

Inscribed Roman bronze tablets from the Notranjska region (SW Slovenia)

Rimske bronaste plošče z napisi z Notranjske (JZ Slovenija)

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Izvleček

Članek obravnava odlomke štirih bronastih plošč z Notranjske, na katerih je ohranjenih po nekaj črk. Na primerku z Gradišča nad Gornjo Košano je ohranjen del imena ljudstva Batavov, kar bi lahko nakazovalo, da gre za omembo pomožne vojaške enote (ale ali kohorte Batavov) in s tem za del vojaške diplome. Odlomka vojaških diplom sta morda tudi najdbi z Gradišča na Čepni in neznanega notranjskega najdišča, medtem ko je bil odlomek z Gradišča nad Knežakom del drugačne napisne plošče. Najdbe so pomembne z ozirom na fenomen kontinuirane poselitve prazgodovinskih gradišč v rimsko dobo, morebitne vojaške diplome pa postavljajo zanimiva vprašanja glede rekrutacije pomožnih enot in vračanja veteranov po odpustu iz službovanja v rimski vojski.

Ključne besede: epigrafika; rimski napisi; rimske vojaške diplome; prozopografija

Abstract

The article discusses four fragments of inscribed bronze tablets from the Notranjska region. The inscription on the fragment from Gradišče above Gornja Košana names the ethnic group Batavi, possibly referencing an auxiliary military unit (ala or cohort of Batavi) as part of a military diploma. The fragments from Gradišče at Čepna and from an unknown site in Notranjska may also be parts of military diplomas, whereas the fragment from Gradišče above Knežak belonged to a different type of inscribed tablet. The four finds provide further evidence that life in these prehistoric hillforts continued into the Roman period, while the presumed military diplomas also raise intriguing questions concerning the recruitment of auxiliary units and the return of veterans following discharge from service in the Roman army.

Keywords: epigraphy; Roman inscriptions; Roman military diplomas; prosopography

The archaeological finds from the Notranjska region kept in the National Museum of Slovenia include three fragments of inscribed bronze tablets (*Fig. 1*). They were unearthed by unauthorised individuals using metal-detectors, hence we know little of their original contexts. The fragment from Gradišče above Gornja Košana (*Fig. 2*)¹ was report-

edly found in the south-eastern part of the hillfort, on a terrace immediately before the rampart ruins. For the fragment in *Fig. 6*, the museum's accession records note the findspot as Gradišče above Knežak, while the fragment in *Fig. 8* is only broadly located to the Notranjska region.² The last fragment was documented in 2018, when we visited a private

¹ Laharnar 2022, 134–135, Pl. 29: 15; Laharnar 2023, 67, Fig. 13: 1.

² Laharnar 2022, 246–247, Pl. 49: 13; Laharnar 2023, 67, Fig. 13: 2.

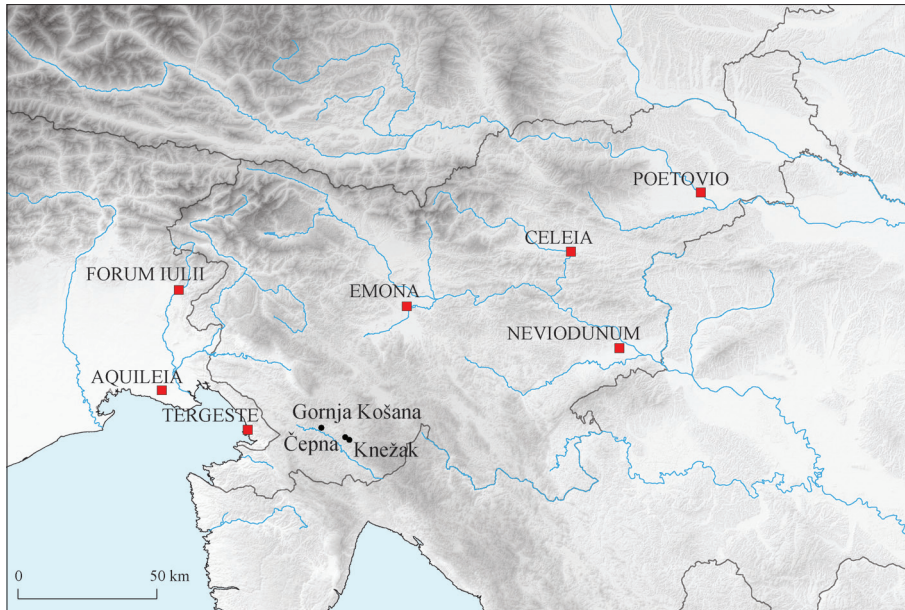


Fig. 1: The southeastern Alpine and northern Adriatic region with Roman towns and findspots of the discussed bronze tablets.
Sl. 1: Jugovzhodnoalpski in severnojadranski prostor z rimskimi mesti in najdišči obravnavanih bronastih plošč z napisi.

collector in Šembije and made a list of the archaeological finds in his collection. The finds included a fragment of an inscribed bronze tablet (Fig. 4) probably also unearthed with a metal detector;³ the only information on the tablet is that it was found in the area of Gradišče at Čepna.

FRAGMENT FROM GRADIŠČE ABOVE GORNJA KOŠANA (Fig. 2)

Artefact

The fragment is broken off on all sides and damaged in fire. Letter height: 1.1 cm. Size: 6.2 × 4.7 × c. 0.25 cm. Material: copper alloy. Inv. No. R 27138.

Inscription:

 ---]+(?) [---
 ---]BATAV(+?) [---
 ---]N(I?) [---

The letters in the second line relate part of the name of the ethnic group *Batavi*, possibly representing the name of an auxiliary unit (*cohors* or *ala Batavorum*) and hence a Roman military diploma.

