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Novootkrivena figuralna ploča iz Zavale (Općina Ravno): Ikonografsko-stilska analiza i prilog kontekstualizaciji kamenih ulomaka

Newly Discovered Relief Slab from Zavala (Ravno Municipality): Iconographic-Stylistic Analysis and a Contribution to the Contextualization of Stone Fragments

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Sažetak: U radu je predstavljena novootkrivena, do sada neobjavljena, figuralna reljefna ploča s lokaliteta Crkvina u Zavali, Općina Ravno. Pronađena je 2020. godine unutar perimetra trolisne predromaničke građevine, otkrivene ispod mlađe Male crkve prilikom posljednje faze arheoloških istraživanja. Odlikuje je figuralna kompozicija s predstavom velike ptice s nimбом i bogato obrađen gornji pojas (vijenac). Ploča je analizirana iz ikonografsko-stilskog stajališta i dovedena u odnos s ranije pronađenim figuralnim pločama s istog lokaliteta, kao i s drugom komparativnom građom. Predloženo ikonološko tumačenje reljefa usmjereno je prema simbolici rajskoga vrta i eshatološkim značenjima, naročito nadi u uskrsnuće. Pitanju namjene donje trolisne građevine također je posvećena pažnja. U svjetlu arheoloških nalaza, funerarnog okruženja te ikonografskog repertoara, ova predromanička građevina sada se argumentirano razmatra i kao moguća memorija, a ne isključivo kao crkva. Spoznavanje nove ploče iz različitih uglova doprinosi boljem razumijevanju i kontekstualizaciji zavalske kamene plastike. Time se otvara put novim tumačenjima složene sakralne topografije ovog lokaliteta i, šire gledano, uloge Zavale u stilskim i ikonografskim tokovima ranog srednjeg vijeka.

Cljučne riječi: Crkvina u Zavali, kamena plastika, reljefna ploča, predromanika, rani srednji vijek

Abstract: This paper presents a newly discovered, previously unpublished, figural relief slab from the site of Crkvina in Zavala, Ravno municipality. It was discovered in 2020 within the perimeters of a triconchal pre-Romanesque structure, which lay beneath the later Small Church (*Mala crkva*) and was uncovered during the final phase of archaeological research. It is characterized by a figural composition featuring a depiction of a large bird with a nimbus and a richly decorated upper band. The slab has been analysed from an iconographic and stylistic perspective, and compared with previously discovered figural slabs from the same site, as well as with other comparative material. The proposed iconological interpretation of the relief is directed toward the symbolism of the Garden of Eden and eschatological meanings, particularly the hope of resurrection. Attention has also been devoted to the question of the function of the lower triconchal (trefoil) structure. Taking into account the archaeological evidence, burial context and iconographic repertoire, it is now argued that this pre-Romanesque structure may have served as a *memoria*, in contrast to the previous interpretation of it having functioned solely as a church. Examining the new slab from different perspectives contributes to a better understanding and contextualization of the stone sculpture from Zavala; this in turn opens a route to new interpretations of the complex sacred topography of this site and, more broadly, the role of Zavala in the stylistic and iconographic developments of the Early Middle Ages.

Keywords: Crkvina in Zavala, stone sculpture, relief slab, pre-romanesque, early middle ages

UVOD

U fokusu istraživanja je velika reljefna ploča s motivom ptice s nimbom (sl. 1, 2) s lokaliteta Crkvina u Zavali, Općina Ravno. Otkrivena je tek 2020. godine, nakon revizijskih istraživanja ovog sakralnog kompleksa. Pronalazak novog ulomka, uz promijenjene okolnosti na terenu i identifikaciju starije, predromaničke trolisne građevine, zahtijeva ponovni uvid u kamenu plastiku iz Zavale, poznatu od ranije, te omogućuje nove spoznaje i tumačenja složene ikonografije kamenih pregrada na prostoru današnje Bosne i Hercegovine u ranom srednjem vijeku.

INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on a large relief slab featuring a bird with a nimbus (halo) motif (Figs. 1, 2) from the Crkvina site in Zavala, Ravno municipality, discovered in 2020, following a revision of archaeological research of this sacral complex. The discovery of a new fragment, together with a change in fieldwork conditions and the identification of an earlier, pre-Romanesque triconchal structure, requires a renewed examination of the previously known stone sculpture from Zavala, and enables new insights and interpretations of the complex iconography of stone partitions upon the territory of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Early Middle Ages.



Slika 1. Novootkrivena figuralna reljefna ploča iz Zavale (snimila i obradila: A. Mekić).

Figure 1. Newly discovered figural relief slab from Zavala (photography and editing: A. Mekić).



Slika 2. Novootkrivena figuralna reljefna ploča iz Zavale (snimila i obradila: A. Mekić).
Figure 2. Newly discovered figurative relief slab from Zavala (photography and editing: A. Mekić).



Slika 3. Reljefna ploča 1 iz Zavale (a, b; dimenzije: 78 x 42 x 11 cm). Muzej Hercegovine u Trebinju, inventar Srednjovjekovne arheološke zbirke br. 15 (snimila i obradila: A. Mekić).

Slika 4. Reljefna ploča 2 (a, b; dimenzije 43 x 30 x 13 cm) i reljefna ploča 3 (c; dimenzije 45 x 25 x 16 cm) iz Zavale. Muzej Hercegovine u Trebinju, inventar Srednjovjekovne arheološke zbirke br. 17 i br. 14 (snimila i obradila: A. Mekić).

Figure 3. Relief slab 1 from Zavala (a, b; dimensions: 78 x 42 x 11 cm). Museum of Herzegovina in Trebinje, inventory of the Medieval Archaeological Collection, No. 15 (photography and editing: A. Mekić).

Figure 4. . Relief slab 2 (a, b; dimensions: 43 x 30 x 13 cm) and relief slab 3 (c; dimensions: 45 x 25 x 16 cm) from Zavala. Museum of Herzegovina in Trebinje, inventory of the Medieval Archaeological Collection, Nos. 17 & 14 (photography and editing: A. Mekić).

Ikonografsko-stilske karakteristike ovog nalaza upućuju na povezanost s drugim figuralnim pločama iz Zavale (sl. 3, 4), osobito s velikim reljefom s prikazom dvije ptice, od kojih veća ima nimbu. Već na prvi pogled uočljive su međusobne sličnosti, u pogledu dimenzija, izbora motiva, tehničke izvedbe i stilskih odlika. Izvođenje zaključaka o njihovoj izravnoj povezanosti, ipak, može uslijediti tek nakon detaljnije analize i komparacije.

O kamenoj plastici iz Zavale se opsežno pisalo, uz različite prijedloge i argumentacije za datiranje i stilsko određivanje.¹ Brojne dvojbe, koje su se javljale pri smještanju reljefnih ploča u vremenski kontekst, povezane su s problemom njihovog pripisivanja određenom sakralnom objektu. Pojedini dijelovi, za koje se pretpostavlja da su činili (oltarnu) kamenu pregradu, pronađeni su tek fragmentarno i izmješteni na više lokacija. Stajališta u struci i dalje se razilaze, što je donekle i razumljivo, s obzirom na sve nepoznanice u vezi s objek-

The iconographic and stylistic features of this find indicate a connection with other figural slabs from Zavala (Figs. 3, 4), particularly the large relief showing two birds, one of which – larger in size – bears a nimbus. Initially, mutual similarities are noticeable in terms of dimensions, choice of motifs, technical execution and stylistic features. However, conclusions about their direct connection can only be drawn after a more detailed analysis and comparison.

The stone sculpture from Zavala has long been the subject of extensive scholarly debate, particularly regarding its chronology and stylistic classification.¹ Numerous doubts that arose when temporally positioning the relief slabs were related to the problem of attributing them to a specific sacral object. Certain parts, assumed to have formed the (altar) stone partition, were found only in a fragmented state, and have been relocated to several locations. Scholarly opinions remain divided, which is somewhat understandable given all the uncertainties regarding the structure to which they belonged. The wide range of

1 Interes prema arheološkom kompleksu Crkva u Zavali, posebno reljefnoj plastici, u svojim radovima su iskazali: Mihajlović 1890; Tihčić-Basler 1957; Vego 1961; Miletić 1984; Jovanović 1986; Palameta 1997; Praštalo 2003, Tomasović 2011; Marasović 2013. i drugi.

1 Interest in the archaeological complex of Crkva in Zavala, particularly its relief sculpture, has been expressed in the works of: Mihajlović (1890), Tihčić & Basler (1957), Vego (1961), Miletić (1984), Jovanović (1986), Palameta (1997), Praštalo (2003), Tomasović (2011), Marasović (2013), and others.

tom kojem su pripadale. Širok raspon predloženih datacija, koji obuhvata više stoljeća, ujedno ukazuje na jedinstvenost nalaza. Interpretiranje ulomaka dodatno usložnjavaju stilske razlike između pleterne ornamentike i figuralnih predstava, zbog čega su se pojedine skupine ulomaka s istog lokaliteta često u literaturi različito datirale (iako najveća ploča ima vijenacu tropletu, op.a). Iz tih razloga, desetljećima se smatralo da fragmenti potječu iz crkve sv. Petra, čije vrijeme nastanka nije precizno utvrđeno, iako je najčešće datirana u 12. stoljeće.² Tek ponovljenim istraživanjima lokaliteta Crkvine u Zavali 2016–2018. godine na svjetlost dana izlazi trolisna, predromanička građevina (moguće iz 9. stoljeća), za koju se dosad nije znalo. Rezultate na terenu dopunjavaju temelji mlađe crkve (10–11. stoljeće), te ostatci novovjekovnog sakralnog objekta. Ovi nalazi bitno mijenjaju kontekst i nameću potrebu ponovnog razmatranja pitanja podrijetla i funkcije kamene plastike iz Zavale, pri čemu novootkrivena figuralna ploča postaje ključni element u njezinoj rekontekstualizaciji i reinterpretaciji.³

proposed datings – spanning several centuries – simultaneously indicates the uniqueness of the find. Stylistic differences between the interlace decoration and the figural representations further complicate the interpretation of the fragments, which explains why some groups from the same site have been assigned differing dates in scholarly works (author's note: even though the largest slab contains an upper band in a triple braid motif). Accordingly, it was long held that the fragments originated from the Church of St. Peter, a building whose exact construction date remains unclear, though it is typically dated to the 12th century.² New archaeological investigations conducted at the Crkvina site between 2016 and 2018 have significantly transformed this picture, revealing a previously unknown triconchal building of pre-Romanesque character, possibly dating to the 9th century. The field results are complemented by the foundations of a later church (10th–11th century) and the remains of an Early Modern sacral structure. Altogether, this new evidence substantially alters the context, and calls for a renewed examination of the provenance and function of the Zavala stone sculpture, with the newly identified figural slab assuming a key role in this process.³

- 2 Prijedlozi datiranja sakralnih objekata u Zavali često su vezani za vrijeme njihove gradnje ili kameni namještaj, pri čemu su iznesena stajališta neujednačena. Tihčić i Basler su, u kraćem izvješću, analizirajući reljefnu plastiku predložili vrijeme izgradnje u drugu polovicu 11. stoljeća. Ističu da su reljefi nastali kada se već formirala zrela pleterna skulptura (između 9. i prve polovice 11. stoljeća). Također napominju da se pojava predmeta simboličnog značenja – kakvi su krug oko glave pauna i posuda – javlja krajem tog perioda (u drugoj polovici 11. stoljeća), kada počinje preplitanje i miješanje starih oblika pletera s tendencijama rane romantike (Tihčić, Basler 1957, 111). Za razliku od njih, Vego je, na osnovu načina gradnje te pojave pleternog ornamenta, datirao u drugu polovicu 12. stoljeća i crkvu i kamenu plastiku (Vego 1959, 199). Miletić, nešto kasnije, reljefe s pticama datira u 11. ili 12. stoljeće, a kamenu plastiku s pleternim ukrasom smatra izrazitim predstavnikom predromaničke umjetnosti, karakterističnim za vrijeme 9.-10. stoljeća (Miletić 1984, 400–401; 2001, 7, 10). Jovanović pleternu plastiku smješta u 9.–10. stoljeće, uz naglasak da ove fragmente smatra spolijama u crkvi sv. Petra, dok ploče s pticama datira u vrijeme njezine gradnje – 11. ili rani 12. vijek (Jovanović 1986, 78). Ovih spomenika dotiče se i Jurković, koji ih datira u 10. stoljeće (Jurković 1987, 111). U Arheološkom leksikonu BiH, Glavaš navodi da je crkva sv. Petra imala kamenu oltarnu ogradu ukrašenu predromaničkim ornamentom, te da je, na osnovu solidne gradnje, datirana u 12. stoljeće. Istovremeno ističe da stilske osobine kamenog namještaja upućuju na znatno raniji period, na 9. stoljeće (Glavaš 1988, 171). Tridesetak godina nakon svog prvog teksta, Basler ponovo analizira plastiku iz Zavale. Pripisuje je crkvi sv. Petra te je, kao i nju, datira u 11. stoljeće (Basler 1990, 119). To čini i Marasović (2013, 328–330). On ploče, s reljefima ptica i pleternom ornamentikom, kao i Basler, veže za istu oltarnu pregradu. Uz to Basler sugerira postojanje neke još starije crkve, koja bi se mogla nalaziti na obližnjoj lokaciji Mihalje. (Basler 1990, 119). Vego napominje da su 1957. na tom mjestu izvršena probna iskopavanja, ali bez rezultata. Registrirano je tek manje groblje i profilirani fragment s motivom križa (Vego 1959, 184). Miletić, pozivajući se na taj nalaz, sugerira da se naziv Mihalje može vezati uz crkvu sv. Mihalja koja je nekad tu mogla postojati (Miletić 2001, 10). Spomenuta razmatranja o lokalitetu i spomenicima sada su vrlo indikativna s obzirom na nedavna otkrića starijih objekata.
- 3 Praštalo iznosi mišljenje da su reljefne ploče, koje datira u 9. stoljeće, dijelovi oltarne pregrade starije crkve, otkrivene unutar kompleksa manastira Vavedenja Presvete Bogorodice u Zavali (Praštalo 2003, 195). Na tom tragu, uporište nalazi i Okilj (Okilj 2010, 57–62). Podudarnost u širini naosa pomenute crkve i ponuđene rekonstrukcije oltarne pregrade (Praštalo, op.cit., tabla IV) tumači se kao argument da je ona odatle prenesena u crkvu sv. Petra. Prethodne stavove, sada kada raspoložemo rezultatima posljednjih arheoloških istraživanja, ne možemo smatrati znanstveno relevantnim.

- 2 Proposals for dating the sacral buildings in Zavala are often tied to either the time of their construction or the stone furnishings, and the views put forward are not uniform. Tihčić and Basler, in a brief report, analysed the relief sculpture and proposed the second half of the 11th century as the time of construction. They emphasize that the reliefs were created when mature interlace sculpture had already been formed (between the 9th and the first half of the 11th centuries). They also note that the appearance of objects of symbolic meaning – such as the circle around the peacock's head and the vessel situated between two birds – occurs at the end of that period (in the second half of the 11th century), when the interweaving and blending of older interlace forms with tendencies of early Romanesque begins (Tihčić, Basler 1957, 111). In contrast, Vego, based on the construction technique and the appearance of interlace ornament, dated both the church and the stone sculpture to the second half of the 12th century (Vego 1959, 199). Somewhat later, Miletić dated the reliefs with birds to the 11th or 12th century, while considering the stone sculpture with interlace decoration to be a pronounced representative of pre-Romanesque art, characteristic of the 9th to 10th centuries (Miletić 1984, 400–401; 2001, 7, 10). Jovanović places the interlace sculpture in the 9th to 10th centuries, emphasizing that he considers these fragments to be spolia in the Church of St. Peter, dating the slabs with birds to the time of its construction – the 11th or early 12th century (Jovanović 1986, 78). These monuments are also addressed by Jurković, who dates them to the 10th century (Jurković 1987, 111). In the Archaeological Lexicon of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Glavaš states that the Church of St. Peter had a stone altar screen decorated with pre-Romanesque ornament, and that, based on its solid construction, it dates to the 12th century. At the same time, he pointed out that the stylistic features of the stone furnishings indicate a much earlier period, namely the 9th century (Glavaš 1988, 171). About thirty years after his first text, Basler reanalysed the sculpture from Zavala, attributing it to the Church of St. Peter and dating it, like the church itself, to the 11th century (Basler 1990, 119). The same conclusion was drawn by Marasović (2013, 328–330). He, like Basler, connected the slabs with reliefs of birds and interlace ornamentation to the same altar screen. In addition, Basler suggested the existence of an even older church, which might have been located at the nearby site of Mihalje (Basler 1990, 119). Vego notes that trial excavations were carried out at that site in 1957, but without results; only a small cemetery and a profiled fragment with a cross motif were recorded (Vego 1959, 184). Referring to this find, Miletić suggests that the name Mihalje may be linked to a (hypothetical) Church of St. Michael that may once have existed there (Miletić 2001, 10). These considerations of the site and its monuments are now highly indicative of this in light of recent discoveries of earlier structures.
- 3 Praštalo expresses the opinion that the relief slabs, which he dated to the 9th century, are parts of the altar screen of an older church, discovered within the complex of the Monastery of the Presentation of the Virgin in Zavala (Praštalo 2003, 195). In this regard, Okilj also lends support to this in her writings on the monastery (Okilj 2010, 57–62). The correspondence between the width of the deposit of the mentioned church and the proposed reconstruction of the altar screen (Praštalo 2003, slab IV) is interpreted as an argument that it was transferred from there to the Church of St. Peter. These earlier views, now that we have the results of recent archaeological research, can no longer be considered scientifically relevant.

