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Fragments from Daruvar in the City Museum in Bjelovar – Framework for Inves- tigation

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The authors analyze two fragments of presumably medieval sculpture, a font and a column from Daruvar in the Museum of the City of Bjelovar, with an intention to provide a material, formal, historical, and iconographic framework for an in depth study of the pieces. The analysis raises doubts about local origin and the age of the fragments, which are most likely of Northern Italian (Venetian) origin, and possibly of a rather late date (copies?), as may be the case of some similar materials in Hungary. However, a Pannonian origin and a 12th century date should not be at this stage completely ruled out.

Around 1950 the City Museum of Bjelovar was a recipient of two sculpted objects from the Spa at Daruvar. They are what may be a Holy Water receptacle, and a cluster column with a base, possibly a support for an altar or a lectern, or a fragment of a choir-screen, both covered by low relief (figs. 1–5). As well-known, works of medieval sculpture in Continental Croatia, especially that of earlier periods, and of figured or vegetal nature, are very rare, so it may come as a surprise that the two pieces from Daruvar have so far received minimal scholarly attention. In fact, they were, for the first time, brought into the public's eye at an exhibition in the Museum of Archeology in Zagreb in 1994, when they received their first, albeit brief, scholarly treatment by the author of the exhibition, Branka Migotti (in the text of the catalogue), and by the Director of the Museum, Ante Rendić-Miočević (in the catalogue entries). The scholarly and general silence about them was broken only ten years later by two brief references, by one of the authors of this study, and by Berislav Scheybal.¹

¹ The authors express their gratitude to the Director of the City Museum in Bjelovar, Dubravko Adamović, Academic Painter, and to Goran Jakovljević, M.A., archeologist, for the access to and information on the objects, as well as for permission to photograph them. We hope that this article will stimulate further research of the sculptures at the site itself. We also thank the Staff of the Fine Arts Museum in Budapest, especially Drs. Imre Takács, Maria Verő, and Zsombor Jekely for their courtesy and help in studying comparable materials at the Museum (on exhibit and in storage) and for providing all necessary references published in Hungary along with several photographs, and the permission to publish those we took ourselves; to Professor Xavier Barral i Altet for suggestions he made while we together explored the "vere da pozzo" in the Museum. Also we are indebted to Dr. Pál Lövei, Research Advisor of the Hungarian National Office of Preservation of Monuments in Budapest for his information on the Venetian "vere da pozzo" in Hungary.

The exhibition in the Archeological Museum was entitled *Od nepobjedivog Sunca do Sunca pravde/From the Invincible Sun to the Sun of Justice*. The exhibition catalogue bore the same name (Arheološki muzej, Zagreb 1994), see pp. 53–55, 112–113. Also by Branka Migotti, Evidence for Christianity in Roman Southern Pannonia (Northern Croatia), A Catalogue of Finds and Sites, BAR International Series 684, Zagreb 1997. We thank Dr. Diana Samaržija-Vukičević for drawing our attention to this publication. Also, Vladimir P. Goss, Oriental Presence and the Medieval Art of Croatian Pannonia, in press in the acts of the Symposium *Medioevo Mediterraneo: L'Occidente, Bisanzio e l'Islam dal Tardoantico al secolo XII*. Berislav Scheybal, Municipium Iasorum, *Titula*, 42, 2004., pp. 99–129, especially pp. 118–120. Mr. Scheybal has devoted much time to the study of Daruvar, from his diploma thesis at the University of Zagreb, to his M.A. thesis at the Central European University in Budapest. In his above mentioned article he basically follows Ms. Migotti's conclusions concerning the fragments in Bjelovar.



1. Bjelovar, City Museum, Font from Daruvar, view (photo V. Jukić)

The place of origin, the spa complex in the town of Daruvar, ancient *Aquae Balisae*, should have immediately claimed scholars' attention. The site is that of a considerable Roman, and later medieval, settlement, so far practically unexplored. In her brief discussion of the pieces in the text of the Catalogue, Ms. Migotti suggested a link with the old Roman spa establishment, allowing, however, also for a possibility of different dating.² It seems truly unbelievable that a lively scholarly debate did not follow. And, again, maybe not. For the Daruvar fragments indeed pose a problem which cannot be solved in one move. Therefore, this study does not pretend to be a "publication" of the sculptures.

Rather, this is an attempt to suggest a framework for investigation which may, eventually, shed more light on those mysterious pieces of our cultural heritage.

The pieces were excellently described in the catalogue entries written by Ante Rendić-Miočević, and our description essentially follows his words.³ The receptacle is a cylindrical vessel made of limestone (height 40 cm, width 50 cm, opening 38.5 cm) with a flat bottom and a step like upper edge. Three fanlike protrusions on the upper rim served to attach a cover. One still reveals traces of some sort of a binding, whereas the smaller holes are filled with some white paste. The inside walls are concave, and thus

thinner than the upper rim. At the bottom center there are traces of something which looks like an angular hole, never completed. The entire outside wall is covered by low relief. The upper edge is decorated by a string of triangular, pointed leaves which could also be read as derived from acanthus. The lower edge is marked by a series of circles linked by a horizontal band. In between the two courses there are four pairs of animals in relief – two pairs of doves drinking from a wide vessel decorated by a highly stylized acanthus. The third pair represents dove like peacocks drinking from a somewhat thinner chalice, whereas the fourth shows two rabbits, standing on their hind legs facing a leafy tree with strong, knotty roots – possibly the Three of Life. There are traces of dark substance (niello?) in the drilled holes representing eyes or feathers of the animals.

The column consists of three upright units bound together by a common base. One of them has been carved from a single piece of limestone, the other two are separate. They are all tied together by metal pieces. At both ends there is a cavity which was used to bind the column to the base, and to the nowadays missing upper structure. The bodies of the columns are covered by vegetal scrollwork in low relief which forms rhomb-like and elliptical areas for the display of pointed leaves and grape-like flowers. The base is square and covered by stylized acanthus.

