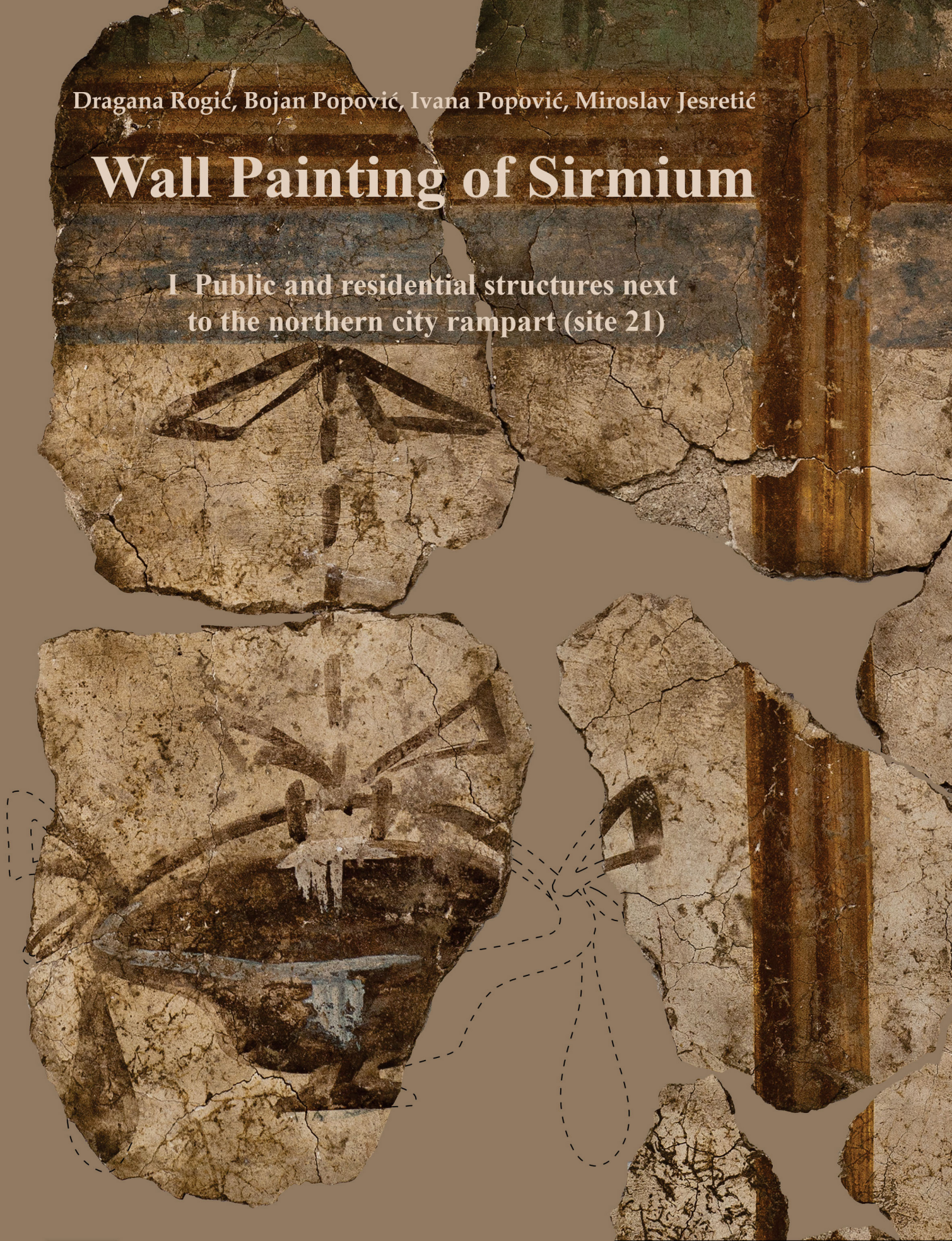


Dragana Rogić, Bojan Popović, Ivana Popović, Miroslav Jesretić

Wall Painting of Sirmium

I Public and residential structures next
to the northern city rampart (site 21)





Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade

Monographs - N° 61

Wall Painting of Sirmium

I Public and residential structures next to the northern city rampart (site 21)

Dragana Rogić, Bojan Popović, Ivana Popović, Miroslav Jesretić

Belgrade 2017

Arheološki institut, Beograd

Posebna izdanja 61

Zidno slikarstvo Sirmijuma

I Javne i stambene građevine uz severni gradski bedem (lokalitet 21)

Dragana Rogić, Bojan Popović, Ivana Popović, Miroslav Jesrečić

Beograd, 2017

Publisher

Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade

Editor in Chief

Miomir Korać

Reviews

Miloje Vasić

Miroslav Vujović

László Borhy

Translation

Jelena Mitić

Photography

Slobodan Maksić, Dragana Rogić and Bojan Popović

Photo editing

Nebojša Borić, Dragana Rogić and Bojan Popović

Graphic design

Slobodan Tripković, Dragana Rogić and Bojan Popović

Print

Digital Art Company doo

Printed in

300 copies

ISBN 978-86-6439-008-8

This monograph is published thanks to the financial support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological development of the Republic of Serbia.

This monograph is the result of projects:

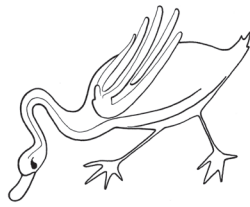
The projects No 177007 and 47018 founded by Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia;

The project "Processing of the fragments of Roman wall painting from the archaeological site of Sirmium" was carried out within two project cycles, in 2010 and 2012. The project was supported by the Provincial Secretariat for culture (2010) and the Ministry of Culture and Information (2012).

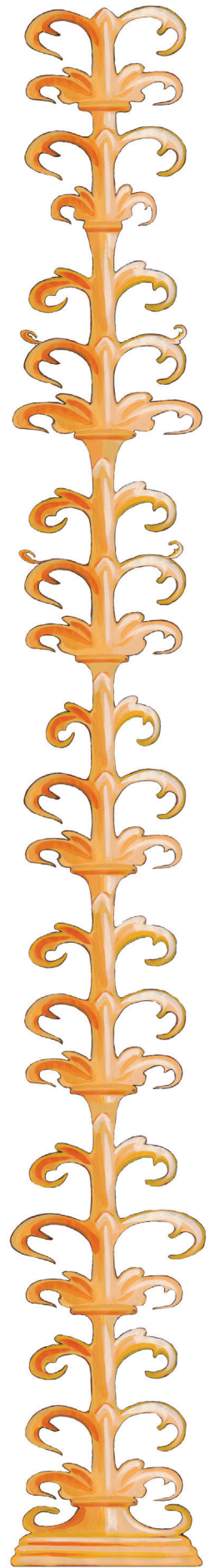
D. Rogić and M. Jesretić were project leaders.

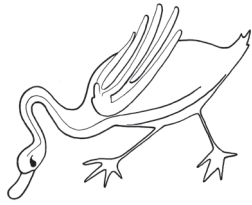
Contents

Ivana POPOVIĆ Wall painting of Sirmium- introductory notes	7
Bojan POPOVIĆ Architectural composition, construction phases, and possible location of the frescoes	13
Dragana ROGIĆ New insights about wall painting of the Room of Muses	47
Dragana ROGIĆ Compositions rendered on white intonaco	83
Ivana POPOVIĆ Representations of human figures: clothes, hairstyles, attributes, ornate	121
Miroslav JESRETIĆ Archaeological and numismatic data about site 21	145
Conclusion	161
Zaključak	173
Sources	181
Abrevtations	182
Bibliography	183



Chapter II





Dragana ROGIĆ

Wall painting of the “Room of Muses”- new insights

In this chapter, the conserved units of wall paintings, as well as the fragments which are attributed to the same room by the composition of plaster and the texture of the painted layer are described. The plaster on the wall paintings contains grey arriccio with sieved sand aggregate and intonaco made of very fine brick powder (see figure 50a).¹

Panels with “Muses” represent the biggest conserved units of wall painting from Sirmium, and they come from structure B, which, by the analysis of the architectural remains, is ascertained to have been a public building. There are twelve conserved panels which form four composition fields. It cannot be claimed for sure what the painted decoration of this room looked like and whether the height and width of the conserved panels² was determined correctly. The height of the conserved panels is 300 cm, and the total width of the composition is 1154,4 cm.

In the socle zone, there are representations of swampland birds and swamp plants. Medallions with portraits are painted in the middle zone, while the upper zone is adorned with a frieze with an ornament of semicircular motifs. It should be pointed out that above the socle zone a horizontal black border framed with white lines was painted (on the upper and lower edge, the white line is about 1 cm thick). The vertical borders of the middle zone, as well as the border below the frieze, are light blue (also bordered with white lines).



Fig. 10 – The conserved panels, on display in the atrium of the Museum of Srem

¹ The binder for the mortar in all the wall paintings is lime, and this will not be mentioned further on in the text.

² None of the wall paintings was preserved in its original dimensions.



