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## REVISITING CHRONOLOGY ISSUES IN RAVANICA

*Abstract:* The article deals with chronology issues of Ravanica, the monastery with two parts of fortified walls, precincts and katholikon, but also with dating wall paintings in the nave, narthex, and tower chapel. Paucity of sources, flawed documentation and insufficient research complicate these issues. After new perusal of sources, material and fieldwork the author argues the process of the monastery formation and decoration took longer than is usually thought.

*Key words:* Ravanica, Prince Lazar, Princess Milica, regency, joint ktetorship, fortified monastery

Monastery Ravanica, one of the most distinctive monuments of medieval Serbia,<sup>1</sup> is situated by the eponymous river, at foothills of the Kučaj mountains.<sup>2</sup> Its monastic precincts are now much devastated due to turbulent past, comprising partly restored fortifications, the meagre remains of cells and refectory, and the lavish katholikon (fig. 1a).<sup>3</sup> The chronology of multiple phases for its erection and decoration is vague due to paucity of sources, but is also complicated by flawed documentation and insufficiency of research.

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<sup>1</sup> The selected bibliography unveils both complexity of the research and array of opinions on various issues, cf. В. Р. Петковић, *Манастир Раваница*, Београд 1922; Б. Вуловић, *Раваница. Њено место и њена улога у сакралној архитектури Поморавља* (Саопштења VII), Београд 1966; В. Ј. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, Београд 1974, 92–95, 221–222; В. Ристић, *Моравска архитектура*, Крушевац 1996, 37–40, 225–226; М. Беловић, *Раваница. Историја и сликарство*, Београд 1999; Т. Стародубцев, *Српско зидно сликарство у земљама Лазаревића и Бранковића. Књига I*, Београд 2016, passim; *ibidem II*, 31–48.

<sup>2</sup> For the toponym, see М. Belović Hodge, *Ravanica – Prince Lazar's Mausoleum Church: Its Name Reconsidered*, *Byzantinoslavica* 61.1 (2003) 205–228.

<sup>3</sup> For one significant description of the monastery from *Life of Prince Lazar*, written by unknown monk in Ravanica, see Ст. Новаковић, *Нешто о кнезу Лазару*, Гласник СУД XXI (1867) 160–111; Ђ. Sp. Radojičić, *Antologija stare srpske književnosti (XI–XVIII veka)*, Београд 1960, 117–118; Ђ. Трифуновић, *Српски средњовековни списи о кнезу Лазару и Косовском боју*, Крушевац 1968, 96–98; Раваничанин I, *Житије светог кнеза Лазара*, Списи о Косову, пр. М. Грковић, Београд 1993, 122–123.

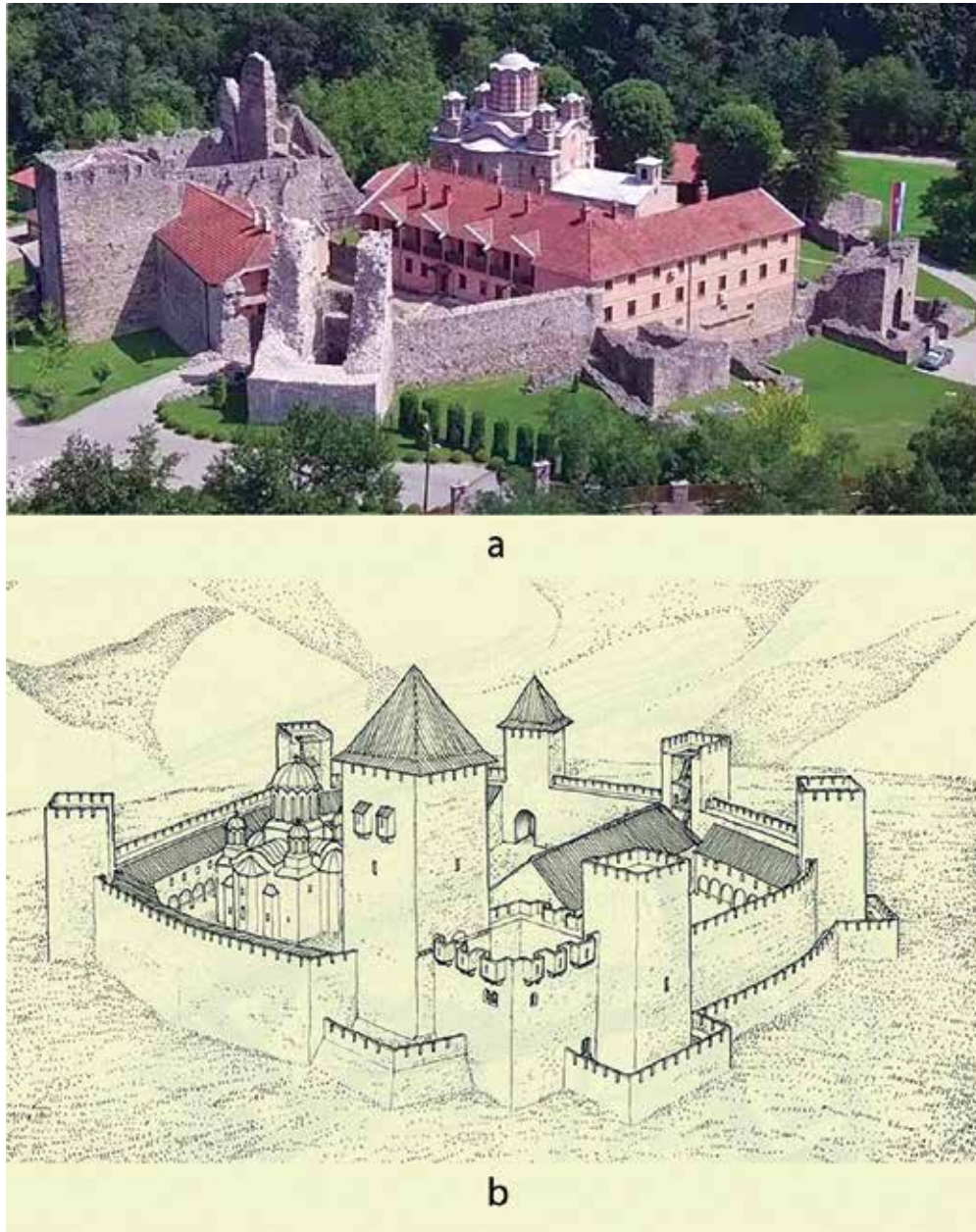


Fig. 1. Monastery Ravanica: a. actual state; b. reconstruction  
Сл. 1 Манастир Раваница: а. садашње стање; б. реконструкција

The founding charter of Knez Lazar (1371–1389) is preserved only in three later copies, generally regarded as transcripts with minor differences in content,<sup>4</sup> but which, however, display anomalies compared to his other acts, contain unusual form of signatures and two different dates, 1376/7 and 1380/1, which is why Ćirković considered them to be formally forgeries.<sup>5</sup> Despite that he argues they reflect contents of original, probably being compilation of the separate acts of Lazar and the then patriarchs, while transcripts possibly follow the charter text, transposed later perhaps on a narthex wall. This intricate reconstruction of various forms of the Ravanica charter text corroborates a document of Patriarch Arsenije III from May 25 1689, featuring a segment from the lost original.<sup>6</sup> The charter tells on how Lazar founds the monastery and endows it with numerous estates without specifying time of erection for any part of the complex.

Notwithstanding transcripts' reliability, this charter does not inform when was the church erected and frescoed, as neither in the monastic complex there are extant inscriptions with data of the sort, nor do such clues exist in any other known source. Different dates in the transcripts, as Ćirković sees it, reveal two consecutive versions of the charter, the earlier which is shorter and the later longer, with appropriate patriarchal sequel certificates, now also lost. The former, issued in 1376/7 during the first mandate of Patriarch Jefrem (1375–1379), was actually amended by the latter in 1380/1 with new estates from the Danube region, which was possible only after 1380 because it was then that Lazar had subdued theretofore autonomous local governors.<sup>7</sup>

Due to such a lack of sources scholars rely on existing dates from aforementioned charter transcripts and posit that building of Ravanica could have started in 1377 and be ended in 1381. Such a simplified reasoning neglects the fact that these years come from charter versions from ca 1700 which makes details therein fairly dubious,<sup>8</sup> that longer time was needed to erect walls and other parts in the complex (fig. 1b), and that dates in medieval charters sometimes do

<sup>4</sup> Cf. A. Младеновић, *Повеље кнеза Лазара. Текст, коментари, снимци*, Београд 2003, 49–108.

