

**Middle Danube-Region Interactions
with the Romans**

A Sunken-Floored Building with Decorated Hearth on the Celtic Oppidum in Bratislava

Igor Bazovský

Abstract: During construction of an underground carpark on Alexander Dubček Square in Bratislava in 2011, part of a subterranean structure with an ornate hearth of the 1st century BC was discovered. The clay hearth was decorated with an incised ornament in the form of a four-pointed star. Decorated hearths have been around since the Early Bronze Age, spread across an area ranging from England to the Ukraine.

Keywords: Slovakia, La Tène period, oppidum, Bratislava, decorated hearth.

Zusammenfassung: Im Jahr 2011 wurde beim Bau einer unterirdischen Großgarage auf dem Alexander-Dubček-Platz in Bratislava ein Teil eines eingetieften Baues mit unikat verzierter Feuerstelle aus dem 1. Jh. v. Chr. entdeckt. In die Tonplatte selbst war ein Ornament in Form eines vierzackigen Sterns eingeritzt. Verzierte Herdplatten gibt es bereits seit der älteren Bronzezeit. Sie sind von England bis in die Ukraine verbreitet.

Schlüsselwörter: Slowakei, Latènezeit, Oppidum, Bratislava, verzierte Feuerstelle.

Over the last few years a number of new finds have drawn attention to the importance of the oppidum on Bratislava's Castle Hill.¹ The spectacular discovery of Roman masonry remains of the 1st century BC has so far not been matched north of the Danube. The significance of the oppidum in Bratislava is also owed to its prime location. It lies on the eastern edge of the Bratislava Gap, also known as the Devín Gap, Hainburg Gap or Hungarian Gap (*Porta Hungarica*): this is where the Danube leaves the Carpathians to enter the Carpathian Basin. Bratislava's Castle Hill constitutes the easternmost outlier of the Carpathians, rising directly above the Danube.

In 2011 colleagues at the Slovak National Museum (Archaeological Museum) had the opportunity to investigate the remains of a sunken-floored building (or sunken-featured building) with a unique decorated hearth on a building site located to the west of the castle area. The complex was discovered during construction of an underground carpark on Alexander Dubček Square, some 180 m west of the Roman masonry remains, and it is dated to the 1st century BC (Fig. 1).

The Sunken-Floored Building with Decorated Hearth

The rectangular sunken-floored building was cut into a small terrace on a slope inclined towards the northeast. Only part of this structure could be examined. As one side of the feature was 5.5 m long, it is assumed that this was quite a large structure, compared to similar contemporary dwellings (Fig. 2). The building was sunk into the granite bedrock to a depth of 70 cm. There were no traces of the postholes that would be expected to support the roof structure. Small, slight scoops may perhaps represent attempts at cutting postholes into the hard bedrock. The building may have been of a different construction (perhaps a kind of log-cabin?). The floor was made of two layers of clay. A unique feature, consisting of a fixed clay sole built *in situ* from material brought in, was found at floor level, approximately in the centre of the building (Fig. 3). Its surface was carefully smoothed and a four-pointed star design was executed, probably by fingers pressing into the still soft clay. Fires were then lit on this sole. Its centre is thoroughly burnt but its edges remained unburnt and did not survive. The hearth was probably square, some 100 × 100 cm in plan. The hearth was renewed, as the traces of fire under the unburnt layer of clay indicate (see Figs. 2–3). This, together with the two floor layers, suggests that the building remained in use for some time.

1. MUSILOVÁ, LESÁK, RESUTÍK 2012.



Fig. 1. Bratislava, Staré mesto (Map 44-24-02). The arrow points to the site.

The hearth was probably not just used as a source of warmth and for cooking. Fire has long had a purifying function. Decorated clay hearths could have had a deeper religious meaning and may have been linked to the worship of house gods, as suggested by similar finds elsewhere.² In this context, the presence of soles with a white coating at the Late Hallstatt/Early La Tène settlements of Želenice and Radovesice in Bohemia are worth noting.³ Jiří Waldhauser considers that this kind of finish did not fulfil a practical purpose.⁴

Decorated hearths are known from the Early Bronze Age onwards, from England to Ukraine. An origin in the Mediterranean, where the designs are far more intricate than in the north, has been sought.⁵ Hearth soles with a simple quadrangular design are known from Late La Tène contexts, for example on the oppidum of Závist in Bohemia or the lowland settlement of Bořitov in Moravia. The Závist hearth (80 × 60 cm) was found in the centre of Building 13, which was probably built above ground

in the manner of a log-cabin.⁶ The Bořitov hearth⁷ (70 × 65 cm) was also located in the centre of the building, in this case the sunken-featured building (*Grubenhäus*) No. 2/72. A similar position must be assumed for the Bratislava example. The fact that decorated hearths are found on Late La Tène settlements that were important trading centres is an aspect worthy of note.

The renewal of the hearth and floor suggests that the sunken-floored building was used for some time. Its occupants probably left the building of their own volition. There were no indications of it having burnt down, and there were no traces of furnishings or artefacts left in the house. The sunken feature was filled with a compact layer of soil shortly after it was abandoned; this layer contained very few finds. Occupation later continued on the surface. After the original fill of the sunken feature had settled, a very dark layer, rich in finds and dated to the second half of the 1st century BC, filled the upper part of the feature. A pit also cut the backfill of the sunken-featured

2. MAKIEWICZ 1987, 205. – PODBORSKÝ 2006, 371.

3. WALDHAUSER 1977, 4. – WALDHAUSER 1993, 215.

4. WALDHAUSER 2012, 444.

5. MAKIEWICZ 1987, 205.

6. MOTYKOVÁ, DRDA, RYBOVÁ 1990, 321, Fig. 23.

7. LUDIKOVSKÝ 1973, 40, Pl. 28.

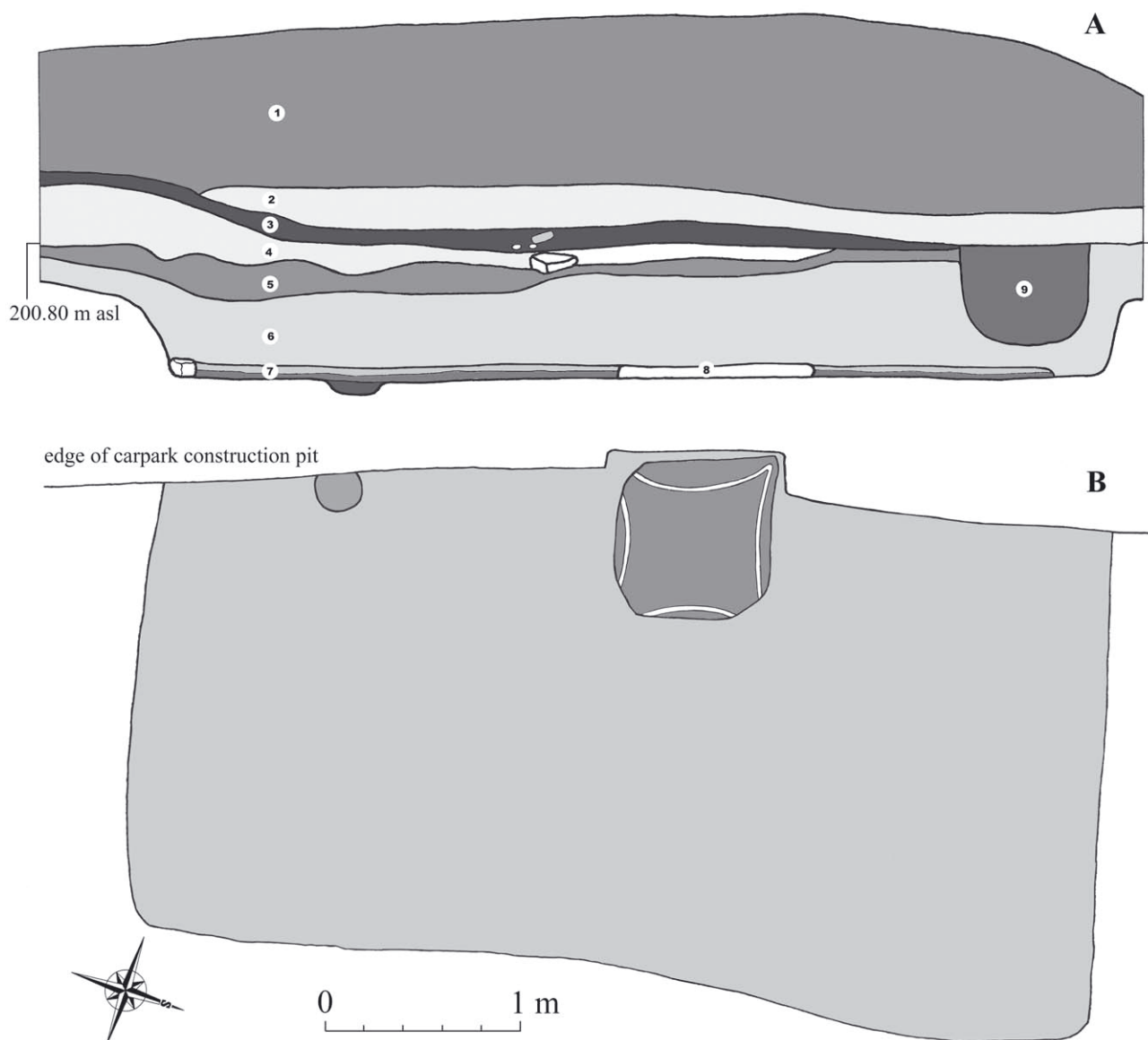


Fig. 2. Bratislava, Alexander Dubček Square. Sunken-featured building with decorated hearth. – A: Section showing brown-grey clay and gravel (1), gravelly pale yellow clay with small stones (2 and 4), black clay with burnt fragments (3), dark brown clay with fragments of charcoal (5), light brown-grey clay (6), clay floor (7), hearth (8), pit (9). – B: Plan of the sunken-featured building with decorated hearth and slight depression.

building and it is also dated to the end of the La Tène phase of occupation.

The Finds

As mentioned above, nearly all the finds were recovered in the upper dark layer attributed to the later period of occupation of the settlement. Since the finds have been published elsewhere, they will only be briefly mentioned here.⁸

8. BAZOVSKÝ 2014.

The small finds

Two small silver coins with horse imagery and a fragment of a bronze fibula with openwork catchplate are relevant for the dating of the dark layer. The small concave coins (8 mm in diameter) are of the Karlstein type (Fig. 4/1–2). Eva Kolníková suggests that the low weight (0.20 g–0.35 g) of the Bratislava finds indicates local production and a date at the beginning of the third quarter of the 1st century BC.⁹ The presence of clay casting trays

9. KOLNÍKOVÁ 1996, 37. – KOLNÍKOVÁ 2010, 73.

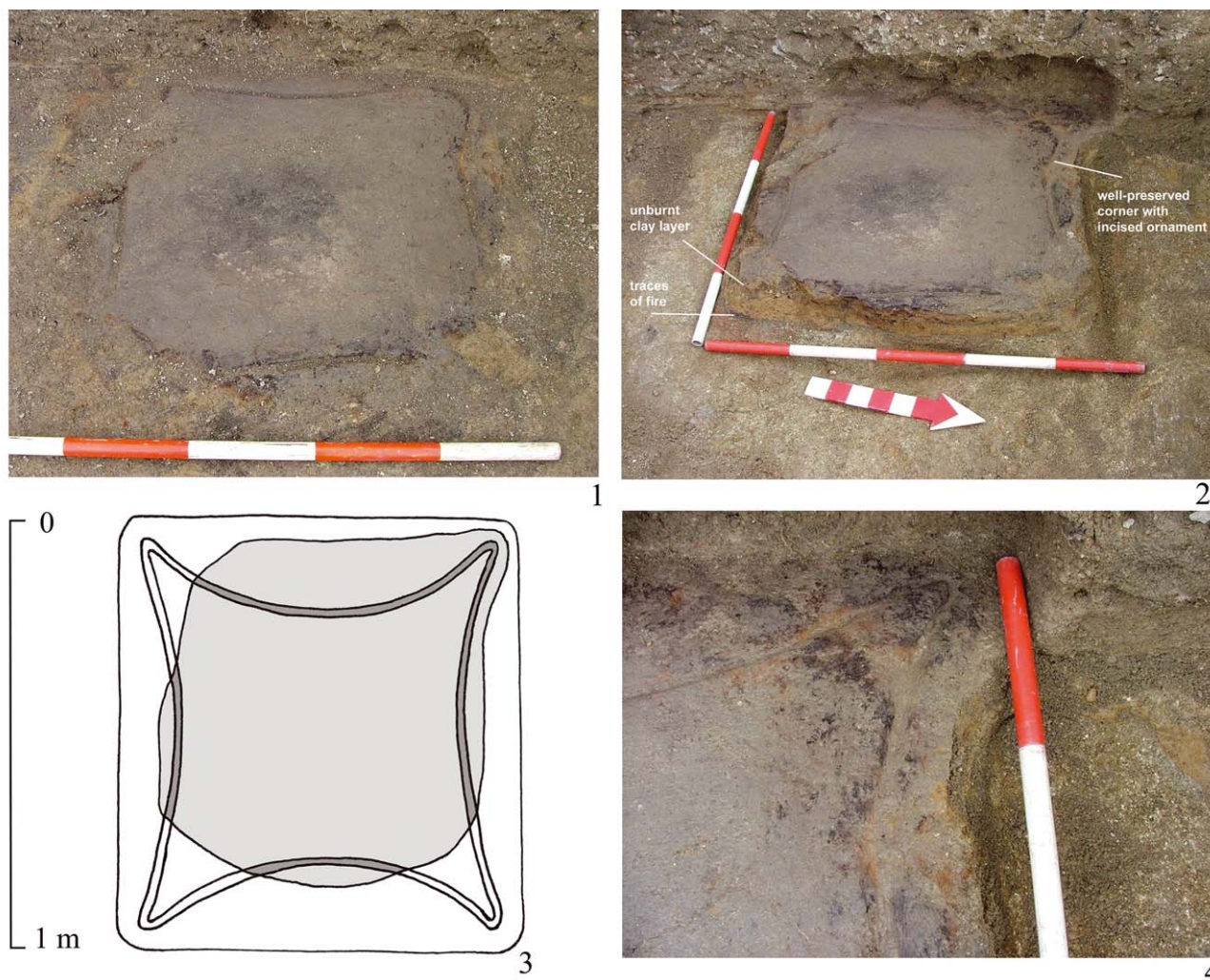


Fig. 3. Bratislava, Alexander Dubček Square. Decorated hearth and reconstruction. Note the traces of an earlier hearth under the unburnt clay layer.

(the so-called *Tüpfelplatten* or pellet trays) in several locations on the oppidum¹⁰ provides indirect evidence that coins were struck locally. The fibula fragment is probably of the Almgren 18 type, which is dated to the second half of the 1st century BC (Fig. 4/3).¹¹ A bronze latch key formed part of the usual domestic equipment (Fig. 4/5). A part-finished small, square antler plaque has one side decorated with two concentric circles (Fig. 4/6). Two similar finds recovered on the oppidum have been interpreted as gaming pieces.¹² Finally, a bronze fibula of Middle La Tène construction was found in a secondary context (Fig. 4/4).

The pottery

Although the pottery has been the subject of a preliminary study, it has since been possible to reconstruct some vessels, either completely or partly. Besides the usual wheel-turned pottery (Fig. 5–7, 8/2, 5) there are also handmade pots which may be of Dacian inspiration (Fig. 8/1, 6).¹³ Sherds of amphorae (for transporting wine?) are important evidence for trade with the Roman Empire. Textile production is attested by several spindle whorls made out of pottery sherds (Fig. 8/3, 4) and a loom weight (Fig. 8/7).

Animal bones

The animal bones constitute the second largest assemblage after the pottery and consist mainly of domestic pigs

10. BAZOVSKÝ, GREGOR 2009, 135, Figs. 1/1 and 4.

11. DEMETZ 1999, 122.

12. PIETA, ZACHAR 1993, 175, Fig. 100/5. – VRTEL 2012, 175, Fig. 268.

13. ČAMBAL et al. 2009.

