

Roman Funerary Monuments of South-Western Pannonia in their Material, Social, and Religious Context

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in collaboration with
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In memory of our colleague and friend Zoran Gregl (1952–2017)

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Chapter III Geology and Quarries

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Foreword and Acknowledgments

Branka Migotti

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Introduction

Branka Migotti

Three starting points have provided a background for the research on the project *Roman Funerary Monuments of Southwestern Pannonia in their Material, Social, and Religious Context*, which has resulted in this book. First is the fact that funerary monuments contain material and spiritual components operating at several interconnected levels: ethno-cultural, social, economic, artistic and ritual-religious, and thus have considerable potential to complement our knowledge of the structures and workings of provincial societies of the Roman Empire. Through historical, art-historical and scientific data on funerary monuments (forms, dimensions, quality of execution, kind of stone used, iconography and epigraphy) it is possible to acquire knowledge of the ethnic-cultural origin, social and financial status, and religious affiliation of the deceased. When properly systematised, such data can offer various insights into the social and cultural identity of the society under investigation: social stratification (concerning military and civil ranks and status), ethnic origin, religious affiliations and the relationship between classical cults and Christianity, artistic trends, as well as production and trading aspects. The provinces of Noricum and Pannonia count among those that did not know stonemasonry before the Roman conquest, at least not at a commercial scale; expectedly, it was the army that introduced the tombstone in the northeastern provinces of the Roman Empire.¹ The only funerary stone tentatively interpreted as of the original or resemantized Celtic provenance from northern Croatia, now walled into the facade of the church in the village of Križovljan (Catalogue, Peripheral areas II. Poetovio, Križovljan), is most probably a portrait niche from a Roman-period funerary building. In view of that, funerary monuments of SW Pannonia make an important medium for the study of the autochthonous substrate and oncoming Romanisation, that is, the reception of Roman culture by the indigenous society and the subsequent integration, with stress on the incipient military role in this process.

Second, the funerary monuments of the selected area have never been studied comprehensively, either by individual kinds or even less as a whole, including the epitaphs that were mostly considered separately in the *CIL* or in modern-day epigraphic Internet databases, such as the *Epigraphic Database Clauss-Slaby* and the *Epigraphic Database Heidelberg*. Therefore, several quite

old publications still figure as the main source for the study of Roman funerary monuments of northwest Croatia (Brunšmid 1903–1912; *AIJ* 1938). Although still a valuable basic source in the absence of more up-to-date works, these publications are outdated in terms of the approach and the lack of new evidence. The contributions by Brunšmid comprise inscribed and non-inscribed monuments, while the monograph of Hoffiller and Saria (*AIJ*) only cover inscribed stones. Needless to say, in all of them the stone material was judged by the naked eye, with, expectedly, quite a lot of mistaken assessments. With rare exceptions, in more recent works funerary monuments were mostly published individually or in smaller groups, or as sections within various thematic monographs, but still lacking archaeometric analyses.²

The third starting point concerns the fact that researchers have by now become completely aware of the necessity to study inscribed stone monuments in their entirety, that is, by giving equal importance to the inscription and depiction.³ The same is true of including archaeometric characterizations, yet not as the aim in itself, but as a contribution to a better insight into the politics of the economy of production of, and trade in, stone monuments. Nevertheless, in practice such theoretical approach has often remained a declarative aim, with epigraphy taking precedence by epigraphers and a formal-artistic analysis being favoured by archaeologists and art historians, especially in thematic corpora, and with archaeometric research remaining partial and not fully incorporated. Among several contrary recent examples, a volume of the *CSIR* on the *stelae* and funerary altars of Flavia Solva should be pointed out as an improvement in the series. It emerged as a work produced by two authors, covering epigraphy and iconography equally, with an in-depth social analysis based on both these components.⁴ Even the third component – petrographic analyses – was included, but only to a measure enabled by characterizations of the monuments conducted previously through another project, resulting in only a very small percentage of the characterized pieces. Indeed, petrographic analyses are still rare as an obligatory component in comprehensive studies of stone monuments, but such an approach has

¹ O. Harl 1991a: 5–12; Jaeger 2003: 476; Carroll 2006: 17; M. Scholz 2012: 2; Russell 2013: 11; Weber-Hiden 2014: 71; Migotti 2016a.

