

# Et saxa habent sua fata



Knežji dvor  
(photo B. Plevčak)



Knežji dvor –  
depiction from the  
church of St Daniel,  
18<sup>th</sup> century  
(photo A. Hotko)



Fragment of the inscription immured into the wall of Knežji dvor, part of the exhibition "Celeia – a town beneath today's town"

## Knežji dvor in Celje

Since 2007 several new findings have come to light which are mostly the result of renovation works in Celje and elsewhere in the Celeian ager. Celje (Cilli) was in the 15<sup>th</sup> century called Troia secunda due to the plentiful Roman remains still visible all around town. The Counts of Celje and certain humanists of the time, probably in the spirit of the European Renaissance, collected many of these Roman remains, especially sculptures and inscribed monuments. Long before the remains of numerous inscriptions, reliefs and parts of statues were immured into the Late Roman wall in the courtyard of the so-called *Knežji dvor*.

During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century the castle served as a residence to the Counts of Celje and later the Princes of Celje. It was separated from the town settlement by battlements and a defence ditch. After the extinction of the Princes of Celje in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the castle was used as an office of the Habsburg caretakers and was transformed into barracks in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The building we know today has undergone many radical changes, most of them during the reign of the empress Maria Theresa. In the last two decades this castle has been subject of considerable renovation works; as the result we obtained numerous new fragments of Roman inscriptions and also a new exhibition was prepared: "Celeia – a town beneath today's town", which in a very genuine manner presents the life in a provincial *municipium*.

"Exhibition rooms" are located in the cellars of Knežji dvor, where remains of the Roman road from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, remains of the Roman walls (a part of the castle leans on them), fragments of Roman houses, and even a preserved house fresco can be seen. Visitors can also admire Roman inscriptions and statues immured into the Late Roman town wall and into the medieval wall of the castle Knežji dvor. The archaeological exhibition site in the cellars presents remains of Roman Celeia "in situ" and offers visitors a unique experience of Roman culture and Roman way of life. Nevertheless, the so-called epigraphic habit can also be discussed since all around the town numerous spolia of Roman inscriptions were found; some are still immured into the walls of the castle, some are kept in the depot of the Regional Museum in Celje and others are still waiting for their own spot in the mentioned cellars to give an even more complete overview of the Roman way of life.

## References

- Curk J., Samostani na Slovenskem do leta 1780. Maribor, Ostroga 2008, 427-438.  
[http://moc.celje.si/uprava/cgi/MOC.cgi?page=doc&doc=projekti\\_obnova](http://moc.celje.si/uprava/cgi/MOC.cgi?page=doc&doc=projekti_obnova)  
Stopar I., "Grajske stavbe v vzhodni Sloveniji - Spodnja Savinjska dolina", Založba Park, Ljubljana, 1992.  
ZVNKD v Celju: "Knežji dvorec v Celju - Začasno poročilo 3", ZVNKD v Celju, 1995.



Two new fragments from Knežji dvor were found at the end of 2011 and at the beginning of 2012

## Carthusian Monastery in Žiče

A somewhat similar situation occurred at the Carthusian monastery in Žiče (Valley of St John the Baptist), which is located in a remote and quite distant part of the Celeian ager. Despite this fact it is evident that the Roman culture was also present here – Romanization obviously took place - since at least five inscriptions are known from the area. They were all reused as building material when the monastery was constructed. The Žiče Carthusian monastery, built in 1165, is a unique historical monument testifying to the history of the life of monks. The monastery was closed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century but the monks' houses, the dining room, kitchen, and church remained, eventually falling to ruins. The monastery has been under renovation for the last fifteen years; during this time a few new Roman monuments come to light. Unfortunately, the new epigraphic findings were not incorporated into the renovation project. The "after-life" of the Roman inscriptions from the Valley of St John the Baptist is thus still uncertain.



One of the fragments from Carthusian monastery in Žiče dated probably to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century

Two fragments of an urn (20x46x65; 19x47x65), of which only the lower part is preserved. There is a figure or some sort of a column depicted in the remains of the left lateral niche. Measurements of the fragments, the form of the letters and other characteristics prove that these two fragments belong together. They were found in 1997 during the research of the spiral stairs in the northern chapel of the church in the Carthusian monastery of Žiče (*Stare Slemene, Slovenske Konjice*). Today they are located within the ruins of the church of St John.

-----  
*sibi et felicissimi  
mo fil(io) o(bito) an(norum) XX*

A fragment of a votive ara made of marble probably dedicated to I O M was found in 1997, immured into the back wall of the Lorgar's mill (*Stare Slemene, Slovenske Konjice*), which is situated approximately 200 meters west of the Carthusian monastery in Žiče. This mill was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was definitely made of ruins of the monastery, which was presumably built also of Roman stones.

## Radana vas (Zreče)

A new tabula, which was during the renovation works of the homestead immured into the wall of the inner hall of the house, next to the entrance, was found at the estate of M. Berglez (*Radana vas 12, in Zreče*) around 1993.

-----  
Saurus  
Dunosedi  
f(ilius) an(norum) LXXX  
H(ic) s(itus) e(st).

Saurus and Dunosedus must have been names of indigenous origin. Dunosedus is here attested for the first time but there are similar names known, for example: Dunomagius and Dunomarus, cf. OPEL II, 111. Saurus is already known from Noricum,

there exist also similar names, cf. OPEL IV, 53.

It can be dated to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> or the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

## To conclude

In the medieval times Roman inscriptions were often reused as building material in castles, churches and other monumental buildings. When renovation works take place - as it is possible to see in Celje - new epigraphic findings can arise, which can be innovatively included in the restoration of a building, simply placed in the depot or put on exhibition. One can be positively surprised to see that individuals are sometimes more aware of the importance of cultural heritage than some institutions, the purpose and mission of which is the protection of world heritage.



Inscription slab from Radana vas