

The Burgbichl in Irschen. Late antique hilltop settlement with an early Christian church in Carinthia (Austria)

Burgbichl pri Irschnu na avstrijskem Koroškem. Poznoantično višinsko utrjeno naselje z zgodnjekrščansko cerkvijo

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Izvleček

Poznoantično višinsko naselje Burgbichl pri Irschnu v dolini Drave na avstrijskem Koroškem je bilo do sedaj raziskano v dveh arheoloških akcijah. Burgbichl leži na križišču ene glavne poti v jugovzhodnih Alpah – poti po Dravski dolini – in prečne poti, ki poteka iz Italije čez prelaz Gailpass (Gailbergsattel). Ker hrib kasneje ni bil poseljen, so antične zgradbe izredno dobro ohranjene: na severu obkroža približno hektar veliko poselitveno območje masiven obodni zid. Delno so bili izkopani deli vhoda in obzidja, velika stanovanjska stavba, dve obrtni območji, vodni zbiralnik in zgodnjekrščanska cerkev. V cerkvi s prizidkom na vzhodu sta ugotovljeni dve gradbeni fazi. Pomemben je dokaz o uporabi marmorja na več mestih: za prag, stopnico in okrasitev prezbiterja. V osrednjem delu prezbiterja je jama za relikviarij. Doslej sta bila odkrita dva grobova – eden v grobnici.

Pri poznoantičnih najdbah iz 5. in 6. st. gre za tipičen spekter, znan s sočasnih najdišč, z množico grobe keramike, posameznimi uvoženimi kosi keramike, novci in fibulami. Posebnost je koščena pasna spona, okrašena s koncentričnimi krožci s pikami. Na več mestih na hribu so vidni ostanki starejše uporabe prostora, tudi med najdbami je veliko predmetov iz rimskega imperialnega obdobja. Razumevanje teh starejših najdb v povezavi z očitno aktivnostjo na najdišču v obdobju od 1. do 3. st. bo vsekakor med glavnimi cilji prihodnjih raziskav.

Ključne besede: Avstrija; Koroška; pozna antika; višinska naselja; zgodnjekrščanska cerkev

Abstract

In two campaigns thus far, a late antique hilltop settlement on the so-called Burgbichl in Irschen in the Drava Valley (Carinthia, Austria) has been investigated by archaeological excavations. The Burgbichl is situated at the crossing of the main road of the southeast Alps through the Drava Valley and the route from Italy over the Gail Pass. Due to the lack of later buildings, the ancient structures are particularly well preserved. In the north, a massive enclosure wall surrounds the approximately 1 ha-large settlement area. Thus far, parts of the gate and the surrounding wall, a large residential building, two places of craftsmanship, a cistern and an early Christian church have been partially excavated. In the church with the transverse annex in the east, two construction phases were identified. Of particular importance is the evidence of marble decoration in several places: both for the threshold and a step, the precious material was also used for the decoration of the presbytery. The reliquary pit was documented centrally within the presbytery. Two graves have been uncovered thus far, one of which is a chamber grave.

The late antique finds from the 5th and 6th centuries AD represent the typical spectrum of hilltop settlements with lots of coarse pottery, individual imported pieces, coins and fibulae. One special piece is the belt buckle made of bone, which bears multiple circular eye decorations. In many places on the hill, evidence of an older use can be seen, and in the archaeological finds, a remarkable number of objects of the Roman Imperial period can be found. The contextualization of these earlier finds in connection with evident site activity during the 1st until the 3rd century AD will certainly be one of the central points of the next excavation campaigns.

Keywords: Austria; Carinthia; Late Antiquity; hilltop settlement; early Christian church

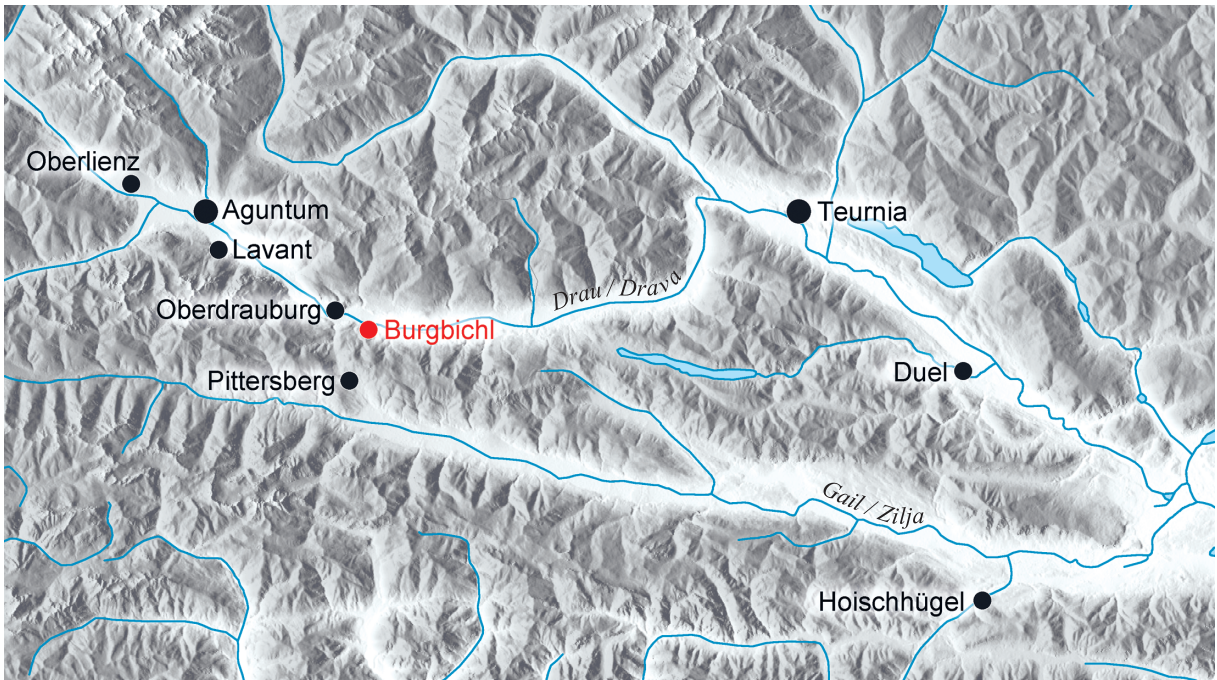


Fig. 1: Map of Upper Carinthia with the locations mentioned in the text.
Sl. 1: Zgornja Koroška z najdišči, omenjenimi v besedilu.

INTRODUCTION

The number of Roman sites in the Drava Valley, the most important west-east axis in Upper Carinthia (Oberkärnten), is quite small compared to other regions of Noricum. Between the Claudian *municipia* Aguntum and Teurnia, only the late antique settlement with two churches on the Kirchbichl in Lavant¹ and the Roman site on the so-called Schrötterhofer Feld in Oberdrauburg² have been known for a long time (Fig. 1). A few remains of dedications or funerary monuments of unknown origin have been built into the church walls in Berg³ and Greifenburg.⁴ South of the Gailbergsattel, the pass to the Gailtal valley, on the Pittersberg,⁵ the find of several *Solidi* of Justinian I probably indicates a late antique hilltop settlement.

Recently, a new site has become of particular interest for this part of Noricum. In the municipal area of Irschen (Spittal an der Drau district) the

so-called Burgbichl rises on the south side of the Drava (Drau). Apart from the fact that the Burgbichl is mentioned in a compilation of medieval castles of Carinthia in 1956⁶ and in the community chronicle of 1975,⁷ where it was thought to be a fortification from the 8th to the 11th/12th centuries, respectively, the site has not received any attention from previous research. With regard to the topography, this is somewhat surprising, since it represents a prominent elevation with a height of about 170 m above the bottom of the valley in front of the cliffs to the west, south and east (Fig. 2). Access to the hilltop is only possible via the northern slope, because the other sides are very steep and difficult to climb, so the topography provides strategic advantages. The trapezoidal hilltop of almost one hectare is divided into several terraces well suited for settlement activities. These specific topographical characteristics are typical for hilltop settlements in late antique Noricum.

The two excavation campaigns in 2016 and 2017 were carried out by the Institute for Archaeology of the University of Innsbruck in cooperation with the Institute for the Study of Ancient Culture at the Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW-IKAnt).⁸

¹ Recently Kainrath 2011.

