Stefan Eichert

EARLY MEDIEVAL FORTIFICATIONS
IN CARINTHIA/AUSTRIA AND THEIR HISTORICAL
AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Abstract - For the 8th c. there is some first evidence for fortified hilltop settlements used by the Slavic Carantanians for military purposes. In the time of the Karolingian and Ottonian reign over the eastern Alps early medieval fortifications in Carinthia are mentioned in written sources as well as they are proven by archaeological excavations and their number increases. They were part of the royal or imperial villikation-system and archaeological investigations suggest that many of those fortifications were used only temporarily and not inhabited permanently. With the further development of feudalism and knighthood many manorial *curtes* and fortifications lost their importance. From the 12th century onwards in most cases the typical knights' castles are now the centres of the villikations.

Key words - Early Middle Ages, Carantania, Fortifications, Castles, Ramparts.

Riassunto - Per l'VIII secolo sussistono alcune evidenze relative all'occupazione a scopo militare di siti d'altura fortificati da parte degli Slavi Carantani. Per l'epoca corrispondente alla dominazione carolingia e ottoniana sulle Alpi orientali, le fonti scritte menzionano la presenza di fortificazioni altomedievali, la cui documentazione va altresì incrementandosi a livello archeologico. Questi siti fortificati erano parte del sistema di villicazione reale o imperiale e la ricerca archeologica suggerisce che molti di essi non furono occupati in modo permanente, bensì solo temporaneamente. Con lo sviluppo ulteriore del feudalesimo e della nobiltà militare, molte *curtes* e molte fortificazioni persero la loro importanza. Dal XII secolo in poi, in molti casi saranno i tipici castelli signorili a fungere da centri dell'amministrazione rurale.

Parole chiave - Alto medioevo, Carantania, Fortificazioni, Castelli, Bastioni.

1. Introduction

From the area of today's Carinthia we know about 200 sites with anthropogenic features that are identified as fortifications or fortified

settlements ([1]). In many cases ramparts can be seen clearly still today ([2]) (Fig. 1). Only a few of those sites are investigated and can therefore be dated definitely.

Their interpretation was so far discussed in many ways and as a result various conclusions were drawn. The article of Paul Gleirscher in this compilation presents a number of sites and describes them in detail ([3]). My article discusses the theoretical background and a cultural and historical interpretation of «early castles» in the area of Carinthia.

2. State of research

Already very early Late Roman hilltop settlements, like on mount Ulrichsberg or in Teurnia drew a lot of attention to them. However, mainly the early Christian churches of those sites were investigated. At the beginning of the 20th c. Rudolf Egger carried out archaeological research on this topic and his results offered new insights on Late Antiquity in the province of Noricum ([4]).

After the First World War studies continued and in 1938 Franz Jantsch presented a collection of all sites known so far. They were at this time mainly interpreted as Roman or Lombard ([5]).

In the year 1939 the department «Ahnenerbe» of the SS carried out the first excavations in the early medieval Karnburg, but the documentation was lost after or during Second World War ([6]).

The number of sites known increased steadily after 1945, especially due to the researches and surveys of Franz Xaver Kohla. He produced a large number of descriptions, plans, and sondages and in 1973 the hitherto identified sites were published in a compilation, covering all so far known fortifications from prehistoric ramparts to medieval knights' castles ([7]).

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([2]) Kohla 1973.

([3]) See the article on pp. 33-62.

([4]) Egger 1916 .

([5]) Jantsch 1938.

([6]) Schleif 1939.

