

**SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE**

## **Roads and rivers 4:**

The unusual in usual: small finds-household items, pottery, jewellery;  
the bridge between Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Roads and rivers 4

**Programme and the Book of Abstracts**  
**Program i knjiga sažetaka**

Institute of Archaeology / Institut za arheologiju

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24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022 / 24-25. Studeni 2022.

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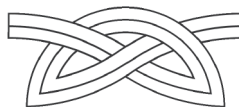

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LIFE ON  
THE  
ROMAN  
ROAD



INSTITUTE  
OF ARCHAEOLOGY



**Zoom link: <https://tinyurl.com/RoadsandRivers4>**



## 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**9.00 – 9.30** Registration, uploading of presentations

**9.30 – 9.40** Opening of the conference:  
Life on the Roman Road project. What did we do?

Coffee break

### Session: Jewellery: local variants, curiosities, possible suprachronological or supraregional connections

Roman

(Chairman: Anita Rapan Papeša)

**10.00 – 10.20** [Alka Starac](#), Jewellery of Roman Istria

**10.20 – 10.40** [Kaja Stemberger Flegar](#), [Jasna Vinder](#), Roman earrings of Slovenia 2.0

**10.40 – 11.00** [Ana Kovačić](#), Taste of victory

**11.00 – 11.20** [Birgitta Hoffman](#), Blue with a white wave – how an Iron age object became associated with the Roman army

Discussion

**11.30-11.50** [Adisa Lepić-Radno](#), Late Antiquity jewellery from the tumulus at the sites Cimeše near Bosanski Petrovac and Podgradina in Livno

**11.50-12.10** [Tina Milavec](#), A modest migrant: hub-cap fibula from Zidani gaber above Mihovo in context

**12. 10-12.30** [Gojko Tica](#), „She walks like a woman and talks like a man« or did even “real” men (sometimes) just dress like women?

Discussion

Lunch break



## Medieval

(Chairman: Ivan Bugarski)

- 14.00-14.20** [Pia Šmalcelj Novaković](#), Everything is in the details: Curious case of an earring from grave 22, Privlaka-Gole njive
- 14.20-14.40** [Anita Rapan Papeša](#), Earring with S-shaped ends in Avar graves in Croatia
- 14.40-15.00** [Hanna Chorvatova](#), Die Lunula-Anhänger in der Kultur der Awaren und Slawen (The Lunula Pendants in the culture of Avars and Slavs)
- 15.00-15.20** [Rade Petcu](#), A glimpse in to the *Instrumentum Domesticum*: Knives from the Roman settlement of *Ulmetum*-Province of Scythia

Discussion

Coffee break

- 15.30** [Ivana Ožanić Roguljić](#), [Mislav Fileš](#), Presentation of „Living Danube limes“ project



## 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**9.00-9.30** Registration, uploading of presentations

**Session: Household items made of metal: type of finds which are usually deemed chronologically insensitive/neutral, but can point out to other patterns: social organisation or valuation of a community or an individual, or any other phenomena**

(Chairman: Ivana Ožanić Roguljić)

**9.30-9.50** [Kaja Stemberger Flegar](#), Warding off evil: apotropaic objects in Roman Slovenia

**9.50-10.10** [Ivana Jadrić-Kučan](#), Decorative pendants of Roman soldiers from Burnum

**10.10-10.30** [Kristina Brkić Drnić](#), Unusual and usual combined: Roman finds from AN 6 – Mirkovci Kamenica 2 site

**10.30-10.50** [Sanja Baškarad](#), Preliminary overview of ceramic finds from the site Virovitica - Brezik (AN3), archaeological research in 2013

Discussion

Coffee break

(Chairman: Pia Šmalcelj Novaković)

**11.20-11.50** [Kaja Pavletić](#), Burning Questions on Fire Steels and Flints in Late Antique Graves

**11.50-12.10** [Vujadin Ivanišević](#), [Ivan Bugarski](#), Coin weighers and dealers in the Early Byzantine city: The case of Justiniana Prima