TROLISNA PREDROMANIČKA GRAĐEVINA NA CRKVINI: TIPOLOŠKA ANALIZA I RAZMATRANJE FUNKCIJE

Nakon nepotpuno provedenih arheoloških iskopavanja na Crkvini u Zavali 1957. godine, fokusiranih na prostor crkve sv. Petra,⁴ na inicijativu Općine Ravno 2016. godine pristupa se ponovnim istraživanjima.⁵ Tada su istražena 42 groba na ovom lokalitetu te su ispod podnice Male crkve (ranije u literaturi neutemeljeno nazivane crkva sv. Petke) i drugih građevnih slojeva pronađeni temelji starijeg, devastiranog objekta. Radilo se o manjoj, do tada nepoznatoj sakralnoj građevini predromaničkog doba, s trolisnim tlocrtom koji se ne podudara s temeljima crkve izgrađene iznad, već se s njima presijeca (sl. 5, 6). O ovom otkriću već je pisano.⁶ U tom radu su predočeni rezultati istraživanja provedenih u periodu

THE TRICONCHAL PRE-ROMANESQUE STRUCTURE AT CRKVINA: TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATION OF FUNCTION

After limited archaeological work conducted at Crkvina in Zavala in 1957, which was centred on the Church of St. Peter,⁴ research was resumed in 2016 at the initiative of the Municipality of Ravno.⁵ At that time, 42 burials were excavated at the site, and below the floor level of the Small Church (earlier, though without basis, referred to in the literature as the Church of St. Petka), along with additional construction layers, the foundations of an older, destroyed building were identified. It was a small, previously unknown, sacral structure of the pre-Romanesque period, with a triconch plan that does not correspond to the foundations of the church built over it, but rather intersects with them (Figs. 5, 6). This



Slika 5. Zračni snimak trikonhalne građevine na Crkvini u Zavali. Oznakom 'X' označeno mjesto pronalaska reljefne ploče (arhiva S. Vasilj, snimio: Vjekoslav Burić).
Figure 5. Aerial view of the triconchal building at Crkvina site in Zavala. The location at which the relief slab was found is marked with an 'X' (archive of S. Vasilj, photography: Vjekoslav Burić).

4 Arheološko iskopavanje na Crkvini pod vodstvom M. Vege izvršeno je u svega nekoliko dana, od 1. do 11.7.1957. godine (Vego 1959, 180, zabilješka 5).
5 Istraživanja je predvodila S. Vasilj, a projekt je realiziran od 2016. do 2018. godine u suradnji Općine Ravno, Federalnog ministarstva kulture i sporta i Zavoda za zaštitu spomenika FBiH. Rezultati objavljeni u časopisu *Hercegovina*. Vasilj 2018, 49-86.
6 Vasilj 2018, 49-86. Iako su dimenzije prikazane u tom tekstu (Vasilj 2018, 68), za potrebe ovoga rada izvršena su dodatna mjerenja, kako bi se razmotrila mogućnost postojanja kamene pregrade unutar datog objekta.

4 Archaeological excavations at Crkvina, led by M. Vego, were conducted over a brief period from 1 to 11 July 1957 (Vego 1959, 180, note 5).
5 The research was directed by S. Vasilj and conducted between 2016 and 2018 in collaboration with the Municipality of Ravno, the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sport, and the Institute for the Protection of Monuments of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The findings were published in the journal *Hercegovina* (Vasilj 2018).

Slika 7. Trikonhalna predromanička građevina ispod Male crkve na Crkvini: pogled s vrha središnje konhe ka zapadu (a) i iz predvorja prema istoku (b) (snimila: A. Mekić).

Figure 7. Triconchal pre-Romanesque building below the Small Church at Crkvina site: view from the top of the central conch to the west (a) and from the vestibule to the east (b) (photography: A. Mekić).

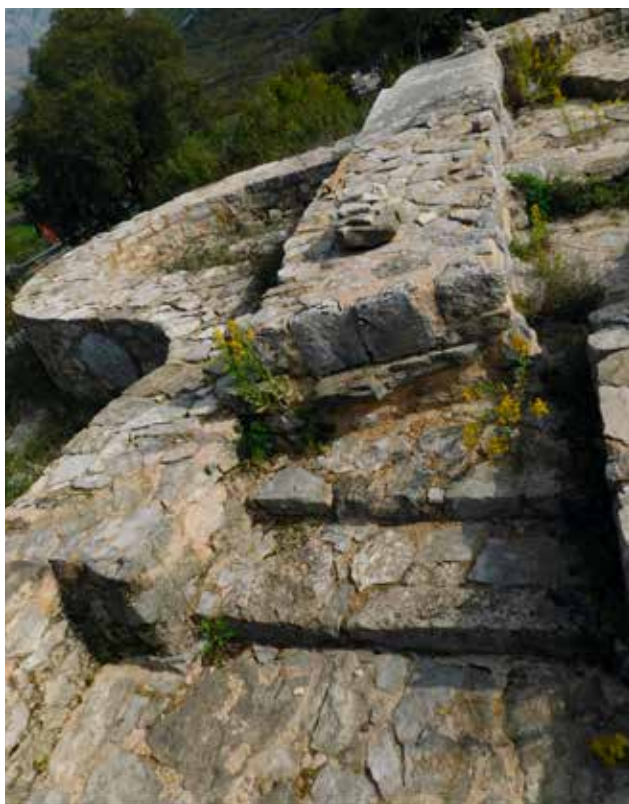


i južna – istražene su, dok je središnja, presječena gornjim strukturama sa stećcima, ostala neistražena. Vanjska širina bočnih konhi, izmjerena na najizbočenijem dijelu, je cca 4,30 m (sa zidovima, a bez zidova 3 m). Dubina im je cca. 1,75 m. Istočna je manja, širine cca 2,75 m, dok se njezina dubina ne može izmjeriti. Širina enterijera između konhi, odnosno u ravni pravolinijskog dijela bočnih zidova je cca. 3 m. To bi potencijalno mogla biti maksimalna širina pregrade parapetnog tipa, ukoliko je postojala i bila konstruirana tako da pregrađuje čitav trikonhalni završetak objekta. U iznimnom slučaju, ukoliko je bio pregrađen samo prostor središnje konhe, ili neki drugi dio prostora, njezina širina bi bila nešto manja.⁹ Pri razmatranju objekta kao memorije, važno je naglasiti da takve građevine mogu imati kamenu pregradu, kao vid obilježavanja sakralnog fokusa unutar objekta (u

designed.⁸ However, this part of the space was ultimately articulated so that it formed the entrance tract alongside the vestibule, and due to the lack of clearer archaeological indications, this issue is being left aside for now. The two lateral conches – northern and southern – have been investigated, while the central one, intersected by upper structures incorporating reused *stećak* tombstones, has remained unexplored. The external width of the lateral conches, measured at the most protruding point, is approximately 4.30 m (including walls) and 3.0 m without them. Their depth is about 1.75 m. The eastern conch is smaller, having a width of about 2.75 m, while its depth cannot be measured. The width of the interior between the conches, that is, along the plane of the straight sections of the side walls, is approximately 3.0 m. This could represent the maximum width of a parapet-type partition, if one existed and was constructed to divide the entire triconchal end of the building. In an exceptional case, if only the space of the central conch or another part of the interior had been partitioned, its width would have been

⁹ Za rekonstrukcije raznovrsnih rješenja oltarnih pregrada vidj. Marasović 2007; 2008, 316-325 (T. III: 1-2). U najvećem broju centralnih polikonalnih građevina nalazila se po sredini crkve. U mnogim ranosrednjovjekovnim crkvama u Dalmaciji sačuvana je baza oltarne pregrade, koju čini stepenica što dijeli niži prostor za vjernike (*quadratum populi*) od povišene razine prezbiterija. Da je stepenica zaista bila u funkciji podnožja oltarne ograde, prepoznaje se po udubinama, koje u mnogim slučajevima pokazuju položaj pluteja i pilastra, odnosno raspon ulaza u prezbiterij. Marasović 2008, 324-326.

⁸ Minor differences can be noted between the architectural plan and the current state of preservation in this part of the structure: the plan (Fig. 6) indicates more rounded transitions at the conches, while the photographs (Figs. 5, 7) show angular ones.



Slika 8. Predvorje (desno) i stepenice koje vode iz predvorja u glavnu prostoriju (lijevo) (snimila: A. Mekić).

Figure 8. Lobby (right) and stairs leading from the lobby to the main room (left) (photography: A. Mekić).



slučaju memorije najčešće groba), ali i kao svojevrsnu liturgijsku barijeru – zavisno od koncepcije i specifične upotrebe samog objekta u okviru zajednice.

Građevina, s obzirom na tipološke odlike, gotovo sigurno pripada stilu predromanike, te se može okvirno datirati u vrijeme između 9. i 11. stoljeća.¹⁰ Na tlu Bosne i Hercegovine do danas je poznato tek nekoliko primjera sličnih, ali ne i identičnih rješenja, i ne iz istog vremenskog razdoblja. Trolisni plan općenito je rjeđa, iako ne i neuobičajena pojava u predromanici na ovim prostorima, jer period od 9. do 11. stoljeća obiluje raznim varijantama osnova građevina, posebno onima centralnog plana.¹¹ Tako je na ovom području reprezentativna pojava trikonhalnog oblikovanja istočnog dijela sakralnog objekta, u znatno većim razmjerima (ukupne dimenzije 24,80 x 15m), registrirana kod rano-kršćanske bazilike u Cimu kod Mostara.¹² Imala je slično formiran trolisni istočni dio, ali većih dimenzija i složenijeg tlocrta. U istom kompleksu se nalazi drugi trolisni objekt – identificiran kao memorija ili grobna crkva, skoro identične

somewhat smaller.⁹ If considering the structure as a memoria, it is important to emphasize that such buildings may include a stone partition as a way of marking the sacred focal point within the structure (in the case of a memoria, most often a grave), but also as a kind of liturgical barrier; this is dependent on the concept and specific use of the structure within the community.

Based on its typological characteristics, the building can almost certainly be assigned to the pre-Romanesque style and dated roughly between the 9th and 11th centuries.¹⁰ Upon the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, only a few examples of similar, though not identical, solutions are known to date, and not from the same time period. The triconch plan is generally a more rare, though not unusual, occurrence in the pre-Romanesque architecture of this region, as the period from the 9th to the 11th centuries abounds in building plan variants, especially those of the central plan.¹¹ Thus, a representative example of triconch articulation of the eastern part of a sacral structure in these regions, on a significantly larger scale (total dimensions 24.80 x 15 m), has been recorded in the early Christian basilica in Cim, near Mostar.¹² It had a similarly formed triconchal eastern section, but was considerably larger and of a more complex plan. Within the same complex exists a smaller triconchal structure – identified as a memoria or funerary church (Pl. II: 2) – almost identical in plan to the triconch in Zavala, as suggested by its dimensions (approx. 11.80 x 5.30 m). As in Zavala, the church contained several burials, and stone fragments were set into the flooring in front of the central conch. Anđelić assumes

10 U 12. stoljeću u Primorju već iščezavaju predromaničke građevine centralnog tipa. Subotić 1963, 14.

11 Bošković 1962, 178–184; Subotić 1963, 12–15. Kao primjeri građevina trikonhalne osnove iz razdoblja predromanike u Primorju navode se sv. Krševan na Krku i sv. Nikola kod Nina (T. II: 4), kao i crkve u Drivasti u oblasti Skadra te Zatonu na Limu. Subotić, 1963. 14–15. Tlocrt crkve u Zatonu, s pravokutnim predvorjem, najbližnji je zavalskoj trolisnoj građevini (T. II: 1)

12 Anđelić 1976, 179–244.

9 For reconstructions of various solutions of altar screens, see Marasović 2007; 2008, 316–325 (Pl. III: 1–2). In the majority of central polyconch buildings, the altar screen was located in the middle of the church. In many Early Medieval churches in Dalmatia, the base of the altar screen has been preserved, consisting of a step that separates the lower space for the worshippers (*quadratum populi*) from the elevated level of the presbytery. That the step indeed functioned as the base of the altar screen is evident through indentations, which in many cases indicate the position of the plutei and pilasters, i.e. the span of the entrance to the presbytery (Marasović 2008, 324–326).

10 In the 12th century, pre-Romanesque buildings of the central type had already disappeared from the Littoral (Subotić 1963, 14).

11 Bošković 1962, 178–184; Subotić 1963, 12–15. Examples of buildings with a triconch plan from the pre-Romanesque period in the Littoral include St. Chrysogonus on Krk and St. Nicholas near Nin (Pl. II: 4), as well as churches in Drivast in the region of Shkodra and in Zaton on the river Lim (Subotić 1963, 14–15). The ground plan of the church in Zaton, with a rectangular vestibule, is most similar to the trilobed structure in Zavala (Pl. II: 1).

12 Anđelić 1976, 179–244.

osnove kao trikonhos u Zavali (T. II: 2, 5), na što sugeriraju i male dimenzije (cca. 11,80 x 5,30 m). Kao u Zavali i u ovoj crkvi su pronađeni višestruki ukopi, a ispred središnje konhe i kameni fragmenti, ukomponirani u podnicu. Za njih Anđelić pretpostavlja da bi mogli biti ostatci oltarne pregrade.¹³ Komparacijom rasporeda, izgleda zidova i prostorija, uočava se sličnost u oblikovanju predvorja i prolaza. Veća razlika je u tome što trikonhos u Cimu ima nešto pravilniju osnovu, uz manje izražene bočne konhe. Trolisni tlocrt zabilježen je i na crkvi sv. Pavla u Čičevu kod Trebinja, tj. paraklesionu posvećenom sv. Petru (T. II: 3).¹⁴ U arheološkoj literaturi nerijetko se javljaju nedoumice oko datiranja objekata ovog tipa.¹⁵ S tim u vezi stoji i tvrdnja Subotića da se podrijetlo građevina trolisnog tlocrta u predromanici može naslutiti iz starijeg perioda, pri čemu razlog za to, prema njegovom mišljenju, leži u kontinuitetu graditeljstva mediteranskog područja, koje je čuvalo pojedine arhitektonske tipove ili se inspirisalo njima.¹⁶ Na tlu Hrvatske nisu rijetke šesterolisne i troapsidalne predromaničke građevine, no među njima su rjeđe one s tri apside koje nisu grupirane, već artikuliraju trolisni završetak građevine, kakav ima i ona u Zavali.¹⁷ U kontekstu interpretacije funkcije ovakvih objekata važno je istaći i Vežićev zaključak da su dalmatinski trikonhosi u svojoj najranijoj fazi nastajali kao kršćanske memorije, zadržavajući kroz rani srednji vijek memorijalno-funerarnu funkciju, iako su pojedini primjeri kasnije prerastali u crkve.¹⁸

S obzirom na arheološke nalaze na lokalitetu Crkvina u Zavali i njegovoj okolini – više sakralnih objekata, kamenu plastiku i višestruke ukope – jasno se očituje dugotrajan sakralni kontinuitet ovoga mjesta, očuvan u tradiciji lokalnog stanovništva.¹⁹ Pitanje preciznijeg vremenskog određenja, namjene, kao i okolnosti devastiranja predromaničke građevine u Zavali ostaje otvoreno.²⁰ Trolisnoj građevini trebalo bi posvetiti dodatnu pažnju kroz istraživanja na terenu i izvan

that these could be remains of an altar screen.¹³ By comparing the arrangement, the appearance of walls and the layout of rooms, similarities can be seen in the design of the vestibule and passageways. A major difference is that the triconch in Cim has a somewhat more regular plan, with less pronounced lateral conches. A triconchal plan is also recorded in the Church of St. Paul in Čičevo, near Trebinje, namely in the paraklesion dedicated to St. Peter (Pl. II: 3).¹⁴ In archaeological literature, uncertainties regarding the dating of structures of this type are not uncommon.¹⁵ In this regard, Subotić's claim – i.e. that the origin of triconch-plan structures of the pre-Romanesque period can be sensed in earlier periods – is also relevant, with the reason for this, in his opinion, lying "in the continuity of Mediterranean architecture, which preserved certain architectural types or drew inspiration from them."¹⁶ In addition to these, upon the territory of Croatia, hexaconch and triapsidal pre-Romanesque structures are not uncommon, but among them those with three apses that are not grouped, but instead articulate a trefoil termination, such as that of the structure in Zavala, are rarer.¹⁷ In the context of interpreting the function of such structures, it is also important to emphasize Vežić's conclusion that Dalmatian triconchs, in their earliest phase, emerged as Christian memoriae, retaining a memorial-funerary function throughout the Early Middle Ages, although some examples later developed into churches.¹⁸

Given the archaeological finds at Crkvina and its surroundings – multiple sacral structures, stone sculpture and multiple burials – a long-lasting sacral continuity of this place is clearly evident, preserved in the tradition of the local population.¹⁹

The question of a more precise chronological determination and purpose, as well as the circumstances of the devastation of the pre-Romanesque structure in Zavala remains open.²⁰

13 Anđelić 1976, 184–188.

14 Plan ovog objekta je nešto složeniji. Osim što je dimenzijama veći: 14 x 6,30 m, kao i objekt u Zavali imao je nartheks (2,30 x 5,10 m), tri apside, polukružno oblikovane s uglovima između konhi. S vanjske strane zidovi su bili zaravnjeni tako da su činili oblik trapeza. Popović 1973, 313–346.

