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## **Combining remote sensing, archaeological survey and geophysical prospections for the enhancement of Roman Doclea, Montenegro**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Roman town of Doclea is one of the most important archaeological site of Montenegro, not only for its impressive remains, but also for the meaning the site takes on for the cultural identity of modern Montenegro, representing a sort of bridge linking the country with the history of Europe and the Mediterranean.

Doclea was the second-largest city in the province of Roman Dalmatia, a municipium created in the 1st cent. AD and named after the Illyrian tribe Docleati. Built strategically within the lowland stretching between the Zeta and the Morača rivers, it is surrounded by monumental walls, delimitating an area of 24 hectares. Only few sectors of the town have been excavated: a square-shaped forum, buildings of different sizes, tabernae, a basilica, three temples, two baths, a domus.

Since the 5th cent. AD the history of the town is less known: the East Goths ravaged the city in 489, an earthquake damaged it in 518 and the Avars and Slavs destroyed it again in 609.

Doclea had indeed an important Late antique phase, represented by three churches, basilica A, basilica B and a third with a cruciform plan, probably dated to the 9th cent. AD.

Even though the area is of great interest for Montenegro, in the last century the site has seen long phases of abandonment alternated with few archaeological excavations, apparently not integrated in a long-term strategy. The presence of a railway cutting the site in the middle, the missing of any facility for visitors, the fact that parts of the town are in private land make a project of enhancement absolutely essential.

Following an international agreement between the National Research Council of Italy and the Ministry of Science and the Ministry of Culture of Montenegro, since 2017 a multidisciplinary research project is in progress for the study and valorisation of the town and its territory.

Through the application of different technologies and methodologies (remote sensing, (satellite, aerial and

drone images analysis) and geophysical prospections (Ground Penetrating Radar method) integrated with historical approaches, as archival research, archaeological surveys and architectonic reconstructions) the Italian-Montenegrin team is working for a better knowledge of the town and, in the same time for its enhancement, through an innovative project integrating the new collected data with the need to design new strategies and structures.

The valorisation project wants to bridge the gap between Doclea and its surrounding material and immaterial context, developing, in a first phase, a territorial-landscape strategy that attributes great importance to the beautiful natural landscape in which the site is inserted and to the still visible remains of its ancient history. Through a system of new accessibility (physical and digital), reception and use of the site and a network of new pavilions, which combine the inclusion of new economic activities and the consolidation of the existing ones, the project creates new connections and alternative management methods for a transversal future of the Montenegrin archaeological heritage.

**Keywords:** Archaeology, cultural identity, technologies, valorisation (Maximum 4).

**Topic:** New strategies in conservation and valorisation of archaeological sites and buildings