NOTES ON THE DOLICHENIAN MONUMENT FROM PINCUM / VELIKO GRADIŠTE
(CIL III 14503, 1 = AE 1902, 20) *

UDK: 930.2:003.071=124’02(497.11)”02”
DOI: 10.2298/STA1666121T
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Received: January 27, 2016
Accepted: March 24, 2016

Abstract. – A small inscribed statuette base, found in Pincum (Veliko Gradište), and belonging to the antiquities collector Imre Pongrácz, was rediscovered recently in the deposits of the Banat Museum. This fact put in a new light all that we have known so far about this object, which was thought to be lost. The inscription is dedicated to Dulcenus, a form of the name of the deity Iuppiter Dolichenus, by two standard-bearers of the legio VII Claudia. In the upper part of the stone can be seen traces of the four hooves of an ox and the central quadrangular support by which the animal’s body was sustained. The ex voto can be determined chronologically, by the style of the letters and the form of the message, to the 3rd century AD.

Key words. – Roman period, religion, Iuppiter Dolichenus, Latin inscription, Pincum.

In the current research literature linked to the Dolichenian cult, an inscription discovered in Veliko Gradište, accompanied by a vague sketch, summarily published for the 1st time in 1901 by Anton von Premerstein, is often quoted.

In the contents of the periodical, it was explicitly specified that the inscribed monument was the property of Emerich von Pongrácz, (as he is mentioned in Premerstein, although the author signed his studies as Pongrácz Imre), a discharged major of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd, quartered in Orsova. The specimen was declared lost and from then, in the literature, controversial information on both the text of the inscription and the preservation location began to arise.¹

The purpose of this paper is to clarify these pieces of information and thus determine the details of the Dolichenian monument, which can improve the “Corpus Cultus Iovis Dolicheni (CCID).”

It is well known that, after the passing of Imre Pongrácz, believed to have been on August 5th 1903,² the then curator of the Banat Museum, the famous numismatist István Berkeszi,³ with the financial support of Budapest, purchased, for the cultural institution of Timișoara, the entire collection of over 6000 objects

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¹ CIL III 14503,1 = CCID 86 = AE 1902, 20; EDCS-1680215; Ladek, Premerstein, Vulić 1901; Jovičić 2013, 537–548. The most amusing piece of information is presented in the corpus dedicated to the Dolichenian monuments, where it is presumed that the specimen was part of the collection of the Belgrade Museum and that it was, at a certain time, lost. See also, Zotovic 1966, 101.
² The death certificate is held, along with sketches, in the private collection of the Banat Museum of Timișoara.
³ István Berkeszi was the secretary (1902–1918) of the “Délmagyarországi Történelmi és Régészeti Társulat” (The History and Archaeology Association of Southern Hungary): Bodor 1996, 64–84; Balla 2007, 7–9; Boda, Varga 2013, 397–412.

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* The paper was sustained from the exhibit project Lapidarium 3D of the Banat Museum Timișoara, financed by the County Council of Timișoara. This work was supported by a grant from the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS-UEFISCDI, project number PNII-RU-TE-2014-4-0488.
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The Pongrác collection (it consisted, in its great majority, of antiquities found at sites on the Serbian shores of The Danube), was, for a long time, the most valuable of all the collections of the Banat Museum.4

With this document we only wish to re-establish the truth and provide researchers and the general public with all the precise expository facts regarding this small inscribed monument.

An utter novelty (a situation that was not reported by Premerstein) is that, on the upper side of the stone, the marks of four hooves, arranged asymmetrically, that suggest a moving bovine, which can only be the Dolichenian bull ridden by a deity, and an altar beneath the body of the animal can be seen.

The monument was “rediscovered” on the occasion of moving the archaeological storerooms as a result of the refurbishment work carried out at Huniade Castle, the headquarters of the Banat Museum of Timişoara.

The discussed object is dedicated, according to the inscription, to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Dulcenus by Aelius Silvanus and [Aelius] Leonides. The exact origin from the relatives of the deceased major.

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*Ijob(i) opt(imo) m(aximo) Dulceno e-

*x vot(o) Ael(i) Silv anus

het( = et?) Leonides, . . . . . .

Fig. 1. Drawing and text of the Dolichenian monument from Pincum, published in 1901 (after: Ladek, Premerstein, Vulić 1901, 73)

Sl. 2. Crtež i tekst dolihenskog spomenika iz Pinkuma, objavljeni 1901. godine (prema: Ladek, Premerstein, Vulić 1901, 73)

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*Fig. 2. Scale drawing of the Dolichenian monument from Pincum (made by: Silviu Saftu, Banat Museum Timişoara)

Sl. 2. Размерни цртеж долихенског спomenika из Пинкума (нацртао: Силвиу Сафту, Музеј Баната Темишвар)
of the dedicators is hard to determine, as the epigraph doesn’t mention ethnicity, nationality, local citizenship, origo or domus. We can only assume that Leonides had some Oriental roots (his name is a Latinized form of λεωνίδης),
5 but this doesn’t necessarily mean that he personally came from the Greek-speaking part of the Empire. The cognomen is frequent throughout the Roman Empire, in Rome as well as in the provinces, without being concentrated in a certain geographical region.6 Also hard to determine is the relationship between the dedicators; this could be of kinship or a professional/collegial partnership. The nomen Aelius is popular from the beginning of Hadrian’s reign.

Iuppiter Dolichenus’ religion was widespread in the Roman Empire, especially within the army.7

In this category the present monument, where the main characters indicate their military status – signiferi legionis – is also included.