15 Crkva sv. Pavla, prvobitno datirana u 12. stoljeće (Popović, op.cit), s otkrićem baptisterija s piscinom 2001. godine, datira se u kasnoantičko doba (Janković 2002, 99–124).

16 Subotić 1963, 15. Cf. Jurković 1988. Među recentnijim istraživanjima posebno se izdvaja rad P. Vežića (2011) o genezi i tipologiji dalmatinskih trikonhosa, s posebnim osvrtom na njihovu funkciju.

17 Cf. Vežić 2011; 2012; Marasović 2008–2013; Jakšić 1997. Oblik njihove osnove se povezuje s bizantskim i karolinškim utjecajima tijekom 9. stoljeća. Jarak 1998, 119–125; Jurković 2000, 167–173, 186–189. Opa. Naglašava se da se građevine centralnog tipa, najčešće posvećene Mariji ili arhandelu Mihovilu, profiliraju kao privatne kapele memorijalnog ili funerarnog karaktera što proizilazi iz antičkih i kasnoantičkih mauzoleja. Imale su oltarne pregrade koje su apside dijelile od ostatka prostora. Jurković 2000, 186.

18 Vežić 2011, 56.

19 U ranom srednjem vijeku moguće je pratiti kontinuitet kršćanskih kulturnih mjesta. Nerijetko se ranosrednjovjekovne crkve grade neposredno iznad starokršćanskih te su služile u obnovi bogoslužja. Rapanić 1986, 12–13. Ovakav model kontinuiteta aktualan je i u ranom i razvijenom srednjem vijeku. Prepoznaje se i u Zavali, gdje je kroz više faza gradnje i ukopa zabilježeno dugotrajno zadržavanje sakralne funkcije prostora.

20 Prilikom istraživanja terena, u i oko trolisnog objekta uočeni su tragovi paljevine do 0,30 m, što upućuje na požar većih razmjera. Iznad predromaničke crkve utvrđeni su ostatci manje jednobrodne građevine sa sprastom apsidom. U 15. stoljeću postavljaju se i stećci, koji su se prilikom treće graditeljske faze našli u strukturi novovjekovne crkve. Vasilj 2018, 54, 67, 71.

13 Anđelić 1976, 184–188.

14 The plan of this structure is somewhat more complex. In addition to being larger in dimensions (14 x 6.30 m), like the structure in Zavala, it had a narthex (2.30 x 5.10 m) and three apses, semi-circular in form, with angles between the conches. On the exterior, the walls were levelled to form a trapezoidal shape (Popović 1973, 313–346).

15 The Church of St. Paul, initially dated to the 12th century (Popović 1973), was reassigned to the Late Antique period following the discovery of a baptistery with a piscina in 2001 (Janković 2002).

16 Subotić 1963, 15; cf. Jurković 1988. Among more recent research, the work of P. Vežić (2011) on the genesis and typology of Dalmatian triconchs, with particular reference to their function, stands out.

17 cf. Vežić 2011; 2012; Marasović 2008; 2013; Jakšić 1997. The form of their ground plans is associated with Byzantine and Carolingian influences during the 9th century (Jarak 1998; Milošević 2013, 167–173, 186–189). It is emphasized in the text that central-type buildings – most often dedicated to Mary or the Archangel Michael – were profiled as private chapels of a memorial or funerary character, deriving from ancient and Late Antique mausolea. They had altar screens that separated the apses from the rest of the space (Milošević 2013, 186).

18 Vežić 2011, 56.

19 A continuity of Christian cult places can be traced through the Early Middle Ages. Early Medieval churches were often built directly above early Christian ones, and served in the renewal of liturgy (Rapanić 1986, 12–13). This model of continuity is present in both the Early and the developed (High) Middle Ages. It is also recognizable in Zavala, where, through several phases of construction and burial, a long-lasting preservation of the sacral function of the space is evident.

20 During field investigations, traces of burning of depths up to 0.30 m were observed in and around the trilobed structure, indicating a fire of considerable scale. Above the pre-Romanesque church, remains of a smaller single-nave building with a sickle-shaped apse were identified. In the 15th century, *stećci* were also placed, which, during the third construction phase, became incorporated into the structure of a Modern period church (Vasilj 2018, 54, 67, 71).

njega, međutim, cilj ovoga rada primarno je usmjeren na novopronađenu figuralnu reljefnu ploču te na nove spoznaje i moguće (re)interpretacije koje ovaj nalaz donosi.

NOVOOTKRIVENA RELJEFNA PLOČA: OKOLNOSTI PRONALASKA I KONTEKSTUALIZIRANJE NALAZA

U jesen 2020. godine, u pripremi restauracije i konzervacije prostora oko Male crkve, obavljen je naknadni uvid u teren, prilikom čega je došlo do novog otkrića. Pažljivijim promatranjem svakog od pojedinačnih komada kamena, u potrazi za profiliranim fragmentima koji ranije nisu uočeni, ispod jednog stećka, iskorištenog za konstrukciju zida mlađeg objekta, ukazao se rijedak nalaz – oveća ploča s dobro očuvanom figuralnom kompozicijom u plitkom reljefu. (sl. 9, 10; T. I: 1, 2). U odnosu na prostor trolisne građevine, koju presijeca spomenuti zid s ugrađenim stećkom, ploča je bila pozicionirana otprilike u sjecište između njezine tri konhe, a stajala je licem prema dolje (sl. 5: mjesto pronalaska označeno znakom 'X'). Trenutno se čuva u Biospeleološkom muzeju Vjetrenica u Zavali.

The triconchal structure should be given additional attention through both field and off-site research; however, the primary focus of this paper is the newly discovered figural relief slab, as well as new insights and possible (re)interpretations that this find brings.

THE NEWLY DISCOVERED RELIEF SLAB: CIRCUMSTANCES OF DISCOVERY AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE FIND

In the autumn of 2020, during preparations for the restoration and conservation of the area surrounding the Small Church, an additional field survey was conducted, resulting in a new discovery. Through more careful observation of each piece of stone, in search of previously unnoticed profiled fragments, beneath a stećak tombstone reused in the construction of the wall of a later structure, a rare find appeared; a large slab with a well-preserved figural composition in shallow relief (Figs. 9, 10; Pl. I: 1, 2). In relation to the space of the triconchal structure, which is intersected by the aforementioned wall with built-in stećak, the slab was positioned approximately at the intersection of its three conches



Slika 9. Pronalazak reljefne ploče tijekom revizije terena na Crkvini u Zavali (snimila: S. Vasilj).

Figure 9. Discovery of the relief slab during the revision of the terrain at Crkvina site (photography: S. Vasilj).



Slika 10. Mjesto i položaj ploče prilikom pronalaska (snimila: S. Vasilj).

Figure 10. Place and position of the slab at the time of discovery (photography: S. Vasilj).

U kontekstu pronalaska ploče i razmatranja pripadnosti zavalske kamene plastike trolisnom objektu, bez obzira na njegovu moguću funkciju, bitno je podvući činjenicu da se na ostatcima zidova ne mogu uočiti nikakve fizičke naznake kamene ograde. Zapravo, na terenu se ne zamjećuju nikakvi arheološki indikatori postojanja određenog oblika pregradne konstrukcije, a naročito pripadnosti pronađenih fragmenata ovom objektu, što ne isključuje tu mogućnost. Pitanje je, koliko je širina unutarnjeg prostora objekta (cca. 2,85 m) bila dovoljna za smještaj konstrukcije kojoj bi potencijalno pripadale sve dosad pronađene parapetne ploče (one za koje se čini da bi mogle pripadati istoj cjelini), pogotovo ukoliko se pretpostavi da je oltarna pregrada imala izgled uobičajen za doba predromanike, koji je uključivao i prolaz po sredini (T. III: 1, 2).²¹ Na takav izgled ukazuju forma i dimenzije pronađenih fragmenata (ploče i stupići), a funkciju im potvrđuje i to što su ploče imale uglavne elemente

and was lying face down (Fig. 5: findspot marked with an "X"). It is currently kept in the Vjetrenica Biospeleological Museum in Zavala.

Regarding the discovery of the slab and the potential attribution of the Zavala stone sculpture to the triconchal structure, regardless of its function, it must be stressed that the preserved walls show no evidence of a stone partition. In fact, no archaeological indicators of the existence of any form of partition structure are noticeable on site, especially none that would confirm the association of the discovered fragments with such a structure, although this possibility cannot be excluded. This raises the question of whether the interior width (approximately 2.85 m) is sufficient to accommodate a structure to which the discovered parapet slabs – apparently belonging to the same ensemble – might be attributed, particularly if one assumes a pre-Romanesque altar screen included a central passage (Pl. III: 1, 2).²¹

21 Primjera radi, ponuđena rekonstrukcija oltarne pregrade prema Praštalo (T. III: 3) je širine 3,76 m, a uključuje nekolicinu (ne sve) ploča iz Zavale, pri čemu sve tri ploče s pticama (bez novootkrivene ploče, op.a). Praštalo 2003, T-IV. Njegov prijedlog odgovara tzv. visokom tipu s trabeacijom, čestom u ranosrednjovjekovnoj Dalmaciji. Marasović 2007, 102. Za uobičajeni izgled i tipove oltarnih pregrada Cf. Marasović, Ibid. i Petricioli 1986, 39–46.

21 For example, the proposed reconstruction of the altar screen according to Praštalo (Pl. III: 3) has a width of 3.76 m and incorporates several (but not all) slabs from Zavala, including all three slabs with birds (note by author: excluding the newly discovered slab) (Praštalo 2003, Pl. IV). His proposal corresponds to the so-called high type with trabeation, common in Early Medieval Dalmatia (Marasović 2007, 102). For the usual appearance and types of altar screens, see Marasović (ibid.) and Petricioli 1986, 39–46.



Slika 11. Donji, oštećeni dio novootkrivene ploče (snimila i obradila: A. Mekić).

Figure 11. Lower, damaged part of the newly discovered slab (photography and editing: A. Mekić).

na bočnim stranama. To je posebno uočljivo na novoj ploči, gdje su vidljivi vertikalni istaci na obje bočne strane (sl. 12), što dodatno ukazuje da je bila dijelom veće pregradne konstrukcije. Trebalo bi razmotriti i mogućnost drugačijeg oblikovanja enterijera u slučaju memorijalne, a ne liturgijske namjene objekta. U prilog tomu idu male dimenzije njegova funkcionalnog prostora, tipične za memorijalno-sepulkralne građevine. Također je nužno imati u vidu širu praksu postupanja s kamenim namještajem u srednjem vijeku. Oltarne ograde mogle su biti zamijenjene novima,²² ponekad i u relativno kratkom vremenskom razdoblju. Nekad se uobičavalo starije dijelove pohraniti u podnicu ili zidove. S druge strane, prilikom podizanja novog objekta, reljefi su se iz napuštenih ili porušenih građevina premještali i ponovo koristili kao sekundarni materijal, pri čemu se dio građe nerijetko i gubio.²³ Navedeno bi značilo da su pojedini objekti mogli imati više varijanti oltarnih pregrada. Iz istih razloga nije isključeno ni da su fragmenti iz Zavale, kao *spolia*, u određenom razdoblju mogli poslužiti kao dio kamenog namještaja crkve sv. Petra.

OPIS, IKONOGRFSKO-STILSKA ANALIZA I INTERPRETACIJA

Novootkrivena ploča isklesana je iz jednog komada kamena vapnenca i bogato reljefno ukrašena. Reljef je plitak do srednje plitak, s izdizanjem do 1 cm u odnosu na površinu (sl. 11). Uz to, ploča je oštećena: nedostaje joj donji dio, zbog čega je motiv ptice, sačuvan fragmentarno. Unatoč navedenom, kompozicija je čitljiva i omogućuje identifikaciju osnovnog motiva – ptice s nimбом.

Ukupne dimenzije ploče su: visina cca. 50 cm (zbog neravnog donjeg ruba, mjereno na najistaknutijem mjestu) i širina cca. 48,5 cm. Debljina varira: u gornjem dijelu je cca.

Such an appearance is indicated by the form and dimensions of the discovered fragments (slabs and colonnettes), and their function is further confirmed by the presence of edge elements on the sides of the slabs. This is particularly evident on the newly found slab, where vertical projections are visible on both sides (Fig. 12), further indicating that it was part of a larger partition structure. The possibility of a different interior arrangement should also be considered in the case of a memorial – as opposed to liturgical – function of the structure. This is supported by the small dimensions of its functional space, typical of memorial-sepulchral buildings. It is also necessary to take into account the broader Medieval practice of handling stone furnishings: Altar screens could be replaced with new ones,²² sometimes within a relatively short period, with older parts on occasion being stored in the floors or walls. On the other hand, during the construction of new structures, reliefs from abandoned or ruined buildings were relocated and re-used as secondary material, with some of the material often being lost in the process.²³ This would mean that certain structures could have had multiple altar screens throughout their history. For the same reasons, it cannot be excluded that fragments from Zavala may have at some point, as *spolia*, served as part of the stone furnishings of the Church of St. Peter.

DESCRIPTION, ICONOGRAPHIC-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

The newly discovered slab is carved from a single piece of limestone and richly decorated in relief form. The relief is shallow-to-moderately-shallow, rising to 1 cm above the surface (Fig. 11). Additionally, the slab is damaged; its lower part is missing, with the bird motif being only fragmentarily preserved. In spite of this, the composition is legible, allowing identification of the main motif: a bird with a nimbus.

The overall dimensions of the slab are as follows: its height is approximately 50 cm (measured from the furthest-protruding

²² Cf. Burić 1997.

²³ Iz toga razloga na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije skoro da nema niti jedne rano-srednjovjekovne crkve s očuvanim cjelovitim kamenim namještajem. Đurić 1986, 63.

²² cf. Burić 1997.

²³ For this reason, almost no Early Medieval church within the territory of the former Yugoslavia preserves its stone furnishings in a complete state (Đurić 1986, 63).



Slika 12. Desni i lijevi vertikalni istak na bočnim stranama ploče (snimila i obradila: A. Mekić).

Figure 12. Right and left vertical protrusions on the sides of the slab (photography and editing: A. Mekić).

