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RUDENICA AND ITS PLACE IN THE MORAVIAN SERBIA ARCHITECTURE

Branka M. GUGOLJ¹
University of Priština in Kosovska Mitrovica
Faculty of Arts, Zvečan
Department of Visual Arts

¹ b.gugolj@gmail.com

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Abstract. Built at the turn of the 14th century, as an endowment of nobleman Vukašin and his wife Vukosava, Rudenica attracted the attention of scholars of Serbian medieval architecture as early as the 19th century. The hardships of the church, as well as lack of data about its original appearance, resulted in two failed restorations. Based on historical sources, preserved and partially published archival documentation, as well as comparisons with chronologically and topographically similar monuments, the previous findings are reexamined in the paper, in order to determine its place in the development of the Moravian Serbia architecture.

The monastery and its church of St. Ilija (Fig. 1) are in the vicinity of Aleksandrovac, in the village of Rudenica. It is an endowment of the nobleman Vukašin and his wife Vukosava, who are represented on the church south wall. The portraits of Despot Stefan Lazarević, shown in the action of bestowing a church model towards the Lord's hand, blessing from one section of the heaven, and his brother Vuk Lazarević are painted on the west church wall (Стародубцев, 2003/2004, p. 101). The church was built at the turn of the 14th century or the early 15th century and was painted between 1403 and 1405 (Стародубцев, 2016, vol. 2, pp. 75–77).

The deserted and ruined church was first visited, surveyed, and investigated by Mihailo Valtrović (Валтровић, 2007a, pp. 18–20; Валтровић, 2007b, pp. 66–68; Валтровић, 2007c, pp. 68–69), and Dragutin Milutinović (Милутиновић & Валтровић, 2007, pp. 22–24), then Petar Popović (Поповић, 1994) and Gabriel Millet (2005, pp. 178–180)², followed by Đurđe Bošković (Бошковић, 1928, pp. 211–218; Прерадовић, 2016, p. 17) and Lazar Mirković (Мирковић, 1931, pp. 83–112). In his report from 1873, Valtrović (Валтровић, 2007a, pp. 18–20) states that although damaged in its upper sections, it could be renovated at a low cost, as its stone decorations of the portal and window frames, as well as rosettes, are scattered all around the church. Further investigations continued with Dragutin Milutinović, resulting in 12 drawings of the church architecture: perspective sketch from the southeast³, panoramic view from the west⁴, ground plan, cross section, windows⁵, the south façade biforiums⁶, the east and north façades

² Mije visited Rudenica for the first time in 1906. On the recommendation of Ljubomir Stojanović, the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, Vladimir R. Petković, the curator at the National Museum, and Petar Popović, the architect of the Ministry of Construction, were appointed as his companions on his trip to Serbia, see Прерадовић (2016, p. 7); Прерадовић (2021, pp. 104–107). He continued his research of Rudenica and the churches of the Moravian School with his wife Sofija, the architect Purpe Bošković and the press bureau photo-reporter Boris Volodin in 1935, see Прерадовић (2021, p. 147).

³ Historical museum of Serbia, Inv.no 4618.

⁴ Historical museum of Serbia, Inv.no 4619.

⁵ Historical museum of Serbia, Inv.no 4673/16.

⁶ Historical museum of Serbia, Inv.no 3603.



Fig. 1. Rudenica church, 2016, © photo B. Gugolj



Fig. 2. Rudenica church, 1927, © Đ. Bošković (according to *Прва сопствена искуства, проблеми, перспективе. Сећања конзервајора*. Београд: Друштво конзерватора Србије, Републички завод за заштиту споменика културе)

biforiums⁷, the north conch biforium⁸, fragments of architectural ornaments⁹, the south and north façades biforiums¹⁰, fragments of architectural ornaments¹¹, the north façade rosettes¹², longitudinal section with the arrangement of fresco paintings¹³, portrait of Despot Stefan Lazarević holding a model of the church in his hands (Милутиновић & Валтровић, 2007, pp. 22–25; Валтровић & Милутиновић, 2006, pp. 202–213).

