

## TEMPLES OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES (ASSEMBLY HALLS) IN ROMAN DACIA. AN ARCHITECTURAL PROSPECTIVE

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**Résumé:** L'objet de cet article sont des locaux de culte de la Dacie romaine, appartenant à des associations religieuses et ethniques. D'après le plan on dirait qu'il s'agit de temples avec cour entourée de portiques, selon un modèle bien documenté en Italie et dans les provinces de l'Empire. L'auteur montre que ces bâtiments avaient l'aspect des grandes salles de réunion. Dans le cas du temple de Bêl à Porolissum les analogies plaident pour une formule traditionnelle dans le Proche Orient, avec deux corridors latéraux. Le local de Sarmizegetusa, dédié lui aussi aux dieux palmyréens, avait une première section utilisée pour les banquets des membres de la petite communauté de la tribu de Bene Agrud. Le local dédié aux dieux paternels des Maurs de Micia, était presque entièrement utilisé pour des rencontres conviviales. Les trois chambres d'arrière étaient probablement utilisées comme chapelle de culte avec annexes. Le local du collège appartenant à la tribu illyrienne des *Sardeates* de Alburnus Maior était bâti en bois, mais il avait les mêmes caractéristiques des autres bâtiments analysés ici.

**Mots-clés:** Haut Empire; architecture; temple; reconstitution; rencontre conviviale.

**Key-words:** Early Roman Empire; architecture; temple; reconstruction; convivial meeting.

Both Roman professional and ethnic organizations (*collegia*) possessed assembly halls (*scholae*), used merely for common meals, rather than for more solemn reunions, like sacrificial rituals and such. They were usually provided with cult rooms (*aedes sacra*) dedicated to the Genius of the association, or to a deity acting as its patron. Best known are specific cases, such as underground Mithras temples (*mithraea*), and Jewish assembly houses (*synagogae*), which are not to be dealt with here because of their typical shape and particular aspect, which raises no identification problem. More questionable are buildings with the aspect (at least in plan) of a traditional Roman temple, or what some would call a "classical temple", which is absolutely an improper name, Archaic and Classical Greek temples having a different outlook and other components. In this respect the only type of cult building from Roman Dacia which would indirectly enter into the range of this study are the so called "Italic temples", frequent in the western provinces of the Roman Empire and ultimately deriving from the forum of Augustus in Rome. Such complexes comprise a holy piece of land, which was inaugurated according to "*disciplina Etrusca*" and was actually called "*templum*". It was rectangular in shape, oriented after the Cardinal axes and contained a sacred building, called "*aedes*", where usually the cult statue was kept.

The altar was placed in front of it, in the open. Usually the holy ground was surrounded by a portico, where from the phrase often mentioned in inscriptions “*templum cum porticibus*”<sup>1</sup>. In the Romanian literature, assembly halls and cult clubs were often mistaken for such cult complexes, i.e. “Italic temples”<sup>2</sup>.

The main confusion comes from the so called “portico”. In fact, the pretended stylobate was not the foundation wall of a colonnade, but a support for banquet couches, or for partition walls of hidden corridors. In order to clarify this matter I need a short digression on ancient porticoes. Tacitus lists the portico amongst the symbols of both Roman civilization and of its decay, along with bath facilities and lavish dinners<sup>3</sup>. Unlike us the Romans would spend most of their day in the shade of deep verandas, making trade, talking politics, or playing social games and even picnicking<sup>4</sup>. To fulfill such purposes a portico needed to be both deep enough for counters, bars and dining tables with their benches, and also high enough to provide the necessary shadow from morning to dawn. At hand are some examples from Sarmizegetusa, the Metropolis of Roman Dacia. Two temples of Italic type, the so called “Great Temple” and the “Temple of Liber Pater” have different sizes, but their porticoes are equally large, 4.50 m (Pl. I a)<sup>5</sup>. The portico of the “Great Temple” had Corinthian columns 4.50 m high, whilst the one of Liber Pater had Tuscan columns around 3.20 m high. The yard of the Great Temple is almost as big as the piazza of the Trajanic forum. This one had a portico 5.60 m wide and Corinthian columns 5.60 m high. The north portico of the same forum was 4.20 m large and the columns reached 6.10 m in height<sup>6</sup>. These figures should suffice to illustrate the difference between a portico and a narrow corridor or a foundation for a couch, whose width did not exceed 2 m or even less. The dimensions of these halls, which do not exceed 12 m in width (Pl. II) make them suitable for roofing and allow rejecting the hypothesis of a central yard.

The other side of my intercession regards the initial aspect of these buildings. Graphic reconstructions of ancient buildings are increasingly popular in Romania, but in most of the cases they have no theoretical or scientific support. Young and enthusiastic architects tend to apply contemporary solutions to ancient problems, with no regard that timber and stone work differently from concrete and iron. In such cases the results are misleading and even harmful for the great public. To avoid such misadventures I feel necessary to recall some basic, paradigmatic (I would say) principles of reconstructing Roman buildings.

**1. Lightening.** The discovery of glass windows was revolutionary for Roman architecture. The most striking element in domestic and public Augustan architecture

<sup>1</sup> E.g. CIL VIII 21825 = IAM, lat. 377, from Volubilis.

<sup>2</sup> For this category see Eingartner 2005, with earlier references.

<sup>3</sup> Agricola, I, 21: “*paulatimque discessum ad delenimenta vitiorum, porticus et balinea et conviviorum elegantia*” (= “step by step they were led to things which dispose to vice, the portico, the bath, the elegant banquet”).

<sup>4</sup> On really unfriendly weather they would move into a “*cryptoporticus*”, a closed portico. For the use of such spaces see Luschin 2002, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Diaconescu 2004 (2011), Vol. I, Cap. 7.1; Schäfer 2007, p. 55–64; 110–111; 156–159; 175–190 and 342–344.

<sup>6</sup> For the reconstruction of the porticoes of the Trajanic forum see Diaconescu, Bota 2009, p. 140–149 (ArM 15–55) and Pl. 53–58.

still visible in Pompeii and Herculaneum is the scarce use of windows (in most cases provided with timber shutters). Thermal facilities are sadly dark (despite Seneca's claim that bath builders excessively tend to use large glass openings), basilicas and other assembly buildings were lightened mainly through the doors, otherwise being provided with small windows, placed in the upper part of unusually high walls (see the *curia senatus* in Rome). Private dinning rooms in the villas around Naples bay have large openings towards the seashore (provided with timber doors and heavy curtains), but almost no windows at all. Later buildings, such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century "basilica" from Bostra, the later bath of Diocletian in Rome, the basilica of Maxentius near the Republican forum, or the Constantinian bath and basilica in Trier, have enormous glass windows, which make them completely different from earlier buildings<sup>7</sup>. Between these two times limits, the use of glass windows produced progressive changing both in the aspect of the facades and in the organization of inner spaces. The provinces were more conservative then the imperial court and assembly buildings from Gaul to Syria might vex the modern viewer by the lack of a proper lighting. It should be enough evoking here the first century temple of Diana at Nemausus, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century huge shrine of the Egyptian gods from Pergamon (see below notes 32, 34 and Pl. VII-VIII).

**2. Proportions.** Roman buildings, particularly temples, were erected according to precise measurements. Even if the prescriptions of Vitruvius were not followed in detail, modules, proportions, and other numeric relations were carefully observed<sup>8</sup>. It follows that when are in the case of a provincial monument, such as the Trajanic forum of Sarmizegetusa, the proportions are detectable in the ground plan, a strong sign that they were followed in the case of the elevation plan too<sup>9</sup>. When there are enough column fragments, and other elements, such as voussoirs from arches, architraves, or pediments and s. o., the reconstruction becomes more probable. By consequence, I would like to make a clear distinction between reconstructions based on close analogies and sufficient architectural elements of the monument itself and pure artist's impressions.

**3. Building materials.** All builders are inventive enough to use as much as possible local materials. The Greek classical techniques, based on regulate cut blocks held together with clamps, the so called "*opus quadratum*", was seldom used in the provinces<sup>10</sup>. *Opus incertum* was wide spread, but brick walls, mixtures of brick and stone, mud brick, clay and timber were considerably more often used then some archaeologists are ready to accept. Most of the buildings in this paper were built in such vernacular techniques.

<sup>7</sup> Ward-Perkins 1994, p. 346, and Fig. 225; p. 418-428, Fig. 282-283 and 289-290; p. 442-449, and Fig. 297-299.

<sup>8</sup> Wilson Jones 2000, *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> See the discussion at Diaconescu, Bota 2009, p. 21-28.

<sup>10</sup> In the case of Dacia, it is attested at the monumental entrance to the Trajanic forum and at the basilica of the same monument (Diaconescu, Bota 2009, p. 29-44, Pl. 1-11; p. 124, Pl. 47 and p. 56-61, 62-76, ArC 35-94, Pl. 12-32). The same technique was used at the gate of the 13<sup>th</sup> legion Gemina from Apulum where a tower still stands several meters above the ground. Professor N. Gudea is preparing now a detailed study of it.

4. **Analogies.** Although the assembly halls in this paper are free standing buildings, the best analogy is, in my opinion, the seat of *collegium fabrum* (association of craftsmen) from the north-east corner of the Trajanic forum at Sarmizegetusa<sup>11</sup> (Pl. III a). In this case, the archaeological information can be combined with the epigraphic one. A first inscription<sup>12</sup>, erected by two patrons of the guild (father and son), mentions the painting of the back wall of a *porticus*, the building of a *properticus* (a veranda in front of the portico) with its gable (*frontalis*), a kitchen (*culina*) and a pair of couches (*accubitus*). All these elements can be identified in the north-east corner of the forum, where a rectangular hall (15.10 × 9.60 m) with an apse (R = 4.80 cm), catches the eye (Pl. III b). On the floor of the first phase of the hall, the prints of the benches were still visible. They left a central space, 2.20 m large, leading to the flight of stairs of the apse, whose floor was raised. Against its back wall, stood a rectangular foundation for a statue base. The presence of the kitchen helps identifying this place as the banquet hall of the *fabri*. In this case, the apse might have been used by the foremost members to dine on a semicircular couch (*sigma*). Another inscription<sup>13</sup> mentions the rebuilding of the western half of the portico by a patron of the 15<sup>th</sup> *decuria* of *fabri*. The most interesting elements are the two marble plates commemorating the building of the sacred chapel of the craftsmen association<sup>14</sup>. The text is almost identical, the only notable difference is that one mentions “*aedes fabrum*”, whilst the other uses only the term “*aedes*”. Probably the first text was placed outside the complex, and the other inside the seat of the craftsmen, above the entrance in the *aedes* itself, where it was no need to specify what chapel was that. For instance, the second plate could have been placed above the 5.60 m large entrance to the apse, which would serve in this case as a chapel. The statue of the back wall would represent in this case the Genius of the *collegium*. Some fragments of votive altars or statue bases were found in the north east corner of the forum, but their text is too fragmentary to be relevant. The inscriptions dedicated to the Genius of the association<sup>15</sup> or the Genii of different sections of it (*decuriae*)<sup>16</sup> are old finds and their place of origin is unknown. In fact the plate with the complete phrase “*aedes fabrum*” was found in a modern hole at the entrance in the large room (see Pl. III, a), behind the section of portico rebuilt later and mentioned already. So, this large room, provided with a cellar, could be the chapel. For such a solution pleads the case of the seat of Augustales from Misenum, where the sacred chapel (*aedes*) and the banquet hall (*triclinium*) are two separated rooms.

<sup>11</sup> The archaeological report can be found at Étienne, Piso, Diaconescu 2004, p. 110-115 and Étienne, Piso, Diaconescu 2006, p. 102-117. For the inscriptions see Piso 2006, no. 11, 24, 31, 33, 36, 44 and for the sculptural decoration, Al. Diaconescu, *La sculpture* in Diaconescu, Bota 2009, p. 262-264, Sc. 46-49. A detailed presentation of the seat of the craftsmen from Sarmizegetusa was made by Diaconescu 2004 (2011), vol. I, cap. 7.2.2.

<sup>12</sup> CIL III 7960 = IDR III/2, 13 = Piso 2006, no. 36.

<sup>13</sup> IDR III/2, 10 = Piso 2006, no. 44.

<sup>14</sup> IDR III/2, 6 = Piso 2006, nos. 10-11.

<sup>15</sup> CIL III 1424 = IDR III/2, 214 = Piso 2006, no. 23.

<sup>16</sup> CIL III 7905 = IDR III/2, 215 = Piso 2006, no. 24 and at least IDR III/2, 106.

The seat of Augustales from Misenum<sup>17</sup> (Pl. IV) was excavated between 1968 and 1972 under difficult conditions (being partly submersed) and it was published only 20 years later, after the death of the excavator, so that several data are not always as accurate as we would wish. The complex was called in an inscription on a statue base of Trajan: “*templum Augusti qui est Augustalium*” (the temple of Augustus which is also the temple of the Augustales)<sup>18</sup>. It consisted of a yard surrounded by porticoes (which was incompletely investigated) and three large rooms partly built up and partly excavated in the cliff of cape *Misenum*. Probably these rooms were called in the same inscription (r. 24) “*aedes sacrae*” (sacred chapels). The central one, which must have been used for religious services, was preceded by a porch (*pronaos*) with Corinthian columns and an elaborately decorated gable<sup>19</sup>. The shrine ended in an apse with a bench. A statue base dedicated to the Genius of the association of *Augustales* was walled in the middle of the apse. The room to our right, also with an apse, was the banquet chamber of the association. Its floor was decorated with a mosaic which was repaired by a privileged member (*immunis*) of the guild of *Augustales*. The inscription specifies that the space was a “*triclinium*”<sup>20</sup>. The function of the third room is not known (here the famous equestrian bronze statue of Vespasian was found; it was supposed to have fallen from the near by theatre).

With these examples in mind we may proceed at the study of some assembly halls with cultic functions from Roman Dacia.

**1. CONVENTIONAL NAME: TEMPLE OF BEL** or more precisely “the temple of the paternal god Bel of the Palmyrenian *numerus* from Porolissum”.

**LOCATION, POSITION.** *Porolissum* (Moigrad village, commune of Jac), an important military complex (where several auxiliary troops were camped simultaneously) and a civilian-commercial point, the main gate to “*Barbaricum*” for the province of Dacia Porolissensis. Soon a prosperous *vicus* grew up around the auxiliary fort. The settlement on the plateau south-east to the fort was granted municipal rank under Septimius Severus (Pl. V a). The status of the settlement north of the fort is uncertain (it could have been part of the *municipium*, or remain under military jurisdiction). The temple is placed on the so called “terrace of the sanctuaries”, i.e. the plateau north-west of the auxiliary fort (square N), some 6 m north of the imperial road leading from the custom building towards the *municipium*. Close to the temple there is another quite large building, provided with a 7 columns portico on the side facing the road. In the small piazza between these buildings and the road there were a

<sup>17</sup> De Franciscis 1991, *passim*. The honorific, commemorative and votive statue bases found in this complex were analyzed by Diaconescu 2004 (2011), vol. I, cap. 7.2.1, and I will not insist on this matter here. For the seats of different guilds from Italy see Bollmann 1998, *passim*. For a general overview see Carrillo Diaz Pines 1995, *passim*.

<sup>18</sup> De Franciscis 1991, p. 24–25, no. 5, fig. 13, r. 3–4. Most of the inscriptions dedicated in this shrine start with the formula “*Augusto sacrum*”, which indicates that the complex belonged to the imperial cult.

<sup>19</sup> De Franciscis 1991, p. 41, figs. 52–56. The building inscription mentions: “*pronaum cum columnis et epistylis*”. On several reasons this *propylon* must be dated under Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.

<sup>20</sup> De Franciscis 1991, p. 45, figs. 65–66.

monumental altar and at least two refuse pits acting as "*favissae*" (Pl. V b). The finds from these contexts remained largely unpublished.

**Archaeological research.** The investigations at this complex have a long and complicated story. In 1937, somewhere to the north of the auxiliary fort a plate with inscription was found, mentioning some repairing under Caracalla (approx. in the years 215-217) at the temple of Bel, the paternal god of the Palmyrenian unit from Porolissum (inscription no. 1 from the present catalog). Previously, a dedication to Dea Syria was found in the same area (inscription no. 3). In the following years (1938-1939), archaeological excavations were carried out on the plateau known as "terrace of the sanctuaries", probably north of the imperial road. On this occasion the altar or statue base dedicated to Liber Pater by a police officer (*beneficiarius consularis*) sometimes between AD 170-270 (inscription no. 2), was found. This led to the conviction that the structure identified there represented "the ruins of the temple of Liber Pater"<sup>21</sup>. Other investigations followed in 1943, 1949 and 1958. We are well informed about the last ones, when south of the same road traces of fire from the sacrifices and rests of ritual banquets were found. Yet, no walls or any other structure was identified. By then, north of the Roman road, large ruins were still visible (probably those excavated in 1938-1939). In the same campaign from 1958, east of these ruins a rectangular building was excavated by M. Macrea, M. Rusu and D. Protase. It measured 15.20 × 10.10 m, with perimeter wall 0.70 m thick. The building was divided in three rooms by narrow walls, 0.40 m large. In 1975, N. Gudea and V. Lucăcel, when publishing the stone monuments from the local museum, were already assuming that the temple of Liber Pater was burnt down and then repaired by the Palmyrenian troop, who dedicated it to their own god. With this conviction, the excavations on the "terrace of the sanctuaries" were reopened in 1977-1979. This time, a more detailed archaeological report and a plan of the building were produced by Al. Matei. According to him, the upper layers have been disturbed by earlier excavations, but the Roman ones were still intact (for instance he found tiles from the roof). Excepting for the walls and traces of fire in the southern part of the building, no floor or other feature is mentioned by the excavator. The stamped tiles of *numerus Palmyrenorum* found in this building prove that it was erected by this troop. By consequence, this structure was put in relation with the inscription found in 1937. Thus the sequence of phases was built by the excavator to fit the scenario of an earlier temple of Liber Pater replaced by the one dedicated to Bel. My analysis of the building confirms that the last building was an Oriental temple, so that I have no reticence in attributing it to Bel, but I doubt the replacement of a temple by another. It is more reasonable to believe that the building excavated in 1938-1939 was a different one. The huge refuse pits in the vicinity of the temple (*favissae*), partly excavated in 1977-1979, remained largely unpublished, which gives room to all kind of ingenious hypothesis and endless comments. For the purpose of this work, the only relevant building is the last one, representing the temple of Bel.

<sup>21</sup> Macrea et alii 1961, p. 377 quoting Stein 1942, p. 4.

**LITERATURE:** Stein 1942, p. 4; Macrea et alii 1961, p. 377-378; Ghergariu 1980, p. 77-79; Matei 1980, p. 90-97; Gudea 1989, p. 84-88; Rusu-Pescaru, Alicu 2000, p. 74-77; Gudea 2003, p. 217-225.

# INSCRIPTIONS:

**1. Building inscription.** Gudea, Lucăcel 1975, p. 11-12, no. 7; Gudea 1989, p. 762, no. 10; Piso 1993, p. 179, no. 10. Limestone plate with simple frame. Dimensions: 45 × 60 × 16 cm. The inscription was found in 1937, approximately north of the auxiliary fort.

