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One phenomenon or many? Considerations on the role of selected sites in Slovenia: Na Bleku, Mali grad, and Gradišče above Bašelj

1 INTRODUCTION

The GIS analysis presented in this volume¹ resulted in four groups of sites according to the natural affordance. However, it also cautioned that the interpretations suggested can only be used as a starting point for a discussion on the individual sites. What follows is such a discussion on three selected sites in Slovenia: Na Bleku, Mali grad, and Gradišče above Bašelj.

2 NA BLEKU

The Na Bleku² site is located on the Krvavec Mountain over 1600 m a. s. l. At least three buildings were built leaning on the steep mountain slope in the 10th century AD. In addition to the large quantity of pottery, a sheep-bell, and a finger ring a spearhead and an arrowhead have also been found. Based on the finds and findings, the site is interpreted as a non-permanent settlement used to exploit the high-mountain pastures in the summer.³

In GIS analysis the site exhibits fringe values in every single category and does not correspond well with other sites considered.⁴ The first obvious reason is that it is not a hilltop location as such since it is located on the mountain slope. In addition, due to the context of the site, the spearhead and the arrowhead are seen as hunting tools rather than military equipment.

And indeed, this site was added to the GIS analysis intentionally as a “red herring” in the data, i.e. our control group. It was known that this is a different type of site and the aim was for the GIS analysis to clearly show this in order to validate the method chosen.

Nonetheless, in the above analysis the site has been marked as a remote and hidden symbolic site. This interpretation is supported by archaeological evidence. First, there is the material evidence for symbolic activities taking place at the site in the form of a pit filled with ashes, stone, a pot and a knife deliberately placed with the blade upwards.⁵ Also, this location has been interpreted as a part of a larger mythical landscape system.⁶

¹ Štular/Eichert, this volume.

² Štular/Eichert, this volume, Appendix: No. 17.

³ Andrej Pleterski, Die frühmittelalterliche Besiedlung des Krvavec. Vorbericht, in: Archäologie in den Alpen. Alltag und Kult, ed. Franz Mandl/Harald Stadler (Haus 2010) 209–218; Benjamin Štular, Medieval High-Mountain Pastures in the Kamnik Alps (Slovenia), in: Archäologie in den Alpen. Alltag und Kult, ed. Franz Mandl/Harald Stadler (Forschungsberichte der ANISA 3, Haus 2010) 259–272.

⁴ Štular/Eichert, this volume.

⁵ Pleterski, Besiedlung des Krvavec 215f.

⁶ Andrej Pleterski, Kulturni genom: prostor in njegovi ideogrami mitične zgodbe (Ljubljana 2014) 287.

3 MALI GRAD

Mali grad in Kamnik⁷ is a site best known for its High Medieval castle built directly on top of the Early Medieval cemetery. Nowadays castle ruins on the cliffy promontory in the midst of the medieval town Kamnik appear unapproachable. However, before the hilltop was substantially remodelled during and after the castle's construction, it was accessible via a natural "bridge".

Graves of at least 32 individuals were buried on the site in the last third of the 10th century. The age and gender structure as well as the short-lived use of the cemetery are evidence that the dead belong to a single generation of a small community. Archaeological interpretations by different authors agree that the community buried was an extended family of the župan, the Slavic Early Medieval local lord.⁸ As of yet, there is no direct archaeological evidence for an Early Medieval settlement. However, based on the cemetery's type and location, the existence of a manor-type site is conjectured.⁹ The site is considered in this study due to the stray find of the bronze pendant with enamel inset representing two birds facing a tree of life belonging to a horse harness or a sword sheath.¹⁰

Directly on top of the cemetery, one of the first and most important castles in the land – of the *Graffenburg* type – was built around AD 1100 as a testimony to the regional importance of the location at the time.¹¹

In the GIS analysis the Mali grad site was interpreted as a central place owing to its excellent living conditions. How important the župan of Kamnik was remains unknown, as does the exact location of the manor house. The cemetery, however, is unequivocal evidence that Mali grad was a central place at least at the end of the 10th century.

Among the other sites in the GIS analysis interpreted as central places, Ptujski grad¹² and Puščava¹³ are also known to be Early Medieval central places,¹⁴ whereas no such archaeological evidence exists for Dunaj at Jereka.¹⁵

It needs to be mentioned, though, that the Mali grad, Ptujski grad and Puščava sites also included ritual properties.¹⁶ However, ritual properties are seen as a secondary function to the settlement, i.e. a function inherent to every central settlement.

⁷ Štular/Eichert, this volume, Appendix: No. 16.

⁸ Milan Sagadin, Staroslovansko grobišče na Malem gradu v Kamniku, in: *Arheološki Vestnik* 52 (2001) 359–375; Benjamin Štular, Posamezniki, skupnost in obred v zgodnjem srednjem veku. Primer grobiščnih podatkov z Malega gradu v Sloveniji, in: *Studia mythologica Slavica* 10 (2007) 23–50; Katarina K. Predovnik, A Brave New World? Building Castles, Changing and Inventing Traditions, in: *Atti dalla accademia Roveretana degli agiati* ser. IX, Volume II, A, fasc. II (2012) 63–106, at 99–100; Andrej Pleterski, Korak v kronologijo zgodnesrednjeveškega naglavnega nakita vzhodnih Alp = A step towards the chronology of early medieval head ornaments in the Eastern Alps, in: *Arheološki vestnik* 64 (2013) 299–334, at 329 and Fig. 15; Andrej Pleterski, Kulturni genom: prostor in njegovi ideogrami mitične zgodbe (Ljubljana 2014) 289–294.

⁹ Milan Sagadin, Mali grad v Kamniku, in: *Varstvo spomenikov* 37 (1997) 105–125, at 109; Štular, Posamezniki, at 32f.

¹⁰ Benjamin Štular, Mali grad. Visokosrednjeveški grad v Kamniku. = Mali grad. High Medieval Castle in Kamnik (*Opera Instituti archaeologici Sloveniae* 15, Ljubljana 2009), 118f., t. 7: 13.

¹¹ Štular, Mali grad.

¹² Štular/Eichert, this volume, Appendix: No. 19.

¹³ Štular/Eichert, this volume, Appendix: No. 20.

¹⁴ Miha Kosi, Predurbane ali zgodnjeurbane naselbine? (Civitas Pettouia, Carnium/Creina in druga centralna naselja neagrarnega značaja v zgodnjem srednjem veku) (I. del), in: *Zgodovinski časopis* 59/3–4 (2005) 269–331, at 289–331; Andrej Pleterski/Mateja Belak, Grobovi s Puščave nad Starim trgom pri Slovenj Gradcu, in: *Arheološki Vestnik* 53 (2002) 233–300.

¹⁵ Štular/Eichert, this volume, Appendix: No. 3.

¹⁶ Pleterski, Kulturni genom, 289–302; Andrej Pleterski, Wie auf der Erde, so im Himmel – himmlischer Hof bei den Slawen, in: *Frühgeschichtliche Zentralorte in Mitteleuropa. Internationale Konferenz und Kolleg der Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung zum 50. Jahrestag des Beginns archäologischer Ausgrabungen in Pohansko bei Břeclav*, 5.–9. 10. 2009, ed. Jiří Macháček/Šimon Ungerman (Břeclav/Bonn 2011); Pleterski, Kulturni genom, 350 respectively.

