



**A**mong the most imposing of all the ancient Roman ruins lining the Dalmatian Coast are those of a palace built by the emperor Diocletian (r. A.D. 284–305) for his retirement in his hometown of Split. More fortress than residence, the palace, which overlooks the Bay of Aspalathos, once covered an area of some 30,000 square meters and was laid out on a rectangular plan enclosed by a system of walls and towers. Monumental gates at the midpoint in each wall opened to porticoed streets, which led to enclosed courtyards. The compound's southern gate was far simpler in its design than the others, leading architectural historians to believe it may have functioned as a service entrance. Within the southern half of the compound was a suite of temples dedicated to Jupiter, Cybelle, and Venus, and the emperor's mausoleum separated by a great peristyle court, which served as the northern entrance to the imperial apartments. The northern half of the palace complex contained barracks for garrisons and storage facilities or, according to a fresh interpretation, an imperial textile workshop.

Today, approximately half of the original building complex still stands, having been significantly modified over the centuries and having sustained substantial damage during Croatia's struggle for independence in early 1991. However, the Great Peristyle Court and two buildings within the palace—the imperial mausoleum and the diminutive barrel-vaulted Temple of Jupiter—have in large part retained their classical forms. The latter served as a model for sev-

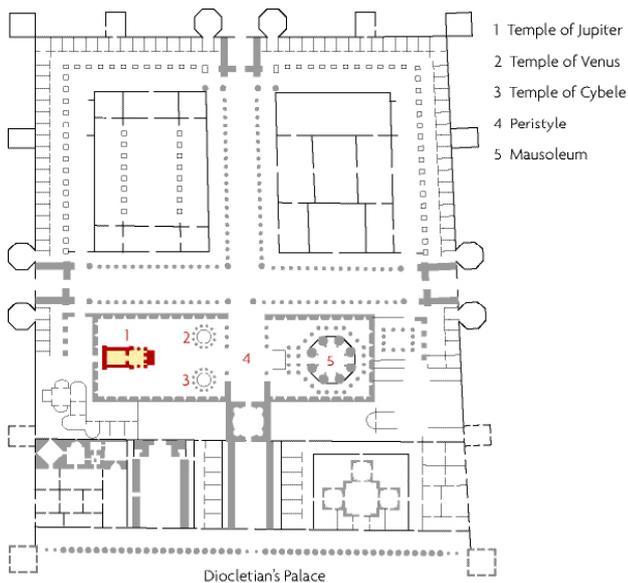
# Jupiter Rising

## RESTORING DIOCLETIAN'S DIMINUTIVE TEMPLE OF JUPITER AT SPLIT

eral later Renaissance buildings in Croatia, including the Cathedral of St. James in Sibenik and the St. John Orsini Chapel at Trogir. Diocletian's Palace, which charts the evolution of architectural forms in the western Adriatic from the classical through medieval periods, was inscribed along with the historic core of Split as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979.

One of the best-preserved late antique temples in Europe, the Temple of Jupiter is built on a rectangular plan, its *cella* elevated on a high platform with a vaulted crypt below. Its walls are built of square blocks hewn of local limestone, adorned with a richly carved cornice, and capped by a coffered barrel vault. The vault is composed of eight parallel arches, each made of five stone slabs, the coffers carved in deep relief. The remains of a well-ordered portico mark the temple's east entrance. The sanctuary's distinctive barrel vault is visible on the exterior; a roof meant to protect the vault was never built although plans for it had been drawn up. Sometime in the late twelfth century, Diocletian's mausoleum was converted into a cathedral and the Temple of Jupiter was appropriated as a baptistry. Shortly thereafter, a baptismal font was placed within the Roman temple. Composed of marble slabs appropriated from an earlier monument, the font bears a carving of an eleventh-century Croatian king, thought to be among the earliest medieval renderings of a European monarch in stone.

