

AKTI VIII. MEĐUNARODNOG KOLOKVIJA O PROBLEMIMA RIMSKOG PROVINCIJALNOG UMJETNIČKOG STVARALAŠTVA

AKTEN DES VIII. INTERNATIONALEN KOLLOQUIUMS ÜBER PROBLEME DES PROVINZIALRÖMISCHEN KUNSTSCHAFFENS

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 8<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON PROBLEMS OF ROMAN PROVINCIAL ART

LES ACTES DU VIII<sup>ÈME</sup> COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL SUR LES PROBLÈMES DE L'ART PROVINCIAL ROMAIN

ZAGREB 5.-8. V. 2003.

RELIGIJA I MIT KAO POTICAJ RIMSKOJ PROVINCIJALNOJ PLASTICI

RELIGION UND MYTHOS ALS ANREGUNG FÜR DIE PROVINZIALRÖMISCHE PLASTIK

RELIGION AND MYTH AS AN IMPETUS FOR THE ROMAN PROVINCIAL SCULPTURE

LA RELIGION ET LE MYTHE COMME INSPIRATION POUR LA SCULPTURE ROMAINE PROVINCIALE

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# SOME EXAMPLES OF LOCAL PRODUCTION OF MITHRAIC RELIEFS FROM ROMAN DALMATIA

BY GORANKA LIPOVAC VRKLJAN

The paper deals with some issues of provincial art production on several examples of Mithraic tauroctony reliefs found in the territory of the Roman Province of Dalmatia. It highlights the diversity of the technical and artistic scope of the monumental heritage of tauroctony reliefs, ranging from the obvious presence of the classical Roman artistic tradition in the local production of coastal towns, up to the decline of Roman influence in the territory of the Dalmatian hinterland, where local technical and stylistic characteristics in monumental expression prevail.

Cult monuments constitute an important group of extraordinarily rich antique stonemasonry production in the Roman Province of Dalmatia.<sup>1</sup> Apart from a smaller number of imports, the majority was produced in local stonemason workshops or by individual masons. The monuments are mostly made of local materials<sup>2</sup>, and only a smaller number is made of imported mar-

ble. They are characterized by certain local (technical, compositional, stylistic and iconographic) provincial distinguishing marks.

The technical and artistic content of provincial cult sculptural plastic of Roman Dalmatia can roughly be categorized into several groups.<sup>3</sup> The basic criteria for categorization are stylistic characteristics. They explicitly adhere to the tradition of classical art, adding elements of the local artistic heritage. Precisely this indigenous artistic element<sup>4</sup> and its implementation within classical artistic expression represent the origin of provincial artistic expression.<sup>5</sup>

The first group consists of cult monuments that follow classical traditions,<sup>6</sup> mostly from the stonemason workshops of larger towns of the Greek-Hellenistic tradition such as Salona (Solina), Iader (Zadar), Narona (Vid near Metković) or Issa (Vis). It includes cult plastic expressed in sculpture and relief,<sup>7</sup> with presentations

<sup>1</sup> Many studies on the development of artistic production in the territory of the Roman Province of Dalmatia have been written by scholars in Croatia and abroad, encouraged by the well-known works of A. Schober, *Die römischen Grabsteine von Noricum und Pannonien*. Sonderschr. Österr. Arch. Inst. 10, 1923 and *Zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der provinzialrömischen Kunst*. Jahresh. Österr. Arch. Inst. 26, 1930, 9–52. Here the most outstanding synthesis: B. Gabričević, *O počecima rimske provincijalne umjetnosti u Liburniji*. Diadora 9, 1980, 251–271. – D. Sergejevski, *Iz problematike ilirske umjetnosti*. Godišnjak CBI III/1, Sarajevo 1965, 119–143. – D. Rendić-Miočević, *Umjetnost Ilira u antičko doba*. In: *Iliri i antički svijet* (Split 1989) 545–558. Note the newest monograph of antique art by academician Nenad Cambi, *Antika* (Zagreb 2002) containing a comprehensive list of literature on this topic.

<sup>2</sup> According to their petrographic composition, the majority of stone monuments of local provenance pertain to sandstone, limestone or marl. On their pliancy but at the same time their frailty and infirmity to atmospheric disturbances, Sergejevski (note 1) 119–121.

<sup>3</sup> D. Rendić-Miočević, *Dva antička signirana reljefa iz radionice majstora Maksima*. In: *Iliri i antički svijet* (Split 1989) 559–570 and Rendić-Miočević (note 1) 545–558.

<sup>4</sup> Sergejevski (note 1) 119–143. – D. Sergejevski, *Dijana i Silvan – Tri rimska reljefa iz Livna i Glamoča*, Glasnik Zemaljskog Muz. Bosna i Hercegovina 41, 1929, 95ff. – D. Sergejevski, *Rimski kameni spomenici s Glamočkog polja*, Glasnik Zemaljskog Muz. Bosna i Hercegovina 39, 1927, 254ff. – D. Rendić-Miočević, *Ilirske predstave Silvana na kulturnim slikama s područja Delmata*. Glasnik Zemaljskog Muz. Sarajevo Arh. n.s. 10, 1955, 5–40. – A. Rendić-Miočević, *Uz dva Silvanova svetišta u okolici Salone*, ARR 8–9, Zagreb 1982, 121–140.