4 GRADIŠČE ABOVE BAŠELJ

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Gradišče above Bašelj is a site best known for numerous finds of military equipment and equestrian gear dated between the late 8th and early 10th centuries.¹⁷ Altogether, more than 1700 metal artefacts are known from this site.¹⁸ However, this is a three-phase site: Late Antique, Early Medieval and High Medieval. The distinction baffled early researchers¹⁹ but was clarified by modern excavation.²⁰

The Late Antique phase is characterised by a stone-built fortified settlement. The end of this phase is radiocarbon-dated to between the end of the 4th and mid-6th centuries AD.²¹ This date is corroborated by LRA 1B and LRA 2 amphorae found on the pavement dated in the second half of the 5th and the 6th c. AD.²²

Here we are focusing on the Early Medieval phase. Early Medieval artefacts were found in the charred layer above the ruins of the Late Antique settlement.²³ Many military items were found lying along the ruins of the walls together with pottery, implements for everyday use and charred cereal grain²⁴ that is radiocarbon-dated to AD 790-990 ($\Sigma 2$).²⁵ The stratigraphic context of the Early Medieval artifacts is therefore distinctly separate from the Late Antique settlement and there is a hiatus of at least two centuries.

The Early Medieval site is most often interpreted either as ruins utilised during the construction of a military stronghold²⁶ or as a settlement.²⁷ The first interpretation is based on the presence of the military

¹⁷ Špela Karo/Timotej Knific/Zoran Milić, Pokositreni železni predmeti z Gradišča nad Bašljem, in: *ARGO* 44/2 (2001) 42–47; Timotej Knific, Zgodnjesrednjeveški pozlačeni predmeti z Gradišča nad Bašljem (Slovenija), in: *Prilozi instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu* 24 (2007) 317–326; Timotej Knific, Early mediaeval hoards of iron items in Slovenia, in: *Archaeologia Adriatica* 4 (2010) 85–99; Špela Karo/Timotej Knific/Marija Lubšina-Tušek, Predmeti avarskega izvora z arheoloških najdišč v Sloveniji, in: *VAMZ - Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu* (annual journal of the museum) 46 (2011) 131–159; Špela Karo, Zgodnjekarolinške najdbe s slovenskih najdišč, in: *Emona med Akvilejo in Panonijo* (Emona between Aquilea and Pannonia), ed. Irena Lazar/Bernarda Županek (Koper 2012) 447–458; Špela Karo, Oprema jahača i konja s Gradišča nad Bašljem (Slovenija). Zbornik radova sa Znanstvenog skupa Dani Stjepana Gunjače 2, Hrvatska srednjovjekovna povijesno-arheološka baština, Međunarodne teme, Split, 18.–21. listopada 2011 (2012) 297–315; Od Rimljanov do Slovanov. Predmeti, ed. Polona Bitenc/Timotej Knific (Ljubljana 2001); Špela Karo/Timotej Knific, Cross Strap Dividers from Gradišče above Bašelj (Slovenia). Zbornik srečanja v Bojni (Nitra, in press).

¹⁸ Karo, Gradišča nad Bašljem 297.

¹⁹ Rajko Ložar, Gradišče nad Bašljem - nova postojanka staroslovenske kulture. Priprava, koncept za študijo, in: Unpublished manuscript from 1939 (Replicated as a citation in Timotej Knific, Arheološko najdišče Gradišče nad Bašljem, in: *Preddvor v času in prostoru*. Zbornik Občine Preddvor, ed. Tone Roblek (Preddvor 1999) 55–67, at 57–61).

²⁰ Timotej Knific, Arheološko najdišče Gradišče nad Bašljem, in: *Preddvor v času in prostoru*. Zbornik Občine Preddvor, ed. Tone Roblek (Preddvor 1999) 55–67; Timotej Knific, Gradišče nad Bašljem, in: *Zakladi tisočletij. Zgodovina Slovenije od neandertalcev do Slovanov*, ed. Dragan Božič/Janez Dular/Primož Pavlin/Tomaž Lauko/Slavko Ciglencečki/Bronislava Aubelj/Sneža Tecco Hvala/Mateja Belak/Dragica Knific Lunder/Tamara Korošec/Jurij Mikuletič (Ljubljana 1999) 398–401.

²¹ Špela Karo, *Ozemlje današnje Slovenije med Avarskimi vojnami in Madžarskimi vpadi v luči arheoloških najdb* (PhD Dissertation at University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana 2007) 205.

²² Verena Perko, *Poznoantične amfore v Sloveniji* (PhD Dissertation at University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana 1994) 195–197; Zvezda Modrijan, Imports from the Aegean Area to the Eastern Alpine Area and Northern Adriatic in Late Antiquity, in: *Ephemeris Napocensis* 24 (2014) 51–70, at 55; Špela Karo/Dimitri Mlekuž, The Archaeological Image of the Land Along the Upper Sava River in Late Antique and Early Medieval Periods. A View in Space, in: *Swords, Crowns, Censers and Books. Francia Media – Cradles of European Culture*, ed. Marina Vicolja-Matijašič (Rijeka 2015) 249–272, at 255–257.

²³ Karo/Mlekuž, *Archaeological Image*, at 255.

²⁴ Knific, *Hoards*, 86; cf. Knific, *Arheološko* 64; Knific, *Gradišče nad Bašljem* 400; Špela Karo, Die Typologie der frühmittelalterlichen Steigbügel aus slowenischen Fundorten, in: Zbornik na počest Danny Bialekovej, ed. Gabor Fusek (Nitra 2004) 165; Knific, *Zgodnjesrednjeveški* 317; Karo, *Ozemlje*, at 49 and 205; Karo, *Gradišča nad Bašljem* 297; Špela Karo/Timotej Knific, *Gradišče boven Bašelj in het vroegmiddeleeuwse Carniola* (Slovenië), in: *De erfenis van Karel de Grote 814 – 2014*, ed. Dirk Callebaut/Horst van Cuyck (Enschede 2015) 255–266, at 259; Timotej Knific/Tomaž Nabergoj, *Srednjeveške zgodbe s stičišča svetov* (Ljubljana 2016) 84.

²⁵ Knific/Nabergoj, *Srednjeveške zgodbe* 83.

²⁶ Knific, *Hoards* 86; cf. Knific, *Arheološko* 67; Knific, *Gradišče nad Bašljem*, 401; Slavko Ciglencečki, Tinje nad Loko pri Žusmu. Poznoantična in zgodnjesrednjeveška naselbina = Tinje oberhalb von Loka pri Žusmu. Spätantike und frühmittelalterliche Siedlung (*Opera Instituti archaeologici Sloveniae* 4, Ljubljana 2000) 155.

