

# ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF KRŠAN

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Based on a comparative analysis of the actual state, archival graphic sources and analogies, this study describes the appearance of the castle of Kršan as one of the best preserved fortified settlements of marked continental type situated in eastern Istria. It focuses on the description of its look in the late medieval and Renaissance period when its space developed reaching the size that has remained unchanged to the present. Particular attention is paid to disappeared details of fortified feudal residence, subsequently changed and inaccessible, confirmed by archival and field remnants and by the original aspect of the suburban settlement. Physical concept and architectural design of the castle of Kršan are compared to examples from surrounding area in which the settlement historically functioned, particularly in the context of pronounced similarities of the continental model of fortification and urbanization, and in the context of differences as well as some similarities with neighbouring Venetian territory.

**Key words: Kršan, castle, suburban settlement, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, eastern Istria, architecture, urban planning**

## **SURROUNDINGS, LOCATION, APPEARANCE AND ARCHITECTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SOME PARTS OF THE SETTLEMENT**

The castle of Kršan is situated on one of the elevations above Čepičko polje, formerly an eponymous lake.<sup>1</sup> Despite a relative accessibility and vicinity of the road Pazin-Vozilići, its views have been still preserved to a large extent. The immediate surroundings of the castle are dominated by pastures and picturesque karst rocks formed by ancient watercourses. Due to the fact that Kršan is not situated on a markedly dominant elevation like Momjan, Kostel or the nearby Boljun, its micro location was probably primarily caused by the configuration of high cliffs suitable for defence surrounded by round karst valleys and gullies. Depressions formed a natural defensive ditch around rocks above which was erected a fortified feudal residence. In a larger sense, the position of Kršan should be considered as one of a number of similar fortified settlements and solitary feudal castles scattered along the former Raša basin, with the task of controlling communications in valleys. In a narrower sense, it should be

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<sup>1</sup> Milevoj provided a thorough report about the draining of the Lake of Čepić, the old idea that saw its realization in the interwar period in several phases, 1987, 99-104. Cf. Božičević, 2005, 155-156.

related to the context of controlling the roads under the western slopes of Učka, the ones across the saddle, and those in the immediate hinterland since the ancient period of the key port in the Bay of Plomin. Furthermore, there is the context of forestry, cattle breeding and agriculture on fertile slopes, the use of watercourse, coastal area, and a wider swampy area of the former Upper Raša and the Lake of Čepić that provided excellent conditions for farming, building water-mills, fishing and hunting despite the infamous malarial properties.<sup>2</sup> The closest equivalent to the role of Kršan is not so much played by the nearer Čepić, but by Kožljak, rising above the opposite, eastern coast of the Lake of Čepić.

Medieval organisation of the surrounding area of Kršan has been almost entirely preserved, along with its woods and pastures with St. Jacob's Church at the foot of the castle and the old dirt partially paved access road today covered by turf and by a layer of earth.<sup>3</sup> Next to Kršan and near the old road towards St. Jacob's Church are remnants of a rectangular barrel vaulted building measuring 4,50x3,50 metres. It was built with small quantities of mortar, irregularly shaped stones set in uneven layers and massive corner blocks. Its entrance is segmentally arched, formed in the structure of walls, and its interior can be seen through narrow windows in the shape of loopholes, a pair near the front door and one each at the back of the building and on the northern wall. What we have here is probably a field shelter, perhaps even a guardhouse from the period of the *Uskok* wars.<sup>4</sup> Around St. Jacob's Church situated on the slope approximately half a kilometre north of the town is today's cemetery. On

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<sup>2</sup> The enclosed segment of normally quite long map of the Raša basin from 1771 may be used as an illustration of the historic aspect of the area before the draining of the Lake of Čepić in the interwar period. It shows the spreading of forests, pastures, farming cultures, reeds and water-mills. This little known map proves even earlier melioration aspirations and it is kept at the Cartography Collection of the State Archives in Rijeka. It was made by Gasparo di Penko, probably the same person as von Penko or von Benko (erratically listed in the bibliography), the author of water-colour drawing of the plan of the town and the port of Rijeka from a recent period (1776). Despite a quite differing scale, the drawing is very similar, while the look of letters even overlaps. Cf. Ekl, 1994., 170-171 (Map of Rijeka). The map of Kršan was also signed by engineer Gajetano de John as Penko's superior. Numerous mills are traced into in. Valvasor points out that "the land of Kršan and Šumber is rich in sheaves and grapes and it yields plenty of grain and wine", while neighbouring land of Čepić "...is endowed with lots of good wine and grain, but also with lots of hay. In that place, the Auersperg princes grow mares. There are lots of forests, game and birds, particularly pheasants. But the air of that area is far from being salubrious, because of a lake situated too close to that land. Moreover, "...Around Kršan, there are also quite many vineyards yielding wine that is good and healthy, but not too strong." About Raša: "...the river Raša flows from the Lake of Čepić towards the sea. It has all kinds of fish and a lot of mills." Z. Sušić, 1970, 118, 120.

<sup>3</sup> Road marked in units 2281 and 2282 is documented in the Cadastre of Francis I kept at the Trieste State Archives, and it can be seen on the ground, at the foot of a small chapel at the entrance to Kršan and the new road that intersects it. Cf. Archivio di Stato di Trieste, Mappa del catasto franceschino, Chersano, 1821. According to Valvasor, Kršan is surrounded by pastures and orchards quite like today, with an enclosed garden at the foot of the northern walls whose remnants are still well discernable. Cf. Valvasor, 1689, XI. 301, folio 107.

<sup>4</sup> Art conservation team that visited it with the intention of repairing it supposed that it was a ruin of a Romanesque church, but nothing visible on the ground indicates such a conclusion. Cf. Poščić, Perčić, Jenko, Travel Report, 1953. The building looks considerably like Venetian guardhouses erected in the period of the *Uskok* war on the heights of Krk controlling Vinodolski kanal.

the occasion of his famous reconnaissance of monuments of eastern Istria, B. Fučić found the church substantially stripped of plaster, coated only with a thin layer of lime-paint, and he described its architectural development starting with the Gothic phase and concluding with the renovation of the building, addition of external walls and additional building of a sacristy dated by an inscription as belonging to 1814. The present church is coated in roughcast mortar and we cannot discern the construction of its walls, so we have to rely on the description provided by Fučić (Fučić, 1953, 92). For this reason, its interior is far more interesting. A Glagolitic inscription from 1593 was discovered there in the early 1990s under thin layers of lime-paint, in obvious memory of the repair performed at the end of the sixteenth century. The inscription fully corresponds to remnants of painted devotional crosses, partly visible on the same layer of paint. The holy-water font decorated with a diamond string and the bell today part of the collection of the Museum in Pazin dated from 1542 by a Glagolitic inscription and from 1541 by Roman numbers both belong to the Renaissance (Fučić, 1982, 225). In the flooring, between privileged burials of local officials, county heads and judges, buried there only from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries onwards judging by the contents of rustically carved inscriptions on sepulchral slabs, there is the centrally situated and especially prominent slab presenting a relief decoration of a shield and an ornate helmet outlined by an inscription skilfully cut in Gothic lettering. The field of the shield and the part above the helmet present the motif of the arrow from the coat of arms of the masters of Kršan. On slab borders runs the standard sepulchral inscription mentioning the deceased from a family of the noblemen of Kršan dated from 1415.<sup>5</sup> In front of the entrance to the castle is a small Baroque chapel. The ideal picture of the landscape is somewhat disturbed by today's access road, the modern communication marked in the nineteenth century along which lay only a few newly erected residential buildings.