([7]) Kohla 1973. Next to Kohla also some others did research on this topic. E.g.: Knapp 1952; Knapp 1955; Dolenz 1958; Viertler/Plank 1967; Viertler 1970.
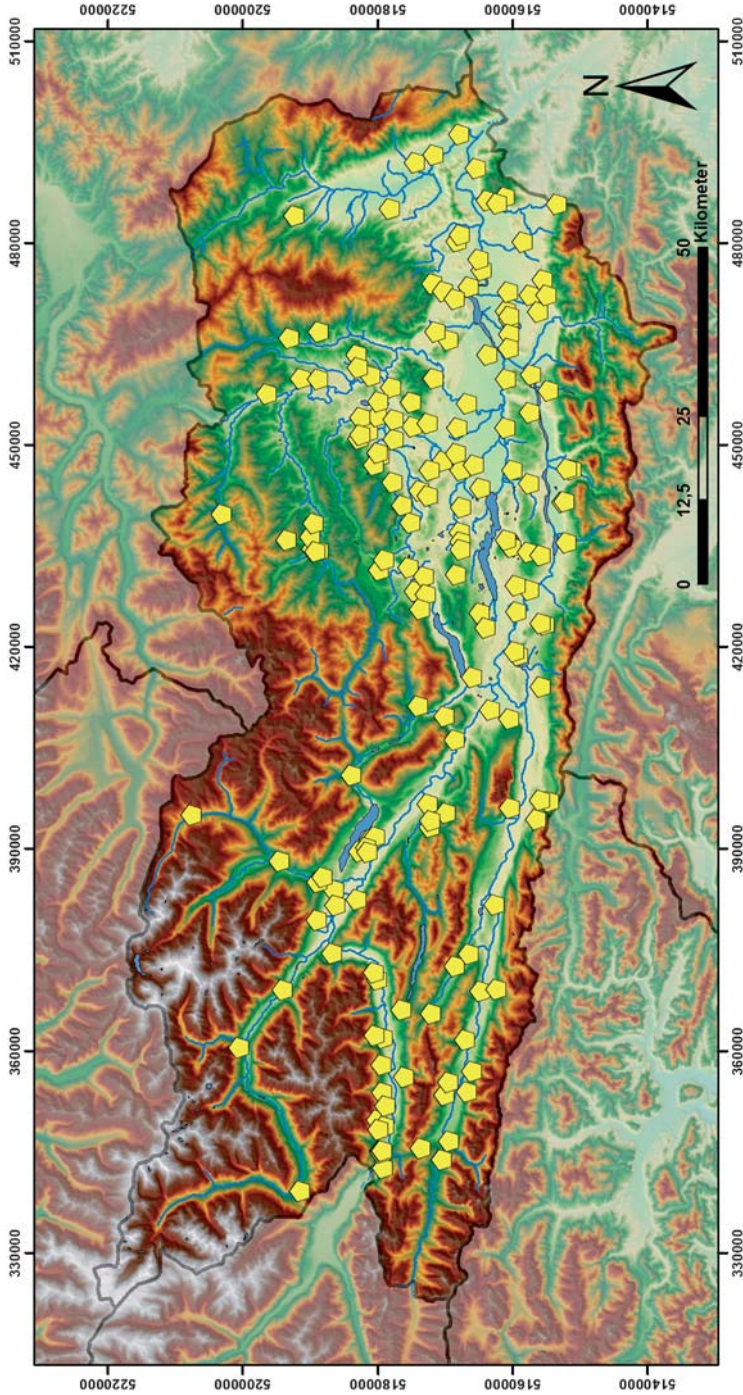
Fig. 1 - Fortifications and hilltop settlements in Carinthia (design: Eichert; mapped after: Kohla 1973; digital elevation model: NASA Srtm)

From the 1980s until now several sites, especially late Roman ones, were analyzed and published [8]. Also Slovenian scholars worked on this topic. In 1987 Slavko Ciglenečki for instance presented a collection and interpretation of late Roman hilltop settlements in the eastern alps [9]. Also a lot of new excavations were carried out in this period, mainly by the archaeologists Franz Glaser [10], Paul Gleirscher [11] and Renate Jernej [12]. Recently also Karnburg has again been investigated by archaeological means [13].

In many cases the sites' chronological and cultural frame could not be identified clearly due to a lack of finds with chronological significance. Also radiocarbon- or dendrodatings are often not available. Altogether there is a broad variety of possible datings. Some sites were already used in the neolithic period [14]. A high number was erected in bronze and especially iron age [15]. In the late Roman period one can observe a large increase of hilltop settlements often in combination with the construction of early Christian churches [16].

The research on mount Hemmaberg offered important new insights on the transition period from Late Antiquity to Early Middle Ages in the 6th and 7th c. [17]. It showed that Slavic newcomers and the autochthonous, roman population used parts of the church buildings for housing purposes after the «official» end of the Roman province.

A high number of stray finds, mainly military objects like spurs or weapons also show that some of the late Roman sites were reused in the Slavic period of Carantania in the 8th and early 9th c. [18]. For the Carolingian and Ottonian period only a few fortifications can so far be identified and dated definitely [19].

Some small sites, often declared as «Turmburg» or «Motte», are also to be mentioned in this context. A clear interpretation is mostly difficult due to the lack of excavations or findings [20].

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[8] E.g. Felgenhauer-Schmiedt 1993; Ladstätter 2000b; Steinklauber 1990.
[9] Ciglenečki 1987.
[10] Glaser 1997; Glaser 2008; Gostenčnik 1997.
[11] E.g. Gleirscher 1996; Gleirscher 2001a.b; Gleirscher 2005; Gleirscher 2009.
[12] E.g. Jernej 2004.
[13] Dolenz/Baur 2011.
[14] E.g. Rabenstein near Lavamünd: Vahlkampf 1995.
[15] E.g. Gleirscher 2010.
[16] Recently: Glaser 2008.
[17] Ladstätter 2000b.
[18] Eichert 2011.
[19] E.g. Gostenčnik 1997; Huber 2009.
[20] The site of Grad/Hrad near Ferlach was recently identified as «Turmburg» and dated in the High Middle Ages: Jernej 2008.

Knights' castles are a prominent feature of the High and Late Middle ages. They can clearly be identified and in most cases also be dated well by means of written sources. In the transition time between Middle and Modern Ages new ramparts were erected and used as refuges in the time of the Turkish raids [21]. Excavations in the site of Georgiberg in valley Jauntal for example revealed a late medieval construction phase of the rampart [22]. Also some other fortifications respectively features are seen in this context [23].

As stated above in many cases there are no or only a few finds from the described types of sites, that point definitely to the Early Middle Ages and if there are some, they mostly represent only a Terminus post quem and for dating and interpretation of the fortifications a big margin remains.

