VIVERE MILITARE EST

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CONTENTS

ARCHITECTURAL SPACE IN THE WALL PAINTING OF THE ROMAN TOMB IN BRESTOVIK*

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ABSTRACT

Previous scientific research of the Roman tomb in the village of Brestovik, on the Danube near Belgrade, was focused on its architectural structure. The painted decoration is described in detail only in the work of Mihailo Valtrović, who recorded what he saw during excavations at the end of the 19th century. Although there is an assumption that all the rooms of the tomb were once painted, today the decoration exists only in the room with graves, and in a very poor state of preservation.

Discussed in this paper is the treatment of space in the wall painting of the tomb, with the use of imitations of architectural techniques and elements. Apart from the imitation of the opus sectile technique on the walls of the tomb, as well as the coffered ceiling painted on its vault, special attention will be devoted to the three-dimensional presentation of the beams on the walls, since in the ancient painting in the territory of today's Serbia, it has been found only in the tomb in Brestovik.

Key words: Brestovik, Roman wall painting, ancient painting styles, Roman tomb, architectural space, oblique projection, coffered ceiling, opus sectile, beam, Hellenism, East.

INTRODUCTION

Ancient tombs, by their size, structure and organisation, often had the character and monumentality of palaces and public buildings, especially when they were imperial mausoleums and tombs of publicly respected and wealthy people.[1] Some members of the Roman nobility had the privilege of being buried within their properties, separated from the rest of the population, thus emphasising the privacy of the ritual.[2]

In the fertile valleys of today's wider area of Belgrade, near the Danube, along with the settlements of Ritopek (*Castra Tricornia*) and Grocka (*Ad Sextum Militare*) and the road connecting Singidunum with Viminacium, numerous villas were built during the Roman period (Fig. 1).[3] The tomb in the Brestovik settlement in the Belgrade municipality of Grocka, as a family mausoleum, probably belonged to a private estate of this type,[4] which was halfway between the ancient civilian settlement of *Aureus Mons* (today's Seone settlement) and *Ad Sextum Militare*, in the *Singidunum* municipality or in the territory of *Aureus Mons*. The person who erected this tomb was probably an important military or state official who built it for himself and his family.[5]

The painted tomb was accidentally found by Vukašin Milosavljević, a villager, digging in his estate in the spring of 1895, near the village cemetery. In the same year, Mihailo Valtrović (1839-1915) excavated the tomb that had already been partly ruined and looted, and whose painted surfaces had been damaged (Fig. 2).[6]

According to Miloje Vasić (1869-1956), the construction of the tomb can be associated with the period of the 3rd century.[7] After the revision excavations that he performed in 1955, Đorđe Stričević dated it to the 3rd or 4th century,[8] while Gordana Milošević associated it with the beginning of the 4th century.[9]

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1 Milošević-Jevtić 2014, 329.

2 Milošević 2009, 748; Milošević-Jevtić 2014, 329.

3 Bojović 1975, 114-115.

4 Milošević 2014, 1.

5 Milošević 2009, 749-750.

6 Валтровић 1906, 128; Валтровић 1895, 130-132.

7 Васић 1906, 140.

8 Стричевић, 1957, 413.

9 Milošević 2006, 371.

Fig. 1 Location of Brestovik in Serbia (Google Earth Pro 7.3.0.3832 (32-bit) image from April 2018, with markings applied by the authors of the paper).

The previous scientific research of the tomb in Brestovik was mostly related to its architecture. It is also interesting to read the discussions about the sculpture of a dressed man who was only recently linked to the tomb, which allowed new observations regarding its owner.[10] The painted decoration was described in the study by Mihailo Valtrović from 1906, who wrote in detail about what he saw during the excavation. Despite the slight ambiguity and disagreement between his text and drawings and the elements of painting that can still be seen today, his study represents the most valuable source of data for the reconstruction of the tomb decoration, which has largely disappeared.

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10 See in: Tomović 1997; Milošević 2009.

During 1964, works on the conservation and restoration of the architecture and painting of the tomb were carried out, under the supervision of architect Mila Vujičić Vulović (Figs. 2a, 2b, 2d, 2g).[11] After the executed works, which, according to the project, were conceived as the first phase, the conservators published a report, but it is not understandable what interventions were performed regarding the painting. It is only mentioned that a preventive protection of the painting was carried out and that its further protection is urgent.[12] Based on today's situation on the site, it can be assumed that the vanished motifs on the damaged paintings were not reconstructed, but that they were covered with ochre paint. On the vault of the tomb, traces of restoration are clearly visible today and we can recognise the newly-painted motifs that could have be reconstructed, while on the walls it seems that attempts were made to reconstruct some of the elements or that the restoration has not yet been completed. Conservation works on the building during this period, which also included the restoration of the walls of the room with graves, saved what was left of the painting.[13]

The tomb was protected by the Institute for the Protection and Scientific Research of Cultural Monuments of the NRS, in 1948,[14] and it was proclaimed in 1979 as a cultural property of great importance.[15] However, access to the tomb as a place which should be protected and presented to visitors today is very problematic since it is on private property and it is necessary to pass through a private gate next to the residential house to get to it (Fig. 3). The painting of the tomb is in a very bad condition. In the grave, villagers hold icons and burn candles, and recently in the area of the tomb, organised by the Church of the Holy Trinity in Grocka, the commemoration of the martyrs Saint Ermil and Stratonic has been carried out. The use of the tomb in this way implies the constant cleaning of its space and surroundings, which has not been the case in the past decades when rubbish has been dumped here, but it is certain that these processes also endanger

11 Вујичић - Вуловић 1967.

12 Preventive conservation works on painting were done by Radoman Gašić, painter-conservator from the Institute for the Protection of Monuments of the Republic of Serbia.

13 Вујичић - Вуловић 1967, 86-92.

14 Решење Завода за заштиту и научно проучавање споменика културе НРС бр.200/48 од 12.2.1948.

15 Одлука о утврђивању непокретних културних добара од изузетног значаја и од великог значаја, *Службени гласник СРС бр.14/1979.*

No interventions

Restored structures

Partially restored structures

a

drenažna cev

No interventions
Restored structures
Partially restored structures

b

c

d

e

f

g
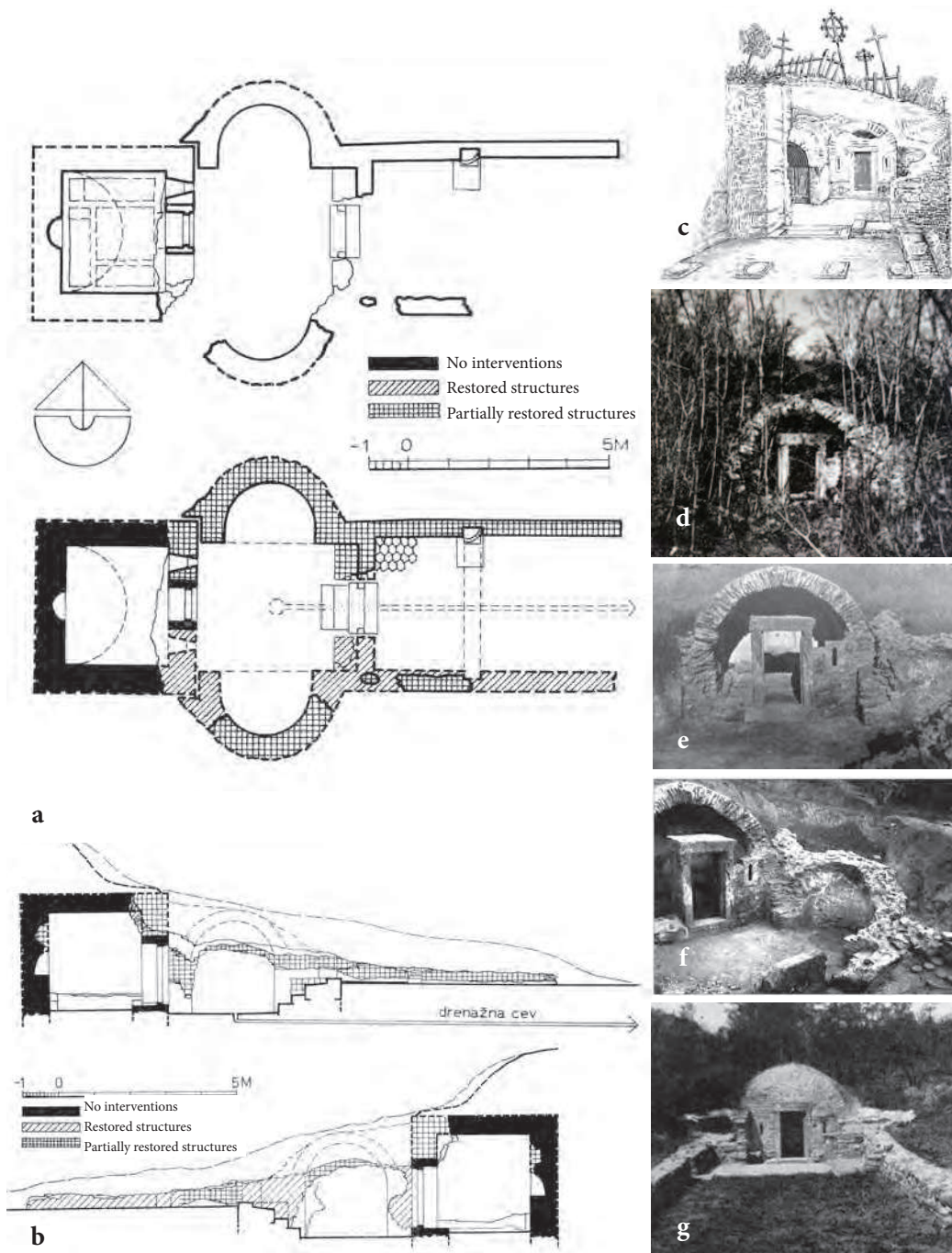
Fig. 2. Brestovik tomb before and after the conservation works:

a. Plan,

b. Sections of the tomb after the conservation works with the suggestion for the reconstruction of the conches (Вујичић - Вуловић 1967, 87-88, Figs. 2-3);

c. As it was seen by Mihailo Valtrović after the excavations (Валтровић 1906, Table IV);

d. Before the conservation works (Вујичић - Вуловић 1967, 89, Fig. 4);

e. Before the conservation works (Стричевић 1957, 412, Fig.1);

f. Before the conservation works (Milošević 2009, 744, Fig. 3);

g. After the conservation works (Вујичић - Вуловић 1967, 97, Fig. 5).

Fig. 3. Brestovik tomb today (photos by the authors of the paper).

the remains of the painting. Perhaps it is already too late for the painting to be returned to its former splendour, but the authors of this study hope that this will happen anyway and that this study, with the drawings of the reconstructions, will represent a small contribution to the future conservation works that are necessary and which will enable its satisfactory public presentation.

TOMB ARCHITECTURE

Mihailo Valtrović wrote long ago: "The architectural arrangement of this tomb, which in the first place should have corresponded to the needs of the mortuary rituals, was conceived and executed with an account of the noble impression".[16] In his text, he described the tomb architecture as it had been experienced during the excavation itself, and after him, it has remained a challenging and interesting topic for the further interpretations of many authors.

In a short report given after the excavations of the tomb in Brestovik, an east-west orientated structure, Valtrović divided its space into four "sections". The first space he presented as a "three-coffin grave" with a "cylindrical vault", and in front of it, he described an open-air space consisting of a middle open space and two vaulted semicircular spaces - niches. The third open part was elevated and served as a hallway. In front of it, there was a fourth space like an entrance, with four stone columns.[17] However, in an extensive text published almost a decade later, he divided the tomb into three parts, which would remain as partitions in the works of later researchers. The first elevated part was the place for burials, the other space, the open part, served for the purpose of posthumous rituals, and its niches were shelters and places for rest, while the third space, in "the oblong form", was the vestibule, that is, the entrance with the columns bearing the ceiling and the roof, accessed along a small gradient with walled sides. According to him, with its columns, beams, and tympanum, it was supposed to give "the first impression of the funeral building of a richer layout" (Figs. 4a - 4c).[18] Miloje Vasić had the

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16 Валтровић 1906, 128.

17 Валтровић 1895, 131-132.

18 Валтровић 1906, 128-130.

same opinion on the division of the space into three parts, while distinguishing a corridor with columns, a central space with niches - probably uncovered, and a "real tomb with sarcophagi".[19]

Later on, Đordje Stričević concluded that the premises of the tomb were not erected at the same time, but that the "rectangular compartment with built-in grave constructions" was later expanded with the space with apses, a porch, and an access corridor, but left open the question of the closure of the central space. Although he considered the method of covering it, and between the vault and the wooden roof structure he preferred another option, he finally concluded that the space, due to the "facade character" of the entrance wall of the room with graves, could have been open to the air.[20] Mila Vujičić Vulović suggested that the central area was covered with a wooden roof, which, among other things, she justified by the existence of painting in this area. According to her, the space was covered and the walls of the apses were "strong enough" to carry the roof. The existence of painting in this space, the level of the floor which is lower here than in the remaining spaces of the building, as well as the climatic conditions characteristic for the area, she used to justify the assumption of the space being closed in.[21] She accepted that not all parts of the building were built at the same time and assumed that the room with the graves belonged to the 3rd century, while the construction of other parts of the building she connected to the 4th century. The facade character of the outer side of the wall of the room with the graves she justified by the fact that this room was built first.[22]

According to Gordana Milošević, the tomb belongs to the tombs with multiple spaces and an elongated rectangular plan, like the majority of late antique tombs in Serbia, but with additional apses and an access corridor.[23] She described the tomb as an assembly made up of a rectangular room with three masonry graves vaulted with a barrel vault and located on the west side of the tomb, a central space with apses on its south and north side, and an entrance area – a vestibule,

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19 Васић 1906, 139.

20 Стричевић 1957, 412-413.

21 Вујичић - Вуловић 1967, 86- 87.

22 Mihailo Valtrović wrote that the roof over middle space has no constructive support. See in: Валтровић 1906, 138.

23 Милошевић 2006, 373, 375, 382, 384.
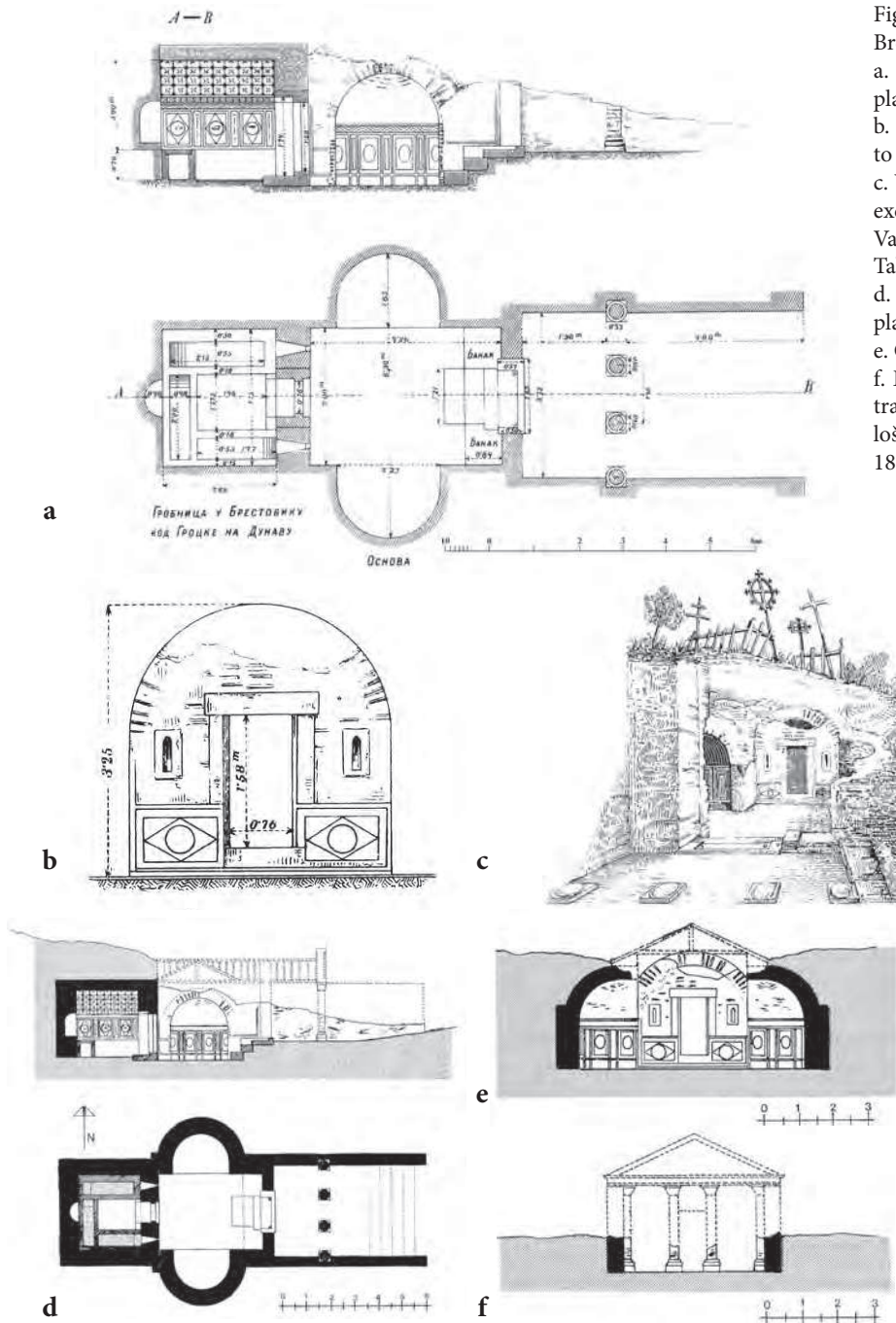
Fig. 4. Architecture of the Brestovik tomb:
a. Longitudinal section and plan,
b. Elevation of the entrance to the grave chamber,
c. View of the tomb after the excavations (drawings by M. Valtrović - Valtrović 1906, Tables IV - V);
d. Longitudinal section and plan,
e. Cross-section,
f. Elevation of the tomb entrance (drawings by G. Milošević - Милошевић 1993, 181-182, Figs. 101-102).

