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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
SLAVISA POPOVIC

AUTHORS
MILOJE VASIC
GORDANA MILOSEVIC
NADEZDA GAVRILOVIC VITAS
VESNA CRNOGLAVAC

REVIEWER
IVANA POPOVIC

PROOF READING
MARIJA STOJANOVIC

TRANSLATION
IVANA KARADZIC

PHOTOS, GRAPHIC DESIGN
AND PREPRESS
ZELJKO CAJIC

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CONSTANTINE'S VILLA
AT MEDIANA

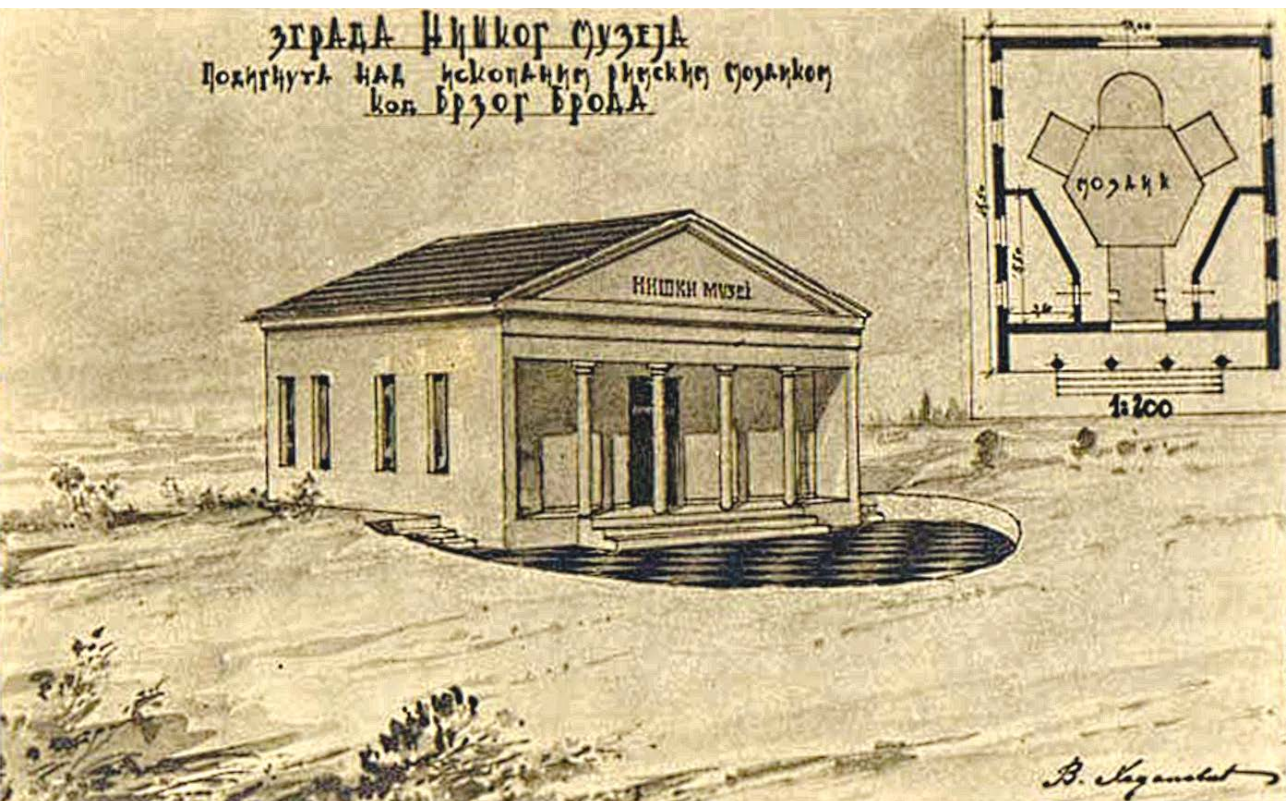
ПОСЕТИТЕ

музејске ископине

мозаик из римског доба

Може се доћи трамвајем ка Нишкој
Бањи - до карауле Бр. 4, где на
захтев стаје трамвај

POSTER - INVITATION FOR VISITING MEDIANA IN 1936



MUSEUM AT MEDIANA AFTER DRAWING OF V. HODANOVIC IN 1936

Constantine the Great stayed in Nais (*Naissus*) last time in the year 334, on the eve of the great jubilee - celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of his arrival to the throne. For several years already, he had been decorating his birthplace Nais with lavish buildings and monuments. It was an opportunity for the estate at Mediana to develop and become large villa where various imperial activities were taking place, while later at the time of his immediate successors, it would reach its zenith. The preserved works of Roman writers and historians lack detailed information about this property. It took thirty years after the Constantine's visit, when the newly elected emperors - brothers Valentinian I and Valens arrived to Mediana, in order that Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus in his famous work (*History*, XXVI. 5. 1) would leave the following news:

"After hastening through Thrace, they came to Naissus, where in a suburb called Mediana, distant three miles from the city, they shared the generals between them in view of their coming separation".

The text of Ammianus does not specify in which direction from Niš Mediana was located. However, the first researches of Felix Kanitz in 19th century, later those of the Niš National Museum in 30's of 20th century, and especially excavations of the Archaeological Institute in Belgrade and the National Museum in Niš from 1961 until present, discovered east of Niš, on the left bank of the Nišava River and on the route of the old Niš - Pirot road, near the village of Brzi Brod, significant remains of Roman architecture. The remains are located at approximately 4,5 km east of the Nis Fortress (below which is the ancient Nais, on the left bank of the Nišava River), that is, the three Roman miles, and on the route of the Roman *via publica* that passed through the diocese Dacia in direction *Singidunum – Viminacium – Naissus – Serdica*. Therefore, it was not unreasonable to identify the architecture discovered near the village of Brzi Brod with Mediana. The above road, from Nais, through Mediana, passes by Niška Banja, and from there, via Remesiana (Bela Palanka) and Tures (Pirot), it continues to Serdica (Sofia).

The rise of urban life in Nais at the end of the 3rd and in the 4th century during the great reforms of Diocletian (284-305), and then at the time of Licinius (308-324) and Constantine (306-337), led to a greater building activity in the city and its surrounding. Relatively small city area did not meet the citizens' needs, the result of which was the intensive construction activity also outside of the city walls, on the left bank of the Nišava River. Numerous finds from the area of the modern

city indicate the scope and size of the settlement at the time of its greatest rise. On the rural farms (*villa rustica*), and at the estates in the fields (*suburbanum*), lived, temporarily or permanently, the citizens of Nais. Especially developed estates were those located on the slopes of the surrounding hills of Gorica and Vinik while one of the most famous was Mediana.

Micro-climatic conditions on the route of the Roman road (*via publica*) from Nais to the thermal springs in Niška Banja (spa), were extremely favorable for agriculture. Big number of sunny and dry days and proximity of the Nišava River had been recognized already from the middle of the 3rd century as a very suitable place for establishing small farms on the slopes of Vlaško brdo (hill), three miles from the antique Nais. Architectural and archaeological remains point to architectural opus that emerged at the end of the 3rd century where one recognizes buildings of various plan, size and structure such as smaller villas and ancillary buildings. During the 4th century, huge construction works were carried out for the needs of imperial estate and residence, which completely changed appearance of the settlement. The last major changes at Mediana were recorded at the end of the 4th century, after the battle of Adrianople.

Mediana is a settlement of open type with elongated base which at the time of its greatest rise spread at about 80 hectares surface. In topography, there is clear and distinct division of settlement in the northern and southern part, while the bordering part is the route of the Roman road (*via publica*) Nais - Serdica. The exact location of the Roman road has not been confirmed. According to numerous examples of the researched communication on wider territory of the Roman provinces, one of the possible positions could be the route south of today's road to Niška Banja (the route of the existing, present railroad). In architectural aspect, one may differentiate certain individual parts of Mediana, which mutually differ according to their organization, function, decoration and time of construction.

Northern part of the settlement is known to researchers to a greater extent, and thus provides multiple elements in the interpretations. It consists of three parts, urbanistically and functionally different. The biggest development is observed in its central part. The central position is occupied by the enclosed complex: villa with peristyle, thermae, monumental gate with access communication and large courtyard divided into several parts. In the west and east of the villa with peristyle, existence of two monumental courtyard areas with similar organization and size has been confirmed. Those are large spatial areas framed on three sides with long, narrow buildings (military barracks and workshops). In the central part of each of those areas there is a warehouse (*horreum*). To the east complex of military barracks, probably belong the discovered remains of larger thermae, of public character,

intended for a large number of the stationed army and other persons who were in service of Mediana.

In the eastern end part of the finding there are traces of properly enclosed courtyard 160 m long, within which there are several buildings of similar size and different orientations. To the ancient settlement also belong facilities and necropolises discovered on the slopes of Vlaško brdo, water tower (*Castellum aquae*) about 500 m southwest of the villa, as well as fortification or fortified villa (?), which has been known from the 19th century notes. Under the route of modern road, several country villas, warehouses and two smaller necropolises were discovered. Remains of the third necropolis were confirmed on the slopes of Vlaško brdo, east of the water tower. In regard to architectural opus we should also mention two small early Christian churches built in the end of the 4th or in the beginning of the 5th century between the western enclosure wall of the villa with peristyle and military barracks in the west.

The excavations that were carried out at Mediana from 2000 to 2011 significantly changed knowledge about the complex and enabled significant revision of certain views concerning architecture, sculptures, frescoes and mosaics. In that way, it was possible to separate three horizons of construction, namely: horizon 1 (end of the 3rd - beginning of the 4th century), horizon 2 (around 330-378) and horizon 3 (about 383-441).

It was confirmed that most of the horizon 1 was deliberately destroyed for the purpose of building the entire complex at Mediana, to which belongs a large group of buildings. End of the horizon 2 is characterized by a strong fire and destruction of the original residential complex at Mediana. On the remains was formed an entirely new type of settlement. In the horizon 3, new buildings were built around the barracks and villa with peristyle, and some parts of the villa have undergone changes. As much as it can be determined at this stage of the research, the settlement that was created after demolition of the residential complex has characteristics of a rural community. That settlement was also destroyed, that time in overrun of the Huns, probably immediately in 441, when Nais was also conquered, which is also supported by numismatic finds at Mediana. Byzantine writer Procopius in Panegyric on construction at the time of Justinian mentions Mediana, but in the area that was intensively researched no traces of the 6th century have been found. It is possible that only fortification or fortified villa was rebuilt (?) on Vlaško brdo, across the residential complex (now under the Electronic Industry buildings).

*

Citizens of high rank very early abandoned traditional habitation in a townhouse (*domus*), they rarely appear at forum and communicate with the town from luxurious palaces or villas in the countryside. Spacious peristyles are transformed and become a kind of privatized forum. In addition to living space, also is introduced large ceremonial space with an apse at one end, usually intended for feasts. Olympiodorus from Thebes records: “... *big houses in Rome include everything that a little town [or medium-sized town] may have: hippodrome, forum, temples, fountains and bathrooms*” (section in Foti - *Suida*). The Flavian dynasty at Palatinum in Rome, introducing new forms into residential architecture which were taken over from public buildings and public space, in the best way represents new relationship of private and ceremonial. The Hadrian’s villa at Tivoli near Rome represents the final form of designing housing of the elite, which within its content has facilities of different purposes and forms.

At the time of Constantine the Great, residential housing got new architectural course with strong ideological message, emphasized symbolism and relation between architectural details and spatial wholeness. One could also observe that in the unique complex of the suburban imperial villa near his hometown. The Constantine’s villa at Mediana includes several buildings and their spatial units such as: central residential complex consisting of the villa with peristyle, *thermae*, spacious courtyards and ceremonial entrance, then a villa with octagon, military barracks and ancillary and agricultural buildings.

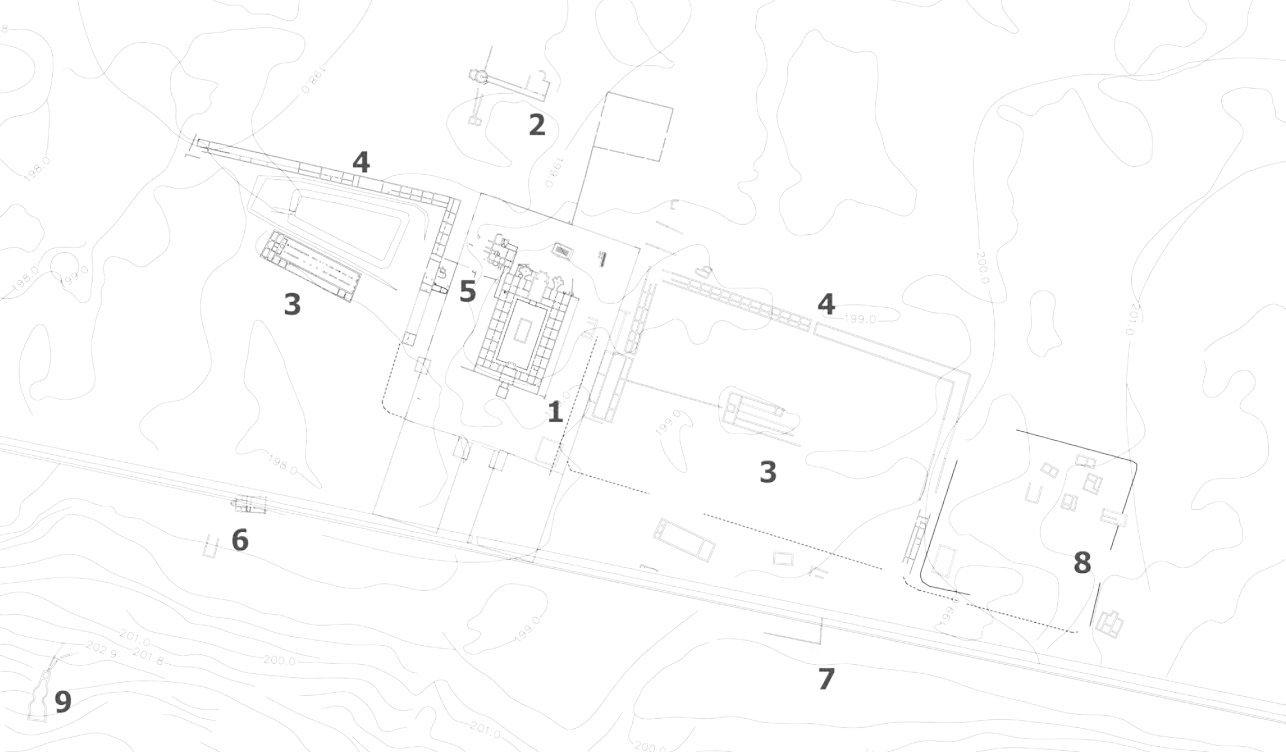


BRONZE PORTRAIT OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

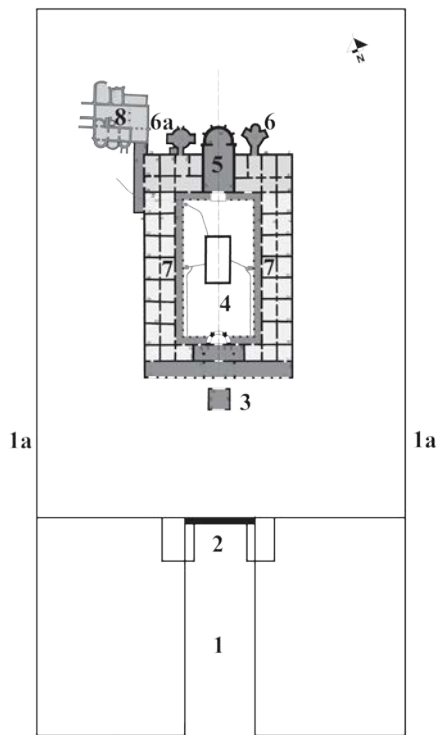


RESIDENTIAL
COMPLEX





MEDIANA - SITUATIONAL PLAN: 1) RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX; 2) VILLA WITH OCTOGON; 3) WAREHOUSE (HORREUM); 4) MILITARY BARRACKS; 5) EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES; 6) VILLA WITH CONCHES; 7) VILLA WITH SURROUNDING WALL; 8) ENCLOSURE WALL (AFTER GEOPHYSICAL INVESTIGATIONS) 9) WATERTOWER



PLAN OF RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX:
 1) CEREMONIAL ACCESS WAY; 1A) SURROUNDING WALL; 2) ANCIENT GATE; 3) VESTIBULUM; 4) PERISTYLE; 5) RECEPTION HALL; 6) STIBADIUM A; 6A) STIBADIUM B; 7) ADMINISTRATION (OFFICIUM); 8) THERMAE

The central part at Mediana comprises the unique unit within which are several buildings of various character and organization. Large villa with peristyle, thermae and antique gate represents a residential complex, separated from the rest of the antique settlement by an enclosing wall thus forming one large extensive garden in the north and two smaller side-yards in the south, with 4, 7 ha total surface. On the border of the northern and southern courtyard is the monumental antique gate (29 x 2, 20 m), preserved in the foundation zone. The integral part of the gate is also made of rooms built in its south-west and south-east end, at 30 m mutual distance. According to the construction design, organization of space and dimensions, they are similar to the military barracks. In the space in-between, in the central part, a monumental ceremonial approach road was formed. Substructure of the approach roadway was discovered, of about 80 m length, southern and western from the antique gate. Existence of several building phases as well as their mutual relationship has been affirmed.

