



Two stone flakes from the cave of Jama za skalami, 8th or 7th millennium BC



The brooch from Bohinjska Bistrica with varied pendants, of the so-called Sveta Lucija type, is a characteristic piece of the Early Iron Age costume worn by the women of the Posočje community (5th century BC).



Hoard of ironwork items, Ajdovska luknja, second half of the 4th or early 5th century

Early investigations

Important discoveries



The first record of the archaeological remains in Bohinj from 1820

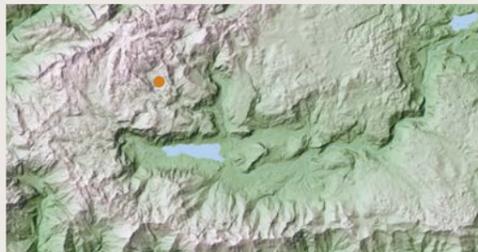


In 1907 and 1936–1939, archaeologist Walter Schmid excavated several archaeological sites in Bohinj.

Middle Stone Age

The earliest traces of human presence in Bohinj

In the Middle Stone Age, sometime in the 8th or 7th millennium BC, man sought refuge in the cave of Jama za skalami near Planina v Lazu, lit a fire there and left behind two stone flakes.



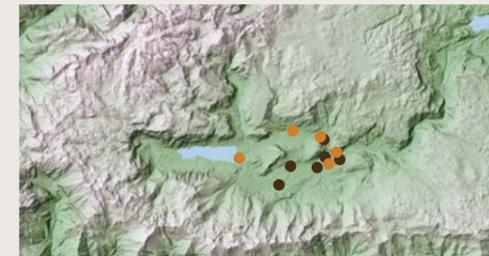
● Settlement or other archaeological site

Iron Age

The first permanent settlements in Bohinj

Attracted by its rich deposits of iron ore, Bohinj was settled in the second half of the late 7th century by people who came from the area of Posočje to the south. It became the economic hinterland of the Iron Age community of Posočje and the source of its prosperity.

People lived in settlements constructed on elevated locations in the two valleys of the Bohinj area, Spodnja dolina and Zgornja dolina. They buried their dead in cemeteries at the feet of these peaks. Towards the end of the Iron Age, in the 1st century BC, ironworking flourished in Bohinj, centred at Dunaj near Jereka. Bohinj then formed part of the Norican Kingdom and was, as such, included into the wide trading network with the renowned Norican iron. The Romans annexed the Norican Kingdom around 16 or 15 BC.



● Settlement
● Cemetery, grave



Select finds from Early Iron Age graves in Bitnje, Lepence and Jereka, 6th–4th century BC (replicas, originals kept in the National Museum of Slovenia)



A mattock, pieces of pig iron, roughly shaped pieces of pig iron and amorphous pieces of bronze and lead reveal that iron processing and nonferrous metal processing took place at Dunaj near Jereka in the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD.



Blacksmithing tools (drift punch and forging die), as well as semi-finished and finished nails from Dunaj near Jereka, 1st century BC and 1st century AD



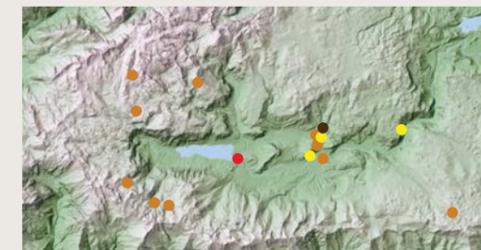
Disused or damaged items were being recycled at Dunaj near Jereka by previously being cut up into smaller pieces (1st century BC and 1st century AD).

Roman period

Bohinj, a remote and poorly Romanised area

The Roman rule did not bring about significant changes in Bohinj, neither in the population nor in the way of life. We have as yet no positively identified remains of settlements, but we know that one must have existed in the vicinity of Jereka, as suggested by a small cemetery. Burial took place there from the 1st to the 3rd century. A sanctuary of an unknown divinity stood at Lake Bohinj, on the spot where the church of St. John the Baptist stands today.

In the turbulent times of the Late Roman period (4th and first half of the 5th century), people occasionally sought refuge in the hills, on elevations already inhabited in the Iron Age. One such elevation was Ajdovski gradec, where they constructed fortification walls of stone. The turbulent times are mirrored in hoards: in fear for their valuables, people would hide them in caves and under rocks, but some could later not retrieve them.



