

methodological perspective, it is highly recommendable to everybody interested in rock engravings and more generally in Neolithic-Early Bronze Age European archaeology.

I–16126 Genoa

Via Balbi 6

E-mail: romaggi2003@libero.it

Roberto Maggi

L. A. S. A.

Laboratorio di Archeologia e Storia Ambientale  
Università di Genova

**BERNHARD HÄNSEL / KRISTINA MIHOVIĆ / BIBA TERŽAN, Monkodonja. Istraživanje protourbanog naselja brončanog doba Istre. Knjiga 1. Iskopavanje i nalazi građevina – Monkodonja. Forschungen zu einer protourbanen Siedlung der Bronzezeit Istriens. Teil 1. Die Grabung und der Baubefund.** With contributions by Claudia Gerling, Helmut Kroll, Damir Matošević, Igor Medari, Branko Muši, Douglas Price, Barbara Teßmann, Rafko Urnikar, Bernhard Weninger. Monografije i katalozi volume 25. Arheološki Muzej Istre, Pula 2015. Kn 350.00. ISBN 978-953-6153-92-3 (Hardcover). 589 pages with 336 illustrations and 7 foldouts.

**ANJA HELLMUTH KRAMBERGER, Monkodonja. Istraživanje protourbanog naselja brončanog doba Istre. Knjiga 2. Keramika s brončanodobne gradine Monkodonja – Monkodonja. Forschungen zu einer protourbanen Siedlung der Bronzezeit Istriens. Teil 2. Die Keramik aus der bronzezeitlichen Gradina Monkodonja.** Volume 2,1 Text. Monografije i katalozi volume 28,1. Arheološki Muzej Istre, Pula 2017. Kn 200.00. ISBN 978-953-8082-03-0 (Hardcover). 438 pages with 283 illustrations. Volume 2,2 Catalogue. Monografije i katalozi volume 28,2. Arheološki Muzej Istre, Pula 2017. Kn 150.00. ISBN 978-953-8082-04-7 (Hardcover). 247 pages with 153 tables.

Two voluminous publications present results of the research on the fortified Bronze Age site of Monkodonja, situated near Rovinj in the region of Istria, Croatia. The work on the site was carried out in the years 1997–2008 by joint efforts of the Archaeological Museum of Istria in Pula, the *Freie Universität Berlin*, Ljubljana University, and Rovinj Heritage Museum. The overall research, conservation, and reconstruction work on the site has earned the *Europa Nostra* award by the European Council for the special results in the preservation and protection of cultural heritage monuments in 2002. As the result of the research, Monkodonja presently stands out as the best-studied Bronze Age site on the eastern Adriatic coast.

The first publication introduces the excavation and presents the architecture of the settlement. The prologue (pp. 11–24) and introductory chapters (pp. 25–50) lead us into the volume. The authors present the chronology of excavation campaigns on Monkodonja. The elaboration of key research goals and decisions helps a lot with the understanding of this comprehensive and very informative volume. A detailed insight with the critical overview of publications on the history of research of Istrian hillforts is provided here as well.

The chapter titled “Fortified site of Monkodonja” (pp. 51–108) opens with the presentation of the natural surroundings and the reconstruction of the geomorphology of the site. Further on, excavation methodology and strategies are described. As we read, most of the trenches have been positioned to define the complex structures around two entrances, the main one in the west and a minor one in the north. It is clearly pointed out that the excavation has been performed by arbitrary horizontal layers (*Planum*), which have been defined mostly by their relation to the remains of architecture. Construction of drystone walls and habitation structures, interpretation of post-depositional processes, and the condition of the architectural remains at the time of excavation

are presented here in detail. Moreover, the restoration methods that have been employed on site, including the challenges that have limited their extent, are discussed. The last part of the chapter, by Helmut Kroll, deals with archaeobotanical finds from the 75 samples selected during the excavation. Apart from certain peculiarities in this small sample, it is notable that grape vines are present in a relatively high number, and the author concludes that the Bronze Age site of Monkodonja was part of the viniculture area of Europe.