To the first phase of construction (end of the 3rd - beginning of the 4th century) would belong a building of a simple form, with elongated axially symmetrical basis with a large courtyard in the middle. Southern part of the building comprises spacious porch and series of rooms forming centrally positioned entrance. The side rooms, arranged in two rows, form two wings east and west from the courtyard. In the northern part of the building, about ten rooms east-west oriented are arranged around the monumental centrally positioned space in the north-south direction. Porches in the courtyard and in the southern access part of the building were supported by wooden columns. In the building architecture, the roof construction units deriving from organization of the foundation are clearly distinctive. In the northern rooms seven furnace-openings (*praefurnii*) were found as well as hypocaust heating system, which indicates a longer stay or use of that part of the buildings throughout the whole year, but also their public and residential character.

Rooms in the lateral wings, with same dimensions and organization, probably were intended for administration (*officium*), but it is not excluded that some of them might have had different purpose. A particular problem in determining its function is a large hall of apsidal shape in the north. Its location, shape and size (374 m²) have similarities with spaces of sacral character (*aedes*) in military command buildings (*principia*) and houses of high ranking military commanders (*praetoria*), but also with organization of civil basilicas in palatial complexes.

Monumental building with the courtyard and wooden porches may be related to construction of the eastern military barracks and eastern horeum, during the time of the first big reconstruction, when that part of the antique settlement experienced

radical changes for the needs of stationing big number of the army and when it was organized as significant economical center – the imperial domain (*patrimonium*). In the field of geophysical research one can clearly observe planimetry and, to some extent, regularities of measuring the central part of the complex, the complex of eastern military barracks and workshops. Those architectural activities also include the *thermae* in the north-western part of the east complex of military barracks, and possibly the eastern tract of the western military barracks.

The second phase of construction incorporates huge reconstructions in the central part of the settlement. In the southern part, big reconstruction of the porch was performed, the entryway was expanded and in the courtyard a semicircular space was added, supported by massive pylons in lower zones. On the external side of the porch, a smaller square area (*vestibulum*) was built. Northern rooms of the villa with peristyle were remodeled by being divided into several smaller parts. East and west from the reception room, beyond dimensions of the original building, the two rooms with central arrangement and jagged basis functioning as dining room or banquet room (*stibadium*) were attached. Porch of the peristyle was extended and wooden pillars were replaced with marble ones. In the northwest corner, the porch was built thus linking the villa with *thermae*. Major renovations were also done in decorating the floors with mosaics in the peristyle, reception room, banquet rooms and corridor to the *thermae*. Walls and ceilings were painted and the entire space was decorated with sculptures. A pool (*impluvium*) in the peristyle was either built or reconstructed and the system of channels for water supply and drainage was built, while reorganization of heating system in the northern rooms was also carried out.

Area of the residential complex is separated from the barracks and warehouses by the built enclosure. In the southern access section, the monumental gate in the shape of triumphal arch was built, together with its accompanying reception rooms.

Radical changing of the settlement central part had for its purpose creation of dynastic ideology in art and architecture of the native Nais and Mediana. It is certain that the changes in appearance and organization of Mediana as well as transformation of buildings from the horizon 1 into the representative residential building can be surely attributed to the building activity of Constantine I.

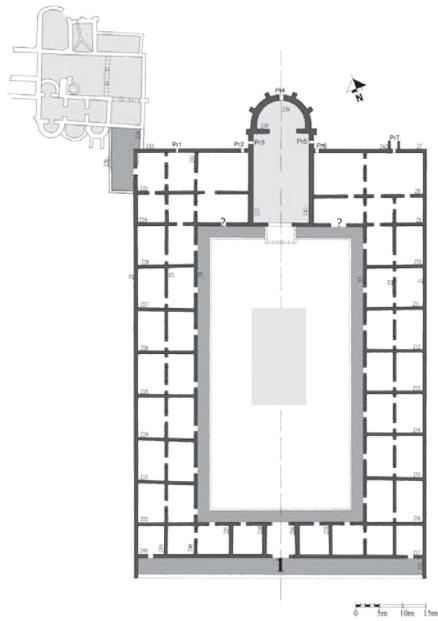
The villa with perystyle is a spacious construction with elongated basis and axial layout of rooms (around 6.000 m² surface), oriented north-west, with minor deviation of the northern part towards the east. Central part of the villa comprises spacious courtyard with the porch (*peristylum*), which center is occupied by the big pool (*impluvium*). From the porch one could enter into several rooms lined up in two lines on the east and west side of the courtyard, with approximately same size and arrangement.

Southern part of the villa consists of 6 m wide outdoor porch. In the western and eastern end of the porch are entrances into two small square rooms. The central part of 12 m wide south porch leads to the courtyard of the villa, which entrance is marked by two massive pylons which constitute integral parts of monumental semicircular structure. South of the entrance porch, in the entrance axis, at 2 meters distance, there is a square interconnecting room - vestibule.

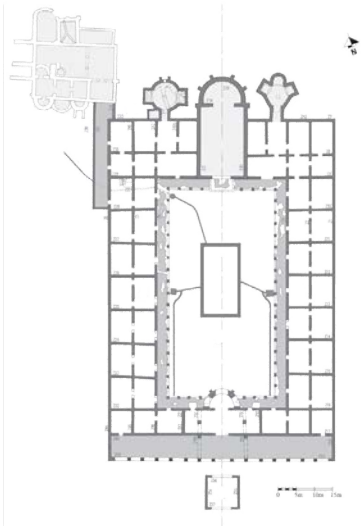
Opposite the entrance, in the peristyle axis on the north side, a large reception hall is located, with semicircle – apsidal ending, reinforced by pilasters. The hall was entered through the podium (*podium*) that is elevated for three steps. East and west of the hall, 14 rooms of unequal size and shape are lined up.

Northwest and northeast from the reception hall, beyond basic dimensions of the villa, there are two independent smaller buildings – stibadia A and B, with central layout, linked by smaller access rooms with the rest of the rooms in the north. The eastern construction – stibadium A has a jagged layout with its central part in the form of hexagon, against which are leaned three freely positioned smaller annexes. The northern annex has an apsidal ending and the two lateral ones have the square base. Due to construction of the Museum in 1936, connection between northern part of the villa and the new building was covered. The western building – stibadium B is of circular base with two lateral annexes, in the east and in the west. On the northern side, opposite the entrance, the furnace opening (*praeefurnium*) and traces of hypocaust were discovered.

On the north-west end, the villa was linked with thermae of private character. Total surface of this building is unknown due to the fact that its western part has not been researched. The bath is the building with central layout. Cold rooms (*frigidarium*) and warm rooms (*tepidarium, caldarium* u *laconicum*) were arranged northern and southern from the central common space. It is assumed that the original entrance of the thermae was on the east side. In one of the reconstructions, thermae were linked by corridor to the northwest rooms of the villa, while due to new needs an entrance was opened on the southern wall of southeast room of the thermae.



THE FIRST BUILDING PHASE OF VILLA WITH PERISTYLE,
GROUND - PLAN AND IDEAL RECONSTRUCTION

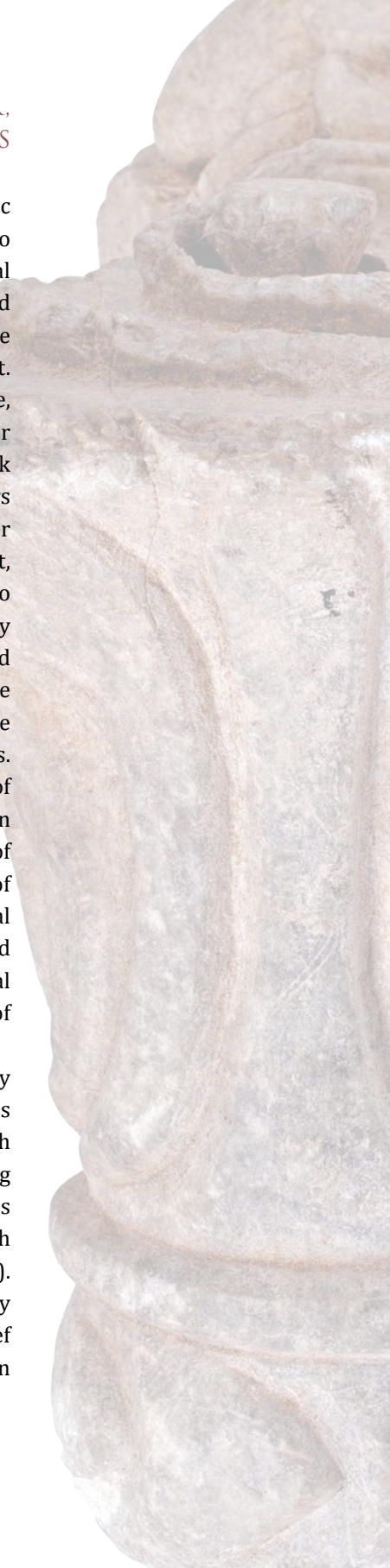


THE SECOND BUILDING PHASE OF VILLA WITH PERISTYLE,
GROUND - PLAN AND IDEAL RECONSTRUCTION

ARCHITECTURAL DECOR, DECORATION OF WALLS AND FLOORS

Concept of representing Constantine's dynastic power is present in monumental architectural plastics, fresco and mosaic decoration. Numerous elements of architectural plastics (capitals, marble slabs with reliefs, marble plating and other) that were found in area of the villa and in its immediate vicinity, have characteristics of late antiquity imperial art. Columns and architrave-beams, except the construction one, had both decorative function and ideological message. For their production, marble of high quality imported from Greek quarries was used. It was the marble of wide range of colors (white, gray, pink, yellow, etc.). Coated stone slabs of color and structure similar to the green porphyry also stand out, as well as partitioning stone battens of maroon color. Due to the lack of marble they used the quality sandstone, especially for production of architraves. Diversity in the way and stylistic processing is reflection of general tendencies in the late antiquity architecture and in reuse of some parts of the building materials that were brought from other buildings. Shafts of the columns, flat or fluted, were always made of marble. Regarding processing of the column bases, the Roman bases are dominant, with simple profile, as well as capitals of Ionic and Corinthian type. One entirely preserved capital of Ionian type was a part of the peristyle colonnade. The capital is with double spiral and echinus with egg-shaped leaves and volute pillow is decorated with twigs. Of high quality material and workmanship is also the preserved capital - pilaster of composite style.

The architrave beams are reduced regardless they are made of either marble or stone. Other discovered pieces belong to various elements of architectonic plastics which made the essential part of complete decoration of the building at Mediana (parapetal marble slabs, plates for plating walls and floors, which may be simple without decoration, or with relief engraved ornaments, as well as various marble battens). It is certain that walls of stibadia A and B were plated by parapetal plates. Numerous pieces of marble flat and relief panels and marble ribbons point out to lavish decoration





IONIC CAPITAL

of certain rooms. Expensive treatment of walls and ceilings is also witnessed by gold-plated mosaic tiles that originate from the upper zones of walls and dome of stibadium B. Although no traces of color were found on the architectural elements, it can be assumed that traditional painting technique was applied in decoration of columns and architraves.



CAPITAL - PILASTER OF COMPOSITE STYLE

FRESCO-DECORATION

Painted decoration was an integral part of the wall treatment in villa with peristyle, as indicated by preserved fragments of fresco paintings on the walls of the peristyle porch, northern rooms, within smaller ancillary room of the stibadium B, as well as in the space of *thermae*. The largest number of frescoes was discovered in secondary position, while *in situ* are preserved parts of the lower wall zone decorations in the northwest rooms of the villa (w-1, w-13, w-22 and w-23). On the preserved frescoes one can clearly observe imitating in painting the marble parapet panels, partition ribbon and battens. Findings of the fresco fragments in demolition layers inside the said rooms indicate that ceiling in those rooms was also painted. By detailed conservation and restoration analysis of the preserved fresco-fragments in 2012-2013, from one of the above mentioned rooms, (w-22), certain motifs on six panels were reconstructed. They provide some insight into the way of painting wall surfaces in the villa with peristyle.

On the panel 1 (70 x 70 cm) we isolated a fragment of red and blue bordure. Fragment of free, non-geometrical painting was arranged on panel 2 (60 x 40 cm). Panel 3 (50 x 30 cm) and panel 4 (90 x 60 cm) comprise parts of blue-maroon and bordure floral motifs. Fragments of geometrical bordure of feather shape were reconstructed on panels 5 (70 x 52 cm) and 6 (120 x 55 cm). Although there is small amount of preserved and reconstructed fragments available, with great certainty it is possible to assume that the feather motive was positioned on the upper wall surfaces of the mentioned room (w-22). For now, it is unknown whether there were medallions with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations in the upper zones of the frescoes, such as those found in numerous villas in the Roman Empire.



1

2

3

Analysis of the painted fragments pointed out to application of the fresco technique (*buon fresco*) that was performed on a layer of wet mortar which is affirmed by the finger-prints of the mortar artist. It was also proved that on the more complex motifs (feather ornament) lines were engraved, which the artist used as a sketch for applying the paint. Although majority of motifs were painted by fresco technique, according to detailed analysis of the mortar structure and facture of the painted layer, it was concluded that some bordures were additionally painted in thicker layer which points out to the *seco* (*fresco-seco*) painting. The color palette on frescoes from the villa with peristyle consisted of: red, white, black, blue, green and yellow. Thanks to the physical-chemical analyzes, it was asserted that in large quantities were present red lead and ceruleum, very expensive pigments, which witnesses about planned investment into the villa with peristyle, which construction and decoration were well organized and expensive achievement.



4



5



6

FRESCOS FROM ROOM W-22 (PANELS 1-6)



IDEAL RECONSTRUCTIONS OF FRESCO - DECORATION IN ROOM W - 22



MOSAIC DECORATION OF FLOORS

Treatment of the floor surfaces was various: from mosaic floors, floors made of bricks and mortar, to the rammed earth floors. The mosaics covered the peristyle, reception room, two smaller banquet rooms (stibadia A and B), corridor towards the *thermae*, as well as some surfaces in the *thermae*.

The surface of around 1.000 m² was adorned with mosaics made of colored stone, ceramic and glass tesserae, using the techniques of *opus tessellatum* and *opus segmentatum*. Geometric motives of octagon, diamond and squares are prevailing, into which are placed vegetable motifs. Within the decorative group, we can distinguish two mosaics with figural representations. Complexity of composition and selection of motifs are both in accordance with function of the room, so the most complex and expensive mosaics were reserved for decorating the reception hall, such as the apsidal hall and banquet rooms.

Simple mosaics decorated the peristyle of Constantine's villa, western corridor towards the *thermae* and some surfaces inside the baths. Mosaics were conserved in the period from 1972 to 1977 and presented *in situ*.

Peristyle

Mosaic in the villa peristyle consists of five carpets of approximately 520 m² total surface, decorated with various geometric patterns, but very close in style both by their composition and in color. The mosaics are made of various colored stone tesserae *in opus tessellatum* technique and they belong to the pattern of repeated geometric motifs. Conservation of the mosaics was done in the period from 1972 to 1974.

Western, northwestern and southwestern part of the peristyle (mosaic no. 1)

In that part of the peristyle, the mosaic covers about 238 m² of total floor surface. It is made of stone tesserae in black, white, red, pink and gray color of various shades. The composition consists of a grid of smaller octagons linked with rectangles, thus forming larger octagonal field made up of four hexagons and square in the middle. Inside the octagons different motives are inscribed:



MOSAIC NO. 1 (DETAIL)

Solomon knot, swastika, cross flower, serrated small square and four leaf rosette with heart-shaped leaves. Rectangular fields are either decorated with chessboard pattern or divided into four triangles. The external framing bordure is white, while the internal one consists of a thin row of small gray tesserae, wider white band and repeated row of small gray tesserae.

Western side of northern part of the peristyle (mosaic no. 2)

Rectangular composition covers 18,4 m² surface in continuation of the mosaic no. 1. The mosaic is made of stone tesserae of white, red and gray color of various shades. The pattern is composed of a grid of squares and Latin crosses which transversal beams are joined with hexagons. In the western part of composition there are two rectangular fields, one below the other, with an inscribed guilloche. Squares are decorated with various motifs: quatrefoil, hexafoil, swastika, crossed spindles and Solomon knot. The external framing band is white, while the internal one is made of a thin row of gray tesserae, a broader row of white tesserae and wide band with a motif of meander.