² Stadler, Franke, Ortisi 1997; Gostenčnik 2001.

³ Marble slab with funerary inscription and dedication to the nymphs (Glaser 1992, 129–130).

⁴ Funerary inscription mentioning a *duumvir* from Teurnia (Glaser 1992, 144).

⁵ Glaser 1992, 177.

⁶ Knapp 1956, 102.

⁷ Schnorr 1975, 25; 53–55.

⁸ Grabherr, Kainrath 2017; Kainrath, Grabherr, Gugl 2020.



Fig. 2: The Burgbichl hill; view from northeast.
Sl. 2: Vzpetina Burgbichl; pogled s severovzhoda.

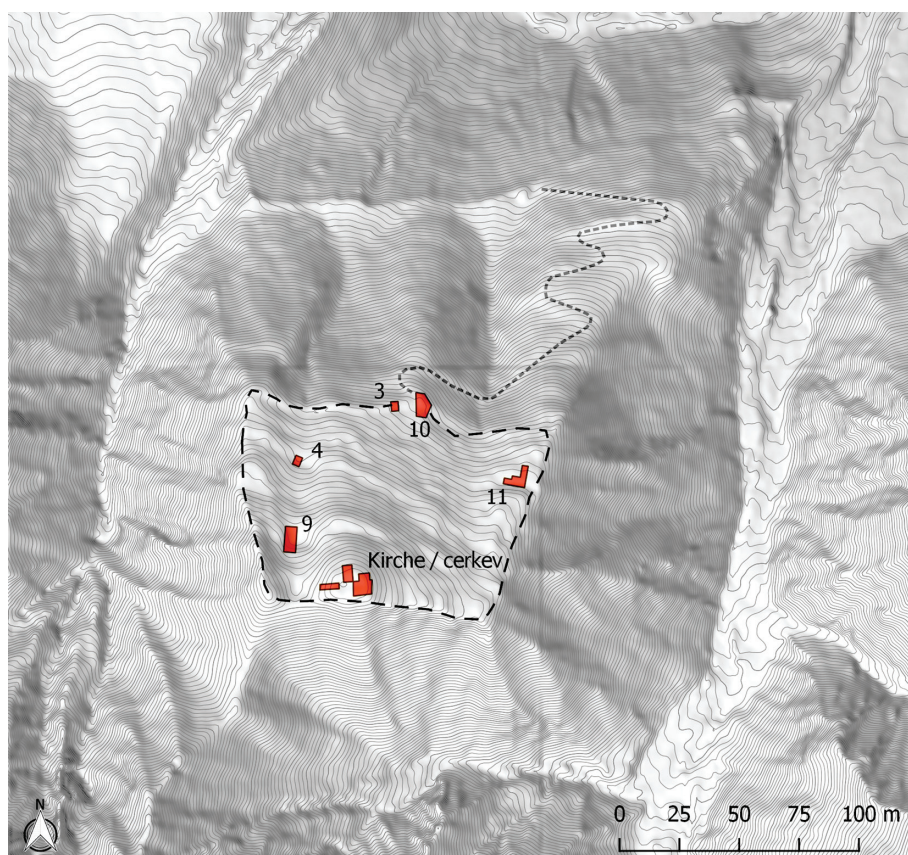


Fig. 3: The path up to the Burgbichl and the extent of the settlement. Terrain model indicating the excavation areas 3, 4 and 9–11.
Sl. 3: Pot na Burgbichl in obseg naselbine. Model reliefa najdišča z območji izkopavanj 3 in 4, 9–11.

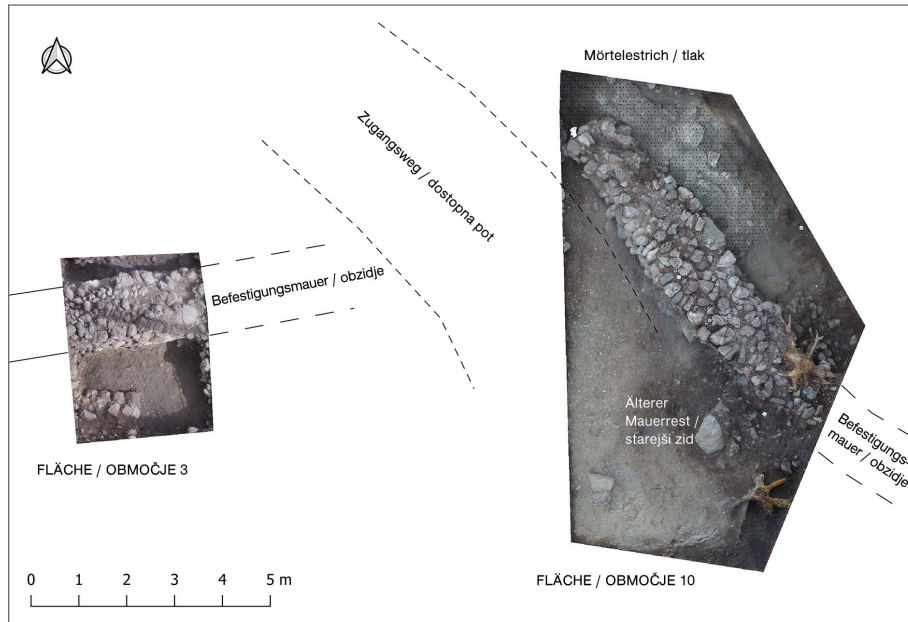


Fig. 4: Burgbichl. Part of the gate and the fortification wall (Area 10).
Sl. 4: Burgbichl. Del vhoda in obrambnega obzidja (območje 10).

THE GATE AND THE FORTIFICATION WALL

On the north side, a path leads to the top of the hill, which is clearly visible in the laser scan terrain model (Fig. 3) and which corresponds to the ancient access. Where this path reaches the terraced area, a gate offers access to the settlement through the fortification wall. A section of this wall running from northwest to southeast was uncovered (Area 10), which is 1.70 m wide and built of limestone, calcareous tufa, and slate of different sizes (Figs. 3: 10; 4). It probably belongs to the gateway, as does a corresponding feature on the Duell (Feistritz an der Drau/Paternion).⁹ The wall is preserved in four stone layers, with a strong northeast inclination and overhang. Underneath this wall, earlier structures also came to light: northeast of it a 0.1 m-thick screed floor of about 6 sqm was uncovered, which proceeds under the enclosure wall. To this phase also belongs a razed wall running from northeast to southwest, thus at right angles to the gate wall.

The enclosure wall leading from west to east can be observed over almost the entire north side of the hill in the terrain. Another section of the 1.4 m-wide wall was uncovered west of the gate (Area 3). It is built of quarry stones of different sizes. The wall rises at a maximum preservation

height of 1.5 m above a 0.2 m-thick level of gravel (Figs. 3: 3; 5). In this layer, several finds were made that provide a chronological indication for the substructure of the wall. For example, a sherd of African Red Slip Ware (D) and an Antoninianus of Gallienus (265/266 A.D., RIC 236, MIR 569a?) belong to a phase anterior to the construction of the massive fortification wall. Just 0.8 m short of the wall, a hearth, bricked in limestone and covered with burnt clay, was detected (Fig. 6).

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

In the 5th/6th centuries, an early Christian church was built on a small plateau on the top of the Burgbichl. It is oriented from west to east where it ends with an apse (Fig. 9).

The church nave is accessed from the west via a threshold formed by two marble blocks. The nave is about 6 metres wide and shows two square side annexes, resulting in a cruciform floor plan. In the north, a narrow flanking room or an open portico was added in a second construction phase¹⁰ (Fig. 7). To the south, a corresponding element may very likely be reconstructed symmetrically. From the northern adjoined element, a staircase leads eastward into the church, the lowest step of which

⁹ Steinklauber 2013, 37.

¹⁰ Perhaps they are colonnaded halls instead of closed side aisles (Glaser 2003, 430–431).



Fig. 5: Burgbichl. The fortification wall (Area 3).
Sl. 5: Burgbichl. Obrambni zid (območje 3).



Fig. 6: Burgbichl. Hearth in the immediate vicinity of the fortification wall (Area 3).
Sl. 6: Burgbichl. Kurišče v neposredni bližini obrambnega obzidja (območje 3).

is formed by a marble plate. Due to the profiling on the quoin and the tap hole with a casting channel filled with lead on the former upper side, the marble block stands out as a reused statue base.

