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Late Roman Emona: Understanding the transformation of the city*

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The archaeological remains of the Roman colony of Emona from the 4th and early 5th centuries point to a period of prosperity in the 4th century, a time of renewed infrastructure and new building development in several locations across the city, reinforcements to the city's defence system, and in the second half of the 4th century there was also considerable investment in Christian buildings. At the same time, secular monuments and, in some cases, infrastructure such as the city moat and the cloacae were often abandoned or neglected.

These changes were closely linked to a range of factors, an important one being the rise of Christianity. With the ongoing Christianisation of Emona, a diocese from the 4th century, the character of urban life was gradually transformed, as well as city's appearance.

Key words: Roman Emona, urbanism, Late Antiquity, Early Christianity, transformation of urban space

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Poznorimska Emona: razumevanje transformacije mesta

Arheološke ostaline rimske kolonije Emone iz 4. in zgodnjega 5. stoletja opozarjajo na obdobje razcveta v 4. stoletju, na obdobje obnavljanja infrastrukture in razvoja gradnje na različnih lokacijah v mestu, utrjevanja mestnega obrambnega sistema, v drugi polovici 4. stoletja pa je prišlo tudi do večjih investicij v krščanske zgradbe. Hkrati so bili posvetni spomeniki in infrastruktura, npr. mestni jarek in kloake, pogosto zapuščeni in zanemarjeni.

Te spremembe so bile tesno povezane z vrsto dejavnikov, eden od pomembnih je bil vzpon krščanstva. S pokristjanjenjem Emone, škofije iz 4. stoletja, se je postopoma spremenil značaj življenja v mestu in njegov izgled.

Ključne besede: rimska Emona, urbanizem, pozna antika, zgodnje krščanstvo, sprememba mestnega prostora.

* The article is based on the paper presented at the international symposium on the 1600th anniversary of Jerome's death, Hieronymus noster, Ljubljana, October 24th–26th, 2019.

Early Roman Emona: Form and function

The construction of the Roman city of Emona was completed by the middle of the second decade of the 1st century AD,¹ which was roughly the time when the Roman city, with all its physical and ideological connotations, was becoming the normative form of social, political and administrative organisation in the Roman Empire. As a newly built, fully fledged Roman city, Emona took on the typical form of the time: a rectangular layout enclosed by walls with towers, four main gates and several side gates (Fig. 1). The forum, covering an area of six *insulae*, had a special place in the rectangular grid of intersecting streets and the buildings between them. On one of the shorter sides of the forum stood the temple; on the other, sunnier side stood – in accordance with the principles of Vitruvius² – the basilica. Both longer sides were lined by colonnades housing shops and offices. The curia was probably to the north of the apse of the basilica.³

The Roman Empire may be seen as a network of cities: relatively autonomous administrative units together with their surrounding territories, all of them closely connected with the city of Rome (Fig. 2). Since the city was key to the administration of the empire, it is often seen mainly as an administrative and fiscal tool; however, this was no longer the case from the Augustan period at the latest – which roughly coincides with the beginnings of Roman Emona. At that time, urbanisation and state (or political) architecture started to receive strong legal and financial support and encouragement.⁴ From then on, the Roman city was a crucial systematic element in Roman imperialism.⁵

The Roman city's ideological charge was not only manifested in its layout and architecture, but also – perhaps even mainly – in its urban lifestyle. The Roman concept of urbanism was not just about living in a city, but the *right way* of living in a city: political involvement and responsibility, communal religious events and public spectacles, erection and maintenance of public monuments and buildings testifying to the wealth of the community and demonstrating loyalty to the

¹ Slapšak, *Unravelling the townscape*, 36; for a discussion about when Emona became a colony, see Šašel Kos, *Colonia Iulia Emona*, 87–92.

² Vitruvius, *The Ten Books of Architecture* (<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/20239/20239-h/20239-h.htm>, accessed on 22.2.2020)

³ Plesničar Gec, *Emonski forum*, 42.

⁴ Häussler, *Architecture, Performance and Ritual*, 11.

⁵ Whittaker, *Imperialism and culture: the Roman initiative*, 143–163; Häussler, *Architecture, Performance and Ritual*, 1–13; Revell, *Roman Imperialism and local identities*.