*Pro salute [I]mp(eratoris) M(arci) Aur[eli(i)] / Antonini Aug(usti) Pii Fel(icis), deo / patrio Belo n(umerus) Pal(mirenorum) sagit(tariorum) tem/plum vi ignis consumptum / pecunia sua restituer(unt) dedi/cant[e C] I[ul(io) Sept(imio)Casti] no / co(n)s(ularis) III Dac[iar(um) et M. Ul]pio Victore / proc(uratore) Aug(usti) provi[nc(iae) Po]lrol(issensis), cura agen/te T. Flavio Saturn[ino (centurione) le] g(inonis) V Mac(edonicae) p(iae) c(constantis).*

The inscription informs us that the temple of the paternal god Bel was restored after a fire by the local unit of Palmyrenians (*numerus Palmyrenorum sagittariorum*), under the supervision of its commanding officer, who was a centurion detached from the 5<sup>th</sup> legion Macedonica, garrisoned in Potaissa. The ceremony of dedication was held for the good health of the reigning emperor, Caracalla, and was presided by the consular governor of the three Dacian provinces, C. Iulius Septimius Castinus (AD 215-217)<sup>22</sup>, assisted by the equestrian governor of Dacia Porolissensis. The official character of the text is obvious. The cult building had the status of a Roman temple, being dedicated according to all religious rules. It was not a “*fanum*” or “*aedes*”, as we would expect in the case of a provincial religious foundation, which was not considered properly “sacred” by Roma laws, but “as if it was sacred”<sup>23</sup>. Legally this change of status was made possible only by *constitutio Antoniniana*, which granted Roman citizenship to all free born inhabitants of the Empire. The official character of the cult of the “national” god Bel at Porolissum is sustained also by inscription no. 4. It is paralleled by the case of the Palmyrenian temple from Dura-Europos, dedicated to Bel as well<sup>24</sup>. The ceremony referred to by the inscription from Porolissum must have been similar to the one depicted by the fresco of the sacrifice of *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* from Dura-Europos, presided by its commander in chief, the tribune Iulius Terentius<sup>25</sup>. He is shown when burning some incense over a *tymiatèrion* in front of his stuff. In the second row the priest (*hiereus*), Themes, son of Mokimos, is identified by

<sup>22</sup> Piso 1993, p. 178-182, no. 39.

<sup>23</sup> Gaius, *Inst.* II 7, states that: “*item quod in provinciis [non] ex auctoritate populi Romani consecratum est, proprie sacrum non est, tamen pro sacro habetur*”, and Varro *apud* Aulus Gellius 14, 7, 7 points to the difference between a consecrated place according to Augural procedures and a cult building which did not benefit from an “*inaguratio*”: “*non omnes aedes sacra templa esse*”.

<sup>24</sup> Dirven 1999, p. 31-98. The cult of Bel became gradually the symbol of Palmyrenian identity, both in the oasis of Palmyra (earlier dominated by tribal cults), and in the communities of merchants and soldiers living in Diaspora. In the Christian era, the cosmic triad of Bel, Yahribol and Aglibol was worshipped at Dura and elsewhere. A good summary on the cult of Bel in Palmyra can be found at Teixidor 1979, p. 1-11.

<sup>25</sup> Kaizer 2006, *passim*.

a Greek graffito. The reason for adding such a note is that Themes was dressed like his fellows and did not wear the usual rich garnets of Palmyrenian priests, which would identify him this way. A standard bearer (*vexillarius*) is also present, thus emphasizing the official character of the scene. As T. Kaizer convincingly demonstrated (see above note 25) the sacrifice was performed in front of the armed statues of the Palmyrene gods, Bel, Yerhabol and Arsu, and not in front of images of Roman emperors. The protective goddess (*Tyché*) of Dura and Palmyra assist to the whole scene.

The inscription from Porolissum is attesting a restoration of the temple following a fire. In my opinion, the disaster must have affected the roof and other timber structures and does not necessary correspond to a rebuilding of the walls and changing of the plan, what would be registered in an archaeological report as a new phase. Thus any attempt to link this inscription with the archaeological sequence of phases could be hazardous if not misleading. That the building and rebuilding of the roof was performed by *numerus Palmyrenorum* is testified by the stamped tiles belonging to the troop, which were found during the excavations.

**2. Altar or statue base** of limestone. Gudea, Lucăcel 1975, p. 14, no. 12; Gudea 1989, p. 767, no. 32. Dimensions: 132 × 74 × 54 cm. Plinth and cornice are decorated with simple moldings. On the pediment, a triangular gable, crowned by *acroteria* and half crescents, is decorated with a vegetal motif.

*Deo Libero / Patri Titus / Flavius / Valentianus / b(ene)ff(iciarius) co(n)s(ularis).*

The piece was dedicated to the vegetation god Liber Pater, by a policeman in the service of the consular governor of the Dacian provinces. The office was inaugurated in AD 170 and lasted till the end of the Roman province. There is no reasonable argument to link this altar or statue base with the first phase of the temple. The discovery in the *favissae* of a *cantharus* decorated with snakes and campestrial scenes depicting Liber Pater with a satyr and Pan, must be linked with the Dionysian cult.

**3. Fragmentary altar** (upper part is missing). Gudea 1989, p. 768, no. 37. Limestone. Dimensions: 64 × 32 × 18 cm. It was found in the same area of the sanctuaries, “north-west of the Roman fort” and entered a private collection in 1935.

*De(ae) Syriae / Aur(elius) Gaianus / de(curio) m(unicipii) P(orolissensis) sace(r)do(s).*

The person, that acted as author of the dedication, was a priest of the Syrian Goddess, and fulfilled also an official duty (*decurio*) in the town of Porolissum.

**4. Altar or statue base.** Limestone. Gudea 1980, p. 89-90, no. 2. Dimensions: 95 × 27 × 25 cm. Found during the excavations from 1979 reused in the defensive wall of the auxiliary fort.

*I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / P(ublius) Ael(ius) M(alachu(s) / flamen / q(uin) q(uennalis) mun(icipii) / S(eptimii) P(orolissensium) et sa/cerdos dei n(umeri) P(almyrenorum) P(orolissensium) / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).*

The dedication to the supreme Roman god was made by a person of Palmyrene extraction who had a brilliant career in the *municipium* of Porolissum: he attained the supreme local office, that of *quinquennalis* and also the most important priesthood that of the imperial cult (*flamen*). At the same time, he was priest (*sacerdos*) of the “god of the unit of Palmyrenians”, which must have been Bel. The inscription is not directly related with the temple of Bel, but it illustrates very well the official character of this cult at Porolissum.

**BUILDING TECHNIQUES.** The walls were built in stones and mortar (so called “*opus incertum*” technique). Those of the first building were 0.60 m thick; those of the second one were larger, measuring 0.80 m, with a foundation 1.30 m large, descending in steps in order to counterbalance the natural slope. The inner walls of this second building were 0.60 m thick. The foundation of those belonging to the porch was 0.80 m thick (no actual wall was preserved). The cracks in the walls of the north side were repaired with bricks, which suggest that the upper part of the walls was made not only in stone, but in brick too. The roof was made of clay tiles.

#### PLAN AND FUNCTION OF ARCHITECTURAL SPACES.

The temple consists mainly of a hall, rectangular in plan, measuring 27.40 × 13.50 m (Pl. VI a). At the east end there is a porch, around 4.75 m deep, preserved only at the level of the foundation, so that no entrance was visible (a 2 m large entrance improperly appears on all plans). The wall was probably a stylobate. Adjacent to the west wall of the porch there are four bases of stone and mortar, which must have supported some pillars or columns. The excavators believe that this porch was a later addition, and the initial facade would have been decorated with the four pillars. The main hall is 20.80 m long. In the inside it has a sort of circumambulator, 1.50 m large. At the west end it encloses an earlier apse. This wall (without a proper foundation) is obviously leaning against the perimeter walls, but is not necessary a later addition, which would have replaced an earlier colonnade, as the first excavators thought. A. Rusu-Pescaru and D. Alicu rightfully pointed out that these walls belong to the initial design, but take them for representing a sort of stylobate for a colonnade. Before that, Al. Matei had already noticed that the corridor is too narrow to be used as portico, so that he suggested that the circumambulatory walls and the perimeter walls could not function simultaneously, the external ones being out of use in the last phase (which is impossible). The division of the inner space, isolating to the west a square chamber (7.75 × 7.75 m including the apse), is taken to be an even later operation, related by some scholars with a supposed Christian church, replacing the pagan temple. It is beyond the aims of this study to discuss such hypotheses, but I would ask of those believing in it first to read the study of C. Popa on the so called Christian basilicas in the province of Dacia<sup>26</sup> before taking any position. From the architectural point of view, the most representative phase, which in this case is the last one, would be the only that matters, the endless debate on the phases of this building being beyond the limits of my study. Although there are doubts about the relation between this structure and the inscriptions found earlier in the area involved, I would gladly take this

<sup>26</sup> Popa 2003, *passim*.

structure to be an oriental temple, namely the one of Bel. Before any further comments I must mention that in the immediate vicinity of this building there is another one, with a weird seven columns portico and a ceremonial road with a sacrificial altar and two refuse pits for sacred deposits (*favissae*) some 10 × 10 m in surface and 4 m deep. Before the complete publishing of the material coming from these contexts, any discussion of the function of the architectural complex remains conjectural.

As an external observer, who can deal now only with the restored foundations on the spot, I would interpret the remains as following: an earlier square building with an apse and a different orientation was replaced by a sort of hall, reusing a part of the apse wall. The new building consists of a porch, or *pronaos*, followed by a main hall, *naos*, and a chapel, *adyton*, with a semicircular niche, the *thalamos*, in the back wall. Its level was slightly raised by a stone and mortar podium. The whole structure is framed by a sort of ambulatory, considered a stylobate of a portico by most of the commentators. Against a portico speaks the narrow space between the two walls, which could have served only as corridor. Thus reconstructions of this building (by N. Gudea and accepted by A. Rusu-Pescaru and D. Alicu) with an open yard and a portico, in the manner of a classical temple, do not take into consideration the real dimensions and proportions of the spaces involved.

#### ANALOGIES AND OTHER COMMENTS

The cult building from Porolissum has good analogies in Ancient Levant, namely in Syria and Palestine. Starting with the Late Bronze Age and then during the Iron Age, a specific kind of cult building, similar to the famous Temple of Solomon (described in the first book of Kings, chapter 6), was the most popular temple type of the region. It had the appearance of a *megaron*, preceded by an antechamber (corresponding to the Greek *pronaos*), or a porch (“*ulam*” in Biblical terms), with two pillars. The main hall (Greek “*naos*”, Hebrew “*hekal*”, called also “Great House” and “Temple”) was followed by the sacred shrine (“Holy of Holies”, or “Inner House”, “*debir*”), which was provided with a niche or a more elaborated aedicule for the cult objects (which could range from statues in the Greek and Roman manner, to a simple a stone, the “*betyl*” of ancient Arabs, venerated in Palmyra, for instance). The sacred chapel corresponds to the “*adyton*” of Greek temples, or “*thalamus*”, the most secrete room, mentioned by Lucian<sup>27</sup>. The more elaborated temples of the Greek and Roman period had a sort of tabernacle, or canopy, also called “*adyton*”, a small temple inside

<sup>27</sup> Lucian, III, *On the Syrian Goddess*, 31. Following passages worth reproducing here: (cap. 31) “The great temple is open to all; the sacred shrine to the priests alone and not to all even of these, but only to those who are deemed nearest to the gods and who have the charge of the entire administration of the sacred rites. In this shrine are placed the statues, one of which is Hera, the other Zeus, though they call him by another name. Both of these are golden, both are sitting; Hera is supported by lions, Zeus is sitting on bulls”. The description fits both the Hittite gods Haddad and Astarte, and to the Roman ones, Jupiter Dolichenus and Cybele. Lucian (cap. 33) follows: “Between the two there stands another image of gold, no part of it resembling the others. This possesses no special form of its own, but recalls the characteristics of other gods. The Assyrians themselves speak of it as a symbol, but they have assigned to it no definite name. They have nothing to tell us about its origin, nor its form: some refer it to Dionysus; others to Deukalion; others to Semiramis; for its summit is crowned by a golden pigeon, and this is why they allege that it is the effigy of Semiramis. It is taken down to the sea twice in every year to bring up the water of which I have spoken” (reproduced after Strong, Garstang 1913, p. 73-75).

the great temple<sup>28</sup>. The main cult building was occasionally surrounded by a corridor, sort of *ambulatorium*, described in the Bible as a succession of chambers, “*sela’ot*”, with three stores, increasing in width from top to bottom.

The dimensions given in the Bible show concern for mathematical proportions (overall width of the building 20 cubits (9 m), depth of porch 10 (4.50 m), of main hall 40 (18 m), of shrine 20 cubits (9 m)<sup>29</sup>. The entire temple had a length of 27 m and a width of 9 m, i.e. a ratio of 3:1. If we were to add the surrounding corridor the whole building would have reached very similar dimensions with the ones of the temple in Porolissum. The “Inner House” of the Temple of Solomon was actually a cube 20 × 20 × 20 cubits (9 × 9 × 9 m, compare with the square plan, 7.50 × 7.50 m in Porolissum). The main Hall was higher, measuring 30 cubits in height. Each floor of the surrounding corridor was 6 cubits high. The text mentions a rich decoration in cedar-wood and gold, with lavishly decorated monumental doors, and two Cherubim of olive-wood covered in gold and placed in the shrine. Also veils and draperies, painted blue, red (crimson) and purple, are mentioned. Windows were large on the inside but narrow on the outside. The two pillars at the entrance recall the obelisks and flag masts at the entrance of Egyptian temples. Herodotus (II, 44) mentions a pair of similar pillars at the entrance in the temple of Hercules at Tyre. They might have been originally phallic symbols, as Lucian of Samosata implies when describing the temple of Dea Syria (*On the Syrian Goddess*, 28–30). He puts them in connection with the cult of Dionysus and states that twice a year a man would climb the gigantic phallus (around 50 meters high) to spend seven days on the top of it (it seems that the case of Saint Simeon Stylites at Kalaat Seman in North Syria is no hazard). In Lucian’s opinion, the custom derives from the habit of putting wooden manikins on the top of the columns. In the Bible, the two pillars Jachin and Boaz (1 Kings 7:21; 2 Kings 11:14; 23:3) were 18 cubits in height (around 10 m) and 12 wide (6 m)<sup>30</sup> and seem to have fulfilled a similar function (derived from the old Hamito-Semitic “*mazzebah*”). They must have been free standing isolated columns, with rich brass capitals (similar to those of the temple of Bel in Palmyra), which might have been used as lamp and fire altar supports.

The structure that answers at best the Biblical description is the temple at Ain Dara, in north Syria (not far from Aleppo)<sup>31</sup> (Pl. VI b). For our case of interest is the last phase, dating between BC 900–740. The total surface covered by it (including the corridor) is 30 × 20 m, very close to the temples of Solomon, and to Porolissum. The structure was erected on a raised platform, the walls being built in big blocks of stone, some decorated with reliefs. The niche-like portico with two pillars is followed by a closed antechamber (*pronaos*) of 6 × 15.50 m, then by the main hall (*naos*), of 16 × 16 m, which contains a stone platform, 0.76 m high, the Holy of Holies (*adyton*). In the rear wall of the sacred chapel a shallow niche (*thalamos*) was lain out, perhaps to shelter a

<sup>28</sup> Ward-Perkins 1994, p. 322–323, notes 30–31 and fig. 208; Schäfer 2007, p. 88–89, Abb. 42–43. A beautiful example is the richly decorated three rooms’ *adyton* from the temple of Baalshamin in Palmyra.

<sup>29</sup> One cubit measured around 0.50 m. To these measurements the outer corridor, or row of rooms, 5 m wide, must be added, which gives a total surface of 35 × 12 m.

<sup>30</sup> Some sources give a height of round 17 meters, which might represent the total height of the porch plus the pillars.

<sup>31</sup> Monson 2004, *passim*; cf. Stone, Zimansky 1999.

cult statue or a standing stone. The most significant item is the ambulatory, provided with internal buttresses, which gives it the aspect of a succession of rooms. Its walls were decorated with reliefs, proving that the corridors were not used just for storage, but for more complex cultic activities. The width of the corridor measured roughly 6 m (18 feet = 11 cubits of the “*sela’ot*” of the temple in Jerusalem). According to the Bible (1 Kings, 6, 8) the entrance in the side rooms was on the right, at Ain Dara it is situated on both sides of the main entrance, close to the corners of the façade.

For the architecture (and reconstruction) of such cult places the so called “Red Hall” from Pergamum is of great significance, since more than 80% of the original structure is still standing<sup>32</sup> (Pl. VII). The sanctuary, probably dedicated to Egyptian deities, was provided with a huge courtyard (probably a park) of 270 × 100 m, surrounded by a 16.50 m large portico. The complex was built presumably under Hadrian. The main building block consists of three bodies, a central one, the Red Hall itself, flanked by two round towers, equally well preserved. The main structure owns its name to the brick walls (an unusual technique in the Roman East) and has the shape of a basilica. It measures 60 × 26 m, twice as much as Solomon’s temple, and its walls still stand at a height of 19 m (not far from the original one)<sup>33</sup>. The temple was preceded by a monumental *propylon*, with columns of 14.50 m, a small porch *in antis* and a huge door. The main hall could be divided in two parts. The first one covers two thirds of the space. Here each lateral wall is provided with five niches at the first level, and with five corresponding windows at the second one. When the huge door was shut, the ten windows were the only source of light. The second part was merged in obscurity, darkness even. It contained a 1.50 m high platform, of 12 × 10 m. On it, and against the back wall, there was another podium, 1 m high and measuring 4.50 m on both sides. On this huge pedestal, the cult statue (of a sitting god) must have been placed. The podium was flanked by a row of four columns. To each column corresponded a rectangular pillar set against the wall. They were supporting a two stores corridor or balconies which were attainable by a flight of stairs set in the two back corners of the hall. The traces on the side walls do not allow a clear reconstitution of this structure. It could have been dark corridors or balconies for a chorus, frequently attested in religious ceremonies. A cave placed under the podium and the cult statue, provided with access stairs, must have served to similar purposes, all kind of wonders and tricks being reported by ancient authors in connection with oriental cults. In front of the podium, a series of small pools played also some part in the rituals. The whole building, including the roof, was covered in marble plates of various colors and essences. The unusual height of the structure and the elaborate lightning of this hall must have made a strong Impression on the visitors. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the temple was transformed into a three nave Christian church, which altered part of the original set up.

The so called “temple of Diana” from Nîmes<sup>34</sup> (Pl. VIII) is also suggestive for any attempt to reconstruct the Palmyrenian temple from Porolissum. Excavated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after it had been damaged several times, the function of this building

<sup>32</sup> Radt 1999, p. 200-209.

<sup>33</sup> The probable height of the building, including the roof, reached 25-26 m.

<sup>34</sup> Stierlin 2002, p. 58-59.

remains a mystery. No inscription was recorded by the excavators, but a statue of Diana found here gave the name of the building. Some scholars considered it to be an elaborated fountain, others a library. In any case, an influence of the oriental temples can't be denied. It was built in Flavian or in Hadrianic times (judging after its rich decoration). The whole building covers a surface of  $22 \times 19$  m. Its original height cannot be estimated (it had probably two stores), but the vault of the main hall must have been at least 15 m tall. The facade is rather simple. The main opening is an arched door with a rectangular window above it. This was the only source of light in the main hall. In the upper corners there were two small rectangular windows which gave light to the corridors that flanked the main hall. The inside of this central room ( $14.52 \times 9.55$  m) was richly decorated. In the back there were three elaborated *aediculae* with deep niches, similar to the *adyton* from Baal-Shamin's temple in Palmyra. On each side wall there were five niches with triangular and doomed pediments. The most interesting element, probably borrowed from oriental architecture, are the two corridors, accessible from the sides of the building and giving access to a room above the main aedicule and to a second floor, which is not preserved. Despite its "classical" decoration, this building merged in obscurity and provided with mysterious corridors leading to secret rooms is an ideal place for confidential meetings and cryptic rituals, being obviously related to oriental temples.

**THE IDEAL RECONSTRUCTION** of the Porolissum cult building as a basilica type hall, and not as a classical temple gains now more credibility (Pl. IX). The very dimensions of its components plead against a complex with a yard surrounded by porticoes and an *aedes* on the back side of it, such as the "Great temple" and the "Temple of Liber Pater", both from *Colonia Dacica Sarmizegetusa*<sup>35</sup>. The porticoes of these temples are 4.50 m large (compare with only 1.50 m at Porolissum), designed to accommodate all kind of ceremonies, including common meals. The uncovered yard (piazza), similar to a forum, is  $31.20 \times 21.30$  m in the case of "The Great Temple" (compare with the  $9.75 \times 7.75$  m hall in Porolissum).

The walls delimiting the porch of the temple from Porolissum represented a stylobate, with probably six columns of the front side, and two on the right and left sides. The intercolumniation was around 2.70 m (*i.e.* 9 Roman feet), and the columns might have been 3.60 m tall (*i.e.* 12 Roman feet), a ratio of 3:4. In the absence of any reliable find, the aspect of the columns remains conjectural. About the four pillars in the back of the veranda, we have less data. My solution of Corinthian columns supporting sphinx like figures is based on vague analogies and fits no other label than "an artist's impression".

