

## **Funerary Aspects of the Ancient Roman Province of Noricum (The Medallion Tomb *Stelae*)**

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### **Abstract**

There were in Graz and other places in Austria special collections of Roman funerary stelae, with different shapes, and they can be found only in the museum Catalogues, so it has never undergone a comparative study, to know if this type of stelae was characteristic in the ancient Roman province of Noricum or not. This study deals with the funerary stelae which depict the deceased person inside a medallion, and the research aims to know if this was something related only to Noricum or it was a tradition in all the Roman provinces in the same time. Some of those represented dead people on the medallions stelae from Austria were Roman soldiers, others were ordinary people depicted while doing their profession as for instance the stela with the depiction of a writer holding a pen and a book. And finally those Medallion Stelae were special for the Western Roman provinces, especially in Noricum and Pannonia, with different subjects of myths, and although the shape of the medallion was Roman, and many of them were soldiers, Celtic elements are found in their depiction,

with another Egyptian and Attic element more than the Roman ones.

**Keywords:** Roman, Tomb Stele, Noricum, Austria.

### **1. Introduction:**

#### **1.1 Historical notes about Noricum:**

The Danube River was very important to the Romans, as it was indicated by the Roman presence in Central and Eastern Europe in early first century A.D. to the last decades of the fourth century (Wilkes, 2005) and has formed the northern boundary of Noricum,\* to the east and southeast of it is Pannonia province, Rattia is to the west and Italy to the south. These borders were fortified in the

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\*Modern Austria: Thanks to Erasmus, post doctoral scholarship which the researcher obtained twice, in 2014 and in 2016, which enabled her to see and take photos for those Tombstones, which are kept in different museums and sites in Austria. Especial thanks are to Proff. G. Koiner from Karl Franzens Universitate, Graz and to the director of Graz Archaeological Museum for permitting me to take photos and measures of some objects.

second century AD against the Germanic tribes who came from the north and east. Those tribes could not fight Italy without crossing the provinces of Noricum and Pannonia; this is why they became of strategic importance to the Roman Empire.

The original inhabitants of the region were a mixture of Illyrians and Celts who came from the Balkans between 750 and 450 BC. There were early trade relations with Italy. The Celtic people were among the most influential elements in the province, especially the Norici tribes (Pleyel, 1987).

The ancient reference to Noricum appeared in Livy (39, 22, 6) when referring to the founding of Aquileia (Strabo, 5, I, 8) in 186 BC. Before Noricum had officially annexed to the Roman Empire, where it existed as an independent kingdom by the name of Regnum Noricum (Balduin, 1950; Scherrer 2002).

Its borders were not well known, it included most of present Austria, northwest of Slovenia and part of Hungary Perhaps a few parts of Switzerland. The administrative center of the kingdom was in Virunum, which became the capital of the province (Hudeczek, 1977) on Magdalensberg hill.

Noricum was peacefully annexed to the Roman Empire at about 15 BC. Although this annexation did not result in its direct conversion to the Roman province, it remained a kingdom with the same system and partition until it became an official province under Emperor Claudius 41-54 AD without any Military resistance of any kind, and he established some cities such as Virunum (Piccottini, 2002) (Klagenfurt) and Iuvavum (Kovacsovics, 2002) (Salzburg). It was only during the reign of Emperor Antoninus Pius, where the second legion Pia settled in, and the commander of the legion became the governor (Pleyel, 1987; Hainzmann & Pochmarski, 1994).

The close relationship between the Severan dynasty and the Danube region, above all Pannonia, continues to be revealed by

discoveries of new constructions, both civil and military, and of inscriptions that increase the statistical predominance of records dating from A.D. 193 and 235 when compared with all other eras. Some have suggested that much of this activity was linked directly with the passage through the area of Severus and his family in A.D. 202 on their return from the Parthian campaign. Other finds have also been linked with the presence of Caracalla on the Danube in A.D. 213 on his route for the Eastern campaign (Birley, 1999). In addition, the emperor Severus brought many changes to the Roman military. Half-increased soldiers' pay, they were allowed to be married while in service, and greater opportunities were provided for promotion into officer ranks and the civil service (Baynes, 1891).

In the reform of civil and military administration in the early fourth century A.D. all the Danube provinces were divided. Superior areas adjacent to the Danube became the provinces Noricum Ripense (Noricum along the river) and Pannonia Prima, now separated from the inner region of Noricum Mediternea and Savia. Pannonia Inferior was divided into Pannonia Secunda and Valeria, both including stretches of the Danube (Wilkes, 2005). Already under Gallienus the same policy continued in reinforced form Measures under Diocletian are also in the interior of the province (Balduin, 1950; Stankovic, 2012)

This kingdom was economically important to the Romans, and was famous for the production of iron, metal tools and high quality weapons. Its location was strategically important as Augustus enabled his expansionist policy to fortify and secure the borders of the Rhine and Danube rivers. In the so-called National hospitality (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6446/>) The role of mining and metalworking, long acknowledged as major elements in the Danube provinces in general (Wilkes, 2005). Its trade flourished during the first century

AD. This encouraged emigration of many merchants from northern Italy and other, which resulted in the imposition and domination of Roman control in all areas, whether economic or cultural. Augustus gave the Roman citizenship to many local aristocrats and nobles. Tiberius pursued this policy. The rest of the people who lived in the center of the Alps and in other parts of the province did not have Roman citizenship, but some received a degree, without granting them any rights (Smith, 1873).

The military government in the neighboring province of Pannonia and Rattia maintained commandment. In the reign of Claudius, the capital of Noricum was transferred to Virunum. Vespasian established an important center in the province also called Flavia Solva (Leibnitz) as Pliny stated (III, 27) "In the rear of the Carni and the Iapydes, along the course of the great river Ister, the Rhæti touch upon the Norici: their towns are Virunum, Celeia, Teurnia, Aguntum, Vianiomina, Claudia, and Flavium Solvense" (Modrijan & Weber, 1965; Hudeczek, 1977; Pleyel, 1987; Hudeczek, 2002).

