

**MOTIF OF „RAILING OF PARADISE“ ON FRESCOES  
FROM TOMBS IN JAGODIN MALA (NAISSUS)  
AND ČALMA (SIRMIUM)\***

The analysis of frescoes from the tombs in Jagodin Mala in Niš (*Naissus*), found by accident in 1953, performed right after this discovery, has shown that this painting by the used motifs – the representations of Apostles Peter and Paul, Christ's monogram in the garland and the symbolical representations of Paradise, finds its analogies in the compositions from the painted tomb 1 (of St Peter and Paul) from Pécs (*Sopiana*).<sup>1</sup> On the same occasion it has been concluded that the painting of these tombs originates from the last decades of the 4th century. These conclusions were, in rough outline, accepted by researchers, who, in later period, commented on painting of these tombs.<sup>2</sup> Next to the Apostles, between the Christograms in the garland, on the west and east wall of the tomb in Jagodin Mala,<sup>3</sup> on its north and south wall are represented birds, palm-branches and vine, motifs symbolizing the Paradise Garden, in front of which is depicted a railing, consisting of segments formed by cross-bars; these segments are separated by herms with representations of young men<sup>4</sup> (Fig. 1). The motif from this railing attracted again the attention of the researchers to

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<sup>1</sup> F. Gerke, Die Wandmalereien der Petrus-Paulus Katakomben in Pécs (Südungarn), in *Neue Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte des 1. Jahrtausends. I Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und christlichen Archäologie I/2. Frühmittelalterliche Kunst*, Baden-Baden 1954, 170-176; Л. Мирковић, Старохришћанска гробница у Нишу (Résumé: Le sépulcre vieux-chrétien de Niš), *Старинар V-VI* (1954-1955), 1956, 68-71.

<sup>2</sup> F. Fülöp, *Sopiana. The History of Pécs during the Roman Era, and the Problem of the Continuity of the Late Roman Population*, Budapest 1984, 39-40; Z. Magyar, The World of Late Antique Sopiana: Artistic Connections and Scholarly Problems, in *Ниш и Византија / Niš and Byzantium VII* (уредник / ed. М. Ракоција), Ниш 2009, 110-111; К. Hudák, L. Nagy, *A Fine and Private Place. Discovering the Early Christian Cemetery of Sopiana / Pécs, Heritage Booklets 6*, Pécs 2009, 39-57.

<sup>3</sup> Л. Мирковић, *op. cit.*, сл. 2-9.

<sup>4</sup> Л. Мирковић, *op. cit.*, сл. 10-13.

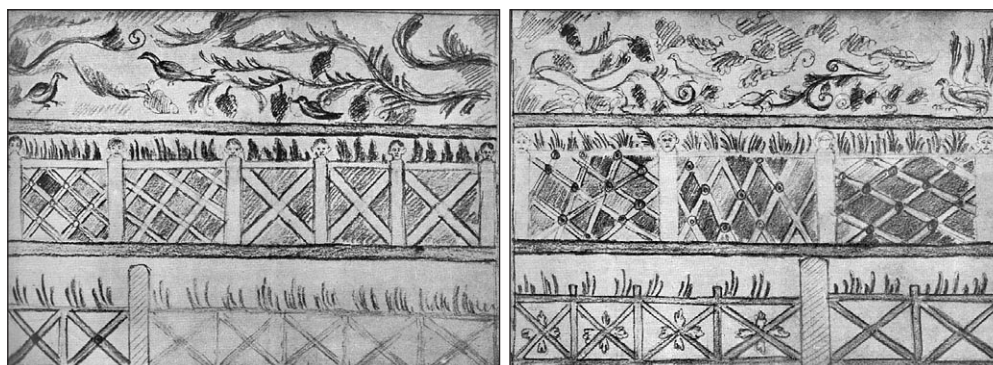


Fig. 1 – „Railing of Paradise“, tomb in Jagodin Mala, Niš: a) north wall; b) south wall (drawing by S. Nenadović, after: Мирковић 1956, сл. 11, 13)

Сл. 1 „Ограда раја“, фреске, гробница у Јагодин Мали, Ниш: а) северни зид; б) јужни зид (цртеж С. Ненадовића, према: Мирковић 1956, сл. 11, 13)

the painting of tombs from Jagodin Mala after 2000, when in Mediana, near Niš, was discovered a bronze railing, consisting of panels with cross-bars and of herms of Aesculapius and Luna (Fig. 2). The comprehensive analysis of this railing has shown that the grate-like barriers, consisting of works of art, appear already in the 1st century, while the cancelli with herms are in use, from time to time, in the 2nd and 3rd century and, according to the artistic representations, they were used also during the 4th, until the middle of the 5th century.<sup>5</sup> According to these works of visual arts, but also to the facts from the written sources, cancelli were used to put a fence around the top of podium or imperial box in the theatre or hippodrome, but also around any other public space in which took place the events of official or spiritual nature.<sup>6</sup> In the opinion of its researcher, the bronze railing was brought to Mediana on demand of emperor Julian, who, during 361, spent a short time in Naissus, probably to be placed at the entrance of the shrine, into which was turned the apse of triclinium in the villa.<sup>7</sup>

Comparing the railing discovered in Mediana with that one painted on the walls of the tomb in Jagodin Mala, it has become easy noticeable that they belong to the identical type, so on the fresco are even marked the round intersections of bars of railing, which are on the bronze railing from Mediana graphically modeled in the shape of lion's or Medusa's head. This led to the assumption that the artist made the wall-painting in tomb from Niš on the basis of the bronze railing which he saw in Mediana. This was presented either as a “daring hypothesis”,<sup>8</sup> or as an “assumption which turned out to be true”.<sup>9</sup> But,

<sup>5</sup> M. Vasić, Bronze Railing from Mediana (Резиме: Бронзана ограда из Медијане), *Starinar* LIII-LIV (2003-2004), 2004, 85-90.

<sup>6</sup> H. Leclercq, Cancelli, in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* II/2, Paris 1919, col. 1822.

