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## ARCHITECTURE OF THE PLACA IN DUBROVNIK: A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY PROJECT

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**ABSTRACT:** Based on the results of most recent research concerning the so-called fourth block of communal houses in the early 1560s, this article argues in favour of the assumption that the facade of this particular block was used as a model for all the house facades later constructed on the north side of the Placa, at first, directly—in the hitherto unknown construction undertakings of two new blocks of communal houses in the westernmost part of the city’s main thoroughfare (near the Franciscan Church) in the early, i.e., mid-seventeenth century—and later, indirectly, in the reconstruction after the 1667 earthquake. Further examined are the issues that result from the analysis of present-day architectural structures in the light of previously known and recently discovered archival and visual evidence, as well as the role of certain participants in the processes of decision-making, design and construction, notably Ragusan authorities as initiators, investors and commissioners, along with two foreign architects—Jacques de Spinis, who arrived in Dubrovnik from Venice in the mid-sixteenth century, and papal architect Giulio Cerruti, sent directly from Rome in the autumn of 1667.

*Keywords:* Dubrovnik, seventeenth century, architecture, urban development, uniform facades, post-earthquake reconstruction, Mannerism, Baroque, Jacques de Spinis, Giulio Cerruti

Deeply seated in the art historical literature is an opinion that the buildings lining the Placa owe their current appearance to the reconstruction carried out

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Figure 1. Dubrovnik, Placa (photo by L. Gusić)

after the earthquake of 1667. North side of the main city communication—from the Franciscan Church to the Sponza Palace (with an exception of the centrally located three-storey building from early nineteenth century)—is lined with two-storey buildings of higher first floors and lower second floors, whose facades show a clear similarity in terms of design. The facades of three-storey buildings between the Church of St Blaise and *Široka ulica*, on the south side of the Placa, also display a uniform design. Considering that the traces of pre-earthquake structures in the Placa could be identified only in the remains of a ground floor stone portico that once stood in front of the so-called fourth block of communal houses (fourth block as viewed from Sponza),<sup>1</sup> the whole concept—consisting of rows of houses with uniform facades—was also unanimously

<sup>1</sup> These remains attracted the attention of the Dubrovnik conservators as early as the first half of the twentieth century, first references to them in literature being made by Cvito Fisković, *Naši graditelji i kipari XV. i XVI. stoljeća u Dubrovniku*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1947: p. 60, and Lukša Beritić, *Urbanistički razvitak Dubrovnika*. Zagreb: Zavod za arhitekturu i urbanizam Instituta za likovne umjetnosti JAZU, 1958: p. 29.

characterised as Baroque in terms of style. This view has been shared by all scholars who have touched upon this topic, from Lukša Beritić, Kruno Prijatelj and Cvito Fisković on.<sup>2</sup> Most recent research, however, confirms that the mentioned facade of the fourth block of communal houses does not date from the post-earthquake period, but in its entirety was built in the sixteenth century, during reconstruction (due to the block's damage in a 1558 fire) in which Jacques de Spinis—a naturalised Dubrovnik architect and sculptor of French origin—took part in 1561.<sup>3</sup>

The prototype of a uniform facade design featuring on all the buildings constructed after the earthquake along the north side of the Placa, including that of the mentioned fourth block, has traditionally been considered the facade of the first block (next to Sponza), allegedly designed by the papal architect Giulio Cerruti, during his short stay in Dubrovnik in August and early September 1667.<sup>4</sup> However, although in November that year, the *Consilium Rogatorum* (Senate)

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<sup>2</sup> L. Beritić, *Urbanistički razvitak Dubrovnika*: p. 32; Kruno Prijatelj, »Dokumenti za historiju dubrovačke barokne arhitekture«, in: *Tkalčićev zbornik*, vol. II, ed. Ivan Bach. Zagreb: Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, 1958: pp. 119–120; Cvito Fisković, »Barokni urbanistički zahvat sred Dubrovnika«. *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti IC JAZU* 19–20 (1982): pp. 91–94; Katarina Horvat-Levaj, *Barokne palače u Dubrovniku*. Zagreb–Dubrovnik: Institut za povijest umjetnosti and Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2001: p. 24; Danko Zelić, »*Utilitas et lucrum* – općinske kuće u srednjovjekovnom Dubrovniku«, in: *Umjetnost i naručitelji. Zbornik radova znanstvenog skupa Dani Cvita Fiskovića održanog 2008. godine*, ed. Jasenka Gudelj. Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti u Zagrebu, Odsjek za povijest umjetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2010: pp. 18–19; K. Horvat-Levaj, »Urbanistička preobrazba Dubrovnika nakon potresa 1667. godine«, in: *Stjepan Gradić, otac domovine*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Pavica Vilać, Dubrovnik: Dubrovački muzeji, 2013: p. 345. These works also contain references to all archival documents—decisions of the *Consilium Rogatorum* on the reconstruction of the houses in the Placa—supplemented in the Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> As opposed to older (medieval) communal houses featuring low first floors and high second floors, in the fourth block—according to a decision by which ground floor spaces were to be vaulted and a representative stone portico was to be attached to the facade—the first floor was then raised to full height, whilst the second was lowered. Apart from a difference in height of the upper levels and an attached portico, Spinis's block distinguished itself from the neighbouring blocks by shape (instead of arched window frames, *fenestre lavorate alla romana* were commissioned) of the openings in the upper zones, see Danko Zelić, »Dva požara, dvije obnove, dva stila: prilog poznavanju dubrovačke stambene arhitekture sredinom 16. stoljeća«. *Peristil* 56 (2013) [*Mjera stanovanja – odah ladanja. Zbornik u čast Nadi Grujić*]: pp. 113–126. On Spinis see Igor Fisković, »Les sculpteurs français à Dubrovnik au XVIe siècle«, in: *Ars auro gemmisque prior. Mélanges en hommage à Jean-Pierre Caillet*, ed. Chrystèle Blondeau, Brigitte Boissavit-Camus, Véronique Boucherat and Panayota Volti. Zagreb–Motovun: Međunarodni istraživački centar za kasnu antiku i srednji vijek, 2013: pp. 379–388.

