

SUMMARY

**THE LATE BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT OF ŠPIČAK IN BOJAČNO:
A CONTRIBUTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIGHLAND SETTLEMENTS
IN THE HRVATSKO ZAGORJE REGION**

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The Hrvatsko Zagorje region, with its diverse relief and particular topographic traits, represents a separate micro-region in the area of central Croatia where life has been present in all historical periods. Zagorje, thanks to its strategic position, is of particular importance with respect to the appearance and development of individual cultures from prehistory to the Middle Ages.

The prehistoric hillfort site of Špičak is located on the westernmost point of Hrvatsko Zagorje, in the village of Bojačno, above the medieval Church of St. Martin, under the slopes of Koštrunov Brijeg hill. Špičak, located on a protected area of the high Košnička Gora mountain, overlooked as a natural barrier the gorge of the River Sutla valley at Harina Žlaka and Sutlanska Poljana. With its prominent strategic position at the turn of a high cliff, the hillfort of Špičak had an important strategic position and took the role of supervising the neighbouring highland areas of Mt. Olimpska Gora and Mt. Rudnica on the Styrian side. The prehistoric settlement site of Špičak also occupied the north-western and eastern slopes of Koštrunov Brijeg hill with positions at Hillfort I - Špičak and Hillfort II - Špičak located at an elevation consisting of four prominent elliptical plateaux. Judging by its defensive dry-stone walls, the smaller Hillfort - I Špičak was used for defensive purposes. This hillfort was connected by a pass to the other, bigger Hillfort Špičak - II. Four Late Bronze Age above-ground dwelling structures (houses) were built in terraced positions of the acropolis of Špičak - II, while one such dwelling was built at the foot of the lowest terraced area.

Settling on Špičak started in the late phase of the early Urnfield Culture. This conclusion is based on the find of a bronze fibula whose bow has a particular finish, and pins with spirally bent heads dated in the Horizon Hoard II - Veliko Nabrđe. The settling intensity continued during the late phase of the Urnfield Culture which is corroborated by accompanying finds pointing to local ceramic production in the settlement. The settlement of Špičak, viewed in its later phase through material remains and relevant finds recovered at all four dwelling structures, indicates that there were cultural connections with similar highland settlements which bear the typological traits of the Velika Gorica group and are located under the slopes of Mt. Medvednica, Mt. Ivanščica, Mt. Kalnik and in the Sava River basin. On the other hand, it has been observed that the hilltop settlement of Špičak was closely related to the Late Bronze Age settlement sites of the Drava River basin and to the south-eastern Alpine circle.

The dominant position of Hillfort II - Špičak in Bojačno at 493 m msl was consciously chosen with the aim of being settled for a long time. The vicinity of permanent water springs in the ravine between the hillforts, the nearby clay pits, the favourable configuration of the terrain with fertile cultivable soil, woods in the background and hunting grounds, all offered basic conditions for more permanent settlement. The founding of the prehistoric settlement at Špičak was conditioned by a favourable configuration of the terrain at Hillfort II - Špičak, where above-ground prehistoric structures - houses were built on almost levelled terraces in the Late Bronze Age. During the archaeological investigations so far conducted, four structures - houses of different dimensions were opened. The houses were grouped at the edge of the hillfort plateau and, according to current data, they belonged to a unique economy of the Late Bronze Age.

The Late Bronze Age site of Špičak is a double hillfort type of settlement and belongs to the group of highland settlements of the westernmost area of the Hrvatsko Zagorje region.