

FORSCHUNGEN  
ZU SPÄTRÖMISCHEN RESIDENZEN



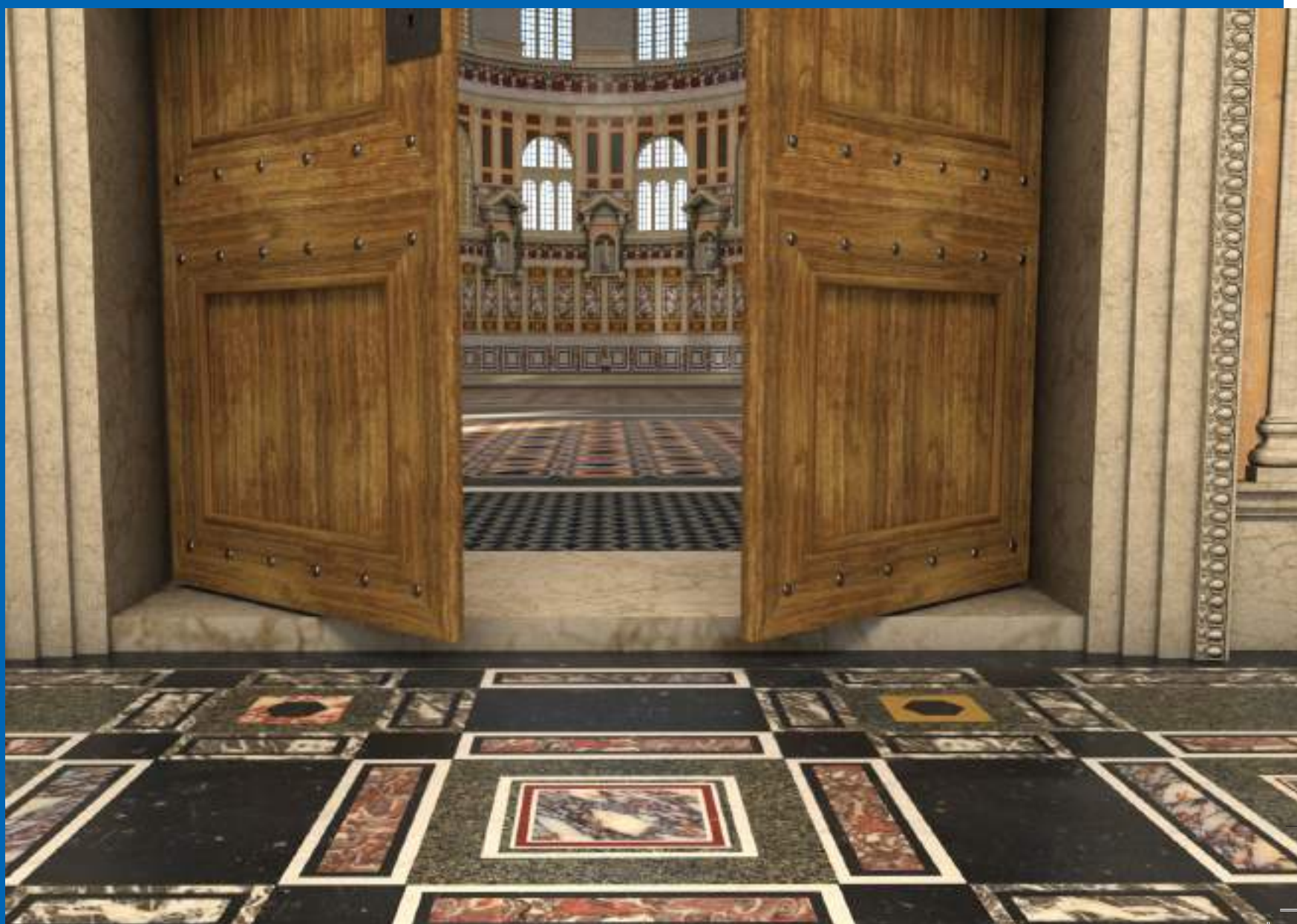
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Vilma Rupprienė (ed.)

STONE AND SPLENDOR:  
INTERIOR DECORATIONS IN LATE-ANTIQUUE  
PALACES AND VILLAS

Proceedings of a Workshop, Trier, 25–26 April 2019

Harrassowitz



## Stone and Splendor

# **Forschungen zu spätrömischen Residenzen**

**1**



**Herausgegeben im Auftrag  
des Verbunds zur Erforschung der  
antiken Kaiserresidenzen Trier  
von Torsten Mattern und Marcus Reuter**

2021

Harrassowitz

**Vilma Ruppenė (ed.)**

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Cover: View from the vestibule into the main hall (Basilika, Trier).  
Reconstruction proposal by V. Ruppené and K.-P. Goethert, executed by F. Dießenbacher and  
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## PREFACE

On 30 November 2018, in the presence of the Minister for Science, Further Education and Culture of the State of Rhineland-Palatinate, Prof. Dr. Konrad Wolf, the “Verbund zur Erforschung der antiken Kaiserresidenz Trier (VaKT)” was founded. Emerged from a cooperation between the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier and Trier University, it is the concern of the network to research the “phenomenon residence” in its entirety: people, size and activities of the “court”, representative and utility buildings, infrastructure, changes in the social and religious structure within the Augusta Treverorum, impacts on the surrounding countryside with the villas and settlement, the military protection and much more. This self-imposed task is large and will take a long time to complete. For this reason, VaKT is open to any colleague who would like to participate. At the same time, Trier is an ideal location to address these questions. Like in hardly any other place, historical, epigraphical and archaeological sources are available here. From the very beginning, however, connected with Trier and the founding of the network was also the hope that the comparison with other

late antique residential cities would broaden and at the same time sharpen the view. It was therefore only logical that the series of publications, the first volume of which is now available, was given the title “Forschungen zu spätantiken Residenzen”. Likewise, it was only logical that the first volume contains the results of an international colloquium that was held here under the direction of Mrs Prof. V. Ruppioné. Like hardly any other material, the coloured marbles stand for the luxury and splendor of the empire and its residences. At the same time, the large number of residences in the articles expresses what we hope to achieve with the publication series. It is not entirely coincidental that the editors have chosen for the title page a view of the reconstructed basilica with an opening door. With the first volume of the new series, you are currently also holding – symbolically – an opening door in your hands and we are excited about what lies ahead of us.

Ad multos annos!

*Torsten Mattern & Marcus Reuter*



## VORWORT

Am 30. November 2018 wurde in Trier unter Anwesenheit des Ministers für Wissenschaft, Weiterbildung und Kultur des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz, Prof. Dr. Konrad Wolf, der Verbund zur Erforschung der antiken Kaiserresidenz Trier (VaKT) gegründet. Hervorgegangen aus einer Kooperation des Rheinischen Landesmuseums Trier und der Universität Trier, ist es das Anliegen des Verbundes, das „Phänomen Residenz“ in seiner gesamten Breite zu erforschen: Personen, Umfang und Wirken des ‚Hofes‘, Repräsentations- und Versorgungsbauten, Infrastruktur, Veränderungen des sozialen und religiösen Gefüges in der Augusta Treverorum, Auswirkungen auf das Umland mit den Villen und der Besiedlung, der militärischen Sicherung und vieles mehr. Diese selbstgestellte Aufgabe ist groß und wird lange Zeit in Anspruch nehmen. Aus diesem Grunde ist VaKT offen für jeden Kollegen, der daran mitwirken möchte. Zugleich ist Trier ein idealer Standort, um sich diesen Fragen zu widmen: Wie an kaum einem anderen Ort stehen hier historische, epigraphische und archäologische Quellen zu Verfügung. Verbunden mit Trier und der Gründung des Verbundes war von Anfang an aber auch die Hoffnung, dass der

Vergleich mit anderen spätantiken Residenzstädten zugleich den Blick weiten, wie auch schärfen würde. Es war deswegen nur folgerichtig, dass die Schriftenreihe, deren erster Band nun vorliegt, den Titel „Forschungen zu spätantiken Residenzen“ erhalten hat. Gleichfalls war es nur folgerichtig, dass der erste Band die Ergebnisse eines internationalen Kolloquiums beinhaltet, das hier unter der Leitung von Frau Prof. V. Ruppinié stattfand: Wie kaum ein anderes Material stehen die Buntmarmore für Luxus und Glanz des Reiches und seiner Residenzen. Zugleich drückt die Vielzahl der Residenzorte in den Beiträgen aus, was wir uns von der Schriftenreihe erhoffen. Nicht ganz zufällig haben die Herausgeber als Motiv für die Titelseite eine Ansicht der rekonstruierten Konstantinsbasilika mit einer sich öffnenden Tür gewählt. Mit dem ersten Band der neuen Reihe halten Sie gerade – symbolisch – ebenfalls eine sich öffnende Tür in den Händen und wir sind gespannt auf das vor uns Liegende.