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one meter higher than the central space, with walls on the sides and embedded in a hill with four stone bases for columns, which, as Valtrović had assumed, probably carried a tympanum.[24] However, although Gordana Milošević confirms the assumption of the above-mentioned authors that there were several construction phases, she finds the reason for this in the dynamics of construction and not in the change of the original idea of a compact building and, therefore, the dilation that exists between the room with graves and the central space she describes as constructive. She is of the opinion that the tomb was conceived as a unique three-part structure, prepared long before the first burial, and consisting of a grave chamber, a space for performing a cult and an accessory dromos, which is, according to her, supported by her claim that the painting of the burial and central space was simultaneously done and stylishly uniform. According to her, the burial chamber was completely buried, while the central space and the dromos were partially or completely visible. Like Vujičić Vulović, she thinks that the central space could have been covered with a wooden gabled roof, but proposes, as a more likely solution, a crossed vault, the existence of which she explains by the large amount of rubble found in the central space during the first excavations (Figs. 4d - 4f).[25]

In 1906, Miloje Vasić gave a brief discussion of possible analogies to the Brestovik tomb researched until that time, that is, the very beginning of the twentieth century, linking it to tombs in Alexandria. He believed that tombs of this type originated in Macedonia and that after Alexander the Great, this concept was transferred to the East and Africa. According to him, the Brestovik tomb was not created under the direct influence of Macedonia, but influences came indirectly from the mentioned regions. Also, he found analogous examples in southern Russia, around the Black Sea.[26] Đorđe Stričević found analogies in examples in Syria dated to the beginning of the 5th century.[27] According to Gordana Milošević, the tomb from Brestovik has similarities with graves from *Viminacium*, *Margum*, Karataš, Niš, *Ulpiana,* and *Sirmium*, but also with those from many sites

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24 Milošević 2009, 741-742, Милошевић 1993, 182-183. More on details of architecture see in: Валтровић 1906, 128-132.

25 Milošević 2009, 747-748, 750. The dilatation was also noted by Mila Vujičič Vulović. See in: Vujičič Vulović 1967, 87 (Fig. 2) The found rubble noted in: Валтровић 1906, 131.

26 Васић, 1906, 138-140.

27 Стричевић 1957, 413.

in Bulgaria.[28] However, according to the general organisation and construction, with subterranean burial space, the central area and the vestibule with columns, she finds the closest analogies in Syria.[29] The architectural structure of a grave in *Anemurium*, in today's Turkey, with a long corridor leading to a vestibule from which one can enter the burial chamber,[30] also carries similarities with the Brestovik tomb. In a tomb of the Late Hellenistic or Roman period in Larnaca (ancient *Kition*), in Cyprus (the so-called Cobham's tomb), a stepped dromos leads up to three chambers, arranged one behind the other, where the first one has a flat coffered ceiling, while the other two are vaulted with a barrel vault.[31]

Nearly all researchers have discussed the character of the tomb in Brestovik in relation to pagan or Christian cults, but this comparison is still vague, which is a common situation when researching funeral structures from this period.[32] Mihailo

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28 Milošević 2014, 7.

29 Милошевић 1993, 183.

30 Hembrey 2008, 6-7.

31 Carstens 2005, 156,157.

32 After the accidental discovery of the building of the sanctuary of Santa Eulalia De Boveda, near the city of Lugo in Spain, while exploring the area under the church built in the 18th century (it was said that another church was hidden under it), excavations were carried out in 1926. After these excavations, the building of the sanctuary was defined as Roman, according to the construction of the brick vault. The openings for windows, made of stone, which are located to the left and right of the door, and above it, are like fenestellas in Brestovik (except that they have an additional blind niche in the shape of a triangle above). In front of the room is a vestibule with two columns. The architectural characteristics, according to some authors, bear an oriental influence that manifested in parallel in Hellenistic Syria and Russia, such as the use of a horseshoe's arched opening through which space is accessed, which is a legacy of Syria and Asia Minor connected with the arrival of Roman legions from the East. It was also written that the characteristics were similar to those of the funerary architecture of the eastern Mediterranean, and in particular southern Russia and Syria (monuments with an approaching staircase to the vestibule and a central grave chamber with niches or apses - the Russian examples were vaulted and Syrian examples were carved in the rock with robust facades, porticos, and two pillars). With the excavations of the fountain, the building was connected with a sanctuary rather than with a tomb. Since then, according to various authors, it has been defined as a pagan temple, a Roman building dedicated to the Christian cult, a Roman thermal centre that, at the end of the 4th century, was converted into a martyrium where the body of the martyr Prisilian was brought, a sanctuary devoted to nymphs from the 4th century that was later transformed into a Christian church, and a Visigoth Church. The authors recognised two phases of the building, where the first was Roman, and the second, with the addition of side aisles in the 4th century, was Christian. Some thought that the entire building was built around the 4th century and that it later changed its purpose. Finally, some confirmed that the phases of the construction existed, but that they were not related to religious changes (Montenegro Rúa et al, 169, 177-183).

Valtrović wrote that the tomb was "tailored and arranged according to the Roman view of death, with its associated rites and customs in honor and commemoration of the deceased".[33] Đorđe Stričević, according to the tomb disposition and found sculptures, defined it as a pagan one, but stressed the plan of the tomb as an important part of the relationship between the "pagan heroons" and early Christian cult buildings.[34] The late antique sacred space of the tomb actually stands halfway between the cult of the tomb of the deceased hero (mausoleum) from the eastern Mediterranean and the consecrated Christian space of the Roman catacombs.[35] On the eastern wall, on both sides of the entrance, windows were formed from single stone blocks, of which the door itself was formed (Fig. 3). Stričević connected these windows with *fenestellae confessionis*, and the entry area with the columns to the pronaos of early Christian churches.[36] Gordana Milošević writes that the sculptural and painted decoration of the tomb indicates the pagan affiliation of the deceased and that, for now, there is no archaeological evidence for its Christian character, nor a connection with the martyrs Ermil and Stratonic, which is one of the theses of some authors. According to her, the characterisation of ancient tombs according to religious affiliation is not reflected in the internal arrangement or applied constructions, and can be made only on the basis of evidence in the form of Christian representations or on the basis of the general context of various findings.[37]

WALL PAINTING OF THE TOMB

Although it is assumed that all the rooms of the tomb in Brestovik were once painted, today the decoration exists only in the room with graves. As Mihailo Vatrović noticed, in all the rooms of the tomb, the decoration was done as an architectural assembly of the three elements – foot, shaft and ending (Fig. 5).[38]

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33 Валтровић 1906, 130.

34 Стричевић 1957, 412-413.

35 Anđelković Grašar et al. 2013, 95.

36 Стричевић 1957, 413.

37 Милошевић 2006, 394.

38 Валтровић 1906, 133.

In the room with graves, the decoration on the wall is made of three broad and three narrow rectangular fields framed in green. In the wide fields, one "upright" rhomb is drawn[39], in a dark colour, and with an inscribed circle of the same colour, while the surfaces around the lines are faintly coloured in yellow. In the centre of the circles, there were painted motifs of birds, Anatidae, and fish, which, at the time of Valtrović's excavations, were not preserved in their entirety, and today have almost completely disappeared. In the narrow fields, "one straight twig is ornamented by three ribbons". [40] A band with wavy lines and a row of "protruding little beams like in a kind of an eave" are located above these fields.[41] On the west wall, there is one wide and one narrow rectangular field on both sides of the niche. The painted motifs within the larger fields did not exist even during Valtrović's excavations, and in the small fields, there are the mentioned twigs. Valtrović's assumption was that above the niche, painted in white or a slightly yellow colour, human beings were also depicted, because in the fragments found in the niche, painted pearls and clothes were seen, and on one of its *in situ* preserved parts, on a blue background, he recognised parts of clothes. On the eastern wall of the space that was largely destroyed after the excavation, and restored in 1964, there are no painted motifs today. Valtrović saw a decoration made of narrow fields with one ornamented twig, on both sides of the entrance. The decoration on the vault of the room with graves reminded him of the "ordinary ceilings in Roman public buildings, made up of coffers" that had "discs" on the corners of the crossed "strings of pearls" and a "rose" in the middle (Fig. 5; Fig. 6; Fig. 7).[42]

As for the central space of the tomb with apses, whose decoration is now completely lost, according to Valtrović's observations, the already mentioned geometric shapes (without rhombs) were used in the central zones of the walls and above them a finishing band with wavy lines was painted. In the narrow fields, there were "thin branches" depicted. The upper zones of the apses were painted in yellow. The decorations, as in the room with the graves, were separated by a red painted band. The background of the decoration was yellowish, the rectangles were green, and the circles were green or yellow. On the outer surface of the entrance wall of the

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39 Валтровић 1906, 134.

40 Валтровић 1906, 134.

41 Валтровић 1906, 135.

42 Валтровић 1906, 134-136.

Fig. 5. Painted decoration of the burial chamber, by M. Valtrović (Валтровић 1906, Table V).
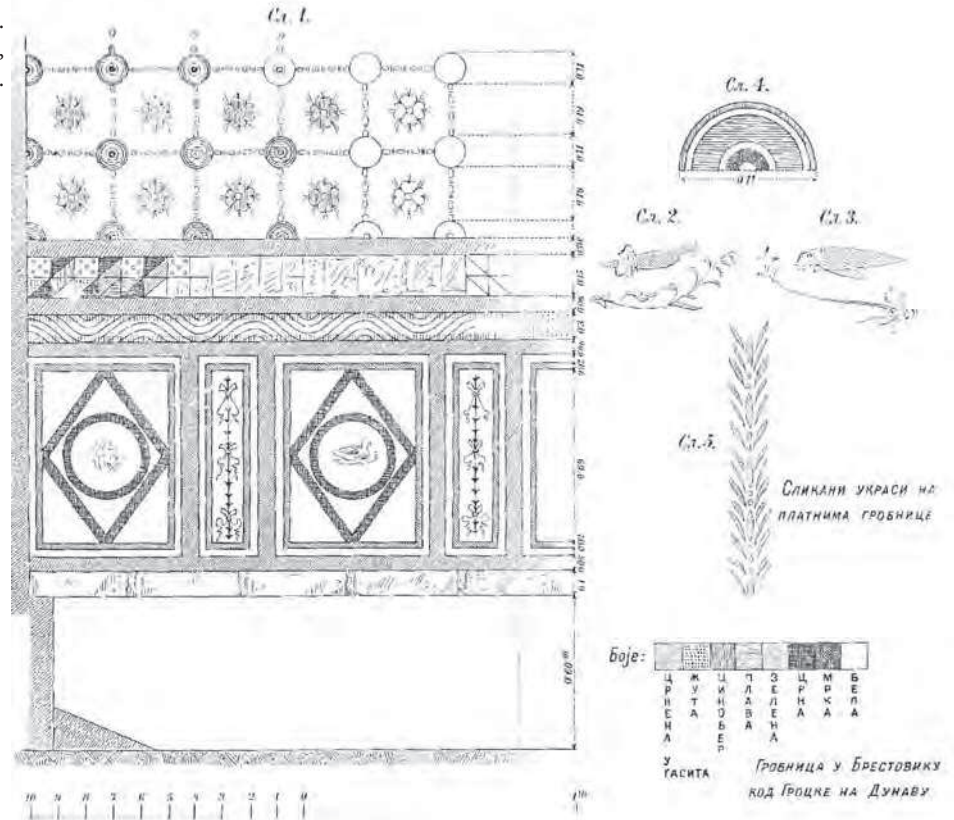
room with graves, and in its lower zone, on both sides of the entrance, there was one horizontally laid rectangular field, in which a rhomb and circle were inscribed. In the parts of the eastern and western wall of the central area, and alongside the apses, there were yellow fields with "wider branches". Valtrović's assumption was that the walls and columns of the next, entrance, area were also painted "so that they imitate marble or some other stone" (Figs 4a-4b; Figs. 5-7).[43]

Since the aforementioned authors who wrote about the architecture of the tomb in Brestovik found its origins in the East and in North Africa, i.e. Syria, Asia Minor and Egypt, it is interesting to see how Michael Rostovtzeff *(Михаи́л Ива́нович Росто́вцев,* 1870-1952*),* while describing the buildings created under these influences in southern Russia (when he also mentioned ancient painting in

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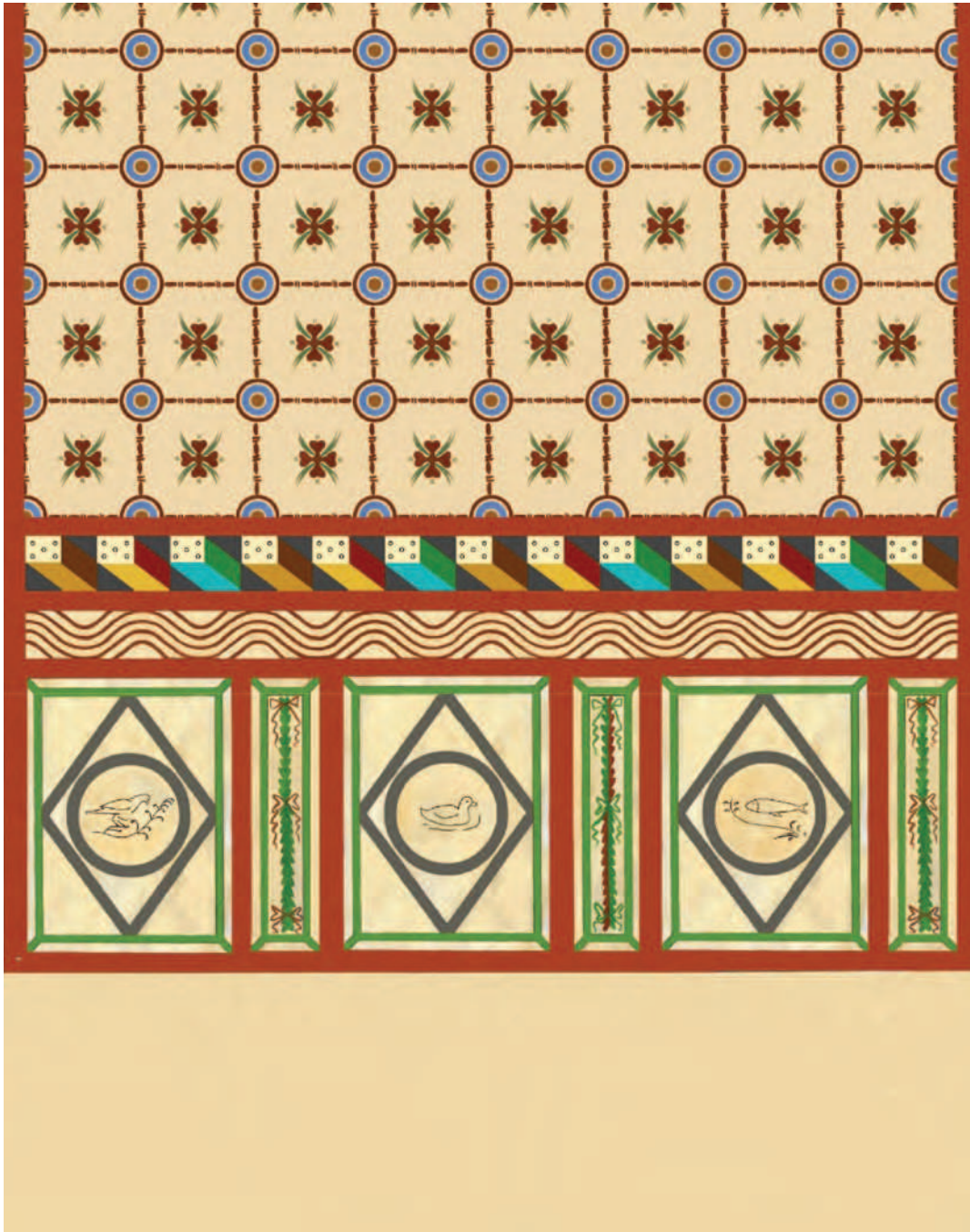43 Валтровић 1906, 130-131, 133, 136-137.

Fig. 6. Painted decoration of the burial chamber - ideal reconstruction of the northern wall (drawing by Dragana Rogić).

the territory of Serbia) - and which Miloje Vasić found analogous to the Brestovik tomb, writes about the development of styles in ancient painting. It was precisely Rostovtzeff who, after Valtrović (in 1917), performed an analysis of ancient painting from the territory of today's Serbia, that is, one grave from *Viminacium*.[44]

In the discussion about monuments from southern Russia, published in 1919, Rostovtzeff gave his overview of the occurrence of styles in ancient painting.[45] For further analysis of the Brestovk tomb painting, two styles are important, which he called "the true incrustation style" and "the floral style". The origin of the first one, according to him, should be sought in Mesopotamia and today's Iran. There, the buildings were usually made of adobe and stone, the walls were divided into zones and, to obtain a polychromous effect, stone plates in one colour were incrusted in others, creating a geometric ornament and separating the figures or scenes one from another. So, the real incrustation style was created by the imitation of this type of wall covering. The earliest painted examples are from Pompeii, and after that, this style appeared everywhere - in homes, catacombs, churches, and tombs, in Rome, Egypt, and Palmyra. Rostovtzeff further distinguishes two

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44 Ростовцевь1917; Николић et al. 2017.

