

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek

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Rimljani v Tržiču in njegovi okolici

IZVLEČEK

Na širšem območju Tržiča do danes niso našli nobenih epigrafskih spomenikov, s pomočjo katerih bi bilo mogoče kaj več povedati o rimskodobnih prebivalcih tega prostora, zato avtorica najprej predstavi z antiko povezana arheološka najdišča tega prostora. Ta namreč služijo kot dokaz ne samo za življenje ljudi na tem območju v času antike, temveč tudi kot posredna potrditev dejstva, da je tod tekla rimska cesta, ki sicer ni vrisana na antičnem zemljevidu oziroma itinerarijih, ker ni šlo za t. i. via publica, torej državno cesto. Čeprav to ni bila cesta najvišjega ranga, je bila kljub temu pomembna, predvsem kot bližnjica med Emona in Virunom. Obstoj te ceste zgodovinarji že več kot stoletje utemeljujejo predvsem z votivnimi spomeniki, ki so jih našli v bližini Ljubelja oziroma ob trasi ceste (danes vsi na avstrijski strani). Še en posreden dokaz pa lahko iščemo tudi v ljudskem izročilu, ki pravi, da je Tržič obstajal že v antiki pod imenom Forum Lubellinum, kar nas spet popelje na Ljubelj.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

Tržič, Ljubelj, rimska cesta, arheologija, epigrafika, božanstva, Belestis, Belenus

ABSTRACT

ROMANS IN TRŽIČ AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

No epigraphic monuments have to date been discovered in the wider surroundings of Tržič that could help us say more about the inhabitants of the area during the Roman Period. For this reason, the author first presents the local archaeological sites related to Antiquity which not only demonstrate that the area was populated in this age, but also indirectly confirm that a Roman road used to run here, even though it is not included in the ancient maps or itineraries, since it was not a so-called via publica, i.e. a state road. Albeit not of the highest rank it was still an important road that above all served as a shortcut between Emona and Virunum. For more than a century, historians have based the existence of the road primarily on the votive monuments discovered near the Ljubelj mountain pass or, rather, along the road layout (all now on the Austrian side of the border). Another indirect proof can be found in the popular tradition, according to which Tržič existed in the Roman Period under the name Forum Lubellinum, again pointing to Ljubelj.

KEY WORDS

Tržič, Ljubelj, Roman road, archaeology, epigraphy, deities, Belestis, Belenus

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S U M M A R Y

Romans in Tržič and its surroundings

At a glimpse, the absence of epigraphic monuments from the Roman period in Tržič and its surroundings may seem surprising. Perhaps it becomes even more unusual if we take a closer look at the situation in this part of Upper Carniola during Antiquity. In administrative terms, the area belonged to the ager of Emona and it was traversed by a useful but also quite dangerous and demanding shortcut to the capital of Noricum in the southern part of the Noricum province. By imposing Roman culture, lifestyle, language, and the customary erection of stone monuments romanisation most certainly also reached these places, as is clearly attested by the archaeological sites near the present-day town of Tržič: Ročevnica, Bistrica, Vaško, and Kovorske senožeti. The discovered objects and remnants of the building culture date the Roman settlement as far back as the first century AD. All the above-mentioned archaeological sites could therefore be at least indirectly linked to the Roman road, which ran near Tržič and continued towards the Ljubelj mountain pass, from where it descended into Noricum. Although the road is not documented in any ancient written source, its existence is strongly confirmed by the three altars, which most likely originate in the Ljubelj mountain pass, even though they were not discovered *in situ* but below Ljubelj, on what is now the Austrian side of the border. Two altars are dedicated to the goddess Belestis, who can quite persuasively also be associated with protecting the dangerous road section over the Ljubelj mountain pass. Worshipped by those who used the road more or less regularly, Belestis can also be viewed as the »protector« of travellers, merchants, and transporters for on the dangerous, sinister road she brought them at least a beam of light, which she is also associated with. Assisting her is a deity bearing a similar name, Belinus (or Belenus), an autochthonous deity typical of Noricum and especially of the *Norici*. Belestis was worshipped by the *Tapponii*, who may be considered as part of the local municipal elite, not only due to their veneration of the above-mentioned goddess, but also because one of their representatives held the office of a mayor in Virunum. Based on their worship of Belestis, it is also safe to assume that the family engaged in trade and transport, used the road across the Ljubelj mountain pass regularly, their lucrative activities enabled them to become relatively wealthy and to enter the municipal elite, sit on the *ordo decurionum*, and consequently hold the mayoral office.

In the popular tradition in Roman times (or perhaps the Middle Ages), the name *Forum Lubelinum* was preserved for Tržič or, rather, a nearby settlement, the name and existence of which are yet to be confirmed definitively. Just as the above-mentioned archaeological sites, this popular tradition can be linked to the Roman road, which ran through the area. All doubts regarding the existence of the Roman road and pertaining infrastructure would be dispelled by a

discovery of a new stone and an inscription-bearing monument, which we hope to achieve in the future. The three altars from the Austrian side of the border could be added one or two on the Slovenian side, and the Norican altars could be added one or two »Italic« ones. Equal advantage would be gained by a discovery of an inscription-bearing tombstone or perhaps a boundary stone, which would enable us to say much more about Tržič in Roman times.