Ad multos annos!

*Torsten Mattern & Marcus Reuter*

## INTRODUCTION

by Vilma Ruppenė

From April 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, an interdisciplinary international workshop on the subject of *Interior decorations in the late-antique imperial palaces, villas and palatial complexes* took place in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier. The primary aim of this workshop was to create a platform for international exchange and networking among scientists with the research focus on the interior decorations (wall and floor incrustations, mosaics, paintings, stucco and sculpture) of late-antique Roman palaces and villas (mainly those in imperial possession) as well as of other contemporaneous palatial building complexes and luxurious villas, which are relevant for comparisons due to their rich furnishings and size. The special attention to wall and floor incrustations resulted from the current research project, which deals with the former interior decorations of the so-called Konstantinbasilika – the audience hall of the late-antique imperial palace in Trier. This study has been financially supported by the Volkswagen-Stiftung (Volkswagen Foundation) since 2016 and is currently in its final phase. As the investigations showed, the walls and the floor of the main hall of the former imperial palace were richly decorated with slabs made of various regional and imported natural stone types, which have survived in large numbers but in a very fragmentary state. The juxtaposition of the interior of the Konstantinbasilika in Trier with the other late-antique palaces and villas in Rome and Roman provinces was intended to shed new light on what decorative elements were used in the buildings in different parts of the Roman Empire and how they differed from each other and from those in the Urbs. The interest was also directed to the question of whether the *marmor* fashion in Late Antiquity continued to be based on the models in Rome, or whether the changed access to decorative materials shaped and influenced taste and created new decorative schemes in the Roman provinces.

The workshop was organized and carried out by the Chair für Geodynamik und Geomaterialforschung at the Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier and Verbund für die Erforschung der spätantiken Kaiserresidenz Trier (VaKT).

The workshop proceedings *Stone and Splendor. Interior Decorations in Late-antique Palaces and Villas. Proceedings of a Workshop, Trier, 25–26 April 2019 Trier* (the title was slightly modified for the publication) contains fourteen contributions. With the exception of two articles which have since been published elsewhere, all contributions presented during the conference have been published in this volume<sup>1</sup>.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the VolkswagenStiftung for its financial support in realizing the research project and the implementation of the event, as well for reimbursing the speakers' travel expenses. Sincere thanks go also to the director of the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier, Marcus Reuter, for providing the lecture hall and a room for the coffee break free of charge, as well as for the opportunity to visit the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier and the archaeological sites on the second day of the meeting. I would also like to thank Katharina Ackenheil and Stephan Ackermann for their competent guided tours in the museum, in the city and on the archaeological excavations. Thanks to the help of Ursula Zimmer, Christine Linge and Florian Tanz, the event ran smoothly. My gratitude goes also to the head of the Institute for Classical Archeology, University of Trier, Torsten Mattern, and the director of the Rheinisches Landesmuseum

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<sup>1</sup> The volume does not include the contributions by Matthias Bruno/Fulvia Bianchi and Katja Marasović. The latter is published in: K. MARASOVIĆ/D. MATETIĆ POLJAK/Đ. GOBIĆ BRAVAR, Colored Marbles of Diocletian's Palace in Split. In: P. Pensabene/E. Gasparini (Ed.), ASMOSIA X. Proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference, Rome 21–26 May 2012 (Rome 2015) 945–961; K. MARASOVIĆ/V. MARINKOVIĆ, Marble revetments of the Diocletian's palace. In: D. Matetić/P. K. Marasović (Ed.), ASMOSIA XI, Interdisciplinary Studies of Ancient Stone Proceedings of the 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference of ASMOSIA, Split, 18–22 May 2015 (Split 2018) 839–853. The originally planned contribution by Maja Zivić had to be cancelled at short notice. Instead, the contributions by Gordana Jeremić and Biljana Lucić were subsequently included in the volume, in order to expand the range of topics with two important late-antique imperial palace complexes.

Trier, Marcus Reuter, for providing the financial means to produce this publication. The editor and the authors are very grateful to Rodman Moore for correcting the English-language contributions. I would also like to thank the reviewers for their crit-

icism as well as Ulrike Melzow and Stephan Specht for the quick and smooth printing process. Last but not least, my cordial thanks go to all participants for their competence and engagement, which made the publication of this book possible in the first place.

# IMPERIAL ART DURING THE TETRARCHY PERIOD IN THE CULTURAL SPACE OF THE BALKANS: THE EXAMPLE OF GALERIUS' FOUNDATION IN ROMULIANA (GAMZIGRAD, SERBIA)

by Gordana Jeremić

## Abstract

The fortified palatial complex in Gamzigrad (*Romuliana*) represents a remarkable example of architecture and art in the area of the Balkans during the Tetrarchy period, created during the short reign of its owner and commissioner – Emperor Galerius (305–311). Remains of a complex with buildings of official, cult and residential character, protected by ramparts, were discovered in *Romuliana*, in a place for life and *apotheosis* of the Emperor, once he would have stepped down from the throne. The complex had opulent architectural decorations: rooms and open spaces were decorated with sculptures, walls with paintings and mosaics, and floors with polychrome mosaics. Analyses of decorative elements from the complex in *Romuliana* provide an overview of the program scheme which brings together the traditions and innovations of Roman crafts and art centres from different parts of the Mediterranean world and together formed the stage for the veneration of the imperial cult.

The late-antique site of Gamzigrad, ca. 12 km to the south-west from Zaječar in Eastern Serbia (Fig. 1), was reliably identified as *Romuliana* thanks to the remarkable finding of an inscribed archivol<sup>1</sup>. *Romuliana* was founded by the Roman Emperor Galerius (Caesar 293–305 and Augustus 305–311)<sup>2</sup>, who named it in honour of his mother Romula. Administratively, the settlement belonged to the province of *Dacia Ripensis*. During the archaeological research, started in 1953, which have been on going up to today<sup>3</sup>, the basic stratigraphy of the settlement was established from the prehistoric periods (Met-

al Ages), over the Roman period (a settlement from the 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century, which was partially negated with the building of Galerius' foundation)<sup>4</sup>, Tetrarchy period (palace), Late Antiquity (a rural-type settlement with local economy and Christian sacral objects), up to the Middle Ages (a settlement and a necropolis).