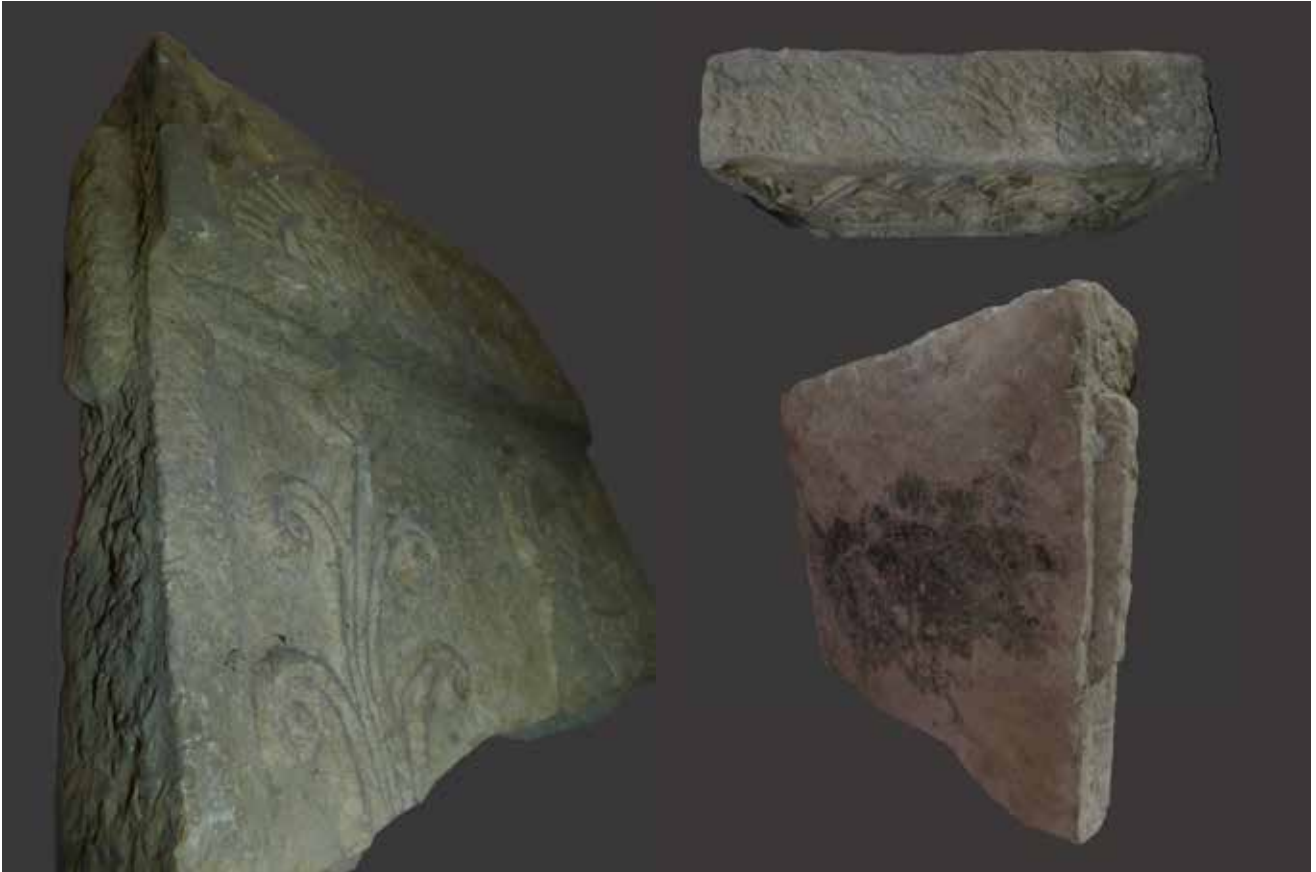
12 cm, a u donjem oko 7 cm.²⁴ Pojedinačna visina polja vijenca je cca. 23 cm, a donjeg dijela reljefa 26 cm. Radi usporedbe, dimenzije veće ploče s pticama iz Muzeja Hercegovine u Trebinju (sl. 5; u daljnjem tekstu: ploča 1) iznose: visina 78 cm, širina 42 cm i debljina 11 cm, dok je visina gornjeg 19 cm, a donjeg dijela ploče 59 cm.²⁵ Ova ploča je nešto je uža (za oko 5 cm) i ima niži vijenac. Unatoč navedenim, manjim

point due to the uneven lower edge), and its width is approximately 48.5 cm. The thickness varies: in the upper part, it is about 12 cm, and in the lower part, around 7 cm.²⁴ The height of the upper band's field is approximately 23 cm, and the lower part of the relief is 26 cm. For comparison, the dimensions of the larger slab with birds from the Museum of Herzegovina in Trebinje (Fig. 5; hereafter: Slab 1) are: height 78 cm, width 42 cm, and thickness 11 cm, while the height of the upper part is

²⁴ U predjelu loma debljina ploče je 5-7 cm.

²⁵ Veličinu ploče Vego je mjerio prema odljevku iz Zemaljskog muzeja, jer je već tada bila slomljena. Vego 1959, 185-186.

²⁴ In the area of the fracture, the thickness of the slab is 5-7 cm.



Slika 13. Lijeva bočna strana ploče s vertikalnim istakom (snimila i obradila: A. Mekić).

Figure 13. Left side of the slab with vertical protrusion (photography and editing: A. Mekić).

Slika 14. Gornja i stražnja strana ploče (snimila i obradila: A. Mekić).

Figure 14. Upper and rear sides of the slab (photography and editing: A. Mekić).

nepodudarnostima, opće dimenzije ostaju usporedive s pločom 1, što upućuje na moguću pripadnost istoj strukturi. Ukoliko su visinom bile identične, može se pretpostaviti da novoj ploči nedostaje oko 30 cm visine.²⁶ Na bočnim stranama sačuvani su pravilni, vertikalni istaci (uglavnicima), visine oko 22–23 cm i debljine 3–4 cm.²⁷ Osim što nisu jednake veličine, različito su pozicionirani na bočnim stranama (sl. 12, 13).²⁸ To sugerira da se radi o pluteju, arhitektonskom elementu kamene ograde, koji se uklapao u veću konstrukciju. Ranije pronađena ploča također ima vidljive neravnine (ispupčenja) na bočnim stranama, ali za razliku od ove, ne toliko izražene ni pravilno izvedene.

U nastavku slijedi detaljnija likovna i ikonografska analiza reljefa, podijeljenog u dva segmenta, uz izravnu komparaciju s pločom 1. Manje ploče će u komparativnom smislu biti uzete u obzir u završnim razmatranjima, budući da pokazuju manje podudarnosti u općem izgledu i kompoziciji te naznake drugačije funkcije. Gornji pojas je pravokutnog oblika i gusto ispunjen složenim motivom. Izdignut je nekoliko

19 cm and the lower part of the slab 59 cm.²⁵ This slab is somewhat narrower (being approximately 5 cm), and has a lower upper band. Despite these minor discrepancies, the overall dimensions remain comparable to those of Slab 1, indicating that the two may have belonged to the same structure. If they were originally of identical height, it can be assumed that the new slab is missing about 30 cm of its full height.²⁶ On the lateral sides, regular vertical projections (tenons) are preserved, approximately 22–23 cm high and 3–4 cm thick.²⁷ Besides being of unequal size, they are positioned differently on the sides (Figs. 12, 13).²⁸ This suggests that the new slab is a pluteus, an architectural element of a stone screen, which was fitted into a larger construction. The previously discovered slab also bears irregularities (protrusions) on the sides, but in comparison these are less pronounced and less regularly executed.

What follows is a more detailed, formal, and iconographic analysis of the relief, divided into two segments, with a direct

26 Imajući u vidu proporcije sačuvanog dijela pluteja s pticom, novoj ploči nedostaje najmanje trećina visine ($v=48,8$ cm), a moguće i više, ako je upoređujemo s pločom 1.

27 Lijevi istak u donjem dijelu je 3 cm, a u gornjem 4 cm; desni je u donjem dijelu širi - 4 cm, dok u gornjem dijelu varira 3,5–4 cm.

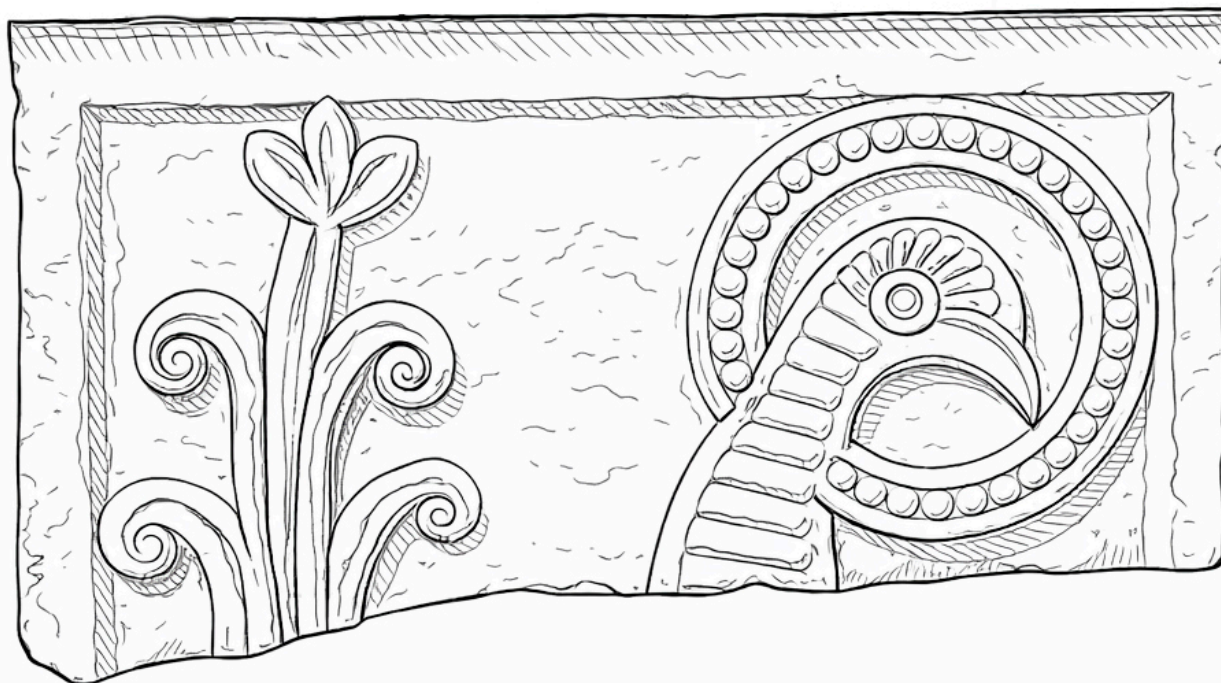
28 Istaci na ploči nisu paralelni. Lijevi istak je od gornjeg ruba odmaknut 7 cm, dok je desni niži - 23 cm od vrha, moguće zbog stabilnosti ploče.

25 Vego measured the size of the slab based on a cast from the National Museum, as it was already broken at that time (Vego 1959, 185–186).

26 Considering the proportions of the preserved part of the pluteus with the bird, the new slab is missing at least one third of its height ($h = 48.8$ cm), and possibly more if compared with Slab 1.

27 The left projection in the lower part is 3 cm, and in the upper part 4 cm; the right one is wider in the lower part at 4 cm, while in the upper part it varies from 3.5 to 4 cm.

28 The projections on the slab are not parallel. The left projection is set 7 cm from the upper edge, while the right is lower, 23 cm from the top, possibly for stability of the slab.



Slika 15. Donji dio reljefne kompozicije: motivom ptice s nimbom (obradila: A. Mekić, uz pomoć alata vještačke inteligencije).

Figure 15. Lower part of the relief composition: motif of a haloed bird (editing: A. Mekić, with the assistance of AI tools).

centimetara u odnosu na donju zonu i uokviren jednostavnom bordurom. Naglašavanje gornjeg dijela (vijenca) česta je odlika pluteja predromaničkog razdoblja u Dalmaciji i drugdje u Evropi, što upućuje na takvu funkciju i ove ploče.²⁹ Okvir varira od 2,7 do 3 cm i blago je izdignut i u odnosu na površinu reljefnog prikaza unutar njega. Ista vrsta okvira javlja se i kod ploča ranije pronađenih u Zavali.³⁰ Ploča 1 također ima ovako oblikovan gornji dio, ali manje isturen i ukrašen samo uglastim pletetom. Vego je također uočio da ga je klesar izradio dosta nemarno, bez naročite preciznosti.³¹ Rubovi su općenito pažljivije obrađeni i bolje definirani na novoj ploči. U donjem segmentu, unatoč oštećenju, jasno se prepoznaje motiv veće ptice, vidljive od vrata naviše. Na glavi ima svetačku aureolu, odnosno nimb (sl. 15). Na lijevoj strani, iza njezinih leđa, nalazi se visoki, vertikalni motiv, moguće vegetabilni. Grana se poput palmete, akantusa ili vitice loze, s izrazito (prema vani) uvijenim završecima koji se na samom vrhu šire u tri trakasta elementa. Pažljivijim promatranjem kompozicije dolazi se do spoznaje da može biti riječ i o stiliziranom repu ptice, u tom slučaju vjerojatno pauna.³²

29 Marasović 2007, 102. Marasović na ovom mjestu također navodi da su pluteji uobičajeno bili ukrašeni pletetnim ukrasom kao univerzalnim likovnim govorom tog doba, kao i to da se u pravilu likovno obrađuje samo vanjska strana, okrenuta vjernicima, što je slučaj i kod ploče iz Zavale (sl. 14).

30 Većina ulomaka, prema Veginom katalogu, imaju definiran okvir, na osnovu čega se zaključuje da se radi o dijelovima oltarne pregrade. One bez okvira pripisao je antependiju, odnosno teguriju. Vego 1959, 192.

31 Vego 1959, 185.

32 Paun, ali i ptice općenito – osobito golubice, čest su motiv predromaničke sakralne plastike. Uz složene geometrijske pletete, u plitkom reljefu su rabljeni

comparison to Slab 1. The smaller slabs will be considered in a comparative sense in the concluding remarks, as they have a lesser degree of correspondence in overall appearance and composition, in addition to indications of a different function. The upper zone consists of a rectangular form filled with a complex motif. It is raised several centimetres above the lower, and framed by a simple border. The emphasis on the upper band is a common feature of pre-Romanesque plutei in Dalmatia and elsewhere in Europe, which likewise points to such a function for this slab.²⁹ The frame of the banner varies from 2.7 to 3 cm, and is slightly raised relative to the surface of the relief motif within it. The same type of framing around the motif appears on slabs previously found in Zavala.³⁰ Slab 1 also has a similarly shaped upper section, but less protruding and solely decorated with angular interlacing. Vego also noted that it was carved "rather carelessly, without particular precision."³¹ The edges are generally more carefully worked and better-defined on the new slab. In the lower segment, despite the damage, the motif of a larger bird is clearly recognizable, visible from the neck upward. On its head is a saint's halo, or nimbus (Fig. 15). On the left side, behind its back, there is a tall vertical motif, possibly vegetal. It branches like a palmette, acanthus, or vine

29 Marasović 2007, 102. At this point, Marasović also notes that plutei were usually decorated with interlace ornament as the universal visual language of the time, and that, as a rule, only the outer side, facing the worshippers, was artistically treated, which is also the case with the slab from Zavala (Fig. 14).

30 Most fragments, according to Vego's catalogue, have a defined frame, based on which it is concluded that they are parts of an altar screen. Those without a frame he attributed to the antependium, or tegurium (Vego 1959, 192).

31 Vego 1959, 185.



Slika 16. Detalji: glava ptice na novoj ploči (a) i glave ptica na ploči 1 (b) (snimila i obradila: A. Mekić).

Figure 16. Details: bird's head on the new slab (a) and bird's head on slab 1 (b) (photography and editing: A. Mekić).

tendrils, with distinctly outward-curving ends that at the very top expand into three ribbon-like elements. Closer observation of the composition suggests that it could also represent a stylized bird's tail; in which case, it is most likely that of a peacock.³²

The figure is rendered in a rather rudimentary manner: its body is schematically outlined with horizontal lines, while a small head with a prominently large central eye emerges from the neck. The eye is further emphasized by small incisions, arranged radially around it. Differences in the shaping of the two figures appear mainly in the details. The part of the head above the eye in the earlier example is not treated as carefully, although that area of the slab was less damaged. On the new slab, the head is modelled with greater refinement and elegance. It evokes the head of a peacock, but possibly also a dove, due to the absence of a characteristic crest. The rendering of the neck on the new slab is achieved through bold horizontal lines, while on Slab 1 the lines in the upper part of the neck are short and positioned diagonally at right angles. The feathers of the flying bird are stylized not only by lines but also by rows of dotted motifs. Furthermore, the head of the bird without a nimbus (Slab 1) is noticeably more roughly treated, although its neck is more similar to that on the new slab, with the same horizontal lines. The beak is slightly curved, shaped in a high arc, which means it does not fully correspond to the narrow beak of the other large bird on Slab 1. Compared to the smaller bird, the difference is much greater, since it resembles the rounded beak of a waterfowl, such as a duck. In addition, in this case the beak touches the nimbus, which is rendered with two circles, between which there stands a row of dotted ornaments. The same shapes – albeit in a somewhat larger variant – are also visible on the arcade in the upper part of the relief. In relation to the frame of the composition, the nimbus (with a diameter of 17.5 cm, measured from the outer edge of the circle) is positioned in the upper right corner on both slabs (Fig. 16).

The interpretation of the depicted bird allows only for a tentative comparison with Slab 1, as the scholarly literature does not provide a definitive identification of those birds either. Due to its long and spreading tail, the larger bird is most often identified as a peacock, a motif frequently represented on altar screens.³³ On the new slab, the curvature of the bird's neck is gentler, so that its body appears more upright, suggesting that the figure is standing on the ground. The bent posture of the bird on Slab 1, as if watching over the smaller one – as interpreted by Palameta – points to Christ who “guards and gathers Christian souls, watching over them.”³⁴ The addition of a nimbus on a peacock motif is not a common occurrence. On the contrary, it is very rare after the early Christian period, which calls this interpretation into question to a

32 The peacock – as well as birds in general, and especially doves – is a frequent motif of pre-Romanesque sacral sculpture. Alongside complex geometric interlacing, vegetal motifs were used in shallow relief, “more closely tied to the representation of symbolic Christian content,” as also noted by N. Jakšić. Among the listed motifs, the vine predominates, on which birds peck at grapes, “recalling the Eucharistic feast of the altar,” followed by palm branches (palmettes); symbols of martyrdom. Among animal motifs, peacocks and lions carry the greatest symbolic meaning. They are associated with the symbolism of the Garden of Paradise, immortality, resurrection and strength (Jakšić 2015, 38).

