

Doctoral Dissertation

Invicto Mithrae spelaeum fecit:

Typology and Topography of Mithraic Temples in the Roman Province of Dalmatia

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAASH	<i>Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
AÉ	<i>L'Année Épigraphique</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
ARYS	<i>Antigüedad: Religiones y Sociedades</i>
BASD	<i>Bulletino di archaeologia e storia dalmata</i>
CBI	<i>Centar za balkanološka ispitivanja Akademije nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> . Vol. III. <i>Inscriptiones Asiae, Provinciarum Europae Graecorum, Illyrici Latinae</i> . Ed. Theodor Mommsen. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1873 (impr. Iter. 1958)
CIMRM	<i>Corpus inscriptionum et monumentorum religionis Mithriacae I-II</i> . Haag: Martinus Hijhoff, 1956-1960. Maarten J. Vermaseren
CRAI	<i>Comptes rendes des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
EDH/HD	<i>Epigraphic Database Heidelberg</i> (https://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/inschrift/suche)
EDCS	<i>Epigraphic-Datenbank Clauss/Slaby</i> (https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/edcs_id.php?s_sprache=en&p_edcs_id=EDCS27700042)
EJMS	<i>Electronic Journal of Mithraic Studies</i>
GZM	<i>Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu</i>
HAD	<i>Hrvatsko arheološko društvo</i>
ILJUG	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMXL et MCMLX repertae et editae sunt</i> (1963). A. Šašel and J. Šašel.
JAZU	<i>Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti</i>
JMS	<i>Journal of Mithraic Studies</i>
JRA	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>

LUPA	<i>Bilddatendank zu antiken Steindenkmälern</i> (http://lupa.at)
MHAS	<i>Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika (Split)</i>
PIAZ	<i>Prilozi Instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu</i>
RFFZd	<i>Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zadru</i>
RFFZg	<i>Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu</i>
ROMIC I	<i>Religionum Orientalium monumenta et inscriptions ex Croatia I. Znakovi i riječi/Signa et Litterae V (2015). P. Selem and I. Vilogorac Brčić.</i>
ROMIC II	<i>Religionum Orientalium monumenta et inscriptions ex Croatia II. Znakovi i riječi/Signa et Litterae VI (2018). P. Selem and I. Vilogorac Brčić.</i>
ROMIS	<i>Religionum Orientalium monumenta et inscriptions Salonitani. Znakovi i riječi/Signa et Litterae III (2012). P. Selem and I. Vilogorac Brčić.</i>
VAHD	<i>Vjesnik za arheologiju i historiju dalmatinsku</i>
VAMZ	<i>Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu</i>
VAPD	<i>Vjesnik za arheologiju i povijest dalmatinsku</i>
WMBH	<i>Wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen aus Bosnien und der Herzegowina</i>

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Topic and Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation deals with the Mithraic temples from the Roman province of Dalmatia. Although the cult of Mithras is attested on thirty-six sites across the province (fig. 2.31) and has been in the scholarly focus for a long time, not a single study is dedicated to its architecture. The same applies to Mithraic temples from other provinces of the Roman Empire, lacking a systematic and comprehensive study.¹ Maarten Vermaseren's *Corpus inscriptionum et monumentorum religionis Mithraeae* (1956/1960), the first catalog that published all the material evidence on the cult of Mithras, listed altogether seventy-three Mithraic temples discovered and published before 1945.² Since then, no updated catalog of the monuments appeared although it is estimated that today around 160 Mithraic temples from around the Roman Empire are known.³

Despite the high number of known Mithraic temples, the study of the cult of Mithras in Dalmatia, as elsewhere in the Empire, has mostly concentrated on the iconographic and epigraphic evidence of the cult.⁴ However, the burgeoning number of the newly discovered Mithraic temples, as well as the advancements in the methods of their excavation and preservation, have led to a better understanding of their internal arrangements, building techniques, and their topographical contextualization. Particularly, the broad range of small

¹ Roger Beck emphasized the lack of such study almost four decades ago, see Roger Beck, "Mithraism Since Franz Cumont," *ANRW* II.17.4 (1984): 2090. Recently, Andreas Hensen published a short study dedicated to Mithraic temples, tackling various aspects of Mithraic architecture (interior layout, topography, etc.). However, the study remains limited in its scope and the author stressed once again that a comprehensive survey of Mithraic architecture is needed, see Andreas Hensen, "Templa et spelaea Mithrae. Unity and Diversity in the Topography, Architecture and Design of Sanctuaries in the cult of Mithras," in *Entangled Worlds: Religious Confluences between East and West in the Roman Empire. The Cults of Isis, Mithras, and Jupiter Dolichenus*, ed. Svenja Nagel, Joachim Friedrich Quack, Christian Witschel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017): 385.

² Maarten J. Vermaseren, *Corpus inscriptionum et monumentorum religionis Mithraeae* I-II, The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1956-1960.

³ Ines Klenner, "Breaking News! Meldungen aus der Welt des Mithras," in *Utere felix vivas. Festschrift für Jürgen Oldenstein*, ed. Patrick Jung and Nina Schückern (Bonn: Verlag Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 2012): 113, cf. note 5.; Ines Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes. Architektur und Kultpraxis am Beispiel der Tempel von Güglingen, Kreis Heilbronn*, Forschungen und Berichte zur Archäologie in Baden-Württemberg 16 (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2020): 15. For an overview of new temples discovered in Germania Inferior see Frank Biller, "Neue Denkmäler orientalischer Kulte in Niedergermanien," in *Religion und Region. Götter und Kulte aus dem östlichen Mittelmeerraum*, ed. Elmar Schwertheim, Engelbert Winter (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 2003): 49-70; for Germania Superior see Andreas Hensen, "Tempel des Mithras in Südwestdeutschland. Ein Überblick," in *Vorträge des 18. Niederbayerischen Archäologentages*, ed. Karl Schmotz (Rahden/Westf.: Leidorf, 2000): 93-110; an overview of Mithraic monuments, including temples, in Germania Superior and Inferior, Raetia, and Belgica in Rainer Wiegels, *Lopodunum II. Inschriften und Kultdenkmäler aus dem römischen Ladenburg am Neckar* (Stuttgart: Kommissionsverlag/Konrad Theiss, 2000): 289-300.

⁴ For concise overview of research trends with detailed references see Aleš Chalupa, "Paradigm Lost, Paradigm Found? Larger Theoretical Assumptions Behind Roger Beck's 'The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire,'" in *Pantheon* 7/1 (2012): 5-8.

finds have opened new perspectives in the study of the cult of Mithras and have allowed new insights into its ritual practices, virtually unknown aspects of the cult.⁵

Mithraic temples from Dalmatia are in general less known to the wider scholarly audience and are usually omitted from important discussions. Discovered and published a long time ago, the information on Dalmatian Mithraic temples remains scant and often misinterpreted by scholars not familiar with the original language of their publication.⁶ Therefore, a fresh and updated examination is long overdue.

After the introduction (chapter 1), two main chapters of the dissertation follow (chapter 2 and 3) while the final part are the concluding remarks (chapter 4). Chapter two is dedicated to the typology of Mithraic temples, otherwise not systematically discussed in the scholarship. The discussion of the typology of Mithraic temples is preceded by a critical survey of the historiography of the topic (subchapters 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4). This overview, so far absent from the studies, will tackle the important question of the origins of the Mithraic temple and will show how Franz Cumont's ideas about the Persian origins of the cult remain particularly influential in the scholarship. Dalmatian Mithraic temples, frequently used to support these ideas, will be used as evidence against the existing linear understanding of the development of the Mithraic temple and it will be argued that a regional approach is necessary.

In order to avoid the multiplicity of confusing and frequently imprecise terminology applied, a simple typological categorization of Mithraic temples will be proposed (subchapter 2.5). This will be demonstrated through the example of Dalmatia, where a particular predilection for installing Mithraic temples in natural settings is noticed (subchapter 2.6). Furthermore, it will be shown how temples located in natural settings were associated with different deities both from pre-Roman and Roman times, and are, thus, deeply embedded in the cultural and religious history of the province.

The third chapter offers a detailed discussion of the Mithraic temples in Dalmatia. It is divided into four subchapters, each corresponding to a different geographic region consistent with the

⁵ On the importance of small finds (course-ware, archaeo-floral and faunal records, timber, pollens, food remains, animal by-products, etc.) for the study of the cult of Mithras see the volume edited by Marleen Martens and Guy De Boe, *Roman Mithraism: the Evidence of the Small Finds* (Brussel: Museum Het Toreke, 2004); Ines Klenner, "Dining with Mithras – Functional Aspects of Pottery Ensembles from Roman Mithraea," in *Small Finds and Ancient Social Practices in the Northwest Provinces of the Roman Empire*, ed. Stefanie Hoss, Alissa Whitmore (Oxford, Phil: Oxbow books, 2016): 117-127; Marleen Martens, "Re-thinking Sacred 'Rubbish': the Ritual Deposits of the Temple of Mithras at Tienen (Belgium)." *JRA* 17 (2004): 333-353; Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes*.

⁶ For example, Walsh provides erroneous information about coins found at *mithraea* at *Arupium* and *Epidaurum* by stating they were discovered in niches around the central relief, see David Walsh, *The Cult of Mithras in Late Antiquity. Development, Decline and Demise ca. AD 270-430*, *Late Antique Archaeology* 2 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2019): 33. See the sections 3.2 and 3.5 for detailed discussion of the sites.

spatial distribution of Mithraic temples: the Gacka river valley (subchapter 3.2), the Vrbas river valley (subchapter 3.3), the Neretva river valley (subchapter 3.4), and the southern Dalmatia (subchapter 3.5). At the beginning of each subchapter, a closer survey of the geography of the particular region is given, followed by a short overview of the Roman settlements and the related finds from the area, which are relevant for the contextualization and interpretation of the cult.

The sites and monuments studied in the third chapter are accompanied by a detailed catalog, where all the necessary and available information about each of the monuments is provided. The catalog follows the structure of the third chapter and is divided into four parts: the Gacka river Valley (no. 1-8), the Vrbas river valley (no. 9-20), the Neretva river valley (no. 21-26), and southern Dalmatia (no. 27-32). The catalog includes some less known objects (e.g. brass *askos* from Jajce, cat. no. 19), previously unpublished monuments (a lion statue from Jajce, cat. no. 18), as well as monuments that are today lost (cat. no. 7, 11, 16, 17, 20, 23, and 29). Besides the basic information (find site, current location, measures, and date), a description of each monument is given with detailed literature references.

An updated list of Mithraic temples from the Roman Empire has been compiled in appendix 1, with altogether 108 temples listed. Although a comprehensive study of Mithraic temples, as well as an in-depth comparative survey that would tackle the question of regional differences in Mithraic architecture is beyond the scope of this study, the appendix was a necessary prerequisite for examining the Mithraic architecture from Dalmatia.

The structure of appendix 1 is organized around individual provinces, arranged alphabetically, listing the Mithraic temples according to the settlement where they are located (also in alphabetical order). It further summarizes the basic information on each of the temples: dates (where known), precise topographical location, dimensions of *cella* and the construction type (where known), and selected bibliography.

Since the material evidence of the cult of Mithras from Dalmatia is largely absent from the scholarly discussions (with few notable exceptions, e.g., double-sided relief from Konjic), its study is long overdue but, unfortunately, remains beyond the scope of this dissertation. Appendix 2 was composed to provide an updated list of Mithraic sites from Dalmatia (excluding the sites examined in this dissertation), necessary for the present study. Altogether twenty-three sites are listed (organized alphabetically), summarizing the basic information about each of the forty-five objects: type of the object and its date (where known), with an image and transcription (where necessary), as well as recording the object's current location and selected bibliography.

1.2 Sites Investigated and Methodologies Applied

The evidence presented in the third chapter is limited to only six Mithraic temples: Oltari and Rajanov grič (*Arupium*, Gacka river valley), Jajce (Vrbaš river valley), Konjic (Neretva river valley), Sv. Juraj and Močići (*Epidaurum*, southern Dalmatia). Out of these, one has been irreversibly destroyed (Sv. Juraj) and one is overgrown by the forest (Konjic). The evidence, thus, offers only a limited insight into the cult of Mithras in Dalmatia.

However, in most cases, monuments of the cult of Mithras are the rare and often best-attested evidence of the Roman settlements and the religious beliefs and practices associated with them. Therefore, they are an invaluable source not only for the study of the cult of Mithras but for understanding the cultural, religious, and social history of the province.

The majority of the Mithraic temples in Dalmatia are located in remote and isolated areas of the province, scarcely populated and hardly accessible mountainous regions. For this reason, Mithraic temples are discussed within their geographic context and are presented together with the (mostly) scanty evidence of the Roman settlements associated with them. These settlements, as well as their Mithraic temples, were discovered and published a long time ago, often without fresh archaeological surveys (exception is Oltari, see part 3.2), while new discoveries remain sporadic.

The lack of research is particularly evident in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on whose territory a major part of Dalmatia once spread. Although it constituted the largest part of the province, it is the least known part of it. In the past, archaeological research was mostly hampered by inaccessible terrain while a major halt was caused by the recent war, whose consequences are still felt today. The complicated political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has important repercussions not only for the archaeological research in the country but is reflected in the (in)accessibility of the monuments and sites as well.

The inadequate care has resulted in the disappearance of numerous objects, including some Mithraic monuments discussed in this dissertation, whose fate remains unknown since the war (e.g., a statue of Cautopates from Jajce, cat. no. 11). Since the sites analyzed in this dissertation were excavated in the nineteenth or early twentieth century, most of the valuable small finds were either overlooked or are recorded without precise stratigraphic context. Moreover, they are mostly unavailable for inspection (their current location is either unknown or they were lost). The evidence of the cult of Mithras discussed in this dissertation thus presents a valuable contribution to the knowledge of this part of the province.

The illegal appropriation of archaeological finds did not only happen during the war but also during the archaeological excavations as well.⁷ The research is further complicated by the fact that some sites have been forever lost due to human interventions into the landscape. The construction of an artificial lake in the river Neretva valley (Jablaničko lake) has flooded several important Roman settlements in the area (see subchapter 3.4), while the course of the river Gacka was cut due to the construction of the hydro plant (subchapter 3.2). Parts of the Mithraic temple in Rajanov grič were dynamited (see cat. no. 6), and alterations were made in the appearance of the Mithraic temple in Močići as well, where the original cave was demolished to install the water cistern (cat. no. 30).

In Jajce, the protective construction was built covering the remains of the Mithraic temple, which, unfortunately, used parts of the natural rock carrying the tauroctony relief as its support (see cat. no. 9). Some alterations were made in the Jajce waterfall and its surroundings, as well (see subchapter 3.3). Furthermore, Jajce has been continuously settled from Roman until modern times, thus limiting the knowledge of its earliest history.

Taking all these facts into the consideration, it is evident that establishing the chronology of the Mithraic monuments and sites discussed in this dissertation is difficult. Therefore, a holistic approach is taken, by which the entire evidence of the cult of Mithras from each site is considered. In this sense, a recent publication by Ines Siemers-Klenner on the Mithraic temple from Güglingen can be taken as an exemplary approach to the topic.⁸ Siemers-Klenner emphasizes the need for the comparative approach, referring not only to regional and transregional Mithraic architecture in her reconstruction of Güglingen's temples but includes the comparison with the local building practices, which help determine the chronology of the Mithraic temples from Güglingen. Although the quantity and the quality of the evidence presented in this dissertation are incomparable to Siemers-Klenner's study (facilitated by contemporary excavation methods), it is a first study that takes the totality of the evidence into the consideration when analyzing and interpreting Mithraic temples from Dalmatia.

Therefore, besides the remains of the Mithraic architecture in Dalmatia, the style and iconography of the sculpture will be analyzed too. Apart from determining the chronology, iconography is also used to trace the local and regional influences. The social structure of the members of the cult is assessed by examining the epigraphic evidence, while the small finds

⁷ See, for example, a lion statue and *askos* from Jajce (cat. no. 18 and 19).

⁸ Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes*. Besides Siemers-Klenner's study, recent publications on Mithraic temples from Inveresk (appendix 1, no. 3), Apulum III (appendix 1, no. 6), and Kempraten (appendix 1, no. 103) show the need for an interdisciplinary team and approach to the excavation and interpretation of Mithraic temples.

will be used to understand the ritual aspects of the cult. Furthermore, the evidence of the cult of Mithras is interpreted with the reference to their physical environment and relevant Roman finds from the surrounding area, thus offering the holistic image of the cult.

1.3 What is a Mithraic Temple?

Before entering any further discussion, it is necessary to define the Mithraic temple, and the criteria used for recognizing a building as such. The mithraic temple is usually referred to by the Latin word *mithraeum*, which is a recent scholarly invention used for these cult buildings. Since the term became a standard designation for Mithraic temples it will be used in this dissertation. The Romans used either the term *templum* or *aedes*, which occur mostly in the provinces, while the terms *spelaeum* and *antrum* (both meaning 'cave' or a 'grotto') are mostly encountered in Italy (see also cat.no.1 in this dissertation).⁹

Mithraeum is usually a rectangular and symmetrical building, with a tripartite internal division of space (fig. 1.1): a sunken *cella* or a cult room consisting of a central aisle (D) flanked on either side by raised *podia* (E), ending with a rear wall where the cult-image and altars were usually arranged.

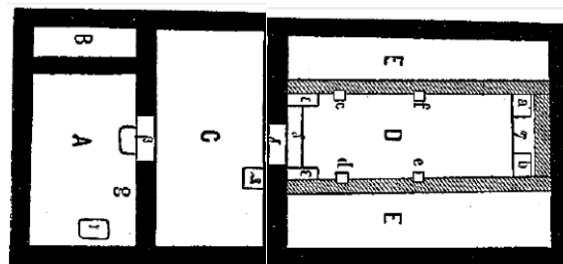


Figure 1.1 Groundplan of Mithraeum II, *Aquincum* (Budapest).

Before the cult room, ante- or service-room(s) are installed (also called a vestibule) on a ground-level (A, B, C), used for preparation and storage of food, or for storing various kitchen equipment and ritual paraphernalia.¹⁰

Based on their easily recognizable ground plan, *mithraea* are often identified as such even when further evidence, e.g., inscription with a dedication to Mithras or sculpture representing either Mithras or other deities/figures associated with the cult, is missing. Recent research has

⁹ In Italy the term *crypta* ('grotto' or a 'vault') is encountered on an inscription from Ostia as well (CIMRM 315). For the overview of the terminology see Manfred Clauss, *Mithras. Kult und Mysterium* (Darmstadt: Philipp von Zabern, 2012 (1990)): 48, 50; Hensen, "*Templa et spelaea*," 394.

¹⁰ Overview of the possible functions of these ante-rooms in Andreas Schatzmann, "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer funktionellen Topographie von Mithras heiligtümern," in *Roman Mithraism: the Evidence of the Small Finds*, ed. Marleen Martens, Guy De Boe (Brussel: Museum Het Toreke, 2004): 12-14.

questioned the canonicity of the Mithraic temple and has shown that not all cult rooms with the characteristic tripartite division and side *podia* can be attributed to the cult of Mithras.

In *Carnuntum*, for example, a complex discovered on the western edge of the *Canabae*, has been previously identified as a *mithraeum* (the so-called Mithraeum II) based on its groundplan, despite the complete lack of dedications or imagery that would confirm its association with Mithras.¹¹ The numerous stone monuments confirmed its identification as the sanctuary of Iuppiter Dolichenus instead.¹² Moreover, similar groundplans with side *podia* are occasionally found in the context of tombs and *mausolea* (where relatives could recline and share a meal in the company of the dead), and in temples or banqueting rooms associated with different cults in the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East.¹³

Moreover, the canonicity of Mithraic temples will be further questioned in this dissertation by demonstrating that not all *mithraea* follow the canonical tripartite layout. *Mithraea* from Jajce and Konjic have only a single *podium*, and the altar arrangements at Oltari, Rajanov grič, and Jajce further confirm that diversity exists in the internal arrangements of *mithraea*.

Not only were the tripartite buildings with side *podia* regularly identified as *mithraea*, but any cave where there is evidence of cultic activities was usually recognized as *mithraeum* as well, regardless of the (in)existent evidence that would undoubtedly confirm such identification. One example of such an approach is the volume dedicated to the cult of Mithras in Malta by Claudia Sagona, where the author identifies any cave or rock-cut structure as a *mithraeum*, without any actual evidence, epigraphic or iconographic.¹⁴

The assumed equivalence between the cave and *mithraeum* has its source in the well-known passage of Porphyry's *De antro nympharum*:

¹¹ Verena Gassner, "Kulträume mit seitlichen Podien in Carnuntum. Überlagungen zum Tempel II im Iuppiterheiligtum auf dem Pfaffenberg," in *Vis Imaginum. Festschrift für Elisabeth Walde zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Gerald Grabherr and Elisabeth Walde (Innsbruck: Institut für Klassische und Provinzialrömische Archäologie der Universität Innsbruck, 2005): 70-90.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ For tombs and *mausolea* see Ulrike Egelhaaf-Gaiser, *Kulträume im römischen Alltag. Das Isisbuch des Apuleius und der Ort von Religion im kaiserzeitlichen Rom*, Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 2, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000): 300-21; for the side *podia* in the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East see Holger Schwarzer, *Das Gebäude mit dem Podiensaal in der Stadtgrabung von Pergamon: Studien zu sakralen Banketträumen mit Liegepodien in der Antike*, *Altertümer von Pergamon* 15: Die Stadtgrabung 4 (Berlin/New York: Walter De Gruyter, 2008): 104-90.

¹⁴ Claudia Sagona, *Looking for Mithra in Malta*, *Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion* 10 (Leuven/Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2009): 33-49. Similarly, natural caves at Zillis and *Aventicum* (Avenches) in Switzerland were identified as *mithraea* without firm evidence. For Zillis see Jürg Rageth, "Ein spätrömischer Kultplatz in einer Höhle bei Zillis GR," *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 58 (2001): 111-126; for Avenches see Anne De Pury-Gysel, "Avenches-Aventicum, Hauptstadt der Helvetier. Zum Forschungsstand 1985-2010," *Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission* 93 (2012): 170-177.

As Eubulus says, Zoroaster was the first to dedicate a natural cavern in the nearby mountains of Persia, having flowers and streams, in honoring Mithras, the maker and father of all. The cavern represented for him an image of the cosmos which Mithras created; the things in the cave were in accordance with symmetrical distances, conveying symbols of elements and seven zones of the cosmos. Then, after this Zoroaster, there also took hold among others the tradition of expounding the mystic rites through caves and caverns, either naturally formed or human-made.¹⁵

The passage inspired Franz Cumont and his influential idea about the Persian origins of the cult, thus identifying caves as authentic places of Mithraic worship.¹⁶

That identification of caves as *mithraea* is a complex issue is further demonstrated by the example of a recently discovered cave on the massif Gradišče at St. Egyden in Carinthia, Austria.¹⁷ Besides the numerous animal bones, fragments of drinking and eating utensils were found, as well as fragments of cult vessels decorated with snakes (so-called Schlangengefäß), one of which includes an inscription.

Although snake-decorated cult vessels are associated with the cult of Mithras, they are frequently found in connection with various other cults as well.¹⁸ Furthermore, the current transcription of the inscription remains questionable as well.¹⁹ Therefore, the evidence does not allow to undoubtedly identify the cave at Gradišče as a *mithraeum*, although the finds and the context where they were found might point in this direction.

In Dalmatia, there are two examples of similar identification of *mithraea* based on their location in a cave or otherwise associated with natural rock structures. A tauroctony relief was discovered in the Roman quarry at Dardagani, near Zvornik (cat. no. 6), and based on this find in connection with the (artificial) caves of the quarry complex, the existence of the *mithraeum*

¹⁵ Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 6. Translation from K. Nilüfer Akçay, *Porphyry's On the Cave of the Nymphs in its Intellectual Context*, Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition 23 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2019): 63.

¹⁶ Detailed discussion of Cumont's hypothesis in the subchapter 2.2.

¹⁷ I am thankful to Dr. Christoph Hinker from the Austrian Archaeological Institute for sharing his thoughts and showing me the finds from the site. Information on the cave from Gradišče can be found at: <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/oeai/pinp/gradisce-reste-kultischer-mahlzeiten>, accessed January 22, 2022.

¹⁸ See subchapter 3.2 for a detailed discussion and references.

¹⁹ The transcription is available at: https://www.academia.edu/37923734/Archaeological_Finds_from_a_Mithras_Cave_on_the_Massif_Gradišče_at_St_Egyden_in_Carinthia_Austria_Poster, accessed January 22, 2022.

has been assumed.²⁰ However, recent research has revealed a large complex of opencast and underground extraction of limestone at Dardagani, which represented the main source of stone blocks and unfinished stone products with which *Sirmium* (Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia) was supplied between the second and fifth centuries AD.²¹ The unfinished character of the tauroctony relief is thus a further confirmation of the workshop present at Dardagani quarries, rather than an indication of a *mithraeum*.²²

Another similar example is Lever Tara in Montenegro. On a site called Preslica, a shallow arched niche with a votive altar carved into the cliff was discovered (fig. 1.2, 1.3). So far, no archaeological excavations have been conducted and, according to the inscription, the site is dated to 270 AD.²³



Figure 1.2: Lever Tara (Montenegro)



Figure 1.3: Lever Tara (Montenegro)

Based on the inscription, which bears a dedication to *Invicto Aug(usto)*, scholars were eager to identify the site as a *mithraeum*, referring to the natural rock setting in further support of their

²⁰ Milica Kosorić, “Spomenik Mitrina kulta iz okoline Zvornika” [Monument of Mithras cult from the vicinity of Zvornik], *Članci i građa za kulturnu istoriju istočne Bosne* 6 (1965): 49-56; Ljubica Zotović, *Mitraizam na tlu Jugoslavije* [Mithraism on the territory of Yugoslavia] Posebna izdanja 11 (Beograd: Arheološki institut, 1973): 22-23, no. 22; Željko Miletić, “Mitraizam u rimskoj provinciji Dalmaciji” [Mithraism in the Roman province of Dalmatia] (PhD diss., University of Zadar, 1996.), 179-180, no. 33b; Goranka Lipovac Vrkljan, “Posebnosti tipologije i ikonografije mitrijskih reljefa rimske Dalmacije” [Typological and iconographical particularities of Mithraic reliefs in the Roman Dalmatia] (PhD diss., University of Zagreb, 2001): 119-121, no. 35a.

²¹ Bojan Djurić et al., “Sirmium’s Main Limestone Quarry at Dardagani (Bosnia and Herzegovina),” in *Interdisciplinary Studies on Ancient Stone. Proceedings of the IX ASMOSIA Conference (Tarragona 2009)*, ed. Anna Gutiérrez García-M., Pilar Lapuente Mercadal, Isabel Rodà de Llanza (Tarragona: Institut Català d’Arqueologia Clàssica, 2012): 471-478.

²² A further examination of Milica Kosorić’s archaeological reports and original photographs confirmed that the relief was not found inside a *mithraeum*, but was found outside the complex, where it ended up on a pile of rubbish collected by workers from the quarry. I am thankful to Dr. Dženan Brigić from the Museum of Eastern Bosnia in Tuzla for allowing me the access to archival documentation of the museum.

²³ AE 1998, 1027; CIL III, 13849; CIMRM 1888; HD 042305. I am grateful to the Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture of Montenegro for the information and photographs of the Lever Tara site.

argument.²⁴ However, recent scholarship has acknowledged that the designations *Invicto*, *Invicto Augusto*, and even *Soli*, *Soli deo*, *Soli Invicto*, etc., are associated with different deities and their identification with Mithras requires additional confirmation (context of finding, etc.).²⁵ Since there are no other clues at Lever Tara that would allow its association with the cult of Mithras, the site's identification as *mithraeum* is dismissed here.²⁶

One more *mithraeum* is usually assumed in Dalmatia, at the locality of Crikvine in Rupotina near *Salona*.²⁷ Besides the remains of an early Christian church, remains of a Roman *villa* (fig. 1.4) and the tauroctony relief (secondarily used as a tomb lid, see appendix 2, no. 4) have been found.²⁸

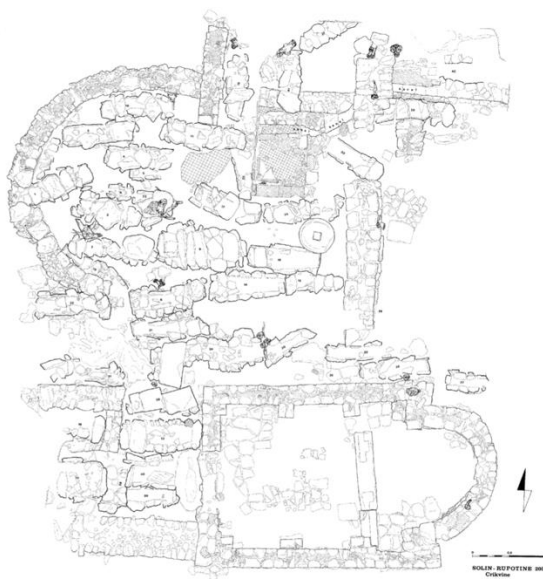


Figure 1.4: Ground plan of the early Christian church and Roman *villa*, Crikvine.

²⁴ Carl Patsch, "Archäologisch-epigraphische Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der römischen Provinz Dalmatien I," *WMBH* 4 (1896): 292, fig. 77; Zotović, *Mitraizam*, 38-39, no. 49; Miletić, *Mitraizam*, 182, no. 38; Lipovac Vrkljan, *Posebnosti tipologije*, 124-125, no. 39.

²⁵ A good survey of the problems of identifying Mithras with Sol (Invictus) in Stephan Berrens, *Sonnenkult und Kaisertum von den Severern bis zu Constantin I. (193-337 n. Chr.)*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 185 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004).

²⁶ In line with the same argument, inscriptions from the following sites are excluded from appendix 2: CIL III 15085/CIMRM 1853/HD 028759 from *Arupium* (Prozor); CIL III, 10120/CIMRM 1848/HD 053168 from Rab; ILJug 0787/CIMRM 1856/HD 34270 from Rider; CIL III, 01788/CIMRM 1880/HD 053178; CIL III, 01783; CIMRM 1881/HD 053179; CIL III, 8432 from *Narona*; CIL III, 8686/CIMRM 1876/HD 040057; CIL III, 1955/CIMRM 1875/HD 053175 from *Salona*; ILJug 1635/CIMRM 1914/HD 033936 from Glamoč. The Dalmatian provenance of the inscription CIL III, 03158b/HD 062304 is insecure and is, therefore, also excluded. Recently, Nadežda Gavrilović Vitas has correctly attributed the inscription from Pljevlja to Sol Invictus (ILJug 1701/CIMRM 1886/CIL III, 12715/HD 03400), and, therefore, it is excluded from this study, see Nadežda Gavrilović Vitas, *Ex Asia et Syria. Oriental Religions in the Roman Central Balkans*, Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 78 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2021): 244, no. 2.

²⁷ Frane Bulić, "Quattro bassorilievi di Mitra a Salona," *BASD* 32 (1909): 53; Branimir Gabričević, "Mitrin kult na području rimske Dalmacije" [The cult of Mithras on the territory of Roman Dalmatia] (PhD diss., University of Zagreb, 1951): 54-55; Lipovac Vrkljan, *Posebnosti tipologije*, 94-95, no. 18a.

²⁸ Nikolina Uroda, "Prilog poznavanju lokaliteta Crikvine u Rupotini" [A contribution to learning the locality of Crikvine in Rupotina], *Tusculum* 1 (2008): 69-79.

Mithraeum was supposedly installed in one of the apsidal rooms belonging to the complex of the Roman *villa*, according to Nikolina Uroda, either in the second century AD or during the reign of Emperor Diocletian (284-305 AD).²⁹ There are no further details about its interior layout and there are no other finds that would confirm such identification. Moreover, the tauroctony relief was found with a number of other Roman monuments re-used as tomb lids on the surrounding medieval graveyard and could have been brought here from elsewhere (*Salona?*).³⁰ Neither is the *mithraeum* architecturally confirmed nor is the tauroctony relief reliably associated with it and the identification of the building as a *mithraeum* is, therefore, dismissed here.

The evident disparity between the number of the generally acknowledged *mithraea* in the scholarship (160 mentioned by Siemers-Klenner) and 108 listed in appendix 1 of this dissertation indicates the complexity of the problem.³¹ As shown in the previous discussion, there is no clear set of criteria by which a certain building is identified as a *mithraeum*. To avoid the pitfalls of previous scholarship, therefore, a standardized set of criteria is needed. As an exemplary approach, the study of the similar issue of identifying *Capitolia* by Josephine Crawley Quinn and Andrew Wilson is taken.³² Based on their approach, only buildings where architectural remains of the *mithraeum* exist, with further epigraphic or iconographic evidence that supports their identification as such are included in appendix 1. Sites where, for example, a larger amount of epigraphic monuments or sculptures associated with the cult of Mithras was found, albeit without the remains of the architecture, are excluded. In the same way, *mithraea* whose identification rests on dubious reports and lacks proper archaeological confirmation are omitted as well.

Finally, since the physical environment of Dalmatia is important for contextualization and interpretation of the cult of Mithras, it remains to briefly address the geography of the province. This will allow a better understanding of the physical characteristics of individual regions given in the third chapter.

²⁹ Ibid, 73.

³⁰ Ibid, 72-73.

³¹ Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes*, 15.

³² Josephine Crawley Quinn and Andrew Wilson, "Capitolia," *JRS* 103 (2013): 117-173.

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Figure 1.5: Geographic map of Dalmatia.



The territory of the Roman province of Dalmatia can be divided into three main geographical units:

- 1) the Adriatic belt,
- 2) the Dinaric Alps (Dinarides), and
- 3) northern Dalmatia (Pannonian plain).³³

These areas follow the main geomorphological outline of the region and are mostly determined by the mountain range in the southern-southeastern part, running parallel to the coast, separating the continental Balkan peninsula from the Adriatic sea.

The Adriatic belt is a narrow area covering the Eastern Adriatic archipelago and the coastal side of the limestone mountain range (comprised of mountains Biokovo, Mosor, Kozjak, Velebit, and Učka), as well as its narrow hinterland, from Istria on the north to Boka Kotorska and Montenegrin coast on the south. The Adriatic Sea is semi-enclosed, bordered in the southwest by the Apennine Peninsula, and connected in the southeast with the Ionian Sea by the 72km wide Strait of Otranto. The Eastern Adriatic coast is the most indented Mediterranean coastline (1246 islands, islets, and reefs). Along with numerous natural harbors, the mild climate and moderate winds offered favorable conditions for safe sailing across the Adriatic sea.³⁴ The geomorphological changes of the Dalmatian coast over the past two millennia have been insignificant, and, therefore, its present appearance largely corresponds to antiquity.³⁵

Most of the Adriatic coast is characterized by barren karst topography. Karst is a mountainous landscape with specific geological, geomorphological, and hydrological features.³⁶ It is primarily associated with porous carbonate rocks (e.g., limestone found in Dalmatia) due to their extreme susceptibility to chemical and mechanical wear, as well as to the influence of tectonics (faults, wrinkles, cracks, etc.). Water penetrates through the cracks of these carbonate

³³ For a detailed geographical description of Dalmatia see John Wilkes, *Dalmatia* (London: Routledge&Paul, 1969); John Wilkes, *The Illyrians* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992): 13-27; Igor Borzić, "Geografske karakteristike i naseljavanje zapadnog Ilirika [Geographical characteristics and the settlement of the western Illyricum]" in *Klasični Rim na tlu Hrvatske. Arhitektura, urbanizam, skulptura*, ed. Marina Šegvić and Danijela Marković (Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2014): 37-40.

³⁴ Tomislav Bilić, "Wind Directions as one of the Problems in Navigation on the Adriatic in Greek and Roman Period," *Pomorstvo* 26/1 (2012): 81-93; Marko Vučetić, "Vrijeme i klima Jadrana u antičkim pisaca, [The Weather and Climate of the Adriatic according to Ancient Writers]," *Hrvatski meteorološki časopis* 46 (2011): 55-67; Igor Borzić, "Rimske luke – riječne i morske – i pomorstvo na Jadranu, [Roman harbors – river and sea – and sailing on the Adriatic]" in *Klasični Rim*, 53-56.

³⁵ Mithad Kozličić, "Obalna linija istočnog Jadrana u starom vijeku [Coast line of the eastern Adriatic in antiquity]," *Latina et Graeca* 28 (1986): 17-38; Mithad Kozličić, *Historijska geografija istočnog Jadrana u starom vijeku* [Historical geography of the eastern Adriatic in antiquity] (Split: Književni krug, 1990); Tomislav Šegota, "Promjena razine Jadranskog mora prema podacima mareografa u Bakru i Splitu [Sea level change of the Adriatic Sea according to mareograph data from Bakar and Split]," *Geografski glasnik* 38/1 (1976): 301-312.

³⁶ For a detailed description of karst see Jo De Waele, "Karst Processes and Landforms," in *The International Encyclopedia of Geography*, Vol. 8, ed. Douglas Richardson et al. (Chicester: John Wiley & Sons, 2017): 1-14.

rocks, dissolving it and creating various surfaces (limestone pavements, sinkholes, karst poljes, etc.), and underground (pits, caves, caverns) karst forms. It is characterized by the subterranean drainage systems, with very few or no surface rivers, where rivers appear in springs and sink back into the ground a number of times (so-called sinking rivers).

The generally dry karst landscape has limited access to the arable land. Besides the Adriatic islands, which provided significant arable surfaces, karst poljes are important in this context. Situated at the inner edge of the Adriatic belt, they offer limited areas of higher fertility with plenty of water: Gacko and Ličko polje in Lika; Sinjsko polje behind Split; Popovo polje in east Herzegovina (and Glamočko, Livanjsko, and Duvanjsko polje deep inside the Dinarides).³⁷ These large flat plains, in fact, depressions, of complex hydrological characteristics (numerous karst springs, sinking rivers, etc.) are rather swampy areas, and most of the year they are not suitable for farming. Since they get flooded easily, they are not appropriate for building settlements either (generally situated at the elevated terrain along its edges).

The hydrographic network of this area is made by few but very important rivers: Zrmanja (*Tadeanius*), Krka (*Titius*), Jadro (*Salon*), Cetina (*Nestos/Hippus*), and Neretva (*Naron*). Since the mountain range is narrow and hardly traversable terrain, it offers only a few natural passages to the hinterland (e. g., mountain pass Vratnik through the Velebit mountain near Senj (*Senia*), Ravni Kotari behind Zadar (*Iader*), or Klis behind Solin (*Salona*)). Therefore, these rivers - flowing vertically to the sea - have an important role in establishing communication between the coast and the hinterland.

Due to its characteristic karst topography, the Adriatic belt was not suitable for intensive settlement. This resulted in the formation of isolated settlement areas which mainly clung to the precipitous shore, using little favorable conditions they found. They were, together with islands, an important part of the maritime network along the Eastern Adriatic coast, enabling communication and trade between the Adriatic centers with the eastern Mediterranean (Greece and Asia Minor), as well as with the western Mediterranean (Italy, Gaul, Spain).³⁸

³⁷ The term *polje* derives from Slavic languages and means *large field* in English, but in English *polje* specifically refers to a karst plain, see De Waele, "Karst Processes," 5.

³⁸ The Eastern Adriatic coast was part of important longitudinal road network connecting Aquileia on the north (via Tarsatica – Senia – Arupium – Burnum - Tilverium) and Dyrrachium on the south. From Aquileia, the Amber Road connected Mediterranean with the North Sea and with the Baltic Sea, while the *Via Egnatia* (continuation of the *Via Appia*) connected the Adriatic Sea via Dyrrachium with the northern coastline of the Aegean Sea and Byzantium, see Željko Miletić, "Roman Roads along the Eastern Coast: State of Research," in *Les routes de l'Adriatique antique: géographie et économie: actes de la Table ronde du 18 au 22 septembre 2001 (Zadar)*, eds. Slobodan Čače, Anamarija Kurilić and Francis Tassaux (Bordeaux/Zadar: Ausonius, 2006): 125-136; Borzić, "Rimske luke," 53-56; Mithad Kozličić, Mateo Bratanić, "Ancient Sailing Routes in Adriatic," in *Les routes de l'Adriatique antique: géographie et économie: actes de la Table ronde du 18 au 22 septembre 2001 (Zadar)*, Bordeaux/Zadar: Ausonius, 2006: 107-124; Mario Jurišić, *Ancient Shipwrecks of the Adriatic. Maritime*

The range of higher mountains rises behind the karst poljes (more than 1,500 m a.s.l.), forming the backbone of the province. They are the core of the Dinaric Alps, stretching parallel with the coast from Istria to Montenegro. This unfriendly area presents a serious physical barrier between the Adriatic belt and northern Dalmatia (and further with Pannonia). The terrain here is extremely hard to traverse, intersected by deep-cut river gorges offering only a few natural passes. These rivers (Una/*Oeneus*, Sana, Vrbas/*Ourpanus*, Bosna/*Bathinus*, Drina/*Drinus*), flowing north into the river Sava (*Savus*), were, together with their harbors, crucial in connecting this area with the Dalmatian and Pannonian road network.

Contrary to the southern karst area, the mountainous northern part is heavily forested with abundant vegetation. However, the opportunities for agriculture are low (except for the aforementioned Glamočko, Livanjsko, and Duvanjsko polje), and mountain cattle breeding is almost the exclusive way of producing food. The mountainous climate prevailing here has cold and snowy winters. Harsh living conditions and a hostile environment made this part of the province rather unattractive for settlement, with no significant urbanization. Since this area is rich in natural resources, ranging from timber and limestone to the deposits of valuable mineral and metal ores (salt, gold, silver, iron),³⁹ it is around these important exploitation zones where stronger economic and settlement activity is noted.⁴⁰

Northern Dalmatia is part of the Pannonian plains, situated between the watershed of Sava valley and the central mountainous area of the Dinarides. Several important rivers and their tributaries intersect this area: Kupa, Vrbas, Bosna (the most direct route to central Dalmatia), and the Drina connecting, via Sava Danube, the southern and central Dalmatia with Pannonia. The road network developed along these rivers had an important role in supplying the army on the Danubian limes. The area here is in stark contrast to the bleached rock of the south: dense forests with occasional swamps cover the majority of the territory. Although the potential for agriculture was much higher than in the southern parts of the province, the mountainous surroundings with harsh climatic conditions did not attract many inhabitants. The settlements mainly clung around important mining centers and river harbors.

Thus, the Roman province of Dalmatia is a region of heterogeneous geographical features, which dictated the dynamics of its economic and cultural development. Due to its harsh

Transport During the First and Second Centuries AD, BAR International Series 828 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000).

³⁹ Kristina Glicksman, "Internal and External Trade in the Roman Province of Dalmatia," *Opuscula Archaeologica* 29 (2005): 189-230.

⁴⁰ So far, the most detailed survey in Esad Pašalić, *Antička naselja i komunikacije u Bosni i Hercegovini* [Ancient settlements and roads in Bosnia and Herzegovina] (Sarajevo: Sarajevski grafički zavod, 1960).

environment, and stark geographical contrasts between the regions (from karst topography and mountain ranges to the Pannonian plain), the density of settlement was uneven. All the main urban centers were located on the Adriatic coast, strategically well positioned and connected with the maritime and coastal road network. In the hinterland, we find sporadic traces of settlements, clustered mainly around important mining centers or connected to its exploitation network (transportation routes, custom posts, etc.).⁴¹

⁴¹ Comprehensive topographical overview of the region in: Ivo Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina u antičko doba/ Bosnie et Herzegovine à l'époque antique*, Centar za balkanološka ispitivanja/Centre d'Etudes Balkaniques 6 (Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 1988).

2. TYPOLOGY OF MITHRAIC TEMPLES

2.1 Introduction

The typological analysis of architecture is a useful approach,⁴² but to understand how typology can enhance our understanding of architecture, it is necessary to first define the concepts of “type” and “typology.”⁴³ “Type” commonly refers to “a group, class, or category with certain shared characteristics, which generally refer to typological classification according to use (e.g. church, school, housing) or morphology (e.g. radial plans, courtyard-buildings).”⁴⁴ “Typology,” then, is “the study of types and the analysis of their characteristics.”⁴⁵ Therefore, the typological classification enables systematic and comparative analysis of building types based on their formal characteristics, functional, and morphological features; it can help us identify their common and/or separative traits, and the degree of their individuality.⁴⁶

In the case of the cult of Mithras, the building used for its cultic purposes can be defined as a type of religious (sacral) architecture, i.e. a temple. According to its morphology, it is a rectangular building, consisting of an ante-room, a cult-room with a central aisle flanked by raised lateral podia, culminating in a recess at the rear wall carrying a cult image. The Mithraic temple represents a specific type of sacral architecture and should not be confused with a layout of a typical Roman temple.⁴⁷ The most common of all architectural types in the Roman world, the Roman temple was usually built on a high podium, dominating the space in front of it, with a lofty staircase leading to the rectangular cella with a deep columnar porch.⁴⁸ Cella contained the cult image and no gatherings or sacrifices took place inside, but in front of the temple.⁴⁹

⁴² Although one could argue that analyzing the typology of Roman architecture is a somewhat anachronistic approach (see, for example, Richard Neudecker, “Buildings, Images, and Rituals in the Roman World,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Art and Architecture*, ed. Clemente Marconi (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015): 353), the fact that it is still widely used in recent publications on Roman architecture, reveals how typology remains the basic category of architectural analysis, see, for example, Fikret Yegül and Diane Favro, *Roman Architecture and Urbanism. From the Origins to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019): 411.

⁴³ For a short survey of origins and transformation of the meaning of the concepts of “type” and “typology” see Sam Jacoby, “Type versus Typology Introduction,” *The Journal of Architecture* 20/6 (2015): 931-937.

⁴⁴ Sam Jacoby, “The Reasoning of Architecture. Type and the Problem of Historicity,” (PhD Diss., Technische Universität Berlin, 2013): 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 8.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 9-10.

⁴⁷ For the survey of the Roman temple as a building type see John W. Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman Temples. The Republican to the Middle Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁴⁸ Frank Sear, *Roman Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1998): 56; detailed survey in Yegül, Favro, “Temple Architecture of Republican Rome and Italy,” in Yegül, Favro, *Roman Architecture*, 81-111.

⁴⁹ For the functioning of the Roman sacrifices see John Scheid, *Quand faire c'est croire. Les rites sacrificiels des Romains* (Paris: Aubier, 2005).

Contrary to this, the Mithraic temple can be described as a congregational temple, built specifically to host religious gatherings and various rituals.⁵⁰

Furthermore, typology enhances our understanding of architecture within its geographical and socio-cultural contexts and is, therefore, an important aspect of studying Mithraic temples.⁵¹ In the following typological analysis of the Mithraic temples from Dalmatia, it will be shown how the geographical context largely conditioned the dominant type of the Mithraic temple in the province. Caves are easily found in the karst landscape of the province, thus making it a natural choice for Mithraic communities. Moreover, it will be argued that, besides the geographical conditions, the pre-existing religious and socio-cultural aspects of life in the province influenced the typology of Mithraic architecture as well.⁵²

Even though the Mithraic temple is understood as a distinctive type of sacral architecture, easily recognizable across the Roman Empire, it has not been the subject of scholarly inquiry so far: we do not know how, where, nor why this specific architectural type developed. Moreover, the typology of Mithraic temples was never addressed systematically, resulting in a plurality of typologies and the terminology applied. To avoid these inconsistencies, it is important to clearly define the architectural categories (typology) and carefully choose the terminology applied when describing them.

The chapter begins with a critical overview of the historiography concerning the typology of Mithraic temples (subchapter 2.2). It is an important prerequisite for understanding the background of more recent debates on the topic, which are discussed in the second part of the chapter (subchapter 2.3). Within this framework, the regional scholarship on Dalmatian *mithraea* is reviewed as well (subchapter 2.4). Finally, based on the previous analysis, the typological classification of Mithraic temples is proposed and Dalmatian *mithraea* are categorized accordingly (subchapter 2.5). The chapter concludes with the wider geographical and socio-cultural contextualization of the typology of Mithraic temples in Dalmatia, together with the comparative analysis of the typology of Mithraic temples in other provinces (based on the table in appendix 1). This will allow us to trace the shared typological features among the provinces and to highlight the specifics of Dalmatian *mithraea*.

⁵⁰ Sear, *Roman Architecture*, 58.

⁵¹ For example, see Yasemin İ. Güney, "Type and Typology in Architectural Discourse," *BAÜ FBE Dergisi* 9/1 (2007): 3-18; Sonay Ayyıldız et al., "Importance of Typological Analysis in Architecture for Cultural Continuity: An Example from Koceali (Turkey)," *IOP Conference Series: Materials, Science, and Engineering* 245/7 (2017): 1-15.

⁵² Caves were used as cult places since prehistoric times, see further in the chapter.

2.2 The Early Evolution of the Mithraic Temple – Franz Cumont and his Contemporaries

Franz Cumont's ideas had a lasting influence on Mithraic studies, and his profound impact can be followed up to today. The first systematic catalog of archaeological and epigraphic material on the cult of Mithras - Franz Cumont's *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, Vol. 1-2 (1896/1899), is characteristic of early approaches of Mithraic studies.⁵³ The title itself reveals the privileged position of *monuments figurés*, which served as a basis for Cumont's interpretation of the cult's mythology and “doctrine,” published in the concluding chapter of the first volume (*La doctrine des mystères*).⁵⁴

Only seventeen Mithraic temples were known at the time, and neither the purpose nor the layout of various parts of the buildings could be established with certainty.⁵⁵ While Cumont's catalog (Vol. 2), records only the basic information about the building's location, his focus is on the figural and epigraphic monuments found in them. Further details on the size, building technique, state of preservation, exact measures of various parts, etc., are rarely given. Illustrations and ground plans are also scarce.

Despite the modest archaeological evidence, Cumonts offered an intriguing interpretation of the origins of the Mithraic temples. He set the discussion of Mithraic temples into the wider narrative about the character of the cult of Mithras, which, according to Cumont, was a Roman form of Mazdaism (Zoroastrianism).⁵⁶ Cumont saw a continuity of the “true nature” of the cult of Mithras, both in its concepts and in its worship, traceable from Persia to Rome.⁵⁷ In the same spirit, he interpreted the origins of Mithraic cave usage, which, according to Cumont, are to be sought in the primitive ritual usage of caves in the Persian mountains.⁵⁸ According to a legend, transmitted to us by Porphyry (c. 234-305 AD), Zoroaster was the first to dedicate a natural

⁵³ Vol. 1 was published after Vol. 2 (1896). While Vol. 2 contains the actual collection of texts and monuments, Vol. 1 remains the interpretive part of the study.

⁵⁴ Second part of the Vol. 1 are the conclusions (pp. 223-350), later published as a separate book *Les Mystères de Mithra*, Brussels: H. Lamartin, 1900. The volume starts with the literary texts in forty-four pages (pp. 3-46), followed by the inscriptions in six pages (pp. 47-52), while the chapter on monuments occupies remaining 168 pages (pp. 53-220). Out of this 168 pages, first fourteen are dedicated to the temples (pp. 54-67), and three pages to the small finds (pp. 68-70). For the discussion of the Mithraic “doctrine” see Roger Beck, “Doctrine Redefined,” in idem, *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 41-64.

⁵⁵ Cumont, *Textes*, Vol. 1, 54.

⁵⁶ Franz Cumont, *Lux perpetua* (Paris: Librairie Orientales Paul Geuthner, 1949): 272.

⁵⁷ Nicole Belayche, “Introduction historiographique. I. L'homme de Mithra,” in Franz Cumont, *Les Mystères de Mithra*, ed. Nicole Belayche and Attilio Mastrocinque, Bibliotheca Cumontiana. Scripta Maiora III (Rome: Nino Aragno Editore 2013): XXIX. According to Cumont, the cult of Mithras is a composite religion, comparable to the geological deposition of sediments: the basal layer is the Mazdean faith of ancient Iran, from which the cult took its origins. Above this substratum, as Cumont described it, a layer of Babylonian astrological doctrines was deposited, and afterwards the local beliefs of Asia Minor. Ultimately, the Hellenic ideas were added as well. Franz Cumont, *Les Mystères*, 30-31.