45 The oldest system of ancient wall decoration in continental Greece, Rostovtzeff called "the Greek structural style", originating from the very structure of the walls of houses and tombs that had to be rendered and plastered, and during which the different wall zones, depending on the material, were painted differently. The wall of adobe was painted in one colour, the stone base was painted as stone imitation, while the bonding zones of wooden and stone parts were suitable for painting ornaments. He further wrote that later walls of the Hellenistic palaces of Asia Minor and Egypt, mostly made of brick, were covered with stone slabs of different colours, while in rich houses and tombs, stone covering was imitated in painted and stucco decoration, which led to the emergence of the "Hellenistic structural style" also called the First Pompeiian style or the incrustation style. According to Rostovtzeff, it should be called the Hellenistic structural style, as it does not belong to Pompeii, because the incrustation is a completely different technique (the process of incrustation of marble of one colour into marble slabs of another colour), and because the style is similar to the Greek structural style (it differs only by the fineness and richness of the colours and details). During the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, in the period of the economic decline of the East, well-paid Greek artists beautified the palaces and villas of the Romans in wealthy parts of Italy, so further styles were developed here. The enrichment of the Hellenistic structural style using strongly emphasised vertical divisions (columns, pilasters, door frames and window frames) in Italy and the western provinces gradually led to the emergence of the Second Pompeian style - architectural style, an imitation of actual architecture and theatre, and later, to the development of the Third and Fourth Pompeian style. When the East, under the Roman Emperors, became rich again, the Pompeian styles were no longer fashionable, and also not in accordance with "the taste of the new world in the East", where, even during the late Hellenistic period, a simplification of the structural style began, and where in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, two different styles appeared – "the true incrustation style" and "the floral style" (Rostovtzeff 1919, 147-148, 150-151).

Fig. 7. Painted decoration of the burial chamber today and the reconstruction (photo and drawing by Emilija Nikolić)
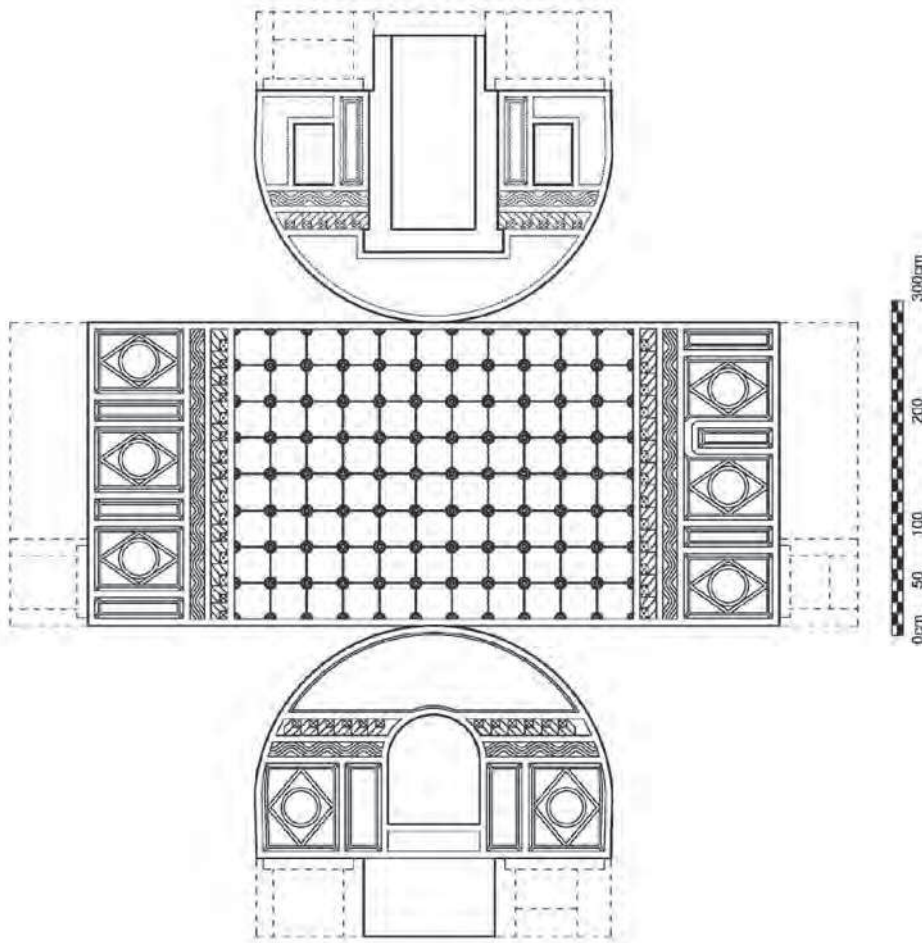
groups of floral styles: the so-called "carpet style" and "true floral style". The inspiration for the carpet style was found in the tents of nomadic tribes, covered with carpets. During the Second and Fourth Pompeian style in Italy and in the buildings of North Africa, it seemed that the reproduction of rich woven carpet or fabric with flowers covered the walls or ceilings. According to Rostovtzeff, the true floral style originated from naturalistic tendencies in Hellenistic and Roman art, and fashion developed from the Ptolemaic restoration of Egyptian art, so the walls and ceilings were painted with motifs of flowers, garlands, other plants, and animals, without any order, and with figures in the central fields and lunettes. This style expanded throughout the whole ancient world, with the earliest occurrences in the small home temples of Pompeii, beginning from the second half of the 1st century AD and through the 2nd century AD, and in the sepulchral buildings of Rome and catacombs, the tombs of Leptis Magna and Palmyra, Phoenicia, Salona, Serbia and Bulgaria, but also in the houses in Pergamon and Rome. Consequently, it can not be linked only with religion. At the end of the study, Michael Rostovtzeff concluded that the combination of incrustation and floral style for the late Roman Empire and the Middle Ages become "a style".[46]

Considering the research of the ancient tombs in Serbia until the first decades of the 20th century, with only the tomb in Brestovik and the grave from *Viminacium* mentioned until that time, we can assume that, by writing that, in the ancient tombs in Serbia, free floral style is visible, Rostovtzeff was considering these two structures. However, for the painting of the *Viminacium* grave, in which a three-dimensional meander is depicted, he wrote that it emerged from a typical late Hellenism, almost without any element of incrustation and elements of the floral style, and that it represented a purified Hellenistic decoration originating from Syria and Egypt.[47] On the other hand, in view of the presence of order and geometry, the painting of the vault imitating a coffered ceiling with floral motifs in the Brestovik tomb is difficult to attribute to the free flower style. Rostovtzeff also wrote that since the beginning of the 3rd century, the floral and incrustation styles slowly lost popularity in southern Russia and that there were no rich colours and forms anymore, with everything based on geometry, lines, and contours, whereas after the establishment of Christianity during the 3rd century, painting under the

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46 Rostovtzeff 1919, 151-152, 161-163.

47 Ростовцевь1917, 57.

influence of Syria and Palestine returned.[48] In architecture, as well as in the painting of the tomb in Brestovik, Aleksandar Jovanović (1947-2009) saw Syrian elements, actually those of Palmyrian art.[49] For all of these reasons, in relation to the period of creation and the story of geometry, we can also associate the Brestovik tomb with a reduced use of the floral and incrustation styles, i.e. to the mentioned influences related to Christianity and Syria.

Julia Valeva wrote that the decorative system of the tombs of the Eastern provinces from the end of the 4th to the 6th/7th centuries extended a tradition originated in the 1st century AD, as a pattern that persisted until the end of Antiquity: orthostats at the base as the frames for figures, a ceiling or a vault that symbolises the space above the terrestrial one, and a frieze as the border between the real world and the celestial dwellings.[50] In an attempt to make a typology of the painted tombs dated to this period, Valeva made a proposal that considered the deductions of two scientists – K. Myatev (*Крьстю Миятевь,* 1892-1966) (who discerned two groups – a decorative one with vegetative motifs and birds bearing ideas of pagan antiquity, and those with a painted cross, noting that many tombs were between the two groups, reflecting the transition between pagan decorative art and Christian art), and D. Ovčarov (who classified the tombs in more detail, whilst also emphasising the "transition of ancient illusionism to the symbolism of Christian art in the sepulchral decoration"). Thus, while writing about the degradation of ancient constructive systems and their replacement by eclectic systems, she classified types of the tomb painting from the mentioned period into: "pseudo-constructive" ("pseudo-structural"), which followed the constructive idea of ancient wall decoration and bore reminiscences of the decorative ideas of "the structural style" (with orthostats, rows of beams and ceiling boxes),[51] and other types, "totally different from the constructive idea" - with garland festoons on the walls and representations of birds and flowers, or with combinations of symbolic patterns connected to Christianity.[52] Valeva also mentioned here the Brestovik tomb classifying

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48 Rostovtzeff 1919, 153.

49 Јовановић 2006, 315 .

50 Valeva 2001, 169-170.

51 Valeva 1989, 1248, 1250.

52 See footnote 45, and the description of "the Hellenistic structural style" made by M. Rostovtzeff.

it, together with the tombs from Silistra and Iznik,[53] as the first type (also writing that in the tombs of this type, instead of coffers, plant motifs could have been used and, instead of beams, ornamental friezes were sometimes present, or there were no bands of any kind on this spot).[54] According to her, this style reflected "the trend towards classicism" at the end of the 3rd and into the 4th century, created to "emphasize the stabilization of imperial power", while the orthostats imitating marble cladding and vegetal motifs on the vault gave this art an eclectic character.[55]

Mihailo Valtrović wrote of the tomb in Brestovik that "a good impression made by decoration with the arrangement of its parts, which are characterized by attractive proportions and easy workmanship, was raised particularly by full and compatible colours".[56] Today, due to fading and, in general, the degradation of some organic colours, they are recognised as some other colours or they do not exist at all.[57] Therefore, today it is impossible to perform an ideal reconstruction of the painted decoration, and the proposal of this study is given on the basis of a combination of all available data, that is, old photographs, the descriptions and drawings of Mihailo Valtrović, a visual overview of today's state of painting by the authors of this study and the knowledge of analogies.

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53 Valeva 1989, 1248.

54 These two tombs will be analysed later in this paper.

55 Valeva 1989, 1250.

56 Valeva 1989, 1250.

57 Валтровић 1906, 133. As for the colours used in the decoration of the room with the graves, Valtrović listed yellow ochre ("dark" and "light"), "burnt ochre", cinnabar, blue, green, brown and black, while in the drawing he denoted "dark" red, yellow, cinnabar, blue, green, black, brown and white, which was obviously the background of the whole decoration, since he mentioned yellow-ochre "narrow sprays" and dark yellow "stripes" along the edges, which "softened the whiteness of the surface, which would come up to the surface more than the other colours and thereby spoil the harmony" (Валтровић 1906, 133-135, table V).

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS IN PAINTED DECORATION

Architectural elements were very often imitated in Roman wall painting.[58] From the architectural elements in the preserved painting of the Brestovik tomb, one can recognise the technique of *opus sectile*, the stucco decoration of the coffered ceiling, and beams in the burial chamber, while in the central room, where there is no decoration today, according to Mihailo Valtrović, there was painting depicting the technique of *opus sectile* (Figs. 4a-4b, 4d-4e; Figs. 5-7).

Opus sectile. Throughout the history of art and architecture, the walls of many luxurious buildings, most often in the area of the socle, were covered with rectangular stone slabs, but also with various stone forms using the *opus sectile* technique. The same decorations were performed in the imitation of slab compositions or stone textures with line and colour in wall paintings.[59] Michael Rostovtzeff wrote that schemes and decorative wall painting systems never change, regardless of whether they are used for "decoration of the flats for the living or dead people".[60] Thus, the technique of *opus sectile* - which we associate with Rostovtzeff's "real incrustation style", besides in public and private buildings, was also used to paint tombs, where marble and its structure were often realistically imitated, but also where the technique served only as a geometric inspiration, as is the case on the walls of the Brestovik tomb (Figs. 8a-8b).

As has been already mentioned, the wall zones above the graves on the southern and northern walls of the room with graves in the Brestovik tomb are divided by wide red bands into six rectangular fields - three wide and three narrow fields. Within each rectangular field, a frame is painted with a narrow green line. The angles of each green frame are connected, by green diagonal lines, with the inner corners of the red bands. These short diagonal lines create the impression of three-dimensionality, that is, the bevelled and processed edges of the stone. Multicoloured marbles are not imitated here, but geometric shapes characteristic of the *opus sectile* technique, in which figural and vegetative motifs are placed,

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58 Valtrović noted that the black colour he saw could also come from some other colour, such as blue or brown (Валтровић 1906, 134).

59 Some were discussed in Rogić, Nikolić 2016, where, through the analyses of *Sirmium* painting, examples of painted architectural elements in profane buildings were presented.

60 More on stone imitation in Rogić 2018.

Fig. 8. Opus sectile: a.b. Brestovik tomb (photos by the authors of the paper);

c. "Tomb with the Anchor" in Niš (Ракоција, 2009, Fig. 27);

d. Model of tomb no.7 in Sofia (Valeva 2001, 168, Fig. 1);

e. "Tomb of the Banquet" in Constanța (Valeva 2001, 173, Fig. 15);

f. Burial chamber II in Pécs (© User:Thaler / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA-3.0; (https:// commons.wikimedia.org/ wiki/File:%C3%93keresz-t%C3%A9ny_ mauz%C3%B3leum2.JPG);

g. The Episcopal Basilica in Stobi (Dimitrova 2012, 22);

h. Grave no. 16, Thessaloniki (Μαρκή 2006, πινακασ / T. 18);

i. Early Christian tomb 1903, in Sevastopol (Zavadskaya 2013, 50, Fig. 11);

j. Grave no. 8, found below St. Sophia, in Sofia (Kitanov 2014, Tafel CXC –Abb.1).

are shown. In this way, the composition deviated from the strict form of the technique. Rectangles, rhombs, and circles in wide fields are underpainted with light ochre, and their form is highlighted in green. The circles form discs that take the role of medallions with painted animal imagery. In this case, the rhombs *frame* the medallions and *break* the rectangular composition. The narrow rectangular fields are formed in a similar way to the wide fields, but without rhombs and circles, and with garlands– twigs, as was already described before[61] (Figs. 5-7; Figs. 8a-8b).

A large number of lower zones in ancient painted tombs had an imitation stone lining. In Serbia, this is the case with the "Tomb with the Anchor" in Niš (*Naissus*) (Fig. 8c).[62] Analogous motifs are also encountered in tombs no. 7,[63] and no. 9 in Sofia (*Serdica*) (Fig. 8d),[64] in the "Tomb of the Banquet" (Fig. 8e),[65] and in the crypt of the Paleo-Christian basilica in Constanța (*Tomis*).[66] Various marble incrustations are also painted in burial chamber II in Pécs (*Sopianae*) (Fig. 8f).[67] In the Episcopal Basilica in *Stobi*, on the lower zone of the walls, there are painted panels separated by painted pilasters (columns), dated to the first half of the 4th century. The panels are formed with rhombs in rectangles, and inside the rhombs there are discs or squares (Fig. 8g).[68] Circles inside rhombs, like in Brestovik, can be seen in grave no. 16 (Fig. 8h) and grave no. 53 from Thessaloniki (*Thessalonica*), dated to the 4th century.[69] However, figures, vegetative motifs or scenes within geometric fields in painted imitations using the *opus sectile* technique are not frequent. Vegetative motifs (trees) in medallions within rhombs inside rectangles can be seen in the early Christian tomb 1903, in today's Sevastopol (*Chersonesus*) (Fig. 8i).[70] A similar

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61 A group of French authors dealing with Roman painting classified the geometric scheme used in opus sectile of the Brestovik tomb, as one of the characteristic schemes using the rhomb as a basic figure (Barbet et al., 1997, 12).

62 Rostovtzeff 1919, 145.

63 Ракоција 2009, 94-95.

64 Valeva 2001, 174, Fig.17; Миятевь 1925, 55-67, Figs. 20, 21; More on the tomb see in: Valeva 1986.

65 Valeva 2001, 168, Fig.1; Миятевь 1925, 86-105, Figs. 31, 32.

66 Barbet, 1994, figs: 2,8 and 9; Valeva 2011, 173, Fig.15, 179, Fig. 30.

67 Barbet, Monier 2001, pl. XLI-XLII, 377-378, Figs. 3, 4, 6.

68 Magyar 2009, 113, 114, Fig 6.

69 Blaževska, Tutkovski 2012, 12,13,16; Dimitrova 2012, 22, 24; Tutkovski 2012, 38.

70 Μαρκή 2006, 172, 173: Σχέδ 124, 174, 175: Σχέδ 126, 223, πινακεσ 18, 20.

division of the fields on the wall is, like in Brestovik, carried out in the vaulted grave no. 8, found below St. Sophia in Sofia, dating back to the late 3rd or early 4th century. The wide rectangular fields on the walls are empty, but with accentuated plasticity, while in the narrow fields, vertically set twigs are present. Some authors describe this decorative system as a product of influences from Asia Minor (Fig. 8j).[71]

Here, the words of Mihailo Valtrović can be quoted, who, in his description of the tomb in Brestovik, wrote that "the painted surfaces showed the character of the stone slab lining", "striving for the excellent impression of the walls in rich, monumental buildings".[72] However, today, some authors have a different attitude from that of the past, when it was believed that the imitation of marble by some other technique was due to the lack of material resources, although it is a fact that the purchase of marble was expensive.[73] One fact that the authors Vranešević and Špehar use to support the contemporary attitude is that rich Roman families often decorated their villas by painting imitations of marble, and cite the example of "the Villa with Peristyle" in *Mediana,* dated to the beginning of the 4th century. They also apply this to early Christian buildings, where, despite this painted decoration, the remains of marble were found, noting also that in the triconchal church in Caričin Grad (*Iustiniana Prima*), there is a painted imitation of the *opus sectile* technique, as well as mosaics of high quality.[74] Authors Vranešević and Špehar write that ancient man evaluated the visual impression more than the authenticity of the materials used for decoration, and that the marble was not only a decoration but also an active surface that produced a certain impression on the viewer. According to them, the imitation of marble in painting formed a new image of the material through the painted image, and something "powerful and strong", such as the marble, attained immateriality.[75] The difference in its use in buildings built by the wealthy citizens of the Roman Empire and later Christian buildings, as they write, is that this "deception" did not have a status related function in Christianity, because they adopted the technique only as a traditional

71 Zavadskaya 2013, 41, 49, 50, Fig. 11.

72 Kitanov 2014, 669, Tafel CXC –Abb.1. About the tomb see also in: Миятевъ 1925, 68-85, Figs. 24, 25, 26, 30.

73 Валтровић1906, 133.