For the main facade of the edifice, I was inspired by similar structures in provinces with the same climate and building materials as in Dacia, such as Germany and Britain. Despite the introduction of glass windows, the lightening openings remained small. For instance, an isolated Roman building with undisturbed collapsed walls near Rottweil<sup>36</sup>, proves that on three sides there was no window or door, and on the facade there were three openings, a larger one in the middle, which served also as

<sup>35</sup> This temple will make the object of another, forthcoming study of mine.

<sup>36</sup> Sommer 2002; Sommer 2007.

doorway, and two smaller windows to its sides (see Pl. X a). It was built in regularly cut stones, which is not the case in Porolissum, where broken rock stones were used, at least for the foundations and the bed-plates of the walls. Since bricks were used at repairing of cracks in the north wall, it is reasonable to imagine a combination of bricks and stone at Porolissum, for which I would recall the impressive Roman facade from Meonstoke, Hunts, reconstructed in the British Museum (Pl. X b)<sup>37</sup>. Several arches are framed in brick and dumped with *opus incertum* masonry, thus reducing the openings from a facade which must have had a Mediterranean model. In the case of Porolissum, the door being rather small (not larger than 2 m), I'm suggesting a larger window above the level of the portico, in a central position. Like in the case of the "temple of Diana" in Nîmes, this could be the only source of light in the main hall. The side windows would thus illuminate the corridors, which must have been accessible from the inside of the main hall, immediately after the entrance (Pl. XI).

For the height of the inner spaces I have no other elements but analogies. The square shape in plan of the Holy of Holies prompts a cubic form, and similar proportions as in Oriental temples should be accepted for the main hall too. The wall painting is purely conjectural. As already mentioned above, the procession depicted here is based on the relation between the building inscription of the temple in Porolissum (inscription no. 1) and the sacrifice scene of Iulius Terentius from Dura-Europos. Since the corridors at Nîmes gave access to an upper room, above the sanctuary, I have designed timber stairs, starting at the sides of the chapel and leading to a platform above it, supported by the walls behind the apse. May be this upper room served for depositing all kinds of ceremonial requisite. A solution with the corridors used as balconies for a chorus raises problems concerning the access, so that I skipped this variant, although it would be very spectacular. At a first glimpse I thought at long benches for banquets, as in other cases of similar assembly halls (see below), but the unusual length and the similarities with other temples from Syria and Palestine made me chose the variant with corridors.

**2. CONVENTIONAL NAME: TEMPLE OF PALMYRENIAN GODS OR SYRIAN TEMPLE**, in fact the Temple of paternal Gods of a Palmyrenian tribe "Bene Agrud".

**LOCATION, POSITION.** *Colonia Dacica Sarmizegetusa* (present days village of Sarmizegetusa, former Grădiște, Hunedoara county), was the only colony of Emperor Trajan in Dacia. The temple was placed *extra muros*, west to the precinct of the Roman town, on top of Delineștilor hill, a north-south oriented pitch, flanked by the creeks Drașcului (to the west) and Bocului (to the east). Both western and eastern slopes are very abrupt and the building, which is orientated east-west, occupies the whole back of the hill. The knoll descends gently towards north, in the direction of the main valley of "Apa Mare" (Zeicani) river and of the Roman imperial road (Pl. XII a). The temple seems to be the only structure from this site. Its remains are not visible any more.

<sup>37</sup> De La Bédoyère 2001, p. 136, fig. 96 and Pl. 27.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS.** Excavated in 1881 by the Hungarian archaeologists G. Téglás and P. Király, from the local county archaeological unit. According to the first one, a decade prior to the excavations, in 1873, a fragmentary altar was found on the same spot, the missing part of the text being filled out by Th. Mommsen himself. I could not firmly identify the inscription, which might be IDR III/2, 345 = CIL IIII 7963, that was found in 1878 “in the point called Draşcovu”. The text mentions a well known local leading family, that of Procilii (certain Flore and Ingenuus, and their freedman Primus). The excavation technique must have been the one in use by then, which explains the lack of detailed information. As usual, the report is a mixture of objective data, personal impressions and subjective interpretation. With the exception of some fugitive remarks of P. Király, the main information comes from the report written by G. Téglás 25 years after the excavation campaign. Some data, including measurements, are inaccurate and even contradictory. By consequence, later scholars (D. Alicu and A. Schäfer), tried to reinterpret the data, even denying part of the original information, which is uneven as working method. Most of the debate concerns the entrance in the temple, and in this respect it must be emphasized that, according to the own words of the excavators, the walls were not cleaned from the topsoil, which explains the lack of any mention of doorsteps and of archaeologically identified entrances.

**LITERATURE:** Király 1889; Téglás 1905, p. 321-330; Daicoviciu, Alicu 1984, p. 70-73; Rusu-Pescaru, Alicu 2000, p. 84-90; Nemeti 2004, passim; Schäfer 2007, p. 85-89, 237-243 and Abb. 37-43.

#### INSCRIPTIONS:

1. **Building inscription:** IDR III/2, 18 = CIL III 7954. Plate made of Bucova marble (local quarry, some 11 km from Sarmizegetusa). Dimensions: 131 × 88 × 18 cm. The epigraphic field is bordered by a simple frame. On both sides there is a triangular gable with two *acroteria*. In the gable a bunch of leafs with a central button is rendered, and the *acroteria* are decorated with a vegetal motif, in form of successive *strygilles*. Preserved in the National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest.

*Dis Patriis / Malagbel et Bebellaha / mon et Benefal et Mana / vat P(ublius) Ael(ius) Theimes II viral(is) / col(oniae) templum fecit solo et / impendio suo pro se suisq(ue) / omnibus, ob pietate(m) ipsorum circa se, iussus ab ipsis, fecit / et culinam subiunxit.*

The text informs us that the temple of the “paternal gods” was entirely built on the expenses of P. Aelius Theimes, a former mayor and judge (*duumviralis*) of the town, for his own benefit and that of his kin. His generosity was a response to the divine grace (*pietas deorum*) he experienced and at the direct demand (*iussu*) of the same gods. He also added a kitchen (*culina*). In the inscription is used the term “*templum*” probably because this foundation was made of Roman soil (it is known that *colonia Dacica* benefited from *ius Italicum*). For various prosopographic reasons, the beneficence of P. Aelius Theimes is to be dated in the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, when he was particularly active<sup>38</sup>. He survived well till under the Severans, since

<sup>38</sup> For a detailed discussion see Diaconescu 2004 (2011), cat. V. 7.

he died at the age of 89, after the premature death of his elder son, who had become centurion in Britain under Septimius Severus. Despite his Palmyrenian origin (the name “*tym*” = “Θαυμης”, is quite frequent in the Syrian oasis) he must have been born Roman citizen and was probably recruited in the German unit from Tibiscum (*cohors I Vindelicorum*) where he reached the rank of a professional officer (*centurio*). It is his father who must have served in the Palmyrenian unit of the same small town of Tibiscum (*numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium*). Theimes must have been discharged in the decade AD 160–170, and then followed a municipal career in Sarmizegetusa, where he eventually reached the highest rank of *quinquennalis* (as we are informed from later inscriptions). All in all the building of the temple must have been financed by Theimes around AD 180 (after the town recovered from the Sarmatian attack in AD 168), if not later.

Unlike the building inscription from Porolissum, which had an official character, the one in Sarmizegetusa is a private one. Instead of the “national” supreme god Bel, we encounter here several gods which deserve a special discussion<sup>39</sup>. The most striking aspect is that Malakbel (the messenger of Bel) is evoked in the first place. L. Dirven has convincingly argued that Malakbel was worshipped as the Sun god by militaries of Palmyrenian origin all over the Empire<sup>40</sup>. At Dura for instance, Malakbel was the main god of the soldiers from *cohors XX Palmyrenorum*<sup>41</sup>. The next gods in the inscription from Sarmizegetusa, Bel, Bel-Hamon, Benefal (Fene-Baal) and Manawat, represent probably two couples, a Phenician Baal-Hammon + Benefal (= Tanit, Fene-Baal, “the Face, or Presence of Baal”, which is the feminine counterpart of the main god) and Bel-Belhamon + Manawat. The last couple was identified with the divine pair worshiped on the top of Jebel Muntar, the hill dominating Palmyra from the west<sup>42</sup>. The origin and nature of these gods is controversial, but the inscription mentioning “*bl blhmn wmnwt*”, points to a local origin for Bel-Hamon as a manifestation of the Babilonian Bel rather than the Phenician Baal, and as a local combination linked to the kin of *bene Agrud*. Theimes must have belonged to this kin and the temple built by him should have represented the meeting place of the small community of Palmyrenian “*bene Agrud*” from Sarmizegetusa. There are too many other epigraphic references to Palmyrenian gods (Malagbel, Iarhibol and so on) not to accept the hypothesis that this was a club limited to a faction of the Syrian minority from the metropolis of Dacia.

**2. Votive inscription:** IDR III/2, 262 = CIL III 7955. Local marble plate without frame, which must have been walled in the central nave, according to the opinion of the authors of the excavation. Broken into seven pieces. Dimensions: 180 × 150 × 20 cm according to G. Téglás, 150 × 48 × 30 cm after IDR. Preserved in the Museum of Deva.

<sup>39</sup> See above all Nemeti 2004, passim (cf. Kaizer 2002, p. 111–115).

<sup>40</sup> Driven 1999, p. 157–189. A well known altar from Rome (CIL VI 710) identifies Malakbel with “*Sol sanctissimus*” (Driven 1999, p. 177–180).

<sup>41</sup> Driven 1999, p. 181–188.

<sup>42</sup> Teixidor 1979, p. 12–17; Kaizer 2004, p. 108–116.

*Deo San[cto] Malagbel[o] / pro salut[e Imp(eratoris) C]aes(aris) M(arci) Aur(elii) / Severi [[Alexandri]] pii fel(icis) Aug(usti) / et Iuliae [[Mameae]] Augus-tae / matri Aug(usti) n(ostri) et castrorum / Primitivos Aug(usti) lib(ertus) tabularius / prov(inciae) Dac(iae) Apulens(is) posuit.*

The plate must have been walled under a niche or in a podium on which must have stood the offering made by the imperial freedman Primitivos in the times of Severus Alexander. Since this was a dedication to Malacbel, the offering must have consisted in a gilded statue or other effigy of this god, similar to those described by Lucian of Samosata in the “*talamos*” of the temple of Dea Syria from Hierapolis<sup>43</sup>. It remains a mystery what kind of relations could have existed between this member of the imperial administration and the segment of the Palmyrenian community from Sarmizegetusa, represented by the Beny Agruds since his name, Primitivos, does not indicate any Oriental origin.

**BUILDING TECHNIQUE.** The perimeter walls of the building had a foundation and a plinth of stone, the wall being most probably of bricks (or a mixed one, combining rows of bricks, *opus latericium*, with stones, *opus incertum*). Brick walls were well attested at Sarmizegetusa in the late Antonine period<sup>44</sup>. The roof was made of tiles. No stamp was found neither on bricks nor on tiles, which confirms the private character of this building. The foundation was 1.40 m large and had an unknown depth. Above it there was a plinth of stones and mortar, 1.20 m wide. According to the ideal elevation drawn by G. Téglás at the east and west wall the edge of the foundation is visible only on the outer face. If the brick wall was also 1.20 m thick, the walls must have been quite high. Inner walls were built in *opus incertum* technique and measured only 0.60 m in width. They were not partition walls, as generally accepted, since in the corners they supported columns, whose bases were found *in situ*. They had a hole in the middle for fixing the column. The very presence of these plinths proves that the walls could not be higher, otherwise they would incorporate the columns, which is absurd. It follows that these walls did not exceed three Roman feet (0.90 m) in height, according to many available analogies of podiums in Roman dining spaces<sup>45</sup>. The excavators do not mention fragments of column; if they were of limestone they would have belonged to the Tuscan order, if they were of marble probably they would have belonged to the pseudo-Corinthian order, which was very popular in Sarmizegetusa. Judging after the limestone plinths, which measured 0.60 × 0.70 m, the columns must not have exceeded 4.50 m in height (if pseudo-Corinthian, and on only 3.20 m

<sup>43</sup> Lucian, *On the Syrian Goddess*, 31-34.

<sup>44</sup> Brick was used at the hall built in the north-west corner of *forum vetus* by the family of Proclii, in the last years of Commodus and the first of Septimius Severus (Étienne, Piso, Diaconescu 2004, p. 115-120; Étienne, Piso, Diaconescu 2006, p. 119-120 and p. 192, under M8 and M7, a detailed description of the walls), and at the north *cryptoporticus* of *forum novum*, built at the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. A segment of a fallen brick wall, about 2 m long, was discovered in my presence in the bath complex belonging to the seat of the financial governor of Dacia Apulensis (the find dates from the mid 1980's but remains unpublished).

<sup>45</sup> For instance, the well known “Podiensaal” from Pergamum, where the walls sustaining the mattresses or pallets were 1 m tall, and the width of the benches measured 2 m (including the support for the tables). See Radt 1999, p. 196-199.

if Tuscan). According to our understanding of the text signed by G. Téglás, the four columns were aligned, designing a rectangle of  $7.60 \times 3.10$  m. On the plan published by the same author the distance between the two column bases in front of the sacred chapel is bigger than the one between the bases of the banquet hall (*pronaos* in the terms of Téglás), but from the text it comes out very clear that at the entrance in the chapel there were two low walls, each 1.25 m long, absolutely similar to those of the podium for banquets, and that the distance between the column bases was of 2.50 m, identical to the one of the banquet room.

The walls were painted, the excavators noting fragments “Pompeii red”. The plaster must have been replaced once, since on the painted surface traces of sketches for a better adherence of the new stratum were visible.

The central nave was paved with mortar, containing “fine grained pebbles and pieces of ground brick”, i.e. *opus signinum* (“terrazzo” in the terms of the excavators). In the banquet room and podiums no clear floor could be identified. The excavators supposed it was made of bricks and tiles, which were broken when the roof and the walls collapsed. I am afraid that the floor of the room and the cover of the podiums were planked, and after it decayed they were covered with debris of the roof and the upper part of the wall.

**PLAN AND FUNCTION OF SPACES.** The plan itself (Pl. XII b) deserves a special discussion because the general dimensions given by P. Király do not match with the most specific ones mentioned by G. Téglás (as for myself I would credit the excavation report, because the site documentation must have been left with the last one). Unfortunately, as mentioned above, even the plans published by G. Téglás do not correspond to the text of the same author. The most obscure part of the text (which is missing from the translations used by D. Alicu and A. Schäfer) concerns the entrance in the sacred chapel. In contradiction to the graphic plan, where the two column bases are placed in immediate extension to the two corners of the walls that retreat by 0.55 m inwards, the text mentions between the corners of the retreating walls and the column bases the presence of a wall not higher than 0.60 m and 1.25 cm long, thus the distance between the columns becoming 2.50 m. More than this, G. Téglás mentions here the discovery of a badly preserved wall, which closed the entrance in the sacred chapel, and was placed against the bases. This mysterious wall, which seems to be the face of a podium, is not rendered on the plan. He also mentions a walled foundation inside the chapel. This base is also missing from the ground plan, but is represented in a rather artistic way on the ideal section across the building from Fig. 3, here Pl. XIII a. These details must be kept in mind for a good reading of the plan and the interpreting of the function of each space.

According to G. Téglás, the building consisted from west to east of: a vestibule, *pronaos*, preceded by a supposed flight of steps, and flanked by two side rooms, where the cult objects were kept. Then followed the temple, *naos*, and the sacred shrine, or *cella*, where the cult statues were sheltered. It is obvious that he had in mind an Oriental temple and he evoked a succession that he knew from the Bible, “*ulan*”, “*hecal*” and “*debir*” (see above). As analogies for this non classical building he quotes the Temple of Magna Mater in Rome and a *Mithraeum* from Dalmatia.

D. Alicu called in question the point of view of the excavators, on the account of the fact that it is hard to believe that the entrance would have been from the west, which is from the opposite direction of the Roman town. He finds that an entrance from the direction of the “Iron Gates of Transylvania” is also unsustainable because of the very abrupt slope of the hill. He supposes an entrance from the east, in the direction of the Roman town, but in fact here the slope is equally improper. Because he did not benefit from an accurate translation concerning the sacred chapel, he ignored the presence of the low cross wall here and of the foundation for the cult statues. By consequence, D. Alicu turns the plan upside down, makes a veranda of the sacred chapel and turns the *pronaos* into a tripartite *cella*. At his turn, A. Schäfer agreed with this ingenious solution, adding as an argument that an entrance from the east corresponds to the description of the Temple of Dea Syria by Lucian of Samosata. By consequence, he reconstructed in the west side an *adyton*, of a typical form for Syrian temples. The solution is the more likely since it benefits from good analogies, such the three room *adyton* from the temple of Baal-Shamin in Palmyra (see above)<sup>46</sup>. Only the reality of the excavated features is different, because the two low walls of the so called “*pronaos*” turn and butt against the side walls, leaving no wall between them, which would be expected if a flight of stairs was there.

My interpreting is different from that of my both colleagues and friends, but does not contradict the excavation report (Pl. XIII a). First of all, the  $5 \times 2.50$  m east room, is obviously the “Holy of Holies”, the *thalamos*, the most secrete room of both the Greek house and the Greek temple. Here Lucian places the statues of the gods, well protected from the eyes of uninitiated persons (even some of the priests). According to the excavators, the plate with inscription of P. Aelius Theimes would have been placed above the entrance in this holy place<sup>47</sup>. Unfortunately we do not know whether this assumption was based of observations made during the excavations, or the plate with inscription was found before the archaeological campaign, and had maybe determined the very decision to excavate there. It is almost certain that the second plate, broken into several pieces, and which mentions a gift for Malagbel, was found during the excavations in the main hall (*naos*). It must have been walled under the niche or in the podium on which the offering stood. In my reconstruction, I have put it into relation with the low wall in front of the *cella*. May be the wall and the plate attached to it were dismantled when the temple was vandalized and spread on the floor. Yet, as a matter of fact, anywhere in such thick walls (0.90, may be 1.20 m), a niche could be placed.

The structure to the west (*pronaos*) is, in my opinion, a banquet chamber. In favor of that I can evoke several arguments:

1. The inscription mentions a “*culina*” which P. Aelius Theimes has added (*subiunxit*) to the temple. This kitchen was unanimously identified with the narrow room adjacent to the south of the main building. The very presence of such a facility

<sup>46</sup> See the very solid argumentation at Schäfer 2007, p. 88-89.

<sup>47</sup> One might suppose there was another similar inscription outside, above the main entrance in the sanctuary. For instance, in the north-east corner of the forum of Sarmizegetusa, such a double inscription concerning *aedes fabrum* was found (see above notes 12-13).

implies that the ceremonies performed there by Theimes and his kin included ritual banquets. For example in Palmyra, on a “*tessera*” (RTP 99) a certain “*symposium of Bel, of the kin beny Agrud*” (‘*gn bl bny ‘grwd*’) is mentioned. On the reverse are depicted the two towers of Bel Hamon and Manawat on Mount Jebel, which were the cult places of Theimes’ kin<sup>48</sup>. Such banquets were very popular all over Palmyra and the temples were usually provided with banquet halls<sup>49</sup>. In the hometown of Theimes, a fragmentary Aramaic inscription from the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD contains the regulations of a religious guild, “*thiasos*”, elaborated by the priests of Belastor (Bel-Ishtar) and Baalshamin<sup>50</sup>. This act provides interesting information on the way such a guild was organized and how it functioned<sup>51</sup>. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> row an average banquet ceremony is mentioned “*sm[ky’]*”, and in the 14<sup>th</sup> row a sacrifice followed by a ritual banquet, “*mšt*” is evoked<sup>52</sup>. In the 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> row the banquet hall is referred to with the term “*drwn*”<sup>53</sup>. The confraternity comprised only male members of the “*benē ‘Ate’aqab*”, although in the more Hellenized Dura-Europos it seems that in the “*thyasoi*” women were also admitted<sup>54</sup>.