<sup>5</sup> С. Ћирковић, *Раваничка хрисовуља*, Манастир Раваница 1381–1981. Споменица о шестој стогодишњици, Београд 1981 (= Споменица), 69–82. Cf. Ф. Баришић, *О повељама кнеза Лазара и патријарха Спиридона*, ЗФФ XII-1 (1974) 367–371.

<sup>6</sup> I. Суботић, *Писмени споменици* (1. Писмено Архи–Епископа Пекскогъ Арсенија Чернојевића, у комъ се манастиру Раваницы одъ Кнеза Лазара дарована притяжанія изчисляваю, и сохраняванъ исты препоручуе), Сербскій лѣтопись 80/1 (1848) 63–67; Г. Витковић, *Споменици из Будимског и Пеитанског архива. Збирка четврта*, Гласник СУД 2-ги одељак. Грађа за новију српску историју. Књига шеста (1875) 185–188, бр. 61.

<sup>7</sup> The old chronicles provide different years, from 1376 to 1382, cf. Љ. Стојановић, *Стари српски родослови и летописи*, Ср. Карловци 1927, 214, 287. М. Orbini makes mention of Lazar crushing Radič (Rastislalić) only in the introductory chapter on Knez Lazar, without chronological references, cf. М. Orbini, *Il regno degli Slavi*, Pesaro 1601, 311; М. Орбин, *Краљевство Словена*, Београд 1968, 93, 329. Also, cf. М. Динић, *Растислалѣћи. Прилог историји распадања српског царства*, ЗРВИ 2 (2003) 139–144.

<sup>8</sup> Enigmatic nature of these transcripts is also pointed at in С. Ћирковић, *Повеље кнеза Лазара и његова канцеларија*, Стари српски архив II (2003) 207–215.

not match erection processes, as witnessed by the first charter for Dečani (1330), followed by the second in 1331, and the third in 1343/5, while the building of the church proper, started in 1327, was finished only in 1334/5.<sup>9</sup> However, scholars tend to date founding Ravanica even earlier,<sup>10</sup> using a chronicle from September 28, 1764, which claims that after the state synod, held in 1375, “the Serbian Emperor Lazar decided to erect monastery Ravanica to glory of God, a temple of the Ascension of Christ”.<sup>11</sup> This text is one of the least reliable in its kind, as it features such folk legends as is phantasy that King Vukašin murdered Tsar Uroš, which is why, Ćirković argues, it should be discarded.<sup>12</sup> On the contrary, this pseudo-historical source was not only used but was interpolated,<sup>13</sup> and in “enriched” guise widely quoted in the form that Lazar “immediately after the state synod decided to build monastery Ravanica”, as if there were any substantial difference between the dates of 1375 and 1377.<sup>14</sup>

But the idea that intention for building Ravanica might coincide with the synod perfectly fit with a hypothesis on origin of the so-called Morava School of the late medieval architecture in Serbia: the unusually lush outlook of some buildings was brought in connection with the alleged synod decisions and political orientation of leading aristocrats and clergymen,<sup>15</sup> as well as with impact of façade decoration of the churches in Peć.<sup>16</sup> These farfetched assumptions led to even less grounded construction with seemingly robust methodological frame, built on the conviction the architectural corpus of the period was one linear development.<sup>17</sup> Such a formalistic approach was counteracted by research based on overall historical and artistic context enabling the sober insight of churches in the Lazarević realm as works of art dependent on the both tradition and function.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the Ravanica katholikon stands out as main royal edifice of a

<sup>9</sup> Б. Тодић, М. Чанак-Медић, *Манастир Дечани*, Музеј у Приштини – Београд 2005, 16–21.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Ђ. Стричевић, *Хронологија раних споменика Моравске школе*, Старијар V-VI (1956) 116; Вуловић, *Раваница*, 33.

<sup>11</sup> For this chronicle see П. С. Срећковић, *Историја царен сербских и племенџ и лози и порекла њ кџда се беше повела и ојконча се*, Гласник СУД XXI (1867) 257.

<sup>12</sup> Ћирковић, *Раваничка хрисовуља*, 82.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. В. Ј. Ђурић, *Српски државни сабори у Пећи и црквено градитељство*, О кнезу Лазару, ур. И. Божић, В. Ј. Ђурић, Београд 1975, 106.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. cf. Беловић, *Раваница*, 47; Стародубцев, *Српско зидно сликарство. Књига II*, 31, н. 98.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. V. Korać, *Les origines de l'architecture de l'école de la Morava*, Моравска школа и њено доба, ур. В. Ј. Ђурић, Београд 1972, 157–168 (= *Извори Моравске архитектуре*, Између Византије и Запада, Београд 1987, 131–144); Ђурић, *Српски државни сабори*, 105–121.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. В. Ј. Ђурић, *Настанак градитељског стила Моравске школе. Фасаде, систем декорације, пластика*, ЗЛУМС 1 (1965) 35–64; Ђ. Бошковић, *О сликаној декорацији на фасадама Пећке патријаршије*, Старијар XVIII (1968) 91–100.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Ристић, *Моравска архитектура*, 47–78 with a theory of gradual development of coefficients of the church ground plans with alleged chronological interdependence, often opposed to what historical sources provide.

<sup>18</sup> И. Стевовић, *Архитектура Моравске Србије: локална градитељска школа или епилог водећих токова позновизантијског градитељског стварања*, ЗРВИ XLIII

new monarch who fought hard for his own legitimacy among regional lords of the time: on one hand, he got support of high clergy, on the other, had to overcome series of obstacles.<sup>19</sup> The most convincing test for the Balkan overlords was how the Ragusans would set them within their perspective, as they never recognised Lazar as undisputed leader of other lords of the former state or sole heir of Nemanids. When in 1383 they began acknowledging his powerful role, the negotiations to get their earlier trade privileges were being prolonged to as late as 1386, and when Lazar had finally issued the charter in 1387, he was only one of the four regional lords with whom Dubrovnik was settling the same matters.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, his lavish endowments, the court church at Kruševac and mausoleum Ravanica, were not possible ca 1371 when his rise began, since both reflect his high achievements, defeat of Nikola Altomanović in 1373, birth of his elder son in 1377 and conquer of the North ca 1380. A quote from the aforementioned chronicle does reveal significance of the very site where the newly built monastery stood: “По семъ собору Лазарь Царь серьски изволи создати обитель Раваницъ, на славу божію; храмъ вознесеніе Христова во держави кнежевства Браничевскаго”,<sup>21</sup> since the statement it is located “in the region of principality Braničevo” implies these lands once were separate entity.<sup>22</sup>

Due to volatile historical context, such a grand monastery equipped with thick walls, high towers and richly decorated five-domed church with subsequently erected narthex, warns that its buildup must have taken much effort and time.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, this paper argues that dates provided by transcripts of the Ravanica charter refer to formal founding and twofold endowing of estates, not to its erection or completion, as the buildup of the complex might have started even earlier than 1377. This also means all the works could not be finished by 1381, and that frescoes in the church, narthex, and tower cannot be dated to 1385/7, as is usually thought. The complex, apart from the church, is in a neglected state, from dozens of archeological finds being scattered within towers, to decaying frescoes in the tower chapel, and almost fully destroyed inscription from the keep's outer wall. Due to improper storage of artifacts, lack of updated documentation for wall paintings, and various issues of the nave and narthex, a new project will address all these.<sup>24</sup>

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(2006) 231–253; J. Bogdanović, *Triconch Churches Sponsored by the Serbian and Wallachian Nobility*, Byzantium in Eastern European Visual Culture in the Late Middle Ages, ed. M. A. Rossi, A. I. Sullivan, Leiden – Boston 2020, 167–199.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. P. Михальчић, *Лазар Хребельановић – историја, култ, предање*, Београд 1989.

<sup>20</sup> For an insightful survey of various issues of the period, see С. Ћирковић, *Старе и нове контроверзе о кнезу Лазару и Србији уочи Косовске битке*, ЗМСИ 42 (1990) 7–16.

<sup>21</sup> Срећковић, *Историја царен серьских*, 257.