The apse is adjoined to the north by another room with a screed floor. Its easternmost wall points to the northeast, and the rest of the room has eroded because of the steep gradient. Inside the apse, there is the semicircular, freestanding priest's bench (*synthronon*), which was erected

about 0.6 m from the apse wall. The eastern part was destroyed by falling trees, but the remaining sections are preserved in two stone layers. A reliquary lacuna, which measures approx. 1.3×0.8 m (Fig. 8), is situated in the centre of the semicircular bench. It has a rectangular outline with a rounded end in the east and was bricked and mortar-dried in several stone layers.

Remains of the church's screed floor have been discovered in all the rooms uncovered thus far.



Fig. 7: Burgbichl. Later extension to the main room of the church with marking of the construction joint.

Sl. 7: Burgbichl. Poznejši prizidek k cerkveni ladji z označenim gradbenim spojem.



Fig. 8: Burgbichl. Reliquary lacuna.

Sl. 8: Burgbichl. Odprtina za relikviarij.

The interior walls of the church were plastered, as white and red fragments from the lintel found upon the screed show. Wedge and ashlar stones of calcareous tufa indicate arches for windows and/or doors. In the presbytery, fragments of a marble column with a leaf capital were found (Fig. 15), which was perhaps part of the altar enclosure or of the altar table itself.

As was common practice in Late Antiquity, graves were also found in the immediate vicinity of the church. To the west of the marble threshold, an individual was buried (Figs. 9;10), who was found severely disturbed by erosion and collapse debris from the church (Grave 1). This burial in a stretched-out supine position is oriented from south to north and thus following the orientation

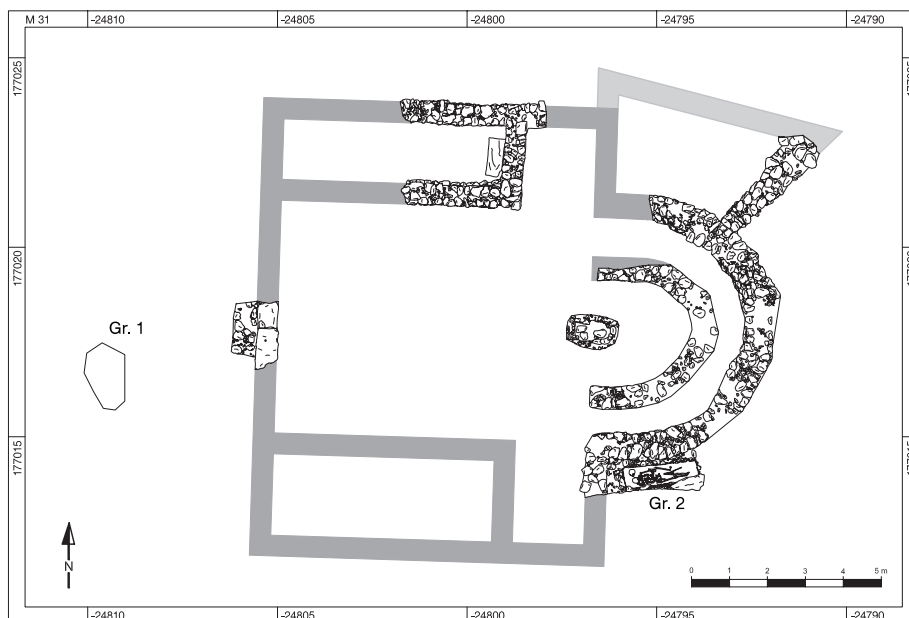


Fig. 9: Burgbichl. Ground plan of the early Christian church.
Sl. 9: Burgbichl. Tloris zgodnjekrščanske cerkve.

of the western church wall. The anthropological analysis¹¹ has shown that this male individual lived to between the ages of 40 and 60 and had both massive wear and tear of the upper jaw and suffered from severe calcifications in the spine, which could possibly indicate a thyroid dysfunction.

South of the church apse, a masonry burial chamber was uncovered (Grave 2). The south wall of the apse rests upon the tomb walls (Figs. 9;11). Considering the fact that this tomb was apparently designed together with the church building, it may be assumed that a prominent person would find his final resting place in this burial chamber. It is obvious to assume the founder of the church or an important clergyman of the parish in it. After removing the broken cover of a large slate slab, eight individuals were found inside the tomb: two newborns, three infants, one adolescent and two adults were buried here, who will be subjected to further anthropological research. The first results of the analysis of the adolescent burial indicate a female person with severe wear and tear of the arms and ankle joints, probably due to heavy physical work.

The question about the founder cannot be clarified at the current state of research. The newly

discovered church represents a relatively small example (approx. 13.7 m long and 12.0 m wide) of early Christian architecture but with remarkably precious marble furnishings. This building material was not only used as *spolia* for the staircase construction in the northern side room, but the entrance threshold was also made of marble. A column from the presbytery as well as further fragments from the debris indicates corresponding high-class furnishings of the altar area.

THE SETTLEMENT SITE

The fact that the Burgbichl is not exclusively a sacral centre¹² but a permanent settlement site has already been demonstrated by initial investigations at several places on the hilltop. In the northeast of the settlement area, near to the gateway, a large building (Building 1) was discovered. It is characterized by a wall, at least 9 m long, and adjoining walls in all directions (Fig. 3: 11). Also two doorways have been excavated. In the middle of the eastern threshold, there is a semi-circular recess of 6 cm in diameter and 3 cm in depth serving as a retainer for a door bolt (Fig. 12). Large

¹¹ We would like to thank Maria Marschler for the research that is being carried out at the Natural History Museum in Vienna.

¹² The sites on Kučar, Vranje, and Tonovcov grad in Slovenia are described as pilgrimage sanctuaries or regional sacral centres (Ciglencečki 2008, 499).



Fig. 10: Burgbichl. Grave 1; west of the marble threshold.
Sl. 10: Burgbichl. Grob 1; zahodno od marmornega praga.



Fig. 11: Burgbichl. Masonry chamber tomb (Grave 2) south of the apse.
Sl. 11: Burgbichl. Zidana grobnica (grob 2) južno od apside.



Fig. 12: Burgbichl. Threshold in Building 1 (Area 11).
Sl. 12: Burgbichl. Prag v stavbi 1 (območje 11).



Fig. 13: Burgbichl. Cistern; view from the north (Area 11).
Sl. 13: Burgbichl. Cisterna (območje 11); pogled s severa.

sections of the screed floor and wall plaster have been preserved. The impressions of the wooden door frame in the plaster of the western doorway of the house are also particularly well preserved. A very small ditch in the screed floor running parallel to the long wall and starting at a right angle directly to the threshold probably served as the foundation of a wooden panel.

Another area (Fig. 3: 4; 14) looked promising in the run-up to the excavations due to numerous pieces of iron slag scattered on the surface. Excavations uncovered a plate of burnt clay, almost square in dimension, which probably suggests a place of work for metalworking at this point.

Due to the lack of a natural spring, at least one cistern was necessary for the water supply of the settlement. Such a cistern was found on a terrace just beneath the church (Fig. 3: 9; 13). Thus far, remains of the western and southern walls, as well as the southwestern corner, have been uncovered. Waterproof brick split mortar still adhered to the cavity walls confirms the identification as a water reservoir. The western wall is approx. 0.7–0.75 m wide and the northern approx. 0.6 m. Regarding the extent of the depression, which already indicated this type of building before the beginning of the excavation work, the water cistern should have been approximately 8 × 8 m in size. The bottom of the basin has not yet been reached. To

the south and a little above of the cistern, a two-phase fireplace made of slate and limestone slabs was embedded in an ash layer.¹³ Due to erosion, all layer connections between the fireplace and the cistern have vanished, and the stratigraphic relations of the findings to each other cannot be determined.

THE FINDS

Within the range of finds, two pieces from a belt buckle stand out as an extraordinary artefact (Fig. 16). It is made of bone, rectangular and shows circular eye decoration on both sides. To date, it is a unique find on hilltop settlements in the Eastern Alps.

Numerous fragments of ceramics and metal objects were recovered, especially from the cistern and the gateway area.¹⁴ Fragments of imported goods such as African Red Slip Ware and an oil lamp, also from North Africa, are occasionally retrieved. LRA-2 amphorae from the eastern Mediterranean and so-called *spatheia* from North Africa also reached the Burgbichl site. As in every late antique

¹³ A C14 dating is still pending.

