



# **200 YEARS OF THE CEMETERY OF PIRAN**

## **1812 – 2012**



In the year 2012 the town cemetery of Piran celebrated 200 years and the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the small cemetery church and the entrance hall.

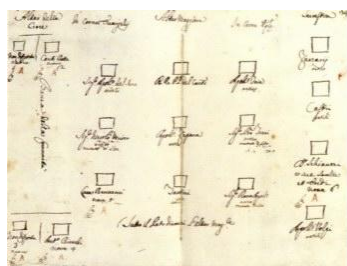
The cemetery of Piran is not only the last resting place of the inhabitants of Piran, but it is also a place of memory and rich historical and cultural heritage.

The cemetery was built on an exclusive location with the views opening to the northern part of the Adriatic as far as Triglav, on the northwestern side to greater part of Italy to Venice, and on the south to Croatia. We are situated at a meeting point of three countries what is reflected also on the gravestones bearing evidence of the connection of the three cultures also beyond earthly life. The history of the town of Piran is written in this place.

With all respect of dignity of every single individual with basic values and ethics it is our duty to preserve the cemetery as a symbol of memory of our deceased who represent an important part of our history.

## **From the history**

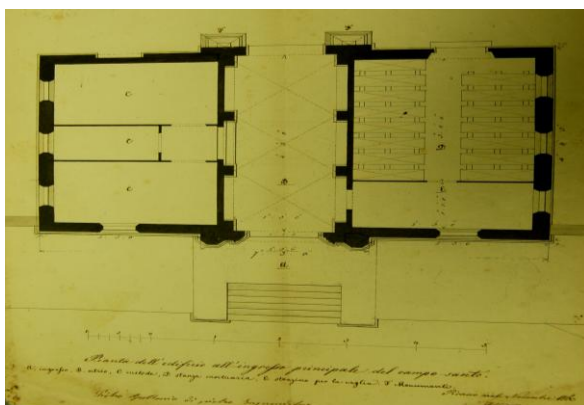
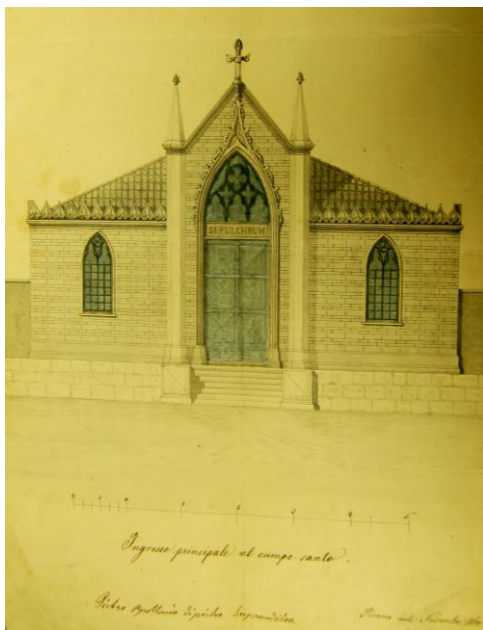
The old town cemetery was situated near the parish church of St. George where there is now the pastoral cultural centre Georgios. Respectable families from Piran afforded to have their last resting place in the tombs in the churches of Piran.