Podium of the entrance to the reception room (mosaic no. 3)

Carpets in northern section of the peristyle are parted by podium of the entrance to the reception room, where figural composition of the river god and mythological representation of Leda and the Swan (Zeus) are presented. In the



MOSAIC NO. 2 (DETAIL)

bottom right corner of the composition the river god is represented, in semi-recumbent position with a wreath of pointed leaves on his head, while in his left hand, rested on a jag from which water flows, he is holding a reed. The river god is facing the central female figure, from which, unfortunately, only part of the dress and legs are preserved. In the bottom left corner of the scene, the mythological representation of Leda and the Swan is presented, most likely at the moment when Leda is preparing herself for bathing in the Eurota River (similar scene is displayed on the mosaic floor inside the reception room at the house of Aeon, on Paphos). The mosaic is seriously damaged in the central part, so that we may assume that originally more figures had been presented on it. The composition covers about 9, 5 m² surface. It is made of stone and glass tesserae of white, black, red, gray, brown, ocher and yellow color of various shades. The external framing band is white, while the internal one consists of wider row of red and white tesserae and a thinner row of black tesserae.



MOSAIC NO. 3 (DETAIL)



MOSAIC NO. 4 (DETAIL)



MOSAIC NO. 5 (DETAIL)

Eastern side of northern part of the peristyle (mosaic no. 4)

The mosaic used to cover whole east side of the peristyle northern part, about 38 m² surface. It is made of stone tesserae of white, black, red and ocher color of various shades. The composition consists of a grid of squares and four-pointed rhomboid stars. In the squares different motives appear: the Solomon knot, swastika, chessboard and quatrefoil. Rhomboid beams have four concentric frames and a decoration in the center: a circle with a serrated square, lozenges and concave octagons. The external framing band is white with a motif of grapevine on the south side. The internal framing band is composed of a wider range of red and white tesserae and a thinner row of black tesserae.

Northern side of eastern part of the peristyle (mosaic no. 5)

The smaller mosaic carpet occupies surface of round 2, 5 m² between mosaics no. 4 and no. 6. It is made of stone tesserae of white, black, red and ocher color. The composition consists of series of mutually intersected octagons, which are made of four hexagons and square in the middle. In the squares there are inscribed alternately motifs of swastika and hourglass, while inside the hexagon are serrated square. The framing band comprises a thin row of black and wider row of white tesserae.

Eastern and southeastern part of the peristyle (mosaic no. 6)

Mosaic covers eastern and southeastern part of the peristyle, about 215 m² total surface. It is made of stone tesserae of white, red, black, gray and other color of various shades. The composition consists of a grid of diagonally positioned squares between which a meander flows thus forming octagonal fields into which four irregular hexagons are inscribed. Inside the square fields there are inscribed motifs of quatrefoil and swastika. The external framing band is white while the interior one consists of a wider row of red and white tesserae and a thinner row of black tesserae.



MOSAIC NO. 6 (DETAIL)

Reception room

Significance and position of the reception room, except for monumentality and carefully selected architectural plastics and decoration of the walls and ceilings, was particularly emphasized also for selection of the mosaic patterns. The mosaic covered about 270 m² of the floor surface, of which is preserved and presented around 50% *in situ*. Conservation of the mosaics were carried out from 1975 to 1977.

The mosaics are made of colored stone tesserae in *opus tessellatum* technique. Decorative composition consists of two mosaic carpets: rectangular (7) and semi-circular (8).

Central space of the reception room (mosaic no. 7)

On the basis of the preserved mosaic carpet fragments in the rectangular part of the room, we may assume that decorative composition consisted of three square fields positioned inside the two framing zones. The external framing zone, in the form of Greek letter "Π", comprises wide band filled with a grid of connected hexagons (honeycomb with inscribed motif of a four-leaf rosette with heart-shaped petals) and lozenges, which mutually form composition of irregular intersecting hexagons. The internal framing zone is performed in the form of swastika meander, with inscribed squares in perspective, flowing around the square fields. Among the three square fields, mostly preserved is the one situated in the southern part of the room. It consists of three concentric zones: the square one with inscribed four-

pointed star, and the two framing zones. The first framing zone is described by an octagon encompassing the square zone while the second zone is composed of series of squares, lozenges and triangles.

Within the four-pointed star, in a circular medallion, the head of Medusa is presented. Her face is oval, framed with snakes - braided forelocks. The eyes are big, forehead is broad with pronounced horizontal wrinkle, and on the top of her head are spread wings. The representation of Medusa is made of white, red, gray and ocher stone tesserae as well as of black glass tesserae. Into triangles of the second framing zone the semicircles with inscribed motifs of pelta, spindle and bowl (?) are placed. Squares are decorated with various patterns: guilloche with inscribed square within perspective, T meander and multicolored chessboard pattern. We find interesting motifs inscribed in lozenges: irregular hexagon with concave ends and abstract motif in the middle (northwest and southeast corner) and schematized representation of birds (a duck?) or perhaps a bowl (paterna) with bird protomes (in the northeast and the southwest corner).

The apsidal space of the reception room (mosaic no. 8)

The mosaic is damaged in its central part so that only fields along the east and west



apse wall are preserved. Composition consists of semicircular zone decorated with a grid of diagonally positioned squares (with inscribed motif of the serrated squares) and of the framing zone in the form of continuous guilloche. The mosaic is made of white, red and black stone tesserae.

For special care in selection of ornaments and for quality of their manufacture, stand out the mosaics in the banquet rooms - stibadia A and B.

Stibadium A

Architectural structure of stibadium A, with its jagged central plan of hexagon around which were freely positioned three smaller annexes and with the access corridor, shows full creativity of the late antiquity residential architecture. The stibadium floor is decorated with five different mosaic carpets of 45 m² total surface. The mosaics are made in *opus tessellatum* technique, from white, red, black, gray and ocher stone tesserae of various shades. The mosaic was conserved in 2014 and presented *in situ* inside of the Museum building on Mediana.

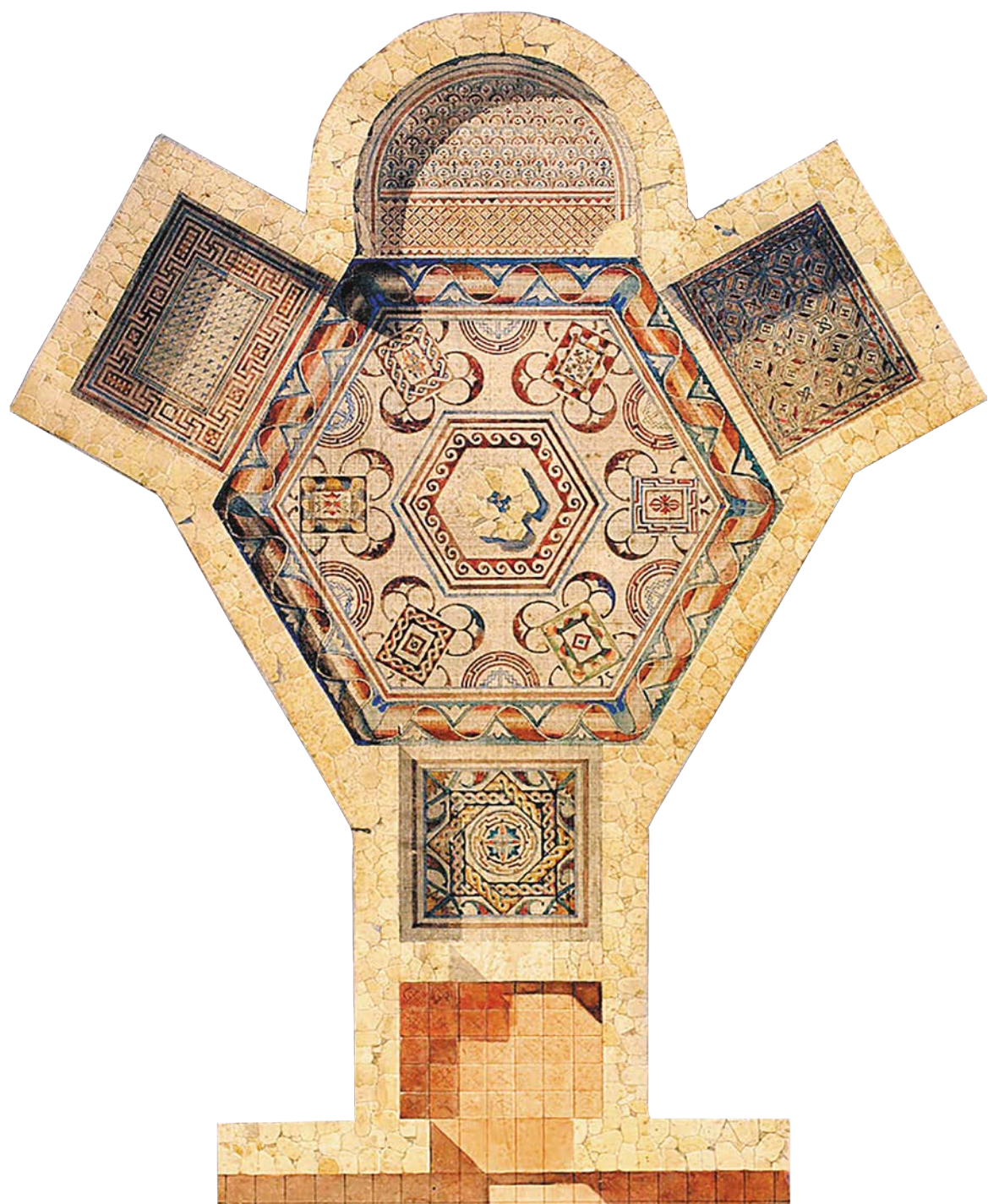
The entrance room of stibadium A (mosaic no. 9)

Main motif of the square composition consists of two squares made of guilloche, which intersect and form an eight-pointed star in the center of which is octagon, with inscribed rosette in the frame of the right-angled Z meander (Greek decoration). In the corners there are four fields in the form of horns with chamfered tops, into which motifs of trifold lotus (single or a pair) flanked by peltae tops are inscribed. The external framing band is white, while the inner one consists of a thin row of black tesserae and a wider row of white and red tesserae.

The central room of stibadium A (mosaic no. 10)

The central room in the form of hexagon has the mosaic composition comprised of three concentric zones and wide white external framing bordure. In the center of the first zone, inside the broad white field with representation of a marine worm, there was a marble fountain. Internal framing band is in the form of the wave pattern continuing alternately with red, white, black, white band and then with red band again.

The first zone is framed by a wide zone decorated with six rectangular fields between which are semicircles. The rectangular fields have frame in the form of wavy band, guilloche and right-angled Z meander, inscribed with motifs of serrated squares and schematized flowers. In the corners, on external side, there are peltae with inscribed motifs of trifold petal. The external zone comprises a band filled with a row of lotuses oppositely arranged with flowers presented in shades of gray and white.



STIBADIUM A (DRAWING R. BRATANIC IN 1936)

The eastern room of stibadium A (mosaic no. 11)

Composition consists of a grid of squares arranged vertically and diagonally between crosses with slanted beam-ends. Within the larger squares are inscribed the quatrefoil, rosette with heart-shaped leaves and Solomon knot, while in diagonal squares motifs of hourglass are inscribed. External framing white bordure is largely destroyed, and the internal one is made from two-strand gilliche to which are connected: a thin row of black tesserae, wider row of white, red and then white tesserae again and one additional thin row of black tesserae.

The northern room with apse in stibadium A (mosaic no. 12)

The composition is made of one semicircular and one rectangular zone, which are surrounded by one mutual broad white external framing band. The semicircular zone is performed in a pattern of fish scales with inscribed flowers that are directly framed by a thin row of black tesserae to which then is added wider row of white, red and then white and black tesserae again.

The rectangular zone is filled with a grid of diagonally arranged squares and framed with band filled with a row of oppositely arranged red and white triangles.

The western room of stibadium A (mosaic no. 13)

Central composition consists of a grid of diagonally arranged hexagons presented in perspective. The first framing bordure makes dentiled band, continued alternately with several bands: black, white, one wide band with a motif of swastika meander into which squares and rectangles are inscribed, then follows wide external white band.

Stibadium B

Floor of the stibadium B was decorated with four mosaic carpets of around 45 m² total surface, which are fully subordinated to the circular base with two lateral annexes in the east and west. The mosaics are made in *opus tessellatum* and *opus sectile*, of stone tiles and tesserae of white, red, black, gray and other color of various shades. They were conserved in 2015 and presented *in situ*.

The entrance into stibadium B (mosaic no. 14)

The entrance to the stibadium B was located on the southern side and decorated with mosaic carpet made by combination of *opus tessellatum* and *opus sectile* techniques, as indicated by preserved parts of the framing bordure on the west side and by fragments of marble tiles, found in the central part of that space. The bordure is made from band of red, white and black color and has been preserved in 115 cm length and about 15 cm width.

The central room of stibadium B (mosaic no. 15)

Composition consists of circular and framing zone. The circular zone is made of eight circular fields between spaced braid strands that are made of band with various motifs (wave pattern, row of superposed isosceles triangles, two-strand guilloche and symmetrically shaded band). In the circles there are displayed alternately: Solomon knot, quatrefoil rosette and pattern in a form of "shield" derived from crescent radii. The central part of mosaic is seriously damaged, but the preserved fragments indicate existence of a central rosette. Framing bordure is made in the form of a wide zone comprising several bands of white, grey, and red color, then dented band and wider three-strand guilloche. In triangular fields between guilloche and first framing band eight branches are presented.



MOSAIC NO. 15 (DETAIL)

The eastern room of stibadium B
(mosaic no. 16)

The mosaic is largely destroyed, and according to preserved fragments it is possible to conclude that the rectangular composition was made of a grid of octagons interconnected with squares. The octagons were decorated with Solomon's knot motifs and four spherical cuttings filled alternately with red and white color and square fields with quatrefoil.



MOSAIC NO. 16 (DETAIL)

The western room of stibadium B
(mosaic no. 17)

Rectangular composition is decorated with a motif of multi-strand guilloche framed with a band with wave pattern.



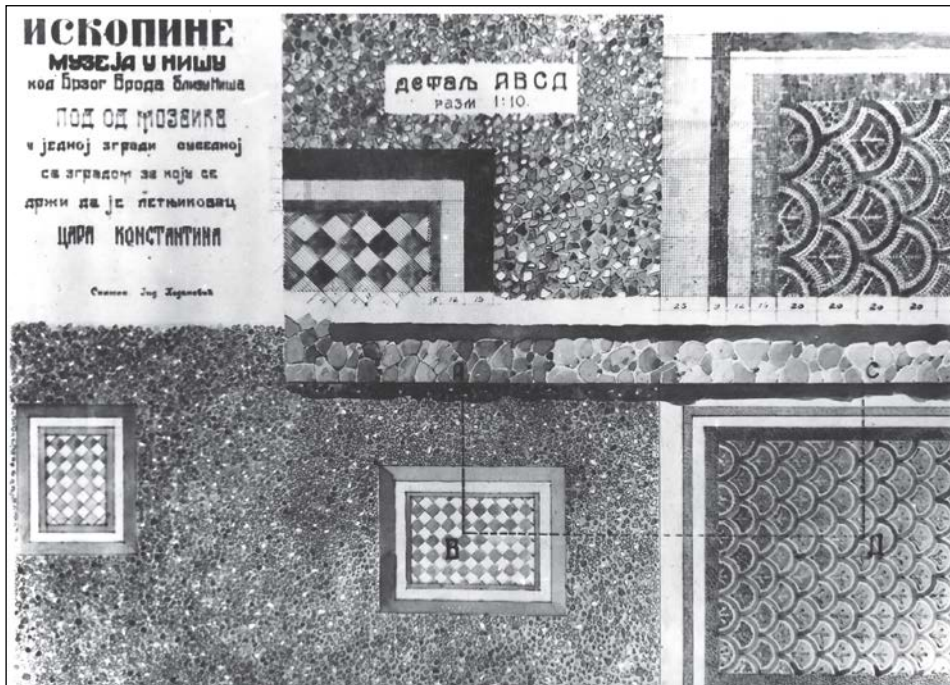
MOSAIC NO. 17 (DETAIL)

Western corridor – the porch towards thermae

Decorative composition comprise two mosaic carpets of around 104 m² total surface and it is made of stone tesserae and tiles of white, red and gray color.

Southern part of the porch towards thermae (mosaic no. 18) is decorated with a pattern in the form of fish scales pattern framed by red, white and gray bands (*opus tessellatum*).

Northern part of the porch towards thermae (mosaic no. 19) is paved with irregular stone tiles in *opus segmentatum* technique, with two inserted square fields in *opus tessellatum* technique. South field is preserved for its most part and has a pattern in the form of red and white chessboard, which is framed by a white and blue bands. North field has partially preserved gray-white framing band.



