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CUPRINS/CONTENTS

30/1

STUDII/STUDIES

Ana ĐURIČIĆ, More than Floors and Domes - Contexts around Ovens in the Late Neolithic of the Central Balkans	11
Aurora PEȚAN, Cetatea dacică de la Cucuiș – Dealul Golu (jud. Hunedoara) în lumina datelor LiDAR	31
Vasile IARMULSCHI, Fibule de tip Kostrzewski G din silvostepa carpato-nipreană	41
Ghenadie SÎRBU, Jaroslav PESKA, Tomas TENCER, Sergiu HEGHEA, O necropolă plană sarmatică descoperită în bazinul râului Răut (Republica Moldova), grație unor cercetări non-invazive	53
Adina VELCESCU, Les amphores découvertes dans la zone portuaire de Callatis (Mangalia, Roumanie) dans les années 1960-1970	61
Ioan MUNTEAN, The Sanctuaries of Iuppiter Dolichenus in the Danubian Provinces. A functional interpretation	83
Csaba SZABÓ, Women and Roman religion in Dacia: the epigraphic evidence	99
Remus FERARU, Gladiatori și spectacole în amfiteatru în cetățile grecești din Pontul Euxin.	123
Vladimir PETROVIĆ, The Epigraphic Testimonies from Timacum Maius (Eastern Moesia Superior): The Important Clues for the Character and Organization of Naissus Region	135
Ioan Carol OPRİȘ, Axiopolis. Stadiul actual al cunoașterii	143
Fatih Hakan KAYA, Musa ALBAYRAK, Martin HENIG, Ergün LAFLI, Earrings from Nicaea in Bithynia (south-eastern Marmara)	179
Nizam ABAY, Grylloi: A Being with Mixed Depictions from Konya	205
Cüneyt ÖZ, Repair of ceramics in Antiquity: Examples from Myra (Lycia)	215
Parastoo Maşjedi KHAK, Seyed Mehdi Mousavi KOUHPAR, Hasan Kohansal VAJARGAH, Cui QILONG, Six Sassanian artworks engraved with hunters: king, crown prince, aristocrat, or pretender to the throne?	221
Khachik HARUTYUNYAN, Newly Discovered Inscriptions from the Armenian Cathedral of St. James in Jerusalem	235
Yaroslav CHENTSOV, The problem of the attribution of burials of medieval nomads on the territory of the Ukrainian steppe on the example of three burials from the Novosilsky kurgan complex	249
Maria-Venera RĂDULESCU, Cavalerul în turnir, temă iconografică redată pe cahle medievale din Muntenia	261

RECENZII/REVIEWS

- Tudor ULIȚĂ-SÎNJOAN, Recenzie: Lee I. Levine, Zeev Weis, Uzi Leibner, *Ancient synagogues revealed 1981-2022*, Israel Exploration Society, 2023, 300 p., ISBN 978-965-221-129-3. 271
- Aurora PEȚAN, Recenzie: Alexandru Berzovan, *At the Borders of the Great Steppe. Late Iron Age Hillforts between the Eastern Carpathians and Prut (5th-3rd centuries BC)*, Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2022, 310 p., 35 pl., ISBN 978-606-020-494-7. 273
- Claudia-Valentina POPÎRȚAC, Recenzie: Maria Alexandrescu Vianu, *Une cité antique à travers ses sculptures. La sculpture en pierre à Tomis à l'époque du Principat (Ier-IIIe siècles)*, Editura Istros a Muzeului Brăilei „Carol I”, Brăila, 2022, 300 p., ISBN 978-606-654-492-4. 276
- Florian BOIȘTEANU, Recenzie: Lucrețiu Mihăilescu-Bîrliba, Ioan Piso (ed.), *Romans and Natives in the Danubian Provinces (1st-6th C. AD)*, Harrassovitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2023, 618 p., ISBN 978-3-447-12096-8. 278
- Tudor ULIȚĂ-SÎNJOAN, Recenzie: Annamária-Izabella Pázsint, *Private Associations in the Pontic Greek Cities (6th century BC–3rd century AD)*, Peeters, Leuven – Paris – Bristol, CT, 2022, 386 p., ISBN 978-90-429-4718-4. 280

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THE SANCTUARIES OF IUPITER DOLICHENUS IN THE DANUBIAN PROVINCES. A FUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION

IOAN MUNTEAN

ABSTRACT:

This article delves into the structure of Iupiter Dolichenus temples, focusing on its sanctuaries in the Danubian Provinces of Dacia, Pannonia Inferior, Pannonia Superior, Raetia, and Noricum. It emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of the cult's role in the religious landscape, cautioning against oversimplified theoretical approaches. Eight Dolichenus cult structures had archaeologically been identified in these provinces (Mehadia, Porolissum, Brigetio, Vetus Salina, Carnuntum I, Carnuntum II, Virunum, Vetoniana), showcasing the cult's manifestation on a broader scale. The study focuses on analyzing these temples' architectural features and functionalities, highlighting both differences and similarities. The article aims to provide a detailed examination of each sanctuary, considering phases of construction, alterations, and factors contributing to variations, through the analysis of archaeological finds and architectural characteristics related to the sanctuaries, it seeks to establish patterns and understand the role of specific chambers within these sacred precincts.

RÉSUMÉ : LES SANCTUAIRES DE JUPITER DOLICHENUS DANS LES PROVINCES DANUBIENNES. UNE INTERPRÉTATION FONCTIONNELLE

Cet article explore la structure des temples de Iupiter Dolichenus, en se concentrant sur ses sanctuaires dans les provinces danubiennes de Dacia, de Pannonia Inferior, de Pannonia Superior, de Raetia et de Noricum. Il souligne la nécessité d'une compréhension nuancée du rôle du culte dans le paysage religieux, mettant en garde contre les approches théoriques simplistes. Huit structures de culte de Dolichenus avaient été identifiées dans les fouilles de cette province (Mehadia, Porolissum, Brigetio, Vetus Salina, Carnuntum I, Carnuntum II, Virunum, Vetoniana), mettant en valeur la manifestation du culte à une échelle plus large. L'étude se concentre sur l'analyse des caractéristiques architecturales et des fonctionnalités de ces temples, mettant en évidence à la fois les différences et les similitudes. L'article vise à fournir un examen détaillé de chaque sanctuaire, en tenant compte des phases de construction, des modifications et des facteurs contribuant aux variations. À travers l'analyse des découvertes archéologiques et des caractéristiques architecturales liées aux sanctuaires, il cherche à établir des schémas et à comprendre le rôle des chambres spécifiques au sein de ces enceintes sacrées.

KEYWORDS: functionality, sacred, temples, planimetry, edifice.

MOTS CLÉS : fonctionnalité, sacré, temples, planimétrie, édifice.

Introduction

The present undertaking requires a few clarifications, with the aim of providing a clearer picture of this cult and its archaeologically identified and excavated sanctuaries within the Danubian Provinces of Dacia, Pannonia Inferior, Pannonia Superior, Raetia and Noricum. To comprehend the role of the sanctuaries of Iupiter Dolichenus in the religious landscape of these territories, it is crucial to steer clear of certain theoretical approaches. The analysis of the archaeological material, as well as of the cult buildings or archaeological contexts, published over an extensive period, starting from the end of the XIXth century until today, has occasionally demanded reinterpretations or modifications.¹

The historiographic concept of Oriental cults has undergone important changes; they were initially categorised based on their origin, either from Egypt or from provinces of the Near East, associated with various mystery rituals

¹ Piso 2001; Piso 2003 and Vitas 2020 are just a few examples of material and archaeological contexts reinterpretation.

and initiation into esoteric knowledge. The Romans sometimes regarded them as *superstitio* or *religio iniusta*², but are subsequently assimilated and embraced by the Roman world. This standpoint on the cults implies the existence of two different worlds, one Roman and the other Oriental, both of them being subjects to a process of acculturation, but the concept of being Roman has many variations, it could represent a frame for a dynamic and diverse world, encompassing many populations and identities, consequently the concept of Oriental gods is a matter of perspective regarding the Romans' position in their world, in every aspect.³ The way these gods are perceived in antiquity shows us a continuous process of interchanging ideas that are reflecting in every feature of these cults, even in their iconography or rituals.⁴

Consequently, even though the Romans viewed them as foreign divinities, and their place of origin provides a criterion for certain typologies, these cults, with all their characteristics, experienced significant transformations in the Roman environment. However, a precise canon of religious ideas or cult manifestations, cannot be firmly established.