33 See previous note.

34 The author refers to the Medieval pictorial theme of the peacock with chicks; in Christian tradition a symbol of Christ (Palameta 1997, 136).

Likovna obrada figure prilično je rudimentarna: tijelo je izvedeno shematski, definirano horizontalnim linijama, dok iz vrata izrasta sitna glava s krupnim okom u središtu. Ono je dodatno naglašeno sitnim urezima, radijalno postavljenim oko oka. Razlike u oblikovanju dviju figura javljaju se uglavnom u detalju. Dio glave iznad oka na ranijem primjeru nije tako pažljivo tretiran, iako je u tom predjelu ploča bila manje oštećena. Glava je na novoj ploči modelirana s većom finoćom i elegancijom te asocira na glavu pauna, ali i golubice – zbog nedostatka karakteristične krijeste. Obrada vrata na novoj ploči je postignuta krupnim vodoravnim linijama, dok su na ploči 1 linije u gornjem dijelu vrata kratke, postavljene dijagonalno u prave kutove. Perje leteće ptice stilizirano je, osim linija, i nizovima točkastih motiva. Nadalje, glava ptice bez nimba (ploča 1) je osjetno grublje tretirana, ali je njezin vrat sličniji onome na novoj ploči – s istim, vodoravnim linijama. Kljun je blago povijen, oblikovan u visokom luku, zbog čega se ne podudara u potpunosti s uskim kljunom druge velike ptice na ploči 1. U odnosu na manju pticu razlika je znatno veća, budući da podsjeća na zaobljeni kljun neke ptice močvarice – patke. Uz to, kljun u ovom slučaju dodiruje nimb, izveden s dvije kružnice, između kojih je niz točkastih ukrasa. Isti oblici, u nešto krupnijoj varijanti, vidljivi su i na arkadi u gornjem dijelu reljefa. U odnosu na okvir kompozicije, nimb je (promjera 17,5 cm, mjereno s vanjske strane kruga), jednako na obje ploče, pozicioniran u sami gornji desni kut (sl. 16).

Pri interpretaciji prikazane ptice usporedba s prvom pločom moguća je tek sa zadržkom, budući da u literaturi postoje nedoumice i oko preciznije identifikacije tih ptica. Zbog dugog i razgranatog repa, najčešće se veća ptica prepoznaje kao paun, često zastupljen motiv na oltarnim ogradama.³³ Na novoj ploči blaža je zakrivljenost vrata kod ptice, tako da se njezino tijelo doima uspravnijim, što sugerira da figura stoji na tlu. Pognuti stav ptice na ploči 1, kao da bdije nad manjom – kako to tumači Palameta – ukazuje na Krista koji čuva i okuplja kršćanske duše, bdijući nad njima.³⁴ Dodatak nimba, kada je u pitanju motiv pauna, nije uobičajena pojava.³⁵ Naprotiv, vrlo je rijetka nakon ranokršćanskog razdoblja, što ovakvo tumačenje donekle dovodi u pitanje. Ipak, nimb bi se u ovom slučaju možda mogao tumačiti kao paunova kruna, onako kako ga definiraju Chevalier i Gheerbrant.³⁶ Nadalje, simbolika krune u kršćanskoj simbolici

certain degree.³⁵ Nevertheless, the nimbus in this case might perhaps be interpreted as the peacock's crown, as defined by Chevalier and Gheerbrant.³⁶

Furthermore, the crown in Christian symbolism is associated with the act of baptism and the spiritual identification of the soul with Christ.³⁷ Authors like Jurković have recognized an eagle in the larger bird on Slab 1, due to the absence of a crown, which a peacock, as a rule, always has, as well as the presence of the nimbus.³⁸

In Christological symbolism, both eagle and peacock are associated with the idea of victory over death and resurrection.³⁹ Such an identification is also supported by the position of the larger bird in relation to the smaller one: with a strongly curved neck and legs resting on its back, it appears like a bird of prey. However, the emphasis on the nimbus on the head excludes negative connotations.⁴⁰ For this reason, the hypothesis of symbolism related to protection or resurrection has stronger grounding: the birds are associated with eschatological meanings, as they function as visual signs of the soul and hope for resurrection. In considering a potential memorial-sepulchral function of the structure for which the slabs were intended, such symbolism gains additional weight, and for this reason the interpretation will remain within this framework in the text that follows. Nevertheless, the question of a more precise identification and meaning of the motif should still be approached with caution.

The missing segment of the slab further contributes to these uncertainties. The question arises as to whether the bird held something or another motif – possibly another bird – could have stood in front. The damage to the slab begins 1 cm below the nimbus, making it difficult to interpret this part of the relief. There could have been enough space for another bird, like the one on Slab 1, but, given the upright position of the large figure, this does not appear to be the case. In some iconographic depictions, a bird – usually identified as a dove – holds a bunch of grapes in its beak (Pl. IV: 2), which points to a Eucharistic meaning. On the eastern Adriatic coast, around ten

vegetabilni motivi, tješnje vezani uz predočavanje simboličkih kršćanskih sadržaja, kako je uočio i N. Jakšić. Među nabrojanim motivima prednjači vinova lozica, na kojoj ptice ključaju grozdove, podsjećajući na euharistijsku gozbu misnoga stola, zatim palmine grane (palmete) – simboli mučeništva. Od životinjskih motiva najviše simboličkih značenja nose paunovi te lavovi. Uz njih se veže simbolika rajskoga vrta, besmrtnosti, uskrnuća i snage. Jakšić 2015, 38.

33 Cf. prethodna bilješka.

34 Autor govori o srednjovjekovnoj likovnoj temi pauna s pticama, u kršćanskoj tradiciji srednjeg vijeka simbol Krista. Palameta 1997, 136.

35 Nerijetko se s nimbom prikazuju druge životinje – ukoliko simbolično personificiraju svete ličnosti: orao kao evangelist Ivan, lav kao sv. Marko, golubica kao Duh Božji, feniks kao Krist, odnosno kao simbol njegovog Uskrnuća.

36 Prema njihovom Rječniku simbola, aureola je solarna slika u značenju kraljevske krune simboličkog zračenja oko lica, nekad oko cijelog tijela. Značenje je sunčevog podrijetla, a iskazuje sveto, svetost i božansko. Riječ je o antipiranom preobraženju u posvećenim tijelima. Eliptična aureola ili aureola oko glave znak je duhovne svjetlosti koju će imati uskrsla tijela. Chevalier, Gheerbrant 2003, 26.

35 Other animals are also often depicted with a nimbus when they symbolically personify sacred figures: the eagle as the Evangelist John, the lion as St. Mark, the dove as the Holy Spirit, the phoenix as Christ, that is, as a symbol of his resurrection.

36 According to Chevalier & Gheerbrant's *Dictionary of Symbols (Rječnik simbola)*, the aureole is "a solar image in the meaning of a royal crown of symbolic radiance around the face, sometimes around the whole body. Its meaning is of solar origin, expressing the sacred, holiness, and the divine. It is an anticipated transfiguration in consecrated bodies. The elliptical aureole or halo around the head is a sign of the spiritual light that resurrected bodies will possess" (Chevalier, Gheerbrant 2003, 26).

37 In texts such as the Odes of Solomon, the image of the crown is inseparable from the image of paradise: "A crown of Truth has been woven for me" (1); "Filled with the grace of God, return to paradise, weave for yourself a wreath from its tree and place it upon your head" (20, 7-8) (Chevalier, Gheerbrant 2003, 326).

38 Jurković 1987, 109.

39 According to Badurina's *Iconographic Lexicon*, the eagle has the power to fly toward the sun or dive into water, to renew its feathers, youth, and strength. In Psalm 103:5, it is written "...your youth is renewed like the eagle's [...]. But those who hope in the Lord renew their strength, they grow wings like eagles..." (Isaiah 40:31). The eagle is also a symbol of Christ. In a broader sense, it denotes the righteous, while when depicted as a bird of prey, it represents a demon that snatches souls or the sins of pride and earthly lust for power (Badurina 1979, 441).

40 In cases where a bird depicted with a nimbus symbolizes Christ, the nimbus then contains an inscribed cross.



Slika 18. Gornji dio reljefne kompozicije: motiv arkade/niša (obradila: A. Mekić, uz pomoć alata vještačke inteligencije).

Figure 18. Upper part of the relief composition: motif of an arcade/niches (editing: A. Mekić, with the assistance of AI tools).

povezana je s činom krštenja te duhovnog poistovjećenja duše s Kristom.³⁷ Neki autori, poput Jurkovića, u većoj ptici na ploči 1 – zbog nedostatka krune, koju paun, u pravilu, uvijek ima, kao i zbog nimba – prepoznali su orla.³⁸ Orao se, kao i paun, u kristološkoj simbolici povezuje s idejom pobjede nad smrću i uskrsnućem.³⁹ Takvoj identifikaciji odgovara i položaj veće ptice u odnosu na manju: s jako povijenim vratom i nogama oslonjenim na njezina leđa doima se kao grabljivica. Ipak, potenciranje nimba na glavi isključuje negativne konotacije.⁴⁰ Zbog toga hipoteza o simbolici zaštite ili uskrsnuća ima više utemeljenja: ptice se dovode u vezu s eshatološkim značenjima, jer djeluju kao vizualni znak duše i nade u uskrsnuće. U razmatranju potencijalne memorijalno-sepulkralne funkcije objekta za koji su ploče bile namijenjene takva simbolika dobiva dodatnu težinu, zbog čega će se tumačenje i u nastavku zadržati u tom interpretativnom okviru. Prema pitanju preciznije identifikacije i značenja motiva, međutim, i dalje se treba odnositi s oprezom.

Nedoumicama doprinosi segment koji na ploči nedostaje. Otvara se pitanje je li ptica nešto držala ili se ispred nje nalazio neki drugi motiv, moguće također druga ptica. Oštećenje ploče počinje već 1 cm ispod nimba pa se teško očitovati o tom dijelu reljefa. Za drugu pticu, poput one na ploči 1, moglo je biti dovoljno prostora, ali se, s obzirom na

pre-Romanesque and early Romanesque plutei with such a motif have been preserved, often combined with interlace ornamentation.⁴¹ However, on the Zavala slab, a clear space is visible beneath the beak, and therefore such a motif can be excluded. Another possibility is that a chalice stood before the bird, although this would usually be placed between two birds, as is the case on two smaller figural slabs from Zavala (Fig. 4). That this is an entirely different composition, featuring only a single bird, is suggested by the visible portion, its size, and its positioning. A review of the available literature and representations of birds in regional stone sculpture suggests that, in pre-Romanesque sculpture, there are no close parallels for such stylization of birds or for such an arrangement within a composition.⁴² It is also worth noting that no bird is known to bear a nimbus on its head in other examples. Therefore, this iconography could be interpreted as a transformed representation of a saintly figure (e.g., Christ – despite the absence of a cross in the nimbus – some saint, or an angel), of divine presence, or simply of the sanctity of the bird.⁴³ In Christian art, from its very beginnings, birds have been understood as symbols of the “winged being,” the soul, or more generally the representation of the spiritual – as opposed to the material – world, making them one of the most common symbolic motifs in sacred art.⁴⁴ According to some hypotheses, the relief composition on Slab 1 is a symbolic representation of the Archangel Michael, who carries the souls

37 U tekstovima poput Salomonove Ode, slika krune nedjeljiva je od slike raja: „Spletana je za me kruna Istine“ (1); „Prepun milosti Božje, vrati se u raj, spleti sebi vijenac od njegova stabla i stavi ga na glavu“ (20, 7-8). Chevalier, Gheerbrant 2003, 326.

38 Jurković 1987, 109.

39 Prema ikonografskom Leksikonu Badurine, orao ima snagu letjeti prema suncu ili zaroniti u vodu, obnoviti perje, mladost i snagu. U Psalmu 103, 5: piše „...ko orlu ti se mladost obnavlja“ (...). „A onima što se u Jahvu uzdaju snaga se obnavlja, krila im rastu kao orlovima...“ (Iz 40, 31). Orao je i simbol Krista. U širem pak smislu on označuje pravednike, dok prikazan kao ptica grabežljivica predstavlja demona koji otima duše ili pak grijehe oholosti i zemaljskog vlastohleplja. Badurina 1979, 441.

40 U slučaju kad ptica prikazana s nimbom simbolizira Krista, nimb tada ima upisan križ.

41 Josipović, Magaš Mesić 2013, 25–28.

42 cf. Jakšić 2015; Janković 2007; Marasović 2007, and other texts and catalogues from the rich corpus on pre-Romanesque and Romanesque sculpture upon the territory of present-day Dalmatia, the Dubrovnik region, and the Montenegrin coast. For several different approaches to rendering the head, body and tail of the bird, see also Pl. IV.

43 In many cultures, birds carry rich symbolic and spiritual meanings: their ability to fly associates them with mediation between heaven and earth and with the celestial realm; they often represent spiritual states, angels, or higher forms of existence. The dove, for instance, in addition to symbolizing the Holy Spirit, can also embody the soul of the righteous (Chevalier, Gheerbrant 2003, 540–541, 169).

44 The depiction of the soul as a bird is linked to the tradition of Ancient Egypt (Badurina 1979, 495).

uspravan položaj velike figure, ne radi o takvom prikazu. U nekim ikonografskim prikazima ptica – obično identificirana kao golubica – u kljunu drži grozd (T. IV: 2), što upućuje na euharistijski značaj. Na istočnoj obali Jadrana sačuvalo se desetak predromaničkih i ranoromaničkih pluteja s takvim motivom, redovito u kombinaciji s pletrenom ornamentikom.⁴¹ Međutim, na ploči iz Zavale jasno je vidljiv prazan prostor ispod kljuna, pa je takav motiv isključen. Druga mogućnost je da se ispred ptice nalazio kalež, iako obično postavljen između dvije ptice – što je slučaj i na dvjema manjim figuralnim pločama iz Zavale (sl. 4). Da je u pitanju potpuno drugačija kompozicija, s isključivo jednom pticom, sugerira njezin vidljivi dio, veličina te položaj. Uvidom u dostupnu literaturu i predstave ptica u kamenoj plastici iz okruženja čini se da u predromaničkoj skulpturi nema bliskih paralela ovakvoj stilizaciji ptica, kao ni ovakvom rasporedu unutar kompozicije.⁴² Vrijedi istaći i to da na drugim primjerima niti jedna ptica na glavi nema nimb. Zbog toga bi se ova ikonografija mogla tumačiti kao transformirani prikaz neke svetačke figure (npr. Krista – unatoč izostanku križa u nimbu, nekog sveca ili anđela), božanske nazočnosti ili samo svetosti ptice.⁴³ U kršćanskoj umjetnosti, od njezinih početaka, ptice su shvaćane kao simboli „krilatog bića“, duše, odnosno općenito predstavljanje duhovnog, za razliku od stvarnog svijeta, po čemu su u sakralnoj umjetnosti jedan od najčešćih simboličnih motiva.⁴⁴ Prema nekim hipotezama, reljefna kompozicija na ploči 1 simboličan je prikaz arkandela Mihaela, koji duše pokojnika odnosi u nebo, tj. u raj.⁴⁵ Ipak, tumačenje da je u pitanju rajska ptica imalo bi najviše utemeljenja. U tom bi se okviru vitičasti element na lijevoj strani mogao čitati dvojako: ili kao rep pauna, ili kao stilizirana reprezentacija rajске vegetacije.⁴⁶ Ukoliko se interpretira kao rep, opravdana je njegova komparacija s repom ptice na ploči 1. Obrada na novoj ploči pritom pokazuje profinjeniju stilizaciju, dok razgranati oblik s ploče 1 ne djeluje naturalistički – ni zbog stroge linearnosti ni zbog svog položaja u odnosu na ostatak tijela. Vego ga opisuje kao tri reda kukica s jako zadebljanim okcima s jedne i druge strane, zaključujući da je vajar htio izraziti rep pauna, ali samo šematski.⁴⁷ Vijugavi krajevi mo-



Slika 17. Detalji: način oblikovanja lukova u gornjem dijelu ploče (snimila i obradila: A. Mekić).