<sup>22</sup> For Braničevo region, see М. Динић, *Браничево у средњем веку*, Српске земље у средњем веку. Историјско-географске студије, пр. С. Ћирковић, Београд 1978, 84–112.

<sup>23</sup> For analysis of complex political situation amidst international relations of the time, see С. Ћирковић, *Косовска битка у међународном контексту*, Глас САНУ CCCLXXVIII/9 (1996) 49–68.

<sup>24</sup> *Monastery Ravanica: archaeology, fortifications, church, wall paintings* has been filed as project No. 272/2022 the part of the research programme of the Regional Museum

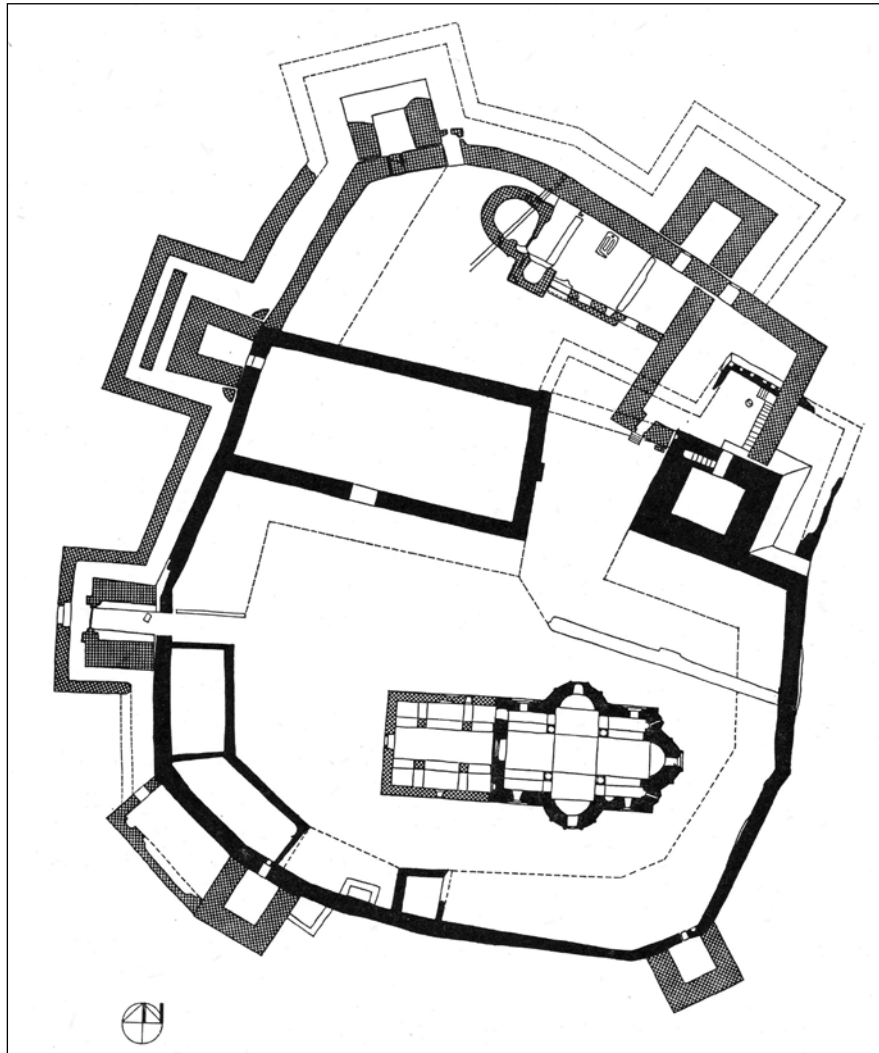


Fig. 2. Monastery Ravanica (ground plan with building phases)

Сл. 2 Манастир Раваница (основа с грађевинским фазама)

One of reasons for starting this project is because results of archaeological excavations in the complex were never fully published. Important results of research and conservation works of the church and narthex, carried out by Vulović from 1956 to 1962, are given in his book but without exhaustive docu-

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Jagodina. Some issues were raised in Б. Цветковић, *Вук Лазаревић у писаним и ликовним изворима*, Средњи век у српској науци, историји, књижевности и уметности XII, ур. Г. Јовановић, Деспотовац 2022, 60–68.



Fig. 3. Monastery Ravanica, katholikon (northern aspect)

Сл. 3 Манастир Раваница, храм (северни изглед)

menation for fragments of architectural sculpture.<sup>25</sup> Later surveys do not provide any better material,<sup>26</sup> as, for instance, the marble spolia from a tower wall has never been studied, except for a short mention.<sup>27</sup> The systematic excavations of large area of courtyard, lasting from 1967 to 1971, were followed by two brief reports,<sup>28</sup> and later by the longer one with data on the newly found objects, ceramic fragments and a bowl, with only one ground plan of discoveries in the north section (fig. 2).<sup>29</sup> However informative, these reports are conceived as preliminary and therefore full chronology remains unresolved, which means that all of the metal, ceramic, and stonework finds are yet to be studied, protected, and published.

<sup>25</sup> Вуловић, *Раваница*, 157–160, 179, Т. XXVI–XXX.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. J. Максимовић, *Српска средњовековна скулптура*, Нови Сад 1971, 121–127; Н. Катанић, *Декоративна камена пластика моравске школе*, Београд 1988, 62–89.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Катанић, *op. cit.*, 89, сл. 41.

<sup>28</sup> D. Madas, *Manastir Ravanica*, AP 11 (1969) 236–238; idem, *Lazaret, manastir Ravanica i ravanička pećina – srednjevekovno manastirsko utvrđenje i kovačnica*, AP 12 (1970) 183–185.

<sup>29</sup> Д. Мадас, *Археолошки радови у манастиру Раваници (1967–1971)*, Саопштења X (1974) 77–85.

These issues affect the chronology of heavily ruined fortifications.<sup>30</sup> Conservation works from 1960s led to partial restoration of the walls and towers, but also to new data that fortified walls were actually built in two distinct phases (fig. 2).<sup>31</sup> The earlier comprised the keep and the inner walled perimeter, while the later had all the other towers, and both were being dated to the end of 14<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>32</sup> There is also a not well founded opinion opposing the essential dating which argues that both the keep and church belong to a much earlier period.<sup>33</sup> Additionally built tower adjacent to the keep blocks its former main façade with entrance and enormous title of the ktetor ruler.<sup>34</sup> Descriptions of this fortified monastery are either simple,<sup>35</sup> or imply symbolism of seven towers, but fail to stress that dates of their erection were different.<sup>36</sup> The more recent publications acknowledge insufficient research of the fort,<sup>37</sup> while some do not include Ravanica at all.<sup>38</sup> As there were no attempts to date additional fort, it is noteworthy that Ćurčić presumes the newer towers postdate the Ottoman attack from 1398,<sup>39</sup> as was recorded by chronicles.<sup>40</sup> In spite of that, forensic clues at the juncture of the keep and adjacent tower reveal it early suffered major cracks, which is why the supports were built to sustain it. It is not clear whether this intervention was simultaneous with erection of the tower from the north of the keep. It could have been damaged by the Ottomans or due to shallow foundations, combined with the ground subsidence, landslide or earthquake. In any given circumstance, buildup of new walls and towers must have proceeded well into the 15<sup>th</sup> C.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. A. Дероко, *Средњовековни градови у Србији, Црној Гори и Македонији*, Београд 1950, 88–89, 133–134, 138; Вуловић, *Раваница*, 130.

<sup>31</sup> Б. Вуловић, *Архитектура Раванице*, Споменица, 19–32.

<sup>32</sup> С. Поповић, *Крст у кругу. Архитектура манастира у средњовековној Србији*, Београд 1994, 212–217.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Р. Прокић, *Средњовековна архитектура Петрушке области*, Крагујевац 1988, 34–41, 53–55.

<sup>34</sup> М. Поповић, *Утврђења Моравске Србије*, Свети кнез Лазар. Споменица о шестој стогодишњици Косовског боја 1389–1989 (= Свети кнез Лазар), Београд 1989, 78, 83, 85, сл. 4, 6.

<sup>35</sup> В. Кораћ, М. Шупут, *Архитектура византијског света*, Београд 1998, 356–359, 364, 366.

