



Palaces of Boka Kotorska



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Second edition

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INTRODUCTION

The publication “Palaces of Boka Kotorska” is one of the results of the project “Cultural Itinerary–Palaces of Boka Kotorska”. It is aimed at presenting the palaces of Boka Kotorska and adding them to a cultural itinerary as part of the existing tourist attraction of Montenegro. By identifying and assessing our rich heritage in this way, the publication hopes to contribute to the development of cultural tourism here.

Cultural itineraries are one of the possible ways in which cultural heritage as a resource for cultural tourism could be exploited. Cultural itineraries can contribute to heritage protection and to overall social and economic development of a country.

As far as the need to develop cultural tourism in Montenegro is concerned, cultural itineraries have been recognised as an important part of our tourist offer. However, none have been designed yet.

With the project “Cultural Itinerary – Palaces of Boka Kotorska”, EXPEDITIO wanted to initiate the concept of cultural itineraries, starting with the palaces of Boka Kotorska.

The project is intended to serve as a model for designing cultural itineraries focusing on various themes, such as archeological sites, medieval towns, Austro-Hungarian fortresses, Romanesque churches, monasteries, rural ensembles, etc. within the cultural heritage of Boka Kotorska, the Montenegrin coast and other parts of Montenegro. These itineraries could later be linked with cultural itineraries of other countries in the region.

In the area of Boka Kotorska there are a large number of *palaces and other characteristic houses* with distinctive cultural-historic,

artistic and architectural values which represent an important segment of our cultural heritage. These houses are the best evidence of social, economic and cultural development of the area and offer an insight into the culture and way of life of the whole area. However, the palaces of Boka Kotorska have not been adequately presented and assessed before. The research and data on some of the palaces is usually accessible only to experts and there is a scarcity of published material about the palaces and their values accessible to a broader audience.

The aim of the publication is to present, in one place, all the palaces and other important and characteristic residential houses in Boka Kotorska which can be included in an interesting cultural itinerary. During preparation of the publication, we referred to a wealth of material and prior research on the individual palaces. A bibliography is included at the end of the publication.

Primarily, the publication aims to present all the houses in Boka Kotorska termed as PALACES (loc. “palata” or “palac”, Ital. “palazzo”) in accordance with the *specific local understanding of this term*. However, the publication also presents some smaller palaces called “PALACINI”, and some selected SUMMER HOUSES, VILLAS and other DISTINCTIVE RESIDENTIAL COMPLEXES in Boka Kotorska which, based on their features, deserve to be included in a cultural itinerary of distinctive houses of Boka Kotorska.

EXPEDITIO

PALACES

By definition, the *palace* is a “**grand and beautiful house**” or a “**building which stands out by its size and luxury**”. In Latin, the word “*palatium*” was used to describe the residence of an emperor and it comes from the name of one of the seven hills of Rome, the Palatine Hill, where Emperor Augustus Caesar lived and where his successors built their luxurious residences.

In its basic meaning the word palace was used to denote an urban residence of a sovereign, a feudal lord, a patrician, etc. and is synonymous to a court. In a broader sense, the term is applied nowadays here to larger buildings used as the seats of ministries, banks, business concerns, organisations, institutions, etc.

“In many ancient civilisations, such as Egypt, Crete, Persia, the Roman Empire, etc. palaces of large dimensions were used as the residences of rulers (e.g. Diocletian’s palace in Split). In Rome, the emperor’s residence was built on one of the seven hills (Palatine Hill) and the name of the hill later came to mean the palace. In the middle ages, feudal lords used fortified towns, i.e. burgs, as their residences (e.g. the papal residence in Avignon). A residential building within such fortified towns acquired the name palais, pales,

palas, palast, etc. From the Renaissance onwards, the residential building evolved into a type of palace, differing from the burg in that it was not fortified; it was part of an urban complex but was not connected to utility buildings, which is characteristic of the court as centre of a feudal estate.