The historic unit is topographically still dominated by the former aristocratic castle situated in the southeast of the elevated southern part of the historic settlement. The comparison of the actual state of the field with historic illustrations reveals a typical look of the successively rebuilt continental fortified feudal residence whose layout conformed to cliffs

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<sup>5</sup> anno · domini. / M · C · C · C · C · XV. obiit nobilis / vir julianus (?) / ... charsani hic sepultus (according to Fučić). Fučić decides that the deceased's name is Julije, which is repeated in a number of later publications, with a later suggestion of the name Tulije. I suggest that the name from the worn inscription should be read as Ivan (Iohannes), which would link him to the member of the family bearing the same name who, according to de Franceschi, lived from 1360-1412. As a contribution to a future synthesis of Istrian stonemason's workshops, it should be underlined that the relief is very similar to the ones rising above the portal of the castle of Pazin. Cf. B. Fučić, 1953, 92. De Franceschi, 1936, 222 and the accompanying page with genealogy.

above which it rose. At the peak of its classical, markedly fortification phase of the sixteenth century, it consisted of the entrance above which rose a defensive tower, the strongest *donjon* or keep, two other towers that defended the southern corners of the fort, the connecting wall, the palace or castellan's residence, and the courtyard.

While the keep remained almost intact in forms of High and Late Middle Ages with its inaccessibility, the remaining parts of fortifications suffered substantial remodelling, annexing and reconstructions, even demolitions. We must not forget the damage the castle suffered in the Habsburg-Venetian war at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Only the westernmost part of the castle is completely missing. It was situated on the site of the present concrete surface, between the parish church and today's west rim of the castle. It was probably completely torn down as early as the nineteenth century, some time after the setting up of the first Austrian cadastre, at the time of the establishment of a new and representative western entrance to the castle from the direction of the church, which Valvasor already represented as extremely dilapidated (Valvasor, 1689, XI, 301, folio 107).<sup>6</sup>

Farther westwards, the parish church is an extension of the structure of fortified castle in the elevated south part of the settlement. It is a two-nave building resulting from the Baroquisation of the Gothic nucleus partly also manifested in the expansion at the expense of the fortifications of Kršan.

The exceptionally preserved suburban settlement descending to the north with its lower part endows the historic unit of Kršan with an outstanding quality.<sup>7</sup> The poorness of the modern period of Kršan caused a relatively good preservation of its early phase. There obviously were neither means nor needs for later radical demolition of humble and original houses or newly erected buildings, which usually resulted in remodelling and annexation. Numerous details of the oldest houses reveal their Renaissance origins, so we can conclude that this particular period marked a systematic transformation of the original wooden into stone houses. Although the primarily Renaissance quality of the suburban settlement is relatively rustic, we should not underestimate the architect's idea aimed at constructing some kind of rustic northern variant of Svetvinčenat in terms of formation of rows of houses, despite the fact of the relation between the castle and the suburban settlement being completely different in Svetvinčenat, primarily due to its lowland location, which made it possible for the Renaissance architect to freely develop the ideal town. Rows of houses in

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<sup>6</sup> In the first Austrian cadastre, the southwest part of the castle still had a projecting element, stretching to the interior of the present kitchen in the castle courtyard, and its front faced the interior of the castle.

<sup>7</sup> In similar remaining castles, these suburban settlements were swept by newly erected nineteenth-century buildings, sometimes only to "clean" the surroundings of the castle, considered to be the only "true" monument.

Kršan were first formed in the open space of a field below the manor house, while their formation along the wall became more intense probably only after the period of the *Uskok* wars.<sup>8</sup> They did not, as was the case in some places, feature as a replacement for town walls, although some annexes such as the loggia and some houses on the opposite west end of the settlement used the walls as early as the Renaissance period as the back of the houses.<sup>9</sup> War circumstances resulted in a fast construction of a new defensive ring around the whole suburban settlement complete with the battlement and the loopholes. The beginning of construction probably dates as early as the fifteenth century or the beginning of the sixteenth century. At the time, a hurried fortification of the suburban settlement is mostly dictated by news about Turkish incursions and the later Venetian-Austrian rivalry. The development of additional low defensive rings is also caused by increasingly wider use of firearms. Just in case, the suburban settlement could accept the refugees from the surrounding rural area together with their cattle. In general, annexes, buildings or reconstructions from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth century harmoniously complement the original picture of Kršan's suburbia. Even the school built in the late Austrian period fits in thanks to the use of traditional materials and design. Yet, in terms of town planning, the school in Kršan disturbed the ideal historic picture with its height and location in the original centre of the suburban settlement in place of the hackberry tree, between the entrance to the suburban settlement, the barn (*kašća*) and loggia and the entrance to fortified castle.

## **FORTIFIED MANOR HOUSE**

The path paved with roughly and irregularly cut stones arranged with pointed parts facing upwards (resembling a knife) from the direction of the main town gate leads to the main entrance to the fortified feudal residence. The passable tower originally probably rose above the entrance. The lower bulwark documented by Valvasor was situated in front of it, and its remnants may be preserved in the fence and the supporting wall of the access path towards the entrance to the fortified manor house.<sup>10</sup> The oldest among the still visible openings on the northern front is a rectangular horizontal loophole laid in the late Gothic

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<sup>8</sup>According to Valvasor, the walls were mainly still freestanding, with only a few smallest adjacent houses or houses situated in the immediate vicinity.

<sup>9</sup> For example, in the suburban settlement of the nearby Žminj, in Beli on the island of Cres and in Dobrinje on Krk.

<sup>10</sup> A similar barbican in front of the town entrance is documented by Valvasor's illustrator in the nearby Brseč, where its remnants are preserved. Unfortunately, the remaining towers of Kršan's feudal castle are still in ruin, like in the second half of the seventeenth century.

manner with oblique frame rims situated in the lower zone of the walls in the west wing of the entrance.<sup>11</sup> The upper zone of the first floor contains a pair of simple rectangular windows bordered with stone beams. Three large windows run at the height of the final second floor, decorated with shallow curved consoles and Late Baroque cornices. The first two windows, together with the certainly newer simply shaped door giving access to the balcony are more densely laid, and their arrangement markedly corresponds to three larger openings topped by round arches represented by Valvasor. The windows documented by Valvasor certainly had no fortification function, but they were not unusual on higher floors containing residential parts of the Late Medieval towers of castles in our area.<sup>12</sup> We should underline the interesting triple console supports of the present balcony too large for their present function that completely remind of consoles of brattices such as the one preserved above the gateway of Pićan or, even more so, of the one flanking the semicircular tower on the east side of the castle of Pazin. The newer simply shaped door with round-arched and perhaps nineteenth-century frame leads to the remarkably preserved Renaissance vaulted hall paved with massive slabs and equipped with cut drainage canals. The interior arched Renaissance door of the northwest tower made of shorter segments of vertical beams traversed by characteristic horizontal connecting beams led to the lateral ground floor probably intended for the guards. In the south-eastern corner of the hall, near the steep stairway leading to the interior courtyard, there is a low rectangular little door framed with massive rectangular beams, traditionally considered as the site of the former *pržun* (prison).<sup>13</sup> The stairway leads to the courtyard above the cistern. After the removal of the plaster, we will probably find some other original fortification opening such as the ones documented by Valvasor, at least in the once projecting part of the west front of the formerly passable tower that did not witness a larger opening of newer windows. We will also see the original well-layered Gothic-Renaissance square stone blocks of the walls still discernible under the plaster.