<sup>4</sup> L. Beritić, *Urbanistički razvitak Dubrovnika*: p. 31; K. Horvat-Levaj, *Barokne palače u Dubrovniku*: p. 193.

decided that the house in the Placa, next to Sponza, ought to be built according to the delineation drawn by Cerruti,<sup>5</sup> yet in May next year Cerruti's design was discarded,<sup>6</sup> as well as another proposition by which the building's facade was to be modelled after that adorning the first house next to the Franciscan Church.<sup>7</sup> The latter house was thus assumed to have been constructed first, shortly after the earthquake,<sup>8</sup> which will prove only partly right. Apparently, it is not disputable that the first block next to Sponza, completed in 1670, is the first building in the Placa reconstructed after the earthquake.<sup>9</sup> Yet, more importantly, it should be emphasised that one of the explicitly mentioned models for its facade—that of the house at the opposite end of the Placa, next to the Franciscan Church, on the site of today's Kerša House (*Palača Kerša*, also known as Dubrovnik Festival Palace)—was indeed built before the earthquake.

As to how the buildings in that part of the Placa looked before 1667 may be grasped from some pre-earthquake visual testimonies. From the veduta that once belonged to Saraka family,<sup>10</sup> between the Franciscan Church and *Petilovrijenci* one can discern facades of rather tall medieval houses of varying size and floor levels. Given that some of these had been constructed on communal plots, their owners had to pay annual land lease to the commune. Thus, data on the houses in that section of the Placa may also be traced in the archival material compiled as result of the administration of communal property holdings.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix, s. d. 5 November 1667.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix, s. d. 4 May 1668.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix, s. d. 11 May 1668.

<sup>8</sup> L. Beritić, *Urbanistički razvitak Dubrovnika*: p. 31; K. Horvat-Levaj, »Dubrovačke barokne palače izgorjele u napadu na grad 6. prosinca 1991. godine«. *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 19 (1995): p. 71; K. Horvat-Levaj, *Barokne palače u Dubrovniku*: pp. 213–216.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Tanja Trška Miklošić, »Obnove nadbiskupskih posjeda u Dubrovniku u vrijeme nadbiskupa Giovannija Vincenza Lucchesinija«. *Peristil* 56 (2013) [*Mjera stanovanja – odah ladanja. Zbornik u čast Nadi Grujić*]: p. 147.

<sup>10</sup> Danko Zelić, »Veduta Dubrovnika, 17. stoljeće« (catalogue unit), in: *Sveto i profano: slikarstvo talijanskog baroka u Hrvatskoj*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Radoslav Tomić and Danijela Marković, Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2015: pp. 236–238. The painting is currently the property of the Society of Friends of Dubrovnik Antiquities.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Irena Benyovsky Latin and Danko Zelić, »Dubrovački fond općinskih nekretnina, sustav najмова i knjige općinskih nekretnina kroz stoljeća (Uvodna studija)«, in: *Knjige nekretnina dubrovačke općine (13–18. st.) = Libri domorum et terrenorum Communis Ragusii deliberatis ad afflictum (saec. XIII–XVIII)*, ed. Irena Benyovsky Latin and Danko Zelić [*Monumenta historica Ragusina*, vol. 7/1]. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2007: pp. 13–75.





Figure 2. Facades of the blocks next to the Franciscan Church as represented on a veduta of Dubrovnik from the legacy of the Saraka Family (property of the Society of Friends of Dubrovnik Antiquities, photo by Lj. Gamulin)

Entries in the register of communal property, which was in use from 1481 to 1722, clearly reveal that in the seventeenth century, before the earthquake, communal property holdings were expanded by four houses in the two newly-built blocks on the site of older private buildings at the western end of the Placa, of which literature to date makes no mention.<sup>12</sup> As *domus comunis positę in Platea magna, ultimo habitatę a Stephano Sorgo et Stephano Vitussa et Andrea Menessali*, the houses in one of these blocks, are mentioned in the very first decision regarding the renovation of the residential buildings in the Placa after the earthquake—a decision of September 1667, to which Lukša Beritić drew attention.<sup>13</sup> Considering that the decision provides no detail on the building’s location, on the basis of the traces of the pre-earthquake portico Beritić was led to assume that the block in question was Spinis’s fourth block of communal houses. However, the three tenants mentioned above do appear, yet in the communal property records before

<sup>12</sup> *Knjige nekretnina dubrovačke općine (13–18. st.)*, vol. 7/2: pp. 308–309.

