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Marble Relief with Enthroned Christ from Rab

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This paper focuses on the marble relief with enthroned Christ built in the north wall in the interior of the church of St Mary at Rab. The author begins by giving an overview of the scholarly literature that mentions this relief before proceeding with an analysis of its iconography. Finally, the author suggests a possible historical context in which the relief may have been produced. Since it was first mentioned in Eitelberger's book of 1861, the relief has been characterised as early Romanesque – an evaluation agreed upon by most present-day scholars. Scholarly attention has been almost exclusively directed at the issue of the relief's date and origin, and, due to the high quality of its carving, dimensions and its overall shape, the relief has been interpreted as an imported icon. At the same time, the iconography of the depiction itself has been relatively neglected, although even Abramić noted the unusual form of the lyre-backed throne. The iconographic analysis and interpretation presented in this paper throw new light on the possible commissioners and the historical circumstances that obtained during the period when the church of St Mary still had a cathedral function.

Key words: Rab, Christ, lyre-backed throne, Byzantium, Venice

In the north aisle of the church of St Mary at Rab is a relief depicting Christ seated on a throne, which has been built in the wall as a *spolia* (Fig. 1). It is a 110.5 cm high and 91.5 cm wide marble panel which had been reconstructed from six fragments at some point before it was placed in its current position. The relief is relatively well-preserved. The edge mouldings on all four sides are original and only the higher parts of the relief, such as the face or feet, are worn. The original edges consist of a flat-band moulding, the inner sloping surface of which is decorated with a repeated foliate motif composed of five small acanthus leaves. Against the plain background of the main field is an enthroned, forward-facing figure of Christ. He is seated with his legs held slightly apart and his right hand held across his chest in a gesture of benediction, with the thumb touching the third finger. His left hand is not visible, lying behind a rectangular-shaped book that rests on the left knee. The throne is ornate and depicted in considerable detail. It consists of an oblong seat supported by four legs which are articulated as columns with bases, capitals and roll mouldings set midway along their length. They rest on an oblong base the same size as the seat. Also resting on this base, between the legs, is a footrest supporting Christ's feet, while on the seat is a cushion on which he sits. The back of the throne has convex sides (lyre-shaped) decorated with widely set rings, and a plain upper horizontal bar; tightly pleated fabric is suspended from this. The foot rest and the right side of the throne are rendered perspectively.

It is not known when the relief was set in its present position. When it was first recorded by Eitelberger in 1861, it was built high up in the exterior of the north wall where it stayed at least until 1926 when it is mentioned by Brusić.¹ Although the church itself was built in the 5th century as Rab Cathedral, it enjoyed considerable reworking over the centuries: it was provided with new nave columns, capitals and two lateral apses in the 11th century, followed by the remodelling of the façade on the occasion of a visit by Pope Alexander III in 1177, and modifications of the lateral walls in the 13th century.² This clearly indicates that the relief was not in its original position when Eitelberger saw it.



Fig. 1. Relief of the enthroned Christ, St Mary's, Rab (from: Supičić 1999, 179)

Historiographical overview

Eitelberger considered the relief to be a high-quality Romanesque carving and thus similar to the gable with an enthroned Christ supported by two angels from the Sustipan cemetery at Split.³ After Eitelberger, the relief was reproduced in predominantly Austrian and Italian publications until the mid 1920s. Among these, Frey, who also saw the relief on the exterior and described it in 1912, paid special attention to the throne, noting that both rear legs are rendered correctly in perspective, and claiming the capitals on top of the legs are Byzantine cushion capitals.⁴ He compared the lyre-shaped back of the throne to that featuring in the later, ninth-century mosaic in the narthex of Hagia Sophia, which, at the time Frey was writing, was considered to be sixth-century work, and observed that it is a type often found in sixth-century mosaics such as those in the chapel of Santa Matrona at St Prisco near Capua (although there the throne is actually not lyre-backed) and in Sant' Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna (Fig. 2), but also on the seventh-century silver reliquary from Grado Cathedral depicting the Virgin on a similar throne.⁵ Based on this comparative material, Frey dated the relief to the 6th or

1 Eitelberger 1861, pp. 25-26; Eitelberger 1884, pp. 73-74; Frey 1912, p. 89, Fig. 1; Dudan 1921, vol. 1, 89; Brusić 1926, 70. Brusić is the only author who records a more precise location of the relief – above the side door.

