

HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF RAGUSA ON PAPER AND PARCHMENT

Conservation of Documents and Other Archival Materials from the National Archives in Dubrovnik

Archival materials from the Republic of Ragusa are of great cultural and national significance for Croatia, and an inexhaustible source of cultural and historical heritage. It is one of the most important archives in Europe because of the amount of material kept there, its age and value. The care of documents created during the Republic of Ragusa has been long and rich. National Archives in Dubrovnik is one of the rare archives where archival materials, created over many centuries, were successfully preserved because of timely rebinding and repairs to damaged materials, as well as the high-quality material used to make them.

From the very beginning of the written word in the Republic of Ragusa, a lot of attention was devoted to the preservation of documents. People of Dubrovnik kept charters and contracts safe to ensure the legal security of the Republic and its citizens. Contracts were drawn up that testify to friendship and freedom, including numerous charters on peace and trade with rulers from the Balkan hinterland. Sales contracts, receipts on money lending, marriage agreements, last wills and testaments of Dubrovnik nobility and common people - in short, everything that made up the everyday life of the City can also be found there.

Registers and documents were written on paper and parchment. It is important to point out that the paper in the Dubrovnik Archives was of exceptional quality. It was made of the highest quality materials made using fabric scraps, which means that its structure was predominantly pure cotton and linen cellulose. In the Republic of Ragusa, parchment was chosen for more important documents, since it was more durable than paper. All statutes, law collections, and lists of civil servants from the rank of

nobility were written on parchment. Parchment was mostly made and processed in Dubrovnik, and the people of Dubrovnik even exported it. In addition to the quality materials used for writing, a high-quality ink was used, i.e. black ink made using stable plant pigments.

Solid foundations for a systematic and detailed conservation and restoration of documents and codices made from the 13th to the 15th century was based on the trilateral agreement between the National Archives in Dubrovnik, Society of Friends of Dubrovnik Antiques and Croatian Conservation Institute. With a project that began in 2015, the rich fundus of archival material was taken care of by experts. Through the three-year long project, as well as painstaking and persistent efforts of these institutions in the future, the bright future of Dubrovnik's past has been ensured. In the centuries-old collage of selfless Dubrovnik affection towards the glorious history and legacy of its ancestors, conservator-restorers have the privilege to be part of this magnificent tradition that we can all be proud of.

It is well known that extremely valuable material from the beginning of the 11th century to the present day is kept at the National Archives in Dubrovnik, and the most valuable archives belong to the funds of the Republic of Ragusa. Documents and codices from that period are the object of conservation and restoration. Today, we can be proud of our ancestors' legacy because we were aware of how important it was to preserve it. At the same time, we have an obligation to ensure that future generations can enjoy this cultural treasure. Only by conserving and restoring the material can we ensure the continuation of this rich tradition.



DRŽAVNI ARHIV
U DUBROVNIKU



POVIJEST DUBROVAČKE REPUBLIKE NA PAPIRU I PERGAMENTU

Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na dokumentima i drugom arhivskom gradivu iz Državnog arhiva u Dubrovniku



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Arhivsko gradivo iz razdoblja Dubrovačke Republike neiscrpan je izvor sačuvane kulturne i povijesne građe i od najvećeg je kulturnog i nacionalnog značenja za Hrvatsku. Prema količini, starosti i vrijednosti, to je jedno od najvažnijih gradiva u Europi. Briga za spise nastale u vrijeme Dubrovačke Republike duga je i bogata. Dubrovački arhiv jedan je od rijetkih u kojem je uspješno sačuvano gradivo nastajalo tijekom stoljeća, zahvaljujući pravovremenom prevezivanju i popravcima oštećenoga gradiva te kvalitetnom materijalu koji se upotrebljavao u dubrovačkim registraturama.

Od najranijih početaka pisane riječi u Dubrovačkoj Republici velika pozornost posvećivala se čuvanju dokumenata. Povelje i ugovore Dubrovčani su morali čuvati jer se na njima zasnivala pravna sigurnost građana, ali i same Republike. Sklapani su ugovori koji svjedoče o prijateljstvu i slobodi, između ostalog i brojne povelje o miru i trgovini s vladarima iz bližeg i daljeg balkanskog zaleđa. Također se spominju kupoprodajne i trgovačke stranke, potvrde o posudbi novca, ženidbeni ugovori, oporuke dubrovačke vlastele i pučana - kratko sve ono što je činilo svakodnevni život Grada.

Registri i isprave pisani su na papiru i pergamentu. Važno je istaknuti da je papir u dubrovačkim registraturama bio iznimne kvalitete. Radilo se o najkvalitetnijem papiru, izrađenom od ostataka tkanine, što zapravo znači da njegovu strukturu čini pretežito čista celuloza pamuka i lana. U Dubrovačkoj Republici pergament se birao za važnije dokumente, budući da je bio dugotrajniji materijal od papira. Ponajprije su to bili svi statuti, zakonski zbornici te popisi državnih službenika iz

redova vlastele. Pergament je većinom izrađivan i prerađivan u Dubrovniku, a Dubrovčani su ga čak i izvozili. Uz kvalitetne pisane podloge koristili su se i vrlo kvalitetnom tintom, tj. crnilom od postojanih biljnih pigmenta.

