

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE CHAPEL AT MEDVEDGRAD

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This study is devoted to the surviving figured elements (one atlas, two lion-head capitals) of the chapel of the feudal castle of Medvedgrad near Zagreb. The goal of the article is to define the iconography of the chapel as a stepping-stone to an in-depth analysis of the style to, hopefully, resolve the issues of chronology and of the place of Medvedgrad within the early Gothic art of the Carpathian basin.

Key words: Medvedgrad, Croatia, Medieval Slavonia, Medieval Art, Romanesque Sculpture, Medieval Iconography.

In a rather short book of investigation and restoration of medieval castles in Continental Croatia, a special place belongs to Medvedgrad. Although the works at the castle have been marred by professional and political controversies and the publication of the discoveries and restoration has never been completed, although the process was interrupted before the area of the northern keep and the second palace were thoroughly explored, Mr. Drago Miletić and his team have given us both an accomplished scholarly insight and, what is even more important under the circumstances, as accurate as possible a restoration of one of the most important and most beautiful feudal castles in Croatia (fig. 1).¹

Unfortunately, little has been done in terms of art historical research on Medvedgrad since the time of Mr. Miletić's truly pioneering intervention. This paper is an attempt to remedy that and it should be taken, first of all, as an indication of how much scholarly work still needs to be performed in order to fully understand many unresolved problems concerning Medvedgrad, its chronology, the chronology of the late twelfth and early thirteenth - century art in Croatia and in the Carpathian basin in general. We will concentrate our efforts on what is the best preserved, best restored and the most studied element of the Medvedgrad complex: the castle chapel believed to have been dedicated to SS. Filip and Jakov (SS. Philip and James, fig. 2).² And even here, we will try to shed more light on just one aspect of the question – the chapel's figured sculpture, its style and iconography.

¹ Miletić/Valjato-Fabris 1987.

² The dedication to SS. Philip and James (the Lesser) was first mentioned by Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, without quoting the source. See Kukuljević 1854, p. 33; also, Miletić/Valjato-Fabris 1987, p. 9. Although there is no confirmation for the dedication, Kukuljević must have followed some well-established tradition. On the higher peak of Veliki Plazur there is still today a chapel of St. James, in its present form apparently rather recent. The Medvednica Mountain is otherwise surrounded by churches (or memories thereof) dedicated to the Apostles: SS. Simon and Judas at Markuševac, St. Peter at Kašina and Bistrica, St. Andrew at Laz, St. Matthew at Matej; the village of Jakovlje may retain the memory of a church or chapel of St. James (the Greater?), and Ivanec Bistranski of St. John (?). Missing: St. Thomas, St. Matthias, St. Bartholomew. Dedications

Romanesque and Early Gothic sculpture in continental Croatia is not all that abundant. However, research in progress indicates that, be it *in situ* or (predominantly) in museums and collections, there are over one hundred figured, animal and vegetal pieces and fragments of Romanesque and Early Gothic sculpture between the Sava and the Drava rivers. The largest group from the abbey of Rudina is divided among several collections and the second most important, that of Glogovnica, is shared between a museum and three *in situ* sites.³ By the sheer number of pieces, counting here vegetal capitals of the chapel and the *palas* of Medvedgrad outnumbers Glogovnica and comes close to Rudina – one more reason to wonder why the sculpture of Medvedgrad has never been a topic of a special study.

What do we have or, more precisely, what did we have at the chapel?

First, there was a lunette, no traces of which were found during the investigations and restoration. Mr. Miletić has very correctly concluded that, being a good and usable piece of stone, the lunette was probably taken away from the ruins and still awaits rediscovery built into some wall or lying in some basement in the Zagreb area.⁴ As to the possible topic of the lunette, we know nothing. Next, inside the chapel there are two atlas figures in lieu of capitals on top of the colonettes on both sides of the entrance door. One of the atlantes is original, the other one is a modern copy; there is, however, very little doubt that originally there was a symmetrical pair.⁵ Facing them, on top of the two colonettes behind the altar, there are two lion heads sinking their sharp teeth into the body of the column.⁶ Finally, there is the key stone, unfortunately damaged to such an extent that the reconstruction of its original contents is impossible.⁷ It may have contained some figured elements but, unfortunately, we will never know for sure. Thus, in terms of style we will center on the one remaining atlas figure and on the two “column eaters” and in terms of iconography on the two opposing pairs.

The architecture of the chapel has been thoroughly studied by the investigators and here we just sum up briefly the most salient points. The chapel is octagonal with a polygonal apse. It is entirely vaulted by rib vaults, the moldings of which are consistent with other key monuments of the earlier 13th century in the area (Gora, Topusko, Čazma). The same is true of the molding of the triumphal arch. The chapel is built of brick with stone being reserved for architectural and decorative details (portal, capitals, supports, ribs). The building technique and the size of bricks are close to those of the church of St. Mary Magdalene at Čazma, known to have existed before 1241, as well as most of the architectural details. Mr. Miletić has already concluded that Medvedgrad chapel was built by the same workshop.⁸ It might be said that this helps the issue of chronology but, in fact, it does not.⁹ In general, the chapel displays a mix of Romanesque and Gothic elements, not unusual for its place and period. A precise definition of those, their distribution and exact sources should be a subject of another in-depth study.

