

The State Archives in Rijeka Pietro Nobile Collection as a source of research of the appearance of Istrian settlements in the early nineteenth century

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The paper analyses the Pietro Nobile Collection, a collection of drawings of Istrian motives by this renowned architect from Trieste, kept in the State Archives in Rijeka. The stress is on the comprehensive and systematic quality of Nobile's depiction of the town-planning situation of the early nineteenth-century Istria. A series of examples mentioned will demonstrate the outstanding accuracy of town views, seemingly hidden beneath sketch-like drawings of the town views. Details of the onetime appearance of settlements have been brought to light, not known of until today because they have disappeared since then, and among which we will find some with no other known illustration but Nobile's drawing. The accuracy of the scenes will be authenticated by comparative analysis of the available graphic sources and field research. The Rijeka Collection is held to be the most extensive pictorial record of the onetime Istrian towns, architectural complexes and single buildings in the first half of the nineteenth century, right after the cadastral register of Francis the First, and the versatile Pietro Nobile as the first modern illustrator, whose interest in antiquity and its heritage surpasses the limited interest in monuments of Classical Antiquity.

Key words: Pietro Nobile, Istria, town views, historical source, town-planning, architecture.

The State Archives in Rijeka keeps a collection of drawings by Pietro Nobile, a renowned architect of Trieste and Vienna. The collection includes seventy-nine views of Istrian towns,

landscapes and prominent monuments, and three drawings of single and group portraits.¹ To be more precise here follows a list of all the drawings, taken from the old archival pagination: sixteen views and sketches of monuments of Pula, five views of Rovinj, one of Vrsar, seven of Poreč, one of Tar, one of Novigrad, two of Umag, two of Piran, one of Izola, two of Koper, two of Muggia, one of Vodnjan, two of Bale, two of Svetvinčenat, one of Kanfanar, one of Dvigrad, one of Kringa, two of Tinjan (both incorrectly signed as Kringa), three of Pazin, two of Lupoglav, one unidentified (incorrectly indicated as Vranja), one of Muntić, three of Motovun, one of Istarske Toplice, two of Vižinada, one of Grožnjan and Motovun (barely recognizable in a panoramic view), one of Buje, one of Kaštel near Buje, two of the area of Kaštel near Buje marked as Belle Grotte, three of Labin, two of Rabac, three of Plomin, one of Lovran, one of Mošćenice, a portrait of the Dean of Brseč, a double portrait of the parish priest of Premantura and a harbour master, and last but not least a group portrait of a family from Premantura. The list itself reveals that the Pietro Nobile Collection of the State Archives in Rijeka represents a precious source for all historical, art-history, archaeological, ethnological, and art-conservation research, just like Valvasor's, Selb's and Tischbein's illustrations, its far more renowned, widely used, many times over published, and long ago popularised equivalents. In this survey of the collection, I once again refer to some of the details of certain drawings, stressing the need of a more comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to its research and conservation.

The State Archives in Rijeka came into possession of the Pietro Nobile Collection of the Historical Archives of Istria in Pula after World War II. It was bought off for the latter institution by Camillo De Franceschi.² This Istrian historian, particularly responsible for acquisition and an early professional conservation of the valuable collection, provided the drawings with additional signatures and descriptions along with the existing ones, most of which had been written down by their previous owners and the author himself. The intention

¹ I have already referred to its existence in an un-reviewed article published in a special edition of the *Archeografo Triestino* dedicated entirely to Pietro Nobile. In this article I bring forth new information I came by in the meantime. Cf. M. Bradanović, *Viaggio artistico attraverso l'Istria di Pietro Nobile*, *Archeografo Triestino*, ser. IV, vol. LIX, Trieste, 1999, pp 83-119. Among numerous studies on Pietro Nobile's life and work I would like to make special mention of G. Pavan's monograph, Pavan being a long-time researcher of the subject matter, *Pietro Nobile architetto (1776-1854)*, Trieste, 1998.

² On the work of this prolific researcher of Istrian history cf. M. Bertoša, *De Franceschi, Camillo*, Istarska enciklopedija, Leksikografski zavod M. Krleža, Zagreb, 2005, 172. Basic information on the history of gathering and safe keeping documents of Istrian origin of the State Archives in Rijeka see: B. Stulli, *Pregled povijesnog razvitka zaštite arhivalija na područjima historijskih arhiva u Pazinu i Rijeci*, Lj. Petrović, *Razvoj i perspektive Historijskog arhiva Rijeka*, N. Crnković, M. Hinić, I. Krota, I. Zurak, *Arhivski fondovi i zbirke u Historijskom arhivu Rijeka*, all in: *Vjesnik Historijskih arhiva u Rijeci i Pazinu*, vol. XXIII, Pazin-Rijeka, 1980, pp 11-44, 55-62, 103-196

was to indicate precisely a town or a church, often given as just a few dots in the landscape. He also marked them with numbers and emblems of his institution, branding each drawing with the Pula City Library stamp. Part of the subsequently added descriptions are written on the back of the paper and the stamps are positioned mostly at the centre of the paper, also on the back, right behind the drawing itself, so unfortunately, due to the transparency of the thin paper, the stamp is seen on the drawing itself. The collection is wrapped in packing paper with the label of the Historical Archives of Istria on its front side. The wrapping paper bears the title of the collection "*Viaggio artistico attraverso l'Istria*", the number of drawings, Pietro Nobile's name as the author of drawings and 1815 as the year the drawings were made in, all written down in De Franceschi's handwriting. A very significant argument for establishing the date of the drawings themselves is to determine the exact date of one particular drawing, the portrait of Valčić, the Dean of Brseč. The handwriting of the date written on this drawing differs significantly from the handwriting on all the other ones, all of them easily recognized as written down by De Franceschi, so this leads to the conclusion the portrait was probably signed by the author himself.³ The covers bear the year of purchase of individual parts of the collection along with the amounts paid up to previous owners, 250 Liras to Polesini in 1934 and 350 Liras to Saba in 1941. At the end of the inscription, on the front side of the cover, is De Franceschi's signature. The standard measures of the drawings are approx. 39 x 25 centimetres, only the two with the Piran motifs are somewhat bigger, 45 x 30 and 50 x 33 centimetres respectively.

Let us take some note of the short history of research and exhibiting of the collection. In 1966 the Rijeka Modern Gallery exhibited some of the drawings from the collection. A modest catalogue with the introduction by Boris Vižintin has been published for the occasion. The author of the catalogue referred to 1934 and 1941 as the years of purchase and to the State Archives in Rijeka as the buyer. The State Archives in Rijeka did exist at that time but only as an affiliate branch of the State Archives in Trieste. The described envelope of the drawings and the silence of the Trieste and Rijeka inventories on behalf of the collection proved his theory wrong.⁴ Shortly after the Rijeka exhibition Stane Bernik gives a comprehensive

³ State Archive in Rijeka (Državni arhiv u Rijeci - DAR), Pietro Nobile Collection, drawing n. 80. It is the only drawing of the collection signed with a date. G. Pavan confirmed it is the same handwriting of Nobile's personal letters kept in the archives in Soprintendenza per i Beni ambientali e architettonici, archeologici, artistici e storici del Friuli-Venezia Giulia-Trieste and other archives in Trieste. Cf. G. Pavan, (1998), the enclosed reproductions of Nobile's signed drawings, pp 414, 415, 421,...