<sup>13</sup> L. Beritić, *Urbanistički razvitak Dubrovnika*: p. 29; see also Appendix, s. d. 23 September 1667.

the earthquake. Indeed, in 1658 they were registered as rightful lease-holders of two houses denoted as *prima* and *seconda casa dalle nuove fabricate nella Piazza grande*.<sup>14</sup> In view of the fact that the first of these houses overlooked *Duičina* (today *Palmotićeve*) street in the east, whilst the second faced *Od Sigurate* in the west, there can be no doubts regarding both their nature (a kind of semi-detached units) and their exact position—at the front of the second block if viewed from the Franciscan Church, i.e. on the site today occupied by the *Klašić House (Palača Klašić)*.



Figure 3. Buildings in the west part of the north front of the Placa, present state (after the architectural survey by I. Tenšek, Institute of Art History, Zagreb, 1970, edited by D. Zuljan)

Registered in the same book as early as the outset of the seventeenth century was the adjacent building, first by the Franciscan Church—between the streets of St Francis (today *Medovićeve*) and *Od Sigurate*—on the site of the already mentioned Kerša House.<sup>15</sup> That, too, was a single volume building, divided into two units—communal houses with ground floor shops, first leased in a public bidding in 1603. On that occasion, however, the houses were not explicitly recorded as new. Indeed, the commune could become the owner of older buildings, yet a piece of evidence from 1609 removes every doubt that the building in question was newly-constructed. According to communal property reambulation records,<sup>16</sup> on that site previously stood a dilapidated house jointly owned by four members of the nobility, who had renounced their right to the use of land in favour of the

<sup>14</sup> *Knjige nekretnina dubrovačke općine (13–18. st.)*, vol. 7/2: pp. 308–309.

<sup>15</sup> *Knjige nekretnina dubrovačke općine (13–18. st.)*, vol. 7/2: p. 300.

<sup>16</sup> State Archives of Dubrovnik, ser. 47 – *Libri afflictuum*, 1609.

commune, so that on the mentioned site and on the site of the neighbouring house, also in a ruinous state, a new block of communal houses was built.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, as to whether Kerša and Klačić houses are Baroque is beyond dispute. The concepts of their inner space and interior layout are an eloquent testimony to this style.<sup>18</sup> It should nevertheless be emphasised that their facades were built before the earthquake, in 1603 and 1658 respectively, according to the scheme that has doubtless been borrowed from the fourth block of communal houses (completed in 1563). First floor windows and mezzanine-type windows of the second floor of the Kerša House facade correspond in terms of size and proportion to the respective openings of the fourth, Spinis's block, although, perhaps, the original facade height may have allowed the second floor to have windows of the same size as those on the first floor.<sup>19</sup> The facade of the Klačić House has originally had the windows of the same size and proportion.<sup>20</sup>

These facts also play an important role in the study of the painted city views made before the earthquake, notably the earlier mentioned veduta from the Saraka family. Judging by the appearance of buildings at the western end of the north Placa front, *terminus post quem non* for its origin (or, more presumably, for the origin of the model that was used for that particular segment of the depiction) would be the year 1603, which marked the completion of the new communal house in the first block next to the Franciscan Church, on the site of the Kerša House. Bearing in mind the finding that the house which preceded it on the site was ruinous, we may rightly assert that depicted in this city view is the state of development of the north prospect of the Placa in the last quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Contrarily, in the representation of Dubrovnik on the altarpiece by the Neapolitan painter Antonio de Bellis *The Virgin with*

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<sup>17</sup> *Libri afflictuum*, 1609, f. 16r: *Casa una al cantone della settima ruga, cioe al cantone della strada di Mala Bratia in Piazza grande le porte guardano verso ponente, la qual casa fu di ser Ierolimo Cerva, ser Daniele et ser Marco Caboga et ser Luca di Nicolo Bona insolidum, li quali perche ruinò, la renunziarno al comone, del quale di puoi fu fabricata di novo, insieme con altra casa del comone che parimente era ruinata.*

<sup>18</sup> Cf. K. Horvat-Levaj, *Barokne palače u Dubrovniku*: pp. 213–214, 233–234.

<sup>19</sup> One should not exclude the possibility that the facades of the two blocks next to Franciscan Church were extended in height during the post-earthquake reconstruction.

<sup>20</sup> According to reconstruction proposed in K. Horvat-Levaj, *Barokne palače u Dubrovniku*: p. 233.

<sup>21</sup> As the earliest possible date the year 1561 may be proposed, considering that it was then that a stone portico was constructed in front of the fourth, Spinis's block modelled after a similar construction in front of the first block of communal houses next to the Sponza Palace.