As for the period of Galerius' reign, archaeological studies were partially performed on the ramparts and towers of the fortification (Fig. 2), buildings in the inner part, the consecrative complex on the near-by hill of Magura<sup>5</sup>, and, in the more recent period, buildings *extra muros* are also being researched<sup>6</sup>. The palatial complex of *Romuliana* belongs to the type of fortified residences (Fig. 3), which were to serve as a kind of oases into which

1 SREJOVIĆ 1985, 51–53.

2 Galerius, born ca. 250, came from a modest farmers' background, and rose in the army to the rank of Caesar in 293. In 298 he won an important victory over the Persians, and in honour of this victory a triumphal arch was raised in Thessaloniki where his residence was located. In May 305 he was declared Augustus, and in 311, while suffering from a severe illness, he issued the momentous Edict on religious tolerance in Serdica. STEIN 1968, 65–93.

3 For a history of research: ŽIVIĆ 2003, 20–27; VASIĆ 2007, 33 f.

4 PETKOVIĆ 2011, 33–39.

5 SREJOVIĆ/VASIĆ 1994, 127–141. According to Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, Galerius passed away in Serdica in May 311 and was buried in his birthplace, *Romulianum*, even though there was a mausoleum prepared for him in Thessaloniki. PLRE I, 574–575, s. v. 9. C. Galerius Valerius Maximianus.

6 VON BÜLOW et al. 2009, 119–135.



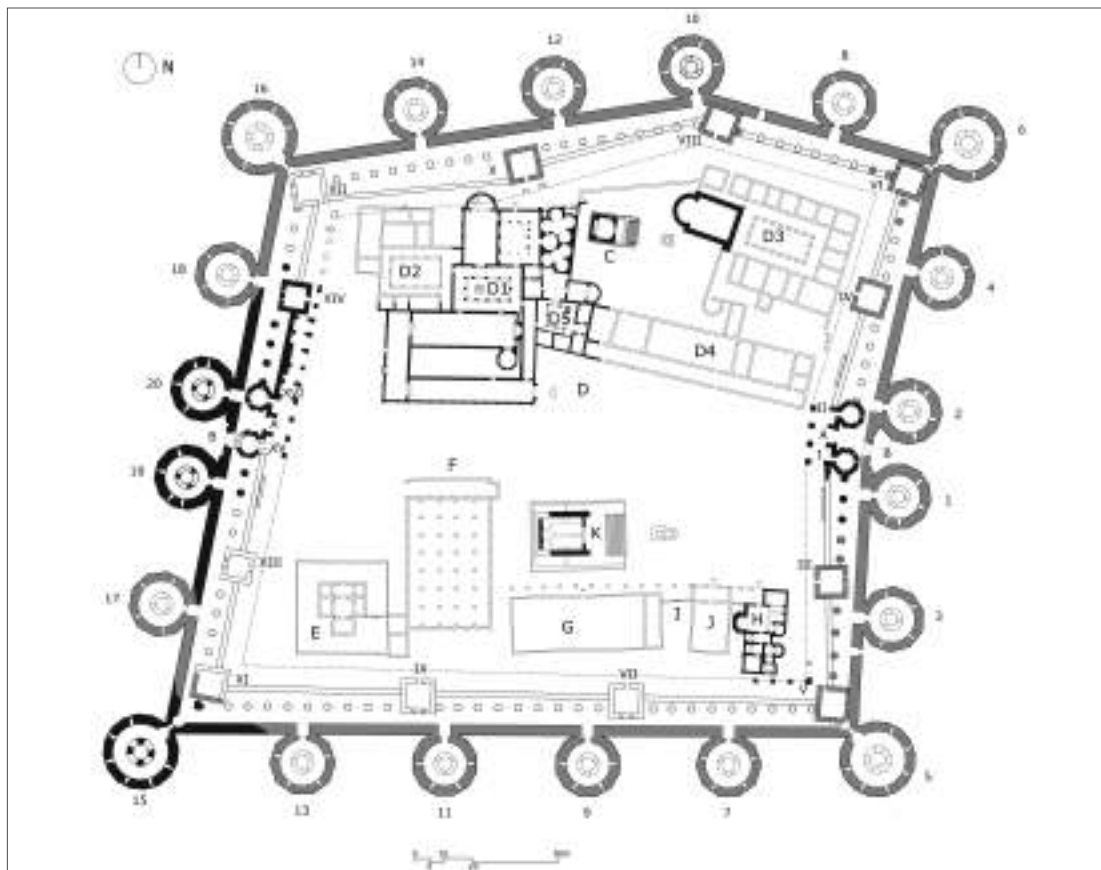
Fig. 1: Balkan provinces in Late Roman period.

a ruler could withdraw after ending his career as an Emperor<sup>7</sup>. Studies established that in the place where the fort from Galerius' period was built, there had already been a fortification with a similar rampart outline, but with different construction

arrangements, probably severely damaged by a natural disaster in the last decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century<sup>8</sup>. The main communication within the fortification was the *decumanus*. The route of the *cardo* was disregarded because of the distribution of buildings inside, which were grouped into two zones, the northern and the southern one. The palatial complex *proprie dictu* took almost the entire northern half of the fortification, while public and cult objects were built in the southern part: a large temple,

<sup>7</sup> This kind of concept in the architecture of the Tetrarchy period is known from the examples of fortified palaces, such as the one in Split, made according to the wishes of its owner Diocletian, and also the one from Šarkamen, which is the foundation of Galerius' nephew Maximinus Daia (308–313).

<sup>8</sup> VON BÜLOW et al. 2009, 160 f.



▲ Fig. 2: Aerial view of the imperial palace in *Romuliana*.

◀ Fig. 3: Site plan of the fortified palace in *Romuliana*.

► Fig. 4: Pilaster with representations of the Tetrarchs in medallions, *Romuliana*.

bath (*balneum*), *basilica*? with a portico, five-nave building and cruciform building constructed within a fenced space (the so-called Romula's *triclinium* or *sacrarium*)<sup>9</sup>.

Archaeological research registered different elements of rich decorations in certain buildings: remains of mosaic and marble floors, parts of polychrome wall paintings<sup>10</sup>, rich architectural decorations (pilasters, lintels, capitals, columns), stone and marble revetments on walls, sculptural works – individual or group statues. These works were created on site, or delivered there, and put in place over a very short period of time. They represent the materialization of the concept based on the divine personality of the Emperor. These works also form a corpus of unique comparative material for studying similar complexes or works of art created in the Late Antiquity period.

#### Architectural decorations

Architectural decorations made of different types of marble, local stone, more seldom ceramics, were registered predominantly in the debris layers of buildings or in secondary use in the later periods<sup>11</sup>. The findings from examined building units provide valuable data on the materials used, on the styles represented and on distinctive traits of given workshops. Various analyses of materials used proved that for the building of the fortification and certain edifices inside – in places where finer works on the surface weren't necessary – hornblende andesite was used originating from a quarry located to the north-west of the fortification<sup>12</sup>. For finer works in the construction of certain parts of the fortification in the lower zones, for both temples and the palace, local volcanoclastic sandstone was used from the quarry located at the hill of Magura. Regional sandy limestone of the Sarmatian Age from a quarry located to the north from the fortification, was used for the plinths of the columns in the peristyle of the palace, small Corinthian capitals, blocks of the large temple, and tombstones from the period of the Tetrarchy<sup>13</sup>. A large number of findings of marble decorations indicate that Mediterranean marble of different origin was very popular. After the palace had been abandoned, large quantities of



