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ANTICKÁ STAVEBNÁ KERAMIKA V GERMÁNSKYCH OBJEKTOCH

ROMAN BUILDING CERAMICS IN THE BARBARIAN ENVIRONMENT IN SLOVAKIA

ERIK HRNČIARIK

Keywords: Roman bricks, Roman Period, settlement finds, grave finds, distribution of bricks, functional purpose of bricks in barbarian environment

Abstract: Roman bricks on the territory of Slovakia are found in three contexts: they are part of the so-called Roman-style buildings, and we find them in the backfill of settlement features and graves. They have fulfilled their primary function, that is building material, only in the first mentioned case; in the other two cases they were probably used for some other purposes. The ancient Germans have appreciated them mainly for their ability to easily absorb and retain warmth. It is likely that they have used them for thermal preparation of food or as a constructional part of ovens. In Slovakia we know only of a single grave whose construction may have been built of bricks. This way of use, relatively widespread in the Roman Empire, did not gain acceptance in the barbarian population.

Rímska stavebná keramika v barbarskom prostredí na Slovensku. Rímske tehly sa na území Slovenska vyskytujú v troch kontextoch: sú súčasťou tzv. na rímsky spôsob vystavanych stavieb, objavujeme ich vo výplni sídliskových objektov a vo výplni hrobov. Svoju primárnu funkciu, teda ako stavebný materiál plnili len v prvom prípade ostatných dvoch boli pravdepodobne použité na iné účely. Germáni si na nich cenili najmä ich schopnosť ľahko prijať a udržať teplo. Je pravdepodobné, že ich používali počas tepelnej úpravy jedál, alebo ako súčasť konštrukcie pecí. Zo Slovenska poznáme len jeden hrob kde by sa dalo predpokladať, že jeho konštrukcia bola zhotovená z tehál. Toto, v Rímskej ríši pomerne rozšírené použitie, sa u barbarského obyvatelstva nepresadilo.

Roman building ceramics in the barbarian environment on the territory of today's Slovakia occur in three contexts. In the context of known find circumstances, bricks are part of Roman style buildings, settlement structures and graves. The second context is that of old museum collections which lack a specific localization. The secondary use of bricks in medieval and modern constructions constitutes the third context, but is not a subject of this contribution. The paper sets out to map the occurrence of bricks in the studied area and identify their origin as well as their possible function outside the Roman Empire.

The first group of bricks comes from three sites on which Roman style buildings have been identified. Their detail analysis was last provided by T. Kolník (*Kolník 1997, 417–421*)¹. Due to these finds' character their exact number cannot be determined but we know that more than 100 stamped bricks come from Bratislava – Dúbravka: No. 1² (*Elschek 1997, 228*), 72 from Cífer – Páč: No. 2 and 221 from Veľký Kýr: No. 3 (*Kolník 1997, Tab. 6.4*). They consist mostly of stamps from military workshops in Vindobona, Carnuntum and Brigetio, as well as private workshops in Carnuntum and Vindobona (*Hrnčiarik 2013, Tab. 66*). Since these finds have not undergone a petrographic analysis, their origin can only be identified on the basis of the stamps, i.e. in the Pannonian environment. Chronologically, the production of bricks from Bratislava – Dúbravka (ca. third century AD) and Cífer – Páč (fourth century AD) corresponds with the dating of these sites. By contrast, the majority of bricks from Veľký Kýr date from the second century AD, while the site dates to the fourth century AD. According to T. Kolník, this could suggest the existence of another, older building in the area (*Komjatice?; Kolník 1986, 415*) whose bricks were here used secondarily (*Kolník 1997, 419*). The current research can neither confirm nor disprove his assumption. However, my opinion is that we must also consider the possibility that the bricks were imported together with later items via the Danube and Nitra rivers from dismantled buildings in Carnuntum, and do not necessarily need to be an indication of an older building. Nevertheless, T. Kolník regards this as improbable (*Kolník 1959, 43*). On the other hand, the bricks found in Komjatice (*Točík 1978, 256*) can also be seen as having come here after the buildings in Veľký Kýr had been dismantled.

