

**MARBLE PROVENANCE ANALYSIS OF ROMAN PERIOD ARTEFACTS FROM  
VILLACH – STADTMUSEUM, AUSTRIA**

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Marble, one of the most widespread and commonly used materials, has been utilised for a very long time during human history, with the earliest marble objects dating as far back as the Neolithic Period. In fact, throughout history, marble was used for a variety of purposes, including art, architecture and religion. Currently, the Museum of Villach in Austria hosts a large Roman collection of archaeological artefacts dating back to dates scattered between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, most of which were discovered in different regions of the Drau River between the 1970's and 2003. Out of this collection, 26 marble artefacts, ranging from epitaphs, tomb portraits, torso statues and grave altar inscriptions to fragments of reliefs, pillars, architraves, grave steles, aediculae and base/corner blocks of burial structures amongst others, were sampled.

The provenance of the material of these artefacts was investigated. Based on the general location within the river Drau at which the artefacts were found, the samples were divided into two main categories, the Villach group and the Frög group. The analytical methods applied to these samples included petrographic investigations, chemical and isotopic analysis as well as fluid inclusion analysis (crush-leach analysis). Statistical treatment for each sample was applied. Given that most artefacts sampled were found in the Drau river close to the Villach area, preliminary hypotheses consider the option that the marble artefacts originate from local quarries. The ancient Roman marble quarries at Gummern and Treffen, both of which are located relatively close to the Drau river bank, were the main quarry candidates considered for the provenance of these 26 artefacts.