MOSAICS IN WESTERN CORRIDOR TOWARDS THERMAE (DRAWING V. HODANOVIC)

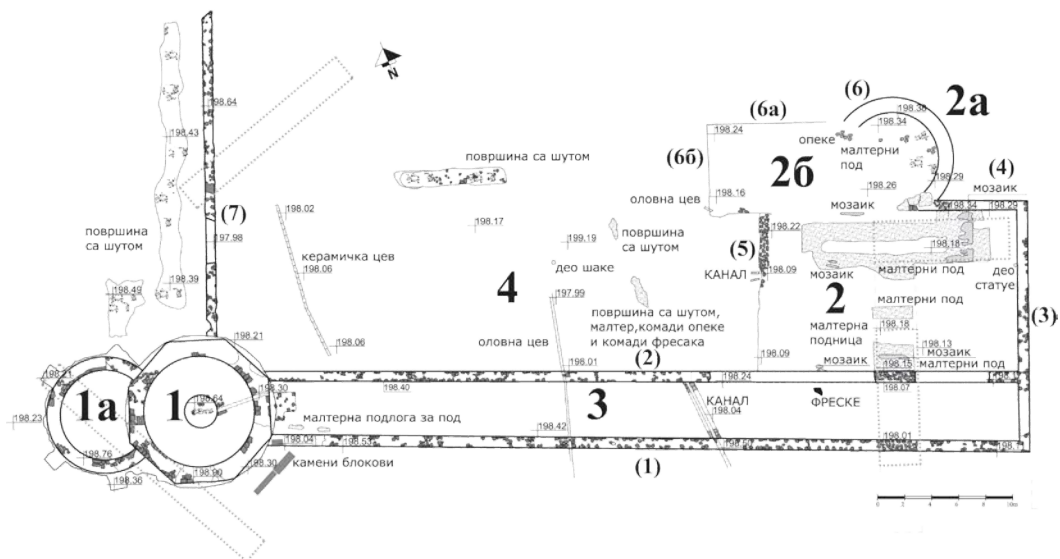
Thermae / Bath

During excavations of thermae in 1932, it was noted that some rooms had mosaic floors. As indicated in thermae base layout, the southern room had “a destroyed hypocaust with floor made of mosaics and marble tiles”, northern room was decorated with mosaic composition in *opus tessellatum* technique composed of two row of circles of four spindles, and in the room for exercise (*palestra*) there was a simple mosaic. During later researches, it was found that the floor in palestra was covered with mosaic made of colored marble tiles in *opus segmentatum* technique. It is preserved only a small part of the mosaic, 6, 40 x 2, 30 m dimension, which is conserved and presented *in situ*.



OTHER BUILDINGS
AT MEDIANA





GROUND - PLAN OF VILLA WITH OCTOGON



IDEAL RECONSTRUCTION OF KITCHEN AND SOUTHERN PORCH OF VILLA WITH OCTOGON

Other buildings at Mediana belong to various phases of its construction. They differ in size, construction and function. According to its architecture and decoration, two villas are distinguished: the villa with octagon and the villa with conches.

VILLA WITH OCTAGON

North from the villa with peristyle, it was partially researched a structure with dispersed basis, of approximately 2000 m² total discovered surface. The villa with octagon and large courtyard on the east (manege for horses) make an integral part of a larger luxurious residential complex with a number of various units that were linked with porches and courtyards. At this level of research, it is very difficult to determine the shape of the building base. According to its porches, it is classified in the group of villas with corridor, while huge garden spaces indicate the basis where rooms are arranged around one or more courtyards.

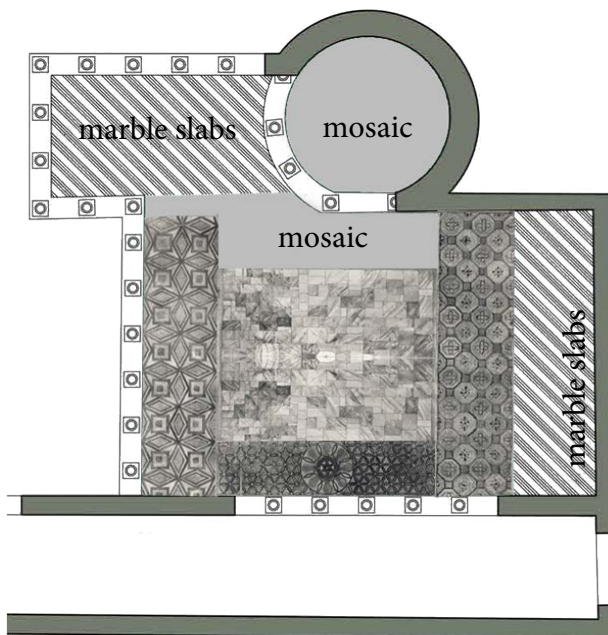
The villa architecture is dominated by its western section, centrally shaped, as the breakthrough of octagon and circle with counterforts that enhance the impression of classic forms of the late antiquity architecture. In the interior organization there is a compound of two monumental circles in which intersection is the partition wall that both divides and unites the space. Thus organized basis provides greater privacy to the western room (1a), compared to the interconnecting room (1). Rooms 1 and 1a and 2a and circular space 2a, according to general findings and analogies with other Roman villas, had function of a dining room (*triclinium*, *stibadium*). Numerous findings of architectural plastics parts, marble plating, frescoes and mosaics, suggest the high standards in decoration of that part of the villa, as well as the monumentality of its appearance and construction. The floors were decorated with mosaics and walls with marble panels. Mosaic inside the octagonal room was made of brown and white tesserae with wave pattern, which confirms a drawing of archaeological excavations from 1864.

About 40 m east, there is other section of the villa, in which another room with circular base is emphasized, with a larger courtyard and fountain in the south. The courtyard was surrounded by colonnade of columns, and eastern and central part of the courtyard was paved with marble slabs. In the open areas around the marble floor there were wide mosaic panels with motifs of the Solomon knot, rosettes and lozenges. The courtyard on the east and octagon with apsidal part were connected by a long porch (space 3). Archaeological traces suggest another porch in north-south direction, in the northwestern part, west of the enclosure wall (7).

Complex of the villa with octagon occupied significantly larger space compared to one which has been presented in today's research and besides the residential premises we can also expect areas of economical character, then kitchen, bathroom and maybe some more reception and banquet rooms.

Mosaic decoration of the floors

Besides in the octagon, the floor mosaics existence has been confirmed also in other rooms. The mosaics are made of colored stone tesserae in *opus tessellatum* technique. During explorations of the complex eastern part in 1938, a bigger room was discovered, of about 200 m² surface, which floor had decoration made of mosaics and marble slabs. Later researches showed that, unfortunately, most of the floor was destroyed, but thanks to the preserved photograph from 1938, it is possible to reconstruct partially its appearance. Floor in the central part of the room was made of marble slabs with a fountain in the middle and surrounded on three sides with mosaic decorated rectangular fields with different compositions: grid of octagons and squares filled with motifs of Solomon knot and quaterfoil rosette (east), grid of circles with inscribed motifs of hexafoil rosette and a medallion, filled with wavy lines and hexafoil rosette in the center (south), and grid of squares and four-pointed rhomboid stars (west).



IDEAL RECONSTRUCTION OF MOSAIC FLOOR IN ROOM NO. 2 IN VILLA WITH OCTAGON

Regarding mosaics at the villa with octagon complex, today only two panels have been preserved, which are exhibited in the National Museum in Niš.

On the first panel (52 x 52 cm), a band is presented filled with a row of alternately and reversely placed motifs of bells, separated by a sinusoid and toned by color. On the second panel (60 x 46 cm) is presented a band with motif of guilloche framed with peltae with a cross. Mosaics are made in *opus tessellatum* technique of stone tesserae of white, red, gray and yellow color of various shades.

According to condition of the finding, it is certain that it is extremely scattered architectural complex of residential and ceremonial character, which is associated with the imperial villa at Mediana. In decoration and furnishment of the villa there is an expressed need for luxury, which is reflected in organization of beautiful parks and gardens connected by corridors and vestibule and adorned with fountains, mosaics, frescoes and sculptures.

Other findings suggest the approximate dating, associated with construction of the Constantine's villa, to 330-334 period. Stratigraphic image of the villa with octagon shows that it had been destroyed in the first demolition of entire residential complex at Mediana after the battle of Adrianople in 378, and that it has not been rebuilt.



PRESERVED PARTS OF MOSAICS FROM VILLA WITH OCTOGON

VILLA WITH CONCHES

Villa with conches is part of a smaller estate of which is known only southern part of the building where part of the apsidal room (triclinium), two square rooms, part of the corridor (?) and parts of the courtyard with a porch (peristyle) are situated. Position of southern part of the rooms and part of the peristyle shows positioning of entrance to the east and lengthwise layout (perhaps symmetric) in east-west direction. Heating system has not been found, which indicates seasonal use of the villa. In one of the rooms that has semi-circular shape in its interior side, there is a mosaic.

The mosaic carpet 15 m² surface is made in *opus tessellatum* technique of white, ocher and red stone tesserae. Composition is comprised of one semi-circular zone in the form of a grid of lozenges and two framing zones. The internal frame consists of a dentiled band, while the external band is with undulating grapevine motif. The mosaic was discovered in 1975 when it was lifted and later conserved, while the restoration works were carried out in 2015. It was exhibited at the archaeological site of Mediana.

Other floors treatment with brick and absence of decorative elements indicate the building is of modest character.



MOSAIC FROM VILLA WITH CONCHES



ECONOMY AND
THE IMPERIAL DOMAIN
(PATRIMONIUM)



During the period of establishing the suburbium economic aspects of small economies (*villa rustica*) was clearly outlined. In the first decades of the 4th century, the central part of the settlement is reorganized and receives some new contents and functions that determine its appearance and character. Spaces and facilities with public and administrative functions are getting organized, where offices of civil servants (*oficium*) are recognized, as an integral part of the imperial domain (*patrimonium*), with significant number of workshops and warehouses for storing goods.

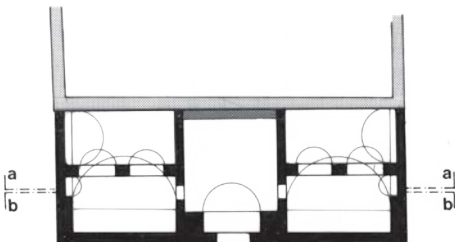
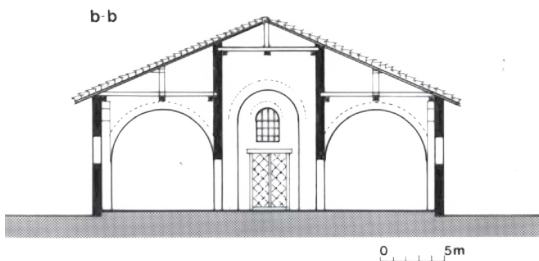
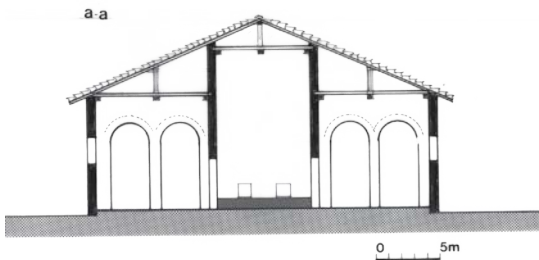
The last major reconstruction, which began in about 330 in central part of the settlement, completely changes appearance of architecture and its immediate surroundings. New concept and construction of residence emphasize the multipurposefulness of space through public and ceremonial character of the complex. New spatial organization caused also higher level in development of the imperial domain. West of the residential complex one more horeum was built, as central part of a large courtyard. On the edge of the yard, on its northern, eastern and western sides, military barracks, workshops and warehouses were arranged. The architectural concept outlined centricity in urban layout of northern part of Mediana with residential complex in the center.

East complex of military barracks with a large warehouse (*horreum*) in the center originated in the first major architectural intervention in a suburb of the antique Nais, at the time of establishing the imperial estate. Organization, construction and movable archaeological material completely correspond to findings of the researched military barracks in the western complex, which have been researched in much greater extent. Confirmation about the same concept and organization of the eastern barracks space one finds in extensive geophysical researches conducted in the northeastern part of Mediana. Regularity in positioning military barracks and warehouses on extremely large surface (approximately 6 hectares) is noticeable. Future archaeological investigations will provide more detailed answers to questions regarding the architecture of this part of Mediana.

Western complex of the military barracks borders with western enclosure wall of the residence and covers about 4 hectares surface. Military barracks are narrow and long buildings with wooden porches on the longer side. Their organization is typical and similar to layouts of barracks and factories in military fortifications. Usually, those are series of pair wise rooms interconnected by one or two passages. At certain intervals one may observe larger spaces, perhaps warehouses. On the northern and eastern barracks complexes, passages 12 m wide were recorded, reinforced at the corners by pilasters. Findings of fresco fragments, marble plating, roof cornice and capitol confirm quality and accuracy in construction of those facilities.

WAREHOUSE (HORREUM)

About 150 m west from the villa with peristyle, a warehouse (*horreum*) is situated. The building has rectangular elongated base of 92 x 27 m surface, oriented in the northwest-southeast direction. It consists of several rooms of unequal shape, size and purpose, which belong to different periods of construction. The main room had tripartite division formed with two rows of 11 brick built columns each. Between the columns and next to the eastern wall, significant number of *dolia* (large ceramic vessels) was discovered. Along the western wall of the room three carefully constructed pools were discovered. In the southern part there is a deep porch while on both sides of the porch there are two smaller rooms in each of the corners. Lateral rooms which were entered from the porch had floor at the porch level or slightly higher. The gable roof construction was supported by massive walls, columns and pillars of the porch. The warehouse space had no floor structure. The roof structure had no ceiling. Due to big height of the warehouse space, rooms in the porch corners could have had wooden floor construction and ceiling. The main room was entered through staircase placed in the western part of the porch. Driveway to the warehouse was in the middle of the south wall.



IDEAL RECONSTRUCTION OF WESTERN PART OF WAREHOUSE (HORREUM)

Western part of the building is an independent unit organized with six rooms arranged in two rows. The rooms could be entered through a massive doorstep on the west wall. In the first phase of its usage, that was three-pane space divided by columns. Later, it was divided with partition walls and its purpose is associated with wine production.

Three pools and big number of dolia suggest pressing out and production of wine in a wine cellar (*cella vinaria*).

From the western section also originate two alters with inscriptions, which were secondarily used as presses counterweights for squeezing grapes into two rectangular pools, from which the juice was dripping into the central circular pool. In front of the pool there are stairs that facilitated taking out of juice with buckets. Grape must was poured into dolia, where it fermented. From them, wine was poured over into amphorae. Dolia bottoms were black possibly due to pouring in resin so that grape must would not drip from them, but also as protection against bacteria. Dolia were exposed to fire so that the resin would melt. Such way of making wine was well known in western part of the Empire and in the 4th century from localities in Gaul and Germania. Data preserved indicate that, at least in the last phase of its use, the building had function of the wine cellar. Since the two discovered alters were dedicated to the gods Jupiter and Mithras, it can be assumed that, as being pagan, they were secondarily used at the time of Christian emperor Valentinian I, when for the last time the building was used for squeezing grapes and fermenting wine. In one of the northwestern rooms of the villa with peristyle (w-25) a big dolium was excavated, which was brought from the wine cellar after huge demolition of Mediana, indicating that the cellar was used until 378, when it was abandoned and when dolia were secondarily used for the needs of new population.



PANORAMIC VIEW OF WAREHOUSE (HORREUM)





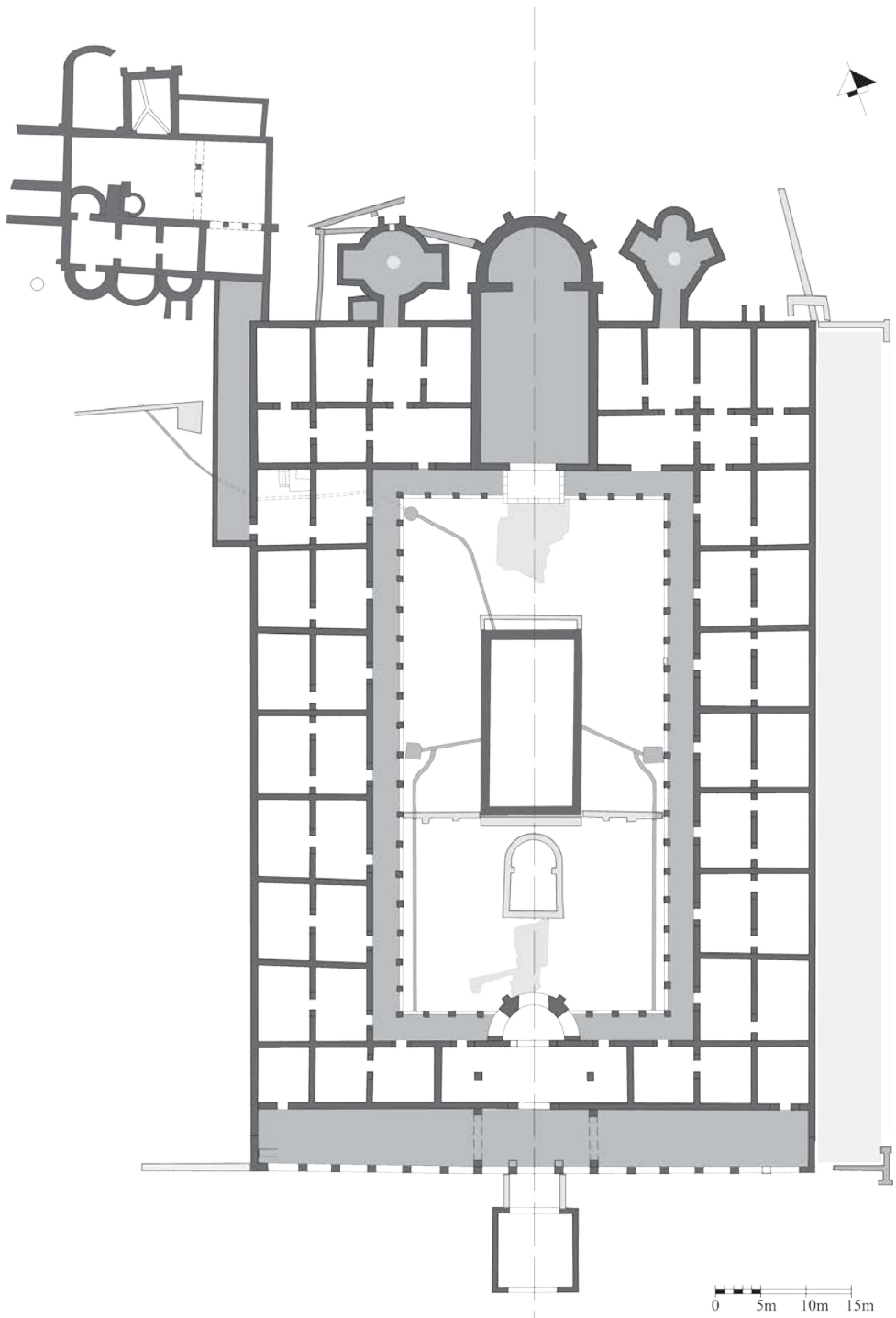
THE RESIDENCE AT MEDIANA
AFTER YEAR 378





Intrusions of Goths after the unfortunate battle of Adrianople in 378 and destructions recorded in fortifications on the Danube limes as well as in villages in the Balkans inland, also did not spare the residential complex at Mediana. Although devastated and partly destroyed by fire, Mediana was still known as the imperial domain and residence. We can assume that by emperor's order, families of Gothic foederati after 383 inhabited the area of the former residential complex. Position of Mediana, on the road route and near Naissus, had all prerequisites for establishment of new population. The fact that it was really about the Gothic foederati is confirmed by graves of the mentioned population who were of different ages, which have been discovered both inside and outside area of the villa with peristyle (in southern rooms of the eastern tract of barracks and western enclosing wall of the villa with peristyle).