⁴ B. Vižintin, *Pietro Nobile*, Rijeka, 1966. Forty-six drawings were exhibited on that occasion while only three of them found their place in the modest catalogue: that of Muntić, Motovun and Piran.

description of the two drawings of Piran and the one of Izola in his study on town development of Koper, Izola and Piran.⁵ Soon after that the collection was forgotten, at least as publishing has been concerned.⁶ Attilio Krizmanić was probably not aware of its existence when in his extensive dissertation on the Town Hall of Pula, published in 1988, in which he evaluates Pietro Nobile's activity in Pula, and regarding the architect's legacy, quotes, with a qualified acceptance though, Livia Rusconi's thesis published in the article "*Pietro Nobile e i monumenti romani di Pola*".⁷ In the said article, published in the *Archeografo Triestino* in 1926, the author makes mention of Nobile's missing projects and the remaining sketches of the monuments of Pula fixing the date of their origin in 1809, and a volume of sketches made in 1810, during his voyage through Istria and Dalmatia.⁸ Gino Pavan, the expert in Nobile's drawing opus, discusses the mysterious disappearance of the collection of drawings, not knowing of its whereabouts though, by quoting Carlo Nobile's biographical notes, the architect's descendant, according to whom one exceptional volume of Istrian landscapes and portraits had been carelessly handed by a certain antiquarian De Marchi to a person unworthy of trust.⁹ In the meantime, the relatively unknown collection has been sporadically used and consulted by few specialized and well-informed Croatian researchers.¹⁰ I draw attention on the mislaid collection of Istrian town views back in 1999 in the *Archeografo Triestino*, and soon after their presentation followed: in 2004 with the exhibition "Iz likovne riznice Državnog arhiva u Rijeci" (Artistic Treasure of the State Archives in Rijeka) and "Pietra d'Istria" (Istrian Stone) in 2005.

⁵ S. Bernik, *Organizem slovenskih obmorskih mest, Koper, Izola, Piran*, Ljubljana, 1968. pp 103, 152, 161. Bernik has to be recognized as the first researcher who had full understanding of the significance of the Pietro Nobile Collection in town-development studies.

⁶ It was Ivan Peranić from the State Archives in Rijeka who brought the collection to my full attention during my art-conservation work in Istria, and once again I would like to express my sincere gratitude.

⁷ A. Krizmanić, *Komunalna palača - Pula, razvitak gradskog središta kroz dvadeset jedno stoljeće*, Pula, 1988, pp 231-232

⁸ L. Rusconi, *Pietro Nobile e i monumenti romani di Pola*, *Archeografo Triestino*, III serie, vol. XIII (XLI), Trieste, 1926, p 343

⁹ G. Pavan, *Pietro Nobile architetto, vita ed opere*, *Archeografo Triestino*, IV serie, vol. XLIX (XCVII) Trieste, 1989, p 427. Ibid. G. Pavan, (1998) pp 90, 392.

¹⁰ Davor Velnić, architect-conservator of Croatian Conservation Institute, made use of the drawings of the Castle of Pazin during the conservation intervention on the monument in the mid-1990s. The insufficient degree of exploration is a direct consequence of a scarce number of researchers carrying on researches on the issue of urban development of Istrian towns, and a marginal position of the archives safe-keeping the relevant documents with regard to activity centres of potential researchers. The graphic material of Rijeka archive's collections such as "Tehnički uredi Grada Rijeke" (Technical Departments of the City of Rijeka), on the other hand, have been thoroughly researched and published. The rest of the Istrian pictorial material kept in different collections of the State Archives in Rijeka is also obscure. A similar situation, which proves this not to be an exception, is to be found with the material on Rijeka kept in the State Archives in Trieste, also scarcely researched. The issue of making the archive's material accessible to all interested researchers has been handled with more success lately thanks to a growing collaboration between the archives and the state-of-the-art copying methods.

De Franceschi's numbering of the once Pula's, and now Rijeka's Pietro Nobile Collection begins with a group of drawings depicting several monuments of Pula. The all-embracing efforts put by the public-works engineer Pietro Nobile, during the French and later Austrian Governments¹¹, into the conservation of the monuments, from conception of a program, on-target suggestions and actual researches, sounding-out of the sites and conservation interventions, presents a wrongfully neglected pioneering episode of a systematic care of the monuments of culture.¹² In his outline on the conservation program of the monuments of Classical Antiquity in Pula, the architect points out the limitations and imprecision of the up-to-then illustrations, disapproves of the collector's passion of foreigners and praises Gian Rinaldo Carli, his predecessor as the researcher of the Amphitheatre in Pula.¹³

His drawings of the Amphitheatre of superior artistic quality are outstanding in their documentary quality and functional framing of Amphitheatre's segments, characteristics which single them out among many of its depictions. Special mention should be made of romantic panoramas of the Amphitheatre as it is quite obvious not all of them are just art-for-art's-sake depictions, though, but very concrete studies from life inspired by the very need of its restoration.¹⁴ The first one, the view of Arena from *Kaštel* with the ruins of the Small Roman Theatre in foreground, and the second one, the view of the bay with an olive-grove and the eastern part of the town walls with prominent Twin Gates, the strong vertical of the Cathedral bell-tower and De Ville's citadel on the hill.¹⁵ Another view from the citadel is worth mentioning here, with a south-eastern part of the town walls sketched in foreground, from the Arch of the Sergi and Portarata complex, to the remains of the three-nave basilican

¹¹ During the French government he was known by the official appellation Illyrian Coastland Chief Bridges and Roads Construction Engineer (Glavni inženjer za izgradnju mostova i cesta Ilirskog primorja), to be more precise.

¹² On Nobile's preservation interventions on the Temple of Augustus and the Town Hall, and the regulation of the whole area see Krizmanić, A. (1988) pp 73, 84 (ill. 22), 155-156, 163, 229. Cf. Pavan, G. *Il Tempio d'Augusto a Pola, La Porta Orientale*, 5-6, Trieste, 1952, pp 129-139, same: (1988), pp 377-431, with plenty of graphic documentation, reports and feasibility studies. More on his conservation work and the afore mentioned studies by L. Rusconi (1926) and G. Pavan (1989, 1998) see: Matijašić, R. *Arhitekt Pietro Nobile i njegova djelatnost zaštite spomenika u Hrvatskoj*, Prilozi za proučavanje društvenih, kulturnih, znanstvenih i inih veza Hrvatske i Švicarske, Veleposlanstvo Republike Hrvatske, Bern, 1999, pp 7-28. On the pioneering role of Nobile in the context of history of cultural heritage conservation on Northern Adriatic cf. Bradanović, M. *Tradicija osnutak i djelovanje konzervatorske službe u Rijeci*, Sv. Vid, VI, Rijeka, 2001

¹³ Rusconi, L. (1926), p. 344

¹⁴ Nobile conducted very extensive excavations of the inside of the Amphitheatre, conservation and restoration works of its outer wall. Cf. Mlakar, Š. *Amfiteatar u Puli*, Pula, 1957, p. 24. Pavan, G. (1998), 377-416 (the author mentions many documents from the Trieste archives, Nobile's instructions for the contractors, and a precisely elaborated graphic plan of the repairs and restoration of the arches. In comparison to this „conservation proposals“ and feasibility studies it is quite clear that the material from the Rijeka archives was the architect's first, initial insight into the issue.