● Sanctuary
● Cemetery
● Hoard find
● Settlement or other archaeological site

Inscribed tombstone, the only Roman inscription stone known from Bohinj, 2nd or 3rd century (replica, original kept in the National Museum of Slovenia)



Select offerings from the Roman-period sanctuary at the lake, 1st–4th century



Hoard of bronze jewellery, Mali spodmol near Ajdovska luknja, late 4th or early 5th century



Hoard of coins, buried probably in 401, Spodmol above Kocjančičev travnik



● Settlement or other archaeological site

Bronze Age

Sites along the paths leading across mountain passes

During the Bronze Age, people visited alpine areas to hunt, exploit raw materials and travel across the mountain passes to the southwest. The site of Poljanica on the plateau of Lepa Komna revealed traces of human presence dating to the 22nd century BC, of individuals who made stone tools beside a fireplace; they also used ceramic vessels of which numerous sherds survive. At Kal on Zadnji Vogel, traces of human activities date between the 16th and the 13th century BC.



Stone artefacts and flakes from Poljanica on Lepa Komna (22nd century BC) and a rim fragment of a ceramic vessel from Kal on Zadnji Vogel (16th–13th century BC)

The pair of silver earrings with incised vegetal decoration, possibly representing a palm tree, was found in a grave of the cemetery at Žale [kept in the National Museum of Slovenia]. It dates to the 10th or the early 11th century.



With those who cling still to this false belief,
He's fled to Bohinj in Bistrice's Vale,
To seek the fort built on a greying crag.

The ruins you may observe until this day,
The Heathens' Fort its name, you see in it
The last redoubt of fleeing Črtomir.

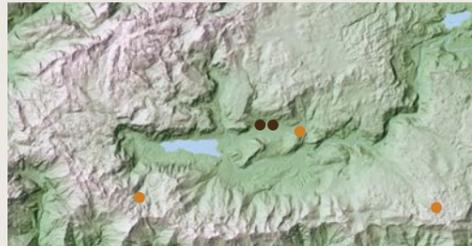
France Prešeren, *The Baptism on the Savica*, translation by Henry R. Cooper, Jr., 1996

BOHINJ THROUGH THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERIODS

Early Middle Ages

The settlement of Slavs in Bohinj

In the early medieval period (from the 7th to the first half of the 11th century), Bohinj and the area of the present-day Slovenia in general was sparsely populated. The Slavs inhabited the valley of Zgornja dolina in the 8th century, as proven by two cemeteries investigated at Srednja vas (Podonjice, Žale), where burial took place at least from the late 8th century onwards. The main Slavic settlement must have existed here. A church presumably stood at Srednja vas prior to the mid-11th century. In the 8th and early 9th centuries, Bohinj was part of the Slavic Carniola, which is mentioned in literary sources and was presumably a principality.



- Settlement or other archaeological site
- Cemetery

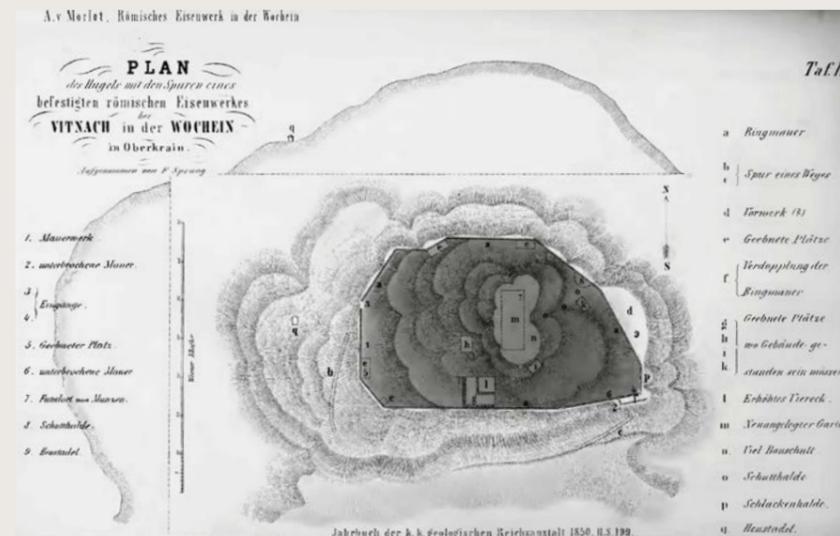


Ajdovski gradec (centre), view from the east

Ajdovski gradec

The most prominent archaeological spot in Bohinj

The hill is naturally protected and strategically sited. In the Early Iron Age, it held the most prominent settlement in Bohinj. In the Late Roman period, more precisely in the 4th century, the summit was reinforced with a stone-built fortification wall and its interior occasionally used as a refuge. The great Slovenian poet France Prešeren chose Ajdovski gradec as the site where the introduction to his epic *The Baptism on the Savica* [*Krst pri Savici* in Slovenian], considered a Slovenian national epic, took place.



Swiss geologist Adolf von Morlot visited Bohinj in 1849, which included a climb to Ajdovski gradec. He explored the site and made a geodetic measurement of the features and fortification walls.



Hinko Smrekar, Črtomir addressing his soldiers on Ajdovski gradec, 1918

Permanent exhibition Bohinj through the archaeological periods

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