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A Note on the Rose Window in Čazma and on the Presence of the Royal Workshops in Medieval Slavonia

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In this paper the authors propose to discuss a remarkable monument of 13th century art in Croatia, the giant west façade rose in Čazma, and its possible links to the Hungarian royal workshops. As background, they also explore some other key sites of 13th century art such as Medvedgrad, Arača, Morović, Cirča, and Prejmer, and some links of the royal workshops with the art of the lands further to the West – Bamberg, Worms and Limburg an der Lahn.

Key words: Čazma, Medvedgrad, Croatia, Medieval Slavonia, Hungarian royal workshops, rosewindow, Renaissance of the Twelfth Century

THE Renaissance of the twelfth century¹ was a powerful and shining moment in European history, and Croatia did not stay untouched, either. As defined by its proponent, Charles Homer Haskins, it was a period of strong new growth in all areas of human endeavour, so also in the arts and culture. Its beginnings could be traced to the time around 1100, and its heyday is the twelfth century. It can be linked to such major social and political events as the Crusades, colonization and the rise of dissent. Although, it made its appearance in the eastern part of Europe only by the end of the twelfth century, its impact was not negligible.² The Renaissance of the twelfth century reached the Lands of the Crown of St. Steven fully by the time of Bela III (1173–1196), who definitely turned his country toward the West, opening the door to numerous colonists, a process that peaked in the middle of the thirteenth century. One of its cultural triumphs was the wonderful culture of the major movers of the colonization process, the Cistercians and orders related to them, including the military ones.³ The Cistercians at that time became the key building advisors and builders to such rulers as Emperor Friedrich II. They also had an important role in bringing the new Gothic style to the Carpathian basin.⁴ Another important fact is that, initiated during the reign of Bela III, marriage alliances with important European houses became frequent at the Arpadian court, as Bela III himself took the daughter of Louis VII of France and sister of Philip II Augustus, as his wife.⁵

In this paper we propose to discuss primarily a remarkable monument of thirteenth century art in Croatia, the giant west façade rose of the church of St. Mary Magdalene in Čazma, relevant art historical information and the rose's possible links to the Hungarian royal workshops. As background, we will explore another key site of thirteenth century Slavonian art, Medvedgrad, and its place within the frame-

work of the art of Hungarian royal workshops from the royal domain of Esztergom, and some links of the royal workshops with the art of the lands further to the West.⁶ We shall not enter here into intricacies of dating the Čazma church or its parts, still dubious in spite of fairly thorough investigations, but concentrate on the rose, in itself an artistic landmark of medieval Slavonia in the first half of the thirteenth century. Nor do we intend to present an overview of rose windows in Southern Pannonia, an enterprise which might produce some interesting results.

Doubtless, the local elites had interest in promoting themselves through art, so artistic production in medieval Slavonia counts some high quality creations. The two key persons in that process, the sponsors of culture and art, were Bishop Stjepan II of Zagreb (1225–47) and Duke Koloman (Herceg), who was the viceroy of Slavonia, Croatia and Dalmatia (1226–41), king of Galicia, and a younger brother of the Hungarian king Bela IV (1235–1270). Before becoming the Bishop of Zagreb, Stjepan II was the Chancellor to King Andrew II (1204–35), the father of Duke Koloman. In old sources we can find interesting descriptions of Stjepan II and Koloman. Thomas Archidiaconus (1200–1268) in his *Historia Salonitana* described Bishop Stjepan II as a man rich in gold, silver and other assets; worldly and pompous, but also courteous and kind. Thomas also mentioned Koloman describing him at his first visit to Split as a young boy who had not achieved anything yet. In a later chapter we found Koloman described as a courageous and capable soldier, and later, after his death, he is described as a religious and pious man.⁷ In the Statutes of the Chapter of Zagreb (1334), Ivan Archdeacon of Gorica calls Stjepan II a “sollemnis homo”, and a great builder of churches.⁸

