

Archaeological Society „Forum Platt“

The society was founded in 1999 by several inhabitants of the small village Platt near Retz in the so called Weinviertel (the wine country of Lower Austria), and by some interested scholars who were associated with the university of Vienna and with two Viennese museums (Naturhistorisches Museum, Prehistoric Department, <http://www.nhm-wien.ac.at> and Kunsthistorisches Museum, Numismatic Department, <http://www.khm.at>).

Our society, „The Forum Platt archaeological – historical initiative” aims to investigate the history of Platt and the surrounding region. According to some vague historical records we suspected that there must have been a „castle” or a „palace” in Platt some centuries ago. Some historians believe it might simply have been a large farm house but today there are no visible traces of such a building on the surface. Ancient folklore mentions the destruction of the Platter „castle“ by an earthquake, but it seems more likely that the building was badly damaged or perhaps even completely ruined by Swedish troops that invaded this part of Austria during the first half of the 17th century.

So, while we haven't yet managed to locate the exact site of „our castle“, we have made an even more important and fascinating discovery: the area around the Sandberg (339 metres high), the hill between Platt and the next village Roseldorf, where today corn, potatoes, sunflowers and vineyards are cultivated, contains the remains of Austria's largest Celtic lowland settlement of late iron age (La – Tène). The area covers more than 22 hectares and was inhabited by a Celtic tribe during the last three centuries B. C.

We have been able to determine that these inhabitants struck their own silver and golden coins - and even produced false ones. Many gold and silver coins have been found in the area (and unfortunately even more of them stolen by illegal prospectors).

To prevent further damage and to preserve the rest of this important cultural location for scientific research, „Forum Platt“ initiated the „Fürstensitz Keltenstadt Sandberg“research

project under the guidance of Dr. Veronika Holzer from the Prehistoric Department of the Naturhistorisches Museum Vienna. For further information please contact Dr. Holzer:

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Since 2001 there have been annual archaeological excavations. In the first year the excavations were in the centre of the Celtic village – where for instance a grain garret with large quantities of burnt corn and wooden remains were found. In the summers of 2002, 2003 and 2004 there were excavations in the area of the extremely interesting Celtic sanctuary. Here enormous amounts of animal bones and iron objects, mostly parts of weapons like swords or sheaths, all deposited for the gods, were discovered. There seem to be many parallels to the Gallic ritual sites in France. The results of these excavations will provide new insights into Celtic life, religion and trade in the last centuries B. C. Therefore the „Forum Platt“ hopes to be able to raise enough money to continue the project during the coming years.

If you would like to support our efforts you are invited to become a member of the „Forum Platt“ and/or to make a donation to our society.

Thank you!

Forum Platt

<http://www.forum-platt.at>