LINKING DIFFERENT TRADITIONS AND INFLUENCES:
SOME REMARKS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE
MONTENEGRO TERRITORY IN THE ROMAN PERIOD*

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Introduction

Montenegro was part of the Roman province of Dalmatia. To the Romans gazing out across the Adriatic Sea, the area was always one of the Illyrian provinces that represented ‘the other side’. After the conquest, however, the Adriatic became a part of the Roman mare nostrum, and as such it was filled with harbours and opened up to commerce, as well as becoming the threshold for the penetration of the Balkan Peninsula¹. Dalmatia can also be placed within the group of the ‘Danube-Balkan’ provinces, which, thanks to their geographical position, history and culture, have always been a meeting point between East and West². Here, the mixing of the Greek-Roman koiné with local traditions offers some particularly interesting socio-cultural insights. The process of Romanization began after the creation of the province under Augustus (10 AD) and developed yet more during the Flavian age. It was at this time that the appellation Dalmatia replaced the previously used Illyricum.

Illyrian-Roman municipia were created, while the already existing links between Dalmatia and other Adriatic provinces, in particular Venetia et Histria, were intensified. This process lasted until Late Antiquity, when, thanks to the reforms of Diocletian, Dalmatia was then divided into two distinct provinces, Dalmatia and Praevalitana to which last Montenegro belongs³.

* I would like to thank Tatjana Koprivica and all my Montenegrin colleagues for giving me the opportunity to discover their beautiful country. Many thanks also go to Philip Ditchfield for improving my English and to Antonio D’Eredità for reproducing the plans 1, 2-4, 7, 9, 11, 15, 20.

¹ See Zaccaria 2015, 13-14. On the relations between the two sides of the Adriatic Sea through the ages, see, among others, Pavan 1958; 1980; 1991; Aquileia, la Dalmazia e l’Ilirico 1985; Braccesi, Graciotti 1999; Marion, Tassaux 2015.

² Rinaldi Tufi 2000, 205-222.

³ For a summary of the history of the region, see Rinaldi Tufi 1989, but Wilkes 1969 remains a fundamental work. On the events related to the conquest, see especially Wilkes 1969, 13-77, while, on Late Antiquity, see 416-437. On Dalmatia in general, see also Sanader 2009. For specific researches, see Davison, Gaffney, Marin 2006. For the economy of Dalmatia, see Zaninović 1977 and for the historical events of the Imperial age, Zaninović 1999. On the Late Antique province, see the recent work of Stevović 2014.
For contemporary historiography the Adriatic is an important area of research, not just for what it represents in terms of commercial and cultural exchange, but also as a boundary between differing models of eastern and western civilisation⁴. Since the 1970s, scholars ‘of the two sides’ have tried to share archaeological data and review the written sources in order to more accurately reconstruct the history of this area⁵.

Montenegro, in particular, possesses significant Roman archaeological remains, dating from the beginning of the Imperial age right up until Late Antiquity (Fig. 1). Unfortunately, however, the archaeological data is quite heterogeneous. Often it is not easily accessible, and there are no specific studies on the documentation of this period as a whole. In recent years, research has intensified in the area, also with the cooperation of foreign archaeological missions, in particular from Italy, but this documentation is barely known outside the specialists.

From the ‘global’ methodological perspective most accepted in recent archaeological studies and with attention to the broader Mediterranean context, I present a brief overview of Roman archaeology in Montenegro on the basis of the literature available in Italy, focusing on some case studies in which a mixture of different influences and traditions is particularly evident.

1. The towns

From an archaeological point of view, the most significant sites of Roman Montenegro are essentially three towns⁶: Doclea and Municipium S. in the inner area and Risinum on the coast. Stari Bar seems to have been scarcely inhabited – if at all – during Roman times, providing medieval deposits that lie beyond the scope of this research⁷.

1.1 Doclea

Doclea was the most important city in the south-eastern part of the Roman province of Dalmatia and played an important role during the Imperial age until Late Antiquity. Only about a fifth of the town has been excavated (Fig. 2), despite investigations beginning at the end of the 19th century. In 1890, thanks to the initiative and the financial

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⁴ On the presence of the Adriatic area in contemporary historiography, see Zaccaria 2015.
⁵ Specific bibliography in Zaccaria 2015.
⁶ On the cities of Dalmatia in general, see Wilkes 2003.
Fig. 1 Map of Montenegro, with the main Roman archaeological sites (modified after https://atlante.unimondo.org/Paesi/Europa/Europa-meridionale/Montenegro/(livello)/mappe).
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support of Prince Nikola of Montenegro, P.A. Rovinski, a Russian scholar, carried out the first excavations in the central part of the site\(^8\). In 1893, J.A. Munro, with other British scholars, excavated the Christian basilicas A, B and the cruciform church C\(^9\). Afterwards, systematic research was carried out by the Balkan Commission of the Academy of Sciences of Vienna, under the direction of an Istrian scholar, Piero Sticotti, to whom we owe the first monograph on the town\(^10\). In 1947-1948, the site was cut through by the construction of a railroad that destroyed some areas of the ancient city. The Serbian archaeologist D. Srejović and other Yugoslav archaeologists carried out more research in the city in the period 1954-1964\(^11\), while J.J. Wilkes dedicated many pages to Doclea in his monograph on Dalmatia\(^12\). More excavations were conducted by the Centre for Conservation and

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\(^{8}\) For the first investigations, see Koprivica 2013.