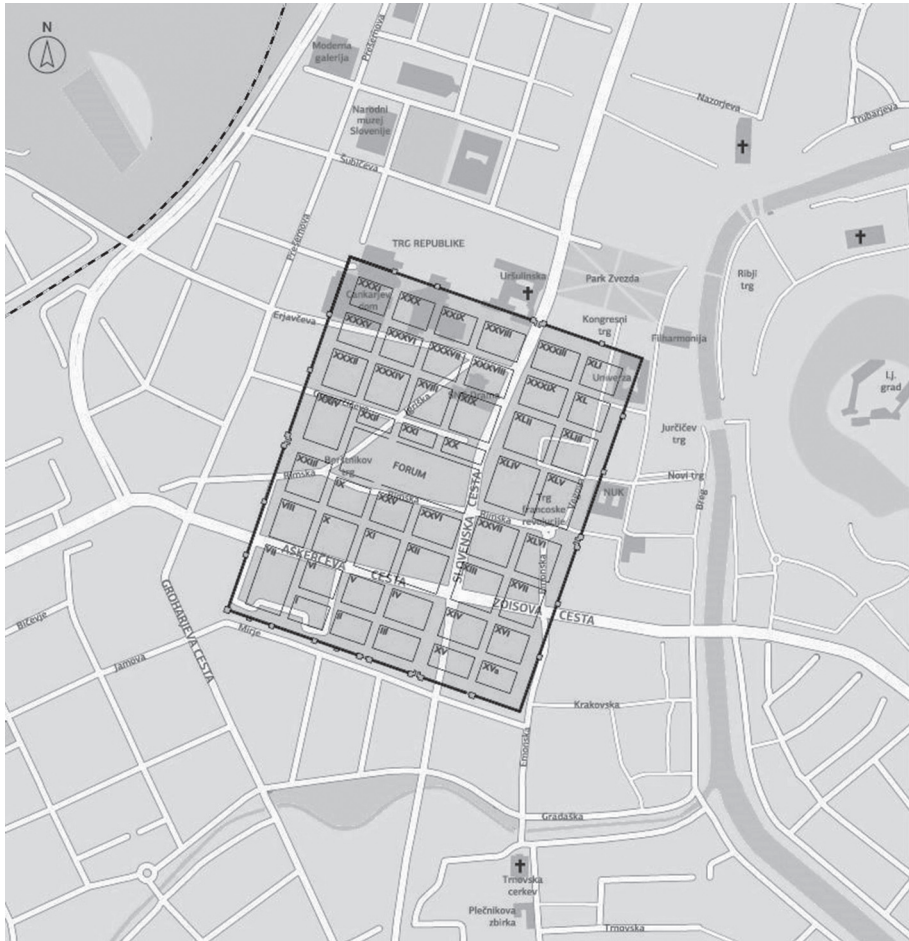


Figure 1: Emona beneath the present-day Ljubljana: the city's rectangular layout with the forum and insulae. Drawing: Janja Gojkovič/MGML.

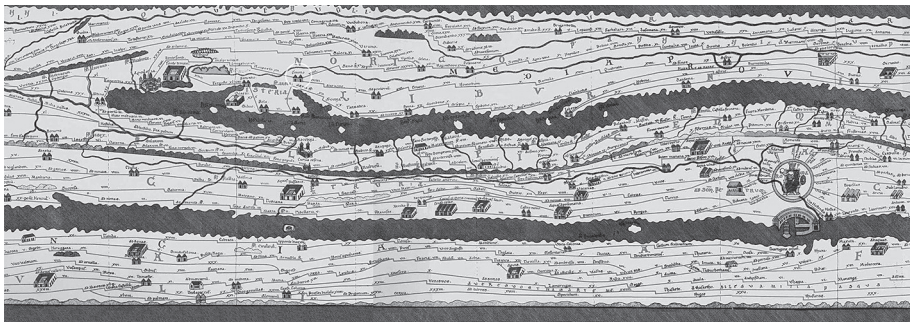


Figure 2: Emona on the Tabula Peutingeriana, marked by a white circle; Rome is on the far right. This and other itineraria show a dense network of cities of various sizes, connected by well-maintained, fast roads that provided an efficient means of communication across the vast empire. https://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabula_Peutingeriana#/media/Slika:TabulaPeutingeriana.jpg, 21.1.2020

empire.⁶ Establishing the proper Roman way of life in the city was not just a question of getting the architecture – the shape and ornamentation of public spaces – right: it was also down to the inhabitants, the colonists. Approximately 30 families, mostly from northern Italy, settled in Emona. They brought with them their culture and *habitus*: their lifestyle, values, dispositions, expectations and experiences of everyday life.⁷

In a sense, then, we can say that a Roman city such as Emona functioned as an ideological, political and administrative machine to romanise its inhabitants, communicate the empire's ideological principles, and speak of *romanitas*. In administrative, political and ideological terms, the empire was driven by a multitude of such machines, a whole network of cities and their surrounding territories.