*St Blaise and St Francis of Assisi* (on display at the Dominican Monastery),<sup>22</sup> one can clearly discern two new two-storey buildings—that is, two new blocks of communal houses next to the Franciscan Church, with tall windows on the first floor and somewhat lower mezzanine-type windows in the second floor zone. In other words, this city view—conceived as ‘painting within painting’, attributed to *vedutista* Didier Barra—is a faithful testimony of the view of Placa after the construction of the communal block of houses on the site of Klačić House, which speaks in support of the painting’s dating to 1657 or 1658, i.e. some ten years before the Great Earthquake, as recently proposed by Radoslav Tomić.<sup>23</sup>



Figure 4. Facades of the blocks next to the Franciscan Church as represented on a veduta of Dubrovnik in the altarpiece “The Virgin with St Blaise and St Francis of Assisi” by Antonio de Bellis (Museum of Dominican Friary of St Dominic)

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If, in the light of the things mentioned, we again analyse archival evidence on the renovation of the houses in the Placa after the earthquake, particularly the decisions made before the building of the first communal house, certain

<sup>22</sup> Radoslav Tomić, »Antonio de Bellis, Bogorodica u slavi sa sv. Vlahom i sv. Franjom Asiškim« (cat. unit S/36), in: *Dominikanci u Hrvatskoj*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Igor Fisković, Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2011: pp. 361–362.

<sup>23</sup> R. Tomić, »Antonio de Bellis, Bogorodica u slavi«: p. 362.



conclusions may be drawn and numerous questions posed, which, however, cannot be supplied with definite answers. Given the lapidary style of the entries in the books of the *Consilium Rogatorum*, as well as the fact that none of the architectural plans or concepts mentioned in them has survived, it is difficult to ascertain the Council's agendas respectively. However, there is ground to assume that the senators decided separately on architectural solution/s of the buildings' interior (*forma domus*), and separately on the design of their facades (*facies domus; prospectus seu, ut dicitur, facciata*).

As they testify to prospective undertakings, the minutes of the *Consilium Rogatorum* are primarily valuable because they provide an insight into the priorities of the Ragusan government. Yet, the selection of project solutions and the execution of construction work are two distinctive processes. Decisions, most certainly, were not carried out promptly; their implementation required resources and time during which they were usually subject to reconsideration and most frequently alteration. The data on the reconstruction of the houses in the Placa (along with numerous other examples from various realms of life) confirm that if a specific proposition at some point of decision-making on the councils was accepted (or denied), it did not necessarily imply its enforcement.

Decisions regarding the reconstruction of the houses in the Placa from November 1667 to May 1668 contain clear implications that in architectural terms the rejected solutions were more ambitious, more representative in terms of design, and with regard to execution were more demanding. As the opening of the construction works neared, the senators grew inclined towards more conventional and cost-acceptable solutions. In this respect, highly indicative is a succession of decisions passed on 11 May 1668.<sup>24</sup> Having definitely confirmed a week earlier that Cerruti's project was no longer under consideration,<sup>25</sup> on the mentioned date first rejected was the project (*forma*) submitted by three appointed officials,<sup>26</sup> as well as a proposition for the facade (*prospectus seu, ut dicitur, facciata*) of the first block next to Sponza to be modelled after that of the house next to the Franciscan Church. The solution ultimately accepted—the facade was to have four [door openings for] shops, and the wall in the ground floor zone was to be raised “up to the shop height”—seems utterly conventional.

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<sup>24</sup> See Appendix, s. d.

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix, s. d. 4 May 1668.

<sup>26</sup> The officials were chosen on 12 April 1668, see Appendix, s. d.

The last decision prior to the construction of the first block next to Sponza, registered on 24 May 1668, was the acceptance of the project (*forma domus*) submitted in the meanwhile by the *provisores civitatis*,<sup>27</sup> most presumably formulated in accordance with previously passed decisions. With regard to the building's facade, completed in 1670, it is not disputable that its design was a replica of Spinis's facade of the fourth block,<sup>28</sup> that is, of its 'derivatives'—facades of the blocks next to the Franciscan Church. In this, however, we can be perfectly certain only in the case of the upper floor zones. With regard to the ground floor (today featuring the uniform asymmetric door openings, locally known as kneelike doors), the situation is somewhat more complex since the data on the shape and dimensions of the original openings are not available to us. In the drawing made after the architectural survey carried out in the late 1960s, it is clearly visible that the ground floors of the first three blocks, and elsewhere, had noticeably higher, also arched door openings without the so-called knee. Considering it to be the result of nineteenth-century interventions, in the second half of the twentieth century Dubrovnik conservators tended to replace



Figure 5. Buildings in the east part of the north front of the Placa in the late 1960s (architectural survey by I. Tenšek, Institute of Art History, Zagreb, 1970)



Figure 6. Buildings in the east part of the north front of the Placa, present state (after the architectural survey by I. Tenšek, Institute of Art History, 1970, edited by I. Valjato Vrus)

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix, s. d.