\(^{9}\) Munro et al. 1896. T. Koprivica studied the documentation in the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford.

\(^{10}\) Sticotti 1913; Rinaldi Tufi 2012, 478-479.

\(^{11}\) Srejović 1967 and 1968.

\(^{12}\) Wilkes 1969, 259-261.
Archaeology in Cetinje between 1997 to 1999, 2003 to 2005 and again 2010 to 2019, but are in part unpublished\textsuperscript{13}. New studies and archaeological investigations have been dedicated to the ancient city in recent years by the Museum of Podgorica in cooperation with the Italian University of Urbino\textsuperscript{14}, the Ca’ Foscari University of Venice\textsuperscript{15} and the British School at Rome\textsuperscript{16}, the aim of which was to promote cultural tourism in Podgorica through the protection of its historical and archaeological heritage\textsuperscript{17}. The Historical Institute of the University of Montenegro has recently carried out more work in the town. In particular, Doclea was the subject of the PhD thesis by Tatjana Koprivica who also presented a paper in this conference\textsuperscript{18}. The Historical Institute of Montenegro initiated a collaborative programme with the Institute for Ancient Mediterranean Studies (ISMA) in 2015 and together with the Institute for Technologies Applied to Cultural Heritage (ITABC), both recently merged in the Institute of Heritage Science (ISPC), of the Italian National Research Council (CNR) in 2016. Other specific archaeological projects are also in progress\textsuperscript{19}.

In this paper, I will not analyse the Doclean monuments in detail, but I would like just to mention some aspects of the Roman architecture of the city to place it in a wider context.

The history of the city can be reconstructed in broad terms from literary and epigraphic sources\textsuperscript{20}. Originally inhabited by the Illyrian tribes of the Docleatae, the site was conquered by Octavian in 35 BC, when its inhabitants were then part of the conventus of Narona. Doclea, so named after the local tribes, become a municipium probably in the Flavian period, when the main monuments were built\textsuperscript{21}.

\textsuperscript{13} Rinaldi Tufi 2012, 478. Archaeological excavations have been carried out in recent years and are still ongoing. See Baković 2010 and 2011; Živanović 2014 and 2018.
\textsuperscript{14} Rinaldi Tufi, Baratin, Peloso 2010: topographic relief carried out in October 2007. See also Baratin 2010.
\textsuperscript{15} Gelichi \textit{et al.} 2012.
\textsuperscript{16} For the geophysical investigations, see in particular Pett 2010.
\textsuperscript{17} The results of these researches have been published in the series \textit{Nova Antička Duklja} 1-9 (2010-2018).
\textsuperscript{18} T. Koprivica, \textit{The Architecture of Late Antique Doclea. Possibilities of Reconstruction}, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, April 2016. See also Koprivica in this book.
\textsuperscript{19} This book collects the results of the joint research project \textit{Mediterranean Cultural Heritage. Italy and Montenegro. Perceptions and Perspectives} (2015-2016) between ISMA-CNR and the Historical Institute of Montenegro, University of Montenegro. For the biennium 2017-2018, a Joint Archaeological Laboratory between ISMA and the Historical Institute of Montenegro was carried out. In addition a bilateral project between ITABC-CNR and the same Institute for the study of other Montenegrin archaeological sites was set up. Recently, a new project on Doclea has been financed for the years 2018-2020 as one of the Great Relevance Projects of the MAECI (see Alberti 2019 for the first results).
\textsuperscript{20} Wilkes 1969, 166-167.
\textsuperscript{21} In the local inscriptions the name Flavius appears 28 times: see Wilkes 1969, 260 and 316 and Pelcer-Vujačić in this volume.
The site is located on a plain, surrounded by mountains; it holds a strategic position at the confluence of the Zeta and Morača rivers, being placed on the west and south-east sides, while to the north there runs the mountain stream Širalija (Fig. 3). The Zeta river valley, in particular, had a great influence on the development of Doclea, thanks to its mild climate and fertile soil. To the south-east of the city, beyond the Morača river, the remains of an aqueduct have been found, but the bridges across the rivers have not been properly identified. 

