

ASPECTS CONCERNING THE INTERIORS OF THE “VOIVODAL PALACE” FROM TURDA

Abstract: The Voivodal Palace of Turda is the most valuable monument of civil medieval architecture in the town and the only palace with surviving parts that date from the late 15th century and the beginning of the next.

Interest in conducting research on the palace is mainly due to the chronological positioning of this monument at the boundary between two distinct periods of the Middle Ages: the Gothic (the end of the period) and the Renaissance. This paper brings additional information to the studies already written about the “Voivodal Palace” of Turda, providing interesting data about the interiors of this building starting from the second half of the 17th century. All the records made during these centuries clearly demonstrate that this building, which served, for a long time, as the Salt Storehouse, had a special significance for both the community of the Turda area and the Principality of Transylvania.

Keywords: Turda, “Voivodal Palace”, Salt Storehouse, Orbán Balász, history museum

Turda, one of the important towns in central Transylvania, appeared in documents from the second half of the 11th century on, becoming the seat of the county of the same name two centuries later. From the 13th century on, Turda featured more and more frequently in the medieval documents. Mentioned particularly in connection with the exploitation of the salt mines, in the year 1297 it was referred to as *civitas*.² The historical evolution of the town has been the subject of several studies based, on one hand, on archaeological research conducted over the recent years, and on the other hand, on written sources, documents, ground plans and period *vedute*.

The economic development of Turda, the demands for comfort expressed by the town’s nobility and, not least, demographic growth led to an expansion of the town in the Middle Ages. The welfare and economic development of Turda during the classical medieval period (the 15th and the 16th centuries) also entailed an increase in the cultural level of various segments of the population. During the period 1438-1539 alone, 42 young men left Turda to study in various European universities. Certainly, many of them belonged to the town’s affluent layer.³

The economic base of the town continued to be mining (salt exploitation), agriculture and trade. The most important salt customs in Transylvania was located in Turda, its headquarters standing right in the town’s medieval core. Trade in agricultural products, salt, and livestock became predominant, especially in Turda Veche, several annual fairs being organized during this period; this proves the importance of Turda

¹ Museum curator, the History Museum of Turda, e-mail: grozatoratiudorin@yahoo.com.

² *Documente privind Istoria României* (hereinafter DIR), Veacul XIII, C, Transilvania, vol. II (1251-1300), București, 1954, p. 435.

³ Răzvan Mihai Neagu, “Studenți din Turda la marile universități europene în evul mediu și epoca premodernă,” in *Apulum*, XLIX, 2012, p. 161.

compared to other towns in the area. Economic development certainly imposed a “regime of building”. Even though many of the edifices erected during that period are no longer in existence today, it was then that the planning of the town was largely outlined. Among the buildings of local historical importance that have been preserved until today, mention must be made of the “Voivodal Palace”, which today houses the collections of the History Museum of Turda.

Few buildings in the medieval centre of Turda were structured on several levels as in the case of the “Voivodal Palace”; in general, civil constructions from this period were modest. The (old) housing fund consisted mostly of houses built of wood, thatched sunken huts, which certainly contributed to enhancing the appearance of the larger public buildings, made of stone, which were found in the town’s central square.

Shortly after the completion of the construction works on the Catholic Church (the beginning of the 16th century), the large town square closed its northern side. The urban streetscape still preserves the medieval structure with a main street with a central thickening for the square, its space being intended primarily for economic activities. It was here that fairs were held periodically throughout the year, selling both domestic products and goods brought by foreign merchants. The square gradually acquired administrative, political and social functions by hosting the major events in the town’s life, including diets, as well as various shows and even public executions. The town core was gradually surrounded by stone buildings, which today no longer exist. Medieval buildings in the town centre have been replaced with others since the 19th century, some of them surviving to this day.

The historical and architectural value of the oldest civil medieval building in the area preserved until today has attracted the attention of both the foreign travellers who passed through Transylvania and of the researchers, historians and, not least, of the tourists visiting the town.