<sup>7</sup> M. Vasić, *op. cit.*, 103-106.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>9</sup> М. Ракоција, О парапетној плочи из Ниша, пореклу и типологији

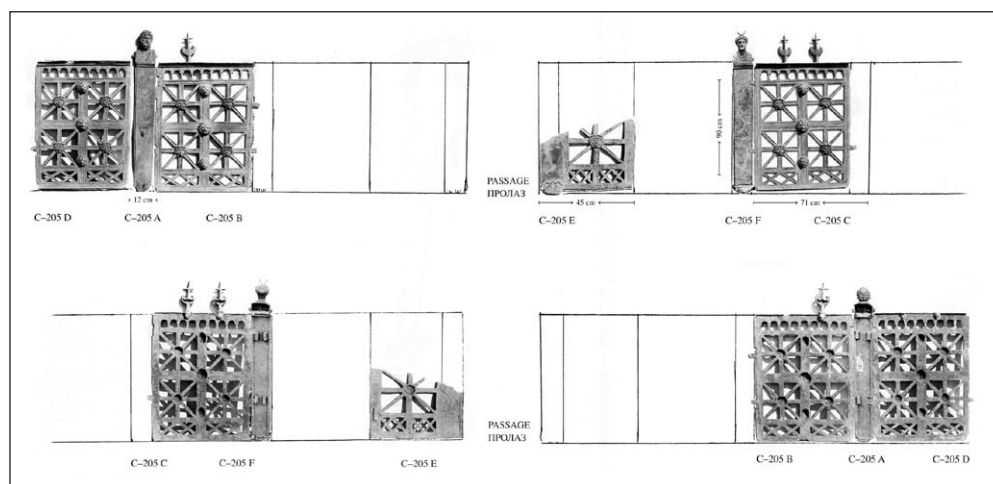


Fig. 2 – Railing with herms, bronze, Mediana (after: Vasić 2004, Fig. 4)

Сл. 2 – Ограда са хермама, бронза, Медијана (према: Vasić 2004, Fig. 4)

besides the fact that the frescoes in the tomb from Jagodin Mala were painted probably around or after 378, when the complex in Mediana and, consequently, the bronze railing, were destroyed, it is important to mention that the purposes of the railing from Mediana, which was, probably, part of inventory of a pagan temple, and of the railing depicted in the tomb from Jagodin Mala, whose function was to separate the heavenly realms from the earthly ones, were entirely different. With regard to this, the necessity imposes itself to define the purposes of discovered or artistically represented cancelli with herms, but also to analyse the genesis and diffusion of the works of visual arts with the representation of this barrier in the sense of “railing of Paradise“.

The oldest, until now, known finds of parts of the railing consisting of parapet panels with herms between them originate from villas from the territory of modern Bulgaria, near the place Ivaylovgrad, in the south-east of this country, and Dolna Kremena, in north-west Bulgaria. In *Villa Armira* near Ivaylovgrad a marble railing with herms representing the participants of Dionysus' tyas, was erected during the first half of the 2nd century and placed between the columns of the colonnade in the peristyle<sup>10</sup> (Fig. 3). The place in which stood the railing

палеовизантијских преграда (Summary: On the Parapet Slab from Niš and on the Origin and Typology of Early-Byzantine Partitions), in *Ниш и Византија / Niš and Byzantium IV* (уредник / ed. М. Ракоција), Ниш 2006, 104-105.

<sup>10</sup> Я. Младенова, Раскопките на вилата при Ивайловград през 1964 г., *Археология* VII/2, 1965, 20-23; J. Mladenova, La villa romaine d'Ivailovgrad, *Actes du Ière Congrès internationale des études balkaniques et sud-est européennes II*, Sofia 1969, 528; Я. Младенова, *Римската вила при Ивайловград. Мраморна стенна декорация* (Résumé: *La villa romaine près d'Ivailovgrad. Incrustations murales et marbre*), София 1975; Я. Младенова, *Античната вила Армира при Ивайловград – история на прозбанията*, (Summary: *Antique Villa Armira near Ivaylovgrad- History of the Survey*), София 1991; В. Динчев, *Римските вили в днешната българска територия* (Summary: *Roman Villas in the Present-Day Bulgarian Lands*), София 1997, 58-61.



Fig. 3 – Railing with herms, reconstruction, marble, villa Armira, Ivaylovgrad (after: <http://restroy.com/projects/2%20RestroiProjectsEN.htm>)

Сл. 3 – Ограда са хермама, реконструкција, мермер, вила Армира, Ивајловград (према: <http://reststroy.com/projects/33%20Reststroy%20ARMIRAEN.htm>)



Fig. 4 – Herms from railing, marble, villa, Dolna Kremena (after: Машов 1988, Обр. 2)

Сл. 4 – Херме са ограде, мермер, вила, Длна Кремна (према: Машов 1988, Обр. 2)

in the villa near Dolna Kremena can not be identified, because only two fragmented herms were discovered (Fig. 4). On the basis of the found material this villa was dated into the period between the end of the 2nd and the middle of the 3rd century.<sup>11</sup> In North Africa, in Leptis Magna, the marble barrier, composed of grate-like panels and herms between them, during the first decade of the 3rd century was placed in front of a nymphaeum<sup>12</sup> (Fig. 5).

Cancelli with herms, in use during the 4th and the first half of the 5th century, are known mostly from their representations in the works of art. On Constantine's Triumphal Arch in Rome, erected in 315, such railing is placed in front of the imperial box (*tribunal*), where are sitting the emperor and the senators during the emperor's speech, *oratio*<sup>13</sup> (Fig. 6), while on the north-east side of the base of Theodosius' obelisk from the hippodrome in Constantinople, erected, probably, in 386, the railing with herms between cancelli is standing around the imperial box in the hippodrome, where is sitting the emperor with his wife and sons, and next to them is the emperor's escort<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 7). A similar

<sup>11</sup> С. Машов, Римската вила при с. Долна Кремна Михайловска област, *Известия на музеите в Северозападна България* 14, 1988, 21-42, Обр. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Th. Kraus, *Das römische Weltreich, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte* Bd. 2, Berlin 1967, Abb. 7 (on the photograph in private possession from 2003 can be noticed that the heads of the herms have been demolished).

<sup>13</sup> S. Violante, Adlocutio di Constantino, Catalogo (no 213), in *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana* (ed. S. Ensoli, E. La Rocca), Roma 2000, 558, cat. 213 (with cited literature).

