Vjekoslav Jukić

The Sculpture of Rudina Abbey in a European Context

Rudina is a site not far from Požega, in the heart of a compact micro-region, the Požega Valley – *Vallis Aurea.* The well-protected and fertile valley has been inhabited since pre-historic times. But the first truly "palpable" period is the Romanesque, its prime monument being the Benedictine monastery of Rudina was under the jurisdiction of Pécs Bishopric (Goss, 2010A, 7).[1] The ruins of the monastery are still quite visible, set on a high plateau on the eastern slope of the Psunj, an excellent strategic position. The archaeological site consists of two basic units: the monastery with an aisled church, a cloister with the accompanying monastery buildings, and a small aisleless church some fifty metres to the West. The most important archaeological discovery at Rudina is a group of fragments of architectural sculpture bearing geometric and floral motifs. Some, however, are decorated with human and animal heads, representing the largest group of figural sculpture in Southern Pannonia. (Figure 1) The abbey complex is rectangular – 30×40 metres with the cloister, surrounded by the church and other monastery buildings. The church is relatively small (14×8 metres) aisled building with three apses of which the central one is wider. At the western end there was an atrium, while the facade was most likely flanked by two towers at the corners. It occupies the southern side of the abbey. To the east of the cloister there were, apparently, other key monastic premises, including one with a semi-circular apse to the north of the church, possibly the chapter house. Between that building and the church there was a sacristy. The other part of the site, the smaller church with a rounded apse (8.5×5 metres including the apse), is located outside the main monastic complex.

The "main" church was built of finely polished ashlar, and, judging from the fragments of architectural ornament, its exterior was richly decorated. The lateral facades terminated in a frieze of small hanging arches, the brackets of which featured palm leaf and sow teeth, and also figured representations.

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1   The history of monastery ends probably with the arrival of the Turks. On the 18th ct. maps Rudina is marked as "Rudina-grad", without any mention of a religious function. A century later it will turn into a quarry for the new immigrants who built their homes not far from the monastery site.

Figure 1: Rudina, benedictine abbey of St. Michael (Gradski muzej Požega).

These sculptures, although known for about one hundred years, still have not been studied as completely as they deserve; analysis has been mostly superficial. The sculpture of Rudina has been qualified as "outside the mainstream" or "totally rustic pieces" (Belamarić, 1997, 70). In spite of all this, the Rudina sculptures are an important cultural phenomenon as the largest group of Romanesque sculptures in Continental Croatia on record, in fact one third of all that has come down to us from that area. There are a total of twenty heads, of which nineteen are brackets.[2]

It is evident that the sculpture is the product of one workshop and several masters or "hands" showing similarities but also differences. The details most of the brackets have in common are the eyes, nose, mouth and chin.[3] Although there is no particular symmetry or perfect finish, the sculptures of Rudina are a bit more sophisticated than they seem at the first glance. For example, some brackets are rich in detail while some other brackets feature only some basic elements (such as mouth, eyes and nose) and

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2   On 13 brackets and one base we have individual human faces. One bracket shows two faces, one three, one an animal face, and three brackets bear representations of complete human figures. In total, 19 show human figures, and only one an animal.

3   The eyes display the greatest level of similarity (fifteen brackets bear figures with almond shaped eyes, the rest show figures with circular eyes). One should also pay attention to similarities in representing the mouth, although there are, strictly speaking, no two brackets with exactly the same mouth. Other detail is shown in such a way as to underline the emotion already conveyed by the eyes and mouths. This may be further emphasized by the position and treatment of the impost block, and the nose, as they often merge or are linked closely together.

lots of empty surface. One is inclined to believe that the variations individualize each face, giving it "portrait" characteristics.[4] Still, there is no doubt that the brackets are product of one workshop. This internal unity is probably the most attractive aspect of the workshop and its artists who were able to achieve this unity while producing a series of apparently very similar, yet individualized sculptures. The differences in shape and technique were noticed by previous researchers, which has led to attempts to define individual masters.

Bogdan Mesinger was the first to handle the problem in a systematic manner and he has proposed six main groups, with a possibility that one group may represent several authors (Mesinger, 2002, 11-17).[5] Mesinger's attempt is a step in the right direction although some of his points may be criticized.[6] Still, it is a good basis for more comprehensive attempts.