2 Domijan 2001, p. 89; Domijan 2004, pp. 9, 12-14.

3 Eitelberger 1861, p. 25; Eitelberger 1884, p. 74.

4 Frey 1912, pp. 89-90. He wrote that the foot rest was also decorated with the acanthus border which frames the panel.

5 Frey 1912, pp. 89-90.



Fig. 2. Enthroned Christ, mosaic on the south wall, Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna (photo: N. Thompson)

7th century, stating that it could have been produced in Ravenna or Constantinople.⁶ Apart from Frey, the panel was more generally considered to be Romanesque in publications by Wulff, Schleyer and Toesca, while Brusić grouped it with the 'interlace' sculptures of the 'ornamental style' which he dated to the period between the 8th and 10th centuries and, more precisely, ascribed it to the eighth-century phase of the Cathedral.⁷ In 1932 the loosely Romanesque date (from the 11th to the 13th centuries) was also rejected by Abramić who argued that lyre-shaped thrones suggest a date

before the year 1000.⁸ He thus dated the relief to the 10th century, while identifying Christ as a *Majestas*, based solely on the blessing gesture and comparisons with the *Majestas* reliefs from Venice and Mistra.⁹ Following these initial analyses, the relief was largely ignored, being mentioned only sporadically in passing, such as when Prijatelj, probably relying on Eitelberger and Abramić, invoked it as an example of the *Majestas* comparable to the Sustipan gable, or when Žic-Rokov referred to it as early Christian.¹⁰ In the late 20th century, however, scholarly interest in

6 Frey 1912, pp. 89-90.

7 Wulff 1914, vol. 2, p. 606; Schleyer 1914, p. 73; Toesca 1927, vol. 1, p. 895, note 33. Brusić's dating is arbitrary; he was a Franciscan and not an art historian and the date relies only on his view of which century the early medieval fragments from St Mary's might have belonged to.

8 Abramić 1932, p. 323.

9 Abramić 1932, p. 323. It is unclear to which *Majestas* relief in the basilica of St Mark Abramić is referring. The only comparable example is on the exterior of the north wall, where the seated Christ is one of five reliefs, the other four depicting the evangelists and are dated to the 12th century. See in: Demus 1995, pp. 13 and 47.

10 Prijatelj 1954, p. 72; Žic-Rokov 1972, p. 458.

the relief was rekindled when Belamarić wrote about it, considering it to be an imported Byzantine icon of twelfth-century date.¹¹ Soon after him, the relief was discussed by Domijan who interpreted it on several occasions as a proto-Romanesque work of the 11th century.¹² Domijan compared the carving to Venetian works, and referred to it as Veneto-Byzantine, ascribing it to the same phase of remodelling of the then Cathedral and its façade which, he claimed, took place either around 1050 or in the second half of the 11th century (rather than the 12th).¹³ Recently, the relief was published by Marasović as a 'marble icon', implying that he supports Domijan's hypothesis, while Jarak left the issue of the function open, suggesting it could have decorated either the façade or the altar of the former Cathedral.¹⁴