74 Вранешевић, Шпехар 2016, 50.

75 Вранешевић, Шпехар 2016, 50-52.

practice in accordance with the time in which they lived.[76] However, we can quote Gordana Milošević, who wrote that the elements of pagan and Christian decoration were indeed shared and taken from the architecture of monumental public buildings, and that, in addition to their religious attitudes, Christians "did not easily deny to show a costly and luxurious grave".[77]

THE BEAMS

The depiction of beams is much more common in ancient mosaics than in painting. One painted example is that from the tomb in Brestovik (Figs. 5-7, 9). The beams are shown here in an oblique projection on three walls of the room with graves and painted in different colours. Their frontal sides were white and, as Mihailo Valtrović wrote, had "the decoration of five small wheels".[78] According to his drawing of the southern wall, viewed from the east to the west, they were arranged in the following sequence and combinations of colours: red-yellow, cinnabar-yellow and green-blue, and so on with repetitions.[79] Unfortunately, the decoration of these five white circles in a *quincunx* arrangement is now lost, and the colours of the beams can not be fully recognised. Valtrović wrote that the beams on the northern, southern and western walls were differently depicted in relation to their directions. However, in the drawing of the southern wall, he marked a change in the direction of the beams, which is characteristic only for the western wall. The drawing also lacks the edge bands of the vault, and some dimensions are incorrectly written, so it is likely that this drawing could have been a scheme (Fig. 5).[80]

An example of a beam representation in wall paintings is found in the Hellenistic age. The tomb in Kazanlak, Bulgaria, dating back to the late classical and early Hellenistic period, is a Thracian tomb in which pictorial and decorative elements produce an overall effect in the manner of the "well-known Ionic decora-

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76 Вранешевић, Шпехар 2016, 52.

77 Вранешевић, Шпехар 2016, 52.

78 Милошевић 2006, 380, 394.

79 Валтровић1906, 135.

80 Валтровић1906, 135, table V.

Fig. 9. Depiction of the beams in the Brestovik tomb (photos by the authors of the paper).

tive style".[81] Here, the beams are painted in a circular edge band in the dome of the tomb, as part of an Ionian cornice and defined as a denticulated motif by Živkova, who also concluded that the three Ionic columns in the chariot race frieze are actually the only architectural detail in the tomb's decoration.[82] The frontal sides of the beams are white, with short dark ochre lines, which seem to show the structure of a tree, while the two other sides are dark ochre (Fig. 10a).

In the vaulted Macedonian "Tomb of Lyson and Kalikles" in Lefkada, dating back to 168 BC,[83] painted pilasters (or perhaps columns), architrave and mutules with guttae in the Doric order, are shown (Fig. 10b). Here, it can be undoubtedly determined which architectural elements are represented regarding the reality of the display, but for later presentations (except perhaps those from the scenes of the Second Pompeian style), regardless of their complexity, it is often difficult to

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81 One of the mistakes is the drawing of the coffered ceiling, which is actually a grid of 8 fields x11 fields, while Valtrović drew a grid with a side of 9 fields. See in: Валтровић1906, table V.

82 Zhivkova 1975, 38.

83 Zhivkova 1975, 69, 72, Figs. 17, 20, 26.

connect them with certain elements.[84] Thus, they can be an imitation of decorative elements of architecture (mutules, dentils, and modillions, which differ in appearance depending on the order), as well as structural elements of the roof (rafters) or some of the horizontal beams (ceiling joists). However, henceforth, this motif will be called *beams*, since decorative stone elements were probably created due to the *petrification* of wooden construction beams[85], and also because of their probable symbolic role in the painting, where, although decoration, they had a kind of constructive function – serving as "carriers of the vault"[86], as Mihailo Valtrović felt in his first encounter with the tomb in Brestovik, as did Miloje Vasić, who described them "very plastically represented beams", which *carried* a roof, i.e. a vault.[87]

In the next examples of tombs, the beams are painted in several colours, and most often the frontal side and other two sides of a beam are differently coloured, although there are examples where all three sides are different, as is the case with the tomb in Brestovik. Sometimes all the beams are painted in the same way, while in some cases there are two or three different beams that change in a row. However, the frontal side of a beam is always light. Sometimes the beams have specific decorations on the frontal side which look like tree rings or carry decoration in the form of dots in different arrangements.[88]

Carved into a rock and in an irregular form, in the tomb of Kerch 1872, in southern Russia, formerly *Pantikápaion*, the capital of The Bosporan Kingdom, dating from the 2nd century AD, the entire lower zone was decorated with an imitation of the *opus sectile* technique, and the pilasters were also painted. Above the pilasters the precisely drawn beams are represented in an oblique projection and

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84 Grobel Miller 1993.

85 Николић et al. 2017, 201. Wooden beams are very realistically depicted in Pompeian painting. One of the many examples is the table in *Casa di Apolline* in Pompeii, whose painting belongs to the Fourth Pompeian style (Strocka 2014, Tafel I, Abb. 2). As one of the many examples of the Second Pompeian style with depicted beams, we can specify Room 23 from *Villa Oplontis* (Stinson 2011, 414, Fig. 9). In these Pompeian cases, the beams are depictions of wooden beams in clear architectural constructions, mostly roofs in architectural scenes. In the Second Pompeian style, stone cornices with dentils are often painted, like in of *Villa Ariana* in *Stabiae*. (Fig. 10d) The dentils are also often depicted in the stucco decoration of the First Pompeiian style, which we can see in "The Samnite House" in Herculaneum (Fig. 10c).

86 Discussions on this see in: Wilson Jones 2002; Ridgway 1966; Washburn 1919; Holland 1917.

87 Валтровић 1906, 135.

88 Васић, 1906, 139-140.

Fig. 10. The beams:
a. The Kazanlak tomb (Živkova 1975, Plate 20);

b. "Tomb of Lyson and Ka-likles", in Lefkada (Rhômiopoulou 2007, 24, Fig.11); ;

c. "The Samnite House", in Herculaneum (photo by the authors of the paper);

d. Villa Ariana, in Stabiae (photo by the authors of the paper);

e. Tomb of Kerch 1872 (http://bosporuscrypt. ru/content/crypts/ crypt_1872_img.ht-m?pict=0&arr=12-28);

f. "The Demeter Crypt", in Kerch (Савостина 2009, http://bosporuscrypt.ru/ content/library/text_04_04. htm; Зинько 2009, http:// bosporuscrypt.ru/content/ library/text_04_03.htm);

g. "The Tomb of Three Brothers", in Palmyra (© Livius.org / CC BY-SA-3.0, https://vici.org/image. php?id=5867)

h. Tomb "A VI 2", from Anemurium (Russell 1977, 52, Fig. 8).
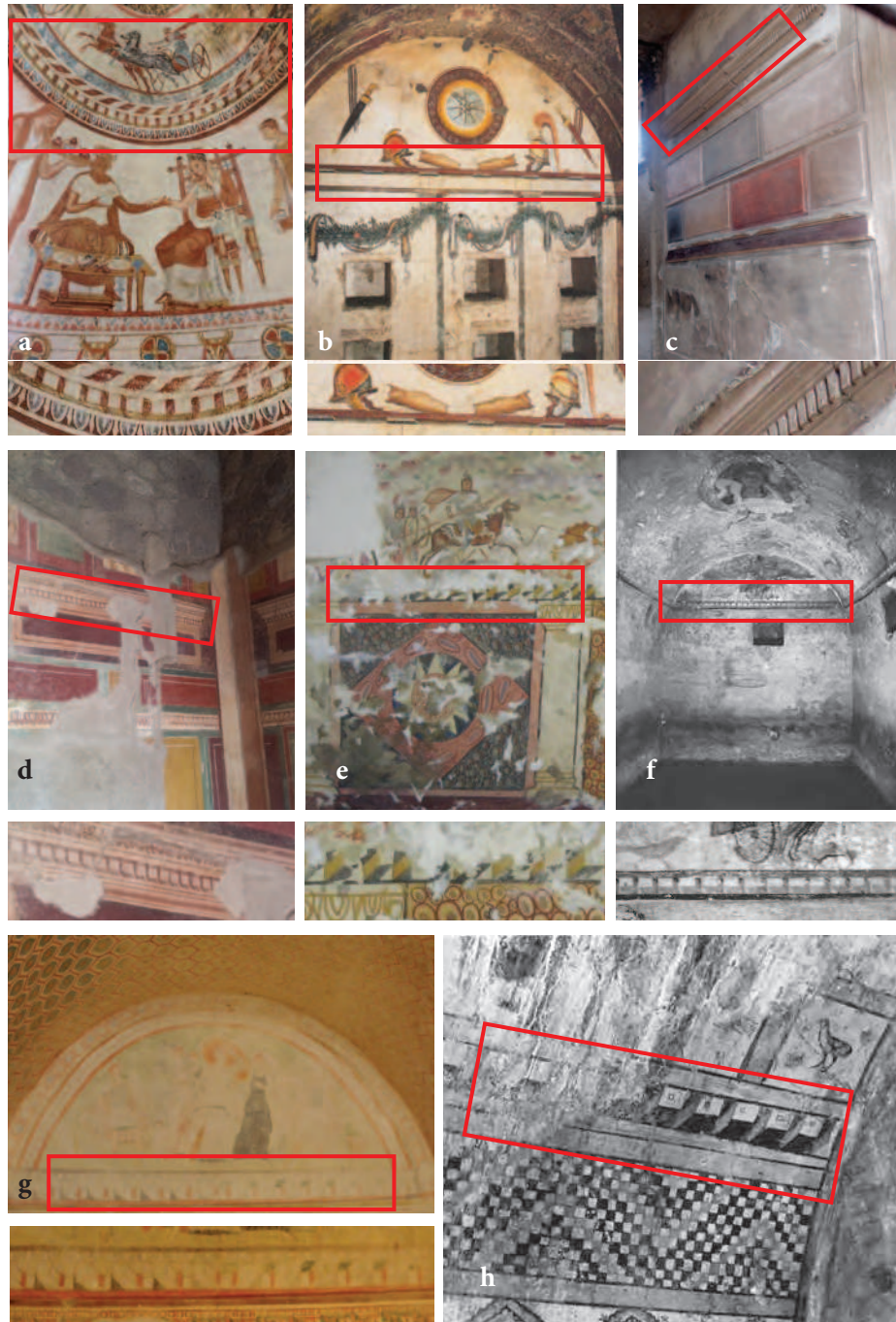
in two colours, with a white frontal side, on a dark background. Above them, on the vault, there are vegetative motives, that is, apples (roses) and leaves, as well as horsemen, wild animals, trees and a square mesh of crossed bands and fields with an imitation of marble texture (Fig. 10e).[89] In the vaulted tomb of Kerch, bearing the name of "The Demeter Crypt", dated to the period of the 1st century AD, walls painted with vegetative motifs, grapes and human figures are separated from the vault (in the centre of which is a medallion with the head of Demeter surrounded by flowers and birds) by a band of beams in an oblique projection, while in the lunettes there are vegetative motifs and scenes from mythology.[90] The frontal side of the beams is white, the other sides are ochre-coloured, and the beams are arranged in one continuous direction along the whole tomb, that is, they create a continuous band crossing from one wall to another. The background is black, one can see the link of the beam with the element of the construction behind, but the beams look like dentiles. They appear to be individually displayed in a slightly inverted perspective (Fig. 10f). In a vaulted tomb near Anapa, ancient *Gorgippia*, also in southern Russia, painted in the 3rd century AD, in the lower zone of the walls, stone blocks in several rows are shown, above which is a cyma, then a three-dimensional polychrome meander, and a row of white dentils on a dark red background, while the vault is coloured blue.[91]

Painted beams can be seen in the "The Tomb of Three Brothers", which was built in the middle of the 2nd century AD and painted until the half of the 3rd century, found in the south-western necropolis of Palmyra.[92] These beams are an imitation

89 Dot arrangements can be further discussed within the history of ornamentation, as well as within symbolic systems.

90 Burgunder, Sinenko 2010, 913-914, Fig.1.

91 Зинько 2009.

92 Ернштедт 1955, рис. 4. A similar example can be seen on the wall paintings of a house in Kerch dating back to the 2nd century BC, where a black-coloured socle, rows of stone in different colours and dark bands, spiral floral ornaments, a three-dimensional meander and dentils are depicted. Some authors see here evidence that Greek craftsmen from Asia Minor worked on the buildings of ancient *Pantikápaion*. These decorations are also frequent in houses in Delos and Alexandria as well as in Priena (Ернштедт 1955). An example of painted beams in a profane building is also found in house II, unit IV, in Ephesus, built in the 1st century BC, and whose subsequent phases can be traced to the 7th century. During the early 3rd century, a garden with flowers, trees, fruits and a blue sky, as well as birds, were painted above a socle of marble slabs in the yard. Above the tree line, there is a row of very realistically depicted beams in an oblique projection that are part of the architectural construction shown in the same projection, and which frames the whole scene. In the second phase

of simple stone modillions, which are elements of the cornice in Corinthian and Composite order, realistically represented by the interconnection and the connection to the structural elements to which they belong. In the lunette, characters from Greek mythology are shown, and there is also the painted opus sectile technique in the lower zone of the walls, with the use of laid rectangles in which rectangles with circles are painted. An almost monochrome cornice with modillions (the colours are faded) is located on all four walls. This tomb depicts Palmyrian art, which, according to some authors, was developed between Hellenistic and local traditions.[93] Here, the modillions are shown in an oblique projection. Below the lunette they are symmetrically separated in two directions, while on the longitudinal walls they have one direction, but opposed to the row below the lunette, so at the joining of the longitudinal walls and the lunette the frontal sides of the modillions face each other and, thus, do not give the impression of the continuity of the cornice. However, on the other hand, this situation creates a new spaciousness, where it seems that the cornice aspires towards the heights (Fig. 10g).[94] Julia Valeva defines this tomb as an example of a tomb from the imperial epoch, whose painting solution was later "prolonged" in the tombs of Brestovik, Silistra and Iznik, having a band of beams as "the illusion of an enlargement of the space".[95]

In a vaulted tomb, named "A VI 2" at the necropolis in *Anemurium*, in present-day Turkey, dating back to the 3rd century,[96] beneath zoomorphic depictions on the ceiling, divided into fields, there is a rich precise geometric decoration of the upper zone with bands formed of crossed zig-zag lines that made a series of squares (or rhombs), that is, a chessboard of colourful squares (whose analysis requires special attention, with regard to the origin of the ornaments and its use in wall painting) and a row of beams in an oblique projection. They have light frontal

of the decoration, motifs of marble imitation were painted over the scene (Hembrey 2008, 28, fig. 41).

93 Hembrey 2008, 9-10.

94 Eristov, Vibert-Guigue 2014, 349, Tafel CXXII – Abb.1 Abb.2.

95 As decoration, a similar depiction of beams – modillions, can be seen in the tablinum of the *Villa d'Orbe Boscéaz,* in Switzerland, dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD (Luginbühl et al. 2001, 49, 50, 67, fig. 61). They are present in the mosaic floor, as a frame of the whole space with geometrical motifs and depictions of Achilles on Skyros. The modillions are very precisely represented, arranged in an oblique projection and symmetrically set in relation to the longitudinal axis of the mosaic. Their frontal sides are light ochre, the other sides are dark ochre, the bottom is brown, and the construction elements above are represented in several colours. The background is black.

96 Valeva 2001, 171-172.

sides with a small square displayed on them (Fig. 10h).

On the walls of vaulted tomb in Iznik (*Nicaea*), in present-day Turkey, dating back to the middle of the 4th century,[97] wide rectangular fields can be seen in the lower zones of the walls, filled with geometric motifs and harmonious representations of birds and vegetative motifs, as well as narrow fields with upright twigs, as in the tomb from Brestovik. The geometric field decoration includes rhombs, squares, and triangles, mutually combined in a composition that imitates *opus sectile*. Above this zone, a frequent and simple floral motif is painted, and then we see a motif of the beams in an oblique projection, like in Brestovik, which is not present on all the walls but only on the longitudinal ones. On the main wall of the tomb, the Christogram is present. Two differently coloured beams alternate, with white frontal sides and white-coloured decoration that resembles tree rings, and two other sides painted in two colours (green or red lower surfaces and ochre and pink lateral sides), on a black background with three white points. Alix Barbet described the beams as solids in perspective having optical illusion, with dots as nails, comparing the tomb painting with the one in Silistra, but also with the Brestovik tomb. She accepted the tomb decoration as a part of an iconographic and stylistic tradition of the 4th century, and a representation of the Christian paradise[98] (Fig. 11).