¹⁴ For the imported finds as well as the most important costume components, cf. Kainrath, Grabherr, Gugl, 2020.



Fig. 14: Burgbichl. Workplace with bricked clay slab (Area 4).
Sl. 14: Burgbichl. Delovno območje z blokom ožgane gline (območje 4).



Fig. 15: Burgbichl. Marble capital found in the presbytery.
Sl. 15: Burgbichl. Marmorni kapitel, najden v prezbitერიju.

context, coarse ceramic pots and bowls, often with characteristic wave decorations, have been found much more frequently. Late antique metal finds include brooches such as the Hrušica type or bow brooches with a triangular head plate and several iron *Stilus* needles.¹⁵ This completes a spectrum typical for this region in Late Antiquity.

Artefacts from the Roman Imperial period are quite common in the context of late antique hilltop settlements in Noricum. In almost all publications

¹⁵ About typology and chronology (Čaval 2013). Iron specimens are rarely compared to bronzes (Modrijan, Milavec 2011, 39).

that contain archaeological objects, earlier finds, especially those made of metal, are present.¹⁶ At the Burgbichl site, there are also fibulae, such as a double knot fibula of the Almgren 236h type and a heavily profiled fibula with chevron decoration of the form Almgren 70/73d as well as ceramics from earlier Roman times.

The interpretation of these earlier finds in connection with activities of the Roman Imperial age will undoubtedly be one of the core issues of the upcoming excavation campaigns at the Burgbichl site.¹⁷ The marble spoliun from the church used as a tread is of particular significance in this respect and raises the question of whether a statue base was dragged from the valley up to the hill or whether a temple already existed on the Burgbichl during the Roman Imperial period. The find assembly from the hilltop also contains a fragment of the handle of a *simpulum*, a specific ladle from the 1st century AD which was often used in ritual acts. The evidence of earlier remains of masonry and mortar screed under the late antique gateway (Fig. 4) as well as of relocated material underneath the fortification wall has special significance in the clarification of the chronology and function of the early structures.

THE BURGICHL SITE IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTHEASTERN ALPINE LATE ANTIQUE HILLTOP SETTLEMENTS

Although the research on the Burgbichl is in the early stages, it is evident that the site can be assessed as a permanent settlement from Late Antiquity with an early Christian church. However, precise data on the chronology are not yet available and, at present, it is also not possible to assign it to a particular type of settlement, as defined by

¹⁶ Examples have been found on the Hemmaberg (Ladstätter 2000), on the Kappel ob Jadersdorf (Felgenhauer-Schmiedt 1993) or on the Kathreinkogel (Baumgartner 2017). Finds from the Roman Imperial period are also common in the find complexes in Slovenia, such as on Tonovcov grad (Modrijan, Milavec 2011, 11–12; Ciglencečki 2016, 13).

¹⁷ The explanation of the metal objects as collection finds for recycling, as assumed for the Hemmaberg, is not suitable for all other sites, since deposits and rare individual finds would have to be available more frequently (Ladstätter 2000, 169). Ciglencečki is considering the same purpose or secondary use because of the heavy wear marks on most of the finds (Ciglencečki 2016, 13).



Fig. 16: Burgbichl. Belt buckle made of bone. Scale = 1:1.
Sl. 16: Burgbichl. Koščena pasna spona. M. = 1:1.

Ciglencečki.¹⁸ In comparison with other fortified settlements, which have been well known¹⁹ since the early 20th century in numerous examples, several quite common findings are recorded. Even before the excavations, wall structures were visible on the surface area. Both the enclosure wall and other particular structures on the hilltop, like the early Christian church, were visible as terrain features before the excavations. However, complete ground plans of buildings cannot be reconstructed in the same way as was apparently successful at several Slovenian sites, where not only the number of

buildings but also their size and shape could be recognized because of the surface relief.²⁰

It is not only the exposed location on hills that are difficult to reach due to steep slopes that is typical for late antique hilltop settlements, but also the walls for defensive purpose on one or more sides of the sites. Some of these fortified hilltops reveal buildings directly adjacent to this wall, such as the Duel at Feistritz²¹ for example (Fig. 1). This hilltop is enclosed and surrounded by a wall, to which numerous houses are attached. When it was discovered, it was considered to have a military purpose and was associated with Byzantine domination shortly before the middle of the 6th century. Also in Slovenia, particular settlements were considered purely military and defensive. The beginning of this thesis started with the site of Korinjski hrib, where Germanic finds were also discovered, which seemed to confirm a military presence.²² In the meantime there are more comparable enclosures with small temporary buildings directly behind the fortification wall (e.g., Ančnikovo gradišče or Gradec near Velika Strmica).²³

Due to the topographical location, the aspect of the control function of fortified hilltop settlements should not be neglected. Sometimes they were also built along important roads or at crossroads. In this respect, the Burgbichl site, in particular, provided a good view over the Roman Drava Valley road, the primary transport connection between Aguntum and Teurnia, and could, therefore, hold an essential function of regional control. Further investigations will clarify whether there were several buildings ('barracks?') adjacent to the fortification wall at the site in Irschen. Respective indications for this are provided by a stove unearthed in area 3 (Fig. 3: 3; 6), indicating a building not far from the fortification wall. For the Burgbichl, it is still too early to determine the total number of buildings and, in particular, their function. In April

²⁰ This applies to the Gradec fortifications at Prapretno, Ajdna, Tonovcov grad, Zidani gaber, Korinjski hrib, Sv. Radegunda, Gračnica, Gradec at Velika Strmica, Rodik and Kučar (Ciglencečki 2008, 491).

²¹ The excavators called these buildings barracks or casemates. The term 'barrack' is also used by Steinklauber, even if she does not think the rooms were used for military purposes because of the lack of specific finds (Steinklauber 2013, 36–43).

²² The military interpretation was not uncontroversial (Bierbrauer 1990, 44–45).

²³ Ciglencečki 2008, 500–501.

¹⁸ Ciglencečki 1987; Ciglencečki 2008, 490–502.

¹⁹ Compositions by Glaser 1997; Glaser 2008; Ciglencečki 2008.

2018, terrestrial laser scanning was performed in the settlement area within the enclosure wall to record terraces appropriate for settling activities.

The eastern part of the Burgbichl is structured into several terraces, which were probably man-made for residential buildings. This phenomenon also represents a significant feature of some sites in Slovenia,²⁴ even though buildings, either in stone or in wood,²⁵ were not discovered everywhere. The extension of the Burgbichl settlement can be clearly outlined by the topography of the hilltop on an area of only approx. 1 ha. However, it is still completely unclear how dense the building development was. Ciglencečki distinguishes between smaller settlements with dense, regular development, such as on Tonovcov grad,²⁶ and larger settlements with only partially developed areas and open spaces for the temporary reception of the population, for which he mainly cites the well-studied Rifnik as an example.²⁷

The cistern in Area 9 is an indicator for a permanent settlement activity on the Burgbichl. The remarkable size of the water basin of over 60 sqm, in which water could be gathered for many inhabitants, supports this presumption. The depth of the basin is still unknown, but at the current state of the excavation a depth range of at least 2 m is confirmed. Typically for the location of the cistern, a place close to large buildings, mostly churches, which could drain a lot of water with their large roofs, was chosen. The Irschen cistern is located right beneath the church, from where water could efficiently be conducted into the basin. Comparable facilities are well known from sites such as Kathreinkogel,²⁸ Hemmaberg,²⁹ Ajdovski Gradec³⁰ or Rifnik.³¹

Traces of handicraft activities, which may be expected in a permanently populated place, came to light in two places. The workplace southwest of

the excavated section of the fortification wall (Figs. 3: 4; 14) including pieces of iron slag is evidence for iron processing. The fireplace south of the cistern probably also indicates craftsmanship.³²

One or even more churches function as centres of cultic activities in late antique settlements. On Burgbichl, a small church stood on the highest point (Fig. 9). Until now, it is the best-investigated building. Only the existence of a narthex in the entrance area of the church is not yet confirmed. Two different temporal phases can be distinguished. The church of the first phase was built in a cruciform ground plan with the transverse annexes and ends in an apse. This scheme is thus one that derives from the Ambrosian building programme of the late 4th and 5th centuries. It became the prototype in the Alpine region and Northern Italy in the 5th and 6th centuries.³³ Above all, in western Noricum this layout seems to appear frequently: the churches in Oberlienz,³⁴ in Lavant under the parish church,³⁵ on the Hoischhügel,³⁶ on the Duel³⁷ and also the first phase of the so-called Bischofskirche in Teurnia³⁸ show the same outline and suggest a common ground plan. This may be due to a uniform construction office. All these churches also have in common a so-called sacristy attached north or south of the apse.³⁹

Even though the church on the Burgbichl cannot be dated by archaeological artefacts, due to the absence of finds inside the church ruins, comparable buildings indicate a dating in the 5th and 6th centuries. This period is defined by Ciglencečki as the third and most diverse phase of the late antique hilltop settlements, when many of them were built or enlarged.⁴⁰ Neither the enclosure wall, the gateway, nor the well-preserved building on the eastern terrace can be dated precisely at the current state of the excavations, but the finds from these areas also point to the 5th and 6th centuries. The earlier phases in the north of the settlement are particularly interesting. The fortification wall

²⁴ Ciglencečki 2008, 492: wooden buildings on the Veliki vrh and the Vipota.

