.

2.2.3.5. Final phase: Pula dioceses

The area around Pula is the richest in the number of the early medieval monuments, which are mostly ruins today. There is still no answer to the question of why this is so. The concentration of monuments within a radius of only 5 kilometres from Vodnjan near Pula is impressive. More so if we have in mind that there is no direct connection (except for a few examples) between Vodnjan region and some of the main traffic routes on the peninsula (for example Via Flavia). And finally, it is even more impressive considering that the architectural heritage of the early Middle Ages is unfortunately still one of the least recognized, preserved and presented one.

What probably is the most interesting about Pula ager are the micro-regional elements of the landscape and the problems of the monuments themselves, their ruins and presumed locations; so many compared to the rest of the peninsula.

In many ways, the space organization model is often repeating in its idea, primarily in the neighbouring areas of the same geopolitical and cultural circle. Sometimes even in a much wider area. Thus was *Pola* ager, from the coast-inland perspective, corresponding to *Parentium*. Both cities were founded during the Roman domination over the peninsula. It is one of the reasons why the constant synergy of their urban tissue with rural ager areas made them the *nuclei* of development and change that the Istrian historical landscape will begin to live from that moment. Centuries later, in the time immediately preceding and then witnessing the arrival of Carolingian - a new change in the political scene of Istria, these cities will be the last strongholds of the Eastern Roman Empire, hitherto the only true heir to Istrian classical thought and creativity.

On the other hand, the interior of the Pula region and its rural landscape would witness a somewhat different situation, where the monuments will be the bearers of the Carolingian novelty. In the absence of historical sources and documents, the analysis of the sculpture would prove to be an extremely valuable datable element. It would chronologically determine certain monuments (far) outside the urban nucleus of Pula in the time before 827 and the final Carolingian subordination of the remaining episcopal centres (including Pula). Finally, it

would repoint to the already mentioned moments of the Carolingian expansion throughout the Istrian peninsula, together with their ideas and solutions.

The original borders of the Pula diocese corresponded to the ancient Pula ager, covering the southern part of the peninsula. The borders stretched from the Lim Channel across the plateau south of Žminj to the Raška Bay.²⁹⁹ Here again, the researchers are facing the question of the Cissan diocese, which is still unclear. Its fate and disappearance in the 8th century may have affected changes in the border area between the dioceses of Pula and Poreč. However, this problem should be left aside for now.

The beginning of Christian activity in Pula corresponds to that of Poreč. It dates back to the 4th century, and perhaps even earlier – in the time of the martyr German. According to *Passio Germani*, a story about his suffering, composed probably in late antiquity, he was tortured and killed in the vicinity of Pula during the reign of the Roman emperor Numerian (c. 254-284). However, contrary to the practice of Poreč, Novigrad (and Trieste), there is still no material evidence of the worship of St German.³⁰⁰ In addition, the Pula Cathedral itself has initially been dedicated to St Thomas the Apostle. It is where his relics were also located, which, according to M. Zgrablić, obviously had a prestigious significance for the late antique city.³⁰¹

* * *

Communication roads, both land and sea, also played a significant role in this area. A. Šonja briefly studied them in his book about the roads of Poreč and yet I have not come across any more recent research. For the past ten years, D. Bulić has been dealing with the organization of space and centuriation during the antiquity and late antiquity, from whose works it is sometimes possible to extract some information relevant to the period of the early Middle

²⁹⁹ MATIJAŠIĆ, 1988; also in ZGRABLIĆ, M., BULIĆ, D., *Povijesno-topografski aspekti kristijanizacije agera kolonije Pole u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjem vijeku (4. – 6. stoljeće)*, *Radovi – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest*, 49, Zagreb, 2017, p. 39.

³⁰⁰ ZGRABLIĆ, M., *Hagiografska tradicija Istre i materijalna svjedočanstva štovanja mučenika u kasnoj antici i ranome srednjem vijeku*, *Croatia Christiana periodica: časopis Instituta za crkvenu povijest Katoličkog bogoslovnog fakulteta Sveučilista u Zagrebu*, 81, 2018, p. 21.

³⁰¹ ZGRABLIĆ, 2018: 19.

Ages. On the last path of the most significant Istrian land road - Via Flavia, lies Bale, one of the best-preserved and still inhabited fortified settlement with a confirmed early medieval chronology. Via Flavia descended from the Lim Channel and Dvigrad as its checkpoint to Vodnjan and finally Pula. Bale was positioned exactly halfway between Vodnjan and Dvigrad (approximately 10 km in each direction). It would not be a mistake to say that Bale preserves the memory of almost every element of the Carolingian presence on the peninsula.

The prehistoric basis of the settlement is already a well-known motif in the Istrian landscape. It is revived in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, and then it continues to function to this day. Today's parish church within its classicist mantle preserves a part of the dimensions of an early medieval building, the spatial characteristics of which were defined by I. Matejčić in 1996. At a distance of approximately 500 meters from the fortified settlement, there is the church of St Elijah. Perhaps it is following the already seen early medieval model of the fortified settlement and the church outside the walls. However, this problem is still insufficiently studied, and its chronology has been only roughly determined to the Middle ages. In addition to the question of churches outside the fortified walls, another church is located on the other side of the Bale village. About 500 meters away is the cemetery and the cemetery church of St Anthony the Abbot from the 15th century. In both cases, it would be interesting to analyze in detail and if possible archaeologically explore both sites, primarily for the sake of a really rich already proven early medieval cultural heritage of the area.

At just over 3 kilometres away, on the road that connects Bale with Rovinj, there is perhaps the most important site of early medieval Istria - the monastery complex of St Mary the Great. The questions that his research opened up, as well as new reflections and at the end of knowledge, in many ways, marked the shift in Croatian art history from traditional notions and understandings of the profession and heritage. Some theoretical issues, as well as the analysis of architectural remains and found sculptures, will be discussed in following chapters. Here I only consider it necessary to draw attention to the position of this complex in space.

The site is located at about 110 meters above sea level, on a gentle hill from which the view today reaches over olive groves to a 4 kilometres distant coast. Unfortunately, very little is known about the early medieval monastery complexes in Istria, thus the greater the importance of the site of St Mary the Great is. Control of the surrounding territory from this

complex was easily achievable, and the continuity of the site since Roman times was proved by the findings of the walls and tesserae of mosaics preceding the construction of the church and monastery.³⁰² Monastery of St Mary the Great was in early medieval times certainly just one of a series of monasteries that complemented the Carolingian network of checkpoints in the area. These points, at least judging by the current state of research, were consisted primarily of fortified settlements, and then monasteries and estates of the newly established elites, today presumed only thanks to the ruins of their private churches.

The organization of the rural landscape in the early medieval period, at the time of the change of government before the dawn of the new Carolingian era, lived a true renaissance with its architectural achievements. It was opposing to the urban centres on the coast which were still nominally under the rule of the Eastern Roman Empire, but was also admiring their rich tradition and artistic expression. It is this last premise which is perfectly reflected in the example of the monastery near Bale, both in its sculptural decoration and in its architectural forms.³⁰³

In the area of the Diocese of Pula, the early medieval phase has been confirmed only by the monastery of St Andrija on an island near Rovinj,³⁰⁴ of which only the central part with a dome has been preserved, which in the 19th century was incorporated into a part of a residential villa, today a hotel. The fact that in the vicinity of Rovinj, which until 827, like other coastal cities (except Novigrad) formally still recognized the authority of the Eastern Roman Empire, there was a monastery that apparently recognized Western rulers, reveals a lot about diplomatic games and relations of power on the Istrian coast. The question remains clear whether the monastery functioned as a Carolingian branch even before 827, which would not be surprising since, although near Rovinj, it is located outside the bay of Rovinj. But even though it lies at a 'safe' distance, it is still close enough for its symbolical message to be clearly understood.

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³⁰² JURKOVIĆ, M., CAILLET, J.P. (eds.), *Velika Gospa prèš de Bale (Istrie) II. L'èglise Velika Gospa pres de Bale. Vol. II*, Zagreb - Motovun, IRCLAMA, 2009, p. 128.

³⁰³ More details in following chapters.

³⁰⁴ Until the middle of the 20th century, traces of frescoes from the early medieval, Carolingian period were still visible on the walls, which have almost completely disappeared today.

South of the fortified Bale, continuing the journey along the Via Flavia towards Pula, there is the area which is probably the richest with the concentration of early medieval sites - the surroundings of Vodnjan. In addition to the somewhat preserved monuments of sacral early medieval architecture, the literature mentions the existence of seven settlements in the 12th century on several occasions: Mednjan, Banjol, Gusan, Guran, Sveti Lovro Vodnjan and Sveti Petar, united with the previous Vodnjan.³⁰⁵ However, plague epidemics in the 14th and 15th centuries left a deep mark in this micro-regional entity, and the more distant settlements of Mednjan, Banjole, Gusan and Guran were abandoned after 1300, while their inhabitants settled the already existing Vodnjan.³⁰⁶

Apart from the already mentioned two settlements (Sveti Lovro and Sveti Petar) which were geographically closest to Vodnjan, the settlement of Gusan is interesting as an example of a fortification on the main roads which obviously had the role of a control point. It is located 3 kilometres, approximately 30 minutes walk north of the centre of Vodnjan, on Via Flavia, and was discovered during the reconnaissance of the route of the main gas pipeline Vodnjan - Umag, which provided other interesting sites as well. Archaeological excavations have found that this is a fortified settlement from the 8th-10th centuries. Finds from prehistoric times (it remains to be seen whether this is a secondary position) and antiquities again point to the continuity of habitation, perhaps even to the existence of an ancient villa which, as in Tar and Novigrad, was established in late antiquity or early medieval times.³⁰⁷ Jurković questions its role in the network of fortified settlements in southern Istria and briefly notes that his function may have been more of a more productional nature, than a defensive one.³⁰⁸ The fact that, just like other fortified settlements in southern Istria (but also in Poreština area), it is located in the area of Pula ager (and Poreč ager, respectfully) could certainly have contributed to the production possibilities and capacities of these settlements. But it should not be forgotten that Gusan was located on Via Flavia itself, just like Bale and Dvigrad before it and Vodnjan after. On the other hand, other settlements in the area such as Mednjan, Banjol

³⁰⁵ GHIRALDO, C., Dignano. Storia. In un manoscritto del parroco di Gallesano Giacomo Giachin (1875), *Atti del Centro di Ricerche Storiche – Rovigno XXX*, 2000, p. 587.

³⁰⁶ C. Ghirardo states that the settlements of St Lawrence and St Peter were connected to Vodnjan. See more in GHIRALDO, 2000: 592.

³⁰⁷ JANKO, I., Plinovod Vodnjan – Umag, lokalitet VU 031A, *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* (2010), 7, 2011, p. 399-401.

³⁰⁸ JURKOVIĆ, 2016: 260.

and Guran were indeed located on the side roads (or at least today we still consider them as such), in the middle of fertile plains that have certainly been one of the main engines of South Istrian agriculture since antiquity. Nevertheless, for any further speculation on this topic, we should wait for future research, for the beginning of the Vodnjan micro-region. Research that will, through an interdisciplinary approach (in the true sense of the word) look at different elements in the landscape, from communication routes (main and secondary), cultivable land with different crops, their dependence on water sources and finally what unites, organizes and controls - a network of points of fortified settlements, monasteries and private churches of the former estates of the Istrian, i.e. the Carolingian elite.

* * *

It is clear, therefore, that the opportunities for future studies and archaeological research are not lacking, and the situation is both satisfactory and unsatisfactory. As M. Jurković has already stated in a recent text about fortified settlements in Carolingian Istria, the fact that these settlements were abandoned at the twilight of the Middle Ages makes them a kind of 'frozen' witnesses of that time, deprived of later periods. But nature has compensated itself for the price of such a historically 'intact' state, and almost all the sites have been completely annihilated by vegetation. The only still somewhat visible elements were the churches, which in the following centuries continued to be the scene of liturgical celebrations, thus being spared the cruelties of nature and preserving their original chronology at least in dimensions, parts of walls or later built-in fragments of sculpture. The churches scattered in a radius of about 5 kilometres from Vodnjan, past the more famous medieval communication routes, but often related to settlements, are just waiting for a more profound study so they could be placed in a broader geopolitical and cultural context. The discovered fragments of sculptural decoration, the spatial concept of the buildings, and often the model of the relationship of the settlement to the church outside it speaks in favour of the early medieval, Carolingian dating of these churches.

Among the most interesting examples of sacral buildings that still exist in elevation and within the urban context is certainly the church of St Stjepan in Peroj, a settlement located

on the road that descends from Barbariga to Pula, and which was mentioned as *casale Petriolo* in Rižanski placit in 804. The spatial concept of the church as a hall building with three inscribed rectangular apses corresponds to the churches of the Carolingian period in Istria. A more detailed elaboration on the determinants of the microregional conception of space, monuments, their functions and formal characteristics will be presented in the following chapters.

On the west side of Via Flavia, on the old, now partly passable, but an almost completely overgrown road, apart from Peroj (which still exists today) and Gusan (along Via Flavia itself, but a bit further south) in the early medieval period probably two more settlements have existed and functioned. - Mednjan and Banjole. Indications that the existence of a medieval settlement could be archaeologically confirmed at the site of Mednjan in the future, except for the mention of one of the seven medieval settlements in the vicinity of Vodnjan, were given by sporadic finds and ruins, but also the church of St Martin with a built-in fragment of sculpture that could chronologically indicate the early periods of Christianity and the Middle Ages. Today, Banjole can be connected only with the church of St Mihovil Banjolski. Although it consists primarily of the structures from somewhat later period of the High Middle Ages, it also contains remains from the late antique and early medieval periods.³⁰⁹ Apart from the mention that refers to Mednjan, there is still no concrete material evidence about the settlement. This micro area in the heart of Pula's Roman centuriation is still awaiting eventual systematic research.³¹⁰

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Certainly, the sites which have undergone the most profound research of a micro-regional area in Istria are located in the vicinity of the abandoned settlement of Stari Guran, about 3.5 kilometres east of Vodnjan. Guran, just like Mednjan, Banjol, Gusan and other already mentioned settlements, is mentioned in the context of leaving the cities due to the plague

³⁰⁹ BARADA, M., MUSTAČ, S., Sv. Mihovil Banjolski - revizijsko iskopavanje i konzervacija, *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* (2005), 2, 2008, p. 243-244.

³¹⁰ M. Jurković recently wrote about the current state of research in the text on fortified settlements in Carolingian Istria, which has already been mentioned several times. JURKOVIĆ, 2018b.

epidemic at the end of the Middle Ages. It is this fact that has left it historically almost intact to this day, which has proven to be a truly fortunate circumstance for researchers. What makes the site of the fortified settlement even more interesting is its micro-regional context, location in the landscape and mutual relations with nearby buildings, today archaeological remains and a network of communication roads, arable land and water sources and ponds.

Right next to the discovered³¹¹ defensive walls of the settlement of Guran, at only sixty meters away are the remains of the once magnificent *basilica*, a unique floor plan for early medieval Istria. The basilica, as well as the excavated parts of the settlement, chronologically correspond to the period of the early Middle Ages, i.e. the transition from the 8th to the 9th century, which completely coincides with the period of Carolingian penetration into the Istrian peninsula.

In addition to the basilica, at just under 900 meters of a direct aerial distance to the northwest in the early Middle Ages, another church existed and functioned - the one dedicated to St Cecilia, built on a site that has testified to the continuity of inhabitation from the 1st century AD and thus symbolically and literally stands at the beginning of the story of the metamorphosis and reorganization of the landscape of this micro space. In Roman times, a *villa rustica* was built on this site. Its transformation in the 5th or 6th century was marked by the construction of a sacral building within one of the rooms of the complex. During the centuries that followed, this sacral building changed its shape on several occasions, primarily the sanctuary, i.e. the eastern part of the building and the apse. In the context of the historical landscape viewed from the broadest macro-regional perspective, and from one step closer - micro-regional, the significance of this site is exceptional and is an extremely important part of the puzzle of the historical and architectural landscape of the early medieval, more precisely Carolingian period. One of the phases of the transformation of the church of St Cecilia (change in the appearance of the sanctuary) corresponds to the time of the construction of the basilica next to the settlement itself, and also another Guran church, that of St Simon. It is a cemetery church which, of all the ones mentioned so far (related to Guran),

³¹¹ Archaeological excavations at the site of the fortified settlement of Guran began in 2002 as part of a research project of the International Research Center for Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, University of Zagreb, in scientific collaboration with Swiss experts from the Cantonal Archaeological Service and the University of Geneva and the Pula Conservation Department. The research was conducted by J. Terrier and M. Jurković, and the results have been published successively in the journal *Hortus Artium Medievalium* since 2003. JURKOVIĆ, M., TERRIER J., MARIĆ I.: Ranosrednjovjekovno naselje Guran, *Histria Antiqua*, 20, 2011, p. 109-134. For the full list of the publications see the chapter 'Bibliography'.

most clearly corresponds to the set paradigm of an early medieval church outside the walls of an early medieval settlement. Built at a distance of 500 meters from the settlement, originally it was as a relatively small single-nave building, just like all mentioned so far (except for St Agatha in Novigrad). It was located at the intersection of four routes (today unfortunately only barely passable field roads), that went from the church to the fortified settlement Guran to the north, Vodnjan to the west, Galižana to the south and Marčana to the east. It is probable that all these settlements lived during the Early Middle Ages, which is again best evidenced by the remains of material heritage - sculpture and architecture. Both in Galižana and Marčana, fragments of sculpture which correspond to the 8th/9th century were built into the walls of several later churches.³¹²

Finally, it should be noted that approximately 200 meters south of the road that passed right next to the church of St Simon and continued in the direction of Marčana, was the church of St Severin which was discovered during the prospection of the route of the main gas pipeline. The church was discovered and archaeologically researched 15 years ago,³¹³ and the analysis of movable finds and historical context directed researchers to two time periods - earlier, Roman and late antique period and the later early medieval period, more precisely the transition from the 8th to the 9th century.

The long continuity of inhabitation of this site is not surprising, especially bearing in mind that nearby (500 meters northwest) was one of the many Istrian ponds, even called Lake Azian, which, just like the previously mentioned church of St Simon was located at the intersection of four roads. Today, it, just like a huge number of other puddles, is overgrown with bushes. Furthermore, Višnjić states that the surrounding fields on the maps are marked with the toponym Buran, which is associated with the settlement first mentioned in the document from 1150 as *de vico Buriano*.³¹⁴ Whether it is possible that there was a settlement of late antique and/or early medieval origin nearby remains to be seen. But here, perhaps

³¹² Sculpture from Galižana built into the church of St Justa (cemetery church, about four hundred meters from the center of Galižana) was cataloged and published by I. Matejčić (<http://www.ppmi.hr/hr/patrimonio/katalog-predmeta/?q=gali%C5%BEana&order=title>). In addition to the fragments built into the church, a chronologically close sculpture can be found on the church of St Antony the Abbot in the center of Galižana (https://ipd-ssi.hr/?page_id=1340).

³¹³ On the results of archaeological research, see VIŠNJIĆ, J., BEKIĆ, L., Guran na Križu - ranosrednjovjekovna crkva sv. Severina, in: BEKIĆ, L. (ed.), *Zaštitna arheologija na magistralnom plinovodu Pula - Karlovac*, Hrvatski restauratorski zavod, Plinacro d.o.o., Zagreb, 2007., str. 11-68.

³¹⁴ VIŠNJIĆ, 2007: 12. In addition to the document from 1150, the toponym Buran is also mentioned in 1273, 1322, 1488 and 1587. See MATIJAŠIĆ, 1988: 75.

more than anywhere else, research should be approached with a really broad perspective that would include at least the Guran microregion, if not the wider area, with all its infrastructural elements and with the diversity of functions and ultimately, the continuity of life.

Apart from sites directly related to the context of early medieval settlements, the Pula area is rich in sporadic examples of seemingly still isolated sacral buildings. Their spatial characteristics and/or sculptural opus correspond to the period of Carolingian domination over the peninsula, which later will be elaborated in detail. One of them is the almost completely forgotten and unexplored church of St Zeno in Savolaga east of Galizana. Although there is no evidence for this yet, P. Kandler assumed that in the vicinity of the church of St Zeno was the ancient settlement of Padernum. The specific spatial concept of the hall church with three prominent semicircular apses, first published by A. Gnirs in 1910, suggests that it originates again from a chronologically relatively limited period marked by a shift during the second half of the 8th and 1st half of the 9th century. This dating, although perhaps somewhat earlier (8th century), is also indicated by found fragments of sculpture recently analyzed and published by I. Matejčić in his synthesis on Istrian sculpture from the 5th to the 13th century.³¹⁵ The same form of the church has so far been found in Istria on several examples,³¹⁶ about which Jurković wrote in more detail, the last time in 2018 in the text on the Carolingian transfer of Lombard architectural models on the Istrian example.³¹⁷

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The early medieval historical landscape of the northern part of the Pula diocese is much less researched, so the number of the studied sites is much smaller. Apart from the mentioned settlement of Bale and the surrounding area (which gravitates more towards the centre of the

³¹⁵ MATEJČIĆ, I., MUSTAČ, S., *Kiparstvo od 4. do 13. stoljeća. Umjetnička baština istarske crkve I*, Poreč, Porečka i Pulska biskupija - Istarska županija - Istarska kulturna agencija, 2017, p. 150-153.

³¹⁶ There are two basic models of the sanctuary which then have their variants. These two basic models are churches with semicircular apses (the church of St Sophia in Dvigrad, the parish church in Bale, the chapel of St Andrew as part of the episcopal complex of Euphrasiana in Poreč, the church of St Gervasius in Pižanovac and the church of St Zeno in Savolag) and churches with square apse (church of St Stephen in Peroj, the church of St Mary in Ružar and one of the phases of the church of St Cecilia near Guran).

³¹⁷ JURKOVIĆ, M., Forms as signs of representation of power. Carolingian transmission of longobard architectural models. The case of Istria, in: ARCHETTI, G. (ed.), *Teodolinda. I longobardi all'alba dell'Europa*, Milano, Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 2018, p. 545-572.

Pula diocese), there are only a few scattered sites that indicate the early medieval phase of use. On the northeastern edge of the Pula ager, outside the basic (known) communication routes, are the remains of the fortified settlement of Stari Gočan (*Golzana Vecchia*) (Fig. 12), today unfortunately completely lost due to vegetation. It was first published by B. Marušić on the basis of archaeological research conducted during the 1950s, but further and more detailed analysis, except for a brief review of preliminary reports and the floor plan of the archaeologically researched area, was missing.³¹⁸

Research has indicated the existence of a late antique and early medieval phase, and the finding of a cemetery church outside the settlement where a Corinthian-type capital with smooth acanthus leaves was found is interesting and certainly calls for further analysis.³¹⁹

With the exception of Stari Gočan, in this part of the Pula diocese so far there are no excavated settlements with a confirmed early medieval phase. However, only 5 kilometres to the east stretches the river Raša, which marked an important ethnic and political border between Histri and Liburnia, between Italy and Dalmatia (Liburnia). The town of Pićan lies near the river, inhabited from late antiquity to the 18th century. It was the centre of the Diocese of Pićan, which had the border with the Diocese of Pula probably precisely around the area of Stari Gočan. The lack of data and the still extremely modest knowledge of this area should be accepted as a challenge for future research.

As it has been said on several occasions, the historical landscape and architectural heritage of the early Middle Ages are determined by a network of fortified settlements, monasteries, and elite estates of which at best only their private churches remain. While in the area of the dioceses of Novigrad and Poreč the number of confirmed fortified settlements with early medieval phases is superior to the number of 'isolated' churches, in the area of the diocese of Pula the situation is more balanced. One of the most important churches, for which has not yet been established a direct link with other elements of the architectural heritage in its

³¹⁸ MARUŠIĆ, 1973–75: 343; MARUŠIĆ, B., Materijalna kultura Istre od 9. do 12. stoljeća, Materijalna kultura Istre od 9. do 12. st., *Arheološka istraživanja u Istri i Hrvatskom primorju, Izdanja Hrvatskog arheološkog društva*, 11/1, 1987, p. 116. Jurković was the last to write about Stari Gočan, placing him in a historical-spatial framework. JURKOVIĆ, 2016.

³¹⁹ M. Levak states that the cemetery church near Stari Gočan was destroyed during one of the Slavic incursions, which indicates the existence of that church in the period before the arrival of the Franks. DIACONUS, P., *Zgodovina Langobardov (Historia Langobardorum)*, Maribor, Obzorja, 1988; LEVAK, 2007: 305-314.

immediate vicinity, is the church of St Thomas, 4 kilometres walk from Rovinj (Fig. 23).³²⁰ It was most likely a private church owned by a member of the (Carolingian) elite. The organization of the space inside the building and the discovery of a privileged burial was found in the southern branch of the transept speaks in favour of the fact that it could have been a mausoleum.³²¹ As for its position in space, apart from the fact that it is located on the road that once connected Saline Bay³²² with the interior, and probably Via Flavia, very little is known about the environment in which it is located, and any further reflection on its history should certainly include that segment. If it is really the property of the Carolingian elite, and it is likely that it is, it would be interesting to investigate, for example, whether there is a continuity of occupation of a particular place in relation to earlier lords and estates - from late antiquity and, of course, antiquity.

In addition to St Thomas, of all the 'independent' churches of the early medieval period without a (proven) direct link with the environment, stands out the church of St Quirinus in today's village of Juršići. The particular thing of interest is the relationship between the time of construction and its formal characteristics. However, since this issue later will be presented in more detail, it is only necessary to point out its location in space. Located 4 kilometres north of Vodnjan, it is located on the road that connects the south of the peninsula and Pula with the interior - Žminj and finally Pazin. On the same road, halfway from the church of St Quirinus and Vodnjan about ten years ago, during the inspection of the route of the future gas pipeline Vodnjan - Umag, another church was found and preserved, known as Sv. Peter of the Seven Doors, the chronology of which has not yet been precisely defined, but roughly belongs to the period from late antiquity / early Christianity to the Middle Ages.

³²⁰ MATEJČIĆ, I., *Dvije crkve, katalog izložbe*, Rijeka - Rovinj, Gradski muzej Rovinj, Uprava za zaštitu spomenika kulture - Konzervatorski ured Rijeka, 1997, p. 11-19, with the earlier bibliography. Also JURKOVIĆ, 2018a.

³²¹ Also see JURKOVIĆ, 2018a: 19.

³²² Remains of ancient rural architecture and the port were found in the bay of Saline, which is not surprising since it is the most sheltered from the wind bay in the northern part of Rovinj.

2.2.3.6. Conquest of counties of Osona and Barcelona

Although the discussion about parallels between two such distant areas - Istria on the one hand and Catalonia on the other, is ungrateful, if we look at it from the most basic perspective of Carolingian advance and conquest of territories from the centre of the country to its periphery, such synchronous approach makes sense. It is possible to see the situation of the last stage of the conquest of both areas, when the Frankish government finally reached Pula and Barcelona, previously incorporating the future counties of Osona, Manresa and Barcelona.

The Franks had been preparing the conquest of Barcelona for several decades. It finally happened shortly after the territory of the future County of Osona had been incorporated into the Frankish state in 798. This is also documented in the written sources which state that Charlemagne himself, in 798, at a gathering in Toulouse, ordered the restoration and fortification of the *civitas* in the County of Osona and the *oppida deserta* of Cardona and Casserres.³²³ In addition to these two 'abandoned fortified settlements' in the mentioned selected group of the sites occupied by the Franks, there was l'Esquerda (Roda de Ter), first mentioned in historical sources in 826 as *Roda ciutate* (Fig. 22).³²⁴

The area of the County of Osona was located in the very centre of old Catalonia, surrounded by the high Pyrenees on the upper side (over 2000 m above sea level) and the slightly lower Montseny mountains on the southern side. The central part of the territory, protected from all sides, was and still is dominated by a broad plain, with Roman Ausona, later Vic in the centre.³²⁵ Having in mind that in 798 Charlemagne ordered Dukes Cerdanya and Urgell - Borrell to secure, restore or rebuild fortifications along two key rivers - Ter and Llobregat, from the perspective of strategic planning it is clear that the conquest of the Counties of Osona and its neighbouring Manresa was a prelude to the final attack of Barcelona and the area to the rivers Llobregat and Cardener, at the very dawn of the 9th century. In the decade that followed, this border proved to be the final reach of the Carolingian Empire on the Iberian

³²³ D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, 1986: 89 (f. 97).

³²⁴ FOLCH IGLESIAS, 2018: 29-49.

³²⁵ On the ancient roads on this territory see PADRÓS, C., Els camins antics i les vies romanes a la comarca d'Osona (Barcelona). Estat de la qüestió, *Quaderns de prehistòria i arqueologia de Castelló*, 28, 2010, p. 233-245.

Peninsula. The attempt to descend to Tarraco and set the border on the Ebro River failed ingloriously.

The network of fortified settlements was complemented by monasteries, their estates and smaller churches, for which the function has not always been clearly defined. These points in space can be observed by following the configuration of the terrain, which is largely determined by river flows and mountain passes. These morphological characteristics of the terrain have been exploited by humans ever since the birth of civilization; each historical period has made them useful in its own way. The capillary expansion of the Frankish rule can be defined, among other things, by following these morphological characteristics of the terrain. Such a situation is not new at all: the alpine and subalpine area of today's Switzerland and northern Italy have demonstrated the same principle during the 2nd half of the 8th century. Documents which mention the founding of the monasteries and monastic estates in the area of the Catalan counties complete the puzzle of historical movements of the end of the 8th and the course of the 9th century.³²⁶

If we visually observe the area of Osona from the east, from Girona, it is enough to follow the course of the river Ter to define a large number of sites from the 9th century. A number of churches and monasteries have been discovered, located between Girona and Vic: the monastery of Sant Medir,³²⁷ founded around 820, the church of Sant Pere de Llorà,³²⁸ the convent of Santa Maria de Amer³²⁹ and its small community of Mare de Déu del Coll³³⁰. The monastery of Sant Llorenç,³³¹ some ten kilometres east of Vic, ends this series of monuments, after which fortifications begin to rise along Ter, all the way to Ripoll at regular intervals of about 5 km of aerial distance. In a strategically important position, on the edge of a river notch overlooking both sides of the Ter River, lie the rests of the most thoroughly studied

³²⁶ D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, 1926-1950.

³²⁷ SANZ, A., PLADEVALL, A., *Catalunya romànica*. Vol. V. Gironès, Selva, Pla de l'Estany, Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1991; BOLOS, J., HURTADO, V., *Atlas del comtat de Girona (795-993)*, Rafael Dalmau, Barcelona, 2000, p. 78.

³²⁸ C MONTALBAN, C., La descoberta de l'església preromànica de Sant Pere de Llorà (Sant Martí de Llémna), in: *Actes del III Congrés d'Arqueologia Medieval i Moderna a Catalunya*, Sabadell, : Ajuntament de Sabadell - Associació Catalana per a la Recerca en Arqueologia Medieval - Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006, p. 613-620.

³²⁹ PRADES I BUIXONS, I., *Catalunya romànica*. Vol. V. Gironès, Selva, Pla de l'Estany, Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1991.

³³⁰ A. Pladevall, *Catalunya romànica*. Vol. V. Barcelona, Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1991.

³³¹ PLADEVALL I FONT, A., El Monasterio de Sant Llorens de Munt, *Ausa*, 4/37, 1961, p. 95-106; PLADEVALL I FONT, A., El Monasterio de Sant Llorens de Munt (II), *Ausa*, 4/38, 1961, p. 131-137; CATALÀ I ROCA, P., *Els castells catalans*, Vol. IV, Barcelona, Rafael Dalmau, 1993.

fort of l'Esquerda or Ciutat de Roda, a site referred to as *civitas* in the historical sources.³³² Most of these fortifications were built or rebuilt in the late 8th century during the first reorganization of the territory when the goal was to prevent the passage of Muslim troops towards Cerdanya and Rosselló, and also towards Girona, which was the task given to Duke Borrell.³³³ At the same time, this network of fortifications had to secure an easier intrusion towards the southeast coast where Barcelona was located. Following the flow of the river Ter, this time from the north in the Pyrenees towards the Osona plain and the town of Vic, there are several fortifications from the 9th and 10th centuries, which certainly had some kind of mutual communication, primarily visual.

As a result of the system of territorial control, the capture of Barcelona took place in 801. This control was primarily organized over the rivers Ter, Llobregat, but also Cardener, which descended from the County of Urgell via Cardona to Barcelona to flow into Llobregat near Manresa. The fortifications of Casserres and Cardona were the axes of the western direction of descent, while the Ossonan fortifications, primarily those around Vic, 'held' the eastern direction. The main road Via Augusta descended from Girona and continued to Tarraco. But the area south of Barcelona and the river Llobregat, i.e. east of the river Cardener, now controlled by Duke Berà I, will remain outside the formal reach of the Carolingian Empire.

Nevertheless, the contentment for the conquered space did not last long. The control and defence system proved ineffective against the anti-Frankish breakthrough led by Aissó in 826 and 827. After a failed attempt to capture Barcelona and Girona, it turned inland, towards the County of Osona where it captured Vic and attacked and destroyed the settlement of Roda (ciutat de Roda), and probably a number of other neighbouring fortifications in the area. Although this rebellion was eventually extinguished, Carolingian rule over the territory of the County of Osona would not be re-established until the time of Duke Urgell and Cerdanya

³³² The bibliography on this subject is extensive. Among the titles: OLLICH, I., Roda: l'Esquerda. La ciutat carolíngia, in: CAMPS, J. (ed.), *Catalunya a l'època carolíngia: art i cultura abans del romànic (segles IX i X)*, Barcelona, Museu nacional d'art de Catalunya 1999, p. 84-88; OLLICH, I., Roda Ciutat (l'Esquerda) i la defensa de la línia del Ter al comtat d'Osona (s. VIII-X), in: *Actes del congrés Els Castells Medievals a la Mediterrània Nord-Occidental. Arbúcies, Museu Etnològic del Montseny*, 2004, p. 179-194; OLLICH, I., ROCAFIGUERA, M., AMBLÀS, O., PRATDESABA, A., PUJOL, M. A., Visigots i Carolingis a Osona. Novetats arqueològiques des del jaciment de l'Esquerda, in: BLASCO, I., ÀNGELS, M. (eds.), *III Jornades d'Arqueologia de la Catalunya Central, Roda de Ter (octubre 2014)*. Roda de Ter - Barcelona, Generalitat de Catalunya - Museu Arqueològic de l'Esquerda, 2015, p. 14-22; OLLICH, ROCAFIGUERA, OCAÑA, 2016, 205-217; OLLICH, I., Roda Ciutat: el nucli fortificat de l'Esquerda sobre el Ter i el seu territori, *Ausa*, 179/28, 2017, p. 23-40.

³³³ See in BOLOS, J., HURTADO, V., *Atlas del comtat d'Osona (798-993)*, Rafael Dalmau, Barcelona, 2001, p. 11-12.

Guifré el Pelós, some fifty years after Aissó's campaign.³³⁴ The absence of structures of sacral architecture from that period, therefore, is not surprising: the territory had obviously suffered great losses, and it took time to start its renovation. This will happen in the last quarter of the 9th century with Duke Guifré el Pelós, who in the 980s began the recovery process by founding two monasteries - Santa María de Ripoll³³⁵ and Sant Joan de Ripoll,³³⁶ today known as Sant Joan de les Abadesses. In addition, the same duke rebuilt the network of fortifications, recuperating the old sites and building new ones. He has also restored the seat of the diocese in Vic and embarked on the process of creating an even denser network of churches and monasteries throughout the county. Whether the reason for such an impression of the scarcity of architectural heritage of the 9th century may lie in the fact that this period was marked by constant turmoil and struggles, remains a question for future research. But it is symptomatic that a vast number of monasteries and churches have undergone some sort of change from the beginning to the middle of the 10th century, although their origins date back to the previous century which, as it seems, was quite problematic for many political and historical reasons.

³³⁴ *Idem*, 12-13.

³³⁵ Here again, the bibliography is extensive. I will cite only few examples: SERRA ROTÉS, R., Les possessions del monestir de Santa Maria de Ripoll al Bergueda, *L'Erol*, 57, 1998, p. 34-39; PLADEVALL I FONT, A., *Els monestirs catalans*, Barcelona, Ed. Destino, 1968; JUNYENT I SUBIRÀ, E., La basílica del monestir de Ripoll, Ripoll, 1969; PLADEVALL I FONT, A., La diòcesi i els bisbes, in: DE PALOL I SALELLAS, P., PLADEVALL I FONT, A. (eds.), *Del Romà al Romànic. Història, art i cultura de la Tarraconense mediterrània entre els segles IV i X*, Barcelona, Edita - Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1999.

³³⁶ CRISPÍ, M., MONTRAVETA, M. (eds.), *El monestir de Sant Joan de les Abadesses*, Junta del Monestir de Sant Joan de les Abadesses - Consorci Ripollès Desenvolupament, 2012; JUNYENT I SUBIRÀ, E., *El monestir de Sant Joan de les Abadesses*, Barcelona, Junta del Monestir de Sant Joan de les Abadesses, 1976.

2.2.4. Observing through micro(regional) perspective. Examples of Istrian and Catalan architectural landscape

Sacral architecture is the projection of ecclesiastical and secular elites' ideology. The idea of the art of the ruling social class is easily applicable to the example of Istria. The evidence of the period that witnessed a substantial change of government has literally remained preserved and written in stone. This situation is of a great privilege for art historians and archaeologists, but consequently also for historians. Especially if we take into account that in terms of architectural and artistic production, the same period in Catalonia is almost invisible. And we are talking about the region that is experiencing a similar political change during the same period.

Since the previous chapters have offered an overview of the wider area (primarily Istrian) through the macro perspective, the emphasis in this chapter will be on the monument itself. Architectural heritage will be seen through its location in space and the role/function it thus receives, as well as what message it sends. Ultimately, although aware of the shortcomings and pitfalls of the study of architectural forms as a separate category, or discipline, they will nevertheless, as the only material which has been preserved as the witness of that historical period, be a critical factor in the creation of the image of the historical landscape. And just as such, it will enable (and already have helped) the opening of new questions that disciplines such as art history, archaeology, but also history should certainly strive for.

2.2.4.1. New and old on the example of Istrian architectural forms and functions

It is ungrateful to talk about the state of research in the architecture of the 8th and 9th centuries in Istria, because at the same time it may seem satisfactory, as well as not. It could be said that the research of Istrian architecture of that period has experienced three renaissances so far. The first and in many ways the most significant was the one documented in the works of A. Gnirs at the beginning of the 20th century.³³⁷ The second one was led by the works of B. Marušić from the 1960s, followed by the works of A. Šonje until 1980s. Whatever we think of today's research and the results of these researchers from today's perspective, their exceptional contribution to the study of Istrian archaeological and architectural heritage is indisputable. Another flourish of the research took place at the turn of the century, primarily thanks to the work of the International Research Centre for Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, but also to the Conservation Department in Pula, the research of which was usually conducted by I. Matejčić. These two centres, in cooperation with numerous foreign institutions, have opened a new path in the study of Istrian heritage that will finally succeed in bringing it to the stage of European early medieval history and art. Although the number of researched sites was not as large as in the time of Marušić, the discoveries indicated the need for a different understanding of the historical events of the 8th and 9th centuries, and what they carry in terms of artistic production.

Until then, the widely accepted view of the architecture that followed Eastern Roman building standards (which is a big issue in itself) and dates back to the time of Byzantine domination over the peninsula, began to be replaced by a new reality. The one that was slowly being discovered in the archaeological layers of the new sites, in sculptural motifs and works,

³³⁷ The following papers will be used in the study. GNIRS, A., Frühe christliche Kultanlagen im sudlichen Istrien, *Kunsthistorisches Jahrbuch*, 5, 1911; GNIRS, A., Forschungen in Istrien, III. Grabungen auf dem Scoglio S. Caterina bei Pola, *Jahreshefte des osterreichischen Archäologischen Institutes in Wien*, 14, 1911, p. 188-196; GNIRS, A., Die Ruine von Due Castelli bei Canfanaro (Istria), *Mittheilungen der k.k. Zentral-Kommission für Denkmalpflege*, 13, 1914, p. 86-89; GNIRS, A., Die frühmittelalterliche Kirche Visitatio B. M. in Valle, *Mittheilungen der k.k. Zentral-Kommission für Denkmalpflege*, 14, 1915, p. 160-162. reproduces the drawings from 1841; GNIRS, A., *Arheološki tekstovi*, Istra kroz stoljeća, kolo XIII., 70. knjiga, Pula, Čakavski sabor, 2009.

and in the revision and re-examination of previous research on already known examples of architectural heritage.

Today, primarily thanks to the works of M. Jurković, it is known that a substantial part of the examples of architecture that were believed to belong to the horizon of the 5th and 6th centuries in Istria was actually built approximately three centuries later, during the new great restoration of Istria, the Renaissance its historical and architectural landscape. This restoration mostly took place in the last quarter of the 8th century, with the arrival of the Carolingian authorities on the peninsula, continuing at the beginning of the 9th century. At least for now, the results of the research indicate that.

As it has already been presented in the previous chapters on the macro-regional system and infrastructure network paired with fortified settlements, monasteries, private estates and other monuments in the landscape, one can read the planning strategy of the new rulers to subjugate the new area to their idea through the prism of construction activity. Control of the newly conquered space is thus woven into the landscape; it is a practice that has been seen so many times throughout history. However, each time it brings with it new norms, whether they are only somewhat changed experiences, ideas and realizations of previous periods, whether it is a new invention.

In Istria at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century, this relationship between the new and the old has fortunately been preserved to this day on the example of several monuments. Here I refer to the similar time and the political context in Catalonia, where there are almost no preserved monuments from that period, which I will discuss later.

Whenever we talk about the architecture of a period which, for one reason or another, is a novelty in relation to the previous one, the question of the use of forms arises. Even without any insight into the problems of a particular case, it is only logical to conclude that the situation is never crystal clear. There have hardly ever been sudden cuts and absolute changes in the historical timeline that have occurred in brief periods - practically on a single-day basis. These are the thoughts, and the conclusions that have so often been generally accepted in historical disciplines. Fortunately, they have been left behind more and more, and have even disappeared from some parts of the discourse of the humanities.

2.2.4.2. Import of new forms

As I have mentioned a few sentences ago, the relationship between the old and the new is always present. Actually, it forms the essence of what new ideas and forms emerge from in the periods that follow. On the example of the architecture from the Istrian area, what is 'old' was indeed nothing less than magnificent, so it is not surprising that some of its elements were repeated in the following centuries. Here I primarily refer to the examples from the ancient and late antique urban centres of Poreč and Pula. For example, the Euphrasian Basilica, an architectural example which will serve as an inspiration to the masters, apparently engaged by the new Carolingian rulers, not only with its architectural form but also with its interior decoration. On the other hand, this new layer of elite and rulers, hitherto unknown and without mention in the Istrian area, will bring with them their own 'tradition' from the other parts of the Frankish state, ideas realized in the form of monuments and their forms and decorations. After all, as it always happens.

It is not surprising that in Novigrad (*Civitas Nova*), which as the centre of the Frankish rule on the Istrian peninsula and the newly established Istrian diocese had to be a pure innovation, an existing model was probably chosen for the construction and the decoration of the crypt of the cathedral and the bishop's seat. This model came from the Cathedral of Aquileia, the seat of the patriarch who was under the direct protection of the Franks / Carolingians.³³⁸ Matejčić writes that it is probable that the Novigrad Cathedral at that time actually was a court cathedral, among other things, considering that at that time, in addition to the bishop (Mauritius), the duke Iohannes (Ivan) also chaired in the city.³³⁹

³³⁸ The founding of the new diocese in Novigrad is also mentioned in the diploma of Otto III. from 996. See MARGETIĆ, L., *Histria et Adriatica*, Trieste, 1983, p.123.

³³⁹ MATEJČIĆ, 2006: 33-34.

2.2.4.1.1.1. The crypt of the Novigrad cathedral

The half-buried crypt (Fig. 24-25) is located below the sanctuary of the former cathedral, today the church of St Pelagius. The shape of the inscribed semicircular apse is repeated in an identical form both in the crypt and in the sanctuary. The simultaneous construction of both floors is supported by the fact that the walls of the crypt and the apse were built at the same time.³⁴⁰ Furthermore, the coincidence in the form with the crypt of the Aquileian Cathedral is indisputable, although in Novigrad it, of course, occupies a significantly smaller space. This is primarily visible in the type of the floor plan, but also in the small rooms in the corners of the east wall, an element which is rare in early medieval crypts. Matejčić adds that the similarity is visible in the semi-capitals of the pilasters along the walls and the lining of the altar with relics in the very centre of the crypt.³⁴¹ Nevertheless, although the hypothesis of the dating of the Novigrad crypt to the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century was accepted in Croatian historiography, many researchers still dispute the dating of the Aquileian crypt, which is analogous to its layout.³⁴² Since the similarity between the two crypts is apparent, and that in the period of the transition in the 9th century they belonged to the same political-cultural circle, it is likely that they would depend on each other chronologically. It is also realistic to expect that the Novigrad crypt had its model in Aquileia and not the other way around. Furthermore, the proposed "Carolingian" chronology of the Novigrad crypt is supported by a stone transenna built into its northern window. Matejčić

³⁴⁰ *Idem*, 22.

³⁴¹ See in *Idem*, 28. The author adds that the altar with relics in the Aquileian crypt no longer exists. In Novigrad, on the other hand, a reliquary has been erected on four pillars. On a symbolic level, it is interesting to note that thus elevated, the reliquary touches the central vault of the crypt, thus establishing contact with the altar in the sanctuary of the church.

³⁴² During the last few decades, S. Tavano insists on the "earlier" dating of the Aquileian crypt, in the time of Patriarch Pauline, at the end of the 8th century. Among the latest texts is TAVANO, S., L'arte in Friuli al tempo di San Paolino, *Antichità Altoadriatiche*, 55, 2003, p. 27-56; S. Tavano, TAVANO, S., San Paolino e la sede patriarcale, in: MIRABELLA ROBERTI, M. (ed.), *Aquileia e le Venezie nell'alto medioevo*, Udine, Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1988, p. 255-279; TAVANO, S., La basilica patriarcale, *Antichità Altoadriatiche*, 1, 1972, p. 189-248.

On the other hand, there are a large number of researchers who oppose such hypotheses. Among others, there are HEITZ, C., Composantes occidentales de l'architecture romane d'Aquilée, *Antichità Altoadriatiche*, 19, 1981, p. 309-323; BARRAL I ALTET, X., La basilica di Massenzio ad Aquileia nel contesto dell'architettura carolingia: teorie e nuove ipotesi, *Antichità Altoadriatiche*, 62, 2006, p. 211-240; BARRAL I ALTET, X., La basilica patriarcale di Aquileia: un grande monumento romanico del primo XI secolo, *Arte medievale*, 2, 2007, p. 29-64; FABBRI, L., La cripta di San Pelagio a Cittanova all'interno del dibattito sulla cripta della basilica di Aquileia, in: FEDERICA, T., GIOVANNA, V. (eds.), *Medioevo adriatico: circolazione di modelli, opere, maestri*, Roma, Viella, 2010, p. 35-57.

writes that the motif and the manner of the carving of the transenna, decorated with twisted circles of three-stringed ribbon, is repeated on specific fragments of the pluteus that were part of the liturgical equipment of the cathedral (Fig. 26-27).³⁴³ The analysis of these pieces of sculptural plastic carried out so far has confirmed the mentioned historical period. If this is the case, and if the placement of the transept in the crypt was *in situ*, much of the puzzle of the old Novigrad Cathedral becomes clearer. Therefore, the dating of the Aquileian Cathedral to the end of the 8th century and the period of Patriarch Pauline should still be studied even more carefully and perhaps with more certainty. It would make a great example if the seemingly 'peripheral' art production, for which the analysis is based on the exact data (in this case a ciborium named after Bishop Maurice) (Fig. 28), could reveal us more information about the history of the monuments in large prominent cultural centres.

* * *

Suppose we assume that the Novigrad crypt in its form really is an import from its superior ecclesiastical centre - Aquileia. In that case, we can start tracing a long list of various imported monument forms which have originated from a geographical area outside Istria, whilst belonging to the same political circle. This hypothesis is nothing new; it has been intensively studied for several years by M. Jurković, who asserts that these monuments and the visualization of power were closely linked to the highest levels of government, both ecclesiastical and secular.³⁴⁴ Likewise, but through the perspective of a specific type of *Dreiapsidensaalkirche*, which is mostly present in the examples of Istrian architecture of the late 8th and early 9th centuries, S. Lomartire dealt with the transfer of this specific form.³⁴⁵ It is, therefore, my intention to look at the various forms of import from a somewhat broader

³⁴³ MATEJČIĆ, 2006: 29; MATEJČIĆ 2018: 80, 153.

³⁴⁴ JURKOVIĆ, 2018a: 525-552. Apart from him, at the beginning of the century the problem of the transfer of forms was dealt with by H. R. Sennhause in the second volume of an exhaustive publication on the churches of the 'eastern Alpine region'. See in SENNHAUSER, H. R., Typen, Formen und Tendenzen im frühen Kirchenbau des östlichen Alpengebietes: Versuch einer Übersicht, in: SENNHAUSER, H.R. (ed.), *Frühe Kirchen im östlichen Alpengebiet. Von der Spätantike bis in ottonische Zeit, Band 2*, München, 2003, p. 933-943.

³⁴⁵ See LOMARTIRE, S., Riflessioni sulla diffusione del tipo "Dreiapsidensaalkirche" nell'architettura lombarda dell'altomedioevo, *Hortus artium medievalium*, 9, 2003, p. 417-432.

perspective, primarily concerning the individual forms that are simultaneously appearing at the other end of the Frankish state, in the area of present-day Catalonia.

2.2.4.1.1.2 Basilica near Guran (Fig. 29-30)

Of the entire corpus of the Istrian architecture, which has been dated with great certainty to the period of the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century, only one monument stands out with its unique layout type. It is a basilica dedicated to a yet unknown patron saint right next to the walls of the medieval settlement of Guran, about 60 meters north of its monumental entrance. The building was first documented and archaeologically excavated (at least to some extent) by M. R. Mirabello in 1936 after the stone material of the medieval settlement of Guran served as a building material for the construction of a nearby road. Remains of a large three-nave basilica were also discovered, which at that time still had two or three arches between the middle and one of the side naves (probably the southern one). Unfortunately, these architectural elements had already been irreversibly destroyed when the experts came to study the church. Fortunately, the part of the liturgical furniture and architectural decorations, which will prove to be one of the critical elements in the later analysis and dating of the building, was saved.³⁴⁶ Just like many others, B. Marušić studied this church as well in the middle and during the 2nd half of the 20th, when it was partially archaeologically excavated. He also suggested dating to the early Christian era, more precisely to the 6th century, based on (modest) sculpture finds that would correspond to that historical period, as well as on its position and the *spoliae* reused in the pavement of the sanctuary area.³⁴⁷

However, Marušić himself in 1963, with the assumption that the Guran basilica was built in the 6th century, described the 'floor plan'³⁴⁸ as an innovation in relation to previous construction practices, which will be confirmed fifty years later.³⁴⁹ However, his theory that

³⁴⁶ The results of the research were published by M. R. Mirabella in 1936 and 1938, when the floor plan was published, and the chronology was proposed. See MIRABELLA ROBERTI, M., *Notiziario archeologico* (1935-1936), *AMSI*, 48, 1936, p. 292-293; MIRABELLA ROBERTI, M., *Notiziario archeologico* (1937/1938, 1939), *AMSI*, 50, 1938, p. 239-241; MIRABELLA ROBERTI, M., *Notiziario archeologico Istriano, Atti e memorie della Società Istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria*, 53, 1949, p. 270; MIRABELLA ROBERTI, M., *Notiziario archeologico*, *AMSI*, 51-52, 1938-1940, p. 160.

³⁴⁷ MARUŠIĆ, B., Dva spomenika ranosrednjovjekovne arhitekture u Guranu kod Vodnjana, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, 8-9, 1963, p. 121-149; MARUŠIĆ, B., Istarska grupa spomenika sakralne arhitekture s upisanom apsidom, *Histria Archaeologica*, 5, 1974, p. 1-191.

³⁴⁸ MARUŠIĆ, 1963: 145.

³⁴⁹ JURKOVIĆ, 2000: 164- 189; JURKOVIĆ, M., Guran, in: MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio II, Katalog*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000, p. 39-41; TERRIER J., JURKOVIĆ, M., MATEJČIĆ, I., La basilique à trois nefs de Guran en Istrie: première campagne de fouilles, *Hortus Artium*

such a floor plan type originated in the Middle East has not been proved correct, for which there is a vast number of texts have been written since the early 2000s. The most interesting results that led to new conclusions about the time of construction of the church were given by the research of interior design - liturgical furniture and architectural plastic, from the masonry pylon that most likely served as the *stipes* of the altar, through the ambo, chancel screen³⁵⁰ and fragments of the transenna. All these examples indicate the time of construction of the church in the period of the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century.