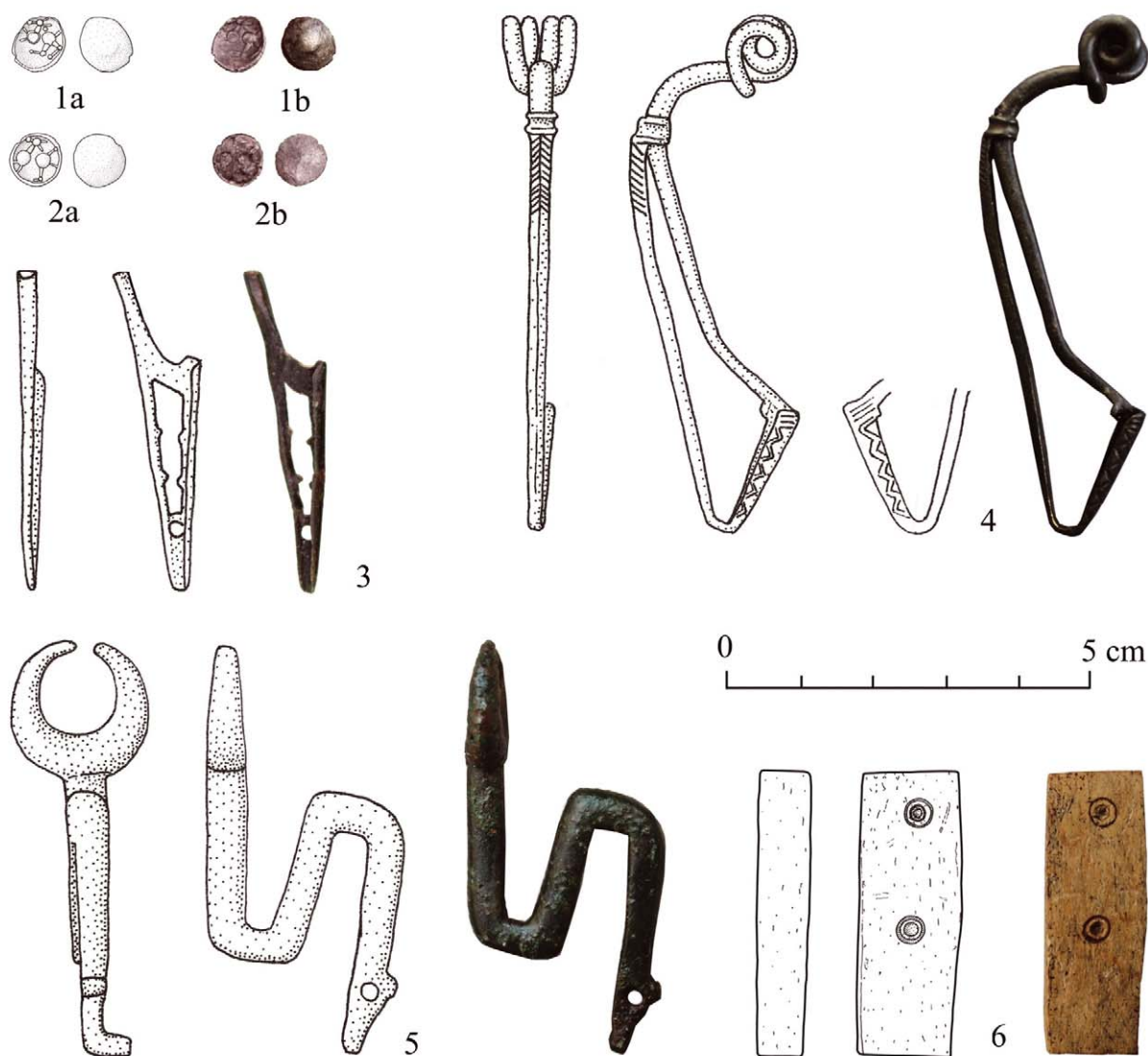


Fig. 4. Bratislava, Alexander Dubček Square. Small finds from the upper fill of the sunken-featured building. – 1–2. Silver coins. – 3. Bronze fibula. – 4. Fibula found in a secondary context. – 5. Bronze key. – 6. Bone plaque.

and cattle. Sheep/goat and horse are rarer. The faunal assemblage has not yet been analysed.

The Pit

A pit, which cut the backfill of the sunken-featured building, belongs to the end phase of the La Tène occupation of the settlement (Fig. 2). A coarse pottery vessel from its fill indicates that ceramic production changed (Fig. 8/8).

Conclusions

We do not know the actual dimensions of the sunken-featured building with decorated hearth since only about half (13.5 m²) could be examined and the absence of postholes renders the identification of the way it was built uncertain. Nevertheless the fact that the floor and hearth were renewed suggests long-term use. The decorated sole

of the hearth constitutes a first in Slovakia. Parallels in other countries suggest that it was probably related to cult practices. The sunken part of the dwelling was backfilled with pale clay after it had been cleared. No datable finds were recovered from the floor of the building or its backfill. The majority of the finds came from the upper dark layer, dated by the presence of two coins of the Karlstein type and an Almgren 18 (?) fibula to the second half of the 1st century BC. This layer formed sometime after the deliberate backfill of the building and must therefore be somewhat later. The Roman amphora sherds are important evidence for contacts between the oppidum and the Roman Empire, as also attested in the castle excavation areas. A pit cutting the backfilled sunken-featured building is the latest feature of the La Tène occupation. Its fill yielded a sherd of a coarsely made vessel.

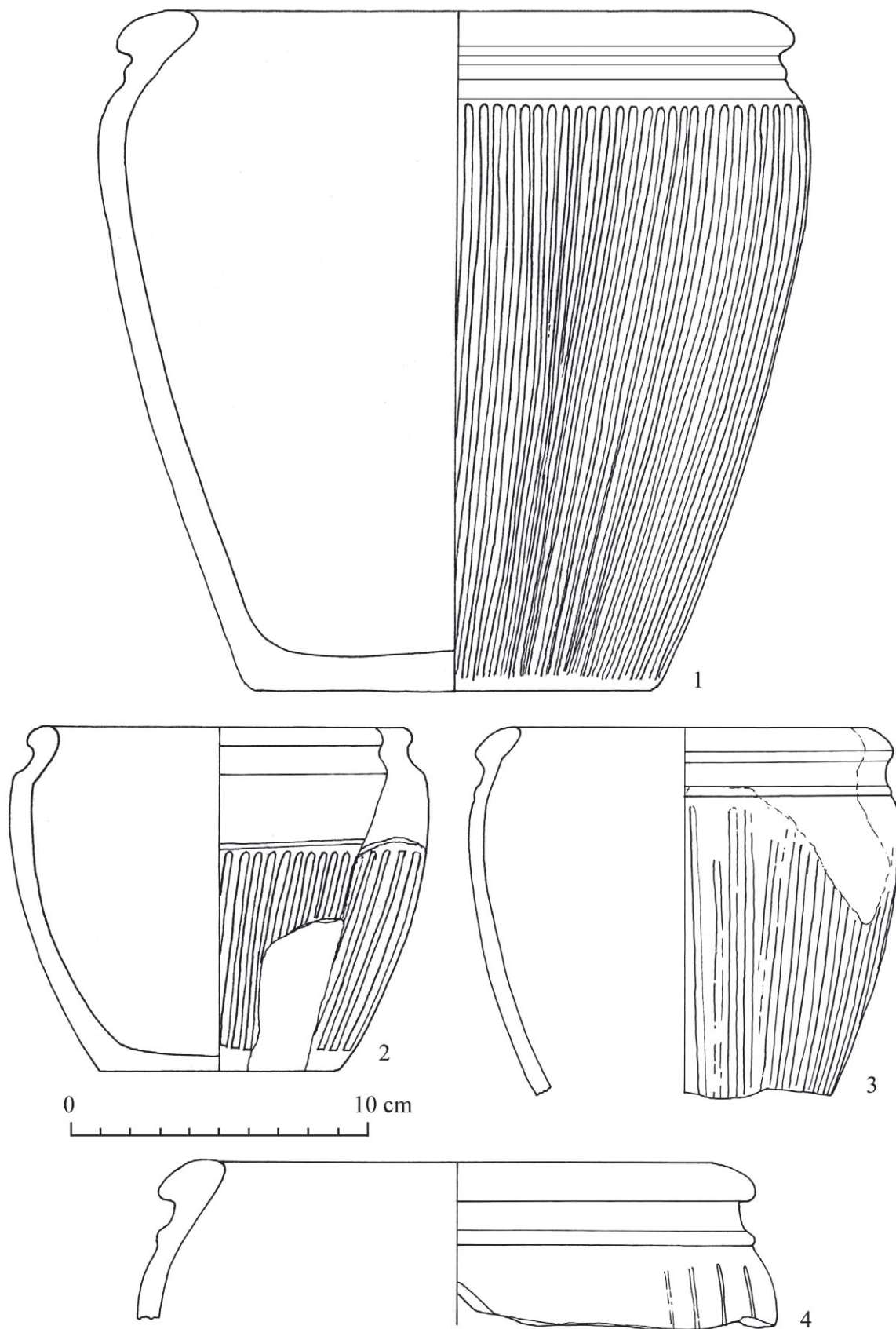


Fig. 5. Bratislava, Alexander Dubček Square. Pottery from the upper fill of the sunken-featured building.

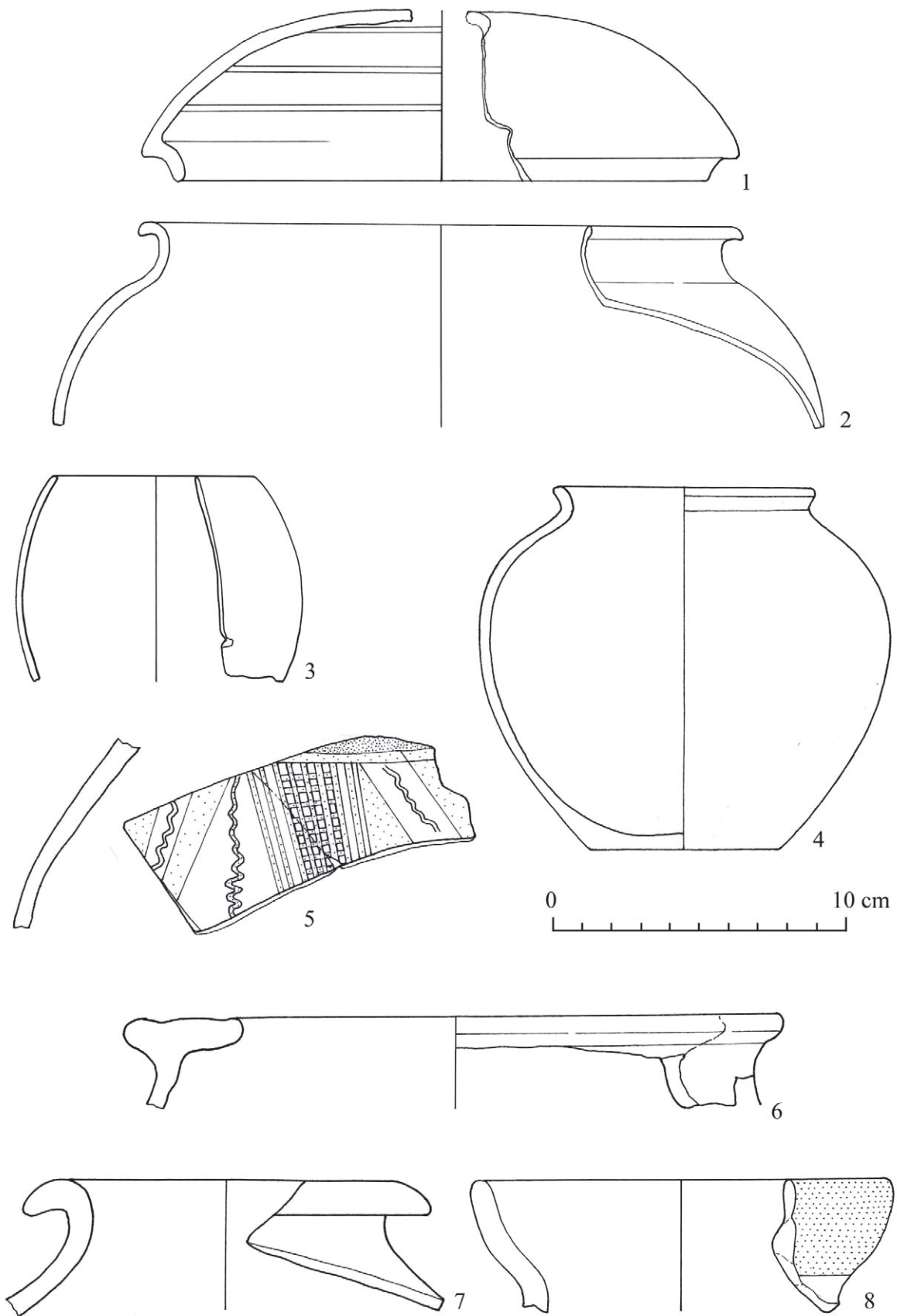


Fig. 6. Bratislava, Alexander Dubček Square. Pottery from the upper fill of the sunken-featured building.

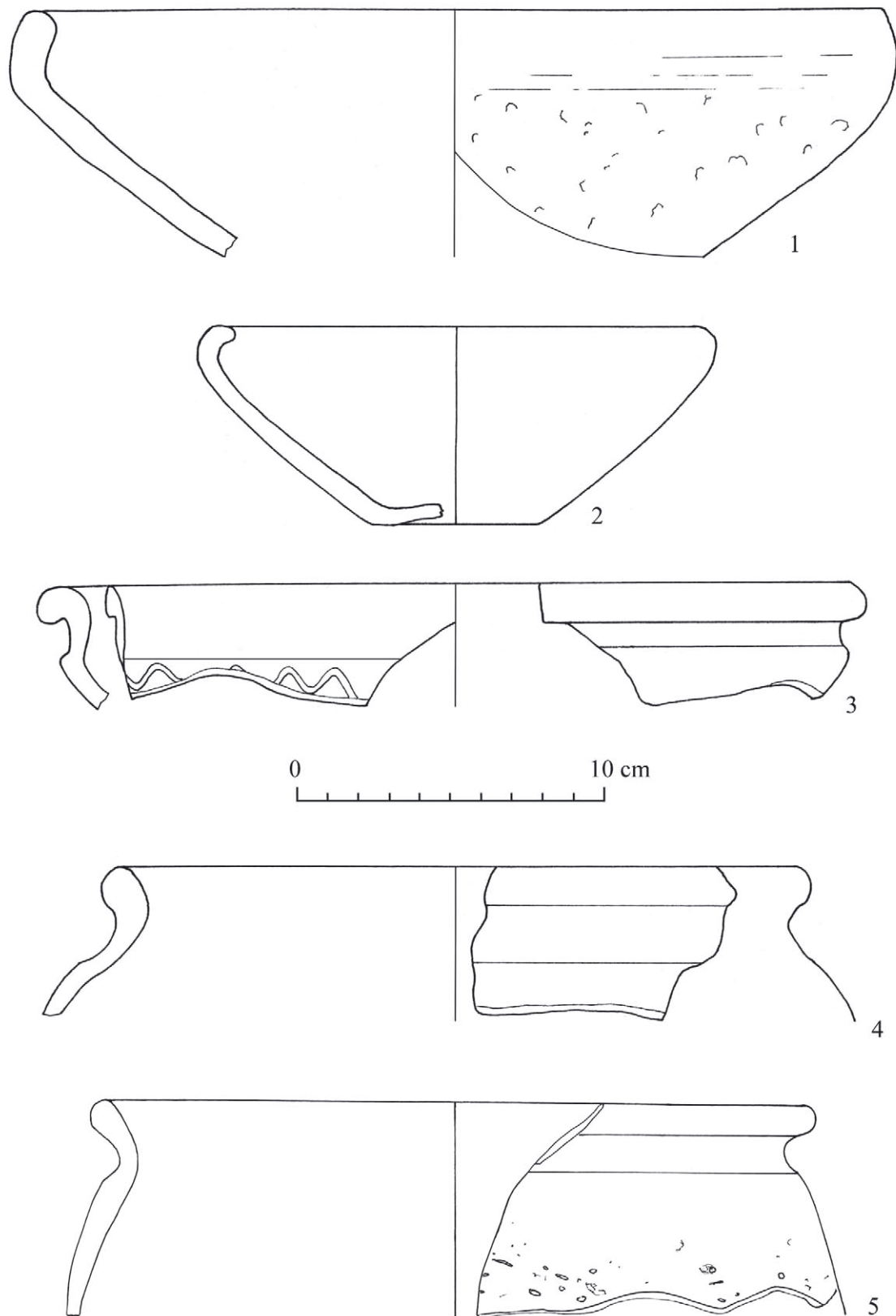


Fig. 7. Bratislava, Alexander Dubček Square. Pottery from the upper fill of the sunken-featured building.