Recently this topic was discussed by Paul Gleirscher [24]. For the Early Middle Ages he states first individual castles in the 9th c. Examples would be Karnburg and Hochgosch. In the 10th c. the Hungarian threat caused the construction of new or at least the enforcement of existing fortifications, with multiple ramparts, as can be observed on the site of St. Helena in valley Gailtal or Karnburg. Besides these, other small ones are erected until the first millennium. Gleirscher interprets them as castles of the noble landlords. At the beginning of Modern Ages some of them have been reused as refuges against the Turkish raids.

3. Fortifications from the time of the Slavic principality of Carantania

In the 8th c. written sources inform us about the Slavic principality of Carantania under the reign of several dukes [25]. From an archaeological point of view there is only little evidence for settlements of this period. We know about graves [26] and churches [27] but until now not a single

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[21] Some of them are even called «Türkenschanze». E.g. in Kleinglödnitz/Gurktal: Kohla 1973, 334.

[22] Jernej 1993.

[23] For instance the latest phase in the site of Ottilienkogel near Glantschach: Gleirscher 2009. Similar in Förker Laas Riegel: Gleirscher 2007. A rampart on the top of Magdalensberg is seen in the same context: Gleirscher 2008. Contrary: Dolenz 2009.

[24] Gleirscher 2010. See also his paper in this book.

[25] For an overview e.g.: Gleirscher 2000; Wolfram 1979; Wolfram 1995b; Wolfram 1995a.

[26] Eichert 2010a.

[27] Karpf 2001; Eichert 2010b.

settlement has clearly been identified and excavated. Also fortifications or «castles» of this period are not definitely proven yet. There is a high number of 8th c. strayfinds in hilltop settlements that mainly originate from Late Antiquity or even Prehistory and were dwelled intensively in late Roman time. We know spurs, stirrups, arrowheads and in some cases weapons like axes from the sites of Karnburg ([28]), Ulrichsberg, Hemmaberg, Kanzianiberg, Lamprechtskogel, Kappele ob Jadersdorf and Förker Laas Riegel ([29]) (Fig. 2). In each case the objects were found without stratification and therefore cannot be connected with features or building phases. In some of the sites also ramparts were observed. In most cases they are not excavated and their dating is unclear, though there is a possibility that they were erected in the 8th and early 9th century and might be connected with the early medieval strayfinds mentioned before ([30]). Due to the high number of those finds/findspots one can say that the objects had not been lost accidentally. It leads to the conclusion that the sites were used by the Carantanians for some military purposes. Also in Slovenia a similar phenomenon can be observed ([31]).

The character of these sites' use in the Early Middle Ages remains unclear. Theoretically one can think of permanent or temporary use for housing purposes, as refuges or as guarded places for storage ([32]).

In the 8th and early 9th c. many armed conflicts took place in Carantania. A battle between Avars, Carantanians and Bavarians is mentioned around 740. Furthermore there have been riots against Christianization and in 772 the Bavarian Duke Tassilo III defeats the Carantanians in a legendary battle. For the 9th c. it ist mentioned, that Carantanian troops were involved in the rebellion of Liutewit and fought against a Carolingian army ([33]). All these events occur in the chronological range of the above described objects. It shows that there must have been a need for military backing in the Slavic Carantania and maybe the mentioned finds are material remains of a Carantanian military infrastructure.

([28]) DOLENZ/BAUR 2011, 330.

([29]) On this type of sites with further bibliography: EICHERT 2011.

([30]) On the rampart of Hemmaberg see: LADSTÄTTER 2000a, 235. P. Gleirscher dates this feature in the Late Middle Ages as a defensive means against Turkish raids: GLEIRSCHER 2010, 26.

([31]) MILAVEC 2009, 253-254.

([32]) See the article of Paul Gleirscher in this compilation.
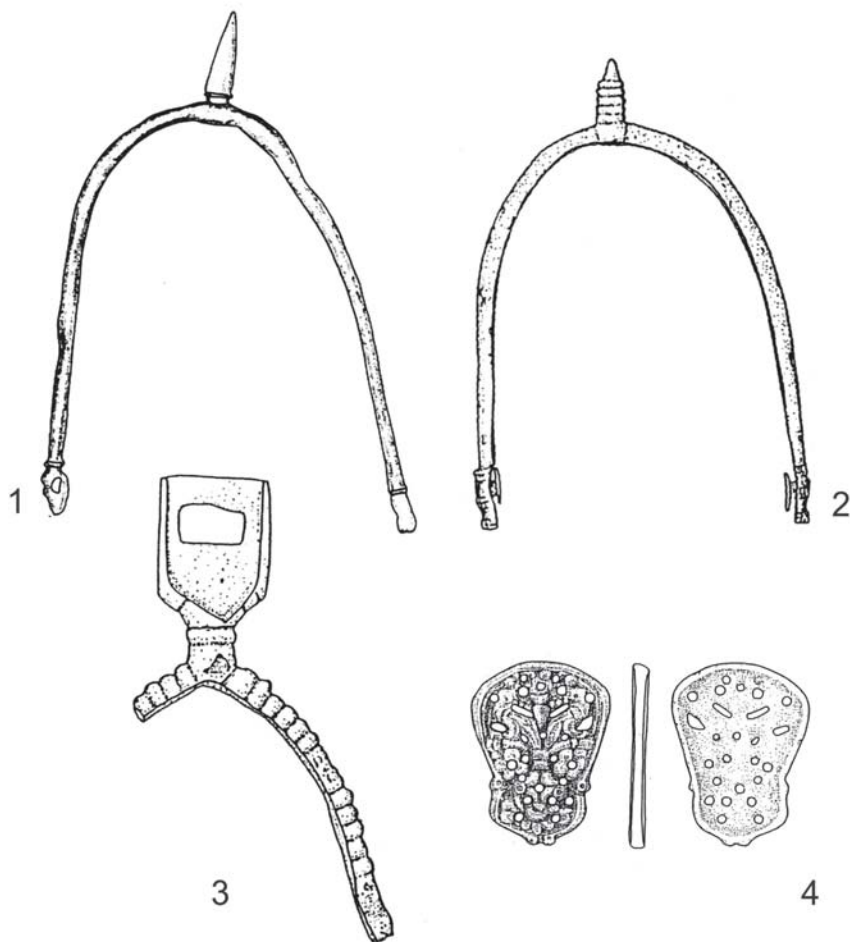
([33]) WOLFRAM 1995a, 301-304.