2. The two small walls bordering the narrow rooms (only 1.70 m large) did not exceed in height 0.90 m, since on their top were found *in situ* the two plinths for columns. They are typical for the couches on which participants to a festive meal would usually recline. They are frequent in Dionysian clubs and in the sanctuaries of Mithras, but are documented in Palmyrenian temples as well. The most reliable epigraphic information on a banquet coach and hall comes from the temple of Baal-Shamin<sup>55</sup>. In the room immediately north of the temple, on a low bench (“*sur le rebord des dalles qui s’alignent à six mètres à droite de la cella*”<sup>56</sup>), is written an inscription attesting that a certain association has built on its own expenses “this banqueting hall”: *smk’* (transcribed in Greek as “*σομακο*”) *dnh*, which was dedicated to the gods Baal-Shamin and Durahlun<sup>57</sup>. A second example is the banquet hall from the sanctuary of Bel<sup>58</sup>, which consists of a long narrow room with low benches along the side walls, continued by an almost square piece, obviously the kitchen. The dining hall measures 30 m in length and could accommodate around 100 people. The building is believed to have been 10 m high and decorated with 11 columns and arches.

<sup>48</sup> Kaizer 2002, p. 114.

<sup>49</sup> Milik 1972, *passim*; Kaizer 2002, p. 220-229 and Kaizer 2008, *passim*.

<sup>50</sup> Such groups of worshipers, or “confraternities”, were called “*mrzh (marzeah)*”, although the term could be applied to all kind of associations, not only to what the Greeks would call a “*thyasos*” (Kaizer 2002, p. 221-222). Other terms used in Greek inscriptions for such clubs were: “*phratría*”, “*hetaireia*” or “*symposion*” (Teixidor 1981, p. 308-309 and Milik 1972, p. 109-110 and 135-138).

<sup>51</sup> Teixidor 1981, *passim*; Kaizer 2002, p. 168-169.

<sup>52</sup> For the difference between the two terms, see Teixidor 1981, p. 310.

<sup>53</sup> The term probably derives from the Greek “*andron*”, but is also related to the Syrian “*endrûnô*” = “inner chamber”. See Teixidor 1981, p. 311. On other occasions for the banquet halls, called in Aramaic inscriptions “*usmk*”, has been given the Greek equivalent “*συνπρόσιον*” = *symposion* (Kaizer 2002, p. 223).

<sup>54</sup> Milik 1972, p. 122-140.

<sup>55</sup> Kaizer 2002, p. 221-223.

<sup>56</sup> According to Bounni, Al-As’ad 1998, p. 56.

<sup>57</sup> See also Kaizer 2002, p. 81-82.

<sup>58</sup> Bounni, Al-As’ad 1989, p. 47; Kaizer 2002, p. 228.

In the case of Theimes and his fellows Palmyrenians from Sarmizegetusa, such convivial meetings played an important part in maintaining the cohesion of the group. Like in the case of other similar associations, both religious and ethnical, banquets were held once a month (from the laws concerning *collegia tenuiorum*, to which I will come back later, it comes that the Roman state would not allow more frequent meetings). In the case of Theimes' association, the number of members would not have exceeded a lot more than a dozen of members, since after my estimations on the couches could not be properly accommodated more than 16 persons at once. Probably they were all males.

The entrance or entrances to the temple is another disputable matter, because no soils or other typical element were recorded by the excavators. An entrance from the west side is to be supposed since the succession of rooms presented by G. Téglás corresponds to Oriental temples, where the entrance is opposite to the "Holy of Holies". Yet it remains unclear how the connection with the kitchen was made (through this door or using another one, placed on the southern wall). On the other hand, a main entrance placed in the middle of the north wall and leading directly into the main hall can not be rejected. First, it would be similar to the entrance in the temple of Bel in Palmyra, which had two *talamoi*, at both ends, like in many Mesopotamian temples. Second, the north slope is very smooth and leads directly to the imperial road, facilitating the access to the temple.

To summarize, we have here a basilica like building, with a single nave. It has a total length of 18.70 m and a width of 8.50 (almost a ratio of 2:1). The central part consisted of a simple hall (on the inside: 7 × 6.10 m). To the east there was a rectangular exedra, of 5 × 2.50 m, which was used as sacred chapel. To the west there was a banquet chamber (6.10 × 5.80 m) with couches on both sides. The passages from the main hall to the chapel and to the dining room were provided with two low walls and two columns. To the south, a narrow room was added which served as kitchen. According to the archaeological report, its walls were ill preserved, but it seems that its width and length could be established (a fragment of wall might indicate that it was as long as the banquet room).

**IDEAL RECONSTRUCTION** (Pl. XIV, XV). Besides analogies and deductions from the plan, for the reconstruction of the temple in Sarmizegetusa there are some internal elements which could be taken into consideration. In the absence of any fragment of column we must operate with the plinths, 0.70 × 0.60 m. As mentioned above, if we consider limestone Tuscan columns the height could be appreciated at 3.20 m, and if we take marble pseudo-Corinthian columns, very popular in Late Antonine and Severan times, the columns would have reached 4.50 m. The two passages from main hall towards holy chapel and banquet chamber must have been provided with semicircular arches. Since their clear span measures 2.50 m, their height should have measured 1.75 m. Together with the low walls of 0.90 m and the columns, the arches would have reached over 7 m. Above that, we must allow at least 1 m till the level of a virtual ceiling, which gives a total height of 8 m, which corresponds to earlier estimations, based on the width of the walls. As far as I am concerned, I do not think that there was a ceiling, which would imply a supplementary effort and huge

beams, over 9 m long, so that I preferred a simple roof. The windows must have been small and placed high above the sight level, as usually at 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century buildings. The "Holy of Holies" had probably no external source of light, and since the entrance door was normally shut, the room was in plain darkness and needed candles and oil lamps for lightening. The main hall could have been half-dark, receiving light only from the banquet chamber, if we were to take into consideration the Red Hall from Pergamum (see above). It might have had its own windows, because at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century glass was largely used at windows in the Roman provinces. For the dining room I have chosen a window above the door in the western wall and three more windows in the side walls. The painted plaster and the draperies are conjectural and based only on analogies. I have added them for the sake of the atmosphere.

**SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTATION.** Whereas the interpreting of this cult building depends a great deal on the original report of G. Téglás, I decided to reproduce it here entirely. The translation into Romanian was achieved by two of my students, Boda Imola and Sidò Katalin. We discussed every passage to make sure that we achieved the right meaning.

"The 1881 excavations undertook by Hunyadmegyei Történelmi Régészeti Tarsulát achieved the discovery of the plan and internal organization of a temple belonging to a cult unknown till now in (the province of) Dacia. This is the first archaeological approach of a building known only from inscriptions (the sole analogy is an altar from Salona, dedicated to the Syrian Gods<sup>59</sup>). The archaeological investigations were executed by G. Téglás and P. Király at the demand of Graf G. Kuún and Doctor F. F. Sólyom, directors of the above mentioned society.

As a result of these actions, was discovered the temple built by the *duumvir* of the colony, P. Aelius Theimes, for the benefit of his kin and the kitchen for cult purposes added to it. It layed to the west, some half an hour walk from the "*castrum*" (fortified precinct of the town), on a lonely hill top.

Because of several obligations, the publishing of these excavations was postponed, but now, since the author has retired from field research he has more time to analyze the results. The present day's road crosses from east to west Roman Sarmizegetusa, which is covered by a few poor lodges. The "*castrum*" lies south of the modern road and thus the former *via Traiana* passed by the north precinct wall of the "*castrum*", very close to it [... follows a digression on Roman Sarmizegetusa which does not worth reproducing here].

**Temple plan.** The temple was situated on a slope ascending towards south. The orientation of the cult building was east-west, the entrance being placed on the west side, towards (*the mountain pass known as*) the Iron Gates of Transylvania. Most probably the temple was burnt down and the walls were smashed to the ground by the West Goths, who then reached to the statues and all kinds of metal items which were robbed. The surface covered by the roof was 8.50 m large and 20.30 m long. It was a simple structure. Little has survived from the walls themselves, because of recent destructive agricultural activity. All the debris was concentrated inside the

<sup>59</sup> *Dii Syrii*, CIL III 1961.

walled precinct. In order to preserve the walls, the excavation was performed on sides, exposing them (*and leaving the topsoil over the walls*). Thus progressively the complete plan of the building emerged. On the west side of the temple there was a *pronaos* 2.50 m wide and 5.10 m long. To the right and to the left of the *pronaos* there were two rooms, each 1.70 m wide. They were separated from the *pronaos* by a wall, only 0.60 m large, which indicates that it was sustaining a lighter structure than the precinct walls, which had a foundation 1.35 m large, and the plinth with the rest of the wall was 1.20 m large. In the two corners of the *pronaos* there are two blocs of sandstone, discovered *in situ*. They measure 0.60 × 0.70 m, and have a rectangular hole in the centre, for fixing the two columns that flanked the entrance to the main nave of the temple (*naos*). The central nave was 7 m long and 6.10 m large, being limited by walls 1.20 m thick. Further east we find in the left and right corner two walls which retire themselves towards the centre for 1.25 m, a situation similar to the one found in the *pronaos*. There were also discovered two blocks of sandstone (0.60 × 0.70 m). The distance between them was 2.50 m. Throw this space one would enter in the main sanctuary. The north outer wall retreats towards south for 0.55 m and continues eastwards with the same thickness of 1.20 m. At the entrance of the sanctuary we identified with some difficulty a badly preserved 0.60 m high wall, running across to the left and right of the columns. The sanctuary was 2.50 m large and 5 m long and had the shape of a rectangle positioned across the main axis of the temple. The plate with inscription of P. Aelius Theimes must have stood behind this wall, and the second one, of Primitivos, *Augusti libertus*, was probably placed in the main nave. Under the main inscription must have been built a carved pedestal (visible in fig. 3, here Pl. XIII a.). The wall was built in rolling stones from Zeicani creek. Most of the buildings in Sarmizegetusa were built like that [...]. The walls of the temple were covered on the inside with plaster colored in Pompeii red (fragments of plaster with incisions on it were found). Inside the temple precinct a lot of fragments of brick were found, which suggests that the walls were built in brick and the roof was made of tiles. The interior of this structure recalls a Roman temple; an analogy for it might be the temple of Magna Mater on the Palatine. Since the outer walls of the temple were 1.20 m thick the total height of the building can be estimated at around 8–10 m. The heavy tiled roof necessitated such thick walls. In the central nave we found lot of fragments of flat and half piped tiles (*tegulae* and *imbrices*).

The west entrance, from the hill slope, was probably provided with some steps. The two side walls at the entrance in the *pronaos* could have held an opened portico, the weight of the columns being easily supported by the foundation.

In the *pronaos* and in the two side rooms the floor must have been of bricks which were broken when the roof collapsed. The floor of the main nave was made of “terrazzo” (*opus signinum*) which was found intact. It was so compact that it remained intact when the walls of the building felt down. The pavement was made of small stones and tiny fragments of brick held together with mortar.

The kitchen (*culina*) was not so solidly built as the temple. The cult kitchen was placed to the right of the entrance, to the north. The foundation of the wall could be traced on a length of 2.50 m, along the inner side. But the side walls (that closed the

room) were not found (being recently robbed). (Follows a comparison with a *mithraeum* in Dalmatia). In both *pornai* (from Sarmizegetusa and Dalmatia) ashes, animal bones and some fragments of red vessels were found. In the kitchen too were found ashes and animal bones. Judging after the jaws they belonged to sheep, goat, cattle and pig (*ovis aries*, *capra*, *bos taurus*, *sus scropha*). These must be the remains of sacrifices.

Besides wall and roof fragments in the central nave were found pottery, corroded glass fragments and a piece of lead which must have served for holding together the columns. In addition iron nails were found. The tiles had no stamps at all. The flat tiles (*tegulae*) measured 30 × 25 × 6 cm, and the half piped ones (*imbrices*) had 35 × 15 × 4 cm.

The most important finds are the two inscriptions. The one which mentions the building of the temple was made of marble which can be found between Zeicani and Bucova. The dimensions of the plate are: length 1.32 m, height 0.88 m, depth 0.15 m.

The second inscription plate was also of marble, but it was discovered broken into small pieces (2 fragments were larger and other 5, smaller). Dimensions: length 1.82 m, height 1.5 m, depth 0.2 m. The names of Severus Alexander and of Iulia Domna have been partly erased. Date: AD 222-235.

### 3. CONVENTIONAL NAME: TEMPLE OF MOORISH GODS (*DII MAURII*) in fact the Temple of paternal Gods of the Moors from Micia.

**LOCATION, POSITION:** Mintia village, commune of Vețel, Hunedoara county = *pagus Miciensis*, a small town, comprising a district of *colonia Dacica Sarmizegetusa* and a "kastellvicus" which was born in the vicinity of the auxiliary fort. Similar to Porolissum, in Micia were stationed several auxiliary units, among which a *numerus Maurorum*. The temple was placed approx. 1 km south-west from the fort, not far from the Roman road along the Mureș River.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS.** In 1937, three years after the discovery of the building inscription (inscription no. 1) and of the altar (inscription no. 2), C. Daicoviciu, O. Floca and M. Moga excavated most of the surface occupied by the cult building (excepting the eastern side, where they could not follow the walls because they were robbed and the excavators probably were not able to identify robbing trenches). Because of the archaeological technique of the time, stratigraphic information is missing, and the data about archaeological contexts and small finds are scarce. Probably as usual the top soil was not removed from the walls, so that soils and passages were not identified. The ground must have been already disturbed by agricultural labors, whereas the inscriptions coming from that temple were uncovered three years before.

**LITERATURE:** Daicoviciu 1941 = Daicoviciu 1969; Benea 1987, p. 131-152; Rusu-Pescaru, Alicu 2000, p. 92-94 = Alicu 2004, p. 63-68; Nemeti 2004a, p. 36-45.

#### INSCRIPTIONS:

1. Plate with building inscription. AE 1944, 74 = IDR III/3, 47. The bloc is entirely preserved, was carved in Bucova marble. Dimensions: 100 × 59 × 17 cm. Discovered

in 1934 in the point called “Comoara” (“the treasure”), around 1 km south-west of the auxiliary fort. Later archaeological excavations were carried out on that spot. Preserved in Deva Museum. Left and right of the epigraphic field there is a *tabula ansata* with the handles in shape of a *pelta* ending in vulture heads. In the four corners there is a vegetal decoration in shape of a bunch of leaves with a button in the middle.

*Pro salute d(ominorum) n(ostrorum) in/victissimor(um) Imp(eratorum) Severi / et Antonini et [[Getae Caesaris Aug]]/g(ustorum) et Iuliae et [[Plautillae Aug(ustarum) et / Plautiani c(larissimi) v(iri) praef(ecti) pr(aetorio) part(is) / Aug(ustae)]] sub Pomponio / Liberale co(n)s(ulari) Mauri Mic(ienses) / et Iul(ius) Euangelianus praef(ectus) / templum deorum patrio/rum vetustate conlapsum / sua p(ecunia) et opera restituer(unt) / Cilone II (secundum) et Libone co(n)s(ulibus).*

The text informs us that the temple of the paternal gods was restored by the local irregular unit of Moors, under their commander (*praefectus*), Iulius Euangelianus. The dedication was made for the good health of the imperial family in AD 204. The text resembles a lot the one from Porolissum but the consular governor, Pomponius Liberalis, did not preside the inauguration ceremony, he only supervised it. Probably because of the official patronage, the building is called “*templum*”, although the Moors did not possess Roman citizenship. The phrase “*vetustate conlapsum*” does not necessary signify that the walls were ruined and had to be replaced, the original plan being altered. It could refer to plaster restoration and other secondary repairing. The Moors not only gathered money for this action, but they directly contributed to the works (probably by lending their slaves to fulfill the tasks).

The temple was built by the Moors from Micia for what they call “*Dii Patrii*”. In his comment, S. Nemeti has rightfully pointed out that that these “paternal gods” are not to be mistaken for “*Dii Mauri*”, which appear as such on inscriptions only in north-western Africa (often in opposition with the “*Dii Patrii*” of the author of the dedication, who was there a foreigner, and equally worshipped both the local gods and those of his own homeland)<sup>60</sup>. Who were the specific gods of the Micia Moors is difficult to say. An ingenious solution was offered by S. Nemeti, who made the connection between the three chambers of the temple from Micia, which suggest a triad, and the altars raised by a certain Rufus, who was a commander of the Moorish irregular unit. This is the reason for including here the following altars, although only one was found in the temple, but we have good reasons to believe that the rest of the altars came from the same place.

**2. Altar with votive inscription.** AE 1944, 75 = IDR III/3, 118. Sandstone. No moldings. Entirely preserved. Dimensions: 53 × 31 × 28 cm. Discovered on the spot where the temple of the paternal gods of the Moors was later excavated. Deva Museum.

*Silvano / Rufus / pr[ae]f(ectus) / v(otum) s(olvit) m(erito) l(ibens).*

<sup>60</sup> The same by Shaw 2007, p. 44-45.

The author of the dedication was a commander in chief (*praefectus*) of the irregular unit (*numerus*) of the Moors from Micia. Silvanus, the god of woods and wild vegetation, in charge also with the clearing of future agricultural grounds, was popular in North Africa and corresponded to a god of the natives. For instance he was one of the members of the local triad of *colonia Marciana Traiana Thamugadi* (Numidia), together with Liber Pater and Saturn, the supreme Punic god<sup>61</sup>. Obviously he was one of the paternal gods of the Moors from Micia.

**3. Altar with votive inscription.** IDR III/3, 104. Fragmentary. Made of andesite, so it differs from the other altars. Dimensions: 62 × 25 × 20 cm. In 1900 it was walled in the “Palatul Prefecturii” from Deva. Deva Museum.

*Libero / Patri / Rufus / [pr]a[ef(ectus)] / [v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens)] m(erito).*

This altar, dedicated by the same Rufus, most probably commander of the Moorish unit, seems to be different from the others, because it is made of another type of stone. Still this altar could have belonged to the same triad of the paternal gods of the Moors. Liber Pater, the god of cultivated vegetation and of vineyards, was another autochthonous North-African deity, worshipped in several triads of the region. For instance, besides Thamugadi, Liber Pater was one of the “paternal gods” of Septimius Severus, together with Hercules<sup>62</sup>.

**4. Altar with votive inscription.** IDR III/3, 116. Sandstone. Very simple, without decoration. Similar to inscription no. 2. Dimensions: 57 × 30 × 20 cm. Found in the village of Vulcez, commune Veșel. It came probably from the same temple of the Moorish gods.

*Pluton(i) / Rufus / praef(ectus) / v(otum) s(olvit) m(erito) l(ibens).*

Pluto (*Dis Pater*), lord of the underworld, was a deity related to the fertility of the soil and the great cycles of nature and life. Thus he is well integrated in a triad together with other two male gods Silvanus and Liber Pater. Being a brother of Zeus, he must have been the main deity of this triad, which S. Nemeti rightfully considered to represent the “*Dii Patrii*” of the Moors from Micia. In North Africa, where the Punic and Berber traditions were very strong, the choice of a Roman equivalent for a local god is perfectly explainable.

**BUILDING TECHNIQUES.** The walls seem to have been built in round stone from the river bed and mortar, in the *opus incertum* technique. The perimeter walls, comprising the main hall and the three back rooms had an average width of 0.65–0.70 m. Most probably these were merely foundations and footings, the proper walls

<sup>61</sup> They were worshipped in the temple of the Genius of the colony together with the Capitoline triad. See Diaconescu 2004 (2011), vol. I, cap. 7.1. Cf. Eingartner 1992, p. 233–236.

<sup>62</sup> I have already drawn attention on the similarities between the gods worshipped in the Great Temple of Sarmizegetusa and the “*Dii Patrii*” of the Severan family (Diaconescu 2004 (2011), cap. 7.1; for the temple cf. Rusu-Pescaru, Alicu 2000, p. 114–119; Schäfer 2007, p. 110–111; 156–159; 342–344). See also a relief from Moesia Superior, which confirms the worshipping of such a triad in the Danube provinces: Pilipović 2008 (2009), *passim*.

might have been made of well burnt bricks (*opus latericium*) or in mud-bricks and timber, a technique more wide-spread in the province of Dacia than most Romanian archaeologists are ready to admit. Whereas the excavators did not report a great quantity of bricks and tiles, the solution of timber and clay walls is the most probable. There are no data on plaster and wall painting.