Between 1180 and 1196 two other remarkable men – Archbishop Hiob and King Bela III – embarked on a huge project: the building and rebuilding of the Cathedral of St. Adalbert and the royal castle at Esztergom with a royal chapel.⁹ Above the portal of the chapel there is a rosewindow in the shape of a twelve-petal flower with a four-petal flower in the middle. The church of the Benedictine abbey in Arača (on the river Tisa, close to Novi Bečej) also had a rosewindow above the main entrance (fig. 1). The church, the walls still stand in the midst of a field, was built

1 The term entered scholarship through the book of Charles H. Haskins *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* published in 1927 (Cambridge, Mass.). For a brief overview of opinions and literature please see: Goss 2010, ppp. 108, 110, 153–54, 208, 250 (also the footnotes); Goss 2008, ppp. 417–26.

2 Please see note one above.

3 Goss 2007A, ppp. 211–224; Goss 2008, ppp. 417–26.; Goss 2010, ppp. 153–54, 195–7, 205–6 (see also the footnotes).

4 Marosi 1984 ppp. 42–50; Cadei 1980, ppp. 191–217; Gislberti 1994, ppp. 41–62.; Goss 2008, ppp. 417–426.; Goss 2009, ppp. XXI.; Goss 2010, ppp. 208–9 (see also the footnotes).

5 Dobronić 1986, ppp. 432.

6 Takács 1998., ppp. 104–109.; Takács 2006, ppp. 11–26.

7 Thomas Archidiaconus 1960, ppp. 59, 74–81, 83, 88.

8 Tkalčić 1874, ppp. 5.

9 Goss 2007A, ppp. 219.

from brick and stone (architectural decor and corner bricks) around 1228 by an unknown Hungarian magnate. It was a monumental aisled Romanesque basilica, without transept and with three rounded apses. It was reconstructed by the Hungarian Queen Elizabeth in 1370 as a Gothic bell tower built next to the apse.¹⁰ According to our reconstruction (fig. 2)¹¹ the Arača rosewindow would have had exactly the same tracery as the one of the Esztergom castle chapel (fig. 3), as still quite obvious from what remains in Arača. So a royal workshop from Esztergom was active in Arača. The diameter of the Arača rose is ca. 3 meters, the one in Esztergom ca. 3.6 m. The form and even the dimensions indicate indeed close connections, something to be borne in mind as we proceed with our argument.



Fig. 1 Arača, Church of Benedictine abbey, western wall.

In medieval Slavonia, i.e. today's continental Croatia, Duke Koloman had his seat in the capital, Zagreb. In cooperation with Bishop Stjepan II he started to build a new town, Čazma, situated just some 70 km from the capital on a hill above the meeting point of the rivers Glogovnica and Česma. This was

¹⁰ Kašanin 1959, pp. 126–27.

¹¹ Special thank to Ana Laća, student of architecture at the University of Zagreb, who transferred our ideas and schemes into computer reconstructions.

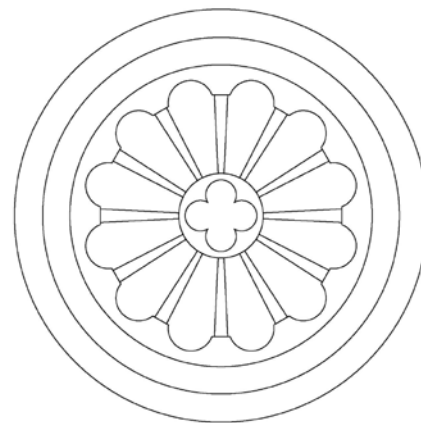


Fig. 2 Arača, rose-window, assumed reconstruction.