²⁷ Ciglencečki, *Tinje* 155; Karo, *Gradišča nad Bašljem* 297; Karo/Mlekuž, *Archaeological Image* 255; *Od Rimljanov do Slovanov*, 121 and 137f.; Knific/Nabergoj, *Srednjeveške zgodbe* 83–84.

finds and the site's strategic location²⁸ and the latter has not been substantiated but by half of a sentence: *... kot je mogoče soditi po množici zgodnesrednjeveških drobnih najdb . . .*²⁹

An alternative interpretation of Gradišče above Bašelj argues that the circumstances of the discovery, as well as the traces of manipulations and the functional composition of the objects, offer a possibility of community offerings in a desolate fortification from the 5th or 6th century.³⁰

The High Medieval phase is only known through finds of pottery³¹ and individual metal artefacts.³²

4.2 SETTLEMENT

The first interpretation mentioning the construction of a military stronghold can be refuted beyond reasonable doubt. In 1939 Ložar established *. . . da je moral biti zid ob prihodu Slovanov že do velike mere porušen, kajti apneni omet prihaja na dan v sami ogleni plasti in celo pod njo*.³³ Re-excavation of the same trench in 1998 (Fig. 1: 1) confirmed that not even the slightest rubble clearance was attempted in the Early Medieval period, let alone any construction undertaken (Fig. 2). Since the excavation trench is positioned at the entrance to the Late Antique fortification this is clear archaeological evidence that there were no re-fortification activities on the entire western wall. In addition, Ložar cleaned the rubble on a portion of the northern wall (Fig. 1: 2). A ruined Late Antique wall with no traces of re-fortification has been recorded (Fig. 3).³⁴ This, therefore, is direct archaeological evidence that the site has not been re-fortified in two of the most vulnerable positions: at the entrance (west) and where the easiest access is (north; Fig. 6).

Could it be, though, that the site was only used for military purposes for a very brief period, i. e. too short a time span for any construction to take place? Not according to the finds assemblage. Namely, although military finds from Gradišče above Bašelj feature most prominently in publications, there are many non-military finds as well. Until a full list of finds is published, only a qualitative statement can be made that the following distinctly non-military finds have been recovered from Gradišče above Bašelj:³⁵

- 7 glass beads,
- 1 bone bead,
- 5 decorative iron pins with glass bead,
- 3 finger rings,
- 1 spindle whorl,
- 3 torqued hooks (part of a sawing or weaving kit),
- 1 loom-weight,
- 7 fragments of a wool or flax comb,
- 4 iron scissors,
- 8 rotary keys,
- 3 rotary-lock key-guard plates,

²⁸ Knific, *Arheološko* 67.

²⁹ "... as can be judged by a multitude of Early Medieval small finds, ..." (translated by the author). Polona Bitenc/Timotej Knific, *Zgodnesrednjeveški zakladi železnih predmetov z Gorjancev, Starega gradu nad Uncem in Ljubične nad Zbelovsko Goro*, in: *Arheološki vestnik* 66 (2015) 103–146, at 121; indirectly also in Karo/Knific, *Gradišče* 259.

³⁰ Andrej Gaspari, *Visoko- in poznosrednjeveško orožje iz arheoloških kontekstov. Primer: viteški meč iz poznorimskega vodnega zbiralnika na Ajdovskem gradcu nad Vranjem*, in: *Vojaška zgodovina* 10 (2009) 145–160, at 156.

³¹ Rajko Ložar, *Staroslovensko in srednjeveško lončarstvo v Sloveniji*, in: *Glasnik Muzejskega društva za Slovenijo* 20/1–4 (1939) 180–225, at 200.

³² Knific/Nabergoj, *Srednjeveške zgodbe* Picture 153.

³³ "... by the arrival of the Slavs the wall must have already been mostly in ruins since the mortar is found within and even beneath the charcoal layer. Rajko Ložar, *Gradišče nad Bašljem*. Dnevnik (Unpublished excavation diary, Archive of ZRC SAZU Institute of archaeology, Sign. 19/1–65 1939) 27 (translated by the author).

³⁴ Knific, *Arheološko* 59.

³⁵ *Od Rimljanov do Slovanov* 325–329; Timotej Knific, *Železni zvonci iz Kamniško-Savinjskih Alp*. *Arheološki pregled*, in: *Človek v Alpah. Desetletje (1996–2006) raziskav o navzočnosti človeka v slovenskih Alpah*, ed. Tone Cevc (Ljubljana, 2006) 138–149; Nika Veršnik, *Gradišče nad Bašljem v luči drobnih vsakdanjih predmetov in nakita* (MA thesis at the University of Primorska, Koper 2009) 21–58; Knific/Nabergoj, *Srednjeveške zgodbe* 90.

- 1 rotary-lock bolt,
- 9 fragments of small jewellery box fittings,
- 4 awls,
- 4 bells and
- 1 bronze cinder.

Although the 59 non-military artefacts mentioned above pale in significance against the total of more than 1700, so do the 54 military artefacts published thus far.³⁶

In conclusion, there is direct archaeological evidence that neither fortification nor any other exclusively military activity took place on the Gradišče above Bašelj site in the Early Medieval period.

Similarly, several arguments can be made against the interpretation of an Early Medieval settlement at Gradišče above Bašelj.

First, no archaeological evidence for Early Medieval settlement structures has ever been put forward (sic). Neither archaeological excavations³⁷ nor archaeological interpretation of lidar data³⁸ revealed any evidence of Early Medieval settlement structures. Whereas lidar data cannot be used to directly date settlement remains, a comparison of the number and size of buildings with the Late Antique hillfort settlement Tonovcov grad³⁹ reveals structural similarity between the two. Also, there are no archaeological features suggesting clearance of the Late Antique ruins. More importantly, though, lidar data exhibit no discernible differences in the shape, size or – most importantly – state of the building ruins throughout the entire site. This uniformity is a strong indicator that the trench excavated in 1939 and again in 1998 (Fig. 1: 1; Fig. 2) – revealing no Early Medieval settlement remains – is a *pars pro toto* indicator for the entire site.

In conclusion, not only is there no archaeological evidence of Early Medieval settlement structures, there is archaeological evidence of its absence.

Second, more than 1700 metal artefacts is a strong indicator against the settlement interpretation. For example, at Ančnikovo gradišče – a Late Antique hillfort that was re-settled in the Early Medieval period – a significant portion of the settlement has been excavated and a total of 63 metal artefacts discovered. Among those only one item, pliers⁴⁰, could potentially be Early Medieval. At a similar site, Tinje above Loka by Žusm, among 101 metal finds there are none that could be securely dated to the Early Medieval period.⁴¹ As the third example, Pristava in Bled can be mentioned. Excavations of this Early Medieval settlement yielded 118 metal artefacts.⁴² As an example of the highest status settlement, a manor house of a central settlement Pohansko in the Czech Republic can be mentioned. Excavation of some 15,000 m² revealed 287 metal artefacts⁴³. In rare cases, though, large quantities of metal finds are found in settlements, but the finds are concentrated in a confined area and heavily fragmented and are interpreted as workshops.⁴⁴

Even supposing that in the case of Gradišče above Bašelj all metal artefacts have been collected and that it was a settlement of the highest status, the 1700 plus metal artefacts surpasses the expected quantity more than fivefold.

³⁶ Karo, this volume, Plate 1: 6–10; Plate 2; Plate 3: 1–17; Plate 4–Plate 6; Od Rimljanov do Slovanov, 315–324, 330.

³⁷ Ložar, Nova postojanka; Ložar, Gradišče nad Bašljem; Knific, Arheološko 67; Knific, Gradišče nad Bašljem.

³⁸ Karo/Mlekuž, Archaeological Image 252–255.