A tough city: through thick and thin

Emona was a relatively small city with some 3,000 inhabitants. The completion of the colony was soon followed by additional investment in the water supply and municipal infrastructure. The central sewage system, consisting of a network of sewers and, in some parts of the city, a water supply system supplemented by numerous water wells,⁸ was constructed in about the middle of the 1st century AD – and there had been sporadic attempts even before that. The city flourished in the 1st and 2nd centuries, which were a time of peace and prosperity across the empire.

In the 3rd century, however, the empire was hit by a series of crises, the result of barbarian incursions, economic hardships and various other factors. Emona was particularly affected in the late 2nd and 3rd centuries. This key period is usually associated with the Marcomannic Wars, during which Emona became the centre of the military-administrative region of *Praetentura Italia et Alpium*; as well as with a decades-long plague epidemic that broke out during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and general economic decline.⁹ Emonan cemeteries show a decline in the number of the city's inhabitants in this period, which can be attributed to these factors.¹⁰

A partial reconstruction of Emona took place as early as the 3rd century.¹¹ The 4th century was again a time of prosperity for Emona, bringing with it the reconstruction of some of the infrastructure as well as new building development in a number of parts of the city.¹² The number of burials in Emona's cemeteries increased.

⁶ Županek, *Emona: a city of the empire*, 54–59.

⁷ Bourdieu, *Outline of a theory of practice*.

⁸ Gaspari, *Water in Roman Emona*, 112–114, 139–144, 170–171.

⁹ Kos, *The monetary circulation in the Southeastern Alpine region*.

¹⁰ The low number of graves that can be reliably dated to the 3rd century is partly due to dating methods. The 2nd century saw a considerable decline in the number of terra sigillata placed in graves; until then, these had provided a solid and relatively precise basis for dating. As regards grave goods, Loeschke X-type oil lamps became much more common, but these are more difficult to date; metal objects and coins were rare. Graves from the 4th century were again easier to date, as they often include coins and/or glass vessels which provide good chronological support.

¹¹ Gaspari, *Prehistoric and Roman Emona*, 220–223.

¹² Cf. the next chapter and Plesničar Gec, *Emonski forum*, 54.

Based on the archaeological record, life in Emona came to an end in the 5th century, probably sometime in the middle of the century as a result of the catastrophic Hun invasion of 452.¹³ However, there are some indications that life in Emona continued into the late 5th century; Ljudmila Plesničar Gec even argues that life in the city continued into the early 6th century.¹⁴

Late Roman Emona: Christianising the urban landscape

As mentioned above, the 4th century was a time of resurgence for Emona. But the Emona of the late 4th century differs considerably from that of the Early Roman period.

In the 4th and 5th centuries maintenance work on parts of the city infrastructure ceased. In the second half of the 4th century, parts of the sewage network were left uncleaned, resulting in some *cloacae* becoming almost completely blocked.¹⁵ In the 5th century the city ditches were no longer cleared.¹⁶ However, more recent excavations show that sediments in some parts of the sewage system were still being removed more or less regularly in the 4th century. The city's water supply system presumably functioned until at least the late 4th or early 5th century.¹⁷ Parts of Early Roman funerary monuments were used in the repair of the *cloacae*¹⁸, suggesting that parts of the city's cemeteries had been abandoned and/or that attitudes to Early Roman graves had changed by that time.

In the city's southern section, part of the defensive ditch that had been filled in in the 1st century was dug out again in the 4th century,¹⁹ probably for security reasons. In the Late Roman period, parts of the city walls were reinforced and some side gates walled up.²⁰ As the city walls became increasingly important for defensive and military purposes, so their symbolic significance declined.

New public buildings of that time were a mix of secular and early Christian. The most notable public building is a large public baths complex situated in Insulae XIII, XVII, XXVII and LXVI and dated to the 4th and early 5th centuries.²¹ Belonging to this complex was a public latrine discovered nearby, in the north-east corner of Insula XVII, dated to the late 4th or early 5th century.²² The early 4th century saw the renovation of the forum: the ceiling of the colonnade was painted and Insula

¹³ Plesničar Gec, *Emonski forum*, 54.