Fig. 11 - The drawing of the condition in which one of the four composition fields was discovered with dotted reconstructed missing parts of the drawing: D. Rogić



Fig. 12 – Panel III, photo by: S. Maksić



Fig. 13 – Panel I:
photo by: S. Maksić.
Unpublished



Fig. 14 – Panel X: photo by: S. Maksić.
Unpublished



Fig. 15 – Panel IV: photo by:
S. Maksić. Unpublished



Fig. 16 – Panel VI:
photo by: S. Maksić.
Unpublished



Fig. 17 – Panel VII: photo by: S. Maksić.
Unpublished

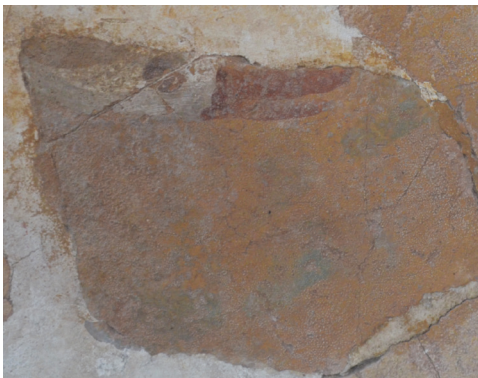


Fig. 18 – Panel IX: photo by: S.
Maksić. Unpublished



Fig. 19 – Panel XII:
photo by: S. Maksić.
Unpublished

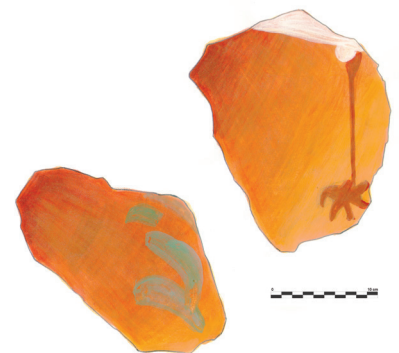


Fig. 20 – Painted according to the
original fragments: D. Rogić

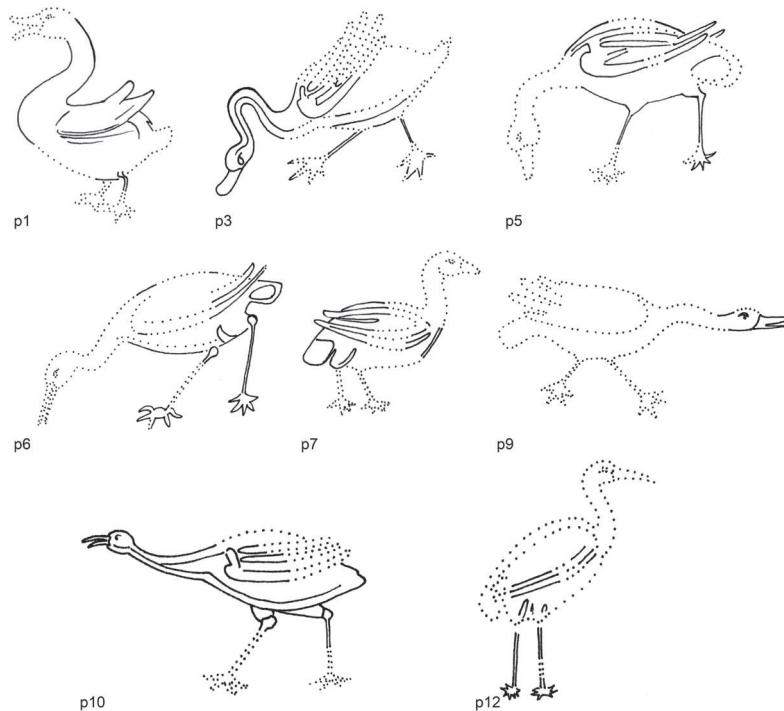


Fig. 21 – The reconstruction of the birds, drawing by: D. Rogić. P=panel

The socle zone

In the socle zone, on ochre background, eight swampland birds³ and four green bushes with white dotted flowers are detected. Only three birds can be recognized with certainty: the representation from panel I (fig. 13) – a wild goose,⁴ panel III (fig. 12) – a swan,⁵ panel X (fig. 14) – a stork. The other birds are only theoretically reconstructed and their species cannot be determined with certainty.

In several preserved bird representations, the legs of middle length can be observed, which cannot classify them as either long-legged birds, like storks or herons, or short-legged, like ducks, geese and swans. For the identification of bird species, the shape of the beak is very important, but certain representations are missing the entire heads.

³ The bird from panel III is best preserved, while the others are fragmented.

⁴ The dimensions of the reconstructed area of the socle are 528 x 39 cm.

⁵ It is assumed that this is a representation of a swan because of the long curved neck and the middle-sized beak with a flat tip.



PII



PV



PVIII



PXI

Fig. 22 - Shrubs, P=panel, photo by: S. Maksić

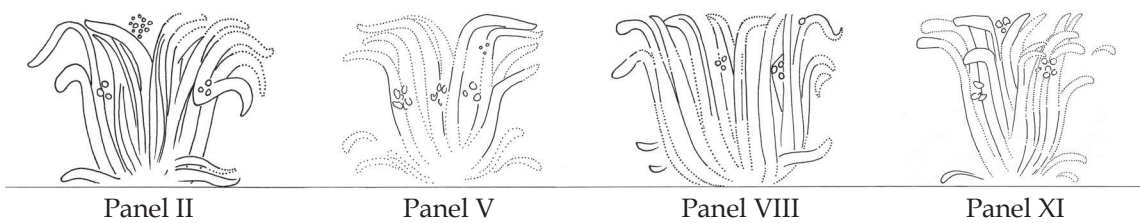


Fig. 23 - The drawing of the condition of the shrubs, with dotted reconstructed missing parts of the drawing: D. Rogić



The birds are painted with light grey, and brightened with white color. The drawing is outlined somewhere in a brownish, and somewhere in pure grey tone. For the drawings in grey, in most cases a wider brush was used (in certain places the thickness of the brush stroke is up to 2 cm), which is especially noticeable on the wings. Only on the wing of the bird from panel I (fig. 13) the brown drawing lines are visible, outlined with a brush with a pointed tip.

The shrubs are painted first in translucent-brownish tones, then in a thicker green color, and the white strokes are rendered in the end. Among the leaves, white dots in groups of three to six that represent flowers can be noticed (fig. 22).

Among the fragments kept in the Museum of Srem, a couple of those that belong to the socle zone are found, too. A red leg of a bird can be recognized, as well as a segment of the belly, white colored, and the background is ochre – gradually turning to a reddish nuance.⁶ Four small green leaves are registered, and similar small leaves are painted around the other birds on the socle (fig. 20).

Upon the examination of the fragments from the museum depot of the Museum of Srem it was concluded that there is a large number (152) of those that can be attributed to the conserved panels. Fragments of ochre background of the socle with parts of green bushes and white dotted flowers were registered (fig. 24). On certain fragments, black traces of burning are noticed, considerably concealing the painted motifs.

Swampland birds are frequently painted in the socle zone. A very similar example can be seen on a wall painting from Ptuj (2nd century)⁷ where a stork (or a heron) is depicted on an ochre background, next to a green bush with red flowers. The bird, the bush and the flowers are painted in almost the same manner as the representations on the socle from Sirmium, even the colors are almost the same.

On the wall painting of the “Red and Black Room” from Balaca (Hungary), small birds are painted around the bushes in the socle zone (late 1st and early 2nd century).⁸ Also, in the socle zone of the “Red Triclinium” from Balaca (the second half of the 1st and first half of the 2nd century), a swampland bird and a rooster⁹ are painted on a black background, among bushes and kantharoi.

White swampland birds and shrubs adorn the socle in *Casa dell' Ara Massima*¹⁰ (room F, Fourth Pompeian Style, second half of the 1st century AD), while above the socle zone, on a red background, medallions with food representations are painted.

On the socle of the peristyle of the Vienne domus (*Vienne*, France, 1st century BC – 1st century AD), there are very realistically painted representations of white flamingoes and bushes with flowers on a black background. The red fields between which there are

⁶ The ochre produced by heating goethite gets a reddish color, the shades can range from orange to dark red. Such changes occur on the temperature of above 260°C: Faria, Lopes 2007, 117–121; Weinstein–Evron, Bani 1994, 461–467; Turinski 1990, 22.

⁷ Plesničar–Gec 2007, fig. 3.

⁸ Kirschhof 2007, fig. 3.

⁹ Kirschhof 2008, 68–69.

¹⁰ A modern term for a small house with atrium in Pompeii.



Fig. 24 - Visual appendix produced according to the original fragments: D. Rogić



candelabra occupy the zone above the socle.¹¹

A section of the preserved wall painting on ochre background in which a segment of a pigeon with a cherry in its beak is visible comes from a residential building from *Immunurium* (Moosham, *Noricum*, House F, Austria, 2nd century).¹²

The middle zone

The middle zone is dominated by the red polished background, which is divided into segments by blue and black borders. The borders are accented with white lines, on their outer edges.

The inner parts of the four segments (immediately next to the white line of the *bordure*) are decorated with semicircular motifs, six along the length and six along the width (figs. 11, 24 and 25). These decorations break the monotony of large red surfaces. The semicircular forms are painted on the polished red color of the background, with black lazure, on which twigs with leaves are depicted. The small leaves and thin stalks are painted by quick and short strokes in two tones – dark and light green color, leaving an impression of the first and second focal plane. The relation of the underpainted surface, lazure, and pastuous layers of color can be seen in figure 25. Unlike the plant motifs from the ochre surface of the socle zone, the twigs in the semicircular motifs along the edges of the panels of the middle zone are painted with much more precision. The semicircular form is surrounded by subtle, short white leaves. Among the fragments in the depot of the Museum of Srem, the segments of twigs that used to be a part of semicircular motifs along the borders of the middle zone, as well as the blue and black borders framed with white lines can be seen (fig. 24).

No analogies have been found for such semicircular decoration so far. A similar manner of painting twigs, with light and dark green color on black background, can be seen on a frame that borders a candelabrum below the frieze with the “perfume production scene with cupids and Psyche” in the House¹³ of the Vettii in Pompeii (Fourth Pompeian Style, 1st century AD).¹⁴

The four medallions with portraits are placed in the upper middle parts of the red panels (generally, the same way they are painted in the analogous examples). Only four medallions are preserved, but maybe there were more.¹⁵ The backgrounds of the medallions were painted in blue and green tones,¹⁶ in a thicker layer. Surrounded with

¹¹ Barbet 1981, 53–55.

¹² Fleicher, Moucka-Weitzel 1998, Abb. 31–32.

¹³ *Oecus*.

¹⁴ Baldassarre et al. 2002, 232–233.

¹⁵ Euterpe, Erato, Calliope, Polyhymnia and Urania are missing.

