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# Maribor

Marburch, Marchpurg, Marichburga

The urban area of Maribor existed as early as the eleventh century, although its castle was first recorded in 1164 and the parish church in 1189. The earlier emergence of the town was indicated by the fact that Bernard I of Spanheim (1096–1147) was denominated Bernard of Maribor as early as 1124, after the castle which he erected on the nearby Piramida hill as the central castle of the Drava Mark. The castle facilitated the origins and development of the settlement in its proximity. Bernard of Maribor simultaneously restored the old Roman river crossing, and established the original parish of Maribor together with Conrad I, Archbishop

of Salzburg (1106–1147). Along the present Koroško Street he created a settlement with about 34 plots for necessary artisans without granting the settlement any kind of legal status. The settlement with its regular plots surrounded the funnel-shaped extension of the road which led along the present Jewish Street to the east. Thus the beginning of the later street arrangement of the town was created. To the north-west and north of the settlement the complexes of the western court and the parish church were built, restraining the development of the settlement towards the north and directing it towards the east and north-east.

The thirteenth century was of decisive importance for the development of Maribor. Above all, the place had become a borough before 1209, and a town before 1254. The period of King Otokar II, Přemisl of Bohemia, as Prince of the Province (1251–1254 and 1260–1276) promoted the development of the town as an important bridgehead on the river Drava (the only one in the possession of the Prince of the Province) along the route towards the Adriatic. In the second half of the thirteenth century the construction of Maribor increased as never again. At that time the urban plan was created for its mediaeval and Modern Age development until the end of the eighteenth century. In 1782 Maribor was deprived of its status of an important stately fortress, and through that the town was lib-



erated from its fortification walls. The rhomboid town walls were constructed between 1255 and 1275, and their sides of about 500 metres in length enclosed 25 hectares of urban territory. At the same time the monastery of Friars Minor and the Jewish settlement were constructed, the parish church was rebuilt, and a number of town dwellings were erected together with the church of St. Ulrica in the eastern suburb and the church of Our Blessed Lady in Lebarje in the western one.

Since the town walls had transformed the existing road system of the town, a new network of streets developed in its eastern part. Through that lateral traffic decreased and meridian traffic increased, the main street of which was Lord Street. It connected the formerly independent parts of the settlement, which were divided into a borough and a village as late as the first half of the thirteenth century, along the eastern edge of the church complex, and through that a unified urban mass was created. Among other streets from the first period Minoritsko and Gospejno Streets played the role of the western wall path, Slovensko Street the northern and Vetrinjsko the eastern path. In the thirteenth century the southern side of the walls was constructed since the monastery of Friars Minor, the court of Žiče and the Jewish synagogue were built upon it.

The development of the meridian street was the final consequence of the fact that the town walls had transformed the road system, which had not been hindered by the original borough settlement around Koroško Street and the western part of Main Square. The town walls reduced the lateral traffic flow to only two roads which used the south-western Koroško Gate and the north-eastern Ulrich Gate. Their connection with the southern Drava Gate created a road system which demanded the emergence of Drava Street as a direct link between Main Square and the bridgehead, apart from the increased role of Lord Street. The subsequent origin of Drava Street was indicated by the accompanying division into plots which protruded into the one from the southern side. Through that Main

Square became the traffic centre of the town, and its eastern starting-point as the transit route (Jewish Street) died away. The south-western Koroško Gate had remained the main town gate until the middle of the sixteenth century. When the road to Graz was removed from Rošpoh to Lajteršperk, Ulrich Gate became the main town gate. The town entrances of former transit routes interrupted by the town walls were preserved in the form of minor wall gates. Through the introduction of Lord Street Maribor acquired its main meridian street which directed the traffic from the Drava bridge towards the east, and since the second half of the sixteenth century further towards the north. Its division into plots indicated its later origins from those of Main Square and Slovensko Street. The latter interrupted the walls in the west and remained an active route only in its eastern part. The trapezoid Garrison Square was formed in the original settlement along the river Drava, and the funnel-shaped Castle Square in the village settlement along Slovensko Street. The origin of the present Vetrinjsko Street branched off from it in the period before the construction of the town walls, and it served as a link with Jewish Street while it was still a transit route. With the transformation of the road system the occupation of the urban area had changed as well, and its north-western part had remained sparsely inhabited.

Two further commercial centres, apart from Koroško Street with Main Square and Slovensko Street with Castle Square, were the port (Lent) with Garrison Square, which served for activities connected with river traffic, and the ghetto adjacent to Jewish Street as the trade and finance centre. The first town dwelling in Maribor was recorded as early as ca. 1222, and the spital with the church of the Holy Spirit for twelve wards were erected in 1384.

In the fourteenth century the town walls were completed, a number of free houses were constructed including the Jewish synagogue, the town tower (ca. 1330) adjacent to the parish church and a prestigious presbytery (ca. 1400). On account of the fire in 1362 the town hall



was removed from Koroško Street to No. 4 Main Square. The fire of 1450 devastated the court of the prince of the province adjacent to Gospejno Street, which used to be half abandoned, and that of 1468 damaged the administrative building at the corner of Lord and Slovensko Streets, which was replaced by the present town castle after 1478. Since 1437 the main concern of the town was the fortification, which was renovated after 1450 in the spirit of the mediæval defence doctrine. In 1481 it sufficed to fend off the incursion of the Hungarians, but after 1522 it proved outdated. At that time the Turkish incursions were resumed, and they reached their climax in September 1532 when the town survived a Turkish siege. A Renaissance renovation of the fortification followed. The town, however, was not greatly reno-

vated, and since the second half of the fifteenth century it stagnated gradually and passed the seventeenth century in a relatively uneventful way.

It is clear from the aforementioned that three starting-points and two stages must be distinguished in the urban development of Maribor.

The first starting-point was the hamlet which developed at the river crossing and formed a trapezoid market-place (the present Garrison Square) along the transit route leading from the ferry-boat port (later the bridgehead) over Lebarje towards Rošpoh and Kamnica. Traditionally the hamlet possessed the church of St. Mary, where the monastery of Friars Minor was established in the thirteenth century, and it gradually covered most of its territory.

The second starting-point was the village settlement which developed





along the road between Kamnica and Melje, in the area of the present Castle Square and the eastern part of Slovensko Street. This settlement, denoted as *villa* as late as the first half of the thirteenth century, was integrated into the walled-in town similarly to that in Pristan.

The third starting-point was the borough settlement (since about 1200) which existed between the first half of the twelfth and the middle of the thirteenth centuries with its centre along Koroško Street and with its boundaries between the present Minoritsko, Gospejno and Orožen Streets, along the southern periphery of Slomšek Square, and the northern and eastern periphery of Rotovž Square, along the middle of the present Main Square and along the southern periphery of the terrace of the river Drava and the northern periphery of Garrison Square.

Thus it was located between the settlement of Pristan and the estates of the town court and the parish church adjacent to the road that branched off from the transit road in the present Vodnik Square and led along the present Koroško Road towards the east, and branched off once again beyond the settlement, with the first branch towards Melje and the second towards Krčevina.

The emergence of the urban settlement in the third quarter of the thirteenth century can be considered as the stage of unification, when the rhomboid town walls enclosed 25 hectares of urban territory.

The last stage of the construction comprised the late Gothic completion of the walled-in town which curved around its centre with the original parish church and castle.

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