

# VIVERE MILITARE EST

FROM POPULUS TO EMPERORS - LIVING ON THE FRONTIER  
VOLUME II



BELGRADE 2018



INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY  
MONOGRAPHS  
No. 68/2

**VIVERE MILITARE EST**  
FROM POPULUS TO EMPERORS - LIVING ON THE FRONTIER

VOLUME II

Belgrade 2018

**PUBLISHER**

**Institute of Archaeology**

Kneza Mihaila 35/IV

11000 Belgrade

<http://www.ai.ac.rs>

[institut@ai.ac.rs](mailto:institut@ai.ac.rs)

Tel. +381 11 2637-191

**MONOGRAPHS 68/2**

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**

**Miomir Korać**

Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade

**EDITORS**

**Snežana Golubović**

Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade

**Nemanja Mrđić**

Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

**Bojan Đurić**, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana; **Cristian Gazdac**, Faculty of History and Philosophy University of Cluj-Napoca and Visiting Fellow at the University of Oxford; **Gordana Jeremić**, Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade; **Miomir Korać**, Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade; **Ioan Piso**, Faculty of History and Philosophy University of Cluj-Napoca; **Mirjana Živojinović**, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade

**EDITORIAL BOARD SECRETARY**

**Jelena Anđelković Grašar**

Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade

**PROOFREADING**

**Dave Calcutt**

**Ranko Bugarski**

**Jelena Vitezović**

**Tamara Rodwell-Jovanović**

**Rajka Marinković**

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**

**Nemanja Mrđić**

**PRINTED BY**

DigitalArt Beograd

**PRINTED IN**

500 copies

**COVER PAGE**

Pectoral plate, Ritopek (National Museum Belgrade)

**REVIEWERS**

**Diliana Angelova**, Departments of History of Art and History Berkeley University, Berkeley; **Vesna Dimitrijević**, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Belgrade; **Erik Hrnčiarik**, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, Trnava University, Trnava; **Kristina Jelinčić Vučković**, Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb; **Mario Novak**, Institute for Anthropological Research, Zagreb; **Ivana Popović**, Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade; **Julia Valeva**, Institute for Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia; **Miloje Vasić**, Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade

ISBN 978-86-6439-035-4

ISBN 978-86-6439-037-8

## CONTENTS

- 7 Nataša Miladinovic-Radmilović  
Population of Ancient Sirmium
- 41 Miomir Korać, Snežana Golubović, Nemanja Mrđić  
Research of Viminacium and its Suburban Zones
- 73 Bojana Borić-Brešković, Mirjana Vojvoda  
The Circulation of Roman Provincial Coins from the Viminacium Mint
- 101 Bebina Milovanović  
Jewelry as a Symbol of Prestige, Luxury and Power of the Viminacium Population
- 143 Angelina Raičković Savić  
Ceramic Vessels as Grave Goods in the Necropolises of Viminacium
- 163 Dragana Rogić  
Painted Decoration from a Viminacium Tomb
- 195 Emilija Nikolić, Dragana Rogić, Jelena Anđelković Grašar  
Architectural Space in the Wall Painting of the Roman Tomb in Brestovik
- 269 Sonja Vuković – Bogdanović  
Meat Diet at the Upper Moesian Limes: Archaeozoological Evidences from the City of Viminacium and its Surroundings
- 311 Bojan Popović  
Architectural Features of Roman Horrea in the Area of Modern-day Serbia

## **PAINTED DECORATION FROM A VIMINACIUM TOMB\***

DRAGANA ROGIĆ, *Institute of Archaeology Belgrade*  
E-mail: rogić.dragana@gmail.com

### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper addresses the technological and iconographic aspects of the wall painting of tomb 3130. The tomb differs from most tombs with preserved wall painting in Viminacium by its vaulted architectural construction. During the conservation of the wall painting in 2017, significant technological and iconographic conclusions were reached. An attempt was made to identify the stone panels of the lateral sides and the motifs on the frontal sides of the tomb by iconographic interpretation.*

**KEY WORDS: WALL PAINTING, TECHNOLOGY, MORTAR, PIGMENTS, STONE PANELS, CONGLOMERATE, NUMIDIAN MARBLE, EDXRF, PEACOCK**

---

\* The article results from the project: *Viminacium, Roman city and military camp – research of the material and non material culture of inhabitants, using the modern technologies of remote detection, geophysics, GIS, digitalisation and 3D visualisation* (no 47018), funded by The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, as well as the project of the Ministry of Culture: “*Conservation and presentation of the wall paintings from archaeological sites: Amphitheater, Facility with apse and Warehouse of oil - Viminacium*”.

## INTRODUCTION

Most of the discovered examples of Roman wall painting from funerary monuments in modern day Serbia come from the area of Viminacium.<sup>1</sup> The wall painting of tombs G-3130, G-5464, G-5 and G-5868 are exhibited at the archaeological site of Viminacium itself, in Domus Scientiarium. “The tomb with cupids” - G-160, was conserved and exhibited in situ, at the site of Pirivoj in Viminacium. Frescoes from two Viminacium tombs, G-5517 and G-2624, are exhibited in the National Museum in Požarevac.

Tomb 3130 was discovered during archaeological research in 1983 (Fig. 1). According to the archaeological data, it was dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The tomb was constructed using horizontal brickwork bound by lime mortar, and with a rectangular base. The outer dimensions of the grave are 260 x 205 x 80 cm, the wall thickness is 30 cm. The inner depth is 75.08 cm. The floor is not preserved, but it had a brick covering. On the preserved upper wall gradient the beginning of wedge-shaped mortar joints indicates that there existed a barrel vault. The tomb was oriented west-east, with a deviation of 12° towards the south in the western part but was, for the most part, destroyed in a looting. No artefacts were found and the skeleton was not preserved.<sup>2</sup>

This grave is very specific because of its vaulted architectural construction. Of the six tombs with preserved wall painting, three have a trapezoidal cross-section. According to the data from 2007, of 29 graves and tombs, 17 have a trapezoidal cross-section, 6 have a barrel vault, 3 have a rectangular cross-section and 3 have a cross vault.<sup>3</sup>

Two sides of this grave (west lateral and south frontal) were discovered and conserved by the experts of the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, in Belgrade, from 1983 to 2009. These two units are displayed in the Domus Scientiarum Viminacium, while the north and east side were conserved in 2017.

---

1 Also, a large number of examples of wall painting from various buildings: thermae, amphitheatres, villas, basilicas etc, was discovered in Viminacium during archaeological research, in: Rogić 2017, 153 – 157; Nikolić et. al. 2017, 62 – 70; Rogić 2014, 507-512.

2 Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology.

3 Korać 2007, 29; Kitanov 2017, 98-99.



Fig. 1. Photographs of tomb 3130, from the archaeological research in 1983.



Fig.2. The back of the wall painting before the works, showing the overhang of the wall painting on the edge of the support.



During conservation works in 1983, the wall painting from the frontal (north) side of the tomb was removed together with the bricks - that is, a part of the wall. The conservation works on this wall painting in 2017 began with the removal of bricks from the back of the wall painting. The brick layer was removed by chisels and a grinder. The plaster surface was very loose, since the lime had almost completely lost its binding power, for which reason a gradual consolidation was carried out, and the lacunas were consolidated with a new material. The first step to follow the consolidation was the levelling of the plaster, i.e. making it thinner by removing the majority of the *arriccio* (a coarser layer of plaster).

The narrower, lateral edges of the wall painting were bent so that the painting assumed the dimensions of a temporary support, a plank, rather than its original dimensions (Fig. 2). The hanging edge was later straightened, allowing the actual dimensions of the painting to be determined. New plaster was applied to the back of the wall painting, which further consolidated and fortified the unit. Then, a reinforced polyester support was constructed. Although aluminium honeycomb panels have been used as supports for years in the conservation atelier in Viminacium, it was decided to use the polyester type of support this time, so as to cohere the conservation methodologies applied on the two sides of the tomb, conserved by the experts of IPCH.<sup>4</sup> The reinforced polyester supports are lightweight

<sup>4</sup> Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (of Serbia).



and thin and paintings conserved this way can be hung on a wall. Any other type of presentation, such as the one discovered in situ (in the object's walls), would require a huge space for display,<sup>5</sup> which would currently be impossible since a large collection of conserved wall paintings already exists in Viminacium.