Fig. 3 Esztergom, Royal Chapel, view.

a unique case of a high class *bastide* in medieval Slavonia in the early thirteenth century. By 1232, when it was mentioned in Stjepan's privilege to the Chapter of Čazma, it must have already been finished and ready for royal living and functioning of the Chapter with churches of the Holy Spirit, the palace of the Canons, the Bishop's Palace, the Palace of the Duke, Churches of St. John the Baptist, St. Andrew and St. Catherine (some of them might be later), the fortress and some kind of general fortifications. The church of St. Mary Magdalene, which is the only monument of this great

project still standing today, and the Dominican monastery, existed before the Tatar invasion (1242).¹² We can find arguments in the lines of *Historia Salonitana* where Thomas Archidiaconus tell us that Koloman was buried there in 1241.¹³ So, no wonder that the church of the monastery where Duke Koloman was buried appears, in our opinion, as a reduced version of the Cathedral of Esztergom as built by Archbishop Hiob and Bela III. The Cathedral was an aisled building with a projecting western massive and two groups of two towers, east and west,¹⁴ the model that is on a reduced scale implemented in Čazma, assuming that the areas at sides of the sanctuary had been topped by towers. The square sanctuary does not fit the general scheme and it may be a later addition by the Dominicans. Unfortunately, this is exactly the area which was not thoroughly investigated by archaeologists.

It is not only architecture that points to the presence of royal workshops, so it should not come as a surprise that the church also had architectural decor of a very high quality. This involves window frames, including two five-lobed rounded windows, fragments of supports, ribs, capitals etc.¹⁵ Their forms also point toward the art of the royal domain, as does a fine fragment of a head of a knight.¹⁶ It is worth noting that until the Croatian–Hungarian Agreement (1868) the tomb stone of Duke Koloman was in Čazma, a slab of red marble as customary for the Hungarian royal house. The panel was certainly too big to be clandestinely broken up or carried away. Therefore, there is still a chance it may be found one day.¹⁷

Finally, during the research by the Institute of Art History in 1999, remains of a monumental rosewindow of the western façade, with an outer diameter of ca. 6.5 meters and situated above the main entrance, were discovered (fig. 4). This huge rosewindow is very similar, according to what remains, to the rose on the southern transept of the Bamberg Cathedral (fig. 5), their outside diameters being almost the same (ca. 6.5 meters).¹⁸ According to our reconstruction

12 Štrk 2001, pp. 21–50; Horvat 2001, pp. 9–20; Goss, Jukić 2007, pp. 295–305; Goss 2010, pp. 210, 212.

13 Thomas Archidiaconus 1960, pp. 83.

14 Marosi 1984, pp. 23–28, 29 (reconstruction).

15 Goss 2007B, pp. 23, 25, 56–65 (detailed description of the key pieces with a proviso that some of the materials preserved in Čazma belong to other, lost monuments of the city); Goss 2010, pp. 210–12 (see also the footnotes).

16 Goss 2007B, pp. 56 (fig.); Goss 2010, pp. 214–15.

17 Goss 2010, pp. 219.; Štrk 2006, pp. 101–106.

18 Rosewindow of the southern transept at Bamberg Cathedral was measured according to the cross-section in



Fig. 4 Čazma, St. Mary Magdalene, western façade, detail.

and the pieces left *in situ* (fig. 6), the Čazma rose was constructed of eight stone pieces, while the Bamberg one counts twelve. There are also obvious similarities – in the shape of the four petal flowers on the outer part of the rosewindow tracery as present in Bamberg and the small circles between those flowers. It was probably made by first drilling the tracery openings, and then by carving final tracery shapes. The tracery is surrounded by eight softly shaped, convex mouldings.

The documentation on the restoration and presentation work at St. Mary Magdalene, which the Institute of Art History made in 2001,¹⁹ suggested a different reconstruction of the west rosewindow. It follows the type of a wheel with eight stone spokes linking the rim to the small circle in the middle (fig. 7), thus quite similar to the rose at the Esztergom castle chapel and to its derivative in Arača, linking again Čazma with the royal workshops even if this, in our opinion less likely reconstruction, is accepted. This rose form, more dynamic and of a more plastic vigor and emphasizing also the dynamics of space, seems to be more compatible with Gothic tendencies. The Bamberg roses and their central European counterparts put

proportion – in Winterfeld 1972, pp. 285, 290.

19 Special thank to mr. sc. Davorin Štepinac from the Zagreb Institute of Art History for the documentation.



Fig. 5 Bamberg Cathedral, southern transept, detail.