The inner walls (so called “partition walls of the naves”) were quite narrow (0.35 m) and probably did not exceed in height 0.60-0.70 m, 0.90 m the most. The three back rooms might have been floored with timber beams and planks, which left the traces of burnt wood of charcoal reported by the excavators. It is possible that the central space of the main hall was paved with ceramic *tesserae* shaped like an “8”, which were found during the excavations, but no clear trace was found of any mortar floor on which the *tesserae* would have been fixed. The roof was made of tiles, which did not bear any stamp.

**PLAN AND FUNCTION OF SPACES.** The building is rectangular in plan, having a total width of 11.90 m and a length over 18 m (Pl. XVI a). At the west end of the main hall there are three rooms (*cubicula*). They have a length of 3.50 m each and a width that differs as follows: the central one was wider, measuring 3.40 m, while the ones to the right and left measured only 3-2.90 m. Probably the entrance in the central room was also larger than the other ones. It is obvious that the central room was the most important one, may be the shrine itself, or the chamber of the main deity (in this case Pluto), flanked by the cult rooms of the other two gods of the triad (in this case Silvanus and Liber Pater). D. Alicu made already the remark that such a display is attested in the case of Liber Pater temple at Sarmizegetusa, where the main room was the *aedes* of Liber Pater and the side rooms (*cubicula*) were used as shrines for other gods (Silvanus to the west, and Diana to the east, I would add)<sup>63</sup>. At Micia there is another room, adjoined to the south and slightly bigger than the others, measuring 4.40 × 5.50 m. The excavators consider it a later addition, but in my opinion it is an annex, which could have been part of the original plan, like in the case of the temple built by Theimes in Sarmizegetusa. The similarity pleads for the same function, as kitchen<sup>64</sup>. The idea of two phases, shared by most of the students of this monument, was prompted by the inscription who speaks about a repairing of the temple which was ruined in time “*vetustate conlapsum (templum)... restituerunt*”. This phrase is often used in Roman epigraphy but must not be taken word to word, because it was also applied to small reparations, such as the repainting of wall plaster, or restoration of windows and roof tiles, which do not imply great changing that, would be detectable in an archaeological excavation. This would explain why in some cases the phrase “*vetustate dilapsum*” (or similar) is used for the same building at a few years distance, to early for a real ruin and collapse of the walls.

The narrow “partition walls”, that separate the hall in “three naves” had 14.20 m in length and were entirely preserved. At the east end they turned towards

<sup>63</sup> For a more accurate description of this temple see Schäfer 2007, p. 55-64; p. 175-190, and Diaconescu 2004 (2011), vol. I, cap. 7.1.

<sup>64</sup> D. Alicu, although pointing to the same analogy, choosed the variant of the later addition.

north and south, abutting against the perimeter walls. D. Alicu rightfully remarked that such "walls" were simple foundations, or socles for a colonnade. Whereas they turned touching at the perimeter walls they could not belong to a portico, but must have been low walls supporting couches (*accubitus*) for convivial meetings. Another argument for a banqueting podium is the width of the supposed naves, 2.20 m, which is not enough for a portico. The fact that the walls are not very elaborated does not mean they are late, the two podiums being a functional part of the initial plan of the building (Pl. XVI a).

The ultimate function of this building is illustrated by the building inscription and the altars which came probably from the same spot. Actually the cult building facilitated the meetings of the Moors from Micia for ritual and religious meals which would strengthen the esprit de corps of the troop and preserve its cultural and ethnic identity. Besides gathering contributions for funerary services and religious ceremonies or solemn sacrifices on special occasions, the main activity of the members of the confraternity of the Moors would be to meet at monthly dinners. According to my estimation, on the couches could be accommodated around 40 persons (Pl. XVI b-c). It is not the case to enter the debate on the number of soldiers forming the *numerus Maurorum* from Micia, but if the troop led by a *praefectus* might have had around 200 members, it seems that only the commanding officers (*decuriones*), and the non-commissioned ones (*duplicarii*, *sequepicarii* and *immunes*) had access at the ritual banquets held in the temple of paternal gods.

**IDEAL RECONSTRUCTION** (Pl. XVII). This building must have resembled a great deal the temple of the Palmyrenians from Sarmizegetusa. It must have been lower whereas its perimeter walls have only 0.65-0.70 m in width (compare to 1.20 m at Sarmizegetusa). Yet, the grater width of the entire building (almost 12 m by comparison with 8.50 m of the one in Sarmizegetusa), suggests a central nave of almost 7 m, flanked by two lower ones, where the 2.20 m couches were placed. We can easy imagine some columns on the couches walls, supporting the central nave, which was more elevated then the lateral ones. In this case, which resembles more the Christian basilicas of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the lightning could be provided not only by windows through the short, east wall, but also by a range of windows through the lateral walls of the central nave. Only the three chapels would have remained in half-darkness. The rest in my reconstruction is conjectural.

**4. CONVENTIONAL NAME: BUILDING TII**, in fact the Temple of the *Genius* of *collegium sardeatum*.

**LOCATION, POSITION:** *Alburnus Maior* (Roşia Montană) was a mining settlement spread over several hills and comprising a number of departments (*vici*), probably each inhabited by a kin of immigrants (most of them miners from Dalmatia and Asia Minor). It contained also some official points, such as police posts (*stationes*). Recent archaeological excavations have identified several hills with cult buildings associated with a specific kin and a corresponding graveyard. Cult building T II belongs to the group from Valea Nanului. On a hill with very abrupt slopes

(called “Curișul Monului”), which dominates the confluence of Nanului and Găuri creeks, four such buildings (TO-TIII) were identified, together with a necropolis (conventionally called TI-II) (Pl. XVIII a). One building (T o) was placed on the very top of the hill, then T I on a small plateau, not far from it, known as the Szekely property, and TII and TIII on a lower plateau (some 125 m away). The cult building T II is situated on Rozalia Drumuș property at the east end of the same plateau with T III.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS.** Despite being rescue-excavations dug under external pressure, they were complete and very well executed. The north-west end of the building with the entrance were cut and partly destroyed on the occasion of a road building (that ultimately led to the identification of the site). The excavators, C. Crăciun and A. Sion, made several evaluation trenches and then opened more boxes, leaving a considerable number of baulks which provided a good control of the stratigraphy. According to the graphic plan and the published photos these balks were not removed, but the aspect of the ground plan of the building is clear enough. Yet some details remain questionable, especially because the “dry walls” are not well preserved and part of them slept on the slopes. Thus the temple which was initially rectangular in plan is now trapezoidal (for instance a short wall is 11.35 m long, while the corresponding one is 12.90 m long) (Pl. XVIII b).

**LITERATURE:** Crăciun, Sion 2010, p. 283-331.

#### INSCRIPTIONS:

**1. Votive altar** of volcanic stone. Ciongradi 2009, p. 77-78, no. 85, Taf. 39, with earlier literature = Crăciun, Sion 2010, p. 291-292, A. Undecorated, very simple form (block); on the top a functional *focus* (diameter = 18 cm). Dimensions: 54.5 × 26 × 27 cm. Discovered between the row of altars and the flight of stairs leading to the *aedes*, approximately on the axis of the building.

*Plautius / Dasantis / Genio / Sardiate(nsium) / d(o)n(um).*

The correct reading of the text belongs to C. Ciongradi, who in stead of *Sardeat(a)e*, which would refer to the tribe or kin as a whole, suggested “*Sardiate(nsium)*”, which would apply to the members of the ethnic community living in Alburnus Maior. Other inscriptions also use the plural.

**2. Votive altar of marble.** Ciongradi 2009, p. 66, no. 58, Taf. 29, with earlier literature = Crăciun, Sion 2010, p. 301-302, B. Undecorated, very simple form (block). Dimensions: 70 × 37 × 26 cm. Discovered in the row of altars fallen in front of the main building (*aedes*). It was the first from the right side (our left).

*[A]el(ius) Qui/[n]tus / Di(i) / [G]enio col / [l]egi(i) Sar[d]/[i]atarum.*

The text alludes to the “*collegium Sardiatarum*”, in this case the ethnic name being inflected according to the first declension.

**3. Votive altar** of sandstone and volcanic tuff. Ciongradi 2009, p. 78, no. 86, Taf. 39 with earlier literature = Crăciun, Sion 2010, p. 292-293. Undecorated, very

simple form. Dimensions: 62 × 29.5 × 21 cm; focus diameter = 19 cm. It is the second from right (our left) in the row of altars.

*Terr(a)e M/atri sa/c(rum) S{f}urio {i/o} Sume/letis / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).*

The dedication was made for Terra Mater by a certain “*Siurioio*”. Supposing the name was falsly written, he myght have been a “*Surio*”. In this case, he would be identical with the person who dedicated in another shrine an altar to Neptunus (Ciongradi 2009, p. 77, no. 84).

4. **Votive altar** of sandstone and volcanic tuff. Ciongradi 2009, p. 49, no. 22, Taf. 16 = Crăciun, Sion 2010, p. 293–294, D. Pediment decorated with incised *pulvini* and triangular gable. Dimensions: 64 × 30 × 19.5 cm; focus: 18 × 11 cm. It is the third in the row of altars.

*I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D/asas Lo/ni col/legi(i) S/ardeate(nsium) / d(ono) d(edit).*

The person who dedicated this altar seems to be the same with one of the widenesses of a fragmentary wax tablet<sup>65</sup>.

5. **Votive altar** of sandstone and volcanic tuff. Ciongradi 2009, p. 49, no. 22, Taf. 16 = Crăciun, Sion 2010, p. 295–296, E. Similar to the precedent, decorated with incised *pulvini* and gable. Dimensions: 70.5 × 32.5 × 28 cm. Focus diameter = 19 cm. It is the fourth in the row of altars.

*Iano Ge/m(ino) Lonijs Tiz/ius Celsi / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).*

The dedication is made to Ianus Geminus, wery popular among the Illyrians from Alburnus Maior, by another person of peregrine extraction.

6–16. **Votive altars** (probably 10), some with fragmentary inscriptions. Crăciun, Sion 2010, p. 297–298, G–R. They occupied the rest of the row of altars in front of the *aedes*. The impressive number of pieces that were destroyed makes useless any attempt to comment on the choice of deities from this sanctuary.

17. **Votive altar**. Ciongradi 2009, p. 79–80, no. 89, Taf. 40. Sandstone and volcanic tuff. Undecorated. Dimensions: 59 × 29 × 22 cm. Found in front of the row of altars, towards the entrance to the temple.

*Apollini / Piruneno / sac(rum) Mac/rianus Surio(nis) / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).*

Another altar dedicated by a peregrine of Illyrian origin, probably a member of the kin of *Sardiatae* / *Sardiatenses*. The byname (attribute) “*Pirunenus*” was linked by

<sup>65</sup> CIL III, TC XX = TabCerD XXI.

C. Crăciun and A. Sion<sup>66</sup> to a Greek term deriving from a verb meaning “to penetrate (with an arrow)” or similar. The etymology is not entirely convincing, but this has little if no relevance for the functional role of the building.

The inscriptions found in the building T II, are all votive altars with functional focus. This building must have been the residence of *collegium Sardiatarum* or *Sardeatensium*. The main deity worshiped here was the Genius of the guild.

**BUILDING TECHNIQUES.** The traces of this building consist of alignments of local stones kept together without mortar and are designated by the excavators as dry walls. In fact they are foundations or, footages (socles), of timber walls, according to a tradition in use even today at Roșia Montană<sup>67</sup>. Because of the heavy rain seasons, timber structures would rotten and perish in a few years if buried in the ground as in dryer regions, so that postholes, so popular among archaeologists, do not exist here. The walls were sustained by bottom beams in which the timber studs were inserted, the whole structure being held together by top plates. The floor was suspended and thus protected from humidity. The whole timber structure is sustained by dry walls, some considerably high if the building is situated on a slope. Drainage trenches are regularly cut to prevent flooding and dampness. The stone foundations of building T II are very large (0.90–1.00 m) and their height (not over 0.90 m) depended on the light slope of the plateau. Water drainages were also found.

**PLAN AND FUNCTION OF SPACES.** The building resembles in plan a classical temple, although the simple drawing can be misleading. In my opinion, the two walls of the supposed portico are not far enough from the side walls of the building to fit a functional colonnade (the space between these walls and the side ones is around 1.80 m, almost identical to the one between the “partition walls” and the perimeter ones of the Palmyrenian temple from Sarmizegetusa). The south-western wall turns left and touches the side wall, after a scheme typical for podiums. The opposite one continues obviously towards the entrance and is detectable even beyond the precinct wall. Here the plan is unclear because of the damages produced by a recent road work. Against a “classical” temple pleads also the absence of a consistent gravel layer in the supposed piazza of the temple. The dimensions (width around 7 m) also plead for a covered hall and against a yard.

The entire building measured 23.60 × 11.30 m, being similar in size with the other meeting halls discussed in this article. C. Crăciun and A. Sion had the sagacious remark that these dimensions transferred into Roman feet would give 78 × 39 (*pedes*), both being a multiple of 13 *pedes*, which proves that the design of this building was an elaborated one. More than that, if we take the inner parts of the building, a pattern of multiples of 7 Roman feet emerges clearly enough to use it for the reconstruction in elevation too (Pl. XIX).

The function of this building can be determined by the help of the inscriptions found here. Three of them mention a “*collegium Sardiatarum*” or “*Sardeatensium*”, two

<sup>66</sup> Crăciun, Sion 2010, p. 297.

<sup>67</sup> For Romanian traditional building techniques see Ionescu 1982; for Roman earth-and-timber buildings in Britain: Perring 2002, p. 87–110. Many usefull remarks on timber buildings can be found at Shirley 2001.

of them being specifically dedicated to the Genius of the above mentioned association. The best parallel is, in my opinion, the “*templum*” of the “*Augustales*” from Misenum. In the centre of the apse of the main hall, which served cultic purposes, stood the statue of the Genius of that *collegium*. In the two side niches were located the naked statues of *Divi Augusti* (Vespasian and Titus). Next to this room there was another chamber, *triclinium*, used for banquets, as we are informed by an inscription on its floor<sup>68</sup>. The association from Alburnus Maior could be classified among the *collegia tenuiorum*, clubs of humble people, similar to the one of Jupiter Cernunos, attested in the same settlement by a wax tablet<sup>69</sup>. The association had apparently a religious character, but in fact its purposes were restricted to mutual help in case of funeral occasions. Initially it had 54 members, but the protocol from AD 167 recorded the dissolution of the guild because of lack of contributors. From what we are informed by comprehensive texts, such as the regulations of “*cultores Dianae et Antinoi*” from Lanuvium (from AD 136)<sup>70</sup> and “*collegium Aesculapii et Hygiae*” from Rome (from AD 153)<sup>71</sup>, the main activity of these associations was to meet (not more than once per month) to feast<sup>72</sup>. The amount of wine (and its quality), distribution of bread, sardines and other items were carefully covered by rules<sup>73</sup>. In our case the association has an obvious ethical character. Whereas the Roman authorities were so reluctant in granting the privilege of association (see Trajan’s negative answer to the letter of Pliny concerning the *collegium fabrum* from Nicomedia, Ep. X, 34), it was probably in the course of colonization of this Illyrian community under Trajan or Hadrian (less probable under Antoninus Pius) that the privilege of gathering in an ethical guild was granted (somehow similar was the case of *Amiseni*, Ep. X, 90, who were treated as allies of the Romans not as subjects, and thus given the privilege of assembling). The main purpose of this club must have been to assist its members at burials and to organize convivial meetings. It follows that this sanctuary, “*aedes*” or “*templum*” whatever it might have been called, was meant to accommodate the monthly dinners of the *Sardeates* (Pl. XX). The connection between such cult buildings and cemeteries is well attested archaeologically at Alburnus Maior<sup>74</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> See above notes 17–20; De Franciscis 1991, p. 37–41, for the *aedes* and p. 65–66 for the *triclinium*.

<sup>69</sup> IDR I/1, 31 = TabCerD I.

<sup>70</sup> CIL XIV 2112.

<sup>71</sup> CIL VI 10234.

<sup>72</sup> The occasions for conviviality were provided by important dates in the life of the association, such as the birthday of its patron gods, its human patrons and benefactors, or popular festivals, such as *floralia* and *rosalia*.

<sup>73</sup> Kloppenborg 1996, *passim*.

<sup>74</sup> So far 7 incineration cemeteries were excavated and a total of 1 430 graves have been unearthed. The graveyards were placed on the slopes of the hills. The most significant are: necropolis on Țarina hill (495 graves), the ones at Tăul Cornei (324 pieces; see Alburnus Maior III, 2008, *passim*), Pârâul Porcului-Tăul Secuilor (310 graves) and Hop-Găuri (255 graves). To these a circular mausoleum at Tău Găuri should be added (Simion, Apostol, Vleja 2004, *passim*). Cult buildings and not less than 40 votive altars were discovered on several hilltops and plateaus, such as Hăbad-Brădoia and Dalea, Tomuş, Szekely and Drumuş, the last situated in the valley of Nanului creek. In addition stone buildings with central heating and bath facilities were identified on Carpeni hill and some traces of similar structures were found also in the area of Tăul Țarcului, which should be related to the Roman authorities. Other isolated or small groups of timber structures, most of them on stone foundation, without a clear function, found at Găuri-Hop and Hăbad, might represent small hamlets belonging to the miners and their families. For all see Alburnus Maior I 2010, *passim*.

**IDEAL RECONSTRUCTION (Pl. XX-XXII).** The initial aspect of this building becomes more vivid, if we take into consideration the analogies pointing to banquet rooms. In addition to that, the building being modulated, as the first publishers rightfully remarked, helps us in guessing the average height of the parts. Thus the main hall, which measures  $3 \times 7$  feet in width, should measure as much in height, plus additional 7 feet for the roof. According to the same principles used at Porolissum and Sarmizegetusa, the sacred chapel, would have had an elevated floor and a lower ceiling, forming a cube of  $2 \times 7$  feet on each side. The foundations of the sacred chapel and of the flight of stairs are well documented archaeologically. The altars were aligned in front of it, which emphasizes the cultic character of this room. At a first sight it could have been a representative podium on which the local leaders, *primores*, would have been accommodated during the banquets. For lack of ideas concerning the decoration of the shrine, I have left the room empty in my attempt of reconstruction. No statues or any other trace of cult images were ever found during the extensive excavations at Alburnus Maior. May be they used gold or silver symbols and abstract images (such as ornamented shields), painted standards and draperies, and also wooden idols dressed with fancy clothes. I used some of these in the decoration of the main hall realizing that a simple timber structure would be too poor, and less suggestive for a cult building. The lightning might have been very simple, only from the side of the entrance, but I have decided for the variant of a central nave, with windows from the sides, the couches corresponding in this case with the side naves<sup>75</sup>. As for the entrance, its reconstruction is conjectural whereas its initial aspect is unclear.

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<sup>75</sup> As already mentioned at the beginning of this paper the "basilica" from Bostra, Syria had windows all along the side walls (see above note 7).