When the support was dry, the unit was turned face up and its original panels and, afterwards, the facing, too, were removed. The painted part was covered with a thick layer of dirt and salt. It was cleaned both chemically and mechanically. The best effect was obtained by using the Mixture AB 57<sup>6</sup> then, after neutralisation, the softened dirt layers were removed using scalpels. The red painted areas were considerably worn. The consolidation of the painted layer was carried out using 3% Paraloid B-72 in acetone. The old putty fillings were removed, after which the filling of the damaged areas was carried out, and then boarding and decorative plaster was added. The decorative plaster was made in the same way as that used by the experts of IPCH, with grey sifted sand used as the aggregate. The grey colour of the decorative plaster is neutral and makes the painted content more prominent. The dimensions of the north conserved unit are 68 x 147 cm.

The back of the plaster on the lateral (east) side of the tomb was levelled in the conservation campaign of 2009, under the direction of M.A. Miroslav Stanojlović,<sup>7</sup> on which occasion the consolidation of the back, together with the plaster layers, was also carried out. During the project in 2017, a polyester "support" was cast (as in the case of the north side). All the other conservation procedures were carried out in an identical way to the front of the tomb. The dimensions of the conserved lateral side are 79.5 x 204 cm.<sup>8</sup>

---

5 Stanojlović 1997, 59-60.

6 Mora, Mora, Philippot 1984, 342.

7 Conservator from IPCH.

8 The conservation and restauration were carried out by: Sanja Blagojević, Mihajlo Mandrapa, Kristina Ponjavić and Dragana Rogić. The works on the conservation and restauration lasted for two months.

Fig. 3. The plaster on the wall painting of tomb 3130.



### **TECHNOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PLASTER AND PIGMENTS**

The plaster of this tomb's wall painting has two layers. The arriccio is composed of slaked lime and fine sand, about 2-3cm thick while the intonaco contains a high percentage of ground brick (of very fine granulation), the thickness of this layer being 0.5 to 1 cm. This was covered with a thin layer of whitewash, onto which the painting was applied using the fresco technique. Intonaco with brick powder filler and whitewash was also identified on the wall painting of tombs 5517,<sup>9</sup> 2624 and 5464 (Fig. 3).

The pigments of the wall painting were processed using the pEDXRF<sup>10</sup> (portable energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence) analytical technique. This analytical technique was chosen because it is non destructive and is especially suitable for work with archaeological artefacts.<sup>11</sup> The elemental composition of all the inorganic materials is obtained using this type of analysis. Its important characteristic is the possibility for it to be applied outside the laboratory, i.e. directly on archaeological sites, in museums, on cultural heritage artefacts, etc.<sup>12</sup> The pigments of the

---

<sup>9</sup> Станојловић 1992, 57.

<sup>10</sup> Portable EDXRF spectrometer, used for the analyses shown in this paper, was developed in the Laboratory for Chemical Dynamics and Permanent Education (060), at the Vinča Institute in Belgrade.

<sup>11</sup> Desnica 2012, 187-196.

<sup>12</sup> Gajić-Kvašček et al. 2012, 1025-1033.



Fig.4. A detail of the analytical process of identifying the green pigment, carried out by applying the pEDXRF technique

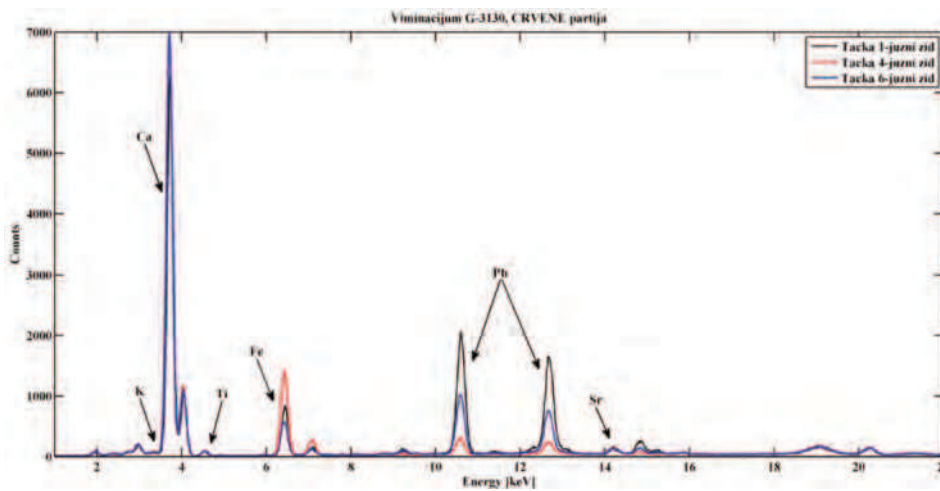


Fig. 5. Comparative spectrums scanned on the red areas of the painted layer of the frescoes from tomb G-3130

wall painting of tomb 3130 were analysed in the *Domus Scientiarum Viminacium* (Fig. 4). The painted layer of the west side of the wall painting was analysed in eight spots, while the painted layer of the south side was analysed in six spots.

Tables 1 and 2 show the results of these measurements: the detected elemental composition in the examined spots and, based to that, the identified pigments.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> I.e. the predominant elements, those present in a moderate percentage, and those present in trace



The palette of the pigments used for painting the frescoes from the tomb is limited to the usage of earth tones: green earth, red and yellow ochre. On certain red areas of the painted layer on the fresco of the south wall an intense peak of lead was detected. By the hue of the examined area, the use of lead oxide (Fig. 5), which was probably mixed with red ochre, can also be presumed. The applied analytical technique cannot yield the data that would make precise identification of the pigment used on the black areas of the painted layer possible.<sup>14</sup>

The results of the qualitative EDXRF analysis:

Table 1. Elemental composition of pigments, G-3130

<b>Spot of analysis</b>	<b>Colour of the analysed spot</b>	<b>Detected chemical elements</b>	<b>Identified pigment(s)</b>
1	Ochre	Ca, Fe, Sr	Yellow ochre
2	Red	Ca, Fe, Sr, K, Hg, Pb, Ti, Mn	Red ochre
3	Green	Ca, Fe, Sr, K, Ti, Mn	Green earth
4	Ochre	Ca, Fe, Sr	Yellow ochre
5	Ochre	Ca, Fe, Sr	Yellow ochre
6	Brown	Ca, Fe, Sr, Mn, Ti,	Red ochre
7	Black	Ca, Fe, Sr, K	Precise identification is not possible using the applied technique
8	Ochre	Ca, Fe, Sr	Yellow ochre

---

amounts only.

<sup>14</sup> I would like to thank Dr Maja Gajić-Kvašček and Velibor Andrić, experts at the Vinča Institute of Nuclear Sciences (Laboratory for Chemical Dynamics and Permanent Education (060) Dept. of Chemical Dynamics) for the scanning and identification of the pigments.

Table 2. Elemental composition of pigments, G-3130

Spot of analysis	Colour of the analysed spot	Detected chemical elements	Identified pigment(s)
1	Red	Ca, Pb, Fe, Sr, Ti, K	Red ochre, Red lead-minium
2	Green	Ca, Fe, Sr, K, Ti	Green earth
3	Green	Ca, Fe, Sr	Green earth
4	Red	Ca, Fe, Pb, Sr, Ti	Red ochre, Red lead-minium
5	Red	Ca, Fe, Sr, K, Ti	Red ochre
6	Red	Ca, Pb, Fe, Sr, Ti	Red ochre, Red lead-minium

## ICONOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The wall painting was preserved only in the lower zone of tomb 3130; since the tomb was vaulted, there probably existed some kind of painted ceiling decoration as well.