Some spaces have been adapted to the needs of new users. Such interventions are observed in the area of the peristyle (horizon 3), which is divided into two sections by a dry- stone-wall. Separated northern unit of the peristyle perhaps had its official significance. South of impluvium, in the garden southeastern corner there was built in a small building with an apse in the north, which very much reminds of the Christian chapel. Along the eastern facade, long and spacious wooden porch was built. Northern part of the villa complex, on external side of the northeastern and northwestern rooms and around the stibadium B, is separated by a wall made of pebbles or broken stones connected with mud or poor quality lime mortar, according to technique similar to partition wall in the peristyle. Similar walls were also noted in the south side of the villa portico. An interesting finding is a chest-hidden space made of bricks placed directly against the stibadium B on its west side, in which was found a bronze coin dated to 425-441 period. In the space between the barracks and western enclosure wall of the villa, two Christian churches were built, around which a smaller necropolis was formed.



THE THIRD BUILDING PHASE OF VILLA WITH PERISTYLE, GROUND - PLAN

CHURCHES – NEW PUBLIC SPACE AT MEDIANA

The last late antique habitation horizon, from the end of the 4th and beginning of the 5th century, shows interventions on of the villa with peristyle architecture, as well as on certain explored parts of the western military barracks. Low level of construction techniques knowledge and secondary used building material from demolished antique walls indicate reduction and change of use of certain parts of the existing residential complex. It has to do with construction using pebbles in dry stone wall or mud mortar and combining it with wooden construction. In that period of life at Mediana, it is also expressed Christian appurtenance of the newly arrived population, which is clearly reflected in architectural remains of two small single-nave Early Christian churches.

Both churches have been erected over the remains of the older antique horizon. The churches are oriented east-west, with the altar apse in the east. They are leaning against one of the rooms in western military barracks. In architecture of the churches, building material from demolished antique buildings was used secondarily, combined with wooden architecture that has traditionally been known to the new users. Regarding the typology, those are two smaller single-nave buildings with apse in the east. Mutual chronological relationship of the two churches is not completely clear, but it can be assumed that the northern church is slightly younger.



EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH NO. 1 AND MOSAIC WITH REPRESENTATION OF CHRIST'S MONOGRAM

The southern church (1) has narthex of accentuated long shape and smaller rectangular nave (3 x 4. 10 m). Narthex is almost two times higher than nave, which would indicate a bigger number of unbaptized and yet smaller number of Christians - foederati. Floors in the rooms are paved by secondarily used Roman bricks in the narthex and well-polished mortar floor in the nave. At the place of ambo there is a mosaic field with representation of Christogram. The mosaic, 60 x 50 cm dimension, is made in *opus tessellatum* technique of stone tesserae in white, red and gray colors. Composition consists of white rectangular field inside which motif of the Christ's monogram is inscribed with double row of red tesserae and framing bordure in the form of wider band made of gray tesserae. The mosaic was lifted and conserved in 2014 and is presently exhibited at the National Museum in Niš.

The northern church (2) is located at eight meter distance and has smaller dimensions. There are clear traces of seats in the apse (*synthronos*), which presumably was made of wooden structure. The altar area is slightly higher than the nave floor, while de-leveling of the floor is accentuated by a series of arranged fragments of antique brick. Along northern facade of the nave, some space was built that could serve both as *proscomidia* and *diaconicon*. In that room, along the nave wall, fragmented pottery used for the liturgy purpose was found.



EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH NO. 2



ART AND RELIGION





At the residential complex entire territory, as well as in the area between eastern military barracks and western enclosure wall of the villa, larger number of fragmented sculptures was discovered. Their stylistic analysis indicates wide dating range and rich iconography. Sculptures from Mediana belong to category of mythological statuettes (Roman deities, demigods, followers of deities, mythological and genre scenes), but are also syncretistic divinities emerged from merging elements of Roman and autochthonous deities, such as, for example, *Dea Dardaniae* sculpture. The sculptures are replicas of significant works of art from classical Greek and Hellenistic art. Selection of the sculpture iconography reflects the extremely refined taste and personal wealth, but also the ideological aspirations of the owner, cherished taste and excellent knowledge of mythology. The sculptures could have been brought to Mediana from other villas or shrines. High artistic standards are recognized also in furnishings of other imperial residences and homes of aristocrats of the Late Roman Empire, both in the Western and Eastern Provinces.

Important place in the opus of sculptures from Mediana occupies the statue of *Dea Dardania (Dea Dardaniae)*, extremely important for understanding the dynastic ideology at Mediana. The supreme goddess and protector of Dardanian people was worshiped by Constantine's father Constantius Chlorus, and probably also reputed by Constantine himself. The sculpture of *Dea Dardania* was discovered in the area of entrance to the villa, where it had been set primarily, as the important deity of the imperial family in the context of its origin, but also as the supreme goddess of Dardanian people to whom belong Constantius Chlorus and Constantine.

A special group of sculptures comprises statues of deities-healers - *Asclepius* and *Hygeia*. In addition to marble ones, the porphyry statues of those deities were also found as being imported works of art. Inscriptions of dedicants at the sculpture base of *Asclepius* and *Hygeia* clearly affirm the worship of their cult, as well as possible existence of shrines of the deities.

THE BRONZE RAILING

Refinement of taste and attitude towards art is best illustrated by finding of the bronze railing fragments in the hoard discovered about 250 m northwest of the villa with peristyle. The railing consisted of panels (*cancelli*), between which stood hermae with statues of deities. In the hoard have been preserved three panels, one half of the panel cast together with herma, herma with a bust of *Asclepius* and herma with the bust of *Luna*. The railing was constructed in the way that it could be disassembled into parts. Each of the panels along their longer side had two outlets which fitted into bearings on the hermae. Due to the fact that one such bearing was



FINDING OF BRONZE RAILING IN 2000



preserved on half of the panel with herma, one can conclude that it stood in the passage to the reception room and that enclosure was divided into two halves. On herma on half of the panel, we can observe edge of the garment which we also find on herma with Luna. In that way, on the right half of the railing there would stand female deities while on the left half would stand male deities. According to position of the bust of Luna, we can conclude that it occupied central position, while the bust of Asclepius stood at the left end of the left half and was facing the central herma. We can assume that on the left half was the central herma with representation of Sol, as counterpart to Luna, while on the right half we should expect herma with bust of Hygeia, as a counterpart to Asclepius. On the panels there is a motif of crossed laths and their intersections are decorated with heads of lions and medusas. The panels end up in the form of spikes stylized in the shape of lily.

The motif of crossed laths in arrays, which appears on the bronze railing panels from Mediana we find on various monuments from the 1st to the 5th century both in western and eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. Their workmanship points to the late antiquity period, as well as time of the enclosure manufacture. Iconographic analysis of the Asclepius and Luna busts shows strong tradition of classical Greek and Hellenistic art, which at the time of the Roman Empire experienced renaissance. The portrait of Luna largely corresponds to facial features of Fausta, the wife of Constantine I. In case those assumptions are correct, then the enclosure cast can be dated to before 325 year. In addition, representations of Fausta, which are closest to the portrait of Luna, have been dated to 324, the time when Fausta was proclaimed Augusta. We should bear in mind that Fausta was executed in 326.

It is not possible to determine with certainty in which part of the Empire the railing was made. It remains an open question whether the railing was originally intended for the residence in Mediana, or it was brought after its construction. According to historical events, it seems possible that the railing was brought to Mediana as desired by the Emperor Julian, who spent few months in Niš in 361, as well as sculptures of Asclepius and Hygeia (catalogue no. 1-5). Most probably the apse of the reception room in Constantine's villa was turned into a smaller shrine, at which entrance stood the bronze railing. In support of the presented hypothesis stands the immense Emperor Julian's worship of the gods Sol (Helios) and Asclepius.

WORKMANSHIP AND ORIGIN OF MOSAIC ARTISTIC FORM

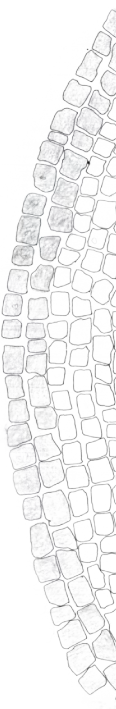
Mosaics inside the villa premises that had the official character (stibadia *A and B, reception room*), differ significantly from the others and are made in much better style which is reflected in selection of decorative compositions, colors and size of the stone tesserae. Bearing in mind large floor surface that was supposed to be decorated with mosaics (around 1.000 m²), one can assume that their workmanship was participated by a number of artisans under supervision of qualified master, where it is certain that figural compositions were performed by specialized masters (*musivarii*). Precise workmanship of mosaic carpets and their proper integration into shapes the room floors outline that iconographic motifs were specially selected and designed for the buildings at Mediana.

Constantine's political victory and new monarchist ideology were particularly expressed in ambitious architectural endeavors. High demand for artisans who, within short period of time, could respond to needs of the new court, engaged almost all of the prominent architects, artists and their workshops in the Empire. Huge reconstruction and remodeling of central part of Mediana into a residential complex between year 330 and 334, is carried out simultaneously with significant hectic activities regarding planning and construction of the new capital of Constantinople.

Need for fast construction and decoration of the villa at Mediana required presence of large number of skillful artisans from various art workshops in the Empire. Colors and use of selected motifs of the masters can be recognized in the most important schools of late antique art from time of the Tetrarchy, as well as in those created under the influence of masters from Thessalonica. We should not ignore influence of the school of Aquileia or one at Dalmatian Coast (Split), then from the North African workshops, which arrived through Sicily and Italy, as well as distant influence of Gallic, or of Aquitaine and eastern Mediterranean workshops.

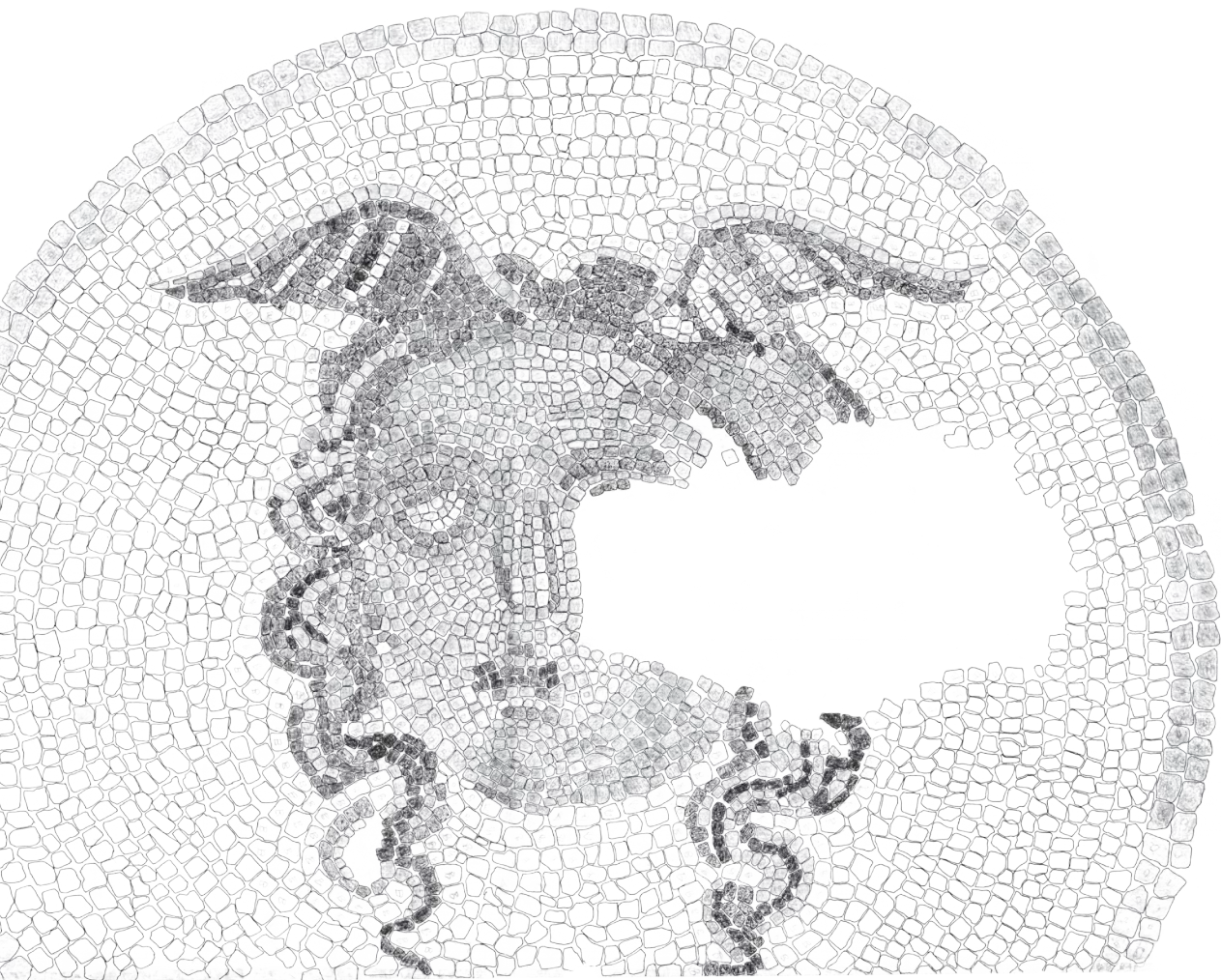
Rich geometric compositions are carefully selected to cover spacious floor surfaces, in accordance with requirements of monumental imperial architecture, so that they do not give the impression of cramped space. Together with two figurative compositions with mythological scenes, they affirm high technical and artistic achievements of mosaics at Mediana, as a result of the joint work of artisans coming from different mosaic workshops. Stylistically speaking, it is very likely that in workmanship of figurative compositions in the reception room took part masters of some of the eastern Mediterranean workshops (the kind one finds in Antioch, Cyprus or the Greek mainland).

GRAPHIC DRAWING OF MOSAIC WITH REPRESENTATION OF MEDUSA



Another possibility that should not be ignored is that from the First Tetrarchy (293-305) time, the court mosaic workshop started being established slowly, where distinguished masters-painters and mosaic makers were received from different places and with different experience. Masters used ready-made templates or drew on the spot various motifs (vegetable, geometric and/or figurative). Influences of the court mosaic workshop are observed on mosaics of imperial residences in Split, Sirmium, Romuliana, Naissus, Mediana, Kostin Brod (*Scretisca* near Sofia) and Thessaloniki.

It is certain that, despite extensive works, in some rooms the process of decorating floors remained unfinished. Prepared mortar and brick paved floors in northern rooms of the villa represent the sub-structure of mosaic floor that had never been made. It remains an open question whether Constantine's death (337) stopped entire renovation of the villa or decoration of villa with mosaics, frescoes and sculptures was continued by Constance, either at the beginning or during his thirteen-year reign.