**12.10-12.30** [Maja Zeman](#), Metal 'pendant' from the locality of the Dubrovnik cathedral – form and function; origin, model and usage

**12.30-12.50** [Ivana Ožanić Roguljić](#), [Angelina Raičković Savić](#), Unusual ceramic household items in use from Antiquity to the Middle Ages

Discussion

Lunch break

**15:00** Visit to the Zagreb Municipal Museum





## ABSTRACTS/SAŽECI

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### **Life on the Roman Road project. What did we do?**

Roads in Roman times were the arteries of the Empire itself. They connected provinces and cities, and without them, the Romans could not have conquered and held onto the territories they ruled. They were means of moving military officials, civilians and transporting goods. Roman roads gave excellent links for organizing life and establishing various settlements in periods after the collapse of the Empire. The engineering and surveying skills of the Romans provided the basis for many of today's routes. Life on some Roman roads continued after the fall of the Empire and has not stopped until today. The main objective of the project is an interpretation of everyday life on the Roman road, from the beginning of Roman rule to the period of decline, acculturation and integration of new identities. This project offers a chance for a new perspective: how does life develop around Roman roads and a path during the main usage of the roads and after it's over? Croatia, due to its very advantageous geostrategic position in the past as well, is situated on the crossroads of very important Roman communications and due to the richness of archaeological heritage, represents an ideal basis or "playground" for this research: one can trace the changes brought about by Romanization, that is, the beginning of Roman rule in this area, and it seems that we can trace the influence of (Late) Roman culture and its successors long after the official Roman rule ends. In our research, we focused on detecting the aspects of material culture through which we can find out more about the most common habits (dietary, for example) and (in)direct influence on a smaller scale (jewellery, motifs of decorations, pottery), which points out the level of influence on the broader population, not just the members of the elite.

Project Life on the Roman road started on 1st January 2018 and will end on 30th April 2023. In this introduction, we will show our major results.



## Jewellery: local variants, curiosities, possible suprachronological or supraregional connections

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### **Jewellery of Roman Istria**

Roman jewellery collected in Istria includes rings (*anuli*), bracelets (*armillae*), pearl necklaces, necklaces made of necklaces (*catellae*), earrings (*inaures*), and gems and cameos that could adorn a lost pectoral pendant or diadem (*diadema*). Jewellery made in whole or in part from glass, amber, semi-precious stones, iron, bronze, silver and gold is represented. One lead pendant of unknown circumstances of the findings can join a group of jewellery. The rings are mostly made of metal, only exceptionally glass or amber. Rings could contain a gem or a cameo with a figural representation. Rings are the most numerous group of jewellery and are most often made of bronze. Rings are the only type of jewellery made of iron. Silver and gold rings were found only in tombs. A special category is represented by key rings. The bracelets are mostly rigid, open-ended and made of bronze, and one specimen is made of glass. Glass was mostly used in jewellery-making for beads strung into necklaces. Monochromatic ring, round, discoid, teardrop-shaped, cylindrical, biconical, quadrangular, polygonal, ribbed and beads with a relief figural representation, as well as multicoloured and gilded beads are represented. Earrings are represented in the range from the simplest bronze earrings to multi-piece gold earrings with inserted glass. Gold earrings are by far the most numerous. Depending on the method of hanging, two types of earrings are represented: the type with an S-hook and a hanging decorative head, and the type with a hoop whose ends are connected by a loop and a hook. According to the complexity of the decoration, there are simple monochrome earrings with a gold head in the shape of a drop or cone and polychrome gold earrings with inserted glass and pendants. A gold necklace with green glass beads is the most representative example of Roman jewellery from Istria. The jewellery of Roman Istria has many parallels in jewellery spread in Italy and European provinces, and fits into the chronological framework of jewellery forms. Most of the specimens come from dated graves, especially those made of silver and gold. A number of jewellery items of more modest materials were found in residential buildings, while for some items the circumstances of the finds are unknown. Dated Roman jewellery from Istria belongs to the period from the middle of the 1st to the end of the 4th century, mostly to the 2nd and 3rd century AD.