Whereas the carving from some distance appears to be smooth, at closer quarters one notices that in fact the cutting is anything but secure and that the lines defining forms are broken and wavy. Some Coptic carvings, for example, the funerary stele from Edfu (6th-7th?), and the tympanum from Seheh Abade (6th?), are in principle comparable to our piece in their low relief technique and decomposition of classical motifs.⁴ This, along with some stylistic elements led Vladimir P. Goss to agree with an early, provisionally mid-6th century date for the Daruvar reliefs.⁵

Historically speaking, there are arguments for such a dating. Alboin, the king of the Lombards, relinquished Pannonia in fear of the Avars in 568, and moved to Italy. Previously, the Christian and Catholic Lombards had been imperial allies in the long Gothic wars. They might have faced the Ostrogoths across the line which once marked the border between Pannonia Savia and Pannonia Secunda.



2. Bjelovar, City Museum, Font from Daruvar, reliefs (Archeological Museum on Zagreb)



4. Bjelovar, City Museum, Font from Daruvar (Archeological Museum on Zagreb)

² Migotti, op. cit., p. 55.

³ Ibid., p.112.

⁴ C. Wessel, *L'art copte*, Meddens. Bruxelles 1964, pl. 85 and 91, pp. 116, 130.

⁵ See the forthcoming study mentioned in the note 1.



3. Bjelovar, City Museum, Column from Daruvar (photo V. Jukić)

Daruvar is close to that line. This would make the Daruvar stones products, albeit provincial, of Justinian's reconquest.⁶

Presumably, the sculptures could not come into being during the Avar rule, i.e., between the second half of the sixth and the end of the eighth century. What about later? Historically, they could have been made in the Romanesque period, from the end of the 11th century onwards. It would be nice to see the receptacle as a sign of "three Pannonian Christianizations," of the Justinianic period, of Charlemagne's conquest of the Avars, and of King Ladislav's creation of the Bishopric of Zagreb (1094). However, even iconographic analysis makes such a neat scheme highly improbable.

The "stones" from Daruvar – make an interesting example of liturgical furnishing the iconography, decoration,

function and dating of which pose different options and possible readings. Taken apart, all these elements could be connected with different lines of influence and interpretations. The two objects are out of the original setting(s) and there are no additional elements to support their provenance or date. They, also, represent a unique appearance of a group in the area with no other objects to be related to.

The receptacle's cylindrical shape and the visible signs of a cover, probably made of a flat piece of wood fastened down by bar and staples, strongly supports the hypothesis that the object was in some period used as a baptismal font in connection with other elements discussed later.⁷ The cover could be of a later date since the practice of covering baptismal fonts is recorded in later Middle Ages. The origin of the font cover is connected with the practice of steeling hallowed water for different purposes, black magic being one of them, since it was a custom to preserve the water in the font for a considerable time mostly because the ceremony of *Benedictio fontis*, or hallowing the water, was complex and was performed on the Holy Saturday. The tendency to ascribe magical and healing powers to the water blessed by the priest was recorded in the early texts. In the last book of *The City of God*, Augustin wrote about two persons who were healed of serious illnesses during their baptism. In the writings of Gregory of Tours there is a mention of a certain bishop who sent blessed water to the house where many had died of fever and that after it was sprinkled around, the illness was gone. In the East, especially, the water from the baptism was believed to have healing power and was kept very carefully through a longer period of year as it is recorded by St. John Chrysostom. From at least the 5th century on there was a common belief both in the East and in the West, that water from baptismal fonts blessed at the Easter Eve has the power to protect.⁸ The font from Daruvar lacks drain that was common feature for most of the fonts for discharging water. There are medieval font vessels, though, without drain. Some of the fonts, especially if they were made of a porous limestone, had a lining, usually of lead which allowed the water to remain in the font for a considerable period. The lack of drain, though, could suggest that the receptacle was used for a holy water stoup, a liturgical vessel, constructed in the Early Medieval and Romanesque times as a smaller font bowl on pedestal following the similar forms and decoration. The diffusion of the use of water stoups is still very uncertain. The first mention of the water being blessed for other purposes than baptism goes to the fifth century and to the Eastern Church. There is a record of it in the Acts of the council of Con-

stantinople in 691. In the West, there are records of Pope Leo IV, who in the 9th century charged his clergy to bless the water every Sunday before mass and to have proper vessel for that.⁹ Also, in the *Capitula presbyteris* of Hincmar of Rheims in 852 we read of his permission to all who wish to take holy water with them in their own small vessels.¹⁰ The rite of that blessing was done by the salt, previously exorcised and blessed, that is sprinkled and mixed with the water. It was, therefore, in general use from the 9th century, but probably the custom was well known in the earlier periods.

From the post-Carolingian times onwards the holy water stoup was placed at the entrance of the churches for the congregation to make the sign of cross at entering the church. The first stoups were of various types, often a reused capital (e.g., in the church of Anzy-le-Duc)¹¹ or some other sculptural fragment, usually of stone, although the genealogy of this liturgical vessel is very uncertain. The most diffused type is that which takes after the structure of a baptismal font – a basin of stone on a high pedestal or simply built in a church wall. The holy water vessels were never covered since they were constructed for the general use and wide purpose.