³⁹ Benjamin Štular, The use of lidar-derived relief models in archaeological topography. The Kobarid region (Slovenia) case study (Uporaba modelov reliefa pridobljenih z lidarskim snemanjem v arheološki topografiji. Študijski primer Kobariške), in: Arheološki vestnik 62 (2011) 393–432, at 421–426.

⁴⁰ Mateja Ravnik, Zaščitne raziskave Ančnikovega gradišča pri Jurišni vasi v letih od 1986 do 1994, BA thesis at the University of Ljubljana (Ljubljana 2006), at T.: 47/454.

⁴¹ Ciglenečki, Tinje 52–58.

⁴² Andrej Pleterski, Zgodnjesrednjeveška naselbina na Blejski Pristavi. Najdbe = Frühmittelalterliche Siedlung Pristava in Bled. Funde (Opera Instituti archaeologici Sloveniae 14, Ljubljana 2008) T. 30–32, 35, 39.

⁴³ Bořivoj Dostál, Břeclav-Pohansko IV: velkomoravský velmožský dvorec (Brno 1975); Drahomíra Frolíková-Kalischová, K významu Klášťova v době velké moravy - místo kultu nebo útočiště?, in: Pravěk 23 (2015) 195–215, at 189–238.

⁴⁴ E.g. Tina Milavec, Kovinske najdbe, in: Poznoantična utrjena naselbina Tonovcov grad pri Kobaridu. Najdbe, Opera Instituti Archaeologici Sloveniae 24, ed. Zvezda Modrijan/Tina Milavec (Ljubljana 2011) 21–82, at 21–63.

Third, the taphonomy of the pottery.⁴⁵ Only a small selection of pottery from the 1939 excavation with unknown contexts has been published.⁴⁶ The fragments that have been drawn are, on average, large (6.48 to 92.5 cm²) and exhibit a high level (28%) of reconstruction. Although the sample is heavily biased, the published fragments can only be interpreted as a primary refuse.⁴⁷ This is corroborated by Ložar's description of a context in the western trench (Fig. 1: 1): *Drug kup črepinj iste posode se je začel pri ca 110 ter sega do ca 150 cm v od zapadne stene v notranjost in ca 60 – 100 od severne stene proti jugu. Stratigrafija ista. Vmes oglje, in poogleneli pesek-omet.*⁴⁸ Therefore a single pot found *in situ* where it was broken (the sherds were spread over 40 by 40 cm) in a burnt layer directly on top of the ruins of Late Antique settlement's walls is described.

The Early Medieval burnt layer at Gradišče above Bašelj is therefore a primary refuse – i. e. the finds have been recorded *in situ* – that bears no evidence of contemporary buildings.

Fourth, the taphonomy of metal finds. The finds excavated by archaeologists have reportedly mostly been scattered, but occasionally found in small groups.⁴⁹ However, the vast majority of the metal finds have been robbed by metal detecting and only subsequently acquired by archaeologists. Not many details are known regarding the context of those, but what is known points towards the finds being clustered in several locations. One large group of the artefacts derives from a very limited area on the lowest terrace adjacent to the south wall⁵⁰ and many items were lying along the walls.⁵¹ It is important to note that potential post-depositional processes dominated by gravitation cannot explain the described concentrations, as there are no colluvial layers.

Described clusters of metal artefacts with such varied functionality cannot be interpreted as lost or misplaced in a settlement and especially not as objects left *in situ* in a hurriedly abandoned settlement.

To sum up:

- there is a direct archaeological evidence that re-fortification did **not** take place,
- there is no archaeological evidence of settlement structures,
- pottery taphonomy as well as the number and context of metal artefacts suggest primary deposition.

4.3 INTENTIONAL DEPOSITION?

Refuting an interpretation is always the easier part of the argument. Indeed, it defies all credibility to suppose that Early Medieval people habitually dropped and lost extremely valuable items by accident in such a remote location as Gradišče above Bašelj, a one-and-a-half-hour uphill walk from the fertile plains. Instead it seems inevitable that the deposition of artefacts was far from uncommon in the Early Medieval period,⁵² as evidenced by numerous hoards.⁵³

⁴⁵ For taphonomy, see Michael B. Schiffer, *Formation processes of the archaeological record* (Salt Lake City 1996); Jiří Macháček, *Studie k velkomoravské keramice. Metody, analýzy a syntézy, modely* (Brno 2001), at 11–17; Andrej Pleterski, *Die frühmittelalterliche Besiedlung des Krvavec. Vorbericht*, in: *Archäologie in den Alpen. Alltag und Kult*, ed. Franz Mandl/Harald Stadler (Haus 2010) 209–218, at 213–216; Benjamin Štular, *Small Finds*, in: *Smlednik Castle*, ed. Benjamin Štular (Ljubljana 2015) 45–68, at 66–67.

⁴⁶ Ložar, *Staroslovensko* 184; 195–200, Table XV sl. 5 and Table XVI sl. 6; Ciglencečki, Tinje 114–115.

⁴⁷ Cf. Štular, *Small finds* 66f.

⁴⁸ The other pile of sherds belonging to the same pot was spread from approximately 110 cm to 150 cm from the western wall towards the interior (of the site) and approximately 60–10 cm from the northern wall towards the south. Stratigraphy is the same. In between charcoal and burnt sand – (i. e.) mortar. Ložar, *Staroslovensko* 27f. (translated by the author).

⁴⁹ *Knjif, Gradišče nad Bašljem* 398.

⁵⁰ As recorded by the author in a brief interview with one of the perpetrators (M. G., 1975, from Radovljica) on the 22nd of February 2003. See also: Gaspari, Orožje 156f.

⁵¹ *Knjif, Hoards* 86.

⁵² Cf. Guy Halsall, *The Viking Presence in England? The Burial Evidence*, in: *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. Dawn M. Hadley/Julian D. Richards (Turnhout 2000) 259–276, at 268; Stanisław Suchodolski, *Warum hat man im frühen Mittelalter Schätze deponiert?*, in: *Economies, monetisation and society in the west Slavic lands*, ed. Mateusz Bogucki/Marian Rębkowski (Szczecin 2013) 89–108.

⁵³ Relevant overviews in: Florin Curta, *New Remarks on Early Medieval Hoards of Iron Implements and Weapons*, in: *Frühgeschichtliche Zentralorte in Mitteleuropa. Internationale Konferenz und Kolleg der Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung zum 50. Jahrestag des Beginns archäologischer Ausgrabungen in Pohansko bei Břeclav, 5.–9. 10. 2009*, ed. Jiří Macháček/

Still, successfully arguing intentional deposition of metal artefacts at Gradišče above Bašelj is, in view of the scarcity of available data, a difficult task. Nevertheless, several arguments can be made in support of this hypothesis.

First, the only relevant analogy to Gradišče above Bašelj as a site with a large number of finds is the Czech site Klášťov. Klášťov is a prehistoric hillfort with a well-defined Early Medieval layer, but whether it was settled in the Early Medieval period is still undetermined.⁵⁴ What is, however, undisputed, is that 1100 Early Medieval iron artefacts derive from multiple hoards.⁵⁵ A similar contemporary site is the Early Medieval hillfort Bojná I-Valy (Slovakia). The metal artefacts include numerous metal detector finds and at least ten hoards with a composition comparable to that at Gradišče above Bašelj. However, Bojná I-Valy was a buzzing central settlement.⁵⁶

The only relevant analogies for the Gradišče above Bašelj site are Klášťov (Czech) and Bojná I-Valy (Slovakia). The large quantity of metal finds from both originates from multiple hoards.