Completely symmetrical iconographic patterns (Fig. 6) are visible on the remains of the wall painting of the lateral walls (west and east) of tomb 3130. Two identical quadrilateral fields with panels are presented. The background of the wall painting is white and while, in one field, diagonal orange stripes were painted (on the left side), in the other they are green and blue (on the right). Over them, in the form of a drawing, there are brown ellipsoids and circles. The larger ellipsoids are inclined to the left, while the smaller ones and small circles fill in the space around them. The ellipsoids are painted very precisely, with a thin brush and in brown paint, evidently by an expert painter. The frames are also precise, as if for that purpose a ruler was used. A quadrilateral frame was rendered as a thick black line, then another, smaller and thinner one, was drawn, its outer edges connected to the inner edges of the larger one by diagonal black lines. These frames seem to

imitate the slanted and treated stone edges. The frames with ellipsoids are bordered by an ochre area, while a red vertical border in the middle of the painting divides it into the right and left side. The painting also has a red horizontal border, about 40 cm from the lower edge of the wall painting. Both the red and the ochre border are 10 to 15 cm wide.

It is very difficult to determine what kind of panels were actually simulated here; panels of this kind are commonly referred to as marble panels in bibliography, but geologists and petrologists would not consider this terminology correct. Marble, as one of the most durable and luxurious materials, was widely used as a wall covering, for entire walls (in the Hellenistic period) or just for the lower wall zones in Late Antiquity. This material, besides being exceptionally decorative, also served as an insulation material and was easy to maintain.

Pliny notes that marble is cut with sand and a saw, so that the saw pushes the sand and disperses it. The luxurious marble interiors and the exploitation of marble were considered useless, decadent and pretentious by Pliny, because of the difficulties with its transportation from the remote parts of the Empire and the disruption of the balance of nature.

After the defeat of Egypt in the thirties BC, the Romans “discovered” a whole new spectrum of polychromatic marbles. Marble was imported from Egypt, as well as from Attica, Euboea, Chios, Phrygia, Teos, Paros, Scyros and Numidia.

The choice of marble did not only convey an economic and exotic message, it also revealed information about the political situation and the territory which became Roman, whereby different kinds of marble were called: Phrygian, Sidonian, Numidian, etc. In the Augustan Age, every respectable monument or tomb had marble panels.

Although marble covered walls looked magnificent, the look of different types of marble was often mimicked in painting throughout the Empire. The reason for this lies not only in its precious nature, but also in the fact that it was very difficult to obtain marble from remote parts of the Empire.

As the most popular motif, marble was mimicked everywhere in temples, basilicas, villas, porticos, public baths etc. Certain patterns were vividly coloured, imitating the exotic stone. Sometimes these imitations even had a three-dimensional effect, where engraved and cut stone was mimicked. The imitation of marble and stone is very frequent in the lower zones of funerary



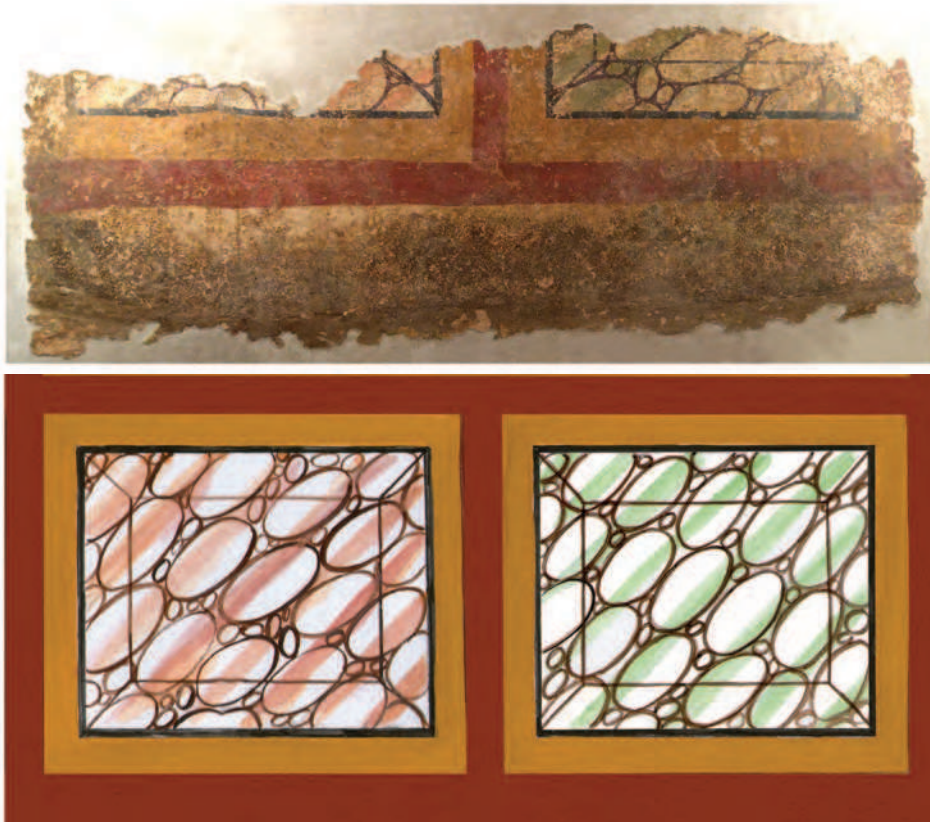


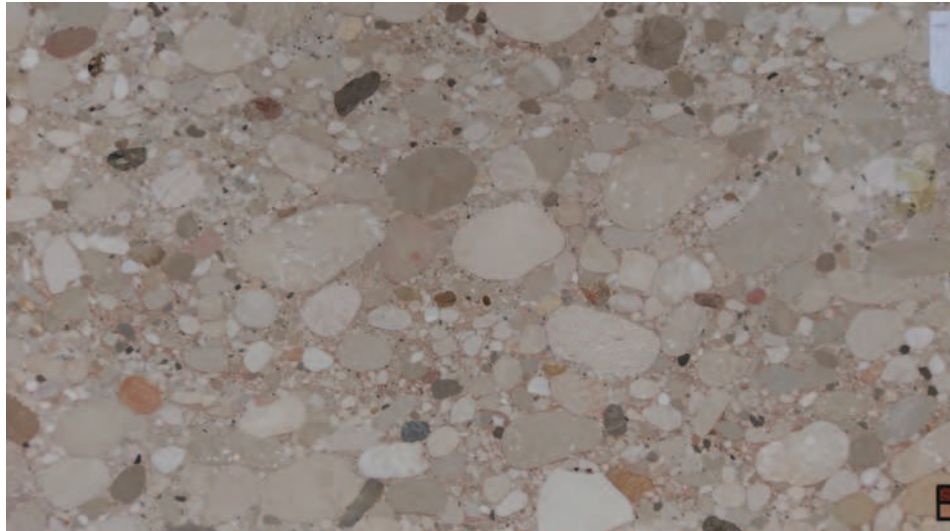
Fig. 6.  
a. The lower zone of G-3130, the east side (the original wall painting)  
b. A reconstruction of stone panels from tomb 3130, painted by D. Rogić

painting in Late Antiquity. These imitations are simplified and schematised and often cannot compare with the more realistic works from the earlier periods.

Searching for analogies in petrology, it was premised that the panels of some types of sedimentary rocks, such as conglomerates and breccia, were depicted on the painted surfaces of tomb 3130. Conglomerates (Latin *Conglomerare* – accumulate, Fig. 7) are made of round rock segments. These ellipsoid and round shapes are actually pebbles and can occur in a uniform or random pattern. The round shapes are connected by an adhesive, that is, the “cement”. Conglomerates can be of various colours, most often white, grey or red. Granites and other types of igneous rock can give completely spherical shapes. The roundness of the fragments is the result of transport and these are mostly fragments of less durable types of rock.<sup>15</sup> Breccia (Latin *Breccia* – crushed rock, Fig. 8) is, unlike conglom-

<sup>15</sup> Terzić, Obradović, Aleksić 1967, 113-115; Протић 1984, 34-58.