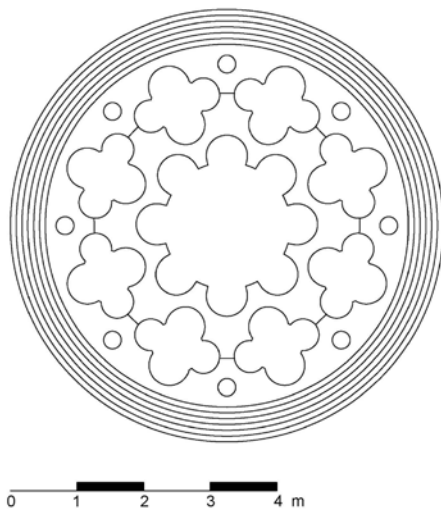


Fig. 6 Čazma, western rosewindow, assumed reconstruction.

an emphasis on the surface which is treated as a flat field into which the stone cutter inscribes his decorative motifs. This is closer to the Romanesque decorative taste. However, both types may appear within the same building, in some cases at least as a consequence of various phases or rebuilding of the monuments.

The presence of masters from Bamberg has been demonstrated for Ják between 1225–1250. Judging from the architectural decor, especially the “á crochet” capitals, one may conclude that a Hungarian royal

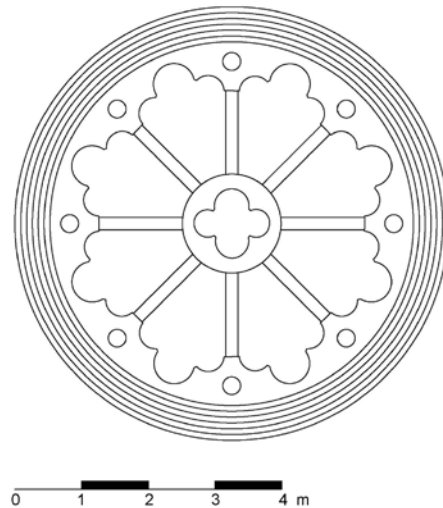


Fig. 7 Čazma, western rosewindow, assumed reconstruction.

workshop was active in Čazma. In our opinion its activities, in the case of the western rose, were supplemented by a workshop tied to Bamberg. The French and the Bamberg connections were recently explored in depth by Imre Takács.²⁰ There is no doubt that King Andrew II was ready to share his own artists, both native and imported, with his former chancellor, Stjepan II, now a close associate to his younger son Koloman in the major political project involving also Čazma.²¹

An important recent discovery was traces of paint on the western rosewindow of Čazma. The paint was on the outside of the carving – traces of red, blue and grey lines on the part of the tracery (fig. 8). The colours strictly follow the mouldings. One may also assume that the other elements of architectural decor were coloured. It is highly unlikely that the colours were original, but not unlikely that the original choice and disposition of the colours have been preserved.

Small rounded windows on the north and south walls of St. Mary Magdalene also have tracery in the shape of a flower constructed of five circles creating one circle of the same size in the middle (fig. 9). They are situated between one bay window at the western corpus of the building. Their shape is pretty similar to the rosewindow at the Medvedgrad Chapel (fig. 10) – bulging mouldings surrounding five, or at the Chapel of Medvedgrad six, flowers forming the tracery measuring two meters in diameter. Both of them display the same profiles of the circular frame. Drago Miletić has already made the comparison between Medvedgrad and Čazma, and Anđela Horvat has compared the small roses of Čazma to the one at the

20 Takács 1998, pp. 104–109.; Takács 2006, pp. 11–26.

21 Goss, Vicelja 2006, pp. 165–175; Goss, Jukić 2007, pp. 295–305; Goss 2007A, pp. 211–224.



Fig. 8 Čazma, St. Mary Magdalene, part of the western rosewindow.



Fig. 10 Medvedgrad, Chapel, view.



Fig. 9 Čazma, St. Mary Magdalene, southern wall, detail.