Second, the stratigraphic context. All Early Medieval artefacts from Gradišče above Bašelj that have been recovered by archaeologists derive from the same stratigraphic context: a black layer with a large quantity of charcoal that lies directly beneath the forest humus layer and directly on top of Late Antiquity ruins (Figure 2).⁵⁷ Besides metal artefacts, pottery fragments,⁵⁸ animal bones⁵⁹ and, in places, charred cereals⁶⁰ have been recovered from this layer. The description of stratigraphy corresponds directly to stratigraphic contexts (from top down) K 101, K 102 and K 103 from the above-mentioned site Klášťov except for the fact the K 103 is prehistoric.⁶¹ It also corresponds well to the stratigraphic context of the Zidani gaber above Mihovo Early Medieval hoard discovered adjacent to the Late Antique hillfort, where iron artefacts were found in a black layer under a thin layer of (forest) humus.⁶² Another hoard, Camberk above Cerov Log, has also been discovered in a humus layer directly under a thin layer of (forest) humus, this time mixed with several big pottery fragments that it was possible to reconstruct.⁶³

The stratigraphic context of the Early Medieval finds from Gradišče above Bašelj therefore corresponds to several known Early Medieval hoards, indicating a similar depositional process.

Third, the taphonomy of the metal artefacts with known archaeological context – items are tightly packed⁶⁴ – suggests that at least some of the artefacts have been intentionally deposited (Fig. 4). And indeed, two such concentrations of artefacts from Gradišče above Bašelj have already been interpreted as hoards.⁶⁵

Šimon Ungerman (Břeclav/Bonn 2011) 309–332; Mária Müllerová, Depoty južných Slovanov a ich klasifikácia pomocou metódy hlavných component, in: Zborník Slovenského národného múzea CVIII – Archeológia 24 (2014) 197–212; Bitenc/Knific, Zgodnjesrednjeveški.

⁵⁴ Drahomíra Frolíková-Kalischová, K významu Klášťova v době velké moravy - místo kultu nebo útočiště?, in: Pravěk 23 (2015) 195–215.

⁵⁵ Martin Geisler/Jiří Kohoutek, Vysoké pole – Klášťov. Inventář hro madných nálezů železných předmětů a shrnutí terénních výzkumných sezón 2005–2007 (Pravěk Supplementum 28, Brno 2014).

⁵⁶ Karol Pieta/Alexander Ruttkay, Bojná - mocenské a christianizačné centrum Nitrianskeho kniežatstva, in: Bojná. Hospodárske a politické centrum nitrianskeho kniežatstva, ed. Karol Pieta/Alexander Ruttkay/Matej Ruttkay (Nitra 2006) 21–70; Vladimír Turčan, Depoty z Bojne v zbierkach Archeologického múzea SNM, in: Bojná. Hospodárske a politické centrum nitrianskeho kniežatstva, ed. Karol Pieta/Alexander Ruttkay/Matej Ruttkay (Nitra 2006) 159–166.

⁵⁷ Knific, Arheološko 64; Knific, Gradišče nad Bašljem 400; Karo, Steigbügel 165; Knific, Zgodnjesrednjeveški 317; Karo, Ozemlje 49 and 205; Knific, Hoards 86; Karo, slovenskih najdišč 297; Karo/Mlekuž, Archaeological Image 255; Knific/Nabergoj, Srednjeveške zgodbe 84.

⁵⁸ Ložar, nova postojanka passim.

⁵⁹ Knific, Arheološko 60.

⁶⁰ Knific/Nabergoj, Srednjeveške zgodbe Picture 108.

⁶¹ Frolíková-Kalischová, Velké moravy 199–202.

⁶² Od Rimljanov do Slovanov 104–106 and 128.

⁶³ Od Rimljanov do Slovanov 106–107 and 128–129, Fig. 15, T. 2: 5.

⁶⁴ Knific, Hoards Figure 2; Od Rimljanov do Slovanov Figure 18.

⁶⁵ Knific Hoards; Polona Bitenc/Timotej Knific, Zgodnjesrednjeveški zakladi železnih predmetov z Gorjancev, Starega gradu nad Uncem in Ljubičine nad Zbelovsko Goro, in: Arheološki vestnik 66 (2015) 103–146, at 110f.

Fourth, the censer (lat. *thuribulum* or *incensorium*) made of bronze sheet probably dated to the 9th century.⁶⁶ The best analogy is a silver- and gold-plated Cetina censer. This exceptional artefact, with close analogies to the famous Tassilo Chalice, was found in 1925 on a hill, Runjevica near Vrlika, in Croatia overlooking the fertile plains of the Paško polje and two springs of the Cetina River. It is dated either in the second half of the 8th or in the last quarter of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century.⁶⁷ Such censers were used in the Christian liturgy in the Carolingian period, as suggested by depictions in illuminated manuscripts, ivory diptych panels and a pyx from the late 8th and 9th century⁶⁸ as well as on the mid-11th-century wall paintings from the Church of St. George in Kostol'any pod Tribečom.⁶⁹ It is important to note that, despite the disputed exact location, the Cetina cinder predates the Early Medieval settlement and Church of St. Savior built in the vicinity in the 9th century and it does not derive from the church.⁷⁰ The only Early Medieval censer from the Balkans with known context is from Kostol/Pontes (Serbia). It belongs to one of the hoards found within an unfortified medieval settlement and it contains a censer and bronze book cover in a pithos.⁷¹

The context of the Bašelj censer is unknown. It can be said that it was neither abandoned in a fire (the artefact shows no traces of being exposed to heat) nor was it left *in situ* in the building of its liturgical use (the artefact was crushed under the weight of soil⁷² – i.e. it was deposited undamaged and was not smashed by collapsing building debris). The possibility that such an exceptional artefact could have been simply lost is rejected as implausible. By elimination, therefore, the censer could only have been deposited. Perhaps the circumstances of its deposition are hinted at by the context of the above-mentioned analogies, one deposited on a hill overlooking an exceptional natural environment and the other deposited in a hoard.

The functionality, state of preservation and the only known analogies of the Bašelj censer therefore bear testimony that this artefact was intentionally deposited.

Fifth, the archaeological contexts. As mentioned, the archaeological contexts of the Gradišće above Bašelj finds are scarcely known. There is, however, one closed stratigraphic context that was excavated by R. Ložar⁷³ in its entirety: a rocky promontory at the northern end of the site (Fig. 1: 3). This small flat area measuring about 5 by 5 m is surrounded with several metres-high rocks on the south and cliffs overlooking the Belica stream gorge to the north and west.⁷⁴ The only possible approach is from the east by first crossing the biggest, highest and best sheltered terrace on the site (where a hunting lodge was built in 1906). The striking ambiances of this location led Ložar to compare it to a pulpit.

A thin layer of up to 10–15 cm of forest humus covered a brown, partially blackened layer with pieces of charcoal above the bedrock.⁷⁵ When excavated, the brown layer yielded . . . *presenetljiva množina*

⁶⁶ Knifc, Gradišće nad Bašljem 400; Karo/Knifc, Gradišće 264.