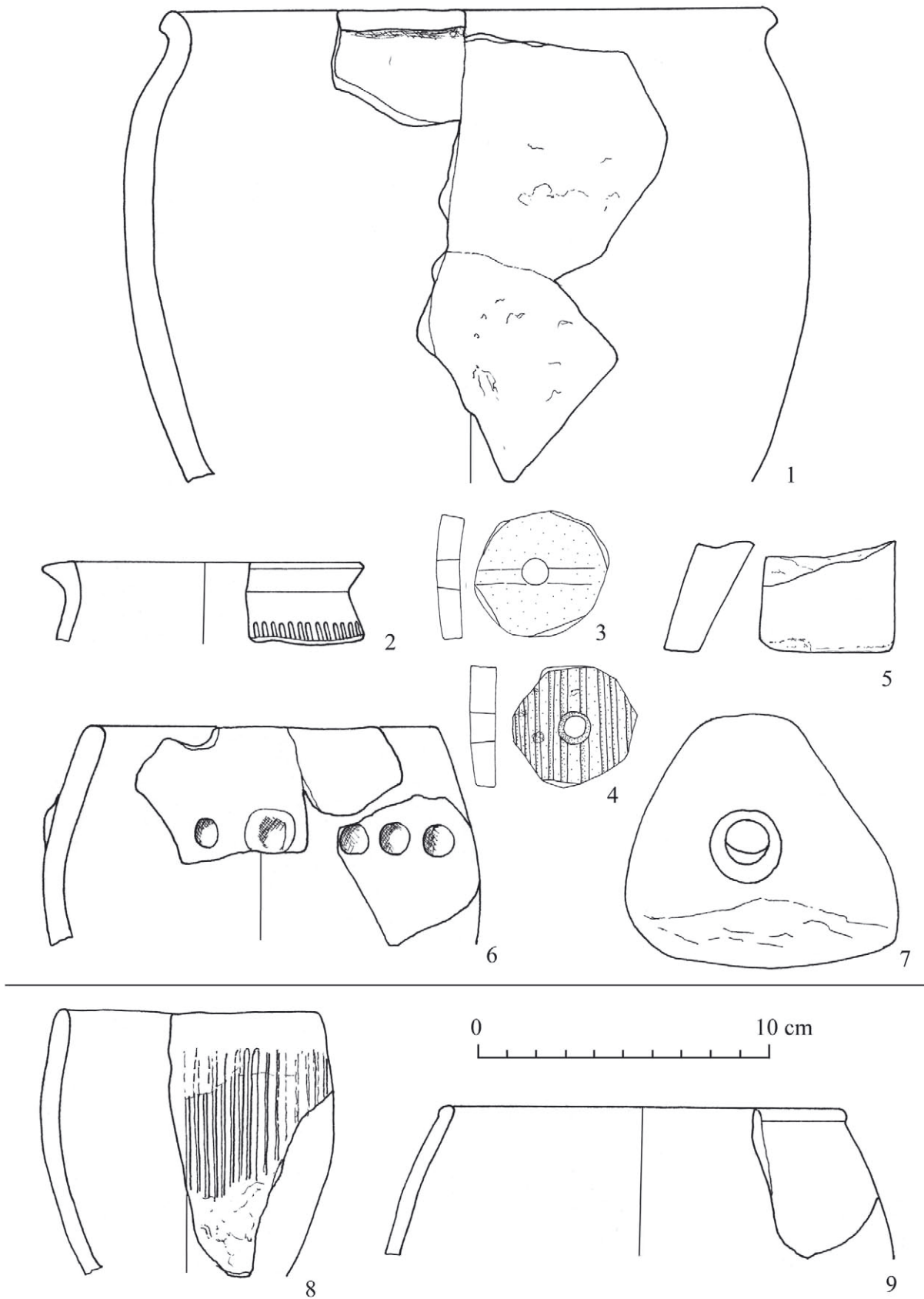


Fig. 8. Bratislava, Alexander Dubček Square. Pottery from the upper fill of the sunken-featured building (Nos. 1–7) and from the fill of the later pit (Nos. 8–9).

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Structural Analysis of the Celto-Roman Masonry Building on Bratislava's Castle Hill – A Preliminary Study

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Abstract: This article reports on research conducted at Bratislava Castle. Remains of Roman style masonry and architecture dated to the 1st century BC were found for the first time in this region. A building complex with Roman pavement and mosaic in *opus signinum* indicates that there were intensive contacts with the Roman Empire. The discovery of a deposit of Celtic gold and silver coins under the floor of the *domus* is indicative of the supra-regional political and economic importance of the site.

Keywords: Late La Tène period, Bratislava Castle, architecture, Romans.

Zusammenfassung: In diesem Beitrag wird über Forschungen auf der Burg Bratislava berichtet. Erstmals wurden in dieser Region Architekturreste des 1. Jhs. v. Chr. nachgewiesen, denen römische Bauweisen zugrunde liegen. Ein Gebäudekomplex mit römischem Pflaster und Mosaik in *opus signinum* verweist auf den intensiven Kontakt ins Römische Imperium. Ein Münzschatz mit keltischen Gold- und Silbermünzen unter dem Boden der *domus* belegt die überregionale politische und wirtschaftliche Bedeutung des Fundortes.

Schlüsselwörter: Spätlatènezeit, Burgberg Bratislava, Architektur, Römer.

Extensive development and restoration work from 2008–2010 in the area of Bratislava Castle in Slovakia has provided the opportunity to excavate and record sites and assemblages that are crucial for our understanding of the Late La Tène period.¹ The archaeological investigations were carried out by the Municipal Monument

Preservation Institute of Bratislava.² The last major building works in the Bratislava Castle precinct date back to between 1956 and 1968.

The building works of 2008–2010 concentrated on the Castle palace itself. In place of the amphitheatre that stood in the northern part of the castle precinct, a Baroque garden with a riding school, which had been abandoned after the great fire of 1811, were to be reconstructed. A carpark (Zámocká entrance) was to be erected below the garden. This development was the occasion for excavations in the area of the so-called northern terrace (Fig. 1). The author of this article directed the excavations in the area of the former Baroque winter riding school. Apart from the remains of the Baroque building, evidence of earlier occupation – mainly of the High and Early Middle Ages as well as the Prehistoric Ages – was expected. The discovery of buildings of the Late La Tène period, probably of the first half of the 1st century BC, built using Roman techniques, and the find of a deposit of Celtic gold and silver coins were the greatest surprise of the campaign.

Bratislava's Castle Hill is located in a prime strategic position at an altitude of 212 m mean sea level above the Baltic Sea (Fig. 2). The present-day castle terrace offers excellent, far-reaching views in all directions. The ford over the Danube and crossing of the Amber Route with the east–west axis of the Danube was eminently suitable for siting a Celtic centre of power. It has long been known that more than 2000 years ago a Celtic hillfort – an oppidum – occupied a surface close to 98 hectares (a figure obtained by recent research) in the area of the present-day Old Town.³ Numerous pottery kilns and remains of pottery production, metalworking and minting, as well as evidence for the defences, including an earthen rampart,

1. This article, completed thanks to the support of the American Academy in Rome, is based on results obtained up to 2012. Later findings could not be included.

2. MUSILOVÁ et al. 2010, 2–13. – BÁRTA et al. 2011, 136. – MUSILOVÁ 2011a, 28–41. – MUSILOVÁ 2011b, 187–206. – MUSILOVÁ 2012d, 123–142.

3. VRTEL 2012, 164.

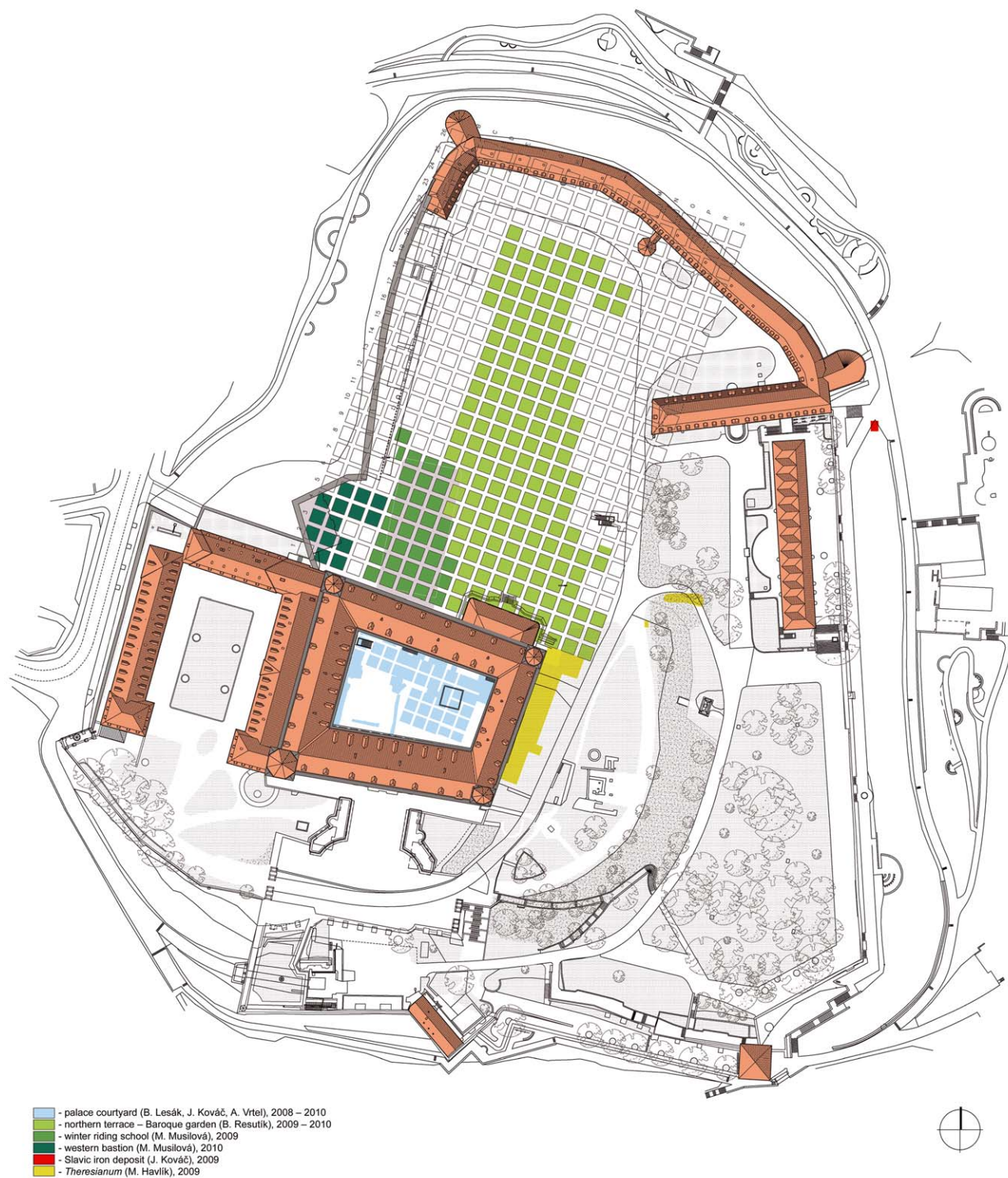


Fig. 1. Plan of Bratislava Castle and of the excavations of 2008–2010 (Drawing: B. Gabura, M. Šabík and H. Ondrušková).



Fig. 2. Aerial photograph of Bratislava Castle from the west (Photograph: P. Chromek; © Foundation for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage, Slovakia).

V-shape ditches and a *Zangentor* type gate,⁴ indicate that the site was an important Celtic centre on the Danube, so far little recognised by the research community.

The Baroque winter riding school was built in 1767, as part of the reconstruction of the castle precinct by Maria Theresa for the Hungarian royal city governor Albert of Saxony-Teschen and his wife Maria Christina of Habsburg-Lorraine. The riding school lies on the northern castle terrace, west of the Baroque garden. The southern half of the riding school (18.5 × 43.5 m) was erected over the backfilled medieval moat and hence no unusual discoveries were expected. Its northern half was built over a backfilled and levelled medieval quarry, whose location is known from plans of the period.⁵

The 18th-century building works probably encountered the buildings erected in antiquity.⁶ The riding

school was rebuilt for the use by a General Seminary under Emperor Joseph II. After his death the castle was occupied by the military. During the Napoleonic Wars a devastating fire broke out on Mai 28, 1811 and lasted three days: it quickly spread to the bailey and the quarter known as *Schlossgrund*. The fire is thought to have been caused by the negligence of the troops. The parts of the castle not touched by the fire continued to be used as barracks and prison buildings right up to the end of World War II. In 1946 the barracks were closed and the castle precinct opened to the public. After World War II a large amphitheatre was built on the northern Theresian garden side. This landscaping and building activity largely destroyed and changed the configuration of the terrain. After a few years the amphitheatre was removed because it was no longer considered suitable for the castle precinct. Further landscaping and levelling operations were carried out, including making up the ground with soil taken from various parts of Bratislava. The excavations which took place during the first large-scale renovation of the castle from 1958 to 1968 did not include the northern terrace.⁷

4. JANŠÁK 1955, 195–221. – ONDROUCH 1958, 127. – FILIP 1960, 97, 108, 115–116. – VALLÁŠEK 1973, 12–15. – NOVOTNÝ 1976, 204–211. – ZACHAR, REXA 1988, 28–91. – BAXA et al. 1990, 38. – MARUNIAKOVÁ 1990. – PIETA, ZACHAR 1993, 148–209. – MUSILOVÁ, LESÁK 1994. – LESÁK, MUSILOVÁ, HOŠŠO 1995. – MUSILOVÁ, LESÁK 1995a. – MUSILOVÁ, LESÁK 1996, 87–105. – LESÁK 2002, 111–118. – ČAMBAL 2004. – ČAMBAL et al. 2006, 123–160. – VRTEL 2006, 184–189. – PIETA 2008. – BAZOVSKÝ, GREGOR 2009, 131–152. – LESÁK, VRTEL 2009, 43–48. – VRTEL 2011, 265–277. – See also I. Bazovský's contribution in this volume.

5. PIERONI 1642. – SICHA 1683.

6. MARQUART 1765.

7. POLLA, ŠTEFANOVIČOVÁ 1959. – POLLA, ŠTEFANOVIČOVÁ 1962, 814–823. – MUSILOVÁ et al. 2010, 2–13.



Fig. 3. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. Plan of the riding school with historic building analysis and the sondages S1/09 and S2/09 (Drawing: M. Šabík and B. Gabura from data provided by M. Musilová and M. Matejka).

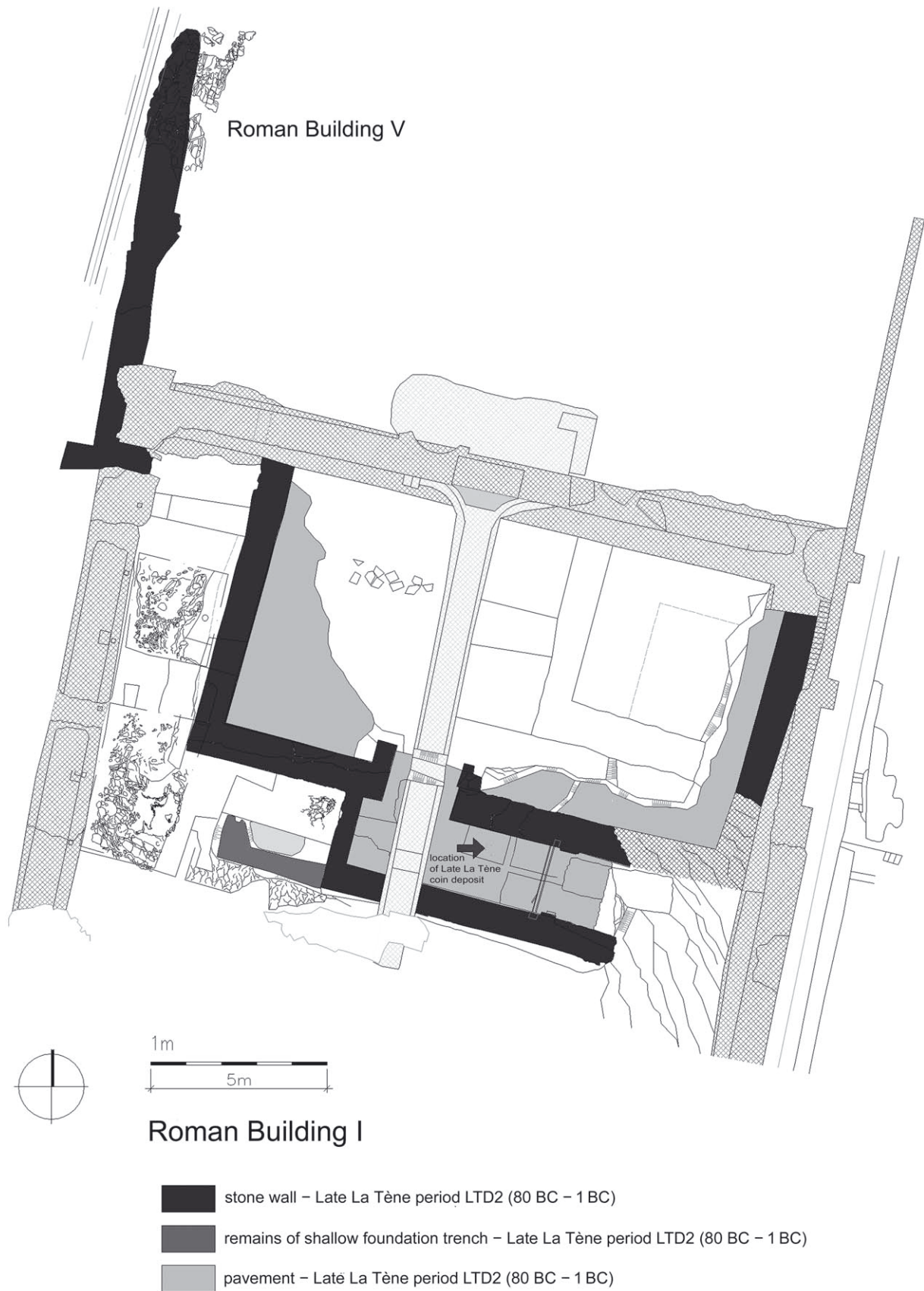


Fig. 4. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. Plan of the riding school, detail (Graphics: M. Musilová and M. Šabík from measurements by B. Gabura).