EVERYDAY LIFE
AT MEDIANA



FIBULAE 2ND - 3RD CENTURY

UTILITARIAN ITEMS

Items for everyday use most clearly show the intensity of life at Mediana, changes that occurred in purpose of the complex of buildings, and, to considerable extent, also ethnicity of its later inhabitants. The largest number of items was discovered in the area that was occupied by the barracks around horeum/warehouses, then around the Early Christian churches, as well as between the western enclosure part of the villa with peristyle and east wing of the barracks. On the basis of those items it is possible to depict a general picture of the late antiquity population everyday life at Mediana.



BRONZE FIGURINES OF GLADIATOR (LEFT)
AND MERCURY (RIGHT)

Items from before the 4th century times are sporadic and they are all made of metal: several different types of bronze and silver fibulae (buckles), bronze jug, bronze bowl and two bronze figurines of Mercury and gladiator. An interesting finding from this period is a bronze lamp, with body in the form of a boat which bow ends with a ram head while on rectangular disc it has the applied standing figure of legionnaire. Since those are metallic, utilitarian items, it is possible that, as a legacy, they were also used during the 4th century.

Movable archeological items that may be ascribed to horizon 2 (around 330-378) are numerous and they clearly indicate that intensive life was going on at Mediana at that time. Find of larger number of crossbow fibulae testifies about the army presence during that period. Some of the army units were stationed even for longer time at Mediana complex while some were in imperial escort only during the emperor's stay at Mediana. It is quite possible that the four gold-plated crossbow fibulae from that period belonged to senior military officials, who received those valuable items from the emperor, as a reward for loyalty they had expressed.



BRONZE LAMP IN THE SHAPE OF BRONZE



GOLD - PLATED CROSSBOW FIBULAE

Other items belonged to civilian population at Mediana that serviced the imperial villa complex. In addition to items for decoration, there were also found fragments of costumes, various tools and instruments, as well as large amount of fragmented vessels made of glass and ceramics.

Among decoration items dominate bracelets of various shapes, made of black glass and of thin bronze wire. Rings are mostly made of bronze, rarely of silver, and preserved specimens show that they were made at some of the local workshops, which existence was confirmed in Naissus during the 4th century. To the imported goods we may also assign two ring gems, one - made of carnelian with engraved schematic representation of a horseman, and the other - of green glass, which has engraved portrait of Silen. Earrings are presented only with few specimens made of bronze, with the exception of one simple specimen that is made of thin gold wire. Several preserved pendants and bigger number of glass beads indicate that wearing of necklaces was widespread among the population of Mediana. Among the pendants stands out the sample in the form of lunula, made of thin lead sheet which is gilded and silvered. The small beads are made of multicolored glass in the form of sphere, cylinder and polyhedron, without decoration or with decoration in the form of incrustation. Noteworthy is also the pendant made of black glass with relief representation of frog and Greek inscription: ZO[HN] (life), which was probably worn as an amulet. There are numerous finds of hairpins with various modeled heads, made of bone and bronze, which were used to decorate women's hairstyles.



GEM OF CARNELIAN WITH ENGRAVED
REPRESENTATION OF HORESMAN



GEM OF GREEN GLASS WITH ENGRAVED
PORTRAIT OF SILEN

Parts of garments and footwear are mainly made of bronze, and less of iron: buttons, different types of buckles, propeller belt stiffeners, belt pendants in the shape of heart or amphorae, etc.

Iron instruments and tools of various shapes and purposes were found in large numbers and they belong to the most numerous movable inventory from Mediana. Predominant still are blades for cutting meat, skin and peeling tree bark, then various blades, chisels, axes, drift pin punches, pins, stylus, pruning knives, sickles and whetstones.

Having suffered the fire damage in 378, the settlement received an entirely different character during the horizon 3 (378-441). Numerous finds of iron tools point to intensive agricultural and artisan activities, while about the continuity of the military units stay at Mediana witness parts of military equipment typical for that period.

The new inhabited Gothic population is attributed numerous iron fibulae with a foot turned up, a bronze fibula with wide broad rhomboid foot and semicircular head, two bronze rings (one with circular bezel decorated with engraved representation of cross, the other with circular bezel in which is set a red glass paste), bone double row comb and beads made of amber, red opal and glass.

From the last horizon of life originates greater number of fragments of glass vessels, mainly beakers and colorless and green glass bottles. The most beautiful specimens include beaker made of greenish glass decorated with blue applied dot-like ornament and fragments of the black glass vessel decorated with incrustation containing motifs of bird and various flowers.



BONE HAIRPINS



**GOLD - PLATED PENDANT IN THE
FORM OF LUNULA**



**BELT PENDANT IN THE SHAPE
OF HEART**



**GLASS PENDANT WITH
REPRESENTATION OF FROG**



BRONZE BUCKLES



BRONZE RING WITH CIRCULAR BEZEL
IN WHICH IS SET RED GLASS PASTE



BRONZE RING WITH CIRCULAR BEZEL EN-
GRAVED WITH REPRESENTATION OF CROSS



BEADS MADE OF AMBER, OPAL AND GLASS



FRAGMENTS OF GLASS VESSEL DECORATED WITH MOTIFS OF BIRD AND FLOWERS



BEAKER MADE OF GREENISH GLASS WITH APPLIED DOT - LIKE ORNAMENT

At Mediana were also found considerable amounts of ceramic vessels that were used for preparation, serving and storage of food, as well as substantial number of ceramic lamps. Ceramics is quite uniform and mostly made of sandy soil structure of gray and rarely brown fire-baked color. Regarding kitchen or tableware, the most numerous are pots followed by lids and bowls, while jugs occur in small numbers. There are also vessels that were used for grinding grain and spices, and for making sauces (mortaria). For storing foods pythoi were used, but they appear at Mediana in small numbers. Of special mention is existence of larger number of amphorae that were most likely used for transport of wine, which production has been verified at Mediana.

Most vessels of fire-baked earth belong to local 4th century production, but there are also few samples of vessels imported from the Asia Minor and Syria territories. Although for the time being furnaces for ceramics manufacture are unknown either at Mediana or in Nais, it is very likely that in both centers used to exist workshop for manufacturing the ceramic vessels.

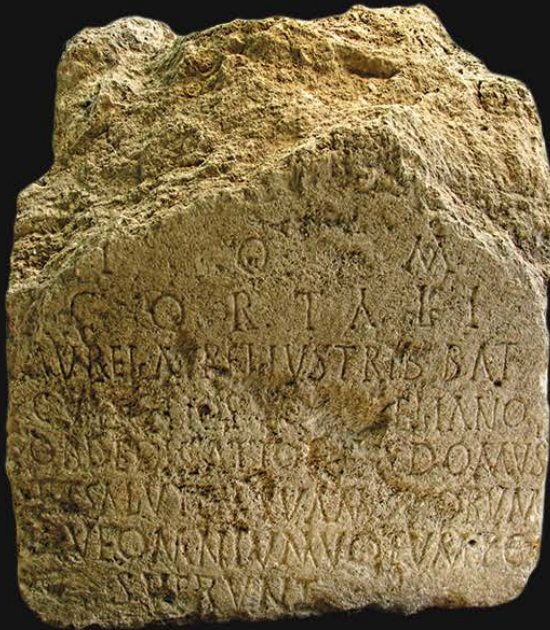
EPIGRAPHIC MONUMENTS

Until present, no inscriptions that would explicitly validate that the Mediana complex was orientated as the imperial estate, however, two inscriptions indirectly point to that possibility. One inscription was found in warehouse/horeum and was used secondarily. The inscription mentions *Aurelius Ampelius, tribunus Batavorum*.

The inscription reads:

I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Co(ho)rtali / Aurel(ius) Ampelius trib(unus) Bat(avorum) / cum filio suo Ampeliano / ob dedicationem domus / et salutem suam suorum / que omnium votum po/suerunt. [To Jupiter, the Best and the Greatest Protector of cohorts - Aurelius Ampelius commander (tribune of the units) of Batavi, with his son Ampeliano, in honor of consecration of the house and his health and (health) of his (family) have set (the) covenant].

It is assumed that the inscription originates from the time of Constantine I. Batavi were in units that served in the imperial guard (*auxilia palatina*), meaning that they were attached to the mobile army (*comitatenses*) which accompanied the Emperor on his travels and in military operations. Aurelius Ampelius sets an inscription *ob dedicationem domus*. It is not excluded that the phrase *ob dedicationem* relates to construction of the imperial villa at Mediana, or to some later alteration, and that *domus* is only abbreviation for *domus divina*, that is imperial palace or residence, which we find in the 5th century texts relating to various imperial



**VOTIVE MONUMENT
DEDICATED TO JUPITER**



**VOTIVE MONUMENT DEDICATED
TO THE INVINCIBLE GOD**

palaces in the Orient. In northern Gaul, the cavalry units *Primani* which were part of the imperial guard as Batavi, took part in construction of the estate that has been identified as the imperial estate with residential villa in Welschbillig, where horses had been probably raised. The above analogy can be considered also for some parts of the complex at Mediana. Besides the large space (60 x 50 m dimensions) north from the villa with peristyle, which was probably used for keeping horses, south from the villa there is partially excavated enclosed space, while on the external side of the southern wall a small residential building is positioned. The enclosed area had larger dimensions and could have served as space for exercising and keeping horses (manege, paddock), according to which the complex at Mediana could be related to breeding and horse training, appropriate to the imperial estate and needs of the cavalry units of the imperial guard.

The second inscription, in fragmented condition, was used as building material for the southern church construction. The inscription fragments are too small in order to make some specific conclusions or to reconstruct the inscription, but the two words there are characteristic. The first preserved line contains the word "*domi[-nus, -ini, -orum]*" ("master": the title of Emperor), and in the second line there is the word "*providentiae*" behind which could stand *augustae (-i)* meaning "the imperial providence". The aforementioned leads us to hypothesis that the inscription was related to a certain emperor.

The third inscription from Mediana (the second one that was found in warehouse/horeum), had the text in just two lines: *Deo Invicto* (to the Invincible God), which is the most common epithet for the god Mithras or god Sol.

FINDS OF ROMAN COINS

Considering the significant quantity of money finds at Mediana (over 1.000 pieces), it can be concluded that specimens from the second half of the 3rd century are sporadic and are only remains of high inflation of bronze coins before Diocletian's reform, which were also used in transactions during the 4th century. Had the settlement at Mediana originated at that time, we would have the 3rd century coins represented in much bigger quantities, starting from inflationary emissions of the Emperor Galien onwards. Due to the aforementioned, more acceptable assumption is that the first horizon buildings at Mediana were built at the very end of the 3rd century, perhaps at the First Tetrarchy time already, or immediately after the year 300. Circulation of money begins to grow from 310 to 324 and the largest annual percentage we find during 318-320 period, exactly at the time when Constantine occasionally resided at Nais. After that, between year 320 and 324 the money circulation declines, while new growth was recorded again in the 330-337 period. Balanced money circulation was also in the period until year 348. That was the time when Constantine's sons from time to time stayed at Podunavlje (the Danube River basin parts in Serbia) and Constance spent year 339/340 in Nais and certainly at Mediana. Due to poor preservation of the coins, it is not possible to date to the particular year pieces from that period, but it is very likely that the circulation increased exactly during the Emperor's stay. That would also explain the circulation in 355-361 related to the Emperor Julian's stay in Nais and Mediana during year 361. Also, stays of the Emperors Valentinian and Valens at Mediana in 364 resulted by increased circulation of money in the period between 364 and 375.

Finds of the coins from 383-392 and 425-441 show life of the third, last horizon, for which is very important the hoard of money found in one of the rooms of horeum / wine cellar. In the hoard, period between 383 and 392 is characterized by maximum circulation of money, which then rapidly drops in 441. Although not

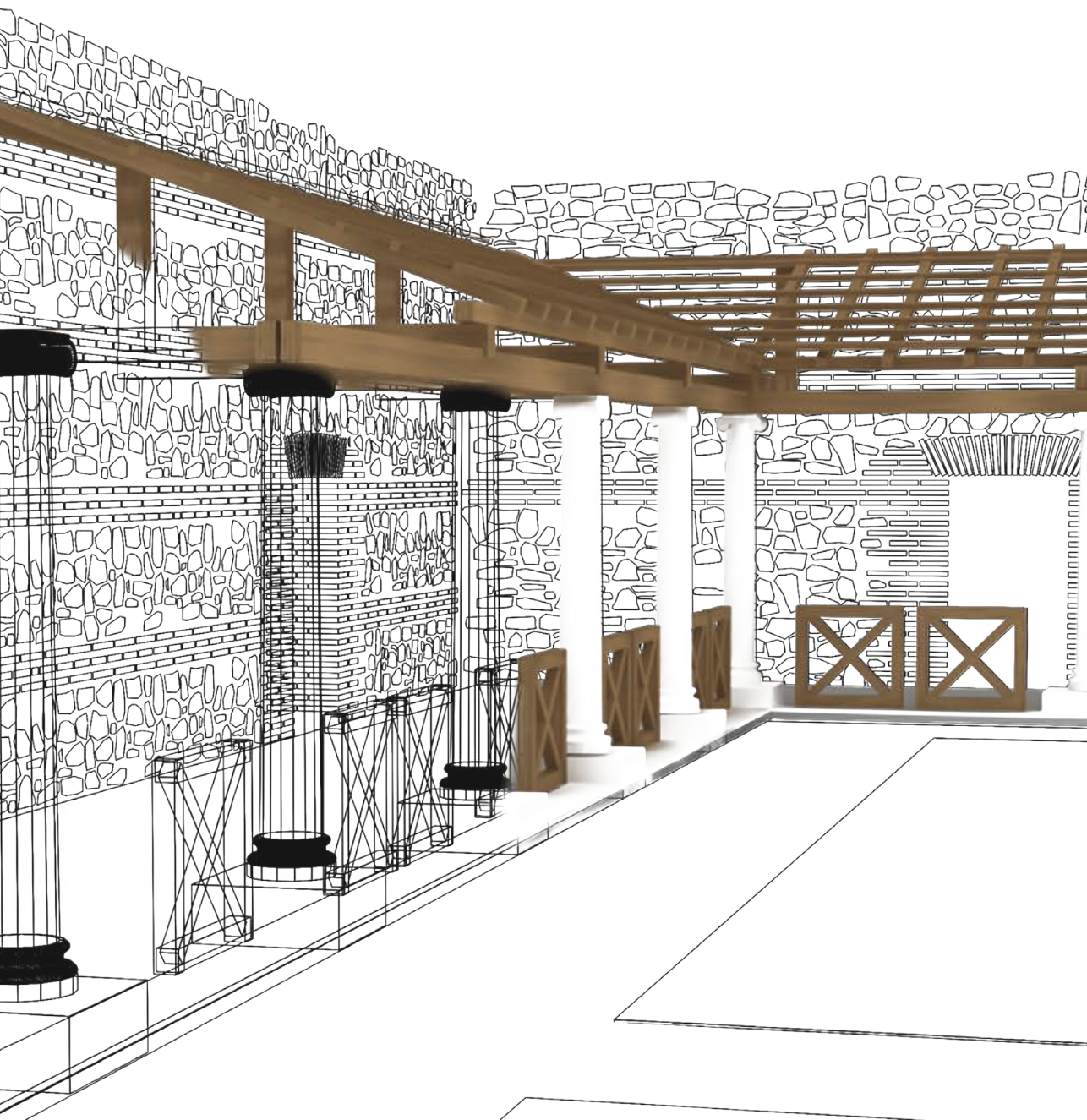
so numerous, also finds of coins from the last horizon, from the villa with peristyle, can be dated to time of the money hoard in horeum. Maximum circulation of money here is confirmed between 383 and 392, with decline noted in 425-441 period, which coincided with invasion of the Huns and demolition of Mediana in year 441.



BRONZE COIN OF CRISPUS (324-330)



INTERPRETATION AND
IDEOLOGICAL MESSAGE OF MEDIANA



IDEAL RECONSTRUCTION OF NORTHWEST PART OF PERISTYLE

In interpreting the Mediana complex one should start from the fact that Mediana was built and perhaps received the status of vicus probably at the end of the 3rd century, with bigger number of individual villas and their respective estates. Excavations have shown that at the area now occupied by the villa with peristyle, as well as at the area around horeum and between barracks and villa enclosure, there were buildings that had been deliberately destroyed and leveled, and on their remains a new building complex was built. Somewhere, under the walls of younger structures, remains of an older architectural horizon have been observed, but for now, there are no records that there were built houses at Mediana before the end of the 3rd century.

Comprehensive and expensive works, demolitions and reconstructions could have been carried out only by a very rich person of high rank. In Nais, however, no aristocrats or senators were recorded, who were the richest social class after the emperor and who had sufficient funds to carry out the whole idea regarding the villa complex at Mediana. The new-constructed buildings are of imposing dimensions, with organization and design of more official appearance, not as facilities that were used exclusively for rest and leisure, and, occasionally for economic activities (*otium et negotium*). In that regard, excavations of the space occupied by the villa with peristyle with additional buildings within the enclosure wall showed extremely formal character of the construction. For decorating the villa, the most expensive marble was used while frescoes were painted by the most expensive paints. Power of the customer who ordered the major reconstruction and decoration is also confirmed by construction of water tower, which supplied with water exclusively the complex of buildings at Mediana.