In a vaulted tomb in Silistra (*Durostorum*), in today's Bulgaria, dating back to the middle of the 4th century,[99] there are painted human figures on the walls within rectangular fields, above which there is a band with beams shown in an oblique projection in two colour variants, so that the trio consisting of green-blue and two orange-yellow beams with a white frontal side and red dots on them alternate. Dots are also present in the interstices in the lower zone of the band, while in the upper zone the space is filled with a dark colour without dots. Some authors link guttae shown on mutules with these dot-wreaths of points.[100] Above the beams, on the frontal wall, there is a lunette with peacocks. Although imprecisely executed - the beams are depicted in mutually different dimensions and bevels, there is the symmetry of the beams' representation in relation to the longitudinal axis of the

97 Hembrey 2008, 6-7, Fig. 6; Russell 1977, 45-46, 48, 52, Fig.2.

98 Barbet 2013, 69, 73.

99 Atanasov 2007, 450. More on the tomb, see in: Димитров, Чичикова 1986.

100 Зинько et al. 2009.

Fig. 11. The tomb in Iznik:
a. Painted surfaces,

b. Plan and cross-section
(Firatli 1974, 921, 923, Figs.
129-130);

c. Southern wall (Barbet
2013, 80, Figure 10);

d. Painted beams (Barbet
2013, 81, Figure 12);

e. Western wall (Barbet
2013, 78, Figure 6)

f. Eastern wall
(Barbet 2013, 77, Fig. 4).

vault. The beams on the left side of the wall with the lunette are depicted as they are viewed from the right, and the beams on the right side of the wall are depicted as they are viewed from the left. These directions are followed on the longitudinal walls, as the line of the beams continues, enclosing the space of the tomb at the entrance wall, where the directions of the beams cross in the space above the line. In contrast to the tomb in Brestovik, here the beams go from the centre of the frontal wall to the outside, and not the other way around. Georgi Atanasov wrote that the artist in the Silistra tomb probably wanted to portray the line between the earthly life and the desired eternal one when painting these beams.[101] He also mentioned the motif of beams as "illusionary", but "very well molded" elements as "perspective trimmer joists."[102] According to Atanasov, decorative system and simplified architectural - spatial composition with the Roman - Hellenistic elements, as well as mirror symmetry and inverted perspective he recognized in the depiction of beams, are part of the last classical phase in the tomb painting. He connected the Silistra tomb painting with the rule of the Constantine the Great and his heirs. It was an epoch, as he wrote, that brought the end of the classical pagan art and the preparation for the expression of the early Christian art[103] (Fig. 12).

In the tomb found in Beit-Ras, Jordan, we find an interesting motif of the beams, forming a circle, painted in one arcosolium. The tomb is dated to the 2nd century AD. The beams, painted on the black background, are coloured identically to those in Iznik, but have the five black dots like those in Brestovik. In the other arcosolium, the twisted rope is depicted, painted with the same colurs. The stone imitation is presented in the lower parts of the walls, while in the upper zones, there are different scenes. Here, the motif of beams in the arcosolium can be interpreted as an ornament, considering the presence of the twisted rope ornament in the analogous spot on the other arcosolium[104] (Figs. 13a-13b).

The vaulted grave no. 49, was damaged by infrastructure works in Apolloniados Street, in Thessaloniki. It is dated to the first half of the 4th century. In the lower zones of the four walls stone plates are imitated, the middle zones are filled with Christian scenes, and above it, a band with a continuous rhomboid pattern
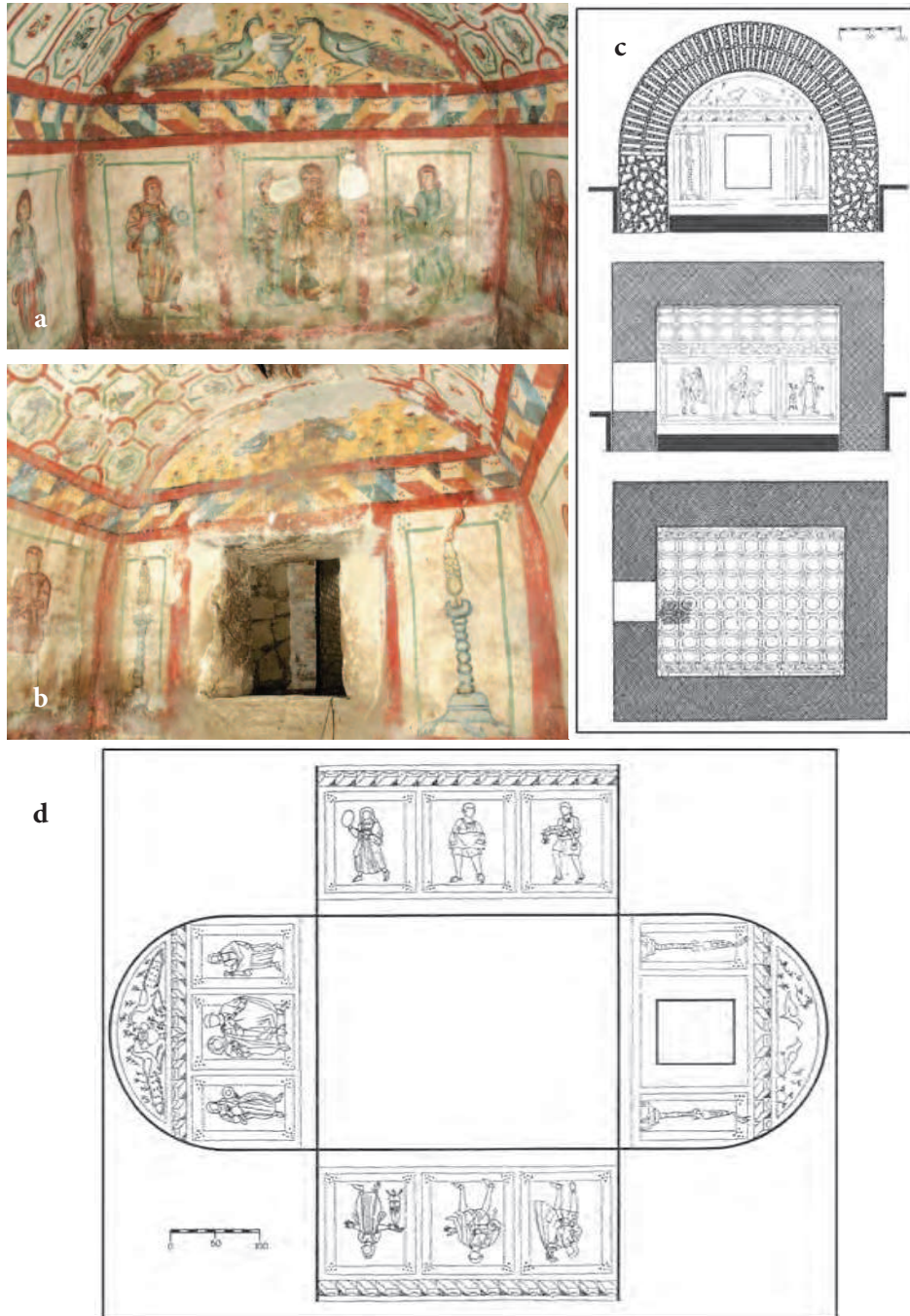
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101 Atanasov 2007, 450.

102 Atanasov 2014, 13.

103 Atanasov 2014, 15

104 Base Décors antiques 2017, BEIT.00004.

Fig. 12. The tomb
in Silistra:
a. The view from the
entrance (Atanasov
2014, 1, Fig.1);

b. Eastern wall (Atanasov
2014, 24, Fig.30);

c. Plan and sections
(Atanasov 2007,
462, Fig.4);

d. Painted surfaces
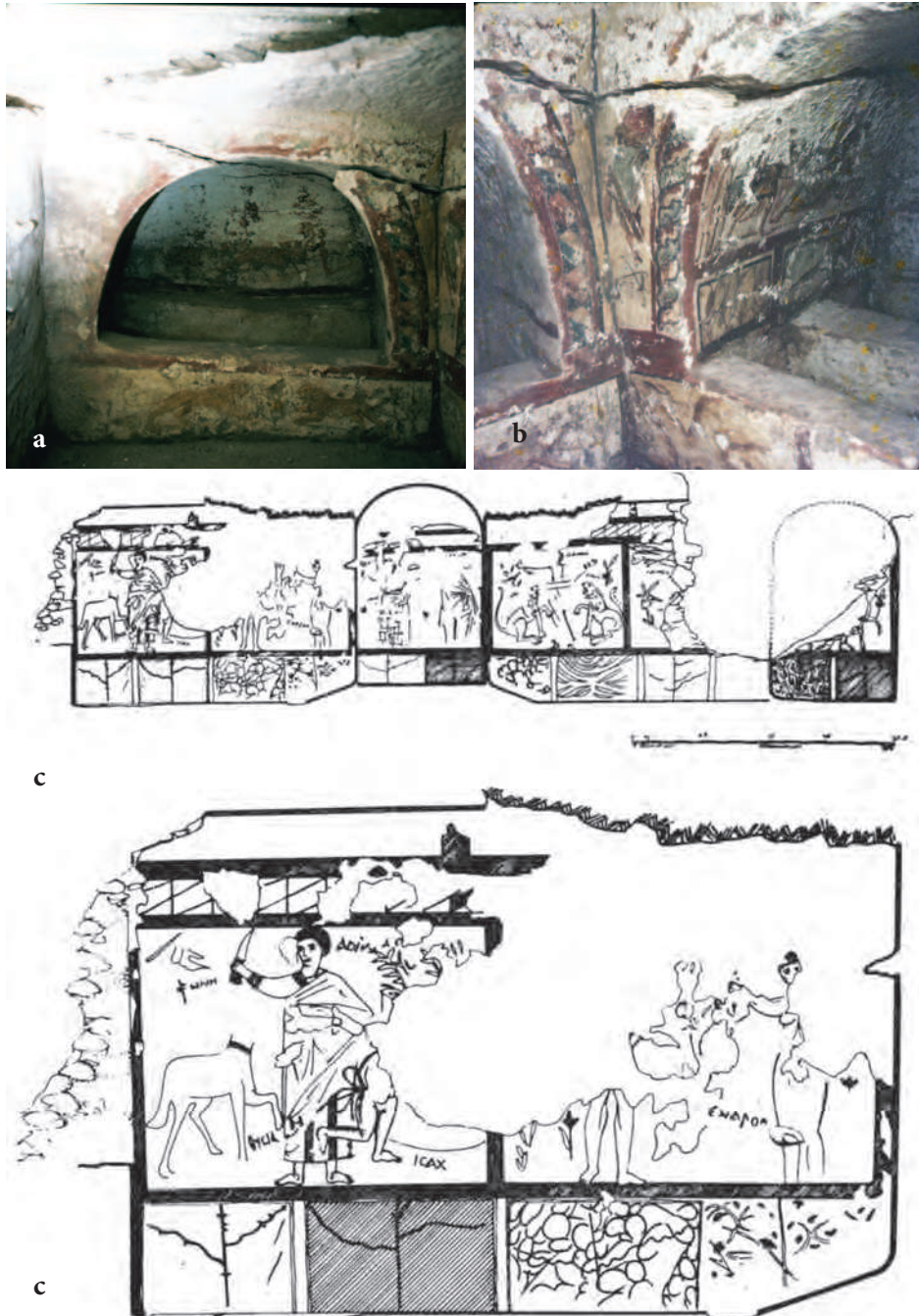(Atanasov 2007,
463, Fig.6).

a

b

c

c

Fig. 13.
Arcosolium in the tomb of Beit-Ras, Jordan
a. From Base Décors antiques - UMR 8546 CNRS/ENS - AOrOc - Archéologie & Philologie, OPUS Alix Barbet Saisie, Image No. Inv BEIT.00010 (Methodologie de la base: Alix Barbet, Joëlle Carayon. Conception, architecture et conventions de saisie: Joëlle Carayon, CNRS – IMR 8546,) (http://129.199.58.244/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=DECORS_ANTIQUES_2013%20 base-m%C3%A8re%2B-pays&-loadframes)

b. From Base Décors antiques - UMR 8546 CNRS/ENS - AOrOc - Archéologie & Philologie, OPUS Alix Barbet Saisie, Image No. Inv BEIT.00004 (Methodologie de la base: Alix Barbet, Joëlle Carayon. Conception, architecture et conventions de saisie: Joëlle Carayon, CNRS – IMR 8546) (http://129.199.58.244/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=DECORS_ANTIQUES_2013%20 base-m%C3%A8re%2B-pays&-loadframes)

Grave no. 49, in Apolloniados Street, Thessaloniki (Παζαράς 1981, 380, 381, Σχέδ 5-7, Πίν. 4.):
c. Painted surfaces,

d. Southern painted wall, detail with beams

is present. This band is associated with the beams presented in Iznik by some authors (Figs. 13c-13d).[105]

An interesting painted geometric composition on the walls, made of squares and inscribed circles, alternating with narrow fields with twigs and a band of small dark squares above is presented in the vaulted "Tomb of Cristo-Sole" ("Mausoleum M", or "The Tomb of the Julii") in the Vatican necropolis. The tomb was originally built as pagan, and was painted. However, in the 3rd century it was redecorated with Christian scenes in mosaic, which have been preserved only partially on the lunettes and the vault.[106]

In the Spanish city of Lugo, there is the sanctuary of Santa Eulalia de Boveda, where we find an interesting example of a motif of beams in an oblique projection on the walls, at the level of the cornice, presented in two rows. However, some authors call it a motif of a chessboard in perspective,[107] or "a double net of real and diminished squares"[108] (Fig. 14). The beams are represented here in two rows with bright sides and on a black background. The motif was called "the chessboard" by those who attributed the building and its art to a pagan origin, finding parallels in Pompeii, but also in catacombs.[109] However, it is undoubtedly a motif of beams, depicted very illusionistically. It is achieved using a combination of colours (white coloured frontal sides, and the other two sides painted in blue and black) which allows us to imagine more rows above and under the presented two, and makes the motif look like an ornament. The vault is painted in the central part as a coffered ceiling, with geometric motifs of rhombs and, in the other zones, as a coffered ceiling with crossed coloured bands in the form of flower buds, which form fields with depictions of birds. With the same motifs, the arcades and frontal wall are painted.[110] The assumption is that in a zone that is not preserved there was an imitation of the *opus sectile* technique under the motif of the beams.[111]As an analogous example, some authors use the Iznik tomb, which is religiously affiliated

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105 Μαρκή 2006, 142-145, Σχέδ 77-80; Παζαράς 1981, 379-382, 388-389, Σχέδ 5-7, Πίν. 4-8.

106 Smothers 1956, 300-301

107 Blanco-Rotea et al. 2009, 195.

108 Guardia 2002, 267.

109 Montenegro Rúa et al., 169, 177-183.

110 Blanco-Rotea et al. 2009, 183, 185, 195.

111 Blanco-Rotea et al. 2009, 184.
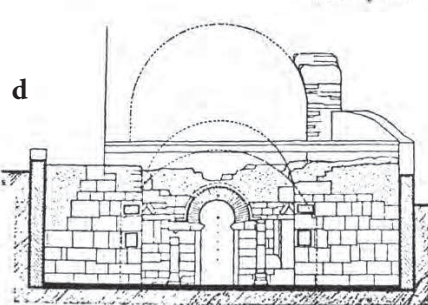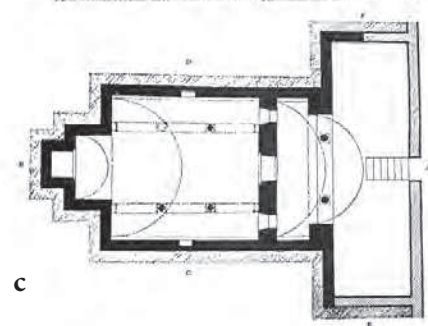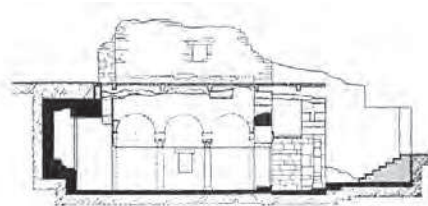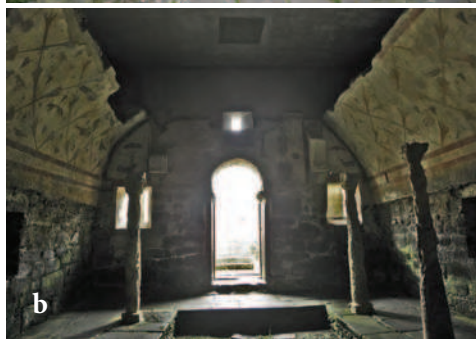
Fig. 14. Santa Eulalia de Boveda:

a. Entrance to the building (© Potoma15 / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Santa_eulalia_de_boveda_fachada.jpg)

b. Interior space (©File Upload Bot (Magnus Manske) / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Templo_romano_de_Santalla_de_B%C3%B3veda.jpg);

c. Longitudinal section and plan,

d. Elevation of the entrance wall,

e. The painted beams (Blanco-Rotea et al. 2009, 151, 184, Figs. 3, 35);

f. The painted beams (Montenegro Rúa et al. 2008, cover page).

by the presence of the Christ monogram.[112] The painted motifs are located in the vaulted part of the building with two arcades on the columns that divide the space, and the construction of the sanctuary is connected with different periods of history, with the earliest one placed in the 3rd century AD. During numerous attempts at identifying the sanctuary as either pagan or Christian, the painting has been placed in different periods, i.e. in the 3rd, 4th, 5th or even the 9th century (Fig. 14).[113]

To date, there are no painted examples of beams in ancient tombs on the territory of Serbia, except in Brestovik.[114] Two painted depictions of a three-dimensional meander in an oblique projection found in graves at Beška and *Viminacium* can be conditionally connected with the beam representation.[115] We can conclude that only in the tombs of Iznik, Silistra, Beit-Ras, and Brestovik, the vividly coloured beams can be seen, while in the other examples they are depicted using two or three (mostly pale) colours.