Iconographic sources

Although Abramić and Prijatelj identified the scheme on the Rab relief as a *Majestas Domini*, there is no convincing iconographic evidence that this is the case. Both Kirschbaum and Poilpré agree that the term *Majestas Domini* can only be applied to those images of Christ in which he is enthroned in a mandorla surrounded by the four evangelist symbols, based on John's vision from the Book of Revelation.¹⁵ Although Schiller was more flexible when using this term and stretched it to include images of Christ in which he is surrounded by cherubim or ordinary angels, she too isolated the image of the enthroned Christ holding the Gospels and blessing as a separate iconographic type which she identified as *Christus-Rex (Basileus)*.¹⁶ To her, Christ *Basileus* is similar to the *Majestas Domini* only to the extent that both belong to scenes which depict the exalted Christ after his Resurrection.¹⁷ The term *Rex/Basileus* itself implies that the origin of this type stems from late antique depictions of Roman emperors.¹⁸ Borrowing from this well-established imperial iconography, the scheme outnumbered all other representations of Christ from the late 4th century onwards.¹⁹

The attributes of Christ *Basileus* are the book, open or closed, in his left hand, which represents the Gospels, and the gestures of his right hand.²⁰ These can be either the gesture of the orator, with the second and third finger held upright, or the gesture of the ruler, with the open hand extended or held across the chest.²¹ The orator's gesture subsequently came to be understood as a benediction but it is unclear when this occurred.²² Another crucial iconographic element of the *Basileus* image is the throne, inherited from the imperial portraits which Schiller demonstrated could include details such as footrests, as in the Rab relief.²³

With regard to the image of the *Basileus* itself, regardless of the shape of the throne, the earliest examples appear in Byzantine art. For instance, Christ on the previously mentioned sixth-century mosaic on the south wall of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna (Fig. 2) is enthroned and surrounded by angels at the head of the procession of male saints.²⁴ The object which he holds in his left hand today, a pointed sceptre, is the result of a restoration carried out between 1857 and 1862; a sixteenth-century description of the mosaic records that in this hand Christ held an open book with the inscription *Ego sum Rex Gloriarum*.²⁵ This Ravennate *Basileus* represents at the same time the earliest preserved example of the lyre-shaped throne and happens to be the only extant example of it in pre-iconoclastic art.²⁶

After the iconoclastic conflict, this iconographic scheme was revived in Byzantine mosaics imbued with strong imperial associations. In the previously mentioned ninth-century mosaic in the narthex of Hagia Sophia, Christ *Basileus*, seated on a lyre-shaped throne, receives homage from a Byzantine emperor, most likely Leo VI (866–912), the second ruler from the Macedonian dynasty (Fig. 3).²⁷ Even more important is the now lost depiction of the enthroned Christ on a lyre-shaped throne in the apse vault behind the imperial throne in the *chrysotriklinos* of the Imperial Palace at Constantinople from the middle of the 9th

11 Belamarić 1997, pp. 58 and 60.

12 Domijan 2001, pp. 95 and 98; Domijan 2004, pp. 12–13.

13 Domijan 2001, p. 98.

14 Marasović 2009, p. 141; Jarak 2010, p. 101–102.

15 Kirschbaum 1971, vol. 3, p. 136; Poilpré 2005, p. 13.

16 Schiller 1986, vol. 3, pp. 238 and 165.

17 Schiller 1986, vol. 3, p. 165.

18 For example, Theodosius on the well-known silver misorium from the 4th century. See in: Elsner 1998, Fig. 56.

19 Schiller 1986, vol. 3, p. 167.

20 Ibidem, p. 223.

21 Ibidem

22 Ibidem

23 Schiller 1986, vol. 3, pp. 168 and 224.

24 Ibidem, p. 224. The mosaic belongs to Theoderic's decoration from the early 6th century. See in: Breckenridge 1980–1981, p. 248.

25 Deichmann 1969, p. 305, fig. 259; Breckenridge 1980–1981, p. 248, note 16; Mauskopf-Deliyannis 2010, p. 158.

26 Breckenridge 1980–1981, p. 248.

27 Schiller 1986, 3, p. 229; Brubaker 1999, pp. 145–150, fig. 82; Oikonomides 1976, pp. 151–172.



Fig. 3. Enthroned Christ, inner narthex of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople © Dumbarton Images, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archives, Washington, DC

century.²⁸ This restoration has been attributed to the reign of Emperor Michael III (842 – 867) or even Basil I (867 – 886), the founder of the Macedonian dynasty who usurped the throne.