Another investigator, who went one step further is Vladimir Peter Goss. He has dealt with the issue of the Rudina workshop several times.[7] He has finally identified six "hands" of Rudina workshop or rather "dominant characteristics" Those "hands" are *the Head Master*, *the Master of Sharp Edges*, *the Master of Rounded Forms*, *the Master of Parallel Planes*, *the Master of the Capital Zone* and *the Master of Rounded Cheeks*. This latest division of hands seems to be the most acceptable and will be adopted in this paper.

Describing, analysing and grouping the Rudina faces is, undeniably, a frustrating task. It is also obvious that there are numerous unifying traits for the brackets but also discrepancies which confuse the investigator. There are many points in common between the brackets attributed to certain artists or groups, and then, also, there are a good number of differences.[8] Differences can be seen even when studying the detail of a single face, as has already been noted by previous researchers, who in such cases agreed that it is quite possible that more than one hand participated in the making of a single bracket (Goss, 2010A, 25). Still, comparisons indicate similarities

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4   In spite of stylization and abstraction the entire group consists of individualized faces.

5   The six main groups identified by Mesinger are: the Master of Robust Portraits, Master of the Twins, the Master (Masters?) of Shriveled Faces, the Master of Ecclectic Portraits, the Master of Grotesque Portrait and the Master of the Youthful Faces.

6   For example, Mesinger did not specify masters for six brackets.

7   In the Catalogue of the exhibition *Stotinu kamenčića izgubljenog raja* (Goss ed., 2007, 26-30) he suggested four main masters: the Head Master, the Master of Sharp Edges, the Master of Rounded Forms and the Master of Parallel Planes. In his later works Rudina – sva lica (Goss, 2010A, 19-25) Goss has suggested that instead of counting hands one should apply the criteria based on the „basic qualities of line, volume and planes." Following this, he widened the number of hands, i.e., dominant characteristics, to six.

8   As a good example one would like to stress once more the eyes of the majority of the brackets.

in the execution of details, and in the quality and purity of execution. The faces show a good deal of emotional, the feeling being conveyed mostly by the eyes and mouth. One notes a broad spectrum of negative emotions, from fear to shock to confusion. Indeed, this differentiations of emotions are probably also one of the most attractive aspects of the Rudina sculptures. The conclusion should be that we are dealing with one large workshop following a joint set of models under the leadership of one dominant personality. This is nothing new, and yet, something still seems to be missing.

Figure 2: Figure of a saint, bracket from Rudina (Arheološki muzej Zagreb).
Figure 3: "Little Girl", bracket from Rudina (Arheološki muzej Zagreb).

So, a deeper analysis of the Rudina sculptures is necessary before any definitive conclusion can be reached. In that sense, aside from identifying specific "hands", the use of motifs is to be studied, and an iconographic and aesthetical evaluation of the material should be performed. The fact that only one out of all Rudina figures features a halo above the head argues against the assumption that the brackets were intended to depict religious scenes. Even if we accept the hypothesis of Željko Tomičić (Tomičić, 2013, 53) that bracket in literature known as a "Little girl" (Goss, 2010A, 14-15) depicts St. Michael, patron of the Benedictine Abbey, and if we assume that the animal head represents the lamb (*Agnus Dei?*), sacred figures (and subjects) still remain vastly outnumbered. However, the "sacred" quality of the aforementioned brackets could be redefined, albeit without firm arguments. The animal head being well endowed with

horns might belong to an ox.[9] Out of the two other possible "sacred" heads, bracket called "Little girl" seems too frightened to be depicting the archangel and commander-in-chief of the celestial army. We are more inclined to believe that the figure of St. Michael might be displayed in the adamant stance of bracket with a halo. Firm gaze and a calm posture depict courage while the schematic attire seems to evoke the appearance of a Roman legionary. Although in a kneeling position, the figure radiates firmness. (Figure 2 and Figure 3)

Taking into account the function of these figures that were most probably set under the roof, they should be understood as anthropomorphic masks that by their strong expression protect in a simple but very efficient manner the church and the monks from, whereas also warning against, worldly perils. This function is not uncommon in the rest of the Romanesque Europe. In this context superficial rusticity of Rudina brackets (often emphasized in existing literature) based on facial details that evoke a deep expression that reach out to the observer, underlines the quality of the iconographic concept of the Rudina material.

