SACERDOS OF JUPITER DOLICHENUS
FROM AN INSCRIPTION RECENTLY DISCOVERED
IN THE VICINITY OF VIMINACIUM

Abstract. – The cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, of oriental origin, is evident in almost all the territory of the Roman Empire. The followers of the Dolichenus theology, such as soldiers, priests, tradesmen, miners and freedmen dedicated figural representations, as well as numerous inscriptions to the glory of the deity. In the Upper Moesia territory, particular frequency of dedication is noticed in the Danube border region, limes, from where the inscription, published in this study, originates. We provide detailed description of the inscription, solution and translation of the text, palaeographic characteristics, we try to close analogies, clarify geographic points concerning the origin of the dedicant and finally, propose a dating for the inscription.

Key words. – The cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, inscription, village Kličevac, dedication, priest Aurelius Iulianus

Before we start reading and discussing the inscription, which is the subject of this study and published for the first time in scientific literature, we think it is important to make a few notes concerning the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, its origin, significance, representations and routes of expansion throughout the Roman Empire, and particularly in the province of Upper Moesia.

The Jupiter Dolichenus cult, as can be concluded from the names of the god, originates from the regions of North Syria and is usually connected with the Commagenian town of Doliche (Dülük in today's Turkey). In accordance with the interpretation of a number of inscriptions discovered in the west part of the Roman world and dedicated to the Dolichenus deity, his homeland has a significant meaning in itself. Namely, here we deal with an area rich in iron ore, which indicates the epigraphic formula ubi ferrum nascitur, that is ubi ferrum exortitur. The traces of iron metallurgy are certainly evident in the Doliche itself, but the Anatolian plateau area, in general, rich in ore deposits in the past as it is today, should also be considered as a point of origin of the cult.

The Dolichenian deity is, in fact, the local god Baal; the basis of the cult itself should be traced more deeply in Syrian religion and tradition of the pre-Roman period. The attributes and iconography of Dolichenus (bull, double axe and lightning), are based precisely on the elements of the autochthonous pantheon: The Aramaic Hadad, Hurith Teshub, Sumerian Iskur, Acadian Adad. The competence of Dolichenus speaks of the syncretism of different influences and, in general, refers to the Sky (Sun) and Earth.

Gradually, thanks to strong contacts with Roman culture, Dolichenus was connected and identified with Jupiter, which was also frequently the case with some other native cults, so in this way he enters the Roman...
pantheon under the name of *Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus.* In sculptures and relieves the deity is represented as a man with a long beard and Frigian cap on his head, standing on the back of a bull. In the right hand, he holds a double axe, *bipennis,* while in the left he holds a bundle of lightening. In accordance with the Syrian tradition, he is joined by a complementary female deity, *Iuno Regina,* often represented in a standing position, on a doe, while looking in the direction of Dolichenus. As well as this, epigraphic monuments were dedicated to the Jupiter Dolichenus cult, while sanctuaries, *dolichenia,* with special architecture and inventory for religious rituals were built too.

The Dolichenus cult spread quickly over the Roman world. One should not expect to find the follower of the Commagenian deity only in one group of believers, primarily among soldiers, as it is usually thought, but also in social classes, like tradesmen or craftsmen of eastern origin. As an example of the inclusion of different social groups, we will mention one somewhat particular type of Dolichenus dedicants, miners and together with them those who were directly or indirectly connected with the mining areas. As we have already mentioned the inscriptions states that the deity was created there where iron is born, *ubi ferrum nascitur (exoritur).*

To this, we should also add representations of Castors, the divine escorts and assistants, confirmed on the inscriptions and iconographic monuments of the Dolichenus cult. Here we actually deal with the interpretation and comprehension of another detail of Jupiter Dolichenus theology concerning the aspect of hardness and permanence represented, above all, in the insurance of stability in the mining layers. Thus, it is absolutely right to conclude that the Dolichenus cult was particularly respected and widespread in mining areas, *territoria metallorum,* which examples like the one from *Ferrariae Panonicae* clearly show.