Fig. 7 A sample of conglomerate from the collection of the Faculty of Mining and Geology, in Belgrade.



erate, composed of coarse fragments of rock of the same or various kinds of stone and the adhesive, the “cement”. The size of fragments and their relationship with the adhesive vary. Usually, the cement has the same composition as the breccia itself, but there are also cements with a different composition.<sup>16</sup> Because of its angled fragments, breccia will not be taken into consideration as a possible pattern for the examples examined further in the paper.

In the examples from the bibliography focused on the identification of panels in the painting of Villa A of Poppaea, a similar type of representation is defined as “marmor numidicum”, i.e. giallo antico.<sup>17</sup> The examples of Numidian marble from Villa A of Poppaea are very different from one another, which was probably as a result of the artists who rendered these paintings. Numidian marble, which came from a quarry in the ancient town of Simitthus<sup>18</sup> in Tunisia, is ochre to almost white, with dark yellow, reddish or brown veins.<sup>19</sup> Diocletian produced a list of 19 kinds of marble, of which pavonazzeto and giallo antico are the most expensive. This was data from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and in the Augustan Age the prices

---

16 Terzić, Obradović, Aleksić 1967, 115-116.

17 Malacrino 2010, 28.

18 The Roman Simitthus was founded as a Berber town of Chemtou near Mount Chemtou (Djebel Chemtou), from where the precious Numidian marble was extracted.

19 Malacrino 2010, 28.

were probably even higher.<sup>20</sup> Consul M. Lepidus (year 676 from the founding of Rome) is the first person to have a numidian marble threshold in his house.<sup>21</sup> Also, a combination of porphyry and giallo antico marble was identified on an example of a wall painting from France (Fig. 9, Soissons, rue Paul Deviolaine, salle XIII).<sup>22</sup> However, since the analogous examples from Italy and France have decorations with reddish ellipsoids on a yellow background, which is defined as giallo antico, they will not be taken into consideration as possible models for the examples from Serbia, since they are rendered in a different colour scheme.

Analogous representations of panels from Serbia can be seen in the wall painting from tomb no. 4 (the tomb with an anchor) at Naissus<sup>23</sup> (Fig. 10) and a tomb from Beška<sup>24</sup> (Fig. 11 and 12). If we compare the wall painting of these three tombs (the tombs from Viminacium, Beška and Naissus), they can all be connected by the ellipsoid motifs, in all three fields of the lower zone of the north wall in Beška, two fields on both the west and the east side of tomb 3130 from Viminacium, and in one field of the tomb with an anchor from Niš.

In the lower zone of the west wall of tomb no. 4 from Niš (end of the 4<sup>th</sup> - middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century),<sup>25</sup> a grey marble frame is painted and the panel is inside it. It was concluded that the panel from Niš is conglomerate,<sup>26</sup> in which a reddish-orange area can be seen, which would be the “cement”, with ochre and umber ovoid motifs. In the tomb from Niš there are no diagonal lines and representations of slanting stone edges.

The tomb from Beška (4<sup>th</sup> century) contains three fields in the lower zone of the north side, i.e. panels with a pattern of ellipsoid shapes. The panels are inserted into black square frames, which are, as in tomb 3130 from Viminacium, bordered by another, larger frame; they are connected by diagonal lines, which look like supports (?). Unlike the representations from Viminacium, these have the frames



Fig. 8 A sample of breccia from the collection of the Faculty of Mining and Geology, in Belgrade.

---

20 Fant 2007, 339; Malacrino 2010, 30.

21 Plin. NH. XXXVI, 2, 6.

22 Allag, Monier, 2003, 361.

23 Ракоција 2009, 94-95.

24 Marijanski – Manojlović 1987, 23.

25 Ракоција 2009, 87 - 88

26 I am grateful to Dr. Violeta Gajić, Dr. Nebojša Vasić and Dr. Predrag Vulić, professors at the Faculty of Mining and Geology, for their help in the interpretation of the stone panels in the wall paintings of Viminacium, Naissus and Beška.



Fig. 9 After: Allag, Monier,  
2003, 361, fig 10 Cliché J.- F.  
Lefevre, CEPMR.

Fig. 10. After: Ракоција  
2009, fig. 27.

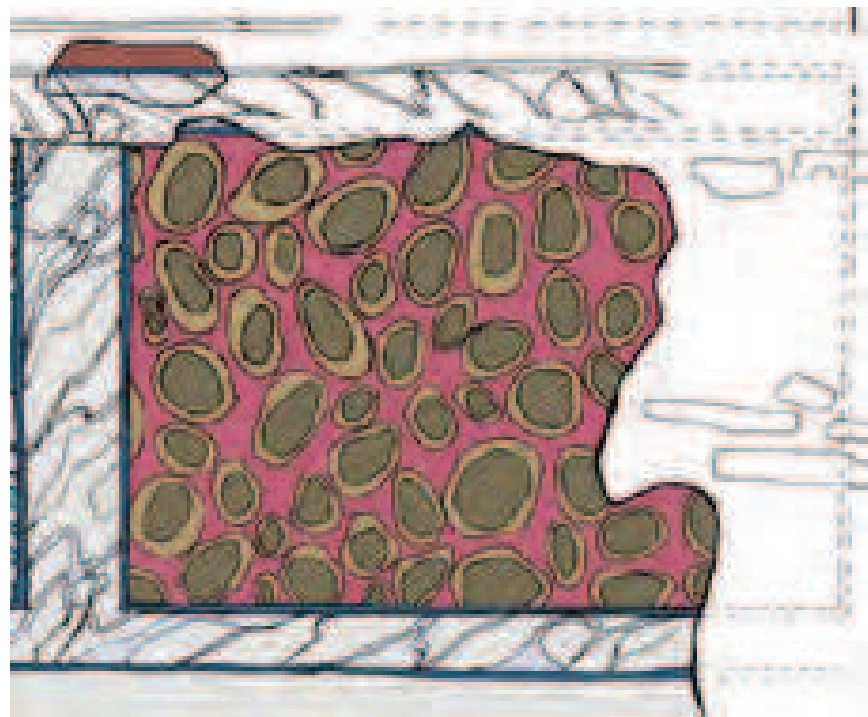
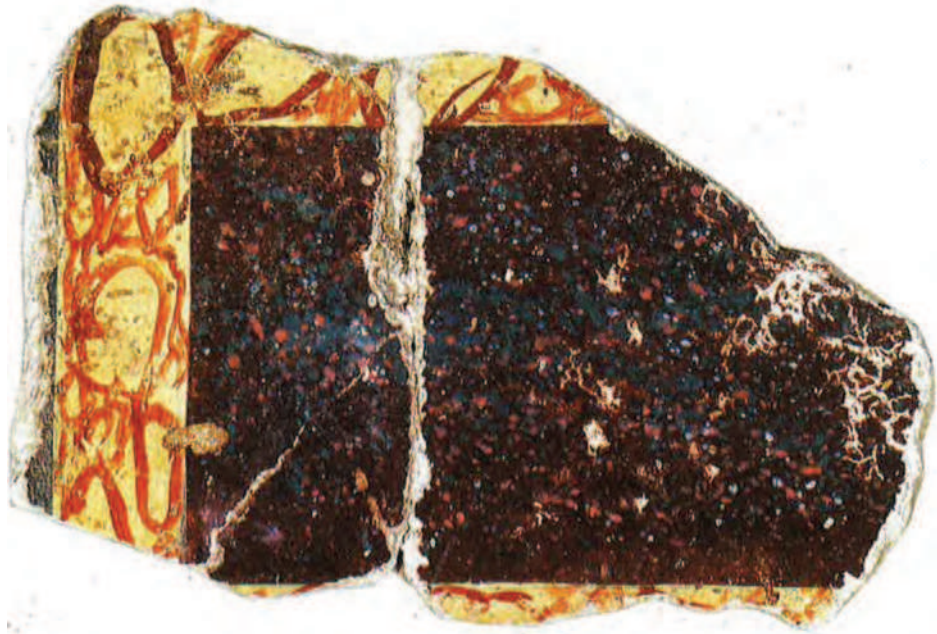




Fig. 11. A field on the right side of the tomb in Beška, after: Marijanski - Manojlović 1987, 23.



