

Totto ex Gavardo Palace

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Description

The palace places its main emphasis on Kidričeva Street, which once connected the central port with the main city square. It bears two names – after the Gavardo family, who built the palace, and after its later owners, the Totto family. The palace encompasses a complex of several older palaces on Kidričeva Street, which were united in the Baroque 18th century. It is one of the highest-quality Baroque noble buildings in Koper.

The Baroque design is mainly longitudinal, with four large windows and a balcony, and a connection between the building and the garden. The ground floor was converted into retail premises in the 1960s according to plans by Edo Mihevac.

The interior is particularly interesting, with an open (now covered with a glass roof) entrance atrium and a staircase leading to the noble floor, where the family lived. The first floor has preserved the original terrazzo tiles and heavily painted frescoes from the time of Francesco Gavardo, with architectural, landscape, and mythological motifs (*The Judgment of Paris, Jupiter on the Throne, Athena and Prometheus with a Hawk*) and sculptural decorations. The family wanted to show off their reputation with the paintings, but they also incurred high costs. Francesco's son, Gavardo de Gavardo, obtained well-paid jobs (including in London) and also supported his father financially.

After World War II, the building housed a kindergarten, and later it was abandoned, with the exception of the ground-floor shops.

A relief of the Venetian lion, the symbol of the Venetian Republic, was built into the portal of the Totto Palace in 1924. It is one of the few remains of the ruined Lion's Castle, a fortress with a military garrison that closed and controlled the only road connecting the mainland and the island on which the city of Koper stood. It is an exceptionally high-quality relief from the second half of the 15th century, possibly carved by Nicholas the Florentine, one of the most distinguished sculptors of the time.

In addition to the palace on Kidričeva Street, the Gavardo family also owned several properties in the hinterland of Koper (Krkavče, Podgrad, Labor, Zabavlje) and in present-day Croatia (Oskoruš, Merišće). In the 18th and 19th centuries, they owned a villa in the area of the present-day Debeli Rtič resort, where several similar residences once stood. The villa has by now been thoroughly renovated and enlarged. Their other estate was in Dekani, on the left bank of the Rižana River,

where a villa with a mill is said to have also stood, but unfortunately there is no trace of it today. The Totto family owned a property with a Baroque villa in the hamlet of Pri Totu near Prade, which is still relatively well preserved today.

Address

Koper

Kidričeva ulica 22b - 6000

SI Address

Activities

Map