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<sup>11</sup> This particular loophole and another one facing it situated on the eastern part of the front of the entrance passable tower are represented by Valvasor. The latter cannot be seen today, but it would probably be visible after the removal of plaster from the front. Cf. Valvasor, 1689, XI, 301, folio 107.

<sup>12</sup> Today it is not possible to define their exact appearance and dimensions because of large rectangular openings in their place. Nevertheless, the dimension of these openings may correspond to the arch of the Renaissance single-light windows secondarily built in the opposite southeast tower of the castle. For the sake of comparison, the Late Gothic tower of the castle of Krk was partly articulated by ornate single-light windows and the tower of the castle of Omišalj had a representative mullioned double-light window. Judging from the present apertures in the wall and Valvasor's illustration, similar entrances on upper floors may exist in the nearby castle Posrt or Šabec near Belaj.

<sup>13</sup> Prison for disobedient serfs is an important element of such castle. Even Novi Lupoglav has one, designed and built in a completely different, Mannerist and Baroque spirit of the second forth of the seventeenth century. Cf. Bradanović, 2006, 189.

The hall gives access to the courtyard at the same walking level, and the yard is situated between the outer walls of the castle, the ground floor of the palace and the Late Gothic base of the keep. With a considerable part of its initial height, the base encircles the cliff above which rises the tower. This courtyard is also paved with slabs, a bit smaller and with different orientation than the ones in the defended hall of the entrance tower. Important elements of the courtyard are remnants of the outer northern wall of the castle with the parapet walk. A wall was added above it in the Baroque period by filling the merlons of the battlement in order to make the roof frame and form residential space. A window with consoles and cornices was made in said annex, identical to the ones in the above-described passable tower. Under the plaster, somewhere at the height of the lower part of this opening, we can expect the discovery of the walled in crenelated battlement above the parapet walk represented by Valvasor. In the layout, the remnants of bridging over between the palace and the keep also belong to the courtyard. To the east, the outer defensive wall reinforced by scarp in the modern period encircles it. Between the palace and the donjon there probably used to be communication through a little wooden drawbridge or some other construction whose abutments can be discerned on the frames of the portal of the donjon and below them. The interspace between their eastern fronts was subsequently connected by a new defensive wall to the parapet walk and loopholes in two rows documented by Valvasor on the outer defensive ring. In the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the original communication across the drawbridge was replaced by bridging over that rested on wooden beams and planks for the full width of the front of the keep. Beams rested on the walls of the palace and the keep. The part belonging to connecting outer walls was used as the third abutment with a new window and fine plastering of the interior front, while the fourth wall rested on the arch, built at the same time between the corner of the keep and the palace. The wall has an identical window. This passage room got another entrance following an additional perforation of palace walls. The trace of its lean-to roof is also preserved. As a curiosity, we should mention a secondarily inserted coat of arms of the masters of Kršan on the described outer eastern wall connecting the keep with the palace (its concave form indicates the end of the fifteenth or the sixteenth century) transformed into the coat of arms of the de Fin family by an apt intervention in the plaster whereby the arrow was turned into the anchor.

The main courtyard with the cistern probably had an earlier phase that more closely corresponded with the level of the entrance hall and the ground floor of the castle. The existing cistern was inserted in the seventeenth century, which is witnessed by the form of battered shield preserved in the lower part of its top, today showing only one part of the

date.<sup>14</sup> The flooring and the new top of the cistern fitted on the earlier polygonal neck belong to the neoclassic phase of the first half of the nineteenth century, also with preserved date on the top (G. Z. F.F. 1834.) The cornice of the new top has more shallowly inscribed initials G. S. perhaps, like the main inscription, referring to Giuseppe Sussani, one of the owners of the castle.<sup>15</sup> The portal leading to the Renaissance arched first floor of the palace belongs to the same period (with the inscription G. Z. 1834), together with the common outer staircase of the palace and the residential area of the passable tower and the so-called kitchen in the courtyard and the establishment of a new representative entrance with access staircase from the direction of the church. The belonging part of the western fence wall connecting the western wall of the passable tower with the kitchen wall was formed at the time said western entrance to the castle was constructed, at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The large kitchen is a result of large-scale remodelling, reconstructions and demolitions in the nineteenth century. A Late Gothic portal probably located somewhere in the representative part of the manor house was used as its entrance from the courtyard with the cistern. The portal is rectangular, decorated with multiple circular profiles and the now engraved coat of arms. A large furnace is preserved on the southern kitchen wall, together with a walled in Baroque loophole on the outer side of the thinner and more irregularly built walls resembling the projecting element on the eastern wall of the castle built with irregularly cut stones. On Valvasor's representation of Kršan, this area suggests very ruinous remnants of a high southwest tower of the castle (Valvasor, 1689, XI, 301, folio 107).

On two lower and vaulted floors, the palace is built with typical intermediate Late Gothic and Renaissance forms, which is witnessed by construction with well-layered ashlar. To some degree, such construction of the walls continues in radically reconstructed and very ruinous parts of the second floor of the palace. The north front of the palace oriented towards the *donjon* preserves the original round-arched entrance to the ground floor and a subsequently opened rectangular portal of the transom decorated with the High Renaissance profiled cornice. Characteristic Late Gothic, small and now built in rectangular and arched apertures are preserved at the height of the floor. They were constructed with massive stone blocks, with no shapes projecting from the wall. The upper zones comprise the subsequently constructed windows from the period of the High Renaissance, Baroque and the nineteenth century, partly constructed by cutting through the original layer of ashlar and partly

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<sup>14</sup> Today we can barely see number 1 and number 6 following it, and Fučić read the whole date as 1666. Cf. Fučić, 1953, 91.

<sup>15</sup> Sussani (Suzanić) as a Hungarian citizen and heir to the castle is also mentioned by C. de Franceschi. Cf. de Franceschi, 1964, 285.



representing a constituent part of the annex. Valvasor's palace is represented with a lean-to roof, a form characteristic for this type of building in the Late Gothic and Renaissance. This particular representation shows an interesting Late Renaissance aperture with the cornice centred on the gable façade of the palace (Valvasor, 1689, XI, 301, folio 107). Frame stone beams are missing today, but its walled in outline has been preserved. The widening of the zone of filling in the wall once containing the cornice is also discernible. Even the cornice is preserved, but it was secondarily fit on the subsequently opened lateral window of the palace.

The upper parts of added eastern façade of the palace are perforated mainly with new and large windows in the nineteenth and part of the first half of the twentieth century (narrower, completely recent apertures without stone frames). In this part, the outer walls of the palace, the neighbouring *donjon*, and the described inter-wall were subsequently reinforced by a slant as a protection against cannon fire. It was partly built of secondarily used ashlar used in the construction of the southeast tower, probably with the material of its former upper floor or the material of the later demolished southwest tower. Sometime in the Baroque period, a narrow projection with latrine was annexed to the eastern wall. It was built with ashlar and covered with a lean-to roof covered with slate. Its narrow southern wall shows traces of walled in rectangular loopholes with very narrow apertures and rustic stone frames attributable to the last Baroque period of reinforcements and repairs of fortifications of Kršan. Considering the fact that the structure of a large part of eastern walls of the palace is still hidden by plaster, the passage from the Gothic-Renaissance layer of the lower zones of the walls, added above the battlement as well, to later phases is still not completely clear.