The city was fortified: the walls enclose an area of approximately 25 hectares. Preserved almost throughout their entire perimeter and often almost up to their original height

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22 Rinaldi Tufi 1989, 94.
23 According to Wilkes 1969, 363, the city walls are 'the most impressive remains in the province' (description of the walls, 364-365).
(Fig. 4), these walls were 3-6 m high, possessing a breadth that varies from 2 to 3 m\(^2\). The main gate could be in the west wall, but nothing is known of its plan. This part of the fortification contained about twenty inscriptions, originally set up in the forum basilica, the latest dating to 254\(^2\). According to J.J. Wilkes, ‘two periods of construction can be detected in the Doclea walls, the later additions being some external towers on the north side facing the Şiralija torrent bed’\(^2\). According to M. Živanović and A. Stamenković the city walls of Doclea belong to the mid 3\(^{rd}\) century or later: ‘We suggest the hypothesis that the construction of city walls of Doclea took place under the patronage of a Roman emperor in the second half of 3\(^{rd}\) and during 4\(^{th}\) century’\(^2\). Unfortunately, studies on the masonry techniques are lacking, while comparisons with other similar structures have yet to be undertaken, so such dates must be treated with caution.

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\(^{24}\) For a recent study on the walls, see Živanović, Stamenković 2012.

\(^{25}\) Wilkes 1969, 365: ‘this part of the building may have taken place during the insecurity of the third century, although a much later date is possible’.

\(^{26}\) Wilkes 1969, 365.

\(^{27}\) Živanović, Stamenković 2012, 137. On fortification in north-western Roman Empire see von Petrikovits 1971.
The archaeological remains are located in the central area of the site. The excavated buildings are in the western sector, arranged along a road, running from west to east. This road is the continuation of another that came from Narona and led to a gate that was identified in the western section of the city walls, but is now no longer visible. On the southern side of the road there is the so-called temple of the goddess Rome, a private house, the so-called temple of Diana, a large bath-house complex and a smaller bathing set-up. On the northern side, there is also an area with many structures yet to be studied, the forum with the basilica, and another temple. Today, the railway cutting through the site does not allow us to easily recognise the relationships between the buildings to the north and south sides of the road.

The main monument is the forum, dedicated by M. Flavius Fronto and his wife Flavia Tertulla, in memory of their son M. Flavius Balbinus, as indicated in an inscription. The forum is a large paved area (60 by 55 m), which is square in shape and surrounded by porticoes and buildings, except on the south side, where the main street passed (Fig. 5). On the north side there are constructions of different sizes: in the middle there is a podium 8 m square and 1.5 m high, probably appropriate to a sacred building, whose access steps are not preserved. A row of tabernae and other structures are situated on the east side, while a basilica is to be found on the west one. The latter is divided in two parts, the larger, rectangular, 50 by 13 m, with a single row of columns across each end, and the smaller, to the north (13 by 10 m) with an apse in its north wall (Fig. 6). The general layout of the complex has no parallel with the other better-known fora of the Adriatic region, such as those of Pula, Zara and Narona, all built in the Augustan age, where a rectangular shape is employed. The roughly square plan here, attested too in some smaller towns in Dalmatia as well as in other provinces, in particular in Britain, finds one good parallel in Rome, in the architecture of the Templum Pacis. The comparison of this last with the forum of Doclea, more or less its contemporary, is compelling. That said, there are many differences in size and lay-out. According to S. Rinaldi Tufi, this scheme could have been inspired by military architecture,
Fig. 5 Doclea: plan of the forum (after Sticotti 1913).

Fig. 6 Doclea: the basilica from the south side (photo by the author).
and in particular by the *castra* that were built in large numbers during the intense military activity of the Flavian emperors. D. Srejović has also proposed that the *forum* of Doclea performed the function of the *Caesareum* or place of imperial cult, a role that in the 3rd century would have been transferred to the temple of the so-called goddess Roma. According to this scholar, moreover, this architectural type would have originated in Egypt: the many small finds coming from Africa and Asia Minor, discovered during the research in the Doclean necropolis, would strengthen ‘the intensive connections that existed between this part of the Balkans and the eastern provinces’.

In recent years and on the east side of the *forum*, a building has been excavated, to discover and define its dimension and features. It is a temple, oriented N-S: a prostyle tetra-style structure of about 7 x 14.5 m, it was built in the central part of a sanctuary, closed on the west, south and probably east sides by a set of rooms, while a porch faces onto the main street (Fig. 7). The temple has been interpreted as the *Capitolium* of the city. If that were the case, the fact that it faces the *decumanus* would make it extremely peculiar. In the other cities of the Adriatic area, such temples always face the *forum*.