As a part of liturgical furnishing baptismal font has long history of changing shapes and decoration due to the changing of the rite of baptism. Changes in shape and material used for a font began in the late 6th and 7th century with the change in practice. The Council of Lerida A.D. 524, in the canon 23, recommends that the vessels for baptizing be not of some porous material. But if a presbyter could not provide himself with that, he can provide “*vas conveniens ad baptizandi officium*,” the most suitable vessel, which could refer not only to the material but also to the form.¹² In 849 Walfridus Strabo writes that baptism is administered by affusion for adults who can not be baptized in a font by immersion referring to the baptism of St Laurentius “*Notandum non solum mergendo verum etiam desuper fundendo multos baptizatos fuisse, et ad huc posse ita baptizari si necessitas sit, sicuti in passione B. Laurentii quendam urceo allato legimus baptizatum. Hoc etiam solet evenire cum provectorum granditas corporum in minoribus vasis hominem tingi non patitur*”.¹³ This is a document that clearly witnesses that smaller fonts were in use from the 9th century on. It was connected with the beginning of the abandonment of the baptistery, the change of the baptismal privileges and the increasing prevalence of infant baptism. It is difficult, though, to establish the exact chronology of the changes since the written sources are scarce and differ as well as their authors’ attitudes.¹⁴



4. Bjelovar, City Museum, Column from Daruvar (Ardcehological Museum in Zagreb)

In early Christian times baptism was presided over by a bishop and was administered in a specially constructed baptistery with a piscina in its center where submersion or immersion could take place. The immersion of a body into

⁶ See the note 5, with a more detailed explanation and accompanying footnotes.

⁷ Some early font covers were made of stone as documented in some examples from England and Italy. F. Bond, *Fonts and font covers*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1908, p. 284.

⁸ W. Smith, *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*. London 1875, pp. 777–778.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 778–779.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 779.

¹¹ Z. Jacoby, *Les fleuves du Paradis à Anzy-le-Duc (Bourgogne): un bénitier roman transformé en chapiteau?*, *Storia dell'arte* 33/1978, pp. 95–103.

¹² R. Lindemann, *Die Taufsteine im Deutschland*. *Einbecker Jahrbuch* 38/1987.

¹³ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

¹⁴ P. Cramer, *Baptism and Change In the Early Middle Ages C. 200 – 1150*, Cambridge 1993.



6. Baptismal ceremony with infant baptism, from the 9th century Pontifical now in the Royal Library at Windsor. From W. Smith, *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, London, 1875, p.29.



8. Baptism of the imperial prince, from the Madrid Skylitzes, From C. Walter, *Art and Ritual in Byzantine Church*, p.XII, fig. 31.

the water was the fullest representation of act of cleansing as well as being “drown” and “come out” of the water in the symbolical meaning of a new birth. There are also other important movements during the act of baptism connected with the water tank – descent, passage through the water and ascent, in which a candidate experienced a descent into burial with Christ and ascent into a new life.¹⁵ When the baptism could be performed by priests and in the parish churches it became usual to baptize inside a church. In the ninth century Pope Leo IV recommended firmly that every church should have a font.¹⁶ Also, there was an increasing practice in baptizing children so that the form of piscina was not longer needed. There are proofs that children baptism was in use even in early Christian times although Church was opposed to that practice. Tertullian in the second century mentions its use, as well as Origen who wrote about infants being baptized because “by the sacrament of baptism the uncleanness of our birth is put away”. In the early writings it probably suggests a symbolic connotation and metaphoric meaning of infant being baptized rather than actual practice. It is especially in Augustine who thinks of a child as a metaphor of weakness and conflict between good and evil since it was born in the sin of Adam. Children were also baptized in the early period in apparent danger of death or in the cases of grave sickness, as is documented in Gregory Nazianzes.¹⁷

In the 8th century some of the theologians were concerned that the unbaptized children, if they die, die in sin,

and could not enter the Heavenly Jerusalem. Therefore, Charlemagne ordered in 789 that all infants should be baptized in the first year of their lives. There is also a canon of the time of King Edgar in England (960) ordering that all children should be baptized within first 37 days after the birth.¹⁸ The rite of the baptism followed the rules of an earlier practice so that the children were immersed in the piscinas or fonts (the symbolical passage through the water, descending and coming up, had to be abandoned). The whole rite tended to preserve the theatrical, solemn and complicated act as it is demonstrated in the treatise *De Ordine Baptismi* of the end of the 8th century, written by Theodulf, the bishop of Orleans. He described the ritual of baptism practiced in the West in a sequence of several acts: consecration of water, renunciation, profession of faith, immersion with accompanying interrogation and the subsequent ceremonial, stating the triple immersion of the catechumens as a general practice “sub trina mersione in fon-

¹⁵ A. Stauffer, *On Baptismal Fonts: Ancient and Modern. Liturgical Studies* 29–30, supplement, 1994, p. 11. Most of the earliest baptisteries had pools with one or more steps. And many early Christian writers refer to steps or to “going down into water.” Ambrose wrote: “He who passes through the waters of this font does not die; he rises again” (*De Sacramentis* I:12). J. Quasten, *Baptismal Creeds and Baptismal Act in St. Ambrose’s De Mysteriis and De Sacramentis*. In: *Mélanges Joseph De Ghellinck*, tome 1, Rome, 1951, p. 223.

¹⁶ Cramer, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

¹⁷ Cramer, *op. cit.*, pp. 113–125; M. Sordi, Agostino A. Milano, *Il Batesimo*. Palermo 1988.

¹⁸ G. Pudelko, *Romanische Taufsteine*. Berlin 1932, p. 32.

¹⁹ S. Keefe S, *Baptismal Instructions in the Carolingian Period*, PhD thesis. London

tem...”¹⁹ The great change, though, in the process of baptism is observed in the growing tendency to formalism where the traditional three-question and answer rite of immersion (Credo) was substituted by simple indicative Ego te baptizo in nomine patris, fillii et spiritus sancti as is stated in the Hadrianum, a version of Gregorian Sacramentary, sent by Pope Hadrian to Charlemagne in 780s as a part of reorganization of Frankish liturgy and acceptance of Roman rite.²⁰ Baptism of infants is shown in a few images in the manuscripts of the 9th and 10th centuries (fig. 6).