The western wall of the annex to the palace constructed with considerably inferior quality lower zones has a row of the nineteenth-century large windows. A zoomorphic mascarón with the original function of gargoyle was secondarily added at that place.<sup>16</sup> Only dilapidated remnants of the southern annex to the palace survived, because the interior of the palace was connected to the southeast tower in elevation. On the other hand, the substructures preserve a wall of the primary phase of the palace built with good quality large ashlar.

The southeast tower was first incorporated into the palace in the Late Baroque period and then in the last phase of the nineteenth-century annex to the castle. For this reason, its primary forms are not easily discerned before an improvement intervention takes place along

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<sup>16</sup> It is difficult to undertake a comparative analysis of this schematically made and relatively rustic sculpture. However, unlike the eroded and inaccessible gargoyles of the *donjon* it still preserves the stone-mason's handwriting. The work on the grotesque snout by making the nose or perforations in the pupils of the eye with a drill principally remind of the series of figurative consoles of the parish church in Oprtalj. Cf. Ivančević, 1963, 19-44, Bradanović, 1999, 85-92.

with a simultaneous conservation and research interventions. Particularly unclear is its relation to the original walls of the palace (a hall whose recently caved in arched ceiling ran between them). In continental Late Gothic period, it had the usual rectangular and not square shape, probably a residential floor as well. It is still ruinous, primarily due to large perforations it suffered during the opening of windows in the nineteenth century. In Valvasor's representation, this tower can be discerned in the background. Its height is impressive, although already in ruins. Today the partially peeled plaster in the lower zones of the outer walls of the tower reveals high quality layered construction style and characteristic Late Gothic walled in loopholes in the shape of laid rectangles. One part of primary structures of the element linking the palace with the southeast tower collapsed in 2002. There is an interesting subsequently made aperture through which this space communicated with the castle courtyard obviously in the phase following its loss of defensive function. The arch of the aperture is a result of remodelling a segment of an exceptionally high quality carved Early Renaissance window with a keystone bearing the date of 1776 obviously inserted during the secondary building (photo-documentation of the Art Conservation Department in Rijeka).<sup>17</sup> The Baroque keystone has disappeared in the meantime.

As it is frequently the case, the oldest structures are best preserved on the fortified castle due to the quality of building. The keep or *donjon* primarily has a double function of the most projecting tower above the access path (prior to the fortification of the suburban settlement) and the final defence in the event of conquering other parts of the castle. It was built in the Romanesque style and situated on the inaccessible cliff above the access path. Nevertheless, even its original structures indicate transitory Romanesque-Gothic forms. The basic features of the solitary *donjon* are Romanesque. The interior walls of the tower are also built with well-cut square blocks. At the passage from the base part, the wall narrows in elevation. The position of high round-arched entrance door originally probably accessible only through the wooden stairway, and only later probably across the bridge and through the vaulted hall from the palace is also a part of Romanesque tradition, like small loopholes in the shape of upright rectangles and the original crenelated battlement. Possible earlier layers hide in archaeological stratum of substructures, and we should note the absence of any trace of the vaulting of the ground floor of the *donjon*. Late Gothic reinforcements of the foundations and the base of the tower run below the floor level for a good part, including the bedrock. Today's

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<sup>17</sup> The closest equivalent to the quality of this Renaissance arch with precisely carved egg-and-darts and bead-and-reeds is found in the windows of the second floor of palace Salomon in Gračišće that seem to have been transferred from Poreč to the Istrian inland, which was noticed by Budinich writing about "the house with Venetian character in count's land". Cf. K. Budinich, 1984, 76.

tower walls unveil three phases of apertures. First of all, rectangular loopholes or narrow vertical apertures in the structure of the walls, then there are horizontally laid and now bricked up apertures and loopholes with specific pear-shaped aperture looking like a circle that narrows down into a slit towards the top carved in a monolithic slab. The walls around the door of the *donjon* reveal the remnants of the groove of the wooden construction of the little drawbridge connected to it after the construction of the palace. Gargoyles in the upper part of the walls have the usual zoomorphic forms, and they are logically related to the style of Late Gothic remodelling.<sup>18</sup> The most interesting is the making of groin vault and the final stone platform it carried, strong in order to carry the burden of firearms. The interior for now reveals the Late Gothic groin vault luxurious for fortification architecture, imprints of floor-dividing constructions, and the stairway leading to a small passage under the arch leading to the top of the tower. The arch with markedly relieved trilateral groins is finished with atypical keystone in the form of rose window whose centre has another smaller flower framed with leaves.<sup>19</sup> The outer part, despite the claims of older authors, shows remnants of the original crenels of the battlement, separated with grating from the Late Gothic filling.<sup>20</sup> The interior side of the battlement provides a better insight into the remodelling that closes the original crenelated battlement by means of inserting the usual pear-shaped loopholes in built niches.

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## THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. ANTHONY

It is a double-nave church with a high rectangular sanctuary. This rather rare layout is the result of a radical eighteenth-century Baroquisation when an additional nave was added to the single-nave Medieval, Late Romanesque or, in all probability Gothic church. According to V. Marković this annexation probably happened in 1740 as testified by the inscription carved in the choir columns.<sup>21</sup> According to the same author the parish church of Kršan follows similar

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<sup>18</sup> The nearest parallel may be found at the courtyard of the castle of Pazin. Valvasor gives a precise representation of details of the *donjon* such as gargoyles or characteristic pear-shaped loopholes. Valvasor, 1689, XI, 301, folio 107.

<sup>19</sup> Although there are not enough arguments for a more reliable attribution, we have to note that the rough cut of the relief and the atypical reinterpretation of motifs considerably resemble the work of local Late Gothic stonemason's workshops, working in the first decades of the sixteenth century in northern Istria, particularly with varied and unusual rose windows and thickset acanthus leaves of the capital of the parish church in Oprtalj.

<sup>20</sup> Previous researchers were confused by the idealized nineteenth-century illustration by G. de Franceschi, leading them to a laconic conclusion that they were not preserved. In fact, the illustrator did not represent the actual state with crenelation but an imaginary look of the well-observed previous phase. Cf. de Franceschi, 1936, accompanying illustration of G. de Franceschi. Also reproduced in: de Franceschi, 1964, 281.

<sup>21</sup> It is possible that the demolition of external walls pertaining to it occurred at the same time. The intervention probably continued during the century because the main altar, as the crowning feature of such interventions, was probably finished in 1795, and the fence encircling the church in 1796.

architectural solutions (Belgrad in Vinodol, Lovran) which were modelled on the two-nave layout of the Franciscan church on Trsat (Marković, 2004, 18, 19).<sup>22</sup> In the course of the seventeenth century the still existing lateral chapel has been added to the northern nave, once the only nave of the former single-nave church. An inscription testifies its origin from 1676.<sup>23</sup> Valvasor's illustration documents the former single-nave church, still without the today's sanctuary, with the annexed chapel adjacent to the northern outer wall. Two larger projecting elements coated with a layer of fine plaster and covered with half-round tiles are still clearly visible on the north wall. This new layer probably hides Gothic buttresses. It should be mentioned that, according to tradition, once the Paulist order had been dissolved late in the eighteenth century, two altars from the Paulist church on the Čepić Lake were transferred to the newly built southern nave.<sup>24</sup> The tradition of relocation of the Paulist church's inventory might be substantiated by wood-carved sculptures of saints on the main altar of the church in Kršan, showing the characteristic features of P. Riedl's Paulist woodcarving workshop. A graveyard was once covering the area of the plateau in front of the church (cadastral unit 362, cadastral municipality Kršan). A belfry is rising at the foot of the church, erected in 1803 in the still present Baroque tradition.

