

# ARCHEST

Aquileia - Emona - Sirmium - Viminacium: on the ancient Roman trail



**Developing archaeological audiences along the Roman route**

**Aquileia-Emona-Sirmium-Viminacium**

Ljubljana, July 2016

## WP3, Task 3.1 – Historiographic research update on the Roman route

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## **Roman road Aquileia-Emona- Siscia-Sirmium-Viminacium: the Slovenian section**

The construction of the road that connected the Italic region with central Slovenia, and then made its way towards the east, was of key strategic importance for the Roman conquest of regions between the Sava and the Danube at the end of the first century BC. After the administrative establishment of the province of Pannonia this road became the main communication route, in the west-east direction, between Italy and the eastern provinces, especially with Pannonia and Moesia. The start of the road, which we follow in the context of the ARCHEST project, was in Aquileia, then across Emona to Neviodunum, passing Aquae Iassae towards Siscia and onwards into Sirmium, Singidunum and Viminacium.

### **Myth-shrouded beginnings: the Amber Road and the Argonauts**

The territory of modern Slovenia was already covered with various routes during prehistoric times. Slovenian territory is located at a transitional area between the Alps and the Balkans, between the Baltic and the Black Sea. The significance of these prehistoric caravan routes and their traffic is shown in legends of old, preserved through the texts by ancient scribes. Centuries before the Romans arrived in what is now Slovenia, Etruscan and Veneti merchants traded here, occasionally also merchants from the East and Greece.

An important trade route that connected the territory of Slovenia with the Baltic received its name, the Amber Road, after the valuable commodity that was transferred on it. Routes, which formed links between the Black Sea and Italy, are also a subject in one version of the Argonaut myth. Irena Žmuc summarises it, *»Pelias usurped the royal throne in place of his nephew Jason, Prince of Thessaly. As a condition for returning it to the legitimate heir, he demanded that Jason seize and bring him the Golden Fleece. Jason assembled around him 50 heroes who dared to set out with him on this dangerous quest. They had the help of the gods, especially the goddess Athena, who provided plans for construction of their ship, the Argo. Built into the prow of the Argo was a board of talking oak that helped guide the crew past dangerous obstacles. Their quest for the Golden Fleece took the Argonauts to Colchis, the land of King Aeetes. After a series of adventures, the expedition arrived at its destination. King Aeetes ordered Jason to perform a number of dangerous and impossible tasks in exchange for the Golden Fleece, which was guarded by a dragon in a cavern sacred to Aries. In the final, deciding task, Jason was helped by the magical power of Aeetes' daughter Medea, who had fallen in love with him. Once Jason had successfully completed the final task and obtained the Golden Fleece, the Argonauts had to flee Colchis. As they fled, the Argo sailed from the Black Sea into the Danube, entering the Sava River at Belgrade and then navigating the Ljubljanica River to the place where they wintered over. It was here that they founded Emona, and in the spring they sailed on to Nauportus where they dismantled the ship and carried it 400 stadia to the Aquilis River, and then sailed on to the Adriatic Sea«* (Žmuc 2010).



**Fig. 1: "The Argonauts building Emona": a graphic print from J.W.Valvasors Die Ehre deß Herzogthums Crain [Glory of the Duchy of Carniola] from 1689. The supposedly Argonautic roots of Ljubljana had a strong influence on local intellectuals in 17. and 18. century Copy. MGML.**

This was the established version of the myth with two Late Antiquity writers, Sozomen and Zosim, while older versions speak of the Argonauts founding Nauportus. In any case, we are dealing with myth-shrouded knowledge of an important traffic route in the area where our road later ran.

Strabo, an ancient geographer, wrote about routes that crossed our territory in the Late Iron Age and were still used during Roman times and beyond. He writes that merchandise was brought on wagons from Aquileia (most likely oil, wine, salt, pottery and glass) across the Odra pass (Razdrto) to Nauportus, a Taurisci settlement. There the merchandise was transferred onto boats and transported via the Ljubljanica and Sava rivers to an important emporium at Siscia and then further on to the Danube.

This is what Strabo writes: »At Odra, the lowest part of the Alps, where Iapodes border the Carni, merchandise is transported with cargo-wagons from Aquileia into a place called Nauportus on a road, not much longer than 400 stadia. From there the merchandise is transported on waterways to the Danube and places situated next to it. Past Nauportus a navigable river flows from the direction of Illyricum. It discharges itself into the Sava River, so the merchandise can be effortlessly transported into Segestica, to the Pannonii and the Taurisci. At Segestica the Kolpa River also flows into Sava. The road from Aquileia to Nauportus, a settlement of the Taurisci, across the Odra pass is 350, or, according to some writers, 500 stadia. Merchandise is transported to Nauportus in wagons. The Odra is the lowest part of the Alps, which extend from Rhætica to the Iapodes, where the mountains rise again, and are called Albii. From Tergeste, a village of the Carni, there is a pass across the Odra to a marsh called Lugeum. A river, the Corcoras, flows near Nauportus, and conveys the merchandise from that place. It flows into the Sava and this river flows into the Drava « (after Šašel 1975, 79). Romans gained control over this prehistoric trade route -- for which the Taurisci, Carni and Iapodes previously fought -- through bloody battles against the native populations.





**Fig. 2: The Ljubljanica river flowing through modern Ljubljana. This waterway was of crucial importance for the area development already in prehistory. Photo Aarstudio, Mostphotos.**

## Across the Alps: Augustan road Aquileia-Emona

The Ocra pass stayed in use, but during the time of Emperor Augustus the Romans established a faster and shorter road. This newly constructed road was a part of the main traffic artery from Italy into Illyricum (part of the Eastern Alps and central Balkans with Dalmatia). Our road, which linked Aquileia and Emona and then made its way to Siscia cut a whole day of travel time because it did not cross the Ocra. Instead, it went directly across Hrušica, known to the Romans as Ad Pirum.



**Fig. 3: Augustan road Aquileia-Emona in the vicinity of present-day Col on lidar photo. Dimitrij Mlekuž/Preventive Archaeology Centre, Institute for Cultural Heritage Protection of Slovenia.**

Ajdovščina's name is already a reminder of the town's important past, as it is a derivation of the word »ajd« which means pagan, giant, a mythical creature to which our Slavic ancestors ascribed the monumental remains of the ancient post there. During Roman times a postal and cargo station by the name of mansio Fluvio Frigido (station at the Cold River – the Hubelj or Vipava rivers) was first built here. It was the last flatland station before the road towards Emona started to ascend to Ad Pirum, Hrušica. Later the settlement received the name Castra, as it

became a monumental fort with towers in the rear end of the *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum* defence system.

During the early Roman period *Nauportus* (today *Vrhnika*) was a fortified post with a port and warehouses through which Italy kept traffic links with central Danube regions (cf. Horvat 1990). The area around *Nauportus* was most likely under Roman control already in the first half of the first century BCE. The settlement received the status of *vicus* (village) and was situated in the city territory of the colony *Aquileia*, on its north-eastern edge. The oldest known part of Roman *Nauportus* was constructed on the right bank of *Ljubljanica*, in the area known as *Dolge njive*, probably in the fourth or third decade BCE (Mušič, Horvat 2007). A forum with a temple stood in the centre of the settlement, while it was enclosed with walls, towers and a ditch (Mušič, Horvat 2007).

*Nauportus* was a fortified transfer station for transit traffic and trade. It probably played an important role by supplying legions at the end of the first century BCE, during the Roman conquest of central Danube territories and northern Balkans. The significance of *Nauportus* was severely reduced in the first century CE. During late Antiquity the strategic importance of the wider *Nauportus* area increased once again with the necessity of defending passageways into Italy (Horvat 1990). A pentagonal fortress at *Gradišče* and a watchtower at nearby *Turnovšče* were erected at the end of the third century. In the fourth century a 10 km long defensive wall with watchtowers (*Ajdovski zid* wall) was built across the surrounding hills that confined westward routes (Horvat 1990).

*Nauportus* was made part of history the Roman historian *Tactius* (55-120 CE) mentioned it in his report on the insurrection of three Roman legions after the death of August in 14 CE. This is what *Tacitus* had to say (*Ann.* I 20, 1.), »*Interea manipuli ante coeptam seditionem Nauportum missi ob itinera et pontes et alios usus, postquam turbatum in castris accepere, vexilla convellunt direptisque proximis vicis ipsoque Nauporto, quod municipii instar erat, retinentis centuriones inrisu et contumeliis, postremo verberibus insectantur, praecipua in Aufidienum Rufum praefectum castrorum ira, quem dereptum vehiculo sarcinis gravant aguntque primo in agmine per ludibrium rogitantes an tam immensa onera, tam longa itinera libenter ferret.*« As *Tacitus* wrote, before the insurrection began several divisions of the Roman army were sent to *Nauportus* for the construction of roads, bridges and other works (perhaps centuriation of *Emona* territory? and/or regulation of the *Ljubljanica* river?). It is likely they were building or repairing sections of the very road we are discussing.

## Via Gemina?

The name *via Gemina* is often used for the road *Aquileia-Emona*. The name is conveyed from three inscriptions in *Aquileia* (cf. Šašel 1973). *Jaroslav Šašel* (1973, 901) summarises, from context, that the inscriptions denote a country road that led to a certain bridge and, while previously neglected, the road was repaired from subsidence damages in 238 by the recruits from the second *Italic* conscription.

As the local section of our road, the *Aquileia-Emona-Viminacium* road, ran over solid terrain all the way to the Roman bridge across the *Soča* at *Majnica/Mainizza*, the only possibility is, according to Šašel (1973, 901), that the eastern road, which went across *Ponte di Ronchi* to *Tergeste* or *Tarsatica*, suffered subsidence damage (Bosio 1963, 167).

To clarify the source of the unusual road name, *Jaroslav Šašel* (1973) published a short survey, including a discussion, on Roman road naming. According to him there are three theoretic possibilities for the *Gemina* name: 1. it is a cognomen of the road's constructor (cf. *Fufius Geminus*, commander of *Siscia* during the winter of 35/34 BCE); 2. the name points to a possible double road route (a second variation of the route), 3. the name was given after the legion that built the road (*Legio XIII Gemina*). Šašel concludes the discussion with the opinion



that none of the possibilities convinced him, let alone gave sufficient proof. Therefore, the name »via Gemina« is not to be used for the road Aquileia-Emona.

## In the Colonia Iulia Emona: road through the town

The road Aquileia-Viminacium, which we are following in the context of the ARCHEST project, went through the Roman Colonia Iulia Emona. The colony was built in what is now the centre of modern Ljubljana, Slovenia's capital, at the left bank of the Ljubljanica River. A separate settlement, discovered on the opposite side of the Ljubljanica, in the area of Gornji trg and Stari trg squares, is dated between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and the first few decades of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, as an indigenous settlement soon populated also by Roman merchants and entrepreneurs. After a short time interval it enjoyed renewed vigour in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century as a suburb of Emona (Vičič 1994).

