

Romanesque Church in Virovitica

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ABSTRACT

Archaeological excavation near the foundation of the baroque church of St. The Rock in Virovitica in 2012. revealed the stone foundation that belongs to the church of St. Mary from 13th century. Romanesque capitals incorporated into today's baroque church originate from this church which was known in written sources. The finding of silver money, slavonski banovac, dates this site to the second half of the 13th century. Some finds, such as the bronze S-loop, point to the period of the early Middle Ages. The stone foundation is the easternmost part of the Romanesque church, which probably belonged to the apse of the square shape. The church board lies below today and is unavailable for exploration.

Keywords: romanese church, coin- slavonski banovac, medieval Virovitica, S-loop

INTRODUCTION

The Pejačević Castle, built at the beginning of the 19th century, occupies a central place in the town of Virovitica. Once there was a lowland fortress here; Traces of the medieval town are today seen on two squares (A. Horvat 1986:100; Fischer 1996:100).¹ Northwest of the Castle, on today's King Zvonimir Square, is the baroque church of St. Rok, a well-preserved 18th century cultural monument. The Franciscan church and monastery are located on the square,² opposite the Pejačević Palace, also from the 18th century.³ On the second square (now King Tomislav Square) north east of the castle was the parish church of St. Kuzma and Damjan. Between the two squares the suburbs developed.⁴

Despite the significant history of Virovitica, especially in the Middle Ages, the interest of

experts for her has started very late for various reasons. Thus, the archeological excavation of medieval fortifications has been encouraging only for the last ten years, within the framework of the reconstruction of the Castle and the park. Unfortunately, valuable movable and immobile finds are not accompanied by archival research that would greatly contribute to the comprehension of the whole. An even greater unknown is sacral archeology. The latest archeological discovery of the foundations of the romanese church of St. Mary from 13th century, backed up by solid evidence, with archaeological finds, confirms often cited written sources about the existence of a medieval church (A. Horvat 1986: 351; Cvekan 1977: 20 ; Andrić 2006:44), but only with a presumed location on the site today. Namely, works on the water proofing of the church of St. The Rok from the 18th century in Virovitica found the foundations of the previous construction in the western, southern and especially eastern part.⁵ Archaeological excavation was carried out only along the eastern part of the foundation of the church of St. Roka, while in the rest of the section was archaeological surveillance. The works were of a smaller scale but they brought significant results and contributed to the completion of the

¹The squares have lost their original proportions mostly due to the road passing through the city center (Sabolić 2006: 102).

²Along with the monastery there is a former baroque pharmacy, now a museum of sacred art and cultural and historical heritage.

³ Conservation works found that the building was built at the beginning of the 18th century and its original purpose was for the equestrian barracks (Hundić 2005: 245).

⁴Archaeological finds extend to the western and eastern part of the city so that the need for expansion of the protected archaeological zone has arisen (Salajić 2000: 36-39).

⁵At the initiative of fra Marko Malović, with the help of the City, the waterproofing of the church of St. Rok. The work was carried out by the construction company Slavić inženjering from Virovitica.

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medieval archaeological map of Virovitica, in particular the sacral heritage.

The Roman Period in the Virovitica Area

Romanesque style is a continuation of the Roman tradition, and she was then part of the province of Panonija, more precisely, Panonia Prima with the capital of Siscia. It was located on the important main road Poetovio-Mursa, with the development Bolencij, Sirotis and Cuconna in the Virovitica area. Archaeological research priorities were in the area of Orešac (Bolencij) and Špišić Bukovica (Cuconna). Virovitica (Sirotis) was not attracted more attention. Roman archaeological finds were accidentally found. The glass jars from the 4th century point to the necropolis. The remains of the Roman road running from the town are also preserved and turn south towards Aquae Balissae (Daruvar). In the woods near the road on the ponds was found a military grave with fibula from the 4th century (Salajić 2000: 11).