Fig. 2 - Unstratified finds of military objects from (fortified) hilltop-settlements:
1: Kappele ob Jadersdorf, (Felgenhauer-Schmiedt 1993, 101, Taf. 44); 2: Hemmaberg;
3: Lamprechtskogel; 4: Kanzianiberg (Szameit 1994, 87, Taf. 3, 91, Taf. 4.).

4. Fortifications from Carolingian and Ottonian period

4.1. Historical background

In the 9th c. Carantania becomes part of the Frankish Empire and the Slavic rulers are replaced by Bavarian counts. In this period the manorial system («Grundherrschaft» or villication) becomes an important

feature for the reign over Carantania ([34]), and the former Slavic domin-
ion is now organized as a Frankish county.

To understand the situation in Carinthia/Carantania, a look at the
core areas of the Frankish Empire can provide further insights. Hansjür-
gen Brachmann ([35]) for instance did extensive research on this topic, as
well as Peter Ettel or Klaus Schwarz, who particularly dealt with Bavar-
ian sites ([36]).

It can be observed that the development of the manorial system in the
9th c. was one of the main influences for the construction of castles. The
organization and the government of old as well as new big territories was
often accomplished and then maintained by power and force ([37]). As a
result one can observe an increase of fortifications accompanying the
spreading of the villication system.

In Europe of Carolingian era in the 8th and 9th c. the right to build
castles was – at least theoretically – owned by the crown. After Charle-
magne's death this law seems to have de facto become loose in favor of
the nobility ([38]). In the capitular of Charles the Bald from Pîtres in the
year 864 it is mentioned that all castles erected without the crown's au-
thorization, had to be removed ([39]). The explicit mentioning of that fact
implicates a high number of already «illegally» erected castles.

The Carolingian rulership was based on the loyalty of certain nobles
as the crown's representatives, who ruled particular territories ([40]). Many
of them were donated castles or they received the authorization respec-
tively the order to build them on their own as a means to organize or
defend the land. One example is known for the year 888 when King
Arnulf instructs his «ministerialis» Heimo to construct a fortification
and organize its defense ([41]). In today's Germany there are many more
examples for castles owned by noble families, either built on their own
or received from the king ([42]). The Empire's expansion to the southeast,
the necessity of organizing new territories in a short time and the loos-
ening of the royal privilege to build castles caused the construction of

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([34]) It can be observed, that already in the 9th c. the villication system is fully estab-
lished in Carantania. See: KARPF/MEYER 2009.
([35]) BRACHMANN 1993.
([36]) ETTEL 2001; ETTEL 2002; ETTEL 2007; SCHWARZ 1976.
([37]) BRACHMANN 1993, 190.
([38]) ETTEL 2001, 200 u. 232.
([39]) MGH Cap. II, 273.
([40]) LexMA 4, 1635-1636.
([41]) MGH DD Arn, 32.
([42]) BRACHMANN 1993, 194.

many new fortifications, especially on the empires periphery. They were usually controlled by local nobles under the authority of the king. Although authorized by the crown they were on the other hand an effective means to establish and increase one's private power. This caused a weakening of the central power which vice versa raised the power of certain noble families [43].

Also the Hungarian threat in the 10th c. influenced the development of fortifications. Widukind of Corvey mentions King Henry I. efforts concerning the defense against the Hungarians [44]. After the armistice of 926 he tried to organize the Empires defense by manning castles, which is usually described as «Burgenbauordnung» [45], though scholars do not completely agree in which way this concretely influenced the situation of fortifications [46]. On one hand new ones might have been erected and on the other hand existing ones might have been reinforced [47].

The monks of Sankt Gallen for instance built in 926 the fortification of Häggenschwill as a refuge against the Hungarians. A short time later the monastery itself was surrounded by a wall and Häggenschwill was not used anymore [48]. A high number of «castles» are seen in a similar context [49]. A characteristic feature are multiple ramparts with peaked pales as a defensive means against equestrian warriors [50]. In spite of this «communis opinio» one has to ask if really such a high number of castles has been build due to the Hungarian raids. Some scholars state that they were only a temporary phenomenon and that their quantity stood far behind the number of regularly erected fortifications [51].