⁵⁸ Franz Cumont, *Textes*, Vol. 1, 55.

cave to Mithras somewhere in the mountains of Persia, which prompted the earliest followers to gather and celebrate initiations in caves (both natural and artificial).⁵⁹

In contrast to the primitive rural origins of the Mithraic temple, the final stage of its development occurred in the civilized urban environment of the (Western) Roman Empire, where temples finally became independent from the natural cave rock.⁶⁰ In the cities, Cumont explained, the caves hidden in the mountains had to be replaced with artificial caves, i.e., vaulted underground temples (*spelaea*): built in imitation of primitive caves, they preserved the remains of the cult's "original barbarity," visible in the "benign phantasmagoria" of the cult's rituals as well.⁶¹ Thus, for Cumont, the Mithraic temple was a hybrid combination of the primitive cave and a Graeco-Roman temple.⁶²

Why was it important for Cumont to emphasize the continuity of the "true nature" of the cult of Mithras, and why did his remarks about the cult's origins often have negative connotations? Cumont considered Oriental religions⁶³ superior to the Roman state religion: the Oriental religions, Cumont argued, offered greater satisfaction to the sentiments, the intellect, and the conscience.⁶⁴ However, he often portrayed their rites as primitive, hateful, barbarous, etc. Cumont's ambivalent discourse, frequently repeating racial stereotypes of and prejudices toward the Orient, is linked to his evolutionist conception of the religious history of the Roman Empire.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Standard reference is Porphyry, *De antro nymphaeum*, revised text with translation by Seminar Classics 609, State University of New York at Buffalo (New York: Arethusa, 1969), 13-15; new translation and commentary of the relevant passage in K. Nilüfer Akçay, *Porphyry's 'On the Cave of the Nymphs' in its Intellectual Context*, Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition 23 (Brill: Leiden/Boston, 2019): 62-63; Cumont, *Textes*, Vol. 1, 55.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 57.

⁶¹ Cumont, *Les Mystères*, 128. Cumont, for example, suggested that cult participants were kneeling on the side podia during the ritual, as a further example of cult's Persian origins: people in the Orient prostrated themselves before their idols in an act of utmost veneration, similar to the "hateful proskynesis," as he called it, performed before their monarchs, Cumont, *Les Mystères*, 62.

⁶² Ibid, 64-65. *Porticus* and *pediment* imitated Hellenic temples; likewise, the term *pronaos* was borrowed from the Greek language, while the apse was adopted from Roman basilicas.

⁶³ The concept of "Oriental religions" was coined by Franz Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (Paris, 1906). However, the term carries false assumptions about the origins and character of the rather heterogeneous group of cults (Isis, Mithras, Jupiter Dolichenus, Magna Mater, etc.), and has received a growing criticism in recent scholarship. For the short overview of the debates with the extensive bibliography see Joachim Friedrich Quack, Christian Witschel, "Introduction: Religious Confluences in the Roman Empire; or: Why 'Oriental Cults' Again?," in *Entangled Worlds: Religious Confluences between East and West in the Roman Empire. The Cults of Isis, Mithras, and Jupiter Dolichenus*, ed. Svenja Nagel, Joachim Friedrich Quack, Christian Witschel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017): 1-22.

⁶⁴ Cumont, *Les religions orientales*, 45.

⁶⁵ On Cumont's evolutionist view see Danny Praet, "Oriental Religions and the Conversion of the Roman Empire. The Views of Ernst Renan and of Franz Cumont on the Transition from Traditional Paganism to Christianity," in *Religion and Competition in Antiquity*, ed. David Engels and Peter Van Nuffelen (Brussels: Éditions Latomus, 2014): 285-307; Danny Praet, "Franz Cumont, the Oriental Religions, and Christianity in the Roman Empire: A Hegelian View on the Evolution of Religion, Politics, and Science," in *Papers of the Nineteenth Century Theology Group. American Academy of Religion (San Francisco Conference 2011)*, ed. Todd Gooch, Dawn De Vries and

According to this view, Oriental religions formed an intermediary step in the development of the Roman state religion, culminating in the triumph of Christianity.⁶⁶ Cumont considered that most of the primitive aspects of the Oriental religions underwent an internal evolution in the West, thus achieving a higher moral and spiritual level, wherein their rituals are regarded as remnants from their primitive and savage past.⁶⁷ Therefore, the origins and the “evolution of the Mithraic temple” should be seen as part of this narrative.

Although Cumont's views on the history of religious change in the Roman Empire and the spread of the “Oriental Religions” have long been challenged, his ideas had a strong influence on his contemporaries.⁶⁸ The work of two archaeologists stands out and is important for our understanding of the development of scholarly debates of Mithraic temples. Carlo Lodovico Visconti, an Italian archaeologist, suggested an interesting typological distinction of the Mithraic temples (1864): the proper temples (“il tempio propriamente detto”), large buildings built above the ground, and caves of modest size (“lo speleo di Mitra”), hidden in the bosom of the earth.⁶⁹ According to Visconti, the difference in their appearance was not the result of the arbitrary choice or availability of one or the other but reflected the difference in their ultimate purpose.⁷⁰ Similar to Cumont, Visconti argued that Mithraic temples developed in Rome - here the cult acquired the public form, bringing the “arcane mysteries” from the darkness of subterranean caves to the light, while *spelaea* degenerated into the cave-like temples (e.g., Heddernheim).⁷¹

Arie Molendijk, (Oregon: Wipf&Stock Publishers, 2011): 133-158; on Cumont's ambivalent attitude and its connection to the evolutionist view see Corinne Bonnet, “Les «Religions Orientales» au Laboratoire de L'Hellénisme. 2. Franz Cumont,” *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 8 (1993): 181-205; Corinne Bonnet and Françoise Van Haepere, “Introduction historiographique,” in *Franz Cumont, Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, Bibliotheca Cumontiana. Scripta Maiora I, ed. Corinne Bonnet and Françoise Van Haepere (Torino: Nino Aragno Editore, 2006 (1906)): XXX-XLIV; on racial theories and stereotypes in Cumont's work see Eline Scheerlinck, Danny Praet, and Sarah Rey, “Race and Religious Transformations in Rome. Franz Cumont and Contemporaries on the Oriental Religions,” *Historia* 65 (2016): 220-243; for a more in-depth analysis of Cumont's attitude toward the Orient see Eline Scheerlinck, “An Orient of Mysteries. Franz Cumont's views on “Orient” and “Occident” in the context of Classical Studies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,” (PhD Diss., University of Gent, 2013).

⁶⁶ Cumont, *Les religions*, 107.

⁶⁷ Eline Scheerlinck, “Franz Cumont's Syrian Tour. A Belgian Scholar in the Ottoman Empire,” *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 91/2 (2013): 334.

⁶⁸ Richard Gordon, “Coming to Terms with the 'Oriental Religions of the Roman Empire,” *Nyamen* 61 (2014): 657-672.

⁶⁹ Carlo Lodovico Visconti, “Del mitreo annesso alle terme ostiensi di Antonino Pio,” *Annali dell'Istituto di corrispondenza archeologica* 6 (1864): 147-183, esp. 152, 154.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 154-155.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 156. The initiated followers, Visconti explained, followed Zoroaster's instructions and celebrated their mysteries in the caves, while the temples served the public worship, accessible also to the uninitiated. The idea of the existence of the public and secret cult of Mithras was introduced by Félix Lajard, *Recherches sur le culte public et les mystères de Mithra en Orient et en Occident* (Paris: L'Imprimerie Impériale, 1867). Although posthumously published few years after Visconti's article came out, the idea must have been familiar to Visconti who cited Lajard's work throughout his publication.

Visconti's ideas made no lasting influence on the scholarship. However, they prompted a critical response by Georg Wolff, a notable German archaeologist, whose synthesizing work on Mithraic temples (1882; 1909) had a deep impact on scholarly discussions on the topic.⁷² This is particularly visible in the regional publications about Mithraic temples from Dalmatia, from the end of the nineteenth century (e.g., Karl Patsch's article on the *mithraeum* from Konjic) up until the 1950s (e.g., Branimir Gabričević's dissertation on the cult of Mithras in Dalmatia).⁷³

Wolff deemed Visconti's distinction between the caves and temples untenable: by analyzing the architecture of the Mithraic temples and by comparing their sizes, Wolff concluded that regardless of their size they all had a common cave-like character, and their size was not, therefore, an indicator of a different purpose.⁷⁴ Following his analysis, Wolff divided temples into three different types:

- 1) natural grottoes, adjusted to the cult needs with more or less artificial alterations;⁷⁵
- 2) underground rooms (basements) of the private houses, modified for cult needs;
- 3) independently built sanctuaries on the flat terrain, unhindered by other natural or architectural arrangements – according to Wolff, the fastest way to secure necessary facilities for cult needs in the typical tripartite form.⁷⁶

In short, rather than offering a typological classification of Mithraic temples, Wolff was largely concerned with their topographical context. However, despite their obvious shortcomings, both Visconti's and Wolff's publications reflect the rising popularity of the topic and they were the first serious step towards a more methodical approach to it. Another important aspect of these early discussions is that the issue of the typology of the Mithraic temple was closely related to the question of the cult's origins. The idea of the Persian provenance of the Mithraic cave and its association with the primitive rural environment, characteristic of the initial stage of the

⁷² Georg Wolff, "Römerkastell und das Mithrasheiligtum zu Gross-Krotzenburg am Main. Beiträgen zur Lösung der Frage über die architektonische Beschaffenheit der Mithrasheilighümer," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde* VIII (1882): 1-101; idem, "Excurs. Ueber die architektonische Beschaffenheit der Mithrasheilighümer," in idem, "Römerkastell," 85-101; idem, *Über Mithrasdienst und Mithreen* (Frankfurt: Druck von Gebrüder Knauer, 1909). In the later publication Wolff repeated his main arguments from the previous article.

⁷³ See subchapter 2.5.

⁷⁴ Wolff, "Excurs.," 86-88, 92.

⁷⁵ Wolff further singled out various sub-groups of the Mithraic *spelaea*: big caves (Hedderheim, Dormagen, Ostia), small *spelaea* (Neuenheim, Housesteads, Gross-Krotzenburg), temples built against the rock-face (Bourg-Saint-Andéol, Schwarzerden), and *spelaea* dug into the hill (Roshang, the Capitol grotto). The prototype of all these different types of *spelaea* was to be found in the Oriental homeland of the cult – Persia, see Wolff, "Excurs.," 100.

⁷⁶ Georg Wolff and Franz Cumont, "Das dritte Mithraeum in Hedderheim und seine Skulpturen," *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst* XIII (1894): 40; Wolff, *Über Mithrasdienst*, 15-16.

cult's development, will remain influential beyond Cumont's time. Such an approach is particularly visible in reference to the Mithraic temples, i.e. caves from Dalmatia, as discussed further in the chapter. The following section provides an overview of the more recent theories surrounding the typology and origins of the Mithraic temple and traces the survival and the development of the early ideas discussed in this part.

2.3 The Adaptive Architecture and the Birth of the Mithraic Temple

Although it was clear from early on that a comprehensive survey of Mithraic temples was needed, no such study appeared. Even the publication of Vermaseren's *Corpus* (1956/1960) did not instigate the necessary interest. Mithraic temples continued to be treated sporadically, thus creating a vast gap in the scholarship. However, during the last few decades, the question of the typology of Mithraic temples appeared in several publications. What they all have in common is that they show the survival of the Cumontian ideas (either explicitly or not), and, except for Inge Nielsen, that the typology is not of their primary interest. However, they are relevant for the current discussion as they represent the rare occasions when Mithraic temples are discussed, and, more importantly, they allow us to better contextualize the existing regional scholarship on the topic.

An interesting idea regarding the origins of the Mithraic temple appears in L. Michael White's study of the social context of early Christian architecture (1996, 1997).⁷⁷ White introduces the concept of “architectural adaptation” as a context for understanding the environment for the development of early Christian buildings.⁷⁸ The earliest Christian places of assembly, White argues, follow similar patterns of architectural development like contemporary *mithraea* and synagogues.⁷⁹ Since they (i.e., *mithraea*, synagogues, and early Christian places of assembly) had no pre-articulated distinctive architectural form for their places of worship, the earliest believers, according to this approach, modified, transformed, and adapted the existing private buildings to suit their particular ritual purposes.⁸⁰

Based on the evidence from Ostia and Rome, White argues that it is more common to find *mithraea* established within the pre-existing structures (warehouses, baths, *cryptoportici*,

⁷⁷ L. Michael White, *The Social Origins of Christian Architecture. Volume 1. Building God's House in the Roman World: Architectural Adaptation Among Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, Harvard Theological Studies 42 (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996); idem, *The Social Origins of Christian Architecture. Volume 2. Texts and Monuments for the Christian Domus Ecclesiae in Its Environment*, Harvard Theological Studies 42 (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997).

⁷⁸ White, *Building God's House*, xi.

⁷⁹ Ibid, xi.

⁸⁰ Ibid, xi.

vaulted subterranean storage chambers, and private houses) than to build them anew.⁸¹ Similar to previously discussed archaeologists, White correlates such architectural progression with the growth of the cult from a small domestic setting to a more public type of buildings, although the practice of re-using (private, domestic) spaces (as well as constructing *mithraea* anew) existed well into the fourth century AD.⁸²

The obvious shortcoming of White's argument lies in the fact that he is referring almost exclusively to the evidence from Rome and Ostia.⁸³ In many aspects exceptional urban setting of Rome and Ostia is drastically different from the situation in provincial towns and settlements, and his analysis merely indicates that there is a regional difference in how (and where) *mithraea* were constructed across the Empire, depending on various regional factors. In the case of Rome and Ostia, these factors were certainly the (un)availability of free space, the costs of adapting the already existing space vs. erecting the temple anew, the targeted community, etc.⁸⁴ Furthermore, there is no explanation of how, where, and when the Mithraic temple appeared, nor is the typological connection with the earlier “adapted domestic architecture” explained – not surprising since White focuses on the early Christian assembly places, and typological development of *mithraea* is not of his primary concern. Caves are

⁸¹ Ibid, 48. He offers some statistical observations pertaining to the Mithraic temples in the Roman Empire: of fifty-eight temples known through their architectural remains, no more than fourteen have been specifically constructed anew as cult buildings. Furthermore, all such cases come from western provinces (Britannia, Gallia, Germania), while in Italy, which has the greatest concentration of extant *mithraea* (twenty-five), only one was specifically constructed anew. For the topographical survey of Ostian *mithraea* see Jan Theo Bakker, *Living and Working with the Gods: Studies of Evidence for Private Religion and its Material Environment in the City of Ostia (100-500 AD)*, Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology XII (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1994): 112f.; L. Michael White, “The Changing Face of Mithraism in Ostia. Archaeology, Art, and the Urban Landscape,” in *Contested Spaces. Houses and Temples in Roman Antiquity and the New Testament*, ed. David L. Balch and Annette Weissenreider (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012): 435-492; Françoise Van Haepelen, “Au-delà du 'modèle missionnaire': la topographie mithriaque d'Ostie,” in *Sacrum facere. V Seminario di Archeologia del Sacro. Sacra peregrina. La gestione della pluralità religiosa nel mondo antico*, ed. Federica Fontana, Emanuela Murgia (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2019): 81-103; for Rome see Alison Bond Griffith, “The Archaeological Evidence for Mithraism in Imperial Rome,” (PhD diss., Michigan: University of Michigan, 1993); Jonas Bjørnebye, “Mithraic Movement: Negotiating Topography and Space in Late Antique Rome,” in *The Moving City: Processions, Passages and Promenades in Ancient Rome*, ed. Ida Östenderg, Simon Malmberg, Jonas Bjørnebye (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2015): 225-236; Françoise Van Haepelen, “Réflexions sur la topographie des *mithraea* de Roma,” in *Il mitreo del Circo Massimo*, ed. Federica Fontana, Emanuela Murgia (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2021): 5-19.

⁸² White, *Building God's House*, 43; on fourth-century building practices see Jonas Bjørnebye, “‘Hic locus est felix, sanctus, piusque benignus.’ The Cult of Mithras in Fourth Century Rome” (PhD diss., University of Bergen, 2007): 82, 221.

⁸³ In Volume 2 of his study White provides, what he considers, a representative sample of Jewish and Mithraic comparative archaeological evidence (architectural remains and related inscriptions), whereby he admits the Jewish evidence is much more complete than the Mithraic. However, the majority of Mithraic evidence pertains to sites from Italy (besides few coming from Pannonia, Germania, Noricum, Africa, and Britannia). See L. Michael White, “Comparative Archaeological and Documentary Evidence: Mithraism and Diaspora Judaism,” in *Texts and Monuments*, 259-429.

⁸⁴ For the discussion of different categories of *mithraea* in Rome and Ostia (neighbourhood *mithraea* and semi-public *mithraea*) and their related communities see Bjørnebye, “Mithraic Movement,” 231-234.

mentioned only briefly in one of the footnotes, where White comments how they appear rarely and only in rural areas of western provinces.⁸⁵

Caves are, however, the focus of Anke Schütte-Maischatz and Engelbert Winter's short discussion of Mithraic temples, which appears as part of their volume dedicated to archaeological excavations in Dolichê (Dülük, Turkey).⁸⁶ The two *mithraea* were discovered on the hillslope above the modern village, in the adjoining caverns that had been formed by earlier quarrying. In their effort to contextualize the Dolichê *mithraea*, the authors briefly explore the Mithraic temples in natural settings.

They start their survey by proposing three types of Mithraic temples:

- 1) free-standing buildings,
- 2) *mithraea* integrated into public or private buildings,⁸⁷ and
- 3) rock-sanctuaries ("Felsheiligtümer"), i.e., *mithraea* connected to natural features: a rock, a hill slope, or a cave.⁸⁸

Only the third type, i.e., rock-sanctuaries, is discussed in a more detailed manner. Mithraic caves are further sub-divided into those installed inside a natural cave (in a geological sense), and those placed inside the artificial ones (that is, caves artificially dug inside the rock/hill).⁸⁹ Besides the fact that the proposed typology refers rather to the topographical location of the temples than to their real typology, their discussion is interesting as it once again shows the impact of the Cumontian hypothesis of cult's Persian origins.

"Mithras Cathedral," as they call the Dolichê *mithraea*, is presented as almost prophetic confirmation of their hypothetical prototype - the original Zoroaster's cave in the mountains of Persia, described at the beginning of their discussion.⁹⁰ By claiming they were in use already by the second half of the first century AD, the Dolichê *mithraea* were supposed to offer the first reliable evidence of the cult found in Commagene, the supposed birthplace of the cult.⁹¹

⁸⁵ White, *Building God's House*, 167, footnote 87.

⁸⁶ Anke Schütte-Maischatz and Engelbert Winter, *Doliche. Eine Kommagenische Stadt und ihre Götter. Mithras und Iupiter Dolichenus*, Asia Minor Studien 52 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 2004).

⁸⁷ According to authors, the second type is mostly found in Ostia and Rome, where *mithraea* are often part of private buildings, but can also be found inside warehouses, shops, baths or apartment blocks, see Schütte-Maischatz and Winter, *Doliche*. 116.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 117.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 118.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 117, 124.

⁹¹ Ibid, 124, 126. It was Roger Beck who, based on the astrological-astronomical components of the cult, identified the dynasty of Commagene as responsible for cult's transmission to Rome, see "The Mysteries of Mithras: A New Account of their Genesis," *JRA* 88 (1998): 115-128; idem, "New Thoughts on the Genesis of the Mysteries of Mithras," *Topoi* 11/1 (2001): 59-76. However, it is not possible to trace their usage as *mithraea* prior to the early third century AD, and, moreover, there is no evidence of their simultaneous use, see Richard Gordon, "Mithras in Dolichê: Issue of Date and Origin," *JRA* 20 (2007): 610.

Despite not proving the “Oriental” origins of the cult, their survey shows that caves were widespread in the entire Roman Empire, and were used simultaneously as other types of Mithraic temples.⁹² This is an important novelty compared to previous studies, which mainly described them as a rural phenomenon, pertaining to the early stages of the cult.

In contrast to earlier authors, the typological classification of Mithraic temples is the focus of one of the chapters of Inge Nielsen's recent publication.⁹³ Nielsen first differentiates between *mithraea* in the East and *mithraea* in the West, thus presuming a non-existing dichotomy between the eastern and western cult of Mithras, and, therefore, the typological difference between the eastern and western temples, both of which do not exist.⁹⁴ Moreover, all the “eastern” examples Nielsen discusses have been founded under Roman influence.⁹⁵ In her discussion, Nielsen seems eager to demonstrate the Persian origins of the Mithraic mysteries – besides proposing the early date for most of the examples, she does not seem to hesitate to emphasize their supposed oriental character.⁹⁶

Mithraic temples in the West are discussed more extensively. According to Nielsen, *mithraea* should be ideally placed in underground caves or basements, following the model from the homeland (!); however, Nielsen explains, the urban and military context of the *mithraea* in the West did not allow for this.⁹⁷ The discussion is limited to only a few examples, selected based on their context, with particular regard to their location in relation to other structures.⁹⁸ She distinguishes three different contexts in which *mithraea* in the West appear:

- 1) *mithraea* in private houses (used by early communities),⁹⁹

⁹² Schütte-Maischatz and Winter, *Doliche*, 118.

⁹³ Inge Nielsen, *Housing the Chosen: The Architectural Context of Mystery Groups and Religious Associations in the Ancient World*, Contextualizing the Sacred 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).

⁹⁴ For a god overview of debates on the topic see Jamie Alvar, “The ‘Romanization’ of ‘Oriental Cults,’” in *Entangled Worlds*, 23-46; Richard Gordon, “*Persae in spelaeis solem colunt*: Mithra(s) between Persia and Rome,” in *Persianism in Antiquity*, ed. Rolf Strootman and Miguel John Versluys (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017): 289-325.

⁹⁵ The foundation of *mithraea* in Doliche are linked to the the *legio IIII Scythica* (Zeugma) and *XVI Flavia Firma* (Samosata) in the early third century AD, see Gordon, “Mithras in Doliche,” 602-610; according to Gordon, the spread of the cult of Mithras in Syria can be linked to the Roman institutions: army and administrative personnel (although there is no direct evidence for the latter): the foundation of the *mithraeum* at Dura-Europos is linked to a centurion commanding vexillations from Zeugma and Samosata; Caesarea Maritima has been linked either or both to the *legio VI Ferrata* and *legio X Fretensis*; Sidon to veterans of *V Macedonica* and *VIII Gallica* stationed in Berytus; the foundation of Hawarte is connected with the imperial circles of the Apamea, see Richard Gordon, “Trajets de Mithra en Syrie romaine,” *Topoi* 11/1 (2001): 77-136; for the Roman character of Dura-Europos and Hawarte see Gordon, “*Persae in spelaeis*,” 318-323.

⁹⁶ For the problems surrounding early date of these *mithraea* see the previous footnote (the same for their supposed oriental character).

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 161.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 162.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 162. These private *mithraea*, according to Nielsen, were 'invisible' and usually very simple: located either in a proper room or in a *cryptoportici* and basements under the private houses and villas, adapted to Mithraic cultic purposes (addition of benches, cult image, etc.).

- 2) *mithraea* in 'public' buildings (baths, *horrea*, *cryptoportici*),¹⁰⁰ and
- 3) *mithraea* in connection with military camps.¹⁰¹

According to Nielsen, *mithraea* in private and public contexts are found in cities and towns, while independent *mithraea* are attested in military camps along the Limes.¹⁰² As a conclusion to the volume, Nielsen briefly sketches the three main “typologies of settings for mystery groups and religious associations:” the temple type, the cave/grotto type, and the banqueting/house type.¹⁰³ Only the latter two are associated with Mithraic groups, whereby, according to Nielsen, *mithraea* represent the most consistent combination of the two.¹⁰⁴

One obvious problem with Nielsen's typology is that she tries to establish comparability between a wide range of structures suitable for different mysteries and religious associations. Furthermore, it is not clear how are various religious groups and associations related to the (trans)formation of each type, particularly considering that each type was not exclusive to any of the religious groups Nielsen discusses.

Recently, Ines Siemers-Klenner has tackled the question of when and where the Mithraic temple developed by analyzing the earliest archaeological evidence of the cult.¹⁰⁵ Based on Marquita Volken's socio-archaeological study of the cult, Siemers-Klenner proposes the existence of “undetectable *mithraea*” for the first phase of the cult.¹⁰⁶ Besides the oldest *mithraea* from Rome and Ostia (c. 160 AD), installed in basements, public bathing facilities, *horrea*, and other structures, according to Siemers-Klenner, cave sanctuaries and temples built against the rock-face belong to the first phase as well.¹⁰⁷

The birthplace of Mithraic temple, according to Siemers-Klenner, is in Germania Superior, where the type appeared shortly after the turn of the second century AD.¹⁰⁸ Phase I of

¹⁰⁰ All examples Nielsen discusses in connection to private and public *mithraea* are from Italy (predominantly Rome and Ostia, with one example from Campania). Nielsen's topographical overview is in this respect indebted to White's analysis, although she nowhere acknowledges his contribution (although she is aware of his publication, see page 163, footnote 216).

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 162.

¹⁰² Ibid, 161. The numerous examples of these *mithraea* found in military camps along the Limes, witness, according to Nielsen, the importance of the cult for the army. Her insistence on the military character of the cult of Mithras is surprising, given it has long been proven that, based on the archaeological and epigraphic evidence, the cult of Mithras can no longer be deemed a religion of soldiers, see Richard Gordon, “The Roman Army and the Cult of Mithras: A Critical Review,” in *L'armée romaine et la religion sous le Haut-Empire romain. Actes du quatrième congrès de Lyon, 26-28 octobre 2006*, ed. Catherine Wolff, (Paris: De Boccard, 2009): 379-450.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 241.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 251.

¹⁰⁵ Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes*. Similarly, Aleš Chalupa has analysed the earliest material evidence of the cult, including the architecture, and has come to the conclusion that it is impossible to

¹⁰⁶ Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes*, 241. Marquita Volken, “The Development of the Cult of Mithras in the Western Roman Empire: A Socio-Archaeological Perspective,” *EJMS* 4 (2004): 1-20.

¹⁰⁷ Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes*, 241.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 239.

Mithraeum II from Güglingen (c. 114/125 AD) represents, according to Siemers-Klenner, the first verifiable floor plan of an independently built *mithraeum*.¹⁰⁹ However, the early date of phase I of Mithraeum II in Güglingen (around 114/125 AD) must be taken with some precautions, and the early date of most of the *mithraea* Siemers-Klenner cites to support her argument cannot be established with certainty as well.¹¹⁰

Although the exact place and date of the birth of the Mithraic temple will still have to wait for its definite answer, Siemer-Klenner's study has clearly shown the need for a change of paradigm. The focus should be re-directed from the supposed Oriental origins of the cult, and a novel, the regional approach should be applied. Moreover, insistence on the linear development of Mithraic temple proposed by Siemers-Klenner and most of the authors discussed so far seems a bit over-simplistic: it suggests development from modest, secondarily used spaces (caves, *horrea*, etc.) towards more complex, monumental built temples. This scenario brings us back to the Cumontian evolutionist views, which supposed an initial ("primitive") usage of caves for ritual purposes, maturing in the form of a monumental temple in the ("civilized") urban environment of the Western Roman Empire.

The idea of a strictly linear development from natural cult sites to monumental stone architecture has been long criticized and shown unsatisfactory.¹¹¹ Instead, the development of Mithraic temple should be discussed regionally, depending on various local conditions. Mithraic temples from Dalmatia are particularly useful in this case, where specific local conditions, both geographical and cultural, as it will be shown, resulted in the more common usage of caves. Contrary to the early date usually suggested for Mithraic cave and rock-temples, the evidence from Dalmatia points to their rather late foundation (late third/early

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 239.

¹¹⁰ The dating of the Phase I is not based on dating finds from the building, but it is possible only indirectly through cumulative evidence, as Siemers-Klenner explains. In the early phase of the *vicus*, houses were built using similar building technique to the phase I of Mithraeum II, with wooden post construction. Solid stone foundations appeared only after the middle of the second century AD, which, according to Siemers-Klenner, underpins the early dating of the Phase I, see Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes*, 122-124; against the early date see Gordon, "The Roman Army," 400. The *mithraea* Siemers-Klenner refers to are from Mainz, Caesarea Maritima, Heddernheim I and III, Carnuntum I, Wiesloch, Gelduba/Krefeld-Gellep, and Heidelberg/Neuenheim II. All examples have either problematic or unresolved stratigraphy, their architecture is either partially or not preserved at all, and some are not even identified as *mithraea* with certainty. They are all discussed with extensive bibliography by Gordon, "The Roman Army," 397-450. Aleš Chalupa has also analysed the earliest material evidence of the cult, including its architecture, and has found the evidence inconclusive regarding identifying the potential centre of cult's spread, see Aleš Chalupa, "The Origins of the Roman Cult of Mithras in the Light of New Evidence and Interpretations: The Current State of Affairs," *Religio* 24/1 (2016): 65-96.

¹¹¹ Joannis Mylonopoulos, "Natur als Heiligtum – Natur im Heiligtum," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 10/1 (2008): 51-83; Katja Sporn, "Natur – Kult – Raum. Eine Einführung in Methode und Inhalt," in *Natur – Kult – Raum. Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums Paris-Lodron-Universität Salzburg, 20.-22. Jänner 2012*, ed. Katja Sporn, Sabine Ladstätter, Michael Kerschner (Vienna: Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, 2015): 340.

fourth century AD, see appendix 1, no. 9, 10, 11, 12).¹¹² Therefore, the Mithraic usage of caves and, generally, of natural settings, should not be regarded as a temporally bound phenomenon, but rather a variety of local conditions should be taken into the consideration.

Before turning to the analysis of the local conditions in Dalmatia which may have influenced the preference for a certain type of Mithraic temple, it is necessary to briefly look at the regional scholarship and its take on Dalmatian Mithraic temples and to contextualize them in regards to studies considered so far.

2.4 Mithraic Temples in Dalmatia in Regional Historiography

The first one to deal with the topic of Mithraic architecture in Dalmatia was Branimir Gabričević. His doctoral dissertation from 1951, which marked the beginning of the systematic and scholarly study of the cult of Mithras in Dalmatia, aimed at arranging the relevant monuments according to different categories: inscriptions, cult and votive images, sanctuaries, and Mithraic motives on the jewelry and small objects.¹¹³ Based on this methodological approach, which Gabričević compared to Cumont's, he intended to offer a complete overview of the "Mithraic phenomenon" in the province.¹¹⁴

It is clear from the structure of the dissertation that the backbone of Gabričević's analysis was derived from inscriptions and images, which are given in the prominent first two chapters.¹¹⁵ Architecture follows but merely covers four pages.¹¹⁶ The chapter begins by summarizing Wolff's typology of *mithraea*, after which Gabričević turned to analyze Dalmatian examples.¹¹⁷ According to Gabričević, all Mithraic sanctuaries in Dalmatia belong to the first type (natural caves), with a single freely-built temple (Konjic).¹¹⁸

Among the sanctuaries located in natural caves, only one is entirely set up in a cave – the *mithraeum* in Črnomalj.¹¹⁹ Others used the natural rock surface for their cult-image (Jajce, Rajanov grič, Prozor, Močići), while the remaining parts of the *mithraea* were artificially

¹¹² Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes*, 241.

¹¹³ Gabričević, "Mitrin kult na području rimske Dalmacije."

¹¹⁴ Gabričević, "Mitrin kult," 4.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 5-25; 26-52.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 53-57.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 53.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 53.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 53. This site, however, is wrongly located in Dalmatia by Gabričević – it was in fact part of *Pannonia Superior*, see Petar Selem, *Les religions orientales dans le Pannonie romaine (partie en Yougoslavie)*, Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain 85 (Leiden: Brill, 1980): 78-80; idem, "Mithrin kult u Panoniji" [The cult of Mithras in Pannonia], *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu* 8 (1976): 11-12.

constructed abutting the rock-face.¹²⁰ The Mithraic use of caves, according to Gabričević, was primarily linked with the architectural tradition from the Orient, coupled with the suitable soil configuration in Dalmatia, where caves were available in the surroundings of almost every settlement.¹²¹ The overall character of the Mithraic architecture in Dalmatia was, according to Gabričević, “rustic” and associated with the low social status of the cult's members who belonged to the poor, non-urban layers of the society.¹²²

Although Gabričević's dissertation was a turning point and certainly gave impetus for further research of the cult in Dalmatia, it was the iconography and epigraphy that was in the spotlight.¹²³ An exception is a monograph by Ljubica Zotović, in which the author published Mithraic monuments from the territory of ex-Yugoslavia (covering parts of Pannonia Superior and Inferior, Dalmatia, and Moesia Superior).¹²⁴ However, the volume is heavily focused on the iconography and stylistic analysis of sculptural monuments (with an additional chapter dedicated to epigraphy), while only the last ten pages are dedicated to Mithraic sanctuaries. Zotović listed twenty-five Mithraic temples on the territory of ex-Yugoslavia, based either on their actual architectural remains or the inscriptions mentioning their foundation or renovation.¹²⁵ According to Zotović, cave-sanctuaries were dominant in Dalmatia, simply because they were available and adapting caves required fewer expenses.¹²⁶ Their usage was imposed as a necessity, Zotović explained similar to Gabričević, caused by the poor economic conditions of the cult's members.¹²⁷

Furthermore, Zotović proposed four types of Mithraic sanctuaries in Yugoslavia:

- 1) open-air sanctuaries,
- 2) *spelaea*,
- 3) semi-*spelaea*, and

¹²⁰ Gabričević, “Mitrin kult,” 54.

¹²¹ Ibid, 54.

¹²² Ibid, 56.

¹²³ Gabričević himself never returned to the topic of Mithraic architecture, and his publications are exemplary of the trends in research at the time, see Branimir Gabričević, “Liturgijsko značenje prikaza na reversu Mitrine kultne slike” [Liturgical meaning of the representation on the reverse side of the Mithraic cult image] *GZM* 7 (1952): 19-25; idem, “Elementi mazdejskog vjerovanja na jednom natpisu iz Solina” [Elements of Mazdean beliefs on one inscription from Solin] *VAHD* 54 (1952): 51-53; idem, “O nekim mitričkim natpisima Sarajevskog muzeja” [On some Mithraic inscriptions from the Sarajevo museum] *GZM* 8 (1953): 141-144; idem, “Iconographie de Mithra dans la province romaine de Dalmatie,” *Archaeologia Iugoslavica* 1 (1964): 37-52; idem, “Ostendere cyphios,” *RFFZg* 2 (1954): 49-56; idem, *Studije i članci o religijama i kultovima antičkog svijeta* [Studies and articles on religions and cults of the ancient world] Split: Književni krug, 1987.

¹²⁴ Zotović, *Mitraizam*.

¹²⁵ Zotović, *Mitraizam*, 119.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 121.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 121.

4) freely-built temples.¹²⁸

By open-air sanctuaries, Zotović presumed spaces, usually in a forest, marked only by a rock carrying the cult image, while the rituals took place in front of them in the open air.¹²⁹ Among the open-air sanctuaries, she included Rajanov grič and Mile Donje (Jajce) from Dalmatia.¹³⁰ *Spelaea*, according to Zotović, are temples inside the caves: Močići, Prilep, Zgornja Pohanca, and possibly Vratnik and Rogatica (both known only from the inscriptions). However, Zotović's interpretation of the word *spelaeum* as cave-sanctuary is misleading since this term is also attested on inscriptions indicating artificially constructed temples.¹³¹

Zotović defined semi-*spelaea* as artificial constructions abutting a rock-face or rock-enclosed spaces with an artificial roof.¹³² Examples include *mithraea* on Sv. Juraj hill (*Epidaurum*), Jajce, Oltari, and Rožanec.¹³³ Finally, among the freely-built temples, only five of them are attested with certainty (three in Ptuj, Konjic, and Biljanovci) – others are either implied by inscriptions and other monuments, or their remains have been destroyed.¹³⁴

Although Zotović aimed at a comprehensive survey of the cult, her study had several weaknesses. As mentioned earlier, the broad geographical area of ex-Yugoslavia included several Roman provinces - analyzing the Mithraic evidence from the entire area gives a false impression that they once formed a unified territory that can be treated as a whole. Furthermore, the architecture was not the focus of her study, and, therefore, was not given equal attention as iconography and epigraphy. The resulting survey and proposed typology included some unconventional ideas (open-air sanctuaries) which Zotović did not explain in detail, and partially based on misinterpreted terminology (*spelaea*, semi-*spelaea*).

More than two decades passed until new comprehensive surveys of the cult appeared, while the sculptural and epigraphic monuments continued to be in the focus. The architecture appears only as part of their catalogs, without further interpretations or analyses. In the catalog of his doctoral dissertation, which focuses on the astronomical and astrological content of Mithraic monuments, Željko Miletić includes nine sanctuaries.¹³⁵

¹²⁸ Ibid, 121.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 121-122; already Beck refuted her arguments, see Roger Beck, "The Rock-Cut Mithraea of Arupium (Dalmatia)," *Phoenix* 38 (1984): 363; further criticism by Andreas Hensen, "*Templa et spelaea*," 387-388.

¹³⁰ No traces of Mithraic temple have been found in Mile Donje. Both localities are discussed in the next chapter.

¹³¹ Hensen, "*Templa et spelaea*," 388.

¹³² Zotović, *Mitraizam*, 121-122.

¹³³ Ibid, 121.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 121-122.

¹³⁵ Miletić, "Mitraizam u rimskoj provinciji Dalmaciji."

Out of these nine sanctuaries, one is assumed solely based on the inscription (Vratnik).¹³⁶ Sanctuaries at Mile Donje and Lever Tara (Montenegro) Miletić labeled after Zotović as open-air sanctuaries; in Prozor (*Arupium*) sanctuary was set up in front of the natural rock and covered with an artificial roof, while Rajanov grič is described as an artificial cave.¹³⁷ Jajce and Konjic are also identified as *mithraea*.¹³⁸ The remaining two sanctuaries are those on the Sv. Juraj hill above Cavtat (*Epidaurum*), and Močići (natural *spelaeum*).¹³⁹

The criteria according to which Miletić recognizes individual sanctuaries is not clearly defined. Hence, he lists Vratnik as a temple based on an inscription, but, for example, does not suggest the existence of further temples based on some cult images (which certainly must have once stood inside a temple). Furthermore, he does not explain the categorizations he uses (open-air sanctuary, *spelaeum*, etc.), and often employs broad descriptive terminology instead. Furthermore, it is not clear why Mile Donje and Lever Tara are considered as open-air sanctuaries, while for Sv. Juraj he presumes the existence of a roof.

Inspired by the numerous Mithraic finds in the province, as well as by the burgeoning astrological interpretative models, two more comprehensive surveys of the cult followed.¹⁴⁰ In her master's thesis, Goranka Lipovac Vrkljan offers a detailed account of the historical development of the cult, its initiation structure, and astronomical foundations, with a separate chapter dedicated to its relationship with Christianity.¹⁴¹ Mithraic monuments from Dalmatia are treated only sporadically in the last chapter, in which Lipovac Vrkljan proposes their iconographical “reading” based on the previous considerations. In the catalog eleven *mithraea* are listed: Vratnik, Prozor (*Arupium*), Rajanov grič, Crikvine, Jajce, Mile Donje, Konjic, Sv. Juraj, Močići, Dardagani, and Lever Tara.¹⁴²

¹³⁶ CIL III 13283.

¹³⁷ Miletić, “Mitraizam:” Mile Donje, 172 (no. 23); Lever Tara 182 (no. 38); Prozor 150 (no. 2); Rajanov grič 151 (no. 4).

¹³⁸ Miletić, “Mitraizam:” Jajce 170-171 (no. 22); Konjic 173-176 (no. 27).

¹³⁹ Miletić, “Mitraizam:” sv. Juraj 177-178 (no. 30); Močići 178-179 (no. 31).

¹⁴⁰ Beck’s “star-tlak” being the most influential among them, see *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire: Mysteries of the Unconquered Sun* (Oxford: OUP, 2006); the concept and the book are a topic of several papers published in a journal *Pantheon* 7/1 (2012): 3-124. Most prominent regional publications on the topic are by Željko Miletić, e.g., “Astronomski sadržaj na mitričkom motivu ubijanja bika” [Astronomical content of the Mithraic bull-killing motif] *RFFZd* 33 (1994): 93-107; idem, “Astronomija i astrologija u mitraizmu” [Astronomy and astrology in Mithraism], in *Kučerin zbornik*, ed. Miroslav Berić and Vilijam Lakić (Šibenik: Gradska knjižnica i Astronomsko društvo Faust Vrančić, 1995), 83-102.

¹⁴¹ Goranka Lipovac Vrkljan “Arheološke potvrde mitraičke religije na prostoru rimske provincije Dalmacije” [Archaeological confirmations of the Mithraic religion on the territory of Roman province of Dalmatia] (MA thesis, University of Zagreb, 1997).

¹⁴² Ibid: Vratnik 179-180 (no. 1); Prozor 185 (no. 4); Rajanov grič 189 (no. 5); Crikvine 218-219 (no. 18); Jajce 223-224 (no. 24); Mile Donje 226 (no. 25); Konjic 228-229 (no. 27); Sv. Juraj 237 (no. 33); Močići 240-241 (no. 34); Dardagani 242 (no. 36); Lever Tara 247-248 (no. 41); Lipovac Vrkljan adds Rožanec here as well, with a note that the site belongs to Pannonia, 248 (no. 42).

Lipovac Vrkljan's doctoral dissertation is entirely dedicated to the typology and iconographical analysis of Mithraic reliefs from Dalmatia.¹⁴³ In the catalog, she lists one new temple - Golubić (*Raetinium*).¹⁴⁴ Similar to Miletić, Lipovac Vrkljan does not define the criteria according to which she identifies *mithraea* in the first place. She suggests *mithraeum* in Golubić based on the numerous finds in the area, but not a single one in, for example, Salona, where the highest concentration of Mithraic finds at a single spot in Dalmatia has been recorded (and so far no archaeologically confirmed *mithraeum*).¹⁴⁵ There is no differentiation between the assumed and archaeologically confirmed *mithraea* either – they are all equally identified as such in the catalogs.

The latest corpus of monuments about “Oriental deities” from Croatia was recently published in the form of three catalogs.¹⁴⁶ The authors have decided to focus on the historical territory of present-day Croatia, which covers the areas of several Roman provinces: besides Dalmatia, those were parts of Histria, Pannonia Superior, and Pannonia Inferior. With this approach, great parts of Roman Dalmatia (much of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and parts of Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, and Albania) have been excluded.

Furthermore, the authors call the various religious phenomena they treat (e.g., cults of Mithras, Jupiter Dolichenus, Magna Mater, etc.) “Oriental cults” despite the term's obvious outdatedness; moreover, Mithras is referred to as “Iranian Mithra” – a clear reference of Cumontian hypothesis about the cult's Persian origins.¹⁴⁷

The *ROMIS* volume focuses exclusively on the area of Salonitan ager: area from modern-day Trogir (*Tragurium*) to Stobreč (*Epetium*), where, according to the authors, the traces of *mithraeum* are suspected only in one case – Crikvine.¹⁴⁸ The *ROMIC I* covers western Croatia, Istria, Lika, northern and parts of central Dalmatia, with two confirmed temples: Prozor and Rajanov grič.¹⁴⁹ The *ROMIC II* continues with the survey of central and southern Dalmatia

¹⁴³ Lipovac Vrkljan, “Posebnosti tipologije.”

¹⁴⁴ Lipovac Vrkljan, “Posebnosti tipologije,” 67 (no. 7).

¹⁴⁵ So far the only comprehensive study in Nirvana Silnović, “‘Soli Deo Stellam et Fructiferam’: The Art of the Mithraic Cult in Salona,” MA Thesis, Budapest: CEU, 2014.

¹⁴⁶ Petar Selem and Inga Vilogorac Brčić, *ROMIS. Religionum Orientalium monumenta et inscriptiones Salonitani*, Znakovi i riječi/Signa et litterae III (Zagreb: FF Press, 2012); idem, *ROMIC I. Religionum Orientalium monumenta et inscriptiones ex Croatia I.*, Znakovi i riječi/Signa et litterae V (Zagreb: FF Press, 2015); idem, *ROMIC II. Religionum Orientalium monumenta et inscriptiones ex Croatia II.*, Znakovi i riječi/Signa et litterae VI (Zagreb: FF Press, 2018).

¹⁴⁷ Selem and Vilogorac Brčić, *ROMIC I*, 5. For a full review see Csaba Szabò, “Petar Selem, Inga Vilogorac Brčić, *Romic I. Religionum Orientalium monumenta et inscriptiones ex Croatia I*, Znakovi i riječi Signa et Litterae vol. V. (Zagreb, 2015), 183 p.,” *Ephemeris Napocensis* 25 (2015): 251-253.

¹⁴⁸ Selem and Vilogorac Brčić, *ROMIS*, 162 (no. 4)

¹⁴⁹ Selem and Vilogorac Brčić, *ROMIC I*, 70-71 (no. 4), 71-72 (no. 5). Another possible rock-cut *mithraeum* was situated in the vicinity of Prozor and Rajanov grič, on the site called Kapelica, above Uroši hamlet in the Godača massif. An irregular trapezoidal niche was apparently cut into the rock, with a wide flat base containing fragments

(excluding Salona) and northern Croatia, with two temples listed: Močići and Sv. Juraj (*Epidaurum*).¹⁵⁰

It is evident from the previous survey that the regional scholarship remains heavily influenced by Cumont. Since the 1950s, when the first systematic studies appeared, until the most recent publications, his views remain unchallenged. In contrast to studies discussed in the previous subchapter, regional scholarship does not seem up-to-date with the current debates. Furthermore, by following the main trends in Mithraic scholarship, these studies have dealt in detail with iconography and epigraphy of the cult, neglecting one important aspect – its architecture.

Although only a very few Mithraic temples have been preserved in Dalmatia, they are important for our understanding of the regional aspects of the cult's architecture. Even though it was rightfully observed how temples located in natural settings prevail in Dalmatia, this important fact has not received much attention and was often interpreted as a symptom of the cult's poor and rural character. Therefore, in the next section, a new typology of Mithraic temples from Dalmatia is suggested, as a necessary prerequisite for their further (re)interpretation and (re)contextualization.

2.5 Proposing a New Typology of Mithraic Temples in Dalmatia

A simple typological division of Mithraic temples in Dalmatia according to their construction properties, i.e. whether they incorporate certain natural features of the terrain (cave, rock-face, cliff) or not (artificially constructed temples) is hereby proposed. This approach to their typology allows us to analyze the impact of the natural and physical environment of the province on the cult, and to understand the interconnectedness of these elements. Mithraic temples can range from fully natural to fully artificial ones, hence we should distinguish between the two basic architectural types:¹⁵¹

- 1) freely-built temples, i.e. entirely artificially constructed temples¹⁵²

of some figural representation. The site is unfortunately surrounded with mine fields, and is therefore impossible to ascertain these claims, 87-88 (no. 4).

¹⁵⁰ Selem and Vilogorac Brčić, *ROMIC II*, 86-87 (no. 15), 87-88 (no. 16).

¹⁵¹ Beck has briefly commented on the issue of typology and has suggested to follow the basic distinction between these two types, see Beck, "The Rock-Cut," 363, footnote 18. Hensen has recently further elaborated Beck's typology, see Hensen, "*Templa et spelaea*," 385-386.

¹⁵² Hensen refers to this category as "cellar-temples," presuming that most of the Mithraic temples are constructed somewhat below ground level. I find this name confusing, first because it alludes to the *mithraea* located in the basements of various public and private buildings, and second because it is a misleading name implying there is a particular cellar-temple type (or alluding to a cellar inside Roman temples, where the cult image would be kept). The name does not refer to its typological feature, it merely suggests that the temple is slightly sunken below ground level - but just as there are Mithraic temples constructed below ground-level, there are *mithraea*

2) temples incorporating natural features:

- a) caves (natural or artificial), i.e. fully natural temples¹⁵³
- b) temples constructed against the rock-face, i.e. temples that partially utilize the natural features of the terrain and are to some degree upgraded with an artificial construction (rock-temples).

In Dalmatia there is only one example of a freely-built temple (*mithraeum* in Konjic, unfortunately no longer preserved), while the second type prevails (altogether five examples): one *mithraeum* is set inside a natural cave (Tomina jama, Močići), and the remaining four examples are rock-temples: Oltari (*Arupium*), Rajanov grič (*Arupium*), Jajce, and Sv. Juraj (*Epidaurum*) (image 2.1).

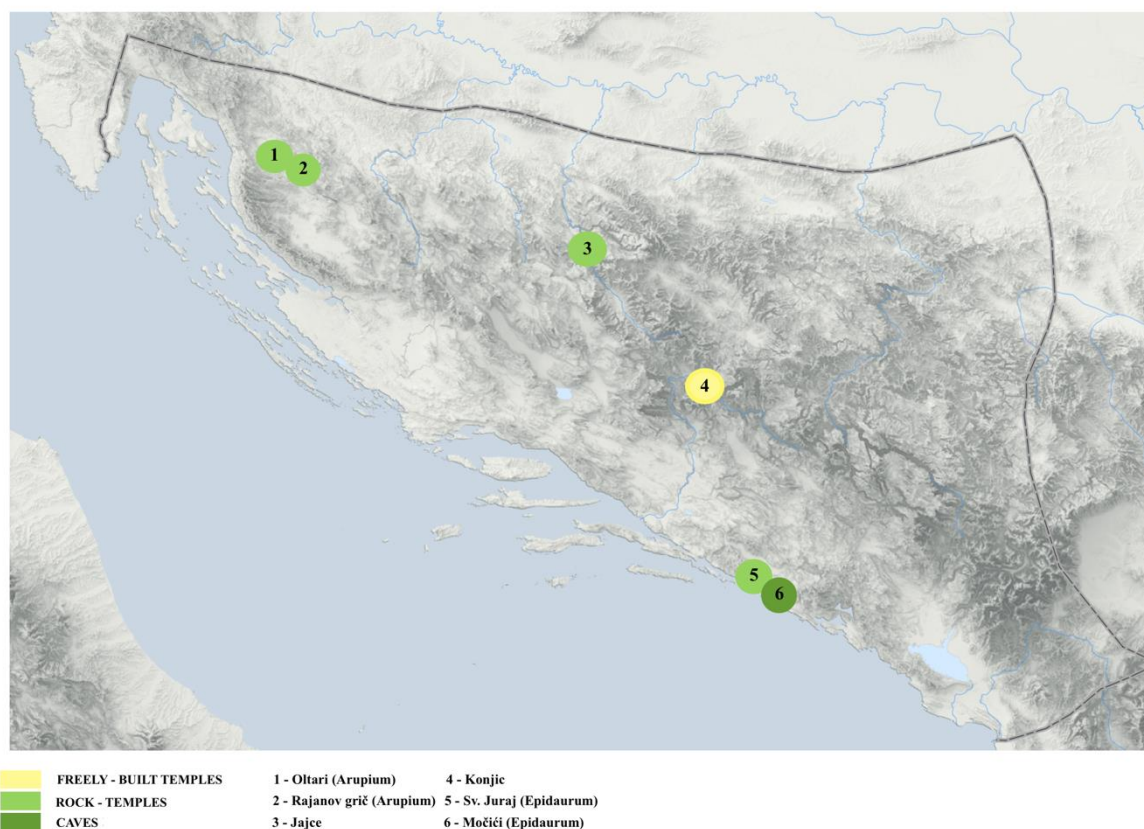


Figure 2.1: *Mithraea* in Dalmatia (N. Silnović).

However, it should be emphasized that this ratio is not conclusive: it is based only on preserved or otherwise archaeologically confirmed *mithraea* (Konjic, Sv. Juraj). In Dalmatia, there are altogether thirty-six Mithraic localities (fig. 2.31). If we consider only the sites with a

constructed above ground level as well. The layout of the freely-built Mithraic temples is discussed in the introduction.

¹⁵³ Neither Beck nor Hensen distinguish between natural and artificial caves. Although one could argue that artificial caves should be considered as artificially constructed temples, they however lack the layout of freely-built temples, and are caves (although artificial) in the physical sense of that word.

significant concentration of monuments (relief/sculpture and/or inscriptions), or sites where cult images were found, excluding the (single) finds without context, we come to the total number of thirteen cult sites, i.e. sites where we can assume the existence of a *mithraeum*.¹⁵⁴ If we add six above-mentioned *mithraea*, we come to the overall number of nineteen *mithraea*.

It is not possible to speculate whether these were freely-built temples and/or temples located in natural settings. In localities with a dense urban structure, like *Salona* (today Solin) or *Iader* (today Zadar), it is more likely that mainly freely-built temples or secondarily used spaces within private or public buildings were used, which does not exclude the possibility of caves or rock-temples somewhere in their immediate surroundings.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the ratio of various types of Mithraic sanctuaries encountered in Dalmatia, while figure 2.3 illustrates the same for the whole of the Roman Empire (excluding Dalmatia). The difference between Dalmatia and the remaining provinces is the stark contrast in percentage between the first and second types.¹⁵⁵

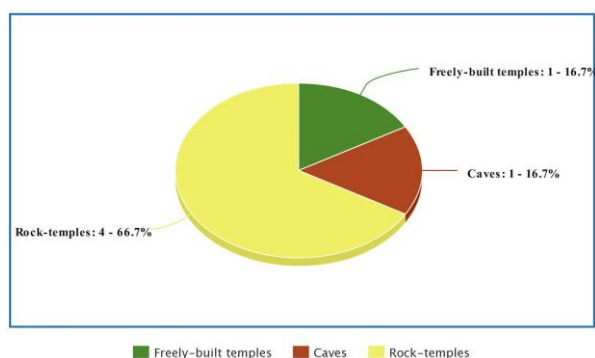


Figure 2.2: Mithraic temples in Dalmatia.