The surviving original atlas figure is a nicely rounded chubby man with a long incised beard covering also his neck (fig. 3). With his arms raised, bent at elbows, he supports the abacus above his head, the top of which is at the same level as his fists. The figure, strictly frontal and symmetric, is executed in simple bold strokes by a skilful artist capable of reconciling the plasticity of the whole and the engraved detail. In those terms, it can be compared to a number of figured examples from elsewhere in the Carpathian basin e.g., Vertessenkereszt, Pecsvarad, and Zalavar, all datable to the early decades of the 13th century.¹⁰ The

themselves speak in favor of the early establishment of those places of cult. SS. Philip and James are both protectors of petty merchants, hatters, and cloth rollers and appear not infrequently together in Central Europe and the Alps, See: Gorys 2003, p. 129, 195; Badurina 1979, p. 228, 291.

³ We are referring to the exhibition “Romanesque sculpture in the museums and collections between the Sava and the Drava rivers”, scheduled for the Museum of Archeology in Zagreb in 2007 and the Catalogue the work on which is in progress.

⁴ Miletić/Valjato-Fabris 1987, pp. 25-26; also, oral information by Mr. Miletić.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 34-35.

⁶ Ibid., p. 34.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 35-37

⁸ Ibid., pp. 15-16, 45-54 with additional references in footnotes. On Gora in particular, Miletić 1997, *passim*.

⁹ Investigations at the church of St. Mary Magdalene in Čazma were completed in 2005, but no definitive report has been published yet. In our opinion, Medvedgrad and Čazma were basically done by the same workshop, but the question whether they were both done before or after the Tartar invasion of 1242 remains moot. We hope to address that issue in a future study.

¹⁰ Takacs 1994, p. 177, 242; Takacs 2001, p. 440, 450, 452; Marosi 1984, p. 352.

motif of atlas is of course a ubiquitous one but not all that frequent in the Carpathian basin, and in terms of the basic concept or pose, none of the examples are quite comparable to Medvedgrad (Beny, Kalocsa, Aracs).¹¹ A reduced version of the motif in terms of a head supporting a bracket or a corner of a capital occurs too: at Janoshida and, in particular, Esztergom where some of the pieces recall the plastic vigor and graphic detail of the Medvedgrad piece.¹² As another comparison, one should list a badly damaged head of a warrior in the Museum in Čazma, which Mr. Štrk has carefully and in our opinion quite convincingly, linked with the lost tomb of Herceg Koloman from the Dominican cloister at Čazma (fig. 4).¹³ It would be a head of a small figure such as appears along the sides of the tomb of Queen Gertrude the fragments of which were found at Pilisszentkereszt.

The Čazma fragment, however, seems to convey a deeper expression than the Medvedgrad piece and a hand of a more accomplished artist, although such a judgment should be taken with a grain of salt given the poor state of the preservation of the piece. A hand of a more accomplished artist is also revealed by the two column-eaters (figs. 4-7). Although the surface has also been rather damaged, one can still feel the energy and the power of their iron grip at the body of the column, very successfully combined with an almost dreamy expression and a beautifully ornamental outline of the face. Detail flows naturally, the carving of the surface is highly sensitive and the result is an accomplished interplay of recessions and protrusions, of light and shade. Even in their damaged state, the Medvedgrad column-eaters rank among the masterpieces of the period in the Carpathian basin and beyond.

Column-eaters are not unknown in the Romanesque art. As we are going to see in more precise terms below, there are examples from Spain, France and England where, in addition to sculpture, they enjoyed considerable popularity among the illuminators of the most prominent twelfth-century English manuscripts such as the Winchester and Lambeth Bibles. In the Carpathian basin we know of only one example, a fragment from Somogyvár, datable to the later 12th century, today in the lapidarium of the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest (fig. 8). The presence of the insular illuminated manuscripts in Hungary has been established by Ernő Marosi and by Nataša Golob in Slovenia.¹⁴ However, there is another comparison which seems to be fully warranted. The wonderfully floral outline of the Medvedgrad lions and their refined sense for undulating surface brings to one's mind the leafy faces from the sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt (fig. 9.), whose Hungarian episode has been recently given more weight in an article by Imre Takacs.¹⁵

This, of course, opens up a whole world of new associations and one should be careful not to be carried too far. Yet, one should note the thematic uniqueness of the Medvedgrad sculptures within the Carpathian basin, as well as their artistic quality. Inasmuch as it may appear impertinent, we would recall the splendid, both classical and "Villardian" key stones and brackets of the Castel del Monte under construction in the 1240ies. The Imperial *Mezzogiorno* was a promised land of the atlas figure – let us just recall the simple, sinuous atlantes at Santa Maria de Ripalta and, of course, the supreme achievements again at the Castel del Monte.¹⁶ We want to make abundantly clear that these are not direct comparison but rather a search of a general context within which the object of our study could be placed.