The intensive penetration of the Jupiter Dolichenus cult into the Upper Moesia province, is often connected, in scientific literature, with the Severan dynasty reign, thus, the end of 2nd and beginning of 3rd century AD. Concerning the spreading of the Dolichenus cult over the Upper Moesia territory, two dates are particularly significant. Namely, in the year 198 AD, the emperor Septimus Severus, in the course of whose reign a significant number of Orientals complemented the army and administration, goes to Syria; this was an opportunity to become acquainted with the local cults and it seems especially with the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus. On his return from the East, in the year 202 AD, he passed through Moesia and *Viminacium* (Kostolac). However, it is difficult to give the precise *terminus post quem* for the establishing of the cult in the regions of Upper Moesia. The worshipers of Jupiter Dolichenus could have existed even earlier, that is before the Severan dynasty. In the past, there were certainly distinct ethnic intermingling and migrations, so that the new-comers from the East could be found among soldiers, as well as, among other social categories like tradesmen, craftsmen, miners, freedmen and slaves. It is known, for example, that, during the 1st century, the first cohort of Thracians from Syria, *cohors I Thracum Syriaca,* was situated in the Roman army camp in Ravna, *Tinacum Minus,* in the valley of the river Timok. From the discovered inscription, we learn not only about the tribune Vecellius Modestus, under whose command the cohort was moved from Syria, but also about the soldiers and veterans, who having finished military service settled in the surroundings of the *castrum.* There may have been followers of the Dolichenus religion among them. However, already in the second half of 3rd century AD, documents concerning the presence of the Jupiter Dolichenus cult in the region of Upper Moesia, become very rare. Many scholars agree with this general con-

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5 The bull motif is characteristic of the Syrian religion; it has a positive and a negative aspect. He was the protector of crops, but also had destructive powers, Merlat P. 1960, 58–59.
6 Regarding representations of Jupiter Dolichenus as well as the architecture and inventory of his sanctuaries, *Bukovčak-Todorović D.* 1964–1965, 178.
8 Merlat P. 1952; *Dörner F. K.* 1965; *Speidel M. P.* 1977.
9 Concerning the representation of Jupiter Dolichenus with Castors, from the inventory of the *dolichenium* in *Egeta,* *Vučković-Todorović D.* 1964–1965, 176–177.
10 *Šašel A.,* J. 1963, 764 (Maslovare): *IOMD et Castoribus* [M. Aur. Flavius sacerdos I O | MD v.s.l.I.m.]
12 Regarding the extent to which the Dolichenus cult was spread in the region of *Ferrariae Panonicae* through epigraphic dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus and Castors, *Dušan S.* 1999, 134.
15 The sculpture of Jupiter Dolichenus on a bull, without inscription, was found in *Tinacum Minus,* *Bynum H.* 1941–1948, 92, 201.
16 Concerning the antique fortification *Tinacum Minus* and army garrisons which were stationed there, *Petrović P.* 1995, 32; *Petrović P.* – *Jovanović C.* 1997, 18.
Fig. 1. Monument with inscription from Kličevac (photo D. Kovačević):

a) inscription field observed from the left side;
b) inscription field observed from the right side

Сл. 1. Споменник са најтисном из Кличевца (фото Д. Ковачевић):
а) најтисно поле посматрано са леве стране;
б) најтисно поле посматрано са десне стране

clusion. Reasons for the withdrawal undoubtedly exist. In our regions, from the second half of 3rd century, in general, there are fewer and fewer inscriptions, while at the same time, the process of conversion to Christianity begins. However, we consider it likely that even after the Severan dynasty, followers of the Dolichenus cult still existed. The Dolichenus cult could have been preserved in its essential form, especially in more closed and more specific environments, like mining areas. Similar examples are known from the regions of nearby Dalmatia, from the site Majdanište in the valley of the river Japra.

The monuments of the Dolichenus cult in the Upper Moesia region are most frequently epigraphic in character, while purely figural forms appear in relatively small number. It is important to mention that they are found mainly in the areas where the Roman army was settled for a longer period. Here we are dealing, in the first place, with the regions of the Danube border, where the Roman legions IV Flavia and VII Claudia were stationed. We know only of one sanctuary dedicated to this deity, discovered near Brza Palanka, antique Egeta. The Deity dedicants: priests, soldiers, tradesmen or craftsmen, in the majority of cases originate from the Orient, that is the region from which the cult spread. The local population of Upper Moesia considered this cult, it seems, closely connected with newcomers from the East, in the first place soldiers. This is concluded due to the absence of monuments dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus in the area.