Figure 17. Detail of the method of shaping the arches in the upper part of the slab (photography and editing: A. Mekić).

of the deceased to heaven, that is, to paradise.⁴⁵ However, the interpretation that this is a paradisiacal bird is the strongest. Within this framework, the tendril-like element on the left side could be read in two ways: either as the tail of a peacock or as a stylized representation of paradisiacal vegetation.⁴⁶ If interpreted as a tail, its comparison with the tail of the bird on Slab 1 is justified. The treatment of the new slab shows a more refined stylization. The branched form on Slab 1 does not appear naturalistic, neither because of its strict linearity nor its position in relation to the rest of the body. Vego describes it as “three rows of hooks with strongly thickened loops on both sides,” concluding that “the sculptor intended to depict a peacock’s tail, but only schematically.”⁴⁷ The sinuous ends of the motif on the new slab are more softly shaped and more widely spaced, while the central part is slightly curved and continuous, resembling a stem. Similar vegetal motifs, including tendrils and palmettes, are frequently used in Early Medieval ornamentation as symbolic references to paradisiacal vegetation (cf. Pl. V: 2–8).

The appearance of a bird with a nimbus and a vegetal element within the same composition suggests a representation of the soul in paradise, while a possible identification with a

41 Josipović, Magaš Mesić 2013, 25–28.

42 Cf. Jakšić 2015; Janković 2007; Marasović 2007. i dr. tekstovi i katalozi iz bogatog korpusa o predromaničkoj i romaničkoj skulpturi na tlu današnje Dalmacije, Dubrovačkog i Crnogorskog primorja. Za nekoliko različitih načina obrade glave, tijela i repa ptice: vidj. i T. IV.

43 U mnogim kulturama ptice imaju bogat simbolički i duhovni značaj; zbog letenja, promatraju se kao posrednici između neba i zemlje, kao simboli nebeskog svijeta; simboliziraju duhovna stanja, anđele, viša stanja bića... Golubica, na primjer, osim Duha Božjeg može personificirati i dušu pravедnika. Chevalier, Gheerbrandt 2003, 540–541, 169.

44 Prikazivanje duše kao ptice veže se za tradiciju drevnog Egipta. Badurina 1979, 495.

45 Ovakva interpretacija je potaknuta posvetom tj. nazivom obližnjeg lokaliteta s grobljem – Mihalje, na kojem se pretpostavlja da se nalazila i crkva sv. Mihovila. Jurković 1987, 109; Basler 1990, 119. Hipoteza je potkrijepljena i činjenicom da je sv. Mihovil/Mihael/Mihajlo vrlo poštovan na ovim prostorima, odnosno da su mu posvećene brojne crkve u široj okolici Ravnoga.

46 U kršćanskoj simbolici vrt označava raj i stanje duhovnog blaženstva. Chevalier, Gheerbrandt 2003, 768. U reduciranim ikonografskim kompozicijama pojedinačni vegetabilni motivi mogu funkcionirati kao oznaka rajskog vrta ili aluzija na drvo života.

47 Vego 1959, 185.

45 This interpretation is prompted by the name of a nearby site with a cemetery – Mihalje – where a church of St. Michael is presumed to have stood (Jurković 1987, 109; Basler 1990, 119). The hypothesis is further supported by the fact that St. Michael/Mihael/Mihajlo is highly venerated in these regions, with numerous churches dedicated to him in the wider area of Ravno.

46 In Christian symbolism, the garden signifies paradise and a state of spiritual bliss (Chevalier, Gheerbrandt 2003, 768). In reduced iconographic compositions, individual vegetal motifs can function as indicators of the Garden of Paradise or as allusions to the Tree of Life.

47 Vego 1959, 185.

tiva na novoj ploči mekše su oblikovani i i međusobno više razmaknuti, dok je središnji dio blago uvijen i cjelovit te više nalikuje stabljici. Slični, biljni motivi, uključujući vitice i palmete, u ranosrednjovjekovnoj ornamentici često se koriste kao simboličke reference na rajsku vegetaciju (usp. T. V: 2–8).

Pojava ptice s nimbom i vegetabilnog elementa unutar iste kompozicije sugerira predstavu duše u raju, pri čemu se ne može isključiti ni eventualna identifikacija sa svecem kojem je kultno mjesto bilo posvećeno. Takva ikonografska koncepcija prerasta u važan argument funkcionalne interpretacije ovoga prostora kao mjesta snažnog sakralnog i memorijalnog značenja, a trolisne građevine kao moguće memorije, a ne isključivo liturgijske crkve. U tom se kontekstu prikaz ptice s nimbom može promatrati kao vizualna artikulacija eshatoloških ideja povezanih s dušom i životom poslije smrti, što naročito dolazi do izražaja u okviru prostora naglašene funerarne simbolike.

Gornji pojas ploče odlikuje znatno složenija i pažljivo strukturirana kompozicija (sl. 17). Obrađena je čitava površina, ali nije ispunjena karakterističnom pleternom ornamentikom. Radi se o anikoničnom, ali simbolički bogatom rješenju koje otvara prostor za detaljniju ikonografsko-ikonološku analizu. Po proporcijama i okviru blisko je vijencu na ploči 1, s ornamentom u tropletu, ali je potpuno drugačije koncipirano. Reljef je u tom segmentu organiziran u dva plana. Gornji (zadnji) sastoji se od sedam zupčastih, prema gore nazubljenih elemenata. Njihova obrada podsjeća na ornament tropleta drugog vijenca, posebno u tehničkoj izvedbi „prutića“ i načinu na koji se izdvajaju iz podloge. Razlika je u tome što zupce na novoj ploči čine dvije, a ne tri trake, uz izraženiji prijelom u vrhu, tj. oštrije rubove. U prednjem planu dominiraju dvije nepotpune kružne forme – polovice kruga oblikovane u vidu ispunjenih traka, odnosno dva luka. U njima se nalaze elementi koji podsjećaju na listiće (snopovi od četiri, odnosno tri lisnate trakice). Lukovi su pravilnog oblika, širine 20,5 cm (promjer zamišljenog kruga izmjeren s vanjske strane luka) i visine 10 cm. S obje strane flankiraju ih sitni, zavijeni oblici, koje možemo identificirati kao volute – što upućuje na mogućnost da su zamišljeni kao arhitektonski elementi. Obrisi lukova različito su likovno tretirani, a pritom njihov izgled snažno asocira na krugove oko glava velikih ptica s ove i druge ploče. Zapravo, oblikom odgovaraju polovicama ta dva nimba, postavljenim jedna uz drugu, što teško može biti slučajnost, nego prije svjesno ponavljanje motiva. Provođenjem komparativne analize postaje očito da su ove cjeline stilski smišljeno povezane, a figuralne ploče u izravnom međuodnosu: lijevi luk, ispunjen kratkim kosim linijama, definiran je na potpuno isti način kao nimb ptice na ploči 1, koji Vego opisuje sintagmom tordirani kružni prsten.⁴⁸ Desni luk je sačinjen od niza ispupčenja u vidu medaljona (ili bisernog niza), što korespondira s nimbom ptice ispod. Nimb ima slično riješen obrub, s tom razlikom što su detalji sitniji od onih na vijencu. Ovakva izvedba

saint to whom the cult site was dedicated cannot be excluded. This iconographic conception thus serves as a significant basis for understanding the space as having strong sacred and memorial functions, and for viewing the triconchal structure as a potential memoria rather than exclusively a church. In this context, the depiction of a bird-with-nimbus may be understood as a visual expression of eschatological ideas related to the soul and the afterlife, particularly within a setting defined by funerary symbolism.

The upper zone of the slab is characterized by a significantly more complex and carefully structured composition (Fig. 17). While the whole surface has been treated, it is not covered with the typical interlace ornamentation. It is an aniconic yet symbolically rich solution that opens space for a more detailed iconographic and iconological analysis. In proportions and framing, it is close to the triple-braid band with ornament on Slab 1, but it is conceived in a completely different way. In this segment, the relief is organized into two areas. The upper (background) area consists of seven chevrons, oriented upward. These elements' treatment resembles the triple-braid ornament of the other band, especially in the technical execution of the individual chevrons and the way they stand out from the background. The difference is that the layered chevrons on the new slab consist of two, and not three, strips, with a more pronounced break at the top, i.e. sharper edges. In the foreground, two incomplete circular forms dominate: halves of a circle shaped as filled bands, or two arches. Within them are elements that resemble leaves (clusters of four and three leaf-like strips). The arches are regular in shape, 20.5 cm wide (diameter of the imagined circle measured from the outer edge of the arch) and 10 cm high. On both sides they are flanked by small, curved forms that can be identified as volutes, indicating that they may have been conceived as architectural elements. The contours of the arches are treated differently in a formal sense, and their appearance strongly evokes the circles around the heads of the large birds on both the newly discovered slab and Slab 1. In fact, their shape corresponds to halves of those two nimbuses placed side by side, which can hardly be accidental; it is rather a deliberate repetition of the motif. Through comparative analysis, it becomes evident that these units are stylistically deliberately connected, and that the figural slabs are in direct relationship with one another: the left arch, filled with short oblique lines, is defined in the same way as the nimbus of the bird on Slab 1, which Vego describes as a "twisted circular ring."⁴⁸ The right arch is composed of a series of protrusions in the form of medallions (or a string of pearls), corresponding to the nimbus of the bird below. The nimbus has a similarly treated border, with the difference that the details are finer than those in the upper band. Such an execution of the arcade in the upper part of the relief could represent a key indicator of the connection between the new slab and previously discovered fragments, as it suggests a close iconographic and stylistic link, and their belonging to the same sacral and spatial context, possibly even to the same construction of church furnishings.

48 Vego 1959, 185.

48 Vego 1959, 185.

arkade u gornjem dijelu reljefa mogla bi predstavljati ključan indikator povezanosti nove ploče s ranije pronađenim ulomcima, jer sugerira blisku ikonografsko-stilsku vezu i njihovu pripadnost istom sakralnom i prostornom kontekstu, moguće i istoj konstrukciji crkvenog namještaja.

Na temelju prethodnih analiza moguće je pristupiti ikonološkom tumačenju kompozicije u gornjem pojasu (sl. 18) na sljedeći način.⁴⁹ Ukoliko se elementi ispod lukova prepoznaju kao stilizirana vegetacija, ostatak kompozicije dobiva jasniju semantičku strukturu: biljni motivi, kao i u donjem dijelu reljefa, označavaju rajsko raslinje. Luk ili arkada, kao likovni motiv, upotrebljavaju se kako bi naznačili prostor – ponekad arhitektonski, a ponekad prostor simboličnog karaktera, kakav je rajski vrt. Simbolizam arkade može se, u smislu duhovne zaštite, promatrati u analogiji s aureolom.⁵⁰ Obje imaju konotaciju zaštite, odvajanja od profanog i stavljanja pod okrilje svetosti. Arkada se, dakle, pojavljuje kao vizualna artikulacija skloništa i raja kao konačnog duhovnog prebivališta. Jedan od lukova je, kao što je već navedeno, ispunjen bisernim nizom, što dodatno simbolički impregnira prizor i implicira koncept rajskog pejzaža – kraljevstva nebeskog.⁵¹ Stoga bi likovno rješenje kompletnog reljefa bilo u skladu s ovakvim tumačenjem. Donji dio ploče predstavljao bi veliku pticu u rajskom vrtu, što podupire identifikaciju te ptice kao pauna – uz mogućnost da prizor zapravo simbolizira dušu u raju. Time se svi ključni elementi kompozicije – ptica s nimбом, arkade, biseri, biljni motivi – povezuju u jedinstvenu ikonološku cjelinu usmjerenu simbolici rajskoga vrta.

Ovakvo, eshatološko čitanje prizora, usmjereno na ideju raja i spasenja duše, logično se nadovezuje na arhitektonsko-ikonografski okvir kompozicije. U srednjovjekovnoj likovnoj praksi, umjesto arkada, češće se pojavljuju polukružne niše (konhe), ponekad oblikovane u vidu školjke. Sve ove varijante imaju funkciju baldahina – vizualnog znaka zaštite i izdvajanja svetog prostora, a simbolika školjke i bisera što se u njoj formira dodatno produbljuje eshatološki potencijal ovakvih rješenja.⁵² Među najljepšim likovnim ostvarenjima te ikonografske koncepcije, također u funerarnom kontekstu, izdvaja se merovinški sarkofag opatice Teodohilde iz kriptе samostana Jouarre u Francuskoj, datiran u 7. stoljeće (T. V: 1).⁵³ Na objema bočnim stranama sarkofaga u dva niza prikazano je po šest školjki-jakobovih kapica, između

Based on the previous analyses, it is possible to approach an iconological interpretation of the composition of the upper slab area (Fig. 18) in the following way:⁴⁹ If the elements beneath the arches are recognized as stylized vegetation, the rest of the composition acquires a clearer semantic structure; vegetal motifs, as in the lower part of the relief, denote the paradisiacal vegetation, while the arch or arcade, as a visual motif, is used to indicate space, sometimes architectural, and sometimes symbolic in character, such as the paradisiacal garden. The role and symbolism of the arcade can, in terms of spiritual protection, be viewed in analogy with the symbol of the aureole.⁵⁰ Both carry connotations of protection, separation from the profane, and placement under the shelter of the sacred. The arcade thus appears as a visual articulation of refuge and of paradise as the ultimate spiritual dwelling. One of the arches, as already noted, is filled with a string of pearls, which further symbolically imbues the scene and implies the concept of a paradisiacal landscape: the Kingdom of Heaven.⁵¹ Accordingly, the visual solution of the entire relief would be consistent with such an interpretation. The lower part of the slab would represent a large bird in a paradisiacal garden, which supports the identification of this bird as a peacock, along with the possibility that the scene symbolizes the soul in paradise. In this way, all key elements of the composition – the bird with a nimbus, the arcades, the pearls, and the vegetal motifs – are brought together into a unified iconological whole oriented toward the symbolism of the Garden of Paradise.

Such an eschatological reading of the scene, oriented toward the idea of paradise and salvation of the soul, logically continues the architectural and iconographic framework of the composition. In Medieval visual practice, semi-circular niches (conches) – often shell-shaped – appear more frequently than arcades. All these variants function as a baldachin; a visual sign of protection and separation of the sacred space, with the symbolism of the shell and the pearl formed within it further deepening the eschatological potential of these realizations.⁵² Among the finest visual realizations of this iconographic concept, and also in the funerary context, is the Merovingian sarcophagus of Abbess Theodechild from the crypt of the monastery of Jouarre in France, dated to the 7th century (Pl. V: 1).⁵³ On the lateral sides of the sarcophagus, two rows of six (scallop) shells are depicted with columns between them stylized as stems. The ends of the columns take the form

49 Zahvaljujemo prof. dr. Jeleni Erdeljan na korisnim uputama i sugestijama o mogućem tumačenju ovih simbola.

50 De Champeaux i Sterckx formulirali su ovu analogiju na sljedeći način: „Obris arkade... tek je savršeni obris čovjeka s aureolom. Ona odgovara svecu, čovjeku u kojem je dovršeno uznesenje tijela po duhu, u kojem je ostvaren misterij božanske nenastanjenosti što je simbolizira kamena crkva“. Champeaux, Sterckx, Introduction au monde des symboles; cit. prema: Chevalier, Gheerbrandt 2003, 431.

51 Biser, „najvredniji od dragulja“, znak je spasa, koji vrijedi više od zemaljskoga blaga. Prema Matejevu evanđelju, Krist je rekao: „S kraljevstvom je nebeskim kao s trgovcem koji traži skupocjeno biserje i kad se namjeri na dragocjen biser, ode da proda sve što ima i kupi ga“ (Mt 13,45). Badurina 1979, 159.

52 Simbolika školjke i bisera dovodi se u vezu sa smrću, s obzirom da je njezin razvoj uvjetovan nestankom prvobitnog stanovnika školjke, odnosno, napredak proizilazi iz „smrti“ prethodnog pokoljenja. Chevalier, Gheerbrandt 2003, 679.

53 Melli 2005, 105.

49 The authors would like to express their gratitude to Prof. Dr. Jelena Erdeljan for her useful guidance and suggestions regarding the possible interpretation of these symbols.

50 De Champeaux and Sterckx formulate this analogy as follows: “The outline of the arcade [...] is nothing but the perfect outline of a man with an aureole. It corresponds to the saint, the man in whom the ascension of the body through the spirit has been completed, in whom the mystery of divine indwelling, symbolized by the stone church, is realized” (Champeaux, Sterckx, Introduction au monde des symboles; cited in Chevalier, Gheerbrandt 2003, 431).

51 The pearl, “the most valuable of jewels,” is a sign of salvation, worth more than earthly treasure. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Christ said: “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, who, when he finds one pearl of great value, goes and sells all that he has and buys it” (Mt 13:45) (Badurina 1979, 159).

52 The symbolism of the shell and the pearl is associated with death, insofar as its development is conditioned by the disappearance of the shell's original inhabitant; that is, progress arises from the “death” of the previous generation (Chevalier, Gheerbrandt 2003, 679).