In the city, two other sacred buildings are known, both hypothetically identified by a fragment of a pediment decoration, one depicting a bust of the goddess Roma on a clypeus and the other piece a bust of Diana. The so-called temple of the goddess Roma, dated to the 3rd century AD, was of the tetrasyle prostyle *in antis* sort, set on a podium with steps in the façade; the temple was enclosed by a wall and faced the main road. The so-called temple of Diana was very similar in plan and was inserted into a *temenos*. Unfortunately today the temples are almost completely destroyed. The plans follow well known models also present in the Adriatic regions. Unfortunately, the religious buildings preserved in both the Augustan region of *Venetia et Histria* and in the Illyricum-Dalmatia province are not numerous, so it is difficult to make comparisons. Only in Pula are more complex situations attested, while the

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37 Rinaldi Tufi 2012, 479. According to P. Gros, ‘même si la thèse est aujourd’hui contestée, il est difficile de ne pas retrouver au moins formellement dans cette organisation sommaire et efficace le souvenir des *principia* des camps legionnaires où en général une salle allongée occupe l’un des côtés de l’aire de rassemblement’ (Gros 2011, 226).
38 Srejović 1967.
39 Stevović 2014, 118.
40 The results of the archaeological investigations carried out inside some rooms of the complex, in particular in the n. 3, have been published in *Nova Antička Duklja* II and III.
41 Baković 2011, 19.
42 For a detailed analysis of Doclea cults, see T. Koprivica in this volume.
43 Rinaldi Tufi 1989, 91.
44 Rinaldi Tufi 1989, 92 had already noted how the temple had been reburied and that nothing was visible of the excavated remains.
45 Wilkes 1969, 374.
façade with four elements is already in use in Augustan buildings in Salona and Narona\textsuperscript{46}.

In the same area of the town a private dwelling was also excavated. The house (30 x 23 m) contains more than twenty rooms arranged around a courtyard and a bath-suite (Fig. 8). The building is particularly interesting because of a little temple in its own enclosure that was incorporated into it\textsuperscript{47}. Examples of religious buildings of this type are to be found within

\textsuperscript{46} Rinaldi Tufi 2012, 478.

\textsuperscript{47} Wilkes 1969, 375-376.
Fig. 8 Doclea: plan of the *domus* with a little temple (*after* Sticotti 1913, 78, fig. 37).
Linking different traditions and influences

some Pompeian houses dating back to the last phase of life of the city. According to J.J. Wilkes, ‘its prominent position in the city, together with the private temple, leaves no doubt that this was the residence of one of the wealthiest families, probably the Flavii who built the forum’. Unfortunately, this building is also in a very poor state of conservation.

Finally, in front of the forum, a large bath complex has been identified (Fig. 9). These baths are more elaborate and luxurious than those present in Salona, but they do not seem to have an axial and symmetrical arrangement which would allow us to recognise a so-called ‘imperial’ plan. Apparently built in the early years of the Flavian city, they have different building phases, attested to by the overlapping of masonry structures.

In order to make a structural and planned study of the complex and establish comparisons with similar buildings, a study of the characteristics of each phase is first necessary. To the east of these structures, another bath complex has been identified, designated as ‘small baths’ (Fig. 10), and as yet to be investigated. The two bath complexes were probably part of a same large building as shown by the results of the geophysical survey.

In 1893, J.A. Munro excavated three churches in the east area of the town. The first possessed three naves (basilica A), another had perhaps a basilical plan (church B) and the last a cruciform plan (church C), and was built after church B. New research carried out by the University Ca’ Foscari of Venice dates churches A and B to the 6th century (Fig. 11). It is likely that basilica A was the first to be built. It was flanked by a porch, service rooms and by another building whose form and function are not currently definable. Church B was built subsequently, it sports a narthex with two small rooms at the ends. In the last phase, the central part of this church was occupied by a new building in plan like a Greek cross (church C) (Fig. 12). It reuses building blocks and architectural elements coming from the

48 For comparisons with domus in Pompeii, see Bassani 2008, 93-98 and catalogue nn. 32-36.
50 Sticotti 1913, 98-103.
52 Wilkes 1969, 379-381: according to the scholar, however, ‘the Doclean baths survived almost untouched by later alterations’.
53 Research carried out in 1997-1998, unpublished, shown that in the thermae there are at least four or five different phases. See Sfameni, Koprivica, D’Eredità 2019
54 Cozzolino, Gentile 2019.
55 Koprivica 2014 studied the documentation preserved in the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology of Oxford.
56 Gelichi et al. 2012. On some issues of early Christian and Medieval constructions in Doclea and Bar, see Zagarčanin 2012. The churches have a different orientation than the buildings in the central area of the town.
57 Gelichi et al. 2012, 27.
Fig. 9 Doclea: aerial view of the bathing complex (modified by Antonio D’Eredità from 2017 Google Earth).

Fig. 10 Doclea: the so-called small thermae (Baths; photo by the author).
Fig. 11 Doclea: the churches A, B and C (after Gelichi et al. 2012, 25, fig. 13).