However the performance does not entirely follow the quality of the concept and the subject. Errors and roughness in execution, and irregularities that cannot be accounted for as "nonchalant Romanesque disorder" can be observed. These irregularities are not dramatically repulsive, since the craftsmen compensates this lack skilfully by a genuine expressiveness giving an almost portrait-like character to the brackets. This *mélange* of skill and clumsiness is another argument for the claim that the craftsmen were knowledgeable in sculpting, but not in stone (Tomičić, 2013, 50). We must remember that the sculpted pieces from Rudina that have come down to us are only a part of a rather large sculptural complex, skilfully tied to the architecture. Rudina is not a particularly large complex as the Benedictine abbeys go. Its overall coherence could argue that it was built in a rather short period of time. So, one can imagine that a local workshop was involved in creating the Rudina sculpture. It counted no proven stone carvers, but artists who knew how to carve wood, and, of course paint it.[10] Although this is only a hypothesis not yet sufficiently supported by arguments, it cannot simply be rejected. But, in order to come to clearer conclusions, or at least pose questions in a clearer manner, it is essential to take a look at the comparative material, including other media beside stone sculpture.

Although in the existing literature there are some interesting theories about the origins of the Rudina sculptures,[11] no firm and convincing conclusions could

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9   Or at least a ram, but in no case a lamb.

10   There may be available some lesser decorators from neighboring sites, e.g., the Cathedral of Pécs.

11   For example, there is a theory that considers Oriental and Coptic sources, primarily through painting

be reached. The Rudina heads are characterized by somewhat hard, cubic forms crisscrossed by innumerable engraved wavy lines ("Romaničko kiparstvo", Belamarić, 1997, 70). But, the fact is that Rudina, as a key sculptural phenomenon in Continental Croatia in the 12th century has remained without an obvious model or progeny.[12] Therefore, it is important to identify sources and origin of Rudina sculpture and some indications may be found among existing comparative material.

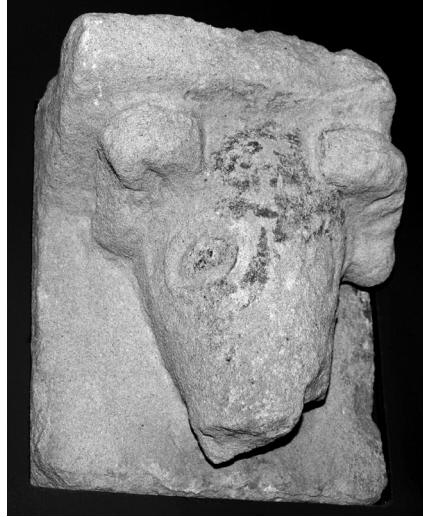Figure 4: Ram, bracket from Rudina (Arheološki muzej Zagreb).
Figure 5: Bracket from Pécs chatedral (Vjekoslav Jukić).

Rudina probably received some influences from the Cathedral at Pécs, a very active workshop throughout the 12th century.[13] Some of the brackets could be compared to those at Rudina. The Rudina bracket with the animal face indeed recalls some of the Pécs pieces which may illustrate links but no firm ties.[14] (Figure 4 and Figure 5) Yet, the brackets at Pécs are in higher relief and the influence of Pécs has not been judged as dominant (Goss, 2010A, 26-27). Rudina and Pécs also share the diamond beads blocks. Strangely enough those at Rudina appear to have been cut with more care and precision. Finally, one should note that at Pécs the sculptural output of the Cathedral workshop

or small utilitarian and decorative objects (Goss, Rudina-sva lica, 26). In support of such an idea one may quote Rakovac (Dombó) on the Danube where a hoard of metal icons of Eastern provenance with Greek inscriptions has been found.

12   Other famous example of Croatian Romanesque sculpture without an obvious model or progeny is in Adriatic coast – the Portal of Master Radovan at Trogir Cathedral.

