



CELEIA (NORICUM) AND THE PROTECTION OF ITS ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

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The history of research into Roman *Celeia* reaches back to the 15th century, if one takes into account the collection and protection of marble inscriptions and reliefs. The first more detailed account of the Roman monuments in Celje was made by Paolo Santonino, whose travel journal (1483 – 1487) contained descriptions of the inscriptions and reliefs. On account of the large number of Roman remains, the townspeople referred to Celje as Little Troy (*Troia secunda*).

The 19th century was a turning point in the protection of the Roman monuments of Celeia. In the mid-19th century 28 votive altars of procurators and consular beneficiarii were found. This discovery gave rise to proposals for the protection of these monuments. The parish offered the area beside the parish church and the people of Celje gained their first lapidarium. The ever increasing number of monuments led to the foundation of the museum in 1882.

The inscriptions and grave monuments are the best indication of the varied nature of the population of Celeia. This was largely Celtic in origin in the first centuries, the percentage of Italian immigrants being relatively small. The floruit of the class of wealthy natives dates largely to the 1st and 2nd centuries. They were the bearers of romanization and urbanisation. The more important families included, for example, the Vindonii, who held land in the Šempeter area. The Celtic tradition was expressed in the native Celtic names on the monuments and in the traditional costume, which is particularly noticeable on the female representations.

The immigrant Italian families, largely from northern Italy, soon achieved strong influence in the town. Some of these families are known by name, e.g. the Castricii, Rufii, Varii, Barbii, Cesernii, etc. The names of individual inhabitants of Celeia, who achieved important positions in Roman society, are also known. Senatorial rank was achieved after a successful military career by *Titus Varius Clemens*, a rank which could only be achieved by a few members of the Norican aristocracy. He was an imperial secretary under the emperor Marcus Aurelius becoming a member of his ruling council.

The extensive excavation in the 20th century and in 2002-2006 brought to light numerous new informations about the extent of the town, its development and life through the centuries. The most important will be presented in the lecture.