Although some of the bricks that have been published come from surveys or were discovered in Germanic structures, it is more or less certain that their primary function was as building material on all three sites menti-

oned. Typologically they include *lateres/laterculi*, *tegulae*, *imbrices* and *tubuli*, i.e. bricks used for building walls, roof covering, but also pieces used as part of the heating system.

The second group of finds comprises bricks from Germanic settlement structures, settlement layers or surveys in the area of the settlements. Their occurrence concentrates in southwestern Slovakia, particularly in the immediate area of the Pannonian border. Their spread is described in table 1 and map 1.

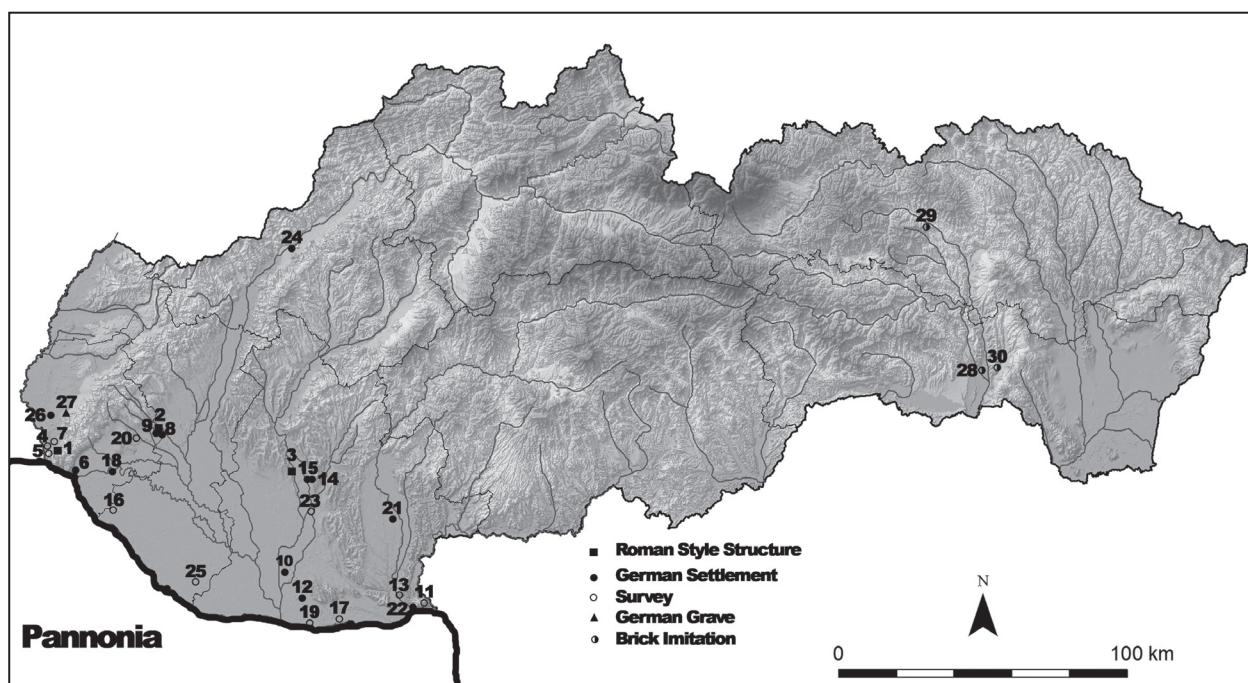
Similarly to the previous group, current research does not allow for specifying the exact number of bricks in this group. Only three stamped bricks have their origin located. Two of them come from surveys on sites Moča (*Hrnčiarik 2013*, Cat. no. 1739) and Šarovce (*Kolník 1959*, note 21) and have stamps LEG I AD of the military brick workshop at the legionary fortress in Brigetio. The find from Šurany (*TIR 2002*, 446) is stamped LEG II ADIUTRIX, which proves its Aquincum origin.