¹⁵ State Archives in Rijeka (Državni arhiv u Rijeci – DAR), *P. Nobile*, 1-8

St. Stephen's Church, in the direction of the Church of St. Michael on the Hilltop, sketched in the background.¹⁶ A drawing of the rear of the Forum temples and the Town Hall, drawn from an almost identical standpoint as one of illustrations by Cassas, confirms the extraordinary documentary quality of the collection. Cassas's drawing shows an evident idealistic approach, ridden with supplemental treatment and often peopled by costumed human figures in Classicist static postures while Nobile brings a very accurate sketch.¹⁷ There are many illustrations of the Town Hall with the Baroque clock but on this very drawing the attention is drawn by the depiction of St. Marc's Church front, plotted on the first Austrian cadastral survey and documented on two Clerisseau's drawings, only part of its rear though.¹⁸ It seems the pulling down of the church occurred at the same time as Nobile's intervention of consolidation of the Forum temples, when, according to the then understandings, a partial purification of the complex was carried out. The repeatedly pointed out authenticity of Nobile's drawing is also proved by the detail of a barrel in the pronaos of the Temple of Augustus as an argument of the Temple's function at that time.¹⁹ The attention of expert analysts will be probably drawn by the narrow staircase placed in the axis of the two central columns of the pronaos. According to chronology of the graphic documentation the construction of the staircase coincides with the architect's stay in Pula.²⁰ Researchers engaged in studies of the increasingly important question of relation between the Late Antique and the Early Medieval architectural heritage in Istria will find the depiction of Late Antique St. Catherine's Church utterly interesting. The church is positioned in foreground with the scene of the town viewed from the sea in its background, the panorama in the back given in mere outlines. With this depiction he found strength to detach himself from the exclusive and narrow-minded favouring of the monuments of Classical Antiquity, a characteristic feature of its time.²¹ The architect shows a great interest in fortifications and town gates. Our attention is caught by a drawing of Portarata, pulled down soon after the drawing was made. The Portarata town gates are shown frontally, a view neglected by Cassas and the others, all of them primarily concentrated on their interior part, in the point where they adjoin the Arch of

¹⁶ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 12. Cf. Cassas, L.F., Lavalle, J. *Voyage pittoresque et historique de l'Istrie et de la Dalmatie*, Paris, 1802, ill. 23

¹⁷ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 11. Cf. Cassas, L.F., Lavalle, J. (1802), ill. 27

¹⁸ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 9, cf. with the ill. of the Town Hall in Selb, A., Tischbein, A., *Memorie di un Viaggio Pittorico nel Littorale Austriaco*, Trieste, 1842 which, unlike the Nobile's one, presents also its east façade. Clerisseau's illustration can be seen in Krizmanić, A. (1988), p 79, ill. 13-14

¹⁹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 10, provisions storehouse, cf. Rusconi, L., 1926, p 346

²⁰ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 10, cf. Krizmanić, A. (1988), p 82, ill. 1; p 83, ill. 19 b and 21; p 84, ill. 22

²¹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 16. Cf. with P. Kandler, *Cenni al Forestiero che visita Pola*, Trst, 1845, pp 121, 122, W. Gerber, *Altchristliche Kultbauten Istriens und Dalmatiens*, Dresden, 1912, pp 61-63, ill. 69. B. Marušić, *Kasnoantička i bizantinska Pula*, Pula, 1967. pp 26, 32, 33, enclosure 3, ill. 2.

the Sergi. The town walls with the towers north of Portarata are also documented on the drawing, up to the point where they change direction near St. Stephen's Church (then the area of intense residential and office buildings construction occurred by the end of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries), ruins of which stand out in the background.²² Drawings of the well preserved town gates, Hercules's and still completely buried Twin Gates, with the forsaken parts of the architrave in foreground and the pertaining fortifications, are of utmost importance because they document the situation before conservation-preservation interventions of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries took place. Unlike relatively limited interventions during the Austrian Government, with the exception of its earliest period, the Italian archaeologists have carried through a kind of purification, which is presentation of the selected preserved layers on a part of the walls from Twin Gates to Hercules's Gates.²³

Before discussing the Rovinj group of drawings the marginal impact on the historical nucleus of the next two centuries should be pointed out, what can not be said of the intensive building up activity spreading from the isthmus towards the hinterland in the first half of the nineteenth century.²⁴ On the view of the stretch between the plateau in front of St. Euphemia's Church and the Franciscan monastery, with a true to the original reproduction of the architectural shaping of the bell-tower elements and the northern wall of the Rovinj Parish Church with its foreshortened Baroque semicircular window openings, Nobile gives a partial view of the northern nave front, preceding the present one completed only in the second half of the nineteenth century.²⁵ On the very edge of the scene some details are discernible like the cartouche above the transom of the aisle portal and the characteristic Baroque, ornamental curve of the aisle gable. The existence of a second floor and the absence of the ground-floor arches of the house adjacent to Balbi's Arch and adjoining the exterior side of the town walls, with the town café in its ground-floor, just between the Arch and the once Praetorian Palace

²² DAR, *P. Nobile*, 13. Cf. L.F. Cassas, J. Lavalle, (1804) ill. 20, 21, 22, 23. Nobile is much more detailed in rendering the town gates, town walls and their towers, so their many layers are far more discernible. The Roman form of the Portarata and the medieval, fourteenth century annex to the northern tower of the town gates are clearly visible. On archaeological stratigraphy and modifications of the fortifications of Pula, accompanied with abundant comparative graphic material see: R. Matijašić and K. Buršić-Matijašić, *Antička Pula s okolicom*, Pula, 1996.