<sup>28</sup> The facade of the first block differs from others in one feature only, the corner rustication, cf. K. Horvat-Levaj, »Urbanistička preobrazba Dubrovnika«: p. 342.

their frames (colloquially also referred to as Austrian) on all facades in the Placa—that is, to restore the kneelike door openings as original. Believed to be the most authentic, the ground floor openings of the fourth block were thus used as model. It should be noted, however, that the door frames which were removed were better adapted to the scale and proportions of the facades in terms of height. In fact, facade geometry of Spinis's fourth block appears to have been harmonised with the volume of its attached stone portico, so that the absence of porticoes in the post-earthquake reconstruction resulted in excessive height of the blank wall zones between ground-floor and first-floor openings—a feature still characterising the fronts of most blocks on the north side of the Placa.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, if we accept the assumption by which the facades of the houses built after the earthquake did have kneelike doors, one may rightly speculate why as a model for the facade of the first block in May 1668, there is no mention of the facade of the fourth block, or rather, why the proposition for it to be modelled after the facade that adorned the first house next to the Franciscan Church was explicitly denied, and for all we know, that facade was a replica of the facade of the fourth block (naturally, with the exception of the portico). Hence it appears likely that the specific difference between the 'new' and 'old' facades lay in the ground floor openings themselves.<sup>30</sup>

Also open for consideration is the question of the uniform facade solution of the houses on the opposite, for the time being still obscure south side of the Placa. On their reconstruction after the earthquake we have a single archival record: on 27 March 1670 it was decided to launch the construction work in conformity with "what was started" on the opposite side of the Placa.<sup>31</sup> Uniform design and the formats of the openings on the facades of three-storey buildings on the south side of the Placa truly bear resemblance with the facade solution of Spinis's (two-storey) fourth block, the difference resting on the 'inserted' low first floor (also with mezzanine-type windows). Given this and the fact that, to our knowledge, their appearance has not been discussed of after the earthquake, there is ground to assume that the uniform design of the facades of the houses lining the south side of the Placa was also defined before the earthquake, presumably in the sixteenth century.

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<sup>29</sup> This feature is today concealed by the metal frames for sun shades, installed at the very height of the former porticoes.

<sup>30</sup> Sadly, the original shape of the ground floor openings on the facades of the blocks next to the Franciscan Church can neither be clearly discerned on the mentioned city view on the altarpiece of Antonio de Bellis at the Dominican Monastery.

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix, s. d. 27 March 1670.

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At two pivotal moments, when, due to a fire that destroyed the fourth block of communal houses in 1558 and the earthquake in 1667, the change of the existing or establishment of a new design paradigm of the facades in the Placa was placed on the agenda, as protagonists of these events we encounter two foreign architects—Jacques de Spinis and Giulio Cerruti. Urbanistic and architectural shaping of the Placa in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can thus be viewed also in the context of a debate on the relationship between foreign architects and local tradition in Dubrovnik architecture.<sup>32</sup>

An excerpt from Abbot Stjepan Gradić's *Treatise on the quarries of travertine*, written in 1672–73 and enclosed to one of his letters to the Ragusan Senate, best illustrates the traditional attitude of Ragusan commissioners towards the architects.<sup>33</sup> Criticising Paolo Andreotti, then in charge of the Cathedral construction work, who deemed that he himself ought to provide all calculations of the necessary stone material, claiming to be “both architect and assessor”, Gradić warns that he should keep to his side of the job. Deliberating further on the role of architect in construction, he reminds of a saying, obviously Ragusan, by which “the first architect” of a construction should be the commissioner/investor (*il primo architetto deve essere il patrone*); commissioner's role is to give reliable orders to “the actual architect” (*saper dar gl'ordini accertatti al vero architetto*), and the latter, throughout the construction process, ought to administer decisions, and not bring them (*deve essere ministro e non arbitro della fabbrica*).

Gradić's views may, at the same time, be taken as guidelines for the assessment of the contribution of the two foreign architects engaged in the pre- and post-earthquake construction of the Placa. For the fourth block of communal houses, for which in the mid-sixteenth century Jacques de Spinis was commissioned, it was possible to establish on the basis of archival data that a mere re-design (i.e. re-systematisation) of the four-axis scheme of older (fourteenth-century) facades

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<sup>32</sup> K. Horvat-Levaj, »Strani projektanti i domaća tradicija u dubrovačkoj baroknoj arhitekturi«, in: *Zbornik 1. kongresa hrvatskih povjesničara umjetnosti*, ed. Milan Pelc. Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2004: pp. 75–84. For the author's most recent contribution to this debate, see Katarina Horvat-Levaj, »Arhitektura barokne katedrale«, in: *Katedrala Gospe Velike u Dubrovniku*, ed. Katarina Horvat-Levaj. Dubrovnik–Zagreb: Gradska župa Gospe Velike, Dubrovnik and Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2014: pp. 121–211.

<sup>33</sup> His *Discorso sopra l'appalto delle cave di travertino* was published by Kruno Prijatelj, »Dokumenti za historiju dubrovačke barokne arhitekture«, pp. 140–144. For more on this see K. Horvat-Levaj, »Arhitektura barokne katedrale«, pp. 140, 544.

of communal houses was to be undertaken. Final result, however, including the adding of a stone portico (whose model had already existed in front of the first block next to Sponza), owed much to reformulation of the architectural programme during the construction itself.<sup>34</sup> Was Spinis *ministro* or *arbitro* in that process? All things considered, his role was to merely execute, i.e. formulate architecturally the commissioners' idea in the spirit of the time—that of the *Consilium Rogatorum* and the three officials chosen to oversee the works.