¹⁴ Cf. the next chapter and Plesničar Gec, *Emonski forum*, 69.

¹⁵ Plesničar Gec, *Urbanizem Emone*, 36.

¹⁶ Plesničar Gec, *Emona in Late Antiquity*, 407.

¹⁷ Gaspari, *Water in Roman Emona*, 162, 115.

¹⁸ Plesničar Gec, *Urbanizem Emone*, 42.

¹⁹ Matej Draksler, Luka Gruškovnjak, Andrej Gaspari, Tina Žerjal, Mojca Fras, *Arheološke raziskave v Križankah v Ljubljani*, Prvo strokovno poročilo o raziskavi 18-0257, (Ljubljana: MGML, ARKLJ, September 2019): 7, 66, 74.

²⁰ Plesničar Gec, *Urbanizem Emone*, 51, 58.

²¹ Plesničar Gec, *Emona in Late Antiquity*, 403–404.

²² Snoj, *Antični pisoar iz Emone*, 555.



Figure 3: The floor mosaic in Insula XIII at the time of its discovery. Photo: Aleš Ogorelec/MGML.

XXI was turned into public baths.²³ Some private homes were lavishly renovated too, accommodating a high standard of living.²⁴

Among the first new early Christian buildings in the city were two assembly halls (*aula primitiva*): a smaller one in Insula XIII, built in the late 4th century,²⁵ and a larger one in Insula XXXII, erected in the second half of the 4th century.²⁶ The floors of both were covered with multi-coloured mosaics featuring early Christian ornamentation (Figs. 3 and 4), and both mosaics were made by the mosaic workshop that was active in Emona at the end of the 4th century.²⁷ In Insula XIII, to the south of the *aula primitiva*, 15 transparent glass *tesserae* containing a thin layer of gold foil between two layers of glass were found, along with a number of other *tesserae*, some colourless, some blue and some green.²⁸ These once formed part of a wall or ceiling mosaic.

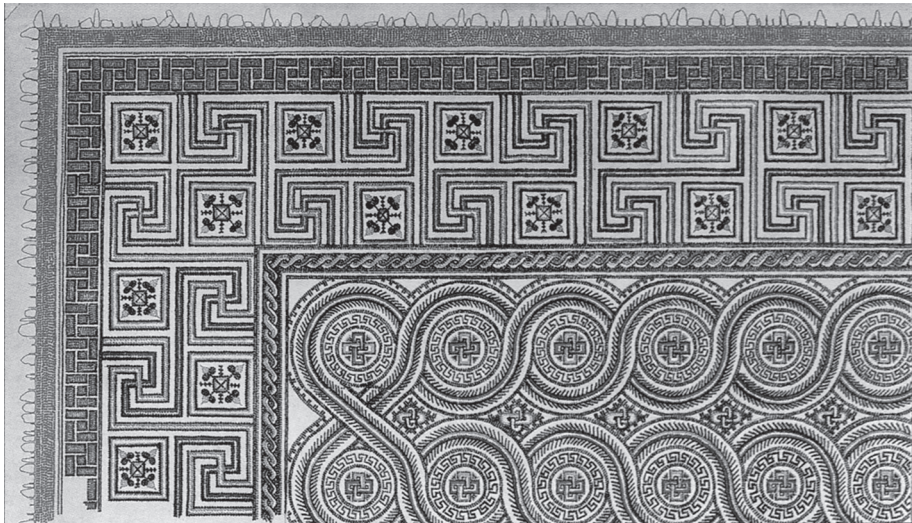


Figure 4: Reconstruction of the floor mosaic in Insula XXXII. Draughtsman unknown, photo: Srečo Habič/MGML.

Soon afterwards, in the late 4th or early 5th century, a large and lavish early Christian complex was built in one section of Insula XXXII.²⁹ The complex included a baptistery, complete with a baptismal pool and a mosaic floor featuring the names of the donors along with the amounts they had contributed (Fig. 5). It

²³ Plesničar Gec, *Emonski forum*, 68.

²⁴ Gaspari, *Prehistoric and Roman Emona*, 230–234.

²⁵ Djurić, *The Emona XIII.8 mosaic from the Late Roman period*, 92.

²⁶ Plesničar Gec, *Starokrščanski center v Emoni*, 16–18.