Fig. 12. The middle field, after: Marijanski - Manojlović 1987, 23.

connected not only by diagonal lines in the corners but also by three straight lines at right angles on each of the longer sides. The fields on the left and right side have the same painted content - on the white plaster background, ellipsoid motifs of various sizes are painted and outlined in brown. Over the patterns with pebbles, thicker ochre, green and blue lines are painted. These patterns of round and ellipsoid shapes with diagonal lines (Fig. 11) are the most similar to the patterns from Viminacium tomb 3130. The middle field of the north side of the tomb from Beška contains irregular shapes that resemble ellipsoids (Fig. 12). These shapes are outlined in red and the space around them is decorated with red curved lines. The inside of the ellipsoids is filled with ochre, but in such a way that the white mortar background is visible between the red line and the ochre. Again, the analysis of this example shows that this could be a representation of conglomerate.

In other countries in this region, various examples that are reminiscent of conglomerate can be observed in tombs, with examples from Bulgaria, Greece and Hungary. On the lateral sides of tomb 7 from Serdica (Bulgaria),<sup>27</sup> three rectangular fields are observed, and here, the left and the right one are important for the current research (Fig. 13), since they contain deformed smaller and larger ellipsoid forms, outlined in dark red, while the inside areas are ochre, but there is some space between the red outer line and inner ochre colour where the colour of the background is visible (as in the case of the middle field of the tomb from Beška). The fields with red and green backgrounds containing ellipsoid forms are also seen in the lower zone of The Burial Chamber of the “Jug” (Sopianae, modern Pecs, 4<sup>th</sup> century),<sup>28</sup> next to the niche. A strikingly similar motif, which can be compared to conglomerate, is an example from the Early Christian mausoleum in Pecs (4<sup>th</sup> century, Fig. 14),<sup>29</sup> where the frames with panels are on the north and south wall. A Christogram is painted on the east wall.<sup>30</sup>

In Thessaloniki tombs and graves from the period of Late Antiquity (no. 20, 49, 53, 78, 91, 94 and 99), stone panels are a common motif in the lower zones, and marble, conglomerate and breccia are the most frequently depicted types

---

27 Pandurski in Pillinger et al. 1999, 67, Tafel 68, Abb. 133.

28 Magyar 2009, 113-114, fig 6.

29 “Early Christian Mausoleum” along St. Stephen’s Square – just one component of Pecs, Hungary.

30 Fülep, Bachman, Pintér 1988, fig. XVI.





Fig. 13. Serdica, tomb 7, watercolour painting of the east side, (photo by K. Šestakov-A. Michailov), after: Pillinger, et al. 1999, Tafel 68, Abb. 133.

Fig. 14. Early Christian mausoleum in Pecs, after: Fülep, Bachman, Pintér 1988, fig. XVI.

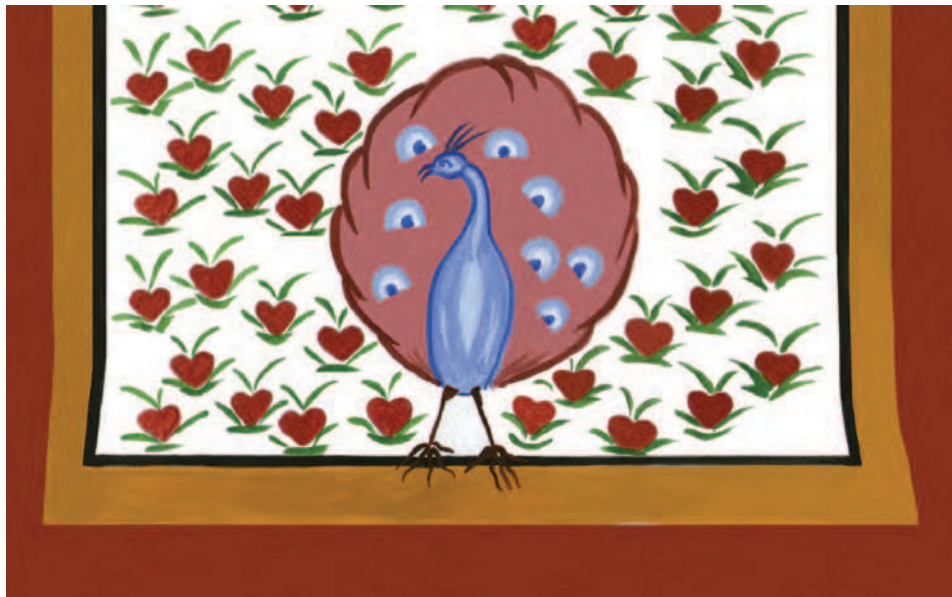




Fig. 15.  
a. South “frontal” side  
b. A detail of the north  
frontal side



Fig. 16. Theoretical  
reconstruction of the  
frontal side of tomb 3130,  
painted by: D. Rogić



of stone.<sup>31</sup> Various kinds of conglomerate can be seen in “Stasovski” tomb from Kerch.<sup>32</sup> Most of the described tombs with stone panels contain paradisiacal motifs, i.e. floral and bird motifs, in the upper zones.

The representations of panels from the Viminacium tomb are considered a type of conglomerate; however, what makes them different from conglomerate are the diagonal lines, which cannot be seen in the natural stone. Taking all of the illogicalities of these explanations into consideration, it might be better to rely on the artistic imagination, which fuses together dissimilar elements and produces specific examples like these. The above mentioned tomb is the only one with a depiction of conglomerate at Viminacium.

### **THE NORTH AND SOUTH SIDES**

A quadrilateral entrance to the tomb probably existed on the north or south side, and it could have been placed in the upper zone. These two “frontal” sides had identical iconographic representations, judging by their remains. A large bird surrounded by fruits or floral motifs (?) was painted inside a “frame” of red and ochre borders. On both sides, only the lower portion of the painting is preserved, and only a pair of bird’s legs (of a dark brown colour), as well as red heart-shaped fruits - or flowers, are visible. The fruits are similar to apples and there are two small leaves in each of the upper gaps. In all likelihood, the frontal, vaulted side was decorated with a large representation of a peacock, judging by the size of the bird’s legs, and its tail was depicted on the vaulted part. A part of the bird’s body, i.e. its blue stomach, is preserved. Other peacocks from the funerary objects of Viminacium, where they are represented in pairs or individually, are also painted in blue. Their tails are most often depicted in a reddish hue, which served as guidance in the reconstruction.

The red fruits are preserved only at the level of the bird’s legs (Fig. 15). The fruits possibly surrounded a large representation of a peacock in the lower zone, and probably ornamented the ceiling as well (Fig. 16). Fruits of a similar shape

---

31 *Μαρκή* 2006: Tomb no. 94, 178; Tomb no. 49, 143, 144; Tomb no. 53, Πίνακας 19, 174, 175; Tomb no. 91, 177; Tomb no. 78, 176; Tomb no. 20, 157; Tomb no. 99, Πίνακας 21, 178.