Fonts were thus in common usage together with tanks in the Early Middle Ages and although we follow the changes in sacrament itself over the long period of the Middle Ages when the habit of infant baptism had become widespread in the churches of the West, the form of adult baptism, celebrated at Easter or Pentecost, continued largely to prevail. If there was a font used instead, it had to be large enough for the immersion of a child and an adult was baptized by affusion, stepping in the font. There are several examples in the medieval manuscripts which demonstrate the baptism of adults; in each the baptized is squeezed in a small font and baptized by affusion (fig. 7). Very few examples of the early medieval fonts from 8th to 10th century, that are preserved and recorded, demonstrate large dimensions: they were set on a low basis, not much above the pavement, with at least a meter in diameter. There are fonts in St Clement in Tour (10th century), in St. Miguel de Lino in Oviedo and one in Germany in Heimerscheid, all 80 to 100 centimeters in diameter.²¹ The baptismal font at the Museum of the Croatian Archaeological Monuments in Split, cited in the bibliography as the font of Dux Višeslav, and dated to the end of the 8th or the beginning of the 9th century bears the same dimensions – 90 cm in height and 120 cm in diameter. It is a hexagonal font from the early medieval time that bears an inscription typical of the Carolingian religious and dogmatic language of the late 8th century. Although of uncertain provenance it represents



7. Jew being baptized by the bishop of Jerusalem, from the Wessobrunner Codex, manuscript of the 9th century, now at Munich. From F. Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 1908, p. 124.

an important testimony of the christening of the Slavs in that period, and the testimony of the baptismal rite per immersionem that is confirmed by its form.²²

In the most parts of Europe baptisteries continued to be in full use during the 8th and 9th centuries, especially in Italy. In *Liber pontificalis* there is a record of five baptisteries being built or rebuilt in Rome between 772 and 816. The same practice is documented in Germany and France.²³ St Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century, when writing about baptism, says “tutius est baptizare per modum immersionis quia hoc habet usus communior”, recommending baptism by immersion if one “wishes to be on a safe side”.²⁴

In the Eastern churches the changes in baptismal rite were also introduced during the Middle Ages, although the ceremony itself and ceremonial words were strongly related to the Early Christian texts.²⁵ The earliest images of administration of baptism in the East are the illustration in the 9th century Paris Gregory which shows the neophyte standing in a sunken font and a bishop placing his right hand on his head.²⁶ In most cases the scene of baptism represented conversion, the hand of a bishop on neophyte’s head representing the conferment of the Holy Spirit, copying the Early Christian formula of Christ’s baptism. The illustration in the manuscripts from a later date, 11th and 12th centuries, reveals the change in the form of fonts; the font is raised and a neophyte is squeezed in it with the bishop performing the blessing, as it is shown in the image of the baptism of Nachor, the sorcerer. There is only one

1981; Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

²⁰ Cramer, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

²¹ G. Pudeluko, *op. cit.*, 1932; F. Nordstrom, *Medieval Baptismal Fonts. An Iconographic Study*, Umea, 1984; Project: *Baptisteria Sacra. An Iconographic Index of Baptismal Fonts*, University of Toronto, dir. H. Sonne de Torrens, www.library.utoronto.ca/bsi/

²² *Bizantini, Croati, Carolingi*. Exhibition Catalogue, Milano 2001, p. 466.

²³ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

²⁴ E. Synan, *Thomas Aquinas – Propositions and Parables*. Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 1979.

²⁵ R. Taft, *The Byzantine Rite*. Collegeville 1992.

²⁶ C. Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church*. London 1982, p.125.



9. A larger fragment of a stone slab from Thessaloniki, dated 9-10th century, at the Byzantine Museum of Athens. From A. Grabar, *Sculptures byzantines du moyen age I, IV^e au Xe siècle*, tome I, Paris 1963, p.134, fig. XLIV.

known picture of infant baptism in the Middle Ages in Byzantium, that of the son of Leo VI, in the Madrid Scytlites.²⁷ (fig. 8).

During Early Christian and early medieval periods there were several layers of meaning of baptism reflected in the theological concepts and symbolism, mostly connected to the birth (new life), cleansing and death or paschal understanding. Birth imagery for baptism was predominant in the East and in the West up to the 5th century. The paschal connotations in the West were strongly proclaimed by Ambrose in Milan who baptized the neophytes with the words “you were immersed, which means that you were buried with Christ”.²⁸ This doctrine was based on the St Paul’s symbolism of mystical dying and rising in the emersio of baptism: “Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”²⁹ The same understanding and reference to the font as sepulcher can be found in eastern writers such as Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem and Theodore of Mopsueptia.³⁰ Saint Augustine, who had been baptized by Ambrose, also elaborated the concept of birth and death as related to baptism as “all who attain to this grace die thereby to sin....and they are thereby alive by being reborn in the baptismal font, just as Christ rose again from the sepulcher.”³¹ The same imagery

was promoted by Pope Leo the Great who insisted on the baptism at the Easter Vigil: “In the rite of baptism death comes from the sin and the triple immersion imitates the three days of burial, and the rising out of the water is like his rising from the tomb.”³² Baptism is also a washing, a sacramental purification from sin, since we were all born with inherited first sin. Tertullian wrote of “a flesh being washed so that the soul may be spotless.”³³ Also, in the 8th century, in the Gelasian Sacramentary, widely used in the Gallican world, there is a mention of the purification imagery: “May the font be alive, the water regenerating, the wave purifying, so that all who shall be washed in this saving laver by the operation of the Holy Spirit within them may be brought to the mercy of perfect cleansing.”³⁴

In the East the symbolic connotations of the act of baptism were not that elaborate in art. Fonts were usually plain, cylindrical, with simple ornamentation or no decoration at all. The examples of early medieval scenes related to baptismal fonts are rare. Most of them convey the message of conversion, forgiveness of sins and eschatological note of “baptismal resurrection” that will continue in the Middle Ages along with the symbolism of proleptic entrance into Paradise.³⁵

²⁷ Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

²⁸ Quasten, *op. cit.*, 225.

