

The Venetic inscription *Ts 3 from Kaštelir above Korte

Venetski napis *Ts 3 s Kaštelirja nad Kortami

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Izvleček

Na odlomku skodele s Kaštelirja nad Kortami, izdelane iz sive prečiščene gline, je bil ohranjen napis v venetskem alfabetu. Napis *Ts 3 je ohranjen v celoti in vsebuje štiri grafeme *vose*, pri čemer interpretacija tretjega grafema ostaja nekoliko težavna. Sekvenca najverjetneje predstavlja osebno ime, morda v okrnjeni obliki, ki pa v korpusu venetskih napisov zaenkrat nima znane vzporednice.

Ključne besede: Slovenija; Kaštelir nad Kortami; siva venetska keramika; venetski napis; paleografija

Abstract

The Venetic inscription from Kaštelir above Korte, bearing the siglum *Ts3, was incised onto a bowl sherd of grey depurated ware. It contains four graphemes in an unfragmented sequence that most likely reads *vose*, although the paleographic interpretation of the third grapheme remains somewhat problematic. The inscription very likely represents a personal name, probably in an abbreviated form, but one that has no exact match in the available corpus of Venetic inscriptions.

Key words: Slovenia; Kaštelir above Korte; grey depurated ware; Venetic inscription; paleography

Kaštelir above Korte near Izola (hereinafter Kaštelir)¹ is an archaeological site extending in the length of 1230 m and holds the remains of one of the largest prehistoric settlements in the Slovenian part of the Istrian Peninsula. The settlement lies at 271 m asl, on the southernmost peak of a long ridge between Izola and Sečovlje, dominating the landscape above the village of Korte.

Several trial trenching campaigns and other investigations have thus far been conducted at

the site.² In 2010, excavations examined the highest southern terrace, on lot No. 1706, cadastral municipality of Dvori nad Izolo, just below the hilltop. A roughly 3 × 10 m large trench was dug longitudinally along the terrace and revealed numerous sherds of prehistoric and Roman pottery, a bronze figurine of a dog, a bronze brooch of

¹ Listed in the Register of Immovable Cultural Heritage under Kaštelir pri Čedljah, EID: 1-07238, EŠD: 7238.

² Mestni muzej Piran (Elica Boltin Tome) conducted investigations in 1956, 1960 and 1962, Institute for Mediterranean Heritage of the University of Primorska (Mitja Guštin, Maša Saccara) in 2008–2010 and Institute for Archaeology and Heritage FHŠ UP (Alenka Tomaž (Tomaž, Sakara Sučević 2017, 71)) in 2014.



Fig. 1: Kaštelir above Korte. The Venetic inscription *Ts 3 on a bowl sherd of grey depurated ware.

Sl. 1: Kaštelir nad Kortami. Venetski napis *Ts 3 na dnu skodele iz sive venetske keramike.

Middle La Tène construction, an amber bead, but also a base sherd of a bowl of grey depurated ware with an inscription scratched on the underside (Sakara Sučević *et al.* 2010; Sakara Sučević 2012, 51–59). Stratigraphic evidence shows that the site was destroyed during terracing, reportedly conducted in the beginning of the 20th century. Only the southern part of the trench, where the slope is steeper, revealed intact remains, presumably a paving and several postholes, but they could not be dated. All other layers contained mixed finds (Sakara Sučević *et al.* 2010).

The diagnostic finds attributable to the early period of Romanisation include a base fragment of a bowl that appears to have been reused as an amphora lid. Its underside bears letters in a North Italic alphabet scratched into the grey slip (see below). The bowl is made of a depurated grey fabric and belongs to the pottery known as ‘grey Venetic ware’, which is in areas east of Aquileia associated with the Roman influence observable in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC; this pottery was produced in eastern Veneto and in Friuli (Cassani *et al.* 2007). A similar and slightly better-preserved bowl came

to light at the nearby site of Stramare/Štramar near Muggia/Milje, which also bears a Venetic inscription (Maselli Scotti (ed.) 1997, 39, Pl. 9: 1).

THE INSCRIPTION (*Ts 3)

The bowl bears a short but clearly visible inscription consisting of four letters in the Venetic alphabet on the convex underside, tracing the now missing edge of the original base (Fig. 1). The inscription was first published in Sakara Sučević 2012, where F. Crevatin provided a tentative reading. It was also included in the map of pre-Roman inscriptions in the south-eastern Alpine region published in Laharnar, Turk 2018, Fig. 161. All the letter shapes have sinistroversive orientation and trace the circular original edge of the base, their stems extending towards the convex centre. Although the sherd is damaged, it can be established with certainty that no letter is missing. The marks on the surface suggest that the letters were incised *post cocturam*, most probably on the bowl when still complete rather than sub-



Fig. 2: Kaštelir above Korte. Close-up of the Venetic inscription *Ts 3.