53 Melli 2005, 105.

kojih se nalaze stubići, stilizirani od stabljika. Krajevi stubića su u vidu tri trakice, vrlo slične završetku motiva u donjoj lijevoj zoni reljefa iz Zavale. Slična simbolika prisutna je i na vizigotskim pločama iz Museo de Zamora (Španija), također datiranim u 7. stoljeće (T. V: 2). Ovdje je motiv školjke smješten pod lukom od perli, izgledom srodnom luku i nimbu s nove ploče. Lukovi ispunjeni nizom bisera, u isprepletenoj varijanti i u štuko tehnici, zastupljeni su i na ciboriju u Crkvi Sant'Ambrogio u Milanu iz 10. stoljeća (T. V: 3).⁵⁴ Unutar arkade razaznaju se biljni motivi, stilizirani trolisno, također slični onima u lukovima na reljefu iz Zavale. Navedeni primjeri predstavljaju mali dio šireg korpusa srodnih likovnih rješenja. Slični dekorativni frizovi mogu se naći i na istočnoj obali Jadranskog mora, između ostalog na reljefima iz Novigrada, Splita, Zadra, kao i na crnogorskom primorju (T. V: 4-8).⁵⁵ Unatoč geografskoj i vremenskoj udaljenosti izdvojenih primjera, odabir motiva i formalne sličnosti upućuju na postojanje zajedničkog ikonografsko-stilskog repertoara u ranosrednjovjekovnoj sakralnoj skulpturi šireg europskog prostora. Riječ je o univerzalnom vizualnom jeziku – simbolici zaštite, sakralnog prostora i duhovnog prebivališta – formiranom unutar mediteranskog kulturnog kruga. Iako se kamena plastika Zavale može razmatrati unutar tog okvira, ona i dalje ostaje jedinstvena pojava. Premda su tumačenja njihove ikonografije zasad na razini pretpostavki, originalnost ovih ploča – koja se prije svega ogleda u izostanku neposrednih paralela – ukazuje na potrebu daljnje istraživanja mogućih uzora i dublje interpretacije slojevite simbolike koju nose.

ZAKLJUČNA RAZMATRANJA

Otkriće nove figuralne reljefne ploče i predromaničke trolisne građevine na Crkvi u Zavali, iako otvara nove mogućnosti za preciznije određivanje vremenskog okvira kamenog namještaja s ovog lokaliteta, ujedno dodatno usložnjava interpretaciju arheoloških nalaza i građevnih slojeva na nje-mu. Premda je teško precizno povezati ulomke s konkretnim slojevima, sama potvrda postojanja starijih građevina na ovom mjestu povećava vjerojatnoću njihove pripadnosti predromaničkom razdoblju, kako su to ranije predlagali pojedini istraživači. S obzirom na nedostatak materijalnih dokaza na terenu, nije moguće bez zadržke iznijeti argumentaciju za izvornu pripadnost ulomaka najstarijoj građevini, kao ni bilo kojoj drugoj – iskopanoj ili još neotkrivenoj – na širem području sela Zavala. Arheološki integritet pokretnih

of three strips, very similar to the termination of the motif in the lower left area of the relief from Zavala. A similar symbolism is present on Visigothic slabs from the Museo de Zamora (Spain), also dated to the 7th century (Pl. V: 2). Here, the shell motif is placed under an arch of pearls, visually related to the arch and nimbus on this new slab. Arches filled with strings of pearls, in an interlaced variant and in stucco technique, are also present on the ciborium in the Church of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan from the 10th century (Pl. V: 3).⁵⁴ Within the arcade, vegetal motifs can be discerned, stylized in three-lobed form, also similar to those within the arches on the Zavala relief. The cited examples represent only a small part of a broader corpus of related visual solutions. Similar decorative friezes can also be found along the eastern Adriatic coast, including on reliefs from Novigrad, Split and Zadar, as well as along the Montenegrin coast (Pl. V: 4–8).⁵⁵ Despite the geographical and chronological distance between the selected examples, the choice of motifs and formal similarities points to the existence of a shared iconographic and stylistic repertoire in Early Medieval sacral sculpture across a broader European space. This represents a universal visual language – the symbolism of protection, sacred space, and spiritual dwelling – formed within the Mediterranean cultural sphere. Although the stone sculpture of Zavala can be considered within this framework, it nevertheless remains a unique phenomenon. Even though interpretations of its iconography currently remain at the level of hypothesis, the originality of these slabs – most evident in the absence of direct parallels – indicates the need for further research into possible models, and a deeper interpretation of the layered symbolism they have.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The discovery of a new figural relief slab and a pre-Romanesque triconchal structure at Crkvina in Zavala, although opening up new possibilities for a more precise determination of the chronological framework of the stone furnishings from this site, at the same time further complicates the interpretation of the archaeological finds and building layers present there. While it is difficult to precisely link the fragments to specific layers, the very confirmation of the existence of earlier structures at this location increases the likelihood of their attribution to the pre-Romanesque period, as previously suggested by certain researchers. Given the lack of material evidence in the field, it is not possible to unreservedly argue for an original attribution of the fragments to the earliest

54 Melli 2005, 155–157.

55 Komponirani su tako da se ispod luka nalaze motivi nalik rozeti, ponekad sa stiliziranom nišom u obliku školjke i volutama. U sakralnoj plastici često je zastupljen ikonografski obrazac križa u vegetaciji, kao vizualna metafora rajskog vrta, naslijeđena iz ranokršćanske ikonografije. Jakšić ovakve predstave vidi kao „rajski vrt“ ili „rajski motiv, prepoznatljiv u plastici oltarnih pregrada na istočnoj obali Jadrana (T. V: 4, 6, 8). Jakšić 2015, sl. 17, 29, 36; Subotić 1963, sl. 11; Janković 2007, sl. 87. Biljni motivi sa strana križa najčešće su stabla ili palmete (T. V: 4, 6, 8). I na njima su nerijetko prisutne arkade ili niše, različito oblikovane. Javljuju se od Kotora na jugu do Novigrada u Istri. U kombinaciji s ovim motivom pojavljuje se greda s nizom koji je Jakšić nazvao „vijenac polurozeta/ razlistanih palmetica“, na što asocira arkada u gornjem dijelu zavalske ploče. Jakšić 2015, 81, 84, 156.

54 Melli 2005, 155–157.

55 They are composed in such a way that beneath the arches there are rosette-like motifs, sometimes with a stylized niche in the form of a shell and volutes. In sacral sculpture, the iconographic scheme of the cross amidst vegetation is frequently represented as a visual metaphor of the Garden of Paradise, inherited from early Christian iconography. Jakšić interprets such representations as a “paradisical garden” or “paradisical motif, recognizable in the sculpture of altar screens on the eastern Adriatic coast” (Pl. V: 4, 6, 8) (Jakšić 2015, figs. 17, 29, 36; Subotić 1963, fig. 11; Janković 2007, fig. 87). The vegetal motifs on either side of the cross are most often trees or palmettes (Pl. V: 4, 6, 8), and arcades or niches of various forms are frequently present on them. They appear from Kotor in the south to Novigrad in Istria. In combination with this motif, a beam appears with a sequence that Jakšić termed a “wreath of half-rosettes / foliated palmettes,” to which the arcade in the upper part of the Zavala slab corresponds (Jakšić 2015, 81, 84, 156).

nalaza iz Zavale nedostatan je do te mjere da zasad ne dopušta iznošenje zaključaka o njihovoj povezanosti s istraženim objektima, pa ni o međusobnoj vezi svih pronađenih fragmenata.

Novootkrivena ploča, iako velik i očigledno značajan dio, ne olakšava rekonstrukciju kamene pregrade kao funkcionalne i likovne cjeline,⁵⁶ ali ključna je za ikonografsku (re)interpretaciju i dopunu dosadašnjih stilskih razmatranja.

Ikonografske i stilske sličnosti dviju velikih ploča, uz veće podudarnosti pojedinih detalja (poput obrade nimbova i polukružnih niša te linearnog tretmana perja), jasno ih postavljaju u izravnu korelaciju i isto vremensko razdoblje, uz mogućnost da su pripadale istoj kamenoj pregradi. Moglo bi se, stoga, pretpostaviti da su potekle iz iste radionice. Očigledne razlike u tehničkoj izvedbi, međutim, upućuju na različite klesare: novu ploču odlikuje precizniji rez i obrada detalja, dok ploča 1 pokazuje mekši tretman forme. Manje ploče s pticama (ploče 2 i 3) mogu se dovesti u vezu s velikima tek na općoj ikonografskoj razini, kao dio istog vizualnog repertoara. U stilskom pogledu ploča 2 pokazuje određene podudarnosti – redukciju volumena u korist linije i oblikovanje tijela i perja pomoću horizontalnih crtica – dok je ploča 3 još grublje izvedena, uz tek pojedine formalne sličnosti s ostalim primjerima. Istodobno, djeluju kao fragmenti druge vrste dekoracije, ne nužno iste kamene pregrade. Na osnovu komparativne analize i stilskih odlika – prije svega naglašene linearne obrade i reduciranja volumena – figuralne ploče mogle bi se s većom sigurnošću okvirno datirati u razdoblje između 9. i 11. stoljeća, imajući u vidu promjene u likovnom izrazu početkom 12. stoljeća.⁵⁷ Bliska kulturološka povezanost s dubrovačkim područjem značajno umanjuje mogućnost izrazito zakašnjelih oblika na jugu današnje Bosne i Hercegovine.⁵⁸ Zbog ikonografske i stilske specifičnosti ovih figuralnih ploča, u potrazi za uzorima, radionicama i općenito novim spoznajama, nužno je proširiti istraživanja u više smjerova. U daljnjoj analizi treba imati u vidu i bizantske utjecaje na području južnog jadranskog primorja i njegovog zaleđa, uz mogućnost da su u autohtonom likovnom jeziku zastupljeni i kroz baštinjenje tradicija ranokršćanskog doba.⁵⁹

structure, nor to any other – excavated or yet undiscovered – within the wider area of the village of Zavala. The archaeological integrity of the movable finds from Zavala is insufficient to – at present – allow conclusions to be drawn about their connection to the investigated structures, or even about the interrelationship of all the discovered fragments.

The newly discovered slab, although a large and evidently significant piece, does not facilitate the reconstruction of the stone screen as a functional and visual whole,⁵⁶ but it is crucial for the iconographic (re)interpretation and in supplementing previous stylistic considerations.

The iconographic and stylistic similarities of the two large slabs, with their stronger correspondences in certain details (such as the treatment of the nimboes and semi-circular niches, as well as the linear rendering of the feathers), clearly place them in direct correlation and within the same chronological period, with the possibility existing that they belonged to the same stone screen. It could therefore be assumed that they originated from the same workshop. However, evident differences in technical execution point to different stone carvers: the new slab is characterized by a more precise cut and finer treatment of details, while Slab 1 shows a softer handling of form. The smaller slabs with birds (Slabs 2 and 3) can be related to the larger ones only at a general iconographic level, as part of the same visual repertoire. In stylistic terms, Slab 2 shows certain correspondences – reduction of volume in favour of line and the shaping of the body and feathers by means of horizontal incisions – while Slab 3 is executed more crudely, with only occasional formal similarities to the other examples. At the same time, they appear to be fragments of a different type of decoration, not necessarily of the same stone screen. On the basis of comparative analysis and stylistic features – above all the pronounced linear treatment and reduction of volume – the figural slabs could, with greater certainty, be broadly dated to the period between the 9th and 11th centuries, taking into account changes in artistic expression at the beginning of the 12th century.⁵⁷ The close cultural connection with the Dubrovnik area significantly reduces the likelihood of markedly delayed forms in the south of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵⁸ Due to the iconographic and stylistic specificity of these figural slabs, in the search for models, workshops, and generally new insights, it is necessary to expand research in multiple directions. In further analysis, Byzantine influences in the southern Adriatic coast and its hinterland should also be taken into account, with the possibility that

56 Za jednu od mogućih rekonstrukcija zavalske oltarne pregrade, načinjene od ranije otkrivenih fragmenata (iako ne svih), vidj. Praštalo 2003, T. VI: 3 (T. III: 3).

57 U 11. stoljeću u predromaničkoj skulpturi istočnogjadranskog primorja uočavaju se promjene. Osjeća se povratak plastičnim vrijednostima, punoća oblika, odnosno udaljavanje od geometrizacije i dekorativnosti, uplitanje življih i slobodnijih motiva u staru linearnu shemu reljefa, kao i brižljivije predstavljanje antičkih motiva. Subotić 1963, 62.

58 Cf. Džino 2023. o uključenosti Zahumlja u prostor istočnog Jadrana i komunikacijama duž doline Neretve, koje su povezivale obalu i zaleđe; o društvenim i političkim transformacijama prostora Huma u 9. stoljeću, te o teritorijalnom opsegu Zahumlja (Huma) u 10. stoljeću između Dubrovnika i Neretve, pri čemu se Zavala navodi kao područje koje je vjerojatno ulazilo u teritorij Zahumlja na granici prema Travuniji Džino, op. cit. 131, 158.

59 Na fenomen ploča iz Zavale osvrće se i Jurković. Ističe da bizantski utjecaj u većoj ili manjoj mjeri postaje trajni dio kulturne baštine ovih prostora, te se prenosi i u kasnija razdoblja. Autor pritom naglašava da ponovna prisutnost Bizanta na istočnoj jadranskoj obali ne mora značiti uvođenje novih oblika, već može predstavljati oživljavanje ranijih stilskih karakteristika. Jurković 1987, 109. Sličan interpretativni okvir Jurković razvija i u raspravi o kontinuitetu između antike i romanike u umjetnosti istočnog Jadrana, gdje ukazuje na dugotrajnost i transformaciju pojedinih obrazaca. Jurković 1988, 41-47.

56 For one of the possible reconstructions of the Zavala altar screen, made from previously discovered fragments (though not all), see Praštalo 2003, Pl. VI: 3 (Pl. III: 3).

57 In the 11th century, changes in the pre-Romanesque sculpture of the eastern Adriatic Littoral can be observed. A renewed emphasis on plasticity and volumetric form is evident, marking a departure from strict geometrization and ornamentality, along with the introduction of more dynamic and freer motifs into the traditional linear relief scheme, as well as a more refined treatment of classical elements (Subotić 1963, 62).

58 cf. Džino 2023 on the inclusion of Zahumlje within the eastern Adriatic sphere and the communications along the Neretva valley connecting the coast and the hinterland, on the social and political transformations of the Hum region in the 9th century, and on the territorial scope of Zahumlje (Hum) in the 10th century between Dubrovnik and the Neretva and its hinterland, with Zavala claimed as an area that likely fell within the territory of Zahumlje on the border with Travunia (Džino, op. cit., 131, 158).

Budući da nije u potpunosti razjašnjeno vrijeme devastacije trolisne građevine, okolnosti podizanja niza kasnijih objekata iznad nje, način postupanja s pronađenim ulomcima kroz stoljeća ni to je li reljefna ploča namjerno ili slučajno završila na zatečenoj lokaciji i dalje ostaju otvorena brojna pitanja sudbine i izgleda ostalih profiliranih kamenih fragmenata.

Ikonološka interpretacija reljefa, u ovom trenutku, ostaje na nivou hipoteza, ali ponuđeno tumačenje usmjereno je prema simbolici rajskoga vrta i temi uskrsnuća kao mogućem ključu čitanja. Ikonografski motiv ptice s nimбом može se dovesti u vezu s eshatološkim značenjima, odnosno s idejom uskrsnuća duše i života poslije smrti, dok prisustvo polukružnih niša i niza bisera na vijencu dodatno naglašava zaštitnu i simboličku dimenziju prikaza. U kontekstu trolisne građevine i jasno izraženog funerarnog okruženja to upućuje na naglašenu memorijalno-sepulkralnu dimenziju datog prostora. Stoga ikonografija cijele skupine figuralne kamene plastike iz Zavale prerasta u argument u funkcionalnoj interpretaciji samog lokaliteta kao mjesta snažnog i dugotrajnog sakralnog i memorijalnog značaja, pri čemu se novootkriveni objekt može s većom vjerojatnošću tumačiti kao memorija, a ne isključivo kao crkva.

Novim arheološkim otkrićima u Zavali još jednom je potvrđena važnost ovog područja u ranom i razvijenom srednjem vijeku. S obzirom na slojevitu arheološku sliku lokaliteta Crkvina – postojanje više različitih objekata, bogato obrađene kamene plastike i višestrukih ukopa – jasno se očituje njegov sakralni kontinuitet. Nalazi nedvosmisleno ukazuju na postojano korištenje prostora kroz više faza gradnje i sepulkralne namjene, što dodatno potvrđuje njegovu ulogu lokalnog kulturnog središta. Daljnja i tehnološki naprednija arheološka istraživanja u široj okolici Ravnoga mogla bi dovesti do novih otkrića i doprinijeti potpunijem razumijevanju ove složene cjeline. Time bi se ujedno proširilo i naše, trenutno još uvijek ograničeno, poznavanje rano-srednjovjekovne sakralne umjetnosti na prostoru današnje Bosne i Hercegovine.

these are represented within the autochthonous artistic language through the inheritance of early Christian traditions.⁵⁹

Since numerous issues – including the time of the devastation of the triconchal structure, the circumstances under which a series of later buildings were erected above it, the way in which the discovered fragments were handled over the centuries, and whether the relief slab ended up at its present location intentionally or by chance – have not been fully resolved, numerous questions concerning the fate and appearance of the remaining profiled stone fragments remain open.

