

# RODIK-AJDOVŠČINA

B. SLAPŠAK

*Filozofska fakulteta, Ljubljana*

Triangulation point 804 m above the village of Rodik near Kozina, the highest point on the western edge of Brkini, above the stretch of land between the Divača and Kozina crossroads, looking down over both crossroads and commanding a view of the Slovene Istrian towns, as well as Grado and Aquileia. The area is mentioned as a prehistoric settlement by C. Marchesetti, *I castellieri* (1903) 79 (also Roman finds); the remains of a (Roman) wall and of other buildings are described in *Novice* (1859) 273, by M. Sila, *Trst in okolica* (Trieste and its surroundings) (1882) 42 and by S. Rutar *Izvestja muzejskega društva* 5 (1895), 214. These authors, and local researchers, consider the site as the centre (or seat) of the *Rundictes* tribe (on the basis of *CIL* 5, 698 and the continuity of the name *Rundictes* — Rodik). A similar opinion was held by A. Degrassi, *Il confine nord orientale dell'Italia Romana* (1954) 189 and by other researches after him, c. f. B. Slapšak *AV* 28 (1977) 122. The Roman road (*CIL* 5, 698) is probably the "Roman road" whose presence can be reliably traced along a line (Lokev—Kačiče—Rodik—Slope—above Brezovica—Materija). At the highest point between Rodik and Slope a "Roman way" branches off and leads evenly up the leeward side of the slope over Čuk (Jezero — an artificially constructed catchment at the summit; interesting oral tradition) to Ajdovščina. The settlement is of a prehistoric type (a hillfort), as seen from its exposed position, its plan — following the contours of the hilltop —, the massiveness of the remains of the walls and the construction of the entrance; prehistoric artefacts are mentioned by Marchesetti. Along the line of the ancient forts, ruins point to renewed fortification during the late Roman period — the date to which the other remains of the settlement belong — with towers at the gates and inside the eastern walls. The inside is criss-crossed with fallen walls which, when traced over a relief map of the area, permit a rough picture of the settlement during its last phase (late Roman). A sounding made by the archaeology department of the University of Ljubljana at a sheltered point just below the summit established the existence of two stages of building, but in different alignments. The earlier cannot yet be dated with certainty (1<sup>st</sup>—2<sup>nd</sup> century?) but the later one is well authenticated with coins from Constantine II to Theodosius in the strata, and with typical finds; the architecture found so far is interesting, finishing on the northern side in an apse, with the typical plan of a larger part of a circle. The topography of the immediate vicinity enabled us to determine a network of communications, probably a cemetery and Roman villages or villas in the valley. At the present time there are no finds which would date the settlement later than the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century, although this site would have been an excellent vantage point over the northern entry into Istria. For the time being it appears that the time-span of the last period overlaps the final period of the Claustra in the Eastern Alps.

Questions posed by the work on Rodik-Ajdovščina refer to the life in the immediate hinterland of the Claustra on territory which strategically forms a logical component of the fortification system. A vantage point overlooking two crossroads is of military interest, at all events. If we exclude the possibility of its being a purely military fortification, there remains the problem of the relationship between the military and other aspects of life at the settlement; this is one of the basic questions of late Roman organisation of the defence of the empire, and late Roman life in general, especially in the Julian Alps.



Rodik-Ajdovščina, sonda 1975 z juga —  
*Rodik-Ajdovščina, excavations 1975, the  
view from the south*