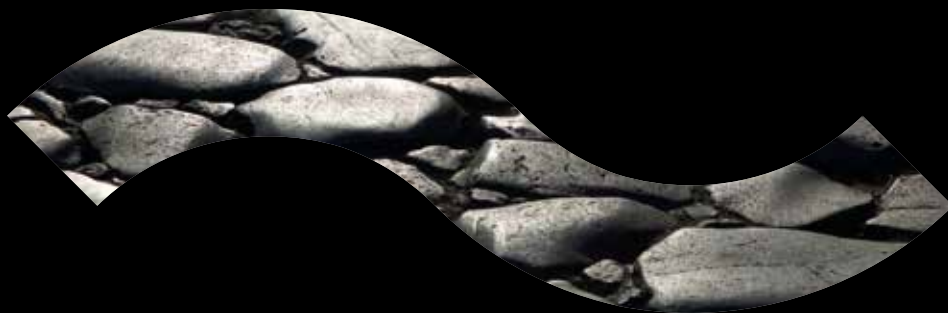


T-PAS

**TOURIST PROMOTION
OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SITES ALONG THE ROUTE
AQUILEIA EMONA VIMINACIUM**



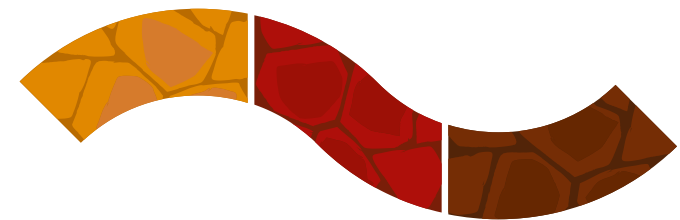
T-PAS
ARCHÆST

Aquileia - Emona - Viminacium on the ancient Roman trail



T-PAS ARCHÆST

Aquileia - Emona - Viminacium:
on the ancient Roman trail





This work programme has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the view only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Fondazione Aquileia
via Patriarca Popone 7,
33051 Aquileia - Italia
www.fondazioneaquileia.it



Muzej in Galerije mesta Ljubljane
Gosposka 15,
1000 Ljubljana - Slovenia
www.mgml.si



Arheološki institut Beograd
Projekat Viminacium
Knez Mihailova 35/IV
11000 Beograd - Serbia
www.ai.sanu.ac.rs

**T-Pas
Tourist Promotion
of the Archaeological Sites
along the Roman route
Aquileia-Emona-Viminacium**

Edited by:

Cristiano Tiussi,
archaeologist, Fondazione Aquileia

Authors:

Ilija Danković, archaeologist,
Arheološki Institut Beograd-Project Viminacium [I.D.]

Annalisa Giovannini,
archaeologist, Fondazione Aquileia [A.G.]

Bernarda Županek, archaeologist,
Muzej in Galerije mesta Ljubljane [B.Ž.]

Photo credits:

- Archives of Ljubljana Tourism Public Institute: pp. 42, 48-49, 52.
- Archives of the Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana: pp. 50 (fig. 7), 54.
- Gianluca Baronchelli: pp. 14, 16 (fig. 3), 20, 24 (fig. 3), 26-27, 30, 32.
- Ilija Danković: pp. 56-57.
- Svetlana Dingarac: pp. 80-81.
- Annalisa Giovannini: p. 36.
- Gregor Humar: p. 46 (fig. 3).
- Miomir Korać: pp. 75, 78, 82, 84 (fig. 13).
- Library of the National Museum of Ljubljana: p. 58.
- Nemanja Mrđić: pp. 64, 70 (fig. 3), 84 (fig. 14).
- Cristiano Tiussi: p. 34.

Drča 2011, p. 114: p. 76
Jovanović 2016, p. 373: p. 68
Popović: p. 72

Graphic design:

Unidea, Udine.

Printing:

Litho Stampa, Udine

Index

06. Introduction

07. Aquileia-Iulia Emona-Viminacium
From the Adriatic to the heart of the Balkans

15. How was a Roman road built?

21. The ancient Roman route Aquileia-Iulia Emona-Viminacium
From Aquileia to the bridge over Isonzo river:
The Italian stages of the journey

43. From the Julian Alps to Siscia and beyond:
The Slovenian and Croatian stages of the journey

65. From Sirmium to Viminacium:
The Serbian stages of the journey



Introduction

Fondazione Aquileia, Muzej in Galerije mesta Ljubljane and the Arheološki Institut Beograd (Project Viminacium) collaborate for the implementation of the project T-PAS "Tourist Promotion of the Archaeological Sites along the route Aquileia-Viminacium", co-financed by the European Union through Culture Programme (2007-2013).

T-PAS project mainly aims at promoting, both culturally and as tourist destination, the ancient Roman route connecting Aquileia and Viminacium passing through Iulia Emona (the modern Ljubljana).

In the framework of tourist promotion and communication activities, the partnership has jointly elaborated this publication, meant to raise awareness and knowledge among tourists on the great historic and cultural value of the sites related to the ancient Roman route.

You will learn the basics about the Roman public transport system (public roads, staging points, milestones) and discover the invaluable heritage you have the possibility to visit.

We hope that you will enjoy this journey back to the Roman age, starting from Aquileia, in Northern Italy, and moving eastwards through Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, travelling along an old road of great commercial and military importance.

Aquileia-Iulia Emona-Viminacium From the Adriatic to the heart of the Balkans

Every road is the material transposition of projects aiming to link the point of departure with the point of arrival via a number of pre-ordained stopovers, responding to clearly conceived and already resolved needs. As far as *Iulia Emona* (Ljubljana in Slovenia), the road from Aquileia to *Viminacium* (Kostolac in Serbia) follows the final section of the ancient route known as the "Amber road", which wound its way down to the Adriatic sea across the Ocra pass. After being used as a military route by Rome, this road then went back to being a trade route, before once again being used by armies.

In the early second century AD, the writer Siculus Flaccus wrote: "The roads managed by the state are public and bear the name of their constructor". However, the road from Aquileia to *Viminacium*, built in stages with Ljubljana as a point of arrival and then of new departures, escapes this definition and conceals its name behind hypotheses, suggestions and proposals. It is possible that there is a simple reason for this. Perhaps the name is not recorded by ancient sources because the road was understood to be a continuation or fork of other routes leading to and from Aquileia.

According to the first hypothesis, shortly after leaving Aquileia, the road splits into two, one heading towards Trieste, traditionally known as the *via Gemina*, the other towards river Isonzo and the Julian Alps. The *via Gemina* is the "double road", the "twin road", the road that forked. On the orders of Julius Caesar, it was built by the thirteenth legion, known as the *Legio XIII Gemina*, which found itself in Aquileia at intervals during the Gallic Wars. This name is cited in the slabs erected by Emperor Maximinus in 238 AD to celebrate its restoration. It therefore has to be asked whether the name of the "low" road should also be attributed to the "high" road. Jaroslav Šašel efficaciously sums up the question of the name *Gemina*: the road from Aquileia to Ljubljana was either called *Gemina* because it was built at two different points in time, because it was associated with the *Legio XII Gemina*, or because it was linked to the military and political figure of *Gaius Fufidius Geminus*, legate of Octavian in *Siscia/Sisak* in 35-34 BC during the Illyrian Wars, which resulted in the creation of the province of Pannonia.

According to the second hypothesis, the road to Ljubljana was the continuation of the *via Postumia*, built in 148 BC to link Genoa to Aquileia and permit rapid movements of troops. Some scholars observed that the area crossed by the route to Ljubljana includes the town of Postumia, now Postojna, maybe a linguistic relic of the ancient road.

The route followed by the road is known thanks to the description provided in the three main historical itineraries, all of which fail to mention its name. These itineraries are the *Itinerarium Antonini* and the *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, which simply provide a written description of the places with a list of way stations and towns, and the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, the only surviving prototype of today's road maps showing the land and its characteristics.

The construction of the road was made at different but linked periods of time, running from at least the second half of the first century BC to the first decades of the first century AD. It was built as a result of a series of historical events, which, from the Illyrian Wars in 35 BC, led Rome to the Balkans and towards the Danube. The Roman strongholds in these areas are represented by the birth of Ljubljana as a Roman colony in the early first century AD, and the foundation, a few decades later, of *Viminacium*, a fortress for auxiliary troops and then for the legions.

**The route
Aquileia-Iulia Emona-Viminacium
on a present-day map**



**The route
Aquileia-Iulia Emona-Viminacium
in the Tabula Peutingeriana,
twelfth-thirteenth century
(after a map of Roman age)**

Aquileia

Emona/Ljubljana

Viminacium / Kostolac

Ponte Sonti/Mainizza

Frigidus Fl. / Hubelj R.

Praetorium Latobiorum / Trebnje

In Alpe Iulia-Ad Pirum/Hrušica

Nauportus/Vrhnika

Neviodunum/Drnovo

Siscia / Sisak

Servitium / Stara Gradiška

Danuvius Fl. / Danube R.

Marsonia/Slavonski brod

Sirmium / Sremska Mitrovica

Bassiana / Petrovac near Ruma

Idiminius / Vojka

Taurunum / Zemun

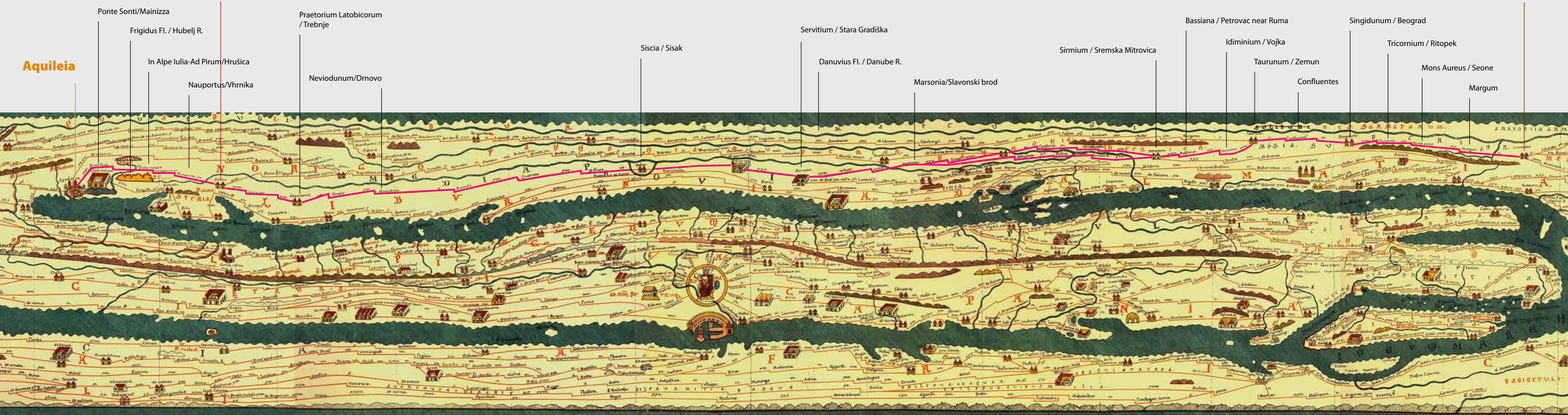
Confluentes

Singidunum / Beograd

Tricornium / Ritopek

Mons Aureus / Seone

Margum





How was a Roman road built?