The period of the Middle Ages in Turda was littered with events that profoundly marked the town’s political, economic, religious and demographic development. There were numerous armed conflicts, followed by epidemics and plagues that decimated the population of the town, profoundly impacting its urbanistic development.⁴

The creation of Salt Storehouse took place in parallel with the development of salt-mining towns, as was the case of Turda. The most important Transylvanian Salt Storehouses were those of Turda, Ocna Dej, Sic, Cojocna and Ocna Sibiului. The Storehouses, which were subordinated directly to the royal court, organized the exploitation and valorization of salt. Throughout time, the five aforementioned Salt Storehouses were most often under a single administration, headed by the *comes* of the Storehouse in Turda. The function of this high official was often very important, as this *comes* was sometimes a member of the royal council.⁵ Salt mining was a royal right, the profit from this activity representing an important source of income for the crown of Hungary; Salt Storehouses were the institutions that supervised salt mining and they were run by *comites* and *vice-comites*.

⁴ Eugen Gergely, *Turda istorie și contemporaneitate*, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 76.

⁵ *DIR*, Veacul XIII, C, Transilvania, vol. II, p. 46; *Monumenta Ecclesiae Strigoniensis*, vol. I, p. 478.

Over time, the building that is the subject of this study had numerous destinations, including that of Customhouse of the Salt Mines of Turda. In conjunction with archaeological research and on-site observations during the restoration works (1997-2011), documentary information has allowed us to reconstruct an image what the interiors of this building looked like in the past. The most valuable information remains that provided by the scribes Diósi Gáspár and Pávai János, who, at the order of Acațiu Barczai, Prince of Transylvania (1658-1660), inventoried the movable and immovable property of the Salt Customhouse of Turda, with all its outbuildings, in 1660.

In the early 20th century, when large-scale works of refurbishment took place, the building was structured on two levels, having also a single-storey part.

The interiors of the building. The ground floor consisted of a hallway, three rooms located in the two-storey wing of the building and two rooms located in the single-storey area. Another room on the northern side, located in the extension of the other two from the single-storey wing of the building, decommissioned in the last century, has recently been rebuilt. The perimeter of the foundation of the old walls has been highlighted, marked out and preserved.⁶

The hallway and the festive staircase. The large and spacious hallway allows access to different parts of the building. We do not know the material originally used to achieve its floors and those in the rooms situated on the ground floor. The treading levels found in archaeological research have revealed several types of flooring used over time: clay, stone, brick and wood.

At the beginning of last century, the floor made of wood was in a poor state of preservation, due largely to water seepage through the shingle roof structure, but also due to the excessive moisture accumulated inside the building. In 1913, the wood flooring was replaced with slabs of stone, which, in turn, were later replaced with ceramic tiles imitating brick.⁷

The staircase (in 1997), supported on brick masonry, consisting of three segments (the western, northern and eastern walls), allowed access to the first floor of the building, being constructed of concrete at the beginning of last century. The stairs were made of stone and the beautifully carved railing was made of oak. The stairs led to a wooden gallery supported by two pillars of the same material, carved with solar motifs that have been preserved. The gallery was extended during the latest restoration works.⁸ The reason for this change must be linked to the need for increasing the exhibition space and providing a sightseeing circuit, as well as to the new location of the staircase, rebuilt on another site in 2008.

From the first landing of the old staircase, at the mezzanine, one could go out into a gazebo (according to information from the 19th century), which, during the renovations of 1913, was replaced with an enclosed extension, provided with four windows and door. The second landing of the staircase led (on the northern side) to an entrance fitted with a beautifully ornate metal door, which allowed access to the small

⁶ The architectural blueprint of the monument was executed by S.C. POLARH S.R.L. in Bucharest.

⁷ The stone slabs in the hallway, which are now gone, had the size of 0.46 m x 0.40 m.

⁸ The wooden gallery upstairs was actually the smaller lobby on the first floor of the building.

attic of the building (the single-storey wing - Figure 1). Both the staircase and the entrances to the extension and, respectively, to the attic have been decommissioned.

From the hallway, one could reach the basement (1913). The stairway (made of concrete, today decommissioned) was placed under the ramp of the festive staircase. On the single landing of this stairway, there was the restroom and the exit to the backyard of the building⁹.

We do not know what material was used in the construction of the first stairs of the building, but we can assume that they were originally built of wood.

