

СВЕТ СРЕДЊОВЕКОВНИХ УТВРЂЕЊА,  
ГРАДОВА И МАНАСТИРА

*Омаж Марку Појовићу*

The Medieval World of Fortresses, Towns and Monasteries. *Homage to Marko Popović*



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Београд 2021.

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Изрека каже: „Човек снује, а Бој одлучује“. Тако је и са књигом **Свети средњовековних утврђења, градова и манастира** – намера уредничтва и жеља приложника била је да она буде зборник радова у част Марка Поповића. Уз велико поштовање према његовим доприносима у сазнавању средњовековне прошлости Србије и очувању националне културне наслеђа, зборник је такође требало да покаже, како стручној јавности тако и самом Поповићу, а на начин уобичајен у научном свету, да његово дело представља истинску инспирацију истраживачима различитих дисциплина и генерација. Нажалост, пред крај рада на обликовању публикације зашлекла нас је тужна вест о његовом одласку.

Овом књигом одајемо почаст великом археологу, колеги и пријатељу Марку Поповићу.

*The saying goes that man proposes, but God disposes, and it has proved to be true for the book **The World of Medieval Fortresses, Cities and Monasteries**. Its editors and contributors intended it as a festschrift to honour Marko Popović. With great appreciation for his many contributions to unravelling the medieval past of Serbia and preserving the national cultural heritage, it was also meant to show, to specialised publics and Marko Popović himself, in the form common in the academic world, how truly inspiring his exhaustive work has been to researchers from different disciplines and generations. To our deep regret, the sad news of his passing came just as this collection of essays was being put into final form.*

*With this book, we pay homage to the great archaeologist, colleague and friend Marko Popović.*

## Омаж Марку Поповићу

У ДРУГОЈ ПОЛОВИНИ 20. ВЕКА АРХЕОЛОГИЈА ДОЖИВЉАВА ПРЕПОРОД НА ЗАПАДНОМ БАЛКАНУ, у некадашњој Југославији, па самим тим и у Србији. Након обимних ископавања у оквиру значајног пројекта изградње хидроелектране Ђердап, археолошка истраживања настављена су, између осталог, опсежним програмима заштите и очувања средњовековног културног наслеђа, од којих поједини трају практично до наших дана. Комплексни археолошки пројекти захтевали су људе „од формата” – истовремено добре организаторе ископавања и научно акрибичне истраживаче. Оба та знамена, али и много више од њих, била су садржана у личности археолога Марка Поповића. Дуже од педесет година он је био доминантна фигура српске археологије средњег века, са изузетно вредним резултатима на захтевном пољу изучавања, заштите и промоције културног наслеђа.

\* \* \*

Марко Поповић је рођен 1944. године у Ужицу, а школовао се у Београду. На Филозофском факултету у Београду дипломирао је 1966. године, магистрирао 1971, а докторирао 1980. Професионалну каријеру започиње 1968. године у Заводу за заштиту споменика културе града Београда, за који остаје везан током целе своје каријере, како учешћем у реализацији низа конзерваторско-реставраторских пројеката на Београдској тврђави, тако и уређивањем његовог гласила *Наслеђе*, чији је и покретач. У Археолошки институт долази 1976. године и у њему остаје све до одласка у пензију 2011. године. Поред тога што је руководио бројним истраживачким пројектима, годинама је водио и научну политику те куће у својству председника Научног већа. Пензионисање није означило крај његове каријере. Многе велике послове урадио је у претходној деценији, при чему можемо истаћи импресивне резултате истраживања и конзервације Новог Брда, тим пре што су се ти радови одвијали у сложенем политичком амбијенту.

Научно усмерење Марка Поповића на археологију пуног и позног средњег века исказано је већ на самом почетку његовог професионалног ангажмана, где је с једнаком пажњом приступао истраживањима и фортификација и сакралних комплекса. Ипак, његов највећи, неисцрпан научни изазов било је проучавање утврђења и система одбране у српским земљама средњег века и на почетку новог доба – са Београдском тврђавом у средишту пажње. Био је један од оснивача и дугогодишњи руководилац Научноистраживачког центра за Београдску тврђаву при Археолошком институту, где је прикупљена огромна грађа и организована датотека старих планова и фотографија, као и документације археолошких истраживања и покретних археолошких налаза, која се односи не само на тврђаву већ и на историјско подручје града Београда.



Изузетан допринос остварио је у изучавању средњовековних утврђења Београда – од времена градње византијског кастела у 12. веку, доградње у време цара Душана и, нарочито, градитељске делатности деспота Стефана Лазаревића која осликава веома значајну етапу развоја српске средњовековне војне архитектуре. Проучавањем развоја фортификација и урбаног језгра Београда у каснијем периоду, између 16. и 18. века, подстакао је развој нововековне археологије у Србији, која је послужила као узор земљама у окружењу. Уз то, дотакао се и проблематике античког Сингидунума, с посебним освртом на преостале материјалне трагове у савременој урбаној матрици, при чему је покренуо и уређивао тематску едицију зборника радова *Сингидунум*, у којој су до сада изашла четири тома.

Више од двадесет година посветио је Марко Поповић истраживањима на подручју Рашке, Новог Пазара и Сјенице – централне области средњовековне Србије. У средишту његове пажње био је комплекс на Градини изнад Пазаришта – Трговишта, који је након укупних сазнања до којих се дошло препознат као Тврђава Рас – знаменито седиште првих Немањића. У наставку изучавања кључних проблема наше националне прошлости посветио се систематским истраживањима Градине у Врсеницама, на рубу Сјеничког поља. Ту је, осим остатака античког и палеовизантијског утврђења, откривен раносредњовековни културни хоризонт са веома значајним траговима утврђивања из 9. века и материјалном културом из времена уобличавања Србије. Резултате тих радова објавио је у детаљним, узорно састављеним монографијама. Обиман пратећи програм теренских рекогносцирања у читавој тој области, приликом којих је откривено више десетина а истражено преко двадесет касноантичких и рановизантијских утврђења, донео је сасвим ново виђење граничног подручја долине Рашке и Пештерске висоравни у доба сутона антике и у раном средњем веку, што је снажно утицало и на развој рановизантијске археологије код нас. У том кључу би требало споменути и истраживања утврде Светиње, по свој прилици Виминакиона 6. века.

Велики део опуса Марка Поповића обухвата проучавање фортификација и настанка урбаних насеби на – градова у српским земљама средњег века. Истраживањима тих проблема он је приступао темељно, повезујући исходе сопствених археолошких истраживања, анализе изворне историјске грађе и резултата ранијих истраживача, што се може видети у публикацијама о Ужичком граду, Магличу и најновијој о Новом Брду. Комплексност утврђених градова у вези је и с питањима која се тичу владарских и властеоских боравишта, њиховог просторног распореда и структуре. Компаративном анализом расположивих података о боравку првих Немањића у области Расе и сазнања о познијим дворovima крај ишчезлог језера на Косову и, доцније, у градовима Београду и Смедереву, успоставио је моделе резиденција средњовековних српских владара.

Други велики тематски круг у научном раду Марка Поповића чине истраживања сакралних комплекса – како манастирских целина тако и појединачних црквених здања. На основу резултата археолошких истраживања, његова проучавања била су усмерена на анализу и тумачење физичких структура, то јест архитектонских остатака објеката у манастирским комплексима и њихове функције у оквиру целине. Још као млад истраживач, крајем шездесетих година прошлог века, открио је и обелоданио црквене комплексе у Панику код Билеће и Св. Петра код Требиња, да би током свог радног века заокружио истраживања средњовековне Митрополије у Београду, Куманице на Лиму, цркве Св. Николе у Станичењу, катедрале града Новог Брда и Шудикове у Будимлји. Обавио је систематска археолошка истраживања комплекса манастира Студенице, која су омогућила целовит увид не само у настанак и развој тог знаменитог светилишта него и



у поједине аспекте живота његове монашке заједнице током средњег века. У склопу проучавања сакралне архитектуре истакли бисмо и његово бављење ктиторским гробовима. Уводна реч је кратка да би објединила све токове плодотворне научне мисли Марка Поповића, па стога овде само спомињемо да је оставио трага и на пољу сигилографије, а нарочито хералдике.

Важно је, међутим, нагласити да је Марко Поповић био археолог изузетно широке ерудиције и великог талента. Захваљујући томе он је утирао нове путеве научне спознаје, превазилазећи конвенционалне оквире чисто археолошке методологије. Уз беспрекорну теренску документацију, на којој је инсистирао, то се односи, с једне стране, на умешно коришћење старе картографске грађе у истраживањима, а, с друге, на архитектонске анализе за које је имао нарочитог дара. Разумевање архитектонског простора и „читање“, често скромних, теренских остатака здања, уз минуциозан стратиграфски приступ истраживањима, обезбедили су читав низ препознатљивих аксонометријских реконструкција којима обилују његове публикације. Веома образован и у сфери историје уметности, још за потребе свог магистарског рада извео је пионирску компаративну анализу археолошких налаза и њихових представа на фрескама у средњовековним црквама. Та веза ће нарочито добити на значају током деценија истраживања српске сакралне архитектуре. Интердисциплинарни приступ Марка Поповића подразумевао је и коришћење аерофотографија, израду стереофотограметријских планова великог формата и организовање геофизичких истраживања на Београдској тврђави још пре распада Југославије, када су такви екскурси представљали праву реткост у нашој археологији. Вреди истаћи и то да је подстакао рана археозоолошка истраживања налаза из Тврђаве Рас. Ипак се по добрим последицама истиче његов кључни утицај на увођење у праксу препознатљивог система обраде и изучавања археолошке керамике што се већ деценијама спроводи у Научноистраживачком центру за Београдску тврђаву.

Посебан значај археолошке делатности Марка Поповића јесте у томе што је своја истраживања по правилу крунисао садржајним публикацијама, често монографијама. Иако је већину радова написао самостално, није се либио коауторстава, у духу правог руководиоца, свесног потребе за тимским радом и интердисциплинарним приступом. Импазантна библиографија, одштампана у овом зборнику, упутиће заинтересованог читаоца на још много детаља његове плодне активности.

У својој пола столећа дугој каријери обављао је различите стручне и друштвене функције. Био је председник Српског археолошког друштва (1987–1990), председник Управног одбора Завода за заштиту споменика културе града Београда (до 2010) и председник Комисије за споменике од изузетног значаја и српска културна добра у иностранству при Министарству културе (2008–2013). Главни је уредник часописа *Наслеђе* и едиције *Синџидунум*, уредник је *Зборника Народног музеја* и члан редакције часописа *Саопштења*. Запажен допринос дао је као члан редакција *Новойазарској зборника* (1982–2007), *Старинара* (1997–2016) и посебних издања Археолошког института. Био је члан Одбора за историју Босне и Херцеговине САНУ.