Also in the 9th century, the image of the *Basileus* on a lyre-shaped throne appears on portable objects. The emperors from the Macedonian dynasty used this iconographic type on the coins they minted between 860s and 950s, but also in the illuminated manuscripts they commissioned, as can be seen in two miniatures of Christ in the Homilies of Gregory Nazianzus dated to 879 – 882.²⁹ After the end of the Macedonian dynasty, this type of the throne was re-introduced in coinage by two eleventh-century emperors: Constantine IX (1042 – 1055) and his son Constantine X (1059 – 1067) in order to refer back to a past perceived as more glori-

ous, when Byzantium was at its peak (Fig. 5).³⁰

It follows from all of the above that after the middle of the 9th century, the *Basileus* type survived almost exclusively on numismatic material. After all, the lyre-shaped throne itself had originally been used for Roman emperors in coinage from the second half of the 5th century onwards.³¹ Apart from the Constantinopolitan mosaic in the narthex of Hagia Sophia and the image in the *chrysotriklinos*, the only other example in monumental painting is that of Christ in a tenth-century fresco at the cave church of Santa Cristina Carpignano near Otranto.³²

Here it has to be mentioned that there are early Christian depictions of the Virgin with Child on such a throne but these provide little analytical information for the analysis of the *Basileus* image and are thus more

28 Grierson, Hendy, Bellinger 1999, p. 34; Breckenridge 1980-1981, p. 257; Parani 2003, p. 165.

29 The first examples in coinage are those minted by Emperor Basil I. See in: Breckenridge 1980-1981, pp. 248, 252-253. The Homilies of Gregory Nazianzus are today in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, gr. 510, Fols. Av, 67v). The first illumination of Christ *Basileus* appears in the frontispiece while the second illustrates the Vision of Isaiah. See in: Breckenridge 1980-1981, p. 248; Brubaker 1999, pp. 54, 139 and 282, fig. II.

30 Breckenridge 1980-1981, p. 248.

31 The term 'lyraförmig' was first used by Weigand to describe the throne of the Virgin on the Grado reliquary. The thrones themselves were introduced by Leo I (473-474) in his *solidi*. See in: Weigand 1932, pp. 65-69; Breckenridge 1980-1981, p. 250.

32 Abramić 1932, p. 323. After iconoclasm, the Virgin is seated on such a throne only in the eleventh-century fresco in St Sophia at Ohrid. See in: Schiller 1980, vol. 4/2, fig. 417.



Fig. 4. The enthroned Christ, Biblioteca Capitolare di Vercelli, Ms CXLVIII, fol. 8r.



Fig. 5. Gold *histamenon* of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX (1042 – 1055) © MoneyMuseum, Coin Collection, Zurich

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relevant to discussions of the overall development and usage of this type of throne.³³ For instance, they tend to have backs with a different curvature, which have been compared by Breckenridge to animal horns.³⁴ The iconographic type of the Christ *Basileus* on a lyre-shaped throne does not exist in western art. In Carolingian art, the most frequent example of the exalted Christ is *Majestas Domini* and isolated images of the *Basileus* appear only in the eighth-century Godescalc Gospels; in the ninth-century Lorsch Gospels, and in the ninth-century Homilies of Gregory the Great, today in Vercelli but originally from Nonantola, where Christ is identified as *Rex regum* (Fig. 4).³⁵ It is interesting to note that in this image Christ has the word *Lux* placed in his cross nimbus which is the case on a fragment of a marble crucifix from Biskupija dated to the 11th century.

33 For example in the sixth-century fresco in Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome; the contemporary mosaic in the church of Panagia Kanakaria at Lythrankomi on Cyprus; a somewhat later mosaic (now lost) from the church of St Demetrios at Salonica, and the previously mentioned seventh-century silver reliquary from Grado. See in: Breckenridge 1980-1981, pp. 249-250.