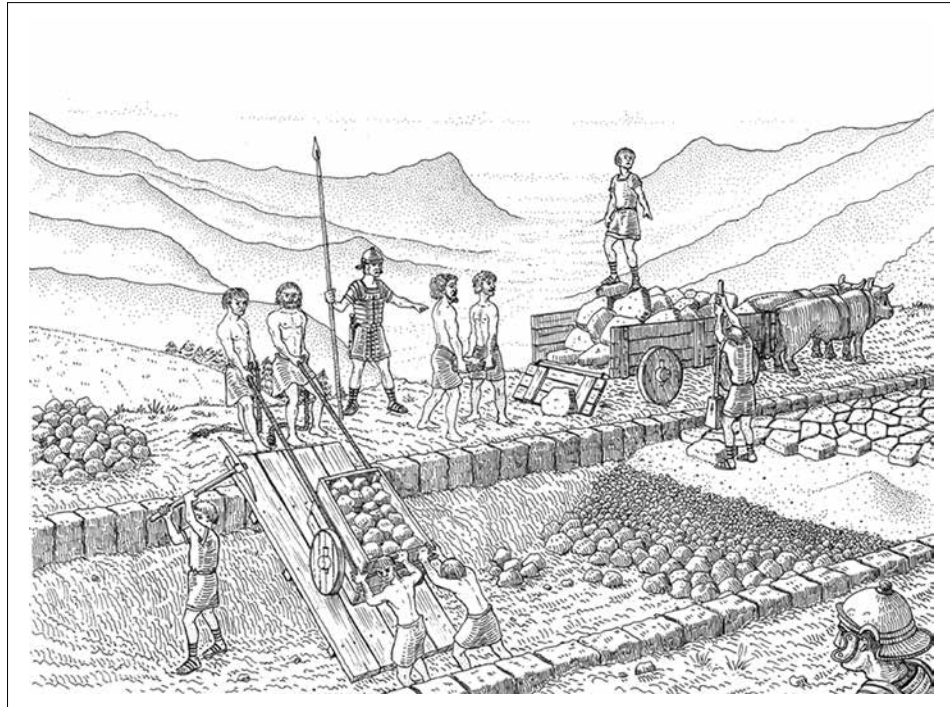
In keeping with the canonical rules, every Roman road involved the creation of a trench into which three preparatory layers were laid, known as the *statumen* or foundation, consisting of large cobblestones, the *rudus* or *ruderatio*, a layer of medium or large stones bound with earth, and the *nucleus*, consisting of coarse gravel levelled and pressed with rollers so as to assume the shape of a donkey's back, for draining away rainwater (figg. 1-2). The final road surface could take on various forms. Roads were therefore divided into *viae terrenaes*, that is to say finished with beaten earth, *viae glareae stratae*, finished with gravel, *viae silice stratae*, finished with squared paving stones wedged into place throughout the entire length of the road or for long stretches, generally found near the bridges, the way stations or on the outskirts of cities, emphasising the approach to urban centres and attributing dignity to their associated necropolis.

Roman public roads were provided with the organic presence of facilities offering these various services. Even today people feel the need to stop for a few minutes, during their journey, to rest, to have something to eat or drink or to fill up with fuel. These reasons have not changed over the years, they were exactly the same in the past, when the "fuel" was fodder for the mounts or draft animals (fig. 2). Travellers also needed to break their journey overnight, choosing to sleep in a comfortable hotel or an inferior but more economical one.

The forebear of today's motorway service station was the *mutatio*, a place for quick stops, usually placed at 10-15 miles (15-22 kilometres) from the nearest destinations. It was not uncommon for people to set up home around the *mutationes*, attracted by the possibility of finding stable work: groups of houses therefore sprung up, leading to the birth of a village or a town.

The *mansio*, on the other hand, was a much more complex way station. It was what is known today as a hotel, characterised by a main building that provided a place to stay, and also by a number of associated internal and external facilities for the wellbeing of guests, such as baths. There was no shortage of shops and workshops of various types, stables and barns.

It is very likely that the locations of these way stations were decided during the construction phase of the roads themselves. In fact, the *mansiones* were usually a day's journey apart, equivalent to 20-30 miles (30-45 kilometres).



2.

Once the construction of the road had been completed, it was travelled by a special wagon known as *odometer*, comparable to the odometers used in modern cars: a milestone, or *miliarium*, was then positioned every mile or 1.48 kilometres (fig. 3). The milestones were series of numbered stones, usually similar to columns up to 2 metres high and with a flat top, indicating the distance travelled in miles from the start of the road or to the nearest city. Milestones were a significant component of the Roman road network. The first Roman milestones appeared on the Appian way, a south-bound road in Rome. In the very centre of the Empire's capital stood the "Golden Milestone". It is from the Golden Milestone that the distances of roads in the Empire were measured. This is where the well-known saying "All roads lead to Rome" originates.

Because of their high visibility and inclusion in the collective imagination, during Late Antiquity milestones became the favoured vehicle of imperial propaganda: the measurements of distance actually tended to disappear, making room for celebratory inscriptions, real political messages of consensus and support, which followed travellers relentlessly on their way. The number of milestones along the verges of the roads, especially the most important ones, increased significantly, demonstrating the desire of the communities to adapt and consent. However, milestones no longer provided information about the road, celebrating maintenance or restoration work, but now celebrated the emperor.

A. G.



3.

1. (Previous page) A Roman road in Aquileia

2. Building a Roman road

3. Milestones discovered in Villesse (Gorizia)

A
QU
ILE
IA





1.

The ancient Roman route Aquileia-Iulia Emona-Viminacium From Aquileia to the bridge over Isonzo river: The Italian stages of the journey

The Italian section of the route from Aquileia to Ljubljana, divided up into fractions that can be travelled in one day, can be identified by comparing and combining archaeological data and the information provided by the three itineraries. The road began just outside of Aquileia, one of the biggest city in Northern Italy. The starting point was located in Monastero, in the north-eastern suburb of the cities, which gravitated around the river port.

“Seeing” Aquileia

Aquileia is a small town nestled in the southern plains of Friuli, about 14 kilometres from the A4 highway and connected to Grado via the SR 352. Since 1998 the city has been listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site on the basis of the following reasons: “Before being destroyed by Attila in the middle of the fifth century AD, Aquileia was one of the largest and wealthiest cities of the Early Roman Empire. Most of ancient Aquileia lies intact and unexcavated under agricultural land and is the largest unexplored archaeological area of its kind”.

Celebrated by poet Ausonius as the ninth city in the Roman Empire, famous for its port and defensive walls, Aquileia preserves important open-air archaeological remains. The Forum, a porticoed square typical of every Roman city, can be seen in its third century AD restored condition: the east side features columns of the portico discovered in the 30s, while the west side is still being excavated (figg. 1-2).

Worth seeing are also the structures of the port, which can be visited on an archaeological walk, called the Via Sacra, covering the bed of the river Natiso cum Turro and its ancient banks.

1. View of the forum from north

2. (Next pages) 3D reconstruction of the ancient square, with porticoes and the civilian Basilica, III century AD (by Cristiano Tiussi and Nudesign)





3.

Here moorings and remains of the warehouses are still in place. At the end of the Via Sacra there is the Patriarchal Basilica of Aquileia, built following the order of Patriarch Popone and inaugurated in 1031 (fig. 3).

The Patriarchal Basilica is a "book made of stone", part of which lies on the remains of the first episcopal complex, and was constructed by Bishop Theodorus after the Edict of Tolerance in 313. In the interior are preserved the remains of its structures and mosaic floors, covering an area of 1,300 square metres. On the outside, since 2011 it has been possible to visit the so-called Südhalle (fig. 5), one of the rooms adjacent the baptistery erected by order of Bishop Chromatius at the end of the fourth century and very likely used to teach catechumens or for other liturgical functions.

Near public Aquileia lies evidence of private Aquileia. The latter housed families, either in sumptuous houses or humbler dwellings, women and servants who went to the markets to buy food and drink, graves where generations of families were brought back together. Most evidence of the existing houses was yielded in two complexes: the "Fondo CAL", opposite the Patriarchal Basilica along the SR 352, and the "Fondo Cossar", north of Capitol Square and of the Basilica. The former included six dwellings, which later were owned by a sole owner in the fourth century. Here the mosaic floor in the large representation room, used for receptions, portrays an image of the dominus. The latter, now subject to new and deeper excavations, was a block of three houses, built in the first century and used all the way through the Late Roman Empire. The middle house is where Aquileia's more refined mosaics come from, on display at the National Archaeological Museum, in the Lapidary Galleries: the "Ratto d'Europa", perhaps from the master bedroom; the asaroton mosaic (literally meaning "the unswept floor"), from the banquet room; the vine branch tied with bows of ribbon.

South of the Basilica, along Via dei Patriarchi, is a market area frequented in the Late Roman Empire. This area includes three structures having a paved rectangular courtyard originally covered with wooden roofs. Here stood the merchant shops, among which one selling fish (fig. 4).

The "Sepolcreto", which in Antiquity was located on a secondary road towards the sea, is the only visible necropolis among those present along the streets that branched off Aquileia. An example of a funerary monument, reconstructed in the city, is the so-called Great Mausoleum or Mausoleum Candia (taking its name after the person who had it built). It belonged to man of prominence in the local political scene who died at the end of the first century AD.