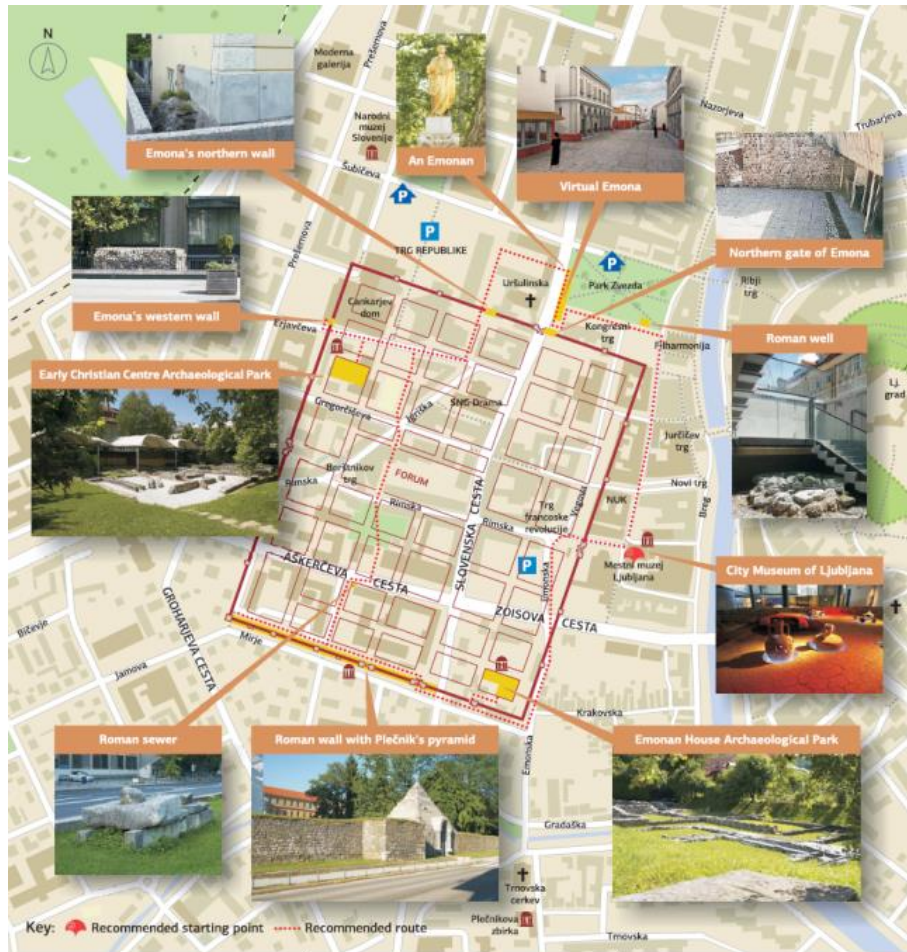


**Fig. 4: People and goods travelled the important road linking Aquileia and Emona. One of such is this precious glass vessel, made in the millefiori technique. The vessel, found in one of Emonan graves, was imported from northern Italy. Igor Lapajne/MGML.**

Despite the fact that several authors (cf. Šašel Kos 1995, 227, note 3) held the opinion that a legionary encampment predated the establishment of the colony of Emona there are no traces of it in epigraphic sources (Šašel Kos 1995) or archaeological record (Plesničar-Gec 1998). However, archaeological investigations in 2008 on the opposite side of the Ljubljanica yielded traces of two consecutive military camps (Vojaković et al. 2011). Two defensive ditches were excavated in the first camp, while to the west of the ditches there was a defensive embankment. The soldiers lived in tents. At the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, on the left bank the walls of this camp were levelled with the ground and the ditches filled in, and then a large part of this area was developed with wooden huts to house the soldiers who built Emona.

Romans established their Colonia Iulia Emona sometime in the first decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. From an inscription stone discovered nearly a century ago, we know that Emona already stood in the second half of the year 14 or beginning of the year 15 AD (Šašel, Weler 1963/64), and that within it the emperors Augustus and Tiberius ordered the construction of a large public building, perhaps as envisaged by the reconstruction in the writings of J. Šašel (Šašel 1955), a walled fortification with towers. The city was settled by colonists from northern Italy. We know the names of around 30 families who settled in Emona; of these 13 came from northern Italy, mainly from the Po River valley (Šašel 1968, 565s).





**Fig. 5: The remains of Emona in the modern Ljubljana are connected into Archaeological park Emona. Bojan Lazarević, Agora d.o.o./MGML.**

Emona thrived from the first to the fifth century. It was laid out in a rectangle with a central square, a forum, and a system of rectangular intersecting streets, between which were building sites. Under the streets running west-east flowed the cloacae, major drainage channels that carried waste water into the Ljubljanica. The town was enclosed by walls and towers and in some places also by one or two ditches filled with water. Some areas beyond the walls were also settled (Plesničar Gec 1977, 28s); the potters' quarter behind the northern wall is well known (cf. Istenič, Plesničar 2001). Alongside the northern, western and eastern thoroughfares into the city – from the directions of Celeia, Aquileia and Neviodunum – cemeteries were established, according to Roman custom. The northern cemetery in particular was thoroughly researched in the 1960s (Plesničar Gec 1972; Petru 1972).





Fig. 6: Northern road to/from Emona, with an extensive cemetery on both sides. Igor Rehar/MGML.

As a Roman colony, Emona had extensive pertaining territory for which it was the administrative, political, economic and cultural centre. Emona's administrative territory or ager stretched from Atrians (Trojane) along the Karavanke mountains towards the north. To the east, the boundary ran somewhere near Višnja Gora, and in the south probably along the Kolpa River (Šašel 1968, 567). To the west, the territory of Emona bordered that of Aquileia (Šašel Kos, 2002).

Our Emona-Viminacium road kept the line of Emona's decumanus maximus, which had a width of 14P inside the town (Plesničar Gec 1999, 30). The road was unpaved, built out of compact gravel, mixed with sand and mortar (Plesničar Gec 1999, 30). All of Emona's decumani had cloacae installed under the road, including our road, until they reached the Ljubljana.



Fig. 7: Part of the Emonan cardo maximus, discovered during archeological excavations in 2015-2016. Skupina Stik/MGML.

Parts of the eastern Roman walls, which separated Emona from the so-called port quarter, were documented in 1987 during the construction of district heating at the Turjaška ulica Street (Ljudmila Plesničar Gec 1999, 43). Through the east gates of Emona (*porta principalis dextra*), which stood in the southwest part of the Trg francoske revolucije Square, the town's main *decumanus* ran and, as the road left Emona, it once again became the road Aquileia-Emona-Viminacium. It crossed the Ljubljanica and connected with the road towards Neviodunum (Drnovo). Wooden piles for the wooden bridge were discovered in the Ljubljanica in 1935, opposite the Breg 16 house address (Ložar 1935).

Next to its road links, the waterway, Ljubljanica, was also of great importance for Emona. From prehistoric times right up to the construction of the railway in the 19th century, it was an important trade communication that linked northern Adriatic with the Danube region. The plethora of finds from the bottom of the Ljubljanica that can be dated to the middle Stone Age and later indicate that the Ljubljanica was also an important cult area. The river probably had associations with the pre-Roman deities of Laburus and Aequorna (Šašel Kos 1992; Šašel Kos 2009). The latter was a very popular deity in Emona – perhaps she was the deity of the nearby marshland Barje, while Laburus was probably a local water god.

### **The road on the exhibition: a preserved part of Emona-Siscia road under the Ljubljana City Museum**

About halfway between the town walls and the bridge across the Ljubljanica our road was detected during the excavations under the City Museum of Ljubljana (ex. Horvat 2002, 62-64).

The road, discovered under the museum, was constructed in macadam technique from layers of compact gravel, mixed with sand and lime mortar (Horvat 2002, 63). The almost eight meters wide carriageway was lined on both side by a pavement made out of compact loam and sand. Along it a ditch channelled precipitation runoff. Underneath the north pavement, directly on the sterile loam, archaeologists discovered a layer which partly continues under the carriageway and is obviously connected with extensive earthworks conducted before and during the construction of the road. One of the reasons for these interventions is the production and exploitation of the river gravel deposits, a necessity for building roads and other construction works. The road was renovated at least three times and with more or less intensity served its purpose until the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Horvat 2002, 64). In the far south part of the palace, at the left edge of the road, a Roman cloaca was also found which carried effluent into the Ljubljanica. A well preserved cloaca, probably built at the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, was vaulted and paved with bricks.

We could link lively traffic on our road to the discovery of foundations next to the pavement. A wooden construction of a non-residential building was erected upon them. In the building we discovered remains of a built vaulted bread oven. Considering the thick layer of ruins with charred beams and planks, the building must have been destroyed in a fire somewhere in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or in the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In the pertaining deposits we found plenty of pottery, among which pitchers and amphorae are most prominent; this could point towards a catering function of the building (Horvat 2002, 62-64).





Fig. 8: The remains of a catering facility near Roman road Emona-Siscia on *in situ* exhibition under the Ljubljana City Museum. Matevž Paternoster/MGML.

## Road towards the southeast: from Emona to Siscia

With Emona behind it, our road ran across Dolenjska to Pretorium Latobicum and then onwards to Neviodunum and Siscia. The Tabula Peutingeriana lists its course in the following (after Šašel 1975, 76):

*Emona (two towers)*

xviii

*Acervone*

xiii

*Ad Protorium (two towers)*

xvi

*Crucio*

xvi

*Novioduni*

x

*Romula*

xiii

*Quadrata*

xiii

*Ad Fines*

xx

*Siscia (two towers)*

*and onwards across the Drina to Sirmium*

Jaroslav Šašel summarised this section of our road already in the 1970s, writing, »*the road is not as well documented as it appears to be. It has been described many times but without proper proof, its actual route is still uncertain. It ran from Emona, approximately, through Škofljica, probably across Šmarje, Stari trg at Višnja gora, Stranska vas and Ivančna gorica towards Praetorium Latobicorum. From here onwards to Neovidunum its route is very disputable. Less questionable is the continuation across Vihre, Čatež, Col at Prilipih, Obrežje. The route from*





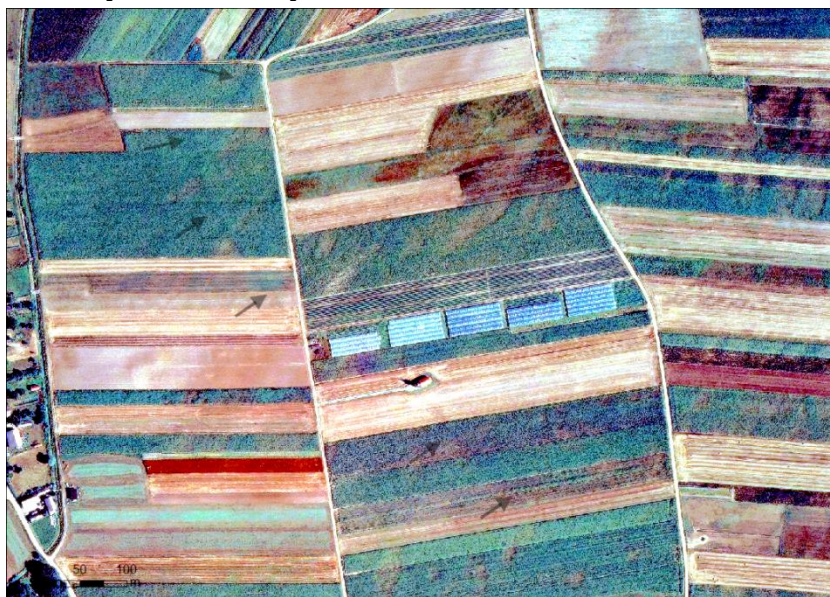
*here to Siscia is not yet determined*» (Šašel 1975, 98). His words still rings true today in many ways, yet some new revelations were brought to light by the construction of the Dolenjska highway (cf. Predan 2006; Mason 2006).

Milan Lovenjak (1997, 90) discusses the road's construction timeline with an inspection of milestones. A land link between Italy and the Balkans and the East was of great strategic value, and so he concludes that the road had to be planned, or even built, during the Augustan period when there were, with a prerequisite of a large military presence, more than enough opportunities. The first opportunity was during Octavian's war in Illyricum (35-33 BCE), the second came in the years 15-9 BCE when Tiberius was active in Illyricum and the third opportunity was during the Great Illyrian Revolt between the years 6 and 9 CE (Lovenjak 1997, 90).

In an case, the road had to be completed by the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE as it was impossible, according to Lovenjak (1997, 90), that Neviodunum became a municipium under Vespasian without a proper land link with Italy. Just as important is the continuation of this road from Neviodunum towards east and Siscia, which already received its Roman military crew during Octavian's interventions in Illyricum.

The first larger settlement on our route after Emona was a traffic and postal station named Praetorium Latobicorum, known today as Trebnje, at the border between Italy and Illyricum and later between Italy and the province of Pannonia Superior. The name Praetorium shows that the station had fortifications. On the Peutinger map the station is named Ad protorium. Praetorium Latobicorum was positioned 34 miles from Emona and 31 miles from Neviodunum, the next town on our road. Praetorium Latobicorum was an important junction of local roads that led to Bela krajina in the south and to Celeia in the north, in the province of Noricum. From Celeia onwards a state road led to Poetovio. The Praetorium Latobicorum station was under police control which is well documented on the altars of the beneficiarii of the emperor's legate in Pannonia Superior. The beneficiarii controlled frontier traffic and worked as tax, octroi and customs collectors.

Neviodunum (today Drnovo na Krškem polju) was founded as a military station and later received a civil administration. In the year 70 the emperor Vespasian awarded Neviodunum municipal rights and a new full name of Municipium Flavium Latobicorum Neviodunum. Its development was favourably affected by the town's geographic position on the roadway between Emona and Siscia (Sisak in Croatia), between which a waterway was also in service. Neviodunum became a port and an important trade centre.