Fig. 12 Doclea: the cruciform church C (photo by the author).
The site in Komini, near present-day Pljevlja in the central Balkan area, is known as

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58 On the Christian complex in Doclea, see also Stevović 2014, 122-126.
59 Vujičić 2007, 45: if this date is correct, then church C would testify that Doclea continued to exist for at least two centuries after the destruction wrought by the Avars and Slavs at the beginning of the 7th century.
60 Rinaldi Tufi 2012, 480.
61 Duval, Popović 1984, 552-553.
63 Zagarčanin 2014. Other Christian churches are located north of Doclea, at Doljani and in other sites, see Nikolajević 1989 and Stevović 2014, 126-127.
64 Hoxha 2005, 186.
65 Rehren, Cholakova, Živanović 2012: from the middle of the 4th century and during the 5th, some of the rooms of the temple complex, now abandoned, were transformed into a small-scale glass workshop (see also Živanović 2014).
Municipium S⁶⁶. The name of the Roman municipium is not reported either in inscriptions or in the literary evidence, but probably the abbreviation S in one inscription refers to the name of the municipium⁶⁷. Far from the main routes of communication, the Roman city existed from the 1st to the 4th centuries AD. Excavations were carried out in 1964-67 and 1970-77: nearly 700 graves, many with inscriptions were discovered in two cemeteries⁶⁸. The large number of Illyrian names in the inscriptions attests to the native component of the population being very strong⁶⁹. The funerary portraits are executed in the same style and modelling, but with different physiological characteristics: a group representing people with plump oval faces is found on most Roman monuments, while other reliefs show people with pronounced cheekbones and chins, making the face look triangular⁷⁰. Here is an example, in figurative art, of how local traditions were able to survive in a Romanised context.

1.3 Risan

The other cities of Montenegro are situated along the coast. Pliny the Elder remarks that from Epidaurus (modern Dubrovnik) sunt oppida civium Romanorum Rhizinium, Acruvium, Butuanum, Olcinium, quod antea Colchinium dictum est, a Colchis conditum⁷¹.

The best known city from an archaeological point of view is Rhizon/Risinum, the modern Risan in the gulf of Kotor⁷². The geographical position of the bay of Kotor was always of huge geopolitical importance and in the region between Narona and Lissos, Risan was the preeminent port⁷³. In antiquity, the site was very important: in the 3rd century BC, during the reign of Queen Teuta, it was the capital of the Illyrian kingdom and was one of the most important strongholds during the first Illyrian war. Sea routes connected Rhizon with the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, constituting at the same time a highway for Mediterranean trade, technology transfers and exchange of ideas. Probably in the Augustan period a municipium was established, but the site may also have received a colony. Families coming from central and southern Europe are attested but, in the 1st century, the ruling class

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⁶⁶ The site was known from late 18th century by reports of travellers and explorers that recorded Roman monuments in Pljevlja and its environs. See Mirković 2012, 1-6.
⁶⁷ Mirković 2012, 28, n. 1.
⁶⁸ Austrian soldiers carried out excavations in a Roman necropolis in the village of Komini in 1899, but it was only from 1964 to 1967 and from 1970 to 1977 that A. Germanović-Kuzmanović carried out systematic excavation in the necropolis. For bibliography, see Mirković 2012, 6-8.
⁶⁹ Mirković 2012, 9-23.
⁷⁰ Mirković 2012, 23, figs. 11-17.
⁷¹ Plin. NH III, 144.
⁷² Wilkes 1969, 254-255.
⁷³ Dyczek 2004, see in particular 101-15 for the written sources and the history of the site.
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was exclusively of Italian origin. The Illyrian fortress was situated on the hill of Gradina, where the ancient Roman town was also located. The first archaeological excavations of the Illyrian settlement were made by Sir Arthur Evans in the 1870s, quickly followed by more campaigns in and around it during the late 1800s and early 1900s. In 2001, the Centre for Research on the Antiquity of Southeastern Europe of the University of Warsaw began work which yielded important results. Since the settlement was a key maritime centre, port and anchorage, the archaeologists of Warsaw have carried out underwater surveys, looking for the remains of the ancient port.

For the topic of this paper, one private building is particularly interesting: discovered by D. Vuksan in 1930 in the modern city centre, by the sea, it was called the ‘villa of Hypnos’ due to the presence of a mosaic depicting Hypnos. It is a four-sided building, with rooms arranged around a central space that was identified as an *atrium* (Fig. 13), indicating to Vuksan that he had found a Roman villa. Further excavations were carried out in 1963 in previously uninvestigated parts of the building: the archaeologists then responsible also interpreted the courtyard as a typical *atrium* of a Roman house. In 2004, Polish archaeologists decided to carry out a regular excavation in order to complete the documentation of the mosaics and to establish the history of the building.

The building was built in an area sloping down towards the sea, over the bed of a stream: it was therefore necessary to create a stable supporting platform. The rooms are arranged around a central courtyard, surrounded itself by a portico; many rooms have mosaic floors (Fig. 14).

The western and eastern wings are almost identical; within them two narrow rooms were identified as staircases. On the northern side there is a long rectangular room situated behind a series of smaller rooms, while the southern wing has four rectangular rooms. The main entrance cannot be reconstructed, but it is possible that it was located to the south (Fig. 15).

