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CITTA' DI
DESENZANO DEL GARDA

THE ROMAN VILLA (1ST CENT. B.C.—4TH CENT. A.D.)

The villa of Desenzano is nowadays the most important testimony in northern Italy of the huge late Roman *villae*. This building was both strategically and beautifully located in its surroundings. It laid, in fact, a little north of the *Via Gallica*, a Roman road which connected *Bergomum*, *Brixia* and *Verona*, in a charming location along the southern shore of Garda Lake.

The building originally faced directly the lake and covered a surface of about 11.000 square meters.

Built at the end of the 1st century B.C., it undergone several building phases. The remains which are still visible today date mostly back to the first half of the 4th century A.D., when the building experienced a total rearrangement of the rooms, which are divided into three areas. The first one, Sector A, was an area dedicated partly to receiving guests (and for showing the owner's great wealth) and partly to serve as a dwelling-place. The second, Sector B, served mainly as a residence and the third and fourth, Sector C and D, were the baths and a residential area.

The *pars rustica* (i.e. the area where agricultural products were manufactured) has been found South-East of the villa, in a zone outside the archaeological area and now occupied by private buildings of via Crocefisso - Via Borgogregio.

The owners' names are still unknown, but it is possible that in the latest phase of the villa it was emperor Magnentius' (350 - 353 A.D.) brother, Flavius Magnus Decentius. From his name would derive that of the whole city: Desenzano.

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