

Interpretierte Eisenzeiten

Fallstudien, Methoden, Theorie

Tagungsbeiträge der 3. Linzer Gespräche
zur interpretativen Eisenzeitarchäologie

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Studien zur Kulturgeschichte von Oberösterreich
Folge 22

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Herausgegeben vom Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseum
Linz 2009
ISBN 978-3-85474-205-0

Medieninhaber:
Land Oberösterreich/OÖ. Landesmuseum
Museumstrasse 14, A-4010 Linz

Direktor:
Mag. Dr. Peter Assmann

Schriftleiter:
Dr. Bernhard Prokisch

Graphische Gestaltung:
Alexandra Bruckböck

Druck:
Easy-Media GmbH Linz

Vernacular Celtic Writing Traditions in the East-Alpine Region in the Iron-Age Period?¹

David Stifter

Abstract

In previous scholarship, four inscriptions or groups of inscriptions are mentioned as proof for vernacular Celtic literacy in the East-Alpine region, i.e. modern Austria, during the La-Tène period or shortly afterwards: 1. the so-called 'writing tablet' from the Dürrnberg above Hallein (Salzburg), 2. the so-called 'Noric' inscriptions from the Magdalensberg (Carinthia), 3. the graffito on a tile fragment from the Frauenberg near Leibnitz (Styria), 4. the graffito on a tile fragment from Grafenstein (Carinthia). This article critically evaluates all four of them. The conclusion is that only the fourth contains genuine Celtic linguistic material. The others belong to different literary traditions or to different periods.

Zusammenfassung

In der einschlägigen Forschung werden vier Inschriften oder Inschriftengruppen als Hinweis für einheimische, keltische Schriftlichkeit im Ostalpenraum, d.h. im auf dem Gebiet des heutigen Österreichs, während der La Tène-Zeit oder kurz danach angeführt: 1. das sogenannte ‚Schreibtäfelchen‘ vom Dürrnberg oberhalb Hallein (Salzburg), 2. die sogenannten ‚norischen‘ Inschriften vom Magdalensberg (Kärnten), 3. die Ritzung auf einem Ziegelbruchstück vom Frauenberg bei Leibnitz (Steiermark), 4. die Ritzung auf einem Ziegelbruchstück von Grafenstein (Kärnten). In diesem Artikel werden alle vier kritisch gesichtet. Die Schlussfolgerung ist, dass nur der vierte Text echt keltisches Sprachmaterial enthält. Die anderen gehören anderen Schrifttraditionen oder anderen Epochen an.

In the east-Alpine region, by which term is meant the area occupied by modern Austria, in the Iron-Age period before the Roman occupation (around 15 b.c.) two vernacular *Schriftprovinzen* can be found, i.e. areas with a local, non-Roman influenced writing tradition: one in the Tyrol, belonging linguistically to the Raetic language with a much larger area of extent in northern Italy (see Schumacher 2004: 190–193), the other one in the Gailtal of southern Carinthia, belonging to the Venetic language (Prosdocimi, Pellegrini 1967: 607–628). The Venetic inscriptions (to which a few more pieces must be added, see below) are not the product of a native population group, but they belong to a class of traders from the south who had their emporium on the Gurina above the Gail. Both writing traditions used their own alphabets, derived from an early Etruscan alphabet. Both writing traditions are rather circumscribed and cover only a small area of the much wider east-Alpine region. The question arises whether that ethnic group which in the late Iron Age inhabited the most extensive part of Austria, i.e. Celtic people like the Noricans, Tauriscans or Boians, did have an Iron-Age writing tradition of its own?

From the circum-Alpine periphery, there is ample evidence for writing by Celtic people. In northern Italy and southern Switzerland we have ca. 150 testimonies of the Lepontic language (Solinas 1995), written in the local Lugano alphabet, a variant of the north-Etruscan script, covering the period from the 6th to the 1st century b.c., as well as a handful of Gaulish texts, also written in the Lugano script (Lejeune 1988: 1–54). From Switzerland (cf. Stüber 2006) there is also the zinc tablet from Berne, Thornebodewald (L-106, Stüber 2005: 11–45), written in Greek letters with an admixture of Latin letter forms; the sword with the name *Korisios* in Greek letters on it, found in the river Zihl at Port near Biel; a glass bead with the appearance of Etruscoid letters on it from Münsingen-Rain (Gambari, Kaenel 2001); and a painted wall inscription from a Roman villa in Meikirch (Fuchs et al. 2004). The latter is from late antiquity, but the others conceivably all belong to the Iron Age. From Germany, two tile fragments are known from the oppidum of Manching, one bearing the name *Boios* in Greek or Roman letters, the other one containing a sequence of four letters of the Greek alphabet (Krämer 1982).