**Fig. 9: Road Emona-Neviodunum near present-day Krško in southern Slovenia, on air photo. Dimitrij Mlekuž/ Preventive Archaeology Centre, Institute for Cultural Heritage Protection of Slovenia.**

## Milestones on the road Emona-Siscia

The main sources of information for the routes of Roman state roads in Slovenia, with the Slovenian section of the road Aquileia-Emona-Viminacium among them, are the Peutinger Table, itineraries with lists of roadside stations, archaeological sites of roadway remains and, last but not least, milestones (Lovenjak 1997).

A Roman milestone was one of the numbered roadside stone obelisks, up to 2 meters tall with a flat top. It was positioned next to the road and marked the distance of one mile (hence the name) or sometimes less. A Roman mile was a thousand paces long, or *mille passum* in Latin, which is about 1,479 meters. Milestones reaffirmed travellers that they were on the right track and informed them on how much they have already travelled or how much they still needed to. They were widely used by Roman Empire road builders and were an important part of any Roman road network.

Milestones are important witnesses to construction works and even to the presence of Roman emperors and their legates on our soil. They are particularly valuable if they state the names of emperors and the works carried out at their installations. Finds of milestones are, next to other road remains which are obtained via terrain surveys or excavations, the most reliable source of information on the routes of specific roads as they remained close to the roadways they marked throughout the centuries due to their size and weight (Lovenjak 1997, 89).

Milestones from the Slovenian section of the Emona-Siscia road were collected by Šašel (cf. Šašel 1975) in his study on Roman roads in Slovenia. A revision of literature and an autopsy of the preserved milestones were later made by Milan Lovenjak (ex. Lovenjak 1997). The latter determined that milestones with preserved inscriptions from the Emona-Neviodunum-Siscia road originated from three time periods: during the rule of Antonius Pius (years 139-141; 7 milestones), during co-emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (year 161; 2 milestones) and from the period of Septimius Severus and his sons (year 201; 8 milestones) (Lovenjak 1997, 91). We are dealing with three periods of repair works at this section of our road.

## The road for state postal service: stations Crucium and Romula

If our road served as a *via militaris* at its completion, a gradual construction of infrastructure with roadside stations and administration intended for the state-run postal service (*cursus publicus*) achieved a new status for the road. It became a *via publica*, a state road.

During archaeological excavations for a new highway two potential locations surfaced for two postal stations mentioned in various sources (Breščak 2006; Mason 2006a). Phil Mason (2006a, 192) writes that based on the morphology of the Dolge njive/Draga site (at the Bela Cerkev village) it is possible to conclude that the site used to be a postal station at the state road Emona - Siscia. The site's position coincides with the location of the settlement Crucium, mentioned in the Peutinger Table and in the *Cosmographia* by an anonymous geographer from Ravenna (Mason 2006a, 192). The Crucium station was supposedly 16 Roman miles from Neviodunum (Drnovo) and also from Praetorium Latobicorum (Trebnje). Mason mentions (2006a, 193) that the name Crucium is most likely of Celtic origin and means a hilltop or an end of a reef. The toponym could also relate to the Vinji vrh which rises north of the Dolge njive/Draga site.

The second through archaeological research proven postal and customs station was Romula, in the area of today's Ribnica near Jesenice na Dolenjskem (Breščak 2006, 199). Romula is recorded on the Peutinger map and the *Cosmographia* by an anonymous geographer from Ravenna. The station existed, judging by the excavated archaeological material, from the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century until the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE (Breščak 2006, 201). The road at Romula was used throughout the whole Antiquity and judging by the traces of medieval settlements also

later. Danilo Breščak (2006, 201) presumes that the road stayed in service until the Austro-Hungarian Empire established a country road system.

### **Roadside fort: military camp at Obrežje**

The most important archaeological discovery during excavations at Obrežje, near the border between Slovenia and Croatia in the years 2001-2003, was a military camp, right next to our road. The camp dates to the Augustan period (14 BC – 9 AD), during the conquest of Slovenia. Obrežje is the only site of its type in the wider Central and Southeast Alpine region (Mason 2006b, 202).

According to Phil Mason (2006b, 202), the camp was of a rectangular shape with rounded corners and enclosed by double ditches of three sides, but by only a single ditch on the fourth side. Originally, the enclosure measured about 6 hectares. Within the camp numerous post-holes and three vaulted earth ovens were found (Mason 2006, 202). Mason assumes that groups of larger pits near the inner edge of the ditch could be water collectors or latrines; at the southwest entrance a more than 6 meters deep well was also discovered. Some pits probably served as storage space, others for waste. The arrangement of pits and complexes within the enclosure points at the location of huts or tents (Mason 2006b, 202). On the northwest and north side outside of the military camp four groups of shaft furnaces and bread ovens were also discovered.

Northwest entrance to the camp opened towards the alignment of an older unpaved road (Mason 2006b, 203). A stretch of 99,77 meters of unpaved road is preserved, it is of north-south orientation and was parallel to a later paved Roman road – more specifically, our road, the Aquileia-Emona-Viminacium road.

Our road had at least three phases of construction and reparations at Obrežje. It was paved with sand and pebbles and measured from 5,86 to 6,56 meters in width (Mason 2006b, 203). According to Phil Mason (2006b, 203), coin finds point the usage of the road from the second half of 1<sup>st</sup> century AD to at least the start of 4<sup>th</sup> century AD; in this time span we can also place the milestone from the time of Septimius Severus at the road Mokrice-Bregana at Obrežje.

Phil Mason (2006b, 203-204) summarises that the military camp had an excellent strategic location. It was positioned at the exit of the main Roman Emona-Siscia communication route from the narrowness of the Brežice Gates into the wide Sava River valley, while it closed off the path across the Gorjanci from the Kolpa River valley. According to the collected data, the camp was constructed during the final conquest of Pannonia and had been reused during the Great Illyrian Revolt. The camp could act as an offensive base during summer months or a temporary supply base (Mason 2006b, 203-204).

During the early rule of Tiberius, as strategic priorities changed, the military camp at Obrežje was abandoned together with other Augustan camps in the area of Krško polje and Brežice Gates (Mason 2006b, 204). Roman military moved closer to the Danube border. From the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD the Roman road Aquileia-Siscia ran past the deserted military camp Obrežje (Mason 2006b, 205) and onwards in the West-East direction across the province of Pannonia.

### **A closed road: *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum***

The Balkans and the Apennine Peninsula meet at a short and mountainous region that stretch from the Julian Alps to the Kvarner Gulf at Rijeka. This is also the most passable parts of the Alps. The system *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum* was built to protect the area where passage from Pannonia and the Balkan Peninsula into Italy is easiest. Precisely because of this a sort of a





fortified war zone was established in this mountainous area. It spanned from Tergeste (Trieste) on one side and to Tarsatica (Rijeka) and Emona (Ljubljana) on the other side.

Roman military had been building defensive walls (barriers), ramparts, watchtowers and forts around here since the occupation. Among the first were Castra (Ajdovščina), Ad Pirum (Hrušica) and Nauportus (Vrhnika). The construction of the Claustra system developed gradually from the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century until the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century; a defence line was in parts built in three lines. The stone defensive walls were supposedly supplemented by wooden palisades and additionally by forts, guardhouses, watchtowers, lookouts and fortified settlements. The height of the defensive walls was at around four meters; on distances of about 100 meters the wall was usually fortified with towers.

Claustra was basically a fortified region on the border between the motherland Italy and the provinces to the east. Builders took advantage of the diverse terrain for the fortifications. Defensive walls were inserted between steep ridges and precipitous rock faces; therefore the walls were, at points, interrupted. Barriers diverted all traffic to the carefully controlled roads, which were under extra supervision from the forts, lookouts and watchtowers. In some places, especially at the main roads, there were several lines of barriers. All of this prevented enemies a quick crossing of the terrain.



**Fig. 10: The remains of one of the Castra turrets in modern Ajdovščina. Gregor Humar/Tourist Information Centre Ajdovščina.**

The barrier system grew in importance from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards. Emperor Diocletian (284-305 CE) stationed three legions in the region. These legions began constructing the first fortresses at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and renovated them at least twice in the second half of the same century. The whole system of Claustra, including the units in larger settlements (Emona, Nauportus, Castra) was under the command of viri spectabilis comitis Italiae, which commanded military units in the Alpes Iuliae section. The military units were named legiones Iuliae Alpinae I, II and III, so it was a permanent military crew which, with the auxilia, probably numbered more than 20.000 men at the time.



One of the most important forts in the system of *Claustra* was *Ad Pirum*, today known as the archaeological park *Hrušica*. The Roman *Ad Pirum* (*Hrušica*, 867 meters above sea level) was an important stop at the road *Aquileia-Emona* during the Roman period. From the 1<sup>st</sup> century onwards a postal station was located here and it eventually transformed into an important military station as it defended the last pass before the descent towards Italy. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century a guardhouse was constructed here and in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century a proper stronghold, an integral part of the *Claustra*'s third defensive line. Archaeological research and restoration of the stronghold already took place. It measured 250 meters in length and between 35 and 75 meters in width. The stronghold was enclosed by imposing walls, built out of crushed stone and about 2,5 to 3 meters thick; the walls were about 8 meters tall. The majority of finds at *Hrušica* date to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. An exceptional find was also discovered here: a part of armour, made out of thin bronze sheet, which used to be attached to a leather padding (cf. Petru, 1973). The goddess *Minerva* and an eagle are depicted on the preserved right neck strip. Armours like this one were worn by cavalymen on special occasions, such as parades and equestrian games. The armour from *Hrušica* is an exceptional find: only two more of the kind were found throughout the Roman Empire.

Despite different intentions, the *Claustra* defensive system demonstrated its usefulness mostly in the battles between various pretenders to the throne of the Empire and not against barbarian invasions. So it was that *Constantius II* won the battle against his rival *Magnentius* by conquering the *Ad Pirum* stronghold. In 388 *Hrušica* played a crucial role in the battles between *Theodosius* and *Maximus*. An event with far-reaching consequences was the well-documented battle at *Fluvio Frigido* (*Fluvius Frigidus* – the Cold River, probably the *Hubelj River*) on the 5 and 6 September 394. *Theodosius* defeated *Eugenius* in the area between the *Ad Pirum* and *Castra* forts. This victory solidified the connection between Christianity and the Roman Empire.

At the start of the 5<sup>th</sup> century the *Claustra* defensive lines were fortified for the last time.

## »All roads lead to Rome«: roads in the landscape of power and hegemony

Landscape is a field of study that fascinated archaeologists since the beginning of the discipline. In our case we are interested in the link between a newly built road network and the Roman landscape as an arena power, a place in which relations of power were not only registered but also leant on it, transmitted through and established (cf. Županek 2002).

A landscape is socially constructed through various practices, meanings, relations and values. Part of these overlapping and interconnected meanings of places through time are also relations of power, which are, according to Barthes (1982, 460) the foundation of social relations. Social power has many faces (cf. Mann 1986), which we try to see jointly, interwoven, written into the landscape. We are interested in how the Roman landscape, intersected by our road, reflects and relates supremacies, restrictions, coercions, negotiations, rebellions. In short, we are interested in various relations of power in the line of various contexts and sub-contexts between two extremes: to dominate and to rebel. A landscape is not just the background on which social relations are written, it is simultaneously creating these same relations. This position was established by Giddens (1984): space is simultaneously a result and creator of social actions. Landscape is therefore not passive, it is not only a vessel in which various relations and contexts pile up, it always participates in their creation and assertion. This approach sees place as actively present, as a medium and not as a background or a vessel.

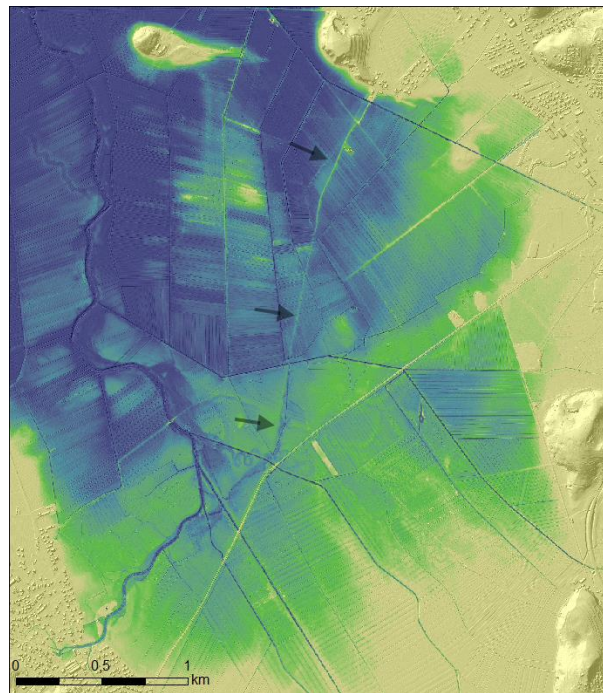
The Slovenian territory became included into the Roman Empire between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. A shift in the relations of power in the landscape is easiest to follow through two key changes that came about at that time: the foundation of towns and - particularly interesting for us - an establishment of a road network.