Hadrian established some other cities such as Carnuntum (Petronell), the Severan dynasty established Vindobona (Vienna) (Pleyel, 1987). Five cities were granted the status of the Roman colony and began to build the borders of the Danube by setting up small military stations along the river. In the middle of the second century AD, the military posts of the state were fortified and reinforced against the attack of some of the other German tribes in an attempt to reach Italy in about 166-171 A. D. (Wilkes, 2005)

Although Noricum was a peaceful province but there were small military garrisons belonging to the Aryans and Pannonia, some inscriptions show the presence of the eighth Augustan Legion and other inscriptions mentioning soldiers belonging to the first Noricum Legion from the first century AD. In the second century AD, with the

reorganization of the Danube borders, some other garrisons were added (Weber, 1969).

## 1.2. Religious and Funerary Aspects in Noricum

In many Danube communities, Roman cults were dominant, generally with little or no assimilation to local pre-Roman deities, an exception was the eastern alpine regions of Noricum and Pannonia where, as in other parts of the Celtic-speaking world, local deities survived in equation with Roman gods (Wilkes, 2005).

The Roman gods were worshiped in addition to some eastern cults such as the cult of Mithra and Isis. One of the most important gods was the goddess Noria, protector of the province, who was assimilated with the Egyptian Isis, as remains of the foundations of a temple for Isis in Frauenberg, was found<sup>†</sup>. In addition, some Celtic gods were mixed with Roman ones as Mars Latopius who was worshiped in different places (Hudeczek, 1977).

Recently published cemeteries from the Danube hinterland in Noricum, in the south of the province constitute family tombs near Klagenfurt and a larger cemetery at Katsch in the territory of Solva. The well-known monuments in the cemetery at Sempeter near Celeia preserved by a flood of the river Sava continue to attract attention as one of the most vivid records of native Roman elite, in this instance of Claudian Celeia. The great western cemetery at Poetovio is now published after having been stored in the museum at Graz for nearly a century, and that at Praetorium Latobicorum on the road between Emona and Siscia is also now fully published (Wilkes, 2005).

There is no evidence that the local inhabitants of Noricum and Pannonia have used any elements to commemorate the deceased before the Roman era, and when the Romans

<sup>†</sup>I had the privilege of participating in the excavations of this site in the 2014 season with the staff of the Classical Archaeology Department of Karl-Franzens University, Graz.

came, the local residents practiced burning the body and covered the place with Tumuli (Hudeczek, 1977).

The custom continued in Leibnitz, south of Austria, but there were no Celtic tombstones, and Roman tombstones were adorned with sculptures or only inscriptions. The tombs were built in as the usual Roman style and the stone markers or the soldiers and merchants who came to the area first used stelae then locals quickly used them.

The Romans tried to show the similarities between the Roman and Celtic cultures in those areas to integrate some ideas, especially those associated with funerary life and the underworld.

### 3. Noricum Stelae

The usual form of tomb stelae is a rectangular slab inscribed with subjects from the deceased's personal life or some mythical themes as in Pannonia. But in Noricum a special type of stelae appeared with a medallion shape (Hassan, 2015), resembling a shield depicting the deceased in the center. Those stelae, in Noricum, are closely similar in its form as well as by the manner of its erection. The exclusive form is a round medallion, or oval, with a deep niche, in which a bust of the deceased is depicted. They have small bases, to facilitate their placement on a broad surface, on top of a high pedestal or an altar (Schober, 1923).

#### 3. 1. The Catalogue of the Stelae

##### Cat. 1



**-Material:** marble **-Dimensions:** width 88 height 106 depth 29 **cm.**

**-Provenance:** Church in Graz-Umgebung [Bezirk]; Styria.

- Graz – Universal museum Joanneum, Inv. **224.**

**-Date:** end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

**-Description:** Medallion stela with remains of red color, framed by laurel wreath, and tympanum above and a small projected stone or plinth to fix it. two busts of men or soldiers, wearing tunic and Sagum with fibula on right shoulder, they are holding weapons, the man to the right with a sword they have Trajanic hair style.

**-Bibliography:**(Schober, 1923; Kremer, 2001; Hudeczek, 2004; Pochmarski, 2011;UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr. **1208**)

##### Cat. 2



**-Material:** Marble **-Dimensions:** width 111 height 114 depth 32 **cm.**

**-Provenance:** Seggauberg; Leibnitz district; Styria, **Flavia Solva.**

- Graz – Universal museum Johanneum, Inv. **157.**

**-Date:** End of Antonine period.

**-Description:** Medallion stela without base, framed by laurel wreath and tympanum

above. Inside a half-length figure of a bearded man or an officer is depicted, the hair is short curly, inlaid eye pupils, he is wearing military cloths composed of tunic with shoulder straps and Cuirass decorated with medusa head, and with officer napkin on his left shoulder. On the left arm, he holds his weapon sheath, in his right hand he holds a Centurion stab, which looks like a dagger, and the hilt of the weapon which is decorated with an eagle's head, is held in the left hand. Behind the officer's left shoulder appears an oval shield with handle in its middle.

**-Bibliography:** (Schober, 1923; Modrijan & Weber, 1965; Hudeczek, 1977; Hudeczek, 2004; Pochmarski, 2011; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr.1207)

**Cat.3**



**-Material:** Marble- **Dimensions:** width 120 height 118 depth 30 cm.

**-Provenance:** Seggauberg; Leibnitz district; Styria, Flavia Solva.

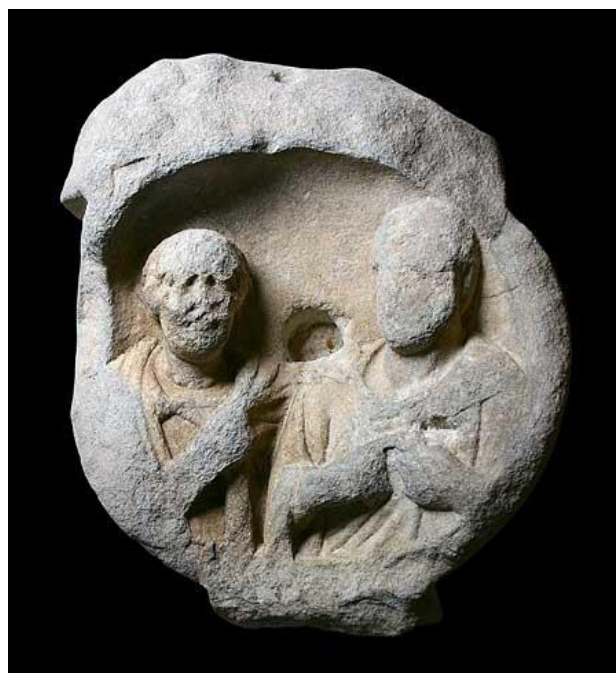
- Graz – Universal museum Joanneum, Inv.153.