Site

The undulating flysch landscape southwest of the village of Gornja Košana includes a dominant elevation of Gradišče that holds the remains of a 3.47 ha large hillfort enclosed with a stonework rampart. Its interior has semicircular terraces leading from the summit towards the lower-lying south and east perimeters. The terraces hold rectangular sunken features of different sizes, which are the remains of buildings that were either detached or formed clusters, some of them with multiple rooms (Fig. 3: A). Further traces of buildings, presumably from the Roman period, have been observed outside the area delimited by the stonework rampart, on the slope and gentle saddle at Pri lokvi, just below the southwest corner of the hillfort (Fig. 3: B). There are also earthwork ramparts, which encircle 2.5 ha of land on the nearby plateau of Brdo (613 m asl), located 270 m northwest of Gradišče (Fig. 3: C).⁴

The archaeological complex at Gornja Košana thus comprises the fortified settlement on Gradišče, the earthwork ramparts on Brdo, the building remains at Pri lokvi and a cult place and/or cemetery at Parti near Stara Sušica (Fig. 3: D). The evidence from the last site shows two main chronological horizons: Late Hallstatt – La Tène period and the Augustan age with the 1st century AD.⁵ There are no known small finds from Brdo and Pri lokvi. Stray

³ Laharnar 2022, 106–107, Pl. 22: 35.

⁴ Laharnar 2022, 129–131, Figs 3.59–3.60.

⁵ Horvat 1995, 178–183, 192–194, Pl. 1–6.

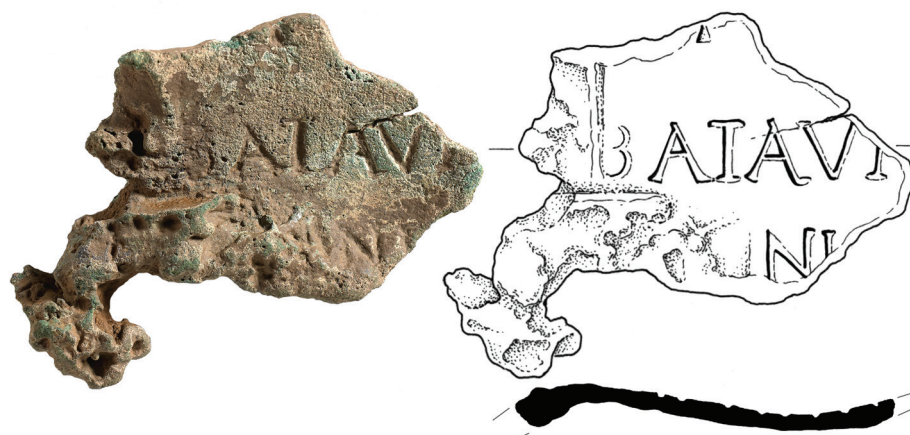


Fig. 2: Gradišče above Gornja Košana. Fragment of an inscribed tablet. Scale = 1:1.

Sl. 2: Gradišče nad Gornjo Košano. Odlomek bronaste plošče z napisom. M. = 1 : 1.