St. Stephen's Chapel in Zagreb. As already noticed in literature, the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Čazma and the Chapel of Medvedgrad are key monuments of the early thirteenth century art in the area. Both are built of brick, with stone being reserved for architectural and decorative details (windows, portal, capitals, supports, ribs). The building technique and brick size are very close, as well as most of the architectural detail. Generally, both monuments display a mix of Romanesque and Gothic elements usual for the place and period.²²

This type of rosewindows which may have impacted the Medvedgrad rosewindow and the side windows in Čazma, with the tracery in the shape of flower inside a circular frame (still essentially a Romanesque flat lacelike concept), we also find in Germany not far away from Bamberg – the tracery in the shape of a six-lobed flower on the apse of the Worms Cathedral, consecrated in 1234, and a four-lobed flower tracery up in the central part of the west façade of Saint George's Cathedral in Limburg an der Lahn, consecrated in 1235.

Imre Takács has explained as the “first international Gothic style” numerous monuments resulting

from fruitful lines of impact from the West towards Eastern Central Europe via Bamberg or Ják.²³ Čazma and Medvedgrad are not alone in that group within the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen. Among those that share the motif of a rose with our monuments one should list, e.g. Cırța (German: Kerz, Hungarian: Kerc) in medieval Transylvania, where one can see circular windows with a six-lobed tracery on the sanctuary walls between the Gothic ribs. Cırța was started at the beginning of the thirteenth century as a church of a Cistercian abbey. The other Transylvanian church with such windows stands in Prejmer (German: Tartlau; Hungarian: Prázsmár) where the Teutonic Knights constructed the fortress in 1212–1213 as a part of their colonization project. In 1240, the church and its associated domain were repossessed by the Cistercian monks. Erected in the thirteenth century in the early Gothic style, the church is a Latin cross building with an octagonal tower rising over the nave, rib vaults and side chapels that flank the polygonal-shaped main apse. The church has small circular windows with a four-lobed flower tracery in the upper parts of the wall that goes all across the eastern part of the transept and around the sanctuary (fig. 11). This type of wall opening is repeated on the four diagonal bottom surfaces of the octagonal tower. The town of Prejmer began its development in the first half of the thirteenth century, and was the eastern-most settlement of the Transylvanian Saxons. An influence of the Saxons, who came to Transylvania at the beginning of thirteenth century, is also noticeable in the architecture of the church of Our Lady in Morović, nowadays in the south-west of the Vojvodina region in Serbia. It has been dated to the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century.²⁴ Besides having an octagonal tower as in Prejmer, the church in Morović also has small

22 Miletić, Valjato–Fabris 1987, pp. 45, 49, 51, 52; Goss 2007A, pp. 216–17.

23 Takács 2006, pp. 11–26.

24 Gvozdanović (Goss) 1969–70, pp. 15–22.



Fig. 11 Prejmer, Church of Holy Cross, sanctuary.



Fig. 12 Morović, Church of Our Lady, southern nave wall, detail.

circular windows with four-lobed flower tracery (fig. 12) in the upper parts of the nave walls, three on both the north and the south side of the aisle.

As already stated, this brief article was not meant to be a survey of rose windows in medieval Slavonia.²⁵ Still, it has incorporated most of the significant ex-

²⁵ There are rose windows which may date from as early as the 13th century also in Koška, Vinično and a fragment of one that might come from Gornja Bukovica (for details see: *A Hundred Stones from a Lost Paradise*, Catalogue of the exhibition, Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, 2007).

amples of the motif, within which the rose window of the western façade of Čazma holds, in our opinion, an exceptional place, not just in nowadays Continental Croatia, but in the entire Pannonian basin and South-eastern Europe. Also, within the growing literature on Pannonian art of the early thirteenth century,²⁶ it is a unique example of a migration of a monumental element decorating one of the most important buildings of the Empire, to what has been considered, until recently, an artistic and cultural “tabula rasa”. The context of its appearance is, as we hope to have indicated, the activity of the royal workshops working for the top members of the Arpad dynasty. What issued forth from the royal domain toward the rim lands such as Transylvania, Slovakia or Southeastern Pannonia (today’s Vojvodina) did not miss Croatia, although here, maybe more than anywhere else within the Pannonian basin, we are dealing with meagre traces of a once brilliant and powerful culture. If those few words on a worthy representative of this culture, the western rose of Čazma, stimulate further search for such witnesses of the past, this brief note would not have been written in vain.²⁷

