

The sacred topography of Tibiscum

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Abstract. The religious life in Tibiscum is well documented by numerous sculptural and epigraphic pieces certifying various deities, religious practices and donors. Broadly speaking, the monuments reveal, through the iconographical type or through the epithets worn by the deities, which one of these cults enjoyed a more special worship and especially, who the worshipers were. The purpose of the present paper is to objectively analyze all the epigraphic sources of the *castrum* and the civil settlement of Tibiscum, which is concentrated on the religious life of the community, following the chronological and topographical evolution of the establishment so as to define the sacred topography of Tibiscum to the current stage of the research. Thereby, we intend to foreshadow, for the local archeological research, certain urban layout elements that integrated the places of worship in the planimetry of the establishment.

Keywords: religion, Tibiscum, topography, epigraphy, sculpture

Rezumat. Topografia sacră a așezării Tibiscum. Viața religioasă la Tibiscum este bine documentată prin descoperirea a numeroase piese epigrafice și sculpturale reprezentând diferite divinități, edificii cultice și dedicații. Pe scurt, monumentele indică, prin tipurile iconografice și epitetele purtate de diferitele divinități, care din aceste culte s-a bucurat de mai multă popularitate și cine erau adoratorii. Scopul acestei lucrări este să analizeze sursele epigrafice votive din castru și din așezarea civilă de la Tibiscum, fiind centrată pe viața religioasă a comunității, urmărind evoluția cronologică și topografică a așezării, astfel încât să poată fi definită topografia sacră a așezării analizate în actualul stadiu al cercetării. Prin urmare, intenționăm să indicăm, pentru cercetarea arheologică locală, anumite elemente de structură urbană care integrează locurile de cult în planimetria așezării.

Cuvinte cheie: religie, Tibiscum, topografie, epigrafie, sculptură

Lately, the geography and topography of the Tibiscum - Jupa archeological site was a frequently approached subject by specialists. Also, a great amount of information on religious life is known from the studies focused on the epigraphic, architectonic, votive and sculptural monuments, none of these scientific approaches manages to interpret the data, in an interdisciplinary manner, in order to establish a connection between the religious life and the topography of the studied settlement.

In the last decades, the study of the Roman religion has known great progress, by the introduction of some new methods, where the emphasis is on appropriation and religious experience. The present paper attempts to connect to the new methodologies already used European research¹.

The archeological site of Tibiscum is currently the most representative one for the Roman era of Banat. The systematical archeological research undertaken here during the interwar period and then resumed in 1964 and pursued until today has brought to light the spectacular magnitude of the area inhabited by the Romans.

Fives hectares of ruins, including the ones of the *castrum*, located on the left shore of Timiș, were salvaged by preserving them in an archeological reservation that is unique in Banat, and another 17 hectares, from the right shore of Timiș – the place on which the Roman city was built – even if affected by agriculture, are periodically subjected to archeological investigations². The large surface occupied by the Roman ruins only allowed, until now, the research of only 5% of the edifices and monuments of ancient Tibiscum. Even so, in the last decades, enough epigraphic and sculptural material that would allow us to sketch the religious life of its habitants and to learn the local

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¹ For the bibliographical references that are considered essential for the under debate topic, see: Steimle 2007, 66-73; Steimle 2008; Andringa 2009; Castella/Krause 2009. For the sacred topography of a city from Pannonia, see: Brelich 1938, 20-142; Paulovics 1943; Alföldy 1963, 47-69; Balla 1967; Sosztarits 1994, 233-241; Szabó 2005-2006, 57-78, 67-76. For the sacred topography of a city from Dacia, see: Boda 2015, 281-304. For the new methods used in the research of the religious life of a Roman city, see, among others, Rüpke 2011, 191-203; Szabó 2014, 41-58.

² Cîntar 2015, 52.

tendencies regarding the practice of cults of various origins has been accumulated.

The archeological and epigraphic sources gives us an image on the presence of religious practices and a variety of divinities within the fort of Tibiscum³: in the court of the headquarters of the great *castrum*, was found, among others, a marble column of 2.32 m high, dedicated to Mars Augustus⁴ for the health of two emperors, identified by I. Piso⁵ as Maximinus Thrax and his son, Maximus⁶.

In the basilica of the *principia*, an altar dedicated to Silvanus Domesticus⁷ and another to Minerva Augusta⁸ were identified.

In the *praetentura dextra*, a fragment of the inscription dedicated to the Palmyrene deity Bel⁹ was discovered, which can represent a clue that, in this area of the great *castrum*, the bowmen brought by the Romans from Palmyra were accommodated.