² Cambi 1989; Burkowsky 1996; Gregl 1996; Gregl and Migotti 2000; Cambi 2002; Cambi 2005; Migotti 2005b; Migotti 2007a; Migotti 2008; Migotti 2010; Belaj and Migotti 2011; Migotti 2012; Migotti 2013a; Migotti 2013b.

³ Cf. Migotti, *The Interdependence* (in press).

⁴ Pochmarski and Weber-Hiden 2016.

been evolving over the last three decades. Two of a few positive examples in this regard should be mentioned. The first relates to two complementary papers on the stone monuments from the military camp in Vindonissa, and the second is the project of the Institute of the History of Culture of Antiquity of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Wien: *Steindenkmäler und Steingewinnung im Raum Carnuntum-Vindobona* (FWF – Projekt P 26368-G21) led by Gabrielle Kremer.⁵ Finally, a whole new impetus and a new research protocol have been given to this field of research by Bojan Djurić and his team in the last two decades, with the aim of establishing a course for a more comprehensive research that will cover all aspects of the phenomenon of stone production and use. In order to achieve this goal, the investigation has been focused on the production of monuments at all stages, from the extraction of stone and the primary roughing out of the product at the quarry workshop to its final use, be it near or far away from the starting point. The research protocol introduced and defined by Bojan Djurić comprised two main points: the supply of stone and stone monuments in the territory of study (between the Eastern Alps and the Carpathians), and, consequently, transportation routes and commercial relationships, which turned out to be more complicated than previously considered in relation to Eastern Alpine marbles. With these investigations, the study of Roman stone in the region in question has acquired a completely new dimension, making it much easier for researchers of smaller sections of the whole area to better understand wider procedures and more successfully contribute to the general knowledge of issues that remain contested.⁶

Until recently, the stone provenance and workshop origin of Roman funerary monuments of northwest Croatia were rarely taken into consideration, with hypotheses on the import vs. local production mostly resting on typological, iconographical, and stylistic traits. A decade or so ago, marble characterizations of various monuments, funerary included, have been carried out for Mursa (present-day Osijek) in Pannonia Inferior, as well as a certain number of those kept in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb; among the latter were also monuments from the three Roman cities of the study area (Andautonia, Siscia, and Aquae Balissae).⁷ With the passage of time, it turned out that characterizations conducted by Harald Müller in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb in 2008 required some updating through more refined methods; such research was indeed conducted within the project which has generated this book. On the other hand, no archaeometric research was carried out on stone other than marble from Andautonia, Siscia and Aquae

Balissae, while the origin of stone and its association with possible quarries were looked for in only several examples of recently published monuments.⁸ For all the above reasons, the interpretative potential of the evidence discussed here had remained much underused before the above-mentioned project started. Therefore, one of the aims of this book was to present the results of the study of a corpus of stone monuments by equally treating all of its components: structural typology, iconography, inscription and stone fabric.

Because of the multifaceted interpretive potential of the evidence, the area of study has been limited to three southwestern Pannonian Roman cities in the territory of north-western Croatia: *municipium Andautonia* (Ščitarjevo), *colonia Siscia* (Sisak), and *municipium Aquae Balissae* (Daruvar) (Figures 1 and 2). It was hoped that juxtaposing three cities of different dimensions and municipal profiles, and of unequal importance in the wider area, would offer a good opportunity for a meaningful comparison of various components of the study. Before the conquest, Siscia/Segest(ica) had been an important Pannonian emporium. Since its occupation by the Romans in the year 35 BC, the city became a strategically well-placed legionary fortress, but soon enough also a thriving production, commercial and transport hub, covering an area of some 400,000 m². The military were present in Siscia even after the town's elevation to the rank of colony (*colonia Flavia*) under Vespasian, while Septimius Severus honoured the city with a renewed colony title: *colonia Septimia Siscia Augusta*. In the 3rd century a mint was established in Siscia, while in Late Antiquity it was the most important city of southwest Pannonia, figuring as the capital of Pannonia Savia and an early Christian bishopric. Throughout, the importance and cosmopolitan profile of the city was based on its favourable strategic and traffic position, as well as iron mines in its wider surroundings.⁹ Andautonia came under Roman control in the 2nd half of the 1st century BC. Its development as a Roman town started in the beginning of the 1st century AD, to reach its peak in the 2nd century, when it stretched 1000 m in length and 400 m in width. The city was elevated to the rank of *municipium* by the end of the 1st century; apart from *municipium Andautonia*, it was confirmed as *res publica Andautoniensium* situated on the road between Poetovio (Ptuj, SI) and Siscia, and thus on the shortest route from southwestern Pannonia toward North Italy, was the main source of Andautonia's economic growth. The importance of the city seems to have considerably dropped in Late Antiquity.¹⁰ Aquae Balissae was a tribal centre of the Iasi

