

SUMMARY

**RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, THEIR DECORATIONS AND LUXURY IN ROMAN PULA.
SOME EXAMPLES**

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Roman Pula acquired the outlines of a planned Roman city while keeping the prehistoric planimetry in the form of a spider web of the central city hill after the colony had been established in the middle of the 1st century BC, probably in the time of Caesar. The spiral road which ran around the hill leading to the capitolium, and radial access streets and passages starting at the Gates of Hercules and other city gates resulted in the trapezoid shape of the insulae where residential buildings and villas of the urban colony of Pula were built. Relevant buildings and finds dated in the 1st century BC have been documented by investigations in the area of the city's foundations of what is known as the House of Agrippina in the northern area of the Roman forum, and at the site on Castropola way to the top of Pula,

The period of rule of Emperor Augustus and the time of the members of his family and the imperial public servants are characterised by an almost complete reconstruction of the *pars superior* and the *pars inferior* of the city, with relatively more regularly shaped insulae starting from the *decumanus* and spreading in the direction of the bay. In the area where villas were built, there were several magnificent buildings with floors decorated with mosaics (for example "The Punishment of Dirce"). In the area stretching from the *decumanus* to the upper Roman city, multi-floored buildings were built in the insulae. The buildings followed the radial pattern of steep streets (*clivus*) and merged into areas where new urban villas (*villa urbana*) were erected. The villas had luxurious interior decorations such as mosaic floors, frescoes, stuccos, private *thermae* and stone decorations.

Consequently, particular attention should be paid to the mentioned luxury villas once located in the Roman upper city on the slopes of the central hill (*pars superior*) of the Roman colony of Pula. Among them, a building with a peristyle and a mosaic floor with two peacocks is an important decorative example of Roman city planning and can be used as a paradigm of Pula's urban luxury villas, both for its architectural concept and for its decorations, including mosaics, frescoes and marble fountains which decorated the atrium.

Given that Pula was a Roman city of members of the imperial gens Julia, of high state dignitaries and of patrician families, the level to which the city area has been investigated does not correspond to the facts that Pula was a Roman colony and had wealthy inhabitants. However, the results so far obtained shed some light on the city core of Pula from the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD, and can be taken as indications of just how luxuriously and richly Roman urban villas were equipped if compared to more modestly equipped residential insulae inhabited by families of artisans, merchants and civil servants.