New, Roman roads mean in part a political reorganisation of the landscape and a connection between the empire and previously unconnected locations. With the inclusion of today's Slovenia into the road network this area became a part of Roman geographical concepts. In those Slovenian area presented an important knot in some key traffic links (Aquileia-Siscia-Viminacium, Aquileia-Poetovio-Carnutum, the Ljubljana and Sava waterways). Roman roads became part of the topography of newly conquered and remodelled landscape.

Some road sections in the area are completely straight, for example the continuation of Emona's cardo in the direction towards the Sava. Straightness is common among Roman roads; the reason for this »geometric display« (Purcell 1990, 13) is usually sought in the efficiency and economy of building roads in this fashion. An often overlooked reason for this impressive construction method is the exhibition of power: Rome has the power to intervene into a landscape and change it (Purcell 1990).

The Roman road network did not only change the visual of the landscape, the new relations of power were not only written on the landscape: the establishment of a Roman road network means a difference in experiencing landscape itself. Namely, new roads directed and regulated movements across the landscape, with their establishment new and »correct« routes they created a new hierarchy of locations and a different, precisely defined interpretation of the landscape (ex. Witcher 1998). The construction of a road network can be understood as one of the key elements in the display of Roman power over the new landscape (ex. Purcell 1990, Witcher 1998).



**Fig. 11: Some road sections in the wider area of Emona were absolutely straight, such as the difficult section running across the swampy area of Babna gorica towards Ig as seen on lidar photo. © Dimitrij Mlekuž / Preventive Archaeology Centre, Institute for Cultural Heritage Protection of Slovenia.**

The period of Roman occupation of Slovenian territory is a time of landscape reorganization via a road network, foundation of towns, centuriation, through the development of rural infrastructure (roads, villas, villages, secondary centres, brickyards, etc.) and through the Roman fiscal system, maintaining order, etc.

Roman occupation of this space was not only physical but also symbolic: the organization of a newly occupied landscape had, at the time, important ideological dimensions. This can be seen by in the arrangement of landscape as a whole. It was a case of world rearrangement, which accompanied the inclusion of the new territory into the Empire. Newly conquered and



rearranged landscape helped establish, repeat and expand Roman power. Clearly inscribed Roman power was also an encouragement to a discourse: a newly established, Roman, landscape was surely not static, but was continuously developing in the processes of restrictions, negotiations, adaptations and rebellions (cf. Županek 2002).



**Fig. 12: Roads connected nodes of Romaness in the landscape: towns, monuments, temples, centuriated fields. Remains of monumental Emonan southern town walls. Andrej Peunik/MGML.**

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## Roman road Aquileia-Emona-Siscia-Viminacium: Section of the road in the territory of present-day Croatia

Romans are renowned for aiming at making most of natural topography thus most of the roads were laid along valleys, ravines and rivers. The area of South Pannonia in the territory of present-day Croatia is an example of such a construction approach. The main road routes ran along the rivers Sava and Drava and another main road (the Limes Road) ran along the Danube connecting border fortifications. There were other connecting roads between the main routes as well as vicinal roads linking settlements. In that way the Sava-Drava and Danube confluence was well connected. The towns were founded along the main roads, and stopping places (*mansiones*) and way stations for changing horses or carriages (*mutationes*) were built at regular intervals.

Two main Pannonian roads, which followed the Sava and the Drava courses, were initially built for military purposes and for the connection of the legionary camps but also to secure communication throughout the area connecting Italy with the east. The building of the road along the Sava, started in Augustus' time, then it was continued by Tiberius and finally finished by the time of the Flavians. Strabo mentions very interesting information about communication between Italy and the Sava region in earlier period (before Augustus' time) when the roads were combined with river routes. From *Nauportus* the merchandise was transferred onto boats and transported to Segestica and further on to the Danube (Strab. 4. 6. 10). The river Sava was important also in the later period because of the fact that it was navigable and in combination with the road along the Sava, represented the main transport route to the east.

The army built and maintained the roads, as it was mentioned in Tacitus' report on the rebellion of the Pannonian legions in AD 14. (Tac. *Ann.*1.20): *Meanwhile the companies which previous to the mutiny had been sent to Nauportus to make roads and bridges and for other purposes, when they heard of the tumult in the camp, tore up the standards, and having plundered the neighbouring villages and Nauportus itself, which was like a town (...)*; (Domić Kunić 2012, 64).

Tabula Peutingeriana contains very useful data on the part of the Roman road route Aquileia-Emona-Siscia-Sirmium in the territory of the present-day Croatia. Although the data in that source is not always reliable and is very schematic it provides a very good basis for orientation. Supplemented with the data on milestones and the data provided by the archaeological research they make the reconstruction of the route and the position of this important Roman road possible.

Tabula Peutingeriana (TP, 5.5 – 7.1) mentions the following way stations after *Neviodunum*:

*Romula XIII*

*Quadrata XIII*

*Ad Fines XX*

*Siscia*

*Ad Pretorium XXX*

*Servitio XXIII*

*Urbate XXXIII*

*Marsonie*

*Ad Basante XX*

*Saldis XX*

*Drinum fl(umen). XVIII (or XXIII)*

*Sirmium XVIII*

### Road route to Sisak

There has been much dispute in Croatian literature over determining the position of the part of the road route between *Neviodunum* and *Siscia* where *Romula*, *Quadrata* and *Ad Fines* are mentioned since these way stations are also mentioned in the Antonine itinerary (IA 274, 4-7) but on the road that runs from Aquileia through Liburnia to *Siscia* (*Romula* - *Quadrata* m. p. XIII (or XXIII) - *Ad Fines* XIII (or XXIII) - *Siscia* m. p. XXI). Because of that *Romula* was believed to be in Dubovac near Karlovac, *Quadrata* in Topusko and *Ad Fines* in Mali Gradac (Gračanin 2010, 12-18) which would mean that the road was illogically longer leading to present-day Karlovac and then eastward towards Sisak. The distance mentioned in Tabula Peutingeriana (TP, 5.5 – 6.4), between *Neviodunum* and *Siscia* of 58 miles (approx. 85 km) also suggests a shorter route which could be related to the route following the river Sava. The recent archaeological research and terrain survey in the wider Zagreb and Sisak regions, the milestones finds and the fact that the location of *Romula* has been confirmed to be in Ribnica (Petru 1969, 20) also confirm that.

Therefore it can be determined that the road from *Romula* (Ribnica) lay in the direction of Ježdovec and further on across the Odra, passed between Lukavec and Donja Lomnica towards Petrovina, Okuje, Mraclin, and Buševac to Sisak (Gregl 1984; Nemeth-Ehrlich, Kušan Špalj 2003, 107-110). A part of this road was discovered in recent excavations in Okuje, and the recent finds of three milestones in Ježdovec suggest that this was the location of the crossroads (<http://www.mgz.hr/hr/zbirke/antička-zbirka,19.html>). The discovery of a milestone that was erected during the Emperor Decius's reign is of special interest. The milestone states the distance of XIV miles from *Andautonia* (Bugar, Mašić 2013, 21-23), which corresponds to the



distance to present-day Ščitarjevo. This suggests that a segment of the state road forked in Ježdovec towards the east and *Andautonia*.

An important crossroads on the section of the road *Romula-Quadrata-Ad Fines-Siscia* was located on the territory of present-day Buševac where the road *Emona –Siscia* connected to the *Siscia – Poetovio* road. The route of the road *Siscia – Poetovio* went from Sisak, Sela, Dužica, Ogulinec, Buševac, Vukovina, Staro Čiče, Novo Čiče, Bapče, Ščitarjevo (*Andautonia*), and then further on to the north. The route of that road was also confirmed by a series of archaeological excavations and terrain surveys in the area around Sisak and Ščitarjevo. The question where the stations *Quadrata* and *Ad Fines* were located remains open. According to the distances stated in Tabula Peutingeriana it can be presumed that *Ad Fines* was in present-day Buševac, which would be in accordance with the stated distance of 20 miles to Sisak, while *Quadrata* should be somewhere halfway between Romula (Ribnica) and *Ad Fines* (Buševac?). If one is to take into consideration the assumption that the distances stated in Tabula Peutingeriana were not always very accurate, perhaps *Quadrata* is located on the site of the milestone find and the presupposed intersection in present-day Ježdovec.

The history of and reasons for building the section of the road from *Neviodunum* to *Siscia* should be looked at in the context of the significance of the territory where prehistoric Segestica (later Roman *Siscia*) was located. The territory in question was an extremely favourable military-strategic position, which was a natural connection between the Podunavlje-Pannonia lowlands and Dinara karst region.

According to the usual interpretations, Segestica was located on the river peninsula Pogorelec on the right bank of the Kupa (later the Romans founded a city on the left bank) but recent archaeological excavations on both banks indicate much bigger prehistoric settlement (Drnić 2015). A favourable location and navigability of rivers were the main reasons for founding the Iron Age settlement and its continuity during La Tene period as an important trading and craft centre. Segestica was located in a very favourable geographical position - the Sava, which enabled connections to the east, and the Kupa, which flows south-west, through the territory of the Iapods, to the Adriatic. Also, iron mines were nearby in Zrinska and Petrova gora.

Basic information on Segestica were given by Appian (App. 4.22), while Strabo (Strab. 4.6,10 ) mentioned importance of its location on several navigable rivers (Domić Kunić 2012, 48).

Even though it might seem that during the Republic period the Roman interventions in this area were reduced to punitive expeditions, one can still conclude that even during that time they realised that the Sava valley was the shortest route towards the east. It is for that reason that Segestica, enabling further conquests in various directions, was the main target of Roman conquest in this area during 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC. It might be that the conquest of the Pannonian territory was already in plan during the founding of Aquileia, or rather that the first Roman intrusions towards Segestica occurred as early as 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, around 156 BC, when most likely the first (and failed) war against the Pannonians took place (Domić Kunić 2006, 85-88). That event is mentioned by Appian (Illyr., 4.22, 3.14) as a failed campaign against the Pannonians under the leadership of Cornelius (possibly a consul in 156 BC). Appian states that even before Augustus' campaign in 35 BC, Romans had attacked Segestica twice. The next campaign followed about forty years later, and had also most likely started in Aquileia, although it is only mentioned by Appian (Illyr. 2.,10), and was most likely unsuccessful (Illyr. 4.22). The final victory by the Romans was achieved during the reign on Octavian Augustus in 35 BC





(Mócsy 1962, 539–541), who managed to defeat the Iapods, and conquer Segestica after a month-long siege (Illyr, 4,23-4.24). In order to create a stronghold for further conquests, Octavian Augustus placed a military garrison in that area, and it is from then on that the development of Roman *Siscia* can be traced. Octavian Augustus connected the conquered territory to Italy, continuing the traffic route from Aquileia, through Emona to Segestica. Due to the frequent rebellions of the local population, it took several decades for the complete conquest of the Illyric territory. Complete pacification of the area followed after the Batonian uprising (6-9 AD) when *Siscia* served as the Tiberius' main military headquarters. After the suppression of the uprising *Siscia* slowly lost its significance as a military stronghold (especially after Flavian period) and the intense urban development began. The location of the intersection of roads was favourable for the city's development as an economic and trade centre. During the reign of Emperor Vespasian, in 71 AD the city was given the status of a colony -*Colonia Flavia Siscia* (Mócsy 1962, 597). Shortly afterwards, the influx of new settlers - Ravenna navy veterans - followed, which was probably in line with the Emperor's attempt to strengthen the trade along the rivers Sava and Kupa as an important factor in the economy of the city.

In 194 AD the status of a colony was confirmed during the reign of Septimius Severus, when the city gained a new title *Colonia Septimia Siscia Augusta* (Mócsy 1962, 602). The administration of the Dalmatian-Pannonian silver mines (*praepositus splendidissimi vectigalis ferrarium*) was located in *Siscia*, as well as the customs posts (*publicum portorium Illyrici*), a beneficiarian post, and most likely the procuratorian seat for the Upper Pannonia (Radman-Livaja 2014, 16-17). Since the reign of Emperor Gallus a mint was established in *Siscia*, and was most probably active since 262 AD (Mócsy 1962, 566, 693). After Diocletian's administrative reform when the Pannonian territory was divided into four smaller provinces, *Siscia* became the capitol of *Pannonia Savia*. From the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ct AD Christian community existed in *Siscia*, and the city became the seat of the diocese. Gradual weakening of *Siscia* was influenced by civil wars during the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, and after Theodosius defeated Maximus near *Siscia* in 388 AD, the city, it appears, lost its importance even more (Radman-Livaja 2014, 19-20). At the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD *Siscia* bishops were taking part in Church councils in Salona (530-533), which presents the last mention of the Late Antique city.