More recently, a shard with the Latin letters *TAR[* was discovered (Schubert 2002). From Slovenia stem two testimonies of possibly Celtic provenance, the inscription reading *artebudz brogdui* (or *artebuθsbroχθui*) from Ptuj (Eichner et al. 1994), and perhaps some of the names on the famous helmet A from Ženjak-Negau (Ia: *siraku*, Ic: *duφniφanuaφi*; Nedoma 2002: 57–58). Schumacher (2004: 329–331, 335), however, considers the possibility of a Raetic affiliation of those names. In addition to all that there is indirect evidence for writing in the form of styluses and writing tablets, excavated in the oppida of Berne (Switzerland), Manching (Bavaria), Závist, Staré Hradisko and the Hradišt near Stradonice (Czech Republic) (Zeidler 2003: 97). Leaving aside northern Italy, these stray pieces of evidence taken together do not attest to a continuous zone of literacy across Central Europe, but they raise the hopes for Celtic writing to be found also on the soil of modern Austria.

In the scholarly literature devoted to ancient Celtic Austria, reference to three inscriptions and one group of inscriptions can be found that might support the notion of vernacular literacy:

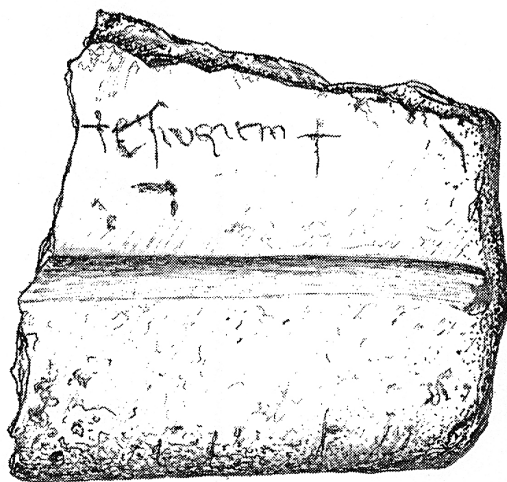
1. the so-called ‘writing tablet’ from the Dürrenberg above Hallein (prov. Salzburg)
2. the so-called ‘Noric’ inscriptions from the Magdalensberg (prov. Carinthia)
3. the graffito on a tile fragment from the Frauenberg near Leibnitz (prov. Styria)
4. the graffito on a tile fragment from Grafenstein (prov. Carinthia)

As a fifth class of inscriptions the Noric-Tauriscan and Boian coin legends might be added, but they are excluded here. The inscriptions on the coins do not necessarily attest of an independent tradition of writing, but can be interpreted as being part of the Venetic and Roman cultural and linguistic zones.

In the following, I want to present all four texts. Each has its own problems of interpretation and analysis. In each case, research is still continuing. Therefore I am not in a position to present results of any kind, let alone interpretations of the contents. All I want to do is take stock of what inscription can be reliably attributed to a Celtic language, and to give an overview of the state of research.

1. The 'Writing Tablet' from the Dürrenberg

I start with an extraordinary fragment of pottery that was discovered in spring 1982 during excavations in the Ramsautal at the Dürrenberg above Hallein, Salzburg (Moosleitner, Zeller 1982: 30; Zeller 1984: 62–63, 77; Krämer 1984; Zeller 1988: 11). It is now kept in the archives of the Salzburg Museum in the town of Salzburg where it has the inventory nr. 673/82. It's $6.5 \times 5.5 \times 1.5$ cm large and of a light-brown colour. It bears very fine, almost fragile scratches that evoke the impression of an inscription (ill. 1). The scratches were made after the baking (*pace* L. Pauli in Krämer 1984: 294), apparently by someone with some experience in writing in baked clay. Despite several attempts no-one had hitherto succeeded in reading the text (Meid 1996: 308–309, 319; 1998: 23). The excavators, Fritz Moosleitner and Kurt Zeller, suggested to read Greek letters, but they did not substantiate their claim. The object is remarkable in other respects, as well. Its light, ochre clay has no parallel among the dark-gray La-Tène pottery that accompanied it in the same excavation sector. The excavators interpreted the medium of the inscription to be the fragment of a writing tablet, that is, an object that was covered on one side by a thin layer of wax into which letters could be inscribed with a pointed stylus. A clay object of this kind, however, has no parallel in the entire history of writing. I deem it more likely that the object is the fragment of a tile.



