

The role of Roman armies in the territorial expansion and consolidation of Roman imperial power in the territory of Slovenia

Vloga rimskih vojsk v rimski osvojitvi ozemlja današnje Slovenije in utrditvi rimske nadvlade

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Izvleček

Članek obravnava arheološke vire o rimskem vojaškem delovanju na ozemlju današnje Slovenije v 1. st. pr. n. št. in v prvi polovici 1. st. n. št. V tem obdobju je Rim končal osvajanje ozemlja današnje Slovenije in utrdil svojo premoč. Tema je aktualna, ker sta se v zadnjih dveh desetletjih in pol količina in kakovost arheoloških podatkov o rimskem vojaškem delovanju v obravnavanem prostoru in času močno povečali. Predstavljeni izsledki kažejo rimsko vojsko kot pomembno silo, ki je v drugi polovici 1. st. pr. n. št. in v zgodnjem 1. st. n. št. sodelovala pri vzpostavitvi rimske prevlade nad obsežnimi območji današnje Slovenije. Približno dve stoletji trajajoče rimsko osvajanje tega za rimsko državo strateško pomembnega ozemlja je bilo končano ob začetku vladavine cesarja Tiberija.

Ključne besede: rimska vojska; Slovenija; 1. st. pr. n. št.; julijsko-klavdijska doba; zgodnji principat; bojišča; vojaški tabori

Abstract

This paper provides an overview and synthesis of the archaeology of the Roman military conquest and consolidation of Roman imperial power from the 1st century BC to the mid-1st century AD in the territory of present-day Slovenia. This focus is timely, as recent decades have seen a significant increase in both the quantity and quality of archaeological evidence concerning Roman military activities during this period in the region.

The evidence presented highlights the Roman military as an important force in imposing Roman control over large areas of what is now Slovenia during the second half of the 1st century BC and the early 1st century AD. The roughly two-century-long process of Roman conquest in this territory, strategically highly significant to the Roman state, was concluded in the early reign of Tiberius.

Key words: Roman military; Slovenia; 1st century BC; Early Principate; battlefields; forts; camps

The territory of modern Slovenia held great strategic significance to the Romans, as it lies between the Apennine Peninsula in the west and the Balkans and the Pannonian Plain to the east.

The Latin colony Aquileia, founded in 181 BC at the head of the Adriatic Sea, served as a

military command centre and a logistical base for the Roman ambitions eastward. Archaeological evidence suggests the Romans relied heavily on their armies in their conquest of territories east and south-east of Aquileia in the 2nd century BC. The earliest known Roman military installations

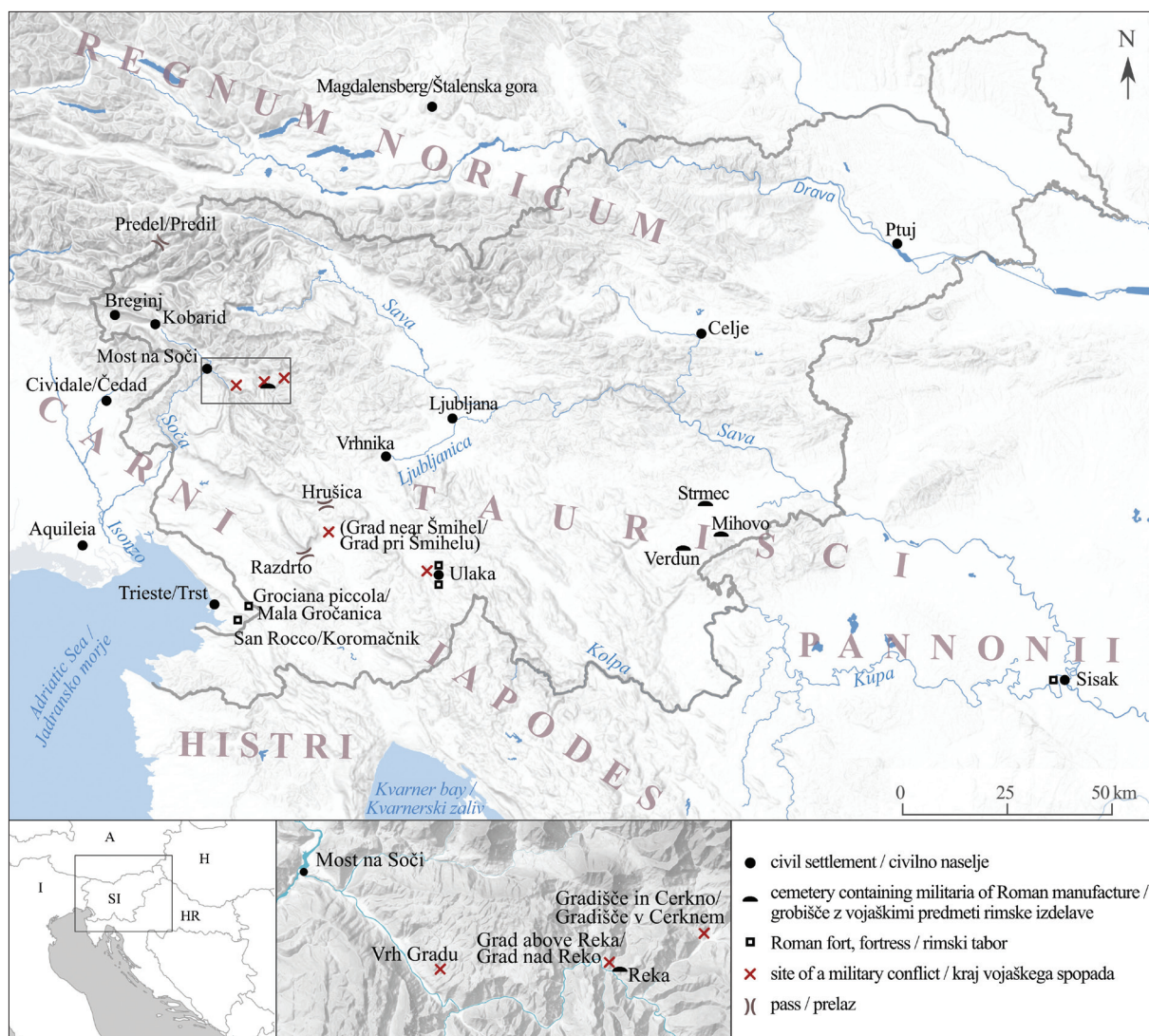


Fig. 1: A map of the territory of Slovenia and its neighbouring regions, indicating sites dated between c. 100 and c. 15 BC, with earlier site shown in parentheses, as referenced in the text.

Sl. 1: Zemljevid ozemlja Slovenije in okolice, ki kaže v besedilu omenjena najdišča, datirana približno med letoma 100 in 15 pr. n. št. V oklepaju je starejše najdišče.

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in the region are the forts at S. Rocco/Koromačnik and Grociana piccola/Mala Gročanica (Fig. 1).¹ Findings from the hillfort at Grad near Šmihel and the pre-Roman settlement at Razdrto/Ocra Pass show that by the late 2nd century BC Rome employed military force to control this key pass on the route from the Apennine Peninsula, through the North Italian Plain, to the Danube Basin and the Balkans.²

The area north of Aquileia was inhabited by the Carni³ (Fig. 1), and the Romans likely considered

western Slovenia also part of their territory.⁴ Beyond the Carni lived the Norici, who formed the core of the Norican Kingdom.⁵ It is assumed that by the mid-1st century BC the Norican Kingdom expanded into central northern Slovenia, which under Emperor Claudius (AD 41–54) became the territory of *municipium Celeia* and the southernmost part of the Roman province of Noricum.⁶

⁴ Božič 1999, 202–203; Laharnar 2024.

⁵ Šašel Kos 1997a, 24–30; Urban 2000, 332–368.

⁶ Šašel Kos 1997a, 32, 37, 40–41. A relatively widespread opinion, first proposed by Alföldy (1936, 540–541), suggests that the area of Ptuj/*Poetovio* or the entire western periphery of the later province of Pannonia initially be-

¹ Bernardini et al. 2021; Bernardini, Horvat, Vinci 2023.

² Horvat 2002; Laharnar 2022, 324–327; Laharnar 2023.

³ Vedaldi Iasbez 2000, 333–336.

Late Iron Age material culture in central and eastern Slovenia (Mokronog group) aligns relatively well with that of central Europe and is presumably related to the Tauriscan tribal confederation.⁷ Evidence from south-eastern Slovenia suggests a mix of interests of the Carni, Taurisci, and Iapodes.⁸

The late first century BC and the first half of the first century AD marked the final and most extensive period of Rome's gradual expansion into the territory of modern Slovenia, as well as the consolidation of its power. Over the past 25 years, there has been a significant increase in the quantity and quality of archaeological evidence related to Roman military activities in this region during this period. This paper aims to provide an up-to-date overview and evaluation of this evidence. It also briefly summarises the literary and epigraphic sources that offer information on Roman military activities in the period and territory mentioned. A synthesis follows at the end.

LITERARY SOURCES

Ancient literary sources primarily relate to Octavian's Illyrian Wars (35–33 BC), the Pannonian Wars (14–9 BC), and the Pannonian-Dalmatian uprising (AD 6–9).

The two main sources for the Illyrian Wars are Appian⁹ and Cassius Dio.¹⁰ They describe the battles with the Iapodes, Pannonians and Dalmatae, who lived to the south and south-east of Slovenia.¹¹ Key targets in this area included *Segestica* or *Siscia* (Sisak, Croatia),¹² which occupied a crucial strategic position on the western edge of the River Sava

plain. Appian's account lists the Taurisci and the Carni among the adversaries Octavian reportedly defeated with moderate effort, likely referencing the Slovenian territory. Dio mentions the Taurisci as one of the peoples who rebelled even before the wars began.¹³

Ancient writers provide only brief accounts of the war against the Pannonians and Dalmatae (14–9 BC), with Cassius Dio's Roman History being the most informative.¹⁴ The conflicts occurred between 12 and 9 BC, and Tiberius served as the chief military commander. The main Roman military base was in *Siscia*. The zone of military conflicts was (largely) located outside Slovenia, in the area that later became the south-eastern part of the province of Pannonia, encompassing roughly modern northern Croatia and Bosnia.¹⁵

Cassius Dio and Velleius Paterculus are the key sources for the Pannonian-Dalmatian uprising of AD 6–9.¹⁶ The Romans and the rebels primarily engaged in combat in modern Slavonia (N Croatia) and Bosnia. The winter camps, which functioned as military bases for the Roman army, were established in Sisak/*Siscia* (Croatia), which also housed the headquarters, and in Sremska Mitrovica/*Sirmium* (Serbia). Both sites were located along the River Sava.¹⁷ The rebels' plan to invade Italy—likely through the Razdrto Pass—directly involved the Slovenian territory. However, this plan was thwarted because of the Roman military intervention led by Valerius Messalina in AD 6, resulting in the defeat of the rebels in the broader area around Sisak.¹⁸ According to literary sources, the AD 6–9 war marked the final phase of the Roman conquest of the (future) provinces Pannonia and Dalmatia.¹⁹

longed to *Regnum Noricum*. Several publications share this view (cf. Ragolič 2014, 323–324, notes 2, 5). In contrast, Kovács (2008, 243–245; 2018) argues that, aside from the broader area of Carnuntum, there is insufficient evidence for this claim.

⁷ Božič 1987; Laharnar 2020.

⁸ Horvat, Bavdek 2009, 19–22; Laharnar 2022, 356.

⁹ App. *Illyr.* 4, 15–28; Šašel Kos 2005, 65–81, 393–471.

¹⁰ Cass. Dio 49, 35–38; Šašel Kos 1986, 128–145.

¹¹ Dzino 2010, 99–116; Dzino, Domić Kunić 2013, 149–158.

¹² Appian mentions *Segestica* and *Segestanoi*, and *Segestica* is mentioned on an inscribed lead tessera found in the River Kupa in Sisak (Radman Livaja 2007), while Dio uses the name *Siscia* (Džino, Domić Kunić 2018). History of research and excavation results: Drnić 2018. Topography and other aspects of the Roman conquest of *Segestica*: Drnić, Radman-Livaja 2020, 189–200. *Siscia* is used in the paper, except if related to the Octavianic period.

¹³ App. *Illyr.* 4, 16, 47; Cass. Dio, 49, 34, 2; 50, 28, 4; Šašel Kos 1986, 128–129, 148–149; Šašel Kos 2005, 67–68.

¹⁴ Cass. Dio 54, 24, 3; 43, 28, 1–2; 54, 31, 2–4; 54, 34, 3–4; 54, 36, 2; 55, 2, 4; Šašel Kos 1986, 152–162.

¹⁵ Šašel Kos 2011, 107–110; Radman-Livaja 2012, 161–163; Dzino 2010, 129–136; Dzino, Domić Kunić 2013, 162–170; Dzino, Domić Kunić 2018.

¹⁶ Cass. Dio 55, 28, 7–34; 56, 11–17; Velleius Paterculus 2, 110–116.

¹⁷ Dzino 2009; Dzino 2010, 137–155; Dzino, Domić Kunić 2013, 170–179, 184–185; Šašel Kos 2015; Radman-Livaja 2018, 158–160, note 28.

¹⁸ Velleius Paterculus 2, 110, 112; Cass. Dio 55, 30, 1; Šašel Kos 1986, 166–167, 182–185; Šašel Kos 2011; Radman-Livaja 2012, 165.

¹⁹ The territories of Dalmatia and Pannonia originally formed the province of *Illyricum*. During the AD 6–9 wars, the Romans established the province of *Dalmatia* (possibly initially named *Illyricum Superius*), whereas opinions differ

From Tacitus' *Annales*, we learn that, upon the death of Augustus, a mutiny erupted among the three Pannonian legions (VIII, IX, and XV), which were stationed at a joint summer camp. Furthermore, there is information that several detachments of these legions had been dispatched to Vrhnika/*Nauportus* before the uprising, to carry out tasks that included construction of roads and bridges.²⁰

EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Fifteen or sixteen epigraphic monuments that mention Roman soldiers date up to c. AD 50. Seven tombstones and one votive altar, the latter of uncertain authenticity, originate from Ljubljana/*Emona*, six tombstones come from Ptuj/*Poetovio* and its surroundings, one tombstone from Most na Soči, and another one from Celje/*Celeia*.

The earliest example may be a poorly preserved tombstone from Most na Soči, commemorating a soldier or veteran of *Legio XV*. Estimates of its date range from 51/50 BC to the Late Augustan period.²¹

Four monuments from the discussed period found in *Emona* mention serving military personnel. The earliest is probably the tombstone for the high-ranking military Titus Iunius Montanus, dating to the Augustan period.²² From the first third of the 1st century AD are a tombstone for a praetorian,²³ and a tombstone put up by a soldier of *Legio XV* for his sister.²⁴ The votive altar dedi-

cated by a *frumentarius* of *Legio XV* is from the first half of the 1st century, if it is genuine.²⁵ Four tombstones from the first half of the 1st century were erected in memory of veterans: i) three of *Legio XV*²⁶ and one of an unidentified legion.²⁷ Dating to the same period is probably the fragment of a tombstone (the inscription does not survive) depicting military decoration *phalerae*.²⁸

Three inscribed tombstones discovered in Ptuj, along with the two from the surrounding area, reference *Legio VIII*;²⁹ at least three of them were dedicated to serving soldiers.³⁰ Together with Tacitus' *Annales* (I.23, 30),³¹ these inscriptions indicate that by the end of the Augustan period Ptuj housed *Legio VIII*.³² A tombstone for a veteran of *Legio XI* dates to the second quarter of the 1st century AD.³³ All military tombstones from the first half of the 1st century AD, located in their original position, come from the area of *Poetovio*'s western cemetery on the west bank of the Drava. This cemetery is also the source of all serving soldiers' tombstones from the second half of the 1st century AD and the majority of veteran tombstones from the 1st and 2nd centuries.³⁴

as to the constitutional position of the N part of *Illyricum*, which may have been called *Illyricum Inferius* at first and later undoubtedly *Pannonia*. Most authors agree that it became an independent province at the beginning of Tiberius' reign at the latest (Schaub 2001, 300–301; Rollinger 2001; Dzino 2010, 159–167; Kovács 2014, 67), while Šašel Kos (2010; 2013) suggested this was a military district under the command of a *legatus excercitus*, i.e. commander of three Pannonian legions to the reign of Vespasian.

²⁰ Tacitus, *Annales* I, 16–30; Šašel Kos 1990, 21; Šašel Kos 1995, 236–237. The site of the joint summer camp of the three Pannonian legions is not known; Šašel Kos (1995, 236) and Radman-Livaja (2018, 161) assume it was at or near *Siscia* or *Poetovio*/Ptuj, while Keppie (1998, 144) argues it was around *Emona*.

²¹ Šašel 1985; Wheeler 2000, 261–262, 270; Mosser 2003, 93–94, 166, Cat. No. 3, Pl. 2: 3; Zaccaria 2010, 108.

²² Šašel Kos 1997b, 183–184, Cat. No. 36 (= *AIJ* 173; *AE* 1938, 173 = *EDR*073370 = *lupa* 3688 = *EDCS*-12700084).

²³ Šašel Kos 1997b, 185–186, Cat. No. 37 (= *ILJug* 305; *AE* 1950, 42 = *EDR*073752 = *lupa* 4190 = *EDCS*-10000372).

²⁴ Šašel Kos 1997b, 186–188, Cat. No. 38 (= *CIL* III 10769 = *EDR*129035 = *lupa* 4227 = *EDCS*-29000514); Mosser 2003, 175, Cat. No. 19.

²⁵ Šašel Kos 1997b, 133–136, Cat. No. 8 (= *CIL* III 3835 + p. 2328,188 = *AIJ* 151 = *EDR*128830 = *lupa* 6149 = *EDCS*-26600531); Mosser 2003, 266, Cat. No. 200.

²⁶ Šašel Kos 1997b, 189–191, Cat. No. 39 (= *CIL* III 3847 = 10757 = *AIJ* 174 = *EDR*129059 = *lupa* 3689 = *EDCS*-26600538); Mosser 2003, 175, Cat. No. 19); Šašel Kos 1998, 336–337, Cat. No. 6 (= *CIL* III 3845 + p. 2328,188 = *ILS* 2264 = *EDR*135194 = *lupa* 4202 = *EDCS*-28701001); Mosser 2003, 167, Cat. No. 5) – the stone was commissioned by a veteran of *Legio VIII*; tombstone discovered in 2017: <https://mgml.si/sl/mestni-muzej/razstave/309/nagrobni-spomenik-veterana-15-apolonove-legije/>.