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Thanks to good fortune, an inscription dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus was recently found on a monument

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17 Zorovic IJ. 1966, 49.
The text of the inscription reads:\textsuperscript{23} I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(oliccheno) | AVR(elius) IVLIANVS | IVLIANI (filius) SAC(erdos) | EIVSDEM DEI | EX PR(ovincia) SYR(ia) COEL(e) | REG(ione) CYRR(h)ENS(i) | VICO CAPERSIN(a?) | [ – – – ]

Translation of the text reads:
To Jupiter, the best, the greatest, Dolichenus | Aurelius Julianus | Julianus’ (son), priest | of the same god, | from the province Syria Coele | of the Cyrrhus region, | of village Capersin(a?) | [ – – – ]

The addressee of the inscription is undoubtedly revealed by the formula I.O.M.D., in the first place, and by the information concerning Julianus’ Syrian origin in the lines 5–7. This clearly indicates that the inscription is dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus. A different solution for this consecration formula is not very likely. The Jupiter Dolichenus cult was widespread, so that there was no need for the whole name of the deity to be written or slightly shortened.\textsuperscript{24}

The area itself, where the inscription was found, Roman Kličevac (connection with the legionary camp?) also favours the already mentioned conclusion\textsuperscript{25}. Therefore the dedicant of the inscription, Aurelius Julianus, was a priest of the Dolichenus cult. It seems quite possible that, as an Oriental, he was attached to

\textsuperscript{20} According to documentation in the Pozarevac Museum, the village Kličevac is located beside the Danube, in the Stig region, on the main road Pozarevac–Ram–Veliko Gradiste. It is only 8 km from antique Viminacium (Kostolac).

\textsuperscript{21} The cylindrical form of the monument points to the eastern origin of the dedicant, eg., Mirković M. 1986, no. 212.

\textsuperscript{22} Ligature VS also appears in the inscription from Timacium Minus. According to Professor Petar Petrović it appears in all provinces of Balkan and it is also confirmed in around forty inscriptions from the region of Pannonia, Petrović P. 1975, 55; According to Malone’s interpretation we are dealing with ligature, which having been transmitted from ordinary alphabet onto stone inscription, changed its character, Mallon J. 1953, 150.

\textsuperscript{23} In line 5, between P and R, there is a punctuation mark. Maybe these letters should be read as two abbreviations, for example pr\selectlanguage{sr}ovin\selectlanguage{en}(ia) R(omana\selectlanguage{sr}a\selectlanguage{en}?).

\textsuperscript{24} For a more thorough interpretation of the solution for the formula I.O.M.D., Jorović Jb. 1966, 37–43.

\textsuperscript{25} Little is known about Kličevac in the Roman epoch. The remains of the army road which led from Viminacium (Kostolac) in the direction of the fortification Lederata (Ram) and further along the Iron Gate lines are confirmed near the village. Concerning the road from Viminacium to Lederata., Mirkovic M. 1986, 22. During construction of the Kličevac local authority building, remains of an object from the Roman period, recorded in the documentation of the Pozarevac Museum, were found in the foundations. Apart from the short distance between antique Kličevac and Viminacium (8 km), archaeological finds discovered on this territory also confirm the

Fig. 2. Drawing of the text of the inscription (arch. O. Petrović)

Сл. 2. Цртеж текста матрице (арх. О. Петривић)
the emperor’s army, during some of the sojourns of Upper Moesian legions in Syria. The inscriptions found in the surroundings of Cyrrhus confirm this.\textsuperscript{26} The priests of Jupiter Dolichenus are also mentioned in some inscriptions found on the Danube lines in Upper Moesia.\textsuperscript{27}

In the text of our ex-voto the dedicants homeland is mentioned precisely: province \textit{Syria Coele}, region Cyrrhestica\textsuperscript{28} and village \textit{Capersin(a?)}. The village Capersana, mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus, can be identified with \textit{Capersin(a?)} from the 7th line of our inscription.\textsuperscript{29} We can conclude on the basis of toponyms in several inscriptions found in our part of Danube,\textsuperscript{30} that, on the territory of \textit{Viminacium}, there were newcomers from North Syria, particularly from Commagene, that is the Dolichenus area.