The Archaeological Excavations of 2008–2010

The archaeological investigations of the winter riding school took place in two stages. The first campaign was carried out between October and December 2008 and directed by archaeologists Branislav Lesák and Jozef Kováč, and art historian Miroslav Matejka. The second excavation campaign, directed by Margaréta Musilová, began in April 2009 and lasted until January 2010.⁸ Immediately after the start of the excavations a historic layer – the surface of the interior of the riding school covered with a layer of ashy sand dating to the period immediately after the 1811 fire – was found. Two test trenches designed to identify the various building phases were laid out immediately against the walls of the riding school. The first trench (S1/2009) was located where the northern wall of the riding school is met by a central partition wall; the second (S2/2009) was dug at the point of contact between the central partition wall and an accumulation of rubble, which was probably the hard-core for a military road ramp of the 19th century (Fig. 3).

In S2/2009, under a burnt layer (dated to 1811) and the foundation layer of the riding school (second half of the 18th century), a layer (204.37/31–204.419 m above Baltic sea level) with masonry made of granite rubble and limestone ashlar with well-preserved wall plaster and mortar floor was recorded. This was named “Structure 1/ Roman Building I” (Fig. 4). As it had been intended to remove the entire masonry of the Baroque riding school over an area of c. 900 m², it was essential to excavate and record Structure 1 as precisely as possible.

The exterior face of the wall of Structure 1 consists of granite stones laid in rows and mortared with a gravel and lime mortar. The inside of the wall was filled with Roman concrete (Fig. 5). The corners feature limestone ashlar on which traces of working, probably made by sharp chisels, can be observed. Such tools are mainly known from Roman sites.⁹ The surviving masonry varies in width, being 30, 60 and 90 cm wide.¹⁰ The walls that had a width of 90–100 cm probably bore the weight of two storeys. The interior face of the walls had a mortar rendering (Fig. 6). Two kinds of poured mortar floor were found on the extensive surface of the building, which must have comprised at least two rooms. A type with small river gravel (0.3 to 1.5 mm in diameter, with one exception of 5 mm) was incorporated into a lime mortar some 10 cm thick applied directly to the bedrock (Fig. 7/a–c). The river sand and gravel used in the mortar

corresponds to the Danube sediments.¹¹ For structural reasons the mortar must have been quite solid because mortar mixed with gravel tends to subside. Mineralogical and petrographic analyses have established that traces of La Tène pottery were present in the mortar.¹² Chemical analyses of the binding material identified hydraulic phases but no pozzolanic or latent hydraulic material. The identification of the hydraulic phases seems to reflect impurities (clay minerals, dolomites) occurring naturally in the limestone.¹³

The second type of floor was found in the corridor or antechamber. It was not applied to the bedrock but onto a layer of clay. The mortar floor consisted of two layers. The upper layer contained small black and white angular broken stones, which lay on top of a gravelly mortar bed (Fig. 8/a–b). This typically Roman technique is widespread.¹⁴

In addition to the two kinds of floor in the interior of the building, a further prestigious variant of a floor of *terrazzo* type was found in a secondary context outside the outer wall of the riding school (northwestern corner, in Pit no. 11/2009) (Fig. 9/a–b). This kind of floor requires a mixture of coarse and fine sand, mortar, ground-up tiles, gravel and *terracotta*. White worked stone fragments and even tesserae cut from white and grey-white limestone from the area of Devín were added to this mixture.¹⁵ After the surfaces had been plastered, linseed oil, wax or tar was applied and polished for so long that the final surface was as smooth as marble. Such a material was much loved in Roman architecture and, because it was simple to produce, was frequently used.¹⁶

The discovered building was oriented north–south and comprised a corridor (antechamber) with entrance on its eastern side, sheltered from the prevailing wind; it served to catch draughts and protect the building from the cold. Parallels for such an arrangement have been found on the Magdalensberg in Austria.¹⁷ The high threshold prevented water from coming in. This sill was removed in the 18th century when the riding school was transformed and levelled. The entrance of the building, i.e. the antechamber, was built in at least two phases. Presumably the building was entered via wooden steps and a massive timber portal.

8. MUSILOVÁ 2012a.

9. PIVKO 2009, 1. – PIVKO 2012, 192.

10. A Roman foot measures 29.667 cm.

11. GREGOR, PIVKO 2010, 3–4.

12. GREGOR, PIVKO 2010, 3–4.

13. M. Gregor – communication in Oberleisberg-Klement on June 15–16, 2012.

14. DOLENZ 2009, 1.

15. DOLENZ 2009, 1–2. – PIVKO 2009, 1–2. – PIVKO 2012, 180–181.

16. DOLENZ 2009, 1–2.

17. I am grateful to Dr H. Dolenz (Magdalensberg) for this information. – SCHÜTZ 2003, 69–77.



Fig. 5. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. View of the exterior wall of the Roman Building I from the west (Photograph: M. Musilová; © MÚOP, Bratislava).



Fig. 6. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. The interior wall rendering of the corridor of the Roman Building I. View from the west (Photograph: M. Musilová; © MÚOP, Bratislava).



Fig. 7. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. Mortar floor of simple type in the large room of the Roman Building I. – a: View of the eastern wall with the floor directly on the bedrock. – b–c: Detail of the mortar floor (Photograph: M. Musilová; © MÚOP, Bratislava).

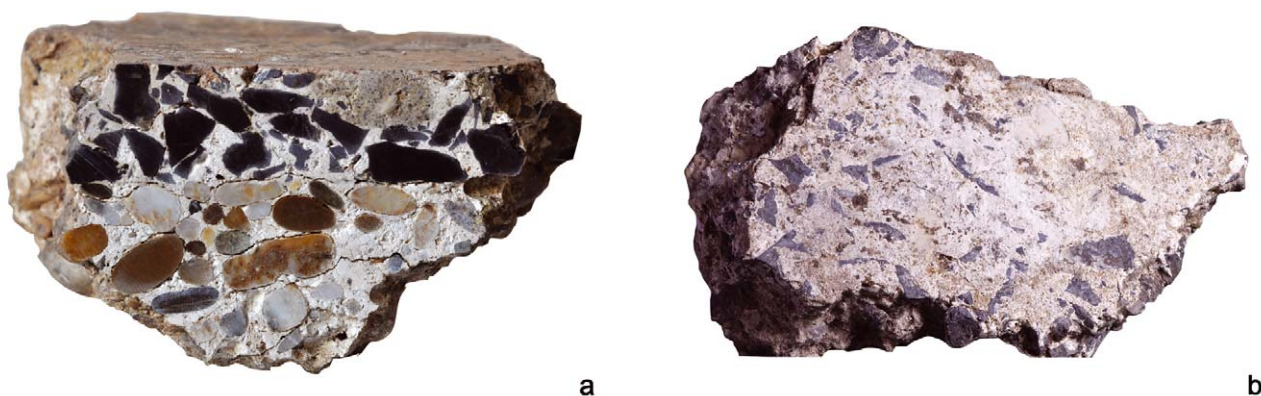


Fig. 8. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. Second type of floor in the corridor of the Roman Building I. – a: Section through the poured mortar floor with angular stones. – b: Surface (Photograph: L. Lovíšková; © MÚOP, Bratislava).

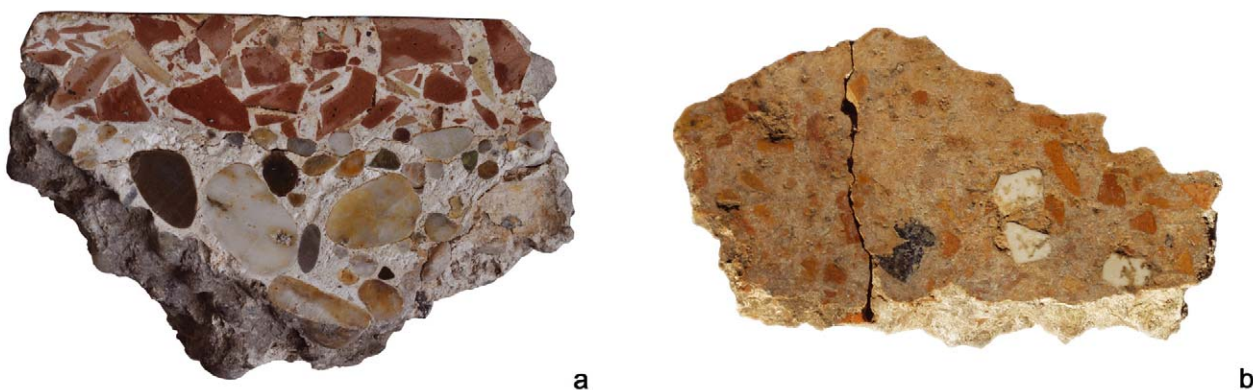


Fig. 9. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. Fragments of the third type of floor (*terrazzo* type). – a: Section. – b: Surface (Photograph: P. Horanský; © MÚOP, Bratislava).

The 1.9 m wide and 7.75 m long antechamber preceded a large room of around 107 m² built against its right corner (Fig. 10). A step led down into the main room; some of its worked stone blocks were found. The underside of a 57 cm wide block of fine-grained granite (outcrops are known on Castle Hill) was chiselled. An upper stone block (57–57.5 × 26.5 × 20 cm) was made of sandstone from the region of Devínska Kobyla in Slovakia, which belongs to the Leitha group of limestone (*Leithakalk*).¹⁸ A hole with a diameter of 7.5 cm perforated its upper surface. The block probably served as a sill for a rotating door (Fig. 11).

The purpose of the large room, whose floor was not heated, is not yet clear. Only the southern, eastern and western outer walls are documented, the northern wall having been destroyed by a medieval quarry. The building

techniques and the plan indicate that it is a prestigious house built in Roman style.

An earlier building phase was identified west of the wall of Structure 1/Roman Building I. A shallow foundation trench cut the rock in an east–west direction, suggesting that Structure 1 had been a transformation of an earlier complex. A yellow clay floor abutted this earlier foundation (Fig. 12).

The Coin Deposit

In the stratified level corresponding to the backfill of Structure 1 (its destruction phase) sherds of Late La Tène pottery were recovered right up to the top of its masonry walls. Unusually there were also large quantities of sherds of Roman wine amphorae, produced in central and northern Italy and Adriatic regions in the second third of the 1st century BC.¹⁹ So far 662 amphora sherds have been

¹⁸. PIVKO 2009, 1–2.

¹⁹. Identified by Dr Ján Kysela, Charles University Prague, 2013, 204–206. – KYSELA, OLMER 2014, 167–188.

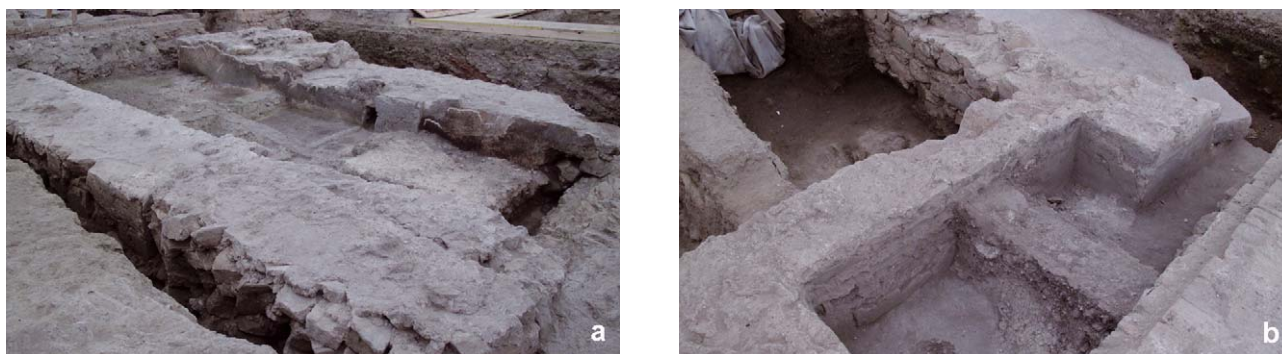


Fig. 10. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. Roman Building I. – a: View of the corridor from the east. – b: View of the corridor, western corner (Photograph: M. Musilová; © MÚOP, Bratislava).



Fig. 11. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. Roman Building I: threshold stone in secondary context (Photograph: M. Musilová; © MÚOP, Bratislava).

examined.²⁰ The majority comes from the Adriatic coast: they are of Lamboglia 2 or Dressel 6A type. Amphorae produced in Campania and Etruria account for 7 % of the assemblage (types Dressel IC, Dressel 2–4). Dressel IC amphorae stopped being manufactured before the middle of the 1st century BC,²¹ while Lamboglia 2 amphorae are dated to the second third to third quarter of the 1st century BC but continued to circulate as late as pre-Augustan times.²²

20. Identified by Dr Ján Kyselá. – KYSELA, OLMER 2014, 167–188.

21. ZABEHLICKY 2009.

22. Identified by Dr Ján Kyselá. – KYSELA, OLMER 2014, 167–188.

The pottery assemblage from the disuse phase of Structure 1 contained no later sherds, which suggests that it went out of use sometime around the turn of the era. The later stratified layers sealing the complex yielded sherds of Slavic and modern pottery.

Two Celtic silver coins were recovered from the backfill layers of Structure 1/Roman Building I and this led us to be especially careful in the excavation of the archaeological layers underneath. Attention was paid to the floor of the antechamber, where a metal-detector sweep allowed us to locate a large quantity of precious metal. It was nevertheless a great surprise to recover a

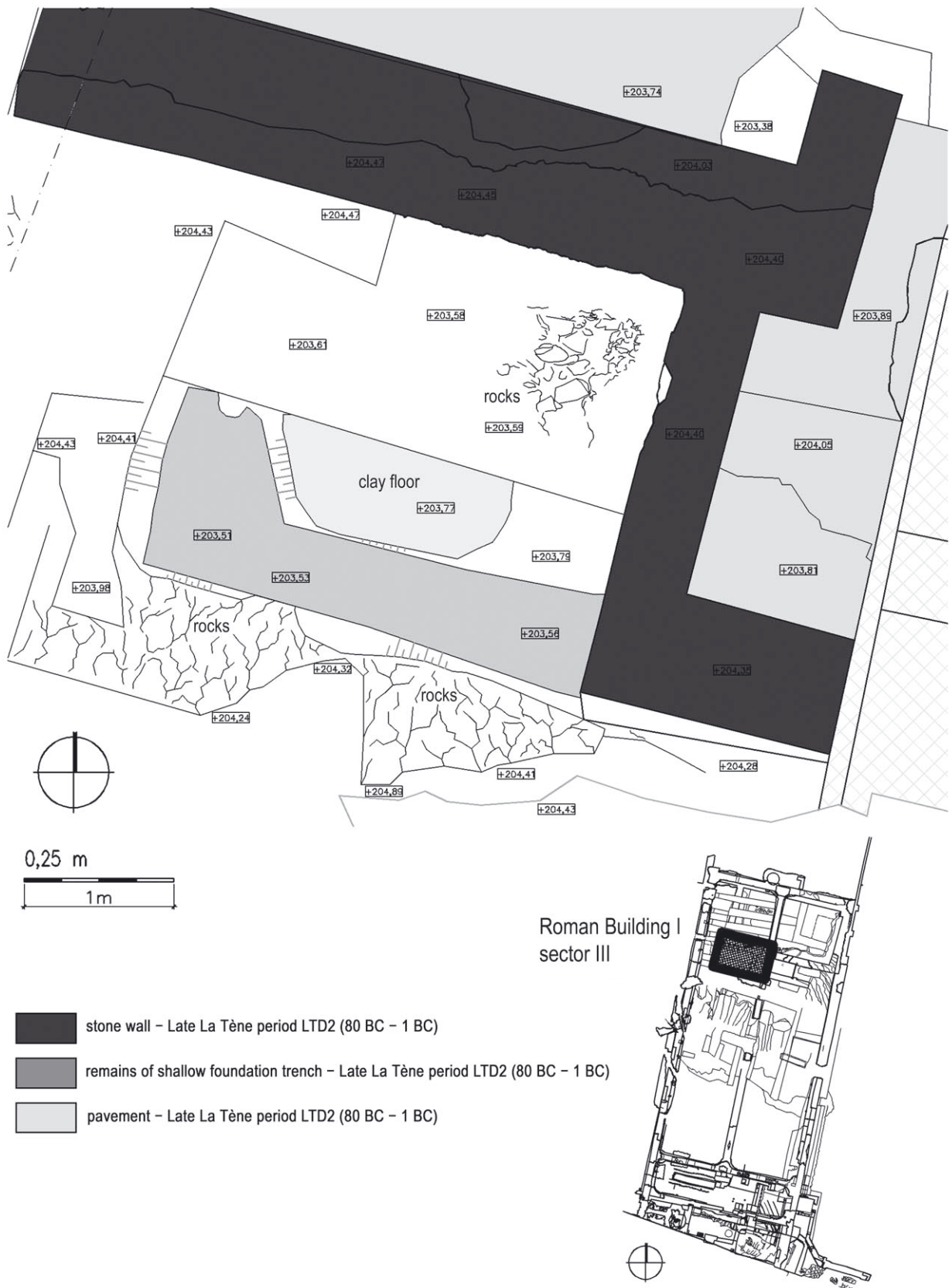


Fig. 12. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. Roman Building I: foundation ditch with clay floor abutting it (Plan: M. Musilová and M. Šabík from measurements by B. Gabura).