Detailed insight into the structure, organisation, and the chronology of the fortification of Monkodonja is provided in the chapter on “The main fortification wall” (pp. 109–254). The authors present the results of the excavation along with a number of illustrations and drawings (plans, sections, and reconstructions) that help with the understanding of the very complex building sequence. The excavation of the most well-preserved section of the fortification, between the western and northern gates, has revealed traces of additional walling and use of added inner spaces with storage areas. Rare metal finds from this area have proved to be important for the overall dating of phases of the site. The detailed presentation of the western gate, as the most prominent fortification element, reveals six construction phases. Looking for possible connections and influences from other sites, the authors note general similarities with local hillforts but many more to those of phase VIII at Old Aegina. An area with exposed, massive, irregular stones for fighting off the cavalry, *Chevaux-de-Frise*, has been identified in front of one section of the wall.

Two graves in cists by the western gate are presented along with the anthropological analysis by Barbara Teßmann (pp. 195–230). Grave A is situated at a prominent position at the western gate. The cist contained bones of more than ten individuals that had lived over the course of seven centuries, according to the radiocarbon analyses. The earliest dates pre-date the construction of the fortification by six centuries. Preliminary isotope analyses (by Claudia Gerling and Douglas Price) show a high probability of a local origin of the buried individuals. The authors suggest that the cist could have been used as a place of ancestral cult after the bones had been collected from another ritual site. The cist of grave B contained a few bones from multiple individuals, including ones of a younger female, as the majority had obviously been removed for a final burial. The authors presume that these were the graves of prominent members of the community, whose status was commemorated not by their grave offerings, which were almost none, but by their position within the settlement. In the proximate vicinity of these, the excavation revealed the existence of more graves, all of them destroyed.

The results of the excavation in the central part of the settlement, surrounded by the fortification wall, are presented in the chapter titled “Acropolis” (pp. 255–340). The western section of the wall was examined in detail, providing evidence of four phases of construction. The end of the settlement came through destructive events, evidenced here by the finds of metal and stone weaponry. The interpretation of the interior organisation of the acropolis proved to be a challenge, due to the poorly preserved stratigraphic sequence, as it would be expected on hillfort sites in the karst. The authors suggest two main construction periods. During the initial period, the houses were aligned with the delimiting wall, the spaces closer to the wall were open, and there were spaces between houses that could be referred to as streets. The lower parts of the houses were built with drystone walling and the roofing was supported by wooden construction laid upon supporting beams, whose traces are documented as holes in the bedrock. In the younger period of occupation, the area of the acropolis was reduced, but the planimetry remained more or less the same.

As the results have shown, the settlement possessed levels of internal organisation, separated by walls and terraces (chapter “Upper town and lower town”, pp. 341–372). The area named “upper town” is adjacent to the acropolis wall at the west, and it was separated from the “lower town” area by a wall. Only parts of the “upper town” were excavated, but the metal detector prospection had

yielded finds of splashes of bronze, interpreted as a discard from the smelting process. The rest of the area also shows finds that can be associated with different crafts, and so the authors interpret this part of the settlement as a craftsmen and workshop area. The “lower town” shows a dense concentration of houses, aligned along the bedrock terraces. Their rear was backed onto the step of the bedrock and the delimiting wall towards the “upper town”, while the communication ran along the fronts of houses.

The preliminary work on the documentation and research of the natural pit cave (*Schachthöhle*) near the northern gates of settlement is described in the chapter “Pit Cave” (pp. 373–387), with a contribution by Rafko Urankar. It is concluded that the cave served as a burial place during the Neolithic but had a different role during the life of the Bronze Age settlement that still needs to be resolved through further research.

A detailed description of the geophysical research on Monkodonja by Branko Mušič and Igor Medarić is presented in the chapter “Geophysical prospection” (pp. 389–421). Apart from the results that have contributed to the overall understanding of the organisation of the settlement (potential remains of the eastern entrance) and raised some new questions (the “palace”, elaborated in “Summary and conclusions”), the authors describe in detail the challenges of the application of geophysical methods and solutions that can be replicated in the karst area.