32 Logdacheva et al. 2011, 201, 202.

can be seen in the "Stasovski" tomb from Kerch,<sup>33</sup> and their spatial distribution is random, they are placed in the upper zones and on the ceiling, around all the representations, but do not appear on the "floor". Heart shaped forms can also be seen in a tomb from Thessaloniki.<sup>34</sup> Peacocks combined with a variety of other motifs: floral, vines, other birds, garlands, wreaths etc., appear in Thessaloniki tombs, but only those representations of peacocks which can be connected to representations of stone panels will be taken into consideration here. In tomb 94, a peacock with a floral background is painted in a lunette, while stone panels are depicted in the lower zone. A peacock and a peahen are painted in the lunette of tomb 91, and below them there is a frieze with grapevine motifs, while the lower zones are decorated with representations of stone panels. A panel with conglomerate is presented in tomb 20, where the other sides of the tomb are decorated by bird and floral motifs.<sup>35</sup>

In the upper zone of the vaulted, frontal side of the tomb in Silistra,<sup>36</sup> two peacocks flanking a kantharos, surrounded by red flowers on green leafy stems, are painted. In addition, a tomb from Iznik<sup>37</sup> has a painting of two peacocks facing each other in a flower garden.

A peacock as an iconographic motif was very common in the funerary art of the period of Late Antiquity, both pagan and Christian. It represents a symbol of the victory over death.<sup>38</sup>

As has already been mentioned, peacocks were used to decorate the walls of the following Viminacium tombs: G-5517, G-5464, G-5313, G-2624 and G-160. In tomb G-5517, on the west "frontal" side, a Christogram in a laurel wreath is painted, while on the east side there is a representation of the Garden of Eden - two peacocks flanking a kantharos (Fig. 17). The lateral sides are decorated with hunting scenes.<sup>39</sup> On the west side of tomb G-2624 there is a waist up painting of a woman, which is one of the most beautiful Late Antique representations, while

---

33 Rostovtzeff 1919, 148-149.

34 *Μαρκή* 2006, fig. 59, 127.

35 *Μαρκή* 2006: Tomb no. 94, 178 (fig. 132); Tomb no. 91, 177 (fig. 131); Tomb no. 20, 157.

36 Atanasov 2007, 451.

37 Barbet, Selçuk Şener 1999, 213.

38 Andelković, Nikolić, Rogić 2011, 233-238.

39 Korać 2007, 41.



Fig. 17. The east side of tomb G-5517,  
Photo by: M. Korać

on the east side there is a servant with offerings. Large greyish-blue peacocks with a kantharos, turned towards a female figure (Fig. 18)<sup>40</sup> are painted on the lateral sides. In tomb G-5464, two peacocks facing each other with an amphora between them are placed on the west “frontal” side (Fig. 19). The peacocks are painted in light blue. The other sides of the tomb are decorated by stylised vine motifs. Tomb G-160 is referred to as “The tomb with Cupids”. The scene on the west frontal wall is indistinguishable but, according to analogies, it can be presumed that this side was dedicated to the deceased. A representation of two Cupids is painted on the east side. The iconographic content of the south and north wall is almost identical. Standing figures in an “offering (procession)” scene are painted inside large

---

<sup>40</sup> Anđelković Grašar, Tapavički Ilić 2015, 18; Anđelković Grašar 2015, 271–272.



Fig. 18. The lateral side of tomb G-2624,  
Photo by: M. Korać

Fig. 19. The west frontal side of tomb G-5464.  
Photo by: M. Korać



frames. On the north wall, there is a male figure in a short blue robe. A female figure is depicted in a larger frame on the south wall. Grapevine motifs ornament the upper frieze of the north and south wall. Below, there are two smaller frames with painted peacocks surrounded by flowers and *kalathoi* (Fig. 20). In the next frame (closer to the west wall) there are two birds flanking a bowl filled with flowers.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Korać 2007, 125-140; Anđelković Grašar, Nikolić, Rogić 2013, 73-100.



Fig. 20. One of the frames on a lateral side of tomb G-160. Photo by: M. Korać.

In tomb G-5313, a peacock is painted inside a trapezoidal field (Fig. 21) of the east frontal side, but the painting is damaged to a large extent.<sup>42</sup> On the south and north side there is a representation of *hortus conclusus*.

The greatest number of vaulted tombs is actually located in Bulgaria, and vaults of tombs no. 6, 7 and 8<sup>43</sup> from Serdica have floral decoration. Tomb no. 7 from Serdica has an almost square base, is vaulted and has a square entrance on the north side, in the vaulted part. It is maintained that this tomb's lower part was below ground level while its upper half was above ground. Floral decoration is painted on the vault. The lateral sides contain representations of stone panels. The panels from the lower zone, as well as the floral motifs on the vault, could serve as inspiration in the reconstruction of the decorative repertoire of tomb G-3130.

A floral repertoire with garlands, kalathoi and birds is painted on the vaults and vaulted sides of tomb 2007.03 and the "Tomb of Chrysanthios", in Sardis.<sup>44</sup> According to all the information about the wall painting of the above mentioned tombs, it is highly probable that the vault of tomb G-3130 from Viminacium was ornamented by some other motifs as well.

---

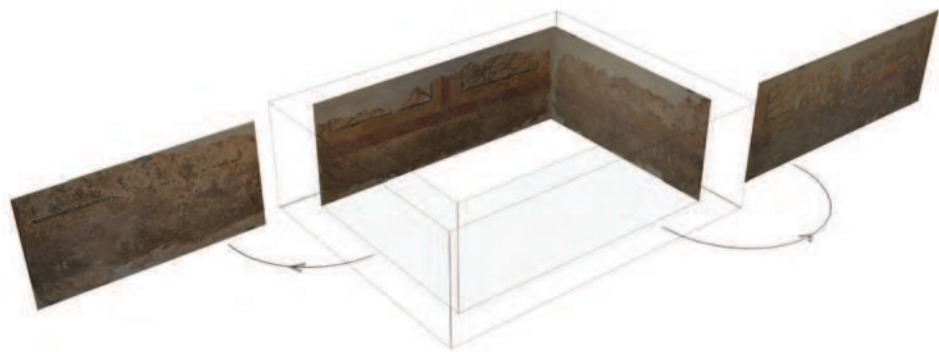
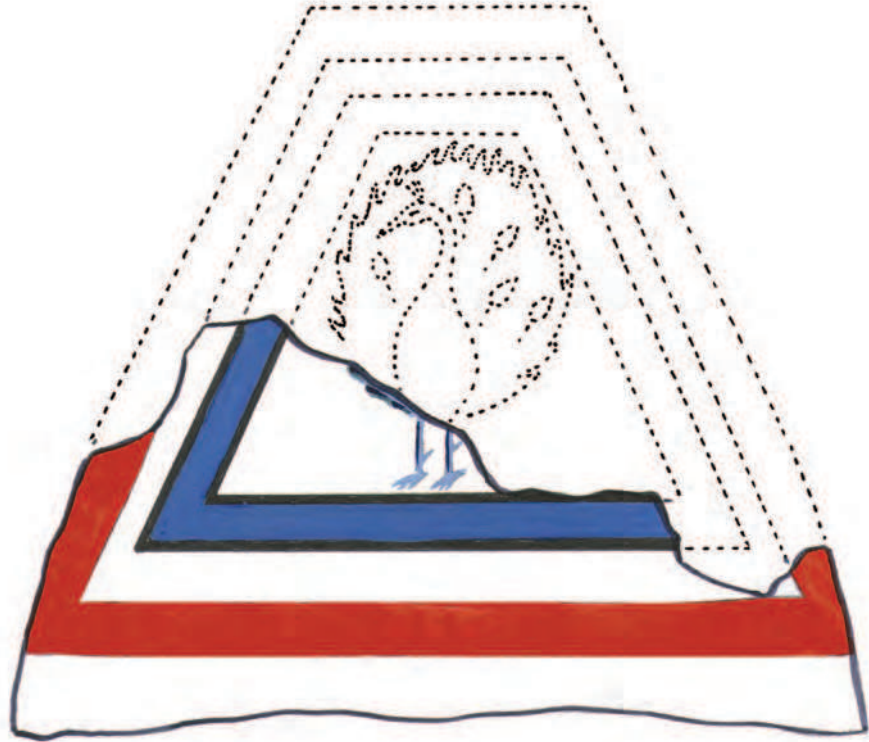
42 Korać, 2007, 23 – 24; Anđelković, Nikolić, Rogić 2011, 231-248.