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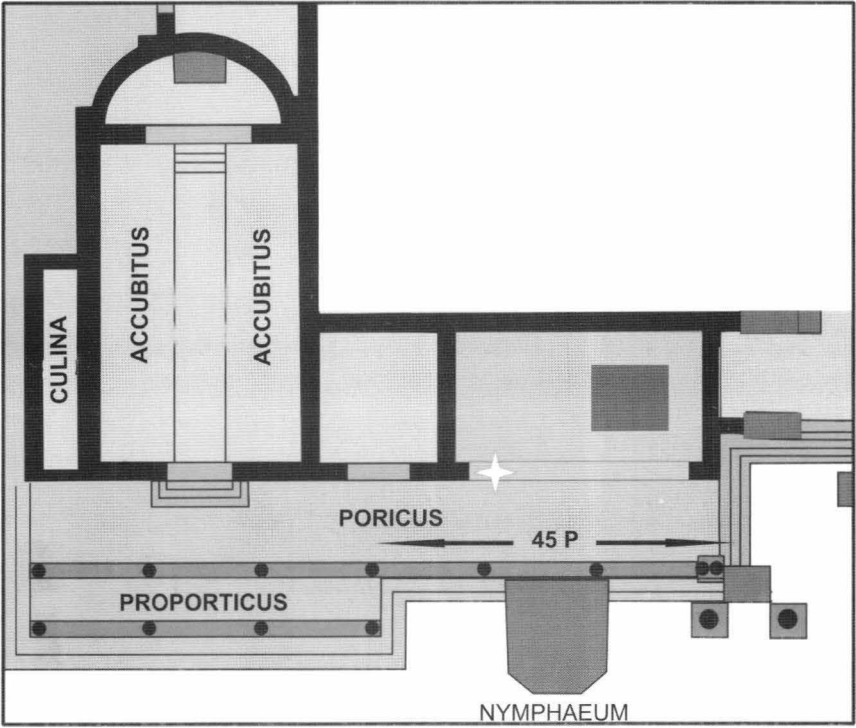
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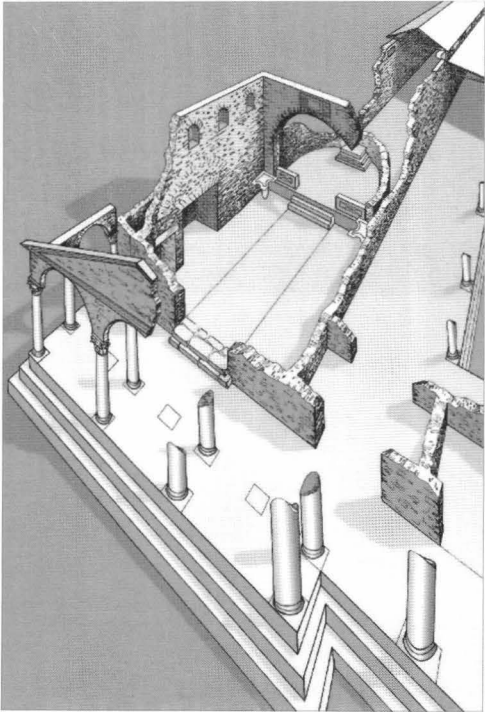
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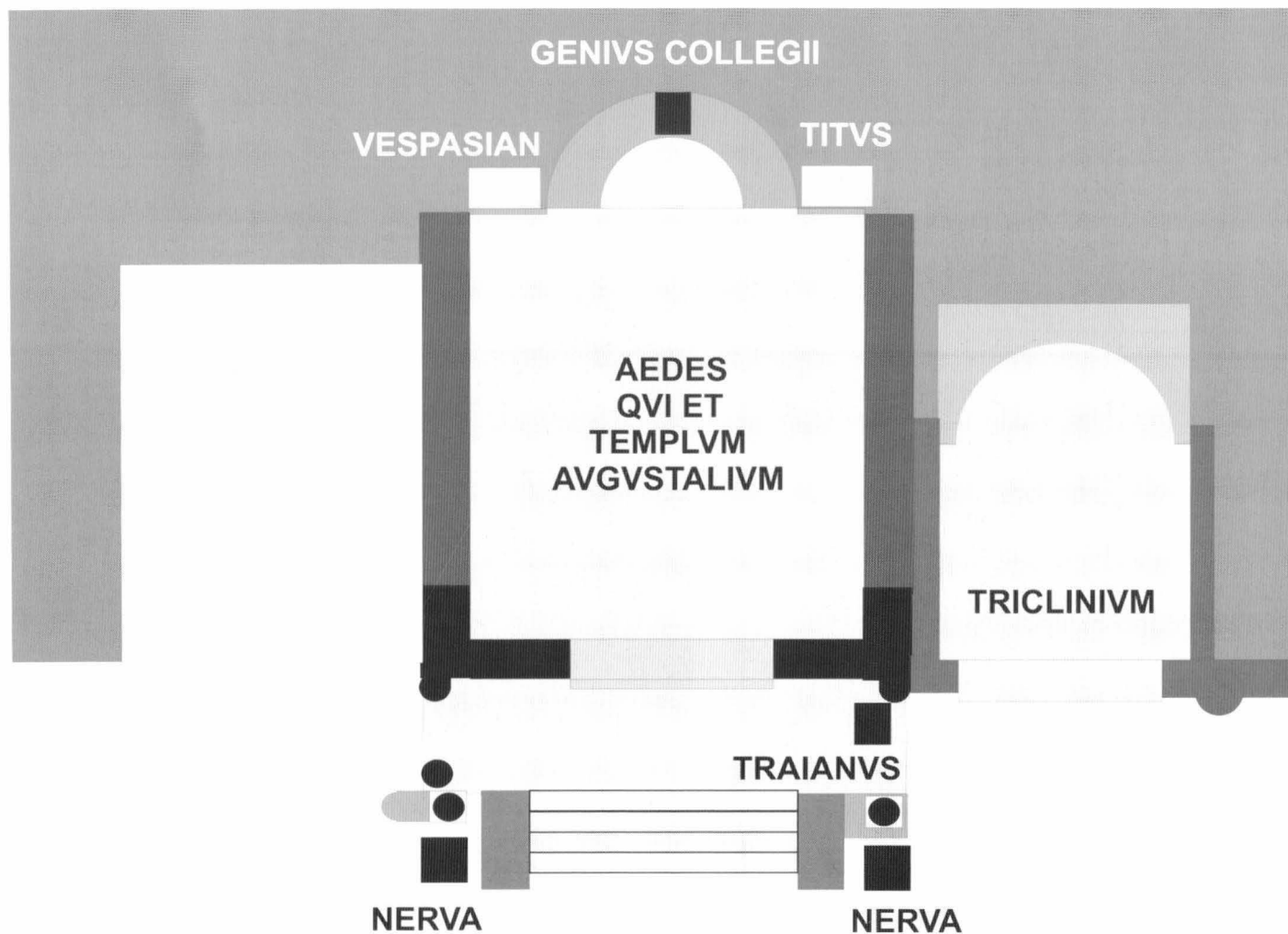


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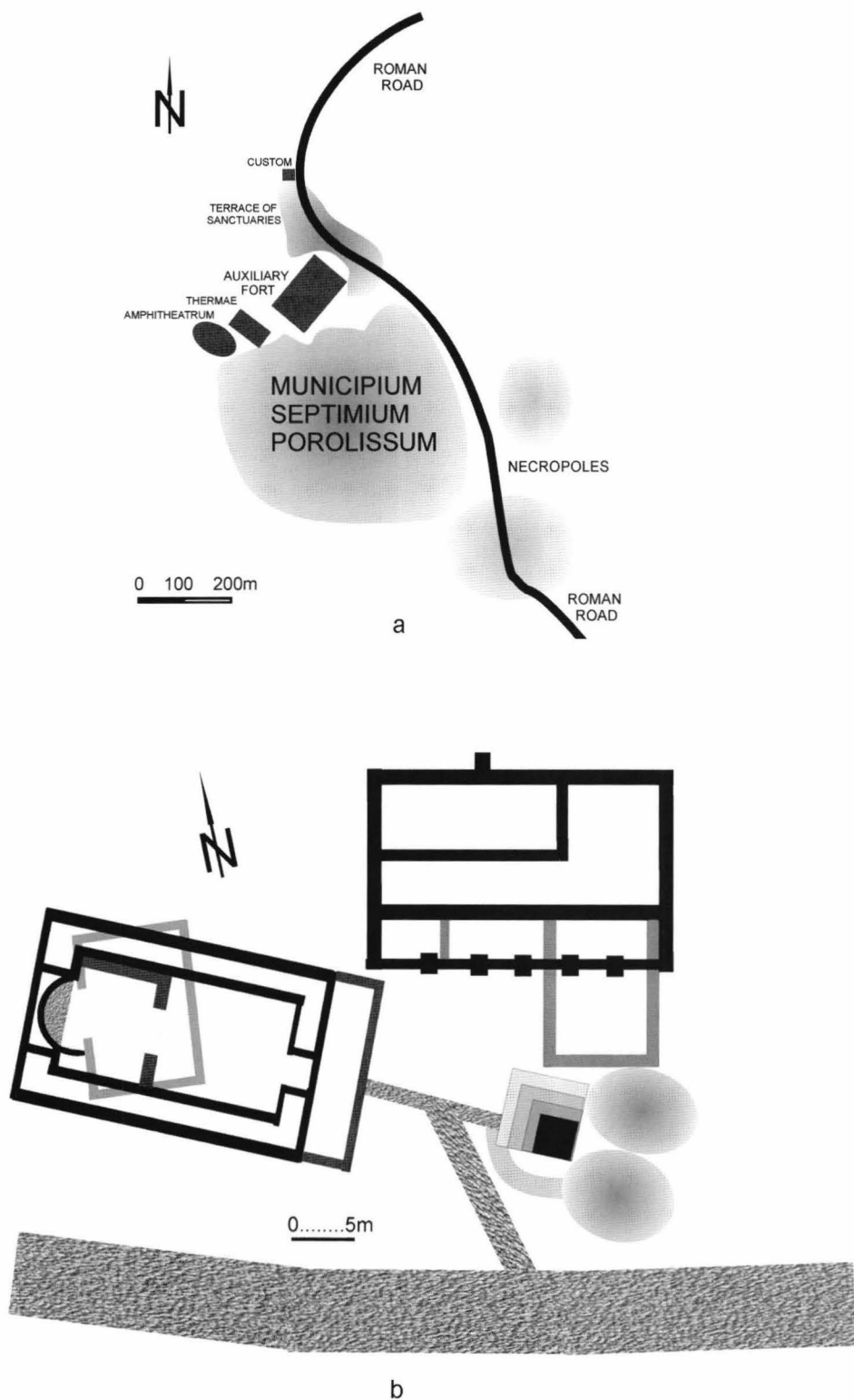


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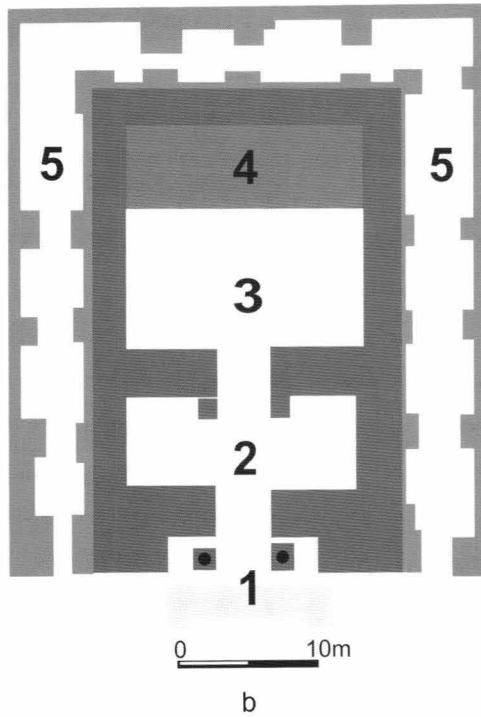
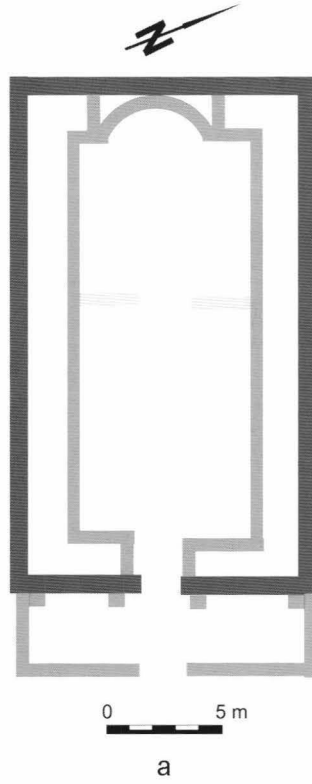
**Pl. III.** a. North-east corner of the Trajanic forum from Sarmizegetusa. (author's redrawing). The star marks the finding place of the inscription mentioning "*aedes fabrum*"; b. Sarmizegetusa. Banquet hall of "*fabri*" (partial reconstruction of the author).



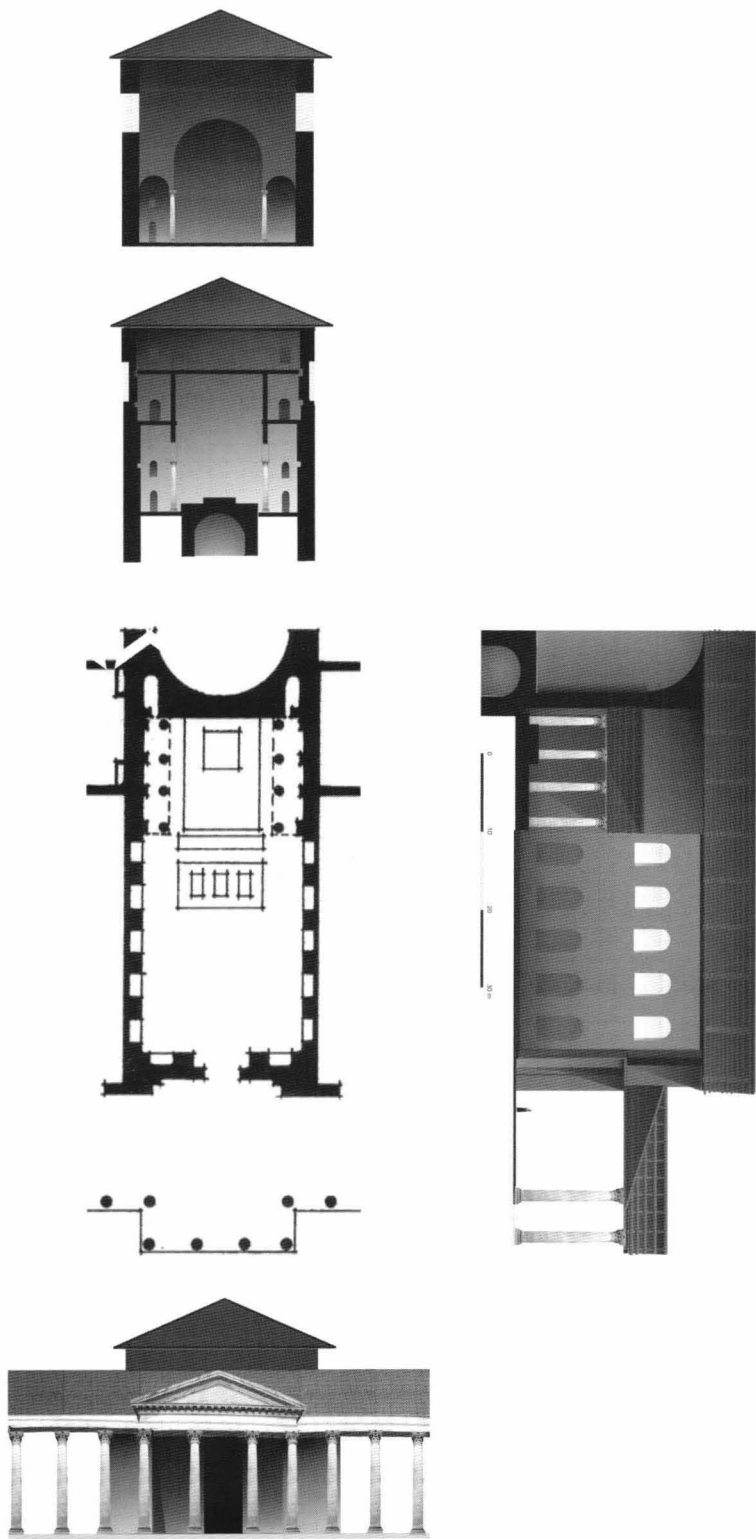
Pl. IV. *"Templum Augusti"* and seat of *"Augustales"* from Misenum (plan of the backside with *"aedes"* and *"triclinium"*, redrawn by the author).



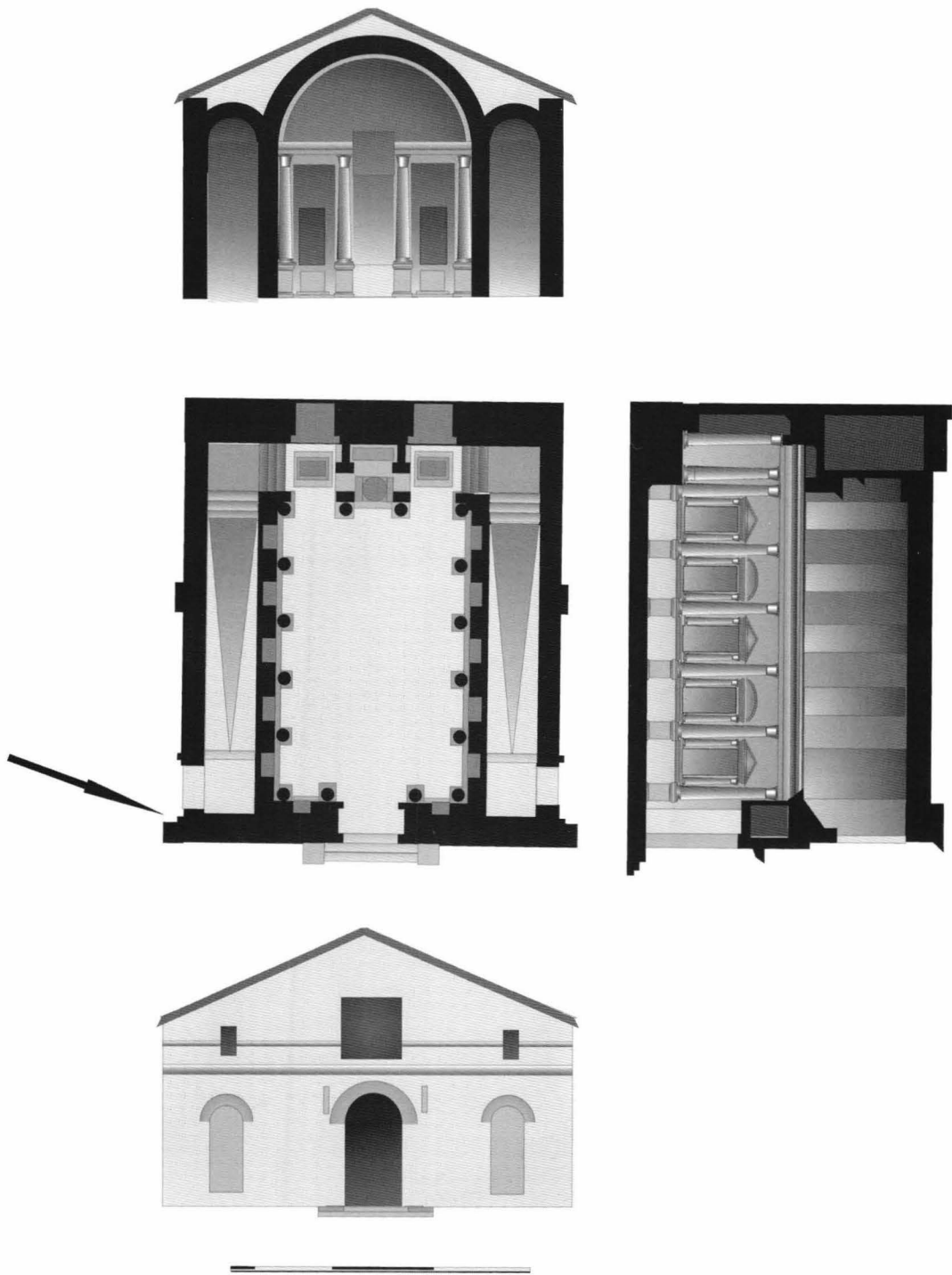
**Pl. V.** Porolissum: **a.** general plan redrawn by the author; **b.** supposed cult complex of Liber Pater and Bel, with altar and “favissae” (after Matei 1980).