<sup>36</sup> С. Радојчић, *Старо српско сликарство*, Београд 1966, 204; idem, *Идеја о савршеном граду у држави кнеза Лазара и деспота Стефана*, Зограф 32 (2008) 10.

<sup>37</sup> Г. Симић, С. Вукадиновић, *Утврђење манастира Ресаве: од замисли до остварења*, Београд 2018, 57, 223.

<sup>38</sup> Although mentioned in the introductory essay, there is no entry on Ravanica in *Лексикон градова и тргова средњовековних српских земаља: према писаним изворима*, ред. С. Мишић, Београд 2010, 13, 233–235, unlike the fortified monastery Resava, which was conceived on the Ravanica pattern.

<sup>39</sup> S. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent*, New Haven – London 2010, 632–633, fig. 736.

<sup>40</sup> И. Руварац, *О кучајинским манастирима по записима (I. Манастир Раваница)*, Старица 3/5 (1888) 76; Стојановић, *Стари српски родослови*, 113, 219–220; Р. Новаковић, *Бранковићев летопис*, Београд 1960, 49.



The most enigmatic part in Ravanica is the tower chapel, almost unanimously referred to as the paracletus of the keep (donjon, pyrgos),<sup>41</sup> or that “the remains of a chapel on the donjon’s second floor belong to the oldest buildings of the complex”.<sup>42</sup> Apart from denials it was a chapel at all, and that remnant of an altar in the wall was actually only one of the originally three such niches,<sup>43</sup> there were assumptions too the chapel was being accessed by stairs through the wall of the keep and that a saint formerly depicted above its entrance was probably the holy patron of the chapel.<sup>44</sup> It is only rarely noted the chapel actually sits in the tower adjacent to the keep, not the keep itself.<sup>45</sup> Its function and position within the newly built tower with a possible residential purpose, as well as its enigmatic relation to the keep due to its altar being dented into the wall of the keep, are still to be explored.

From all of the objects in Ravanica it was the katholikon that attracted most attention of scholars, due to its lavish architecture and wall paintings. The church with its five-domed nave and subsequently built narthex (fig. 3), being the major edifice of Knez Lazar, had crucial role in all previous research which often mingled chronology of the complex with that of the church. As there were parallel building processes during monastery buildup it is not possible to provide one simple dating for Ravanica and therefore the charter transcripts could not contain information for dating its entirety or parts but instead present only the likely date of the monastery founding and of the time when the new properties were assigned to it.

Taking into account all that is known on medieval building techniques,<sup>46</sup> and probability that erection of Ravanica might have begun in 1377, exact date on when the church was finished cannot be determined lightly. Though 1381 is widely accepted, it means it took at least five years for the church to be completed, without narthex. As the large church of Dečani was built in eight years, this presumed time span for Ravanica seems possible, but it could have been longer due to series of reasons, from technical and organizational to demanding construction of five domes and need to produce loads of carved stones, profiled bricks and interlace façade sculpture. The sheer bulk of stonework implies slow processing: there are 18 twisted columns on apses, 65 arches and 3 cornices with hundreds of pieces, 11 window pilasters, 38 window posts, 1 rosette, 19 lunettes, 31 chessboard fields, 2 cross fields, 64 profiled dome jambs, dozens

<sup>41</sup> Б. Живковић, *Конзерваторски радови на живопису манастира Раванице*, Саопштења VIII (1969) 142–143, сл. 4; Н. Антић-Комненовић, *Остаци фресака у кули кнеза Лазара*, ЗНМ VIII (1975) 417–429; eadem, З. Живковић, *Копије фресака из српских средњовековних цркава у рушевинама*, Београд 1980, 44–45, сл. 42, 43; S. Popović, *Pyrgos in the Late Byzantine Monastic Context*, Манастир Жича. Зборник радова, пр. Г. Суботић, Краљево 2000, 107; Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, 632; Т. Стародубцев, *Задужбинарство и ктитори у Србији у доба Лазаревића*, Саопштења XLII (2010) 45.

<sup>42</sup> Вуловић, *Раваница*, 130; idem, *Архитектура Раванице*, 29–30.

<sup>43</sup> Прокић, *op. cit.*, 40.

<sup>44</sup> Поповић, *Крст у кругу*, 215.

<sup>45</sup> Г. Симић, *Донжон куле у фортификацији средњовековних градова*, Београд 2010, 133–134, 146, сл. 79, 80; Стародубцев, *Српско зидно сликарство. Књига II*, 37–38.

<sup>46</sup> R. Ousterhout, *Master Builders in Byzantium*, Princeton 1999.

of profiled parts in pillars of the main dome, and 3 portals with 11 parts.<sup>47</sup> Production of all these materials had to last long and if compared to the building intervals for the monastery churches in Dečani (1327–1334) and Resava (1406–1418), any guesswork for a shorter time for Ravanica buildup seems implausible. Careful processing of façades also took time for its specially conceived segments the meaning of which was to decorate implying the old theological notions of Heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>48</sup> Such strict ideological pattern is found in the very preamble of the Ravanica charter featuring comparison of the newly built church with Tabernacle of Moses and rock of St Peter.<sup>49</sup>

Even more problems appear with dating the narthex which subsequent addition is well attested by archaeological probes, interspaces between nave and narthex, to the broken dado and hollowed-out northern door.<sup>50</sup> Still, some scholars dispute data and believe there was no interval in erection of the two katholikon parts, from the claim that later opened northern door is actually concurrent with the nave,<sup>51</sup> to the conviction that narthex was built at the same time as nave, as is allegedly proved by south joints of walls,<sup>52</sup> which are actually not medieval but belong to partial reconstruction in 1973.<sup>53</sup> Addition of narthexes was a common practice due to various needs,<sup>54</sup> and that this was also the case in Ravanica is obvious in image on the fresco with ktetors, where bond of the two buildings is rather artificial.<sup>55</sup> A redefinition of the Ravanica narthex is needed especially due to recent research which convincingly opposes any connection of Knez Lazar with the Chilandari narthex as its hypothetical model.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>47</sup> For problem of authenticity of portals see Вуловић, *Раваница*, 144–147, Т. XIII, XVI, XVII, XIX; Ј. С. Ђирић, *Портали црква Моравске Србије: архитектура и архитектонски украс*, докторска дисертација, Филозофски факултет, Београд 2014, 71–75, 139; eadem, *Les portails des églises de la Serbie de la Morava. Esquisse historiographique et les possibilités de la recherche*, Artum 2 (2015) 26–27.

<sup>48</sup> Стевовић, *Каленић*; С. Пејић, *Манастир Свети Никола Дабарски*, Београд 2009, 54, 67, сл. 7, 17, 31, 32.

<sup>49</sup> Младеновић, *Повеље кнеза Лазара*, 52, 59, 85, 91–92, 98, 106–107, 109–110.

<sup>50</sup> Вуловић, *Раваница*, 33–34, 67–89, 145, 157–167, 179–180; idem, *Архитектура Раванице*, 22–23; С. Мандић, *Стари раванички нартекс*, Споменица, 33–38. For the rebuilt narthex see М. Ђоровић-Љубинковић, *Даскал јеромонах Стефан Раваничанин*, Рад војвођанских музеја 5 (1956) 73–79; eadem, *Даскал Стефан. Поводом шесте стогодишњице оснивања Раванице*, Споменица, 165–176.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. М. Радужко, *Копорин*, Београд 2006, 245, н. 780.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Стародубцев, *Српско зидно сликарство. Књига II*, 31, н. 100 quoting a graphic illustration from Вуловић, *Раваница*, Т. XXV, which is actually theoretical reconstruction of the walls' joints.

<sup>53</sup> Д. Радуловић, *Један занимљив покушај рестаурације Лазареве припрате у манастиру Раваница*, Гласник ДКС 13 (1989) 78–81.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. N. Stanković, *At the Threshold of the Heavens: the Narthex and Adjacent Spaces in Middle Byzantine Churches of Mount Athos (10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries) – Architecture, Function, and Meaning*, doctoral dissertation, Princeton University 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Ћ. Marinković, *Founder's Model: Representation of a Maquette or the Church?*, ЗРВИ XLIV (2007) 145–152.