The Eastern side of the great *castrum* of Tibiscum has benefited of intense systematical archeological research, inside the last investigated structure, the edifice no. IV¹⁰, being found a monument dedicated to the deity Minerva Augusta and to the protective spirit of the Palmyrene bowmen' garrison¹¹.

From the area of the north-west corner of the great *castrum* one votive monument dedicated to Malagbel¹² and another to Iuppiter Conservator¹³ are known from archeological findings. Adjacently, a

³ Cintar 2015, 316.

⁴ IDR III/1, 144.

⁵ Piso 1982, 225-238.

⁶ Benea/Bona 1994, 25. The authors of IDR (III/1, 144) are keen to date the monument during the reign of Filip the Arab and his son (247-249 A.D.).

⁷ IDR III/1, 146.

⁸ IDR III/1, 184.

⁹ IDR III/1, 134.

¹⁰ Building No. IV of the *castrum* is a building that appeared late in the planimetry of the fortification and had a utilitarian nature, however just on the Northern extremity, the last room being better equipped seeing that it has a *hypocaustum* and there, the inscription dedicated to Minerva and to the Genius of the Palmyrene unit was found upside-down. For more details, see: Timoc 2007, 85-96.

¹¹ Timoc 2006, 277.

¹² Piso 1983, 109, no. 5. We believe that this piece was rather discovered in the *schola*, namely in the first building of the north-east corner of the great *castrum*, seeing that, in this space, all the epigraphic pieces dedicated to this god of *Tibiscum* were discovered.

¹³ IDR III/1, 138 a.

votive relief representing Iuppiter Tronans¹⁴ has surfaced. The association of these pieces in the same context has made the researchers D. Benea and P. Bona to suspect the existence of a *fanum* in the area¹⁵.

It is difficult to believe that in the North-Western corner of the great *castrum* of Tibiscum a sacre space existed, the vestiges of the field being inconclusive; instead, it is certain that, in the civil settlement, there was a sanctuary dedicated to the Capitoline Triad which unfortunately, hasn't yet been identified on the site.

The possible *schola* from the North-Eastern side of the *castrum*¹⁶ was, very likely, a meeting place, as well as a space consecrated to the usual ceremonial banquets. An interesting inscription is dedicated to the deities *Genius Numeri Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium*, *Genius Horreorum* and *Dii patrii*¹⁷. At the moment, we accept the speculation that, in the epigraphic document, *Genius Horreorum*, alongside *Genius Numeri* and *Dii patrii* are mentioned simply because such an association with the Palmyrene deities is not unusual. G. Rickman recalls that, in the *horrea*, apart from *Genii horreorum*, other deities are mentioned also¹⁸. The same opinion was raised also by J. S. Domínguez¹⁹. Thus, they also mention an epigraphic document from the *horreum* of *Palmyra*, where *Malagbel* and *diis Palmyrae*²⁰ are attested. In addition to this discovery, the *Genii horreorum* is present, among other locations, in Mogontiacum (Mainz)²¹, Germania Superior²² and Rome²³. Regarding these grain stocks, the risk of a fire was always present and that is why they had a *genius*, who protected them and to whom P. Aelius Servius from Tibiscum, along

¹⁴ Moga/Benea 1979, 134, fig. 2.

¹⁵ D. Benea and P. Bona claim that these were placed by the same person (Benea/Bona 1994, 21, 111), a theory subsequently resumed by A. Ștefănescu-Onițiu as well (Ștefănescu-Onițiu 2009, 37); however, we have no proof to support it.

¹⁶ Piso/Benea 1999, 104-106; Alicu 2002, 201-235; Timoc 2005 b, 115-122; Marcu 2006 a, 76-105; Marcu 2006 b, 259-269.

¹⁷ IDR III/1, 136.

¹⁸ Rickman 1971.

¹⁹ Domínguez 2012, 310-341.

²⁰ Domínguez 2012, 310-341. He mentions the epigraphic document after Rickman 1971, 314.

²¹ CIL XIII 11802 = AE 1904, 180 = AE 1906, 133.

²² CIL XIII 7749.

²³ CIL VI 237; CIL VI 238 (3004, 3755). Regarding the religious life in *horrea* with the examples from Rome and Ostia, see: Van Haepere 2010, 243-259.

with other important deities from the private Pantheon of the individual²⁴ they were dedicated to.

From the mentioned edifice, monuments dedicated to Malagbel²⁵ and *Dii patrii*²⁶ are also well-known, and at the entrance of the structure, according to some researchers, monuments for Sol Invictus Mithras²⁷ by both of the troupes of the Tibiscum garrison - *numerus Palmyrenorum* and *numerus Maurorum*, have been erected. In the latter case, the name of the deity cannot be read on the preserved fragment; therefore, the worshiped deity must have been another, because we are not familiar with such an association in the Roman Empire, in which Mithras is to be venerated in the same room of worship as other deities of Palmyra.