**Plan of burial spaces in the church of St. Francis and the tomb of Tartini family**

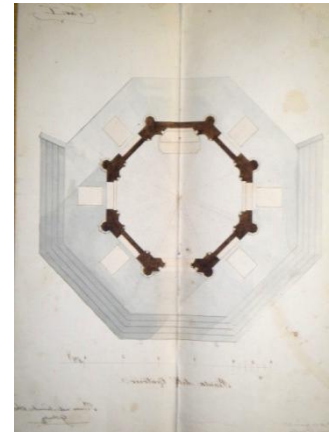
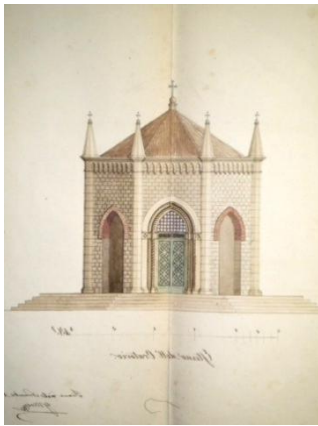
Some data imply the wish of the municipal assembly of Piran to move the cemetery out of the town walls («extra muros») already in the year 1765, that is long before Napoleon's edict. However, only in the first decade of the 19th century it came to effective preparations. The project was carried out by Pietro

Gregorette and in the year 1812 the new cemetery was completed on today's location. Already in the sixties of the 19th century the cemetery had to be extended. It was then when the cemetery church of St. Hermagorus and Fortunatus and the entrance hall were built. The plan for both of them was designed by the architect G. Moso from Piran. According to the memorial plaque the cemetery must have been consecrated by the bishop of Triest and Koper diocese Bartolomeo Legat 27.Sept.1862.



Entrance hall, project by G. Moso,1860

Memorial plaque in entrance hall



**Chapel of St. Hermagorus and Fortunatus, project by G. Moso, 1860**

Among the oldest graves preserved are the outstanding tombs of the oldest noble and middle-class families: Apollonio, Fonda, Corsi, Viezzoli, Tamaro, Bartole, Bubba, Venier, Petronio, Zarotti, Ravalico, Rota. The most imposing tomb was built in the thirties of the 20th century. It is the tomb – chapel de Castro, of the oldest documented patrician family of Piran (mentioned already in the 10th century).



**Tomb of de Castro family, 1939**

In order to save the bones from abandoned empty graves the ossuary («Ossario di Pirano») was built in the thirties of the 20th century. From the register («Registro dell'ossario») it can be figured out that the ossuary served its purpose for 24 years, precisely since 1939 until the year 1963. Even nowadays in small wooden chests (with name surname and in some places with a photo of



the deceased) human remains of hundreds of people from Piran are kept.

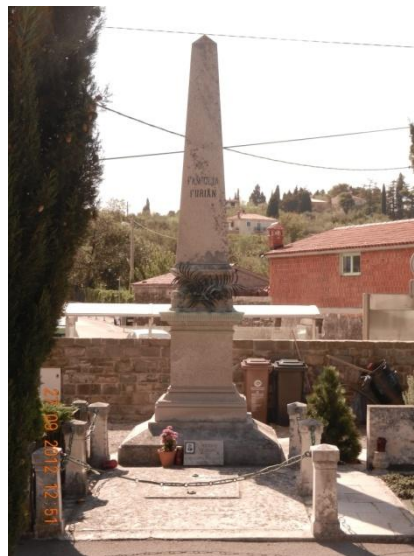


**The old ossuary - exterior**



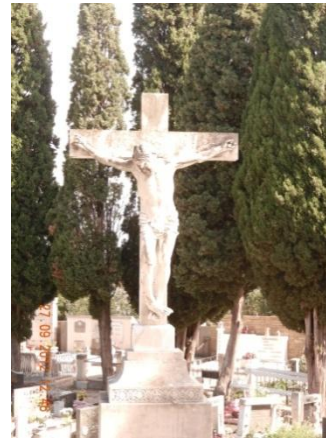
**The old ossuary - interior**

From artistic and historic point of view besides the tombs we have listed monuments in the shape of obelisk can be mentioned. There are 15 such monuments in the cemetery of Piran. The biggest and the best preserved among them is that one which decorates the tomb of the family of the architect Lorenzo Furian from the year 1861.



