Centurio helmet from Sisak

Exposed in Archeological Museum Zagreb, Croatia

Centurio helmet from Sisak, Croatia. Is this the only one proven centurio helmet model Galic F. A helmet of Weisenau type - Imperial Gallic F, by Robinson's classification – from Sisak, Croatia, found in the Kupa river, it has been dated to the Pannonian revolt from 6 to 9 AD. The helmet shows evidence of three layers of decorative plating in silver and gilding, applied at three different times during its use. The small ring preserved on one side, and a corresponding hole on the other side where a ring has been lost, indicate a system for attaching a transverse crest. All this evidence leads to argument that this is a spesiment of a richly decorated helmet of a centurion. (photos courtesy Prof Radman-Livaja Archaeological Museum, Zagreb)

It’s been three years since I started working on the project Centurio helmet from Sisak, Croatia.
It took me another two years to meet new publications and to prepare new information to improve this my old project.

My helmet replica is tinned and then silver plated.

I personally visited the Archaeological Museum in Zagrzeb where I made my remarks, photos and videos. From there I acquired publication of Ivan Radman published by him in scientific literature, purchased by me.

Good occasion is with this publication of this helmet to celebrate 2010 years anniversary of Illyrian Revolt. Erupted on 6 AD by which this helmet are connected. Often the well decorated and silver plated helmets used in reenactment are transcribed as a parade one. But in this model things are in different way. This is a helmet that has been repeatedly used by perhaps a few field centurions and was most likely lost during military actions in forcing the Kupa river in the time of the Pannonian uprising war.
“Despite being numerous, the finds from Sisak are perhaps the least likely to be connected with any certainty to the Pannonian revolt from 6 to 9 AD. It is not due to chronological issues because we believe that all of them might have been in use during the Pannonian revolt. It should also be pointed out that we did not mention many finds from Siscia whose dating is more uncertain or very broad, like spears, javelins, arrows, lead shots, fragments of chain and scale armour, harness equipment pieces, etc., although they could have been used during the Pannonian war as well. The problem with finds from Siscia, or we should better say the difficulty of connecting finds from Siscia to the Pannonian revolt lies in the fact that this place was an important military garrison from 35 BC till at least 43 AD when the 9th legion left for Britain. “

citation (Archaeological Museum, zagreb; photo courtesy Prof Radman-Livaja)

Used materials, iron, brass, tin, silver and red enamel (possibly close to sources be archeology).

How it looks from the inside, lined with leather
To obtain a good result (I hope that I achieved) I have to improve and change some things. My preparation for improvements on this model started with the concentric rosette appliqués I created them as I tried to be as close to the originals. I made steel mold with the appropriate shape and then I hammered them from brass sheet (as in the antiquity).

Cleaned and polished. Ready for assembly.

These rosettes are very suitable and for Weisenau type helmet found in the Sava river near the village of Klakar. 1st century AD

The resemblance which I achieved on this concentric rosette is very good. Masked spherical rosettes on both sides are under the decorate band. What makes this helmet so different from the usual Gallic models?
I made rings and brackets for the centurion crest with bigger size.

I tried to do the slope of the scratches-bars on the forehead brass strip with an appropriate slope. I install and "cups" for the red enamel on all concentric rosettes (by the archeology). In the scientific publications describes it that the band on the brow was made from silver.

As described in scientific publications from Mr. Radman the entire helmet is covered with punched decoration. The depicted motifs are mostly floral, wreaths, vine shoots and “S” forms motifs so familiar from the scutum by fresco of Orange.
Due to the strong corrosion of the helmet almost 80% of the punched “points” decoration scheme is unknown. I had to interpret to recreate part of the decoration, of course I followed the visible lines on which I managed to made drawings and scheme during my visit in the Archaeological Museum of Zagreb.
Once I reflect on what I saw and what I read my conclusion are that these hammering small holes with a sharp object (nail), are not made of a master but rather are hammering by centurion himself in the long winter and snowy days when they had a lot of free time. It is possible that some of his subordinate have been entrusted with this "creative task" to decorate his helmet with a sharp object. These points are not a complicated task and do not require any special artistic skills. The only thing needed is a lot of time. To me personally hammering of these thousands of holes it took me 20 days work. This is a slow and frustrating process.

A few more details of the technical process. Partially disassembled base model, so I can replace parts with some more correctly made one.

So disassembled it is more convenient to be decorated with hammering- punched decoration.

Citation (Archaeological Museum, zagreb; photo courtesy Prof Radman-Livaja)

„It was restored several times already in the Roman period since it was successively covered with three decorative metal sheets. The first was silvered with
a punched vegetal
decoration, the second layer was
of gilded silver
while the last was again a silver
sheet with a punched decoration. In all likelihood
this helmet was reconstructed and redecorated on
three different
occasions by its owner or even several
owners. This would point to a rather long period
of use for this helmet...

Transformation of this Centurio helmet from Sisak.
As it is described from Mr. Radman, that this Gallic helmet type F (similar to this Nijmegen
model) has undergone transformation from a simple basic type F helmet to a richly
decorated centurion helmet. This was perhaps happened in three (or more) stages as these
improvements have cost quite denarius (roman silver coins) to his owners. But this was not
a big problem given the high (compared with ordinary legionnaire) salary (and the various
benefits) of the centurion.

In the middle is the prototype of the Centurion helmet from Sisak, Croatia (the basic model)
Very similar model showing the helmet in the early stage of its transformation.
I install and cups for the red enamel on all concentric rosettes as in the archeology. In front of me constantly were the photos I had done during my visit to the museum and I tried to imitate the work of the ancient warrior. Next is polishing and cleaning of the helmet and prepare for galvanized, first with tin and then with pure silver 1000 sample. According to me cups of concentric rosettes they were filled with red enamel, so I also tried to reconstruct and this detail.

It is logical that these legionnaire which have money, no matter if it gained from gambling or looted trophy (salaries of the legionnaires were small for such luxury) had the opportunity to order from a local craftsman who works in the nearest town or to the blacksmith workshop from outside of the castrum to improve its basic legionnaires equipment. No matter if it’s a helmet, gladius or pugio.

My creative project in action.

Good picture taken by a professional journalist in APVLVM ROMAN FESTIVAL (6-8 may 2016). Here my new silvered helmet is well depicted