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### **Roman earrings of Slovenia 2.0**

In the spring of 2022, a very curious Roman period grave was excavated at *Colonia Ulpia Traiana Poetovio*. Located at modern-day Ptuj, *Poetovio* was the largest Roman colony on the territory of present Slovenia with large cemeteries, but this particular grave stood out for its abundant jewellery.

A pair of gold earrings, a large number of glass beads, and numerous beads made from organic material covered in golden foil were unearthed. While osteological analyses are still ongoing, we believe the grave may belong to the special group of richly furnished female burials previously identified for Slovenia on the basis of the cemeteries of *Colonia Iulia Emona*, modern Ljubljana. Searching for exact parallels for *Poetovio's* jewellery items, we realised that the typology of earrings made in 1979 by Kristina Mihovilić had since not been revised or updated.

Our study is based on all available site reports and published museum collections up to 2022. In addition to establishing a typo–chronology, we aimed to record at what type of sites earrings are found (graves, settlements etc.) and interpret the patterns of their occurrence. Moreover, we compared where possible the distribution patterns between the four Roman-period entities whose parts now form Slovenian territory: *Regio X, Noricum, Pannonia, and Dalmatia*.



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### Taste of victory

The presentation concentrates on a red jasper intaglio gem found during archaeological investigations taking place in 2019 in the old town centre of Ajdovščina in Slovenia. The excavations were conducted intra and in a limited part also extra muros of the Late Roman fortress called *Castra*. Pottery found on the site is dated from the Middle to Late Roman period (from the middle of the 1st century to the 5th century AD) and the small finds in the layers of this complex confirm the military character of the settlement.

The newly discovered gem is oval in shape and made from red jasper intaglio with a flat engraved face and chamfered sides. It is engraved with a standing winged Victoria facing left conducting slow *quadriga*, holding out the wreath in the right hand and holding palm and reins in the left hand.

The *quadriga* appears frequently on gems and in other media of art as the vehicle of *Sol (Helios)* or *Victoria (Nike)*. The Goddess *Victoria* or *Victory* was the personification of victory in all forms and was the Roman interpretation and equivalent of the Greek goddess *Nike*. Although the concept of victory was important to both cultures, it's clear from the differences in the level of portrayal that *Victoria* held a far higher standing in Roman culture than *Nike* to the Greeks. It has been generally accepted, how purposefully chosen images shaped the public impression of political and military power in Rome. Images of the triumphant rider, an image originally confined to the Emperor, had changed, from public to private and were used in many image-bearing objects, such as gemstones.



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**‘Blue with a white wave’ – how an Iron age object became associated with the Roman army.**

One of the more common beads on the Roman military site in *Britannia* is a small blue annular bead with a white wave and an unusually large hole. The pattern puts it firmly in the tradition of Iron Age beadmaking, but it is apparently more commonly found on sites with a military presence than on civilian sites. This paper explores possible explanations for the distribution and use of the bead and discusses its possible function within early Roman Britain, is it just jewellery, or does it have a different function?

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**Late Antiquity jewellery from the *tumulus* at the sites Cimeše near Bosanski Petrovac and Podgradina in Livno**

The presentation is based on the determination and processing of materials from Late Antique tumuli of the Cimeše site near Bosanski Petrovac, the material of which was still excavated in 1899 by Vejsil Čurčić. Soon after that, the material was published in the Gazette of the National Museum, indicated as material from the Migration period. The author of this paper will deal with a small number of grave goods from the tumulus in more detail, which mainly consists of jewellery. As these tumuli were probably used in earlier periods also, prehistoric and material from Antiquity will be interpreted, which mainly make up pottery fragments.

In order to get a broader picture, the listed items will be compared with recent finds, among other things with identical, recently found material from the Podgradina locality in Livno. With this work, the author will open a larger topic, which concerns the continuity of burials under tumuli from the prehistoric to the Late Antique and even the Late Medieval period, which is represented and insufficiently processed in the territory of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina



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### **A modest migrant: hub-cap fibula from Zidani gaber above Mihovo in context**

In the fortified hilltop settlement Zidani gaber above Mihovo in SE Slovenia a brass round fibula with an inset of unrecognized material and engraved decoration was found (without context, metal detector find). Close analogies can be found in central Europe, but also very far, in N Europe and Scandinavia in the 10th c. AD.