²⁷ Djurić, *The Emona XIII.8 mosaic from the Late Roman period*, 92.

²⁸ The *tesserae* are kept at the City Museum of Ljubljana under inventory numbers 510:LJU;0061003 and 510:LJU;0043752 and accession numbers S0014137, S0014155, S0014160, S0014161, S0014168, S0024176, S0024177, S0024178, S0024228, S0024230 and S0024231.

²⁹ The complex as a whole is referred to as the “Early Christian Centre” in the Slovenian archaeological literature.

probably also included the bishop's residence and at least one church.³⁰ That there was a church here is evidenced by the architectural remains and by the fact that the baptistery could not have existed without a church in the vicinity.

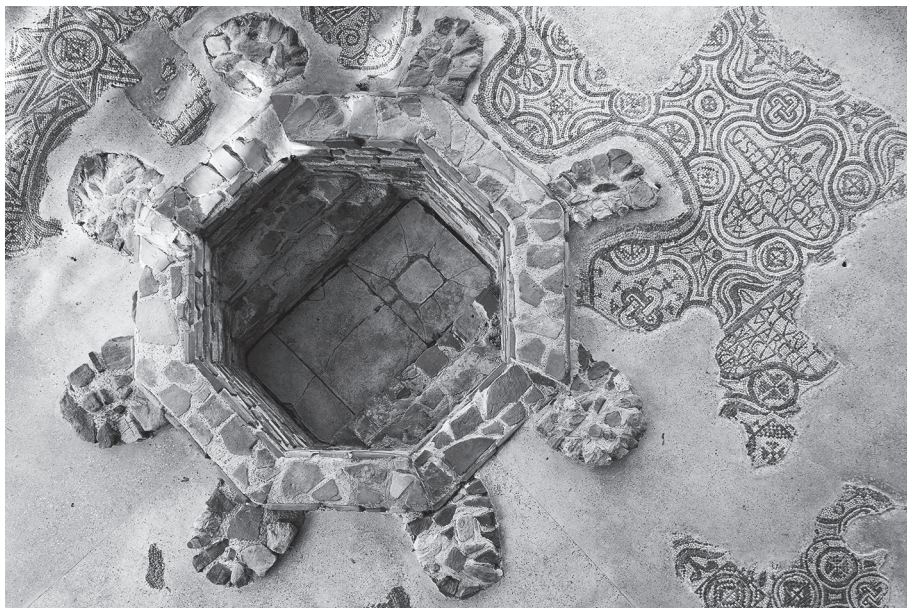


Figure 5: The baptismal pool and the mosaic featuring the names of donors in the baptistery of the Early Christian Centre. Photo: Andrej Peunik/MGML.

Two other locations housing early Christian activities were discovered in the course of earlier excavations. The first was Insula XII, which yielded part of a bronze candlestick and three oil lamps,³¹ all decorated with a Christogram and dated to the 4th century. The second, in Insula XXX, features a large hall, also dating to the 4th century.³²

The most recent major excavations carried out in what is believed to be the early Christian section of the large northern necropolis of Emona have yielded 350 graves, believed to be early Christian, including a large number of sarcophagi, all clearly arranged around the central grave in line with the burial practice known as *ad sanctos*.³³ Over time, further sacral structures were added, both above the central grave and around it: modest at first, but becoming more luxurious later.

These were the major changes in the urban fabric of Emona in the 4th and early 5th centuries. One further change might have been the demolition of the forum

³⁰ Plesničar Gec, *Starokrščanski center v Emoni*, 21–23.

³¹ Klemenc, *Kršćanstvo v Emoni*, 356–358.

³² Klemenc, *Kršćanstvo v Emoni*, 358–359.

³³ Gaspari, Hvalec, Masaryk, Urankar, Stehlikova, Bekljanov Zidanšek, Žerjal, Brečič, Verbič, Leskovar, Kolar, Babič, Plohl, *Prvo strokovno poročilo o predhodni arheološki raziskavi*, 79–80.