Ill. 1. The 'writing tablet' from the Dürrenberg (source: Moosleitner, Zeller 1982: 30).

On the basis of the accompanying finds and because of the archaeological stratum the excavators assigned the object to the 4th or 3rd centuries b.c. This date, as well as the archaeological context and the place of discovery, Dürrenberg, are the sole reasons why this has been claimed to be a Celtic inscription. No text-immanent justification has been provided so far. The two crosses at the beginning and at the end, which are suggestive of a Christian background, seem hard to square with a pre-Christian date. In fact, it is likely that the inscription can be omitted from Celtic palaeography altogether. Following the suggestion that the inscription bears Greek letters, in November 2008 I showed an image of the fragment to a Greek epigrapher, Hans Taeuber from the University of Vienna. After more than twenty-five years, he was the first person who was able to recognise some letters on the tile. According to him, the script is late imperial Greek cursive. The two crosses could well be of Christian origin. At the moment, Taeuber's readings are only tentative, pending a more detailed study not of a photograph, but of the real object. According to him, the first three letters can be read fairly securely as ἐγώ 'I'. The final portion could be ἐπί. The letters in between are unclear. If Taeuber's reading is correct, we are dealing with a late-antique object that by accident slipped into a La-Tène stratum. Bruno Reiterer, the conservator at the Salzburg Museum, told me that there were other such cases, even from much later periods. Since, however, chronologically misplaced objects had been of no interest to anyone, these had not been studied or mentioned in the literature. Kurt Zeller has raised the objection that Roman-age objects were absent almost altogether from the Dürrenberg. A late imperial Greek funeral (?) inscription would thus be fairly exotic. A thermoluminescence examination, which Kurt Zeller has announced for 2009, will hopefully resolve all open questions.

2. The So-called 'Noric' Inscriptions from the Magdalensberg

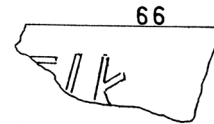
The next item, the so-called 'Noric' inscriptions from the Magdalensberg in Carinthia, are the longest-known complex of possible Celtic literacy in Austria. During his excavation campaigns on the famous

mountain in the 1950ies and 60ies, the archaeologist Rudolf Egger not only produced thousands of everyday graffiti in Latin script and language, but also a small number of inscriptions which he, who also tried to distinguish himself as an epigrapher, assigned to a separate, local alphabet. All material was published in the bi- or triannual excavation reports (Egger 1959, 1961, 1963, 1966, 1969), as well as in a few publications elsewhere (Egger 1968a, 1968b) and by colleagues or disciples (Moßler 1961, 1986; Hebert 1991). In several of these publications Egger explicitly called the script ‘Noric alphabet’.

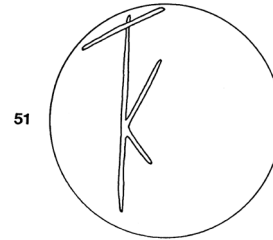
All specimens of the Noric script are highly suspect of being figments of Egger’s imagination. This suspicion is fed by several observations and considerations. Many of Egger’s alleged Noric letters simply belong to Latin. For example, the variant of the letter *A* with a slanting middle stroke (ill. 2) is common in Latin epigraphy. Egger never provided explanations for his analyses. I can only surmise that the reason why he regarded the fragmentary text *JFIK* or *JEIK* as Noric (ill. 3) must be sought in the use of the letter *K* which was rare in Latin. But rare doesn’t mean absent. *K* is encountered not infrequently among the Latin graffiti from the Magdalensberg, as in the monogramme of the trader *Titus Kanius* (Ill. 4) or in the company stamp of the *Laekanii* (Ill. 5). In a similarly arbitrary fashion Eggers sometimes read the letter that has the shape of St. Andrew’s cross as an abbreviation of the name *Xanthus* or as the numeral ‘10’, whereas he analysed it as Noric *T* when found on local pottery. It need not be stressed that a character like *X* need not always be a letter at all, but may be a mere non-literate marker. Often Egger’s interpretation of a letter as Noric went hand in hand with the type of medium on which it is found. Characters on imported pottery were assigned to Latin; characters on coarse local ware, especially on so-called *Dreifussschalen* ‘three-legged bowls’, were almost automatically regarded as Noric.



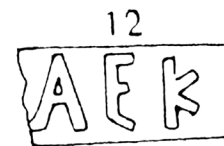
Ill. 2. ‘Noric’ *A* (source: Egger 1966: 465).



Ill. 3. ‘Noric’ ?*IK* (source: Egger 1963: 100).