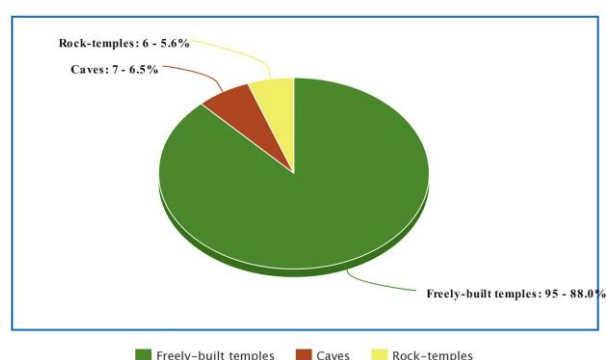


Figure 2.3: Mithraic temples in the RE.

Outside Dalmatia, there are only thirteen examples of Mithraic sanctuaries located in natural settings. In the neighboring Pannonia, a tauroctony relief with a votive inscription has been carved into the natural rock in the forest canyon east of Rožanec (figure 2.4, appendix 1, no. 99).¹⁵⁶ Nothing of the rest of the *mithraeum* construction has been preserved. According to the inscription, *mithraeum* is dated to the first half of the second century AD.¹⁵⁷ Another rock-cut tauroctony has been preserved in Bourg-Saint-Andéol (Gallia, figure 2.5, appendix 1, no. 14)

¹⁵⁴ Here sites of Bijaći, Gardun, Golubić, Ivoševci, Jezerine, Kašić, Proložac Donji, Solin, Stari Grad and Zadar are considered. We can add tauroctonies from Crikvine, Umljanovići and Zaostrog although they were found either secondarily used or without context.

¹⁵⁵ Bearing in mind that these figures are based on the archaeologically attested *mithraea*.

¹⁵⁶ Milan Lovenjak, *Inscriptiones Latinae Sloveniae (ILSl) 1: Neviodonum*, Situla 37, (Ljubljana: Narodni muzej Slovenije, 1998): 286-287; CIMRM 1481-1483.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 287; CIL III 2933.

as well, whose abutting structure perished with time.¹⁵⁸ A rock-cut tauroctony with traces of wooden construction with a gabled roof was found in Reichweiler-Schwarzerden (appendix 1, no. 41), probably in use during the third century AD. Recently, an account about the rock-cut relief from Kato Thermes (Macedonia, figure 2.6, appendix 1, no. 78) was reported, however, without details of the sanctuary itself.¹⁵⁹

Besides for its cult relief, the *mithraeum* in Fertőrákos (near *Scarabantia*, today Sopron, Pannonia, image 2.7, appendix 1, no. 102) used the natural rock for its wall construction as well, adding built walls only on its west and north side.¹⁶⁰ The temple was in use from the beginning to the mid-third century AD.¹⁶¹ Similarly, in Mithraeum I from *Carnuntum* (Petronell, Pannonia), a construction in brick and stone was combined with a natural cave (appendix 1, no. 93).¹⁶² Mithraeum was located on the eastern end of the *canabae*, at the foot of the Kirchenberg hill, and was in use from around 100 AD.¹⁶³ The modern stone quarry located at the site, unfortunately, destroyed the sanctuary. Two large-format tauroctony reliefs were found, indicating, according to Gabrielle Kremer, that even two *mithraea* could have existed at the site.¹⁶⁴

One of the *mithraea* placed inside a natural cave is attested in Zgornja Pohanca (Noricum), on the site called Zlodejev graben (Devil's gorge, figure 2.8, appendix 1, no. 84).¹⁶⁵ The cult relief was not cut into the natural rock but made of marble and subsequently mounted on the back wall.¹⁶⁶ Another *mithraeum* in a natural cave has been discovered in Târgușor, Romania (territory of *Istros*, Moesia Inferior, figure 2.9, appendix 1, no. 81).¹⁶⁷ In a cave called “la

¹⁵⁸ For recent overview of the site and related bibliography see Stefanie Lenk, “Bourg-Saint-Andéol,” in *Images of Mithra*, ed. Philippa Adrych et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017): 61-80.

¹⁵⁹ Ines Klenner, “Breaking News!,” 121-122.

¹⁶⁰ István Tóth, *A fertőrákosi Mithraeum* [The Mithraeum in Fertőrákos] (Budapest: Verano, 2007); CIMRM 1636-1647.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 58, 66.

¹⁶² Christian Gugl, Gabrielle Kremer, “Das Mithräum I ‘Am Stein’,” in *Götterbilder – Menschenbilder. Religion und Kulte in Carnuntum*, ed. Franz Humer and Gabrielle Kremer (Vienna: AV + Astoria Druckzentrum, 2011): 164-166; Gabrielle Kremer, *Götterdarstellungen, Kult- und Weihedenkmäler aus Carnuntum. Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani. Corpus der Skulpturen der Römischen Welt. Supplement 1* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2012): 330-331; CIMRM 1664.

¹⁶³ Mithraeum I is considered the oldest *mithraeum* in *Carnuntum*, dated to c. 100 AD by Gugl and Kremer, “Das Mithräum I,” 165; Kremer, *Götterdarstellungen*, 180-181, cat. no. 352. This early date has been recently contested by Gordon, arguing for later date at the end of the second/beginning of the third century AD, see Gordon, “The Roman Army,” 393.

¹⁶⁴ Kremer, *Götterdarstellungen*, 331, cat. nos. 192, 193.

¹⁶⁵ Walter Schmid, “Das Mithrasheiligtum von Pohanica bei Rann an der Save,” in *Schild von Steier, Beiträge zur steirischen vor- und Frühgeschichte* 1 (1945): 35-46; CIMRM 1457-1461; Lovenjak, *Inscriptiones*, 125.

¹⁶⁶ Schmid, “Das Mithrasheiligtum,” 37, Abb. 3; CIMRM 1458. Besides relief, a votive altar was found, dated to the second/third century AD, AIJ 258; ILug I 335.

¹⁶⁷ Ligia Ruscu, “Zum Kult des Mithras an der Westpontischen Küste,” *Rivista de Istoria Sociala* 8-9 (2003-2004): 27-28; Valentin Bottez, “Mithras in Moesia Inferior. New Data and New Perspectives,” *AAASH* 58 (2018): 244; CIMRM 2303-2309;

Adam,” an inventory of a sacred ware deposit was discovered, together with several altars and two reliefs in sandstone.¹⁶⁸ The *mithraeum* at Ponza island (Italia, appendix 1, no. 65) is dated to the third century AD and is mostly known for its stucco zodiac on the ceiling. According to Vermaseren, the cave is vaulted, and further interventions were made in the cult niche by cutting away some of the natural rock and by stuccoing the walls.¹⁶⁹ Further up north in Italy, in S. Giovanni di Duino near Trieste, another natural cave was used as a *mithraeum* (appendix 1, no. 74). It had lateral podia installed, including a well dug into it. It was probably used during the second half of the second century AD until the end of the fourth century AD.¹⁷⁰

Finally, a natural cave was used for the *mithraeum* in Hawarte (Northern Syria), well-known for its wall paintings (appendix 1, no. 106).¹⁷¹ The paintings covered all four walls and the ceiling of the *mithraeum*, with an exception of the niche cut in the natural rock at the northern end, where a sculpted depiction of tauroctony probably stood.¹⁷² This *mithraeum* is dated to the late fourth century AD.¹⁷³

Contrary to natural caves, artificial ones are created by carving out space in rock for different purposes. In this context, *mithraea* are frequently located in quarries, inside one of the hewn galleries, rather than inside an artificial cave intentionally carved out for this purpose. Artificial caves were used as *mithraea* on two sites. First, at a less known site in Moesia Inferior, a *mithraeum* was placed inside one of the stone quarries near the village of Kreta, located on the Vit river bank (appendix 1, no. 80).¹⁷⁴ The sanctuary was subsequently enlarged with stone blocks, and a large stone niche was made on the east side of the cave containing a smaller niche with relief in sandstone.¹⁷⁵ The already mentioned *mithraea* in the limestone quarries in Doliche should belong to this group as well (appendix 1, no. 108).¹⁷⁶

This brief survey shows that Dalmatia, with altogether five examples of Mithraic sanctuaries placed in natural settings, has the highest number of this type of Mithraic temples within one province. Pannonia follows with three examples of rock-temples (Rožanec, Fertőrákos,

¹⁶⁸ Bottez, “Mithras,” 244; CIMRM 2305-2306.

¹⁶⁹ Maarten J. Vermaseren, *Mithriaca II. The Mithraeum at Ponza*, Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain 16 (Leiden: Brill, 1974): 6-7; Roger Beck, “Interpreting the Ponza Zodiac, I,” *JMS* 1 (1976): 1-19; idem, “Interpreting the Ponza Zodiac, II,” *JMS* 2 (1977/1978): 87-147.

¹⁷⁰ David Walsh, *The Cult of Mithras*, 114-115, F.4.

¹⁷¹ For an up-to-date survey of the site and relevant bibliography see Michal Gawlikowski, “The Mithraeum at Hawarte in Syria,” in *The Archaeology of Mithraism. New Finds and Approaches to Mithras-Worship*, ed. Matthew M. McCarty and Marina Egri (Leuven/Paris/Bristol: Peeters, 2020): 183-190.

¹⁷² Ibid, 186.

¹⁷³ Gordon, “Trajets de Mithra,” 77-136; idem, “*Persae in spelaeis*,” 289-325.

¹⁷⁴ Valentin Bottez, “Quelques aspects du culte mithriaque en Mésie Inférieure,” *Dacia* 50 (2007): 285-296; CIMRM 2256-2262.

¹⁷⁵ CIMRM 2256.

¹⁷⁶ Schütte-Maischatz, Winter, *Doliche*; Gordon, “Mithras in Doliche,” 602-610.

Carnuntum); Italia (Ponza, Duino), Moesia Inferior (Târgușor, Kreta) and Syria (Hawarte, Doliche) have two examples each, all of which are natural caves, except Kreta and Doliche which are artificial ones. One rock-temple is located in Gallia (Bourg-Saint-Andéol), one in Noricum (Zgornja Pohanca), one in Germania (Reichweiler-Schwarzerden) and one possibly in Macedonia (Kato Thermes). The ratio is six rock-temples versus seven caves (five natural and two artificial ones).

Due to the relatively small number of the Mithraic temples preserved/known in Dalmatia (in comparison to the overall number of Mithraic sites and monuments), it is hard to offer a comprehensive typological survey. However, a high concentration of temples that incorporate natural features can be taken as characteristic for the province. That being said, favorable geographical conditions were not the sole reason that prompted Mithraic communities to choose natural settings for their sanctuaries. To better understand the (Mithraic) practice of placing the sanctuaries in natural contexts, a further socio-cultural contextualization of the cult of Mithras is needed. By looking into the broader setting of the various religious practices in Dalmatia, or more precisely, by further examining the practice of placing the sanctuaries in the natural settings, the following section will show that this habit was rooted in local religious tradition(s).

2.6 Sanctuaries in Natural Settings in Dalmatia

There are several deities whose veneration in Dalmatia is tied to the natural settings. Besides Hercules, Dioscuri, and Jupiter, the largest number of such sanctuaries is linked to Silvanus, spread mostly along the central coastline, as well as in its hinterland. Furthermore, the practice seems to have pre-Roman antecedents, mainly attested by the caves-sanctuaries along the Adriatic coast.

The rock-cut relief of Hercules (height 0.80 m, depth 0.20 m) has been recently identified at the entrance to the Rasohe quarry (island of Brač), most likely dated to the first half of the third century AD (figures 2.10, 2.11).¹⁷⁷ Nenad Cambi suggests that the space in front of the relief functioned as a sanctuary, where a so far unidentified stone altar stood and was used for sacrificial purposes.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Nenad Cambi, "Herkul na Braču" [Hercules on Brač] *Klesarstvo i graditeljstvo* 24 (2013): 5-19.

¹⁷⁸ Moreover, Cambi suggests two more sanctuaries in a similar natural settings at the nearby quarries Stražišće and Plate. No reliefs were found there, but only altars dedicated to Hercules. However, two more reliefs representing Hercules were found in the vicinity of the Rasohe and Plate quarries, Cambi, "Herkul," 5-19. Rendić-Miočević suggested that this relief could have been a replica or rather a model of a god's statue adorning one of the niches around one of the gates on Diocletian's palace, see Duje Rendić-Miočević, "Dva antička signirana

As a symbol of physical strength and endurance, Hercules was especially popular among stoneworkers, quarrymen, and miners, as well as among the members of the Roman army usually in charge of those tasks.¹⁷⁹ Consequently, he is often encountered in quarrying or mining contexts.¹⁸⁰ In Dalmatia, Hercules' monuments are further attested in the two Roman quarries in *Tragurion* (present-day Trogir).¹⁸¹ However, Brač remains the only example of rock-cut relief of Hercules known to me, both in Dalmatia, as well as outside the province.¹⁸² Furthermore, a rock-cut relief depicting Dioscuri (0.45 x 0.42 m) was discovered in Dračevo, (close to Čapljina), near the river Neretva (figure 2.12).¹⁸³ Since the relief was discovered close to the river Neretva, an important traffic route connecting the Adriatic coast and the hinterland, they were probably venerated here as protectors of sailors and tradesmen traveling along the Neretva, as well as by local fishermen.¹⁸⁴ Relief is dated to the second half of the second century AD - third century AD.¹⁸⁵ A similar relief showing Dioscuri was found in a nearby

reljefa iz radionice majstora Maksimina" [Two ancient signed reliefs from the workshop of master Maksimin], *Arheološki radovi i rasprave* IV-V (1967): 341-342.

¹⁷⁹ Slobodan Dušanić, "The Miners' Cults in Illyricus," *Pallas* 50 (1999): 133; Krešimir Matijević, "*Hercules Saxanus*: Germanisch, keltisch oder römisch?" in *Kelto-Römische Gottheiten und ihre Verehrer. Akten des 14. F.E.R.C.AN.-Workshops; Trier, 12-14. Oktober 2015*, ed. Krešimir Matijević (Rahden/Westf.: Leidorf, 2016): 41-73.

¹⁸⁰ Matijević, "*Hercules Saxanus*," Dragana Nikolić, "Stoneworkers' Hercules. A Comment on an Upper Moesian Inscription," *Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica* 25/2 (2019): 457-463; Nadežda Gavrilović, *Kult Herkula i Merkura u Gornjoj Meziji I-IV vek n.e.* [The cults of Hercules and Mercury in Upper Moesia from the first to the fourth century] (Beograd: Arheološki institut, 2014): 21, 58-59.

¹⁸¹ Jasna Jeličić, "Heraklov žrtvenik i ostali nalazi u Segetu Donjem kod Trogira" [Hercules' altar and other findings in Seget Donji near Trogir] *VAHD* 75 (1981): 97-104; Dražen Maršić, "Novi Heraklov žrtvenik iz Trogira" [A new altar to Hercules from Trogir] *Archaeologia Adriatica* 1 (2007): 111-127; for the general overview of the cult in Croatia see Mirjana Sanader, "O kultu Herkula u Hrvatskoj," [Hercules' cult in Croatia] *Opuscula Archaeologica* 18 (1994): 87-114.

¹⁸² Worth mentioning in this context is the Hercules' monument carved out of (rather than in) the rock, found in the Brohl valley (Upper Germany), c. 100 AD: it contains five niches with an altar carrying inscription in the central one, otherwise decorated with carved images of the sun rays and a moon – no figural representation of Hercules. Originally it probably adorned an underground cave, see Matijević, "*Hercules Saxanus*," 48. A rock-sanctuary with a gabled niche hewn in the tufa in a gallery of an ancient quarry, with parts of at least two statuettes of Hercules, presumably associated with the sanctuary of the Hercules *Cubans*, has been found in Rome, on the right bank of Tiber, see Matijević, "*Hercules Saxanus*," 53.

¹⁸³ Veljko Paškvalin, "Interpretacija likovnih predstava na stijeni kod Dračeva kod Čapljine" [Interpretation of images on the rock at Dračevo, Čapljina], *Starinar* 22 (1972): 53-59; Adnan Busuladžić, *Tragovi antičkog teatra, muzike, gladijatorskih borbi i takmičenja iz arheoloških zbirki u Bosni i Hercegovini*/Evidence of the Theatre, Music, Gladiator Combats and Games from Ancient Greece and Rome in Archaeology Collections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo: Zemaljski muzej Bosne i Hercegovine, 2017): 162-164, cat. no. 138, tab. 56; figures were alternatively identified as soldiers dressed in *paenula* and holding a spear, see Irma Čremošnik, "Nošnja na rimskim spomenicima u Bosni i Hercegovini" [Costumes on the Roman monuments from Bosnia and Herzegovina], *GZM* 29 (1974): 108.

¹⁸⁴ Recent excavations in the area confirm the economic and traffic importance of the area, see Snježana Vasilj, "Arheološki lokalitet Doljani-Dubine u općini Čapljina, Bosna i Hercegovina. Prilog istraživanju donjeg toka rijeke Neretve" [Archaeological site Doljani-Dubine, municipality of Čapljina in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A contribution to the research of the lower course of the river Neretva], *Godišnjak CBI ANUBiH* 41 (2012): 113-134; Hrvoje Manenica, "Antički fluvijalni lokaliteti u dolini rijeke Neretve" [Fluvial locations in the Neretva valley during antiquity], *Histria Antiqua* 21 (2012): 279-291.

¹⁸⁵ Edin Mulović, *Katalog kamene arheološke zbirke Muzeja Hercegovine Mostar/Catalogue of the stone archaeological collection of the Museum of Herzegovina Mostar* (Mostar: Muzej Hercegovine, 2018): 29-30; 36.

Narona (today Vid near Metković), which could indicate their veneration along the Neretva valley by local sailors and fishermen.¹⁸⁶

An interesting find of three rock-cut altars on the slopes of Vital hill (close to *Arupium*, present-day Prozor, Croatia) is of interest as well.¹⁸⁷ According to Karl Patsch, an exedra-like rock, about 1.40 m high, was found on the north slopes of Mali Vital (figures 2.13, 2.14, 2.15).¹⁸⁸ The upper part of this exedra has been carved into an altar with a cornice and a drain, containing an inscription dedicated to IOM.¹⁸⁹ Further to the north, on Veliki Vital, a vertical rock containing an oblong field (0.03 x 0.32 m) with one more inscription (epitaph) was discovered.¹⁹⁰

Between the altar and the epitaph, two more similar monuments were documented. On one of the rock crests a square inscription field was carved, unfortunately badly worn-out and illegible.¹⁹¹ Right beside the inscription field, a limestone bank was transformed into a rectangular basin with an inlet channel.¹⁹² A little further from here, a wide bench was made in the rock, known as a “Canape” among the locals.¹⁹³ As Patsch noted, attempts were made to give “a more pleasing form to the rocks,” unfortunately destroyed by local shepherds and subsequently even blasted with gunpowder.¹⁹⁴ These findings could have belonged to an open-air sanctuary, or even, indicated by the various fragments of architectural decoration found scattered in the vicinity, to a temple that incorporated the rock-altars in its construction.¹⁹⁵ Although inscriptions are not fully legible, the dedication to Jupiter, a supreme Roman deity, makes it likely that the sanctuary was dedicated to him.

Apart from these single cases, another well-attested deity in Dalmatia had its sanctuaries located in natural settings – Silvanus. In the entire corpus of the religious sculpture of the province, Silvanus is the most frequently represented deity – it occurs on almost a quarter of

¹⁸⁶ Busuladžić, *Tragovi*, 164; Mihovil Abramić, “Reljef Dioskura iz Narone” [Dioscuri relief from Narona], *VAHD* 54 (1952): 120-126; Nenad Cambi, *Kiparstvo rimske Dalmacije* [Sculpture of Roman Dalmatia] (Split: Književni krug, 2005): 46, 48, 125.

¹⁸⁷ The site is only known from the nineteenth-century descriptions by Šime Ljubić, “Putopisne arheološke bilješke od Ogulina do Prozora” [Travel archaeological notes from Ogulin to Prozor], *VAMZ* 4/1 (1882): 18-19; and Josip Brunšmid, “Arheološke bilješke iz Dalmacije i Panonije” [Archaeological notes from Dalmatia and Pannonia], *VAMZ* 5/1 (1901): 109-110.

¹⁸⁸ Karl Patsch, *Die Lika in römischer Zeit*, (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1900): 79-81.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 79; CIL III 10045.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 79; CIL III 3010.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*; Brunšmid, “Arheološke,” 110.

overall religious sculpture from the province.¹⁹⁶ More than 160 inscriptions and images dedicated to Silvanus testify to his popularity.¹⁹⁷ Unique to the Dalmatian worship of Silvanus, besides the unusual iconography, are his cave sanctuaries as well.¹⁹⁸

Most characteristic are the open-space sanctuaries placed in the natural environment outside urban contexts, often in inaccessible areas.¹⁹⁹ The evidence for such sacred spaces is given by rock-cut reliefs or with votive altars.²⁰⁰ One of the examples is the relief of Silvanus (0.45 m x 0.23-0.30 m) carved into the natural rock in the vicinity of Klis (cliff separating mountains Mosor and Kozjak), dated to the second/third century AD (figures 2.16, 2.17).²⁰¹ Here the relief was carved on a lower part of a vertical cliff, framed by the rocky and steep gorges on its upper side (height 6-8 m), and rising above the elevated grassy terrace below.²⁰²

Another case is a rock-cut relief of Silvanus on the southern slopes of the mountain Kozjak (She-goat) (figures 2.18, 2.19, 2.20).²⁰³ Under the steep and rocky crown of the Kozjak massif, a smaller glade stretches below the pyramidal cliffs, on one of which the relief was carved (h. 1.10 m x 0.95 m b.).²⁰⁴ The relief is dated to the second/third century AD.²⁰⁵ A further rock-cut relief depicting Silvanus with the goddess Diana was found at *Aequum* (present-day Čitluk near Sinj, (0.42 m x 0.63 m x 0.12 m, figure 2.21).²⁰⁶ Unfortunately, the relief, dated to the second/third century AD, has been taken out of its original setting in the Roman quarry.²⁰⁷

¹⁹⁶ Josipa Lulić, “Aspekti religijske skulpture na prostoru rimske Dalmacije u vrijeme Rimskog Carstva” [Aspects of the religious sculpture in roman province of Dalmatia in the Roman Empire] (PhD diss., University of Zagreb, 2015), 62; idem, “Illyrian Religion and Nation as Zero Institution,” *Studies in Visual Art and Communication* 3/1 (2016): 5.

¹⁹⁷ Danijel Džino, “The Cult of Silvanus: Rethinking Provincial Identities in Roman Dalmatia,” *VAMZ* 3/XLV (2012): 264.

¹⁹⁸ On the iconography see the third chapter of the dissertation. Danijel Džino, “The Cult of Silvanus,” 264; idem, “Subverting Braudel in Dalmatia: Religion, Landscape, and Cultural Mediation in the Hinterland of the Eastern Adriatic,” in *Across the Corrupting Sea: Post-Braudelian Approaches to the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Cavan Concannon, Lindsey A. Mazurek (London/New York: Routledge, 2016): 200; idem, “The Cult of Silvanus in the Central Adriatic Islands between Insularity and Connectivity,” in *Insularity and Identity in the Roman Mediterranean*, ed. Anna Kouremenos (Oxford, Phil.: Oxbow Books, 2018): 112.

¹⁹⁹ Nenad Cambi, “O svetištima Silvana u Dalmaciji” [On Silvanus’ sanctuaries in Dalmatia], *Adrias* 8/10 (1998/2000): 99-112; Ljubica Perinić, *The Nature and Origin of the Cult of Silvanus in the Roman Provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia*, Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 19 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2016): 40-44.

²⁰⁰ Cambi, “O svetištima,” 99-112. Eight votive altars dedicated to Silvanus were found in Vrljika (Crkvina/Otišić), which could indicate a sanctuary at this spot, Ante Milošević, *Arheološka topografija Cetine*, MHAS [Archaeological topography of Cetina, MHAS], MHAS, Katalozi i monografije 3 (Split: MHAS, 1998): 98; Perinić, *The Nature*, 40.

²⁰¹ Ante Rendić-Miočević, “Uz dva Silvanova svetišta u okolici Salone” [On the two Silvanus’ sanctuaries in the surroundings of Salona], *Arheološki radovi i rasprave* 8/9 (1982): 133-135; Cambi, “O svetištima,” 104; Perinić, *The Nature*, 40, cat. III/23.

²⁰² Rendić-Miočević, “Uz dva,” 133.

²⁰³ Ibid, 131-133; Perinić, *The Nature*, 41, cat. III/24.

²⁰⁴ Rendić-Miočević, “Uz dva,” 131.

²⁰⁵ Perinić, *The Nature*, cat. III/24.

²⁰⁶ Perinić, *The Nature*, 43, cat. III/74.

²⁰⁷ Marina Miličević Bradač, “Dijana izvan grada” [Diana outside the city], *Archaeologia Adriatica* 11 (2008): 359-366.

This kind of open-space sanctuaries existed also in the hinterland of the province. Several such sanctuaries are assumed in the mountainous environment of Glamočko polje, stretching behind the Dinara massif: in Busija, where Silvanus was venerated jointly with Diana, and in Borak (Vrba) where possibly a cave was dedicated to Silvanus.²⁰⁸ Cave sanctuaries are considered typical places of Silvanus's worship, and, as mentioned earlier, are unique to Dalmatia.²⁰⁹

Besides the possible Silvanus' cave located on the mountain Kozjak above Salona, he was venerated in Vodna Jama cave (between Supetar and Donji Humac, the island of Brač) (figures 2.22, 2.13).²¹⁰ It is situated on the top of the hill with a view of the entire Brač channel and islands of Šolta and Čiovo. Besides the preserved fragment of a relief depicting Silvanus and nymphs (mid-second century AD), the site is today destroyed.²¹¹ The presence of Iron Age pottery and Hellenistic ceramics indicates the presence of indigenous communities at least up to the first century BC.²¹² Vodna jama came into use again during Late Antiquity, when it was used as a source of water.²¹³

It is clear from this short survey that the practice of placing the sanctuaries in natural settings and especially carving rock-cut reliefs for cultic purposes was widespread in the province. Besides the cult of Mithras, we can associate it with Hercules, Dioscuri, possibly Jupiter, but mostly with Silvanus. Since they were usually located in inaccessible areas, which preserved their isolated character until today, we can assume that their number must have been higher. Although such sanctuaries are not exclusive to Dalmatia, the fact that in the case of Hercules, and above all Silvanus, we are dealing with examples of unique Dalmatian practice, a question of whether we can associate this practice with local pre-Roman traditions arises.

²⁰⁸ For Busija see Ivo Bojanovski, "Novi votivni reljef Silvana i Dijane iz Glamoča" [New votive relief of Silvanus and Diana from Glamoč], *Bulletin Zavoda za likovne umjetnosti JAZU* 13 (1965): 20-21; for Borak (Vrba) see Demetrius Sergejevski, "Rimski kameni spomenici sa Glamočkog polja" [Roman stone monuments from Glamočko polje] *GZM* 2 (1927): 255-265; idem, "Putne bilježke iz Glamoča" [Travel notes from Glamoč], *GZM* 54 (1943): 127; Ivo Bojanovski, "Novi spomenici Silvanove kultne zajednice s Glamočkog polja" [New votive monuments of Silvan's cult community from Glamočko polje], *VAMZ* 3 (1977-78): 129.

²⁰⁹ The only possible example outside Dalmatia is the cave in Csákvár (Hungary, part of the Roman province of Pannonia), where an image of Diana has been carved into the rock, with the accompanying phallic symbol scratched next to it, interpreted as her divine pair Silvanus (supposedly identified as such on an accompanying inscription M(entula?) S(ilvani?) (phallus)). However, I would be more inclined to think of a certain local fertility deity, rather than Silvanus. See Bence Fehér, "Diana's Cave Sanctuary in Csákvár (County Fejér)," *AAASH* 61 (2010): 185-206; AE 2010, 1352/HD072448; AE 2010, 1353/HD072449. Cave from Močići (*Epidaurum*), usually taken as another example of Silvanus' cave sanctuary in Dalmatia, is not included here as the identification of Silvanus' figure is no longer accepted as such. Detailed discussion of the site in the third chapter.

²¹⁰ For Kozjak cave see Cambi, "O svetištima," 103-104; Dino Demicheli, "Reljef nimfa i Silvana iz Vodne Jame na otoku Braču" [Relief with Nymphs and Silvanus from Vodna jama on Brač island], *Izdanja HAD-a* 26 (2010): 175-185; Džino, "Insularity and Connectivity," 114.

²¹¹ Demicheli, "Reljef," 176, 182; Džino, "Insularity and Connectivity," 114.

²¹² Goran Skelac and Igor Kulenović, "Vodna jama," *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* 4 (2008): 540-541.

²¹³ Ibid.

The pre-Roman religions from the territory of Roman Dalmatia are not well known and there was no single religious system on the territory that would later become the Roman province of Dalmatia.²¹⁴ Different indigenous Iron Age communities populated the area (e.g., Liburnians, Delmatae, Iapodes, etc.), inhabiting ecologically and culturally diverse sub-regions.²¹⁵ Very little is known about these communities: they established patterns of hierarchical societies (small, family-centered communities), inhabiting fertile river valleys or karst *poljes*, whose changing ecological factors had a profound impact on the formation of their identities.²¹⁶ Despite certain mutual traits, they show an active engagement in creating their regional sense of identity, visible, for example, in various regional building traditions in the construction of the characteristic *gradine* (hillforts).²¹⁷

The same can be observed regarding their religion – different communities developed various, simple or more complex, religious systems.²¹⁸ Contrary to the Liburnians, for example, who worshipped local female divinities (Avitica, Jutossica, Sentona, Latra, Ansotica, etc.), Delmatae had a religious system with Silvanus and Diana as their main deities, while the only “Japodian”²¹⁹ deity known to us is Bindus.²²⁰ The cult place dedicated to Bindus was discovered in the valley of the river Una, near the Privilica spring (Golubić, close to Bihać, figure 2.24).²²¹ Altogether eleven altars dedicated to Bindus Neptunus were found, some only fragmentarily preserved, dated to the late first century AD.²²²

The place is interpreted as an open-space sanctuary, and traces of fire burning and remains of sacrificial animals (goats and cattle) were found on the spot.²²³ Considering that dedications

²¹⁴ Nenad Cambi, “Romanization of the Western Illyricum From Religious Point of View,” *Godišnjak CBI ANUBiH* 40 (2013): 72.

²¹⁵ Danijel Džino, “The Impact of Roman Imperialism on the Formation of Group Identities in some Indigenous Societies from the Eastern Adriatic Hinterland,” in *Armées grecques et romaines dans le nord des Balkans. Conflits et Integration des Communautés Guerrieres*, ed. Aliénor Rufin Solas, Marie-Gabrielle Parisaki, Elpida Kosmidou (Gdansk: Akanthina, 2013): 145. The concept of “Illyrians” and “Illyrian tribes,” often used to refer to these communities, has long been proven problematic as it is based on modern concepts of nation and ethnicity. Therefore, it is not used in this work. On the discussion see Danijel Džino, “Deconstructing ‘Illyrians’: Zeitgeist, Changing Perceptions and the Identity of Peoples from Ancient Illyricum,” *Časopis za hrvatske studije* 5/1 (2008): 43-55; idem, “Constructing Illyrians: Prehistoric Inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula in Early Modern and Modern Perceptions,” *Balkanistica* 27 (2014): 1-39; Lulić, “Illyrian Religion,” 1-12.

²¹⁶ Danijel Džino, “Contesting Identities of Pre-Roman Illyricum,” *Ancient West & East* 11 (2012): 73-74.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 74, 83.

²¹⁸ Cambi, “Romanization,” 72.

²¹⁹ Although Bindus Neptunus is commonly referred to as Japodean main deity, the evidence for such a claim is based solely on one locality. However, the question remains whether we can make conclusions about general phenomenon based on a single evidence: did all Japodeans believed in Bindus and/or if it was local elite?

²²⁰ Ibid, 72, 74, 76.

²²¹ Ibid, 74-76.

²²² Danijel Džino, “Bindus Neptunus: Hybridity, Acculturation and the Display of Power in the Hinterland of Roman Dalmatia,” *Histria Antiqua* 18/1 (2009): 355-362; Nenad Cambi, *Kiparstvo*, 47.

²²³ Carl Patsch, “Archäologisch-epigraphische Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der römischen Provinz Dalmatien,” *WMBH* 7 (1900): 36-40.

were made by *praepositi* and *principes* – local Iapodean chieftains, some scholars even suggested it might have been the main Iapodean sanctuary.²²⁴

Dedications are written in the Latin language, while the geometrical and figural decorations were made using the local engraving technique.²²⁵ The iconography is, however, entirely Roman: one of the altars depicts Neptunus (with his attributes dolphin and trident) on one, and Triton (half fish/half man) on the other side. In the gables on both sides of the altar male goats are represented. Bindus was probably associated with the underground, fertility, and freshwater springs.²²⁶

The cultic importance of goats for different pre-Roman communities in pre-Roman Dalmatia is further confirmed by the cave sanctuary of Spila Nakovana (Pelješac peninsula), located near the summit of Kopinje hill, overlooking the sea channels between Pelješac, Korčula, Hvar, and the mouth of river Neretva (figure 2.25).²²⁷ A large amount of sheep and goat bones, as well as Greek pottery (ranging from fourth to first century BC), was discovered concentrated around the phallic-like stalactite, which stands out by its prominent position and size.²²⁸

A similar cave linked to the pre-Roman religious activities was discovered in Rača, on the southeast part of Lastovo island, with findings of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Hellenistic, and Roman pottery (figures 2.27, 2.28).²²⁹ Another pre-Roman cave sanctuary of St. Philip and Jacob at Marina (near Trogir) is situated on the southeast slopes of Pliće hill (figure 2.26). A rich archaeological material spanning from Iron Age, Hellenistic, to the Roman and Medieval eras were found.²³⁰

²²⁴ Only if the functions of *praepositi* and of *principes* could be established with certainty, see Cambi, “Romanization,” 76; Džino, “Bindus,” 356; *ibid.*, “The Formation of Early Imperial Peregrine *civitates* in Dalmatia: (Re)constructing Indigenous Communities After the Conquest,” in *The Edges of the Roman World*, ed. Marko A. Janković, Vladimir D. Mihajlović, and Staša Babić (Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2014): 224–225.

²²⁵ Branka Raunig, *Umjetnosti i religija prahistorijskih Japoda* [Art and religion of prehistoric Iapodes], (Sarajevo: ANUBiH, 2004): 20–21.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

²²⁷ Stašo Forenbaher, “Nakovana Culture: State of Research,” *Opuscula Archaeologica* 23–24 (1999/2000): 373–385; Stašo Forenbaher and Timothy Kaiser, “Nakovana Cave: An Illyrian Ritual Site,” *Antiquity* 75 (2001): 677–678.

²²⁸ Stašo Forenbaher and Timothy Kaiser, *Spila Nakovana. Ilirsko svetište na Pelješcu* [Nakovana Cave . Illyrian sanctuary on Pelješac] (Zagreb: VBZ, 2003): 22.

²²⁹ Marinko Gjirović, “Špilja Rača na otoku Lastovu” [Rača cave on Lastovo island] *Naše planine* 6 (1951): 154–159; Philippe Della Casa et al., “An Overview of Prehistoric and Early Historic Settlement, Topography, and Maritime Connections on Lastovo Island, Croatia,” in *A Connecting Sea: Maritime Interaction in Adriatic Prehistory*, ed. Stašo Forenbaher, BAR International Series 2037 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009): 115.

²³⁰ Ante Piteša, “Lokalitet: Spilja sv. Filipa i Jakova” [Locality: St. Philip and Jacob cave] *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* 1 (2004): 244–247; *idem*, “Istraživanja u spilji sv. Filipa i Jakova kod Marine 2004. godine” [Research in the cave of St. Philip and Jacob near Marina in 2004], in *Vinišćanski zbornik* 2, ed. I. Pažanin (Vinišća: Župa Presvetog srca Isusova, 2008): 217–224.

Finally, a cave sanctuary Vilina špilja located on the cliffs of Bjelotin hill, above the source of river Ombla in Rijeka Dubrovačka was discovered, with numerous pottery finds from the fourth century BC until the fifth century AD (figures 2.29, 2.30).²³¹ Although it is not known which deity was worshipped there, it is possible that it was linked to the water.²³²

Although here it is possible to offer only a short survey of the relevant sites, the links between the pre-Roman and Roman religious practices on the territory of the Roman province of Dalmatia deserve a more thorough study. However, it is clear even from this brief overview that the tradition of placing sanctuaries in natural settings can be followed from pre-Roman times. What all these sites, both pre-Roman and Roman, have in common is that they are all associated with the veneration of nature and natural phenomena.

Nature had a deep impact on the lives of the local communities. The rough weather conditions, for example, affected their crops and, more dangerously, the karst landscape they inhabited (see the geographical intro). A study has shown how the increased wetness in the Iron Age in Ravni Kotari (around and east of Zadar) turned the soil in lowlands difficult for cultivation and threatened crops with waterlogging; in turn, frequent flooding made the whole area difficult for living, causing Iron Age populations to inhabit slopes and ridges around fields.²³³ Similar climate conditions continued during the Roman period, when, despite the increased draughtiness there was a higher risk of flooding due to greater runoff from mainly deforested and thinning karst.²³⁴ Due to such conditions, people mainly inhabited karst ridges and hill-slopes.²³⁵ It is, therefore, not surprising that the continuous threat of and dependence on nature left a considerable imprint on local people's beliefs and religious practices. It is this aspect of the cult of Mithras, i.e., the cult's association with nature, that is mostly exploited by the local communities in Dalmatia, as it will be shown in the next chapter.

2.7. Conclusions

This chapter aimed to primarily discuss the typological features of the Mithraic temples in Dalmatia. The analysis has shown that the second type, i.e., the temples incorporating natural features, are the most common type of the Mithraic temples encountered in Dalmatia. It is this

²³¹ Domagoj Perkić, "Svetište u Vilinoj špilji iznad izvora rijeke Ombla" [Sanctuary in Vilina cave above the source of river Ombla], in *Antički Grci na tlu Hrvatske*, ed. J. Poklečki Stošić (Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi Dvori, 2010): 159-161.

²³² Alternatively, it could have been dedicated to a deity equivalent to Greek Athena, indicated by the relatively large amount of pottery decorated with owls found in the cave, Perkić, "Svetište u Vilinoj špilji," 161.

²³³ John Chapman, Robert Shiel and Šime Batović, *The Changing Face of Dalmatia: Archaeological and Ecological Studies in a Mediterranean Landscape* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996): 255-256; 262-263.

²³⁴ Ibid, 256.

²³⁵ Ibid, 263-264.

feature that distinguishes Dalmatia from other provinces and is taken as characteristic for it. Outside Dalmatia, only thirteen temples belonging to the second type are attested and their occurrence is not characteristic for any of the provinces. Out of these thirteen temples, six are rock-temples (appendix 1, no. 14, 41, 78, 93, 99, 102), five are natural caves (appendix 1, no. 65, 74, 81, 84, 106) and two are artificial caves (appendix 1, no. 80, 108).

Since Mithraic temples have not yet been the topic of a comprehensive study, and as a necessary prerequisite for establishing a clear typology, a historiographical survey of the topic was provided. The overview concentrated on selected publications relevant for the current discussion and has shown the long-lasting influence of Franz Cumont and his ideas of the Persian origins of the cult, particularly evident in the regional scholarship concerning the cult of Mithras.

Furthermore, it became clear that the dominant view regarding the Mithraic cave and rock-temples sees them as indicators of the rural and primitive character of the cult, often linked with the early stages of the cult. As it will be shown in the following chapter, none of these applies to the examples from Dalmatia. On the contrary, the need for a regional approach was emphasized, the one which would consider a variety of local pre(conditions) when it comes to the selection of a certain type of Mithraic temple.

The final part of this chapter explored some of the reasons, beyond the physical environment of the province, that might have affected the choices made by the local Mithraic communities regarding their places of worship. It showed that sanctuaries placed in natural settings were not characteristic only for the cult of Mithras, but were associated with various deities.

Furthermore, examples of Rača cave on the island of Lastovo, the cave of St. Philip and Jacob in Marina, and Vilina Špilja in Rijeka Dubrovačka pointed out that the tradition of cave sanctuaries reaches long back into the cultural and religious history of the pre-Roman Dalmatia. A similar link with the pre-Roman beliefs and cult places can be observed in Gallia, where Mithras appears associated with Apollo and the indigenous water and healing sanctuaries (see appendix 1, no. 13, 15, 17, 19-23).²³⁶ Furthermore, in several German *mithraea* (see appendix 1, no. 27, 29, 34, 43, 47) Mithras is venerated together with Mercury, thus indicating the degree to which the cult of Mithras was integrated into the local religious beliefs.²³⁷

²³⁶ Philippe Roy, "Mithra et l'Apollon celtique en Gaule," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni* 79/2 (2013): 360-378.

²³⁷ Andreas Hensen, "Mercurio Mithrae. Zeugnisse der Merkurverehrung im Mithraskult," in *Provinzialrömische Forschungen. Festschrift für Günter Ulbert zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Wolfgang Cyszcz et al. (Espelkamp: Verlag Marie Leidorf, 1995): 211-216; Gordon, "The Roman Army," 401.

In Dalmatia, direct evidence of venerating Mithras together with the pre-Roman deities does not exist, although an interesting discovery of four sacrificial altars from *Salona* should be mentioned here. In the area of the western necropolis a rectangular structure consisting of three rooms was discovered.²³⁸ Altars were found in one of the rooms whose purpose remains unconfirmed: one was dedicated to Mithras, two to Silvanus, while the fourth one mentions no particular deity (*Deo por bono!*).²³⁹ If the future research confirms its use for cult purposes, it would be the first example of Silvanus' and Mithras' joint veneration in Dalmatia, otherwise well-attested elsewhere in the Empire.²⁴⁰

Even without such direct evidence, the previous analysis has shown the essential connection between humans and their environment, which, in Dalmatia, found its expression in cave and rock-temples, as well as in deities venerated there. The cult of Mithras thus seems to be an integral part of this continuing tradition. In this sense, the conscious choice made by local Mithraic communities regarding their place of worship shows their active engagement in negotiating and (re)constructing their local identity. The next chapter provides a detailed insight into Mithraic temples from Dalmatia and explores further their relationship with nature.

²³⁸ Jagoda Mardešić, "Solin-Salona," *Arheološki pregled* 28 (1987): 95-97.

²³⁹ For Mithras' altar see appendix 2, no. 37.

²⁴⁰ For example, the relief of Silvanus was found in Mithraeum III in *Poetovio* CIMRM 1604-1605. An inscription dedicated to Silvanus was found next to the Mithras' relief in the *mithraeum* in *Apulum*, see Mihály Loránd Dézpa, *Peripherie-Denken. Transformation und Adaption des Gottes Silvanus in den Donauprovinzen (1.-4. Jahrhundert n. Chr.)*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012): 38; dedication to Mithras was found in Silvanus' sanctuary in *Aquincum*, built next to the water source, see Dézpa, *Peripherie*, 111; also CIMRM 276, CIMRM 283, CIMRM 502.

3. TOPOGRAPHY OF MITHRAIC TEMPLES IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF DALMATIA

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is the topographical survey of the Mithraic temples from Dalmatia. It is divided into four subchapters, each corresponding to a particular geographical area where *mithraea* are located: the Gacka river valley (Oltari and Rajanov grič), the Vrbas river valley (Jajce), the Neretva river valley (Konjic), and southern Dalmatia (Sv. Juraj and Močići). By concentrating on specific geographical regions, the close relationship of these *mithraea* with the natural setting is emphasized.

Since this feature is characteristic for *mithraea* in Dalmatia, each subchapter begins with a short description of the geographical properties of the area. Besides introducing less known regions of Dalmatia, distinguished by the difficult physical environment, isolated and often with extreme living conditions, it allows a better understanding of their interconnectedness.

Following their geographical background, a short survey of the Roman period in each region is given, with particular regard to the evidence of religious beliefs and practices attested in each area. These surveys represent a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of the scholarship on the topic. Most of these areas lack systematic archaeological research and the information about the Roman settlements and finds is often scant, thus making the study of the cult of Mithras difficult. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the relevant data to be able to better contextualize the cult of Mithras.

The evidence of the cult of Mithras is analyzed against this context. Besides the architecture, other monuments and related finds are studied as well. Based on their examination, the social networks and the related routes of the cult's spread in each of the regions are analyzed. The iconography, the design, and the stylistic features of the relevant monuments are observed, to help further understand the chronology of the cult's spread in the province. Small finds are used to help understand what type of rituals were practiced by each Mithraic community.

3.2 The Gacka River Valley

The Gacka valley is a large karst valley situated in the area of Lika-Senj County in central Croatia (fig. 3.1). It is a high karst area fringed on the coastal side with the largest mountain range in Croatia - Velebit (1757 m), and with Velika (1533 m) and Mala (1279 m) Kapela and Plješevica (1657 m) Mountains stretching on its northwest-southeast side. A typical karst landscape of the area is dominated by a large karst polje - Gacko polje, surrounded by undulating hills (formed mostly of karstified carbonates).²⁴¹ The valley is sparsely dotted with hillocks: Veliki and Mali Vital, Špiljnička glava, Humac, Prozorina, Pražinovac, Um and Umčić. The peculiarity of the area is reflected in the wealth of its surface and groundwater resources.²⁴² The valley is transected by the river Gacka, the third-longest sinking river in the world, which begins its course with a series of springs at one end of the valley and sinks underground on its opposite end (fig. 3.2).²⁴³ The river is further enriched by numerous tributaries, and several other karst features can be found in the area as well (sinkholes, caves, etc.).²⁴⁴

The large and complex karst aquifer Gacka is characterized by a heterogeneous terrain, consisting of four major (Tonković Vrilo, Majerovo Vrilo, Klanac, and Pećina), and several minor springs (Jaz, Marusino Vrilo, and Graba) of different discharge rates.²⁴⁵ The surface hydrography of the Gacko polje is very poor and confined to a few rivers - a standard feature of all karst areas.²⁴⁶ Although Lika County is characterized by a high quantity of rainfall (1600-3600 mm), with some distinctive spatial differentiation (higher rainfall occurs in the mountains, lower in the Gacko polje), precipitation infiltrates very quickly into the porous and permeable rock layers.²⁴⁷ However, before the modern hydro-technical interventions, the water would remain on the surface for most of the year, and floods are still common today in the lowest

²⁴¹ Limestone prevails, followed by clastites and dolomites, see Jasmina Lukač Reberski, Sanja Kapelj, and Josip Terzić, "An Estimation of Groundwater Type and Origin of the Complex Karst Catchment Using Hydrological and Hydrogeochemical Parameters: A Case Study of the Gacka River Springs," *Geologia Croatica* 62/3 (2009): 158.

²⁴² Marijana Fišić, Josip Rubinić, Maja Radišić, "Hidrološka analiza izvorišnog dijela rijeke Gacke" [Hydrological analysis of the source of the river Gacka], *Zbornik radova (Građevinski fakultet Sveučilišta u Rijeci)* 21/1 (2018): 164.

²⁴³ <http://www.np-sjeverni-velebit.hr/posjeti/okolica/gackadolina/>, last accessed May 13, 2020. The overground parts of the river have been subject to substantial human intervention: originally 32 km long, the river's course was cut down to 11 km with the construction of the hydroelectric power plant Senj in 1960, regulating its flow into the Adriatic Sea.

²⁴⁴ Lukač Reberski, Kapelj, Terzić, "An Estimation," 157; Jasmina Lukač Reberski, Tamara Marković, and Zoran Nakić, "Definition of the River Gacka Springs Subcatchment Areas on the Basis of Hydrogeological Parameters," *Geologia Croatica* 66/1 (2013): 40.

²⁴⁵ Lukač Reberski, Marković, Nakić, "Definition," 39.

²⁴⁶ Lukač Reberski, Kapelj, Terzić, "An Estimation," 176.

²⁴⁷ Lukač Reberski, Kapelj, Terzić, "An Estimation," 176.

parts of the polje, especially in early spring when the snow melts.²⁴⁸ Due to the frequent flooding and small arable surfaces (mainly confined to poljes), the area has always been sparsely populated.

Still, the river Gacka has favorable hydrological conditions: thanks to the large underground retention space, significant water supplies are formed, recharging the river's flow during the drier periods.²⁴⁹ The flow system of the river Gacka is standardized and homogeneous in comparison to other karst rivers, and considerable alterations of the flow quantities through its river bed do not occur, even during the years with the most extreme drought conditions.²⁵⁰ Owing to a gently sloping terrain (the highest altitudes of the central part of karst hinterland < 1200 m.a.s.l, and the lowest at the river Gacka springs c. 450 m.a.s.l), the river's course is tranquil and winding.²⁵¹ The area has a humid continental climate, with mean annual air temperature ranges between 4 and 9 °C.²⁵²

3.2.1 Gacka Valley in the Roman Times

The most important Roman center in this area was the ancient *Senia* (present-day Senj), part of the territory of Roman *Liburnia* (fig. 3.3, 3.5).²⁵³ *Senia* is located in a barren karst area with a harsh climate in winter and drought in summer. Such climate conditions were not suitable for growing field crops and the limited natural resources were compensated with the exploitation of rich forests in the hinterland, cattle breeding, and sea salt trade.²⁵⁴ *Senia* is strategically located at the foot of the mountain pass Vratnik, the lowest pass (698 m.a.s.l) over Velebit, which ensured the shortest and easiest natural route from the seashore through the valley of Senj (Senjska Draga) and further via Vratnik to the hinterland (fig. 3.4, 3.6). A suitable deep bay (which cut much deeper into the mainland than today) was ideal for the development of a seaport and allowed *Senia* to become of exceptional traffic and trade importance.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁸ Fišić, Rubinić, Radešić, "Hidrološka analiza," 164.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 176.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 159, 176.

²⁵¹ Lukač Reberski, Marković, Nakić, "Definition," 40.

²⁵² Ibid, 40.

²⁵³ The territory inhabited by Illyrian Liburnians, including the mainland and island area from the river Raša (Arsia flumen) in the north to the river Krka (Titius flumen) in the south, see Robert Matijašić, "La Liburnia settentrionale all'inizio del Principato: uno shizzo dell'organizzazione amministrativa e territoriale," in *Les routes de l'Adriatique antique. Géographie et économie*, ed. Slobodan Čače, Anamarija Kurilić and Francis Tassaux (Bordeaux/Zadar: Institut Ausonius/Université de Zadar, 2006): 81-87.

²⁵⁴ Miroslav Glavičić, "Značenje Senije tijekom antike" [The meaning of Senia during antiquity], *Senjski zbornik* 21 (1994): 43, 54.

²⁵⁵ Glavičić, "Značenje Senije;" idem, *Kultovi antičke Senije*, 1-2.

Furthermore, both naval and land routes intersected at *Senia*, which had a positive effect on the prosperity of the city.²⁵⁶ One of the important traffic routes connected *Senia* with *Aquileia* in the north, and with *Salona* and *Dyrrachium* in the south, while the other one connected *Senia* with the settlements in its hinterland (*Arupium*) and further with Pannonia, particularly *Siscia* (today Sisak) (*Senia – Avendo – Arupium – Bibium – Romula – Quadrata – Siscia*).²⁵⁷ The direct road connection with the interior enabled unhindered trade with *Siscia*, which made *Senia*, also called the “port of *Siscia*,” a trading stronghold throughout antiquity, and undoubtedly the most important city in this part of the Adriatic.²⁵⁸ Because of its significance, *Senia* received the status of *municipium* already during the reign of Emperor Augustus (27 BC – 14 AD).²⁵⁹

The importance of *Senia* is further confirmed by the fact that in the second half of the second century AD there was an imperial customs office for Illyricum stationed here (*publicum portorium Illyrici*). Recently, excavations at a nearby site of Žuta lokva have yielded remains of a roadside station through which the imperial customs office distributed goods from *Senia* to the hinterland (fig. 3.4).²⁶⁰ The building was in function from the beginning of the first century AD until the mid-second century AD.²⁶¹ Numerous pottery and *amphorae* finds from Žuta lokva witness the active trade network and the presence of a high number of travelers in the area.²⁶²

²⁵⁶ Glavičić, “Značenje Senije,” idem, *Kultovi antičke Senije*, 1-2.