The Palmyrene influences on the sacred topography of the *castrum* is present also in other units of the Tibiscum garrison. An eloquent example is offered to us by the monument dedicated to Ierhabol²⁸ by Aurelius Laecanius Paulinus, a service man in *cohors I Vindelicorum*, who, doesn't seem to be of Eastern origin.

We notice the existence of a single relief with a representation of the Danubian Riders inside the mentioned edifice, moreover unique on the surface of the *castrum*²⁹. Because of the small size of the relief (15 x 14 cm) and the lack of similarities necessary for associating this cult to the Syrian/Palmyrene deities, we believe that this piece occupies a secondary position, because all the other ten reliefs are found in *in situ*, in the private buildings of the civil establishment. The relief could have belonged to one of the decuriones from the 3rd building of the north-east

²⁴ Concerning the dating of the monument, the two emperors could be Caracalla and his brother Geta, taking into account that a *G* and an *N* are inscribed behind by the *damnatio memoriae* of the year 212, but I. I. Russu chooses wrong, in our opinion, dating the piece under the reign of the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (IDRIII/1, 136).

²⁵ Piso 1983, 109, no. 4.

²⁶ IDR III/1, 135.

²⁷ IDR III/1, 147.

²⁸ We wish to mention the fact that this solar deity of the *Palmyra* appears in Roman Dacia on epigraphically sources under different names: Ierhabol (*Tibiscum* - IDR III/1, 137, *Colonia Sarmizegetusa* - AÉ 2004, 1216), Hierabol (*Apulum* - IDR III/5, 102, 105, *Colonia Sarmizegetusa* - AÉ 2011, 1084), sometimes appears associated with Sol of the Romans (*Apulum* - IDR III/5, 103, *Tibiscum* - IDR III/1, 137, *Colonia Sarmizegetusa* - AÉ 2004, 1216). For the more information, see: Sanie 1981; Carbó García 2011, 923-927.

²⁹ Moga 1972, 40, no. 1.

corner of the great *castrum* and that, according to planimetry, is an *equites* barrack.

In Tibiscum, two votive reliefs representing the goddess Epona are known, both in an incomplete state and both presenting the deity feeding horses with forage from the foot of her coat³⁰. This type of representation is the most wide-spread one in the Roman society, the so-called *Reichstypus*, according to M. Euskirchen – type VI³¹. This deity protects the horses, and these votive plates in which she appears, if they were indeed discovered, as suspected, inside the Roman *castrum*, then they were certainly pinned on one of the stable's pillars, stable used for sheltering the horses of the Tibiscum garrison *equites'* detachments³². We are not dismissing, taking into account that the votive pieces have become a part of the collection of the Museum of Lugoj in the interwar period (probably being discovered in proximity to one other), the possibility of the authors of the discoveries made back then uncovering a stable with the role of a *veterinarium*³³ for the horses of the garrison.

At the entrance of the great fort, before the *porta praetoria*, a monument in a secondary position, dedicated to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus and another one, also re-used as a construction material, located a few meters away, farther North than the first monument, dedicated to the same deity, were found³⁴.

In the Western vicinity of the road that crosses the civil settlement, very close to the eastern gate of the small fort, the votive plate dedicated to Liber Pater³⁵ was discovered. The size of the entire horizontal stone, after the highly credible restoration proposition of I. Piso, of approximately 1.40 m in length and 0.50 m in height, suggests a monumental entrance in the temple of this god, as the epigraphic document³⁶ mentions.

³⁰ Isac/Stratan 1973, 120-123; Timoc 1997, 115-117; Timoc 2005 a, 237.

³¹ Euskirchen 1993, 662.

³² In this regard, see Apuleius, *Met.*, III, 27.

³³ The sculptural reliefs with the representation of Epona have entered the collections of the Museum of Lugoj during the interwar period, when the administrator, the Greco-Catholic priest I. Boroş was performing the first archeological excavations in *Tibiscum* (1926-1927) along with G. G. Mateescu, a lecturer of the University of Cluj.

³⁴ IDR III/1, 138; Piso/Benea 1999, 97-98, no. 3.

³⁵ Piso/Benea 1999, 97-98, no. 1.