<sup>56</sup> Б. Тодић, *Време изградње католиконе и ексонартекса манастира Хиландара*, ХЗ 14 (2018) 147–155 (with bibliography). Cf. V. Božinović, *The Sculptural Decoration of*

More enigmas exist with the establishment of cult of St Romylos, a hermit who spent his last days at a hut in Ravanica vicinity. Exact year of his death is still not known and scholars opt between ca 1375/6 to 1385.<sup>57</sup> What calls for further research is that his tomb with an arcosolium is placed in the south bay of the narthex,<sup>58</sup> but it is not clear whether it is his original burial place or saint's second tomb. Being inserted into the double opening it is plausible to argue it was not simultaneous with the narthex erection. There are also problems with sources since it is claimed that his vita allegedly states that relics of Romylos rest "along those of Lazar",<sup>59</sup> but this can be found e.g. in the aforementioned act of Arsenije III.<sup>60</sup> It has been pointed out that St Gerasimos figure, depicted close to the Romylos' tomb, reflects the passage from the vita,<sup>61</sup> which further analyses corroborate since other frescoes too are connected with the Romylos' cult.<sup>62</sup>

The wall paintings do not provide much information for precise dating of the church, as wide area above entrance to the nave, originally defined for inscription, was either left empty which is not likely or its text mostly vanished in the meantime. Anyway, it seems there were no serious attempts to study this issue properly: apart from brief comments by Nikolić that "illegible inscription is above portal",<sup>63</sup> and by Vulović that "there are remains of text with barely visible letters in 4 upper rows written on 4 lines incised into mortar",<sup>64</sup> Živković firstly says "inscription above the door, now completely erased, provides no clues of its original content",<sup>65</sup> and later that "it has 12 inscribed lines with

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*Chilandar's Outer Narthex*, X3 15 (2021) 101–118, with suggestion that figures of dragons on the parapets putatively symbolize Order of the Dragon.

<sup>57</sup> Л. Павловић, *Култови лица код Срба и Македонаца*, Смедерево 1965, 195–196; А. Радовић, *Синаити и њихов значај у Србији у XIV и XV веку*, Споменица, 116–118; А. М. Talbot, *Romylos*, ODB 3, New York–Oxford 1991, 1812; Кл. Иванова, *Ромил Видински*, Старобългарска литература. Енциклопедичен речник. Второ допуњено издание, ред. Д. Петканова, Велико Търново 2003, 435; А. Rigo, М. Scagra, *La Vita di Romylos da Vidin asceta nei Balcani (1310 ca. – 1376/1380)*, Bruxelles 2022, 44–45.

<sup>58</sup> Б. Кнежевић, *Аркосолији у Хиландару и у српским средњовековним манастирима*, Осам векова Хиландара, ур. В. Кораћ, Београд 2000, 608.

<sup>59</sup> Д. Поповић, *Раванички гроб кнеза Лазара*, Свети кнез Лазар, 179; eadem, *Српски владарски гроб у средњем веку*, Београд 1992, 125 with quotes from Ђ. Сп. Радојичић, *Григорије из Горњака*, ИЧ III (1952) 95 who claims the opposite.

<sup>60</sup> Субботић, *Писменни споменици*, 65; Витковић, *Споменици*, 186.

<sup>61</sup> Беловић, *Раваница*, 152–157. Cf. Е. Bakalova, *Scenes from the Life of St. Gerasimos of Jordan in Ivanovo (A Pictorial Interpretation of the Idea of Restoring Harmony Between Man and the World of Nature)*, ЗЛУМС 21 (1985) 121.

<sup>62</sup> В. Cvetković, *Shrine of Romylos the Blessed in Ravanica: Culminating Focus of His Balkan Paths, Mountains, and Plains*, 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference "Via Egnatia: Peoples and States – Cultural, Political, Regional Identities in the Past and Today". Abstracts of Papers, Tbilisi 2009, 23–25.

<sup>63</sup> Р. Николић, *Прилог за проучавање живописа манастира Раванице*, Саопштења IV (1961) 28, сл. 36).

<sup>64</sup> Вуловић, *Раваница*, 32.

<sup>65</sup> Б. Живковић, *Конзерваторски радови на живопису манастира Раванице*, Саопштења VIII (1969) 142.

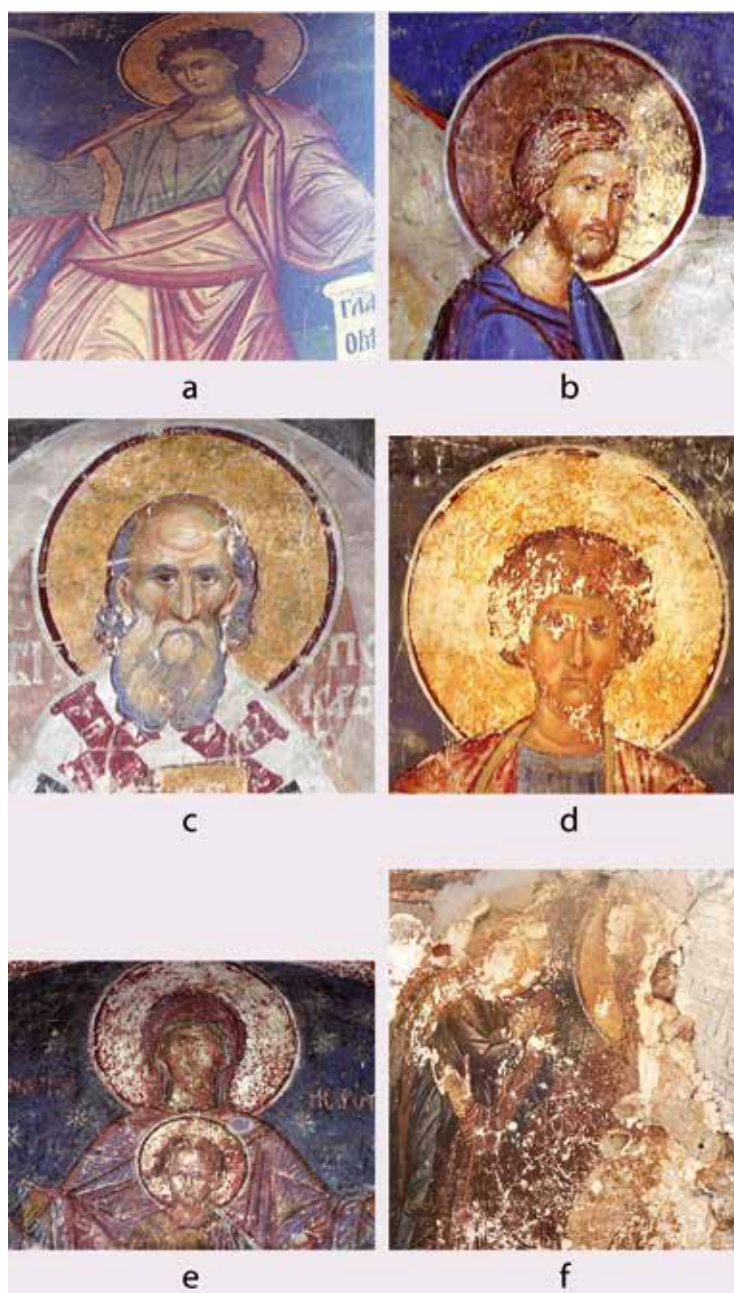


Fig. 4. Wall paintings: a. dome; b. middle zone; c. busts zone; d. first zone; e. narthex; f. tower chapel

Сл. 4 Зидно сликарство: а. купола; б. средња зона; с. попрсја; д. прва зона; е. припрата; ф. параклис



Fig. 5. North-west corner of the nave

Сл. 5 Северо-западни угао наоса

traces of obliterated letters”.<sup>66</sup> Finally Starodubcev notes “that area prepared for an inscription has shallow incised horizontal lines, but it is impossible to ascertain how many and there are no visible traces of letters which probably fell off due to being written on dry mortar”.<sup>67</sup> Instead of devoting more attention to this, much effort was wasted in inventing signature of Konstantin painter, allegedly written on the costume of a holy warrior:<sup>68</sup> this widely accepted belief,<sup>69</sup> was later refuted as perusal showed that several random lines only resembled forms of letters.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Б. Живковић, *Раваница. Цртежи фресака*, Београд 1990, 33–34, 36–37, бр. 22.

<sup>67</sup> Т. Стародубцев, *Писани извори о црквама и манастирима подизаним или обнављаним у областма Лазаревића и Бранковића I. Ктиторски натписи*, Саопштења XLV (2013) 141–142, н. 66, 67.