Before the First World War, the National Museum of Belgrade implemented the most necessary protection. The church had been covered and protected with a wooden structure (Бошковић, 1933, p. 533; Стојаковић, 1980, p. 259). In 1927, when Lazar Mirković and Đurđe Bošković (Бошковић, 1933, p. 533; Бошковић, 1982, p. 17) were investigating it, the structure had already collapsed (Fig. 2). In the 1940s, there was an upper part of the dome missing, the narthex was missing its blind dome and the walls above the stringcourse were in ruins. The renovation works were done in 1936 and 1937 but they substantially deviated from the project¹⁴ (Figs. 3a, 3b, 4) made by Đurđe Bošković in 1935. Besides numerous deviations from the design,

⁷ Historical museum of Serbia, Inv.no 3604.

⁸ Historical museum of Serbia, Inv.no 3605.

⁹ Historical museum of Serbia, Inv.no 4620.

¹⁰ Historical museum of Serbia, Inv.no 3606.

¹¹ Historical museum of Serbia, Inv.no 3602.

¹² Historical museum of Serbia, Inv.no 3607.

¹³ Historical museum of Serbia, Inv.no 5322.

¹⁴ Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia in Belgrade, Inv.no 8522, Inv.no 8523.

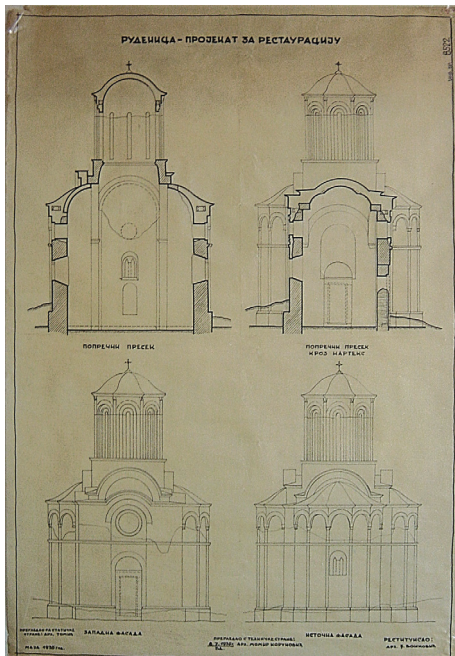
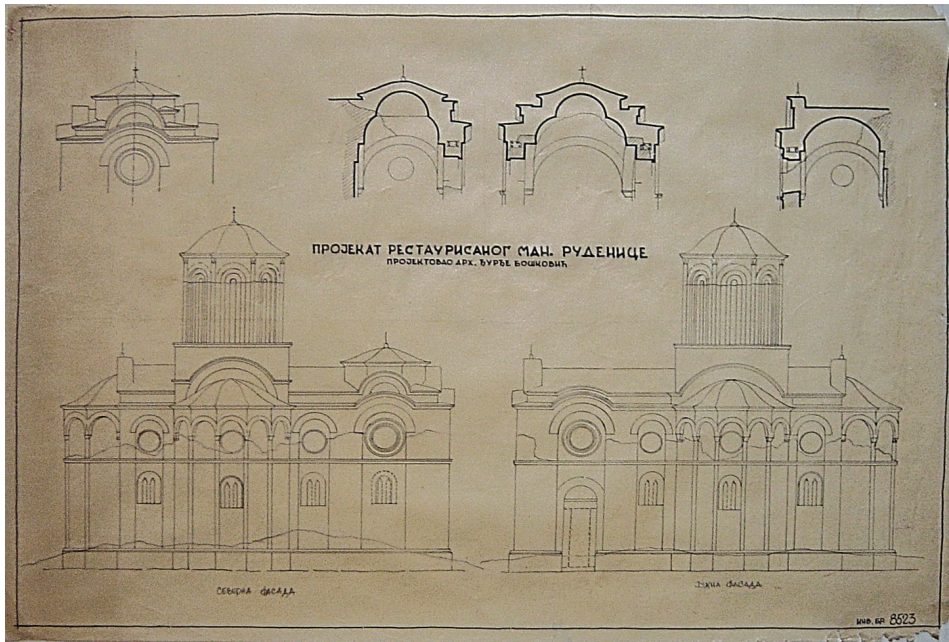


Fig. 4. State after the reconstruction,
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Fig. 3. a, b, Restoration project made by
Đ. Bošković, Institute for the Protection of
Cultural Monuments, © photo B. Gugolj