²⁵⁷ Željko Miletić, “Roman Roads along the Eastern Coast: State of Research,” in *Les routes de l’Adriatique antique*, 125-148; Ivan Milotić, *Rimska cestovna baština na tlu Hrvatske* [Roman road heritage on Croatian soil], (Zagreb: Hrvatsko društvo za ceste, 2010): 239-267; Vedrana Glavaš, “Prometno i strateško značenje prijevoja Vratnik u antici” [Traffic and strategic importance of the Vratnik pass in antiquity], *Senjski zbornik* 37 (2010): 5-18.

²⁵⁸ Glavaš, “Prometno,” 15.

²⁵⁹ There is some disagreement whether *Senia* had a status of colony or not, but the prevailing opinion is that it did not, see Glavičić, “Značenje Senije,” 49.

²⁶⁰ The lack of evidence suggests that the building did not serve as a *mansio* or *mutatio*, but was rather a private inn (*caupona*, *diversorium*, or *hospitium*), see Tatjana Kolak, “Antička putna postaja u Žutoj Lokvi” [Ancient road station in Žuta Lokva], *Modruški zbornik* 6 (2012): 17-28; Ivana Ožanić Roguljić, Tatjana Kolak, “Excavations of the Roman Sites in Lika (Croatia): Žuta Lokva, Lički Ribnik,” in *New Discoveries Between the Alps and the Black Sea. Results From the Roman Sites in the Period Between 2005 and 2015. Proceedings of the 1st International Archaeological Conference, Ptuj, 8th and 9th October 2015*, ed. Maja Janežič et al. (Ljubljana: Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije, 2018): 115-119.

²⁶¹ Ivana Ožanić Roguljić, “Thinwalled pottery from Žuta lokva, Roman Dalmatia (Croatia),” in *Chronologie und vergleichende Chronologien zum Ausgang der Römischen Republik und zur Frühen Kaiserzeit*, ed. Heimo Dolenz, Karl Strobel (Klagenfurt: Landesmuseum für Kärnten, 2019): 427.

²⁶² Ivana Ožanić Roguljić, “Amphoras from Žuta Lokva,” in *AdriAmphorae. Amfore kao izvor za rekonstrukciju gospodarskoga razvoja jadranske regije u antici: lokalna proizvodnja. Radovi s okruglog stola Zagreb, 21. travnja 2016. g.*, ed. Goranka Lipovac Vrkljan, Irena Radić Rossi, Ana Konestra (Zagreb: Institut za arheologiju, 2017): 80-85; idem, “Thinwalled,” 427-435; Ivana Ožanić Roguljić, Valentina Mantovani, “Sarius Cups from Žuta Lokva (Roman Dalmatia – Croatia). Preliminary Report,” in *Rei Cretariae Romanae Favtorvm. Acta 46. Congressus Tricesimus Primus Rei Cretariae Romanae Favtorvm Napocae Habitus MMXVIII*, ed. Catarina Viegas (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020): 311-316.

3.2.2 Monuments of the Cult of Mithras in the Gacka Valley

It is not surprising that in the dynamic environment of *Senia* we encounter the earliest evidence of the cult of Mithras in Dalmatia. The significant presence of the cult in the Gacka valley makes it an exceptional case study in the province of Dalmatia (fig. 3.7). Not only do these monuments offer a possibility to explore the routes of cult's transmission in the area, but they allow us to identify the social structures involved in this process, as well as the transmission of iconographical and compositional templates.

3.2.2.1 Vratnik

The existence of the imperial customs office in *Senia* is attested by the two Mithraic altars found at St. Michael's church in Vratnik.²⁶³ Although the altars were found at the same location, thus indicating a possibility of the *mithraeum* erected somewhere nearby, its traces were never detected.²⁶⁴

According to the first inscription, Hermes, a slave of Fortunatus, who himself was a *servus vilicus* (the senior official of a customs post)²⁶⁵ in service of C. Antonius Rufus, both a *praefectus vehiculorum* (an official overseeing the *cursus publicus*, the state courier service) and a *conductor publici portorii* (customs leaseholder),²⁶⁶ set up a sanctuary at his own expense

²⁶³ Šime Ljubić, "Rimski nadpisi otkriti tečajem god. 1891 u Hrvatskoj, sačuvani u nar. arkeolog. muzeju" [Roman inscriptions discovered during the 1891 in Croatia, preserved in the national archaeological museum], *VHAD* 1 (1892): 1-4.

²⁶⁴ Josip Brunšmid conducted archaeological survey of the site in 1898, and recognized what he thought was the foundation of the southern wall of the *mithraeum*. He further noticed that the site was previously dug over "not in a rational way," and his endeavors yielded no results. Brunšmid made note of several fragments of various vessels found scattered around the surface of the excavated area: the shattered bottom of a lamp without a seal and a few fragments of large wine *amphorae*, together with some fragments of long narrow bricks, presumably used for the floor of the building. See Brunšmid, "Arheološke bilješke iz Dalmacije i Panonije IV" [Archaeological notes from Dalmatia and Pannonia IV], *VAMZ* 5/1 (1901): 189-190. There were no excavations on the site ever since. Glavičić assumes an open-air sanctuary (*sub divo*) set up around an artificial altar or a larger rock, or, alternatively, hidden among the rocks, Glavičić, "Natpisi," 69; idem, "Mithräen sub divo in den Dörfern Vratnik und Prozor bei Otočac (Arupium)," in *Ptuj im römischen Reich: Mithraskult und seine Zeit. Internationales Symposium, Ptuj, 11.-15. Oktober 1999*, *Archaeologia Poetoviensis* 2, ed. Mojca Vomer Gojković (Ptuj: Pokrajinski muzej Ptuj, 2001): 223.

²⁶⁵ *Servus vilicus* was initially a slave appointed as property manager, with extensive duties of both administrative and supervisory nature. However, numerous epigraphic monuments inform us that *vilici* were also employed as administrators within the imperial customs (*vilici publici portorii*), tax (*vilicus stationis vectigalis*), post and road (*vilici vehiculorum*) offices in the provinces. Therefore, Fortunatus was not a property manager, as, for example, claimed by Selem and Vilogorac Brčić, *ROMIC* 1, 75, but he was a slave appointed as a customs administrator. On the role(s) of *vilicus* in Dalmatia see Mirjana Sanader, "Vilicus – prilog poznavanju djelatnosti upravitelja imanja i državnog namještenika" [Vilicus – a contribution to the knowledge of the activities of the manager of the property and the state employee], *Opvscvla archaeologica* 19 (1995): 97-109.

²⁶⁶ Initially, *conductores* were appointed as tax collectors in individual customs districts. Emperor Antoninus Pius reorganized the Illyrian customs administration and replaced the system of indirect tax collection by individual tenants with the direct collection of customs duties administered by the state, i.e., imperial *conductores*. However, although *conductores* were primarily tax collector, some scholars have recently suggested that they might have been engaged with the management of resource-extraction like, e.g., *conductores* from *Apulum* (Dacia) who were involved in exploitation and trade of salt, see Csaba Szabó, "The Cult of *Mithras* in *Apulum*: Communities and

(cat. no. 1, fig. 3.8, 3.9). Both Fortunatus and C. Antonius Rufus are mentioned on a votive inscription from *Atrans* (Trojane, Noricum), a customs post on the border between Pannonia Superior and Noricum, where Rufus is attested alone on one more inscription.²⁶⁷ Moreover, C. Antonius Rufus is a well-known name from several other inscriptions from various customs districts of the *publicum portorii Illyrici*.²⁶⁸

Most inscriptions mentioning Rufus - altogether five - are from Mithraeum I (mid-second century AD) from *Poetovio* (present-day Ptuj, Pannonia Superior).²⁶⁹ Besides the customs post, *Poetovio* was the administrative center of the entire *publicum portorii Illirici*.²⁷⁰ Rufus is further mentioned in one inscription from *Aquileia* (Venetia et Histria, Regio X), Camporosso (*Teurnia*, Noricum, dedicated to Mithras), and *Aquincum*/Albertirsa? (Pannonia Inferior).²⁷¹

After an almost fifteen-year-long career as *conductor*, C. Antonius Rufus was appointed as *procurator publici portorii* at the beginning of 170s AD.²⁷² According to general opinion, Rufus belonged to the second generation of *portorium*'s staff and held the lease at the same time as *conductores* Q. Sabinius Veranus and T. Iulius Saturninus.²⁷³

Individuals,” in *Culti e religiosità nelle province danubiane. Atti del II Convegno Internazionale Ferrara 20-22 Novembre 2013*, ed. Livio Zerbini (Bologna: I Libri di Emil, 2015): 407-422.

²⁶⁷ CIL III, 05117, ILJug 0380, HD 060189; CIL III 5122.

²⁶⁸ On C. Antonius Rufus' inscriptions see Per Beskow, “The Portorium and the Mysteries of Mithras,” *JMS* III/1-2 (1980): 4-6; Claudio Zaccaria, “La dedica a Mitra di un *vilicus* del *publicum portorii Illyrici* rinvenuta a Camporosso in Valcanale,” in *Carinthia Romana und die Römische Welt. Festschrift für Gernot Piccottini zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Friedrich Wilhelm Leitner (Klagenfurt: Verlag des Geschichtsvereines für Kärnten, 2001): 207-217; Ioan Piso, “Die Inschrift von Albertirsa,” in *Studia Epigraphica in memoriam Géza Alföldy*, ed. Werner Eck, Bence Fehér, Péter Kovács (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 2013): 275-284.

²⁶⁹ CIL III 14354³⁰/HD 013628; CIL III 14354²⁶/HD 017399; CIL III 14354²⁹/HD 068243; CIL III 14354³³/HD 068777; CIL III 14354³⁴/HD 068778; Beskow, “The Portorium,” 4-6. Some have even suggested that Rufus might have originated from *Poetovio*, however, this remains hypothetical, see Marjeta Šašel Kos, *The Roman Inscriptions in the National Museum of Slovenia. Lapidarij Narodnega muzeja Slovenije* (Ljubljana: Narodni muzej, 1997): 314.

²⁷⁰ The Illyrian *portorium* covered the entire Danubian region, which included provinces Dalmatia, Raetia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dacia, and Moesia. On the role of *Poetovio* see Božidar Slapšak, “Poetovio as a Supra-Regional Center,” in *Ptuj im römischen Reich*, 11-19; Marjeta Šašel Kos, “Poetovio before the Marcomannic Wars: from Legionary Camp to Colonia Ulpia,” in *Trajan und Seine Städte. Colloquium Cluj-Napoca*, 29. September – 2. Oktober 2013, ed. Ioan Piso and Rada Varga (Cluj-Napoca: Mega Verlag, 2014): 139-165.

²⁷¹ CIL V 820; AE 2001 1576; CIL III 10605a/HD 020088.

²⁷² The inscription from *Atrans* (CIL III 05117) informs us that Rufus held a position of *procurator Augusti*, otherwise documented on the two inscriptions from *Poetovio* (CIL III 14354³³/HD 068777 and CIL III 14354³⁴/HD 068778), and on an inscription from *Aquincum*/Albertirsa? (CIL III 10605a/HD 020088) as well. For the exact years of Rufus' offices see Zaccaria, “La dedica,” 214-215; Gerhard Winkler, *Die Reichsbeamten von Noricum und ihr Personal bis zum Ende der römischen Herrschaft* (Wien: VÖAW, 1969): 151-152.

²⁷³ No inscription so far proves a connection between all three *conductores*. The earlier reading of the inscription from *Ad Mediam* (Baile Herculane/Herkulesbad, Dacia, CIL III 1568/HD 046381) on which Rufus and Saturninus were supposedly documented together has been corrected, and it appears it mentions only Saturninus, see Piso, “Die Inschrift,” 280. However, the designation *conductor t(ertiae) p(artis)*, which is attested for all three tenants, makes their simultaneity very likely. The question of whether they formed a *societas* or whether they each leased a third of the duty independently of one another remains an open question. They were succeeded in 161 AD by the three brothers *Iulii*. For the discussion see Zaccaria, “La dedica,” 215; Bernd Steidl, “Neues zu den Inschriften aus dem Mithraeum von Mühlthal am Inn. *Pons Aeni*, *Ad Enum* und die *statio Enensis* des *publicum portorium Illyrici*,” *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter* 73 (2008): 75.

Saturninus appears in the second inscription from Vratnik, which was set up by Faustus, a *servus vilicus* in his service (cat. no. 2, fig. 3.10-3.15). The inscription further informs us that Saturninus was simultaneously *conductor* and, like Rufus, a *praefectus vehiculorum*.²⁷⁴

Based on the epigraphic evidence, Saturninus was a *conductor* from 146 - 166 AD, and, of all *conductores*, he seems to be attested on the greatest number of inscriptions.²⁷⁵

The fact that a slave named Hermes had the sanctuary built at his own expense, or that another slave named Faustus made a dedication (inside the same *mithraeum*?) is not surprising. These customs officials were not mere slaves - they belonged to the uppermost stratum of the servile class, working as semi-public officials, and were prolific dedicants of monuments.²⁷⁶ *Portorium* offered an opportunity to the slave administrators to accumulate certain wealth and there was a possibility of social advancements as well.²⁷⁷

The personnel of the *portorium* was highly mobile as well, and their important role in the spread of the cult of Mithras has long been recognized.²⁷⁸ In the case of Vratnik, it was the social networks of the *portorium* that enabled close contacts and movement of personnel between *Poetovio* and Vratnik, ultimately resulting in the spread of the Mithras cult in the latter area.²⁷⁹

C. Antonius Rufus, as mentioned earlier, is known from several inscriptions from Mithraeum I in *Poetovio*, while T. Iulius Saturninus might have been recorded in another inscription from

²⁷⁴ It seems that Saturninus started his career as *apparitor* (an official of lower rank), after which he simultaneously held the positions of *conductor* and *praefectus vehiculorum*, followed by equestrian administrative career as *procurator* during the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, see Ioan Carol Opris, Alexandru Ratiu, "Roman Customs Station from Capidava. *Statio* for *publicum portorii Illyrici* in the 2nd century AD and a Hypothetical Model for Interactions with *Barbaricum* in the 4th century AD," in *Orbis Romanus and Barbaricum. The Barbarians around the Province of Dacia and Their Relations with the Roman Empire*, ed. Vitalie Barca (Cluj-Napoca: Mega Publishing House, 2016): 91.

²⁷⁵ Ioan Piso, Vasile Moga, "Un bureau du *publicum portorium Illyrici* a Apulum," *Acta Musei Napocensis* 35/1 (1998): 108, note 8. He is attested on five inscriptions from Dacia (*Dierna*, *Ad Mediam*, *Alburnus Maior*, *Apulum*, and *Partiscum*), six from Moesia Inferior (*Capidava*, *Montana*, *Oescus*, *Dimum*, *Nicopolis ad Istrum*, *Lemica*), three from Noricum (*Loncivm*, two from *Syblavio*), one from Gallia Belgica (*Augusta Treverorum*), one from Gallia Lugdunensis (*Lugdunum*), and one from Rome. For a full list with references, including a map see Opris, Ratiu, "Roman Customs," 89-109.

²⁷⁶ For example, besides a number of inscriptions that report on installation of stone sculpture in *mithraea*, we know of *contrascriptor* (accountant) Apollonides who restored a dilapidated *mithraeum* in Lamudum, *vilicus* Ision who had an entire *mithraeum* built at his own expense (Guberavac, Moesia Inferior), *vilicus* Telephorus from Camporosso who also probably had a *mithraeum* built at his own expense, and Fructus (slave of Q. Sabinus Veranus) who not only donated the furnishings but most probably built a *mithraeum* at *Pons Aeni*. For the references see Steidl, "Neues," 75, note 74.

²⁷⁷ Ibid, 14-15.

²⁷⁸ Beskow, "The Portorium," 1; cf. note 47.

²⁷⁹ On the importance of social networks for the spread of religious ideas see Anna Collar, *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire: The Spread of New Ideas* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2013); recently, the connection between the mobility of the military personnel and state official and the early appearance of deities like Mithras, Iuppiter Dolichenus, or Iuppiter Heliopolitanus on the Amber road connecting *Aquileia* and *Carnuntum* has been shown by Felix Teichner, "From Aquileia to Carnuntum: Geographical Mobility along the Amber Road," *Veleia* 30 (2013): 47-73.

the same *mithraeum*.²⁸⁰ The core of Mithraeum I (mid-second century AD) and II (end of second/beginning of third century AD) from *Poetovio* was formed by the slaves who worked for the *conductores* of the *portorium* and the cult appears to have been brought to *Poetovio* by the customs official via *Aquileia* as well.²⁸¹ With altogether four *mithraea* (appendix 1, no. 95-98), *Poetovio* can be regarded as a regional Mithraic hub, from where, together with the movement of its personnel, the cult spread as well.²⁸²

Although the role of *Poetovio* in the spread of the cult in northern Dalmatia has been already acknowledged in the scholarship, the questions of the transfer of religious knowledge related to the performance of ritual acts have not been tackled so far.²⁸³ Hermes and Faustus made dedications at about the same time, however, it is Hermes who can be attributed the primary role in the dissemination of the cult from *Poetovio* to northern Dalmatia. Hermes was the so-called “core member” who had a *mithraeum* built, after which Faustus set up his dedication, probably inside the same sanctuary.²⁸⁴ Both Hermes and Faustus came into contact with the cult through their colleagues in customs administration in *Poetovio*, where they were persuaded to join the cult and, finally, to invest in a new *mithraeum* in Vratnik.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁰ For C. Antonius Rufus see footnote 36; T. Iulius Saturninus is probably recorded on CIL III 4094/HD 066978, Beskow, “The Portorium,” 5; Petar Selem, *Les religions orientales dans la Pannonie Romaine. Partie en Yougoslavie* (Leiden: Brill, 1980): 105, no. 42.

²⁸¹ Seven out of ten recorded dedications in Mithraeum I explicitly belong to the members of the customs office: four *vicarii* (personal slave of *dispensator*, the cashier), one *contrascriptor* (an accountant), and one *scrutator* (inspector of travellers and goods). The Mithraeum II, erected some twenty meters from the first one, was mostly built by customs officials as well (probably established as a direct result of overcrowding of the first one), although we find two soldiers and even an *IIIvir Augustalis* among the remaining (probably civilian) dedicators. On the dedicants see Ernest Will, “Les fidèles de Mithra à Poetovio,” in *Adriatica prehistorica et antiqua. Zbornik radova posvećen Grgi Novaku*, ed. V. Miroslavljević, D. Rendić-Miočević, M. Suić (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu/Arheološki institut Filozofskog fakulteta Zagreb, 1970): 633-638; Blanka Misić, “Cognitive Theory and Religious Integration: The Case of the Poetovian Mithraea,” in *TRAC 2014: Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Reading 2014*, ed. T. Brindle et al. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2015): 35-36.

²⁸² On *mithraea* from *Poetovio* see Mojca Vomer Gojkovič, “Petovionski mitreji” [Poetovian mithraea], in *Ptuj im Römischen Reich*, 105-133; Ivan Žižek, “Tretji ptujski mitrej v luči materialne kulture” [Third Poetovian mithraeum in light of material culture], in *Ptuj im Römischen Reich*, 134-171; Ivan Tušek, “V. mitrej na Ptjuju” [V. mithraeum in Ptuj], in *Ptuj im Römischen Reich*, 191-215; Mojca Vomer Gojkovič, Bojan Djurić, Milan Lovenjak, *Prvi petovionski mitrej na Spodnji Hajdini* [First Poetovian mithraeum at Spodnja Hajdina], (Ptuj – Ormož: Pokrajinski muzej, 2011); Mojca Vomer Gojkovič, “Mithraea in Poetovio and the New Discoveries,” *Acta Ant. Hung.* 58 (2018): 263-273. For example, on the role of the Poetovian M. Valerius Maximianus in the spread of the cult see Reinhold Merkelbach, *Mithras* (Königstein/Ts.: Hain, 1984): 162-174; for the role of customs personnel from *Poetovio* in spreading of the cult in *Apulum* (Dacia) see Szabó, “The Cult of *Mithras*,” 407-422; Matthew McCarty, Mariana Egri and Aurel Ristoiu, “Connected Communities in Roman Mithraism: Regional Webs from the Apulum Mithraeum III Project (Dacia),” *Phoenix* 71 3/4 (2017): 370-392; Matthew McCarty, Mariana Egri and Aurel Rustoiu, “The Archaeology of Ancient Cult: From Foundation Deposits to Religion in Roman Mithraism,” *JRA* 32 (2019): 279-312.

²⁸³ The importance of this question was recently brought up by McCarty, Egri and Rustoiu, “The Archaeology,” 282-283.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 308.

²⁸⁵ They can be called *colporteurs*, that is, traveling carriers of the cult, see Richard Gordon, “Who Worshipped Mithras?,” *JRA* 7 (1994): 463. Gordon further envisaged the model of contact-conversion, according to which the

Although no other finds survive from the presumed *mithraeum* at Vratnik which could help understand the type of rituals performed by the local Mithraic community, Faustus' altar can provide insight into the transmission of some aspects of the religious knowledge. The sides of the altar feature two sacrificial utensils: a *patera* on the left side and an *urceus* on the right side (fig. 3.11-3.14). Selem and Vilogorac Brčić have linked these two objects with the important role of water for the cult.²⁸⁶ However, these vessels had slightly different connotations. The short sides of Roman altars are traditionally decorated with a *patera* and an *urceus*, utensils that were usually associated with sacrificial rites.²⁸⁷ However, the altar from Vratnik has a flat top and was not used for sacrificial rites (fig. 3.15). Here, the sacrificial ritual is only alluded to through the representation of particular utensils used to perform it, thus functioning as an evocation of the ritual, allowing the observer to recognize and reconstitute its various parts through the symbolic representation (of, e.g., a sacrificial utensil).²⁸⁸ What particular Mithraic ritual could they allude to then?

Urceus and *patera* appear on many Mithraic votive altars.²⁸⁹ In particular, they are often found in connection with the torchbearers.²⁹⁰ The two bases of torchbearer's statues from Mitreo del Palazzo Imperiale in Ostia is an illustrative example (fig. 3.16-3.18). The statue bases initially served as votive altars dedicated to the two torchbearers, and were most probably placed inside the two niches in the middle of the side podia; later on, they were re-used as statue bases and installed on the stairs flanking the main altar with the tauroctony relief.²⁹¹ The fronts of these bases are decorated with engraved inscriptions and reliefs of Cautes and Cautopates, while their sides bear images of *patera* and *urceus*, together with the rest of the dedicatory inscriptions (fig. 3.16).

nucleus of the new congregation was formed by a small group of men, or an individual, who by moving to another place brought some knowledge of the cult as well, see Richard Gordon, "Institutionalized Religious Options: Mithraism," in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke (Malden: Blackwell, 2007): 400.

²⁸⁶ Selem, Vilogorac Brčić, *ROMIC I*, 76.

²⁸⁷ On visual representation of Roman sacrificial rituals see Jas Elsner, "Sacrifice in Late Roman Art," in *Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice. Ancient Victims, Modern Observers*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone, F. S. Naiden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012): 120-163; comparison with Mithraic reliefs in Valérie Huet, "Roman Sacrificial Reliefs in Rome, Italy, and Gaul: Reconstructing Archaeological Evidence?," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome. Supplementary Volumes. Ritual Matters: Material Remains and Ancient Religion* 13 (2017): 11-32.

²⁸⁸ On the different modes of watching a ritual in Roman religion see Valérie Huet, "Watching Rituals," in *A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World*, ed. Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015): 147; Elsner, "Sacrifice," 122-123.

²⁸⁹ For a list of monuments see Csaba Szabó, "Microregional Manifestation of a Private Cult. The Mithraic Community of Apulum," in *Angels, Demons and Representation of Afterlife within the Jewish, Pagan and Christian Imagery*, ed. Iulian Moga (Iasi: Ed. Universitatii, 2013): 54.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Raffaella Marchesini, "Il culto di Mitra ad Ostia nelle fonti epigrafiche. Un riesame di CIL, XIV, 58 e 59 del Mitreo del cd. Palazzo Imperiale," *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 79/2 (2013): 419-439.

This altar arrangement was certainly not random: even though the statue bases were re-used furnishings, they were carefully selected for their ultimate place in the main altar area. This is confirmed by the fact that for this occasion they were adorned with statues of Cautes and Cautopates. The symbolism of this altar arrangement is multiple: first, it was a space where actual rituals took place, including libations (for which *patera* and *urceus* were used). Second, the libations were performed in front of the tauroctony image, which represented the central sacrificial act, i.e. Mithras killing the bull.²⁹² In this way, both the sacrificial utensils (real and depicted) and the act of libation were equated with the scene of sacrificing the bull.²⁹³ Torchbearers are rarely absent from the cult reliefs - as Mithras' faithful companions they witness the act of the primal sacrifice, here both the actual one and the one depicted on the cult relief.

The link between the torchbearers and sacrificial utensils is further explained by their representation on the two reliefs – the only two representations of *urceus* being used in Mithraic ritual. A fragment of a relief from Tróia (Sextubal) from *Lusitania* (Hispania) (fig. 3.19), shows Cautopates attending the feast scene (Mithras and Sol reclining at the table). He is about to take the wine (symbolizing bull's blood) with an *urceus* from the snake-encircled krater, and pour it into the *rhyton* held in the left hand of each god; Cautes is on the opposite side, holding an offering with two loaves of bread (?).²⁹⁴

An analogous scene is found on the relief from *Lopodunum* (Ladenburg), Germania Superior, where a small figure (probably a Cautopates) holds an *urceus* above an altar, next to which a krater encircled by a snake is represented (fig. 3.20).²⁹⁵ Gordon correctly observes that, when it appears in the bull-killing scenes, the krater is a vessel not used for water but wine (representing the bull's blood).²⁹⁶ The association between the libation scene, the krater, and the sacrifice of the bull seems obvious here: Cautopates stands directly below Mithras who

²⁹² On the nature of Mithraic sacrifice in relation to the traditional Roman sacrifice see Francesca Prescendi, "Riflessioni e ipotesi sulla tauroctonia mitraica e il sacrificio romano," in *Religions orientales – culti misterici. Neue Perspektiven – nouvelles perspectives – prospettive nuove*, ed. Corinne Bonnet, Jörg Rüpke, Paolo Scarpi (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006): 113-122; Valérie Huet, "Reliefs mithriaques et reliefs romains 'traditionnels': essai de confrontation," in *Les religions orientales dans le monde grec et romain. Cent ans après Cumont (1906-2006): bilan historique et historiographique*, ed. C. Bonnet, V. Pirenne-Delforge, D. Praet (Brussels/Rome: Institut Historique Belge de Rome, 2009): 233-256.

²⁹³ Elsner suggested that both an image of an instrument used for the sacrifice, as well as the visual experience of libation was equally equated with the scene of killing, Elsner, "Sacrifice," 122-123.

²⁹⁴ Richard Gordon, "Viewing Mithraic Art: the Altar from Burginatum (Kalkar), Germania Inferior," *ARYS* 1 (1998): 254; Jaime Alvar, *El culto de Mithra en Hispania* (Madrid: Editorial Dykinson, 2018): 124-126, 1.02.01.01.

²⁹⁵ Gordon, "Viewing," 254, footnote 100; Schwertheim, *Die Denkmäler*, 177-178, no. 138.

²⁹⁶ Gordon, "Viewing," 257.

sacrifices the bull, whose blood fills the krater and consequently the *urceus* held by the torchbearer, in an act of libation.

Thus, *patera* and *urceus* from the altar from Vratnik evoke the ritual experiences associated with the central sacrificial act (tauroctony) and with the shared meal (banquet) as well, celebrating the consequences of the sacrifice of the bull, both to be commemorated at each gathering of a Mithraic community.²⁹⁷ Therefore, it can be assumed that Faustus was acquainted with the sacred narrative and the rituals associated with it, and could have been the individual responsible for the transmission of this knowledge to the newly-founded local community.²⁹⁸

3.2.2.2 Arupium (Prozor)

Arupium was an important Iapodean settlement that developed on the hillocks of Veliki and Mali Vital, a dual hill-fort settlement that dominated the surrounding area (fig. 3.3).²⁹⁹ The territory of the Illyrian communities of Iapodes roughly included the entire valley of the Gacka river, and besides Lika and Gorski kotar in Croatia, it extended to the middle flow of the river Una in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bela Krajina in Slovenia (fig. 3.21).³⁰⁰ The Iapodes cultivated identical material and spiritual culture, recognizable in the manner of the construction of fortified hill-fort settlements (*gradine*), their burial customs (characteristic

²⁹⁷ While there is no evidence of killing of the bull in *mithraea*, the communal meals were at the centre of cultic meetings and were the most important ritual celebrated in them. For further insights and references see Anders Hultgård, "Remarques sur les repas cultuels dans le mithriacisme," in *Le Repas de Dieu. Das Mahl Gottes. 4. Symposium Strasbourg, Tübingen, Upsal. Strasbourg 11-15 septembre 2002*, ed. Christian Grappe (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004): 299-324; Anja Klöckner, "Mithras und das Mahl der Männer: Götterbilder, Ritual und sakraler Raum in einem römischen 'Mysterienkult,'" in *Kultur der Antike: Transdisziplinäres Arbeiten in den Altertumswissenschaften*, ed. Ulrike Egelhaaf-Gaiser, Dennis Pausch, Meike Rühl (Berlin: Verlag Antike, 2011): 200-225; Lucinda Dirven, "The Mithraeum as *tableau vivant*. A Preliminary Study of Ritual Performance and Emotional Involvement in Ancient Mystery Cults," *Religion in the Roman Empire* 1/1 (2015): 20-50. Already Elsner argued how the Mithraic ritual imitated the Mithraic cult image (contrary to Roman religious art, which imitated Roman sacrificial practices), and how, in the case of the cult of Mithras, religious practice became a mimesis of the cult icon, Jas Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer. The Transformation of Art From Pagan World to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 212.

²⁹⁸ Recently, it has been shown that founder(s) of a *mithraeum*, i.e. person/s paying for the construction and/or furnishings were not necessarily in a possession of ritual expertise required to perform, for example, foundational rites or any other rites not learned by experience and repetition (rituals that were performed on special occasions, i.e. single-time events, or distinctly local rituals). In this sense, rites associated with *patera* and *urceus* belonged to the frequently performed rituals, the knowledge of which would have been familiar to Faustus. See McCarty, Egri and Rustoiu, "The Archaeology," 304-306.

²⁹⁹ Ivan Šarić, "Topološka struktura japodskog egzistencijalnog prostora u Gackom polju" [Topological structure of Ipaodean existential space in Gacko polje], in *Arheološka problematika zapadne Bosne. Zbornik I*, ed. Blagoje Govedarica (Sarajevo: Arheološko društvo Bosne i Hercegovine, 1983): 103-109; idem, "Arupijski prostorni koncept u arealu Gackoga polja/The area of Arupium in Gacko valley," *VAMZ* 3/37 (2004): 43-46.

³⁰⁰ Although they are traditionally referred to as a tribe, there is no evidence that they ever formed a state. Therefore, it is more correct to speak of a cluster of related communities, rather than a single tribe. For the discussion see Boris Olujić, *Povijest Japoda* [History of Iapodes], (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2007): 41-49.

stone urns), and beliefs.³⁰¹ Besides hill-fort settlements (most notably, on Veliki and Mali Vital), the cattle-raising nomadic communities of Iapodes lived in the numerous caves found in the karst surroundings as well.³⁰²

There is scant information about the Roman settlement in *Arupium*, which stretched in the valley between the Čovići hamlet and the northern foot of the Vital hill-fort.³⁰³ The settlement was granted the status of a Roman *municipium* during the Flavian dynasty (69-96 AD).³⁰⁴ Archaeological excavations have revealed different parts of the Roman settlement, including remains of residential architecture, an architectural complex of possibly representative purpose, parts of the street pavements and the sewage system, as well as a smaller necropolis.³⁰⁵ The Roman quarry was discovered on the north-eastern slopes of Veliki Vital hill, not far from where the remains of the ancient settlement were unearthed.³⁰⁶

Besides the well-attested cult of Mithras and a previously-mentioned rock-cut altar dedicated to IOM, only two other finds illuminate the religious life of the Roman *Arupium*. A votive altar with a carved figure of Hercules has been found on the Vital hill, whose veneration may be connected to the presence of stonecutters in the area.³⁰⁷ Another votive inscription dedicated to Iuppiter Dolichenus was discovered in Prozor.³⁰⁸ The monuments of the cult of Mithras, therefore, present a valuable source of the cult practices and beliefs present in the Gacka valley during the Roman times.

³⁰¹ On Iapodean hill-forts see Klara Buršić-Matijašić, “Gradine Istre i gradine Like – arheološko-kulturološki fenomen krša/Hill-forts of Istria and Lika – Archaeological and Cultural Phenomenon of Karst,” in *Archaeological Research in Lika*, Izdanja HAD-a 23, ed. Tatjana Kolak (Zagreb: Kratis, 2008): 127-134; particularly on hill-forts on Veliki and Mali Vital see Ružica Drechsler-Bižić, “Nekropola prethistorijskih Japoda u Prozoru kod Otočca” [Necropolis of prehistoric Iapodes in Prozor near Otočac], *VAMZ* 6-7/1 (1972): 1-46.

³⁰² Boris Olujić, Hrvoje Cvitanović, “Speleoarheološka istraživanja na Vitlu (Prozor kod Otočca)” [Speleoarchaeological research at Vitlo (Prozor near Otočac)], in *Povijest u kršu*, ed. Boris Olujić (Zagreb: FF Press, 2008): 149-160.

³⁰³ Patsch, *Die Lika*, 76-78.

³⁰⁴ Julijan Medini, “Neki aspekti razvoja antičkih religija na području Japoda” [Some aspects of the development of ancient religions on the Iapodean territory], in *Arheološka problematika Like*, 91; Glavičić, “Mithrān *sub divo*,” 223.

³⁰⁵ Ante Rendić-Miočević, “Istraživanja antičkog naselja kod Prozora u Lici (Arupium)” [Research of the ancient settlement at Prozor in Lika (Arupium)], *VAMZ* 3/9 (1975): 169-171; idem, “Istraživanja antičkog naselja u Prozoru u Lici (Arupium) u 1978. i 1979. godini” [Research of the ancient settlement at Prozor in Lika (Arupium) in 1978 and 1979], *VAMZ* 3/7-8 (1980): 241-243.

³⁰⁶ Ante Rendić-Miočević, “Prozor, Otočac, Lika – antički kamenolom” [Prozor, Otočac, Lika – ancient quarry], *Arheološki pregled* 21 (1980): 105-106, T.LXII; Ivan Šarić, “Antički kamenolom u Prozoru (tehnologija vađenja kamena)” [Ancient quarry in Prozor (technology of stone extraction)], in *Materijali, tehnike i strukture predantičkog i antičkog graditeljstva na istočnom jadranskom prostoru. Znanstveni kolokvij održan u Zadru od 6. - 8. XII. 1976.*, ed. Mate Suić, Marin Zaninović (Zagreb: Odjel za arheologiju, Centar za povijesne znanosti, 1980): 115-123.

³⁰⁷ CIL III 3012; HD 018081; Medini even suggested a sanctuary dedicated to Hercules on top of the hill, Medini, “Neki aspekti,” 86; Sanader, “O kultu Herkula,” 98, no. 10; Rendić-Miočević, “Monuments,” 406.

³⁰⁸ CIL III 1044; HD 053426; Brunšmid, “Kameni spomenici,” 110, no. 229; Medini, “Neki aspekti,” 86.

3.2.2.2.1 Oltari/Kraljev stolac

The conspicuous rock formation bearing the rock-cut tauroctony relief is the sole preserved part of the *mithraeum* at Oltari/Kraljev stolac in Prozor (*Arupium*) (cat. no. 3, 4; fig. 3.22-3.34). The natural setting of the *mithraeum* incorporating the features of the rocky landscape and the absence of the actual architecture made some scholars conclude how space must have functioned as an open-air sanctuary.³⁰⁹ However, fragments of roof tiles discovered on the site suggest that some sort of construction must have existed. Furthermore, the evidence indicating the observance of the communal religious activities, most notably shared meals (fragments of glass and ceramic kitchen-ware), means that various spaces for its preparation and consumption were required, as well as a storage room(s), which obviously could not have taken place *sub divo*.

The *mithraeum* probably had an abutting construction made of perishable materials (wood?), which, as a result of the continuous devastation of the space by amateurish diggings and its constant exposure to the weathering, left no traces today. Based on her recent excavations, Tatjana Kolak suggests a simple roof structure carried by four wooden pillars.³¹⁰ Further insight into how the site might have originally appeared is provided by a drawing made by Carl Patsch (fig. 3.40).³¹¹ Patsch described the site as an enclosed space determined by high ridges, of which the two longer ones face each other and create a spacious room in between.³¹²

The rocks create an impression of a defined space, and they were probably partially used for the construction of the *mithraeum* itself, further abutted by a wooden construction creating the walls in between the rocks, topped by the roof covered with tiles. The tauroctony relief is carved on the inner face of the eastern ridge, directly opposite the little passage between the two rocks on the western side, where we can assume the entrance to the *cella*. Thus created *cella* was of average size, measuring less than ten meters in length and width. Although today it is hard to recognize all the features from Patsch's drawing, it reveals that the site was suitable for the *mithraeum*, and was carefully chosen for this purpose.

As mentioned earlier, ceramic and glass fragments of the table- and kitchenware found at the site indicate that the communal meal was practiced in the *mithraeum*. The wooden podia were

³⁰⁹ Glavičić, "Mithraen *sub divo*," 223. Recently Rendić-Miočević went further and suggested the *mithraeum* was neither a simple open-air sanctuary, nor a proper temple, but should be defined by a word *aedes*. He does not explain what he means by these three separate categories nor what they mean on the example of Mithraic architecture, but seems to suggest further in the text that the *mithraeum* had some parts artificially walled and roofed, see Rendić-Miočević, "Monuments," 409. On the issue of *sub-divo mithraea* see previous chapter.

³¹⁰ Tatjana Kolak, "Oltari – Kraljev stolac," *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* 9 (2012): 556.

³¹¹ Patsch, *Die Lika*, 82-83, image 31.

³¹² Patsch, *Die Lika*, 82-83.

probably installed inside the *cella* for this purpose. Furthermore, the various natural stone indentions could have been used for additional side spaces, used to prepare and store the food and drinks consumed at the communal meal, as well as to keep the various equipment required for the rituals.³¹³ These service rooms were usually constructed less solidly than the *cella*, either of wood or half-timbering and generally at the contemporary ground-level in contrast to the sunken *cella*.³¹⁴ As a result, traces of these light structures often disappeared with time.

One such service space could have been installed in front of the entrance to the *cella* as a slightly concave curve can be observed on the outer face of the ridge where the possible entrance to the *cella* was. The curve can be followed to the adjoining rock on the right side, and this area could have formed an entrance area, called a vestibule or a *pronaos*.³¹⁵

It is hard to determine the period when the *mithraeum* was used, and its dating rests on a few small finds. Usually, the seven bronze coins (from the period between the mid-third to the mid-fourth century AD) were used to establish the sanctuary's foundation and abandonment date.³¹⁶ However, without firm stratigraphic context, these coins cannot be used for determining the start and end date of a *mithraeum*; rather, they might point to a performance of a particular rite – coin deposition. Recently, coin finds from several *mithraea* have been carefully recorded, indicating that during the second half of the third and throughout the fourth centuries AD a votive deposition of coins was practiced among the worshippers.³¹⁷ The spatial distribution of

³¹³ A list of different purposes of the various service-rooms associated with *mithraea* in Andreas Schatzmann, "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer funktionellen Topographie von Mithrasheiligtümern," in *Roman Mithraism*, 12-14.

³¹⁴ Hensen, "*Templa et spelaea*," 390.

³¹⁵ Recent excavations have shown how these vestibules were mostly multi-purpose rooms (storage spaces, kitchens, etc.). For the different purposes of these spaces see, e.g., *mithraea* in Wiesloch, Riegel and Mundelsheim, which even had two separate vestibules. All three discussed with further literature in Andreas Hensen, "Tempel des Mithras in Südwestdeutschland. Ein Überblick," in *Vorträge des 18. Niederbayerischen Archäologentages*, ed. Karl Schmotz (Rahden/Westf.: Leidorf, 2000): 93-110; another well-preserved example is a vestibule of the *mithraeum* in Septeuil (Gaul), used as a kitchen, see Marie-Agnès Gaidon-Bunuel, "Les mithraea de Septeuil et de Bordeaux," *Revue du Nord* 73 (1991): 49-58; idem, "Honorer Mithra en mangeant: la cuisine du mithraeum de Septeuil (La Féerie)," in *Archéologie du sacrifice animal en Gaule romaine. Rituels et pratiques alimentaires*, ed. Pierre Caillat (Montagnac: Mergoïl, 2008): 255-266.

³¹⁶ Patsch, *Die Lika*, 84; Brunšmid, "Arheološke bilješke," 111-112; Zotović, *Mitraizam*, 67, no. 86; Miletić, *Mitraizam*, 150, no. 2; Krznarić, "Mitrički spomenici," 36; Lipovac Vrkljan, *Posebnosti tipologije*, 63; Glavičić, "Mithraen," 224; ibid, *The Cults*, 98; Rendić Miočević, *Monuments*, 411; Selem, Vilogorac Brčić, *ROMIC I*, 70-71, no. 4. Recently, Walsh notes that the coins were found deposited in a small niche situated in front of/around the central relief. Pavelić mentioned no such detail, and neither did Brunšmid, who gave a detailed account of Pavelić's finds, as well as Patsch. The exact findspots of these coins were unfortunately not recorded, as was the case with the majority of other small finds. See Walsh, *The cult of Mithras*, 33, 112, E.1.

³¹⁷ François Wiblé, "Les petits objets du mithraeum de Martigny/Forum Claudii Vallensium," in *Roman Mithraism*, 140-143. Recently, Walsh has argued how this new form of ritual practice indicates opening of the cult to a broader group of casual worshippers engaging in a depositional practice, however, his conclusions rest on problematic chronological correlations, see Walsh, *The Cult of Mithras*, 32-33. Similarly to Walsh, Sauer has suggested a similar openness of the cult in the fourth century AD based on coin finds, see Eberhard Sauer, *The Archaeology of Religious Hatred in the Roman and Early Medieval World* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2003): 143-156; idem, "Not Just a Small Change – Coins in Mithraea," in *Roman Mithraism*, 327-353; justified criticism

these coins within the *mithraea* shows their highest concentration around the cult image, although they are found scattered both inside and outside *mithraea*.³¹⁸ Even though it is not possible to make any definite conclusions about the ritual role of the coins found at Oltari, it seems possible that this form of votive practice was observed by local worshippers.

While coins might not help date the *mithraeum*, several other objects found at the site could help establish its relative chronology. A *Firmalampe* with a workshop stamp of *Vibianvs* was found in the course of the latest archaeological survey of the *mithraeum* (fig. 3.34, 3.35).³¹⁹ The workshop of master *Vibianvs* is of northern Italian provenance, and these lamps (type Loeschcke X/Ivanyi XVII) are broadly dated from the early first to the beginning of the third centuries AD.³²⁰ Besides Oltari, another lamp bearing the stamp of *Vibianvs* was found in the nearby *Senia*, dated to the second century AD.³²¹ Furthermore, a *dupondius*, probably of Antoninus Pius, is reported to have been found during the same archaeological survey at Oltari (fig. 3.36). Thus, it seems the *mithraeum* was in use approximately at the same time when the two altars from Vratnik are dated, i.e., in the second half of the second century AD.

Interestingly, *Vibianus*' stamp also appears on several lamps found in *Poetovio*, where, besides imports from north-italic workshops, they were locally produced as well.³²² In the case of *Poetovio* and northern Dalmatia, as shown earlier in the text, a direct link can be established between the spread of the cult of Mithras and individuals involved in trade, i.e., personnel of the *portorium*. Although it is not known where exactly the lamp found at Oltari was produced, it could have been imported from *Poetovio*, probably via *Senia* (where *Vibianus*' lamp is also attested). That the trade links existed between the two regions is confirmed by one more object found at Oltari *mithraeum*.

in Richard Gordon, "The End of Mithraism in the Northwest Provinces. Review of Sauer 1996," *JRA* 12/2 (1999): 682-688.

³¹⁸ Wibl , "Les petits," 140-143; Sauer, "Not Just a Small Change," 330.

³¹⁹ Kolak.

³²⁰ Branka Viki -Belan i , "Anti ke svjetiljke u Arheolo kom muzeju u Zagrebu" [Roman lamps in the Archaeological museum in Zagreb], *VAMZ* 9/1 (1975): 54.

³²¹ Bla enka Ljubovi , *Senj u prapovijesti, antici i ranom srednjem vijeku: katalog arheolo ke zbirke* [Senj in prehistory, antiquity and early Middle Ages: a catalog of the archaeological collection], (Senj: Gradski muzej, 2000): 174.

³²² For *Vibianus*' lamps in *Poetovio* see Otto Fischbach, "R mische Lampen aus Poetovio des steierm rkischen Landesmuseums 'Joanneum,'" *Mittheilungen des Historischen Vereines f r Steiermark* 44 (1896): 26, no. 196; Mihovil Abrami , *Poetovio. F hrer durch die Denkm ler der r mischen Stadt* (Wien:  sterreichischen Staatsdruckerei, 1925): 88; Mojca Vomer Gojkovi , "Oil Lamps from the Territory of Eastern Slovenia: Poetovio," in *Lychnological Acts 2. Acts of the 2nd International Congress on Ancient and Middle Age Lighting Devices (Zalau-Cluj Napoca, 13th – 18th May 2006). Trade and Local Production of Lamps from the Prehistory until the Middle Age*, ed. Cristian-Aurel Roman, Nicolae Gudea (Cluj-Napoca, Editura Mega, 2008): 230; for the local production of lamps in Poetovio see Marjana Tomani  Jevremov, "Obrtni ke delavnice Petovine. Werkst tten in Poetovio," in *Rimljani: steklo, glina, kamen/Die R mer: Glas, Ton, Stein*, ed. Irena Lazar (Celje: Pokrajinski muzej, 2004): 94-99; Janka Isteni , "Petoviona – sredi ce izdelave in distribucije kerami kih izdelkov. Poetovio – Zsentrum der Herstellung keramischer Erzeugnisse," in *Rimljani*, 108-111.

A fragment of a cult vessel decorated with a lizard appliqué was found in 2012 excavations (fig. 3.37).³²³ Rather uncommon for Mithraic iconography, the lizard is shown only on few monuments: on the tauroctony relief from Rome, where he creeps out of a grotto below the bust of Sol; on the circular marble relief from Salona with a highly unusual sequence of aquatic animals; and he was reported to have been shown on a vase from Stockstadt (Germania Superior, today lost).³²⁴

This type of vessel decoration belongs to the well-known group of vessels usually decorated with snakes (Schlangengefäß), often interpreted as cult vessels used to mix the wine for the cult-meal.³²⁵ They can have different forms and, besides snakes, other decorative elements can appear as well (frogs, lizards, tortoises, scorpions, etc.).³²⁶ Although they are frequently found in connection with the cult of Mithras, they are nevertheless used in various cults like that of Sabazios, Liber, Aesculap, or even Silvanus.³²⁷

Many snake-kraters appear on tauroctony reliefs (as a lion-krater-snake triad) or, more importantly, on reliefs showing the banquet scene, on which snake-kraters are associated with

³²³ Kolak, "Oltari – Kraljev stolac," 556; Tatjana Kolak, "O gušteru na kultnoj posudi i mitreju I na Oltarima u Prozoru" [About the lizard on a cult vessel and a *mithraeum* I on Oltari in Prozor], *Lička revija* 13 (2014): 19-33.

³²⁴ Relief from Rome: CIMRM 435; on the unusual iconography of the relief from Salona see Nirvana Silnović, "The Iconography of the Mithraic Tondo from Salona Revisited," in *Tradition and Transformation. Dissent and Consent in the Mediterranean. Proceedings of the 3rd CEMS International Graduate Conference*, ed. Mihail Mitrea (Kiel: Solivagus Verlag, 2016): 56-75; Stockstadt vase in Schwertheim, *Die Denkmäler*, 150, no. 117h. Lizard also appears on the fragments of a crater from a sanctuary in the eastern part of the *canabae* of Carnuntum (variously identified as *mithraeum* or sanctuary of Heliopolitanian gods), shown among the grapes and vine scrolls, as well as on a fragment of another vessel, see Verena Gassner, "Schlangengefäße aus Carnuntum," in *Akten des 14. Internationalen Limeskongresses 1986 in Carnuntum*, ed. H. Vetters and M. Kandler (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990): 651-656; idem, "Snake-Decorated Vessels from the *Canabae* of Carnuntum – evidence for another *Mithraeum*?,", in *Roman Mithraism*, 229-238.

³²⁵ A good introduction to the typology of Schlangengefäß in Debora Schmid, *Die römischen Schlangentöpfe aus Augst und Kaiseraugst* (Augst: Amt für Museen und Archäologie des Kantons Basel-Landschaft, 1991); Gassner, "Schlangengefäße," Gassner, "Snake-Decorated Vessels," Artur Kaczor, "Iconography or Function? 'Snake Technique' Pottery in Mithraic Cult," in *The Archaeology of Mithraism*, 191-194.

³²⁶ Schmid, *Die römischen Schlangentöpfe*, 9; Péter Vámos, "Schlangengefäße in Aquincum," in *Ex officina. Studia in honorem Dénes Gabler*, ed. Szivia Bíró (Gyor: Marsella, 2009): 538.

³²⁷ Since the lizard appears rarely in Mithraic iconography, Tatjana Kolak links the fragment from Oltari with the cult of Sabazios and suggests the possibility of the joint veneration of the two gods at the sanctuary at Oltari. However, the cult of Sabazios is rarely attested in Dalmatia, and there is no other evidence of its cult in the surrounding area. The lizard-fragment from Oltari is found at the place undoubtedly associated with the cult of Mithras, and therefore there is no other reason to attribute it to another deity. See Kolak, "O gušteru," 29-30. On the cult of Sabazios in Dalmatia see Julijan Medini, "Sabazijev kult u rimskoj provinciji Dalmaciji" [Cult of Sabazios in Roman province of Dalmatia], *VAHD* 74 (1980): 67-86; Selem, Inga Vilogorac Brčić, *Romic I*, 162-167. For the connection with other cults see Gassner, "Schlangengefäße," 654; Joanna Bird, "Frogs from the Walbrook: A Cult Pot and its Attribution," in *Interpreting Roman London: Papers in Memory of Hugh Chapman*, ed. J. Bird, M. Hassall, H. Sheldon (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1996): 119-127; Gassner, "Snake-Decorated Vessels," 233; Angelina Raičković, Saša Redžić, Bebina Milovanović, "Posude sa apliciranim zmijama iz Zanatskog centra" [Vessels decorated with snakes from Zanatski centar], *Arheologija i prirodne nauke* 2 (2006): 69-76; Vámos, "Schlangengefäße," 537-560; Izida Berger-Pavić, Susanne Stökl, "Neue Schlangengefäße aus der Zivilstadt Carnuntum. Ein Beitrag zur Problematik der Schlangengefäße und ihrer Verwendung im Kult/Hauskult," *Carnuntum Jahrbuch* (2017): 97-125.

bull's blood, i.e., the killing of the bull (see earlier in the text).³²⁸ Since there were no attempts to re-enact the sacrifice of the bull in *mithraea*, the only other mythical event that worshippers could imitate that would involve drinking wine/blood from the snake-vessel is the post-sacrificial meal celebrated by Mithras and Sol, commemorated in form of a shared meal, which, as discussed earlier, was practiced at Oltari.³²⁹

The fragment from Oltari remains the only example of snake-vessel associated with the cult of Mithras in Dalmatia.³³⁰ Otherwise, the snake-vessels are attested on only a few sites in the province: fragments of snake-vessels are known from the *augustaeum* in *Narona* (associated with the cult of Liber), from *Burnum* legionary camp (Ivoševci near Kistanje, unknown cult), and, most interestingly, fragments of snake-vessel were found in a Roman pottery workshop of *Sextus Metilius Maximus* in the nearby *Ad turres* (Crikvenica, fig. 3.38).³³¹

The possible cult character of the fragments of the snake-vessel from Crikvenica, however, cannot be confirmed: it is not possible to guess the final form of the vessel based on its preserved fragments.³³² They were found together with the kitchen- and tableware associated with the pottery workshop of the above-mentioned *Sextus Metilius Maximus*, active from the first century BC to the end of the second century AD.³³³ Besides the various table- and cooking-

³²⁸ Gordon, "Viewing Mithraic Art," 257; idem, "From East to West: Staging Religious Experience in the Mithraic Temple," in *Entangled Worlds*, 428.