²⁵ For evidence on the Hemmaberg cf. Glaser 2008, 617.

²⁶ He also assigns the settlements on the Ulrichsberg and the Kappele to this category.

²⁷ Ciglencečki 2008, 498. In Austria he also mentions the Kathreinkogel and the Tscheltschnigkogel.

²⁸ Two cisterns were excavated here (Glaser 1997, 124).

²⁹ Two cisterns are located in the immediate vicinity of churches (Glaser 1991, 47, 72).

³⁰ A cistern with a capacity of 100,000 litres and with remains of a wooden construction was discovered here (Glaser 1997, 77 Fig. 29).

³¹ Glaser 1997, 71; Bolta 1981, 9.

³² A similar kiln is recorded in Lavant (Kainrath 2011, 66, Fig. 66).

³³ Bierbrauer 2015, 139.

³⁴ Glaser 2003, 146–147.

³⁵ Winkler 1996.

³⁶ Glaser 1997, 88–89; Glaser 2003, 432, Fig. 15.

³⁷ Glaser 2003, 429, Fig. 13.

³⁸ Glaser 2003, 415–416.

³⁹ However, the state of preservation of the churches and the illustrated floor plans, which have often been heavily reconstructed, must be taken into account.

⁴⁰ Ciglencečki 2008, 496.

was built above relocated material, which contains finds from the 3rd and 4th centuries, and an anterior building has been removed for the construction of the gateway. This is documented by the foundation of a wall with the corresponding screed floor (Fig. 4). These indications suggest that the area was already in use before the 5th and 6th centuries, when both the fortification wall including the gateway and the early Christian church of the settlement were probably erected.

The general dating of late antique settlements may be classified as at Tonovcov grad (phases LA 1 and LA 2),⁴¹ but unless a detailed chronology on the basis of archaeological finds can be established, such classifications must remain hypothetical. The most obvious reasons for this are the lack of stratigraphy in the hilltop settlements, the uniformity of the coarse pottery, which constitutes the main part of the ceramic finds in each of these settlements, and the few pieces of imported pottery, which generally can be dated more precisely. Finally, the fading of the regular coinage supply prevents a detailed chronological classification for the last centuries of the Roman presence in Noricum. Despite these difficulties,

⁴¹ LA 1: 2nd half 4th to mid-5th century and LA 2: late 5th to early 7th century (Modrijan, Milavec 2011, 12–13).

three chronological phases have been defined for the Slovenian sites,⁴² the first of which began in the 270s. The second phase, when most of the settlements were established, is delimited from the second half of the 4th to the first half of the 5th century and thus corresponds to the phase LA 1 on the Tonovcov grad site. The second half of the 5th century and the entire 6th century form the last division of Late Antiquity, which covers a longer period than phase LA 1. These 250 years (LA1 and LA2), during which people settled on steep hills in the southeastern part of the Alps, are also the main period of use of the Burgbichl site at Irschen.

This newly discovered site in the upper Drava Valley, therefore, still raises many questions, but at the same time offers great potential for future research. After the successful research activities in Slovenia during the last decades, it is very encouraging that new research is now starting in a late antique site in the Austrian part of Noricum Mediterraneum, in a region with a long tradition of research in this field.

⁴² First stated by Ciglencečki in 1987 and adapted several times to current results (Ciglencečki 1987, 109–120; Ciglencečki 2008, 486–490).

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Burgbichl pri Irschnu na avstrijskem Koroškem. Poznoantično višinsko utrjeno naselje z zgodnjekrščansko cerkvijo

Povzetek

Uvod

Število rimskih najdišč v Dravski dolini, ki predstavlja najpomembnejšo os v smeri vzhod-zahod na Zgornjem Koroškem (Oberkärnten), je v primerjavi z ostalimi pokrajinami Norika precej majhno. Dolgo časa sta bila med klavdijskim municipijem Aguntum in Teurnijo znana le poznoantična naselbina z dvema cerkvama na Kirchbichlu nad Lavantom¹ in rimsko najdišče na tako imenovanem Schröttelhoferjevem polju (Schröttelhofer Feld) v Oberdrauburgu² (*sl. 1*). V cerkvene zidove v Ber-

gu³ in Greifenburgu⁴ je v zidanih nekaj fragmentov posvetilnih ali nagrobnih spomenikov neznanega izvora. Najdba nekaj solidov cesarja Justinijana I. na Pittersbergu⁵ južno od Gailbergsattla, prehoda v Ziljsko dolino (Gailtall), verjetno kaže na obstoj poznoantične naselbine na tej lokaciji. Nedavno pa je v tem delu Norika zelo zanimivo postalo novo najdišče.

Na občinskem območju kraja Irschen v okrožju Špital (Spitall an der Drau) se na južnem bregu

³ Marmorna plošča z nagrobnim napisom in posvetilo nimfam. Glaser 1992, 129–130.

⁴ Nagrobni napis, omenjen je *duumvir* iz Teurnije. Glaser 1992, 144.

⁵ Glaser 1992, 177.

¹ Nedavno Kainrath 2011.

² Stadler, Franke, Ortisi 1997; Gostenčnik 2001.

Drave (Drau) dviga tako imenovani Burgbichl. Čeprav je bilo naselje omenjeno v zborniku o srednjeveških gradovih na Koroškem leta 1956⁶ in v občinski kroniki iz leta 1975,⁷ kjer je bilo opredeljeno kot utrdba iz 8. in 11./12. st., pred zadnjimi raziskavami ni bilo zanimivo. Glede na lego je to nekoliko nenavadno, saj gre za izstopajočo vzpetino, ki se dviga pribl. 170 m nad dnom doline. Na zahodu, jugu in vzhodu jo obdajajo pečine, dostop na vrh je mogoč samo po severnem pobočju, preostala so strma in neprehodna, tako da oblikovanost vzpetine omogoča strateške prednosti. Trapezoidni vrh hriba, ki obsega skoraj hektar, je razdeljen na več teras, primernih za poselitev. Te specifične topografske značilnosti so tipične za višinska naselja pozne antike.

V letih 2016 in 2017 je Inštitut za arheologijo Univerze v Innsbrucku (Institut für Archäologien der Universität Innsbruck) v sodelovanju z Inštitutom za antično zgodovino umetnosti na Avstrijski akademiji znanosti (Institut für Kulturgeschichte der Antike der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften) na hribu izvedel dve izkopavalni akciji.⁸

Vhod in obrambno obzidje

Pot, ki po severni strani vodi na vrh hriba in je jasno vidna tudi na lasersko skeniranem modelu reliefa (sl. 3), ustreza tudi antičnemu dostopu. Na mestu, kjer pot doseže terasiran predel, so vrata, ki omogočajo dostop skozi obzidje. Raziskan je bil odsek tega obzidja, ki poteka od severozahoda do jugovzhoda (območje 10). Zid je bil tu širok 1,7 m in zgrajen iz apnenca, apnenčastega lehnjaka in skrilavca različnih velikosti (sl. 3: 10; sl. 4). Verjetno spada k vhodu, kot pri primerljivem objektu na Duelu.⁹ Zid je ohranjen v štirih vrstah kamnov in močno nagnjen proti severovzhodu. Pod tem zidom so se pojavile tudi starejše strukture: severovzhodno je bil odkrit 10 cm debel estrih, površine 6 m², ki poteka pod obodnim zidom. V to fazo spada porušen zid, ki poteka od severovzhoda do jugozahoda in je torej pravokoten na steno z vrati.