In this theoretical framework of Oriental gods, Jupiter Dolichenus has been classified within the typology of *Wettergott*, a storm deity archetype prevalent in the Near Eastern regions, characterized by its dual nature, embodying both the destructive aspects of weather and the potential for agricultural fertility. Although it is a historiographic concept, this typology is based on a wealth of data present in the Near Eastern provinces spanning a broad temporal and geographical scope. However, caution must be exercised in this theoretical approach. The various forms of sources at our disposal presents a multiplicity of interpretations, highlighting the dynamic and intricate nature of this religious phenomenon.⁵ The god's spreading in the Western Empire shows the acceptance and the reliability on the military network, as it seems, this storm deity shared many characteristics with other Syrian cults, including the storm god characteristics, but in the Roman world the temple from Doliche does not represent a religious center for this cult, its expansion being a phenomenon based on the many different networks of the empire.⁶

Concerning the Danubian provinces, the votive inscriptions have yielded valuable insights into the worship practices and beliefs associated with this god. The inscriptions are diverse; while the majority are attributed to military personnel⁷, there are also references to merchants⁸, city magistrates⁹, priests of the cult¹⁰, etc. Therefore, it becomes evident that in these provinces, the cult was not confined solely to the military environment and actually attracted followers from various professions. The way in which the deity is depicted in inscriptions illustrates how well-adapted this cult was to Roman society. Additionally, some inscriptions also indicate infrastructural developments, such as the construction or renovation of a temple¹¹, further underscoring the deity's influence and the community's devotion.

The Danubian provinces, represent a space with intricate networks that facilitated the spread of the cult, particularly in the border region. The Romans viewed the Danube as a natural boundary of whose control could ensure both the internal security of the provinces and a communication corridor between them, supported by a network of roads and forts, therefore enabling a high grade of mobility. From a fiscal and economic standpoint, these provinces were integrated into a unified system of custom networks known as *publicum portorii Illyrici*.¹² The military environment played a crucial role in the spread and development of the cult, though the dedications are heterogeneous it seems that the soldiers and army officers had an important role in this phenomenon, the eastern campaigns, the subsequent relations between the soldiers and traders or the local populations, represent the main network of spreading the cult and its ideas in the empire.¹³

Based on Schwarzer's statistics, eight Dolichenus cult structures have been archaeologically identified in the provinces of Dacia, Pannonia Inferior, Superior, Noricum and Raetia, with seven additional examples known from inscriptions.¹⁴ Thus, the Danubian region provides numerous examples that can help us understand and illustrate the manifestation of this cult on a much broader scale, not just at a local level strictly associated with a settlement.

² Sanzi 2013, 19-21.

³ Versluys 2013, 240-242.

⁴ Quack and Witschel 2017, 7.

⁵ Green 2003, 1-3.

⁶ Blömer 2010, 79-82.

⁷ Horig and Schwertheim 1987, no. 242, 253, 222.

⁸ CIL III, 7761.

⁹ IDR III, 2, 201; Horig and Schwertheim 1987, no. 239.

¹⁰ IDR III, 5, 221; Horig and Schwertheim 1987, no. 219, no. 229.

¹¹ Horig and Schwertheim 1987, 238; Gudea and Tamba 2001, 25.

¹² Szabó 2022, 5.

¹³ Collar 2013, 102-116.

¹⁴ Schwarzer 2012, Abb.1.

In the present study, the structure from Egeta from Moesia Superior was not taken into consideration, due to its very small dimensions which excludes it from being considered a proper edifice and rather suggest it is a storage place for cult inventory, a *sacrarium*.¹⁵ Instead, I introduced a structure omitted in previous studies, the one from Mehadia in the province of Dacia, where the cults of Dolichenus and Apollo are attested, published as a cult structure by Benea.¹⁶ The cult buildings that will be analysed include those from Mehadia, Porolissum, Brigetio, Vetus Salina, Carnuntum I and II, Virunum, and Vetoniana. The aim of this study is to identify the main features of these temples in order to highlight not only the architectural differences but also similarities in the functionalities of certain chambers or structures within the temple, as well as in the religious inventory found in them.

A functional approach

The differences between these cult buildings are evident, and it cannot be ascertain an archetype regarding the planimetry and architecture of these structures. The present objective entails a detailed examination commencing at a micro-level, regarding archaeological artifacts and the circumstances of their discovery, when available. Subsequently, our focus shifts towards comprehending how the architectural layout and structure of these edifices may be shaped by practical exigencies imposed by diverse factors, such as spatial constraints, alignment with the configurations of adjacent buildings, or potential interconnections with other sanctuaries.

Discerning parallels among these structures imposes an important consideration of the functionalities inherent to specific chambers or structures that exhibit a recurring pattern across various edifices. In instances, where such consistencies are absent, it must be reckoned a distinctive configuration. This inquiry does not imply to construct a typology of Jupiter Dolichenus cult buildings, but nevertheless endeavors to analyse the insights derived from the spatial disposition of artifacts and from the relations observed between different rooms. The goal is to discern the functional role inherent to specific rooms within these sacred precincts, which gives us a distinct perspective on the character of each sanctuary.

It is imperative to clarify certain terminology within the scope of this study. In general, I have opted for the concept of sanctuary, cult edifice or building, which are more encompassing terms for the religious buildings which are under investigation here. However, it is essential to elucidate a few general definitions: the term *templum* refers to a religious edifice dedicated in a certain space and to a specific cult, fundamentally featuring an altar for sacrifices and a symbolic, usually hidden monument depicting a deity, such as a statue, to convey the presence of the divine.¹⁷ It is worth noting, however, that there may be instances where multiple deities are venerated within the same temple; nevertheless, the edifice itself might be consecrated to a singular divine entity.

Templum was usually considered as *liberatus et effatus*, a delimited space, consecrated for ritual purposes exclusively, nonetheless there are also cases when other public activities could have taken place in a temple.¹⁸ Consequently such religious buildings as the sanctuaries of Jupiter Dolichenus have multiple roles regarding its activities and the interactions with the community, which must imply much broader terms.

Another notion employed is that of *sacrarium*, used here to denote a delineated space or an actual chamber where the primary sacred ritual objects were stored. This could be a separate chamber within the edifice or have an entrance from its exterior.¹⁹ In light of this analysis, the structure commonly referred to as the temple in Egeta is more aptly classified as a *sacrarium*. It appears to be distinct from the main cultic edifice and serves as a repository for specific objects and monuments. Its modest dimensions, measuring 3.5 x 3.8 meters, unequivocally suggest that it was not a space intended for the performance of religious rituals.²⁰

The segregated space within the temple where the primary image of the deity is housed, is referred to as *cella*.²¹ At times, this compartment may be located within the interior of the temple, with separation achieved through walls or *aedicula*-type structures. A concerning aspect is that the spaces reserved for ritual banquets, observable in some temples, I have chosen not to employ a specific term, given their highly diverse configurations. The determination of their functionality can only be established through certain internal arrangements or structures such as *hypocaustum* or associated archaeological material, such as tableware. Some of these edifices feature a preparation area for banquets, a cooking zone known as *culina*, term derived from domestic architecture.²²

¹⁵ Vitas 2020, 209-210.