Due to modest material, execution and decoration similar fibulae are often interpreted as cheap local products, copies of more prestigious pieces of jewellery. But in some cases, apparently even inexpensive artefacts travelled far and may represent traces of otherwise invisible, unexpected connections in Early Medieval Europe.



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## **„She walks like a woman and talks like a man« or did even “real” men (sometimes) just dress like women?**

In archaeology it is generally accepted that Late Antique or Early Medieval East Germanic bow *fibulae* of various shapes are part of women's costumes. This includes the so-called *fibulae* made of hammered sheet metal, which appear in the 4th and 5th centuries. Smaller bronze and silver arch *fibulae* made of hammered sheet appear for the first time in the 4th century in the area of the Černjahovo - Sântana de Mureș culture and its neighbourhood, and from there they allegedly first spread to the Danube region at the end of the 4th and 5th centuries, and from there probably with migrations of various East Germanic and Alanic groups as far west as Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula. Over time, *fibulae* made of hammered sheet metal became larger and decorated with some details. Allegedly, "barbarian" women used to fasten clothes similar to Roman *stolas*, Roman *peplos* and similar robes on their shoulders. But at least two graves show that *fibulae* made of the hammered sheet were used by men as well, or that these *fibulae* are also found in male graves. A small *fibula* made of hammered sheet metal was found in the cremation grave 86 of the Kompanijci necropolis in central Ukraine. In addition to the *fibula* and other finds, a bent sword, an axe, a spear point and an umbo shield were also found in the grave. Based on the findings, we can rightly assume that it is a male grave. And in grave 107 at the Tîrghșor necropolis, a man was buried with a pair of hammered sheet *fibulae* about 9 cm long made of forged sheet. A pot/glass and a one-handed pitcher lay at the feet of the deceased. In none of the mentioned cases, except for the *fibula*, do we have any finds that could be connected in one way or another to women's costumes or in any way to the female (biological) sex. It should also be noted that many *fibulae* made of hammered sheet metal, mostly in pairs, are undoubtedly found in women's graves (anthropological analyzes of skeletons), and quite often such *fibulae*, if found in pairs, are automatically attributed to women's graves, as accidental finds also come from children's graves. Graves, whose gender cannot be determined, or are found in graves next to/on the shoulders of skeletons whose gender has not been determined by anthropological analyses.

Given that in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, the practical function of *fibulae* made of hammered sheet metal, especially when they appeared in pairs on the shoulders, was supposed to be the attachment of parts of women's costumes, then also for some other types of *fibulae* from the same time, above all if they found



in pairs on the shoulders of the deceased, we can conclude that, regardless of their shape, they had the same function as *fibulae* of hammered sheet metal, which is to fasten (female) clothing of the same type. Here I am mainly referring to *fibulae* with a bent leg and *T-fibulae* with a spring. In some necropolises within the Černjahovo – Sântana de Mureș culture, where skeletons were anthropologically analyzed, *fibulae* with a bent leg and *T-fibulae* with a spring found on the shoulders of the deceased, are indeed most often found in women's graves, but sporadically also in men's graves. We have a similar example at the Rakovčani cemetery near Prijedor from the end of the 5th and the first decades of the 6th century, where a pair of iron *T-fibulae* with a spring was also found in a male grave 7. Both *fibulae* with a bent leg and *T-fibulae* with spring are often found in children's graves whose gender cannot be determined or are found in graves whose gender of the deceased has not been determined by anthropological analyses. Likewise, we cannot explicitly connect the finds from these graves with women's clothing or in any way with female (biological) sex.