Obodni zid, ki vodi od zahoda proti vzhodu, je v terenu viden na skoraj celotni severni strani

hriba. Drugi del zidu, širok 1,4 m, je bil odkrit zahodno od vrat (območje 3). Zgrajen je iz kamnov različnih velikosti. Zid se dviguje do 1,5 m nad 0,2 m debelo gramozno plast (sl. 3: 3; 5). V njej je bilo odkritih več predmetov, ki časovno opredeljujejo strukture pod zidom. Tako npr. odlomek afriške sigilate D in novec (antoninijan cesarja Gallena) pripadata fazi pred gradnjo masivnega obrambnega zidu. Le 0,6 m od zidu je bilo odkrito ognjišče, obdano z apnenčevimi kamni in prekrito z ožgano ilovico (sl. 6).

Zgodnjekrščanska cerkev

V 5./6. st. je bila na majhnem platoju na vrhu Burgbichla zgrajena zgodnjekrščanska cerkev. Usmerjena je od zahoda proti vzhodu, kjer se konča z apsido (sl. 3; 9).

Dostop v cerkveno ladjo je z zahoda, čez prag, ki ga sestavlja marmorna bloka. Ladja je široka pribl. 6 m in ima dve kvadratni stranski razširitvi, zaradi česar je njen tloris križne oblike. V drugi gradbeni fazi je bil na severu dodan ozek stranski prostor ali odprt portik¹⁰ (sl. 7). Severnemu podobni stranski prostor verjetno lahko rekonstruiramo tudi na južni strani. Iz severnega dodanega prostora proti vzhodu v cerkev vodijo stopnice, katerih najnižjo stopnjo predstavlja marmornat blok. Ta ima na zgornji strani profilirano odprtino in luknjo z ulivnim kanalom, zapolnjenim s svincem, zato ga interpretiramo kot ponovno uporabljen podstavek kipa. Apsidi je na severni strani dodan še en prostor z estrihom. Njegova vzhodna stena je usmerjena proti severovzhodu, preostali del prostora je bil uničen zaradi strmega pobočja. V apsidi je polkrožna prostostoječa duhovniška klop (*synthronon*), postavljena okrog 0,6 m od zidu apsidi. Njen vzhodni del so uničila podrtja drevesa, preostali del je ohranjen v dveh vrstah kamnov. V sredini med stranicami polkrožne klopi je odprtina za relikviarij, velika pribl. 130 × 80 cm (sl. 8). Odprtina je pravokotne oblike z zaobljenim koncem na vzhodu, obložena pa je bila z več vrstami kamnov, povezanih z malto.

Ostanki estriha so bili najdeni v vseh do sedaj raziskanih prostorih. Notranje stranice cerkvenih zidov so bile ometane, kar kažejo rdeči in beli kosi ometa, najdeni nad estrihom. Klinasti in kvadrasti klesani kamni iz apnenčastega lehnjaka predstavljajo

⁶ Knapp 1956, 102.

⁷ Schnorr 1975, 25, 53–55.

⁸ Grabherr, Kainrath 2017; Kainrath, Grabherr, Gugl 2020.

⁹ Steinklauber 2013, 37.

¹⁰ Morda gre za stebriščne dvorane namesto zaprtih stranskih prehodov (Glaser 2003, 430–431).

dele lokov oken in/ali vrat. V prezbitერიju so bili najdeni fragmenti marmornega stebra z listnim kapitelom (sl. 15), ki je bil morda del oltarne pregrade ali oltarne mize.

Kot je pogosta praksa v pozni antiki, so bili v neposredni bližini cerkve najdeni grobovi. Zahodno od marmornega praga je bil odkrit pokop (sl. 9;10), ki sta ga močno uničili erozija in ruševina cerkve (grob 1). Ta pokop v iztegnjenem položaju je usmerjen v smeri sever-jug in tako sledi orientaciji zahodnega cerkvenega zidu. Antropološka analiza¹¹ je pokazala, da je bil moški star od 40 do 60 let in da je imel hudo obrabo zgornje čeljusti, trpel pa je tudi zaradi močne kalcifikacije v hrbtnici, kar bi lahko kazalo na disfunkcijo ščitnice. Južno od cerkvene apside je bila odkrita zidana grobna komora (grob 2). Južni zid apside stoji na stenah grobnice (sl. 9;11). Ker je bila grobnica očitno zasnovana skupaj s cerkvijo, lahko domnevamo, da je v njej našla zadnje počivališče pomembna oseba. Očitno gre za ustanovitelja cerkve ali pomembnega duhovnika. Po odstranitvi razbitega pokrova, narejenega iz velikega kosa skrilavca, je bilo v grobnici najdenih osem oseb: dva novorojenčka, trije dojenčki, en mladostnik in dve odrasli oseb. Vsi pokopi bodo predmet nadaljnjih antropoloških raziskav. Prvi rezultati analize pokopa mladostnika kažejo na žensko osebo s hudo obrabo rok in sklepov gležnjev, kar je verjetno rezultat težkega fizičnega dela.

Vprašanja o ustanovitelju ob trenutnem stanju raziskav ni mogoče razjasniti. Novoodkrita cerkev je razmeroma majhen (približno 13,7 m dolga in 12 m široka) primer zgodnjekrščanske arhitekture, vendar z izredno dragoceno marmorno opremo. Ta gradbeni material se ni uporabljal samo kot spolija za konstrukcijo stopnišča v severnem stranskem prostoru, ampak je bil iz marmorja tudi vhodni prag. Steber iz prezbitერიja in ostali fragmenti iz ruševine kažejo na ustrezno visoko kakovost opreme oltarnega prostora.

Naselje

To, da Burgbichl ni izključno sakralno središče,¹² ampak stalno naselje, je bilo dokazano že z za-

¹¹ Radi bi se zahvalili Marii Marschler za raziskavo, ki je bila izvedena v Naravoslovno-zgodovinskem muzeju na Dunaju (Naturhistorisches Museum Wien).

¹² Naselja na Kučarju, Vranju in Tonovcovem gradu so opredeljena kot romarska svetišča ali regionalni sakralni centri (Ciglenečki 2008, 499).

četnimi raziskavami na več mestih na vrhu hriba. Na severovzhodnem delu naselja, v bližini vhoda, je bila odkrita velika stavba (stavba 1). Na njen najdaljši zid, ki je dolg najmanj 9 m, se v vseh smereh navezujejo drugi zidovi (sl. 3: 11). Odkritih je bilo tudi dvoje vrat. Na sredini vzhodnega praga je 3 cm globoka polkrožna vdolbina premera 6 cm, ki služi za tečaj (sl. 12). Ohranjeni so bili veliki deli estrihov in stenskih ometov. Posebno dobro ohranjen je tudi odtis lesenega okvirja vrat v ometu zahodnih hišnih vrat. Zelo majhna vdolbina v tleh estriha, ki poteka vzporedno z dolgim zidom in se začne pod pravim kotom neposredno ob pragu, je verjetno služila kot temelj lesene plošče.

Drugo območje (sl. 3: 4; 14) je bilo v času pred izkopavanjem videti obetavno zaradi številnih kosov železne žindre, raztresenih po površini. Izkopavanja so odkrila skoraj kvadratno ploščo žgane gline, ki verjetno nakazuje, da gre za območje za predelavo kovin.

Ker na hribu ni bilo naravnega izvira, je bila za oskrbo z vodo v naselju potrebna vsaj ena cisterna. Takšna cisterna je bila najdena na terasi tik pod cerkvijo (sl. 3: 9; 13). Do sedaj so bili odkriti ostanki zahodnega in severnega zidu ter severozahodni vogal. Vodoodporna malta, mešana s koščki opeke, s katero so še vedno premazani zidovi, potrjuje interpretacijo, da gre pri tem objektu za vodni zbiralnik. Zahodni zid je širok 0,7–0,75 m, severni pa pribl. 0,6 m. Glede na obseg poglobitve v terenu, ki je že pred začetkom izkopavanj nakazovala, da gre za tovrsten objekt, bi morala biti cisterna velika približno 8 × 8 m. Njeno dno še ni bilo doseženo. Na jugu, malo nad cisterno, je bilo v sloju pepela odkrito dvofazno ognjišče, zgrajeno iz skrilavca in apnenčastih plošč.¹³ Zaradi erozije so vse plasti med ognjiščem in cisterno izginile, zato stratigrafskih odnosov med njima ni bilo mogoče določiti.