³²⁹ On the banqueting scene, Mithras and Sol are usually depicted holding *rhytos* in their hands, filled with the wine/bull's blood. It has been also suggested that these vessels were used in initiation rituals, see Julio Muñoz García-Vaso, "Los vasos litúrgicos mitraicos," *Espacio, tiempo y forma. Serie II, Historia Antigua* 4 (1991): 165-166.

³³⁰ Busuladžić has recently published two fragments of snake-decorated cult-vessels from Japra (near Bosanski Novi, Bosnia and Hercegovina), and has attributed them to the cult of Mithras. However, without the firm context this attribution remains doubtful, see Adnan Busuladžić, "Nalaz ulomaka keramičkih posuda sa prikazom zmije iz Japre kod Bosanskog Novog/Find of the Ceramic Vessel fragments with Snake Representation from Japra near Bosanski Novi," *Godišnjak* 39 (2010): 125-134.

³³¹ For *Narona* see Miroslava Topić, "Posude za svakodnevnu uporabu grublje izrade, amfore, terakote i kultne posude is augusteuma Narone/Coarse Ware, Amphorae, Terracota and Cult Vessels from the Augusteum at *Narona*," *VAHD* 96 (2003): 315-319; idem, "Keramika iz augusteuma *Narona*/The Pottery of the Augusteum at *Narona*," *VAHD* 97 (2004): 71, 86, no.66; materials from *Burnum* remain unpublished, information obtained in Nina Radinović, "Antičko kultno posuđe na istočnoj obali Jadrana" [Ancient cult vessels on eastern Adriatic coast], MA thesis (Zadar: University of Zadar, 2016): 61, note 251; Crikvenica: Radinović, "Antičko kultno posuđe," 63-64.

³³² Ibid, 63.

³³³ Goranka Lipovac Vrkljan, Bartul Šiljeg, "Crikvenica – *Ad turres*, rezultati četvrte godine sustavnih arheoloških istraživanja rimske keramičarske radionice na lokalitetu 'Igralište'/Crikvenica – *Ad turres*, Results of the Fourth Year of Systematic Archaeological Excavations of a Roman Pottery Workshop at the 'Igralište' Site," *Ann. Inst. Archaeol.* 6 (2010): 70-75; Goranka Lipovac Vrkljan, Ivana Ožanić Roguljić, "Distribucija crikveničke keramike kao prilog poznavanju rimskog gospodarstva" [Distribution of Crikvenica pottery as a contribution to the knowledge of the Roman economy], *Senjski zbornik* 40 (2013): 255-270; Goranka Lipovac Vrkljan et al., "Antički proizvodni keramičarski kompleks u Crikvenici – zaključna istraživanja 2015. godine/Roman Pottery Production Complex in Crikvenica – Conclusive Research in 2015," *Ann. Inst. Archaeol.* 12 (2016): 144-151.

ware, the workshop specialized in storage and transport containers (*amphorae*), construction materials (*tegulae*, *imbrices*, etc.), and loom weights – not in the production of cult vessels.³³⁴ Although wares from *Maximus*'s workshop are attested on multiple localities in the surrounding area, particularly in *Senia* as one of its distribution centers, the fragment from Oltari does not seem to be its product.³³⁵

However, Mithraic cult vessels decorated with snakes are found in *Poetovio*. In Mithraeum III (in use from the second to the first decades of fourth century AD) and Mithraeum V (third-fourth century AD) in *Poetovio*, several fragments of Schlangengefäßen were found, crafted in the local pottery workshops (fig. 3.39).³³⁶ Although none of the snake-vessels from *Poetovio* are of the comparable color to the fragment from Oltari, the typical and most common products of the local workshops included dark-grey ceramics as well.³³⁷ The majority of the cooking and tableware found at Oltari were probably locally produced, special items, like cult vessels, could have been imported, as attested elsewhere in *mithraea* throughout the Empire.

Although it is not possible to attribute the lizard-fragment from Oltari to a workshop from *Poetovio* with absolute certainty, it is not unlikely either. The activity of its *portorium* personnel is attested in the area, and the vessel, if its *Poetovian* provenance is accepted, could indicate that, besides the cult itself, certain aspects of its ritual(s) were imported as well.

Finally, it remains to discuss the cult relief from Oltari *mithraeum*. Since the relief shares several important features with the rock-cut tauroctony from the nearby *mithraeum* at Rajanov grič, they are discussed together in the following section.

3.2.2.2.2 Rajanov grič

Besides the rock bearing the tauroctony relief, no traces of *mithraeum*'s architecture have been preserved (cat. no. 5, 6; fig. 3.42-3.45). However, Patsch described the site at the beginning of the twentieth century, when some of the surrounding features were still present (fig. 3.41,

³³⁴ Lipovac Vrkljan, Šiljeg, "Crikvenica," 71; Lipovac Vrkljan et al., "Antički," 141; Ivana Ožanić Roguljić, "Osvrt na tekstilnu proizvodnju u rimskodobnoj Dalmaciji" [A review of the textile production in Roman Dalmatia], *Izdanja Hrvatskog arheološkog društva* 33 (2019): 39-45.

³³⁵ Different production techniques were applied: while Oltari fragment is of dark grey-brownish color and has perforated structure, the snake's body on the reddish-yellow (typical color of the pottery from this workshop) fragment from Crikvenica is emulated by small irregular incisions.

³³⁶ Jana Horvat, Marjana Tomanič-Jevremov, "Kultne posode iz Petovione" [Cult vessels from Ptuj], in *Ptuj im römischen Reich*, 359-366; Brane Lamut, "Posodi z mitraično kultno simboliko iz Petovione. Zwei Gefäße mit Symbolen des Mithraskultes aus Poetovio," in *Rimljani: steklo, glina, kamen/Die Römer: Glas, Ton, Stein*, ed. Irena Lazar (Celje: Pokrajinski muzej, 2004): 112-115. On local pottery workshops see Tomanič Jevremov, "Obrtniške delavnice Petovine" 94-99; Istenič, "Petoviona," 108-111.

³³⁷ Mojca Vomer Gojkovič, "Ceramics and Glass in the Ptuj Provincial Museum," in *Glass and Ceramics Conservation 2007: Interim Meeting of the ICOM_CC Working Group*, ed. Lisa Pilosi (Nova Gorica: Goriški muzej Kromberk, 2007): 246.

3.42).³³⁸ According to his description, the space of the *mithraeum* was formed by several rows of high ridges, forming narrow gorges. These ridges created a semi-enclosed space, which, similarly to the *mithraeum* at Oltari, were abutted using a light construction made of perishable materials (probably wood), that would have disappeared over time.³³⁹ Although the site offers fewer clues about the possible rituals that took place here and is even more silent about its possible dating, several features link Rajanov grič to Oltari, which, consequently, could help establish its relative chronology.

The first peculiarity concerns their cult-relief composition. The relief at Oltari uses the naturally concave surface of the rock, conveniently used for the tauroctony composition, reminiscent of a triptych (fig. 3.25).³⁴⁰ Contrary to the curved surface of the relief at Oltari, the tauroctony at Rajanov grič uses the flat surface of the rock for its tauroctony relief (fig. 3.46). As it appears, both tauroctonies had a semi-circular frame on the upper side of the central niche, evidently evoking the cave vault.

Similar to Oltari, where the central niche is dominated by the figures of the two main protagonists of the tauroctony scene, the cult image at Rajanov grič is even more explicit in its intention to focus on the sacrificial act. Here the elaborated side wings from Oltari are missing, compressed to the miniature images of the torchbearers flanking the main niche on its upper left and right sides (fig. 3.49, 3.50).

The analogy for this compositional design can be observed on several monuments from *Poetovio* and its surroundings (*Ager Poetoviensis*) (fig. 3.51). On the votive relief from the Mithraeum III from *Poetovio* (in use from the second to the first decades of fourth century AD) similar triptych-like composition has been applied (fig. 3.52).³⁴¹ The central rectangular field is dominated by the figure of Mithras killing the bull, while other figures were placed on its side wings (the right side one is missing).

Another similar tripartite votive relief was found in Ruše (Noricum, Slovenia), a small town located in the river Drava valley, between the slopes of Pohorje massif (fig. 3.53).³⁴² The *mithraeum* seems to have been located on a prominent position on the riverbank, at the place where the Roman road likely crossed the river, in the vicinity of the deep gorge carved by the

³³⁸ Patsch, *Die Lika*, 84.

³³⁹ Zotović identified Rajanov grič as an open-air *mithraeum*, Zotović, *Mitraizam*, 61, no. 73; similar argument also by Glavičič, “Mithraen *sub divo*,” 224. In his later publication the author seems to have corrected his opinion, idem, *The Cults*, 99-100. The issue of *sub-divo mithraea* is discussed in the previous chapter.

³⁴⁰ Beck, “The Rock-Cut,” 366.

³⁴¹ Vomer Gojkovič, *Tretji poetovionski mitrej*, 27. the relief is listed here as an altar plate, although its dimensions (0.53 x 0.81 x 0.13 m) are too modest for such use. See LUPA 22302.

³⁴² Lazar, *Rimljani*, 178, no. 12; LUPA 6111; HD066869, with the dating 171-300AD.

Ruše stream.³⁴³ In the central rectangular field of the relief, Mithras is depicted killing the bull inside a rocky ambiance of the cave. On the side wings with triangular upper frames, torchbearers are shown standing on the pedestals, with Cautopates on the left, and Cautes on the right side.

The reliefs from Ptuj and Ruše are comparable to the tauroctonies from Oltari and Rajanov grič in their tripartite division; however, their central field is rectangular, while the tauroctonies from Oltari and Rajanov grič have a semicircular upper frame, in clear imitation of the cave-vault. In the *mithraeum* in Ruše four other small votive reliefs have been found with a similar upper frame; although they are badly worn out, and they lack the tripartite division like the above-mentioned reliefs, the semicircular upper frame is present on all of them (fig. 3.54).³⁴⁴ Particularly on one of the reliefs (upper left), torchbearers have been placed on the very edge of the central scene, directly below the curve of the semicircle of the cave vault; moreover, they seem to be standing on high pedestals, thus observing the central scene from an elevated position, similarly to Rajanov grič.

Perhaps the closest analogy to the reliefs from Oltari and Rajanov grič is a similarly rock-cut tauroctony (1.65 x 1.40 m) from Rožanec, near Črnomelj (Pannonia Superior, Slovenia) (fig. 3.55-3.58).³⁴⁵ The site lies closest to Dalmatia from the previously discussed sites at *ager Poetoviensis*. The *mithraeum* is hidden inside a karst oval sinkhole called Judovje, located on the southern slopes of the Gorjanci mountain (fig. 3.55). The surrounding area is characterized by a forestry karst landscape and swampy meadows, with a Vodice spring flowing nearby.³⁴⁶ The *mithraeum* was installed inside a Roman quarry, either while the quarry was still in use or shortly after it had been abandoned.³⁴⁷ The inscription carved above the tauroctony relief is dated ca. 131 AD – 170 AD. Besides the similar natural settings, the *mithraea* in Rožanec and Gacka valley have similarly designed cult-reliefs as well. The large relief at Rožanec consists of the central shallow niche with a semicircular upper frame, dominated by the figure of Mithras killing the bull (fig. 3.57). The central niche is flanked by two lower side wings, also

³⁴³ The *mithraeum* has been excavated in the nineteenth century, and unfortunately no documentation about the activity has been preserved. Today, the location where the *mithraeum* once stood has been flooded by the artificial lake, see Viktor Skrabar, “Ruški mitrej,” *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje* 17 (1922): 15-20; Andrej Preložnik, Aleksandra Nestorović, “Between Metropolis and Wilderness: the Topography of Mithraea in Ager Poetoviensis,” *Acta Ant. Hung.* 58 (2018): 284-285.

³⁴⁴ LUPA 8020, LUPA 8021; LUPA 8022; LUPA 8023.

³⁴⁵ Lovenjak, *Inscriptiones*, 286-287, no. 148; Selem, *Les religions*, 78-80, no. 5; LUPA 9207; CIL III, 03933; HD 068496; CIMRM 1483.

³⁴⁶ Josip Korošec, “Ocena stanja dediščine mitraizma v slovenskem prostoru” [Assessment of the state of Mithraic heritage in Slovenia], in *Ptuj im römischen Reich*, 373.

³⁴⁷ Ibid, 373.

topped with the semicircular frames, while at the bottom there are remains of a ledge similar to Oltari and Rajanov grič.

Each wing is divided into two vertical sections. On the left-wing, Cautopates stands with his lowered torch, while the rayed bust of Sol is in the above section. Cautes, with his raised torch, occupies the analogous position on the right-wing, while the bust of Luna with a crescent is in the upper section. The disproportionally large figure of the dog has been moved outside its regular place on the main scene, reaching towards the bull's wound in front of the figure of Cautes. Thus, a similar tendency towards displacing the subsidiary figures (torchbearers in both Oltari and Rajanov grič, and a dog at Rožanec) from the main scene can be observed in all three rock-cut tauroctonies. In this sense, the composition at Rajanov grič follows the tripartite design of the reliefs from *Ager Poetoviensis*, and, particularly from Rožanec.

The rock-birth scene is a further link between Oltari and Rajanov grič. What is special about the large rock-birth scene at Rajanov grič, placed on the lower left-hand side, is the impression that Mithras is emerging from the natural rock on which the scene was carved, which can probably explain why the scene was placed at this exact position (fig. 3.48). On the tauroctony from Oltari, the lower part of the rock-birth scene has been preserved on the left wing (fig. 3.29).³⁴⁸

The choice of this particular scene was not accidental. Mithras' rock-birth appears on a group of dedications (*Natura dei, petrae genetrici/Genetrici, or genitura dei*) characteristic for the Danubian provinces; more precisely, the area of circulation of these monuments corresponds to the operational area of the *publicum portorium Illyrici*.³⁴⁹ Since the earliest examples are attested in Mithraeum I in *Poetovio* (during the reign of Antoninus Pius, 138-161 AD), István Tóth argued that this particular practice, that favored dedications to Mithras' rock-birth, was created by the *portorium* slave community at *Poetovio*.³⁵⁰ The sanctuary at *Poetovio* thus

³⁴⁸ As part of the main scene, rock-birth is represented in the upper-right corner on the following reliefs: on a marble votive relief from Alcsút (today in Budapest, Pannonia Inferior, LUPA 13180); on a votive relief from Vindobona (Vienna, Pannonia Superior, LUPA 6389); on a relief from Stixneusiedl (Pannonia Superior, LUPA 8901/HD071893/CIL III 04542); and, on the marble relief from Rome (CIMRM 556). On a bottom section of a tauroctony relief from Kral-Marko (Moesia Superior, CIMRM 2245); on a lower part of the relief fragment from Besigheim (Germania, CIMRM 1301); as a subsidiary scene on the front side of a double-sided relief from Dieburg (Germania Superior, CIMRM 1247/LUPA 24880/HD042503); as one of the side scenes on a relief from Heidelberg/Neuenheim (Germania Superior, CIMRM 1283/LUPA 26499); also a side scene on a relief from Mithraeum I and III from Nida/Hedderheim (Germania Superior, LUPA 7109, LUPA 7181).

³⁴⁹ This group of dedications also include inscriptions to *Fonti perenni/Fonti dei, Transitus/Transitus dei*, see István Tóth, "Das lokale System der mithraischen Personifikationen im Gebiet von Poetovio," *Arheološki vestnik* 28 (1977): 385-392. Recently, Mithraeum III from Apulum (Dacia) has been added to the same group of localities, see McCarty, Egri, Rustoiu, "Connected Communities," 379-381; idem, "The Archaeology," 308-311.

³⁵⁰ Tóth, "Das lokale," 386.

became the hub through which these dedicatory practices spread to other customs sites as the personnel moved from there to other stations.³⁵¹

Besides on dedications, rock-birth appears as a motive on reliefs as well: a sculptural representation of rock-birth accompanies the dedication to *Natura dei* from the Mithraeum I in *Poetovio* (fig. 3.59), mentioning *vilicus* C. Antonius Rufus (the same *conductor* from Vratnik),³⁵² and another sculpture of rock-birth once stood on top of the votive altar dedicated to *Petrae genetrix* in the same *mithraeum* (fig. 3.60).³⁵³ Another rock-birth statuette accompanies the dedication to the nascent god (*nascentem deum*) from the Mithraeum II (fig. 3.61),³⁵⁴ and, finally, the already-mentioned votive relief from Mithraeum III depicts Mithras' rock-birth assisted by the two torchbearers.³⁵⁵

Furthermore, a votive relief depicting rock-birth was found in Camporosso (Teurnia, *Noricum*), in the same *mithraeum* in which our *conductor* from Vratnik, C. Antonius Rufus, is attested in one of the dedicatory inscriptions (fig. 3.62).³⁵⁶ Moreover, Tóth argued that the monuments bearing a dedication to Mithras' rock-birth were usually installed at the end of the sanctuary, to the left of the bull-killing scene, which corresponds to their placement at Oltari and Rajanov grič.³⁵⁷

Furthermore, on the tauroctony relief from Sinac (cat. no. 8, fig. 3.63) Cautes is shown standing on a rock, a well-known allusion to the rock from which Mithras was born.³⁵⁸ Besides accompanying Mithras in the bull-killing scene, the two torchbearers are sometimes also present at god's birth.³⁵⁹ The closest examples are the pair of votive altars from Mithraeum I from *Poetoevio*, dedicated to Cautes and Cautopates respectively (fig. 3.64, 3.65).³⁶⁰ One altar shows a relief bust of a young Cautes emerging from acanthus leaves on its front (fig. 3.64), while the other one shows his counterpart Cautopates. On either side of the Cautopates' altar,

³⁵¹ The dedications to Mithras' rock-birth are otherwise attested at Tridentum (today Trento, Raetia), Mogontiacum (Mainz, Germania Superior), Carnuntum (Petronell, Pannonia Superior), Aquincum (Pannonia Inferior), and Salona. (Dalmatia), see Tóth, "Das lokale," 386.

³⁵² CIL III 14354/29; HD 068243; LUPA 9326; Vomer Gojković, Djurić, Lovenjak, *Prvi petovionski mitrej*, 31.

³⁵³ CIL III. 14354/30; HD 013628; LUPA 9327.

³⁵⁴ CIL III 15184/5; HD 068803; LUPA 9333.

³⁵⁵ AE 1936 00054; HD 02491; LUPA 9346.

³⁵⁶ LUPA 23347; Paolo Casari, "Il culto di Mitra nella *Statio Bilachiniensis* in Norico," in *Culti e religiosità nelle province danubiane. Atti del II Convegno Internazionale Ferrara 20-22 Novembre 2013*, ed. Livio Zerbini (Bologna: I Libri di Emil, 2015): 209-225, also see earlier in the text.

³⁵⁷ Tóth, "Das lokale," 389.

³⁵⁸ On the rock-birth of Mithras see Clauss, Mithras, 65-72; Ilaria Neri, "Mithra petrogenito. Origine iconografica e aspetti culturali della nascita della pietra," *Ostraka* IX/1 (2000): 227-245.

³⁵⁹ Survey of relief and statues showing torchbearers attending Mithras' birth in Marten J. Vermaseren, "The Miraculous Birth of Mithras," *Mnemosyne* 4 (1951): 285-301; generally on the iconography see John R. Hinnells, "The Iconography of Cautes and Cautopates I: The Data," *JMS* 1/1 (1976): 36-67.

³⁶⁰ CIL III 14354³¹/HD 068775/LUPA 9328; CIL III 14354³²/HD 068776/LUPA 9329; Vomer Gojković, Djurić, Lovenjak, *Prvi petovionski mitrej*, 44-47.

there is a relief bust of Mithras emerging from a pile of rocks (rock-birth) (fig. 3.65).³⁶¹ Furthermore, the two torchbearers attend the Mithras' birth on a votive altar from Mithraeum III from Poetovio (fig. 3.66), where they assist the god by pulling him out of the rocks by his arms.³⁶² Similarly, torchbearers assist Mithras' birth on relief from *Virunum* (Zollfeld, *Noricum*) (fig. 3.67).³⁶³ The previously-mentioned torchbearer's statues from the Mitreo del Palazzo Imperiale in Ostia (Regio III) show Cautes and Cutopates standing against a pile of rocks (fig. 3.16), and possibly another statue from Bodobrica/Boppard shows Cautes standing against the rock.³⁶⁴

Thus, monuments from the Gacka valley can be added to the same group of Mithraic dedications/reliefs, which shared a particular common "idiom." Members of the *portorium* learned about this particular manner of honoring Mithras at *Poetovio* and spread it through the *portorium*'s network. According to Tóth, these monuments appear within a limited time frame, from the mid-second century AD until the mid-third century AD.³⁶⁵ This particular time frame is in accordance with the presence of the cult in the Gacka valley as well.

A further peculiarity of the tauroctonies from Oltari and Rajanov grič concerns the Mithras' dress (fig. 3.68). Beck has already stressed a striking similarity in the treatment of the tunic between Oltari and Rajanov grič.³⁶⁶ On both tauroctonies, Mithras is wearing almost a bell-shaped tunic, falling in two flared layers above his knees, with vertical lines marking the pleats of the fabric. Despite their obvious similarity, there are slight differences in the rendering of Mithras' tunic at Oltari and Rajanov grič. The tunic at Oltari appears more voluminous, with heavy pleated layers falling down the Mithras' body. Contrary to Oltari, Mithras' tunic at Rajanov grič is flatter, with simple incised lines marking the separate layers of the tunic. The weight of folds cannot be sensed here, and the impression is of a more linear, schematized approach.

³⁶¹ Similarly, the stele from Mithraeum III from Nida (Heddernheim), Germania Superior, is decorated on its front side with the relief representation of Mithras' rock-birth. On the left side of the stele a standing figure of Cautes is shown, while on the right side his counterpart Cautopates stands, CIL XIII 7369/HD 041976/LUPA 16956.

³⁶² AE 1936, 00054/HD024291/LUPA 9346; Selem, *Les religions*, 100-101, no. 33; Mojca Vomer Gojkovič, *Tretji petovionski mitrej* (Ptuj: Pokrajinski muzej Ptuj - Ormož, 2014): 26. Similarly, they attend the god's birth on the bottom side-scene on the tauroctony from Nersae (Nesce, Italia), shown holding their hands against their faces, CIMRM 650; they also attend the rock-birth scene on a marble statue found in Rome (preserved in Dublin, CIMRM 590), shown flanking the birth-scene, holding their torches; on a votive relief found in Aequinoctium (Schwadorf, Austria), Pannonia Superior, Cautes and Cautopates look at the rock-birth scene and are shown holding their torches (CIL III 4543/HD071892/LUPA 8905).

³⁶³ Gernot Piccottini, *Mithrastempel in Virunum* (Klagenfurt: Verlag des Geschichtsvereins für Kärnten, 1994): 12, no. 1, image 5; LUPA 5861.

³⁶⁴ Alternatively interpreted as a tree, see Csaba Szabó, "Notes on a New Cautes Statue from Apulum (Jud. Alba/RO)," *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 45/2 (2015): 242.

³⁶⁵ Tóth, "Das lokale," 390.

³⁶⁶ Beck, "The Rock-Cut," 367.

Tunics at Oltari and Rajanov grič have a distinctive appearance, that can be ascribed to local artistic traditions. Similar bell-shaped dresses with emphasized pleats can be observed on Japodean monuments from the area. The Japodean art, whose influence was already mentioned in the previous chapter in connection with the Bindus-Neptunus sanctuary, is characterized by simplified, geometrical forms, rendered by shallow incisions of vertical and horizontal lines, similar to the treatment of Mithras' dress at Oltari and Rajanov grič.³⁶⁷

The schematized, stiff figures engraved on the locally produced Japodean stone urns (produced from sixth/fifth centuries BC to the second/third centuries AD) are reminiscent of Mithras' figures at Oltari, and especially Rajanov grič (fig. 3.69, 3.70).³⁶⁸ The slender, elongated Mithras' limbs at Oltari, and the even more pronounced linearity and geometrization of Mithras' figure and his dress at Rajanov grič reveal that both tauroctonies are a work of local craftsmen, familiar with local artistic traditions.³⁶⁹

The tauroctony relief from the nearby Sinac (fig. 3.63) belongs to the same local artistic tradition, visible on the pronounced linear rendering of Mithras' tunic, v-folds on Mithras', Sol's, and Cautes' chest (similar v-folds also on the relief from Rožanec!), as well as in the way raven's wing or wheat on bull's tail has been represented. The stiff, schematized figures and especially the simplified facial traits of Sol speak in favor of the similar artistic background of all three tauroctonies from the Gacka valley.

Based on the remarkable resemblance of Mithras' dress on tauroctonies from Oltari and Rajanov grič, Beck even suggested that they were executed by the same artist.³⁷⁰ However, despite the imminent proximity of the two monuments, and their obvious compositional and stylistic similarities, the tauroctonies have been executed by different hands: the rendering of volume and figures at Oltari lies in contrast to the flat linearism of Rajanov grič. Both artists had similar templates at hand, and their artistic expression was rooted in the same local tradition; however, the two images have different characters.³⁷¹

³⁶⁷ Raunig, *Umjetnosti i religija prahistorijskih Japoda*, 20-21, 39.

³⁶⁸ On Japodean urns see Ivan Šarić, "Japodske urne u Lici" [Iapodean urns in Lika], *GZM* 3/9 (1975): 23-36; idem, "Kamene urne u Lici" [Stone urns in Lika], in *Arheološka problematika Like*, 57-74; Nenad Cambi, "Bilješka o japodskim urnama i sarkofazima" [A note on the Iapodean urns and sarcophagi], *Senjski zbornik* 30 (2003): 97-108.

³⁶⁹ Compare to the bell-shaped dress of Iapodean warriors depicted on urns, Sineva Kukoč, "Lik japodskog ratnika/Figure of a Iapodian Warrior," in *Archaeological Research in Lika*, Izdanja HAD-a 23, ed. Tatjana Kolak (Zagreb: Kratis, 2008): 185-216.

³⁷⁰ Beck, "The Rock-Cut," 367-368.

³⁷¹ Recently, Marlish Arnhold has shown how there was a high number of widely distributed production places of Mithraic reliefs and has argued for the general accessibility and availability of the iconographic, motivic, and compositional models for Mithraic reliefs in Germanic provinces. The iconographic and compositional similarities between the tauroctony reliefs from the Gacka valley and the reliefs from *ager Poetoviensis* and *Noricum* are further evidence that such circulation of Mithraic models existed. See Marlis Arnhold, "Imagining Mithras in

Based on the proximity of the two *mithraea* and the similarity of their cult reliefs, the two must have functioned approximately at the same time, although they were probably not built simultaneously.³⁷² However, it is difficult to determine their exact chronology, i.e., which one was built first. Judging by Patsch's drawings, both *mithraea* were rather small structures, probably not exceeding the average size of these buildings, measuring less than ten meters in length and width. The *cellae* of such small buildings could accommodate only a limited number of people, a maximum of ten to twelve worshippers at the time.³⁷³

It seems that it was important to preserve the small size of these communities. Instead of enlarging the existing buildings as the community grew, it appears it was more common to build a second temple, as indicated by several cases. The Mithraic *album* from *Virunum* (Noricum), a bronze plaque registering the names of the members of the cult dedicated in 182/83 AD, offers epigraphic evidence of this process: when the community became too large, reaching almost 100 members, a new community was formed, recorded on the fragment of the second album (dated to Severan period).³⁷⁴

Similarly, the Mithraeum II at *Poetovio* seems to have been established as a direct result of the overcrowding of the first one.³⁷⁵ After a previously mentioned Mithraeum II in Güglingen (beginning of the second century AD?, expanded in the mid-second century AD) became too small, after only a few decades a second temple (Mithraeum I) was erected a mere 130 m away, while the first sanctuary continued being in use.³⁷⁶ It also appears that at Nida/Hedderheim (Germania Superior) there were simultaneously three (some suggest even four) *mithraea* of similar size in use in the first half of the third century AD.³⁷⁷ The two *mithraea* in the *vicus* of

Light of Iconographic Standardization and Individual Accentuation," in *Seeing the God. Image, Space, Performance, and Vision in the Religion of the Roman Empire*, ed. Marlis Arnhold, Harry O. Meier, Jörg Rüpke (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018): 125-147.

³⁷² Contrary to Beck's claim they were founded as a pair, see Beck, "The Rock-Cut," 367-368.

³⁷³ There are various estimations on the average size of the Mithraic communities, based on the size of the podia. Bakker allocated 0.5 m. of space to each person, and concluded that Ostian *mithraea* could accommodate 35 people on average: the smallest 18, the largest 45, see Jan-Theo Bakker, *Living and Working with Gods. Studies of evidence for Private Religion and its Material Environment in Ostia (BC 100 – AD 500)*, (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1994): 114-115; same estimates by Gordon, "Institutionalized," 400; White calculated the maximum capacity of each of the Ostian *mithraea* as well, allowing for 15-23 participants in the smaller ones, and 28-53 in the larger ones, White, "The Changing Face," 441-443; according to Bjørnebye, the average size of the community in Rome must have been twenty members, see Bjørnebye, "Hic locus," 14.

³⁷⁴ Gernot Piccottini, *Mithrastempel in Virunum* (Klagenfurt: Verlag des Geschichtsvereines für Kärnten, 1994); Aleš Chalupa, "Mithraistické album z Viruna a jeho význam pro studium mithraismu" [Mithraic Album from Virunum and its importance for the study of Mithraism], *Religio* 14/2 (2006): 243-258.

³⁷⁵ Misić, "Cognitive Theory," 37.

³⁷⁶ Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes*, 122.

³⁷⁷ Huld-Zetsche, "Nida," 45.

the fort at Stockstadt am Main (Germania Superior) were probably also in use at the same time (second half of the second/mid-third century AD).³⁷⁸

One final feature shared by the *mithraea* at Oltari and Rajanov grič deserved further elaboration. As mentioned earlier in the text, both tauroctonies have sort of a ledge at their bottom, whose function has not been so far explained (fig. 3.25, 3.46)³⁷⁹ The rock-cut tauroctony at Rožanec seems to have had a similar feature (fig. 3. 57, 3.58), with a protruding ledge on its lower part, and the two sockets indicating that an altar fixture was attached below the cult-image.

Recently, Siemers-Klenner has argued how the design of the altar area is a distinguishing feature of each *mithraeum*.³⁸⁰ Specifically, semicircular niches of different depths that frame the cult image, like the ones at Oltari and Rajanov grič, are, according to Siemers-Klenner, a supraregional phenomenon and appear throughout the Roman Empire.³⁸¹

The closest analogies to our examples are from Ostia and Rome: here we can observe arrangements which include niches and the opulent altar systems with stairs and elaborate decoration (Mitreo di Casa di Diana, Ostia; *mithraeum* below S. Prisca, Rome, fig. 3.71, 3.73), with niches often made of bricks, covered with *stucco*, painted or decorated with reliefs.³⁸² Siemers-Klenner suggested a similar altar arrangement for the first phase of the Mithraeum II from Güglingen I, with a semicircular niche resting on two columns atop of a pedestal (notice the rock-birth scene on the lower-left pedestal!, fig. 3. 74).³⁸³

The niches designed in this way were intended to recreate the cave in which the sacrifice of the bull took place. Moreover, the lower ledge could have a practical role in the ritual: oil lamps or various ritual props could have been placed here, to be at hand at the right moment of the ritual. These could have been in form of shallow shelves, like at Oltari and Rajanov grič, although it is not excluded that a similar pedestal arrangement was installed below (similar to Güglingen or the one at Mitreo di Casa di Dana in Ostia), forming an altar table in front of the cult image. In the case of Oltari and Rajanov grič, these altar fixtures could have been made of wood as well, which would explain their disappearance with time.

³⁷⁸ Andreas Hensen, "Mithräum und Grab," *Saalburg Jahrbuch* 50 (2000): 91.

³⁷⁹ Ljubić described the concave rock at Oltari as a sacrificial altar, Ljubić, "Kameni spomenici," 19; Patsch made a short remark about the possible altar function of the small bench at Oltari, Patsch, "Die Lika," 83; Brunšmid suggested a similar sacrificial altar at Rajanov grič, Brunšmid "Arheološke bilješke," 112.

³⁸⁰ Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes*, 86-87.

³⁸¹ Ibid, 88.

³⁸² Ibid, 121, 391.

³⁸³ Ibid, 390.

Furthermore, besides providing a practical work surface, this type of altar arrangement functioned as a kind of a stage as well.³⁸⁴ This is particularly visible at the *mithraeum* at Dura Europos, where the altar area has a raised platform in front of the cult image, accessed by a small staircase installed in the middle (fig. 3.72). A similar staircase can be further observed at the Mitreo di Casa di Diana in Ostia, with perhaps the most theatrical example at the previously mentioned Mitreo del Palazzo Imperiale, where the entire altar area has been raised on the flight of steps. Similarly, the altar-staircase is present in the *mithraeum* in Jajce as well (see next section).

However, even the less extensive design of the altar areas at Oltari and Rajanov grič show the same tendency towards the theatricality: large figures of the two main protagonists of the dramatic tauroctony scene are placed inside semicircular niches, i.e. caves, appearing as if on a stage in front of the ritual participants.³⁸⁵ The natural rock surface contributed additionally to the creation of the cave ambiance.³⁸⁶

Finally, the previous analysis has shown that both sites were chosen carefully for their purpose. The natural rock settings of *mithraea* at Oltari and Rajanov grič certainly had meaning for local communities and were not a result of their poor and primitive background. Moreover, the setting and a particular visual idiom used for the two tauroctonies helped create a sense of distinct local identity.

Due to the scarcity of information about the Roman settlement of *Arupium*, it is not possible to discern the topographical context of the two *mithraea* with more precision. Recent research has shown how Mithraic temples were mostly integrated into the wider spatial settings of settlements, at the rather accessible areas, often directly off the streets, and their existence was generally known among the locals.³⁸⁷ Moreover, *mithraea* were mostly located at the edges of the settlements, sometimes even close to the cemeteries.³⁸⁸ Considering their natural settings, *mithraea* at Oltari and Rajanov grič were probably similarly located at the periphery of the Roman *Arupium*.

³⁸⁴ Ibid, 361.

³⁸⁵ As argued recently, ritual re-enactments of the sacred narrative seem to have been performed at each *mithraeum*, see Dirven, “The Mithraeum as *tableau vivant*,” 45-46.

³⁸⁶ Further details about the possible original coloring of the reliefs or installations like curtains that were used to reveal cult-images at certain dramatic points of the ritual should also be imagined.

³⁸⁷ John Scheid, “Der Mithraskult im römischen Polytheismus,” in *Ptuj im römischen Reich*, 102; Marlis Arnhold, “Sanctuaries and Urban Spatial Settings in Roman Imperial Ostia,” in *A Companion to the Archaeology*, 301-302; Hensen, “*Templa et spelaea*,” 400-401.

³⁸⁸ Hensen, “*Templa et spaleae*,” 400-401; Hensen, “Mithräum und grab;” Gordon, “The Roman Army,” 396-401.

3.2.3 Conclusions

The exceptional evidence of the cult of Mithras in the Gacka valley, attested on two votive altars from Vratnik, rock-temples with rock-tauroctonies from Oltari and Rajanov grič, another inscription from Podum (cat. no. 7), as well as on the tauroctony relief from Sinac, offers several important insights about the cult in this area.

The important role of *Poetovio* and the members of its *portorium* for the local spread of the cult was once again emphasized. Furthermore, Faustus' part in the possible transmission of religious knowledge was discussed. The presence of the rock-birth scene on tauroctonies from Oltari and Rajanov grič have reinforced the significance of *Poetovio* and have shown that both *mithraea* belong to a small number of sites that shared a particular mode of venerating Mithras. The characteristic tripartite design of the tauroctonies from Oltari and Rajanov grič also pointed to *ager Poetoviensis* (especially Rožanec) as their models, thus indicating the circulation of tauroctony templates between the two areas.

Besides the religious and artistic transfers between the two regions, *Vibianus'* lamp and a fragment of a lizard-decorated cult vessel show possible trade links between *Poetovio* and Gacka valley as well. Further analysis of the small finds from Oltari *mithraeum* has shown that communal meal was practiced by the local community, and there is a possibility that the practice of coin deposition was observed as well. Finally, the persistence of the local artistic idiom was detected in the rendering of Mithras' dress at the tauroctonies from Oltari, Rajanov grič, and Sinac. The role of the theatrical design of both altar settings in the rituals, as well as in the transfer of knowledge about the sacred narrative was noted too.

The evidence points to the second half of the second century as the approximate time when the cult spread in the Gacka valley. Unfortunately, it is hard to establish its end date, although the evidence of the coin deposition at Oltari might indicate that the cult was active until the mid-fourth century AD.

The conscious choice of natural settings for *mithraea* at Oltari and Rajanov grič means this type of setting had a particular appeal to the local communities and their everyday life. The hardships of people living in a difficult karst environment, where possibilities for growing crops were limited and there was a constant threat of the rain-floods. Recently excavated *villa rustica* at Lički Ribnik (first to the beginning of the third century AD) provides some important insights into the daily life of the inhabitants of Gacka valley.³⁸⁹ Archaeological analyses have confirmed cattle and sheep breeding as one of the primary economic activities in the region.

³⁸⁹ Tatjana Kolak, "Rimski lokalitet u Ribniku pored Gospića" [Roman locality at Ribnik near Gospić], *Zadarska smotra* 3 (2013): 162-169.

Moreover, the site has revealed the local production of crops suitable for the harsh climate of the region, which included cereals and legumes - millet and peas in particular.³⁹⁰

Since Mithras' sacrifice of the bull was a cosmogonic event, the creative sacrifice by which Mithras created nature and all living beings, the origins of a cereal-culture are, therefore, a direct consequence of this sacrifice.³⁹¹ The local inhabitant's concern with fertility and agrarian prosperity is perhaps most explicitly conveyed with the ear of wheat on the bull's tail on the reliefs from Oltari and Sinac. Moreover, the rock-birth scene expresses the idea of a fecund stone that gave birth to Mithras, as a further reference to the life-giving, creative force of nature. The message about the generative rock is even further reinforced by choosing the natural rock to carry the representations of the cosmogonic tauroctony and rock-birth at Oltari and Rajanov grič.

³⁹⁰ Ivana Ožanić Roguljić, "Crtice o prehrani u rimsko doba na prostoru Like" [Notes on diet in Roman times in Lika], *MemorabiLika* 2 (2019): 31-38; Kelly Reed et al., "Daily Food Consumption in a Rural Roman Villa: Excavations at Lički Ribnik, Croatia," *Interdisciplinaria Archaeologica* 10/1 (2019): 3-13.

³⁹¹ Gordon, "Cosmic Order," 118.

3.3 The Vrbas River Valley

The river Vrbas is a major river in the western part of Bosnia and Herzegovina that drains the central part of the Dinaric mountain massif. It is one of the larger tributaries of the river Sava, and about 235 kilometers long. The Vrbas appears from two springs at the southeastern slopes of Vranica mountain, near the town of Gornji Vakuf, at 1530 meters a. s. l., and it conflues into the Sava river near the town of Srbac. The Vrbas river basin is characterized by a mountain-hilly relief of the Dinaric mountain range. The area includes tectonic depressions (valleys) and scattered karst areas divided into smaller isolated massifs and mountains, dominated by the Manjača massif (1239 meters a. s. l.) in its central part.

The fast mountain river Vrbas made its way through mostly limestone bedrocks, flowing through Skopljanska valley, Jajce valley, Banja Luka valley, and the lower flow through Lijevče polje, intersected with several rapid falls. The valleys are connected with the relatively deep gorges (Vinačka gorge) and canyons (Tijesno and Podmilačje), thus forming a dramatic landscape. The average altitude of the Vrbas basin is about 690 meters a. s. l., with the highest point in the basin at about 2100 meters a. s. l. The dominant feature of the river Vrbas valley is the striking river canyon (fig. 3.75), stretching between the towns of Banja Luka and Jajce. The area is dotted with numerous waterfalls, cascades, steep rocks, and towering cliffs, springs, and caves.

The hydrographic network of the river Vrbas comprises several major tributaries and numerous streams, with extremely torrential regimes and a very short time of concentration of the flood wave.³⁹² The climate of the area ranges from moderate continental in its lower parts, to the sub-mountain and mountain climates in the higher zones. The average precipitation is 1050 mm per year.³⁹³ The area boasts rich and diverse forest and scrub vegetation, varying from the lowest parts of the river valley with permanent wetlands to the higher mountain areas.³⁹⁴ Together with geomorphological characteristics, the heavily forested environment of the river Vrbas leaves little possibility for developing settlements and building road communications. The present-day highway connecting the two cities (E661/M-16) follows the winding course of the Vrbas river canyon, indicating the difficult passability of the rough terrain. The steep

³⁹² Radislav Tošić et al., "Assessment of Torrential Flood Susceptibility Using GIS Matrix Method: Case Study – Vrbas River Basin (B&H)," *Carpathian Journal of Earth and Environmental Sciences* 13/2 (2018): 371.

³⁹³ Tošić et al., "Assessment," 371.

³⁹⁴ Ognjen Lukić and Vladimir Stupar, "Phytosociological Analysis of Forest Communities in the Vrbas River Canyon (Bosnia and Herzegovina)," source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339796400_Phytosociological_analysis_of_forest_communities_in_the_Vrbas_River_Canyon_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina, accessed July 26, 2021.

and narrow riverbank, the accumulation of silt from the hills, and the deposition of thick layers of tufa at some parts certainly contributed to the lack of suitable settlement places.³⁹⁵

One of the areas that allowed for settlement development is the territory around the city of Jajce and the river Pliva valley to the west.³⁹⁶ A gentle valley rich in water and fertile land is dominated by a small (33 kilometers long), travertine river that forms three natural lakes: Veliko Plivsko Lake, Small Plivsko Lake, and Okruglo Lake.³⁹⁷ The formation of numerous travertine barriers, typical for the karst rivers and springs, resulted in the appearance of low cascades (fig. 3.76).³⁹⁸ Contrary to the Vrbas, its tributary Pliva is slower and deeper. The karstic surroundings of mainly dolomite and limestone characterize the area.³⁹⁹

After springing in the Vitorog mountain (Šipovo municipality), the river Pliva meets with the river Vrbas in the Jajce city-center in form of a 22 meters high Pliva Waterfall, a natural phenomenon consisting of a travertine calcareous barrier (fig. 3.77, 3.78).⁴⁰⁰

3.3.1 Vrbas Valley and its Territory in the Roman Times

It seems that Jajce was the most important Roman settlement of the Vrbas valley. Jajce is situated in a naturally enclosed hollow, formed by mountains Vlašić and Karaula on the east, Manjača on the north, and Ravna gora on the southwest (fig. 3.79). It lies on an important river crossing, at the place where the only crossing over a deep Vrbas canyon is possible.⁴⁰¹ It commanded a geographically strategic position on the intersection of waterways and roads between the Adriatic coast (*Salona*) and the important Pannonian centers (most notably

³⁹⁵ Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 294.

³⁹⁶ Wilkes, *Dalmatia*, 273.

³⁹⁷ Ivo Bojanovski, *Dolabelin sistem cesta u rimskoj provinciji Dalmaciji* [Dolabella's road network in the Roman province of Dalmatia], (Sarajevo: ANUBiH, 1974): 109.

³⁹⁸ Emir Temimović, Dragan Glavaš, "The Pliva Lakes – Sustainable Management and Tourism Valorization," *Acta geographica Bosniae et Herzegovinae* 7 (2017): 44.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ Damir Čorko et al., "Repair of the Pliva River Waterfall at Jajce," in *Geotechnical Hazards*, ed. Božica Marić, Zvonimir Lisac and Antun Szavits-Nossan, 415-419. London: CRC Press, 1998. Unfortunately, due to the construction of the hydroelectric power station that has altered the natural water regime, and the progressive erosion of the travertine, the current position of the waterfall differs drastically from its original appearance, see Zoran Milašinović, Danijela Zovko and Ivana Lukić, "Sanacija korita i vodopada na rijeci Plivi u Jajcu" [Riverbed and waterfall improvement at the Pliva River in Jajce], *Građevinar* 62 (2018): 724; Čorko et al., "Repair."

⁴⁰¹ Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 292. Bojanovski believed that in Roman times there was a smaller fortress here, enabling the controlled river crossing, along with the observation post and a toll station, *Ibid*, 292, 296.

Servitium and further on with *Siscia* and *Sirmium*) and the Danubian provinces.⁴⁰² Another important nearby route connected *Salona* with *Argentaria*, a mining area rich in silver ore.⁴⁰³ Moreover, Jajce was geographically closely associated with the mining region in the Japra valley, rich in iron, lead, and copper ores, intensively exploited since the pre-Roman times.⁴⁰⁴ Especially the mines in the nearby Stari Majdan district, on Sinjakovo plateau (including the slopes of neighboring Lisina near Šipovo), and Mrkonjić Grad are famous for their iron-ore deposits.⁴⁰⁵

Today, the medieval hilltop fortress and its stone walls witness the famous medieval history of the city, once the capital of the Kingdom of Bosnia and the seat of the Bosnian kings (fig. 3.80). The medieval Jajce was built on top of the Roman settlement that once stood here, using its remains as a building material, as witnessed by the *spolia* found around the city. Due to its continuous settlement and the destruction caused by the water, not much was preserved of the Roman Jajce.⁴⁰⁶ It is difficult to assess the exact size of the Roman settlement – the only estimate provided by Đuro Basler suggests around thirty to fifty houses that stretched at the foot of the hill, encompassing the area between the *figlina*, *mithraeum*, and the late antique necropolis (north of Banjalučka kapija, northern medieval entrance to the city).⁴⁰⁷

However, several architectural remains and monuments of Roman provenance (mostly *spolia* found in the narrower city center) reveal the significance of the area and confirm the existence

⁴⁰² The exact route of the Roman road that passed through this territory has not been archaeologically confirmed, see Pašalić, *Antička naselja i komunikacije*, 1960, 22-23; Bojanovski, *Dolabelin sistem cesta*, 1974, 199-202; Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 296-297; for the recent discussion of the role of *Servitium* and its road network see Amra Šaćić Beća, “Rimske administrativne jedinice na pretpostavljenoj teritoriji panonskog naroda Osterijatâ: municipium Faustinianum and Servitium” [Roman administrative units on the presumed territory of the Pannonian community of the Osteriates: municipium Faustinianum and Servitium], *GZM* 54 (2017): 109-166; Salmedin Mesihović, “Prilozi antičkoj topografiji Bosne i Hercegovine - dva toponima sa šireg jajačkog područja” [Contribution to the ancient topography of Bosnia and Herzegovina – two toponyms from the wider Jajce area], *Godišnjak Bošnjačke kulturne zajednice 'Preporod'* 9 (2009): 171-185.

⁴⁰³ Bojanovski, *Dolabelin sistem cesta*, 179-182; Enver Imamović, “Rimske rudarske ceste na području Bosne i Hercegovine” [Roman mining roads on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina], *Prilozi* 21 (1985): 31-52; Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 296-297.

⁴⁰⁴ Esad Pašalić, “O antičkom rudarstvu u Bosni i Hercegovini” [About the ancient mining in Bosnia and Herzegovina], *GZM* 9 (1954): 55-60; Đuro Basler, “Rimski metalurški pogon i naselje u dolini Japre” [Roman metallurgy and settlement in Japra valley], *GZM* 30/31 (1977): 121-171; Kristina Glicksman, “Metal Mining in Roman Dalmatia,” *Opvscvla Archaeologica* 39/40 (2018): 272-273.

⁴⁰⁵ Ivo Bojanovski, “Antičko rudarstvo u unutrašnjosti provincije Dalmacije u svjetlu epigrafskih i numizmatičkih izvora” [Ancient mining in the interior of the province of Dalmatia in the light of epigraphic and numismatic sources], *Arheološki radovi i rasprave* 8-9 (1982): 89-120; idem, “O rimskom rudarstvu i metalurgiji u sjeverozapadnoj Bosni. Rimska ferarija u Starom Majdanu na Sani” [On Roman mining and metallurgy in northwestern Bosnia. Roman ferraria in Stari Majdan in Sana], *Zbornik arheološkog društva BiH* I (1983): 119-130.

⁴⁰⁶ Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 294.

⁴⁰⁷ Đuro Basler, “Manji nalazi iz starije prošlosti Jajca” [Smaller finds from the older past of Jajce], *Zbornik krajiških muzeja* 2 (1963/1964): 43-45.

of the Roman settlement at this place.⁴⁰⁸ Unfortunately, neither its name nor its legal status is known. Based on the epigraphic evidence, Salmedin Mesihović recently identified Jajce as *Sapua*, however, this requires additional confirmation.⁴⁰⁹ It is believed that, due to its strategic position, a tax-collecting station (*statio*) or even a *portorium* existed here.⁴¹⁰ Based on the later date of most of the finds around the city, Basler suggested that the settlement developed more intensively only during the later period of Antiquity in Dalmatia.⁴¹¹

Furthermore, several important ancient agglomerations are attested in the vicinity of Jajce. In Pijavica, on the right shore of the river Pliva, traces of a brick workshop (*figlina*) have been found, thus pointing to commercial activity in the area.⁴¹² Most notably, on the locality Metaljka (Metalka, or Gromile) at the Carevo polje, traces of a larger settlement (from at least third century AD) with remains of residential and religious architecture, along with metallurgical facilities (*officina ferraria*, as indicated by the toponym itself) have been discovered.⁴¹³ Recently two altars have been found, one anepigraphic and one dedicated to Jupiter.⁴¹⁴ Together with a relief showing two Silvans with nymphs from nearby Nadvoda, it offers a rare testimony of religious life on the territory of Roman Jajce.⁴¹⁵ A votive altar dedicated to Jupiter Depulsor, found on Harmani/Brdo near Jajce should be added here as well.⁴¹⁶ The most significant evidence of the Roman settlement in Jajce, and the religious

⁴⁰⁸ Pašalić, *Antička naselja*, 22-23; Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 292-297; Basler, “Manji nalazi,” 41-48; Edin Bujak, Salmedin Mesihović, Amra Šaćić, “Epigrafski spomenik iz Donje Šibenice kod Jajca” [Epigraphic monument from Donja Šibenica near Jajce], *Godišnjak ANUBiH* 43 (2014): 149-153.

⁴⁰⁹ Location of *Sapua* is presumed based on an inscription found carved on a cliff on the Vaganac hill (Šipovo), CIL III 9864a/HD 053672/LUPA21529, marking the boundary between the indigenous communities of *Sapuates* and *Emantini* or *Lemantini*, see Mesihović, “Prilozi antičkoj topografiji,” 171-185; idem, *Antiqvi Homines Bosnae* (Sarajevo: Filozofski fakultet, 2011): 317-318, no. 10; idem, *Proconsvles, Legati, et Praesides. Rimski namjesnici Ilirika, Gornjeg Ilirika i Dalmacije* [Proconsvles, Legati, et Praesides. Roman governors of Illyricum, Upper Illyricum, and Dalmatia], (Sarajevo: Filozofski fakultet, 2014): 120-121, no. 1.

⁴¹⁰ Bojanovski argued that Jajce was a toll post, see Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 292; contrary to Bojanovski, Basler saw Roman Jajce as a satellite settlement of a *municipium* of unknown name that existed at the nearby Šipovo, or, alternatively, as a naturally protected area it offered a *refugium* for the residents of Šipovo, see Basler, “Manji nalazi,” 45; Goranka Lipovac-Vrkljan, “Naselja rudonosnih prostora rimske Dalmacije i Panonije. Nekoliko pitanja o prisutnosti istočnih kultova” [The settlements in mining areas of Roman Dalmatia and Pannonia – a few questions on the presence of Eastern cults], *Histria Antiqua* 11 (2003): 368-369. Šipovo was so far mainly linked to the settlement and a road station called *Baloie*, a key settlement on the road *Servitium-Salona*, see Bojanovski, *Dolabelin sistem cesta*, 108-110. However, Mesihović recently suggested alternative location of *Baloie* – at Markonjić Grad, on the locality called Baljvine, while he identified Šipovo as *Sarute*, see Mesihović, “Prilozi antičkoj topografiji,” 171-185.

⁴¹¹ Basler, “Manji nalazi,” 45.