Figure 6: Oil lamp featuring a Christogram, discovered in 1961 during excavations in Insula XXX. Photo: Matevž Paternoster/MGML

temple. This could have happened at about the same time, given that one of the slabs that had previously adorned it was discovered in the water well in Insula XIII.³⁴ We must also mention a couple of other discoveries dating to the 5th or possibly 6th century. One of these is the rotunda erected on the southern edge of what had been the forum prior to its demolition in the Hun invasion of 452.³⁵ The rotunda dates to the second half of the 5th and the 6th century.³⁶ This large round structure had a diameter of 13.5 metres and walls 1.4 metres thick, two marble capitals of which have been preserved. It was probably used for early Christian rituals, a theory supported by the discovery of a small pool to the north of it.³⁷ Three fragments of glass lamps were also discovered, all from hanging oil lamps, or *polycandela*, and dating to the same period: the second half of the 5th or perhaps the 6th century.³⁸ Two of the fragments were discovered in Insula XXXI, and one in Insula XXXII. Insula XXXII was the site of the Early Christian Centre discussed above, but no early Christian remains have been found in Insula XXXI.

³⁴ Plesničar Gec, *Emonski forum*, 67.

³⁵ Plesničar Gec, *Emona in Late Antiquity*, 405.

³⁶ Plesničar Gec, *Emonski forum*, 69.

³⁷ Plesničar Gec, *Emonski forum*, 59.

³⁸ Milavec, *A glass lamp with base knob from Emona*, 101.

Understanding the transformation of the city in the Late Roman era

How did the transformation of Emona occur? How did an Early Roman city in the classical style and with regularly maintained infrastructure evolve into a Late Roman city with a very different appearance and – as will be argued below – function, poorly maintained infrastructure and several new and lavishly decorated early Christian buildings? It was all the result of a long process that was typical of a number of cities in the western part of the empire during the Late Roman period.

The complex causes underlying this urban transformation have been widely discussed and cannot be summarised in a couple of sentences. It is worth noting, however, that the Late Roman Emona was a city in an increasingly fragmented and unstable empire; its surrounding territory therefore became part of the *Claustra Alpium Iuliarum*, a defensive system designed to prevent invasions and other threats from the east. Other factors include a strong Christian community, as evidenced by architectural remains and two letters written by St Jerome. Judging by some well documented cases from the western part of the empire, the fact that Emona held the status of diocese from the 380s to the end of the 6th century³⁹ might imply that the bishop was increasingly assuming certain secular functions, thereby becoming an influential and authoritative figure in the city.

After the legalisation of Christianity, the social life of the city became increasingly desecularised, with the focus of investment shifting from public buildings (though these did not disappear altogether, as can be seen from the major baths and the renovation of the forum) to early Christian ones. A change in attitude towards public buildings and city infrastructure was also significant, as reflected in the fact that the city sewers and ditches gradually fell into neglect and the forum temple was demolished. The Church was slowly becoming a focal point for the accumulation of wealth. The bishops and their assistants started investing in new buildings, as we can see from the name of Archdeacon Antiochus inscribed on the portico of the Early Christian Centre⁴⁰ (Figure 7). The role previously played by secular monumental structures was now taken over by ecclesiastical buildings promoting the Christian way of life and new ideas and values.

It should be noted that the transformation in Emona's appearance went hand in hand with changes to the way of life in the city. The Roman city was not only a residential space, physical structure and administrative unit but, as suggested above, a place with a strong symbolic and ideological charge, where people lived in the proper – that is to say, the *Roman* – manner. When it came to attesting to and reaffirming the *romanitas* of the city, the practices of everyday life were at least as important as the city's appearance. In Early Roman Emona, Roman-ness was reflected and reinforced in the rhythm of everyday life: in the offerings to the gods, the meetings of the city council, attendance at various games or *ludi*, the Roman manner of dining and so on.

³⁹ The last mention of a bishop of Emona dates to the late 6th century, by which time he probably resided somewhere outside Emona. Bratož, *Bischofssitze und Kirchenorganisation in Slowenien*, 187–188.

⁴⁰ Šašel, *Napisi v mozaičnih tleh*, 53.



Figure 7: The inscription to Archdeacon Antiochus in the portico of the Early Christian Centre. Photo: Matevž Paternoster/MGML.

By contrast, in Late Roman Emona the focus was on Christian rituals and events: processions, holy masses, christenings, Christian funerary rituals, and the distribution of food. The Church organised almsgiving and care for the poor. We can hypothesise that a monastery was founded⁴¹, and that a recently discovered grave of a woman who clearly held a special position in Emona's early Christian community might have been a place of pilgrimage.⁴² The spaces and buildings required for the activities of early Christians were promptly built; structures that were no longer required were either rearranged or fell into disuse. Parts of funerary monuments in the classical style were now used as building material for new structures.⁴³ In short, attitudes to secular public buildings changed profoundly.