Najdbe

Med najdbami izstopata kosa pasne spone (sl. 16). Spona je izdelana iz kosti, pravokotne oblike in na obeh straneh okrašena s krožci s piko. Do danes je to edinstvena oblika v naseljih v vzhodnih Alpah.

Odkriti so bili številni fragmenti keramike in kovinskih predmetov, predvsem iz cisterne in z

¹³ Datacija C14 je še vedno v pripravi.

vhodnega območja.¹⁴ Fragmenti uvoženih predmetov, kot so afriška sigilata in oljenke iz severne Afrike, so zastopani sporadično. Na Burgbichl so prispele tudi amfore LRA2, ki izvirajo iz vzhodnega Sredozemlja, in tako imenovani spatejoni iz severne Afrike. Mnogo pogostejši so bili – kot v vseh poznoantičnih kontekstih – lonci in sklede, izdelani iz grobe keramike in včasih okrašeni z značilno valovnico. Poznoantične kovinske najdbe vključujejo npr. sponke tipa Hrušica, ločne sponke s trikotno glavo in več železnih igel (stilusi).¹⁵ To je tipičen spekter najdb, značilen za to regijo v pozni antiki.

V kontekstih poznoantičnih višinskih naselij v Noriku se pogosto pojavljajo predmeti iz zgodnjerskega obdobja. Tovrstne – zlasti kovinske – najdbe so prisotne v skoraj vseh publikacijah z arheološkimi predmeti.¹⁶ Na najdišču Burgbichl so pojavljajo fibule, kot sta tipa Almgren 236h in močno profilirana in okrašena fibula tipa Almgren 70/73d, pa tudi keramika iz zgodnjerskega obdobja.

Razlaga teh starejših najdb v povezavi z dejavnostmi v rimskem cesarskem obdobju bo zagotovo eno od osrednjih vprašanj prihodnjih raziskovalnih akcij na Burgbichlu.¹⁷ Poseben pomen pri tem ima marmorna spolija iz cerkve, uporabljena kot stopnica, saj se postavlja vprašanje, ali so podstavek za kip privlekli na hrib iz doline ali pa je v času rimskega cesarskega obdobja na Burgbichlu obstajal npr. tempelj. Med najdbami iz naselbine je tudi del ročaja simpuluma, posebnega lončka iz 1. st. n. št., ki so ga uporabljali predvsem pri ritualih. Poseben pomen pri pojasnjevanju kronologije in funkcije zgodnjih struktur imajo tudi ostanki starejših zidov in maltnih estrihov pod poznoantičnim vhodom (*sl.* 4) ter premešane plasti pod obzidjem.

¹⁴ Za uvožene najdbe in pomembnejše dele noše glej Kainrath, Grabherr, Gugl 2020.

¹⁵ O tipologiji in kronologiji: Čaval 2013. Železni primeri so redkejši v primerjavi z bronastimi: Modrijan, Milavec 2011, 39.

¹⁶ Primeri so bili najdeni na Hemmabergu (Ladstätter 2000); na najdišču Kappel pri Jadersdorfu (Felgenhauer-Schmiedt 1993); na Kathreinkoglu (Baumgartner 2017). Najdbe iz rimskega cesarskega obdobja so pogoste tudi v kompleksih v Sloveniji, kot npr. na Tonovcovem gradu (Modrijan, Milavec 2011, 11–12; Ciglencečki 2016, 13).

¹⁷ Razlaga kovinskih najdb kot zbirke predmetov, namenjenih recikliranju, kot se domneva za najdbe na Hemmabergu, ni primerna za ostala najdišča, ker bi depoziti in redke posamične najdbe morale biti pogostejše (Ladstätter 2000, 169). Ciglencečki domneva podoben namen oz. sekundarno uporabo zaradi močnih sledov uporabe na večini teh najdb (Ciglencečki 2016, 13).

Burgbichl v kontekstu jugovzhodnoalpske poznoantične poselitve

Čeprav so raziskave na Burgbichlu šele v zgodnji fazi, je očitno, da lahko najdišče opredelimo kot stalno poseljeno poznoantično naselbino z zgodnjekrščansko cerkvijo. Po drugi strani natančni podatki o kronologiji še niso na voljo in ga zato trenutno ni mogoče dodeliti določeni vrsti naselja, kot jih je definiral S. Ciglencečki.¹⁸ V primerjavi s številnimi drugimi utrjenimi naselji, ki so znana že od začetka 20. stoletja,¹⁹ lahko navedemo več splošnih ugotovitev. Že pred izkopavanjem so bile na površini vidne zidane strukture. Obzidje in drugi objekti na vrhu hriba, kot je zgodnjekrščanska cerkev, so bili pred izkopavanji vidni v reliefu. Popolnih tlorisov zgradb ni bilo mogoče rekonstruirati enako, kot je bil to primer na več slovenskih lokacijah, kjer je zaradi ugodnih razmer mogoče v reliefu prepoznati ne le števila stavb, temveč tudi njihovo velikost in obliko.²⁰

Za poznoantična višinska naselja ni značilna le izpostavljena lokacija na vrhu hriba, ki je bil težko dostopen zaradi strmih pobočij, ampak tudi obrambno obzidje na eni ali več straneh najdišča. Nekaj teh naselij ima stavbe prislonjene neposredno na obzidje, npr. Duel pri Bistrici (*sl.* 1).²¹ To naselje je obdajalo obzidje, na katerega so bile dodane številne hiše. Ob odkritju so mu pripisali vojaško namembnost v povezavi z bizantinsko dominacijo malo pred sredino 6. st. Tudi v Sloveniji je nekaterim naselbinam pripisana izključno vojaška in obrambna funkcija. Ta teza se je pojavila v zvezi s Korinjskim hribom, kjer so bile odkrite tudi germanske najdbe, za katere se je zdelo, da potrjujejo vojaško prisotnost.²² Medtem je bilo odkritih še več utrjenih naselbin z manjšimi začasnimi stavbami neposredno ob obrambnem

¹⁸ Ciglencečki 1987; Ciglencečki 2008, 490–502.

¹⁹ Zbrano pri Glaser 1997; Glaser 2008; Ciglencečki 2008.

²⁰ To velja za utrdbe Gradec pri Prapretnem, Ajdna, Tonovcov grad, Zidani gaber, Korinjski hrib, Sv. Radegunda, Gračnica, Gradec pri Veliki Strmici, Rodik in Kučar (Ciglencečki 2008, 491).

²¹ Izkopavalci so stavbe imenovali vojaške barake ali kazemate. Izraz vojaška baraka uporablja tudi U. Steinklauber, čeprav zaradi pomanjkanja specifičnih najdb misli, da niso bile uporabljane v vojaške namene (Steinklauber 2013, 36–43).

²² Vojaška razlaga ni bila nesporna (Bierbrauer 1990, 44–45).

obzidju (npr. Ančnikovo gradišče in Gradec pri Veliki Strmici).²³

Aspekta kontrolne funkcije višinskih naselbin zaradi njihovega topografskega položaja ne moremo zanikati. Včasih so bile zgrajene ob pomembnih poteh in križiščih. V tem pogledu je Burgbichl zagotavljal dober razgled na rimsko cesti po Dravski dolini, ki je bila glavna prometna povezava med Aguntom in Teurnijo, zato je gotovo imel pomembno vlogo v regionalnem nadzoru. Nadaljnje raziskave bodo razjasnile, ali so bile tudi na Burgbichlu stavbe (vojaške barake?) dodane neposredno k obrambnemu obzidju. Delno potrditev tega pomeni peč, odkrita v območju 3 (*sl.* 3: 3; 6), ki kaže na obstoj stavbe nedaleč od obrambnega obzidja. Za Burgbichl je še vedno preskok, da bi določili skupno število stavb in posebej njihovo funkcijo. Avgusta leta 2016 je bilo na območju naselbine znotraj obzidja izvedeno lasersko skeniranje z namenom dokumentiranja teras, primernih za poselitev.