³⁶ The most delicate issue is raised by the epithet of the god *Frugifer*, hypothetically deciphered by I. Piso. Herein, we wish to mention the fact that epithets appear in the 1st or 2nd line of the inscription, anyhow, after the name of the god and never in the

A major issue is related to the significance of Liber Pater for the Palmyrene, insomuch that it was decided to build him, and not the deities of *Palmyra*, a temple. Their veneration could also be noted in Porolissum, in a single temple, if we accept the fact that the materials came from the same place, and lest we are talking about two different edifices³⁷.

The comprehension of this religious preference is difficult to explain, because there is no direct connection between Liber Pater and the Palmyrene gods, but especially because these bowmen very rarely worship deities other than their own. We believe that the construction of this temple is a collective religious manifestation of the Palmyrene, whose occupation was trading wine (in *Palmyra*³⁸ and probably in *Tibiscum* also), and the main reason that has led to them worshipping this deity is closely linked to their practiced profession³⁹.

last line of the text. The epithet is known in the settlement of *Colonia Sarmizegetusa*, but herein, it is annexed to the goddess Isis (IDR III/2, 227). The deities of the Roman Empire that wear this epithet are Pluto (Africa Proconsularis, AÉ 1968, 595), Caelestis (Hispania Citerior, AÉ 2003, 948), us having frequent conjurations for *Genius Frugifer* (Numidia, EDCS-46400017; Africa Proconsularis, EDCS-06000004) or *Frugiferus Augustus* (Africa Proconsularis, AÉ 2002, 1681; AÉ 1997, 1642; AÉ 1974, 690; AÉ 1915, 22; Numidia, AÉ 1946, 106 = AÉ 1909, 8 = AÉ 1909, 128 1; Mauretania Caesariensis, CIL VIII 20318; CIL VIII 8826 = CIL VIII 20628). Instead, until now, it appears that the epithet *Frugifer* for Liber Pater is a unique case of veneration. From this point of view and also, by taking into account that the epithet only appears after the name of the deity, we believe that, in this particular case, in the last line of the inscription, we are most probably dealing with just one part of the names of the dedicators, closely linked to the Palmyrene soldiers.

³⁷ Chirilă/Gudea/Matei/Lucăcel 1980, 82-104; Chirilă/Gudea/Matei/Lucăcel 1983, 119-148. Unfortunately, the exact location and context of the inscriptions discovered for the gods Liber Pater and Bel are not known, therefore, a correct identification cannot be made if we are dealing with two separate temples or if the two deities were worshiped in the same building. If we take as example the case from *Tibiscum*, we notice that the Palmyrene were worshipping Liber Pater because of their occupation. In these circumstances, the appearance of the two deities in the same temple isn't so difficult to believe. For the more information, see: Diaconescu 2011, 135-192.

³⁸ Sommer 2012, 2; Smith 2013, 107; Zuchowska 2013, 382.

³⁹ If we were to assess the importation of wine in *Tibiscum* based on the *amphorae* discoveries, from the analysis of the archeological material examined for the current stage of the research, A. Ardeț has already observed that the wine was brought, in *amphorae*, in Asia Minor and Moesia Inferior in large quantities (Ardeț 1993, 105; Ardeț 2006, 256-257). 80% of the total of the *amphorae* discoveries come from the civil

The deities worshiped outside the *castrum*, in *vicus militaris*, a civil establishment later known as *municipium Tibiscensium*⁴⁰, certified through epigraphic documentation, are Iuppiter⁴¹ and Liber Pater⁴². However, based on the existing data, a relative wealth regarding the presence of the emblematic monuments was detected. Firstly, we must remember a head of a statue representing Iuppiter, emerged in the archaeological excavations from building no. III⁴³.

Regarding the civil area, as S. Nemeti⁴⁴ claimed, a particular importance is brought on by Tibiscum by its specific features emphasized for the Cult of the Danubian Riders⁴⁵. The 11 pieces discovered until now, 10 of which found in the civil settlement, just about in any private building of the civil establishment, suggest that, at one point (in our opinion), the cult of the Danubian Riders was present exclusively in domestic – primary spaces in *lararia*, together with other divinities.

Venus, the goddess of beauty, love, pleasure, as well the patron of marriage and family⁴⁶ is represented in *Tibiscum* on a marble relief (nude *Venus Capitolina*; on the left side, a tail of a dolphin can be observed, on which beneath, a small Cupido⁴⁷ may have been reproduced), on bronze statues, which were discovered in the *castrum*,

settlement of *Tibiscum*. In the *castrum*, the insertion of *amphorae* filled with wine was very likely allowed just for the officers of the garrison (Ardeț 2006, 246). The most common wine amphora of *Tibiscum* is the one with the funnel-shaped opening and with the neck widening towards the joint of the recipient (Opaiț III, Popilian², Peacock & Williams 57 models). This type, widely known in the 2nd and 3rd century AD and even specific to Dobrogea and Pontus, is pot-bellied and has a considerable storage capacity (Ardeț 1993, 103-104). The frequency of this amphora in *Tibiscum* indicated that this beverage was also sold, not just consumed.

