

## ROMAN ANTEFIXA IN THE MUSEUM OF SLAVONIA

A kind of material from Roman Mursa that has hitherto rarely been worked on in literature, is described here. Namely, terra cotta antefixes from the Museum's archaeological collection are represented of which 20 pieces were found at Osijek, and only one near Osijek at Batina Skela on the Danube. In the whole of Slavonia, as far as our evidence goes, there have never been found similar objects, but of course some far-fetched analogies could be stated among the Roman material from Siscia, Sirmium, Aquincum, Carnuntum, Apulum, Corpadea, Ravazd and among some more ancient material from Tarentum. These clay decorations invented by Etruscan architects and borrowed by the Romans, were used to decorate various parts of an edifice externally, as well as internally to cover a flat surface or conceal junctures between two blocks of masonry. The material from Mursa as well as the analogies from Pannonia and Dacia indicate that they were probably used to conceal the end of the ridge tiles (*imbrices*) and the juncture of the flat ones (*tegulae*). Antefixes are in general decorated with reliefs of palm-leaves, lion's heads, young female or bearded male faces or masks. Our collection consists of only two types of decorated antefixa. The bulk of them is decorated with a young female face (plate I—IX) whereas only two pieces belong to the type with bearded masks (plate X). The female faces have a special head-gear which in some of the variations resembles the hair-dressing of Hadrian's wife Sabina, as is represented on some coins. This feature might be a hint as to the dating of our Mursan antefixa. We know that romanisation of this part of Slavonia (i. e. the southeastern part of Pannonia Inferior) started after the occupation of the land was completed at the end of the first century and at the beginning of the second when Hadrian founded the colony Mursa. As can be judged by epigraphic and archaeological material romanisation took deeper roots here during the reign of the Antonini and the Severi up to the middle of the third century when disastrous wars, barbaric invasions and christianity, that slowly but steadily shook the old system down to the roots, caused the decline of the Roman Empire. It is assumed therefore that probably only in the second and first half of the third century houses were built in Mursa in an Italic style with atria and peristylia and that these houses with roofs of *tegulae* and *imbrices* were also decorated with the antefixes from our collection.