4.2. Types of fortifications

In north-eastern Bavaria Peter Ettel describes three types of constructions that can be observed in the 9th and 10th c. There are dry stonewalls often supported by ramparts made of earth (1) next to stonewalls made with mortar (2) and ramparts made only of earth (3) [52]. In many

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[43] Brachmann 1993, 210.
[44] MGH Widukind II, 32.
[45] Erdmann 1943.
[46] LexMA 2, 1004-1005.
[47] Ettel 2002, 368.
[48] Schwarz 1976, 404 and attachment 40/6.
[49] Jäschke 1975; Brachmann 1993, 191, footnote 17.
[50] E.g. Schulze 1984, 487-495; Ettel 2002, 367-370 & Gleirscher 2010, 15.
[51] Brachmann 1993, 191. See also: Janssen 1985, passim, esp. 53-55.
[52] Ettel 2002, 367.

cases only certain sections are protected by them and usually the topo-graphic situation is used as natural defensive means. On the other hand one can observe sites totally surrounded by walls or ramparts. As stated above, multiple ramparts in front of the main walls are usually seen as a barrier against Hungarian equestrians.

Concerning the size there are again three types of fortifications. Sites with more than three ha can be found for example in Bamberg, Kro-nach, Roßtal or Nabburg (all in Bavaria). The Karlburg in Unterfranken would be a castle with an area of 1-3ha. Eiringsburg, also situated in Unterfranken/Bavaria represents the third type: a fortification with a size smaller than one ha [53].

Regarding the usage one can differentiate between temporarily and permanently used ones. Both types show a broad variety of architectural characteristics and concerning construction there are no specific ele-ments for only one of the types [54]. Also the size is not specific for the type of usage. Very small as well as very big fortifications were used tem-porarily respectively permanently.

4.3. Castles and the manorial system

In many cases castles were part of the manorial system and their clas-sification in this context can result in new insights on the development in Carantania. Three types of developments can be observed:

1. Manor becomes fortified.
   Usually the manor or «curtis» is the centre of the villication [55]. In Carolingian era the «curtis» was normally not fortified. Only in the Ottonian period one can observe that some «curtes» become enforced by surrounding walls or that certain buildings are rebuilt as towers or as a so called «Festes Haus» [56]. Archaeological examples are El-mendorf (Niedersachsen), Gommerstedt (Thüringen) or Husterkn-upp (Nordrhein Westfalen), where around the year 1000 unfortified manors developed to castles due to the construction of so called motte-and-bailey castles [57].

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[53] ETTEL 2002, 369-370.
[54] BRACHMANN 1993, 190; ETTEL 2001, 207; 369.
[55] LEXMA 8, 1694.
[56] BRACHMANN 1993, 198.
[57] BRACHMANN 1993, 198-201 u. Abb. 102-103.

2. Manor and refuge.

Besides the first explanation there are many examples for temporarily used castles next or near to an associated manor. While the manor contained the representative residence of the landlord («domus»), the nearby castle only served as temporary refuge. This can be observed concretely for the Ahalolfingian castle on mount Bussen in Baden Württemberg. Although the castle existed already in the early 9th c. the owners used their manor in Dieterskirch for official purposes that needed an representative environment. Only in the late 9th c. the situation seemed to have changed so that in the year 892 charters were also signed in the castle [58]. A similar case comes from Bavaria. Count Ratolt from the family of Ebersberg owned the castles Ebersberg as well as «Ekkilinpurc», mentioned in 816. Nevertheless he used his manor in Daglfing for official bargains like the trade of goods in the year 839 [59].

A co-existence of manor and refuge can also be observed archaeologically for example in Bernshausen in Niedersachsen, where a manor that is mentioned for the first time in 1013, was excavated. Its beginning can be dated in the 7th or 8th c. Close to this settlement existed a fortification with a size of about one ha with a wall constructed of wood and earth and a ditch that was used only temporarily. In the 10th century it was reinforced by mortar walls but remained uninhabited. Until the 13th c. the manor itself got restructured and an new castle arose nearby, which became the representative centre [60].

In Unterregenbach an der Jagst in Baden Württemberg a manor from the 8th c. existed near to an associated fortification. In the 11th c. the castle was abandoned as the manor became fortified by stone walls [61].

3. Castle as residence.

As a third type permanently inhabited castles that contain the representative residence of the landlord are to be mentioned. In the case of Karlburg there is a dwelled fortification next to a settlement underneath – the so called «villa Karloburg» [62]. Also Bamberg, Würzburg, Forchheim (Bavaria) are similar examples [63]. In most cases they are superior centres of their environment.

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[58] Brachmann 1993, 193-194.
[59] Brachmann 1993, 194.
[60] Brachmann 1993, 201-202.
[61] Brachmann 1993, 202.
[62] Ettel 2001, 208.
[63] Ettel 2001, 208.

5. On the dating and interpretation of Carantanian fortifications

On the territory of today's Carinthia only a small number of the approximately 200 fortifications ([64]) can surely be dated in the Early Middle Ages ([65]) (Fig. 8). These rare examples are Sankt Helena ([66]) near Dellach im Gailtal or the so called Hochgosch near Spittal an der Drau ([67]), where several building phases were dated scientifically. In Sankt Helena a radiocarbondating proves that the main early medieval rampart was erected between 680 and 900 ([68]). On the Hochgosch the wall/rampart was dendrodated in the middle of the 9th century. Also in Karnburg radiocarbondatings show that the last building phase was carried out between the 9th and 11th c ([69]).