According to Ammiano Marcellino's writings about the two brothers' stay and division of the army, one can conclude that Mediana was the imperial estate. Undoubtedly, we should be extremely cautious when identifying certain villas as the imperial residences or palaces, but it is necessary to emphasize that also some of the emperors, especially until the time of Theodosius I, often travelled all over the Empire. Within the context of the question where the emperors and their escort used to stay during the trips, it is known that, for example, the emperors stayed in Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica), where the researches confirmed the complex which belonged to the royal palace. During the 4th century, the emperors also stayed in Viminacium (Kostolac) so that there had to be a residence, too. According to all the above mentioned, Nais should be the next bigger place where the emperors used to stay. In the northwest part of Nais, a large building with an octagonal hall was excavated, possibly a part of the imperial palace, which does not exclude desire of Constantine the Great to build a villa in the suburb of his native Nais.

The concept of administration headquarters and residence of Emperor required halls for state receptions, rooms for reception and entertainment of foreign rulers and deputies followed by large number of people from the emperor's environment. Such halls had to be of much larger dimensions compared to those at the private citizens' houses, regardless how rich and powerful they were. In addition, the emperor's presence also involved receiving of applications and appeals, conducting the state legal affairs and adoption of laws and other state regulations. Accordingly, there had to be special space for those activities within the palace during the late antiquity (4th-5th century). Such concept can be found exactly in Mediana.

After the monarchy had been established, Constantine's builders began construction of public buildings throughout the Empire, and the Emperor himself was preoccupied with establishing new capital and palace on the Bosphorus. Within the general representation of the Emperor, it was necessary to decorate and mark the place of his birth and prepare it as it is appropriate for an inviolable monarch. Sovereignty and prestige, but also the royal origin, had to be marked in accordance with already existing values expressed in residences and villas owned by Diocletian (Split), Galerius (Romuliana - Gamzigrad), as well as by other dignitaries. Narrowness and overpopulation of the ancient fortified town of Nais hindered erection of monumental constructions or thorough reconstruction of the existing infrastructure. Imperial domain, occupying dominant place at Mediana, on the route *via publica* was extremely convenient for demonstrating the dynastic power and origin. The works were extensive, fast, but also consistent with preparations for celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of his rule. After the reconstruction completion, the appearance was completely changed, as well as the meaning of the central space at Mediana. Its public, administrative and private characters were featured simultaneously. By using featured elements in architecture and decoration, the existing building was transformed into the residence with all attributes contained in the adjective "imperial".

Despite the fragmentary preserved pieces of the Constantine's villa with peristyle architecture, the major part of which has been researched, the building appearance may be restored with some certainty. The south entryway of the villa is accentuated by deep access porch with massive columns carrying the arcades. At the bordering section towards the peristyle, a part in the form of big semicalotte (sky) resting on massive pylons was built additionally. Porches in the courtyard were extended and 50 marble columns were set on cubic pedestals and stylobate. Walls of the porch are decorated with frescoes, and floors were lavishly paved with mosaics. Arrangement of the spacious courtyard can be estimated only on the basis of a large pool (impluvium) of 242 m² surface. On foundation remains of the massive wall one can recognize impressions of square pedestals, which were carrying the pillars

colonnade with architrave ending. Other parts of the courtyard could have had features of the ordinary antique landscape with numerous plants of Mediterranean origin, local plants and lined up sculptures in natural size or on pedestals.

The reception room was also re-arranged for the needs of new users. Its accentuation in architecture as well as dominance emphasized finalization the emperor's ceremonial passing. North, semicircular part of the room was carrying a monumental semicalotte of around 12 m diameter. In the southern rectangular part, ceiling was probably flat with false ceiling, which was fresco-painted and imitated monumental stone caisson ceilings. The walls were decorated with marble cladding panels and maybe were fresco painted or decorated with wall mosaics. At the pass from rectangular into semicircular space, the triumphal arch rests on pilasters formed in the upper zones of marble semi-capitals. Glazed windows in the upper zones of the room illuminated the room and with plenty of shadows supplemented its festive look and character. The reception room entrance was wide, with double doors, architravely ending with doorjambs of profiled marble. The entrance part was emphasized also by placing elevated podium with gabled roof and a triangular gable that was carried by the massive marble pillars.

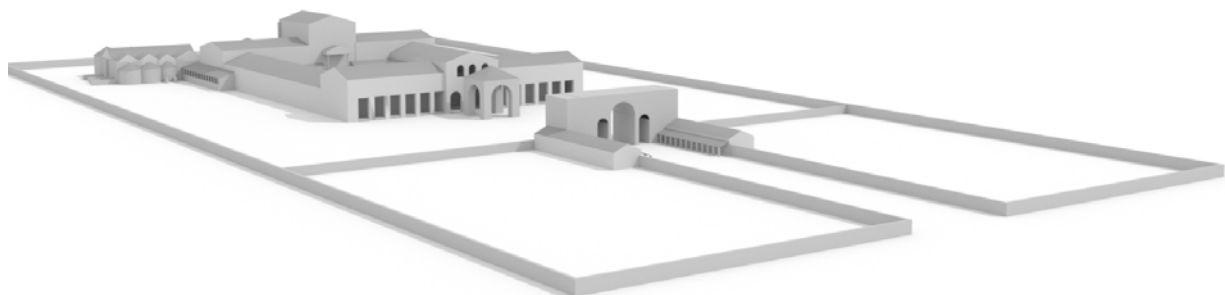
Special attention was paid also to presentation of the floor mosaic at the reception room and at the access. There are represented two mosaics with figural representations as follows: in the central part of the room there is representation of Medusa's head while at the podium is mythological scene with representation of the river god and Leda and the Swan.

Northwest and northeast from the reception room, two independent smaller banquet rooms framed the total rearrangement concept of the strict administrative building for needs of the residence. Jagged basis of stibadia A and B, shafting the walls with expensive marble plates, colors and motifs on the floor mosaics, traces of gilding in the upper zones of the walls and stibadium dome clearly indicate the owner's status. For the building reconstruction, high-quality marble was used for construction of architectural elements, while stone, glass and ceramics were used for mosaics, as well as expensive materials for painting the frescoes, together with application of new construction systems such as vault, calottes and semicalottes that enhanced monumentality, representativeness and significance of the building.

In new organization of the building, there was clearly marked direction of moving down the ceremonial approach roadway through the monumental antique gate in the form of triumphal arch then continuing through the rooms for presentation (*salutatorium*) and waiting purposes. The ceremonial approach road led through the peristyle to the reception room (*consitorium*) and banquet rooms of stibadia A and B. The monumental character expressed by accented architectural

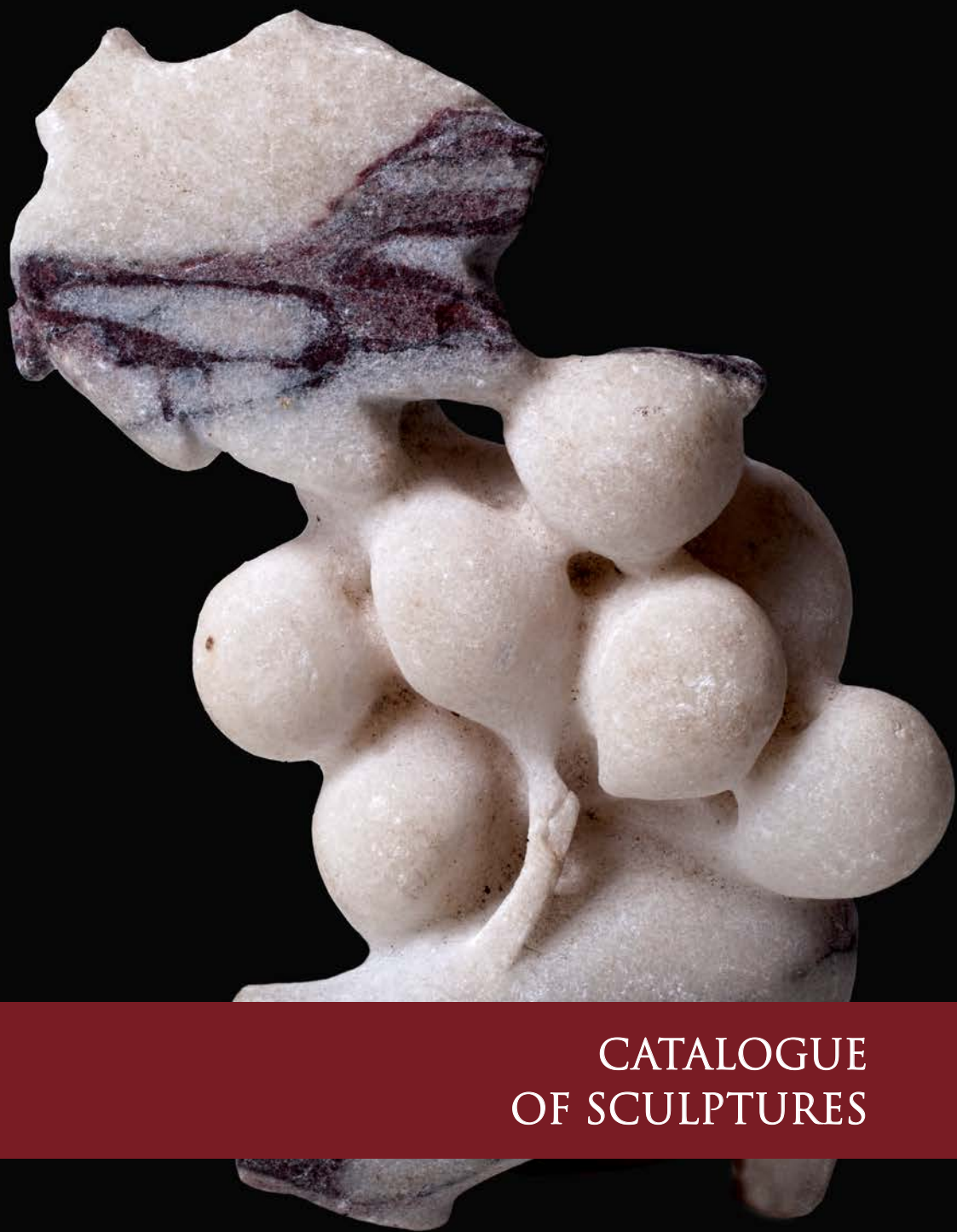
In accordance with general artistic aspirations of the late antiquity pagan elitism, the villa with peristyle and villa with octagon are decorated with geometric or figural mosaics as well as with sculptures with mythological themes. It was necessary to show refined taste of the owner and their knowledge of antique mythology and philosophy. No wonder that the villa, which belonged to the Christian rulers, was decorated with pagan motifs. As already emphasized, those were primarily sculptures and mosaics that served purely decorative purpose, rather than religious items. They could carry also philosophical messages, because the antique deities often received allegorical interpretations close to the Christian religion. It is not unusual that desire for collecting sculptures that adorned villas of the emperors and aristocracy, appeared during the 4th century. Constantine the Great placed such collections in the new capital, Constantinople. In his wish to adorn it, he ordered the big number of ancient monuments to be brought from the main cities of Greece and Asia Minor, as it was also the case at Mediana. In that way, classical education enabled the owner of the villa at Mediana, while at the same time looking at sculptures and mosaics and comparing them with literary culture, to create a harmonious relationship with foundations of the living Roman tradition and many virtues that participated in its creation. Thus coexistence of the pagan and Christian ideas has been shown in the best way, especially in regard to the works of art. Only at the time of Julian the Apostate, a sanctuary dedicated to Asclepius and Hygeia could have been established at the Constantine's villa, due to the fact that votive inscriptions placed at the pedestals of some statuettes, clearly indicate that they were used in worshipping the cult of Aesculapius.

Last pages of the late antique history had been written in the late 4th and early 5th century, by bringing the Gothic foederati to the imperial estate, where they established their settlement, perhaps significantly, according to the Episcopal Church. After invasion of the Huns in 441, that part of Mediana was not reconstructed and only since the 12th century it has become re-inhabited.



IDEAL RECONSTRUCTION OF COMPLEX OF CONSTANTINE'S VILLA





CATALOGUE
OF SCULPTURES





It has already been mentioned that at the territory of Mediana, numerous fragmented statuettes have been discovered. Only in the second phase of the villa with peristyle reconstruction, it was decorated with sculptures. The aforementioned is also shown by those found in thermae, which were also brought there after the thermae remodeling. It probably happened at the Emperor Constans time, during his longer stay in Nais and probably at Mediana, in 339/40. Besides the statues and statuettes described in the catalog of sculptures, at the territory of villa with peristyle and its surrounding, a number of small sculpture fragments was found, such as parts of the legs of human figures and animals, parts of the arms, hands and animal paws, part of a hand with round attribute (an apple, an egg?) and so on. Fragmented state of the mentioned parts of the sculptures does not allow more accurate determination of the statue or the statue groups found so far, but number of the above mentioned fragments suggests that many of the sculptures adorned the late antique buildings at the territory of Mediana.

Due to their dimensions, the statuettes had to stand on pedestals in order to be at the eye level of a viewer. In the villa with peristyle, in room w-16 (west), such a pedestal was discovered in the form of ara, but there is also a fragmented one, with larger dimensions, definitely found in the villa, but the exact place of its finding is unknown.

New analysis of the sculptures from Mediana showed that both dates and attributions slightly differ from the previously proposed.

The sculptures found in the room w-4 of the villa with peristyle during the excavations in 1972:



1. PORPHYRY SCULPTURE OF THE GOD ASCLEPIUS

43 cm height, inv. no. 985/R

The statue of the god is missing the head and right arm. The body of the god is in contrapposto pose, his body relying on his left foot while right leg is slightly bent at the knee and moved forward. Asclepius is dressed in richly pleated himation, which is not covering the god's right arm and most of his torso. One part of the himation is draped over his left arm and falls down on the god's feet, on which he has sandals. Naked part of the deity's torso points to skillfully and realistically modeled strong male body with accentuated muscles. In his left hand he holds a globe or an egg, while in his right hand he was probably holding the snake-entwined staff. The sculpture of the god stands on a rectangular pedestal with a Greek inscription dedicated to Asclepius, which translation reads: "To Asclepius the Savior, Roimetalkes and his wife Philipa gratefully raise the monument." Porphyry statue of the god Asclepius belongs to widespread circle of deity sculptures with uniform iconographic form generated even in classical Greek period. The statue can be dated to the period from second half of the 2nd to early 4th century.

2. PORPHYRY SCULPTURE OF THE GODDESS HYGEIA

49 cm height, inv.no. 986/R

The statue of Hygeia is also missing the head. The goddess is dressed in a long chiton falling down her legs in rich folds, over which a himation is draped. Hygeia stands in contrapposto pose, her body relying on her left foot, while her right leg is slightly bent and moved backwards. The body of the goddess is skillfully modeled, except her breasts which the artist was not able to present realistically. Hygeia's left arm is bent at the elbow and the goddess holds a patera in it. Around the divinity's right arm a snake is entwined, moving toward the patera. The statue stands on a rectangular pedestal on which is carved a Greek inscription which reads: "To Hygeia, Roimetalkes, diasemotatos, and his wife Philipa grateful raise the monument." The sculpture of Hygeia from Mediana is modeled after widespread iconographic type of the goddess representation, on which she usually holds patera in her hand and a snake wrapped around one of the arms. Considering that the statue was also placed by Roimetalkes as votive gift, it can be also dated to the period from second half of 3rd century to the first decades of the 4th century.



3. MARBLE SCULPTURE OF ASCLEPIUS WITH TELESPHOROS

52 cm height, inv.no. 987/R, 988/R and 988a/R

The statue is missing the right arm, left hand and almost whole figure of (only the boy's right foot is preserved). The figure stands in contrapposto pose, weight of the body is on the left leg while the right leg is bent at the knee and slightly moved behind the left leg. Head of the god, fragmented in the upper face, shows that Asclepius was represented with long hair coming down to his shoulders and short beard, parted in the middle. Small mouth with full lips and partially preserved right eye, point to carefully and realistically modeling of the face features. The god is dressed in a long, pleated himation which does not cover right side of the figure upper torso and his right shoulder. Naked part of the right side of the deity's upper torso suggests harmoniously shaped body of the god. Sculptural group of Asclepius with his son Telesphoros stands on pedestal with Greek inscription which translation reads: "To Asclepius the Savior, Sim [...] a priest."



Although the figure of Telesphoros was not preserved, on the basis of analogous specimens from other regions of the Roman Empire, one can assume that the sculptural group of Asclepius with Telesphoros from Mediana belonged to the widely known iconographic type of representations of Asclepius and Telesphoros where the god is shown as a mature, bearded man who in one hand held a staff with a snake wrapped around it, in the other hand a patera, and at his knee height stood a small figure of Telesphoros a boy, with a hood on his head and with a long cloak. Although representations of Telesphoros as a boy have been known since the 4th century BC, somewhat hybrid representations of Telesphoros (figure of a boy with posture and clothing of an adult person) with the god Asclepius become very common from the 2nd century. Sculptural group of Asclepius with Telesphoros is dated to the first half of the 4th century.