²⁷ Šašel Kos 1997b, 191–192, Cat. No. 40 (= *CIL* III 3848 = *EDR*129060 = *lupa* 4193 = *EDCS*-26600539).

²⁸ Maxfield 1986.

²⁹ Ragolič 2023, 43–44, Cat. No. 7 (= *CIL* III 10878 + p. 2188 = *AIJ* 371 = *EDCS*-29000461 = *lupa* 1699), 47, Cat. No. 10 (= *EDCS*-09200411 = *lupa* 6194), 49–50, Cat. No. 13 (= *CIL* III 10879 + p. 2188 = *AIJ* 381 = *EDCS*-29000462 = *lupa* 1700), 306–308, Cat. No. 405 (= *CIL* III 4060 = *AIJ* 260 = *EDCS*-26600462 = *lupa* 3102), 308–309, Cat. No. 406 (= *AIJ* 262 = *EDCS*-11300990 = *lupa* 3749).

³⁰ Ragolič 2023, 43–44, Cat. Nos. 13, 405, 406 (cf. note 29).

³¹ Cf. Section Literary sources.

³² Oldenstein-Pferdehirt 1984, 397–400; Reddé 2000, 120–121.

³³ Ragolič 2023, 44–45, Cat. No. 8 (= *AIJ* 379 = *lupa* 3068 = *EDCS*-11301055).

³⁴ Istenič 2002, 168–169; Ragolič 2023, 43–47, 49–50, 51–52, 54–56, Cat. Nos 7–10, 13, 15, 17–18.

The tombstone erected for a veteran of *Legio VIII* at Celje/*Celeia* suggests he was a serving soldier of the legion while it was stationed in *Poetovio*, prior to c. AD 43.³⁵

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Militaria from the Early Augustan period exhibit no marked changes when compared to that of the Late Republic; however, changes become apparent in the Middle Augustan era. This prompted us to discuss the archaeological evidence up to and including the Early Augustan period in the first paragraph, and the evidence from the later period in the second paragraph.

Archaeological evidence from the early 1st century to the end of the Early Augustan period

The Alésia A–D type hobnails, used on Roman military footwear from the late 2nd century³⁶ to c. 15 BC,³⁷ are the leading pre-Middle Augustan military finds in the region (Fig. 2). At Grociana piccola/Mala Gročanica and S. Rocco/Koromačnik (Italy),³⁸ they were unearthed in contexts associated with camps or forts of a rectangular and trapezoid plan covering the surface of c. 2 ha and c. 0.7 ha, respectively.³⁹ Their rounded corners suggest they are not earlier than the Caesarean period.⁴⁰

A considerable number of Alésia A–D type hobnails comes from Grad above Reka (Fig. 4: 11–20), Gradišče in Cerklje, and Vrh gradu near Pečine, in the mountainous eastern hinterland of the Soča valley that was likely the eastern part of

the settlement area of the Carni.⁴¹ All three sites are in poorly accessible, naturally well-protected locations. The archaeological evidence found here includes numerous artefacts related to the Roman army.⁴² The sites at Gradišče in Cerklje and Vrh gradu have been published recently,⁴³ while two decades have passed since the short paper on Grad above Reka.⁴⁴ Therefore, a summary of recent research on this site complex is provided below.

It is situated above the valley of the River Idrijca and comprises the ridge known as Grad along with its steep eastern and western slopes, the adjacent Ajdovo brdo ridge with its eastern slope, and the southeastern edge of the plain of Poliško polje (Fig. 3). In addition to c. 110 hobnails, the vast majority of artefacts consist of projectiles. Most of these are lead slingshot, totalling 34 pieces (Fig. 5: 27–33).⁴⁵ The collection of iron projectiles includes two tanged pila with single barbs (Fig. 4: 23–24), 22 tanged catapult bolts (Fig. 5: 1–5), ten socketed catapult bolts (Fig. 5: 6–10), nineteen tri-bladed arrowheads of the Zanier Ia type (Fig. 5: 11–19), ten simple asymmetric tanged arrowheads (Fig. 5: 23–26), and six tanged single-barbed arrowheads (Fig. 5: 20–22). Several projectiles exhibit damage consistent with impacts from hitting targets. A pure brass chape of a sword scabbard (Fig. 4: 22) is notable. Its closest parallel is a scabbard with a net-like fitting from the River Ljubljana, dated to between c. 60 and 15 BC.⁴⁶ Likely also associated with Roman soldiers are the three Alésia (Fig. 4: 1–3) and two Jezerine type brooches (Fig. 4: 4–5), five signet rings (Fig. 4: 6–10),⁴⁷ and a tent peg (Fig. 4: 21). Mapping these artefacts has revealed that the Roman army probably commenced its assault from Poliško polje, first capturing Ajdovo brdo and then Grad (Fig. 3).

The finds from Gradišče in Cerklje include most of the weapon types known from the Grad near

³⁵ Visočnik 2017, 105–106, Cat. No. 78 (= *CIL* 03, 05220 = *EDCS*-14500532 = *lupa* 411).

³⁶ Kielb Zaaraoui 2018.

³⁷ Istenič 2019a, 276–279. For dating up to around 15 BC, the recently identified 77 Alesia-type hobnails (all of the Alesia D type) found at Dangstetten are particularly important; they represent approximately 23% of the hobnails from the site that can be assigned to specific types (Schrempf, J. 2025, *Die römischen Schuhnägel aus dem Lager Dangstetten*. – In: W. Zanier (ed.), *Das römische Militärlager auf dem Septimerpass in Graubünden (Schweiz)* 3, *Münchner Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte* 70, to be published in 2025).

³⁸ Cf. Introduction.

³⁹ Bernardini et al. 2021; Bernardini, Horvat, Vinci 2023.

⁴⁰ Reddé 2023.

⁴¹ Cf. Introduction.

⁴² Istenič 2005; Istenič 2015a.

⁴³ Istenič 2015a.

⁴⁴ Istenič 2005.

⁴⁵ Two of the 22 lead slingshot found as a group clearly exhibit damage from impact (Laharnar 2011, 343–344, 362, Nos. 9, 14), which argues against the idea that the group constituted unused stock slingshot (cf. o.c.).

The selection of objects in Figures 4 and 5 aims to illustrate the range of shapes and sizes of the various types of objects.

⁴⁶ Istenič 2019b, 34–40, 150–151, 264–267, Fig. A1.1–A1.9, Pl. 1: A1 (with references).

⁴⁷ Nestorović 2005, 34, Cat. No. 56, Pl. 5: 56.

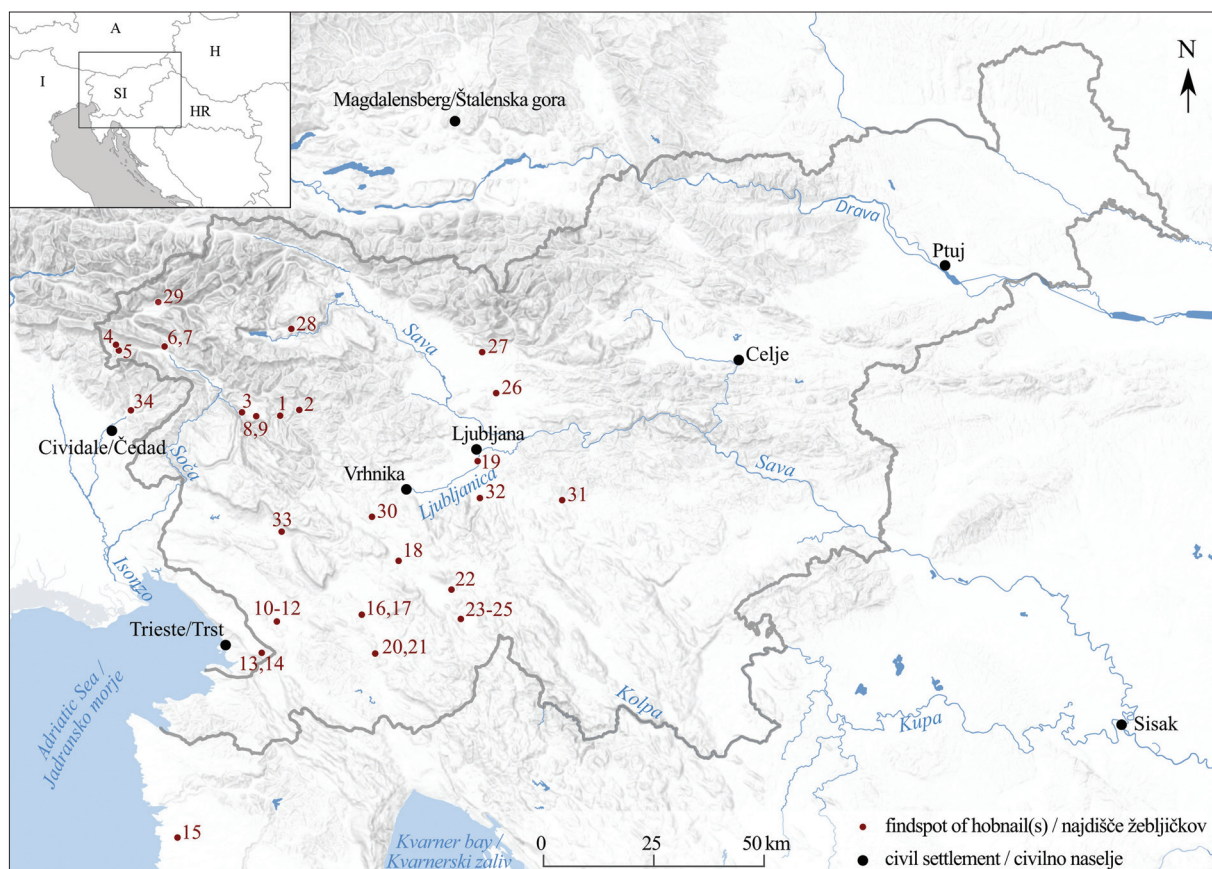


Fig. 2: Findspots of the Alésia A-D type hobnails. 1 – Grad above Reka; 2 – Gradišče in Cerkno; 3 – Vrh gradu near Pečine; 4 – Gradec near Sedlo; 5 – Sv. Helena near Podbela; 6 – Gradič in Kobarid; 7 – Tonovcov grad near Kobarid; 8 – Gradišče in Polje; 9 – Berlotov rob; 10–12 – Tabor and Strmca above Povir; 13 – Gocciana piccola/Mala Gročanica; 14 – several sites in the hinterland of Trieste/Trst; 15 – Kaštelir near Nova vas; 16 – Baba; 17 – Ambroževo gradišče; 18 – Stari grad; 19 – The River Ljubljanica at Rakova Jelša; 20 – Grmada above Zagorje; 21 – Gradišče at Čepna; 22 – Žerovnišček; 23 – Nadleški hrib; 24 – Ulaka – tabor; 25 – Ulaka; 26 – Gobavica above Mengeš; 27 – Straža above Šmartno; 28 – Dunaj near Jereka; 29 – Ravelnik near Bovec; 30 – Velike Bukve above Gorenji Logatec; 31 – Stari trg near Višnja gora (Stergar, Porenta 2020); 32 – Pungrt (Vojaković 2023b, Nos 6003, 6011, 6040–6041, 6178, 6225); 33 – several nearby sites east of Ajdovščina; 34 – Barda and Roba hills. Cf. Istenič 2019a, 275, Fn. 20, List 1; for Nr. 24 cf. also Laharnar, Istenič 2024, and for Nrs 16–25 Laharnar 2022 (basemap: cf. Fig. 1; ©NMS).

Sl. 2: Najdišča okovnih žebličkov tipov Alezija A–D. 1 – najdiščna skupina okoli Gradu nad Reko; 2 – Gradišče v Cerknem; 3 – Vrh gradu pri Pečinah; 4 – Gradec pri Sedlu; 5 – Sv. Helena pri Podbeli; 6 – Gradič v Kobaridu; 7 – Tonovcov grad; 8 – Gradišče v Polju; 9 – Berlotov rob; 10 – Tabor nad Povirjem; 11 – Strmca nad Povirjem; 12 – Tabor ali Strmca nad Povirjem; 13 – Mala Gročanica; 14 – več najdišč v zaledju Trsta; 15 – Kaštelir pri Novi vasi; 16 – Baba; 17 – Ambroževo gradišče; 18 – Stari grad; 19 – Ljubljanica pri Rakovi Jelši; 20 – Grmada nad Zagorjem; 21 – Gradišče nad Čepno; 22 – Žerovnišček; 23 – Nadleški hrib; 24 – Ulaka – tabor; 25 – Ulaka; 26 – Gobavica nad Mengšem; 27 – Straža nad Šmartnim; 28 – Dunaj pri Jereki; 29 – Ravelnik pri Bovcu; 30 – Velike Bukve nad Gorenjim Logatcem; 31 – Stari trg pri Višnji Gori (Stergar, Porenta 2020); 32 – Pungrt (Vojaković 2023b, št. 6003, 6011, 6040–6041, 6178, 6225); 33 – več najdišč vzhodno od Ajdovščine; 34 – vzpetini Barda in Roba. Cf. Istenič 2019a, 275, op. 20, Seznam 1; za št. 24 glej še Laharnar, Istenič 2024, in za št. 16–25 Laharnar 2022 (podlaga: cf. sl. 1; ©NMS).

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Fig. 3: The Grad above Reka site complex. The archaeological interpretation of the LiDAR-derived digital elevation model shows areas where metal-detectorists reported finding Roman projectiles and hobnails of the Alésia types (available findspot information for many artefacts are too imprecise to be shown in the figure). 1 – along the path leading to the valley of the Soča/Isonzo; 2 – south-eastern edge of Poliško polje; 3 – Ajdovo brdo; 4 – path between Ajdovo brdo and Grad above Reka; 5 – Grad above Reka; 6 – southern part of the Ajdovo brdo ridge (basemap: LiDAR©ARSO; ©NMS).

Sl. 3: Najdiščna skupina okoli Gradu nad Reko. Tridimenzionalni prikaz arheološke interpretacije lidarskih podatkov z označenimi območji najdišč rimskih izstrelkov in okovnih žebličkov tipov Alezija A–D. Vir najdiščnih podatkov: iskalci z detektorji kovin; za številne najdbe so najdiščni podatki preveč netočni, da bi jih lahko prikazali na sliki. 1 – vzdolž poti proti Soški dolini; 2 – jugovzhodni rob Poliškega polja; 3 – Ajdovo brdo; 4 – pot med Ajdovim brdom in Gradom nad Reko; 5 – Grad nad Reko; 6 – južni del grebena Ajdovo brdo (podlaga: LiDAR ©ARSO; ©NMS).

Reka site complex; the pila, tanged single-barbed arrowheads and particularly a lead slingshot are absent.⁴⁸ In contrast, the Early Roman weapons from Vrh gradu consist of 38 slingshot, four arrowheads, and a tanged pilum with single barb, similar to Fig. 4: 23.⁴⁹

The evidence of Roman military assault at the three sites likely stems from the same Roman military campaign, dated after Caesar's Gallic Wars and before the Middle Augustan period, as indicated by coins, tanged catapult bolts, Jezerine brooches,

and tanged tri-bladed arrowheads of the Zanier Ia type.⁵⁰ Appian's reference to the Carni opposing Octavian during the Illyrian Wars (35–33 BC)⁵¹ suggests that these conflicts were related to the Illyrian Wars. This aligns with the consideration that securing the eastern hinterland of the middle Soča Valley was crucial for Italy's safety and for Roman campaigning further south-east towards Sisak/*Siscia*.⁵²

At all three sites, the narrow summit plateaus and the characteristics of small finds predating

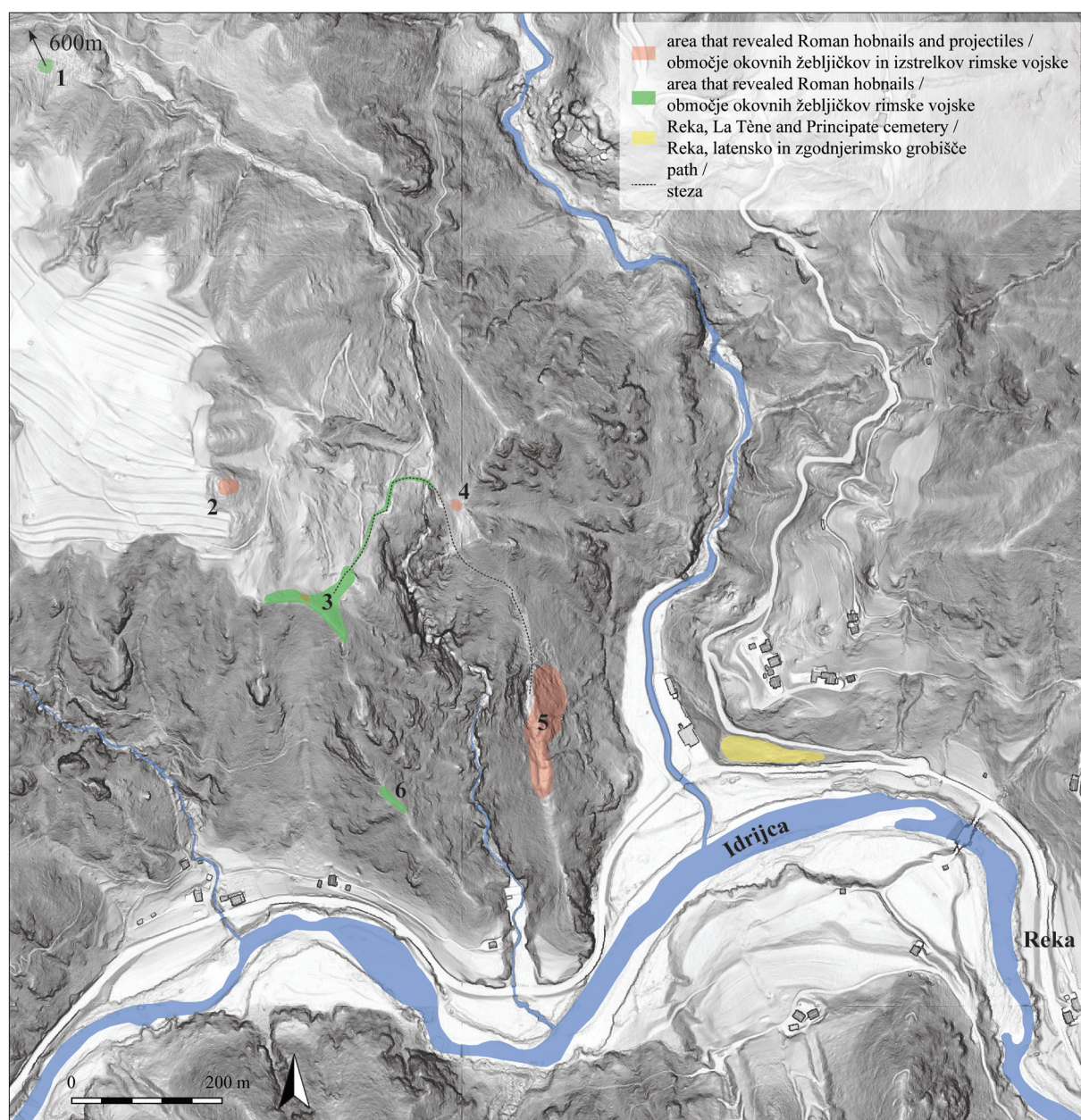
⁴⁸ Istenič 2015a, 68–70, Pl. 2–4.