Based on the finds of pairs of *fibulae* on the shoulders, regardless of shape, even in male graves, we can say that at least between the 4th and the first half of the 6th century, women and men partially wore the same type of clothing, although paired *fibulae* on the shoulders appear more often in women's graves. However, we cannot determine from the archaeological context why some men fastened their clothes with *fibulae* on their shoulders. So, according to archaeological sources, and in my opinion also on the basis of contemporary ethnological, anthropological, cultural and similar research and their application to the situation in the rather distant past, it is not possible (or at least very difficult) to connect the use of some women's, or rather » of non-male" elements in male graves with the situation in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. In the last half-century, the study of gender has intensified ("gender" as a psychological and cultural concept versus "sex" as a biological concept). However, considering the research within the "funeral archaeology" of the Late Antique period and the time of the Migration of peoples (at least in the Rhine-Danube border area and in Barbaricum), we can only speak theoretically about the study of sexes (gender), without any strong evidence of the feminization of men on the one hand or the masculinization of women on the other hand. Based on the finds of pairs of different shoulder *fibulae* in male graves, we can only state that even "real" men (whatever that means) sometimes wore clothing that was more common among women and children, whose gender is anthropologically indeterminate, and the reason we are not familiar with that. And given the state of research, we can't claim anything more than that. Besides, it is also necessary to take into account that we have many more skeletons that have not been anthropologically investigated, and that regardless of the fact that pairs of *fibulae* on the shoulders appear in the vast majority in women's and children's graves, caution is necessary when determining whether they are female or male grave.



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## **Everything is in the details: Curious case of an earring from grave**

### **22, Privlaka-Gole njive**

Privlaka-Gole njive is a Late Avar age inhumation cemetery situated in the vicinity of Vinkovci (former Roman town *Cibalae*), in Sirmia, the easternmost part of Croatia, near the Danube: it was partially excavated during the second half of the 20th century—to this day, it is the biggest excavated cemetery of Late Avar age in Croatia, with more than 230 excavated graves. In one of the graves, a curious earring has been found, which defies standard morphology and characteristics of production of its age. On this occasion, I will investigate possible explanations of this occurrence, especially considering the context of the site and the broader context of the region in the 8th century. This work has been developed under the project Life on the Roman road: communications, trade and identities on Roman roads in Croatia from 1st – 8th CE (Croatian Scientific Foundation; UIP-05-2017-9768).



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### **Earring with S-shaped ends in Avar graves in Croatia**

The specific form of Early Medieval head jewellery, in the form of an earring with open ends, one of which is unrolled and shaped in the shape of the letter “s”, is primarily associated with the period of Bjelo brdo culture. However, this form appears sporadically in the graves of the late Avar population throughout the area of Avaria. In the investigated burials in northern Croatia, this type of find is numerically statistically negligible, but it certainly forms an important detail in the forming of the mosaic of finds as well as the mapping of similar finds.

The paper will present the finds of earrings with S-shaped ends and will compare them with the contemporaneous finds of Avaria.





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## **Die Lunula-Anhänger in der Kultur der Awaren und Slawen (The Lunula Pendants in the culture of Avars and Slavs)**

Seit Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts und während des 9. Jhrs. sind in der Kultur der Awaren und Slawen die Artefakte, die die Archäologen als Lunula-Anhänger nennen. Diese Artefakte sind selten, sie kommen aus den Kindern und weiblichen Gräbern.

Lunula-Anhänger wurden aus unterschiedlichen Materialien (Gold, Silber, meist Bronze, selten Blei) und unterschiedlichen Techniken (Gießen, Schneiden und Treiben und verziert mit der Granulation) hergestellt.

Ihre Einzigartigkeit verursacht Probleme bei ihrer Datierung, erlaubt uns aber gleichzeitig, ihre Reisen durch Mitteleuropa zu verfolgen. Besonders interessant erscheint das Wandern eines Lunula-Anhänger-Typs, der unter dem Begriff Lunula-Typ von Gnezdovo bekannt ist.

Neben dem Lunula-Anhänger kommen in der Kultur auch Anhänger anderer Form vor, die Forscher sehr unterschiedlich ihre Form definieren, für die jedoch der Begriff Anhänger vom Typ Temice übernommen wurde. Anhänger des Těmice-Typs sind sehr selten.