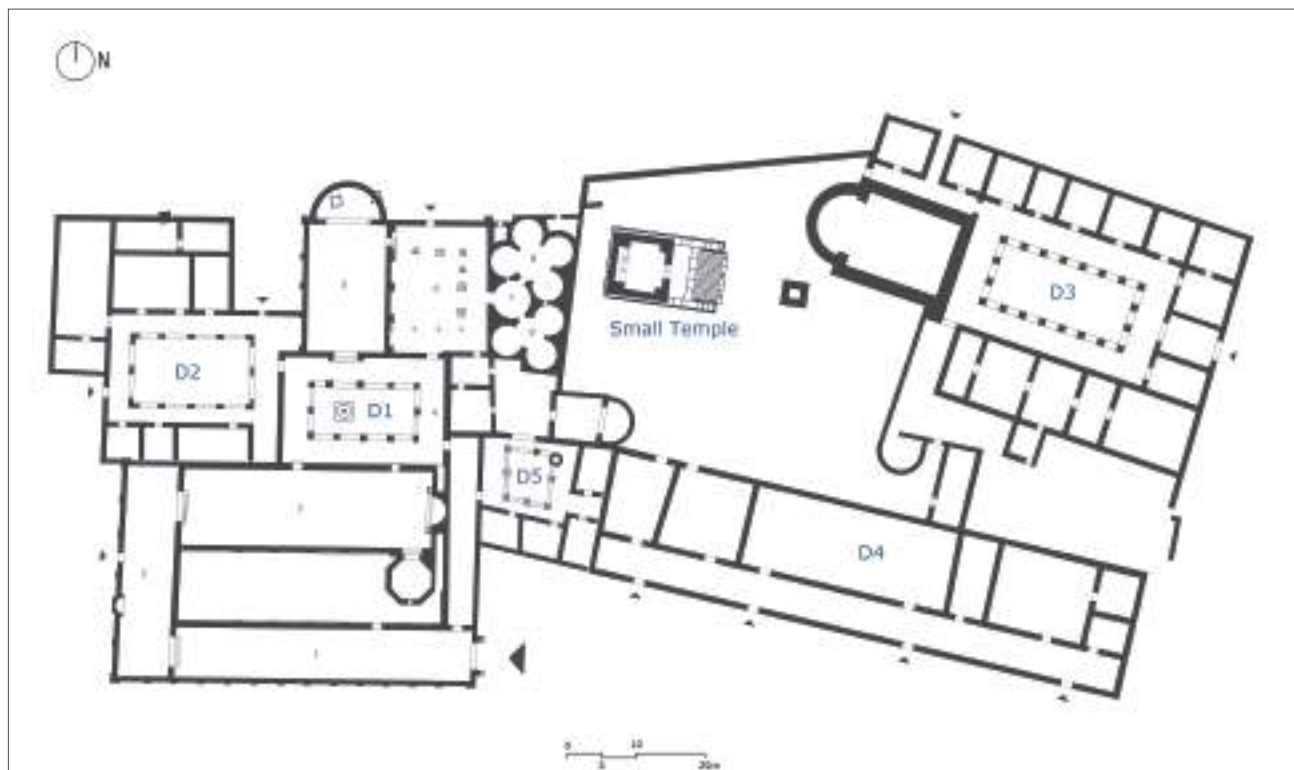
9 VON BÜLOW et al. 2009, 159.

10 Because of their very fragmentary state of preservation, this group of findings will not be discussed in detail in this paper.

11 SREJOVIĆ 1983, 88.

12 DJURIĆ et al. 2018, 487.

13 DJURIĆ et al. 2018, 487–490.



white marble and limestone were secondarily used for limekilns<sup>14</sup>.

The eastern and the western façades of the entryways of the fortification represent eminent parts of this unique complex. They reflected the power, prominence, imperial role and state propaganda through their symbolism and the representations shown on them. Elements of the imperial *potestas* were especially noteworthy in the program scheme of the eastern façade, which communicated visually with the funerary-sacral complex on the near-by hill of Magura. This façade was decorated with a pilaster with representations of the pairs of rulers – Tetrarchs, in medallions on a military standard (Fig. 4). Another pilaster was decorated with the scene of the crowning of the Tetrarchs, with representations of divinities in an *edicula* – probably Jupiter and Victoria, crowning the rulers, and also a part of a pilaster with pastoral or ritual scenes<sup>15</sup>. The monumentality of the eastern façade was augmented by pillars made of imperial porphyry (*porfido rosso antico*, Gebel Dokhan), fragments of which were discovered near the eastern entrance into the fortification<sup>16</sup>. However, the largest number of architectural decorations from these two prominent entrances were made of the local types of stone: vol-

caniclastic sandstone and sandy limestone of Sarmatian Age<sup>17</sup>.

The imperial palace (Fig. 5) went through numerous adaptations and partitioning up until the Early Byzantine period, and it was for the building of churches in particular (end of the 4<sup>th</sup>–the 6<sup>th</sup> century) that a secondary use of architectural elements from the Tetrarchy period was noted. The decorations of the palace include six small limestone capitals, whose close parallels can be found in the vestibule of Diocletian's palace in Split<sup>18</sup>. The largest amount of decorative elements were made of *marmor proconnesium*, out of which Ionic capitals and column bases in the peristyle of the palace were made, and also of Pentelic marble, used for column bases and Ionic capitals, mostly found in the peristyle of the palace. A smaller group of capitals was made of Thasian marble<sup>19</sup>. For the wall and floor panels, as well as the *sectilia pavimenta*, marble of different colors was used in the palace, among which different types have been identified from at least 12 different quarries in Greece, Turkey and North Africa<sup>20</sup>.

In the decoration of the large temple (Fig. 3, K), dedicated to Jupiter, in the southern part of the for-

Fig. 5: Complex of the imperial palace in Romuliana.

14 DJURIĆ et al. 2018, 491.

15 ŽIVIĆ 2011, 109 Fig. 64a–b.

16 DJURIĆ et al. 2018, 491 f.

17 BREITNER 2011, 144 f.

18 BREITNER 2011, 146 note 11.

19 DJURIĆ et al. 2018, 492.

20 DJURIĆ et al. 2018, 493.





Fig. 6: Fragmented archivolt of volcaniclastic sandstone with a carved-in inscription *Romuliana*.

tification, regional sandy limestone was used for the blocs of the temple, and marbles for two groups of Corinthian and one group of Ionian capitals. The general trait of these capitals is that parallels for them can be found in buildings from various parts of the Empire, predominantly from the period of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries and they couldn't be considered a product from the Tetrarchy period: much more likely they were used from some other, older architectural ensembles<sup>21</sup>. In the case of the small temple (Fig. 3, C), volcaniclastic sandstone was used for architectural decorations and roof tiles, while the stone architraves of this temple bear identical decorations to those of the marble examples from the large temple, which could indicate that they were made in the same workshop.

During the archaeological research of 1984, a fragmented archivolt made of volcaniclastic sandstone with a relief and a carved-in inscription (Fig. 6) was discovered in the prominent cruciform building (Fig. 3, E). It is one of the most important findings of the fortified complex in Gamzigrad, which provided an epigraphic verification of its antique name – *Felix Romuliana*<sup>22</sup>. A stylistically identical finding is the archivolt from the eastern gate of the fortification, which is, however, anepigraphic<sup>23</sup>.

## Sculptures and sculptural groups

Sculptural works of the complex of Gamzigrad were mostly discovered fragmented. They are characterized by stylistic and thematic diversity and were made of local stone or marble. Sculptures of marble originate from different workshops around the Mediterranean world. More recent analyses on the origin of the marble revealed that most of the sculptural works had been made of fine-grained Pentelic marble from the quarry in the vicinity of Athens and from *marmor Docimium* (Afyon-*Docimium* in Asia Minor). They represented ordered works of art<sup>24</sup>. Sculptures from *Romuliana* can be divided into two basic groups: group one includes statues of Emperor Galerius and group two – representation of divinities from the Roman Pantheon and depictions of heroes.