13   Pécs is a more than 100 kilometers away from Rudina and it is the seat of the bishopric Rudina belonged to.

14   For example the ram's head nowadays in the Cathedral Museum.

roughly between ca. 1100 and 1200 was huge, that the styles range from late interlace to the appearance of Cistercian elements, and that a lot of this is figured, often in very competent, even excellent style. But the Rudina hands, if they had been present at Pécs did not care for the fine Old Testament scenes along the staircase to the crypt in a style which seems to combine Wiligelmo's tradition with the art of Niccoló, or any other specifically figured segment of the rich decor of the Cathedral. So, some connections between Rudina and Pécs could be found but they are not as firm as they should be.

Some examples could also be found among Benedictine foundations in Pannonian basin such as Somogyvár, Madocsa, Jásd and Rakovac. A fairly close but not completely satisfying analogy is the monastery church of the Benedictine abbey at Somogyvár. This church is much larger than the one at Rudina, but the plan is the same (Goss, 2010A, 26; Sekulić-Gvozdanović, 2007, 39-45).[15] (Figure 6 and Figure 7) Also, analogies in sculpture have already been noticed but they are rather general (Goss, 2010A, 26).[16] It is not unlikely that the architect of Rudina knew Somogyvár which itself was tied to French Benedictines, in particular to St. Gilles-du-Gard in Languedoc, and that it housed exclusively French Benedictine monks (Jurković, 1995, 13-17, Takács, 2001, 681).
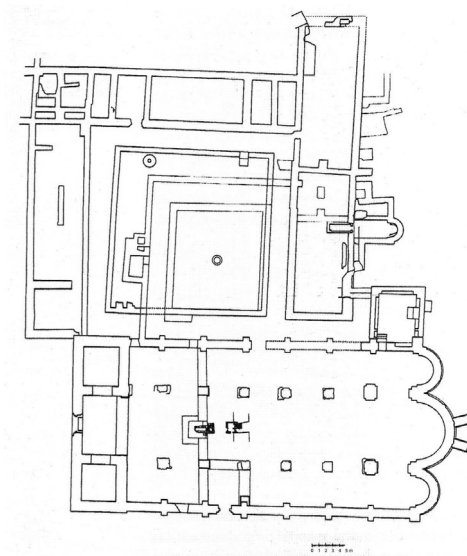

Figure 6: Somogyvár, plan of benedictine abbey (Sena Sekulić-Gvozdanović).

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15   An aisled basilica with a triple sanctuary, and a two-tower facade; the cloister is to the North and the monastic buildings are grouped around it

16   The faces on the well-known panel "lunette" are rather different from those at Rudina but there are analogies in details of the eyes (almond shaped, double framed), and the arches above them continue down from the forehead forming the noses).
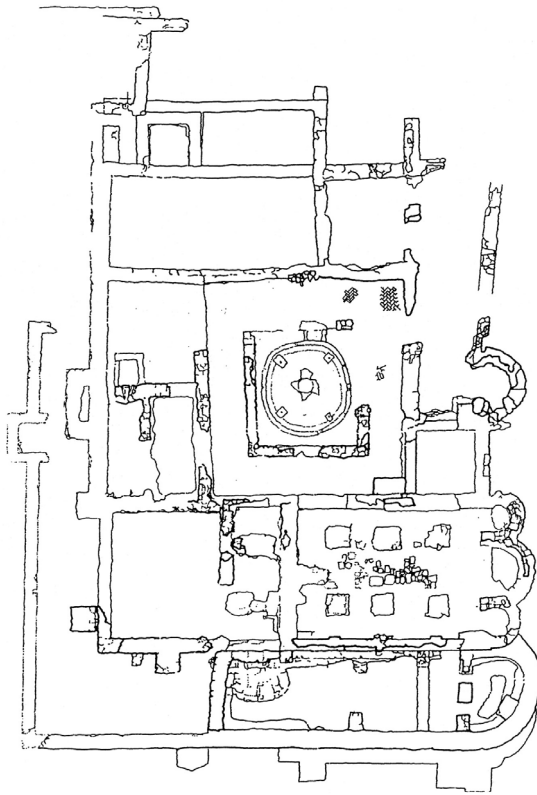
Figure 7: Rudina, plan of benedictine abbey (Sena Sekulić-Gvozdanović).

The architecture of the Benedictine abbey of Madocsa has not been preserved, but it was described in the 18th century visitations (Takács, 2001, 695).[17] One of preserved medieval remains, a fragment of a decorated arch, reminds one, on a more sophisticated level, of the palm fragments from Rudina.