²³ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 15, 14, cf. G. Caprin, *L' Istria nobilissima*, I, Trieste, 1905, p 160. (with the illustration of the Twin Gates brings the news on removal of the strewn material, which occurred in 1819), *Mitteilungen der k.k. Zentralkommission für Denkmalpflege, Küstenland, Pola, Porta Ercole, Restaurierung*, Wien, 1911, p 182. B. F. Tamaro, *Cenni preliminari sulle recenti scoperte archeologiche a Pola e Trieste*, Atti e memorie della Società Istriana di Archeologia e Storia patria, 44, 1932, pp 323-324, Planoteka AMI, Pula, *Rilievo scavi Viale Carrara* (I would like to express my gratitude to Robert Matijašić for bringing this issue and the pertaining blueprint to my attention)

²⁴ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 17, 18, 19

²⁵ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 19. A. Horvat, R. Matejčić, K. Prijatelj, *Barok u Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb, 1982, p. 436. M. Tamaro, *Le citta e le castella dell'Istria (Rovigno-Dignano)*, vol. II, Poreč, 1893, p 224.

are somehow puzzling. The discrepancies between the drawing and the actual situation are probably to be explained by the assumption that Nobile's drawing records the unfinished building, or that it is a combination of a thumbnail sketch of the then existing two-storey building and a planned and executed reconstruction which unifies the then existing ground-floor with the first-floor. This line of thought is supported by a complete correspondence of the second-floor window openings of the building represented on the drawing and the today's first-floor window openings. Without doubt, these are the same openings with their pronounced cornices and elegant Classicist shapes and proportions, which completely correspond to the existing ones, including the correlation between theirs and the Balbi's Arch height. The same drawing has the composition seen in a series of depictions from the Late Venetian Republic, the town flagpole on the *Velika riva* flanked by a pair of columns with no sculptures of the lion of St. Marc nor that of St. Euphemia on their tops.²⁶ The last from the series of Rovinj panoramas presents a dominant loggia-like arcaded building in foreground, with no roof indicated whatsoever. This leads to the conclusion the building was probably a medical or contumation building, that is harbour quarantine, resembling the one, with a roof frame though, recorded on water-colour drawings from the Late Venetian period.²⁷

Leone Castle is yet another fortification depicted by Nobile just before its demolition. According to his position, Nobile was probably included in planning or approving of such intervention.²⁸ Unlike the completely destroyed fortress on the entrance to Koper, the local *Piazza*, except for some details, remained almost untouched, but nevertheless the Venetian flagpole was already missing.²⁹ Nevertheless it should be mentioned that the transformation of the palace was completed in 1821, flanking the west side of the Koper Town Square, that is immediately after the said drawing has been made, showing the then still existing relief of the winged Lion of St. Marc above the portal of the *Armeria*.³⁰

On a drawing of a onetime berth (*mandrač*) and the buildings surrounding it, the author's immediate connection with the motif can be substantiated at least in the detail of the scene of

²⁶ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 20. Cf. a comprehensive analysis of the topic in the town-planning study: M. Budicin, *Aspetti storico-urbani nell' Istria Veneta*, Trieste - Rovigno, 1998, pp 76-77, 84-85, 87, 89

²⁷ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 21. can be seen in: M. Budicin (1998), 76-77, 84-85, 87

²⁸ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 37, among many illustrations of this fortress the following are to be noted: Caprin, (1905) pp 94-95, 104-105; F. Semi, *Capris Iustinopolis Capodistria*, Trieste, 1975, 316, 317 and Budicin, (1998), 64-65

²⁹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 38

³⁰ S. Bernik, (1968), 40. The relief has been removed in 1814. Cf. A. Rizzi, "*Pax in hac civitate et in omnibus abitantibus in ea*" *I rilievi marciani di Capodistria*, Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti, vol. 149, Venezia, 1991, p 185

the original Gothic front of St. Peter's Church, which has been radically reconstructed in 1818 after Nobile's project.³¹ The Early Gothic Town Hall pulled down in 1877 is given in just a few strokes, unlike the minute, detailed depiction on Tischbein's lithograph.³² Comparison with this quarter of a century older source reminds us of a yet another drastic Early Classicist intervention in the historical nucleus of the town: replacement of the Municipal Loggia and the adjacent house with the new "Kazina" palace.³³ The view of the outer perimeter of the peninsula of Piran with a dominant vertical of St. George's Church is the only pen-and-ink drawing of the collection.³⁴ A very well preserved view of the boat berth (*mandrač*) and the *Veliki trg* in Izola found its place in the collection.³⁵

Although the Poreč group of drawings also begins with a panoramic view from the sea³⁶, the choice of motifs reminds us of the author's primary and understandable interest in chronicling the past, which is his absorption with the Antique. Nobile makes a detailed drawing of the Poreč Forum temple ruins, the then situation being almost the same as today, like, for instance, the correlation between the south stylobate and the Romanesque house. The drawing has its obvious documentary quality but nevertheless includes a genre-painting detail of a woman posing by her front door, on the margin of the scene.³⁷ Today, after the removal of houses built on the north stylobate, we have a radically different scene.³⁸ The rear of the Forum temple was then just barely discernible among the foundations of the western town walls, what can not be said about the remains of the so called Neptune's Temple, and probable Forum additions, clearly visible in front of the northern, meanwhile largely devastated rim of fortification walls, only today connected with the remains of the tower and the supporting

³¹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 35. The drawing can be seen in S. Bernik, (1968) 161. On Nobile's intervention on St. Peter's Church see Sonja Ana Hoyer's article *Il neoclassicismo triestino e lo storicismo a Pirano*, *Archeografo triestino*, ser. IV, vol. LIX, Trieste, 1999, 325-338

³² A detailed comparative analysis of the available graphic documents was made by S. Bernik, (1968), 162-164, p 163. Quotation of the work brings a photo of the town hall. Cf. A. Selb, A. Tischbein, (1842) 15, G. Caprin, (1905) 204, 205. The town hall is described by P. Kandler, *Pirano, Monografia storica*, Parenzo, 1879, pp 45-47

³³ On Nobile's drawing the "Kazina" still does not have its characteristic semicircular gable hiding the gable roof, so it might represent the still unfinished building. Cf. Selb, Tischbein, (1842) 15. More on substitution of the Municipal Loggia with the "Kazina" see: Bernik, (1968) 165, 171

³⁴ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 34. The reproduction of the drawing can be seen in: Bernik, (1968) 152

³⁵ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 36. Reproduced in Bernik, (1968) 103, for the comment see p 112

³⁶ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 23

³⁷ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 25. There is a photo by M. Prelog with an almost identical scene of the medieval house near the south side of the temple ruins, although Prelog was not aware of the existence of the Rijeka collection, a fact which only lends support to the theory that in different periods of time researchers search the answer to the same questions. M. Prelog, *Poreč grad i spomenici*, Beograd, 1957, p 46, ill. 60.