⁴¹² Vjenceslav Radimski, “Rimska ciglana kod Pijavica blizu Jajca” [Roman brickyard at Pijavica near Jajce], *GZM* 7 (1895): 217-219.

⁴¹³ Edin Bujak, “Novi slučajni nalazi sa Carevog polja kod Jajca” [New accidental Roman finds from Carevo polje near Jajce], *Gradina* 2 (2013): 137-141.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, 137-141.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid; LUPA 30511; Veljko Paškvalin, “Reljef Silvana i Nimfi” [Relief of Silvanus and the Nymphs], *GZM* 19 (1964): 151-155.

⁴¹⁶ CIL III 13981/EDH 052281/IJug III 1618; Ćiro Truhelka, “Archäologische Forschungen auf der Burg von Jajce und in Ihrer nächsten Umgebung,” *WMBH* 2 (1894): 93; Enver Imamović, *Antički kulturni i votivni spomenici*

activity in the area, however, is a *mithraeum* with a large rock-cut tauroctony relief, discovered at the southwestern periphery of the city.

3.3.2 Monuments of the Cult of Mithras in the Vrbas Valley

3.3.2.1 The Jajce *Mithraeum*

The *mithraeum* is located on the wetland area called Bare (Swamp) on the left bank of the river Pliva (cat. no.9, fig. 3.81, 3.82).⁴¹⁷ Typologically, it is a rock-temple: the west part of the building used the natural marl rock on which the cult-image is carved, while the rest of the walls were built using the irregular marlstone blocks (fig. 3.84). The *mithraeum* is today surrounded by modern houses and its original setting is therefore lost.

However, the proximity of the river Pliva and its surrounding thick forest give an idea of the site's original appearance. Although little is known about the topography of the Roman Jajce, the *mithraeum* was located on its edge, similar to Oltari and Rajanov grč. The unfortunate circumstances of its discovery and the obscure history of the findings from the *mithraeum* offer little clues about its social catchment, dating, or rituals.

The peculiarity of the Jajce *mithraeum* is that only the remains of the left podium were found (fig. 3.83-3.88). The same feature appears in the *mithraeum* in Konjic as well (see the next subchapter), and the feature seems linked to the particular construction conditions. For example, *mithraeum* at Hawarte (Syria, later fourth century AD, appendix 1, no. 106) had an L-shaped podium along the eastern and southern wall, since the unusual layout of the *mithraeum* did not allow for the regular side podia.⁴¹⁸ Furthermore, at a recently discovered *mithraeum* at Ostia, the so-called Mithraeum of the Colored Marbles (fourth century AD - first decades of the fifth century AD), appendix 1, no. 64 -), only one podium has been found as well.⁴¹⁹

na području Bosne i Hercegovine [Ancient cult and votive monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina], (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1977): 354-355; Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 293; Salmedin Mesihović, *Antiqvi Homines*, 316-317, no. 9. Jupiter Depulsor is attested on only two more inscriptions from Dalmatia: CIL III 14981 (*Burnum*) and recently on an altar from *Varvaria*, see Zović, Kurilić, "Strukture," 445, cat. no. 176, although the authors identified it as the dedication to Jupiter Optimus; corrected reading in Nikola Cesarik, David Štrmelj, "An Altar Dedicated to Jupiter Depulsor from Varvaria," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 199 (2016): 237-238.

⁴¹⁷ Dimitrije Sergejevski, "Das Mithräum von Jajce," *GZM* 49 (1937): 11-18; Zotović, *Mitraizam*, 26-27, no. 30; Miletić, "Mitraizam," 170-171, no. 22; Lipovac Vrkljan, "Arheološke potvrde," 223-226, no. 24; Lipovac Vrkljan, "Posebnosti tipologije," 101-104, no. 23.

⁴¹⁸ Michal Gawlikowski, "The Mithraeum at Hawarte and its Paintings," *JRA* 20 (2007): 349; idem, "The Mithraeum at Hawarte in Syria," in *The Archaeology of Mithraism*, 186.

⁴¹⁹ Massimiliano David, "Osservazioni sul bancheto rituale mitraico a partire dal 'Mitreo dei marmi colorati' di Ostia antica," *Antichità Altoadriatiche* 84 (2016): 173-184.

According to Massimiliano David, one possible explanation of such arrangement could be that the space was designed for the limited number of adepts, and, therefore, there was no need for the second podium.⁴²⁰ Another possibility, suggested by David, is the diversification of the cult and its spaces during the Late Antiquity.⁴²¹ David Walsh similarly explains the departure from the standard architectural features of *mithraea* in Jajce and Konjic. According to Walsh, they reflect significant ritual differences among the Late Antique communities and are a signal of the cult's decline.⁴²²

Although all four examples are late, they should not be taken as symptomatic of ritual changes in the late antique cult of Mithras. The unusual feature of these *mithraea* is in all cases a practical solution to particular (limited) space demands and/or the small size of their communities: in Jajce, the construction of the *mithraeum* was conditioned by the rocky terrain configuration and the surrounding swamps; the *mithraeum* at Hawarte was installed in an artificial cave, perhaps originally hollowed out for some other purposes; the *mithraeum* at Ostia was built inside the pre-existing structure; finally, the *mithraeum* in Konjic was built on the sloping and foresty terrain which certainly posed some limits to the size of the building.

Although insights about the social status of the individual members from Jajce and Konjic are limited, their furnishings show that they were wealthy communities: the cult-relief in Jajce is the largest one from Dalmatia, while the double-sided relief from Konjic was not among the cheaper fittings as well. It is therefore not possible to speak about the weakening and decline of the cult in Dalmatia. Similar to the existing differences in iconography and imagery of the cult, variations between the individual temples existed as well, caused by a range of reasons: availability (or limitation) of space, the preferred size of the community, etc.⁴²³

That individuals involved in the cult of Mithras in Jajce were persons of means is further confirmed by a recently published brass *askos* (cat. no. 19, fig. 3.107).⁴²⁴ It is dated to the first century AD and is an import from southern Italian workshops.⁴²⁵ Although Alka Domić Kunić

⁴²⁰ David, "Osservazioni sul bancheto rituale mitraico," 175.

⁴²¹ Massimiliano David, "Some New Observations about the Mithraeum of the Colored Marbles at Ostia," in *The Archaeology of Mithraism*, 105.

⁴²² Walsh, *The Cult of Mithras*, 21.

⁴²³ See Gordon's criticism of Walsh's argument in his review of Walsh's book: Richard Gordon, "The Cult of Mithras in Late Antiquity," *ARYS* 17 (2019): 466. Particularly illustrative example are *mithraea* in Ostia, where, as Gordon emphasizes, "not one of the cult-niches closely resembles any other."

⁴²⁴ Alka Domić Kunić, "Askos iz mitreja u Jajcu (Uz poseban osvrt na mitraizam kao na imitaciju kršćanstva)" [An *askos* from a Mithraeum in Jajce with special reference on Mithraism as an imitation of Christianity]. *Arheološki radovi i rasprave* 13 (2001): 39-102.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, 43.

is right to emphasize the uniqueness of the find in the context of the cult of Mithras, it is incorrect to suggest that bronze (or brass) objects were not used in the cult.⁴²⁶

It suffices to mention just a few examples (a bronze lamp in form of a peacock from the *mithraeum* in Orbe-Boscéaz (Switzerland), fragments of a bronze tauroctony from *Forum Claudii Vallensium* (Martigny, Switzerland), a bronze statue of Mithras from Italy, or a bronze handle with a representation of bull-killing (part of a vessel or chest) found in the river Saale, etc.) to conclude that bronze (brass) objects had its place within the cult, either as decorative objects, votive gifts, ritual vessels, or even as cult-images.⁴²⁷

What remains unclear is the object's possible role in the ritual, and its chronological relationship with the *mithraeum*, generally assumed to have been used only from the early fourth century AD (see further discussion). *Askos* is not specifically linked to the cult of Mithras: this type of globular vessel, probably originally derived from containers made of animal skins or organs, was often placed in tombs; however, their exact function is still uncertain.⁴²⁸ Still, as previously shown in the example of *urceus*, these kinds of (unusual) vessels do appear in the context of the cult.

There is no specific reference that would explain in which part of the ritual the vessel could have been used. The weight of the *askos* and the fact that it could contain only small quantities of liquid speak in favor of its ritual use.⁴²⁹ Its symbolic connection with animal skins has its resonance for the cult as well – the bull's hide is placed over the table or the two gods recline on it on numerous banqueting scenes, depicting Mithras and Sol sharing a meal.⁴³⁰ Therefore, *askos* could have been used for, e.g., wine libations, in a symbolic act referring to the bull's sacrifice, both events commemorated at each gathering of a Mithraic community.⁴³¹ The glowing surface of the vessel must have appeared impressive in the dark interior of the *mithraeum*, adding to the solemnity of the moment.

⁴²⁶ Ibid, 40. Bronze objects were often looted and re-cycled, therefore, they are perhaps not to be expected to be found as often on the archaeological sites.

⁴²⁷ All examples can be found in the volume dedicated to small finds in the cult of Mithras, *Roman Mithraism*, 2004: peacock lamp p. 116; bronze tauroctony p. 144; statue of Mithras p. 264; tauroctony handle p. 269. In this sense, interesting findings of bronze Mithras' hand holding a dagger from several sites in Germany, France, Belgium, and Switzerland should be mentioned as well, see Markus Marquart, "Mithras aus Bronze," in *Roman Mithrasim*, 303-317.

⁴²⁸ https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1850-0823-1, accessed July 30, 2021.

⁴²⁹ Domić Kunić, "Askos iz mitreja," 47.

⁴³⁰ For example, on one of the small scene sin Dura-Europos, Mithras and Sol recline on the dead bull; on the reverse of the relief from Konjic bull's hide is placed over the table.

⁴³¹ The importance of the cult meal and the connection between wine, libation, and the killing of the bull have been discussed in the previous part.

Based on the early date of the *askos*, and the early date of some of the coins found in the *mithraeum*, Domić Kunić proposed to date the *mithraeum* to the second century AD.⁴³² As discussed previously, without firm stratigraphic context coins can not be used for establishing the start and end date of the *mithraeum*. Since coins were found in front of the cult-image, it seems they rather ended up here as votive offerings, similarly to Oltari. Furthermore, the *askos* is made of durable material and could have ended up in the *mithraeum*, probably as a votive gift, later than the second century AD, as well.

Another object confirms the unfortunate fate of the finds from the *mithraeum*. Not long ago, a lion statue has been installed as part of today's altar ensemble (cat. no. 18, fig. 3.108-3.113).⁴³³ It shows a lying lion holding an object between its forelegs. Although the object is hard to recognize today, there are a few parallel examples of lion statues, which might help identify it. A lion statue from Mithraeum II in *Poetovio* (beginning of third – mid-fourth century AD) has an unidentified animal head under its front left paw; a statue from the Mithraeum III from *Carnuntum*, dated to the end of second/beginning of third century AD, has a bull's skull placed between the lion's forelegs (possibly also a statuette from Mithraeum I in *Carnuntum*, dated to the mid- or end of second century AD, although the bull's skull is no longer recognizable), while the statue from the *mithraeum* in Les Bolards (Gallia, appendix 1, no. 19) has an inverted urn with flowing water set between the lion's front paws.⁴³⁴ Furthermore, two large lion sculptures from the *mithraeum* in Königshoffen (Germania Superior, appendix 1, no. 45) each hold a boar's head under their front paws.⁴³⁵

Since the animal heads or skulls appear most often, the roundish form held by the lion in Jajce can most probably be identified as an animal head/skull. Such identification is even more plausible since the nearest parallel is to be found in *Poetovio*, whose importance for the local spread of the cult has already been discussed. The lion sculpture in *Poetovio* guarded the water basin next to the entrance to the *mithraeum*; a similar association between the lion and the water is observable in Les Bolards, where the statue was erected near the entrance as well. Furthermore, a lion statue from the Mithraeum II in Nida-Hedderheim has an opening running

⁴³² Domić Kunić, "Askos iz mitreja," 53. See the previous section for the discussion of shared meal.

⁴³³ The sculpture was not there during my first visit in 2016, but it was there in 2019. The personnel from the Agency for Cultural Historical and Natural Heritage and Tourism Development of Town Jajce, in charge of the *mithraeum* today, could not provide more details on the sculpture.

⁴³⁴ For more details on the lion statues from Carnuntum see Kremer, *Götterdarstellungen*, 66-77, cat. no. 84 (taf. 31), and 85 (taf. 32); on a lion statue from *Poetovio* see Abramić, *Poetovio*, 68-69, no. 57; Vomer Gojković, "Petovionski mitreji," 112-113; about the lions from the *mithraeum* in Les Bolards see David Mouraire, "La statuaire du *mithraeum* des Bolards à Nuits-Saint-Georges (Côte-d'Or): nouvelles observations," *Revue archéologique de l'Est* 48 (1997): 261-278.

⁴³⁵ Robert Forrer, *Das Mithra-Heiligtum von Königshofen bei Strassburg* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1915): 40-42, taf. XIII; CIMRM 1336.

from the mouth to the back of the statue, which supposedly communicated with a fountain; a similar opening is visible in the statue from the Mithraeum I in *Carnuntum*, which, however, has been interpreted as the smoke or fire channel.⁴³⁶ Lion statue from Jajce did not have a mechanical function, but it could have been originally installed at the entrance, in connection to the water basin.⁴³⁷

The date of the statue is hard to determine. In comparison to the cult-relief, which has been exposed to moisture and tuff, the lion statue was not exposed to the weathering. There has been an effort to clean the statue, although this was not done in professional circumstances. The result is a striking contrast between the whiteness of the lion and the yellowish-greyish appearance of the cult-image. The rendering of the details of the lion's body in comparison with similar details on the cult-image (particularly his round eyes versus the almond-shaped ones of the figures on the cult-image, or the rendering of the lion's mane versus the schematic hair of Mithras, Sol, and Luna, see fig. 3.96), reveals a different hand behind the two monuments.

The worn-out appearance of the statue makes any definite conclusions difficult; however, presuming it was part of the original inventory of the *mithraeum*, it could have been installed at the same time when the *mithraeum* was built and furnished, albeit commissioned from the different workshop; alternatively, it could have been installed slightly later, perhaps as a votive gift.

There are no solid grounds for establishing the chronology of the *mithraeum*: neither the small finds nor the rest of the inventory is particularly helpful in this sense. However, the later date seems more likely. As mentioned earlier, the Roman settlement is considered to be of later date and the Roman finds from and around Jajce generally belong to the later date as well. Based on the later date of these finds, Sergejevskij argued that the *mithraeum* should be dated to the beginning of the fourth century AD.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ For Mithraeum II in Nida-Hedderheim see Ingeborg Huld-Zetsche, *Mithras in Nida-Hedderheim: Gesamtkatalog*. Archäologische Reihe VI (Frankfurt: Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 1986): 22-25, cat. no. 27. A lion statuette was found in Mithraeum I (cat. no 15), and a lion's head was found in Mithraeum III as well (cat. no. 40). About the function of the lion statuette from Mithraeum I in Carnuntum see Kremer, *Götterdarstellungen*, cat. no. 85, 67.

⁴³⁷ Interestingly, there are two stone blocks from Golubić, near Bihać (*Raetinium*), which bear inscriptions dedicated to *Fonti* and *Leoni*. Patsch suggested that the one bearing dedication *Fonti* could have carried a water container, while the other one had a lion sculpture on top, thus forming a pair, see Patsch, "Mithraeum u Konjicu" [Mithraeum in Konjic], *GZM* 4 (1897): 654-656, appendix 2, no. 9, 10. The link between the lion and water(sources) is also visible on an altar from Trier (*Augusta Treverorum*), which on its front side shows a lion sitting below a hydria and a bow, as an obvious reference to the water-miracle scene (Mithras shoots an arrow into a rock or a cliff to produce water, for details see Clauss, *Mithras*, 72-74), CIMRM 992; Schwertheim, *Die Denkmäler*, cat. no. 197, 235-236; Gordon, "Viewing Mithraic Art," 248.

⁴³⁸ Sergejevski, "Das Mithräum," 17.

Similarly, the stylistic features of the cult-image support this date as well (cat. no. 10, fig. 3.95-3.96). The figures on the rock-cut tauroctony appear rather stiff, which is particularly observable on the disproportionate Mithras' body, and the schematized folds of his tunic (fig. 3.96). The bodies and dresses of the torchbearers appear the same (fig. 3.101, 3.102). Mithras' face, although damaged, shows there was a tendency to emphasize his almond-shaped eyes.

This characteristic is especially visible on the busts of Sol and Luna. Their faces are rounded, with large, almond-shaped eyes. Their stiff facial expressions lack any sign of individual features. Sol has short hair with broad locks, while Luna's hair is parted in the middle and falls to her shoulders in gentle waves; a wide braid turns from the back of her head forward, ending in a characteristic bun on the top of her head.⁴³⁹ All these features are characteristic of the portraits of the Tetrarchic period, i.e., late third/early fourth century AD.⁴⁴⁰

Furthermore, tauroctony from Jajce shares several characteristics with the tauroctony reliefs from Oltari and Rajanov grič. All three are rock-cut reliefs, set inside similar architecture, i.e., rock-temples. Their altar arrangements are similar as well. Below the relief in Jajce *mithraeum* there is a ledge, similar to Oltari and Rajanov grič (fig. 3.87). This theatrical design (discussed in the previous chapter) is even more emphasized here by the two stairs leading to the cult image, presumably used to reach the curtain and reveal the cult image at certain dramatic points of the ritual.⁴⁴¹

Moreover, a similar tendency to place the figures of the torchbearers outside the main scene can be observed on all three reliefs. In Jajce, Cautopates stands holding an inverted torch (actually parallel to the ground) on the left-hand side, while on the right-hand side Cautes holds a raised torch. Both are placed within the shallow gabled niches, on the frame of the central field (similar to Rajanov grič) (fig. 3.101, 3.102). The placement of the torchbearers has been reversed here, following the pattern of the reliefs from Rhine and Danubian provinces – particularly, tauroctony reliefs from *Poetovio* should be mentioned in this respect.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ They can be compared to the portraits of the Emperor Diocletian and his wife Prisca on the frieze in Diocletian's Mausoleum, Split; also compare Luna's hairstyle with the one on a female portrait from Konjic, dated to the Tetrarchic period as well, in Nenad Cambi, *Imago Animi. Antički portret u Hrvatskoj* [Imago Animi. Ancient portrait in Croatia], (Split: Književni krug, 2000): cat. no. 128-129, and cat. no. 127; LUPA 30484.

⁴⁴⁰ Cambi, *Imago Animi*, 77-84.

⁴⁴¹ An inscription from Mithraeum Aldobrandini (Ostia) mentions a curtain with a painted image of Mithras, CIMRM 233; CIL XIV 4314; AE 1924, 0199; HD 026488. In the *mithraeum* in Königshoffen, a round stone column used for hanging the curtain is preserved, see Claus, *Mithras*, 58. Remains of small rings have been found on the frame of the cult-niche in the *mithraeum* in Dura-Europos; similarly, nail holes in the cult-niche in the Mitreo della Casa di Diana are interpreted to have had the same purpose; remains of iron pins are mentioned on the cult-image from the third *mithraeum* in Carnuntum as well; for references see Siemers-Klenner, *Archäologie des Mithraskultes*, 261-262.

⁴⁴² John R. Hinnells, "The Iconography of Cautes and Cautopates," *JMS* 1 (1976): 38-40.

The stylized cave vault in form of the triangular gable is a feature that deserves some attention too (fig. 3.100). The architectural elements (gables, pediments, pilasters, columns, etc.), evoking the temple interior as a setting for the bull-killing scene, can be found on the reliefs from the Danube region, especially from Moesia Superior and Dacia (fig. 3.116).⁴⁴³ However, it is only in Dacia that the ideas of a natural and artificial environment were combined: usually, pilasters or columns frame the tauroctony scene on its sides, while the leafy wreath indicates the cave arch (fig. 3.114, 3.115).⁴⁴⁴ On one marble relief from *Apulum*, the tauroctony scene is flanked with leafy wheat stalks with crop on the top, and small trees are arranged between the altars on top of the cave arch (fig. 3.114).⁴⁴⁵ Here the bull's tail ends in a triple ear of wheat, similarly to Jajce.

On the relief from Jajce, it is hard to recognize the pilasters (if there ever were ones). Furthermore, in Dacia, the triangular pediment forms a separate field with additional scenes or figures, while in Jajce it is triangle gable is the cave arch. However, the combination of architectural elements and vegetal decoration points to Dacia as a source of inspiration. That (artistic) contacts between Jajce and Dacia existed is further supported by another relief from the nearby Donje Mile.

3.3.2.2 Donje Mile

Only a brief mention and an old illustration of a tauroctony relief found in the village Donje Mile exists (cat. no. 30, fig. 3. 117).⁴⁴⁶ Patsch, who published the monument, visited the area where the relief was discovered hoping to find traces of a possible *mithraeum*.⁴⁴⁷ Since he did not find them, he assumed that the relief was originally attached to one of the cliffs nearby.⁴⁴⁸ The unusual detail on the tauroctony relief is the two torches held by each torchbearer, instead of one. This motive can be found on reliefs from the Danubian provinces, where either Cautes

⁴⁴³ Gabriel Sicoe, *Die Mithräischen*, 131. For example, see CIMRM 1919; CIMRM 2244; CIMRM 2305; Sicoe, *Die Mithräischen Steindenkmäler*, cat. no. 116, fig. 135.

⁴⁴⁴ CIMRM II 1958-1959, Sicoe *Die Mithräischen Steindenkmäler*, cat. no. 30, fig. 77, third century AD; CIMRM 2159; Sicoe, *Die Mithräischen Steindenkmäler*, cat. no. 226, fig. 143, second half of the second/third century AD. A similar leafy wreath appears on both sides of the double-sided relief from Proložac Donji (municipality of Imotski), Dalmatia, see Ljubomir Gudelj, *Od svetišta Mitre do crkve Sv. Mihovila. Rezultati istraživanja kod crkve Sv. Mihovila u Proložcu Donjem-Postranju (1986.-1997. godine)* [From the sanctuary of Mithras to the church of St. Michael. Results of the research at the church of St. Michael in Proložac Donji-Postranje (1986.-1997.)]. *Katalozi i monografije* 16, (Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2006): 35, 38.

⁴⁴⁵ CIMRM II 1973, Sicoe *Die Mithräischen Steindenkmäler*, 156-157, cat. no. 39, fig. 72; Pavel, "Mithras in Apulum," 175-176, fig. 4.

⁴⁴⁶ Carl Patsch, "Drei bosnische Kultstätten," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 32 (1925): 137-155.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid, 137.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, 139.

or Cautopates or sometimes both, are depicted holding two torches.⁴⁴⁹ In particular, reliefs showing one of the torchbearers with two torches are typical for the Sarmizegetusa workshop, Dacia's main manufacturer of Mithraic reliefs.⁴⁵⁰

Especially, similarities can be observed between the relief from Donje Mile and the marble relief from Lopadea Nouă (*territorium Apulense*), dated between 170 and 190 AD, on which both Cautes and Cautopates carry two torches (fig. 3. 118).⁴⁵¹ Both reliefs share a similar rectangular form with a simple frame and a wider lower field (the relief from Dacia carries an inscription, which cannot be seen on the Donje Mile one). The analogous position of the Cautes' torches, and especially of Cautopates' is striking: he holds one torch with his left arm parallel to his body, while the other one, disproportionately bigger, is stretched upwards with his right hand.

Further parallels can be observed in the reversed position of Cautes and Cautopates, the composition of each relief, similar disproportional treatment of figures, the *en-face* position of Mithras' face, placement of the raven on the top of Mithras' fluttering cloak, disproportionately large dagger, and the treatment of the folds (lower part of Mithras' and torchbearer's tunic). It even appears that on Donje Mile's relief Mithras carries the sheath of the dagger on his shoulder, which otherwise appears almost exclusively on Dacian reliefs.⁴⁵²

The striking similarities in composition and the iconographic motives between the two reliefs suggest that the relief from Donje Mile may have been imported from Dacia.⁴⁵³ Roman Jajce, as mentioned earlier in the text, was located on important water and roadways. Moreover, significant trade activities, linked to the extraction of rich metal ores, existed between this area and the Danubian provinces.

Already from the second century AD, several Dalmatian communities have been attested in Dacia (*Alburnus Maior*, *Ampelum*, and *Apulum*), where a sizeable number of them worked in the mines.⁴⁵⁴ The exploitation of metal ores was an important industry that, besides the extraction and processing of ores, included its transportation and the movement of the belonging personnel in charge and the workers well. It is within this context that the presence of the Donje Mile tauroctony, a product of a Sarmizegetusa workshop, should be observed.

⁴⁴⁹ CIMRM 1958; CIMRM 1972; CIMRM 2018; CIMRM 2036.

⁴⁵⁰ Pavel, "Mithras in Apulum," 175; Sicoe, *Die Mithräischen Steindenkmäler*, 59-69. The workshop was active throughout the second century.

⁴⁵¹ Sicoe, *Die Mithräischen Steindenkmäler*, 169, no. 62, fig. 37; Pavel, "Mithras in Apulum," 176, fig. 5.

⁴⁵² Pavel, "Mithras in Apulum," 176.

⁴⁵³ Most of the reliefs from the Sarmizegetusa workshop are from the end of the second/beginning of the third century AD., see Sicoe, *Die Mithräischen Steindenkmäler*, 59-69. Probably relief from Donje Mile can be broadly dated to the same period as well.

⁴⁵⁴ Glicksman, "Metal Mining," 276-278.

3.3.3 Conclusions

Although, as stated earlier, epigraphic evidence does not reveal much about the individual members of the cult, several hints could help determine the social circles involved in the (spread of) cult in the Vrbas valley.⁴⁵⁵

First of all, certain resemblances between the cult-relief in Jajce and the ones at Oltari and Rajanov grič have been emphasized. All three examples use the natural rock as a medium for the cult-image, and all three *mithraea* belong to the same type of rock-temples. Besides these general similarities, there are some more specific ones as well. The tendency to place the figures of the torchbearers outside the scene links the relief from Jajce with the one from Rajanov grič (and with the Oltari as well). There seem to have been similarities in their rituals as well, since coin deposition was probably practiced at Oltari and also in Jajce. Finally, all three altar arrangements were designed similarly, with a ledge below their cult-reliefs.

Dissemination of the cult of Mithras in the Gacka valley (Oltari, Rajanov grič) is linked to the presence of customs officials at Vratnik, and the *portorium* in Senia. As mentioned earlier, given the strategic importance of the settlement, a *portorium* in Jajce might have existed as well.⁴⁵⁶ Therefore, the similarities in architecture, ritual, cult-images, and altar arrangements between the *mithraea* in the Gacka valley and Jajce could have been the result of the movement of the *portorium*'s personnel, whose important role in the local spread of the cult was already emphasized.

Second of all, certain Dacian influences have been observed as well: the combination of natural and architectural setting of the bull-killing scene in Jajce, and a direct import of a Sarmizegetusa relief found in Donje Mile. The cult of Mithras in Vrbas valley is thus a good example of the importance of customs' and trade networks for the (spread of) cult.

Finally, the choice of natural setting for the *mithraeum* in Jajce, similarly to *mithraea* in the valley of the river Gacka, demonstrates the importance of establishing and maintaining the connection to nature by the local Mithraic community. The location of the *mithraeum* on the riverbank and, reportedly, next to the water source, as well as its interior decoration, reflects this link.⁴⁵⁷

Palmette decoration on the gable of the cult-relief, including the palmette decoration on one of the altars installed in front of the cult-image, were further used to emulate the nature around of the *mithraeum*; the painted green background of the cult-image must have enhanced the

⁴⁵⁵ Lipovac Vrkljan, "Posebnosti tipologije," 222; idem, "Naselja rudonosnih prostora," 368-369.

⁴⁵⁶ Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 292.

⁴⁵⁷ Sergejevski, "Das Mithräum," 11.

impression as well. The wealth and prosperity of the local communities in the Vrbas valley depended on the natural resources (mining, waterways, etc.), and it is therefore not surprising that this aspect of the cult was attractive for them.

3.4 The Neretva River Valley

The river Neretva is the largest karst river in the Dinaric Alps in the eastern part of the Adriatic basin, which stretches for 220 kilometers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the last 20 kilometers in Croatia (fig. 3.119). It emerges in a gorge beneath the Zelengora and Lebršnik mountains in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina (1227 meters a. s. l.), on the thickly forested and steep slopes of the Gredelj ridge. It further runs through the valley surrounded by high mountains: to the north Bitovnja (1700 meters a. s. l.) and Vranica (2112 meters a. s. l.) mountains, to the south mountains Prenj (2103 meters a. s. l.) and Čvrsnica (2226 meters a. s. l.), while to the west Bjelašnica mountain rises (2062 meters a. s. l.). Finally, the river Neretva reaches the Adriatic Sea at the town of Ploče (Dubrovnik-Neretva County) in form of a wide delta.

The upper course of the river Neretva (Gornja Neretva) is a vast mountainous area stretching from the river's springs to the town of Konjic (the only town in the Gornja Neretva area) (fig. 3. 120, 3.121). Here the river runs in undisturbed rapids and waterfalls, thus carving the steep gorges (600-800 meters in depth) through the rugged and inaccessible limestone terrain. Before reaching the town of Konjic, the river passes through the wide and fertile Ulog and Glavatičevo valleys, intersected with canyons, cliffs, and hollows. The area is rich in freshwater springs and encompasses three major glacial lakes (Uloško, Boračko, and Blatačko Lakes). Right below the town of Konjic, the river expands into a third and largest valley that provided fertile agricultural land.⁴⁵⁸

The green landscapes of thick forests of the upper Neretva valley end with the snow-covered peaks of the Prenj mountain.⁴⁵⁹ Here, the vegetation changes and becomes very sparse, only to be replaced by the bare karstic rock. This, middle section of the Neretva river starts at the confluence of the Neretva and Rama rivers and is characterized by the sudden south-southeast turn of the river. At this part, the river passes through the largest canyon on its course, a steep and narrow gorge running through the mountains of Prenj, Čvrsnica, and Čabulja, approximately between 800 to 1200 meters in depth. The only major area suitable for agricultural exploitation is Bijelo polje (White polje) around the city of Mostar.⁴⁶⁰ However, the summer heat and mountainous surroundings where it is difficult to build roads make this area unattractive for settling.

⁴⁵⁸ Today, most of the fertile valley is flooded by Jablaničko lake. A large artificial lake was created after the construction of Jablanica Dam in 1953. The lake flooded many villages as well, thus disabling further archaeological investigation in the area.

⁴⁵⁹ Wilkes, *Dalmatia*, xxiv.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, 251.

The lower Neretva valley spreads into a wide marshy delta along the last 30 kilometers of its course. Today, it consists of Hutovo Blato wetlands on the north and the lower delta on the south. However, the land here appears in irregular small pockets, thus offering little opportunity for agriculture.⁴⁶¹ Moreover, the area suffers from frequent flooding.⁴⁶²

3.4.1 Neretva Valley in the Roman Times

The river Neretva offered the only natural passage through the Dinaric Alps in this part of the eastern Adriatic coast. Due to this fact, it was of extreme strategic importance and became a major trade route between the Adriatic coast and the interior of the province. The Neretvanski kanal (Neretva channel) was part of an important sailing route in the Adriatic, which passed from the Splitski kanal towards Neretvanski kanal and *Narona* (Vid near Metković, fig. 3.119), located at the end of the channel.⁴⁶³

Narona, an important Roman colony and the seat of one of the three judicial convents of Dalmatia (*Conventus Naronitanus*) was the last stop for ships trading with ore, livestock, and agricultural products with the interior.⁴⁶⁴ Besides *Narona*, there are no other traces of significant urbanization in the lower Neretva valley.⁴⁶⁵ Furthermore, an important Roman road passed through the valley of the river Neretva, connecting *Narona* with *Argentaria*, and further with the grain-bearing Pannonia on the north (*Narona* – Bijelo polje – Nevesinjsko polje – Boračko jezero – Konjic – Ivan planina – Sarajevsko polje – Romanija – Drinjača – Drina valley – Sava).⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, 251.

⁴⁶² Ibid, 247.

⁴⁶³ Mithad Kozličić, Mateo Bratanić, “Ancient Sailing Routes in Adriatic,” in *Les routes de l'Adriatique Antique*, 112.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, 112; Manenica, “Antički fluvijalni lokaliteti,” 287.

⁴⁶⁵ Wilkes, *Dalmatia*, 251; The appearance of the estuary and the course of the river Neretva changed significantly since the Roman times; moreover, the presence of the underground water makes it difficult to conduct excavations in the area. Mostly sporadic finds and traces of *villae rusticae* testify to the life during the Roman Empire in the lower Neretva valley, see Manenica, “Antički fluvijalni lokaliteti.” Recently, it has been shown that the main supplementary sources of the people in the lower Neretva valley were fishing, snail and shell harvesting, see Marinko Tomasović, “Arheološke potvrde ribarstva i izlova školjaka i puževa u međurječju Cetine i Neretve” [Archaeological confirmations of fish and shellfish fishing in the Cetina and Neretva rivers], *Ethnologica Dalmatica* 22 (2015): 231-275.

⁴⁶⁶ Pašalić, *Antička naselja i komunikacije*, 60-70; Ivo Bojanovski, “Prilozi za topografiju rimskih i predrimskih komunikacija i naselja u rimskoj provinciji Dalmaciji, II – Prehistorijska i rimska cesta Narona – Sarajevsko polje s limitrofnim naseljima” [Contribution to the topography of Roman and pre-Roman communications and settlements in the Roman province of Dalmatia, II – prehistoric and Roman road Narona-Sarajevsko polje with border settlements], *Godišnjak CBI* 17 (1978): 51-127. Although the earliest mention of the road *Narona* – Sarajevsko polje (milestone found in Trešanica near Konjic, CIL III 10164) is linked to the governorship of Dolabella (14-20 AD), the exact time of its construction still remains to be confirmed, see Mesihović, *Proconsules*, 67-68, cat. no 3.

The upper Neretva valley offered more suitable conditions for settling. Especially the region around the town of Konjic stands out as one of the most densely populated areas in the entire valley of Neretva (fig. 3.122).⁴⁶⁷ It has favorable climate conditions, while mountain pastures allow for extensive cattle breeding and some fertile land is available too, especially around Lisičići and Čelebići.⁴⁶⁸ The vicinity of the important crossroads and rich ore resources (iron and gold) of the Vranica and Bitovnja mountains contributed to the prosperity of the region as well.⁴⁶⁹

Most of the upper course of the river Neretva, from its source on the north to the Prenj mountain on the south, was inhabited by the Illyrian people of Neresi (*civitas Narensium*), the second-largest people in the Naronitan convent.⁴⁷⁰ Although there is no direct evidence of the municipal status of Konjic (its Roman name remains unknown, too), a large number of significant Roman finds, as well as its strategic position, indicate that the administrative and political center of the *civitas Narensium* should be located right here.⁴⁷¹ Three milestones found at the nearby Podorašće suggest the existence of a larger urban center in this area, located at important commercial crossroads, connecting Naron with the interior of the province.⁴⁷² Besides Konjic, significant Roman settlements developed in Madeškovci, Polje and further down the river in Čelebići, Orahovica, Lisičići, Ostrožac, and Ribić.⁴⁷³

Testimonies of the religious life of the upper Neretva are rare.⁴⁷⁴ In Trusine (Baturović polje), near Konjic, a relief representing Silvanus has been found, dated to the second-third centuries AD.⁴⁷⁵ Another fragment of a relief representing a hunting scene, probably related to the

⁴⁶⁷ Karlo Patsch, "Rimska mjesta u konjičkom kotaru" [Roman settlements in Konjic area], *GZM* 14 (1902): 304-305; Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 133; Pašalić, *Antička neselja i komunikacije*, 67.

⁴⁶⁸ Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 133; Pašalić, *Antička neselja i komunikacije*, 67.

⁴⁶⁹ Pašalić, "O antičkom rudarstvu," 49-55; Enver Imamović, "Eksploatacija zlata i srebra u rimskoj provinciji Dalmaciji" [Exploitation of gold and silver in the Roman province of Dalmatia], *Godišnjak društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine* 27 (1976): 21-27; idem, "Rimske rudarske ceste," 38-39; Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 68.

⁴⁷⁰ Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 133; Amra Šaćić, "Kulturno-historijski razvoj ilirskog naroda Neresa (*civitas Narensium*)/Cultural-historical development of the Illirian people of Naresi (*civitas Narensium*)," *Godišnjak ANUBiH* 41 (2012): 100-101.

⁴⁷¹ Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 134-135; Šaćić, "Kulturno-historijski razvoj," 105-109.

⁴⁷² CIL III, 10166/ LUPA 23697/HD 057971; CIL III, 10164/LUPA 30356/HD 014448; CIL III, 10165/HD 057970; Šaćić, "Kulturno-historijski razvoj," 106.

⁴⁷³ Patsch, "Rimska mjesta," 303-333; idem, "Rimski ostaci iz doline Neretve" [Roman remains from the Neretva valley], *GZM* 6 (1894): 711-719; Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 134.

⁴⁷⁴ Rare overview of religious monuments from the area in Almir Marić, "Religijske prilike na području gornje Neretve u antičko doba" [Religious circumstances in the upper Neretva in the ancient times], *Časopis Fakulteta humanističkih nauka* 8 (2013): 29-46.

⁴⁷⁵ LUPA 30434; Dimitrije Sergejevski, "Nekoliko neizdatih antičkih reljefa" [Several unpublished ancient reliefs], *GZM* 55 (1943): 5-6, no. 2, fig. 5; Marić, "Religijske prilike," 31; Perinić, *The Nature and Origin of the Cult of Silvanus*, 84, cat. no. 48.

goddess Diana, was found in Lisičići.⁴⁷⁶ Furthermore, a relief depicting Venus was discovered in Buturović polje (first-second centuries AD), probably within the precincts of a sanctuary dedicated to the same goddess.⁴⁷⁷ In the village Barica, on the left bank of the river Neretvica, a relief depicting Minerva has been discovered.⁴⁷⁸ Dedication to Jupiter is preserved on a votive altar discovered in the village of Cerići, near Konjic, dated to the end of the third-beginning of the fourth century AD.⁴⁷⁹ Finally, in Potoci, near Mostar, a votive altar dedicated to Juno was found, dated to the second-beginning of fourth centuries AD.⁴⁸⁰

Although these finds are sporadic, they are more numerous than the evidence of the Roman religious beliefs and practices from Gacka and Vrbas valleys. Moreover, besides gods and goddesses of the Roman pantheon, Silvanus and Diana represent the autochthonous deities venerated in the upper Neretva valley. However, the monuments of the cult of Mithras stand out again as the best attested religious phenomenon in the area.

3.4.2 Cult of Mithras in the Neretva River Valley

3.4.2.1 Konjic

Today, Konjic is a small town located 60 kilometers southwest of Sarajevo and 70 kilometers north of Mostar. The town extends on both sides of the river Neretva, which flows directly through its center, and is encircled with the wooded mountain slopes of Bjelašnica, Visočica, and Prenj. The *mithraeum*, whose exact location today is unknown, was located on the slopes of Repovica hill in the vicinity of the Trstenica stream (cat. no. 21; fig. 3.123, 3.124).⁴⁸¹ It represents the sole example of the freely-built *mithraeum* in Dalmatia. As in previous cases in Gacka and Vrbas valleys, the *mithraeum* in Konjic was located at the edge of the Roman settlement.

Since the remains of the *mithraeum* are no longer available for inspection, it is not possible to offer a detailed analysis of its construction. However, based on Patsch's detailed report, the

⁴⁷⁶ Carl Patsch, "Archäologisch-epigraphische Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der römischen Provinz Dalmatien I," *WMBH* 4 (1896): 269-270, fig. 39; idem, "Rimski ostaci," 714-715; Marić, "Religijske prilike," 31-32.

⁴⁷⁷ LUPA 30623; Irma Čremošnik, "Nešto o antičkim naseljima u okolini Konjica" [About ancient settlements around Konjic], *GZM* 10 (1954): 186; Imamović, *Antički kultni i votivni spomenici*, 394, no. 146, fig. 146; Marić, "Religijske prilike," 32-33.

⁴⁷⁸ Patsch, "Rimska mjesta," 322-323, fig. 18; idem, "Archäologisch-epigraphische Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der römischen Provinz Dalmatien VI," *WMBH* 9 (1904): 253-255, fig. 128; Imamović, *Antički kultni i votivni spomenici*, 386, no. 133, fig. 133.

⁴⁷⁹ CIL III 14167, 1; HD 052294; Patsch, "Rimska mjesta," 317-318, fig. 14; Šaćić, "Kulturno-historijski razvoj," 108, fig. 5; Marić, "Religijske prilike," 34.

⁴⁸⁰ AE 1906, 0185; ILJug 1742; HD 022127; LUPA 23703; Patsch, "Rimska mjesta," 270-271, no. 6, fig. 142; Imamović, *Antički kultni i votivni spomenici*, 384; Šaćić, "Kulturno-historijski razvoj," 105-106, fig. 6.

⁴⁸¹ Patsch, "Mithraeum u Konjicu" [Mithraeum in Konjic], *GZM* 4 (1897): 629-656; idem, "Archäologisch-epigraphische Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der römischen Provinz Dalmatien III," *WMBH* 6 (1899): 186-211.

mithraeum had only one podium on its north wall, similar to Jajce (fig. 125).⁴⁸² As discussed in the previous section, this interesting feature was probably a result of the practical necessities and reflects the efforts of the local community to keep their size small.

According to the coin finds, Patsch dated the *mithraeum* to the time of Emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD).⁴⁸³ Contrary, Lipovac Vrkljan and Miletić argue for a slightly later date in the mid-second half of the third century AD.⁴⁸⁴ Although not useful for determining the start and end date of the *mithraeum*, these coins, as previously discussed, probably ended up in the *mithraeum* as votive offerings.

There are, however, two other monuments that might help establish the approximate time when the *mithraeum* was used. A votive altar found in the eastern part of the building (B on the ground plan, cat. no. 24, fig. 3.126) is dated to the later third/early fourth century AD.⁴⁸⁵ Furthermore, a double-sided cult-relief, perhaps the best known Mithraic monument from Dalmatia, was found in the sanctuary of the *mithraeum* (A on the ground plan, cat. no. 22, fig. 3.129-3.130).

The style of the relief undoubtedly points to the early/mid-fourth century AD, i.e., tetrarchic or early post-tetrarchic period.⁴⁸⁶ Distinct stiff figures, with squat, formless bodies, square heads with large, expressive eyes, as well as usage of drilling (e.g., pupils, column capitals), are all characteristic of the sculpture of the time.⁴⁸⁷ Thus, it appears that the *mithraeum* was used approximately from the end of the third and in the first half of the fourth century AD.

The double-sided cult-relief bears iconographically interesting representations, which could further illuminate the possible social background of the Mithraic community in Konjic. The lower side scenes on the front show two figures carrying a boar (left-hand side) and a ram

⁴⁸² Patsch, "Mithraeum u Konjicu," 633.

⁴⁸³ Patsch, "Mithraeum u Konjicu," 653. Based on the coin dates, Šačić also proposed earlier date in the beginning of the second century AD, see Amra Šačić, "Mithraism in the Territory of Today's Herzegovina," *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Sarajevu* 7/3 (2014): 269.

⁴⁸⁴ Miletić, *Mitraizam*, 173-174, no. 27; Lipovac Vrkljan, *Arheološke potvrde*, 228-229, no. 27; Lipovac Vrkljan, *Posebnosti tipologije*, 106-107, no. 26.

⁴⁸⁵ Patsch, "Mithraeum u Konjicu," 644-645.

⁴⁸⁶ Miletić, "The Nymphus Grade on the Reverse of the Mithraic Cult Icon from Konjic," in *Ptuj im römischen Reich*, 283-284; Cambi, "Bilješka o reversu mitraičkog reljefa iz Konjica" [A note on the reverse of the Mithraic relief from Konjic], *Godišnjak ANUBiH* 32 (2002): 442-445. Gabričević argued for mid-late fourth century AD, Gabričević, "O nekim natpisima Sarajevskog muzeja" [On some Mithraic inscriptions from the Sarajevo museum], *GZM* 8 (1953): 142; Lipovac Vrkljan suggests mid-third century AD, Lipovac Vrkljan, "Prilog sadržaja i kompozicije donjih polja konjičke tauroktonije" [Contribution to the content and composition of the lower fields of the Konjic tauroctony], *PIAZ* 19 (2002): 131. Contrary to this later date, Skok suggested end of the second/beginning of the third century AD, after the earliest coins found in the *mithraeum*, see Petar Skok, *Pojave vulgarno-latinskog jezika na natpisima rimske provincije Dalmacije* [Appearances of the vulgar Latin language on the inscriptions of the Roman province of Dalmatia], (Zagreb: JAZU, 1915): 15.

⁴⁸⁷ Cambi, *Imago Animi*, 77-86.

(right-hand side) by their hind legs (fig. 3.129).⁴⁸⁸ The scene is reminiscent of the so-called *Mithras taurophorus* scene, on which Mithras is shown carrying or dragging the bull by its hind legs over his shoulders into the cave, where the central sacrificial act is about to occur.⁴⁸⁹ The obvious compositional parallels between the *Mithras taurophorus* and Konjic side scenes indicate that the figures on the Konjic relief should be identified as Mithras as well. The difference is that he is shown here carrying a boar and a ram, instead of the bull. A further peculiarity of the Konjic relief is that the scene is shown twice, potentially indicating the special meaning of these scenes for the local community.

The statue of Mithras carrying the bull appears in the Mithraeum I in *Poetovio*, with a dedication to *Transitus* inscribed on its base.⁴⁹⁰ Dedication refers to the transition or alteration which the bull and/or Mithras have to go through before the central act of killing takes place inside the cave.⁴⁹¹ Dedications to *Transitus* are extremely rare, confined to a small group of sites where the previously mentioned dedications to the Mithras' rock-birth appear as well.⁴⁹² These dedications spread from *Poetovio*, and are found across the Danubian provinces.⁴⁹³ One of these rare sites is located in Dalmatia, in *Malvesia* (Skelani), an important center at the crossing over river Drina between Dalmatia and Moesia (appendix 2, no. 19).⁴⁹⁴

Although the relief from Konjic bears no dedication to *Transitus*, the fact this scene has been shown twice means that it was chosen carefully.⁴⁹⁵ A local worshipper(s) (or perhaps a founding member) from Konjic could have been involved in the regional customs system where he (they) learned about the cult and this particular idiom of Mithras' veneration. As mentioned earlier, Roman Konjic was located at important commercial crossroads and it

⁴⁸⁸ The animals have been variously interpreted as a pig and a sheep, see Miletić, *Mitraizam*, 174-175; or as a pig and a ram, see Lipovac Vrkljan, *Arheološke potvrde*, 108-109; Lipovac Vrkljan, *Posebnosti tipologije*, 230-231. However, the indicated fur on the left-hand side animal seems to point to its identification as a boar, rather than a pig; the curved horns on the right-hand animal belong to the ram, and not to the sheep.

⁴⁸⁹ On *Mithras taurophorus* see Clauss, *Mithras*, 76-77. Alternatively, the scene has been interpreted as Mithras performing the *suovetaurilia* (sacrifice of a pig, sheep, and the bull), see Miletić, *Mitraizam*, 174-175; Lipovac Vrkljan, *Arheološke potvrde*, 108-109; Lipovac Vrkljan, *Posebnosti tipologije*, 230-231.

⁴⁹⁰ On the statue from *Poetovio* see CIL III 14354, 28; HD 068774; LUPA 9325; Vomer Gojković, Djurić, Lovenjak, *Prvi petovionski mitrej*, 40-41.

⁴⁹¹ Clauss, *Mithras*, 76-78.

⁴⁹² Other sites with preserved dedication to *Transitus* are: *Savaria*, *Brigetio*, *Malvesia*, *Carnuntum*, and *Gorsium*. For references see McCarty, Egri, and Rustoiu, "The Archaeology of Ancient Cult," 309, cf. note 130. Tóth, "Das lokale system," 385-392; McCarty, Egri, and Rustoiu, "The Archaeology of Ancient Cult," 308-311. See the relevant discussion in the subchapter on the Gacka valley.

⁴⁹³ Tóth, "Das lokale system," 385-392; McCarty, Egri, and Rustoiu, "The Archaeology of Ancient Cult," 308-311.

⁴⁹⁴ CIL III , 14219, 8; ILJug 1533, CIMRM 1900; HD 052644; Carl Patsch, "Archäologisch-epigraphische Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der römischen Provinz Dalmatien VII," *WMBH* 11 (1909): 148, no. 13, fig. 53.

⁴⁹⁵ Lipovac Vrkljan also interpreted the lower side scenes as representations of *Transitus*, see Lipovac Vrkljan, "Prilog sadržaja i kompozicije," 131-140.

probably had a *portorium* office as well.⁴⁹⁶ Perhaps it was even *Veturius Lucius*, who dedicated the above-mentioned altar, although his occupation is not explicitly referred to.⁴⁹⁷ If the link between Konjic and *Poetovio* is accepted, *Veturius*, as a customs official, might have arrived at Konjic from either *Poetovio* or some other related site.

The upper side scenes on Konjic relief seem to reinforce links with *Poetovio* as well. The scene of rock-birth, partially preserved on the upper right register of the Konjic relief, appears on monuments from Gacka valley as well (Oltari and Rajanov grič, albeit on the left-hand side), whose strong links with *Poetovio* have been discussed earlier. In Mithraeum III in *Poetovio* the scene of the handshake between Mithras and Sol (upper side scenes on the Konjic cult-relief) appears singled out on a large marble altar that was installed in front of the cult relief (260-268 AD) (fig. 3.131).⁴⁹⁸ The two gods are shown roasting bull's meat over the altar flame, with the bull's hind-quarter lying on the ground and a raven pecking at the roasting bull's meat. There is an obvious connection between the handshake and the sacrifice of the bull in this representation and similar features is recognizable on the Konjic relief as well. Here, the handshake is to be imagined happening between the two gods above the main sacrificial scene, i.e. the slaying of the bull.

The entire composition of the front side of the relief thus seems to have been conceived with a strong emphasis on the sacrifice: the boar and ram are dragged by Mithras, evidently, moments before they will be sacrificed. In the rock-birth scene, Mithras is usually shown holding a knife in his right hand - a straightforward allusion to his future sacrificial deed. Eventually, following the sacrifice of the bull, Mithras and Sol prepare the meat of the slain animal, which they are finally shown consuming on the backside of the relief.

The focus of the reverse of the relief seems to be entirely on the single scene, the striking representation of the Mithras and Sol banqueting on the hide of the slaughtered bull (fig. 3.130). The two figures closest to the table are probably *Cautes* and *Cautopates*, frequently represented serving gods at their sacrificial feast. The peculiar part of the scene are the two outer figures, depicted wearing the raven's (left-hand side) and a lion's (right-hand side) masks.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁶ Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 97.

⁴⁹⁷ Šačić identifies *Veturius* as a soldier, based on the already dismissed military character of the cult, see Šačić, "Mithraism in the Territory of Today's Herzegovina," 270. Interestingly, another *Veturius*, who indeed was an ex military officer of a lower rank (*ex duplicario*) seems to have been involved in the Mithraic cult as well: *Veturius Dubitatus*, a veteran of *ala I civium Romanorum*, dedicated an altar to Mithras found in the village Dalj, the site where a Roman fort *Teutoburgium* (Pannonia Inferior) once stood. The altar is dated to the end of the second or the early third century AD. For more details see Inga Vilogorac Brčić and Laurent Bricault, "Mithras in Teutoburgium. Mitra u Teutoburgiju," *PIAZ* 38/2 (2021): 199-204.

⁴⁹⁸ AE 1936, 0053; AE 1960, 0351; CIMRM 1585; HD 024288; LUPA 9343; Clauss, *Mithras*, 61-62, fig. 20.

⁴⁹⁹ One of the scenes in Dura Europos shows Mithras and Sol reclining on a dead bull, served by a figure wearing the mask of the raven (CIMRM 49); the raven-headed figure is also shown on a banqueting scene on a reverse of

So far, the figures on the reverse of Konjic relief have been mostly identified as representatives of the so-called seven initiation grades.⁵⁰⁰ Although initiation grades seem to be a conventional part of the cult, they were employed flexibly across different local communities.⁵⁰¹ The scene should not be taken as emblematic of seven initiatory grades: their exact number, hierarchy, and meaning in this particular community are unknown to us. Only the two outer figures can be taken as representatives of initiation grades: *Corax* and *Leo*, while the presence of other grades remains speculative.