Sl. 2: Kaštelir nad Kortami. Venetski napis *Ts 3 pod povečavo.

sequently on the sherd. The first (*digamma*), the second (*omicron*) and the fourth letter (*epsilon*) are neatly done and were perfectly legible even before the sherd had been cleaned. The *o* has the usual rhomboid shape and the *digamma* is of the normal *f*-type. The only problematic part of the inscription is the third grapheme. Crevatin's original reading of the sequence (Sakara Sučević 2012) as *vo.e* has a close, although imperfect parallel on a bone from *Acelum* (REI 2004, Asolo (Treviso) 5) that reads *vo.a* (or, alternatively, *vo.u.* if the middle hasta of the *alpha* is in fact an interpunct, as one would indeed expect). A recent autopsy of the debated inscription has shown, however, that the third sign most probably extends to the edge of the original surface and must in all likelihood represent a letter form rather than an interpunct. It is clearly bent in the lower half, while its upper part curves only very slightly to the right. When considerably enlarged (cf. Fig. 2), the upper part might (marked in dotted lines on the drawing to convey the uncertainty) be a typologically unrelated incision (perhaps a scratch mark), as the characteristic ridges on either side of the

incisions otherwise visible in the letters *v* and *o* can only be detected in the lower curve. If this is indeed the case, the reading of the third symbol as an interpunct is probably justified. However, it is necessary to point out that in such a case the actually expected sequence would be *vo.e.*, i.e. with an additional interpunctum to the left of the letter *e*. As it stands, however, *vo.e* could only represent an example of defective spelling. Additional support for a different reading is lent by the fact that the same absence of ridge marks can be observed in the upper part of the fourth letter form (*epsilon*), where the strokes are undoubtedly part of the letter, while a macroscopic inspection reveals almost undoubtedly that the incision forming the third grapheme is deliberate and represents a single stroke. As such, the third letter form could either stand for a three-bar *sigma* (*vose*), with unsurprising leftward orientation in a sinistroverse sequence, or potentially a *jod* (*voje*). The latter of the two possibilities is much less likely, since we would expect a *j* between two vowels to be spelt as either **vo.i.iie*, **vo.i.je*, **vo.i.ije* or, if this were

a Carnic inscription, **vojje*. The only parallel in the available corpus of Venetic inscriptions for a -VjV- sequence being spelled out defectively as -VjV- is *ajo-* in *Jajokos* (Ca 34) from Lågole di Calalzo, hence the possibility that *Ts 3 shows the same peculiarity is practically non-existent.

It is uncertain whether the sequence represents a *catena litterarum*, though the inscription is generally comparable with examples such as Pa 18 with the masculine name *vaso* in the nominative singular occupying the base of a cup. If we are indeed dealing with a personal name (cf. the epigraphical sources *Vosis* [CIL V 4891], *Voseia* [CIL V 1264], *Vosio* [CIL V 4879]), which would be the most likely possibility given the epigraphical context, a form ending in -e cannot represent any of the expected endings (note that Etruscan origin, which would otherwise better account for the word-final *e*, is excluded by the unambiguous presence of the *omicron*), so that an abbreviation of some kind would need to be assumed in any event. A possible parallel may be the inscribed pot from Vicenza, if it indeed contains the sequence *o.s.tie* (see Marinetti 1999, 465, Nb 13) rather than *o.s.tiv*. The obvious formal possibilities for a truncated version of a name are the following: a – *vose* standing for *vose(.i.)*, i.e. the dative singular of an

i-stem **vosi.s.* or an *s*-stem **voses*, alternatively also the genitive singular of a **vose.i.io.s.*, b – *vose* standing for *vose(ś)*, i.e. the nominative singular of a *t*-stem, c – *vose* standing for *vose(s)*, i.e. the nominative singular of an *s*-stem, and d – *vose* representing the nominative singular *vose(.o.)*.

NB At this point a brief comment on the sigla assigned to the Venetic inscriptions from the Trieste area is in order. The fragmentary inscription from Parti near Stara Sušica (Košana), referred to in Pellegrini 1981 as “Košana II” and interpreted as *škeva* (see, however, Repanšek 2022, 605 fn. 20, where an alternative reading *števa*, with the typical saltire shape of the letter *t*, is suggested), should from now on be labeled as *Ts 2. Following the chronology of the finds, the four-letter inscription from Kaštelir must then logically be assigned the abbreviation *Ts 3. Ts 1 has been traditionally allotted to the *.o..s.tiiare.i.* inscription from Škocjan (Okostna jama) (see Pellegrini, Prodocimi 1967, 604–605), while no siglum has been assigned to the non-interpunctuated sequence *tulvis* from Stramare/Štramar near Muggia/Milje (Pellegrini, Prodocimi 1967, 605–606). The same goes for the additional find from the same locality published in Crevatin 1997, 231.

