

Poreč is a town located in the central section of the western coastline of the Istrian Peninsula. It obtained the status of municipality during the period of Augustus, in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and somewhat later, most probably during the reign of Emperor Tiberius, it was given the rank of colony (Colonia Iulia Parentium). A capitulum was also erected on the highest topographical spot of the Poreč Peninsula (the old section of town). The temple on the peninsula can be described as a hexastylos – a temple with a deep pronaos, a portico with six columns on the main façade and most probably with two on the side, and with an opisthodomos or an amphiprostyle – a decorative rear façade. The cella, the sacral core of the temple, had the same proportions as the temples at Pula. The cult center of Roman Poreč was known to Giacomo Filippo Tommasini and Bartolommeo Vergottini already in the 16<sup>th</sup> and in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century respectively. Some researchers like A. Pogatschnig and M. Prelog were of the opinion that they were dealing with a single cult structure, whereas A. Amoroso, P. Kandler and A. Šonje thought that it represents two structures that were erected on the Roman forum. To this day it, unfortunately, remains covered under a veil of mystery because it was not sufficiently explored, and there are also conflicting opinions regarding its dedication.

The rescue archaeological excavations on the Poreč – Temple site, which were conducted in 2010 alongside the outer sides of the temple (the northern and western sides), yielded a vast number of mobile material finds. A special group of finds is on exhibit here. It consists mainly of objects that were either used for daily chores or else they had a decorative purpose, and were made of bone, bronze, pottery or stone.

## Oil Lamps

As an “Instrumentum Domesticum”, clay oil lamps were used on a daily basis to illuminate public and private premises. Two oil lamp fragments belong to a group featuring a volute-shaped nose, stemming from the period of Tiberius, from the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The depictions on the disc are executed in relief and are often accompanied with details that are either incised or consist of engraved points. These depictions represent mythological characters, amphitheater scenes, animals, floral motifs, cult

objects, items for daily usage, and a mask. Such oil lamps stem for the most part either from cisalpine workshops or from those located in Aquileia, and were manufactured from the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century to the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

## A Bone Die

The oldest dice are approximately 4,500 years old and stem from the site of “Burn City” in Persia. Homer writes that the hero Palamedes was responsible for the creation of dice that were intended to somehow assist the soldiers under Troy in their moments of idleness. Herodotus believed that the Lydi were responsible for this, whereas Plato prefers to credit the Egyptians. After a full two millennia we can hear Caesar’s words “The dice have fallen” in places about which he was not even able to dream. The die exhibited in the showcase was excavated in the Roman layer (SJ 62). It can be dated into the period between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## A Marble Nose

A fragment representing a nose from a large-size Roman sculpture, layer (SJ 41), 1<sup>st</sup> century. This nose fragment, alongside the already existent torso made of Greek marble, which is on display in the area of the Big Temple, corroborates that the interior of the temple was decorated with an array of sculptures.

## Tableware

The three vessels that are on display belong to the group of thin-walled pottery vessels. This group encompasses not only fine tableware but also ware intended for everyday use. To date this pottery was not subjected to detailed studies that would provide satisfactory answers to questions regarding either typology or production. It is known that such pottery was produced in the Italic region from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, and that in the course of the 1<sup>st</sup> century its production spread to the provinces.

The small grey bowl with a sandy surface, layer (SJ 41), and the small semi-circular bowl decorated with a scaly, barbotine, appliqué ornamentation, layer (41/76), were both dated to the period of Tiberius, to the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

The dome-shaped bowl embellished with a barbotine decoration executed with a small wheel, layer 41/62, was dated into the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

## Bronze Objects

Three different types of fibulae are in this group, followed by fishing hooks, sewing needles, a ring decorated with a glass paste ornament, and a rather uncharacteristic object featuring two rivets on one side, and well-preserved gold plate on the other. One of the fibulae belongs to the Aucissa type whose design was very widespread. It features a high, semicircular bow and a short foot. “AVCISSA” stems from the name of the workshop, and it is dated into the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The second fibula belongs to the “Pelta” group of plate-shaped fibulae that were likewise dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The third fibula is poorly preserved and we were not able to identify it to date.

## Bronze Coins

Three bronze coins with an effigy of the Emperor, Tiberius 14 – 37 AD. A coin with an image of Constans who was a co-ruler together with Constantinus I, approximately 335 – 337 AD.

The discoveries of these especially singled out objects, most of which stem from the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, tell us something about the period when the temple was erected. A more detailed analysis of all the materials that were unearthed will undoubtedly provide us with a more precise picture of all the excavated layers located on the exterior side of the temple. Still other finds tell us that life on this location existed continuously from the Bronze Age to the present.

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DISPLAY CASE OF THE MONTH  
1<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST - 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2011