⁶⁷ Ksenija Vinski-Gasparini, Ranosrednjovjekovna kadionica iz stare Vrlike, in: Starohrvatska prosvjeta 3/6 (1958) 95–103; Ante Milošević, Cetina kod Vrlike, Runjavica, in: Hrvati i Karolinzi. Katalozi, ed. Ante Milošević (Split 2000) 251–253 with cited bibliography; Andre Jurčević, Nalazi ranokarolinškog oružja i konjaničke opreme u doba formiranja Hrvatske Kneževine, in: Starohrvatska prosvjeta III 38 (2011) 111–148, at 115–118, 125f.

⁶⁸ Ante Milošević, Karolinški utjecaji u Hrvatskoj kneževini u svjetlu arheoloških nalaza, in: Hrvati i Karolinzi. Rasprave i vrela, ed. Ante Milošević (Split 2000) 106–141, at 110–112; Herbert Schutz, The Carolingians in Central Europe, Their History, Arts and Architecture: A Cultural History of Central Europe, 750–900 (Leiden 2004) 283–286.

⁶⁹ Jana Maříková-Kubková/Peter Baxa/Peter Bisták/Zuzana Borzová, The Church of St. George in Kostol'any pod Tribečom, in: Swords, Crowns, Censers and Books. Francia Media – Cradles of European Culture, ed. Marina Vicelja-Matijašić (2015) 214–248, at 236–237.

⁷⁰ Ante Milošević, Arheološka topografija Cetine (Split 1998) 81; Ante Milošević/Željko Peković, Predromanička crkva Svetoga Spasa u Cetinu = La chiesa di S. Salvatore: definizioni nel tempo e nello spazio (Studia mediterranea archaeologica 3, Dubrovnik/Split 2009), at 13–15.

⁷¹ Milutin Garašanin/Miloje Vasić, Castrum Pontes. Izveštaj o iskopavačima u 1981. i 1982. godini, in: Đerdapske sveske IV, ed. Vladimir Kondić (Beograd 1987) 71–116, 87; cf. Curta, Implements and Weapons 332, No. 83; Perica Špehar, Remarks to Christianisation and realms in the central Balkans in the light of archaeological finds (7th–11th c.), in: "Castellum, civitas, urbs": Zentren und Eliten im frühmittelalterlichen Ostmitteleuropa. Centres and Elites in Early Medieval East-Central Europe, ed. Orsolya Heinrich-Tamáska/Hajnalka Herold/Péter Straub/Tivadar Vida (Budapest/Leipzig/Keszthely/Rahden-Westfahlen 2015) 71–94, at 77, Fig. 7.

⁷² Karo/Knifc, Gradišće, Figur 12.

⁷³ Ložar, Nova postojanka.

⁷⁴ Knifc, Arheološko 59.

⁷⁵ Ložar, Gradišće nad Bašljem 12–13.

*črepinj, oglja, kosti; . . . del bronaste ostroge, bronast prstan, rimski bronasti novc cesarja Licinija ter spona iz železa. Največ je med najdbami oglja, kosti živali in črepinj posod*⁷⁶ and *del steklene mase*.⁷⁷ Among the bones, pig and sheep/goat prevailed over cow. The pottery sherds could not be reconstructed into whole pots and included both handmade pots and pots finished on a potter's wheel.⁷⁸ Among them were *prav lepe črepinje*⁷⁹ suggesting large fragments.

Based on the above data, an archaeological interpretation can be made. There is a complete absence of any settlement remains. The thin and levelled layer on almost the highest peak excludes the possibility of a secondary context, e.g. colluvium, as does the described taphonomy of the pottery sherds; the artefacts were therefore discovered *in situ*. The artefacts were deposited directly on the bedrock. As such, they could not have been lost or misplaced. The description of typologically different types of pottery suggests chronologically different types⁸⁰ and thus deposition over a very long period of time. The artefact and ecofact assemblage (from most to least abundant) is: charcoal, animal bones, pottery and a few very valuable metal objects.

Among the latter, the 4th century coin seems to be of special importance. Similar coins have been found in several Early Medieval graves⁸¹ (Fig. 5) and, in one case, in a pit contemporary to the cemetery.⁸² Roman coins have also been found in Early Medieval settlements in contexts suggesting deliberate deposition, e.g. in a building's foundation⁸³ or in the context of a cult pit.⁸⁴ A Late Roman coin in a closed Early Medieval stratigraphic context can therefore be understood as direct evidence of non-profane activities.

Thence, the following interpretation of activities taking place on the promontory can be inferred. In a confined area within an exceptional natural environment and with no man-made structures in sight, a repeated activity took place over a long period of time. The activity involved bringing prime food-stuffs⁸⁵ in recipients, making fire (abundant charcoal), occasionally deliberately placing valuable objects (spur) and objects of special meaning (finger ring, coin) on the ground and breaking – not necessary deliberately – the recipients (pottery sherds). Parts of the breakage have been removed (pots can rarely be entirely reconstructed) which suggest attentiveness. The activities were strictly controlled – either by control of access or by a taboo – which is evidenced by the non-removal of valuable objects already present in plain view. The taboo or control of access persisted long enough after the activities ended that the foliage covering discarded items transformed into a forest humus layer, thus obscuring the deposited valuable objects from view. Since humification of foliage is a lengthy process, taboo is more likely than control of access.

⁷⁶ Knific, *Arheološko* 60: . . . a surprising amount of pottery sherds, charcoal and bones; . . . a fragment of bronze spur, bronze finger ring, Roman coin of the emperor Licinius (308–324, note by author) and an iron buckle. Among the finds charcoal, animal bones and pottery sherds prevail (translation by author).

⁷⁷ Fragment of glass raw material (translation by author). Ložar, *Gradišče nad Bašljem* 18; cf. Žiga Šmit/David Jezeršek/Timotej Knific/Janka Istenič, PIXE-PIGE analysis of Carolingian period glass from Slovenia, in: *Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research B* 267 (2009) 121–124; Knific/Nabergoj, *Srednjeveške zgodbe* slika 107.

⁷⁸ Knific, *Arheološko* 60.

⁷⁹ . . . nice sherds . . . Ložar, *Gradišče nad Bašljem* 13.

⁸⁰ Ložar *Staroslovensko*, 192, 195–200 and 208; cf. Hans Losert, *Die früh- bis hochmittelalterliche Keramik in Oberfranken* (*Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, Beiheft 8, Bonn 1993) 26–39; Štular *Mali grad*, 123–125, Fig. 6. 1; but see Andrzej Buko, *Ceramics and Medieval pottery research in Poland*, in: *Archaeologia Polona* 30 (1992) 5–25, at 8f.

⁸¹ *Ptuj*: Paola Korošec, *Nekropola na ptujskem gradu-turnirski prostor* (Ptuj 1999), Taf. 8: 77(12). *Župna cerkev in Kranj*: Jože Kastelic/Vinko Šribar, *Staroslovensko grobišče ob Župni cerkvi v Kranju. Katalog grobov, izkopanih leta 1953*, in: *Grobišče Župna cerkev v Kranju. Dokumentacija o izkopavanjih v letu 1953*, ed. Benjamin Štular/Mateja Belak (*E-Monographiae Instituti Archaeologici Sloveniae* 1, 187–202, Ljubljana 2012) 9–465, at 195; Andrej Valič, *Grobovi in njih inventar*, in: *Grobišče Župna cerkev v Kranju. Dokumentacija o izkopavanjih v letih 1964, 1965 in 1966*, ed. Benjamin Štular/Mateja Belak (*E-Monographiae Instituti Archaeologici Sloveniae* 4, Ljubljana 2013) 80–96, at 92. *Pristava na Bledu*: Jože Kastelic/Božo Škerlj, *Slovanska nekropola na Bledu. Arheološko in antropološko poročilo za leto 1948* (Dela SAZU, Monografije 2, Ljubljana 1950), at Slika 21.