Some hundred years later, only a few months after the disaster, by the end of July 1667, upon the initiative of Abbot Stjepan Gradić and prompting of Cardinal Barberini, Giulio Cerruti was sent to Dubrovnik by Pope Clement IX, having granted his chief architect a paid four-month leave.<sup>35</sup> The fact that Ragusan authorities first set a high cost of his accommodation, only to reward him substantially upon his leave, considering Cerruti's fairly short stay in Dubrovnik does strike as odd, especially in the light of the fact that not a single of his projects recorded in the sources came to fruition.<sup>36</sup> Cerruti's arrival in the earthquake-stricken Dubrovnik was apparently ill-timed, as it took some while for the actual construction to take place; master builders sent to Dubrovnik by Cardinal Barberini on his own expense (*un capo mastro muratore... che sarà mezzo architetto*, as well as masons and carpenters) also returned to Rome

<sup>34</sup> D. Zelić, »Dva požara, dvije obnove, dva stila«: pp. 116–121.

<sup>35</sup> *Capitano* Cerruti, of Swiss origin, recorded as *ingegnere della Camera Apostolica* and *Soprostante alle fortezze pontificie*, is by no means a minor architect. His documented activity spans from 1640 to 1690; in his mature professional days in Rome he was referred to simply as *Colonello*. Cerruti has earned his place in the history of Baroque architecture for having collaborated with the famous Carlo Fontana (1638–1714), whose Roman *bottega* has produced an impressive succession of first-rate Italian and European architects of the second half of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century, among whom were Filippo Juvarra, Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach and Lucas von Hildebrandt. The latter in his memories of the training in Rome with Fontana explicitly mentioned that he was also a student of *Colonello Cerruti*. For a broader account on Cerruti and his achievements on the Apennine Peninsula see »Cerruti, Giulio«, *SAUR Allgemeines Künstler Lexikon*, B. 17, München–Leipzig: K. G. Saur Verlag, 1997: p. 616; Mario Bevilacqua, »Architetti e costruttori del Barocco in Toscana«, in: *Architetti e costruttori del barocco in Toscana. Opere, tecniche, materiali*, ed. M. Bevilacqua. Roma: De Luca Editori d'Arte, 2010: pp. 29–30.

<sup>36</sup> The Senate must have undertaken all steps to have the wording of Cerruti's report to the pope harmonised with Ragusan wishes, and in no way whatsoever was it to undermine the expected financial support for the city's restoration. The expenditure proved to have been a good investment; on the situation in Dubrovnik Cerruti reported to the pope just as the Ragusans anticipated, see *Abatis Stephani Gradii Ragusini ad consilium rogatorum Rei publicae Ragusinae epistolae scriptae (ab anno MDCLXVII. usque ad mortem Gradii) / Pisma opata Stjepana Gradića Dubrovčanina senatu Republike Dubrovačke od godine 1667. do 1683*, ed. Đuro Körbler [Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, vol. XXXVII]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1915: pp. 128–129.



soon after the architect.<sup>37</sup> Cerruti's primary task was to offer assistance in the consolidation of the city fortifications,<sup>38</sup> yet the Ragusans tried to make the most of the presence of the eminent architect, and thus consulted him on other important issues regarding the city's restoration, primarily on the houses on the Placa, which doubtless proved to have been among the main priorities.

Cerruti's design (*delineatio; forma*) did not only pertain to the first house next to the Sponza Palace, but, as far as the facade was concerned, was conceived as a prototype for all buildings lining the north side of the Placa. To what extent this plan was the fruit of his own invention, and to what extent, like Spinis, he merely elaborated the given programme, will remain unknown. Whatever the case, as stated earlier, in November 1667 the senators initially agreed upon the execution of Cerruti's project, only to abandon it in the spring next year. Among the decisions passed on 11 May 1668, the last two certainly appear as most intriguing. According to the first decision, an utterly traditional solution was accepted—*de fabricando in prospectu seu facie domus edificandę quatuor apothecas, producendo murum ad altitudinem apothecarum*. The mention of the (openings of) four shops on the ground floor and explicit insistence that the wall should be raised “up to the height of the shops” might lead to a conclusion that by the previously considered solutions, both Cerruti's and/or that of the three appointed officials, addition of a portico to the facade had been planned or even opening of the ground floor zone by means of a portico. According to the second decision, however, it was determined that the “length” of the house facade be equal to the existing one (*de faciendo prospectum seu faciem domus longam quantum modo longa est*). Considering that the width of the block was already determined in its right, that formulation might have referred to the height of the facade, yet—which is far more likely—to the abandonment of the idea to move the construction line forward, into the space of the Placa, most probably up to the line upon which the pre-earthquake portico columns stood.

Apart from the objective factors—technical demands and execution cost—the reason for abandoning the initial (Cerruti's) project should be sought in the fact that in the meanwhile (in January 1668) it was decided that the houses to be built in the Placa by public funds be no longer communal, and upon completion they were to be sold and the money thus obtained was to be re-invested into

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<sup>37</sup> *Abatis Stephani Gradii ... epistolae*: pp. 129–130.