At the end of the 19th century, when the historian Orbán Balász visited the building, the wooden staircase was in a poor state of preservation¹⁰. Balász was the only historian who supported the idea that the staircase, whose railing was adorned with sculptures, was built of stone. He based his hypothesis on the traces of the stone consoles supporting it, which were visible at the end of the 19th century¹¹.

The rooms of the building branch out from the hallway, to the south, west and north. On the eastern wall, there is the entrance to the building, with a Gothic platband made of stone. This, together with the door, is described in a document issued in 1677¹².

The solid oak door from the entrance had hinges reinforced with metal brackets (full width) and it could be locked with a deadbolt. Perhaps as a safety measure, the door handles were removable, and there was also a casement for them¹³.

The entrance to the first room is made through a platband similar to that from the entrance. To the right of the entrance, one may notice the “manhole” of the central chimney from the old hot air heating system.

From the second half of the 17th century, information on the layout and destination of the building interiors multiplied. Some of the descriptions found in the documents consulted no longer reflect today’s reality. Some descriptions relating to the layout of the chambers and other details have been confirmed by archaeological research.

In 1660, the wooden ceiling of the hallway was in an advanced state of decay¹⁴. Two decades later, the situation appears to have slightly changed, following the renovation interventions, a ceiling being added to the hallway in the upper part¹⁵. Some sources inform us about the existence of brick arches, prior to the wooden ceilings, the traces of the brackets that supported them being visible up until the end of the 19th century¹⁶.

⁹ Both the lower and the upper part of the extension, where the restroom and, respectively, the chamber of the supervisory staff were located, have been decommissioned. The boiler has its location here today.

¹⁰ Orbán Balász, *Torda város és környéke*, Budapest, 1889, p. 347.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Kolozsmonostori Konvent Levéltára. A tordai sókamaraház 1677-es leltári listája*, Magyar Országos Levéltár, Budapest, Urbaria Folia 786-890 (hereinafter MOL, *Urbaria Folia*).

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ *Az erdély káptalan országos levéltára: A tordai sókamaraház 1660-as leltári listája*, Magyar Országos Levéltár, Budapest, Lymbus XVI/1, (hereinafter MOL, *Lymbus, XVI/1*). The inventory conducted by the scribes in the prince’s chancery found several objects stored in the hall: a bench, a box for candles, and a piece of iron for the chimney door.

¹⁵ MOL, *Urbaria Folia*, pp. 786-890.

¹⁶ Orbán Balász, *op.cit.*, p. 347.

According to the information available, from the hallway one could reach the garden. When the plaster in the hallway was removed (1997), the remains of a vault were discovered in the elevation of the western wall, which certainly represented an exit to the garden of the building. The many renovation and restoration interventions seriously affected the building interiors, leading later to walling in this exit.

At the end of the 19th century, the hallway provided access to the chambers on the southern, western and northern sides, each with a Gothic stone platband, carved and ornamented. Today, only the one on the south wall of the hall is preserved¹⁷. The doors to the rooms were blocked with boards, the space behind them being used as a storage space for barrels of alcoholic beverages (plum brandy was marketed in another building, facing town’s Big Square¹⁸).

The chambers situated on the ground floor from the two-storey wing of the building. The first room, the one in which the *cămăraş* lived (the *comes* of the Salt Customhouse), had an oak door fitted with a cornice, metal hinges, wrought iron reinforcements and a latch¹⁹. In the second half of the 17th century, the room did not have a ceiling, as the old medieval structure of vaults made of bricks had been maintained²⁰. The appearance of this room underwent significant changes during the renovations of 1818, when a ceiling was built here, as well as in the other rooms of the building.

The room in which the *cămăraş* lived had window glazing fitted in wooden frames, its stone platband having two metal rods inserted vertically and one horizontally²¹. The room was heated by a terracotta stove, made of green glazed tiles, decorated at the top²², and the brick arches of the room were supported by “props” made of wood. The room, presented as an evidence room (*sămădaş*) in a document, was probably used as employee housing²³. It was probably here that, in the mid-16th century, the reckoning deacon (the accountant) lived, who was paid 18 florins annually, and the payment allotter, remunerated with 12 florins annually²⁴.