⁴⁰ Ardeț 2004, 79.

⁴¹ IDR III/1, 141.

⁴² IDR III/1, 135; Piso/Benea 1999, 97-98, no. 2.

⁴³ Benea 1999-2000, 191-223; Rusu-Pescaru/Alicu 2000, 102-104, pl. XXXV; Benea 2003, 123; Cîntar 2013 a, 597-605; Cîntar 2013 b, 155-159.

⁴⁴ Nemeti 2005, 200-218; Nemeti 2012, 167-191; Nemeti 2015, 129-138.

⁴⁵ Moga 1972, 39-51; Tudor 1976; Nemeti 2005, 200-218; Vasinca 2009, 259-264; Nemeti 2012, 167-191; Nemeti/Ardeț 2013, 213-244; Nemeti 2015, 129-138.

⁴⁶ For the bibliography regarding the propagation of the cult in Roman Dacia, see: Boda/Szabó 2014, 131-133.

⁴⁷ We kindly thank our colleague, Dr. Adriana Antal, for the description regarding the material in question. A. Antal, *Cultul Venerei în Dacia romană*, PhD Thesis, Cluj-Napoca, 2014.

as well as in the civil settlement (*Venus Anadyomene*⁴⁸). Nevertheless, the better-rendered exemplars seem to be the terracotta ones: nude *Venus Cnidos* (two such exemplars), *Venus Victrix* (also two) and a statuary group that depicts Venus with Cupido (two exemplars⁴⁹). Even proof of patterns in which the obverse of the first part of a certain type of Venus statue have been discovered, and the reverse belongs to another type⁵⁰.

Analyzing the pieces that represented Venus in Tibiscum, we state that indeed, the possibility of a workshop existing in the area is not excluded: the vague, sometimes even “unsightly” features of the pieces, the much too oblong, disproportionate body, indicate patterns created by provincial craftsmen, without many artistic capabilities.

The Nymphs seem to be worshiped in Tibiscum in conjunction to the drinking water sources of here. In the statuary art of Tibiscum a representation on an impressive block of limestone (1.10 x 0.60 x 0.30 m) is well-known, with a Nymph sitting down, supported on her elbow. From an iconographic point of view, this posture of the goddess has many similarities (for example: Aquincum, Pergamon⁵¹ and in Dacia, in - Băile Herculane⁵²) in the statues that adorn the public fountains⁵³. These sculptures were located above the water basin, in the center of the fountain and, in many cases the latter was close to a wall, which could have belonged to a neighboring edifice. From a point of view of the sacred topography, in Tibiscum, this piece could have belonged to an imposing fountain from the area of the entrance in the municipal forum, in the *castrum* or at the crossroad of the main roads of the civil settlement, in any case, in an area accessible to the habitants.

The god Apollo is known in Tibiscum from two epigraphs, both pieces being votive stones discovered together 1 km outside the city, on the imperial roads that led towards the Roman Dacia metropolis, *Colonia Sarmizegetusa*⁵⁴. The epigraphic documents attest the restoration of the

⁴⁸ Țeposu-Marinescu/Pop 2000, 91, pl. 54, Fig. 101; Antal 2014.

⁴⁹ Ungurean 2008, 29-32, 63, cat. nr. 130-135; Antal 2014.

⁵⁰ Ungurean 2008, 29-32, 63.

⁵¹ Diaconescu/Bota 2004, 478-479.

⁵² Benea/Lalescu 1997-1998, 301.

⁵³ Timoc 2004, 79-80.

⁵⁴ A first piece of information we find in Piso/Rogozea 1985, 211-214, who processed the epigraphic documents. The edifice per se appears in D. Benea, P. Bona, in the *Tibiscum* monograph (Benea/Bona 1994, 108-109). Based on it, A. Rusu-Pescaru and D. Alicu, in their paper on the Roman temples of Dacia (Rusu-Pescaru/Alicu 2000)

building destroyed by age (*fanum vetustate conlapsum restituit*), which was accomplished by Septimius Diomedes, a tribune of *the cohors I Vindelicorum*⁵⁵. Therefore, this information suggests that we also have a 2nd phase, one of a *fanum* that dates between the years AD 200-202.

On the occasion of emperor's Caracalla⁵⁶ visit, the second construction slab, with the name of Dacia's governor, L. Marius Perpetuus, is dedicated to Apollo Conservator, for the health of the mentioned emperor. This was accomplished by the tribune P. Aelius Gemellus, the commander of the *cohors I Vindelicorum*, in the year AD 213/214⁵⁷.