¹⁶ Benea, 2008.

¹⁷ Daremberg and Saglio 1877-1919, *templum*.

¹⁸ Servius, ad Aen. I., 446.

¹⁹ Daremberg and Saglio 1877-1919, *sacrarium*.

²⁰ Vitas 2020, 206.

²¹ Daremberg and Saglio 1877-1919, *cella*.

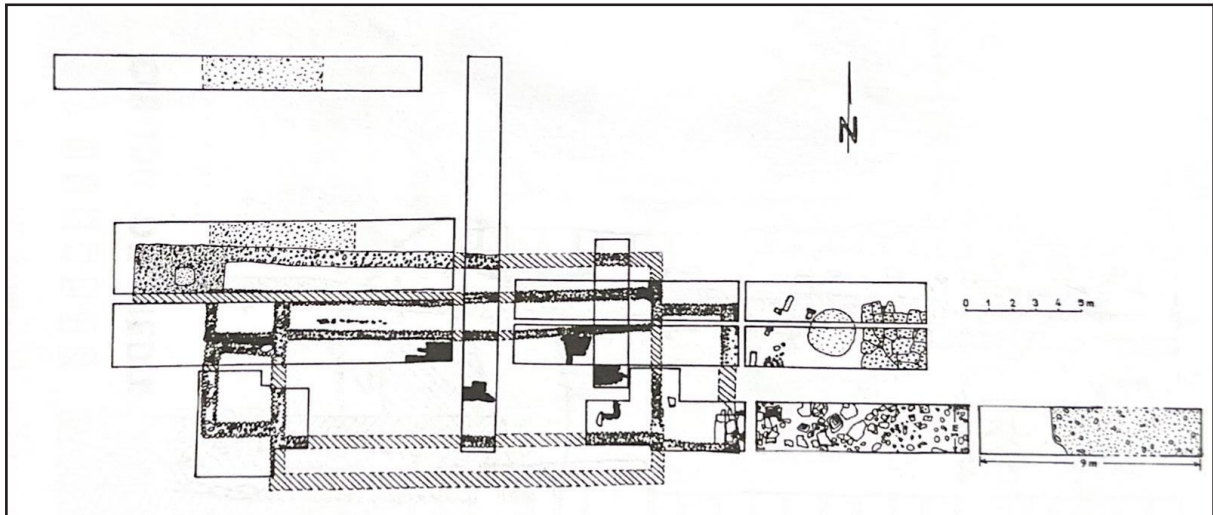
²² Daremberg and Saglio 1877-1919, *culina*.

The following investigation will provide an in-depth examination of each sanctuary individually. Each phase of the temple construction must be understood and taken into consideration, in order to highlight potential alterations not only in their planimetry but also in the functions of specific chambers. Additionally, certain aspects related to dating or the reconfiguration of the initial building plan have required reassessment. The main goal is to assess the architectural characteristics and be focused on establishing patterns and highlighting differences among the analyzed temples. In doing so, the factors contributing to these variations need a clear identification, considering archaeological inventory, preferences for specific construction materials, and the presence of structural or decorative elements if they were identifiable.

Internal and external structure

Mehadia

This edifice was excavated in the years 2001, 2002, and 2003, and the results were subsequently published by Doina Benea. Its location is approximately 40 meters west of the fort wall, within the western sector of the military *vicus*.²³ Initially, on the site, traces of a street grid and remnants of wooden constructions were observed. These were later removed, enabling the construction of a new building with a religious function²⁴, which might suggest a consecration of this once occupied space for religious purposes.



Pl. I. The Planimetry of the temple from Mehadia. Adapted after: Benea 2008, fig. 17.

Three construction phases have been identified for this edifice, during which the worship of both Apollo and Jupiter Dolichenus is attested. In the first phase, dated based on coin finds to the reigns of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus (the temple could have been built around 148-150 AD), a separation of rooms and of designated spaces typical to a cult building can be observed. The east-west oriented edifice features an eastern chamber, possibly a *vestibulum*, allowing entry into the central nave. This interior space includes a vast elongated chamber delimited by two walls on the north and south, along with two smaller chambers formed by the delineation of the outer and inner walls of the building. One is identified on the northern side, while the southern one is presumed (not investigated, although in some open sections, the continuation of the wall towards the south can be observed).²⁵ Opposite the entrance, on the western side of the structure, there is a small exterior room, likely serving as a *cella* due to its central position and the access from the previous chamber. Certain portions of the main nave, the northern chamber, and the eastern chamber reveal a mortar floor. In this phase, all the walls are interconnected, with their base consisting of river stones, sporadically found inside due to collapse. River stones and occasionally quarried stones, both connected with mortar, are observed in various sections.²⁶

²³ Benea 2008, 41.

²⁴ Benea 2008, 99.

²⁵ Benea 2008, 101-102.

²⁶ Benea 2008, 99-100, 43.

The second phase of the edifice can be approximately dated to the Severan dynasty, witnessing an interior space renovation. A single chamber is added on the western side, north of the *cella* but with smaller dimensions. The walls are relatively thin, constructed from river stones and mortar. The purpose of this chamber is challenging to ascertain. Doina Benea suggests it might be a new *cella*, given its small size and position, possibly indicating an entry from the northern nave of the main room. Regarding the interior renovations, a new floor is arranged in the central chamber, featuring a layer of clay covered with mortar, onto which bricks are applied. For the side naves, a gravel layer is applied which might suggest the presence of benches in these areas, built on this layer.²⁷

An entry from the central *cella* on the western side is improbable, as its northern wall was doubled by the southern wall of the new chamber, suggesting a distinct functionality. Presumably, the new chamber's entrance was external, serving as a *sacrarium* due to its reduced size and not a new *cella* for Iupiter Dolichenus in a temple of Apollo as Doinea Benea proposed. The flooring arrangement in this phase and the potential presence of benches used during ritualistic banquets suggest that the community of worshipers grew, and their activities within the temple expanded. This growth may have attracted investments from the community, leading to the building's renovation.

In the third phase of the edifice, signs of abandonment are observed. The precise moment and the duration (if it ever actually occurred) are challenging to identify due to disturbed stratigraphy. One of the essential indicators of partial abandonment is a layer of tiles in its northern part, possibly suggesting a collapse of the roof in this area. A gravel layer was applied over this, and another chamber was built on its surface, partially following the general plan of the edifice, starting from its eastern limit but extending beyond the western chambers. At the western end, this chamber also had a pedestal of approximately 1 x 1 meter. The role of this room is difficult to determine due to its poorly preserved state. The base of the new wall consists of river stones and quarried stones bound with clay. This third phase also includes some refurbishments and interventions involving the reuse of fragments from votive or architectural monuments. An intervention is evident on the eastern wall of the *vestibulum*, where the second row on its southern portion is formed from such fragments. Additionally, a public space was arranged in front of the building, leveled with a layer of destroyed monuments. Doina Benea associates this phase and the intentional reuse of the destroyed monuments with a desacralization of the space and a reorientation of its functionality.²⁸

The definite moment of destruction and abandonment of the building before this phase is challenging to establish. However, it could be linked to the phenomenon of abandonment/destruction of temples dedicated to Iupiter Dolichenus. Based on these considerations, the building can be approximately dated to the mid-third century.