⁴⁹ Arrowheads: Istenič 2015a, 71–73, Pl. 5–7; pilum: Mlinar et al. 2018, 76, Cat. No. 76.

⁵⁰ Cf. Istenič 2005; Istenič 2015a.

⁵¹ Cf. Section Literary sources.

⁵² Istenič 2015a, 59–60.



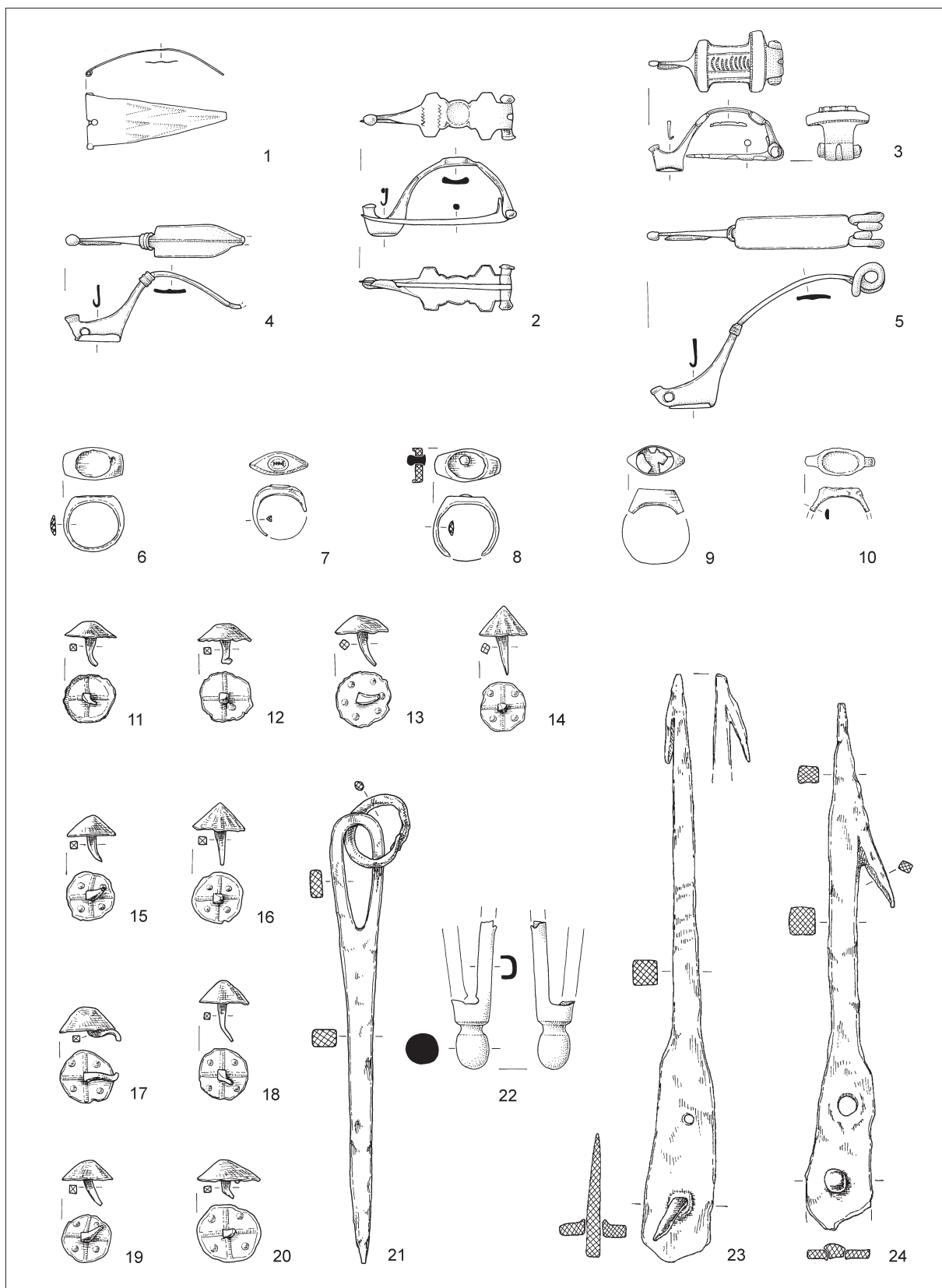


Fig. 4: The Grad above Reka site complex. Select finds. 1–3,22 pure brass; 4,5 gunmetal; 10 copper alloy; 7 iron and chalcedony?; 8 iron and copper alloy; 6,9,11–21,23–24 iron. Scale = 1:2.

Sl. 4: Najdiščna skupina okoli Gradu nad Reko. Izbor drobnih najdb. 1–3,22 čista medenina; 4,5 zlitina bakra, kositra in cinka; 10 bakrova zlitina; 7 železo in kalcedon?; 8 železo in bakrova zlitina; 6,9,11–21,23–24 železo. M. = 1:2.

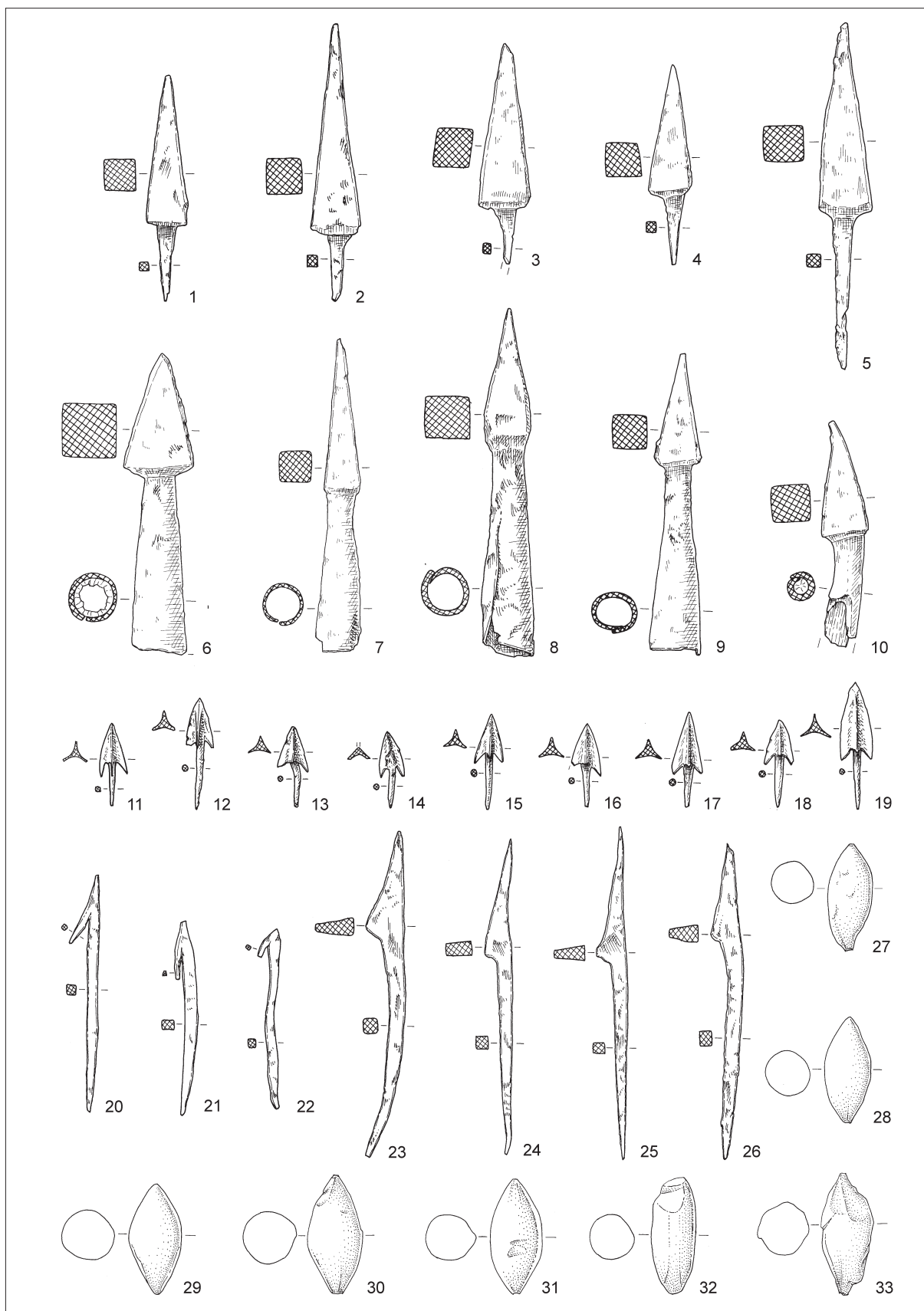


Fig. 5: The Grad above Reka site complex. Select finds. 1–26 iron; 27–33 lead. Scale = 1:2.

Sl. 5: Najdiščna skupina okoli Gradu nad Reko. Izbor drobnih najdb. 1–26 železo; 27–33 svinec. M. = 1:2.

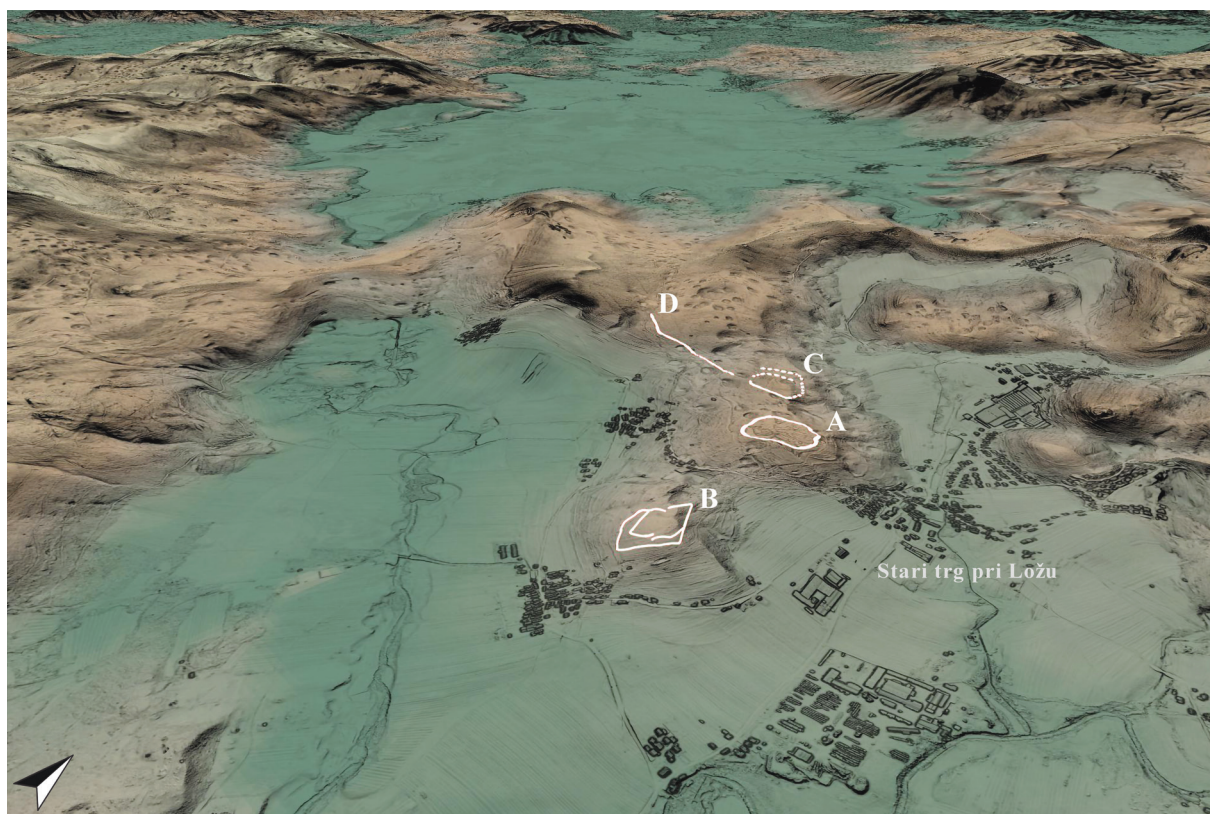


Fig. 6: The Ulaka site complex. Archaeological interpretation of the LiDAR-derived digital elevation model. A – Ulaka, hillfort; B – Nadleški hrib – Roman forts; C – Ulaka-tabor, Roman fort(s); D – linear earthwork (basemap: LiDAR ©ARSO; ©NMS).

Sl. 6: Najdiščna skupina okoli Ulake. Tridimenzionalni prikaz interpretacije lidarskih podatkov. A – gradišče Ulaka; B – Nadleški hrib (rimska tabora); C – Ulaka – tabor (en ali več rimskih taborov); D – linijski okop (podlaga: LiDAR ©ARSO; ©NMS).

the Roman assaults allow the assumption that these places were sacred places significant to the identity of the indigenous population.⁵³

The Alésia type hobnails are common finds at Ulaka – tabor and Nadleški hrib, two sites linked to the Roman military conquest of the hillfort on Ulaka (Fig. 6: A–C), situated in a strategically important position.⁵⁴ On Ulaka – tabor, the archaeological analysis and interpretation of the LiDAR-derived data revealed the remains of presumably more than one Roman camp or fort. In addition to 45 Alésia-type hobnails, the metal-detecting survey yielded two pila, catapult bolts, and other Roman projectiles; they indicate the armed Roman military action in the mid-1st century BC.⁵⁵

The LiDAR-derived data from Nadleški hrib show two successive camps or forts. The earlier

one, dating to before 15 BC, can be inferred from the Alésia types hobnails and from a socketed catapult bolt with a pyramidal head; it is presumably related to the smaller of the two camps or forts (covering c. 2.4 ha).⁵⁶

The geopolitical context suggests two specific periods for a Roman attack on the Ulaka hillfort: Caesar's proconsulship in Gaul and Illyricum (59–49 BC) and Octavian's Illyrian Wars (35–33 BC).⁵⁷ Two arguments appear to support the later dating: i) Ulaka's location on a route leading from Italy to the Iapodes and *Segestica/Siscia*, and ii) the hillfort's position within the territory con-

⁵³ Istenič 2023.

⁵⁴ Istenič 2019a, 282–283, Cat. Nos 23–25; Laharnar 2022, 220–237, 415, Pl. 48: 12–19; Laharnar, Istenič 2024.

⁵⁵ Laharnar, Istenič 2024, 178–181, Fig. 4: 3–8.

⁵⁶ Laharnar 2016, 96, Fig. 6: 1, 11–18; Laharnar 2022, 234–237, Fig. 3.118–3.120, Pl. 48: 1, 6–10, 12–19; Laharnar, Lozić 2016, 65–66; Laharnar, Istenič 2024, 177–178, Fig. 2, 5. The site also yielded three Late Republican *denarii*, the latest of which being a not much worn coin minted in 90 BC (Laharnar 2016, 96).

⁵⁷ Cf. Section Literary sources.

trolled by the Taurisci or Carni, peoples defeated by Octavian according to Appian.⁵⁸

About 20 hobnails (mostly of Alesia Type D) discovered east of Ajdovščina (Fig. 2: 33) might suggest that the Roman army used the route across the Hrušica/*Ad pirum* Pass prior to the construction of the Roman road there under Augustus.⁵⁹

In addition to the sites discussed above, the Alésia-type hobnails occur at indigenous settlements and cult sites, most of which are located in prominent strategic positions, e.g. i) along the route from Cividale/*Forum Iulii* area to the Soča Valley (Fig. 2: 4–7) and further east⁶⁰ (Fig. 2: 8–9) or north (Fig. 2: 29) towards the Predel/Predil Pass,⁶¹ ii) along the routes in south-western Slovenia leading to Kvarner Bay or Sisak/*Siscia* (Fig. 2: 16–18, 20–22), and north of Ljubljana in the Ljubljana Basin (Fig. 2: 26–27).⁶² The earlier Roman military presence at Žerovnišček,⁶³ and the assumed Roman assault at Stari grad above Unec⁶⁴ were likely associated with Octavian's Illyrian Wars.⁶⁵ In contrast, Roman military activities at Baba near Slavina⁶⁶ and perhaps also at the nearby Ambrožovo gradišče⁶⁷ (Fig. 2: 16, 17) might

date to a few decades earlier.⁶⁸ For the remaining sites, the available archaeological evidence does not provide sufficient information to refine the dating suggested by the hobnails.⁶⁹

Two hobnails and at least five other pieces of Roman militaria were found in the River Ljubljana. They indicate that Roman armies used the route along the river before the Middle Augustan period.⁷⁰ The route started in Vrhnika/*Nauportus*, a commercial hub of the Taurisci taken over by Roman merchants from Aquileia in the mid-1st century BC or in the Octavianic period. Vast storehouses were constructed in the Octavianic or Early Augustan period.⁷¹ Until the road along the northern fringes of the marshy Ljubljansko barje (Fig. 7: insert) was built, the Ljubljana was the only year-round communication line between *Nauportus* and *Emona*, forming part of the most convenient route from Italy across the Razdrto/Ocra Pass and the Postojna Gates to the east.⁷²

Diplomatic (and possibly military) contacts between the Roman and the indigenous elites are suggested by five swords in scabbards featuring brass openwork decoration, dated to c. 40/30 to 15 BC. They were presumably Roman products adapted to Celtic taste; with one exception, they were found in graves (Fig. 1: Strmec, Verdun, Mihovo). The earliest grave containing Roman weapons may date from the Early Augustan period (Fig. 1: Reka).⁷³

Middle Augustan and later archaeological evidence

Roman military finds from the Ljubljana largely date to the Middle and Late Augustan period, with only roughly 5% reliably attributed to

⁵⁸ Cf. Introduction and Section Literary sources; Laharnar, Istenič 2024.

