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ROMAN ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS IN POETOVIO

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Because of its position at the crossing of important water and road ways, by the arterial road, the amber-road, Poetovio became, soon after the arrival of Romans, one of the biggest centers in Pannonia. The town was settled by officials, merchants and others, and they brought different cultures, religions and habits into the town which had a strong influence on the life in Poetovio. The researches in the area of today's Ptuj and Hajdina confirm this influence on the construction of Poetovio's public and private buildings. Many buildings were decorated with frescos and mosaics. Among architectural remains there were different building elements from marble, sandstone; they used columns and stringers decorated with various ornaments and images.

Key words: road, amber road, Poetovio, public and private buildings, marble, sandstone

The crossroads of aquatic ways and roads had certainly influence on the development of the town. A favourable position along the main road, the Amber Road leading from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea (Vomer Gojkovič 1999, 43-48. Vomer Gojkovič 2004a, 86-89. Vomer Gojkovič 2004b, 167-172. Horvat et al. 2003, 153-189), offered Poetovio the possibility for trading with imported semimanufactures and products from the west and east, their completion and trading with own made goods.

Among other things the Romans brought with themselves also the old Mediterranean practice of using stone for construction, decorative and monumental purposes. Their urban-type settlements were always built of local stones.

The first marble quarry in the Pohorje Mountains was undoubtedly opened in the surroundings of Šmartno for the needs of the soldiers and officers of the *Legio VIII Augusta* that set up its camp in the early 1st century in Poetovio on the right bank of the Drava Riv-

Fig. 1 - On two sides decorated stringer: two griffons with a kantharos and two hippocamps with a large vessel
(Photo: Boris Farič)



Fig. 2 - The reconstructed column standing in front of the Middle School Centre in Ptuj
(Photo: Photo archive of Regional Museum Ptuj)



er, and stayed there for several decades (Abramić 1925, 5-13. Vomer Gojkovič 2005b, 49-64). At the beginning the marble were transported on the Drava River from the quarry in Gummern situated westwards of the town Santicum (Beljak- Villach), and in the 20s of the 1st century the marble from the quarry in Pohorje Mountains (Djurić at al. 2004). In this early time we can trace in Poetovio also other sorts of stones e.g. the white sandstone and the sandstone from Haloze. In Poetovio the limestone was not used. A votive altar dedicated to Saxan was discovered in Pohorje Moutains (Djurić 2004, 159, 168).

In the town area various tradesmen's workshops were discovered (Vomer Gojkovič 2008a, 173-174). Poetovio traded with important and rich towns in Pannonia and with Danubian towns of Upper Messia. River ships transported the products on the Drava River and on the Danube downwards and upwards. Sculptors and their workshops possibly came together with the Mediterranean goods and they encouraged the local production Djurić 2001, 61-70. Djurić 2004, 150-167).

Most workshops were discovered in the so called craftsmen's quarter where large potter's and brick-producing plants prevailed (Tomanič Jevremov 2004, 94-99. Vomer Gojkovič 1993, 449-480. Vomer Gojkovič 2004b, 167-172). There were also three stoneworker's workshops (Vomer Gojkovič 2009a, 657-662). The carving of marble and sandstone was performed in places paved with clay or gravel. In Hajdina unfinished products and pieces of carved marble have been found (Jevremov 1981).

Stoneworkshops were situated in or outside buildings or near cemeteries. Here parts of carved stones, unfinished building elements, capitals, columns and pedestals have been found.

The great majority of stone monuments of the Roman Poetovio was built in to the walls of the medieval town Ptuj; among the walls the parts of inscriptions have been found, as for example probably the part of a stringer with the cut in letter M.

Two parts of a stringer were built in to the north wall of the provost's Church of St. George (Abramić 1925, 152, No. 188. Jevremov 1988, 87, No. 76) (Fig. 1). The stringer is decorated on two sides, on one side two griffons are putting their paws on a kantharos, on the other side there are two winged hippocamps and between them there is a large vessel.¹ A similar depiction has been found in Carnuntum and in Rome (Kremer, 2001, Kat. II 277).