Fig. 5. Church model holding by despot Stefan Lazarević, on the ktetor's composition, © photo B. Gugolj

on the outside, the church was simply plastered, while its original façade was plastered but with painted decorations of rows of bricks both horizontally and vertically (Стојаковић, 1980, pp. 259, 265; Бошковић, 1982, p. 22).¹⁵ Essential repairs were carried out in 1971 according to the project by the architect Marija Domazet from the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Kraljevo (Станић, 1975, pp. 306–307; Грујовић Брковић et al., 2016, p. 176). In 1994 and 1995 the conservation works continued according to a project by the architect Mirko Kovačević from the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia in Belgrade (Ковачевић, 1996, pp. 114–115). The dome drum colonettes, which had been renovated in 1936, were now shortened. A series of arches was made above the window openings to connect them. Parts of the façade above the blind arcades on all three conches were rebuilt and recessed

to fit the surface with the arcades. The roof cornices from 1936 were redone and moved to an 'appropriate' height. The blind dome above the narthex was reconstructed using a church model (Fig. 5) as shown on the ktetor's composition. The church roof was covered with lead. The brick floor was replaced with stone slabs. The façade plaster from 1936 was removed and the older one with the painted decorations was conserved. The original painted decoration was reconstructed (Fig. 6) on a new layer of plaster.

The early history of the church is unknown. There is no record of the dedication, original purpose, and social position of the ktetor or ktetors of the church. During archaeological research in 1995, it was established that the church was built on an older cult site with a structure of unknown purpose

¹⁵ Bošković states that during his stay in Paris, the reconstruction was entrusted to arch M. Mladenović, who, using his study, made several serious errors. Stojaković (1980, p. 265, note 36) states that Mladenović, the architect, only followed the author's ideas in general, while altering the details roughly and uncouthly. Nenadović recommended radical restoration with additions and changes, see Nenadović (1980, pp. 129–130). About the conservation works, see also Руденица (1998, p. 92).



Fig. 6. Painted decoration,
© photo B. Gugolj



Fig. 7. Vukašin and Vukosava, ktetor's
composition, © photo B. Gugolj

and a necropolis (Тошић, 1996, pp. 112–114). Research from the first decades of the current century has provided answers to some of these questions. A special contribution in this field was made by Tatjana Starodubcev and Branislav Cvetković. The structure with the narthex, for the construction and painting of which substantial funds were spent, as well as the luxurious clothes of the ktetors, indicated that Vukašin and Vukosava (Fig. 7) came from the ranks of a wealthy nobility. Two documents from the period of despot Stefan record a noble with the name Vukašin. In the first document—written in Jagodina on July 15, 1399, and recorded in the Dubrovnik records on October 10, 1404—Vukašin was entered as one of the benefactors and treasurer. In the will of the Dubrovnik merchant, Gostiša Bratolajić, drawn up in Novo Brdo on October 7, 1411, the treasurer Vukašin is mentioned among the debtors. Between 1404 and 1411, treasurer Vukašin was in the service of Despot Stefan. He carried out treasury-related duties, but he was also taken to Novo Brdo for commercial affairs (Стародубцев, 2003/2004, pp. 107–108)¹⁶.

According to Gordana Babić, the ktetor's painting emphasizes the subordination of the noble Vukašin and his wife Vukosava to the Despot Stefan Lazarević and his brother Vuk. The purpose of this picture is

¹⁶ For the meaning of treasurer and mentioning of Vukašin as a treasurer, see Ризничар (1999, pp. 621–622).

to show respect and gratitude to the despot for their material standing and social position, and to show their gratitude to them. The hypothesis that the despot participated in the construction of the church with his donations (Петковић & Татић, 1926, p. 7) or that he was one of the kteurs (Цветковић, 2009b, pp. 79–98) by the research of Gordana Babić (1972, p. 148) and Tatjana Starodubcev (Стародубцев, 2016, pp. 160–161, note 776) was disputed. The model of the endowment of Vukašin and Vukosava is in the hands of the despot Stefan and he, as an intermediary between the patron and Christ, offers it in the direction of the painted segment of the sky from which the blessing hand of God appears (Ђурић, 1990, p. 25).