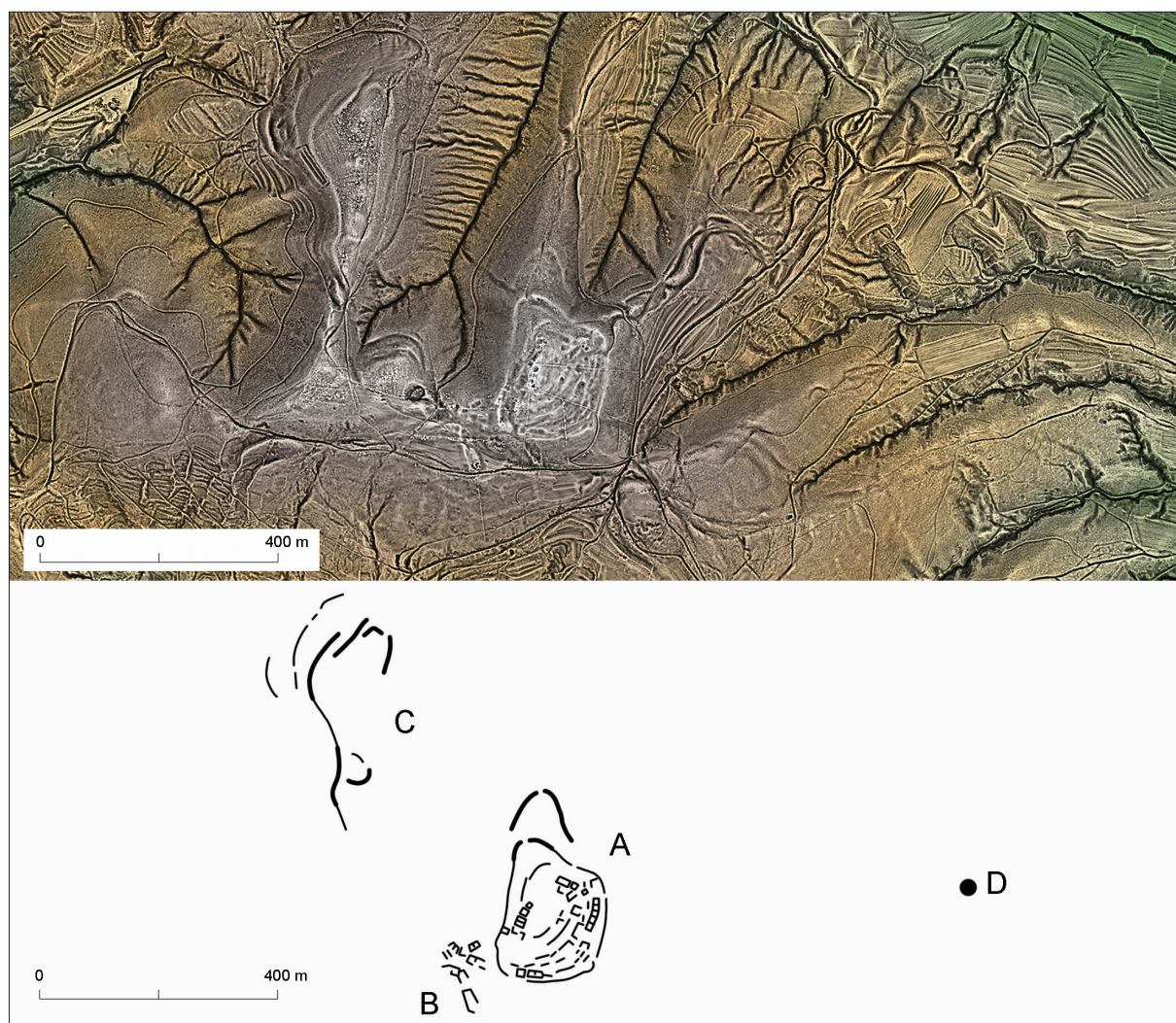


Fig. 3: Gradišče above Gornja Košana and its surroundings. LiDAR-derived DEM and its archaeological interpretation: A – Gradišče, prehistoric hillfort and Roman settlement; B – Pri Lokvi, presumed remains of Roman buildings; C – Brdo, presumed prehistoric earthworks; D – Parti near Stara Sušica, cult place and burials (from Laharnar 2022, Fig. 3.59).

Sl. 3: Gradišče nad Gornjo Košano z okolico. Prikaz DMR po lidarskih podatkih in arheološka interpretacija: A – Gradišče, prazgodovinsko gradišče in rimsko naselje; B – Pri Lokvi, domnevni sledovi rimskih stavb; C – Brdo, prazgodovinski (?) okopi; D – Parti pri Stari Sušici, kultno mesto in grobišče (po Laharnar 2022, sl. 3.59).

finds, mostly unearthened by unauthorised metal detectorists, indicate habitation on Gradišče in the Late Bronze, Early Iron and Late Iron Ages, as well as the Roman period. Metal detectorists also dug up a scatter at least 16 Roman silver coins on the steep north-western slope outside the hillfort, in a length of ten metres. Based on the latest coin of the scatter, interpreted as purse contents, the coins are estimated to have been lost after 43 BC. Additional three Roman silver coins, one of them of Julius Caesar, came to light further north on the same slope.⁶ Altogether, Gradišče revealed 84 stray finds of Roman coins. They consist of seven Republican and two Augustan coins, eight coins from the 1st, 43 from the 1st or 2nd centuries, six from the 3rd and ten coins from the 4th century.⁷ The Roman coins, but also brooches and other objects show that the prehistoric hillfort continued to be inhabited in the Roman period, from the 1st to the 4th century.⁸

FRAGMENT FROM GRADIŠČE AT ČEPNA

(Fig. 4)

Artefact

The fragment is broken off on all sides. Letter height: 0.8 cm. Size: 2.8 × 2.1 × 0.4 cm. Material: copper alloy. In private collection (ZN 387-4).

Inscription:

 ---] P. NO[---
 ---]OMIT(?)[---

The first line probably relates a personal name – praenomen and gentilicium: *P(ublius) No(?)*.

The second line holds four letters, with the fourth letter only surviving as part of the vertical stroke; there are numerous possible reconstructions of this word, one of them also a personal name (e.g. *Domitius, Domitianus...*).

Site

The hillfort at Gradišče at Čepna lies at the edge of a steep and in places precipitous slope of the Taborski greben ridge. This slope represents the

western perimeter of the hillfort and rises some 300 m above the valley. The opposite, east side of the hillfort, where access was relatively easy, was protected by a stonework rampart. The northern section of the rampart terminated in a tower, next to which was the north entrance. The interior of the 1.87 ha large hillfort is heavily modified with



Fig. 4: Gradišče at Čepna. Fragment of an inscribed tablet. Scale = 1:1.

Sl. 4: Gradišče na Čepni. Odlomek bronaste plošče z napisom. M. = 1 : 1.

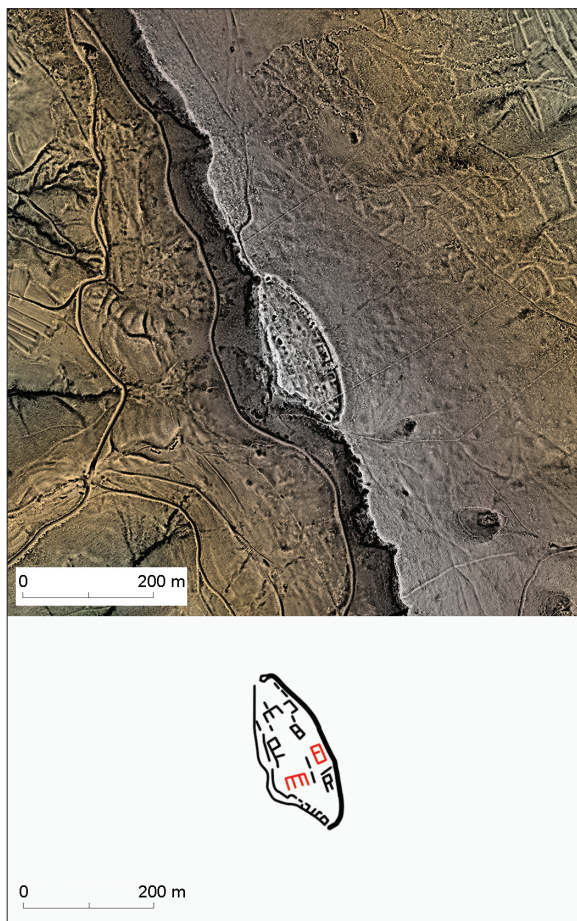


Fig. 5: Gradišče at Čepna, prehistoric hillfort and Roman settlement. LiDAR-derived DEM and its archaeological interpretation (from Laharnar 2022, Fig. 3.37).