¹ Size: 225 × 72 × 37 cm. Site: Ptuj, Proštjska cerkev. Inv. No. PMPO RL 817.

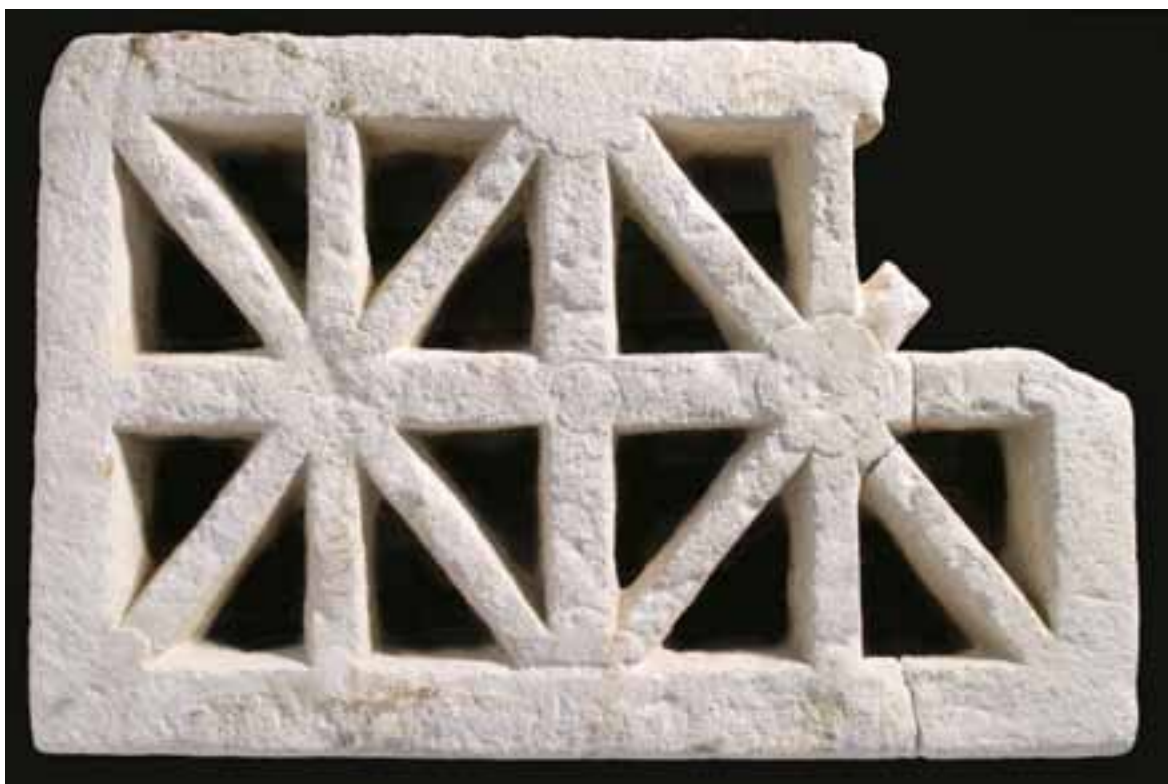


Fig. 3 – The marble fence perforated in the shape of a wooden fence; at the joints of rectangular and diagonal crossbars “metal” lamellas are shown (Photo Boris Farič)

Among the Roman building remains bigger elements of doors/windows furniture have also been found. In the area of Hajdina, in the town's quarter *vicus Fortunae*, we discovered a Roman object in a 16 × 5 m large probe sound. The walls made of river gravel bound by lime mortar, separating the rooms in the building, were badly preserved and somewhere they were even leveled to the ground. The building was probably a part of a tradesman's workshop for manufacturing of metal objects (Tušek 1986, 357-358).