Some analogies to Rudina's sculpture could be found at the Benedictine abbey at Jásd (Tomičić, 2013, 27, 53). One should single out two brackets with animal heads and front paws, supports of an arcade. In both cases there are parallel wavy lines stemming from the nose and spreading toward the edge of the face, and large, bulging eyes with narrow lids and drilled pupil holes. This repertoire of essentially graphic devices is generally applied to formation of the faces, particularly fantastic ones at Jásd and Rudina, but also elsewhere in the Romanesque Europe.[18]

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17   The church was built of carved stone in "Italian style" and had a sanctuary with "side chapels" and two towers on west façade.

18   Such as Kilpeck, Cumnor, Caen etc.

Finally, another important Benedictine foundation is the ruined but somewhat explored abbey of Rakovac,[19] on the Danube a few kilometres into Serbia. In the Museum of Vojvodina in Novi Sad there are three heads on two capital zones, the faces of which recall some of the Rudina detail – in particular the nose continuing into the forehead (Nagy, 1985, 18-23 and Tables XXVIII and XXIX). A female figure with a helmet (or a strange hairstyle?) shown on a pilaster-strip is somewhat alike the analogous bracket from Rudina, but as in the case of Pécs, the analogies are not all too close.[20]

To conclude, try as one might, one cannot find convincing analogies in the immediate neighbourhood. Those we have noted fall within the category of general characteristics of the Romanesque in rural and provincial areas. So much concerning the form, whereas the eerie expressionism of the Rudina heads is indeed quite unique in Southern Pannonia, and in the Pannonian basin in general. We shall now try to seek for clarifications in a broader European context where such brackets are no exception within the Romanesque architecture. There is a large body of buildings in Spain, France or Great Britain featuring cornices supported by brackets decorated by human, animal and fantastic figures.[21] All this is quite typical of Romanesque art, and so also of the Rudina faces, as noticed by Bogdan Mesinger, who in those terms points out the sculpture of Serrabone in the French Pyrenees (Mesinger, 2002, 6). There is an obvious identity of function as well as an analogous expressive charge; even some formal elements – the parallel planes and parallel lines – that recall Rudina. There are the square foreheads/impost-blocks, almond-shaped eyes and cubic heads, recalling, in fact, many similar works in Western Europe.

Still, could there be any connections between Rudina and those faraway lands? The Hungarian Court maintained close relations with the European West (Kontler, 2007, 81). In spite of those ties recorded in historical documents the brackets from Rudina cannot be easily connected to those materials. Yet, some similarities need to be stressed. Therefore potential stimuli should be sought among the monuments which recall Rudina either by the placement of their brackets or by the themes represented.

In the first group one would primarily consider buildings with brackets underneath the roof, what was probably the position of the Rudina brackets. In this context one should consider SS. Mary and David in Kilpeck in Herefordshire (England). The cornice is decorated by numerous brackets, many well-preserved,

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19   Also known as Dombó or Dumbovo.

20   A series of heads from the Benedictine abbey of St. George in Rakovac shows, on the other hand, a strong influence of Roman/Late Antique sculpture, no wonder as the medieval Benedictine abbey at Rakovac stands on the ruins of a Roman site.

21   Including obscene ones showing their genitals to the viewer.

which predominantly show animal figures, e.g., dog and hare, but also human and fantastic figures (mostly heads, but also full size figures as for example a woman showing her genitals) and typical Christian motifs such as the Agnus Dei. Such diversity is also typical of Rudina. Thus, this group and also the examples that follow show thematic analogies with Rudina and share the same world of violence and terror. Another such example is the Benedictine abbey at Reading (Reading Abbey), founded by Henry I as a Cluniac house in 1121 (Pevsner, 1966, 197-199). At the peak of its power, which coincides with the early period, it counted ca. 100 monks, had a hospice dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and numerous other quarters. None of this has survived but there are some pieces of sculpture, though, such as several capitals in the Museum at Reading, most of them with figural representations, including heads with bulging eyes and snake-like scrollwork appearing from their mouths and spreading over the rest of the capital. Two sculptural fragments are also built into a wall in the Caversham Court Park about two miles north of the abbey. They are brackets showing fantastic humanoids with bulging rounded eyes, and stylized linear whiskers in a technique recalling Rudina.