<sup>14</sup> G. Dagron, Constantinople, la Roma d'Oriente, in *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pa-*



Fig. 5 – Railing with herms, Leptis Magna (private photograph, 2003)

Сл. 5 – Ограда са хермама, Лептис Магна (приватан снимак, 2003. година)



Fig. 6 – Railing with herms, Constantine's Arch, Rome (after: Violante 2000, cat. 213)

Сл. 6 – Ограда са хермама, Константинов славолук, Рим (према: Violante 2000, cat. 213)



Fig. 7 – Railing with herms, basis of Theodosius' Obelisk, Constantinople (after: Dagron 2000, 230, fig. 1)

Сл. 7 – Ограда са хермама, база Теодосијевог обелиска, Константинопољ (према: Dagron 2000, 230, fig. 1)

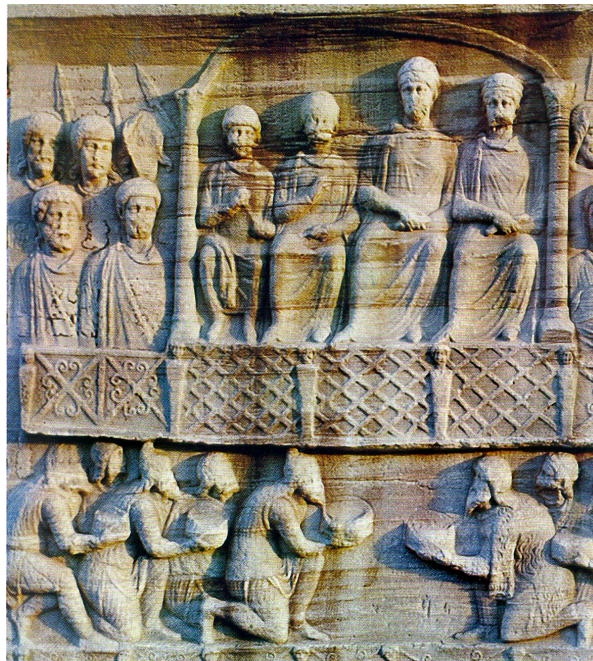




Fig. 8 – Railing with herms, diptych, ivory, Mâson (after: *A l'aube de la France* 1981, cat. 31)

Сл. 8 – Ограда са хермама, диптих, слоновача, Мâсон (према: *A l'aube de la France* 1981, cat. 31)

role such railing has on the ivory diptycha, one from the beginning of the 5th century, from the place Mâcon in south Gaul<sup>15</sup> (Fig. 8), and the other, of Lampadii family, made in Rome, probably during the first half of the 5th century<sup>16</sup> (Fig. 9). On them are represented the imperial high dignitaries, sitting in the imperial box of amphitheatre during the deer hunt, i.e. in the box of hippodrome during the four-horse carriages race. Both manifestations were given for the emperor, and their organizers are sitting behind the marble railing assembled of cancelli with herms between them. These cancelli are not grate-like, but they are the marble panels decorated with engraved bands and rhombs, that is with motifs that imitate the openwork ornaments.

The mentioned examples show that, according to the material known up to now, cancelli with herms during the 2nd-3rd century have been used for enclosing the parts of public profane objects, peristyles in villas and nymphaeums, while during the 4th and the first half of the 5th century such railings were intended for enclosing the imperial boxes for separating, during certain ceremonies, the emperor, his family and imperial high dignitaries from the present crowd. The grate-like marble barriers, placed around the last steps leading into the papal crypt in the catacombs of St Callixte (Callisto) in Rome<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 10), created, also, some sort of rectangular box in front of the entrance into the crypt, flanked by a herma. As we already said, the bronze

*gana alla città cristiana* (ed. S. Ensoli, E. La Rocca), Roma 2000, 230, fig. 1.

<sup>15</sup> *A l'aube de la France. La Gaule de Constantin à Childéric*, Paris 1981, cat. 31; - *Spätantike und frühes Christentum. Ausstellung im Liebieghaus Museum alter Plastik Frankfurt am Main*, Frankfurt 1983, Kat. 222.

<sup>16</sup> I. Tantillo, I munera in età tardoantica, in *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana* (ed. S. Ensoli, E. La Rocca), Roma 2000, 121, fig. 1; K. Painter, Valva dei ditico dei Lampadii, Catalogo (no 33), in *Aurea Roma. Dalla città pagana alla città cristiana* (ed. S. Ensoli, E. La Rocca), Roma 2000, cat. 33 (with cited literature).

<sup>17</sup> F. Cabrol, H. Leclercq, Calliste (cimetière de), in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* II/2, Paris 1919, col. 1742, fig. 1937.



railing with the herms of deities, of which are preserved the busts of Aesculapius and Luna, which was found in Mediana, was, most probably, brought into this villa on demand of the emperor Julian, during his stay in Naissus in 361, to create a part of inventory of the newly built pagan temple. Having in mind the religious policy of this emperor, that railing had its function in his imperial propaganda.

In contrast to the above mentioned railings of official character, on certain pictorial works of art from the 3th century we encounter cancelli with herms in entirely different role. According to the iconographic solutions, frescoes with these themes, created in this period, lean on the traditions of painting of the 1st century, that is on the representations of imperial gardens, enclosed by marble barriers, like the painting of Livia's garden from her villa in Prima Porta in Rome<sup>18</sup> (Fig. 11). As the repertoire of paintings was transferred from one generation to another, but with modification of decorative and iconographic scheme, the representation of the garden from the walls of the vaulted room in Via Genova in Rome, painted at the end of the 2nd or in the beginning of the 3rd century, gives us the picture of cancelli, composed of crossed bars, above which are flying and onto which are descending birds; in front of the railing there is an animal and a bigger biconical cup (Fig. 12). According to the representations of the sleeping Maenad and Pan on the ceiling of this room,<sup>19</sup> the animal and the cup in front of the garden railing, painted on the lateral walls, are connected, probably, with the themes from Dionysus' cult. Parks depicted on the above mentioned frescoes are

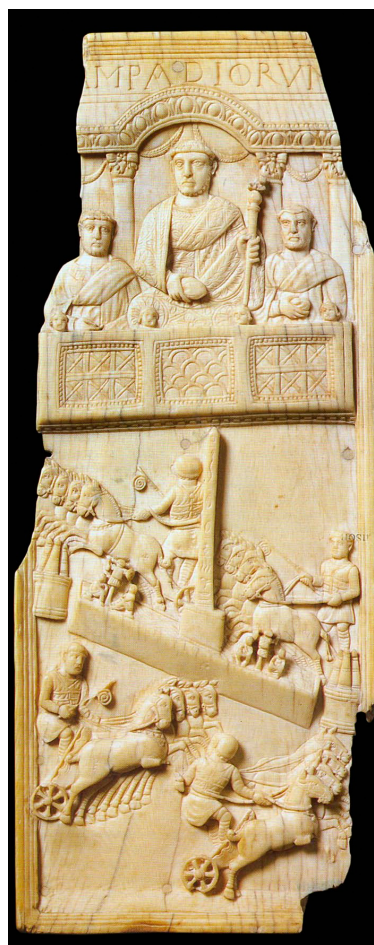


Fig. 9 – Railing with herms, diptych of Lampadii family, ivory (after: Tantillo 2000, 121, fig. 1)

Сл. 9 – Ограда са хермама, диптих породице Лампадија, слоновача (према: Tantillo 2000, 121, fig 1)

<sup>18</sup> F. Gerke, *Die Wandmalereien der neugefundenen Grabkammer in Pécs (Fünfkirchen)*, in *Neue Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte des 1. Jahrtausends. I Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und christlichen Archäologie V/1. Spätantike und Byzanz*, Baden-Baden 1952, 128. For frescoes from Livia's villa cf. I. Baldassarre, A. Pontrandolfo, A. Rouveret, M. Salvadori, *Römische Malerei. Vom Hellenismus bis zur Spätantike*, Köln 2002, 151 (with bibliography), fig. on p. 152-153.