When it comes to the representations of Emperor Galerius, parts of one or more statues made of porphyry were registered. They came to light during several archaeological campaigns in different parts of *Romuliana*, mostly in secondary use. A globe held in a left hand, which was part of a colossal imperial statue, was discovered in 1972 in the palace area on the outer side of the apse of the *aula*. It most probably decorated a niche in this most prominent chamber of the palace. In addition, part of Victoria's wing was found in the debris layer of the tetraconch *stibadium* of the palace. Between 1971–1976, numerous parts of porphyry compositions were discovered in the large temple, where the imperial cult was most probably venerated: findings of wings, feet and hands of Victoria (?), fragments of palmettes, paws with claws, as well as hands, feet and shoulders of an unidentified person<sup>25</sup>. The most significant finding – the porphyry head of Emperor Galerius, crowned with a *corona triumphalis*, was discovered in 1993 in secondary use in the area of the *balneum* in the south-eastern part of the fortification (Fig. 3, H). During the research in 2005 a fragment of a male torso, with parts of a cloak, also made of porphyry, was found in the construction of an Early Byzantine bath wall. In the area of the western gate of the fortification, a fragment of a sculpture came to light, out of which a part of the neck and the nape, with styled locks of hair, was preserved<sup>26</sup>.

Out of all the porphyry statues, the most important finding is that of the portrait of Emperor Galerius (Fig. 7), which represents a solid work of art

21 BREITNER 2011, 147 Fig. 6–7. On the other hand, findings of semi-finished products were registered in *Romuliana*, such as column bases and columns made of *marmor proconnesium*, which indicate that they had been finished *in situ*. Cf. DJURIĆ et al. 2018, 491.

22 SREJOVIĆ 1985, 51 Fig. 1.

23 LALOVIĆ 1993, 206 f. No. 49.

24 PROCHASKA / ŽIVIĆ 2018, 301.

25 POPOVIĆ 2017, Nos. 18–26.

26 For this finding, it was stated that it was discovered “in front of the western gate of the older fortification”. It is more likely that the finding belongs, chronologically, to the phase of the later fortification. Cf. SREJOVIĆ 1983, 79 No 26; POPOVIĆ 2017, No. 16.



Fig. 7 (above): Portrait of Galerius, Romuliana.

Fig. 8 (left below): Monumental marble head of Jupiter, Romuliana.

Fig. 9 (right below): Marble head of Hercules, Romuliana.



from the Tetrarchy period. Christian writers who were averse to him used to describe him as a tall, muscular person, his body large and bloated even to a terrifying extent, with a wild, primitive temper, because of which he inspired fear in everyone. The portrait from *Romuliana*, quite to the contrary, shows a certain meekness in the traits of the face.

If this bust was part of a standing statue, its height would have been ca. 2.5 m. If the mentioned hand with the globe also belonged to this statue, it would have been a representation of Galerius as *Cosmocrator*, same as he was depicted in one bronze Egyptian sculpture, described in detail by Ammianus Marcellinus. It was possibly erected after the year 305



Fig. 10: Asleep  
Ariadne,  
*Romuliana*.

when Galerius was declared Augustus<sup>27</sup>. One or two colossal statues (over 4 m), representing Emperor Galerius as a general, possibly together with Diocletian, were made of marble probably originating from Pohorje, which could have been placed inside Jupiter's large temple, or, possibly, on the *forum* of the fortified complex<sup>28</sup>.

Although preserved fragmentarily, representations of divinities of the Roman *Pantheon* and depictions of heroes made of marble indicate that a classical Roman repertoire was present in *Romuliana*. Of the divinities of the Roman *Pantheon*, Jupiter was most probably venerated in the large temple as the supreme deity, but also as a figure that was considered the protector and founder of the family of the senior Tetrarchs (Fig. 8). A monumental marble head of this deity is preserved. In a political-hierarchical sense, his subordinate was Hercules, a symbol of the younger pair of Tetrarchs-Caesars, whose head (Fig. 9), made in the Hellenistic style, was discovered in *Romuliana*, as well as a pedestal with his feet and a rock draped with lion's skin<sup>29</sup>. Representa-

tions of Roman deities also comprehend fragmented statues of Minerva – part of the Capitoline Triad (?) and Aesculapius, the healer deity<sup>30</sup>. For a large number of fragments of female figures in draped clothing it is impossible to establish their identity without further attributes – they could have represented the Muses, Minerva or Juno. Parts of a column wrapped in vines, could be attributed to the cult of Dionysus present in the mosaic art of *Romuliana*, as well as a fragment of a marble plate with the depiction of Ariadne asleep (Fig. 10), and also the head of a young Satyr, Dionysus' companion.

Aside from the divinities of the Roman *Pantheon*, judging from the basis of written data and archaeological findings, local divinities were also venerated, most prominently the protectors of forests and hunting. Lactantius noted that Galerius' mother was a follower of the cult of mountain deities, and that she used to make sacrificial feasts in their honour quite often, to which she would invite her neighbours<sup>31</sup>. In 2010, the lower part of a marble sculptural group (Fig. 11) was discovered during the

27 Amm. Marc. 25, 10, 13. The same author mentioned that in Antioch, in the vestibule of the imperial palace, there was a statue of Caesar Maximianus, with a bronze globe, which fell down from the statue, and which was interpreted as a bad sign. Cf. Amm. Marc. 24, 10, 1–2.

28 PROCHASKA / ŽIVIĆ 2018, 301 f. Fig. 2.

29 SREJOVIĆ 1983, 78 f. Nos. 5. 10.

30 The prevalence of the cult of this deity – patron of medicine and healing – in Gamzigrad may not have been a coincidence: in Gamzigradska Banja, 2.5 km from the site, there are healing sources that were probably also known to the Romans.

31 Before 303. Lact. De mort. pers. 11, 1–2.



research of the complex within an enclosed space to the north from the fortified imperial palace, created most probably during the period of Aurelian. It was used as a workshop and storage area during the construction of the fortified palace in the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It is a very good piece of artisanal work from the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, made of marble from the vicinity of Berkovitsa, in today's Bulgaria. The preserved parts of the sculpture comprehend the lower extremities and hooves of a horse and a running dog biting the leg of the wild boar, which had already fallen to its front legs<sup>32</sup>. This piece of art could have been a representation of a Thracian horseman or a scene with Diana. The sculpture could have been a decorative piece in a building from an older suburb of Gamzigrad and it could have possibly been used in cult and/or for decorative purposes during the reign of Galerius.

## Mosaics

Buildings of the fortified complex of Gamzigrad (*Romuliana*) were richly decorated with mosaics that were created over a very short time. Mosaics covered the surfaces of walls and vaults, out of which individual findings of glass *tesserae* with traces of golden foil on one side remained preserved. During

more recent studies, individual *tesserae* were discovered in the complex located to the north from the eminent fortification within the building identified as the *basilica*. The concentration at this place could indicate that, at one point, this space might have been used as a depot for storing mosaic materials of an *in situ* workshop (*officina*) for the making of *tesserae* or mobile mosaic panels for the decoration of buildings in Gamzigrad<sup>33</sup>.

During the studies performed in *Romuliana* so far, mosaic floors have been discovered in three buildings: in palace D1, in a building with a cruciform ground plan in the south-western corner, and in the bath. Discoveries of the mosaics of Gamzigrad began during the first year of systematic research of the palace in 1953, when the first panels with hunting scenes (*venatio*) were found, as well as a part of a geometric mosaic with the representation of a labyrinth<sup>34</sup>. In 1969, the most significant mosaic was discovered in the large *triclinium* – *aula*, with the depiction of Dionysus sitting. Successively, further mosaic floors in other rooms of this complex located in the north-western section of the fortification were uncovered.

The imperial palace in the north-western section of the fortification consisted of five units and it had a series of rooms with a different ground plan and different orientation<sup>35</sup> (Fig. 5). The palace *stricto sensu* represents a group of rooms in the south-western corner of the fortification (D1, Fig. 5), intended for ceremonial activities, and it spread over the surface of 3250 m<sup>2</sup>. It was the only building covered with

Fig. 11: Boar-hunting, fragment of the marble sculptural group, *Romuliana*.