Apart from one find from a structure in Bratislava – Staré Mesto (*Musilová/Lesák 1996*, 87–105), all items date to the Late Roman period, i.e. the second to fourth centuries AD. Their occurrence often corresponds with the reconstruction of the Roman frontier after the Marcomannic wars during the reign of Caesar Commodus, but most often with reconstructions in Late Antiquity.

Typologically they are mainly *tegulae/imbrices* and *lateres/laterculi*, i.e. bricks that in the Roman Empire served as roof covering or for building walls. However, in Barbaricum they were rarely used as building material. According to T. Kolník, some pit houses in Cífer – Pác had roof covering (*Kolník 1975*, 9). Several *tegulae* were found in structure 131 in Bratislava-Dúbravka, though according to the interpretation of their finders they had not been used as roof covering but as floor covering (*Elschek 1997a*, 225). But the find is problematic as the find circumstances were recorded but not sufficiently documented. That means that bricks hardly played a role in Germanic architecture. The Germans continued to use traditional building materials such as wood, clay, straw, etc. Despite this fact bricks do occur in the finds material, and were thus likely used for other purposes. Nevertheless, we have no direct proof of it and can only speculate about their utilization.

These bricks had flat surfaces that might have been used for cutting food or other materials. But since the surfaces bear no traces of cuts, this purpose was apparently served by wooden boards, which were lighter and did not crumble when used for cutting, as would have been the case with the bricks.

Interestingly enough, according to the published information most of the brick finds were fragments, which allows us to consider their other uses. The Germans could possibly have been collecting old bricks on the abandoned Roman building sites, for instance in Bratislava – Dúbravka. They brought them to their settlements and cleaned them off mortar, which was undesirable for their secondary use. Such “cleaning” might have caused that they crumbled or small pieces broke off them. It could have been these fragments that were found in infills of settlement structures or layers. The cleaned bricks were then offered for sale or exchange for other goods. A similar practice is still found today among poorer families in Slovakia (e.g. in Romani settlements) and is carried out



Map. 1 Occurrence of Roman bricks in Slovakia.

by women, children or older people to add to the family budget. However, bricks are first of all a valuable product that keeps the heat for a long time, so they were likely sought after for this quality and used as firebricks for building fireplaces, or directly on open fireplace when meals were prepared, for which purpose the flat surface of roof tiles was particularly suitable. A larger amount of such bricks was found in Zohor, where K. Elschek uncovered numerous iron furnaces (Elschek 2011, 86). According to the preliminary report there was also a large number of Roman roof tile fragments, which I think could have served this purpose.

Very interesting among this group of finds are tens of bricks from three East-Slovak sites Košice-Šebastovce (TIR 2002, 406), Ražňany-Farské (*Karabinoš/Vizdal* 2010, 15-38) and Krásna (*Lamiová-Schmiedlová* 1969, 481). In case of the first two sites the bricks were found in settlement structures which, based on analogies, date to the fourth century AD. In Košice-Šebastovce they were finds of imbrices around 50 cm long, whose ends were either the same size or one end was narrower and the other one wider. In some of them the inner side was fired and in shape they resembled the Roman *imbrices*, though according to the author of the excavation they were thicker (*Lamiová-Schmiedlová* 1969, 65-67). Since no *tegulae*³ were found on this site, M. Lamiová-Schmiedlová assumed that these did not serve as roof covering but as part of floor covering. However, in that case it is questionable why they bore traces of firing on the inside. Again, we can assume their use for the construction of kilns, which this site is known for. Such fragments were even found in some of the extinct kilns (*Lamiová-Schmiedlová* 1969, 65-67).