<sup>19</sup> I. Baldassarre, A. Pontrandolfo, A. Rouveret, M. Salvadori, *op. cit.*, 294-296.

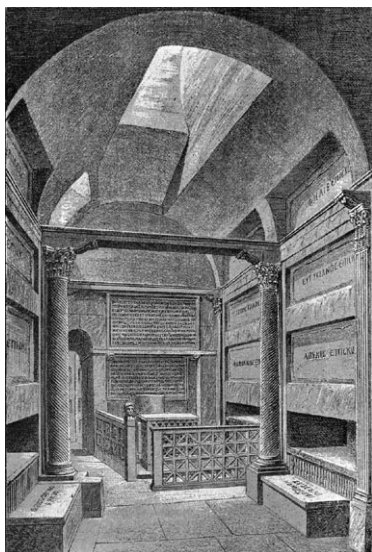


Fig. 10 – “Railing of Paradise“, reconstruction, marble, papal crypt, catacombs of St Callixte, Rome (Cabrol, Leclercq 1910, fig. 1937)

Сл. 10 – „Ограда раја“, реконструкција, мермер, папска крипта, катакомбе св. Калиста, Рим (према: Cabrol, Leclercq 1910, fig. 1937)



Fig. 11 – Imperial garden, detail, fresco, Livia's villa, Prima Porta (after: Baldassarre et al. 2002, figs. on p. 152-153)

Сл. 11 – Царски врт, детаљ, фреска, Ливијина вила, Рим, Prima Porta (према: Baladassarre et al. 2002, сл. на стр. 152-153 )

represented as places full of trees and plants with fruits, in which there are fountains and where peacocks are walking, while birds are descending onto the railing. These iconographic solutions show that parks are the pleasant places (*loci amoeni*), which will on frescoes from the 4th century receive symbolical meaning of Paradise, and railings will become the borders between two worlds, the earthly and the heavenly one. Inside these “railings of Paradise“ are depicted birds, flowers, vine, palm branches and other motifs which contain in themselves the idea of “heavenly garden”.

But, the evolution of pictures of enclosed gardens into the symbolical representation of Paradise was not so fast and rectilinear, both at the levels of iconography and of meaning. So, the “railings of Paradise”, assembled of cancelli formed of crossed wooden bars, or, more probably, of metal bars, behind which the plants can be discerned, are represented on frescoes in the Oceanus-crypt in catacombs of St Callixte, in catacombs of St Domitilla and of St Peter and Marcellinus (Pietro e Marcellino) in Rome,<sup>20</sup> but also on the walls of tombs II (Tomb with a jug) and XX in Pécs.<sup>21</sup> But, on the fresco painted in *arcoso-*

<sup>20</sup> J. Willpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms*, Freiburg 1903, Taf. 134, 2; 121; 143; 218, 2.

<sup>21</sup> F. Fülep, *op. cit.*, 45, T. XXI, 1-2; K. Hudák, L. Nagy, *op. cit.*, 34, Pictures 12-14; 37, Picture 15.



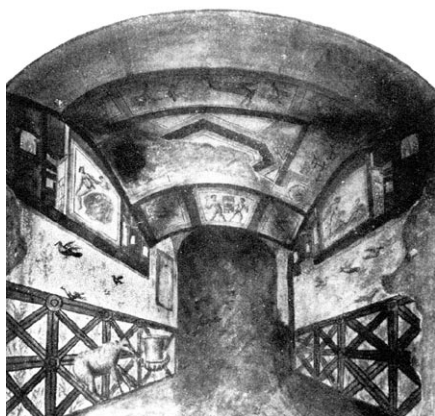


Fig. 12 – Garden railing, Via Genova, Rome (after: Baldassarre et al. 2002, fig. on p. 294)

Сл. 12 – Ограда врта, Via Genova, Рим (према: Baladassarre et al. 2002, сл. на стр. 294)



Fig. 13 – “Railing of Paradise“, fresco, detail, Basilica Teodoriana, socle of south wall, south aula, Aquileia (after: Salvadori, Tiussi, Villa 2009, fig. 2)

Сл. 13 - „Ограда раја“, фреска, детаљ, Теодорова базилика, сокл јужног зида, јужна аула, Аквилеја (према: Salvadori, Tiussi, Villa 2009, Fig 2)



Fig. 14 – Drawing of railing on socle of south wall of south aula of Basilica Teodoriana, Aquileia (after: Salvadori, Tiussi, Villa 2009, fig. 3; aquarel painted by L. Perco)

Сл. 14 – Цртеж ограде на соклу јужног зида јужне ауле Теодорове базилике, Аквилеја (према: Salvadori, Tiussi, Villa 2009, Fig 3; акварел је урадио L. Perco)

*lium* of catacombs of St Cyriaca in Rome (Fig. 15), in front of the railing with herms, behind which there are plants, are represented two animals,<sup>22</sup> probably a calf and a sheep. One of these animals is grazing grass in the meadow, that is on the green pasture ground, which, in accordance with the biblical picture of the perfect place (Psalm 23, 1-2), symbolizes the Paradise scenery. On the other hand, on frescoes from the socle of the south wall of south aula of Basilica Teodoriana in Aquileia (Figs. 13, 14), erected between 314 and 319, in front of the garden railing there were winged *genius* and birds. This is, also, the railing placed in front of Paradise, symbolized by peacocks, plants and a fountain, the elements which are characteristic of representations of imperial gardens. The picture of enclosed Paradise scenery on the wall of south aula of basilica in Aquileia is entirely in accordance with the floor decoration of the same room,

<sup>22</sup> O. Marucchi, F. Sägmüller, *Handbuch der christlichen Archäologie*, Berlin 1912, Abb. 34.