In dem Beitrag werde ich versuchen, einzelne Arten von Lunula-Anhängern vorzustellen, ich werde einen Versuch vorstellen, sie chronologisch zu bestimmen. Am Ende werde ich einige Gedanken zur Bedeutung von Lunula-Anhängern und Anhängern vom Typ Těmice präsentieren.



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## **A glimpse in to the *Instrumentum Domesticum*: Knives from the Roman settlement of *Ulmetum*-Province of Scythia**

Knives are among the most common household implements discovered in Roman and Roman-Byzantine sites. Because of the simplicity of their shape and because they do not require pretentious methods of manufacturing, they could easily be produced in local workshops, which had a minimum of utilitarian equipment. Hence the diversity of shapes and sizes that makes it impossible to classify objects by large regions. Thus, the only useful typology that we can try is the one at the level of settlements.

Located in the center of the province of Moesia Inferior and Scythia, the fortification of Ulmetum is first mentioned in ancient sources by Procopius of Caesarea in *De Aedificiis*. The name appears on the list of fortresses in the province renovated by Emperor Justinian in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Founded as a vicus in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the settlement had a more or less uninterrupted evolution until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Recent archaeological research carried out on the perimeter of the Late Roman fortification, has highlighted two major periods of habitation:

1. The end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (the moment when construction of the defensive system began) and the third quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD (c. 380/390-470/480). This period is characterized by three main phases of habitation;
2. The second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD – the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD (c. 540/550- 596/600?), where two habitation phases are identified. According to our study, it can be observed that the highest concentration of knives is in the construction level of the fortification system and the presence of the Goth foederati, respectively carriers of the material culture Sântana de Mureş-Cerneahov.



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### **Presentation of the „Living Danube limes“ project**

Living Danube Limes is an EU-funded Interreg Danube Transnational Programme project that focuses on connecting, enlivening, researching, preserving and highlighting the Roman Danube Limes as a transnational cultural heritage of enormous significance to create a sound foundation for a future European Cultural Route.

Living Danube Limes stands for Valorising cultural heritage and fostering sustainable tourism by LIVING the common heritage on the DANUBE LIMES as a basis for a cultural route.

The Institute of Archaeology is a project partner working in collaboration with the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb as an associated partner.

One of the Outputs of the project was reconstructing the Roman Danube ship of the 4th century AD, using Roman tool replicas. From mid-July to mid-October 2022 connecting cruise started down the Danube, with an international crew on board, to highlight the connecting character of the Roman Danube Limes. The name of the ship is Danuvina Alacris.

During the Croatian leg of the cruise, a video was filmed, and numerous exciting photographs were taken. This paper will be a short presentation of the exciting days of Danuvina Alacris in Croatia.



Household items made of metal: type of finds which are usually deemed chronologically insensitive/neutral, but can point out to other patterns: social organisation or valuation of a community or an individual, or any other phenomena

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### **Warding off evil: apotropaic objects in Roman Slovenia**

Apotropaic objects of different kinds have been used as simple good luck charms or complex amulets throughout history. The Roman period was in this regard no exception, as attested by ancient literature and art, as well as archaeological finds. Nonetheless, apotropaic objects could be for a long time only be found in the “curious items” sections of Fundberichte catalogues, without further discussions or analyses. Interest in apotropaic objects in Slovenian archaeology has increased in the last decade, but they are still predominantly discussed as part of site interpretations and are rarely studied in their own right.

The aim of this paper is to establish a comprehensive theoretical base rooted in life course studies and Van Gennep’s rites of passage concept. Moreover, I discuss which parts of the population, and why, needed magical protection in everyday life and in death.

In addition to the theoretical overview, the paper aims to establish a robust typology of the apotropaic items of Roman period Slovenia. The spatial and chronological distribution of the finds was established in order to examine whether practices differ between settlements and cemeteries, between urban centres and rural areas, and between Italy and the provinces. I address the forms and materials used for these apotropaic objects, how they are identified by modern researchers, and which types of apotropaic objects are most likely to be overlooked – and why.