Fig. 13. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. Celtic coin deposit from the Roman Building I, 2009 (Photograph: L. Lovíšková; © MÚOP, Bratislava).

first coin from the mortar-like deposit, a gold shell-shaped stater inscribed BIATEC. More and more coins followed, and they literally had to be chiselled out of the mortar. Altogether 15 gold staters, 4 tetradrachms of Bratislava type and 3 drachms of Simmering type were recovered. All were produced from dies typical of the Boian rulers of the oppidum (Fig. 13).²³

Fragments of a glass vessel²⁴ were also found in the mortar layer among the coins – a rare find – as well as a bronze ovate seal box (Fig. 14),²⁵ which is known in this particular guise from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD. They are distributed north of the Alps and have been recovered on Late La Tène oppida, in Augustan forts but also occur in the Mediterranean zone, for example at Corinth and Delos.²⁶ The Alésia type, found on the pseudo-sanctuary of Cybele in Lyon and dated to Late Republican times (44–30 BC) is identical to our find.²⁷ Seal boxes are known from sanctuaries and temples and are interpreted as evidence of petitions addressed

23. MUSILOVÁ, KOLNÍKOVÁ 2009, 58–61. – BÁRTA et al. 2011, 136. – KOLNÍKOVÁ 2012, 205–215.

24. CÍLOVÁ 2010, 10. – SOUČKOVÁ-DAŇKOVÁ 2011. – MUSILOVÁ 2012c, 363–374.

25. I am grateful to Dr J. Rajtár und Prof. Dr D. Božič for the identification.

26. ČIŽMÁŘ 1990, 597–600. – BOŽIČ 1998, 141–156. – ČIŽMÁŘ 2005, 51. – MOSSER 2006, 55–57. – FURGER, WARTMANN, RIHA 2009, 49–52.

27. DESBAT, MAZA 2008, 242, 244–45, Fig. 5/55.



Fig. 14. Bratislava Castle – Winter riding school. Roman Building I: bronze seal box (Photograph: M. Musilová; © MÚOP, Bratislava).

to the gods.²⁸ The chemical analysis of the glass vessel indicates that it is Hellenistic and is most likely to have come from the Mediterranean area.²⁹ As reconstructed, it could perhaps be a bowl, a type that was current between 125 and 69 BC. Presumably this glass vessel counted as luxury ware, present or loot brought to the oppidum. At the time the value of glass was comparable to that of gold and silver.³⁰

Such a precious assemblage – 15 gold and 7 silver coins – has so far never been found in archaeological excavations in Bratislava. The shell-shaped gold staters are present in unusually high numbers (15). Such staters were minted by the Boii in the territory of present-day Bohemia and Moravia. They differ from the Bratislava exemplars in that they are heavier and are not inscribed. The Celtic rulers of Bratislava began to strike coins based on these prototypes but with inscriptions.³¹

A motif reminiscent of a protecting hand can be identified on nine coins. The inscription reads BIATEC.³²

28. MOSSER 2006, 55.

29. I am grateful to Dr L. Mandruzzato who identified the glass as Hellenistic and referred me to the literature on the subject. – CÍLOVÁ 2010, 10.

30. NENNA 1998, 84–85. – ARVEILLER-DULONG, NENNA 2000, 19–20, 177–178.

31. I would like to thank Dr Eva Kolníková for the numismatic analysis of the celtic coins from the hoard.

32. KUPIDO 1866, 98–106. – PAULSEN 1933, 113–115. – Staters with this inscription have been discovered in the past, first in 1855 during

Four staters bear a NONNOS inscription, and these are the first instance of such a type. As it had been assumed that only Biatec minted gold on the oppidum of Bratislava, the finds from the riding school are a ground-breaking discovery. Now we know that Nonnos also struck gold coins.³³ The coin assemblage also contains two uninscribed staters with star symbols. The spectroscopic analysis indicates that the staters consisted of almost pure gold with very little silver or copper.³⁴ Their weight ranges between 6.4 and 6.5 g.

The staters were associated with four tetradrachms inscribed with BIATEC and NONNOS. Because there are no coins bearing the names of other Celtic rulers, we conclude that the coin deposit was assembled at the time Biatec and Nonnos were ruling. Inscribed tetradrachms are frequent in the assemblages found in present-day Bratislava and its wider environs. The Bratislava Castle deposit shows that the coins in circulation on the oppidum were not restricted to staters and tetradrachms, but also included smaller denominations like the three silver drachms found there.³⁵

The coins were found in a mortar layer deposited on the *terrazzo* floor, apparently an unfinished rendering or a collapsed ceiling. This raises the question whether they represent an offering at the time of building. Roman building offerings, in the form of vessels, jewellery or animal offerings, were quite frequent and could also be substituted by coins. They were a plea that the building work would be successful or a way of expressing gratitude for its successful outcome, as attested by numerous coin offerings deposited under *opus signinum* or mosaic floors.³⁶ The mortar layer may however have been a redeposited part of a rendering applied to the wall or ceiling which covered coins that had originally been placed in a niche.

The large number of gold coins suggests that the deposits had an exceptional value. How they came to be embedded in the mortar remains unclear. The building itself shows evidence of at least two phases, and the mortar containing the coins belongs to its declining years.

A further three structures arranged similarly and built in the same technique were found on the eastern slope

fieldwork at Deutsch Jahrndorf (Austria) in a pottery vessel. So far they have not been found in Slovakia. I am grateful to Dr M. Torbágyi of the Nemzeti Múzeum in Budapest for information about this report and for the opportunity to see the coins. – DEMBSKI 1998.
 33. MUSILOVÁ, KOLNÍKOVÁ 2009, 60–61. – KOLNÍKOVÁ 2012, 205–215. – MUSILOVÁ 2012b, 197–200.
 34. HLOŽEK 2011.
 35. MUSILOVÁ, KOLNÍKOVÁ 2009, 60–61. – KOLNÍKOVÁ 2012, 205–215. – MUSILOVÁ 2012b, 197–200.
 36. DONDERER 1984, 179–181. – KRMNÍČEK 2010, 147–148.

of the northern garden terrace. One of these buildings had walls that had survived to a height of 1 m, like the building with wall plaster and *terrazzo* floor on the site of the riding school. A destruction layer with ash and the remains of a collapsed roof was also recorded. The buildings were probably terraced into the hillside and comprised at least two storeys. A cast bronze house bell and several inscribed wine amphorae are significant imports found on floor of House II.³⁷

A floor of *opus signinum* or rather *opus caementitium* type (Feature 7/08) was found in the inner palace courtyard of the castle, in its northeastern corner and in the eastern souterrain. It was decorated with a mosaic, which is typical of *opus signinum*, showing a motif of small flowers and a border with a swastika pattern (Fig. 15/a–c). Parallels for this type of floor range from the Magdalensberg in Austria to Rome, Pompeii, Herculaneum, Paestum, Morgantina, Soluntum und Monte Iato in Italy (2nd century BC – 1st century AD).³⁸ Apart from the pavement several robber trenches of the original foundations were recorded, making it possible to identify the plan of the buildings, built in at least two phases. Details are published in the excavation report.³⁹

Summary

The high-status inhabitants of the oppidum of Bratislava appear to have adopted elements of Roman architecture. They erected monumental buildings in Roman style on the oppidum's acropolis (Fig. 16).⁴⁰ The archaeological investigations on Castle Hill have uncovered evidence of extensive Late Republican and Early Augustan building activity. The sophisticated building techniques applied in the *domus* located under the winter riding school and the houses uncovered in the southeastern corner of the Baroque garden on the northern terrace – Roman Buildings II, III and IV⁴¹ – are comparable to those of the major Celtic oppida of Bibracte (France), the Magdalensberg

37. Excavation of Roman houses II, III and IV continued during season 2013/2014. Many other significant imports such as republican coins, amber, ingot, etc. were discovered. – MUSILOVÁ et al. 2010, 2–13. – RESUTÍK 2010. – RESUTÍK 2012, 201–205. – KYSELA, OLMER 2014, 167–188. – RESUTÍK 2014, 153–166.

38. MORRIGONE MATINI 1971. – DONDERER 1986. – TSAKIRGIS 1990. – DE FRANCESCHINI 1991. – COARELLI 1995. – WOLF 2003, 121. – DE FRANCESCHINI 2005. – RINALDI 2005. – VASSAL 2006, 245.

39. LESÁK 2012, 201–202. – LESÁK, KOVÁČ, VRTEL 2012, 146–147. – LESÁK, MUSILOVÁ, RESUTÍK 2013, 49–70.

40. BORHY 2009. – DOLENZ 2009. – MUSILOVÁ, GROH, SEDLMAYER 2009. – MUSILOVÁ 2011a, 28–41. – MUSILOVÁ 2011b, 187–206. – MUSILOVÁ 2012d, 123–142.

41. RESUTÍK 2010. – The excavation of these buildings was suspended in 2010.



Fig. 15. – a: *Opus signinum* floor (Feature 7/2008). – b: Meander pattern. – c: Flower motif. Bratislava Castle palace courtyard (Photograph: B. Lesák, J. Kováč; © MÚOP, Bratislava).

(Austria) or La Vispesa (Spain).⁴² The *opus signinum* floor found under the Bratislava Castle palace courtyard⁴³ is similar to several examples of *opus caementitium* in

42. THIEDIG, WAPPIS 2003, 33–128. – WOLF 2003. – MUSILOVÁ, GROH, SEDLMAYER 2009, 1–3.

43. MUSILOVÁ et al. 2010, 2–13. – LESÁK, KOVÁČ, VRTEL 2012, 146–147.

Italy, Greece and France.⁴⁴ The quality of the buildings and finds known so far indicates that there were good connections with Italy and the Mediterranean area, and suggests that the wealthy oppidum at Bratislava played a central political and economic role on the Amber Route.

In sum, the buildings and assemblages recovered can be considered to form a discrete, prestigious architectural ensemble influenced by Roman architectural concepts. This means that we are dealing with public buildings built around a square. The excavated buildings were part of a Late Republican or Early Augustan acropolis and their purpose is likely to have been of a sacred or administrative nature. Domestic buildings and structures with an economic function would have been sited lower down. More precise dating is needed to ascertain the significance and purpose our buildings fulfilled.

Dating

There are two alternatives to consider:

The buildings could belong to a Late La Tène horizon dating to between 70/60 BC and 40 BC. The traces of fire and layers of burning on the rendering and plaster could be interpreted as having resulted from the catastrophic defeat of the Boii around 50 BC by the Dacians under Burebista.

If no burning layers materialise, then:

The buildings were erected only after this event, i.e. in the 40s BC, after the demise of Boian power. Or the bellicose events of 50 BC did not touch the acropolis. So far no traces of burning have been identified on the buildings.⁴⁵ The power hiatus created by the demise of the Boian and Dacian powers was used by the Romans, or rather by the Norici under Roman administration, with the consent of the Norici and with the participation and compliance of what was left of the Boian population. The Bratislava Arx Boiorum may have been the Carnuntum referred to in the historic account of Velleius Paterculus,⁴⁶ which reports that in AD 6 Tiberius, *the son*

44. I am grateful to Dr Susanne Zabeňlicky and Dr Heinrich Zabeňlicky for identification in 2009. – MORRIGONE MATINI 1971. – DONDERER 1986. – TSAKIRGIS 1990. – DE FRANCESCHINI 1991. – THIEDIG, WAPPIS 2003, 33–128. – WOLF 2003. – DE FRANCESCHINI 2005. – RINALDI 2005. – ZABEHLICKY 2009, 1.

45. New excavations in the years 2013–2014 made by the Municipal Monuments Preservation Institute and the private archaeological company VIA MAGNA s.r.o. brought to light new evidence of Celto-Roman structures on the northern terrace. The results were presented in 2014 at the Danube Limes Brand conference “Bratislavský hrad, dejiny, výskuma obnova”, see Footnote 48.

46. This opinion was expressed on the occasion of a visit to the excavation in 2009 and by the archaeological commission of Prof. Werner Jobst, Dr Stefan Groh and Dr Heimo Dolenz.

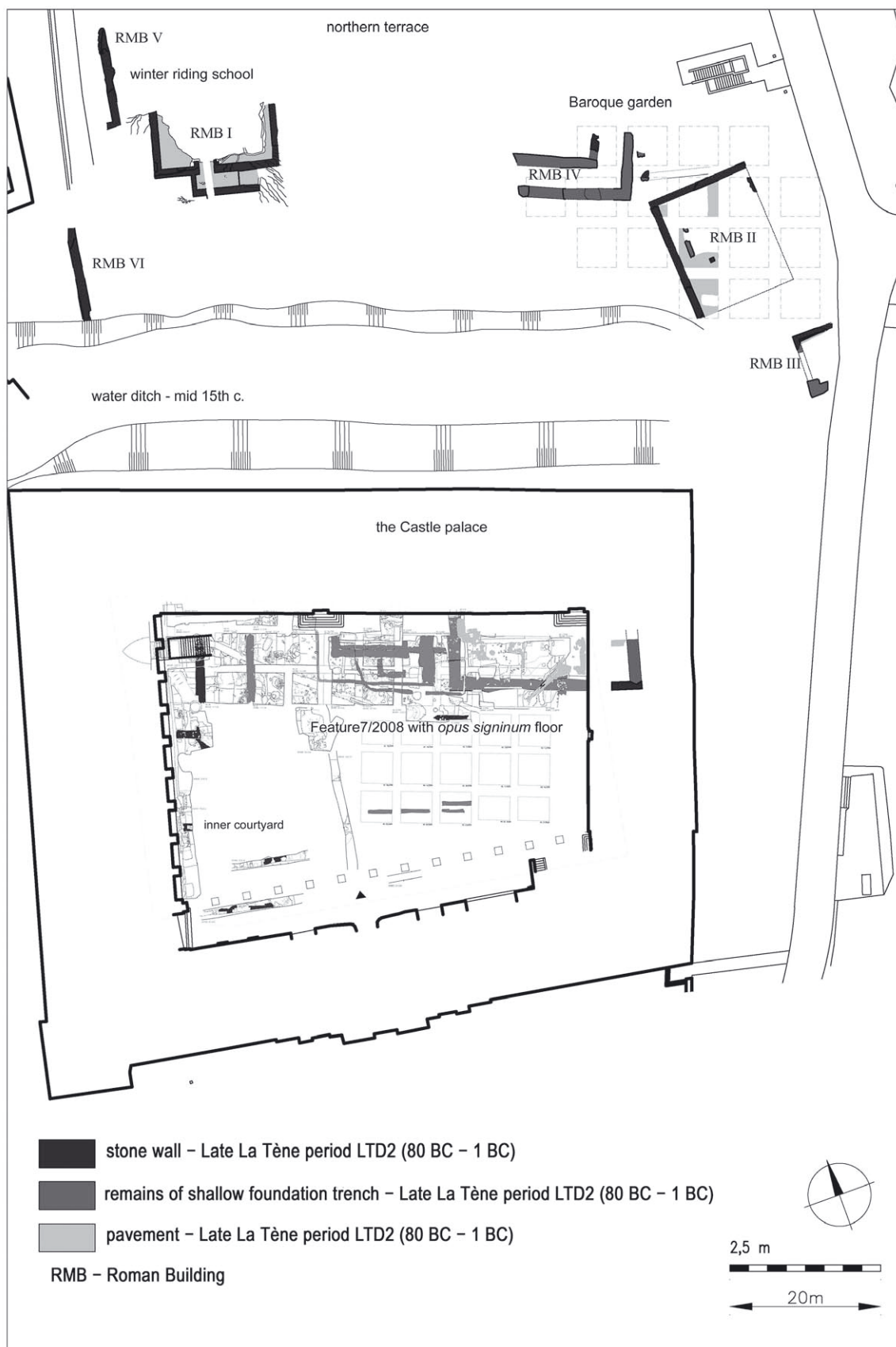


Fig. 16. Plan of the castle precinct with buildings of so-called Roman type (Drawing: M. Šabík).

of Augustus, led his army, that was serving in Illyricum from its seat Carnuntum (in) Noricum in combat against the Marcomanni.⁴⁷

Basically the structures – the Roman Building I and the other masonry buildings (Roman Buildings II, III and IV) – belong to the Late La Tène period, i.e. to between 80 BC and the turn of the era. This dating is based on the current state of research, the stratigraphy, the analysis of the finds, parallels at an international level and a discussion of the site in the context of a commission assembled on August 26, 2009. We hope that the examination of the finds and the results of analyses from the natural sciences will provide more precise dating elements in the near future.⁴⁸

Structure 1, although it has been dubbed “Roman Building I”, does not date to the period of Roman presence on the Danube (1st – 4th century AD). It was defined as such because it was probably built by a Roman master builder using Roman building techniques for the upper levels of Celtic society occupying the Late La Tène oppidum on Bratislava's Castle Hill.