32 W. Prochaska and M. Živić see this sculpture fragment as the symbolism and tendency of depicting the strength and virtue of the Emperor as well as his divine nature (PROCHASKA / ŽIVIĆ 2018, 302 Fig. 3), which, for the time being, on the basis of such a low level of preservation and the context itself of the finding, we aren't fully able to support.

33 JEREMIĆ 2020, 329.

34 MANO-ZISI 1956, 74–84.

35 POPOVIĆ 2019, 68.

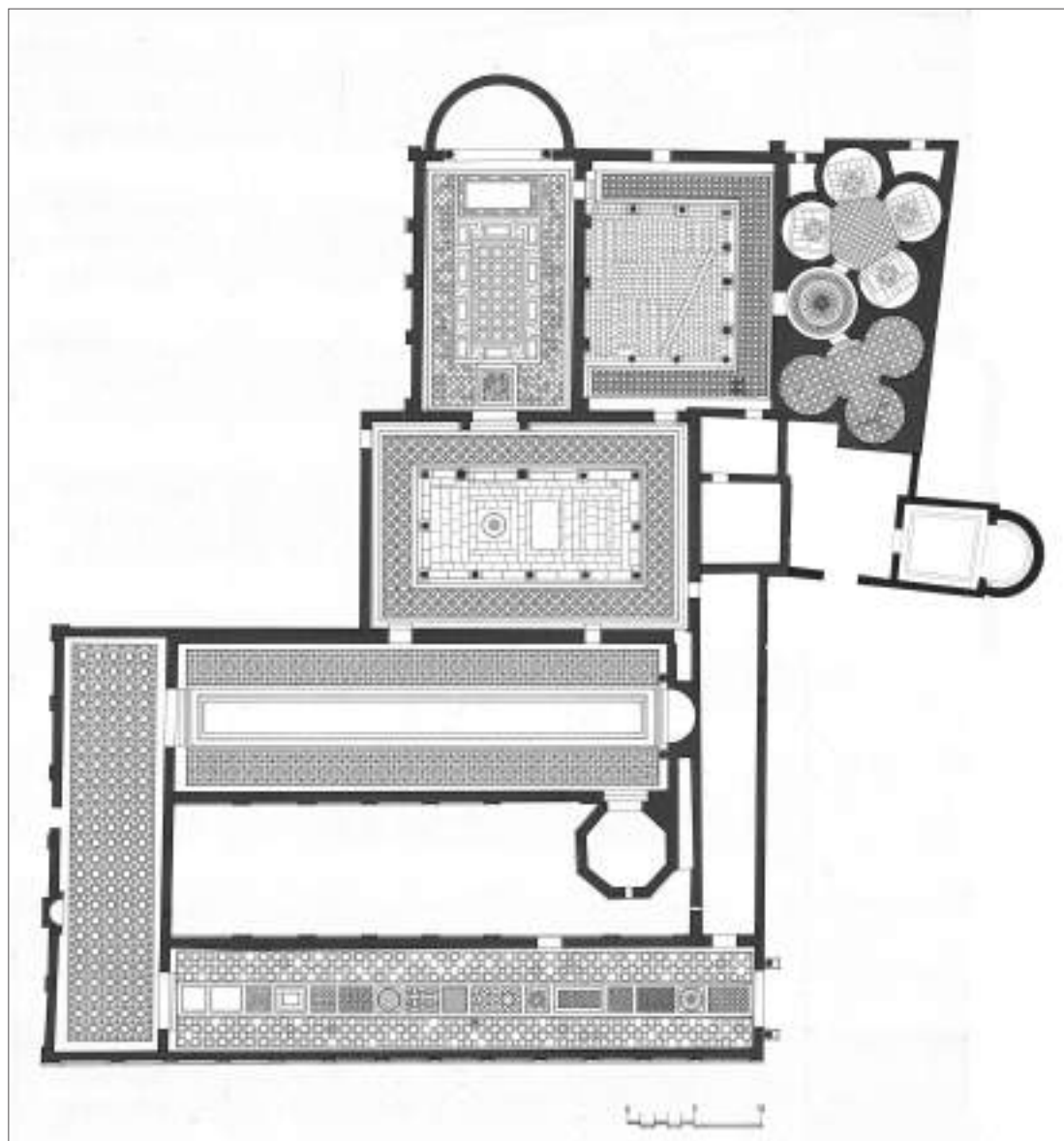


Fig. 12: Mosaic floors in the palace D1, Romuliana.

mosaic floors (Fig. 12) on the surface of 1600 m<sup>2</sup>. *Secilia pavimenta* were registered in three chambers of palace D1 – *aula* (5) and two *stibadia* (8 and 9, Fig. 5). The floors of five rooms and two *atria* were also decorated with mosaics.

Mosaic floors were organized into carpets, and additionally enriched with panels with geometrical, floral or figural representations in certain rooms. The first mosaic carpet that a visitor, user or the owner of the palace would have encountered was located in the entrance corridor (hall 1), oriented along the axis north-south (42.7×7.5 m). The surface here was separated into two side carpets (Fig. 13), whose composition scheme consisted of a net made of connected octagons forming squares with inscribed swastikas, decorated with different

motifs<sup>36</sup> (Fig. 14a–d). The central “island” of hall 1 was divided into sixteen fields filled with different motifs. Among them there are nets formed of connected circles, a circular shield overlapping circles which form four-petal flowers, stars formed by eight rhombi overlapping octagons, octagons surrounded by rhombi and squares, squares with *peltas* in the corners, connected hexagons, swastikas, interlacing patterns<sup>37</sup>. One of the most important motifs is

36 BLANCHARD et al. 1973, No. 358 (var.); PRUDHOMME/STERN 1985, 254 f.; Pl. 166,b. The motifs comprehend representations of amphorae, Solomon’s knots, braids, chess fields, stars formed by rhombi, overlapping circles, waves, *peltas* and various flowers (four-petal/quatrefoil, six-petal/sextifoil, eight-petal/octofoil, composite, cruciform).

37 JEREMIĆ 2009, 41–51.



the representation of a labyrinth flanked by craters with vine and *peltas* (Fig. 15). The labyrinth is hexagonal, with six passages and a two-story rampart, and spikes at the top. It belongs to the most frequent type of simple labyrinths with a meander-shaped path, which has been registered on approximately forty mosaics, mostly in the western provinces of the Empire, and with only one example registered on Cyprus. Aside from its decorative role, the depiction of labyrinth on mosaics can also have a symbolic role of apotropaic and prophylactic character. It can also represent the open space for equestrian sports, or symbolise difficulties in life, the long path towards the truth, a place of transformation, initiation or final victory<sup>38</sup>.

Hall 2 (30.72 × 7.27 m) had a very poorly preserved mosaic in the south-eastern part consisting

38 DASZEWSKI 1977, 64.



of stars formed by eight rhombi, bordered with large and small squares<sup>39</sup>, filled with ornaments with interlacing pattern, chess fields and Solomon's knots. Hall 3 (35 × 10.95 m) with a semi-circular niche in the east had a three-piece mosaic floor: the two lateral geometric carpets were separated into nets made of overlapping circles forming four-petal flowers with curvilinear squares in the interspaces<sup>40</sup> (Fig. 16a–b). The central sequence contained panels with figural scenes, out of which three were partially preserved<sup>41</sup>. On the easternmost panel, a part of a leopard is visible (Fig. 17) prancing against its opponent, while on the other panel we can see the hind legs and the curled tail of a hunting hound (*canis venaticus*) with trees around it<sup>42</sup> (Fig. 18). The best preserved scene depicts two *venatores* being attacked by a lion<sup>43</sup> (Fig. 19). The hunters are dressed in green tunics decorated with ribbons and *orbiculi* and with leather shoes with textile laces on their feet. The standing *venator* has a rope wrapped around his left hand wrist, while the crouching hunter has a spear in his right hand and holds a massive round shield in his left one. Shields of this form and with such decorations appear on vignettes in *Notitia Dignitatum*, furthermore in the Great Hunt mosaic in Piazza

Fig. 13 (left above): Mosaics of the hall 1 of the palace, Romuliana.