⁸² Štular, *Posamezniki* 27–28.

⁸³ Pleterski, *Blejski Pristavi* 110–111.

⁸⁴ Pleterski, *Krvavec* 215–216.

⁸⁵ Pig and other animal bones; *for everyday food* cf. Andrej Pleterski, *Kuhinjska kultura v zgodnjem srednjem veku* (Ljubljana 2008).

Discussing whether the data regarding the activities taking place on the promontory suffices to argue for a sacred rather than profane deposition of artefacts overreaches the ambitions of this article. However, the arguments for the deliberate deposition of artefacts in a non-settlement environment are conclusive.

In summary, there is a pervasive body of evidence that the metal artefacts from Gradišče above Bašelj were deliberately deposited. The arguments are:

- the best analogy for the site as a whole are multiple hoards from Klášťov and Bojná I-Valy,
- contemporary hoards provide best analogies for the stratigraphic context,
- the taphonomy of at least some metal artefacts testifies for deliberate deposition,
- analysis of an exceptional find (censer) suggests deliberate deposition and
- analysis of the only known closed stratigraphic context proves deliberate deposition beyond reasonable doubt.

4.4 GRADIŠČE ABOVE BAŠELJ – A DISCUSSION

Gradišče above Bašelj has been interpreted as a settlement based on (i) the interpretation of artefacts and (ii) on the alleged strategic position of the site. The unfeasibility of the former has been demonstrated *in extenso* above. The latter can be discussed using the results of the GIS analysis.⁸⁶

It has long been recognised that Gradišče above Bašelj is too remote to be a self-sufficient permanent settlement⁸⁷ and this was confirmed in a comparative analysis.⁸⁸ Therefore, the alleged *strategic position* of Gradišče above Bašelj remains as the last argument for the settlement interpretation.⁸⁹ How *strategic* is the location of the Gradišče above Bašelj, then?

By *strategic* a natural affordance for defensibility is implicitly envisaged for Gradišče above Bašelj. However, the site is adjacent to the mountain saddle. Therefore, potential attackers would be able to deploy archers on the higher ground, thus nullifying the advantage of the hilltop location (Fig. 6). For this reason the Late Antique settlement was fortified with a wall on the northern side; in the Early Medieval phase, however, there were no (semi)permanent defensive structures in place (see above; Fig. 3). In the Early Medieval period Gradišče above Bašelj therefore offered low defensibility.

Another alleged *strategic* characteristic of Gradišče above Bašelj is that it affords a commanding view of the Kranj plain.⁹⁰ However, the view of potential fields within a middle-range distance is negligible signifying that the view from the site had no military value: most of the visible land is at a distance of over 5000 m away and thus any possible activity – hostile or friendly – cannot be distinguished.⁹¹

The location of Gradišče above Bašelj is therefore neither easily defensible nor does it provide a commanding view useful for military purposes. As such, the location had no strategic value in the Early Medieval landscape other than possible policing of the alleged merchant route,⁹² a task unworthy of the members of the ruling military class mirrored in the finds.

The visibility analysis of the Gradišče above Bašelj site offers an important insight, though. The viewshed is closed and framed thus creating a visibility “funnel”: in the south the view opens towards Kranj, and in the north towards the mountain slopes of Storžič. Visual and physical connections between Kranj, Gradišče above Bašelj and the peak of Storžič imply ideational and conceptual relations between them, perhaps as much a result of the cosmology and identity politics of the then inhabitants of the Kranj Plain as of practical logic.⁹³

⁸⁶ Štular/Eichert, this volume; Karo/Mlekuž, Archaeological Image 264–268.

⁸⁷ *Ložar in Knifc*, Arheološko 57f.; Knifc, Arheološko 67.

⁸⁸ Štular/Eichert, this volume.

⁸⁹ Knifc, Arheološko 67; Karo/Mlekuž, Archaeological Image 250.

⁹⁰ *Ložar in Knifc*, Arheološko 57f.; Špela Karo/Timotej Knifc, Gradišče boven Bašelj in het vroegmiddeleeuwse Carniola (Slovenië), in: *De erfenis van Karel de Grote 814 – 2014*, ed. Dirk Callebaut/Horst van Cuyck (Ename 2014) 255–266, at 256.

⁹¹ Štular/Eichert, this volume.

⁹² Karo/Mlekuž, Archaeological Image 252.

⁹³ Karo/Mlekuž, Archaeological Image 268.

The importance of this is that it establishes the connection on the axis Kranj–Gradišče above Bašelj–Storžič Mountain. Kranj is a central settlement contemporary to the Early Medieval finds from Gradišče above Bašelj, as evidenced by the large cemetery.⁹⁴ Storžič Mountain was described in the 17th century as *Storžič, ki stoji sam samcat nad Kranjem, se dviga tako visoko in strmo, kakor bi hotel predreti oblake*. . . ⁹⁵ Whether this is just a poetic description or hints at the pre-Christian beliefs – as often in Valvasor's work⁹⁶ – notwithstanding, the symbolic meaning of the Storžič Mountain peak in the Early Medieval period has been established.⁹⁷ It is very likely that this mountain represented the embodiment of the symbolic *axis mundi*⁹⁸ to the then inhabitants of Kranj.

With the association of Kranj (profane central settlement) and Storžič (a local embodiment of the sacred *axis mundi*) established, the intermediary role of Gradišče above Bašelj emerges: situated between the two at a liminal location, on the natural passage from the highly accessible Kranj Plain to the border of inaccessible hinterland,⁹⁹ with an exceptional natural scenery (see above, the description of the promontory) and a clear connection to the forbears (see above, the description of stratigraphy).

In the Early Medieval period the Gradišče above Bašelj site was therefore a place of special symbolic meaning. Such places are typically located in the liminal zones or borders¹⁰⁰ and served as a *lieux de mémoire* – a place *where memory crystallizes and secretes itself*.¹⁰¹ Using the Occam's razor principle it seems judicious to explore the large quantity of intentionally deposited valuable artefacts at the Gradišče above Bašelj site in connection with its intermediary role between the profane (Kranj) and the sacred (*axis mundi*).

5 CONCLUSION

The Mali grad and Na Bleku sites have been used to demonstrate the validity of the GIS analysis of hilltops since the results confirmed previously existing interpretations. Using the study case of Gradišče above Bašelj, we demonstrated the input of the GIS analysis in scholarly ambiguity regarding the site's interpretation. The three examples are therefore both a testimony to the validity of GIS analysis and a cautionary tale against oversimplifying its results.

6 CATALOGUE OF FINDS

The following is a selection of previously published¹⁰² non-military finds from the Gradišče above Bašelj site.

Female jewellery

Pl. 1: 1. Bright green glass bead. Diameter 0.26 cm, and thickness 0.1 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 6271.