Graffiti carved into the fresco layer on the lower part of St. Apostol Paul's figure painted on the eastern side on the southwest pillar of the nave, brings the new important information that Rudenica was founded as a monastery. The inscription was written by Deacon Paul in the monastery desert in Rudenica (Цветковић, 2009a, pp. 62–65; Цветковић, 2009b, pp. 87–89, 91–92, 97). Written historical sources never mention any monks from Rudenica. Lazar Mirković (1931, pp. 86–87) claims that Rudenica was not a monastery, whereas Đorđe Stričević (Стричевић, 1995, p. 217) stated that it was founded as a court chapel; this viewpoint was supported by Vladislav Ristić (Ристић, 1996b, pp. 180, 228). Monastery's status confirmed the number of holy monks and hermits, including St. Sabas the Serbian clad as a monk, painted in the south choir. The hypothesis about Rudenica as a court chapel was refuted by Svetlana Popović (Поповић, 1994), who believes that it was unusual for a court chapel to be built on an older cult site—the necropolis, as well as the fact that the choice of church plan—according to numerous examples—does not require the simultaneous division between monastic and court chapels (p. 95, notes 289). According to parallels, the destroyed fresco between the figures of St. John the Baptist and ktetors, possibly contained a charter or a similar document, on which the conclusion was made that the church was originally dedicated to St. John the Baptist (Цветковић, 2009a, pp. 62–65; Цветковић, 2009b, pp. 91–92, 97).

The Rudenica church ground plan has a shape of a simple triconch (Fig. 8). The apses are semicircular from the inside with five sides from the outside and colonnettes placed at the exterior angles. The dome is supported by pilasters. The dome drum is circular from the inside and octagonal from the outside with adjacent colonnettes. The narthex, which was built at the same time as the church is vaulted with a small blind dome (Fig. 9). It was built from undressed sandstone and limestone, while for the upper sections—the vaulted ceiling, arches and the dome—the builder used tufa stone, following the construction rule that parts of a building that are to be supported should be made of lighter material (Валтровић, 2007b, pp. 66–68). Only the building edges are reinforced with sandstone blocks (Бошковић, 1928, p. 212). The dressed blocks at the building angles can also be found on the Milentija Monastery (Ристић, 1996b, p. 221).

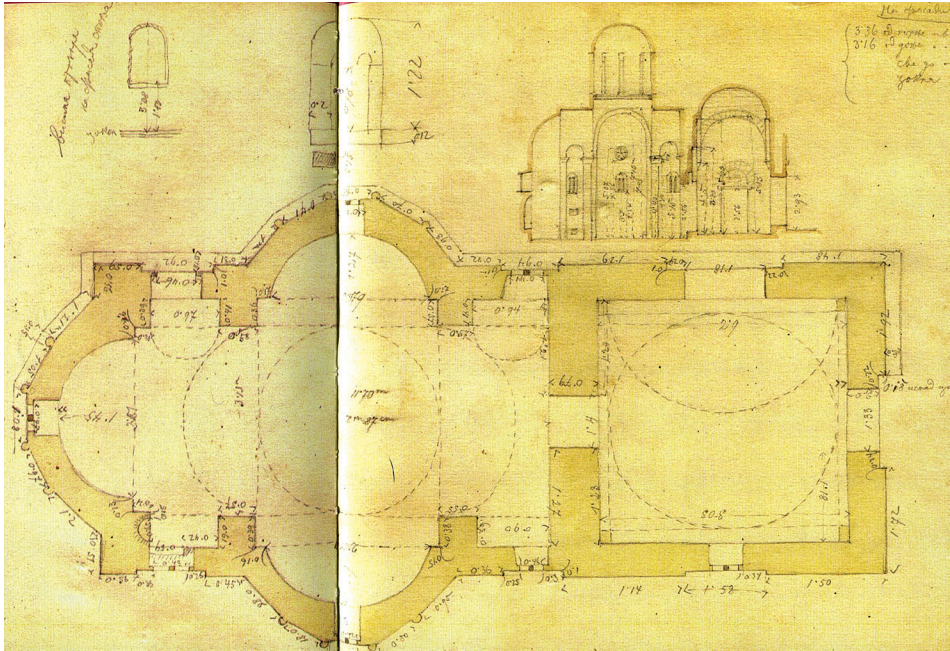


Fig. 8. The Rudenica church ground plan, drawing by D. Milutinović (according to Милутиновић, Д. и Валтровић М. (2006).