Na temeljima trilateralnog ugovora Državnog arhiva u Dubrovniku, Društva prijatelja dubrovačke starine i Hrvatskog restauratorskog zavoda postavljeni su čvrsti temelji za sustavno i detaljno restauriranje i konzerviranje dokumenata i kodeksa iz XIII. do XV. stoljeća. Projektom koji je počeo 2015. godine, bogati fundus arhivskoga gradiva zaslužio je profesionalno zbrinut. Tim trogodišnjim projektom, ali i onim budućim, marljivim i upornim zalaganjem navedenih ustanova osigurana je svijetla budućnost dubrovačke prošlosti. U stoljetnom kolažu nesebične ljubavi Dubrovčana prema slavnoj povijesti i ostavštini svojih predaka, očuvanjem i restauriranjem ove građe, konzervatori-restauratori imaju čast biti dio te veličanstvene tradicije na koju svi možemo biti ponosni.

Poznato je da se u Državnom arhivu u Dubrovniku čuva iznimno vrijedna građa od početka 11. stoljeća sve do današnjih dana, a najvrjednije su one arhivalije koje pripadaju fondovima Dubrovačke Republike. Dokumenti i kodeksi iz tog razdoblja predmeti su ovih konzervatorsko-restauratorskih radova. Upravo zbog svijesti o važnosti očuvanja arhivskoga gradiva, danas se možemo ponositi naslijeđenim fundusom naših predaka. Istovremeno imamo obavezu pobrinuti se da i buduće generacije mogu uživati u tom kulturnom blagu. Jedino je konzerviranjem i restauriranjem gradiva moguće osigurati nastavak te bogate tradicije.



Izložbom održanom u Palači Sponza predstavljen je rezultat uspješne trogodišnje suradnje i dovršenih cjelovitih konzervatorsko-restauratorskih radova na čak 209 dokumenata i 11 kodeksa iz Državnog arhiva u Dubrovniku. Kako bi taj proces bio što zornije predstavljen, na izložbenim plakatima opisani su svi konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi provedeni na dokumentima i kodeksima, što je samo mali dio fundusa pisanoga arhivskog gradiva.

Iako je Dubrovačka Republika veliku važnost pridavala kvaliteti pisane podloge, loši uvjeti čuvanja uvelike su promijenili svojstva materijala, bez obzira na kvalitetu. Upravo neadekvatna temperatura, vlaga i svjetlost uzrokovali su biološki razvoj i nepoželjno kemijsko djelovanje. Najzahtjevniji dokumenti za obradu su oni zaraženi velikim kolonijama plijesni koje su dovele do pucanja celuloznih lanaca, kemijskog propadanja podloge i velikih fizičkih oštećenja.

Prva faza konzervatorsko-restauratorskih radova, nakon detaljne pisane i fotografske dokumentacije, bila je dezinfekcija najprihvatljivijim kemijskim fungicidom, kako bi se zaustavila biološka aktivnost i njezino širenje. Radovi su nastavljani istraživanjima i analizama kako bi se na adekvatan način pristupilo daljnjim radovima u skladu s dobivenim rezultatima. Nakon suhog i mokrog uklanjanja nečistoća, uslijedila je konsolidacija pregiba, rekonstrukcija nedostajućih dijelova, restauracija uveza te adekvatna pohrana.

Poseban izazov bila je izrada adekvatne pohrane za dokumente, zbog visećih voštanih pečata i velikih dimenzija. Za sve dokumente izrađene su posebne kutije od beskišelnog kartona arhivske kvalitete s utorima za pečate. Kutije se u cijelosti rastvaraju i podatne su za rukovanje. Kompletna građa restaurirana je prema svim pravilima struke; naročito se vodilo računa o estetskom, povijesnom i fizičkom integritetu dokumenata.

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The exhibition held at the Sponza Palace presented the results of a successful three-year cooperation and completed conservation and restoration of 209 documents and 11 codices from the National Archives in Dubrovnik. In order to present this project as clearly as possible, all the work involved in conservation and restoration of the documents and codices, only a small part of the fundus of the written archive materials is described in great detail on the panels.

Although the quality of the materials on which documents were written was extremely important during the Republic of Ragusa, bad storage conditions have greatly altered the properties of the material, regardless of the quality. Inadequate temperature, moisture and light caused biological development and undesirable chemical reactions. The most challenging for conservation are documents infected with large colonies of mould that led to cellulose chains breaking, chemical degradation of the base and extensive physical damage.

The first stage of conservation and restoration, after detailed written and photographic documentation, was the disinfection with the most acceptable chemical fungicide to stop biological activity and its spread. The process was continued with research and analysis in order to adequately approach further work in accordance with the obtained results. After the dry and wet removal of impurities, creases were consolidated, missing parts were reconstructed, binding was restored and documents were adequately stored.

The creation of adequate storage was especially challenging because of large dimensions of documents and hanging wax seals. Special boxes were made for each document using acid-free cardboard of archival quality with slots for seals. The boxes can be completely opened and are easy to handle. The entire material was restored according to high professional standards, and great care was paid to the aesthetic, historical and physical integrity of documents.

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