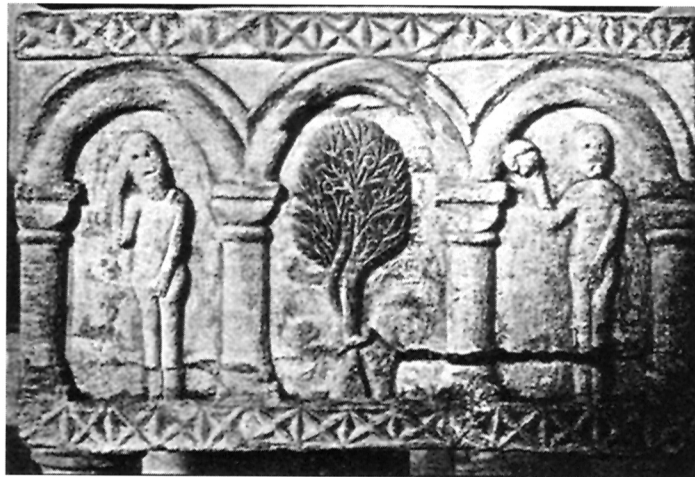
²⁹ *The Bible*, St Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, 6.3–4.

³⁰ Stauffer, *op. cit.*, pp. 7–9.

³¹ V. Bedard, *The Symbolism of the Baptismal Font in Early Christian Thought. Studies in Sacred Theology*, 45, 1951.

³² *Ibidem*, pp. 1 and 51.

³³ Stauffer, *op. cit.*, p. 8.



10. Representation of Adam and Eve on one slab of the font from Fincham, 12th century. F. Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 1908, p. 156.

If we look closely to the iconographic scheme of the Daruvar's font the message of sin, resurrection and eternal life in Christ, as well as symbolic function of water is rather clear. There are four images that wrap the font's surface. Three represent birds drinking from the cantharos, and one represents two hares in upright position flanking the tree. It is difficult to define whether the birds represent only peacocks or both doves and peacocks since there is a confusion between the "iconographic scheme," and the treatment of the bodies, feathers, and tails. All the birds are shaped in the same pattern, with richly and minutely decorated bodies and tails. But, according to the iconographic practice, birds standing on the vessel and drinking from it are probably doves, whereas birds flanking the cantharos and drinking from it would probably represent peacocks both on the basis of the iconographic scheme and the elaborate "crown" on their heads. Cantharoi are also richly decorated. Symbolic connotations of birds drinking from the vessel did not change throughout the Early Christian and medieval period signifying souls drinking from the *fons vitae*. There are many literary proofs, from the earliest times, that baptismal fonts were considered to symbolize *fons vi-*

tae or the fountain of life in Paradise. One of the most celebrated inscriptions is certainly that of the Lateran baptistery of about 440: *Fons hic est vitae, qui totum diliut orbem*.³⁶ The cantharus, thus, became one of the central motifs in the iconographic scheme, representing the paradise vase, which is a motif that continues in art from the Early Christian period through the Middle Ages, and a motif that in the more abstract, periphrastic form of the life-giving water of the Bible, appears on the Romanesque fonts in northern Europe.³⁷ From the cantharos flanked by peacocks rise palm branches spreading over the bowl, in clear representation of the Tree of Life, as a complete adoption of the Early Christian iconographic idiom. The images of peacocks accentuate the connotation of immortality and new life and at the same time represent a connection to the idea of re-birth in the resurrection of Christ according to the doctrines mentioned previously. Their presence, further, emphasizes the interpretation of the baptismal font as a sacred tomb, in which he who is baptized is buried together with Christ and is to rise with him in baptism, as is expressed in St. Augustine's *Enchiridion, sive de fide, spe et charitate*.³⁸

The image with the hares flanking the cantharos is very interesting and almost unique in the artistic heritage, especially in the stone sculpture. A very similar representation, though better technically elaborated, is found on the ivory casket at the Museum of the church of San Isidoro in Leon, dated to the 12th century and of a probable Byzan-

³⁴ E. C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*. London 1970.

³⁵ Walter, op. cit. p. 128.

³⁶ P. Underwood, *The Fountain of Life in Manuscripts of the Gospels*. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* V/1950, pp. 41–138.

³⁷ O. Reutersvard, *The Fountain of Paradise and the "Paradise Fonts" of Gotland*. Boras, 1967

³⁸ H.-I. Marrou, *St Augustine and His Influence Through the Ages*. New York 1957, p. 69. .



11. Budapest, Fine Arts Museum, Font Cat. No. 59.13.



13. Budapest, Fine Arts Museum, Font Cat. No. 5437

tine provenance.³⁹ Iconography of the hare in the Christian art of the Middle Ages, especially in the early period, is still very unclear. A hare is usually connected to symbolism of lunar animals and fecundity, and bore negative connotations in the Early Christian iconography since in the fifth book of Moses it was considered an impure animal.⁴⁰ There are very early examples of a hare in the Christian art tradition, on the oil lamps, sepulchral slabs, or on the early Byzantine sarcophagi or fragments within no defined context.⁴¹ From the late 10th century onwards it appears more often and more regularly in the symbolic scenes – with a palmette, a branch or a symbolic representation of a tree, facing a bunch of grapes, or in claws of an eagle, in Byzantine art or the art under Byzantine influence such as the Upper Adriatic area (fig. 9).⁴² The connotation in this image is probably that of a soul or a sinner being cleaned and reborn through the act of Christ passion and sacrifice, and could refer to the sacrament of baptism. The tree they are flanking is a representation of Christ's passion and death and symbolize the Crucifixion, a scene that often appears on the baptismal fonts.⁴³ A hare is often used as a symbol of man's weakness or else sinfulness, of frailty to which he was born, he inherits the sin of Adam at birth, and is a victim, a defenseless creature.⁴⁴ The idea of the Fall of Man is also connected with medieval sacrament of baptism. The Fathers of the Church emphasized that human beings, through their bodily births are born in Adam's sin and the-