On the east side of the probe sound there were two carved stone plates between the walls, showing the disposition of the cut in holes on the edge of two stone building elements made of white marble: a plate having in its deepened field two holes needed for the beam.² The other plate has in its deepened field two holes for the beam and three smaller holes for bungs.³ On the deepened part and on the holes the traces of usage are still visible.

Among the architectural parts of the buildings in the Roman Poetovio some different sized column bases made of marble from the Pohorje Mountains have also been discovered:

- base of the column with torus, plinth, scotia and a square hole on it.⁴
- base of the column with torus, plinth, scotia and a square hole on it (Jevremov 1988, 121, No. 144);⁵

- base of the column made of marble from the Pohorje Mountains has a cone shaped torus on a low rectangular plate (*plinthis*), having a scotia on it, and an upper cylindrical shaped torus (Djurić 2004, 176, No. 9). According to the proportions the base must have been a part of a 450 cm high column;⁶
- base with the part of a column has a high, double lower rectangular plane.⁷

Different shaped columns were standing on the bases. The part of with grooved semi-circle-shaped cannelures was made of marble from the Pohorje Mountains (Jevremov 1988, 121, No. 143. Djurić 2004, 176, No. 9).⁸ The columns are also smooth, as for instance the reconstructed column standing in front of the Middle School Centre in Ptuj (Tušek 1986, 354) (Fig. 2).⁹ The capitals were also of different shapes and sizes. Two capitals are especially interesting; they confirm that they are the work of home workshops. Both have been made of marble from the Pohorje Mountains:

- Corinthian capital is an unfinished semi-manufactured product made in the workshop (*officina*) situated near the quarry (Djurić 2004, 188, No. 22); sculptural workshops were provided with such products. The main elements of the capital and its proportions have already been shaped: the height, the radius of the abacus, the

2 Plate size: 96 × 44 × 20 cm; holes size: 5.5 × 5.5 × 6 cm. Site: Spodnja Hajdina, Zadruga. Inv. No. PMPO.

3 Plate size: 140 × 48 × 16 cm; holes size: 6 × 6 × 4 cm; holes for bungs: 3.5 to 4 × 3 × 2.5 cm. Site: Spodnja Hajdina, Zadruga. Inv. No. PMPO.

4 Size: high: 32 cm; diameter: 25-35 cm. Site: Ptuj, Panorama. Inv. No. PMPO RL 646.

5 Size: high: 32 cm; diameter: 25-35 cm. Site: Ptuj, Panorama. Inv. No. PMPO RL 648.

6 Size: high: 25 cm; diameter: 31-37 cm. Site: Ptuj, Panorama. Inv. No. PMPO RL 650.

7 Size: high: 72 cm; diameter: 14.5 cm. Site: Ptuj, Panorama. Inv. No. PMPO RL 663.

8 Size: high: 225 cm (on the whole it must have been about 270 cm high); diameter: 48 cm; cannelures width: 3 cm. Site: Ptuj, Panorama. Inv. No. PMPO RL 460.

9 Size: high: 240 cm; diameter: 36-30 cm. Site: Ptuj, Srednješolski center.

Fig. 4 – Corner of rich marble architraves
(Photo: Grega Gojkovič)



type of acanthus leaves, the volutes at the edges and the blossoms;¹⁰

- small Corinthian capital with two ranks of plastic-shaped acanthus leaves around the lower half of the khalatos and sprouts (*cauliculus*) growing into the volutes at the edges. On the capital lies a plate (*abacus*) with an acanthus blossom in the middle of each turned side (Abramić 1925, 191, No. 257. Djurić 2004, 175, No. 8). The capital belonged, according to the proportions, to a about 270 cm high column.¹¹

Among the architectural remains there are also parts of fences, mostly decorated with oblique cannelures. Their endings can also be circular or semi-circular shaped, as this is the case with the grave fence from Spodnja Hajdina.¹²

- fence made of marble from the Pohorje Mountains surely belongs to a finer item: a rectangular plate perforated in the shape of a wooden fence consisting of rectangular fields is intersected by rectangular and diagonal crossbars. At the joints “metal” lamellas are shown. (Jevremov 1988, 83-84, No. 71. Djurić 2004, 181, No. 15) (Fig. 3).¹³