They are the only cases in Carinthia where certain construction phases can definitely be dated, though for the radiocarbon datings a big margin remains. All other fortifications can only be classified by unstratified finds. For the 8th c. the above described military objects show that some sites were used by the Slavic Carantanians most probably for military purposes.

Other early medieval strayfinds from places like Ottilienkogel ([70]), Steiner Berg ([71]) or Gurina ([72]) with a possible later chronological frame (8/9th and 10th c.) can again not be connected with building features or construction phases. They only proof that the site was used for mostly unknown purposes in the Early Middle Ages.

Next to (scarce) archaeological evidences for castles, there are some historical sources on this topic: In a chapter from 895 two castles in the valley of Trixen are mentioned. King Arnulf donates them to his loyal follower Waltuni ([73]). It shows us that already in the 9th c. castles that originally belonged to the crown were privately owned by certain noble families.

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([64]) Kohla 1973.
([65]) For a more detailed description of certain sites mentioned in this chapter, see the article of P. Gleirscher in this compilation.
([66]) Jernej 2004.
([67]) Gostenčnik 1997; Huber 2009.
([68]) Jernej 2006: Vera 3284.
([69]) Dolenz/Baur 2011, 121.
([70]) Gleirscher 2009.
([71]) Gleirscher 2001a.
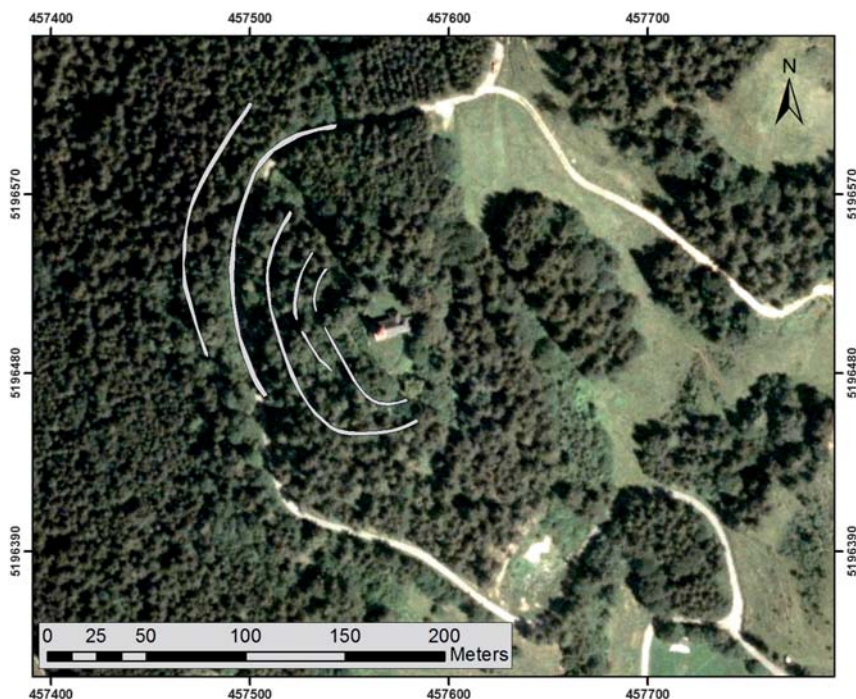([72]) Jablonka 2001.
([73]) MC I, 3.

Fig. 3 - The site of Lorenzenberg with the church in the centre and partially surrounding ramparts (design: Eichert; based on: Kohla 1973; aerial photograph: KAGIS Kärnten).

In other cases a combination of archaeological and historical sources leads to an early medieval dating. From the top of mount Lorenzenberg there are grave-finds from the 9th or 10th c., on a site where also a medieval church is situated. It was owned by the family of the holy Hemma. The top is partially surrounded by (non excavated) ramparts. Altogether one can think of an early medieval church with a churchyard as part of a noble landlord's residence, that was fortified with walls or ramparts [74] (Fig. 3).

A similar situation can be observed in Villach St. Martin. From this church we know early medieval grave finds (9th and 10th c.) [75] and the churchyard and its environment were surrounded by impressive ram-

[74] Eichert 2010a, 228; Kohla 1973, 193.
[75] Eichert 2010a, 270.

parts that were removed uninvestigated due to the construction of roads and buildings in the 20th c ([76]). Next to these archaeological evidences there are written sources that inform us about «*curtis*» and «*castellum*» of 10th c. in Villach ([77]) that most probably are to be located in St. Martin. The rampart is a feature that classifies the site as castle. The church inside of it shows that it was used for representative purposes too and therefore most probably has also been a residence. An area outside of the walls seems to have been connected to the whole structure and was maybe the «*curtis*» meaning an agricultural and economic centre of the villication next to the castle ([78]) (Fig. 4).

In Althofen on the Krappfeld there are again written sources that mention «*curtis*» and «*castellum*» ([79]). In the year 953 they were confiscated from the family of the Luitpoldingians and given to the bishopric of Salzburg. The castle must have been situated on the top of the rock plateau where the historic centre of today's Althofen is situated. The «*curtis*» could have been underneath in the area around the church of St. Cecilia (Fig. 5).