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### **Decorative pendants of Roman soldiers from *Burnum***

The paper analyzes decorative pendants that were part of the personal jewellery of Roman soldiers and were found during systematic archaeological research in *Burnum* from 2003 onwards, in the area inside and around the amphitheatre and the nearby training ground (*campus*), which are located a little west of military camp, *castra Burnum*. Their chronological determination can be explained by specific stratigraphic relationships recorded on a wider spatial plan. In the rich and dynamic history of the *Burnum* military camp, several main phases were recorded: initial late Augustan-early Tiberian, reorganizational Claudian and Flavian. Most of the pendants come from the layers in the area of the amphitheatre and training ground (*campus*) which, through the archaeological material found, date to the first half of the 1st century, ending with the early phase of Claudius' reign.



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## **Unusual and usual combined: Roman finds from AN 6 – Mirkovci Kamenica 2 site**

In August of 2016, Archaeological Museum in Zagreb performed rescue excavations at AN 6 – Mirkovci Kamenica 2 site, located in the area of Vinkovci, in the near vicinity of the Kamenica archaeological site. Archaeological structures dating to prehistory and the Roman era were found during excavations. The prehistoric horizon is represented by a damaged cremation grave dating to the Early Bronze Age period of the Vinkovci culture and one element of horse bits from the Late Iron Age, without obvious context. The rest of the finds belong to the Roman period and were located in one oval pit. The content of the pit is peculiar because it obtains different sorts of archaeological material – from precious jewellery to waste. The two most important finds are an iron ring with chalcedony intaglio and an amethyst bead. The rest of the material is represented by coarse handmade pottery, spindle whorls, loom weight, iron knife, lead object, glass and iron fragments. It also contained *tegula*, daub and animal bones.

The aim of this paper is to discuss both the datation and interpretation of the pit and its material, since jewellery and Roman coarse handmade pottery do not provide a narrow time span, while a ring with chalcedony intaglio and amethyst bead indeed represents unusual finds in usual Roman pit.



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## **Preliminary overview of ceramic finds from the site Virovitica -**

### **Brezik (AN3), archaeological research in 2013**

On July 22, 2013, the firm Archeolog d.o.o. carried out a protective archaeological excavation on the route of the future Podravska expressway, section Virovitica - Suhopolje, phase I A, length 9.1 km at the archaeological site AN 3 Virovitica - Brezik. The paper presents a preliminary overview of the ceramic material from the AN 3 Brezik locality, where the existence of several phases was established: prehistoric, ancient and Early Medieval. According to the technological and typological characteristics of the ceramic finds, it was possible to determine the relative chronology of one part of the archaeological units in which they were found. The second part could not be determined culturally and temporally, either due to the lack of movable material in the stratigraphic units or due to the absence of material with characteristic features.



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### **Burning Questions on Fire Steels and Flints in Late Antique Graves**

Fire steels, also known as fire strikers, are not uncommon objects at Late Antique archaeological sites in Slovenia but have rarely drawn much scholarly attention. This is most likely due to the fact that they are chronologically rather ambiguous, often badly preserved and considered mundane everyday objects. However, their presence in graves, which are understood to be highly ritualised deposits filled with symbolism, might indicate an attempt to project meaning other than just the direct function of a fire-starting tool.

The majority of fire steels and flints were found at the cemetery Lajh in Kranj. With approximately 700 graves it is the largest Late Antique cemetery in modern-day Slovenia. This site will be the focus of the study, while examples will be drawn from other sites and countries as well.

Fire steels and flints are usually found in graves with a relatively large number of grave goods and are frequently observed in distinct combinations. First and foremost, they appear together with belt buckles and knives, but also with weapons, tools and coins. Grave assemblages with fire steels and flints are interpreted almost exclusively as male, which also strongly correlates with the anthropological determination of the sex of the deceased. Usually these graves belonged to young men, however, age appears to be less restrictive than sex as fire steels also occasionally feature in the graves of children and mature individuals.