Without having a clear reference to the discovery site, a small votive relief, highly corroded, is also part of the older archeological discoveries, representing the scene of Mithras'⁵⁸ tauroctony. Unfortunately, we also do not know the location of the discovery of the monument built by Hermadio (also confirmed in the *Colonia Sarmizegetusa*⁵⁹) for the deity Sol Invictus Nabarze Mithras⁶⁰.

The discovery of a bronze votive hand with symbols connected to the cult of Sabazios in Jena indicates, as a center of origin, the settlement of Tibiscum - Jupa⁶¹ also. We do not necessarily believe in the existence of a temple dedicated to the mentioned god, the cult piece could have very well been stored in one of the buildings that were excavated or epigraphically mentioned as temples.

work on a manuscript based the excavation report received from P. Rogozea and, on this occasion, correct many mistakes made by D. Benea and P. Bona in 1994 (Benea/Bona 1994). We also mention a study of D. Alicu (Alicu 2000, 299-304), whose main purpose is the analysis of the chronology of the stages researched and the typological framing of the edifice. Subsequently, the issue is resumed by D. Benea (Benea 1999-2000, 191-203) however; no new corrections or interpretations are introduced.

⁵⁵ Piso/Rogozea 1985, 211-215.

⁵⁶ Popescu 2011, 62-63.

⁵⁷ Piso/Rogozea 1985, 211-215.

⁵⁸ Isac/Stratan 1973, 120.

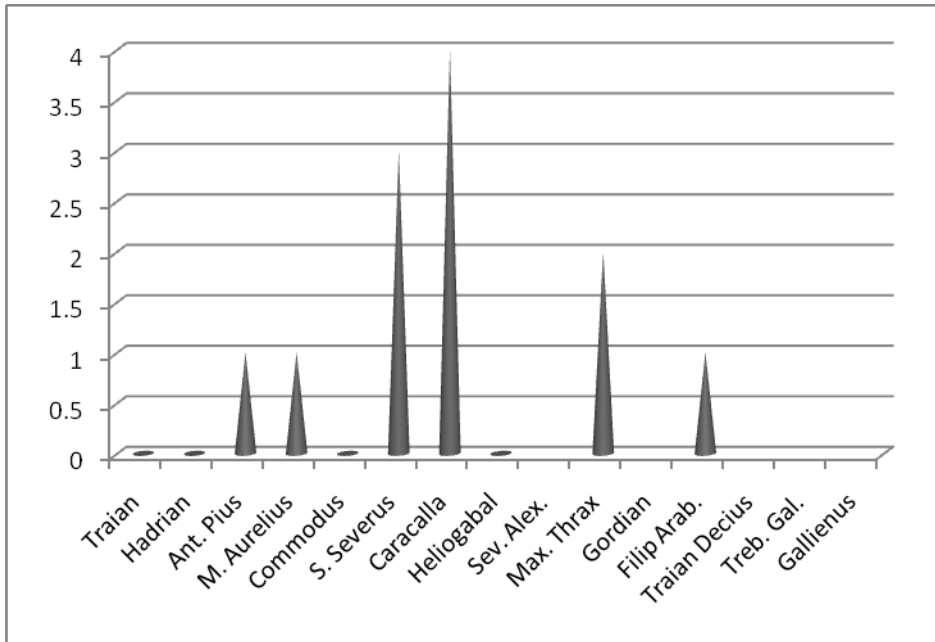
⁵⁹ IDR III/2, 283.

⁶⁰ IDR III/1, 145. For the more informations, see: Tóth 1994, 153-160 = Tóth 1995, 175-180 = Tóth 2003, 81-86; Nemeti 2012, 149; Szabó 2015, 407-422. For the cult of Mithras in *Tibiscum*, see: Timoc/Boda 2016, 245-257.

⁶¹ Milleker 1892, 133-136; On the history of research, see also: Boda/Varga 2013, 397-412.

Conclusions

Chronological observations regarding the religious phenomenon from Tibiscum can be made, by analyzing diachronically the dated artifacts.

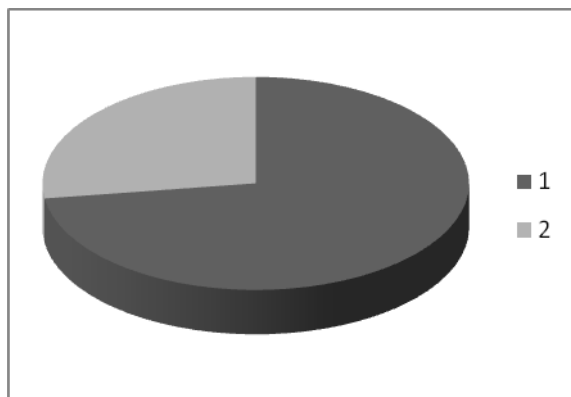


The frequency of the datable votive epigraphs of *Tibiscum*.