<sup>68</sup> В. Р. Петковић, *Народни музеј у 1920. год.*, Годишњак СКА 29 (1921) 149–150; *idem*, *Манастир Раваница*, 64; С. Радојчић, *Мајстори старог српског сликарства*, Београд 1955, 42; Б. Вуловић, *Потпис сликара Константина у Раваници*, Саопштења I (1956) 167–168.

<sup>69</sup> For number of mentions see Т. Стародубцев, *Сликари задужбина Лазаревића*, ЗРВИ XLIII (2006) 354, н. 23–24; *eadem*, *Српско зидно сликарство II*, 47, н. 161–163.

<sup>70</sup> Живковић, *Раваница. Цртежи фресака*, 32 provides precise drawing of the spot.

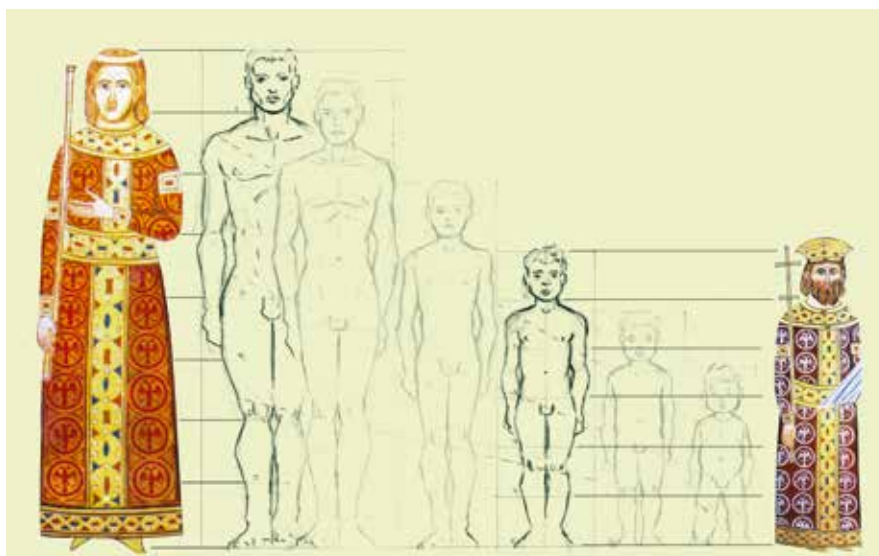


Fig. 6. Proportions of portrayed figures

Сл. 6 Пропорције фигура на портретима

It was early noticed that the nave frescoes of originally 800 m<sup>2</sup> were produced in four phases: once main dome was frescoed, the walls remained bare for quite long time.<sup>71</sup> Intervals during erection and painting of churches were well known praxis, to mention only Dečani (built 1327–1334/5, frescoed 1338/9–1348),<sup>72</sup> or Psača (built ca 1355, frescoed 1365/71).<sup>73</sup> Having in mind all known on painters' work days,<sup>74</sup> further research came up that three different groups worked in Ravanica with breaks in between.<sup>75</sup> The change of painters

<sup>71</sup> For this comment see Живковић, *Конзерваторски радови*, 137–138, n. 4.

<sup>72</sup> Г. Суботић, *Прилог хронологији дечанског зидног сликарства*, ЗРВИ XX (1981) 111–135; Тодић, Чанак-Медић, *op. cit.*, 22–23, 326–328.

<sup>73</sup> И. М. Ђорђевић, *Зидно сликарство српске властеле у доба Немањића*, Београд 1994, 106, 172–175, црт. 36, Т. 21; З. Расолкоска-Николовска, *О историјским портретима у Псаћи и времену њиховог настанка*, Зограф 24 (1995) 43–49, сл. 5–7. Also, see Ст. Новаковић, *Законски споменици српских држава средњег века*, Београд 1912, 435–436, бр. 36; А. Соловјев, *Одабрани споменици српског права (од XII до краја XIV века)*, Београд 1926, 155, бр. 75; Ј. Славева, В. Мошин, *Српски грамоти од Душаново време*, Прилеп 1988, 200–202; С. Мишић, *Хрисовуља цара Стефана Душана о поклањању цркве Светог Николе у Псаћи*, Стари српски архив 4 (2005) 135–149.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Р. Николић, *О радном дану средњовековног зографа*, Зограф 1 (1966) 30; D. Winfield, *Middle and Later Byzantine Wall Painting Methods. A Comparative Study*, DOP 22 (1968) 61–139; A. Cutler, *The Industries of Art, The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century 2*, ed. A. Laiou, Washington D.C. 2002, 554–565.

<sup>75</sup> В. Ј. Ђурић, *Зидно сликарство Моравске школе*, Београд 1968, 10–13; Г. Бабић-Ђорђевић, В. Ј. Ђурић, *Пошет уметности*, Историја српског народа II, ур. Ј. Калић, Београд 1982, 168–188; Т. Стародубцев, *Писани извори о црквама и манастирима подизаним или обнављаним у областма Лазаревића и Бранковића II*.

reveal serious issues which prevent dating to 1385/7. If necessary intervals between construction and painting phases are taken into account, frescoing must have taken some ten years,<sup>76</sup> instead of only three consecutive warm seasons.<sup>77</sup> If the church was indeed begun in 1377, it is reasonable to assume its buildup lasted until ca 1381, and since walls had to settle in at least two years, meaning ca 1382/3, main dome could have been frescoed ca 1384, which was done by one traditionalist painter (fig. 4a).

Some major reasons prevented continual frescoing of the church. One may assume it was due to the narthex construction, perhaps ca 1385. Again a period was needed for narthex walls to settle, probably until 1387. Only after that, a set up of the Romylos' arcosolium could have taken place sometime between 1388 and 1395, depending on whether this was the spot of his first or second grave and the period needed for elevation and translation of relics, rituals prescribed for a new saint's canonization. The frescoes in altar and higher nave zones most likely date ca 1388/9, with the Kosovo battle as possible cause for this break in decorating katholikon. These were painted by the new group of four painters who before coming to Ravanica had formerly worked in Greek Edessa (fig. 4b). Finally, the first zone of the nave was frescoed by the third workshop with two artists, earlier engaged at the Pantokrator monastery on Athos (fig. 4c, 4d).<sup>78</sup> This sequence of the previous phases points to the only possible conclusion that these wall paintings cannot be prior 1390/93, which enables proper interpretation of the portraits. Gradual creation of the nave frescoes means that two new artists must have worked in the narthex not before ca 1395 (fig. 4e), and since the tower chapel was not contemporary with inner fort, yet another one had to come to decorate it, most probably ca 1400 (fig. 4f).

Unusual features of the west wall decoration were early noticed,<sup>79</sup> and due to conspicuous details of insignia and costume on the portraits, scholars stress important fact that Lazar and his wife Milica both wear identical royal *sakkoi* (fig. 5/1,4).<sup>80</sup> Dense structure of this fresco with the two princes between the parents, under the image of the church (fig. 5/2,3) and technical features made some authors believe it was painted later, reflecting position of the depicted persons after the Kosovo battle.<sup>81</sup> This was to be strengthened by the docu-

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*Повеље*, Саопштења XLVI (2014) 107–108. This conclusion is also corroborated by study of inscriptions, see И. М. Ђорђевић, *Натписи на свицима и књигама у раваничком зидном сликарству*, Свети кнез Лазар, 63–70.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Ђурић, *Византијске фреске у Југославији*, 92–95.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Стародубцев, *Српско зидно сликарство. Књига II*, 46–48.

<sup>78</sup> For survey of Ravanica painters see Стародубцев, *Сликари задужбина Лазаревића*, 350–355.

<sup>79</sup> П. Поповић, *Западни зид цркве Раванице*, ПКЈИФ 5 (1925) 234–239; idem, *Le mur occidental de l'église de Ravanica*, *L'art byzantin chez les Slaves*, Paris 1930, 213–216.

<sup>80</sup> Г. Бабић, *Владарске инсигније кнеза Лазара*, О кнезу Лазару, 65–69, 74–76; Lj. D. Popovich, *Portraits of Knjeginja Milica. Part II: In Visual Arts*, *Serbian Studies* 9/1&2 (1994) 42–51.