¹⁶ It seems that the medallions were painted with blue color, i.e. azurite, and that in some places its alteration occurred, causing the change into green – malachite. On alteration of azurite, see: Kajrež 2011, 59. According to the results of phase-contrast X-ray analyses – XRD, it was concluded that the blue color does not come

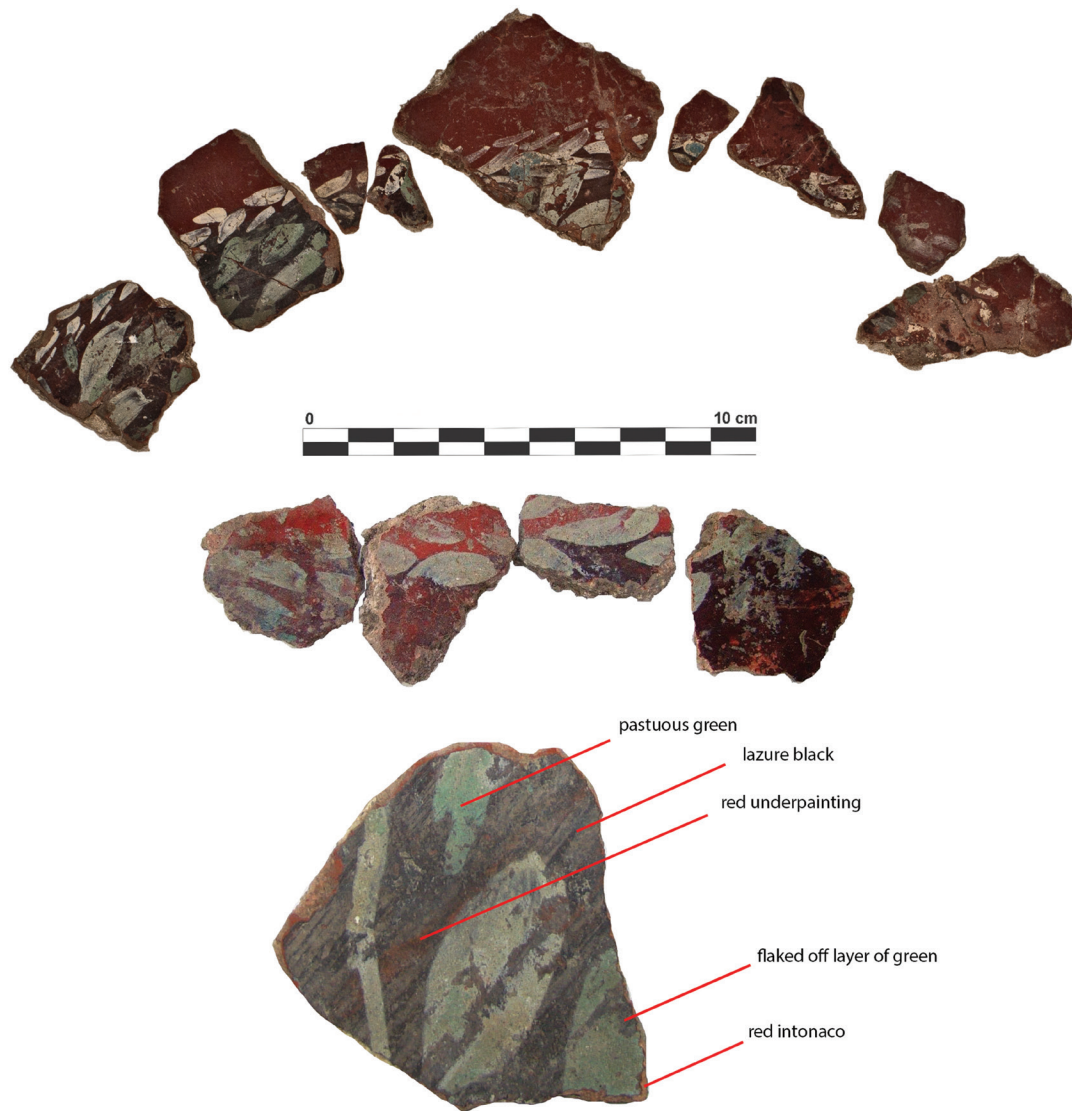


Fig. 25 - The fragments that used to belong to the edges of the panels with "Muses".
Unpublished. Photo by: D. Rogić.

A detail; lazure black, pastuous green, red underpainting, flaked off layer of green, red intonaco. Unpublished. Photo by: D. Rogić

white astragals,¹⁷ in certain medallions the astragals consisted of ellipses with two beads, while in others the ellipses only have one bead each (fig. 28).

According to the two preserved attributes in the medallions, Muses Melpomene and Terpsichore were recognized (fig. 29).¹⁸ Next to Melpomene's portrait, a tragic mask is painted in a brownish tone and accented with white color. Next to Terpsichore, a lyre

from azurite, but that Egyptian blue, which does not alter on higher temperatures, was used instead.

¹⁷ Rogić, Nikolić, Jesretić 2011, 212-217.

¹⁸ Popović 2008, 22-24.



Fig. 26 - Tersiphora's nose. Photo by: D. Rogić



Fig. 27 - The areas where parts of the carnation fell off. Photo by: D. Rogić

with five strings was painted with light and dark ochre.¹⁹ No attributes are visible for the two remaining Muses, but it is considered that they are Clio and Thalia.²⁰ Pearl earrings are visible in three portraits, on the Muses in the first, third and fourth medallion (fig. 28).

The faces are pastuously painted and to a large degree flaked off. On the areas where parts of the carnation fell off, the red polished surface of the background is visible (fig. 27). The manner in which the faces were modelled is best visible on the representation of Tersiphora (fig. 26). The base of the face is painted with light ochre, and brightened with white, the shades are rendered in light brown color, while the drawing is dark brown. It looks like Tersiphora's head is slightly raised, which is obvious by the shaded part of the nose around the nostrils. The impression is that the portrait is "looking" at us from above, which is also suggested by the half-closed eyelids (fig. 26). The hair is long and slightly wavy (fig. 28), rendered in brown lazures. The Muse's clothes are blue, with white brightenings.

On the Muses' heads, there are flower wreaths lifted up like crowns²¹ (fig. 28), painted in a brownish green tone and brightened with a few white pastuous accents (fig. 29a). Around their heads and on the sides, small leaves are visible. The Muses were represented with various wreaths and crowns²² in both mosaic and wall painting.

¹⁹ The colors of ochre can have different shades, from yellow to red and brown, which depends on the concentration of iron: Hradil *at al.* 2003, 227.

²⁰ Popović 2008, 23.

²¹ On crowns, see: Анђелковић, Роговић, Николић 2013, 385.

²² On a mosaic from Sousse (3rd century AD, the mosaic is kept in the Bardo National Museum, Tunisia) there



I



II



III



IV

Fig. 28 - The reconstruction according to the remains of the original wall painting: D. Rogić.
Unpublished

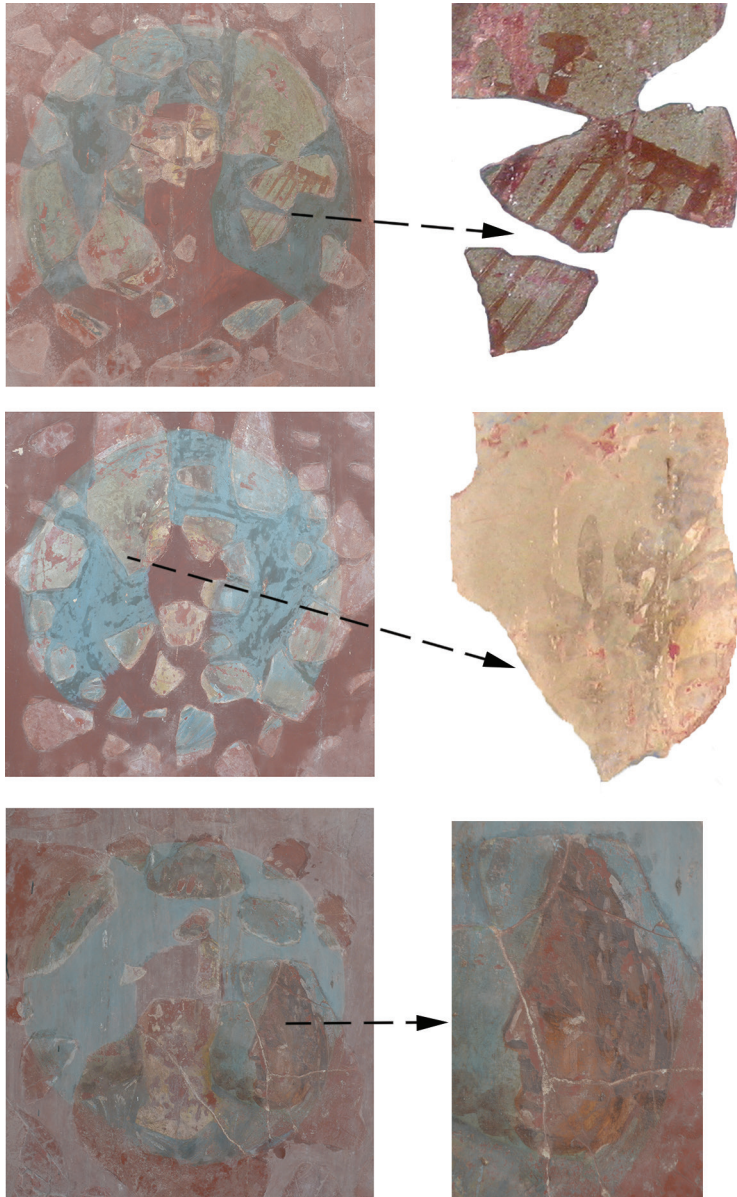


Fig. 29 – A detail of the instrument next to the representation of Muse Terpsichore;
 A detail of the wreath on the head of Muse Thalia (?);
 A detail of the mask next to the representation of Muse Melpomene. Photo by: S. Maksić



Fig. 29a – A detail of the wreath on the head of Muse Melpomene. Photo by: S. Maksić