The only figurative mosaic found represents Hypnos, the god of Sleep (Fig. 16): this image is unique for a mosaic floor and, according to some scholars, it could be a symbol of death. The other floors present geometrical forms and occasionally stylised vegetation. The composition is similar: a rectangle or square in the centre, two smaller rectangles often near to

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74 Evans 1883-1885 and 2006.
75 For the history of research, see Ciolek-Kowal 2010.
77 Karpinski 2010, 125-163.
78 Vuksan 1931 and 1932.
79 Marković 1964.
81 Dyczek 2010, 57.
82 Dyczek 2009.
Fig. 13 Risan, villa of Hypnos: plan (after Vuksan 1932, fig. 1).

Fig. 14 Risan, villa of Hypnos: the central courtyard (photo by the author).
Fig. 15 Risan, villa of Hypnos: plan of the villa after the recent investigations (after Dyczek 2012, 221, fig. 3).

Fig. 16 Risan, villa of Hypnos: the mosaic depicting Hypnos (photo by the author).
the short sides (Fig. 17). Black and white predominate. The decorative motifs reflect different traditions: some patterns have a Greek origin and date back to the 1st century BC, while others come from Italy or Gaul and date from the 1st century AD onwards\footnote{For an analysis of the villa mosaics, see Dyczek 2010 and 2012.}. Some of them are from North Africa. In particular, emblems similar to that of Hypnos, but with different subjects, can be found in African pavements in the mid-2nd century. The African connection in the Risan mosaics is exceptional, and is particularly noteworthy since this is the earliest example of such a link in this region\footnote{Dyczek 2010, 70. The scholar notes that an inscription found in Lambaesis attests to the presence of citizens of Risinium (CIL VIII, 2581: the inscription described a mounted statue of the Illyrian god Medaurus, reproducing a monument from Risinium, see Dyczek et al. 2010).}. Excavation data is lacking: the mosaics can be dated, only on the basis of the decorative motifs, to the reign of Antoninus Pius, between 138 and 161 AD. A coin of Constantine and some red slip ware ceramics places the destruction of the building in the first half of the 4th century\footnote{Dyczek 2010, 60.}.

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Fig. 17 Risan, villa of Hypnos: the floor of Room 1 (after Dyczek 2010, 64, fig. 14).
The Risan mosaics illustrate well the evolution of the mosaic ateliers in Dalmatia. From the very beginning these workshops show heavy influence from the Italic mosaicists. The first ‘mosaic school’ was created in the 1st century AD in Istria, under the influence of Aquileia\(^86\). The school of Salona developed between the late 2nd and the early 3rd centuries, reaching its greatest development in the 3rd century. Then, though remaining as active, it declined in quality gradually during the 4th century. The combinations of decorative motifs originating both from the western provinces and from North Africa are characteristic of this production. Stylistic variations confirm the existence of a local Salonitan school-workshop and of other Dalmatian workshops. These include those of Narona, Senije, Iader, Tarsatica and Epidauros\(^87\). It has been suggested that in Salona there was an actual mosaic school (a sort of academy) from which patterns and variants of pre-existing motifs emanated throughout the province of Dalmatia and influenced its workshops\(^88\).

P. Dyczek proposed a new interpretation of the Hypnos villa\(^89\), generally considered to be either a typical Italic domus or, since it is located outside the city, a suburban villa\(^90\). According to this scholar, the hypothesis that it was a country villa should be rejected, since the soil conditions around it render the practice of agriculture impossible. The mosaics, which boast a highly decorated middle panel (Fig. 18), seem to suggest that the furniture would have been arranged around them and that the rooms could be essentially used as triclinia of different sizes to accommodate varying numbers of guests. The main rectangular hall may have been used for larger meetings, or as a dormitory. The building had an upper floor that could have held bedrooms, while other rooms on the lower floor could also have served as sleeping areas. Thus he argues that the so-called villa of Hypnos in Risan was in fact an inn (hospitium)\(^91\). The closest comparison would be with two similar houses discovered at Byllis in Albania that may have had a similar function\(^92\). Nevertheless, the type of domus or villa with rooms around a central space is widespread throughout the Roman world\(^93\). In particular, it is possible to establish

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\(^{86}\) On the Salonitan mosaic school-workshop, see Matulić 2003.
\(^{87}\) For the mosaic school in Dalmatia, see Mano-Zissi 1965.
\(^{88}\) Matulić 2003, 99.
\(^{89}\) Dyczek 2010.
\(^{90}\) Mijović 1980, 109: this type of villa can be compared with villas in Pannonia, precisely Eisenstriad, Balaca I, Gyulafiratoy Poganytelek-Tac I, that have a central space or an open peristyle. See also Vasić 1970.
\(^{91}\) Dyczek 2010, 74.
\(^{92}\) Ceka 1992, 75. See also Ferriés, Skenderaj 2015.
\(^{93}\) For some methodological thoughts on the identification of Roman inn, see Le Guennec 2016.
precise comparisons with buildings of the *X Regio Venetia et Histria*\(^94\), both urban and rural, as well as villas in Pannonia\(^95\): all of which have a square plan with a central space or peristyle.