It is a three-nave basilica measuring 20 x 10.7 m. So far, in terms of total area, it is the largest church of the early Middle Ages in Istria, more precisely the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century.³⁵¹ What makes it unique in terms of the floor plan in relation to other Istrian examples of the same period is the combination of the three inscribed rectangular apses and three naves. The same ground plan composition, of almost identical dimensions,³⁵² is found only in the heart of the Croatian principality, nearly 300 km southeast, on the example of the church of St. Mary on the site of Crkvina in Biskupija, near Knin. It is assumed that the Guran basilica was the private church of a Carolingian official and it is possible that in the high Middle Ages it became the parish church of the settlement by receiving a bell tower along the southern entrance.³⁵³ Although none of these hypotheses has yet been confirmed with certainty, the correlation between the architectural forms is interesting. In the case of the church in Crkvina (Biskupija near Knin), it was confirmed that the structure connected to the church was the mausoleum of the Croatian rulers. Its private character is, therefore, plausible. At the same time, a privileged burial, a tomb-reliquary located in the central part of the north nave, was found in the basilica near Guran. Research has shown that

Medievalium, 9, 2003, p. 433-438; JURKOVIĆ, M., TERRIER, J., MARIĆ, I., Guran – trobrodna bazilika, crkva sv. Šimuna, staro naselje Guran, crkva sv. Cecilije, *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* (2005), 2, 2006, p. 204-207; JURKOVIĆ, M., MARIĆ, I., BASIĆ, I., Novi fragmenti ambona iz Gurana - prilog opusu "Majstora kapitela iz Bala", *Peristil*, 50, 2007, p. 7-20; JURKOVIĆ, M., Srednjovjekovno fortificirano naselje Guran - od karolinškog castruma do ruralnog naselja, *Peristil*, 56, 2013, p. 25-36. Full list of publications see in the bibliography.

³⁵⁰ JURKOVIĆ, M., Le „Maître de chapiteaux de Bale“, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 8, 2002, p. 349-360.

³⁵¹ One should have in mind that a large number of churches are still unknown and insufficiently researched. Unfortunately, one of the poorly researched ones is the sacral building under today's parish church of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Trg slobode in Umag, which could far exceed the dimensions of the basilica near Guran. For more information about the church, see chapter about hidden Istrian monuments.

³⁵² Of course, with the exception of the western massif, which is also the mausoleum of Croatian rulers.

³⁵³ JURKOVIĆ, 2013: 33 and earlier bibliography.

the tomb was simultaneous with the construction of the church, as well as that there are indications that a member of an elite was buried there.³⁵⁴

In their paper from 2007, Jurković and Basić emphasize the symbolism of the church's location in relation to the settlement. They believe that its close location next to the settlement gives the impression of a dominant position. Also, it is a private church. The aforementioned settlement Guran was built *ex nihilo* during the Frankish occupation of the Istrian territory and as such is of exceptional importance not only in the Croatian but also in the European context where such cases are rare.³⁵⁵ It should be noted that the Guran Basilica was not the only church in the vicinity of the settlement. The topic of cemetery churches close to fortified settlements has already been discussed in the macro-regional review. Such example, the church of St Simon and its surrounding cemetery were also located near Guran, 500 meters to the south. Finally, although Guran is most probably a newly formed settlement formed in the late 8th or early 9th century, the population of this area dates back to much earlier centuries.³⁵⁶ The mentioned site of the Roman villa and the church of St Cecilia, which lasted for a long time until the end of the Middle Ages, is located approximately 600 meters northwest of the settlement of Guran.

The conclusion that the layout of the Guran basilica is an import is more than probable, since not only are there no such architectural forms in the time before the construction of the church but so far (except for the case of the church in Crkvina in Biskupija) we do not know of any simultaneous examples of such a construction. Finally, suppose it turns out that the Novigrad crypt really belongs to the end of the 8th / beginning of the 9th century. In that case, it will, together with the basilica near Guran, be the only two examples of unique architectural solutions imported in that period.

³⁵⁴ JURKOVIĆ, BASIĆ, 2007: 294-295.

³⁵⁵ On Guran in the macro-regional context, see the chapter '2.2.3.5.Final phase: Pula dioceses'. On the fortified settlements of the early Middle Ages in Europe, see N. Christie, H. Herold, 2016. In the same book is an article by M. Jurković on the fortified settlements of Istria during the Carolingian domination over the peninsula. See JURKOVIĆ, 2016: 248-262.

³⁵⁶ West of the façade of the three-nave basilica along the walls of Guran, during excavations carried out since the early 2000s, numerous ceramic objects belonging to the prehistoric horizon have been found and point to the first settlement phases of the site. See in RUFFIEUX, P., La céramique de la basilique à trois nefs de Guran en Istrie (Croatie), *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 12, 2006, p. 271-276.

* * *

Certainly, the most widespread architectural form of this period on the western side of the Istrian peninsula is the spatial organization of the hall churches with three apses - *Dreiapsidensaalkirche*. They have been documented as individual monuments, without typological categorization, since the beginning of the 20th century. These are single-nave churches of similar dimensions, 6 to 10 meters wide, and in addition to single-nave, they have in common the three-apse layout of the sanctuary. However, the execution of this three-apse layout is not unified, so semicircular prominent and semicircular and square inscribed apses are built on various examples. The most significant example, primarily because it is located in the centre of the urban grid and because it is relatively successfully presented, is the northern church of St Andrew forming a part of the Euphrasian Cathedral complex in Poreč.

In 2018, Jurković counted and documented seven of them: the parish church of St Mary in Bale, the church of St Sofia in Dvigrad / Duecastelli, St Stephen in Peroj, the mentioned church of St Andrew within the cathedral complex in Poreč, the church of St Mary in the unknown fortified settlement of Ružar near Vižinada, one of the phases of the church of St Cecilia near Guran and the church of St Gervasius in Pižanovac near Bale (Fig. 18).³⁵⁷

There are two arguments for their dating to the end of the 8th / the beginning of the 9th century which have been most widely accepted so far.

The first one relies on the analysis of the found fragments of the sculpture, primarily defined by the *opus* of the so-called *The master of the capitals from Bale*, but also the only reliably datable monument - the ciborium of the Novigrad bishop Mauricius. The second argument concerns the typological and layout features. It is based on the historical-political context of the Istrian area which at the time belonged to the same political and cultural circle as the northern parts of Italy and the southern parts of Switzerland, where this type of layout is confirmed and reliably dated. The following chapters will present several examples of such architecture, including the later ones which will demonstrate the changes and the

³⁵⁷ JURKOVIĆ, 2018a: 526-528.

development and adoption of this particular spatial concept, as well as its 'long duration' as an idea and architectural solution.

Two of the seven churches of this form confirmed so far are dated based on their liturgical furniture to the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century - the parish church in Bale and the church of St Sofia in Dvigrad. The analysis of the sculpture has so far established that in both cases the hand of *The Master of the Capitals from Bale* is visible, whose work, based on our previous knowledge, should be chronologically placed in the period of the turn of the century.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁸ JURKOVIĆ, 2002: 349-360; JURKOVIĆ, 2018a: 528.

2.2.4.1.1.3 Parish church in Bale

The parish church in Bale, one of the fortified settlements that were rebuilt in the late 8th and early 9th centuries,³⁵⁹ remained known only on paper, as of today's 19th-century church completely denied it. It was built along the eastern edge of the settlement, at the highest, most dominant position.³⁶⁰ The problem of the church was mostly dealt with by I. Matejčić, who presented the history of its research, gave a detailed analysis and the possible reconstruction of the original appearance (Fig. 31). Furthermore, he showed several analogous examples with typologically related churches from southern Switzerland and Alpine Italy, all dated to the beginning of the 9th century.³⁶¹

The first to publish the documents of the site was a conservator A. Gnirs. In 1915, he published a 74-year-old floor plan and the plan of the eastern exterior of the old church (before the construction of today's 1878-1882).³⁶² Nevertheless, his hypothesis that the drawing shows a three-nave church of early Christian chronology proved to be incorrect, as B. Marušić pointed out in the 1980s, citing descriptions made before the demolition of the church in 1878.³⁶³ Thus, an analysis of written sources and Gnirs' published drawings established that the ground plan shows a church constructed in 1588. The crucial fact was that during the construction of this late Renaissance building, 'some older church' was enlarged. This information was supported by a rich corpus of stone fragments of the sculpture collected during the construction of today's church at the end of the 19th century, which also point to the early medieval chronology of their origin.

Based on the collected data, in 1996, I. Matejčić proposed the reconstruction of the church that preceded the late Renaissance one. His hypothesis about a hall church with a three-apse sanctuary consisting of three prominent semicircular apses fit into the then already well-heated idea of so-called Carolingian Istria. This was supported by the hypothesis about the

³⁵⁹ JURKOVIĆ, 2016: 258-259.

³⁶⁰ The micro-regional situation and the fact that there are two more churches next to the fortified settlement (at a distance of 500 m) have already been discussed.

³⁶¹ MATEJČIĆ, I., Tri priloga za prof. Petriciolija. O izvornom izgledu, stilu i dataciji bivše crkve Sv. Marije u Balama, *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji*, 36, 1996, p. 133-139.

³⁶² GNIRS, 1915: 160-62.

³⁶³ MARUŠIĆ, B., Contributo alla conoscenza dei monumenti storico-artistici di Castrum Vallis e del suo territorio, *Atti*, 13, 1982-83, p. 21-34.

import of forms from the Frankish provinces of northern Italy and southern Switzerland in the late 8th and early 9th centuries. The additional confirmation of these ideas was the analysis of sculptural remains that also correspond to that period.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁴ However, it should be noted that in his catalogue of fragments of the sculpture Marušić dated some examples before the 8th century, at the end of the 6th century.

2.2.4.1.1.4. Church of St Sofia in Dvigrad and the surrounding architecture

Another church that is almost certainly dated to the end of the 8th / beginning of the 9th century based on the analysis of its liturgical furniture, architectural plastic and the choice of spatial organization is the church of St Sofia, inside the abandoned fortified settlement of Dvigrad / Duecastelli (Fig. 11, 32-34).³⁶⁵ It was built on the site of an older, early Christian single-apse building.³⁶⁶ The spatial concept of the early medieval church follows the idea of a hall single-nave church with a three-apse sanctuary. The apses are semicircular and inscribed in a flat rear wall. Characteristically, the apse spaces are deeper than is the case with other churches of the *Dreiapsidensaalkirche* group (Fig. 18). They could only be compared to the ground plan of the church of St Gervasius in Pižanovac near Bale.³⁶⁷ There the sanctuary was divided into three elongated semicircular apses inscribed in a flat wall as well.³⁶⁸ In addition, both in Pižanovac and Dvigrad, the rear wall is rhythmic with narrow openings which, at least according to the documented floor plans, do not exist in other churches of this group. The conception of space in both churches is also indicative because

³⁶⁵ During the last twenty years, Dvigrad is together with Guran, the only systematically researched medieval fortified settlement. At the beginning of the last century the remains of the church were studied and documented by A. Gnirs. The archaeological research has started in 1964 by B. Marušić. After 2000 the same task was approached by researchers from the University of Padua and the Department of Conservation in Pula (2002, under the leadership of G. P. Brogiol), and finally in 2005 under the leadership of M. Barada (Department of Conservation in Pula). See in GNIRS, 1914: 86.-89; SCHIAVUZZI, R., Due Castelli, *Atti e Memorie della Società Istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria*, 31, 1919, p. 83-118; MARUŠIĆ, B., Dvograd, Sv. Sofija, Rovinj, Pula - srednjovjekovna sakralna arhitektura, *Arheološki pregled*, 6., Beograd 1964, p. 128; MARUŠIĆ, B., Kompleks bazilike sv. Sofije u Dvogradu, *Histria archeologica*, 2, 1971 (printed 1976), p. 6-133; JUROŠ MONFARDIN, F., Dvigrad: povijesnoarheološka skica, *Histria Archaeologica*, 30, 1999, p. 155-164; BROGIOLO, G.P., MALAGUTI, C., RIAVEZ, P., Nuovi dati archeologici dallo scavo della chiesa di Santa Sofia e dell'insediamento di Dvigrad/Duecastelli, *Antichità altoadriatiche*, 55, 2003, p. 115-151; BARADA, M., Dvigrad - crkva sv. Sofije, *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* (2005), 2, 2006, p. 200-202; LEVAK, 2007: 305-314. For more papers on this subject see bibliography.

³⁶⁶ Whose place for relics was respected in the moment of the construction of early medieval church.

³⁶⁷ Church of St Gervasius excavated in 1974, until a few decades ago was considered a building from the 11th century, although B. Marušić writes that the found fragments of stone furniture belong to the pre-Romanesque. However, Jurković 2018 dates this church to the period when the Franks came to power in Italy. Compare MARUŠIĆ, 1974: 53; JURKOVIĆ, 2018: 10-12.

³⁶⁸ The church of St Gervasius is characterized by the appearance of protrusions in the front of the walls that separate the apses, which indicated that the shells of the apse ended in a double apse arch. Such a situation was documented and published by B. Marušić in 1972, at a time when the church was still somewhat defying the passage of time. During a recent attempt to locate the building, it was concluded that it was most likely completely negated by vegetation and further damaged compared to the situation some 50 years ago. See in MARUŠIĆ, B., Tri spomenika crkvene arhitekture s upisanim apsidama u Istri, *Histria Archaeologica*, 1, 1972, p. 88-92.

it does not lean toward the longitudinal concept. On the contrary, here more than elsewhere, it aims toward the central spatial model.

In the apses of the Dvigrad church, the remains of fresco paintings are also visible, which, in addition to the well-known remains of the wall painting in the church of St Andrew on an island near Rovinj is the only such example of this period in Istria.³⁶⁹ In addition to the rich corpus of church furniture, an iron cross dates from the same period (Fig. 35). Typologically it corresponds to two examples from stone fragments of liturgical equipment. One cross is carved on a fragment of a shallow gable from the same church, while the other cross is on the front of a late antique sarcophagus from the chapel of St Andrew in the complex of the Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč, which researchers date to the 8th century (Fig. 36).³⁷⁰ The church is located on the central, highest plateau of Moncastello, one of the two neighbouring fortifications of Dvigrad. The first mention of the church can be found in the records of Bishop Valier's visit to the Poreč diocese from 1580.³⁷¹ There, along with other churches in the Poreč diocese, the church and its inventory are systematically described. It was documented again in the middle of the 17th century, presumably without going into the question of dating.³⁷² In the Romanesque era (12th c.), a new basilica was built, which negated the hall's predecessor only in the parts that made its construction impossible. It either included the rest in the composition of its walls (rear) or hid it inside them (apsidole).³⁷³ The Romanesque basilica was a couple of times larger than the previous church - the width of its central nave roughly corresponded to the overall width of the older one (Fig. 34).

³⁶⁹ MARUŠIĆ, 1971: 41-42; MATEJČIĆ, I., Affreschi delle absidi della chiesa di Santa Sofia, in: BERTELLI, C., BROGIOLO, G.P., JURKOVIĆ, M., MATEJČIĆ, I., MILOŠEVIĆ, A., STELLA, C. (eds.), *Bizantini, Croati, Carolingi. Alba e tramonto di regni e imperi*, Milano, Skira, 2001, p. 343.

³⁷⁰ MARUŠIĆ, 1971: 33; MILOŠEVIĆ, A., The Iron Cross of Dvigrad, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 8, 2003, p. 289-294; LEVAK, 2007: 311; MATEJČIĆ, MUSTAČ, 2017: 140-142.

³⁷¹ ARCHIVIO SEGRETO VATICANO, Agostino Valier, Congr. Vescovi eRegolari, Visita Ap. 86. Visitatio Ecclesiae Parentinae (1579-1580), fol. 58r, Aduentus ad Duo Castra; JOKSIMOVIĆ, M., KOMŠO, D., Crkva sv. Sofije u Dvigradu u spisima o vizitaciji biskupa Agostina Valiera Porečkoj biskupiji 1580., in: JELENIĆ, M. (ed.), *Dvegrajski zbornik br. 4. Zbornik radova znanstvenih skupova "Crtice uz povijesti Kanfanarštine" 2016. i 2017.*, Kanfanar, Općina Kanfanar - Udruga za očuvanje i promociju nasljeđa Dvegrajci, 2018, p. 47-79.

³⁷² DE TOMMASINI, G.F., *Commentari storici-geografici della provincia dell'Istria, libri otto, con appendice, Archeografo Triestino*, 4, 1837, p. 432.

³⁷³ MARUŠIĆ, 1971: 36.

At the micro-regional level of space organization in the period of the end of the 8th / beginning of the 9th century, it is probable that this church was not the only sacral building near the fortified settlement, just as is the case in the just mentioned Bale. Two churches are located today near Dvigrad, each about two hundred meters away from the centre of the village. Church of St Mary "od Lokvića" is located in the cemetery in the valley of Draga at the foot of the northern walls of the castle. It was built around the end of the 12th century, after the definitive abandonment of the Dvigrad cemetery on Kacavanac, where today the ruins of the church of St Peter stand.³⁷⁴ The second church is located above Dvigrad, southeast of the entrance to the city, about halfway between the old cemetery church of St Peter and the fortified settlement. However, none of the buildings has a chronology older than the high Middle Ages.

Certainly the most interesting of the surrounding churches of Dvigrad is the mentioned cemetery church of St Peter, which was researched by B. Marušić in the 1950s. He believes that the original church was built in the second half of the 5th century as a simple rectangular building. The first phase of the church of St Sofia in Dvigrad should correspond to that period. However, the second phase, which Marušić dates to the beginning of the 9th century, is more significant for this research. At that time, a hall building with a three-apse sanctuary was allegedly built on the site of an older church. Compared to other such churches in Istria, this one has an almost unique concept of a sanctuary with a semi-convex semicircular middle apse and two square lateral ones (Fig. 37). In spatial proportions, although somewhat smaller and with different side apses, the church of St Peter corresponds to the church of St Sofia in the settlement. Such spatial organization, with a central semicircular and lateral square apses, has been recorded only in the church of St Lawrence in Šijana near Pula. Although the floor plan of the latter has not been documented, the remains of the church were described and published by M. Mirabella Roberti after, just before its destruction, he managed to save some fragments of the sculpture.³⁷⁵ But, apart from a possible analogy in the choice of architectural forms, the connection between these two sites is also found in architectural plastic. Preserved sculpture from the church of St Lawrence in Šijana (Fig. 38) formed a part of the altar rail, where the reliefs of the pilasters are comparable with the fragments of the liturgical furniture

³⁷⁴ MARUŠIĆ, B., Kasnoantičko i ranosrednjovjekovno groblje kaštela Dvograd, *Histria Archaeologica*, 1, 1970, p. 7-65.

³⁷⁵ MIRABELLA ROBERTI, 1949: 270.

from the church of St Sofia in Dvigrad and the church of St Thomas near Rovinj (currently irrelevant to this particular issue).³⁷⁶

Unfortunately, in the absence of a large number of found stone furniture from the site of the church of St Peter near Dvigrad, it is impossible to discuss the connection between the sculptural opus of these two churches. However, if the same workshop connected the mentioned sites (St Lawrence in Šijana, St Sophia in Dvigrad), it would not be surprising that the coincidence of using the same spatial concept of the hall church of the three-apse sanctuary on the examples of St Sofia's neighboring church of St Peter and the church of St Lovre in Šijana. It would serve as a great example if the two sites, although each with their own 'incomplete biographies'³⁷⁷, could complement each other.

Finally, Marušić states the end of the 10th century as a *terminus post quem non* for the construction of the second phase of the church of St Peter based on an analysis of burial finds.³⁷⁸ However, before any further conclusions, but also *a priori* acceptance of the previous ones, it would undoubtedly be worthwhile to revise prior research and the obtained results. Given the abundance of burial finds, but also the fact that it is located 400-500 meters from Dvigrad (the indicating distance mentioned here on multiple occasions), this site should certainly be included in the necessary future research. As for the typology of the church, perhaps the churches of St Peter near Dvigrad, but also St Lawrence in Šijana near Pula could be added to the current list of seven buildings last published in the text of M. Jurković in 2018.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁶ MATEJČIĆ, MUSTAČ, 2017: 190-191.

³⁷⁷ The 'incomplete biography' monument syntagm was taken from JURKOVIĆ, M., "Spomenici nepotpune biografije". Skice za teorijska promišljanja ranosrednjovjekovne umjetnosti, in: JURKOVIĆ, M., MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (eds), *Munuscula in honorem Željko Rapanić. Zbornik povodom osamdesetog rođendana*, Split, 2012, p. 259-272.

³⁷⁸ MARUŠIĆ, 1970: 17-18.

³⁷⁹ Given the rather good condition of the altar railing, the width of the church might be possible to define precisely through sculpture.

2.2.4.1.1.5. Chapel within the cathedral complex in Poreč

And while the available data and research results suggest that the churches of St Sofia in Dvigrad and the parish churches in Bale were churches within fortified settlements, the next example stands in the very centre of one of the urban centres - Poreč. It is a transformation within the cathedral complex that has existed as the religious centre of Poreč since the 4th century. This is the only documented example in Istria where the Carolingian innovation has been preserved within the cathedral complex. The hall chapel with a three-apse sanctuary was built on the site of the so-called *the first church*, atop the northern one of the two late antique *basilicas geminae*, but of reduced dimensions. Although its western perimeter is still unknown, it is known that the changes in the structure occurred after a sarcophagus was placed in the eastern part of the northern basilica, more precisely in the southeast corner.³⁸⁰ Behind the top of the *synthronos* from the original apse, an altar was erected, while an *arcosolium* was constructed above the sarcophagus. Such alterations of fragmenting a larger, early Christian space are not uncommon for the early medieval period. These changes are thought to have occurred during the 8th century, which represents the first *terminus post-quem* for the future transformation of the sanctuary into a three-apse form.³⁸¹ As the second chronological determinant, the council in Mantua in 827, when Poreč was formally incorporated into the Carolingian Empire, should undoubtedly be taken into account. This historical event indicates that the changes in the sanctuary of the northern basilica occurred after the third decade of the 9th century. As for the typology of this new sanctuary, the solution was again three semicircular apses inscribed in a flat rear wall. But, unlike the example of the church of St Sofia and the church of St Gervasius, here the depth of these apses is considerably shallower, though still more profound than the regular semicircle. In addition to the construction of the three apses, the transformation of the previous structure also included raising the floor level. The sarcophagus was thus partially incorporated into the foundations of the walls of the new apses, while those parts of the *synthronos*, altars and arches which crossed the level of the new floor were dismantled.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ On the subject of the sarcophagus see in MATEJČIĆ, MUSTAČ, 2017: 140-142.

³⁸¹ MATEJČIĆ, I., Chevalier, P., Nouvelle interprétation du complexe épiscopal "pré-euphrasien" de Poreč, *Bulletin de l'Association pour l'Antiquité Tardive*, 6, 1998, p. 355-365.

³⁸² MATEJČIĆ, MUSTAČ, 2017: 140.

This is an exceptional example of the continuity of the place where a chapel with its architectural language originated from the Carolingian centers of northern Italy and southern Switzerland, was built on the site of the earliest sacral building, whose. The aspect of the continuity can be applied to the 'place' in this example, but also to the very concept of 'idea and solution'. The spatial concept of *the first basilica* from the 4th century finds its typological parallels in the early Christian complex of the Aquileian cathedral of the Theodoric and post-Theodoric periods. About four centuries later, the new, Carolingian government will once again look back to the forms from the northern Italian provinces and Aquileia itself (the mentioned example of the Novigrad crypt) which will, consciously or unconsciously, repeat the history and symbolically close the circle (with the Carolingians).

2.2.4.1.1.6. Dreiapsidensaalkirche as a spatial concept in the *longue durée*

Two churches near Guran. Cemeterial church of St Simon and St Cecilia on an ancient villa

From a broader perspective of the study of space and its organization, it is interesting to see that all the confirmed three-apse church halls, except for the one in the cathedral complex in Poreč and the insufficiently researched church of St Mary near Ružar, are located in the territory of the Diocese of Pula. However, it is essential to have in mind that the concentration of the known monuments is far denser in that area than in the other two "coastal" dioceses, Poreč and Novigrad.

The settlement of Guran (Fig. 10, 39) has been mentioned several times, most recently together with its relation to the three-nave basilica just outside the settlement fortification walls. Based on the to the relatively successful research of this site and its micro-regional context, in addition to the three-nave basilica, two other examples of sacral architecture are known, which were supposedly connected with the settlement itself - the church of St Cecilia (Fig. 21, 40) on an ancient villa and the cemetery church of St Simon (Fig. 41-43).³⁸³ They are the examples of churches of a long chronological duration that have gone through various stages of transformation of their structures over the centuries. What connects them, apart from the geographical proximity, is the period in which both were transformed into hall churches with a three-apse sanctuary inscribed in a flat rear wall. Radiocarbon analysis of the buildings confirmed the relative chronology proposed on the basis of archaeological excavations. Among other things, it was found that in both cases, the change of the spatial concept to the three-apse hall church occurred in the 11th century. At that time, of course, it was no longer an import, since the previous examples from Bale, Dvigrad, Pižanovac and Poreč have been confirmed to date from the transition from the 8th to the 9th century with considerable certainty. However, the spatial context should also be taken into account, and

³⁸³ In addition to the mentioned churches, 1.5 km southeast of the settlement are the remains of the church of St Severin. Since it is a church of the simplest generic plan of a rectangle with a square apse, there will be no talk of it here.

even more importantly - the function of these two churches. While the churches mentioned earlier were mostly located within the urbanized areas (Bale, Dvigrad and Poreč), with the exception of Pižanovac where the spatial-historical context is still completely unknown, the churches of St Cecilia and St Simon are far outside the urban core of Guran. Their simplified forms at the turn of the century suggest that they were outside of the circle of the most important points of the Carolingian expansion through the Istrian territory.

The church of St Simon functioned as a cemeterial church. It is assumed that the tomb on the outside of the south wall of the church coincided with the early medieval phase of the building (late 8th century) when it had a very simple rectangular shape. At a particular moment which is still unknown - between the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 11th century, but most probably very early, around 9th century - this rectangular space was extended to the west. At the same time, in the eastern part, its space was divided, resulting in the typical shape of a simplified rectangular church (9.8x4.3 m). Its form would change drastically in the 11th century with the construction of a much larger hall church with three apses. This church incorporated the south wall of the previous building into its dimensions, whilst covering the early medieval tomb with a newly built structure. We can assume that by incorporating the earlier tomb into the expanded church, its importance was most probably acknowledged, even cherished.

* * *

During the enthronement of the Carolingian rule in Istria, St Cecilia also had a simplified form, similar to the church of St Simon. The church is located in the southern part of the perimeter of the Roman *villa rustica* and has had at least six construction phases until the end of the Middle Ages, all confirmed by the systematic archaeological excavations. The original rectangular space underwent a transformation in around 5th-6th century when a semicircular apse was added. The results of radiocarbon analysis showed that it continued to function

during the later 7th and 8th centuries.³⁸⁴ The next transformation would once again reshape the area of the sanctuary where the semicircular apse was replaced by a larger, square one. In the centre of the apse, a hole was found; most probably it was a negative of an altar. Relative chronology suggests that this phase corresponds to the Carolingian period (late 8th and 9th centuries). The findings of the sculpture dated to the 9th century give further support to the theory that the church stood there and that time.³⁸⁵ Also, at that moment the church was expanded to the west, just as was the case with the church of St Simon.

The sanctuary of the church of St Cecilia underwent the next series of transformations in the 11th century,³⁸⁶ which again corresponds to the chronology and the construction phases of St Simon. The church was extended to the east, the rectangular apse was demolished, and a new sanctuary with three square apses inscribed in the rear wall was built. It is a form that had been already well known to Istrian builders and which displays a long continuity of use, from the middle / the end of the 8th to the 11th century. The church gets its final shape during the 12th and 13th centuries when the three-apse layout is replaced by two rectangular and finally two semicircular apses.

The fact that the church was built on an ancient/late antique villa is nothing new for European historiography dealing with the late antique and medieval period. Nevertheless, the church of St Cecilia remains by far the best researched and documented example of such church with an early medieval phase in Istria. During the preparation for this dissertation, I came across the information that on the island of St George, right next to Vrsar, there is a church from the 9th century which also allegedly lies on an ancient villa. The church has two apses, which is not such a rare form for the medieval period of Istria and the northern Adriatic.³⁸⁷ But for any

³⁸⁴ TERRIER J., JURKOVIĆ, M., MARIĆ, I., Les sites de l'église Sainte-Cécile et de l'agglomération médiévale de Guran en Istrie (Croatie): onzième campagne de fouilles archéologiques, *Hortus artium medievalium*, 19, 2013, p. 357-366; JURKOVIC, 2018a : 533-534.

³⁸⁵ JURKOVIĆ, 2018a: 533-534.

³⁸⁶ These conclusions are based on the results of radiocarbon analyzes. TERRIER, JURKOVIC, MARIC, 2013: 359.

³⁸⁷ There are several of them on the Kvarner islands. On Krk, St Peter on Kanajt, on Cres St Plato, a newly discovered church on Rab at the Ciprijanovo site above Gožinka Bay. MOHOROVIČIĆ, A., Problem tipološke klasifikacije objekata srednjovjekovne arhitekture na području Istre i Kvarnera. *Ljetopis Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, 62, 1957, p. 486-537; JURKOVIĆ, M., TENŠEK, I., Novootkrivena ranokršćanska crkva na otoku Rabu, *Obavijesti Hrvatskog arheološkog društva*, 22/1, 1990, p. 38-40; GAROFANO, A. G., Le chiese duali di età carolingia fra Istria e Italia settentrionale, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 8, 2002, p. 159-166; STARAC, R. (2004), Two Examples of Rural Ecclesiastical Architectural Continuity on the Island of Krk, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 10, p. 231-236. There are examples in Istria too. In addition to the above-mentioned St Cecilia near Guran and the church on the island of St George near Vrsar, Little St Mary near Bale has been documented. It is a church for which the chronology has not been confirmed

further argumentation and eventual correlation with the example of St Cecilia, the first step should include studying all the available documentation, which I was not able to conclude before the end of this doctoral thesis.

St Stephen in Peroj - church as a mausoleum

Church of St Stephen (Fig. 44-45) is a fascinating example of medieval Istrian architecture for several reasons. It is located in the village of Peroj, more precisely on its present-day edge, 6 km from Vodnjan in the direction of the coast overlooking the Brijuni Islands. Although the dimensions of this building have been preserved to this day in almost original form, the first serious research of the site and the immediate surroundings has not been conducted until 2008 and 2009 under the leadership of I. Matejčić and A. Milošević.³⁸⁸

This desacralized building repeats the concept of spatial organization that has been seen on several occasions. It was built as a hall church with three square apses inscribed in a flat rear wall (See Fig. 18). But while such a form might lead to the conclusion that it is another example of early medieval churches from the period of the beginning of Carolingian rule on the peninsula, this probably is not the case. Four years ago, I. Matejčić presented a number of interesting reflections on its context, but also arguments for somewhat later dating.³⁸⁹

yet, since it contains elements that can be dated from 8th/9th century to the 11th century. See MATEJČIĆ, 1997; MATEJČIĆ, I., Jedna dvoapsidalna crkva: Sveta Marija Mala kod Bala, in: JURKOVIĆ, M., LUKŠIĆ, T. (eds.), *Starohrvatska spomenička baština. Rađanje prvog hrvatskog kulturnog pejzaža*, Zagreb, Odsjek za povijest umjetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta, 1996, p. 231-244.

There is also a well-known example in Zadar - the church of St Peter the Elder. See PETRICIOLI, I., VUČENOVIĆ, S., Crkve Sv. Andrija i Sv. Petar Stari u Zadru, *Diadora*, 5, 1970, p. 177-202; JURKOVIĆ, M., Sv. Petar Stari u Zadru i njegova kriptna, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, 24, 1997, p. 77-90.

³⁸⁸ Such a late beginning of the study of the history of this building was contributed by the complicated property legal situation. The church was nationalized almost two centuries ago and the sacral function was replaced by a purely utilitarian one. It became a barn and warehouse and its interior was segmented over time to meet the new demands of its owners and the role it was given. In 1945, the partition walls between the apse and their vaults were demolished, thus denying these spaces, although the remains of the structures remained visible on the walls and floor. Prior to the 2009 research, B. Marušić wrote more specifically about the church. More in MARUŠIĆ, 1974: 44-47; I MATEJČIĆ, I., MILOŠEVIĆ, A., Peroj, crkva sv. Stjepana, *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* (2009), 6, 2010, p. 366-369, 369-371.

³⁸⁹ I MATEJČIĆ, I., La chiesa di Santo Stefano a Peroi, in: CHAVARRIA, A., JURKOVIĆ, M. (eds.), *Alla ricerca di un passato complesso. Contributi in onore di Gian Pietro Brogiolo per il suo settantesimo compleanno. Dissertationes et Monographiae* 8, Zagreb, IRCLAMA, 2016, p. 257-270.

Probably the most important find from this building was a masonry tomb that was discovered along the western entrance to which it was placed perpendicularly. It is the only tomb in its interior, and its significance lies primarily in the fact that it preceded the construction of the church, as indicated by the results of archaeological research.³⁹⁰ Not only did the tomb precede the church, but it is possible to assume that it stimulated its construction. This theory is supported by two short parallel wall structures in the interior of the west façade which correspond to the central two of a total of four lesenes on the outside of the facade. With the discovery of these walls, the mentioned lesenes also gained a constructive purpose, since the parallel walls most likely carried a bell tower, which was then partially supported by the external articulation of the walls (Fig. 46). In addition, these two lesenes still carry imposts which were probably reutilised from some older (Roman) structure (Fig. 47).³⁹¹ In one of the two reconstructions proposed by I. Matejčić, the consoles carried a mass of bell towers that rose above the central part of the church facade. The interior of this space had the function of a mausoleum. However, it is unknown whether it was built immediately after burial or with a specific time lag and in honour and memory of the person buried there. Whether the burial site is in a privileged or *anti-privileged* place could be debated, as Matejčić himself points out. He finds the placement of the tomb at the very entrance to the church demeaning since all the people practically walked over the deceased upon entering. But it should be noted that such positioning is not unusual in medieval architecture, nor is the construction of a mausoleum above an already existing tomb.³⁹² Indeed, for members of the secular (but certainly elite), it was not appropriate to bury oneself near the altar since that space was strictly reserved for (mostly?) members of the church elite. Furthermore, it was the burial in the western part of the church that gained special significance during the so-called Carolingian Renaissance when the concept of the Westwork spread throughout the Empire from its very centres. Finally, I do not think that the possibility that the west door was not part of the original layout should automatically be ruled out. It could be that the door was opened later, at a time when, for a number of reasons, the memory of the deceased may have slowly faded or disappeared.

³⁹⁰ MATEJČIĆ, 2016: 264-265.

³⁹¹ A fragment of identical motifs from the ancient crown was found at the site of the church of St Quirinus near Vodnjan. See MARUŠIĆ, B., Ricerche archeologiche nella basilica di S. Quirino presso Dignano, *Atti del Centro di Ricerche Storiche Rovigno*, 17, 1986-87, p. 39-81. Na isto to upozorio je i MATEJČIĆ, 2016: 270. More about the church of St Quirinus in the chapter 2.2.2.4.2. Fusion of old, continuity and new.

³⁹² Matejčić himself points to this in the mentioned article.

The extent to which similar solutions were uniformly applicable throughout Europe in the implementation of similar requirements³⁹³ is best illustrated by the example from the distant Kingdom of Asturias, on the southwestern periphery of the Empire, i.e. outside it. It is a territory for which, of course, any premise about possible direct connections should be discarded. And that is why it is even more interesting because, as will be presented in the next chapter,³⁹⁴ it is a politically and ultimately culturally similar area as the eastern Adriatic was in that period, primarily the Principality of Croatia. It only suggests how ideas and solutions were exchanged on the broad European medieval scene, not to mention earlier periods. Something that is understood as usual in today's global world, in part, existed more than a millennium ago.

In the ecclesiastical and administrative centre of the Asturian Kingdom of the 9th century, Oviedo, below today's cathedral stood the church of Santa Maria, also known as the royal mausoleum, where the Asturian rulers from King Alfonso II (died 842) to Alfonso III I (died 910) were buried. Although its dimensions are almost four times larger than the Istrian St Stephen, here as well, just as in the case of St Stephen, the western part of the building was reserved for (in this case almost certainly) privileged burials since they were the rulers of the (earthly) kingdom. Since there is nothing left in the elevation of the church, we have no choice but to rely on the proposed floor plan, which, just like in the Peroj case, is segmented in the western part by walls that apparently had supported a specific structure. It is also assumed that this part of the building was entered through the central nave of the church and that there was no direct communication with the exterior.³⁹⁵

If we go back to the example of St Stephen in Peroj, the length of the church (17.43 m) disproportionate to the modest width of 6.93 m could support the fact that the interior was segmented even before the desacralization in the 19th century. First of all, I refer to the division of the western part of the building. Such an argument is supported by the still undefined wall structure perpendicular to the south wall and parallel to the west. It was

³⁹³ On the subject of royal sepultures in France see: ERLANDE-BRANDENBURG, A., *Le roi est mort. Étude sur les funérailles, les sépultures et les tombeaux des rois de France jusqu'à la fin du XIIIe siècle*, Paris, Arts et métiers graphiques, 1975.

³⁹⁴ In the chapter 3. The midlands. *Ducatus Croatiae* with few remarks on *Regnum Asturorum*.

³⁹⁵ On the royal mausoleum among other publications, see: ALONSO ÁLVAREZ, R., El panteón de los reyes de Asturias: modelos ideológicos, in: *Modelos, intercambios y recepción artística (de las rutas marítimas a la navegación en red): XV Congreso Nacional de Historia del Arte. Palma de Mallorca, 1, 2008*, p. 37-48. This example will be further presented in the context of the mausoleum of Croatian rulers at the Crkvina site in Biskupija near Knin.

excavated during the archaeological excavations in 2009 and was partly reused by the recent wall partition which has leaned on it. It was determined that the structure was built simultaneously with the south wall, and therefore with the construction of the church itself.³⁹⁶

In addition to the original spatial concept of the so-called *Dreiausidensalenkirche*, this building contains a few more elements which, if the usual chronology based on the established typological norms were to be followed, should indicate the transition from the 8th to the 9th century, but also the earlier periods. The first are the four structures located at the top edge points of the side walls, where they merge with the western façade on the one side of the building and with the rear wall on the other side. Matejčić believes that, although such a motif appears in chronologically older examples, for example in early Christian architecture in Ravenna, models and parallels for the St Stephen case should be sought in its (immediate) proximity, at the microregional level. For now, the closest analogy would be the church of St Fosca, known for its Romanesque murals.³⁹⁷ Except for the protruding structures on the side facades, the possible connection between St Stephen and St Fosca could also be sought in the organization of their sanctuaries. In both cases, it is a three-apse spatial layout where the rectangular apses are inscribed in the rear wall. The previous two examples of St Cecilia and St Simon near Guran showed that such a choice of sanctuary concept existed for a long time from the end of the 8th to the 11th and 12th centuries. Furthermore, new interpretations of the east and west walls of the church of St Fosca, which partly includes the mentioned wall paintings, point to a somewhat later chronology - the end of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th century.

I believe that the church of St Stephen in Peroj is an excellent example of how easy it is to get disoriented in the pre-defined typological determinants of particular periods and styles and how it is crucial to approach the new beliefs critically. In order to examine the issue more profoundly, the next chapter will present the same question using some specific examples of using earlier forms.

³⁹⁶ This is indicated by a small remnant of the original plaster located in the corner between the south wall and the transverse structure. See in MATEJČIĆ, MILOŠEVIĆ, 2010: 367-368.

³⁹⁷ Another example, although geographically somewhat more distant is the church of St Martin in the village of Sveti Lovreč, about 30 km away. The protrusions on the side facades from that church also initially misled the researchers to an early Christian chronology. See ŠONJE, 1982: 54-57. Along with these two examples, Matejčić also cites one example from the island of Rab. On the church of the Benedictine monastery of St Andrew from the middle of the 11th century the same motif appears. See MATEJČIĆ, 2016: 268.

2.2.4.1.2. Fusion of old, continuity and new

While the texture of the Istrian landscape of the early Middle Ages has been given a new look due to the imported spatial concept of the three-apsed hall churches, at the same time the late antique tradition, deeply woven into Istria, continued to be an inspiration to new masters and builders. The fusion of new ideas intertwined with the already well-known solutions transformed itself into the new early medieval look. Perhaps the best-researched example of this synergy of “the old forming the new” is the monastery of St Mary the Great near Bale (Fig. 48-50).³⁹⁸ I have already, only briefly, referred to the problem of the positioning of this site in space in the about the Diocese of Pula, to which it belonged. The spatial concept of the early medieval church has been completely preserved, which almost unconditionally follows that of the Euphrasian Basilica of the Cathedral Complex in Poreč. In addition, the elevation of the walls has been partially preserved, as well as an extensive *corpus* of architectural decoration. As a result of the latter, it was possible to conduct a detailed analysis of the found sculpture, which ultimately proved to be crucial not only for the dating of this church but also of numerous other buildings on the Istrian peninsula where numerous fragments of sculpture have been found over the years.³⁹⁹

There are plenty of connections with the Euphrasian Basilica, from imitating certain concepts of architectural plastic decoration (Fig. 52) to the spatial organization. Although the church of the monastery near Bale was not preserved in its complete elevation, due to some simple

³⁹⁸ The results of archaeological research have been successively published in *Hortus Artium Medievalium* (from 1996 to 2000) and in *Bulletin de l'Association pour l'Antiquité Tardive* (from 1996 to 1999) and in the second wave of research in the *Croatian Archaeological Yearbook* (from 2006 to 2008, in 2013 and in 2016). See CAILLET, J.P., JURKOVIĆ, M., MATEJČIĆ, I., *Le complexe paléochrétien et haut médiéval de Velika Gospa près de Bale (Istrie): première campagne de fouilles*, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 2, 1996, p. 133-136. See the complete list of publications in the bibliography. The most comprehensive overview of the monastery and the church can be found in monographic publications published in two volumes in 2007 and 2009. See JURKOVIĆ, M., CAILLET, J.P. (eds.), *Velika Gospa près de Bale (Istrie) I. L'église Velika Gospa près de Bale. Vol. I*, Zagreb - Motovun, IRCLAMA, 2007 and JURKOVIĆ, CAILLET, 2009. Although the monographic publications are written in French, an extensive summary is available in Croatian.

³⁹⁹ For a workshop defined on the basis of found pieces of stone equipment, see JURKOVIĆ, 2002: 349-360; MATEJČIĆ, I., JURKOVIĆ, M., *Lapidarij u Balama*, Split - Bale, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2002; JURKOVIĆ, M., *Les chapiteaux de Sveta Marija Velika près de Bale (Istrie): la tradition de l'antiquité tardive à l'époque carolingienne*, in: BALMELLE, C., CHEVALIER, P., RIPOLL, G. (eds.), *Mélanges d'antiquité tardive: studiola in honorem Noël Duval*, Brepols, 2004, p. 165-174; JURKOVIĆ, M., *Le maître d'œuvre au haut Moyen Age: l'exemple du „Maître des chapiteaux de Bale“*, in: ALCOY, R., ALLIOS, D. (eds.), *Le plaisir de l'art du Moyen Age. Commande, production et réception de l'œuvre d'art. Mélanges en hommage à Xavier Barral i Altet*, Paris, Picard, 2012: p. 494 - 500.

mathematical and geometric calculations of proportions, it was possible to reconstruct its original appearance (Fig. 51).⁴⁰⁰

The church was a three-nave basilica with its three apses which are polygonal on the outside and semicircular on the inside. For the early medieval period, the fact that it had columns (circular cross-section) rather than pillars is unusual, which is a much more common construction practice in the area of the Carolingian influence.⁴⁰¹ It is the only known example of such a concept on the Istrian peninsula.

The unit of measurement for the reconstruction was the distance between the two columns, or the length of the intercolumniation.⁴⁰² Here it measures 289 cm, which was then multiplied eight times, starting with the west facade and ending with the apex of the inner wall of the central apse. Simply put, it is possible to inscribe two circles of the diameter of 1156 cm (289 cm x 4) inside the floorplan. Similarly, although somewhat less precisely,⁴⁰³ the basilica near Guran could be reconstructed, which also to some extent follows the geometric norms of proportions.

The church of the monastery near Bale is another example which, as a result of archaeological research, has given us new knowledge about the Istrian architectural landscape and its chronology. And while ‘stylistic language’, which is becoming more and more an abstract term in a contemporary art historical discourse, could indicate that the church was built during the 6th century, today we know that such predetermined typologies should by no means be followed blindly. The use of the proportional system documented on

⁴⁰⁰ The subject of proportions in late antique and early medieval churches is nothing new. For the area of the northern Adriatic basin see PETROVIĆ, N., Rappports et proportions dans les plans des basiliques du V^{ème} et VI^{ème} siècles de Ravenne et du litoral septentrional de l'Adriatique, *Felix Ravenna*, 34, 1962, p. 41-71; VIDULLI TORLO, M., Considerazioni sull'unità di misura utilizzata nella Basilica eufrasiana di Parenzo, *Aquileia Nostra*, 55, 1984, p. 185-188; POZZETTO, M., Appunti sul problema della configurazione spaziale delle basiliche eliane di Grado, *Felix Ravenna*, 103-104, 1972, p. 235-260; TAVANO, S., Le proporzioni nelle basiliche paleocristiane dell'Alto Adriatico, *Quaderni Giuliani di storia*, 3/1, 1982, p. 7-22. L. Arias Páramo, among others, dealt with the issue of proportions in early medieval architecture on the Iberian Peninsula. See ARIAS PÁRAMO, L., *Geometría y proporción en la arquitectura prerrománica asturiana*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas - Instituto de Historia, 2008.

⁴⁰¹ One of the few examples in the center of the empire is the Justinuskirche church in Frankfurt-Höchst, today's neighborhood in the city of Frankfurt am Main built in the first half. 9th c. Carolingian capitals have been preserved in the church. See: METTERNICH, W., *Die Justinuskirche in Frankfurt am Main-Höchst*, Königstein im Taunus, Die blauen Bücher, 2017, with bibliography.

⁴⁰² JURKOVIĆ, CAILLET, 2009: 33-34.

⁴⁰³ It is possible to draw two circles along the length of the church in the floor plan of the basilica near Guran, too. But, although almost insignificant, there is a visible deviation from the perfection achieved in the church of the monastery near Bale.

numerous sacral buildings in Istria and the northern Adriatic arch of the 6th century (Pula, Poreč, Grado) reveals a lot about the way of thinking of new clients from the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century. More than two hundred years after the renaissance of ancient thought carried out during the reign of Emperor Justinian, these new clients and their masters will revive the somewhat dormant Istrian peninsula, creating a new, personalized architectural landscape in the service of the idea of *renovatio imperii*. This *renovatio* is evident in the example of the basilica of the monastery near Bale in almost all of its aspects: besides the traditional morphology of the basilical form of the church, there is the solution of a three-apse sanctuary where the apses are polygonal on the outside and semicircular on the inside, and the imitation of the models of capitals which have been preserved to this day in the atrium of the Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč (Fig. 52). It is a place that has obviously been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the early medieval masters, but also their superiors, financiers - the creators of a new ideology and a new stream of thought.

The basilica of the monastery near Bale is not the only church where the spatial organization has continued to perplex the researchers who have been studying the chronology of its construction. Fifteen kilometres away stands the church of St Quirinus, just next to the road that descends from the centre of Istria (Žminj) towards Vodnjan. It is another example of a three-nave, three-apse church (Fig. 53-54). Marušić dated it to the second half of the 6th century, which was a theory accepted by Šonje.⁴⁰⁴ However, in the early 2000s in the publication which followed a large exhibition *Croats and Carolingians*, M. Jurković presented a hypothesis which defines the St Quirinus church as an early medieval church from the time of the Carolingian rule in Istria.⁴⁰⁵ It is a church which, if the apses are taken away, again conforms to the proportional laws, which could be used for a possible future reconstruction of its original appearance. These regularities are primarily manifested in its square-shaped floor plan. So although such a thoughtful architectural expression could be linked to the early Christian period, there are several arguments which suggest the later, Carolingian one.

⁴⁰⁴ MARUŠIĆ, 1986: 39-78.

⁴⁰⁵ JURKOVIĆ, 2000: 76.

To begin with, the stone fragments of architectural decoration found at the site belong primarily to the early medieval stylistic expression.⁴⁰⁶ Only a few fragments can be dated to the early Christian period. According to current information, an earlier church was built, of which only the central apse has been preserved today.⁴⁰⁷ More information about the shape of this earlier building is still missing; its existence is indicated only by the fact that the central apse is not organically connected with the side apses, which should mean that it preceded the early medieval church. On the other hand, the side apses are connected to the outer walls of the church, which implies the simultaneity of their construction.

Apart from the sculpture and the floor plan layout, which may or may not refer to an early Christian phase (or the early Middle Ages), the masonry pillars of a rectangular section are symptomatic, since it is a feature characteristic of the later, early medieval period.

There is still no information about the function of this church, especially since its spatial concept of a three-nave three-apse building (which even seems to be of a central layout, and not of an elongated rectangle) is a unique example in Istria. No burials have been found at the site so far, but for all further conclusions, it is worth waiting for systematic research that would include a key part of the building - the central nave, over which today stands an 18th-century church. Such research should shed new light not only on the early medieval phase of the construction but also on what preceded it. In this way, the continuity of the place clearly evident here, and which acquired a new meaning with the arrival of Franks, could finally be more clearly presented.

* * *

Continuity and new inventions have been woven into the architectural landscape of Istria at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century. These two features were brilliantly

⁴⁰⁶ They are related with the sculptures from Bale, Novigrad and Valbandona from the end of the 8th or the beginning of the 9th century, although the results of a thorough analysis are yet to be published. See JURKOVIĆ, 2000: 76.

⁴⁰⁷ A fragment of an ancient crown was documented. It is the counterpart possibly from the same part that was found in the church of St Stephen in Peroj.

united in the second concept of the organization of the space of sacral buildings. It is the so-called *T-floor plan*, the representative of which is the church of St Thomas near Rovinj (Fig. 55-56). Its function could also be partly connected with the previously mentioned St Stephen in Peroj. This is an example of a private church of the newly established elite, which has mostly been dated to the 6th century throughout historiography.⁴⁰⁸ Thirty years ago, under the leadership of I. Matejčić, archaeological research began at the site, which resulted in new hypotheses and interpretations.⁴⁰⁹

For a start, the possibility of a later dating of the church was presented, in the transition from the 8th to the 9th century, thus rejecting the long-repeated statements about the cause-and-effect relationship between a specific 'T' floor plan and the early Christian period. The newly proposed chronology was supported by numerous stone fragments of liturgical furniture found at the site. They complemented the corpus of early medieval Istrian sculpture, primarily defined by the work of the Master of the Capitals from Bale, who has also worked on this church. The aforementioned, long-accepted theory of the typological determinant of the church, which corresponds primarily to the early Christian period, was studiously re-examined. Based on a comparative analysis with monuments outside the Istrian area that had been dated in the early medieval and later periods, similarity has been established with a whole series of such 'T' churches with a floor plan with three apses (Fig. 57). It is symptomatic that the highest concentration of such buildings is again in the northern Italian alpine area and the area of present-day Switzerland.⁴¹⁰ But this spatial concept was distributed even further; examples are also found on the west coast of the Mediterranean and in the foothills of the northern Pyrenees. Furthermore, this form will be used in the coming centuries, although to some extent modified.

⁴⁰⁸ A. Mohorovičić was the first to write about the church as part of a theoretical paper on the typological classification of medieval buildings in Adriatic Istria and Kvarner. He considers it a transitional model from the early Christian to the early Romanesque period, and defines three phases of construction. He sees the three apses layout as a characteristic of the earliest phase, which is further defined by the polygonality of the central apse. The author believes that the second phase and change in the structure of the building occurred in the Romanesque era when the outer upper part of the central apse gets a semicircular perimeter. He also states that a bell tower was built along the north wall of the church at that time. See Mohorovičić, 1957: 496. The same chronology is repeated by A. Šonje and B. Marušić. See MARUŠIĆ, B., *Istra u ranom srednjem vijeku*, Pula, Arheološki muzej Istre, 1960; ŠONJE, 1982: 51-52.

The assumption that the upper part of the apse with the transition from a polygonal to a semicircular shape belongs to the second phase of construction was not confirmed as no traces were observed that would indicate that the change in shape was due to some alteration. See MATEJČIĆ, 1997: 12-13.

⁴⁰⁹ *Idem*, 11-19; MATEJČIĆ, 2000: 67-69; JURKOVIĆ, 2018a: 560-564.

⁴¹⁰ RASMO, N., *Arte carolingia nell'Alto Adige*, Bolzano, Stampa rapide, 1981, p. 35, 37.

The question of the primordial origin of such an organization of space should certainly be sought in the late antique period, so it is not surprising that researchers of the Istrian architecture were convinced that this was a monument that belonged to an earlier period. One example is still preserved in Pula: one of the two chapels of the early Christian basilica of St Mary *Formosa*, which in its distant, original idea essentially corresponds to St Thomas near Rovinj. Still, it seems likely that this is just a distant, general idea. If we take a closer look at the manner of execution of St Thomas, but also of other churches of the early medieval horizon with the 'T' floor plan (even just 2D floor plan projections), they show a considerable distinction from the original, *classical* model of the cross-plan building, such as the Pula chapel of the former Basilica of Formosa or the mausoleum of Gala Placidia in Ravenna. What distances them from the original examples is the three-apse solution of the rear wall and the elongation of the nave of the church. These are the elements which are repeated in the area of northern Italy and Switzerland, which are relatively close to Carolingian Istria. Besides on these 'foreign' monuments, an almost identical model of the ground plan has been standing in Pula just until a century ago. It was the church of St Clement, a church that was last seen in elevation and first documented by P. Kandler in the mid-19th century after which it was soon demolished. At that time there were two buildings. St Clement was a church of the 'T' floor plan which, at least according to Kandler's drawing, which was connected with the church of St Michael with what seemed to be a narrow vaulted structure. St Michael was a three-nave three-apse basilica that Kandler described as an early Christian building with marble columns.⁴¹¹ St Clement, just like St Michael, has unquestionably been dated to the early Christian period. Still, the new hypothesis presented by I. Matejčić at the end of the last century, based on the new interpretations of St Thomas near Rovinj, raised serious questions about the topic. Hardly ever again will the rests of the material structure provide any new data to shed new light on this issue. There is nothing left but to continue to expand the network of archaeologically documented monuments which, with their form, function, and general context, could, through a comparative study, clarify the historical story of St Clement.