**-Date:** End of Antonine period.

**-Description:** Medallion stela without base, decorated with laurel wreath frame, topped by tympanum. Inside it a couple is depicted, the man is to the right and the woman to the left. The man is bearded, with curly hair, wearing tunic and toga contabulata. The woman is wearing headdress, hood, belted tunic and toga, richly cloths adorned by brooches on both sides, necklace with pendant in lunar shape.

**-Bibliography:**(Schober, 1923; Modrijan & Weber, 1965; Hudeczek, 2004; Pochmarski, 2011; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr. 1206)

**Cat. 4**



**-Material:** marble- **Dimensions:** width 80 height 98 depth 42 cm.

**-Provenance:** Seggauberg; Leibnitz district; Styria, Flavia Solva.

- Graz – Universal museum Joanneum, Inv. 145.

**-Date:** end of Antonine and beginning of Severan period.

**-Description:** Medallion stela, but in bad condition and without base, with tympanum

and probably dolphins on both sides. Inside it a couple is depicted, the man to the right and the woman to left. The man is bearded, wearing tunic and toga contabulata, holding in his left hand a scroll of paper. The woman is wearing a headdress, hood, holding her cloths with her right hand.

**-Bibliography:**( Schober, 1923; Kremer, 2001; Modrijan& Weber, 1965; Pochmarski,20114; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr. 1239)

### Cat. 5



**-Material:** marble- **Dimensions:** width 58, height 100 cm

**-Provenance:** Flavia Solva; Noricum

- Schlosses Seggau, partially broken and not in a good condition.

**-Date:** end of Antonine and beginning of Severan times.

**-Description:** The remaining part of a medallion stela framed by part of the tympanum, inside it is depicted a couple, a bearded man to the right with arranged hairstyle, to the left is a woman with a hood and hair arranged around her face as two rolls around both sides.

**-Bibliography:** (Hainzmann Pochmarski, 1994; Pochmarski,2011; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr. 1274)

### Cat.6



**-Material:** Marble-**Dimensions:** width 97 height 79 depth 21, 5 cm

**-Provenance:** Flavia Solva; Noricum

- Museum Frauenberg – Temple museum

**-Date:** end of Antonine and beginning of Severan times

**-Description:** The remaining part of a medallion stela, a family is depicted; to the right is a bearded man wearing a tunic and Sagum, holding in his left hand a scroll of papyrus. To the left is a woman with Antonine hairstyle, wearing tunic and toga, on her breast is a fibula, brooch and necklace ends with lunar pendant. In front of them is a bust of a boy wearing a tunic and Sagum, and holding two birds in his hands.

**-Bibliography:**(Pochmarski,2011; Mander, 2012; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr. 1350).

**Cat.7**

**-Material:** Marble **-Dimensions:** width 50, height 72, depth 11,5 cm

**-Provenance:** Noricum.

- On the walls of Sankt Nikolai church in Sausal; Leibnitz [District]; Styria; Austria

**-Date:** end of Antonine and beginning of Severan times.

**-Description:** Medallion stela with tympanum above, and a rectangular base with an inscription. Inside the medallion, a child or a boy is depicted with short hair, and Harpocrates lock of hair over his right shoulder, wearing a tunic and Toga contabulata, holding a bird in his left hand and playing with it with his right hand.

**-Inscription:**

P(ublio) Cass[io] Maternia/no [filio an(norum)] III

**-Bibliography:**(Pochmarski,2011; Mander, 2012; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr. 2882; <http://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD052215>)

**Cat. 8**

**-Material:** marble **-Dimensions:** width 83 height 103 depth 30 cm.

**-Provenance:** Seggau; Leibnitz district; Styria, **Flavia Solva.**

- Graz – Universal museum Joanneum, Inv. 159.

**-Date:** Severian.

**-Description:** Medallion framed by two crossing Cornucopiae, supporting the tympanum, sea creatures decorate the area above the racking cornices. Inside the medallion busts of a couple is depicted, the man to the right, bearded, bald forehead, wearing a tunic and toga contabulata, holding a scroll of paper in his left hand and his right hand is shaking the woman right hand. The woman to the left is wearing a local headdress, a hood, and a belted tunic and Toga, decorated with fibula, metal chains on chest, floral decorated necklace and bracelet,

her left hand is placed on the man's right shoulder.

**-Bibliography:**(Schober, 1923; Kremer, 2001; Modrijan& Weber, 1965; Hudeczek, 2004; Pochmarski,2011; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr.1204)

### Cat. 9



**-Material:** Marble- **Dimensions** width 89 height 90 depth 29 **cm.**

**-Provenance:** Seggauberg; Leibnitz district; Styria, **Flavia Solva.**

- Graz – Universal museum Joanneum, Inv. **172.**

**-Date:** Severan.

**-Description:** remains of a medallion stela with part of the base, tympanum missing its frame decorations. Inside it is represented busts of a couple emerging from acanthus leaves. The woman to the right is wearing a hood, and a necklace with a pendant in lunar shape, and belted Tunic and toga adorned with brooches. The man is to the left, bearded, wearing tunic and Sagum with fibula on the right shoulder.

**-Bibliography:** (Schober, 1923; Kremer, 2001; Modrijan& Weber, 1965;

Pochmarski,2011;UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr.1213)

### Cat.10



**-Material:** Marble-**Dimensions:** width 83 height 97 cm

**-Provenance:** Flavia Solva; Noricum

- Museum Seggauberg - Schloss Seggau

**-Date:** Severan times.

**-Description:** A medallion stela, inserted in the walls of the castle, with tympanum above. Inside it, a couple is depicted shaking hands, to the right is a bearded man wearing tunic and toga, holding in his left hand a scroll of papyrus. To the left is a woman with a hood wearing a tunic and toga, on her breast is a winged fibula, brooch, necklace, and bracelets in her right hand.