4.

3. The Patriarchal Basilica of Aquileia

4. 3D reconstruction of the markets and the big storehouse, IV century AD (by Cristiano Tiussi and Nudesign)

5. (Next page) The new building in which the mosaics of the Südhalle are preserved since 2011





6.

The first section of the road, from Monastero to Villa Vicentina, coincides significantly with the straight Strada Provinciale 8 until reaching the crossroads with the Strada Regionale 14 Trieste-Venice: extensive parts of the roadbed were discovered in the nineteenth century and by various twentieth-century excavations.

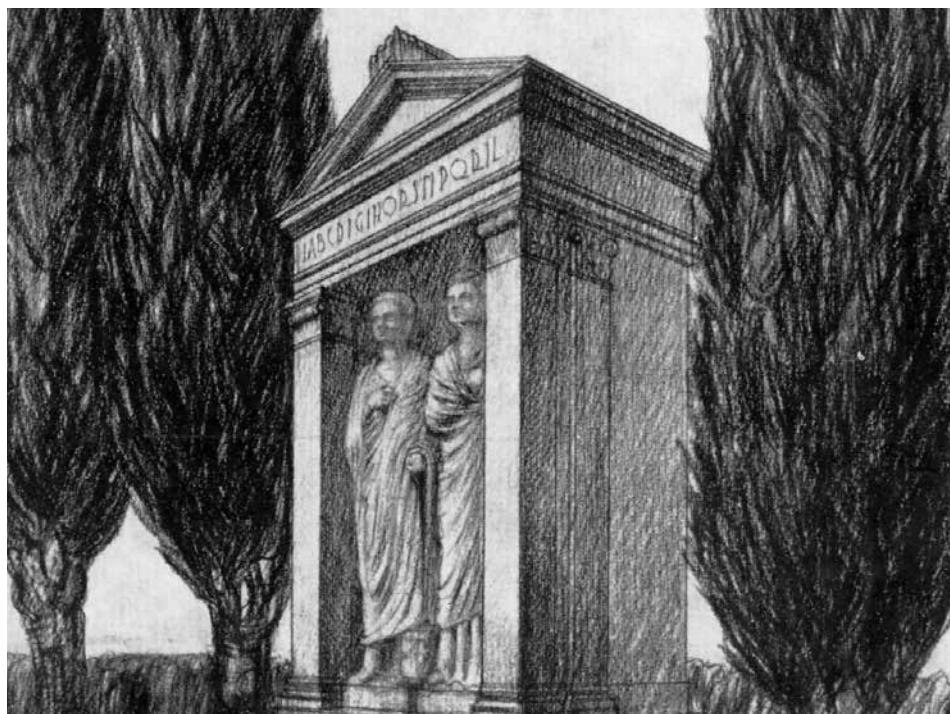
Just after leaving the city and having crossed two bridges, the first over a canal and the second over the *Natiso* (Natisone) joined together with the river *Turrus* (Torre), the road arrived to Colombara, where it split into two significant branches.

It was at this point that the road to Ljubljana really began.

From here it crossed the first north-eastern outskirts of Aquileia, the site of the great necropolis, the “cities of the dead”, arranged into enclosed plots sold or rented to families from the city, who could bury their dead here for several generations.

Several monuments and sculptures, still visible in the National Archaeological Museum of Aquileia, belonged to the graves, such as the married couple in Aurisina limestone (end of the first century BC) originally inserted in an aedicule (figg. 6-7). The funerary altar of *Quintus Euvius Capreolus* was made for a distinguished soldier, who was born in Vienne, France, but who remained in Aquileia after he was discharged (fig. 8). Another funerary altar belonged to *Fructus*, a merchant on a large-scale; a third-one to *Quintus Cerrinius Corinthus*, freed by the veteran *Quintus Cerrinius Cordus*, who fought in the *Legio VIII Augusta* that was transferred in 45 AD from Pannonia (coinciding with much of Hungary) to Moesia (a region that now corresponds in part to Serbia and in part to Hungary).

The tomb of the *Curii* (fig. 9), dating back to the first half of the first century AD and discovered in Colombara, has been reconstructed in the garden of the Archaeological Museum, in a charming setting reminiscent of ancient times. The inscription is a real “family record”, narrating the social and economic rise of a close-knit and united group achieved over four generations, starting with the grandmother, a freed slave. The enclosure was dominated by an aedicule housing a statue.



7.

6. The discovery of the statues of a husband and his wife, in Sant'Egidio, along the road to *Iulia Emona*, in 1930

7. Reconstruction of the aedicule in which the statues originally were placed



8.

A lot of rich objects were placed in the graves, such as the beautiful gold-banded glass box with lid for creams or cosmetics (fig. 10), which can be dated to the first half of the first century. A pair of *fibulae* for fastening a cloak and a belt buckle, in gilded silver and garnets, belonging to a noble woman of the Gothic ruling classes, died between 525 and 550 AD, witnesses the importance of the road even after the end of the Antiquity, in particular during the so-called Gothic War from 532 to 552 AD.

After touching upon the settlement now known as Villa Vicentina, the road continued in the direction of Villesse, where a very important “nest” of milestones was recently discovered in the bed of the river Torre.

Imperial propaganda: the milestones of Villesse

One particularly exceptional find was made in the Torre River on 15 October 2008, downstream from the bridge on the SR 351. The discovery comprised eight milestones and a basis, to which a tenth was added in 2011, indicating the possibility of further milestones being present. All the finds had one thing in common: they featured inscriptions in praise of the emperors, written between 305-306 and 383-392 AD. They were discovered beneath the gravel, almost in the centre of the river bed, within a very restricted area and were angled in the direction of the current, lying parallel to the banks.

However, this was “secondary deposit”, meaning that it did not coincide with their original positions. Further research was needed to reconstruct their lost original setting, which must have been relatively nearby.

The fact that they lay so close together demonstrated that they were erected within a limited area, not far from where they were found. The Torre is a constantly evolving river, with unstable characteristics, subject to diversions and changes of course. It is therefore plausible that the milestones stood either on the left bank, to mark the point where the Aquileia-Ljubljana road met another important road coming from the West. The crossroads would have coincided exactly with the point where the milestones were found.

“Nests” of milestones are mainly found on roads of particular importance: the Aquileia-Ljubljana road played a highly strategic role because of its route through the heart of the eastern.

8. The funerary altar of Q. Euvivius Capreolus, now reconstructed in the National Archaeological Museum



9.

A lot of rich objects were put in the graves, such as the beautiful gold-banded glass box with lid for creams or cosmetics, which can be dated to the first half of the first century. A pair of fibulae for fastening a cloak and a belt buckle, in gilded silver and garnets, belonging to a noble woman of the Gothic ruling classes, died between 525 and 550 AD, witnesses the importance of the road even after the end of the Antiquity, in particular during the so-called Gothic War (532-552 AD).

After touching upon the settlement now known as Villa Vicentina, the road continued in the direction of Villesse, where a very important “nest” of milestones was recently discovered in the bed of the Torre river.

Imperial propaganda: the milestones of Villesse

One particularly exceptional find was made in the Torre River on 15 October 2008, downstream from the bridge on the SR 351 (fig. 11). The discovery comprised eight milestones and a basis, to which another one was added in 2011 (fig. 12), indicating the possibility of further milestones being present. All the finds had one thing in common: they featured inscriptions in praise of the emperors, written between 305-306 and 383-392 AD. They were discovered beneath the gravel, almost in the centre of the river bed, within a very restricted area measuring and were angled in the direction of the current, lying parallel to the banks.

However, this was “secondary deposit”, meaning that it did not coincide with the original position of the milestones. Further research was needed to reconstruct their lost original setting, which must have been relatively nearby.

The fact that they lay so close together demonstrated that they were erected within a limited area, not far from where they were found. The Torre is a constantly evolving river, with unstable characteristics, subject to diversions and changes of course. It is therefore plausible that the milestones stood either on the left bank, to mark the point where the Aquileia-Ljubljana road met another important road coming from the West. The crossroads would have coincided exactly with the point where the milestones were found.



10.

9. The Tomb of Curii family, also reconstructed in the National Archaeological Museum

10. Gold banded box with lid, coming from the necropolis on the road Aquileia-Julia Emona



11.

“Nests” of milestones are mainly found on roads of particular importance: the Aquileia-Ljubljana road played a highly strategic role because of its route through the heart of the eastern Alpine passes, in Late Antiquity a place of passage for armies and then the Barbarians: asserting the power of the Empire would have been of particular significance. Through its connections with other streets, the road represented the quickest route between areas of Central and Eastern Europe and Milan, the new capital of the Western Roman Empire from 286 to 402 AD. From this perspective too, demonstrations of loyalty to the central power were very meaningful.

At 16 kilometres from Aquileia, the road reached the *mutatio*, a way station described as *ad Undecimum* in the itineraries, that is to say “at the eleventh mile”. This indication of distance identifies a sort of “motorway service station”, around which the small settlement of Gradisca d’Isonzo grew up. Various remains of the route have been discovered to the north/north-west of this area on a number of occasions.

After another 3 miles, that is to say around 5 kilometres, the route arrived at the *mansio Ponte Sonti*, or the “hotel at the Bridge over the Isonzo”, in Mainizza, part of the municipality of Farra. This descriptive name indicates that the river (in Latin *Aesontius*, which became *Sontius*) was crossed at this point. A small votive altar offered by *Lucius Barbius Montanus* to the god Isonzo, which can be dated to the third century AD, was discovered into the walls of the small church of Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore and is now visible in the National Archaeological Museum of Aquileia. A second small altar features a personification of the River Isonzo, in keeping with the methods used in the classical world to depict rivers. The god is shown half-reclining amidst reed beds, resting on an amphora from which water gushes out. The sides of the altar are decorated with images of a patera and a pitcher, symbols of sacrificial offerings to the gods, while on the back is a laurel crown, a symbol of power and victory. It can be dated to the second half of the second century AD or to the following century.



12.

11. The discovery of the milestones in the bed of Torre river in 2008

12. The milestone found in 2011, at dawn



13.