Some knowledge about the function of St Clement is still preserved, at least at one point in the Middle Ages. During the high Middle Ages, it was used as the burial place of the overthrown Hungarian King Solomon, whose sarcophagus was placed there in 1087. If we

⁴¹¹ KANDLER, P., Chiesa di S. Michele in Monte di Pola nella quale era la tomba di Salmone re di Ungheria, *L'Istria*, 7/16, 1852.

go back to the example of St Thomas, we will find that it is not only the form that makes them two remarkably similar buildings (Fig. 58). Although the original function of the church of St Thomas has not yet been defined with certainty, several elements are indicative. The private character of the church is indicated by its position in space, in the landscape. It is located in a fairly secluded place (or so it is today, and so far there is no indication that in the early Middle Ages it was significantly different), a little more than 4 km away from Rovinj, more precisely halfway from Rovinj to the Lim Channel. Jurković suggests that it was a church on private property, probably one of the landowners from the newly established Carolingian elite.⁴¹² The parallel to some extent could be drawn with the basilica near Guran, but the big difference lies in their position in space. While the basilica near Guran was built right next to the walls of the settlement, for now it seems that the church of St Thomas is an illustrative example of a monument in a rural landscape, built in the middle of a field. The question of the function of St Thomas was further deepened by the fact that the area of the northern chapel of the transept was visually separated from the main nave – the central part of the church. The remains of the bases for the altar railing were defined in the paving, which must have occupied a relatively large part of that space in the original layout. It seems that this part of the church was exclusively private since its size did not allow it to receive more than just a few people. The fact that there was a door on the west wall of the northern part of the transept also supports the additional separate character of that space.

At the opposite, southern end of the transept, the sphere of the private oratory was replaced by a funerary function. The space of a volume symmetrical to the northern one, it did not have a door behind the west wall, but a tomb *a pozzo* in which, presumably, the patron of the church was buried. The function of the building is in many ways much clearer than most of the other Istrian churches at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries. Apparently, it was the mausoleum of one of the members of the Carolingian elite infiltrated into the Istrian society. Elite burial in Istria is not new, we have seen it at least twice - in the church of St Stephen in Peroj (which, although probably of a somewhat later date, follows the early medieval idea of space) and in the church of St Simon near Guran, where the several phases of the cemeterial church were built next to the older tomb.

⁴¹² JURKOVIĆ, 2018a: 563.

If we go back to the example of the (unfortunately forever lost church) of St Clement, the information about the burial of the Hungarian king in the late 11th century should not surprise us. It is possible to assume that the church has served as a mausoleum during the Early Middle Ages (if its recognizable “T shape” was indeed built then). The original premise of the space (e.g. the mausoleum of Gala Placidia) supplemented by polygonal apses that structurally evoke architectural forms from the past, is woven into the idea of *renovatio imperii* and in any case, supports such considerations.

The last of the Istrian examples which was, at least on paper, somewhat defined by the 'T' form is the church of St Catherine on the namesake islet in front of Pula. In the middle of the 19th century, P. Kandler also saw and documented it as an almost intact building. However, Gnirs unfortunately found it in a ruined condition as early as 1910, and conducted the archaeological excavation, although the interior of the church had already been devastated. The result is the last documented and published floor plan indicating several stages of its construction. The eastern part of the church was built with three semicircular (!) apses which closed the transept. A tomb with a sarcophagus was found in the northern area of the transept, which, judging by the deviation from the walls of the church, had followed an earlier structure. The model of a privileged burial is, therefore repeated in this example as well. The memorial character of the church was further emphasized by two additional tombs located in the western corners of the central area which, possibly, in the early Middle Ages was extended to the west. The idea of the northern part of the transept from St Thomas partly corresponds to the southern part of St Catherine, which even has a vaulted crypt with a separate entrance on the south side below.

Since there is nothing left of the church today, it is unlikely that we will ever come upon new information based upon the material evidence. But the answers can be hidden in other monuments, already discovered or still deeply hidden by vegetation or incorporated into newer structures. It may be that their specificities and above all the contextual framework alone could provide further evidence for some new or old interpretations.⁴¹³

⁴¹³ One of them is perhaps the church of St Andrew on an island near Rovinj, today integrated into a hotel complex and spatially almost completely denied. However, Mohorovičić also notes that the church could have the Greek cross layout with a semicircular apse, and also states the typological similarity with the church of St. Catherine on the islet in front of Pula. See: MATEJČIĆ, I., Crkva Av. Andrije na otoku kraj Rovinja, in: MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio II, Katalog*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000, p. 66-67.

These last few examples reveal a story which definitely surpasses each of the buildings mentioned separately. Hypotheses proposed thirty years ago indicated the need for a different rethinking of the concept of space, where observing the floor plan and categorizing the morphological elements of the church cannot and should not be a key item in defining the monuments. The monument is much more than a two-dimensional frame, which, unfortunately, in the absence of more data, is most often shown and it is something that researchers must be aware of on a daily basis. In the study of architectural and other artistic achievements, both in the early Middle Ages and otherwise, there are no laws that are unquestionable and indisputable. On the contrary, the humanities are almost as a rule such that they require constant questioning and rethinking - and here lies their beauty.

2.2.4.1.3. New reflections on the still hidden or forgotten Istrian monuments

At the beginning of the chapter, the path and development of Istrian historiography have been briefly presented, from the beginning of the 20th century and the time of A. Gnirs, through the works and research of B. Marušić in the middle and second half of the 20th century until new knowledge derived primarily from the thinking of M. Jurković and I. Matejčić thirty years ago. However, we are all aware that the Istrian area is still mostly unexplored and that many monuments are still hidden underground, overgrown with vegetation or denied by some form of urbanism and new construction. There are also those monuments that have already been discovered and documented, but time, nature, and vegetation have made them invisible again.

Such example are the ruins of the church of St Zenon (Zena) in Savolago near Galizana, which could perhaps be added to the group of hall churches of the three-apse sanctuary, such as the parish church in Bale. Today, unfortunately, it is impossible to locate it with certainty, although the approximate location is known based on a comparison of old maps. Apart from the indicative ground plan, this building could be chronologically determined by stone fragments of liturgical equipment that were found and published by A. Gnirs during an archaeological excavation in 1910. On that occasion, the floor plan of the building was published, which showed that it was a single-nave church of much larger dimensions than the previous ones with three semicircular apses (Fig. 59). Although Gnirs suggested a period of the high Middle Ages (11th-12th century) for a fragment of an architrave beam, he considered that it was carved according to some older models of stone furniture found in the church - fragments of the pilasters and capitals (Fig. 60). According to him, these older fragments were based on the achievements of the Byzantine tradition of the 6th and 7th centuries.⁴¹⁴ Marušić moved the dating to the middle / second half of the 8th century, arguing that the stonemasons of that time still carried the echoes of classical times.⁴¹⁵ The last time

⁴¹⁴ GNIRS, 1911: 11-16. Thirteen selected papers by the conservator Anton Gnirs were collected and published in 2009 in the book *Arheološki tekstovi* (engl. *Archaeological Texts*). Among others, there is a report on the church in Savolag (Casai, Padernum). See GNIRS, 2009: 201-203.

⁴¹⁵ MARUŠIĆ, B., *Kasnoantička i bizantska Pula*, Pula, Arheološki muzej Istre, 1967, p. 42-43; MARUŠIĆ, B., *Doprinos poznavanju ranosrednjovjekovne skulpture u Istri*, *Jadranski zbornik*, 12, 1982-1985, p. 332.

the fragments of the sculpture were published and catalogued was three years ago when Ivan Matejčić and Sunčica Mustać included them in the corpus of Istrian sculpture, agreeing with Marušić's dating to the middle of the 8th century. They also noted that some specific analogies with the examples of Lombard sculpture in northern Italy from the first half and middle of the 8th century could be drawn.⁴¹⁶

But why could this church be so important for the understanding the changes that were taking place on the Istrian peninsula in the middle and the second half of the 8th century? For a start, according to the dating of its sculpture, it would be the earliest dated example of this type of spatial organization which, and it is almost certain, came to Istria as a direct import from the northern Italian provinces. But the question is whether this is a solution brought by the Franks, i.e. soon the Carolingians, or does it come even earlier - with the Lombards?

* * *

Among the examples of inadequately researched monuments of a great potential, the structure below today's parish church of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the Freedom Square in Umag should certainly be included. The church was archaeologically excavated at the beginning of this century. But, as I mentioned in one of the previous chapters, unfortunately the only 'plan' of the structures found is the infamous schematic originally published in Croatian Archaeological Yearbook which was later republished several times.⁴¹⁷ If the published sketch is to be believed, the church of impressive dimensions was found - approximately 25 x 17 metres. Given the current knowledge of the corpus of Istrian monuments, the next information is somewhat surprising. The layout of the sanctuary follows the idea of three profound apses inscribed in a flat rear wall. But the supposed width of the church of 17 meters hardly leaves the possibility that it was a hall building. It is more probable that the interior was divided into three naves. If it was really a church from the 8th or the

⁴¹⁶ MATEJČIĆ, MUSTAČ, 2017, 150-152. Marušić also pointed out the similarity with the northern Italian examples. MARUŠIĆ, 1982-1985: 332. See also VERZONE, P., *L' arte preromanica in Liguria ed i rilievi decorativi dei secoli barbari*, Torino, Viglono, 1945, p. 145-147.

⁴¹⁷ BOLŠEC FERRI, 2008: 105-109; BOJIĆ et al., 2016: 13.

beginning of the 9th century, as it was stated in the report,⁴¹⁸ it would be the largest such church in Istria in terms of overall dimensions. The church was allegedly burned in 876 during the looting of the city by Prince Domagoj.

Furthermore, the cadastral map from 1877 shows the name of the St Pelegrin next to the town square in front of the church. This can be related to the fact that on the site of the 'early medieval' church there was probably a properly oriented collegial medieval church dedicated both to Virgin Mary and St Pellegrin. Although nothing has survived from it to this day, P. Kandler published a document from 1426 which allegedly confirmed its existence (“*ante portam et limine portae Ecclesiae Sanctae Mariae sive Sancti Peregrini de Humago*”).⁴¹⁹ Although it is a late medieval saint - St Pellegrin, it is interesting that the same title is mentioned in the context of another (unfortunately lost) church on the today's site of Vižanel, between Galižana and Fažana. The church was documented and published by A. Gnirs at the beginning of the last century, publishing a floor plan and a number of stone fragments of architectural furniture that correspond to the opus of early medieval sculpture of the late 8th and early 9th centuries in Istria.⁴²⁰ All of this information does not mean much when the examples are studied separately, but it definitely points out the need for a systematic research, from archaeological remains to the historical sources. The practice from Umag should not be repeated, especially if we know that the research has been conducted less than 20 years ago, i.e. at a time when certain tools for the documentation of the archaeological heritage have already been easily accessible and in use. In any case, this example indicated that the current state of research of Istrian heritage at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century, but also what immediately preceded and followed that period, caught only the very tip of the iceberg. After all, it is enough to remember that out of 172 listed settlements from Plee of Rizana, only 10 percent have been confirmed.

I want to end this short passage about 'hidden Istrian monuments' by pointing out once again all those cemetery churches that are mentioned in this dissertation. One has to ask whether those churches with built-in pieces of stone furniture are the elements that can indicate us a possible vicinity of the settlement that have lived in the early Middle Ages, in the period of the arrival of the Franks? In the sea of unknowns, in the absence of the written sources,

⁴¹⁸ BOJIĆ et al., 2016: 12.

⁴¹⁹ KANDLER, 1986: CDI, IV, 998. See more about the later mentions of that church in BOJIĆ et al., 2016: 13, with the related bibliography.

⁴²⁰ GNIRS, 1911: 1-10.

perhaps such clues are key information for the decipher of the unknown lines from Istrian history? Aware of the possibilities offered by modern technologies and methods of terrain prospecting, for example multisensor aerial photography (Lidar),⁴²¹ it is necessary to know where to begin to look.

⁴²¹ A state-of-the-art approach to the exploration of the historic landscape with stunning results involves remote laser 3D scanning with a LiDAR device that allows you to "see" beneath the vegetation. See BERNARDINI, F., VINCI, G., Archaeological landscape in Central Northern Istria (Croatia) Revealed by Airborne LiDAR: from Prehistoric Sites to Roman Centuriation, in: *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*, 12, 2020. See more in the chapter 1.2. Methodology.

2.2.4.2. Architectural landscape of the Catalan counties of the 9th century

At the other end of the Frankish realm at the time of the enthronement of the new government, and later of the Carolingian Empire, unfortunately, we encounter an extremely modest repertoire of architectural forms; not to mention almost non-existent. Today's knowledge of specific architectural forms, primarily of the 9th century, which is the period on which this doctoral dissertation is focused, does not meet the standards in the study of architectural heritage. This poses a problem that certainly requires special attention in future research. While on the Istrian peninsula in the period of the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century (more precisely the period of the change of the government) numerous buildings have been defined so far, in the area of the Catalan counties at that time not a single church has been confirmed. Perhaps the most intriguing question of this dissertation is, how is this possible?

Such a situation would not be so surprising if there was not a significant number of documents confirming that the period of the 9th century was not utterly inactive in terms of architectural activity. On the other hand, I repeat, at the other end of the Empire, which in many ways underwent similar processes of political transformation, the situation was opposite - the Istrian area of the period was experiencing a real renaissance of construction, the first after the 6th century and the Emperor Justinian.

We can only assume that the reason for such an 'empty space' is the fact that the architecture of the urban centres of the time was generally negated by later structures, alterations and new architectural solutions, which have already been discussed in the chapters on episcopal centres. The only examples that remain are the churches of irregular, quite generic forms dispersed throughout rural areas, which in no way reveal the inventiveness of the newly arrived rulers - and the new elites who I have referred to so many times. Their elements, most often of quadrangular forms, can hardly reveal that they belong to a specific period; these are the forms that could have been used throughout the history of construction. However, the lack of material remains of buildings is replaced by a large number of grants and documents that testify to the consecration of churches (*Actas de consagración*), to which few European

areas can match.⁴²² These documents bring back memories of long-lost buildings, the shapes of which shapes are often no longer possible to reconstruct. Yet, although unknown today, they did form an integral part of the historical landscape of the Catalan counties of the period.

The historical landscape during the first decades of the Frankish occupation of what we know today as Marca Hispanica was partly still filled with old structures from the late antiquity and early Christian period, just as was in the case of Istria. There are still no confirmed examples of monumental architecture built *ex novo* at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries in Catalonia, both in rural and urban contexts. Several reasons could have conditioned such state. First of all, we should have in mind that the architecture of that time often used stone bound with earth mortar instead of lime mortar, as was the case in Istria, for example. It is not surprising, therefore, that the churches built in this way probably did not live to be a century old, let alone that they could have been preserved to this day. Apart from the fact that so far no monumental building from urban centres dating back to that time has been found, a document about the dedication of the church of Sant Germà of the monastery of Cuixà from July 30, 953 describes such a way of construction. The church was built of lime mortar and stone (“*ex calce et lapidibus et lignis dedolatis*”), unlike the previous one which was made of mud and stone (“*parvullum ex luto et lapidibus confectam*”).⁴²³ The example of the church of Sant Germà supports the belief that the buildings at the time had a short lifespan. Having been built in the middle of the 9th century, it was replaced by a new one as soon as 953, no more than 100 years later.⁴²⁴

⁴²² The document catalogization was done by BARAUT, C., Les actes de consagració d'esglésies del bisbat d'Urgell (segles IX-XII), in *Urgellia* I, 1978, p. 11-182 and ORDEIG, R., Les dotalies de les esglésies de Catalunya (segles IX-XII), vol. I, Estudis Històrics, Diplomataris 1, Vic, 1993. R. Ordeig i Mata catalogued 19 documents for the period of the 9th century (833-899). See ORDEIG I MATA, R., Inventari de les actes de consagració i dotació de les esglésies catalanes. I. anys 833-950, *Revista Catalana de Teologia* 4, 1979, pp. 123-165.

⁴²³ DE MARCA, P., *Marca hispanica sive limes hispanicus*, Paris, Baluze, 1688. (reedició facsímil: ed. Base, Barcelona 1972), doc. XC, p. 867-868; ADELL I GISBERT, J.A., Notes per a l'estudi de la tecnologia constructiva de l'hàbitat en el poblament medieval de l'Esquerda, *Ausa*, 10/102-104, 1982, p. 346.

⁴²⁴ BARRAL I ALTET, 1981: 79.

2.2.4.2.1. The period prior to the 9th century. The episcopal complex at Terrassa (*Egara*) and other selected examples

The period of the Visigothic domination and its associated architectural landscape in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula is as little known as the initial period of Frankish expansion in the same area. There are only a few sites in the entire scope of the later Catalan counties that date to those earlier periods. Certainly, the most famous example is the episcopal complex in Terrassa, the early Christian episcopal centre of *Egara*, which surpasses most examples of Catalan early medieval architecture (Fig. 61-64). It is a site with the continuity from the Iberian period (4th century BC) to the present day. Two pedestals built into the transept and the nave of the Romanesque church of Santa Maria, one of the three buildings of the episcopal complex, are generally taken as the earliest evidence of a Roman settlement. Inscriptions have been found on the pedestals, one of which mentions the "*municipium flauium Egara*" with the year inscribed - 139. In addition to this mention, Claudius Ptolemy also mentions the settlement of *Egos* in his work *Geographia*, which is traditionally associated with today's Terrassa.⁴²⁵ In the middle of the 5th century, Bishop *Nundinari* of Barcelona appointed *Irineu* as the first bishop of *Egara*,⁴²⁶ a town that would reach its peak during the Visigothic rule over the Iberian Peninsula.⁴²⁷ It is uncertain whether the changes that followed the arrival of Muslims in the early 8th century also marked the end of *Egara* as the centre of the diocese,⁴²⁸ as it was probably the case with the most other Catalan urban centres. It is interesting that the archaeological excavations have established that there was

⁴²⁵ GARCIA I LLINARES, M., MORO GARCÍA, A., Tuset Bertrán, F., *La seu episcopal d'Ègara. Arqueologia d'un conjunt cristià del segle IV al IX*, Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica, 2009, p. 13, 33; GARCIA, M. G., OLESTI, O., *Terrassa i el seu territori a l'edat antiga: estat de la qüestió i noves perspectives de recerca*, *Terme* 14, 1999, p. 13-23, p. 14; PUIG, P., *Ègara. Grafia que correspon a la pronúncia correcta del nom de l'antic municipi flavi*, *Terme*, 3, 1988, p. 45-56.

⁴²⁶ This event is known from the correspondence between Pope Hilar and Ascani, Metropolitan of Tarragona. See in MIGNE, J.-P., *Patrologia latina*, vol. 58, col. 14-18, 1844-1845.

⁴²⁷ PLADEVALL, A., *La creació de les diòcesis*, in: DE PALOL I SALELLAS, P., PLADEVALL I FONT, A. (eds.), *Del Romà al Romànic. Història, art i cultura de la Tarraconense mediterrània entre els segles IV i X*, Barcelona, Edita - Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1999, p. 30-35.

⁴²⁸ The last bishop of *Egara*, Joan, is referred to in 693 when he was attending the 16th Council of Toledo. See GARCIA I LLINARES, MORO GARCÍA, Tuset Bertrán, 2009: 29; VIVES, J., *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos*, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Enrique Flórez, Barcelona-Madrid, 1963, p. 19. On the continuity of the diocese and at the time of Muslim domination over this territory see in: SOLER, J., *El territori d'Ègara, des de la seu episcopal fins al "castrum Terracense" (segles V-X). Alguns residus antics en la toponímia altmedieval*, *Terme* 18, 2003, p. 77.

no conflict or destruction of the site in that period.⁴²⁹ On the contrary, it is likely that its 'religious activity' continued and structurally 'intact' welcomed a new ruler - the Carolingians - at the very beginning of the 9th century. But what is different from other centres, such as Vic, Girona, or Barcelona, is that Egara will lose its function as the episcopal centre and will not regain it upon the arrival of Frankish rule, just as it was the case with Empúries. The period of the 9th and 10th centuries is poorly known and difficult to interpret. First of all, this refers to the context of architectural and artistic production, since current findings show that there were no significant changes in the structure of the construction complex. But this is not something new for the area of the Catalan counties.

* * *

Today's complex consists of three churches that are the result of a series of transformations. The parish church of Sant Pere and the churches of Santa Maria and Sant Miquel have undergone renovations, expansions, changes of function, etc. Given their significance, characteristics and historical context, it is not unusual that this complex stands out as one of the most intriguing problems of Catalan art history, archaeology and history.⁴³⁰ The first archaeological excavations began in the early 19th century at the church of Sant Miquel. The first half of the 20th century was marked by the research of J. Puig and Cadafalch (1906-1934), who defined the church remains in and around the present-day church of Santa Maria as the first Egara Cathedral, built around 450.⁴³¹

The earliest structures that indicate the traces of Christian rites at this site date from the middle of the 4th to the middle of the 5th century, in which at least two phases of construction have been defined so far. A church with a rectangular ground plan was discovered, with a square apse on the outside and a polygonal apse on the east wall. The building also had a rectangular apse on the north wall and a spatially opposite semicircular exedra on the south

⁴²⁹ GARCIA I LLINARES, MORO GARCÍA, Tuset Bertrán, 2009: 32.

⁴³⁰ CARBONELL ESTELLER, E., Evolució arquitectònica de les esglésies, s. IV-XI. Estat de la qüestió i plantejament actualitzat de la problemàtica, Simposi internacional sobre les esglésies de Sant Pere de Terrassa, 1992, p. 11-16.

⁴³¹ PUIG I CADAFALCH, J., Noves descobertes a la catedral d'Egara. Memòries, IX, Barcelona, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1948.

wall.⁴³² All these structures are located on the site, more precisely in front of the later Cathedral of Santa Maria. By the middle of the 5th century, a baptismal pool was built along the eastern edge of the complex.⁴³³ From the middle of the 5th century, shortly before Egara became the episcopal centre, a great architectural undertaking had taken place. At the western end, a new baptistery was built with an octagonal baptismal pool in its centre.⁴³⁴

In the middle of the 5th century, Egara became a bishop's centre, and new transformations of the first sacral building took place, which was initiated by Bishop Irineu. At the latest in the first half of the 6th century, three new churches were built, most of which have been preserved to this day. This new construction almost entirely negated the previous structures. Perhaps the most interesting building of the episcopal complex and the only one that has preserved its original spatial concept, from the floor plan to the height, is the church of Sant Miquel.⁴³⁵ It has a central form with a prominent heptagonal (7) exterior and a horseshoe-shaped apse on the inside. The central part is rhythmized with eight pillars with capitals supporting the dome. These capitals, of various shapes, were not carved for this building as their diameter did not correspond to the diameter of the pillars on which they stand. It is certain, therefore, that they were brought to the church from some other site or that they had belonged to some earlier building.⁴³⁶ Beneath the apse, an underground crypt was built, with a trefoil chapel where the remains of the tomb were found.⁴³⁷ The church was entered through three doors on each of the facades. The building was surrounded on three sides - north, west and south, by a continuous corridor that is chronologically identical to the rest of the church. Considering the found crypt with a tomb and the burials excavated in the northern and southern part of the corridor, which are chronologically simultaneous to the construction, it

⁴³² FERRAN I GÓMEZ, D., MORO I GARCÍA, A., TUSET I BERTRÁN, F., *Evolució arquitectònica de la Seu episcopal d'Egara (segle IV al segle VIII)*, *Tribuna d'arqueologia*, N° 2002-2003, 2005, p. 81-94; GARCIA I LLINARES, MORO GARCÍA, TUSET BERTRÁN, 2009: 54.

⁴³³ J. de C. Serra-Ràfols, E. de Fortuny, *Excavaciones en Santa María de Egara (Tarrassa)*, *Informes y Memorias de la Comisaria General de Excavaciones Arqueológicas* 18, Madrid, 1949, p. 40-43; GARCIA I LLINARES, MORO GARCÍA, TUSET BERTRÁN, 2009: 73.

⁴³⁴ GARCIA I LLINARES, MORO GARCÍA, TUSET BERTRÁN, 2009: 84-90.

⁴³⁵ The Church of Sant Miquel is often involved in discussions of the central churches of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. See in TOSCO, C., *The Cross-in-square Plan in Carolingian Architecture*, *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 20/2, 2014, p. 490.

⁴³⁶ GARCIA I LLINARES, MORO GARCÍA, TUSET BERTRÁN, 2009: 128. A detailed analysis of each individual capital was made by A. Moro García. See in A. Moro García, *Sant Miquel de Terrassa, in Catalunya Romànica*. Vol. 18: *El Vallès Occidental, el Vallès Oriental*, Barcelona: *Fundació Enciclopèdia Catalana*, 1999.

⁴³⁷ GARCIA I LLINARES, MORO GARCÍA, TUSET BERTRÁN, 2009: 135-137.

is assumed that the function of the building was funeral, i.e. it was a mausoleum.⁴³⁸ The last of the three churches was Sant Pere, probably a parish church. Researchers believe it was a three-nave building with a prominent transept and a three-part sanctuary. That church was also negated by a later, Romanesque building which still exists today. The only part that still exists today, and that is from the 6th century, is a trefoil sanctuary that the Romanesque church used and incorporated into the new structure.

The arrival of new rulers marked the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century in Catalonia. Barcelona and its surroundings, up to the river Llobregat, were incorporated into the system of the Carolingian Empire in 801. Thirty kilometres away, Egara (Terrassa) will again belong to the diocese of Barcelona, just as it was before the middle of the 5th century when it had become independent. The church of Sant Pere became the main parish church. So far, no structural changes have been defined on the churches of the complex which could be dated to the period of 9th to 10th century; it was only noticed that there was a slight rise in the floor level in the churches of Sant Pere and Sant Miquel. The fact that the burials (of a specific anthropomorphic form which has been found on a few 9th/10th-century sites) were found in the area between these two churches, and no longer only in front of the church of Sant Pere, indicates that the site was used during the 9th and 10th centuries.⁴³⁹ However, no burials have been found inside the cathedral that could correspond to this chronological period.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁸ GARCIA I LLINARES, MORO GARCÍA, Tuset Bertrán, 2009: 135-137. On the contrary, Puig and Cadafalch has considered it a baptistery. Cf. PUIG AND CADAFALCH, J., DE FALGUERA, A., GODAY, J., *L'arquitectura romànica a Catalunya*, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, vol. 4, Barcelona, 1983, p. 327.

⁴³⁹ More on the necropolis see in: MOLIST, N., RIPOLL, G. (eds.), *Arqueologia funerària al nord-est peninsular (segles VI-XII)*, Barcelona, Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya, 2012, with following papers: ROIG BUXÓ, A., COLL RIERA, J.M., El món funerari dels territoris de Barcino i Egara entre l'antiguitat tardana i l'època altmedieval (segles V al XII): caracterització de les necròpolis i cronotipologia de les sepultures, p. 375-402; GARCIA I LLINARES, M.G., MORO GARCÍA, A., Tuset Bertrán, F., Necròpolis del conjunt episcopal d'Egara, p. 403-420; PADILLA, J. I., ÁLVARO, K., Alberto del castillo y la cronología de las tumbas llamadas "olerdolanas", p. 33-40; LÓPEZ MULLOR, A., Algunes necròpolis altmedievals del Berguedà i el Bages, segles VII-X, p. 237-263; OLLICH I CASTANYER, I., La necròpolis medieval de l'Esquerda (segles VIII-XIV dC). Cronologia i noves perspectives de recerca, p. 275-286. More on this subject in RIPOLL, G., *La arquitectura funeraria de Hispania entre los siglos V y VIII: aproximación tipológica*, SPANIA. *Estudis d'Antiguitat Tardana oferts en homenatge al professor Pere de Palol i Salellas*. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona, 1996.

⁴⁴⁰ GARCIA I LLINARES, MORO GARCÍA, Tuset Bertrán, 2012: 417.

A new major change in space, the first of its kind after the 6th century, occurred in the 11th and finally in the 12th century when the churches of Santa Maria (the year 1112)⁴⁴¹ and Sant Pere (probably at the end of the 12th century) were renovated and consecrated).⁴⁴²

* * *

Another example of a site which has lived continuously at the microregional level (this time since the Bronze Age) is Sorba (Fig. 65-66). During the Carolingian times, the settlement has belonged to the County of Berga, but it is interesting precisely because of what preceded that period. During the Visigothic rule of the area near the river Aigua d'Ora, a martyrrium dedicated to St Eudald was built in the late 6th century. It was a circular building with a dome slightly higher than five metres and about four metres in diameter, together with the tomb of a martyr and an altar. The rotunda was presumably soon joined by an atrium with three arcades 2.40 m long and about 4 m long rectangular nave, probably completed by the end of the 7th century.⁴⁴³ Space was remodelled and further expanded during the 9th and 10th centuries, which coincides with the time when this area was incorporated into the territory of the Carolingian Empire. The building, now over 12 m long, became a church and received the title of St Mary. The *terminus ante quem* for this event is the year 888, when Duke Urgella Wilfred the Hairy (cat. Guifré el Pilós) and his wife Guinidilde (cat. Guinidilda d'Empúries) donated the church of Santa María de Sorba to the convent of Santa María de Ripoll, among others. The church then allegedly received two more semicircular apses with a diameter of 1.65 m, one on each side of the rotunda, which used the side arcades of the atrium. Today, only the lower part of the south apse is visible. In the 11th century, as expected, new changes took place in the church.

⁴⁴¹ PUIG I ULLSTRELL, P., Acta de consagració de l'església de Santa Maria de Terrassa, in: Catalunya Romànica. Vol. 18: El Vallès Occidental, el Vallès Oriental, Barcelona: Fundació Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1999, p. 238.

⁴⁴² The last publication offering a detailed overview of the stages of transformation: GARCIA I LLINARES, MORO GARCÍA, Tuset Bertrán, 2009: 183-186.

⁴⁴³ BARRAL I ALTET I ALTET, 1981: 182; RIU, M., Excavaciones arqueológicas en Santa María de Sorba, *Cuadernos de Estudios Medievales*, Barcelona, años II, vol. Y, núm. 6, 1981, p. 323-344; RIU, M., El martyrrium de Sant Eudald, Sorba, *L'Erol*, 1999, 63, p. 28-31.

Precisely because they are of their rarity, such examples where the somewhat clearly defined chronological frameworks exist, can significantly contribute to the understanding of the transformation of the forms through the period from the Visigothic rule to the Carolingian one. Finally, the fact that the church was mentioned in 888 also supports the fact that this building should be studied carefully since, together with a few other examples, it could be of great use for further study of the problems of Catalan architecture of the early Middle Ages.

The church of Santa Margarida near Martorell should be added to the list of the sites where the continuity from the early Christian era has been confirmed. The original building was probably built in the 5th-6th century, along with the ancient Via Augusta. It is located near the river Llobregat, close to one of its tributaries - l'Anoia.⁴⁴⁴ The eastern part of the church is organized into three parts, with a central apse of a rectangular shape and two rectangular side rooms inscribed into the flat rear wall; the outer layout of the church is rectangular. The fact that the church continues to function during the period which is studied in this dissertation is also important. This is especially interesting if we know that it was located on the very border of the Carolingian Empire, which managed to expand its territory to the river Llobregat. The original spatial concept will remain almost unchanged until the 12th century when the Romanesque monastery of Sant Genís de Rocafort was founded and built on the site of an older, early Christian one.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁴ There is another example of the continuity of the place – the site of Abrera, next to the river Llobregat, where an interesting archaeological excavations have been conducted in the past few years with roman structures defined underneath the (early?) medieval church. Scientific directors of the project: G. Ripoll and F. Tuset.

⁴⁴⁵ See ALLEPUZ, E.T., NAVARRO SÁEZ, R., MARTÍ, A.M., FARRENY I AGRÀS, M., BERNAL, P.D., SOCORREGUT DOMÈNECH, J., De l'església paleocristiana a la sagrera medieval: Transformacions estructurals i ordenament intern del jaciment de Santa Margarida (Martorell, Barcelona), in: LÓPEZ VILAR, J. (ed.), *Tarraco Biennal. Actes 4t Congrés Internacional d'Arqueologia i Món Antic. VII Reunió d'Arqueologia Cristiana Hispànica: el cristianisme en l'Antiguitat Tardana. Noves perspectives*, Tarragona, Universitat Rovira i Virgili - Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2019, p. 181-188.

2.2.4.2.2. Traces of the monastic architecture from the first period of the Carolingian presence

One of the bearers of the new Carolingian thought at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries, with its source in the centres of Central Europe and the Empire, were the monasteries, of which, unfortunately, almost nothing has survived. So far, archaeological research has offered only a few results: the example of the monastery complexes of Sant Llorenç near Bagà, Sant Pere de Rodes and Sant Esteve de Banyoles.

The structure of the monastery of Sant Llorenç, Bagà, which should be placed chronologically in the 9th/early 10th century, was a simple building in the shape of an elongated rectangle, measuring 30x8 metres, without any internal divisions (Fig. 67). It stretched in a north-south direction. At the end of the 10th century, a much larger three-nave church was built about ten meters northwest of the building.

Today, the magnificent structures of the monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes (Fig. 68) are the result of a series of later alterations. Like the previous convent, Sant Pere in its foundations preserves only extremely poor indications of structures that belonged to the first phase of Frankish expansion through the area south of the Pyrenees. Here, in addition to a simple church of smaller dimensions (12x7 m), properly oriented east-west, with a profound semicircular apse, two more parallel rectangular smaller buildings and one larger one were built, in a north-south direction (Fig. 69).⁴⁴⁶ G. Boto states that on the example of both monasteries there are specific indications for a theory of the continuity of these sites from the time of the Visigoths, but so far they are still insufficient to form any hypothesis or interpretation of space.⁴⁴⁷ What is certain, but also the only logical if we take into account

⁴⁴⁶ As it was the case with the example of the monastery of Sant Llorenç.

⁴⁴⁷ BOTO VARELA, G., Topografía de los monasterios de la marca de Hispania (ca. 800 - ca. 1030), in: GARCÍA DE CORTÁZAR, J.Á., TEJA, R. (eds.), *Monjes y monasterios hispanos en la Alta Edad Media*, Salamanca, Fundación Santa María la Real - Centro de Estudios del Románico, 2006, p. 152. He also notes that in relation to the examples of the Visigothic architecture throughout the Iberian Peninsula, these monasteries do not show a distinction from the established model of construction. See CABALLERO, L., Perviviencia de elementos visigodos en la transición al mundo medieval. Planteamiento del tema, *III Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*, I, Oviedo, 1989, p. 122; CABALLERO, L., Arquitectura de culto cristiano y época visigoda en la Península Ibérica, *XXXIV Corso di Cultura sull'arte revennate e bizantina, Ravenna*, 1987, p. 64. However, conclusions based solely on the models and construction techniques should certainly be taken with extreme caution, especially when the only thing left for analysis is such sparse material as it is the case with the monasteries near Bagà and Sant Pere de Rodes,

the elementary forms used in the construction of these two monasteries, is that the solutions came from the local tradition - late antique and Visigothic/Hispanogothic. The situation is at the same time quite the opposite but in a way analogous to the example of the monastery near Bale in Istria, where its time of origin, according to the current knowledge, should be sought at the turn of the 8th to 9th century. This monastery as well, just as the two Catalan examples, is based on the ideas of a local tradition. However, unlike the Catalan ones, it is evident that the Istrian monastery was inspired by one of the most representative examples of late antique, Justinian architecture - the Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč. One has to ask whether through such an opposite choice of forms we can read the deeper message or meaning the patrons of these two examples of monasteries wanted to send? Although the monasteries coincide in function and political background, the final solutions and architectural models were entirely different.

Although the monastery of St Mary the Great near Bale is a great example of the fusion of forms and solutions derived from the Carolingian Renaissance and the idea of *renovatio imperii*, it should be borne in mind that it is still the only such preserved monastery in Istria. So while it is tantalizing to assume that this could be just one of many such examples, one shouldn't rush to conclusions until the eventual scientific research offers concrete results.

* * *

The last of the three, the monastery of Sant Esteve de Banyoles is an example of a site that went through several changes, alterations and new construction phases throughout the 9th and 10th centuries. It is almost certain that the monastery was founded at the very beginning of the 9th century - around 812. It was founded by Abbot Bonito, who began the construction of the church (consecrated in 889). But, as in so many other cases, the building has been destroyed over the decades that followed and replaced with a new one, dedicated in 957 and built *ex calce te lapidibus dedolatis*.⁴⁴⁸ At the end of the 11th century, the church underwent structural changes and a new building was consecrated in 1086. Inside the church (later

⁴⁴⁸ RAMOS Y MARTÍNEZ, M. L., et al., Sant Esteve de Banyoles, in Catalunya romànica, Osona, El Pla de l'Estany

denied by a new late medieval, baroque and neoclassical structures) in 1981, archaeological excavations found the remains of two different but adjoining apse which were deviated from the axis of the later church.⁴⁴⁹ The larger and more profound, southern apse is interpreted as a construction of the 9th century or earlier while the smaller, northern one is dated to the 10th century. Given the modest examples of 9th-century architecture so far, it is likely that a simple rectangular single nave continued on this earlier apse.

* * *

If we rely on the current results of archaeological and other research of the historical landscape of the northeastern Iberian Peninsula of the 9th and 10th centuries, which in no way should be taken as final conclusions, the following premise arises. The events related with the context of artistic production in Istria at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries (primarily architectural), were not implemented in the area of the Catalan counties until a century later. Despite the fact that in geopolitical terms the Istrian and Catalan territories went through similar stages in the same historical period, the political context, at least according to the current knowledge, did not result in the same changes in the architectural landscape. Both areas adopted new liturgical practices at about the same time, the diffusion of which was carried out primarily by the Benedictines. However, while for the Istrian area this change remained recorded in the monuments - the transformations of their architectural language and forms - in Catalonia we see such a transformation only after the middle of the 10th century. We are still not able to decipher whether it is because the changes have come only during the second half of the 10th century, or the architecture of the 9th century has not been preserved. We should have in mind that the total number of churches from the period preceding the 9th century was undoubtedly greater than it is evident today. The question remains to what extent these older churches have been altered within their structures, whether there has been a change in the architectural/liturgical sculpture etc. Is it possible that the lack of sculptural accomplishments was influenced by the lack of stone-carving workshops,

⁴⁴⁹ The orientation of these older structures corresponds with the axis of the cloister and other annexed monastery rooms. It is certain, therefore, that a cloister was built on the site of the present one at the time of the monastery foundation.

visible perhaps since the time of late antiquity, as E. Carbonell points out?⁴⁵⁰ Unfortunately, the answers to these questions are still not evident.⁴⁵¹ The example of the early Christian episcopal complex in Egara has given almost any evidence of the possible changes during the 9th century, nor have other monuments known to have functioned for a long time, such as the church at Sorba or Santa Margarida near Martorell.

* * *

A large three-nave basilica, consecrated in 983, was built on the site of the aforementioned Sant Llorenç monastery near Bagà.⁴⁵² The flat eastern wall on the inside was probably articulated rhythmically with only two half-pillars following the axes of the colonnades of rectangular-section pillars. This specific feature, as well as the “reverse” orientation of the church, could indicate Carolingian origin. Researchers state that through such a model, this Catalan monastery follows the idea of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, the Basilica of St Peter in Rome and other Carolingian models.⁴⁵³

But is it possible that the relationship between architecture and the liturgy, i.e. the function of that same architecture in Catalonia, did not have a causal relationship? In other words, is it possible that the new Roman liturgy, which certainly began to replace the old Hispanic through the Benedictine monasteries as early as the beginning of the 9th century⁴⁵⁴ in the

⁴⁵⁰ The author cites as an example the importance of imported goods such as sarcophagi from North Africa, Italy and Provence. See CARBONELL, E., *Astúries i la Marca Hispànica*, in: CARBONELL, E., CASSANELLI, R. (eds.), *El Mediterrani i l'Art de Mahoma a Carlemany*, Barcelona, Lunwerg, 2001, p. 212.

⁴⁵¹ For a brief overview of the problem of the almost 'non-existent' sculpture of the 9th and 10th centuries in Catalonia, see CAMPS AND SÒRIA, J., MANCHO, C., *L'escultura a Catalunya als segles IX i X*, in: CAMPS, J., (ed.), *Catalunya a l'època carolíngia: art i cultura abans del romànic (segles IX i X)*, Barcelona, Museu nacional d'art de Catalunya 1999, p. 215-218, with its bibliography.

⁴⁵² For more information see: BOLÓS, J., PAGÉS, M., *El monestir de Sant Llorenç prop Bagà*, Barcelona, Artestudi, 1986; LOPEZ MULLOR, A., CAIXAL MATA, À., *Restauracions i noves troballes. Arquitectura i Arqueologia. Berguedà. Sant Llorenç prop Bagà. Catalunya Romànica XXVII. Visió de síntesi. Restauracions i noves troballes. Bibliografia. Índexs generals*, Barcelona, 1998, p. 184-188; LOPEZ MULLOR, A., CAIXAL MATA, À., *Resultats dels darrers treballs d'excavació al monestir de Sant Llorenç prop Bagà (Guardiola de Berguedà)*, *Lambart*, 14, 2001- 2002, p. 47-74; BOTO VARELA, 2006: 147-204; LÓPEZ MULLOR, A., CAIXAL MATA, A., *L'evolució històrica del monestir*, *L'Erol*, 99, 2008, p. 15-20..

⁴⁵³ LÓPEZ MULLOR, CAIXAL MATA, 2008: 18.

⁴⁵⁴ In the Archbishopric of Narbonne, the Roman liturgy was accepted in 815 (thanks to the archbishop Nebridius and Benet d'Aniana), and since 860 the Catalan bishops have been regular participants in the Frankish synods. In addition, from 870, texts related to the Roman liturgy began to appear in the Catalan area. In March, the Roman liturgy was logically accepted before the remnants of Spain. But the episode with Bishop Felix of

northeast of the Iberian Peninsula, did not condition a change in architectural language and form? It is known, for example, that at the end of the 9th century an old rite was still followed in the church at Ripoll, by lowering the curtain at the entrance to the sanctuary from which the priest preached.⁴⁵⁵

Perhaps the most striking element of the new Roman liturgy throughout the Empire was the multiplication of altars. Such a practice resulted in a three-apse articulation of the sanctuary, seen so many times in the centres of the empire, but also in its peripheral parts - practically everywhere except in the area of the Catalan counties.⁴⁵⁶ Some researchers conclude that this absence is caused by the fact that the architecture in the service of the Roman liturgy began to be built only after 970. Furthermore, some believe that direct links between form and function of the churches over a period of 150 years (from the beginning of the 9th century to 970) did not even exist.⁴⁵⁷ Such conclusions, although somewhat understandable given the current research results, should be taken with caution. Primarily because the problem of Catalan early medieval architecture is that the definition of its chronology is still extremely questionable and it is still unknown what the architectural landscape of the late 8th, 9th and early 10th centuries was actually like.

Urgell should be remembered. His strong connection with the Visigothic diocese of Toledo and Bishop Elipand played an important role during the implementation of the Roman liturgy. The problems were largely solved by the appointment of Narbonne by the competent Catalan archdiocese. J. P Rubio Sadia however states that by the end of the 875, the old hispani-gothic liturgy has been suppressed from the Catalan counties. RUBIO SADIA, J. P., "Apud hispanos lex toletana obliterata est". Suppressions, oblits i pervivències al voltant del ritu hispànic, *Miscel·lània litúrgica catalana*, 2017, p. 119-36. More on the liturgy in Catalan counties see in GROS, M. S., *Arquitectura i litúrgia entorn de l'any 1000*, in: CAMPS, J., (ed.), *Catalunya a l'època carolíngia: art i cultura abans del romànic (segles IX i X)*, Barcelona, Museu nacional d'art de Catalunya 1999, p. 197-200. Also see OLIVAR, A., *Survivances wisigothiques dans la liturgie catalano-languedocienne*, *Liturgie et musique (ixe-xive)*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 17, Toulouse, 1982, p. 157-172; GROS, M., *Les Wisigoths et les liturgies occidentales*, in: Fontaine, J., Pellistrandi, C. (eds.), *L'Europe héritière de l'Espagne wisigothique*, Madrid, Casa de Velázquez, 1992, p. 125-135; GROS, M., *De l'església hispana a l'església carolíngia i el canvi de litúrgia*, in: DE PALOL I SALELLAS, P., PLADEVALL I FONT, A. (eds.), *Del Romà al Romànic. Història, art i cultura de la Tarraconense mediterrània entre els segles IV i X*, Barcelona, Edita - Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1999, p. 397-407; ZIMMERMANN, M., *Écrire et lire en Catalogne (IXe-XIIIe siècle)*, 23, Madrid, Casa de Velázquez, 2003; ZAPKE, S., *Hispania Vetus. Manuscritos litúrgico-musicales de los orígenes visigóticos a la transición francoromana (siglos IX-XII)*, Bilbao, Fundación BBVA, 2007. And yet, the modern, comprehensive monograph on the transition from Visigothic to Carolingian liturgy in Catalan counties is still missing.

⁴⁵⁵ CARBONELL, 2001: 208. On the elements of still hispanogothic tradition in Ripoll see GROS, M. S., *Els manuscrits litúrgics de l'antiga biblioteca del monestir de Ripoll*, in: *Mil·lenari de la basílica de Santa Maria de Ripoll: 977-1977*, Ripoll, Impremta Maideu, 1977, p. 15-20.

⁴⁵⁶ All the way to the Istrian peninsula and the Duchy of Croatia, but on the opposite side of the continent as well, on the territory of the Kingdom of Asturias.

⁴⁵⁷ See BOTO VARELA, 2006: 153.

This 'cut' in relation to the previous understanding of architectural language that emerged around 950 is explained as the moment when the social and ecclesiastical structures of the Catalan counties were finally formed and systematized to some extent. In a way, the period of Carolingian rule over Catalonia was then slowly beginning to come to an end. Parallel to those processes, a resistance to the centres of central European government also began to strengthen. It has been several decades since the last seat of the diocese had been confirmed, which would suddenly result in a powerful and monumental architecture that was actually an overture for a new understanding of space and artistic production in general - Romanesque. E. Carbonell writes in one of his texts that Romanesque architecture, practically without a period of transition, emerged from this 'improved' socio-political system that can be traced back to the middle of the 10th century.⁴⁵⁸

2.2.4.2.3. Form and function

Everything that has been preserved, or is presumed to belong to the Catalan horizon of the 9th century, can for the time being easily be placed under the common denominator of single-nave buildings with one apse, just as the buildings from the 10th century are (Fig. 70).⁴⁵⁹ The invention lies exclusively in the form of an apse which on some examples is trapezoidal, while on others it is a horseshoe or a regular semicircle.

An analysis of historiographical texts published so far on the architecture of the Catalan counties from the time of the Carolingian Empire found that a around 20 churches (for which we still have material traces) date to the 9th century, while around 70 have been confirmed in written sources.⁴⁶⁰ The disproportion between the confirmed sacral buildings of the 9th

⁴⁵⁸ CARBONELL, 2001: 209.

⁴⁵⁹ About the problem of a single-nave architecture of the Middle Ages in Catalonia see in FREIXAS I CAMS, P., SUREDA I JUBANY, M., La nau única en l'arquitectura medieval catalana. Reflexions sobre la pervivència d'un model constructiu del preromànic al gòtic, *Annals de l'Institut d'Estudis Gironins*, 50, Girona, 2009, p. 41-51.

⁴⁶⁰ In the doctoral dissertation presented in 2017 at the Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier 3, the corpus of rural churches from the 5th to the 11th century was published. Among other things, the churches of the 9th and 10th centuries from the area of the Catalan counties in the north of the Pyrenees (Rosselló, Vallespir) were

century and those from the 10th century is significant - for the 10th century the number of around 170 churches that still exist has been confirmed, even in ruins. At the same time, 500 examples are documented through the written sources.⁴⁶¹

A slightly higher concentration of churches from the 4th to the 11th century, including the 9th-century examples, is found in the County of Empúries, which is presented in the 'Catalan Counties of Empúries, Girona, Besalu, Urgell, Cerdanya and Bergar' of this dissertation through a macro perspective.⁴⁶² All churches follow a similar form of the most often irregular quadrangle with a trapezoidal, irregular apse. Their width is approximately 5 meters, with slight variations, while their length varies about 13-14 meters. Since these churches are not defined chronologically with certainty, I believe that it is not necessary to describe their dimensions in more detail. Still, it is required to get at least a rough idea of their spatial organization. According to current knowledge, the beginning of the 10th century would not bring anything new in terms of the dimensions of the church. The only invention in some examples would be the replacement of the former square apses with a semicircular and horseshoe-shaped one.

The classification of Catalan architecture of the 9th and early 10th centuries, given the current state of research and analysis, is still an incredibly ungrateful task. I believe that, before any further proposing new or accepting old dating, it would be necessary to do the following. The future of the study of Catalan architecture must strive to open up the problem of recognizing narrower morphological features that would be contextualized within their local and then broader frameworks. A comparative connection with related accomplishments in the wider

discussed. An impressive number of 27 documented churches from the 9th century (both in written sources and/or the remains of which were still visible) has been confirmed. Of these, 8 are still existing. Also, 53 churches from the 10th century have been recorded, of which 11 still exist. See GOURGUES, M., *Les églises rurales dans l'ancien diocèse d'Elne (Roussillon et Vallespir, Pyrénées-Orientales), entre le Vème et le XIème siècle : l'expression d'un palimpseste architectural ? Un répertoire des formes, entre préroman et anté-roman*, Doctoral dissertation, Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier 3, 2017, p. 276-278.

⁴⁶¹ This number is based on the churches published so far, primarily in the volumes of the encyclopedia *Catalunya Romanica* and the book X. Barral and Altet, *L'art pre-romànic a Catalunya: segles IX-X*, Barcelona, 1981. Unfortunately, a corpus which would incorporate the churches from present-day Catalan territory (such as the doctoral dissertations which gathered material from the counties of North Pyrenees - see GOURGUES, 2017), still does not exist. Therefore, I would like to state that the accuracy of the figures presented in the text is far from definite, since these information has not been revised so far. They serve for illustration purposes only.

⁴⁶² The corpus of churches of the Empordà region see in: BADIA I HOMES, J., *L'arquitectura medieval de l'Empordà*, Girona, Diputació de Girona. (1. Baix Empordà ; 2-A. Alt Empordà : Agullana-Peralada ; 2-B. Alt Empordà : Pont de Molins-Vilaur), Girona, 1977-1981.

area, which in the case of the Catalan counties would be a wide area north of the Pyrenees, but of course the achievements on the peninsula itself could, and should, resolve many dilemmas. The historical context in this particular case must not be determined solely by the time of the Frankish expansion to the northeast of the peninsula. Still, it must include the centuries that preceded that historical period, but also those that followed. It is evident that the architectural forms, which today we consider to belong to the 9th and/or 10th century, are in many ways just repetitions of earlier architectural achievements.

Finally, perhaps the most important issue is the one related to the function of these buildings. Who built them, and what was their purpose? This social aspect is often unjustly neglected, and in fact, forms the basis of the study of every building, be it sacral or secular. The function of some of the rural churches of the studied period of the 9th and 10th centuries is known - they are documented in large numbers as the possessions of larger monasteries, such as Sant Esteve de Banyoles, Sant Pere d'Albanyà, Sant Serni de Tavèrnoles, Sant Medir, and since the 10th c. Sant Pere de Rodes as well. I will present only some of the illustrative examples.

Near Valletta, at the site of El Terror, lie the ruins of a church that could be connected to the documented church of Sant Genís, which belonged to the monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes from the 10th century.⁴⁶³ If today's ruins really are the church of Sant Genís, it is again an example of a single-nave structure with a specific prominent, almost ellipsoidal apse (Fig. 71). Two documents of Charles the Bald related to the monastery of Sant Pere d'Albanyà, the first from 844 and the second from 869, also mentioned his monastic estates: the church of Sant Miquel de la Cirera and Sant Romà de Casamor.⁴⁶⁴ Both estates, together with the main monastery in Albanyà, as early as 869 came under the protection and became the property of the monastery of Santa María de Arles, north of the Pyrenees.

The document of King Louis II from 878, again related to the monasteries of Sant Pere d'Albanyà and Santa María de Arles, also mentioned the site of *carboniles et Calmilies* where the church of Sant Feliu is located.⁴⁶⁵ The church of Sant Martí de Vallmala or de Fontanet has been in possession of the monastery of Sant Esteve de Banyoles since the beginning of

⁴⁶³ BARRAL I ALTET, 1981: 210.

⁴⁶⁴ BADIA I HOMES, Joan; CASES, M. Lluïsa (1990). Catalunya romànica. Vol. IX. L'Empordà II. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana.

⁴⁶⁵ BADIA I HOMES, J., Aportacions a l'estudi del pre-romànic empordanès, *Revista de Girona*, 72, Girona tercer trimestre de 1975, p. 41-42; BARRAL I ALTET, 1981: 201.

the 11th century.⁴⁶⁶ However, this church of a simple rectangular shape with a trapezoidal apse was documented earlier, in the 9th century. Does this mean that large monasteries took under their auspices the churches that had been built before? If they were, this raises the question of their original function.