Sl. 5: Gradišče na Čepni. Prikaz DMR po lidarskih podatkih in arheološka interpretacija (po Laharnar 2022, sl. 3.37).

⁶ Commentary to ZN 396 in the list of finds in private collections (archives of the Archaeological Department at the National Museum of Slovenia (AO NMS)).

⁷ Šemrov 1998, Cat. No. 33; Šemrov 2004, Cat. No. 30; Šemrov 2010, Cat. No. 51.

⁸ Laharnar 2022, 129–135, Pl. 29: 1–20.



Fig. 6: Gradišče above Knežak. Fragment of an inscribed tablet. Scale = 1:1.

Sl. 6: Gradišče nad Knežakom. Odlomek bronaste plošče z napisom. M. = 1 : 1.

terraces, sunken features and small cairns. The archaeological interpretation of the LiDAR data has revealed traces of rectangular buildings that are either detached or form clusters (Fig. 5).

The numerous finds from the site suggest that a settlement existed here possibly already in the Late Bronze Age, but certainly in the Iron Age and the Roman period.⁹ The substantial assemblage of prehistoric and Roman finds discovered in 1890 within the ruins of a stonework rampart also provided evidence of cult practices – possibly associated with a Roman sanctuary.¹⁰

FRAGMENT FROM GRADIŠČE ABOVE KNEŽAK

(Fig. 6)

Artefact

The fragment is broken off on all sides. Letter height: 0.9–1.1 cm. Size: 5.3 × 5.2 × 0.9 cm. Material: copper alloy. Inv. No. R 27838.

Inscription:

 ---]N
 ---]M
 ---]TI(?)[---

Very little survives of the inscription. The reconstruction is uncertain.

Site

Gradišče above Knežak lies on an elevation on the gradually rising terrain between the villages of Šembije and Knežak. The northern perimeter of the hillfort runs along the steep and in places precipitous slope, similarly as the hillfort at Gradišče at Čepna, while a stonework rampart was constructed in the west, south and east. The central part of the hillfort is segmental in plan and divided into the upper plateau (1.39 ha) and the lower terrace (0.68 ha), separated by an interior stonework rampart, while a 0.60 ha large area west of this central part was also enclosed within a stonework rampart. The two parts were additionally separated by a steep slope and a dolina. The archaeological interpretation of the LiDAR data has revealed a dense grid of mostly rectangular and square features in the central part. These are the remains of buildings with multiple rooms that either stand detached or in clusters, with open spaces in between that form small squares (Fig. 7: A).¹¹

The Roman artefacts, as well as the complex and dense layout of the settlement suggest that it was intensely populated in the Roman period, while the settlement location, size, layout, fortifications and the lines of communication around the hillfort all originate in the Iron Age. The available evidence does not reveal the relationship between the hillfort and the possibly Roman buildings along the path immediately

⁹ Laharnar 2022, 93–106, Pls 15–22, 23: 47–49.

¹⁰ Laharnar 2022, 94–97, 329–335, Figs 3.42, 4.19, Pls 15–21.

¹¹ Laharnar, Lozić, Miškec 2020, 124–126, Fig. 1; Laharnar 2022, 106–109, Figs 3.45–3.46.

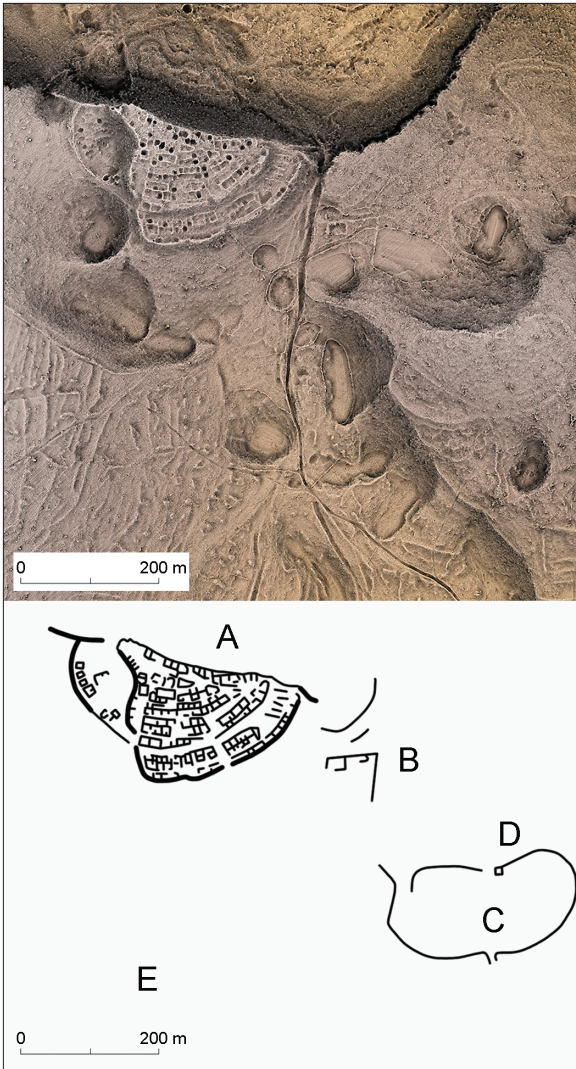


Fig. 7: Gradišče above Knežak and its surroundings. LiDAR-derived DEM and its archaeological interpretation: A – Gradišče, prehistoric hillfort and Roman settlement; B – Roman architecture (?); C – Reber, prehistoric enclosure; D – Reber, Roman rectangular building, tower; E – prehistoric and Roman agro-pastoral landscape (from Laharnar 2022, Fig. 3.45).