Farra d'Isonzo, Mainizza: a bridge, a hotel and a small church

The historian Herodian wrote that the bridge that crossed the river at Mainizza, at a distance of 21 kilometres from Aquileia, was an "imposing work of great prestige, built by the first emperors with squared stones and arches of increasing size". However, in 237 AD, the people of Aquileia feared the approach of Emperor Maximinus Thrax, declared a public enemy by the Senate. The Emperor wanted to attack this Upper Adriatic city so as to send out a strong message and, in order to get there as quickly as possible from Central Europe, he would have to follow the Ljubljana-Aquileia road. The people therefore reached a difficult and drastic decision: to demolish the great bridge, which was around 200 metres long and at least 15 metres wide. Once the attack on the city came to an end and the emperor was murdered by his own soldiers, the bridge was reconstructed using the demolition rubble that had fallen into the river, as well as stone materials taken primarily from imposing funerary monuments erected alongside the road in the immediate vicinity, uncovered by the river especially at times of exceptional drought. Where now stands the small church of Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore (fig. 13), once stood the great staging post "at the Bridge over the Isonzo". Excavations carried out between 1933-34 and today have brought to light various structures, revealing a number of complex buildings under and around the church. These buildings had sophisticated finishes and were of a certain prestige, with running water and a system of channels draining into the river. They were in use from the first century AD until at least the tenth century, as indicated by the most recent finds. The Longobard presence in this important area, which needed to be monitored and protected, was followed by the presence of early Slavic peoples, signifying that the structures were still in use or inhabited throughout this period and that the bridge, which collapsed at the height of the Middle Ages, was still stable.



14.

From the river Isonzo (fig. 14), the route headed straight east, keeping to the right-hand bank of the Vipacco river (in Latin the *Frigidus*, that is to say the "cold river" because of its currents), making its way over the border between Italy and Slovenia, between Savogna d'Isonzo, Merna/Miren and Boccavizza/Bukovica.

A. G.

13. The church of Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore at Mainizza

14. Going towards the Isonzo River, today

Literature

Adam J.-P., L'arte di costruire presso i Romani. Materiali e tecniche, Longanesi, Milan, 1990.

Bertacchi L., Il ponte romano sull'Isonzo alla Mainizza. In "Journal of Ancient Topography / Rivista di Topografia Antica", 9, 1999, pp. 67-80.

Bosio L., Le strade romane della Venetia e dell'Histria, Editoriale Programma, Padua, 1991.

Cammina, cammina... Dalla via dell'ambra alla via della fede, exhibition catalogue, edited by S. Blason Scarel, Gruppo Archeologico Aquileiese, Marano Lagunare (UD), 2000.

Galliazzo V., I ponti romani, I-II, Canova, Treviso, 2005.

Magnani S., Banchig P., Ventura P., Il ponte romano alla Mainizza e la via Aquileia-Emona. In "Aquileia Nostra", 76, 2005, coll. 81-136.

Maselli Scotti F., I monumenti sepolcrali del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Aquileia. In "Antichità Altoadriatiche", 43, 1997, pp. 137-148.

Tiussi C., Un ritrovamento di miliari nel greto del fiume Torre a Villesse (Gorizia) e la via Aquileia-Iulia Emona. In "Aquileia Nostra", 81, 2010, coll. 277-360.

**E
MO
NA**





1.

From the Julian Alps to Siscia and beyond: The Slovenian and Croatian stages of the journey

Located in the transitional area between the Alps and the Balkans, between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, the territory of present-day Slovenia had already been criss-crossed with roads during prehistory. Ancient legends preserved in the works of classical authors prove the significance of prehistoric caravan routes and communications existing in this area centuries before the arrival of the Romans. Etruscan and Venetic merchants traded here, as well as merchants from the East and from Greece.

One important trading route linking present-day Slovenia with the Baltic Sea was dubbed the Amber Road – after the precious goods transported along it. The routes leading from the Black Sea over Slovenia to Italy feature in one of the versions of the Argonauts legend. When the Argonauts with the Golden Fleece were returning home from the Black Sea, they reached the Adriatic Sea by travelling up the Danube River and its tributaries. They sailed on a ship to *Nauportus* (today's Vrhnika) – or, in a later version of the story, to *Iulia Emona* – directly from the Danube River via the Sava and Ljubljana Rivers (fig. 1).

The transport routes leading over present-day Slovenia in the Late Iron Age and preserving their function up until Roman times and even later were also described by the Greek geographer Strabo. He reported, among other things, that goods from Aquileia (most probably oil, wine, salt, pottery and glass) were transported by wagons over the Odra Pass (Razdrto) to the Tauriscan settlement of *Nauportus* where they were reloaded onto boats and transported along the Ljubljana and Sava Rivers to the important emporium of *Siscia* (Sisak) and onwards to the Danube River. The Romans gained control over this ancient trade route, which was also claimed by *Taurisci* as well as *Carni* and *Iapodi*, following bloody fights with the native population. With the route leading over the Odra Pass still being in use, a faster, shorter road was built under Augustus.

1. Along the route of the Argonauts: numerous tourist boats operate on the Ljubljana River in Ljubljana, whose predecessor *Iulia Emona* is supposed to have been established by the Greek heroes sailing on their ship, the *Argo*



2.

This newly built road was part of the major route leading from Italy to Illyricum (comprising one part of the eastern Alpine region and the central Balkans along with Dalmatia). Avoiding the Ocra Pass and going directly over today's Hrušica, which back then was called *Ad Pirum*, this road shortened the journey by one day.

The road from Aquileia over *Emona* to *Viminacium*, including its numerous variants and side roads, grew to become one of the most significant roads of the Roman state, connecting the Apennine Peninsula (Italy) with the Balkans (Illyricum up to Thrace and Macedonia) and with the provinces located in Asia Minor. Gradually, it grew from a military road (*via militaris*) into a public road (*via publica*), intended mainly for the postal service, and still for the army and officials on business trips, along with emperors and their family members and other travellers. Naturally, it was frequently used by merchants: the Romans exported from the area of present-day Slovenia products of the soil and stockfarming, ores, wood, wine and other things, and imported tableware, Roman-style jugs, plates, and for the first time also blown glass, along with wine, olive oil, fish sauces, exotic spices and the like.

In Late Antiquity, the road was connected with the *Clastra Alpium Iuliarum* (popularly known as the Roman *Limes*), a defence system set up along the borders of Italy and the province of Pannonia in the territory of present-day Slovenia and Croatia. It ran from Trsat (*Tharsaticum*) in Croatia across the Notranjsko region (Prezid, Selo, Rob, Rakitna) to Hrušica (*Ad Pirum*) (fig. 2), between Logatec (*Longaticum*) and Vrhnika (*Nauportus*) and along the way leading from the Gorenjsko region to the valley of the Bača River. Further to the north, the Romans depended on the natural barrier of the Julian Alps (*Alpes Iuliae*) up to the defence facilities in the Gail Valley at Meglarje (*Meclaria*) and along the upper Drava valley (Duel near Paternion).

Fortress Castra (Ajdoščina) and the Battle of the Frigid River

Proof of the significant history of Ajdoščina is its very name, derived from the word "ajd", implying a heathen, pagan, giant, thus a mythical being to whom our Slavic ancestors attributed the remains of a robust ancient post. In Roman times, a staging post called mansio Fluvio Frigido (the post at the Frigid River – Hubelj or Vipava/Vipacco) first appeared here, the last post situated in the plain, just before the road to Iulia Emona started to ascend onwards to Ad Pirum, Hrušica. Later, the settlement was named Castra, which literally means "Fortresses" as it was turned into a fortification with towers located in the hinterland defence system Claustra Alpium Iuliarum.

2. The *Ad Pirum* fortress, an important point of the *Claustra*, which was traversed by the Aquileia-Emona road. Reconstruction by Peter Kos, computer realisation by Igor Dolinar, made within the framework of the strategic project "Archaeological Parks of the Northern Adriatic" – PaRSJAd, which was co-financed under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Slovenia-Italy 2007-2013 by the European Regional Development Fund and the budget of the Republic of Slovenia



3.

It is somewhere near Castra (fig. 3) that the theatre of the famous Battle of the Frigid River might be located in which Theodosius and Eugenius engaged in 394. The tide of the battle was decisively turned by one peculiar characteristic of this area, i.e. the Karst bora wind, as celebrated by Claudian in his panegyric from 396:

*“Thanks to thine influence the wind of the frozen North
overwhelmed the enemy’s line with his mountain storms,
hurled back their weapons upon the throwers
and with the violence of his tempest drove back their spears.”*

On the Empire’s border: Fortress Ad Pirum (Hrušica)

Originally at Hrušica, where the road reached its highest point, there was only a staging post, similarly as where present-day Ajdovščina, i.e. the Roman Castra, lies. From the second century on, the Hrušica Pass had been controlled by beneficiarii. In the late third century, the Romans changed their military strategy so that access points to Italy were safeguarded along with the Empire’s outermost borders; therefore, a large fortress was built here (fig. 2-4). Extensive archaeological excavations were undertaken at Hrušica. Among the most unusual finds from Hrušica are the bones and a tooth of an African camel. It is unclear what the animal did at Hrušica, it might have been used for transporting goods as part of military campaigns or civil commerce. The area surrounding the fortress is now an archaeological park managed by the National Museum of Slovenia.



4.

3. The remains of the Castra fortress in today's Ajdovščina

4. In the Ad Pirum fortress. Reconstruction by Peter Kos, computer realisation by Igor Dolinar, made within the framework of the strategic project “Archaeological Parks of the Northern Adriatic” – PArSJAd, which was co-financed under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Slovenia–Italy 2007–2013 by the European Regional Development Fund and the budget of the Republic of Slovenia





6.

The first major town which the road under consideration connected with Aquileia was *Iulia Emona*, today's Ljubljana (fig. 5).

A predecessor of modern Slovenia's capital: the Roman Iulia Emona

The Romans established their colony *Iulia Emona* at the location of the centre of today's Slovenian capital, i.e. on the left bank of the Ljubljanica River, in the first decade of the 1st century (fig. 6). Emona flourished from the first to the fifth century. As a town with a rectangular layout, it had a central square, the forum, and a grid of rectangularly intersecting streets which marked the boundaries of residential areas (fig. 7). Today, the remains of one of the private houses featuring a hypocaust and a geometric mosaic can be visited in the Emonan House archaeological park (figg. 8-9).