Part of the buildings were parish churches, often in settlements that no longer exist or do not have the same significance as they had at the time. One of them is the former parish church of Sant Martí de Bausitges (Fig. 71), the surroundings of which today is entirely uninhabited. It was first mentioned in 946 in a document related to the consecration, but it is not excluded that the consecrated church had existed before. It is again an example of a single-nave rectangular building with uneven walls with a prominent wide square apse. The interior of the church is vaulted with a barrel vault and is divided into two equal parts by a visually continuous arch.

Another example of a parish church is Sant Feliu de Vilajuïga, in the very centre of the village. To date, the church has undergone numerous transformations, so it is difficult to talk about its original appearance, which could be interesting. According to X. Barral, the spatial concept of this building differed from the ubiquitous generic forms of single-nave churches with a prominent apse. Here, too, the apse was probably a prominent trapezoid, but the church was three-aisled.⁴⁶⁷ A similar organization of space has been documented on the example of a church on the site of Santa Creus de Rodes,⁴⁶⁸ in the middle of the abandoned, once fortified settlement of the same name. It was first mentioned in a document from 947 as the property of the monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes.⁴⁶⁹ There are two assumptions regarding its floor plan. Both possibilities include a trapezoidal apse, while the organization of the nave (or naves) is questionable. The first states that it was a three-nave building with pillars and arcades, which connects it with the previous example in Vilajuïga and with the parish church of Santa María in Vilanant⁴⁷⁰ Another possibility is that it was a single-nave church with a transept, i.e. a cross-planned structure. In this case, a similar solution could be found in the

⁴⁶⁶ BARRAL I ALTET, 1981: 211.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁸ *Idem*, 209.

⁴⁶⁹ Papal bull of Benedict VI.

⁴⁷⁰ BARRAL I ALTET, 1981: 212-213. The comparison was brought to public by X. Barral, while J. Badia believes that the eastern end of the church was articulated with three apses. The central one was of a trapezoidal form, while the lateral ones were semicircular. The similar concept also had the church of Sant Quirze de Pedret, where it is assumed that a common single-nave layout with the trapezoidal apse (today the central one) existed before the current three-naved, three-apse articulation of space.

church of Sant Vicenç d'Obiols, in the early medieval county of Berga, within the boundaries of the diocese of Urgell.⁴⁷¹ The first mention of this church was in the already mentioned document from 888, in which this church was cited as one of the donations of Duke Urgell Wilfred the Hairy (cat. Guifré el Pilós) and his wife Guinidilda d'Empúries to the monastery of Santa María de Ripoll. Since the document states that the church was already consecrated at that time (*Et in eodem Comitatus ecclesias Sancti Vincencio, que este consecrata...*), it can be assumed that the time of its construction should be sought at an earlier period.⁴⁷² In addition to the church in Obiols, the church of Santa María de Matadars near the settlement of El Pont de Vilomara had a similar layout (Fig. 71).⁴⁷³

In the context of the organization of space of the previous five examples, the church of Sant Joan in Bellcaire d'Empordà is certainly worth mentioning. Perhaps its structures can represent the transformations of particular Catalan churches of similar shapes most vividly. The church was transformed from its initial irregular quadrangular form to a three-nave, three-apse church probably in the 10th century. The central apse was of a common trapezoidal form while the lateral ones, judging by the part of the northern apse that has been preserved, were most likely semicircular. Interestingly, however, there is a slight deviation of the eastern part of the building from the three-nave central part, especially considering that the construction of the transept preceded the construction of the side naves. This means that at one point, the church was a single-nave building with a transept and a trapezoidal apse, and its side naves were then reconstructed. Is it possible that the church in Santes Creus near the convent of Sant Pere Rodes, the church of Sant Feliu Vilajuïga and also the church of Santa María in Vilanant went through a similar process of transformation?

Finally, as an example of the currently unique spatial concept in the area of the Catalan counties for the period of 9th/10th century, stands the church of Sant Martí at the site of Forn del Vidre. It is located right next to today's highway, the former Via Augusta, just a few kilometres away from another important site Panissars, which is located on today's border with France. The Church of Sant Martí is a single-nave building, with a trefoil sanctuary.

⁴⁷¹ BARRAL I ALTET, 1981: 178-179.

⁴⁷² D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS, 1926-1955: 164, 172; BARRAL I ALTET, X., La circulation des monnaies suèves et visigothiques, *Contribution a l'histoire économique du royaume visigoth*, (Beihefte der France, 4), 137, Munic, 1976, p. 190.

⁴⁷³ SITJES I MOLINS, X., Les esglésies pre-romàniques de Bages, Berguedà i Cardener, Manresa, 1977, p. 133-142, BARRAL I ALTET, 1981: 230.

This is a form that was used in earlier periods. For example, the church of Sant Pere from the 6th century follows a similar concept of the organization of the sanctuary, although the apses there are somewhat shallower. X. Barral suggests to date the church of Sant Martí as early as to the end of the 10th century. A similar type of sanctuary was often used in the architecture of the 9th century and in the area of the Croatian Principality, where it also has its origins in late antiquity and early Christian period (more on which in the following chapter).

* * *

Placing the Catalan and Istrian architectural landscape of the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century in relation cannot yet give and does not provide any more concrete conclusions. Historical moments coincide in many ways, primarily in terms of the stages of the conquest of both areas where chronologically, almost simultaneously, the borders of the Frankish state move to the southwest and southeast. But architectural solutions on both peripheral areas follow their laws. And while the Istrian territory acknowledged the idea of the Carolingian *renovatio imperii* and quickly implemented its ideology in the historical landscape, the situation with the Catalan counties is somewhat different. In Istria, this new ideology had to oppose to the ‘autochthonous’ Eastern Roman one. It was woven into the structures of the monasteries, the estates of the elite, their private churches, fortified settlements and the sacral buildings belonging to them, all of which accepted this new artistic language and expression. In addition to the import of new forms that symbolically represented the new government at their core, new architectural solutions often followed the same ‘Eastern Roman’ tradition, using individual examples that represented the culmination of their artistic expression. We can go as far as to say that in that way this new, Carolingian ideology superimposed itself in relation to the original, and surpassed it within its own norms and categories.

On the other hand, the situation at the foot of the Pyrenees still remains much more unclear. Here, this penetration of new forms and the transformation of architectural solutions did not exist until after the middle of the 10th century, when the new spatial articulation (three-naved, three-apse architectural solutions) finally reflected the western-Roman liturgy. The idea of

the Carolingian renaissance and *renovatio imperii* definitely experienced a significant delay in its implementation, especially if we compare it with the Istrian example. However, at the local, regional level of the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula, the difference compared to the architectural achievements of previous centuries is very visible.

Although this goes far beyond the historical framework of this dissertation, in the context of the problem of development of the forms and continuity, or the discontinuity of ideas, I consider it important to point out several Catalan examples that (at least) coincide in many ways with the full century older Istrian examples.

An example of the so-called 'T' floor plan is present from the mid-8th and early 9th centuries on a considerable number of monuments from the Istrian peninsula, through northern Italy and southern Switzerland to south-western France and the church of Saint Pierre-des-cuisines in Toulouse. All the churches are dated to the period of the most intensive Carolingian expansion in Europe. However, as it has been stated on several occasions, the area around the Pyrenees will include these new forms in its architectural repertoire a little later. One of the examples is the monastery of Sant Pere d'Albanyà that has been known in documents since the first half of the 9th century. In 844 it received the protection of King Charles the Bald, and the same document mentions two monastery cells that belonged to it: Sant Miquel de la Cirera and Sant Romà de Casamor.⁴⁷⁴

But not even 30 years later, the monastery fell under the protection of the monastery on the north side of the Pyrenees - Santa María de Arles.⁴⁷⁵ Then, according to researchers, a new church was built, consecrated in 957, with - and it has to be stressed out - the spatial concept which followed the model of the so-called 'T' floor plan. Such a new type of spatial concept was adopted by the monastic churches of Sant Gení de Fontanes and Sant Andreu in Surada at the end of the 10th century. Both monasteries were founded at the beginning of the 9th century, within the first few decades of the Carolingian presence in this area. However, even in this case, the architectural forms that we study appeared only at the end of the 10th century. In addition to the monastery of Sant Pere d'Albanyà, another example of the use of the 'T' floor plan on the south side of the Pyrenees was the church of the monastery of Sant Pere de

⁴⁷⁴ BADIA I HOMES, J., Catalunya romànica. Vol. IX. L'Empordà II. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1990

⁴⁷⁵ New document issued by the same King, Charles the Bald, February 23rd, 869. See: D'ABADAL I DE VINYALS: 1926-1950, 6-8, 31, 34-35, 38-39.

Graudescales, originally consecrated in 913 (Fig. 71). The new one was in the 11th century, following the 'new' conception of spatial organization. These examples are of course no exception since, during the 11th century, more and more churches have been built using the 'T' floor plan layout. But since this goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, I leave all further considerations for future discussions and analysis.

2.2.4.3. Concluding remarks on the architecture of the southeastern and southwestern periphery

Synchronous reviews of the architectural accomplishments of certain political entities, as presented in this dissertation, have multiple advantages. Confronting the political and artistic development of the two geographically completely independent regions can often relativize eventual firmly established premises without the initial “over-examination” of the core of the problem. Or at it can question them critically, precisely to go deeper and problematize a particular topic. One such example is the often mentioned statement that the lack of preserved and exceptional architecture of the 9th century in the Catalan counties should be attributed to the fact that this geopolitical area at the time of the most significant expansion of the Frankish state was far from its political and economic centres.⁴⁷⁶ On its own and without a broader context, such a remark would be quite logical especially when one adds to it an argument about a strong Visigothic and late antique tradition that virtually hindered the development of the Carolingian idea in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula.

But when we turn our attention to the other end of the Carolingian Empire, to the other marginal zone - the Istrian peninsula, all Catalan arguments - the distance from the centre of the Empire, the strong traditions that preceded the Frankish arrival (in the Istrian case the Byzantine, i.e. Eastern Roman and late antique), can be applied there as well. Nevertheless, all these reasons that in the Catalan case resulted in a lack of art production or exclusive repetition of the already known forms become relative because the Istrian area of the late 8th and early 9th century experienced one of the most intense architectural swings, the renaissance of the architectural landscape in the full sense of the word.

This does not mean that the arguments for Catalonia are not valid, but only points to a deeper reflection on the problem, contextualization of the situation and ultimately the search for additional arguments, supported by facts.

⁴⁷⁶ CARBONELL, 2001: 209. The Croatian historiography found itself in similar *paradigmatic void* towards the second half of the 20th century, when it was clear that the long-supported theory of the so-called *art of the periphery*, which indicated the *inferiority* of the Croatian heritage (for example medieval architecture) opposed to the examples of foreign cultural centres, could not offer an objective and prolific basis for further research. See KARAMAN, LJ., O djelovanju domaće sredine u umjetnosti hrvatskih krajeva, Zagreb, 1963.

3. **The midlands – *Ducatus Croatiae* with few remarks on *Regnum Asturorum***

After Istria and the Catalan counties have been placed in relation, these areas would be placed in a broader context in the final part of the dissertation. Therefore, the dissertation will include the dynamics of Istria's neighbouring area - the Principality of Croatia, where, partly through Istria, models from other centres of the Carolingian Empire have been arriving. The term contact zone can be applied not only to the historical area of today's Croatia but also at the very opposite end of the continent, on the Iberian Peninsula. This geographical distance offers an objective approach to observing the historical and architectural landscape of both territories and the elements that have defined them. The regions of the Principality of Croatia and the Kingdom of Asturias do not share any direct links. Any possible similarities in artistic and architectural achievements speak only about their common neighbour, the early medieval mediator of new cultural and architectural accomplishments - the Carolingians. An important element should also be considered, and it is their dynamic relationship with the centuries-old tradition that the regions inherit. Some examples from the Principality's territory, which is again in the focus of this analysis, have been studied and placed in the political context from which they had arisen. Here understood as a substrate, or a base, the tradition of space has been opposed to the innovations that have arrived from the outside of borders of this newly formed political entity. It is possible to compare them through a synchronous perspective with selected examples of architecture of the chronologically modern Kingdom of Asturias.

In the following chapter, therefore, through the perspective of several problematic hypotheses, already well known in Croatian historiography, a framework will be set for further research of the architectural landscape, primarily of the Croatian Principality, and partly of the Kingdom of Asturias. To begin with, I will start the discussion with the question of the relationship of the new ruling elite of the Croatian principality with the Carolingian structures, and finally, the ecclesiastical ones. Furthermore, several selected examples of the monuments positioned in the landscape will be presented, with the focus on the relationship with the earlier structures - Roman, late antique or early Christian ones - whether it is an example of a complete architectural transformation, or simply the reconstruction or refurbishment of the interior. Eventually, the discussion will attend to the problem of the

westwerk. Nowhere in the territory of the Principality have the Frankish presence and ideology been more tangible than in the implementation of that particular Carolingian invention. *Westwerk* not only represented a specific building structure. It stood as a symbol of the unification of ecclesiastical and secular authority.

Finally, I want to emphasize that the focus here will not be on the architectural landscape as a whole. On the contrary, the emphasis will be on that one of its specific elements, which contrasts to the Istrian area at the end of the 8th and the beginning 9th century. While it does not exist in Istria at all, it regularly appears on the territory of the Principality, almost as a rule. Nearly every church built or renovated during the period of the Principality incorporated this motif of the western massif into its structure. Finally, this architectural phenomenon (historical and political as well, as it would be presented later) will be compared with (chronologically almost simultaneous) architecturally similar solutions from the territory of the Asturian kingdom. Of course, aware of the complexity of the topic, I will have to refrain from a more in-depth investigation of the problem and leave it for some future research.

3.1. Historical introduction

The Frankish expansion stages on the southeastern front of the country have already been analyzed in the context of the Istrian peninsula at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century. After these few decades, from the beginning of the 9th century, another region of the eastern Adriatic coast began to awaken. It was the one in its hinterland, an area that occupied part of the historic Roman province of Dalmatia. This new political establishment was in many ways independent; for example, the prince's successor was chosen by the *populus*. Nevertheless, the act of enthronement could not be finalized without the confirmation of the ruler of the mighty Carolingian Empire. At that time, the Empire was ruled by the son of Charlemagne - Louis the Pious, the same one who was appointed as the king of Aquitaine as a three-year-old boy. From the administrative point, the Principality of Croatia was one of the borderland vassal political entities, similar to its northern neighbour -

the Lower Pannonia. It could certainly not have been considered the same for the western coast of Istria, since that territory formally belonged to the Carolingian Empire.

In order to get at least a rough idea of the moment of the first half of the 9th century in the area of the former Roman province of Dalmatia, it is necessary to look back several decades. The centuries that preceded, especially the 7th century, were marked by Avar military campaigns and the first wave of Slavic colonization. The problem of the early medieval migrations is still one of the most debatable topics on the Croatian historiography. One of the reasons lies in the fact that it is closely related to the issue of so-called "National history". The two main "schools" of history are opposed. The older one uses a standard narrative depicting the earliest period of the "national history", primarily based on the work *De Administrando Imperio* attributed to the emperor-writer Constantine Porphyrogenitus. The basic paradigm is that the "migration of the Croatian people" took place in the early 7th century, during the reign of Emperor Heracles. Approximately two centuries after this initial event, the "creation of stataal establishment" began, as part of the subordination to the Frankish government.⁴⁷⁷ This thesis has been questioned and in many ways disputed in numerous works by domestic and foreign researchers, mostly from the late 1980s onwards.⁴⁷⁸

The second point of view is led by the idea that the Croats and other Slavic ethnic communities came to the former Roman province of Dalmatia in the late 8th or early 9th century. It was at about the same time when the much of today's territory of Croatia (Istria, Central Croatia, Dalmatia and the hinterland) was experiencing strong military, political and social Carolingian activity.⁴⁷⁹ One of the most intriguing historiographical questions is what kind of situation could have they found there since there are still no written sources about that period in that particular area.

Here, as well as Istria (at least according to our current knowledge), the life continued without major interruptions exclusively in the coastal area and its urban centres - from Rab in the

⁴⁷⁷ See RAČKI, F., *Nutarnje stanje Hrvatske prije XII. stoljeća*. (ed. ANČIĆ), Zagreb, 2009; ŠIŠIĆ, F., *Povijest Hrvata u vrijeme narodnih vladara*. Zagreb, 1925.

⁴⁷⁸ We should also have in mind that certain ideas and hypotheses have very often been and are a reflection of current socio-political situations, which certainly requires critical approach to any conclusions, even the ones publishes in scientific literature. See: POHL, W., National Origin Narratives in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, in: P. GEARY, J., KLANICZAY, G. (eds.), *Entangled History of Medievalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Leiden - Boston, Brill, 2013., p. 13-50; DŽINO, D., *Becoming Slav, Becoming Croat: Identity Transformations in Post-Roman and Early Medieval Dalmatia*. Leiden - Boston, Brill, 2010, p. 1-56.

⁴⁷⁹ See ANČIĆ, M., *Franački i langobardski utjecaji pri stvaranju i oblikovanju Hrvatske Kneževine, Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, 43, 2016, p. 218-238.

northern Adriatic, through Zadar, Trogir, Split and Dubrovnik . These cities were representatives of the Eastern Roman Empire in the eastern Adriatic, but still not powerful enough to successfully control or organize the lives of the inhabitants of the deeper hinterland.

Let us compare the situation of the southeastern border of the Frankish state with the one on its southwestern one - in the north of the Iberian Peninsula. We come across the following: with the invasion of the Moors and the defeat of the Visigoths in 711, a new period in the history of the Iberian Peninsula began. A few years after the Moorish army, coming from North Africa, had overthrown the Visigothic Kingdom centred in Toledo, a group of rebels against Islam's new culture led by Pelayo appeared in the province of Asturias in northern Spain.⁴⁸⁰ In 722, at the Battle of Covadonga, he defeated the Moorish army and founded a small kingdom on the slopes of Mount Auseva, with the town of Cangas de Onís as its original centre.⁴⁸¹ During the next two centuries of the kingdom's existence, the area of northern Spain has been isolated from the rest of the Iberian Peninsula, which was primarily ruled by the Moors. Simultaneously, the Kingdom's connection with Europe, both by sea and land, was quite strong.⁴⁸² An old Roman road ran along the Cantabrian coast towards the Frankish Empire, crossing the massive Pyrenees gorge. In addition to this route, the capital of the then Kingdom of Asturias, Oviedo, had excellent maritime communication, due to its position near the coast of northern Spain. All this favoured the establishment of strong ties with the Frankish rulers, including the court of Charlemagne in Aachen. However, the memory of the Visigothic past, woven into the actions of the Asturian rulers from their first king Pelayo, whose origins were most likely Hispanic-Gothic, was even more potent than the connection with the Carolingians. According to the Asturian cultural landscape researchers, this Visigothic tradition has manifested itself in the preserved architectural forms more than anything else. However, at the same time, here we encounter particular architectural solutions that can be seen throughout the Carolingian Empire, and beyond, in other parts of the

⁴⁸⁰ The origin of Pelayo is still unknown, although it is indicative that the chroniclers of Alfonso III noted his role as the leader of the Asturian rebellion against Muslims, emphasizing his level of integration in the Asturian society. See GIL FERNÁNDEZ, J., MORALEJO, J.L., RUIZ DE LA PEÑA, J.I., *Crónicas asturianas*, Oviedo, Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Oviedo, 1985; MÍNGUEZ FERNÁNDEZ, J. M., *La España de los siglos VI al XIII: guerra, expansión y transformaciones: en busca de una frágil unidad*, San Sebastián, Nerea, 2004, p. 169.

⁴⁸¹ Christian victory at Covadonga was mentioned as *Spaniae salus*, salvation (or liberation) of Spain in the chronicles of Alfonso III. See GIL FERNÁNDEZ, MORALEJO, RUIZ DE LA PEÑA, 1985.

⁴⁸² For more about the relations with the Charlemagne's court, see ARIAS PÁRAMO, 1993: 20.

continent, where such Visigothic tradition does not exist. That is the reality, and as such, it should be accepted and studied. This does not necessarily imply a flow of strong cultural influence in any direction, but it certainly questions our understandings of the transfer of forms, ideas, and solutions.

* * *

Carolingian expansionist policy, the annexation of Istria and the further progress towards the southern parts of the Adriatic basin prompted a direct reaction from Eastern Roman Empire. The escalation of the tensions in the region ultimately resulted in an open conflict between the two superpowers. Thus, the most significant recorded historical event of the early 9th century was the Treaty of Aachen, signed between the western and eastern emperors in 812.⁴⁸³ Peace has deepened the already noticeable gap between the coastal areas and their cities, which continued to function as enclaves of the Byzantine Empire on the Adriatic, and its natural background, the hinterland. It was this hinterland, formally excluded from the administrative system of the Carolingian Empire, that became something like a buffer zone on the border of two worlds - the Carolingian and the Eastern Roman. Although the Croatian principality government was independent "on paper", the reality was somewhat different. It should not surprise, given the power the Carolingian Empire still had at the time.

Today, as a result of numerous archaeological discoveries, toponymy and sources from later periods, we can approximately outline the former borders of the Principality of Croatia.⁴⁸⁴ The south border probably went from the Cetina River to the north, following the Vrbas River until its mouth in the Sava River and then to the slopes of the Psunj and Papuk Mountains. Those were the natural features that have been used for defence purposes. The western borders of the Principality (from the slopes of the Učka Mountain to the middle section of

⁴⁸³ The latest publication about the Treaty of Aachen is: ANČIĆ, M., The Treaty of Aachen. How many empires?, ANČIĆ, M., SHEPARD, J., VEDRIŠ, T. (eds.), *Imperial Spheres and the Adriatic Byzantium, the Carolingians and the Treaty of Aachen (812)*, New York, Routledge, 2018, p. 25-42. See the related bibliography and historical sources.

⁴⁸⁴ ANČIĆ, 2000: 89-92.

the Kupa River) were shared with the Istrian territory, i.e. the Carolingian Empire, while the southern parts shared borders with Sclavinias.⁴⁸⁵

During the last few decades, various scientific studies of the Croatian early medieval architecture have offered a new perspective on its role in a broader European context. The specific geographical and historical context of the Eastern Adriatic region, together with the Istrian peninsula, resulted in extensive architectural diversity. The diversity was especially notable during the end of the 8th / beginning of the 9th c. in Istria, and during the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century in the Principality of Croatia. It was when great efforts of the two opposed European centres of power, the Byzantine and the Carolingian Empire, resulted in actions with a goal to establish their dominance over the Eastern Adriatic region: from Istrian peninsula on the north-west, which has become a part of Carolingian Marca Friuli, through the Dalmatian hinterland and the newly-formed Principality of Croatia in the former Roman province of Dalmatia, to the Byzantine coastal towns. This complex situation and the future close relations between the Principality of Croatia and the Carolingian Empire produced works of art that demonstrate a high degree of transnational influence. The Carolingian control over Croatia must be analyzed through two inseparable aspects – the ecclesiastical structures, i.e. the Church, and the secular ones, i.e. the state. Similarly, the same relationship will be presented on the example of the Asturian rulers, as seen below.

The foundation of the sacral art in the Principality of Croatia during the 9th century was formed by the close relation with the process of the Christianization of the *populus* from the Principality. Today, the widely accepted theory is that Christianization of this specific area was the process primarily led by the Franks.⁴⁸⁶ This thesis is proved by many pieces of evidence, one of them being summarized on one precise monument – the church of Saint Martha (Fig. 72-75). Its context and appearance will be studied in the following pages. The church is located in Bijaći, in the northwestern part of the Kaštela valley, 6 kilometres from Trogir. I mention it here because it is the example of architecture where it is possible to define

⁴⁸⁵ The derived Greek term Sklavinia (Greek: Σκλαβίνια, Latin: SCLAVINIAE) was used for the Slav settlements which were initially out of Byzantine control and independent. The term may be interpreted as "Slav lands" in Byzantium.

⁴⁸⁶ KLAJIĆ, N., *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku*, Zagreb, Školska knjiga, 1975, p. 203; JURKOVIĆ, M., Franački utjecaj na konstituiranje crkvene umjetnosti u Hrvatskoj, in: BUDAK, N. (ed.), *Etnogeneza Hrvata*, Zagreb, Nakladni Zavod Matice Hrvatske, Zavod za Hrvatsku Povijest Filozofskog Fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1995, p. 117; JURKOVIĆ, M., O arhitekturi hrvatske države 9. stoljeća (On the Architecture of Croatia in the 9th Century), *Arheološka istraživanja u Kninu i Kninskoj krajini. Izdanja Hrvatskog arheološkog društva*, 15, 1992, p. 66.

the 'signature' of foreign influences through the Carolingian rulers on three levels. Its case is all the more impressive because here, as in so many examples from Istria, a probable relation with the Aquileian area has been noticed. The church's consecration to St Martha is not common in the territory of the Croatian principality and could be appointed to the Carolingian tradition.

Furthermore, an inscription on the lintel found in the early 20th century mentions the priest *Gumpertus*, the investor of the church. The origin of its name does not need further clarification, since it is clear that it does not derive from the tradition of the Dalmatian area. The inscription engraved in one of the architraves begins with the Ambrosian *Te Deum*,⁴⁸⁷ which could also indicate northern Italian models.

Finally, the origin of the spatial concept of the church should be sought outside the local historical-geographical context. Yet again, the closest similar example is located in the subalpine area, in Vicenza.⁴⁸⁸ The two oldest preserved documents of Croatian medieval history are also in relation with the church - the documents of Duke Trpimir (dating 840-843) and Duke Muncimir (dated 892).⁴⁸⁹ In the document from 892, the church is mentioned as the place of issuance of Duke's issues.⁴⁹⁰ The connection of the three elements that have formed the backbone of the historical events of the Croatian principality during the 9th century - the Church, the Croatian court and the Carolingians, can therefore hardly be more evident than on the example of the church of St Martha.

The tradition of the late antique architecture was significantly weaker in the 9th-century Principality than it was, for example, in Istria or the coastal zone. Such a situation is not surprising given the historical context of the centuries that preceded the definition of the

⁴⁸⁷ The transcription of the inscription is published in the N. Jakšić's paper. JAKŠIĆ, M., Reljefi Trogirske klesarske radionice iz crkve Sv. Marte u Bijaćima, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* III/26, 1999, p. 267. This, as well as a few other inscriptions had been epigraphically analyzed by N. Cambi, (CAMBI, N., Nekoliko neobjavljenih natpisa iz fonda nekadašnjeg društva u Institutu za nacionalnu arheologiju u Splitu, *Starohrvatska Prosvjeta*, III/10, 1968, p. 63), and later by V. Delonga, (DELONGA, V., Latinski spomenici u ranosrednjovjekovnoj Hrvatskoj, Split, 1996, p. 51).

⁴⁸⁸ The form of a three-nave church with three rectangular apses, the central one of which is prominent and much larger than the lateral ones, is known from the early Christian models. One of these is the example of the church of St Felix and Fortunato in Vicenza, although it is much larger in size.

⁴⁸⁹ See ANČIĆ, M., Od vladarske curtis do gradskoga kotara Bijaći i crkva Sv. Marte od početka 9. do početka 13. stoljeća, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, III/26, 1999, p. 189-236. For the more precise dating of the Trpimir's grant, M. Ančić refers to the paper MARGETIĆ, L., Bilješke uz Trpimirovu ispravu, CD I, 3-8, *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Splitu*, 30/1/1993. The text of the Trpimir's grant has been published in ANČIĆ, 2000: 280-282.

⁴⁹⁰ See ANČIĆ, 1999: 209.

Principality as a political entity. Apart from this historical and political aspect, the ecclesiastical policy in the Dalmatian hinterland area, which has turned towards Rome as its centre, and not Constantinople, had a significant influence on architectural development and artistic expression. When we observe the liturgical practices, the *ritus*, one of the most significant changes brought by Frankish domination over the European continent was the change of liturgy. The primary feature of this new tradition implied the use of a triapsal sanctuary which allowed the installation of more than one altar. This kind of the architectural solution was not known in the Byzantine theme of Dalmatia where the eastern liturgy continued to be in use, following the early Christian practices that needed only one altar in the church.⁴⁹¹ In addition, this would also support the hypothesis about the Frankish Christianization of the area of the Principality of Croatia, and not the one asserting that the Christianization came from the Dalmatian, Byzantine area. Furthermore, as a result of the study of ecclesiastical practices and analogies, researchers believe that the same type of liturgy used in the Principality of Croatia was also used throughout the territory of the Patriarchates of Milan and Aquileia,⁴⁹² and therefore also in Istria.

This problem has already been presented in the chapters on Istria and the Catalan counties, where the question of accepting the Western Roman rite and its implementation in architectural forms and solutions of spatial organization was brought to light. Such an organization of the ecclesiastical space was accepted at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century in Istria, the territory conquered by the Franks. The forms which were taken, the imports, were also documented on the examples of the sacral architecture of northern Italy and southern Switzerland.

On the other hand, such solutions from the period of the 9th century have not been preserved in the area of the former Catalan counties. The previous chapter has already stated the following question: is it possible that until the second half of the 10th century, when the first known examples were dated, they have not even been implemented? It is known that the Western Roman rite was generally accepted by replacing the previous Hispanic-Gothic practice. Having this in mind, it is certainly worth asking ourselves what types of architectural

⁴⁹¹ However, if there are three apses, they function as the Prothesis and the Diaconicon. This situation can be observed in the cathedral in Dubrovnik. JURKOVIĆ, M., Problem kontinuiteta između antike i romanike u umjetnosti istočnog Jadrana, *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, 12-13, 1989, p. 43.

⁴⁹² JURKOVIĆ, 1992

solutions were used by the masters and builders from the territory of the Kingdom of Asturias. The following chapter will attempt to provide some answers to that question.

3.2. Reflections on the problem of *westwerk*. The continuity of place and the new construction

Several examples of sacral buildings on the mainland of Dalmatia have undergone the restoration or transformation of their earlier structures and liturgical equipment during the 9th century. On the other hand, many early Christian buildings were completely demolished during the Avar-Slavic migration at the beginning of the 7th century.⁴⁹³ At least three sites that will be briefly presented below are located on the same traffic route that still exists today and connects Skradin with the Dalmatian Novigrad in the so-called Ravni kotari, the most fertile part of the Dalmatian coast. During the Roman, late antique and early medieval period, this area has been the main road connecting Jader (Zadar) and Aenona (Nin) with the interior of the province of Dalmatia and Burnum (Fig. 76-77),⁴⁹⁴ the seat of the Roman legion, which has existed until the Byzantine-Gothic war. This area was controlled through the fortifications of Nedinum, Asseria and Varvaria, which probably played a key role in the fact that the early Christian churches near the road survived the incursions of new settlers in the 7th century.⁴⁹⁵

Certainly one of the most significant examples of the continuity of the cult place from early Christianity to the early Middle Ages is St Martin's church in Pridraga near Novigrad (Fig.

⁴⁹³ N. Jakšić, Il ruolo delle antiche chiese rurali nella formazione del ducato croato medievale, HAM 14, 2008, p. 103–112.

⁴⁹⁴ For more about Burnum, see: M. Zaninović, Burnum, castellum - municipium, Diadora, 4, 1968, p. 119-129; N. Cambi, M. Glavičić, D. Maršić, Ž. Miletić, J. Zaninović, Amfiteatar u Burnumu: stanje istraživanja 2003. - 2005., Drniš - Šibenik - Zadar: Šibenik : Nacionalni park, 2006; A. Campedelli, The Castrum of Burnum: between old Excavations and new Researches, Archaeologia Adriatica, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2011, p. 33-64.

⁴⁹⁵ N. Jakšić also states that, for example, Christian objects located away from the main Jader-Aenona road in the inland were destroyed during these incursions. For more details about the organization of that territory and the early Christian architecture, see N. Jakšić, Il ruolo delle antiche chiese rurali nella formazione del ducato croato medievale, HAM 14, 2008, p. 103–112.

78-79).⁴⁹⁶ It is a church built on the site of an older Roman structure in the late 5th or early 6th century as a single-nave church with a triconch sanctuary. In the 6th century, surrounding rooms and an octagonal baptistery with a hexagonal baptismal *piscina* on the south side were added to the church.⁴⁹⁷ The continuity of use will continue in the period between the 6th century and the time when this area began to be dominated by the rulers of the Principality of Croatia. It is believed that this was the time of the partial transformation of the baptistery, to which a horseshoe-type apse would be added on the east side (Fig. 80).⁴⁹⁸

The beginning of the 9th century will bring a change in the political context. Although there are no indications that there have been transformations or alterations to the church's architectural structures, these changes will be manifested in the repeated redecoration of the early medieval liturgical furniture. This liturgical furnishing could be defined chronologically based on the inscription of the royal title *dux* on one and "Duke Mislav" on the other example of a fragment of an architrave (Fig. 82). Such findings not only point to a strong connection between this church and the ruling elite but also speak in favour of the thesis that a Croatian nobleman initiated the renovation of church furniture, possibly the ruler himself - Duke Mislav.⁴⁹⁹

In the immediate vicinity of the church of St Martin, less than 300 metres away, stands the church of St Michael (Fig. 81, 83). Unlike the previous church, this one was built *ex novo* at some point in the 9th century, probably during the reign of Duke Trpimir (845 - 864). Apart

⁴⁹⁶ This church has often been studied in scientific literature. The list of the most important publications and previous research and various hypotheses is given by I. Josipović in the most recent book about the Pridraga site. See JOSIPOVIĆ, I., *Pridraga u zaleđu Zadra*, Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2018, p. 11-13 (f. 28). Autor također upućuje na zanimljivu polemiku oko posvete crkve i kulta svetoga Martina u Josipović, 2018: 10. Vidi detaljnije u JAKŠIĆ, N., La survivance des édifices paléochrétiens dans les terres de la principauté Croate, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 1, 1995, p. 36, 43 (f. 3); UGLEŠIĆ, A., *Ranokršćanska arhitektura na području današnje Zadarske nadbiskupije*. Zadar, Filozofski fakultet u Zadru - Zadarska nadbiskupija, 2002, p. 56; JAKŠIĆ, N., Patron Saints of the Medieval Gates in Diocletian's Palace, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 9, 2003, p. 187-194; VEDRIŠ, T., Čašćenje svetega Martina Tourskega v Dalmaciji v pozni antiki in zgodnjem srednjem veku; nekaj opazanj, in: ARAMBAŠIĆ, J. (ur.), *Sveti Martin Tourski kot simbol evropske kulture / Saint Martin de Tours, symbole de la culture européenne*, Celovec - Ljubljana, Mohorjeva založba Celovec, 2008, p. 92-106; VEDRIŠ, T., "Frankish" or "Byzantine" Saint? The Origins of the Cult of Saint Martin in Dalmatia, in: NEOCLEOUS, S. (ed.), *Papers from the First and Second Postgraduate Forums in Byzantine Studies: Sailing to Byzantium, Trinity College Dublin, 16-17 April 2007 and 15-16 May 2008*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2009, p. 219-248; UGLEŠIĆ, A., Kasnoantička i ranosrednjovjekovna nalazišta na području Novigrada, in: KAŠTELA, S. (ed.): *Novigrad nekad i sad*, Zadar, Sveučilište u Zadru, 2016, p. 170-171.

⁴⁹⁷ See JOSIPOVIĆ, 2018: 13; VEŽIĆ, P., Dalmatinski trikonhosi, *Ars Adriatica* 1, Zadar, 2011, p. 27-66.

⁴⁹⁸ Josipović cites a number of analogous examples of this change in order to point to the fact that it is still impossible to define the changes in the structure of the Pridraška baptistery chronologically with more precision. See JOSIPOVIĆ, 2018: 15 (f. 29).

⁴⁹⁹ See JOSIPOVIĆ, 2018: 15.

from the spatial organization of the building, fragments of early medieval reliefs also indicate such dating. The researchers have assumed that they should originate from a stonemason's workshop that operated during the duke's reign.⁵⁰⁰ The spatial concept of the church can be found on several other architectural examples of the period in the area of the former Roman province of Dalmatia. It is a hexaconch structure, probably a private oratory built on the site of an ancient *villa rustica*.⁵⁰¹ The surrounding excavated structures that belonged to a larger early medieval building complex have been interpreted as a monastic complex until recently. However, as a result of the historical sources analysis, M. Ančić ruled out this possibility in 2007 and reinterpreted the found structures as a complex belonging to a ruler.⁵⁰²

On the same traffic route, between Skradin and Novigrad, along the road near the town of Žažvić, lie the remains of a church of unknown title, preserved only in the foundations. It is another example of an early Christian building that was rebuilt in the time of Prince Trpimir, as indicated by the analysis of the found sculpture.⁵⁰³ The church was originally a single-nave building with a deep semicircular apse on the east and a narthex on the west (Fig. 84-86).⁵⁰⁴ In the 9th century, two significant interventions in its spatial organization happened. The unique interior space of the church was divided into three naves by the construction of the four pillars, while a bell tower was added to the entrance, which apparently had to result in the raising of the floor level in the narthex area.⁵⁰⁵ Thus, from the morphological and structural perspective, this western massif fulfilled the basic conditions for being a westwork structure.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁰ JAKŠIĆ, N., Croatian Art in the Second Half of the Ninth Century, *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 3, 1997, p. 47.

⁵⁰¹ For more about the pre-Romanesque hexaconchs, see JURKOVIĆ, M., Predromanički šesterolisti Dalmacije - problemi funkcije, *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji*, 35, 1995, p. 225-240 and VEŽIĆ, P., Dalmatinski šesterolisti - sličnosti i razlike, *Ars Adriatica*, 2, 2012, p. 41-74.

For St Michael, see GUNJAČA, S., Srednjovjekovni Dolac kod Novigrada, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, 8-9, 1963, p. 7-66; ANČIĆ, M., Architecture on Royal Domains in Northern Dalmatia, *Hortus artium medievalium*, 13/1, 2007, p. 207; MARASOVIĆ, 2009: 243-247.

⁵⁰² More in ANČIĆ, 2007: 207 (f. 14). The hypothesis is repeated by JOSIPOVIĆ, 2018: 16. Yet, two years after Ančić's paper had been published, T. Marasović still believed the complex was a monastery. See MARASOVIĆ, 2009: 244.

⁵⁰³ JAKŠIĆ, 1997: 41-54.

⁵⁰⁴ J. Jeličić studies the problem of narthex: JELIČIĆ, J., Narteks u ranokršćanskoj arhitekturi na području istočnoga Jadrana, *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 23, Split, 1983, p. 5-39.

⁵⁰⁵ See JAKŠIĆ, 2008: 110; JURKOVIĆ, J., Žažvić kraj Skradina, in: MILOŠEVIĆ A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio II, Katalog*, Split, 2000, p. 354 with the related bibliography.

⁵⁰⁶ See JURKOVIĆ, M., Crkve s westwerkom na istočnom Jadranu, *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji*, 26, 1986, p. 61-86.

The last of the three early Christian sites with the continuity in the early Middle Ages located in the area of Ravni Kotari which will be mentioned here, is the church of St Martin in Lepuri, 10 km from Benkovac (Fig. 87).⁵⁰⁷ This early Christian church of a complex form, with phases of construction roughly dated to the 5th and 6th centuries, underwent significant structural changes during the reign of Prince Trpimir and later Branimir (Fig. 88-89).⁵⁰⁸ Besides, it was furnished with the new liturgical furnishing, the remains of which have helped to attribute it to the workshops from the time of the Duke Trpimir and Duke Branimir.⁵⁰⁹ Here as well, just as it was the case with the previous examples, a bell tower was added on the western facade,⁵¹⁰ while its narthex has been raised, so it got the form of a *westwerk*. The interior of the church has also been divided by the four pillars.⁵¹¹

The mention of Duke Trpimir was found on another site that originally dates back to the early Christian times, this time at the foot of Klis – in a small monastery oratory in Rižinice (Fig. 91-92), which was donated to the Benedictines by the duke himself and for which he ordered new liturgical equipment. This is confirmed by the found fragment of the gable of the altar railing which carries the engraved inscription "PRO DVCE TREPIME [ro ..]...". A written source from 852 is related to the monastery in Rižinice - Trpimir's grant, where he is titled as "*dux Chroatorum*".⁵¹²

Is it possible that these early Christian monuments have influenced the evolution of the new building structures in the territory of the young Principality of Croatia? The same question

⁵⁰⁷ Of course, there were similar architectural examples. These examples were taken only to illustrate the problem. The churches of St Bartholomew in Galovac, the church with the baptistery in Nin, the church in Koljani, and certainly many others, have witnessed similar processes of transformation. See JAKŠIĆ, 2008: 103-112.

⁵⁰⁸ Systematic archaeological excavations were carried out from 1997 to 2004. The results were published in JAKŠIĆ, N., Arheološka istraživanja razorene crkvice Sv. Martina u Lepurima kod Benkovca, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* 3/27, 2000, p. 189-200 together with the earlier bibliography.

⁵⁰⁹ For the detailed analysis of the sculpture, see JOSIPOVIĆ, I., Dva ranosrednjovjekovna ciborija iz Lepura kod Benkovca, in: ŠEPAROVIĆ, T. (ed.), *Dani Stjepana Gunjače 2*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2012, p. 49-62.

⁵¹⁰ Very similar, almost the same structure has been found on the site Srma-Prižba where the remains of *basilicae geminae* stand (Fig. 90). The researchers for now date it to the 6th/7th century, without the consideration of any later reconstructions. See GUNJAČA, Z., Srma – Prižba: Ostaci arhitekture i analiza građevinskih faza, Šibenik, Gradski muzej Šibenik, 2005, p. 10 – 54; CAMBI, N., Srma i dvojne bazilike u Dalmaciji, in: MARŠIĆ, D., (ed.), *Srma - Prižba, starokršćanske dvojne crkve*, Šibenik, Gradski muzej Šibenik, 2005, p. 57-70.

⁵¹¹ See JAKŠIĆ, 2008: 107-109.

⁵¹² DELONGA, V., Pismenost karolinškog doba i njeni hrvatski odjeci - latinska epigrafička baština u hrvatskim krajevima, in: MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio I, Rasprave i vrela*, Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000, p. 245. On parts of the altar rail see in DELONGA, V., Rižinice kraj Solina, in: MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (ed.), *Hrvati i Karolinzi. Dio II, Katalog*, Split, 2000, p. 329-330.

was raised almost 30 years ago by M. Jurković.⁵¹³ But the idea of the 'influence' of forms perhaps is a bit too strong, which the author himself immediately concluded. The creativeness in the use of different spatial solutions in the sacral architecture, at least during the early medieval period, has never really gone to the extremes. The basic concepts of sacral buildings and perceptions of their space have actually been quite homogeneous throughout history. Some variations took place within the very physical volumes of the buildings, but I would never classify these innovations as drastic cuts in the general idea of space. The most common reason for these modifications were changes in the liturgy, the language of religious rulers. It was this liturgy, along with the products of artistic creation - sculpture, painting and architecture, that was the mediator between what the word of God represented and the *persona* of a believer. From today's perspective, we could conceptualize the liturgy of that time as a fashion that had to be followed in order to prove participation and understanding of the then-current historical and political events. One of the many examples of the import of the new spatial solutions has already been defined in Istria, where the new model of a triapsal hall church (*Dreiapsidensaalkirche*) came with the new political elites and their liturgical tradition. However, all these churches were essentially Christian and followed the same primordial ideas. The change that took place was by no means radical; it was just one of many inventions and interpretations of the faith within the permissible frameworks of the Christian tradition.

The concept which has remained, and has served as a role model as long as there has been a continuity of life in a particular place, were the techniques and the practices of producing certain morphological elements. This is the fundamental presumption we should keep in mind the next time we try to define a specific style in combination with a particular period or a precisely defined area. Such reflection should lead us to accept not only that it is a difficult task to carry out, but also unnecessary. Many architectural elements could lead us astray in such an intention, such as lesenes,⁵¹⁴ mushroom openings, polygonal apses or various architectural protrusions standing atop the outer walls of the lateral naves. These elements have already been observed in several different architectural examples from the Istrian area

⁵¹³ JURKOVIĆ, 1992: 66.

⁵¹⁴ More about the tradition of lesenes in the early Croatian architecture in GUNJAČA, Z., Kontrafori, lezene i niše u starohrvatskom graditeljstvu, in: JURKOVIĆ, M., LUKŠIĆ, T. (eds.), *Starohrvatska spomenička baština. Rađanje prvog hrvatskog kulturnog pejzaža*, Zagreb, Odsjek za povijest umjetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta, 1996, p. 65-74. See also the discussion which I. Matejčić proposes in his paper on St Stephen's church in Peroj, Istria where the "mushroom" motif has been studied. MATEJČIĆ, 2016: 268-269.

at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century. There it was clearly indicated that they have derived from the tradition of local construction, local *know-how* and the ideas of masters and investors. However, although their forms visually evoke the "traditional" architectural solutions, it should not automatically lead us to conclude that they indeed belong to the late antique horizon, and not the period posterior to the significant political changes.⁵¹⁵

Therefore, the new churches built in the former Province of Dalmatia should be observed through this perspective. The fact that many churches from the early Christian period have survived at least to some extent speaks in favour of the assumption that everyday life, despite political changes and incursions of the new peoples in the 7th century, continued to flow in such continuity and that the memory of the cult place had not disappeared. Of course, as it has already been mentioned, this continuity was far more evident in the coastal urban centres, but that does not mean that it completely vanished from their hinterland.

In the same way, we can continue to reflect on the continuity of places and ideas if we take a closer look at the situation at the other end of the continent, in the territory of the Kingdom of Asturias. Since the question of the architecture of the area is quite complex, it is not my intention to enter into a thorough discussion here. However, the historical context where both regions are practically the neighbours of the Carolingian Empire,⁵¹⁶ i.e. what was left of it at the end of the 9th century, indicates that the observation of their artistic and architectural achievements could open up exciting questions for future research.

In the north of the Iberian Peninsula, the situation that preceded the architectural achievements of the 9th century is somewhat different from that of the Principality of Croatia. However, this is precisely why the comparison of these two areas should be approached with even greater attention, not to mention that the later architectural solutions of the 9th century share many similarities. The particularity of the architectural landscape of the Iberian Peninsula, especially its central-northern part - the area of the central plateau (Meseta), is that the continuity of construction there was not interrupted, as it had most often been the case with the territory of the former province of Dalmatia, primarily its hinterland, during the 7th and 8th centuries. Although the total number of confirmed monuments dated to the 7th-

⁵¹⁵ See chapters about the church of St Stephen in Peroj and the monastery church of St Mary the Great near Bale.

⁵¹⁶ I emphasize the word „almost“ because Asturia did not have any type of direct contact.

century period on the Iberian Peninsula is not large, their significance certainly is. These are the churches that have most often been considered as buildings from the Visigothic era.⁵¹⁷ These are, for example, the church of San Juan de Baños (Palencia), Quintanilla de la Viñas (Burgos), San Pedro de la Nave (Zamora), Santa Comba de Bande (Fig. 93, 94a-d), as well as those geographically positioned further south - Santa María de Melque (Toledo) (Fig. 95-96) and Santa Lucía del Trampal (Alcuéscar, Cáceres) (Fig. 97-98). These churches have been at the centre of scientific discussions for thirty years, stimulated by the works and researchers gathered around the hypothesis of L. Caballero. They believe that almost the entire corpus of architecture so far dated to the Visigothic era actually originated after the Muslim conquest of the peninsula, if not later in the 9th and 10th centuries.⁵¹⁸ Unfortunately, this question is currently perhaps more important than any other in the Iberian historiography of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Precisely because of this, it requires an extensive and detailed discussion, and I will therefore leave it aside because of the limitations of this dissertation's scope.

Nevertheless, critical questioning of such highly debatable hypotheses is absolutely necessary, and the scientific community will have to confront it eventually.⁵¹⁹ I believe that

⁵¹⁷ It is certainly a more correct term than the 'Visigothic building'. This is not only the case with the term 'Visigothic' - every such 'possessive adjective' should be approached with equal caution when referring to the architecture of a space, for example 'Carolingian church', 'Byzantine church', etc. G. Ripoll warns of such characterization of a particular building. See RIPOLL, G., *L'architettura sacra nella Spagna visigoda, Roma e i barbari, Catálogo de la exposición*, Venice, Palazzo Grassi, 2008, p. 549. For the analysis of this problem from a broader perspective, see also BARRAL I ALTET, X., *Esiste un'arte di un territorio politico? Il caso 'Neustria' da Dagoberto a Carlo Magno*, in: Pace, V. (ed.), *L'VIII secolo: un secolo inquieto, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Cividale del Friuli, 4-7 dicembre 2008, Chiesa di S. Maria dei Battuti)*, Cividale del Friuli, Comune di Cividale del Friuli, 2010, p. 243-251.

⁵¹⁸ S GAREN, *Santa María de Melque and Church Construction under Muslim Rule*, *Journal of Society of Architectural Historians* 51.2, 1992, 288-305. The basic problem with such truly debatable considerations is that they have occupied a large part of the contemporary historiography where they are often presented with a lack of critical thought. For example UTRERO, M.Á., *Late-Antique and Early Medieval Hispanic Churches and the archaeology of architecture: revisions and reinterpretation of construction, chronologies and context*, *Medieval Archaeology*, 54, 2010, p. 1-33.

⁵¹⁹ Great example of the reaction to this new historical paradigm was the paper of USCATESCU, A., RUIZ SOUZA, A.C., *El "occidentalismo" de Hispania y la koiné artística mediterránea (siglos VII-VIII)*, *Goya* 347, 2014, 95-112. Prior to their discussion, the answer to such reflections of the „school“ of Caballero was offered by A. Chavarría in her paper CHAVARRÍA, A., *Churches and aristocracies in seventh-century Spain: some thoughts on the debate on Visigothic churches*, *Early Medieval Europe*, 18/2, 2010, p. 160-174. Besides the mentioned papers, E. Carrero and D. Rico have also assessed the topic through their interesting overview of the historiography of the Hispanic liturgical tradition. See CARRERO, E., Rico, D., *La organización del espacio litúrgico hispánico entre los siglos VI y XI*, in: VELÁZQUEZ, I., RIPOLL, G. (eds.), *Isidore de Séville et son temps, Antiquité Tardive*, 23, 2015, p. 239-248. Finally, G. Ripoll together with other fellow researchers has also been warning about the somewhat untenable nature of Caballero's paradigms. See AZKÁRATE, A., RIPOLL, G., SOUTO, J.A., *Algunas reflexiones personales sobre el simposio 'visigodos y omeyas'*, in: CABALLERO, L., MATEOS, P. (eds.), *Visigodos y Omeyas. Un debate entre la Antigüedad tardía y la alta Edad Media, Anejos de AEA* 23, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2000, p. 457-459;

the amount of energy needed to prove certain facts, such as that the vaulting of sacral buildings is not exclusively linked and conditioned by the influence of Muslim architecture, would not be proportional to the final scientific outcome. It is unlikely that these efforts would result in any significant discovery or a significantly better understanding of the matter. Researchers should always strive to assess the existing established attitudes, without further ado critically, and what is certain is that the initial impulse of Caballero's theses did provoke some new considerations. However, such controversial hypotheses always ask for a strong factual and objective argumentation; otherwise, there is a high probability of a chance of falling into the trap of scientific sensationalism.

After the short digression about the current issues related to the chronology of architecture from the Visigothic era, we return to the question of the continuity of construction. It was the vaulting system which was a common feature of many sacral buildings belonging to the cultural horizon of the early Christianity, from the 6th-century churches of Sant Miquel and Sant Pere in Tarrassa, to the previously mentioned Sant Pedro de la Nave and Santa Lucía del Trampal.⁵²⁰ It is one of the characteristics that will often be applicable to later buildings from the period of the Asturian kingdom. An interesting link between the later 9th-century vaulted buildings, such as the church of San Miguel de Lillo, Santa Cristina de Lena and San Salvador de Valdediós, is the church of Santa Comba de Bande, in the present-day Galicia. For a long time, this central cross-plan building with a flat rectangular apse and a vestibule on the west was considered an example of 7th-century architecture. However, a few years later, a somewhat later dating to the middle/end of the 8th century was proposed. Furthermore, in addition to the results of a series of laboratory analyses, two capitals along the apse's north wall could also prove this assumption, showing clear analogies with examples from 9th-century Asturian churches. As a result of this, the authors of the most recent research believe that this church could be the forerunner ('antecedent') of somewhat

RIPOLL, 2008: 549-550; RIPOLL, G., CARRERO, E., Art wisigoth en Hispania : en quête d'une révision nécessaire, *Perspective*, 2, 2009, p. 256-276; RIPOLL, G., Arquitectura religiosa hispánica entre los siglos IV y X: paradojas y dialécticas de la investigación, *Medievalia*, 15, 2012, p. 67-70; RIPOLL, G., CARRERO, E., RICO, D., TUSET, F., VELÁZQUEZ, I., LÓPEZ BATLLE, A., MAS, C., VALLS, M., CAU, M.A., La arquitectura religiosa hispánica del siglo IV al X y el proyecto del Corpus Architecturae Religiosae Europaeae – CARE-Hispania, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 18/1, 2012, p. 45-73. One of the most recent argumentative critiques comes from SANCHEZ PARDO, J.C., BLANCO-ROTEA, R., SANJURJO-SANCHEZ, J., The church of Santa Comba de Bande and early medieval Iberian architecture - new chronological results, *Antiquity*, 91/358, 2017, p. 1011-1026.