In France one could quote the church of the Notre-Dame of the Benedictine monastery at Jumièges decorated with human heads, however less grotesque than those at Rudina. Analogous groups could be seen at several churches of the Avrenches region in the West of Normandy (Basse-Normandie), e.g., the brackets at Saint-Loup-sous-Avranches (first third of the 12th ct., a bit cruder than Jumièges), at Breville, St. Benoit, Yquelon, Saint-Léonard-de-Vains (all from the first half of the 12th ct., and linked to the Benedictines), the last one directly linked to the Abbey of Sainte-Trinité (Abbaye aux Dames) in Caen.

Second group of the monuments are those which use similar visual language as Rudina. Among those the Benedictine abbey in Jásd has already been mentioned,[22] but another possible example is Kilpeck (SS. Mary and David), which seems comparable to Jásd, and via Jásd to Rudina.[23] In Kilpeck there is a series of brackets underneath the eaves, but one can also find visual analogies on the well-preserved southern portal richly decorated with human figures and floral motifs.[24] The lunette also bearing floral ornaments is surrounded by *voussoir* arches giving the entire entryway arch a

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22 Although only two brackets with animal heads have been preserved, the wavy lines on their face and the big, almond shaped eyes strongly recall some brackets from Rudina. Unfortunately this is all that we have from Jásd, so our attempt at comparison need necessarily remain tentative.

23 Kilpeck was mentioned in the 7th century, and the church itself is dated to the first half of the 12th ct. A small Benedictine abbey stood there in 1134, which is close to presumed date of Rudina as we will try to establish in a moment (Pevsner, 1963, 75-77).

24 Pictures of church st. Mary in Kilpeck can be found at http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/810/, and especially http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/810/image/feature/9346/.

mushroom form. Those arches are richly decorated by fantastic creatures. Some of them show almond shaped eyes, and faces crisscrossed by wavy lines, and widely open mouths. Snakes emerge from some of the mouth openings. The head of a figure at the right heel of the *voussoir* arch recalls some examples from Rudina.

Another place that needs to be mentioned is Cumnor (church of St. Michael) in England (Oxfordshire).[25] The oldest section of the much rebuilt structure includes a frieze of heads at the top of the facade, a number of which recall Rudina (for example an elongated male head with large almond shaped eyes, a short nose and a face with sharp parallel incisions, or a bracket in the sanctuary).[26]

Throughout France (Brittany, Normandy, and the central parts of France), Spain and Great Britain numerous small edifices stemming from the Middle Ages and featuring similar representations on brackets indicate that brackets were decorative as well as informative element conveying a message to the public. This is indeed what links Rudina with the rest of the European Romanesque art. Connections between French Benedictine abbeys and those situated within the domains of the Crown of St. Stephen (i.e. between Somogyvár and St. Gilles-du-Gard in Languedoc) make this link even more plausible.

Although import seems improbable due to Rudina's distance from the major centres of contemporary art, it is not quite unusual that stone sculptures have been found far from their places of origin. Nevertheless, in our case import of finished products is highly unlikely; after all, local stone was used. Furthermore, although the heads may somewhat resemble the Western examples mentioned above, their features even more so support the thesis of a local workshop. So, where is the possible link between the West European sites and Rudina?

Could such a link be a new abbot coming from abroad? Via Somogyvár and Pécs, a man well-versed in the ins and outs of the Romanesque art? A monk, young in spirit, well-educated and of firm character, coming into this frontier area with a load of books and aiming to transpose part of the Western spirit to Europe's southeast?[27] Such a man would know what a respectable abbey should look like, and all that he needed was a local workshop to translate his wishes into matter. He also knew that a proper

25   The church dates from the 12th ct., and was an important possession of the Benedictine abbey at Abingdon.

26   Picture can be found at http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/555/image/feature/16496/ and http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/555/.

27   Manuscripts are very important as possible source of inspirations. Especially as it is known that manuscripts were not just indispensable to such communities, but often they were brought by the abbot from far away. Books were much lighter to transport than stone, so it is not hard to imagine these manuscripts as a source of ideas not just for the execution of the stone sculpture, but also of the iconological concept.

building of his times should be adorned by sculpture and painting, briefly by images as sculpture was painted, too (Ratkovčić, 2010, 345).