All these findings are indicative of a period in which the interests of the Celts coincided with the economic and political ambitions of the Romans. Did the Celtic rulers commission such buildings from Roman master builders? The Celtic Boii built a massive oppidum with an acropolis on Castle Hill in present-day Bratislava and surroundings. They had military power, controlled strategic trade routes running from north to south (the Amber Route) and minted gold and silver coins. Were conditions on the oppidum similar to those on the Magdalensberg in Carinthia, where the Norici developed the site following a peace treaty with the Roman Imperium? The quality of the buildings and the finds so far analysed indicate intensive contacts with Italy and the Mediterranean; the importance and wealth of the Bratislava oppidum as a centre of power and trade on the Amber Route must be emphasised. It was certainly an Arx Boiorum; but whether it was the “Celtic Carnuntum” remains a hypothesis. The most recent research by Hungarian and Austrian archaeologists indicates that the Roman military, or rather the Romans' advance troops, were present in Augustan to Tiberian times on the putative line of the Amber Route

in Strebersdorf (Burgenland)⁴⁹ leading towards the Danube crossing at Devín,⁵⁰ or most probably at Bratislava (Pressburg),⁵¹ i.e. in locations where Roman buildings and finds of pre-Augustan and Augustan times have been recorded. Current knowledge excludes the oppidum on the Braunsberg as a candidate for the old Carnuntum because it was abandoned around the middle of the 1st century BC.⁵² The Roman site of Carnuntum near Petronell also does not come into the equation because, according to the evidence currently available, it was not founded until the middle of the 1st century AD, i.e. under Claudius. In the context of the establishment of the client *regnum Vannium*, the Roman army and what was left of the Boian population withdrew to the right bank of the Danube. This is where, in a sheltered position west of the confluence of the Morava with the Danube in the area between present-day Bad Deutsch-Altenburg and Petronell, the legionary fortress and town of new Carnuntum was established, using the old name of the Boii's central place.⁵³

The members of an international archaeological commission have confirmed the dating of the Bratislava Castle site and have identified the masonry building with mortar floor as a find of exceptional value, contributing not only to our knowledge of the history of Bratislava and its castle but demonstrating international significance. It has the potential to change our views of the evolution and history of the Middle Danube region in the 1st century BC right up to the turn of the era and beyond.

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47. Velleius Paterculus 2nd book, chapt. 109, 88.

48. The structures – Roman buildings I–IV and others (V–VII) found in 2013–2014 – could be dated to 50/40–30/20 BC. This information was presented at the DLB conference “Bratislavský hrad, dejiny, výskuma obnova” (Bratislava castle, history, research and renovation) held from September 22–23, 2014 in Bratislava. For the conference proceedings see MUSILOVÁ, BARTA, HERUCOVÁ 2014.

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53. STROBEL 2008, 370–373. – STROBEL 2009, 501.

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ZACHAR, REXA 1988

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Maroboduus and the Consolidation of Roman Authority in the Middle Danube Region

Michael Erdrich

Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters
Bertold Brecht, Moscow 1936

Abstract: The idea that Maroboduus seized power over the tribe of the Marcomanni voluntarily and without Roman influence and that his migration to Bohemia soon afterwards was not controlled by Rome appears questionable for various reasons, especially in the light of the exceedingly successful Roman offensives against Germanic tribes in this period.

Keywords: Middle Danube region, Marcomanni, Maroboduus, Germanic tribes, securing Roman hegemony.

Zusammenfassung: Die Vorstellung, dass Marbod aus freien Stücken und ohne römische Einflussnahme die Herrschaft über den Stamm der Markomannen übernahm und seine wenig später erfolgte Abwanderung nach Böhmen nicht von Rom gesteuert war, erscheint vor allem vor dem Hintergrund der im fraglichen Zeitraum überaus erfolgreich verlaufenden römischen Angriffskriege gegen germanische Stämme fragwürdig.

Schlüsselwörter: Mittlerer Donaauraum, Markomannen, Marbod, germanische Stämme, Sicherung römischer Hegemonie.

Introduction

The reorganisation of the tribal landscape in the western and central European *Barbaricum*, which had been conquered by Rome through military force or political coercion, became a routine measure for consolidating power over these territories surely earlier than the dying days of the Roman Republic. The history of Caesar's Gallic Wars and of the Augustan offensives against the Germanic tribes is indicative of this strategy, sometimes carried out with (to modern eyes) drastic measures, inherent to the Roman expansion policy. Even after the end of the Gallic Wars Rome intervened in a multitude of ways in the political and social structures of the societies it conquered and in doing so created the conditions for the integration

of the reconfigured tribal landscape and its new political, ideological and economic elites into the Roman world.

A comparison between the tribal landscape of north-eastern Gaul and the lower German Rhineland during and shortly after Caesar's Gallic Wars on the one hand, and the situation at the end of the reign of Augustus on the other shows a dramatically modified situation (Figs. 1–2).¹

Some tribes, like that of the Eburones, were largely exterminated during the Gallic Wars on the orders of Caesar,² and the Aduatuci were replaced by the Tungri. The Batavi or Batavians, according to historic sources an offshoot of the Chatti, settled in Betuwe in the present-day Low Countries³ as a consequence of a relocation organised by Rome. Given that the Late Iron Age and Early Imperial occupation of Dutch Betuwe does not show any evidence of a hiatus in settlement development, and since so far no finds which could be directly linked to the area of origin of the Batavi (which is historically documented as located in Hesse, Germany) have turned up, it may be that the resettled community was more of an eponymous elite.⁴ This group had been put together at the time in accordance with a Roman perspective, probably even without regard for its actual ethnic background, and labelled "Batavi".⁵ Set up by Rome to act as the new leaders of the communities settling in Late Iron Age Betuwe the Batavi established a new identity. After the

1. KUNOW 1987, 27–109, especially 27–45, Figs. 13 and 22. – JOACHIM 2007, 48–58.

2. ECK 2004, 41–45. Eck casts reasonable and well-argued doubts on the oft-cited large-scale extermination of the Eburones by Caesar, a thesis based on an account by Caesar himself.

3. For the Batavi, see ROYMANS 2004. – ROYMANS 2009, 85–98. – WILLEMS, VAN ENCKEVORT 2009.

4. WENSKUS 1961.

5. Whether we are always dealing with actual "ethnic" "Batavi" among these peoples is open to question. The attribution to a tribe by the Roman authorities was decisive: see VAN DRIEL-MURRAY, 2003, 200–217.



Fig. 1. Areas occupied by indigenous tribes in the Rhineland in Caesarian times (after HORN 1988, Fig. 13; Landschaftsverband LVR-Amt für Bodendenkmalpflege im Rheinland/LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn).

foundation of the province of Germania Inferior in the 80s of the first century AD this region – newly-formed according to Roman preferences – obtained the administrative status of a *civitas*, which gave to the population living there additional confirmation and promotion of their new collective identity. The Ubii were also relocated from present-day Hesse to the Cologne Lowland,⁶ and their later history there is more or less analogous to that of the Batavi. The deportation, ordered by Tiberius during the Augustan offensive of 8 BC, of a few thousand Sugambri constitutes a further example. Members of other Germanic tribes such as the Marsi, which the Romans for – from a present point of view – incomprehensible reasons counted among the deported Sugambri, were probably also affected by this measure.⁷ Even when no

written sources or archaeological testimonies are available, other groups may have been the victims of resettlement or genocide, in particular some parts of the communities belonging to the Elbe-Germani occupying Westphalia. Indeed Elbe-Germanic and Suebian warrior groups were considered – at least from the time of Caesar's conflict with Ariovist – the main adversaries of Rome's interests. The affected populations were driven out of the areas they occupied on the right bank of the Rhine and resettled on the left bank. The historic sources refer to a (surely exaggerated) total population of 40,000 people. The Oppidum Batavorum (Nijmegen, Netherlands)⁸ and the Oppidum

the agreement and the active participation of the Sugambric *nobilitas*, for purely organisational reasons alone. It is also likely that there was a strong element of control on part of the Roman military. This cooperative *nobilitas* is highly likely to have been the newly-established ruling class set up by Rome after the surrender of the Sugambri. – HEINRICH 2001, 54–92.

8. WILLEMS, VAN ENCKEVORT 2009.

6. ECK 2004, 46–62.

7. The resettlement of the Sugambri has been thoroughly examined from different perspectives by Johannes Heinrichs. He rightly emphasises that the resettlement could only have taken place with



Fig. 2. Areas occupied by indigenous tribes in the Rhineland in the 1st century AD (after HORN 1988, Fig. 22; LVR-Amt für Bodendenkmalpflege im Rheinland/LVR-Landes-Museum Bonn).

Ubiarum (Cologne, Germany)⁹ are examples of fully planned central places of Roman type that began to be established in the last decade BC in the territories occupied by the resettled Batavi and Ubii.¹⁰

The fact that there is a hiatus of two to three years between the resettlement of the Sugambri and the return of Maroboduus to “Germania” and his departure for Bohemia shortly afterwards does not mean that these two events were not part of the same programme. The aim of such a programme was to secure power over the conquered regions and their foreland in the short or medium term. The Roman staff in charge of planning would have known from a sober analysis of the situation in 8 BC that the offensives were to continue and that further military success and territorial expansion lay ahead. The consolidation of control over so far occupied or yet to be

occupied territories and their occupants would have been discussed, designed and, finally, implemented.

Roman acquiescence in or even instigation of or an actual instruction to Maroboduus to depart to Bohemia with his followers has recently been vehemently disputed because it does not fit the wording in the writings of ancient historians and geographers.¹¹ A comparison with well-documented processes of ethnic re-orderings in the Lower Rhine area however prompts us to re-open the debate and to consider a thesis that goes against the grain of the historic record and all its problems.

Geographic Context and Research Questions

For quite diverse reasons there is considerable uncertainty in historical as well as archaeological research about how Rome enforced its claims to power in the regions it controlled directly, or at least in the immediate sphere

9. ECK 2004.

10. MORSCHER-NIEBERGALL 2009.

11. KEHNE 2001a, 258–262, especially 259.

of interest of the Empire in the Middle Danube region (Fig. 3) after its successful campaigns in the Alps and the probably largely peaceful annexation of the *regnum Noricum* (15 BC). We are on solid, archaeologically-documented ground once (beginning in the Claudian period) forts were built on the southern banks of the Danube River to control the frontier by military means. From then on an increasingly tight chain of military camps secured the interests of the Empire. The official transformation of the former *regnum Noricum* into a regular province may have occurred at the same time. Since archaeologically-documented military garrisons or other sites yielding weapons or equipment of the Roman army dating to the time of the conquest of the *regnum Noricum* are missing, we are not even able to ascertain whether any significant numbers of Roman troops were present in the areas affected – for example in the Vienna or Tulln basins. The altogether quite confusing situation is not made any clearer by the successful (from a Roman point of view) campaigns against the Germanic tribes. The fact that these campaigns were largely initiated in Gaul or in the northwestern parts of the Alps and had no measurable effect on our region plays a not negligible part. Despite its wealth of strategic resources the entire eastern Alpine region did not play a role as a deployment zone or supply area for troops,¹² even after the integration of the *regnum Noricum* into the Roman Empire. This raises questions about how far Rome's dominion extended and how effectively it was protected.

South of the Danube, our study area comprises primarily the basin of Vienna between the Vienna Woods (*Wienerwald*) in the west and the Leitha Mountains in the east, whose northern foothills join the southern spur of the Little Carpathians on the Danube near Bad Deutsch-Altenburg opposite Bratislava. North of the Danube the region under study encompasses Bohemia and Moravia, the eastern part of Lower Austria and the neighbouring lowlands of the Morava as far as the Little Carpathians to the east. Formally the basin of Tulln to the west of the Vienna Woods and large parts of present-day Upper Austria can also be included.

12. This could mean that Roman knowledge of the regions and people north of the eastern Prealps was not sufficient at the time to organise large military operations. On the other hand, intelligence may have been so good that it was clear that it would not be possible to supply large contingents stationed on the Middle Danube or military formations operating from there either from the land itself or through existing supply routes from northern Italy. In contrast to the more developed Gaul, the eastern Alpine zone lacked the infrastructure and social conditions necessary for success.

In 1997, Verena Gassner and Sonja Jilek equated the historically-recorded *deserta Boiorum* established after the defeat of the Boii by the Dacians with the area south of the Danube described above and the Burgenland. They surmised that these regions still belonged to the sphere of influence of the *regnum Noricum*.¹³ We can assume at least, on the basis of the multiple political and economic contacts between the *regnum Noricum* and the Roman Republic, that Rome was well informed about military events and ethnic transformations on the periphery of the friendly Norican kingdom. This raises the question whether these peripheral regions automatically entered the sphere of interest of Rome after the incorporation of the *regnum Noricum* into the Roman Empire in 15 BC or shortly afterwards or, if not, what their status was.¹⁴ The same of course also applies to the parts of the *deserta Boiorum* located north of the Danube. In his account of the early history of the Romans and Germanic people on the Middle Danube, Alois Stuppner,¹⁵ like Gassner and Jilek, tacitly assumes that the annexation of the *regnum Noricum* moved the frontiers of the Roman Empire forwards to the Danube.¹⁶ This may also have been the Roman perception. But how this translated into reality escapes us. The situation only becomes very clear – both to the ancient inhabitants on either side of the Danube and to modern research – when a chain of permanently garrisoned military camps was established on the southern bank of the Danube under Claudius. However, if we compare the situation on the Middle Danube with the conditions on the Middle and Lower Rhine after the end of Caesar's Gallic Wars – where no troops were stationed on the frontier for several decades – the lack of consolidation of power becomes obvious. Germanic warrior groups used the power vacuum for assaults on the Gaulish and Germanic tribes that had been conquered and subjugated by Rome and crossed the Rhine unopposed. Perhaps the absence of the Roman military encouraged Germanic bands of warriors to attack ter-

13. GASSNER, JILEK 1997, 26–44, especially 26–27.

14. Archaeological and historical research, as well as popular perception, keeps emphasising the “peaceful”, even amicable character of the annexation of the independent *regnum Noricum*. But what does “peaceful” actually mean when an independent kingdom is being annexed and Roman troops armed to the teeth are fighting and murdering only a few marching days away? Hence, doubts must remain as to the use of the expression “peaceful annexation”, doubts already voiced by GASSNER, JILEK 1997, 59.

15. STUPPNER 1997, 113–127, especially 113–115.

16. This opinion ultimately goes back to a remark made by Augustus in his progress report. He mentions that he had conquered the Pannonian peoples and thus moved the frontier of Roman Illyria as far as the Danube: see Augustus, *Res Gestae* 30.

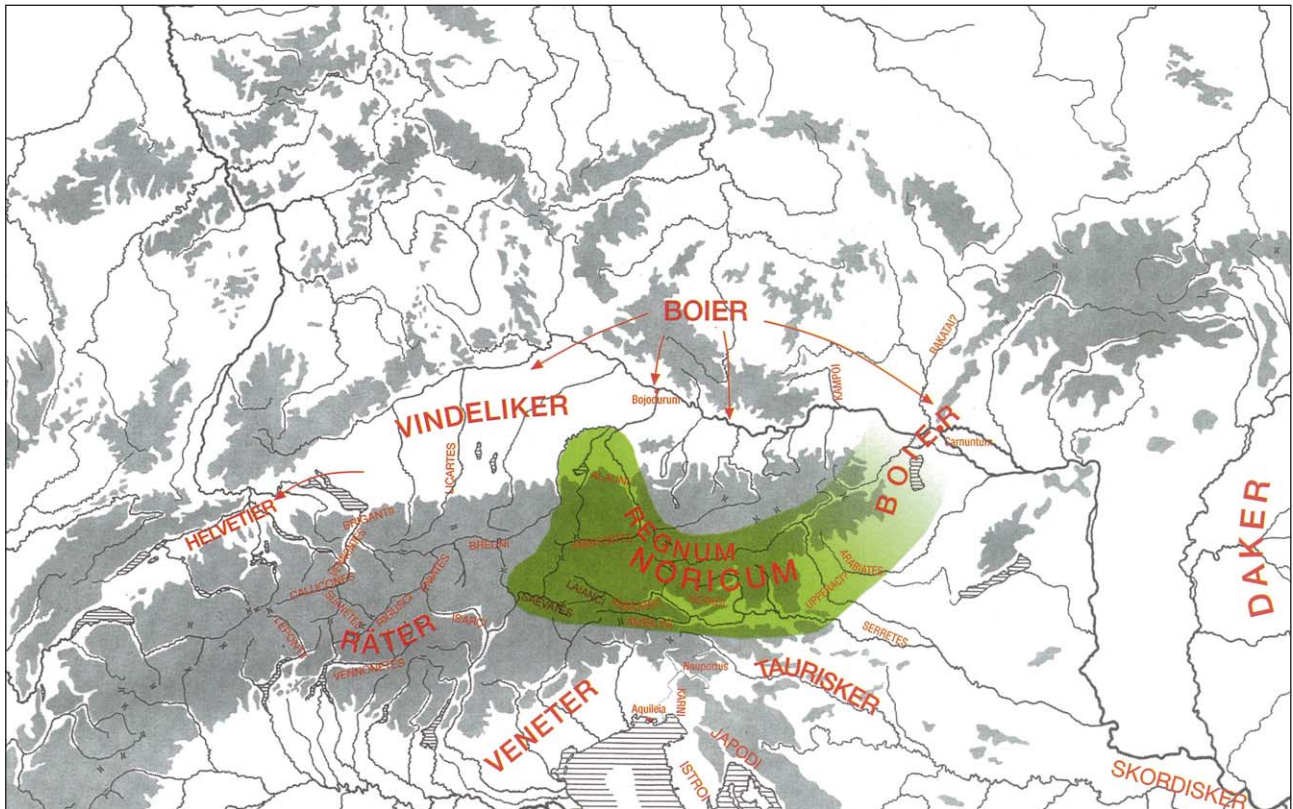


Fig. 3. The *regnum Noricum* and neighbouring tribes in the eastern Alpine and Danube region (URBAN 2000, 365).

ritories that were only nominally Roman and what was surely considered to be a militarily unsecured region in the eyes of Germanic warrior bands from the right bank of the Rhine. It is not excluded that Germanic warriors had stayed in the territory of the Treveri even before the uprising of the latter and possibly also took part in some form or another in that revolt. The surprising defeat of Lollius and the loss of half a legion in 16 BC at the hands of a federation of Sugambric warriors in the Roman Rhineland illustrate impressively the military strength and organisation of the attacking Germanic warrior bands. We can assume that contingents of warriors belonging to Elbe-Germanic and Suebian tribes also participated in these operations, given the strong presence of these tribal groups in Westphalia.