Apart from the beams, it is important to mention the wavy line below them, present in the Brestovik tomb (Fig. 15a) which can be understood as a simplification of vegetative or floral motifs. It is also possible that this image imitated the architrave, where the wavy line was a representation of tree rings (since the curved lines are recognised as probable tree ring imitations in the analogous examples mentioned above). It is interesting to mention that a very similar motif can be seen carved on the underside of the architrave stone blocks (in the field between the holes for connecting the architrave to the column capitals), among the remains that were once part of the porticos near the eastern gate in Roman

112 Montenegro Rúa et al. 177.

113 Montenegro Rúa et al. 27, 169, 177-183.

114 Mihailo Valtrović, as an example of the similar use of motifs in painting on the territory of Serbia, mentioned the medieval monastery Ježevica, near Čačak, where within the square field on the wall there are polychrome ornaments in the form of beams in several rows, painted in left and right, alternating directions (Валтровић 1906, 135).

115 More on meander motif in mosaic and funerary painting and its connection to the three-dimensional presentation of the beams, see in::Николић et al. 2017, 175-216. The most interesting to compare is the one in the hypogeum of Santa Maria in Stella in Verona, which painting is dated to the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century. See in: Николић et al. 2017, 200-201; Bisconti, Braconi 2012. The painted two-dimensional meander with the three-dimensional elements - cubes (connecting with the beams) can be also seen on the vault of the arcosolium in the tomb named "Q10 - a Tomb with two Cocks", found in Qweilbeh-Abila, Jordan, and dated to the 2nd century AD. In the same space we can see the dentils and other architectural elements depicted on the walls. (Base Décors antiques 2017, QWEI.00097.)

Philippopolis, today Plovdiv, in Bulgaria (Fig. 15b).[116]

We see the same wavy motif in the baptistery of the house - church in *Dura Europos*, in a painting belonging to one of the oldest with a Christian theme, dated to around 232 AD. It is depicted at the point of separation of the two wall zones – the lower one - which, according to the widespread, contemporary opinion, contains the scene named "Women at the Tomb" (Figs. 15c), and the upper one - where the scenes of "The Wonders of Christ", "Christ's Healing of the Paralytic", and "Christ Walking on Water" are shown.[117] It is interesting that the wavy line is depicted here between two bands that look like two rows of beams. Michael Peppard wrote that this wavy line suggested a paradise river or the rivers "that flowed around the room underneath the series of mighty deeds". [118] It is interesting to mention another example from Dura Europos, where in the painting originating from a residential building, dated to the 2nd century AD, the beams, painted in two colours, are depicted below the hunting scene[119]. Also, the motif can maybe be linked to the wavy one encountered as a frame of the wall painting scenes in the Synagoge of Dura Europos, dated to the period of 245-256 AD.[120]

In the painting found in fragments, originating from the unknown building in "oppidum de Puech Balat", Aumes, France, and dated to the 1st century BC, we see the imitation of stone slabs and the same wavy motif done with brown, ochre, and red colours (Fig. 15d). Alix Barbet described it as an imitation of alabaster.[121]

 Also, we can see the similar motif in the painting fragments, originating from the unknown building, found in Bavillier, France, and dated to the period of the 3rd and 4th century AD. Here, the wavy motif is depicted with the beams (or irregular chess board), garlands, and ribbons. It is painted using the ochre and white colours. It is different from the previously mentioned examples because the curves are disconnected, except the one continuous curvy line that flows along the band (Fig.15e).[122]

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116 We thank Julia Valeva for this information and the photo in this paper depicting the mentioned blocks.

117 Peppard 2011, 103-104.

118 Peppard 2016, 91

119 Base Décors antiques 2017, DOUR.00025

120 Berger 2011, 128, 130, 132-133.

121 Base Décors antiques 2017, AUME.00001

122 Base Décors antiques 2017, AUME.00001

Fig. 15. The wavy line:
a. Brestovik tomb (photo by the authors of the paper);

b. Architrave block from Philippopolis (photo by Julia Valeva).

c. Dura Europos house – church (Peppard 2012, 559, Fig. 9);

d. Aumes, France From Base Décors antiques - UMR 8546 CNRS/ENS - AOrOc - Archéologie & Philologie, OPUS Alix Barbet Saisie, Image No. Inv AUME.00001 (Methodologie de la base: Alix Barbet, Joëlle Carayon. Conception, architecture et conventions de saisie: Joëlle Carayon, CNRS – IMR 8546 (http://129.199.58.244/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=DECORS_ANTIQUES_2013%20base-m%C3%A8re%2Bpays&-loadframes)

e.Bavilliers, France(reconstruction) From Base Décors antiques - UMR 8546 CNRS/ENS - AOrOc - Archéologie & Philologie, OPUS Alix Barbet Saisie, Image No. Inv BAVI.00005 (Methodologie de la base: Alix Barbet, Joëlle Carayon. Conception, architecture et conventions de saisie: Joëlle Carayon, CNRS – IMR 8546 (http://129.199.58.244/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=DECORS_ANTIQUES_2013%20base-m%C3%A8re%2Bpays&-loadframes)
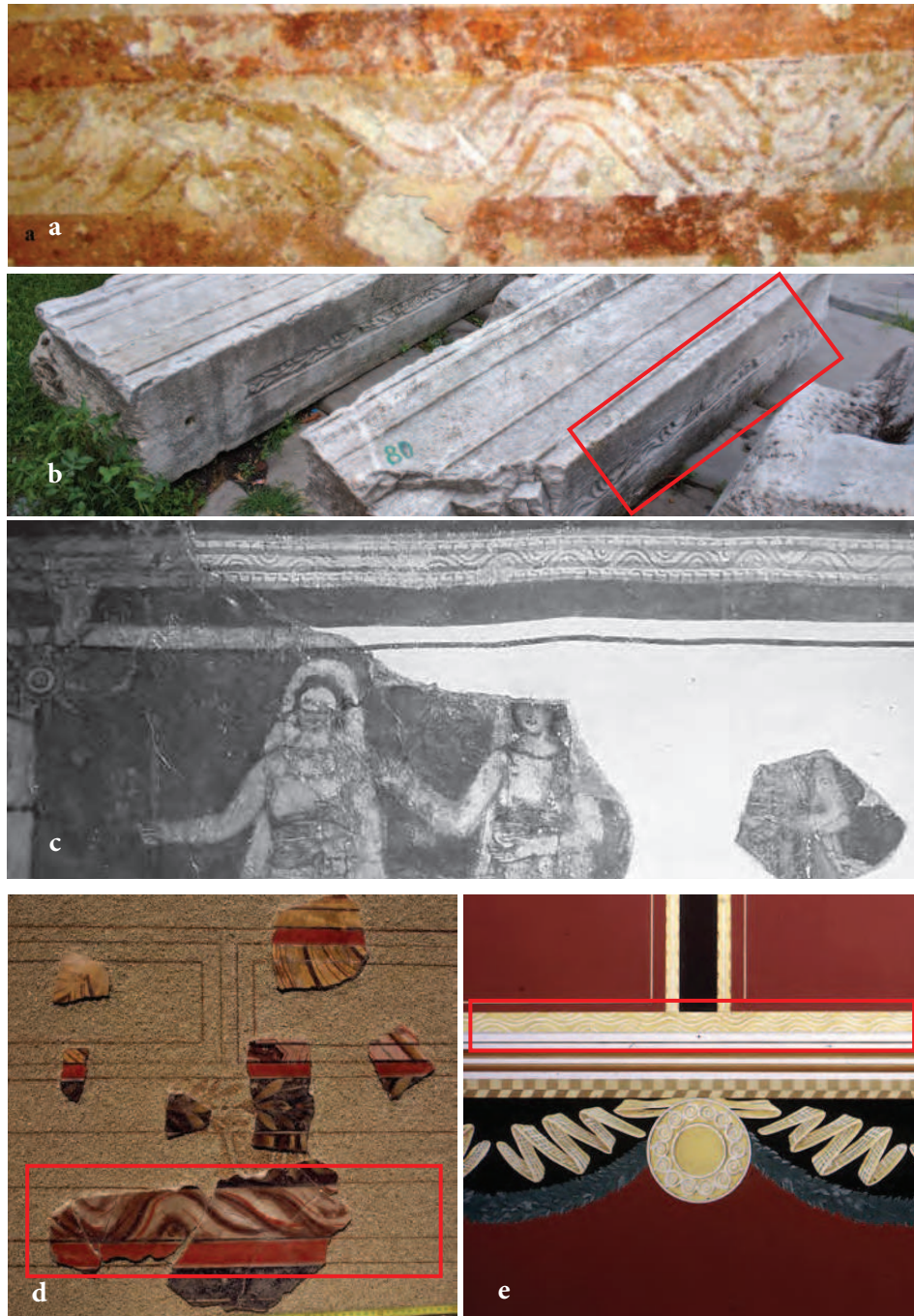
THE COFFERED CEILING

Stucco decoration was very often imitated in the history of wall painting. The motifs of coffered ceilings in the stucco technique are different, and they can be both simple as well as very complex. The imitation was applied in buildings for various purposes, as well as in tombs. Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic depictions, usually coloured, were often represented within coffers. An example of the imitation of this type of decoration is represented in the vault of the tomb in Brestovik (Figs. 16a-16c). This kind of painting of vaults has been already mentioned in the analysis of the development of the floral style in the history of painting during the first centuries of the new era, by Michael Rostovtzeff.[123]

The barrel vault of the tomb at Brestovik was underpainted with the same ochre tone as the southern and northern walls. It is decorated with very precisely rendered bands of red astragals, which are crossed at right angles. The astragal motif is one of the most commonly used decorations in classical architectural decoration in all materials.[124] In the tomb at Brestovik the angles of the square fields which are formed with the astragal bands are decorated with concentric circles and the fields between them are painted in three colours. The circle of the largest diameter is coloured red, a blue circle is in the middle, while in the centre there is a small ochre circle. In the middle of each square field, a red, four-petal flower is depicted.[125] When describing the painting of the vault, Mihailo Valtrović wrote that the strings of "pearls" are crossed, that one round plate is placed on the point of intersection, and one "rose" is in the middle of the field. The pearls and the roses are coloured red, and "the tops

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123 The coffered ceiling was also present in funerary structures as a stone decoration, which is visible in the Thracian Ostrusha tomb, near the town of Shipka, in Bulgaria, dated to the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic period. In the stone coffers, figurative scenes from mythology, heads and floral motifs are painted. Julia Valeva characterised the tomb as a mixture of local, Greek and Mesopotamian elements, with the external appearance influenced by Persia. Of interest is the central field of the ceiling with a sculpted square. Inside the square there is another rotated square with an inscribed circle (Valeva 2005, we need to put the page number). Stone coffers with sculpted floral motifs are also present on the ceilings of classical Greek buildings, as is the case in the Tholos of Epidaurus, but also in later monuments, as is the case with the Palmyrian monuments and Roman temple in Maison Carrée, in Nîmes, France.

124 About astragal depictions in ancient paintings see in: Rogić et al. 2011.

125 About the four petal flowers see in: Rogić, Anđelković Grašar 2015, 206-207.

Fig. 16.
The coffered ceiling:
a. b. c. Brestovik tomb
(photos by the authors of
the paper);

d. Columbarium I, in Rome
(Mancioli 1997, 7);

e. "Tomb of the Three
Brothers" (https://vici.org/
vici/18090/);

f. Tomb in Iznik
From Base Décors antiques
- UMR 8546 CNRS/ENS
- AOrOc - Archéologie
& Philologie, OPUS Alix
Barbet Saisie, Image No. Inv
IZNI.00001 (Methodologie
de la base: Alix Barbet,
Joëlle Carayon. Conception,
architecture et conventions
de saisie: Joëlle Carayon,
CNRS – IMR 8546
(http://129.199.58.244/fmi/
iwp/cgi?-db=DECORS_
ANTIQUES_2013%20base-
m%C3%A8re%2Bpays&-
loadframes)

g. Tomb in Silistra
(Atanasov 2014, 28, Fig.35);

h. "Tomb with stylised
paradise garden", in Ephesus
(Zimmerman 2014, Tafel
CCII, Abb. 3);

i. The Episcopal Basilica, in
Stobi (Dimitrova 2012, 27).

of the flower sepals are emerging between their leaves".[126] As Valtrović wrote, here the ornament retained a strictly decorative character, without plasticity.[127]

A vault with crossed bands of astragals and squares with flowers was painted in Columbarium I in Rome, in Via Taranto, dated to the 2nd century (Fig. 16d).[128] On a vault in the "Tomb of the Three Brothers", a coffered ceiling composed of hexagonal fields with geometric motifs is depicted (Fig. 16e).[129] According to some authors, the vault is "covered with a carpet-like scheme", and with its strictness, it is remarkably similar to luxurious stucco ceilings.[130] On the vault of the tomb of Iznik, a geometric net is painted, made of crossed bands forming small squares, within which there are several variants of a four-petal flower (Figs. 16f). On the vault of the tomb in Silistra, there are concentric circles on the cross-sections of the bands, as well as green-coloured octagons in the fields obtained, showing red flowers with four petals, as in Brestovik, birds, and trees (Fig. 16g).[131] A painted vault, designated by Norbert Zimmermann as a "stylised paradise garden", is located in the "Tomb with stylised paradise garden" in the Harbour-Necropolis in Ephesus, dated to the period of the 4th century (Fig. 16h). Here, the white background of the vault is divided into staggered rectangular fields formed of red bands and with a red, four petal flower, similar to that in Brestovik. In this tomb, this scheme is spread over the entire vault and all the walls. Norbert Zimmermann wrote that the motif of this ceiling provided the idea of a paradise garden that surrounded the tomb from all sides, which was meant to express the "peaceful atmosphere of a Christian paradise", and this type of funerary architecture he classified into a local type, consisting of simple mausoleums of rectangular plan and with a barrel

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126 Валтровић 1906, 136.

127 Валтровић 1906, 136. A group of French authors dealing with Roman painting classified the scheme of Brestovik painted coffered ceiling as a regular grid made of three-petal flowers with the circles in the intersections, and circles with inscribed flowers in the coffers (scheme 15j) (Barbet et al., 1997, 21). However, the Brestovik painting scheme should rather be classified as a combination of many other schemes the authors offered.

128 Baldassarre, et al. 2002, 303.

129 Eristov, Vibert-Guigue 2014, 349, Tafel CXXII – Abb.1 Abb.2.

130 Hembrey 2008, 10.

131 Димитров, Чичикова, 1986, сл. 70. Concentric circles were represented at the intersection of the bands on the ceiling in the Roman house at Via Bella Rocca, in Cremona, dating from the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th century. Within the obtained fields, green bands form hexagons in which the flowers are painted (See in: Pitcher, Mariani 2014, 441, Tafel CL - Abb.4, Abb.5).

vault.[132] On the vault of the vaulted tomb at Iznik, a dense geometric net is painted, made of crossed bands which form squares, within which there are several variants of a cross-shaped flower form.

On the ceiling of the Episcopal Basilica in Stobi, a square net is painted in which four different fields alternate, i.e. coffers (concentric squares), beams - hollow cubes in an oblique projection with one dot in the centre,[133] circles with flowers, and concentric squares. This "illusionistic panorama" framed by flower garlands dates back to the second half of the 4th century. Concentric squares are located "on a background of small stars" as the authors described dots on a black background around the squares. In one part of this ceiling, there is also a cross in a wreath (Fig. 16i).[134]

The decorated ceiling in ancient times was a mixture of depictions of rich terrestrial ceiling decoration and stylised celestial paradise gardens. In the painting of the vaulted tombs, usually, the dividing band between the walls and the vaults was interpreted as the border between the earth and the sky. In the vaults of a large number of catacombs' cubiculi, artists used various presentations that authors interpret as "paradisiac", containing a series of panels grouped around a central motif – the main symbol of salvation. However, in the vaults of the arcosolia, representations that differ in shape, but which are essentially the same, often appear. The space is divided into the squares or hexagons, with a rosette inside. This kind of composition is also referred to as paradise, with the rosettes as stars, according to the literature. Regarding this, there are two interpretations given by Erwin Goodenough. The first one is that the early Christians probably aspired only toward the decoration and that they used formal motives from mystical symbolism, mythology and the Bible, because these forms were close to them, but without thinking about their religious implications. Thus, garlands, wreaths, birds or starry ceilings are often motifs which fill the spaces. However, the rejection of the meaning of these ancient representations is often presupposed, because if these representations have no meaning for us today, that does not mean that they did not have meanings for the painters or those who were ordering the paintings.

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132 Zimmermann 2014, 729, 732, Tafel CCII – Abb.3 I Abb.4.

133 Compare the meander depictions in the graves from Beška and Viminacium and the analogous examples in Николић et al. 2017.