Although the baptistry is used but once a year—on the Feast of St. John—it has become one of the most often visited sites in Split. Until recently, however, the temple also had been one of the most in need of conservation. Over the centuries, water had penetrated its limestone blocks, resulting in substantial



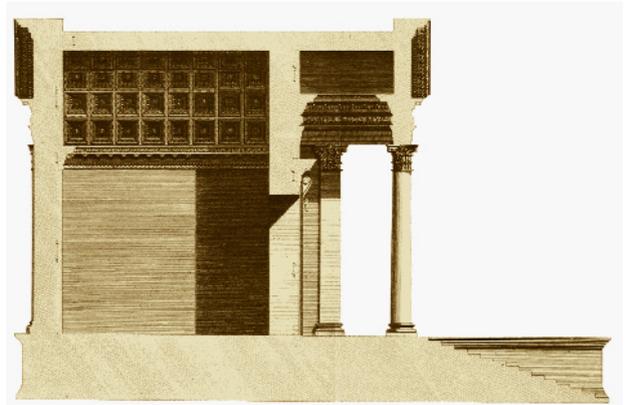
erosion, an accumulation of corrosive salts within the structure, and a rusting—and subsequent expansion—of the iron clamps and dowels used by the Romans to hold the ashlar together. As the clamps expanded, they caused substantial cracking, lifting, and rotation of much of the masonry. Several of the cornice blocks on the west pediment—each of which weigh between three and six tons—having been lifted up by expanding locator dowels had begun sliding down the pediment. The building was further compromised during the 1991 war. By the mid 1990s, the building, particularly its west pediment, was in imminent danger of collapse, secured in place with a network of steel cables.

When the World Bank began its rebuilding efforts in Split in 1996, WMF was asked to take on the Temple of Jupiter as a pilot project in the city. Following the sanctuary's inclusion on WMF's 1996 list of *100 Most Endangered Sites*, monies were found to begin its restoration. In 2000, a team of conservators from the Croatian Ministry of Culture embarked on a comprehensive conservation program, the first phase of which involved a detailed documentation of the building and the creation of a 3-D computer model to analyze its structural behavior. It was determined that the horizontal thrust of the vault upon the weakened iron supports, particularly in the upper portions of the temple, had resulted in substantial strain and lateral movement within the structure, causing much of its façade masonry to crack. If the temple was to survive another millennium, drastic measures would be needed to arrest its decay and continued lateral movement. The restoration of the temple, which would take several years to complete and cost in excess of \$500,000 U.S. to carry out, would be underwritten by the Croatian Ministry of Culture and WMF through its Kress Foundation European Heritage Preservation Program.



**DISPLACED MASONRY IS REMOVED FROM THE CORNICE OF THE BARREL-VAULTED TEMPLE OF JUPITER DURING RESTORATION, LEFT. SWELLING OF THE RUSTING IRON CLAMPS AND DOWELS USED BY THE ROMANS TO SECURE THE ASHLARS CAUSED SEVERE CRACKING AND DISPLACEMENT OF THE WEST PEDIMENT BLOCKS, BELOW.**





A NEW CARVED STONE SECTION OF THE NORTH CORNICE IS HOISTED INTO PLACE, LEFT. RENDERINGS OF THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER BY THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH ARCHITECT ROBERT ADAM, BELOW LEFT AND ABOVE, AND A STONE MASON CARVES A NEW CORNER SECTION, BELOW RIGHT. REPLACEMENT STONE WAS QUARRIED FROM THE ISLAND OF BRAC AS WAS THE ORIGINAL USED TO BUILD TO TEMPLE.

Scaffolding was erected about the building and the interior vault was braced to support the structure as sections of it were dismantled to replace rusting iron clamps and dowels with ones of stainless steel and to consolidate, repair, and repoint its masonry. In the process, conservators enhanced the building's strength and reestablished its original distribution of structural loads. Portions of the exterior cornice and pediment deemed damaged beyond repair were replaced with newly carved stone. Because of the narrow streets surrounding the temple, a special crane had to be built to carry out the work. A second phase of restoration will include the installation of lead sheets to protect the structure from water infiltration and a laser cleaning of the stone.

In addition to the restoration of the Temple of Jupiter, WMF has underwritten a conditions assessment of the surviving stone elements in the palace's Great Peristyle Court so that a viable plan for its conservation can be developed. Testing and monitoring of the Great Peristyle Court has been carried out by scientists from the Conservation Institute of Zagreb and the Opificio delle Pietre Dure in Florence. Conservation work is slated to begin later this fall. ■