⁵⁹ Istenič 2019b, 254.

⁶⁰ Istenič 2015a, 59–60.

⁶¹ Horvat 2018.

⁶² Istenič 2019a, 283–287.

⁶³ The only Roman projectiles (and indeed weapons) from Žerovnišček are two slingshot of types Völling Ib and IIb that cannot be dated closer than from the end of the 2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD or later (Laharnar 2009, 106–107, 118, 132, 141, Pl. 5: 5–7). Therefore, contrary to Horvat (2015b, Fig. 2) and Bernardini, Duiz (2021, 30, Fig. 7), we agree with Laharnar (2011, 353, 370) that the evidence does not suggest a Roman military assault.

⁶⁴ The assault is suggested by numerous slingshot of Völling IIb type, comprising several ones that show damage inflicted upon impact (Laharnar 2011, 347–348, 365–366, 369, Fig. 6, Pl. 1: 1, 2, 9, 12, 15, 16, 19; the same slingshot: Laharnar 2011, 175–177, Fig. 3.90, Pl. 35: 143–178).

⁶⁵ Istenič 2019a, 284. Information about a coin scatter from Stari grad, containing c. 60 *denarii*, the latest of which an Octavian's *denarius* in little circulated condition, minted in 36 BC (Švajncer, Švajncer 2020, 140, bottom figure in the right column) could not be verified.

⁶⁶ Numerous slingshot suggest a Roman assault, while the absence of later finds indicates the abandonment of the hillfort (Laharnar 2022, 54–57, 327–328, Pl. 3: 15–17; 4: 18–29, Fig. 3.15).

⁶⁷ In addition to the hobnails, only a few Roman military items from the site date earlier than the Middle Augustan period, and they do not suggest a Roman military assault. Several militaria from the site date to the Middle

to Late Augustan period; therefore, the same may apply to the slingshot, which were presumably unused and were found in two distinct groups, possibly caches (Laharnar 2022, 298–299, 314–316, Pl. 9: 71–75, 78–111).

⁶⁸ Istenič 2019a, 284–285; Laharnar 2022, 346–347.

⁶⁹ Istenič 2019a, 238–287.

⁷⁰ Istenič 2019b, 30–41, 114–115, 208–210, Cat. Nos. A1, A4, MM A22, MM A23, C1, H7, H8, Fig. 13, 17, 123, Pl. 1, 12, 19.

⁷¹ Horvat 1990; Mušič, Horvat 2007; Vojaković, Bekljanov Zidanšek, Toškan 2019.

⁷² Istenič 2019b, 236–238 (with references).

⁷³ Swords in scabbards with brass openwork decoration: Istenič 2010; Istenič 2015b; grave with Roman weapons: Istenič 2013.



Fig. 7: A map of the territory of Slovenia and its neighbouring regions showing Middle and Late Augustan sites, as mentioned in the text (basemap: cf. Fig. 1; ©NMS).

Sl. 7: Zemljevid ozemlja Slovenije in okolice kaže v članku omenjena najdišča iz srednje in pozne avgustejske dobe (podlaga: cf. sl. 1; ©NMS).

the Tiberian era or later.⁷⁴ The drop in Tiberian finds roughly coincides with the construction of the land route between Vrhnika/ *Nauportus* and Ljubljana/*Emona*, presumably completed towards the end of Augustus' reign.⁷⁵ More importantly, this marked decline in the number of finds presumably reflects the substantially decreased need for supplying the Roman army once the conquest of northern Illyricum was complete.

We further presume that the accumulation of the finds near Bevke is related to the boundary separating the Roman territory under civil admin-

istration (province *Gallia Cisalpina*/Roman Italy⁷⁶) from the frontier zone under Roman military administration.⁷⁷ We assume it was at the same spot as the later boundary between the territories of the autonomous towns Aquileia and *Emona*/Ljubljana, indicated by the boundary stone found at the sharp bend of the Ljubljanica near Bevke (fig. 7: insert).⁷⁸ The boundary between *Gallia Cisalpina*/Roman Italy and the frontier zone probably existed from the mid-1st century BC (when

⁷⁴ Istenič 2019b, 208–210, Fig. 123.

⁷⁵ Istenič 2019b, 254–255.

⁷⁶ *Gallia Cisalpina* became the far north-eastern part of Italy in 42/41 BC (Bandelli 2017, 308).

⁷⁷ Cf. Roymans 2004, 195.

⁷⁸ Istenič 2019b, 246, 248, 250, Fig. 144. The boundary stone: Šašel Kos 2002.

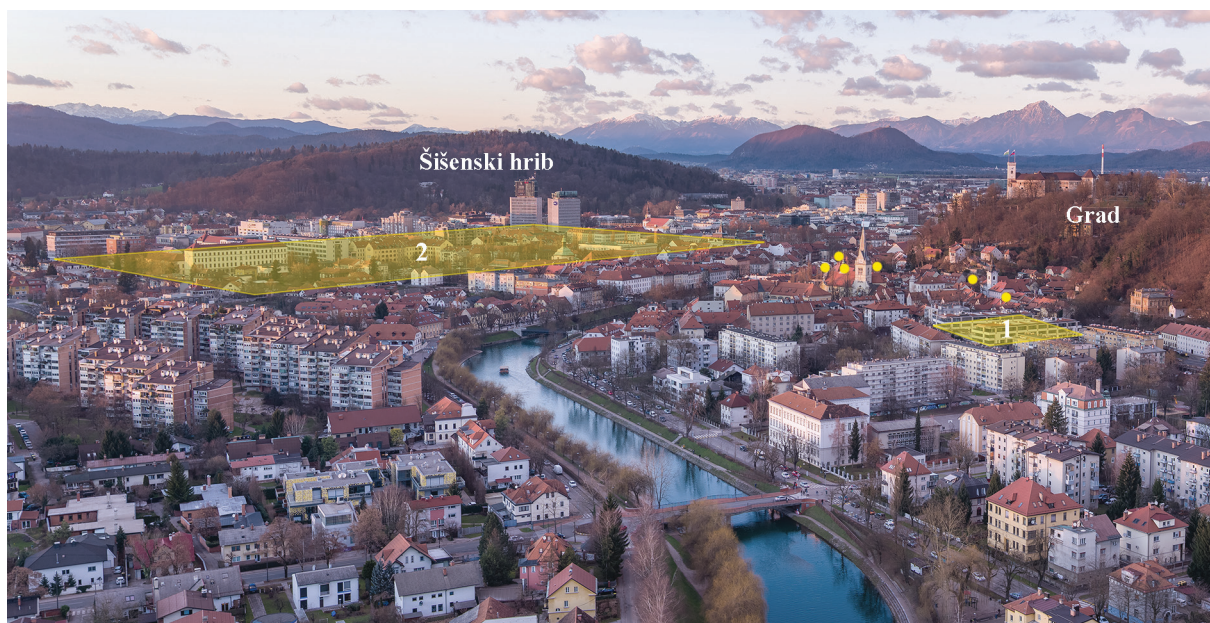


Fig. 8: The Ljubljana Gates, view from the south. 1 – excavation area with the remains of the Middle-Late Augustan forts; 2 – walled town (*colonia Iulia Emona*); • – sites where the Late La Tène-Augustan settlement was excavated.

Sl. 8: Ljubljanska vrata, pogled z juga. 1 – območje izkopavanj, ki so odkrila ostanke vojaškega tabora iz srednje in pozne avgustejske dobe; 2 – obzidano mesto (*colonia Iulia Emona*); • – območja, kjer je bilo odkrito poznolatsko in avgustejsko civilno naselje.

Nauportus was presumably incorporated into *Gallia Cisalpina*, which was abolished 42 BC and its territory administratively included in Italy⁷⁹) and the end of Augustus' reign.⁸⁰ The later date is indicated by the foundation date of *colonia Iulia Emona* as inferred from the archaeological evidence and the building inscription dated to AD 14/15. Notably, this date coincides with the significant decline in the number of militaria recovered from the Ljubljanica near Bevke.⁸¹

The concentration of Roman military finds in the Ljubljanica at Vrhnika aligns with significant port activity, which would be expected in a transshipment and transport hub of vital importance to the Roman army, and therefore likely under its control.⁸²

The river route along the Ljubljanica in its readily navigable section across the Ljubljansko barje (in contrast with the treacherous sections further south-east along the Ljubljanica and the Sava) ended at the Ljubljana Gates (Fig. 8). Here, the route forked, leading north-east overland to the Central Danube Basin, and south-east by river and land to Sisak/*Siscia* and further on to

the Balkans.⁸³ The Ljubljana Gates were of key strategic importance for the Roman army during the conquest of Illyricum.

Two successive Roman forts on the left bank of the Ljubljanica were investigated in 2008 and 2018. Their description given below is based on the excavation reports,⁸⁴ published overviews,⁸⁵ but also data and information kindly provided by Iris Bekljanov Zidanšek (Arhej, d. o. o.), who is preparing a comprehensive publication of both forts.

The early fort was built next to the settlement of the indigenous inhabitants (likely joined by Roman immigrants from the Middle Augustan period onwards) on the south-eastern foot of Grajski grič (Fig. 8).⁸⁶ Excavations unearthed 60 m of the fortification wall with two parallel V-sectioned ditches on the exterior, as well as the remains of an earth bank (maximum w. 3.6 m) abutting the fortification wall, and a 2.2–2.8-metre-wide pebbled surface (*via sagularis*) in the interior. The wall (2.5–2.8 m wide, surviving to a maximum height

⁷⁹ Istenič 2019b, 240–245, with references.

⁸⁰ Novšak, Bekljanov Zidanšek, Vojaković 2017, 27–29; Gaspari et al. 2014, 136–146, 151–153.

⁸¹ Vojaković et al. 2011; Novšak et al. 2023.

⁸² Settlement below Grajski grič: Vičič 1993; Vičič 1994; Vičič 2002; Vojaković 2014; Novšak, Bekljanov Zidanšek, Vojaković 2017; Vojaković 2023a.

⁷⁹ Zaccharia 2023, 133.

⁸⁰ Istenič 2019b, 246–254.

⁸¹ Istenič 2019b, 242, with references.

⁸² Istenič 2019b, 246–254.

of c. half a metre) was built of stone, earth and four parallel lines of vertical beams (Figs. 9, 10).

The fireplaces, small hearths, and other features found in the fort's interior indicate the barracks. The available space suggests the fort could not have covered more than c. 5 ha. During its use, the original defensive ditches underwent modifications. The outer ditch was first completely filled in, and then a new, wider, and deeper ditch was dug, while the inner ditch was widened.

Tableware from the layers directly above the barrack floors and from the fills of the defensive ditches shows the fort became operative around or just before 10 BC⁸⁷ and continued into the Late Augustan period. Invaluable dating evidence came from the inner defensive ditch. Part of its first phase slope was fortified with beech stakes (Fig. 10), and the dendrochronological dating of one of these stakes, which lacked final tree rings, indicates it was made of a tree felled after AD 3. The first phase of the ditches thus ended after AD 3. The numismatic evidence does not provide a narrower dating.⁸⁸

The earlier fort was abandoned, the area levelled, and a new fort was built over it. The tableware found in the levelling layer can only be broadly dated to the Late Augustan period. The numismatic evidence supports this dating.⁸⁹

Most of the later fort remains were found east of the earlier fort's fortification wall. In the southern sector, they comprised timber constructions, which were likely part of a *valetudinarium*.⁹⁰ The



Fig. 9: The earlier fort on the right bank of the Ljubljanica in Ljubljana: defensive wall, view to the SW.

Sl. 9: Starejši tabor na desnem bregu Ljubljanice: obrambno obzidje, pogled proti jugozahodu.

⁸⁷ The analysis of the 2008 excavation evidence indicated the fort began 'after 10 BC' (Novšak, Bekljanov Zidanšek, Vojaković 2017, 28; Gaspari et al. 2014, 144), whereas the discoveries in the 2018 campaign revealed several floor levels, of which the earliest were – based on the fineware – preliminarily dated between 20 and 10 BC (Novšak et al. 2023, 110–114, 121, 177).

⁸⁸ N = 40. Moneyers' coins (52%; roughly equal shares of early coins, minted in 18–15 BC, and later coins, minted in 7–6 BC) predominate, and are followed by the Republican coins (22%). The coin evidence includes one Nemausus I–II coin (RPC 522–524) and two Gaius-Lucius *denarii* (RIC 207), minted from 2 BC onwards (Wolters 2000, 94–95, 99).

⁸⁹ N = 69. Moneyers' coins, with an early to late coin ratio consistent with that in note 88, and Republican coins constitute the vast majority of the finds. Two Nemausus I–II coins (RPC 522–524), one Nemausus II coin (RPC 524), and one Lugdunum I coin (RIC 230) are noteworthy. A halved Nemausus III coin (RPC 525) minted between AD 10 and 14 was presumably originally in the upper-lying layer related to the later fort.

⁹⁰ Sedlmayer 2020, 20–21, Fig. 7.

northern sector revealed a different set of timber buildings, as well as a wooden well, the construction of which the dendrochronological analysis dates to after AD 4. The perimeter of this fort, which was likely larger than the earlier one, lay beyond the excavation area. Pottery and the coins⁹¹ indicate a Late Augustan date.

We can conclude that the two forts were in function in the Middle and Late Augustan periods, and likely succeeded one another either directly or within a short time. The earlier fort was probably constructed c. 10 BC, and the later one in the second half of the first decade AD. Both forts played a crucial role in safeguarding the key overland

⁹¹ N = 60. The moneyers' coins, with an early to late coin ratio consistent with that in note 88, and the Republican coins greatly predominate. The assemblage also includes single examples of Lugdunum I (RIC 230), Nemausus I (RPC 523), Nemausus II (RPC 524), Gaius-Lucius coins (RIC 207), and two coins of Nemausus I or II (RPS 522–524). The Nemausus III coin (RPC 525) minted in AD 10–14 is presumably also related to the later fort (note 89). The coins of Tiberius are notably absent.



Fig. 10: The earlier fort on the right bank of the Ljubljanica in Ljubljana, from left to right: the two defensive ditches, lines of holes indicating the position of vertical beams in the already dismantled defensive wall, and via sagularis; view to the west-southwest. Sl. 10: Starejši tabor na desnem bregu Ljubljanice: obrambna jarka, vrste lukenj, ki kažejo lego navpičnih lesenih kolov v že odstranjenem obzidju, in *via sagularis*; z leve proti desni, pogled proti zahodu oziroma jugozahodu.

transport route between the main supply base at Aquileia and Illyricum.⁹²

The fineware from the forts primarily consists of imports from Italy. The stamps on the *terra sigillata* are rectangular, while the *in planta pedis* stamps are notably absent. The numismatic evidence reveals a predominance of moneyers' coins, alongside Republican coins, which form the second-largest group. The Nemausus and Lugdunum coins are represented by very few specimens. This suggests that the Roman armies in the territory of modern Slovenia were supplied with money from Italy. In contrast, in the Rhineland – probably supplied from Gaul – large quantities of moneyers' coins only appear at the beginning of the Tiberius' reign; Nemausus I coins are characteristic of the military sites of the Dangstetten-Oberaden horizon, and Lugdunum I coins mark the Haltern-Kalkriese horizon.⁹³

In Ljubljana, traces of the Augustan Roman military presence have also been found on the left bank of the Ljubljanica. Rescue excavations have unearthed a 'training camp', V-sectioned ditches at several locations, as well as pits and ovens used for food preparation, suggesting the existence of several successive camps or forts.⁹⁴ These features lie beneath extensive ground levelling conducted in the final years of the Augustan period. Early Tiberian contexts bear the earliest evidence of civilian settlement.⁹⁵ The 'training camp' and most of the pits date to the Late Augustan era, while at least one of the pits is likely Middle Augustan.⁹⁶

⁹² Istenič 2019b, 242, 243, note 905.

⁹³ Gaspari 2010, 25–81, 113–125; Gaspari 2014, 134–141, Fig. 143–146; Gaspari et al. 2014, 147–149, 164; Istenič 2019b, 242, 243, note 905; Praprotnik 2016.

⁹⁴ The results of the excavation and the pottery analysis of the NUK II site in Ljubljana are comprehensively presented in an undergraduate thesis (Praprotnik 2016). It reveals that the majority of the stratigraphic units (SE) beneath the extensive levelling date to either the Late or the Middle to Late Augustan period. Notably, Pit SE 2718, one of the

⁹² Egri 2008. Cf. Kehne 2007.

⁹³ Wigg-Wolf 2007; Wolters 2000; Wolters 2007.