A Renaissance type of feudal palace (Ital. palazzo) developed in Italy from the 15th century onwards, first in Florence, Rome and Venice; here the wings of a palace with porches resting on pillars enclose a fine quadrangle (e.g. Strozzi Palace and Pitti Palace in Florence). Palaces serving public purposes were built in a similar way (e.g. Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome). In Italy, palaces developed especially in the Baroque period, and the term “palazzo” became widely used.

The Slavic names for a palace are derived from Latin (e.g. palata, palača, polača, palac in Serbo-Croat; palac in Czech and Polish). Today, in this area, the term palace is applied not only to luxurious, distinctive houses built as private residences of noble families, but also to all fine and prominent buildings.”²

1 Milan Vujaklija, *Leksikon stranih reči i izraza* (Dictionary of Foreign Words and Expressions)

2 *Enciklopedija likovnih umjetnosti* (Encyclopedia of Fine Arts)



Venice, Italy

FEATURES OF PALACES

The term palace includes both private mansions and buildings used for public purposes, i.e. important governmental, religious, administrative and commercial buildings.

Regardless of whether they have a public or residential character, palaces always express symbols – “a symbol of authority and power for some people or a symbol of social status and wealth for others. All palaces, by their size, artistic expression, quality of construction and historical importance, represent exceptional works of architecture.”¹

It is customary for larger and more elaborate houses with careful and fine construction and rich ornamentation to be called palaces, rather than modest townhouses.

Primarily, the palace represents a suitable and protected space for all aspects of family life and besides that, it has a role in social relations. Like jewellery, the palace has the ability to build the

reputation and emphasise the importance of the owner to others, no matter if it is an individual, a local community or the whole of society. Generally speaking, the palace serves to satisfy the need for beauty and to provide a framework for a better and more refined life. For a nobleman his palace is the obvious, visible sign of his social, economic and political status.

Secondly, palaces had an important role in the field of construction because they served as examples and models for other buildings. By constructing palaces, villas and summer residences, the finest works of secular architecture were accomplished. In addition, the forms of new artistic styles were usually first applied on some important religious buildings and palaces, only to be later copied to other buildings.

The elements that distinguish palaces from other houses can be:

- Their size, dimensions and height
- Concept of interior layout
- More elaborated façade walls
- More “harmonious” proportions and position of openings
- Architectural elements and ornamentation
- Number of vertical rows of windows (usually three, four or five, i.e. more than on ordinary houses)
- Family coat-of-arms on the façade (although some less rich, middle-class families also had and displayed their coats-of-arms)
- Existence of rooms for special purposes (e.g. a large hall, a salon, a study, a library, a separate kitchen, a garden, etc.)

Finally, the wealth and luxury of the palace can be determined by comparing the space necessary for living and the space used for reception.



Baroque façade of the Tripković Palace in Dobrota

1. Duško Živanović, “Dubrovačke kuće i palače” (Houses and Palaces of Dubrovnik)



Engraving of Boka Kotorska (Canale di Cattaro), Vincenzo Coronelli, 1688

BOKA KOTORSKA

"This magic bay, in which the rugged and almost inaccessible hills of south Herzegovina and Montenegro descend and sink, is called Boka Kotorska. People who have travelled the world describe the Bay as one of the most beautiful areas in the world; and truly, it looks as if nature was playing while creating its marvellous works."

(S. M. Ljubiša)

Boka Kotorska is a unique bay in the Mediterranean. It is an exceptional cultural landscape created through the harmonious symbiosis of natural phenomena and man-made heritage. The exceptionally favourable and specific natural and climatic conditions of the Bay were decisive factors for the early settling of the area. This led to the formation

of towns and settlements in a distinctive way, creating a unique harmony of the works of nature and human spirit.

Various morphological, geological and hydrological phenomena contributed to turning this area into an exceptional creation of nature, unique not only in the Mediterranean but also, when adding an anthropogenic component, in the world. The Bay is surrounded by steep limestone mountains of the Dinaric Alps, reaching a highest elevation of 1895 m (Mt Orjen) and a greatest depth in the Bay of 52 m, which makes this area one of the rare holokarst areas in the world, with particularly evident karst morphology and hydrology.