Ill. 4. Monogramme of *Titus Kanius* (source: H. Vettters, G. Piccottini (1986), *Magdalensberg – Grabungsbericht* (15). *Die Ausgrabungen auf dem Magdalensberg 1975 bis 1979*, Klagenfurt: 249).



Ill. 5. Part of the company stamp of the *Laekanii* (source: Egger 1959: 139).

Practically all of Egger’s Noric inscriptions consist of single letters. For this fact alone the alarm should go off immediately. Inscriptions in alphabetic scripts typically consist of strings of letters, not of single graphic items. If we systematically find single signs on local ware, it is more appropriate to think of a marking, not a writing system – indeed this seems to be the current consensus (see, for example, Zabehlicky-Scheffenegger 1997: 130). These potters’ marks may be para-literate, that is to say, those artisans who attached these signs in imitation of writing systems of neighbouring cultures or even of certain classes within their own culture, were non-literate themselves. Thus it becomes clear why some of the signs can in no way be regarded as belonging to a writing system, but have to be classified as purely ornamental (e.g., nrs. 1–5, 25, 33 in ill. 6). Some of them are of a rather unspecific, universal, geometric nature (e.g., nrs. 11, 15, 26–29 in ill. 6). Some, however, have clear and undeniable parallels in letters of known alphabets, especially of the Venetic script (e.g., nrs. 17, 18, 24 in ill. 6). It may also be noted that

apart from the stray publications by Moßler 1986 and Hebert 1991 (which contain material that is dubious even by Egger's standards) no more Noric inscriptions were found after Egger's death. The methods of how to identify Noric inscriptions were apparently tied to a single person; it was not an objective method.

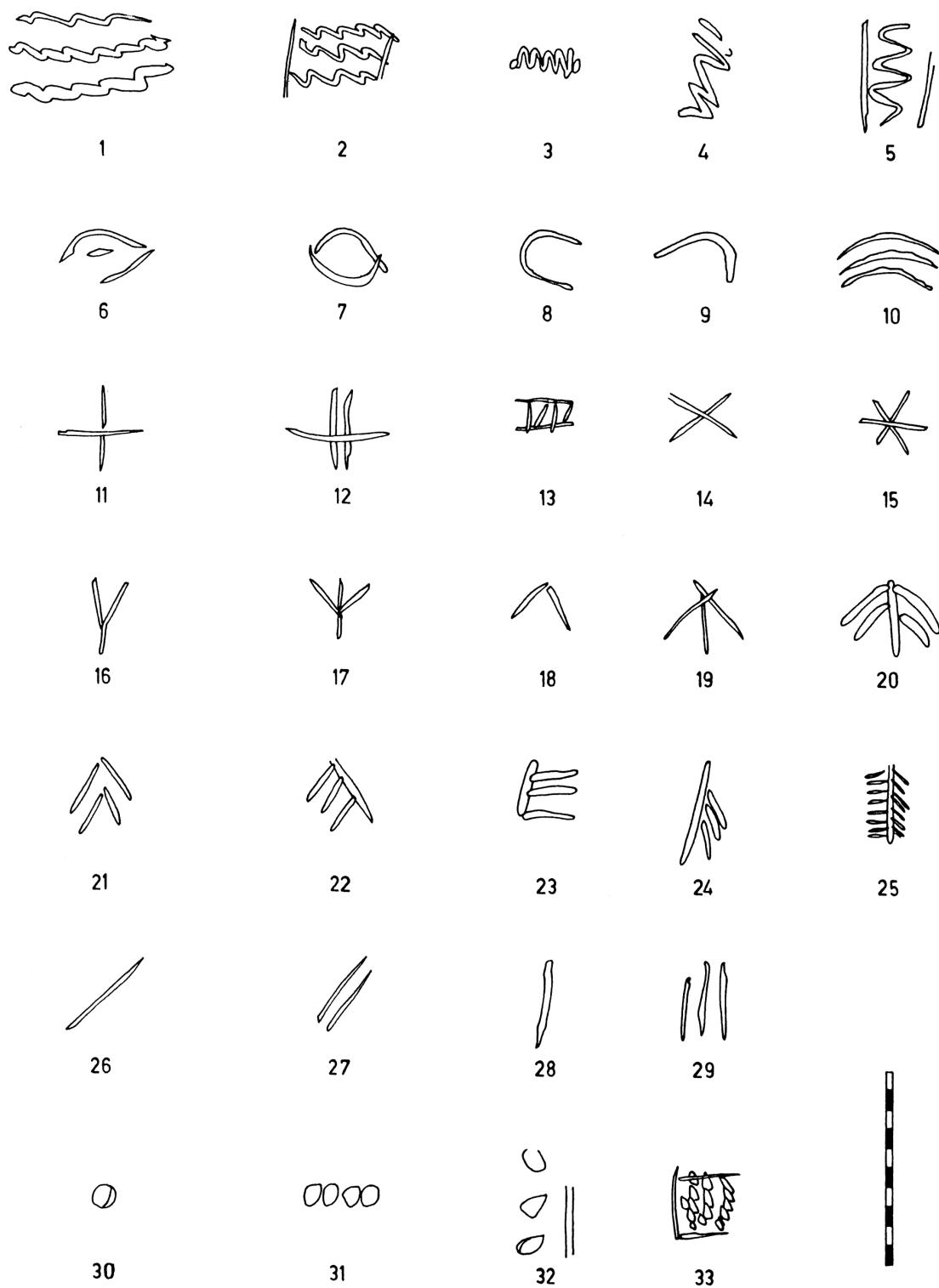
There is only a single exception to the Noric single-letter-inscriptions. In July 1957, in regular excavations five pieces of a fragmentary terra-sigillata plate were discovered, containing graffiti that create the impression of two strings of letters (see ill. 7). The plate dates to the late Augustan period. The graffiti quite obviously contain no Latin letters. Immediately after the discovery Rudolf Egger and the excavators had agreed that the inscription was of vernacular, that is, Noric provenance. In order to enhance the legibility of the graffiti its lines were filled with a white paste, probably gypsum. Convinced of his ideas about local scripts of Noricum, in the following years Egger published two divergent readings and translations of the plate (Egger 1959: 135–139, 1968b). His interpretations are methodically so haphazard that it would be unjustified to discuss them here. For Egger it was a fact beyond dispute that he was working with an authentic inscription. For me it is not.