Next to it, there was another vaulted chamber used as storage space²⁵. The two rooms, initially conjoined into one, were separated by a stone wall, introduced in one of the previous renovations. The date when this change occurred is not known, and the material used in making the flooring of these rooms is also not known. What is known

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 136. After the year 1848, when the salt customs house in Turda was moved, the building was rented to merchants.

¹⁹ MOL, *Urbaria Folia*, pp. 786-890.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² *Ibidem*. The inventory of this chamber included: an old long table, a bench-type chair, a peasant hanger, a bed, a small white cupboard, and a cabinet used for storing crockery.

²³ MOL, *Lymbus XVI / 1*. The inventory of this chamber, presented by the document, is about the same, but the descriptions are much more succinct: a stove in good condition, two empty barrels for vinegar, a shelf for glasses, a table, a bed, a cupboard, a seat with backrest, two benches, a peg, a glass window, two basins for plates and a griddle.

²⁴ *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, Bucureşti, 1970, vol. II, p. 21 (hereinafter *Călători...*).

²⁵ MOL, *Urbaria Folia*, pp. 786-890. In this room were deposited: a bench, food for horses (oats), 250 small bread loaves, a box for vegetables, a trough with handles, 3 new hoes, 2 old hoes, 3 seals harnesses, 3 pieces of flax linen, 3 metal parts made in Hungary, 20 *oci* (unit of measurement) of lentils in a pot, half a pound of peas and a pound and 3 *oci* of barley.

for sure is that at a certain time, the floor was made of brick, probably in both rooms. In the first room, no traces showing this have been preserved, as the flooring suffered changes during the interventions from the early 20th century, when the new hot air heating system of the building was introduced.

The second room had a treading level that has been fully preserved. It consisted of brick paving, which, considering its wear, represented a treading level for a longer time. The non-homogeneous pavement placed on a bed of sand had a variable thickness, due to the two types of brick used to make it²⁶.

From this room, one could reach the latrine²⁷. Archaeological research undertaken in this area of the building has located this latrine.

From Balász's romantic descriptions, we may also find other details referring to these chambers. The first one served as a guard room, while the second was destined to warming food, as the kitchen was an outbuilding located in the courtyard²⁸.

Today these rooms no longer exist. The damaged vaults were replaced with wooden ceilings in the 19th century, which is also when the wall separating the rooms was removed. The last intervention on the ceilings, superficial and of poor quality, was made in the years 1963-1964, when out of the desire to consolidate the monument, the "authors" poured reinforced concrete, with plate, beams and belts, into this section of the building increasing the difficulty of subsequent restorations. During the latest restoration, the beams were masked with wood elements, the restoration being made in tune with the existing woodwork in the building.

In the western wing adjoined during another phase of construction, there are two rooms that have the same size. The rooms communicate with each other through a door with stone platband. This type of rectangular shaped framing, with profiles turned towards the door gap at the base, is found in most of the building's rooms, the vast majority of which were restored in the early 20th century.

The rooms were divided width-wise at some point. The walls that had an arch opening were most likely annexed during the renovations of 1818. Built of stone and brick, they were dismantled in 1998. When one of the walls was removed, there were found two fragments of limestone platband, one of them being engraved. The text, which contained a person's name, should be attributed to the master mason's insignia, which were common in the medieval period (Figure 2).

Orbán Balász confirms the existence of these "double rooms," noting that there were held the meetings of the Hungarian nobility²⁹. The assumption of the Hungarian historian regarding the existence of a door, walled in today, which opened from one of the rooms onto the church, has not been confirmed.

The first information about these two rooms comes from a document dated 2 April 1660³⁰. The first room had a "padded" oak door, was provided with a cornice, and

²⁶ The first had the size: 32 x 15.5 x 7 cm and had the stamp of the workshop of origin impressed on one side ("W"). The second type of brick, probably older, had the size: 29 x 14.5 x 4.5 cm. Prior to this pavement, there was another treading layer, consisting of a clay mix that was 5 cm thick.

²⁷ MOL, *Urbaria Folia*, pp. 786-890.