The medallions, as well as the square fields²³ with the portraits of Muses, were frequently represented in mosaic, while in wall painting, for the most part the entire figures are painted. One of the examples is located on the east wall of the peristyle garden of "Hanghouse II" in Ephesus (residential unit no. 4, 3rd century) where the figure²⁴ of Muse Urania on a red background is painted. In her left hand, there was probably a globe, while with the right hand she is pointing at it. She is wearing a sleeveless chiton, has an ornament made of feathers on her head, and there is an inscription above her head.²⁵ In the same house (in the residential unit no. 3, room no. 12, 3rd century), in the middle zone, the nine Muses are painted, with their names written above their heads. The Muses have feather decorations on their heads, they are wearing long robes and are covered with cloaks. Each of the Muses is represented with her own attributes. Clio is holding a stylus and a tablet, Euterpe – flutes, Thalia – a comic mask and a shepherd's crook, the figure of Melpomene is badly damaged and her emblems are not visible, Terpsichore is holding a square lyre with seven strings and a plectrum, Erato is also painted with a lyre with six strings, Polyhymnia carries a staff on her shoulder, Urania is also badly damaged, while Calliope is holding a scroll. Apart from the Muses, Apollo with a lyre and poetess Sappho with a scroll in her hands are also painted in this room.²⁶

In the "Room of the Muses"²⁷ in Ostia (1st century) the central scene is occupied by the panel of ochre background with a representation of Apollo, flanked by two panels with standing Muses.²⁸

In triclinium A in Murecine (Pompeii, 1st century), standing figures of the Muses, with only Terpsichora missing, are painted on a red background. The representation of "hovering" Apollo is the most dominant one. The wall paintings belong to the Fourth Pompeian Style. Through the cracks, it can be noticed that the intonaco²⁹ is red, and the

is a representation of sitting Virgil, flanked by the standing Muses. Clio and Melpomene have ornaments lifted up on their heads: Ben Abed 2006, 105; the Muses from the mosaic from Zeugma have crowns of feathers on their heads (2nd century BC): <http://eu.greekreporter.com/2014/11/11/mosaics-revealed-at-ancient-greek-city-of-zeugma-in-turkey/>; Calliope on the mosaic from Panik, Bileća (3rd century) has a square blue raised ornament that resembles a diadem: Busuladžić 2008, 52–54, Plate XLVI; Euterpe in a medallion with a blue crown on her head is depicted on a mosaic from Tarragona (2nd century, *Museo Nacional Arqueològic de Tarragona*); The nine Muses in the medallions on a mosaic from Tunisia have lifted ornaments on their heads similar to the ones of the Muses from Sirmium, (*Thysdrus*, El Djem, 3rd century), <http://www.gettyimages.pt/detail/foto/mosaic-of-nine-muses-from-thysdrus-el-djem-tunisia-fotografia-de-stock/568568549>;

²³ Busts of the Muses are depicted on a mosaic from Carthage (second half of the 2nd century): Dunbabin 2010, 104, fig 103.

²⁴ The height of the entire figure is 37 cm.

²⁵ Zimmerman, Landstätter 2010, 83–85; Bingöl 1997, 119, fig. 85.

²⁶ Zimmermann, Landstätter 2010, Abb 153–161.

²⁷ Room 5.

²⁸ Clarke 1991, 28.

²⁹ Intonaco is the finishing layer of the plaster on which frescoes are painted. In this case, it was made of brick powder and slaked lime, due to which it has a reddish shade.

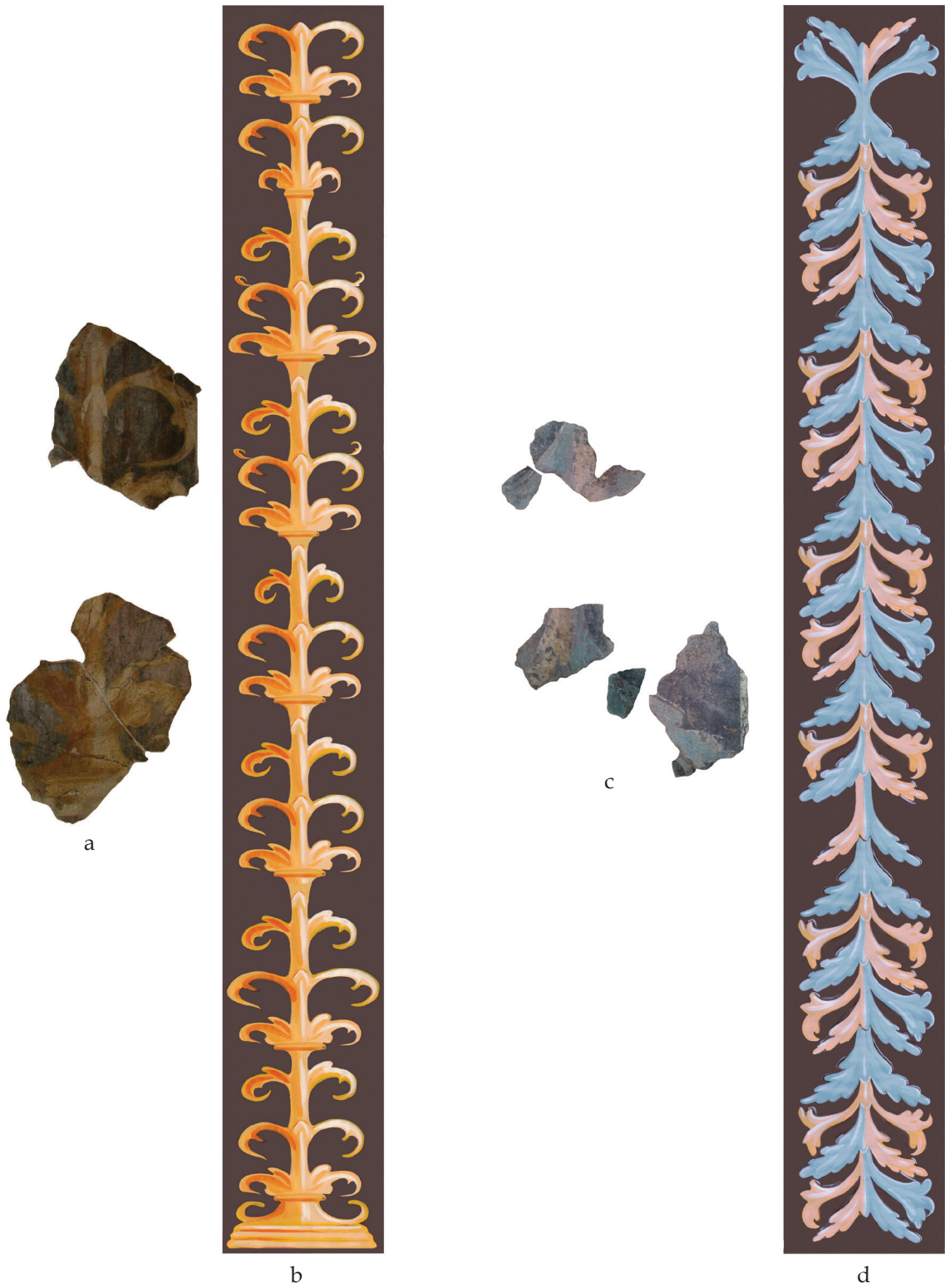


Fig. 30 - Figures a and c - fragments with the original painting; figures b and d - the ideal reconstruction of the candelabrum, painted by D. Rogić



arriccio is with sand aggregate,³⁰ while the plaster is like in the composition with Muses from Sirmium.

The candelabra

Among the conserved panels belonging to the room with muses there are three panels with black background on which vegetative candelabra (in figures 30 a and c, several most discernible original fragments are presented, while on the ideal reconstruction in figs. 30 b and 30 d the entire candelabra can be seen). In the case of the first panel, the candelabrum is painted with ochre tones. On one side, it was brightened with a mixture of ochre and white, while on the other side it was darkened with brownish tones; the accents are white. In the case of the other candelabrum, a combination of ochre and green leaves is depicted, too.

There are numerous analogous examples on which candelabra between “red” panels can be seen. A very similar example is the so-called “red and black” wall painting, found in the southeast part of the civilian city of Aquincum (building XV – a building with a peristyle, second quarter of the 2nd century), in which there are vegetative candelabra painted between red panels. Mythological representations³¹ are depicted on the red panels in square emblems.

Candelabra combined with red panels can be seen on wall paintings throughout the Empire. A similar example of the Third Pompeian Style comes from the Arausio domus (*Arausio*, modern day Orange, France, second half of the 1st century), as well as from the domus in Aquae Sextiae (*Aquae Sextiae*, modern day *Aix-en-Provence*, second half of the 1st century).³² In the House of the Priest Amandus (Pompeii), on the east wall of the triclinium, red backgrounds with hovering figures are depicted, between which there are candelabra on a dark background. In the central scene, Daedalus and Icarus are painted on a blue background.³³

Vitruvius especially criticized the paintings with candelabra. He states that instead of columns, reed stalks were being depicted, and instead of gables, the ornaments with curled leaves, which “carry” pictures of dogs, figures and imaginary creatures, without any sense and exemplar in nature.³⁴

³⁰ Pappalardo 2008, 166–167.

³¹ Madarassy, Zsidi 2003, 249, 250, Abb. 10–11.

³² <http://followinghadrian.com/2015/01/18/roman-frescoes-on-show-in-toulouse-france/>

³³ Casa del Sacerdos Amandus or House of the Priest Amandus or Casa dell'affresco di Spartaco, Pompeii, Baldassarre et al. 2002, 164;

<http://www.pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R1/1%2007%2007%20p3.htm>

³⁴ Vitruvius V.