There are three possible approaches to determine the authenticity of an inscription: one can ask persons who were present at the time whether they know of rumours, or more, about a fake. Or, one can apply scientific methods to find out if the object is a modern artifact. Or, one can try to position the graffiti in an epigraphic-palaeographic typology. Since all people who were involved in the excavations are long dead, the first possibility is eliminated. As for the second possibility, neither of the two methods suggested by Markus Scholz from the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz looks promising for the present object. One would be to analyse the chemical structure of the soil remains in the scratches. By comparing the chemical 'fingerprint' with that of the soil at the alleged place of discovery it would be possible to say whether the inscription had indeed remained under earth. But since the object was thoroughly cleansed after the discovery and since the scratches were afterwards filled with a white paste, it is very unlikely that enough material (several grammes) could be accumu-

lated for an investigation. The other method is optically stimulated luminescence. Ideally, it would allow to assess whether the scratches and the surrounding surfaces had been exposed to different amounts of light. But the plate had been lying covered in earth for 1900 years. If the inscriptions are of a modern date, they must have been applied immediately after the discovery of the plate, in which case surface and scratches would have been exposed to an almost identical amount of light. I am still looking for further scientific methods that can be of help in this matter.

There remains the palaeographic comparison. Studying the Magdalensberg plate from a palaeographic point of view very soon leads to the conclusion that – given our knowledge about writing systems in northern Italy and in the Mediterranean world – this inscription must be unauthentic. The inscription looks like clumsy, untrained scribbling, the shapes and the spaces between the letters are erratic, very much in contrast to the graffiti that are usually found on pottery. The presumed 'letters' of the inscription find parallels nowhere. It is long known that the alphabets and the shapes of the letters in the circum-Mediterranean world stand in precise genealogical relationships to each other. The scratchings on the Magdalensberg plate have no cognates anywhere. Furthermore, those 'letters' lack a local writing tradition. Even if Egger were right with his hypothesis of a Noric alphabet at the Magdalensberg, the 'letters' on the plate have nothing in common with all other so-called Noric inscriptions. There is only one conclusion that I can draw: somebody played a joke on Rudolf Egger. Already in the 1920s Egger had been the victim of a similar joke. Someone had planted a bone with a faked runic inscription on it (Egger 1927: 1–2). Only years later Egger reluctantly admitted its unauthenticity (Egger 1936: 88–89). Egger is part of a tradition in which faked inscriptions were a means of playing practical jokes on archaeologists.

When surveying all so-called Noric inscriptions from the Magdalensberg the conclusion must be drawn that none of it stands up to a close investigation. The short inscriptions either belong to the Roman tradition or are potters' marks. The only inscription with more than one letter, the Magdalensberg plate, is beset with so many oddities that its value is reduced to zero. I must



Ill. 6. Potters' marks from the Magdalensberg (source: Zabehlicky-Scheffenecker 1997: 131).