The foundations of another building, with mosaic floors, were found near the villa of Hypnos, under a road. Called ‘villa of the Meander’, it was built in the 2\(^{nd}\) century, re-built in the early 4\(^{th}\) century when it acquired an *opus sectile* floor and perhaps abandoned in the late 4\(^{th}\)\(^6\). Although the interpretation proposed by the Polish scholar for the villa of Hypnos is compelling, in the absence of other elements, it cannot be excluded that all we are dealing with here is a residential district. Beyond its functional interpretation, however, the Risan building constitutes a very useful case-study for the confluence of decorative motifs of different Mediterranean origins.

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\(^94\) De Franceschini 1998; Busana 2002; Matijasic 2001.

\(^95\) Mulvin 2002.

\(^96\) Dyczek 2004, 108-111.
1.4 Other Roman towns on the Montenegrin coast

In other coastal towns, such as *Acruvium* (Kotor), *Butua* (Budva) and *Olcinium* (Ulcinj) the archaeological remains tend as yet to be very poor\(^{97}\), but these sites might simply require further investigation.

Pliny places the Illyrian city of *Acruvium* among the *oppida civium Romanorum*\(^ {98}\), but it is not certain if it was a colony\(^ {99}\). During the restoration of the Cathedral of Kotor, fragments of an older church were found, which were then kept in a lapidary store. Further investigations were conducted after the earthquake in 1979, but only medieval remains were found\(^ {100}\).

In the Illyrian settlement of Budva (*Butua*), already populated by Roman citizens before it became a colony or *municipium*\(^ {101}\), graves with Hellenistic-Roman objects were found in 1938. Sadly the grave goods are now mostly missing. Excavations recommenced after World War II, but the results were never published. After the earthquake in 1979, the excavation of the cemetery was completed and 4\(^{th}\) to 5\(^{th}\) centuries burials were identified. In particular, the great variety of glass objects from Mediterranean workshops present in the Budva necropolis provides an interesting picture of its trade relationships\(^ {102}\). Glass vessels from Italian workshops were imported during the 1\(^{st}\) and 2\(^{nd}\) centuries, while the import of objects from Eastern Mediterranean lasted until the 4\(^{th}\) century. The materials are now on display in the Archaeological Museum of Budva. In the same museum, there is a fragment of a decorated marble pluteus or iconostasis probably from an early Christian basilica of the 6\(^{th}\) century\(^ {103}\).

Ulcinj (*Olcinium*) is the southernmost town of the Montenegrin littoral. According to Pliny, the city was founded by Colchis\(^ {104}\), but there are no materials related to an archaic phase. Excavations in the old town have revealed the existence of walls dating between the 4\(^{th}\) and the 3\(^{rd}\) centuries BC. After the fall of the Illyrian kingdom in 167 BC, the city became a Roman *oppidum*, but inscriptions in Latin have not been found\(^ {105}\).

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\(^{97}\) Wilkes 1969, 257.

\(^{98}\) Plin. *NH* III, 144; Wilkes 1969, 256.

\(^{99}\) Rinaldi Tufi 1989, 97. Roman materials (sculptures, inscriptions) are kept in the Pomorski Muzej (Naval Museum).

\(^{100}\) Martinović 2010, 179-181.

\(^{101}\) Plin. *NH* III, 144; Wilkes 1969, 256.

\(^{102}\) Lazar 2015.

\(^{103}\) Martinović 2010, 179.

\(^{104}\) Plin. *NH* III, 144.

\(^{105}\) Martinović 2010, 182.
2. The countryside

The evidence regarding the countryside of Roman Montenegro is very poor. If much of the entire province of Dalmatia remains terra incognita in settlement terms, as V. Gaffney notes\textsuperscript{106}, this is especially true for Montenegro, where, until recently, no attention was paid to the study and interpretation of its historical or archaeological landscape. The new work conducted at Risan, Doclea and Stari Bar is based on modern non-invasive methods of studying the archaeological landscape. Numerous sites dating to early Roman times have been identified in the territory of Bar. To these we have to add the underwater archaeological finds that testify to strong trade links with different Mediterranean regions\textsuperscript{107}. It is thus possible to argue that settlements lay scattered along the coastal strip, concentrated around Bar, while their cemeteries were located on the more internal reliefs\textsuperscript{108}.

S. Gelichi notes that ‘there is an absence of settlements of at least a minimal institutional importance in the Roman-Hellenistic age on the coast between Budva and Ulcinium’, but this absence ‘seems to have been compensated, at least from the Late Imperial Age, by a series of villae, testified by direct archaeological finds (mosaics and structures) or indirectly, as, for example, for the small group of tombs found in Sutomore in 1971’\textsuperscript{109}. Nevertheless, only two villas have been excavated.

In the early 1900s, in the locality of Mirišta in Petrovac na Moru, on the coast between Budva and Bar, a mosaic floor was found, along with fragments probably coming from other rooms (Fig. 19)\textsuperscript{110}.