This in itself is not very easy, as the forms and artists that traveled through the world of what might be called the "First International Gothic" are notoriously difficult to pin down. Did the Medvedgrad column-eater master reach medieval Slavonia by way of Dalmatia, or the mid-Danube? By way of Split or Esztergom? Was he trained in Apulia or in Bamberg. In 1235 when the great southern workshops of Trani, Ripalta and Capua were in full bloom and Castel del Monte in preparation, emperor Frederic II made a large donation to the Bamberg Cathedral. And our column-eaters belong to the same culture as the "Green

¹¹ Marosi 1984, p. 355.

¹² Ibid., p. 335, 340.

¹³ Štrk 2006, *passim*. The task to reconstruct the presumed monument may seem daunting but not quite impossible, as Imre Takacs's reconstruction of the tomb of Queen Gertrude from Pilisszentkereszt demonstrates. For the newest on that issue, Takacs 2006, pp. 20-21.

¹⁴ Marosi 1984, p. 65. Golob 1999, *passim*.

¹⁵ Takacs 2006, *passim*.

¹⁶ Ghisalberti 1990, pp. 52, 58; Pace 1990, pp. 160-162; Sauerländer 1990, pp. 203-206. Calò Mariani 1984, pp. 64-84, 120-135.

Man” on the console supporting the Bamberg Rider (ca. 1237) as well as the “green faces” of Villard de Honnecourt.¹⁷

How much more light could a detailed analysis of iconography shed on our material?

The iconography of the lion in the medieval art is both rich and controversial. The sources for the lion symbolism lie in the Biblical texts, in the writings of Christian writers and, certainly, in one of the most important books for the medieval iconography - the *Physiologus*. The *Physiologus* begins with the lion to which it attributes three characteristics:

- First, “when the lion perceives that the hunters are pursuing him, he erases his foot-prints with his tail, so that he cannot be traced to his lair. Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah, concealed all traces of His Godhead, when He descended to the earth and entered into the womb of the Virgin Mary.”

- Second, “the lion always sleeps with his eyes open, as Christ slept with His body on the Cross, but awoke at the right hand of the Father.”

- Third, “the lioness brings forth her whelps dead and watches over them until, after three days, the lion comes and howls over them and vivifies them by his breath, as God the Father recalled to life His only-begotten Son, who on the third day was raised from the dead and will likewise raise us all up to eternal life.”¹⁸

This last supposed characteristic of the lion appears to have been a favorite symbol of the Resurrection of Christ as well as of the general resurrection and holds a prominent place in the medieval architectural sculpture. Another important source of its iconography is the apocalyptic vision of St. John that evokes the presence of Christ in the Last Judgment. In the patristic texts the lion becomes an allegory of Christ who is good to the good and without mercy to the sinners.¹⁹ The lion who holds in his paws a lamb, a deer or a human figure is a metaphor of protective Christ (as on the many examples of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century sculpture in Italy and Provence) or it can represent the punishing of the sinners in the image of the lion *anthropophagus*. It is the symbol of death that destructs, absorbs and devours everything but after death restores the soul in re-birth (fig. 10). In Christian iconography this is the promise of the resurrection in Christ and as such the subject appears on baptismal fonts as on the font in the parish church of Lullington (fig. 11).

One of the most prominent functions of the lion in the iconographic sphere is that of the custodian of the sacred places, marking the passage from the profane world into the consecrated area. It gives the symbol of the lion an apotropaic meaning which, by assuming a terrible look, frightens the demonic forces and represents the *traemendum* in the sacred. We find the images of lions represented as monstrous beasts at the entrances of the medieval churches or at the entrances of the most sacred space in the church within the corpus of Romanesque sculpture of France, Spain and England (fig. 12, 13). The symbolism of the Romanesque column - bearing lions is closely related to the function of the architectural element of the porch portal. The column-sustaining lions, so often placed at the entrance of the churches or used as supports of pulpits - in Pisa, Sienna, Lucca, Chiusi and elsewhere in Italy, Tuscany in particular, represent Satan subdued to the service of Christianity. In the vestibule of the cathedral of Piacenza dating from the first half of the 12th century, as well as in many religious buildings in Ferrara, Modena and Rome, the columns rest upon the shoulders of men with lions underneath them, which have seized other men as their prey. They symbolize heretics, who the devil has got hold of, and who are overcome by the power of truth. Among other sculptures on the doors of a church in Novgorod, there is a head of a lion with open jaws in which we see the faces of the damned writhing in agony and above it is the inscription: “Hell consuming sinners.”

Placed at the entrances to the churches lions also invoke both public sentencing and the law, thus associating the iconographic themes and cycles related to the area with both religious and civic justice and morality. The lion beneath the column thus represents triumph of justice over crime.²⁰ Together with

¹⁷ Calò Mariani 1984, p. 125.

¹⁸ Wood Rendell 1928, pp. 56-58.