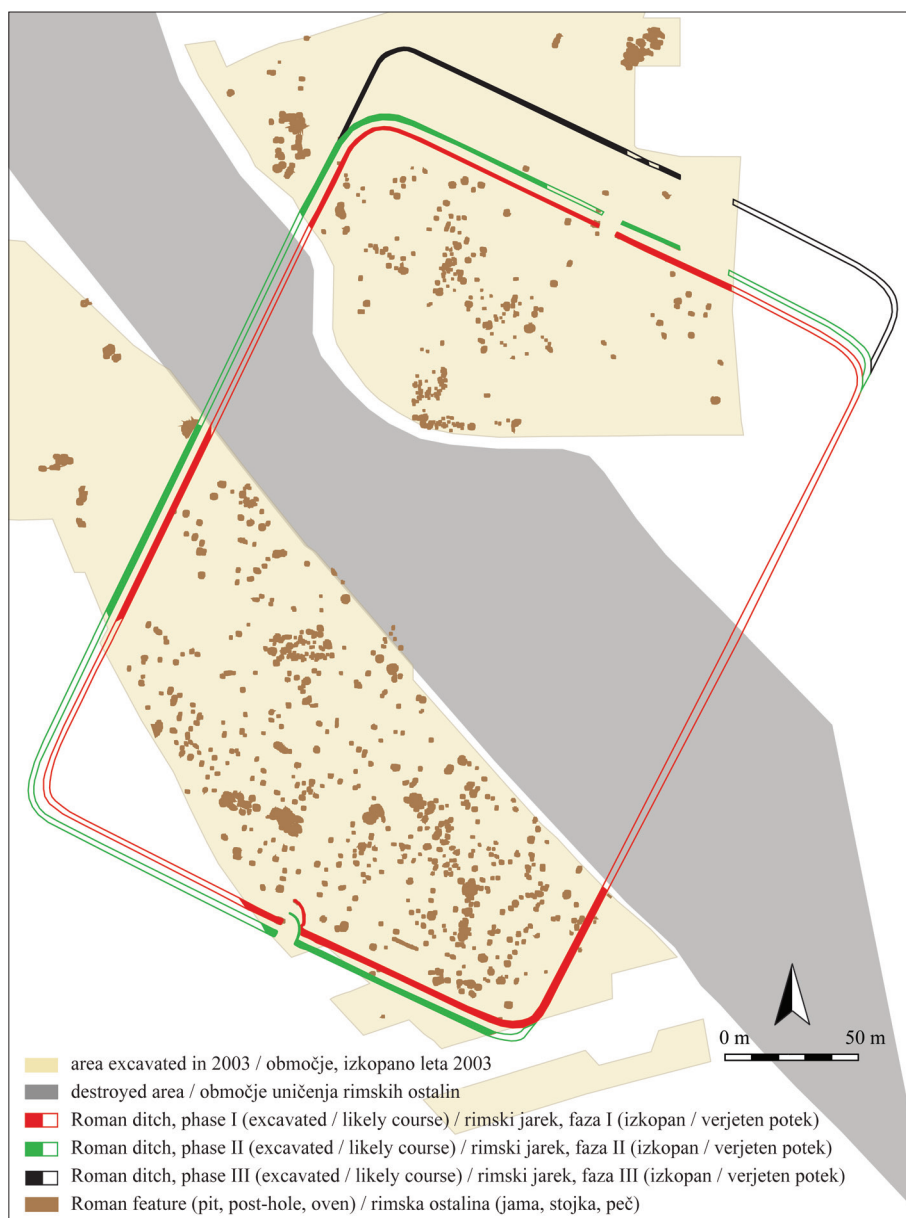


Fig. 11: The fort at Obrežje. Its north-eastern part was eroded by the River Sava and the central part destroyed during the construction of the Ljubljana-Zagreb road in the 1950s and by the Slovenia-Croatia border crossing in 1991. The south-western corner remained unexcavated (from Mason, Kramberger 2022, 28, Fig. 15).

Sl. 11: Tabor na Obrežju. Njegov severovzhodni del je erodirala reka Sava, osrednji del pa je bil uničen med gradnjo ceste Ljubljana-Zagreb v petdesetih letih 20. stoletja ter ob gradnji mejnega prehoda med Slovenijo in Hrvaško leta 1991. Jugozahodni vogal je ostal neizkopan (po Mason, Kramberger 2022, 28, sl. 15).

Three Roman forts were discovered in the Brežice Gates, a strategically important narrow passage between Krško polje and the valley of the River Sava.

The site of Vihre – Sv. Urh near Drnovo, on the west bank of the Sava and a few kilometres upstream from its confluence with the Krka (Fig. 7), is today just under two kilometres from the Sava. However, in Roman times, it must have been located next to the river.⁹⁷ The 2015 excavations examined a relatively

earliest Roman stratigraphic units at the site, appears to date to the Middle Augustan period (Praprotnik 2016, 21–23, 72, 97: Cat. Nos 4–7, Pl. 1: 4–7; cf. Gaspari 2010, 32, Pl. 3: SE/SU 2718).

⁹⁷ The Sava no doubt ran past Drnovo near Krško/ *municipium Flavium Latobiorum Neviodunum* (Verbič, Berič 1993, 330).

small area (105 m²) and revealed four chronological phases of one or more Roman forts. The earliest is a V-sectioned defensive ditch (Phase I), followed by several bread ovens (Phase II), and pits (Phase III); sleeper beam slots of wooden barracks and contemporary pits constitute the latest phase (Phase IV). Scarce small finds associated with Phases I and II do not allow a more precise dating than the Middle or Late Augustan period, while the later two phases date to the Late Augustan era.⁹⁸ The excavations in 2022 unearthed the ground surface of wooden barracks.⁹⁹ In addition, investigations in 2003, 2004, and 2009 revealed V-sectioned ditches, bread ovens and pits in different parts of the site.¹⁰⁰

Another fort (or perhaps camp) came to light at Čatež – Sredno polje, also on the right bank of the Sava (Fig. 7). The archaeological investigations revealed the lower sections of two parallel V-sectioned ditches and domed ovens. The few associated artefacts suggest they date from the Middle Augustan to the Tiberian period.¹⁰¹

The most extensively researched is the fort at Obrežje, located few km south-east of Brežice, on the west bank of the Sava, on the gravel terrace formed by its western tributary (Fig. 7). At this spot, the Brežice Gates open into the broad valley of the Sava. The following description of the archaeological evidence from this site is based on the papers published shortly after the end of excavations,¹⁰² a paper that briefly addresses the coins from the site,¹⁰³ and the invaluable information kindly provided by Maja Janežič, the author of an as yet unpublished report on the small finds from the site.

The excavations explored more than half of the fort area, which originally covered approximately 6 ha. They revealed only negative features, as no intact occupation layers associated with the Roman fort have survived. The fort was built on a rectangular plan with rounded corners (Fig. 11). Details of the south-western inner *clavicula* entrance indicate

that, in its first phase, the fort featured a single ditch that enclosed an area of 290 m × 210 m. A later ditch, visible in the excavated ground plan as the outer ditch, enclosed a slightly larger area (300 m × 215 m) and was probably associated with an earth-and-timber rampart, erected on the backfilled inner ditch. Another ditch was subsequently added to the north-east end of the fort to enclose a 215 m × 25 m annex.

The fort's interior contained numerous pits and postholes, three beehive-shaped clay bread ovens with access pits, and a single well, while the annex was nearly empty. A series of large pits, intersected by others, suggests intensive activity and at least two occupation phases.

Compared to the forts from Ljubljana, the fort at Obrežje yielded few small finds.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, they suggest it was in use in the Late Augustan period. Stratigraphic evidence reveals that the two phases of the fort succeeded each other in a short time. The earliest of a small group of cremation burials found within the fort area is of Tiberian date,¹⁰⁵ indicating that the fort was no longer in use in that time.

The larger camp or fort (c. 4 ha) on Nadleški hrib (Fig. 6: B) is likely from the Middle or Late Augustan period.¹⁰⁶ The trenching at the nearby site Ulaka – tabor (Fig. 6: C) revealed a rampart that suggests a Middle or Late Augustan camp or fort also existed there.¹⁰⁷

The only Early Principate fortress in Slovenia was situated at Ptuj (Fig. 7). During the Roman conquest period, the site was strategically significant for several reasons: i) situated along the River Drava, it was well connected with Moesia and the eastern part of the Roman state, ii) it was the location where the main pre-Roman route crossed the Drava to continue towards the Middle Danube

⁹⁸ Leskovar et al. 2019.

⁹⁹ Source: FB page Arhos, d. o. o., published on 6 April 2023 (<https://www.facebook.com/arhos.arhos.71>).

¹⁰⁰ Vičič, Predan 2003; Vičič, Predan 2004; Štular, Tica 2004; Olić 2009. Guštin (2015, 224) includes incorrect information by discussing Vihre and Sv. Urh as two separate sites and stating that a piece of a *lorica squamata* (rather than *lorica segmentata*) was found there.

¹⁰¹ Tomaž 2022, 109–114, 183–187, 798–803, Fig. 8b, 58–64.

¹⁰² Mason 2006; Mason 2008.

¹⁰³ Miškec 2009.

¹⁰⁴ Predominating among the pottery is thin-walled ware (c. 120 pieces), around 20 pieces belong to terra sigillata. The numismatic evidence is similar to that from the forts in Ljubljana; of 34 coins, three quarters are moneyers' coins, c. 17% are Republican coins, and two are Lugdunum I bronze coins (RIC 230) that mark the Haltern-Kalkriese horizon in the Rhineland (Wigg-Wolf 2007; Wolters 2000, 93).

¹⁰⁵ The grave goods include a Celtic silver coin, four Roman coins (latest one minted in AD 11–12) and an Almgren 236a brooch with two knobs (cf. Demetz 1999, 49–51, 55–56; Sedlmayer 2009, 26). Other three cremations are either later or cannot be precisely dated.

¹⁰⁶ Laharnar 2016, 94–95, Fig. 4, 7: 19, 20, 23.

¹⁰⁷ Laharnar, Istenič 2024.

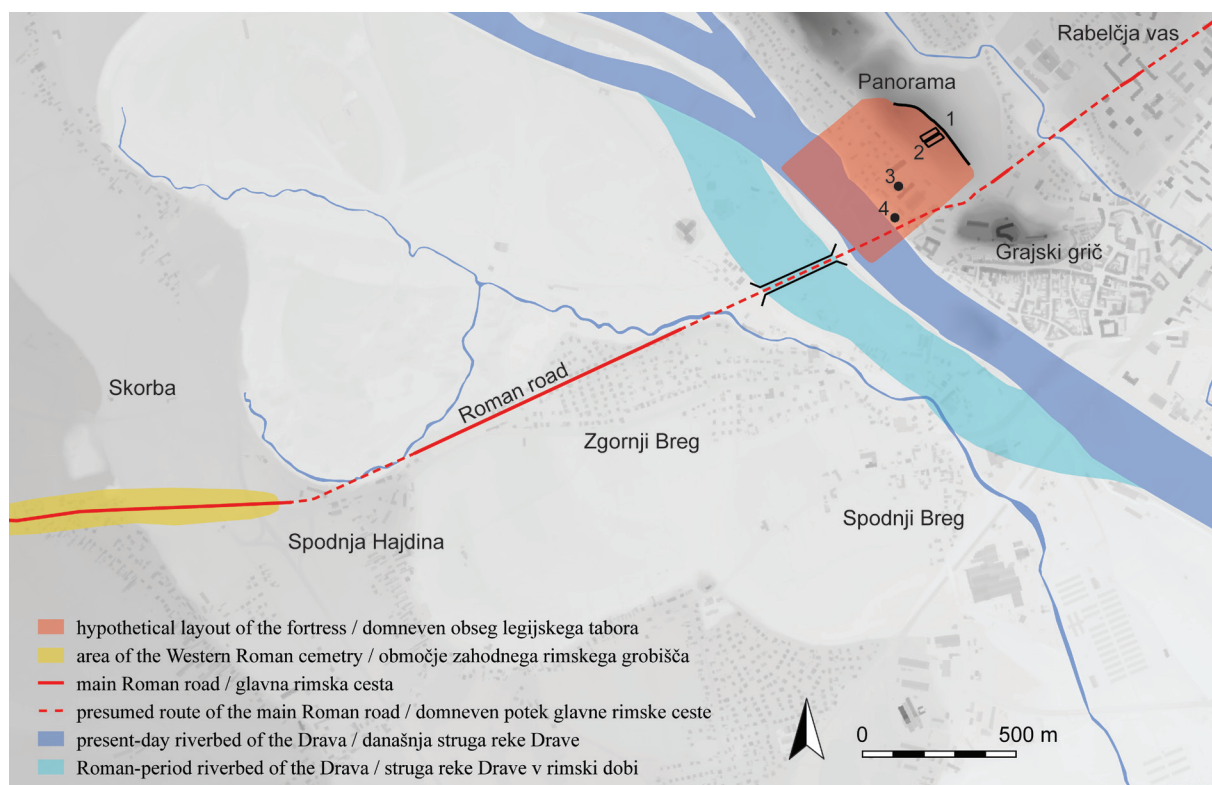


Fig. 12: Ptuj/*Poetovio*, 1st century AD. 1 – defensive wall of a Roman fort(ress) (geophysical and trenching evidence); 2 – presumed military barracks (geophysical evidence); 3–4 – sites where the remains of wooden buildings and militaria were excavated (archaeological data source: Horvat 2024; basemap: LiDAR ©ARSO).

Sl. 12: Zemljevid območja Ptuja s prikazom v članku omenjenih najdišč iz 1. st. n. št. 1 – obrambno obzidje rimskega tabora (vir: geofizikalne raziskave in arheološka izkopavanja); 2 – verjetne vojaške barake (vir: geofizikalne raziskave); 3–4 – najdišča lesenih stavb in rimskih vojaških predmetov (vir arheoloških podatkov: Horvat 2024; podlaga: LiDAR ©ARSO).

region,¹⁰⁸ iii) to the west, it was protected by the territory of the Norican Kingdom, annexed to the Roman state around 15 BC.¹⁰⁹

Ever since the research of the Roman military presence at Ptuj has begun, it has been widely accepted that it hosted a fortress from the Augustan period to the end of the 1st century AD.¹¹⁰ The two main arguments for its existence in the Augustan period provide the tombstones of the soldiers of *Legio VIII* found in and around Ptuj,¹¹¹ and Tacitus who mentions this legion among the three Pannonian legions that mutinied on the death of Augustus.¹¹² The fortress of *Legio VIII* must therefore have existed at Ptuj by AD 14.¹¹³ There is no clear evidence of an earlier presence

of the Roman army at Ptuj. Historians nevertheless often propose that Ptuj hosted a fortress from the Pannonian Wars in 12–9 BC onwards.¹¹⁴ Between AD 43 and 45, *Legio VIII* was replaced by *Legio XIII*, which arrived to *Poetovio* from *Vindonissa*.¹¹⁵ The former is credited with opening the marble quarries in the eastern Pohorje Hills.¹¹⁶

Until recently, it was widely believed that the fortress was located on the right bank of the Drava, north of Spodnja Hajdina, in an area eroded by the Drava after the Roman period.¹¹⁷ However, the geophysical survey on the hill of Panorama on the left bank of the Drava suggested a defensive wall and barracks of a Roman fort(ress) (Fig. 12:

¹⁰⁸ Evidence for a prehistoric route underlying the Roman road: Tomanič Jevremov 1985, 289; Jevremov 1978, 59.

¹⁰⁹ Šašel Kos 1997b, 32–33; Urban 2000, 368.

¹¹⁰ Ritterling 1924–1925, 1645; Saria 1951, 1170–1172.

¹¹¹ Cf. Section Epigraphic evidence.

¹¹² Tacitus, *Annales* I, 23, 30 (cf. Section Literary sources).

¹¹³ Oldenstein-Pferdehirt 1984, 397–400; Reddé 2000, 120–121.

¹¹⁴ Saria 1951, 1170; Radman-Livaja 2012, 164 (with references).

¹¹⁵ Ritterling 1924–1925, 1713; Saria 1951, 1171; Oldenstein-Pferdehirt 1984, 398–400; Reddé 2000, 121. Tombstones of serving soldiers and veterans of *Legio XIII* in and around Ptuj: Ragolič 2023, 16, Cat. Nos 2, 9, 14, 15, 16?, 17–20, 359.

¹¹⁶ Djurić 2008, 161, 163–164.

¹¹⁷ Klemenc, Saria 1936, 50; Saria 1951, 1169; Wolff 2000.

1–2).¹¹⁸ The subsequent trial trenching in 2020 unearthed the defensive features of two phases that can only be dated broadly, to the 1st century AD. Phase 1 comprises a wooden palisade and an almost completely destroyed earth-and-timber rampart, while Phase 2 is represented by a stone-built defence wall with an inner tower, and a V-sectioned ditch. The finding gave rise to the hypothesis that the structures discovered on Panorama relate to a fortress covering c. 20 ha, situated on two levels: on the summit of Panorama and below it, in the plain between Panorama and the Drava (*Fig. 12*),¹¹⁹ where Roman military presence in the 1st century AD is suggested by several pieces of military and horse equipment and perhaps also by the evidence of timber structures (military barracks?; *Fig. 12: 3–4*).¹²⁰

The use of stone for the second phase of the defensive wall on Panorama suggests its dating to the last third of the 1st century AD.¹²¹ The replacement of the earth-and-timber rampart with the stone defensive wall is, therefore, attributed to *Legio XIII*. However, there is currently no evidence to suggest whether this legion also built the earth-and-timber rampart on Panorama, e.g. upon its arrival to Ptuj c. AD 43, or if it was built earlier, by *Legio VIII*. For now, it remains unclear whether the fortress of *Legio VIII* was on Panorama or elsewhere, perhaps on the right bank.

A small number of metal objects, characteristic of the Roman army in the Early Principate, have been discovered at several prehistoric hillforts in south-western Slovenia and north of Ljubljana.¹²² However, with the exception of Ambrožovo gradišče,¹²³ there is no information about their find context or the pottery from the sites, allowing for various interpretations. These include the possible presence of Roman troops in local settlements or auxiliary soldiers returning to their home communities.¹²⁴

The Roman military metalwork items from Kranj are associated with the Middle to Late Augustan settlement enclosed by a stone wall with towers that are not of a military character. The settlement is situated on a naturally well-protected promontory overlooking the confluence of the Rivers Kokra and Sava, along the northbound road from Ljubljana/*Emona*.¹²⁵

We should also note the graves containing Early Roman weapons, which are concentrated in north-west and south-east Slovenia, with sporadic occurrences in central Slovenia (*Fig. 7: Reka, Strmec, Mihovo, Verdun, Ljubljana*). These graves likely represent the burials of indigenous men who served in Roman auxiliary units. The custom of placing weapons in graves ceased after the first half of the first century AD.¹²⁶

CONCLUSION

The archaeological evidence on the Roman military presence between the late 2nd century BC and the beginning of the Middle Augustan period in Slovenia is limited to its western half. At several sites, it only consists of the *caligae* hobnails.

Dating evidence provided for the sites Grad near Reka, Gradišče in Cerklje, and Vrh gradu is likely related to a Roman assault during Octavian's Illyrian Wars (35–33 BC). Presumably also associated to the same wars is the evidence of Roman military presence at several sites in southwestern and northern Slovenia (*Figs 1, 2*). After the Illyrian Wars, the Romans presumably controlled roughly the western half of the territory of Slovenia, which included the Sava plain north of Ljubljana and the areas up to the Sava east of Ljubljana.

The intensive Roman military actions that the territory of Slovenia witnessed during the Illyrian Wars were the result of the need to secure the overland communication between Italy and the areas of the fiercest fighting with the Iapodes and Segestani (N Croatia).¹²⁷ An important part of this communication ran along the River Ljubljanica between Vrhnika/*Nauportus* and Ljubljana/*Emona*.