³⁸ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 27. Practically the same angle, only with a slightly purified motif, was captured by Caprin's illustrator Giulio De Franceschi by the end of the century. Cf. G. Caprin, (1905) vol. I, p 30

masonry, on the stretch north of Villa Polesini.³⁹ In the end, Nobile also brings many versions of his perception of the Poreč Forum and the so called Neptune's temple reconstructions,⁴⁰ and adds a cross-view and a ground-plan to the existing plans of the Euphrasian Basilica complex, both of them unfinished sketches.⁴¹

A great significance of this collection lies in the fact that unlike his predecessors, who were just travelling along the Istrian coast in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, Nobile was actually engaged in tracing out the coastal road from Koper to Pula and was probably the first, after the proverbially imprecise Baroque *vedutistas* of the seventeenth century, who has drawn views of smaller towns with no significant Roman monuments of their own. It is instructive to compare a view of Novigrad by Prospero Petronio, full of characteristic simplifications, a certain clumsy perspective and exaggerations, with the Nobile's view from the direction of Brtonigla. Despite the fact that it was made from a distant vantage point, it records the exact correlation between the parts of the town still rigidly encircled by the Medieval and Renaissance walls, towered by the first Cathedral bell-tower, facing St. Mary's Church in front of the town and St. Agatha's Church far off in the field. In foreground of the Novigrad panorama, on its very margin, there are two sitting figures and one lying sidewise sleeping, his back turned to the spectator, rendered in just a few light pencil strokes.⁴²

Mention should be made of the authentic appearance of the main square in Umag with a row of houses facing the unfinished front of the Umag Parish Church, recorded on photographs. The view of the Town Hall is particularly interesting - Nobile brings a faithful depiction of details such as coats of arms and the relief of St. Marc's lion, later built into the bell-tower. There is an unknown detail of the Baroque portal on the eastern façade of the palace, probably the exit on the

³⁹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 24. Cf. for the same angle from a closer view see: G. Caprin, (1905) vol. I, p 29

⁴⁰ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 29

⁴¹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 28. A rough draft of the chapel apse layer in the north-west corner of the atrium cf. with Selb, Tischbein, (1842) 15, a record of the condition of the atrium after an Early Austrian conservation intervention had been carried out. Cf. also with Prelog (1957) pp 96, 120, 187 and 188. Here mention should be made of a drawing of the eastern stretch of the town walls and the town gates towers, bearing strong resemblance to the drawing manner of Nobile's group of town views, today in Rijeka. Next to the cylindrical pentagonal tower with the adjacent town walls, the drawing records the today nonexistent town gates. H. Giaconi, comparing the drawing with the actual situation during a preservation intervention on the tower, came to the conclusion that the gates were probably of Roman origin. H. Giaconi, I. Matejčić, *Konzervatorska podloga prostora uz istočni gradski bedem u Poreču*, Rijeka, MKRH, Uprava za zaštitu kulturne baštine, Konzervatorski odjel u Rijeci, project report, Rijeka, 1995. Baldini confirms the same. Cf. M. Baldini, *Parentium – Contributi alla lettura della cronologia urbana e l'episodio romano del martirio di S. Mauro*, Atti Centro di ricerche storiche – Rovigno, XXIX, Trieste-Rovigno, 1999, pp 87-88. The drawing without comment can be seen in D. Orlić, *Srdačno Vaš Poreč*, Poreč, 1997, p 148.

⁴² DAR, *P. Nobile*, 31. P. Petronio, *Memorie sacre e profane dell' Istria*, Trst, 1968, pp 413, 414

lateral terrace.⁴³ Yet another proof of authenticity of data recorded by Nobile's drawings, often given in a few pencil strokes, is his drawing of the Umag gateway, with barely visible contours of crenellations in foreground which defended the access embankment on both sides, the remains of the main entrance tower in the background and the still existing Renaissance tower on the south stretch of the walls. All of the above mentioned should be compared to a water-colour drawing, the Topographic View of the Umag Municipality from 1765, with a minutely rendered detail of the strongly fortified peninsular town. The original is kept in the Cartographic collection of the State Archives in Rijeka.⁴⁴

The view of Vrsar shows a striking growth that took place in the nineteenth century when the town started to spread downhill towards the sea. Instead by the church and the bell-tower, which were erected only in the twentieth century, the town was towered by the then still existing crenellations of the Episcopal summer residence, the Vergottini Castle. St. Anthony's Church with the portico depicted in front of the town walls, is today integrated into the overbuilt area of the suburban settlement, while one part of the Franciscan monastery, this in turn part of the St. Mary's Church complex, suffered from caving in. It is interesting to note that the vantage point, which is the only possible viewpoint of the scene, was exactly in the position of the nineteenth century breakwater, a fact which leads to the conclusion that the drawing was made during Nobile's supervision of the construction works or other similar activities.⁴⁵

Unlike Vrsar, Bale has remained almost completely unchanged, seen from the road beneath the town, as in the view of the square with the town gates and the Soardo-Bembo Palace. Only the Gothic Town Hall, seen from its lateral façade, was subjected to a radical reconstruction in Neo-Gothic manner.⁴⁶

The view of Vodnjan and the rear of the just finished St. Blaise's Church with the suggested vertical of the bell-tower, then under construction, were drawn from the church portico.

⁴³ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 32. A photo of demolished buildings by G. Martinello, *Umago d' Istria, Notizie storiche*, Trst, 1964, p 24. Mentioning and remembering it means giving contribution to the criticism of the present-day oversize open plateau in the centre of the peninsula, with no adequate connection to the Gothic-Renaissance part of the historical nucleus of the town.

⁴⁴ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 33. Cartographic collection. The detail was drawn from the original and published by G. Martinella, (1964) 15, no mention of the original whatsoever. The same was taken over by R. Cigui, *Contributo all' araldica di Umago*, Atti Centro di ricerche Storiche-Rovigno, vol. XXIV, Trst-Rovinj, 1994. p 245. The original map has probably ended up in the State Archives in Rijeka along with the heritage of De Franceschi's from Seget.

⁴⁵ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 22

⁴⁶ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 42, 43

According to the angle of the view and the depicted fragment of the edifice, that church can be St. Francis's Church situated on the road towards Bale. Nevertheless, the lack of any trace of a portico in front of this Romanesque church now turned to ruins is puzzling.⁴⁷

The drawing of Svetvinčenat is yet another example of documentary authenticity of Nobile's drawings, although it is sometimes hard to believe in that because the situation we find today obviously differs from the onetime situation. At first sight the scene of the town in the drawing matches the present situation in every detail, but some differences can be observed. The present Town Loggia has a pavillion roof instead of a gable roof, and the arches of both colonnades have been levelled in their apex heights. Nobile, just as Tischbein did some thirty years later, depicts a roof truss above the girders facing the square, supported by a ridge beam and longitudinal double wooden console above capitals. Consequently, this side of the Loggia was not articulated by arches until a later restoration intervention. There is a very valuable detail of decorative ghibellines of the main tower of the Grimani castle, already missing on Tischbein's drawing. Comparative analysis shows there were alterations in the uppermost storey of the main tower.⁴⁸ Details of the castle, dilapidated during the course of time, like the staircase with balustrade leading to the parapet walk, high stables with hay-barns, exterior staircases along the inner walls, documented on photographs by the end of the nineteenth century, are today missing which is witnessed by traces of the embankment slope, wall consoles and beam holes. At the time, all the castle's towers were covered by roof trusses.⁴⁹

In Kanfanar, Nobile draws a view of the town from the vantage point of a church portico, a view of the bell-tower, the front of the Parish Church and several houses on the other side of the street. The unavoidable Dvigrad is depicted as a mere blotch in the landscape.⁵⁰