<sup>81</sup> Р. Николић, *Када је подигнута и живописана Раваница*, Саопштења XV (1983) 45–64; М. Љубинковић, *Раваница*, Београд 1989, 7, 29; И. М. Ђорђевић, *Фреске Раванице*, Раваница. Цртежи фресака, Београд 1990, 3–4; Б. Цветковић, *Нови прилози*



Fig. 7. Byzantine empresses and regents: a. Eirene 797-802; b. Theodora 842-856; c. Zoe Karbonopsina 913-919; d. Theophano 963; e. Theodora 1055-1056; f. Eudokia Makrembolitissa 1067, 1071; g. Maria of Alania 1071-1081; h. Anna of Savoy 1341-1347

Сл. 7 Византијске царице и регенткиње:  
 а. Ирена 797-802; б. Теодора 842-856; в. Зоја Карбонопсина 913-919; д. Теофано 963; е. Теодора 1055-1056; ф. Евдокија Макремволитиса 1067, 1071; г. Марија Аланска 1071-1081; х. Ана Савојска 1341-1347



mentation of Todorović,<sup>82</sup> however, its validity and some of ensuing conclusions were later rightfully challenged by Starodubcev,<sup>83</sup> causing uncertainties in scholarship,<sup>84</sup> especially due to her claim that portraits may stand for an example that joint submission of a church image by the two persons is not always proof of their joint donorship.<sup>85</sup> This hypothesis uses the circular argument,<sup>86</sup> and rests on choosing between statements of the image and of the charter.<sup>87</sup> The recent research reveal all of the old assumptions must be repositioned and that appropriate dating of frescoes in the first zone makes full sense of adaptations of the west wall in view of subsequently built narthex, unusually dense fresco with portraits and the historical context.<sup>88</sup> Since Milica together with Lazar holds image of the church, she simply must have had a role in completion the monastery, as it was not possible to show her in this way if she had no ktetorial rights.<sup>89</sup> Later dating of the last phase of the frescoes not only throws new light on why is Milica depicted as ruler, due to her being the Regent, but also finds additional support in figures positioned next to the portrayals, from St Paul

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проучавању ктиторске композиције у Раваници, Саопштења XXVI (1994) 37–51; Р. Зарић, *Раваница, манастир*, Споменичко наслеђе Србије, ур. С. Пејић, Београд 1998, 325; Беловић, *Раваница*, 53–56; Р. Николић, *О Раваници и Љубостињи*, Гласник ДКС 23-24 (2000) 37–40; Ч. Маринковић, *Слика подигнуте цркве. Представе архитектуре на ктиторским портретима у српској и византијској уметности*, Београд – Крагујевац 2007, 151–152, сл. 162–163.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Д. Тодоровић, *Портрет кнеза Лазара у Раваници*, Споменица, 39–43; idem, *Првобитни изглед ктиторских портрета у Раваници*, Зограф 14 (1983) 68–73.

<sup>83</sup> Т. Стародубцев, *О портретима у Раваници*, ЗРВИ XLIX (2012) 333–352; eadem, *Владарске инсигније кнегиње Милице*, Niš & Byzantium XI (2013) 267–277; eadem, *Српско зидно сликарство. Књига II*, 31–48.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. В. Петровић, А. Фостиков, *Цркве и манастири у повељама кнегиње Милице*, Кнегиња Милица – монахиња Јевгенија и њено доба, ур. С. Мишић, Д. Јечменица, Трстеник – Београд 2014, 130, н. 14; Љ. Винуловић, *Портрети жена ктитора у време Лазаревића*, Култура 165 (2019) 326–335; М. Шуица, *Милица – кнегиња немирног доба*, Београд 2019, 66–70.

<sup>85</sup> Стародубцев, *О портретима у Раваници*, 340–345; eadem, *Српско зидно сликарство. Књига II*, 31–37.

<sup>86</sup> Claim is built exactly on the statement that portrayals of persons holding images of churches do not always signify ktetorship, providing as only proof the Ravanica portraits, and is as such, nevertheless, accepted by Д. Павловић, *Питање ктиторства цркве Светог Ђорђа у Полошком*, Зограф 29 (2015) 112, н. 28.

<sup>87</sup> That the Ravanica charter should not be taken as proof against that portraits show joint donorship is argued by Ђ. Бубало, *Ктиторски портрет и ктиторска повеља*, Саопштења XLVIII (2016) 93–110.

<sup>88</sup> Цветковић, *Вук Лазаревић у писаним и ликовним изворима*, 60–68.

<sup>89</sup> For huge material pertaining to portrait typology, see А. Adashinskaya, *Ktetor: Practices of Ecclesiastic Foundation, Sponsorship, and Patronage in Late Byzantium and Balkan Slavic Countries*, doctoral dissertation, Central European University, Budapest 2020. Also, see В. Цветковић, *The Portraits in Lapušnja and Iconography of Joint Ktetorship*, Niš & Byzantium XI (2013), 295–307; М. С. Carile, *Buildings in their patrons' hands? The multifunction of small size models between Byzantium and Transcaucasia*, www.kunsttexte.de, Nr.3, 2014.



Fig. 8. Garments on historical portraits

Сл. 8 Одежде на историјским портретима

of Thebes (fig. 5/5)<sup>90</sup> to St Barlaam and Ioasaph (fig. 5/7, 8),<sup>91</sup> but especially St Simeon Nemanja,<sup>92</sup> which stands out as authentic proof that invention of Milica's Nemanid descent was contemporary with these very frescoes, echoing complex actions supervised by Patriarch Danilo III during her regency.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Цветковић, *Вук Лазаревић у писаним и ликовним изворима*, 66.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*, 67.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem*, 66–67.

<sup>93</sup> For the breakthrough in research of content and function of chronicles see M. Васиљевић, *Генеалогичке између историје и идеологије: пример порекла кнегиње Милице*, ИЧ LXV (2016) 79–99.

One of the main but flawed arguments for various dating of the Ravanica frescoes have been figures of princes. Portraits of Lazar's juvenile sons were thought by scholars to duly reflect their approximate age ranging from 7 to 12 years. However, their figures simply cannot be tools for dating (fig. 6), since Stefan has proportions of an adult, unlike his father.<sup>94</sup>

Due to flaked surface of the fresco true shape of scepters cannot be determined, as argued by Starodubcev,<sup>95</sup> or in guises given by Todorović which were used in my texts on Ravanica and iconography of regency.<sup>96</sup> But recent research reveals the historical background and dating of the portraits actually do not depend on this issue since the form of scepters is irrelevant.<sup>97</sup> Although the empresses as regents,<sup>98</sup> are often shown with cruciform scepters, sometimes they could have scepters in other form, as coinage and seals with imagery of Byzantine rulers, their spouses and co-rulers disclose:<sup>99</sup> Empress (Emperor) Eirene (797–802) has cruciform scepter (fig. 7a), and so does Empress Theodora Theodora (842–856), consort of Theophilos (fig. 7b), as well as Empress Regent Zoe Karbonopsina (913, 919), mother of Constantine VII (fig. 7c). On the other hand, Empress and Regent Theophano (963) has branch scepter (fig. 7d), Empress Theodora (1055–1056) raises labarum (fig. 7e), and Empress and Regent Eudokia Makrembolitissa (1067, 1071) has cruciform scepter (fig. 7f). Finally, Empress Maria of Alania (1071–1081) holds cruciform floriated scepter (fig. 7g), while Empress Mother and Regent Anna of Savoy (1341–1347) has branch scepter (fig. 7h).<sup>100</sup>

<sup>94</sup> For images of the young in Byzantine art, see C. Hennesy, *Images of Children in Byzantium*, Ashgate 2008; B. Caseau, *Too Young to Be Accountable: Is 15 Years Old a Threshold in Byzantium?*, *Coming of Age in Byzantium. Adolescence and Society*, ed. D. Ariantzi, Berlin 2018, 19–28; L. Brubaker, *Images of Byzantine Adolescents*, *ibidem*, 141–174.

<sup>95</sup> Стародубцев, *Владарске инсигније кнегиње Милице*, 268–270, сл. 2, 3; *eadem*, *Српско зидно сликарство. Књига II*, 33–37, црт. 4, сл. 25.

<sup>96</sup> Цветковић, *Нови прилози*, 37–51; *idem*, *Iconography of Female Regency: An Issue of Methodology*, *Niš & Byzantium X* (2012) 405–414.