За свој научни рад и укупан ангажман на очувању и презентацији српског културног наслеђа стекао је угледна признања. Добио је три пута Октобарску награду града Београда: 1974, 1976. (колеktivна) и 1983. године. Добитник је и Априлске награде града Београда 2005. године (са В. Бикић), затим награде града Ужица „С. Пенезић – Крцун“ 1989. године и Награде града Новог Пазара 1985. године. У фебруару 2018. одликован је орденом Круне I степена, године 2019. уручена му је Велика повеља града Ужица, а у фебруару 2020. одликован је Сретењским орденом III степена за нарочите заслуге у области културе.

\* \* \*

Марко Поповић словио је за посвећеног, енергичног и ауторитативног археолога, а његов захтеван карактер надалеко је познат. Војничка дисциплина и штедљивост ресурса, нарочито изражени у току теренских истраживања, а многим незамисливи како у оном а још више у овом времену, често су мамили осмехе његових сарадника. Сарадња с њим представљала је изазов свакојаке врсте, али у коначници резултат је увек био утемељен и неспоран. Неспорна је и његова несебична помоћ коју је пружао колегама у свакој ситуацији и под свим условима. С великим поносом и захвалношћу можемо да истакнемо да је Марко Поповић створио препознатљиву школу у оквиру Археолошког института. Доста рано у каријери постао је синоним за српску средњовековну археологију и узор многим колегама и у земљи и у окружењу, а то је – због широког знања, изузетне мотивације, ефикасности и изванредног истраживачког дара – остао и до данас.

Зборником који посвећујемо успомени на Марка Поповића одајемо почаст његовој непресушној истраживачкој радозналости.

*Уредници*

## *Homage to Marko Popović*

THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SAW A REVIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE WESTERN Balkans, the former Yugoslavia, and thus in Serbia. Large-scale rescue excavations ahead of the construction of the Djerdap hydroelectric power plant were followed by other archaeological projects, including extensive and, in some cases, still ongoing programmes of medieval cultural heritage protection and preservation. Complex archaeological projects required persons of high calibre, combining the qualities of a competent excavation leader and a scrupulous scholar. The archaeologist Marko Popović was both, and much more. For more than fifty years he was a dominant figure in Serbian medieval archaeology with exceptional achievements in the demanding area of the study, protection and promotion of cultural heritage.

\* \* \*

Marko Popović was born in Užice in 1944 and educated in Belgrade, graduating from the Faculty of Philosophy in 1966, taking his master's degree in 1971 and his PhD in 1980. His professional career began in 1968 when he joined the Cultural Heritage Preservation Institute of Belgrade, remaining tied to it ever since through participating in a number of conservation-restoration projects for the Belgrade Fortress and as the initiator and editor of its journal *Nasledje/Heritage*. In 1976 he joined the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade and remained its member until his retirement in 2011, directing a number of the Institute's research projects and steering its research policy in his capacity as chairman of its Scholarly Council. But retirement was by no means the end of his working days. During the past decade he accomplished much important work, notably the project of the excavation and conservation of Novo Brdo, all the more impressive for its results because it was carried out in complicated political circumstances.

Marko Popović had been focused on the archaeology of the Central and Late Middle Ages from the very beginning of his career, dividing his research attention equally between fortifications and religious complexes. But what remained his biggest and inexhaustible challenge was the study of military architecture and defence systems in the Serbian lands in the medieval and early modern periods – with the Belgrade Fortress at its centre. He was one of the founders and long-standing director of the Institute of Archaeology's Research Centre for the Belgrade Fortress, which has accumulated vast documentation and set up a database of old plans and photographs concerning not only the Fortress but also the whole historic area of Belgrade. He made an exceptional contribution to the study of Belgrade's medieval fortifications – from the twelfth-century Byzantine castellum and the additions built under Emperor Stefan Dušan to, especially, the fifteenth-century building activity of Despot

Stefan Lazarević which marks a particularly important stage in the development of medieval Serbian military architecture. His research on the development of the defences and urban core of Belgrade in a later period, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, encouraged the development of the archaeology of the modern era in Serbia, setting a model followed in neighbouring countries. His research interests included the period of Roman Singidunum as well, focusing especially on its surviving traces in the contemporary urban fabric. He initiated and edited a collective series on the subject, *Singidunum*, consisting of four volumes to date.

Marko Popović devoted more than twenty years of research to the region of Raška, Novi Pazar and Sjenica – the core area of medieval Serbia. His focus was on the complex at Gradina above Pazarište (Trgovište), now identified as the Ras Fortress, the illustrious seat of the first rulers of the Nemanjić dynasty. Continuing his research on important issues of the national past, he embarked on the systematic excavation of the site of Gradina in Vrsenice, at the edge of Sjeničko Polje. Apart from the remains of a Roman and Early Byzantine fortress, the site yielded an early-medieval cultural horizon with significant vestiges of ninth-century fortification and the material culture from the period of the crystallisation of a Serbian polity. These excavations produced an exemplary monographic study. An extensive project of field survey of the whole area, which discovered several dozen and investigated more than twenty late-antique forts produced a very different picture of the border area of the Raška Valley and Pešter Plateau in the period of the decline of late antiquity and in the Early Middle Ages, strongly influencing the development of Early Byzantine archaeology in Serbia. To be mentioned in the same context is the excavation of the fort on the site of Svetinja, most likely identifiable as sixth-century Viminakion.

A good part of Marko Popović's work was concerned with the study of fortifications and the genesis of fortified urban settlements in the medieval Serbian lands. His approach was always thorough, drawing on the results of his own archaeological investigations, rigorous scrutiny of surviving written sources and the work of earlier researchers, as can be seen from the books on the fortresses/castles of Užice, Maglič, and the latest, Novo Brdo. The issue of fortified urban settlements is closely tied to the issue of royal and aristocratic residences, including their layout and structure. Based on a comparative analysis of the available information about the early Nemanjić rulers residing in the Ras area and the discoveries about the later royal residences by a now-vanished lake in Kosovo and, later still, in the cities of Belgrade and Smederevo, he established the patterns of medieval Serbian rulers' residences.

Another important set of topics addressed by Marko Popović concerned sacral complexes, both monastic enclosures and individual church buildings. Basing his research on the archaeological evidence, he focused on the analysis and interpretation of physical structures, i.e., structural remains, within monastic complexes and their original function. Even as a young archaeologist, in the late 1960s, Marko Popović discovered and draw attention to the sacral complexes in Panik near Bileća and St Peter's near Trebinje, wrapping up in the course of his career the exploration of the medieval complex of the metropolitan church in Belgrade, Kumanica on the Lim, the church of St Nicholas in Staničenje, the cathedral of the city of Novo Brdo and Šudikova in Budimlja. His systematic archaeological investigation of the monastery of Studenica has made it possible to create a comprehensive picture of the origin and development of this illustrious religious house, and of some aspects of the everyday life of the monastic community in the Middle Ages. His work on religious architecture also included topics such as the tombs of the founders of churches or monasteries. This short introductory text cannot possibly

cover all areas of Marko Popović's wide-ranging scholarly work, but it should be noted that he also made a contribution in the field of sigillography and, especially, heraldry.

Owing to his exceptionally broad erudition and archaeological talent Marko Popović was able to open new avenues of research, going beyond the boundaries of conventional archaeological method. Apart from impeccably kept excavation records, on which he always insisted, this involved the competent use of historic cartographic sources, and the analysis of structural remains, which was one of his fortes. His understanding of architectural space and skilful reading of frequently meagre structural remains, combined with a meticulous stratigraphic approach, resulted in many axonometric reconstructions typically enriching his texts. Comprehensively knowledgeable about art history as well, even his master's thesis offered a pioneering comparative analysis of archaeological remains and their visual representations in frescoes in medieval churches, establishing a link that would prove its importance particularly in the flourishing decades of the study of medieval Serbian religious architecture. Marko Popović's interdisciplinary approach involved the use of aerial photography, large-format stereophotogrammetric plans and geophysical surveys in the Belgrade Fortress area even before the disintegration of Yugoslavia, when such techniques were still a rarity in the country's archaeology. It should also be noted that he gave impetus to early archaeozoological studies of the finds from the Ras Fortress. But the part of his legacy that stands out for its beneficial impact is that he was instrumental in introducing the distinctive system of processing and studying archaeological pottery that has for decades now been standard practice at the Research Centre for the Belgrade Fortress.

A particularly important aspect of Marko Popović's archaeological work was that he as a rule crowned his research by publication, frequently in the form of insightful monographs. Although the sole author in most cases, he was never ill-disposed towards co-authorship, being aware, as a true leader, of the necessity of teamwork and interdisciplinarity. His impressive bibliography, provided in this volume, will introduce the interested reader to his fruitful archaeological work in more detail.

In his fifty-year-long career Marko Popović held various professional and social positions. He served as president of the Serbian Archaeological Society (1987–1990), president of the Managing Board of the Cultural Heritage Preservation Institute of Belgrade (until 2010) and chaired the Ministry of Culture's Committee on Monuments of Outstanding Importance and Serbian Cultural Assets Abroad (2008–2013). At the time of death, he was editor-in-chief of the journal *Heritage* and the *Singidunum* series, editor of the annual of the National Museum in Belgrade, *Zbornik Narodnog Muzeja*, member of the editorial board of the journal *Saopštenja/Communications*, and member of the Committee on the History of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He also made a considerable contribution in his capacity as member of the editorial board of the journals *Novopazarski Zbornik* (1982–2007) and *Starinar* (1997–2016), and of the Monographs series of the Institute of Archaeology.

His scholarly work and overall achievement in the preservation and presentation of the Serbian cultural heritage earned him prestigious awards. He was a three-time recipient of the October Award of the City of Belgrade: 1974, 1976 (collective) and 1983; of the 2005 April Award of the City of Belgrade (with Vesna Bikić); of the 1989 S. Penezić Krcun Award of the City of Užice; and the 1985 Award of the City of Novi Pazar. In February 2018 he was awarded the Order of the Crown 1<sup>st</sup> Class, and in 2019 the Order of Sretenje 3<sup>rd</sup> Class for Distinguished Contributions in Culture.



\* \* \*

Marko Popović was reputed to be a dedicated, energetic and authoritative archaeologist, and his demanding nature preceded him. Unconceivable to many in earlier times and even more so today, his iron work discipline and careful management of resources, which could best be seen during fieldwork, often brought a smile to the faces of his colleagues. Working with him was a challenge in many ways but, at the end of the day, the results were always there, well founded and indisputable. And he generously shared his knowledge and assisted his colleagues in all situations and under all circumstances. It is with great pride and gratitude that we can say that Marko Popović created a recognisable school within the Institute of Archaeology. Quite early in his career he became a synonym for Serbian medieval archaeology, and a role model for many colleagues both in the country and in the region. And he remained one by virtue of his broad knowledge, exceptional motivation, efficiency and outstanding research talent.

With this volume dedicated to Marko Popović we pay homage to his insatiable spirit of inquiry.