Results of radiocarbon analyses are presented in the chapter “The dating of the site” (co-authored by Bernhard Weninger, pp. 423–452). This chapter summarises all of the comments on radiocarbon dates that have been presented earlier in the text. As such, it is a very useful part of the volume, where one can correlate parts of the construction of the site in their chronological sequence. According to it, the foundation of the settlement can be dated soon after 1800 BC and its end soon after 1500 BC. Burials that were found in the cist grave A date from 24<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century BC and those in the grave B from 20<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The chapter “Summary and conclusions” (pp. 453–510) represents a good insight into the variety of research topics and main theses that were drawn out of the results of work on the site. The authors point out that the foundation of the settlement was a planned act and its planimetry was set up along with social roles. They classify the Monkodonja settlement as a town, with an estimated population of 1000. An upcoming volume that will deal with metal, bone, and other finds will probably back up the theses on the social stratification, as it has been noted by the authors throughout this volume. It is here that the authors argue for the origin of settlers of Monkodonja and the sources of their knowledge in construction designs. They claim that the founders and builders / architects of Monkodonja had to be in intensive and direct contact with the Eastern Mediterranean in order to employ the techniques and construction designs, the rituals that are recorded within graves A and B, and even cult practices at the cave by the northern gates. They even presume “the presence of master builders from the Aegean in Monkodonja” (pp. 500–501). The epilogue contains considerations (hardly provable) on the origin of the name of the site Monkodonja that is associated with Kydonia, the presumed site of origin of its settlers.

Throughout the volume, the authors not only present results but regularly discuss their research questions and explain the decision-making processes. This is especially valuable when it comes to challenges of the research and reconstruction of prehistoric drystone walls and habitation areas. Detailed documentation and descriptions give it an added value, making it a must-read for scholars who engage into the research of hillfort sites. The graphic contents of the volume are well made and well-chosen to the accompanying text. Attention should be paid to the terminology of defensive structure elements that is used here since it does not fully correspond in its meaning to architectural elements from later historical periods (i. e. “Risalit”, “Bastion”, “Kasematte”). There

are, however, certain theses in the text that are lacking solid evidence. There is a tendency to pinpoint each element that can support the general idea of strong links and direct contacts with the Eastern Mediterranean which, sometimes, goes beyond firm evidence. It is concluded that some kind of colonisation effort, with the elite as colonisers and the local population as the subdued, was a prerequisite for the foundation act of the settlement. Still, it is claimed that there is no evidence that can clearly point out the origin of such a colonising group. On the contrary, isotope analyses of human remains from graves A (that pre-dates the fortification) and B, which the authors themselves consider to be somehow related to the founders of the settlement (pp. 209–210), are pointing to the probable local origin of buried individuals (p. 237). Also, the attempt to bridge the chronological gap between the finds from Monkodonja and the burials at the nearby Mušego tumuli is still missing stronger evidence and contextualisation. These discrepancies in the interpretation of early events on the site of Monkodonja show the need for both further research and a reconsideration of colonialist interpretative concepts. Still, this does not reduce the fundamental value of this landmark volume for any further research of the Bronze Age in the area.

The second publication on Monkodonja comes in two volumes, text and catalogue, and presents the results of the comprehensive work that was done by Anja Hellmuth Kramberger on pottery finds from the excavation. Volume 1 opens with the “Introduction” (pp. 15–35), including the overview of research results on Bronze Age pottery in the region of Istria and the Caput Adriae area, and the description of the methodology applied to seize the very voluminous and demanding body of finds. Observations are made on the inconsistency of terms, procedures, and descriptions within pottery studies from the area of Istria that can be found in the literature. The lack of a systematic approach to pottery studies from individual sites in the area has resulted in the application of terms to describe features of pottery often biased by individual experiences of the researchers.

The chapter “Analysis of the Material” (pp. 37–66) presents in detail the author’s approach to the classification of pottery based on its features. A. Hellmuth Kramberger describes the material classification system she has used. It is based on the following categories: surface treatment, colour of surface and fabric, hardness, porosity, inclusions, and firing. Following are the remarks on forming techniques and residue marks traced on a smaller number of sherds.