Unlike in Košice-Šebastovce, in Ražňany – Farské remains of both types of roof tiles were found, *tegulae* as well as *imbrices* (*Karabinoš* 2010, 152). They may have been brick remains that had covered an unidentified building. The authors of the excavation assume it to be a stone building, whose foundations have not been uncovered yet. However, similar to Čífer – Pác, it was not necessarily a stone building. A wooden building (for example with a pole structure) could have been covered in the same way if it had a properly made truss laid on the structure, which was firmly anchored in the ground. Yet petrographic analyses of bricks from Ražňany⁴, as well as parallels from Pontus or the area of Chernyakhov culture (*Popa* 2001) suggest that they were products of domestic workshops, produced under the influence of Roman brick workshops, and not imports from Roman provinces. That this environment had contacts with the Roman Empire and even with Pontus, is proved by finds from a rich grave in Ostrovany, which was situated about one kilometer from Ražňany (*Karabinoš* 2010, 154), as well as a unique amphora find with remains of fish sauce – *garum* from a settlement in Ostrovany (*Lamiová-Schmiedlová/Tomášová* 1993, 79-80).

The third group of bricks found on the territory of Slovakia consists of an extraordinary find of Roman brick fragments in the infill⁵ of the inhumation grave 03/07 in Stupava: No. 27 (*Turčan/Šefčáková* 2012, 122). The fragments are from nine unstamped bricks. Among them were typologically distinguished three fragments of imbrices, one tegula rim, and the rest is unidentifiable. The cemetery has been dated to the first half of the third century AD. According to V. Turčan and A. Šefčáková the affinity between the fragments and the nearby site Kopec is doubtless, but considering the context in which they were found their function in the grave can be determined only with difficulty (*Turčan/Šefčáková* 2012, 124). In the Roman environment, roof covering was also used for tiling and covering the grave chamber (e.g. grave LIII in Rusovce; *Pichlerová* 1981, 64). Here, however, brick fragments were found in the infill of a disturbed grave, whose walls had collapsed. These find circumstances could be evidence that the grave had originally been built of bricks and the grave pit was disturbed later as they were being taken out, which probably also damaged some of the bricks, so they became useless and were thrown back into the pit. The option that they were symbolically added to the grave seems to me more or less improbable, not least because no parallels exist on the territory of the Roman Empire or beyond its borders. Neither can we assume that the bricks were brought to the grave infill together with clay from an extinct Roman building, as that would have to be in the immediate area. Their relation to the site Stupava – Kopec is also by the authors considered only in the wider context of bricks occurrence on this site, but we cannot assume that the fragments had been brought together with earth from such distance. Even though these graves were damaged in the later period and many finds have been lost, their inventory is relatively rich and proves strong Romanisation of the population buried on this cemetery. It is therefore likely that the dead in this grave had been buried the Roman way, but part of his grave inventory is evidence of his domestic – Germanic origin.

In conclusion, the occurrence of Roman building ceramics concentrates mainly in southwestern Slovakia. Apart from a few exceptions it did not have application in the domestic Barbarian architecture. Their primary use cannot be assumed before the third century AD, when Roman style buildings start occurring in the studied area. Yet these bricks were used by the Roman, not domestic builders. The occurrence of brick fragments in the Germanic environment is related to their thermal qualities, especially their ability to absorb and accumulate heat. It is therefore likely that they were used in thermal preparation of food, in metalworking, or in constructing ceramic kilns. The occurrence of brick fragments in Germanic graves is rare on the territory of Slovakia.