From the total of the archeological and epigraphic sources, approximately 60% are epigraphic monuments, the remaining 40% being inscribed iconographic material with representations of divinities such as votive reliefs, statues or terracotta figurines. From the quantity of epigraphs, we notice that a significant part of them are chronologically grouped in the period of the emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla, and the ones discovered in the *castrum* area (in *principia* and in the area of the edifices from the North-Eastern corner of the fortification) come from the 3rd century AD. For the 2nd century there are no known attestations, the layers of this period hardly being archeologically investigated.

Almost three quarters of the inscriptions come from the *castrum*, their dedicators being military, and of the ones from the civil settlement,

besides three inscriptions that belong to some magistrates or clergymen, the rest also belong to some servicemen or former servicemen. This can also be owed to a research deficiency, the area of the *municipium* hardly being investigated from an archeological point of view comparatively to its surface.



The statistical distribution of the votive epigraphic discoveries:
1. The military environment; 2. The civil settlement.

We are not denying the involvement of the military in the religious life of the civil settlement, and in the case of the cities born from *vici militares*, their involvement is even more obvious (for example, the worship edifice dedicated to Apollo).

However, the archaeological research of the last few years of the civil settlement draws our attention on the fact that this area can surprise us, the discoveries regarding religious life progressively multiplying with the advancement of the excavations in the area.

Among the deities worshiped by the military, apart from the official Greek-Roman ones and from the patrons of the military bases of the garrison, we notice that a significant group of gods belongs to the bowmen of Palmyra, which are, perhaps, more «pious» and attached to their ancestral deities.

Also from the global analysis of the data linked to the moment when the civil settlement became a *municipium*, we notice, from the series of epigraphs that can be dated, that this moment was marked by many investments also in the case of public buildings such as places of worship.

Finally, regarding the situation of the sacred topography, we can observe, for the great *castrum* of Tibiscum, the fact that we have two areas in which the votive inscriptions dedicated by the soldiers are grouped.

The first area, somewhat natural for the setup of these monuments is the *basilica* of the headquarters building and the immediate vicinity. From here, we only know inscriptions dedicated to the official Greek-Roman deities.

The second area is the North-Eastern corner of the great *castrum*, where a *schola* has functioned. The deities venerated in this edifice are mostly originating in the East, all the monuments being dedicated by soldiers and veterans. The relatively large amount of dedicated votive pieces discovered here is owed to the fact that this edifice also had religious functions.

For the moment, we weren't able to notice the contour of *area sacra* within the urban planimetry of the civil settlement of Tibiscum. The epigraphic and emblematic documents discovered scattered on the entire archeologically researched area rather attest the existence of some private cults. Each house had a *lararium* and this seems to be reasoned in Tibiscum by the discovery of plates representing the Danubian Riders in almost each house.

Two existing worship places (building No. III - Iuppiter and Liber Pater), near the main road of the civil settlement, indicate the concern of the local authorities of having worship places in the most intensely circulated areas of the town.

The existence of a temple dedicated to the Capitoline Triad is self-understood, because each Roman town is built after the model of Rome⁶², to which the proof of the numerous inscriptions and emblematic monuments dedicated to the gods and discovered on the surface of the investigated territory (quite circulated due to the fact that the monuments were re-used as building material⁶³).

Building No. III has a *portico* marked by four imposing marble columns; the bases of these columns are the largest ones discovered until now in Tibiscum, having a diameter of 0.80 m. Inside the edifice were found the fragment of a votive column dedicated by Victorinus, a decurion from Apulum (the first line of the column, that contains the

⁶² Wissowa 1902, 280-298; Brelich 1938, 20-142; Alföldy 1963, 47-69.

⁶³ IDR III/1, 138, 138 a, 140; Moga/Benea 1979, 134, fig. 2; Piso/Benea 1999, 91-98, no. 3.

name of the divinity, is missing, but the space and the type of epigraphic monument allows us to assign it to IOMD), and a marble head of a god, with beard and wearing a tiara have been discovered. This statue head was already identified by D. Benea as Iupiter Dolichenus⁶⁴.

Also around this building, a century ago, the shrines built for Deus Aeternus⁶⁵ and probably, for IOMD⁶⁶ were brought to light, from which we discover that the town's flamen, Iulius Valentinus, dedicates, to the god, the monument for the health of his comrades in *contubernium*⁶⁷.