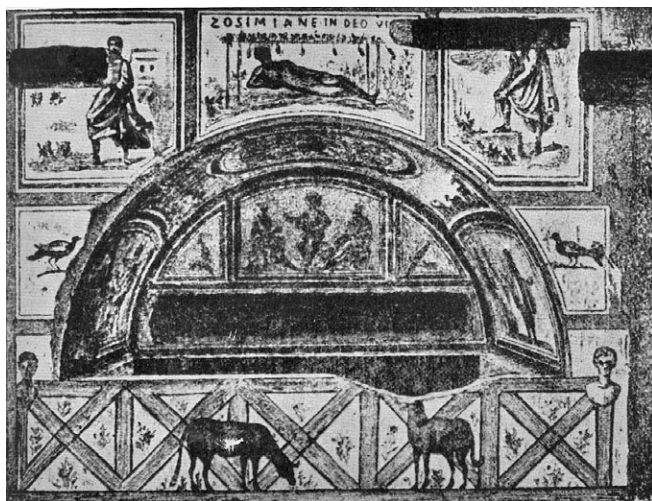


Fig. 15 – “Railing of Paradise“, fresco, catacombs of St Cyriaca, arcosolium, Rome (after: Marucchi, Sägmüller 1912, Abb. 34)

Сл. 15 – „Ограда раја“, фреска, катакомбе св. Киријаке, акросолијум, Рим, (према: Marucchi, Sägmüller 1912, Abb. 34)



Сл. 16 – “Railing of Paradise“, fresco, north wall of tomb no 89 in Thessalonike (after: Маркис 2006, Пів. 12γ).

Сл. 16 – „Ограда раја“, фреска, северни зид гробнице бр. 89 у Солуну (према: Маркис 2006, Пів. 12γ).

i.e. of the mosaic representations of sleeping Jonah and of Good Shepherd.<sup>23</sup> «Railing of Paradise, consisting of two cancelli with crossed bars, between which there is an entrance – «gates of Paradise», with a fountain in the background (Fig. 16), is also represented on the north wall of tomb no 89 in the east necropolis of Thessalonike. Behind, there is a field strewn with flowers that symbolize Paradise garden, and on the railing, next to the «gates of Paradise», two peacocks are standing. The tomb is dated into the fourth decade of the 4th century.<sup>24</sup> For the analysis of «railing of Paradise» with herms between cancelli especially interesting is the representation from the north wall of tomb no 90 in the west necropolis of Thessalonike (Fig. 17), dated into the period after 327. Between cancelli with crossed bars of this railing there are not herms, but columns with bigger cones on the top, behind it there is a field with flowers, and above are the birds pecking grapes.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, although the icono-

<sup>23</sup> M. Salvadori, Il tema del „paradeisos“ negli affreschi della Basilica Teodoriana di Aquileia, *Antichità Altoadriatiche* 62, 2006, 171-184.

<sup>24</sup> E. Маркис *Η νεκρόπολη της Θεσσαλονίκης στους Υστερορωμαϊκούς και Παλαιохριστιανικούς χρόνους*, Αθήνα 2006, 159, Σχέδ. 101, Πίν. 12γ.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 159-160, Σχέδ. 102, Πίν. 12δ.



Сл. 17 – “Railing of Paradise“, fresco, north wall of tomb no 90 in Thessalonike (after: Маркίς 2006, Πίv. 12δ).

Сл. 17 – „Ограда раја“, фреска, северни зид гробнице бр. 90 у Солуну (према: Маркίς 2006, Πίv. 12δ).

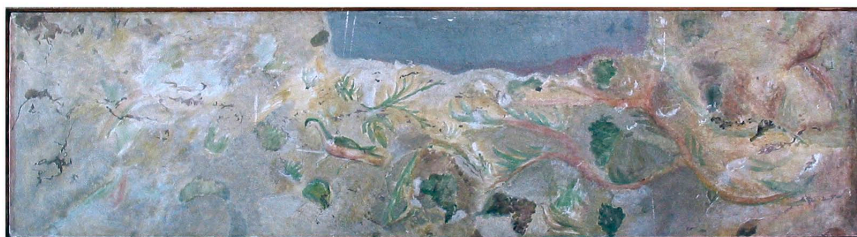
graphic solutions of the railing and the garden on frescoes from the room in Via Genova, from catacombs of St Cyriaca, tombs nr. 89 and in Thessalonike and from basilica in Aquileia are closely related, their symbolics are different, considering that, unlike the others mentioned above, the pictures from Via Genova do not belong to the Christian context. But, all these frescoes show that numerous motifs, represented on the wall-paintings from the earlier periods, in Late Antiquity continued to be used in different sense, of course, with some iconographic modifications. To this bears witness also the fresco on the sole of the south wall of south aula of basilica in Aquileia, on which is depicted the railing of Paradise Garden, in front of which there is a winged genius. It can be supposed that on the paintings of railings of some parks there were painted also the sculptures or herms,<sup>26</sup> so that the basically pagan model of cancelli with herms, at first designed for enclosing the public, official or festive spaces, started to be used in the Christian context of the picture of “railing of Paradise”, as in the case of the railing depicted on the fresco from the areal of so-called Domus Pietri in catacombs of St Sebastiano in Rome.<sup>27</sup> As the railing depicted in the tomb no 90 from Thessalonike shows, in the Christian context of “railing of Paradise” herms between cancelli can be replaced with columns on whose top there is a cone, the eschatological symbol of hope in the resurrection and eternal life. Anyway, also the Paradise Garden itself, enclosed by such railings, can be treated as a sort of exclusive space, designated for the chosen ones, i.e. for those who lived in chastity. Consequently, the representation of “railing of Paradise” on the south and north wall of the tomb from Jagodin Mala in Niš was made after the already widely accepted pattern of painting this motif, used on frescoes from the catacombs in Rome and from the south aula of basilica in Aquileia.

Besides the already mentioned representations of railing and of Paradise scenery on the wall paintings in the Roman catacombs, in basilica of Aquileia and in the tomb from Jagodin Mala in Niš (Figs. 18 a, 19 a; 18 b, 19 b), we en-

<sup>26</sup> F. Gerke, *op. cit.* (note 18), 130; F. Fülep, *op. cit.*, 45.

<sup>27</sup> F. Gerke, *op. cit.* (note 1), 169.