Richly shaped are also the remains of church balustrades, the reconstructions are from two of the six early Christian churches that, unfortunately, have not been preserved. Some pieces indicate that early-Christian churches were located in Spodnja Hajdina and Ptuj: Rogoznica, Zgornji Breg, Panorama and the site of the Provost church. Richly shaped are also the remains of church balustrades:

- part of the choral screen, decorated on both sides of the frame: one has a circular contour with a semicircle, the other has a rosette carved in relief (Schmid 1936, 103-107. Mikl Curk 1978, 408. Knific, Sagadin 1991, 14-16, 101);¹⁴
- column of choral screen, decorated with relief of vines and grapes. The vines grow out of two-handled vessel, on the top sits a dove, with a cross on its chest. (Schmid 1936, 106. Knific, Sagadin 1991, 15, 55, No. 17);¹⁵
- parts of a choral screen. Two biggest fragments, decorated on both sides, were parts of the frame, while eight smaller fragments belonged to the central structure of the marble screen. The third bigger piece was part of edging stone (Knific, Sagadin 1991, 17, 56, 102, No. 18).¹⁶

10 Size: high: 34 cm; size: 26 × 28 cm; diameter: 57 cm. Site: Ptuj, Rimski ploščad. Inv. No. PMPO RL 1030.

11 Size: high: 30 cm; size: 24 × 27 cm; diameter 51 cm. Site: Ptuj, Zgornji Breg –Mithras Shrines III. Inv. No. PMPO RL 393.

12 Size: 27.5 × 172 × 37 cm. Site: Zgornja Hajdina. Inv. No. PMPO RL 856.

13 Size: 128 × 86 × 19 cm. Site: Krčevina pri Ptuj. Inv. No. PMPO RL 103.

14 Size: 54 × 35 × 11 cm. Site: Ptuj, Hawelkova hiša. Inv. No. PMPO RL 566.

15 Size: 50 × 31 × 26 cm. Site: Ptuj, Hawelkova hiša. Inv. No. PMPO 428.

16 Size of the largest piece: 15.9 × 12.6 × 7.8 cm. Site: Ptuj, Panorama.



Fig. 5 – Mounted Bellerophon after killing a dragon with a spear - the central image of mosaic (Photo: Boris Farič)

The richness of architecture shows the richly ornamented architrave.

- part of marble architraves with embossing strip with the circles. Below, one side has a profiliated part. One side has an edge hewed off;¹⁷
- part of the marble architrave is decorated with an edge with an egg frieze and string of hour-glasses;¹⁸
- part of a large building's marble architraves with astragal and consoles, decorated with holborn-gable and rosette between the consoles;¹⁹
- corner of rich marble architraves (Fig. 4). Holborn-gable covered with acanthus leaves in the intermediate places are masks and egg frieze. Among the acanthus leaves and the rectangular plate, with an image of a genius on it, there are some beads. At the top is, once again, a wreath made of acanthus leaves. The edge of the architrave has again acanthus wreath of leaves, rising above the Holborn-gable strip.²⁰

The architectural remains of the Roman Poetovio are still being discovered. The buildings were built of stone and wood and covered with high quality tiles made in Poetovio's workshops. The size and the disposition of rooms depended on the owner's social status and

his financial abilities. The remains of villas show genuine richness of the interior arrangement; the summer and winter rooms were richly decorated with mosaic floors (Djurić 1977):

- mosaic with depiction of the Bellerophon (Šubic 1974. Djurić 1977, 599. Vomer Gojkovič 2008, 227. Verzàr-Bass 2011, 1389) (Fig. 5). The central image shows mounted Bellerophon after killing a dragon with a spear. The mosaic is edged with animal and plant motives and a wide belt at the edge of coffer designs. It is framed by a woven plait.²¹