*Editors*



## Late Roman Structural Element Construction in Medieval Sacred Structures in the Area of Sirmium Imperial Palace

**Ivana POPOVIĆ**

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**Bojan POPOVIĆ**

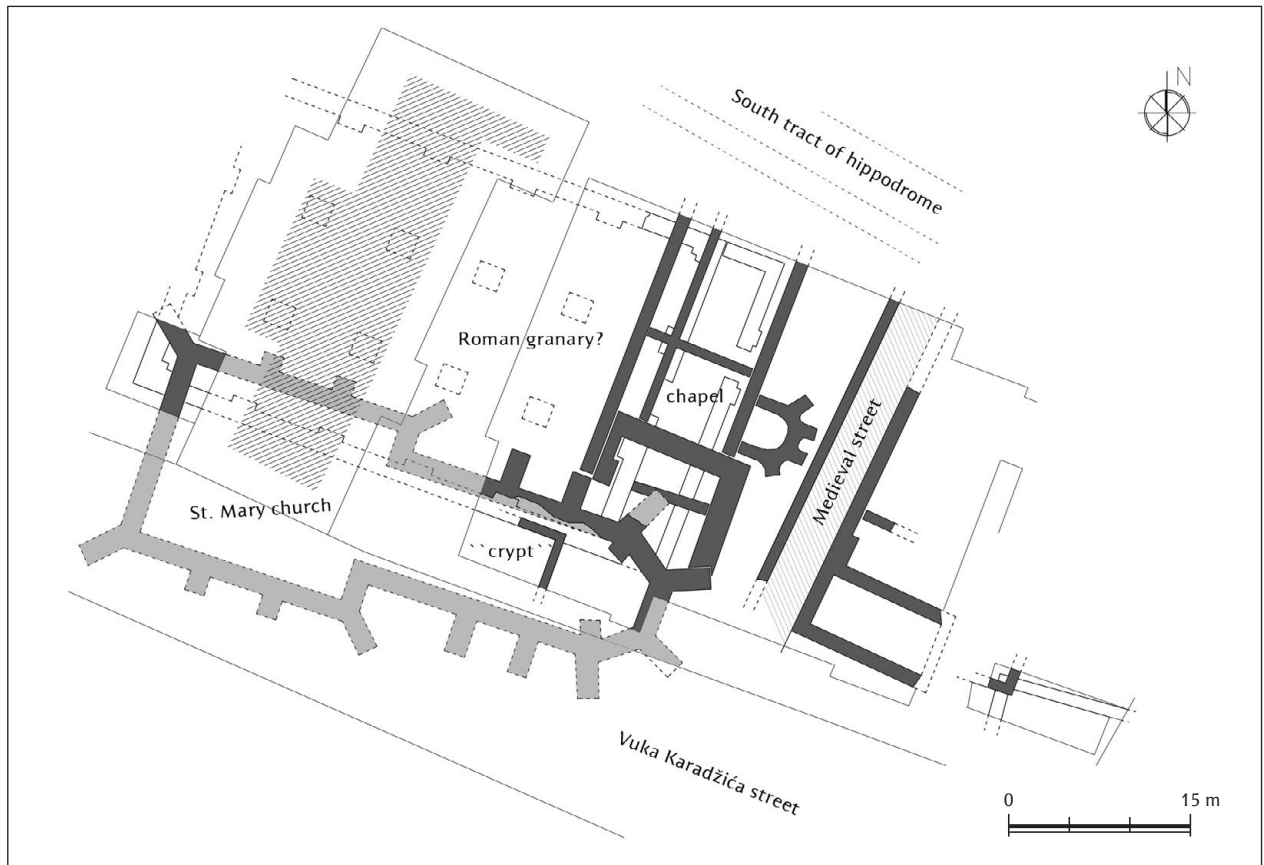
Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade

Archaeological investigations of the north section of the Imperial palace complex in Sirmium (site 85) started in 2002 and continued until 2006. After an interruption between 2007 and 2009, the excavations were resumed in 2010 and lasted until 2015.<sup>1</sup> In the control trench excavated in 2002 we established the stratigraphy of the site, taking note of the Pre-Roman, Early Roman, Tetrarchic, Late Roman and Medieval periods, the last generally dated between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup>

Intending that the remains of the Medieval period became understandable, a statement of the principal historical facts is essential. The district of Srem (Szerém) was subject to the Archbishop of Kalocsa after the Christianization of Hungary. Concerning a large extent of his diocese, the archbishop, in 1228, petitioned the Holy See to found a new bishopric, and in 1229, Gregory IX established the See of Szerém, the jurisdiction of which covered almost exclusively the territory on the right bank of the Sava River. On the

<sup>1</sup> Archaeological investigations at site 85 were organised by the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade in cooperation with the Museum of Srem in Sremska Mitrovica and the Office for the Protection Cultural Monuments in Sremska Mitrovica. In the period between 2010 and 2015, the Institute of Archaeology worked in cooperation only with the Museum of Srem, as the Office for Protection Cultural Monuments was not interested in continuing the previous cooperation. The directors of the investigation project in the period 2002–2006, and 2010 were fellows of the Institute of Archaeology, in Belgrade, Ivana Popović and Miroslav Jeremić, the director of the project between 2011 and 2013 was Ivana Popović and in 2014–2015, the directors were Ivana Popović and Stefan Pop-Lazić. Architectural analyses in the period between 2002 and 2006 and in 2010 were performed by Miroslav Jeremić and in 2011–2012 by Bojan Popović.

<sup>2</sup> М. Јеремих, И. Поповић, *Археолошка истраживања Сирмијума у Сремској Миштровици на локалитетима 79 и 85 (у периоду од 2000. до 2003. године)*, Старинар LIII–LIV/2003 (2004) 284–288, сл. 6.



**Fig. 1.** Medieval structures at site 80 – situation

(drawing by B. Popović after: M. Jeremić, *The Relationship*, fig. 16)

**Сл. 1.** Средњовековна здања на локалитету 80 – ситуациони план

(цртеж: Б. Поповић, према М. Јеремић, *The Relationship*, fig. 16)

basis of the archive materials of primarily Hungarian and other diplomats, and numerous literature, the paper attempts to create hitherto the most complete and the most accurate chronological order of Roman Catholic Sirmium bishops in the Sirmium bishopric, from its foundation in 1229 to the Battle of Mohacs in 1526, and to the fall of the medieval Hungarian kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

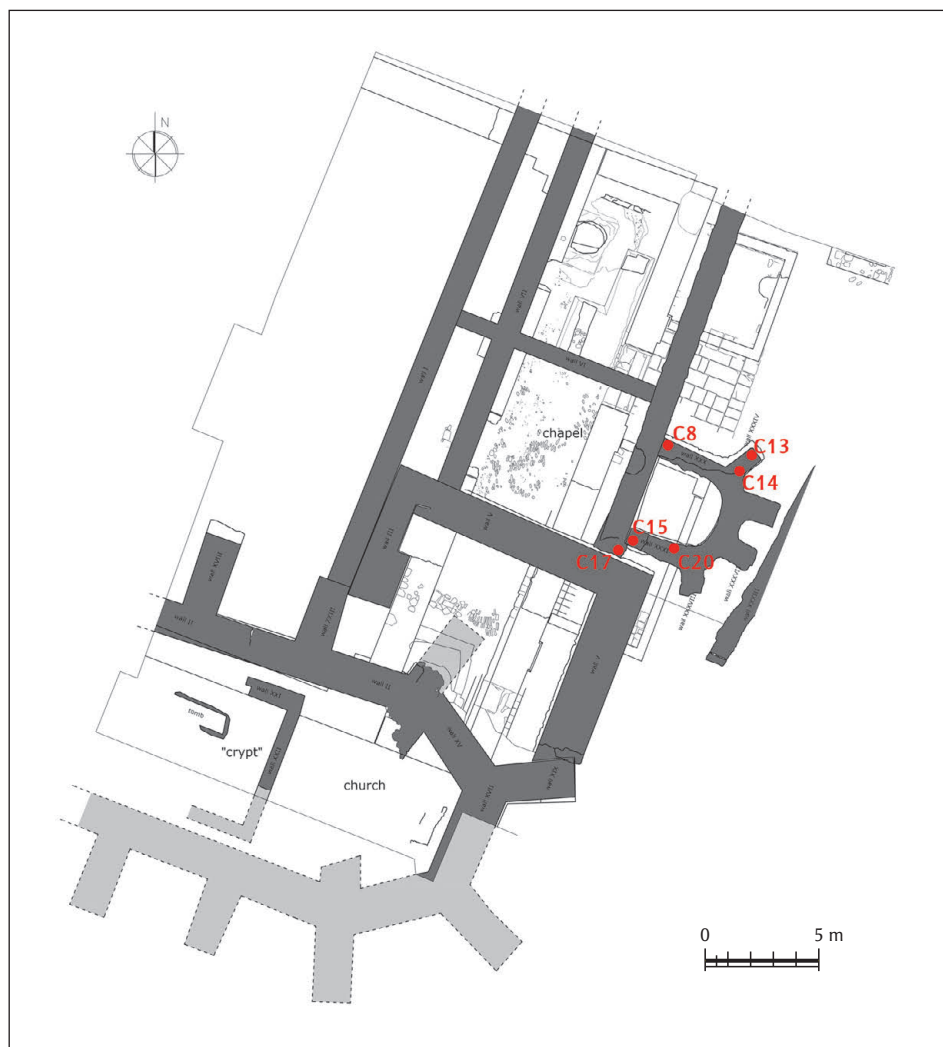
Remains of the medieval architecture at site 85 discovered in the course of archaeological excavations from 2003 to 2005 indicate that in this area there were many structures situated on both sides of the street running in a north–south direction. The street, which

was 3.55 m wide, was bordered on both sides by two parallel walls. One wall, 0.85 m thick, which was on the west side of the street, is slightly thinner than the wall on the east side. It was probably the perimeter wall of the structures on the west side, while, judging by the remains and architectural structure, the wall on the east side of the street was a segment of a larger building, which has not been completely explored (Fig. 1).

The structures on the west side of the street were structurally joined together, suggested by the interconnections between the walls and they most probably created an entirety – a complex of a sacred character. This entirety included a single-nave church/cathedral<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Б. Стојковски, *Сремски бискупи 1229–1534*, Истраживања 23 (2012) 161–180.

<sup>4</sup> For different opinions regarding the character of this sacred structure, see notes 5 and 9.



**Fig. 2.** Ground plan of the structures on the west side of the medieval street with marked position of the bricks placed into the chapel foundation

(drawing by B. Popović, after the plan in the documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade)

**Сл. 2.** Основа здања западно од средњовековне улице с назначеним положајем опека у темељу капеле (цртеж: Б. Поповић, према плану из документације Археолошког института)

with a three-sided apse reinforced on the outside with massive elongated counterforts, and a structure identified as a chapel with a horseshoe-shaped apse, which was also reinforced with massive counterforts (Fig. 2).<sup>5</sup>

The discovered structural elements of the cathedral, walls and counterforts, are of considerable size. They are solidly built using bricks and stone that were

sometimes taken from older buildings and joined with lime mortar. The north wall, 1.52 m thick, marked in the documentation as wall II, is reinforced on the outside with two strong counterforts, marked on the plan as wall XVIII and wall XXIII. The counterforts are of the same thickness as the north wall, i.e. 1.50 m, while they are 3.28 and 3.06 m long, respectively. They are

<sup>5</sup> M. Jeremić, *The relationship between the urban physical structures of medieval Mitrovica and Roman Sirmium*, Hortus Artium Medievalium 12 (2006) 150–151.