4. MARBLE SCULPTURE OF ASCLEPIUS WITH TELESPHOROS

24 cm height, inv.no. 989/R

Asclepius's head, right arm and feet are missing. Figure of the god stands in contrapposto pose, his body relying on his left foot while right leg is slightly bent at the knee and moved backward. Asclepius is dressed in a long pleated himation, which leaves the right side of the upper torso uncovered. Naked part of the deity's body is harmoniously shaped with clearly indicated chest part of the body. Next to Asclepius' left leg, at his knee height figure of the boy Telesphoros is presented, with a hood on his head, mantled with a long cloak. The boy's facial features are only slightly indicated, just as not much attention was paid to modeling of his body. Like the previous sculptural group of Asclepius with Telesphoros, this statuary composition also belongs to the same iconographic type of representations and is approximately dated to the first half of the 4th century.



5. MARBLE SCULPTURE OF GODDESS HYGEIA

35 cm height, inv.no. 999/R

The statue is missing the head and left hand. Hygeia stands in contrapposto pose, her body weight on her right leg, while her left leg knee is mildly bent and the leg is slightly moved backward. Body of the goddess is dressed into long, pleated chiton while also long himation richly pleated at her breasts, is draped over her and falling down up to her knees. Arms are bent at the elbows, with her right hand the goddess holds her gown, while probably in her left hand was a patera. The iconographic type of the goddess Hygeia representation does not vary from the widespread iconographic pattern of representing deities and according to stylistic features it can be dated to the first half of the 3rd century.





6. MARBLE SCULPTURE OF APHRODITE SOSANDRA
49 cm height, inv.no. 1000/R

The head, left forearm and left hand are missing. The statue stands in contrapposto posture, relying on her right leg while the left leg is slightly bent at the knee and moved backward. She is wearing a long chiton, over which is draped himation which in rich folds she holds by her right hand. The left arm is bent at the elbow and stretched, while the right arm, also bent at the elbow, is placed on the chest and her hand is on her left shoulder. Although head of the statue is missing, one may quite accurately assume that it is representation of the goddess Aphrodite Sosandra ("Savior of Men"), modeled after the famous bronze statue of Aphrodite Sosandra by sculptor Kalamis in 465 BC. Analogous representations allow an assumption regarding head of the goddess with wavy hair parted in the middle with a veil draped over, beautifully shaped arched eyebrows, almond-shaped eyes, proper nose and small mouth, as well as with restrained facial expression with vulnerable smile. The sculpture of Aphrodite Sosandra from Mediana is dated to the 2nd century.



7. MARBLE SCULPTURE OF A NUDE MAN
HERMES/ MERCURY
47cm height, inv.no. 994/R

Figure of a nude man in the standing position of contrapposto, relying on his left leg, while the right leg is slightly bent at the knee and moved backward. The head, both arms, left leg up to the knee and right leg from mid-thigh are missing. Over his left shoulder is draped a himation, which falls in rich folds, and on the right thigh is visible trace of statue support. Body of the statue is very carefully and skillfully shaped – the thorax and abdomen muscles were performed with anatomical precision. On the basis of spectroscopic analysis, the torso includes pedestal with a ram (catalogue no. 8). The sculpture, according to analogy and sculpturing of chlamys, could be dated to the end of the 2nd and beginning of the 3rd century.

8. MARBLE PEDESTAL WITH A PAIR OF HUMAN FEET AND REPRESENTATION OF A RAM

27 x 20 x 6, 5 cm dimensions, inv.no. 995/R

Fragmented sculptural group with preserved rectangular pedestal on which the left foot and right leg of the male figure can be observed which, with right side of the body, are leaning against a tree (column?) next to which is presented fragmented figure of a ram. The ram is presented with its head raised towards the male figure, with very minutiously shaped horns, unlike other details on its head. Considering the fact that analogy with statuary groups of Mercury and ram is obvious, one can assume that this is also representation of the god Mercury with one of his animal followers - a ram.

9. MARBLE SCULPTURE OF GOD HERCULES WITH ERYMANTHIAN BOAR

12,7cm height, inv.no. 997/R

Fragmented statuary composition of the god Hercules with Erymanthian boar, of which is preserved part of the statue support, part of the lower left leg of a man and head of Erymanthian boar. At the support upper part there are visible lion's paws. Head of the Erymanthian boar is modeled in low relief, while stylistic features and careful design allow the assumption of high quality sculpture. Fragmented representation of Hercules with Erymanthian boar shows one of 12 labors of the deity – slaying the dangerous animal and analogously to similar Roman representations, probably is presented within dodecatlon cycles where boar is symbolically presented beside the god (as opposed to the Greek representations depicting boar below the Hercules' feet or Hercules carrying the slayed beast on his shoulders). Statuary composition of Hercules with Erymanthian boar from Mediana is dated to the middle of the 4th century.





10. MARBLE SCULPTURE OF HERCULES WITH
THE APPLES OF THE HESPERIDES

14 cm height, inv.no. 996/R

Fragmented representation of the god Hercules with apples from the garden of the Hesperides. The god's right hand has been preserved, with the lion's skin slung over him and three apples in his closed fist. The lion's skin is modeled in great detail, with carefully sculpted lion's head, claws and phalanges of the fingers, which shows the high quality of the sculpture. Fragmented composition of Hercules with the apples of the Hesperides from Mediana was created after the Farnese Hercules type of representations and is dated to the middle of the 4th century.



11. MARBLE SCULPTURE OF LANTERNARIUS,
A SLAVE WHO CARRIES A LANTERN

52 cm height, inv.no. 990/R

Head, both arms up to the elbows and right leg below the knee are missing. Fragmented statue of a young man sitting on a stylized base with his left leg raised, bent at the knee. According to position of the left hand, one can assume that it was resting on his left leg, while the right hand was laid beside his stretched right leg. The young man is dressed in a short chiton, while over his back and left side of his chest a long himation is thrown. In earlier literature defined as dadophora statue, the sculpture of young men can be recognized more as representation of a slave carrying a lantern goods carrying a lantern. Details of the young man's clothing were not designed with care, but rather schematically, so that the sculpture can be dated to the period from the 3rd to early 4th century.

12. MARBLE HEAD OF A SATYR

20 cm height, inv.no. 991/R

Fragmented head of the satyr, damaged at the lower right part of the face, right side of the neck and part of ivy wreath. The boy's head is turned to the left, so that it can be assumed that it was slightly leaned to his left shoulder. The boy is presented with curly hair in which there is a crown made of ivy tied with ribbons. His facial features are correct and reflect gentle, boyish face with large eyes, small nose and full, smiling lips. Carefully shaped goat ears emerge among the dense curls of the boy's haircut. Head of the satyr statue from Mediana was created after the classicist models from the 1st and 2nd century and thanks to the softer treatment, the youthful face has almost dreamy expression. The satyr's head is dated to the end of the 2nd and beginning of 3rd century.



13. MARBLE HEAD OF A PANTHER

25 cm height, inv.no. 992/R

Head of a panther with slightly elongated neck, damaged in the muzzle area. Panther has raised his head and is looking upward. His eyes with pointed eye pupils and mouth with canine teeth indicate the consistent attention paid to modeling of details. Ears of the animal are also precisely designed, as well as part of the muzzle which has been preserved. According to analogous sculptures and performed spectroscopic analysis, head of the panther belongs to composition with the satyr (catalogue no. 12), where the panther is shown by the satyr's left leg and is looking up at him.



14. MARBLE PEDESTAL WITH A PAIR OF HUMAN FEET AND SUPPORT IN THE FORM OF A COLUMN

34 x 20 x 4, 5 cm dimensions, inv.no. 998/R

Two feet at the pedestal were preserved while next to the left foot there is a column of which only base is preserved, ornamented with acanthus leaves. Lack of any kind of attributes does not allow either closer identification of a deity or a hero, or more precise dating of the composition, except to wider chronological range between the 3rd and 4th century.



15. MARBLE FRAGMENTED SCULPTURAL COMPOSITION – POSSIBLE FROM THE CULT OF DIONYSUS

94 cm height, inv.no. 993/R

From the entire composition is preserved only the support (column) of the statue or of the statuary group, with branches and grapes, partly human legs and partly representation of an animal (probably panther). It is visible and represents a lizard in the grapes. Height of the preserved part of the sculptural group is 94 cm, which indicates that it is composition of monumental proportions, probably one of the scenes from the cult of the god Dionysus. Realistically shaped details of the grape, lizard and four-legged animal imply the high quality statuary group, most likely created at the beginning of the 4th century.





Other sculptures from the villa with peristyle area:

16. MARBLE SCULPTURE OF DEA DARDANIA

134 cm height, inv.no. 229/R

Fragmented statue of Dardanian supreme goddess, head over which a veil was draped, is missing. The deity's body relies on the left leg while right leg is slightly bent at the knee and moved backward. The goddess Dardania is dressed in a long chiton and in her left stretched hand is holding a bag of money, while in her right hand of the arm bent at the elbow she is holding a small figure of an ox. Next to the goddess's left leg a head of a wild boar is presented, above which is a double-edged ax - labris. Attributes that the goddess holds in her hands, as well as wild boar and double-edged ax, point to the goddess as the patron of nature, animals and natural resources (minerals, grains etc.). Himation of the goddess Dardania from Mediana is presented in linear schematized folds, while hands and details of animal traits are also modeled rather poorly. Due to those reasons, but also analogously to other iconographic representations, this statue is dated to the period from the second half of the 3rd to early 4th century.

17. MARBLE HEAD OF THE GODDESS VENUS
25 cm height, inv.no. 1108/R

Damaged in the nose, lips and chin areas. Despite the damage, one can notice great attention and skill used for modeling the deity's oval face features – big almond-shaped eyes, straight nose and full lips. Wavy hair of the Venus Pudica (ashamed) is parted in the middle and collected with tenia into typical hairstyle in the form of knot (*krobylos*), while on the nape of her neck it is tied in a low bun. On the left side of her neck one lock is falling down. Fullness of the goddess body is implied by two arched lines on the neck, known as the Venus's necklace, which besides sensuality expressed in the figure of the goddess, further confirms that this is representation of the goddess Venus. To the sculpture to which the head used to belong also belongs the pedestal with woman's feet and dolphin head (catalogue no. 18), which was established by spectroscopic analysis. This determined the type of Venus - that it was Venus Pudica with the dolphin. According to the sculpture stylistic features, it can be dated between the end of the 3rd century and early 4th century.



18. MARBLE PEDESTAL WITH A PAIR OF
WOMAN'S AND A DOLPHIN'S HEAD
42 x 27 x 7 cm dimensions, inv.no. 1108a

Fragmented pedestal of the statue with preserved pair of woman's feet on the left side and a dolphin's head on the right. Carefully sculptured toes on the feet and dolphin's head indicate that this is skillfully modeled statuary composition of the high quality. Dolphin represents typical animal follower of the goddess Venus.



During the excavations in 2002, fragment of the head from the god Asclepius sculpture was discovered and in 2011, fragment of the porphyry sculpture with a snake on patera (probably it used to belong to the statue of Hygeia) was found.



The sculptures found in 1933 during the *thermae* excavations:

19. MARBLE SCULPTURAL GROUP OF
HERCULES WITH TELEPHUS

38 cm height, inv.no. 174/R

There are preserved fragment of a pedestal with a column, figure of a boy Telephus and four-legged animal, probably a hind. The boy is shown with the right hand raised while with his left hand he is touching the animal's head. The boy's look is directed upward to the statue of Hercules, which has not been preserved. The Telephus's nude body is sculptured with gentleness and fullness of a real child's body, with attention paid to details during the modeling (navel, genitals). Boy's facial features are so damaged that are almost unrecognizable. However, longer, wavy hair is clearly visible. Fragmented sculptural group of Hercules with Telephus is dated to the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 4th century.



20. MARBLE SCULPTURE OF A SATYR

32 cm height, inv.no. 171/R

Fragmented statue of a satyr from which only torso of Dionysus's follower is preserved (head, arms and legs are missing). Over right side of the torso is skin of a hind or a goat tied in a knot while the animal skin endings (hooves) are freely falling down. Head of the hind or goat which skin is thrown over the satyr's torso is presented *en face*. The man's torso is harmoniously shaped with carefully sculptured chest and abdominal muscles. The statue stylistic features, such as properly shaped torso muscles and animal skin, point to the very good quality work from the beginning of the 4th century.

21. MARBLE STATUARY COMPOSITION OF TIPSY DIONYSUS WITH A SATYR
30 x 60 x 51 cm dimensions, inv.no. 278/R

From the entire composition, there have been preserved pedestal of rectangular shape with two pairs of human feet (whose heels and big toe tips are broken), fragments of trees, ram's head and four-legged animal paws (probably panther). Right foot of the first figure is along the pedestal left edge, while the left foot is on the shallow pedestal in the middle. Right foot of the second figure is placed on a rock at the left upper part of the pedestal, while the left foot rests on the ram's head. By foot position it can be easily concluded that the second figure stood directly behind the first figure, which completely resembles the scene from the myth of Dionysus, where the tipsy god is held by some of his followers - a satyr, silen, maenad or Ariadne. Based on the existing analogies, it is clear that this is a scene where the tipsy Dionysus is held by the satyr, but it is necessary to point out that in sculptural composition from Mediana a certain iconographic mistake occurred so that, as usual, the god Dionysus's foot rests on the ram's head, in the sculptural group from Mediana the satyr's foot is laid on the animal's head instead. Extremely careful modeling and good-quality sculptured details indicate high quality of the statuary composition. Due to the lack of details, the composition has to be dated broadly to the period between 2nd and 4th century.





Sculptures discovered between the eastern barracks and western enclosure wall of the villa with peristyle, during the excavations between 1996 and 2002:

22. MARBLE HEAD OF MAENAD

15 cm height, inv.no. 1101/R

Damaged in the nose, lips, chin and neck areas. On the young woman's head there is wavy hair parted in the middle; it shows a narrow ribbon by which the hair is tied in a low bun at the nape of her neck. From the hair emerges the wreath of laurel. Eyebrows and almond-like eyes of the young girl are very carefully and beautifully shaped, and according to remains of the nose it can be assumed that it was small and proper. Gentleness of the oval face modeling and full lips contribute to a dreamy expression of Maenad's face. Stylistic features of the bacchante's head, as well as the way of sculpturing, point to the end of the 2nd century.



23. MARBLE HEAD OF VENUS OR DIANA

8 cm height, inv.no. 1102/R

Damaged in the chin area. Head of a young woman with wavy hair collected into typical hairstyle in the form of a knot of krobylos type (*krobylos*) on the top of her head. Rest of the hair is tied with a ribbon at the nape of her neck into a low bun. Oval shape with very carefully almond-shaped eyes, proper nose and full lips gives impression of gentleness and tenderness. Characteristic hairstyle of krobylos type implies that this is one of the two goddesses – Venus or Diana, but insufficiency of other attributes does not allow making safe selection of one of them. Although the goddess's facial expression is dreamy like and gentle, certain stylistic features, such as hairstyling and certain un-skillfulness in treatment of details point to the second half of the 3rd century as probable date of the statuette origin.

Sculpture discovered in the villa with octagon:

24. LOWER PART OF THE MARBLE STATUE OF A MAN

33 cm height, inv.no. 1200/R

Fragmented sculpture of a nude young man made of white marble, preserved from the waist to the knees area, with considerable damage in the upper leg area. Abdominal part is modeled as rounded and youthful, without accentuation of muscularity typical for the body of the mature man, as well as the thighs are harmoniously shaped with no indication of the mature body in his prime. Carefully modeled waistline and thighs indicate that it is a quality sculpture of a nude young man, possibly one of the gods already confirmed at Mediana. Ichnographically, the fragmented sculpture from the villa with octagon at Mediana is most similar to fragmented sculpture of a naked young man from Romuliana, which may have been a young Heracles. Stylistically, Roman copies modeling in the classicist style of Greek sculptures from the middle of 5th century BC is evident. The sculpture can roughly be dated to the 3rd century.



Sculpture incidentally found at Mediana (unknown location):

25. MARBLE SCULPTURE OF GODDESS MAGNA MATER

27 cm height, inv.no. 338/R

Fragmented sculpture of the goddess, of which torso is preserved in a long chiton, over which a himation is draped, in a sitting position. Although head, forearms and feet of the statue are missing, it can be confirmed with certainty that it is the representation Phrygian deity, considering the characteristic way of tying the chiton and sitting position typical for bigger number of well-known Magna Mater representations. The chiton in rich folds is tied below breasts of the female figure, and on the right shoulder curls of hair can be observed. Type of iconographic representations of the goddess Magna Mater seated on a throne belongs to the deity most common representation throughout the Roman Empire, created after the famous statue of the goddess of Phidias' pupil Agoracritus from the 5th century BC. Analogously to the known examples of that type representations, it can be assumed that the goddess was wearing a crown in the shape of the city walls (*corona muralis*) or diadem, that in her hands she could have held some of the common attributes, such as scepter, ear of grain, patera, tympanum, and that on each side of the throne stood sculpture of a lion, the main animal follower of the deity. Fragmented statue of Magna Mater is dated to the beginning of the 4th century.





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COVER

Goran Jerinkic and Zeljko Cajic

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