Medieval Wereucha

The presence of an early medieval population in Virovitica can be traced back to the 7th century (Sekelj Ivančan, Tkalčec 2008: 115). Although the early Middle Ages are still insufficiently archaeologically explored in this part of Slavonia, recent shifts may be noticeable. Let us mention that archaeological excavations of the Western Bypass in Virovitica found pottery from the 9th and 10th centuries in the prehistoric settlement (Salajić 2017: 197-205).

The Avaric sword and spear found in the 60 years of the 20th century in the Dabrovica River in Suhopoljska Borova dates back to the end of the 8th or the beginning of the 9th century and reflect the Karoling time in this area (Tomičić 1997). Obviously, Virovitica was a historical site much earlier than the first written record of it in 1234.

In the 13th century, Virovitica is one of the larger towns in this part of Croatia, after the privilege of herceg Koloman (Adamić 1986: 113), in a constant rise. Virovitica is proclaimed a town, and its residents, with the right to vote, have each year the right to elect their own judge (vilicus). With this charter, citizens gain greater freedom and authority in relation to real estate sales. This directly influenced the development of craftsmanship and unhindered trading. It was logical because of its extraordinary geographic location, at the intersection of the east-west, but also north-west. Panonia has been in the common state with Hungary since the 12th

century. The road "via magna" that led across the Drava to Hungary, passing near Virovitica, and came to the Adriatic Sea. Virovitica was known in the 13th century as the royal possession of the Hungarian queen, Queen Mary, after the death of herceg Koloman.⁶ In addition, Virovitica was in the 13th century the seat of the county, which was associated with the owner of the manor.

Churches in Medieval Virovitica

The development of Virovitica was influenced by: traffic connections, general situation and development of cities from the 12th century in Europe, economic growth and trade development, faster communication, power and prestige of feudal people. Under these circumstances we also note the arrival of the Franciscans, church rows of the Friars Minor. They build a church and monastery here in the 13th century, during the time of Queen Mary (Cvekan 1977: 62; Andrić 2006: 46). Archaeological excavation revealed a part of the foundations of the medieval church, established its location, and started only one subject that required a continuation of research, but also the involvement of experts (historians, art historians). The written sources mention the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Monastery of the Friars Minor in Virovitica in 1280 (Cvekan 1977: 20, 63; Andrić 2006: 44). The cause is the excommunication of the church community due to the non-payment of church tithing. Because the Virovitica estate belonged to the Hungarian queens, Mary and then Elizabeth, it was commonly believed that the church and monastery had been raised by Mary, although it is an important role and Elizabeth. In any case it was one of the oldest monasteries in the Zagreb Custody. The church appears for the first time in 1280. In written sources, confirmed by the archaeological finds found in 2012. When excavating the remnants of the medieval church from the 13th century. The Dominican row in Virovitica comes some time later, in 1290. When the church of the Holy Savior was mentioned (Cvekan 1977: 28; Andrić 2006: 43). Parish church of St. Kuzma and Damian are mentioned in written sources in 1334 (Cvekan 1977: 116; Andrić 2006: 43). However, Virovitica also mentions the home for the poor with the chapel of St. Nicholas (Adamček 1986: 115). With the fort and the three churches we

⁶The Queen of Mary is the wife of King Bela IV and she inherited the Virovitica estate. After that, the same estate was succeeded by Queen Elizabeth.

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can assume the appearance of the medieval town of Wereuche. It was a royal possession, and high dignitaries were here.

In the church territorial organization she belonged to the Zagreb Diocese, the archdeaconry Gušće.⁷ The Zagreb Diocese managed this part of Slavonia through the Zborni kaptol in Čazma. The archdeaconry from Čazma had some possessions in Gušće and neighboring archdeaconry from Vaška in Virovitica-Podravina county in the period from 1232. to 1549. (Štrk 2012: 7,24). In the Middle Ages, archdeaconry were counted by a relatively large number of parishes, which leads us to rich religious life and dates back to the 13th century.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUPERVISION

The West Facade of the Church of St. Rok

Works on the waterproofing of the foundation of the parish church of St. Rok were made in two stages. In the first phase, in May 2012, archaeological attention was carried out in the western part. On that occasion, the basic construction rates were excavated in front of the western entrance to the church (Fig. 1.).



