

LIBELIČE – KOSTNICA SV. MIHAELA

OSSUARY OF ST. MICHAEL

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Kostnica sv. Mihaela stoji na zahodnem delu vasi, na strmem pobočju na obzidanem pokopališču ob cerkvi sv. Martina. Najverjetneje je bila zgrajena v prvi polovici 12. stoletja. Kostnica je kamnita okrogla dvoetažna stavba s polkrožno apsido na vzhodu. Pokrita je s strmo stožčasto skodlasto streho. Fasado členijo zgodnjegotske okenske odprtine s krogovičjem, romansko okno, polkrožno zaključen portal, posnet na ajdovo zrno, zunanja kamnita prižnica poligonalnega tlorisa in vhod v spodnji del kostnice, v katerem so shranjene kosti umrlih. V zgornjem delu, v kapeli, je v notranjščini raven lesen strop. Leta 1991 je bila kostnica celovito obnovljena, povrnjena ji je bila njena avtentična pojavnost iz pozne romanike z nekaterimi zgodnjegotskimi elementi.

V romanski dobi so zlasti v alpskih deželah stale kostnice na pokopališčih ob vseh župnijskih cerkvah. Nekdanja pokopališča so bila manjša od današnjih in grobove je bilo zaradi pomanjkanja prostora potrebno kmalu prekopati. Kostni iz prekopanih grobov so shranili v kostnice oziroma karnerje (izpeljano iz latinske besede *carnarium*). To so bile majhne okrogle stavbe, razdeljene v spodnji in zgornji prostor. V zgornjem prostoru je bila kapela, praviloma posvečena sv. Mihaelu, pod njo pa prostor, v katerem so shranjevali kosti. Da bi bil spodnji prostor vsaj deloma pod zemljo, so te stavbe postavljali v hrib. Libeliško kostnico oziroma klet so zasuli okoli leta 1700. Od 17. stoletja naprej so škofijski vizitatorji župnikom naročali, naj tiste kostnice, ki so bile v slabem stanju, popravijo, nepotrebne pa porušijo. Tako so se v Sloveniji ohranili le še trije tovrstni mrliški hrami: poleg libeliškega še v Mokronogu na Dolenjskem in v Jareninskem Dolu v Slovenskih Goricah. Kostnica je tako ena od treh še ohranjenih v Sloveniji in je zaradi svoje izjemnosti in redkosti vrhunski kulturni in zgodovinski spomenik.



Libeliče, kostnica (zbirka INDOK, 1969)

Libeliče, ossuary (INDOK collection, 1969)



Kostnica na franciscejskem katastru, 1827
The ossuary depicted on French land registry, 1827

The ossuary of St. Michael is located in the western part of the village, on a steep slope within the walled cemetery next to the church of St. Martin. It was most likely built in the first half of the 12th century. This stone, round, two-story building has a semicircular apse to the east. The ossuary is covered with a steep, conical shingled roof. The façade is articulated by early Gothic window openings with tracery, a Romanesque window, a semicircular-arched portal, profiled in the form of a millet grain, an external stone pulpit with a polygonal floor plan, and an entrance to the lower part of the ossuary, in which the bones of the deceased are stored. In interior of the upper part, the chapel, has a flat wooden ceiling. The ossuary was thoroughly renovated in 1991, restoring its authentic late Romanesque appearance with some early Gothic elements.

*During the Romanesque period ossuaries were commonly found in the cemeteries next to parish churches, particularly in Alpine countries. Cemeteries were smaller back then, and graves had to be dug up again soon due to a lack of space. Bones from the exhumed graves were stored in ossuaries or charnel houses (derived from the Latin word *carnarium*). These were small, round buildings, divided into an upper and lower space. The upper space contained a chapel, usually dedicated to St. Michael, while in the lower space the bones were kept. To ensure that the lower space was at least partly underground, these buildings were constructed into a hill. The Libeliče ossuary, or cellar, was buried around 1700. From the 17th century onwards, parish priests were instructed during canonical visitations to repair those ossuaries that were in poor condition and to demolish unnecessary ones. Thus, only three such mortuary buildings have been preserved in Slovenia: in addition to the one in Libeliče, there are also those in Mokronog in Dolenjska and in Jareninski Dol in Slovenske Gorice. As a result, the Libeliče ossuary is one of only three surviving in Slovenia and, because of its uniqueness and rarity, it is a remarkable cultural and historical monument.*