<sup>5</sup> Gabričević (note 1) 266ff. – Rendić-Miočević (note 1) 546.

<sup>6</sup> Cambi mentions the statue of Diana from Tiluri as one of the best examples, Cambi (note 1) 97 fig. 131. Some marble monuments of cult characters with accentuated classical features of style are imports. For examples see Cambi (note 1) 98–112.

<sup>7</sup> Cambi (note 1) 95ff. Apart from cult plastic, sepulchral monuments were also formed in the tradition of classical art; a particular example are monumental stellas, N. Cambi, *Rimski nadgrobni spomenici u Asseriji*. Radovi (Zadar) 31 (19), 1991–1992, 25–51. – D. Rendić-Miočević, *Nekoliko monumentalnih stela s portretima iz stare Liburnije*. In: *Iliri i antički svijet* (Split 1989) 571–588. – K. Prijatelj, *Nekoliko rimskih portreta u Arheološkom muzeju u Splitu*. Vjesnik Arh. i Hist. Dalmatinsku 53, 1950–51, 135–154. On the same examples of the antique artistic tradition in provincial plastic of Noricum and Pannonia, A. Schober, *Die römischen Grabsteine von Noricum und Pannonien*. Sonderschr. Österr. Arch. Inst. 10, 1923.

of local deities, which were identified with their Roman counterparts (*interpretatio romana*) and thus integrated into Roman culture.<sup>8</sup>

The largest number of Dalmatian cult monuments belongs to the second group. Their technical and artistic characteristics range from a relatively high production level to solid local provincial production. A small part of them stands apart, as they represent failed attempts executed by mostly technically unskilled masons. In view of the disposition of this group of monuments, and their technical and compositional semblance, we must assume that a part of these workshops existed in the Dalmatian hinterland. They were located in smaller towns and Roman camps.

The third and possibly most interesting provincial art group of cult monuments of Roman Dalmatia includes works of notable rusticity. They reflect the original local artisanal artistic tradition of Roman Dalmatia.<sup>9</sup> Even though they technically lag behind the aforementioned groups, on the whole the quality of their artistic expression derives directly from traditional local art.

Although this categorization does not explain the complete significance of provincial artistic production of cult plastic of the Roman Province of Dalmatia, it still offers certain starting points for some assumptions related to the topic of this paper oriented to provincial artistic expression of some Mithraic reliefs.

Within the monumental heritage of the Mithraic mystery of the Roman Province of Dalmatia,<sup>10</sup> the aforementioned classification of stonemason artistic production of Dalmatia is well demonstrated on the basis of several examples of cult relief (*tauroctony*).

The classical spirit of the stonemason art tradition of provincial workshops can be identified in several *tauroctony* reliefs from larger cities. They are mostly high, almost sculpture-like reliefs, characterized by realistic expression, the art of accentuating plans and by distinguished artistic skill.

An example of the classical influence and of exceptional understanding of demanding iconographic principles is the *tauroctony* relief from Iader (Zadar) made of white limestone.<sup>11</sup> It is believed to be the earliest example of *tauroctony* in the territory of Dalmatia (second half of the second century, or a decade or two before that). Since this relief was already thoroughly analyzed and explained, let us point out merely the most important distinctive traits.<sup>12</sup> An analysis of style and composition, as well as iconographic elements, suggests a strong influence of Italic workshops from the second century AD, particularly in Aequileia<sup>13</sup>, thus they stand out from most of Mithraic reliefs of Roman Dalmatia. The upper right part of this high relief is missing. Its *tauroctony* details are made almost sculpture-like, and the entire composition is characterized by accentuated plasticity. Apart from those classical elements of artistic expression, the proportionality of figures and realism in the presentation of Mithras' head and animal figures – the dog, the scorpion and the raven. High relief set up another element of the classical tradition of compositional presentation; the presentation of scene plans. Thus, in the foreground the principal mystery scene event is shown; Mithras at the moment when he jumps the bull and knocks him down. In the background there are figures accompanying the scene. At the fallen bull's feet and stomach the dog, snake and scorpion are represented. In the upper left section of the relief, behind Mithras' waving chiton, there is Sol's four-horse chariot (*quadriga*). Explicit plasticity, an almost sculptural feature of the chiton, intensifies the experience of the *quadriga* in the background of Mithras' figure. Even though the upper right section of the relief is missing, we believe that it used to represent Lunas' two-horse chariot (*biga*) with the same stylistic and compositional expression. Apart from the described elements of style and composition of classical artistic tradition, another

<sup>8</sup> D. Rendić-Miočević, *Problem romanizacije Ilira s osobitim obzirom na kultove i onomastiku*. In: *Iliri i antički svijet* (Split 1989) 430–432.

<sup>9</sup> Sergejevski (note 1) 119–142.