Several aspects of this sanctuary have necessitated reevaluation. The prevailing hypothesis that this edifice was initially consecrated to Apollo and later on, in the second phase, to Iupiter Dolichenus, requires further clarification. The presence of votive monument fragments related to both cults might suggest their presence in this building, unfortunately the fragments were reused in the eastern wall and others as paving in the building's frontal zone. A votive column, reinterpreted by Szabó and Boda as a Iupiter Dolichenus monument, provides another perspective in which the eagle represents a symbol of Iupiter Dolichenus, and the stag is associated with his divine consort. These two deities appear together in other representations as well. Interestingly, the stag is depicted larger than the eagle, presented in natural size, suggesting a sense of equality between Iupiter (the eagle) and Juno (the stag).²⁹ This monument stands as the most definitive proof of the building's affiliation with this cult. Other fragments, like an eagle sculpture or a piece possibly from a bull, might suggest a similar connection.³⁰ The lone inscription, which Benea attributes to the god Apollo, is excessively fragmented and more plausibly pertains to a dedication to Gordian.³¹

Consequently, the sanctuary's proximity to the military fort, its internal configuration as well as the existence of representative monuments belonging to Iupiter Dolichenus are conclusive evidence to say that the edifice belonged to this deity. The internal structure, especially in the second phase of construction, indicates the role of a banqueting hall, highlighting various activities that might have been practiced within its precinct and usually associated with this cult. The many fragments that certify the god Apollo, most possibly have a different origin, and were brought here and reused maybe sometime in the second half of the third century or the beginning of the fourth century.

Porolissum

The building was identified northwest of the Porolissum fort as a result of the research conducted by Nicolae Gudea and Dan Tamba to clarify the stratigraphic and planimetric situation of LM1 building initially identified in 1939 by

²⁷ Benea 2008, 105-106.

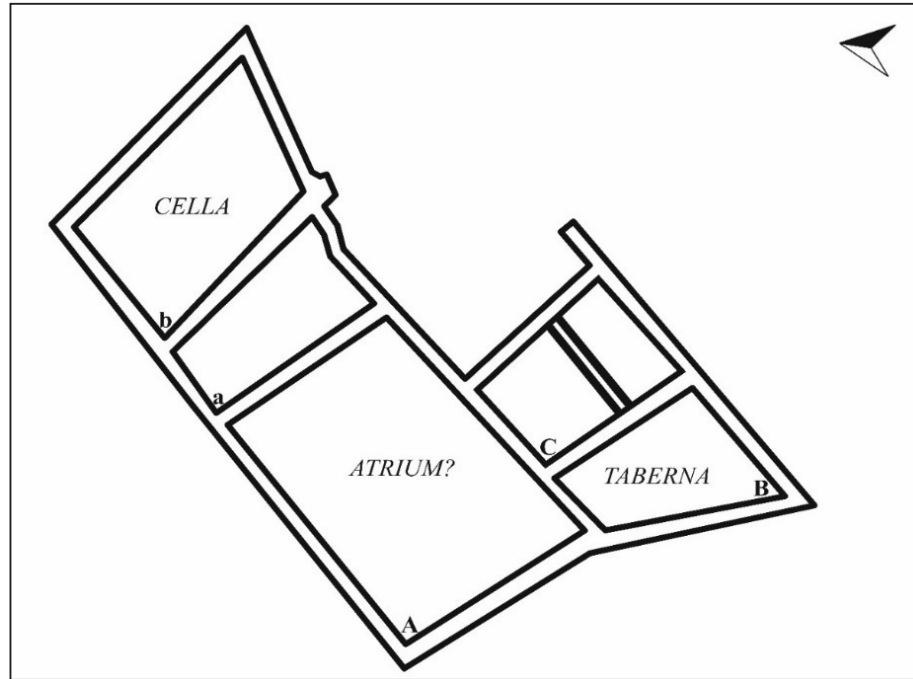
²⁸ Benea 2008, 111-113.

²⁹ Boda and Szabó 2011, 275-280.

³⁰ Benea 2008, 94, 96.

³¹ AE 2011, 1096.

Constantin Daicoviciu. In the investigations carried out in the 1990s, specifically from 1990 to 1993, two walls were identified northeast of room A, appearing to function as buttresses supporting the sloping structure. Subsequent conservation and restoration efforts necessitated excavations in 1996, 1998, and 1999. These excavations revealed that these buttresses were extensions of the actual walls of the LM1 building. Additionally, two more rooms were identified in this area, constituting the LM1-S building.³²



Pl. II. The planimetry of the temple from Porolissum. Adapted after: Gudea and Tamba 2001.

The LM1 building was divided into three rooms. Room A was interpreted by Gudea and Tamba as a banqueting hall opening toward the road. Inside, on two sides, three column bases were identified, suggesting the presence of a portico. The first phase of room A is notably sparse in archaeological material and appears to have been constructed from a clay structure. In contrast, the second phase of the room features a brick pavement.³³ Ioan Piso considers this to be most likely an inner courtyard, an *atrium*, allowing access to the other rooms.³⁴ Room B, located southeast of A, has been identified as a *culina* where bread and other food items were prepared. Room C, found northeast of B, was interpreted as a dwelling due to the presence of a relatively rudimentary *hypocaustum* system.³⁵ An inscription mentions the construction of a *templum* and *tabernae*.³⁶

LM 1-S, identified northeast of A, was divided into two rooms, *a* and *b*. Room *a* does not yield abundant votive archaeological material; however, in *b*, most of the statuette fragments and inscriptions were found. This space can thus be divided into the inner courtyard (room A), which likely served to receive the worshipers, and room B, paved with brick, the primary area for rituals and the exhibition of key religious objects such as a statue of the god made of stone³⁷, a statuette made of marble³⁸, and many other fragments. Centrally, a pedestal constructed from clay and brick was discerned, where one the main inscription was located.³⁹ It's worth noting that many votive objects were discovered in a small excavation area east of room *b*, suggesting the presence of a *sacrarium* where these items were stored. The role of the so called *taberna* and the additional room, especially due to the presence of the heating system, might suggest a space dedicated for ritual banquets, nevertheless the space is very small, and such gatherings were hard to display, even for a small community. It is also not excluded that this *taberna* might have served an economical role in relation with the sanctuary.⁴⁰

Vetus Salina

Following excavation works for the construction of a water reservoir in 1975, traces of a building along with votive objects were unearthed, providing evidence of the cult of Iupiter Dolichenus' presence. Due to construction activities,

³² Gudea and Tamba 2001, 21-22.

³³ Gudea and Tamba 2001, 20.

³⁴ Piso 2001, 234.

³⁵ Gudea and Tamba 2001, 20-21.

³⁶ Piso 2001, 228.

³⁷ Gudea and Tamba 2001, 26.

³⁸ Gudea and Tamba 2001, 27.

³⁹ Gudea and Tamba 2001, 22-23.

⁴⁰ Szabó 2018, 134.

the western part of the edifice was destroyed, and traces of the building in this portion could only be sporadically identified, inferred with the floor plan. The temple is located approximately 80-90 m southwest of the Roman camp, of which only the southwest sector has been preserved, again due to river regulation works along the Danube. Sections opened at the edge of the reservoir pit led to the discovery of several walls. Consequently, the eastern part of the building was examined, along with certain adjacent structures. The edifice's walls were constructed with stone bound by clay. Regarding the temple's internal divisions into multiple rooms that can only be inferred analogously to other structures dedicated to this cult.