**-Bibliography:**(Schober, 1923; Pochmarski,2011; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr. **1268)**



**Cat.11**

**-Material:** Marble-**Dimensions:** width 72 height 74 cm

**-Provenance:** Noricum

- Mooskirchen; Voitsberg [District]; Styria; Austria, in the southern part of the church wall.

**-Date:** Severan times.

**-Description:** A medallion stela, inserted in the walls of the church, inside it a couple is depicted shaking hands, to the right is a bearded man wearing a Sagum with fringes, holding in his left hand a scroll of papyrus and wearing a finger ring. To the left is a woman with a hood wearing a tunic, toga, and a collar necklace ends with a lunar pendant.

**-Bibliography:**(Pochmarski,2011; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr. 4382)

**Cat.12**

**-Material:** Marble-**Dimensions:** width 80 height 80cm

**-Provenance:** Flavia Solva; Noricum

- Museum Seggau - Schloss Seggau in bad condition of preservation.

**-Date:** Severan times.

**-Description:** The remaining part of a medallion stela, inserted in the walls of the castle, inside it a family is depicted, the mother to the left, part of her head is missing, wearing a hood on her head, a belted tunic and toga, the father to the right is bearded and wearing a toga with long sleeves and sad emotion on his face, in front of them are represented two young children their faces are broken, to the right is a girl with a necklace, to the left is a boy with a toga contabulata.

**-Bibliography:** Hainzmann& Pochmarski, 1994; Pochmarski,2011; Mander, 2012; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr.1273)

**Cat.13**

**-Material:** White Marble-**Dimensions:** width 86 height 103 cm

**-Provenance:** Flavia Solva; Noricum

- Museum Seggau - Schloss Seggau

**-Date:** late Severan times middle of third century A. D.

**-Description:** Remains of an elliptical medallion inserted in the wall of the castle, with a Laurel wreath around it and tympanum. Inside the medallion, a half size man and a boy are depicted. The man has his hair combed in neat divisions; he has a mustache and a short beard. His eyes are wide open; his

mouth is slightly open. He wears a leather armor-*lorica*, from which a part on the right shoulder and on the right upper arm shows the leather strips and the metal Cuirass at the front on the breast can be seen, which was originally decorated with medusa head. He has lowered the right arm and placed the right hand on the right shoulder of the son. To his right appears in the background the upper part of a *Pilum*; consists of a triangular tip, the pear-shaped forcible with a small annular bead, a tassel, and the broad shaft. On the right side of the man is represented his half-grown son whose head reaches under the shoulder of the father. He wears the Sagum, which is held together on the right shoulder by a fibula. He bents his right arm in front of the body, and turns the right and left finger of the right hand into a deictic gesture to the right, where the approach of a scrolling scroll is still visible.

**-Bibliography:**(Schober, 1923; Hainzmann& Pochmarski, 1994; Pochmarski,2011; Mander, 2012; UBi-erat-Lupa.org. No. 1266)

**Cat.14**

**-Material:** Marble-**Dimensions:** width 108 height 110 cm

**-Provenance:** Flavia Solva

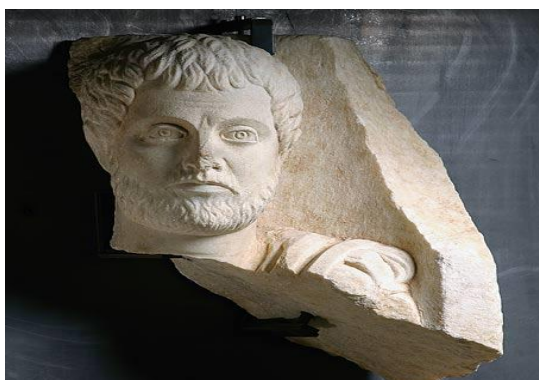
- Museum Seggau - Courtyard of the castle Schloss Seggau

**-Date:** late Severan times middle of third century A. D.

**-Description:** A round medallion inserted in the wall of the castle, with Laurel wreath around it. and small base for placing on a substructure. Inside a half size couple is depicted with acanthus leaves emerging below their bodies from the medallion. The man is to the right, his face is destroyed, and he has a beard around the outline of the face. He is wearing a tunic over which he wears the Sagum held together on the right shoulder with a fibula. The two arms are angled in front of the body of the man, while in the left hand he holds a scroll, to which he points with the right hand index and middle fingers. The woman is to the left, she is an indigenous woman wearing an under garment or a tunic and toga, with two fixing fibulae on both shoulders, she holds her clothes with her left hand. She also wears a head cover or a hood, and a necklace with a lunar pendant, a small part of a bracelet appears in her right wrist.

**-Bibliography:**(Schober, 1923; Kremer, 2001; Hainzmann& Pochmarski, 1994; Pochmarski,2011;UBi-erat-Lupa.org, No. 1267)

**Cat. 15**



**-Material:** marble- **Dimensions:** width 35 height 45 depth 23 cm.

**-Provenance:** Wagna / Leibnitz district; Styria, **Flavia Solva**; found in the degradation of late antique fountain.

- Graz – Universal museum Joanneum, Inv. **298.**

**-Date:** Gallienus time.

**-Description:** fragment of a Medallion stela, on which remains only the head and left shoulder of a man with a beard and moustache, with inlaid eyes. He probably wears a fringed Sagum.

**-Bibliography:**(Hudeczek, 2004; Pochmarski,2011; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr.6649)

**Cat. 16**



**-Material:** marble- **Dimensions:** width 51 height 69 depth 13 cm.

**-Provenance:** Wagna- Leibnitz district; Styria; **Flavia Solva**, from the excavations of 1915.

- Graz – Universal museum Joanneum, Inv. **226.**

**-Date:** Constantine 306-320

**-Description:** Medallion stela framed with laurel wreath with a rosette in the top middle; there is a tympanum with two dolphins on both sides. Inside the medallion a bust of a man is depicted, beardless, high hairstyle, wearing a tunic and fringed Sagum, fibula in the shape of a bow, he is holding a stylus or a pen with his right hand, writing with it on a half opened or unfolded writing board.