In the course of the nineteenth century, Lupoglav castle had been annexed a stable along the perimeter of the eastern fortification walls, suffering its first serious devastation only after World War II when its main doorway with the coat of arms was reduced to rubble. The second devastation occurred during the adaptation works of the residential part and extension of the stable, while the other parts of the castle have remained unaltered since Nobile's time, although dilapidated. The conversion of the southeast tower into a dwelling place, done in Nobile's time,

⁴⁷ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 41. Cf. M. Tamaro, pp 578, 587

⁴⁸ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 44

⁴⁹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 45

⁵⁰ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 46, 47, 48

is very curious.⁵¹ From another, wider angle the architect marked the position of the remains of the old castle on the hill, with St. Stephen's Church in the town below, rendered also by Valvasor some two centuries before.⁵²

The northern wing of the Pazin Castle remained exactly the same as it was when drawn by Nobile, except for the annex that he marked only above the western but not above the northern stretch of the external parapet walk, along the uppermost level of the walls. The defence moat had already been filled up and the outer walls in front of the castle entrance torn down in the meantime. In the background of the view of Pazin there is the bell-tower and the front of St. Nichola's Parish Church rendered with just a few light strokes, the view today thwarted by newly erected buildings.⁵³ The Croatian gymnasium boarding-school building was blocking the view from the square in front of the Franciscan church towards the new Pazin boroughs in the early twentieth century. The Classicist monument erected at the time the drawing was made, has been removed after World War I. Underneath the Baroque semicircular window on the front of the Franciscan Church of Mary's Visitation, the spectator's attention will be drawn to the today invisible (Gothic?) windows, niches for statues and the characteristic Baroque bell-tower bulb, instead of today's pyramid.⁵⁴ The view of the Pazin Pit was almost an imperative.⁵⁵

The group of Labin drawings begins with the usual panorama of the fortified town on the hill.⁵⁶ All the basic elements presented on the view drawn from the slope under St. Anthony's church towards a row of Baroque houses built on the perimeter of the town walls, have been preserved, except for some minor alterations. The direct view, made from the lower side of the access road, has been thwarted by buildings erected in 1930's.⁵⁷ On the view of the Renaissance outer fortification ring, only partly preserved today, facing the main Town Gates of St. Flor, still today preserved in the perimeter of the interior, medieval, town walls, Nobile documents the view of the outer town gates, of which only the lower part of the left door-post with the base survived until today. It is very evident that the complex of houses in the background was built on the

⁵¹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 56. A detailed description of the changes of the new Lupoglav castle was in fact made possible by the Rijeka archival material, National Assembly of the Margravate of Istria (Zemaljski sabor Markgrofovije Istre). Cf. M. Bradanović, *Nekoliko primjera ladanja mletačke i austrijske Istre*, in: *Kultura ladanja*, Zbornik Dana Cvita Fiskovića I, Zagreb, 2006., 183-194

⁵² DAR, *P. Nobile*, 55. J. W. Valvasor, *Die Ehre des Hertzogthums Crain*, Laibach, 1689, p 355

⁵³ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 53

⁵⁴ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 54

⁵⁵ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 52

⁵⁶ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 70

⁵⁷ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 71

foundations of the medieval town walls while the clock tower got its Classicist cupola. The Renaissance Tower and the new Baroque Town Loggia have remained unaltered.⁵⁸ There is also one mirror image of the Rabac Valley and the outlines of Labin in the background, with the rocky slopes along the road to Rabac and the sea in the back. In the inevitable comparison of the onetime situation with the present one, this is an example of a completely altered landscape.⁵⁹

The view of Plomin with the Učka massif in the background, drawn from the road from Labin, Nobile depicted as blotches at the foothill, a pier with sailboats at anchor and the Villa Depangher complex, quite recently demolished in the area occupied today by the thermo-electric power plant waste dump.⁶⁰ From the shadow of the still partly existing although dilapidated water-mills at the foot of the town hill, Nobile gives a thumbnail sketch of the still unspoiled view of the western stretch of Plomin's fortification walls, with the tower defending the town entrance, the parish church as integral part of the town's fortification system, the parish church bell-tower and the bell-tower of St. George's "The Old" Church.⁶¹ The view of the south-western stretch of the town walls above the Bay, a great part of it preserved, with the angular, rectangular Venetian tower, with its front divided by the rounded Renaissance cornice, the relief of the winged lion of St. Marc and the two church towers dominating the scene is today thwarted by the recent nearby construction activity. The older, inner ring of the walls, above a small Romanesque portal discernible on the drawing, has been torn down, while the today sealed up portal flanked by the circumferential road has been preserved as is also the lower part of the pertaining fortification walls used as garden supporting masonry.⁶²

A slanted-base massive rectangular tower in front of the entrance to Mošćenice has already been subjected to modifications, namely perforation of the wall for window openings on the ground floor and enlargement of the existing ones on the first floor, which started in Nobile's time and lasted during the whole nineteenth century. The main theme of the drawing is a lavish crown of a recently cut down chestnut tree, with a Baroque loggia in the background.⁶³

The panorama of Tinjan, with the view of the well-known Parish Church Baroque front and the even more known bell-tower and its tambour without the final pyramid, one of the writers of the

⁵⁸ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 72

⁵⁹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 73, 74

⁶⁰ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 75

⁶¹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 76

⁶² DAR, *P. Nobile*, 77

⁶³ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 79

description under the drawing indicated as Kringa. The fortification walls were already partly demolished, especially after the new, wider access road towards the main square in front of the church had been cut through. In two of his drawings, Nobile lends support to a great extent to the schematic depiction of Tinjan from Valvasor's book, the then still standing medieval rectangular passable tower above the onetime main town gateway, today only small portion of the parapet surviving.⁶⁴ The still existing Prefect's Table in front of the entrance to Tinjan served as a refreshment spot for Nobile's tired fellow travellers.⁶⁵

The view of Kringa is signed correctly. The centre of today's Kringa has already then been defined. We can recognize the present Parish Church of SS. Peter and Paul and the small St. Ann's Church. Although the town was still within the limited perimeter of the elevation, comparisons with the earlier depictions by Valvasor and Petronio show considerable modifications. There is the discernible silhouette of the Sv. Petar u Šumi bell-tower in the background.⁶⁶

On the question of the descriptions accompanying the drawings, probably made by the first owner of the collection in the first half of the twentieth century, it should be noted that a drawing was incorrectly signed as "Vranja".⁶⁷ A drawing representing a few houses but with no characteristic detail is signed as "Muntić", which cannot be neither denied nor confirmed.⁶⁸

The view of the centre of Vižinada, with the recently demolished Town Hall and the palace near the cistern, points out the degree of destruction and devastation mainly occurring in the second half of the twentieth century. Next to the central motif of the Baroque cistern, the ashlar of the Gothic-Renaissance section of masonry with the Venetian winged lion are highly prominent. It seems it had a public function at first. Late in the previous century it was radically rebuilt, but it managed to preserve its peculiar details, at least traces of them, which reveal the period it was built in and to which Nobile devoted his attention to. There is a Renaissance mullioned window with two lights sealed up on one of its walls, which was probably coated with plaster in Nobile's time.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 50