17a



16a

Fig. 18 a – 19 a - “Railing of Paradise“ and Paradise landscape, copies of frescoes, tomb in Jagodin Mala, Niš, north wall (documentation of National Museum, Niš)

Сл. 18 а-19 а „Ограда раја“, и рајски предео, копије фресака, гробница у Јагодин Мали, Ниш, северни зид (документација Народног музеја, Ниш)



17b



16b

Fig. 18 b – 19 b - “Railing of Paradise“ and Paradise landscape, copies of frescoes, tomb in Jagodin Mala, Niš, south wall (documentation of National Museum, Niš)

Сл. 18 б-19 б – „Ограда раја“, и рајски предео, копије фресака, гробница у Јагодин Мали, Ниш, јужни зид (документација Народног музеја, Ниш)



Fig. 20 – “Railing of Paradise“, fresco, tomb I, Čalma, look of part of south wall (documentation of Museum of Srem, Sremska Mitrovica)

Сл. 20 – „Ограда раја“, фреска, гробница I, Чалма, изглед дела јужног зида (документација Музеја Срема, Сремска Митровица)



Fig. 21 – Tomb I, Čalma, look of part of east wall (documentation of Museum of Srem, Sremska Mitrovica)

Сл. 21 - Гробница I, Чалма, изглед дела источног зида (документација Музеја Срема, Сремска Митровица)

counter the similar motif, in our opinion, also on the wall paintings in the Late Antique tomb I, discovered by accident in 1969, in the village Čalma, about 10 km north-west from modern Sremska Mitrovica, that means in the wider city territory of *Sirmium*.

In spite of the poor state of preservation of frescoes in this tomb, during their analysis it has been noticed that the compositions were represented in the fields with edgings in red color. In these fields dominate the linear ornaments mainly of red and, to lesser extent, green color. On the south wall was recognized a bust of a youth (Fig. 20), and on the east one, the human figure in a long cloak<sup>28</sup> (Fig. 21). Later was on the north wall noticed another male bust<sup>29</sup> (Fig. 22), which has not been included into the drawing illustrating this wall-painting (Fig. 23). Both busts were explained as the representations of the deceased persons, and the female figure in the long dress was treated as a servant, the gifts-bearer.<sup>30</sup> But, observing the entire iconographic scheme of wall-painting of tomb I from Čalma, we tend to interpret the depicted composition in another way. The female figure, represented on the east wall, is dressed in a fes-

<sup>28</sup> P. Milošević, Fourth Century Tombs from Čalma near Sremska Mitrovica (Резиме: Гробнице IV века из Чалме код Сремске Митровице), *Sirmium* III, Beograd 1973, 85-87, Pl. I, Pl. with a color-drawing of the compositions on all walls.

<sup>29</sup> S. Đurić, *Kasnoantičke i ranohrišćanske zidane grobnice u Iliriku (III-VI v)*, PhD thesis, manuscript, Filozofski fakultet, Beograd 1985, 133.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 169-170.





Fig. 22 – “Railing of Paradise“, fresco, tomb I, Čalma, look of part of north wall (documentation of Museum of Srem, Sremska Mitrovica)

Сл. 22 – „Ограда раја“, фреска, гробница I, Чалма, изглед дела северног зида (документација Музеја Срема, Сремска Митровица)

tive blue dress (*dalmatica*) with *clavi*, marked with red color. She has brought her right hand up to the cheek and she is holding the left one on the stomach. We think that the depicted figure represents the deceased woman, who is in front of the railing, waiting for the entrance into the Paradise. On the apsidal west wall the irregular red lines form a construction looking as a railing with baldachin (Fig. 24). The irregularly scattered blue flowers and a band of green color point that this is a landscape, i.e. a field with the railing around it. On the representations from the south and north wall of the tomb dominate the lines executed in red color, some lines are painted with green color, and the irregularly scattered flowers are noticeable. On the south wall can be seen the bust of a youth, placed on a vertical column, ending with a horizontal line, under which there is a row of vertical lines, so it gives the impression that the bust is placed on a column of the railing. On the both sides of the head of the herma, the green garlands are hanging. The same composition, although not so well preserved and hardly noticeable, exists

also on the north wall (Fig. 23). We tend to recognize in the scenes represented on the south and north wall of the tomb the representation of the railing, composed of more segments, *cancelli*, between which the herms are standing. This would, consequently, be the presentation of the “railing of Paradise”, symbolically represented by blue flowers, garlands and bands, executed in green color. The schematism and the damaged condition of the composition, as also the linear style in its artistic expression, make the detailed reconstruction of the look of “railing of Paradise” impossible. According to the preserved parts of the wall-painting, it seems that this is the representation of *cancelli* consisting of bars made of metal or wood, and at certain points separated by herms. The construction of *cancelli* is not entirely clear, because they are depicted with vertical and irregular slant and curved lines, without any details, in abstract style. In the similar manner, with red lines crossed in such way that they form an oblique cross, is also painted the detail of the “railing of Paradise” on the north wall of the narthex of the church, resulting from the restoration of the thermal basilica in Varaždinske Toplice (*Aquae Iasae*).<sup>31</sup> Next to the representation of

<sup>31</sup> B. Migotti, Ranokršćanski nalazi u sjevernoj Hrvatskoj (Summary: Fids of Early





Fig. 23 – Tomb I, Čalma, drawing of frescoes (after Milošević 1973, color-plate)

Сл. 23 – Гробница I, Чалма, цртеж фресака (према. Милошевић 1973, табла у боји)

cancelli with herms on the north and south wall of the tomb in Čalma, on its west apsidal wall is painted the railing above which there is an arch, like a baldachin. Although linear in its artistic expression, this solution reminds of architectural stage settings, represented on frescoes executed in the illusionist style of painting, which was again in fashion during the Constantine's period. If on the walls of the tomb in Čalma the "railing of Paradise" is represented as a railing with herms, on the longitudinal walls, and as a railing vaulted with baldachin on the transversal wall, this would be a confirmation of the thesis, already set forth, that the artistic solution of the "railing of Paradise" originated from the traditions of representing the railings of imperial gardens, which were, in painting of Constantine's epoch, represented after the models from Hellenistic-Early Roman Period. On the territory of Pannonia, in the peristyle of villa at the site Baláca near Lake Balaton, already during the second half of the 2nd century was depicted a garden, in front of which there is a railing, composed of segments with crossed bars.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, also in the Early-Christian art on the Pannonian soil we can follow the process during which the garden, as *locus amoenus*, became an artistic interpretation of the Paradise region. The "railing of Paradise" was represented in a simple manner, with crossed lines, as in the tombs II and XX in Pécs, or, as in the tomb I in Čalma, in the form of cancelli with herms, used in the pagan times for putting fence around the public, solemn and honorary spaces.

The proposed solution of pictorial compositions on the walls of tomb I from Čalma gains in importance even more if we take into consideration that

Christianity in Northern Croatia), in: *1700 godina svetih Srijemskih mučenika. Zbornik radova s međunarodnog simpozija o 1700 obljetnici Srijemsko-panonskih mučenika (304-2004)* (priredila D. Damjanović), Đakovo 2011, 96-97.

<sup>32</sup> I. Baldassarre, A. Pontrandolfo, A. Rouveret, M. Salvadori, *op. cit.*, 336, fig. on p. 335.