Additionally, colored plaster residues were found among the temple remains in the western part, while the eastern part suggested the presence of at least two rooms with different functions, as the plaster appeared to be white.⁴¹

Close to the temple, three other buildings were identified, but their functionality remains undetermined due to their poor state of preservation. Based on the wall traces, building I is located to the southern part of the edifice, and seems asymmetrically positioned, possibly indicating a preceding phase. Building II was discovered north of the Dolichenum, but only one row from the wall foundation could be captured. It was divided into two rooms, and although the entire plan couldn't be reconstructed due to western damages, it may have been related to the temple.⁴²

The third building, situated east of the temple, consists of two rooms, one smaller to the north and a larger one to the south. The difference in elevation compared to the temple, along with fragments of columns near this building, suggests that these columns were part of the temple's portico, indicating a higher level. However, the construction of this building appears to have leveled the space next to the edifice, suggesting different construction phases.⁴³

This theory is reinforced by the discovery of column fragments and inscriptions attesting to *Cohors III Batavorum*, found in the wall separating the rooms of Building III. This indicates a later reuse of such monuments.⁴⁴ Thus, it can be reasonably assumed that this building belongs to a different phase. It is also plausible that the column shafts used in this wall were taken from the temple, leaving behind their bases, identified within the building, with dimensions and materials similar to fragments from the religious edifice.

Brigetio

This sanctuary was discovered in 1900 during stone extraction works in the area of the legionary camp and the *canabae*. The temple is located approximately 114 m away from the southwest corner of the Brigetio camp. The sanctuary is oriented east-west with its entrance to the east, and its interior is separated by a wall (B) or votive colonnades. The functionality of the first room, C, is unknown, but due to its separation from room A, it is presumed that practitioners gathered here during rituals. Room A was likely intended for displaying the most important cult objects; however, due to the circumstances of the discovery and the loss of documentation, it is challenging to ascertain whether it also had an arrangement resembling a banquet hall.⁴⁵

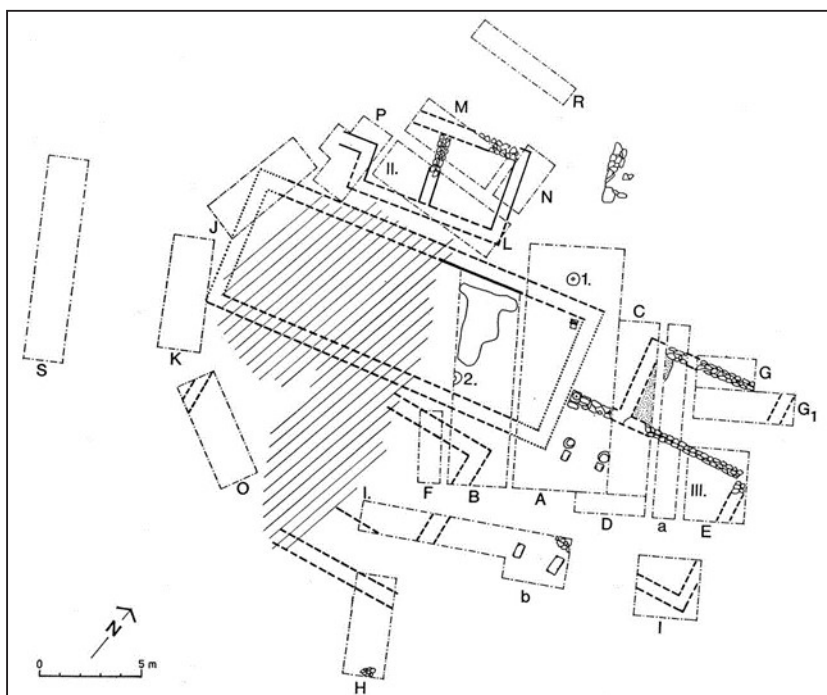


Fig. 1. The planimetry of the temple from Vetus Salina. Source: Bánki 1981, 97, Abb. 2.

⁴¹ Bánki 1981, 96.

⁴² Bánki 1981, 97.

⁴³ Bánki 1981, 97-98.

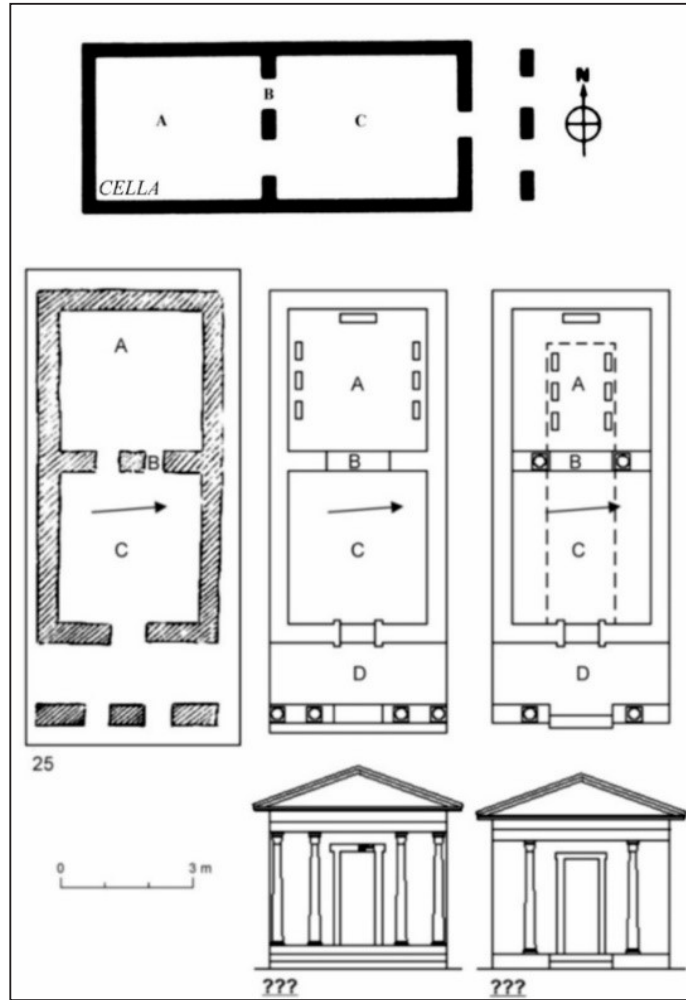
⁴⁴ Bánki 1981, 101, cat. 21-29.

⁴⁵ Ratimorská and Minaroviech, 2009, 7-9.

Furthermore, other structures were observed in front of the temple, possibly indicating a portico. The only column fragments were found approximately 10 m from the temple, though it cannot be definitively stated whether they originated from the building.⁴⁶ The presence of the legionary camp and members of the community from Commagene facilitated the development of the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus here, and the preservation of a fairly impressive number of votive objects attests to this.⁴⁷

Carnuntum I

At Carnuntum, two cult structures have been identified and attributed to Jupiter Dolichenus. The first of these was located near the auxiliary camp in the present-day village of Petronell, in what seems to have been a sacred area (a wall identified here appears to have served as the enclosure of a sanctuary). The building is attached to a *mithraeum* on its southern portion and is believed to have been aligned in the west-east direction. Its shape is nearly square, although the eastern wall is not symmetrical with the others, and the lengths of the four sides are different. The foundation of the stone walls is preserved up to a height of 35 cm, while the walls themselves stand at a height of 1 m, with a thickness ranging from 1.14 to 1.30 m. An open section on the eastern side has been identified as a potential entrance



Pl. III. The planimetry of the temple from Brigetio, with possible reconstructions. Adapted after Horig and Schwertheim 1987, 156, Abb. 14; Ratimorská and Minaroviech 2009, fig. 26 a,b.