Figure1. Construction Rates in Front of the West Entrance to the Church of St. Rok

They belonged to the foundation of the building that continues under the present church. The foundations appear at a depth of 0.70-0.80 m. They are in line with the church of St.Rok, except in the area of the main door, where there are two square protrusions, like a building rate, built of broken stone and bricks. They are 1.90 m long, 2.50 m wide and 3.00 m apart. In the southwestern part, under the belfry, at a depth of 1.20m, construction with amorphous stones ceases and construction begins with a processed

⁷ Gušće is today's Gačište village in the Suhopolje municipality.

stone of white sandstone. The same stone is visible in the upper part of the belfry is also present in the Virovitica lowland fort where archaeological finds date back to the 15th century (Salajić 2017: 87-89). The square in front of the church was paved so there was no research possible.

The Foundation of the Brick

In the south-east part of the church of St. Rok, at a depth of 0.80 m, the foundation of the brick-built building appears. The bricks are interconnected by plaster. The facility under today's church is also in the east-west direction, but the ground planes do not exactly match. In the absence of archaeological finds we assume that it belonged to the churches from the 15th to the 16th centuries. It was a temporary building that, like all the churches in Virovitica, was destroyed with the arrival of the Ottomans in these areas. In the southern part of the church at a depth of 0.70m, another foundation of the brick-built building is emerging. Its length is 13.50 m and has a slightly smaller deflection, than 1.00 m in the east. The tunnel was found in the central part of the southern facade of the church, just after the removal of the plaster. It has been closed earlier and is connected with the tunnels in the fort (Šegregur 2008:81).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

The foundation of the object constructed from the brick appears in the eastern part of the church very shallow, at a depth of 0.30-0.40 m, a length of 9.20 m and a maximum width of 1.25 m. Ends with a depth of trench of 0,80 m. Here the foundation of the brick is attached to the stone foundation. In this eastern part, a entrance to the crypt was also found, but it was closed with a brick. Thus archaeological excavation found the foundations of the church from the three epochs-evolved Middle Ages, Late Middle Ages and Baroque. Our attention was focused on the stone foundation in the eastern part of the church of St. Rok, which, in agreement with the contractor of construction works, was left for archaeological excavation.⁸The upper layer contained a thick layer of rejected construction material with fragments of

⁸On the intervention of the Conservation Department in Požega, archaeological digging of the protective character of 12 working days with four workers was carried out by Silvija Salajić, archeologist at the City Museum in Virovitica. Technical drawing was made by architect Ljiljana Saraga, geodesist Marijan Jengi, and photographer Božo Turkalj.

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new and late medieval ceramics, iron and glass. Human bones were also found here, mostly dislocated. We found eight graves. The skeletons were laid in the direction of east-west, sometimes in wooden coffins, of which the remaining nails were left with the rest of the tree. In the layer with the rejected construction material were found Grave 1, Grave 2 and 3 and partly Grave 4, Grave 5 and 6, while in the lower layer, digged Grave 7 and 8.

Stone Foundation

The stone foundation belongs to the Romanesque church, located in the eastern part of the church of St. Rok, in a small space between the two foundations. On the south side, the stone foundation is embedded in the base of the brick, where a deflection is 1,25m from today's church. With a deeper digging, a gradual stone foundation was discovered, built of hewn stone, connected to live lime. In the northeastern part of the church of St. Rok excavation was affected by the entrance to the crypt, an integral part of baroque construction, with a still preserved nearby morgue, which is today a barber shop (Fig.2).



Figure2. Archaeological Excavation in the Eastern Part of The Church of St. Rok

The Graves from the Time of the New Era

Archaeological excavation confirmed the existence of cemeteries around the church. Many dislocated bones have been found.⁹Graves 2 and 3 (skulls only) at depths of 1.50 m and

⁹In 1782. Austro-Hungarian emperor Josip II. publishes "IMITAT" - The Imperial Cemetery Order and Cryptum. This decree prohibits burial of dead at cemeteries near church and crypts. Under this new law, cemeteries must be at least 300 steps away from the church and the settlement.