The decorative motifs – vine leaves, knot of Solomon, kantharoi – date the mosaic to the last decade of the 3rd century AD\textsuperscript{111}. Excavations at the site were undertaken in 2006 and the results of the 2006-2011 campaigns were published in 2014; another monograph is in preparation\textsuperscript{112}. New rooms were discovered, and more building phases recognised (Fig. 20). The first phase is dated to between the late 1st and early 2nd centuries AD; between the 2nd and the 3rd centuries, the building was enlarged in its western part. Thereafter, an important

\textsuperscript{106} Gaffney 2006, 104.
\textsuperscript{107} Zagarčanin 2013.
\textsuperscript{108} For some evidence from the territory of Bar, as well as from underwater research, see Zagarčanin 2013, 27-33.
\textsuperscript{109} Gelichi 2006b, 10-11.
\textsuperscript{110} The first study is Nikolajević-Stojković 1957.
\textsuperscript{111} Mijović 1980, 110.
\textsuperscript{112} Zagarčanin 2014.
building phase ensues with rooms having mosaic floors and areas for the production of oil, all dating to the 4th century. The particularity of the building at this stage is the presence of a series of pools inside the rooms, the function of which is not clear. M. Zagarčanin suggests that in this phase the building was not a villa, but a place of worship, a sort of sanatorium connected with a bathing complex that is not preserved. More investigation is needed: building underwent a violent destruction in the 4th century, the cause of which is uncertain; further changes are attested in the 6th century.

113 Zagarčanin 2014.
Fig. 20 Petrovac na Moru: plan of the villa (after Zagarčanin 2014, 23, fig. 1).
Another villa has been partially excavated in the Kruce Bay, between Bar and Ulcinj, in 1984\textsuperscript{116}: two rectangular rooms and a bathing complex with three fragments of mosaic floors were dated to the 6\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{117}. However, the structure seems older and the finds only bear witness to the last phase of the site’s occupation\textsuperscript{118}. The villa is similar to that of Petrovac in its seaside location, for the presence of rooms decorated with mosaics and for a Late Antique chronology. According to S. Gelichi, however, the possibility that these buildings were connected to estates still remains hypothetical and even their chronology ought to be reassessed on the basis of more reliable archaeological data\textsuperscript{119}.

Mosaic floor fragments have been found both on the coast and inland: ‘it is only reasonable to assume the existence of Late Roman villas with latifundia, which later passed into the ownership of the Church’\textsuperscript{120}. I. Stevović mentions the villa rustica on the site Podvhr-Crkvine, situated below Gradina in Martiniči, near Doclea, which would have a Christian temple\textsuperscript{121}.

Other villas, unpublished, are reported in Buliarica (between Bar and Petrovac) and in Pjaca Vranovica, near Tivat\textsuperscript{122}. The recovered materials also suggest a direct connection between these settlements and the Adriatic-Mediterranean trade routes\textsuperscript{123}.

**Conclusions**

In conclusion, we can observe how Roman archaeology in Montenegro is yet to be satisfactorily explored. That said, the available documentation is strongly suggestive of a high level of cross-cultural exchange. Meeting point of ancient cultures and peoples, Roman Montenegro quickly became incorporated into the Imperial system, as evidenced by all the monuments built in its cities. Doclea, in particular, is representative of this phenomenon: the main buildings so far known in the Roman town fit perfectly in the ‘official’ Roman tradition and also find precise comparisons in aulic architectural models, as can be seen in particular in the case of the forum, the temples and the baths. In Doclea, there is no perception of a possible

\textsuperscript{116} Mišović 1987, 120 and 149.
\textsuperscript{117} Gelichi 2006b, 13 and pl. 1.9
\textsuperscript{118} Gelichi 2006b, 14.
\textsuperscript{119} Gelichi 2006b, 14.
\textsuperscript{120} Mišović 1980, 108. Zagarčanin 2015 also indicates the presence of a Roman villa in the small island Prevlaka near Tivat, and the mosaics of a thermal complex (1\textsuperscript{st}-3\textsuperscript{rd} centuries) found under the dormitory of the monastery of St. Michael the Archangel (Zagarčanin 2016).
\textsuperscript{121} Stevović 2014, 128. The site is not published and it is not possible to verify the relationship between the villa and the ‘Christian Temple’.
\textsuperscript{122} Gelichi 2006b, 13.
\textsuperscript{123} Gelichi 2006b, 13.
reduction in the inhabited space in Late Antiquity, a phenomenon commonly found in many cities of the Empire. The research, which up until now has been limited to church buildings, needs to be widened, in order to better reconstruct the dynamics of the abandonment of the city in the early Middle Ages.

More research is also needed in the other Roman cities of Montenegro and their hinterlands. On the basis of the discovery of the mosaic fragments both on the coast and inland, it is reasonable to assume the existence of many Roman villas, all of which require further investigation. As regards the coastal settlements, it is likely that these villas represent the phenomenon of scattered settlement that was a common pattern on the Roman coastlines. As for cross-cultural contacts, further studies on the production of mosaics and, above all, on the production and circulation of ceramics and other materials all still needs to be further developed.

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