

Title: **Coepimus et lapide pingere: marble decoration from the 'Baths of Diocletian' at Palmyra**

Author(s): Dagmara Wielgosz

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Abstract: Little is known about the history of the complex dubbed the “Baths of Diocletian” discovered by Syrian archaeologists in Palmyra. The latest building activity seems to have taken place under Diocletian when a portico was added. At the same time marble decoration appears to have been introduced in the various rooms of the establishment. It included freestanding statuary, as well as floor and wall revetments. The marble statues, made of Dokimeian, Pentelic and Proconnesian marbles, were taken most probably from other Palmyrene buildings (abandoned or in decline after AD 273) and then reused in the new setting of the baths. The wall and pavement decoration, however, combined different types of expensive color marbles arranged in exceedingly sophisticated patterns and as such it was certainly worthy of imperial patronage.

Keywords: Palmyra, Diocletian’s Baths, colour marbles, wall revetment, Pliny the Elder