<sup>10</sup> Numerous studies were written on Mithraism in the territory of Roman Dalmatia. Note M. J. Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum religionis Mithraicae* (CIMRM) II (Hague 1960). – B. Gabričević, *Iconographie de Mithra taurocton dans la province romaine de Dalmatie*. Arch. Jugoslavica 1, 1954. – K. Patsch, *Mithraeum u Konjicu*. Glasnik Zemaljskog Muz. Bosna i Hercegovina 9, 1897. – D. Sergejevski, *Das Mithraeum von Jajce*. Glasnik Zemaljskog Muz. Bosna i Hercegovina 49, 1937, 11–18. – Lj. Zotović, *Mithraizam na tlu Jugoslavije* (Belgrade 1973). – V. Paškvalin, *Kultovi u antičko doba na području Bosne i Hercegovine*. Glasnik Zemaljskog Muz. Sarajevo Arh. n.s. 18, 1963. – E. Imamović, *Antički kultovi i votivni spomenici na području Bosne i Hercegovine*. (Sarajevo 1977). – J. Medini, *Mithraički reljef iz Banjevacu*. Diadora 8, 1975, 39–88. – P. Selem, *Mithraizam Dalmacije i Panonije u svjetlu novih istraživanja*, Hist. Zbornik 39(1), 1986, 173–204.

<sup>11</sup> CIMRM II, 1879 fig. 468. – Gabričević (note 10) 37; 50 n. 2. Dilemmas on the provenance of this monument – Iader, Narona or Aequum – were solved by Suić, M. Suić, *Orijentalni kultovi u antičkom Zadru*. Diadora 3, 1965, 93–94 fig. 1, thus confirming Cumont's old thesis, *Textes et Monuments figures relatifs of aux mysteres de Mithra*, I, II, (TMM), Bruxelles 1986–1988, no. 232.

<sup>12</sup> A detailed study of this relief was published by J. Medini, *Mithraica Iadertina*. Radovi (Zadar) 24 (11) 1984/85, 61–71.

<sup>13</sup> This Iadertinian relief and its notable classical and stylistic expression was underlined as far as 1965 by M. Suić, who brought them in connection with direct Italian influences, which was appropriate keeping in mind comparative examples, especially from Aquileia (e.g. CIMRM I, 736), Suić (note 11) 93.