Another place of worship in which Hercules was venerated, presumably because of the narrative relief discovered in the civil settlement⁶⁸. This discovery suggests the existence of an edifice, the *aedes* of a college where, in addition to its own patron deities (*Genius*), deities of various origins were also worshiped. An eloquent example for supporting this hypothesis is offered by the presence of the *aedes Augustales*, archeologically researched in *Forum Vetus* of the *Colonia Sarmizegetusa*⁶⁹.

The problems of the cult edifices from the civil society is not yet satisfactorily solved; even if there are enough clues linked to the existence of such public constructions, their complete plan, the architecture and the sequence of the construction stages is far from being clear.

⁶⁴ Benea 2013, 301. After the statuary iconography that the supra-dimensioned head of the statue of Iupiter represents it can't be Dolichenus, because is not wearing the frigian bonet, and the hair loops that are hold together with a ribbon it is characteristic for the Roman-Greek deities and not for those of Oriental origin.

⁶⁵ CIL III 7996 = IDR III/1, 133 = Ardevan 1997, 119-129.

⁶⁶ By identifying Iuppiter Aeternus with Iupiter Dolichenus, the numerous *ex voto* dedicated to Aeternus in Dacia, in the *Apulum*, *Ampelum* and *Colonia Sarmizegetusa* centers, where the cult of Dolichenus was very popular (Nemeti 2005, 224-235, 352-366), are explained. For example, three inscriptions dedicated to Iupiter Aeternus in *Colonia Sarmizegetusa* were discovered along with a shrine dedicated to Dolichenus and with two statues representing eagles that hold an animal in their claws (Nemeti 2012, 83, note 30), a topic belonging to the Dolichenus imagery (Boda/Szabó 2011, 275-285; Nemeti 2012, 83, note 30).

⁶⁷ IDR III/1, 139 = Szabó 2007, 94-95, D 60 = Carbó García 2010, no. 196.

⁶⁸ Bărbulescu 1981, 455-460.

⁶⁹ Bărbulescu/Nemeş 1974-1975, 317-322; on *Forum Vetus* of the *Colonia Sarmizegetusa* see the monograph: Étienne/Piso/Diaconescu 2006.

Area sacra from Tibiscum cannot yet be spot out for now, the cult buildings documented archaeologically are scattered through the site.

We are looking forward, in the future, for a complex approach of the temples and theirs inventory, combined with an exhaustive analysis from the archaeological and architectural point of view, a mandatory one for those who study the religious life of a provincial town.

Illustrations

Map of *Tibiscum*-Jupa archaeological site, pointing the location of the monuments

Epigraphic documents: 1: Mars Augustus (IDR III/1, 144); 2: Silvanus Domesticus (IDR III/1, 146); 3: Minerva Augusta (IDR III/1, 184); 4: Bel (IDR III/1, 134); 5: Iupiter Optimus Maximus (IDR III/1, 138); 6: Minerva Augusta and *Genius Numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium* (Timoc 2006, 277); 7: Ierhabol (IDR III/1, 137); 8: Malagbel (Piso 1983, 109, no. 5); 9: Iuppiter Conservator (IDR III/1, 138a); 10: Iupiter Optimus Maximus (Piso/Benea 1999, 97-98, no. 3); 11: *Genius Numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium* and *Genius Horreorum* and *Dii Patrii* (IDR III/1, 136); 12: Sol Invictus Mithras? (IDR III/1, 147); 13: Malachbel (Piso 1983, p. 108, no. 4); 14: Liber Pater (Piso/Benea 1999, 91, nr. 1); 15: *Dii Patrii* (IDR III/1, 135); 16: Iupiter Optimus Maximus (IDR III/1, 140); 17: Liber Pater (IDR III/1, 181; Piso/Benea 1999, 96, no. 2).

Sculptural monuments: a: Head of a statue representing Iupiter (Benea 2003, 128); b: Danubian Riders (Nemeti/Ardeț 2013, 217-218); c: Danubian Riders (Moga 1972, 46, nr. 4); d: Danubian Riders (Vasinca 2009, 262-263, no. 31); e: Danubian Riders (Moga 1972, 40, no. 1); f: Danubian Riders (Vasinca 2009, 263, no. 33); g: *labrum* (Regep/Timoc 2000, 225); h: Venus terracotta (Benea/Bona 1994, 112); i: mould for a Venus terracotta (Benea/Bona 1994, 111), j. bas-relief of Iupiter (Moga/Benea 1979, 134, fig. 2).

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