34 Breckenridge 1980-1981, pp. 250 and 252.

35 Schiller 1986, vol. 3, p. 227, figs 639-641. The Homilies are in Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare (Ms CXLVIII, fol. 8r). See also in: Crivello 2005, p. 65 and P1.III where he identified the image as that of Christ *Basileus*.

With the revived interest in Byzantine art during the Ottonian emperors, the 11th century saw a rise in western instances of the isolated enthroned Christ, beginning with the early eleventh-century golden bookcover of the Uta Codex.³⁶ The 11th century was also the time at which the first stone sculptures of the *Basileus* type, albeit without a lyre-shaped throne, began to appear, such as the relief from the church of St Emmeram at Regensburg (1049 – 1060), or that from the church of St Radegund at Poitiers.³⁷

An isolated Christ *Basileus* can also be seen in a miniature in the Rab Pericopes (also known as the Rab Evangelistary) dated to the second half of the 11th century.³⁸ This image, which Badurina identified as the Transfiguration despite the lack of any defining iconographic indicators of this episode, shows Christ blessing with his right and holding a book in his left hand.³⁹ Badurina argued that the manuscript may have been produced locally, in the Benedictine monastery

36 Schiller 1986, vol. 3, p. 228, fig. 643.

37 Ibidem, figs 644-645.

38 Badurina 1997, pp. 186-187, fig. 49; Badurina 1965-1966, p. 5. The manuscript is written in Beneventan script of Monte Cassino type. Six folia are in the Rectory at Rab and two are in the National University Library at Zagreb (R4106).

39 Badurina 1965-1966, pp. 8-9.

of St John the Evangelist, on stylistic grounds – the presence of ‘Byzantine morphology’ next to ‘western colours, and geometric and vegetal ornament’ – and attributed it to what Croatian scholarship sometimes identifies as ‘adriobyzantinism’.⁴⁰ However, this *Basileus* also lacks a lyre-shaped throne which once again indicates that this iconographic type appeared exclusively in Byzantine art.

Symbolical interpretation

As noted, depictions of Christ *Basileus* express the power of the exalted Christ as a ruler.⁴¹ Although his kingdom is not secular, he is the messianic king, the heir of David, and his kingdom is without end.⁴² This idea is confirmed by the lyre-backed throne which was used by the eastern Roman and Byzantine emperors, as can be judged from the coinage from the 5th century onwards, and which was borrowed for the images of Christ in monumental art and portable objects alike. As early as the 6th century, such a throne was given to Christ in Sant’ Apollinare Nuovo – the church which the Ostrogothic king and Arian heretic Theodoric built as his palatine chapel around 500 and whose mosaics were rapidly modified as soon as Justinian’s army brought Ravenna under Byzantine control and the true, Orthodox religion. The inscription *Rex Gloriarum* itself, from the original book in Christ’s left hand, directly witnesses the royal/imperial connotation. The image of the enthroned *Basileus* on a lyre-shaped throne survived the iconoclastic controversy and re-appeared in the 9th century in the most important aspects of imperial rule such as in the ceremonial hall, *chrysotriklinos*, immediately behind the imperial throne; in the narthex of Hagia Sophia, above the doors through which the Emperor enters the Great Church during the liturgy of the Great Entrance, and finally on coins, which have always been the ideal medium for displaying motifs associated with imperial propaganda.

All ninth-century examples coincide more or less with the time of the Macedonian emperors and it is their glory that Emperors Constantine IX and Constantine X wanted to revive between 1042 and 1067 when they had their golden *histamanoi* impressed with the image of the Christ *Basileus* on a lyre-shaped throne because to them it stood for ‘past associations and glories’.⁴³

Breckenridge, however, did not think that these two emperors were particularly aware of imperial associations and the ‘special significance’ this motif had held for the Macedonian dynasty, and this, in his opinion, explains why the lyre-shaped throne was absent from the more varied types of the enthroned Christ.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the inscription *Rex regnantium*, ‘king of kings’, which regularly accompanies Christ *Basileus* on coins does not leave any doubt that this image did possess considerable imperial associations: on the one hand, it guaranteed the subjects that their temporal ruler was just and in keeping with the divine ruler, and on the other, it showed that jurisdiction of God’s rule relied on the power of a secular ruler as Christ’s vicar on earth.