<sup>38</sup> Lukša Beritić, *Utvrdjenja grada Dubrovnika*. Zagreb: JAZU, 1955: p. 193.

further renovation of the buildings in the city's main thoroughfare.<sup>39</sup> The abandoning of centuries-long practice of building and renting communal houses definitely marked a shift in the architectural programme of all future construction in the Placa. Traditional blocks consisting of smaller, autonomous vertical units—the so-called houses with shops, leased out to merchants and craftsmen in five-year intervals<sup>40</sup>—were eventually replaced with residential buildings featuring more spacious interiors that were functionally entirely separated from the rows of shops lining the street. That change evidently resulted in the expansion of the construction plots depthwise.<sup>41</sup>

None of these major novelties would, however, mirror in the facades, shaped and executed in accordance with a hundred-year-old model—Spinis's generic solution of the fourth block facade. With this fact in mind, in the Placa one may easily discern the continuity of the phenomenon of 'scenographic facades' discussed by Nada Grujić.<sup>42</sup> However, instead of "Renaissance facades of medieval houses" she was referring to (which can be equally applied to Spinis's fourth block), in post-earthquake reconstruction one can rightfully speak of *Renaissance facades of Baroque houses*.

With regard to characterisation of the whole project in terms of style, one should bear in mind the question whether the results of reconstruction were the outcome of stylistically-conscious choices (and if so, to what extent), posed by Vladimir Marković in his study on the overall restoration of Ragusan dwelling architecture after the earthquake.<sup>43</sup> At any rate, the post-earthquake reconstruction of the facades lining the main city street has indeed failed to introduce any novelty in design, let alone in style. Quite the contrary, their appearance clearly proves the attachment to the older, sixteenth-century prototype, i.e. the Spinis's

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<sup>39</sup> See Appendix, s. d. 19 January 1668.

<sup>40</sup> As early as the sixteenth century, some blocks of communal houses in the Placa witnessed change of interior space, i.e. joining of adjacent miniature space units, four-space units being remodelled into two-space units. Similarly, blocks next to the Franciscan Church built in the seventeenth century (before the earthquake) had only two houses with shops each.

<sup>41</sup> Decision of 1670, by which the second house was (also) permitted to occupy the space of an alley that before the earthquake ran along the back side of the blocks overlooking the Placa, see Appendix, s. d. 12 June 1670, testifies that (unlike the facades) the reconstruction plan of the buildings in the Placa did not propose unique ground plan dimensions nor a uniform interior layout.

<sup>42</sup> Nada Grujić, *Kuća u Gradu: studije o dubrovačkoj stambenoj arhitekturi 15. i 16. stoljeća*. Dubrovnik: Matica hrvatska, Ogranak Dubrovnik, 2013: pp. 215–231.

<sup>43</sup> Vladimir Marković, »Kuća i prostor grada u Dubrovniku nakon potresa 1667. godine«. *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 14 (1990): p. 146.

facade of the fourth block. In other words, in that particular process the earthquake was no more than a catalyst. Hypothetically, in an ideal scenario in which Dubrovnik had not been hit by a disaster of 1667, over time all facades on the north front of the Placa would have adopted the design of Spinis's fourth block facade. After the earthquake—at least as far as the facades are concerned—*restoration* was at work and not *reconstruction*.

If we wished to attach an adequate style designation to the architectural-urbanistic complex of the Placa, Mannerist would suit far better than Baroque. That would, however, imply that the final result—'iconography' of the post-earthquake Placa in Dubrovnik—was an outcome of a specific striving or, in Rieglian terms, of a *Kunstwollen*, which, most certainly, does not correspond to genuine facts. By contrast, the idea of uniform facade design of the blocks lining the entire street prospects of the Placa is an autochthonous innovation of the Ragusan sixteenth century, modelled so as to suit the traditional purpose of these buildings. Hence, from the viewpoint of its past development, the architectural shaping of Dubrovnik's Placa in its final, post-earthquake stage proves to have been a retrogressive phenomenon.

### *Appendix*

Decisions of the *Consilium Rogatorum* on reconstruction of the houses in the Placa 1667–1670 (Fond of the Dubrovnik Republic, ser. III, Acta Consilii Rogatorum, State Archives in Dubrovnik)

#### **23 September 1667**

Die XXIII septembris 1667.

Prima pars est de ordinando ut reedificentur domus comunis positę in Platea magna, ultimo habitatę a Stephano Sorgo et Stephano Vitussa et Andrea Menessali idque quamprimum. Per XIV, contra I.

(*Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, vol. 114, f. 136r)

#### **5 November 1667**

Die V mensis novembris 1667.

Prima pars est de fabricando domum in platea magna incipiendo a parte Dohanę iuxta delineationem relictam a capitaneo Iulio Ceruti. <Per> XIII, <contra> III.

(Secunda pars est de non fabricando pro nunc. *cancell.*)

(Prima pars est de utendo pro fabrica dicte domus fabricandę ut supra pecuniam assignatam pro fabrica domorum in platea magna quousque habemus non expensa in illis. *cancell.*)

Secunda pars est de aliter faciendo. Per X, contra V.

Prima pars est de comittendo dominis provisoribus civitatis ut formant et referant opinionem in presentem consilium rogatorum dię iovis desuper modo reperiendi pecuniam pro fabrica domorum fabricandarum pro publico. <Per> XIII, contra I.