⁶⁵ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 51

⁶⁶ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 49. Valvasor (1689) p 318, Petronio (1968) 239

⁶⁷ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 57

⁶⁸ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 58

⁶⁹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 64

A today nonexistent floor articulated with columns on the interior side of the Motovun Town Gates is given in just a few strokes. The remains of the front of a house adjacent to the bell-tower, reconstructed in the meantime, have been recently presented to the public, while the architectural elements of the first construction layer of a Romanesque castle front facing the square, in Nobile's time already are not visible.⁷⁰

Integrating with accomplishment the views of the fortified towns on the hills, the beauty of landscape and contours of his fellow-travellers, usually represented laying idly under a tree, Nobile in a series of drawings departs from the exactness of an architect's attitude anticipating in the nostalgic atmosphere of his drawings the spirit of the approaching age of Romanticism. Reverberations of his Roman schooling, especially the study of composition of Poussin's Arcadian landscapes are strongly felt in his drawings.⁷¹ It seems that the core of such representations was the awareness of the necessity of capturing the image of the ephemeral flowing time, although it is precisely these very motifs that have by some miracle managed to survive through time almost intact, becoming the most important heritage of the Istrian peninsula. Among this group of drawings the landscapes with the fortified towns above the Mirna Valley are especially distinctive, the most outstanding being the views of Motovun, made from different vantage points and in different combinations.⁷² The outstanding qualities of the landscape were also the immediate cause for the view of Istarske Toplice.⁷³ Buje, drawn from the direction of Grožnjan, have preserved the basic silhouette of a fortified town on a hilltop in full, with the characteristic correlation of the two verticals, the bell-towers of St. Servolo's Church and the Church of St. Mary of Mercy.⁷⁴ At the bottom of Tar Valley there already was an isolated house, and in the course of the past centuries almost nothing has changed.⁷⁵ The view of *Kaštel* near Buje is showing somehow more preserved town walls and roof trusses of the houses, while St. Sabo's Church at the foothill still does not have its detached bell-tower.⁷⁶ Another two drawings belonging to this group are signed as *Belle Grotte*, and on one of them *Kaštel* near Buje

⁷⁰ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 61

⁷¹ Also aware of Nicolas Poussin's influence is R. Fabiani, *L'architetto Pietro Nobile*, Arte in Friuli - Arte a Trieste, 4, Trieste, 1980, p 78. Nobile's fellow-travellers probably were baron de Humbracht and the gentlemen Balzano, Balesin and Sandri, who were assisting him on the project of tracing the Kopar-Pula road in 1815. Cf. Pavan, (1998) 31.

⁷² DAR, *P. Nobile*, 59, 60, 63, 65

⁷³ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 62

⁷⁴ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 66

⁷⁵ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 30

⁷⁶ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 67

can be traced in the background.⁷⁷ These impressions of the Istrian landscape, which are in no way architectural studies, are in fact probably the most important part of Nobile's drawer's work.

This winding journey should be brought to its end with its first and last destination, Muggia and its defensive walls and the view of its pier, which is still preserved in its entirety⁷⁸ and Lovran with its boat dock breakwater, already found in other Nobile's drawings, which leads us to the conclusion that he had his share in the construction of this breakwater also. The comparison of Nobile's drawing of Lovran's boat dock with Valvasor's print taken from the opposite angle, besides being useful in a comparison of two different piers is also enabling a more precise reconstruction of town's silhouettes in a drawing made in the early nineteenth century. This confirms that in Nobile's time, next to the still existing church of the Holy Trinity on the shore there was another one, that of St. Sebastian. The Lovran town walls overlooking the pier, with the town gates and the Stubica Tower are very well documented.⁷⁹

Coincident with the making of the Premantura drawing is Nobile's conception of the construction of the Porer lighthouse, a project carried out by his pupil Giuseppe Sforzi.⁸⁰ It is no coincidence that one of the figures from his drawing which was probably signed at the time of its making, is identified as a harbour's master.⁸¹ The group portrait of the Mezolić family will probably be interesting to ethnologists because the members of the family have been portrayed wearing folk costumes.⁸²

The above description of the Pietro Nobile Collection in Rijeka alone is enough to draw some conclusions and identify certain patterns. Even without archival research it can be observed that the huge infrastructure accomplishments, especially the building of the road and harbour's infrastructure, represented on Nobile's drawings, partly deny the ivory-tower character of his travels preserved in the very title of the collection. We can also assume that the whole collection was made in a relatively short period of time, what can be deduced by the relatively uniform quality and size of the paper and the pencil used. If we are to judge by the details, the drawings

⁷⁷ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 68, 69

⁷⁸ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 39, 40

⁷⁹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 78. Valvasor, (1689) p 346

⁸⁰ For more on Nobile's lighthouse projects see in G. Pavan, (1998) p 45 and also prints of his lighthouse studies pp 262-269. Cf. M. Bradanović, *Istočnojadranski svjetionici (postanak, korijeni oblikovanja)*, Industrijska baština, zbornik, Rijeka, 2003, pp 491-499.

⁸¹ DAR, *P. Nobile*, 81. This is also the only prominent occurrence of the handwriting, next to the one on the dated portrait of Valčić, the Brseč Dean.

⁸² DAR, *P. Nobile*, 82

were made in the period after the definite establishment of the Austrian Government in Istria, a fact which compared to the known biographical facts about the author sets up the time of the making of the drawings in the period between the 1813 and 1818. Some of the drawings could have been made even earlier, maybe during his previous visits to Istria, in 1809 and 1810. The drawings show the influence of the author's education from St. Luke's Academy in Rome, his study of Possin's and Lorrain's art, research of Piranesi and all the others absorbed in antiquities and ruins of the Antique monuments, and last but not least, the impact of the Italian view painters of the eighteenth century. By detaching himself from the exclusive interest in the Antique monuments, with his collection of drawings he anticipates the age of Romanticism.

Deliberating about the architect's possible authorship of single edifices, the historical importance of Nobile's project of the construction of the Savudrija lighthouse in 1817, the then state-of-the-art Mediterranean lighthouse and the first modern lighthouse on the eastern coast of Adriatic should be noted. Some other, hypothetic Istrian works by Nobile certainly need further discussion. In connection to the afore said all the available data on some of the Classicist palaces in Piran and Rovinj should be checked, the palaces bearing a strong resemblance with Nobile's Triestian buildings like, for instance, the Fontana House. We should not go too far with such simplified comparisons though, especially regarding the architect's pedagogic work, his followers and the whole circle of Triestian Classicist architects. As to the Višnjan Parish Church, completed in 1833, its vigorous Schinkel-like front resembling a Greek temple pronaos could emerge on the Istrian soil only as a consequence of inspiration with Pietro Nobile's work, as an ardent promoter of Winckelmann's "pro-Greek" Neoclassicist trend. Similar reverberations of Nobile's and the Triestian Neoclassicist school of architecture can be found all over Istria, in coastal towns as well as those in the Istrian hinterland, especially with the more ambitiously conceived churches, like the afore mentioned ones in Višnjan and Vižinada.