Archaeological research carried out in the area of present-day Sisak revealed numerous public and private buildings of the Roman *Siscia* - parts of defence walls and towers, city baths, granary, temples, the river port, aqueduct, sewage system etc. and several necropolises that were placed along extra-urban roads. (Lolić, 2003; Lolić, Wiewegh 2012).

It can be concluded that *Siscia* was one of the most important cities on the *Aquileia-Emona-Viminacium* road where other road routes intersected, and river traffic was also of importance. All this had an impact on the city's intense development over several centuries.

North of *Siscia* was another significant urban settlement - *Andautonia*, located on the *Siscia-Poetovio* road to which also a section of the *Aquileia-Emona-Viminacium* road led.

Roman city *Andautonia* was located on the site of the present-day village Šćitarjevo, approximately 10 km south-east of Zagreb. The city was located in the Posavina plain, an area of great traffic importance where the Roman road *Poetovio-Siscia* crossed the river Sava, that is, along the road which was significant even before the arrival of Romans. The specific location and significance of *Andautonia* were influenced by the proximity of *Siscia* and the *Aquileia-Emona-Viminacium* road. Since the river Sava was navigable and used as a trading route *Andautonia* must have been an important river port. Due to all these circumstances it had an extraordinary



advantage in traffic and commercial development, which was reflected in the expansion of the city and luxurious fittings of individual facilities (Nemeth-Ehrlich, Vojvoda 1994). There is no specific mention of the future *Andautonia* area in sources that report on the Roman conquests of Segestica in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC (*App. Illyr.* X,16,18,22-24; *Cass. Dio* XLIX,LI,LIV), but because of its location it can be presumed that part of the data does refer to that area.

Since Andautonia was built on the site where the prehistoric road crossed the river Sava, it is certain that the Romans spotted the strategic importance of this location very early. The entire Sava valley, and thus the area of the future town of *Andautonia* probably came under Roman rule as early as 35 BC when Segestica was conquered, or at the latest during the Tiberius' march in the second decade BC. It is possible that the tribes that lived on the territory of the future city *Andautonia* were Roman allies during the Segestica siege (*Cass. Dio* XLIX,36,1), and perhaps the peaceful submission is the reason for not being mentioned in literary sources (Nemeth-Ehrlich, Kušan Špalj, 2003).

So far, archaeological research has shown that the development of *Andautonia* can be traced from first decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> to the end of 4<sup>th</sup> century AD and that despite constant danger of flooding, the city was continuously expanded, adapting to the relief and natural conditions (Vikić-Belančić, 1981).

Claudius Ptolemy (*Ptol. Geo.* II,14,4) testifies to the importance of *Andautonia* on the *Neviodunum – Bononia* road, while the Antonine Itinerary mentions (*Itin. Ant.* 266,2) *Andautonia* on the *Poetovio – Aqua Viva – Pirry – Dautonia – Siscia* road.

On the basis of a honoric inscription erected to the senator *Lucius Funisulanus Vettonianus* by the decree of the town councillors - *decreto decurionum* (CIL III, 4013), it can be presumed that by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD *Andautonia* already had the municipal status and was one of the independent cities in the Province of Pannonia. The first explicit mention of *Andautonia* as a *municipum* is preserved on the reverse side of the same monument dated to 2/3 century AD, where below the goddess Nemesis relief, an inscription mentioning the *Andautonia* municipality councillor *Iulius Victorinus* (a veteran?) can be found (CIL III 4008).

Within *respublica Andautoniensium*, *Andautonia* was also the centre of territorial indigenous population. *Respublica Andautoniensium* is mentioned in two inscriptions dated to around 250 AD, one dedicated to the Emperor Decius (CIL III 4010), the other to his wife Herennia Etruscilla (CIL III 4011).

*Andautonia* was located on the road which ran in the north-south direction and connected two early Roman military strongholds - *Siscia* and *Petovio*. The route of this road can be followed in the area of the present-day Ščitarjevo and is confirmed by the milestone found in 1934 in Jelkovec. The milestone, which can be dated to the reign of emperor Maximus (235.-238) states the distance of XXX miles to *Andautonia* (*AIJ* 212,277, No. 602, Klemenc 1938, 23-24). After Sesvete the road took a turn towards north-west, where it, to some extent, followed the modern road to Varaždin. One leg of the road led to Ptuj, the other to Ludbreg.

The route of this road can be traced within the *Andautonia* (in the very centre of the present-day village), where a part of it has been excavated and presented on the site in the rectory yard. Archaeological excavations revealed a hard gravel layer approximately 2.5cm thick, within which three different levels of the road which were laid at the same time when other constructions were built, can be distinguished. The earliest layer is dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD, and at that time the road served as an access road from the south. Along the road the remains of a cremation necropolis were found. After the great flood at



the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD the city was rebuilt and expanded, while the levelling of the terrain led to raising the level of the road along which stone constructions were built thus gaining the function of a street. The level of the road built in 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, with partially preserved pavement, wheel grooves and channels for water drainage are still visible today (Nemeth-Ehrlich, Kušan Špalj 2007, 76-77).

The continuation of this road can be traced in the south part of the Roman city and south of present-day Ščitarjevo. Based on the aerial and terrain surveys and archaeological excavations, its segments can be traced further on towards Sisak, i.e. to Bapče and Kobilić, Novo Čiče, Vukovina, and Buševac where it connected to the Emona- Siscia road (Nemeth-Ehrlich, Kušan Špalj 2003, 109-110).



**Fig. 1 and 2: Andautonia, part of roman town. Photo Archaeological Museum in Zagreb**





**Fig. 3: Andautonia, part of roman town, 3 D reconstruction. Photo Studio Kušan**



**Fig. 4: Sisak-Sv. Križ site. A part of the walls with a tower and a horreum. Photo by Conservation Department in Zagreb (Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia).**



**Fig. 5: Sisak-Sv. Kvirin site. North city gate. Photo by Conservation Department in Zagreb (Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia).**

## Siscia-Sirmium road route

Depending on military victories in Pannonia, the Romans were constructing roads in that area since good communications were a precondition for military control of the newly conquered regions. Hence, after military successes and taking over the territories in 35 BC, Octavian Augustus lengthened the road *Aquileia-Emona-Neviodum* all the way to Segestica, i.e. Roman *Siscia*. That is confirmed by C. Rufius Festus who wrote in 4<sup>th</sup> century that Noric and Pannonia were made closer to Italy owing to the new road: *Under Julius Octavian Caesar the route across the Julian Alps was opened (Brev., 7) (Domić-Kunić 2006, 117).*



**Fig. 6: Andautonia. Pavement of roman street. Photo Archaeological Museum in Zagreb**

Pannonian war led by Tiberius in 12-11 BC created the prerequisites for prolonging the road towards east to Sirmium. In Antonine itinerary this road is mentioned as *ab Hemona per Sisciam Sirmi* (IA, 259.11-14, 260, 1-9;). Three more roads that went through Siscia are mentioned in Antonine itinerary (*Siscia –Mursam* (IA 265, 5-10), *Siscia –Poetovioenem* IA 265, 11-12), *Siscia – Seniam* IA 272, 8-9). Intense urbanisation and Romanisation of that region were the consequence of the construction of the roads, hence after the Tiberius' conquest of Pannonia and "lengthening" the road from Siscia towards east, the development of Roman towns such as Mursa, Cibalae, Marsonia and Sirmium can be noted. The construction of the roads in Pannonia and Dalmatia is also confirmed by the fact that Tiberius' legate in Dalmatia – Publius Cornelius Dolabella completed the road in 17 AD *...ad fines provinciae Dalmaciae* (CIL III 3198a), which led from Salona to the river Sava, i.e. from *Servitium* (Bojanovski 1974). The intense process of romanisation and urbanisation of Pannonia is also related to the *Aquileia- Emona- Viminacium* road. It took place during the Emperor Vespasian's reign when the Flavian colonies were founded (*Siscia* and *Sirmium*), the defense system on the river Sava and river navy (*classis I Flavia*) were developed. Similar processes took place during the Emperor Hadrian's reign when *Mursa* became a colony, *Cibalae* a municipium and during the Severan dynasty when *Cibalae* gained the status of a colony. According to the found milestones it can be concluded that the Severans took particular care about the road maintenance on the whole Pannonian territory which contributed to the intense trading activity and economic development. Tabula





Peuntigeriana gives data about the continuation of the road which led from Siscia to Sirmium - Siscia, *Ad Praetorium*, *Servitium*, *Urbate*, *Marsonie*, *Ad Basante*, *Saldis Drinum fl(umen)*, *Sirmium* and it also notes the total length of 220 miles (approx. 325km) of that part of the road (TP, 5.5 – 7.1). I. Bojanovski made the biggest contribution to getting to know the leg of the road which led from Siscia to Sirmium, who also took into account historical sources and the facts collected on the site (Bojanovski, 1984). It is supposed that the road upon leaving Sisak went south through the Moštanica valley, then turned towards east in the direction of the present-day Velika Graduš, Hrastovac, Utolica, Slabinja to Baćin and Hrvatska Dubica. A milestone from the time of the emperor Caracalla (212 AD), which mentions the distance (XXII miles) from Siscia (Bojanovski, 1984, 250-253), was found on that stretch of the road (north from Hrvatska Kostajnica). Along the same stretch of the road between Slabinja and Hrvatska Dubica five more milestones (CIL III, 15201, 15203, 15202, 15200), dating from Caracalla's, Valentinian's and Valens' times, have been found. The milestone from Gornji Baćin (CIL III 15202), is particularly interesting as it presumes that a way-station *Ad Praetorium* was situated there (Bojanovski 1984, 161-166, 1993, 63). The road continues from Gornji Baćin (*Ad Praetorium*) through Hrvatska Dubica along the southern slopes of Posara through Vrbaška to the plain along the Sava to *Servitium*, an important mainland and river hub. Bojanovski presumed that *Servitium* was in Bosanska Gradiška (Bojanovski 1984, 172, 173), but there are also some other ideas like its location in the area between Stara Gradiška, Nova Varoš i Pivar (Minichreiter 2006, 96). *Servitium* was the seat of a river fleet prefect and the road from *Salona* also led to it. It is supposed that the road after *Servitium* went along the right bank of the Sava to Srbac where probably a way station *Urbate* was situated. The road probably crossed to the left bank of the river Sava near Pričac and continued through Brodski Stupnik to Slavonski Brod, i.e. Roman *Marsonia* (Bojanovski 1984, 173-184).



Fig. 7: Andautonia. Roman street during excavation. Photo Archaeological Museum in Zagreb

Some researchers believe that the road from *Marsonia* went along northern Posavina through Babina Greda to the way station *Ad Basante*. According to that supposition *Ad Basante* was probably situated on the site Vragorilo near the river Bosut in the vicinity of Županja, from there the road led to Posavske gajnice where a supposed way station *Saldis* was. (Bojanovski





1984, 200-205, 211; Gračanin 2010, 17,18). There is also a supposition that the way station *Ad Basante* was situated in the area of Donja Mahala, and that the way station *Saldis* was in Brčko (Babić 2009) or in Račinovci (Iskra-Janošić 2001, 46). Way station *Drinum fl.* according to Bojanovski could be situated in Pretkaje near Donji Brodac, from where the road continued to *Sirmium* (Bojanovski, 1984,217-220).

However, there was yet another leg of that road which led to *Sirmium* and which forked from *Marsonia* towards *Cibale*, an important town built half-way between *Mursa* on the river Drava and *Marsonia* on the Sava. Although the road through *Cibale* was a longer route to *Sirmium*, it seems it was more favourable as there were no frequent river crossings, and it was also the route the army took towards the Roman Limes road. Bojanovski reckons that the route of the road *Ad Basante* and *Drinum fl.* was more important in the 1<sup>st</sup> century when the river Sava was the borderline and the river fleets were also connected by the road. Later in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century that stretch of the road lost significance since the defence was moved to the Danube and the more important route through *Cibale* (Bojanovski, 1984, 257-258). Hence *Cibale* and *Marsonia* became important destinations on the route *Aquileia-Emona-Siscia-Sirmium*, as well as on the road which ran from Dalmatia (*Salona-Servitium-Marsonia-Cibale-Sirmium*).