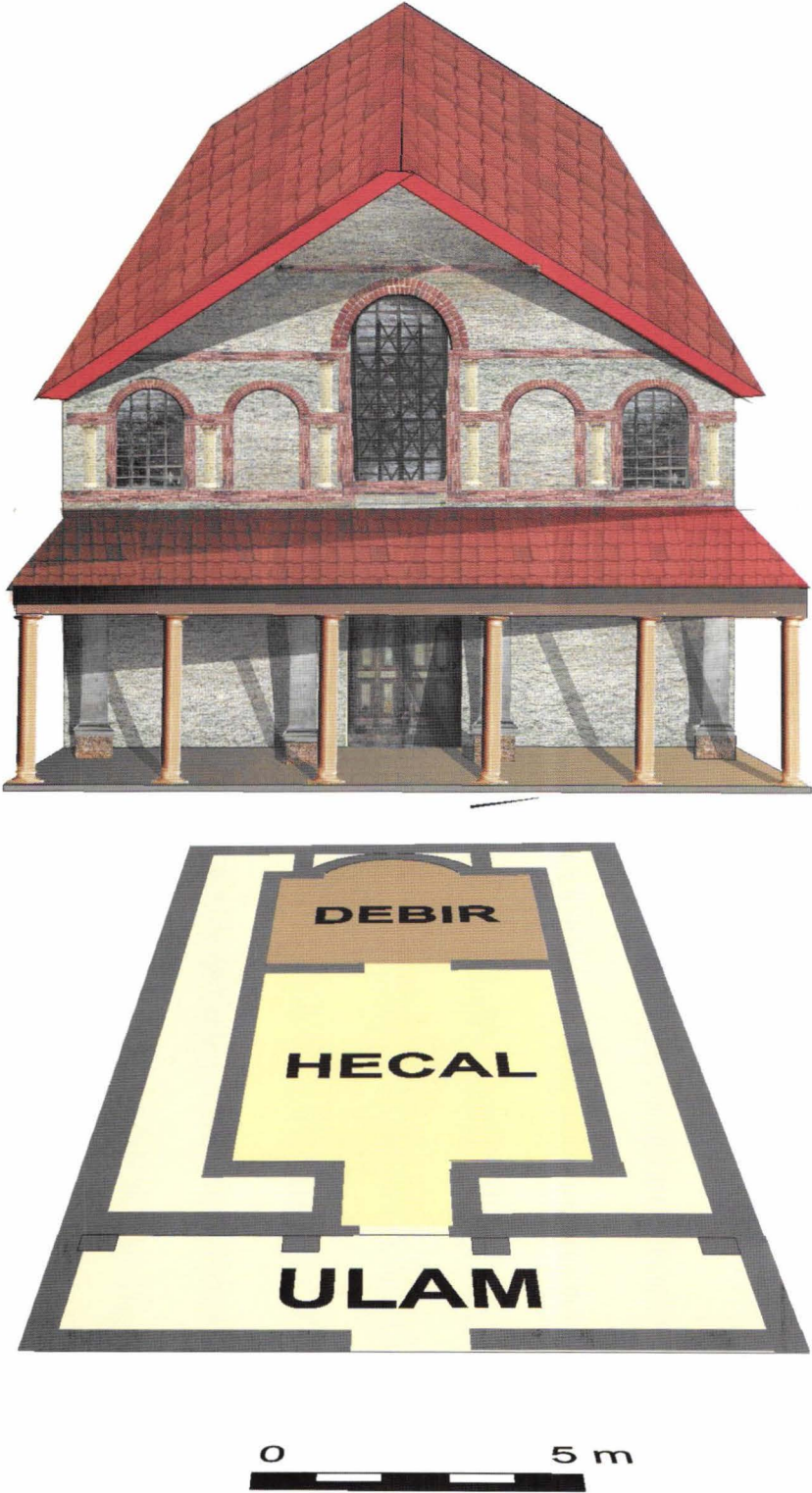
**Pl. VI. a.** Porolissum. Cult building of Bel (last phase redrawn by the author); **b.** Ain Dara, Syria (plan redrawn by the author).



**Pl. VII.** The “Red Hall” from Pergamum. Plan and elevation reconstructed by the author after old drawings (see Radt 1999, Abb. 143–144 and 148) and own photos.



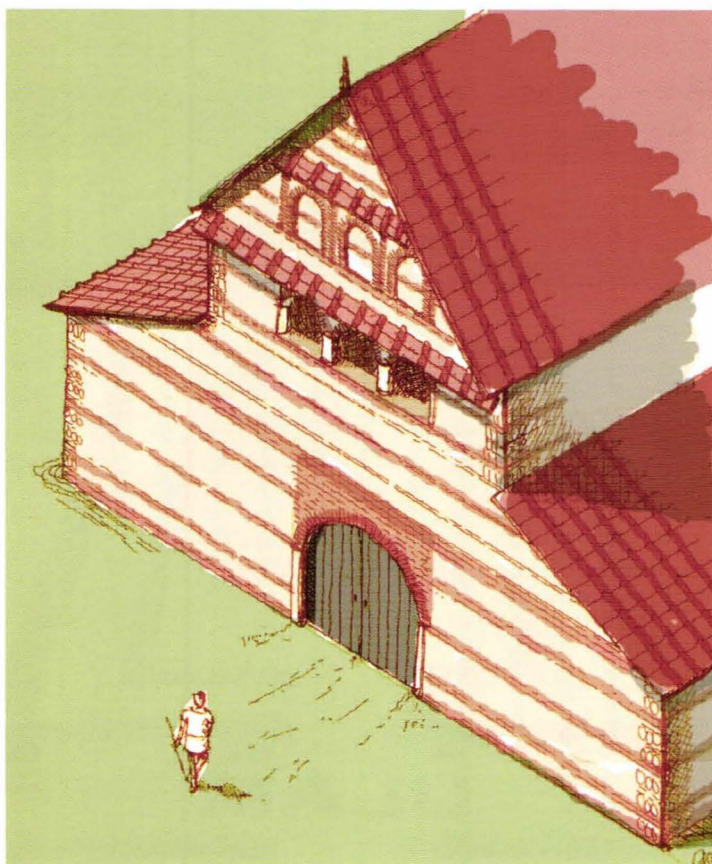
Pl. VIII. The “Temple of Diana” at Nîmes (plan and elevation reconstructed by the author after Stierlin 2002, p. 59 and own photos).



Pl. IX. Porolissum. Temple of Bel (ideal reconstruction of the facade and author's vision on its components).

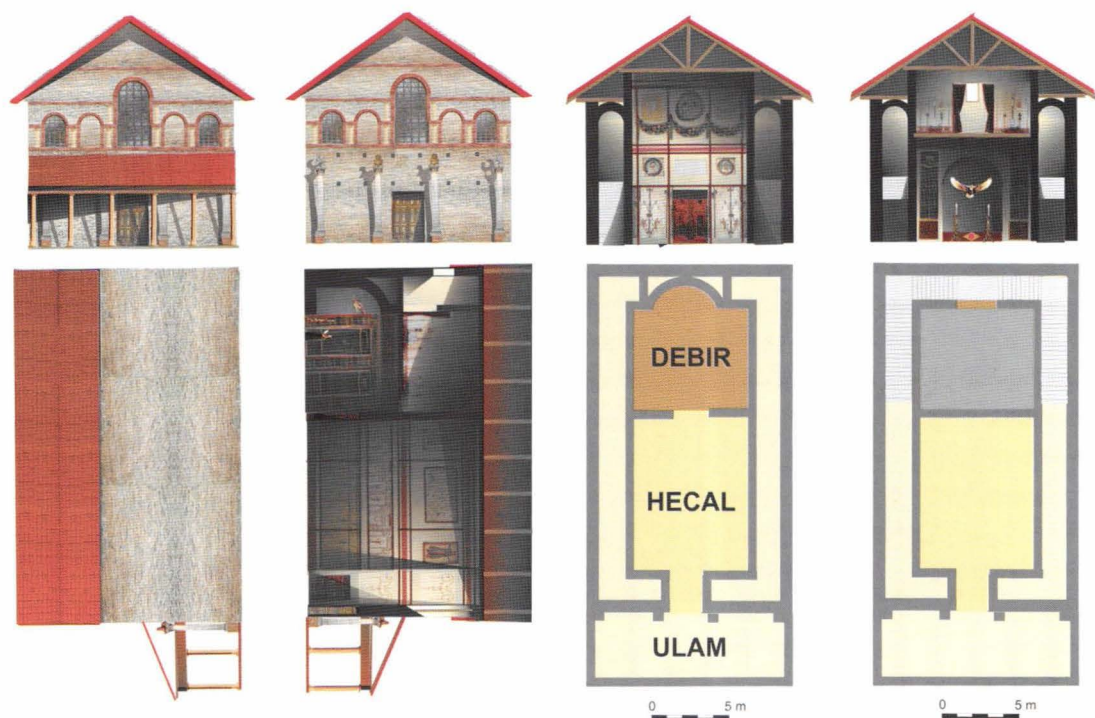


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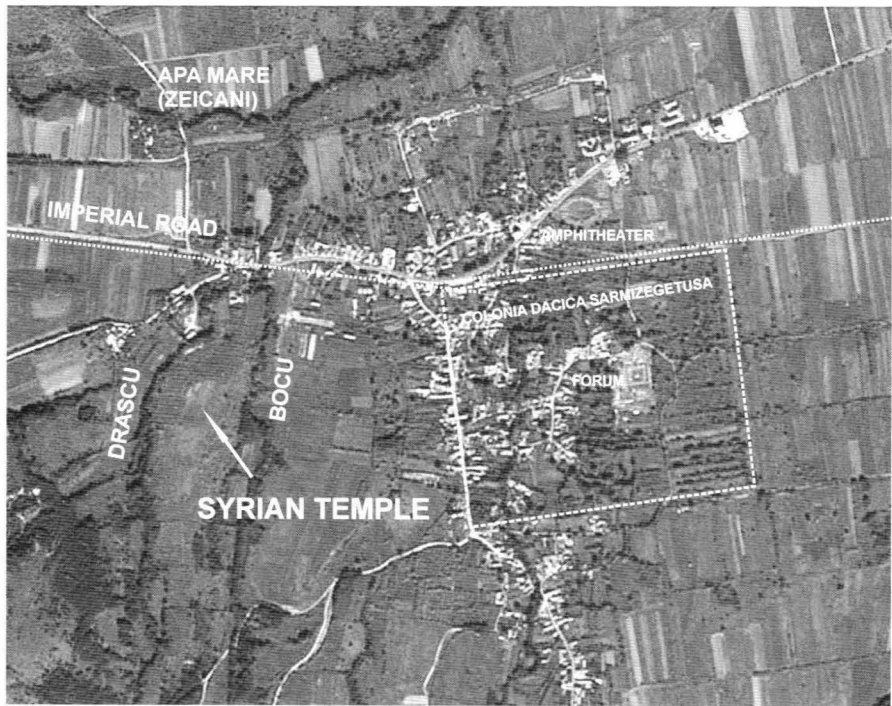


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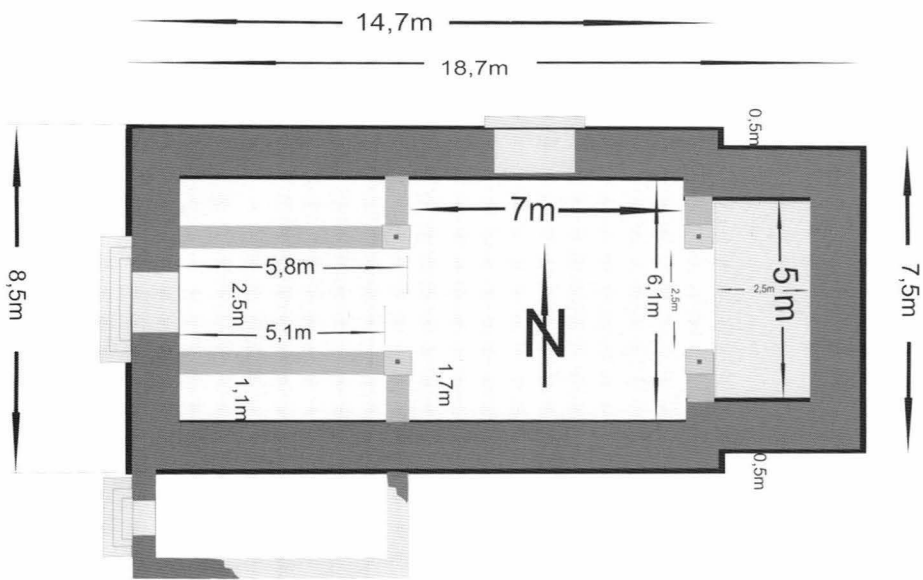
**Pl. X. a.** Collapsed facade of Roman building near Rottweil (Foto: LAD, O. Braasch after <http://www.denkmalpflege-bw.de/denkmale/projekte/archaeologische-denkmalpflege/dreidimensionale-rekonstruktion-roemischer-gebäude-die-villa-rustica-von-oberndorf-bochingen.html>); **b.** Elevation of the facade of villa from Meonstoke (after De La Bédoyère 2001, p. 136, fig. 96).



Pl. XI. Ideal reconstruction of the temple of Bel from Porolissum (the author's impression).

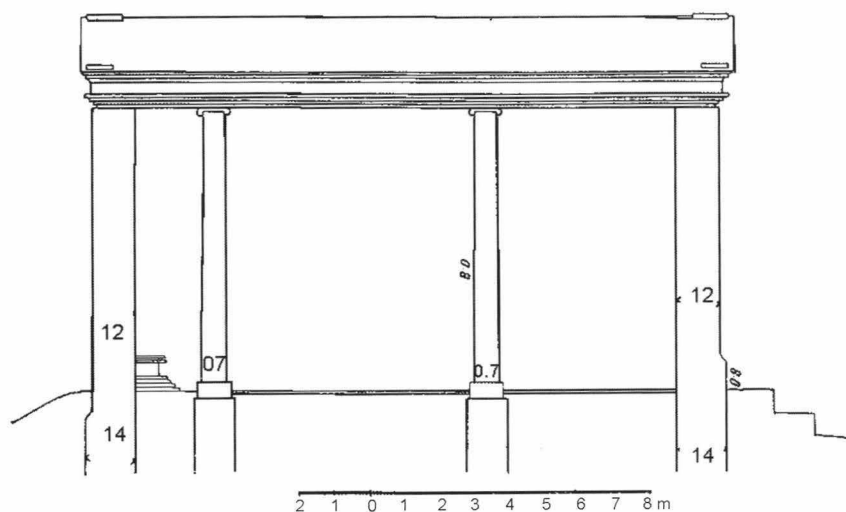


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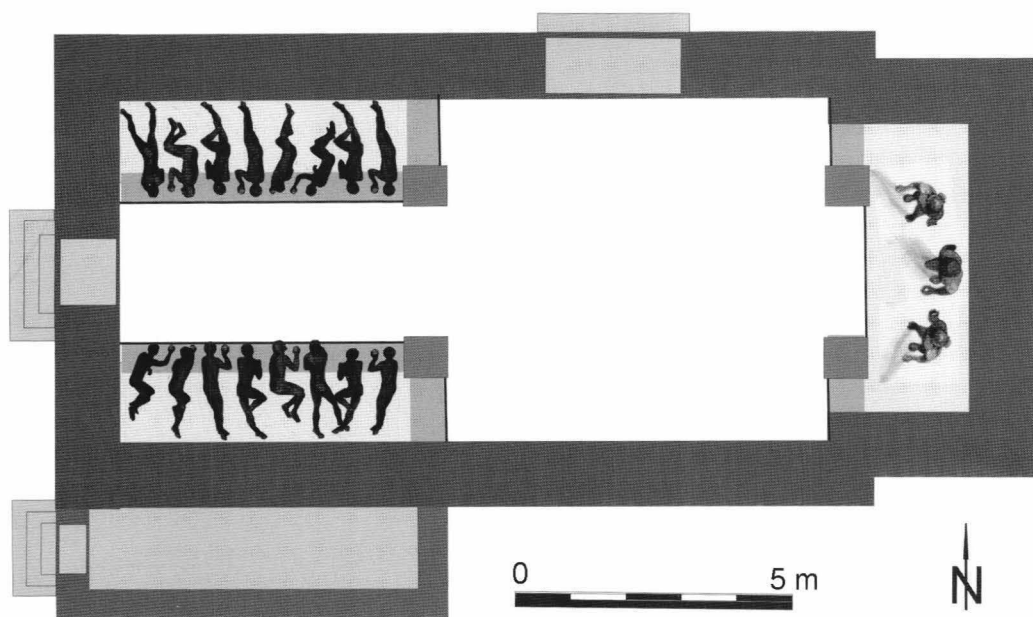


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Pl. XII. a. Sarmizegetusa. Position of “Syrian Temple” (after Téglás 1905, fig. 1 - drawing of the author on Google Earth satellite image); b. Sarmizegetusa. Plan of the “Syrian Temple” (drawn by the author after the new translation of G. Téglás archaeological report). The position of entrances is conjectural.

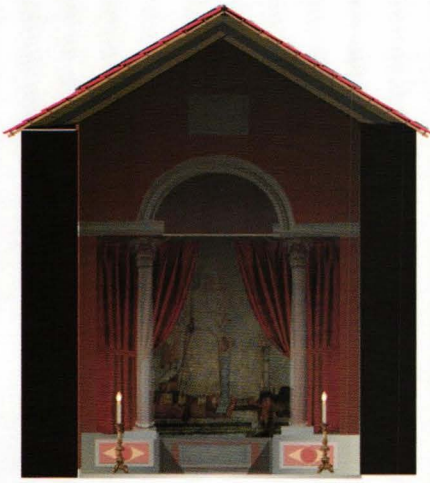


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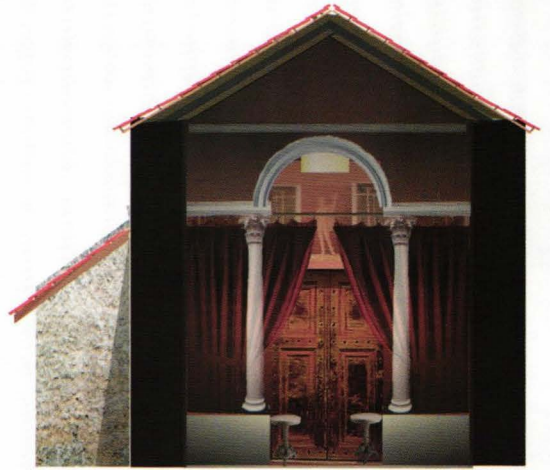


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**Pl. XIII.** a. Ideal cross section of the “Syrian Temple” in Sarmizegetusa (reproduced after Téglás 1905, fig. 3); b. Sarmizegetusa. Plan of the “Syrian Temple” (author’s interpreting of the functions of different spaces).



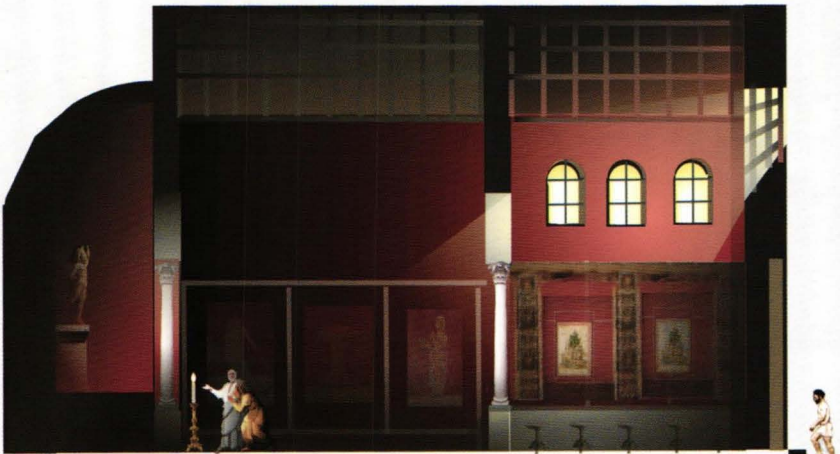
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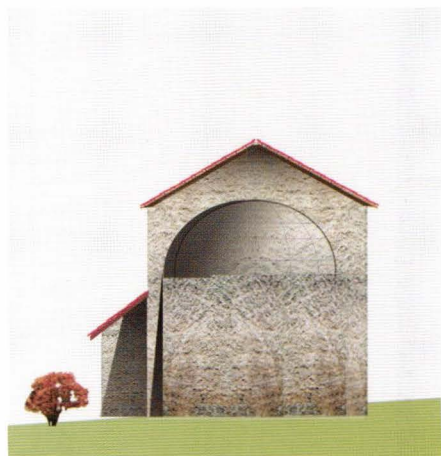


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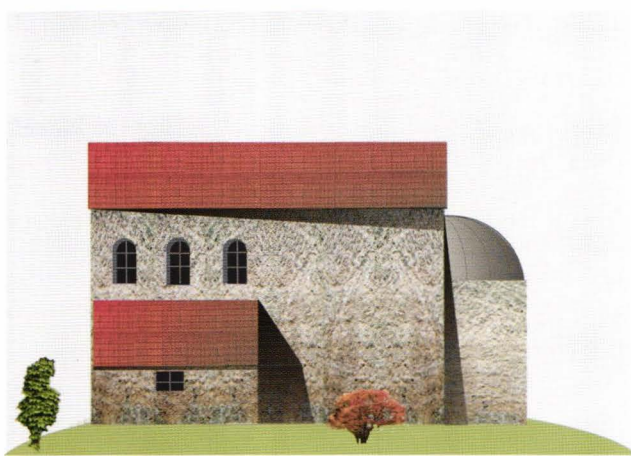


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Pl. XIV. a-d. Author's ideal reconstruction of the "Syrian Temple" from Sarmizegetusa - cross sections through the temple.



