

## Školarice near Spodnje Škofije

Spodnje Škofije – archaeological site Školarice

sk 20 Klanec–Ankaran

x 405784 y 46846 z 25

Koper 29

c.c. Škofije, cadastral plot nos. 79/5, 673/14, 673/22, 673/23, 702/15, 702/16, 702/27, 702/28, 703/2, 703/3, 703/4, 704/6, 708/3, 710/3, 711/4, 711/5, 711/6 & 714/5

Villa rustica

Roman

Topography 1991, Giordano Labud; Systematic archaeological survey 2001, Gojko Tica and Bojan Djurić

Excavation 2002

Alfred Trenz and Matjaž Novšak

6,136 m<sup>2</sup>

ZVKDS, Piran Regional Office

IRN 14299

Motorway section

Geographical coordinates

Primary topographical map sheet TTN5

Cadastral register

Site type

Period

Method and date of discovery, site discovered by

Fieldwork method and date

Excavation directors

Excavated area

Site archive kept by



Small Late Roman jar

The remains of a Roman settlement are located on the south-western terraced slope of the Bečajevec hill between Dekani and Sermin. The underlying geology consists of Eocene flysch, which stretches from Črni Kal, Kubed and Sočerga in the east to the Dragonja–Buzet line in the south.

The Školarice toponym, derived from the Italian Scoladizzi (Ital. *scolare* means ‘drip’, ‘trickle’), indicates the presence of small springs in the area. The landscape around the site is hilly and mostly covered with olive groves and vineyards. The numerous terraces are indicators of intense anthropogenic influence on the landscape.

Two large building complexes were excavated in the two parts affected by motorway construction within the excavated part of the site. The architectural remains indicate that an extensive country villa (*villa rustica*) was built here during the period of the Early Roman Empire.

The size and preservation of the remains are representative and exceptional in the territory of Slovenian



Istria. The excavated artefacts indicate that the villa was occupied throughout the period between the end of the 1st century BC and the 5th century AD.

Several functionally different parts can be identified in the excavated part of the villa. The commercial zone with manufacturing units is located on the present second and third terrace of the Bečajevec hill, which already was terraced in the Roman period. The ruins of the building in this area are particularly well preserved. The finely dressed, mortared walls here survive to a height of 2m. The floors, covered with screed, floor tiles and mosaic are preserved in the interior. The stone-built stairway is almost entirely extant. The remains of stone bases for a press and receptacles (dolia, amphorae, a stone bowl) are the preserved parts of furnishings and equipment for processing olives and making wine. The warehouse with an internal peristyle (600 m<sup>2</sup>) and a drainage system was built in extension to the north of the commercial buildings. It originally served as a storage area. The roof was used as a floor, after it collapsed in the Late Roman period. The interior of the building was subdivided with drystone walls and wooden superstructures for commercial purposes. An oven was erected in one of the rooms, and numerous scattered fragmented metal artefacts were discovered around it. After the villa was abandoned, a massive supporting wall was preserved, as well as several stone bases of the colonnade, but the floors in the rooms were buried beneath rubble.

The bathhouse (termae) and the ruins of the residential structures likewise developed in several phases. The apse of the at least six-roomed building was panelled with white marble floor and walls tiles in the *opus sectile* technique. Fragments of the richly furnished interior were discovered among the ruins: fragments of ornamental stucco, smaller cubes of the mosaic paving and fragments of frescoes with vegetal motifs.

An access path with a compact surface was discovered to the north of the bathhouse building. It was probably the link between the villa and the main *Tergeste-Pola* road, which was discovered at the foot of the hill.

#### MATJAŽ NOVŠAK

##### References

- DJURIĆ, BOJAN, *Arheološki pregled potencialnega arheološkega najdišča Križišče – Školarice*, Ljubljana 2001.
- LABUD, GIORDANO, *Ricerche archeologico-ambientali dell'Istria settentrionale. La valle del fiume Risano*, Jonsered 1995, pp. 50–52.
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Roman relief-decorated  
incense burner