¹¹⁸ Horvat et al. 2020, 13–53, 65–70.

¹¹⁹ Horvat 2023; Horvat 2024.

¹²⁰ Janežič, Lazar 2015; Schindler-Kaudelka, Janežič 2019; Istenič et al. 2020; Horvat 2024, notes 25, 33, *Fig. 3*).

¹²¹ Cf. Reddé et al. 2006, 85–86; Hanel 2007, 399; Fischer 2012, 257.

¹²² On most of these sites, earlier militaria were also found (cf. *Fig. 2*). Sites at Gobavica and Straža: Horvat 2015a, 189–190, *Fig. 7: 5, 10, Pl. 1: 20, Pl. 2: 3*; site Žerovnišček: Laharnar 2009; various sites in south-eastern Slovenia: Laharnar 2022, 298–302.

¹²³ Horvat 1995, 183–188, Pl. 7–12.

¹²⁴ Laharnar 2022, 327–330, 360–365.

¹²⁵ Sagadin 2015; Sagadin 2020, 204–208, 210, *Fig. 2*.

¹²⁶ Istenič 2013. Grave from Ljubljana: Gaspari et al. 2015; graves from Verdun: Breščak 2015.

¹²⁷ Istenič 2005; Istenič 2015a. The Roman army presumably entered the land of the Iapodes and Segestani (N Croatia) mainly from the Kvarner Bay (Šašel Kos 2005, 429–430).

A correlation of archaeological and historical sources reveals that a military base was located in Ljubljana from the Pannonian War (12–9 BC), when the early fort on the right bank of the Ljubljanica became active, to roughly the end of the Augustan period, when the later fort was abandoned. The abandonment of the early fort and the construction of the later and larger one may be related to the beginning of the Pannonian-Dalmatian uprising in AD 6, when the rebels threatened to invade Italy via land routes. Before the end of the Augustan period, Roman military use of the left bank also came to an end or was severely reduced, and extensive ground levelling prepared the terrain for the construction of the colony of *Emona*.

One tombstone and the votive altar (if genuine) related to the serving personnel of *Legio XV*, supported by three tombstones erected in the memory of veterans of the same legion,¹²⁸ lead to a conjecture that one or more detachments of this legion were among the forces active in *Emona*. The fortress of *Legio XV* was located within the territory that subsequently became the province of Pannonia.¹²⁹

The concentration of archaeological and epigraphic evidence associated with the Roman army in Ljubljana mirrors the vital importance of Ljubljana Gates for safeguarding Italy and supplying the Roman armies deployed to Illyricum. *Emona* was one of the key points on the main line of communication between the Roman hinterland, with the operational base in Aquileia, and the conflict zones on the Balkan Peninsula; in the northern Balkans, the main Roman base after the end of the war in 35–33 BC was at Sisak/*Siscia*.¹³⁰

Another concentration of Roman forces was in the area of the Brežice Gates. The available evidence indicates that the Late Augustan forts were situated at three sites on the right bank of the River Sava (Obrežje, Čatež – Sredno polje, Vihre – Sv. Urh). It seems reasonable to assume they are related to the AD 6–9 uprising. At that time, it was vital for the Roman army to secure the passages leading to Italy from the Balkans, and, viewed from the east, the Brežice Gates was the first area where it

was possible to control the military movements towards Italy on the main road along the Sava.

The later camps or forts on Nadleški hrib and Ulaka – tabor may be associated with the wars in 12–9 BC and/or AD 6–9. Their primary function was probably to control the side road connecting Illyricum to Italy. As discussed above, this control was of paramount importance at the onset of the uprising in AD 6–9.

The literary and epigraphic evidence indicates that a fortress was built at Ptuj on the River Drava by AD 14, but we lack archaeological evidence on the Roman military presence there during either the Augustan or Tiberian periods. The Ptuj area likely became significant for the Roman army in the war of 12–9 BC or not long thereafter, as its geostrategic location made it an ideal base for military conquests further north and east, into areas that would later become part of the province of Pannonia. As for the view that Ptuj served as the headquarters of the Pannonian army and the seat of the provincial governor in the first half of the 1st century AD,¹³¹ it is, for now, not supported by either literary or archaeological evidence. It seems reasonable to infer a military supply base at Ptuj, though neither archaeological,¹³² epigraphic or other written evidence provides any indications of this.

The Roman military protection was likely provided for those civilian settlements where inhabitants from Italy played the leading role and which were situated along major roads. One such settlement was established either by or during the Octavian's era at Vrhnika/*Nauportus*, an important stop on the Roman army's supply line during the wars in 35–33 BC and in the Augustan period. A similar Middle to Late Augustan settlement may have existed at Kranj, located on the road leading from Ljubljana/*Emona*¹³³ to Magdalensberg (Austria), which served as the political and economic hub of Roman Noricum, annexed around 15 BC.¹³⁴

Archaeological evidence of military camps, forts, fortresses, and battle sites is much easier to recognise than material traces of other, often brutal practices—such as massacres of both combatant and non-combatant populations, scorched-

¹²⁸ Cf. Section Literary sources.

¹²⁹ Šašel Kos 1995, 123–237; Mosser 2003, 167; Wheeler 2000, 270–274; Dzino 2010, 168; Radman-Livaja 2018, 160–161.

¹³⁰ Radman-Livaja 2018, 153–154, 155–158. Archaeological evidence on an Augustan-Tiberian fort on the left bank of the Kupa: Drnić 2018, 10, 12, 14–15, 18–20, Fig. 1.

¹³¹ Saria 1951, 1178; Šašel Kos 2014, 139. The main Balkan base of operations in the wars of 12–9 BC and AD 6–9 was in *Siscia*, where the fortress persisted at least to AD 43 (Radman-Livaja 2018, 166–168).

¹³² The arguments that Egri (2008) states in support of storehouses at Ptuj are highly unreliable.

¹³³ Sagadin 2020, 210.

¹³⁴ Dolenz et al. 2024.

earth campaigns, plundering, deportations, and mass enslavement – that Roman imperial power employed to acquire new territories and assert control over conquered peoples.¹³⁵ The use of such or similar means could be related to the abandonment of several indigenous hilltop settlements during the last decades of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD, as indicated by archaeological evidence in regions presumably inhabited by the Taurisci¹³⁶ or under their political influence.¹³⁷ Hilltop settlements exhibiting continuity of occupation into the Roman period indicate that, even within the relatively small territory of southwestern Slovenia, interactions between indigenous populations and the Romans were manifold and not uniformly characterised by hostility.¹³⁸

Drafting indigenous men into the Roman army, during and in the immediate aftermath of wars of conquest was a less overtly violent means of controlling and exploiting conquered populations, although the primary aim was to ensure an adequate number of soldiers.¹³⁹ This practice is reflected in graves containing Roman weapons and in epigraphic sources, most of which come from north-west and especially south-east Slovenia. The evidence suggests that indigenous men began joining the Roman auxilia soon after the war in 35–33 BC. The recruitment of indigenous men in south-western Slovenia is also suggested by three very small fragments of inscribed bronze plates, likely Roman military diplomas, found at hillfort settlements.¹⁴⁰ Roman recruitment among the Latobici, who lived in south-eastern Slovenia

(in areas where urban settlements later developed at Drnovo near Krško/*Municipium Flavium Latobicorum Neviodunum*, and Trebnje/*Praetorium Latobicorum*) and who were presumably subjected to the Taurisci prior to the Roman rule, can be inferred from two military diplomas mentioning *ala I Latobicorum et Varcianorum*.¹⁴¹

In eastern Slovenia north of the Sava, there are no archaeological traces of Roman military activities in the period under discussion. This aligns with the evidence that in the second half of the 1st century BC, most of this area was part of the Norican Kingdom, a traditional ally of Rome which became a Roman protectorate around 15 BC, without the need for military intervention. To manage and govern this area, the Roman authorities relied heavily on the Norican elite.¹⁴²

It is uncertain if the Norican Kingdom encompassed the wider area of Ptuj.¹⁴³ Regardless of that, literary and epigraphic evidence suggests that the absence of archaeological evidence for the early Roman military activities there mirrors the state of research, as well as the extent to which archaeological evidence survives.

The mutiny in *Nauportus* following the death of Augustus is the latest literary reference to the activities of Roman soldiers in the territory of Slovenia during the first half of the 1st century. Archaeological evidence indicates that the fort at *Emona* was abandoned at the end of the Augustan period. Extensive military operations in the western Balkans came to an end, and the focus of diplomatic and military efforts shifted to the frontier on the Danube. In the hinterland of the *limes* developing along the middle Danube, the fortress in Ptuj protected the main corridor between Italy and the Central Danube Basin, as well as the northern Balkans until the end of the 1st century AD.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁵ Roymans 2018; Roymans 2019a; Roymans 2019b; Fernández-Götz, Roymans 2024.

¹³⁶ Sites Gobavica above Mengeš and Straža above Šmartno (Fig. 2: 26–27; Horvat 2015a), Cvinger above Vir near Stična (Laharnar 2011, 350, 368, No. 18) and presumably several other sites, mostly in south-eastern Slovenia (Laharnar 2011, 350, 368, Nos 17, 19–22).

¹³⁷ Laharnar 2022, 360–365.

¹³⁸ Laharnar 2022, 364.

¹³⁹ Indication of drafting among indigenous populations in the territory of the later province of Dalmatia: Cass. Dio 55, 29; cf. Šašel Kos 1986, 166, 182–183. Various aspects of Roman recruitment among indigenous populations: Hirt 2018, 1–2, 14–18; Roymans et al 2020, 275–277.

¹⁴⁰ Laharnar 2022, 327–328, 330, Pl. 22: 35, 29: 15, 49: 13. A detailed analysis of the fragments has not yet been conducted and is unlikely to yield precise dates. Therefore, regarding the date of the diplomas, it can only be stated that they are not earlier than the beginning of the second half of the 1st century.

¹⁴¹ Lovenjak 2003, 95. The diplomas date to the reign of Vespasian (CIL 16 Suppl. No. 158) and Traian (Roxan 1978, No. 52).

¹⁴² Šašel 1954; Šašel Kos 1997a, 24–32; Urban 2000, 332–368.

¹⁴³ Cf. note 6.

¹⁴⁴ Sedlmayer 2020, 20–26. In relation to the hypothesis on a line of fortresses running from the hinterland of the eastern Adriatic in Dalmatia across *Siscia* and *Poetovio* to *Carnuntum* on the Danube and established either during the war in 35–33 or in the Augustan period with the aim of controlling Illyricum and protecting Italy (Šašel 1974), we should mention the study in which Periša (2008) showed

Upon the foundation of *colonia Iulia Emona*, likely at the end of the Augustan period, the territory of the colony passed from military¹⁴⁵ to civil administration. Life in the walled town of rectangular layout on the left bank of the Ljubljana began in the Early Tiberian period.¹⁴⁶ The prevailing view is that the Tiberian period is also when the province of Pannonia (*Illyricum Inferior*)

that the Roman forts in Dalmatia were closely linked with the Roman battles against the Delmatae.

¹⁴⁵ In contrast, Šašel (1989) and Šašel Kos (1995; 2005, 341, Fig. 81; 2012, 80–84, Fig. 2) argue that the *Emona* area was part of the province Gallia Cisalpina from the mid-1st century BC or, after 42/41 BC, part of Italy.

¹⁴⁶ This dating is supported by the archaeological evidence and the imperial building inscription published in Šašel Kos 1997b, 177–181, Cat. Nos 34, 35 (= *CIL* III 10768 + p. 2328,26 = *CIL* 03, 10768 = *AIJ* 303, 304 = *lupa* 9246). Šašel Kos (e.g. 2012) advocates that the Roman colony was established around 30 BC. Summarised history of research with references: Istenič 2019b, Chapter 19.2.3, 240–244.

AE = *L'Année épigraphique* (prim.npr. op. 22, 23).

AIJ = V. Hoffiller, B. Saria, *Antike Inschriften aus Jugoslavien, Heft I: Noricum und Pannonia Superior*, Zagreb 1938.

CIL = *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*.

EDCS = *Epigraphik-Datenbank Claus* / *Slaby*. <https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/hinweise/hinweis-en.html>

EDR = *Epigraphic Database Roma*, DigiLab Centro inter-dipartimentale di ricerca e servizi, Sapienza Università di Roma. <http://www.edr-edr.it>

ILJug = A. Šašel, J. Šašel, *Inscriptiones Latinae, quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMLX et MCMLXX repertae et editae sunt* (Situla 19), Ljubljana 1978; A. Šašel, J. Šašel, *Inscriptiones Latinae, quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMII et MCMXL repertae et editae sunt* (Situla 25), Ljubljana 1986.

ILS = H. Dessau (ur. / ed.), *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Berlin 1892-1916.

lupa = UBI ERAT LUPA – Bilddatenbank zu antiken Stein-denkmälern, CHC – Archäometrie und Cultural Heritage Computing, Universität Salzburg). <http://www.lupa.at>

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was established.¹⁴⁷ Consequently, the territory of Slovenia belonged to three administrative units: the province of Pannonia, *regio X* of Italy, and the protectorate (which became a province under Claudius) of Noricum.

From the evidence discussed in this paper, the Roman military emerges as an important factor in imposing Roman imperial power over large parts of what is now Slovenia during the second half of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD, thereby concluding the process of Roman conquest in this territory, which took nearly two centuries.

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¹⁴⁷ Cf. note 19.

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Vloga rimskih vojsk v rimski osvojitvi ozemlja današnje Slovenije in utrditvi rimske nadvlade

Povzetek

Arheološki podatki kažejo, da je bila rimska vojska pomemben dejavnik pri rimskem osvajanju ozemelj vzhodno in jugovzhodno od kolonije Akvileje v 2. st. pr. n. št. (sl. 1).¹

Severno od Akvileje so živeli Karni² (sl. 1) in severno od njih Noriki, ki so bili jedro Noriškega kraljestva.³ Zdi se, da se je do sredine 1. st. pr. n. št. to kraljestvo razširilo na ozemlje osrednje severne Slovenije, ki je bilo pod cesarjem Klavdijem (41–54 n. št.) vključeno v upravno območje mesta *municipium Celeia*.⁴

Materialna kultura pozne železne dobe v srednji in vzhodni Sloveniji (mokronoška skupina) je verjetno povezana s plemensko zvezo Tavriskov.⁵ Arheološki podatki iz Notranjske kažejo, da so se tu križali interesi in vplivi Karnov, Tavriskov in Japodov.⁶

V zadnjih približno 25 letih sta se močno povečali količina in kakovost arheoloških virov o sklepnem in najintenzivnejšem obdobju rimske širitve na ozemlje današnje Slovenije ter utrditve rimske prevlade v 1. st. pr. n. št. in v prvi polovici 1. st. n. št. V prispevku podajamo pregled teh virov ter kratko povzemamo podatke o rimskih vojaških dejavnostih v pisnih in epigrafskih virih. Na koncu sledi sinteza.

ANTIČNI LITERARNI VIRI

Viri, ki zadevajo ozemlje današnje Slovenije, se nanašajo predvsem na Oktavijanove ilirske vojne (35–33 pr. n. št.), panonske vojne (14–9 pr. n. št.) in panonsko-delmatski upor (6–9 pr. n. št.).

Glavna vira za ilirske vojne sta Apijan⁷ in Kasij Dion.⁸ Opisujeta vojno z Japodi, Panonci in Delmati, ki so živeli južno od ozemlja današnje Slovenije.⁹ Ključni rimski cilj na tem območju je bila Segestika oziroma Siscija (Sisak, Hrvaška).¹⁰ Apijan navaja Tavriske in Karne med tistimi nasprotniki, ki jih je Oktavijan premagal z zmernim naporom, Dion pa omenja Tavriske med ljudstvi, ki so se uprla še pred začetkom vojn.¹¹

Med skupimi podatki o vojni proti Panoncem in Delmatom so najbolj povedni tisti v Dionovi Rimski zgodovini.¹² Navajajo spopade med letoma 12 in 9 pr. n. št., ko je bil Tiberij glavni rimski vojaški poveljnik. Glavno rimsko vojaško oporišče je bilo v Sisciji. Območje vojaških spopadov je bilo

⁷ App. Illyr. 4, 15–28; Šašel Kos 2005, 65–81, 393–471.

⁸ Cass. Dio 49, 35–38; Šašel Kos 1986, 128–145.

⁹ Džino 2010, 99–116; Džino, Domic Kunić 2013, 149–158.

¹⁰ Apijan omenja pojme Segestica in Segestanoi, Segestica je omenjena tudi na napisu na teseri, najdeni v reki Kolpi v Sisku (Radman Livaja 2007); Dio uporablja ime Siscia (Džino, Domic Kunić 2018). Zgodovina raziskav in izsledki izkopavanja: Drnić 2018. Topografija in drugi vidiki rimske osvojitve: Drnić, Radman-Livaja 2020, 189–200. V članku uporabljamo ime Siscia, razen v povezavi z oktavijanskim obdobjem, ko uporabljamo ime Segestika.

¹¹ App. Illyr. 4, 16, 47; Cass. Dio 49, 34, 2; 50, 28, 4; Šašel Kos 1986, 128–129, 148–149; Šašel Kos 2005, 67–68.

¹² Cass. Dio 54, 24, 3; 43, 28, 1–2; 54, 31, 2–4; 54, 34, 3–4; 54, 36, 2; 55, 2, 4; Šašel Kos 1986, 152–162.

¹ Bernardini et al. 2021; Bernardini, Horvat, Vinci 2023; Horvat 2002; Laharnar 2022, 324–327; Laharnar 2023.

² Vedaldi Iasbez 2000, 333–336; Božič 1999, 202–203; Laharnar 2024.

³ Šašel Kos 1997a, 24–30; Urban 2000, 332–368.

⁴ Šašel Kos 1997a, 32, 37, 40–41.

⁵ Božič 1987; Laharnar 2020.

⁶ Horvat, Bavdek 2009, 19–22; Laharnar 2022, 356.