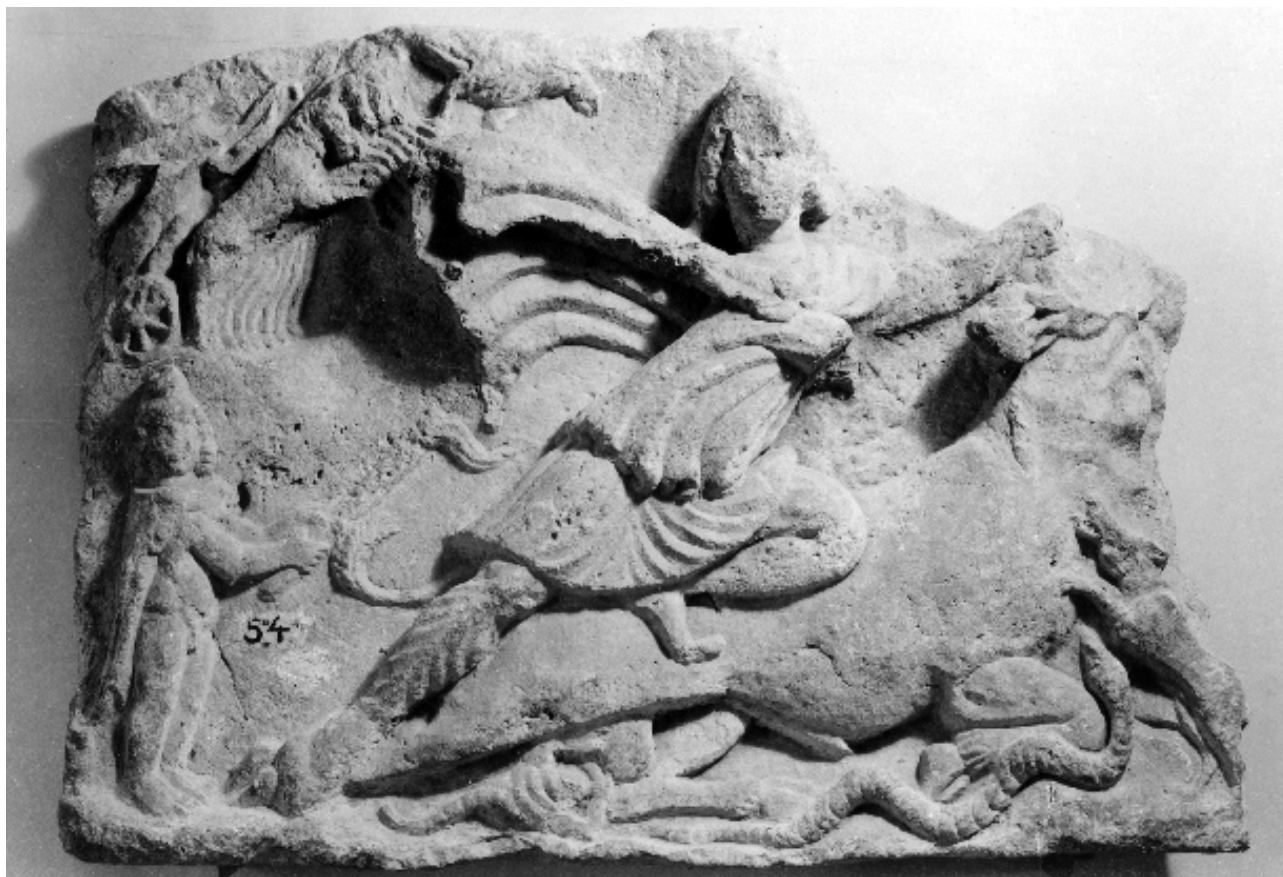


FIG. 1 RELIEF OF TAUROCTONY FROM IADER (FOTO BY ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM ZADAR).

as important detail indicating classical influence upon the relief is also the treatment of some iconographic details. Even though the iconography within the Mithraic mystery is strictly standardized,<sup>14</sup> certain distinguishing marks are possible within its stylistic expression. Some of them contain also an element important for monumental dating. As the analysis of the body of Mithraic monuments of the Roman Empire has shown, the non-reduced presentation of Sol in quadriga and of Luna in biga was present in tauroctony reliefs of the middle of the second century AD, particularly in the Italic territory. At a later stage of Mithraic iconography, in the first half of the third century AD, this iconographic presentation was partially reduced to their busts and the heads of the horses pulling chariots. An example

is the Dalmatian ritual dual-sided relief from Kašić<sup>15</sup>. Entirely reduced presentations of Sol and Luna and the disappearance of their heavenly chariots occurred since the second half of the third century AD, with only the heads of the planetary deities depicted. Hence the relief from Iader is dated in the second half of the second century AD. Another iconographic element applied in dating the Mithraic relief from Iader is the presentation of the naked torchbearer Cautes. Within the strictly standardized Mithraic iconography, torchbearers (Cautes and Cautopates) wear the same oriental clothes as Mithras. Therefore his presentation with a chiton over his shoulders is exceptionally important stylistic and dating information, along with the presentation of naked Sol in the quadriga. Stylistically this detail can be

<sup>14</sup> See also L. A. Campbell, *Mithraic iconography and ideology* (Leiden 1968).

<sup>15</sup> The relief was published by J. Medini under the name of the locality Banjevci, J. Medini, *Mitrički reljef iz Banjevaca*. *Diadora* 8, 1975, 39–88, which was later corrected in the literature, Ivo Pedišić/Ž. Krnčević, *Rekonstruiranje područja sela Kašić (Pirovac)*. *Obavijesti* 3, 1992, 52–55.



FIG. 2.1 THE REVERSE OF TAUROCTONY FROM IADER  
(FOTO BY ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM ZADAR).



FIG. 2.2 THE REVERSE OF TAUROCTONY FROM TILURIJ  
(CIMRM II, 1857) (FOTO BY ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
MUSEUM SPLIT).

related with several similar examples on Mithraic reliefs, even though they depict naked Sol (Heliodromus) or naked Mithras exclusively at the banquet.<sup>16</sup> This de-

tail emerged from the classical arts and its style as such not only articulates the source of influence of the relief, but also directs us in dating it into the very beginning

<sup>16</sup> Comparisons with monument CIMRM I, 641 (Fiano Romano) and monument CIMRM II, 1275 (Lopodunum).



of the Mithraic relief presentations in the Italic territory to the second half of the second century AD.

The relief from Kašić, from which several details of classical style stand out, of which we particularly point to the plasticity of the depicted sea waves under Luna's biga, is also dated to the time when in the Italic territory the first relief presentations of tauroctony came into being. This is indicated not only by the described elements of classical style, but also by a compositional detail. The torchbearers are not placed within the tauroctony sections as it is standard, but outside of them. Unless such compositional arrangement is simply a consequence of a lack of space provided for the central scene, and according to the reconstruction that is not the case, then it indicates a notably early origin of the relief from Kašić, since the same scheme is found at the very beginning of tauroctony presentation in Rome.<sup>17</sup> An imitation of this compositional detail was possible in the first phase of the distribution of Mithraism in the territory of Roman Dalmatia.<sup>18</sup> But this relief is maybe one of the best examples of the implementation of local provincial traits of Roman Dalmatia within the tradition of classical expression in Mithraic plastic. Those are clearly articulated iconographic and compositional distinguishing marks. One of the distinguishing marks of the relief from Kašić is the segmented belt with zodiac signs. In Mithraic monuments of other provinces of the Empire, representing a belt with zodiac signs, the fields with the single signs are not separated, as is the case with the relief from Kašić of the Province of Dalmatia.<sup>19</sup> The same composition is found with a relief from Salona.<sup>20</sup> In Pannonia, the same manner of dividing the zodiac fields was marked with a relief from Siscia (Sisak).<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the assumption that tauroctonies within the ring with segmented fields with zodiac signs originate from the Province of Dalmatia, and that as such they represent a separate provincial subgroup within Campbell's ty-

pological division of Mithraic reliefs, does not seem impossible.<sup>22</sup>

Even though astral deities appear in a reduced form already in the relief from Kašić (only a presentation of Luna was preserved), its production in high relief, as well as the plasticity in styling the details, suggests that this relief has to be assigned to the influence of the classical style of Italic workshops.