Site	Find circum-stances	Type	Number	Stamp	Literature
Bratislava – Devínska Nová Ves, Position I: No.4	Survey	tegulae/ imbrices	ca. 60		Elschek/Mihál/Kubíny 1996, 44–48
Bratislava – Devínska: Nová Ves, Za blatom: No.5	Survey	Tegulae	1		Farkaš/Turčan 1992, 33
Bratislava – Staré mesto: No.6	Str. 12		1		Musilová/Lesák 1996, 87–105
Bratislava – Záhorská Bystrica : No.7	Survey	tegulae/ imbrices	Several fragments		Farkaš/Ivák 1993, 36–37
Cífer : No.8	Pit house	Tegulae	1		Ruttkay/Bielich/ Chebeň/Kuzma 2002, 169–170
Cífer – Pác : No.9	Str.		1		Varsik/Bednár 1990, 167–168
Hurbanovo : No.10	Str. 1	tegulae/ imbrices	1		Ruttkay/Bielich 2002, 166–169
Chľaba : No.11	Survey		1		Kolník 1959a, note 21
Chotín VII : No.12	Str.		Several fragments	Also stamped	Romsauer 1978, 207–209
Kamenín : No.13.	Survey		1		Kolník 1959a, note 21
Komjatice – Legionárske: No. 14	Str.		Several fragments		Točík 1978, 257–261
Komjatice – Tomášove: No.15	Str.		Several fragments		Točík 1978, 254–257
	Str. 16		Fragment		
Kvetoslavov : No.16	Survey		1		Kolník 1959a, note 21
Moča : No.17	Survey		1	LEG I AD	Hrnčiarik 2013, cat. no. 1739
Most pri Bratislave : No.18	Str. 1		1		Hrnčiarik 2013, cat. no. 248
Patince : No.19	Survey		1		Kolník 1959a, note 21
Slovenský Grob, Štěpnice: No.20	Survey	tegulae/ imbrices	?		Bazovský 2006, 28
Šarovce : No.21	Survey		1	LEG I AD	Kolník 1959a, note 21
	Survey /Str.?		5		Information from J. Beljak
Štúrovo : No.22	Str. VII		1		Kolník 1961, 360
	Str. XII		1		Kolník 1961, 362
	Str. 2, 5, 6/6a, 12		Several fragments		Beljak 2010, 144
Šurany : No.23.	Survey		1	LEG II ADIUTRIX	TIR 2002, 446
Trenčín : No.24	Str.	tegulae/ imbrices	1		Madl 1930, 66–69
Veľký Meder : No.25	Layer		1		Information from V. Varsik
Zohor: No.26	Survey		ca. 60		Elschek/Mihál/Kubíny 1996, 44–48
	Str. 32	tegulae/ imbrices, tehly	ca. 30		Elschek 1997, 40
	Str. 75 and 76	tegulae/ imbrices, bricks	Several fragments		Elschek 1997, 40

Tab. 1 Occurrence of Roman bricks in Germanic structures.

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Footnotes

¹ This contribution is dedicated to T. Kolník on the occasion of his jubilee.

² Number also use in map 1.

³ At least they are not mentioned in the cited article.

⁴ Clay used for their production is according to geological maps found in the vicinity of the site, which means that they are most probably local products. However, this does not exclude the possibility that they were made of similar clay on a different site and the ready made products were imported. To confirm or disprove this assumption we would need a chemical analysis. My thanks for the information go to A. Karabinoš.

⁵ The authors clearly exclude their connection with later (medieval or modern) building phases in the vicinity of this site and associate them directly with grave 03/07 (*Turčan/Šefčáková 2011*, note 3).

RÍMSKA STAVEBNÁ KERAMIKA V BARBARSKOM PROSTREDÍ NA SLOVENSKU

ERIK HRNČIARIK

S rímskou stavebnou keramikou sa v barbarskom prostredí na území Slovenska stretávame v troch kontextoch: sú súčasťou tzv. na rímsky spôsob vystavaných stavieb, objavujeme ich vo výplni objektov a vo výplni hrobov. Okrem toto ich nachádzame aj v starých muzeálnych zbierkach alebo boli sekundárne použité na výstavbu stredovekých a novovekých stavieb. Nálezy tehál z posledných dvoch skupín neboli použité pre predloženú analýzu. Rozšírenie nálezov rímskych tehál na území Slovenska zachytáva mapa 1.