134 Dimitrova 2012, 26, 27.

If we consider the second interpretation, the constant filling of space with specific motifs, can be comprehended as the creation of an atmosphere and the expression of hope. For centuries, early Christians rarely aspired to depict characteristic Christian scenes or motifs, which became very important in the future of Christian art and iconography. Instead, the first Christian images represented the faith very indirectly, with borrowed types. When the vocabulary of painting was pagan, it often expressed Christian hopes.[135]

In the room with the graves of the tomb in Brestovik, the central zone of the wall could represent a terrestrial residence, and the beams as the *supportive* elements of ceiling decoration could symbolise the border between the two worlds, while the vault with flowers may recall a dwelling in paradise.[136] The use of such elements has often enabled the hiding of certain symbolisms, which could have had a Christian character. A cruciform flower in the centre of a coffer could also be a Christian symbol, informative enough for believers, as is the case in a Thessaloniki tomb,[137] although this four-petal flower of a simple form was a very well known motif in pagan painting as well. According to Michael Rostovtzeff, the four-petal flower which was painted in the grave from *Viminacium* is typically Hellenistic or moreover, of Egyptian-Hellenistic origin. The author used the tomb from Brestovik as an example for comparison regarding the motif.[138]

135 Goodenough 1962, 11-117.

136 A wider discussion of the topic is developed in the analysis of the painting from Beška and *Viminacium* graves. See in: Николић et al. 2017, 206-207.

137 In the example of tomb no. 37, the four-petal flower and other motives define the tomb as Christian. See in: Μαρκή 2006, 162-164, 220, Σχέδ 108-109.

138 Ростовцевь 1917, 57.

DISCUSSION ON THE MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELEMENTS OF PAINTED DECORATION

The projection systems

The existence of beams shown in three dimensions, that is, in an oblique projection, the slight emphasis of the plasticity of the fields made in the technique of *opus sectile* by introducing diagonals, and the complete absence of space in the depiction of the coffered ceiling refer to thoughts about the methods of space presentation and projection systems used in the painting of the tomb in Brestovik. Considering the rare instances of the three-dimensional representation of elements in ancient examples of painting from the territory of today's Serbia and only one example of the depiction of an architectural scene with the construction (from *Sirmium*),[139] it its very interesting to analyse the beams represented in the Brestovik tomb.

Anka Stojaković (1925-2015), in her study of architectural space in wall painting, directly connected the features of the painted space with the application of a certain projection system. Although, as she wrote, ancient artists knew about perspective, they failed to consistently apply the convergence of parallel lines of all the planes to the same vanishing point. They knew about the phenomenon that two parallel lines converge towards infinity, but it is disputable whether they knew about the vanishing point for the space, so this perspective can be called *an ancient perspective*, different from the one we know today as *a scientific perspective*, developed in the Renaissance. When a scientific perspective in ancient examples is seen, it can be considered coincidental or extraordinary.[140]

An oblique projection represents something between an orthogonal projection and an ancient perspective and, therefore, it carries the elements of both systems. Here, architectural forms are created by a system of parallel rays, which are projected at an angle relative to the surface of the image. This construction gives an illusion of architectural volume, which makes it close to perspective but, because of the lack of convergence, it differs from it. An oblique projection is closer to the natural vision than an orthogonal projection, but it does not coincide with normal visual perception. It does not deform images as perspective, but leaves

139 See in: Rogić, Nikolić 2016, 84-85, 89; Rogić et al. 2017, 107-11.
140 Стојаковић 1970, 12-13, 23-26, 91, 160.

their actual sizes as an orthogonal projection. Still, with an oblique projection, the painted architectural forms penetrate in the direction of the third dimension and emphasise the depth of space.[141]

In ancient art, a particular type of oblique projection was often used, which Anka Stojaković called "oblique binocular projection" or "dividing construction" in which the parallelism of the lines for all the elements within their half of the image is retained. The impression of depth was achieved by the binocular character of this construction, conditioned by the infinitely distant eye for the left and right symmetric side of the composition, but the incident angle of the projectors had to be the same. The dividing construction could not always be used and was limited to symmetric compositions and the symmetry of the architectural frame. It is, thus, a projection where the pairs of projectors of symmetrically arranged elements intersect in a series of specific points, all of which are in the image's axis of symmetry. In the case of an asymmetric composition, the rays lose their pairs, so the impression of space is lost. If we remove one half of the architecture painted using the dividing construction, we have a clear oblique projection. In ancient painting, the dividing construction was mainly applied to display the ceiling joists or consoles, which were used for an impression of depth, protruding towards the third dimension.[142]

According to Philip Stinson, who analysed the Second Pompeian style, projections in Roman wall painting can be called "non-scientific types of architectural perspective", which include *a parallel perspective* (the dividing construction of Anka Stojaković) and *a convergence perspective* (Anka Stojaković's ancient perspective), both seen in the Second Pompeian style. According to him, each system served a special purpose. The location of the scenes with perspective was conditioned by the function of the room, and it was supposed that the maximum effective impression left on the observers was by the upper zone of the walls where convergence perspective was used. The parts of the painting that were not visible from the entrance, or those obscured by the furniture, were not depicted in this way. This perspective disappears with the arrival of the Third and Fourth styles. In dense Fourth-style compositions, a parallel perspective became sufficient for depiction, and convergence perspective was no longer used.[143]

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141 Стојаковић 1970, 55-56.

142 Стојаковић 1970, 86-89.

143 Stinson 2011, 403, 405, 420, 424.

It is precisely in the system of the dividing construction or parallel perspective that the beams are displayed on the west wall of the tomb in Brestovik, while the beams on the north and south walls are shown in an oblique projection. On the west wall, the beams are depicted on the left and right side of the niche, sloped on different sides, so that they appear to tend towards one another. It appears that the beams from the south and north sides of the west wall are equal in number, shape, and angle direction, however, given the very poor preservation of this segment of painting together with the incomplete conservation interventions, there may have been deviations in this regard (Fig. 17a).

In ancient perspective, the realistic concept of the image was developed to an utterly illusionary extent, while, with the development of Christian art, new relationships between a human and the space were introduced, so painted architecture attained a new role, and objective relationships, among which were those in perspective, were destroyed and became subjective, emphasising symbolism.[144] There was no longer a visual shortening achieved by the convergence of parallel rays, which would bring the human figure into real relationships. "Archaic projection constructions", among which were orthogonal projection and oblique projection, received primacy, and the inverted perspective was conceived.[145] Early Christian art adopted an orthogonal projection system by showing the surface of the objects as unfolded, as a reaction to the optical realistic projection of the ancient perspective and illusionism.[146] However, the earliest monuments of the 4th century were still related to the realistic understanding of space, and the ambitions were directed to giving the impression of depth to the viewer.[147] This system was connected with the East, where the illusionist conception of perspective was a foreign concept, and the forms in real, unchanged measures were a familiar one.[148] Unfortunately, the depictions of the characters in the niche on the west wall and the lunette of the tomb in Brestovik have not been preserved, so we cannot discuss the applied projections here and their relationship to the surroundings.[149]

144 Стојаковић 1970, 25-26.
145 Стојаковић 1970, 26.
146 Стојаковић 1970, 50.
147 Стојаковић 1970, 38.
148 Стојаковић 1970, 54.
149 About interpretations of the characters, see in: Valtrović 1906, 134-135; Đurić 1985, 7; Anđelković

Fig. 17. Projection systems of the beams:
a. Brestovik tomb (photo by Dragana Rogić with the drawing by Emilija Nikolić);

b. "The Ariadne's House", in Pompeii (Стојаковић 1970, 33);

c. Tomb in Silistra (Atanasov 2014, 26, Fig.33);

d. "The Tomb of Three Brothers" (© Livius.org / CC BY-SA-3.0, https://vici.org/image.php?id=5867);

e. San Vitale, in Ravenna (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Meister_von_San_Vitale_in_Ravenna_003.jpg)

The painted beams row in the western wall of the burial chamber in the Brestovik tomb, as already mentioned above, is interrupted in the middle with the niche. The interruption of a row of beams with the insertion of a motif was observed by Anka Stojaković as a common situation that avoided the solution of the "node" that emerged in the axis of symmetry.[150] However, if the beams system is represented in its entirety, without interruption, then this node could be solved so that the inner edges of the last pair of beams converge with each other (because the central element could not be turned to either side, so as not to disturb the symmetry), thus creating a central element of a trapezial shape.[151] In the tomb in Silistra, the location of the node is resolved differently, that is, the middle of the display is not a trapezial beam, but an empty space between the two beams. However, the unequal dimensions of the beams[152] led to the need for the narrowing of the last beam in a part of the row on the left side, and almost to the disappearance of the central space between the beams, which partly disturbed the symmetry of this wall, on which peacocks and human figures are symmetrically painted (Fig. 17c). In *"The Tomb of Three Brothers",* the node is resolved in the same way, but much more precisely (Fig. 17d). In the previously mentioned painting found in Bavilliers, France (Fig. 15e) the "beams" are drawn irregularly with no complete volumes, but can be also interpreted as attached to one another, having sides conversely coloured. The central empty space between two rows of the beams converging with each other is in the form of trapezium. Solving the node, either with a motif that hides it, a central trapezial beam or with a solution where there is an empty space between the two beams, is often present in Pompeian painting, performed precisely and with respect to symmetry.[153]

In the tomb in Brestovik, as previously mentioned, a node on the west wall could not be created, because there is a niche that interrupts the row of beams. The beams are positioned almost symmetrically from both sides of the niche so that they *ap-*

Grašar 2015, 274.

150 One of the examples is found in Pompeii and "The House of Epidius Sabinus". See in: Стојаковић 1970, fig. 32.

151 One of the examples is found in Pompeii and "The Ariadne's House". See in: Стојаковић 1970, fig. 32 (Fig. 17b).

152 Unequal dimensions of the beams are also visible in Iznik tomb.

153 An example is the aforementioned tablinum in *Casa di Apolline*, in Pompeii (Strocka 2014, Tafel I, Abb. 2).

proach one another in the space *in front of the wall*, and not in *the depth of the wall* itself. In other words, they do not create the connection of the pairs of rays of the dividing construction below themselves, but above. Since the direction of the beams can emphasise the scene painted in the wall zone to which they are tending towards, in this way, it might have been used to emphasise today's missing part of the painting on the part of the wall above the niche – the lunette. This way of displaying the beams has some similarity with the inverted perspective. Here, the individual beam elements are not shown in an inverted perspective, but the entire row of beams can be viewed as an element depicted in this way. This situation in painting is rare, and the same case can be seen on the mosaic of Justinian with his escort from San Vitale, in Ravenna.[154] Here, the beams are shown in an inverse form of the dividing construction, as in Brestovik, converging to the viewer. Below the motif of the beams, the coffered ceiling is shown on the same mosaic, executed in the same projection system, and its central field is formed in the form of a trapezium. Anka Stojaković associated this kind of presentation with the early Middle Ages and a complete lack of awareness for the realistic representation of the interior.[155] On the other hand, Rudolf Arnheim (1904-2007) wrote that, with the arrangement of the beams converging to the viewer, and which are located above an object or a person, in this case above Justinian and his escort, those *covered* motifs are emphasised, forming a kind of roof above them (Fig. 17e).[156] For these reasons, we can assume that in the Brestovik tomb, the representation of the beams on the western wall was created to accentuate the scene in the niche, and not the one above it, as was written previously. However, although the same situation exists in the decoration of the entrance wall in the tomb of Silistra, we cannot say that the beams are tending towards one another to emphasise the scene below, because it is the space of the door. If we accept that on the unpreserved decoration of the eastern wall in Brestovik beams were also present, following the circle of their direction as in Silistra,[157] thus having them *converge* at some point in the lower zone of the wall, we see two mutually reversed

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154 See in: Andreescu-Treadgold and, Treadgold 1997, 709, fig.1.

155 Стојаковић 1970, 89-90, 161. See fig. 37 in Стојаковић 1970.

156 Arnheim 1972, 128, 135.

157 Valtrović only mentioned the depiction of two fields with twigs on the eastern wall, but, according to the fact that the painting was poorly preserved even at the time of excavation, and other analogous examples with all four walls painted in the same manner, it can not be taken for granted that the eastern wall in the tomb of Brestovik was without other decorative motifs.

situations in these tombs which can raise further questions about the possibility of intentional or accidental depiction of the beams' direction.

THE SYMMETRY OF PAINTING

Small diagrams with sketches were part of the preliminary process of wall painting, which was confirmed by the examples dated to the 1st century BC, in Italy. These sketches could have been transmitted to one or more walls using a mesh that allowed the artists to enlarge them precisely or even to make them as mirror images. However, on some examples from Pompeii, it can be seen that the painters drew precise lines for the main elements, that the details were drawn freely, and that some elements were not even drawn, but were painted freely in the final phases of painting.[158] During these processes, often there were differences, which we perceive today as mistakes. Many examples show us the mistakes made during the performing of works of art in antiquity, the differences between drawing bases and subsequent filling –with colour, stone or other material, most often as a result of disorientation with complex spatial motifs.[159]

The symmetry of the Brestovik tomb architecture was achieved by the arrangement of its walls and columns, and the symmetry of the room with graves was achieved by the position of the entrance, the windows, and the niche. The desired symmetry of the tomb is also witnessed by found sculptures, whose symmetrical position was described by Mihailo Valtrović. According to his records, two marble statues of the genii of death were designed to be symmetrically placed, since they were leaning against a torch with their left or right side of the body. Two lions were also designed to be set symmetrically, and they probably stood in front of the door of the room with the graves, in order to guard the entrance.[160] Although it can be assumed that it was imagined to be executed symmetrically, the wall painting of this room actually has no symmetry. Valtrović noted that the northern and southern wall mutually differed "in fine details", but that their ornaments were similar (Figs. 18a-18b).[161]

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158 Stinson 2011, 416,418.

159 Николић et al. 2017, 204.
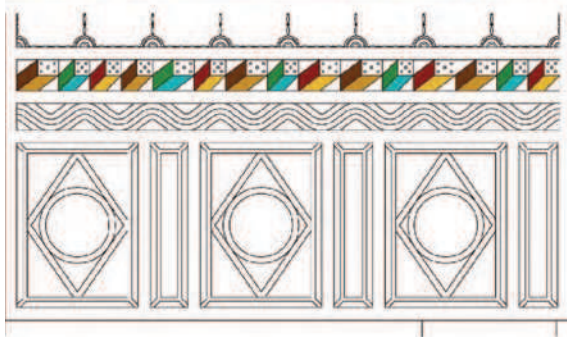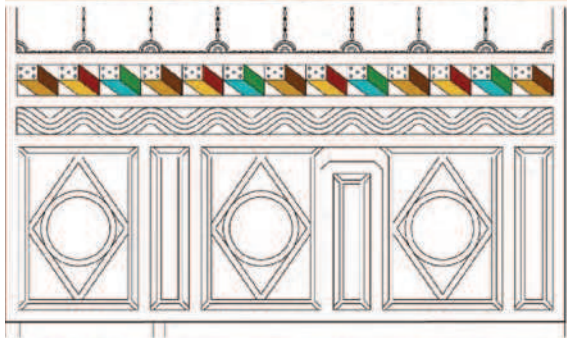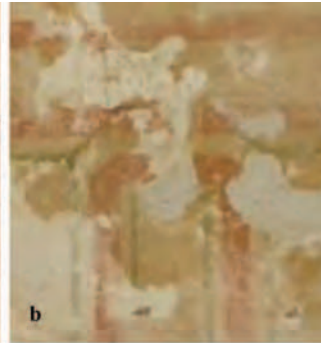
160 Валтровић 1906, 137.

161 Валтровић 1906, 134.

Fig. 18. The beams in the Brestovik tomb:
a.c. Northern wall;

b. Northern wall (detail);

d. e Southern wall (photos by the authors of the paper and drawings by Emilija Nikolić).

When forming a rectangular field layout on the northern and southern walls of the burial chamber in the Brestovik tomb, it is likely that the painter followed one set scheme or pattern. However, it seems that he literally applied it painting from the left to the right side on both walls, in the same arrangement, without setting up representations in the fields on the opposite walls in mirror symmetry.[162] Although the painted motifs within the circles on the walls are lost, the assumption is that they were the same on both walls. Judging by the drawings made by Mihailo Valtrović, while some of the motifs were still visible, their layout was also not symmetrical in relation to the whole room, which is in keeping with the literal application of the wall scheme. However, when determining the position of the beams, their direction was oriented consciously always to face the west wall, while on the west wall the beams of the north and south halves of the wall were directed towards the niche, as discussed previously, so the overall symmetry of the beams was achieved. Mihailo Valtrović showed in his drawing a cornice of the beams as a result of a grid created by the geometric division of the horizontal band. The horizontal division is made at half the height of the band, and then it is divided into squares, which probably seemed to the author as the most likely geometry in relation to the ease of performance.[163] However, the beams are not painted as the same elements on each wall, neither in terms of dimensions, nor in the angle of the projection. It is also likely that they are presented in a different number on the southern and northern walls. Their frontal sides – faces, are not always squares, and the beams are not directed always using the same angle (although the mesh was conceived to make a base for an angle of 45°). In this way, the desire for symmetry in the mutual relationship between the southern and the northern walls is partially lost. Due to the different angle of the oblique projection and the different gap between the beams, a smaller number of beams (13) were depicted on the

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162 There are few examples of funerary painting in Viminacium, where the symmetry was executed almost ideally as it was very important in an aesthetic, but also symbolic sense. Cf. Anđelković Grašar et al. 2012. Similar observations about the symmetry in painting were given by Alix Barbet in the discussion about the Iznik tomb (See in: Barbet 2013, 69).