⁵²⁰ More about the problem from a broader perspective in RIPOLL et al, 2012: 48-73.

later examples of architecture from the Kingdom of Asturias.⁵²¹ I leave the discussion about the role models and influences for the researchers who study these churches on a more detailed level. However, it is important to emphasize the fact that the continuity of the construction of both central and longitudinal churches⁵²² on the Iberian Peninsula is more or less uninterrupted during the 7th, 8th, and the 9th century. Such a situation must have significantly affected the appearance of the churches from the time of the kingdom. Perhaps this should not even be defined as an 'impact' - more a natural sequel of events. Still, the triapsal layout of the sanctuary could be considered as a particular novelty. An almost identical situation happened in Istria, and throughout the territory of the Principality of Croatia, as I have already mentioned.

One of the most interesting examples of the 9th-century architecture, which in its spatial layout could partly follow the older models such as the church of Santa Comba de Banda, is the church of Santa Cristina de Lena, 30 km away from Oviedo (Fig. 99-101). It is a barrel-vaulted church with a central, cross-plan, which deviates from the usual basilical (longitudinal) spatial concept, characteristic for the churches from the time of the Kingdom of Asturias.⁵²³ The time of its construction is considered to be the period immediately after the appearance of the emblematic buildings on the hill of Naranco above Oviedo, built as part of the construction project of King Ramir I, the successor of Alfonso II. His reign was not long-lasting (842-850), but the architectural achievements created in those eight years

⁵²¹ SANCHEZ PARDO, BLANCO-ROTEA, SANJURJO-SANCHEZ, 2017: 1022. In relation to that, see also part of the paragraph which refers to the investors of this, but also many other churches of the end of the 8th century in Galicia (*Ibid.*, 1023).

⁵²² Here I use the term „longitudinal building“ primarily in order to differentiate it from the central cruciform churches such as Santa Comba de Bande, Santa María de Melque or, for example, later Santa Cristina de Lena. It is important to note that such „longitudinality“ is not the same as in the examples of Santa María in Oviedo or Sant Salvador de Valdediós, but a form of the Greek cross inscribed in a rectangle. In any case, one of the examples of such longitudinal buildings, for which the researchers generally agree about its dating (indicated by the results of laboratory research) is a 7th-century San Pedro de la Nave. Interestingly, this church was completely dislocated, stone by stone, from its original location on the banks of the river Esla due to the danger of flooding. The dislocation took place in the early 1930s. For more on the research of this church, see ALONSO, F., RODRÍGUEZ, E., RUBINOS, A., *Datación de madera constructiva en San Pedro de la Nave (Zamora) y su interdatación con San Juan de Baños (Palencia)*, in: CABALLERO, L. (ed.), *La iglesia de San Pedro de la Nave, Zamora, 2004*, p. 209-237; CABALLERO, L., LATORRE MACARRÓN, J.I., *La iglesia y el monasterio visigodo de Santa María de Melque (Toledo). Arqueología y arquitectura. San Pedro de la Mata (Toledo) y Santa Comba de Bande (Orense)*, EAE 109, Madrid, 1980. Also in SANCHEZ PARDO, BLANCO-ROTEA, SANJURJO-SANCHEZ, 2017: 1011-1026.

⁵²³ See ARIAS PÁRAMO, 1993: 194. In addition, a single-apse sanctuary layout stands out as an atypical phenomenon in the previous tradition of Asturian sacral construction, where we usually find triapsal sanctuaries with the flat rear wall. But such a solution should come as no surprise given the cross-plan of the building. A similar concept of spatial organization shares the church of Santa Comba de Bande. The church has been the subject of many discussions, for example: SCHLUNK, H., *Arte Visigodo. Arte Asturiano, Ars Hispaniae*, vol. II, Madrid, 1947.

have remained recorded as some of the most significant architectural examples in the historical landscape of the early Middle Ages in general, not only on the Iberian Peninsula. Just like the church of Sant Miguel de Lillo and the palace of Naranco (today the church of Santa María), the church of Santa Cristina de Lena should therefore probably be dated somewhere during Ramiro's reign, or a bit later, during the period of his successor Ordoño I. (850-866). Such hypotheses are primarily based on analogies of the sculptural opus between the Naranco Palace and the Church of Santa Cristina de Lena, although it is possible that the sculptural decoration was not carried out by the same master.⁵²⁴ Unfortunately, unlike the example of Naranco, this church was not mentioned in any of the medieval chronicles, which complicates its study and convolutes more specific chronological determination.⁵²⁵ A particular element is interesting from the perspective of studying the Croatian territories. It is the two-story space wide as the main nave of the church, positioned against the west wall, between the main nave and the vestibule. Whether this is a later intervention or not, it has not yet been confirmed with certainty. However, it is indicative that the church of Sant Miguel de Lillo on the hill of Naranco, which is known to have been built by order of the ruler, shares a similar architectural solution on the inner side of the western facade.

Perhaps the most interesting detail from this church is the altar railing where the names of the two apostles, Peter and Paul, are engraved. It is located on the edge of the presbytery, which is about a metre elevated from the rest of the space, and separated from it by a large *tribelon* resting on marble pillars and capitals derived from the Corinthian tradition. Five transenes stand above the arcades (three directly atop the keystones of the *tribelon*, two above the columns), one of which carries the year 681 carved in stone. Such a composition is unique in Asturian architecture, and there are no known examples from Visigothic art that could serve as a model for the composition.⁵²⁶ The question of the dating of this *tribelon* remains opened.

⁵²⁴ Sculpture analysis involves the comparison of the cubic capitals decorated with the schematic motifs, which are similar to the ones from the Naranco palace, the comparison of the human figures and the characteristic triangular shapes divided by the rope motif.

⁵²⁵ GARCÍA GUINEA, PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ, 2007: 327.

⁵²⁶ As the only comparable example where the tripartite arcade divides the presbytery, L. Arias Páramo mentions a 10th-century church of San Miguel de Escalda in the León province. ARIAS PÁRAMO, 1993: 204.

* * *

The continuation of the study of the architectural solutions by some means related to earlier structures in the area of the Principality of Croatia provides interesting results. The already mentioned church of St Martha in Bijaći in the hinterland of Trogir is another example where the continuity of the place played a significant role in the construction of an early medieval sacral building. The site where the church of St Martha was built in the 9th century had existed continuously since the Roman period. The ancient *villa rustica* existed there, followed by an early Christian church and a baptistery which was built on the south side. While the older church structures were partially re-used by the early medieval building, the baptistery would remain in operation. The church is another example of a three-nave triapsal church where the naves were divided by masonry pillars, as in the churches in Žažvić and Lepuri. The particular feature of this building is its convex central rectangular apse; the lateral apses were inscribed in the rear wall.

This church, just like the churches in Lepuri, in Žažvić, but also in Koljani near Vrlika, the Biograd Cathedral, the church of St Cecilia in Biskupija and the Church of Holy Salvation on the source of the Cetina river, had a frontal axial bell tower. The problem of the axial bell tower is a topic related to perhaps the most interesting issue of the import of certain forms from the centre of the Empire - that of the *westwerk*.

I will start with the example of the church of the Holy Salvation at the source of the Cetina river (Sv. Spas na Vrelu Cetine), as a unique example of the early medieval architecture in the eastern Adriatic, its hinterland, but also the wider region. It is the only church from the period where its elevation has survived to this day, almost to the roofline, without significant late interventions in its tissue (besides the later central apse) (Fig. 107-113). Precisely because of its level of preservation, it was possible to discuss the appearance of other examples of architecture of similar spatial conception, all of which have remained preserved only in archaeological layers or negated by later structures, i.e. incorporated into them.

Church of the Holy Salvation is a single-nave building with a triconch sanctuary layout.⁵²⁷ It is presented as an example here primarily because of the solution of the western part of the church where, between the already mentioned axial bell tower and the nave, a massive two-story structure stands. The researchers have defined the structure as a *westwerk*.

* * *

The term Westwerk is one of the oldest, best-known and probably also the most frequently discussed technical terms in German and European early medieval research.⁵²⁸ The term was first coined in the late 19 century and was soon used to describe the monumental western complex of the abbey church at Corvey. C. B. McClendon has divided the types of *westwerks* into four main categories based on their floor plan.⁵²⁹ The first one is an early, experimental phase in the development of this architectural and functional structure, characterized by a narrow alignment of towers and a central protruding unit. The *westwerk* from the abbey church at Saint-Denis (consecrated in 775), with the probable burial tomb of Pippin and his wife, and the one from the abbey church at Lorsch stand as examples of the first type. At the turn of the new century and with the examples from Saint-Riquier at Centula (consecrated in 799), where it has probably served an important liturgical function, and from the royal chapel at Aachen (from the 790), where it housed the throne of Charlemagne, McClendon distinguished another type with cylindrical stair towers. The next type shows the rectangular floorplan with vaulted ceiling. The examples would be the westwerks from the cathedral of Reims (816-862) that probably contained both a baptismal font and an altar to the Saviour, and the example of Saint-Germaine at Auxerre where the oratory dedicated to John the Baptist has been mentioned in the western part of the basilica. The third type's examples

⁵²⁷ T. Marasović presented a genesis of the triconchal sanctuary form on the territory of the Eastern Adriatic. See MARASOVIĆ, T., Prilog morfološkoj klasifikaciji ranosrednjovjekovne arhitekture i Dalmaciji, in: MOHOROVIČIĆ, A. (ed.), *Prilozi istraživanju starohrvatske arhitekture*, Split, Kabinet za urbanizam i arhitekturu Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 1978, p. 57. Also in GUNJAČA, Z., O pojavi elemenata kasnoantičke graditeljske tradicije na nekim ranosrednjovjekovnim sakralnim objektima, in: RAPANIĆ, Ž. (ed.), *Cetinska krajina od prehistorije do dolaska Turaka*, Split, 1984, p. 69.

⁵²⁸ For a general overview of the *westwerk* problem, see VON SCHÖNFELD DE REYES, D., *Westwerkprobleme. Zur Bedeutung der Westwerke in der kunsthistorischen Forschung*, Weimar: VDG, 1999, with the bibliography.

⁵²⁹ MCCLENDON, C.B., *The Origins of Medieval Architecture: Building in Europe, A.D 600-900*, Yale University Press, 2005, p. 188-194.

correspond chronologically to the presumed moment of the importation of the westwerk structure into the territory of the Principality of Croatia. Finally, the last type is represented by the most famous example from the abbey church at Corvey (873-885) with the compact cubic design, a feature that could also be applied to the *westwerk* of the cathedral at Halberstadt (consecrated in 859) where this part seemed to have had a funeral function.

Of course, a much more interesting category than the one related to its formal realizations is the one determined by its function. In this respect, the research of C. Heitz, one of the leading art historians of the 20th century, is extremely important. In the 1960s, he set the paradigm which states that the types of medieval architecture were conditioned by the liturgical needs of the time. Based on Angilbert's chronicles about Centula, Heitz concluded that the western structure was the site of celebration of the most important Christian holidays dedicated to Christ himself - Christmas, Easter and Ascension - and that on these days the laymen, clergy and monks used the *westwerk* space together for Eucharistic liturgical celebrations (*Festkirche*), the procession (*Stationskirche*) and prayer.⁵³⁰ Heitz continued on the theoretical beliefs about the imperial church and connected the triumphal cult of the Saviour, where the Christ is glorified, with the cult of the emperor, who is Christ's mediator on earth.⁵³¹ In relation to this, it is believed that the *westwerk* reached its "peak" during the reign of Charlemagne, with whom the construction of the palatine chapel in Aachen is connected. The strong connection between the liturgical needs and programs and the ruler's participation in them (*laudes regiae*) as *vicarius Christi* has nowhere been as clear as in the example of the Aachen chapel. In addition to this function, some examples *westwerk* featured an altar of St Saviour, usually positioned on the first floor. This very important note could ultimately be associated with the church of the Holy Salvation near Cetina, which is dedicated to the Christ himself. Finally, since the funeral function of the *westwerk* has been defined on the example

⁵³⁰ HEITZ, C., *Recherches sur les rapports entre architecture et liturgie à l'époque carolingienne*, Bibliothèque générale de l'Ecole pratique des Hautes-Etudes, VIe section, S.E.V.P.E.N., 1963, p. 21-28.

⁵³¹ More about the hypothesis about the imperial church (*Kaiserkirche*) in A. Fuchs, *Die karolingischen Westwerke und andere Fragen der karolingischen Baukunst*, Paderborn: Druck und Verlag der Bonifacius-Druckerei in Paderborn, 1929. Probably the most important scholar on the subject of westwerk is Uwe Lobbedey who has been studying the problem of this specific structure since 1970s. He approached the available materials and sources very scientifically and analytically, and he analyzed the current condition of key buildings and the literature on them extremely objectively and in the spirit of scientific criticism. See more in his papers: LOBBEDEY, U., *Der Beitrag von Corvey zur Geschichte der Westbauten und Westwerke*, *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 8, 2002, p. 83–98. 8; LOBBEDEY, U., *Überlegungen zu den Westbauten der älteren Domkirchen von Halberstadt*, *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 58, 2004, p. 42–59. 9; LOBBEDEY, U., *'Westwerke' des 12. Jahrhunderts in Westfalen*, *Architektur – Struktur – Symbol. Streifzüge durch die Architekturgeschichte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart. Festschrift für Cord Meckseper zum 65. Geburtstag*, Maike Kozok, 85–100. Petersberg, Petersberg Imhof, 1999.

of the church of Saint-Denis where King Pippin and his wife were buried, it was all the easier to find the analogies on the monuments from the territory of the Croatian Principality, more on that below.

Carolingian *westwerks* are also seen as the elements of the administrative structure, the liturgical practice typical for the west, and above all, the symbolic representation of the power of the feudalists and the feudal social relations, which is a social construction unknown in the Byzantine Dalmatia.⁵³² The acceptance of the part of the rituals related to the Carolingian court clearly shows that the architecture of the Croatian ruling class, and its spiritual life as well, accordingly, was organized according to the Carolingian models.⁵³³

The church of the Holy Salvation faithfully follows this idea. It was built in the 980s as a private church on the property of the local administrator Gostiha (lat. *Gastica*). He, just as Gumpertus from Bijaći near Trogir, had his name engraved into the altar railing (Fig. 114).⁵³⁴ The spatial concept of the church will be repeated several more times in the Principality's territory. The builders and masons of the church at the Lopuška glavica site in the village of Biskupija near Knin formed the sanctuary of the same triconch layout, while the entrance to the church was again characterized by a massive structure (although significantly smaller in size than the one at Cetina), apparently *westwerk*, but without the axial bell tower. Together with the church at Lopuška glavica, the church of Holy Salvation belongs to a group of early medieval churches with specific round buttresses (Fig. 115).⁵³⁵ The same feature also

⁵³² JURKOVIĆ, M., Sv. Spas na vrelu Cetine i problem westwerka u hrvatskoj predromanici, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, 22, 1997, p. 55-80.

⁵³³ JURKOVIĆ, 1992: 66.

⁵³⁴ His name has been inscribed into the altar railing. Based on the comparative and morphological analysis of the decorative motifs, the fragments were related with the production of the so-called Court's stonemasonry workshop from the time of the Duke Branimir. See JOSIPOVIĆ, I., *Predromanički reljefi na teritoriju Sklavinije Hrvatske između Zrmanje i Krke do kraja 9. stoljeća*, Doctoral Dissertation, Zagreb, University of Zagreb, 2013.

⁵³⁵ For more about the churches with that specific construction element, see PETRICIOLI, I., Prilog diskusiji o starohrvatskim crkvama s oblim kontraforima, *Izdanja Hrvatskog arheološkog društva*, 8, 1980, p. 221-226; PETRICIOLI, I., Oko datiranja umjetničkih spomenika ranog srednjeg vijeka, in: ERCEG, I., HORVAT, A., MAŽURAN, I., SUIĆ, M. (eds.), *Gunjačin zbornik. U povodu sedamdesete godine života i četrdeset i pete godine znanstvenog rada Zagreb*, Zagreb, SIZ za kulturu SR Hrvatske - Općina Sinj - IRO Školska knjiga, 1980, p. 117. GUNJAČA, S., Radovi na crkvi i groblju Svetog Spasa na vrelu Cetine, *Ljetopis Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti za godine 1946.-1948.*, 55, Zagreb, 1949, p. 87-91; GUNJAČA, S., Starohrvatska crkva i groblje na Lopuškoj glavici u Biskupiji kod Knina, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, 3/3, Split, 1954, p. 7-29; GUNJAČA, S., Četvrta starohrvatska crkva u Biskupiji kod Knina i groblje oko nje, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, 3/2, Split, 1952, p. 57-79; GUNJAČA, S., Ostaci starohrvatske crkve sv. Cecilije na stupovima u Biskupiji kod Knina, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, 3/5, Split, 1956, p. 65-127. M. Jurković wrote about the semicircular buttresses and concluded that such architectural solution is unique in the European area. See JURKOVIĆ, 1986: 70.

appeared on the churches of St Mary in Blizna Donja,⁵³⁶ the former cathedral in Biograd (which also had an axial bell tower), and the church of St Cecilia located close to Lopuška glavica, which, in addition to the axial bell tower, had a massive western structure - *westwerk*. But given the size and the width of the building, the latter was three-aisled,⁵³⁷ just as the cathedral in Biograd.

And while the *westwerk* of the church of the Holy Salvation certainly is the best-preserved example in the whole Adriatic region, i.e. the only such example preserved in elevation,⁵³⁸ it is not the most significant. The eternal question for most researchers who study almost any aspect of the historical sciences is the search for the original forms, or at least the first known examples in a particular field. The question of finding the earliest example of the first *westwerk* in the territory of the Croatian principality is still one of the most intriguing issues of the Croatian early medieval historiography. It is assumed that the impetus and the idea for the construction of the first *westwerk* came with a medieval intellectual, the Benedictine Gottschalk of Orbais (Godescalc of Orbais) who found himself at the court of Duke Trpimir between 846 and 848. He played the role of a missionary, a prophet ("soothsayer"), and arrived at Trpimir's court from Venice and soon continued towards Bulgaria.⁵³⁹ M. Jurković

⁵³⁶ This church was added to the first corpus later. See BUŽANČIĆ, R., Nalaz Gospine crkve iz starohrvatskog doba na groblju sela Blizna Gornja, *Kvartal*, 1-2, Trogir, 2001, p. 5-7; KOVAČIĆ, K., Blizna Gornja – crkva sv. Marije, *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* (2005), 2, 2006, Zagreb, p. 345-346; BUŽANČIĆ, R., Crkve sv. Vida na Klisu i sv. Marije u Blizni Gornjoj. Prilog proučavanju vladarske predromaničke arhitekture IX. stoljeća, *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji*, 42, 2011, p. 29-67.

⁵³⁷ It is necessary to point out the form of the pillars, which are cross-shaped in section.

⁵³⁸ *Westwerk* from Cetina is the only such example that has remained almost unchanged to this day. However, back in 1998, Z. Demori Staničić published an article about the church of St Stephen in the village of Golubić (originally dedicated to St Mary?) near Knin, for which she assumed that today's church used the already existing structure, which also had a *westwerk* at the western facade. Furthermore, the author assumed that the original church was early Christian, as in the examples of Žažvić and Lepuri, and that the *westwerk* with an axial bell tower was added during the early Middle Ages. In the walls of today's church, Fr. Lujo Marun and F. Bulić also noticed several early medieval reliefs. Demori Staničić's thesis in 2009 was supported by the reconstruction made by A. Milošević and Ž. Peković. Finally, the sculpture from the church was studied as a part of the doctoral thesis of I. Josipović. Vidi BULIĆ, F., *Hrvatski spomenici u kninskoj okolici uz ostale suvremene dalmatinske iz dobe narodne*, Zagreb, Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1888, p. 19, 30; DEMORI STANIČIĆ, Z., L'église Saint-Etienne de Golubić, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 4, 1998, p. 223-229; MARUN, L., *Starinarski dnevnik* (ed. PETRINEC, M.), Split, Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 1998; MILOŠEVIĆ, A., PEKOVIĆ, Ž., *Predromanička crkva Svetoga Spasa u Cetini*, Dubrovnik - Split, Omega Engineering - Centar Studia Mediterranea, 2009, p. 167-169; JOSIPOVIĆ, 2013: 655-656.

⁵³⁹ L. Katić wrote about the Gottschalk's stay at the court of Duke Trpimir. See KATIĆ, L., Saksonac Gottschalk na dvoru kneza Trpimira, *Bogoslovska smotra*, 20/4, 1932, p. 403-423. See also KLAJČ, 1975: 191.; CURTA, F., *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 139-140; BRYAN GILLIS, M., *Heresy and Dissent in the Carolingian Empire. The Case of Gottschalk of Orbais*, Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 101-104.; BASIĆ, I., Imperium and Regnum in Gottschalk's Description of Dalmatia, in: DŽINO, D., VEDRIŠ, T., MILOŠEVIĆ, A. (eds.), *Migration, Integration and Connectivity on the Southeastern Frontier of the Carolingian Empire*, Leiden - Boston, Brill, 2018, p. 170-209. M. Jurković pointed

argumented the idea of Gottschalk as a mediator of the form and meaning of the *westwerk* by the fact that Gottschalk spent part of his life in Fulda, where a three-nave triapsal church with *westwerk* was built during his stay. The church of St Mary in Crkvina (Biskupija near Knin) has an almost identical form of the western massif. This large three-nave church is a unique example of such building in the area of the Principality, but also in the whole Byzantine theme of Dalmatia (Fig. 116-119). The only analogous example confirmed so far is the basilica next to the medieval settlement of Guran in Istria, which had been a formal part of the Frankish state for a long time. Only the basic spatial organization (longitudinal rectangular layout divided into three naves, while the apses of the triapsal sanctuary were inscribed in a flat rear wall) could be the link between those two distant churches. However, the monumental structure adjoined to the western part of St Mary in Crkvina still has no parallels from the Croatian territory. The first to propose an interpretation of the western annexe as *westwerk* was V. Gvozdanović (V. P. Goss),⁵⁴⁰ following the S. Gunjača's considerations about its role as the royal mausoleum.⁵⁴¹

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As an argument that would support the theory that the form of the *westwerk* arrived as an import, but not through the Istrian territory, would be the fact that there were no such forms in Istria at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century. If we logically analyze the situation, there simply could not have been a westwork in that period. For a start, Istrian architectural forms were related to two sources of origin and inspiration. One of them was their own tradition which, due to its uninterrupted life along the west coast, would form one of the basic factors in creating a new architectural landscape of the late 8th and the early 9th century. Another area to which it was inextricably linked was the area of the Aquileian cultural and political circle. As a result of the transfer of forms, ideas and functions thorough,

out the idea of the relation between westwerk and the Gottschalk's visit 30 years ago. See JURKOVIĆ, 1986: 61-86.

⁵⁴⁰ GOSS (GVOZDANOVIĆ), V., Two Early Croatian Royal Mausolea, *Peristil*, 18, 1976, p. 5-10. He repeats this hypothesis in all his further work.

⁵⁴¹ GUNJAČA, S., Revizija iskopina u Biskupiji kod Knina 1950, *Ljetopis Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, 57, Zagreb, 1953, p. 9-49.

the new architectural and artistic solutions could enter into the Istrian territory. With this in mind, it is logical to start looking for a similar architectural example of the *westwerk* structure there, in the area of northern Italy and southern Switzerland, from where the imported forms could have normally flown. The answer to the question if any of the confirmed examples of the *westwerk* exist there is negative. But one should also ask an even simpler and more logical question. If we know that the first forms of the so-called *westwerk* have not been documented before the last quarter of the 8th century in the very centres of the Frankish state (Lorsch 774?, Saint-Denis 775 etc.), how could it be possible to expect them in the distant region of Istria at the same time, or only a few years later? It would be unrealistic to expect that such solutions could have been implemented in Istria almost simultaneously, while, I note, the form still had not existed even in the areas of subalpine Italy and Switzerland, the territories that were in some way the catalysts and the transmitters of ideas towards the edges of the Frankish state. In the early medieval reality, where the ideas could have travelled only as quickly as the people have travelled, the process of the transfer of such innovations took time. There simply was not enough time to implement the novelty of *westwerk* throughout the Istrian territory, during the first wave of expansion. Yet enough time had passed before the Carolingians reached the Dalmatian hinterland, so the implementation of such a feature could have been possible.

Therefore, the link between the basilica near Guran and the church of St Mary in Crkvina (Biskupija near Knin) becomes all the more interesting. While the Guran basilica is dated (with considerable certainty, on the basis of the sculpture) in the late 8th/early 9th century, which historically corresponds to the penetration and time of the Carolingian rule on the Istrian peninsula, the Crkvina site is also chronologically determined by its sculpture, but about half a century later.⁵⁴² The evidence of the church's mid-9th century dating is found in its first altar rail. According to N. Jakšić, it was made before the time of Duke Branimir (879-892) during whose rule the church was probably equipped for the second time. If the established chronological sequence was correct, this church would be the first known triapsal

⁵⁴² Besides the sculpture, extremely rich burial finds (unfortunately some of them completely lost due to the poor conservation and excavation practice) have helped the interpretation of the Crkvina site. For the insight into the current state of research see JURČEVIĆ, A., *Arhitektura i skulptura s lokaliteta Crkvina u Biskupiji kod Knina*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Zagreb, 2016.

basilica in the Principality of Croatia. This also implies that during that time, the western rite had already been in use.⁵⁴³

As for the morphological characteristics of the westwerk from the Crkvina site, it should certainly be noted that its structures were not completely connected to the walls of the church, indicating the different construction phases. But whether this structure was created sooner or later, it is impossible to say with certainty, especially given the poor conduction of research in the late 19th and the early 20th century. Unfortunately, such an approach led to a destruction of certain structures and finds that could have given more concrete answers to many questions related to this site. Therefore, all further discussions should be carried out with great caution. Nevertheless, it is possible to conclude with a significant level of certainty that the floor plan of the structure was divided into three parts and that the structure was multi-levelled, which was assumed even at the end of the 19th century.⁵⁴⁴

It was Gottschalk's connection with Fulda and later Trpimir's court that could have indeed been the solution to this new form. During his life, many of the Carolingian *westwerks* had already been built.⁵⁴⁵ Besides that, given its specific function inside the church, researchers have assumed that the *westwerks* in Croatia did not appear as the consequence of an 'influence' from the Carolingian world, but as a planned result revolved in the mind of the people who were already familiar with its function and form.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴³ JAKŠIĆ, N., Zabati oltarne pregrade iz Crkvine u Biskupiji kod Knina, *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji*, 21, 1980, p. 97-109; JURKOVIĆ, 1992: 67. There was also another possible evidence for dating of the *westwerk*. Judging by the a coin of Emperor Basilius I that was found in the ruler's sarcophagus inside the *westwerk* of the church of St Mary at Crkvina, we could assume the time of the construction of this western massif. The burial must have occurred after 867 when Basilius came to the Byzantine throne, and possibly before 900, when Basilius's money would have been seen as obsolete. Vidi u JURKOVIĆ, 1986: 80.

⁵⁴⁴ See F. RADIĆ, Pločaste nadstupine sa srednjih stupčića dvostrukih prozora (bifora) staro-hrvatskih zvonika, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, 4, Zagreb, 1898, p. 21. He believed that, based on the observations of the floor plan, the basilica had two bell towers on its western facade with the entrance between them. The hypothesis was commented by Gunjača during his revisional excavation (See Gunjača, *Revizija iskopina na Biskupiji kod Knina godine 1950*). See Gunjača, 1953.

⁵⁴⁵ See chapter about *westwerk* in MCCLENDON, 2005: 188-194.

⁵⁴⁶ Jurković continued and confronted the hypothesis of T. Marasović and V. Gvozdanović that it was the thing of the Carolingian influence. See JURKOVIĆ, 1986: 79-80.; GOSS (GVOZDANOVIĆ), V., Značaj starohrvatske arhitekture za opću povijest evropske predromanike, in: MOHOROVIČIĆ, A. (ed.), *Prilozi istraživanju starohrvatske arhitekture*, Split, Kabinet za urbanizam i arhitekturu Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 1978, p. 139; MARASOVIĆ, T., Carolingian Influence in Early Medieval Architecture in Dalmatia, in: *Actes du XIXe Congres d'Histoire de l'Art*, Paris, 1958, p. 117- 121.

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The most interesting parallel between the architectural landscape of the Croatian Principality and that of the Kingdom of Asturias is precisely the western part of the sacral buildings. Just as in the example of the Crkvina's royal mausoleum, in Asturias, chronologically almost simultaneously, existed a well-known example of a royal mausoleum located in the western part of the church of Santa María in Oviedo.⁵⁴⁷ The church was annihilated in later centuries by new structures and disappeared within the Oviedo cathedral complex. It was built by King Alfonso II (791-842), apparently as a part of the urban program of creating a new *urbs regia* in Oviedo as the centre of the Asturorum Regnum.⁵⁴⁸ The chronicle of Alfonso III - *Crónica ad Sebastianum* speaks about the time and place of construction, which is extremely important for the study of this missing monument. The helping circumstance, among other things, is that it was written shortly after the construction of the church, during the reign of King Alfonso III.⁵⁴⁹ The chronicler of the period thus conveyed information about the construction of the church of San Salvador, which, in addition to the main altar, had twelve more altars with the relics of all the apostles. Along the north side of the church, another church was built, dedicated to St Mary, with the main altar dedicated to the patron saint, and two lateral altars dedicated to St Stephen and St Julian. In the western part of the basilica, the king built a structure intended for the burial of the ruling dynasty members. The chronicler also mentioned the construction of San Tirso's church and the church of San Julián Mártir. For now, this overview will leave those churches aside.

⁵⁴⁷ R. Alonso wrote about the genesis of the royal burials, including the Merovingian, Carolingian, Visigothic and Asturian dynasties. See ALONSO ÁLVAREZ, 2008: 37-48.

⁵⁴⁸ For more about the concept of the „Holy City“ of Oviedo, and of Oviedo as the episcopal see: CARRERO SANTAMARÍA, E., El conjunto catedralicio de Oviedo en la Edad Media arquitectura, topografía y funciones en la ciudad episcopal, Real Instituto de Estudios Asturianos, 2003; CARRERO SANTAMARÍA, E., La „ciudad santa“ de Oviedo. Un conjunto de iglesias para la memoria del rey, *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 13/2, 2007, p. 375-389; CARRERO SANTAMARÍA, E., La catedral de Oviedo entre los siglos IX y XIV. Cabeceras, altares y capillas, BSAA Arte, 84, 2018, p. 17-39.

⁵⁴⁹ A fortunate circumstance for the study of the Asturian architecture and art in general is a great number of preserved written historical sources, just as it was the case with Catalonia. The only problem is that it is often unknown if the sources are original and trustworthy, or they are a later falsified copy. One of the two chronicles of Alfonso III, „ad Sebastianum“, is very important for the study of the burial character of the church of Santa María de Oviedo. See ALONSO ÁLVAREZ, 2008: 37. Cf. GIL FERNÁNDEZ, MORALEJO, RUIZ DE LA PEÑA, 1985.

The Church of Santa María was a three-nave building with three rectangular apses inscribed in the rear wall (Fig. 120). The western part of the church was also divided into three parts. Judging by the available floor plans, the central part was reserved for burials and closed from all four sides, with a passage on the east wall. An almost identical concept of the western part with burial could be read in the church of St Stephen in Peroj, but of course on a much smaller scale. It is clear that the concept of burying the ruling elites is nothing new on the European territory. For example, it is known that Clovis, the first Frankish king who had united all Frankish tribes, was buried (along with other members of his family) next to the tomb of Sancta Genoveva in the Church of the Holy Apostles (Saints-Apôtres de París), later known as the Abbey of St Genevieve (Sainte-Geneviève). Such practice, although not necessarily in the same place, was followed by his successors, all the way to Childeric II (died 673) who was buried in the church of Saint-Vincent de París (today known as Saint-Germain-des-Près). A piece of interesting information brought by R. Alonso Álvarez is the fact that the sources in no way mention that the "royal" nature of the burials, but only that the rulers (kings) were buried there with their families. The need for the tomb to be situated in the centre of the kingdom, which certainly enhanced the impression and perception of the power of the ruling dynasty, indeed was emphasized.⁵⁵⁰ From Charles Martel to Charles III the Simple, the Carolingian rulers followed the already established practice of the Merovingian predecessors and would bury themselves inside the churches.⁵⁵¹

While the burial places of the Frankish rulers were carefully recorded, such information is almost non-existent on the Iberian Peninsula where the Visigoths ruled.⁵⁵² Until the construction of the royal mausoleum in Oviedo and King Alfonso II, historical sources were extremely modest about the locations of the tombs of rulers. Some information about their burials is known only from the work of Bishop Pelayo de Oviedo from the 11th century.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ ALONSO ÁLVAREZ, 2008: 39. The author refers to the following text: DIERKENS, A., PÉRIN, P., Les "sedes regiae" mérovingiennes entre Seine et Rhin, in: RIPOLL, G., GURT, J.M. (eds.), *Sedes regiae (ann. 400-800)*, Barcelona, Reial Acadèmia de Bones Lletres, 2000, p. 275.

⁵⁵¹ Álvarez presents the list of the rulers together with the time of their death and the locations of their burial sites. See ALONSO ÁLVAREZ 2008: 40. See ERLANDE-BRANDENBURG, 1975.

⁵⁵² It is necessary to look at the results of the research of R. Alonso Álvarez which has studied this topic extensively. See ALONSO ÁLVAREZ, R., Los enterramientos de los reyes visigodos, in: *Fundamentos medievales de los particularismos hispánicos*, León, Fundación Sánchez-Albornoz, 2005, p. 363-375; ALONSO ÁLVAREZ, R., Las sepulturas de los reyes godos en Hispania. Chindasvinto, Recesvinto y Wamba, Pyrenae, 2013, 44/1, p. 135-155.

⁵⁵³ For more about the work of the bishop Pelayo, see ALONSO ÁLVAREZ, R., El Corpus pelagianum y el Liber testamentorum ecclesiae ouetensis: las "reliquias del pasado" de la catedral de Oviedo y su uso propagandístico en la obra del obispo Pelayo de Oviedo (1101-1153), in: ALAMICHEL, M.F., BRAID, R.

What is interesting in the context of the study of the western massif is the example of the information about King Silo (died 783). He was buried in the church of San Juan de Pravia, which he had built with his wife Adosinda between 774 and 783, after moving the seat of the Kingdom to the city of Pravia. The city (Roman *Flavium Avia*) was located at the intersection of Roman communication routes and in the middle of an area with a high concentration of ancient Roman villas. According to the chronicle of Alfonso III from 905, Silo was buried inside the vestibule of the church, which led researchers to conclude that this was also a royal mausoleum.

Why are the examples of Pravia and the royal mausoleum in Oviedo (the church of Santa María) important for the study of the monuments from the area of the Croatian principality, such as the church of St Mary in Biskupija? And not only for that example but also for the whole question of *westwerk* in the early medieval architecture of Europe. The church of San Juan de Pravia has been preserved in its entirety to this day, but its original form is not fully known as the church has undergone a series of transformations over the centuries.⁵⁵⁴ Unfortunately, the structures next to the building entrance, where the room on the first floor is located today, have also gone through changes in form. If it were in its original form, it would very well contribute to the better understanding of the problem of *westwerk*, especially if we remember that at that time the *westwerk* had still not been built even in the centres of the Frankish state. The western massif on the Iberian Peninsula was mostly studied in the works of I. Bango Torviso, who has been vigorously rejecting any possibility of the influence of the Carolingian forms, such as *westwerk*, on what the architectural production in the Kingdom of Asturias.⁵⁵⁵ Because this problem's complexity is impossible to overcome within the framework of this dissertation, the intention here is only to point out particular possibilities for further research. The fact that similar ideas have been manifesting through architectural forms since the middle of the 9th century throughout the area of the Principality

(eds.), *Texte et Contexte. Littérature et Histoire de l'Europe médiévale*, Paris, Michel Houdiard, 2011, p. 519-548.

⁵⁵⁴ One of the most drastic transformations happened in 1637 when the Salas family carried out the renovation of the church. They acquired the permission to be buried in the church.

⁵⁵⁵ On that subject see the long discussion proposed by the french historiography where the Asturian Kingdom was perceived as a satellite entity of the Carolingian Empire. Here is one of the publications where I. Bango Torviso strongly disagrees on the theory: BANGO TORVISO, I. G., *De la arquitectura visigoda a la arquitectura asturiana: los edificios ovetenses en la tradición de Toledo y frente a Aquisgrán*, in: FONTAINE, J., PELLISTRANDI C. (eds.), *L'Europe héritière de l'Espagne wisigothique*, Madrid, 1992, p. 303-313. However, more on this subject in the following pages.

of Croatia only emphasizes the need to re-examine such exclusive approaches. As I have already pointed out, it is precisely the absolute independence of one space from another (Croatian from Asturian, as well as Croatian from Catalan), but at the same time a coincidence of particular historical processes, that could open up some new possibilities for the reconsideration of the topic.

Individual examples of architectural forms from both areas, placed next to each other, demonstrate coincidences which could be considered as unusual. Two more examples of architectural heritage from in the Kingdom of Asturias will be presented in the following part, the churches of San Miguel de Lillo (mid-9th century) and San Salvador de Valdediós (end of the 9th century/beginning of the 10th century). Their structures, or at least some of their elements such as the solutions of Western structures, could be opposed to the examples from the Principality of Croatia.

* * *

A very interesting element of the church of San Miguel de Lillo, which can be compared with the Principality's example is the solution of its western two-story structure. The Palatine Church of Santa María, today known as San Miguel de Lillo (Fig. 121-124, 126),⁵⁵⁶ was built during the reign of Ramiro I, between 842 and 850.⁵⁵⁷ Today's monument is only a part of what the original building was.⁵⁵⁸ In the 11th century, most of the building collapsed. The

⁵⁵⁶ *Crónica Ad Sebastianum* and *Historia Silense* tell us that the present-day church of San Miguel de Lillo was originally built under the name of Santa María. See ARIAS PÁRAMO, 1993: 134.

⁵⁵⁷ From *Crónica Ad Sebastianum*, around 885: „[...] Hab eo una cum septem filiis suis interemptus est. Interea supra dictus rex ecclesiam condidit in memoriam sancte Marie in latere montis Naurantii, distantem ab Oueto duorum milia passuum mire pulcritudinis perfecteque decoris et, ut alia decoris eius taceam, cum pluribus centriforniceis sit concamerata, sola calce et lapide constructa; cui si aliquis edificium consimulare uoluerit, in Spania non inueniet. Multa etiam non longe a supra dicta ecclesia condidit palatia et balnea pulchra atque decora. [...]“. An inscription from the altar, a copy of which is kept in the Naranco Palace (848), could also indicate the time when the church was built. But Cesar García de Castro Valdés rejects the connection of that altar with the church of San Miguel and says that there is no epigraphic record that would indicate the exact time of construction and dedication of the church. He argues his thesis with the fact that this important information is first mentioned in documents only at the end of the 18th century, while the chroniclers of the 16th and 17th centuries do not mention it at all. See GARCÍA DE CASTRO VALDÉS, C., *Arqueología cristiana de la Alta Edad Media en Asturias*, Oviedo, Real Instituto de Estudios Asturianos, 1995, p. 420; GARCÍA DE CASTRO VALDÉS, C., *Notas sobre la teología política en el Reino de Asturias: la inscripción del altar de Santa María de Naranco (Oviedo) y el Testamento de Alfonso II*, *Arqueología y Territorio Medieval*, 10, 1, Jaén, Universidad de Jaén, 2003.

⁵⁵⁸ Various reconstructions of its original appearance have been proposed throughout history. L. Arias Páramo in his paper gives a brief overview of the most significant hypotheses, from about 1850 to the present day. At first, researchers thought that the original plan of the church was similar to today's. These theses began to change

western part of the original form has been preserved: the façade and one bay (Fig. 9). The preserved part is of great importance because it still demonstrates that right at the entrance, the church was divided into two floors. Two staircases led to space on the upper floor, and the most probable theory so far assumes that space was a royal gallery (Fig. 11). It is assumed that from there Ramiro I had a direct view of the altar. If the correct assumption is that the altar, a copy of which is today kept in the Naranco Palace, was originally located in this church, that would mean that he could have seen his name engraved in Latin, describing him as a magnificent ruler (*principe gloriosum*).⁵⁵⁹

Over the last few decades, the majority of the researchers has agreed that the original form of this church corresponded to the usual type of Asturian churches of the period (Fig. 10).⁵⁶⁰ The church was entered through a vestibule, above which was (and still is) a vaulted structure - a gallery flanked by two staircases on each side. According to the calculations based on modular criteria and proportional relations, the central nave was 11 meters long, while the height of the vault, which is still preserved today, is slightly less than 11 meters.⁵⁶¹ The church is completely vaulted, as is the adjoining palace, as *Crónica Albeldense* (881) describes it: "On the site of Liña he built a church and a palace with a stunning vault." The interior of the church was monumentalized with pillars of imposing 3.60 meters in height which were carrying arches of arcades, instead of the traditional Asturian pillars.⁵⁶² On the bases of these pillars, of which 10 have been preserved *in situ*, human figures were carved,

at the beginning of the 20th century, and the researchers began to consider more intensively the possibility that the building was originally of the basilica type with a three-part sanctuary. Archaeological research has intensified in the last decades of the 20th century, See ARIAS PÁRAMO, 1993: 165-166.

⁵⁵⁹ *Idem*, 154-155.

† CHRistE FILIVS Dei Q(ui) IN VTERO VIRGINIS BE(ata) E MARIAE INGRESSVS ES SINE HV.
 MANA CONTEPTIONE ET EGRESSVS SINE CORRVP(T)IONE QVI Per FAMVLVM.
 TVVm RANIMIRVm PRINCIPEm GloriOSVm CVM PA(ter) NA RE(gina) CONIVGE RENO
 [VASTI(hoc)
 HABITACVLVm NIMIA VETVSTATE CONSVmPTVm E(t pro) EIS AEDIFICASTI HANC HA
 [RAM B(enedic)
 TIONIS GLoriOSAE SanCtE MARIAE IN LOCVm HVNC SVmuN EX(audi)EOS DE CAELO
 [Rum HABITACVLO TVO ET DIM(itte peccata).
 (e)ORVM QVI VIVIS ET REGNAS Per INFINITA SaeCULA SaeCuLORum AMEN
 (di)E VIII^o KaLenDaS IVLIAS. ERA DCCCLXXXVI A.

⁵⁶⁰ One of the most accurate comparisons is that with the Church of Santa María in Oviedo, the royal mausoleum built by Ramiro's predecessor Alfonso II. Apart from the general concept of the basilica form, the solution of the western part of the building, which was intended for burials in Alfonso's basilica, is certainly interesting, while the two-storey structure has been preserved to this day.

⁵⁶¹ GARCÍA DE CASTRO VALDÉS, 1995: 408.

⁵⁶² L. Arias Páramo states that this is the only church with circular floorplan columns. See ARIAS PÁRAMO, 1993: 172.

representing evangelists reading or writing, in the classical early medieval manner of depiction (Fig. 127).⁵⁶³

In addition to these examples, the church of San Miguel de Lillo was decorated with two other extremely significant relief decorations. The two unusual door jambs are located on the main portal (Fig. 125, 128). They are of the same size, divided into three rectangular fields and are preserved in excellent condition.⁵⁶⁴ The diptych depicts a consul seated on a *subsellium*, accompanied by two acolytes. He holds a sceptre in his left hand and a *mappa* in his right.⁵⁶⁵ The scene was depicted faithfully and with minor alterations on the upper and lower field of the jamb. In the central field, there is a display of a circus theme with an acrobat jumping over a lion with a bar while a juggler is standing next to him. When we look at the door jamb as a whole, it seems as if the figures from the upper and lower fields are attending a circus spectacle taking place in the central field. Although this relief does not convey the artistic and aesthetic quality of the original, it is of great importance because it represents one of the few European examples of a non-religious scene located on the portal of an early medieval court church.⁵⁶⁶ Is it possible that this is a symbolic place where the king and the village meet - the village being represented on a central panel with a circus-themed scene, and the king being depicted in the upper and lower fields?⁵⁶⁷ Finally, it is worth mentioning the remains of the wall painting of the vaults of the church, which are significant because it is the first depiction of a human figure in the wall painting of the Kingdom of Asturias.

⁵⁶³ Prototypes for this way of depiction could be found in Carolingian manuscripts. Furthermore, the representation of the Tetramorph, associated with the Apocalypse, relates the bases of the pillars of this church with other branches of art such as goldsmithing. *Idem*, 175-176.

⁵⁶⁴ A prototype for this relief could have been the ivory diptych of the consul Areobindus (506), one copy of which is kept in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, and the other one in the Cluny Museum in Paris. Such an example of adopting motifs from much earlier artistic achievements is no exception in Asturian art. Two vertical acanthus friezes from the interior of the church are following the similar model. They are probably the quotes from the early Christian sarcophagus of Bishop Ithacius (1st half of the 6th c.) kept in the Cathedral of Oviedo. This is one of the best examples of how the late antique sarcophagi, even before the Romanesque period, have served as a model for the early medieval craftsmen. DODDS, J.D., *The Art of Medieval Spain, A.D. 500–1200*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993, p. 45.

⁵⁶⁵ *Mappa* is a headscarf that the consul holds in his right hand in the representations on the diptychs. At circus games, the consul would throw that *mappa* into the arena, and that was the sign that the games could begin. See BADURINA, A. (ed.), *Leksikon ikonografije, liturgike i simbolike zapadnog kršćanstva*, Zagreb, Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1985, p. 392.

⁵⁶⁶ L. Arias Páramo cites the striking resemblance of this scene to another late antique diptych, that of Consul Anastasius (517), kept in a museum in Berlin. See ARIAS PÁRAMO, 1993: 178.

⁵⁶⁷ GARCÍA GUINEA, PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ, 2007: 184.

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The last of the rulers who ruled in Oviedo ⁵⁶⁸ was Alfonso III The Great. He ruled from 866 to 910, and during his time the Kingdom has been extended to the south, all the way to the rivers Duoro and Mondego.⁵⁶⁹ The last building with its forms interesting in the context of the comparison of the early medieval examples from the Croatian Principality and the Kingdom of Asturias is the church of San Salvador de Valdediós. The year 893, interpreted as a year of the consecration of the church, is engraved on the stone of the north wall of the room, which is entered through a royal portal. It is also recorded that it was consecrated in the presence of seven bishops, one of whom was the Mozarabic Bishop from Zaragoza. A covered passage connected the church with the nearby Cistercian monastery of Santa María de Valdediós,⁵⁷⁰ but the passage was completely demolished in the 19th century.

It was built as a three-nave triapsal basilica, completely vaulted with a barrel vault, just as the church of San Miguel de Lillo. Although in many ways this building can be considered as a continuation of the architecture of Ramiro I, there are a few details that differ. The most often mentioned one is the lack of "boldness "in the construction of certain architectural elements,⁵⁷¹ which was vividly evident in the architecture of King Ramiro.⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁸ After the end of the reign of Alfonso III. the center of power was, for strategic reasons, transferred to León.

⁵⁶⁹ DODDS, 1993, 119.

⁵⁷⁰ Before the arrival of the Cistercians (around the beginning of the 13th c.), this was a Benedictine monastery. However, since the Cistercians built a new building on the site, the appearance of the original monastery has been lost. Nevertheless, recent archaeological research conducted in 1992 confirmed the existence of a building in the immediate vicinity of the church of San Salvador, whose chronology coincides with that of the basilica. Such discoveries and findings help unravel the original function of the church, probably forming part of the monastery complex. See ARIAS PÁRAMO, 1993: 217-218.

⁵⁷¹ This was also manifested in the return to the use of large, massive square pillars, as the ones used in the church of San Julián de los Prados (from the time of Alfonso II). More about this church in MORÁIS MORÁN, J. A., El valor clásico de la arquitectura asturiana (s. IX): la iglesia de San Julián de los Prados. Entre la tradición «antiquizante» hispanovisigoda y la carolingia, *Anales de historia del arte*, N° Extra 1, 2009, p. 233-246 with the corresponding bibliography.

⁵⁷² The main nave is wider than, for example, the nave in San Miguel de Lillo, and its height reaches 7.5 metres, compared to 11 metres (as the nave in the church of San Miguel). The height of the nave in San Salvador is three times the height of the pillars (2.5 meters). The system of proportions in which pillars become the modules in construction and design is not only typical of Asturian architecture (as Arias Páramo, 1993: 220 considers), but is common throughout Europe, and probably beyond. It is worth remembering one of the examples from the Istrian peninsula - the monastery church of St Mary the Great near Bale, which also follows the system of proportions. The same system was applied on the Euphrasian Basilica Cathedral complex in Poreč, Istria.

At the entrance to the church, there is a vestibule, not visible from the outside. It is flanked on both sides by two small rooms, the function of which is still unknown.⁵⁷³ The eastern part of the church ends with a three-part sanctuary, which corresponds to other examples of buildings from the period of the Kingdom of Asturias, but also outside the borders of the Iberian Peninsula.⁵⁷⁴ Along the lateral walls of the building, there are two rooms, the sacristies, of which only the southern one is original. Along with this sacristy, a royal portal was built in a yet unknown moment, which communicates with the interior of the church through an elongated rectangular space with a barrel vault with girders, also known as the bishop's chapel.⁵⁷⁵

Determining the chronology of the construction of this church seems to be a complicated task for researchers, even though there seems to be a clearly defined date of its consecration. H. Schlunk believes that the sculptural decoration is one of the most important elements in its determination. He states that the construction of the church began from its eastern part, i.e. from the apse.⁵⁷⁶ C. Garcia de Castro proposes another hypothesis about the time of its construction. In his book, this researcher discusses the fact that the year 893, found on a stone with a dedication, could mark the year of the completion of the lateral royal portal and fresco paintings.⁵⁷⁷ He believes that the building existed before and that it was not built then, but only adapted. Such new theses may sound enticing, but the author himself calls for caution and the need for new archaeological research.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷³ Such organization of the space with two lateral rooms below the royal gallery is reminiscent of that seen in the church of Santa Cristina de Lena. The difference is that in the case of San Salvador the lateral walls of the vestibule, i.e. the lateral rooms continue on the body of the church while in the church of Santa Cristina de Lena we have an example of a vestibule having the shape of a small square room leaning against the main nave of the church. Accordingly, the lateral rooms in this church are not located next to the vestibule, but flank the eastern, barrel-vaulted part of the nave below the royal gallery. We find a similar situation in the church of San Miguel de Lillo.

⁵⁷⁴ For example San Julián de los Prados, Santa María u Oviedu (mausoleum of the ruling dynasty), Santa María de Bendones, San Miguel de Lillo and otheri. On the other side of the continent, both in Istrian and Dalmatian area, triapsal sanctuary layout stands almost as a norm.

⁵⁷⁵ BANGO TORVISO, 2001: 271.

⁵⁷⁶ This claim is supported by the fact that the cubic capitals from the apses have characteristic rope motifs from the period of the rule of Ramiro and are completely different from the other capitals in this church which are much simpler. See SCHLUNK, 1947: 379. L. Arias Páramo complements Schlunk's hypothesis with the theory that the capitals from the rest of the church came from a stonemason's workshop from the al-Andalus area. See ARIAS PÁRAMO, 1993: 226.

⁵⁷⁷ In 1919, José Fernández Menéndez discovered the remains of a fresco painting after the restoration of the church. The most significant depictions were found in the central chapel, in the north apse, and on the walls and vault of the central and lateral naves.

⁵⁷⁸ GARCÍA DE CASTRO VALDÉS, 1995: 433.

Here I want to point to one interesting comparison - the one between the church of San Salvador de Valdediós and the church which has been completely annihilated and known only from the archaeological reports, the church of St Stephen na Otoku ("on the Island") (Fig. 129). Church of St Stephen is located in the centre of today's Solin, a little more than 500 metres southeast of the ruins of the ancient Salona, the former capital city of the Roman Province of Dalmatia. I repeat, this analogy in no way implies any mutual influence. However, the mutual similarity in the concept of space, its organization and proportions is impossible to oversee. In the western part of the church, which researchers from V. Gvozdanović,⁵⁷⁹ T. Marasović,⁵⁸⁰ M. Jurković,⁵⁸¹ and finally R. Bužančić⁵⁸² defined as a *westwerk*, a fragment of the sarcophagus of Croatian Queen Jelena from 976 was found, which is also the terminus ante quem for dating this church.⁵⁸³

⁵⁷⁹ Goss (GVOZDANOVIĆ), V., The Early Croatian Royal mausolea, *Peristil*, 1976, 18-19, Zagreb, p. 5-13; GOSS (GVOZDANOVIĆ), V., *Early Croatian Architecture. A Study of the Pre-Romanesque*, London, 1987, p. 122-123.

⁵⁸⁰ MARASOVIĆ, T., Prilog morfološkoj klasifikaciji ranosrednjovjekovne arhitekture i Dalmaciji, in: MOHOROVIČIĆ, A. (ed.), *Prilozi istraživanju starohrvatske arhitekture*, Split, Kabinet za urbanizam i arhitekturu Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 1978, p. 5-129; MARASOVIĆ, T., Starohrvatski Solin – položaj i značaj u ranosrednjovjekovnom graditeljstvu Dalmacije, *VAHD 80, (Disputationes Salonitanae IV)*, 1993, p. 62-68.

⁵⁸¹ JURKOVIĆ, 1987: 61; JURKOVIĆ, 1992: 100.

⁵⁸² R BUŽANČIĆ, R., *Mauzolej kraljice Jelene na Gospinom Otoku, Stota obljetnica otkrića nadgrobnog natpisa hrvatske kraljice Jelene*, 1898-1998, Solin, 1998, p. 10; BUŽANČIĆ, R., Srednjovjekovne geminae na Otoku u Solinu, *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 38, 1998, p. 57-97.