Graves 5 and 6 were found, partially preserved, at the same depth of 1.50 m but in the northern part of the probe. In the rejected construction material it was not possible to find the grave attachments, but its contents (building material, glazed ceramics, horseshoes) points to the time of the new era, which certainly belonged to the skeleton.

Medieval Graves and Stone Foundation

The stone foundation is 2.50 m in height, 1.40 m in width below and 2.00 m in the upper part, where it was partially destroyed by digging the excavator. Nevertheless, a foundation is preserved in which the larger coarsely chiselled stones in the upper part were identified, the monolithic stone in the central and less amorphous stones below it. Everything ends, actually begins with tiny, flat stones upright laid on a land where archeological finds cease (Fig.3).



Figure3. The Foundation of the Brick, the Stone Foundation and Closed the Entrance to the Crypt

Grave 1 was still found in a layer in the rejected construction material, while Grave 4 was found near the stone foundations with the finds of bronze jewelry with a S loop and stone plastics, late medieval ceramics and a dislocated skeleton. In the lowest layer two graves were laid in the east-west direction. One of them, Grave 7, had 6 silver coins-slavonski banovac. The coins were dating this archaeological place in the 13th century.

Grave of a Child (Grave 1)

Findings

- object with bended ends of iron –buckle
- bead of bone
- object with holes of bone
- fragments of handle of knife of iron with rivets

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- razor of iron
- the nail, made in minting
- wedge of iron for coffin

The children's skeleton in Grave 1 was found 0.95 m away from a stone foundation at a depth of 1.40m in a layer of waste construction material. The skeleton, with well-preserved bones, is laid in the direction of the east, with a view to the east. Anthropological analysis has established the age of 3-4 years.¹⁰ Attachments in the grave are dislocated, only buckles and bead found near the head.¹¹

Grave 4

Findings

- a bronze S-shaped loop
- a fragment of stone plastic
- fragments of ceramic pots and of the oven

Grave 4 is a wrecked grave, located at the stone foundation, right next to him. In the upper part, the square shape of the grave was clearly seen. At a depth of 1,70m, a bronze S-shaped loop was found (Fig.4).



Figure4. A Bronze S-Shaped Loop-Attachments In Grave 4

In the layer with waste building material where brick is prevalent, fragments of stone have also been found. It is interesting that the brick and bones retained a lot of moisture, which contained a closed burial, which unfortunately

¹⁰Dr. sc. Mario Šlaus and associates from the Anthropological Center of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb made anthropological analysis.

¹¹The skeleton disorder emerged in the medieval times, at the time of burial, because it was most important to be in the vicinity of the church (Demo 2007:51).

was not preserved. Important finds of stone plastics were found in a bunch of brick fragments mixed with earth. In the lower part of the grave, at a depth of 1,70-2,10 m, a dislocated skeleton is found with preserved skull and smaller dislocated bones. At the bottom are found fragments of ceramic pots and stoves, stone and bricks, preserved in fragments. Also the hewn, flat stone of larger dimensions, found in the southern part of the grave, and processed stone in the eastern part.¹²

Graves 7 and 8

Significant graves 7 and 8 were found to be found only 30 centimeters of the Romanesque church, at a depth of 2.50m. Both skeletons are placed side by side east-west with east facing views.

Grave 7

Findings

- bent wire of iron
- a fragment of a small, bronze ring
- a nail of iron with a fragment of wood

Grave 7 is not entirely preserved. The best preserved is skull, partial chest and left upper arm, right thigh and lower leg, while the right forearm is dislocated. The remains of the grave were not noticed, but the nail with the rest of the wood pointed to a burial in a wooden coffin. The skeleton belongs to a woman aged 20 to 25 years. The attachment is a curved wire of smaller dimensions of iron, 2.5 cm long, on the right side of the skull, and a smaller fragment of the bronze ring in the area of the neck (Fig.5).



