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**SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE
OF THE MONASTERY OF STUDENICA
PAST, PERSEVERANCE, CONTEMPORANEITY**

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of the consoles supporting the frieze under the eaves on the western façade are sculpted. Mounted in the central part of the façade, at the apex of the gable, above the main portal, are four consoles, one of which is profiled in a simple manner, the remaining three being adorned with two human heads and one of an animal, which has been identified as a lion head. It represents the protome of an animal with sharp teeth in its jaws, a wide, fleshy nose, with two deeply set horizontal lines at its root, and wide nostrils, as well as bulging eyes set wide apart, with large lead pupils, and pointed ears. There is no hint of fur or a mane. Animal heads of this type are represented in several places on the façade of Studenica, namely, on the two consoles on the southern façade, and on the western façade itself, at the apex of the portal archivolt, where the animal head spouts undulating scrolls, as well as on the figure of the lioness on the large console of the main portal, which suggests that they were most likely made by the same master sculptor.

REFERENCES: Maksimović, 1971, 71-75; *Manastir Studenica*, 1986, 109-112, 124-127 (Maksimović).

DUBRAVKA PRERADOVIĆ

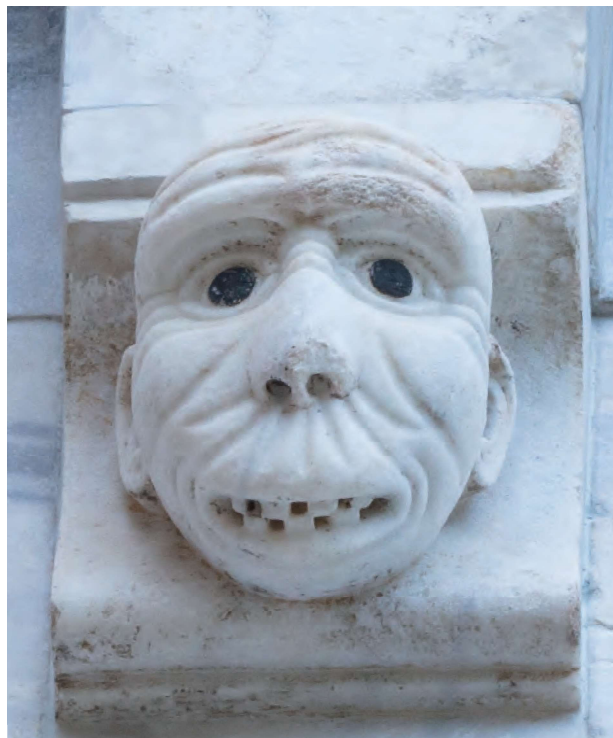


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7. CONSOLE. A MAN'S HEAD WITH AN ELONGATED BEARD

Studenica, Church of the Virgin,
south façade, ca. 1190, copy
Cast by Krsta Avakumović, 1952
Plaster, cast 23 × 21 cm
National Museum, Kraljevo

The gallery of human and animal heads represented on the consoles of the frieze of the eaves on the south façade of the katholikon in Studenica also includes a superbly crafted man's head, at the west end of the eastern bay. Despite having been damaged along the right half of the face, as well as at the tip of the nose, it has lost nothing of its expressiveness and beauty. The oval face with a high forehead is fashioned in soft lines, the nose is exquisite and long, and the almond-shaped eyes with lead in lieu of the pupils, are framed by a fine line. The mouth is half open, revealing, quite extraordinarily, a set of teeth in jaws. The face is framed by a combed and tapered medium-length beard, rendered by softly treated and slightly wavy lines. The meticulously shaped



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moustache is rendered in the same manner, as well as the short hair combed back behind the ears, with one strand extending down the middle of the forehead.

A similar treatment of the face, and primarily the beard and the hair, can be noted on the figures of the apostles on the doorpost of the main, western, portal. This refers especially to the apostles represented in the lower section of the north doorpost. Classical peace, naturalness and harmony - noted as important characteristics of Studenica sculpture - are fully reflected in the man's head with an elongated beard. In that sense, Studenica sculpture belongs to the Romanesque art trend that fostered the traditions of classical antiquity, as was the case in coastal cities on both sides of the Adriatic Sea.

Studenica's consoles have not been the subject of a special study and the degree to which they have been researched so far is inadequate for establishing their role in the concept of sculptural decoration of the Church of the Mother of God. They belong to the classical iconographic repertoire of marginal sculpture of the time, featuring a high level of artistic expression, which additionally underlines the extraordinary skills of the stone masons of Studenica.

REFERENCES: *Manastir Studenica*, 1986, 124–127 (Maksimović).

DUBRAVKA PRERADOVIĆ

8. CONSOLE. THE APE-LIKE HEAD OF AN ELDERLY MAN

Studenica, Church of the Virgin, south façade, ca. 1190, copy
Cast by Krsta Avakumović, 1952
Plaster, cast 23 × 21 cm

Gallery of Frescoes of the National Museum in Belgrade

Particularly distinctive in the series of consoles of the arcade frieze on the south façade is yet another one, which is the first to be noticed when observing the frieze from the western part of the church. It features the sculpted ape-like head of an elderly man, with a high, protruding and wrinkled forehead, and thick eyebrows overhanging his wide-open and deep-set eyes, with lead pupils and fan-like wrinkles at the outer corners. The snout is represented as having radially set wrinkles, and the mouth is open with his jaws visible. The nose is wide featuring two horizontal lines at the apex, and the ears are large and slightly sticking out.

In the *Physiologus*, the ape is likened to the devil himself, while early Christian church fathers insisted on the disquieting similarity between the ape and man, attributing a series of negative connotations to the ape. In Christian iconography the ape is often represented as holding a mirror, a symbol of the weakness of the human spirit, or as shackled, symbolizing evil and destruction. While representations of apes did appear in Romanesque art, their role was marginalized. From the 12th century on, ape-like creatures began symbolizing human beings degenerated by sin. It is exactly this symbolic context that underlies the representation on the console in Studenica.

The rich gallery of consoles of the katholikon of the Monastery of Dečani also includes a console that was crafted after the model of the Studenica protome described here, located on the main apse of the church.

REFERENCES: Bošković, Petković, 1941, 85; *Manastir Studenica*, 1986, 121–122, fig. 90. (Maksimović); Walker Vadillo, 2013, 63–77.

DUBRAVKA PRERADOVIĆ