**Fig. 3.** Crypt of the Gothic church, east wall, fresco with the composition *Unction of Christ in the House of Simon the Pharisee* (Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade)

**Сл. 3.** Крипта готичке цркве, источни зид, фреска са композицијом *Помазања Христјовој у кући Симона фарисеја* (Документација Археолошког института)

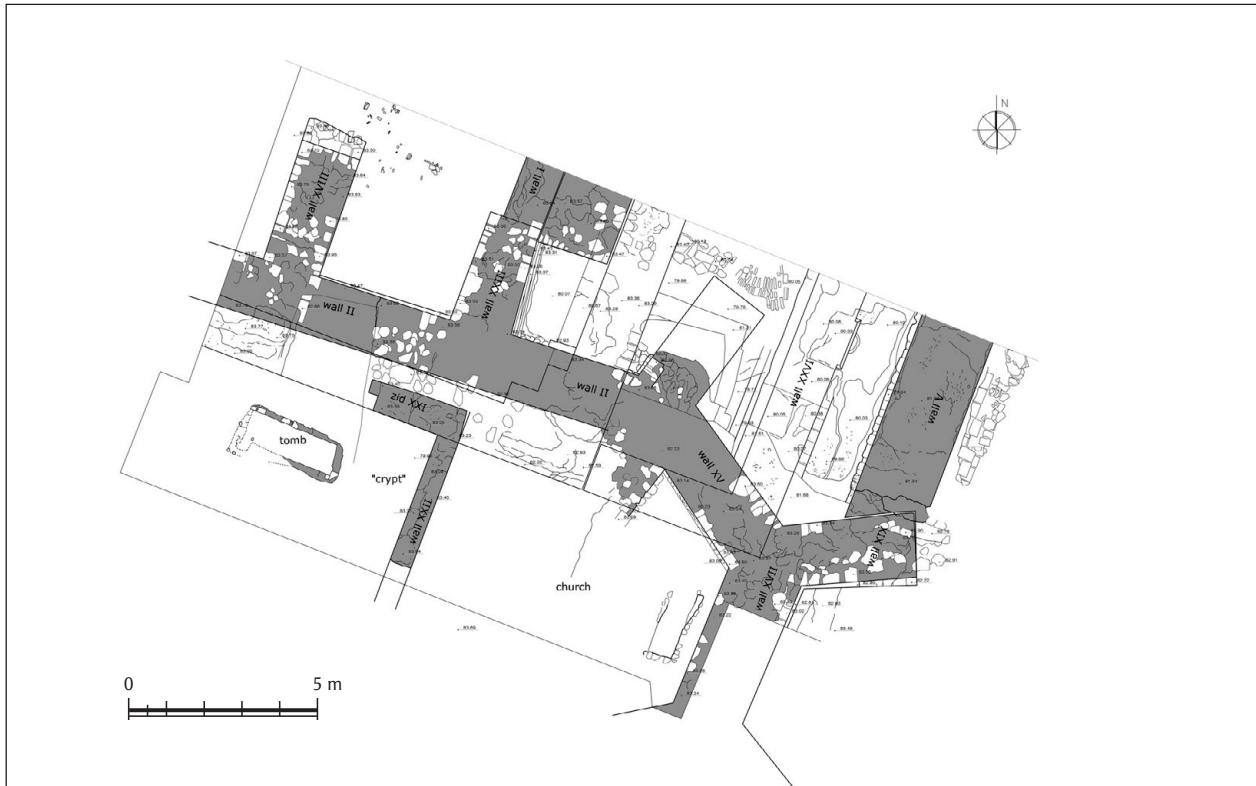
arranged at 3.68 m from each other, a pattern that could be observed for all the discovered counterforts, with only slight variations. Located at the point where the three-sided apse commenced as well as at the junction of its sides are counterforts, marked as wall XX and wall XIX that are 1.50 m thick and around 3.10 m long. In the central area of the cathedral, in the direction of counterfort marked as wall XXIII, the 0.60 m thick wall XXII was discovered, which was, in

fact, the east wall of the room identified in literature as the crypt.<sup>6</sup> The crypt was plastered on the inside and fresco painted and a scene with Mary Magdalene and Christ could be identified, with the Latin inscription *MARIA MAGDALENA* (Fig. 3) discernible.<sup>7</sup> On the basis of this inscription, M. Jeremić came to the conclusion that this cathedral could have been dedicated to Mary Magdalene.<sup>8</sup> The other opinion is that this sacred structure is not a cathedral, but nothing more than a

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>7</sup> These frescoes were discovered in the course of archaeological excavations at site 85 in 2003 and on that occasion they were provisionally protected by a makeshift wooden structure constructed *in situ*. The investigators promptly informed the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments but after many written and personal appeals to the directors of that institution (that have changed in the meantime) and to the Commission for the Protection Cultural Monuments of Exceptional Significance to undertake conservation of the frescoes, the experts from the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments did it only partially in 2011. Nevertheless, the method of their display was not decided on that occasion, so they are today housed in the depot of the Museum of Srem in Sremska Mitrovica with colours unfortunately changing and fading over the course of time while waiting for conservation treatment.

<sup>8</sup> M. Jeremić, *The relationship*, 151.



**Fig. 4.** Ground plan of the central area of the cathedral – crypt

(drawing by B. Popović, after the plan in the documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade)

**Сл. 4.** Основа средишњег дела цркве, крипта

(цртеж: Б. Поповић, према плану из документације Археолошког института)

village church, dedicated to St Mary.<sup>9</sup> Some significant information in the documentation that raises confusion regarding the relationship between the earlier architecture and the cathedral, concerns wall XXI. This is the north wall of the crypt that is marked on the plan as being inserted into the south wall of the Late Roman structure (Fig. 4). From the structural point of view there is no justification for such an action because no better characteristics of the junction could have been achieved from a statics perspective. Also, the time and money necessary for such an activity should be taken into account, so such an action would have not been justified from an economic standpoint. We are

of the opinion that the south wall of the Late Roman structure was demolished or dismantled, depending on the circumstances, to a certain level (83.02 m ASL)<sup>10</sup> and, as the crypt required a higher wall (83.38 m ASL or more),<sup>11</sup> that small difference was simply made up and the cathedral floor was constructed on top of it. The difference could have been substituted by wall XXI, which was 0.85 m thick. It is clearly visible on the plan as well as on the photographs from the photo documentation that the inside face of wall XXI and external face of the Late Roman structure create an equal plane and the purpose of this was to provide flat wall surfaces in the inside of the crypt. Also, it was

<sup>9</sup> S. Andrić, *Bazilijanski i benediktinski samostan sv. Dimitrija u Srijemskoj Mitrovici*, Radovi – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest 40 (2008) 157–158.

<sup>10</sup> This is the highest point of the Late Roman wall in the immediate vicinity, to the north of wall XXI.

<sup>11</sup> The highest preserved point of wall XXI.





**Fig. 5.** Crypt of the Gothic church: a) connection between east and north wall;  
b–c) north wall, parts of the composition *Washing of the Feet of the Apostles*  
(Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade)

**Сл. 5.** Крипта готичке цркве: а) спој источног и северног зида;  
б–с) северни зид, делови композиције *Прања ноју айосћола*  
(Документација Археолошког института)



possible to discern in the photographs that there is no actual connection between wall XXII and the south wall of the Late Roman structure, but that the wall was skilfully added to. It is perhaps best noticeable in the lower zone of the wall junctions (fig. 5a).

The reconstruction of the cathedral ground plan on the basis of the investigated sections of the building was proposed by M. Jeremić.<sup>12</sup> According to his reconstruction, the assumed external length including the altar area and apse would be 45 m, while the external width of the altar space would be 11 m. The central space was more than 15 m wide and the main entrance was located in the west. We think, on the basis of spatial analyses and the new finds of remains of the counterforts on the southern side<sup>13</sup> and a similar example from the Gothic church of the Benedictine monastery of Saint George in Dumbovo (Dombó), dated to the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 6)<sup>14</sup> and situated in the village of Stari Rakovac, around 30 km north of Sirmium, that the proposed reconstruction of the ground plan of the Mitrovica cathedral is absolutely justified at this point in the investigation. In addition, considering the thickness of the walls and massive counterforts, we could conclude that the cathedral was of a considerable height and there is a justified opinion that it had either a barrel vault or a Gothic rib vault.

Sections of a composition are preserved on the east wall of the crypt, to the north of the niche (Fig. 3). In its centre are visible remains of the monumental throne on which Christ is seated and just the lower section of his figure is preserved – segments of a pink under dress and blue top dress and bare feet. Next to his legs kneels a female figure who is wiping the freshly anointed feet of Christ with her loose hair. It is signed, in Latin script, *MARIA MAGDALENA*. The lower sections of two standing figures in antique robes are preserved to the left

of Christ. On the bottom section of the figure to the right can be recognised the style of dress of an Old Testament dignitary. The composition could be identified as *The Unction of Christ in the House of Simon the Pharisee* (Luke 7. 36–50). Small fragments of fresco decoration are preserved to the south of the niche. On the north wall of the crypt, supported by the south wall of the Late Roman structure, could be recognised sections of the composition *Washing of the Feet of the Apostles*. On one fragment a brown painted bottom border is visible. Next to the border are well preserved sandaled feet and the lower section of Christ's figure in a blue robe and brown cloak in front of a white background whose top edge is decorated with foliage (Fig. 5b). On the other fragment, one shod and another bare foot of one of the apostles can be seen, on an ochre background (Fig. 5c).