У: Т. Дамљановић (ур.), *Валићровић и Милутиновић: Документи, I, Теренска праћа 1871–1884*. Београд: Историјски музеј Србије)



Fig. 9. Main dome and blind dome, © photo B. Gugolj

Of the same basic triconch ground plan are also the churches in the surrounding area, built in or around the same period: Veluće, Lepenac, and Milentija, but also those smaller or distant ones: Annunciation (*Blagoveštenje*) on Mlava, Vitovnica, Gornjak, Lazarica, Naupara, Sisojevac, and St. Paraskeva in Izvor near Paraćin. With the five side apses on the outside and semicircular on the inside are: Veluće, Lazarica, Ljubostinja, Milentija, Naupara, and Nova Pavlica. The dome drum which is circular on the inside and octagonal on the outside is characteristic to Veluće, Vitovnica, Gornjak, Drenča, Lazarica, Ljubostinja, Naupara, and Nova Pavlica. With the colonnettes on the apse side angles on the outside are: Veluće, Ljubostinja, and Milentija. With the colonnettes on the dome drum are: Drenča, Ljubostinja, and Nova Pavlica, whereas on the Ljubostinja church, they are spiral. Ljubostinja also has a blind dome over the narthex (Ристић, 1996b, p. 220) which Veluće probably used to have once (Цветковић & Гаврић, 2015, p. 45).

Special features of the overall look of the monastery are its painted façades and sculptures as a secondary architecture. The plastered façades in fresco technique try to imitate a building technique of alternating stone and brick course. There are four courses of brick painted horizontally with two or sometimes one brick painted vertically in between. It is similar to Ljubostinja where there are three or four courses of brick painted horizontally with two or three vertical ones in between. The painted decoration emulating a stone and brick building technique occurs also on the Naupara façades (Ристић, 1996b, p. 223; Поповић & Ђурчић, 2000, pp. 33–35). Interlaced yellow, red, and blue ribbons that form a plate of diagonal crosses were scratched into fresh plaster below the string course. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries they were visible in fragments (Милутиновић & Валтровић, 2007, p. 23; Бошковић, 1928, pp. 212–213; Millet, 2005, p. 180, fig 213; Ђурић, 1965, p. 58)¹⁷ (Fig. 10 a, 10 b). The decoration is conserved and reconstructed on a new layer of wall plaster on the north–east façade. More complex decorations with grapevine bunches and interlaced colourful rings motifs are found below the mid-section string course of the Veluće church (Цветковић & Гаврић, 2015, p. 45).

The zone with painted interlaced ribbon is also beneath the cord wreath of the Ljubostinja church (Ђурић, 1965, pp. 57–58; Ђурић, 1985, pp. 40–43). The hypothesis about the painted facades of Sisojevac and Drenča has not been confirmed by recent research (Стародубцев, 2008, p. 28; Гаврић & Ковачевић, 2015, pp. 53–82). The practice of painting facades was common in Byzantine art. In the absence of material resources for more expensive building materials, the fresco technique imitated construction with stone, brick, and mortar. Imitation of the expensive masonry technique by painting is a tradition known in late antiquity (Ђурић, 1965, pp. 43–44). In the Serbian environment, a rich

¹⁷ Ornamental bands below the cordon wreath can be seen in an old photograph published by Millet (2005, p. 180, fig. 213).

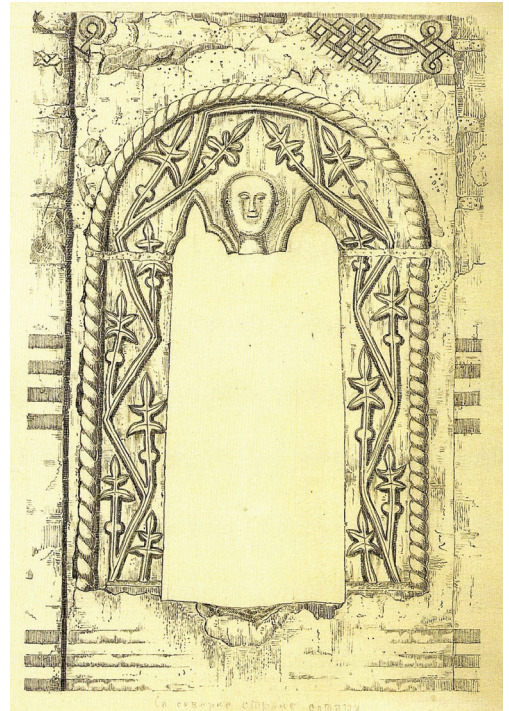


Fig. 10. a, b, Painted ribbons, © photo B. Gugolj, © drawing by D. Milutinović (according to Милутиновић, Д. и Валтровић М. (2006). У: Т. Дамљановић (ур.), *Валтровић и Милутиновић: Документи, I, Теренска црква 1871–1884*. Београд: Историјски музеј Србије)

ensemble of painted decorations can be seen on the façades of the Patriarchate of Peć (Ђурић, 1965, pp. 43–50; Бошковић, 1968, pp. 91–102).