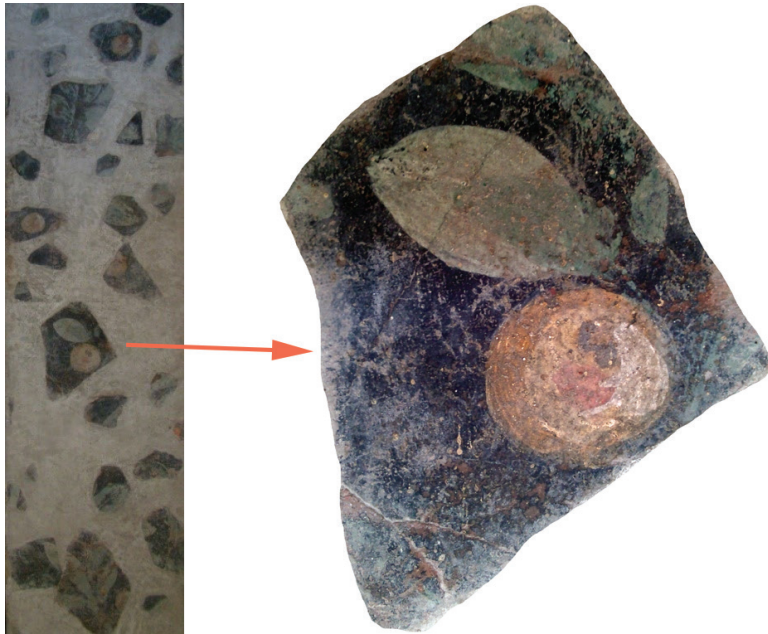


Fig. 31 - Fruit representations



Fig. 33 - Frieze

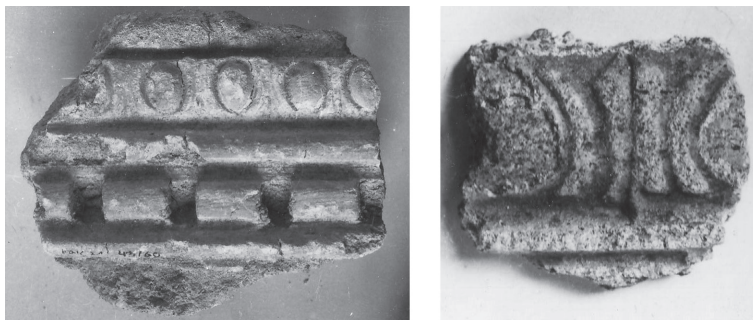


Fig. 34 - A motif from the marble frieze, from site 21; Stucco decoration from site 21



Fig. 32 - Ideal reconstruction, painted by: D. Rogić

Fruit

The panel characterized as a “vegetative column”³⁵ contains green leaves and yellow fruits - fruit on a black surface (figs. 31 and 32). The leaves are painted with light

³⁵ Popović 2008, 52.



and dark green color. The fruit is round and realistically modelled. The base is ochre, the drawing is outlined in one stroke with brownish lazure. The calyx is rendered as a small brown circular line. The vividness of the fruit is evoked by a reddish tone in the central part, while the accent is outlined with a white semicircular stroke. It could be assumed that these are representations of yellow apples.

In the triclinium of the so-called “House of the Priest Amandus” in Pompeii (Third Pompeian Style, 1st century), vegetative columns can be seen, on which twigs with green leaves and red fruit are diagonally positioned, creating an impression of twining around the column. However, on the conserved panel (fig. 31) there is no impression that the twigs are twining around the column. It seems that the fragments of this panel created a very harmonious image of a garden with fruits, similar to those in “The House of the Golden Bracelet” (Pompeii) and “The House of Livia” (Palatine Hill), or that they used to fill the spaces between the varicolored panels, as shown in figures 44 and 47. The fragments of the so-called “vegetal column” can be related to panel 16 (fig. 45) according to the painted motifs.

Similar apples are painted in the three panels on red background in “Portico house” in Narbonne (*Narbonne*, House III, Room C, northeast wall, 2nd-3rd century). Two yellow apples on each of the small stands are represented as the central scenes, which makes them look like small still life paintings.³⁶

The upper zone

Although the conserved panels of the “Room of Muses” end in a frieze in the upper zone, it is not impossible that there might have been some more painted ornaments above it. An ornament is rendered on ochre background (fig. 33) in the form of a strip formed by the main decoration consisting of a series of three semicircular motifs: a bigger semicircular form, then a smaller one, and finally the smallest one. Between the biggest semicircles there are lines which imitate the form of a dart.³⁷ This ornament was probably inspired by ovoli, i.e. the “egg-and-dart motif”.³⁸ Below the strip with the ovoli, a sequence of small semicircular motifs is painted, while above the frieze with ovoli there is a dentil motif.³⁹ Similar examples can be observed in stone sculpture, as well as in stucco decoration, coming from the same object (fig. 34).

In Sirmium, there is another very simplified painted example of the egg-and-dart motif in a semi-circular strip coming from site 30 – *horreum*.⁴⁰

³⁶ Sabrié, Sabrié 1994, fig. 40, fig 42.

³⁷ Rogić, Nikolić, Jesretić 2011, 210.

³⁸ In our literature, this motif is known as ovoid cyma.

³⁹ Dentils are the ornaments that imitate beams in the classical architecture, they can often be seen on stucco decorations and marble plastic with the ovoli and astragals.

⁴⁰ Rogić, Nikolić, Jesretić 2011, Abb. 16, sl. 16, 218, 219.

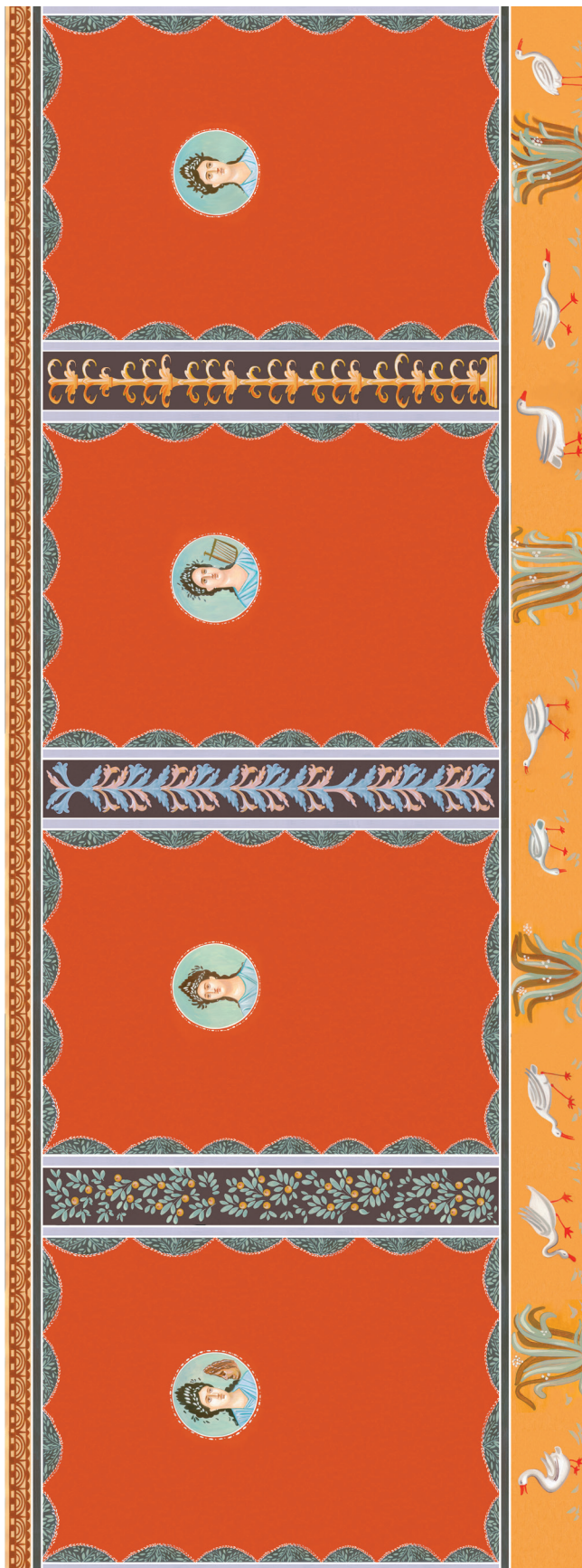


Fig. 35 - Theoretical reconstruction of the composition with the Muses: D. Rogić.



In the Hellenistic period and in Pompeian Styles this motif is very plastic and realistic, and later it was simplified and gradually lost the three-dimensional appearance, which can also be said of the use of colors. Emulating stucco decoration in wall painting is very common, the examples can be very realistic,⁴¹ but also simple, in the form of drawings.⁴² An analogous example can be observed on the wall painting of the “House with a peristyle”, which originates from the archaeological site of “*Clos de la Lombarde*” (*Colonia Narbo Martius*, modern-day Narbonne in France, Fourth Pompeian Style, 1st century).⁴³ The panels with Erotes are adorned with frames with arched, repetitive motifs containing palmettes.⁴⁴ The semicircular ornaments are linked by a triangular motif which could mimic a tongue or a dart.

The motif of a half of an ovolo and dart can be seen on the mosaic from the Villa of Constantine (Antioch).⁴⁵

The Dioscuri

The wall painting with the representation of the Dioscuri could belong either to the Room of Muses or to the adjacent room because of the characteristic red polished background, the used colors, and the appearance of mortar.

The conserved panel with the representation of one of the Dioscuri is on permanent exhibit in the Museum of Srem (fig. 36). On a red background, a nude male figure is painted in contrapposto (the height of the figure is 60 cm), preserved in fragments. Above the head, a star is painted – an attribute of the Dioscuri. The face and the body are painted in rosy and ochre colors, brightened with white, and the drawing is light brown.