Sl. 7: Gradišče nad Knežakom z okolico. Prikaz DMR po lidarskih podatkih in arheološka interpretacija: A – Gradišče, prazgodovinsko gradišče in rimsko naselje; B – sledovi rimskih stavb (?); C – Reber, prazgodovinski okop; D – Reber, rimska pravokotna stavba, stolp (?); E – prazgodovinska in rimska poljedelsko-pastirska kulturna krajina (po Laharnar 2022, sl. 3.45).

below it (Fig. 7: B).¹² Another Roman building, very likely a tower, on the nearby hill of Reber (Fig. 7: D) indicates the settlement's significance

¹² Supporting a Roman dating are four Roman bronze bells found together in the corner of one of the buildings (the bells are in a private collection, archives of the AO NMS).



Fig. 8: The Notranjska region, unknown site. Fragment of an inscribed tablet. Scale = 1:1.

Sl. 8: Neznano najdišče na Notranjskem. Odlomek bronaste plošče z napisom. M. = 1 : 1.

and strength in the Late Roman period.¹³ The intensity and continuity of habitation at the hillfort from the Iron Age to the Roman period reflect the economic strength of its inhabitants, possibly connected with a specific agricultural activity. The latter is indicated by many traces of intensive land use in the immediate proximity, the beginnings of which date to the Iron Age (Fig. 7: E).

FRAGMENT FROM AN UNKNOWN SITE IN THE NOTRANJSKA REGION

(Fig. 8)

Artefact

The fragment is broken off on all four sides. Letter height: 0.68 cm. Size: 1.5 × 2.2 × 0.25 cm. Material: copper alloy. Inv. No. R 18782.

Inscription:

---]NIO[---

The first and third letters are only partially preserved. Reconstruction is uncertain.

DISCUSSION

The fragments of bronze tablets under discussion are small and only reveal a few letters of their respective inscriptions, making it difficult to positively identify the type of tablets they belonged to. The thickness of the sheet metal (c. 2.5 mm) and the surviving part of the name of the Batavians, possibly referencing an auxiliary military unit (ala or cohort of Batavians) of the Roman army, nevertheless seem to suggest the find from Gradišče

¹³ Laharnar, Lozić, Miškec 2020, 131, Fig. 1: h.

above Gornja Košana was part of a Roman military diploma. The same interpretation may be proposed for the fragments from Gradišče at Čepna and from an unknown site in the Notranjska region. In contrast, the sheet metal of the fragment from Gradišče above Knežak is 9 mm thick, which is considerably more than the thickness of 1–3 mm characteristic of Roman military diplomas;¹⁴ we therefore presume it belonged to a different type of inscribed tablet.

The fragments from Gornja Košana and Knežak are stray finds from hillforts inhabited at least from the Late Bronze Age onward and showing clear habitation continuity from prehistory into the Roman period. The assemblage of stray finds from Gradišče above Knežak shows it was inhabited at least until the first half of the 4th century;¹⁵ the buildings outside the hillfort rampart (*Fig. 7: B*) most likely also date to the Roman period.¹⁶ For the hillfort at Gradišče above Gornja Košana, we likewise posit that additional buildings were constructed in the Roman period beyond the rampart (*Fig. 3: B*); the stray finds from this hillfort area show it was inhabited until the 4th century.¹⁷

Small finds reveal that the settlement on Gradišče at Čepna also remained inhabited in the Roman period, although LiDAR data show a different layout compared with the ‘urban’ plan of Gradišče above Knežak and Gradišče above Gornja Košana. The latter two show densely spaced individual buildings or building clusters, whereas there are fewer building traces at Čepna and those indicate larger buildings. Standing out among these are a building with three parallel rooms and a two-room building near the eastern rampart (*Fig. 5: red lines*), which we tentatively interpret as the remains of a Roman sanctuary. Supporting this interpretation is the small finds, particularly the large number of varied and chronologically diverse objects found close together in the ruins of the rampart in 1890, which we have plausibly connected with Roman ritual practices.¹⁸

¹⁴ E.g. Roxan 1978; 1985; 1994; Roxan, Holder 2003; one of the tablets of the well-preserved military diploma from the River Sava near Slavovski Brod is 1.5 mm thick, while the thickness of the other ranges between 2 and 3.2 mm (Miškov 1997–1998, 91).

¹⁵ Laharnar, Lozić, Miškec 2020, 129–130, 135–139; Laharnar 2022, 110–114, 335–337, Pls 24–27.

¹⁶ See Note 12.

¹⁷ Laharnar 2022, 132–134, Pl. 29: 1–20.

¹⁸ Laharnar 2022, 94–97, 331–335, Figs 3.42, 4.19, Pls 15–20.