The focus of public life gradually expanded from the central forum to other city spaces; while some parts of the city prospered, others fell into decline. An interesting insight can be gained by analysing Emona using space syntax tools. The construction of the forum (which was not completed until the 2nd or even early 3rd century)⁴⁴ seems not to have had a positive impact on the functioning of the city: in spatial terms, the forum closed the city off and, as a result, its function as a communication and meeting place was paradoxically diminished.⁴⁵ The completion of the forum was certainly one of the factors that reversed the city's fortunes, leading to the fragmentation of public spaces and playing a part in the city's decline in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.⁴⁶ It is possible that this occurred in synergy with the rise of Christianity, though this was probably coincidental, if so. The rise of Christianity in Emona coincided with and perhaps even enhanced a period of prosperity in the 4th century. It certainly had a profound influence on the urban development of the city. Space syntax tools have shown that the forum acted as a barrier to communication, thereby giving rise to small secondary squares; and in fact, we know that the new Christian buildings were initially spread across the city, not appearing in the forum area until the second half of the 5th century.

In short, changes in the everyday lives and activities of Emonans gradually changed the city too, not only in terms of its appearance but also in its function, as it adapted to meet changing needs. We should stress that this process was both gradual and partial, as illustrated by the following example. In 376/377, when St Jerome wrote his letters to the *virgines* of Emona and to Antony the Monk, there must have been a strong early Christian community in the city. Members of this community were already burying their dead in the Christian section of Emona's northern cemetery⁴⁷, and were probably also performing their rituals in the structure

⁴¹ Bratož, *Meništvó v rimskih provincah*, 111.

⁴² Gaspari, Hvalec, Masaryk, Urankar, Stehlikova, Bekljanov Zidanšek, Žerjal, Brečič, Verbič, Leskovar, Kolar, Babič, Plohl, *Prvo strokovno poročilo o predhodni arheološki raziskavi*, 79–80.

⁴³ Plesničar Gec, *Urbanizem Emone*, 36–42.

⁴⁴ Plesničar Gec, *Emonski forum*, 47.

⁴⁵ Mlekuž, Županek, *Mesto kot stroj: analiza prostorske skladnje Emone*, 104–107.

⁴⁶ Mlekuž, Županek, *Mesto kot stroj: analiza prostorske skladnje Emone*, 107–108.

⁴⁷ Gaspari, Hvalec, Masaryk, Urankar, Stehlikova, Bekljanov Zidanšek, Žerjal, Brečič, Verbič, Leskovar, Kolar, Babič, Plohl, *Prvo strokovno poročilo o predhodni arheološki raziskavi*, 80.

built over the oldest grave in that section. The two assembly halls (*aula primitiva*) must have already been completed. Yet twelve years later, when Emperor Theodosius visited Emona in 388, the orator Latinus Pacatus Drepanius referred to two groups of priests, both pagan, in his welcoming address.⁴⁸ Moreover, in the second half of the 4th century a significant part of the northern cemetery was still being used for pagan burials using the *Romani ritu*, and these would continue until the middle of the 5th century.⁴⁹

Conclusion

Gradual Christianisation went hand in hand with changes to the social life of the city. Roman Emona was both a product of Roman society and a space where one part of that society lived and changed. Christianisation of the people occurred alongside the Christianisation of the space. The urban way of life and the urban landscape of Emona began to change in the 4th century, just like the society that inhabited it. In this paper we have sought to show that the Christianisation of Emona was a slow and complex process that occurred at the same time as, and in conjunction with, other processes driving change in the cities of the western empire in the Late Roman period.

It is therefore all the more relevant to ask what was happening in Emona in the long and dynamic 5th century and – given the discovery of the rotunda and other finds – perhaps also in the 6th, albeit to a smaller degree. The fall of the Roman Empire – and with it, Emona – was a slow and gradual process. From today's perspective it seems inevitable, but in reality it was very complex, and periods of decline were often interspersed with periods of at least some growth. Such questions could be answered to some extent by an examination of the “dark earth” of the city. Dark earth deposits do not necessarily imply abandonment, either in Emona or in other cities where they have been documented; rather, given their dating, they point to changes in the use of urban spaces: new activities such as land cultivation or waste disposal (including human and/or animal remains).

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⁴⁸ Nixon, Saylor Rodgers, *In praise of later Roman emperors*, 504.