Mithras and Sol are perhaps symbolic representatives of the two top grades, *Pater* and *Heliodromus*. The peculiar representation of Mithras and Sol in this scene, lacking their regular attributes, indicates that these two figures might represent the actual members of the community (*Pater* and *Heliodromus*), here idealized as Mithras and Sol.⁵⁰² The ensuing question then is whether the scene commemorates the mythical banquet between Mithras and Sol, or a concrete communal meal celebrated in the *mithraeum* in Konjic?

The answer should be both. The existence of a podium in the *mithraeum* in Konjic, as well as numerous animal bones that were found, clearly show that the communal meal was practiced. Moreover, foundation deposits discovered in *mithraea* across the Roman Empire, suggest that at the occasion of the foundation of a particular *mithraeum* a communal meal was shared by the worshippers.⁵⁰³ Certainly, this was a special occasion for any community, worthy of

a relief from Rome (CIMRM 397); the lion-headed figure is shown on a *terra sigillata* from Ittenwiller, Clauss, *Mithras*, 117, fig. 74.

⁵⁰⁰ Mithras and Sol as *Pater* and *Heliodromus*, raven- and lion-headed figures as *Corax* and *Leo*, while the remaining characters have been variously interpreted as *Perses* (left-hand figure with Phrygian hat) and *Miles*/second *Perses* (right-hand figure), and the seated lion as *Nymphus*/second *Leo*. Patsch identified them as *Pater*, *Heliodromus*, *Corax* and *Perses* on the left, *Leo* and *Miles* on the right, lion as a *Nymphus*, see Patsch, "Mithraeum u Konjicu," 640-641; similar identification also by Branimir Gabričević, "Liturgijsko značenje prikaza na reversu Mitrine kultne slike" [Liturgical meaning of the representation on the reverse of the Mithraic cult image], *GZM* 7 (1952): 19-25; idem, "Ostendere cryphios," *RFFZg* 2 (1954): 49-56. Recently Miletić argued for the presence of all seven grades as well, see idem, "The Nymphus Grade," 283-288. Petar Selem thought that the *Nymphus* grade is missing, and that *Leo* is depicted twice, see idem, "Mitrazam Dalmacije i Panonije u svjetlu novih istraživanja" [Mithraism of Dalmatia and Panonnia in the light of new research], *Historijski zbornik* 39 (1986): 202-203. Similar is argued by Anemari Bugarski, "Ikono grafija i specifičnosti reljefa mitrinog kulta obrađenih s dvije strane" [Iconography and particularities of the double-sided Mithraic reliefs], *Diadora* 18/19 (1996/1997): 230-234. Clauss thinks that the figure represent priestly grades, see Clauss, *Mithras*, 105-106.

⁵⁰¹ For the discussion of Mithraic grade-system see Aleš Chalupa, "Seven Mithraic Grades: An Initiatory or Priestly Hierarchy?," *Religio* 16/2 (2008): 177-201; Richard Gordon, "Ritual and Hierarchy in the Mysteries of Mithras," in *The Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, ed. John. North and Simon Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 325-356. Recent discussion of the topic with extensive bibliography in Philippa Adrych, "The Seven Grades of Mithraism, or How to Build Religion," in *Mystery Cults in Visual Representation in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Nicole Belayche and Francesco Massa (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2021): 103-122.

⁵⁰² Cambi is also of the opinion that, due to their portrait features, the two reclining figures should be identified as real persons. Although I agree with such identification, I disagree on the presence of the portrait features. See Nenad Cambi, "Bilješka o reversu," 439-445.

⁵⁰³ Marleen Martens, Re-thinking Sacred 'Rubbish,'" 333-353; McCarty, Egri, and Rustoiu, "The Archaeology of Ancient Cult," 299-301.

commemorating. The representation on the reverse of the Konjic cult-relief may be a commemoration of a foundation meal, i.e., an actual ceremony celebrated by the members of the local community. The unusual animals dragged by Mithras on the front side scenes of the relief might thus appear less unusual if taken as a reference to the actual animals consumed on that occasion. In this way, during the communal meal, worshippers were able to associate with this particular ceremony and with the mythical banquet. Moreover, by celebrating the communal meal, the ritual participants not only imitated the foundation/mythical banquet but also re-enacted it.⁵⁰⁴

Double-sided reliefs, as Gordon emphasizes, appear exclusively in the Mithraic cult, and they were invented precisely to express the link between the mythical banqueting event and the ritual reality (shared meal) in a highly performative way.⁵⁰⁵ They usually depict tauroctony on the one, and the banquet scene on the other side.⁵⁰⁶ According to Gordon, they appear mostly in wealthy communities of Germania Superior (Nida/Hedderheim; Rückingen; Dieburg; Mithraeum I in Stockstadt); in addition, several examples are known from northern and central Italy as well (Castello di Tueno; Castra Praetoria; Rome; Fiano Romano).⁵⁰⁷

Most examples, however, come from Dalmatia: besides Konjic, they were found in Zadar (*Iader*), Kašić (Banjevci), Gardun (*Tilurium*), and Proložac Donji (Postranje).⁵⁰⁸ What escaped Gordon's (and others) attention is the fact that in Dalmatia, double-sided reliefs appear on relatively nearby sites at the southern part of the province: all are located on the narrow coastal belt, along the section of the Roman road running between *Iader* and *Narona* (fig. 3.132).⁵⁰⁹ The exception is Konjic, which is the only example of the double-sided relief which appears in the hinterland.

The geographical distribution of the double-sided reliefs seems to follow the chronological one as well: reliefs from *Iader*, Banjevci, and *Tilurium* are all dated to the end of the second/beginning of the third centuries AD, while the one from Proložac Donji dates back to

⁵⁰⁴ Dirven, "The Mithraeum as *tableau vivant*," 41-42.

⁵⁰⁵ Gordon, "From East to West," 425-426.

⁵⁰⁶ Double-sided reliefs from Dieburg and Stockstadt differ in their iconography: front side shows Mithras in the hunt, while on the rear side seated Mithras-Phaeton is shown, see Ingeborg Huld-Zetsche, Klaus-Jürgen Rau, "Das Doppelseitige Kultbild aus dem Mithräum I von Stockstadt," *Saalburg Jahrbuch* 51 (2001): 13-35.

⁵⁰⁷ Gordon, "From East to West," 425-426. Double-sided reliefs from Germania Superior: Nida/Hedderheim (CIMRM 1083), Rückingen (CIMRM 1137), Dieburg (CIMRM 1247), and Mithraeum I from Stockstadt (CIMRM 1161); Italy: Castra Praetoria (Rome, CIMRM 397), Rome (CIMRM 635), Fiano Romano (CIMRM 641), Castello di Tueno (CIMRM 723-724).

⁵⁰⁸ Bugarski, "Ikonografija i specifičnosti," 221-236, for Proložac Donji see Gudelj, *Od svetišta Mitre do crkve sv. Mihovila*.

⁵⁰⁹ Gordon argues that these sites in Dalmatia are scattered and wrongly locates Banjevci in today Serbia, see Gordon, "From East to West," 426, note 75.

the second half of the third/beginning of the fourth centuries AD, with Konjic as the latest example from the first half of the fourth century AD. The closely related distribution of double-sided reliefs in Dalmatia allows several preliminary conclusions: this type of relief was particularly appealing to and preferred by the Mithraic communities in this region and, more importantly, these groups communicated closely with each other and shared the templates for their cult-images and the associated rituals as well.⁵¹⁰

Besides Konjic, the cult of Mithras is attested on two more locations in the Neretva valley.

3.4.2.2 Vratnica, near Lisičići

The archaeological surveys conducted in Lisičići (before its flooding by Jablaničko lake), hinted at a larger Roman settlement on the right bank of the river Neretva (fig. 3.119).⁵¹¹ Remains of three *villae rusticae* have been found, situated in the vicinity of the Roman road running along the river Neretva; they are dated to the third, late third/beginning of the fourth, and end of the fourth centuries AD.⁵¹² Other findings include mainly tombstones, from the second and third centuries AD.⁵¹³

The tauroctony, dated to the third century AD, relief was discovered accidentally on the private ploughland (cat.no. 25, fig. 3.133). Although Patsch mentioned numerous wall stones at the site, the *mithraeum* was not found. The bottom inscription reveals that the relief was set up as a votive gift by Lucius Antonius Menander from Aphrodisias (Caria, Asia Minor).

3.4.2.3 Potoci, Bijelo polje

The last Mithraic monument from the river Neretva valley is the stone slab, found in the hamlet Potoci, situated in the central part of the Bijelo polje (cat. no. 26, fig. 3.134).⁵¹⁴ The site was thoroughly investigated by Patsch in 1902, who recorded a significant number of architectural remains of various residential and public buildings, including a votive altar dedicated to Juno (second century AD), several altar slabs and pilasters belonging to the late antique church

⁵¹⁰ The topic deserves further investigation; however, due to the scope of the current work it is not possible to do so here.

⁵¹¹ Pašalić, *Antička naselja i komunikacije*, 67.

⁵¹² Irma Čremošnik, "Nova antička istraživanja kod Konjica i Travnika" [New research near Konjic and Travnik], *GZM* 10 (1955): 107-136; idem, "Dalja istraživanja na rimskom naselju u Lisičićima" [Further research in the Roman settlement in Lisičići], *GZM* 12 (1957): 143-162; Adnan Busuladžić, *Rimske vile u Bosni i Hercegovini. Roman Villas in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Sarajevo: Zemaljski muzej Bosne i Hercegovine, 2011): 157-158, no. 19, 20, and 21.

⁵¹³ Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 134-135; Pašalić, *Antička naselja i komunikacije*, 67.

⁵¹⁴ Patsch, "Archäologisch-epigraphische Untersuchungen VI," 264-274; idem, "Arheološko-epigrafska istraživanja o povijesti rimske pokrajine Dalmacije" [Archaeological and epigraphic research on the history of the Roman province of Dalmatia], *GZM* 16 (1904): 33-43.

(fifth-sixth centuries AD), as well as several fragments of stamped roof tiles indicating a local *figlina*.⁵¹⁵ Based on his findings, Patsch assumed the existence of a larger Roman settlement in Potoci.⁵¹⁶ Moreover, since the settlement was located on the important road connecting *Narona* with the northern part of the province (via Konjic), Bojanovski suggested a customs office here as well.⁵¹⁷

According to Patsch, the slab was probably part of the revetment installation (cylindrical recess for fixing the slab is preserved at its bottom) surrounding the water source that once existed near the *mithraeum*, which he presumed at this location.⁵¹⁸ The decoration on the slab, showing a rounded vessel (krater?) with flowing water, would suit such a purpose. Besides the evident desire to locate *mithraea* in the vicinity of a river or a spring (e.g., Oltari, Rajanov grič, Jajce, Konjic), water was important for ritual purposes as well and water-basins were usually installed inside the *mithraea*.

The ever-gushing water spring, so-called *fons perennis*, probably symbolized Mithras himself: on a previously mentioned votive altar from Mithraeum II from *Poetovio* Mithras is acclaimed as *fons perennis*; furthermore, the altar from *Aquincum* shows a *krater* placed between the two torchbearers, in a position usually taken by Mithras (fig. 3.138).⁵¹⁹ In this way, Mithras is identified as a source of water the as the source of nature's vitality.⁵²⁰ After all, Mithras was born out of the rock, and, in one of his deeds, he forced the water to gush out of the dead rock. Needless to say, water played an important role in the lives of the local people: not only did they use the river to transport goods and people, but, more importantly, water was needed for the successful growth of crops on the little arable land they had at their disposal.

Furthermore, the graffiti added by *Marcianus* and *Rumanus* (probably misspelled name *Romanus*), mention two pine trees and ten fig trees. Both trees appear as part of the cult's iconography; however, the graffiti are probably a reference to gifts made by these two individuals. The pine and fig trees may have been planted as a sacred grove around the water

⁵¹⁵ Ibid; Pašalić, *Antička naselja i komunikacije*, 67.

⁵¹⁶ The site Grčine was once more investigated by Nada Miletić in 1959, whose numerous Roman and late antique finds confirmed Patsch's assumption about the existence of a larger settlement in Potoci, see Nada Miletić, "Izveštaj o zaštitnom iskopavanju u Potocima kod Mostara" [Report on protective excavations in Potoci near Mostar], *GZM* 17 (1962): 153-157. Unfortunately, there have been no further archaeological surveys in the area.

⁵¹⁷ Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 97; Veljko Paškvalin, "Područje Mostara u antičkom i kasnoantičkom dobu do dolaska Hrvata" [The area of Mostar in ancient and late antique times until the arrival of Croats], *'Hercegovina' godišnjak za kulturno i povijesno naslijeđe* 4-5/12-13 (1998-1999): 59.

⁵¹⁸ Patsch, "Arheološko-epigrafska istraživanja," 38.

⁵¹⁹ Altar from Mithraeum II, *Poetovio*: CIL III 15184/24; CIMRM 1533; LUPA 9402; HD 071858; Altar from *Aquincum*: AE 1937, 00198; CIMRM 1766; HD 023514, LUPA6075. For the symbolism of *fons perennis* see Clauss, *Mithras*, 72-74.

⁵²⁰ Gordon, "Comsic Order," 118-119.

source, and, in addition to the green enclosure, they would have provided cones for the incense and fruit for ritual meals as well.⁵²¹

The most interesting aspect of this monument is certainly the spelling of the name of the god - *Meteri*, which appears in the identical form as the god's name on the relief from Konjic; in fact, the entire dedicatory formula is congruent on both monuments.⁵²² There are numerous cases where Mithras' name appears in different forms: *Mitrhe*, *Methrae*, *Mitre*, *Mitrai*, *Mithrae*, *Mithrae*, *Minitrae*, *Motre*, *Metras*, *Midre*, *Mithre*, *Mytrae*, *Myrthe*, *Meterae*, *Matira*, or *Mythrae*.⁵²³ As rightly observed by Aleš Chalupa, Mithras' name appears more often “misspelled” than in the “correct form,” and this phenomenon is encountered primarily in the Danubian and Rhinean provinces.⁵²⁴

The frequency of variations of god's name means there was no overall uniformity in the name given to Mithras: he could be called in different ways, described by many epithets, all of which appear in varying sequences and forms in the inscriptions.⁵²⁵ Therefore, these name variations should not be seen as misspellings, but, rather as different local names given to the god Mithras. The existence of local variations in the iconography and the architecture of the cult, the

⁵²¹ Besides artistic, artefactual evidence associates pine cones with the cult of Mithras: stone and marble models of pine cones have been found at several sites (*mithraeum* IV in Aquincum, Lambaesis, Santa Prisca, *Castra Peregrinorum* in Rome), while real pine cones have been recorded in Walbrook *mithraeum* in London and in the *mithraeum* in Carrawburgh, where they were burned as incense in the rituals, see Joanna Bird, “Incense in Mithraic Ritual: the Evidence of the Finds,” in *Roman Mithraism*, 196-197. Furthermore, figs have been recovered from several classical temples, as part of ritualised deposition of plant remains, and were probably consumed in regional temples as well, see Lisa Lodwick, “Identifying Ritual Deposition of Plant Remains: A Case Study of Stone Pine Cones in Roman Britain,” in *TRAC 2014: Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, ed. T. Brindle et al. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2015): 54-69. That fruits were actually consumed in *mithraea* is indicated by the remains of carbonized fruits (grapes, plums, apples, and cherries), berries, and nuts discovered in the *mithraeum* in *Lentia* (Linz, Noricum), see Heinrich Ludwig Werneck, “Der Obstweihfund im Vorraum des Mithraeums zu Linz-Donau, Oberösterreich,” *Naturkundliches Jahrbuch der Stadt Linz* 1 (1955): 9-39.

⁵²² First one to argue that Mithras' name appears in the same form on these two monuments was Gabričević, “O nekim,” 141-143. His arguments is followed by Šačić, “Mithraism in the Territory of Today's Herzegovina,” 273-274.

⁵²³ *Mitrhe* (CIMRM 625), *Methrae* (CIMRM 522), *Mitre* (CIMRM 206), *Mitrai* (CIMRM 515), *Mitrae* (CIMRM 516), *Minitrae* (1776), *Motre* (CIMRM 1700), *Metras* (CIMRM 1443), *Midre* (CIMRM 1315), *Mithre* (CIMRM 1976), *Mytrae* (CIMRM 1367), *Myrthe* (CIMRM 1303), *Matira* (CIMRM 1419), or *Mythrae* (CIMRM 941), which appears on a newly discovered inscription from Dacia as well, see Csaba Szabó, Imola Boda, Victor Bunoiu, Calin Timoc, “Notes on a New Mithraic Inscription from Dacia,” In *Mensa Rotvnda Epigraphica Napocensis. Papers of the 4th Romanian-Hungarian Epigraphic Round Table, Cluj-Napoca, 16-17 October 2015*, (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2016): 91-104. Recent discussion of the name *Minitra* from *Aquincum* in Tünde Vágási, “Minitra et Numini Eius. A Celtic Deity and the Vulgar Latin in Aquincum,” *Acta Classica Univ. Scient. Debrecen.* 16 (2020): 179-193, in which the author argues that *Minitra* is another variation of Mithras' name.

⁵²⁴ Chalupa's analysis has shown that in more than 120 inscriptions (where god's name appears in an unabbreviated form), we can find 18 “erroneous readings,” see Chalupa, “Seven Mithraic Grades,” 190, footnote 66.

⁵²⁵ The appearance of various forms of the god's name was not only limited to the Roman Empire: the variations exist in Sasanian Iran, Kushan Bactria and in Commagene, recently explored in the various chapters of the volume *Images of Mithra*, ed. Philippa Adrych, Robert Bracey, Dominic Dalglish, Stefanie Lenk, and Rachel Wood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

plurality of cultic practices, and the use of specific names reveal that the cult adapted to the circumstances and demands of the various local communities.

Monuments from Konjic and Potoci are one example of such local appropriation and a reminder that the cult of Mithras should not be taken as a uniform cult, but, we should rather think of the plurality of the individual, personal appropriations of the cult, i.e., cults of Mithras.⁵²⁶ By giving the god a localized version of his name, the Mithraic community in the upper Neretva valley established a more personal relationship with the god and a higher degree of differentiation and individualization. This in turn increased the attractiveness of the cult, necessary for its long-term sustainability.⁵²⁷

3.4.3 Conclusions

Our knowledge of the political, cultural, religious, and social aspects of life in the Neretva river valley during Roman times is very limited, hindered by the lack of any systematic archaeological research, and forever prevented by the flooding of several important localities. However, monuments published so far, as well as the slowly increasing number of newly discovered ones (mainly epigraphic), deepen our knowledge about life in this part of Roman Dalmatia.⁵²⁸ Due to the geographical distance and the inaccessibility of the mountainous terrain, this part of the province appears quite cut off from the large urban centers, both on the coastal Dalmatia, as well as in its hinterland.

In this context, monuments of the cult of Mithras are particularly significant: they offer a rare glimpse into the religious life of the upper Neretva valley and indicate the existence of an important *municipium*, probably in the area of today's Konjic.⁵²⁹ Furthermore, they confirm that, despite their relative isolation, the settlements in the upper Neretva valley had strong cultural ties with important urban centers of the province, as well as outside of it.

⁵²⁶ Richard Gordon, "‘Den Jungstier auf den goldenen Schultern tragen:’ Mythos, Ritual und Jenseitsvorstellungen im Mithraskult," in *Burial Rituals, Ideas of Afterlife, and the Individual in the Hellenistic World and the Roman Empire*, ed. Katharina Waldner, Richard Gordon, Wolfgang Spickermann (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016): 215-219. Recently, Laurent Bricault and Philippe Roy have also referred to the plurality of the cults of Mithras in the title of their publication, see Laurent Bricault, Philippe Roy, *Les cultes de Mithra dans l'Empire romain* (Toulouse, Presses de universitaires du Midi, 2021). Walsh interpreted different name variations of Mithras' name as one of the signs of the cult's decline in Late Antiquity, see Walsh, *The Cult of Mithras*, 39. See the main text for the counter-argument, as well as criticism by Gordon, "The Cult of Mithras in Late Antiquity," 466-467.

⁵²⁷ Richard Gordon, "Project, Performance, and Charisma: Managing Small Religious Groups in the Roman Empire," in *Beyond Priesthood. Religious Entrepreneurs and Innovators in the Roman Empire*, ed. Richard Gordon, Jörg Rüpke, Georgia Petridou (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017): 294-295.

⁵²⁸ For example, see Amra Šaćić, "Četiri do sada neobjavljena epigrafska spomenika" [Four previously unpublished epigraphic monuments], *Godišnjak ANUBiH* 43 (2014): 155-166.

⁵²⁹ Šaćić, "Kulturno-historijski razvoj," 106.

First, the presence of the reversible cult-relief, otherwise attested on the narrow coastal belt of the province, shows the important role of the river Neretva in facilitating the dissemination of religious ideas. More precisely, it was through *Narona*, the main Roman base in the middle Adriatic, whose *ager* spread well into the upper course of the river Neretva, that religious, artistic, and cultural influences from the coast reached the settlements of the upper Neretva valley.⁵³⁰

Second, it appears that the cult of Mithras in the upper Neretva valley once again confirms the significance of the *Poetovio* and the network of its *portorium* for the local spread of the cult. The careful design of the Konjic relief and the selection of the scenes on its front, i.e., *Transitus*, rock-birth, and the handshake, all seem to point to *Poetovio* as their source. Besides spreading the cult, the personnel of the customs administration, who circulated between the different customs stations, was also responsible for spreading the particular manner of honoring Mithras (*Transitus*).⁵³¹

However, despite the multiple sources of its influence, the cult of Mithras in the upper Neretva valley demonstrates a strong local character. The localized form of god's name, Meteri, shows that there was great diversity among various communities. The funerary art and onomastic analysis of the monuments from the upper Neretva valley indicate the perseverance of the autochthonous fashion and local names long after the arrival of Romans.⁵³² The cult of Mithras flourished here only in the later third and fourth centuries AD, indicating, as in the case of Vrbas valley, that the processes connected with the globalizing Roman culture reached the inland of the province at a slightly later stage than the urban centers on its coastal part.⁵³³

The choice of the location of the *mithraeum* in Konjic built on the very edge of the settled area seems to be in keeping with the previously discussed *mithraea* from the Gacka and Vrbas valleys. Here too, the choice of the specific location seems like a result of a particular desire of the local community who wanted to build their temple in a natural setting, rather than being a sign of their poor or marginal character.

⁵³⁰ Already Patsch emphasized the significant role of *Narona* for the spread of the cult of Mithras in this area, see Patsch, "Mithraeum u Konjicu," 645; Bojanovski, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 116-128. Interestingly, no evidence of the cult of Mithras have been found in *Narona*.

⁵³¹ McCarty, Egri, Rustoiu, "The Archaeology of Ancient Cult," 310.

⁵³² Šačić, "Kulturno-historijski razvoj," 104.

⁵³³ For the concept of the globalising Roman culture (used instead of a problematic and much criticised term "Romanisation") see Richard Hingley, *Globalising Roman Culture: Unity, Diversity, and Empire* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005). For the short discussion of the "Romanisation" of the interior of Dalmatia see Amra Šačić, "The Process of Romanisation in the Inland of the Roman Province of Dalmatia in the 1st Century," *Acta Illyrica* 1 (2017): 78-88.

3.5 Southern Dalmatia

Contrary to the previous three regions treated in this chapter, the geography of the southernmost part of the province of Dalmatia is not shaped by the river landscapes. Instead, the scenery here is characterized by sharp contrasts between green vegetation and the barren karst (fig. 3.139, 3.140). The area stretches roughly between the river Neretva on the northwest and the Gulf of Kotor (Boka Kotorska) on the southeast (c. 160 kilometres, fig. 3.141). It is characterized by a narrow coastline screened by mountains on all sides, most notably by the mountains Sniježnica (“Snowy mountain”), the southernmost mountain ridge of the Dinarides (1234 m.a.s.l.), Bjelotina (1125 m.a.s.l.), and Orjen massif (1895 m.a.s.l.).

The mountainous hinterlands, together with the somewhat dramatic coastline, make this part of Dalmatia quite isolated from its surroundings. The coast of southern Dalmatia is not as indented as the rest of the eastern Adriatic coast: the islands cease here and the coast is distinguished by up to 300 meters high and steep rocks (the so-called Konavle cliffs), compared by some authors to the Norwegian fjords (images 3.1 and 3.2).⁵³⁴

Between the high mountains and the steep coastal cliffs lies the so-called Konavosko polje (Konavle), the most important agrarian area of the southern Dalmatian coast (fig. 3.142).⁵³⁵ It is an elongated karst field, approximately forty kilometers long, and between two and fifteen kilometers wide. The area is rich in sources of (occasional and permanent) drinking water. The sinking river Ljuta (“Angry”), with the constant flow all year round, flows into the polje. It is joined by two tributary sinking rivers Konavočica and Kopačica, that used to flood the field in the winter, turning it into a lake. As a consequence, until the construction of the drainage tunnel in 1958, agricultural production was based solely on seasonal crops.⁵³⁶

Another important fertile karstic valley lies in the immediate hinterland of the narrow coastal belt, the Popovo polje (The Priest's polje), one of the largest polje in the world (fig. 3.141).⁵³⁷ It offers a precious pocket of fertile land; however, the hinterland of southern Dalmatia has been rightfully described as one of the most inhospitable and unattractive areas for settling in the entire province, thus limiting the development of settlements to the very few spots on the more amiable coast.⁵³⁸ Besides the typical karstic features like polje and sinking rivers, another

⁵³⁴ Wilkes, *Dalmatia*, xxiii.

⁵³⁵ Josip Roglić, Ivo Baučić, “Krš u dolomitima između Konavoskog polja i morske obale” [Karst in the dolomites between Konavosko polje and seaside], *Hrvatski geografski glasnik* 20 (1958): 129-137.

⁵³⁶ Nikolina Kapović, “Izvorno zelenilo u službi očuvanja ruralnog ambijenta na primjeru Konavala” [Original green vegetation intended for preserving the rural landscape - the Konavle example], *Agronomski glasnik* 2-4 (2005): 218.

⁵³⁷ Mihovil Vlahinić, *Poljoprivredno-melioracijska i agrohidrološka monografija Popova polja* [Land reclamation and agrohydrological monograph of Popovo polje], Djela ANUBiH 78 (Sarajevo: ANUBiH, 2004).

⁵³⁸ Wilkes, *Dalmatia*, 258-259.

distinguishing feature of the southern Dalmatian coast is a high number of speleological objects, i.e., caves and pits (e.g., the already-mentioned Vilina špilja at the source of the river Ombla).⁵³⁹ Such landscape features offer an ideal setting for the cult of Mithras.

Of interest for this analysis are the Elaphiti islands, or the Elaphites, the southernmost archipelago of the Adriatic coast. The Elaphites stretch between the Pelješac peninsula in the northwest to the Lapad peninsula (Dubrovnik) in the southeast (fig. 3.143). The archipelago includes as many as thirteen islands and cliffs, with Šipan, Lopud (details below), and Koločep as the three major ones. The geomorphological formation of the islands is karstic, with typical forms such as sinkholes and caves.⁵⁴⁰ The mildly hilly landscapes are interspersed with gorges containing patches of fertile arable land. Their coasts are mostly unapproachable, with steep limestone rocks and occasional sandy coves. Besides the exploitation of favorable soils for agricultural cultivation, the rocky limestone offered suitable areas for cattle breeding as well.⁵⁴¹

A pleasant Mediterranean climate with moderately warm and dry summers and a high value of insolation (ca. 215 sunny days per year) is characteristic for the area; however, coupled with the impact of the climate from the mountainous hinterland, it ensures significant precipitation during autumns and winters, accompanied by the considerably low temperatures (snow on the Sniježnica mountain sometimes lingers almost until May).⁵⁴²

It is against this isolated environment of the picturesque southern Dalmatia that Roman *Epidaurum* and the pertaining evidence of the cult of Mithras should be contextualized.

3.5.1 Southern Dalmatia in the Roman Times

As previously emphasized, the narrow and steep terrain of the southern Dalmatian coast was not suitable for settlement. The only site with a favorable coastal configuration is the area of today's Cavtat, where the Roman city of *Epidaurum* was once located.⁵⁴³ More precisely, *Epidaurum* was situated on the peninsula, today called Rat ("Peninsula"), which, together with

⁵³⁹ Goran Rnjak, Stipe Maleš, Dino Grozić, "Novija speleološka istraživanja na području Dubrovačkog primorja i Konavala" [Recent speleological research in the areas of Dubrovnik Littoral and Konavle], *Subterranea Croatica* 17 (2019): 35-45; Jerković Goran, Miro Marijanović, Anita Trojanović, "Pregled speleološkog istraživanja Konavala" [A Review of Speleological Research of Konavle Region], *Speleolog* 68 (2020): 67-79.

⁵⁴⁰ Damir Magaš, Josip Faričić, Maša Surić, "Elafitsko otočje. Fizičko-geografska obilježja u funkciji društveno-gospodarskog razvitka" [Elaphites islands – physical-geographical characteristics in function of socio-economical development], *Geoadria* 6 (2001): 35; Martin Glamuzina, Nikola Glamuzina, "Socio-economic and Demographic Characteristics of Remote South-Eastern Adriatic Islands," *Naše more* 45 (2001): 248-249.

⁵⁴¹ Magaš, Faričić, Surić, "Elafitsko otočje," 48-49.

⁵⁴² Ibid, 40-42.

⁵⁴³ Aleksandra Faber, "Prilog topografiji ilirsko-rimskog Epidaura s posebnim obzirom na nova istraživanja" [Contribution to the topography of Illyrian-Roman Epidaurum with special regard to the new research], *Opvscvla archaeologica* 6 (1966): 25-38.

the somewhat smaller neighboring peninsula Sustjepan encloses the bay, today called Luka (“Bay”) (fig. 3.144). This exceptional geographical condition was an important prerequisite for the growing importance of the city. First, the naturally protected position of the city offered the only safe harbor between Dubrovnik and Boka Kotorska bay (*sinus Risonicus*). Second, due to the extremely favorable strategic location between the two important trade centers, *Narona* on the northwest and *Risinium* (Risan, Montenegro) on the southeast, *Epidaurum* developed into a major trade port and economic center on this part of the Dalmatian coast.⁵⁴⁴

The first written record of the city (47 BC) mentions *Epidaurum* in the context of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey (*De bello Alexandrino*, 44,5), and refers to it as a *praesidium*, probably a fortified settlement of great military and strategic importance.⁵⁴⁵ It is usually assumed that Caesar (49-44 BC) granted *Epidaurum* a municipal status, and shortly afterward, already during Caesar's or perhaps during the early reign of Augustus (27 BC-14 AD), the city received the status of a colony.⁵⁴⁶ Due to the rich fertile hinterlands (Konavosko polje and parts of Popovo polje), *Epidaurum* developed mostly as an agricultural colony.⁵⁴⁷

Although *Epidaurum* was the most important Roman city on the southern Dalmatian coast, its topography and urban planning are poorly documented. The archaeological excavations, of which only a few have been carried out, are hampered by the fact that the modern city of Cavtat was built upon the remains of Roman *Epidaurum*. However, there are several significant hints of the former Roman city. It seems that most of today's streets follow the Roman urban plan with a regular orthogonal street grid.⁵⁴⁸ Recently, excavations on the extreme western part of the peninsula Rat have yielded architectural remains that probably belonged to a complex of public buildings (1-5 AD) whose exact purpose is yet to be determined.⁵⁴⁹ In the immediate

⁵⁴⁴ For example, recent finds of luxury glassware attest to diverse trade contacts between Epidaurum and north Italian, Mediterranean, Gaulish, and Rhenish workshops, see Nikolina Topić, Helena Puhara, and Lucija Vuković, “Glass from the Roman Colony of Epidaurum: Archaeological Excavations in Cavtat, near Dubrovnik, Croatia,” *Journal of Glass Studies* 61 (2019): 49-58.

⁵⁴⁵ Nenad Cambi, “Antički Epidaur” [Ancient Epidaur], *Dubrovnik* 17/3 (2006): 190.

⁵⁴⁶ Grgo Novak, “Povijest Dubrovnika od najstarijih vremena do početka VII. st.” [History of Dubrovnik from the earliest time until the beginning of VII. century], *Anali historijskog instituta JAZU u Dubrovniku* 10/11 (1966): 24; Bojanovski, *BiH u antičko doba*, 79-80; Cambi, “Antički Epidaur,” 190-191.

⁵⁴⁷ Bojanovski, *BiH u antičko doba*, 81.

⁵⁴⁸ Cambi, “Antički Epidaur,” 196-197.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 200-201; Romana Menalo, Helena Puhara, “Cavtat – poluotok Rat” [Cavtat – peninsula Rat], *Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak* 9 (2012): 835-837; Helena Puhara, Ana Požar Piplica, “Novootkriveni fragment antičkog zidnog oslika iz Cavtata: istraživanje, konzerviranje i mogućnost prezentacije” [Newly-discovered fragment of an ancient wall painting in Cavtat: research, conservation, and possibility of presentation], *Portal: godišnjak Hrvatskog restauratorskog zavoda* 9 (2018): 7-14.

surroundings of *Epidaurum*, especially in Konavosko polje, remains of *villae rusticae* have been identified as well.⁵⁵⁰

The best-known structure from *Epidaurum* is the aqueduct, which ensured the communal supply of freshwater from its remote source in Vodovađa, the easternmost village of Konavle (fig. 3.145).⁵⁵¹ It was most probably built under the governor P. Cornelius Dolabella (14-20 AD), whose building activity in *Epidaurum* is attested by the two honorary inscriptions.⁵⁵² It is also assumed that an important section of the Roman road that connected *Epidaurum* with *Narona* and *Risinium* was built under the governorship of Dolabella as well; an additional road connected *Epidaurum* with Popovo polje (part of *ager Epidauritanus*) and further on with important centers in the hinterland (fig. 3.146).⁵⁵³

Not much is known about the art of the Roman *Epidaurum* either, and epigraphic material remains a primary source for the reconstruction of the history of the colony.⁵⁵⁴ Besides the well-attested cult of Mithras, the evidence of Roman religion and cults in *Epidaurum* are similarly scarce and based on a few sporadic finds. An altar dedicated to Jupiter was found near the hilltop chapel of Saint Roch, today unfortunately lost.⁵⁵⁵ Another votive inscription dedicated to Diana was discovered built into the St. Mary's church in Mandaljena (Župa Dubrovačka), but is today also lost.⁵⁵⁶ Furthermore, there is a small bronze statue of Minerva from Pridvorje (Konavle), which probably served private cult purposes in one of the *villae*

⁵⁵⁰ Marin Zaninović, "Villae rusticae u području Epidaura/Villae Rusticae in the region of Epidaurum," *Izdanja HAD-a* 12 (1987): 89-100.

⁵⁵¹ Ljiljana Kovačić, "Antički vodovod Vodovađa – Cavtat" [Roman aqueduct Vodovađa-Cavtat], *Izdanja HAD-a* 24 (2010): 87-97.

⁵⁵² AE 1964, 0227/ILJug 0636/HD016150; CIL III, 01741/AE 2008, 1035/HD026403; Miroslav Glavičić, "Epigrafska baština rimskodobnog Epidaura" [The epigraphic heritage of Roman Epidaurum], *Archaeologia Adriatica* 11 (2008): 45-49; Bruno Bijadija, "Contribution to the Knowledge about Epidaurum based on Two of the Inscriptions of Dolabella from Cavtat," in *The Century of the Brave. Roman Conquest and Indigenous Resistance in Illyricum during the time of Augustus and his Heirs. Proceedings of the International Conference held in Zagreb 22-26.9.2014*, ed. Marina Miličević Bradač, Dino Demicheli (Zagreb: FF Press, 2018): 307-318.

⁵⁵³ Pašalić, *Antička naselja*, 61-64; Dimitrije Sergejevski, "Rimska cesta od Epidauruma do Anderbe" [Roman road from Epidaurum to Anderba], *GZM* 17 (1962): 74-109; Enver Imamović, "Rimska cestovna mreža na dubrovačkom području./Das Römische Strassennetz im Gebiet von Dubrovnik" *Izdanja HAD-a* 12 (1988): 119-127; Ivo Bojanovski, "Epidauritana archaeologica I," *Dubrovački horizonti* 26 (1986): 36-45; idem, *BiH u antičko doba*, 82-87; Željka Pandža, Stanislav Vukorep, "Rimska cesta od Vida (Narona) u dolini Neretve do sela Cicina – Hum kod Trebinja" [Roman road from Vid (Narona) in the Neretva river valley to the village of Cicina – Hum near Trebinje], *Hercegovina* 2 (2016): 25-63.

⁵⁵⁴ Rare examples are the two portrait *stelae*, which offer only a limited insight into the artistic production of the area, see Dražen Maršić, "Dvije portretne stele iz antičkog Epidaura" [Two portrait *stelae* from Roman Epidaurum], *Archaeologia Adriatica* 11 (2008): 63-74; most recent overview of the epigraphic monuments in Glavičić, "Epigrafska baština," 43-62.

⁵⁵⁵ ILJug 1861/HD034159; Glavičić, "Epigrafska baština," 55-56; Bruno Bijadija, "Rimska religija i kultovi u Epidauru./Roman Religion and Cults in Epidaurum," *Archaeologia Adriatica* 6 (2012): 68-70.

⁵⁵⁶ Župa Dubrovačka includes the area between Dubrovnik in the west and Konavle with Cavtat in the east. CIL III, 08405/HD062032; Cambi, "Antički Epidaur," 208; Glavičić, "Epigrafska baština," 56; Bijadija, "Rimska religija," 72-73.

rusticae.⁵⁵⁷ Finally, a small relief fragment depicting Venus or a water Nymph is preserved in the Collection of Baltazar Bogišić in Cavtat, presumably also from a private context.⁵⁵⁸ Some authors have suggested the presence of an imperial cult in *Epidaurum*, although this claim remains without direct evidence.⁵⁵⁹

The scanty nature of the knowledge about the Roman *Epidaurum* poses certain obstacles in contextualizing and interpreting the material evidence of the cult of Mithras. On the one hand, it is hard to fully understand the topographic circumstances, the social catchment, or the meaning of the cult in the overall religious life of the area. On the other hand, with its two sanctuaries and two more fragments of tauroctony reliefs, the cult of Mithras presents the best-known cult from the *ager Epidauritanus* and offers an invaluable glimpse into the religious life of the area.

3.5.2 The Cult of Mithras in the Southern Dalmatia

3.5.2.1 Sv. Juraj (Đurađ) and Močići

The current survey of the cult of Mithras in southern Dalmatia is limited by several important factors. One of the sanctuaries – Sv. Juraj (Đurađ) hill above Cavtat (cat. no. 21; fig. 3.147) – does not exist anymore, and it is no longer possible to say anything about its original physical appearance, nor to understand its relationship with the natural surroundings or to provide wider topographic contextualization. Moreover, the cult relief has been cut off and is today stored in inadequate conditions, thus making an analysis of the already badly worn-out monument almost impossible (cat. no. 28, fig. 3.148).

Furthermore, only the small fragments of two other tauroctony reliefs have been found. The relief fragment found in Cavtat (cat. no. 29; fig. 3.149) is today lost and nothing is known about its original provenance since the relief was found already built into the private house. The original provenance of the tauroctony fragment from the Lopud island (cat. no. 32, image 3.159) remains unknown as well.

The best-preserved Mithraic monument from southern Dalmatia is the *mithraeum* with the rock-cut tauroctony in the village Močići in Konavosko polje (cat. no. 30, fig. 3.150-3.154). However, the site has been heavily altered in the past and is rapidly deteriorating due to exposure to the surrounding vegetation and weathering. Moreover, the rock-cut tauroctony

⁵⁵⁷ Cambi, “Antički Epidaur,” 208; Bijadija, “Rimska religija,” 70-72.

⁵⁵⁸ Cambi, “Antički Epidaur,” 206-207; Bijadija, “Rimska religija,” 84.

⁵⁵⁹ Cambi, “Antički Epidaur,” 208-209; Glavičić, “Epigrafska baština,” 54; Ivana Jadrić-Kučan, “Pokrajinski carski kult u rimskoj provinciji Dalmaciji./The regional imperial cult in the Roman province of Dalmatia,” *VAPD* 105 (2012): 57-63; Bijadija, “Rimska religija,” 75-79; Bijadija, “Contribution to the knowledge,” 312-314.

relief is badly worn out – only the general outlines of the relief are discernible, while the details of each figure are no longer visible (cat. no. 31, fig. 3.155).⁵⁶⁰ Although more conclusive insights about the individual Mithraic monuments from southern Dalmatia are hindered by their state of preservation and by the lack of information on their original contexts, few important considerations can be made.

Both *mithraea* from the area are situated within the natural surroundings, thus following the pattern established by the previously discussed *mithraea* from Dalmatia (Oltari, Rajanov grič, Jajce, Konjic). While Sv. Juraj (Đurađ) probably belonged to the rock-temple type of the *mithraeum*, Močići was once a proper natural cave before its original features have been altered by later modifications. Thereby, the cave in Močići remains so far the only natural cave used as *mithraeum* in Dalmatia.

Furthermore, both sanctuaries are located outside the city walls, in the vicinity of the local trade roads.⁵⁶¹ More precisely, *mithraeum* at Sv. Juraj (Đurađ), was located at the edge of the settlement, near an important road junction connecting *Epidaurum* with Popovo polje and hinterland on the one side, and with the Konavosko polje and *Risinium* on the other side, thus confirming the patterns established elsewhere in the province (*Arupium*, Jajce, Konjic) and the Empire.⁵⁶²

While the *mithraeum* at Sv. Juraj (Đurađ) probably served the urban population, mostly local Romanized families consisting predominantly of merchants and landowners, the situation with Močići is somewhat different.⁵⁶³ It is assumed that this area was primarily occupied by various agricultural and residential estates, e.g. *villae rusticae*, connected with the exploitation of the fertile soil in Konavle.⁵⁶⁴ Located further away in the countryside, the *mithraeum* in Močići

⁵⁶⁰ It has been repeatedly reported that the cult-relief was originally visible from the outside of the *mithraeum*, similar to the situation today. Recently, Stefanie Lenk described the *mithraeum* at Močići as an open-air sanctuary, see Lenke, "Settings," 72. However, such description of the site is a result of a misinformation – the current appearance of the *mithraeum* is a result of the later interventions in the site, for details see cat. no. 30.

⁵⁶¹ Traces of city walls are possibly preserved on the western side of the city, see Faber, "Prilog topografiji," 28, 34; Cambi, "Antički Epidaur," 197; on the roman road see Bojanovski, "Epidauritana," 39-42.

⁵⁶² Hensen, "Mithräum und Grab," 87-94; Gordon, "The Roman Army," 396-397.

⁵⁶³ Cambi, "Antički Epidaur," 193-194.

⁵⁶⁴ One of these *villae* was partially uncovered on the southern part of the Sustjepan peninsula, while the other one was discovered on the other side of the city, in the Tiha bay. For more details see Zaninović, "*Villae rusticae*," 92-95; Vlasta Begović, Ivančica Schrunck, "Rimske vile Istre i Dalmacije, I. dio: pregled lokaliteta./Roman Villas of Istria and Dalmatia I.," *PIAZ* 19 (2002): 122-123; Vlasta Begović, Ivančica Schrunck, "Rimske vile Istre i Dalmacije, II. dio: tipologija vila. Roman Villas of Istria and Dalmatia, Part II: Typology of Villas," *PIAZ* 20 (2003): 105, 108. Furthermore, traces of centuriation and irrigation system are still partially visible, Cambi, "Antički Epidaurum," 209-210.

was probably founded and attended by landowners, farm managers, and various laborers and servants attached to the agricultural estates in its surroundings.⁵⁶⁵

It is hard to determine when exactly were these sanctuaries were in use. The coins found at Sv. Juraj (Đurađ) are without their context, and both tauroctonies are too worn out to be helpful in this respect. They are certainly works of local stonemasons. The one from Sv. Juraj (Đurađ) reveals crude craftsmanship, with clumsy postures and disproportionate bodies, while the relief from Močići is a work of a more skillful stonemason. Nenad Cambi suggests later third or early fourth century for both reliefs.⁵⁶⁶

3.5.2.2. Lopud Island

A similar date is proposed for the tauroctony fragment found on the island of Lopud (cat. no. 32, fig. 3.159).⁵⁶⁷ The second-largest island of the Elaphites, located centrally between Koločep and Šipan, is a small island covering only five square kilometers. The island has a rugged coastline, with two major bays: the broader one on the west side, where today's settlement is located (Lopud), and the narrow and sandy one on the east side (Šunj), which remains uninhabited. Three hills stretch along the middle of the island: Ivanje brdo, Polačica (highest point of the island, 216 m.a.s.l.), and Pilača (fig. 3.158). The plateau in the interior of the island is rich in fertile soil, and it abounds in sources of freshwater.

Lopud, as well as the other Elaphiti islands, was part of the *ager Epidauritanus*, and its fertile land was divided among the rich families from the colony, who used it for the production of olive oil and wine.⁵⁶⁸ Unfortunately, little is known about the organization of the properties on Lopud, and Roman finds remain sporadic and with no systematic research.⁵⁶⁹ The fragment of the tauroctony relief was discovered secondarily used as building material inside the church of St. John the Baptist (fig. 3.160), which was built above some earlier structures, possibly belonging to a *villa rustica*.⁵⁷⁰ Although it is not certain whether the tauroctony fragment came

⁵⁶⁵ An overview of the *mithraea* associated with *domi* and *villae* in Rebeca Rubio Rivera, "Mitreos en domus y villae," *ARYS* 6 (2003-5): 125-134; a short overview in Bricault, Roy, *Les cultes de Mithra*, 189-194.

⁵⁶⁶ Cambi, "Antički Epidaurum," 207.

⁵⁶⁷ Ivan Šarić, "Tri antička spomenika s otoka Lopuda" [Three Roman monuments from the Lopud island], *Izdanja HAD-a* 12 (1987): 114-115.

⁵⁶⁸ Cambi, "Antički Epidaurum," 210.

⁵⁶⁹ Overview of the state of research and main finds in Maja Zeman, "Elafitsko otočje u antici i kasnoj antici" [Elaphites islands in Roman and Late Antique Period], in *Spomenici otoka Lopuda od antike do srednjeg vijeka*, Ivana Tomas and Maja Zeman (Zagreb/Dubrovnik: FF-Press, Ogranak Matice hrvatske u Dubrovniku, 2017): 11-34.

⁵⁷⁰ Zaninović, "Villae rusticae," 97; Zeman, "Elafitsko otočje," 19.

from this location or from elsewhere on the island, Ivan Šarić associated it with Mithraic communities composed of slaves and freedmen employed on the island estates.⁵⁷¹

Maja Zeman has recently suggested a possible link with the customs officials stationed on the island, and supports her claim with a funerary stele of a certain Ursus and Victoria (end of second/early third century AD), discovered in the vicinity of the church of St. Nicholas on the Polačica hill.⁵⁷² On the top of the stele writing utensils and wax, tablets are depicted, thus identifying Ursus as a clerk or a financial administrator (*vilicus*) of an estate.⁵⁷³ However, Zeman thinks he might have been involved with tax collection as well.⁵⁷⁴ Since the presence of customs officials is otherwise not attested in the entire *ager Epidauritanus* (although not impossible, given the importance of *Epidaurum*), and the inscription does not explicitly mention his occupation, this claim remains without support.

It seems more likely that, given the primarily agricultural character of the island, this is the context in which the cult appeared here. Moreover, the appearance of the cult on the Lopud island should be observed in the context of the island's association with *Epidaurum*, who played a central role in the economic, religious, and cultural life of its *ager*. The *mithraeum* in Močići was similarly linked to the neighboring *villae rusticae*; the analogous posture of Cautopates, standing with his legs parallel to each other, is observable on both the tauroctony from Močići, as well as on the relief from Lopud. Although due to the fragmentary state of the Lopud relief further compositional and/or iconographic similarities cannot be established, the cult probably spread on the island, through the staff employed on the agricultural estates in the area.

The fragment of the tauroctony relief from Lopud, despite its state of preservation, is valuable material evidence of not only the cult of Mithras in southern Dalmatia, but it is one of only three Roman monuments discovered on the island so far. Besides the already mentioned funerary stele of Ursus and Victoria, a fragment of a marble sarcophagus discovered near the church of St. John the Baptist, an import of high quality, is among the rare examples of the Roman monuments from Lopud.⁵⁷⁵

3.5.3 Conclusions

The territory of southern Dalmatia, or, more precisely, *ager Epidauritanus*, remains largely silent when it comes to understanding the different facets of socio-economic, religious, and

⁵⁷¹ Šarić, "Tri antička spomenika," 115.

⁵⁷² AE 1989, 0616/HD018354; Zeman, "Elafitsko otočje," 20-22; Šarić, "Tri antička spomenika," 112-114.

⁵⁷³ Šarić, "Tri antička spomenika," 113-114.

⁵⁷⁴ Zeman, "Elafitsko otočje," 21-22.

⁵⁷⁵ Šarić, "Tri antička spomenika," 115; Zeman, "Elafitsko otočje," 20.

cultural life in this area. The strong presence of the cult of Mithras in the remote and secluded territory of southern Dalmatia is thus even more significant. As was the case in the previously discussed areas (the Gacka river valley, the Vrbas river valley, and the Neretva river valley), the cult of Mithras appears as the most visible and best attested religious phenomenon in the area concerned. Although this image is far from conclusive, the mere fact that the cult usually offers the only insight into the social and religious life of various parts of Roman Dalmatia speaks in favor of the importance of the cult in the province.

The unfortunate lack of epigraphic evidence related to the cult of Mithras in *ager Epidauritanus* makes the reconstruction of the cult's social background difficult.⁵⁷⁶ However, significant clues can be taken indirectly from the fact that *Epidaurum*'s primary economic resource was the exploitation of fertile soil, scattered in its environs. In addition, *Epidaurum* was a harbor city at the junction of important trade routes (both land and sea), in which a number of wealthy merchants and craftsmen are expected as well. In this sense, southern Dalmatia is different from the previous cases, where the cult of Mithras appeared primarily in the context of the Imperial customs network (Gacka, Vrbas, and Neretva valleys) and/or in the territories with mining activities (Vrbas and Neretva valleys). However, the involvement of slaves and freedmen associated with the agricultural estates of the area does not stand in contrast to the overall patterns of the cult.

Similar to Gacka, Vrbas, and Neretva valleys, the *mithraea* of southern Dalmatia are placed in the natural surroundings as well. The advantageous geographical conditions, with the abundance of suitable caves, groves, and springs, make this part of the province an ideal setting for the cult. The agrarian community of *ager Epidauritanus*, whose welfare was dependent on nature, was certainly attracted to this aspect of the cult.

As mentioned earlier, little is known about the cults and deities otherwise venerated in *Epidaurum*. The presence of Jupiter is by no means surprising, while Minerva can probably be associated with the commercial activities of the local population. If the figure on the relief from Bogišić collection is identified as Venus, her link to fertility and prosperity should be considered; if, however, the figure is to be recognized as a water Nymph, the reference to nature is more than obvious.

⁵⁷⁶ Recently, a fragment of an inscription secondarily built into the church of Sv. Juraj (Đurađ) was published. Only the name, Quintus Fabius Sanga, a freedman of Quintus, has been preserved, dated to the early 40s of the first century BC. Although it was found at the place where the *mithraeum* was once located, the inscription is unfortunately too early to be linked with the cult. For more details about the inscription see Dino Demicheli and Niko Kapetanović, "Kvint Fabije Sanga – senatorski oslobođenik na natpisu iz Cavtata?/Quintus Fabius Sanga – A Senatorial Freedman in the Inscription from Cavtat?," *Diadora* 35 (2021): 139-152.

Perhaps the most interesting in this regard is the previously-mentioned dedication to Diana, goddess associated with a rural and pastoral context, as well as with peripheral areas as boundaries between domestic and wild. Taking into consideration her strong relationship with nature, the presence of her veneration in *Epidaurum* is, therefore, not unexpected.⁵⁷⁷

Although it is not possible to offer more conclusive insights about the particular religious preferences of the local community, a special tie with nature is notable. This is particularly evident in the effort made by the cult communities to honor Mithras in the natural setting.

⁵⁷⁷ Moreover, some scholars are eager to locate her temple below the present church where the inscription was found, see Domagoj Perkić et al., *Arheološka baština Župe dubrovačke/Archaeological Heritage of Župa dubrovačka* (Dubrovnik: Dubrovački muzeji, Općina Župa dubrovačka, 2007): 9; Bijadija, “Rimska religija,” 85.