The blue surface visible on the right side of the figure represents a part of the cape. Also, a segment of a horse’s chest is observed, with hanging ornaments and strips in ochre color. Above the mentioned segment of the horse there is an elbow and a part of a forearm of one of the Dioscuri, probably holding the reins of the horse. On the left side, below the hand of one of the Dioscuri, there is a white surface with linear and circular ornament, representing a segment of another horse and its equipment (fig. 37).⁴⁶

On the feet, there are sandals painted with light brown color. They consist of two straps around the ankles, and one across the toes. A vertical strap runs between the

⁴¹ One of the more realistic examples of the ovoli is painted on the ceiling of the Imperial Palace in Trier: Lavin 1967, 102.

⁴² The ovoid motif in the form of drawings in which masks are depicted is located on the wall of House 2 (room 4) in *Schwangau*, southern Germany), 1st century: Krahe, Zahlhaas 1984, 46–48; An example of a rosette bordered by a hexagon with the ovoid motif can be seen on the wall of the villa in Nemesvámos-Balácapusta: Thomas 1964, 102; a frieze with ovoli is painted on the fresco fragments from the villa in *Villevieille*, (France, Second Pompeian style, 1st century BC): Vauxion 2010, 845–848.

⁴³ Baldassarre et al. 2002, 267

⁴⁴ Sabrié, Sabrié 1994, fig. 56.

⁴⁵ Lavin 1967, fig. 26.

⁴⁶ About of the reconstructed equipment of the horse in: Borhy 1997, 163–165.

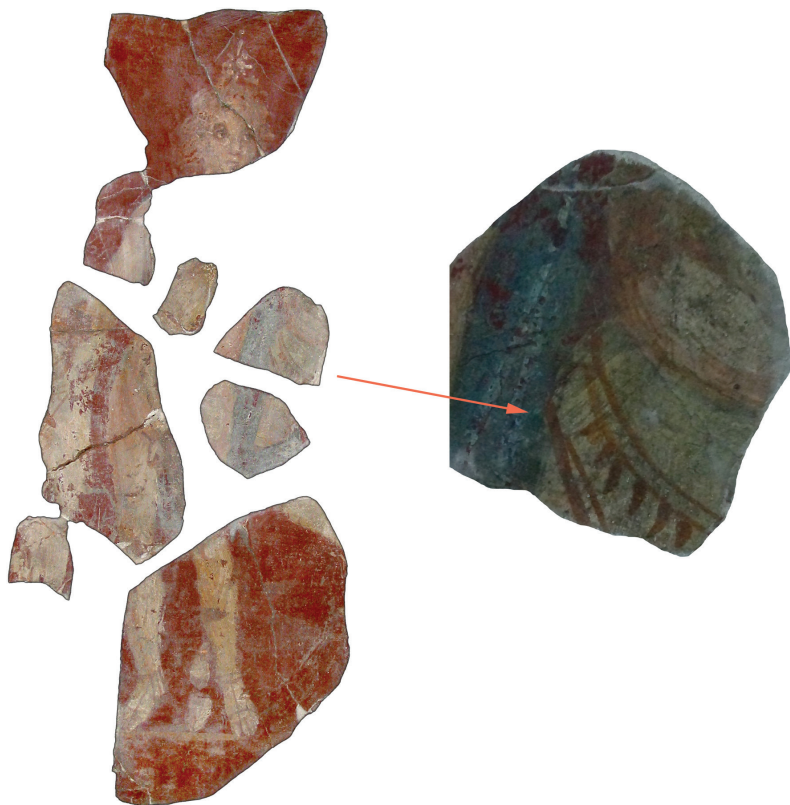


Fig. 36 - One of the Dioscuri, exponat displayed in the Museum of Srem; Segment of a horse from the right side



Fig. 37 - Segment of a horse from the left side



Fig. 38 - Feet



Fig. 39 - Parts of the other of the two Dioscuri and horse



Fig. 40 - Fragments of part of the head, neck and shoulders of the other of the Dioscuri, unpublished



Fig. 41 - Plant motif



toes (the big toe and the second toe) and reaches the first strap around the ankle. On the sides, from the heels to the ankles, there are three straps. The feet are not very skillfully depicted, leaving an impression that the figure is standing on its toes. The floor level was evoked by an ochre stroke by the toes. Between the legs of one of the Dioscuri, a segment of a horse's leg with the hoof can be observed (fig. 38).

Sixty seven fragments kept in the depot of the Museum of Srem can be attributed to this unit. They have been classified according to the appearance of the plaster, the texture of the colored layer, as well as by the applied colors. Eight most representative fragments that can be linked to the conserved unit of the representation with the Dioscuri have been selected. The same red polished base on which there are representations (fig. 39, 1-6) of the upper part of the horse's head with ears and mane between them (1), a star-shaped ornament of the second of the Dioscuri (2), segments of horses' legs (3 and 4), the tail (5), a segment of the second of the Dioscuri's leg (6) is clearly recognizable. Recently, the "head" of the second of the Dioscuri (fig. 40) has been identified, and the right part of the face, the chin, the neck and the shoulder girdle, with a blue cape, can be observed.

The red polished surface, as well as the pastuous ochre and white colors which are flaked off in some places suggest that secco technique was probably employed.

The examples of the Dioscuri are not very common in wall painting. The representations of Castor and Pollux are painted on the walls of the vestibule of the house on *Via di Mercurio* (Pompeii).⁴⁷ They are depicted on a red background, covered with light capes, and next to them there are two white horses (Fourth Pompeian Style).⁴⁸ The Dioscuri represented as white marble statues on a dark background are painted in triclinium B, *Murecine*, (Pompeii, 1st century).⁴⁹ The heraldic representations of the Dioscuri come from the "Temple of the Dioscuri" in Afghanistan (Dilberjin, 2nd-3rd century AD).⁵⁰

Among the fragments, the one whose darker shade of red differs from the red background of the fragments belonging to the composition with the Dioscuri and to the composition with "Muses" was observed. On the fragment, a segment of a plant motif painted with green color is visible (fig. 41).

The red panel bordered with a vegetative frame

Among the fragments in the depot of the Museum of Srem, a large number of those which by the finishing of the intonaco, color and manner of painting can belong to the "Room of Muses" or one of the adjacent rooms of the same object was found.

⁴⁷ *Casa del Dioscuri*.

⁴⁸ Today, the wall paintings of the Dioscuri are located in the Naples National Archaeological Museum, inv.no. 9455 i 9453.

⁴⁹ Pappalardo 2008, 166-167.

⁵⁰ Stančo 2012, 110, fig 154.

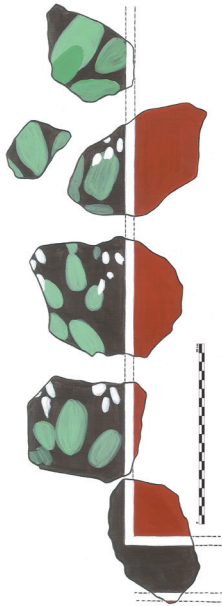


Fig. 42 - Painted according to the original fragments:
D. Rogić



Fig. 43 - Ideal reconstruction according to the visual content of the original fragments: D. Rogić

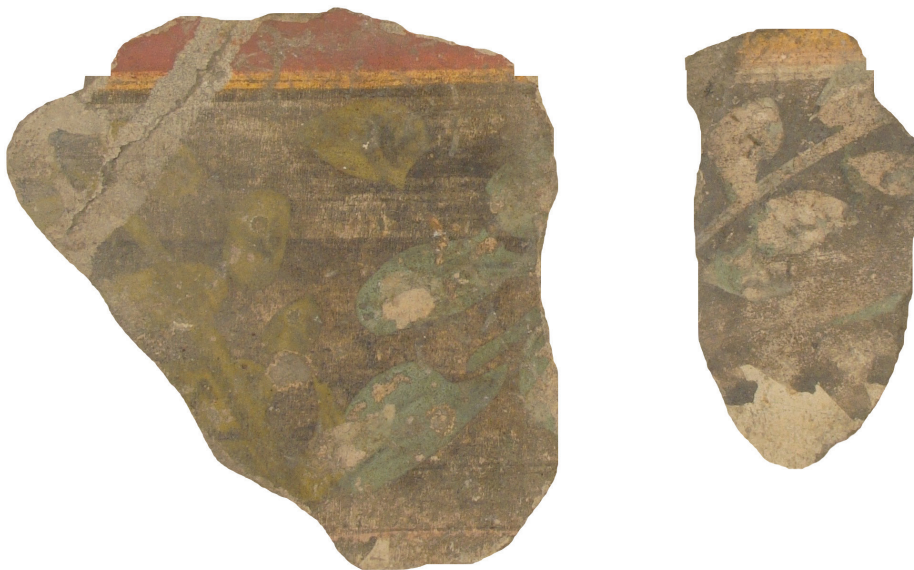


Fig. 44 - Panel 16, unpublished



On a large number of fragments, green vegetative motifs are visible on black background. The underpainting of almost all of these fragments is red. The parts that look like they are painted in dark purple color are obtained by painting with a very lazure black tone over a red polished surface (fig. 42). Lighter and darker green were used to model the leaves, painted with thicker and thinner color layers. Between the leaves, there are a couple of white dotted flowers. A thin white line (about 8 mm thick) separates the vegetative decoration from the red polished surfaces. The vegetative decoration might have been located between the big red panels (see the theoretical reconstruction in figure 43).

An analogous example can be seen on the wall of the southeast insula from *Virunum* (R XXXIV, 3rd century AD).⁵¹

Similar decoration with green leaves can be seen on the conserved panel no. 16 (fig. 44). The leaves are painted in warmer and cooler green tones on a black background. No archaeological data about this panel have been found, and by the manner of painting, it was classified as belonging to site 21.

Borders-frames

On the fragments, the already mentioned black surface decorated with light and dark leaves can be seen. Black follows the ochre surface, and a white line separates them. There is also a part of an angle of the linear pair decorated with a star-shaped form (fig. 45). On one fragment, fallen off the corner of the wall (figs. 45 and 46), the same decoration can be observed on both sides (black background with green leaves) which indicates that similar painting style continued to the adjacent room: a room, a hall, or it might have been a part of a sill, a jamb or a pillar. What this decoration looked like can only be guessed, and one of the suggestions can be seen in the visual appendix – fig. 47.