**Obelisk on the Furian, family tomb of the 1861**

Dealing with memorial sculpture it is worth mentioning the two mourning female figures (tombs of the families Cicogna and Ravalico), a bronze head on the monument Zacchi and a bronze bust on the tomb Zarotti. Unfortunately, all these works are without signature. However, two big stone sculptures of the crucified on the tomb of Chiarego (Achille Tamburlini, 1903) and a head on the tomb of Silvio Tamaro were signed. (Ugo Cara', 1939).



**Two stone female figures**

**The Crucified**

## **The cemetery today**

With globalization of the settlements year by year in the municipality of Piran the population in these localities started to grow. In the cemetery the spaces for burial began to lack that is why during decades the cemetery was several times renovated and enlarged. In the sixties of the 20th century new spaces for burial were acquired by extending the children's part of the cemetery. In the year 1965 in the entrance hall where there used to be the flat and the work shop of the guard of the cemetery they converted it into two funeral parlours and into the room for the deceased (mortuary). Gradually new extensions of the cemetery followed precisely in the seventies, eighties, and nineties of the 20th century. As a peculiarity of the cemetery it is worth mentioning the concrete tomb built in the year 1995, according to the model of the tomb in Triest. The extension of the cemetery followed again in the years 2006 and 2010. In the year 2008 the room for the deceased (mortuary) was renovated, the rooms for the workers of the cemetery – gravediggers (dressing room, kitchen nook, restroom ...), the cemetery office with the show-room for funerary objects and a store was transferred to a new location. The last extension with the acquisition of 104 new burial spaces was carried out in the year 2010. On the occasion of the two hundredth anniversary of the cemetery and one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the entrance hall the funeral parlour was renovated. Then the room for mourners and visitors of the cemetery was fixed, too.

Several hundred burial spaces in the earth, several hundred urn niches and the Triest tomb with over two hundred spaces for burial were acquired with the extension of the cemetery. Nowadays there are 3595 burial spaces in the cemetery of Piran and precisely:

1718 single graves (in rows)

588 family graves and tombs

75 urn graves

46 childrens' graves

888 urn niches (ossuaries)

280 cells in the common (Triest) tomb



**Area VII -1980**

The cemetery of Piran has been chosen as the last resting place also by some famous personalities;

**Enrico Fonda**, Italian painter;



**Antonio Sema**, Italian historian and writer (after him the Italian secondary school of Piran is named);

**František Čap**, film director , screenwriter and editor;

**Herman Pečarič**, Slovene painter;

**Zdravko Slamnik**, known under pseudonym Pavle Zidar, Slovene writer

**Viktor Birsa**, Slovene painter;

**Diego de Castro**, Italian historian and writer (after him the Italian primary school of Piran is named)

**Janez Lenassi**, Slovene sculptor ;

**Zvest Apollonio**, Slovene painter;

**Rita Pierobon**, Italian opera singer;

The old part of the cemetery is walled with a stone wall. In the year 2008 because of its historical and artistic elements it was entered into the register of the immovable cultural heritage of the Republic of Slovenia under no. 27784







**Cemetery beginning of the 20th century**

The cemetery of Piran is not only a place where the funerary and cemeterial activities are carried out but much more. It is a place where besides the memory of the dead historic events of the town are recorded, it is a part of cultural and artistic treasury of Piran.

A number of important personalities are buried in our cemetery. They shaped together with other townspeople the cultural artistic development and the development of civilization of the historically important town of Piran.

As administrators and managers because of architectural, multinational importance, and because of the famous personalities buried here etc. we are trying hard to become associated and later also permanent members of ASCE (Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe)

The association includes cemeteries which represent real artistic jewels. They are cemeteries in Paris, Rome, Palermo, Barcelona, Berlin, Vienna and over 100 other cities in Europe. Among them there are also Žale in Ljubljana and the cemetery Pobrežje in Maribor.

We believe that our cemetery belongs to the association as well as that it deserves this honour.

Currently the procedure of proclamation of the cemetery of Piran as a municipal cultural monument is under way and this is a guarantee for special protection and importance of the cemetery.

#### Sources and bibliography:

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