## **FORTIFICATION WALLS OF THE SUBURBAN SETTLEMENT**

The defensive belt encircling the suburban settlement of Kršan is almost entirely preserved. Its north-western angle caved in and the smaller segments on its northern stretch are also dilapidated. A large portion of the walls is coated with plaster, but it can be discerned they were built with well-cut layered stone blocks revealing their rather early origins.<sup>25</sup> Preserved suburban settlements of the former fortified feudal residences in the surrounding area are very rare and their fortifications even more so. Most of them were torn down in nineteenth-century razing. The walls are not articulated by towers although in Valvasor's time they were in a slightly elevated position above key points, next to the portal, on north-eastern and maybe even north-western corners, the latter in ruins today. The eastern walls are articulated by a big round-arched gateway from the early nineteenth century built instead of the former

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<sup>22</sup> Here belong the double-nave Parish Church of old Hreljin in Vinodol and the cemetery church of St. Nicholas in Veli Brgud.

<sup>23</sup> See in Fučić, 1953, 93. PIA OPE COMMUNITATIS/SUFFRAGIO ECCLESIAARUM/AC INDUSTRIA AD MODUM/REV(EREN) DI THOMAE LAZARICH/PAROCHI OPUS HOC ERECTUM EST ANNO SALUS 1676.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 93

<sup>25</sup> Very similar loop-holes from the mid-sixteenth century can be found in the nearby Venetian Plomin and the town walls of Novi Lupoglav from the second quarter of the seventeenth century.

rectangular doorway, shaped in the structure of the wall documented by Valvasor. The keystone of the arched portal bears the year 1803 chiselled in. There is an exceptionally preserved loophole next to the portal and segments of the inner parapet walk. The outer walls originally had a large number of such rectangular loopholes, in some points arranged in two rows which were also documented by Valvasor. Today they are sealed up and walled in the posterior façades of the houses flanking the walls. The two rows of rectangular loopholes can still be seen on a narrow area of the eastern walls connecting the donjon with the palace.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBURBAN SETTLEMENT**

The parish priest's house (cadastral unit 347), a somewhat large building topped with a three-sloping roof covered with half-round tiles, is situated on the south-western brim of Kršan's suburban settlement. It clearly shows marked features from the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries reconstruction phases. There is a cistern with a Baroque top documented in the first cadastral registry located in the perimeter of the parish priest's house plot, next to a smaller edifice on cadastral unit 346. A large part of the western wall of the house is probably a section of the suburban settlement's walls. A low gable-roofed two-storey house is adjacent to the parish office (cadastral unit 347/2). Hammered surface stone window-frames are of a later date (nineteenth century), while a ground-floor arched opening testifies its Renaissance origins. The back of the building is actually the defensive wall of the suburban settlement. Maybe it is the same building represented by Valvasor as an isolated house with a shed roof flanking the south-western wall. The next house in the row of houses stretching along the western walls is a two-storey house on cadastral unit 348. Its gable roof is covered with half-round tiles and topped by a wooden attic cornice. During the twentieth-century reconstruction (in the interwar period) the old apertures of the front façade from the seventeenth century had been sealed up and the new ones have been opened with a disencumbering arch above the lintel. The western wall, a remainder of fortification walls, still has a loophole preserved, while a projecting hollow console is preserved on the front façade. Three houses following each other on cadastral units 349, 350 and 351 have fortification walls as their rear façades. They are partly roofless ruins and partly still topped with a gable roof covered with half-round tiles. All of them have very prominent transitory Late Gothic–Renaissance elements of architectural decoration like, for instance, the original, massive Renaissance ground-floor arched aperture nowadays hidden beneath recent wooden frames, a slanted-base stool of the window and the like. In the north-western corner of the walls (today cadastral unit 352/1) there are ruins of a house preserved only on the ground level. The razed embankment

probably hides and thus preserves a significant part of the former ground-floor and town walls.

Unlike this collapsed segment of the walls, the northern stretch is very well preserved and it is also flanked by a row of adjoining houses on cadastral units 353/1, 353/2 and 354. The last one on house number 22 has an external stone staircase with vaulted entrance on the ground floor, with massive covering stone slabs of the parapet. All three of them are two-storey houses with gable roofs covered with half-round tiles and shaped in the Baroque tradition, as far as is possible to apply a category of style to traditional architecture and all of them have profiled attic cornice stone consoles, a particular quality that should be mentioned.

The north-eastern walls stretch towards the town gates. The western stretch starts with a two-storey house coated with plaster on cadastral unit 355. The house might be older, but the only visible elements on its front façade are the nineteenth-century stone frames of the façade apertures. The rear wall of the house is actually an excellently preserved segment of town walls incorporated in the house. A dilapidated house on cadastral unit 356 follows. Its rear façade bears traces of an older window opening, now walled in, and a loophole. It has a concave plastered attic cornice and other nineteenth-century architectural decorations. The lower part of the rear wall still has very well-preserved remnants of the original fortification belt, in spite of the latest concrete additions. The house on cadastral unit 358/1 has the same construction and architectural elements (walls coated with a fine layer of plaster, high hammered stone window frames, a large outer staircase). The rear wall has been recently perforated and an annex with a toilet added, being actually the only somewhat larger annex flanking the outer walls. The two-storey house with an external staircase on cadastral unit 358/2 has a loophole safe-kept in the perimeter of its rear wall.

The last edifice in the south-eastern row is a recently improved loggia or a tithe barn (*kašća*) with its ground-floor front articulated by three robust Renaissance arches, central entrance way with two wide lateral openings flanking it on both sides. The upper, first-floor of the front is articulated by two rectangular window openings and topped by a firebox chimney, located on the first floor. The southern, lateral façade is articulated with one ground-floor arch, a continuation of the front façade arches, and a first-floor rectangular entrance accessed by a recently built exterior staircase.<sup>26</sup> The loggia has an excellent position next to the town gates, with its front facing a former square. Its rear façade was originally articulated by a pair of small rectangular windows framed with massive stone beams finely cut as are the massive

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<sup>26</sup> The former staircase was very narrow and made of rustically chiselled stone-blocks.

corner defining ashlar while the rest of the wall was built in roughly and irregularly cut stones with ample use of binder. That is not the case with the well-layered rear wall, which is an integral part (segment) of the town walls. Kršan's tithe barn (*kašćca*) is a good example of representative yet common Renaissance building of Eastern Istria. It resembles the Boljun's tithe barn, a somewhat more luxurious edifice with its ground-floor loggia articulated by robust columns, as also a number of houses in Boljun with architectural decoration identical to that of the Kršan's tithe barn, so we are probably dealing with one and the same local architectural workshop. The school building on cadastral unit 369 is a somewhat larger two-storey building with very well preserved circumferential walls but with no roof or floor-dividing structure. It was built in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries in the traditional technique and use of materials though.

Inhabited house on cadastral units 360/1,2,3,4 (Kršan, house number 19) has got a basement, ground floor and the attic. The central part of the house is gable-roofed and covered with half-round tiles while its annexes have a shed roof also covered with half-round tiles. The front façade abounds in rich Baroque architectural decoration of its apertures among which special mention should be made of the curved stone consoles of the attic cornice. A shed-roofed annex has a Renaissance arched opening walled in, witnessing the existence of many layers from subsequent construction phases. A roofless single-storey house (cadastral unit 361/1) shows many subsequent layers, from the Renaissance and Baroque reconstructions until nineteenth-century reconstructions. On cadastral unit 361/2 there is a gable-roofed house coated with plaster, its roof truss covered with tiles. No special features. The visible openings are quite recent. It was probably a former residential edifice which has been converted into a barn. The previously described houses are lined in a row stretching southwards from the group of houses annexed to the northern walls.