Most façades on the Rudenica church are painted but it was the builders who chiselled all the decorations around the windows, the portal, arches, as well as the rosettes (Fig. 11) (Ђурић, 1965, p. 58). When we consider the size of the building, Rudenica used to have lavish stone tracery decorations. The church façade is split in two by a simple profiled stringcourse. There were ten rosettes in the upper section, below the arcade frieze. Six of them were made during the church reconstruction works. Only two window rosettes on the north façade are just partially original, whereas we know about the other two only from the published drawings of their fragments. Two mostly preserved rosettes and the two whose fragmented images we have only in drawings left by Dragutin Milutinović (Валтровић & Милутиновић, 2006, pp. 211–212) support an argument that each one was differently decorated. Similarly to the Ljubostinja church, they are framed in a stone ring with a flower in its centre from which interlaced two-strip



Fig. 11. North façade, © photo B. Gugolj



Fig. 12. Gargoyle carved in the lunette of the window, © photo B. Gugolj

ribbons emerge (Максимовић, 1971, p. 137). The Rudenica rosettes are unique because they have a wide, smoothly carved frame with a simply profiled outer edge, in addition to the twisted cord (Ристић, 1996b, p. 181).

In the lower section of the façade, below the string course, there are eight bifora windows whose openings, like those on the Ljubostinja church, are in the form of a pointed, ogee arch. The stonework holding the window and the lunettes are decorated with two-strip ribbons forming various ornaments, mostly geometrical ones. There are also stylized and geometrical floral motifs. Anthropomorphic images are reduced to gargoyles carved in the lunettes of two biforas (Fig. 12). The two-part window

of the Rudenica church is similar to the bifora from the northern apse of the church in Drenča (Катанић 1988, pp. 154–155; Цветковић, 1997, p. 58; Гаврић & Ковачевић, 2015, p. 81), adorned with the gargoyle motif and floral tracery, which in Rudenica is quite geometrical. There are some similarities with a gargoyle head in the window lunette that used to be on the Drenča church but is now built in the bell tower of the church in Kožetin (Гаврић & Ковачевић, 2015, p. 81, figs. 88, 158). Anthropomorphic gargoyle is also on the stonework of a single opening window on the nave south wall on the Veluče monastery church (Катанић, 1988, p. 131, fig. 5). Five biforas have spiral stonework frame, while a semicircular part of one is emphasized with a carved bas-relief ornament. A carved geometrical stone tracery, today preserved in fragments on the north conch, used to cover the arcade friezes above the rosettes. Stone tracery with floral motifs is also preserved in fragments on the dome windows. The Rudenica bas-relief stone tracery can also be found on Drenča, Naupara, Veluče, Lazarica, Ljubostinja, but also on the quite remote Holy Virgin church in Gradac on the Morava. The material used for carving is the sandstone from the Bele Vode and Brajkovac quarries (Ристић, 1996a, pp. 38–39).

The entire external design of the Rudenica, including the painted facades, the vertical rhythm with only one cordon wreath and, especially, the carved repertoire almost literally repeats that of Ljubostinja, albeit more modestly (Ђурић, 1985, pp. 60–61). There are various views expressed about the aesthetic values of the Rudenica ornamentation. According to Gabriel Millet (2005), the origin of church decoration from the time of Prince Lazar and his successors continues the Georgian and Russian tradition of architectural decoration, with the fact that in Ljubostinja and Rudenica the motifs were taken from Islamic art as well (Прерадовић, 2021, p. 115). In her synthesis of Serbian mediaeval sculpture, Jovanka Maksimović maintained that the degeneration of the motifs, desiccation of the floral forms, sparseness of the carved ornaments or a lack of ingenuity in seeking new motifs, solutions and intricate tracery actually reduce the Rudenica stone decorations to a second-grade monument (Максимовић, 1971, p. 138). This opinion was also accepted by some later scholars (Ђурић, 1985, pp. 60–61; Катанић, 1988, p. 155). In the Ljubostinja church, geometrical tracery is a primarily decorative element, with some exceptions. Those shapes had been used earlier and the way they had been composed was taken as a novelty. The arrangement of the geometrical tracery points to two tendencies—one is a thickly interlaced decoration without any blank space in between, while the other is loosely plaited with blank space in between (Максимовић, 1971, p. 136). The question is now whether the loose arrangement of the carved ornaments and the repetition of the earlier shapes present enough support for scaling down Rudenica to a second-grade monument. We are inclined to accept Valtrović's (Валтровић, 2007c) views of long ago who said that the master's chisel was skilful in both the carving of the ornaments as well as in creating their design; there