The walls in extra luxurious houses were covered with marble plates – very often that was only a realistic painted imitation. The walls were painted, mostly they were monochrome or they were divided into simple coloured fields being placed side by side. The walls were often painted with frescoes. The choice of colours and figurative motives depended on the use of the room, and at the same time it was under a strong influence of fashion (Jenny 1896. Vomer Gojkovič 2008b. Vomer Gojkovič 2009b, 267-269):

- fragment with a depiction of a genius (Plesničar-Gec 1998, 354-355) (Fig. 6);

17 Size: 34 × 31 × 19 cm. Site: Ptuj. Inv. No. PMPO RL 547.

18 Size: 24.5 × 19.1 × 11.1 cm. Site: Ptuj, Panorama. Inv. No. PMPO RL644.

19 Size: length 92 cm, thickness 39 cm. Site: Ptuj, Panorama. Inv. No. PMPO RL661.

20 Size: 30 × 29 × 44 (or 64). Site: Ptuj. Inv. No. PMPO RL 753.

21 Size: Originally it would be approx. 8 x 8 m big. Mosaic-stones are approx. 1 cm large; they are white, light grey to black, pale to dark blue, ochre and red. Site: Spodnja Hajdina. Inv. No. PMPO RL.

Fig. 6 – Fragment with a depiction of a genius (Photo: Mojca Vomer Gojkovič)



Fig. 7 – Fragment with a depiction of a man in tunics (Photo: Mojca Vomer Gojkovič)



Fig. 8 – Dolphins depicted stucco (Photo: Boris Farič)



- fragment with a depiction of a man in tunics (Fig. 7).²²

Very rich was also the interior of the houses in Poetovio. Dolphins are depicted on a stucco, on a marble covering there is a stylized acanthus blossom, on the second covering there is a relief pilaster with an acanthus ornament.

- dolphins depicted stucco (Jenny 1896. Ertel 1993, 345, 347. Vomer Gojkovič 2008b, 225) (Fig. 8);²³
- on a marble covering there is a stylized acanthus blossom;²⁴
- on the second covering there is a relief pilaster with an acanthus ornament.²⁵

Most of stone products, found in Ptuj, were carved in the workshops of the ancient Poetovio. The marble cutters also used themes from everyday's life which can be seen in the depiction of costumes, fibulas, various deities, emperors, portraits and mythological scenes.

The stonecutting-sculptural production of Noric-Pannonian quarries and workshops does not only present the best provincial achievements of Roman art, but it also represents one of the most important factors influencing the Romanization of the Pannonian population.

²² Size: 13,5 × 14,3 cm. Site: Spodnja Hajdina. Inv. No. PMPO 10HG004/1.

²³ Size of the largest piece: 14 × 14 × 6.5 cm. Site: Ptuj, Zgornji Breg. Inv. No. PMPO R 26-30.

²⁴ Size: 37 × 44 × 3 cm. Site: Ptuj. Inv. No. PMPO RL 553.

²⁵ Size: 45-33 × 34 × 5 cm. Site: Ptuj, Gregorčičev drevored. Inv. No. PMPO RL 710.

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SUMMARY

RIMSKI ARHITEKTONSKI ELEMENTI U POETOVIJU

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Zbog svog smještaja na križanju važnih plovnih i cestovnih putova, pokraj glavne ceste, jantarne ceste, Poetovio je postao, ubrzo po dolasku Rimljana, jedno od najvećih središta u Panoniji. U taj grad doselili su se službenici, trgovci i drugi, i sa sobom donijeli različite kulture, vjere i običaje, što je snažno utjecalo na život u Poetoviju. Istraživanja na području današnjega Ptujja i Hajdine potvrđuju taj utjecaj na izgradnju javnih i privatnih zgrada u Poetoviju. Mnoge su zgrade ukrašene freskama i mozaicima. Među građevinskim ostacima nalaze se različiti građevni elementi od mramora, pješčenjaka, koristili su stupove i mosnice ukrašene različitim ornamentima i likovima.