Vzhodni del Burgbichla je razdeljen na več teras, ki so bile verjetno namenjene stanovanjskim stavbam. Ta pojav je značilnost tudi nekaterih lokacij v Sloveniji,²⁴ čeprav stavbe, kamnite ali lesene,²⁵ niso bile odkrite na vseh. Obseg naselja na Burgbichlu je jasno razviden iz oblikovanosti vrha hriba na površini le pribl. enega hektarja. Vendar pa je še vedno popolnoma nejasno, kakšen je bil njegov gradbeni razvoj. Ciglenečki razlikuje med manjšimi naselji s popolnim, pravilnim tlorisom, kot je Tonovcov grad,²⁶ in večjimi naselji s samo delno pozidanimi območji in odprtimi prostori za začasni sprejem prebivalstva, za kar v glavnem navaja dobro preučeni Rifnik.²⁷

Cisterna v območju 9 dokazuje stalno naselbinsko aktivnost na Burgbichlu. To domnevo podpira izjemna velikost vodnega zbiralnika (po površini meri več kot 60 m²), v katerem so lahko hranili vodo za veliko prebivalcev. Globina zbiralnika še ni znana, glede na sedanje stanje raziskav je bila vsaj 2 m. Za lokacijo cisterne je bilo običajno izbrano mesto v bližini velikih zgradb, večinoma cerkva, ki s svojimi velikimi strehami lahko zagotovijo veliko vode. Cisterna na Burgbichlu stoji tik pod cerkvijo, od koder bi bilo vodo zlahka speljati v zbiralnik (*sl.* 3:11; 13). Primerljivi objekti so znani

²³ Ciglenečki 2008, 500–501.

²⁴ Ciglenečki 2008, 492: lesene stavbe na Velikem vrhu in Vipoti.

²⁵ Za Hemmaberg cf. Glaser 2008, 617.

²⁶ V to skupino uvršča tudi višinski naselbini Ulrichsberg in Kappele.

²⁷ Ciglenečki 2008, 498. V Avstriji omenja Kathreinkogel in Tscheltschnigkogel.

z najdišč Kathreinkogel,²⁸ Hemmaberg,²⁹ Ajdovski gradec³⁰ ali Rifnik.³¹

Sledovi obrtniških dejavnosti, ki jih je mogoče pričakovati na stalno naseljenem prostoru, so bili odkriti na dveh mestih. Delovni prostor jugozahodno od izkopanega odseka obzidja (*sl.* 3: 4; 14), vključno s koščki železne žindre, je dokaz za obdelavo železa. Tudi ognjišče južno od cisterne verjetno kaže na obrtniške dejavnosti.³²

V poznoantičnih naseljih je kot religiozni center delovala ena ali celo več cerkva. Na Burgbichlu je majhna cerkev postavljena na najvišji točki (*sl.* 3; 7). To je do zdaj najbolj raziskana stavba. Potrjen ni samo obstoj nartekse na vhodnem delu cerkve, kjer je mogoče ločiti dve časovni fazi. Cerkev prve faze je bila zgrajena v obliki križa s prečnimi priključki in zaključkom v obliki apside. To je shema, ki se je razvila iz Ambrozijevega gradbenega programa ob koncu 4. in v 5. stoletju. V 5. in 6. st. je postala prototip cerkva na območju Alp in v severni Italiji. Zdi se, da se ta tloris najpogosteje pojavlja v zahodnem delu Norika: cerkev v Oberlienzu,³³ v Lavantu pod župno cerkvijo,³⁴ na Hoischuglu,³⁵ na Duelu³⁶ in tudi prva faza tako imenovane škofovske cerkve v Teurniji³⁷ kažejo enak tloris in s tem na skupen načrt. Mogoče je to posledica enotnega gradbenega urada. Skupna vsem tem cerkvam je tudi tako imenovana zakristija, dodana severno ali južno od apside.³⁸

Čeprav cerkev na Burgbichlu zaradi pomanjkanja najdb v ruševinskih plasteh ne more biti datirana na podlagi arheoloških predmetov, primerljive stavbe kažejo na datacijo v 5. in 6. st. To obdobje opredeljuje Ciglenečki kot tretjo in najbolj raznoliko fazo, ko je bilo veliko poznoantičnih višinskih naselbin zgrajenih ali povečanih.³⁹ Glede na današnje stanje raziskav ni mogoče natančno datirati niti obodnega zidu, niti vhoda, niti dobro ohranjene zgradbe na vzhodni

²⁸ Izkopani sta bili dve cisterni (Glaser 1997, 124).

²⁹ Dve cisterni sta v neposredni bližini cerkva (Glaser 1991, 47, 72).

³⁰ Odkrita je bila cisterna s prostornino 100 000 litrov, v kateri so bili ohranjeni ostanki lesene konstrukcije (Glaser 1997, 77 Fig. 29).

³¹ Glaser 1997, 71; Bolta 1981, 9.

³² Podobna peč je bila dokumentirana na Lavantu (Kainrath 2011, 66, Fig. 66).

³³ Glaser 2003, 146–147.

³⁴ Winkler 1996.

³⁵ Glaser 1997, 88–89; Glaser 2003, 432, Fig. 15.

³⁶ Glaser 2003, 429, Fig. 13.

³⁷ Glaser 2003, 415–416.

³⁸ Upoštevati pa je treba tudi stanje ohranjenosti cerkva in ponazorjenih tlorisov, ki so marsikdaj močno rekonstruirani.

³⁹ Ciglenečki 2008, 496.

terasi, vendar pa najdbe s teh območij prav tako kažejo na 5. in 6. st. Posebno zanimive so zgodnejše faze na severu naselbine. Obrambno obzidje je bilo zgrajeno nad premešanim materialom, ki vsebuje najdbe iz 3. in 4. st., za gradnjo vhoda pa je bila odstranjena starejša stavba. To dokazuje temelj zidu z ustreznim podom – premazom estriha (*sl.* 4) in kaže, da je bilo to območje v uporabi že pred 5. in 6. st., ko sta bila verjetno postavljena obrambni zid z vhodom in zgodnjekrščanska cerkev.

Okvirno lahko datacijo poznoantične poselitve opredelimo podobno kot na Tonovcovem gradu (fazi LRA 1 in LRA 2),⁴⁰ toda brez detajlne kronologije, ki bi temeljila na arheološkem gradivu, ostajajo take klasifikacije hipotetične. Najočitnejši razlog za to je pomanjkanje stratigrafije na višinskih naselbinah, uniformnost grobe keramike, ki pomeni v vseh naselbinah glavni del keramičnih najdb, in skromna zastopanost uvožene keramike, ki bi jo bilo mogoče natančneje datirati. In ne nazadnje, tudi upad rednega novčnega obtoka onemogoča natančnejšo kronološko razdelitev zadnjih stoletij rimske navzočnosti v Noriku. Kljub tem težavam je bilo na slovenskih najdiščih mogoče definirati tri kronološke stopnje.⁴¹ Prva se začne v sedemdesetih letih 3. st., druga je postavljena med drugo polovico 4. in drugo polovico 5. st., ko je bila ustanovljena večina naselbin, ustreza pa fazi LA 1 na Tonovcovem gradu. Zadnje obdobje pozne antike obsega čas druge polovice 5. in celotno 6. stoletje. Teh 250 let (LA 1 in LA 2), v katerih so se ljudje naselili na strmih hribih v jugovzhodnem delu Alp, pomeni tudi glavno obdobje poseljenosti Burgbichla pri Irschnu.

Novoodkrito najdišče v zgornji Dravski dolini tako še vedno postavlja veliko vprašanj, hkrati pa ponuja velik potencial za prihodnje raziskave. Po uspešnih raziskovalnih aktivnostih v Sloveniji je zelo spodbudno, da so se začele nove raziskave poznoantičnega najdišča tudi v avstrijskem delu mediteranskega Norika, na območju z dolgo raziskovalno tradicijo na tem področju.

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⁴⁰ LA 1: druga polovica 4. in prva polovica 5. st. LA 2: od poznega 5. do zgodnjega 7. st. (Modrijan, Milavec 2011, 12–13).

⁴¹ Prvič definirano pri Ciglenečki leta 1987 in nekajkrat dopolnjeno glede na nove raziskave (Ciglenečki 1987, 109–120; Ciglenečki 2008, 486–490).