The chapter “Pottery types and their distribution” (pp. 77–302) brings a fundamental value to these volumes. The author has presented her typology and coding system, based on clearly described standards of form, size, and proportions. Pottery forms (cups, beakers, kantharoi, jugs, flasks, bowls, small bowls, pots, pithoi, tripods, and special forms) and types (with names based on morphological features) are presented with drawings and distribution maps. In cases where vessel types are present beyond Istria, these types have been presented along with multiple comparisons and comments on the possible origin of the form, or of the pot itself.

The chapter on “The distribution of finds within the settlement” (pp. 303–318) contributes to the understanding of the internal organisation of life within the settlement, pointing to the storage areas (by the massive walls), areas for food preparation, and the exclusivity of the presence of drinking sets to the acropolis area.

The chapter “Considerations on the chronological sequence of certain pottery forms at Monkodonja” (pp. 319–333) brings results based on the research of types from parts of two trenches (III and IX), where the site formation was best documented. A. Hellmuth Kramberger follows the division in two horizons, Monkodonja I and II, as suggested in volume 1 by Hänsel et al. Together with a clear description and visual representation of the pottery chronology, this chapter presents valuable data that is helpful in establishing relations between different areas of the settlement.

Typo-chronological comparisons with neighbouring regions are presented in a separate chapter with the same title (pp. 335–392). The author draws wide comparisons with the material from neighbouring regions of the Mediterranean and continental Europe. The overall success of this work is shown in the number of correlations that can be pointed out. For example, the author notes that tripods represent a common type of pottery that is often found in Istria, while it is absent from the rest of the Adriatic. Their existence in the eastern Mediterranean can, to a certain extent, show links between these two areas. Still, some comparisons are not of high importance for the goals of the work, for example, the correlation made between the Monkodonja material and the Cetina type ware. Apart from the clear similarities that have been pointed out, there are no clear conclusions on the correlations drawn with the Cetina ware. After all, it should be pointed out that the absence of studies of Middle Bronze Age pottery from systematic excavations in the eastern Adriatic is still creating a gap in knowledge that presents a big problem for comprehensive studies like this one.

Horizons Monkodonja I and II roughly fit the span from the end of Reinecke's *Bronzezeit* A2 till the end of B1 / beginning of B2, with the division between the two set towards the end of A3. As the author points out (p. 391), all of the typo-chronological comparisons drawn with neighbouring regions fit within the time frame set by the radiocarbon dates from the site (1850/1750–1500/1450 BCE).

Compared to the state of research of typo-chronological studies about Istria, the division of the typological spectrum recovered at Monkodonja into two horizons represents one of the best achievements of Anja Hellmuth's work, as it adds details to former cornerstone typo-chronological studies of the region (such as e.g. A. CARDARELLI, *Castellieri nel Carso e nell' Istria: Cronologia degli insediamenti fra media Età del Bronzo e prima Età del Ferro*. In: *Regione Friuli-Venezia Giulia et al. [ed.], Preistoria del Caput Adriae: Trieste, Castello di S. Giusto [Udine 1983] 87–104*), who couldn't rely upon well preserved contexts such as those in trenches III and IX in Monkodonja.

Volume 2 comprises the catalogue and the tables. The catalogue presents almost 1100 diagnostic sherds, which were recorded and defined through codes assigned to describe the context, ware type, colour, surface treatment, shape, type, and decoration (where present). This forms the basis of the code system that was used to create the database. The drawings presented on 153 tables are well made by the author.

The author uses a considerable volume of local literature that provides a solid basis for distribution studies. This could still be misleading due to the quality of original publications, but this is not the case with this study. It can be concluded that Volume 2 of the Monkodonja publications is well prepared and well-made in presenting results of a systematic work that was done on a very demanding pottery assemblage. The author has created the work that will remain a reference point for anybody, pottery specialist or field archaeologist, who studies the Middle Bronze Age in the Adriatic.

HR–21000 Split  
Poljička cesta 35  
E-mail: vedbarba@ffst.hr

Vedran Barbarić  
Department of Art History  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Split