The idea of the 'composite' Mary Magdalene was introduced by the pope Gregory the Great (around 540–604): it was a combination of an anonymous sinner from the Gospel of Luke that anointed and wiped Christ's feet with her hair, Mary from Bethany – sister of the resurrected Lazarus and Mary of Magdala, who Christ freed from the seven demons (Mark 16:9, Luke 8:2).<sup>15</sup> These three persons have never been united in the Eastern Church; the relics of St Mary Magdalene have been housed in the church of St Lazarus in Constantinople since the 9<sup>th</sup> century. She was considered to have been the follower of Jesus, appointed to her apostolic duty by the resurrected Christ on the Easter morning. She became popular in the East only after the foundation of the Crusader states, which could be noticed in her status as an apostolic saint as well as even earlier in the special devotion to her in the West.<sup>16</sup>

The cult of Mary Magdalene flourished within the Roman Catholic Church in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Fourth

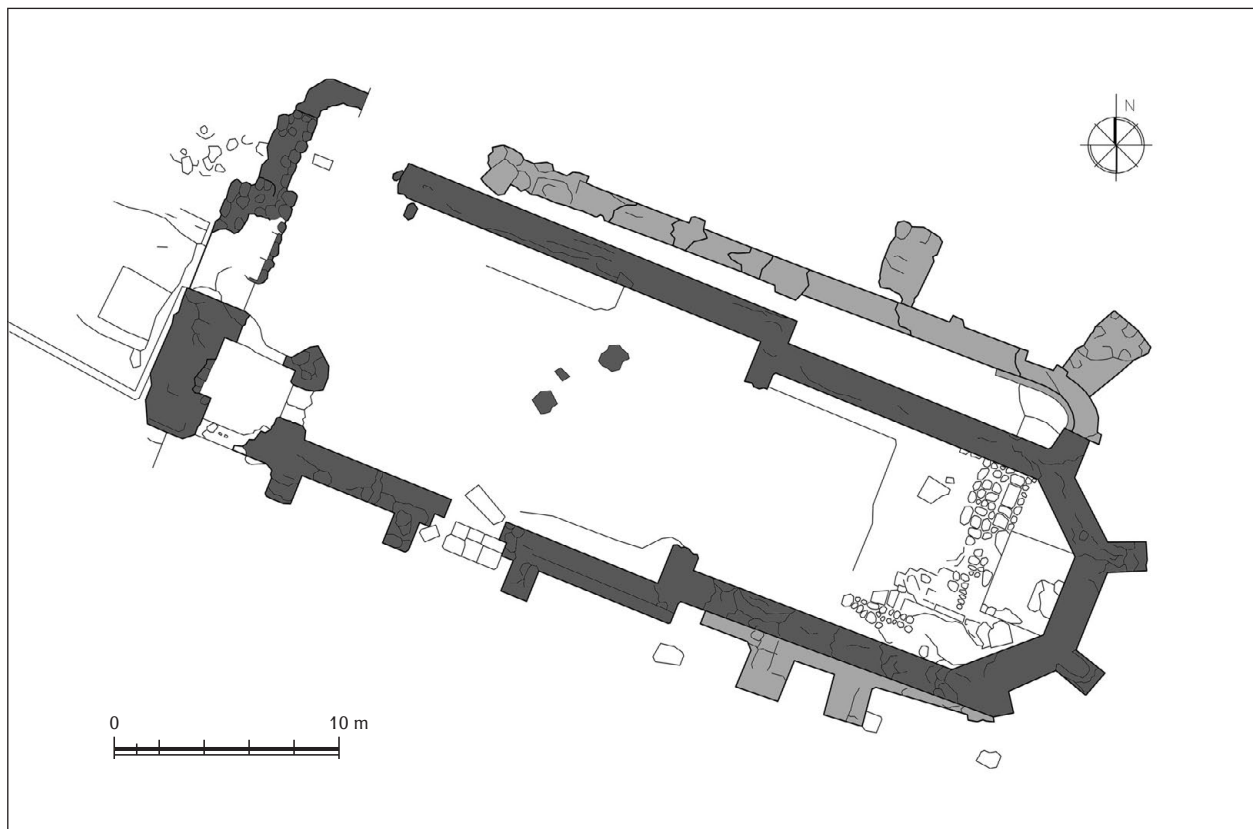
<sup>12</sup> M. Jeremić, *The relationship*, fig. 16.

<sup>13</sup> In the course of rescue excavations along the line of new water supply system conducted in 2010 there were noticed the remains of counterforts 1.50 m wide, which according to their position and dimensions correspond to the counterforts on the north side of the cathedral.

<sup>14</sup> S. Andrić, *Problemi graditeljske povijesti benediktinskog samostana sv. Jurja u Dumbovu*, *Scrinia Slavonica* 6 (2006) 160–182. Ground plan shape, constructive structure and dimensions of this church are almost identical to the Mitrovica cathedral.

<sup>15</sup> K. L. Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen. Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages*, Princeton 1999, 20–23; K. Havelock, *In Memory of Her: The Iconography of the Magdalen Dossalin in the Galleria dell'Accademia*, Florence 2014, 12–13.

<sup>16</sup> V. A. Foskolou, *Mary Magdalene between East and West. Cult and Image, Relics and Politics in the Late Thirteenth-Century Eastern Mediterranean*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 65–66/2011 (2012) 284. For the different aspects of the cult in the West, cf. K. L. Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*.



**Fig. 6.** Ground plan of the cathedral of the Dominican monastery in Dumbovo

(drawing by B. Popović, after the plan in [www.gradovi.protego.rs/index.php/pregled/dombo-stari-rakovac](http://www.gradovi.protego.rs/index.php/pregled/dombo-stari-rakovac))

**Сл. 6.** Основа цркве доминиканског манастира у Думбову

(цртеж: Б. Поповић, према плану са странице [www.gradovi.protego.rs/index.php/pregled/dombo-stari-rakovac](http://www.gradovi.protego.rs/index.php/pregled/dombo-stari-rakovac))

Council of the Lateran, which took place in 1215, discussed, among other things, the question of the role of penitence in the church. One of the results was the reformulation of penitent theology regarding the importance of confession. Concepts of penitence and the Eucharist became indissolubly connected, one requiring the other. New enthusiasm for the penitence started to appear, becoming the only way to accept the Eucharist. Franciscan and Dominican orders started almost immediately to preach about sacramental penitence using the rescued Magdalene as an example of perfect penitence. They were further preoccupied with establishing throughout Europe houses and monas-

teries devoted to Mary Magdalene that gave shelter to penitent women.<sup>17</sup>

After the rediscovery of the relics of Mary Magdalene in Provence in 1279, which had been miraculously discovered by the future king Charles II of Sicily, this saint became the protectress of the Angevin dynasty. Charles II built many churches and chapels in her honour in the Southern Kingdom, Naples and Provence in the final decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup> That resulted in an increase in the number of painted cycles devoted to Mary Magdalene.<sup>19</sup> It is considered that the panel in the Gallery of the Academy in Florence, dated to around 1280, with a figure of Mary Magdalene surrounded by

<sup>17</sup> K. LaTulipe, *A Sinner in the City: Contextualizing the Magdalene Master Vita Panel c. 1280*, Birmingham, Alabama 2014, 31–33.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>19</sup> K. Havelock, *In Memory of Her*, 4, n. 13.

scenes from her life was the result of special care paid by the Angevin dynasty.<sup>20</sup>

The first known representation and hagiography of that saint in a composite manner is presented in the panel. Equal importance was attached to all three evangelical personas by joining them into one person. Somewhat earlier cycles about her life on French stained glass windows from the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, despite being extensive, do not emphasise the aspect of the anonymous sinner, but the sister of Lazarus and her role after the Resurrection.<sup>21</sup> The unction, or dinner, in the house of Simon the Pharisee became one of the most frequently illustrated and recognisable pictures in the cycle of Mary Magdalene paintings at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It represents the moment of transformation of the figure of the 'sinner' into the figure of the 'solemn penitent' and the starting point for the representation of her life devoted to God. Until the moment she was appointed to the apostolic mission depicted in the *Noli me tangere* compositions, Magdalene wore a red cloak, a traditional mark of her profession at that time. Later, she performed her apostolic duties "dressed" only in her hair falling in waves to her ankles.<sup>22</sup>

Judging by the preserved parts of the fresco decoration, the cycle dedicated to Mary Magdalene was not painted in the crypt of the church in Sremska Mitrovica. Remaining segments of the composition depicting the washing of feet suggest that a decorative programme was represented in the crypt, which corresponds to the religious services of Lent and the Holy pre-Easter cycle.

The frescoes were painted in the manner of the Romano-gothic and Byzantine style. The composition of *The Unction of Christ in the House of Simon the Pharisee* in paintings from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century does not

differ from the same scene in Orthodox churches – the figures are sitting around the table for a private dinner, while the sinner is in a prostrate position in front of Christ.<sup>23</sup> Different to the iconography in the Romano-Catholic sacred structures,<sup>24</sup> in the Orthodox churches the sinner is not denoted as Mary Magdalene. The composition in the Sirmium fresco is organised in a symmetric and frontal manner. In the centre is a dominant Christ on a large, over-sized throne resembling the one in the fresco *The Crowning of the Virgin* in the upper basilica of St Francis in Assisi, painted by Cimabue at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup> The other figures are standing and it cannot be assumed whether a table was depicted or not. The well-preserved figure of St Mary Magdalene in a bright red himation was skilfully painted with confident strokes. The proportions and natural position of the body, the large hands and oval face with fleshy cheeks, the eyes with prominent whites, the contours accentuated with black paint, and under-painting using green paint (especially visible on Christ's feet) are elements encountered on objects of art produced in the closest communication between western and Byzantine artists. A similar situation is noted in the Romano-Catholic sacred structures in Kotor, the church of St Mary Collegiate (around 1300) and the cathedral of St Tryphon (beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century), both decorated in the manner of Byzantine art.<sup>26</sup>

The fresco of Mary Magdalene in Sremska Mitrovica reveals, regarding its style, common traits with the style of painting figures and faces on the Venetian diptych produced for the Hungarian king Andrew III around 1280/1290, today housed in Bern.<sup>27</sup> Although it is clear that, according to the figures of the Holy Hungarian kings, the object was made to order, the diptych from Bern belongs to the large collection of

<sup>20</sup> K. L. Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 247–264; K. LaTulipe, *A Sinner in the City*, 38.

<sup>21</sup> V. A. Foskolou, *Mary Magdalene between East and West*, 273, n. 9.

<sup>22</sup> K. Havelock, *In Memory of Her*, 7; F. Fabri, *Così vicino, così lontano: riflessioni su alcuni: "Noli me tangere" fra Trecento e Seicento*, *Arte Cristiana* CV/898 (2017) 55–68.

<sup>23</sup> М. Марковић, *Христљова чуда и њоуке*, у: *Зидно сликарство манастира Дечана. Грађа и студије*, ур. В. Ј. Ђурић, Београд 1995, 134, нап. 10.

<sup>24</sup> V. Vannucci, *Maria Magdalena: Storia e iconografia nel Medioevo dal III al XIV secolo*, Roma 2012.

<sup>25</sup> J. Polzer, *Concerning the Chronology of Cimabue's Oeuvre and the Origin of Pictorial Depth in Italian Painting of the Later Middle Ages*, *Zograf* 29/2002 (2003) 133, fig. 18.

<sup>26</sup> В. Живковић, *Религиозност и уметности у Кошору XIV–XVI век*, Београд 2010, 195–208.

<sup>27</sup> K. Weitzmann, *Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 20 (1966) 49–83.