Overall, another four examples from the Roman Empire, in which the dedicators were signiferi, are known: Aquae,8 Emona,9 Lambaesis10 and Carnuntum.11

It was supposed that the two signiferi could have been from the legio VII Claudia,12 because Veliko Gradište is located in the immediate vicinity of the cas-

trum of this legion, at Viminacium (Kostolac).13 The epigraphical source doesn’t offer any absolute information regarding their association with a certain legion.

Regarding the name of the deity recorded as Dulcenus (instead of the regular Dolichenus), it also doesn’t constitute a rarity in the Roman Empire. The formula Iovi optimo maximo Dulceno is attested in Domnesti,14

4 Medele, Toma 1997, 75–77.
5 Eck 1992, 237.
6 For example: AE 1987, 132; AE 1960, 90; CIL III 5835a; CIL VI 7326, 15483, 18651, 20876, 21030; CIL VIII 3015; CIL X 160; CIL XI, 7792; EDCS-65300008.
8 IDR III/3, 15.
9 CCID 273.
10 CIL VIII 18224 = AE 1891, 4 = CCID 623.
12 Jovičić 2013, 537–548.
13 Benea 1983, 97, 136–137.
14 CIL III 3462 = CIL III 13366 = CCID 138.
TIMOC, BODA, Notes on the Dolichenian Monument from Pincum / Veliko Gradište (121–127)

Vrlika, Mauer an der Url, Aquincum and at an unknown location in Pannonia Inferior. The name Dulcenus (without being assimilated with Iuppiter Optimus Maximus) is recorded in three instances, at Mauer an der Url and Ampelum respectively.

Both the name of the deity, as well as the style of the monument reveal a local manufacturer, a provincial workshop. Regarding the dating, according to the writing and the name of the deity, it can be framed after the latter half of the 3rd century AD.

Instead of presenting a conclusion about the discussed monument, we can underline the fact that the statuette base represents an ex voto with the representation of a bull ridden by a god: the ex voto implies that the specimen was located in a place of worship at Pincum (Veliko Gradište) dedicated to one or more deities. The writing falls into the series of the few specimens at the level of the Roman Empire on which Dolichenus appears with his rarely encountered name, which implies a local influence.

The artifact is of a small size (12.5 x 5.6 x 8 cm) and the writing is negligent – probably the work of an inexperienced artisan, most probably local. For this reason it is assumed that the manufacturing manner of the ex voto suggest that the monument was made in a local (provincial) workshop.

The marble pedestal with this particular inscription falls into the category of the miniature monuments to be

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15 CIL III 9827 a = CCID 122.
16 AE 1982, 734 = CCID 310.
17 CIL III 3462 = CIL III 13366 = CCID 183.
18 AE 1972, 428 = CCID 182.
19 AE 1939, 125, 271 = CCID 300; AE 1982, 739 = CCID 313; AE 1982, 740 = CCID 316.
20 IDR III/3, 296.
exhibited online (open access), in a modern, dynamic style, in a PDF format (so they can be accessed from any device) within the virtual exhibit Lapidarium 3D of the Banat Museum of Timișoara (www.muzeulbanatului.ro), which aims to promote the archaeological, cultural patrimony and its private collections.

Specimen description
1. Name: Inscribed Dolichenian statuette base;
2. Material, technology: grey marble, sculpted with a carelessly incised inscription, in four lines, the letters being marked in black.
3. Conservation status: fragmentary, only the base of the statue, worn on the corners, is preserved;
4. Dimensions: Length = 12.5 cm; height (base) = 5.6 cm; height (total) = 8 cm; width = 5.5 cm; height (letters) = 1.1 cm;
5. Description: Quadrilateral base of a Dolichenian statuette of which only the bull’s hooves and the shrine beneath the animal’s body have remained intact (the closest analogy, from a topographic point of view, with the presence of the shrine under the body of the animal, is represented by the Dolichenian monument of Egeta, but such a representation is propagated on a much wider territory, which, in some cases, are also inscribed).
6. The inscription:
   Io\(\nu=B\)(i) Opt(imo) M(aximo)
   D<o=V>l(i)c(h)eno e/x vot(o) Ael(i)
   Silvanus / \(h\)et Leonides leg(ionis) sig(niferi) / ¿\(b\)\(\nu\)\(e\)=M\(e\)=I\(r\)\(e\)nti
7. Place of discovery: The Roman fortification of Veliko Gradiste / Pincum, Moesia Superior, discovered in the year 1899. The piece was sold to the Honvéd Officer of Orsova Imre Pongrácz in the late 19th century by a Serbian merchant, thus entering his private collection.
8. Custody location: Banat Museum of Timişoara (Pongrácz collection), MBT inventory No., 1300.

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21 Jovičić 2013, 537–548, fig. 4.
23 CCID Image No. 62, 206.
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БЕЛЕШКЕ О ДОЛИХЕНСКОМ СПОМЕНИКУ ИЗ ПИНКУМА / ВЕЛИКО ГРАДИШТЕ
(CIL III 14503, 1 = AE 1902, 20)

Резиме:

Један натпис на маленом вајарском мраморном споменику, пронађен у Великом Градишту, у којем је припадао колекционару антиквитета Имреу Понграшу, пре његовог открића је откривен у складишту Музеја Баната у Темишвару.

Ова чињеница баче ново светло на све оно што смо до сада знали из стручне литературе о овом предмету, за који се до сада мислило да је изгубљен.

Натпис је посвећен Dulcenus-у, који представља један вид обрађивања двеју застава из VII Клаудијеве легије Јупитеру Долихенусу. На горњем делу плоче се у виду четири расцепљених копита једног биљоједа, вероватно неког бика, и један кубни ослонац у централном делу који подупире трбух животиње. Ex voto може бити укључен у римски провинцијски уметнички стил, а према формату слова и реализацији скраћеница, у раздобље III века после Хр.