⁵⁸³ See T. MARASOVIĆ, 2011: 212 onwards for the overview of the research.

3.3. Final remarks on the issue of tripartite form and western structure in the territory of the Croatian Principality and the Kingdom of Asturias

After this basic review of selected monuments from the territory of the Principality of Croatia and the Kingdom of Asturias, there is nothing left but to ask what to do next? First of all, I would like to emphasize that the presented examples are only one part of a rich corpus of architectural production in both areas. They were chosen not so much for their general significance, but for their specific features that could open new questions in the process of their study, guided by the basic premise of opposing the elements of the architectural landscape of two political entities outside the Carolingian Empire.⁵⁸⁴ Any final conclusions that would in one way or another aim to define certain similarities would be utterly irresponsible. However, such comparative attempts should also be considered in the further analyses of the early medieval architecture. These comparisons in no way suggest the existence of any direct links between the studied areas. Nonetheless, they can point to the models of functioning and processes of development of particular forms and solutions that in their own way follow the laws of the functions for which they were created and intended.

The case of the western structure of sacral buildings is a great example. Never before have these two political entities and their artistic production been placed in such a definite correlation. On several occasions, certain similarities were discussed, primarily from the perspective of Croatian researchers of the early medieval heritage,⁵⁸⁵ but the more-in-depth analysis has deliberately been evaded. This approach is not *a priori* wrong, yet any conclusions drawn from such considerations should be taken with a great deal of reserve. That is why I want to point out that this final, almost peripheral chapter of the dissertation aims to emphasize the exciting possibilities that a detailed analysis of synchronous processes could provide in future research.

⁵⁸⁴ For example, for now I decided to leave aside one of the most important buildings not only of the Iberian but also of the European Middle Ages - the palace on Mount Naranco (Fig. 102-106). The issue of its forms is a story unto itself.

⁵⁸⁵ GOSS (GVOZDANOVIĆ), V., The „Croatian Westwork“ Revisited, *Ars* 43, 2010, p. 3-23.

Indeed, there is no shortage of texts which discuss specific architectural forms, such as the western gallery, which appears on numerous monuments in the north of the Iberian Peninsula. I have already mentioned I. Bango Torviso's fierce opposition to the often present narrative of Carolingian solutions' influence on those from the territory of the Kingdom of Asturias.⁵⁸⁶ It is not my intention to challenge or confirm such considerations. However, I consider it necessary to point out from the objective perspective the need not to draw definite conclusions where certain paradigms are rejected or defended with absolute conviction.

That is why I decided to start with the premise of the continuity of the Iberian Peninsula architecture where I believe that one of the answers to the question of the origin of this specific motif of the western structure is hidden; in any case the form of its Iberian version. I. Bango Torviso stands for the same idea, but he rejects any possible influence of Carolingian solutions, which perhaps should not be completely ruled out. In relation to this, for example, the frequent use of a triapsal sanctuary, which is almost a standard solution for sacral buildings throughout Central Europe in the period immediately before and during the Carolingian Empire, could be indicative.⁵⁸⁷ Such an organization of the sanctuary is not only reserved for areas that were formally part of the Frankish state. It also appears outside its borders, in the areas that were politically independent (or at least seemed to be), but which have followed the pan-European solutions derived from the Frankish idea in many ways. This formal turn was conditioned by a change of function; the Eastern Roman liturgy was replaced at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century by the Roman one in the territory of today's Croatia, closely connected with the Frankish ideology. On the other hand, the Hispanic-Gothic rite was significantly more strongly opposed to this new Roman liturgy. It is known that in Catalonia the Roman liturgy was accepted in theory at the time when the French crossed the Pyrenees, with the Benedictines acting as the main mediators. The question is how the change manifested itself in practice. The architectural solutions of the preserved examples of the 9th century and almost the entire 10th century still followed the

⁵⁸⁶ See in BANGO TORVISO, 1992: 303-313. Also in BANGO TORVISO, I. G., *El arte asturiano y el Imperio carolingio*, in: *Arte prerrománico y románico en Asturias*, Villaviciosa, 1988, pp. 31-88; BANGO TORVISO, I. G., *La vieja liturgia hispana y la interpretación funcional del templo prerrománico*, in: DE LA IGLESIA DUARTE, J. I. (eds.), *VII Semana de Estudios Medievales: Nájera*, 1996, p. 61-120.

⁵⁸⁷ It is important to emphasize here that the triapsidality of the studied period is most closely related to the erection of the three altars. I note this in order to avoid confusion and relativization of the organization of the sanctuary from the early Christian era, where the sanctuary is also often divided into three parts - the main apse and its side rooms or apses. However, the function of these side rooms was not intended for additional altars. One of the basic examples for studying this change is the Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč.

previous forms; the triapsal layout of the sanctuary still did not exist there. By what evolutionary line did this form, conditioned by the need to set up more altars, arrive in the territory of the Kingdom of Asturias?

The question that must precede what has just been said is whether there is evidence for the triapsal spatial organization with the three altars for the churches from the Visigothic period? Here I will list two churches that Isidro Bango considers to have suited this type - Santa Lucía del Trampal and Santa María de Melque.⁵⁸⁸ Their forms, in any case, correspond to the triapsal solution, but it has not yet been confirmed with certainty that they had additional altars.⁵⁸⁹ Their function in this regard is still not explained. On the other hand, there may be an indicative frequent recurrence of a triapsal layout in the later churches of the 9th century from Asturias, from the church of Santa María in Oviedo, which was also the royal mausoleum, through San Julián de los Prados, San Adriano de Tuñón, San Pedro de la Nora, San Miguel de Lillo, San Salvador de Valdediós, Santa María de Bendones and others. As it has already been mentioned, for written sources about the church of Santa María in Oviedo exist, and confirm the existence of three altars.

In the same way, we can present the problem of the western structure, which could be even more complex than the previous one. Western annexes are by no means unknown in the architecture of the Iberian Peninsula; the same applies to the eastern Adriatic coast. Here the well-known problem of the so-called contra-apse from the late antique and early Christian architecture also poses a problem, which I have to leave aside here as this would imply a much deeper examination of the issue.⁵⁹⁰ If in the context of the Iberian Peninsula, we limit ourselves exclusively to the smaller 7th/8th-century rural monuments, we notice the following. Some examples (San Juan de Baños, Santa Comba de Bande and again Santa Maria de Melque) feature forms of 'vestibule', while other feature more complex structures built into the dimensions of the church (Quintanilla de las Viñas, São Gião de Nazaré). Similar solutions as would be common in later 9th-century architecture in Asturias, on the churches

⁵⁸⁸ See BANGO TORVISO, 1996, 92-93. Cf. CABALLERO ZOREDA, L., Hacia una propuesta tipológica de los elementos de la arquitectura de culto cristiano de época visigoda. *Nuevas iglesias de El Gatillo y El Trampal, Arqueología Medieval española: II congreso, Vol. 1, Tomo 1*, 1987, p. 61-98. San Juan de Baños might be added to these two churches.

⁵⁸⁹ See BANGO TORVISO, 1996: 92.

⁵⁹⁰ See for example the paper written by N. Duval, with its bibliography. DUVAL, N., Le problème des contre-absides dans l'architecture paléochrétienne : rapport avec l'architecture médiévale, *Actes du colloque Avant-nefs et espaces d'accueil entre le IV^e et le XII^e siècle*, Auxerre, 17-20 juin 1999 (sous la direction de Chr. Sapiin), Paris (CTHS), 2002, p. 50-64.

presented in the previous chapter. However, given the still uncertain dating of certain elements of these buildings, including the western structures which, among other things, have often been the subject of restorations and transformations, conclusions should not be rushed. Also, it is not known whether these structures had a raised floor level or not,⁵⁹¹ as the later churches from the area of the Kingdom of Asturias usually have. Finally, the basic issue for both cases remains their function.

In relation to this, I would like to point out the following. One of the basic hypotheses of I. Bango Torvis is that of the independence of the Asturian monarchy and the old Hispanic-Gothic liturgy from the Western Roman, i.e. Carolingian. The author goes so far with his belief in the isolation of the Kingdom of Asturias as to hypothesize the reverse influence and transfer of forms - instead of from the continent north of the Pyrenees to the Iberian Peninsula and the kingdom, he believes that the Carolingian forms were actually inspired by Hispanic.⁵⁹² Of course, nothing is impossible, but one should always be careful with such strong assumptions. After all, where in all this is the architecture from the area of the Principality of Croatia? Is it really possible that in the middle of the 9th century the original Hispanic-Gothic forms, previously incorporated into the Frankish architectural language, actually arrived in Dalmatia?

If we observe the area of the eastern Adriatic coast, there are no western annexes in the chronologically simultaneous period of the 7th and 8th centuries, but the structure of the narthex is present in most early Christian churches and reaches its peak during the 6th century.⁵⁹³ The examples where it is believed that these structures have served as a foundation for the later implementation of the *westwerk* are already the mentioned churches in Žažvić and Lepuri. One should, therefore question the possible differences between the early Christian narthex and the later westwork.

⁵⁹¹ SCHLUNK, H., La Iglesia de São Gião de Nazaré. Contribución al estudio de la influencia de la liturgia en la arquitectura de las iglesias prerrománicas de la Península Ibérica, Actas do II Congresso Nacional de Arqueologia, vol. II, Coimbra, 1971, p. 509-528. Also see CABALLERO, L., ARCE, F., UTRERO, M.A., São Gião de Nazaré (Portugal). Un tipo original de iglesia, Arqueología de la arquitectura, 2, 2003, p. 75-79. There is another example where the wooden structure might have existed – church San Pedro de Merida. See MATEOS, P., CABALLERO, L. (eds.), *Repertorio de Arquitectura Cristiana en Extremadura: época tardoantigua y altomedieval*, Mérida, Anejos de AEspA, 2003, p. 73-76.

⁵⁹² See BANGO TORVISO, 1996: 63, f. 7, 8. The author presented the same ideas earlier in his works. Cf. BANGO TORVISO, 1988: 31-88; BANGO TORVISO, 1992, 303-313.

⁵⁹³ JELIČIĆ, 1983: 35.

In both cases, the ground floor structures served as a burial site, which was definitely not a novelty in the Christian world. There are well-known examples of burials, masonry tombs and sarcophagi within early Christian narthexes, such as those in the basilica on Sustipan, in Srima, on Marusinec in Salona, and also in Žažvić,⁵⁹⁴ and elsewhere.⁵⁹⁵ On the other hand, it is assumed that the vision of the early medieval *westwerk* was a symbolic connection of the ruler (or members of a sufficiently powerful ruling elite) with the sacral dimension and the divine place on Earth. In terms of form, the westwerk was a vertical structure on the first floor, symbolically the *Anastasis*, a kind of church for itself where the upper floor was a place for the altar of the Saviour while the ground floor is a crypt, a place of eternal rest of the ruler, as seen in the church of St Mary in Crkvina in Biskupija and St Stephen on the Island in Solin.

Therefore, the answer to the indirect question of whether it is possible that the Visigothic solutions actually came to Croatia through the Carolingian Empire is not even in sight. Here I would certainly like to point to a kind of coincidence of individual architectural forms, which I have already pointed out earlier - from the noticeable similarity in the floor plan of the church of St Stephen in Solin and those of San Salvador de Valdediós or for example in relation to the proportions in the churches of San Julian de Prados and the cathedral in Biograd. The idea of burying the ruling elite in the western part of the sacral buildings is also something that is repeated in Asturias and the hinterland of the eastern Adriatic coast, but also in Istria (for example the church/royal mausoleum of Santa María in Oviedo, the church/mausoleum of St Stephen in Peroj and the two church/ royal mausoleums from the Principality - St Mary in Crkvina and St Stephen on the Island in Solin). However, it is a common symbol of ruling power that has been practised since the Merovingian kings from the beginning of the 6th century, and probably also the Visigothic ones, although information about this is almost non-existent. That is why it is ungrateful to talk about any concrete interactions here.

Finally, I want to emphasize that the biggest mistake we could make as researchers is to blindly believe in two-dimensional shapes. As tempting as these comparisons may sometimes seem, as seen in the above example, we must not forget (and often do) that the building is so much more than the form itself. We must also be aware that the focus of our research are the

⁵⁹⁴ MARUN, 1986: 119.

⁵⁹⁵ For more examples see JELIČIĆ, 1983: 5-39

monuments that lost their original function long ago, although there are many examples when it remains the same in theory. The historical and architectural landscape as we see it today has changed drastically and we need to be constantly aware of that. What needs to be done, both on the Iberian Peninsula and in today's Croatia, and of course from outside of those areas, is an in-depth revision of available information and materials, at the latest from the very beginnings of Christianity, but of course from much earlier periods. Only then, and only if we approach the analysis without pre-determined assumptions and/or burdened with national issues, will we be able to make progress in understanding certain forms and solutions that still remain unknown.

4. CONCLUSION

This topic exceeds the volume of a doctoral dissertation in terms of its complexity; it requires a project to be worked on by a team of people of different scientific backgrounds and experiences. It is clear that the pages of this doctoral dissertation are therefore only an overture to what will, I hope, follow at some point. The opportunity to try to deal, at least to some extent, and present such a geographically, historically and politically vast topic was at the same time a unique challenge, but also an exceptional burden. It is a work that has resulted in the idea that writing a conclusion as a chapter aimed at finalizing a particular topic is almost impossible - if not ill-advised. It would also be against the so-called norms of the profession. The only way to conclude this story at this point is to refrain from a definitive conclusion, as the commonly accepted forms would have known it. Therefore, only a few reflections on the specific aspects of this paper, as well as on the consideration of the future research follow.

The observation of historical processes - what they condition and what they result in - always must be carried out looking through at a perspective that is at least a step or two more comprehensive than the actual subject of research. In order to understand historical and artistic events at all, we need to understand how and where they came from, for which we need a broader context. Ten years ago, in the paper of the proceedings of the symposium *Convegno Internazionale di Studi* on the 8th century, entitled *L'VIII secolo: un secolo inquieto*, X. Barral i Altet proposed an interesting question about whether it is possible when we discuss the artistic production, to talk about the art of a specific political space, a geographically defined territory.⁵⁹⁶ It is no coincidence that such a thought came from the scientist who, among other things, had published the book *Contre L'art Roman ? : Essai Sur Un Passé Réinventé* a few years earlier, in 2006. There, too, he questioned the established conceptions of art-historical historiography in a very provocative manner, those primarily related to the stylistic determinants (in this case, the Romanesque period).⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁶ BARRAL I ALTET, 2010: 243-251.

⁵⁹⁷ BARRAL I ALTET, X., *Contre L'art Roman ? : Essai Sur Un Passé Réinventé*, Fayard, 2006.

The discussion about the clearly defined boundaries and territories in the context of the stylistic determinants of early medieval art production is an ungrateful task. First of all, the subject of our research is a period which is still, in the absence of historical sources and material remains, challenging to define and understand in many ways. Borderland territories, but also the entire early medieval political territories were places of ceaseless turmoil and change, caught in a constant whirlwind of the opposed structures. The many iterations of „space“ - physical, social or symbolic⁵⁹⁸ - are subjected to various influences, which results in what is known in the natural sciences as the law of action and reaction. Translated into the discourse of the humanities, the processes of incorporating an idea could be considered as ‘actions’, while the „reactions“ would be the resistance which follows that idea. To avoid further theoretical entanglement, I would summarize the following: the art of a particular territory in its essence means nothing. It is because the „territory“ cannot be perceived as the agent who can influence the development of artistic production, an artistic idea for itself or by itself. It exists only as a social construction which provides the basis for further creation. The creation is the product of human imagination, and it is conditioned by various social laws. During the early medieval period, as well as the period prior and posterior to it, the actual carrier and patron of the artistic idea has been the society - primarily the elite, the ruling classes at different levels of government. They are the ones who have dictated significant changes and generated novelties. These ideas could have been accepted or rejected, modified or adapted, and as such continued their path, manifesting themselves in various ways through artistic production - architecture, sculpture, painting and works of applied art. Every monument, every building, every object that we now understand as cultural heritage have once been created as a result of an infinite set of social relations in one period of time.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁸ A great intellectual momentum which has redefined the understanding of space and its relation to the social structures which inhabit its physical dimension was propelled by the movement commonly known as the „spatial turn“ in the last quarter of the 20th century. See for example TUAN, Y.F., *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1977; FOUCAULT, M., *The Archaeology of Knowledge: And the Discourse on Language*, New York, Pantheon, 1982; WERLEN, B., *Society, Action and Space: An Alternative Human Geography*, London, Routledge, 1993; UCKO, P., LAYTON, R.H. (eds.), *The Archaeology and Anthropology of Landscape. Shaping Your Landscape*, London, Routledge, 2005; NOVAKOVIĆ, P., „Arheologija prostora i arheologija krajolika“, u: OLUJIĆ, B. (ed.), *Povijest u kršu. Zbornik radova projekta "Naselja i komunikacije u kontekstu veza između jadranskog priobalja i unutrašnjosti u prapovijesti i antici"*, Zagreb, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu - FF press, str. 15-54., 2008.; SHANKLAND, D. (ed.), *Archaeology and Anthropology: Past, Present and Future*. London, Routledge, 2012.

⁵⁹⁹ JURKOVIĆ, M., ČALDAROVIĆ, O., BEHAIM, J., KRANJEC, I., The Perception and Social Role of Heritage Buildings in Modern Society, in: MARTINS, J. (ed.), *Innovation in Intelligent Management of Heritage Buildings*, Zagreb-Motovun, IRCLAMA - COST, 2019, p. 68-83.

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What could be the approach for further research? First of all, we should be aware of the potential adverse effects of the hyperproduction of new publications. In many ways, this can be useful; however, often the quantity is not accompanied by the quality of what is presented. This is definitely one of the obvious drawbacks of this work, of which I am well aware. The fact that the researcher can never be confident about whether he has included every relevant publication about a particular issue is a kind of burden of the globalized world. It could also be considered a setback for the academic *milieu* as well, which sometimes seems to revolve in a vicious circle created by itself, from which it actually refuses to leave. One of the fundamental questions of my work was to determine to what extent and how to present the areas which seem similar in many ways but are also completely different. Ultimately, this issue became the most interesting element of the research. Although the subject of the research might seem too extensive (geographically, historically and thematically), I believe that the majority of similar future research projects should be based on similarly established foundations. Perhaps the best way to illustrate it is the example of a comparison of architectural solutions found throughout the Principality of Croatia and Kingdom of Asturias. Once again, I will emphasize the fact that in this particular example, it is precisely the geographical distance that can lead to a far more objective approach and reflection. Since these two historical regions do not share any direct links, possible similarities in artistic and architectural achievements speak of the tradition of their heritage and its dynamic relationship with their common neighbour - the Carolingians. On the other hand, the territories of Catalonia and Istria did not confirm the preliminary hypothesis. But even such result provides a great methodological framework for further study and should not be disregarded. There should be no lack of motivation to investigate the territory of Catalonia, and above all its monuments, which at its core may still preserve traces of the period before the dawn of the new millennium.

Aware of the fact that a significant number of presented problems have remained unresolved, I hope that this dissertation, more of a synthesizing nature than of a scientific discussion, will result in new research, reflections and further questioning. The need for an even better and

more elaborate theoretical and methodological framework for understanding the historical landscape of the early Middle Ages is obvious and is something that asks for further efforts. The Carolingian Empire itself contained a number of other regions and related political territories, both central and peripheral, the study of which could benefit significantly through this broader perspective. Only then will we be able to see more clearly how different ideas and models moved, where and why did they stop, how they merged and/or in the interaction with other elements and phenomena. Once we are able to visualize artistic achievements, along with their sources and patterns, at the level of a global, networked map of historical events and processes of the early medieval period (and others), we may finally understand more of what is still a mystery to us today.

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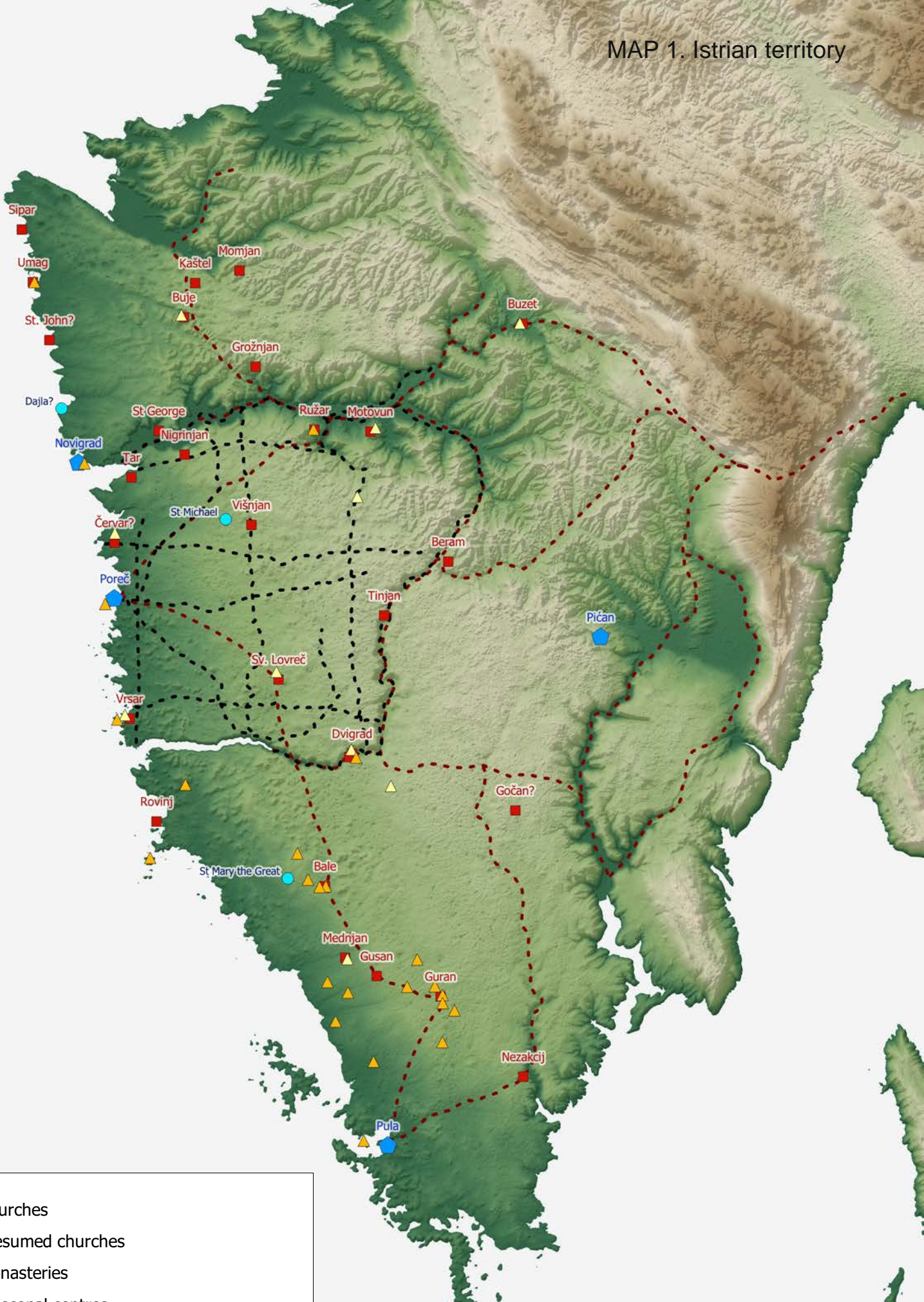
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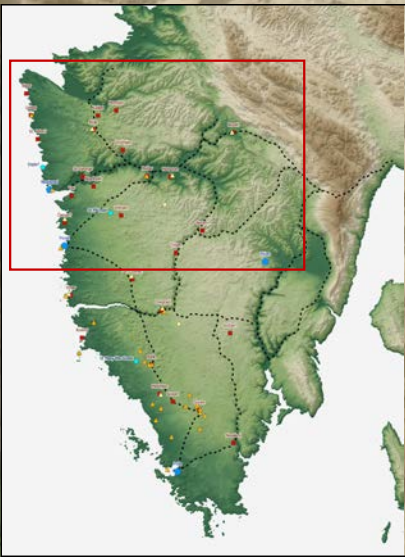
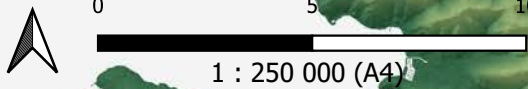
- ▲ Churches
- ▲ Presumed churches
- Monasteries
- ⬠ Episcopal centres
- Settlements
- - - Communications (after A. Šonje, M. Baldini)
- - - Communications (after B. Marušić)

0 10 20 km

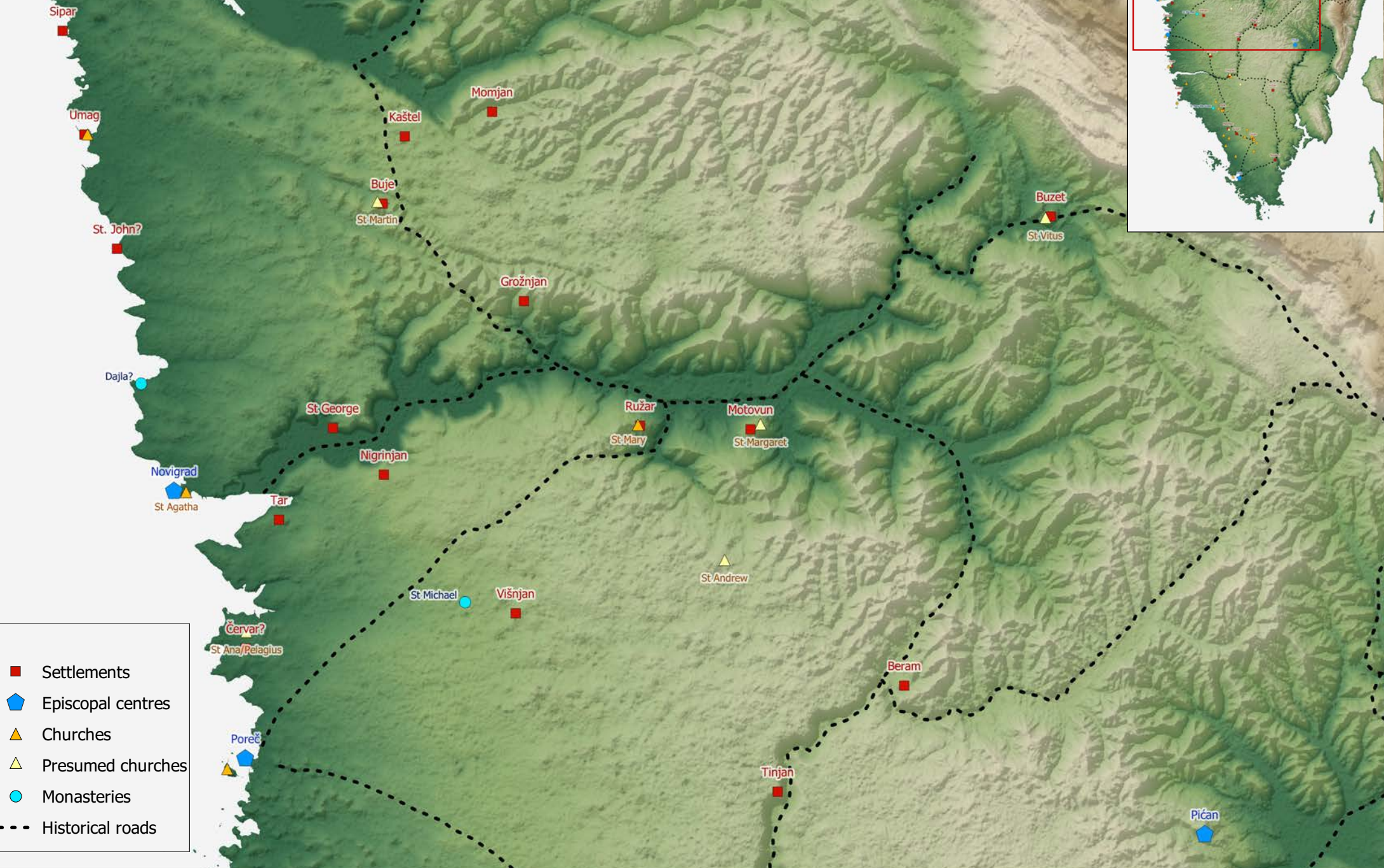
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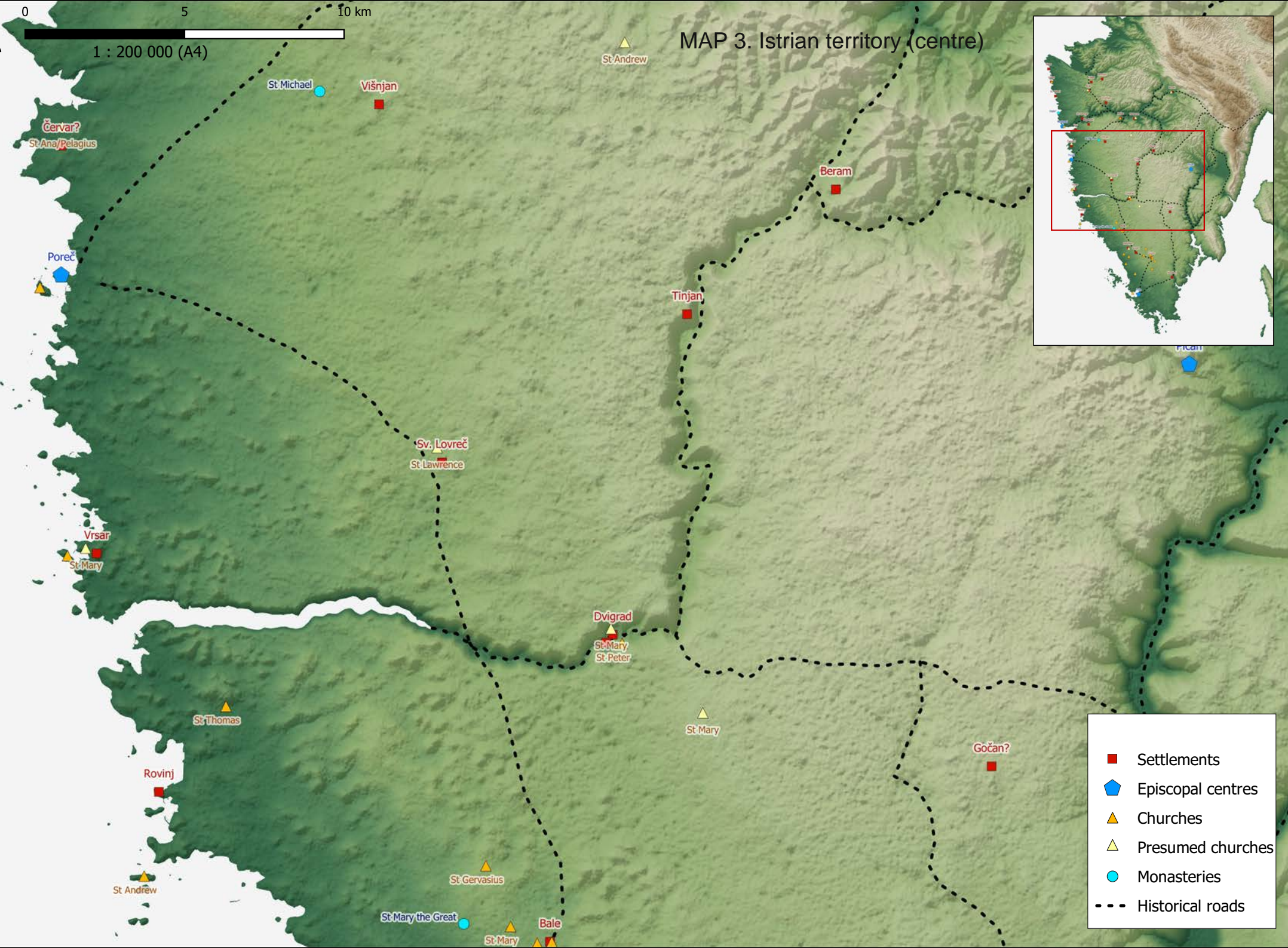
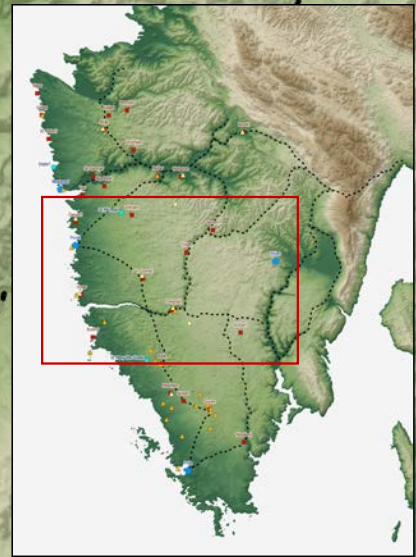
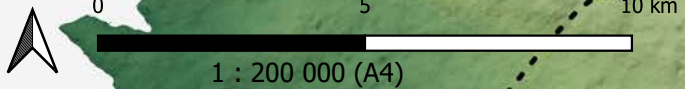
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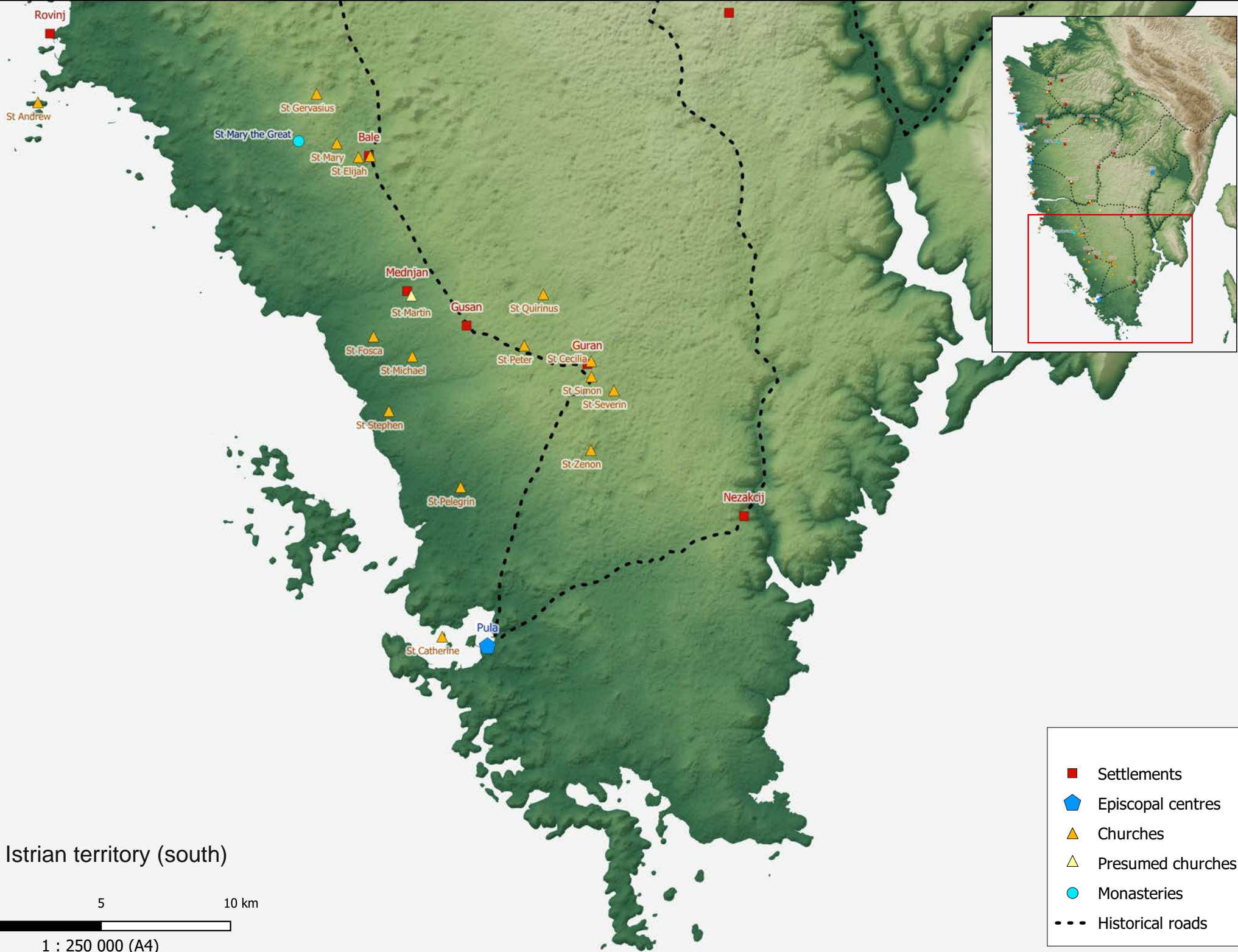
- Settlements
- ⬠ Episcopal centres
- ▲ Churches
- ▲ Presumed churches
- Monasteries
- - - Historical roads



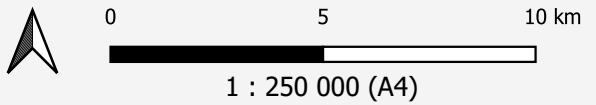
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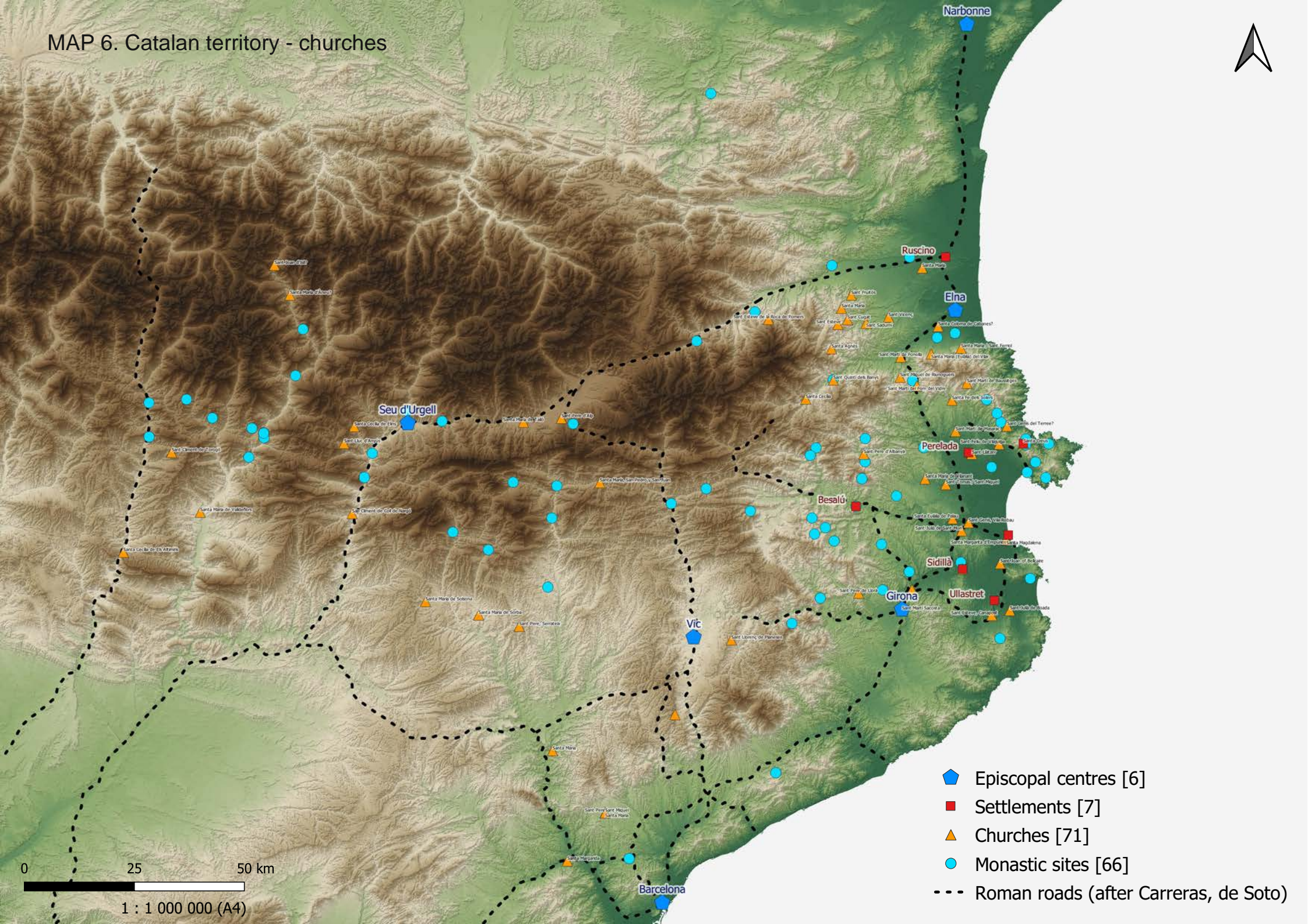
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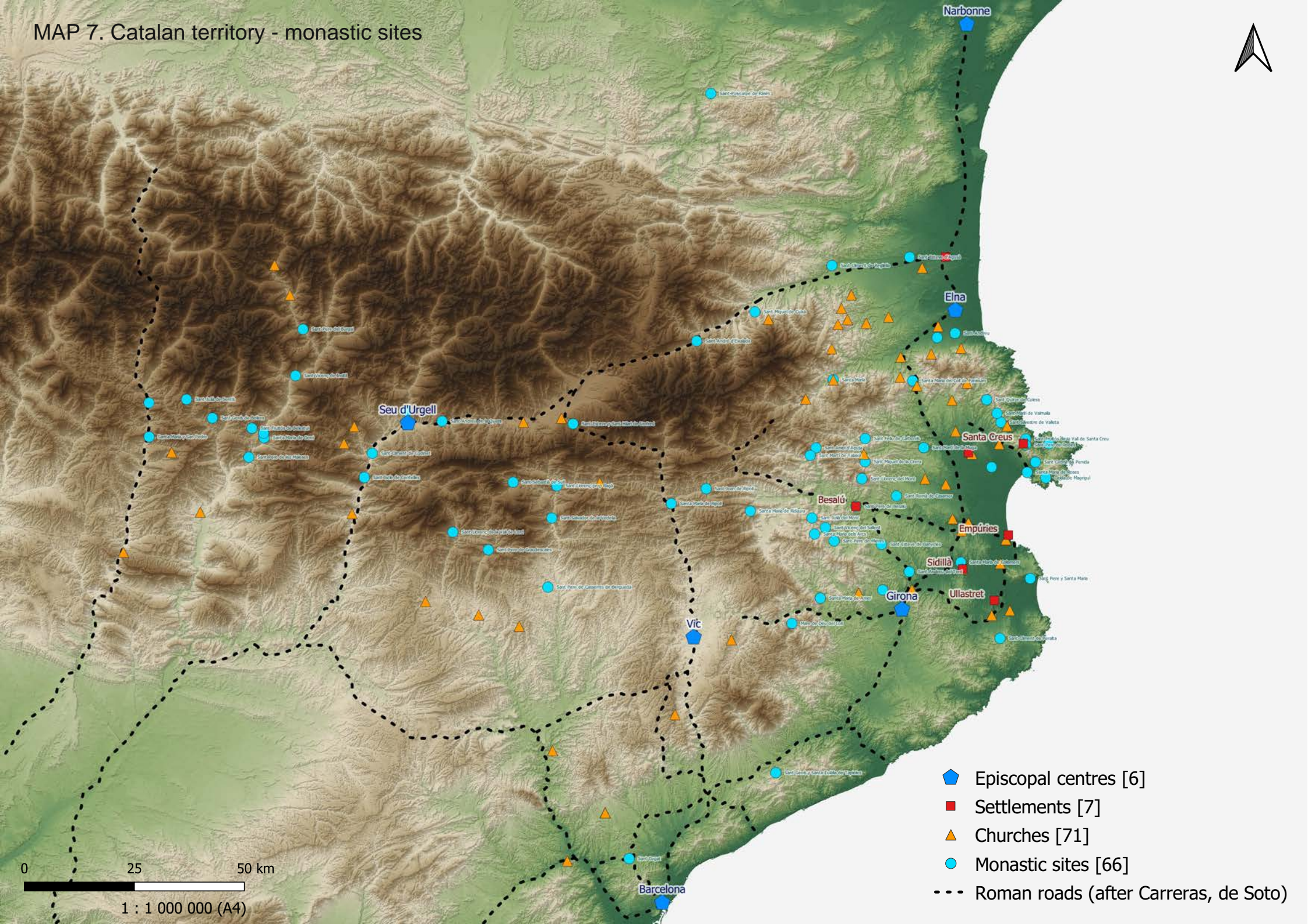
0 25 50 km
1 : 1 000 000 (A4)

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- Episcopal centres [6]
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- Churches [71]
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- ◆ Episcopal centres [6]
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0 25 50 km
1 : 1 000 000 (A4)

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Fig. 58. Comparison of the so-called *T-plan* examples from Istria. Plan: J. Behaim.

Fig. 59. Savolago, Church of St Zenon. Plan: J. Behaim.

Fig. 60. Fragments of liturgical furnishing from Church of St Zenon (not in scale). Photo: Historical and Maritime Museum of Istria. Author: I. Puniš. Source: <http://www.ppmi.hr/hr/patrimonio/katalog-predmeta/item/939/> ; <http://www.ppmi.hr/hr/patrimonio/katalog-predmeta/item/941/> ; <http://www.ppmi.hr/hr/patrimonio/katalog-predmeta/item/942/> ; <http://www.ppmi.hr/hr/patrimonio/katalog-predmeta/item/940/>

Fig. 61. Episcopal complex in Terrassa. Photo: J. Behaim.

Fig. 62. Episcopal complex in Terrassa. Photo: J. Behaim.

Fig. 63. Episcopal complex in Terrassa. Sant Pere. Photo: J. Behaim.

Fig. 64. Plan of the Episcopal complex in Terrassa. Plan: Garcia, Moro, Tuset, 2009; adaptations M. Valls (RIPOLL et al., 2012: 53).

Fig. 65. Sorba site. Plan: A. Bastardes i Porcel, Catalunya Romànica. Source:

<https://www.encyclopedia.cat/ec-catrom-1233101.xml>

Fig. 66. Sorba site. Photo: R. Viladés, Catalunya Romànica. Source:

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Fig. 67. Plan of Sant Llorenç near Bagà. (BOTO VARELA, 2006, after A. López, A. Caixal).

Fig. 68. Sant Pere de Rodes. Photo: J. Behaim.

Fig. 69. Plan of the early medieval phase of Sant Pere de Rodes (BOTO VARELA, 2006, after J. Adell, E. Riu).

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Fig. 71. Architectural plans of the Catalan architectural examples. Plans: Catalunya Romànica. El Terrer: J. Falguera, J. Rodeja, J. Torrent; Sant Martí: J. Badia; Santa Maria: A. Mazcuñan, F. Junyent; Sant Pere: J. Segués. Source:

<https://www.encyclopedia.cat/catalunya-romanica>

Fig. 72. Bijaći (Trogir), Church of St Martha. Photo: J. Behaim.

Fig. 73. Bijaći (Trogir), Church of St Martha. Photo: J. Behaim.

Fig. 74. Bijaći, (Trogir), St Martha. Aerial photo. Photo: Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments (MHAS), Split. Source: <https://www.mhas-split.hr/istrazivanje/arhiva-istrazivanje/artmid/934/articleid/86/bija%C4%86i-svmarta>.

Fig. 75. Church of St Martha near Bijaći (Trogir). Results of the archaeological excavation and conservation 1967-1970 (JELOVINA, 2006: 106).

- Fig. 76. Aerial photo of the Burnum amphitheatre. Photo: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 77. The remaining arcades of the *principium*. Photo: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 78. Pridraga, Church of St Martin. View from the north-east. Photo: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 79. Pridraga, Church of St Martin. View of the eastern apses. Photo: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 80. Pridraga, Church of St Martin. Southern *piscina*. Photo: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 81. Comparison of the floor plans of the churches of St Martin and St Michael. Plans: J. Behaim (after P. Vežić and M. Jurković).
- Fig. 82. Sculpture fragments found in Church of St Martin, with the inscriptions *DUX* and *...OYAS...* (Josipović, 2018: 121, 135).
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- Fig. 84. Žažvić site. Archaeological excavations in the 19th century. (MARUN, 1896: 120).
- Fig. 85. Žažvić site, 2016 situation. Photo: J. Behaim
- Fig. 86. Žažvić site, floor plan. Plan: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 87. Lepuri, Church of St Martin. Position in landscape. Photo: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 88. Lepuri, Church of St Martin. Orthophoto plan. Plan: J. Behaim.
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A. San Juan de Baños. Photo: Wikimedia Commons. Source:

https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iglesia_de_San_Juan_de_Ba%C3%B1os#/media/Archivo:SAN_JUAN_DE_BA%C3%91OS.JPG

B. Quintanilla de la Viñas. Photo: Por Soleá. Source: <https://porsolea.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ermita-quintanilla-de-la-vi%C3%B1as-2.jpg>

C. San Pedro de la Nave. Photo: Wikimedia Commons. Source:

[https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iglesia_de_San_Pedro_de_la_Nave_\(El_Campillo\)#/media/Archivo:El_Campillo_-_Iglesia_de_San_Pedro_de_la_Nave_\(Exterior\).jpg](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iglesia_de_San_Pedro_de_la_Nave_(El_Campillo)#/media/Archivo:El_Campillo_-_Iglesia_de_San_Pedro_de_la_Nave_(Exterior).jpg)

D. Santa Comba de Bande. Photo: Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación.

Source: https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/desarrollo-rural/temas/caminos-naturales/img_20180612_181427629_tcm30-467892.jpg

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https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/50/Iglesia_de_Santa_Mar%C3%ADa_de_Melque_01.jpg

Fig. 96. Plan of the Melque complex (CABALLERO, 2004: 359).

Fig. 97. Santa Lucía del Trampal, exterior. Photo: J.L. Cabana (Wikimedia Commons). Source:

https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bas%C3%ADlica_de_Santa_Luc%C3%ADa_del_Trampal#/media/Archivo:Santa_Luc%C3%ADa_de_El_Trampal.jpg

Fig. 98. Plan of Santa Lucía del Trampal. Plan: SAES. Source:

<http://www.spanisharts.com/arquitectura/imagenes/prerromanico/santalucia.html>

Fig. 99. Santa Cristina de Lena. Photo: J.L. Martinez Alvarez (Wikimedia Commons). Source:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7f/Santa_Cristina_de_Lena.jpg

Fig. 100. Santa Cristina de Lena, architectural drawing. Museo Nacional del Prado, catalogue No

G005231. Authors: E. Stüler, J. Gándara. Source:

<https://www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/obra-de-arte/planta-alzado-seccion-y-detalles-de-santa/19930646-7d95-4e5c-9023-c03a7ca36615>

- Fig. 101. Santa Cristina de Lena, panoramic view of the interior. Photo: Á.M. Felicísimo (Wikimedia Commons). Source: [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Cristina_de_Lena#/media/Archivo:Santa_Cristina_de_Lena_\(33009507432\).jpg](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Cristina_de_Lena#/media/Archivo:Santa_Cristina_de_Lena_(33009507432).jpg)
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- Fig. 103. Naranco palace. Photo: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 104. Naranco palace. Photo: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 105. Naranco palace. Photo: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 106. Naranco floor plan. (ÁNGELES UTERO, 2016: 259-260).
- Fig. 107. Church of the Holy Salvation, Cetina. Photo: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 108. Church of the Holy Salvation, Cetina. Photo: J. Behaim.
- Fig. 109. Church of the Holy Salvation, Cetina. Orthophoto plans of the western and southern facade with *westwerk* marked in red. Authors: J. Behaim, I. Kranjec.
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- Fig. 115. Churches with semicircular buttresses. Plans: J. Behaim.
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Fig. 121. Proposed reconstruction of Sant Miguel de Lillo (ARIAS PÁRAMO, 2005: 11, 22).

Fig. 122. San Miguel de Lillo. Photo: J. Behaim.

Fig. 123. San Miguel de Lillo. Photo: J. Behaim.

Fig. 124. San Miguel de Lillo, interior. Source:

<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/27/e3/50/27e350422f2570c94d67f244277fb3bf.jpg>

Fig. 125. San Miguel de Lillo, southern jamb. Photo: Á.M. Felicísimo (Wikimedia Commons).

Source:

[https://es.wiktionary.org/wiki/jamba#/media/Archivo:San_Miguel_de_Lillo_\(2\).jpg](https://es.wiktionary.org/wiki/jamba#/media/Archivo:San_Miguel_de_Lillo_(2).jpg)

Fig. 126. San Miguel de Lillo, interior sculptural decoration. Photo: Instituto Nacional de Tecnologías Educativas y de Formación del Profesorado. Source:

<http://procomun.educalab.es/gl/ode/view/1416349626734>

Fig. 127. San Miguel de Lillo, decorated pillar bases. Photo: Agrega Educación. Source:

http://agrega.educacion.es/visualizar/es/es_20071227_1_5027294/false

Fig. 128. San Miguel de Lillo, southern jamb detail. Photo: Wikimedia Commons. Source:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a7/San_miguel_de_lillo_jamba.jpg

Fig. 129. The comparison of St Stephen „na Otoku“ in Solin and San Salvador de Valdediós.

Plan: J. Behaim.