**Fig. 7.** Tombstone with engraved heraldic symbol and the inscription

(Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade)

**Сл. 7.** Надгробни споменик са урезаним хералдичким симболом и натписом

(Документација Археолошког института)

the Venetian objects of art made of precious materials and of expert manufacture that were distributed throughout central and southern Europe from the end of 13<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>28</sup> The Serbian kings Stefan Dušan and Stefan Uroš II Milutin gave two similar diptychs as gifts to the Hilandar monastery at the end of 13<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and one of them is now in the treasury of the monastery of St Paul on Mount Athos.<sup>29</sup> As analogies, the initials in the group of liturgical manuscripts from the end of 13<sup>th</sup> and the beginning decades of the 14<sup>th</sup> century that are treasured in Zadar should be also added.<sup>30</sup> We have chosen to mention here these analogies because they come from relatively nearby areas, but they are a segment of an exceptionally large production of portable objects of art of a similar style in almost the whole of Italy and Rome, in the Holy Land and in the islands.<sup>31</sup> This group of monuments belongs to the Venetian branch of this final medieval symbio-

sis of eastern and western Christian art. The frescoes in Sremska Mitrovica, judging by the analogies, could have been painted at the end of 13<sup>th</sup> and in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when Hungary was ruled by the Angevin dynasty.<sup>32</sup>

Inside and around the Gothic church more than 500 graves, dated to different periods, were investigated. In the course of archaeological excavations of the Gothic church, conducted in 2003, one fragment of a stone tombstone with sections of an engraved inscription along the opposing edges and with a heraldic symbol in the centre was found above one grave in the vicinity of the apse. The inscription along one edge includes the word *banus* and the heraldic symbol is a bird's wing on a foot with a claw (Fig. 7). Many various opinions have been given regarding the possible owner of that coat of arms. According to one opinion it is the coat of arms of one of the Croatian bans (counts) from the Kanizsay family,<sup>33</sup> while, according to another, the

<sup>28</sup> B. Zs. Szakács, *From the Harbour of Venice to the Kingdom of Hungary: Art and Trade in the 11th–13th Centuries*, *Hortus Artium Mediaevalium* 22 (2016) 302, fig. 19.

<sup>29</sup> С. Радојчић, *Хиландарски дивјихи. Нови прилози познавању млетачке минијатури касној XIII века*, у: Одабрани чланци и студије, Београд – Нови Сад 1982, 150–153, сл. 91–112; Ј. Проловић, *Хиландарски дивјихи и њему сродна дела венецијанској иорекла на Аџосу*, *Хиландарски зборник* 11 (2004) 133–160.

<sup>30</sup> Л. Мирковић, *Минијатури у антифонарима и ирагуали маманасџира Св. Фрање Асишкој у Загру*, Београд 1977.

<sup>31</sup> K. Weitzmann, *Icon Painting*, 49–83.

<sup>32</sup> The frescoes have been analysed with the assistance of Branka Ivanić, museum counselor in the National Museum in Belgrade, and we hereby express to her our warmest appreciation.

<sup>33</sup> M. Jeremić, *The relationship*, 152–153, figs 28–29.

inscription and engraved coat of arms indicate rather reliably that it was the tombstone of one of the Mačva bans for whom Mitrovica was the main official residence, i.e. that it was a member of a family from the Osl clan whose common coat of arms was a black eagle wing on a claw within a gold panel. The rank of nobility among these families reached the families of Kanizsay and Ostffy and two Mačva bans (Nikola Ostffy 1335–1339 and Dominik Ostffy 1340–1353) actually descended from the latter. So, it was concluded that the gravestone was from the tomb of one of those two aristocrats.<sup>34</sup> We can leave, on this occasion, the discussion regarding that question to experts in heraldry of that period but with a remark that the eagle's wing with a claw was also the coat of arms of the family Perényi, related to the Hungarian king Sigismund (1387–1437).<sup>35</sup> Coins of that ruler predominate among the numismatic finds from the church and the necropolis around it.<sup>36</sup>

Immediately next to the cathedral was discovered a medieval sacred structure identified as a chapel (Fig. 2). It is a structure built in the Gothic style with a horseshoe-shaped apse to the east and four massive counterforts. The chapel is situated around 10 m to the north of the cathedral, which is oriented in an east–west direction and with an apse to the east. In contrast to the cathedral, which has been partially explored, the ground plan of the Gothic chapel has been completely investigated. Thus, we know that its total length is 17.50 m and the width (of the nave) is 7.50 m. The interior width of the apse is 3.50 m and its length is 3.40 m. The chapel is mainly preserved only in the foundation zone because its walls were mostly destroyed as a result of pits in the cellar dug by the Austrians. Only its well preserved, relatively massive, walls XXXI and XXIX (0.76 m thick) have been discovered. Within the ground plan the massive south wall of the chapel, wall V, was discovered, whose thickness is between 1.90 to 2 m and it turns at a right angle towards the counterforts and the apse of the cathedral,

suggesting it could have been of a protective/defensive character. The thickness of the remaining chapel walls, around 0.70 m, is almost identical, while the thickness of the foundation zone varies between 1 and 1.20 m. The chapel was built of half-dressed stone and brick joined with lime mortar, while the lowest zones of the foundations are, in some places, without any bonding material. It seems that the material for the construction of the foundation zone was mostly taken from older buildings and reused. Thus, we can see broken and undressed stone usually used as infill for the walls and broken fragments of antique bricks used for the foundations and walls of the medieval structures. We can notice that the building method is somewhat more rustic and negligent comparing to the cathedral, thus, indicating the lesser importance of the building but also the later time of construction. M. Jeremić dated the chapel to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> The west chapel wall, wall I, has not been precisely dated, so there is a possibility that it was built later in the Austrian times. In that case, it would be necessary to reconsider in detail the relationship between the chapel walls as well as its dimensions.

In the course of the archaeological campaign carried out in the autumn of 2013, we took apart the foundation zone of the chapel walls. A layer of dark brown loose soil with building rubble that contained fragments of the early Byzantine pottery was encountered on the inside of the north chapel wall (wall XXX), at a depth of 81.47 m ASL. This layer, into which the foundation of the chapel wall was dug, corresponds with the layer underneath horizon *d* in the north section of the sector, which is beneath the horizon of the earliest phase of the medieval communication recorded to the west of the chapel (Fig. 1).

In the foundation zone of the north chapel wall (wall XXX) and opposite the north-eastern counterfort (wall XXXIV), a fragment of a brick 35 cm long, 26.5 cm wide and 5.9 cm thick (inv. C–8/2013) was found at a depth of 81.61 m ASL (Fig. 8a). Most of the

<sup>34</sup> S. Andrić, *Bazilijanski i benediktinski samostan*, 158.

<sup>35</sup> Zs. Jékely, *Armorial and Grants of Arms: Heraldic representation of Hungarian nobles at the time of the Council of Constance*, in: *Das Konzil von Konstanz und Ungarn*, Hrsg. A. Bárány, Debrecen 2016, 160, fig. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Preliminary analysis of the numismatic finds was carried out in the course of field campaigns by Pavle Popović, museum counselor in the Museum of Srem in Sremska Mitrovica.

<sup>37</sup> M. Jeremić *The relationship*, 152.



brick corner is missing (Fig. 9a). Judging by its size, it was a Roman brick. A cross with 19 cm long equal arms ending in a cross fourchy type was deeply engraved on the brick.

A Roman brick 40 cm long, 29 cm wide and 6 cm thick was discovered in the foundation zone of the north-eastern counterfort (wall XXXIV) at 81.51 m ASL (Fig. 8b). It has a deeply engraved cross whose 21.5 cm long and wide arms terminate in a fork shape (cross fourchy). There is one deeply engraved short line each (inv. C-14/2013) on the vertical arm of the cross and before the fork-shaped extensions (Fig. 9b). In the foundation zone of the south chapel wall (wall

XXXI), one brick fragment (dim. 18.5 x 31.5 cm) with a stamped "S" – the stamp of the Sirmium brick plant (inv. C-13/2013) was found at 81.967 m ASL (Fig. 9e), while a Roman brick broken into two pieces was discovered at 81.61 m ASL (Fig. 8c). It is 45 cm long, 39 cm wide and with a deeply engraved cross with fork-shaped ends on the 21 cm long arms (inv. C-15/2013). The ends of the cross arms are joined with thin engraved lines creating a square before the fork-shaped extensions (Fig. 9c). In the foundation zone of the same wall (Fig. 8d), yet another Roman brick 45.5 cm long, 29 cm wide and 6.8 cm thick with a deeply engraved cross of the same type (Fig. 9d) with 24 cm long arms (inv.



**Fig. 8.** Roman bricks with engraved motif of cross fourchy, chapel, moment of discovery:

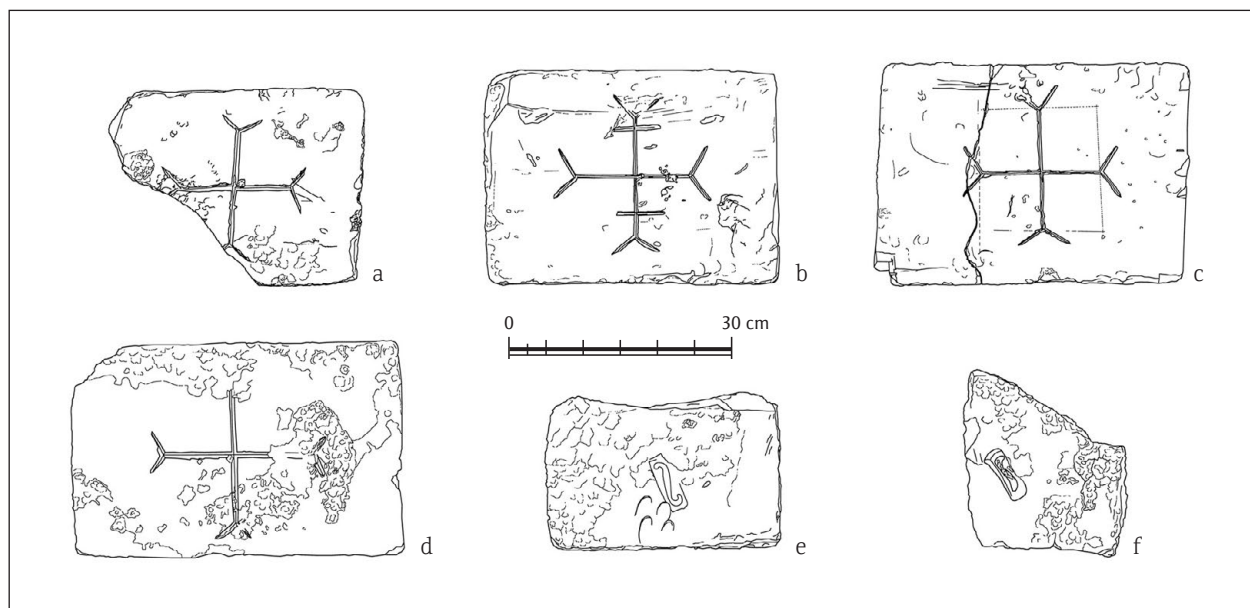
a) C-8/2013; b) C-14/2013; c) C-15/2013; d) C-17/2013

(Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade)

**Сл. 8.** Римске опеке са урезаним симболом *cross fourché* у капели, у тренутку откривања:

a) C-8/2013; b) C-14/2013; c) C-15/2013; d) C-17/2013

(Документација Археолошког института)



**Fig. 9.** Roman bricks with engraved motif of cross fourchy and with the stamp of the Sirmium workshop:  
a) C–8/2013; b) C–14/2013; c) C–15/2013; d) C–17/2013; e) C–13/2013; f) C–20/2013  
(drawing by V. Popović)

**Сл. 9.** Римске опеке са урезаним симболом *cross fourché* и печатом сирмијумске радионице:  
a) C–8/2013; b) C–14/2013; c) C–15/2013; d) C–17/2013; e) C–13/2013; f) C–20/2013  
(цртеж: Б. Поповић)

C–17/2013) was found at 81.49 m ASL, and a brick with a stamped “S” (inv. C–20/2013) was registered at 81.44 m ASL (Fig. 9f). A brick fragment with an unidentifiable stamp (inv. C–22/2013) was recorded at 81.53 m ASL.