**-Bibliography:** (Schober, 1923; Kremer, 2001; Modrijan & Weber, 1965; Hudeczek, 1978; Hudeczek, 2004; Pochmarski, 2011; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr.1205) **Cat.17**



**-Material:** Marble-**Dimensions:** height 65 cm

**-Provenance:** Flavia Solva; Noricum

- When plowing in the area of today's gas station 1963, is missing now.

**-Date:** Time of Four emperors (Tetrarchy).

**-Description:** A medallion stela, with nearly flat tympanum and two lying figures on both sides (not very clear), it has a small semi-triangular base below, inside it is depicted a couple, to the right is a bearded man with

straight hair locks wearing a tunic and Sagum with fringes, holding in his left hand a scroll of papyrus and wearing a finger ring. To the left is a woman, wearing a tunic and toga, a collar necklace, bracelets. She holds an apple with her right hand.

**-Bibliography:**(Pochmarski, 2005; Pochmarski, 2011; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr. 5744)

### Cat. 18



**-Material:** Marble- **Dimensions:** width 32 height 20 depth 8 cm

**-Provenance:** Flavia Solva; Noricum

- Private ownership, not known.

**-Date:** Time of Four emperors (Tetrarchy).

**-Description:** a fragment of a medallion stela, with nearly flat tympanum with lying dolphins on each side. What remains of the depicted subject is only a head of a beardless man with smooth hair.

**-Bibliography:**(Pochmarski, 2011; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr.9087)

### 4. Analytical study for the Stelae in the Catalogue:

The catalogue stelae are collected from many sources; the Graz Museum, books, visits to other sites and museums outside Graz in different parts of Austria. In fact, the majority

of these monuments were discovered outside their archaeological context, where they were usually reused as decorative elements with a special aesthetic impression in a church or within the walls of a castle or reused as building material in several regions of Austria. Finding them inserted in these walls reflects their interpretation as some works of art that have no connection to pagan gods but they express ordinary people.

The frames around the Medallion stelae from Noricum show that they are usually decorated with laurel flowers, or rarely two intersecting Cornucopiae as in **Cat. 8**. (**Fig. 1**) shows the predominance of Laurel 83% and only 17% with Cornucopiae.

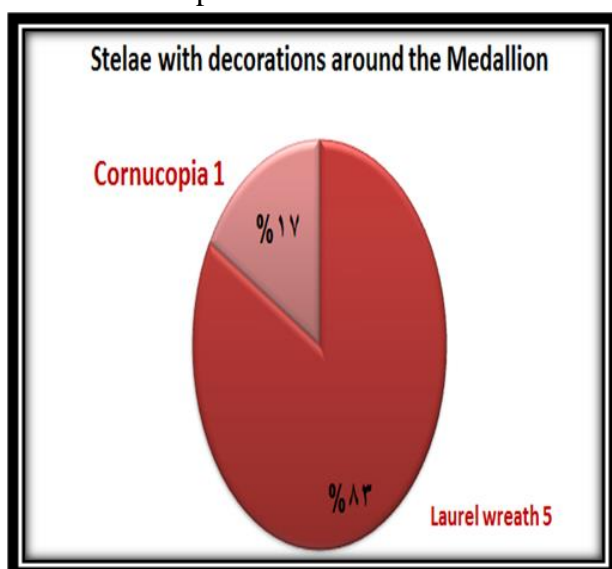


Fig.1.: The percentage of Decorations around the stela

Some of the Medallions have the architectural form of temple pediments, on the rectangular stelae of Noricum, the pediment always had some symbolic decorations as lions, griffons, Medusa or two rosettes (Schober, 1923), but on the medallion stelae the pediment is shallow and two lions or dolphins appear for the protection of the deceased in his journey to the underworld or as guardians for his grave. (**Fig. 2**) shows that most of the medallions about 13 had the tympanum above (**Cat. 1-8, 10, 13, 16-18**), and only 5 have not (**Cat. 9, 11-12, 14-15**), it is to be noted that

missing the tympanum might have been happened due to their reuse in the churches or castle's walls so, they may or not, have the same architectural frame.

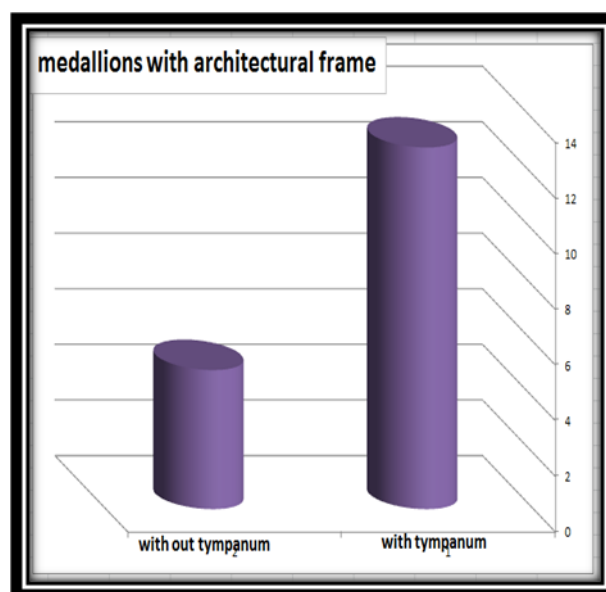


Fig. 2: The number of stelae with architectural frame.

The medallions sometimes stand free, so it should have a small base on them or a tapering stone to fix them on the grave directly or they may have been inserted in other high pedestals or columns on the graves. On the usual rectangular stelae from Noricum the pedestals usually have certain decorations, like funerary tables, vegetable ornaments, and the main scene inside a rectangle (Schober, 1923). Also some of the medallions stelae have the same pedestals, but others have no remains of any kind of bases, those ones may have been part of rectangular stelae decorated with the deceased inside medallions as the famous stela in Graz Museum of L. Cantius Secundus and his family (Fig. 3) (Schober, 1923; Hudeczek, 1977; Hudeczek, 2004; UBi-erat-Lupa.org, Nr. 1165.).



Fig. 3. L, Cantius stela, Photo by: F. Gaber, the Author.