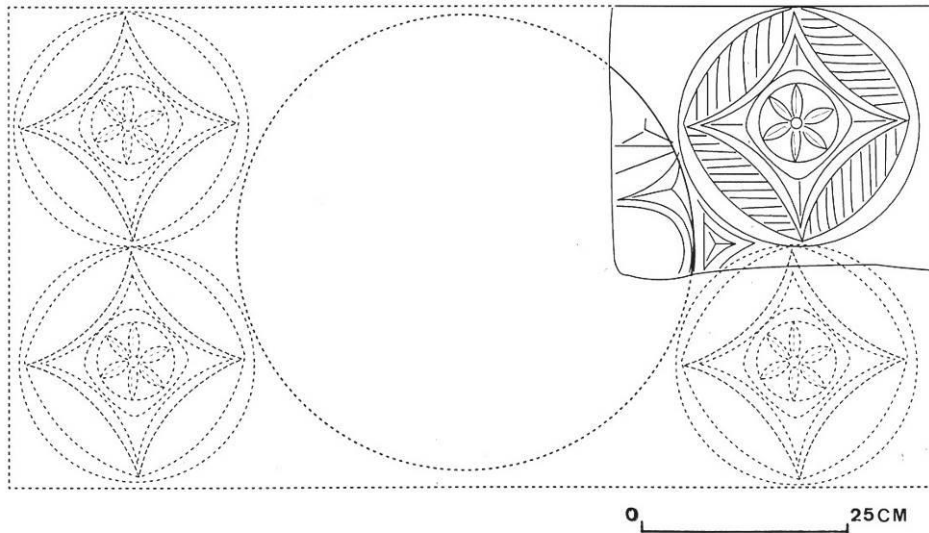


Fig. 1. Sant Martí Sacosta, proposed reconstruction of the altar railing fragment



Fig. 2. Poreč, Euphrasian Basilica



Fig. 3. Pula, St Mary *Formosa*



Fig. 4. Pula Cathedral. Gable of Bishop Handegis

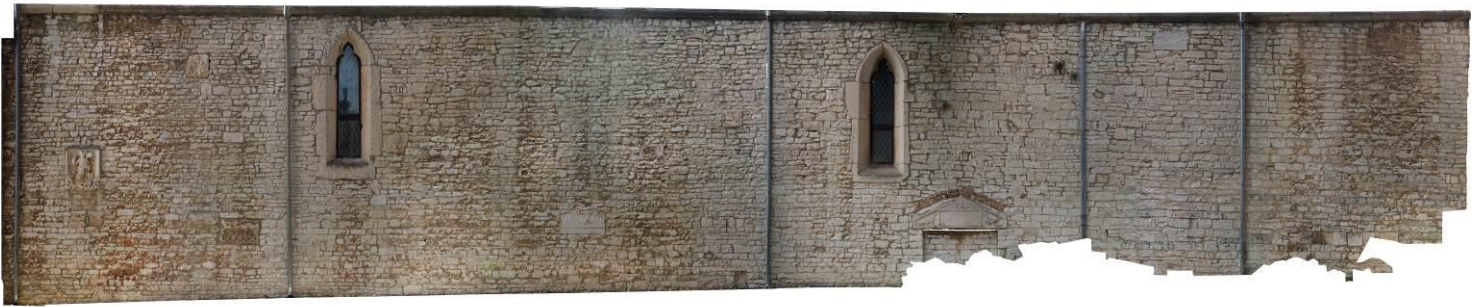
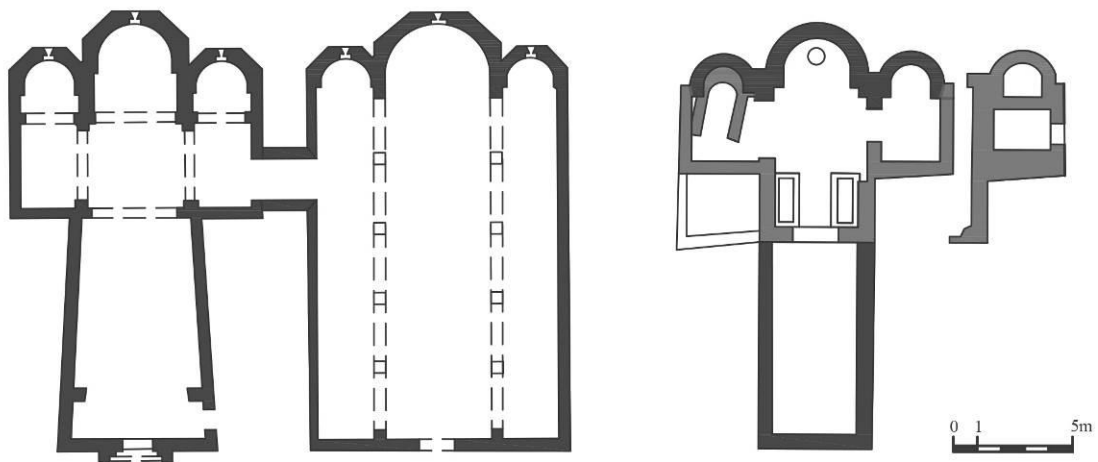


Fig. 5. Orthophoto image of the southern façade of Pula Cathedral



St Clement and St Michael in Pula

St Catherine on the islet in front of Pula

Fig. 6. Plan comparison

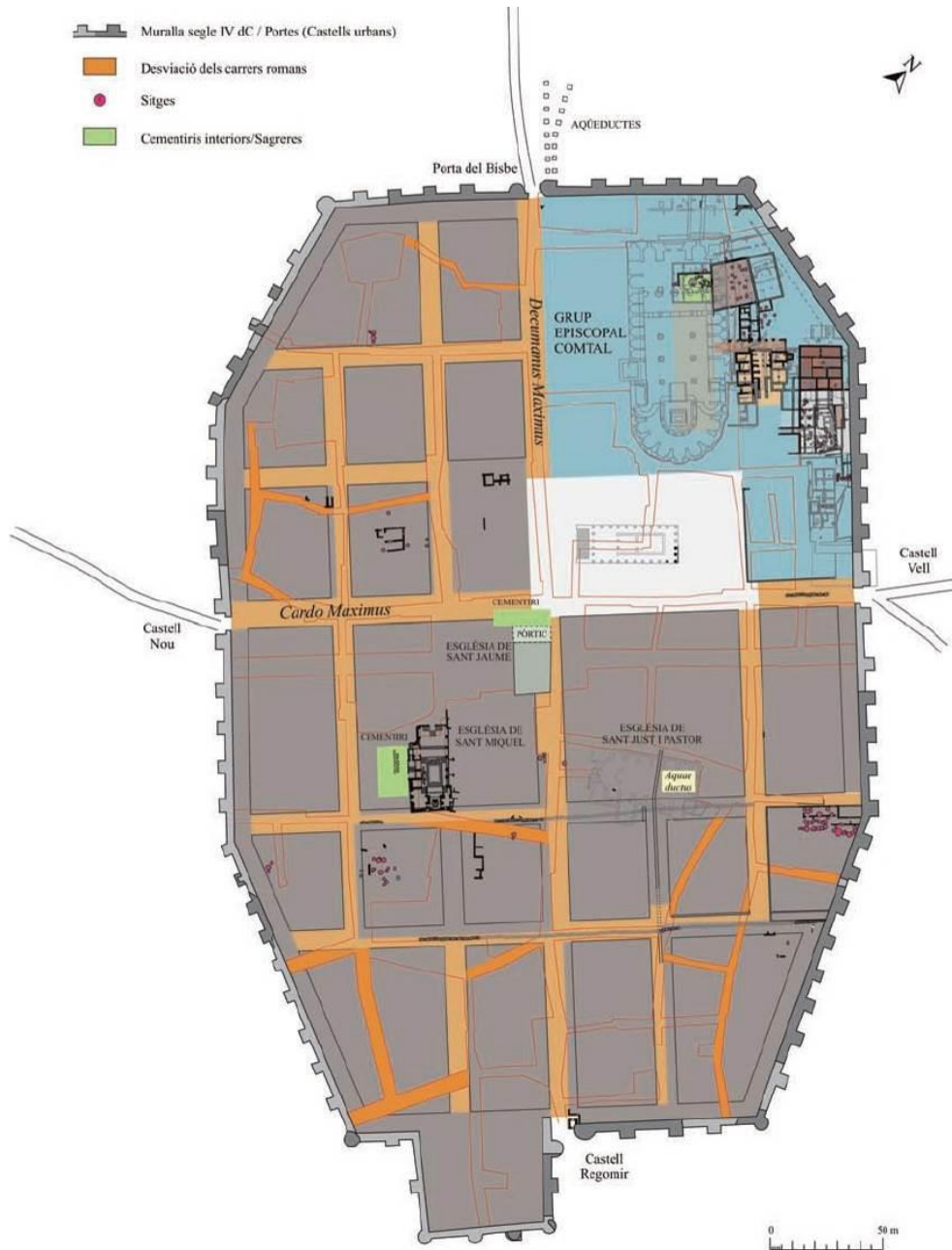


Fig. 7. Plan of Barcelona with the archaeological findings



Fig. 8. Sant Pere de les Puelles, impost



Fig. 9. Sant Pere de les Puelles, impost



Fig. 10. Guran settlement, state of research 2018



Fig. 11. Dvigrad *castrum* overlooking the Lim valley

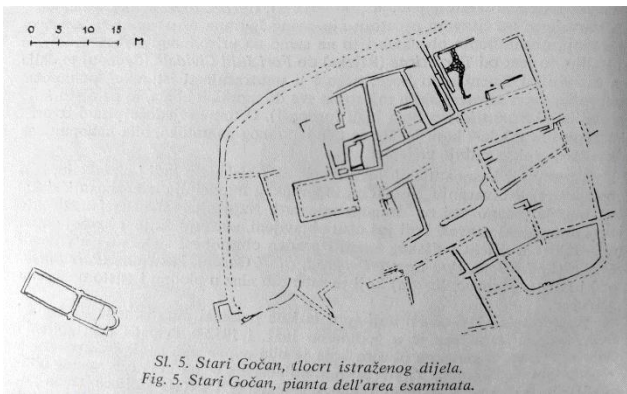


Fig. 12. Stari Gočan archaeological site



Fig. 13. Gusan settlement, aerial photo



Fig. 14. St. George ("Santi Quaranta") above Mirna



Fig. 15. Strategic point Nigrinjan above Mirna



Fig. 16. Visual communication across Mirna from Motovun



Fig. 17. Motovun town above Mirna

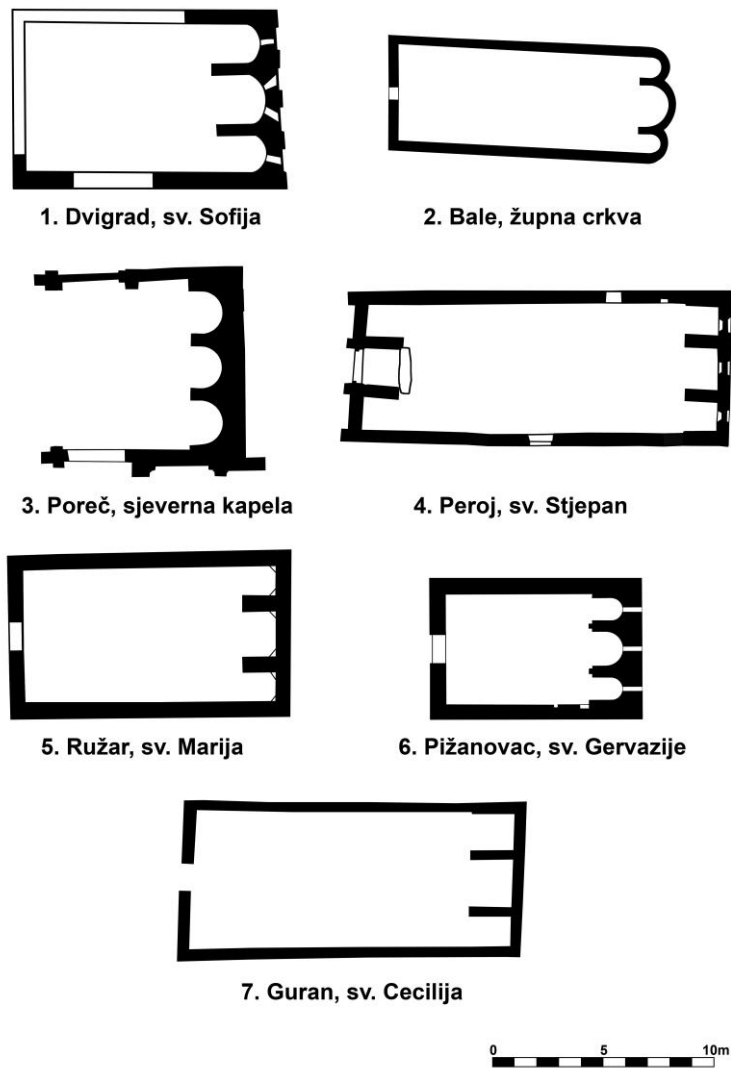


Fig. 18. Examples of *Dreiapsidensaalkirche* type



Fig. 19. Poreč, aerial view



Fig. 20. Vrsar, St Mary "of the Sea" (1970s)



Fig. 21. St Cecilia near Guran. Aerial view



Fig. 22. Roda de Ter, aerial view



Fig. 23. St Thomas near Rovinj. Position in landscape

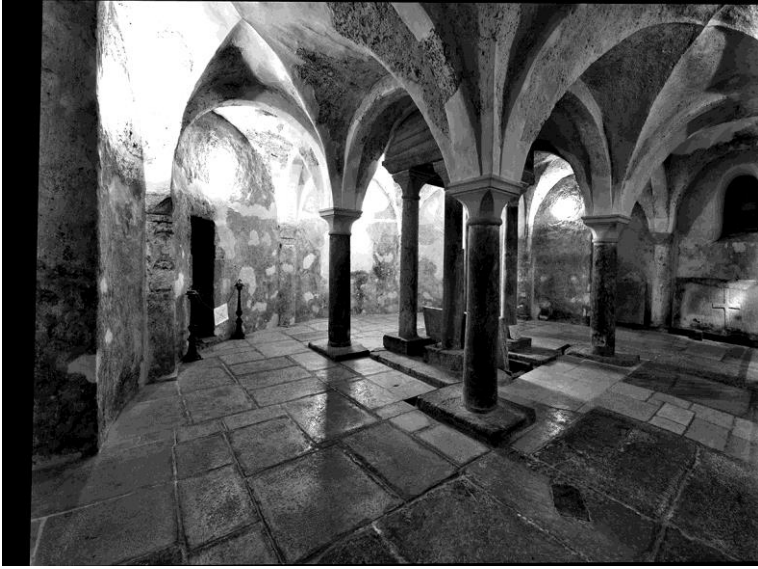


Fig. 24. Novigrad crypt

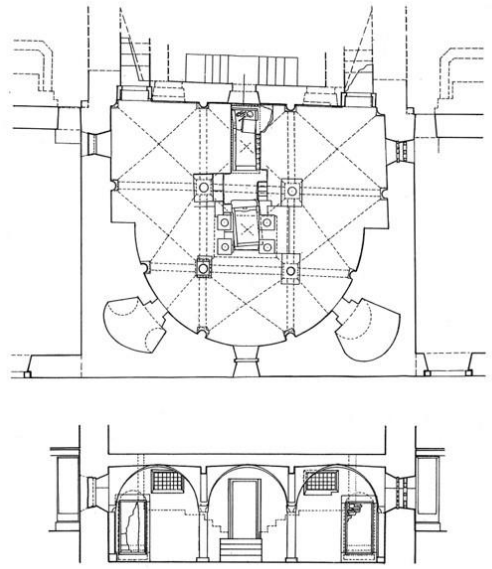


Fig. 25. Novigrad crypt plan



Fig. 26. Transenna, Novigrad



Fig. 27. Fragment of the pluteus, Novigrad



Fig. 28. Fragment of the Mauritian *ciborium* from Novigrad



Fig. 29. Three-nave basilica next to Guran settlement

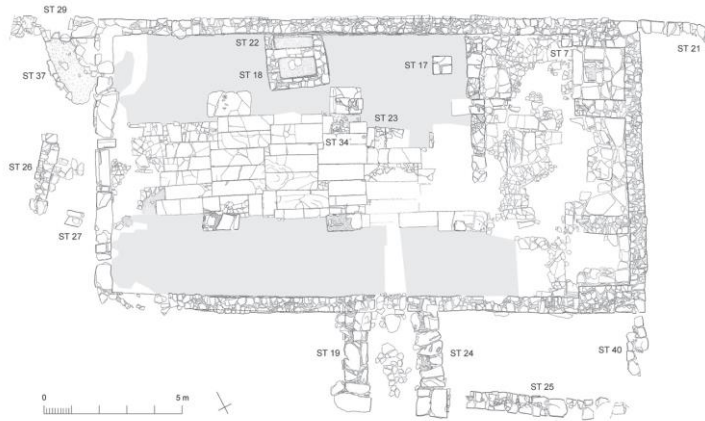


Fig. 30. Floor plan of the three-nave basilica next to Guran settlement

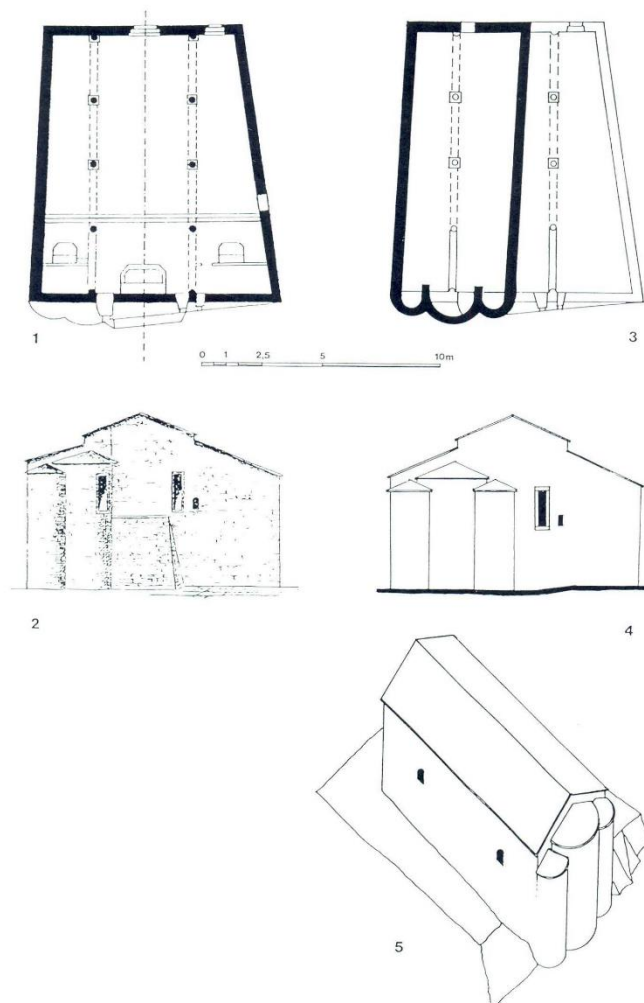


Fig. 31. Bale parish church. Reconstruction of the early medieval construction phase



Fig. 32. Dvigrad *castrum*



Fig. 33. View of the church of St Sofia

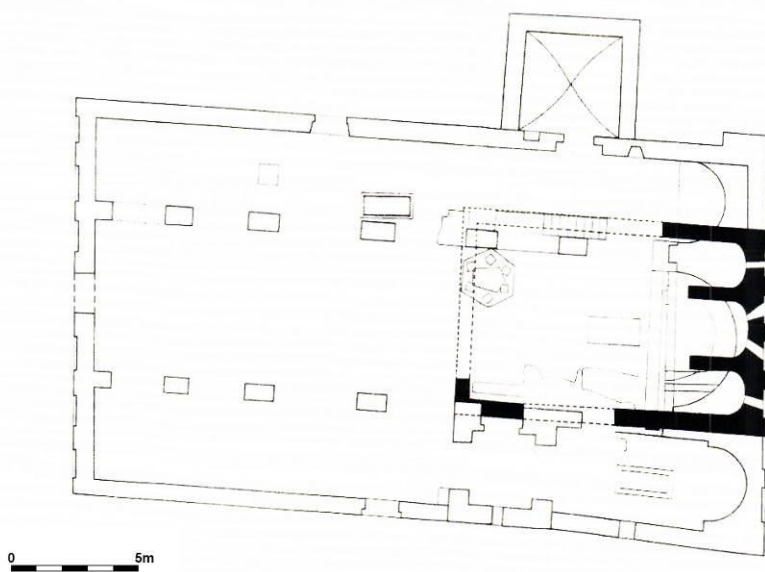


Fig. 34. Floor plan of the church of St Sofia, Dvigrad

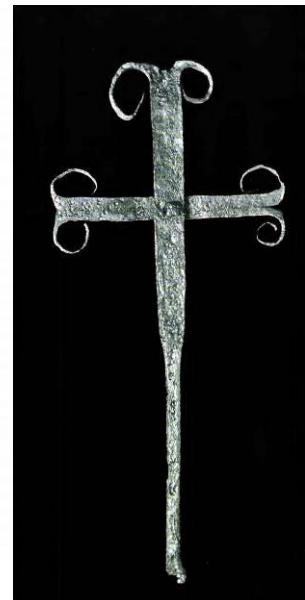


Fig. 35. Iron cross from Dvigrad



Fig. 36. Sarcophagus from basilica in Poreč

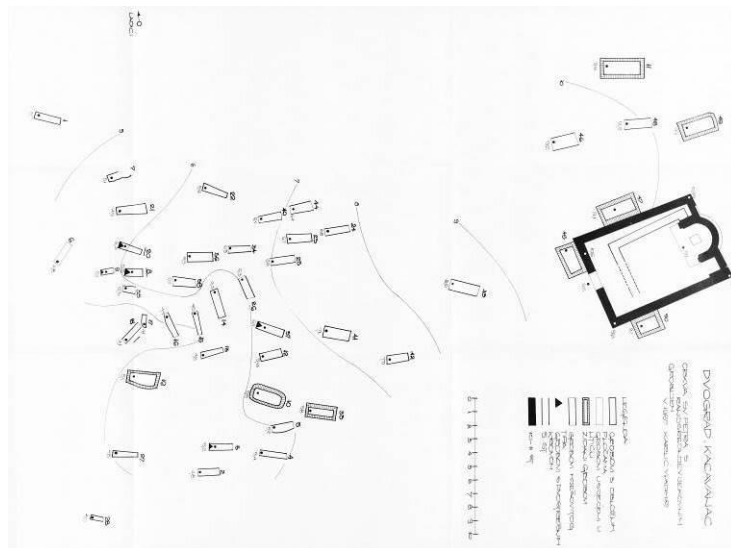


Fig. 37. Cemetery church of St Peter near Dvigrad, 1957



Fig. 38. Altar railing from Šijana (near Pula)

GURAN (near VODNJAN, ISTRIA)
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS 2013-2018

General plan
Authors: A. Borzacconi, J. Behaim, I. Kranjec
Research director M. Jurković
International Research Centre for Late Antiquity and Middle Ages
University of Zagreb, Croatia

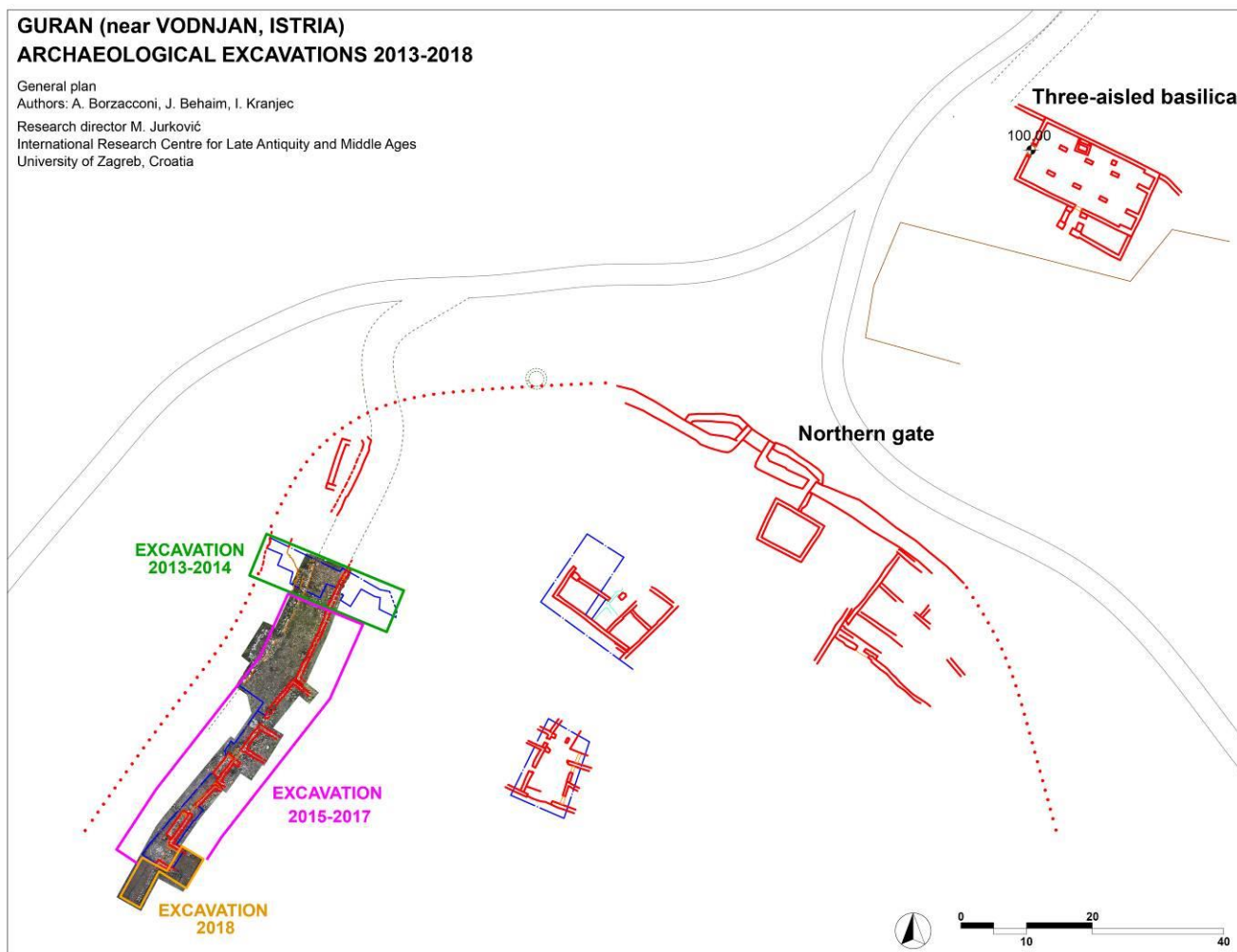


Fig. 39. Medieval settlement of Guran. State of research 2018



Fig. 40. Guran, Church of St Cecilia, aerial view

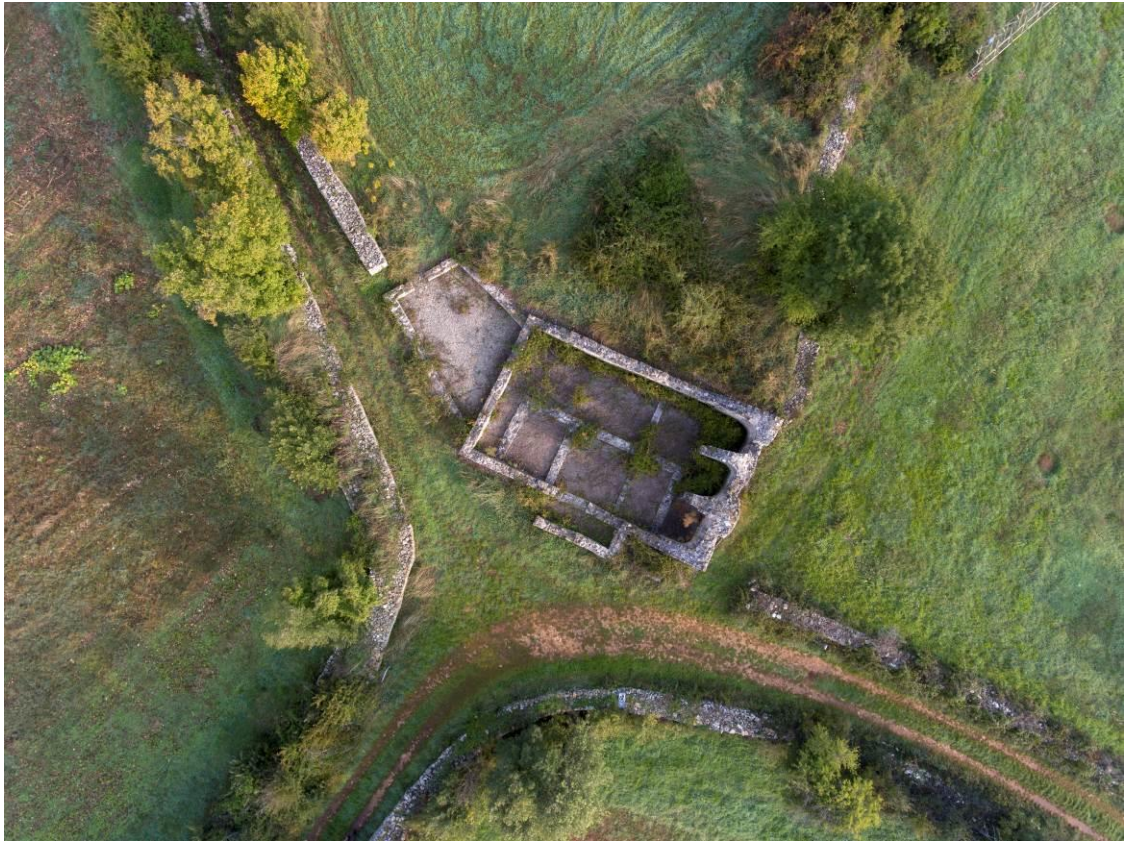


Fig. 41. Guran, Church of St Simon

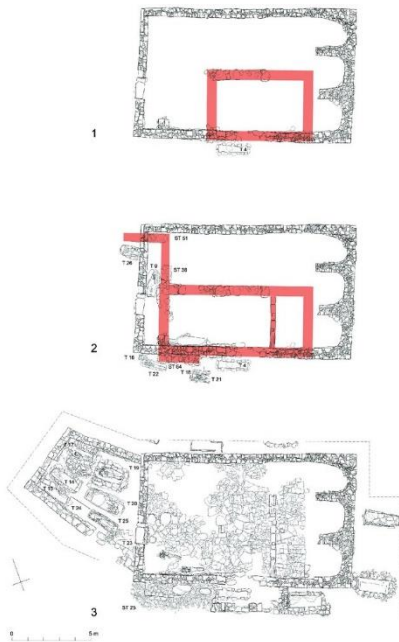


Fig. 42. Guran, Church of St Simon, phases of construction



Fig. 43. Guran, Church of St Simon, archaeological excavation



Fig. 44. Peroj, Church of St Stephen



Fig. 45. Peroj, Church of St Stephen, western facade

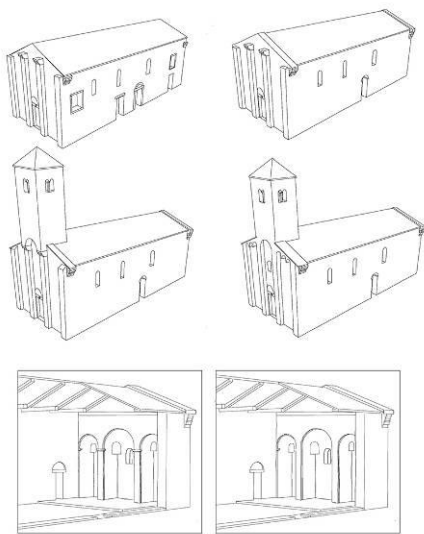


Fig. 46. Proposed reconstructions of the church



Fig. 47. Protruding structures of the western facade



Fig. 48. Monastery complex of St Mary the Great near Bale, aerial view

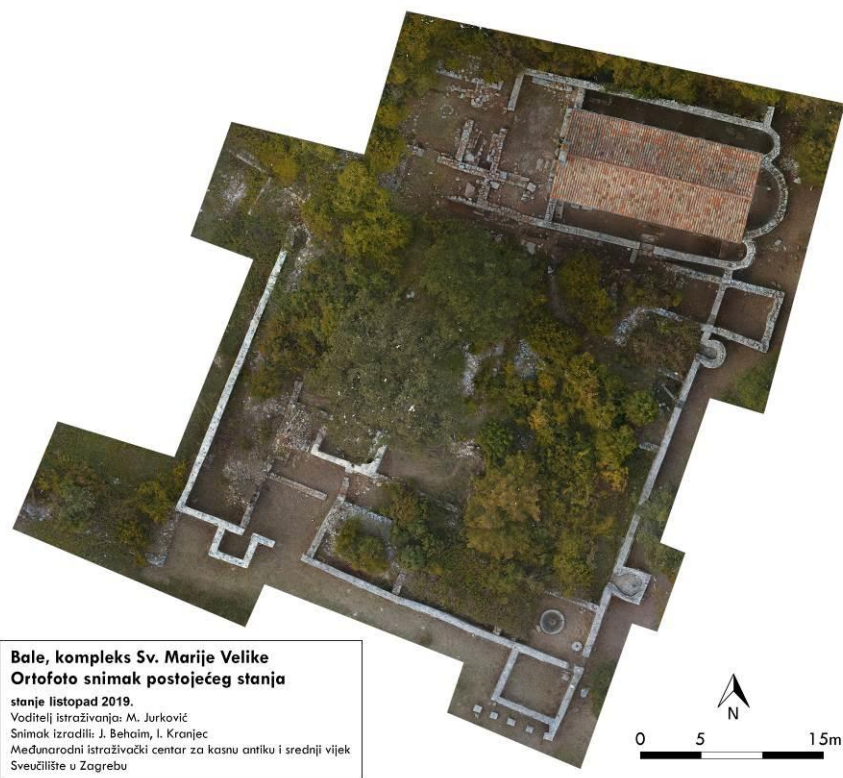


Fig. 49. Orthophoto plan of the monastery complex. State of research 2019

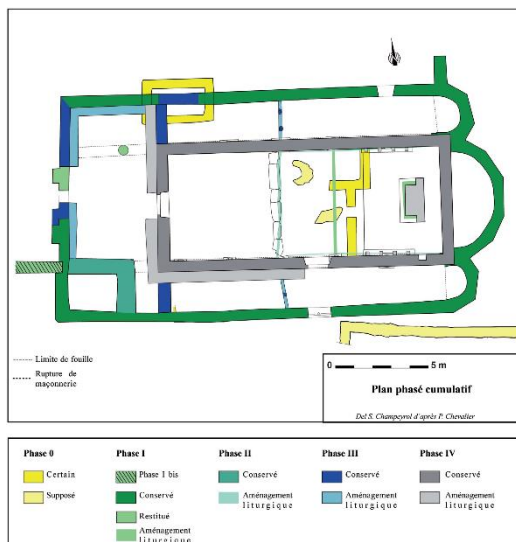


Fig. 50. Floor plan of the monastery church and its phases of construction

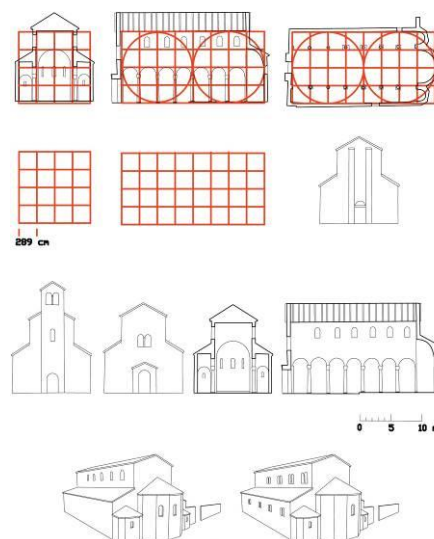


Fig. 51. Reconstruction of the early medieval church according to the modular calculations



Fig. 52. Comparison of the late antique capital from the *portico* of the Euphrasian basilica complex and the early medieval examples from St Mary the Great



Fig. 53. Juršići, Church of St Quirinus

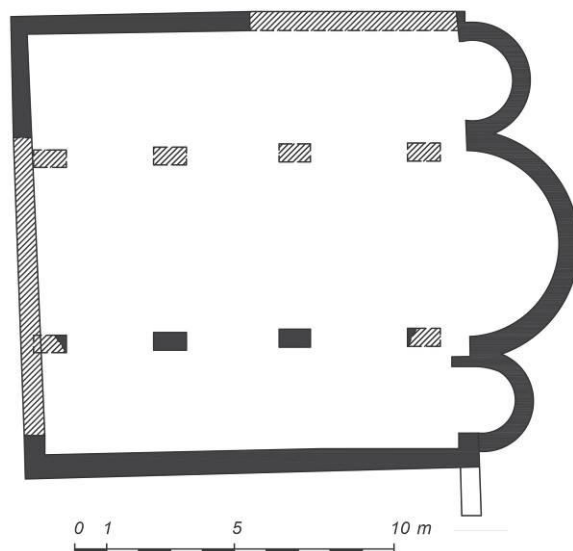


Fig. 54. Juršići, Church of St Quirinus, floor plan



Fig. 55a-d. Church of St Thomas near Rovinj

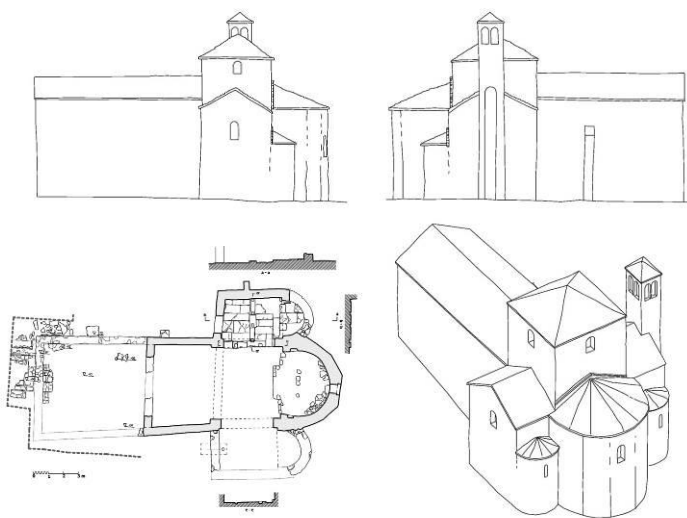


Fig. 56. Church of St Thomas near Rovinj, floor plan and the proposed reconstruction

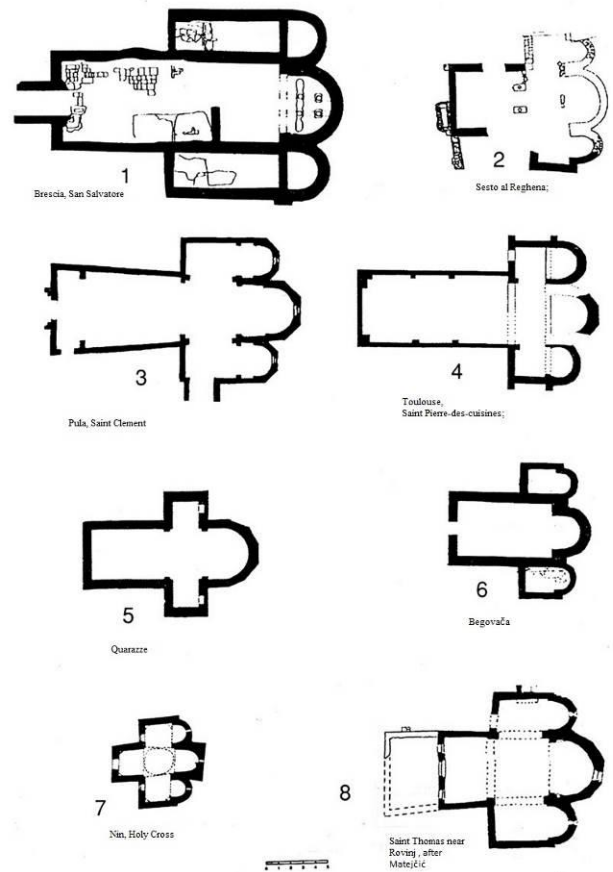


Fig. 57. Examples of the so-called T-plan churches

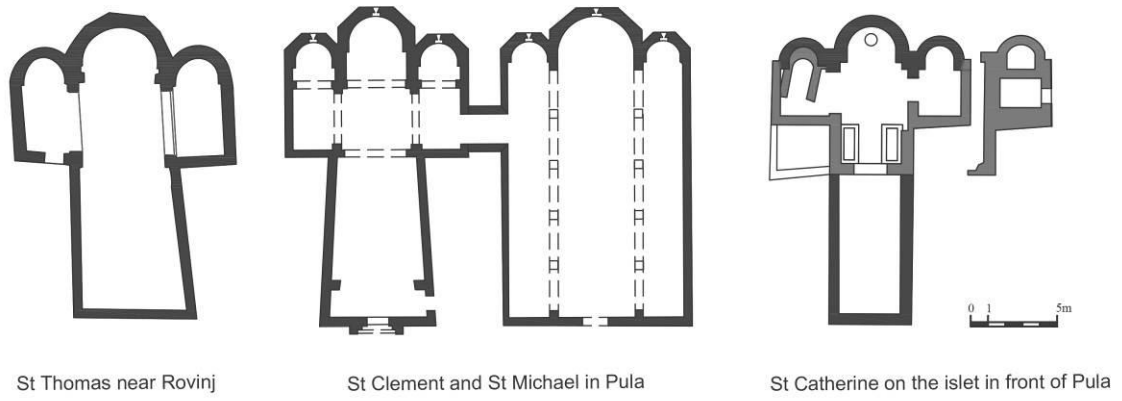


Fig. 58. Comparison of the so-called *T-plan* examples from Istria

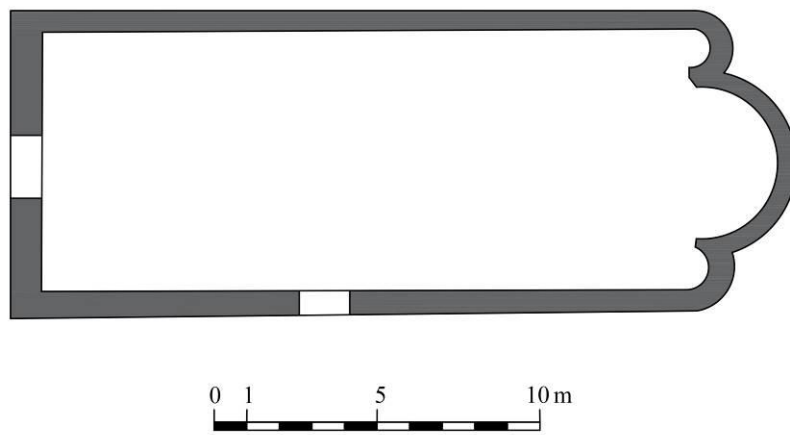


Fig. 59. Savolago, Church of St Zenon



Fig. 60. Fragments of liturgical furnishing from Church of St Zenon (not in scale)



Fig. 61. Episcopal complex in Terrassa



Fig. 62. Episcopal complex in Terrassa



Fig. 63. Episcopal complex in Terrassa. Sant Pere



Fig. 64. Plan of the Episcopal complex in Terrassa

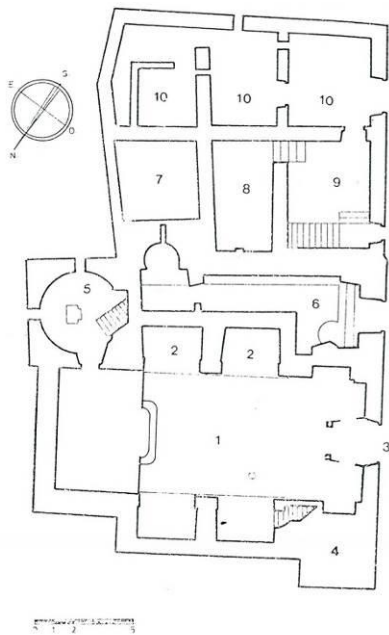


Fig. 65. Sorba site



Fig. 66. Sorba site

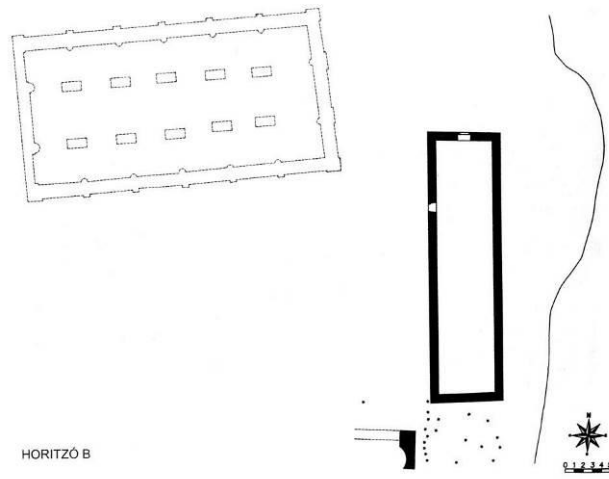


Fig. 67. Plan of Sant Llorenç near Bagà



Fig. 68. Sant Pere de Rodes

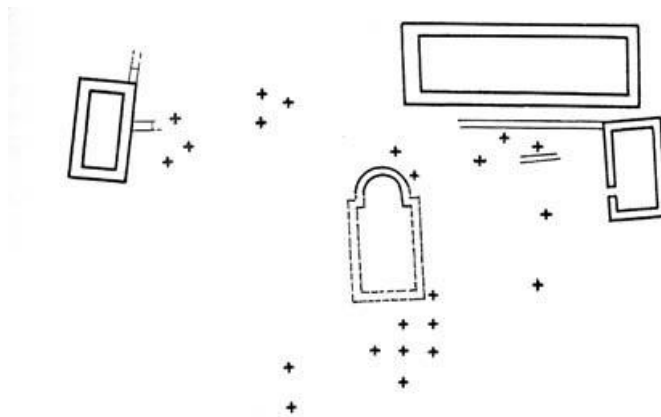


Fig. 69. Plan of the early medieval phase of Sant Pere de Rodes

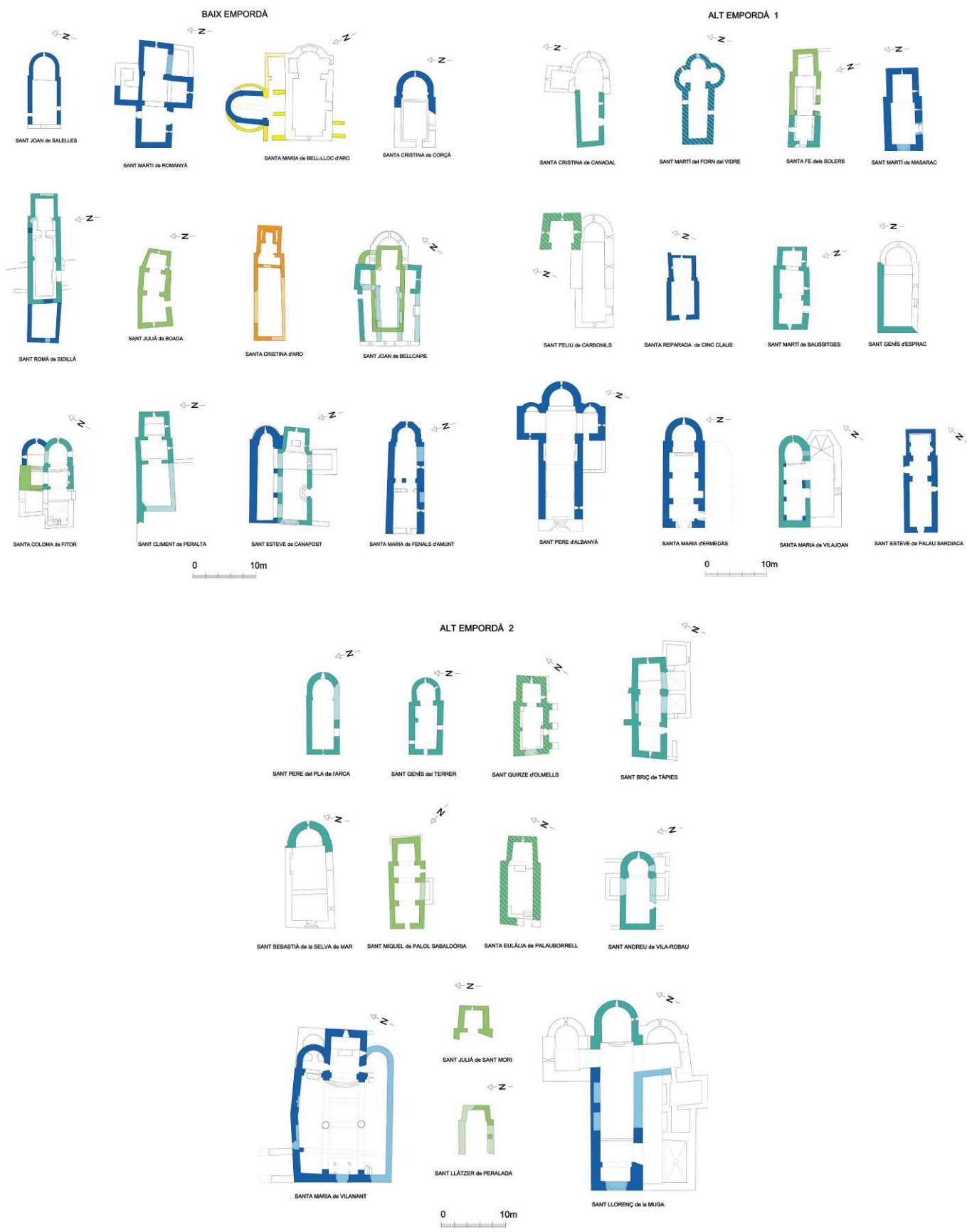
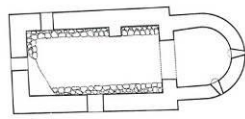
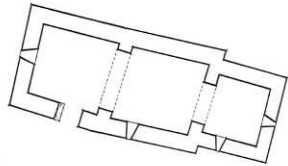


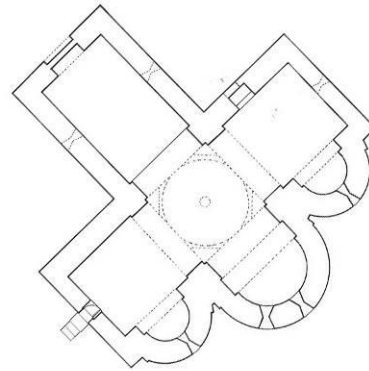
Fig. 70. Examples of Catalan early medieval sacral architecture from Baix Empordà and Alt Empordà. *CARE Hispania* project



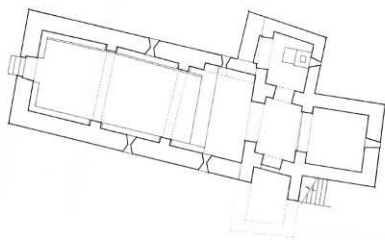
El Terrer



Sant Martí de Baussitges



Sant Pere de Graudescales



Santa Maria de Matadars



Fig. 71. Architectural plans of the Catalan architectural examples



Fig. 72. Bijaći (Trogir), Church of St Martha



Fig. 73. Bijaći (Trogir), Church of St Martha



Fig. 74. Bijaći (Trogir), Church of St Martha. Aerial photo

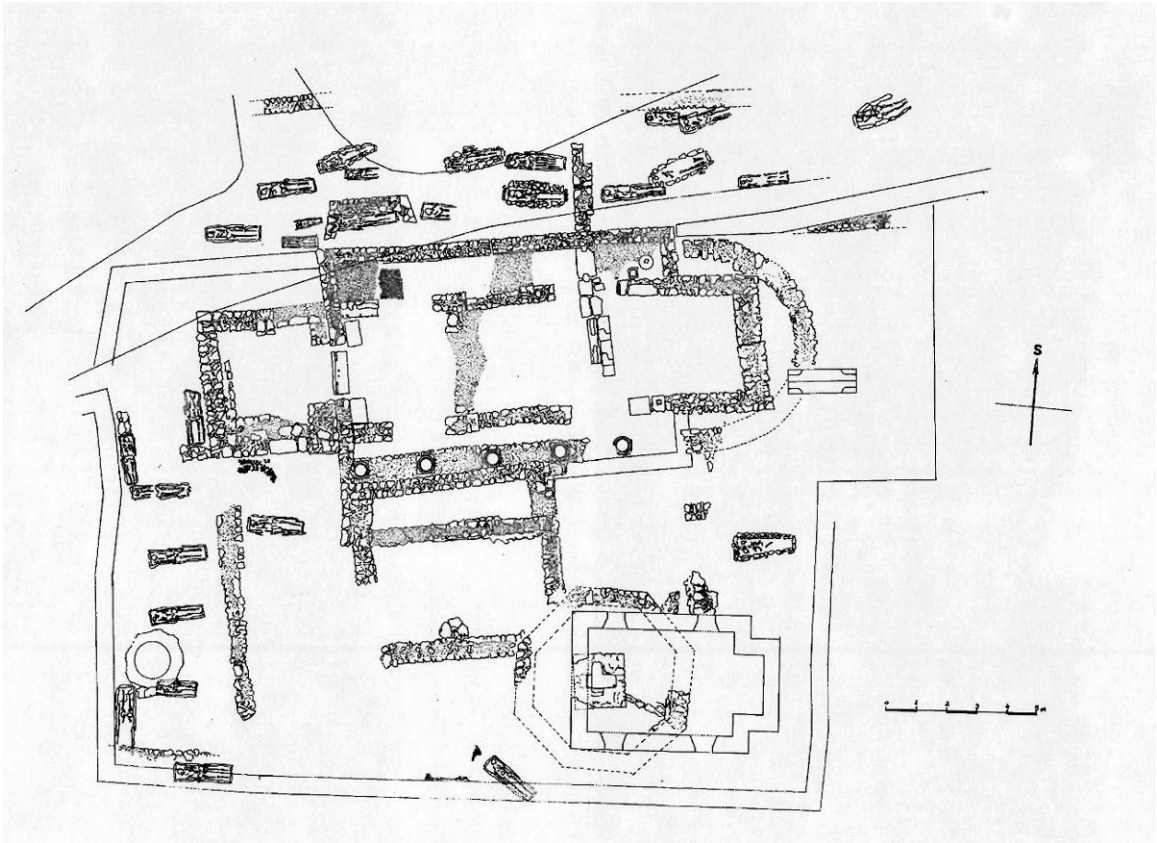


Fig. 75. Church of St Martha near Bijaći (Trogir). Results of the archaeological excavation and conservation 1967-1970



Fig. 76. Aerial photo of the Burnum amphitheatre



Fig. 77. The remaining arcades of the *principium*.