Architecturally Rudina was a modern building for the first half of the 12th century. As any reasonable Romanesque architecture, Rudina had to bear sculpture, primarily on the outside, as the appearance of monumental facade sculpture is one of the hallmarks of the Mature Romanesque and of the Renaissance of the 12th century (Goss, 2010B, 193-194).

The problem our presumed founder of Rudina encountered was the lack of trained sculptors working in stone, and for him it would have been logical to look at Pécs for artists and models. Along with *imagiers* there were at Pécs certainly numerous quality *décorateurs*. Also, by format and graphic detail some of the Pécs brackets (such as the "Frog-face") may have served as inspiration for Rudina, possibly for the "Master of the Puffed Up Cheeks." So, our founder now had quite a clear idea of the iconographic program as well as some stone cutters from a local major workshop. As an intelligent man he realizes that there will be no major figural sculpture display (e.g., using the Cross made of not too accomplished interlace, a symbolic rather than figured composition). He however judged that his team is capable of doing at least brackets, and so he designed a program. Cracking this program would greatly help in placing Rudina in terms of its European context. But his team remains first of all a group of carvers experienced in wood rather than in stone.[28]

There is no doubt that in Continental Croatia wooden sculpture had had a long tradition, from the time of introduction of Christianity, and that construction of churches, predominantly wooden, was strongly encouraged (Engel, 2001, 46). This is also applicable to Rudina. The team collected at Rudina was primarily of woodcutters, local artists of decent quality. They were the offspring of generations of artists we know practically nothing about, from the early Slavic image makers on, who made images of the early Slavic, often three-headed Gods, the memories of which we can catch sight of through place names, and some extremely rare pieces that have survived in Eastern and Central Eastern Europe (Goss, 2009, 35-54).[29]

Although we have demonstrated possible connections of with the European Northwest, one may feel a breath of the old, pre-Christian times within the Rudina

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28 The wooden beams discovered at St. Donat in Zadar and usually dated around 750, stylistically very close to what in Zadar (and elsewhere in Dalmatia) was produced in stone, are a typical non-classical early medieval work – in the political center of the Roman Dalmatia! The traces of the early 9th century wooden church excavated at Lobor belong to the sphere of the Carolingian expansion into Pannonia, and repeat the forms of similar buildings both in wood and permanent materials in the Alps and Central Europe. Like Zadar, Lobor, was a seat of non-Slavic authorities in a Slavic area.

29 Some of examples are Treglava, Trojeglava (possibly relating to three-headed early Slavic gods); or Kip, Stari Kip (related to old image, image, possibly sculpted) etc.

workshop whose woodcutters could be imagined as successors to those old pagan carvers now carving Christian, rather than pagan figures. But their *iconographic style* thanks to the knowledgeable patron, just like the architecture, was modern! Thus it is legitimate to look for far away analogies on the basis of function and imagery of the Rudina sculpture, most notably the British Isles, Bretagne, Normandy, and Scandinavia, where we also encounter another component that has been of interests to us – the carving in wood. And the influence of wood, particularly Viking, has been noted in the Romanesque sculpture of the above mentioned areas. This material is even visually somewhat similar to the sculpture of Rudina.

Rudina has often been called crude and awkward, and also brilliantly expressive and dramatic. Both is true. The Rudina sculptors were mostly rather crude hands. But they were certainly also artists who could convey deep and dramatic emotions. Like many expressionist artist of the 20th century, their pictures may not have been pretty, but they were impressive and engaged. They had and still have an eerie power to shake the viewer, to scare him, to threaten him, to ward him off lest he should harm the holy place and its inhabitants. And that is also true of the other already mentioned faraway places where main function of bracket was the same – to shake, scare and threat the viewer.