refore condemned to death, but through the Holy Baptism they are born again. This is especially accentuated in St Augustine: "*O fili male ex Adam nate, sed bene in Christo renate*" (fig. 10).⁴⁵ Baptism removes the sinful condition in which a man is born. The representation of the Tree of Life is connected also with the Early Christian practice of placing a piece of wood, usually a wooden cross, in the baptismal water. Through the magical and healing powers of blessed water the wood becomes *Lignum vitae*. This tradition recorded in Carolingian scriptures was known from the time of Constantine.⁴⁶

The pedestal from Daruvar is formed as a clustered column, with four engaged shafts richly decorated with foliate motifs, and posed on a base decorated with highly stylized foliate ornament. The ornament spreads across all the available surface into repeated patterns of quadrifoils, palmettes and grape-bunches and represents repertory largely used in Romanesque period widespread in the corpus of

³⁹ F. Mata, *Le erboraria de los reinos hispanios durante los siglos XI y XII, Codex Aquilarensis 13, 1998; Enciclopedia del Romanico en Castilla y Leon, Aquilar de Campos, 2002.*

⁴⁰ H. G. Mohr, *Lessico di iconografia cristiana*. Milano 1982, p. 68; M. X.R. Ferro, *Symboles animaux*. Paris 1996, pp. 200–202.

⁴¹ A. Grabar, *Sculptures byzantines du moyen age I, IVe au Xe siècle*. Paris 1963.

⁴² A. Grabar, *Sculpture byzantines du moyen age II, XIe au XIVe siècle*, Paris, 1976; *Venezia e Bisanzio* (edited by S. Bettini). Venezia 1974; R. Polacco, *Sculpture paleocristiane e altomedioevali di Torcello*. Treviso 1976.

⁴³ F. Nordstrom, *op. cit.*, pp. 44–48.

⁴⁴ Tertullian compared Christ to hunted hares: "On us, as we were hares, is



12. Budapest, Fine Arts Museum, Font Cat. No. 63.2.

European sculpture, of diverse function and material.⁴⁷

As for the formal characteristic of the reliefs, they are flat and rather rustic, probably indicating a local workshop or stone cutter and can be hardly connected to any known group or workshop. Stylistic and iconographic elements present the revival, or continuity of the Early Christian tradition with special reference to the Byzantine influence noted in the iconographic schemes of the font. The pedestal reveals more elaborate technique in ornamenting the surface in a demanding form of the clustered columns.

Although we lack any knowledge of the context in which this vessel was functioning, and assuming that it was used as a baptismal font, we can conclude that it corresponds to the medieval concept of the importance of the font as a liturgical object and its iconographic program related to the baptismal ritual and theological ideas. Its shape and measures are not unlike those in the catalogue of Romanesque fonts of the broader area of central and northern Eu-

rope.⁴⁸ As for its iconography, it is very specific and unique in the scheme but conveying, in general, the ideas of baptismal symbolism. Therefore, the proposed dating of this group would go from late 10th up to the 12th century.

Such dating, especially to the later 11th or the 12th century would not be incompatible with the history of Pannonia. But were our sculptures indeed made in Pannonia? This is an important question which needs to be addressed. Of course, a petrographic analysis could decide the issue (and also an analysis of other substances, in particular of the mysterious white substance in the holes at the upper rim). But even without it a framework for investigation should not leave out a possibility that the sculptures were imports. But let us go step by step.

The late Antique “feel” is quite strong, and it led most of the scholars (no novices, but experienced researchers in the field) – including one of the authors of this article – to seriously consider a 5th through 7th century date.⁴⁹

The column from Daruvar shows a low, but apparently fairly skillfully carved relief of regularly interspersed crisply cut pointed leaves and bunches of grapes. As already stated, this effect is somewhat minimized at close quarters. Still the precision of stone cutting allows for a clear and rather pronounced interplay of light and shadow. One is reminded of the better among the capitals of the choir-screen of the Basilica Euphrasiana (ca. 550; nowadays in the atrium). Some of the less typically “Constantinopolitan” among the

the hunt focused.” The hare has no strength or weapons to defend itself, therefore it represents Christian’s trust and dependence on Christ’s protection and mercy.” T. Barnes, *Tertullian. A Historical and Literary Study*. Oxford 1985.

⁴⁵ H.-I. Marrou, op. cit., pp. 112–117.

⁴⁶ R. Bauereiss, *Fons Sacer*. München 1956, pp.12–14.

⁴⁷ J. Poeschke, *Die Skulptur des Mittelalters in Italien I, Romanik*. München 1998; H. Beenken, *Romanische Skulptur in Deutschland*. Leipzig 1926; A. K. Porter, *Spanish Romanesque Sculpture*. New York 1969.

⁴⁸ C. S. Drake, *The Romanesque Fonts of Northern Europe and Scandinavia*. Woodbridge 2002.

⁴⁹ See above, note 1.