These exceptional natural conditions, coupled with geographic location and historical circumstances, have created distinctive cultural

properties whilst also under the influence of other cultures of the Mediterranean, West and partly East. However, these influences have been adapted to the local lifestyles and ways of life, and further disseminated to broader areas of the former Yugoslavia, Balkans and even Eastern Europe. This diversity and balance has blended with the natural environment of the Bay, creating thus, in the most humane way, a unique natural and cultural environment for human life.

The towns and larger and smaller settlements lining the coast of the Bay represent diverse and distinctive ensembles. Although each settlement has its own urban and cultural characteristics, they maintain the unity and continuity of cultural heritage of the whole area. The ecclesiastical architecture of the settlements has developed through

the blending of different styles, especially Romanesque and Baroque; while secular architecture has created different forms of houses, through a mixture of vernacular architecture and influences of the Mediterranean, the West and the East. Elite secular architecture of the palaces takes an important place. Furthermore, in Boka Kotorska, there are rich collections and treasuries of our cultural heritage to be found.

The Bay of Boka Kotorska is part of the **Club of the most beautiful bays in the world**. Due to its exceptional cultural and natural features, a part of the Bay, the area of Kotor - consisting of the two smaller bays of Kotor and Risan - has been included on **UNESCO's World Heritage List** since 1979.



Boka Kotorska Bay



Boka Kotorska Bay, a view from Lovćen Mountain

Well before and after the arrival of Slavic people, numerous states, sovereigns and rulers aspired to hold the Bay of Boka Kotorska in their possession. Its important strategic position on the south-eastern Adriatic, with its calm coves, could offer shelter to ships from the raging sea and pirates. It was adorned with numerous ancient towns, seafaring settlements and pleasant villages. No less than 15 times, various domestic and foreign rules succeeded each other for shorter or longer periods, shifting the boundaries of the Bay. However, only several longer-lasting rules created deeper changes, leaving an indelible mark on the history of the whole area.

The town of Kotor has not always been the centre of the Bay. The town acquired this prominent position as a political, economic and cultural centre, giving the name to the whole Bay, in the period of its full development in the Middle Ages. During the Illyrian and Roman period, the main

town in the Bay was Risan, after which the whole Bay had been named the Bay of Risan (*Sinus Rhisonicus*). The town of Herceg

Novi was established in the 14th century, while the settlements along its Riviera saw rapid development after the liberation of this part of the Bay from Turkish rule in 1687. Between the 16th and 18th century, during the Venetian rule, the settlements of Perast, Dobrota, Prčanj and Stoliv developed and gained power, acquiring the status of seafaring communities. During Austrian rule, the town of Tivat became the main naval base in the Bay.

(Sources: Nomination documentation for the inscription of Cultural-Historical and Natural region of Kotor on UNESCO's World Heritage List and Miloš Milošević, "Istorijski tokovi na području Zaliva" - History of the Bay of Boka Kotorska)

CHRONOLOGY OF HISTORY OF BOKA KOTORSKA

300 to 168 BC
The Illyrian period

168 BC to 476 AD
The Roman period

476 to 1185 AD
The Byzantine period

**Slavic states of Duklja (Doclea)
and Zeta**

1185 to 1371
Period of rule of the Serbian medieval state Raška

1371 to 1384
**Period of reign of the Hungarian-Croatian King
Ludovic I**

**1382. - The town of Herceg Novi founded by the
Bosnian King Tvrtko I**

1384 to 1391
Period of reign of the Bosnian King Tvrtko I

1391 to 1420
Kotor is an independent city-republic

A.D.