The iconological interpretation of the relief, at this stage, remains at the level of hypothesis, but the proposed reading is directed toward the symbolism of the Garden of Paradise and the theme of resurrection as a possible key to its interpretation. The iconographic motif of a bird with a nimbus may be associated with eschatological meanings, i.e. with the idea of the resurrection of the soul and life after death, while the presence of semi-circular niches and a string of pearls on the moulding further emphasizes the protective and symbolic dimension of the depiction. In the context of the triconchal structure and the clearly expressed funerary environment, this points to a pronounced memorial-sepulchral dimension of the space in question. Thus, the iconography of the entire grouping of figural stone sculpture from Zavala develops into an argument as to the functional interpretation of the site itself as a place of strong and long-lasting sacred and memorial significance, whereby the newly discovered structure can, with greater probability, be interpreted as a memoria rather than exclusively as a church.

New archaeological discoveries in Zavala have once again confirmed the importance of this area in the Early and High Middle Ages. Given the stratified archaeological picture of the Crkvina site – the presence of several different structures, richly carved stone sculpture, and multiple burials – its sacred continuity is clearly evident. The finds unequivocally indicate the continuous use of the space through several phases of construction and sepulchral function, which further confirms its role as a local cult centre. Additional, technologically more advanced archaeological research in the wider area of Ravno could lead to new discoveries and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of this complex site. In doing so, it would also expand our currently still-limited knowledge of Early Medieval sacred art upon the territory of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Marasović je smatrao da se rano-srednjovjekovna arhitektura u Bosni i Hercegovini ne može promatrati kao izolirana ili zakašnjela pojava, već kao dio šireg dalmatinsko-jadranskog kulturnog kruga, te je dijelom priključio građi Dalmatia praeromanica. Razmatra tipološka rješenja, poput centralnih i više-apsidalnih osnova, kao rezultat dugotrajnog kontinuiteta i lokalne transformacije kasnoantičkih graditeljskih tradicija. Marasović 2013.

59 Jurković also addresses the phenomenon of the slabs from Zavala. He emphasizes that Byzantine influence became, to a greater or lesser extent, a permanent part of the cultural heritage of these regions and was transmitted into later periods. He stresses that the renewed presence of Byzantium on the eastern Adriatic coast does not necessarily imply the introduction of new forms, but may instead represent the revival of earlier stylistic characteristics (Jurković 1987, 109). A similar interpretative framework is developed by Jurković in his discussion of the continuity between Antiquity and the Romanesque in the art of the eastern Adriatic, where he points to the longevity and transformation of certain patterns (Jurković 1988, 41–47). Marasović considered that Early Medieval architecture in Bosnia and Herzegovina should not be viewed as an isolated or belated phenomenon, but as part of the broader Dalmatian-Adriatic cultural sphere, partially incorporating it into the corpus of *Dalmatia praeromanica*. He examines typological solutions, such as central and multi-apsed plans, as the result of long continuity and the local transformation of Late Antique building traditions (Marasović 2013).

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Građa (projektna dokumentacija):

Idejni projekt konzervacije i restauracije tri crkve, zid i obnova Crkve sv. Petra, arheološki lokalitet Crkvina u Zavali, kat. č. 583/1, k.o. Zavala. TD 74-01/19, 2019. AG Burić d.o.o., projektna dokumentacija.

T. 1

Pl. 1



1



2



3



4



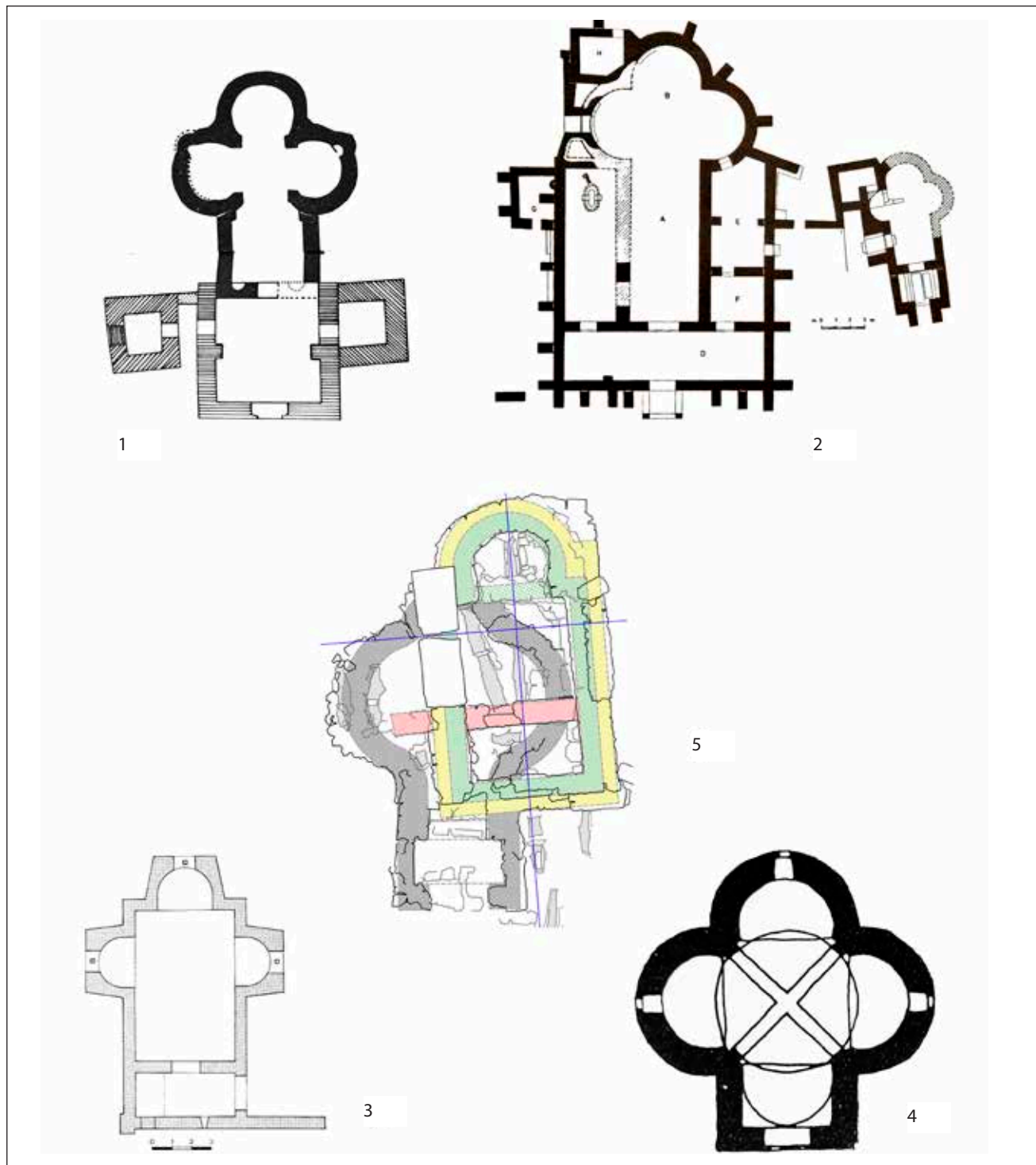
5

1, 2. Pronalazak reljefne ploče, listopad 2020. godine (arhiva S. Vasilj).

3-5. Konhe predromaničke građevine: u fazi istraživanja terena (3; arhiva S. Vasilj) i nakon konzervacije (4, 5; snimila: A. Mekić).

1, 2. Discovery of the relief slab, October 2020. (archive of S. Vasilj).

3-5. Conches of the pre-Romanesque building: during the archaeological investigation stage (3, archive of S. Vasilj) and after conservation (4, 5; photography: A. Mekić).



Komparativna građa: trolisne građevine

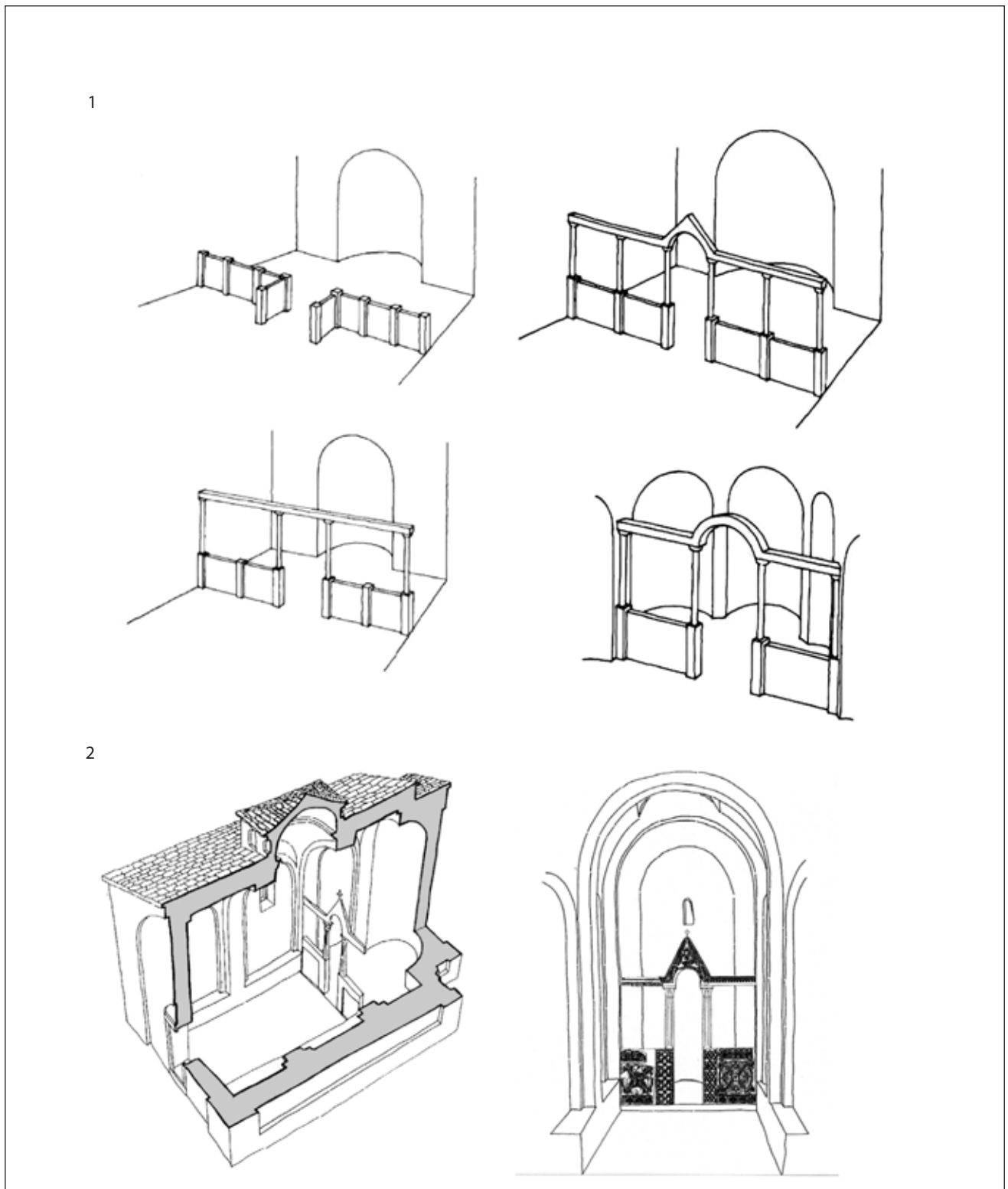
1. Tlocrt Crkve sv. Jovana, Zaton na Limu (prema: Đurić 1986, crtež str. 58/59).
2. Tlocrt starokršćanske bazilike u Cim i grobne kapele/memorije južno od bazilike (prema: Paškvalin, 2003, SGM 50, str. 336).
3. Tlocrt Crkve sv. Pavla, Čičevo kod Trebinja (prema: Popović 1973, sl. 3, 324).
4. Tlocrt Crkve sv. Nikole, Nin (prema: Subotić 1963, sl. 1, 2, 17).
5. Tlocrt trikonhosa u Zavali, razmjera 1:100 (AG Burić d.o.o.).

Comparative material: triconchal buildings

1. Floor plan of the Church of St. John at Zaton on Lim (acc.: Đurić 1986, drawing 58/59).
2. Floor plan of the early Christian basilica in Cim and the burial chapel/memorial south of the basilica (acc.: Paškvalin, 2003, SGM 50, 336).
3. Floor plan of the Church of St. Paul in Čičevo near Trebinje (acc.: Popović 1973, fig. 3, 324).
4. Floor plan of the Church of St. Nicolas in Nin (acc.: Subotić 1963, fig. 1, 2, 17).
5. Floor plan of triconchal plan in Zavala, scale 1:100 (AG Burić d.o.o.).

T. 3

Pl. 3

**Izgled oltarnih pregrada**

1. Tipovi oltarnih pregrada (prema: Marasović 2007, 111).
2. Idejna rekonstrukcija crkve Sv. Mihajla na Koločepu (prema: Marasović 2007, 112).
3. Idejna rekonstrukcija oltarne pregrade iz Zavale (prema: Praštalo 2003, T-IV).

Appearance of altar screens

1. Types of altar screens (acc.: Marasović 2007, 111).
2. Conceptual reconstruction of the Church of St. Michael on Koločep (acc.: Marasović 2007, 112).
3. Conceptual reconstruction of the altar screen from Zavala (acc.: Praštalo 2003, T-IV).



1 a



1 b



2 a



2 b

Komparativna građa: motivi ptica

1 (a, b). Zabati sa sučeljenimpticama: Uzdolje kod Knina (prema: Jakšić 2015, 358, sl. 9b), Crkva sv. Petra i Mojsija u Solinu (prema: Marasović 2008, 313, sl. 353a).
2 (a, b). Motivi ptica s grozdom u kljunu (prema: Josipović, Magaš Mesić, 27, sl. 5), plutej iz Novigrada (prema: Jakšić 2015, naslovnica knjige).

Comparative material: bird motifs

1 (a, b). Gables with opposed birds: Uzdolje near Knin (acc.: Jakšić 2015, 358, fig. 9b), Church of St. Peter and Moses in Solin (acc.: Marasović 2008, 313, fig. 353a).
2 (a, b). Motifs of birds with grapes in their beaks (acc.: Josipović, Magaš Mesić, 27, fig. 5), pluteus from Novigrad (acc.: Jakšić 2015, book cover).



Komparativna građa: simbolika rajskoga vrta

1. Teodohildin sarkofag, Opatija Notre-Dame de Jouarre, Francuska (uz dozvolu preuzeto s oficijelne web stranice <https://www.abbayejouarre.org/>).
- 2 (a, b). Nišne ploče, Pozantiguo (Zamora). Museo de Zamora, Španija (fotografija: Estudio Mynt).
3. Detalj luka ciborija iz crkve Sant'Ambrogio u Milanu (snimila: A. Mekić).
4. Mramorni plutej u Novigradu (prema: Jakšić 2015, 71, sl. 17).
5. Dio pluteja iz Arheološkog muzeja u Splitu (prema: Subotić 1963, 31, sl. 11: detalj).
6. Plutej iz Arheološkog muzeja u Zadru (prema: Jakšić 2015, 83, sl. 36).
7. Ploča oltarne pregrade s motivima niša iz Manastira Ilovica (prema: Janković 2007, 100, sl. 87).
8. Mali sarkofag iz kompleksa katedrale u Zadru (prema: Jakšić 2015, 474, sl. 29).

Comparative material: symbolism of the Garden of Eden

1. Theodohilda's sarcophagus, Notre-Dame de Jouarre Abbey, France (taken with permission from the official website <https://www.abbayejouarre.org/>).
- 2 (a, b). Niche slabs, Pozantiguo (Zamora). Museo de Zamora, Spain (photography: Estudio Mynt).
3. Detail of the ciborium arch from the church of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan (photography: A. Mekić).
4. Marble pluteus from Novigrad (acc.: Jakšić 2015, 71, fig. 17).
5. Part of a pluteus from the Archaeological Museum in Split (acc.: Subotić 1963, 31, fig. 11: detail).
6. Pluteus from the Archaeological Museum in Zadar (acc.: Jakšić 2015, 83, fig. 36).
7. Plate of the altar screen with niche motifs from the Ilovica Monastery (acc.: Janković 2007, 100, fig. 87).
8. Small sarcophagus from the Zadar cathedral complex (acc.: Jakšić 2015, 474, fig. 29).



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