²⁸ Orbán Balász, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ MOL, *Lymbus XVI / 1*. The inventory of this chamber included: a table, two boards, a box with 1386 candles, a thread for leather bellows and a door.

had fittings installed³¹. Heating was ensured by a glazed tile terracotta stove. It is also here that the presence of a second (common) stove appears to have existed, constructed from the same type of tiles, which could be fuelled from the adjacent room.

The room was separated by a wall of fir plank, which had a white door fitted with wrought iron hinges and flaps. It could be locked with a sliding latched board. Inside this partition, on one of the walls there was a window that was blocked, at the time, with boards³².

The other chamber, also partitioned with boards, was used as storage space. The existing partitions (silos) were used for storing wheat, oats and vegetables³³. The room had the window blocked with boards and beamed ceiling was not planked. From this room one could reach the latrine. The latrine had a small wooden door with two hinges, wrought iron reinforcements and a latch³⁴. The rooms communicated through a padded wooden door, provided with a cornice³⁵.

The heating system. The many changes and transformations suffered over time have also affected the heating system. Thus, in over 400 years since the “foundation,” there have occurred location changes for both the smoke chimneys and the heating stoves.

On a European level, we have little data on the existence of tiled stoves prior to the 11th century. Terracotta stoves began to spread widely in the 13th and 14th centuries, when it there appeared the first representations on tiles. In the Middle Ages there were centers specialized in this field, especially in the German area.

In Transylvania, the closed heating system was introduced by the Saxon colonists. The existence of terracotta tiled stoves at the “Voivodal Palace” is confirmed both by the documents and by archaeological research. What we do not know is their location and placement.

Parament researches have identified the sites of old smoke chimneys (a few of them) and, implicitly, the location of the stoves used for heating the building. Up until 1997, the building had two smoke chimneys, one being centrally located in the two-storey wing and a secondary one, located in the one-storey wing.

The smoke chimneys identified by us were built through the walls of the building and they were not functional at the time of their discovery. One of them, found on the eastern side, preserved with a length of 2.70 m, had a cross-section of 25 x 25 cm and was plastered (Figure 3). The traces of another dismantled chimney, partially built of bricks, could be seen on the northern side of the one-storey wing. Its cross-section was 20 x 20 cm. Another smoke chimney was found upstairs, on the northern side of the extension to the west.

The first floor. Information about the rooms on the first floor of the building is incomplete and confusing. The most numerous, but not necessarily accurate data were

³¹ MOL, *Urbaria Folia*, pp. 786-890. The door had two hinges with wrought iron reinforcements and a latch handle. In the room were deposited: a box for the door handles, wooden utensils for making nails, a hammer, two damaged windows that had animal guts (intestines) mounted instead of glass and two brackets for nailing tools.

³² *Ibidem*. In this room there was a peasant’s bed, while on one wall there was a wooden frame.

³³ MOL, *Urbaria Folia*, pp. 786-890.

³⁴ This was the latrine previously described.

³⁵ The document describes minutely the hardware of each door.

offered by Orbán Balász, who, in an era characterized by romanticism, brought his subjective contribution to presenting the building premises and their destination. The very rich imagination of the Hungarian historian regarding political events in the history of Transylvania that occurred inside the “Voivodal Palace” have remained unconfirmed.

The hallway upstairs. In 1997, public access to the History Museum of Turda was ceased because work for the restoration and preservation of the building had begun. At that time, the staircase made of three segments, designed at the beginning of the 20th century, led to a small rectangular hall on the first floor. On three sides of the hallway were placed openings provided with stone platbands. Two of these were entries to the rooms on the first floor of the building, while the last one allowed access to the balcony of the building.

Medieval and modern documents and the reports from the late 19th century speak about the existence of an opening located on the northern wall of the hallway that led to the former attic of the one-storey wing, which has a garret today³⁶: This entrance was walled in during one of the rehabilitation interventions that have occurred over time.

Another entrance fitted with an ornate metal door was located at the intersection of the eastern and northern walls of the hallway. The entrance opened at the beginning of last century was on the second landing of the old staircase and allowed access to the attic of the one-storey wing of the building. A stone inscription written in medieval Latin and recently deciphered is mounted on the eastern wall of the hallway (Figure 4).