Having analysed the lyre-shaped throne as an independent motif, without Christ, Breckenridge noted that prior to the 9th century it was used as a seat for two or more emperors, rather than for a single ruler, and so he interpreted the examples with Christ enthroned on such a throne as signifying that he is both Creator Father and Saviour Son.⁴⁵ He also connected such a depiction with the inscription *Rex regnantium* and argued that it refers to Christ as ‘the Son of God who rules the earth through the regency of the emperors’.⁴⁶ This interpretation also supports the idea emanating from such an image of universal harmony between the heavenly and the earthly. It is interesting to point out that an identical explanation can be found even in the West, as can be seen in the image of Christ from the early ninth-century Homilies of Gregory the Great now at Vercelli, where the enthroned Christ is identified as *Rex regum*.⁴⁷

Finally, it should be mentioned that Cutler also examined the occurrence of the lyre-backed throne in coinage, and that his main argument relied on the dependence of the shape on the instrument itself and its connection with Orpheus.⁴⁸ Relying on Eusebius’ comparison between Christ and Orpheus who tamed wild beasts by playing music on his lyre, Cutler arrived at the conclusion that Christ’s lyre-backed throne represents ‘the seat of harmony, the throne of the Logos in incarnate majesty’ and thus symbolized universal harmony.⁴⁹

44 Ibidem.

45 Ibidem, p. 259.

46 Ibidem.

47 Schiller 1986, vol. 3, p. 227, figs 639–641. The Homilies are in Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare (Ms CXLVIII, fol. 8r).

48 Cutler 1975, pp. 45–52.

49 Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine* (εἰς Κωνσταντίνων

40 Badurina 1997, pp. 189 and 186; Badurina 1965–1966, pp. 5 and 10–11.

41 Schiller 1986, vol. 3, p. 222.

42 Ibidem.

43 Breckenridge 1980–1981, p. 248.

Concluding remarks

The iconography of the Rab relief suggests that it is best viewed in the context of the eleventh-century renewed interest in Byzantine models and the more frequent depictions of Christ *Basileus* as an isolated image. The comparison with the images of the *Basileus* on a lyre-backed throne also indicates a Byzantine source, most likely of a portable rather than monumental nature. Thus, it becomes clear that the Rab relief was produced in a region which knew Byzantine works well, or in Byzantium itself.

On the other hand, the lack of context for this relief aggravates further analysis. Nothing is known about its original location, function, possible commissioner or whether there were originally other similar pieces on the island of Rab. If the relief had been an isolated plaque, then its iconography and the finely carved frame imply that it could indeed have been intended as a stone icon, similar to the eleventh-century icons from Constantinople and Venice.⁵⁰

The inherent symbolism of the *Basileus* image on the Rab relief indicates that the commissioner may have been a person who had significant political power in the local community, a supposition supported by the use of marble and the quality of carving which successfully renders perspective. In eleventh-century Rab, this person could only have been a local *prior* or indeed a bishop. Another possibility, again suggested by the high quality of the carving but also by the specific Byzantine iconography, is that the relief could have been a gift to the local commune from Venice, which claimed power over Rab and the rest of the Quarnero islands from 1000 to the 1050s, and again in 1090s.⁵¹ This explanation seems more likely since access to high-quality Byzantine icons made of marble would have been more natural in a Venetian context than among the local bishops or *priors* between 1050 and 1090s when the island of Rab was free from Venetian control.

