Diocletian’s reign was marked by a policy of pacification and stabilization of the shaken Roman Empire. By introducing peace, releasing prisoners, and introducing orderly rule which brought back peace and harmony to the empire, Diocletian created the impression that the Golden Age had returned, which empowered the imperial cult and the soteriological role of his occurrence. “The return of sunlight to the throne”, as his reign was named, brought about extraordinarily strong construction activities throughout the empire, which introduced new forms to architecture and urbanism by connecting western architectural tradition with the East. Diocletian’s Palace in Split is the best preserved part of an extraordinary large architectural opus of the emperor accused by Christian sources for insatiability in building, calling it cupiditas aedificandi.

Diocletian’s mausoleum is one of the best preserved buildings from the fourth century, which only went through some minor modifications from the time that it was built. It was built in 305 A.D. within the imperial palace, near the city of

Ground plan of Diocletian’s palace in Split (after J. Marasović)
Salona, the ancient center of Illyricum. It was erected as a central peripter of an octagonal layout, the cylindrical interior of which is covered by a dome. It belongs to the Syrian - type of architecture, and was built out of massive blocks connected with metal clamps by Hellenized Egyptian builders. There have been attempts to connect the Greek names Filotas and Zotikos, engraved on the peripter and on the Golden Gate of the palace, to the builders of the palace. The assumption that they were architects of Greek origin brought by the emperor in order to realize his architectural ideas should be extended to other parts of the Eastern empire because these names could be names of Hellenized Syrian and Egyptian builders.

The interior of the temple is decorated with eight monumental Corinthian columns standing next to the walls, with another line of smaller columns above, and a relief frieze in the background. The lower part of the construction contains a crypt, most probably a grave chamber, which is also covered by a dome. Its funerary function has been guaranteed by an interior frieze relief depicting portraits of Emperor Diocletian and his wife Prisca, Hermes, Psykopompos, as well as the motif of the erotes hunting the imperial deer.

The syncretistic cult of Serapis which worships Aesculapius, Zeus, Hades, and Oziris, along with Dionysius who, like Diocletian, is the son of the supreme deity, carries the fundamental motif of victory over death, as well as
one of rebirth and resurrection. It is safe to assert that the biggest and most luxurious temple of Diocletian's Palace in Split is the emperor's mausoleum. Diocletian's mausoleum, two tholoi and the Small temple were situated in the centre of the imperial palace surrounded by the wall of temenos. Four temples in the same area surrounded by the wall of the temenos suggest that this is one unique sanctuary in the service of the imperial cult. In the middle of the seventh century, the mausoleum became the Cathedral of the city of Split, and that is the reason why it has been exceptionally well preserved. A Romanesque bell tower has been added to the original building on its west façade, while a Baroque choir was added on the east. The originally preserved Ionian portal from Diocletian's time has Romanesque wooden carved doors from the 13th century. The interior of the mausoleum represents completely preserved Roman architecture with an added Romanesque pulpit, early Renaissance chapels and Baroque altars. The floor has been tiled with new panels, under which the Late Antique floor, made according to a technique called opus sectile marmoreum with geometric patterns, was partially preserved. We can follow the restoration methods on the mausoleum because

Central part of the Palace, mausoleum, two tholoi and the Small temple surrounded by the wall of temenos (after J. Marasović)
The frieze and an ornamented cornice at the base of the mausoleum's dome

Architectural survey of the fourth century mausoleum's dome, for project of rehabilitation of damaged sections

its restoration has been carried out from the second half of the 19th century until the present day.
The earliest architectural drawings of the mausoleum were made by Andrea Palladio at the beginning of the 16th century. A very precise drawings was taken by Vicko Andrić in 1853, and a new survey made by a laser 3D scanner was taken during the latest restoration. The mausoleum was renovated in the 19th century when its exterior, and partly its interior, were purified. At that time, the stone moldings, entrance portal, capitals, interior cornices, as well as the profiles and the peripter colonnades outside the temple, were restored. A new renovation of the Cathedral, the former mausoleum, began several years ago with the restoration of the early Renaissance chapels and the main
Calotte surface of the final part of the dome during restauration; As the only light source for the mausoleum’s interior, small window on the wright is not part of original roman architecture. It was open in 17th century restauration

altar, as well as the renovation of the Late Antique stone moldings of the entrance portal, which were cleaned by laser technique.

Within the restoration of the mausoleum’s interior, frieze reliefs were also restored and cleaned, together with the section of the wall in which they are situated. Above the frieze, there is an ornamented cornice at the base of the mausoleum’s dome from the fourth century. The part of the mausoleum that is of particular architectural interest is the dome from the fourth century, for which there are various theories regarding the way it was built. New and precise architectural survey identified deformations that may indicate modifications in the final part of the dome.

The purpose of the research is to determine its original appearance and construction, and to resolve the dilemma of whether it was a self-supporting con-
construction, or whether scaffolding was erected for its construction. The hypotheses of the 19th century discussed the possibility of the existence of an opening on the top of the dome, like the one on the Pantheon. This is supported by the way the bricks were laid and the way they were distributed within semi-circular brick arches which divide the surface of the calotte into a series of scales which become smaller towards the end. During the restoration, Roman anchors, made of iron and laid out radially, were discovered, and their role may be connected to the construction of the dome. Their circular layout could reveal the construction technology of the final part of the dome.

Notes
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2 Kečkemet D., 1993, 126.

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Canova’s pupil Architect Vicko Andrić and his 19th century architectural survey of the mausoleum’s dome; the most impressive and grandiose elements of the palace, remain largely intact. Reconstruction of Peristyle and Mausoleum (after Niemann)