MANEĀ[AN]T • [F]IÓ[D]ES • SPES • CHARITAS • TRIA • HEC[HAEC]

The inscription is original and definitely belongs to this building. Such inscriptions often appeared in medieval public buildings in many parts of Europe. Its text presents a biblical psalm from “St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians,” chapter 13³⁷.

Southern wall of the (present-day) hallway upstairs has been restored during one of the renovation interventions. When the plaster was removed (1998), it was observed that it had been rebuilt on a different site, partially blocking a gap in one of the walls of the building (now in the form of a niche), which was probably an older entrance or passageway to one of the building’s interior spaces.

It is unlikely that we can accurately reconstruct the original appearance and purpose of the rooms on the first floor of the building. This is due to the numerous renovations and restorations throughout the ages, which have simplified the image building to a great extent, and to the lack of documentary information on this issue.

The significance of the rooms also changed whenever major renovations took place or when the destination of the building was modified. We believe, generally speaking, that the current form of this building was given by the renovations of 1818. Then, the initial appearance of the building was deeply modified by interventions conducted both outside and especially inside. One final “blow” was given by the restorations of the early 20th century, which, although scientifically executed, made it even more difficult to reconstruct the original appearance of the building given the

³⁶ MOL, *Urbaria Folia*, pp. 786-890. These entries are found even today. Only one of them, the one located on the north side, allows access today to a room that is the product of renovations conducted in the years 1997-2008 and that was the attic of the one-level building.

³⁷ In translation, the psalm goes: “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.”

modifications it brought about. Many elements that might have been useful for a reconstruction of the “Voivodal Palace” area and its outbuildings were lost when the building in Republic Square no. 15 was erected.

The subsequent renovations brought other changes, further hindering the operation of reconstructing the image of the old building interiors.

The balcony of the building. The Hungarian historian Orbán Balász said: “on the eastern gable of the building one may notice a pointed portal carved very harmoniously out of stone, above which there is a wooden balcony in an advanced state of decay. Before it, there was another, older one, built of stone, which was removed during the renovations of 1886-1887”³⁸.

With the radical changes of the 19th century, the spiral staircase that rested on one of the pillars of the balcony was destroyed, the latter protecting it from the weather, because protruded outside the building. The bases of the columns that supported the old balcony were seen by the Hungarian historian during his visit. Their traces were found before the main entrance during renovations carried out between 1911 and 1913 and have been confirmed by archaeological research.

The balcony was rebuilt at the beginning of last century, resting on five consoles in gradual withdrawal, carved in stone, after the blueprints made by the architect Lux Kálmán. When it was rebuilt, the pillars were removed, given the short distance between them and the Post Office building, an edifice erected in 1900-1902³⁹.

The rooms on the first floor of the building. Improperly called “palaces” by one of the documents, the upstairs rooms, five in number, were partially inhabited. The document informs us about the advanced state of degradation (decay), at that time, of two rooms which are said to have been “deserted”⁴⁰.

The first room. The first of the rooms found upstairs today (Exhibit Hall 4) is located in the old wing (the former tower with a rectangular ground plan).

In the second half of the 18th century, this room, as described in the document, does not appear to be reflected in the current appearance of the building. The document mentions six windows, five of them made of fir wood and one made of stone⁴¹.

An alternative that could be considered would be an error committed by the scribes who inventoried the Salt Customhouse at that time. Upstairs, namely in the hallway and the room located south of this, described in the document issued in 1677 as the living room, there are indeed six windows today. It is possible that the chancery scribes considered the total number of windows, including those that were in the hall on first floor⁴². Perhaps the only window fitted with stone platband was that from which a fragment is preserved today on the eastern side in the old body of the building. The other windows with platbands must have been replaced at a later date, after the document was issued.

³⁸ Orbán Balász, *op.cit.*, p. 347.

³⁹ “A Közművelődési ház létesítéséről”, in „Emlékkönyv”, Torda, 1913, pp.16-23.