As demonstrated in previous publications, prehistoric hillforts in Notranjska may be broadly divided into two groups. The first comprises Grad near Šmihel and the hillforts along the southern fringes of the Spodnja Pivka valley (Baba and Ambroževogradišče), the areas beyond the Postojna Gate and east of the Javorniki hills (Stari grad above Unec, Tržišče near Dolenja vas, Žerovnišček near Bločice, possibly Velike Bukve above Logatec). After the Roman conquest, these were either destroyed or declined in importance and were eventually abandoned. In contrast, the hillforts of the Zgornja Pivka valley (Kerin above Pivka, Gradišče at Čepna, Gradišče above Knežak), the Košana valley (Gradišče above Gornja Košana), the Ilirska Bistrica area (Gradišče above Trnovo, Javor near Dolnji Zemon), parts of the Vipava valley (e.g. Sv. Pavel above Planina) and the Kras (e.g. Ajdovščina above Rodik) continued to be inhabited in the Roman period.¹⁹

This pattern corresponds with the distribution of Republican and Augustan finds of Roman military equipment, such as lead slingshot,²⁰ other weapons and hobnails of military footwear.²¹ These objects are characteristic of the final settlement phase on the sites of the first group, whereas they are almost entirely absent from the sites of the second group. We may see this difference as the result of the different policies that the indigenous communities adopted in the face of the Roman colonial and expansionist policy and, consequently, of the continuity or discontinuity of their settlements after the Roman conquest.²²

The fragments of inscribed tablets discussed here should also be viewed in this light, as they come from the hillforts of the second group, i.e. sites that went on to become Roman settlements (Gradišče above Knežak, Gradišče above Gornja Košana) or even a site of a Roman sanctuary (Gradišče at Čepna). These were settlements of the indigenous communities that appear to have pursued a pragmatic, pro-Roman policy. Recruiting young men into the auxiliary units of the Roman army may have been an important aspect of the relations between them and the Romans. It could have begun soon after the final subjugation of the

¹⁹ Laharnar, Lozić, Miškec 2020, 132–134; Laharnar 2022, 346–349, Fig. 4.24.

²⁰ Laharnar 2011, Fig. 1.

²¹ Istenič 2019, Fig. 1; Istenič 2025, Fig. 2.

²² Laharnar, Lozić, Miškec 2020, 134; Laharnar 2022, 345–349.

Notranjska communities, during Octavian's war in Illyricum (35–33 BC).²³ A similar situation can be observed through the burials with Roman weapons in the Soča valley and the Dolenjska region (SE Slovenia), as these are generally understood to be the burials of auxiliary soldiers.²⁴

If the inscribed tablet fragments under discussion are indeed pieces of Roman military diplomas, they represent direct evidence for Roman recruitment among the indigenous communities in Notranjska. Over time, the diplomas entered the archaeological record as settlement refuse or recycling material, as suggested by the heavily fire-damaged and partly melted fragment from Gradišče above Gornja Košana. We have already proposed in an earlier publication that the Roman military finds from the Augustan period and the 1st century AD recovered in the Notranjska hillforts belonged to local men who, after completing their service in the auxiliary units of the Roman army and receiving honourable discharge, returned to their home communities.²⁵ A similar interpretation has been proposed for the fragments of Roman military diplomas, Roman military and cavalry equipment, writing implements and sigillata vessels, mostly from the Augustan–Tiberian period and the 1st century AD, unearthed in the simple, traditional rural byre houses of the Batavians, living in the lower Rhineland. Researchers propose that the returning Batavian veterans were the principal agents and mediators of Roman goods, skills and customs among the indigenous rural populations,

i.e. not only of objects, but also of literacy, knowledge of Latin, dress styles, dietary practices and funerary customs.²⁶ Inasmuch as this interpretive model for the rural sites in the Rhineland cannot be simply and uncritically applied to the hillforts of Notranjska, the presumed finds of military diplomas nevertheless indicate that veterans in Notranjska also played their part in the transformation of the prehistoric hillfort landscape into the Roman countryside. It is furthermore worth noting that the similarity between Notranjska and the lower Rhineland goes beyond the military diplomas, as other types of finds believed to reflect the role of veterans in the Romanisation of the indigenous populations in the Rhine delta are also represented among the objects unearthed in the hillforts of Notranjska and their immediate surroundings.²⁷

Acknowledgement

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²⁶ Derks, Roymans 2006; Nicolay 2007; Roymans 2009.

²⁷ Roman military and cavalry equipment (Laharnar 2022, 298–302, Pls 9: 71–75; 22: 29; 26: 51; 28: 8–9; 29: 11–12; 35: 134; 44: 50–55), seal boxes (Korenjak 2023, Pl. 1: 5–6, 11, 25), styli (Laharnar 2022, Pls 13: 34; 19: 117–120; 20: 121–128; 22: 39; 36: 187–188), wax spatulas (Laharnar 2022, Pl. 20: 129) and sigillata ware (Horvat 1995, Pls 4: 2–5; 9: 5–6; Laharnar 2022, 331–332, Note 1296). Other objects can also be viewed in this light, especially certain types of brooches such as the Aucissa and Langton Down types (Laharnar 2022, Fig. 3.77: 1; Pls 5: 18–20; 12: 8; 14: 14; 15: 9–15; 23: 12–14; 28: 5; 43: 13), as well as coin finds, for example the Augustan bronze coins from the mint at Nemausus (Miškec 2009, 286–287, Fig. 5).

²³ Laharnar, Istenič 2024, Istenič 2025, 131, 133.

²⁴ Istenič 2005, 84; Istenič 2013, 26–27; Gaspari et al. 2015, 160; Istenič 2025, 131, Fig. 7.

²⁵ Laharnar 2022, 327–330, 360, 363; Laharnar 2023, 69.