¹⁹ Enciclopedia dell'arte medievale 1996, and vocem «Leone,» vol. VII, pp. 635-636.

²⁰ According to C. Verzar the lion in the Romanesque Italian sculptural portal tradition could derive from the lion on the column which served in papal Rome as symbol of justice and which during the middle ages stood in front of the transept of San Giovanni in Laterano, in a square that served as an open-air law court. Lions were often associated with the theme of civic justice as the freestanding marble lion in the Piazza Mercantile at Bari can attest. Such lion carries a collar with the

the demonstration of the moral values, the door represented a demand for penance and purification while offering a promise of forgiveness and salvation. At the porch portal of Verona Cathedral there is an inscription surrounding the tympanum «Here God is seen as the great lion, Christ as the lamb». There are many representations of the lion symbolizing Christ's Second Coming and Last Judgment on the facades of medieval churches.²¹

The lion, as we have seen, can symbolize utterly opposing principles since it embodies antagonistic qualities.²² It is not only typical of Christ's triumph over death and hell and the breaking of the seven seals on the book of life (The Revelation V. 5), but also signifies the great adversary, the devil as it is stated in the First Epistle of Peter (I-5, 6-11):

6 *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

7 *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

9 *Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

10 *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

11 *To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*²³

St. Peter speaks of the devil «as a roaring lion that walks about, seeking whom he may devour». The representation of the so-called «devouring lion» motif is one of the most bizarre Romanesque motifs. A lion can be represented devouring animals, human figures (fig. 14), plants, ornamental motifs and/or columns as in the examples of the capitals in the Medvedgrad chapel. Quite frequent among such is the «foliate spewer», a motif known from the Pre-Romanesque stone sculpture mostly in France, England, and Spain, e.g., on the tenth-century font at Gurabecque in the Pas-de-Calais or on the font at Lullington (Somerset). On a page from the twelfth-century Winchester Bible we can observe a similar motif of a lion head spewing the ornamental motif that separates two scenes both connected with the victory of Christ and Christian faith over Satan (fig. 15).

This is the lion to which St. Augustine refers when he exclaims in his *Sermo de Tempore* «who would not rush into the jaws of this lion, if the lion of the tribe of Judah should not prevail! It is lion against lion, and lamb against wolf.» The lion of the tribe of Judah is opposed to the devouring lion and the lamb as the type of the meek and humble Savior is opposed to the fierce and insatiable wolf typifying Satan. Christ, he adds, «is a lion in fortitude, a lamb in innocence; a lion because He is invincible, a lamb because He is meek and gentle.» In another discourse St. Augustine says that the devil is impetuous as the lion and insidious as the dragon, raging openly like the former and lying in wait secretly like the latter. The lion and the bear typify the devil «who is figured in these two beasts, because the bear's strength is in its paw and the lion's is in its mouth.»²⁴

The specific example of the motif, the so called «column eater or swallower» - a head of a beast (most often of a lion) with specific characteristics such as pointed ears, bulging eyes, grinning face with strong teeth that bite and leave their marks on the column - is to be found in some churches in south and southwestern France, northern Spain and England.²⁵ Decorating the capitals, archivolts and corbels, the motif is usually connected with the portal sculpture program (fig. 16) or can be found in the interior of the churches, usually in the apses and close to the presbytery (fig. 17) but could also be found in other places such as a capital of a column of the rose window in a church in Kent (fig. 18). This motif is very characteristic

inscription *Custos Iusticie*, and it must have marked the place of a medieval open-air law court. In medieval juridical sources the place of the judge was often described as *inter leones*. Verzar, 1999 pp. 257 – 267.

²¹ De Appolonia 2004, passim

²² Lessico dei simboli medievali 1994, pp. 173 – 190.

²³ The Bible. The New Testament (authorized King James version). Oxford, 1993.

²⁴ Evans 1896, pp. 46 – 48.

²⁵ Recently, the matter has been carefully studied by Deborah Kahn from the University of Boston. Professor Kahn presented the subject at the 81th Medieval Academy Annual Meeting in Boston in April, 2006 in the paper «Jaws that Bite. Mask Capitals in Romanesque Europe». The article is yet to be published.

of the southwestern France where we can observe it in many churches such as Saint Roman at Melles (fig. 19), the priories at Chadenac (fig. 20) and at Echillais (fig. 21), the church of Notre Dame in Cunault, and St. Sylvestre at Colombiers. Many of those churches are situated in the province of Saintonge, close to the main pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela and their decorations are dated to the late 11th and early 12th century.²⁶ This area was joined to England in 1154, following the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine to Henry of Anjou, later Henry II of England. French monks were collaborators of the kings and princes in founding and building of the monasteries in England as well as in Spain. This explains close relations to both Spanish and English regions and the development of a specific decorative program or forms such as the representation of a devouring lion or a column swallower in those regions.²⁷ The similar examples are found in the pilgrimage church of Santiago in Puente la Reina (fig. 22) and in some churches in England such as the church of St. John in Elkstone in Gloucestershire (fig. 23)²⁸, St. Mark and St. Luke in Avington in Berkshire (fig. 24) and at St. Giles in Stanton in Wiltshire (fig. 25). The images are closely related to the similar examples in the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts usually representing lion heads in pairs spewing the columns/vaults that separate the Canon tables (fig. 24).