Iulia Emona was surrounded by town walls with towers. Nearly the entire southern section of the town walls has been preserved and transformed according to the plans of the architect Jože Plečnik. Surrounded by a park, it constitutes a tranquil historical setting in the middle of Ljubljana. Emona was the seat of the diocese between the late fourth and late sixth century. The remains of the diocesan centre with a baptistery and the striking multi-coloured mosaics are preserved and open to the public in the Early Christian Centre archaeological park (fig. 10).

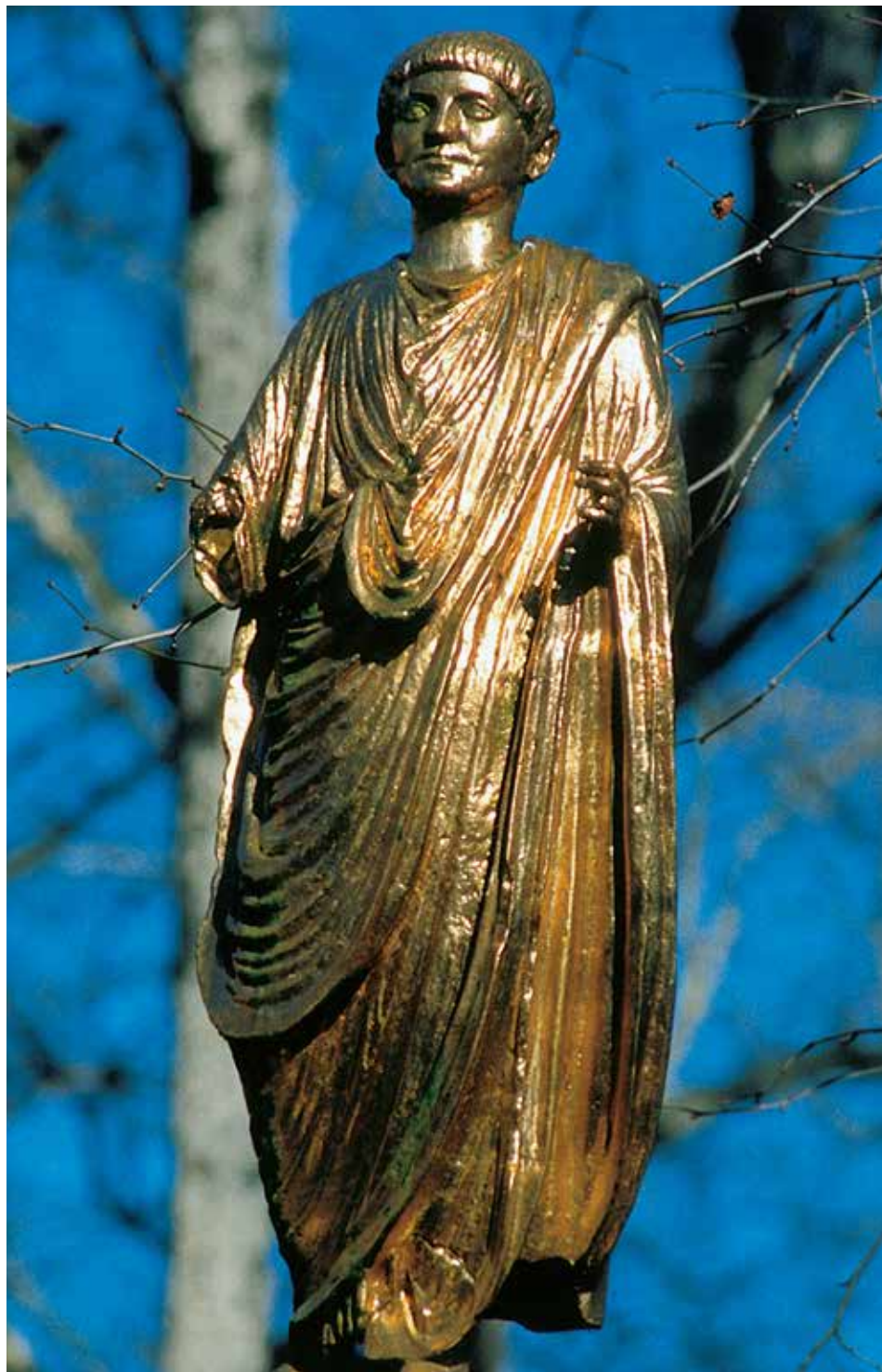


7.

5. (Previous page). Where the Roman town of *Emona* once stood today stands Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana

6. Reconstruction of *Emona* by Igor Rehar

7. A road crossing in *Emona* during archaeological excavations: a sewer beneath a decumanus



8.

From *Emona*, the road led across what is today Dolenjsko to *Praetorium Latobicorum* (today's Trebnje) and onwards to *Neviodunum* (today's Drnovo near Krško). A staging post called *Praetorium Latobicorum* was located in the border area between Italy and Illyricum and later between Italy and Upper Pannonia. The name *Praetorium* suggests that the post was fortified. On the Peutinger Map, the station is called *Ad pratorium*.

Praetorium Latobicorum was situated 34 miles from *Iulia Emona* and 31 miles from the next town, *Neviodunum*, whose full name was *Municipium Flavium Latobicorum Neviodunum*, a port and an important trade centre. *Praetorium Latobicorum* was a hub of important local routes leading to the south, i.e. to what is today Bela krajina, and to the north, i.e. to *Celeia* (Celje) in Noricum; from here, there was a public road leading to *Poetovio* (Ptuj). The post was under police surveillance, which is well-documented by the altars of the *beneficarii* of the praetorian prefect of Upper Pannonia. *Beneficarii* controlled cross-border traffic and were involved in the collection of taxes, tolls and customs duties.

Along the road, between *Iulia Emona* and *Neviodunum*, several milestones were brought to light, indicating the distance from the main cities of the region. One of them was discovered in Velika vas near Krško. Entirely preserved, it is 2.33 meters high and has a diameter of 0.70 meters. In 1887 it was moved to Ljubljana, to the then Rudolfinum (today the National Museum of Slovenia), where it is on display in the Lapidarium. The milestone was erected by co-emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus in 161 (fig. 12).

Past *Praetorium Latobicorum*, the road led across the province of Pannonia, hence its name *via Pannonia*, the Pannonian Road. The road ran in a West-East direction. According to the Peutinger Map, its Croatian section was 110 miles (167 kilometres) long. In what is today Croatian territory, three posts stood along it: *Siscia* (today's Sisak), *Servitium* (Stara Gradiška), *Urbate* (Srbac) and *Marsonia* (Slavonski Brod).

8: One of Ljubljana's emblems is the statue of an Emonan, a respectable citizen of Roman *Emona* who had the statue placed on his tomb. Today, a copy of the statue is put on display in the Zvezda town park in the very centre of Ljubljana



9.

Siscia was one of the most important towns in the area concerned (fig. 11). In the fourth century BC, this town was settled by the Celtic tribe of *Segestani* (*Segestanoi* in Greek), who intermingled with the native population, giving the common settlement their name: *Segestica*. The Romans attempted to conquer *Segestica* several times. Their success only came in 35 BC when the young Octavian, later Emperor Augustus, invaded the town with 12,000 troops after besieging it for one month, establishing a Roman military camp called *Siscia* on the opposite bank of the Kolpa River. The camp was soon walled-in and received the status of a town. Given its geographical position, *Siscia* later became the military, transport and administrative centre of the major part of Pannonia. Under Emperor Vespasian, *Siscia* became a colony, i.e. *Colonia Flavia Siscia*; under Emperor Septimius Severus, it was renamed *Colonia Septimia Siscia Augusta*. *Siscia* had a port at the Kolpa River, and a smithy from the mid-third century. It is supposed that there are remains of public buildings such as a theatre and amphitheatre, the baths were in fact discovered.

Under Emperor Diocletian, when the Roman province of Pannonia was split into four parts in 297, *Siscia* became the capital of the province of Pannonia Savia. With a population of approximately 40,000, the town also had a Christian community; the first bishop is documented in 284. The significance of *Siscia* declined along with the gradual disintegration of the Empire.

B.Ž



10.

9. Emona Archaeological Park: Emonan House. The Emona Archaeological Park comprises several sites in the centre of Ljubljana; the entry point is the City Museum of Ljubljana at Gosposka 15

10. Emona Archaeological Park: Early Christian Centre





12.

After *Marsonia* (Slavonski Brod), the road separated in two branches, both going to *Sirmium*. The northern of these branches was known as *via Mediterranea*.

Via Mediterranea went through another important settlement – *Cibalae*, located beneath the modern town of Vinkovci. The Romans built this city on the foundations of an earlier Celtic village. The history of *Cibalae* resembles that of *Siscia*, and *Pannonia* in general. Without doubt, the most important historic event of the city was the battle between Constantine the Great and Licinius in 314 AD in which the former secured a great victory.

Like some other cities on our route, the city of *Cibalae* was the birthplace of two Roman emperors – in this case the brothers Valentinianus I and Valens.

Among other features that are characteristic of Roman cities, it is important to mention the potteries that have been found in *Cibalae*. The products of these centres, along with many other artifacts from Roman times, can be seen today in the Vinkovci City Museum.

I.D.

11. (Previous page). *Siscia/Sisak*. Part of the south-western rampart with remains of one tower, as well as foundations of fourth century horreum (granary)

12. Milestone from *Velika vas* near Krško; kept by the National Museum of Slovenia, ACN. L 140

Literature

Božič D. and others, Zakladi tisočletij. Zgodovina Slovenije od neandertalcev do Slovanov, Ljubljana, Modrijan 1999.

Breščak D., Romula in rimska cesta: poštna in carinska postaja ob rimski cesti Emona-Neviodunum-Siscia. In: "Revija za literaturo, kulturo in družbena vprašanja", letn. 17, št. 2 (apr. 2006), pp. 199-201.

Brunšmid J., *Colonia Aurelia Cibalae*. In: "Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu", Vol.6, No.1, 1902.

Curk I., Sto zgodb arheoloških spomenikov v Sloveniji, Ljubljana: Prešernova družba 1995.

Curk I., "Arma virumque ---": ob stvarnih virih o rimski dobi na Slovenskem. Ljubljana : DZS. 1999.

Iskra-Janošić I., Urbanizacija Cibala i razvoj keramičkih središta, HAZU, Zagreb-Vinkovci, 2001.

Istenič J., Hrušica = Ad Pirum : arheološki park in arheološka zbirka, Ljubljana: Narodni muzej, 1996.