⁴⁹ Cf. Mišček, Županek, Karo, Tica, *Severno emonsko grobišče – raziskave na najdišču Kozolec*.

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POVZETEK

Poznorimska Emona: kako razumeti transformacijo mesta

Bernarda Županek

Rimsko mesto Emona, eno od številnih mest v ogromnem rimskem imperiju, se pogosto zdi predvsem njegov administrativni in fiskalni vzvod. To pa vsaj od avgustejskega časa – kar se okvirno pokriva z začetki rimske Emone – ne drži več. V tem času je bila urbanizacija in državna oz. politična arhitektura deležna močne pravne in finančne podpore ter promocije. Vsaj od takrat naprej je bilo rimsko mesto namenski element rimskega imperializma. To je bilo vpisano v njegovo obliko in arhitekturo ter nenazadnje v način življenja v njem. Za vzpostavitev pravilnega rimskega življenja v mestu namreč ni bila dovolj prava arhitektura, oblika in okras prostorov, ampak ljudje s politično udeležbo in odgovornostjo, ki so skrbeli za skupne religiozne dogodke in javne spektakle, postavljali in vzdrževali javne spomenike in zgradbe, ki so pričali o bogastvu skupnosti in lojalnosti imperiju, in drugo. Oboje, ustrezno arhitekturo in pravi način življenja v mestu je zgodnjericimska Emona imela.

V poznorimskem času pa se je emonski mestni prostor spremenil. Arheološka odkritja kažejo, da je bilo četrto stoletje za kolonijo Emono čas blagostanja, ki je prinesel prenovno dela infrastrukture in novogradnje v različnih delih mesta. Deli mestnega obzidja so bili v poznorimskem času ojačani, v drugi polovici 4. stoletja so bile izvedene številne investicije v zgodnjekrščanske objekte, z gradnjo dveh molilnic, vsaj ene cerkve s kristilnico, sakralnim objektom na zgodnjekrščanskem odseku severnega mestnega pokopališča in kasneje rotunde na forumu. Hkrati so bili nekateri deli infrastrukture, na primer deli kloak in obrambnih jarkov, pogosto slabo ali sploh ne vzdrževani.

Vzroki za našete spremembe mestne podobe so številni in kompleksni. Poznorimska Emona je bila mesto v vedno bolj razdrobljenem in nestabilnem imperiju, in zaradi vpadov ter groženj z vzhoda je njeno širše območje postalo del vzhodnoalpskih zapor. Med drugimi, na tem mestu bolj izpostavljenimi dejavniki za spremembo, so dokazi za močno emonsko krščansko skupnost, kar je pomenilo, med drugim, drugačen način življenja v mestu. Trdimo, da je transformacija videza Emone šla z roko v roki s spremembo v načinu življenja v mestu.

Rimsko mesto ni bilo zgolj prostor za bivanje, zgolj fizična struktura ali administrativna enota, ampak, kot smo že poudarili, simbolično in ideološko nabit prostor, kjer je življenje teklo na pravi, rimski način. Ne samo podoba mesta, tudi – ali pa celo predvsem prakse vsakdanjega življenja v njem so izpričevale in potrjevale *romanitas* mesta in njegovih prebivalcev. V zgodnje-

rimski Emoni se je rimskost odslikavala in ojačevala v ritmu vsakdanjega življenja, v daritvah bogovom, srečevanjih mestnega seta, obisku *ludi*, rimskemu načinu večerjanja itd. Poznorimska Emona je bila prostor za udeležbo pri krščanskih obredih in dogodkih, kot so bile procesije, maše, krščevanja, specifični obredi pokopavanja. V mestu so hitro zrasli za zgodnjekrščanske aktivnosti nujno potrebni prostori in zgradbe, tiste ne več nujno potrebne pa so bile preuporabljene ali zanemarjene. Kot viri gradbenega materiala so služili tudi deli nekoč po klasičnem zgledu urejenih nagrobnih spomenikov. Odnos do sekularnih javnih zgradb se je spremenil.

Spremenjene prakse vsakdanjega življenja, drugačne aktivnosti prebivalcev mesta so Emono počasi spremenile. Spremenile so ne zgolj njen videz, ampak tudi njene funkcije, pač v skladu s potrebami. Pokristjanjenje ljudi je teklo hkrati s pokristjanjenjem prostora. Skratka, način urbanega življenja in urbana pokrajina Emone sta se v 4. stoletju spremenili, enako kot družba, ki je živela v njej.