14. Pannonhalma, Benedictine Arch Abbey, column from the Zichy Collection (photo I. Takacs)

capitals inside the Basilica could be used for comparison purposes, too.⁵⁰ The Daruvar relief lacks the lacelike quality and the deep dark shadows of the imperial imports,⁵¹ but still it reveals a hand of a fairly skillful master. One should be a little bit more guarded when dealing with the vessel itself as its carvings, both ornamental, vegetal, and animal, appear a bit more coarse and crude. One might claim that the master of the font was an accomplished “decorateur,” but less capable when carving animal bodies; yet, a certain irregularity and restlessness rules also decorative elements, as well as the tree of life and the cantharoi the doves and the peacocks drink from. Still, the manner of carving, and the resulting stylizations are not unlike the coastal material, e.g., the irregular number eight motif forming in the center of the vessels, which could be compared to the less accomplished among the Euphrasian’s choir screen capitals⁵². The animals are definitely less convincing, more stylized and less volumetric than their counterparts on the capitals of the Euphrasiana.⁵³ Some other Late

Antique (a fragment of a capital from St. Agneza at Muntajana, mid 5th ct.?) or Pre-Romanesque period fragments (fragment of a beam from St. Benedict at Sutlovreč, mid 8th-early 9th ct.) should be quoted, too.⁵⁴ The series of circles at the bottom end of the basin finds some analogy with the fragment from the Church of the Assunta at the Suvjent hill south of Motovun (mid 8th ct.), and St. Andrew at Karojba (early medieval fragment within a 12th ct. church).⁵⁵

These references to Istrian and North Italian materials are not accidental, as it was indeed Venice and its lagoons where the tradition of Byzantine forms so well merged with the art of the Romanesque⁵⁶ Indeed even something close to the strange motif of a chain of circles appears on Venetian monuments from the 9th throughout the 12th centuries.⁵⁷

Our mysterious rabbit is also a frequent visitor.⁵⁸ Although our font does not belong to the well-known series of Venetian early and later medieval “vere da pozzo” (it has a bottom!) it definitely recalls their form and style.⁵⁹

We are particularly grateful to Dr. Pál Lövei for drawing our attention to the presence of numerous Venetian or Northern Italian well-heads or fonts (as well as other fragments) in Hungary, a number of which are on exhibit or in storage at the Fine Arts Museum in Budapest, but are also found elsewhere throughout the country. Apparently, spending one’s honeymoon in Venice was quite popular with the Hungarian gentry in the later 18th and throughout the 19th century, as well as the custom of bringing home sculpted trophies. A possibility that our fragments reached Daruvar at such a late date should not be ruled out, especially in the light of the fact that Daruvar was one of the seats of the powerful Slavonian Janković family.

The fact that something is an import does not make it a lesser work of art. In fact, the conditions under which the “vere da pozzo” currently in Hungary had reached the country, its noble families collection, and, finally a major public collection is in itself a cultural historical story of the greatest interest. The same would be true of the Daruvar fragments, if they had been imported by a Janković or some other member of Slavonia’s 19th century noble class. For this reason, the handsome collection of those objects in the Fine Arts Museum in Budapest, as well as those elsewhere, have claimed very serious attention by the best among native scholars, such as Jolán Balogh.⁶⁰ Among those analyzed by Ms. Balogh, there are several which in terms of technique – the certain insecurity of ductus – as well as style do recall the Daruvar fragments. Those are a square “vera” dated by Balogh to the 12th century (fig.11), and a cylindrical one of a similar date (fig. 12); among the mate-

rial there is also a smaller font with a flat back (late 13th century), and another smaller vessel (fig. 13), with a bottom and a hole which recalls the one begun in Daruvar (it is just quite regular), which is not on a permanent exhibition (early 13th century).⁶¹ Our piece thus seems, at least provisionally, to find both stylistic and functional analogies with Venetian material.

As Dorigo points out, the popularity of the Venetian “vere” (and other carved material) was such that it resulted in a great outflow of medieval originals. Temptation to produce fakes was, apparently, great. A. Rizzi questioned the originality of most of the Fine Arts Museum pieces. Similar doubts were raised about some such pieces in England.⁶² Even so, one must contemplate another aspect of the situation: if a 19th century “fake,” what a nice piece of historicism!

Again, as in the case of import, we suggest that Rizzi’s doubts be taken as only one of the parameters of the research framework. But this aspect should indeed call for a thorough physical examination, as well as further efforts on the part of historians (Janković archives and files, if any), and art historians to establish the truth.

At the end, we would like to remind the reader that our intention was not to solve one of the most interesting riddles of Croatian medieval (or “medieval”) art history. We hope to have provided a “framework for investigation” in terms of both history, iconography, style, and provenance of the Daruvar pieces in the City Museum of Bjelovar. There, our ambitions stop. Whatever the final conclusion might be, the Museum owns some of the most interesting pieces of art history in Continental Croatia, and it should take the lead to reach the truth, a small step toward which, we hope, is represented by this “framework.”

⁵⁰ M. Prelog, *Poreč – grad i spomenici*. Kolarčev narodni univerzitet, Belgrade 1957, pl. 162, 178, 183–189; M. Prelog, *Eufrazijeva bazilika u Poreču*. Grafički zavod, Zagreb 1986, p. 25, p. 28.

⁵¹ Prelog (1957), pl. 182.

⁵² Prelog (1957), pl. 162, in particular the capital on the far right.

⁵³ M. Prelog (1957), pl. 180, 192, 193.

⁵⁴ A. Šonje, *Crkvena arhitektura zapadne Istre*. Kršćanska sadašnjost, Zagreb 1982, pl. 25b, 43.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pl. 50a, 112c.

⁵⁶ One should just see the wonderful and truly monumental book by Wladimiro Dorigo, *Venezia romanica*. Venice 2003, 2 vols.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 495. Also note the technique of carving of a piece from SS. Filippo and Giacomo (possibly mid-twelfth ct.), *ibid.*, p. 86.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 236, 466, 467, 481.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.