Mason P., Vojaški tabor in rimska cesta pri Obrežju. In: "Revija za literaturo, kulturo in družbena vprašanja", letn. 17, št. 2 (apr. 2006), pp. 202-205.

Predan P., Rimska cesta na Čatežu pri Brežicah: rimska cesta *Emona-Neviodunum-Siscia*. In: "Revija za literaturo, kulturo in družbena vprašanja", letn. 17, št. 2 (apr. 2006), pp. 196-198.

Županek B., Rimska Ljubljana, vodnik. – Turizem Ljubljana, 2013.

V
IMI
NA
CI
UM





1.

From Sirmium to Viminacium: The Serbian stages of the journey

Travelling further down the road, we leave the territory of modern day Croatia and enter Serbia: the next stop was *Sirmium* (today's Sremska Mitrovica). It was definitely one of the most important Roman cities in the territory of Serbia. It was a legionary camp and the administrative centre of the province of *Pannonia Inferior*, i.e. of *Pannonia Secunda* after Diocletian's reforms. During the period of the tetrarchy, it was one of four tetrarchic capitals for a short time. In the fourth century, literary sources mention *Sirmium* as one of the six most beautiful and wealthiest cities in *Illyricum*.

It was founded in the territory inhabited by the tribes of Sirmians and Amantins. The city rose to the status of a colony very fast, as early as the time of the Flavian dynasty and most probably during the reign of Emperor Domitian, hence the name *Colonia Flavia Sirmium*, mentioned in various epigraphic sources. Such rapid economic and cultural prosperity was directly influenced by the fact that the city was located on several roads, the most important of which being the one we are currently dealing with, but also the roads connecting Sirmium with the Danube limes and, across the River Sava, with the province of Dalmatia. Two bridges on the Sava are known to us from literary sources.

One of them is known because it was used by Licinius to escape from Constantine the Great, and the other (*Pons Basentis*) as the place where the martyr Irenaeus was beheaded.

In the centuries after *Sirmium* became a *colonia* and it is often mentioned as an occasional residence of several Roman emperors. One of the more important events that occurred in the city was the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 AD. Philostratus informs us that the "philosopher king" had a palace (*basileion* or *regia*) in *Sirmium*. The next emperor mentioned in connection with the city was Maximinus Thrax, who spent most of the time during his war against the Saristi in it. In the third century, the city was also the place from which the usurpers Ingenus and Regalianus reigned. In the age of the tetrarchy, Diocletian visited *Sirmium* several times, and Galerius briefly made it one of the capitals of the Empire.

Licinius lived in the city in the period between 308 and 314 AD, before Constantine the Great defeated him near *Cibalae*. Constantine also spent several years in the city.

The biggest contribution *Sirmium* makes to the history of the Roman Empire is the fact that as many as six emperors were born in the city: Trajan Decius, Aurelianus, Probus, Maximianus Herculius, Constantius II and Gratian.

1. Portrait of emperor Decius (249-251)

Gaius Messius Quintus Decius (249-251) (fig. 1) was born in the village of Budalia, eight miles from *Sirmium*. He was a warrior and gained glory due to his virtue and skill. Trajan was very popular amongst his fellow soldiers and, after the victory against Emperor Philip the Arab in 249 AD, at the battle of Verona, they proclaimed him emperor.

Trajan proved to be worthy of the task, and managed to improve the economic situation in the state. He also took care of war veterans, distributed donations to the people and repaired the infrastructure. In 251 AD the Goths crossed the lower part of the Danube, pillaging and destroying everything in their path. Trajan Decius defeated half of the barbarian forces in the battle of *Nicopolis* and engaged the second half at *Abritus*. Unfortunately, he and his army got trapped in the mud and were duly slaughtered.

Lucius Domitius Aurelianus (270-275) was born in a small *villa rustica* near the city. His mother was a priestess of the god *Sol* (Sun). He entered the army as a common soldier, and, due to his bravery and intelligence, he prospered very quickly.

He made the army stronger than it had been in a very long time and won many battles and wars. The Goths and Germans were defeated, Rome was defended by new city walls, *Gallia*, *Hispania* and *Britannia* were regained from the hands of the usurpers, the Danube frontier stabilised and the Palmyrene kingdom, under the rule of queen Zenobia, was conquered. All these conquests led to him being entitled *Aurelianus Resturator orbis*. He also established the imperial cult of *Sol*. Near the end of 274 AD, Aurelianus marched to the east to begin a war with the Persians. During this voyage he was killed by a conspiracy of his most trusted men.

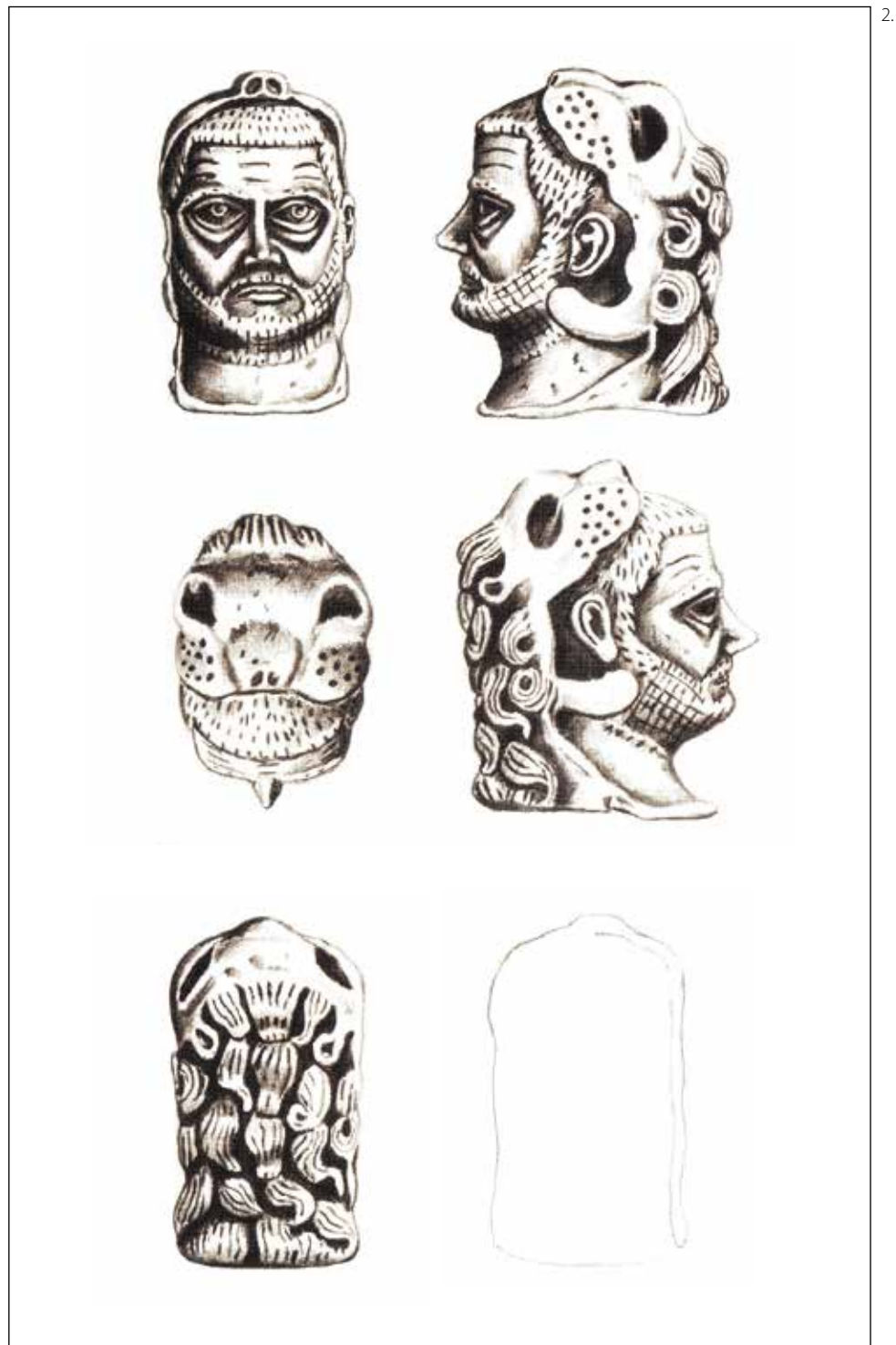
Marcus Aurelius Probus (276-282) was also born in the countryside of *Sirmium*. He entered the military at a young age and advanced through the ranks, due to his success and victories. Emperor Valerianus noticed him, and made him a tribune. Probus repaid this honour by defeating Sarmates, and winning numerous battles, earning the epithet *semper victoriosus*. After the death of Aurelianus, and his successor Tacitus, Probus claimed the throne after a short civil war. He continued to wage wars as the emperor, winning one after another, and was given the title of conqueror of all barbarian tribes, tyrants and usurpers and peacemaker. During his reign, discipline in the army was at its highest. When soldiers were not engaged in warfare they were tasked with developing economic structures. One such task, the melioration of the countryside of *Sirmium* proved to be fatal for the emperor. Angry soldiers killed him in one of the city towers then, immediately realising what they had done, many of them committed suicide.

Marcus Aurelius Maximianus (285-305; 310) gained glory in the army with his bravery and ability. This is why Diocletian chose him as his co-ruler in 285 AD. Maximianus is remembered as being uneducated, brutal, and reckless towards the law and the given word. He showed no mercy and personally carried out all punishments. Maximianus added the epithet *Herculius* to his name and he was often depicted with lion's skin, characteristic for this deity. (fig. 2) He ruled the western part of the empire from the court in Milan. Maximian's reign is marked by many successful military conquests in which he conquered numerous Germanic tribes, waged wars in Africa and Spain, and defeated usurpers in Gaul and Britain. He abdicated together with Diocletian in 305 AD, only to return to the political scene in the civil war that his son, Maxentius, waged. In 310, he was either killed, or forced to commit suicide.

Iulius Flavius Constantius (337-361) was the third son of emperor Constantine the Great. He was a diligent student of science and skilled in rhetoric, as well as being very good at sports, horse riding and handling weapons. One of his flaws was that he believed all kinds of rumour and intrigue and then, in a rage, he would often punish innocent people. After the death of his father, civil war between his successors broke out. Constantius waited patiently and emerged as the winner after the battle of *Mursa* (Osijek, Croatia) in 351. However, he had no success in wars against foreign enemies, except in the campaigns against the Sarmats and Quades who ravaged the province of Pannonia. Constantius died of fever during the wars with Sassanides in the east.