Fig. 14a–d (left below): Details of the mosaics of the hall 1, Romuliana.

Fig. 15 (right): Panel with labyrinth in the hall 1, Romuliana.

39 BLANCHARD et al. 1973, No. 367.

40 BLANCHARD et al. 1973, No. 437; PRUDHOMME/STERN 1985, 370 f.; Pl. 237–238.

41 MANO-ZISI 1956, 72–74.

42 JEREMIĆ 2011, 291–304.

43 JEREMIĆ 2009, 228–239.

► Fig. 16a–b (both above): (a) Eastern part of the mosaic in the hall 3, *Romuliana*, (b) detail of the mosaic in the hall 3.



Fig. 17 (left below): Panel with a leopard, hall 3, *Romuliana*.

Fig. 18 (central below): Panels with *canis venaticus* and a lion, hall 3, *Romuliana*.

Fig. 19 (right below): Panel with *venatores*, hall 3, *Romuliana*.



Armerina<sup>44</sup> and in the hunting scene on a mosaic from *Hippo Regius*.<sup>45</sup> The scene with insufficiently protected hunters, aristocrats, soldiers, both infantry and horsemen, usually equipped merely with a shield and a spear, is a common motif in late-antique and early Byzantine mosaics.

The two *atrii* along the main room of the palace – the southern one (Fig. 5, No. 4) with a fountain, and the eastern one (Fig. 5, No. 6) – were decorated with

mosaics, very poorly preserved. The pattern from the southern *atrium* consisted of crosses formed by four rhombi inside a circle<sup>46</sup>, while a net made of diagonal squares with a Solomon's knot was shown in the eastern one<sup>47</sup>. There was also a mosaic floor in the room connecting the two *stibadia* of unusual shape – triconch and tetraconch. This vestibule had a circular floor plan (Fig. 20), thus, the mosaic followed the shape of the space: it contained the motif

44 DUNBABIN 1978, Pl. 77.

45 LAVIN 1963, Fig. 81.

46 BALMELLE et al. 2002, 40. Similar to this motif: BLANCHARD et al. 1973, No. 364.

47 BLANCHARD et al. 1973, No. 337.



Fig. 20: Mosaic of the hall 7, Romuliana.

of a shield made of triangles with the vortex effect<sup>48</sup>, similar to the one depicted on the panel in the entrance hall 1.

The most prestigious room of the palace was the *aula* (Fig. 5, No. 5) (18.5×11 m) with a semi-circular apse in the northern end (Fig. 21). The central part was taken up by a floor made of marble tiles (*sectilia pavimenta*) (7.5×3.4 m), surrounded with smaller mosaic panels with figural scenes, among which there is a depiction of a scenery with low vegetation and a running dog (*canis venaticus*) (Fig. 22) probably hunting small game. Geometrical carpets of the remaining part of the room consisted of octagons with squares on the sides<sup>49</sup> filled with motifs (Fig. 23a–b) that can be also found in room 1 as well, with several minor differences<sup>50</sup>. Because of the density of motifs on them, the carpets placed in this chamber leave the impression of *horror vacui*. In the central part of the southern mosaic carpet aligned with the entrance, there is a panel (2.47×1.55 m) with a figural representation of young Dionysus sitting (Fig. 24). He is semi-nude, with an ivy-wreath and a blue nimbus around his head, holding a *cantharus*

in his right hand, and leaning onto a *thyrsus* with his left one<sup>51</sup>. A leopard is sitting by his right leg, its head turned towards him. The scene is flanked with two vine branches. Dionysus, the God of wine, vegetation, regeneration of nature, lord of the dead, prophet, who could punish with madness the ones who failed to pay him homage, was often depicted on Roman mosaics. He was especially popular in North Africa during Late Antiquity. The representation from *Romuliana* was made according to the famous Hellenistic models from Pella and Delos, and it was executed in the mannerism of Antioch schools from the imperial period<sup>52</sup>. Dionysus is depicted here as a sublime God, far from any wantonness and debauchery. He was considered a bringer of peace, harmony and order in the Late Antiquity period, and, as such, was seen as Dionysus the Saviour, a counterpart of sorts to eastern monotheistic religions<sup>53</sup>.

Mosaics also adorned the prestigious building in the south-western section of the fortification (Fig. 3, E), where a stone block was discovered bearing the inscription – *Felix Romuliana*. Researchers iden-

48 BALMELLE et al. 2002, 136, Pl. 328a.

49 BLANCHARD et al. 1973, No. 344.

50 JEREMIĆ 2009, 55.

51 JEREMIĆ 2009, 175–180.

52 JEREMIĆ 2006, 47–53.

53 DASZEWSKI 1985.



Fig. 21 (left): Aula (hall 5) of the palace in Romuliana.

Fig. 22 (right above): Hunting dog in the aula of the palace in Romuliana.

Fig. 23a–b (right below): Details of the mosaics of the aula, Romuliana.



tified this building as the small palace – Romula's *triclinium*<sup>54</sup>. This edifice is located in the central part of a square yard (32×32 m), with a porch with columns and arcades along the fence (Fig. 25). The building (19.1×17.3 m), whose entrance was oriented towards the palace, had a central square chamber (6.5×6.5 m), which was surrounded on three sides by rectangular rooms. The inner and outer sides of walls were painted. Mosaic floors adorned at least five rooms, one of which had a panel with unknown, destroyed content. Different composition schemes were present on the remaining mosaics: overlapping circles forming four-petal flowers; square fields decorated with swastikas, Solomon's knots and chess fields; nets made of connected circles, with curvilinear squares in the interspaces; octagons with stars formed by squares and rhombi, squares being decorated with interlacing pattern, Solomon's knots, swastikas and four-petal flowers<sup>55</sup>.

The smaller *balneum* (Fig. 3, H) in the south-eastern part of the fortification had a prominent *apodyterium* (8.82×9.05 m) decorated with square panels of marble and dark sandstone, set in the pattern of a chess board. Under this floor, the remains of a mosa-

ic floor have been found, which are believed to have never been fully completed<sup>56</sup>. Another, older floor in this room was registered under the mosaic, made of hydrostatic mortar, resting on a substructure made of broken stone and clay. On the western end, the *apodyterium* ended with an elevated semi-circular niche, decorated with a mosaic. The remains of the mosaic from the *apodyterium* show that it was set in a manner to imitate floors made in *sectilia pavimen-*

54 SREJOVIĆ/LALOVIĆ 1989, 9.

55 JEREMIĆ 2009, 57–59.

56 RUŽIĆ 2003, 31; VASIĆ 2007, 43 f.



ta technique<sup>57</sup>. In every other square, alternating, there was a Solomon's knot (Fig. 26). On the basis of archaeological research, it was determined that the bath had been in use for a long time, all the way until the early Byzantine period, and the mosaic floors could have belonged to the Tetrarchy period in *Romuliana*.