While fire steels and other means of lighting a fire such as flints must have been common objects in everyday life, the particular pattern of their deposition in graves is intriguing. It appears to be linked to age and particularly to gender and the combinations of objects in which fire steels occur to indicate that such items in graves were reserved for a certain group of people. They feature prominently in the graves of young men with above-average wealth and oftentimes display certain characteristics of warrior culture or craftsmanship. Some graves with fire steels or flints belonged to women, though they appear very sporadically, which opens new questions into the meaning and provides new lines of inquiry regarding these objects that have so far, perhaps unfairly, been treated as less insignificant.





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### **Coin weighers and dealers in the Early Byzantine city: The case of *Justiniana Prima***

Up to the present day, the study of coin quality control in tax payment and money exchange in Late Antiquity has not relied much on archaeological data. This is so because coin scales and weights have rarely been found in cities, other settlements and fortresses, or in coin hoards and graves.

On the other hand, the decades-long excavations at Caričin Grad (*Justiniana Prima*) have yielded numerous scales and glass and bronze weights. These finds speak both for the importance of coin quality control in the sixth century and for the unstable value of the solidi and their fractions used in exchange in northern *Illyricum*.

The analysis of the spatial distribution of the scales and weights enables us to suggest that both coin weighers (*ζυγοστάται*) and dealers (*τραπεζίται*) used to operate in *Justiniana Prima*. Moreover, we are close to discerning the exact places and areas within the city limits where these operations have taken place.



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### **Metal 'pendant' from the locality of the Dubrovnik cathedral – form and function; origin, model and usage**

The archaeological locality of the Dubrovnik Cathedral, excavated during the 1980s, yielded a large number of movable finds that only recently underwent their first systematic study. As a part of the ongoing project Discovering the Old Dubrovnik Cathedrals, starting in 2015, a hundred of thousands of objects were processed and analyzed, among which stand out a number of those that would require somewhat closer attention in an attempt to determine their typology and chronology.

One of them is a metal 'pendant' formed as a bust that was not previously studied or published, not even properly processed or documented. In the notes made during the excavations, we can only find a short record describing it as a bronze pendant of a church lamp. But, if we observe this object more closely, we can conclude that it was in fact used as a steelyard weight, more precisely as a sculptured copper-alloy casing of a lead core. Typically, those kinds of weights were used as a part of the so-called speed balance, made in Roman tradition.

Although there are numerous examples of this particular anthropomorphic type of weight in the Eastern Adriatic region of the broader Roman period, our item stands alone in that group. Its formal and stylistic features direct us more to Byzantine analogies dated from the 4th/5th till the 7th/8th cc., the form of which reflected not just commodities that were measured, but also who measured them. In that respect, one would connect the example from Dubrovnik either to the Church administration or some economic activities set up in the vicinity of the cathedral complex and/or managed by the Church.

Still, in terms of iconography, our object represents *unicum*. Its form of a half-human, half-bird being, with female body features and manly facial characteristics, leads us to classical models that would seem peculiar in the context of the place of its discovery and even the chronology of the earliest phases of the Dubrovnik cathedral, set in the transitional period from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages.

All the included facts raise a series of questions considering the dating of the object, the context of the find, the place of its discovery and its usage there, but also the place of its production and the origin of the model, implying areas with stronger cultural and artistic classical revival, present even at the onset of the Middle Ages.



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## **Unusual ceramic household items in use from Antiquity to the Middle Ages**

On the sites of Pannonia and Moesia, objects are found that are apparently entirely unusual, and some of them have not changed their appearance from prehistoric times to the present day. For example, a vessel with a grate, an object whose exact purpose has not been revealed so far, and the theories about it exceed the number of those found. Vessels with a handle above the opening are used from prehistory to the Middle Ages and are also found in ethnological ceramics. The large clay lid also traces its origins from prehistoric times to the present. And cheese moulds have not changed their appearance since Roman times. Bowls with buttons on the handles also attract attention with possible guesses about how they were used. In this paper, we will present the current state of research on several of such items that are found in Lower *Pannonia* and Upper *Moesia*.