5th

7th

11th

12th

14th

15th

- 3000 BC – the first evidence of a Neolithic culture in the cave of Spila above Perast
- cave paintings at Lipci

- 228 BC – the Illyrian queen Teuta takes refuge in Risan, fleeing from the Romans
- an Illyrian mint established in Risan

- Development of Rhisinium and Acruvium as the towns of the Roman citizens
- Risan is the main town of the Bay Sinus Risonicus

- 6th century – the first reference of Paul, bishop of Kotor

- Settling of Slavic people and Avars
- Byzantine rule in the towns, while the interior is predominantly Slavic
- The end of the 10th century – Emperor Samuilo destroys Kotor

- Decline of Byzantium after the death of Emperor Basilius (1025), followed by the rise of Slavic Duklja

- Mihailo, king of Duklja, has his residence in Kotor

- The Byzantine rule in Kotor replaced by that of the Vojislavljević dynasty of Zeta; the town has its own administration headed by a "prior" (prince)

- Kotor is the seat of one of the three Byzantine "dukate" (administrative units). The interior belongs to the rulers of Zeta

- Kotor enjoys privileged position as the main port of Raška; Stefan Nemanja (ruler of Raška) has his residence in Kotor

- Kotor gains importance as a transit port in the trade between the Balkans, the Italian (Apennine) Peninsula and the Mediterranean

- The civil community of Kotor, with its Statute and legislative, judiciary and administrative bodies enjoys a great degree of autonomy

- The Balšić dynasty of Zeta strives to conquer Kotor

1420 to 1797**Period of rule of the Venetian Republic****1482 to 1687 Herceg Novi, together with the north-western part of the Bay, ruled by the Turks**

In 1482, the north-western part of the Bay, from Herceg Novi to Risan, was seized by the Turks who occupied it for the following 200 years. The rest of the Bay was ruled by the Venetian Republic.

1687 to 1797 Herceg Novi ruled by the Venetian Republic**1797 to 1806****The first period of Austrian rule****1806 to 1807 - period of the Russian rule****1807 to 1813 - period of the French rule****1813 to 1814 - a temporary government of Boka Kotorska and Montenegro, the so-called "Central Commission"****1814-1918****The second period of Austrian rule****1918 - Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes****1929 - Kingdom of Yugoslavia****1945 - Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia****1992 - Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro****2006 - Montenegro****15th**

- Kotor, together with some other settlements in the Bay, place itself under the protection of Venice

16th

- Formally, Kotor retains its autonomy; the town is governed by a proveditor (duke) appointed by Venice
- 14511 - Stefan Crnojević (ruler of Upper Zeta) obtains salt fields in the vicinity of Kotor, the authority over customs offices and a house in Kotor
- 1538 - the Spanish conquer Herceg Novi
- 1539 - Ottoman admiral Hayreddin Barbarossa attacks Kotor
- 1585 - Perast breaks off from Kotor and becomes an independent community

17th

- 1625 - Prčanj acquires the status of a maritime community
- 1654 - the Turks attack Perast
- 1657 - the Turks attack Kotor
- 1667 - a devastating earthquake
- 1684 - liberation of Risan from Turkish rule
- 1687 - liberation of Herceg Novi from Turkish rule

18th

- 1717 - Dobrota acquires the status of a maritime community
- 1721 - Stoliv acquires the status of a maritime community

19th

- At first, Boka had a status of an independent region, subject directly to Vienne
- a Russian consul in Kotor

20th

- 1979- a devastating earthquake
- the area of Kotor is included on UNESCO's World Heritage List

21th

PALACES IN BOKA KOTORSKA

"Today, the palaces of Boka Kotorska are almost silent witnesses of its former greatness, splendour and wealth. A complete history of the area, especially the prosperous period is vividly reflected in them ... The palaces of Kotor, built at the close of the Middle Ages, throughout the 16th century and in smaller numbers even later, together with the palaces of Perast built throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, and those of Dobrota and Prčanj dating back to the 18th century, speak clearly about the historical changes in the area of Boka Kotorska and reflect the changing social-economic and cultural development of the most important settlements in Boka Kotorska."

(Pavao Butorac, the first half of the 20th century)

The development of building in Boka Kotorska in general and the construction of distinctive houses and palaces in particular, are closely connected with historical circumstances and the social, economic and cultural development of the area.