<sup>97</sup> Цветковић, *Вук Лазаревић у писаним и ликовним изворима*, 64.

<sup>98</sup> A. Χριστοφίλοπούλου, *Ἡ ἀντιβασιλεία εἰς τὸ Βυζάντιον*, Βυζαντινά Σύμμεκτα 2 (1970) 1–144; L. Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium AD 527–1204*, London – New York 1999; J. Herrin, *Women in Purple: Rulers of Medieval Byzantium*, Princeton 2001; *eadem*, *Unrivalled Influence. Women and Empire in Byzantium*, Princeton – Oxford 2013; É. Malamuth, *Jeanne-Anne princesse de Savoie et impératrice de Byzance*, *Impératrices, princesses, aristocrates et saintes souveraines. De l'Orient chrétien et musulman au Moyen Âge et au début des Temps modernes*, eds. É. Malamuth, A. Nicolaïdès, Aix-en-Provence 2014, 85–118.

<sup>99</sup> D. Nicol, S. Bendall, *Anna of Savoy in Thessalonica: the numismatic evidence*, *Revue numismatique* 19 (1977) 87–102; L. Brubaker, H. Tobler, *The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324–802)*, *Gender & History* 12/3 (2000) 572–594; Ж. Жекова, *Византијската императрица върху монетите и печатите*, В. Търново 2017; Б. Цветковић, *Света Теодора у Арти: култно постројење и портрети владара*, *Саопштења L* (2018) 51–71; *Mujeres imperiales, mujeres reales. Representaciones públicas y representaciones del poder en la Antigüedad tardía y Bizancio*, eds. M. C. Chiriatti, R. Villegas Marín, Brill Schöningh 2021.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. G. Zacos, A. Vegler, *Byzantine lead seals 1/3*, Basel 1972; Ph. Grierson, A. R. Bellinger, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in*

Unlike uncertain forms of scepters on Ravanica portrayals, of crucial significance are the types of royal costume, as well as their colour and symbols. Special position of Princess Milica is rendered by her being dressed in *sakkos* and *loros*, which is rare on portraits of female wielders of power. Analogy with Queen Helen, wife of Uroš I, though important, is not proof that this was regular garb of the Serbian royal feminine but that it is the sign of her special role as the political figure, rooted in her imperial descent.<sup>101</sup> Hitherto neglected evidence is costumes colour which reflect meaningful interrelation between members of the ruling family (Fig. 8). Stefan and Milica wear identical ochre *sakkoi* with red two-headed eagles in circles, unlike Lazar and his younger son Vuk, who have *sakkoi* of purple with white eagles and green with yellow lilies, respectively. Such a layout of interchanged identical and different patterns of royal *sakkoi* in a sophisticated way shows Milica and her elder son Stefan hold special place among the portrayals, she in being the Regent and Stefan the heir apparent. The portraits do stand for the strong piece of evidence in elucidating complex issues of dating the wall paintings. Since the portrayals undoubtedly belong to the post Kosovo period, reflecting political situation of regency, the emphasis is laid on young princes who upon their father's demise assumed role of corulers with their mother, the Regent Milica.<sup>102</sup> The portrait of Milica showing her in the royal *sakkos* and *loros* obviously predates her taking the veil, and is contemporary with sources from period of her regency 1389–1393, during which she had been styled still as Milica, as in the letter to Dubrovnik in 1391.<sup>103</sup>

The renewed perusal of sources and of material on the ground help redate phases of both architecture and wall paintings in Ravanica. As shown, frescoing of the nave had taken years and with rearranged insights of iconography it is possible to better understand many more segments. One such is surely the figure of St Lazarus the Painter, depicted in south end of the west wall of the nave. In view of the post Kosovo dating of the first fresco zone in the nave, it can be argued that this rarely painted saint holds this very place in Ravanica not because it is positioned "above the prearranged tomb of Knez Lazar."<sup>104</sup> On the contrary, the reason for depicting holy namesake of Lazar was that the coffin with his relics had already stood there before the painters started frescoing the lowest zones of the nave.

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*the Whittemore Collection Vol. 3, Parts 1-2*, Washington D.C. 1973; Ph. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, London – Los Angeles 1982; J. Nesbitt, C. Morrisson, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art Vol. 6*, Washington D.C. 2009.

<sup>101</sup> Цветковић, *Вук Лазаревић у писаним и ликовним изворима*, 64–65 (with bibliography).

<sup>102</sup> *ibidem*, 66–68.

<sup>103</sup> С. Ћирковић, *Повеље и писма Стефана Лазаревића*, Стари српски архив 7 (2008) 237–238. Cf. А. Младеновић, *Повеље и писма деспота Стефана. Текст, коментари, снимци*, Београд 2007, 19, 87–88, 155–162, 200–201, сл. I/1, II/1–II/2; М. Шуица, *Повеља кнеза Стефана Лазаревића којом се Хиландару прилаже црква Ваведена Богородичиног у Ибру*, Стари српски архив 3 (2004) 107–123.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. T. Starodubcev, *Saint Lazarus the Painter or on a Seldom Painted Champion of Sacred Paintings*, Niš & Byzantium XVII (2019) 383–399.

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#### НОВИ ОСВРТ НА ХРОНОЛОШКА ПИТАЊА РАВАНИЦЕ

Чланак указује на сложену проблематику недовољно познате хронологије подизања и опремања манастира Раванице, на различито читање извора, нејасне резултате археолошких ископавања услед необјављене грађе, као и на методолошке и фактографске недоумице у погледу одговарајућег приступа датовању различитих делова архитектуре утврђења, манастирског насеља, сакралних објеката, као и зидног сликарства.

Због неусклађених ставова у погледу датовања и необјављене археолошке грађе која се већ дуго налази у неодговарајућем стању у првобитно замишљеном излагачком простору једне раваничке куле, покренут је истраживачки пројекат који треба да буде оквир за обраду и конзерваторску заштиту предметне грађе од метала, керамике и камена откривених током археолошких истраживања Раванице 1967-1972. У том смислу, у чланку се покрећу питања везана за хронологију и контекстуализацију два одвојена дела утврђења, указује на нејасно тумачење параклиса утврђења, као и проблем датовања и додатних оштећења остатака живописа у параклису. Такође, у тексту се разматрају проблеми датовања католикона, времена и контекста подизања наоса цркве и накнадно дозиданог нартекса и указује се на нејасну хронологију опремања припрате, посебно у светлу заснивања култа пустињака Ромила, тумачења хагиографских извора и конструкције аркосолијума. Рад је посвећен и сложеним питањима датовања живописа у наосу. Имајући у виду расположиве изворе, као и конзерваторске извештаје и резултате теренских истраживања, у чланку се заступа став да је подизање и опремање раваничког комплекса трајало дуже време. Узимајући у обзир нужне цезуре током процеса зидања које обухватају периоде слегања зидова, као и чињеницу да је осликавање наоса извођено у три наврата са прекидима, почетак градитељских радова могао се поклапати с датумом прве верзије оснивачке повеље из 1376/7. године. Година 1380/1. из друге, допуњене верзије раваничке повеље могла је означавати приближно време завршетка градње цркве и првог дела утврђења, па би након нужног периода од пар година потребног за слегање зидова (око 1382/3) украшавање главне куполе могло да буде изведено током 1384. године. Време доградње припрате је могуће сместити око 1385/6. године уз неопходно време за слегање зидова дограђеног објекта (око 1387), с тим што је датовање конструкције аркосолијума пустињака Ромила зависно од одговора на питање да ли је реч о првом или другом гробу, с обзиром на то да је реч о новом светитељу, а разрешења тог проблема указаће на време осликавања припрате, до чега је могло доћи и око 1395. године. Осликавање виших зона наоса могло је зато уследити тек након подизања припрате, не пре 1388/9. године, а како је у том процесу дошло до још једног прекида и промене сликара, могуће да је томе разлог била Косовска битка. С обзиром на поступност градитељских и сликарских радова, доње зоне наоса могле су бити живописане тек после 1390. године. Иконографске и инсигнолошке особености историјских портрета пружају додатни основ за такво датовање доњих зона раваничког наоса, а подробна анализа костима потврђује постојеће хипотезе да портрети припадају посткосовском периоду и да је кнегиња Милица у Раваници приказана као регент.