Figure5. Processed Perforated Bone -Attachments in Grave 1

¹²It is possible that the rough stone was a stone base from which it was subsequently separated.

Grave 8

Findings

- coins - 6 pcs (silver)
- piece of black animal skin
- wedge for closure coffin (iron)

Grave 8 contains a skeleton of men, exceptionally tall but very poorly preserved bones.¹³The deceased is laid on his back with his arms extended to the body, with his right hand on the pelvis. On the inside of the right lacquer are coins, placed one above the other. The coins were probably in a smaller leather bag because it was a piece of black skin (size 0.8x1 cm) along with coins (Fig.6). Both graves placed in the coffin one to the other should be watched together, especially if it is a married couple, apparently very wealthy and respectable, who deserved to be buried right next to the church (Demo 2007: 50) (Fig.7).



Figure 6. Graves 7 and 8 along the stone foundation



Figure 7. Avers of silver coins-slavonski banovac-attachments in Grave 8

¹³The man at the time of death was over 50 years old.

Entrance to the Crypt

The stone foundation of the Romanesque church is located next to the entrance to the crypt. Initially, the baroque church had two entrances to the crypt. One on the east side of the church, and the other on the east side, below the main altar. The crypt is linked to the morgue, which is still preserved, today serving as a barbershop. Before the Second World War, the entrance to the crypt was closed.

Elected Archaeological Finds from the Graves

Finds from Grave 1

The only finding on the skull was an iron object, such as a buckle, bent 6 cm long, probably a constituent part of an object that was in function of ornaments on the head. Along with the skull was also found a small bead of 1 cm in length and 1 cm wide, of organic matter, of bones. Of course, the best attention is paid to the treated bone with perforations (Fig.5). It was found far from the child's skeleton, on its southern side, but in touch with the Grave 4. The object of the treated bone is 10 cm long, 2-3 cm wide, it has been damaged and has perforations of 1 cm in diameter. This item was used to make a crown for prayer. The small balls were tied together and formed the whole (Fehring 2004: 261).

A Bronze S-Shaped Loop from Grave 4

At the excavation of the Romanesque church of St. Mary was found only one S-shaped loop. It is a typical piece of jewelry belonging to the Bjelobrdska culture. This culture lived in Croatia in the area between the Drava and Sava in the period from the first half of the 11th century to the end of the 13th century. It was named after the eponymous site of Bijelo Brdo near Osijek. Various types of earrings, rings, necklaces, pendants, but also weapons and tools, ceramic pots and coins are found in skeletal graves. In our area, a necropolis was investigated at the Veliko polje site in Zvonimirovo in the 90s of the 20th century and at Josipovo near Slatina. The small S-shaped loop rarely appeared alone, usually with several of them, along with earrings. Bronze S-shaped loop, bigger in diameter, but weaving wire, like ours from the excavation of the church of St. Rok are characteristic of the earlier period of the Middle Ages, and are typical of the local workshops (Petrinec 2009:236). We are dating it in the 9th or 10th century. At that time Slavonia was an independent principality, in Trpimirović's power (Tomičić 1997:81). He is a testimony of the

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medieval Virovitica and its particular special importance.

Coin-Slavonski Banovac in Grave 8

Finding money in a male grave is extremely important for dating graves and a site (Fig. 7). It is a group of six silver coins belonging to the slavonski banovac. Four denars and two halfdenars date back to the 13th century.¹⁴ The money originates from the time of Stjepan V (1270-1272.), so we got the exact data. These coins are the only examples in Virovitica and are important for national numismatics (Mirnik 1986: 107). The forcing of slavonski banovac begins for the rule of Bela IV. (1235-1270), and ends during Ludovik I (1342-1382) (Göricke Lukić 2009:99), first in Pakrac until 1260, then in Zagreb (Göricke Lukić 2009: 99). They were respected in central Europe for the sake of purity of silver (Dolenec 1993: 17). Finding slavonski banovac in Virovitica means much more than the exact date. It is a confirmation of the medieval Wereuche, but also the way to finding a money making workshop in Virovitica.