The freestanding medallion stelae have a pedestal void from any decoration or rarely have an inscription for the deceased as in **Cat.7**. In (Fig. 4) we can see that about 44% of the medallions have this base and about 56% have not, this also is not emphatic conclusion because some of them are broken and some are inserted in the modern walls of the churches, and we do not know their original form.

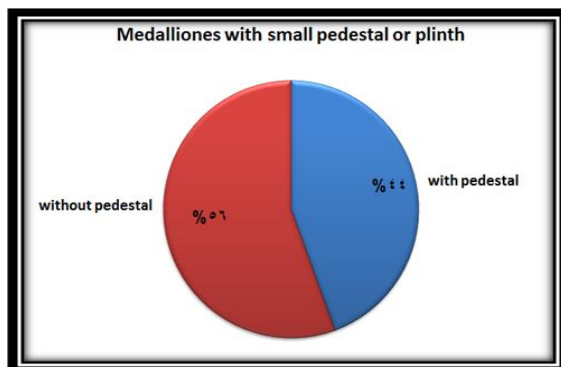


Fig. 4: The percentage of stelae above Pedestal

The inscriptions on these stelae are in Latin, because Latin was widely spread among all classes in the province in general, it was the official predominant language before 100 A. D. (Hudeczek, 1977). With prosperity and economic recovery at the beginning of the second century AD there was a trend towards building luxurious tombs and to use richly decorated tombstones. In the fourth century and after Christianity, burying has replaced burning entirely throughout the Roman Empire.

Towards the end of the third century AD. stone sarcophagi replaced tombstones and were spread more widely in the province of Pannonia. Therefore, the date of these medallions from Noricum is likely to be from the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. until the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.

**4. 1. The themes which appeared on these stelae** depict the deceased either alone as a soldier **Cat.2**, or showing only his head **Cat.15** or he is depicted performing a job as the messenger of the army or a writer stela **Cat.16**. Sometimes two dead persons are represented in the stela probably friends or brothers or, as they usually wear military clothes and hold some weapons, they might have been sharing a military career **Cat.1**. Other stelae have shown also men in full military costumes, Lorica and weapons, but they look different. In **Cat. 2**, the man wears rich military clothes with richly decorated Cuirass and ordinary weapons while a shield stands behind. The luxurious appearance indicates a high ranked officer or commander. **Cat. 13** show another cuirassed one with his son. It is clear that he is not an ordinary soldier, but a high ranked officer also. The weapons which accompany those soldiers, diverse between the small short pugio or gladius which was used forehead-to-hand combat; it was short stabbing sword as in **Cat. 1-2**. in **Cat. 2** the sword has a hilt decorated with an eagle's head. This kind of

swords originally came from Spain. It is suggested that Spanish mercenaries fighting for Carthage in the first Punic war had introduced it. It had a scabbard made of wood, leather and tin, which hung from the right side (Smith, 1890). Behind the officer's left shoulder in **Cat. 2** a shield with a handle in its middle appears. It is semi-oval, not the round one. It is known that the Romans used the huge round shield at the beginning of their history since the Republican period, and they inspired this semi oval shield from the Celts or the Gauls since the third century BC. (Bull, 1991). It appears on the altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus and on Trajan's column in Rome (Kleiner, 1992). Another weapon appeared in **Cat. 13** that are the Pilum, the Roman soldiers relied on; it was a long spear, or javelin. There were two types: thick and thin. The thin one had a long iron head, which fit to the long handle by way of a socket. The thin Pilum was about 2 m long, with a barbed point. The thick Pilum was of a similar length, and was attached to the shaft with a 5 cm wide tang. The tip of both of these weapons had a pyramid-shaped barb. On the thick Pilum, there was a wooden block to secure the metal head and to protect the hand during fighting. The thick pila were much lighter, weighing at about 2kg. This lightening of the Pilum led to the introduction of a version of the heavy Pilum with a weighted ball at the top of the shaft, to help balance the spear. The point was made of softer iron so that it would bend upon impact, preventing the enemy from throwing the spear back (Boutell & Lacombe, 1996). Our example in **Cat. 13** should be from the type of thick Pilum; because it ends with a triangular shape, below it some other decorative elements like bead and pear shape.

On some other medallion stelae, the deceased child is depicted holding a bird **Cat. 7**, which was a usual type on the Greek and Roman stelae of children accompanied by pets, it was

very frequent on Attic, Hellenistic and Roman Stelae<sup>‡</sup>. Here in our example the Egyptian-Alexandrian influence is traceable through the hair lock of the god Harpocrates. So it may refer to the association of the child with gods like Harpocrates who was considered as a shining sun; it was known that the sun renewed itself daily; so the depiction of the deceased assimilated to Harpocrates may refer to his renewed life as that of the god Harpocrates (El-Khachab, 1971).

In other examples appears a couple portrait and it was usual that the man is depicted to the right and the woman to the left. However, only one example depicts the woman to the right and the man to the left **Cat. 9**. Although they appear as husband and wife, yet, the sculpture did not show any kind of relationship between them, as in **Cats. 3-4, 9, 17**. Sometimes the husband appears shaking hands in a farewell scene with his wife as in **Cat. 8, 10-11**.

Some stelae show a family; father, mother, son and daughter **Cat.9**. Or parents with one child only **Cat.6** girl or a boy depicted assimilating his father or holding a bird or any pet animal as was usual on the children stelae.

#### **4. 2. Persons who are depicted on the Medallion Stelae**

The deceased is represented with some elements that may be considered as indicators of things, related to his life before death or symbols referring to his religious beliefs. For example, some of the deceased men were depicted holding writing tools, pens or papyrus scroll **Cats. 4, 6, 10-11, 17**, It was common that the texts had to be kept written

<sup>‡</sup>Children were common figures in Greek art since the fourth century BC, especially in Attica; where a large group of children statues appeared. A group of terracotta smiley children statues were uncovered inside the temple of Artemis at Brauron, it is suggested that these statues were offerings to the goddess who protects children, on behalf of the children who died before the marriage age: Pedley, J. G., 1994: "Greek Art", in: Art Institute of Chicago Museum, 47-48.

on papyrus scrolls, it was the usual form of books in the ancient world since the ancient Egyptian civilization and continued until the late Roman period. (Fig. 5) clarifies that most of them are represented with this scroll.