Several significant elements speak of the chronology of the inscription. Precisely engraved text, separation marks in the shape of triangular carvings and forms of letters (A – with lines of identical length and ends stressed with horizontal serifs, I – with shorter horizontal line stressed with a vertical serif, S – with arched lines which end with triangular serifs, V – with ends marked with horizontal serifs), do not contradict dating in the first decades of the 3rd century AD. On the other hand, the absence of the \textit{praenomen} in the name of the dedicant indicates the epoch of late Antonins and Severus. It is also important to point out the fact that the province \textit{Syria Coele}, from which the dedication of the inscription originates, was founded in the time of Septimius Severus (193–211), more correctly in 194 AD, by dividing Syria into \textit{Syria Coele} in the North and \textit{Syria Phoentece} in the South.\textsuperscript{31} This is one \textit{terminus post quem} for our monument. The name of the dedicant, Aurelius Iulianus, surely indicates that he or maybe already his parent received Roman citizenship under Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, so called Caracalla (211–217). Namely, it is known that in 212 AD Caracalla proclaimed the famous edit \textit{Constitutio Antoniniana}, by which citizenship was conferred on almost all free people of the Roman Empire.\textsuperscript{32}

Having in mind the way in which the monument was finished, the dedication should not be later than mid 3rd century AD.\textsuperscript{33}

The significance of the discovery of this inscription, dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus, is twofold. In the first place, it is important to stress that the data from the inscription provides valuable knowledge in the field of historical geography of antique Syrian territory. The province of \textit{Syria Coele}, Cyrrhus region and village \textit{Capersin(a?)} are mentioned.

obvious connection between them. One Corinthian capital and Roman bricks with the stamp of the VII legion, \textit{VII Claudia}, have been published. They were found at Kličevac, but more precise details about the site are not given. One Constantine golden coin, 8 kg of Greek and Roman silver coins and one Emperor Titus silver coin were also found in the field near Kličevac, Tapamannus M. – Tapamannus II, 1951, 185; Mirković M. 1986, 56. One more monument originates from the Kličevac region, which perhaps speaks of its character in antique time. Namely, the monument in question is a votive sculpture with an inscription. Part of a foot on the left side, and the bow of a small boat with the figure of an oarsman in kneeling position on the right side are preserved on the sculpture. The inscription is partly damaged, while its interpretation is connected with \textit{collegium nautarum}. It is also mentioned that the statue part, which is missing, could have been a personification of the goddess \textit{Annona}, which is sometimes represented with a bow of a boat. \textit{Nautae}, like all \textit{navicularii} took part in supplying the army, Mirković M. 1986, 49.

\textsuperscript{26} The legions \textit{VII Claudia} and \textit{IV Flavia} are mentioned on the inscriptions: \textit{CIL}, III, 195; \textit{ILS} 9201; \textit{IGLSyr.}, I, 150, 151, with commentary.

\textsuperscript{27} Concerning the priests of Jupiter Dolichenus see inscriptions, \textit{AE.}, 1902, 69; \textit{AE.}, 1933, 121.

\textsuperscript{28} Region of Cyrrhestica from the inscription is the area of antique Cyrrhus, today a place called Nabi Huri, located 76 km north of the town Aleppo in Syria, near the Turkish border. The town was founded way back in 300 BC, after the conquest of Alexander the Great, thus it became an important military, administrative and economic centre of a wider region, very early. Two bridges still cross by traffic today, one theatre and a tomb in the form of a tower, remain from the Roman period. For more detailed data concerning the location and archaeological investigation of Cyrrhus, Frézouls E. 1954/55, 89 – 128; Concerning Cyrrhus in the antique period we find the following information: «Cyrrhus was located on the important trade road between Antioch and Ephesians (Zeugma)», in the work, Issac B. 1866, 260, n.11; Cyrrhus is also mentioned in the work, Tac., \textit{Ann.}, II, 57, 2.

\textsuperscript{29} RE III, s. v. Capersana, 1510; In the work of Ammianus Marcellinus, the village \textit{Capersin(a?)} from our inscription is mentioned twice under the name of Capersana. That was the place where the pontoon bridge over the river was located: \textit{Quo certis speculatibus cognito nos disponsamus propearem Samosassamut superato exinde flumine pontumque apud Zephyr et Capersana uncunturian simulscistis hostiles impetus, si ievisset foris alta, repelleremus.}, Amm. XVIII, 8, 1: \textit{quibus percutis, ut propius agens futuros possit anteveire conatus, quam primum hibernis egressos, accito undique equitita peditumque robore, quo fidebat, per Capersanam Ephesiate navali ponte transcurso Edessam petit ubereum comenibus et munition, ibi parumper operientis dum exploratores aet perfugiae matum castrorum hostilium indicarer.,} Amm. XXI, 7, 7; It is interesting that \textit{Capersana} from the work of Ammianus Marcellinus, Dussaud identifies with a place called \textit{Caphrena}, Dussaud R. 1927, 459; \textit{Caphreia} is mentioned by Plinius as the residence of the satrap and crossroad of important caravan routes, already from the period of Achemenids, \textit{Plin.}, Nat. VI, 119.