Southwards, parallel with the said row of houses, flanking the south side of the road leading from the main gates through the centre of the suburban settlement towards the west, stretches a row of the oldest residential buildings of the settlement. On cadastral unit 367 there is a roofless two-storey building with its entrance way located on the gable wall, facing the town gates. Architectural decoration indicates it has been built in the Baroque period, but as the house shows many Renaissance features, it is more probable that the original apertures have been subsequently replaced by the existing ones. The house on cadastral unit 366 shows details of original Renaissance shaping, like the round-arched doorway for instance, which have been preserved on the longer, northern façade and are also discernible on the adjacent

house (cadastral unit 365). The row ends with a dilapidated two-storey building with no special features (cadastral unit 364/4).

In the north direction, right at the foot of the parish church and just behind the bell-tower, approximately on cadastral unit 364/1 (the land register is rather imprecise in this point) there is a small single-storey building with two openings of hammered stone frames from the late nineteenth century. According to tradition it was used as a butcher's shop and at times also as a lock-up for all those who excessively indulged in liquor during the party season. It is quite certain its erection followed that of the bell-tower, which was built in the early nineteenth century. In the covering stone slab of the fencing wall next to the butcher's there is a fragment of Romanesque pluteus, adorned with interlaced circles of three-strand pattern.

The two-storey buildings on cadastral units 364/2 and 363/2 were significantly rebuilt in nineteenth century. The latter one has a traditional first-floor fireplace, supported by consoles projecting on the front. The last house in the row, on cadastral unit 363/1, is a single-storey building with a basement. It is coated with a fine, smooth layer of plaster and its gable roof covered with half-round tiles. It shows stylistic elements of the early nineteenth century although it is probably an adaptation of an older building. The house accommodates the parish archives in which one of the transcripts of the *Demarcation of Istrian Land (Istarski razvod)* has been found. The whole area of the suburban settlement shows clear traces of former earthworks so it is quite possible that originally the terrain was much steeper.

## **PROPOSAL FOR A DEVELOPMENT CHRONOLOGY AND ANALOGY WITH THE EXAMPLES IN THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING**

A thorough study of the preserved architectural heritage, compared with the available graphic sources, revealed a series of unknown details which could be linked, with a dose of salt though, with what has been written in historiography on the castle of Kršan.<sup>27</sup> It was very important carrying it out owing to the ruinous state of the castle, a destructive process of unauthorized removal of its architectural decoration in the last few decades and its constant

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<sup>27</sup> The extensive de Franceschi's study on the history of the County of Pazin and his previous article on the masters of Kršan are the basic historiographic works followed by all later authors. Cf. De Franceschi, 1964, id. 1936, 214-234. Our researchers have often relied on the imprecise and rather unreliable historical survey by H. Stemberger (1983). Referring to de Franceschi, Alisi brings a few concise suggestions regarding the building chronology, Alisi, 1997, 33. Fučić writes a first short description of the castle, Fučić, 1953, 91. For a description of the castle see Foscan, 1992, 223-228. It is worth mentioning here the unpublished study by Nefat, Petronijević, Radolović and Vareško (1994). A. Mohorovičić makes mention of the castle in his survey and gives a brief description of its location, Mohorovičić, 1997, 94.



irreversible process of caving in.<sup>28</sup> Interpretation of the material remains should be taken into consideration, especially a series of latest findings, documented by a conservation study and architectural drawing (Barada, Bradanović, 2002, Huić, Milković, Purišić, 2004).<sup>29</sup> Pre-Romanesque plastic art can signify the existence of an Early Medieval settlement and imply the existence of a Late Antique one, but we should not jump to such conclusions, even if there were evidence of its traces inside the walls of the castle. Besides, the sculpture was walled in as the covering stone slab of a wall which has been erected in the nineteenth century only. Relocations of such artefacts were common in the nineteenth century but did also occur in centuries before out of collector's, aesthetic and symbolic reasons but also out of need to denote the continuity of a cult. Pre-Romanesque interlaced plastic art is walled in in the staircase parapet found in the ruins of the Paulist monastery of St. Mary on Čepić Lake, ergo on the nearby position which, by its geographical position, shows much more potential of a possible continuity from Late Antique to the Early Middle Ages.<sup>30</sup> Also, the first mention of Kršan in the second half of the thirteenth century, which is fitting into the big picture of the rise of this type of fortified settlements in the Late Middle Ages, need archaeological substantiation.

The main donjon is a well-preserved structure of a relatively late origin with numerous details revealing their Gothic features but its general appearance sets it into the Romanesque building tradition. No evidence has been found that could set its building to be prior to the fourteenth century. For example, there are no sickle-shaped arches or arches constructed with smaller segments and similar elements found on some of the preserved keeps in Istria, like the one of the Momjan's castle. Its nearest counterpart and model, today only partly preserved and significantly lower in elevation, was certainly the main keep of the castle of Pazin. Remains of similar towers can be found in Paz and the nearby Gradinje.<sup>31</sup> Tower of such great height, like its counterparts and models, had a pronounced reconnaissance function, so that even Plomin could have been kept under visual surveillance. The bell-tower of Plomin did not only

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<sup>28</sup> The last few years saw the implementation of the preliminary preservation, clearing of vegetation which has been devastating the donjon walls, clearing of its interior and erection of a protective building slab in the palace, but no actual preservation of the walls followed though.

<sup>29</sup> In the years-long research of Kršan Mr. Klaudio Lazarić, member of the government of the Municipality of Kršan in charge of culture has been of great assistance, and I would like to express my warm-hearted gratitude once more.

<sup>30</sup> Finding of an Antique object of art has been recorded in Čepić, an altar dedicated to Silvanus. Cf. Matijašić, 2005, 2. There is also the aforesaid tradition of relocation of the altar from the Paulist church, so it is possible that during the demolition of this monastic church the fragment, possibly found in the wall, has been relocated to Kršan.

<sup>31</sup> De Franceschi himself sets the beginning of the erection of the castle in the early fourteenth century. De Franceschi's schematic layouts, roughly the equivalent of a graphic display can be of some use, as are Foscan's maps, layouts and photographs. Cf. De Franceschi, 1964, 253, 256, 279-280. Foscan, 1992, 208-213.

have a sacral function; it also had its reconnaissance one as also an actual defensive role in Plomin's fortification system. By the same analogy it is logical to assume the existence of Romanesque foundations underneath the today preserved Gothic-Renaissance layers of the fortified feudal residence of Kršan, but this can only be substantiated by archaeological research.<sup>32</sup> As early as the fourteenth century there is mention of the Chapel of St. John the Baptist but it is not possible to establish its exact location without archaeological interventions being carried out.<sup>33</sup>