#### Chronology of the construction and decoration works of the buildings in *Romuliana*

The fortified palace in *Romuliana* represents an amalgam of military, palatial, official and sacral architecture, thus forming a foundation intended for life surrounded by safety and luxury after stepping down from the throne. Christian writers, great antagonists of the Emperor, provided precious data on Galerius' psychological, ideological and human profile, and gave us basic notions of the Emperor's activities, which were in connection with the complex in Gamzigrad and its ideological background. Lactantius considered Galerius to be a primitive, arrogant and extremely superstitious man, who presented himself and behaved as if he were a descendant of Mars, and the new Romulus. This writer notes that after bringing order to the governing of the

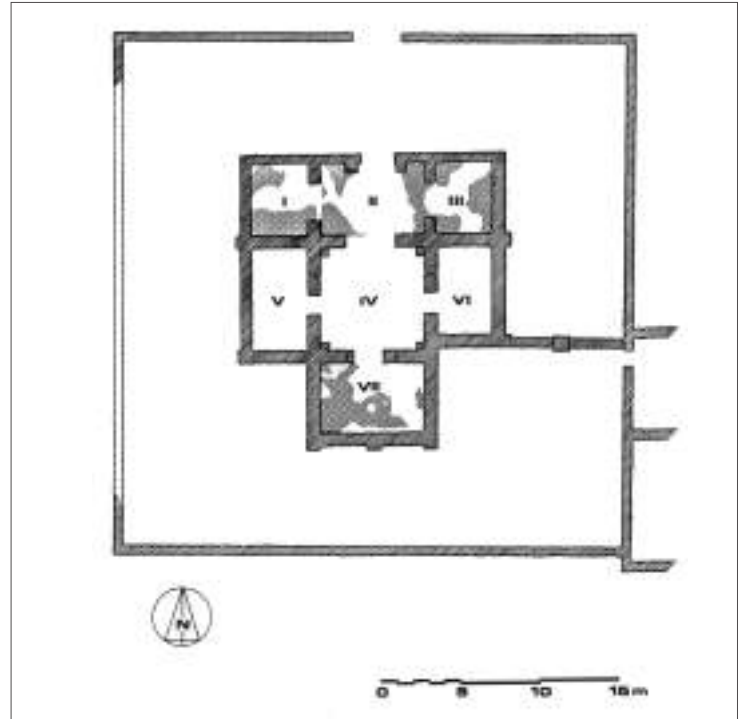


Fig. 24 (left above): Panel with representation of Dionysus, *Romuliana*.

Fig. 25 (right, above): Building with mosaics in the south-west section of the fortification.

Fig. 26 (right, below): Mosaic from *apodyterium* of the baths in *Romuliana*.



country and leaving it under the control of his heirs, it was the Emperor's wish to spend his old age in the peace and security of unconquerable ramparts<sup>58</sup>.

57 BLANCHARD et al. 1973, No. 518.

58 Lact. De mort. pers. 9, 9; 20, 3-5.



Fig. 27:  
Mosaics from  
Galerius' impe-  
rial complex in  
Thessaloniki.

However, the fortified complex in *Romuliana*, which the Emperor ambitiously envisioned as his foundation, in terms of urbanistic solutions, distribution of buildings, their inter-relations, as well as communications within given units, shows a high level of improvisation without a previous concept created *ad hoc* directly on locations. An exception is the palace *stricto sensu* (D1), which had a clear labyrinth-shaped plan and structure from the beginning to the end. A clear plan can also be seen in the choice of building materials for the construction and decoration of the objects. For the basic building works and parts of architectural decorations of the buildings of great importance, stone from a quarry in the immediate location was used first and foremost. It was the volcanoclastic sandstone that proved to be especially adept for the materialization of the imperial cult through the many decorations of the eastern façade and the cruciform building, which had a special status within the fortification of Gamzigrad.

Different types of Mediterranean marble, especially that from Greek quarries, served to depict the polychromy and opulence of the interiors. The red porphyry from Gebel Dokhan was used in the depictions of the imperial cult. Even though they were preserved only fragmented, the sculptural works

of *Romuliana* provide a great insight into the art of the Tetrarchy period in this region. The palace, temples and public buildings were decorated with sculptural works made of marble of the classical Roman repertoire. The hierarchical supremacy was held by Jupiter, the main deity of the Roman Pantheon and the protector of the Tetrarchs – Augusti, who reached the highest step in their ruling and political career. Attention was also dedicated to the Hercules cult, the patron of the younger Tetrarchs – Caesars. Sculptural works of *Romuliana* display the traits of skilful craftsmen, created in the traditions of classical Greek and Hellenistic art which was at a high level during the Roman period in the leading workshop centres of Greece (Athens, Thessaloniki) and Asia Minor. The sculptures were usually made of Pentelic and Docimean marble, and they represented commissioned works of art.

A completely specific and heterogeneous group of works of art are the sculptures of Emperor Galerius, made of different types of marble and porphyry. Among these works, the porphyry bust of the Emperor stands out, a significant piece of art from the Tetrarchy period. This bust, even though it was made from a very hard material, depicts Galerius with softened traits, in a style, which was created on the transition point from the individualistic to the

impersonal style in the portraits of the Tetrarchs. This new style of depicting the rulers reflected imperial propaganda, embodied in the promotion of their hierarchical similarity and declarative harmony<sup>59</sup>.

The preserved parts of floor mosaics take a special place in the decoration of the complex in Gamzigrad. The mosaics, which adorned the floors and walls of the most prominent, official and private, intimate parts of the palace (corridors which led to the audience room, the hall, luxurious *atrii* and *stibadia*), the dressing room of the bath and the cruciform building, represent important works from the Tetrarchy period where different kinds of mosaic techniques were used. The largest number of mosaic carpets was made in the *opus tessellatum* technique, with different composition schemes, enriched with different motifs and with various coloring schemes. Certain spaces, such as the corridors in the vicinity of the central hall, and also the audience hall (*aula*), were additionally decorated with series of panels with figural and floral representations (*opus vermiculatum*), where representations of Dionysus and the hunting (*venatio*) of exotic (lion, leopard) or small game (*canes venatici*, shown in low vegetation, probably hunting rabbits) were depicted. Scenes of hunting of exotic game without adequate protection can have several layers of meaning – practicing military principles and endurance, symbolic battle of good versus evil, while the hunting of small game was a part of every-day life of the aristocrats. The especially precious technique of *secitilia pavimenta*, which was at the same time very practical, because it wore out less, was present in the prestigious audience room and in the two *stibadia*.

The represented composition schemes of the mosaics of Gamzigrad show great similarity to the schemes and motifs of the mosaics from Galerius' imperial complex in Thessaloniki (Fig. 27), whence the masters who made these mosaics could have come from<sup>60</sup>. Geometric motifs in the corridors and festive *aulae* appear in both palatial complexes<sup>61</sup>. An additional ennobling factor of the mosaics of Gamzigrad are the figural panels, which weren't present in the palace in Thessaloniki, and which were made under the influence of the mosaic schools from Asia Minor and North Africa.

The complex in *Romuliana* was built in the period when Galerius had already been declared Augustus, and when his position had already been sufficiently firm in the Tetrarchy system of rule. The entire complex was finished, the decoration of the buildings included, in the period between 308 and

311, as can be concluded primarily on the basis of numismatic findings, registered on very significant places: coins of Galerius minted between 308 and 311 were discovered in the mortar basis of the northern tower of the western gate<sup>62</sup>, while Licinius' coins minted between 309 and 311 were discovered during the preservation-conservation of mosaics in the corridor with the hunting scenes panels<sup>63</sup>. Thus, data was obtained which indicate that there were well organized and synchronized works of different craftsmen and artists in the creation of the unique foundation of its commissioner, where the achievements of ateliers from the Balkans and the Mediterranean world could serve as a first-rate comparative material for the building and artistic attainments of similar chronologies and concepts in the Late Antiquity world.

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59 This style can be best perceived on the medallions on a pilaster of the eastern façade of the fortification.

60 KOLARIK 2006, 170.

61 KOLARIK 2006, 162–164.

62 VASIĆ 2007, 52.

63 ČANAK-MEDIĆ 1978, 96 Fig. 69. 98.

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