The reasons lying behind Venetian aspirations to Rab stem from the fact that it was a Dalmatian city and

as such it had been a Byzantine territory from Justinian onwards. However, Byzantine rule over the Adriatic cities gradually became increasingly formal rather than actual, as was the case with Venice.⁵² In the 9th century the Dalmatian cities rejected this formal rule and became independent, an act which prompted Byzantium to ally with Venice and temporarily relinquish control of the cities.⁵³ Certainly in the 10th century Constantine Porphyrogenitos mentioned Rab as one of the cities inhabited by the *Romanoi*, which is the term used for Byzantine subjects.⁵⁴

Due to dynastic struggles between factions in the Croatian kingdom in the late 10th century, and their family ties with the Orseolo family, Peter II Orseolo, the Doge of Venice, set sail with his fleet to Dalmatia in the year 1000, in order to free 'his people' from paying tribute to the Slav Croats; he docked in Dalmatian ports and received oaths of allegiance, among which was one given by the Bishop of Rab.⁵⁵ In 1018 Otto Orseolo, Peter's son, retracing his father's steps, also sailed to Dalmatia but failed to proceed further than Rab, where *prior* Bellata and Bishop Maius recognized Venetian rule and promised to pay the annual tribute.⁵⁶ This situation seems to have lasted until the 1060s when Rab established closer links with Croatia and its king, Petar Krešimir IV (1058-1075).⁵⁷ However, after the death of Zvonimir (1089), Rab re-acknowledged the rule of Venice at some point between 1091 and 1097 when, having accepted Doge Vital Michieli's offer of protection, all Dalmatian cities followed suit.⁵⁸

Thus, Rab spent nearly seventy years as a 'vassal city' of Venice, making it possible that the relief with

52 Budak 1994, p. 37.

53 Margetić 1987, p. 200.

54 *De Administrando Imperio* 29. 51-52, in: Moravcsik, Jenkins 1967, pp. 124-125.

55 Margetić 1987, p. 200; Budak 1994, pp. 36-37; Goldstein 1995, pp. 341-342. See also Iohannes Diaconus, *Chronicon Venetum (Cronaca Veneziana)* in: Monticolo 1890, p. 157.

56 Budak 1994, p. 37; Goldstein 1995, pp. 343; Klaić 1971, p. 330, note 174; Brusić 1926, p. 71.

57 Margetić 1987, p. 201. Opinions differ as to whether Rab acknowledged the Croatian ruler even earlier in 1025 as reported by Thomas the Archdeacon and supported by Budak and Klaić. See in: Budak 1987, p. 193; Klaić 1976, p. 335.

58 Budak 1994, p. 49; Margetić 1987, p. 201. According to Budak, the Byzantine emperor sent Gottfried de Melfi, son of Amico, to Dalmatia in 1091 and he stayed there until 1093, while Margetić stated Rab returned to Venice in 1095.

τριαχωνταετης ιχός) 14. See in: Heikel 1902, pp. 241-244; Cutler 1975, pp. 52 and 30. The connection between the Orpheus-lyre and Christ-throne is also in Goldammer 1963, p. 228.

50 Belting 1996, figs 108, 115 and 120.

51 Budak 1994, p. 38. In the middle of the 11th century, Venetian rule was disrupted by Petar Krešimir IV (1058-1075). However, they regained control in the late 11th century and again from 1108 or 1115. See in: Margetić 1987, p. 201.

Christ *Basileus* might have been carved in Venice and presented as a diplomatic gift to a local dignitary, or acquired as an icon. The late eleventh-century date seems a more likely option due to the fact that lyre-backed thrones re-appear on the coins minted by Constantine IX and X around the middle of the 11th century. For this reason, it can be suggested that the

relief with Christ *Basileus* is likely to have been produced in a brief period between 1091 and 1097 when Rab returned to Venice and through her to Byzantium, whose doges and emperors saw themselves as governing with the blessing of Christ as ‘the king of kings’ himself.