In his study of the archaeology of the Late pre-Roman Iron Age and Early Imperial period in Westphalia Georg Eggenstein discusses an archaeological horizon characterised by Elbe-Germanic materials clearly identifiable on settlements but not in burials of the time. The fact that these Elbe-Germanic finds are always associated with indigenous wares is worth noting. To date no sites with only Elbe-Germanic assemblages have been recorded. After a balanced consideration of the opinions previously expressed, Eggenstein concludes

that the Elbe-Germanic horizon in Westphalia and in neighbouring regions is the result of the “immigration of Elbe-Germanic communities”, in which the migrants favoured already settled areas and mixed with the indigenous population.¹⁷ The strength of the Elbe-Germanic influence on the indigenous tribes of Westphalia is illustrated by a map (Fig. 4) showing the presence of Elbe-Germanic pottery in Westphalia and the left bank of the Rhineland. Eggenstein believes that there was no potential for conflict in the region because the Elbe-Germanic pottery always occurs together with local pottery on indigenous settlements. Christoph Reichmann on the other hand would not exclude the possibility that the Elbe-Germanic immigrants – which he describes as an “outsider group” – carried out raids from the Lower Rhine into the area of the left Rhine river bank.¹⁸ In this

17. EGGENSTEIN 2002, especially 179–183. – BEMMANN (2007, 97–105, especially map 64) accepts Eggenstein’s position that there are no indications of conflict between indigenous and newly-arrived populations without further comment. – See also FRANK, KELLER 2007, 316–324. – For the western expansion of the Przeworsk culture, see BOCKIUS, ŁUCKIEWICZ 2004, 332–335. – ŁUCKIEWICZ 2007, 336–338.

18. REICHMANN 1979, 186–217, especially 201, 210.

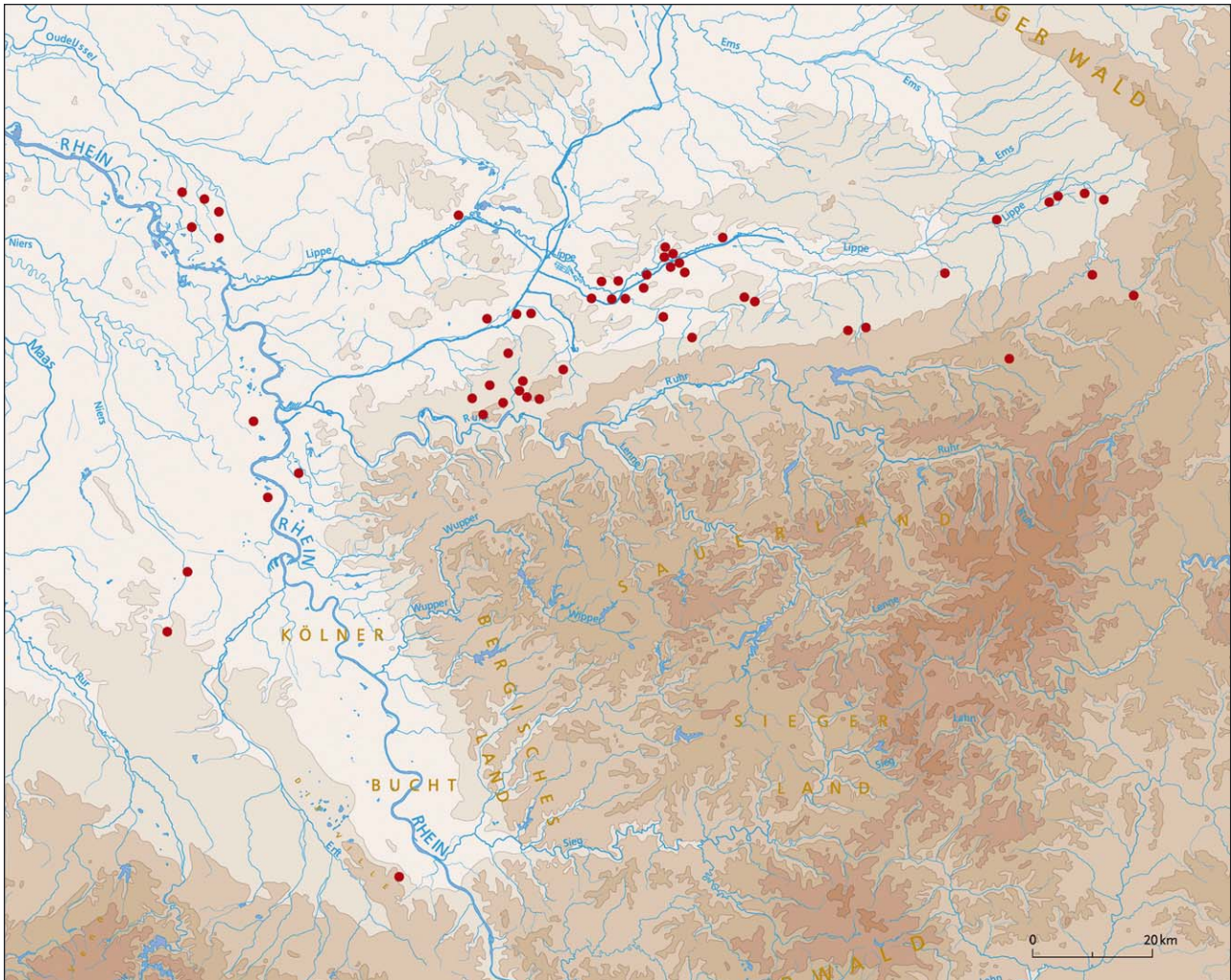


Fig. 4. Map of sites with pottery of Elbe-Germanic type in Westphalia and the Rhineland (after BEMMANN 2007, Fig. 64; graphics: Christoph Duntze, LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn).

case subordination to the indigenous population would appear rather unlikely.

Against this background the question arises of how Rome secured its claim to power over the regions of the *regnum Noricum*, which was incorporated around or soon after 15 BC. The uncontrolled infiltration of Elbe-Germanic and eastern Germanic groups in southern German areas but especially in the regions to the north of the Middle Danube could have represented a potentially dangerous situation for the newly-integrated Noricum and its strategic assets such as iron and gold.¹⁹ This is comparable to the danger posed by the increasing presence of foreign groups in Westphalia and the Main region for the economically very important and rich Gaul.

The problem of consolidating power is exacerbated by the (in Roman eyes) successful campaigns of Drusus

and his successor Tiberius. Since there is no archaeological evidence available, the writings of ancient authors do not provide sufficient grounds to draw up a reliable map of the tribes and their territories conquered by Drusus and Tiberius. Overall it looks as though the northern German lowlands and the Mittelgebirge region adjoining it to the south as far as the Weser and the Main were conquered. Any statement about the situation between the northern fringes of the Alps and the Danube and the areas to the north of the Danube is pure speculation. We cannot even say with any degree of certainty if and what role the (Middle) Danube played during the wars in the Alps or in the Germanic wars under Augustus. The location of Rome's "northern frontier" after the integration of the *regnum Noricum* is unknown. Was it the Danube or some unknown "line" north or south of the great European river whose middle course was to become the northern frontier of the Empire more than 60 years later? We

19. STRAUBE 1996. – CECH 2008.

should avoid projecting later systems of the balance of power onto the very dynamic situation during the times of the Augustan offensives.

We must also accept that during these offensives situations arose that forced Roman officers and officials to take decisions whose influence went far beyond the actual events. The full significance of such decisions was however not always recognised by the ancient authors or was not deemed important enough to warrant a mention. The testimonies of our ancient “informants” concentrate on the decisions and actions at the highest level of command, i.e. the members of the imperial family and its close entourage.

Remarks on the Results of Research on the Written Sources Referring to Maroboduus

There is no doubt that Maroboduus, of the tribe of the Marcomanni, played a key role in the political and military development of the Middle Danube region in Augustan and Tiberian times. Many scholars have dealt with his biography,²⁰ most recently Peter Kehne and Gerhard Dobesch. Despite different perspectives on some aspects, both follow surprisingly closely the wording of the ancient authors in their reconstructions of Maroboduus’ life and actions. At this point let us recall that the written sources at our disposal are in no way independent or value-free testimonies, but narratives influenced by personal motivations, intentions or knowledge of historic events, processes and people. None of these accounts would stand up to scrutiny in a modern-day court.

Despite the relative amount of detail contained in the written sources about Maroboduus, serious doubts remain about these accounts and the actual course of the events they report. Here I would like to concentrate on certain questions that relate to our concerns, namely in what capacity Maroboduus came into direct personal contact with Roman officials. His relationship with the emperor Augustus is also closely linked to this question. The core of the problem is whether Maroboduus went to Bohemia as a “private person” as the ancient written sources tell us, or whether he was sent there by the Romans. The answer to this question influences our judgment of his position in the political and military structures of the Middle Danube area and neighbouring regions.

20. Recent overviews can be found in: KEHNE 2001a, 258–262. – KEHNE 2001b, 290–302. – DOBESCH 2009, 7–52. – KEHNE 2009, 53. Since the sources have not changed, there is little point in reiterating the opinions expressed to date and evaluating anew the arguments advanced with different degrees of emphasis. Both authors provide extensive bibliographies.

Modern historians indicate that Maroboduus was born in 30 BC or shortly thereafter, the son of a member of the Marcomannic *nobilitas* living at that time either in Main-Hesse or Main-Franconia. According to the written sources he went to Rome at some point and stayed there for an undetermined period. The reasons for his stay in the Empire’s capital are not given but it is possible, among others, that he was taken hostage after a defeat and subsequent bilateral agreements, or that he served in the imperial guard or in another military unit. Maybe he was simply a prisoner of war. Presumably he did not fall into the hands of Rome by his own choice.²¹ The earliest possible time for these events would be the beginning of the Augustan offensive against Germanic tribes, but it is more likely that Maroboduus’ captivity dates to the defeat of a Marcomannic army by Drusus in 10 or 9 BC.²² Gerhard Dobesch supposes that he returned to Germania in 7 or 6 BC.²³

Close contacts with Augustus are as difficult to substantiate as the education Maroboduus is supposed to have received. Both are quite unlikely.²⁴ The Marcomanni were one among many Germanic tribes, far away from Rome and at that time of no political or military importance. Augustus, the sole ruler of the Roman Empire, surely had better things to do than to look personally after a young member of the Marcomannic nobility. Moreover, Augustus suffered and had to deal with some personal setbacks:²⁵ Augustus probably never acknowledged Maroboduus in the manner that a literal reading of the few contemporary sources would suggest. The gifts and other good deeds allegedly bestowed are inventions of the ancient authors designed to reinforce Maroboduus’ negative image. They are stylistic devices to justify morally and ideologically Rome’s conduct in dismantling Maroboduus’ empire. The emperor was not always in Rome during the relevant years, and when he was, the young Marcomannic tribesman must have meant very little to him.

Like many other young men from the upper social strata of subjugated nations or from populations contractually bound to Rome, Maroboduus probably stayed

21. WOLTERS 1990, 180–181. – KEHNE 2001a, 258. – See DOBESCH 2009, 13–14.

22. See also DOBESCH 2009, 14, 16.

23. DOBESCH 2009, 15. – The 15–20-year old Maroboduus thus had a maximum of four years in which he not only mastered an astonishing amount of learning and acquired remarkable skills, but also found entry into the highest circles of the Empire. – Kehne cannot give precise indications about the timing of his return in his short biography of Maroboduus.

24. See also KEHNE 2001a, 258.

25. CHRIST 1988, 91.

in Rome at first against his will as human collateral in a negotiated agreement.²⁶ The “Rome” of the ancient authors can also stand in for Lugdunum or another large military garrison to serve the purpose of these authors and to enhance the potential for moral outrage. Presumably Maroboduus did receive military training, and it is possible that he commanded, like other Germanic leaders in the service of Rome, a Germanic or Marcomannic unit, thereby gaining insights into the civil administration of the Imperium and especially the organisational structure of the Roman army.

I believe it rather unlikely that it was even possible for a high-ranking Roman commander in the Germanic theatre of war or the emperor in Rome himself to reflect meaningfully on the reorganisation of the Germanic tribal landscape after a successful conquest or make decisions about staffing. Such matters were decided as and when the situation arose, and only then were decisions about personnel made. Who was to know at the time of the (supposed) hostage taking of a relatively unimportant Germanic youth what a bright star he would become in a few years time? It was not Augustus who personally drew up the list of hostages to be secured but an officer on the spot, based on information gathered about individuals that were available. Is it likely that young noblemen from any number of Germanic tribes that had just been subjugated and forced to surrender to the Roman army were brought to Rome and then educated together with the sons of major and important kingdoms in the east of the Empire, receiving tuition that included fluent Latin and a thorough knowledge of Greek and Roman literature? Would these “young savages” from Europe’s *Barbaricum* be groomed as inspired interlocutors at the highest social level in a completely uncertain future?²⁷ Is this a realistic scenario? Rather not.

In reality Maroboduus was far from having the status of a potential “friendly king” at the beginning of his stay in “Rome”. If we accept that he entered the Empire as a hostage, then he was just one of many similar young Germanic men who were used to guarantee compliance with the terms of treaty in the aftermath of military defeat or voluntary submission.

26. Like other “hostages” Maroboduus may have been considered an investment that was cheap to maintain but represented a useful asset for the future.

27. DOBESCH (2009, 8–10) qualifies his remarks by noting that his account of the Cheruscan nobles in Rome cannot be transferred directly to Maroboduus but his subsequent statements on the education of “Cherusci of the high nobility” come close.

On the other hand, after the successful campaigns under Drusus,²⁸ which Tiberius concluded after Drusus’ death, the Romans must have soon considered the new order in the conquered territories and pondered over the consolidation of its periphery. If the suggestion outlined above, i.e. that the offensive carried out from the Rhine was intended to conquer all Germanic tribal territories between the Rhine and the Weser holds reasonably true, then different regions were affected. First any claims over the subjugated tribes and their territories had to be consolidated. If the ethnic reorganisation of regions conquered by the military formed part of Augustus’ policy of consolidation, the resettlement and deportation from the right bank of the Rhine and Westphalia of the Sugambri, and (as the case may be) of other Germanic groups, fits this scenario. This would have removed a potentially serious danger of uprisings in the northern periphery of Gaul. The situation in the south and in the entire area to the north of the Alps up to the Danube and beyond is less easy to assess. But we can assume that the Roman military staff in charge of planning in the Germanic theatre of war had a good knowledge of the topography and settlement of the eastern and southern regions, whose tribes had already been conquered. Add to this information on the structure of the population on the periphery of the *regnum Noricum*, which by then had been incorporated into the Empire. We should not forget that the Norican gold and iron resources were already accessible and were of great economic value. The indigenous population had an excellent knowledge of metal extraction and metalworking techniques; it was probably well organised and used to dealing with the Romans. If there was an ethnic reorganisation of the regions conquered in the northwest, why should the south and the east be overlooked? There the still extant Celtic traditions played, in my opinion, a rather secondary role, even in the conflict-fuelled time of military occupation. The conquered regions and, when possible, their peripheries had to come under permanent Roman control, no matter what the ethnic or cultural affiliation of their inhabitants were.