Regarding Nobile's preservationist's activity, keeping in mind it was not a hobby but a professional line of duty of a public works engineer and a clearly defined profession which included supervision of a wide range of activities, from archaeological researches in Trieste and Aquileia, to conservational and presentational work on the Amphitheatre and the Temple of Augustus in Pula, according to the then state-of-the-art methods (after all, we must keep in mind Nobile is a pupil of Valadier), we will become aware of the fact that his pioneering art-

conservation work in this part of the world has been wrongfully neglected.⁸³ The architect's work was not based on his Roman experience only, but also on the entire cultural atmosphere of the early nineteenth-century Trieste and a general renewed interest in ancient monuments, in which Nobile's, A. Canova's and D. Rosetti's activities along with the huge impact of Winckelmann's work played a decisive part.

The collection of drawings kept in State Archives in Rijeka is of great importance to researches nowadays, in the first place for the method and the technique applied (we are talking about drafts made on site, without embellishment and subsequent finishing touches from memory) because Nobile is the first illustrator of Istrian landscapes and town views who brings authentic views with no idealistic trait whatsoever in the true to the original presentation of architecture. The collection is a precious source for all comparative analyses of the historical graphic documentation and the actual state of the architectural fund of Istrian towns, and it reminds us of the possibility of creating new archival material as contribution to our town-planning heritage and the scientific necessity of a systematic publishing of such archival material.⁸⁴ Istria recorded

⁸³ In the year 1809 Nobile started his study tour of Istria, while the next year saw him in Istria and Dalmatia respectively. Pavan and Matijašić make mention of his drawings of Split, kept in the Soprintendenza in Trieste. In 1813 already he proposed his extensive program for preservation of the architectural heritage of Illirya to the French Government. Nobile keeps a vivid interest in the restoration of monuments till late years of his life, so in 1846 and 1847 we have him advising his pupil Bioni during the restoration of the Šibenik Cathedral. See in G. Pavan, (1989) 411-412, *ibid.* (1998) 25-26, 62, 63, Matijašić, (1999) 12-21. Nobile's professional art-conservation work was in a sort of clash with his other activities, but, it will be recalled, it had started several decades earlier with the comprehensive evaluation of Vicko Andrić's work in Split. For information on Andrić cf. D. Kečkemet, *V. Andrić, arhitekt i konzervator 1793-1866*, Split, 1993. From the documents of the Trieste archives it is clear that the art-conservation aspect of Nobile's activities has been conceptually formed early in his life because it consists of his theoretical theses, program-elaboration and researches, and following his trip to Vienna, a series of practical instructions for contractors. Regarding the works on the Amphitheatre and the Temple of Augustus in Pula many of his previous researches and feasibility studies had been saved, according to which preservation works have been conducted.

⁸⁴ Especially today with a much wider range of possibilities which provide a better insight into the subject matter. Beside the very well known historical views of Istrian settlements like the nautical, travel and cartographic ones, by B. von Breydenbach and A. Degli Oddi for instance, Baroque and Romanticist town views (illustrators of Valvasor's book, *Selb-Tischbein*), a wide array of high-quality prints of plans and drafts from the late period of Venetian Government have become generally available (especially owing to Budicin's synthesis from 1998). There is also a large number of scientific monographs which treat the subject of architectural and town-development issues like *Dioecesis Justinopolitana, L' arte gotica nel territorio della diocesi di Capodistria*, ed. S. Štefanac, Koper, 2000, (with contributions by S. Bernik and N. Grujić) and also useful popular-science works like Foscano's studies *I castelli medioevali dell'Istria*, Trieste, 1992 and *Porte e mura delle citta, terre e castella della Carsia e dell'Istria*, Rovigno-Trieste, 2003. Numerous local monographs with plenty of historical pictorial material should be mentioned like, for instance, *Srdačno Vaš Poreč* by Drago Orlić from 1997, large photograph collections like the ones in Conservation Department in Rijeka (Konzervatorski odjel u Rijeci) or the Institute for Art History in Zagreb (Institut za povijest umjetnosti u Zagrebu), the growing number of relevant material on the subject matter on the Internet and last but not least, a huge quantity of until today unpublished or, according to present-day standards, inadequately reproduced archivalia (let us concentrate on the pictorial documents only, leaving apart the written sources). Anyone handling the Pietro Nobile Collection will encounter the very pronounced issue of a highly delicate paper with pencil strokes faded completely in some places.

by Nobile during his business travel is actually the Istria of the past, that precisely in his time and with him begins its way out of medieval walls.

The State Archives in Rijeka Pietro Nobile Collection as a source of research of the appearance of Istrian settlements in the early nineteenth century

(summary)

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The paper analyses the Pietro Nobile Collection, a collection of drawings of Istrian motives by this renowned Triestian architect, kept in the State Archives in Rijeka. It describes the history of the collection bought up from collectors between the two World Wars and catalogued by Camillo De Franceschi, historian, librarian and archivist from Pula. Since the end of World War II it has been kept in the State Archives in Rijeka. It consists of seventy-nine drawings of town views and landscapes, and three portraits. A contemporary inscription on the portrait of Valčić, the Dean of Brseč, places it in 1815, while some of the drawings were certainly made a few years earlier. The sketch-like drawings are markedly realistic which sets them apart from all the previous views of Istrian towns, in which the matter-of-fact illustration was lost due to subsequent finishing touches. Until now unknown details of the then appearance of Istrian towns are illustrated, lost in the course of time, among which we may find those with no other known illustrations. Nobile, like his predecessors, is above all interested in Roman monuments, but he also shows interest in monuments of all historical periods in general, an interest anticipating the age of Romanticism. Among numerous views of Pula there is a remarkable one because of more documentary quality than any of the known sources, showing the outer side of Golden Gates (Zlatna Vrata) with a segment of northern town walls and towers. Especially interesting are the views of Rovinj depicting a segment of St. Euphemia's Church front, flagpole with the flanking columns, and the remains of the quarantine on the town quay, the view of the main square in Koper, specially the detail

of the Armeria façade, and last but not least the view of Piran's boat berth with the original front of St. Peter's Church. The views of Poreč have the Forum temple as the protagonist, among which there is a rare view of the remains of its rear with the medieval walls in elevation. Views of the less frequently depicted towns are especially informative, like the one with the fortified access embankment in front of the inner town walls of Umag, the view of the Labin main town gateway, and the view of Tinjan's passable tower above the main gates. The views of Bale, Plomin, Motovun, Svetvinčenat and the Pazin and Lupoglav Castles have remained practically unchanged since then. The accuracy of the views is proved by comparative analyses of the available graphic material and field research. Apart from its artistic value the collection is one of the most comprehensive graphic sources of the appearance of Istrian towns in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is important to notice that the insufficient degree of exploration and scarce knowledge of this collection should figure as an appeal for further comparative analyses of the drawings and a rightful valuation of Pietro Nobile's work as architect and preservationist here in Istria.

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