Roman *Marsonia* was developed on the territory of the present-day Slavonski Brod in a very favourable location, and the traces of its settlement can be followed all the way to prehistoric times (Lozok, 1993).

Before the arrival of the Romans that area was inhabited by the Pannonian tribe Breuci, renowned for their rebellion against the Romans (6-9 AD) (Zaninović 2003). After the rebellion had been suppressed, the process of Romanisation and urbanisation began and Roman administration was introduced. In order to establish peace and order in the province military administration was introduced. The subdued indigenous communities were organised in peregrine communities (*civitates peregrinae*) which were governed by the prefects, high-ranking military officials. According to a recently discovered inscription from Varaždinske Toplice (*Aquae Iasae*), it is known that at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century the communities of Scordisci, Breuci and Iasi had a common governor - (*praefectus civitatum Scordischorum et Breucorum et Iasorum*) whose seat was probably in Poetovio (Kušan Špalj, 2015, 50-54).

During the time of the emperor Traianus at the latest, the *civitates* gained autonomy and military prefectures were replaced by the local patrons and the colonies and municipia, which also included the territories of local communities, were established throughout Pannonia (Mócsy 1974, 134-135). Indigenous inhabitants were recruited into the Roman army and they gradually adopted the Roman way of life. Several finds of Roman military diplomas from the 1<sup>st</sup> century (Grabarje near Brod, Negoslavci, Vukovar and Slavonski Brod) (Miškov, 1998, 83-84) and epigraphic monuments confirm the fact that Breuci were included in the Roman army on a large scale. Many auxiliary units – cohorts were named after them (*cohortes Breucorum*). According to known diplomas of members of Breuci cohorts, it is probably that *cohortes Breucorum* were raised around 40 for the purpose of military operations of Caligula in Germania in 39. (Radman 2012, 168).

A military diploma which was issued in 71 AD, during the reign of the emperor Vespasian, was found near Slavonski Šamac in the river Sava in 1997 (J. Miškov, 1998). It was awarded to the Centurion *Liccius*, the citizen of *Marsonia* (*Marsunnia*) who had been recruited in *Misenum* fleet during the reign of the emperor Claudius (41-54). *Liccius* fought on Vespasian's side and was demobilised two years later and settled in *Marsonia*. The diploma was



found in pristine condition with all the witness's seals preserved, which so far is a unique find. The name of his place of birth, which appears as *Marsunnia* on the diploma is the oldest written record of the name of the town and it differs from the Roman version of the name which is known from more antique sources (*Marsonia*-Ptol. II 15, 4, Rav. IV-19-215, 2; *Marsonie* -TP 5.5 – 7.1). The version *Marsunnia* gives an indication of a domestic origin of the name which has been kept until the present day in the name of the rivulet Mrsunja. The Roman town was developed at its confluence and the meaning of the word can be related to the term denoting water, i.e. marsh (Miškiv, 2000, 106).

The Roman town *Marsonia* was developed primarily owing to the location on the crossroads with a convenient crossing over the river Sava and since the river traffic was of great significance it was also a very important port (Bojanovski 1993, 61). Due to all that, the town probably served as a postal and customs station. The find of an altar dedicated to Jupiter Depulsor (CIL III 3269) which was erected by the Roman customs official *Marcus Sperat(us)*, in the honour of the emperor Caracalla and his mother Julia Domna, suggests the existence of a customs post. There is a possibility that *Marsonia* developed from a Roman camp, and the army was probably stationed in the town in the later period too, which is mentioned in *Notitia dignitatum*, at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (*auxilia ascarii Tauruno sive Marsonia* (Not. Dign. occ., 32. 43). Traces of the castrum and numerous finds of weapons and military personal equipment (Bojanovski 1984, 184-185) suggest the presence on the army. The parade greave found in 1975 during sand mining in the Sava is of special interest. It is a Roman parade leg greave from the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, which was made of silver plated bronze sheet. The god Mars, goddess Diana and Hercules are depicted in various scenes together with floral and ornamental motifs in the techniques of engraving or hammering (Miškiv 1993).

Due to the Trajan's division of Pannonia at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century *Marsonia* became a part of the new province *Pannonia Inferior*, and from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century was a part of *Pannonia Secunda*. Although no epigraphic evidence has been found so far, it is presumed that *Marsonia* had a status of a colony from the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century at the latest. The coins hoard from the Sava island between Slavonski Brod and Bosanski Brod (Ljubić 1883, 94-95), which was most probably interred during Julianus Apostatus' reign, can be dated as the latest Roman find, but it can be presumed that the life continued there also in the Late Antique period.

The city of *Cibalae* developed in the vicinity of *Marsonia*, on the north section of the road to *Sirmium*. It is an important traffic position that led to the development of this Roman city (present-day Vinkovci) on the left bank of the river Bosut. The traces of settlements in this area can be followed from early Neolithic to the present day. The area was most probably under Roman rule at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Apart from military units, tradesmen and craftsmen that were beginning to populate the territory as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century had an important role in the development of the Roman settlement. The first Roman settlement was founded on the Hotel-Tržnica site, a prehistoric tell, which was a convenient site for building a fortification at the time of the conquest of this area. In its earliest phase of *Cibalae* an important role was played by its indigenous mixed Celtic-Pannonian population, which resided in the fortified settlement Dirov brijeg and the open-type settlement in Ervenica. During Tiberius' conquests, at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> century BC the Celtic settlement in Dirov brijeg was abandoned and it can be concluded that the population moved to the newly established *Cibalae* (Dizdar 2001, 93-96).





**Fig. 8: Roman street in Andautonia. Photo Archaeological Museum in Zagreb**

The accelerated development of *Cibalae* is due to its position in the vicinity of the Danube Limes which enabled it to become an important supply centre for military camps and fortifications along the Limes. The town evolved into one of the bigger centres in the *Pannonia Secunda*, owing to its important traffic position and the route which connected the rivers Sava and Drava. The city was connected by roads to *Siscia* and Dalmatia, while the road from *Certissia* and *Mursa* connected this area to *Poetovio*, and the boarder road to *Aquincum*. The link from *Cibalae* to the Danube and Sava was possible through the rivers Bosut, Vuka and Ervenica; therefore *Cibalae* must have held a harbour for smaller ships (Iskra-Janošić 2004, 183). The settlement was gradually romanised during the Emperor Hadrian's reign (117-138) and gained the status of *Municipium Aelium Cibalae*.



The status of a colony was probably given to it during the reign of the emperor Caracalla (196-217) and then it became *Colonia Aurelia Cibalae*.

*Cibalae* was the location of great battles – between Licinius and Constantine I in 316 AD, and between Constantius II and Magnentius in 351 AD. The town is also renowned as the birthplace of two emperors, brothers and co-emperors Valentinian I (321-375) and Valens (328-378).

Archaeological research carried out over the past 50 years has revealed numerous public and private buildings and constructions, necropolises and various facilities (tile furnaces etc.) while many parts of the Roman city still lie under the present-day Vinkovci (Lolić, Wiewegh 2012, 206-207). Apart from many imported items, many artefacts that were manufactured in domestic workshops have been found. The find of the Late Antique hoard containing silverware, excavated in 2012 is particularly outstanding (Vulić 2012). Archaeological research shows that the life in this town continued throughout the Late Antiquity, and many graves provide evidence that the area was relatively densely populated in that period (Rapan Papeša 2011, 219-220).

Very interesting epigraphic monument concerning roman road *Aquileia-Emona-Siscia-Sirmium* was found in Štrbinci, near Đakovo, where most probably Roman *Certissia* was located (Migotti, B., et al. 1998). That is a fragment of public inscription on which *Certissia* is mentioned as *caput v(iarum)*, that represents epigraphic confirmation of the data known from the written sources (Migotti 2000). Roman *Certissia* is known from different historical sources (Ptolemy, the Antonine Itinerary, the Tabula Peutingeriana, the Anonymous Cosmographer of Ravenna) where it was mentioned under various names: *Kertissa*, *Cirtisa*, *Cirtisia*, *Certis*, and *Certissia*, and shown as a crossroads (22 Roman miles to the west of *Cibalae*). *Certissia* was located on the road *Marsonia – Certissia – Cibalae – Sirmium* (as a part of the road *Aquileia- Emona - Viminacium*) and on the road that led to the west, to *Siscia* (*Certissia- Varianis- Siscia*) and passed through the area northern of the river Sava.

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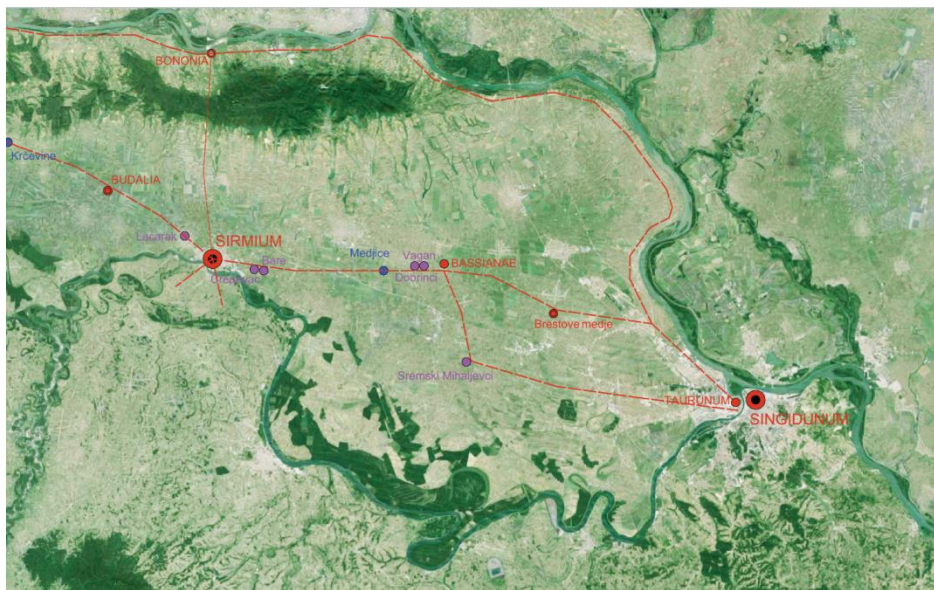
Zagreb city museum, Antička zbirka (<http://www.mgz.hr/hr/zbirke/antička-zbirka,19.html/20.06.2016>)

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## Contribution to the research of the main Roman road through Srem

The main goal of this contribution is to draw attention to preservation status of the archaeological remains on the field and to highlight the importance of data from ancient itineraries which indicate the existence of two parallel paths from Bassianae to Singidunum that had been left aside for a long time. The latest discovery of the milestone near Sremski Mihaljevci reopens the discussion about the road route Sirmium – Singidunum (Fig. 1).

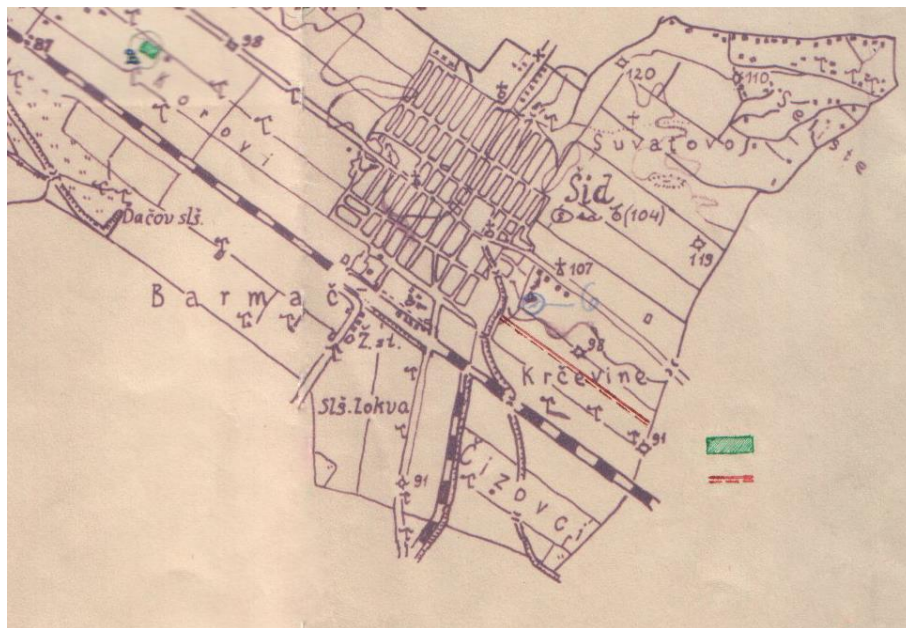


**Fig. 1: Map of Srem with the route of the main Roman road and localities Krčevine in Sid, Medjice in Kraljevci and Sremski Mihaljevci (I. Filipović)**

Sirmium was important crossroad in the Roman Empire. Road construction was of extraordinary importance for economic growth, trade, army transportation and it started right after Rome had conquered Pannonia region at the point of transition into the new era. In the area of today's Srem, first roads, amongst which was the terrestrial road that connected Italy with Asia Minor, can be dated in the time of emperors Octavian and Tiberius (Mócsy 1962, 655,633; Брукнер 1990, 187; Dautova Ruševljan, Vujović 2006, 13). Route from Aquileia, across Emona, Siscia, Cibalae, Sirmium and Singidunum, was the main road in this part of the Empire. Its route was the subject of all major historical and archaeological studies which included area of Srem in the last several decades (Mirković 1971, 5-94; Popović 1980, 101-108; Popović 1996, 137-142; Gračanin 2000, 9-69; Milošević 2001, 74-75; Đorđević 2007, 109-112; Dautova Ruševljan, Vujović 2006, 12-15) and for long time there had been no debates or discussions that would significantly question interpretation of historical sources and the route determined by archaeological prospecting of the terrain (Popović 1980, 101-108).

