

## ***Archaeological Site of Gamzigrad (Felix Romuliana)***

Country or territory:  
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO  
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Name of organisation  
compiling the information:  
Institute for the Protection of  
Cultural Monuments of Serbia, Belgrade

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Name and address of building(s) or site:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF  
GAMZIGRAD (FELIX ROMULIANA)

Municipality of Zaječar

Inventory reference number(s):

AN 40

Building type(s):

Archaeological site: multi layer, from pre-history to the Middle Ages, the most important phase is the late antique palace of the Emperor Galerius

Main date(s):

297 – 311 A.D.

Current use(s):

Archaeological park

Significance:

The archaeological site of Gamzigrad (Felix Romuliana), is a memorial complex of the Roman Emperor from the time of the tetrarchy – Galerius, that ruled from 297 till 311 AD. The complex is comprised of fortifications with a palace and other public houses, tombs and mausoleums on the adjacent hill.

Ancient remains were noted by 19<sup>th</sup> century travellers. Systematic archaeological exploration, however, started only in 1953, and is still going on. Conservation of remains, architectural, mosaics and decorative architectural sculptures accompanied explorations from the start.

The fortresses are composed of two parallel fortification systems including massive towers connected by walls. The defence systems were built in a short time span and differ by their spatial organisation and building technique. First, the inner row of towers and walls was erected, modest in size. Shortly after that, Galerius was proclaimed Emperor and a new, more monumental and decorative fortification system was built.

The space within the fortification is divided by the main communication axis, the decumanus, oriented from north to south. In the northern part is the Emperor's residential complex. Only the official reception area was excavated, conserved and presented. The existence of private premises is known by probe examinations. In the north part within the palace is a small temple, whose dedication is still uncertain.

In the south part of the fortified space are buildings of public character – Jupiter Temple, *thermae*, and *horreum*. Only the Jupiter temple has been archaeologically excavated, while the research in the *thermae* is still going on. Other buildings in the southern part are only identified by probe examinations.

On the hill Magura, about one kilometre to the east of the palace, is a group of commemorative structures, including the remains of a mausoleum and monument dedicated to Emperor Galerius and his mother Romula. The traces of the ancient road is visible nearby, next to the remains of a Tetrapylon.

The architecture of the Imperial complex is rich in materials, has high quality of decorative architectural sculpture of pillars, capitals, walls, as well as sculptural decoration. Especially beautiful are the floor mosaics which, for the choice of motives and the exceptional quality of the material, are among the most significant in the whole Roman Empire. The spatial composition of the buildings of the fortified Imperial Palace and Memorial is unique. The realisation of this complex is based on a clearly defined ideological programme by the inspirer and builder, the Roman Emperor Galerius.

#### Categories of significance:

Of outstanding national importance

Archaeological site of Gamzigrad – Romuliana, is a cultural property of exceptional significance for the Republic of Serbia. It is on the national Tentative List of sites to be nominated for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

#### Categories of ownership or interest:

State property.

#### Documentation and bibliographic references:

##### Documentation

Technical and photo documentation is stored in the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia and Archaeology Institute of Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences.

##### Bibliography

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Condition:

Very bad – Lack of funding hinders systematic conservation works, which leads to a deterioration of the structures, exposed to weather and sudden changes of temperature. It is necessary to study the possibility of protecting the palace and its mosaics by an appropriate shelter. A continuous maintenance is also needed.

Risk:

Condition risk:

Under repair - The fortified imperial palace is under constant survey of conservers, from the very beginning of the archaeological excavations. However, lack of funding prevented its presentation.

Technical assessment and costing:

Financing of conservation and presentation of the architecture and mosaics of the archaeological site, until year 1990, was made at the state budget level. Since 1990, the funding was reduced and irregular. For the year 2003, an amount of 30.000,00€ was provided.

Ownership:

The archaeological site of Gamzigrad – Romuliana is owned by the State.

Occupation:

The Archaeological site Gamzigrad – Romuliana has been used as an archaeological park and it is possible to use it as an attractive place, in order to improve the tourist attraction to the region.

Management:

The Municipality of Zaječar is responsible for management, through the National Museum in Zaječar. In the case of financing of conservation works, administration of the funds would be under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, while the oversight of conservation works will be conducted by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia.

Summary:

The archaeological site of Gamzigrad – Romuliana is a cultural property of exceptional national and possibly international significance.

The preservation and presentation of the site, which is improving, can be jeopardized, due to lack of funding.

A Plan to declare the property "Area of Special Purpose", which is being officially adopted, shall provide protection zones and guidelines for preservation and use. The Plan envisages the possibility to use the archaeological site for tourism, and identifies Gamzigrad as one of the most significant assets in view of the sustainable development of this relatively poor area.

Signature and date:

Brana Stojković-Pavelka

March 5, 2004