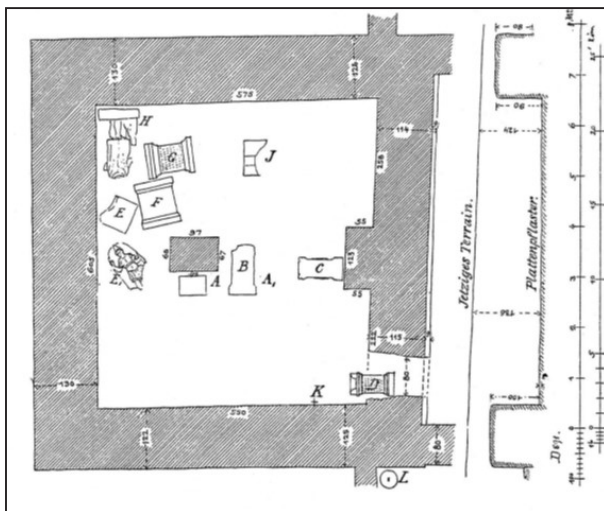


Fig. 2. The planimetry of the Dolichenum I from Carnuntum. Source: Schwarzer 2012, 199, Abb. 11.

to the building. Additionally, on the interior side, a structure resembling a buttress, measuring 1.23 m in length, was found. The interior of the room was paved with bricks, and painted plaster was identified on the walls.⁴⁸

A noteworthy feature is the presence of a brick pilaster in the central area of the room, constructed using whole bricks and fragments. Considering the thickness of the walls and the portion of the eastern wall that projects inward, aligning with the brick pilaster, suggests that this building had an upper floor supported by these structures. This is further supported by fragments of brick mosaic, which could have served as flooring for the upper level that subsequently collapsed onto the floor of the building.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ratimorská and Minaroviech, 2009, 9.
⁴⁷ Horig and Schwertheim 1987, no. 225, 238, 239, 240, 244.
⁴⁸ Horig and Schwertheim 1987, 143-144.
⁴⁹ Horig and Schwertheim 1987, 143-144.

Carnuntum II

The second building, considered to be dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus was discovered on the slope of a hill near Bad Deutsch-Altenburg during excavations in the 1970s-1980s, a site now entirely destroyed by a quarry. Initially it was thought to be dedicated to the Capitoline Triad⁵⁰, but this theory was later refuted.⁵¹ The building was instead associated with an inscription found in the nearby amphitheater, suggesting that it may have functioned as an assembly house for *iuventus colens*.⁵²

It is located approximately 2 km east of the legionary camp which sets it apart from the previously analyzed structures. The entrance is situated on the western side. The building consists of three rooms, the central one labeled A and two lateral ones, B and C. Additionally, there is a portico labeled D in front of it, measuring 19.70 m x 3 m. In room A, with dimensions of 13.45 m x 10.40 m, two double walls originating from the east and parallel to the north and south walls were identified.

Initially interpreted as part of a Capitoline temple with three aisles, the 60 cm distance between these walls and the main walls of the building are too small for such an arrangement. Instead, it is suggested that these are small podiums for placing food and drinks during banquets, or possibly benches rather than podiums supporting columns or walls. The absence of a temple podium and of an inscription indicating the presence of the Capitoline Triad negates the possibility of this structure being a Capitolium.⁵³ The two walls do not extend to the entrance, allowing access to the other two rooms, B and C. Room B, measuring 7.10 m x 4.56 m, likely served as a kitchen for preparing the necessities for the banquets, while room C, significantly smaller at 3.30 m x 3.10 m, functioned as a storage space for ritual inventory.⁵⁴

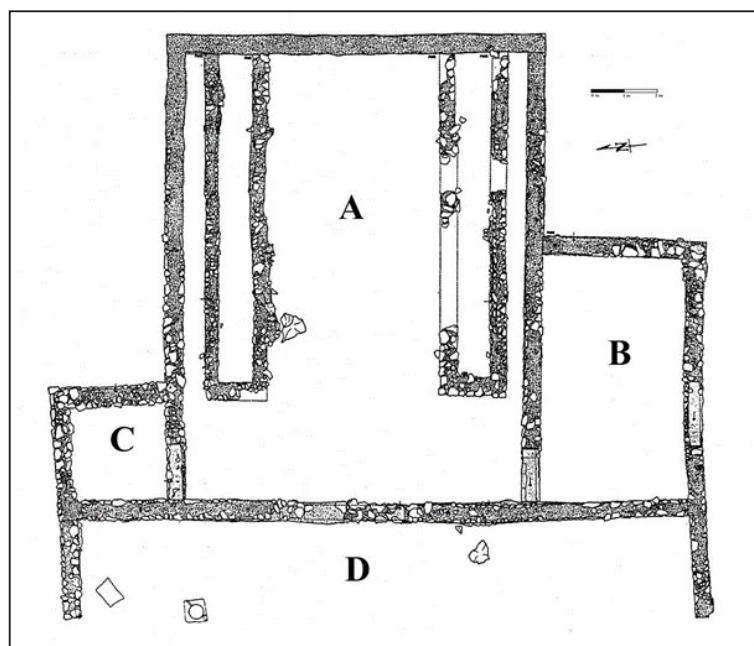


Fig. 3. The planimetry of Dolichenum II from Carnuntum.
Source: Stiglitz, Kandler and Jobst 1977, 712, Abb. 11b.

Virunum

This temple was discovered in 1913 in the present-day village of Zollfeld, its existence being presumed as early as 1838 when a farmer accidentally stumbled upon an inscription in the area, attesting to the construction of a *sacrarium* and a *triclinium* by the command of the deity.⁵⁵ It is located to the north of the Capitol and the forum. Recent research based on geophysical measurements and aerial photographs also indicates the existence of a fort in the city, explaining the presence of military personnel in the area; thus, the temple is situated to the northwest of this fort on a lower slope.⁵⁶

The total size of the building is 17.70 m x 11.60 m, and its walls were constructed from stone. The temple is divided into four well-defined rooms. In Room I, with dimensions of 7.85 x 6.45 m in the southern area of the temple where the entrance was located, the floor was made of mortar with bricks. In the north-western part, two smaller walls forming a 90-degree angle were identified, suggesting the possible existence of a pilaster that may have served as support for certain votive objects. Due to its size and the inventory found here, this room is considered the main cult chamber. The second room was also interpreted as a cult space, but it had a beaten-earth floor. Its dimensions were 7.80 x 3.60 m, and the separation from the western room may have been intended to accommodate certain

⁵⁰ Stiglitz, Kandler and Jobst 1977, 713.

⁵¹ Schwarzer 2012, 156.

⁵² Horig and Schwertheim 1987, no. 217.

⁵³ Schwarzer 2012, 156-157.

⁵⁴ Schwarzer 2012, 157-158.

⁵⁵ Horig and Schwertheim 1987, 212.

⁵⁶ Gugl et al. 2016, 145-149.

believers or non-initiates in a separate space.⁵⁷ A similar phenomenon can probably be observed at the temple in Brigetio, where two rooms are separated. It is not excluded that a similar situation existed at Vetus Salina, although the western half of the temple there was destroyed, so there cannot be specify with certainty if it is the same situation.

Room III, located to the north of Room II, has smaller dimensions, only 7.80 x 3.60 m. However, the situation here is special because there is a hypocaust installation, so most likely, this room was reserved for banquets with the *triclinium* mentioned in the inscription. In the case of Room IV, the floor is also beaten earth, and the smaller dimensions of 7.85 x 3.25 m indicate that this was most likely a sacarium where the main cult objects were stored. The exact time when this building was abandoned is not known, but the upper layer shows signs of intensive burning and destruction.⁵⁸