In the Roman period, the first buildings of the type *"villa rustica"* were constructed in the town of Risan. In Kotor, during the Middle Ages and especially in the period of its greatest prosperity, various "courts" and palaces were built. In the same period, many noble families from Kotor built their summer residences in the area of Tivat. During the 17th and 18th centuries a specific type of Baroque palace developed in the Bay, first in the settlements of Perast, Prčanj and Dobrota, which in that period acquired the status of seafaring communities, and also in Kotor, where noble families built their palaces. In the same period, especially after liberation from Turkish rule, some representative houses and palaces were built on Herceg Novi Riviera.



Perast, Fedor Koračaj, 1837

The term “*specific palaces of Boka Kotorska*” includes primarily the Baroque palaces built in this area during the 17th and 18th centuries.

In terms of their inner layout and the way of life that was led in them, the specific palaces of Boka Kotorska represent *enlarged townhouses*, with a larger number of reception rooms and living quarters.

The *townhouses* of Boka Kotorska usually had three floors and were intended for one family. The ground floor served various commercial purposes. The first floor was used for reception, while the second contained the private quarters of family members. The reception rooms on the first floor were usually used to celebrate important holidays and events, to hold baptism and wedding celebrations and also to receive friends, and in the case of a death in the family. The third, i.e. last floor, situated in the attic area, had a spacious kitchen which was used as the main living area and also contained some utility rooms.

The difference between the palaces and townhouses of Boka Kotorska is not evident so much in the rendering of individual parts as it is in their general architectural concept. The palaces of Boka Kotorska, apart from those built in Kotor which have specific urban character, stand out for their size. The palaces had three or more often four floors (consisting of a ground floor, two floors above it and an attic), with a symmetrical front. Especially in the Baroque period, this symmetry was additionally emphasised by a narrow top floor, which had the form of an extended belvedere and a balcony as an obligatory element. A garden was an inseparable outer part of the houses and especially palaces of Boka Kotorska.

The typical organisation of space in the *palaces of Boka Kotorska* was quite simple.



Boka Kotorska, Giuseppe Rieger, 1851

It was modelled on the layout found in the townhouses of Boka Kotorska, and was also created under the influence of the representative palaces in Italy, primarily in Venice. A typical layout of rooms in the palaces of the Boka consisted of a central hall, i.e. a salon surrounded by four rooms, two each on two sides, and it is known as the “*four rooms and a salon*” concept (Ital. “*La casa di un padron, quattrro stanze un salon*”). In the palaces built by the sea, the salon was always on the side facing the sea. This concept of interior layout was applied on the coast from the 16th century and it derived from a similar gothic concept which was enhanced by enlarging the central salon in accordance with the functional requirements of the Renaissance and Baroque lifestyles.

The interior layout of the palaces, their courtyards and all utility spaces, offer an insight into the culture and way of life of the whole area of Boka Kotorska.

“The ground floor usually contained a storage area for boats and navigation equipment, and also had vaults for barrels, wooden tubs and stone oil containers, as well as storerooms for various household supplies and utensils. In some palaces,

the ground areas were so large that they could be used as granaries. In the absence of a separate magazine or storehouse built near the palace or in some other part of the town, the ground floor was used as the storage for merchandise accumulated through maritime trade and usually transported by the palace owners in their own ships.

On the first floor, the space was divided according to the Venetian “four rooms and a salon” concept (Ital. quattro stanze, un salon). The Venetian style of construction was not imitated only in the architectural concept and exterior stylisation of palaces, but also in their interior layout. This especially applies to the first floor which was used as the reception area for friends and guests. A large and spacious salon on the first floor was used for various purposes, including regular visits, guests entertaining and all important family events. At each corner, the salon opened to a room.



Ivanović-Moro Palace, Dobrota

All better pieces of furniture usually found their place of display in the salons. Special features of the salons were huge mirrors with wooden gold plated frames, richly carved in Baroque style, of considerable artistic value. Such valuable frames can also be found framing portraits and other paintings. In the houses of the seamen of this area, it was also possible to find the so-called “sailor’s chests” usually made of hardwood, which were given that name because they were used by the sailors for their belongings. The chests were also used for keeping the brides’ dowry.