Apart from the relief from Iader and the first group of Mithraic reliefs, here are some more examples of classical production. Let us point to two fragments of a relief from Salona, the Antiquity cultural and artistic center of the Roman Province of Dalmatia.

The first tauroctony fragment in high relief represents the bust of Luna with a half-moon on its shoulder.<sup>23</sup> The composition of the chiton, its diaphanous folds, as well as the accuracy in accentuating the hair tufts secured by a double hair-band, point to the high quality of classical stylistic influences. This relief (as well as some other reliefs from Solin) is also interesting on account of its material. It is made of marble that is not found on the territory of Roman Dalmatia. This opens several possibilities of interpreting the origin of marble cult monuments of Roman Dalmatia. They either came to Dalmatia as an import in the form of ready-made products, or local workshops imported un-worked marble blocks to suit their needs.<sup>24</sup> Of Mithraic marble monuments we can state almost with certainty that they are works of local workshops working in the spirit of classical antique tradition of artistic expression.

The other example of monuments of the classical stylistic expression from Solin is a fragment of a tauroctony made of local limestone, with only the bull's head and Mithras' hand on its nostrils preserved.<sup>25</sup> It is a work of remarkable handicraft and exceptional plasticity. Note the finger detail of Mithras' hand, which is made sculpture-like with remarkable skill in realistically reproducing the anatomy.

<sup>17</sup> An example is the earliest presentation of tauroctony in the Italic area, the sculpture from Rome, CIMRM I, 593 fig. 168.

<sup>18</sup> The beginning of Mithras' presence in the Roman Province of Dalmatia, which is related with the officers of the Illyrian customs system (*publicum portorii Illyrici*), was noted in the second half of the second century AD in the monuments from Vratnik, CIMRM II, 1846 and CIMRM II, 1847. – Selem (note 10) 173–181.

<sup>19</sup> Compare with monuments CIMRM I, 810 from Londini, CIMRM II, 1161 from Stockstadt and CIMRM II, 1271 from Dieburg.

<sup>20</sup> CIMRM II, 1870. – Gabričević (note 10) 39 no. 28 fig. 11

<sup>21</sup> CIMRM II, 1472.

<sup>22</sup> Medini (note 15) 64–68; 66 and especially note 51. On the typological classification of presentations of tauroctony within round fields (with zodiac signs or foliated garlands) L. A. Campbell, *Typologie de Mithra tauroctone*. Berytus 11, 1955, 13.

<sup>23</sup> CIMRM II, 1869 fig. 484. – Gabričević (note 10) 38 no. 27 fig. 10

<sup>24</sup> On problems of criteria for distinguishing between ready-made imports of classical plastic production from local workshop production with the same characteristics, Rendić-Miočević (note 1) 549.

<sup>25</sup> CIMRM II, 1868 fig. 483. – Gabričević (note 10) 38 no. 26 fig. 9

Another example from this group is also a fragment of a relief from Faros (Stari Grad).<sup>26</sup> Again only Luna's bust with a half moon on the right shoulder was preserved, reminding us of the aforementioned example of Luna from Salona. That we are dealing with works of extraordinary artistic and stonemasonry attainment of classical features can also be concluded on the grounds of the entire plasticity of artistic production. Luna is represented almost as a sculpture. This is maybe one of the most beautiful representations of Luna (and presumably of the complete tauroctony) on the territory of the Province of Dalmatia, and its production is related with the workshops of Salona.

Thus we have exhausted Mithraic cult monuments of the Province of Dalmatia, which are all apparently characterized by all the elements of classical artistic tradition (in the form of direct influence). Therefore we shall move on to the next group, with particular marks of classical elements, being more or less successful attempts at their imitation, nevertheless without the high-quality production technique. Most of the Mithraic reliefs, such as the tauroctony reliefs from Retinij (Golubić near Bihać),<sup>27</sup> Jezerine,<sup>28</sup> Burnum (Ivoševci near Kistanje),<sup>29</sup> Crikvine,<sup>30</sup> Lisičići<sup>31</sup> and Zaostrog,<sup>32</sup> to mention only a few, are classified as belonging to this group of monuments of provincial production.

As already stated, they are characterized by different levels of technical and artistic production skill. Pieces of solid technical production prevail, but clear classical elements of style are missing. The presentations are not made in high relief as in the first group; on the contrary, they are rather flat. Due to the lack of production skill, there are no sketches. The realistic characteristic of the classical influence is lacking. However, this does not reduce the total artistic attainment of some reliefs. This is particularly true of *in situ* reliefs from Oltar<sup>33</sup> and Močići.<sup>34</sup>

Of the Mithraic dual-sided ritual reliefs from Tiluri (Gardun)<sup>35</sup> and Iader (Zadar)<sup>36</sup> we conclude that they

belong to the second group of monuments with the characteristics of mediocre provincial work. The relief only slightly indicates spatial depth; therefore no plasticity is achieved in the presentation of the figures. Along with this is the disproportion of the figures, which is particularly evident in the presentation of the relation between the animal and the tree. Realism in figural expression is entirely lost, as is apparent in the presentation of Sol in the relief of Iader and the presentation of Luna in the relief of Tiluri. An interesting feature of both reliefs is their compositional and iconographic resemblance. This is particularly manifest in their preserved reverses. The presentation field is separated in the same way: the upper presentation is separated from the lower by a strip. Another similarity lies within the motifs depicted; animals near a tree, on the left fragment from Tiluri there is a bull, and on the right fragment from Iader there is a dog (?).