Fig. 24 – “Railing of Paradise“, fresco, tomb I, look of apse-shaped west wall (documentation of Museum of Srem, Sremska Mitrovica)

Сл. 24- „Ограда раја“, фреска, гробница I, Чалма, изглед апсидалног западног зида (документација Музеја Срема, Сремска Митровица)

the figural motifs, represented on the bronze paneling of the wooden reliquary,<sup>33</sup> whose parts, discovered in the tomb, were later explained as parts of two biblical scenes, known as *Abraham's Sacrifice* and *Multiplying of Breads and Fishes*.<sup>34</sup> By this was confirmed the Christian character of the burial performed in the tomb, although its wall-paintings only with the motif of “railing of Paradise” point to the Christian symbolics. In the tombs were also found the bronze coins, of which the youngest one is that of Constans, minted in *Thessalonike* between 337 and 341,<sup>35</sup> which designates *terminus post quem* for dating the burial, and by this also for defining the time when the wall-paintings of the tomb in Čalma were executed. This would mean that tomb I in Čalma was decorated few decades before the tomb from Jagodin Mala in Niš, whose painting, in the opinion of most authors, originates from the last decades of the 4th century.

The analysis of wall-paintings from tombs in Jagodin Mala has shown that the representations of the Apostles between the christograms in the garlands find their analogies in the composition of St Peter and Paul around the christogram on the fresco from the tomb I in Pécs, while the vegetal motifs, which in the tomb in Niš symbolize Paradise, resemble not only to the ornamentation from tomb I, but also to the allusions to Paradise on the frescoes from tombs I and XX in Pécs. It has been concluded that these motifs in the burial chambers in Pécs were painted under the strong influence of artistic traditions cultivated in the artistic centres in Italy, in the first place in Rome and Aquileia.<sup>36</sup> Frescoes from the tombs in Jagodin Mala show that these influences reached also Naissus, and use of the motif of “railing of Paradise” on its north and south wall, of the same

<sup>33</sup> P. Milošević, *op. cit.*, 87, Figs. 2, 3, 1-2, Pl. II, III.

<sup>34</sup> The explanation of scenes on the bronze paneling gave I. Nikolajević in the unpublished work “Grave I from Čalma near Sremska Mitrovica“, envisaged to be printed in volume V of the edition *Sirmium*. The same author has published the abridged version of her analysis in the synthetic work on Early-Christian graves in Moesia, cf. I. Nikolajević, Grabanlagen und Begräbniskulte in Moesien aus frühchristlicher Zeit, *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 29, 1980, 305.

<sup>35</sup> P. Milošević, *op. cit.*, 92.

<sup>36</sup> F. Fülep, *op. cit.*, 39-40.

construction as the railing from the north aula of basilica in Aquileia, just confirms this fact. As the same motif, in the schematic form indeed, appears also on the frescoes from the south and north wall of tomb I in Čalma, we think that its wall-painting developed under the influence of cultural streamings from North Italy, most probably from Aquileia. In view of relative proximity, the existence of good communications and traditional trading connections of Aquileia with Sirmium, the influence was facilitated on the Pannonian metropolis and its vicinity from this North-Italian centre, as also their acceptance earlier than in other environments in the Balkan interior. The intensified influence of artistic schools from Rome and Aquileia on the iconographic program of the wall-paintings in Pannonia during the second half of the 4th century can be explained by the complex situation in connection with the theological disputes between the adherents of the Nicaean dogma and Arian haeresy. Namely, Sirmium was until the end of the 4th century a stronghold of Arianism, which in the interior of the Balkans was suppressed already about 360. To return Sirmium and its surrounding territory under his jurisdiction, Rome has, besides the political ones, intensified also the influences in the field of artistic interpretation of orthodox belief, which can be noticed in the programs of wall-painting of tombs in Sopianae, Sirmium and Naissus, and over Thessalonike the propaganda of the official religious program was carried out in the Balkan interior, so the motif of Paradise Garden, represented by vegetal motifs, can be recognized not only in the tombs of Thessalonike itself, but also in Serdica.<sup>37</sup>

The linear-abstract style of painting the tomb in Čalma can be noticed also in the decorative system applied in the galleries 64-66 of catacombs of St Domitilla, on whose walls there is a railing with pilasters represented by rows of fields with reticular and rectangular ornaments.<sup>38</sup> Apart from the Roman catacombs, the railing represented by crossed lines appears also on frescoes from some Pannonian sites. So, the preserved segment of "railing of Paradise" from the fresco in Varaždinske Toplice, painted, maybe, in Constantine's time, has the shape of the oblique cross,<sup>39</sup> while on the walls around the entrance into tomb II in Pécs the railing is represented by the rows of crossed oblique lines, behind which are the arrow-shaped flowers.<sup>40</sup> The linearity in expression became prominent in painting the tomb, discovered in 1952 near the waterworks for the factory "Jugovinil" in the necropolis Manastirine in Salona, on whose walls and vault the railing is represented by a ribbon filled up with a zig-zag line with dots in the centre of the triangles.<sup>41</sup> But, the fresco-painting of the tomb in Čalma, besides all its linearity in artistic expression, contains also few

<sup>37</sup> K. Hudák, L. Nagy, *op. cit.*, 58-61.

<sup>38</sup> N. Zimmermann, *Werkstattgruppen römischer Katakombenmalerei*, Münster 2002, 128, Abb. 75-77.

<sup>39</sup> B. Migotti, *op. cit.*, 96-97.

<sup>40</sup> F. Fülep, *op. cit.*, 45, Pl. XXI, 1-2; K. Hudák, L. Nagy, *op. cit.*, 34, Picture 14.

<sup>41</sup> D. Rendić-Miočević, *Neue Funde in der altchristlichen Nekropole Manastirine in Salona*, *Archaeologia Jugoslavica* I, 1954, 59-61, Abb. 2; Ј. Мирковић, *op. cit.* (note 1), 68, сл. 17-19.



important elements which connect it with the scheme after which Paradise and its railing are represented on frescoes from Rome, Aquileia, Thessalonike and Naissus.