A cross with arms of equal length and ending in a fork shape is engraved on four Roman bricks discovered in the foundation zones of the north wall (XXX), north-eastern counterfort (XXXIV) and south wall (XXXI) of the chapel (Figs 2, 9a–d). It belongs to the type known in heraldry as a cross fourchy, i.e. a cross fourché or croix fourchée.<sup>38</sup> Gold coins of the local Anglo-Saxon nobles with representation of cross fourchy within a circle on their obverses were discov-

ered at the sites of Canterbury and Goodnestone in Kent, in England. These coins are dated to the early 7<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. in the period around AD 630,<sup>39</sup> and they reflect the aspiration of the nobles to fit into the Romano-British milieu by presenting themselves as legitimate rulers, issuing money resembling Byzantine coins. In any case, the cross fourchy representation disappeared from Byzantine as well as from Anglo-Saxon and Merovingian coins around or before the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Two bricks with an engraved cross with fork-ending arms found at the site of Bedem in the village of Maskara on the left bank of the Western Morava river were also dated to the Early Byzantine period, although without plausible arguments.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> G. Brault, *Early Blazo: Heraldic Terminology in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries with Special Reference to Arthurian Heraldry*, Woodbridge 1997, 158.

<sup>39</sup> M. Blackburn, *Two new Types of Anglo-Saxon Gold Shillings*, in: *Coinage and History in the North Sea World, c. AD 500–1250. Essays in Honour of Marion Archibald*, eds B. Cook, G. Williams, Leiden – Boston 2006, 128–129, figs 2–3.

<sup>40</sup> Д. Рашковић, Н. Ђокић, *Резултати рекогносцирања античких налазишта и комуникација на подручју јужног Темнића*, Гласник Српског археолошког друштва 13 (1997) 137, сл. 1.



The symbol depicted on the brick inv. C–14/2013 (Fig. 9b) is a combined representation of a cross fourchy and a cross of Salem – the cross is, to a certain degree, similar to the patriarchal cross type (archiepiscopal cross, *crux gemina*). The patriarchal cross has, on the top section of the vertical bar and above the horizontal bar, yet another shorter horizontal bar, which is missing on the lower section of the vertical bar but is depicted on the cross of the Salem type and on the cross represented on the brick from Sirmium. Representations of the patriarchal cross appear on Byzantine lead stamps in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and are particularly numerous in the 10<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>41</sup> and due to the spread of Byzantine influence they became frequent in Hungary from the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, taking its place in the national coat of arms.<sup>42</sup>

Different types of crosses, including those with fork-shaped arms ends, sometimes accompanied with letters and inscriptions, appear on bricks and pottery in the territories settled by the Slavs in the early Middle Ages, and such motifs are particularly characteristic of the Bulgarian pottery industry of the 9<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the same period, or a little earlier, different types of crosses, including those with fork-shaped arm ends, were incised on the slabs placed behind the feet in the stone constructed graves of cemeteries registered in the area of Sinj, in Middle Dalmatia. The crosses with fork-shaped arm ends are numerous on the slabs placed behind the feet in the graves at the site of Gluvine Kuće 2, in the village of Glavice, dated in the period between the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the end

of 9<sup>th</sup> century, in character of surviving Late Roman traditions.<sup>43</sup> In a similar way, in the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries, in Northern Albania, the Komani – Kruja culture appeared. At the site of Kalaja Dalmaces one bronze ring with an engraved cross with fork-shaped arm ends was found. The same type of ring was also registered at the site of Kašiče in Dalmatia.<sup>44</sup> Those crosses were encountered, in the period of the 9<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries, on the doorposts and window headers of Early Christian structures within the Belgrade fortress,<sup>45</sup> on the handle of a pottery vessel from the site of Ras – Gradina,<sup>46</sup> as well as on a brick and fragment of a pottery vessel from the site of Čečen, near Vučitrn,<sup>47</sup> where a cross with fork-shaped arm ends is accompanied by a Glagolitic inscription. These marks are considered to be the signs of artisans or workshops and a magic significance is also attributed to them, emphasising the protective force of the cross by writing cryptograms on or near the cross, i.e. by adding 'crucifix letters'.<sup>48</sup> The apotropaic function of bricks with an engraved cross and inscriptions is also indicated by Roman bricks with engraved crosses and some with Glagolitic inscriptions placed on one edge below the legs of the deceased and with the inscription facing the head, found in graves at the site of Pesača near Donji Milanovac and dating from the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>49</sup>

Judging by certain objects found sporadically at the sites in the east Mediterranean basin, the use of motifs of a cross with fork-shaped arm ends was common in that area at the time of the Crusades.<sup>50</sup> A great role in that situation was played by the activities of

<sup>41</sup> J. Nesbitt, N. Oikonomides (eds), *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art, Volume 3, West, Northwest and Central Asia Minor and the Orient*, Washington D.C. 1996, nos 86.43, 86.47, 86.52.

<sup>42</sup> M. C. Redy, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*, London 2000, 12.

<sup>43</sup> A. Milošević, *Križevi na obložnicama ranosrednjovjekovnih grobova u okolici Sinja*, Dubrovnik – Split 2008, 9–11; 22–41; 70–76, figs 1–2, 11–13.

<sup>44</sup> V. Popović, *Byzantins, Slaves et autochtones dans les provinces de Prévalitane et Nouvelle Épire*, dans: *Villes et peuplements dans l'Illyricum protobyzantin*, Rome 1984, 220, 224, figs 24, 28.

<sup>45</sup> M. Bajalović–Hačić–Pešić, *Унутрашње утврђење Београдског града II. Период ране средње веке*, Годишњак града Београда XXXIX (1992) 28–39, сл. 12.

<sup>46</sup> Г. Томовић, *Глагољски нађипис из Чечена*, Историјски часопис XXXVII (1990) 7, 11, сл. 1. 2/7.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.; R. Novaković, *O problemu proučavanja gradina na Kosovu*, *Glasnik muzeja Kosova* 13–14 (1984) 99–116.

<sup>48</sup> G. Babić, *Les croix à cryptogrammes, peintes dans les églises serbes des XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles*, dans: *Byzance et les Slaves. Étude de civilisation. Mélanges Ivan Dujev*, éd. S. Dufrenne, Paris 1979, 1–13; M. Шаkota, *Једна мало позната сџарина из Дечана. Крст сџарца Нещџора*, *Саопштења XIV* (1982) 51–61.

<sup>49</sup> Д. Минић, *Песача, античко утврђење и средњовековна некропола*, *Старинар XXXIII–XXXIV/1982–1983* (1984) 173–175, сл. 2–3, Т. I/1; II/3.

<sup>50</sup> [www.tresarent.com/forums/what/149946-any-info-cross-fourchee-c13-14th-sword.html](http://www.tresarent.com/forums/what/149946-any-info-cross-fourchee-c13-14th-sword.html) (accessed 15. 1. 2020)

Charles I of Anjou (1266–1285), a member of the Capetian royal house, count of Anjou, Maine and Provence, king of Sicily, prince of Achaia and king of Albania, the lord who laid claim to the kingdom of Jerusalem and also participated in the Sixth Crusade in Egypt.<sup>51</sup> On the obverse of his coins was a representation of a cross fourchy and, as we know from the find in the Stromboli Island to the north of Sicily, that motif was also represented on the coins of his opponent, Frederick III of Aragon.<sup>52</sup> As a result of the expanded family connections of Charles I of Anjou, coins with representation of a cross fourchy spread across Western Europe and England. Its connections with England were maintained not only by Charles II, the heir of Charles I, but also by the Hungarian queen Maria.<sup>53</sup> In such a way, but also through the activity of the members of various knightly orders, one could explain the appearance of this symbol on the external choir wall of the church of St Michael in Garway (Herefordshire), in southwest England. Bricks with crosses of different types including the cross fourchy were built into that wall. The church was restored by the Order of Hospitallers (Order of Knights of St John) at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, on the location of an earlier Templar church from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and engraved crosses on the bricks could be identified as some kind of masonry signs,<sup>54</sup> a common custom during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Does the cross with fork-shaped arm ends (cross fourchy) engraved on four bricks laid in the foundations of the chapel walls situated within the area of the Sirmium imperial palace also have the same meaning? It must be taken into account, when discussing this question, that two bricks with a stamp

ped “S” – the stamp of the Sirmium workshop (Fig. 9e, f) and one with an unidentified stamp were also placed in the foundations of the south wall of the Sirmium chapel. The S stamp of the Sirmium brick plant was recorded on bricks dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and discovered at various locations within the city.<sup>55</sup> Four more bricks with the stamp of the Sirmium brick plant (inv. C–5/2015, C–17/2015, C–19/2015, C–20/2015) have also been found at site 85, in the immediate vicinity of the chapel, in wall XXVI and in debris below the junction of the foundations of walls V and XXVI. Discoveries of those bricks in the area around the chapel as well as the one with the stamp *Classis Flavia Pannonica* (inv. C–25/2015), confirm the use of Roman bricks from devastated Late Roman structures for constructing later buildings. However, two bricks with stamps of the Sirmium brick plant were laid in the foundations of the chapel at site 85 alongside Roman bricks with an additionally engraved cross fourchy (Figs 2, 9). What is the meaning of those bricks considering the fact that certain relics, valuable objects or documents were usually built into the foundations of sacred structures in order to protect the church from destruction and to strengthen its arches?<sup>56</sup> Besides structural reasons, we should also bear in mind the symbolic ones; in other words the acts of foundation laying, consecration and restoration of the temple were accompanied by distinct religious rituals. The act of laying foundations for the temple in the third decade of the 14<sup>th</sup> century is described on the occasion of the building of the Dečani monastery with a remark that Stefan Dečanski, together with archbishop Danilo II, laid the corner stone for the temple and that was accompanied by an

<sup>51</sup> D. Abulafia, *The state of research. Chares of Anjou reassessed*, *Journal of Medieval History* 26/1 (2000) 93–114.

<sup>52</sup> D. Yoon, S. T. Levi, A. Ollà, G. Tignano, *Medieval Coins from the Site San Vincenzo on the Island Stromboly, Italy*, *American Journal of Numismatics* 30 (2018), 243–244, nos 1–2 (Charles I), 3–10 (Frederic III).

<sup>53</sup> A. Bárány, *The English Relations of Charles II of Sicily and Maria of Hungary*, in: *Diplomacy in the Countries of the Angevin Dynasty in the Thirteenth–Fourteenth Centuries*, eds Z. Kordé, I. Petrovics, Roma 2010, 57–77.

<sup>54</sup> A. Brooks, N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire*, New Haven – London 2012, 243–245.