The figures of atlantes at the corbels above the entrance of the church at Medvegrad are a frequently used motif in the Romanesque art with roots in Antiquity. Within the Romanesque sculptural corpus we often find prophets represented as atlantes on lintels, archivolt or *trimeaux* of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century churches tied to the theme of the Last Judgment. Taken from the symbolism of the Ancient art involving a Titan who was forced to hold the earth on his shoulders for eternity, the Romanesque figures embody the idea of the Coming of Christ usually displayed in the center of the sculptural program.²⁹ They stand for the sinners and the dead who are expecting the end of time and the final judgment. The atlantes are represented in many different poses, naked or vested, usually with the arms lifted in the position of carrying heavy loads. Grimaces and distortion of their faces emphasize the burden they have been charged with. We find them in different arrangements and places on indoor and outdoor architectural elements of the church such as interior capitals (figs. 25 and 26), capitals of the exterior (figs. 27 and 28), corbels and other supporting elements (fig. 29).

Stylistically, the Medvedgrad stones are close to figurative Romanesque corbels that for the most parts represented beasts, monsters and images of sinners, subjects that grew very popular from the 11th century on. These images often represent figures from the margins of the society – entertainers, acrobats, mummers or musicians shown on the outer walls of churches as a gallery of sinners. In the 13th century corbel tables became less popular and moved to the inside of churches.³⁰

The preserved figured decoration of the Medvedgrad chapel fits well within the framework of the medieval iconographic program endowed with the passion and drama of the most popular and prominent subject, that of the tremendous pictorial pages of the Last Days. The images of warning, of sin, of suffering, judgment and punishment “welcomed” the faithful entering the church. Medieval pictorial Apocalypse, potent in terror and abundant in monsters and strange visions, enigmatic symbols and unfamiliar elements, was a response to the needs of the medieval man who perceived the strange and distorted forms as a mode of his obedience to and as an expression of an absolute ignorance of God’s Universe. The motif of the atlantes is widely used in the repertoire of stone sculpture, whereas the motif of a “devouring lion” or a “column swallower” is mostly concentrated in a few regions of Europe, as mentioned above; the Medvedgrad capitals are only the second identified example of that iconographic motif in this part of Europe.

But their appearance is not quite random. The newest discoveries and research amply demonstrate the links between the art of the medieval Slavonia in the last decade of the 12th through the fourth decade of the 13th century, and the art of the royal domain of Esztergom and the Danube Bend in general.³¹ This is not only a question of style. The positioning of the column-eating lions in full view opposite the entrance,

²⁶ Eygun 1970, sections on the monuments mentioned above.

²⁷ Porter 1985, relevant section on the listed monuments.

²⁸ Knowles 1930, pp. 187 – 200. The key stone of the chancel vault of the church is decorated with four images of column-swallowers which define it as a unique example of the sort (Ibid, pl. V, fig. 8).

²⁹ Lessico dei simboli medievali 1994, Atlante, ad vocem, pp. 73 – 74.

³⁰ Dale 2001, pp. 43 – 57.

³¹ Goss 2006A, in press; Goss 2006B, in press.

and above the altar, clearly recalls the above mentioned words from Peter I/5, 6-11. We do not believe it is accidental that a very similar inscription (preserved) was held by St. Peter at the Porta Speciosa of the Cathedral of Esztergom (late 12th century.). It runs: “K(arissi)MI VIGILATE I(n)OR(ation)O(n)IBUS Q(ui)A ADV(er)SARIUS V(este)R DIABOL(u)S TA(m)Q(uam) LEO RUGIE(n)S C(ir)CUIT QUERENSQ(ue)m DEUORET.³²The Medvedgrad chapel apse is an eloquent reference to those words. After being reminded, and refreshed by prayer, the faithful would turn toward the exit where they would face the pair of the atlantes, directly opposite the lions. What they would be seeing in such a way was the world of sin, the world of today, the *homo reus*, briefly, themselves, in a noble function of expiating the sins by supporting by the labors of their hands the “dome of Heaven” above. If the key-stone contained a “Dextra Dei” as it does in some other Pannonian examples, they would, passing below, receive the divine blessing.

This entire iconography is rather old-fashioned, “Romanesque.” The “late Romanesque” links between Zagreb and Esztergom are brought home in a most graphic way by two capitals, one in the Historical Museum of Croatia in Zagreb, the other *in situ* in the royal palace at Esztergom (figs. 30, 31). They are simply the same, which did not elude Marosi’s attention.³³The Zagreb capital was believed to have come from Medvedgrad, but nowadays it is linked to the Romanesque cathedral of Zagreb.³⁴It is “too early” for Medvedgrad. Or, is it? The art history evidence, both iconographic and stylistic (to be dealt with in detail in a future study) point to a date earlier than the traditional one of cca. 1250 and thereafter.³⁵Such an earlier date must be at least reconsidered. And so also the role of Medvedgrad in the genesis of the Gothic in Continental Croatia, not only in terms of style but also in terms of its surprising artistic quality.