In the early fifteenth century Ivan (not Julije) Kršanski is probably erecting St. Jacob's Church at the foot of the town. The relief on his sepulchral slab, situated in the privileged central position in this church, is very similar in treatment to those on the front façade of the Pazin's Castle, so there is yet another connection between Kršan and Pazin. It was in this time that the fortified feudal residence has started to acquire its present shape. In the Late Gothic period of the fifteenth or, taking into consideration the circumstances in the wider area and the afore described stylistic features suggested by the architectural decoration, even sixteenth century, this main keep has been reinforced with groin vault, supporting the final platform.<sup>34</sup> Overlapping of this transitional Late Gothic and Renaissance features is especially evident in the shaping of north-western and south-eastern towers, ground floor, first floor and the remains of the second floor of the palace, although the general impression is that of a Gothic edifice. The elongated south-eastern and north-western towers are especially prominent still preserving discernible traces of former residential function of the upper floors although it is the upper floors precisely that have been submitted to drastic reconstructions, in nineteenth century and Baroque respectively. At the turn of Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance, a period which coincides with the rule of the Kršanski family, in regard to the prevailing poorness of the area the castle figured as a magnificent building which is witnessed by the reused remains of the architectural decoration like, for instance, a Late Gothic doorway built into the front façade of the servant's kitchen in the nineteenth century and an arch of an Early Renaissance mullioned one-light window built into the south-eastern tower. These segments, although modest, reveal the overlapping of various cultural influences as the doorway shows the continental *maniera* while the Early Renaissance shaping of the mullioned one-light

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<sup>32</sup> The closest example of preserved previous layers and structures is Kostel or Pietra Pelosa, situated in the area among Oportalj, Zrenj and Buzet. A well-preserved narrow inner corridor (*propugnaculum*), part of the immediate entrance way to the castle, from which the defenders through wisely positioned loopholes could easily spot and annihilate the intruders. The outer part of the walls still preserve visible traces of the external system of multiple barriers defending the entrance to the castle.

<sup>33</sup> De Franceschi, 1964, 280

<sup>34</sup> The historical fact on re-fortification carried out in the early sixteenth century, the time of Gaspar Krsanski, could indicate the same period, de Franceschi, 1936, 226-227.

window reveals a marked Venetian influence, characteristic feature of stonemason's workmanship of Istrian coastland. The south-western tower was at that time still passable, so it has a well-preserved vaulted corridor, a guardhouse and a dungeon. Mention has been made of possible remains of a big brattice above the main portal. Many aforesaid elements like, for example, vaulting or details of architectural decoration, were in this period also modelled on the castle of Pazin as the logical pattern and source of influence. Characteristic feature of this period of intense fortification are the pear-shaped loopholes set in vaulted niches for firearms, which served as reinforcement of the donjon parapets, and the laid rectangular ones with Late-Gothic oblique frame rims. These interventions can also be related to the rule of the Kršanski family and apart from the aforesaid Pazin this could be also said of a number of other examples in closest vicinity, starting from the relatively preserved ruinous walls of Paz, miniature Posrt and Šabec near Belaj, all the way to Kožljak and Lupoglav, documented by Valvasor. Speaking of the inner fortified manor house, it is very similar high-walled constructions that we are talking about, with brattices and rectangular towers with residential area usually located at the uppermost, final floors. With its medieval compact layout and shaping, the inner stronghold of Kršan is conceptually different from the Boljun's one, which through many subsequent reconstructions kept its dominant Renaissance concept of cylindrical towers camp with slanted base walls and a big courtyard for inhabitants of the undefended suburban settlement and the surrounding villages seeking shelter. The Renaissance castle with cylinder-shaped towers in Šumber was modelled on the castle of Boljun. Its walls are of a somewhat more rustic quality, made of roughly cut stones, but it is mentioned here because the shape and location of the loopholes follow the pattern of the castle of Kršan, a cultural centre of its own.

The exceptionally preserved outer bulwark encircling and defending the whole perimeter of Kršan's suburban settlement was built in fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It resembles a rather symmetrical hexagon. As far as can be seen today, it was built with well-layered stone-blocks, the dressing of the blocks being of a slightly lesser quality than the ones walled in the towers of the fortified manor house. There are vertical rectangular loopholes scattered along the wall shaped in the structure of the wall. The complete defensive system, enclosing within its walls the church and all the houses of the suburban settlement at the foot of the manor house, does not have a typological counterpart in surrounding area of a former territory of the County of Pazin.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> It seems the situation has been unaltered throughout the history. Some settlements, like Beram for instance, had just an indication of a defensive system, while some others, like Gračišće, had strong cylindrical

The loggia with *kašća*, the upper-storey room used as tithe repository, with distinctive Renaissance features, was built inside the walls next to the gates of the suburban settlement. Its front faced a large field, the main junction, just beneath the entrance way leading into the fortified manor house. It resembles the loggia in Boljun, of a somewhat more luxurious front façade, with arcades on columns, but they both belong to the same typological group of edifices with articulated ground-floor and rather unarticulated first floor accessed by a lateral outer staircase. Both loggias were built with roughly cut stones (except for the rear of the loggia of Kršan being integral part of the defensive walls), corner defining ashlar and massive architectural decoration. The loggias in Šumberg and Kašćerga, of a somewhat later date and rather plain, were modelled on the Kršan's loggia. Some of the houses of the Kršan's suburban settlement still have the characteristic stout Renaissance architectural decoration from the local stone-mason's workshops, usually on the ground floor and occasionally on the first floor also. Single-storey houses and some of the two-storey houses from that period were built with roughly cut stones while finely cut stones were used for corner defining ashlar and their door and window frames. They are much plainer compared to the Gothic-Renaissance houses of the suburban settlement of Pazin, only few of them preserved, similar to those in Boljun and much more refined than the houses in Šumber and Kašćerga.

It should be mentioned that the suburban settlement was already defined in terms of urban planning, its spaces determined in a very specific manner: houses arranged in rows, still existing today, flanking the main streets stretching in the East-West direction parallel with the main portal axis, and some of them already adjoining the walls. For the sake of comparison, the neighbouring rival Venetian Plomin was in that same period submitted to a completely different urban development. The exact location of the original citadel is still undefined but in all probability it was situated next to the main town gates, on the location of the today's Parish Church of the Blessed Virgin, with the still discernible impressive traces of the mighty Gothic-Renaissance fortifications on site. Plomin had a defensive bulwark in the Romanesque period already, which had been built on the bedrock and was following the configuration of the terrain, maybe even the perimeter of the Prehistoric settlement. Inside the town walls houses were built organized in rows stretching from south-west towards north-east running vertical to the main direction of the walls. The rows kept spreading and houses were built showing a tendency toward formation of one-way passageways and later, in the Baroque period, towards a marked formation of house-blocks, with minute courtyards enclosed by high

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watchtowers and walls with prominent Renaissance features. Kozjak also had a system of outer bulwark guarded by cylindrical watchtowers with marked Renaissance features.

walls, thus indicating a significantly different way of life.<sup>36</sup> Houses in Plomin have very prominent Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque details of architectural sculpture while stylistic features are not being so pronounced nor stratigraphically layered in the less sophisticated suburban settlement of Kršan. In the course of the fifteenth, sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries the defence system of Plomin has been reinforced by a new system of fortification walls which enclosed the old ones. The new walls had also a complex system of multiple barriers. The walls of Plomin, just like its houses, have very prominent ornamental and architectural features, like slanted foot of the walls and semi-circled cornices, which enable us to determine with utmost accuracy the period they had been built in. The well-preserved inner gates of Plomin, topped by the landing with a parapet and loopholes, and the outer defensive belt of the castle of Kršan have a very similar structure of the walls, although the latter of a somewhat lesser quality.<sup>37</sup>