<sup>55</sup> A. Milošević, *Roman Brick Stamps from Sirmium*, in: *Sirmium I*, ed. V. Popović, Beograd 1971, 107, 111, 118, nos 42, 45.

<sup>56</sup> Of a similar apotropaic character is the Temnić inscription dating from the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It contained Slavic forms of the Greek names of the ten of forty Sebastian martyrs and the concluding words were *pray to God for us!* It was believed that the magic power of the inscription could protect the structure where the plate was originally placed. Next to it had probably been deposited three other identical plates with the names of the remaining Sebastian martyrs; cf. С. Радојчић, *Темнићки најшйис. Сујевеирице средњовековних традишйеља о чудойворној моћи имена и ликова севасшйјских мученика*, *Зборник за ликовне уметности Матице Српске* 3 (1969) 9; Б. Чигоја, *Темнићки најшйис*, *Анали Филолошког факултета* 18 (1987) 211.



appeal to God to support the building of the temple and to secure the laying of the corner stone.<sup>57</sup>

The bricks with an “S” stamp are objects with the original stamp of the Sirmium brick plant, while the cross fourchy was engraved later on Roman bricks. The deep incisions are precisely executed but slight irregularities can be noticed around the edges of the cross arms as a result of additional engraving. Additional engraving is also confirmed by a shallow incised square within which the cross was engraved on brick C-15/2013. At what time and with what purpose had the crosses been engraved? As the foundations of the chapel are at a depth between 81.44 and 81.97 m ASL and as they were dug into a layer of dark brown loose soil with debris and fragments of Early Byzantine pottery, we came to the conclusion that the chapel was erected in the post-Early Byzantine, i.e. medieval period. Fragments of a marble slab, possibly a parapet and the mosaic floor recorded in the process of dismantling the western counterfort (wall XXIX), as well as other sparse and atypical portable finds, offer no possibility for the chronological determination of the structure.

Results of archaeological investigation conducted in 1966 at the site of Zidine in Mačvanska Mitrovica, when three medieval churches were encountered on top of an Early Christian martyrion from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, are of great significance for comprehending the chronological picture of the construction of medieval sacred structures in the area of Roman Sirmium. The first church could be associated with the western missions arriving via Hungary and dating after the fall of Preslav, Bulgaria, in 971. A church with three apses

was erected on top of it around the year 1000, and the Catholic church that was the seat of the Benedictine Srem bishopric in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century was built in the same location around 1232.<sup>58</sup> The medieval church with crypt, which was partially explored in the course of archaeological investigations of the north section of the Sirmium palatial complex (site 85) and generally dated to the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>59</sup> was situated around 12 m to the west of the chapel. It had been more solidly built than the chapel. The chapel is situated to the east of the south annex of a massive Late Roman structure (granary?) and was leaning on it. It could be assumed that it was built at the same time or after the construction of the medieval sacred structures in Mačvanska Mitrovica. Analysis of human osteological material from Sremska Mitrovica reveals two horizons of interment, from the 10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries and the 13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>60</sup> Interment in the graves from the 10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries, some of which contained portable finds of the Bijelo Brdo culture, were recorded at 11 localities in Sremska Mitrovica,<sup>61</sup> among others at site 37,<sup>62</sup> situated to the east of site 85 with which it forms the same entity.<sup>63</sup>

However, the graves with adornments characteristic of the Bijelo Brdo culture have not been recorded inside or around the church at site 85, where the earliest graves were situated between its south-eastern and southern counterforts and to the west of the chapel.<sup>64</sup> Sections of the walls of the palatial complex were still visible at that time, so the construction of the chapel could not have compromised them. On the other hand, there was a strong local liturgical tradition regarding the martyrdom of the Sirmium bishop

<sup>57</sup> В. Вукашиновић, *Теологија и њакса освећења бојослужбеног простора у периоду рашког сџила српске сакралне архитектуре*, у: Српска теологија у двадесетом веку – истраживачки проблеми и резултати, Зборник радова 18, ур. Б. Шијаковић, Београд 2015, 31.

<sup>58</sup> V. Popović, *Continuité culturelle et tradition littéraire dans l'église médiévale de Sirmium*, dans: Sirmium XII, éd. V. Popović, Beograd 1980, I–II.

<sup>59</sup> М. Јеремић, И. Поповић, *Археолошка истраживања Сирмијума*, 286; М. Јеремић, *The relationship*, 139, 148–153.

<sup>60</sup> N. Miladinović-Radmilović, *Sirmium – Necropolis*, Beograd – Sremska Mitrovica 2011, 486, 523.

<sup>61</sup> Eadem, *Analysis of human osteological material from the Eastern part of site no. 37 in Sremska Mitrovica*, Starinar LXII (2012) 181; For the finds characteristic for the Bijelo Brdo culture registered on the site 4 of Sirmium (*villa urbana*), cf. M. Parović-Pešikan, *Sirmium, villa urbana, lokalitet 4*, Arheološki pregled 10 (1968) 189.

<sup>62</sup> П. Милошевић, *Тојоирафија Сирмијума*, Грађа за археолошку карту Војводине 1, Нови Сад 1994, 31.

<sup>63</sup> А. Милошевић, *Lokalitet 37 – nalazi rimske arhitekture, srednjevekovni i kasniji*, Arheološki pregled 10 (1968) 139–142; N. Miladinović-Radmilović, *Analysis of human osteological material*, 181–182, fig. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Eadem, *Sirmium – Necropolis*, 486, fig. 246.

Irenaeus,<sup>65</sup> i.e. about the significance of Early Christian Sirmium in the history of Christianity in this area. It should not be forgotten that there were connections between Sirmium and the Bulgarian state and Byzantium in the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries and then with Hungary,<sup>66</sup> as a route for the arrival of western cultural influences. There also existed a local Balkan tradition originating from the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries, whereby crosses, sometimes accompanied with various letters and signs, were engraved on bricks in order to protect the church. However, considering that the remains of some Early Christian church has not been registered

under or around the Medieval sacred structures, the existence of a connection between Late Roman and Medieval cultic places in the area of the northern section of the Imperial palace complex in Sirmium has not been confirmed. The reasons for placing Roman bricks with the stamp of the Sirmium brick plant and Roman bricks with an engraved cross fourchy into the chapel foundation revealed the religious affiliation of its builders and their wish to protect the sacred structure from destruction.

*Translated by Mirjana Vukmanović*

<sup>65</sup> V. Popović, *Continuité culturelle*, III–VII.

<sup>66</sup> S. Andrić, *Bazilijanski i benediktinski samostan*, 115–185.

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## Касноантички грађевински елементи у средњовековним сакралним објектима на простору палатијалног комплекса у Сирмијуму

Археолошка истраживања северног дела палатијалног комплекса у Сирмијуму (локалитет 85) вршена су у периоду између 2002. и 2006, а затим између 2010. и 2015. године. Стратиграфска слика овог локалитета указује на постојање преримског, раноримског, тетрархијског, касноантичког и средњовековног археолошког слоја. Остаци средњовековне архитектуре лоцирани су на обе стране улице, постављене у правцу север–југ и ограничене са обе стране паралелним зидовима. Зид на источној страни улице био је део масивне грађевине која није у потпуности истражена (сл. 1). Објекти на западној страни улице припадају комплексу сакралног карактера. Реч је о једнобродној цркви са тространом апсидом, споља ојачане масивним контрафорима (сл. 2).

Откривени грађевински елементи цркве, зидови и контрафори, значајних су димензија. У централном простору цркве регистрован је источни зид просторије (зид XXII), идентификоване као крипта, чији су зидови били украшени фрескама са сценама Марије Магдалене и Христа, а о чему сведочи латински натпис *MARIA MAGDALENA* (сл. 3). Тај натпис је био основа за закључак да је реч о катедрали посвећеној Марији Магдалени, док је, по другом мишљењу, сакрални објекат био жупна црква подигнута у част Свете Марије. Према теренској документацији изгледало је да је за северни зид крипте искоришћен јужни зид масивне касноантичке грађевине (сл. 4), али се након архитектонских анализа дошло до закључка да је зид XXII крипте додат на постојећи јужни зид касноантичког објекта (сл. 5а). Након реконструкције плана овог сакралног објекта закључено је да он најближе аналогије налази у плану цркве Св. Ђорђа у Думбову, датоване у 12–13. век (сл. 6).

Делови фреско-сликарства сачувани су на источном и северном зиду крипте. На источном зиду налазила се композиција *Помазање Христово у кући Симона фарисеја* (Лука 7, 36–50; сл. 3), а на северном зиду може се препознати композиција *Прање ноју айосћола* (сл. 5).

Ове две идентификоване композиције сведоче да је у крипти био примењен декоративни програм састављен од *Циклуса Христове јавне делатности* и *Циклуса стирања*. Ти циклуси одговарају богослужењима посног и страдног предускршњег циклуса што се на исти начин смењују у ортодоксној и римокатоличкој литургијској години. Фреске су сликане у спреси романо-готског и византијског стила и носе елементе који се налазе на уметничким делима насталим у најближој комуникацији западних и источних уметника, у државама крсташа 12. и 13. века, као и на јадранској обали.

Унутар готичке цркве и око ње истражено је више од 500 гробова из различитих периода. У унутрашњости цркве, у близини апсиде, нађена је надгробна плоча са натписом у којем се чита реч *banus*, праћена, у центру, хералдичким симболом орловог крила и ногу са канцама (сл. 7). Постоји мишљење да је то грб хрватских банова из фамилије Кањижи (Kanizsay), али напомињемо да се та ознака налазила и на грбу Перењи (Perényi) породице с којом је био повезан мађарски краљ Жигмунд (1387–1437), чији је новац веома често налажен у гробовима око цркве.

Око 10 m северно од цркве откривен је још један сакрални објекат, идентификован као капела (сл. 4) и комплетно истражен. Грађевина је изведена у готичком стилу – са апсидом и масивним контрафорима. У темељној зони северног зида капеле и контрафора откривено је шест римских опека, од којих су две носиле печат фиглине *Sirmium* а четири накнадно урезан крст са виљушкасто завршеним крајевима (сл. 2, 8–9). Тај тип крста (*cross fourchu*, *cross fourché*, *croix fourchée*) појављује се у 7. веку на англосаксонском новцу, а током 7–8. и 9–11. века како на керамици, тако и на различитим грађевинским и фунерарним објектима на далматинском и централнобалканском подручју. Опеке са урезаним крстом тог, али и других типова крста, тумаче се као ознаке мајстора, градитеља цркве за чију су конструкцију коришћене. Уколико су опеке са уре-

заним крстом, праћеним понекад натписима, полагане у темеље објекта, оне су имале улогу не само статичке потпоре већ и заштите од различитих невоља, оштећења и рушења. На тај начин може се објаснити и постављање римских опека у темеље сирмијумске капеле.

Урезани крстови сведоче о верском опредељењу њених градитеља, али, будући да на тој локацији нису откривени остаци неке ранохришћанске цркве, они не могу бити сведочанства о континуитету култног места од касне антике до средњег века.

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