²⁶ Goss 2010, pp. 108, 110, 153–54, 208, 250 (see also the footnotes); Goss 2008, pp. 417–26.; Goss, Vicolja 2006, pp. 165–175; Goss, Jukić 2007, pp. 295–305; Goss 2007A, pp. 211–224.; Goss 2007B, pp. 16–37; Marosi 1984.

²⁷ Note of Thanks: The authors thank Tomislav Šeparović, Director of the Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments for inviting them to submit this note. We also thank Jadranka Kruljac Sever and Vjekoslav Štrk from the Museum of Čazma, Ana Laća for drawing the reconstructions and mr. sc. Davorin Stepinac from the Institute of Art History for the documentation.

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Razmatranje rozete u Čazmi i prisutnosti kraljevskih radionica u srednjovjekovnoj Slavoniji

Ključne riječi: Čazma, Medvedgrad, Hrvatska, srednjovjekovna Slavonija, mađarske kraljevske radionice, rozeta, renesansa 12. stoljeća.

Članak razmatra neke pojavne vidove renesanse 12. stoljeća na prostoru istočne Europe, a samim tim i današnje Hrvatske. Pojava se razmatra u okviru širenja gotičkog stila, unutar zemalja krune sv. Stjepana, koje je započelo dolaskom na prijestolje Bele III. (1173.–1196.) te okretanjem i otvaranjem zemlje prema Zapadu i njegovim utjecajima. Slučaj gradnje i obnavljanja katedrale i kraljevskog dvora u Esztergomu (između 1180. i 1196.) pod patronatom nadbiskupa Hioba i kralja Bele III. ponovio se nekoliko desetljeća kasnije u Čazmi, gdje pak nastaje potpuno novi grad pod patronatom dvojice velikih i utjecajnih ljudi svojega doba i područja, zagrebačkog biskupa Stjepana II. i hercega Kolomana.

Razmatra se trenutak pojave vrhunskog umjetničkog izričaja kroz monumentalnu rozetu na zapadnom pročelju crkve sv. Marije Magdalene u Čazmi koja je svjetlo dana ponovno ugledala tijekom istraživanja Instituta za povijest umjetnosti 2001. godine. Kružni prozorski otvori, koji se nalaze na sjevernom i južnom zidu predvorja Sv. Marije Magdalene u Čazmi, stilski i formalno imaju jasnu poveznicu s rozetom koja se nalazi iznad portala kapele na Med-

vedgradu. Oblici koji se tamo pojavljuju, jasno ukazuju na prisutnost mađarske kraljevske radionice koja djeluje iz domene Esztergoma, i koja ujedno širi oblike donesene sa Zapada (u ovom slučaju Bamberg, Worms...). Prisutnost kraljevskih radionica iz domene Esztergoma već je prikazana u ranijim člancima koji se bave kamenom plastikom ovog područja.

Da je kraljevska radionica djelovala izvan Esztergoma, može se potpuno jasno vidjeti i na pretpostavljenoj rekonstrukciji rozete koja se nalazila iznad zapadnog portala benediktinske opatije u Arači. Njezini oblici gotovo se u potpunosti poklapaju s oblicima rozete koja se nalazi iznad ulaznog portala kraljevske kapele u Esztergomu. Jasni utjecaji vidljivi su i u drugim regijama koje su bile dio zemalja krune sv. Stjepana (primjeri Cirte i Prejmera na području Transilvanije te Morovića na području današnje Vojvodine). Može se zaključiti da su na području južnog panonskog ruba djelovale kvalitetne radionice, bilo udomaćene u kraljevskoj domeni Esztergoma, bilo uvozne, kako se njihova prisutnost očituje u Jáku te u nas u Čazmi.