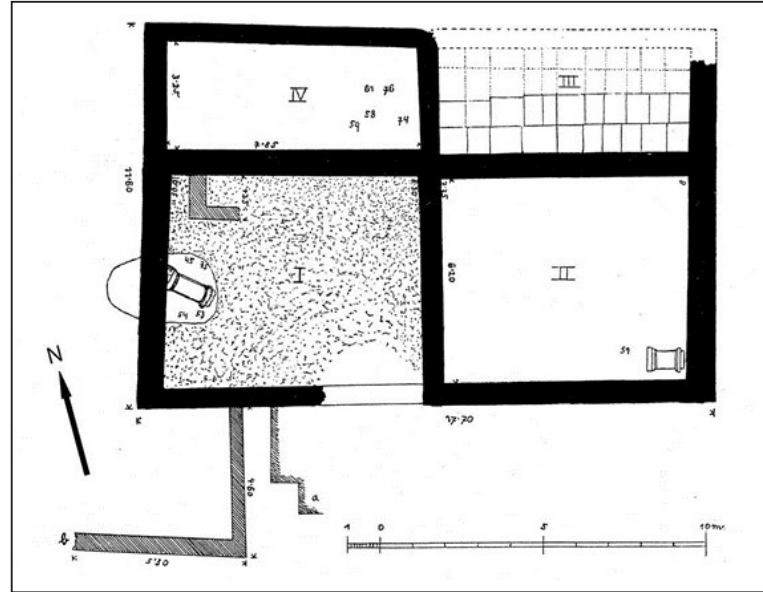
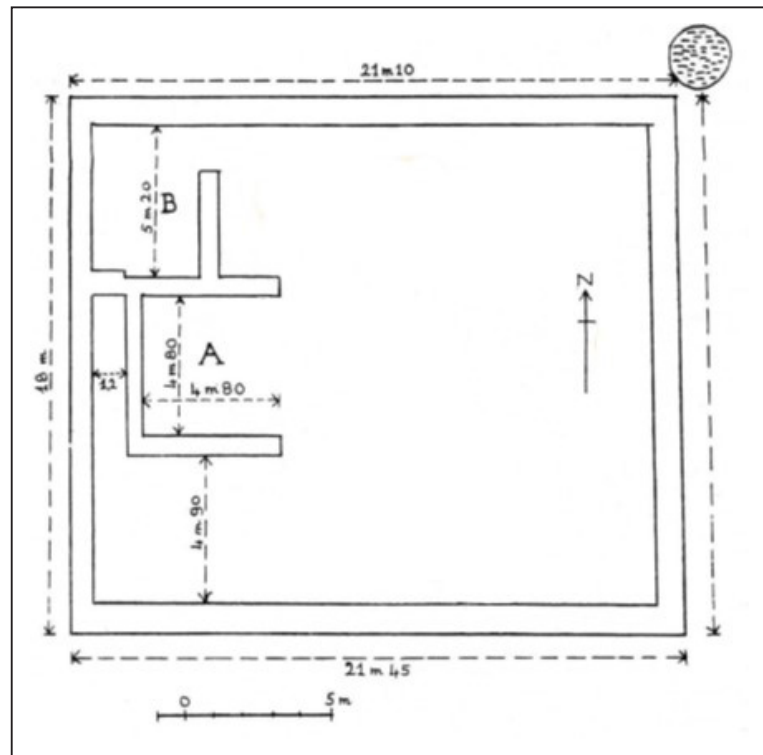


Fig. 4. The planimetry of the temple from Virunum.
Source: Schwarzer 2012, 200, Abb. 15.

Vetoniana

The temple of Iupiter Dolichenus at Vetoniana was identified during excavations and surveys conducted in the fortress and adjacent vicus in the year 1888.⁵⁹ It is situated approximately 50 meters south of the fortress and near the road that extends southward from it. Its shape is rectangular, possibly with the entrance to the east, although this has not been positively identified. The dimensions are 21.45 x 21.10 meters, and the remaining walls are visible up to a height of approximately 40 to 50 centimeters. The interior was compartmentalized in a straightforward manner, and in the western zone, a structure consisting of three walls, resembling a *cella*, was identified. The opening of this *cella* faces east, suggesting it may serve as an entrance to this part of the edifice. A wall extending from the northern portion of the *cella* forms a small chamber in the northwestern corner of the building, featuring a relatively small entrance, leading to the presumption that this chamber



Pl. IV. The Planimetry of the edifice from Vetoniana.
Adapted after: Schwarzer 2012, 201, A.

⁵⁷ Schwarzer 2012, 159-160.

⁵⁸ Schwarzer 2012, 159-160.

⁵⁹ Leisser 2015, 62.

had the function of a *sacrarium*. Outside the temple, in the northeastern corner, a pit filled with remnants of construction materials was identified, although its initial purpose remains unknown. Furthermore, within the edifice, additional wall remnants were discovered, their functionality and origin eluding conclusive determination; these may potentially belong to structures predating the temple.⁶⁰

The functionality of rooms

Until the present moment, it is certain that the temples of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Roman Empire lack a specific architectural archetype.⁶¹ Recent research at Doliche has unfortunately not provided sufficient information to establish whether the original temple of the cult serves as a model for all others from an architectural standpoint. The Roman phase is notably disrupted, overlapping with earlier phases, and distinguishing Roman foundations from Iron Age or later ones proves challenging. Only fragments of architectural structures could be utilized here to discern certain analogies, particularly within the Syrian context. Nonetheless, archaeological findings attest to the presence of the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in this region.⁶²

One of the most significant discoveries is a votive stele depicting the deity alongside his *paredra*, dated to the Roman phase of the structure. The artistic style evokes Iron Age art, with both figures represented hieratically, akin to the priests in the lower register of the image. Their attributes are rigid and bear analogies to representations of ancient deities in the Eastern region.⁶³

In the case of temples in the Danubian provinces, we can fortunately establish, in most cases, the exact construction phases and their floor plans. One crucial aspect to consider is the location of the *cella*, where the main image of the deity should be displayed—the most sacred space within the temple. As has been previously observed, such a chamber can undoubtedly be identified in the temples at Mehadia and Vetoniana, where the demarcation is quite clear. At Vetoniana, the *cella* is delineated by interior walls, whereas at Mehadia, the *cella* extends outside the building, a rather atypical feature since it should be located within.

If, in other cases among those analyzed, a clear demarcation of a *cella* cannot be identified, there is nevertheless an observable separation of the interior space into several larger chambers. Based on archaeological material, we can determine which of these chambers served the purpose of displaying and storing not only the main statue of the deity but also other votive monuments. Such a separation is evident at Porolissum, where in Room B or in its vicinity, most of the votive objects were identified. Here, a division into two rooms is observed, with one reserved for main rituals and the other as an *atrium* for the reception of worshippers.

For the temple at Vetus Salina, uncertainty prevails regarding the existence of a separation into two chambers due to the temple's destruction during basin construction works. However, the captured portion suggests a plan similar to that of Brigetio, where it is quite clear that such a separation existed, even though the exact means, whether through columns or a wall, remain unknown. It is not excluded that at Vetus Salina, the walls adjacent to the temple may have belonged to other chambers, yet this is challenging to specify due to the level of destruction.

The situation at Virunum somewhat parallels that at Porolissum. In both cases, multiple adjoining chambers are present, each distinct from the others. At Virunum, Room I appears to be the chamber where main votive monuments were displayed, possibly with a small pedestal for the deity's statue. Room II could have served for the reception of worshippers, while the other two, as previously mentioned, might have functioned as a *sacrarium* and a banqueting chamber, respectively. Notably, the entrance was through Room I at Virunum, an unusual arrangement as practitioners would have had more challenging access to the main chamber of the temple. The *triclinium* mentioned in the construction inscription is the room where the heating system was discovered, akin to the situation at Porolissum. Therefore, we can confidently assert that, in this case as well, that chamber was likely reserved for feasts, with the heating system used during colder seasons.

At the temple of Petronell-Carnuntum, a distinctive situation arises where separation appears to occur across levels. The lower level likely served the preservation and exhibition of the main statue, while the upper level could have been reserved for rituals or banquets. The pilaster found in the central part of the chamber may have functioned as a pedestal for a monument, possibly even for the deity's statue. A similar situation is encountered at Porolissum, where a pedestal was identified in the central area of the chamber, supporting the construction inscription of the building collapsed nearby.⁶⁴ Hence, it can be argued that these traces of brick pilasters at Carnuntum represent

⁶⁰ Leisser 2015, 63-64.