Ill. 7. Terra-sigillata plate from the Magdalensberg (source: D. Stifter).

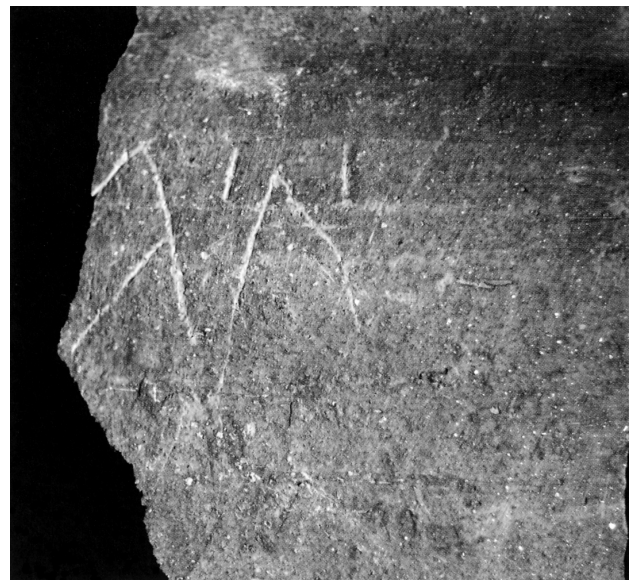
state it clearly: the Noric script is a chimera of Rudolf Egger's. Egger was too eager to discover a writing system of his own to be restrained by a sober assessment of what he was doing.

As noted above, some of the potters' marks show an untrivial resemblance to letters of the Venetic script. This allows some conclusions to be drawn about the cultural relationships in the pre-Roman period. It is long known that the Gurina in the Gailtal in southern Carinthia was a Venetic post north of the Carnic Alps for trading with the Alpine-Celtic peoples, a trading post much of the sort the Magdalensberg was for the Romans in a later period. As such, the Gurina was a focal point for cultural exchange between the ethnic groups. This cultural exchange found one expression in the Tauriscan-Noric coin emissions of the 2nd century b.c.² But contrary to a widespread belief most of those coin legends that are termed 'Venetic' in publications by numismaticists or historians (like Göbl 1973) are of late date and are written in Roman letters; only the earliest emissions from the 2nd century b.c. made use of the Venetic script. One legend is of particular interest because it has been wrongly read so far. The coin with the inscription VOKK used to be identified with the Noric king Voccio, mentioned once by Julius Caesar (bell. Gall. 1, 53, 4). Up to the discovery of the Enemonzo hoard this identification provided the most important clue for the chronology of the Tauriscan-Noric coin production. However, an examination of the coin has revealed that it actually reads

.n.no.u. in Venetic letters (see also Kos 2004).³ The connection with the Noric king Voccio has to be dropped. In any case those early coins give evidence of the use of the Venetic script in Noricum at least in a limited sector of life.

3. The Tile from the Frauenberg

This leads us directly to the third inscription that has been claimed for Celtic in Austria. The fragmentary graffito on a tile from the Frauenberg near Leibnitz in southern Styria has not been properly edited so far. It is not entirely clear when it was discovered, but it seems to have been found in a waste heap of the 2nd or 1st centuries b.c. during excavations in the 1990s. The inscription consists of the two Venetic letters *Ja.u.* that seem to form the end of a word (see ill. 8). The rest of the word is missing. The tile was on display 2008 at an exhibition about 'Heiligtümer der Druiden. Opfer und Rituale bei den Kelten' at the Museum für Urgeschichte in Asparn an der Zaya where it was presented as an example of the Celts' use of writing for non-religious purposes. It is cursorily discussed and explained as a Celtic dative in the exhibition catalogue (Tiefengraber, Grill 2008: 96). This interpretation, for which Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel and Reinhold Wedenig



Ill. 8. Tile fragment from the Frauenberg (source: Tiefengraber, Grill 2008: 96).