are no two tracery designs or two rosettes that are the same, and everything is done in such a manner that there is neither blank space in between nor too thick interlacing in their composition, creating, “a totally harmonious impression” (p. 68). According to Dragutin Milutinović (Милутиновић & Валтровић, 2007), “this little church is one of the beautiful fragrant wreath flowers made up of Serbian–Byzantine style monuments, yet to be properly studied in the history of architecture” (p. 22). Its master probably belonged to one of the local stonemasonry workshops in the Kruševac area, where a stonemasonry school was quite active from the 1360s (Ристић, 1996b, p. 121).

We have known for some time now that there was a hierarchical principle in place in the period of the families Lazarević and Branković. Such a practice was also in place in the previous period when the nobility built their endowments that used the ruler’s ones as models for their exterior.¹⁸ The privileges of the ruler’s endowments included five domes and a lavish manner of building. The funerary churches of the rulers, such as Ravanica and Resava, stand out for their dimensions in the architecture of Moravian Serbia. They are followed by endowments erected by relatives of the sovereign, such as Ljubostinja and Nova Pavlica. Not far behind were the churches of wealthy nobles such as Vračevšnica, Naupara, Kalenić, Veluče, Koporin, Rudenica, Šatornja, as well as Pavlovac, Lipovac, Brezovac, Blagoveštenje in the Mlava gorge, Kastaljan, the church at the cemetery in Smederevo, and Jovča in Novo Brdo. The churches were of more modest size, whose ktetors were probably lower-ranking nobles, as well as those intended for monastic families in impassable gorges—such as Gornjak, Namasija, Petruša, and the monastery churches in the Crnica gorge (Бабић-Ђорђевић, 1997, p. 151; Стародубцев, 2016, vol. 1, p. 93, note 572).

By shifting the interest of scholars from the level of superficial and unfounded classifications of monuments as “finished products” to the examination of diverse factors that affected their creation, and the reasons that led to their very specific appearance (Стевовић, 2006), provides a different picture of architectural monuments of Moravian Serbia. Only four churches entirely have “all these characteristics that we consider distinctive from the Moravian school” (p. 49). Only in Lazar’s endowments, Ravanica, as well as in the noble endowments, Veluče and Kalenić, a trefoil plan, masonry in mixed media, and a characteristic low-relief decoration were united. The other churches were mainly made of various stones, although some of them were later painted to simulate mixed media facades. Rudenica is only one in a series of monuments built of stone. Taking into account all monuments at the time, it is obvious that church architecture during the time of Prince Lazar and Despot Stefan Lazarević was primarily made of stone. Only a few structures and the most

¹⁸ For significant similarities between the church in Lipljan and Gračanica, also the church of St. Savior in Prizren and the Virgin of Ljeviška, see Ćurčić (1977, pp. 45–51).

representative were constructed with the brick façades. Differences in the quality of masonry work indirectly testify that stone processing in the areas with the highest concentration of monuments in Moravian Serbia was a developed and widespread craft. The use of bricks required a greater economic investment, a significantly sophisticated level of construction technology, including the production of special molds of various shapes, knowledge of the operation of kilns for baking at high temperatures, and the presence of masters who knew the construction system using mixed media (Стевовић, 2006, pp. 49–51). The representation of the Rudenica church in the ktetor's composition shows that the roof was covered with bricks, which is a familiar feature in Byzantine architecture. Koporin and Ramaća testify to the prevalence of this practice in the Moravian area, along with Rudenica (Радужко, 2006, pp. 80–81). The roof of the church of Veluće is also constructed of bricks, which is evident in the model in the ktetor's composition. In the renovation from 1936, Rudenica was covered with tiles, while in the conservation and restoration works from 1994 and 1995, a lead roof layer was installed (Ковачевић, 1996, p. 114).

The choice of the master builder depended not only on financial strength of the client commissioning the works but also on the designs and artistic ideas requested by the founder, which the master builders had to be able to realize. The Rudenica Monastery's ktetor, Vukašin, who enjoyed a high-ranking title of a treasurer in the service of Despot Stefan Lazarević, certainly was one of those whose artistic requirements were not minor.