³² Marosi 1984, p. 81.

³³ Dextra Dei at Veszprem, Marosi 1984, fig. 370. Marosi 1984, p. 136, figs., 103-104; Marosi (figs. 105, 107) brings two more capitals (one fragmentary) from Esztergom which may be related to the two pieces. A recently discovered fragment of an animal head at the Museum of Sv. Ivan Zelina, and yet unpublished, may be a fragment of a similar piece.

³⁴ Valentić/Prišter 2002, p. 48

³⁵ Miletić/Valjato-Fabris 1987, p. 54

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Sažetak

Novi pogledi na kapelu na Medvedgradu

Ključne riječi: Medvedgrad, Hrvatska, srednjovjekovna Slavonija, srednjovjekovna umjetnost, romanička skulptura, srednjovjekovna ikonografija.

Plemićki grad Medvedgrad kraj Zagreba rijedak je primjer detaljno istraženog i restauriranog starog grada u Hrvatskoj. Nažalost, zbog stručnih i političkih kontroverzi Medvedgrad je nestao iz znanstvene literature odmah po prekidu istraživanja koja nisu obuhvatila do kraja sjeverni dio grada, te po objavljivanju pionirskog rada Drage Miletića i Marine Valjato Fabris o istraživanjima i restauraciji grada.

Cilj ovog rada je započeti revalorizaciju jednog važnog spomenika kasne romanike/rane gotike u kontinentalnoj Hrvatskoj i u Karpatskom bazenu općenito. Pri tome je naglasak stavljen na ikonografiju kapele, odnosno na očuvane figuralne elemente – par kapitela-atlanta (jedan obnovljen) pri ulazu i par kapitela lavova “stupoždera” na zidu iza oltara. Detaljnom ikonografskom analizom obaju motiva određuje se mjesto naših radova u kontekstu romaničkog svjetonazora i svijeta romaničkih oblika, te dostupnosti istih motiva u Karpatskom bazenu.

Motiv lavova stupoždera dobro je poznat europskom zapadu (Engleska, jugozapadna Francuska – Plantagenetske zemlje, koje ostaju vezane uz englesku krunu do 15. st., Španjolska) u skulpturi, te u inzularnim i kvazi - inzularnim manuskriptima, kakvi su, kako su pokazali Marosi i Golob, bili pristupni u Ugarskoj i Sloveniji. Ipak, uz Medvedgrad postoji samo još jedan primjer lava stupoždera u Karpatskom bazenu, u Somgyvaru, i to iz 12. stoljeća. Medvedgradski kapiteli jedinstveni su u cijeloj Panoniji i predstavljaju izrazit primjer umjetnosti “prve internacionalne gotike”, koja nastaje u kontekstu kulture vezane uz krug cara Fridrika II. Legitimno se postavlja pitanje jesu li ti oblici, koji imaju jak oslonac u kulturi koju predstavljaju crteži Villarda de Honnecourta (čija je mađarska epizoda doživjela nedavno revalorizaciju u radovima Imre Takacsa) stigli u Hrvatsku iz ključnih središta te kulture (na pr. Bamberg) preko Ugarske (Jak), ili preko Apulije.

Usprkos takvoj izrazitoj modernosti oblika, valja podučiti da je ikonografija tradicionalna, “romanička”, a sadržajno se izravno veže uz zamisao izraženu u natpisu koji je držao Sv. Petar na Porta Speciosa katedrale u Esztergomu (poslije 1180.), gdje se podsjeća na tekst iz Petrove poslanice (Petar, I, 5, 6-11) i potiče vjernike da se molitvama obrate oltaru jer đavo poput ričućeg lava traži svoje žrtve. Ovoj sadržajnoj vezi s umjetnošću kraljevske domene u okuci Dunava (Esztergom, Pilisszentekereszt, Visegrad, itd.), pridružuje se već primijećeni fenomen (Marosi) kapitela iz kraljevske palače u Esztergomu i kapitela u Hrvatskom povijesnom muzeju u Zagrebu, navodno s Medvedgrada, koji su doslovno isti, a treba ih datirati oko 1200. ili nešto ranije.

U zaključku postavlja se pitanje prihvaćene datacije Medvedgrada (poslije 1250.) i predlaže njena revalorizacija detaljnom stilskom analizom elemenata skulpture što će biti predmetom istraživanja i studija koji slijede.