⁶⁰ Ms. Balogh wrote about them several times, e.g., J. Balogh, *Studi sulla collezione di sculture del Museo di Belle Art di Budapest*, part VI. *Acta Historiae Artium* 12, 1966, pp. 211–278, and *Katalog der Ausländischen Bildwerke des Museums der Bildenden Künste in Budapest, IV–XIII Jahrhundert*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest 1975, pp. 31–39. Information in the current Museum Catalogue is largely based on her research.

⁶¹ Balogh (1966), p. 225ff, fig. 32; p. 229ff, fig. 42; p. 232ff, fig. 46; p. 233ff, fig. 51; Balogh (1975), p. 35, fig. 10; p. 35, fig. 11; p. 35, fig. 12; p. 38, figs., 21 a and b. Catalogue numbers 59.13, 63.2, 1432, and 5437.

Dimensions of the square “vera” (63.2) are: height 78, opening 76 x 76; of the cylindrical one (59.13): height 79, radius ca. 100. The early 13th ct. one (1432) is 47 by 68, and the late 13th ct. (5437): height: 44, opening 46 x 39 (all in centimeters).

⁶² Dorigo, *op. cit.*, p. 494. A Rizzi, *Verre da pozzo in Venezia. I puteali pubblici di Venezia e della sua Laguna*, Stamperia di Venezia, Venezia 1981.; P. Hetherington *Two Medieval Venetian Well-Heads in England*, *Arte Veneta*

34/1988, pp. 9–17. The staff of the Fine Arts Museum in Budapest is fully aware of those charges. Our own recent careful examination of the material in the company of Professor Barral i Altet, certainly one of the leading experts on the Medieval Venice, did not lead to any firm conclusions. There was only agreement on one point, the vessel which is in storage (No. 1432), and there only a partial one. The Museum staff thinks that this piece may be a fake, whereas it appears to me that only its lower section was re-carved.

Is there any chance that the Daruvar sculptures may have been carved in Pannonia? We can give a very careful “yes” answer to this question. In Zánka, to the North of the Balaton lake (Veszprém County) there is a column in the tower of the church covered by low-relief decor which just vaguely recalls some standard elements (remember the somewhat rare appearance of the Daruvar column decoration), e. g., pretzels, but otherwise seems to be a product of folk imagination. However, the ornament is lined around the column in a spiral manner of Roman triumphal columns, well-known and copied in the Middle Ages (e. g., Bernward’s column in Hildesheim, early 11th ct.). The Hungarian column is believed to date from the 13th century; the church originally goes back to the end of the 11th, and there are some apparently Roman fragments built into the tower, too. It is interesting that a similar spiral column with a capital which strikingly recalls the base of the Daruvar column is in the collection of the Pannonhalma Archabbey (fig. 14). It formerly belonged to the collection of the Zichy family from Oroszvár, today’s Rušovce in Slovakia. The decor of the column including birds, leaves, and diamond beads speaks eloquently of a Northern Italian/Venetian origin. Judging from the way it reached Pannonhalma, it was probably another “trophy piece.” The column of Zánka was almost certainly made “at home,” but a distant Northern Italian model should not be ruled out. Thus in the Romanesque Pannonia there existed a culture within which our Daruvar sculptures are, theoretically, a possibility. On Zánka: Éva Mezösine Kozák, *A Zánkai református trmplon kutatása*. *Magyar Műemlékvédelem* 11/2002, pp. 119–142. We also thank Dr. Pál Lövei for additional information, and Dr. Imre Takács for information on and the photograph of the Zichy piece.

Sažetak

Vladimir P. Goss i Marina Vicelja

Ulomci iz Daruvara u Gradskom muzeju u Bjelovaru – okvir za istraživanje

U Muzeju grada Bjelovara nalaze se dva kamena predmeta koji su onamo stigli iz Daruvara pred više od pola stoljeća. Radi se o posudi, vjerojatno krsnom zdencu, i snopastom stupiću, nekakvu potpornju ili možda dijelu pregrade. Usprkos neobično zanimljivoj stilu a i provenijenciji (rimске Aquae Balisae) predmeti nisu dosad privukli osobito zanimanje znanstvenika. Ovo je pokušaj da se odredi okvir za njihovo proučavanje i otvori krajnje potrebna diskusija

Minucioznim studijem ikonografskog sadržaja i liturgijske namjene zaključuje se da bi najvjerojatniji vremenski okvir bio nakon godine 1100. U sklopu analize stila razmatraju se datacije u kasnu antiku, te rani ili zreli srednji vijek, sa sličnim zaključkom do kojega dovodi analiza ikonografije. Najbliže stilske usporedbe nalaze se u sjevernoj Italiji (Venecija). Međutim, pitanje datuma i (izvorne?) provenijencije komplicira se činjenicom da se upravo takav materijal kakvi su naši fragmenti uvelike uvozi u Mađarsku pri kraju 18. i tijekom 19. stoljeća. Donosi ga plemstvo kao "trofeje" s bračnih putovanja. Ne treba zaboraviti da je Daruvar središte posjeda velike slavonske plemenitaške obitelji Jankovića.

Velik interes stranaca za sjevernotalijanske srednjovjekovne radove, posebice venecijanske "vere da pozzo", dovodi nadalje do masovne proizvodnje otočentističkih kopija, pa tako u znatnom broju slučajeva, poput "vera da pozzo" u Muzeju lijepih umjetnosti u Budimpešti, pitanje izvornosti ostaje otvoreno. No otvoreno ostaje i pitanje da li su daruvarski fragmenti ipak mogli nastati u srednjovjekovnoj Panoniji.

Namjera autora nije bila da "objave" daruvarske predmete, to je ionako nemoguće bez petrografskih i kemijskih analiza, već da prikupi što se s razumnim stupnjem sigurnosti može danas za njih znanstveno ustvrditi. Bez obzira na datum i provenijenciju, daruvarski fragmenti ostaju među najzanimljivijim predmetima povijesti umjetnosti i kulture u kontinentalnoj Hrvatskoj.