⁴⁰ MOL, *Urbaria Folia*, pp. 786-890.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

Access from the hallway into the room (living room) was made through an opening that had a wooden frame mounted. The “living room” was partially floored with planks of fir, and in the porch area (the hall upstairs - our note), the beams were apparent. This area was under construction at the time. Here were three pieces of furniture (cupboards) for storing crockery, arranged along one of the walls of the room⁴³.

The second room. In the second room (palace), one could enter through a “half” door (probably with two leaves), with a stone platband and threshold⁴⁴. The flooring of the room was also made of fir boards. We do not have details regarding the room windows⁴⁵. From this room, one could get to the latrine. The rudimentary latrine had only a fir wood platband mounted, having no door or seat. Given its positioning, according to research conducted here, it overlapped the latrine found during archaeological research.

The third room. About this room, we know only have that it had a door made of unsanded fir plank and that the two windows of the room had stone frames⁴⁶. One of them had a wooden platband and frame (no glass), on which were mounted two iron hinges and a latch⁴⁷.

The uninhabited rooms upstairs. On the northern wall of the hallway there was an entrance that allowed access to two rooms without ceilings, deserted at that time (1677). It has not been possible to locate these rooms in the current layout of the building.

Conclusions. The description given in the document issued in 1677 justifies, to some extent, the existing spaces upstairs. The hallway and the three inhabited rooms described above are positioned in the same layout. The latrine mentioned in the document no longer exists, as it was decommissioned in one of the subsequent renovations.

As regards the uninhabited spaces, the so-called “deserted palaces”, we do not know where they were located or if there ever existed. According to the information we have at present, their location may have been in the one-storey wing of the building. Reports on this area, issued after this document, speak about the existence of a balcony. Other sources mention the existence of a two-storey wing, where the general administrator and other notables lived, his residence being related to the “Voivodal Palace”⁴⁸. None of this information can be verified or confirmed in the present state of research.

The ground plan of the building from 1997 outlines the situation of the spaces on the first floor and their functionality. According to it, the floor was composed of: the hallway (now modified) and two rooms (Hall 4 and the Big Hall - the latter being compartmented width-wise - Hall 5 and Hall 6).

Interesting things emerged when the plaster was removed. Thus, in the first room, on the eastern wall, there were found two artistically wrought medieval fragments of stone. The first, which is rather dulled, represents a human figure. Floral motifs are

⁴³ *Ibidem*. Here were stored a long board and a short one.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*. The door was fitted with two hinges, had wrought iron flaps and a latch.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*. The door was equipped with the relevant hardware: hinges, brackets, a latch and a lock with a key.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸ Orbán Balász, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

represented in the second (Figure 5). On the southern wall of the same room, on one of the carved blocks, there have been discovered the insignia of master masons (Figure 6). Compared with carpenters or bricklayers, stonemasons have left the highest amount of evidence preserved to this day.

On the western wall of the room, we could notice, at that time, the traces of an older entrance that was walled in later. In conjunction with the parament study, the documentary information makes us believe that this entrance led to the latrine mentioned in the document and described by us. It was also along this wall that the old hot air circulation channel was discovered. The channel is not functional, having been walled in during one of the restoration interventions.

The interior aspect of the other rooms (the Big Hall) was given by Kálmán Lux's renovations (1911-1913), when all the woodwork was replaced.

During the renovations of the late 20th century, the idea of resting the ceilings on pillars was abandoned and the initial partitioning was returned to. Thus, a dividing wall was mounted in the middle of the room along the east-west direction, creating two exhibition spaces. We do not know the date when the old wall was dismantled. The fact is that it did not exist in the late 19th century, when Orbán Balázs visited the building. He mentioned only the existence of a large room with an area of 6/5 fathoms (about as large as the Big Hall on the first floor, before it was partitioned)⁴⁹.

Solid and imposing, the “Voivodal Palace” in Turda, the most important monument of medieval urban architecture in the locality that has been preserved until today, has many secrets to share. Future researches will certainly prove this.

List of illustrations

Fig.1. Metal door at the entrance to the attic of the building.

Fig. 2. Reused - engraved platband.

Fig. 3. Smoke chimney found on the eastern side, in elevation.

Fig. 4. Medieval inscription - the hallway upstairs.

Fig. 5. Decorated platband.