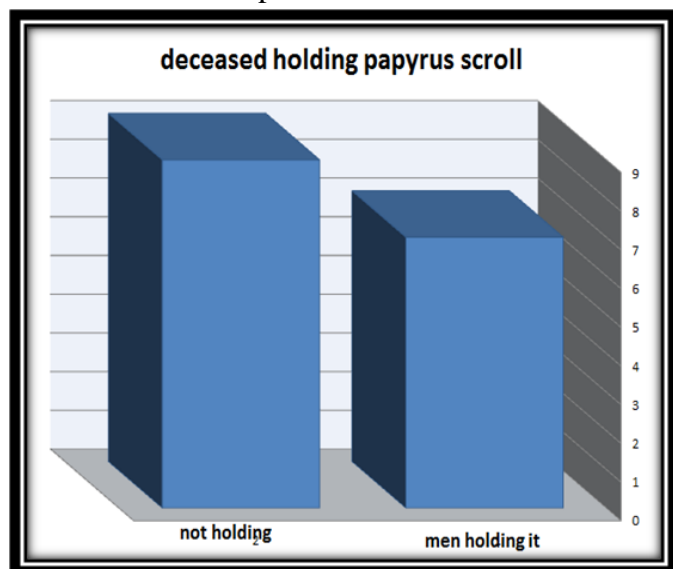


Fig. 5: The number of deceased holding a scroll

However, the indication of this is uncertain as far as we are not able to read or know what kind of text is written. Holding a written text may indicate that the deceased was of the intellectual class of the society or that he was not a roman citizen but obtained the citizenship, or he was an owner of a considerable property which requires his revision of revenues, especially that some examples show the man wearing a finger ring **Cats.** 11, 17. Finally, it may indicate that the deceased served as a government employment. In any case, those men with papyri scrolls were members of the highly privileged class of the society.

#### 4. 3. Clothes

The common garment of all the classes, including military, common people and slaves, was undoubtedly the shirt-like tunic which was used for men and women as the under garment, it consists of two pieces of cloth placed on the shoulders and sides and attached by a belt at the waist. Men wore the short tunic which covers the knees. It existed

in various types; armless, short or long-armed, in the long-armed tunic *manicata* was regarded as a soft, unmanageable. Soldiers usually wore a dark tunic of fluffy material (Smith, 1890).

The Roman Toga was the outer garment in peaceful time, not in battles; it was worn by both sexes. It consisted of a piece of white wool that ended with round edges when folded; the fold appears round, with a part of it on the left shoulder hanging down. Another way to wear it is to be hanged on the left shoulder to be wrapped around the right arm. The method of wrapping the toga is sometimes used for dating because it varied from time to time; the classical toga was replaced by the toga *contabulata*, a shorter version of the classical toga that was folded in a band across the wearer's chest (Smith, 1890). This kind was spread in the end of Antonine and in the Severan times and men were depicted wearing it in **Cats.** 3-4, 7-8, 10-11.

In addition, some dead persons were portrayed with the *Sagum*, it was a large rectangular cloak - usually with fringes or small circular discs, and other decorations, fastened on shoulders with fibula. It was the cloak of war; all men wore it in times of wars even if they stayed in the city. Similar to the *Sagum* is the *Abolla* that was a cloak used since the late republic and became popular in the Second century, and reemerged again in the Fourth and Fifth centuries (Pleyel, 1987). The Roman soldiers and inferior officer's rank, in contradistinction to the *Paludamentum* for generals and superior officers, wore it (Smith, 1890). *Sagum* was always fastened by leather and metal clasp or a big round fibula on the right shoulder and worn on top of the armor as in **Cats.** 1, 6, 9, 11, 15, 17, but in a rare example **Cat.** 16 the fibula was bow shaped. This type of *Sagum* classed as a military armor in connection with soldiers and officers, dates back to the time of



Caracalla 211-217 A.D. or to the Severan dynasty in general. Some scholars consider it as Celtic or from a Celtic origin (Pochmarski, 2004).

#### 4. 4. Women of local origin:

On tombstones in Noricum and Pannonia, women and girls are depicted wearing a long tunic with long sleeves, or without sleeves, and another robe that attached to the waist with a belt and held on the shoulders with large fibula. Their dress can be seen frequently as armless and was not sewn at the shoulders, but was held together by pairwise of worn fibers. As the native costume appears, which can be found on stelae from Noricum till the 3<sup>rd</sup> century as in the stela of 100 A. D. of Lucius Cantius, previously mentioned, from Flavia Solva the deceased wore Celtic clothes and the Norrish pannonish double fibula and winged or flugel *fibeln* (Garbsch, 1965; Pleyel, 1987), which is already known from the Augustan period in the area (Magdalena, 2014).

In **Cat. 8**, appears some decorations for the woman's chest, sometimes as linked chains around the jewelry or the fibula, sometimes a piece of cloth is placed on the shoulders and sometimes it extends to cover the head. It is a common situation among the Celtic women, but did not appear on our medallion stelae of Noricum, this type flourished more clearly on the stelae of Pannonia because the local effect was stronger as mentioned before.

There are different types of women's head cover on Noricum stelae in general, as in Virunum and Flavia Solva and Iuvavum, the norisch *Haube* is developed from the Celtic one and continued in use even in Roman times but with some differences. In the previously mentioned stela of L. Cantius (Fig. 3), it was for a family and two women are depicted with the typical Celtic head cover, which is like a high-*modiusmutze* or a cape covering the head without any hair locks appearing, the other women are wearing

another type of cape, above the cape a piece of cloth covers part of the cape and the hair is extended below on both sides of the face like an inner roll (Garbsch, 1965; Hudeczek, 1977), not as hair locks, then in a third type, the cape continued in use but less higher than the second type, with the hair on both sides only without any veil (Pleyel, 1987). The Three types of Celtic hair covers did not appear with women depicted on the Medallion stelae, especially for the first type which in the course of time disappeared and only the second and third type continued in use **Cats. 3, 5, 9, 10** show women with head covers and the hair like an inner roll on both sides of the face, in spite of this Celtic appearance, another woman is depicted with the Celtic head cover mixed with the hair style of roman time **Cat. 8** which appears on the forehead and the face below the cape from the Severan time. Another example represents the woman only with a pure Roman Antonine hairstyle as in **Cat. 6**.