Nevertheless, if we are to guess the appearance of the reconstruction of the entire upper back field of both reliefs on the basis of comparative examples from other tauroctonies, we may conclude that both reliefs used to bear the same presentations of hunting scenes.<sup>37</sup> Accordingly, on the lost right fragment from Tiluri we should expect a presentation of a dog, and on the lost left fragment from Iader a presentation of a bull. Considering the exceptionality of such scenes not only within the body of Mithraic monuments of Roman Dalmatia, but also on a broader scale, the question arises whether the scene composition in the upper field of the reverse of the reliefs from Tiluri and Iader is a reflection of a provincial workshop, or whether it was imported from other provinces. If in the territory of the Roman Empire we compare the relief from Nida-Hedderheim<sup>38</sup> and the one from Ruckingen,<sup>39</sup> the only two examples with presentations of animals (a bull and a dog) on the top of the reverses, and above the banquet scene, we might come closer to an answer. Even though they are char-

<sup>26</sup> A. Rendić-Miočević, *Skulptura*. In: Pharos, antički Stari Grad. Katalog (Zagreb 1996) 122 br. 6.

<sup>27</sup> CIMRM II, 910 fig. 498. – Gabričević (note 10) 37 no. 12.

<sup>28</sup> CIMRM II, 1907 fig. 496. – Gabričević (note 10) 37 no. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Suić (note 11) 95–97 fig. 4.

<sup>30</sup> CIMRM II, 1871 fig. 485. – Gabričević (note 10) 37 no. 6.

<sup>31</sup> CIMRM II, 1893 fig. 488. – Gabričević (note 10) 37 no. 17.

<sup>32</sup> J. Medini, *Makarsko primorje u antici*. Makarski zbornik, 1970, 18–19; 41 and 52 tab. XVIII, fig. 1.

<sup>33</sup> CIMRM II, 1851. – Gabričević (note 10) 37 no. 10.

<sup>34</sup> CIMRM II, 1882. – Gabričević (note 10) 37 no. 18. – D. Rendić-Miočević, *Da li je spelaeum u Močićima služilo samo mitrijačkom kultu*. Glasnik Zemaljskog Muz. Sarajevo n.s. 8, 1953, 271ff.

<sup>35</sup> CIMRM II, 1857 and 1858. – Gabričević (note 10) 37 no. 7 fig. 1 – Campbell (note 14) 319–320.

<sup>36</sup> This dual-sided ritual relief was published by M. Suić in 1965, Suić (note 11) 94 fig. 2 and fig. 3 – Medini (note 12) 68–71.

<sup>37</sup> Medini (note 12) 69.

<sup>38</sup> CIMRM II, 1083.

<sup>39</sup> CIMRM II, 1137.



FIG. 3 THE REVERSE OF TAUROCTONY FROM SINAC (CIMRM II, 1849) (FOTO BY ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM ZAGREB).

acterized by much richer scene elements and a higher level of artistic skill, many features of their composition correspond with the Dalmatian examples. Therefore, we do not exclude the possibility that the composition of the two reliefs influenced the mentioned Dalmatian tauroctonies, which certainly were made by considerably less skilled local masons. The question arises as to the site of their production, which is not easily answered since the expression of both reliefs, as well as their iconographic, compositional and stylistic marks point to the hand of almost the same masons, but they originate from two relatively distinct digs.

We tend to believe that the same mason made the two monuments – the relief from Iader and Tiluri – to

order. So far we cannot claim with absolute certainty whether the mason was from a workshop in Iader or from a workshop in the military camp of Tiluri.

Last but not least, let us point to the hindmost group of tauroctony reliefs of Roman Dalmatia, which, although rather small, is still of great importance for the understanding of provincial art.<sup>40</sup> It is composed of monuments of notably local provincial stonemasonry artistic tradition. By analyzing them one can best become acquainted with the local originality in their presentation of the composition, but also of certain iconographic elements.<sup>41</sup> Within the technical and artistic expression of this group of Mithraic cult reliefs, particularly with two reliefs from the Iapodian terri-

<sup>40</sup> On provincial art A. Schober, *Zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der provinzialrömischen Kunst*. Jahresh. Österr. Arch. Inst. 26, 1930, 9–52. – Prijatelj (note 7) 135–154.

<sup>41</sup> Even after accepting classical forms in the hinterland of the Province, the indigenous tradition enriched them by its original technical treatment and stylistic expression. Therefore new artistic expression in provincial arts does not indicate a weakening of artistic expression, but the opposite, Rendić-Miočević (note 8) 437.