On certain fragments that are painted black, red underpainting can be observed. The first layers of color are thin (ochre and black surfaces), while vegetative motifs are mostly more pastuous. The thicker layers of color are to a large extent damaged and flaked off.

Because of the composition of the plaster, the black surfaces with green leaves, as well as the ochre surfaces as the ones detected on the socle of the panel with Muses, it can be assumed that the fragments belonged to the Room of Muses.

Among the 511 fragments of ochre colored surfaces, there have been noticed two on which there are graffiti, rendered with a thin, sharp tool, by cutting into the surface of the plaster. The engraved letters are not completely legible and the inscription most looks like R_COETM(?) (fig. 48).

Another graffito can be seen in figure 49. This is a representation of a drawing that cannot be interpreted easily. It reminds of an anthropomorphic figure with the head

⁵¹Dörfler 2006, 16-17, Tafel 2.

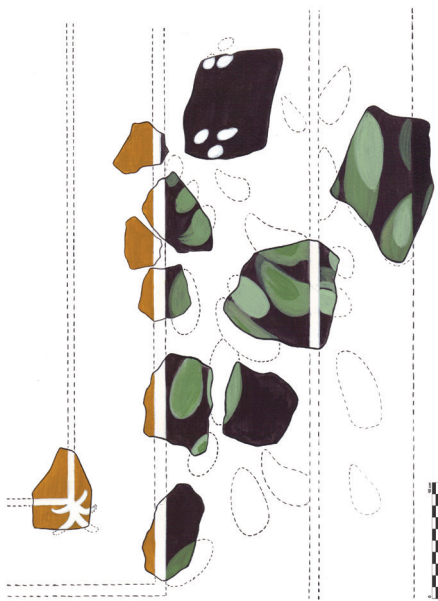


Fig. 45 - Visual appendix made according to the original painting:
D. Rogić



A corner of a wall

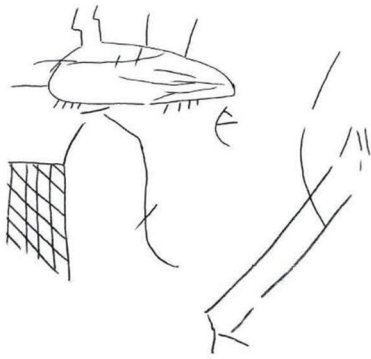
Fig. 46 - A corner of a wall. One fragment, fallen off the corner of the wall.



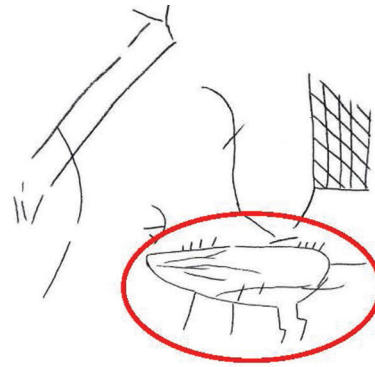
Fig. 47 - Ideal reconstruction according to the visual content of the original fragments: D. Rogić



Fig. 48 - Graffiti



A representation of a gladiator(?)



The image rotated by 180 °, a representation of an animal (?), suggested by a red ellipse.



The head(?)



The net

Fig. 49



a

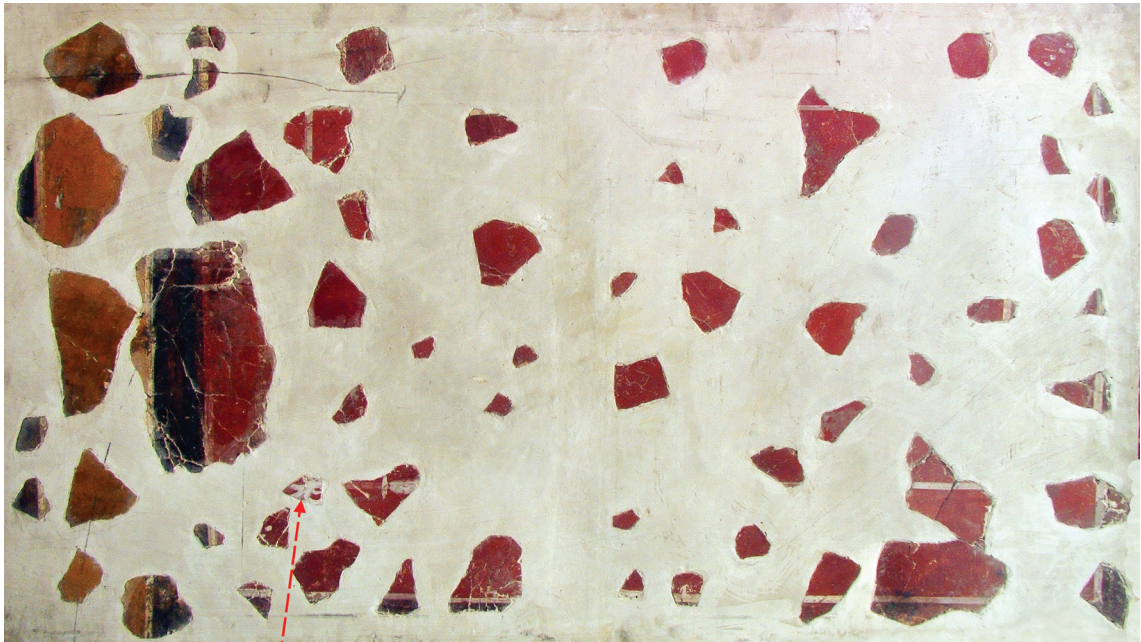


b

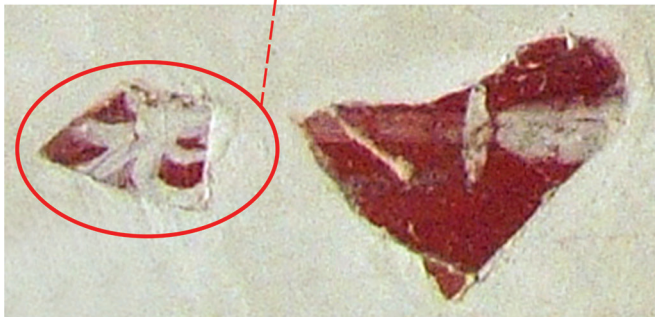


c

Fig. 50 - Different types of plaster



The conserved panel no. 13, unpublished.



detail - panel no. 13

Fig. 51



detail from fig. 45

depicted in profile view. The body is depicted in frontal view, while on the left side there is a net, which leads to the idea that maybe this is a representation of a gladiator (?). By rotating the drawing by 180°, “the head of the gladiator” resembles a four-legged animal(?).

A graffito with the representation of a gladiator and net, made with a sharp tool on ochre background, is also depicted on a Gallo-Roman wall painting.⁵²

Since the fragments of both the “frame” and the “graffito” were placed together, they could be classified as belonging to the same group.

The fragments of the frame with black background (fig. 45 and 48) have red intonaco (fig. 50 a), while certain ochre surfaces have very thin reddish intonachino

⁵² Barbet 2009, fig. 58.

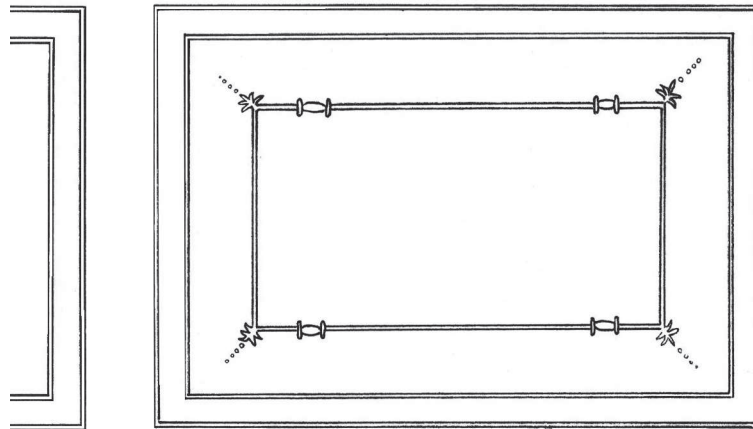


Fig. 52 – Drawing: D. Rogić

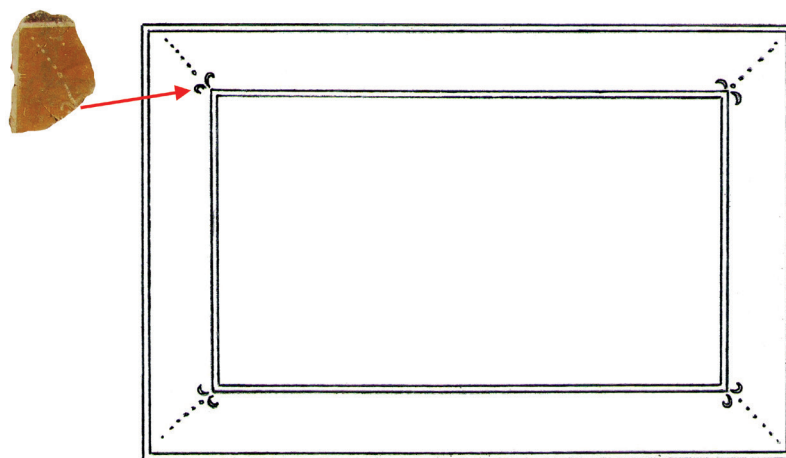


Fig. 53 – Panel no. 14. Drawing: D. Rogić



which continues on to the white intonaco (fig. 50 b), and there are also some on which only white intonaco was registered (fig. 50 c). The thickness of the plaster is 4 to 7 mm. Arriccio is preserved in a very thin grey-colored layer.⁵³

No archaeological data about the conserved panel no. 13 were found (fig. 51). According to its polished painted surface, and a star-shaped ornament painted in the corner of a rectangular field, it can be assumed that it comes from site 21. The red rectangular field is bordered by a dark line, on whose outer edges there is a white line. Inside the red field, an elongated white rectangle is painted, whose all four angles were most most likely decorated with a star-shaped motif. Apart from this ornament, astragals are painted, too (see vis. appendix fig. 52).