Abbreviations / Kratice

CIL = *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*.

REI 2004 = PROSDOCIMI, A. L., A. MARINETTI 2004, *Rivista di epigrafia Italica*. – *Studi Etruschi* 70, 363–424.

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Venetski napis *Ts 3 s Kaštelirja nad Kortami

Povzetek

Kaštelir nad Kortami pri Izoli (v nadaljevanju Kaštelir)¹ je s 1230 m obsega ena večjih prazgodovinskih naselbin v slovenskem delu Istre. Naselbinsko območje leži na skrajni južni vzpetini dolgega grebena, ki poteka med Izolo in Sečovljami in dominira nad vasjo Korte na 271 m nadmorske višine.

Na najdišču je potekalo več poskusnih arheoloških raziskav in drugih raziskovalnih dejavnosti.² Leta 2010 je bilo izvedeno izkopavanje na prvi južni terasi, parcela št. 1706, k. o. Dvori nad Izolo, tik pod vrhom hriba. Sonda v velikosti cca. 3 × 10 m je potekala vzdolžno na teraso. Izkopavanja so prinesla številno prazgodovinsko in rimskodobno keramiko, bronasto figurico psa, bronasto fibulo srednjelatenske sheme, jantarno jagodo in dno sive venetske skodele z vpraskanim napisom (Sakara Sučević *et al.* 2010; Sakara Sučević 2012, 51–59). Stratigrafija je pokazala, da je bilo najdišče uničeno ob terasiranju, ki naj bi se zgodilo v začetku 20. st. Le na južnem delu sonde, kjer teren strmo pada, se je ohranilo domnevno tlakovanje in nekaj stojk, a jih ni bilo mogoče datirati. Vse druge plasti so vsebovale premešano gradivo (Sakara Sučević *et al.* 2010).

Med izkopanim gradivom, ki sodi v sklop zgodnje romanizacije, je tudi odlomek dna skodele, ki je bilo po vsej verjetnosti naknadno uporabljeno kot pokrovček za amforo. Na zunanji strani so bile

v sivi premaz vpraskane črke v severnoitalskem alfabetu (gl. spodaj). Skodela je bila izdelana iz prečiščene sive gline. Gre za tako imenovano sivo venetsko keramiko, ki jo v 2. in 1. st. pr. n. št. na prostoru vzhodno od Akvileje lahko povežemo z rimskim vplivom. Proizvajali so jo v vzhodni Benečiji in Furlaniji (Cassani *et al.* 2007). Na bližnjem najdišču Štramar pri Miljah je bila najdena podobna, nekoliko bolj ohranjena skodela, ki ima prav tako venetski napis (Maselli Scotti (ed.) 1997, 39, t. 9: 1).

NAPIS (*Ts 3)

Napis teče pod notranjim robom (gl. *sl. 1*), in sicer od desne proti levi, sestavljajo pa ga štirje grafemi. Prvi, drugi in četrti so dobro berljivi in zagotovo predstavljajo črke v venetskem alfabetu. Omikron (*o*) je tipično romboidne oblike, prav tako digama (*v*) in epsilon (*e*) ne odstopata od pričakovanih realizacij. Tretji grafem je v spodnjem delu nedvomno prelomljen, v zgornjem pa ima namesto pričakovanega preloma le blago krivino. Glede na obliko lahko predstavlja ali sigmo (*s*), orientirano v levo, kar je za napise, ki potekajo od desne proti levi, običajno (četudi ne diagnostično, saj je orientacija sigme v venetskih napisih dokaj fluidna), ali joto (*j*). Slednje sicer le z močnim pridržkom, saj v takem okolju (tj. med dvema samoglasnikoma) ne bi pričakovali zapisa *jote* z golim grafemom *j*, temveč z zaporedjem *.i.j.*, *.i.ii* oz. *.i.ij* ali eventualno (in zgolj če bi šlo za karnijski tip venetskega alfabetu) *jj*. Venetski korpus namreč vsebuje en sam napis (Ca 34) s poenostavitvijo, kot bi jo eventualno lahko izkazovalo zaporedje

¹ V registru nepremične kulturne dediščine Kaštelir pri Čedljah, EID: 1-07238, EŠD: 7238,