Ill. 9. Tile fragment from Grafenstein (source: Glaser 1991).

are ultimately responsible (ibid. 101), is then used to analyse the whole text as dedicatory. All of these conclusions are too far-reaching. Unfortunately, the catalogue does not explain by which criteria the two letters were assigned to a Celtic language in the first place. The only thing that is fairly certain is that the two letters belong to the Venetic alphabet. The most natural conclusion must be that an inscription in Venetic letters that was found not very far away from the Venetic-speaking area contains a text in the Venetic language. All other assumptions are admissible only if there are cogent reasons to think otherwise. However, this is not the case here. Therefore this short text cannot be regarded as Celtic, but it has to be added to the corpus of Venetic.⁴

4. The Grafenstein Tile

The final item is the inscribed tile fragment from Grafenstein near Klagenfurt in Carinthia. The object, which is appr. $27,5 \times 13,5 \times 3,4$ cm large, was discovered 1977 accidentally while digging out a gravel pit. The tile itself has not been dated, but a grave and various Roman objects associated with the find belong to the 2nd century a.d. Nothing in the inscription militates against such a date. The tile is kept at the Landesmuseum Kärnten without inventory number. The letters, which were encaved before baking, are of a moderate Roman cursive variant (see ill. 9). They are generally well readable, except for a few sections where the medium itself has been interfered with or is damaged.

The inscription has been edited three times so far (Glaser 1991, Lambert 2002: 243–244 = L-95, Stifter 2003). All three editions, including my own, are wrong. Franz Glaser, the archaeologist responsible for the find, lacked the linguistic expertise, Pierre-Yves Lambert and I made our editions only on the basis of photographs and a drawing by Glaser. Nevertheless the text, in particular the phrase *ollo so*, has evoked some interest among historical linguists (Watkins 1999, Katz 2001, De Bernardo Stempel 2003). Only two years later did I find the opportunity to study the object with my own eyes. This allowed me to correct several misreadings in the previous editions. With a few questions still unsolved (especially the second word of the third line), the following provisional text can be given:

MOGII · IIS[
P · II- LAV · IIX[
NII · SADNIIS[
OLLO · SO · VILO[
QNA C[...]