Fig. 6. Signs of master masons.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*. 1 fathom = 1,896 m; the name of the Big Hall was given when the spaces of the exhibition rooms in the History Museum were created.



Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3



Fig.4

Fig.5

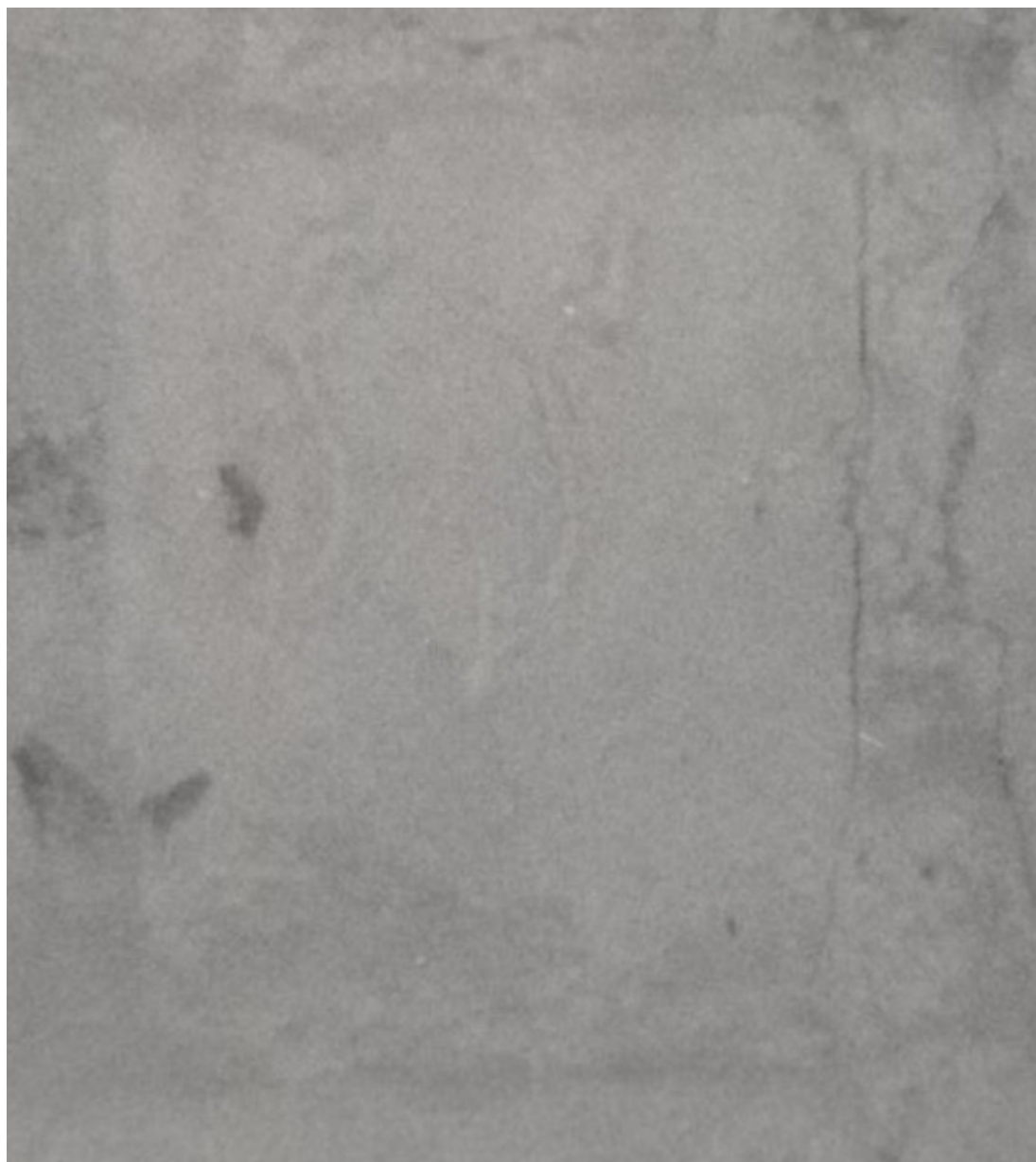


Fig.6