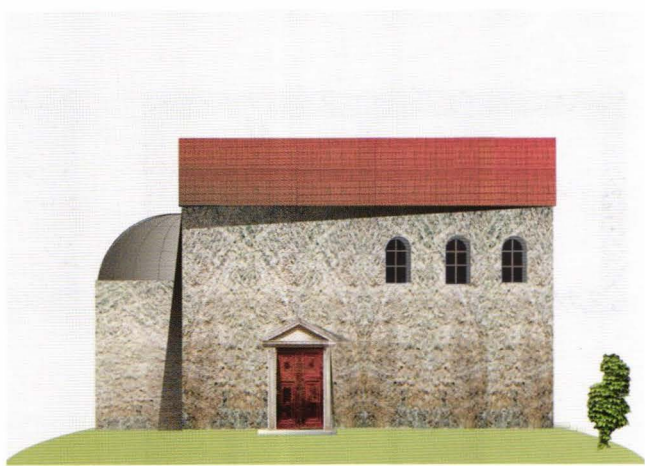
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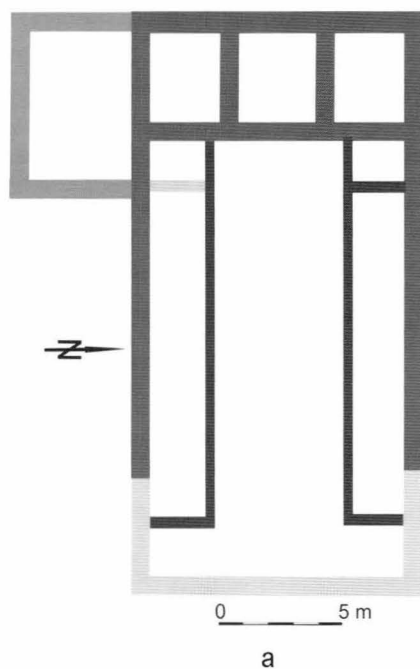


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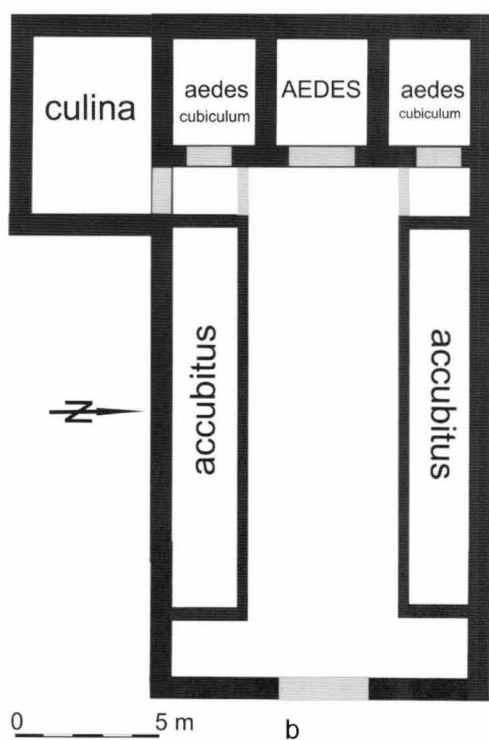


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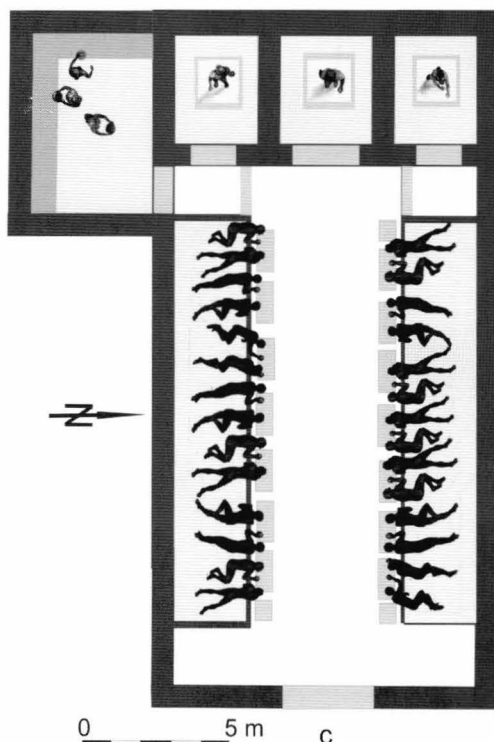
**Pl. XV. a-d.** Author's ideal reconstruction of the "Syrian Temple" from Sarmizegetusa - elevation seen from outside.



a



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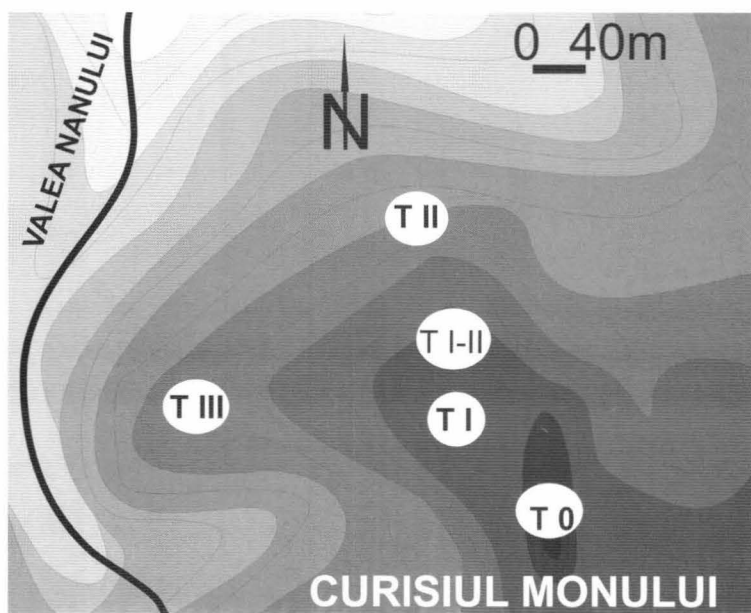


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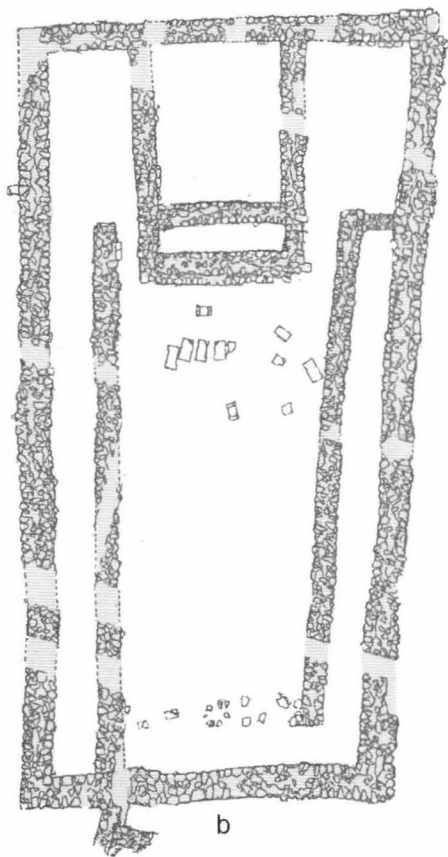
Pl. XVI. a. Plan of the “Temple of *Dii Mauri*” from Micia, redrawn by the author; b-c. Plan of the “Temple of *Dii Mauri*” from Micia, as interpreted by the author.



Pl. XVII. Inside view of the Moorish temple from Micia (the author's artistic impression).

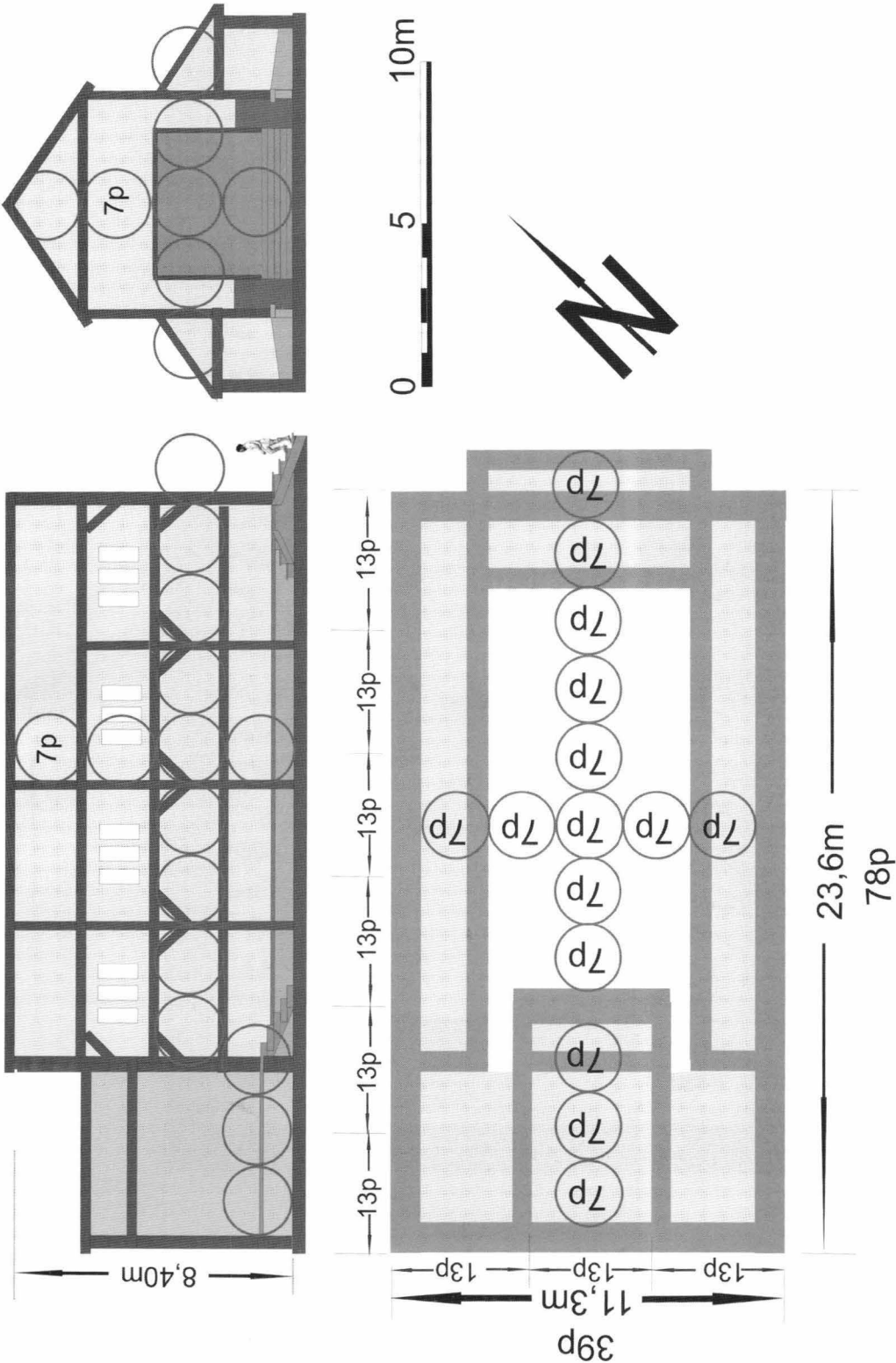


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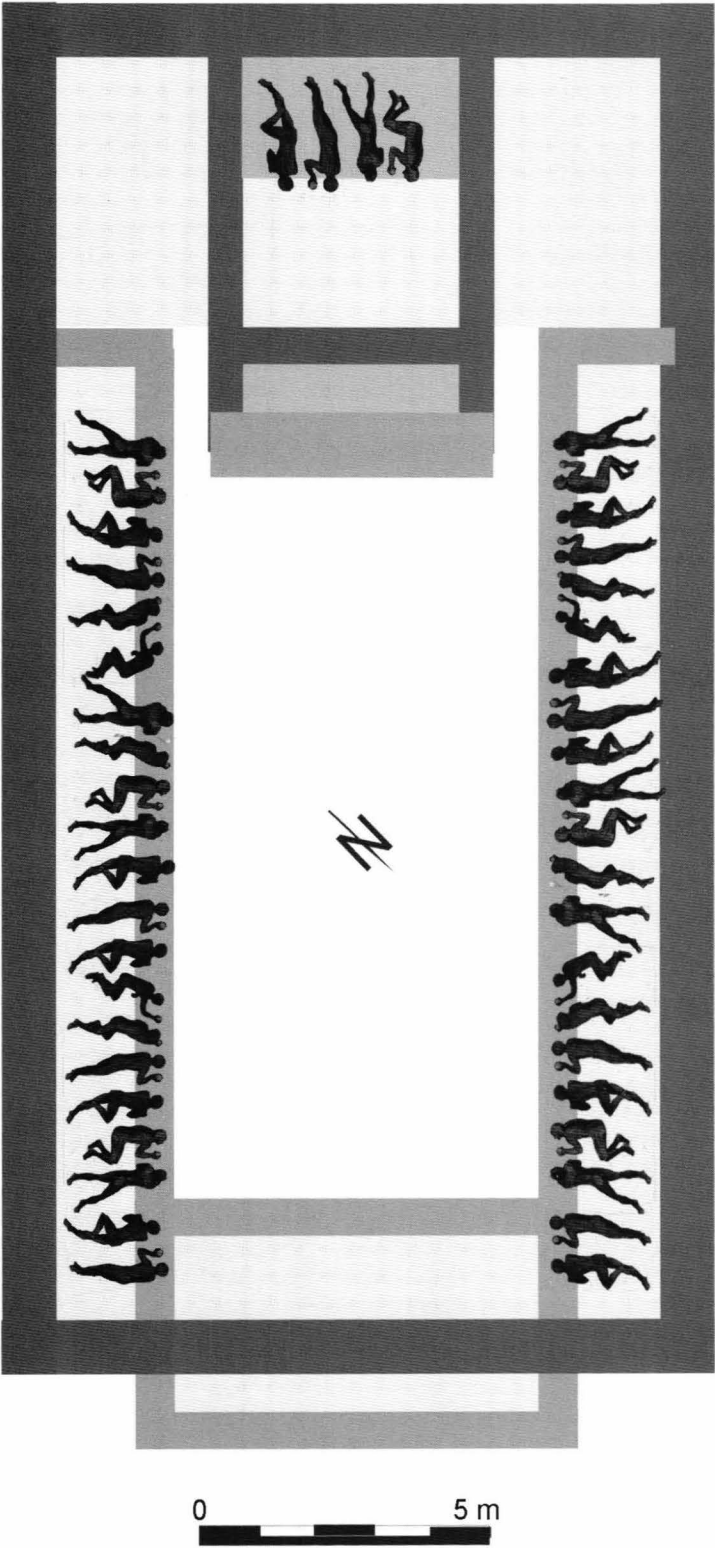


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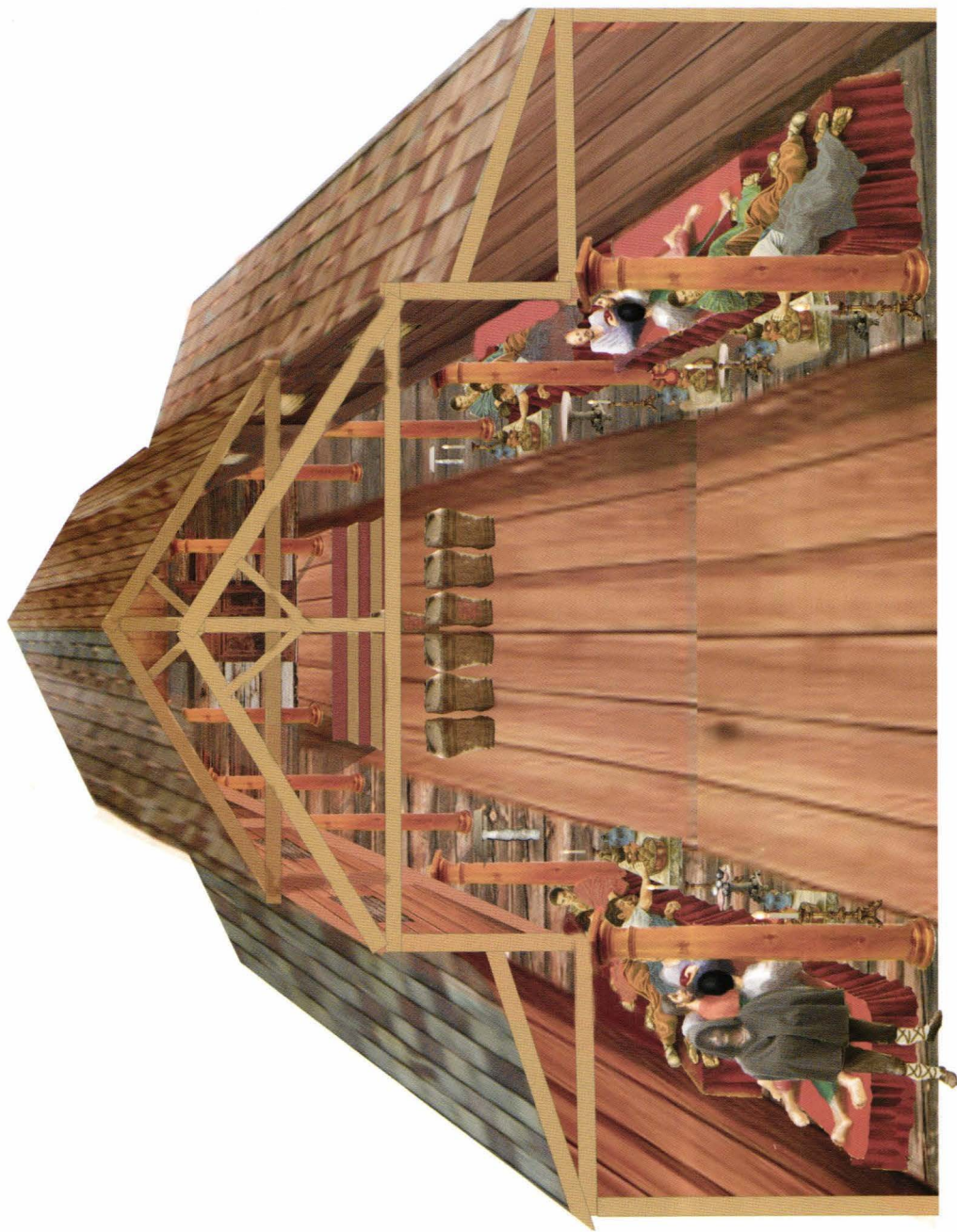
Pl. XVIII. Alburnus Maior: **a.** The “Curișul Monului” hill with the archaeological objectives so far identified here (redrawn by the author); **b.** temple of *Sardeatae* (plan redrawn by the author).



Pl. XIX. Alburnus Maior, temple of *Sardeatae* - plan and elevation showing modulation and proportions.



Pl. XX. Alburnus Maior, temple of *Sardeatae*, plan with functions interpreted by the author (the persons lying in the cult chamber are conjectural).



Pl. XXI. Alburnus Maior, temple of *Sardeatae* (the author's artistic impression).



Pl. XXII. Alburnus Maior, temple of *Sardeatae* (the author's artistic impression).