² 1956, 1960, 1962: Mestni muzej Piran (Elica Boltin Tome); 2008–2010: Inštitut za dediščino Sredozemlja Univerze na Primorskem (Mitja Guštin, Maša Saccara); 2014: Inštitut za arheologijo FHŠ UP (Alenka Tomaž; glej Tomaž, Sakara Sučević 2017, 71).

napisa *Ts 3 (namreč *Jajokos*), zato je verjetnost, da gre za sekvenco *voje*, čisto tipološko gledano izredno majhna in ne prepriča. Prvotno branje napisa, objavljeno v Sakara Sučević 2012 (napis je najti tudi že na zemljevidu predrimskih napisnih spomenikov na jugovzhodnem alpskem prostoru v Laharnar, Turk 2017, sl. 161), je ponudil F. Crevatin, ki je predmet videl še pred očiščenjem in zato zaznal le srednji del črke, ki pa ga je interpretiral kot interpunkt, torej *vo.e* (primerljiv napis bi bil v tem primeru *vo.a* oz. *vo.u.* na koščici iz Asola (ant. *Acelum*); gl. REI 2004, Asolo (Treviso) 5). Po očiščenju je že s prostim očesom dobro vidno, da se grafem razteza vse do notranjega roba (ima torej še spodnji del) in je visok toliko kot preostale črke napisa. Ob tem je sicer treba omeniti, da se zgornji del črke (na risbi namerno označen s črtkano črto) pod povečavo (gl. sl. 2) tipološko nekoliko razlikuje od spodnjega – ta namreč na površini pušča brazdasto zarezo, kot je značilno za vse zareze črke *v* in *o*, zato ni mogoče povsem izključiti niti možnosti, da sta del prvotnega napisa le spodnji in srednji del, zgornji del pa kasnejša zareza oz. praska. Ob upoštevanju tega bi bilo branje napisa kot *vo.e* načelno sicer upravičeno, nasprotujejo pa mu trije argumenti: a – tudi zgornji del četrte črke se tipološko loči od preostalih zarez, a so v tem primeru te nedvomno del grafema, b – pregled s prostim očesom jasno pokaže, da je celotna zareza, ki tvori tretji grafem, namerna in izvira iz časa, ko je bil napis vpraskan v predmet, c – če bi šlo za *vo.e* in ne *vose*, bi bila sekvenca tako ali tako defektivna, saj bi pričakovali **vo.e.*, tj. s še enim interpunktom levo od epsilon.

Napis najverjetneje predstavlja osebno ime (podoben primer bi npr. predstavljal napis Pa 18 z osebnim imenom *vaso* v imenovalniku ednine, prav tako na dnu čaše), vendar izpričano zaporedje v korpusu še nima vzporednice (prim. sicer epigrafske vire *Vosis* [CIL V 4891], *Voseia* [CIL V 1264], *Vosio*

[CIL V 4879]), prav tako pa s končnim *-e*, ki kot končnica v venetščini ni pričakovan, opozarja, da gre morda za modifikacijo oz. skrajšavo. Etruščanski izvor, ki bi tak končaj sicer zlahka pojasnil, je seveda izključen z dejstvom, da sekvenca vsebuje omikron (*o*), ki ga etruščanski napisi ne poznajo. Če gre torej za v izglasju okrajšano ime venetskega izvora, so najočitnejše formalne možnosti naslednje: a – *vose(.i.)* kot dajalnik ednine *i*-osnove **vosi.s.*, kot dajalnik ednine *s*-osnove **voses* ali kot rodilnik ednine *k* **vose.i.io.s.*, b – imenovalnik ednine *t*-osnove *vose(s)*, c – imenovalnik ednine *s*-osnove *vose(s)*, č – imenovalnik ednine *vose(.o.)*.

Opomba: Po kronologiji odkritij se na tem mestu napisu s Kaštelirja dodeli sigla *Ts 3, fragmentarnemu napisu *škeva* oz. *števa* (Parti pri Stari Sušici), ki ga je leta 1981 interpretiral Pellegrini, pa *Ts 2. Siglo Ts 1 od leta 1967 nosi napis iz Okostne jame *.o..s.tiare.i.* (gl. Pellegrini, Prosdocimi 1967, 604–605), medtem ko najdbi iz Štramarja pri Miljah z neinterpunkuiranim napisom *tulvis* (gl. Pellegrini, Prosdocimi 1967, 605–606) sigla ni bila dodeljena. Prav tako ne poznejšemu odkritju z istega najdišča, objavljenem v Crevatin 1997, 231.

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