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Rimske bronaste plošče z napisi z Notranjske (JZ Slovenija)

Povzetek

Obravnavani odlomki bronastih plošč so razmeroma majhni, na njih je ohranjenih le po nekaj črk, zato je težko z gotovostjo potrditi, čemu so bile namenjene. Glede na debelino pločevine (2–3 mm) in deloma ohranjeno besedilo na plošči z Gradišča nad Gornjo Košano (*sl.* 2), ki omenja pripadnike ljudstva Batavov, lahko sklepamo, da gre pri tem za omembo ene od pomožnih vojaških enot, ale ali kohorte Batavov, in s tem za vojaško diplomu. Te so prejeli vojaki pomožnih enot rimske vojske ob častnem odpustu po dolgoletni vojaški službi. Na njih je lahko navedenih tudi do dvajset različnih enot, katerih pripadniki so hkrati prejeli s tem povezane privilegije – rimsko državljanstvo in pravico do sklenitve polnopravne zakonske zveze. To pomeni, da pri vojaški diplomu z Gradišča nad

Gornjo Košano ne gre za vojaško diplomu, ki jo je prejel posameznik iz ljudstva Batavov, ampak, da so vojaške diplome, ki so bile izstavljene v Rimu na podlagi iste cesarske konstitucije, prejeli tudi vojaki enote, ki se je imenovala po Batavih in je bila prvotno rekrutirana na njihovem ozemlju.

Dela vojaških diplom sta morda tudi odlomka z Gradišča na Čepni (*sl.* 4) in neznanega notranjskega najdišča (*sl.* 8). Pločevina odlomka z Gradišča nad Knežakom (*sl.* 6) je z debelino 9 mm masivnejša od bronastih plošč rimskih vojaških diplom, ki se večinoma gibljejo od 1 do 3 mm,¹ zato menimo, da je pripadala drugačni vrsti napisne plošče.

¹ Npr. Roxan 1978; 1985; 1994; Roxan, Holder 2003; debelina ene od plošč odlično ohranjene vojaške diplome

Odlomka z Gornje Košane in Knežaka sta naselbinski najdbi. Sta posamezni najdbi z gradišč, poseljenih najpozneje od pozne bronaste dobe, a z jasno poselitveno kontinuiteto v rimsko obdobje. Glede na posamične najdbe je bilo Gradišče nad Knežakom obljudeno vsaj do prve polovice 4. st.² Rimski je najverjetneje tudi pozidava izven oboda gradišča (sl. 7: B). Rimsko širitev pozidave izven gradišča domnevamo tudi na Gradišču nad Gornjo Košano (sl. 3: B), ki je bilo glede na posamične najdbe z območja gradišča naseljeno do 4. st.³

Glede na drobne najdbe je tudi naselje na Gradišču na Čepni ostalo poseljeno v rimski dobi, vendar so njegovi lidarski podatki (sl. 5) razkrili drugačen naselbinski raster od "urbanega" rastra Gradišča nad Knežakom in Gradišča nad Gornjo Košano. Medtem ko je zanju značilen gost raster sledov samostojnih ali v skupine povezanih stavb (sl. 3, 7), je takšnih sledov na Čepni manj in nakazuje večje stavbe. Med njimi izstopata stavba s tremi vzporednimi prostori in dvosobna stavba blizu vzhodnega obzidja (sl. 5: izrisano rdeče). Domnevamo, da gre za sledove rimske svetiščne arhitekture. Taki interpretaciji v prid govori analiza drobnih najdb, predvsem večjega števila raznovrstnih in različno starih predmetov, odkritih blizu skupaj v ruševini obzidja leta 1890, ki smo jih utemeljeno povezali z rimskimi verskimi obredi.⁴

Kot smo pokazali že na drugem mestu, notranjska prazgodovinska gradišča okvirno delimo na dve skupini. V prvo sodijo Grad pri Šmihelu in gradišča južnega obrobja Spodnje Pivke (Baba in Ambrožovo gradišče), območja onkraj Postojnskih vrat ter vzhodno od Javornikov (Stari grad nad Uncem, Tržišče pri Dolenji vasi, Žerovnišček pri Bločicah, morda Velike Bukve nad Logatcem). Ta so bila ob rimski nadvladi ali uničena ali so izgubila na pomenu in so sčasoma opustela. Nasprotno pa so gradišča Zgornje Pivke (Kerin nad Pivko, Gradišče na Čepni, Gradišče nad Knežakom), Košanske doline (Gradišče nad Gornjo Košano), Ilirskobistriškega (Gradišče nad Trnovim, Javor pri Dolnjem Zemonu), ponekod v Vipavski dolini (npr. Sv. Pavel nad Planino) in na Krasu (npr. Ajdovščina nad Rodikom) ostala tudi rimska naselja.⁵

Pomenljivo je, da se to dejstvo ujema z razprostranjenostjo republikanskih in avgustejskih najdb rimske vojaške opreme, npr. svinčenih izstrelkov za pračo⁶ in drugega orožja ter okovnih žebličkov vojaških obuval.⁷ Tovrstni predmeti so značilni za zadnje obdobje poselitve naselbin prve skupine, medtem ko na naselbinah druge skupine skoraj povsem umanjajo. To razumemo kot odraz različnih politik domorodnih skupnosti do rimske kolonialne in osvajalske politike ter s tem povezane kontinuitete ali diskontinuitete njihovih naselbin po rimski osvojitvi.⁸

V tej luči moramo razumeti tudi odlomke obravnavanih plošč z napisi, saj izvirajo z gradišč druge skupine, torej z najdišč, ki so bila tudi rimska naselja (Gradišče nad Knežakom, Gradišče nad Gornjo Košano) ali celo prostor z rimskim svetiščem (Gradišče na Čepni). To so bila naselja domorodnih skupnosti, ki so bržkone vodile do Rimljanov pragmatično prorimsko politiko. Pomemben del teh odnosov je bila verjetno tudi rekrutacija mladih moških v pomožne enote rimske vojske. Ta se je morda začela izvajati kmalu po dokončni rimski podreditvi notranjskih skupnosti za časa Oktavijanove vojne v Iliriku (35–33 pr. n. št.).⁹ Podobno nakazujejo pokopi z rimskim orožjem v Posočju in na Dolenjskem, za katere prevladuje mnenje, da gre za grobove pripadnikov pomožnih enot rimske vojske.¹⁰