\textsuperscript{30} For inscriptions whose dedicants originate from the region of North Syria, Mirković M. 1986, no. 161, 169, 211, 212, 213.

\textsuperscript{31} Concerning the foundation of the province \textit{Syria Coele}, \textit{RE} XXI, s. v. Kiole–Syria, 1051.

\textsuperscript{32} Concerning \textit{Constitutio Antoniniana}, Grani M. 1996, 5-12.

\textsuperscript{33} The inscription is kept on a private property in Leskovac. I am thankful to the owner for help with photographing the monument.
On the other hand, the inscription completes the poor picture of the antique past of Kličevac. The eastern origin of the inscription dedicant, Aurelius Iulianus, indicates the existence of the Syrian element in the ethnic structure of our region. Since Aurelius Iulianus was also a priest of the Dolichenus cult, we believe that the discovery of an object, like a sanctuary, dolichenium, can be expected in this region. The data we have given surely points to the need for more detailed archaeological investigation of the Kličevac antique past.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>L'année épigraphique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ann. Arch. de Syrie</td>
<td>Les Annales Archéologiques de Syrie</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIL</td>
<td>Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPRO</td>
<td>Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans L'Empire Romain</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGLSyr</td>
<td>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie, Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>A. Pauly – G. Wissowa, Realencyclopaedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</td>
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СА НОВОГ НАТПИСА ИЗ ОКОЛИНЕ ВИМИНАЦИУМ-а

Недавно је на подручју села Кличеца, надомак античко-
грачког вретеница, пронађен натпис посвећен Јупитеру Долихе-
ну, на цилиндричном споменику од београдског мермера, димензи-
ја (h=150 cm и Ø=90 cm). Величина слови је у р. 1=8 cm, док је у р. 2=7–8 cm. Јавља се две линатуре: у другом реду VS и у четвртом реду DEI; броји су јер интерпретацијски значи у виду троугластих уреза.

Текст натписа гласи:

(Iovi [Optimo] Maximi Dolichenis) [AVR(eius)] IVLIANVS
| IVLIANI (filius) SAC[erdos] | EIVSDEM DEI | EX PR
| ovinca] SYR(ius) COEL(e) | REG(ione) CYRR(h)E(N)s | [VI-
| CO CAPERIS(a)?] | [ ]

Адресата натписа несумњиво одају формулом I.O.M.D. у првом реду и подаци о Јулијановом сиском посебном реду у р. 5–7, који јајно указује да се ради о посети богу Јупитеру Долихе-
ну. Деликатан натпис Aurelius Iulianus био је, даље, свеште-
ник Долихенског култа. Изгледа сасвим вероватно да је као оријенталан прикључак царској војсци, при неком од борава-
ка градитеља римског легиона на подручју Сириса, о којима све-
дочи натписи пронађени у окопини Cyrrhus-a. Свещеници Јупитера Долихена помињу се на још неким натписима про-
нађеним на луцинакском месту у Горњи Мезији. У самом тексту на његову врсту, веома лако се види да је био наложен на месту, где се вршили занатства и култура. Укупна дата натписа је веома интересантна, а неколико од својих особина га прави специфичним.

О хронологији натписа говори неколико важних елемен-
та. Ово је важан улаз у позајмничке везе у култури Сириса. Натпис је добио свој статус натписа у култури Сириса и стога има велику вредност за истраживање историје Сириса. Укупна дата натписа је веома интересантна, а неколико од својих особина га прави специфичним.

Споменици долихенскога култа на територији Горње Мезије су најчешће епиграфског карактера, док су чисто писцама фронтално размештени на плакетама на месту где се натпис јавља. Произилазимо их латинском епиграфском каламом, а неколико од својих особина га прави специфичним.