43 Миятев 1925, Serdica, tomb 5, 35-44 (Fig. 12 and 13); Serdica, tomb 6, 45-54 (Fig. 17 and 18); Serdica, tomb 7 55-67 (Fig. 20); tomb 8, Kitanov 2014, Abb. 1 and 2.

44 Rousseau 2014, 193, 194, fig. 2, 4 and 5.

Fig. 21. Presumed reconstruction of the frontal side tomb G-5313, painted by: D. Rogić

Fig. 22. Scheme of the distribution of wall paintings in tomb G-3130



## CONCLUSION

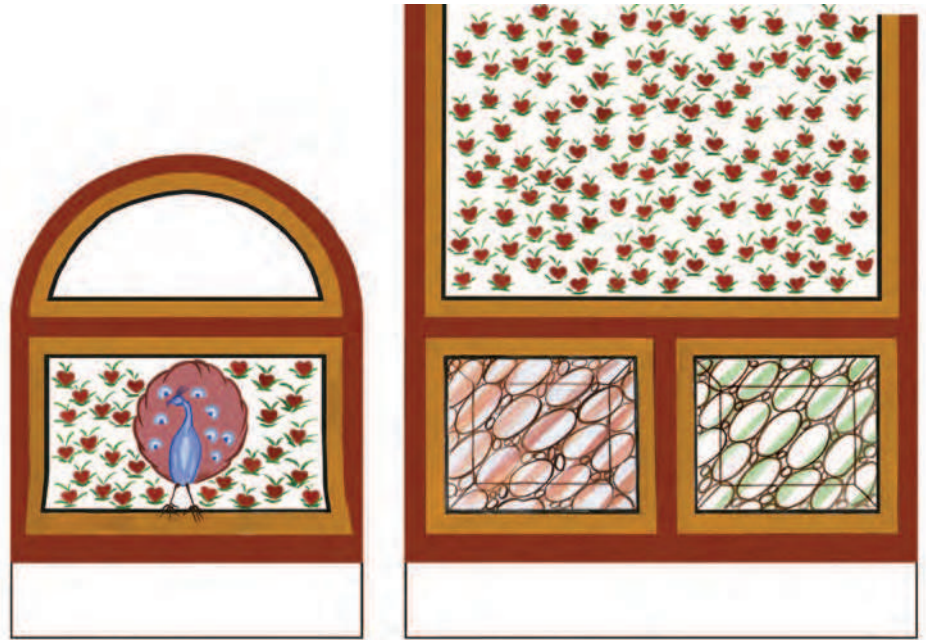
Through the work on the conservation of these wall paintings, a number of technological and iconographic conclusions were reached. The intonaco of tomb G-3130 contains a high percentage of ground brick and is covered with a thin layer of whitewash on which the painting was rendered, as in tombs G-5517, G-2624 and G-5464. According to the technological details, such as the composition of the plaster and the white lime background for the painting, it could be concluded that the wall painting of the above mentioned tombs comes from artists from the same painting atelier, with established technological regulations. Pigments in earth tones and red lead paint were used in the decoration of tomb G-3130, a fact which was determined by the application of the pEDXRF analytical technique.

Since this tomb was vaulted, in all likelihood, the upper zones and the vault itself probably had a rich iconographical content. On the remains of the painting of the lateral sides (west and east) of tomb G-3130, a completely identical iconographic pattern is seen. On each side there are representations of two identical quadrilateral frames with imitations of stone panels. Similar representations of panels can be seen on the wall paintings in tomb no.4 from Naissus and a tomb from Beška (in Serbia). All of these paintings differ in colour, pattern and size of the ellipsoids. Also, it can be deduced that they do not represent imitations of natural stone, but that the painters were focused on details which they multiplied, and these details closely resemble conglomerate. However, in the cases of tomb G-3130 and the tomb from Beška, the painters combined the conglomerate details with veins of marble, thus creating very original results. Certain researchers mention the possible use of catalogues which itinerant painters used in their painting. The extent of the success of copying these motifs depended on the individual artist. Since the desire for change is in an artist's nature, it would be natural to rely on the artistic imagination, which is always vivid and tends toward modification. The extent to which copying was faithfully carried out depended on the artist. It seems that it was not required to imitate a certain type of marble and that the choice of colours was more liberal. If we bear this in mind while studying the examples of panels from Viminacium, then they could represent a fusion of conglomerate and marble.

In other nearby countries, analogous examples which come from tombs can be seen among finds from Bulgaria, Pecs and Thessaloniki. In tombs from the period



Fig. 23. Presumed reconstruction of tomb G-3130, painted by: D. Rogić



of Late Antiquity, the motif of stone panels is common in the lower zones, while the upper zones contain representations of birds and floral motifs.

On the north and south side (of tomb G-3130) the lower zone contained a painting of a peacock surrounded by red fruits. Since the available elements were insufficient for an accurate reconstruction, the visual representation was reconstructed according to analogous examples and logic (Fig. 23). The representation in the lunette could not be reconstructed; it might have been a representation of an amphora, grapevine, wreaths, Christogram etc., which would make it possible to determine this tomb as pagan or Christian.

*Translated by Jelena Mitić*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **Sources:**

**Pliny Nat. His.** – Pliny, *Natural History*, book XXXVI, trans. З. Бојић, Плиније Старији, О уметности, Београд, 2011.

### **Literature:**

**Allag, Monier 2004** – C. Allag, F. Monier, La représentation des roches décoratives dans la peinture murale romaine, In: *Les roches décoratives dans l'architecture antique et du haut Moyen Âge S*, 2004, 355-368.

**Anđelković Grašar 2015** – J. Anđelković Grašar, Funerary images of women in tomb frescos of the Late Antique and Early Byzantine period from the Central Balkans. In: G. R. Tsetschladze/A. Avram/J. Hargrave (ed.) *The Danubian Lands between the Black, Aegean and Adriatic Seas (7<sup>th</sup> century BC – 10<sup>th</sup> century AD). Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress on Black Sea Antiquities*, Belgrade, 17-21 September 2013, Oxford, 2015, 269–275.

**Anđelković Grašar, Tapavički-Ilić 2015** – J. Anđelković Grašar, M. Tapavički-Ilić Mural Painting of a Roman Lady from Viminacium: From Roman Matron to the Modern Icon. *Exarc Journal Digest* and Online issue 2, 2015, 17–19.

**Anđelković, Nikolić, Rogić 2011** – J. Anđelković, E. Nikolić, D. Rogić, Peacock as a sign in the Late Antique and early Christian visual art, *Arheologija i prirodne nauke* 6/2010, Београд 2011, 231-248.

**Anđelković Grašar, Nikolić, Rogić 2013** – J. Anđelković Grašar, E. Nikolić, D. Rogić, “Tomb with Cupids” from Viminacium: a Contribution to Research of Construction, Iconography and Style, *Starinar* 63, 2013, 73-100.

**Barbet, Selçuk Şener 1999** – A. Barbet, Y. Selçuk Şener, *Conservation Work at İznik: Elbeyli Tomb Paintings*, *XX Uluslararası Araştırma Arkeometri Sempozyumu, XVI. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı*, (25 - 29 Mayıs 1998 - Tarsus), Ankara, 1999, 203-223.

**Bradley 2006** – M. Bradley, Colour and marble in early imperial Rome, *The Cambridge Classical Journal*, Vol. 52, 2006, 1-22.