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Mramorni reljef Krista na prijestolju iz Raba

Ključne riječi: Rab, Krist, prijestolje, Bizant, Venecija

U članku se obrađuje reljef Krista na prijestolju u obliku lire koji se nalazi u unutrašnjosti crkve sv. Marije u Rabu. Reljef je prvi put spomenut 1861., kad ga Eitelberger ocjenjuje kao romanički rad. Oblik prijestolja prvi je analizirao Frey, a potom Abramić, godine 1932., koji rapski reljef datira u 10. stoljeće. Krajem 20. stoljeća reljef obrađuju Belamarić i Domijan, koji zaključuju da je riječ o importiranoj skulpturi iz 12., odnosno 11. stoljeća. Belamarić smatra da reljef predstavlja ikonu, dok Domijan sugerira da je mogao pripadati pročelju koje tadašnja rapska katedrala dobiva u drugoj polovici 11. stoljeća. Nakon Freya i Abramića o ikonografiji reljefa uopće se nije pisalo. Frey je reljef usporedio s prikazima Krista na prijestolju u obliku lire iz 6. stoljeća te zato predložio dataciju u to stoljeće. Abramić je, pak, reljef iščitao kao *Majestas Domini* i usporedio ga s neidentificiranim reljefom iz bazilike sv. Marka u Veneciji, a prijestolje u obliku lire shvatio kao detalj koji upućuje na razdoblje prije godine 1000.

Nakana autorice bila je ponuditi prvu ikonografsku analizu rapskog reljefa nakon najmanje osamdeset godina koliko je proteklo of Freyevih i Abramićevih zapažanja. Ikonografski predlošci pronađeni su u bizantskoj umjetnosti. Najraniji primjer Krista na prijestolju u obliku lire je mozaik iz 6. stoljeća u crkvi *Sant' Apollinare Nuovo*. U 9. stoljeću istovjetno prijestolje javlja se na mozaiku u narteksu Sv. Sofije i na nestalom prikazu u *chrysotriklinosu* carske palače također u Carigradu. Isti motiv pojavljuje se i na bizantskom novcu najprije u 9., a potom i u 11. stoljeću. Zbog po-

kretne prirode novca i činjenice da je bizantski novac kolao cijelim jadranskim bazenom, najvjerojatnije je da su upravo prikazi na novcu poslužili kao ikonografski predložak. U članku se razmatra i ikonografska veza između prijestolja u obliku lire i natpisa *Rex regnantium* koji se javlja na novcu. Dodatno uporište za 'vladarsko' tumačenje ove ikonografije nalazi se i u argumentaciji Gertrud Schiller, koja tip Krista na prijestolju koji drži knjigu u lijevoj ruci, a blagoslivlja desnom naziva *Christus Rex* ili *Basileus*. Usko povezana s Kristom na prijestolju u obliku lire je i njegova pripadajuća simbolika. Kako objašnjavaju Breckenridge i Cutler, to ikonografsko rješenje predstavlja univerzalnu harmoniju između nebeskog (Boga) i zemaljskog (cara) te između Krista kao Oca, odnosno Sina.

Ukazujući na povezanost ikonografskih oznaka rapskog reljefa i bizantskog novca makedonske dinastije, autorica smješta reljef na sam kraj 11. stoljeća, kad Venecija uz blagoslov Bizanta širi svoju vlast na dalmatinske gradove, među kojima je i Rab. Potvrđujući mišljenja Belamarića i Domijana da se radi o importiranom reljefu, autorica sugerira da ga je mogao kupiti rapski prior ili biskup u Veneciji ili da je reljef čak poklonjen jednom od njih kao diplomatski dar. Vladarske konotacije koje prožimaju ikonografiju Krista *Basileusa* na prijestolju u obliku lire ukazuju na naručitelja koji razumije važnost harmonije između nebeskog vladara kao pokrovitelja svjetovnih vladara i njihova pozivanja na legitimitet koji dolazi od Krista 'kralja kraljeva' i Pantokratora.