(*Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, vol. 114, ff. 150v–151r)

#### **19 January 1668**

Die XIX ianuarii 1668.

[Providimentum relatam a dominis provisoribus civitatis supra reedificationem civitatis]

(..)

Prima pars est de approbando quartum capitulum dicti providimenti lectum. Per XIV, contra V.

Quarto, che pigliar si debbano a cento ducati sei milla di grossetti 40 a ragione di cinque per cento sopra le rendite delli nostri lazareti e restituo, il quale capitale

in tutto o in parte sempre restituire si possa ad ogni volere dell' eccelso Consiglio di pregati, li quali ducati sei milla si debbano impiegare et investire nella fabrica delle case pubbliche da fabricarsi nella Piazza grande secondo la parte presa nell' eccelso Consiglio di pregati sotto il di <V> novembre prossime passato e conforme il modello in quella nominato, o altro da farsi e di approvarsi dall' eccelso Consiglio di pregati; le quali case una o piu finite che saranno, si debbano vendere al publico incanto al piu dante et offerente in perpetuo et il prezzo delle medeme investire ed impiegare di novo nella fabrica d'altre case nove, una o piu di mano in mano, le quali finite vendere si debbano nel modo predetto, et il loro prezzo investirsi in altre nove case come sopra e non potendosi vendere dette case o alcuna di quelle che affittare si debbano al piu dante et offerente con riserva pero sempre di poterle vendere nel modo predetto.

Prima pars est de approbando quintum capitulum dicti providimenti lectum. Per XVIII, contra I.

Che oltre li detti ducati sei milla da pigliarsi a cento come nel precedente capitolo, levare si debbano per il medemo effetto delle fabriche delle case del publico dall'erario publico ducati quatro milla di grossetti 40 per ducato con li quali impiegare et investire si debbano nelle fabriche delle case predette da vendersi et affittarsi rispettivamente come nel precedente capitolo.

(*Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, vol. 116, ff. 9v–10r)

## 12 April 1668

Die XII aprilis 1668.

[Providimentum relatum a dominis provisoribus civitatis supra reedificationem civitatis]

(...)

Prima pars est de approbando capitulum vigesimum secundum delatum ut supra. Per X, contra VII.

Che si dia principio à fabricare la casa nel terreno già nettato, dove erano li volti delli mercanti, conforme il modello.

Electio trium officialium super edificatione domus

Ser Giore Palmota

Per XI, contra V, ex. I.

Ser Andreās de Basseoglio

Per VIII, contra VII.

Electio unius reliqui ex dictis officialibus

Ser Lucas de Zamagno

Per IX, contra VI, ex. I.

(*Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, vol. 116, f. 64r–v)



**4 May 1668**

Die IV mensis maii 1668.

(Prima pars est de stando parti factę sub die <V> mensis <novembris 1667> super fabrica domorum ędificandorum iuxta formam factam a capitaneo Ceruto. *cancell.*)

Secunda pars est de non stando. <Per> XI, <contra> VI.

(*Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, vol. 116, f. 79r)

**11 May 1668**

Die XI mensis maii 1668.

(Prima pars est de approbando formam delatam a dominibus officialibus deputatis super fabrica novę domus. *cancell.*)

Secunda pars est de non approbando. Per X, contra VII.

(Prima pars est de incipiendo prospectum seu, ut dicitur, facciatam domus fabricandę hic in Platea iuxta illum prospectum quem habuit domus prope ecclesiam Sancti Francisci. *cancell.*)

Secunda pars est de aliter faciendo. Per IX, contra VIII.

Prima pars est de fabricando in prospectu seu facie domus ędificandę quatuor apothecas, producendo murum ad altitudinem apothecarum et de faciendo prospectum seu faciem domus longam quantum modo longa est. Per X, contra VII.

(*Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, vol. 116, f. 82r)

**24 May 1668**

Die XXIII maii 1668.

Prima pars est de approbando formam domus ędificandę dellatam a dominibus provisoribus civitatis. Per XIII, contra V.

(*Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, vol. 116, f. 84v)

**24 October 1669**

Die XXIV mensis octobris 1669.

(Prima pars est de terminando ut edificetur alia domus prope iam fabricatam simili prospectu Ghettum versus occupando unam viam, investiendo in illius ędificatione pretium domus venditę prope viam latam. *cancell.*)

Secunda pars est de aliter faciendo. Per XII, contra VI.

(*Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, vol. 117, f. 97r)

**27 March 1670**

Die XXVII mensis martii 1670.

Prima pars est de terminando ut debeat fabricari ex altera parte Plateę magne iuxta quod inceptum est ex parte Dogane quoad prospectum seu faciem domorum, cum hoc ut non possint tamen fieri in Platea portę tabernarum. Per XVI, contra III.

*(Acta Consilii Rogatorum, vol. 117, f. 192v)*

**12 June 1670**

Die XII mensis iunii 1670.

Prima pars est de terminando fabricare domum in platea magna secundum formam inceptam serviri in ultima parte vię fabrorum ferrariorum includendo in dicta domo callem qui erat iam inter ultimam domum in via ferrariorum et domum que respiciebat Plateam. Per XV, contra II.

*(Acta Consilii Rogatorum, vol. 118, f. 21r–v)*