Many of the women are depicted with some jewelry, which indicate how rich they are. Brooches or fibulae were usually of bronze; two large ones on the shoulders resembling those of Celtic and Germanic Ones **Cat. 3, 9**. Women usually wear a crescent necklaces or necklaces that distinguish the local wealthy women with lunar pendant **Cats. 3, 6, 9, 11**. (**Fig. 6**) shows the percentage of women on Noricum stelae with different types of accessories, in hands or on cloths or different kinds of jewelry, it can give some indications; about 75% of the depicted women were from the high classes or rich people, and only about 25% were depicted without any kind of accessories, the predominance for erecting stelae in the province was for the rich people.

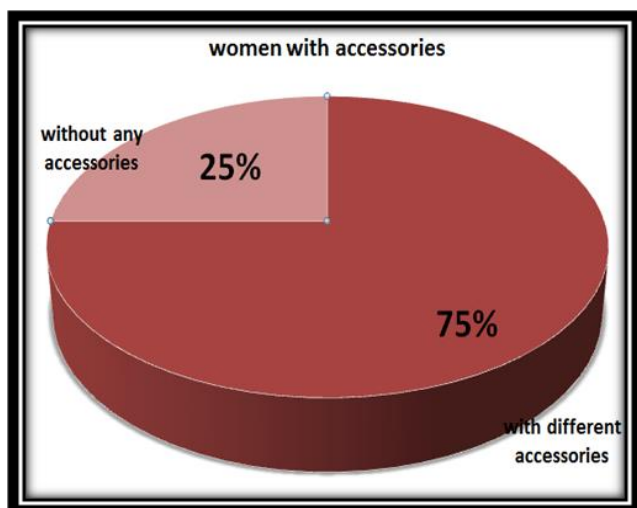


Fig. 6: The percentage of wealthy women with accessories.

#### 4. 5. The Origin and Symbolism of representing the deceased inside a medallion.

The bust which is depicted inside a medallion in Roman times was suitable for depicting the *Imagines Maiorum*, emperors, deities, philosophers as a memorial art either civil or funerary which was called "*Clipeatae Imagines*". These busts inside medallions were well known since a long time before the Romans, on golden medals, shields since the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC., the Greeks used a votive round mirrors in their tombs as an example in Boston museum of fine art (Vermeule, 1965).

The shape of the medallion has its symbolic feature in all civilizations as in the Near East and Egypt, it symbolizes the cosmos and the ruler weather god or king depicted inside. First the god was represented, then the king in the Hellenistic world, and finally the dignified deceased (Vermeule, 1965). This may refer to his eternity in the underworld.

Pliny (XXXV, IIII) shows that the busts inside shields were derived from the Carthaginian ones, where they used to make both their bucklers and their portraits of gold, and to carry them in the camp at all events. This refers to the military virtue, which the Roman emperors adopted, as on Augustus

coins which represent the emperor inside a laurel wreath (Hadrill, 1986).

It seems that the form of a medal or a round shield spread in Roman western provinces, since the second century AD and continued in the third century AD after the emergence of the so-called *imagines clipeatae*, derived from *Clipeus*, *Clipeum* which literally means the bronze round shield of the Roman soldiers, it appeared during the reign of Emperor Trajan. The word was used to refer to things that looks like a round shield, like *Clipeum* -as medals that carry a portrait of a goddess or someone special (Smith, 1890).

Persons emerging from shields decorated with architectural elements are of Greek and Hellenistic origin and had a heroic character; when used in Rome, it had a funerary character. This form appeared in Rome since early times and was characterized with the depiction of some emperors or gods. It is more likely that, this form was an important symbol in the hearts of the Romans. in Noricum as part of the Roman empire, this idea continued, especially the laurel wreath surrounding the medal, which may refer to the victory of the Emperor or the god and may have a meaning in funerary art as the victory of the spirit of the deceased and its arrival in the underworld overcoming the various forces of evils in order to enjoy peace in the other world.

From this point of view, this form of medallions or round shields was unique and predominant in Noricum, compared with Roman examples dating back to the same period from other parts of the empire, especially in the eastern provinces. Although they had the same themes such as soldiers in military uniform, this form of Medallion stelae did not appear in the province of Egypt in general and Alexandria in particular or any other eastern province. Some medallion stelae are characterizing only the Western Roman

provinces as Noricum and Pannonia and have a symbolic funerary meaning.

### 5. Conclusion:

Although that type of tomb stelae was new to the Celts, they adopted it in Noricum using their customs and Celtic elements which continued to be dominant in different places while the Roman elements were few compared to the Celtic ones, in addition to the appearance of some Egyptian elements.

Dates of the Medallion stelae from Noricum range from the end of the first century AD. till the Tetrarchy times in the fourth century AD. (Fig.7), but the time of the Antonine and Severan dynasties witnessed the very high production of this kind of stelae, this may be due to the passing of the Severan family through the province while returning back from the Parthian wars, or because of the depiction of Septimius Severus with his family inside a kind of medallion or what they called the Severan *Tondo* (Kulikowski, 2016).

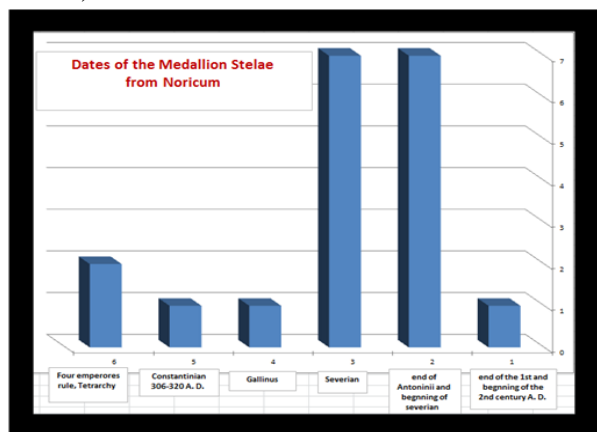


Fig. 7: The dating ranges of Noricum Stelae.

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