These examples show that also in Carinthia a co-existence of manor and castle can be found and that they were both part of a villication. In the special case of Villach the castle seems to have been a representative centre and residence too.

In the area of the late Roman capital Teurnia/Liburnia a royal manor is mentioned for the year 891 ([80]). At this time it belongs to king Arnulf. On the mountain ridge «Fratresberg» or Seerücken near Teurnia lies the fortification of Hochgosch. Its wall encloses an area of 2 ha. It is built as a dry stone wall supported by a construction of wood/earth/clay, with an entrance at the north-western part ([81]). The length of this wall, the complexity of its construction and the area enclosed classify the features as expensive building that must have been erected under the authority of a powerful landlord. There are no early medieval finds from the site but its construction can be dated in the years around 850 due to scientific analyses ([82]). It must have been built under the reign of King Luis the German and therefore – at least «de iure» – with his au-

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([76]) Neumann 2005.
([77]) MC III, 150.
([78]) Maybe there is a similar Situation like on Karlburg, where a permanently dwelled castle existed next to a «civil» settlement. See above.
([79]) MC III, 112.
([80]) MC III, 63.
([81]) Gostenčnik 1997.
([82]) Huber 2009.

Fig. 4 - Hypothetical reconstruction of «castellum» and «curtis» in Villach St. Martin. Red: ramparts that were still preserved until the 20th c. Grey: terrain edges that indicate former walls/ramparts. Yellow: supposed area of the «curtis». Black: church (design: Eichert; Map: Franziszeischer Kataster, Kärntner Landesarchiv).

Fig. 5 - The town of Althofen on a rock-plateau, where also the castle mentioned in 953 can be located (photograph: Sinnerman, Wikimedia Commons, Licensed under a CreativeCommons-Lizenz by-sa-3.0, URL: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.de).

thorization. It was most probably part of a villication and associated with a manor. Its quality and size as well as the vicinity to Teurnia suggest that it belonged to the royal manor Liburnia and that the crown owned it, so it can be interpreted as the refuge of the nearby «curtis» (Fig. 6-7).

Karnburg is another early medieval fortification. Already in the 18th c. scholars interpreted it as the political centre of the Carantanian rulers in Slavic as well as in Carolingian/Ottonian era [83]. There is a church, which is still used today and an area of about 2-3 ha is enclosed by a massive wall/rampart and some multiple ramparts in the eastern part. In the year 888 it is mentioned as «curtis Corantana» and King Arnulf spent Christmas here, as he stopped in Carantania on his way back from Italy [84]. In the 10th c. it is mentioned as «civitas» and as «sedes regalis» [85]. Recent excavations have shown an impressive Wall surrounding the site as the last construction phase. The dating is discussed controversially [86] but following radiocarbon data it must have been erected between 870 and 1050 [87]. Certain finds from 8th century (a spur and a belt-application [88]) show that the site was already used under the reign of Slavic dukes. For the 9th c. it seems to have been a royal manor, which corresponds to the written sources. In the 10th c. probably in the face of the Hungarian threat it was reinforced with the described stone wall and the «curtis» became a fortification. It was owned by the crown and seems to have been the political centre and base of the royal power in Carantania of Carolingian and Ottonian period. In this case we can observe a development where the «curtis» itself becomes fortified. As described above, these cases can often be found in superior central settlements.

Next to these examples there are about 15 other manors in the area of today Carinthia, that are mentioned in written sources [89]. Most probably they were not fortified. Today's settlements often originate from these «curtes» and they are usually situated in valleys or basins where there are hardly any natural, topographic advantages concerning their defense. On the other hand there is a high number of unexcavated and therefore not dated «castles» on hills or rock-plateaus. They can be identified as fortifications due to ramparts still visible today [90]. They are

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[83] HANSIZ 1793.
[84] MC III, 57.
[85] MC III, 147; 156.
[86] DOLENZ/BAUR 2011; GLEIRSCHER 2011.
[87] DOLENZ/BAUR 2011, 121.
[88] DOLENZ/BAUR 2011, 93.
[89] For an overview: MORO 1941.
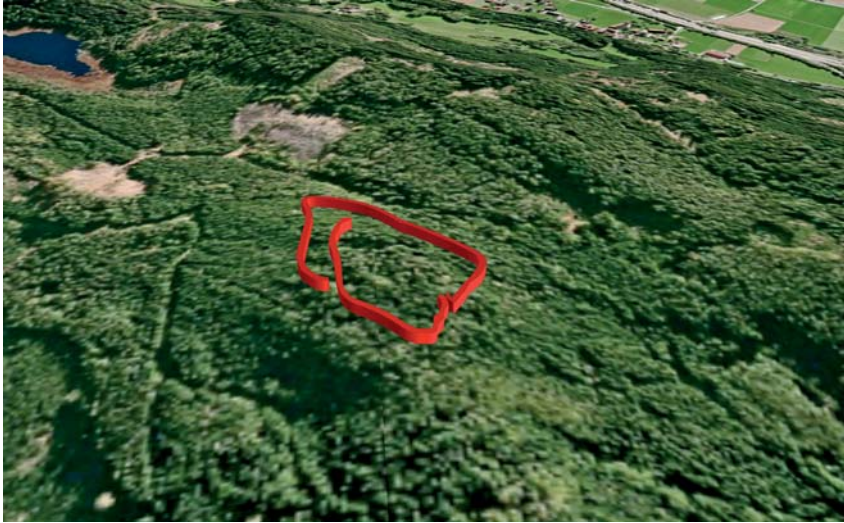[90] For a collection: KOHLA 1973.