FIG. 4 RELIEF OF TAUROCTONY FROM DARDAGAN (FOTO BY LJ. ZOTOVIĆ, 1973.).

tory (the relief from Rajanov grič and the relief from Sinac), autochthonous artistic tradition is much less evident than with the examples of some cult relief from the hinterland of the province.<sup>42</sup> The reasons for this are twofold. The first is certainly because of the slower process of Romanization in the territory of the Dalmatian hinterland beneath the Dinara Mountains.<sup>43</sup> Here indigenous Illyrian tradition was preserved in its entirety much longer than in the coastal zone, where

local elements were rapidly implemented within classical art.<sup>44</sup> The second, however not less important, cause is the origin of the Mithras' cult.<sup>45</sup> Since it does not belong to the autochthonous religious pantheon of the Illyrians, and cannot have an analogous deity within it considering its exclusively mysterious character, it is clear that its iconographic presentations, as well as the default composition of the cult picture, will have to be produced exclusively according to imported models.

<sup>42</sup> The most explicit examples of indigenous artistic tradition are relief presentations of Sylvan and his cult community of the area in the outmost hinterland of the Province of Dalmatia. On the issues of the indigenous stylistical elements in the reliefs of the hinterland of the Province of Dalmatia, today's territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sergejevski (note 1) 119–161. – Rendić-Miočević (note 1) 545–558.

<sup>43</sup> Rendić-Miočević (note 4) 6.

<sup>44</sup> On the interconnection of Roman classical art and autochthonous Illyrian tradition, Prijatelj (note 7) 137 and 139. – Rendić-Miočević (note 4) 6–7.

<sup>45</sup> Today Cumont's theory on the Persian origin of the Mithraic mystery has been almost entirely rejected, F. Cumont, TMMM, I, II, and the opinion of the Italian area, Rome itself, as its nurturing place in a mystery atmosphere, prevails. In favour of this is also the fact that the first tauroctony reliefs, i.e. the origin of the iconography itself, emanates from the Italic territory, Merkelbach, Mithras

<sup>46</sup> CIMRM II, 1852. – Gabričević (note 10) 37 no. 11.

<sup>47</sup> CIMRM II, 1849 fig. 473. – Gabričević (note 10) 37 no. 9.

<sup>48</sup> Lj. Zotović, *Mitraizam na tlu Jugoslavije* (1978) 22 no. 5.



The tauroctony reliefs from Rajanov grič (village Čovići near Arupium, Prozor),<sup>46</sup> from nearby Sinac,<sup>47</sup> and from Dardagan<sup>48</sup> are examples of the hindmost group.

Their expression points to the hand of a local mason, who was less familiar with the technique of the classical stonemasonry artistic production,<sup>49</sup> but who compensates this by introducing certain stylistic and even compositional innovations. The basic trait of these reliefs is rusticity, which, as is evident from the reliefs from Čovići and Sinac, is manifested in the lack of plasticity, which is one of the main characteristics of classical Roman art. The result is an extraordinary flatness of presentation (production in markedly flat relief), which excludes the understanding of plans, as evident in the tauroctony of Sinac in the position of the left torch-bearer directly beneath Sol. Their figures are disproportional and stiff, with schematized heads and a view *en face*. The folds of their clothes, as well as the beams on Sol's head are indicated by stiff lines, thus excluding the classical diaphanousness, so typical of the examples from the first group of Mithraic reliefs of Roman Dalmatia. The lack of diaphanousness is also evident in Mithras' chiton. It is not a chiton with waving folds, but only a stylized outline. The same stiff lines are used to depict the raven's wing, which stands unusually erect, as well as its body. Nevertheless, in spite of the mentioned lack of the classical tradition, this work of local production is of significant artistic expression arising from its simple poetic language, representing maybe the best example of provincial art within the body of Mithraic monuments of Roman Dalmatia.

The case with the relief from Dardagan is different. Even though at first sight one might conclude that it is just a notably bad work, after careful observation some details of this relief still indicate certain autochthonous stylistic features which are not only a result of the mason's lack of skill, but also a stylistic expression of the naiveté of local production. Certainly this is far from original traditional art preserved in the presentations

of romanized local deities from the hinterland of the province, for the reasons stated above. Eventually let us point to two interesting features of the relief from Dardagan. It depicts Mithras in a standing position, which is an amazing iconographic novelty<sup>50</sup>. Another singularity is the compositional arrangement of Sol and Luna. They are shown next to each other in the top left part of the relief, and their positions were interchanged. Luna appears to Sol's left. This is a seldom compositional sequence, since in the Mithraic iconography Sol is regularly represented in the top left section, and Luna in the opposite, top right section. Sometimes their disposition does occur,<sup>51</sup> but they are never paired on one side of the relief. Another deviation is the positioning of the raven. Instead of its standard presentation on Mithras' waving chiton, left of Mithras' head, the raven is depicted on the right side (where Luna regularly appears). The mentioned iconographic details make the work an undeniable exception. Considering that the maker of the Dardagan relief did not have its model in front of him, the work is probably made from memory and is due to the mason's poetic license in compositional shaping, which is not a common practice in Mithraic presentations.