(večinoma) zunaj ozemlja današnje Slovenije, na območju, ki je pozneje postalo jugovzhodni del province Panonije.¹³

Najpomembnejša vira za panonsko-delmatski upor (6–9 n. št.) sta Dion in Velej Paterkul.¹⁴ Rimljani in uporniki so se borili predvsem v Slavoniji in Bosni. Glavni rimski oporišči sta bili ob reki Savi, v Sisciji in Sirmiju (Sremska Mitrovica, Srbija).¹⁵ Načrt upornikov za invazijo na Italijo – verjetno čez prelaz Razdrto – je neposredno zadeval slovensko ozemlje, vendar so ga Rimljani preprečili.¹⁶ Po literarnih virih sodeč je bila vojna 6–9 n. št. zadnja faza rimskega osvajanja (prihodnjih) provinc Panonije in Dalmacije.¹⁷

Po Avgustovi smrti je izbruhnil upor treh panonskih legij (8., 9. in 15.), ki so bile nameščene v skupnem poletnem taboru. Še pred začetkom upora so v Navport (*Nauportus*/Vrhnika) napotili več oddelkov teh legij, da bi gradili ceste in mostove ter opravili druge naloge; tudi ti oddelki so se uprli.¹⁸

EPIGRAFSKI VIRI

Iz obdobja do okoli leta 50 n. št. je 15 ali 16 epigrafskih spomenikov. Iz Ljubljane izvira sedem nagrobnikov in votivni oltar, ki morda ni pristen.

¹³ Šašel Kos 2011, 107–110; Radman-Livaja 2012, 161–163; Dzino 2010, 129–136; Džino, Domić Kunić 2013, 162–170; Džino, Domić Kunić 2018.

¹⁴ Cass. Dio 55, 28, 7–34; 56, 11–17; Velleius Paterculus 2, 110–116.

¹⁵ Džino 2009; Dzino 2010, 137–155; Džino, Domić Kunić 2013, 170–179, 184–185; Šašel Kos 2015; Radman-Livaja 2018, 158–160, op. 28.

¹⁶ Velleius Paterculus 2, 110, 112; Cass. Dio 55, 30, 1; Šašel Kos 1986, 166–167, 182–185; Šašel Kos 2011; Radman-Livaja 2012, 165.

¹⁷ Ozemlji poznejših provinc *Dalmatia* in *Pannonia* sta prvotno sestavljali provinco Ilirik. Med vojnami v letih 6–9 n. št. so Rimljani ustanovili provinco *Dalmatia* (ki je bila morda sprva imenovana *Illyricum Superius*). Mnenja o upravnem položaju severnega dela Ilirika v tem času so različna. Večina avtorjev se strinja, da je Panonija postala samostojna provinca najpozneje na začetku vladavine Tiberija (Schaub 2001, 300–301; Rollinger 2001; Dzino 2010, 159–167; Kovács 2014, 67), medtem ko Šašel Kos (2010; 2013) meni, da je bilo vse do vladavine Vespazijana vojaško območje pod poveljstvom poveljnika treh panonskih legij.

¹⁸ Tacitus, *Annales* I, 16–30; Šašel Kos 1990, 21; Šašel Kos 1995, 236–237. Kraj skupnega poletnega tabora treh panonskih legij ni znan; Šašel Kos (1995, 236) in Radman-Livaja (2018, 161) domnevata, da je bil v Sisciji ali njeni bližini oziroma pri Poetovionii, medtem ko Keppie (1998, 144) meni, da je bil v okolici Emone.

Šest nagrobnikov je s Ptuja z okolico ter po eden z Mosta na Soči in iz Celja.

Najstarejši je verjetno nagrobnik vojaka ali veterana 15. legije z Mosta na Soči. Mnenja o njegovi dataciji segajo od leta 51/50 pr. n. št. do pozne avgustejske dobe.¹⁹

Štirje nagrobniki iz Ljubljane omenjajo aktivno vojaško osebo. Iz avgustejske dobe je nagrobnik Tita Junija Montana, ki je imel visok vojaški položaj.²⁰ V prvo tretjino 1. st. n. št. sta datirana nagrobnik pretorijanca²¹ in nagrobnik, ki ga je dal postaviti vojak 15. legije za svojo sestro.²² Če je votivni oltar iz Ljubljane pristen, ga je dal postaviti frumentarij 15. legije v prvi polovici 1. st. n. št.²³ Enako so datirani trije nagrobniki veteranov 15. legije²⁴ in nagrobnik veterana neznane legije²⁵ ter nagrobnik z upodobitvijo rimskega odlikovanja *phalerae* brez ohranjenega napisa.²⁶

Trije nagrobniki s Ptuja in dva iz njegove okolice omenjajo 8. legijo.²⁷ Najmanj trije med njimi so bili postavljeni za aktivne vojake te legije,²⁸ kar – skupaj s Tacitovim podatkom (*Annales* I.23, 30)²⁹ – govori, da je bil zimski tabor 8. legije na

¹⁹ Šašel 1985; Wheeler 2000, 261–262, 270; Mosser 2003, 93–94, 166, kat. št. 3, t. 2: 3; Zaccaria 2010, 108.

²⁰ Šašel Kos 1997b, 183–184, kat. št. 36 (= *AIJ* 173; *AE* 1938, 173 = *EDR073370* = *lupa* 3688 = *EDCS-12700084*).

²¹ Šašel Kos 1997b, 185–186, kat. št. 37 (= *ILJug* 305; *AE* 1950, 42 = *EDR073752* = *lupa* 4190 = *EDCS-10000372*).

²² Šašel Kos 1997b, 186–188, kat. št. 38 (= *CIL* III 10769 = *EDR129035* = *lupa* 4227 = *EDCS-29000514*); Mosser 2003, 175, kat. št. 19.

²³ Šašel Kos 1997b, 133–136, kat. št. 8 (= *CIL* III 3835 + p. 2328, 188 = *AIJ* 151 = *EDR128830* = *lupa* 6149 = *EDCS-26600531*); Mosser 2003, 266, kat. št. 200.

²⁴ Šašel Kos 1997b, 189–191, kat. št. 39 (= *CIL* III 3847 = 10757 = *AIJ* 174 = *EDR129059* = *lupa* 3689 = *EDCS-26600538*); Mosser 2003, 175, kat. št. 19); Šašel Kos 1998, 336–337, kat. št. 6 (= *CIL* III 3845 + p. 2328, 188 = *ILS* 2264 = *EDR135194* = *lupa* 4202 = *EDCS-28701001*); Mosser 2003, 167, kat. št. 5) – nagrobnik je dal postaviti veteran VIII. legije; nagrobnik, odkrit leta 2017: <https://mgml.si/sl/mestni-muzej/razstave/309/nagrobni-spomenik-veterana-15-apolonove-legije/>

²⁵ Šašel Kos 1997b, 191–192, kat. št. 40 (= *CIL* III 3848 = *EDR129060* = *lupa* 4193 = *EDCS-26600539*).

²⁶ Maxfield 1986.

²⁷ Ragolič 2023, 43–44, kat. št. 7 (= *CIL* III 10878 + p. 2188 = *AIJ* 371 = *EDCS-29000461* = *lupa* 1699), 47, kat. št. 10 (= *EDCS-09200411* = *lupa* 6194), 49–50, kat. št. 13 (= *CIL* III 10879 + p. 2188 = *AIJ* 381 = *EDCS-29000462* = *lupa* 1700), 306–308, kat. št. 405 (= *CIL* III 4060 = *AIJ* 260 = *EDCS-26600462* = *lupa* 3102), 308–309, kat. št. 406 (= *AIJ* 262 = *EDCS-11300990* = *lupa* 3749).

²⁸ Ragolič 2023, 43–44, kat. št. 13, 405, 406.

²⁹ Cf. obravnavo literarnih virov.

Ptjuju najpozneje ob koncu avgustejske dobe.³⁰ Iz druge četrtine 1. st. n. št. je nagrobnik veterana 11. legije.³¹ Vsi *in situ* najdeni nagrobniki iz prve polovice 1. st. n. št. so z območja zahodnega grobišča Poetovione na desnem bregu Drave, kjer so bili najdeni tudi vsi v drugo polovico 1. st. n. št. datirani nagrobniki aktivnih vojakov ter večina nagrobnikov veteranov iz 1. in 2. st. n. št.³²

V Celju najdeni nagrobnik veterana 8. legije nakazuje, da je služil v tej legiji, ko je bila namerščena na Ptjuju, tj. pred letom 43 n. št.³³

ARHEOLOŠKI VIRI

Od zgodnjega 1. st. do konca zgodnje avgustejske dobe

Daleč najpogostejše najdbe pred srednjo avgustejsko dobo so okovni žeblički rimskih vojaških obuval tipov Alezija A–D (*sl.* 2), ki so datirani od poznega 2. st. pr. n. št.³⁴ do okoli leta 15 pr. n. št.³⁵

Številni okovni žeblički tipov Alezija A–D izvirajo z najdišč Gradišče v Cerknem, Vrh gradu pri Pečinah in iz najdiščnega kompleksa Grad nad Reko (*sl.* 2: 1–3; *sl.* 4: 11–20), tj. z vzhodnega dela naselbinskega območja Karnov. Vsa tri najdišča so na naravno dobro zavarovanih legah; domnevamo, da je šlo za svete kraje, pomembne za identiteto domačega prebivalstva.³⁶ Odkrili so jih nearheologi, ki so uporabljali detektorje kovin.³⁷ Gradišče v Cerknem in Vrh gradu pri Pečinah sta že bila razmeroma izčrpno obravnavana,³⁸ Grad nad Reko pa le zelo kratko,³⁹ zato so v članku povzeti izsledki raziskav tega najdiščnega kompleksa (*sl.* 3–5). Od tu izvira najširši nabor tipov rimskega orožja, sledi Gradišče v Cerknem, kjer so našli večino tipov z Gradu nad Reko poznane orožja,⁴⁰

sočasno rimsko orožje z Vrh gradu pri Pečinah pa obsega 38 svinčenih želodov in štiri puščične osti.⁴¹ Materialni sledovi rimske oborožene agresije so verjetno na vseh treh najdiščih povezani z istim rimskim vojaškim pohodom v obdobju po Cezarjevih galskih vojnah in pred začetkom srednje avgustejske dobe.⁴² Apijanova omemba Karnov med Oktavijanovimi nasprotniki v ilirskih vojnah (35–33 pr. n. št.)⁴³ nakazuje, da je bil ta pohod del ilirskih vojn. S tako interpretacijo se ujema dejstvo, da je bilo zavarovanje vzhodnega zaledja srednje Soške doline ključno za varnost Italije in za rimske vojaške pohode naprej proti jugovzhodu proti Sisciji.⁴⁴

Številni okovni žeblički tipov Alezija izvirajo z najdišč Ulaka – tabor in Nadleški hrib, ki sta povezana z rimsko vojaško osvojitvijo gradišča na Ulaki (*sl.* 6: A–C).⁴⁵ Na najdišču Ulaka – tabor sta arheološka analiza in interpretacija lidarskih podatkov pokazali ostanke rimskih vojaških struktur (verjetno več kot en tabor in zaporni zid). Med drobnimi najdbami so poleg 45 okovnih žebličkov tipov Alezija dve železni konici pilumov, katapultne konice in drugi rimski izstrelki, ki kažejo na oboroženi rimski poseg v sredini 1. st. pr. n. št.⁴⁶ Pri Nadleškem hribu lidarski podatki in drobne najdbe kažejo na časovno zaporedna rimska vojaška tabora. Starejši (pred približno leta 15 pr. n. št.) je verjetno manjši tabor (površina okoli 2,4 ha).⁴⁷

Geopolitične okoliščine nakazujejo dve možni obdobji za rimski napad na gradišče Ulaka: Cezarjev prokonzulat v Galiji in Iliriku (59–49 pr. n. št.) ter ilirske vojne (35–33 pr. n. št.). Drugi možnosti v prid govori lega Ulake na poti, ki je vodila iz Italije proti Japodom in Segestiki/Sisciji, ter obenem na ozemlju pod nadzorom Tavriskov ali Karnov – torej ljudstev, ki jih je premagal Oktavijan.

Več kot 20 okovnih žebličkov tipov Alezija z najdišč vzhodno od Ajdovščine (*sl.* 2: 33) na-

³⁰ Oldenstein-Pferdehirt 1984, 397–400; Reddé 2000, 120–121.

³¹ Ragolič 2023, 44–45, kat. št. 8 (= *AIJ* 379 = *lupa* 3068 = *EDCS*-11301055).

³² Istenič 2002, 168–169; Ragolič 2023, 43–47, 49–50, 51–52, 54–56, kat. št. 7–10, 13, 15, 17–18.

³³ Visočnik 2017, 105–106, kat. št. 78 (= *CIL* 03, 05220 = *EDCS*-14500532 = *lupa* 411).

³⁴ Kielb Zaaraoui 2018.

³⁵ Istenič 2019a, 276–279.

³⁶ Istenič 2023.

³⁷ Istenič 2005; Istenič 2015a.

³⁸ Istenič 2015a.

³⁹ Istenič 2005.

⁴⁰ Istenič 2015a, 68–70, t. 2–4.

⁴¹ Istenič 2015a, 71–73, t. 5–7.

⁴² Cf. Istenič 2005; Istenič 2015a.

⁴³ Cf. obravnavo literarnih virov.

⁴⁴ Istenič 2015a, 59–60.

⁴⁵ Istenič 2019a, 282–283, kat. št. 23–25; Laharnar 2022, 220–237, 415, t. 48: 12–19; Laharnar, Istenič 2024.

⁴⁶ Laharnar, Istenič 2024, 178–181, sl. 4: 3–8.

⁴⁷ Laharnar 2016, 96, sl. 6: 1, 11–18; Laharnar 2022, 234–237, sl. 3.118–3.120, sl. 48: 1, 6–10, 12–19; Laharnar, Lozić 2016, 65–66; Laharnar, Istenič 2024, 177–178, sl. 2, 5. Z najdišča izvirajo tudi trije poznorepublikanski denariji, od katerih je najmlajši malo obrabljen kovanec, skovan leta 90 pr. n. št. (Laharnar 2016, 96).

kazuje, da je rimska vojska morda uporabljala pot čez prelaz Hrušica pred začetkom srednje avgustejske dobe.⁴⁸

Poleg obravnavanih najdišč okovni žebeljčki tipov Alezija izvirajo iz številnih naselij in kulturnih krajev domačinov.⁴⁹ Večina je verjetno iz časa ilirskih vojn,⁵⁰ nekatera so morda nekaj desetletij starejša (sl. 2: Baba, 17),⁵¹ drugih pa za zdaj ni mogoče datirati ožje kot okovnih žebeljčkov.⁵²

Okovna žebeljčka in najmanj pet drugih kosov rimskega orožja iz Ljublanice kažejo, da je rimska vojska uporabljala plovno pot po Ljublanici pred srednjo avgustejsko dobo.⁵³ Do izgradnje ceste na severnem robu Barja (sl. 7) je bila Ljublanica edina vse leto uporabna povezava med Navportom in Emono.⁵⁴

Diplomatske in morda vojaške stike Rimljanov z elito domačinov po našem mnenju kažejo meči v nožnicah z medeninastimi okovi, okrašenimi v predrti tehniki; verjetno gre za rimske izdelke iz obdobja med okoli letoma 40/30 in 15 pr. n. št., narejene ob upoštevanju keltskega okusa. Približno sočasen je najstarejši grob z rimskim orožjem (sl. 1: Reka).⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Istenič 2019b, 254.

⁴⁹ Istenič 2015a, 59–60; Horvat 2018; Istenič 2019a, 283–287.

⁵⁰ Laharnar 2009, 106–107, 118, 132, 141, t. 5: 5–7; Laharnar 2011, 353, 370, 347–348, 365–366, 369, sl. 6, t. 1: 1,2,9,12,15,16,19. Podatka o najdbi raztresenih kovancev s Starega gradu, ki naj bi obsegala okoli 60 denarijev, od katerih je najmlajši Oktavijanov denarij skovan leta 36 pr. n. št. (Švajncer, Švajncer 2020, 140, spodnja slika v desnem stolpcu), ni bilo mogoče preveriti.

⁵¹ Številni izstrelki za pračo nakazujejo rimski napad, medtem ko odsotnost poznejših najdb govori za opustitev gradišča (Laharnar 2022, 54–57, 327–328, t. 3: 15–17; 4: 18–29, sl. 3.15). Poleg okovnih žebeljčkov vojaških obuval je med rimskimi vojaškimi predmeti s tega najdišča le nekaj kosov, starejših od srednjeavgustejske dobe, vendar ti ne kažejo na rimski vojaški napad. Več vojaških predmetov s tega najdišča je iz srednje do pozne avgustejske dobe, zato domnevamo, da lahko enako velja za pračne izstrelke, ki verjetno niso bili uporabljeni in so bili najdeni v dveh ločenih skupinah (Laharnar 2022, 298–299, 314–316, t. 9: 71–75, 78–111). Istenič 2019a, 284–285; Laharnar 2022, 346–347.

⁵² Istenič 2019a, 238–287.

⁵³ Istenič 2019b, 30–41, 114–115, 208–210, kat. št. A1, A4, MM A22, MM A23, C1, H7, H8, sl. 13, 17, 123, t. 1, 12, 19; Horvat 1990; Mušič, Horvat 2007; Vojaković, Bekljanov Zidanšek, Toškan 2019.

⁵⁴ Istenič 2019b, 236–238.

⁵⁵ Nožnice z medeninastim mrežastim okovom: Istenič 2010; Istenič 2015b; grob z rimskim orožjem: Istenič 2013.

Od srednje avgustejske dobe do okoli leta 14 n. št.

Velika večina rimskih vojaških najdb iz Ljublanice je iz srednje in pozne avgustejske dobe (15 pr. n. št.–14 n. št.). Le okoli pet odstotkov predmetov je ozko datiranih v čas od vključno Tiberijeve vladavine (14–37 n. št.) naprej.⁵⁶ Upad števila najdb v Tiberijevi dobi se ujema z domnevnim časom izgradnje ceste *Nauportus–Emona* proti koncu Avgustove vladavine in z zmanjšanim obsegom oskrbe po rimski osvojitvi severnega Balkana.⁵⁷

Morda je gostota najdb pri Bevkah povezana z mejo med rimskim ozemljem pod civilno upravo (provinca Galija Cisalpina/Italija)⁵⁸ in obmejnimi območjem pod vojaško upravo,⁵⁹ ki jo domnevamo pri izrazitem zavoju Ljublanice vzhodno od Bevk, tj. na najdišču mejnika, ki je označeval poznejšo mejo med upravnima ozemljema Akvileje in Emone (sl. 7).⁶⁰ Mejo med ozemljem pod rimsko civilno upravo in obmejnimi območjem pod vojaško upravo pri Bevkah domnevamo med sredino 1. st. pr. n. št. in koncem Avgustove vladavine.⁶¹

V Ljubljani, na desnem bregu Ljublanice, so Rimljani ob civilnem naselju⁶² zgradili zaporedna vojaška tabora (sl. 8: 1, 9), ki sta imela ključno vlogo pri varovanju kopenske transportne povezave med glavno oskrbovalno bazo v Akvileji in Ilirikom.⁶³ Naš opis taborov temelji na poročilih o izkopavanjih⁶⁴ in objavah⁶⁵ ter na podatkih, ki nam jih je prijazno poslala Iris Bekljanov Zidanšek (Arhej, d. o. o.), ki pripravlja izčrpno objavo o obeh taborih.