Fig. 1. Castle of Medvedgrad (foto: V. P. Goss)



Fig. 2. Castle of Medvedgrad, chapel (foto: V. P. Goss)



Fig. 3. Medvedgrad, chapel, atlas figure (foto: D. Miletić)



Fig. 4. Medvedgrad, chapel, column-eating lion (foto: D. Miletić)



Fig. 5. Medvedgrad, chapel, column-eating lion (foto: V. P. Goss)



Fig..6. Medvedgrad, chapel, column-eating lions (foto: D. Miletić)



Fig. 7. Medvedgrad, chapel, column-eating lion (foto: V. P. Goss)



Fig. 8. Budapest, National Gallery, column-eater from Saomgyvar (foto: V. P. Goss)



Fig. 9. Villard de Honnecourt, study of a face (foto: V. P. Goss)



Fig. 10. Church of Saint Pierre in Airvault, capital at the apse, exterior (foto: M. Vicelja)



Fig. 11. Lullington, parish church, font (foto: M. Vicelja)



Fig. 12. Church of Notre Dame in Cunault, capital in the choir (foto: M. Vicelja)



Fig. 13. Priory church in Echillais, Saintonge, west facade (foto: M. Vicelja)

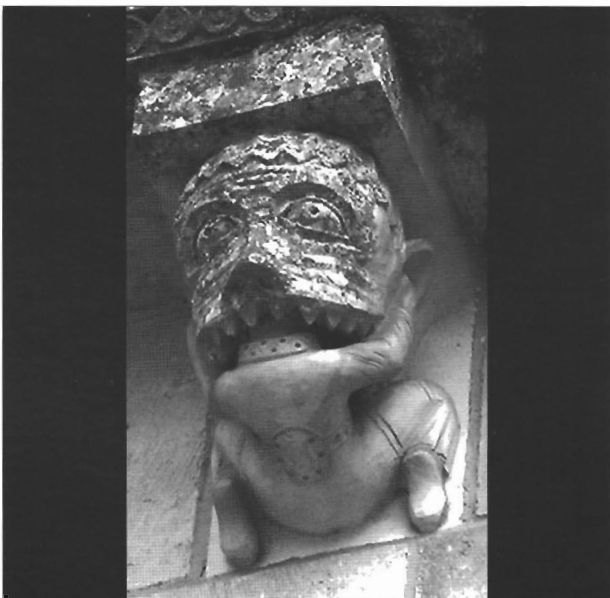


Fig. 14. Church of Saint Nicholas in Maillezais, corbel on the west portal (foto: M. Vicelja)

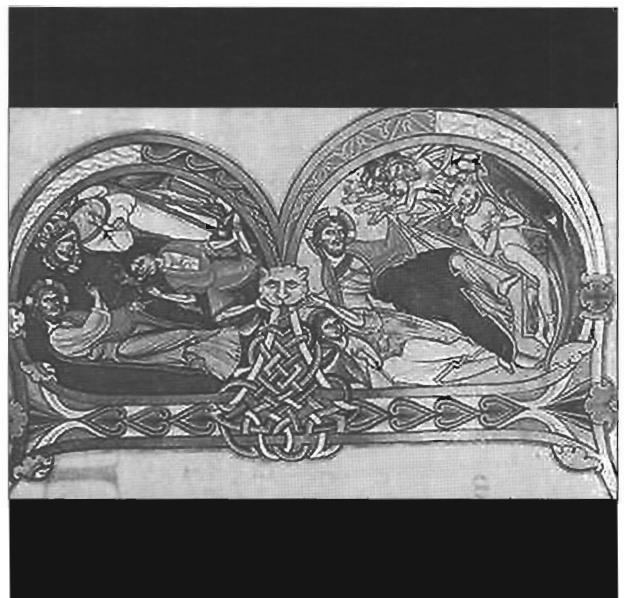


Fig. 15. Winchester Bible, The life of David (David kills the lion and the bear), Winchester Cathedral Library, folio 218 (foto: M. Vicelja)



Fig. 16. Church of St. Sylvester, Colombiers, Vienne, portal capitals (foto: M. Vicelja)



Fig. 17. Church of Notre Dame in Cunault, capital in the presbitery (foto: M. Vicelja)

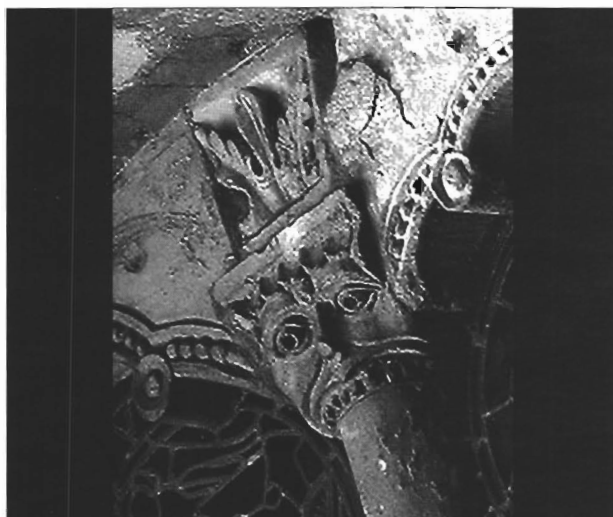


Fig. 18. *Parish church in Bafreston, Kent, rose window, west facade (foto: M. Vicelja)*