Fig. 6 - Schematic 3d reconstroction of Hochgosch (design: Eichert; aerial Photograph Google Earth; digital elevation model: NASA Srtm).
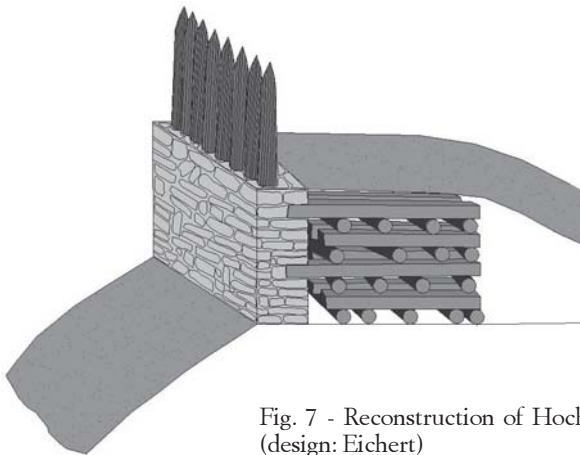

Fig. 7 - Reconstruction of Hochgosch's wall-construction (design: Eichert)

often situated near to a manor mentioned in written sources. It seems probable that some of them are associated to the «curtis» and represent a connected refuge.

6. Conclusions

As seen on Hemmaberg in the 6th/7th c. the late Roman population as well as Slavic immigrants used existing structures in (fortified) hilltop settlements for housing purposes.

In the 8th century, the period of the Slavic principality of Carantania, certain existing hilltop settlements, get reused for military purposes.

In the era of the Frankish reign over Carantania the villication system is soon fully established. A typical villication includes an unfortified manor or «curtis» as political and economical centre.

Concerning castles we can observe some developments, similar to the core areas of the Frankish Empire. As seen in the Trixen valley in the 9th c., the crown owns fortifications and gives them to loyal followers as a fief or even as donation to own it privately. So for the 9th c. we can state first castles built and owned by the crown or already even by local nobles.

As written sources show, the castles were part of the manorial system and often associated with a «curtis».

Concerning the usage one can differentiate between permanent and temporary uses. The Hochgosch near Spittal an der Drau respectively Teurnia, where a royal «curtis» is located, can be interpreted as an uninhabited refuge of the royal manor.

In Villach St. Martin a «castellum» mentioned in written sources can be located around today's church. It seems to have acted as a representative residence and political centre of a villication. A «curtis» also mentioned in the sources seems to have existed nearby as the economic centre.

For the 9th/10th c. in Karnburg one can observe a former «curtis» that developed to a fortification with representative character.

In the time of the Hungarian raids some fortifications might have been built newly or enforced by multiple ramparts as barriers against equestrians. Certain features in St. Helena ([91]) and in Karnburg ([92]) are interpreted this way. The quantity of newly constructed castles due to the Hungarian threat remains unclear. The scientific datings of St. Helena and Hochgosch as well as written sources that mention several castles, show that they existed already before the 10th c. Nevertheless it seems very probable that many sites were enforced for this reason.

([91]) See the article of P. Gleirscher in this book.
([92]) Gleirscher 2011.

Period Site	Prehistory	Roman	Slavic Carantania until 828	Carolingian 9th c.	Ottonian 10th c.	Late Middle Ages
Hemmaberg	x	x	ceramics/military obj.			
Kappele	x	x	military obj.			
Lamprechtskogel	x	x	military obj.			
Kanzianiberg	x	x	military obj.			
Ulrichsberg	x	x	ceramics/military obj.			
Förk	x		military obj.			
St. Helena	x	x	ceramics/wall (14C: 680-900)			
Hochgosch				wall (dendro ca. 850)		
Karnburg			military obj.	chapters/finds/wall (14C: 870-1050)		
Trixen				chapters (895)		
Althofen	x	x	military obj./graves		chapters (953)	
Stein	x	x		finds/chapters (993-1000)		
Ottilienkogel	x			finds		
Lorenzenberg					graves	
Villach		x			chapters(979)/graves	
Gurina	x	x	ceramics (7/8th c.?)/graves (8/9th c.) jewelry (9/10th c.)			
Georgiberg						finds/wall

Fig. 8 - Fortifications, their dating and usage in different periods. Blue: usage in Slavic era; Yellow: dated construction phases. In the fields are listed the dating elements (design: Eichert).

At the end of the Early and especially in High Middle Ages the representative character of a castle became more and more important. The landlord's residences were no longer situated in unfortified manors but in stone-built castles. In many cases newly constructed knights castles became the political and representative centres of an existing villication ([93]) while the manor lost its importance and took over the agricultural support for the castle or became a «civil» settlement and the origin of many today's villages and cities. Many of the large sized fortifications used in the Early Middle Ages – permanently and temporarily – were abandoned.

About 500 years later, when Turkish raids reached Carinthia some of the sites are used again as refuges.

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