⁶¹ Schwertheim 1981, 201.

⁶² Winter 2011, 6-9.

⁶³ Blömer 2011, 72-74.

⁶⁴ Gudea and Tamba 2001, 25.

more of a pedestal for a monument than a column intended to support an upper level. This argument is reinforced by the presence of the inscription base and the statue that could have been placed upon it.⁶⁵

Regarding what appears to be a buttress in the eastern wall, it might serve as an *aedicula* structure for the relief with an inscription found collapsed and fragmented a few meters away.⁶⁶ Thus, all these separate chambers, despite their larger dimensions, can be considered as *cella*, much closer to the concept of Roman religious architecture.

The presence of a *sacrarium* can also reveal the manner in which rituals unfolded. Such chambers could be identified as separate rooms or internal partitions, as seen at Vetoniana. It is challenging to identify a *sacrarium* for the temples at Petronell-Carnuntum, Vetus Salina, and Brigetio. At Carnuntum, the exact role of the upper level could not be established. However, the floor plan of the building at Virunum is quite similar to that of Brigetio. Considering the inscription at Virunum mentioning the construction of a *sacrarium* and a *triclinium*, it can be assumed that these were built separately, possibly in a later phase, due to the necessity of storing mobile cult objects. A similar situation may exist at Porolissum, where the walls outside Room B could have housed a *sacrarium*.

Separate storage spaces and distinct ritual chambers may also indicate how practitioners of the cult accessed the building. At Mehadia and Bad-Deutsch Altenburg-Carnuntum, a *vestibulum* and *porticus* were identified, respectively, while at Porolissum, an *atrium* could exist. These elements could have served as ways to separate initiates into the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus. The rooms at Brigetio, possibly Vetus Salina, and Virunum likely served the same purpose. Schwarzer notes in the temple of Dura Europos the presence of multiple chambers that might even be related to a social stratification of practitioners.⁶⁷

The role of religious banquets

It is well-established that certain chambers were reserved for the conduct of ritual banquets, both in the case of the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus and in the practice of other cults, such as that of Mithras. We must consider the role such a cult could have played in the social cohesion of its practitioners. Being a mystery cult, practitioners were significantly fewer compared to state-sponsored cults. The priestly body attracted individuals from various social backgrounds, highlighting the adaptation of cult buildings to their specific needs. Banquets held an important role in the overall aspects of Roman society, from social cohesion to economic and moral features, they were an important pillar of communication.⁶⁸ Therefore religious banquets represented an important moment in the rituals and sacred activities, most likely associated in this case with certain holidays and as temporal landmarks in their daily life.

While we categorize them as temples, primarily due to the archaeological material associated with them, it is crucial to acknowledge that these buildings served multiple functions. Their association with classical cult structures can be misleading, as the architecture of some suggests the practice of ritual banquets, in contrast to the distinct configuration of classical temples.⁶⁹ In this context, the two Dolichenus cult buildings in Carnuntum provide the best analogy. The rich votive material from Petronell-Carnuntum distinctly indicates the ritual nature of this structure, although the extent to which banquets may have taken place remains uncertain, with only ceramic fragments offering potential evidence.

On the other hand, the inscription found near the amphitheater at Bad-Deutsch Altenburg-Carnuntum unequivocally attests to the presence of a college dedicated to the god Jupiter Dolichenus, possibly in the *canabae*. Their activities were linked to the construction of one of the enclosure wall's section and a gate of for amphitheater.⁷⁰ It could reasonably be assumed that this served as a gathering place for young practitioners under the organization of a college. The presence of two cult buildings with different configurations at Carnuntum could aid in better understanding the functioning of other analyzed temples. The closest analogy to Carnuntum is observed in Mehadia, where the compartmentalization of the main nave draws attention. While not implying a separation into multiple naves, it suggests an arrangement allowing for the placement of benches for banquets. A similar arrangement is evident at Carnuntum, where a *culina* and a *sacrarium* were identified, potentially indicating the occurrence of such activities.

In Dacia, other analogies for similar assembly places have been identified at Porolissum and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa.⁷¹ For Virunum, Porolissum, and possibly Vetus Salina, the configuration is different, and the banquet chambers are much smaller, suggesting a smaller community.

⁶⁵ Horig and Schwertheim 1987, no. 223, 224.

⁶⁶ Horig and Schwertheim 1987, no. 222.

⁶⁷ Schwarzer 2012, 178.

⁶⁸ Zerbini 2014.

⁶⁹ Diaconescu, 2011, 135-136.

⁷⁰ Piso 2003, 19.

⁷¹ Diaconescu 2011, 139-158.

Conclusions

The present study aims to a comparative analysis of these temples in the Danubian provinces, in order to ascertain the differences between various settlements and identify factors that may influence these variations. Due to the absence of an architectural archetype, the configuration of these temples exhibits considerable diversity. To discern potential patterns, I undertook an analysis of the functionality of the temple chambers, based on their configuration and relevant archaeological materials.

In cases where the context was disrupted or destroyed, an endeavour was undertaken to identify the closest analogies to fill any gaps in the analysis as comprehensively as possible. While avoiding a clear typology of the temples analyzed, it is important to consider certain criteria for the ongoing analysis and the conclusions drawn from identifying the functionality of the chambers. The temple at Bad-Deutsch Altenburg-Carnuntum and that from Mehadia exhibit some features that could categorize them as buildings used as gathering places, found in several religious cults. They appear better organized in terms of their floor plan. On the other hand, the structures at Virunum and Porolissum do not seem to have the same organization, but the random separation of chambers suggests the need to fulfill certain purposes for the practitioners. In the case of the temples at Brigetio and Vetus Salina, the floor plan is relatively simple, being the only temples where the practice of banquets or the presence of a separate *sacrarium* could not be definitively identified. The same can be said about the edifices from Petronell-Carnuntum and Vetoniana, in both cases they have a simple, almost square plan.

Consequently, the variations in the planimetry have different causes, but the necessities imposed by the religious community and possibly by certain religious ideas which sometimes elude us, are present in the internal separation of the buildings and reflected by the position of archaeological material within the rooms. The importance of these demands exceeds the need for a rigorous architecture, which might sometimes be limited by space or even financial constraints. Beyond religion and cult activities, these buildings had important roles in social cohesion and identity, acting as places of gathering and spacial landmarks.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AE. L'Année Epigraphique. Presses Universitaires de France.

CIL III. Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, III, 1873.

IDR III, 2. Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae, III, 2.

IDR III, 5. Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae, III, 5.

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Liste des illustrations

- Fig. 1. La planimétrie du temple de Vetus Salina. Source : Bánki 1981, 97, Abb. 2.
- Fig. 2. La planimétrie du Dolichenum I de Carnuntum. Source : Schwarzer 2012, 199, Abb. 11.
- Fig. 3. La planimétrie du Dolichenum II de Carnuntum. Source : Stiglitz, Kandler et Jobst 1977, 712, Abb. 11b.
- Fig. 4. La planimétrie du temple de Virunum. Source : Schwarzer 2012, 200, Abb. 15.
- Pl. I. La planimétrie du temple de Mehadia. Adapté de : Benea 2008, fig. 17.
- Pl. II. La planimétrie du temple de Porolissum. Adapté de : Gudea et Tamba 2001.
- Pl. III. La planimétrie du temple de Brigetio, avec des reconstructions possibles. Adapté de : Horig et Schwertheim 1987, 156, Abb. 14; Ratimorská et Minaroviech 2009, fig. 26 a,b.
- Pl. IV. La planimétrie de l'édifice de Vetoniana. Adapté de : Schwarzer 2012, 201, A..

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