Gratian (367-383) was the eldest son of emperor Valentinianus. He is known as one of the most educated rulers of the Late Antiquity. At the beginning of his reign, Gratian successfully organised the administrative functions, and also had luck on the battlefield, defeating Alamans. However, the tables then turned, and he lost control of the state. Corruption, injustice and the buying of the merits became part of everyday life in the court. Gratian himself was spending most of the time hunting. He was killed in an ambush while fleeing the usurper *Magnus Maximus*. Gratian is remembered as a devoted Christian and as the man who removed the statue of *Victoria* from the Roman Senate.

During the period of Late Antiquity, *Sirmium* was known as an important Christian centre. In the papers of the Aquilean Council held in 381 AD, the city is mentioned as "the head of *Illyricum*". It is also well known for the many martyrs who gave their lives for the faith, the most prominent being the previously mentioned *Irenaeus*.



Ancient *Sirmium* lay beneath the modern town of Sremska Mitrovica, and as a result excavations held from the mid-20th century onwards were limited. However, parts of the hippodrome, aqueducts, luxurious houses, ramparts, and the monumental palace (imperial residence) were discovered. The imperial palace and 200 square meters of mosaics are now protected by a special construction and are on view to tourists.

Leaving *Sirmium*, our ancient traveller would pass through several settlements before reaching the next important stop, *Singidunum*. These stations are *Bassiana*, *Idiminium*, *Taurunum* and *Confluentes*.

Bassiana is located in modern day Petrovac near Ruma. It was a Roman city and military camp. It became a municipium during the reign of Hadrian and a *colonia* in the time of the Severian dynasty. The large *castrum*, in which legion II *Adiutrix* was stationed, has been archaeologically researched.

Taurunum (today's Zemun) was founded immediately after the Romans arrived on the Danube, and it quickly became the main base of the Roman Pannonia fleet. This claim is confirmed both by literary sources, and by finds of bricks bearing the stamp of the fleet.

After passing *Confluentes*, i.e. crossing to the south bank of the Sava River, our traveller would find himself in the province of *Moesia Superior*.

The remains of *Singidunum* are located beneath the capital of modern-day Serbia, Belgrade. This is a strategically very important location, on the confluence of rivers Danube and Sava. Before the arrival of the Romans, a huge Celtic settlement existed here, and the very name *Singidunum* has Celtic origins. In the beginning it was probably the military camp of one of two legions that began building infrastructure on the Moesian limes, legion IV *Scythica* or legion V *Macedonica*. After the departure of this legion, another one, named IV *Flavia*, arrived and probably built a stone fortification on the place of the medieval Kalemegdan fortress (fig. 3). This legion is also believed to have built the bridge connecting *Singidunum* and *Taurunum*.

2. Silver head of a sceptre: the emperor Maximianus wearing a lion's skin, like Hercules



3.

The city also had some contingents of a river fleet placed in it. The civil settlement arose next to the military camp, as was common practice in Roman times. This settlement witnessed rapid economic and cultural prosperity, and so Singidunum grew municipally and, at the beginning of the third century AD, Gordian III raised the city to the status of a *colonia*. The history of *Singidunum* was not very turbulent after the end of Trajan's wars with the Dacians, except for occasional incursions of Quads and Jasigs. More important events during the third and fourth centuries are definitely the visits that Roman emperors paid to the city (Septimius Severus in 202, Diocletian in 295 and Constantius in 349).

The emperor Jovian was born in the city and reigned for a short period in 363-364 AD. He served as emperor's guard in the court of Constantius II and was proclaimed emperor by the troops on the battlefield after the death of Julian in the war with the Persians. Jovian then made peace with the enemy, under humiliating terms, losing more territory of the Empire than was ever previously recorded. He met a sudden and mysterious death in the north of Gaul.

As previously mentioned, modern-day Belgrade was built upon the remains of *Singidunum*, and this is the main reason we know so little about the organisation of the Roman city. The most important building that was excavated is the *thermae* on the plateau between Student's Square and Knez Mihailova street. The ramparts of the ancient *castrum* can now be seen in the Roman Hall of the Belgrade City Library. Also, part of the necropolis, consisting of 56 tombs, was discovered during the construction of an underground car park between Belgrade City Hall and the National Assembly building.

A comprehensive collection of Roman artifacts can be found in the National Museum, which is currently under reconstruction. One of the more important remains from antiquity is the Jonas sarcophagus that is on display in Kalemegdan fortress (fig. 5). It is believed to be one of the oldest Christian sarcophagi from the territory of Belgrade. Two scenes from the Old Testament story of Jonas are depicted on it.



4.

3. Remains of Roman fortifications at *Singidunum*

4. Sarcophagus with scenes of the biblical story of the prophet Jonas, now in Kalemegdan fortress



5.

After his departure from *Singidunum* our traveller would find himself on the final section of road to his final destination, *Viminacium*. Some of the more important stations on this road were *Tricornium*, *Aureus Mons*, *Vinceia* and *Margum*.

Tricornium (Ritopek) was an important military centre, judging by the name *Castra Tricornia* in Roman itineraries, and by the remains of several fortifications in Ritopek. Possible residents of this fortification could have been the cohorts I *Flavia Bessorum* and I *Pannoniorum*, as well as parts of the IV *Flavia* legion. *Tricornium* was important because of its strategic position, rich countryside and the vicinity of silver and lead mines. It was probably the administrative centre for mining. It is best known for the discovery of parade armour, which is displayed in the National Museum in Belgrade.

Parade armour from Ritopek

The parade armour from Ritopek is, without doubt, one of the most exceptional finds dating from the Roman era in the territory of modern-day Serbia. It was worn on the chest and fastened to the standard body armour (pectoral).

The depictions on this pectoral are divided in three friezes. In the uppermost frieze, a personification of one of the virtues of the Roman soldier is depicted on the left, with the genius of the legion (presumably of legion VII Claudia) on the right. They both have eagles on their heads, and there are two signums and one vexillum between them.

The central frieze shows us depictions of three important deities. Mars, the god of war is in the middle, Sol, who represents a deified emperor, on the left, and Jupiter on the right.

Saturn is represented on the left side of the third frieze, and Pietas, the personified virtue of piety, on the right. In the space between them are two Roman soldiers engaged in a fight. Behind one of them, there is a bull, the symbol of legion VII Claudia.

One interpretation is that this pectoral tells the story of an actual event, the conflict between legion VII Claudia and the troops of the usurper Ingenuus. If so, this artifact is even more remarkable, considering that parade armour was usually decorated with standardised depictions.

5. Parade armour discovered in Ritopek/Tricornium



Aureus Mons (Seone) is known from literary sources as the place where grapevines were cultivated in the time of Probus. Also, not far from this site, in the village of Brestovik, a late Roman tomb was unearthed in 1901. It has four compartments and rich fresco decorations.

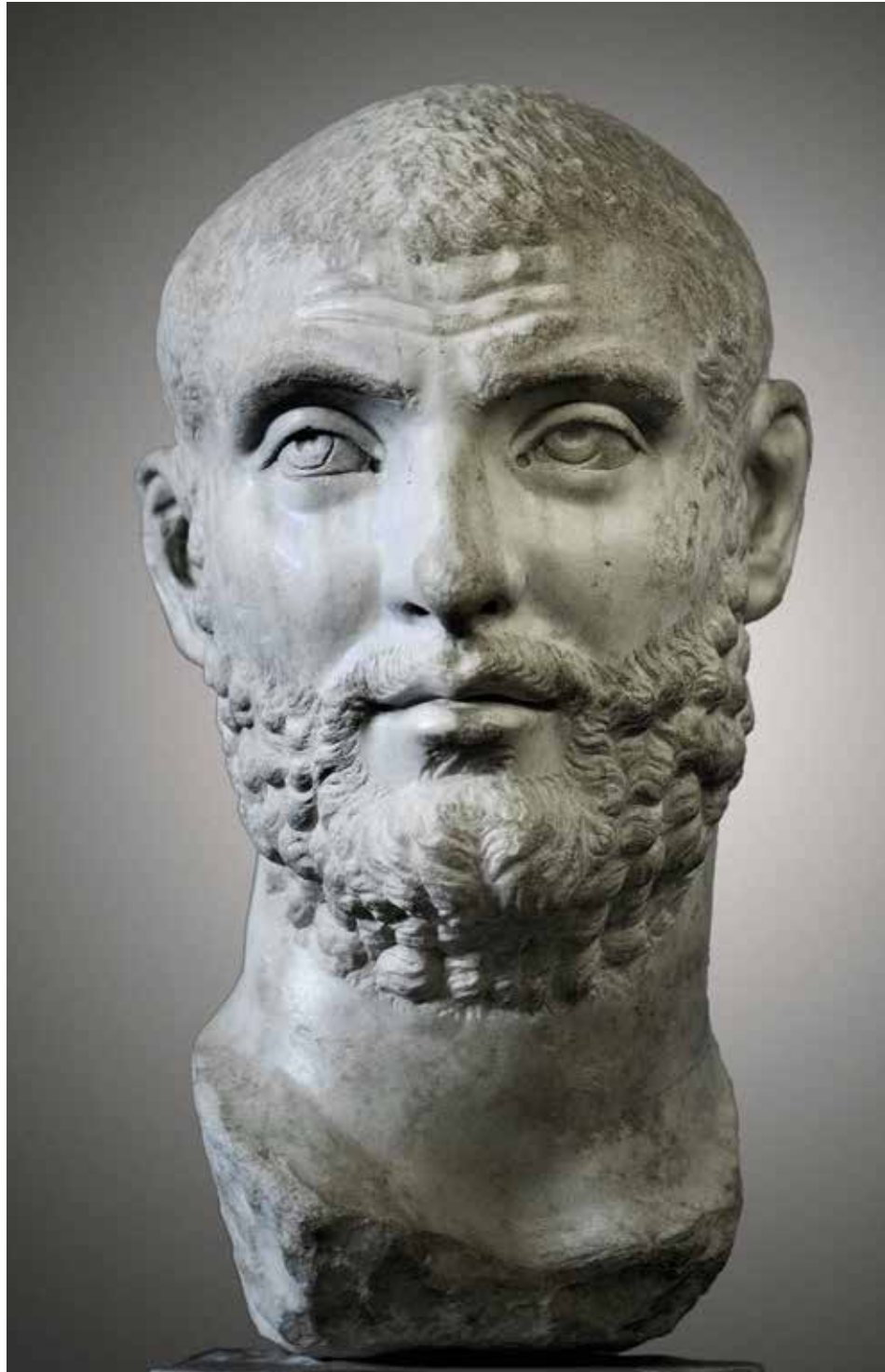
Margum was situated on the confluence of the Danube and Velika Morava rivers, a strategically very important place.