Judging by the exceptionally polished surface of the painted layer, as well as by the numerous fragments of the same colors which are classified as belonging to site 21, panel no. 14⁵⁴ probably comes from site 21, too. In this panel, the decoration is represented in the form of thin white “frames”, that is, a smaller and a larger rectangle on an ochre background. The smaller and larger rectangle are connected by the ornaments reminding of lillies, placed on the outer edges of the smaller rectangle from which a succession of dots diagonally expands to the inner edges of the larger rectangle. Apart from the described frames that form one segment, another smaller white rectangle can be seen on the left side, with no special ornaments. The decoration probably consisted of alternating smaller and larger frames (fig. 53).

The results of the conducted analyses of wall painting in the “Room of Muses” lead to the new conclusions that refer to: detecting birds and shrubs from the socle zone, noting the various details of the Muses in the medallions, the ornaments of the upper zone; a definitive connection of the candelabra and the panels with Muses is established (see fig. 24).

Seven more birds have been detected, in the socle zone, which hadn’t been researched before. It is possible that these are representations of wild geese, swans, storks or white herons. Four shrub plants have also been detected, as well as the fragments that used to constitute a part of the socle, and they are located in the depot of the Museum of Srem. A conclusion was reached that more fragments with ochre backgrounds on which there are segments of bushes, as well as a segment of a bird, can be added to the socle. Close analogies can be found in the representations of birds and bushes from Ptuj,⁵⁵

⁵³ The plaster of almost all fragments is made thinner due to the performed conservation procedures.

⁵⁴ There are no archaeological or conservators’ data about panel no. 14.

⁵⁵ Plesničar-Gec 2007, fig. 3.



Baláca,⁵⁶ Vienne,⁵⁷ Fréjus,⁵⁸ as well as in the numerous examples from Italy.

By detailed observation, the faces of the Muses in medallions were reconstructed, as well as the ornaments on their heads. These ornaments represent wreaths lifted up like diadems, and on the sides they are decorated with unattached small leaves. The Muses' hairs are slightly wavy, brushed back behind the ears, and long locks go down their shoulders. Earrings with one pearl are detected on the Muses.

The portraits of the Muses in medallions are mostly represented in mosaic, while in wall painting mostly entire figures are depicted. The figures of the Muses adorned the walls in Ostia (1st century), Pompeii (1st century), Ephesus (3rd century) etc.

Medallions with portrait representations⁵⁹ are numerous, many examples can be seen in the Naples National Archaeological Museum. The medallion with astragals encircling the head of a "young philosopher" from Ephesus (2nd century) is painted on a red background.⁶⁰ Apart from the portraits in medallions (which can be individual or group), various scenes are depicted, the mythological and narrative ones, landscapes, still life and animals. The blue medallions on a red background adorned the walls of the tablinum from the "House of the Small Fountain" in Pompeii, and in one of them there is a griffon (1st century BC). On the red panels surrounded by astragals in Villa *San Marco* in Stabiae "seaside landscapes" with representations of architectural structures by the shore are painted.⁶¹ The medallion with still life in which there are figs, grapes and poultry comes from Pompeii.⁶² On the red panels from the triclinium in Baláca, medallions encircled by astragals with representations of bread and mushrooms are painted. The diameters of these medallions are 41–43 cm,⁶³ while the diameters of the medallions with Muses from Sirmium are about 45 cm.

The frieze of the upper zone, with which the conserved units with Muses finish, is defined. The similar analogous examples very often had an imitation of stucco decoration in their upper zones, or the more luxurious ones had real stucco decoration. In this regard, it is assumed that this is a very simplified frieze motif with ovoli between which there are darts, above which there are dentiles, while small semicircular motifs below the row of the ovoli might also represent simplified astragals(?).

The spaces that look dark purple (on which candelabra, semicircular forms and a horizontal border are painted) actually represent lazure areas in black color, painted

⁵⁶ Kirschhof 2007, fig. 3.

⁵⁷ Barbet 1981, 53–55. <http://followinghadrian.com/2015/01/18/roman-frescoes-on-show-in-toulouse-france/>

⁵⁸ Baldassarre et al. 2002, 269.

⁵⁹ Pliny writes about the portraits in Roman art in book XXXV and emphasizes the importance of family portraits, also stating that the portraits in medallions were especially popular: Bojić 2011, 26–29; Pliny XXXV.

⁶⁰ Zimmerman, Landstätter 2010, Abb. 191.

⁶¹ Naples National Archaeological Museum, Naples, inv. No. 9408.

⁶² Naples National Archaeological Museum, Naples, inv. No. 8642.

⁶³ Kirschhof 2008, 60.



on red surfaces. Red is very polished, and its intensity is achieved by painting on the intonaco made of powdered brick, which has a reddish color. The small white leaves around the semicircular decorations are pastuous and painted with very short strokes and thin paintbrushes, the green twigs are in a thicker layer of two tones, which creates an illusion of the first and second focal plane. The blue and green areas of the medallions, the astragals, wreaths, as well as the faces, are very pastuous. Thicker painted layers are to a great extent damaged and flaked off. The hair of the Muses was painted very lazure.

Compositions similar to the panels with Muses from Sirmium are very common in Roman painting. A close analogy can be seen in a reconstructed panel from Aquincum where, too, red areas between which there are narrow fields with the candelabra are depicted.⁶⁴ Instead of the medallions on red areas there are squares in which various representations are depicted.

When it comes to red backgrounds in painting, they were a kind of a fashion during the 1st and 2nd century, and the analogies are numerous. In a room in villa *Carmiano* on the west wall (Fourth Pompeian style)⁶⁵ red backgrounds can be observed, divided into several units in which figures with a larger central scene are depicted. The red panels between which there are candelabra on a black background are painted in Nimes (1st-2nd century).⁶⁶ In a wall painting from Aqua Sextia (*Aquae Sextiae*, modern-day Aix-en-Provence, France, 1st century) a field with a candelabrum is bordered by strips with an ornament similar to the ornament in the upper zone from Sirmium. The outlined field is flanked by red panels.⁶⁷ Red backgrounds with figures are also represented on frescoes from Magdalensberg in Austria (late 1st century BC–beginning of the 1st century AD).⁶⁸

According to the characteristic painting and technological details, the scene with the Dioscuri is added to the Room of Muses, although it used to be observed on its own until now. The red polished surface of the background, the colors of the very representation of the Dioscuri, the beauty of the artistic expression and the composition of mortar all lead to the opinion that it belongs to the above mentioned room. The fragments from the depot of the Museum of Srem, where parts of the other of the two Dioscuri which complete this little composition were found (segment of the head with the shoulder girdle, a star, segment of a leg – below the knee down to the ankle, as well as segments of a horse – the mane with the ears, segments of the legs and the tail) (figs. 39–40) helped arrive at these conclusions.

The so-called red panel bordered with a vegetative frame was classified as belonging to the Room of Muses, because of the characteristic colors and painted leaves (figs. 42 and 43). Beside this frame, other frames and borders with various ornaments:

⁶⁴ Kovács 2002, 99 (soba VI).

⁶⁵ The purpose of the room is unknown, it is assumed that it could have had the function of a triclinium, http://arthistory.about.com/od/special_exhibitions/1/bl-stabiano-gm0307rev.htm

⁶⁶ Boislève 2014. Abb.1.

⁶⁷ <http://followinghadrian.com/2015/01/18/roman-frescoes-on-show-in-toulouse-france/>

⁶⁸ Ling 1992, 170.



in the form of volutes, stars, astragals and dots painted on red and ochre backgrounds, were added, too.

The painting rendered on ochre surfaces probably used to belong to the Room of Muses because of the relation to the ochre socle. On certain fragments, ochre follows the black surface decorated with green leaves in two tones, which is shown in figures 45 – 47, similar to the field with “apples” of the composition with the “Muses” (fig. 32) and red panels from figures 42 and 43.

Certainly, we should not disregard the rare examples of the graffiti on the wall paintings of Sirmium, carved on the ochre backgrounds of the walls. On one of them, there is an inscription, and on the other, a very interesting representation of gladiators or an animal with a net (?) (figs. 48–49).

According to the number of fragments of wall paintings, we get an impression that every room of this complex used to be adorned with paintings. Judging by the motifs used, these were probably important rooms, inspired by Third Pompeian Style.

Because of the polished red painted surfaces and frequent application of pastuous layers, it can be concluded that the painting in the Room of Muses was executed in secco technique. According to the XRD⁶⁹ analytical technique it is concluded that for painting the red surfaces hematite was used (Fe₂O₃), while the red color was additionally intensified by the red intonaco (plaster with brick powder aggregate). The perfectly polished surfaces of the red panels from the Room of Muses are a result of the experience and precision of the masters from Sirmium in plaster application. A large quantity of red and ochre paint was necessary for painting the walls of the Room of Muses, and also, the polishing of the walls required more time than painting on a white mortar surface, which in turn required a larger budget.

The fragments of wall paintings found in structure B on site 21, yield enough data for the apprehension of the interior decoration. The accurate dimensions of the walls are missing, so the height and width of the painted zones cannot be determined. The numerous analogies mentioned in this chapter lead to the reconsideration of the proportions of the fields in which the Muses’ portraits are depicted. Thus, the following dimensions have been obtained – the total width of the entire composition could amount to 805, 8 cm, while previously it was determined to be 1154,4 cm; the composition is narrower because of the narrowing of the red fields.

According to everything that was mentioned above, it could be concluded that the walls of the interior of the object of public purpose from Sirmium were very elegantly painted, after the model of the already standardized visual models from the center of the Empire.

⁶⁹ A separate publication on the analysis of the paints of Sirmium’s painters is being prepared.