Ultimately, one returns to the fact that Rudina is "the key monument of the Romanesque in Slavonia." Its riddles and inconsistencies are truly compatible with a land of huge forests and equally huge marches, of wild, steep slopes and bottomless ravines. Also, albeit the comparisons are not all too satisfactory, Rudina appears closest to the output of central Pannonia of the first half of the 12th century, of Pécs sculpture predating the main figured projects at the Cathedral (e.g., the crypt *additus)* of around 1125-1135. That this dating coincides with the date of 1129 suggested by the Glagolitic inscription found at Rudina may be a happy (?) coincidence (Putanec, 1977, 69-73).[30] It could have been reached without it.

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30 A panel in glagolitic script was found at Rudina and, according to Valentin Putanec, it bears the year of 1129, which he interprets as the foundation date.

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Vjekoslav Jukić

Skulptura iz opatije Rudina
v evropskem kontekstu

Ključne besede: Rudina, srednjeveško figuralno kiparstvo, Panonska nižina, srednjeveška Evropa, Hrvaška, romanska umetnost

Benediktinska opatija sv. Mihaela v Rudini nedaleč od Požege je arheološka lokacija, ki je znana že več kot sto let. Arheološke raziskave so potekale v več etapah, v katerih so bili poleg arhitekturnih ostankov odkriti tudi pomembni ostanki arhitekturne plastike in figuralne skulpture, ki predstavljajo daleč najpomembnejši sklop romanskega figuralnega kiparstva na področju celinske Hrvaške. Gre za kamnite konzole z izrazito ekspresivno oblikovanimi človeškimi glavami oziroma celopostavnimi figurami. Skupina konzol iz Rudine je bila v starejši strokovni literaturi sicer večkrat obravnavana, vendar ni bila ustrezno umeščena v umetnostni kontekst, hkrati pa so bili spomeniki neupravičeno označeni kot rustikalni primeri brez večje umetniške vrednosti. Izhajajoč iz najnovejših raziskav se avtor prispevka osredotoča na vprašanje evropskih vplivov na figuralno plastiko benediktinskega samostana v Rudini, predvsem z možnimi povezavami z umetnostnimi središči na ozemlju tedanjih dežel krone sv. Štefana. Posebna pozornost je posvečena slogovni in ikonografski analizi rudinske plastike ter primerjavam s sorodnimi spomeniki na Madžarskem in v Zahodni Evropi. Pri tem avtor poskuša odgovoriti tudi na vprašanje, na kakšen način in po katerih poteh so lahko spomeniki iz relevantnih umetnostnih središč panonskega bazena in Zahodne Evrope vplivali na kamnite konzole v Rudini. Pri raziskovanju potencialnih vplivov se avtor ne omejuje izključno na kiparstvo, temveč dolžno pozornost posveti tudi drugim medijem, zlasti knjižni iluminaciji. Pri tem vključi ikonografske in ikonološke vidike, ki v starejši literaturi niso bili upoštevani. Prispevek hkrati osvetli specifične morfološke značilnosti rudinske skupine ter s pomočjo natančne formalne in slogovne analize kamnitih konzol razkriva, da gre za lokalno delavnico, v kateri je najverjetneje delalo šest mojstrov.

Vjekoslav Jukić

The Sculpture of Rudina Abbey in a European Context

Keywords: Rudina, medieval figural sculpture, Pannonian basin, Medieval Europe, Croatia, Romanesque art

The Benedictine Abbey of St. Michael in Rudine near Požega is an archaeological site known for more than a hundred years. The first explorations were done in 1906 and 1907 and ever since then Rudina has been explored in a stop and start manner. The archaeological site consists of two basic units: the monastery with a three-aisle, three-apse church, a cloister with the accompanying monastic buildings, and a small aisleless church with a rounded apse some fifty metres to the West. A considerable body of architectural sculpture has been found at the site, but the most important finding is a series of twenty heads, of which nineteen are brackets. This figural sculpture is mainly described in the literature as rustic work without a solid link to sculpture in the immediate area. In spite of all this, the Rudina sculptures are an extremely important cultural phenomenon as the largest group of Romanesque sculptures in Continental Croatia on record. Still, this sculpture has not been studied as completely as it deserves to be. This paper mentions the possibility that the figural stone sculpture of the Benedictine monastery in Rudina was made by a local workshop, it also raises the question of possible influence on that sculpture within the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen, but indirectly also in Western Europe. Special emphasis is placed on the possible ways (or media) that these influences could have been adopted and on the potential connection to Western Europe and the Pannonian basin.