With its typological spatial concept of a basic triconch, Rudenica becomes part of the trends of Serbian mediaeval architecture, including a number of churches in the Kruševac area, in the decades and years before Rudenica was built. The overall exterior of the Rudenica, including the painted façades, the vertical arrangement with only one stringcourse line and particularly the carved decorations repeat those on the Ljubostinja church in almost all the aspects, in rather modest terms, however. In its exterior shape, we recognise a link with Ljubostinja: just one stringcourse, painted decorations that emulate stone and brick structure, a painted frieze below the string course, and the shape of the biforas with their pointed and ogee arches. The tendency to emphasize height, which is typical not only for Rudenica, but also for Naupara and Ljubostinja, is an echo of the emphasis on height expressed in the overall features of Lazarica (Стевовић, 2006, p. 163).

It seems that for almost a whole century since the first scholars, Rudenica has not been given a proper place in the art of Moravian Serbia. The place of Rudenica in the art of Moravian Serbia was pointed out by Gordana Babić-Porpević (Бабић-Ђорђевић, 1997), assessing that:

“The plastered facades of the church, the endowments of Vukašin and Vukosava, and next to the cordon wreath, the colonnade with the arcade

interlaced ribbons and rosettes, cut and painted decorations, seem much more modest than the harmoniously built Kalenić and the colorful wealth that characterizes the stone and brick facades of that church. The painter Teodor, signed in Rudenica, was a good master, but he was surpassed by the more talented and experienced painter Radoslav, who with his assistants, created frescoes in Kalenić... As if the noble Vukašin, who had *no titles*, could not compete with the despot's *protovestiaros* (chief treasurer) Bogdan, the patron of Kalenić, who was not only a wealthy man but also a highly respected courtier." (p. 155)

According to Vojislav Korać and Marica Šuput (Kopaň & Шупут, 2006), Rudenica, along with Naupara, Veluće, and Kalenić, belongs to the group of representative buildings that best exemplify the mature achievements of the Moravian style (p. 365). Its significance was highlighted by Milan Radujko (Радујко, 2006, pp. 60, 82), who ranks Rudenica alongside Ljubostinja, Belgrade Metropolis, Kalenić, and Resava, among the most significant churches built or painted in the period from 1402 to 1418. These structures, by aesthetic standards, are classified as prime examples of Moravian architecture.

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Бранка М. ГУГОЉ

Универзитет у Приштини са привременим
седиштем у Косовској Митровици
Факултет уметности, Звечан
Одсек ликовних уметности

Руденица и њено место у архитектури Моравске Србије

Резиме

Црква манастира Руденице саграђена је на прелазу из XIV у XV век, што се закључује на основу ктиторских портрета који су насликани између 1403. и 1405. године. Задужбина је властелина Вукашина, ризничара деспота Стефана и супруге Вукосаве. Храм има основу у облику сажетог триконхоса са једном куполом. Истовремено саграђена припрата засведена је слепом калотом. Тамбур куполе на коцкастом постољу изнутра је кружан, а споља осмостран. Хоризонтална подела фасада изведена је кордонским венцем, изнад кога се налазе розете са слепим аркадама, док су у нижој зони дводелни прозори украшени каменом пластиком. Грађена је од необрађеног пешчара и кречњака, а само су ивице појачане тесаницима пешчара. На малтерисаним фасадама у фреско-техници опонашан је хелијасти начин зидања редовима камена и опеке. Током векова страдали су горњи делови грађевине, који су обновљени током конзерваторско-рестаураторских радова изведених 1936/1937. и 1994/1995. године. Руденица је рано привукла пажњу истраживача, па је већ 1877. године забележено да је један од лепих цветића из мирисавог венца, који у историји архитектуре још није заузео своје заслужено место. Недуго затим, уочена је њена неспорна сличност са Љубостињом која се огледа у спољном обликовању фасада. Питање је који су разлози довели до тога. Наиме, у српској средини од раније су познати примери угледања властеоских задужбина на властеоске, па у том смислу Руденица не представља изузетак. Истраживања архитектонског наслеђа Моравске Србије показала су да је Љубостиња представљала један од узора, али да се аналогije за елементе њене архитектуре: основу, горњу конструкцију, отворе, материјал, технику и начин зидања, камену и сликану декорацију налазе на хронолошки и топографски блиским храмовима, као и оним удаљенијим.

Кључне речи: Руденица; архитектура; скулптура; сликана орнаментика.



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