## A brief history of research

The first survey of the eastern section of the Roman road was done by the Regional Museum in Zemun (Dimitrijević 1961, 94-97; Dimitrijević 1966, 124-127; Dimitrijević 1969, 42-64). This archaeological survey covered the route from Taurunum (over locality Klisina) to Batajnica (Kamenita greda site) to the border of districts Ugrinovci and Vojka where is Brestove medje site situated<sup>1</sup> (assumed to have been mutatio Novicianana).



**Fig. 2: Section of the archaeological map of Sid with the marked route of the Roman road at locality Krčevine (Documentation of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments Sremska Mitrovica).**

Systematic prospecting and researching was conducted within the framework of the Yugoslav-American Sirmium Project in the period from 1969 to 1971<sup>2</sup> (Popović, Vasiljević 1969, 261-262; Popović, Vasiljević 1970, 193-194; Popović 1980, 101-108). On this occasion the 115-kilometre-long main road route was determined, from Tovarnik (on the border between Croatia and Serbia) to Zemun.<sup>3</sup> The direction of the road was determined on the basis of surface finds such as pebbles, bricks, various types of mostly amorphously shaped stone that were covering the approximately 15-meter-wide surface. It was noted that "the route mainly follows the field leveling, with some exceptions of certain short sections where the road forms a slightly elevated earthen embankment which is between 10 and 15 meters wide, of height varying from 1 to 0.5 m" (Popović, Vasiljević 1969, 261). The first minor archaeological excavations of Sirmium-Bassianae main Roman road were carried out during August and September in 1969 (Popović,

<sup>1</sup> Number of the sites are taken from the published research of D. Popović (Popović D. 1980, Glavna antička komunikacija u Sremu u svetlu arheoloških istraživanja, *Putevi i komunikacije u antici, Materijali XVII*, Beograd, 101-108). Brestove medje is under number 20 (Popović 1980, 105).

<sup>2</sup> Systematic research on the Roman communications in Srem started with the foundation of Institute for protection for cultural monuments Sremska Mitrovica in 1962. It was conducted by college archaeologist Dragan Popović who left us reliable data collected during long term program of archaeological survey which lasted 35 years (1962-1997).

<sup>3</sup> This research included the positioning of the vicinal road route Sirmium-Bonnonia (Milošević 1969, 199-201; Milošević 1988, 117-123), too.



Vasiljević 1969, 261-262). They provided some information about the scant remains of the road substructure.

Larger scale researches were conducted during the rescue excavations on highway E-70 on Rumska petlja section when 1500 m of the old road was examined (Brukner 1995, 187; Popović 1980, 103, site no. 11). Having probed a part of road section, data on the lower surface consisting of two layers were obtained: 0.30-meter-thick compacted nankin clay and a layer of small pebbles in 0.20-meter-thick compacted clay (Brukner 1982, 96). It could only be concluded that the structures of the upper substrate and curbs were destroyed. Their existence has been confirmed by findings of stones, coarse pebbles, gravel, and broken bricks found in the 0.35-meter-deep cultivated humus layer (Brukner 1995, 187). Petrographic analysis of the material has confirmed that all types of stone from which the road was built originated from Fruška Gora quarries. It was determined that the road was 7 metres wide.



Fig. 3 and 4: Earthen embankment of the Roman road at the site Krčevine, photograph taken in 1967 (Documentation of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments Sremska Mitrovica)

## Recent research on the route

In the recent period only minor rescue excavations and surface prospecting has been conducted on Roman archeological sites outside the boundaries of Sirmium.<sup>4</sup> They were done within the projects on construction of gas pipeline<sup>5</sup>. These data are important for monitoring the state of the sites on already established locations.

Surface prospecting of the main Roman road was done for the purpose of the *Study for the protection of archaeological sites for the needs of South Stream pipeline construction* in 2012. The field survey has identified a Roman road route that stretches in the area Medjice, south of the village Kraljevci, about 2 kilometers in length<sup>6</sup>. In this entire area in southwest-northeast direction, about 10 meters in width, on the surface of arable land, a large quantity of circular

<sup>4</sup> More intensive, mostly protective archaeological excavations were conducted in Sirmium on the locations of Imperial palace, Mala crkva –early Christian cult place, town north defensive wall, aqueduct and *castelum aquae*. Intensive conservation and restoration works are done on the mosaic pavements of the imperial palace of Sirmium.

<sup>5</sup> Investor was Srbija gas.

<sup>6</sup> Nearby the road route were noted localities Mala umka and Velika umka in Kraljevci (Popović 1980, 103, sites no. 12 and 13)



stones appeared (Fig. 13, 14). It is interesting that there has remained a local tradition that says that there used to be a path which led to the Roman town of Bassianae in Donji Petrovci.



**Fig. 5, 6, 7, Surface remains of the Roman road on locality Krčevine, 2015**

Minor rescue archaeological excavations were carried out during October 2015 on a part of the section of the gas pipeline that was cutting the main route of the Roman road in Krčevine area on the eastern outskirts of Šid<sup>7</sup>. Krčevine site is located between Šid – Gibarac road and Belgrade – Zagreb railway. It was first registered during the surveys in 1967 (Popović 1967, 179) and in 1970. Several important archeological localities area situated nearby: Orašje in Tovarnik which has been identified as mansio Ulmus (*Ulmo*) (Popović 1967, 179; Popović, Vasiljević 1970, 193-194; Popović, 1980, 101-108, site no. 1); Stara ciglana - necropolis on the location of the old brick factory - situated 50 to 100 meters to the north from the road where a sarcophagus, now stored in the Museum of Srem in Sremska Mitrovica, was found in 1936 (Garašanin 1951, 234) and numerous Roman tombs and coins (Popović 1978, 179, site no. 3); Roman settlement in Barmač area was identified to the south of the route. On the basis of the archaeological data collected in the previous period we could conclude that the best preserved remains of the road construction - earthen embankments (Fig. 3, 4) were noted at Krčevine area, some 700 m in length. There are only a few other localities where these embankments were preserved: on the section between sites Brestove medje and Batajnica and at already excavated site Rumska petlja. These data were leading us to the assumptions that the substructure of the

<sup>7</sup> Site no. 4 (D. Popović 1980, 102); *Joint historic research on the Roman road Aquileia-Emona-Viminacium* (T-PAS Project), 151.

road could have been at least partially preserved at Krčevine. The position to set up archaeological excavations was determined on the basis of old maps of archaeological surveys that have clearly indicated the old route (Fig. 2), as well as the intensity of surface finds of road substructure on the parcel (Fig. 5, 6, 7). The material of the road substructure and a road drain trench in the southern extension were found there (Fig. 8, 9, 10, 11). Within the archaeological works, a survey of Krčevine area was carried out again, as well as the precise marking of the current status of surface finds on the ground. After the completion of the archaeological research, by comparing the results of surveys from the 1960s, we can conclude that earthen embankment was completely destroyed at the Krčevine area.

### **Milestone from Sremski Mihaljevci and Sirmium–Singidunum road route**

Milestones are extremely important for determining the route of the roads. On Srem section of the main road, besides the latest finding in Sremski Mihaljevci, milestones were discovered in Šid, Lačarak, Sremska Mitrovica, Crepovac and Bare area, in Dobrinovci and on Vagan site. The oldest found in Sirmium is from the time of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus and is related with the wars on the Danube. Most of these milestones date from the time of Septimius and Alexander Severus. The only marble milestone on this road, which is now kept in Vienna, dates from the time of Constantius II, and certainly had an important propaganda role.

Milestone from Sremski Mihaljevci was discovered in the village, near the Sava River, about 40 km from Sremska Mitrovica and the same distance from Belgrade (Mirković, 2006, 135-136; Mirković 2012, 29-39). Until 2005, when milestone was transferred to the Museum of Srem, it was used as a part of the structure on which the farm barn was set up. Two parts of the same milestone have been dated in the period of Septimius Severus and Caracalla (Mirković 2012, 33).

Milestone from Sremski Mihaljevci is significant as the only finding of milestone on the route of the road between Bassianae and Taurunum. Taking into account that the milestones were placed on the main roads, M. Mirković proposes a review of the pathway after the village Dobrinici, since in this settlement two milestones were discovered. The author assumes that the road after Dobrinici (at Vagan site) could divert to the south and follow the route closer to the River Sava (Mirković 2012, 34), supporting the claim with a large number of archaeological sites on this section. Also, the question is whether the main road was going towards the city of Bassianae, as stated in itineraries, or only the vicinal road led to the city (Mirković 2012, 33).

After a detailed study of the old itineraries, it seems reasonable that there were two routes of the Roman road from Bassianae to Singidunum, which probably bifurcated after Bassianae: on northern and southern branch (Gračanin 2000, 26). In this way we can explain the differences in itineraries which mention the different road stations, probably depending on the chosen route: via Idiminium to Taurunum (as specified in *Tabula Peutingeriana* and repeated in *Geograph from Ravenna*), or Noviciana and Altina bypassing Taurunum (as indicated in *Itinerarium Hierosolymitanum*). Station locating (*mansio* and *mutatio*) is another issue that, until now, has remained without reliable answers which could contribute to resolving perplexities.



## Conclusion

Earlier researchers pointed out that Roman roads in Srem and Pannonia were insufficiently preserved, which can be explained primarily by cultivation of the soil for centuries, secondary use of the material from which the road was built (Popović 1980, 105; Brukner 1990 188) and intensive urbanization. In order to contribute to the research we certainly need more intense work on precise positioning of the site remains on the ground, defining routes, and collecting all relevant information on archaeological sites which are related to this and other routing paths. A small number of excavated archaeological sites outside the town of Sirmium certainly represents an insurmountable obstacle to the creation of more reliable interpretations. Only systematic archaeological approach could contribute to the solutions of certain questions and give us directions how to proceed.



**Fig. 8, 9: Drain channel in the southern part of the trench 4**



**Fig. 10 and 11: Surface remains of the Roman road on the area Međice in Kraljevci**

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## From Singidunum to Viminacium through Moesia Superior

Roman roads and distribution of the forts and settlements can be traced through several itineraries and maps that survived in copies through mediaeval to the modern age. Itineraries and lists like *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, *Itinerarium Antonini* and *Notitia Dignitatum* left us basic information about forts, settlements and distances, while Ptolemy's world map and *Tabula Peutingeriana* (Fig. 1) remain main pictorial source in the form of real basic map.

When you leave *Pannonia Inferior* and cross from *Taurunum* to *Singidunum* at the *Confluentes* first thing that you see will be mighty fort of legio IIII *Flavia Felix* (Fig. 2). After passing *Confluentes*, i.e. crossing to the south bank of the Sava River, you would find yourself in the province of *Moesia Superior*.



Fig. 1: Tabula Peutingeriana (segment of the original map)



Fig. 2: View of the Roman Singidunum from the River (photo by Stefan Pop-Lazić)

The remains of *Singidunum* are located beneath the capital of modern-day Serbia, Belgrade. This is a strategically very important location, on the high terrace above 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*.

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).