Legion IV *Flavia* was probably situated here at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century, before its departure to *Singidunum*. The city was raised to the status of a *municipium* in the second century. Archaeological excavations conducted so far have been very limited, because of the forests and river canals on the site, and they don't help us to understand the topography of *Margum* any better.

And so, our ancient traveller reaches the end of his journey in the city of *Viminacium*, a military camp and civil settlement and the capital of the Roman province of *Moesia Superior*. It was founded on the confluence of the Danube and Mlava rivers. The city was connected to different parts of the Empire by three important roads, which directly influenced its rapid economic and cultural prosperity, giving *Viminacium* a cosmopolitan character in different aspects of its everyday life.

The *castrum* was the permanent camp of legion VII *Claudia* which came from Dalmatia in the second part of the first century and remained until the end of the Roman period. This legion earned the epithet *pia fidelis* in 42 AD, when it demonstrated its loyalty during Scribonian's rebellion in Dalmatia. However, the first legions to be stationed here were the already mentioned IV *Scythica* and V *Macedonica*.

6. Coin of Viminacium's mint: personification of goddess Moesia with a bull and a lion



7.

The civil settlement was granted municipal status during the reign of Hadrian, around 117 AD, when it was given the title *Viminacium municipium Aelium Hadrianum*. The development of the city was briefly interrupted by a plague epidemic during the time of Marcus Aurelius, but by the time of the beginning of the third century commerce was flourishing once again. Many Roman emperors visited *Viminacium* during its existence, and as the power of the Empire started to decline, the city gained in importance, so on a few occasions questions about the disposition of the ruling power were resolved in it.

Without a doubt, two of the most significant moments in the history of the city were the visits by Emperor Hadrian, for whom hunts were organised near *Viminacium*. Emperor Septimius Severus also visited the city twice, and on one of these occasions proclaimed his son Caracalla as *Caesar*. Other emperors who stayed here were Gordian III, Philip the Arab, Trebonius Gallus, Hostilian, Diocletian, Constantine the Great, Constans I and Julian. Gratian was the last emperor to have visited the city. Emperor Hostilian spent most of his short reign in *Viminacium*, where he and his mother died, supposedly of plague, but there are also some indications that there was a conspiracy to kill the young ruler.

In the third century, during the reign of emperor Gordian III, *Viminacium* gained colonial status and was granted the right to mint coins. Coins minted here are recognisable by a representation of the goddess *Moesia* on their reverse. On either side of the deity, a lion and a bull were depicted as the symbols of two legions guarding the province. The specific feature of *Viminacium* coinage is that the time of minting was marked by letters *an(no)* and the corresponding numbers from I to XV on the reverse side (fig. 6). The closure of the *Viminacium* mint took place under the rule of Gallienus (253-268), who closed down almost all local mints in the Empire.

In 284, a decisive battle was fought in the vicinity of the city between the emperors Diocletian and Carinus. This battle determined the future of the state. An important find from this period is a head of Carinus (fig. 7). In 441 AD, the Huns conquered *Viminacium*, razing it to the ground. The town was never rebuilt.

7. Head of the emperor Carinus discovered in *Viminacium*



8.



9.



10.

Today, *Viminacium* is the most visited archaeological park in Serbia, with several remains displayed for visitors. New excavations are being conducted simultaneously alongside tourist presentations. In the earlier phases of these excavations, in the '70s and '80s, a total of 13,500 graves were discovered, making it the most researched necropolis in the territory of the empire. During the latest excavations, from 2000 onwards, city baths, an amphitheatre, the northern gate of a military camp, a mausoleum of a wealthy citizen and aqueducts were unearthed. All of these remains have now been restored and presented to the public.

The baths (*thermae*) are typical Roman buildings. They served not only as a means of personal hygiene, but also for relaxation and various social activities. The baths of *Viminacium* are distinguished by their architectural design. The archaeological explorations showed the existence of five conchs, four of which were used as warm rooms and one as a cold room. The entire building was heated using the hypocaust system, a uniquely Roman way of heating the floor. The remains of fresco paintings witness to the luxury of the baths. In one of the earlier phases of the building, the floor was covered with mosaics. The large number of oil lamps that have been found during the excavation suggests that the *thermae* were also used during the night. The city baths, as well as the gate of the *castrum* and the mausoleum are covered by special timber constructions, so they can be visited regardless of the weather (fig. 8).

The amphitheatre at *Viminacium* is the first building of this type to be unearthed in Serbia. It had stone walls around the arena, and tribunes made of timber. It could accommodate around 7,000 spectators. Part of the tribune has been reconstructed, and now various cultural events are being held in this unique surrounding (fig. 9).

8. Remains of the Roman baths in *Viminacium*9. 3D reconstruction of the amphitheatre in *Viminacium* (by Emilija Nikolić)

10. Recent archaeological excavations of the north gate of the military camp

11. (Next page). The mausoleum





12.

The approximate dimensions of the military camp are 443 x 387 meters. The north gate, so called *porta praetoria*, was researched during the excavations conducted in 2002 and 2003. The remains of an entrance gate, with massive pavement blocks, a *cloaca* and richly decorated architectural elements were unearthed.

The find of a hoard of bronze coins dating from the period of the fourth and early fifth centuries is testimony to the imperilled state of the camp, which was abandoned during the invasion of the Huns in 441 AD.

The aforementioned mausoleum is square in plan and measures 20 x 20 meters. It is built of stone blocks and ashlars and decorated with columns. The main building is in the central part of the mausoleum. Its dimensions are 5 x 5 meters and it is built of chunks of green schist bonded by mortar. The stone bases at the corners of the building carried columns. A tomb was discovered in the central part of the structure. The deceased person was laid on the wooden support and cremated on the spot. This form of burial, known as a *bustum*, is generally very rare, and it was quite exceptional in the period in which the mausoleum was erected. The individual cremated and buried in this place must have been a person of great distinction in the Roman hierarchy. The mausoleum was plundered during Roman times, and its ashlars and columns were used secondarily for the construction of nearby fourth century tombs.

Alongside the mausoleum, three tombs with fresco decorations are displayed for tourists. What is unique is the way in which they are presented, with visitors having to go through an underground tunnel from which they enter the tombs from beneath. One of these tombs belonged to a young woman, depicted in the fresco technique. This painting is considered to be amongst the highest achievements of art of the Late Antiquity. (fig. 12).

12. Tomb with fresco decoration showing a young woman



13.

About 1,000 meters of three Roman aqueducts have been unearthed (fig. 13). These structures were built of stone chunks, bonded with lime mortar. The sides of the aqueducts were covered with lime mortar too, and the lower layer was made of water resistant mortar. The bottom was built of fire-baked bricks bearing the stamps of the Roman legions that built the aqueducts in the first century AD. The legions in question were III *Flavia Felix* and VII *Claudia Pia Fidelis*. The upper part was covered with massive floor bricks. Their total length was about 10 kilometres and they brought water to the ancient town and military camp of *Viminacium*. The gradient from the water source to the city and castrum was 1 to 2 percent per mile. The names of the craftsmen who built the structures have been found inscribed in several places.

One part of the aqueducts has been moved, as it was endangered by the Drmno coal mine. This segment will be presented in the part of the *Viminacium* archaeological camp that is currently being prepared, together with kilns used for making clay bricks and the remains of a third century *villa rustica*.

Domus Scientiarum Viminacium

The *Viminacium Scientific-Research Centre (Domus Scientiarum)* is a facility built in the style of a Roman *villa rustica* (fig. 14). It serves multiple purposes, as it has quarters intended to be used by archaeologists and other scientists who are engaged in multidisciplinary research on the site as well for the accommodation and activities of tourists who wish to get to know *Viminacium* more thoroughly than would possible during standard tours.

The facility consists of two levels. On the upper level, there are premises for work (laboratories, workshops and studies) and accommodation, a library, a kitchen, a dining room and a spa centre, which resembles Roman baths. The lower level consists of a conference hall and a museum. In 2013 an exhibition celebrating the 1,700 year jubilee of the Edict of Milan was held here. It comprised of all of the most important artifacts from the Roman period in the territory of Serbia. *Domus Scientiarum* represents the very best in archaeological tourism, with the unique atmosphere of ancient Rome.

I.D.



14.

13. Remains of one of the aqueduct in Viminacium

14. Domus Scientiarum Viminacium, an example of building for archaeological tourism

Literature

Brunšmid J., Colonia Aurelia Cibalae.

In: "Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu",
vol. 6, n.1 1902.

Iskra-Janošić I., Urbanizacija Cibala i razvoj
keramičkih središta, HAZU, Zagreb-Vinkovci,
2001.

Jovanović A., Serbia Homeland of the Roman
Emperors, Belgrade 2006.

Korać M., Slikarstvo Viminacijuma,
Beograd 2007.

Korać M., Golubović S., Mrđić N.,
Itinerarium Romanum Serbiae, Beograd 2009.

Mirković M. 1968, Rimski gradovi na Dunavu
u Gornjoj Meziji, Beograd 1968.

Popović V., Sirmium- Grad careva i mučenika.

In: Rimski gradovi i palate u Srbiji,
ed. D. Srejović, Beograd 1993.

Popović I., Rimski paradni oklop iz Ritopeka.
Narodni Muzej Beograd, Beograd 1993.

Radman Livaja I., Militaria Sisciensia, Nalazi
rimске vojne opreme iz Siska u fundusu
Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu (Katalozi i
Monografije AMZ-a, sv. 1), Zagreb 2005.

Spasić- Ćurić D., Viminacijum,
Glavim grad rimske provincije
Gornje Mezije, Požarevac 2002.

Srejović D., Arheološki leksikon,
Beograd 1997.