Če je naša interpretacija obravnavanih odlomkov kot delov rimskih vojaških diplom pravilna, so to neposredni pokazatelji rekrutiranja med notranjskimi skupnostmi domačinov. Diplome so sčasoma končale kot naselbinski odpad ali reciklažni material, kar nakazuje zaradi ognja močno poškodovan in delno staljen odlomek z Gradišča nad Gornjo Košano. V objavah smo že predlagali interpretacijo rimskih vojaških najdb avgustejskega časa in 1. st. n. št. z notranjskih gradišč kot predmetov domačinov, ki so se po končani vojaški službi v pomožnih enotah rimske vojske in častnem odpustu vrnili v domači kraj.¹¹ Podobno interpretirajo najdbe odlomkov rimskih vojaških diplom, delov rimske vojaške in konjeniške opreme, pisalnih pripomočkov ter sigilatnega

iz reke Save pri Slavonskem Brodu je 1,5 mm, druge pa med 2 in 3,2 mm (Miškov 1997–1998, 91).

² Laharnar, Lozić, Miškec 2020, 129–130, 135–139; Laharnar 2022, 110–114, 335–337, t. 24–27.

³ Laharnar 2022, 132–134, t. 29: 1–20.

⁴ Laharnar 2022, 94–97, 331–335, sl. 3.42, 4.19, t. 15–20.

⁵ Laharnar, Lozić, Miškec 2020, 132–134; Laharnar 2022, 346–349, sl. 4.24.

⁶ Laharnar 2011, sl. 1.

⁷ Istenič 2019, sl. 1; Istenič 2025, sl. 2.

⁸ Laharnar, Lozić, Miškec 2020, 134; Laharnar 2022, 345–349.

⁹ Laharnar, Istenič 2024, Istenič 2025, 131, 133.

¹⁰ Istenič 2005, 84; Istenič 2013, 26–27; Gaspari et al. 2015, 160; Istenič 2025, 131, sl. 7.

¹¹ Laharnar 2022, 327–330, 360, 363; Laharnar 2023, 69.

posodja iz večinoma avgustejsko–tiberijskega časa in 1. st. n. št., odkrite v preprostih, tradicionalnih podeželskih hišah Batavijcev. Domnevajo, da so bili prav vračajoči se veterani glavni promotorji in posredniki rimskih dobrin, znanj in navad med domačim ruralnim prebivalstvom, torej ne zgolj predmetov, ampak tudi pismenosti, znanja latinščine, načina oblačenja, prehranjevalnih navad in pogrebnih običajev.¹² Predlaganega interpretativnega modela za podeželska najdišča spodnjega Porenja ne moremo zgolj nekritično aplicirati na primer notranjskih gradišč, a vendar nam prav najdbe verjetnih vojaških diplom nakazujejo vlogo veteranov pri preoblikovanju prazgodovinske notranjske krajine gradišč v rimsko podeželje. Velja še opozoriti, da so našete zvrsti najdb, ki naj bi poleg vojaških diplom odražale vlogo veteranov v romanizaciji domorodnega prebivalstva ob delti

Rena, zastopane tudi med gradivom notranjskih gradišč in njihove neposredne okolice.¹³

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¹³ Rimska vojaška in konjeniška oprema (Laharnar 2022, 298–302, t. 9: 71–75; 22: 29; 26: 51; 28: 8–9; 29: 11–12; 35: 134; 44: 50–55); pečatne škatlice (Korenjak 2023, t. 1: 5–6, 11, 25); stilusi (Laharnar 2022, t. 13: 34; 19: 117–120; 20: 121–128; 22: 39; 36: 187–188); lopatke za nanašanje voska na povoščene pisalne tablice (Laharnar 2022, t. 20: 129) in sigilatno posodje (Horvat 1995, t. 4: 2–5; 9: 5–6; Laharnar 2022, 331–332, op. 1296). V tej luči lahko presojamo tudi druge predmete, predvsem nekatere vrste fibul, npr. vrste Aucissa in Langtown Down (Laharnar 2022, sl. 3.77: 1; t. 5: 18–20; 12: 8; 14: 14; 15: 9–15; 23: 12–14; 28: 5; 43: 13) ter novčnih najdb, npr. avgustejske bronaste novce kovnice v Nemavsu (Miškec 2009, 286–287, sl. 5).

¹² Derks, Roymans 2006; Nicolay 2007; Roymans 2009.

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Slikovno gradivo: Sl. 1 (karta: Nejc Dolinar, NMS). – Sl. 2 (foto: Tomaž Lauko, NMS). – Sl. 4 (foto: Boštjan Laharnar, NMS). – Sl. 6, 8 (foto: Nejc Dolinar, NMS). – Sl. 2, 4, 6, 8 (risba: Ida Murgelj, NMS).

Illustrations: Fig. 1 (map: Nejc Dolinar, NMS). – Fig. 2 (photo: Tomaž Lauko, NMS). – Fig. 4 (photo: Boštjan Laharnar, NMS). – Figs 6, 8 (photo: Nejc Dolinar, NMS). – Figs 2, 4, 6, 8 (drawing: Ida Murgelj, NMS).

The data underlying this article will be shared on reasonable request to the corresponding author. / Podatki, na katerih temelji ta članek, bodo na razumno zahtevo posredovani interesentu.

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