**Fig. 3: Singidunum legionary fort. Remains of the Roman wall incorporated into mediaeval ramparts (photo by Nemanja Mrđić)**

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, but part of *via decumana* discovered remained under modern streets (Fig. 4). 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.

Section from Belgrade to Golubac was explored only at some strong points and major cities like *Singidunum*, *Margum* and *Viminacium*. This section of the limes in Moesia Superior is the focal point of defense system. River is calm and there are many river islands and potential crossings. Wide valley is accessible and open for barbarian intrusions. Fort in Singidunum with the one in Viminacium, comprise the core of the defense of the Moesia Superior. Positioned at two opposite sides of low Danube valley their role was to ensure security of trade along Danube and of the hinterland.





Fig. 4: Singidunum via decumana (photo by Stefan Pop-Lazić)



Fig. 5: Sarcophagus with scenes of the biblical story of the prophet Jonas, now in Kalemegdan fortress

After his departure from *Singidunum* our traveler would find himself on the final section of road to his final destination, *Viminacium*. Some of the more important stations on this road were *Ad Octavum*, *Tricornium*, *Aureus Mons*, *Vinceia* and *Margum*. Downstream from Singidunum there is a fort in Višnjica, identified as the *castrum Octavum*. During the sixties of the 20th century, research was conducted which revealed a tower in the western rampart, the northern rampart and parts of the eastern rampart. Today, *Octavum* is covered with woods, while on the western side, the defensive ditch in front of the rampart is still noticeable. Just like with other fortifications, a civilian settlement developed next to the main communication along the Danube. On several places near the fort, late antique graves were discovered. Numerous Roman remains were discovered on different sites between Višnjica and Ritopek (Fig. 6). Still, due to the lack of systematic research, we can only say that this area was densely populated, since cemeteries were discovered on several places, numerous sarcophagi and architectural remains. At the distance of 14 roman miles from *Singidunum*, the *Tabula Peutingeriana* gives notice about the fort *Castra Tricornia*, connected to the local settlement of the *Tricornenses*, a Celtic tribe dwelling next to the Danube. *Tricornium* (Ritopek) was an important military center, 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. A military diploma from the year 120 was also discovered in Ritopek. It is best known for the discovery of parade armor, which is displayed in the National Museum in Belgrade (Fig. 7).



Fig. 6: View to Barbaricum from Roman Octavum (photo by Stefan Pop-Lazić)



Fig. 7: Parade breast plate of the decorative armor from Ritopek

At the end of the 19th century, in Brestovik, a late antique tomb was discovered, revealing a sculpture depicting a noble deceased who was buried inside (Fig. 8). According to the image of the sculpture, it can be concluded that he was a nobleman who lived here at the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th century. Bricks with stamps of the legions IV *Flavia* and VII *Claudia* were used for constructing this tomb. This late Roman tomb was unearthed in 1901. It has four compartments and rich fresco decorations.

#### *Parade Armor from Ritopek (Fig. 7)*

The parade armor 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 armor (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.

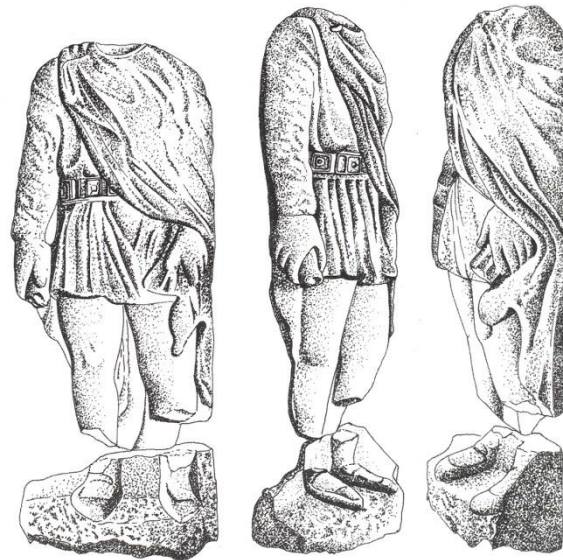


They both have eagles on their heads, and there are two signums and one vexillum between them.

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 armor was usually decorated with standardized depictions.



**Fig. 8: Statue of the nobleman from the Tomb in Brestovik**

At the distance of 12 roman miles from *Tricornium*, ancient sources mention a settlement *Aureo Monte*. *Notitia Dignitatum* - Register of Dignitaries compiled in Late Antiquity, mentions the *cuneus equitum Delmatarum* as the garrison of *Aureus Mons*. *Aureus Mons* (Seone) is known from literary sources as the place where grapevines were cultivated in the time of Probus.

From confluence of the Morava to confluence of the Mlava there was a large developed urban and industrial area. Municipium *Margum* at Dubravica and *municipium Aelium Viminacium* (later *colonia Viminacium*) are both situated at river confluences (rivers Morava and Mlava). Administratively Viminacium was the provincial capital, and military command centre. Fertile valleys with plenty of water were suitable for agriculture. Craft centers for local production of *terra sigillata* (*Viminacium* – *Margum* production centre) and typical Roman provincial pottery as well as glass were positioned between these confluences.

*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 traveler 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 (Fig. 9), 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. Part of the Roman road leading out of this camp is still visible in the area of the *porta praetoria* (fig. 10). 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*.



Fig. 9: Viminacium, Roman Street near amphitheater (photo by Nemanja Mrdić)



Fig. 10: Viminacium, porta praetoria (photo by Nemanja Mrdić)

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 organized 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.



**Fig. 11: Coin from Viminacium's mint: personification of goddess Moesia with a bull and a lion – symbols of the Moesian legions**



**Fig. 12: Viminacium cemeteries (photo by Nemanja Mrdić)**

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 recognizable by a

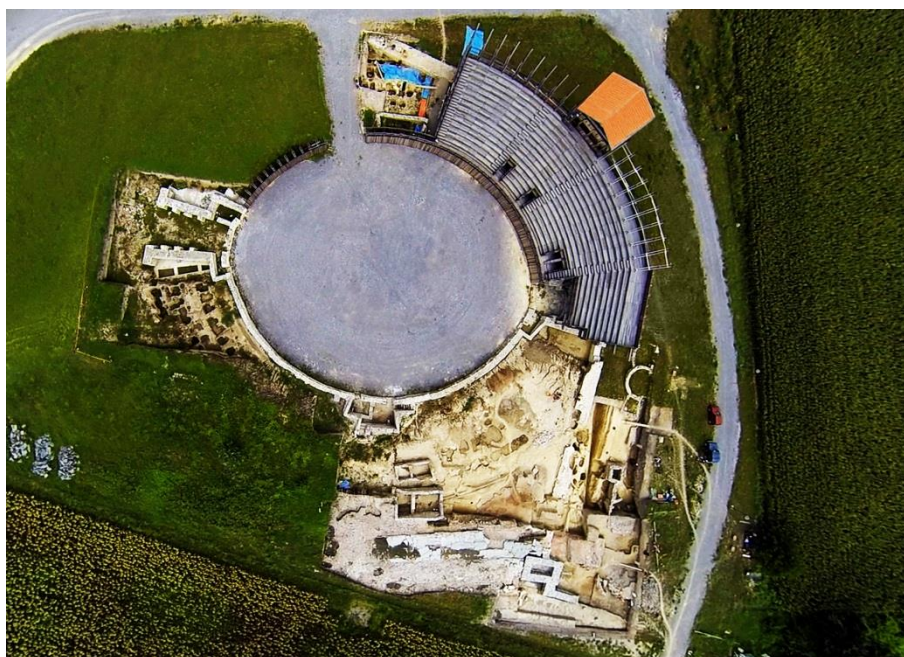


representation of the goddess *Moesia* on their reverse. On either side of the deity, a lion and a bull were depicted as the symbols of two legions guarding the province. The specific feature of *Viminacium* coinage is that the time of minting was marked by letters an(no) and the corresponding numbers from I to XVI on the reverse side (fig. 11). 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. In 441 AD, the Huns conquered *Viminacium*, razing it to the ground. The town was never rebuilt.



Fig. 13: Viminacium thermae (archive of the Institute of Archaeology)





**Fig. 14: Amphitheater, aerial drone image (archive of the Institute of Archaeology)**

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 (Fig. 12). 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 (Fig. 13). 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.

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. 14-15).



**Fig. 15: Amphitheater, view to the reconstructed section (photo by Miomir Korać)**

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.



**Fig. 16: Viminacium mausoleum at east cemetery (photo by Svetlana Dingarac)**

The aforementioned mausoleum is square in plan and measures 20 x 20 meters. It is built of stone blocks and ashlar 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 (Fig. 16). 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 ashlar and columns were used secondarily for the construction of nearby fourth century tombs.



**Fig. 17: Wall paintings from Viminacium cemeteries (photo by Miomir Korać)**



**Fig. 18: Viminacium aqueducts (photo by Miomir Korać)**

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 together with her servant. This painting is considered to be amongst the highest achievements of art of the Late Antiquity. (fig. 17).

About 1,000 meters of three Roman aqueducts have been unearthed (fig. 18). 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 kilometers 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. 19). 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 be possible during standard tours.*





**Fig. 19: Viminacium, Domus Scientiarum – Scientific, Research and Tourist center (photo by Miomir Korać)**

*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.*

## **A Vision of Development and Presentation of the Archaeological sites**

Since preliminary research was done in previous decades many of the sites have been almost completely destroyed or are seriously endangered. Experience with development of Viminacium Archaeological Park proves that development of tourism and constant flow of visitors not just improve local economy but even more important prevents systematic looting on the sites.

The situation along the Danube differs enormously. Some sites, like Singidunum are under modern settlements. Elements of a Roman legionary fort are under Kalemegdan Park and the Belgrade fortress. Roman city and surrounding cemeteries are under the modern city centre. The possibility for the presentation of antique architecture is fairly limited, but almost all the infrastructure still exists. On the other hand, Viminacium city and the legionary fort are away from modern settlements or communications. Nothing is visible above the surface, but the objects are well preserved. There are unlimited possibilities for the presentation, reconstruction and visualization, but the entire infrastructure will have to be built from zero. In the eastern section, sites are either under modern settlements or very close to them.

Among the stakeholders in the Danube area, it is necessary to include The Electric Power Industry of Serbia in all major activities. It has facilities in the vicinity of some of the crucial archaeological sites. The Electric Power Industry of Serbia can, and often does, influence local and regional development and financing and can help with site management. Here, we should specially distinguish the thermoelectric power plants “Kostolac A” and “Kostolac B”, the open pit coal mine “Drmno” and the hydroelectric power plants “Djerdap I” and “Djerdap II”.

Cooperation with the municipalities along the Danube is also of crucial importance to the nomination. The maintenance, protection, management and utilization of all sites depend a lot





on local authorities. Therefore, it is also imperative to have good communication with the local population and to achieve their awareness of the importance that these sites have on the level of the entire humanity. The number of municipalities is large and they must all take part in the nomination of properties.

Majority of the known sites that are along the road from Singidunum to Viminacium are being nominated as the UNESCO world heritage sites as part of the extension of project Frontiers of the Roman Empire (inscribed in 1987 and extended in 2005 and 2008 – Ref No. 430ter). UNESCO Tentative list of the sites along the frontier exists since April 2015 and many efforts are being made to pass their full nomination by 2020.

The benefits of becoming a world heritage site are enormous. The development of tourism and the regional economy that normally follows this achievement greatly improves the quality of life of the local populations and brings international prestige. The obligations of the national and local government are now greatly enlarged. Financial expenses, as well as income, rise due to larger tourist traffic. However, all the efforts are futile unless the local population accepts the duty of the protection and management of the property. People living in the vicinity are the first line of defense, and without their cooperation central government has little chance to succeed in managing the site. Being a world heritage site also has limitations that sometimes discourage people from supporting the nomination. These limitations are primarily focused on the prevention of building activities and continuous maintenance.

Being part of the World Heritage List is the ultimate recognition of international value. The responsibility of maintaining this status is probably an even harder task than the nomination itself. Whatever the outcome of all of our efforts, the preservation of the Roman heritage for future generations remains the true legacy of this project.

What is the meaning of the Roman Heritage for local communities? Remnants of the Roman mythology live in Slavic tradition, as well remnants of pagan customs in family life. Several streets have names of the Roman cities or Roman legions that had garrison in these places (fig. 20). Although Empire vanished more than 14 centuries ago it still lives buried deep in people memories often completely unaware of its existence.



Fig. 20: Modern streets named after roman cities or legions (photos by Stefan Pop-Lazić and Nemanja Mrdić)

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