The still essentially Late Gothic Kršan has been already documented in the second half of the seventeenth century in the renowned Valvasor's work. He described a settlement on the hill, surrounded by vineyards and a circle of fortification walls, with small and poor houses of the market town, a manor house fortified by massive towering although obsolete walls, with the chapel which has been the goal of Flagellant processions and small and poor rooms. According to the enclosed illustration, whose authenticity has been established many times over by research and above all by many documented or still existing details, the castle in that time still had its function of a fortified feudal residence with the belonging suburban settlement and market town and a well-preserved lower outer ring of defensive walls. Three obsolete tall castle towers, the donjon and the two southern ones, were neglected and dilapidated while the passable gate tower served as a residential premise. According to the shaping of the markedly Renaissance window apertures, along with the original loopholes, it also had a row of bigger ones located on its topmost level. The palace was covered with a shed roof. Valvasor depicts a Late Renaissance window aperture on the northern façade, today witnessed by traces in the wall.<sup>38</sup> The *Uskok* wars over, the castle is submitted to yet another renovation and reinforcing by completion of slanted stone walls at the foot of the eastern walls, with distinctive ashlar of the former fortification being built in, parts of the south-

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<sup>36</sup> In general, there is a strong tendency towards formation of inner courtyards in urbanization of North Adriatic settlements, but it is most likely that in Plomin they were primarily dictated by the need of protection against the proverbially strong gusts of the north easter (*bora*).

<sup>37</sup> For the ground-plan and the scale drawing of the front see L. Foscan's work, while the coat-of-arms placing the door jamb in mid-sixteenth century can be found in T. Vorano and G. Radossi's work. Cf. Radossi, Vorano, 2003, 305. Foscan, 2003, 234-235.

<sup>38</sup> Valvasor, 1689, XI. 301, folio 107

western tower in all probability. In the Episcopal visitation at the end of 1658, along with St. Anthony's Parish Church inside the walls and the Church of St. Jacob the Apostle outside the walls there is also mention of the Chapel of St. John the Baptist inside the fortified feudal residence. The visitors mention the chapel wall adjoining the defence walls of the castle being damp because of the flooring being somewhat lower than the wall. The owner of the castle, Baron Andrea de Fin, gave them promise he would see to it and raise the level of the floor. There are, therefore, indications that the original medieval palace chapel once in the foundations of the castle had ceased to exist and the new one was erected in the higher parts of the palace, today in ruins. According to the statement of Tomo Lazarić, the parish priest known as the founder of the lateral chapel of the Parish Church of Kršan, the municipality then had a population of some two-hundred.<sup>39</sup> The still existing cistern inside the castle was built in 1660s.<sup>40</sup>

The reconstruction of the residential area of the feudal residence, which gradually phased out its fortification character, went on throughout the eighteenth century, under the management of the families Rampel and dell'Argento. An inscription testifies the south-eastern tower has been added an aperture in 1776, during the management of the dell'Argento family. This might be the time when yet another adaptation of the uppermost, final floor of the passable tower and opening of new window apertures in this residential area took place. This is also the time of the previously described extension of the church at the expense of a part of the southern walls. In the Late Baroque period some of the houses of the castle of Kršan have been rebuilt both in the traditional spirit and following the latest architectural fashion. Additional floors have been built, external staircases and consoles of attic cornices were added, while the front façades were articulated with new bigger apertures and their stone frames. Judging by the new construction *maniera* of the attic cornices, it is quite probable that it was in this time that the half-rounded tiles replaced the traditional vegetal covering of houses in the suburban settlement.

The first half of the nineteenth century saw the following additions: the castle's courtyard was paved, the top of the cistern was added a cornice, a kitchen for servants was built, a new entrance way leading from the courtyard to the second floor of the palace and another representative entrance with an arched doorway and an access staircase from the parish church were completed. According to the initials inscribed in the cornice of the cistern's top

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<sup>39</sup> N. Kudiš-Burić, N. Labus, 2005, 138-145

<sup>40</sup> According to de Franceschi's genealogy Andre de Fin could have still been the owner but it was also possible that the castle was already in the possession of Wolfgang Engelbert the Count of Auersperg. It is more logical to suppose that it was the new owner who took the investment upon himself. Cf. de Franceschi, 1936, 232

and the nearby lintel, Kršan was already then owned by Giuseppe Susanni.<sup>41</sup> The adaptations continued in the subsequent period with the expansion and building of the additional storeys of the palace, fenestration of the former defensive walls, building of additional storeys above the defensive walls, conversion of the south-eastern tower into residential area. Remodelling and building of annexes of houses of the suburban settlement went on, their fronts were coated with a new layer of plaster but there were almost no newly built houses or radical reconstructions which would affect the long ago established urban layout. Unlike for centuries deserted and devastated medieval towns like the nearby old Lupoglav (Mahrenfels), the feudal castle of Kršan was inhabited until the first half of the twentieth century by his last masters, the Tonetties, merchant princes from Plomin.<sup>42</sup> The former manor house is today deserted and dilapidated. A large part of the suburban settlement inhabited by the parish priest and only few families is also fallen into disrepair.

## ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF KRŠAN

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. (summary)

Based on a description of field remnants and comparative analysis of the actual state with the archival graphic and written sources the author reconstructs the appearance of the castle of Kršan, with the special focus on its Gothic–Renaissance phase when its space developed reaching the size that has remained unchanged to the present. The first phase of the donjon is described, built in the Romanesque tradition, and the subsequent Late Gothic reinforcement of its structure when its crenellated parapet has been closed by peer-shaped loopholes and the final platform got its groin vault. It is followed by the description of the original appearance of the other two towers and of the fourth one whose remains have mostly been torn down in the early nineteenth century, of the palace, the suburban settlement and the outer belt of the defensive walls during the Late Gothic and Renaissance period. The author points out the exceptionally preserved condition and high quality structure of the suburban settlement's

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<sup>41</sup> Who inherited the property from his mother. De Franceschi, 1964, 285

<sup>42</sup> This phase of architectural development of Kršan as an illustrative example of defortification and conversion of a fortified castle into a manor house was shortly described in the context of an article on typology of Istrian country architecture. Cf. Bradanović, 2006, 183-194.

walls. In the stratigraphically much simpler suburban settlement the location and disposition of the oldest stone houses built in the Renaissance period are exceptionally well preserved, the houses in some places showing well preserved remains of their original stout architectural decoration. The front of the loggia flanking the inner side of the fortification walls right next to the main entrance is the most articulated one. Special comparative study is dedicated to the rather inaccessible and hardly visible architectural decoration of the fortified feudal residence, which has not been relocated from its original site, and to architectural elements relocated from their former positions underlying the exceptional high quality of the Late Gothic and Early Renaissance phase of the representative residential area. Physical concept and architectural design of the castle of Kršan are compared to examples from surrounding area in which the settlement historically functioned, particularly in the context of pronounced similarities of the continental model of fortification and urbanization, and in the context of differences as well as some similarities with neighbouring Venetian territory. In such a way, comparison is made between architectural and town planning features of single parts and chronological layers of Kršan and the castle of Pazin, Kostel, Paz, Gradinje, Žminj, Beram, Kašćerga, Šumber, Momjan, Svetvinčenat and Plomin. The new cistern was built in mid-seventeenth century, followed by reparations of the walls and an ample reconstruction of south-eastern and north-western towers of the castle by the end of the eighteenth century. In that period also the parish church in the suburban settlement was enlarged at the expense of the defensive walls. The last reconstructions defined in terms of style occurred in the neoclassical period of the first half of the nineteenth century, followed by a sort of defortification process of the castle, expansion and building of additional storeys of the palace and further opening of new and bigger apertures.

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