⁵ Tomasevic Buck 2007; Schuler 2007; Rohatsch et al. 2016.

⁶ Djurić, in press. See also the list of papers by B. Djurić in the Literature.

⁷ Djurić, Müller and Filipović 2010; Djurić 2013.

⁸ Migotti 2005b; Belaj and Migotti 2011.

⁹ Lolić 2003; Šašel Kos 2017b: 174-175.

¹⁰ Nemeth-Ehrlich and Kušan Špalj 2003.



Figure 1. Map of the province of Pannonia (after Migotti 2012c)

(*civitas Iasorum*), which in time acquired the status of autonomous city, attested literally and epigraphically as *res publica Iasorum*, *Aquae Balissae*, and *municipium Iasorum*; the last-mentioned dates from the reign of the Emperor Hadrian. Due to the lack of archaeological excavations, the perimeter of Aquae Balissae has remained conjectural, but was estimated as covering an area of 100–120 m in diameter. The importance of the city was based on its healing thermal springs and was enhanced by its strategic location in between the Sava and Drava Rivers as the main traffic arteries of the region. Still, the presence of the military either at the beginning of Roman rule or at any later point remains obscure despite epigraphic testimonies of veterans and even active soldiers in the archaeological evidence.¹¹

¹¹ Schejbal 2004; Migotti 2017c.

In this book, published and unpublished funerary monuments of all kinds (*stelae*, sarcophagi, ash-chests, *tituli*, altars, medallions, and funerary buildings) dating from the 1st century to the late Roman period are systematically studied through an interdisciplinary approach comprising archaeological, epigraphic, and geological analyses. A total of 200 monuments were considered, of which 143 from Siscia, 30 from Andautonia and 27 from Aquae Balissae, comprising 48 *stelae*, 39 sarcophagi, 54 ash-chests, five *tituli*, five altars, two funerary medallions, 13 funerary buildings, and 30 unclassifiable pieces, some of which no longer exist. There is no doubt that inclusion of all categories of monuments, in addition to funerary, would have widened the interpretative potential of the evidence, but this was not done for two reasons. First is because the Project leader's main research interest is in Roman funerary monuments of northern



Figure 2. Map of south-western Pannonia (after Migotti 2017a)

Croatia, which resulted in quite a few publications of individual pieces or thematic groups before the start of the Project research. This has enabled a fairly sound overview of the published pieces, providing at the same time the tools to deal with the remainder of the evidence. Also, due to such circumstances enough time remained within the research protocol for the search of unpublished or mostly unknown monuments hidden in museum depots, or out in the open at various places throughout northwest Croatia and northwest Bosnia and Herzegovina. Second, including votive and other

monuments would have much strained the research, which was quite limited by the Project's time protocol. Finally, funerary monuments make the most numerous category of Roman stones preserved everywhere in the Roman Empire, the Norico-Pannonian region included, which in a way makes them a representative sample for studying a provincial Roman society.¹² On balance, the research was conceived of as a pilot study in nature, with the possibility for building on it through including other categories of monuments and also widening the territorial scope of study.

¹² O. Harl 1991b: 17; Hope 2001: 1; Carroll 2006: 15; Beltrán Lloris 2015: 95; Hemelrijk 2015: 33; Mitthof and Cenati 2016: 120; Djurić, in press.