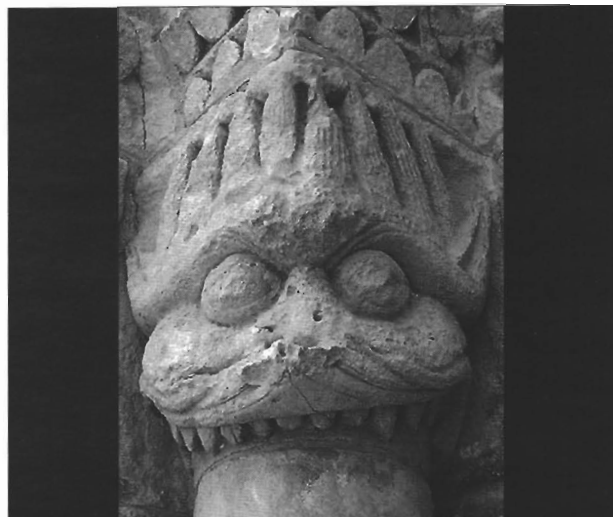


Fig. 19. *Church of Saint Roman in Melles, south archivolt (foto: M. Vicelja)*

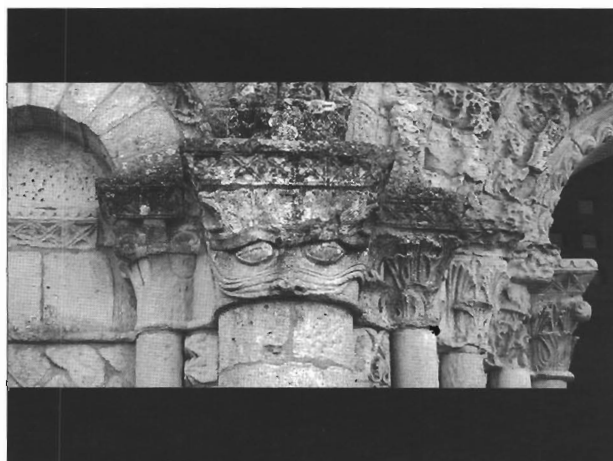


Fig. 20. *Priory church in Chadenac, west portal (foto: M. Vicelja)*



Fig. 21. *Priory church in Echillais, Saintonge, west portal (foto: M. Vicelja)*

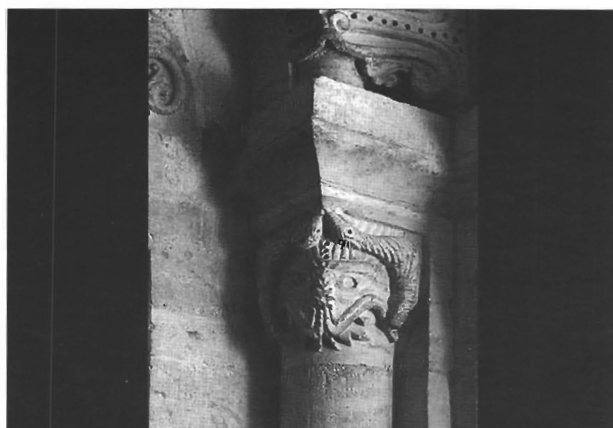


Fig. 22. *Church of Santiago in Puente la Reina, west portal (foto: M. Vicelja)*



Fig. 23. *Church of St. John in Elkstone, Gloucestershire (foto: M. Vicelja)*



Fig. 24. Anglo-Saxon manuscript, late 10th century, British Library Harley 76, f.8v, f.10 (foto: M. Vicelja)



Fig. 25. Church of San Savino, Piacenza, indoor capital (foto: M. Vicelja)



Fig. 26. Church of Saint Dier in Auvergne, indoor capital (foto: M. Vicelja)



Fig. 27. Church of Saint Martin in Canigou, cloister (foto: M. Vicelja)



Fig. 28. Church of Saint Pierre in Airvault, capital on the facade (foto: M. Vicelja)

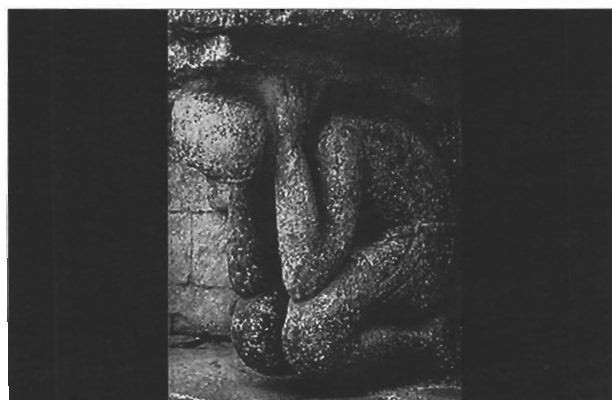


Fig. 29. Parish church in Ruvo di Puglia, west portal (foto: M. Vicelja)



Fig. 30. Estergom, Royal Palace, capital (foto: V. P. Goss)



Fig. 31. Zagreb, Historical Musuem of Croatia, capital from Medvedgtad (?)(foto: HPM)