The attic contained a **kitchen** and utility rooms. The houses had a paved **courtyard** usually containing storerooms for household supplies, an enclosure for domestic animals, a water cistern and flower beds. Flowers thrive well in the exceptionally mild climate of Boka Kotorska and can be found even in winter. Some palaces had large and nicely arranged courtyards which presented favourite retreating places, especially in summer. The courtyards usually extended into vegetable **gardens** or orchards. These were mainly terrace gardens consisting of several smaller areas of land encircled by walls. The usual fruits grown were oranges and lemons. It was also possible to find tree species such as oleander, palm, pine, cypress, etc.

A characteristic of houses next to the sea is the so-called “**ponta**”. It is a small quay built of stone extending out into the sea. It is surrounded by the sea on three sides, while on the fourth it is connected to the coast. On **ponta**, there are stone seats, locally known as “**pižuli**”, usually enclosed by walls. **Ponta** are sometimes planted with flowers and trees, usually lemon and oleander. A “**mandrač**”, i.e. a sheltered enclosure for boats can be found by **ponta**. In the past, every house directly accessing the sea used to have one. The **mandrač** consists of a quay-like stone structure which instead of extending straight out into the sea, formed an enclosure in order to provide shelter from storms or invaders. Every **mandrač** had a “**tiradur**” (Ital. “**trirare**”, meaning to pull)

– a space that was used to pull boats on the coast during winter or when they needed to be repaired.

In 1904, the Austro-Hungarians built a new coastal road without taking into consideration the function of the ponte and mandrač, and the inhabitants they served, thus breaking the organic connection between the town and the sea.”¹

OWNERS AND BUILDERS OF PALACES

Although the houses and palaces of Boka Kotorska are characterised by a certain simplicity and uniformity, each of them separately reflects the personal attitudes and wealth of its founder. The houses and palaces were always created through a joint endeavour of their commissioners / owners and the appointed builders.

The owners of the palaces represented the influential families of Boka Kotorska, while their builders / designers were either architects (domestic or foreign) or the owners themselves.

It is known that some of the most important Baroque complexes in Boka Kotorska were designed by Venetian architects, while some churches and fine architectural ensembles were created by architects from the adjacent trading and cultural centres of Dalmatia, with which Boka Kotorska has had close connections.

However, for the majority of architectural ensembles and larger and minor palaces, it can be assumed that they were designed

by their owners, usually seamen and merchants, who had a clear idea of what kind of houses they needed.

“There are many signs suggesting that the former seafarers of Boka Kotorska, being ship-owners and traders, were at the same time the architects of their houses. Of sober and practical mind, they also showed a refined sense for the layout of rooms and for the adequate positioning of the house on a plot.”²



Vicko Bujović, Perast

We have good reason to believe that, for example, Pima and Grgurina Palaces in Kotor, Bujović and Smekja Palaces in Perast, Dabinović and Tripković Palaces in Dobrota, or Beskuća and Verona Palaces in Prčanj, were designed by architects whose names are lost to us, but whose style is recognisable. For one minor palace in Dobrota called “Kokotova kula” (Rooster’s Tower), we had indirect evidence of the architect’s plan in a now lost model of the palace.³

The best craftsmen, who had already proved their skill on some public, religious and private buildings, were always commissioned for the construction of the palaces.

The palaces were built using the best quality materials. All the houses and palaces in Boka were made of stone, i.e. limestone from the nearby quarries, while, without exception, all the secondary elements such as the frames

² Milan Zloković, “Građanska arhitektura u Boki Kotorskoj u doba mletačke vlasti” (Civil Architecture in Boka Kotorska during the Venetian Rule)

³ Miloš Milošević, “Neke stilske odlike baroka u Boki Kotorskoj” (Features of the Baroque Style in Boka Kotorska)

¹ Pavao Butorac, *Kulturna povijest grada Perasta* (Cultural History of Perast)