Stone Plastic

One piece of stone plastic was found in the destroyed Grave 4, along with waste construction material, at a depth of 1.90 m. A harmonious look, smaller dimensions 4-7cm wide, 8 cm high and 5 cm thick, made of stone sand stone. It is obviously a semi-detached part of the architectural ensemble of the interior or exterior of the church. Stone plastic probably belonged to the upper part of the pillar. When constructing the church of St. Rok from 1746-1750. romanesque columns were found and built into the interior of the church, as a spolij (Fig. 8).



Figure 8. Romanesque pillar built in the baroque church of St. Rok in Virovitica

¹⁴I would like to thank Zdenko Burkowski for his help in cleaning of coins and and by purchasing literature.

Their place of discovery is unknown. It is about stone capitals with columns at the turn of the romanesque to gothic from the second half of the 13th century (A. Horvat 1986:351). A column of height of 0.70m is kept upside down and served as a support for the shell with holy water.

The Stone Foundation of the Square Shape

The excavated stone foundation belongs to the romanesque church. It shows a solid construction of a larger and smaller stone. The foundation is not free in space, because on the southern side continues the foundation of brick.¹⁵ In the north part there is an entrance to the crypt. The upper part of the stone foundation, by the foundation of today's church, was destroyed during construction works. From the profile it is seen that it has a slightly stepwise shape (Žile 2003:186). The foundation is massive so it may be a tower or tower bell, which could serve as a church entrance. The stone foundation continues under today's church so it is not possible to continue digging. We can safely say that it is a romanesque church of St. Mary for whom there are written documents. The coins from the grave determines the church's date in the 13th century, although the S-loop shows an earlier date. The often mentioned church of St. Mary and the monastery were here until the middle of the 16th century, when this area conquered the Ottomans. Virovitica remained in the Ottoman Empire for 137 years.

CONCLUSION

Waterproofing works and archaeological digging on the baroque church of St. Rok in Virovitica in 2012. discovered the foundations of older buildings. The youngest one belongs to the baroque building (18th century) and consists of the entrance to the crypt, in the northeastern part, that was closed before the second world war, 1941. Previously it was a church with brick foundation, which has a slight deflection from the present church and probably dates back to the 15th / 16th century. The oldest foundation with roughly treated stone belongs to the church of St. Mary 13th Century, and was in the middle of the eastern façade. The Romanesque affiliation confirmed the grave with medieval coins (slavonski banovac) from the grave very close the foundation of the church. Archaeological digging in the eastern part of the foundation of

¹⁵The brick wall in this part has the greatest deflection of the present, baroque church.

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the church of St. Rok found eight graves belonging to the period of late middle age and period of new Age. The skeletons were laid in the east-west direction, laid in wooden coffins, of which the remaining nails were left with the rest of the wood. The top layer contained a thicker layer with waste construction material with fragments of new and late medieval ceramics, iron and glass. Here, human bones were found, mostly dislocated.

The stone foundation was found at 2.50 in depth, 2.00 m wide, made of roughly treated stone connected with lime. In the upper part there are larger pieces of stone, while in the lower part, the small stones are laid upright. In the central part is a massive, monolithic stone. The most significant are graves 1, 4, 7 and 8. The children's skeleton-Grave 1 contains the following findings: treated bone with perforations, an iron knife handle, razor blade, ironwork. Grave 4 contained a bronze S-loop and fragments of stone plastic. Graves 7 and 8 were buried in the sand, right next to the foundation. The male skeleton contained silver coins (slavonski banovac) laid on the right lacquer, and the female skeleton, Grave 7 had a fragment of iron wire earrings that belonged to a earring of the bjelobrdska culture.

The stone foundation is slightly graded, filled, so we consider it to belong to a square apse or tower (bell tower). Its continuation is under today's church so it is not possible to excavate it. This foundation of the 13th century romanesque church belongs to the church of St. Mary, known in written sources. The pillars of this church are located in the interior of the baroque church of St. Rok in Virovitica. The archaeological digging has established the location of the Romanesque church and obtained accurate data.

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