Ивана Поповић  
МОТИВ „ОГРАДЕ РАЈА“ НА ФРЕСКАМА ИЗ ГРОБНИЦА  
У ЈАГОДИН МАЛИ (*NAISSUS*) И ЧАЛМИ (*SIRMIUM*)

Анализа фресака из гробнице у Јагодин Мали у Нишу (*Naissus*) (Сл. 1) показала је да овај живопис по коришћеним мотивима – представама апостола Петра и Павла, Христовог монограма у венцу и симболичним приказима рајског врта - своје аналогије налази у композицијама из осликане гробнице I (св. Петра и Павла) из Печуја (*Sopianae*). Истом приликом је закључено да је сликарство ових гробница настало током последњих деценија IV века. Поред апостола између христограма у венцу, на западном и источном зиду гробнице у Јагодин Мали, на њеном северном и јужном зиду приказане су птице, палмине гране и винова лоза, мотиви који симболизују рајски врт, испред којих је представљена ограда састављена од сегмената са укрштеним летвама, међу собом раздвојених хермама. Управо је мотив ове ограде поново скрену пажњу истраживача на сликарство гробнице из Јагодин Мале после 2000. године, када је на Медијани код Ниша откривена бронзана ограда, састављена од решеткастих плоча (*cancelli*) и херми Асклепија и Луне (Сл. 2).

Упоредјујући ограду откривену у Медијани са оном насликаном на зидовима гробнице у Јагодин Мали, лако је постало уочљиво да оне припадају идентичном типу. То је довело до претпоставке да је мајстор зидну слику у нишкој гробници урадио на основу бронзана ограде коју је видео на Медијани. Међутим, поред тога што су фреске у гробници из Јагодин Мале насликане вероватно око или после 378. године, када су комплекс на Медијани, па самим тим и бронзана ограда, били уништени, важно је напоменути да су намене ограде са Медијане, која је вероватно била део инвентра паганског храма, и ограде осликане у гробници из Јагодин Мале, чија је функција била да одели рајске пределе од овоземаљских, биле сасвим различите. С тим у вези намеће се потреба да се утврде намене откривених или у уметности приказаних канцела са хермама, али и да се анализира генеза и распрострањеност ликовних дела са представом ове ограде у значењу „ограде раја“.

Према до сада познатом материјалу, закључујемо да су канцели са хермама током II-III века употребљавани за ограђивање делова јавних профаних објеката, перистила у вилама и нимфеја (Ивајловград (Сл. 3), Долна Кремена (Сл. 4), *Leptis Magna* (Сл. 5)), док су током IV и прве половине V века овакве ограде биле намењене за омеђавање свечаних ложа и одвајање, током одређених церемонија, цара, његове фамилије и царских достојанственика од присутне масе (Константинов славолук у Риму (Сл. 6), база Теодосијевог обелиска у Константинопољу (Сл. 7), диптиси од слоноваче (Сл. 8, 9)). Сличну улогу имала је и решеткаста мермерна ограда са хермом на једном крају, која је формирала неку врсту ложе око степеника на уласку у катакомбе св. Калиста у Риму (Сл. 10). Бронзана ограда са хермама божанстава, од којих су сачуване бисте Асклепија и Луне, која је нађена на Медијани, највероватније је у ову вилу донета по жељи цара Јулијана, током његовог боравка у Наису 361. године, да би била део инвентара новоподигнутог паганског храма. Имајући у виду верску политику овог цара, та ограда је имала своју функцију у његовој религиској пропаганди.

Насупрот поменутиим оградама официјелног карактера, на појединим ликовним остварењима из IV века наилазимо на канцеле са хермама у сасвим другој улози.

Наслоњене на традицију сликарства I века у приказивању царских паркова, ограђених мермерним оградама, као што је слика Ливијиног врта из њене виле у Prima Porta у Риму (Сл. 11), али и каснијих остварења као што су решеткасти канцели из просторије на Via Genova у Риму (Сл. 12), ограде на фрескама из IV века постају граница два света, будући да царски паркови задобијају симболично значење рајског предела, омеђеног „оградом раја“, унутар које су приказане птице, цвеће, винова лоза, палмине гране и други мотиви који у себи садрже мисао о „небеској башти“. Како показују фреске из базилике у Аквилеји (Сл. 13, 14), подигнуте између 314. и 319. године, испред решеткасте ограде царског врта налазили су се крилати генији и птице, што упућује на помисао да су на неким оградама оваквих паркова биле насликане и скулптуре или херме, тако да се тај, у основи пагански модел, почео примењивати и у хришћанском контексту слике „ограде раја“. Тако се ограде, насликане у ареалу тзв. Domus Pietri у катакомбама св. Себастијана у Риму и у аркосолију катакомби св. Киријаке у Риму (Сл. 15), састоје од решеткастих канцела између којих су херме. Слична иконографска решења налазе се и у фрескама из гробница бр. 89 и 90 у Солуну (Сл. 16, 17). Дакле, приказ „ограде раја“ на јужном и северном зиду гробнице из Јагодин Мале у Нишу урађен је према већ усвојеном обрасцу осликавања овог мотива, примењеном на фрескама из катакомби у Риму, из јужне аule базилике у Аквилеји и солунских гробница.

Поред поменутих приказа „ограде раја“, састављене од канцела и херми, на зидним сликама у римским катакомбама, у базилици из Аквилеје и у гробници из Јагодин Мале у Нишу (Сл. 18, 19), сличан мотив сусрећемо, по нашем мишљењу, и у фреско сликарству касноантичке гробнице I, случајно откривене 1969. године у селу Чалма, око 10 км северозападно од данашње Сремске Митровице, дакле на широј градској територији Сирмијума (*Sirmium*).

Упркос лошем стању очуваности фресака у овој гробници, при њиховој анализи уочило се да су композиције приказане унутар поља обрубљених бордурама црвене боје. Ликовни израз ових зидних слика одликује линеарност и схематизација мотива (Сл. 23). Сматрамо да је на источном зиду приказана покојница која чека на улазак у рај (Сл. 21). На јужном и северном зиду гробнице представљена је, по нашем мишљењу, ограда, састављена од канцела, између којих је, на оба зида, приказана херма (Сл. 20, 22). То би била „ограда раја“, представљеног расутиим плавим цветовима. На апсидалном западном зиду гробнице приказана је ограда са балдахином (Сл. 24), што представља ехо илузионистичког стила, односно сликања архитектонских кулиса, мотива који у сликарству Константинове епохе поново улази у моду. Уколико је на зидовима гробнице из Чалме „ограда раја“ приказана као ограда са хермама, на подужним, и као ограда са балдахином, на попречном зиду, то би била потврда већ изнете тезе да је ликовно решење „ограде раја“ настало на традицијама представе ограда царских вртова, који су се у сликарству Константинове епохе приказивали по узору на традиције из ранијих периода.

Судећи по нумизматичким налазима, гробница из Чалме се може датовати у период после 337-341. године. Њено сликарство је, дакле, нешто старије од оног из гробнице у Јагодин Мали у Нишу. Мотив „ограде раја“, приказан у обе гробнице, показује да су фреске у њима, иако различите по тематици и стилу израде, настале под утицајем сликарства из уметничких центара са тла Италије, пре свега из Рима и Аквилеје.