163 In one part of the western wall, there seems to be a fragment of a drawing of such a network, however, it is not certain if this network is part of the original image or conservation works. Compare the text above on the sanctuary of Santa Eulalia de Boveda and the beams that are derived from the chessboard and Montenegro Rúa 2016, CL table, Fig. 245, and Montenegro Rúa 2016, tabla CL, fig. 245.

northern wall, than on the southern wall (15).[164] As for the colour of the beams, they are consistently depicted on the longitudinal walls using the same alternation of colours in a row, but also symmetrically, regarding the colour scheme, if we start from the entrance to the grave room and compare the relationship between these two walls. However, this does not fit into the previous assumption that the painter painted two walls according to the same pattern, moving from left to right, because if the painter did so, the arrangement of the colour variants for the beams would not be symmetrical, when comparing the two walls. The question arises as to why symmetry in the painted decoration in the room with graves exists only on some parts of the walls. Is our understanding of the direction of painting from the left to the right side a consequence of the habit developed by the direction of writing, which is a European inheritance? Since several eastern scripts are written in the opposite direction, can an eastern origin of the painter be presumed? If we assume that the painter painted from the right to the left, the arrangement of the rhombs, rectangular fields, and the beams using the pattern that the painter literally followed, becomes logical (Figs. 18a, 18c-18e).[165] It is also unknown why the red band around one of the narrow rectangular fields is incoherently executed on the north wall, that is, it does not create a whole with a horizontal band that divides these fields from a field with a wavy line (Fig. 18b).

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164 These numbers need to be accepted as an assumption because of the poor state of the conservation of the painting. The beams displayed in the mosaic of the Santa Maria della Croce, in Casarano, Italy, dated back to the middle of the 5th century, were executed in three variants of colour combinations, but always having a bright frontal side with a square and five-points in a *quincunx* arrangement inside. An unevenness can be seen here, that is, the beams are not shown in the same number on the opposite walls that carry a vault (on which, in addition to geometric and decorative motifs, zoomorphic motifs - ducks, fish, rabbits, herbs, a pomegranate and carob, are also shown (Spinosa 2012, 155-159).

165 The problem with the assumption of the existence of a scheme for the northern and southern wall painting, irrespective of the direction of the painting, is the representation of vertical twigs in narrow rectangular fields that are not coloured in accordance with some pattern. Two of the three twigs depicted on the southern wall are preserved (Valtrović saw only one red twig with a green ribbon). One is red and green with a green strip, while the other is green (probably with a red strip that is not preserved). On the northern wall, today we can see only one twig preserved – a green one with a red strip (Valtrović described more twigs, all green with red strips) (Валтровић 1906, 134). Here, we can see no scheme or symmetry which can mutually connect these depictions on the two opposite walls, but can assume the painter's desire to have one red-green strip "in the middle", surrounded by two green twigs on the one wall (northern) and one green twig "in the middle", surrounded by two red-green twigs on the other wall (southern). The other possibility is that there were red twigs on the southern wall, and green twigs on the southern one, as Valtrović wrote, but that changes in colours were made during conservation works.

On the western wall, there is a much less preserved depiction of the beams, but it seems that the number of beams on both sides of the niche is equal. The arrangement of the beams by colours, however, has no symmetry, but the left and the right row of beams were conceived as one row, so that three variants of colour combination alternate. The two twigs shown on this wall are not painted in accordance with the symmetry of the wall, one is green and the other is formed using green and red. However, Mihailo Valtrović saw these twigs differently. He wrote that in the southern part of the western wall the twig was green, and the strip was red, while on the northern wall the colours were reversed (Fig. 19).[166]

Regarding the vault of the Brestovik tomb, the division of the fields is very precise, although it was more difficult to perform, given the position and curvature of the surface for the painting (Fig. 16a). By small holes in the walls and the vault, it is noticed that a divider was used for the formation of circles. The precision of the square grid of the vault leads to this conclusion. Why are all the elements not performed so precisely? Could there have been two painters, one of whom was more skilled in measuring and drew "more complicated" elements, such as a large number of equal fields on a curved surface and concentric circles, and the other, who painted motifs and drew simple elements? Looking at the diversity of the beams and their different numbers on the northern and southern walls of the tomb, the possibility that two painters split the work becomes more likely.

THE POSITION OF THE BEAMS

Observing the beams in the Brestovik tomb, it can be seen that the beam band is on an already curved part of the wall, which raises further questions regarding the architectural element they imitate, that is, the presumed cornice. The band with wavy lines below the beams may represent architrave, but this line (and even the upper zone of the central wall the fields in opus sectile) is located above the imaginary line of the joint of the wall and the vault, that is, on the curved part of the wall. The reasons for this may be found in the next discussion about "The Demeter Crypt". Namely, the picture of the cornice made of beams in this tomb is also located on the curved surface belonging to a part of the vault. The origin

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157 Валтровић 1906, 134.

Fig. 19. The beams in the Brestovik tomb - western wall (pphoto by Dragana Rogić and drawing by Emilija Nikolić).
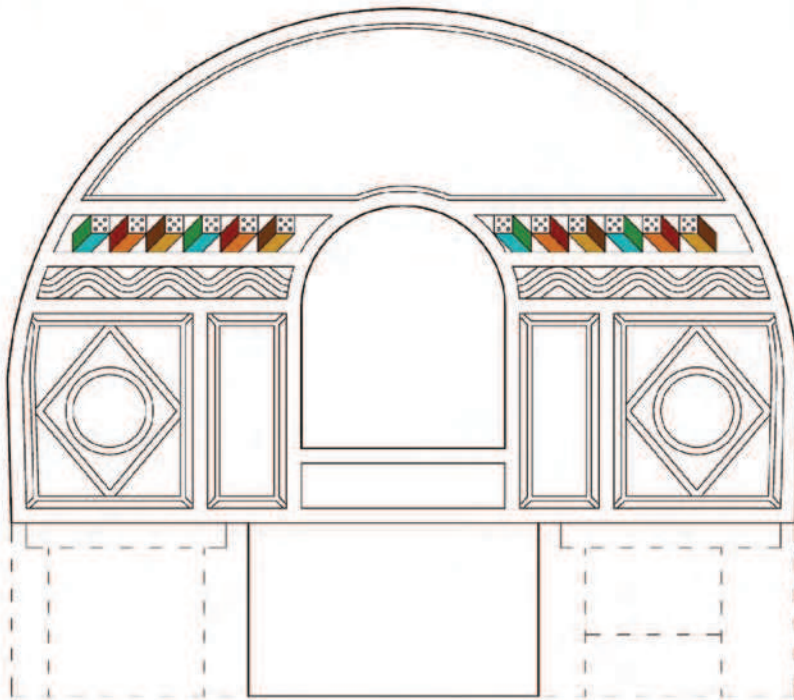
of these built-in tomb structures, with slightly inclined walls to the interior space is, according to Michael Rostovtzeff, connected to the tombs carved in the rocks, where such a construction was common place. He saw the construction of the "The Demeter Crypt" as a cause for the position of the cornice, and he thought that the painter could not determine exactly where the vault began and did it according to his own free decision, separating the wall from the vault with the cornice at the spot where he thought it was convenient.[167] However, Alla Valerievna Bujskikh (Алла Валеріївна Буйських) considered this tomb to be the beginning of a new constructive line of development of underground grave crypts with walls inclined inside the chamber. She compared "The Demeter Crypt" with "The Tomb of Lyson and Kalikles", where a clear separation of the wall from the vault is shown and where the walls are not sloped (whose painted architrave and mutules with guttae are in the zone of curvature), and concluded that in "The Demeter Crypt" the position of the painted cornice is just above the imaginary architrave in the contact zone of the wall and the vault, but whose spatial relationship is hardly noticeable in the tomb in the absence of the architrave. Raising a cornice toward the curved part of the vault, according to her, therefore, does not only indicate the impossibility of an exact determination of the cornice place by the painter, but also a change in approach, where the architrave is no longer depicted, so that the observer thinks that the cornice is too elevated. According to her, this became a trend in painted scenic decorations that imitated architectural elements in the first centuries of our era.[168]In the tomb of Silistra, where the element associated to the architrave is absent, the walls are not slightly inclined, but the beam cornice is indeed raised in the curved zone, which confirms the previous thesis. The tomb in Iznik is a different case from the examples already mentioned. Here the vault seems to start immediately above the graves, so the whole painted decoration is on the curved surface and the role of the beams as a point of the boundary of the vault cannot be discussed.[169] It is difficult to make clear conclusions regarding the

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167 Буйских 2009

168 Буйских 2009

169 In this tomb, the decoration is made very precisely for the beams and the ceiling, and the lines of geometric motifs in the zone with *opus sectile* are almost perfectly made, which is interesting since the painter carried it out on a completely curved surface. Above and below the beams, there is a cyma. However, it is not positioned in the separate zones, but freely drawn in white over a red band that separated the beams from the *opus sectile* on the wall and coffered ceiling on the vault.

painting of the tomb in Brestovik, since its cross-section also has slightly curved walls, and is even reminiscent of a horseshoe. However, it could have been deformed during the centuries, or badly executed. In the tomb in Constanța, where there is neither a cornice of beams nor an architrave, there is only a decoration in the form of a motif of an ovolo (a part of the cornice), and a part of the wall with *opus sectile* enters the curved zone of the vault.[170] In the vaulted tomb no. 8,[171] found beneath St. Sophia, in Sofia, there is an imitation of a cyma (which can be a part of the architrave and of the cornice). In tombs no. 1,[172] and no. 9 in Sofia, this zone was presented only as a band.

It is likely that this architectural motif originally painted above the architrave and located at the ideal spot on the connection between the wall and the vault, through ancient art history became a pure decoration, and it was only important to be at some imaginary height above the graves, which is seen in the Iznik tomb. In the end, the primary role of the beams as decoration can in fact be attributed to those in Brestovik too, where, as in Iznik, according to the preserved decoration, they do not have a clearly shown connection with the construction behind (it is a completely dark background, with or without decoration). In the case where the beams were independent of each other, they would have to be correctly displayed on the lateral sides, which in this case would have excluded the filling of the lower space with paint and decoration. In the Silistra tomb, the colour of the lower surface behind the beams is in the same colour as the beams, which makes the beams have the aforementioned constructive connection with the surface behind. Decoration with dots is done in this respect consistently, since they are located on the beams itself and on the mentioned surface, and do not exist in the intermediate space - air.

In this way, it became pure decoration on the linear ornament on the wall. See in: Firatli 1974, 926.

170 Above the row of the beams, there is also an ovolo in "The Tomb of Three Brothers".

171 Valeva 2001, 175, fig. 21.

172 Миятевъ 1925, 5-14, Figs.1.

CONCLUSION

MihailoValtrović described the tomb of Brestovik as a monumental tomb built "at the height of ordinary good craftsmanship", and he rated painting as "ordinary" and "with its harmony admirable", from an architectural point of view arranged "properly and meaningfully", made "diligently, by a light and practical handcrafted hand". There is no decorative architecture in the tomb, the surfaces of the walls are smooth, without profiles, and, according to him, the tomb painting helped to obtain this impression and introduced "constructive clarity" into the building, "revived" areas and "usefully supplemented the architectural idea of the builder". The builders of this tomb "were not artists, but practiced craftsmen", "the materials were not mosaics and marbles, but the painter imitated them".[173] Although Gordana Milošević rated the decoration as "pedantic",[174] after the analysis of the architectural elements on the wall paintings of the tomb, it can be said that there is a mild disparity between the different representations in terms of their precision and dimensions, and that the strict following of the pattern probably led to a loss of symmetry of the entire architectural space in painting, which was otherwise consistently carried out in the architecture of the tomb.

The architectural space in painting should be discussed based on an analysis of the system of applied projection systems.[175] Although the reverse system of the dividing construction cannot be linked with the inverted perspective, because it does not possess a vanishing point, features of the inverted perspective, which, as Anka Stojaković wrote, is "beyond the law of an objective projection treatment of space based on realistic principles of optics",[176] may be related to the reason for the use of the reverse dividing construction in the Brestovik tomb. Being used in the medieval art of Byzantine tradition, Anka Stojaković characterised it as an unreal way of representation which was most suitable for the transcendental character of this art,[177] while its appearance in ancient art is rare and ancient perspective is the carrier of the whole style, not characterising the structure of the painting in its

173 Валтровић 1906, 132, 136-137.
174 Milošević 2009, 748.
175 Стојаковић 1970, 11.
176 Стојаковић 1970, 77.
177 Стојаковић 1970, 77.

entirety.[178]The tomb in Brestovik, where an oblique projection, the dividing construction, and its reverse variant were applied, belongs to the period of the return to "archaic" structures in painting, with the development of Christian art, as was previously mentioned in this text.

According to Gordana Milošević, the tomb from Brestovik belongs to the oldest period of family tomb building tradition in the Central Balkans, from the beginning of the 4th century.[179] At the beginning of the last century, Miloje Vasić wrote: "In all cultural periods, the graves are a faithful and reliable image of the cultural life of the time in which they existed. If life is in one human settlement at a higher level, and if it is more rich and diverse, the graves themselves, as well as their content, will be richer and more diverse".[180]

The same author also wrote that "probably somewhere in the southeast or in Egypt, the later forms served for the execution of this construction in Brestovik, which has so little specifically Roman in it".[181] Gordana Milošević wrote that in the Late Roman era the idea of choosing a burial site on the property was renewed under the Hellenistic-monarchist models, where inspiration for construction was sought, and the family grave in the late antique provinces in the Balkans "underwent a similar transformation with a little delay", in accordance with the social position and status of the commissioner.[182] Her conclusion regarding the analysis of funeral architecture in the Central Balkans provinces from the 4th to the 6th century is that the architecture of Late Antiquity in the Balkans was the product of local masters, which was developed due to the geographical location between the west and the east under the influence of the western provinces and the Orient.[183] The conclusion that arises during the analysis of the origin of the painting of the Brestovik tomb is similar, that is, that the effects of the East and the West can be seen on it, more specifically a combination of the incrustation and the floral styles that "are fighting" against the Second Pompeian style from the West.[184]

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178 Стојаковић 1970, 74.

179 Милошевић 2006, 380.

180 Васић 1907, 97-98.

181 Vasić 1906, 140.

182 Милошевић 2006, 371.

183 Милошевић 2006, 392.

184 About this *fight* see in: Rostovtzeff 1919, 163.

The architectural elements depicted in the painting of the Brestovik tomb can be interpreted as decorative incrustations on the wall, constructive beams or a coffered ceiling, but also as windows and doors, carriers of the vault or a paradise garden. It would be almost impossible for us as interpreters to unveil and understand the true intent of the one who had chosen and rendered these motives. The most interesting architectural elements represented in the Brestovik tomb are the beams, since in antique painting from the territory of today's Serbia, this kind of motif has been found only in this tomb thus far. This important constructive element in architecture, through the history of stone decoration, although retaining three dimensions, had lost its basic role of the carrier, which was returned to it often in the two-dimensional art of tomb painting, through symbolism, when, although often clumsy, it "carried" the heavenly vault.

While searching for the formative or mathematical principles behind the creation of a historical building, we are in fact looking for different schemes that would point us to the meaning of a building. However, the nature of the building is such that the connection between the planned and the derived state is not clear enough. Seeking explanations for atypical or confusing features, we encourage views on architecture that may be more valuable than conclusions.[185] Linking the tomb in Brestovik, including its painting, only with *typologically* similar buildings, can lead researchers in the wrong direction. Sheila Campbell wrote that the mosaic floors of ancient *Anemurium,* with human and zoomorphic representations, as well as geometric motifs (which are a close analogy to the aforementioned meander motifs from Viminacium and Beška graves), demonstrate the links between this site and other places in southern Asia Minor, and that the similarities between iconography, Christian and pagan, and combinations of geometric forms, clearly express the movement of ideas and people in this region through the late (early Christian) period.[186] The similarities between the architecture of the tombs from the distant territories, as well as between the paintings of buildings of different purposes, are often greater than would have been assumed. Sometimes the old texts of the first researchers of the monuments seem to be insufficiently argued and with prematurely drawn conclusions when accepting analogies, especially when we remember that their authors had no such number of explored monuments

185 Wilson Jones 2009, 14,71.
186 Campbell 1989, 1639.

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in front of them or almost unlimited access to information, as is the case today. However, their almost crude perceptions after travelling and the visual overview of the monuments, shaped through thoughts and long interactions, with knowledge of history and the use of logic in the conclusions, are often more important than the finding of an *ideal* analogy. Perhaps something else is completely true and important, as noted by Mihailo Valtrović, when he wrote that the realisation of the entirety of the tomb in Brestovik, made of three buildings "different in form and purpose", was guided by "the established folk notion and he feeling of man's duty to the deceased",[187] with a small addition - that it was done regardless of the national or religious affiliation was of the deceased.

All the aforementioned, as part of the analysis of the interrelation between the elements of the architecture depicted in the painting of the Brestovik tomb, has to be taken as only one side of the perception and the sum of the assumptions regarding the painting's poor preservation. However, this study raises a large number of further questions, including the origin of painting and the various influences that effected it, the issue of the manner of painting, the use of projection systems and the existence of mistakes, or the origin and skill of painters, which together with the already existing themes of tomb architecture, the question of its owner, that is, the origin of the deceased, as well as the belonging of a tomb to a pagan or Christian cult, together constitute a collection of secrets hidden by this tomb.

Works on the protection of the painting of the tomb in Brestovik, further conservation of the building, the arrangement of its immediate environment, the provision of guardians and regular maintenance of the monument were set as conditions for preventing the monument's collapse, in 1964, after partly conducted conservation and restoration work.[188] Unfortunately, none of this happened and today the tomb, and especially its painting, is in an extremely bad condition. We hope that this research, together with that from the past and with the new illustrations of the painting of the tomb that the research brings, will help during its future conservation, and we appeal for its urgent implementation, as did authors before us, if it is not already too late. Although from 1895 to the present day, a large number of late antique painted tombs with valuable painting have been found in the territory of Serbia, some of which are of high artistic value, the tomb

187 Валтровић 1906, 132.
188 Вујичић – Вуловић 1967, 91.

in Brestovik is still a "unique Roman building in Serbia",[189] "whose equal in design and decoration, is not yet known in our country."[190]

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189 Валтровић 1906, 137.
190 Валтровић 1895, 131.

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