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# Galerius, Gamzigrad, and the Fifth Macedonian legion

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The future emperor Galerius was born in a small village in the province of Dacia Ripensis around A.D. 258.<sup>1</sup> His mother's name was Romula. When he was confirmed as a member of the tetrarchy he undertook a building programme in his native village, transforming it into a monumental fortified palace. To honour his mother he gave it a new name, *Felix Romuliana*. In 311, before this ambitious programme was complete, he died and was buried and deified there.<sup>2</sup>

*Romuliana* has been securely identified through epigraphic evidence with the impressive remains that exist near modern Gamzigrad (NE Serbia).<sup>3</sup> This fortified palace was built in two phases: first came a fortification wall with 16 small rectangular or octagonal towers, dated in the first five years of the 4th c.; then in c.305<sup>4</sup> this defensive system was partly demolished and a new, bigger fortification wall, strengthened by 20 huge, bastion-like towers (16-, 12- or 10-sided) was erected on the outside, encompassing and enlarging the original plan. This wall has been dated to 306-311.<sup>5</sup> Inside the walls were erected two temples with altars, two palace complexes, a bath, a *horreum*, and auxiliary buildings.<sup>6</sup> On a low ridge of hills east of the fortified palace two large consecration mounds and two mausolea were excavated in 1993. From the finds as well as the overall nature of the buildings at Romuliana, it was determined that this was where Galerius and his mother were buried and deified in the first years of the 4th c.<sup>7</sup>

The two fortified enceintes, as well as the palaces inside, were built by *Legio V Macedonica* which was normally based in Oescus on the right bank of the Danube.<sup>8</sup> Soldiers of this legion left their stamps on some bricks used in building *Romuliana*. The stamped bricks found, which number about 40, belong both to the inner (earlier) as well as the outer (later) fortification walls. They were found during the excavations either inside the filling of the polygonal towers or mixed with débris in the interior of the palaces.<sup>9</sup> Undoubtedly many more stamped bricks exist in the standing walls but their stamps cannot now be seen.

- 1 For a biographical summary of Galerius's life see D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle* (2nd edn., Darmstadt 1996) 283-87; for a generally acceptable chronology of his reign, see T. D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, MA 1982) 37-38 and 61-64, revised by C. Zuckerman, *AnTar* 2 (1994) 65-70.
- 2 *Epit. de Caes.* 40.16; Kienast *ibid.* 284; Barnes *ibid.* 64. For a plausible identification of the original name of Romuliana, see A. Jovanović, "Notes to the manuscript *De Aedificiis* by Procopius," in M. Lazić (ed.), *The archaeology of eastern Serbia* (Belgrade 1997) 259-63.
- 3 See M. Canak-Medić, *Gamzigrad, kasnoantička palata. Arhitektura i prostorni sklop* (Belgrade 1978), and D. Srejšović *et al.*, *Gamzigrad: kasnoantički carski dvorci* (Belgrade 1983).
- 4 Srejšović *ibid.* 198 and *id.* (ed.), *Roman imperial towns and palaces in Serbia: Sirmium, Romuliana, Naissus* (Belgrade 1993) 118-25.
- 5 Canak-Medić (supra n.3) 96-99. A coin found in the mortar of the foundations, beneath the floor of one of the polygonal towers of the more recent fortification, was issued between 308 and 311. Therefore at that place this fortification cannot be earlier than 308. Another coin, issued between 309 and 311, was found in the substratum of the mosaic floor in Palace I. This palace is contemporary with the later fortification and later than the internal fortification. For the dating of the internal fortification see also Srejšović 1993 (supra n.4) 125-27.
- 6 Srejšović 1983 (supra n.3) 37-53, and *id.* 1993 (supra n.4) 128-47.
- 7 D. Srejšović and C. Vasić, *Imperial mausolea and consecration memorials in Felix Romuliana (Gamzigrad, East Serbia)* (Belgrade 1994).
- 8 Srejšović 1983, 161-70; M. Mirković, "Romuliana, the Roman army and soldiers," in M. Lazić (ed.), *Ἀντίδωρον Dragoslavo Srejšović* (Belgrade 1997) 427-35.
- 9 Canak-Medić (supra n.3) 31, 89-90 and 111-12.