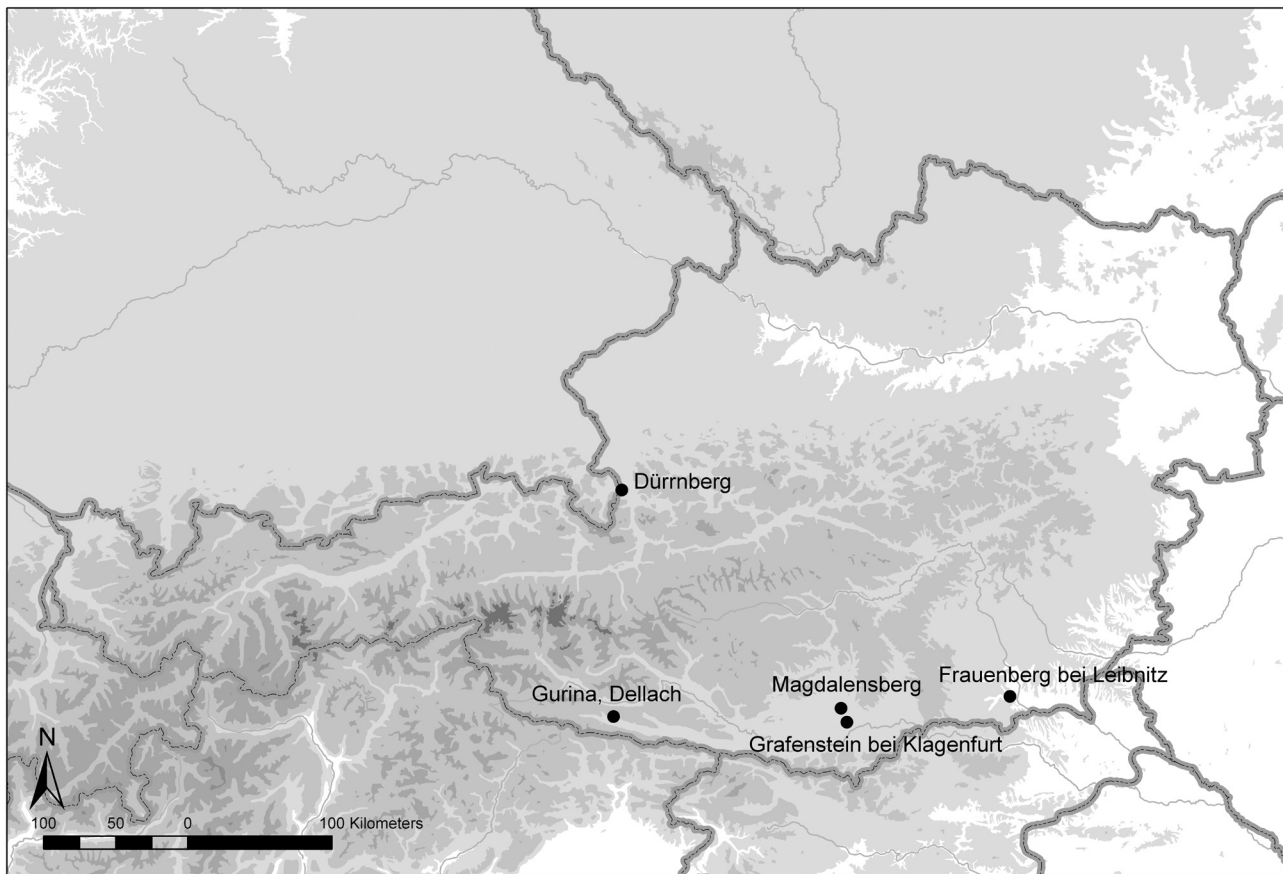
OLLO · SO · 7 [
P LVGNV · SI

All sequences of *II* are probably to be read as *E*, except for *II-* in the second line, which is the Roman numeral '2 1/12', preceded by *P* = *pondo* 'having the weight of'. This phrase is Latin. Nevertheless, the inscriptions contains some undoubtedly Celtic elements

that make it the only authentic Celtic inscription of the four studied in this article. *Moge* at the beginning is probably to be connected with the Celtic name *Mogeti-us*. Likewise, *Lugnu* and *si* are possibly Celtic. Most clearly Celtic is the twice repeated phrase *ollo so*, probably ‘all that’. One best thinks of a receipt or a delivery note or something similar, perhaps for use in a pottery. Finding the vernacular language used in such a context in the 2nd century a.d. is remarkable.

All of the foregoing are preliminary results. In the near future I will publish much more detailed studies on each of the inscriptions presented here. In summary

it can be said that at the moment there is no conclusive evidence that there existed in the east-Alpine region, i.e. in and around the Noric kingdom, a pre-Roman tradition of writing. The Venetic script was known in the 2nd century b.c., and the Roman script a little later, but we find it only applied in the production of coins. This is no evidence for a fully developed writing tradition, since the use of letters on coins could have been imported with foreign mintmasters. The only inscription with an undoubted Celtic-language portion, the tile fragment from Grafenstein, belongs to the Roman provincial period and to a Romanised cultural world.



III. 10. The places mentioned in the article (source: Raimund Karl).

Notes:

- 1 Work on this paper was undertaken within the FWF-funded project P20755-G03 'Die altkeltischen Sprachreste in Österreich' (The Old-Celtic Language Remains of Austria). This work was awarded the 2008 prize of the 'Burgenlandstiftung Theodor Kery' (<http://www.kerstiftung.at/>).
- 2 Because of the influential works of Göbl (1973, 1994) it was long assumed that the local Celtic coin production was confined to the period from ca. 70–30 b.c. Doubts about this relatively short period were expressed already during the 1990s, but only the discovery of the hoard from Enemonzo (Gorini 2005) has made it clear that the Tauriscans and Noricans started issuing money almost a century earlier than hitherto thought.
- 3 The interpretation of *.n.no.u.* is difficult. I suspect that it is an error (?) for the popular Venetic name *Enno*, perhaps with a 'Celticising' ending. Compare this with the coin legend *.e.n.no.* on the imitation of a Nike stater in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cat. nr. 9474.
- 4 Other texts that must be added to the Venetic corpus: the Noric-Tauriscan coin legends *t, ves, .n.no.u.*, and possibly *kr* and *ekr*, the coin legend *.e.n.no* from Paris, and possibly an unedited inscription on a stylus from the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (Jablonka 2001: 356).

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Zusammenfassung der Diskussion

(Beiträge von C. Eibner und Leskovar)

Die bekannte lange Tradition der Nutzung einzelner schriftähnlicher Zeichen z.B. auf Gefäßböden wird als Markierung (der Besitzer, der Hersteller, etc.) betrachtet. Diese wurden bereits ausführlich bearbeitet (Zeidler), hier aber nicht weiter beachtet, weil der Forschungsschwerpunkt nicht Einzelzeichen sondern Schrift (also sinnvoll kombinierte Zeichen) ist.

Die Punkte innerhalb der venetischen Inschriften sind Teil der Silbenmarkierung der venetischen Orthographie (sie bezeichnen eine Art Ausnahmen in der Silbenstruktur).

Um mögliche Fälschungen unter den Inschriften-Funden herauszufiltern, könnte mittels CT der Verwitterungsgrad untersucht werden (u.a. die Fachhochschule in Wels beschäftigt sich mit derartigen Analysen).