**Desnica 2009/2010** – V. Desnica, Prijenosni uređaj za rentgensku fluorescentnu analizu (XRF) kao jedinstveni instrument za in situ elementnu karakterizaciju objekata kulturne baštine, *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske 33/34-2009/2010*, 2012, 187-196.

**Fant 1999** – J. C. Fant, Augustus and the city of Marble, in: Schvoerer, M. (ed.) *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference of the Association for the study of marble and other stones in Antiquity, Archeomateriaux – marbres et autres roches*, University Press Bordeaux, Bordeaux, 1999, 277-280.

**Fülep, Bachman, Pintér 1988** – F. Fülep, Z. Bachman, A. Pintér, *Sopianae - Pécs, ókeresztény emlékei*, Budapest, 1988.

**Gajić-Kvašček et al. 2012** – M. Gajić-Kvašček, M. Marić Stojanović, Ž. Šmit, V. Kantareiou, A. Germanos Karydes, D. Šljivar, D. Milovanović, Velibor Andrić, New evidence for the use of cinnabar as a colouring pigment in the Vinca culture, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, Vol. 39, Issue 4, 2012, 1025-1033.

**Korać 2007** – M. Korać, *Slikarstvo Viminacijuma*, Beograd, 2007.

**Kitanov 2017** – K. Kitanov, *La peinture funéraire de l'Antiquité tardive en Thrace et en Dacie*: Volume II, Éditions universitaires européennes, 2017.

**Kitanov 2014** – K. Kitanov, La peinture du tombeau n. 8 de Serdica. Matériaux et technique de réalisation, In: N. Zimmermann (ed.), *Antike Malerei zwischen Lokalstil und Zeitstil*. Akten des XI. Internationalen Kolloquiums der AIPMA, 13.-17. September 2010 in Ephesos, Wien, 2014, 669-674.

**Magyar 2009** – Z. Magyar, *The World of Late Antique Sopianae: Artistic Connections and Scholarly Problems* (2009), in: *Niš i Vizantija/Niš and Byzantium*, The Collection of Scientific Works VII, (ed.) M. Rakocija, Niš 2009, 107-118.

**Marijanski-Manojlović 1987** – M. Marijanski-Manojlović, *Rimska nekropola kod Beškeu Sremu*, Vojvodanski muzej, Novi Sad, 1987.

**Malacrino 2010** – G. Malacrino, *Constructing the Ancient World*, trans. Paul Getty Trust; Getty Publications, California, 2010.

**Миятев 1925** – К. Миятев, *Декоративната живопис на Софийския некропол*, София, 1925.

**Μαρκή 2006** – Ε. Μαρκή, Η νεκρόπολη της Θεσσαλονίκης στους υστερορωμαϊκούς και παλαιοχριστιανικούς χρόνους Μέσα του 3ου έως μέσα του 8ου αι. μ.Χ. Αθηνά, 2006.

**Mora, Mora, Philippot 1984** – P. Mora, L. Mora, P. Philippot, *Conservation of Wall Paintings*, Glasgow, 1984.

**Logdacheva et al. 2011** – E. Logdacheva, Y. Vinogradov, S. Shvemberger, N. Borisov, 3D Reconstructions of Cimmerian Bosphorus Painted Crypts, in: *EVA'11 Proceedings of the 2011 international conference on Electronic Visualisation and the Arts*, 2011, 197-202.

**Nikolić et al. 2017** – S. Nikolić, Lj. Jevtović, G. Stojić, D. Rogić, Arheološka istraživanja prostora viminacijumskog amfiteatra u 2015. godini, in: (eds. I. Bugarski, N. Gavrilović Vitas, V. Filipović) *Arheologija u Srbiji: projekti Arheološkog instituta u 2015. godini*, Arheološki institut, Beograd, 2017, 62 – 70.

**Pillinger et al. 1999** – R. Pillinger, V. Popova, B. Zimmermann, Bulgarisches Redaktionsteam: I. Venedikov, J. Mladenova, I. Marazov, J. Valeva, *Corpus der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Wandmalereien Bulgariens*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1999 (=Schriften der Balkan-Kommission, Antiquarische Abteilung 21).

**Протић 1984** – М. Протић, Петрологија седиментних стена, Београд, 1984.



**Ракоција 2009** – М. Ракоција, Сликарство гробнице са сидром у Нишу, Painting in the Crypt with an Anchor in Niš, Ниш и Византија, *Niš & Bizantium*, VII, 2009, 87-106.

**Rogić 2017** – D. Rogić, Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na fragmentima zidnih slika sa arheološkog lokaliteta Amfiteatar u Viminacijumu”, in: (eds. I. Bugarski, N. Gavrilović Vitas, V. Filipović), *Arheologija u Srbiji projekti Arheološkog instituta u 2014. godini*, Arheološki institut, Beograd, 2017, 153 – 157.

**Rogić 2014** – D. Rogić, Wall decoration of the Viminacium amphitheatre, in: Antike Malerei zwischen Lokalstil und Zeitstil. *Akten des XI. Internationalen Kolloquiums der AIPMA (Association Internationale pour la Peinture Murale Antique)*, Band 23, Wien 2014, 507-512.

**Rostovtzeff 1919** – M. Rostovtzeff, Ancient decorative Wall - Painting, *The Journal for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 39, 1919, 144-163.

**Rousseau 2014** – V. Rousseau, Paradisiacal tombs and architectural rooms in late Roman Sardis: Period styles and regional variants, in: Antike Malerei zwischen Lokalstil und Zeitstil. *Akten des XI. Internationalen Kolloquiums der AIPMA (Association Internationale pour la Peinture Murale Antique)*, Band 23, Wien 2014, 193-198.

**Станојловић 1997** – М. Станојловић, Могућа презентација конзервираних зидних слика из Виминацијума, Гласник ДКС 21, 1997, 59-60.

**Станојловић 1992** – М. Станојловић, Нека опажања о употребљеним малтерима за зидање и малтерисање гробова у Виминацијуму, Гласник ДКС, бр. 16, 1992, 56-59.

**Terzić, Obradović, Aleksić 1967** – М. Terzić, J. Obradović, V. Aleksić, *Petrologija*, Beograd, 1967.

**Valeva 2001** – J. Valeva, *La peinture funéraire dans les provinces orientales de l'Empire romain dans l'Antiquité Tardive*, *Hortus Artium Medievalium, Journal of*

*the International Research Centre for Late Antiquity and Middle Ages*, Zagreb, vol. 7, 2001, 167–208.

**Valeva 2017** – J. Valeva, L'image sur les murs des *domus* de l'Antiquité tardive: contexte et système decorative, Context and Meaning Proceedings of the twelfth International Conference of the *Association Internationale pour la Peinture Murale Antique*, Athens, September 16-20, 2013, Edited by Stephan T.A.M. Mols & Eric M. Moormann, Leuven - Paris - Bristol, CT, 2017, 63-68.

**Вранешевић, Шпехар 2016** – Б. Вранешевић, О. Шпехар, Мермерна оплата и њене сликане имитације. Боја и светлост у рановизантијској уметности централног Балкана, Зборник Народног музеја XXII, 2, 2016, 47-190.

CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији -  
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

94(398)(082)  
903.3/.5"652"(497.11)(082)

VIVERE militare est : from populus to emperors - living on the frontier. Vol. 2 /  
[editorsin Snežana Golubović, Nemanja Mrđić]. - Belgrade : Institute of Archaeology,  
2018 (Belgrade : Digital Art). - 350 str. : ilustr. ; 24 cm. - (Monographs / Institute  
of Archaeology, Belgrade ; no. 68/2)

Tiraž 500. - Napomene i bibliografske reference uz tekst. - Bibliografija uz svaki  
rad.

ISBN 978-86-6439-037-8  
ISBN 978-86-6439-035-4 (niz)

а) Римска држава - Лимес - Србија - Зборници б) Археолошки налази, римски  
- Србија - Зборници  
COBISS.SR-ID 267210764