V prvom prípade boli tehly aj v nerímskom prostredí používané ako stavebný materiál. Stretnávame sa s ich využitím pri konštrukcii tzv. na rímsky spôsob vystavaných stavbách v Bratislave – Dúbravke, Cíferi – Páci a vo Veľkom Kýre. Z typologického hľadiska išlo o strešnú krytinu (*tegulae/imbrices*), stavebnú tehlu (*lateres/laterculi*), či tehly používané vo vykurovacom systéme (*tubuli*). Na základe signovaných kusov možno predpokladať, že boli na naše územie dovezené z panónskej oblasti. Ich výroba je v dvoch prípadoch (Bratislava-Dúbravka a Cífer –Páč) zhodná s datovaním týchto lokalít. Vo Veľkom Kýre však boli použité aj staršie tehly (cca. 2. stor. po Kr.) počas výstavby v 4. stor. po Kr.

Rímske tehly boli ďalej objavené aj v germánskych sídliskových objektoch, ktoré sa nachádzajú na juhozápadnom Slovensku a to najmä v oblasti *Ripa Pannonica*. Okrem jediného nálezu pochádzajúceho zo Starého mesta v Bratislave možno všetky datovať do mladšej doby rímskej. Opäť ide najmä o nálezy strešnej krytiny a stavebných tehál. Ich primárne využitie v tomto kontexte bolo veľmi zriedkavé. Na zakrytie strechy germánskych polozemníc bola v Cíferi-Páci použitá importovaná škridla (*Kolník 1975, 9*). Strešná krytina bola asi využitá aj ako podlaha v Bratislave – Dúbravke v objekte 131 (*Elschek 1997a, 225*). V ostatných príkladoch uvedených v tab. 1 je potrebné počítať s ich využitím na iné účely ako v architektúre. Kedže sa vo väčšine prípadov išlo o úlomky tehál, ktoré majú veľmi dobrú schopnosť ľahko priať a dlho udržať teplo boli pravdepodobne využívané pri tepelnej úprave jedál alebo pri spracovaní kovov. Je možné že sa tehly aj zámerne drvili a boli použité pri stavbe a na konštrukciu pecí ako šamot, žiaľ priame doklady zatiaľ chýbajú. Medzi artefaktmi tejto skupiny sú veľmi zaujímavé nálezy strešnej krytiny z troch lokalít na východnom Slovensku (Ražňany, Krásna a Šebastovce-Barca). Petrografická analýza tehál z prvej z nich ukázala, že ide o produkty miestnej dielne, ktoré ale boli vyrobené pod silným vplyvom rímskeho tehliarstva. Dokonca by sa dalo uvažovať, že tak ako sa pripúšťa možnosť vandrujúcich majstrov na dvorci v Ostrovanoch, či v Cejkove je možné, že domáce obyvateľstvo sa naučilo vyrábať tehly od vandrujúcich tehliarov. Aj napriek tomu, že sa tu dodnes nepodarilo lokalizovať žiadnu kamennú stavbu je možné počítať s ich použitím na zakrytie domácej, drevenej architektúry prípadne opäť pri konštrukcii pecí.

Posledná skupina nálezov zastúpená doposiaľ ojedinelým nálezzom 9 tehál pochádza zo zásypu hrobovej jamy v Stupave. Ide pravdepodobne o zlomky strešnej krytiny, ktorá sa v rímskom prostredí taktiež využívala pri konštrukcii hrobov. Či aj v tomto prípade ide o podobnú funkciu týchto nálezov je za súčasného stavu bádania len hypotetické.

Celkovo sa zdá, že aj napriek ojedinelým prípadom nebola rímska stavebná keramika v barbarskom prostredí využívaná v architektúre. Uplatnenie však našla vďaka svojej schopnosti udržiavať teplo a preto asi bola používaná pri tepelnej úprave jedál, alebo spracovaní kovu, či výrobe keramiky.

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