

Summary

REMESIANA - THE PICTURE OF AN ANTIQUE TOWN

Remesiana, the antique settlement on the site of the present-day Bela Palanka, lies at the ravine of Bela Palanka and the valley of the Nishava river and stretches along the main road (via publica), which used to lead from Naissus to Serdica and then to Constantinopolis.

On the basis of the existing topography and archaeology explorations, we are able to estimate and to restore a possible appearance of this antique town. In the first years of its foundation, the settlement was built along the Roman road (via militaris). Until now, it has not been archeologically confirmed whether this settlement consisted of the group of wooden houses along the both sides of the road, but it is certain that it was an open type of settlement with the forum in the middle of the settlement's cardo and decumanus. At the beginning of the 4th century a wall was built around the town, while the suburb (suburbium) was formed outside of the ramparts. The location of the forum and the streets arrangement were retained during the late antique period, although it can be noticed that some public objects changed their purpose, such as the civil basilica which was transformed into the Christian one. The area inside the ramparts was about 5 hectares, while the suburban area was about 17 hectares. The town's necropolis, situated along the western, eastern and southern access roads to the town, belonged to the central part of the town, while the country estates with villas and separate family cemeteries belonged to the wider town area.

Remesiana belonged to the type of smaller settlements where the population never exceeded 2000. The extraordinary rich selection of the objects found at the cemeteries indicates that the deceased belonged to the upper-middle class, were highly respected and high-ranked in the emperor's hierarchy, specially during the time of Constantine's attempts to secure the support of the local aristocracy and take Naissus and its surroundings. Another important one in the history of the town was the bishop Niketa, the missionary, who was significant for spreading Christianity in the Remesiana region at the end of the 4th and at the beginning of the 5th century.