⁹⁴ *an overview with bibliography in* Benjamin Štular/Seta Štuhec, 3D Archaeology. Early Medieval Earrings from Kranj (Ljubljana 2015) 34–42.

⁹⁵ Storžič situated on its own above Kranj is climbing so high and so steep as if wanting to penetrate the clouds . . . (translated by author from Slovenian). Janez V. Valvasor, *Slava vojvodine Kranjske. Izbrana poglavja* (Original *Die Ehre dess Hertzogthums Crain*, published in 1689) (Ljubljana 1984) 25.

⁹⁶ E.g. Benjamin Štular/Ivan M. Hrovatin, Slovene pagan sacred landscape. Study case: the Bistrica Plain, in: *Studia mythologica Slavica* 5 (2002) 43–68, at 62f..

⁹⁷ Pleterski, *Kulturni genom* 287f.

⁹⁸ Cf. Zmago Šmitek, The Image of the Real World and the World Beyond in the Slovene Folk Tradition, in: *Studia Mythologica Slavica* 2 (1999) 161–195.

⁹⁹ Karo/Mlekuž, *Archaeological Image* 266–268, Figure 19.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Julie Lund, Banks, Borders and Bodies of Water in a Viking Age Mentality, in: *Journal of Wetland Archaeology* 8 (2008) 53–72, at 54f.; Katja Hrobat, *Ko Baba dvigne krilo. Prostor in čas v folklori Krasa* (Ljubljana 2010), 64–69.

¹⁰¹ Pierre Nora, Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire, in: *Representations* 26 (1989) 7–24, at 7.

¹⁰² Nos. 1–23, 27–32 and 35–40 after Veršnik 2009, Gradišče, 21–34 and T.1–T.12; Nos. 24–26 after Knific, *Železni zvonci* 138–149; Nos. 31, 32 after Knific/Nabergoj, *Srednjeveške zgodbe slika* 106 and slika 116; Nos. 33 and 34 after Bitenc/Knific, *Od Rimljanov*, 101, No. 329.

Pl. 1: 2. Dark blue glass bead. Diameter 0.58 cm, and thickness 0.23 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 5838.

Pl. 1: 3. Dark blue glass bead. Diameter 0.60 cm, and thickness 0.12 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 6240.

Pl. 1: 4. A fragment of an iron pin with the pin-head made of grey glass inlaid with white thread. Length 1.78 cm, pin-head diameter 0.58 cm. National museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 6264.

Pl. 1: 5. Iron pin with the pin-head made of dark blue glass; the pin is slightly bent. Length 1.78 cm, pin-head diameter 0.58 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 6264.

Pl. 1: 6. Iron pin with the pin-head made of dark blue glass; the pin is bent. Length 2.75 cm, pin-head diameter 0.62 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 3009.

Pl. 1: 7. Iron pin with the pin-head made of see-through green glass. Length 3.66 cm, pin-head diameter 0.61 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2766.

Pl. 1: 8. Iron pin with the pin-head made of green glass; only the pin-head is preserved. Length 0.81 cm, pin-head diameter 0.55 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 5263.

Pl. 1: 9. Fragment of a finger ring made of bronze metal sheet. Diameter 2.05 cm, maximum width 1.78 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2765.

Pl. 1: 10. Fragment of a finger ring made of bronze metal sheet. Diameter 1.85 cm, maximum width 1.40 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 4096.

Pl. 1: 11. Fragment of a finger ring made of bronze metal sheet. Diameter 1.98 cm, maximum width 1.82 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2242.

Pl. 1: 12. Damaged rumbler bell with loop made of a copper alloy with a ball made of stone. Diameter 2.62 cm, height 3.56 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2639.

Pl. 1: 13. Rumbler bell with loop made of a copper alloy with a ball made of stone. Diameter 2.15 cm, height 2.62 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2887.

Sawing or weaving kit

Pl. 1: 14. Iron sawing needle. Length 3.10 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2795.

Pl. 1: 15. Pottery spindle whorl. Diameter 3.44 cm, height 0.75 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 649.

Pl. 1: 16. Iron hook with loop. Length 5.13 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2738.

Pl. 1: 17. Iron hook with square section ornamented with horizontal cuts. Length 6.83 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2717.

Pl. 1: 18. Iron hook. Length 3.05 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 6096.

Sheep-farming tools and equipment

Pl. 2: 19. Iron comb for wool or flax; one comb tooth is preserved. Height 8.73 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2828.

Pl. 2: 20. Iron comb for wool or flax; one comb tooth is preserved. Height 8.87 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2830.

Pl. 2: 21. Iron comb for wool or flax; 12 comb teeth inserted into the rectangular iron plate in two lines are preserved. Height 9.16 cm, width 4.60 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 3170.

Pl. 2: 22. Iron scissors. Length 23.5, length of blade 10.2, width of blade 1.57 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 3174.

Pl. 2: 23. Iron scissors. Length 21.7, length of blade 8.8, width of blade 1.95 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2818.

Pl. 2: 24. Copper-plated iron bell with hook and clapper. Height 8.8 cm, width 6.1 cm. National museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 3163.

Pl. 2: 25. Copper-plated iron bell with hook and clapper. Height 9.0 cm, width 7.1 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 3172.

Pl. 2: 26. Copper-plated iron bell with hook and clapper. Height 8.6 cm, width 6.0 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 4139.

Housing

Pl. 3: 27. Rotary lock mechanism, only the bolt is preserved. Width 8.1 cm, height 1.32 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 4144.

Pl. 3: 28. An iron loop. Height 3.5 cm, width 3.3. cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2712.

Pl. 3: 29. An iron loop. Height 3.3 cm, width 2.6. cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2720.

Tools

Pl. 3: 30. Iron peg with loop. Length 10.3 cm, width of loop 3.9. cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2826.

Pl. 3: 31. Iron tongs. Length 11.2 cm, width 3.4 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 4185.

Pl. 3: 32. Iron spike. Length 17.1 cm, width 2.1 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 4120.

Liturgical

Pl. 3: 33. Bronze sheet bell with iron clapper; bell is crushed. Height 7.9 cm, width 9.2 cm, restored height 10.2 cm, restored width 5.3 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2631.

Pl. 3: 34. Censer (lat. *thuribulum* or *incensorium*) made of bronze sheet; censer is crushed. Height 8.4 cm, width 8.2 cm, restored height 6.6 cm, restored rim diameter 7.2 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2630.

Housing (continued)

Pl. 4: 35. Iron rotary key with bow and a bit made of a perpendicularly curved shank. Length 18.3 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 3217.

Pl. 4: 36. Iron rotary key with bow and a bit with two teeth. Length 11.0 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 4178.

Pl. 4: 37. Rotary key with bit and hollow shank; bit with decorated elongated bow. Length 9.5 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 2794.

Pl. 4: 38. Rotary key with bit and hollow shank; bit with two clefts and flat section round bow. Length 13.4 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 4117.

Pl. 4: 39. Rotary lock mechanism, only key-guard plate with staples and bolt is preserved. Width 7.0 cm, height 4.9 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 4124.

Pl. 4: 40. Rotary lock mechanism, only key-guard plate with staples and bolt is preserved. Width 6.2 cm, height 4.6 cm. National Museum of Slovenia, Inv. No. AO S 5242.