Finally, the question of localizing individual stonemason workshops on the territory of the Province of Dalmatia arises. The problem of Roman antiquity stonemason workshops from the territory of the hinterland of Roman Dalmatia was an issue of almost all papers dedicated to artistic production. As already mentioned, their existence in larger cities is certain. This is confirmed also by a larger number of finds of stone monuments not only of cult character, but also monuments of architectural heritage. In any case, we have to assume the existence of smaller local workshops in smaller towns in the hinterland of the Province,<sup>52</sup> as well as on the territories of Roman military camps. The existence of workshops in the military camps of Tiluri and Burnum can be taken almost for granted on the basis of individual synonymous characteristics in the

<sup>49</sup> This conclusion can particularly be drawn from the relief from Rajanov Grič, wherein the stylization of Mithras' depiction completely negates classical and artistic expression. It is difficult to conclude to what extent the marked bell-shape of Mithras' toga is an attempt at a synthesis between standard iconographic models and local tradition. Known artistic depictions from Iapode territory do not provide sufficient data, D. Sergejevski, *Japodske urne*. Glasnik Zemaljskog Muz. Sarajevo n.s. IV–V, 1950, 45–94.

<sup>50</sup> Mithras' standard posture is one foot on the floor, the other – bent in the knee – leaning on the bull's thigh. The only example of Mithras in a similarly erected posture in foreground within Mithraic iconography is the tauroctony relief from Dura-Europos, CIMRM I, 40 fig. 15

<sup>51</sup> As is the case in several examples: CIMRM I, 148; CIMRM II, 1468; 2198; 2306.

<sup>52</sup> The existence of a workshop to which Master Maksimin (signed in two reliefs, that of Diana from Proložac, and the sepulchral relief from the neighboring Sović) used to belong, D. Rendić-Miočević, *Dva signirana reljefa iz radionice majstora Maksimina*. In: *Iliri i antički svijet* (Split 1989) 560–562 and 565–567, was questioned by N. Cambi, *Antički kameni spomenici iz Proložca*. Proložac 1 (11), 1986, 12–13, who believed that Master Maksimin belonged to the category of travelling Masters, as confirmed by the distinct technical and artistic character of his monuments, Cambi (note 1) 112.

production technique, content, composition and style of their grave monuments.<sup>53</sup> Stone monuments of different character for the needs of smaller towns in the hinterland were not only transported from larger cities; moreover, their main source was local production. A major number of workshops from the hinterland of the Province of Dalmatia, whose existence is confirmed by certain synonymous characteristics of stone plastic, can so far be located only roughly<sup>54</sup>.

In the case of the two reliefs from the surroundings of Arupium (Rajanov Grič and Oltar), and the relief from nearby Sinac, we can assume the activity of a smaller stonemason workshop. An analysis of an antique sarcophagus from the territory of Otočac,<sup>55</sup> several fragments of its cover and of Iapodian urns from the Roman period have already led to the conclusion that there was a common workshop on this territory. Since Mithraic reliefs of this Arupium region are characterized by a different stylistic expression, we have to assume the activity of several masons within the workshop. Since in the Arupium area the existence of an antique

quarry was confirmed<sup>56</sup> and besides parts of antique stone architecture as well as semi-worked cut stones were found on the same place<sup>57</sup>, stonemasonry activity within a smaller workshop seems a realistic assumption.

Based on the examples of Mithraic monuments of the Province of Dalmatia we have attempted to show the variety of the technical and artistic scope of provincial monuments. Within the local workshop production, particularly in the Dalmatian hinterland, works of different levels of technical and artistic skill prevail. Among them are works of high quality, but also of mediocre value. In large coastal cities such as Salona and Iader we encounter works of classical traditions. Chronologically they are the earliest examples of tauroctony in this part of the world. Works from the last group of reliefs illustrate the best examples of local traditional production. Even though rustic in their expression, their artistic expression is greatly specific. Smaller local provincial stonemason workshops, whose production was partly shown today, are to be located in the hinterland of Dalmatia. An example is the workshop in Arupium.

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<sup>53</sup> Gabričević (note 1) 246. – Rendić-Miočević (note 7) 578.

<sup>54</sup> More on this issue on the examples of cult presentations of Sylvan, alone or along with another deity from the Valleys of Livanjsko, Glamočko and Duvanjsko Polje, as well as the area of the upper Cetina flow, Rendić-Miočević (note 1) 549–551.

<sup>55</sup> N. Cambi, *Antički sarkofazi iz Like*, in: *Arheološka problematika Like*, Otočac 1974, Izdanje HAD-a, Split 1975, p. 75–85.

<sup>56</sup> I. Šarić, *Antički kamenolom u Prozoru*. In: *Materijali, tehnike i strukture predantičkog i antičkog graditeljstva na istočnom jadranskom prostoru* (Zagreb 1980) 115–121.

<sup>57</sup> A. Rendić-Miočević, *Prozor, Otočac, Lika – antički Arupium*. *Arh. Pregled* 16, 1974, p. . – A. Rendić-Miočević, *Istraživanja antičkog naselja kod Prozora u Lici (Arupium)*. *VAMZ* IX/3, Zagreb 1975, p. 169–171.