Starejši tabor (sl. 9, 10) je bil zgrajen okoli leta 10 pr. n. št. in je še bil v uporabi v začetku pozne avgustejske dobe (*terminus post quem* leto 3 n. št.). V

⁵⁶ Istenič 2019b, 208–210, sl. 123.

⁵⁷ Istenič 2019b, 254–255.

⁵⁸ Gallia Cisalpina je leta 42/41 pr. n. št. postala skrajni severovzhodni del Italije (Bandelli 2017, 308).

⁵⁹ Cf. Roymans 2004, 195.

⁶⁰ Istenič 2019b, 246, 248, 250, sl. 144. Mejnik: Šašel Kos 2002.

⁶¹ Zaccharia 2023, 133; Istenič 2019b, 242 z opombami, 246–254.

⁶² Naselje pod Gradom: Vičič 1993; Vičič 1994; Vičič 2002; Vojaković 2014; Novšak, Bekljanov Zidanšek, Vojaković 2017; Vojaković 2023a.

⁶³ Egri 2008. Cf. Kehne 2007.

⁶⁴ Novšak, Bekljanov Zidanšek, Vojaković 2017, 27–29; Gaspari et al. 2014, 136–146, 151–153.

⁶⁵ Vojaković et al. 2011; Novšak et al. 2023.

drugi polovici prvega desetletja n. št. mu je sledil mlajši in večji tabor.⁶⁶

Sledovi rimskih vojaških struktur v Ljubljani so bili odkriti tudi na lev3m bregu strani Ljubljanice; večina je iz pozne, redke pa iz srednje avgustejske dobe. So pod plastmi, ki so povezane z gradnjo civilnega naselja.⁶⁷

Najmanj trije rimski tabori so bili na območju Brežiških vrat, strateško pomembnem ozkem prehodu med Krškim poljem in dolino reke Save (sl. 7). Vsi so bili na desnem bregu Save. Najbolje raziskan je tabor iz pozne avgustejske dobe na Obrežju (sl. 11).⁶⁸ V pozni avgustejski dobi je deloval tudi tabor Vihre – Sv. Urh pri Drnovem.⁶⁹ Ostanke tabora na najdišču Čatež – Sredno polje za zdaj ni mogoče datirati ožje kot v srednjo avgustejsko do tiberijsko dobo.⁷⁰

Večji tabor (c. 4 ha) na Nadleškem hribu (sl. 6: B; 7) je verjetno iz srednje ali pozne avgustejske dobe.⁷¹ V istem času je bil verjetno tabor tudi na bližnjem najdišču Ulaka – tabor (sl. 6: C).⁷²

Na Ptujju (sl. 7, 12), ki je imel za Rimljane v obdobju rimskega osvajanja strateško lego, je bil najpoznejše od leta 14 n. št. do konca 1. st. legijski tabor. Od leta 14 do 43/45 je bila v njem nameščena 8., pozneje pa 13. legija.⁷³ Nedavne raziskave so

pokazale sledove rimskega vojaškega tabora na Panorami. Časovno sta si sledila starejši okop iz lesa in zemlje z leseno palisado ter mlajše kamnito obzidje tabora. Odkritje je vodilo k domnevi, da je bil na Panorami in verjetno na nižje ležeči terasi med Panoramo in Dravo legijski tabor (sl. 12).⁷⁴

Majhno število za rimsko vojsko zgodnjega principata značilnih predmetov izvira s prazgodovinskih gradišč v jugozahodni Sloveniji in severno od Ljubljane. Razen na Ambroževem gradišču nimamo podatkov o kontekstu teh najdb ali npr. o lončenini s teh najdišč. Med možnimi razlagami rimskih vojaških predmetov na teh najdiščih so prisotnost rimskih enot v lokalnih naseljih in vrnitev pomožnih vojakov v njihovo izvorno okolje.

Grobovi z zgodnjorimskim orožjem so predvsem v severozahodni in jugovzhodni Sloveniji ter posamezni v osrednji Sloveniji (sl. 7). V njih so verjetno pokopani domačini, ki so služili v rimski vojski.⁷⁵

SKLEP

Arheološki viri kažejo rimsko vojaško prisotnost pred začetkom srednje avgustejske dobe v zahodni polovici ozemlja Slovenije. Vodilne drobne najdbe so okovni žebeljički tipov Alezija.

Razmeroma zanesljiva in ozka datacija je možna za najdišča Grad pri Reki z okolico, Gradišče v Cerknem in Vrh gradu pri Pečinah, ki so najverjetneje povezani z Oktavijanovimi ilirskimi vojnami (35–33 pr. n. št.). Z istimi vojnami povezujemo materialne sledove rimske vojaške prisotnosti na Notranjskem in Gorenjskem (sl. 1, 2). Zdi se, da so Rimljani po ilirskih vojnah nadzorovali ozemlje zahodne polovice Slovenije, ki je vzhodno od Ljubljane segala do Save.

Intenzivno rimsko vojaško delovanje med ilirskimi vojnami je bilo posledica potrebe po zagotavljanju kopenske povezave med Italijo ter območji bojov z Japodi in Segestani (severna Hrvaška).⁷⁶ Pomemben del te povezave je potekal po reki Ljubljanici med Navportom (Vrhniko) in Emono (Ljubljana).

Povezava arheoloških in zgodovinskih virov razkriva, da je bilo v Ljubljani rimsko vojaško oporišče od panonskih vojn (12–9 pr. n. št.), ko

⁶⁶ Izsledki izkopavanj leta 2008 so pokazali, da je utrdba nastala "po letu 10 pr. n. št." (Novšak, Bekljanov Zidanšek, Vojaković 2017, 28; Gaspari et al. 2014, 144), medtem ko so izkopavanja leta 2018 razkrila več nivojev tal, od katerih so najstarejša – na podlagi fine keramike – datirana med 20 in 10 pr. n. št. (Novšak et al. 2023, 110–114, 121, 177). Novci: glej op. 88–91 v angleškem besedilu.

⁶⁷ Istenič 2019b, 242, 243, op. 905. Gaspari 2010, 25–81, 113–125; Gaspari 2014, 134–141, sl. 143–146; Gaspari et al. 2014, 147–149, 164; Istenič 2019b, 242, 243, op. 905; Praprotnik 2016.

⁶⁸ Mason 2006; Mason 2008; Miškec 2009. Podrobnejša analiza: glej op. 104–105 v angleškem besedilu.

⁶⁹ Drnovo pri Krškem/municipium Flavium Latobiorum Neviodunum je bilo neposredno ob Savi (Verbič, Berič 1993, 330); Leskovar et al. 2019; Vir: objava na FB-strani Arhos, d. o. o., objavljeno 6. aprila 2023 (<https://www.facebook.com/arhos.arhos.71>); Vičič, Predan 2003; Vičič, Predan 2004; Štular, Tica 2004; Olić 2009.

⁷⁰ Tomaž 2022, 109–114, 183–187, 798–803, sl. 8b, 58–64.

⁷¹ Laharnar 2016, 94–95, sl. 4, 7: 19, 20, 23.

⁷² Laharnar, Istenič 2024.

⁷³ Cf. obravnavo epigrafskih virov. Tacitus, Annales I, 23, 30. Oldenstein-Pferdehirt 1984, 397–400; Reddé 2000, 120–121. Saria 1951, 1170–1171; Radman-Livaja 2012, 164 (z referencami); Ritterling 1924–1925, 1713. Nagrobniki veteranov in aktivnih vojakov 8. legije na Ptujju in v njegovi okolici: Ragolič 2023, 16, kat. št. 2, 9, 14, 15, 16?, 17–20, 359.

⁷⁴ Horvat et al. 2020, 13–53, 65–70; Horvat 2023; Horvat 2024.

⁷⁵ Istenič 2013. Grob iz Ljubljane: Gaspari et al. 2015; grobova z Verduna: Breščak 2015.

⁷⁶ Istenič 2005; Istenič 2015a.

je začel delovati starejši tabor na desnem bregu Ljubljane, do približno konca avgustejske dobe, ko je prenehal delovati tamkajšnji mlajši tabor. Opustitev zgodnjega tabora ter gradnja mlajšega in večjega sta verjetno povezani z začetkom panonsko-delmatskega upora leta 6 n. št., ko je grozila invazija upornikov v Italijo po kopenskih poteh. Pred koncem avgustejske dobe se je rimska vojaška raba levega brega prav tako končala ali znatno zmanjšala, obsežna izravnava pa je pripravila teren za gradnjo kolonije Emona.

Nagrobnik in votivni oltar (če je avtentičen), povezana z aktivnimi pripadniki 15. legije, ter trije nagrobniki veteranov iste legije⁷⁷ nakazujejo, da so bili med aktivnimi enotami v Emoni oddelki 15. legije, ki je imela tabor na območju poznejše province Panonije.⁷⁸

Koncentracija z rimsko vojsko povezanih arheoloških in epigrafskih virov v Ljubljani odraža ključni pomen Ljubljanskih vrat za zaščito Italije in za oskrbovanje rimskih vojaških enot v Iliriku. Emona je bila med ključnimi točkami na glavni komunikacijski poti, ki je povezovala rimsko zaledje z operativno bazo v Ogleju, in območju spopadov na Balkanskem polotoku.

Druga zgoščina rimskih enot je bila na območju Brežiških vrat. Poznoavgustejski tabori so bili na treh lokacijah na desnem bregu reke Save (Obrežje, Čatež – Sredno polje, Vihre – Sv. Urh). Domnevamo, da so bili povezani z vojno v letih 6–9 n. št. Takrat je bilo za rimsko vojsko ključnega pomena zavarovati prehode, ki so vodili z Balkana v Italijo, pri čemer so bila Brežiška vrata, gledano z vzhoda, prvo območje ob glavni prometnici ob Savi, kjer je bilo mogoče nadzorovati vojaške premike proti Italiji.

Mlajša tabora na Nadleškem hribu in sosednjem najdišču Ulaka – tabor bi lahko bila povezana z vojnami v letih 12–9 pr. n. št. in/ali 6–9 n. št. Njuna glavna funkcija je bila verjetno nadzor stranske ceste, ki je povezovala Ilirik z Italijo. Kot že omenjeno, je imel ta nadzor izjemen pomen leta 6 n. št.

Literarni in epigrafski viri kažejo, da je bil legijski tabor na Ptuj zgrajen pred letom 14 n. št., nimamo pa jasnih arheoloških virov o rimski vojaški prisotnosti v avgustejski in tiberijski dobi. Območje Ptuja je za rimsko vojsko postalo

pomembno med vojno v letih 12–9 pr. n. št. ali kmalu zatem, saj je bila njegova geostrateška lega idealna za oporišče v obdobju vojaškega osvajanja proti severu in vzhodu, tj. območij, ki so pozneje postala del province Panonije.

Rimska vojaška zaščita je verjetno vključevala tista civilna naselja ob glavnih cestah, kjer so imeli prebivalci iz Italije vodilno ali pomembno vlogo. Tako naselje je bilo ustanovljeno najpozneje za časa Oktavijana v Navportu, ki je bil pomembna točka na rimski vojaški oskrbovalni poti med vojnami v letih 35–33 pr. n. št. in v avgustejski dobi. Podobno naselje iz srednjega do poznega avgustejskega obdobja je morda obstajalo v Kranju, ob cesti, ki je vodila iz Emone proti Štalenski gori na Koroškem (Avstrija), ki je bila politično in gospodarsko središče Noriškega kraljestva ter po približno letu 15 pr. n. št. rimskega Norika.⁷⁹

Arheološke vire za vojaške tabore in bojišča je lažje prepoznati kot materialne sledove drugih metod, ki so jih Rimljani uporabljali za uveljavitev nadzora nad osvojenimi ljudstvi in ozemlji. Vključevale so prisilno opustitev tistih višinskih naselij, kjer so se prebivalci uprli⁸⁰ Rimljanom, in novačenje med moškimi premaganih skupnosti za vojaške potrebe. Vključevanje domačih moških (predvsem v jugovzhodni in severozahodni Sloveniji) v rimsko vojsko, ki se je začelo kmalu po ilirskih vojnah (35–33 pr. n. št.), kažejo grobovi, ki vsebujejo rimsko orožje, epigrafski viri in domnevni odlomki vojaških diplom.⁸¹ O novačenju med Latobiki (na območjih, kjer so pozneje nastala civilna naselja municipium Flavium Latobicorum Neviodunum in Praetorium Latobicorum), ki so bili pred rimsko nadvlado verjetno podrejeni Tavriskom, sklepamo iz dveh vojaških diplom, ki omenjata konjeniško enoto ala I Latobicorum et Varcianorum.⁸²

V vzhodni Sloveniji severno od Save ni arheoloških sledov rimskih vojaških dejavnosti v obravnavanem obdobju. V drugi polovici 1. st. pr. n. št. je bila večina tega območja del Noriškega kraljestva, tradicionalnega zaveznika Rima, ki

⁷⁹ Sagadin 2020, 210; Dolenz et al. 2024.

⁸⁰ Gobavica nad Mengšem in Straža nad Šmartnim (sl. 2: 26–27; Horvat 2015a), Cvinger nad Virom pri Stični (Laharnar 2011, 350, 368, št. 18) in verjetno številna najdišča na Notranjskem (Laharnar 2011, 350, 368, št. 17, 19–22; Laharnar 2022, 360–365).

⁸¹ Laharnar 2022, 327–328, 330, t. 22: 35, 29: 15, 49: 13.a

⁸² Lovenjak 2003, 95. Diplomi sta iz časa Vespazijanove (CIL 16 Suppl. No. 158) in Trajanove vladavine (Roxan 1978, št. 52).

⁷⁷ Cf. obravnavo literarnih virov.

⁷⁸ Šašel Kos 1995, 123–237; Mosser 2003, 167; Wheeler 2000, 270–274; Dzino 2010, 168; Radman-Livaja 2018, 160–161.

je okoli leta 15 pr. n. št. brez vojaške intervencije postalo rimski protektorat. Pri upravljanju tega območja so se rimske oblasti močno oprle na noriško elito.⁸³

Zadnji z rimsko vojsko povezan dogodek zdeva upor v Nauportu leta 14 n. št. Arheološki viri kažejo, da je bilo vojaško oporišče v Emoni opuščeno ob koncu avgustejskega obdobja. Obsežne vojaške operacije na zahodnem Balkanu so se končale, diplomatska in vojaška prizadevanja pa so se osredotočila na mejo ob Donavi. V zaledju limesa, ki se je razvijal ob srednji Donavi, je ostal legijski tabor na Ptuj, ki je do konca 1. st. n. št. varoval glavno prometnico med Italijo in srednjim Podonavjem ter severnim Balkanom.⁸⁴

⁸³ Šašel 1954; Šašel Kos 1997a, 24–32; Urban 2000, 332–368.

⁸⁴ Sedlmayer 2020, 20–26. V povezavi s hipotezo o liniji utrdb, ki bi potekale iz zaledja vzhodnega Jadrana v Dalmaciji prek Siscije in Poetovione do Carnuntuma ob Donavi ter bile postavljene bodisi med vojno v letih 35–33 pr. n. št. bodisi v avgustejskem obdobju z namenom nadzora nad Ilirikom in zaščite Italije (Šašel 1974), velja omeniti študijo Periša 2008. V njej je avtor pokazal, da so bile rimske utrdbе v Dalmaciji tesno povezane z rimskimi boji proti Delmatom.

Ob ustanovitvi kolonije Emona, verjetno ob koncu avgustejske dobe,⁸⁵ je njeno upravno ozemlje prešlo iz vojaške v civilno upravo.⁸⁶ Življenje v mestu pravokotne oblike s kamnitim obzidjem na levem bregu Ljubljanice se je začelo v zgodnjem tiberijskem obdobju. Prevladuje mnenje, da je bila v istem času ustanovljena provinca Panonija (Spodnji Ilirik).⁸⁷

V članku obravnavani podatki nakazujejo, da je bila rimska vojaška sila pomemben dejavnik pri uveljavitvi rimske prevlade nad precejšnjim delom ozemlja današnje Slovenije v drugi polovici 1. st. pr. n. št. in na začetku 1. st. n. št., ko se je končalo skoraj dve stoletji trajajoče rimsko osvajanje tega ozemlja.

⁸⁵ To datacijo podpirajo arheološki dokazi in cesarski gradbeni napis, objavljen v Šašel Kos 1997b, 177–181, kat. št. 34, 35 (= *CIL* III 10768 + str. 2328,26 = *CIL* 03, 10768 = *AII* 303, 304 = *lupa* 9246). Šašel Kos (npr. 2012) zagovarja tudi tezo, da je bila rimska kolonija ustanovljena okoli leta 30 pr. n. št. Povzetek zgodovine raziskav s sklici: Istenič 2019b, poglavje 19.2.3, 240–244.

⁸⁶ Nasprotno Šašel (1989) in Šašel Kos (1995; 2005, 341, sl. 81; 2012, 80–84, sl. 2) zagovarjata tezo, da je bilo območje Emone že od srede 1. st. pr. n. št. del province Galije Cisalpine oziroma po letu 42/41 pr. n. št. del Italije.

⁸⁷ Cf. op. 17.

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Illustrations: Fig. 1,2,7 (map: Vida Bitenc). – Fig. 3,12 (map: Nejc Dolinar, NMS). – Fig. 4,5 (drawing: Ida Murgelj, NMS). – Fig. 6 (map: Matic Zupan, NMS). – Fig. 8 (photo: Janez Kotar). Fig. 9,10 (photo: Arhej d.o.o.).
Slikovno gradivo: Sl. 1,2,7 (karta: Vida Bitenc). – Sl. 3,11 (karta: Nejc Dolinar, NMS). – Sl. 4,5 (karta: Ida Murgelj, NMS). – Sl. 6 (karta: Matic Zupan, NMS). – Sl. 8 (foto: Janez Kotar). – Sl. 9,10 (foto: Arhej d.o.o.).

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