Maroboduus’ Arrival in Germania

Maroboduus returned to Germania with Rome’s approval, according to Peter Kehne. However, he considers it “highly doubtful” that the Romans also gave their blessing to “a power takeover among the Marcomanni who had been defeated by Drusus in 8 BC and forced to total

28. After all, these campaigns resulted in the surrender of the Marcomanni, in the wake of which Maroboduus was probably taken hostage.

surrender by Tiberius”.²⁹ How could this have happened in practical terms? A hostage leaves his assigned place of residence with the approval of the Roman authorities and meets – after an absence of several years (can this really take place without Roman acquiescence?) – the politically and militarily much weakened leaders of the Marcomanni. And these leaders, which no doubt must have been appointed by the Roman authorities after the surrender, entrust the fate of their severely battered tribe to a young man who had spent the last few years away from his own community and had never occupied any position of responsibility in his tribe. Was the fact that he was a member of the nobility sufficient? Apparently a mandate from a “private person”³⁰ was sufficient. This seems barely possible without the Roman authorities’ approval or instigation.³¹

As soon as he had taken command as the new leader of the Marcomanni Maroboduus let it be known that it was his firm intention to leave the area occupied by the Romans behind and seek new settlement areas in Bohemia with the rest of his tribe. As Gerhard Dobesch rightly remarks, it is an “extremely naïve modern notion” to imagine that Barbarian tribes “could just set off”.³² How would Maroboduus supply his tribe on its journey? What did he imagine his reception in Bohemia – which the archaeological evidence indicates was far from unoccupied, a fact that Maroboduus surely knew – would be, and how did he organise the march? Where did the horses and carts come from, and is it likely that a large group of people would just slip out of a zone occupied by the Romans unnoticed?³³ And did Maroboduus think that Rome would tolerate profound political and military change on the periphery of the *regnum Noricum* that it had annexed just a few years earlier? These are all questions thrown up by the testimony of the ancient written sources and the modern historians who followed them.

A key argument used by modern historians is Strabo’s unequivocal statement that Maroboduus arrived in Bohemia as a “private person”, to cite Peter Kehne. My reading, contrary to the wording of the written sources, is that Maroboduus was acting on behalf of the Romans

ever since he left “Rome” for Germania. The contradiction may not be as stark as would first appear. We know – and not just from the Late Republican period and the wars on the Iberian Peninsula – of a long line of military commanders consistently of senatorial lineage who wielded the power to command (*imperium*) without legal authority from the Senate. Their actions were nevertheless carried out with the understanding and “blessing” of the Senate,³⁴ albeit not officially expressed or sanctioned. Officially, no one knew. In this connection the historian Erich S. Gruen wrote: “Spain provided the site for most of the long-term promagistracies, as might be expected. Much hard fighting was required in the subjugation of the territory. And the Roman government was not to be hamstrung by any abstract principles about annual commands.”³⁵ Is it conceivable that Roman commanders would have taken decisions on the spot and for pragmatic reasons, in close consultation with the Senate or without, about the military and political control of the conquered region and its periphery? This includes the issue of human resources. Could it not have been put to the hostage Maroboduus: “Cooperate! It is not to your disadvantage. Officially we cannot commission you but you have our blessing.”?

The following remarks do not corroborate the written sources and even contradict them: Maroboduus is sent to Bohemia on Rome’s orders – either officially or without mandate – with a retinue probably numerically quite moderate. Upon arrival he is expected to reorganise what is, from the Roman viewpoint, a confusing situation that is potentially dangerous for the further integration of the former *regnum Noricum*.

Maroboduus’ Seat

We start from the premise that Maroboduus went to Bohemia on Roman orders. It is quite unlikely that he acquired a permanent seat on his arrival in Bohemia.³⁶ He must at first have been mobile, until he was in a position to consolidate his claims to power over Bohemia and what remained of its Celtic population and immigrant Germanic groups.³⁷ But soon afterwards he must have

29. KEHNE 2001a, 258: “Herrschaftsübernahme bei den von Drusus 10 v. Chr. vernichtend geschlagenen und 8 v. Chr. von Tiberius zur allgemeinen Deditio gezwungenen Markomannen.”

30. According to Kehne, who follows Strabo’s (7, 1, 4) wording closely: KEHNE 2001a, 258. – KEHNE 2009, 54.

31. DOBESCH 2009, 15 at least leaves open the possibility that Maroboduus acted with Rome’s acquiescence.

32. DOBESCH 2009, 14.

33. KEHNE (2001a, 259) emphasises the wording of the ancient written sources, which unambiguously refer to “individual initiative, migration, flight, occupation, hiding, hideouts”.

34. I am grateful to S. Schipporeit (Vienna) for drawing my attention to this group of *privati*.

35. GRUEN 1974, 538, see also 534–543.

36. DROBERJAR 2009, 94. – KEHNE 2009, 56 and Note 35. – SALAČ 2009, 123.

37. How did Maroboduus come to take control of the remaining Celtic population and Germanic immigrants without legitimation and without pressure? Merely by the strength of his personality? Most probably not. The archaeological evidence suggests that Maroboduus’ incoming group was quite small, and this also makes sense when considering the journey from the Roman occupied zone to

sought to establish a permanent base that had to meet a number of criteria. Power depends on good lines of communication and accessibility. A centre of power in the vicinity of locations like Lovosice, the region of Kadaň, Kolín or Prague-Bubeneč – all Bohemian pre-historic central places as recently proposed by Vladimír Saláč³⁸ – appears unlikely in view of Maroboduus' aims, as reported in historic documents. His dominion, or perhaps better the region under his direct or indirect control, is supposed to have extended beyond the narrow confines of Bohemia and to include large areas of the central European *Barbaricum*.

From the perspective of a Maroboduus depending on Rome, his seat had to meet some further requirements. The line of communication “with Rome” had to be direct and controllable by the contracting authority, i.e. Rome. The traditional central places of Bohemia were unsuited to such a purpose because at that time the routes of advance were uncontrollable and obscure from a Roman viewpoint.

Rome's knowledge of the topography and traditional communication networks of the Middle Danube region relied primarily on information provided by the Norici and to a lesser extent on its own reconnaissance. The question is whether these old, historically-accrued lines of communication were able to meet the needs of a completely changed geopolitical situation. With the annexation of the *regnum Noricum* the immediate influence of Rome had reached the Danube. The simultaneous offensives against the Germanic tribes led, despite military success, to the recognition that military operations needed routes and that these first had to be laboriously cut through thick forest.³⁹ In Gaul the tight network of existing routes of communication between the oppida had facilitated the subjugation of the tribes and their subsequent integration into the Roman Empire. This was not the case in Bohemia. The links with northern Italy were good and well-established. With the prospect of further expansion, but surely also with the consolidation of what had been achieved so far in mind, the Romans had to expand their

Bohemia. So how can a young man without any real legitimation acquire a dominant position in Bohemia at the turn of the era?

38. SALÁČ 2009, 123.

39. An unconventional but very attractive suggestion was made Gerhard Dobesch in this context (DOBESCH 2009, 43). He asks, whether it would have been part of the duties of the troops attacking from Marktbreit to build a solid and durable road towards the east. This hypothetical road building project, perhaps merely invented by Dobesch, would fit exactly a situation in which a campaign was largely over and successful from a Roman viewpoint. It would be a clear and visible sign of Rome's reorganisation of the conquered areas.

network further north because there the existing lines of communication were not suited to the new challenges. If the Roman campaigns against the Germanic tribes had been successful, “in Germania” a network of long-distance-roads would have been built rapidly, at first mainly serving military objectives but later increasingly economic purposes.⁴⁰ Seen against this background, Maroboduus' seat had to be able to respond urgently to these Roman requirements and would therefore not have to tie in with traditional, indigenous structures.

A location with respect to the *regnum Noricum*, which had been annexed only a few years previously, constitutes a further aspect that would have influenced the choice (corresponding to Roman expectations) of a central place in a region under Marcomannic dominion. At the time of the establishment of “Maroboduus' empire” the territory of the *regnum Noricum* was neither conjoined to the regions and settlement areas of north-western Germany and the western Mittelgebirge – now occupied by Roman troops – nor was it contiguous with Bohemia, which is usually equated with the core area of Maroboduus' dominion. On the contrary, the regions located between the east of the main Alpine chain and the Danube (mainly the basins of Vienna and Tulln, favourable to settlement) and especially the areas north of the Danube and in the western Burgenland belonged to a grey area: on the periphery of the zone of interest and influence of the *regnum Noricum* and now within the zone of interest and influence of the Empire. The west of this zone was close to already conquered territories, and to the east the Pannonian Lowlands were already under Roman control. At the time of the establishment of “Maroboduus' empire” the region under consideration posed a security problem. Given the enormous numbers of troops that would have been needed to consolidate the already conquered territories of “Germania” and continue the offensive campaigns, in my opinion, was an illusion: hence the idea of indirect control by a dependant ruler for a limited period.

The new central place therefore had to meet multiple criteria. We can assume with some certainty that at the beginning of the power consolidation phase this seat had to be easily accessible, whenever possible, from the existing Roman road network. The area of Bratislava-Devín fits these requirements perfectly. It is located at the intersection of the Amber Route with the Danube, and at Devín the lines of communication open up towards

40. Let us recall that Agrippa built long-distance roads leading to the Rhine in preparation of the Germanic wars in Gaul. His task was made easier by the fact that he could use already existing routes.

the north, the west and the east (Fig. 5).⁴¹ Moreover, the location of the old central places, unsuited to the new infrastructure's objectives, would not have been corresponded to Maroboduus' desire or demand for close economic contacts with the Roman Empire. If Roman merchants were to settle permanently in the new king's seat of power, they had to have reliable supply routes. From Devín routes towards northern Italy either already existed or could easily be developed. And let us not forget that Devín was accessible not just by traders but by Roman troops.

The excavations carried out over a very limited area and in difficult circumstances in the central castle yard of Bratislava-Devín have yielded a number of Roman finds, which cannot be dated more precisely than to the Augustan period, i.e. the years around the turn of the era and thereafter. Sherds of stamped *terra sigillata*, including several plates, bowls and cups, are well represented in the assemblage and provide a sound basis for dating. Sherds of Augustan finewares and amphorae are also present. The range of metal finds recovered is dominated by elements of Roman military equipment such as buckles and *cingulum* appliques or fittings. Five Aucissa type fibulae, coins and an iron tent peg also fit in this spectrum. The assemblage indicates, as the excavators rightly note, that Roman soldiers were present.⁴² In my opinion the identification of stone foundations measuring barely 4.5 × 3.5 m with an "Augustan tower" is unlikely: a side wall curving towards the interior and ending for no visible reason is puzzling.⁴³ In this context, let us recall a (to my mind less than convincing) remark by Thomas Fischer: he would like to see in the Augustan assemblages and sites of Bratislava-Devín a "fortified and separate headquarters of Tiberius' army". The Roman units would have camped at the foot of the Castle Hill. The site of Kops Plateau in Nijmegen cited by Fischer as a parallel however differs from the site of Devín in many respects.⁴⁴ If Fischer's suggestion should prove to be correct, then one of the questions arising concerns the relations between the (remaining) Celtic population still occupying the oppidum and the high-ranking Roman officers. How, for example, was their security handled?

The evidence for "*negotiatores* components", i.e. traces of the presence of (Roman?) traders in Devín is proving

elusive.⁴⁵ A few traces of artisan activity, iron artefacts and fragments of amber are insufficient.

From a Roman perspective Bratislava's Castle Hill is not eligible as a seat for a Marcomannic king dependent on Rome because it had previously been an emporium of the *regnum Noricum* and was therefore "contaminated". The seat of the new "strong man" in the Middle Danube region was not to stand in the shadow of a power vanquished by Rome; instead it had to symbolise new power balance.

The Roman Finds of the Early Imperial Period in Bohemia⁴⁶

A rapid survey of the Late Iron Age and Early Imperial metal vessels found in Bohemia prompts a few reflections.⁴⁷ As a starting point we must bear in mind that here, as in other parts of the western and central European *Barbaricum*, Late Iron Age and Early Imperial "Roman imports" are practically always restricted to a few forms within a much larger spectrum of containers made from non-ferrous metals available in the Empire.

The period under consideration spans several decades, a period in which an entirely independent Celtic kingdom (though politically and economically closely associated with Rome) existed between the territories of the Late Republic and Bohemia. It is only with the annexation of the *regnum Noricum* that Rome's claims to power expanded towards regions to the north of the Alps (here I deliberately avoid the term "frontier"). This means that all "Roman finds" produced before around 15 BC and which in one form or another found their way to Bohemia could have been acquired during the time of the *regnum Noricum*. I consider this to be a more likely scenario than the acquisition of goods in the Roman Empire south of the Alps. Hence for this period we should refer more correctly to "relations with the entire pre-Roman Norican-Pannonian zone". The quite frequent presence of later Norican-Pannonian belt sets and other elements of dress in Bohemia, Moravia and the territory of present-day Slovakia supports the suggestion that contacts actually targeted this region.

45. PIETA 2010, 54.

46. Just as I completed the manuscript of this paper, a dissertation on the Roman non-ferrous metal vessels from Moravia and parts of Lower Austria north of the Danube was published (JILEK 2012). It was unfortunately not possible to read this work thoroughly in the time available, but a rapid skim of the assemblages immediately shows that they barely differ from the vessels found in Bohemia.

47. KARASOVÁ 1998. Although for various reasons possibly not all metal vessels found in Bohemia have been listed, I take the catalogued pieces to be quantitatively and qualitatively representative. – SALAČ 2009, 120–121.

41. MADEJSKI 2013, 48–52, especially map on p. 58.

42. PIETA, VLACHÁ 1999, 179–205. – PIETA 2010, 54–6.

43. PIETA, VLACHÁ 1999, 190–191, Fig. 1/4 and Fig. 6.

44. ENCKEVORT, ZEE 1999. – FISCHER 2009, 488–489, Note 7. – ENCKEVORT 2014.



Fig. 5. Putative routes of communication from the Baltic to the Roman Empire ("Amber Route"). – Orange: certain. – Yellow: reconstructed (after QUAST, ERDRICH 2013, 48).

Although Zuzana Karasová complies with the recommendations of the CRFB project (Corpus of Roman Finds in the European *Barbaricum*)⁴⁸ in the catalogue section of her overview of bronze vessels from Bohemia, she does not always present the dating of the finds individually and by context.⁴⁹ The dates provided, in particular those of Augustan-Tiberian times or first half of the 1st century AD that are of interest to us here, are generally confined to the date of the context, which by nature is derived from associated Germanic finds. At a subliminal level and probably unconsciously an impression is created that the production of rather long-lived forms of vessels such as situlae of E18 and E19 type or cauldrons with iron rim of types E7 and E8 but also pans and basins belong to the time span of the context which is given by the associated Germanic finds. Problems of circulation and hoarding are thus suppressed.⁵⁰

The two Late Iron Age bronze cauldrons with iron rim from Dobřichov-Piřhora suggest links with the western Celtic-Gaulish zone, that is, their origin is different from that of the remaining Bohemian metal containers.

The types present among the non-ferrous metal vessels found in burials in Bohemia is, as already mentioned, but a small selection of the range of types then available within the Empire, and in terms of function they are confined to eating and drinking sets. As to their value, the situlae, pans, bowls and basins belong to the standard “Roman” household equipment, and hence could hardly have represented “gifts or bribery binding [their recipients] to Rome”.⁵¹ The buckets of E38 type that accompany various Augustan-Tiberian burials are purely and simply cooking pots. The occasional occurrence of vessels like E125 type jugs, which are quite rare in *Barbaricum*, does not change this assessment. It hardly fits the model of relations of trade and exchange, whichever way they were handled and regulated, that the historic sources suggest and that the archaeologists have adopted. The permanent presence of Roman traders in Maroboduus’ seat that the historic sources refer to would have yielded a qualitatively and quantitatively quite different, measurable archaeological assemblage. A reference to the Augustan town of Waldgirmes in Hesse or to the Magdalensberg

in Carinthia should be sufficient to illustrate our point. Finally, Roman luxury ware was made of precious metal.

Rather than “luxury ware” the non-ferrous metal vessels circulating in Bohemia in the period under consideration should be seen as personal belongings. If we compare the range of forms recovered in Bohemia with those found in the more or less contemporary burials of the Lower Elbe,⁵² some surprising correspondences emerge. Here too situlae, pans, bowls and basins are dominant, and cooking cauldrons of types E4–E8 as well as cooking pots of type E38 are also common. This raises the question of whether there was a milieu within the “Roman sphere” in which on the one hand there were young Germanic men or warriors (in view of the repeated association of Germanic weapons and Roman vessels made from non-ferrous metals), and where on the other hand a correspondingly reduced range of metal vessels was used. Certainly during the Early Roman period, one will find parallels in a military environment.

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48. KARASOVÁ 1998, 7.
 49. Rubric 3d is labelled “Dating of the object according to the whole assemblage and its researcher, sometimes with our remarks, when possible, and with presumed time of manufacture”: KARASOVÁ 1998, 65.
 50. The princely burial of Muřov is an impressive illustration of this phenomenon. Interestingly, it also yielded a cauldron with iron rim: see ERDRICH 2008.
 51. SALAČ 2009, 120.
 52. LAUX 1995, 81–95. – ERDRICH 2002.

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