Fig. 78. Pridraga, Church of St Martin. View from the north-east



Fig. 79. Pridraga, Church of St Martin. View of the eastern apses



Fig. 80. Pridraga, Church of St Martin. Southern *piscina*

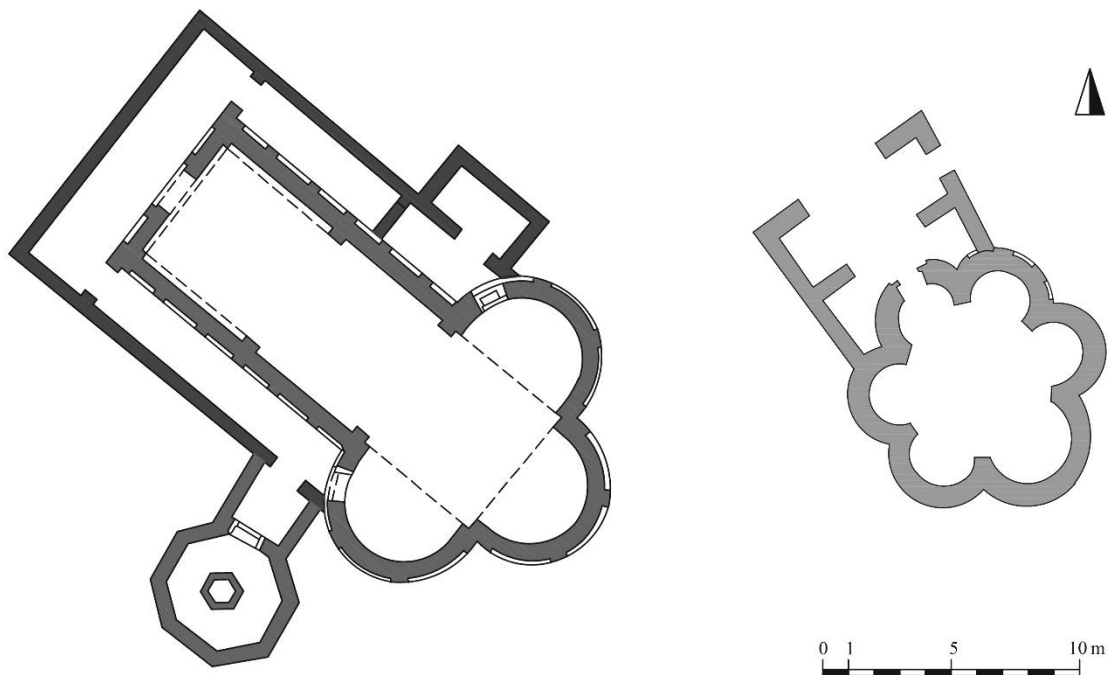


Fig. 81. Comparison of the floor plans of the churches of St Martin and St Michael

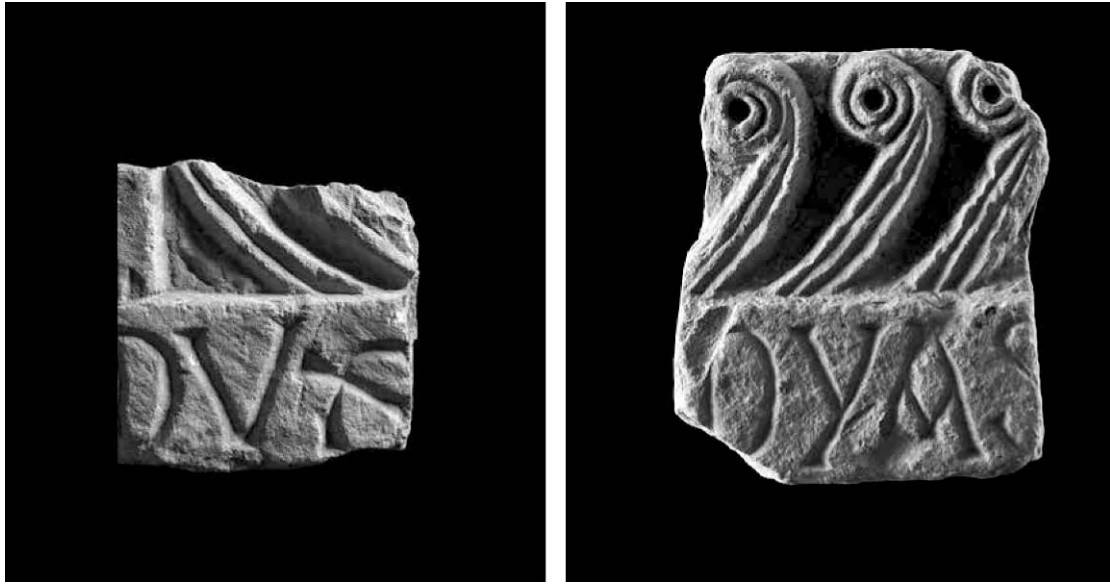


Fig. 82. Sculpture fragments found in Church of St Martin, with the inscriptions *DUX* and *...OYAS...*

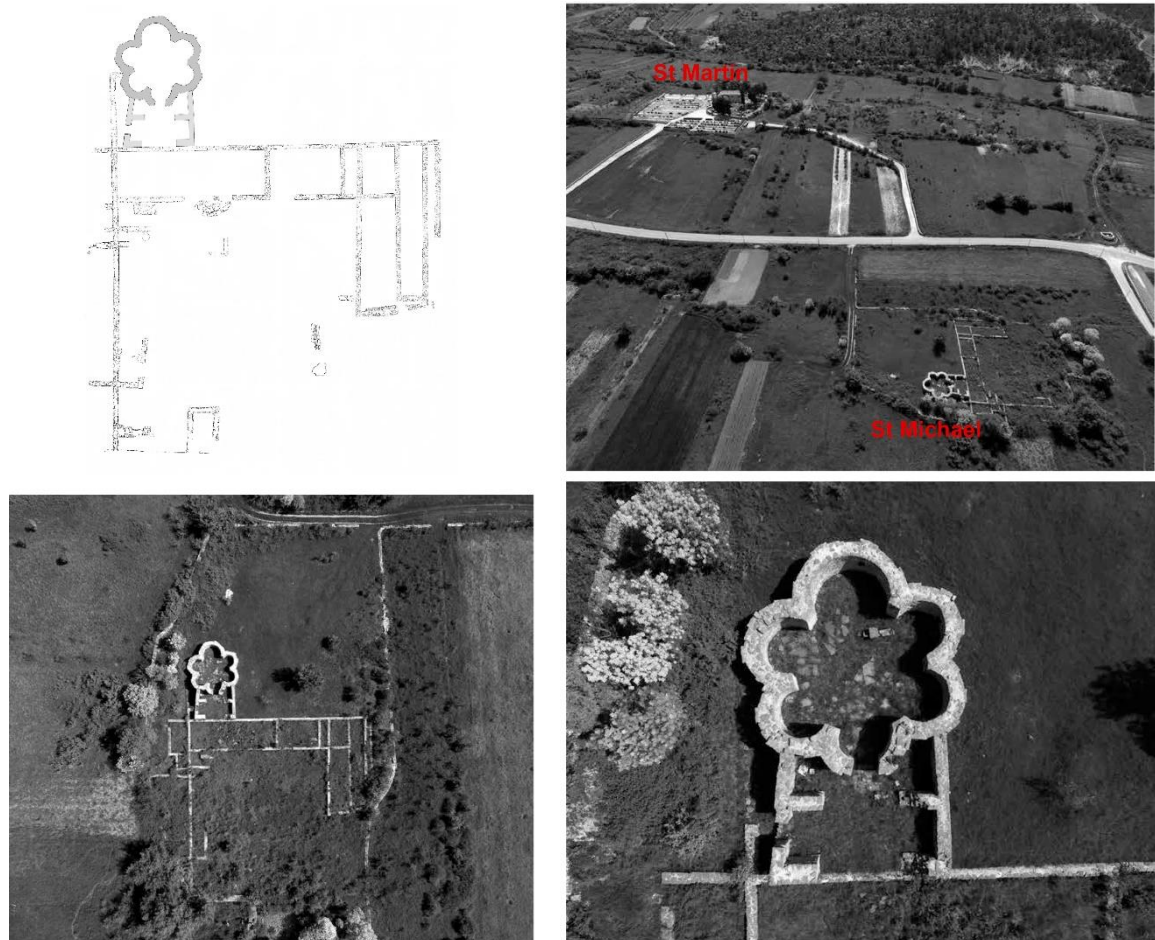


Fig. 83a-d. St Michael near St Martin's church.
Aerial photos and the floor plan of its surrounding complex



Fig. 84. Žažvić site. Archaeological excavations in the 19th century



Fig. 85. Žažvić site, 2016 situation

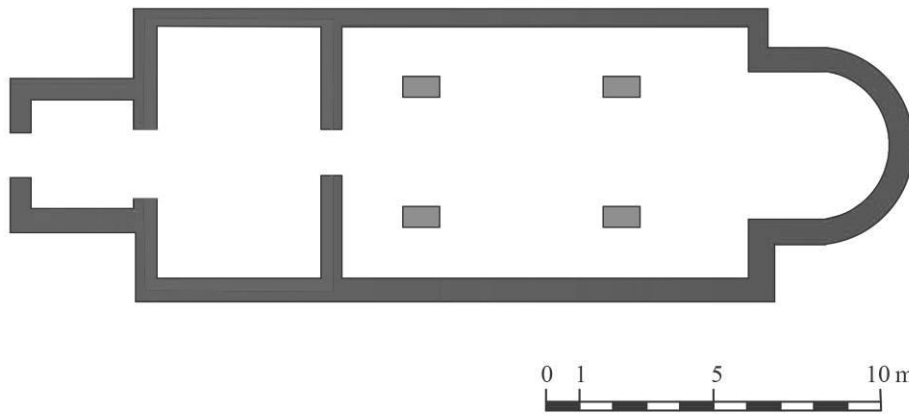


Fig. 86. Žažvić site, floor plan



Fig. 87. Lepuri, Church of St Martin. Position in landscape

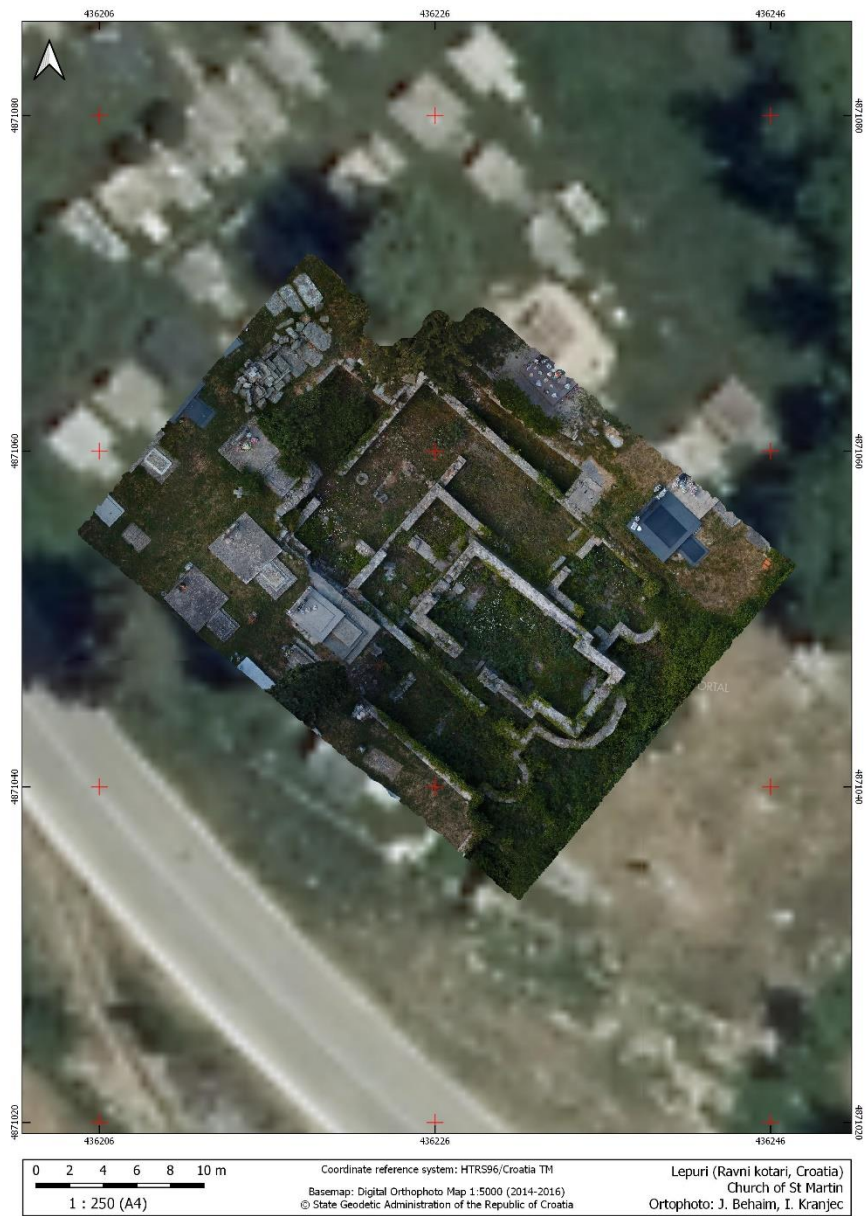


Fig. 88. Lepuri, Church of St Martin. Orthophoto plan

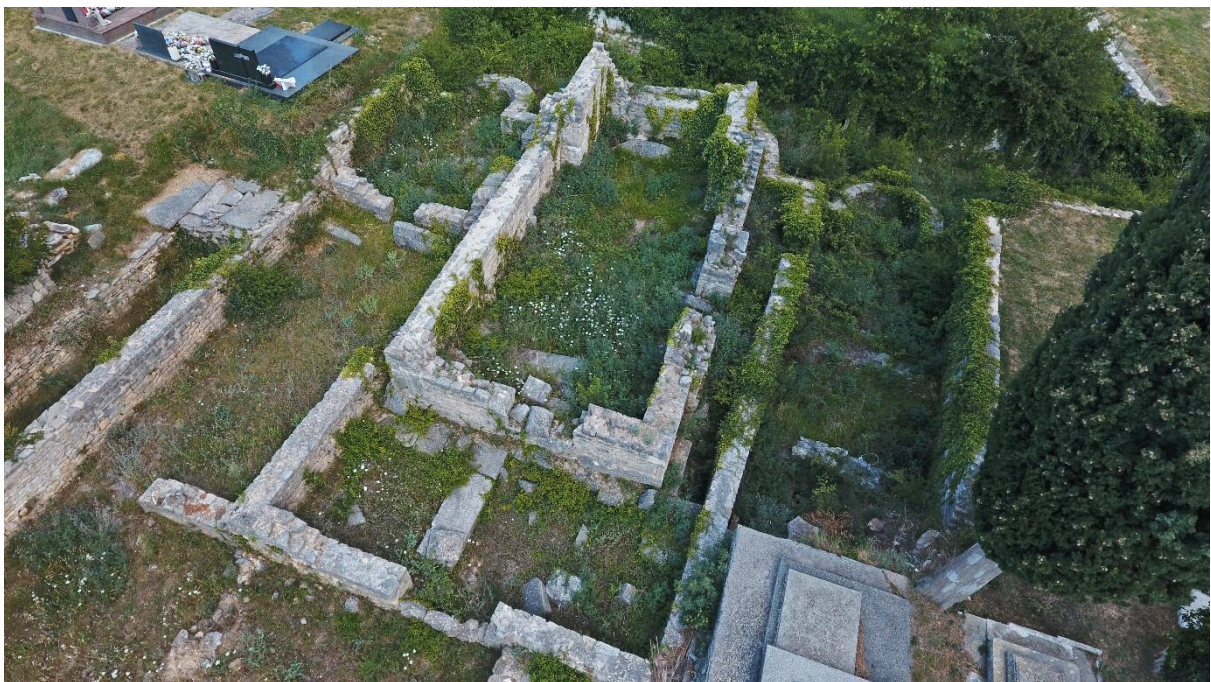


Fig. 89. Lepuri, Church of St Martin. View of the interior

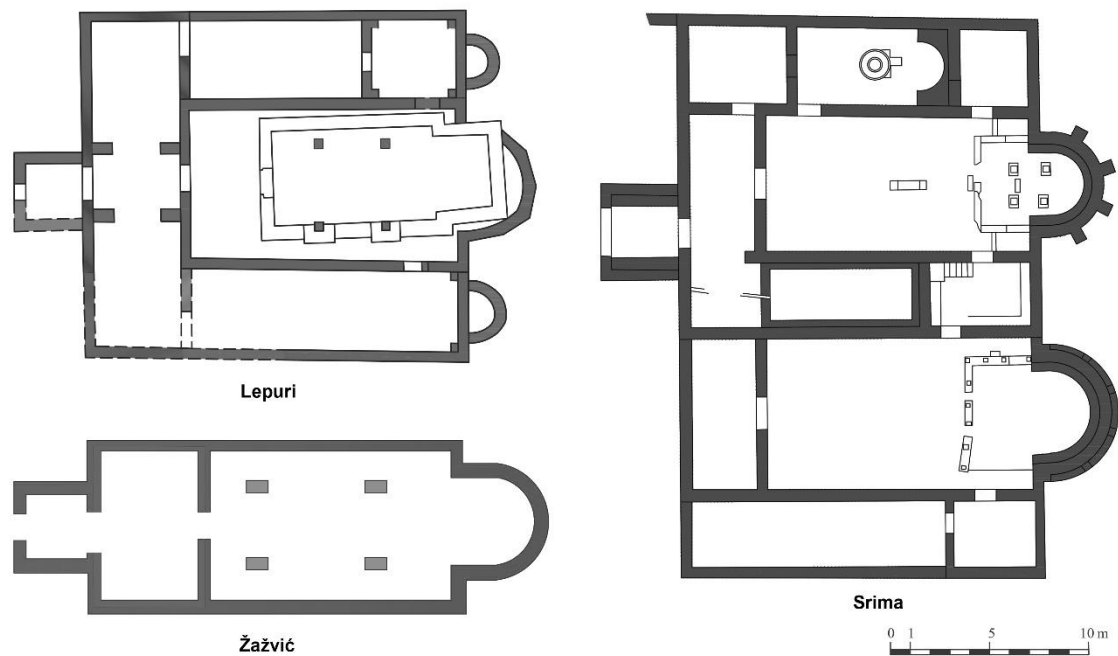


Fig. 90. Comparison of the floor plans of Lepuri, Žažvić and Srma sites

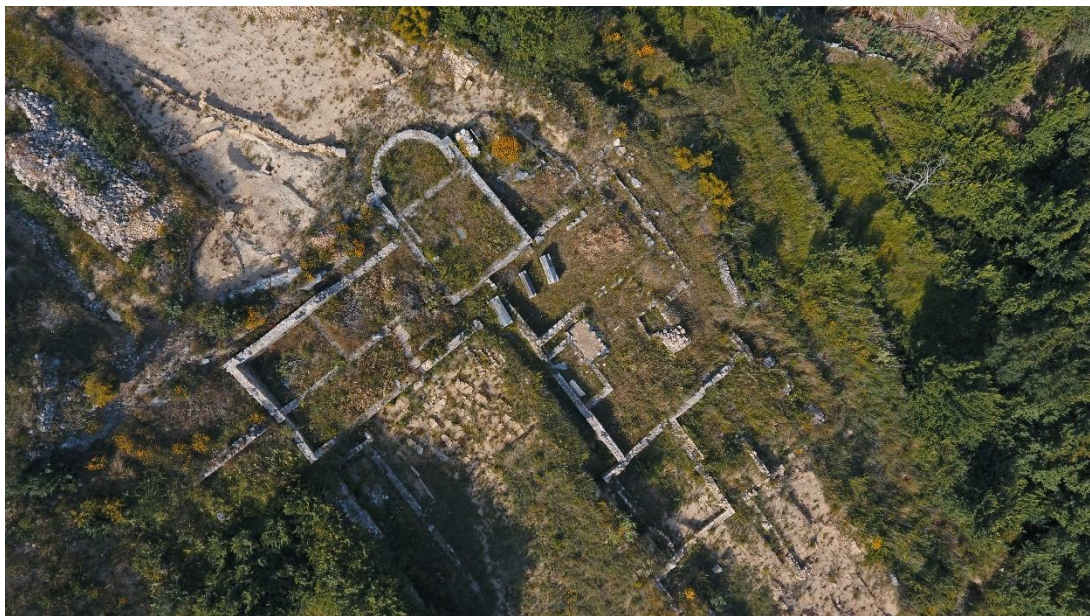


Fig. 91. Rižinice archaeological site. Aerial view



Fig. 92. Rižinice archaeological site. Position in landscape

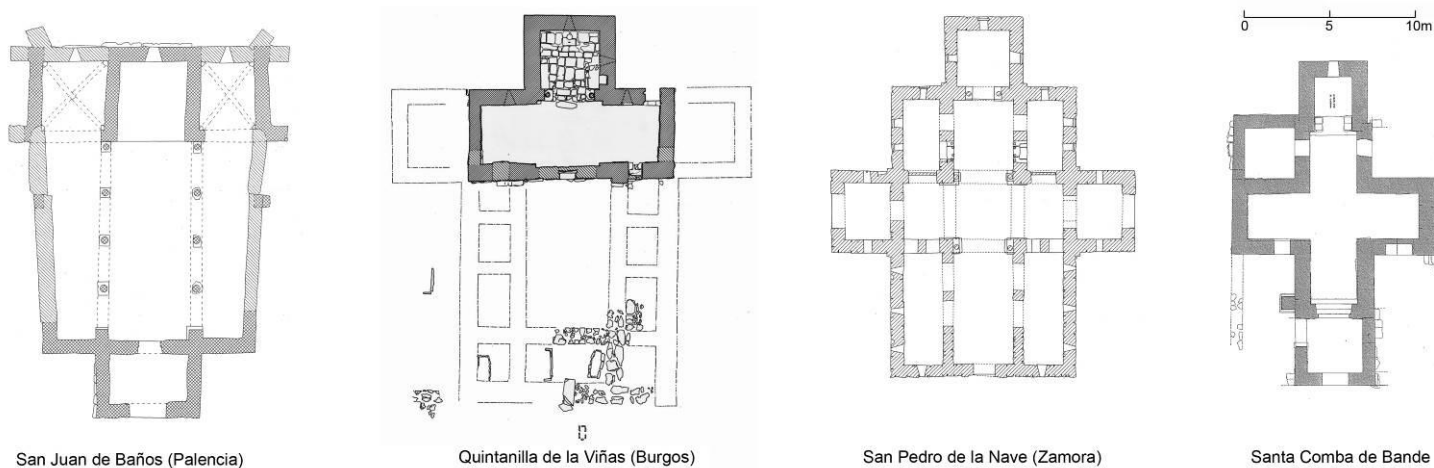


Fig. 93. Comparison of the floor plans of the churches from the Visigothic period



Fig. 94a-d. Churches of the Visigothic period



Fig. 95. Santa María de Melque, exterior

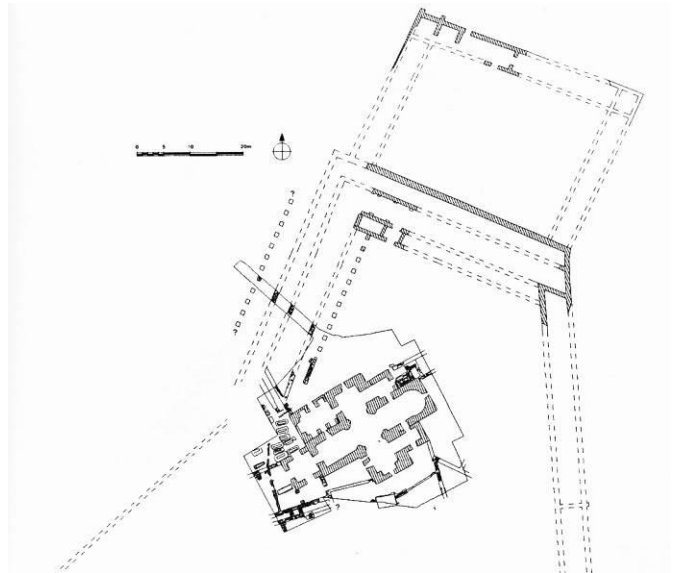


Fig. 96. Plan of the Melque complex



Fig. 97. Santa Lucía del Trampal, exterior

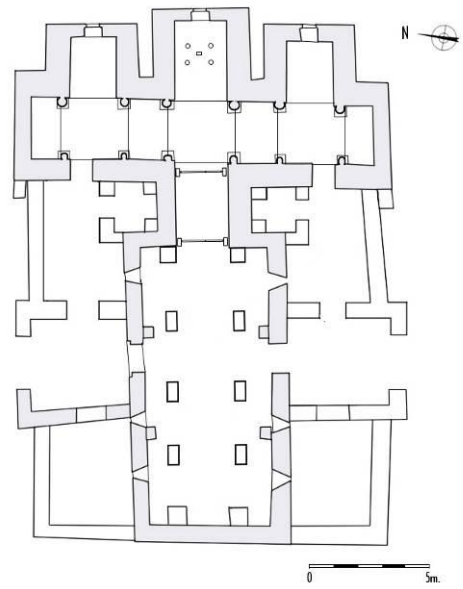


Fig. 98. Plan of Santa Lucía del Trampal



Fig. 99. Santa Cristina de Lena

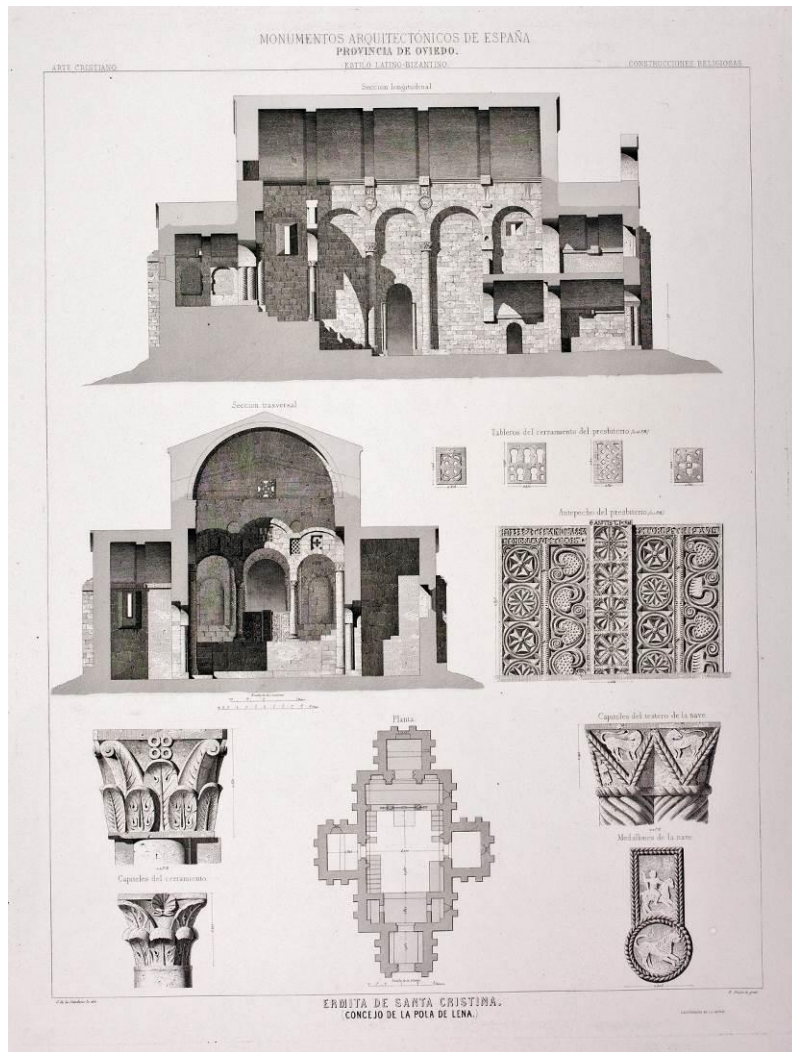


Fig. 100. Santa Cristina de Lena, architectural drawing

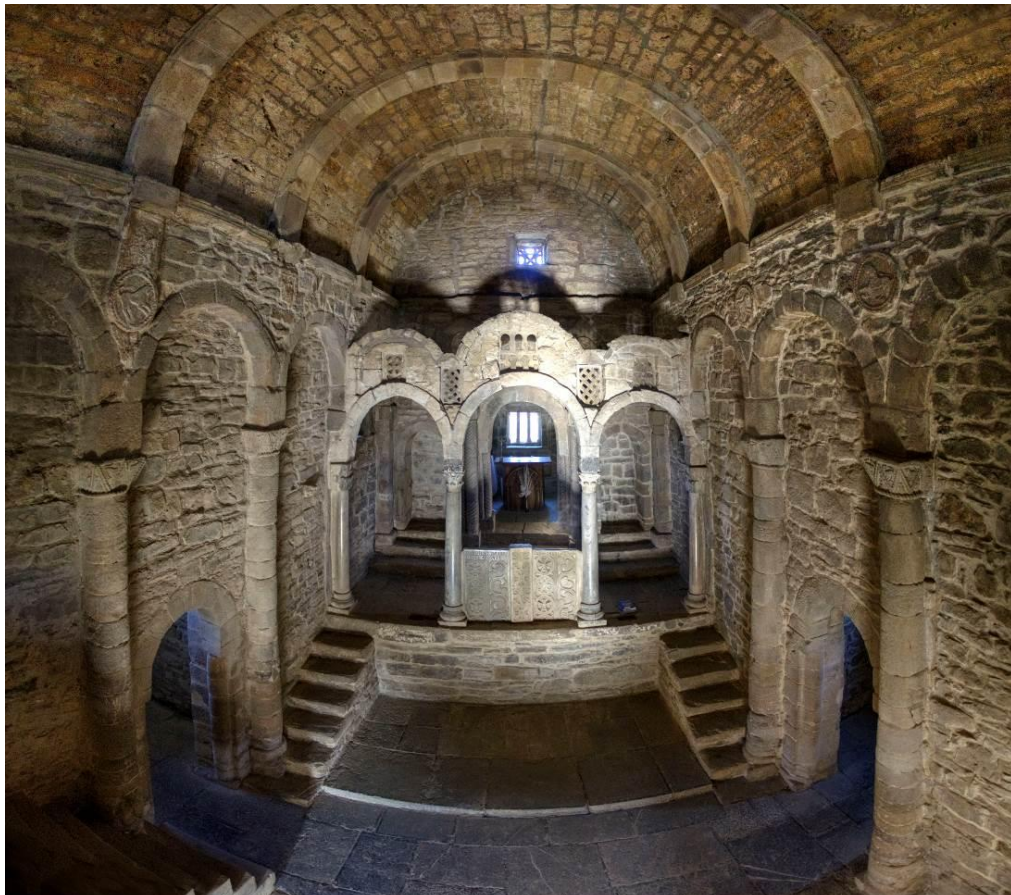


Fig. 101. Santa Cristina de Lena, panoramic view of the interior



Fig. 102. Naranco palace



Fig. 103. Naranco palace



Fig. 104. Naranco palace



Fig. 105. Naranco palace

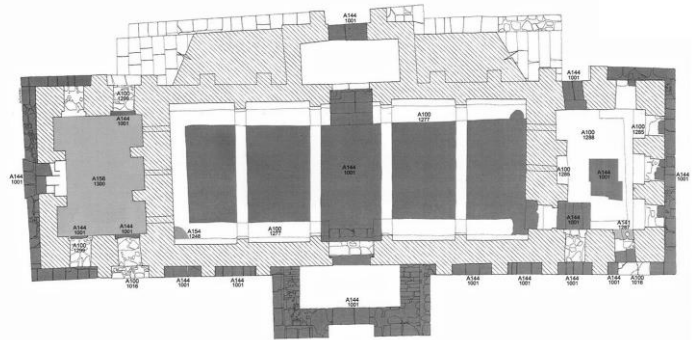
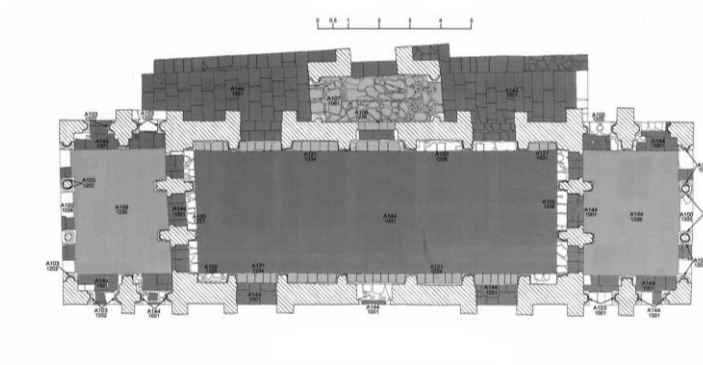


Fig. 106. Naranco floor plan



Fig. 107. Church of the Holy Salvation



Fig. 108. Church of the Holy Salvation, Cetina

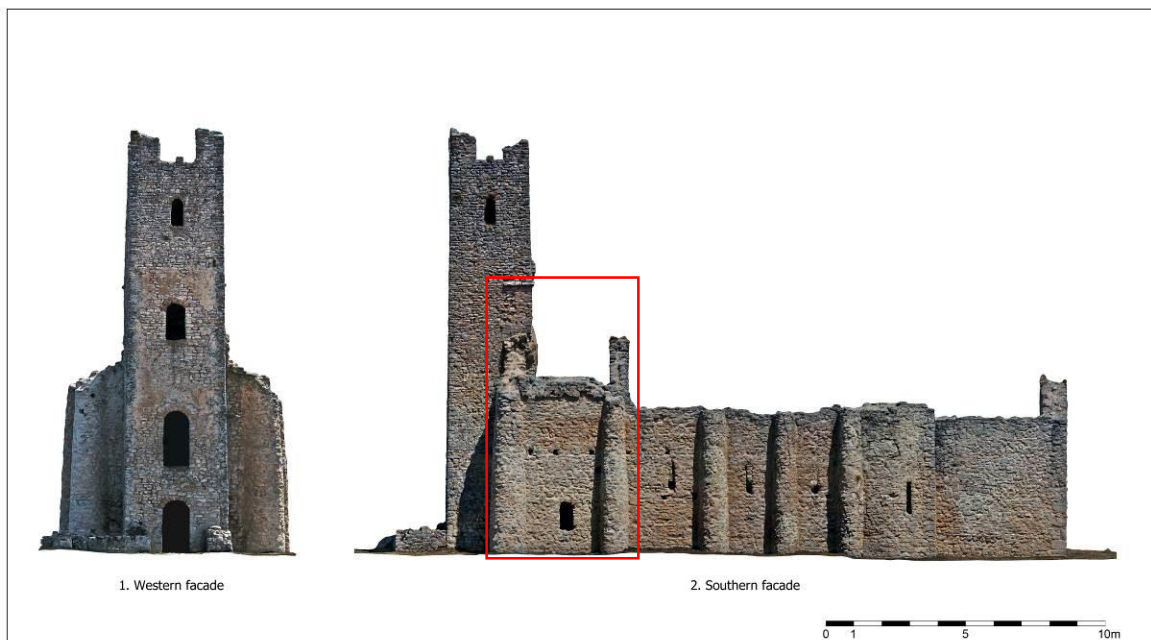


Fig. 109. Church of the Holy Salvation, Cetina. Orthophoto plans

Site location: 494156.75E, 4870362.78N

Cetina (Croatia)
 Church of the Holy Salvation (Sv. Spas na Vrelu Cetine)
 Orthophoto: J. Behaim, I. Kranjec



Fig. 110. Church of the Holy Salvation, interior view towards *westwerk*



Fig. 111. Church of the Holy Salvation. Aerial view of the *westwerk* structure



Fig. 112. Church of the Holy Salvation. Interior view of the bell tower

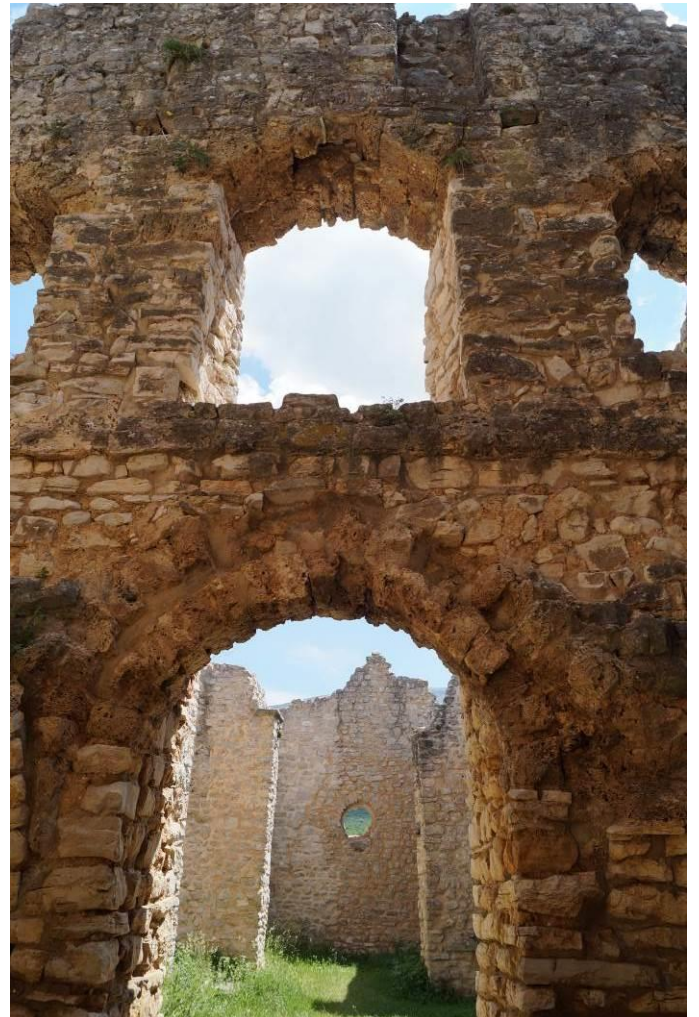
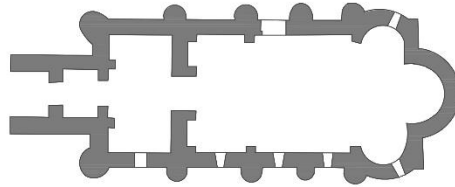


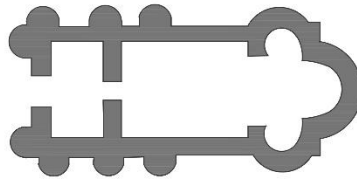
Fig. 113. Church of the Holy Salvation. Interior view towards the sanctuary



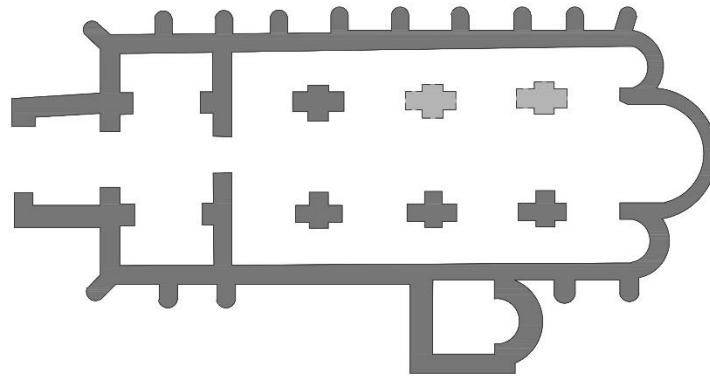
Fig. 114. Fragment of the altar rail from the church of the Holy Salvation



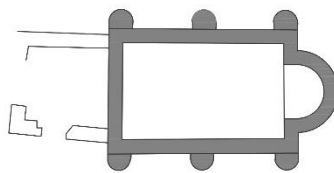
Holy Salvation, Cetina



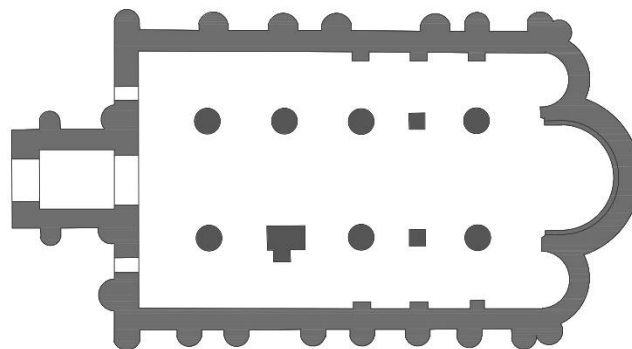
Lopuška glavica



St Cecilia, Stupovi



Blizna



Biograd Cathedral



Fig. 115. Churches with semicircular buttresses



Fig. 116. Aerial view of the Biskupija valley with the locations of early medieval sites



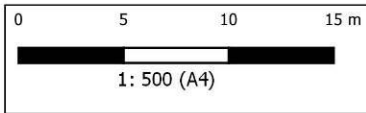
Fig. 117. Aerial view of the Crkvina site



Fig. 118. Crkvina site, position in landscape



Fig. 119. Crkvina archaeological site. Orthophoto plan



Coordinate reference system: HTRS96/Croatia TM

Basemap: Digital Orthophoto Map 1:5000 (2014-2016)
 © State Geodetic Administration of the Republic of Croatia

Biskupija near Knin (Croatia)
 Crkvina archaeological site
 Orthophoto: J. Behaim, I. Kranjec

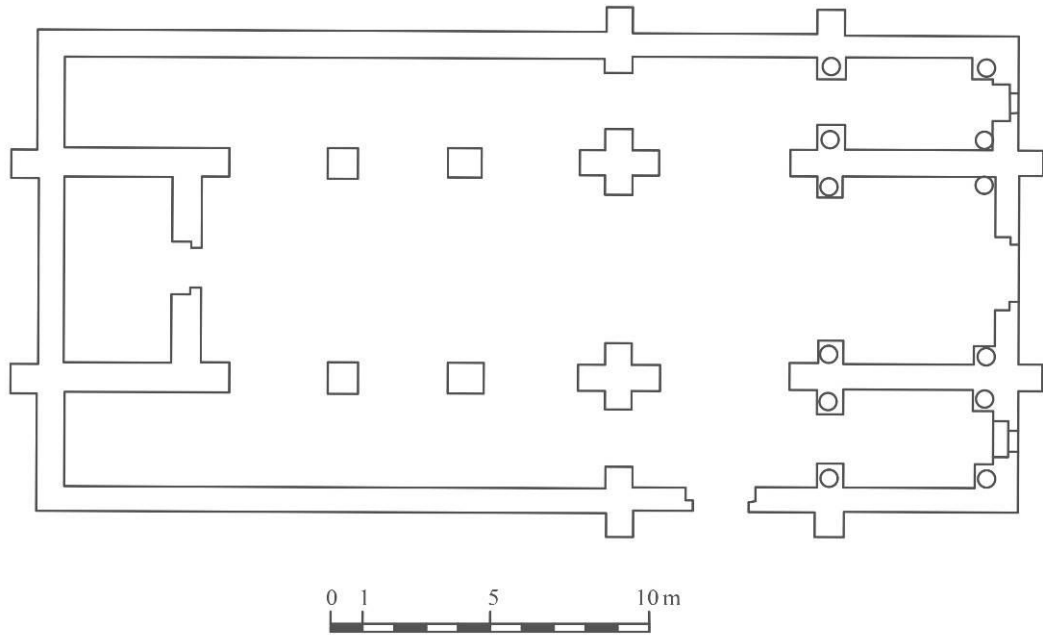


Fig. 120. Oviedo, Santa María

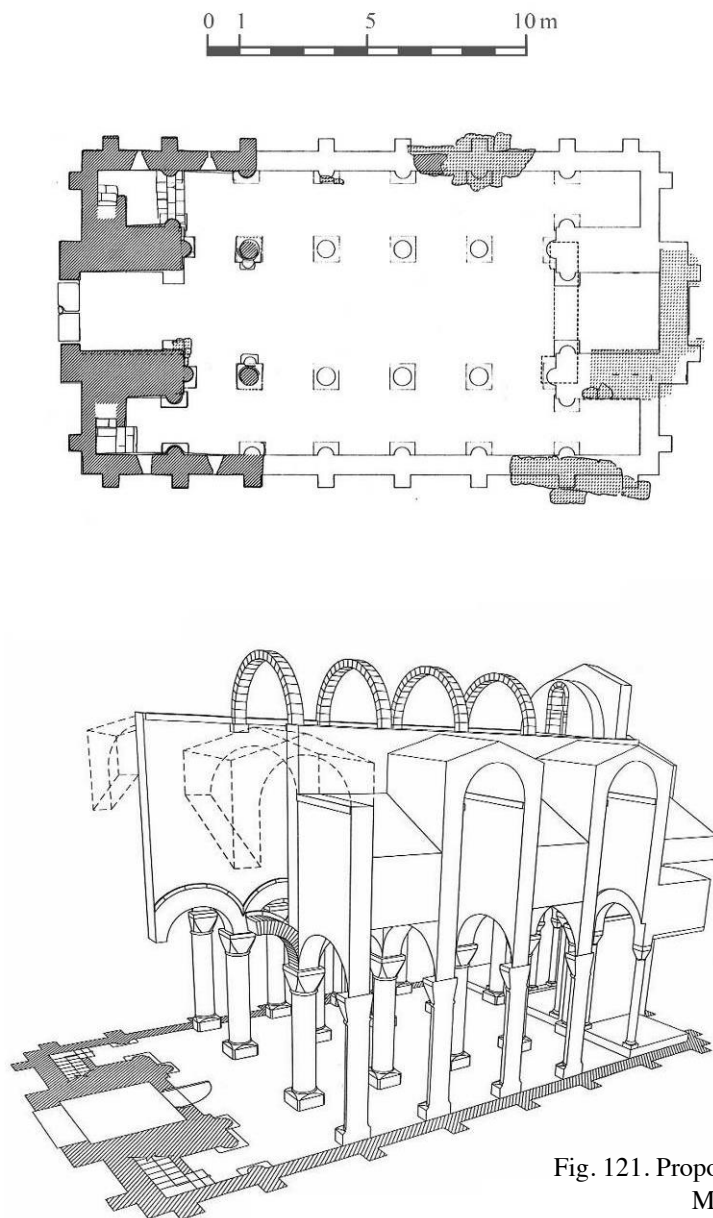


Fig. 121. Proposed reconstruction of Sant Miguel de Lillo



Fig. 122. San Miguel de Lillo.



Fig. 123. San Miguel de Lillo.

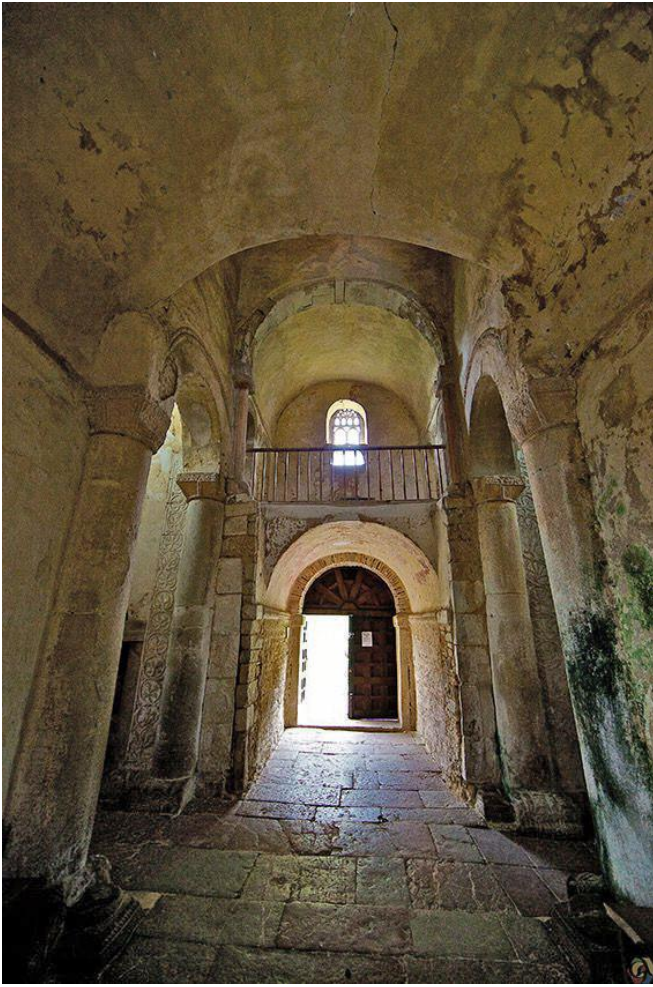


Fig. 124. San Miguel de Lillo, interior



Fig. 125. San Miguel de Lillo, southern jamb



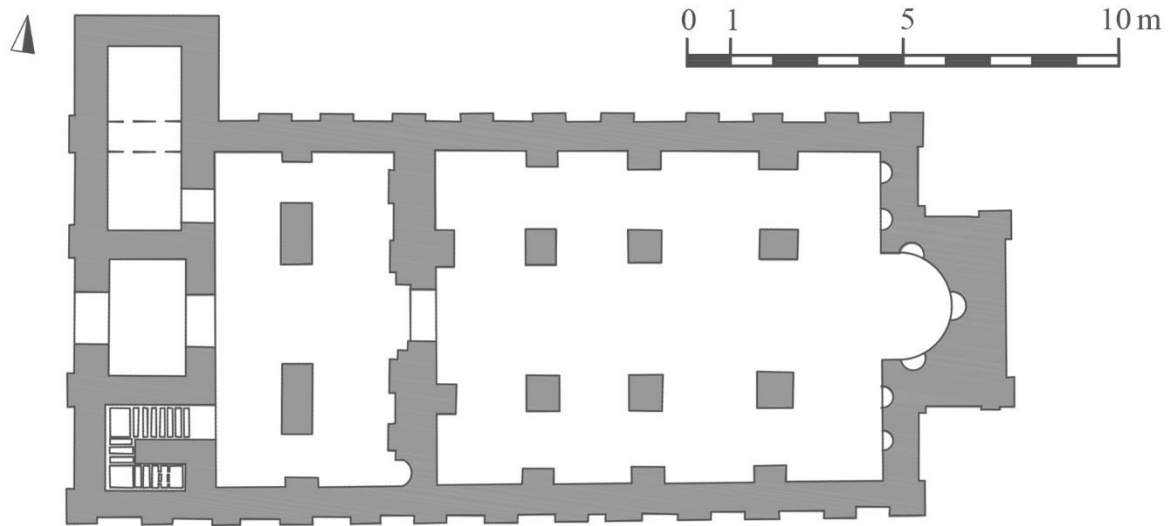
Fig. 126. San Miguel de Lillo, interior sculptural decoration



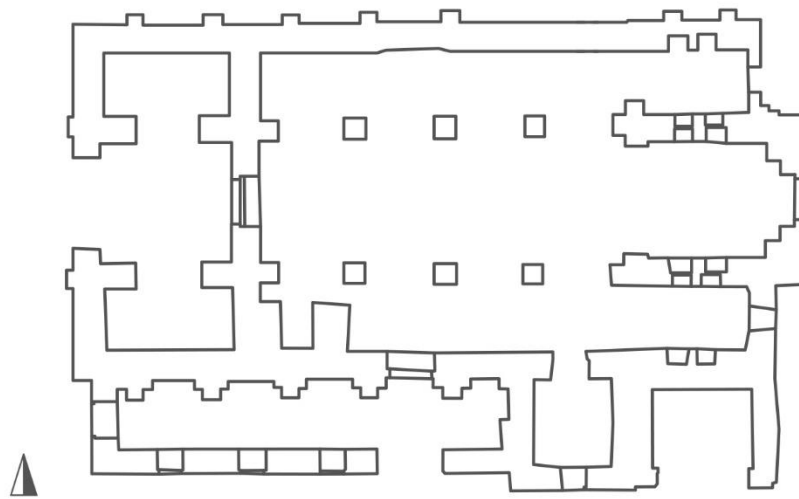
Fig. 127. San Miguel de Lillo, decorated pillar bases



Fig. 128. San Miguel de Lillo, southern jamb detail



St Stephen "na Otoku", Solin



San Salvador de Valdediós

Fig. 129. The comparison of St Stephen „na Otoku“ in Solin and San Salvador de Valdediós