3.6 Conclusions

This chapter dealt with the *mithraea* from the Roman province of Dalmatia. Altogether six *mithraea* (Oltari, Rajanov grič, Jajce, Konjic, Sv. Juraj, and Močići) from four different regions (Gacka valley, Vrbas valley, Neretva valley, and southern Dalmatia) were analyzed. There are several important similarities established between these regions. First concerns the dominant type of the Mithraic temple, i.e., the rock-temple, which appears in Gacka valley (Oltari, Rajanov grič), Vrbas valley (Jajce), and in the southern Dalmatia (Sv. Juraj). The *mithraeum* in Konjic is so far the only example of a freely-built *mithraeum*, while the one in Močići remains the only cave.

The desire to place *mithraea* in natural settings, usually at the edges of the settlements, is observable in all four regions. *Mithraea* are often located in places that can be described as their ideal settings, i.e., using natural rocky features, surrounded by rich vegetation, and frequently close to the water (rivers, streams, or water sources). Contrary to earlier opinion, which saw it as a sign of the poor and primitive character of the local Mithraic communities, their predilection for natural settings is interpreted as a result of a conscious choice. The close relationship with nature is observed as a particular local aspect of the cult, embedded in the local religious traditions.

As mentioned in the second chapter, the choice of natural settings distinguishes *mithraea* in Dalmatia from other provinces. In the way in which Dalmatian rock-temples are constructed, i.e., using the natural rock as a carrier of the cult-relief and as a rear wall of the *mithraeum*, they bear most similarities to the rock-temples from Bourg-Saint-Andéol (appendix 1, no. 14) and Reichweiler-Schwarzerden (appendix 1, no. 41).

Furthermore, the study has shown that the use of rock-temples and caves in Dalmatia is not associated with an early phase of the cult. They are present from the earliest appearance of the cult (Oltari and Rajanov grič, second half of the second century AD) and remain in use throughout the third and fourth centuries AD (Jajce, Sv. Juraj, Močići). Moreover, the Mithraic communities in question consisted of wealthy individuals. Their cult-images are often large (Oltari, Rajanov grič, Jajce), they are carefully designed and show a high degree of creativity. This is especially observable in the costly double-sided cult-relief from Konjic.

The individuals involved in the cult of Mithras in the previously analyzed regions were mostly members of the Imperial custom's office. Particularly in the cases of Gacka, Vrbas, and Neretva valleys links with *Poetovio* and its *portorium* personnel can be established. These are either attested explicitly on the epigraphic evidence (Vratnik) or by the reference to the particular mode of veneration shared by the *Poetovio*'s customs officials, indicated by the careful

selection of the side-scenes on the cult-images (*Petrae genetrici* at Oltari and Rajanov grič, *Transitus* in Konjic).

The similarity of the design of the cult-relief in Jajce *mithraeum* with the design of the cult-reliefs from Oltari and Rajanov grič point to the network of the *portorium* as a context in which the cult was spread in the Vrbas valley. Moreover, the presence of certain influences in its design from Dacia are observed, further reinforced by the presence of the imported tauroctony relief from the Sarmizegetusa workshop (Mile Donje).

The often widespread networks of the highly mobile members of the cult are further demonstrated by the double-sided relief from Konjic. Besides its obvious links with *Poetovio*, this type of relief witnesses the strong ties of the upper Neretva valley with the communities in the urban centers on the Adriatic coast, and the important role of *Narona* in facilitating the exchange between the two areas.

The Mithraic community in the upper Neretva valley, a highly isolated and remote area located high in the mountainous territory of the Dinarides, stands out as the one showing the strongest local character. This is indicated by the localized form of the god's name, *Meteri*, that appears on the cult-relief from Konjic *mithraeum* and the votive slab from Potoci.

Southern Dalmatia, the last region dealt with in this chapter, is the only region whose geography is not shaped by the riverine landscapes. Contrary to the previous regions, there are least clues about the Roman settlement (*Epidaurum*) and the cult as well. However, there are two *mithraea* known from this region (Sv. Juraj, Močići), and the cult of Mithras appears associated with the merchants and craftsmen active in the port-city, as well as with the freedmen in charge of the agricultural estates in its surroundings.

In all four regions, certain clustering of sites related to the cult of Mithras can be observed. This is particularly evident in the Gacka valley (figure 3.161), then in the Neretva valley (figure 3.163), and the southern Dalmatia (figure 3.164), while in the Vrbas valley the cult is attested on only one site other than Jajce (figure 3.162). This indicates the existence of local epicenters from which the cult spread in the surrounding area, mainly tied to the urban centers with significant economic and trade activities.

Although the evidence of the cult of Mithras is frequently scant, with finds often lacking stratigraphic context and further aggravated by the illegal appropriation of artifacts, it is in most cases the best attested religious phenomenon in the areas discussed so far. Besides its value for our knowledge of the cult of Mithras, it is an invaluable source for understanding the religious, social, and cultural history of the related Roman settlements.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this dissertation, Mithraic temples from the Roman province of Dalmatia were studied. The primary aim was to fill in the gap in the scholarship regarding Mithraic architecture and to point out the need for a comprehensive study of this important aspect of the cult. So far, publications were mostly dedicated to individual Mithraic temples, without further attempt to contextualize them against their local or regional backgrounds. Despite the growing number of recently discovered *mithraea*, which are slowly changing the outdated paradigms and contributing to a better understanding of the development of the Mithraic temple, no updated catalog and study of the monuments appeared. Especially *mithraea* in Dalmatia remain less known and usually omitted from important discussions. Therefore, this dissertation provided their fresh and updated examination.

An important issue tackled by this dissertation was the typology of Mithraic temples, otherwise not systematically discussed in the scholarship. A simple typological categorization distinguishing two basic types of Mithraic architecture was introduced: freely-built temples and temples incorporating natural features (caves, natural or artificial, and rock-temples). The analysis has shown that in Dalmatia the second type of Mithraic temples prevails, with four examples of rock-temples (Oltari and Rajanov grič, *Arupium*; Jajce, Sv. Juraj (Đurađ), *Epidaurum*) and one cave (Močići, *Epidaurum*), while the freely-built temple is attested only in Konjic. The comparison with other provinces has demonstrated the contrast between Dalmatia, where the second type is dominant, and the remaining provinces of the Roman Empire where the first type is most represented.

A critical historiographical survey in chapter two has shown the persistence of Franz Cumont's ideas about the Persian origins of the cult throughout the scholarship, including the few regional publications dealing with Mithraic temples from Dalmatia. It has shown how the origins of the Mithraic temple and the related question of its typology have been interpreted through the Cumontian paradigm. In these studies, Dalmatian *mithraea* are usually given as an example that confirms this hypothesis. According to these views, caves and rock-temples pertain to the initial, primitive phase of the cult, often tied to the poor and rural communities, while the freely-built temples are a sign of a developed stage of the cult, linked mainly to the urban centers. However, the discussion in subchapter 2.6 has demonstrated the untenability of such a linear understanding of the development of the Mithraic temple and has shown that various regional sets of circumstances need to be taken into the account.

Furthermore, the dissertation has shown that, in the case of Dalmatia, temples located in natural settings were associated with different deities both from pre-Roman and Roman times, and are, therefore, deeply embedded in the cultural and religious history of the province. The predilection of the local Mithraic communities for installing temples in natural settings is thus seen as part of their local identity. Although the issue of the possible continuities between the pre-Roman and Roman beliefs and practices in Dalmatia is yet to be studied, the current survey points to their close relationship and serves as an impetus for further research.

The detailed survey of the *mithraea* from Dalmatia in the third chapter further confirmed the untenability of the Cumontian paradigm. It has shown that in Dalmatia, rock-temples and caves have been used since the earliest appearance of the cult in the second half of the second century AD (Oltari, Rajanov grič) throughout the third and fourth centuries AD (Jajce, Sv. Juraj, Močići). Therefore, it was shown that the idea of the universal linear development of the Mithraic temple should be abandoned in favor of a regional approach to the phenomenon.

The evidence presented in the third chapter focused on six *mithraea*: Oltari/Kraljev stolac and Rajanov grič from *Arupium*, Jajce, Konjic, and Sv. Juraj (Đurađ) and Močići from *Epidaurum*. The chapter was divided into four subchapters, each corresponding to a different geographic region consistent with the spatial distribution of *mithraea*: the Gacka river valley (Oltari and Rajanov grič, *Arupium*), the Vrbas river valley (Jajce), the Neretva river valley (Konjic), and the southern Dalmatia (Sv. Juraj and Močići, *Epidaurum*).

Contrary to previous studies, a holistic approach was taken: *mithraea* were studied as integral parts of the physical, urban, and cultural environment in which they appear, and other relevant finds (inscriptions, reliefs, statues, small finds, etc.) were included as well. This approach allowed better understanding and contextualization of the cult, as well as a more accurate interpretation of the evidence discussed. As this study has shown, monuments of the cult of Mithras are in most cases a rare and often best-attested evidence of the Roman settlements in Dalmatia. In that sense, they are an invaluable source not only for the study of the cult of Mithras but for understanding the cultural, religious, and social history of the province.

Based on the analysis of all the relevant evidence in the third chapter, several important conclusions about the cult of Mithras in Dalmatia can be drawn. The overall close relationship with nature was observed in all four regions, with *mithraea* usually located at the edges of the Roman settlements. It was demonstrated that mainly individuals from the Imperial customs office were involved in the cult, particularly in the cases of Gacka, Vrbas, and Neretva valleys whose links with *Poetovio* and its *portorium* personnel was proven.

Besides the already known inscriptions from Vratnik, this link was further demonstrated by the presence of the particular mode of veneration shared among the *Poetovio*'s customs officials (*Petrae genetrici* at Oltari and Rajanov grič, *Transitus* in Konjic). Moreover, influences from the territory of *ager Poetoviensis* were recognized in the designs of reliefs from Gacka and Vrbas valleys. The widespread networks of the often mobile members of the local Mithraic communities were further identified in the presence of certain influences from Dacia (design of the cult-relief in Jajce), also attested by the imported tauroctony relief from the Sarmizegetusa workshop (Mile Donje).

In contrast to the first three regions, the analysis has shown how the presence of the cult in southern Dalmatia is primarily associated with the merchants and craftsmen, as well as with the freedman in charge of the agricultural estates attested in the area. Although the least researched area of Dalmatia, the two *mithraea* attested in this region, as well as other Mithraic finds, confirmed once again the importance of the cult for understanding the history of the province.

Furthermore, the dissertation has demonstrated the strong local character of the cult in the Neretva valley. The localized version of the god's name, Meteri, detected on the double-sided cult-relief from Konjic and votive slab from Potoci, has shown that the plurality of the individual, personal appropriations of the cult, i.e., cults of Mithras should be considered. Moreover, the presence of the double-sided relief in the *mithraeum* in Konjic was linked to a small number of Mithraic sites located on the narrow coastal belt, along the section of the Roman road running between *Iader* and *Narona*. The analysis of the so-far unnoticed close spatial distribution of these reliefs in Dalmatia has shown that the close communication between the individual Mithraic communities existed, which included the exchange of the art models and knowledge about the related rituals as well.

Small finds, otherwise absent from the studies of the cult of Mithras in Dalmatia, have been analyzed in light of the growing recognition of their importance for understanding the ritual aspects of the cult. Contrary to previous studies, which mainly focused on the coin finds and used them to date the individual *mithraea*, this dissertation has pointed out their low value for dating. By considering all the available evidence of the small finds, and comparing them with *mithraea* from other provinces, it was shown the so far overlooked ritual of coin deposition was practiced at Oltari, Jajce, and Konjic *mithraea*, while the practice of shared meal was observed at *mithraea* in Oltari and Konjic.

Furthermore, the remaining evidence of the cult of Mithras in Dalmatia was gathered in appendix 2, which is so far the only updated list of Mithraic sites from the province that

includes monuments from outside Croatia as well (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia). Altogether twenty-three sites and forty-five objects are listed. Moreover, in appendix 1, an updated list of 108 *mithraea* from the entire Roman Empire was composed. Although the scope of this dissertation does not allow for a wider comparative study of *mithraea* between various provinces, based on appendix 1 some preliminary conclusions can be drawn. The largest number of *mithraea* is attested in Italy, with altogether twenty-nine Mithraic temples (appendix 1, no. 49-77). In Rome (appendix 1, 66-73) and Ostia (appendix 1, 50-64), where the largest number of the *mithraea* from Italy are located, most of them were installed inside the public or private buildings.

An observable pattern is found in Britannia as well. Here, *mithraea* are mostly built close to the military forts (all five examples, appendix 1, no. 1-5). The second largest number of *mithraea* occurs in Germania, with altogether twenty-four Mithraic temples (appendix 1, no. 24-47). Here, most of the *mithraea* are located at the edges of the settlements, and several are associated with graveyards (appendix 1, no. 30, 43, 44, 47). In Pannonia, where the third-largest number of *mithraea* are attested (thirteen temples, appendix 1, no. 90-102), Mithraic temples are mostly associated with larger urban centers of the province (*Aquincum*, *Carnuntum*, *Poetovio*, appendix 1, no. 90, 91, 93-98).

In Gallia, almost all of the eleven Mithraic temples are, as discussed in the second chapter, associated with the indigenous water and healing sanctuaries (appendix 1, no. 13-23). *Mithraea* in Moesia are perhaps least researched and not much is known about their relationship with settlements (four *mithraea*, appendix 1, no. 79-82). However, they appear located away from the main urban centers, often in the hilly surroundings at the edges of the settled areas (appendix 1, no. 79-82). In Noricum (six *mithraea*, appendix 1, no. 83-88), several *mithraea* are located along the roads on the outskirts of the settled areas, linked either to the *mansio* (appendix 1, no. 85, 88) or a customs station (appendix 1, no. 83). That the cult was spread in the hinterland of the province as well is attested by *mithraea* in Zgornja Pohanca (appendix 1, no. 84) and Ruše (appendix 1, no. 87). Although in Dacia, Hispania, Macedonia, Numidia, and Raetia only one *mithraeum* can be identified in each, the future research will surely enlarge this number and it will be possible to say more about them.

Overall, the dissertation has shown the importance and value of the analyzed material that transcends the boundaries of the province. Especially, the holistic approach to the study of *mithraea* has proven fruitful and has allowed for a better understanding of the cult in Dalmatia. Due to its limited scope, it was not possible to conduct a comparative study of the Mithraic

architecture between the various provinces. However, this dissertation is an important step in this direction.

5. CATALOG OF MONUMENTS FROM THE THIRD CHAPTER

3.2 The Gacka River Valley

1. Altar dedicated to Mithras

Find site: St. Michael's church, Vratnik.

Current location: Archaeological museum, Zagreb.

Measures: 0.67 x 0.42 x 0.26 m

Date: 151 AD – 200 AD

Figures: 3.8, 3.9.

The limestone altar was found in 1891, together with an unidentified coin, in the vicinity of St. Michael's church in Vratnik. The top of the altar is damaged, particularly its right side. It is topped with a decorative cornice filled with two rows of half-palmettes that meet in the corners in the shape of pseudo-acroteria (visible on the preserved left side). The sides are smooth and bear no decoration.

The inscription runs on the front side of the altar:

I(nvicto) M(ithrae) / spelaeum cum / omne impen/sa Hermes C(ai) / Antoni Rufi / praef(ecti) veh(iculorum) et / cond(uctoris) p(ublici) p(ortorii) / ser(vi) vilic(i) Fortu/nat(i servus) fecit (Zović, Kurilić, 2015).

Ljubić: *Fortu/nat(i)*; Patsch, Brunšmid, Zaninović, Glavičić, Miletić, Rendić-Miočević: *Fortu/nat(ianus)*; LUPA: *Fortu/nat(us)*; ROMIC I: *Fortu/nat(us/ianus)*.

Literature: AE 1894, 0022; CIL III 13282; LUPA 6023; HD 028597; Ljubić 1892, 1-4; Brunšmid 1898, 189-190; Patsch 1900, 94-95; Brunšmid 1907, 135-136, no. 237; CIMRM 1846; Zotović 1973, 19, no. 13; Zaninović 1984, 35; Clauss 1992, 149-150; Glavičić 1993/1994, 67-68; Miletić 1996, 148, no. 1b; Ljubović 1998, 387-388; Ljubović 2000, 168-169, no. 4; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 59, no. 1b; Glavičić 2001, 222-223; Glavaš 2010, 14; Glavičić 2013, 93-95; Rendić-Miočević 2015, 409; Zović, Kurilić, 2015, 425, no. 36; ROMIC I, 74, no. 8.

2. Altar dedicated to Mithras

Find site: St. Michael's church, Vratnik.

Current location: City museum, Senj.

Measures: 1.23 x 0.70 x 0.62 m

Date: 138 AD – 161 AD

Figures: 3.10 – 3.15.

The altar, discovered in 1932, was found built into the base of one of the saint's sculptures in the St. Michael's church in Vratnik. The upper part of the marble altar is formed by double-laced smooth pulvini on two sides. On the sides of the altar sacrificial utensils are depicted: on the left side a libation bowl (*patera*) and on the right side a pitcher (*urceus*).

The inscription runs on the front side of the altar, inside a double frame:

S(oli) I(invicto) M(ithrae) / Faustus / T(iti) Iul(i) Saturni/ni praef(ecti) vehi/color(um) et cond/uct(or)is p(ublici) p(ortorii) ser(vus) vil(icus) / pro se et suis / v(otum) s(solvit) l(ibens) m(erito) (HD 020913).

Literature: CIMRM II 1847; ILJug II, 920; HD 020913; Abramić 1933, 140; Klemenc 1940, 5; CIMRM 1847; Zotović 1973, 19-20, no. 14; Clauss 1992, 149-150; Glavičić 1993/1994, 68-69; Miletić 1996, 149, no. 1c; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 60, no. 1c; Glavičić 2001, 222-223; Glavaš 2010, 14-15; Glavičić 2013, 95-97; Rendić-Miočević 2015, 409; Zović, Kurilić 2015, 425, no. 37; ROMIC I, 76-77, no. 9.

3. Mithraeum I

Location: Oltari (Altars)/Kraljev stolac (King's chair/throne) in Špilničko polje (Cave field), near Založnica, Prozor (*Arupium*).

Date: second half of the second century AD – mid fourth century AD?

Figures: 3.22 – 3.24, 3.40.

Mithraeum I is located at a site variously called “kod oltara” (at Altars), Oltari (altars), or Kraljev stolac (King's chair/throne) in Špilničko polje (Cave field) near Založnica. The remains of the *mithraeum* lie inside the grove surrounded by ploughland, some fifteen minutes walking distance from the Vital hill and southwest from the ruins of St. Mark's church. Today, the *mithraeum* is approached by a local road, half a kilometer north of the main road connecting Otočac and Ličko Lešće.

Nothing of the *mithraeum*'s architecture is preserved, except the peculiar rock formation bearing the rock-cut tauroctony relief (see the following entry). The first archaeological excavations on the site were conducted in 1896 by Jerko Pavelić, a museum commissioner from the former National museum in Zagreb (today Archaeological museum). Already Pavelić noted that the site has been amateurishly dug over several times before, thus irreversibly destroying its original stratigraphy. Moreover, the few finds Pavelić managed to dig at the time were sent to the museum in Zagreb in a little box, containing finds from few other sites as well, together with some items that Pavelić had bought from the local shepherds. In a small probe he dug in front of the relief, several fragments of Roman roof tiles (*tegulae*, *imbrices*) were found, as well as some coarse-ware sherds, a fragment of a larger *terra sigillata* plate, few fragments of *Firmalampen*, two small fragments of glass vessels, fragments of *amphorae*, a lump of lead with a nail used to fasten the stone, and a yellowish quartz.

Furthermore, Pavelić found seven bronze coins from the period between the mid-third century AD to the mid-fourth century AD: two of emperor Gallienus, one of Claudius II, one of Constantine the Great, one of Constans or Constantius II, one of Urbs Roma, and one illegible – probably from the Constantinian period.

Another archaeological survey of the site was undertaken by Tatjana Kolak in 2012. The new excavations confirmed once again that the original layers have been disturbed by previous unprofessional diggings, and no traces of *mithraeum*'s architecture have been found. However, some small archaeological finds were discovered: a worn-out *dupondius* (probably of

Antoninus Pius, figure 3.36), a small number of fragments of everyday coarse ceramics, a couple of fragments of finer provincial ceramics, two fragments of fine ceramic plates of African provenance, and a small number of tile fragments. Furthermore, a *Firmalampe* with a workshop stamp bearing the name of (V)IBIAN(VS) has been found (figures 3.34, 3.35).

Most interesting find is a dark grey-brown clay shard of a cult vessel decorated with a lizard appliqué (figure 3.37). The lizard is shown with his four legs at the sides, with triangular incised eyes and one hole marking his nose (or mouth); his tail is damaged. The perforated structure of the clay (the result of the combustion process) emulates the skin of the lizard. The fragment was probably part of the belly of the cult vessel.

Based on the numerous fragments of the roof tiles found at the site, it is assumed that the *mithraeum* had an abutting construction, which probably included some of the surrounding rocks as well (rock-temple).

Literature: Ljubić 1882, 12-28; Pavelić 1897, 158; Patsch 1900, 82-84; Brunšmid 1901, 110-112; CIMRM 1851; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 10; Glavičić 1968, 19; Zotović 1973, 67, no. 86; Medini 1975b, 89; Beck 1984, 356-371; Miletić 1996, 150-151, no. 2b-c; Krznarić 1999, 35-36; Glavičić 2001, 223; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 62-63, no. 3a-b; Kolak 2012, 555-557; Glavičić 2013, 97-98; Rendić-Miočević 2015, 403-426; ROMIC I, 70-71, no. 4; Walsh 2019, 33, 112, E.1.

4. Rock-cut tauroctony

Location: Mithraeum I, Oltari/Kraljev stolac, Prozor (*Arupium*).

Dimensions: 1 x 1.58 x 0.46 m

Date: second half of the second century AD – mid fourth century AD?

Figures: 3.24 – 3.33.

A large tauroctony relief is carved on the naturally concave surface of the rock, today mostly overgrown with moss and lichen.⁵⁷⁸ A deep niche, 0.80 meters above the current ground level, is dominated by an almost rectangular central field. The top part of the niche is missing. It once had a semicircular upper frame, evoking the cave vault. It is indicated by the rear side of the central niche. Here, the tool traces indicate that the rock has been worked-out and intentionally shaped to form an arch surrounding the tauroctony relief (figure 3.30).⁵⁷⁹ Two side protruding surfaces (wings) flank the central field, following the sloping semicircular curve of the niche. Below the relief there is a ledge, which makes the entire assembly resemble the chair form – thus the toponym Kraljev stolac (King's chair/throne, figures 3.32, 3.33).

The central field is occupied by the two main protagonists of the tauroctony scene. Mithras is shown pressing the already slumped bull with his left leg (partially broken off), with his right

⁵⁷⁸ Šime Ljubić, who first described the site, interpreted the scene as a representation of a soldier with a shield on his back, sitting on the side of some "recumbent monster." He identified the torchbearers as infantrymen wearing helmets and short dresses, holding a torch and an inverted spear, respectively. He further identified a vessel depicted next to each of them, see Šime Ljubić, "Putopisne arheološke bilješke od Ogulina do Prozora" [Travel archaeological notes from Ogulin to Prozor], *VAMZ* 4/1 (1882): 19. The vessels were no longer visible when I visited the site and later descriptions do not mention them as well.

⁵⁷⁹ Patsch thought that there was no arched frame, see Patsch, *Die Lika*, 83. However, an old illustration from 18th century military map hints at the semicircular frame surrounding the composition, see Ante Glavičić, "Arheološki nalazi iz Senja i okolice II" [Archaeological finds from Senj and surroundings II], *Senjski zbornik* 3/1 (1968): 19, sl. 4 (figure 3.35).

leg stretched over the bull's hind leg. The god's head is missing.⁵⁸⁰ With his left arm (upper part chipped off) Mithras is pulling the bull's head by its nostrils, while with his extended right hand (almost completely broken off) he plunges a dagger at the bull's shoulder (figure 3.26). Mithras is shown wearing a dress-like tunic, that falls in two flared layers above his knees. The tunic is fastened with a belt indicated by a strong horizontal line below Mithras's chest. A cape flutters behind his back, gathered in a semicircular smoothly rendered layer falling over his shoulders and chest. The curve of the bull's long tail ends on the left wing, close to the figure of the Cautopates. Its end appears split in an ear of wheat.

A dog can be discerned above the bull's bent right foreleg, presumably striving towards the wound on the bull's neck, while scorpion pincers and part of its body can be recognized next to the bull's hind leg hoof, reaching towards the bull's genitals. Other usual animal companions, the snake and the raven, cannot be identified. Above the bull's head traces of the bust of Luna are visible, likely her shoulders (figure 3.30).⁵⁸¹ The bust of Sol presumably occupied the symmetric position on the opposite side of the relief, which is unfortunately missing.

On the right wing, worn-out figure of Cautes stands with his legs crossed, holding a raised torch (figure 3.28). His counterpart, Cautopates, strikes an analogous pose on the left wing, holding a lowered torch (figure 3.29). The upper part of his body is missing. The torchbearers are dressed similarly to Mithras, although only the outlines of their dress are visible.

Remains of the rock-birth scene are visible to the right of Cautopates' figure.

Literature: Ljubić 1882, 12-28; Pavelić 1897, 158; Patsch 1900, 82-84; Brunšmid 1901, 110-112; CIMRM 1851; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 10; Glavičić 1968, 19; Zotović 1973, 67, no. 86; Medini 1975b, 89; Beck 1984, 356-371; Miletić 1996, 150-151, no. 2b-c; Krznarić 1999, 35-36; Glavičić 2001, 223; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 62-63, no. 3a-b; Kolak 2012, 555-557; Glavičić 2013, 97-98; Rendić-Miočević 2015, 403-426; ROMIC I, 70-71, no. 4; Walsh 2019, 33, 112, E.1.

5. Mithraeum II

Location: Rajanov grič, Čovići village, Prozor (*Arupium*).

Date: second half of the second century AD – mid fourth century AD?

Figures: 3.41 – 3.45.

Mithraeum II is located at Rajanov grič (Rajan's hill), at the village Čovići, some twenty minutes-walk south from Oltari. Today, remains of the *mithraeum* stand exposed on the right bank of the Rajan's brook, on a slightly elevated field close to the main road (D-50, Otočac-Liško Lešće). No archaeological excavations have been carried out at the site and no small finds have been recorded.⁵⁸² Besides the rock bearing the tauroctony relief (see the following

⁵⁸⁰ Mithras' head was originally somewhat detached from its background, see figure 3.37. Ljubić thought that the god's head was rendered as a high-relief, see Ljubić, "Putopisne," 18. Rendić-Miočević recently provided an additional information in support to this claim: during his excavations in the area in the 1970s, local workers have informed him that Mithras' head "originally stuck out," and was at some point broken off and used in children's games, see Rendić-Miočević, "Monuments," 411.

⁵⁸¹ Zotović even recognized a crescent on her shoulders, see Zotović, "*Mitraizam*," 67, no. 86.

⁵⁸² Zotović mentioned two coins (Constantine II, Constans) found here, but unfortunately this information is a misunderstanding of Patsch's report on coin finds from Oltari, see Zotović, "*Mitraizam*," 61, no. 73; same misinformation in Glavičić, "Mithräen *sub divo*," 224.

entry), no traces of its architecture were found either.⁵⁸³ *Mithraeum* was built combining the natural rocky features and an abutting construction, i.e., it was a rock-temple.⁵⁸⁴

Literature: Fras 1835, 228-229; Ljubić 1882, 19; Patsch 1900, 84-85; Brunšmid 1901, 112; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 11; CIMRM 1852; Zotović 1973, 61, no. 73; Beck 1984, 356-371; Miletić 1996, 151-152, no. 4; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 63-65, no. 4a-b; Rendić-Miočević 2015, 403-426; ROMIC I, 71-72, no. 5; Walsh 2019, 112, E.1.

6. Rock-cut tauroctony

Location: Mithraeum II, Rajanov grič, Prozor (*Arupium*).

Dimensions: 1.64 x 1.75 m

Date: second half of the second century AD – mid fourth century AD?

Figures: 3.46 – 3.50.

The tauroctony relief is placed inside a large shallow niche with a semicircular upper frame and a bottom ledge, similar to the Oltari *mithraeum*.⁵⁸⁵ The relief is badly worn out, as it stands exposed to the weathering and the surrounding vegetation. It is carved on the flat surface of the rock, contrary to the concave surface of the Oltari relief. There is an obvious contrast between the texture of the rock-surface that has been smoothed and adjusted to carry the relief and the natural, unworked appearance of the surrounding rock-surfaces.

Since the upper part of the rock is missing it is difficult to detect the original appearance of the entire setup, but it seems that the smooth rock-surface surrounded the central niche on its upper part as well, probably duplicating the semicircular upper frame of the niche (indicated by slightly curving lines at the outer borders of the smooth rock-surface). The smooth surface extends lower on the left side, while on the right side it finishes at the level of the ledge. Thus, an analogous concept was applied at both Rajanov grič and at Oltari.

The niche is dominated by the large figure of Mithras pressing the bull with his left leg and with his right leg stretched behind. In his right arm Mithras holds what appears to be a knife. He is wearing a two-layered flared tunic, similar to Mithras' dress at Oltari. A Phrygian cap is on his head, and a curved line behind his back indicates a billowing cloak. Animals (a raven, a scorpion, a dog, and a snake) are not recognizable.

At the very edges of the niche, the two disproportionally small torchbearers are placed (figures 3.49, 3.50). The one on the right-hand side is placed in the level of the bull's head, the details of his posture or dress are not recognizable. The left-hand side one stands with his legs crossed. It is not possible to say anything about the position of their torches. Possibly, the busts of Sol and Luna were placed above the figures of the torchbearers, on the now missing upper sections of the rock.

⁵⁸³ On the occasion of his visit to the site in the 1980s, Roger Beck was informed by a local guide that the surrounding rocks were dynamited and used as a building material, see Beck, "The Rock-Cut," 362. Some remains of the dynamited rocks are still visible today (fig. 3.42).

⁵⁸⁴ Zotović argued that this was an open-air *mithraeum*, Zotović, *Mitraizam*, 61, no. 73; similar argument also by Glavičić, "Mithräen *sub divo*," 224; in his later publication the author seems to have corrected his opinion, see idem, *The Cults*, 99-100. For the discussion of the open-air *mithraea* see chapter 2.

⁵⁸⁵ Julije Fras, the first one to describe the site, interpreted the scene as Hercules tearing up the lion, see Fras, *Vollständige Topographie der Karlstädter Militärgrenze* (Zagreb: Franz Suppan, 1835): 228-229;

At the lower left to the niche, a considerably large scene of Mithras' rock-birth is shown (figure 3.48). Patsch and Brunšmid were able to recognize a knife in his right, and a torch in his left hand – today no longer discernable. He wears a Phrygian cap and appears to emerge from the rock below.

Literature: Fras 1835, 228-229; Ljubić 1882, 19; Patsch 1900, 84-85; Brunšmid 1901, 112; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 11; CIMRM 1852; Zotović 1973, 61, no. 73; Beck 1984, 356-371; Miletić 1996, 151-152, no. 4; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 63-65, no. 4a-b; Rendić-Miočević 2015, 403-426; ROMIC I, 71-72, no. 5; Walsh 2019, 112, E.1.

7. Fragment of an altar dedicated to Mithras

Find site: St. Mark's cemetery, Podum.

Lost.

Measures: 0.48 x 0.48 x 0.36 m

Date: 151 AD – 300 AD.

A fragment of a limestone altar was found on the southern edge of the village Podum, close to *Arupium*, on the road Otočac-Založnica. It was used as a tomb cover in St. Mark's cemetery. Only the first line of the inscription is preserved:

D(eo) I(invicto) M(ithrae) / [----- (HD 053169).

Literature: CIL III 15087; HD 053169; CIMRM 1854; Patsch 1900, 90; Brunšmid 1901, 46; Miletić 1996, 151, no. 3; Glavičić 2001, 224; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 65, no. 5a; Rendić-Miočević 2015, 413; ROMIC I, 73, no. 7.

8. Fragment of a tauroctony relief

Find site: Obdulja creek, Sinac.

Current location: Archaeological museum, Zagreb.

Measures: 0.51 x 0.50 x 0.15 m

Figure: 3.63.

A yellow limestone fragment of a tauroctony relief was discovered in 1894. Patsch assumed that a *mithraeum* existed in the area; alternatively, Rendić-Miočević associated the relief with the so-far unconfirmed *mithraeum* at the nearby Kapelica.⁵⁸⁶ The relief is missing its upper-right part, including Mithras' head, most of the bull's body, the figure of Cautopates, and Luna. It is characterized by relative disproportionality of the figures and the specific way of rendering the thick, parallel pleats of the Mithras' dress (also visible on Cautes' dress), including the similar v-folds on his cloak, raven's wing and end of the bull's tail. Sol is depicted with seven radial sun rays, while bull's tail ends in a double ear of wheat. The snake crawls along the lower edge of the relief, while a scorpion pinches bull's testicles. A ray of sun darts from Sol in the direction of Mithras. Cautes is shown standing on a rock, with his legs parallel to each other.

⁵⁸⁶ Patsch, *Die Lika*, 88-89; Rendić-Miočević, "Monuments of the Mithraic Cult," 414-415.

Literature: Patsch 1900, 88-89; Brunšmid 1905, 65, no. 124; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 9; CIMRM 1949; Miletić 1996, 152-153, no. 5; Glavičić 2001, 224; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 65-66, no. 6a; Rendić-Miočević 2015, 413-414; ROMIC I, 72-73, no. 6.

3.3 The Vrbas River Valley

9. Mithraeum

Location: Bare (Swamp), Jajce.

Measures: 7 x 4.50 m

Date: late third/early fourth century AD

Figures: 3.82 – 3.88; 3.103 – 3.106.

The *mithraeum* was discovered in 1931, some 200 meters from the medieval fortress, on the wetland area called Bare (Swamp), a gently sloping terrain on the left bank of the river Pliva. According to some reports, the most valuable findings were taken from the site before the authorities were officially notified. Today, the *mithraeum* is covered with a protective glass construction (built in 2012), and is approached by a local residential road named Mitrasova ulica (Mithras' street). The site was discovered poorly preserved due to the water penetration, and the constant presence of moisture together with the tufa deposition probably caused the *mithraeum* to collapse at some point.

The *mithraeum* has a trapezoidal ground plan, probably conditioned by the configuration of the surrounding terrain. Typologically, it belongs to the rock-temples: the west part of the building used the natural marl rock on which the cult-image is carved, while the remaining walls were built using the irregular, roughly processed marlstone blocks. In this way, the builders tried to emulate the interior of a cave. The natural rock was partially used for the southern wall as well. It seems that the walls were constructed without the foundations, indicating a light roof construction (possibly a wicker-roof).

The original floor occurs 2.80 meters below the current floor level, and it was made using the stomped earth and sand. The floor in front of the cult-image consists of rubble: bone remnants, fragments of roof tiles, rusted iron fragments, and traces of black humus soil were detected.⁵⁸⁷

The entry lies on the eastern side – a limestone stepping stone was found as well, however, not *in situ*, but in the northeast corner of the *cella*.⁵⁸⁸ Paving stones were found only outside of the entrance.⁵⁸⁹

The remains of the left *podium* are preserved (width 1.80 meters), and no traces of the right one have been found. It is not possible to determine the exact location of the north wall as well, as the stone blocks were not found in their original position.

Some small finds were discovered in front of the cult-image: a brass lamp decorated with tendrils, with a hook and a chain for hanging (*Firmalampe*, Loeschke XXII); red clay *Firmalampe* and a fragment of another *Firmalampe*, both without a stamp, dated to the fourth century AD. A late antique silver spiral fibula was found (Almgren VI), together with sixteen

⁵⁸⁷ Sergejevski, "Das Mithräum," 13. Unfortunately, there is no detailed report on the discovered bones.

⁵⁸⁸ Sergejevski mentioned stone steps in the southwestern corner of the building as well, possibly indicating a second entry to the *cella*, see Sergejevski, "Das Mithräum," 13. The steps are not visible today.

⁵⁸⁹ Neither the stepping stone, nor traces of the paving are visible today.

coins (one bronze coin dated to the reign of Emperor Trajan, one *dupondius* of Antoninus Pius, one *sestertius* of Emperor Philip, one *denarius* of Septimius Geta, while the remaining twelve coins are smaller bronze coins from the Constantinian dynasty, from the fourth century AD).

Literature: Sergejevski 1937, 11-18; CIMRM 1901; Zotović 1973, 26-27, no. 30; Miletić 1996, 170-171, no. 22a; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 101-104, no. 23a; Walsh 2019, 112, no. E.3.

10. Rock-cut tauroctony relief

Location: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Measures: 1.68 x 1.50 m

Date: late third/early fourth century AD

Figures: 3.95 – 3.102.

The rock-cut tauroctony relief, the largest Mithraic cult-image from the province of Dalmatia, is placed inside the shallow gabled niche. The gable is decorated with palmettes (better visible on the left-hand side). Two stairs lead to the ledge below the relief (h. 1 meter). The relief has suffered several damages, observable on Mithras' hand and body, his cap, on the bull's head and parts of his body, as well as on the snake's head. Further damages were caused by modern visitors, e.g., the name "ALEN" that has been incised next to the bust of Luna.

The right-hand side of the rock has been cut off, and the modern-day glass construction cuts into its back (fig. 3. 103-3.106).

Inside a niche, tauroctony relief has been carved. Mithras, shown *en face*, wears a long tunic with a fluttering cloak and a Phrygian cap. He pulls the bull by its nostrils, and stabs the animal in its neck. The bull's tail ends in three smooth ears of wheat. Busts of Sol and Luna are in the upper left and right corners, respectively. A raven is perched on Mithras' fluttering cloak (fig. 3.97), while the snake crawls below the bull (fig. 3.99). The scorpion and the dog, barely recognizable today, are at their usual places (fig. 3.98).

Torchbearers are depicted standing inside the smaller gabled niches, placed on the frame of the main scene (fig. 3.101-3.102). On the left-hand side Cautopates holds an inverted torch (actually, the torch is parallel to the ground), and on the right-hand side Cautes holds a raised torch. They both have their legs parallel to each other. Above the figures of the torchbearers, small triangular niches are inserted, most probably used for lamps.

Sergejevski made few observations about the relief's original coloring: he noticed the blue paint on the Mithras' cloak, some red on his tunic and on Sol and Luna, black and red on the bull's body, and, according to his remarks, green was used for the relief's background. Today, only traces of red can be observed: on Sol's clothes and around the left edges of its figure; on Mithras' face, cloak, and folds on his chest; on the bull's neck; around the neck and left shoulder of Luna; on Cautopates' hat and around the small niche above him, as well as on Cautes' dress and around his hat.

The green color on the ledge and steps below the cult-image is the result of damp and moss (visible on the lower parts of the rock on the outside of the *mithraeum* as well). It seems that red colour was used extensively to outline the figures and make the relief stand out more clearly.

Literature: LUPA 30497; Sergejevski 1937, 11-18; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 14; CIMRM 1902; Zotović 1973, 26-27, no. 30; Miletić 1996, 170-171, no. 22b; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 101-104, no. 23b.

11. Statue of Cautopates

Find site: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Lost.

Measures: h. 0.55 m

Figure: 3.92.

The statue was found on the *podium*, together with three small altars (cat. no. 12, 13, 14). The figure is missing its head. The back side is not worked out, thus indicating that the statue once stood against the wall or podium. The torchbearer stands on a low pedestal with his legs apart and holds an inverted torch.

Literature: Sergejevski 1937, 16; CIMRM 1903; Miletić 1996, 171, no. 22d; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 103-104, no. 23c.

12. Small anepigraphic altar

Find site: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Current location: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Measures: 0.33 x 0.235 x 0.19 m

Figure: 3.91.

A small marlstone altar was found together with the statue of Cautopates and two other altars (cat. no. 13, 14) on the podium. It has a profiled base and head cornice. It is crowned with a pediment and corner acroteria. The altar was partially restored using the cement.

Literature: Sergejevski 1937, 15-16, no. 5; CIMRM 1904; Miletić 1996, 171, no. 22c; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 104, no. 23d.

13. Small anepigraphic altar

Find site: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Current location: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Measures: 0.425 x 0.27 x 0.215 m

Figure: 3.91.

A small marlstone altar was found together with the statue of Cautopates and two other altars (cat. no. 12, 14) on the podium. It has a profiled base and head cornice. Its crown is broken on the front side. The altar was partially restored using the cement.

Literature: Sergejevski 1937, 16, no. 6; CIMRM 1904; Miletić 1996, 171, no. 22c; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 104, no. 23d.

14. Small altar with inscription

Find site: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Current location: Franciscan museum, Monastery of St. Luke, Jajce.

Measures: 0.18 x 0.117 x 0.092 m

Figure: 3.94.

A small marlstone altar was found together with the statue of Cautopates and two other altars (cat. no. 12, 13) on the podium. It has a profiled base and head cornice with a simple crown. There are damages on the front crown, right upper corner, both lower corners and on the front and back of the plinth. The inscription is scratched on its front side:

Inv[icto] -----?

Literature: HD 033920; ILJug 1619, AE 1983, 0741; Sergejevski 1937, 15, no. 4; CIMRM 1904; Miletić 1996, 171, no. 22c; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 104, no. 23d.

15. Anepigraphic altar

Find site: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Current location: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Measures: 0.825 x 0.465 x 0.25 m

Figures: 3.89, 3.90.

The marlstone altar was found in front of the cult-image, together with two other altars (cat. no. 16, 17). It has a profiled base and head cornice. The crown is decorated with palmettes. There are damages on its crown (upper left part, right corner and on the sides) and the entire surface of the front and both sides below the cornice have been chipped off.

Literature: Sergejevski 1937, 14, no. 1; CIMRM 1905; Miletić 1996, 171, no. 22c; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 104, no. 23e.

16. Anepigraphic altar

Find site: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Lost.

Measures: 0.72 x 0.39 x 0.21 m

The marlstone altar was found in front of the cult-image, together with two other altars (cat. no. 15, 16). Sergejevski reported it was found damaged, without any details of its possible decoration.

Literature: Sergejevski 1937, 14, no. 2; CIMRM 1905; Miletić 1996, 171, no. 22c; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 104, no. 23e.

17. Anepigraphic altar

Find site: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Lost.

Measures: 0.45 x 0.47 x 0.17 m

Figure: 3.93.

The marlstone altar was found in front of the cult-image, together with two other altars (cat. no. 15, 16). It has a profiled base and head cornice. The crown was decorated with gable and corner acroteria. A circle was inserted inside the gable, and two rosettes were placed on each side of the gable. Both sides and the base were covered in sinter.

Literature: Sergejevski 1937, 14, no. 3; CIMRM 1905; Miletić 1996, 171, no. 22c; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 104, no. 23e.

18. A lion statue

Find site: Jajce *mithraeum*?

Current location: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Measures: max 0.50 m, 0.45 m, 0.15 m

Figures: 3.108 – 3.113.

A lion statue has been recently installed inside the *mithraeum*. Although the exact provenance of the statue is unknown, it appears to have belonged to the original inventory of the *mithraeum*. It is made of local limestone and shows a lion lying on a roughly trimmed plinth, with his head slightly turned to the left. The statue is badly worn out, with some parts missing (animal's left ear, upper part of its mouth and nose, and front part of the plinth) and there are several scratches on the front and rear part of the lion's body. The overall surface treatment is rough and the lion's body has been rendered schematically.

The thick strands of the lion's mane on the upper part of the its head turn into the shallow curls on the lion's neck. Only the small and round right ear is preserved. The eyes have been rendered as shallow round recesses (the right-side one is badly worn out). The mouth is wide open, with the slightly protruding tongue. On the back of the lion's body there is a small tail ending in thick curls. A roundish object is placed between the lion's forelegs, possibly an animal head/skull.

Literature: unpublished.

19. A brass *askos*

Find site: Jajce *mithraeum*.

Current location: Private possession.

Measures: h. 0.15 m, w. 1.22 kg, v. 4 dcl

Date: first century AD

Figure: 3.107.

A brass *askos*, a ritual vessel used for pouring oil or wine, was reportedly originally found in the *mithraeum* but is kept in private possession. A casted vessel has a smooth surface and an elegant handle fixed to its main body. The handle is attached in form of trefoil palmette, with

the grooved stem tightened by the two rings in the middle. According to the simple handle decoration, *askos* is dated to the first century AD, and it is believed it was imported from the southern Italian workshops. At the later period, the *askos* probably ended up in the *mithraeum* as a votive gift.

Literature: Domić Kunić 2001, 39-102.

20. Tauroctony relief

Find site: Donje Mile village.

Lost.

Measures: 0.28 x 0.21 x 0.03 m

Date: c. 250 AD

Figure: 3.117.

The relief was discovered in 1912 some three kilometers west from Jajce, on the right Pliva riverbank. It was found together with other broken stones and boulders in the vicinity of the creek called Pećine (Caves). The relatively small rectangular relief plate is made of local limestone and represents the standard scene of tauroctony. Mithras is shown stabbing the bull, with a raven perched on his fluttering cloak. A dog, a snake, and a scorpion are at their usual places, as well as the busts of Sol and Luna. Cautopates stands with his legs crossed on the left-hand side, holding two inverted torches (one in each hand). On the right-hand side Cautes stands in a matching pose, holding two raised torches.

Literature: Patsch 1925, 137-155; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 15; CIMRM 1906; Zotović 1973, 34-35, no. 46; Miletić 1996, 172, no. 23a-b; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 104-105, no. 24a-b.

3.4 The Neretva River Valley

21. Mithraeum

Location: Repovica hill, Konjic.

Measures: 9 x 5 m

Date: 300 AD – 350 AD

Figures: 3.125.

The *mithraeum* is located at the right bank of the Trstenica stream, on the slopes of the Repovica hill (right bank of the river Neretva). It was excavated in 1897 by Carl Patsch; however, the archaeological remains of the *mithraeum* were overgrown by the thick forest and the exact location of the *mithraeum* is unknown today. According to Patsch, the *mithraeum* was found on a bare and rather steep slope, approximately 35 meters above the valley. The dense trees and vegetation that once surrounded the *mithraeum*, Patsch noted, offered natural protection against the deposits of mud and sand caused by the heavy rainfalls, which, eventually, caused the collapse of the building.

The rectangular *mithraeum* is the only example of the freely-built temple in Dalmatia. It consisted of one room, the *cella*, built on a single level. Excavated walls were built on 0.40 meters high and 0.73 meters thick foundations; they were all approximately 0.50 meters thick,

and the best-preserved northeastern wall was preserved up to 1.10 meters in height when Patsch excavated the building. The southeastern walls were apparently destroyed by the water. The northern wall of the *mithraeum* was sunk into the hill, while the remaining three walls rose freely. A local limestone from Repovica hill was used for its construction, cut in irregular rectangles and bound with lime mortar (also used for a thin coating of the stone).

It appears that the *mithraeum* was vaulted (indicated by the wedge-shaped stones found inside the temple), and it had a tiled roof. Probably wooden steps led down to the *cella*, as there were no traces of stone steps in the western wall, where the entry to the *mithraeum* was most probably installed. The floor was made of a mixture of earth, sand and broken stones.

A podium was identified on the north wall, 1.30 meters wide and 4.30 meters long; no traces of the south podium have been found. The podium had foundations and face built of stone, while the earth mixed with broken stones was used as its filling. It seems that it did not stretch along the entire length of the building, but was approximately half its length.

Patsch further noted several small finds. They include a water bowl made of a soft, grey limestone (diameter 0.37 meters), decorated with incised concentric rings; two grinding stones; a bronze clasp and a horseshoe – all probably a votive offerings. Furthermore, fragments of five glass vessels have been found: three fragments of a jug made of transparent glass, six fragments of a green bowl, seven fragments of a larger green vessel with a belly, two fragments of a transparent smaller vessel of unknown shape, and a fragment of a very fine, small, transparent vessel of unknown shape. In addition, fragments of clay vessels of different sizes and shapes have been found around the entire *cella*.

Altogether ninety coins (all bronze, except for one silver and six billon coins) were found scattered around the entire sanctuary, as well as outside the eastern wall (marked with F on the groundplan). They span from Emperor Trajan (98-117 AD) to Emperor Arcadius (383-408 AD).⁵⁹⁰ Coins found outside the *mithraeum* were, according to Patsch, washed-out here by the water; however, another possibility is that they were intentionally deposited at this spot. Animal bones were found as well: bovine molar tooth and a rib, tarsal bone of a sheep, lamb rib, a boar incisor tooth, and multiple bird bones.

Literature: Patsch 1897, 629-656; Patsch 1899, 186-211; CIMRM 1895; Zotović 1973, 29-31, no. 35; Miletić 1996, 173-174, no. 27a; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 107, no. 26a; Walsh 2019, 112-113, E.4.

⁵⁹⁰ Following coins were found: Trajan (98-117 AD), one bronze coin; Hadrian (117-138 AD), one bronze coin; Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD), three bronze coins; Julia Mamaea (222-235 AD), one silver coin; Gordian III (238-244 AD), one billon; Gallienus (253-268 AD), two billons; Cornelia Salonina (253-268 AD), one billon; Claudius II (268-270 AD), three billons; Aurelian (270-275 AD), two billons; Tacitus (275-276 AD), one billon; Florianus (276 AD), one billon; Probus (276-282 AD), three billons; Numerianus (282-284 AD), one billon; Diocletian (285-305 AD), one billon and two bronze coins; Maximian (286-310 AD), one bronze and one billon; Galerius (305-311 AD), one billon and three bronze coins; Licinius (308-324 AD), three bronze coins; Constantine I (306-337 AD), two bronze coins; Constantine II (337-340 AD), three bronze coins; Constans I (337-350 AD), seven bronze coins; Constantius II (337-361 AD), nine bronze coins; Julian (361-363 AD), two bronze coins; Valentinian I (364-375 AD), ten bronze coins; Valens (364-378 AD), one bronze coin; Gratian (375-383 AD), three bronze coins; Valentinian II (375-392 AD), seven bronze coins; Theodosius I (379-395 AD), one bronze coin; Arcadius (395-408 AD), ten bronze coins.

22. Double-sided tauroctony relief with inscription

Find site: Konjic *mithraeum*.

Current location: National museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo.

Measures: 0.59 x 0.825 x 0.10 m

Date: 301 AD – 350 AD

Figures: 3.128 – 3.130.

A double-sided cult-relief was found in the sanctuary of the *mithraeum* (A on the groundplan). The relief is made of soft grey limestone from the Repovica hill and measures. It was found broken into several pieces, with some parts missing (mostly upper parts of the slab) and with some damages on the preserved parts. The front has a simple frame. It is divided into central field showing the tauroctony scene, with Mithras stabbing the bull accompanied by Cautopates to the left and Cautes to the right. The scorpion pinches the bull's testicles, while the snake and the dog strive toward the bull's wound. Raven is perched on the arched frame above the main scene; on the right upper side, the lower part of the Mithras' rock-birth can be recognized. The arch carries the following inscription:

Deo Soli Inv[ict]o Mete[ri].

LUPA, HD: *Met(h)e[rae]*; Šačić: *Met(h)e[ri]*.

Patsch was able to see traces of red color on some places of the relief, today no longer visible. The main scene is flanked by two side scenes on each side, organized vertically. Of the upper scenes, only the lower part of the right-hand one is preserved, showing the lower part of the figure and an altar with flames. By the analogy with other scenes, it can be identified as a handshake of Mithras and Sol, the so-called pact of friendship, in which Mithras and Sol shake hands in front of a blazing altar. Probably, Sol was shown in the analogous upper left-hand part of the Konjic relief, which is now missing (only part of the foot remains). The lower side scenes show two figures carrying a boar (left-hand side) and a ram (right-hand side) by their hind legs.⁵⁹¹

The reverse of the relief is more damaged than its front – the upper part of the relief is missing, as well as the upper part of one of the figures on the right-hand side. The relief has a simple frame, and there are no side scenes. It shows the banqueting scene. The relief from Konjic is the only visual representation of the ritual meal that includes figures other than the main celebrants (Mithras, Sol, and torchbearers). On either side there is a twisted Corinthian column, which probably supported an arch (its traces are visible on the left-hand side). The scene features Mithras and Sol banqueting on the hide of the slaughtered bull. The two reclining figures hold their right arms lifted, while with their left hand they recline on the table. Mithras

⁵⁹¹ The animals have been variously interpreted as a pig and a sheep, see Miletić, *Mitraizam u rimskoj provinciji Dalmaciji*, 174-175; or as a pig and a ram, see Lipovac Vrkljan, *Arheološke potvrde*, 108-109; Lipovac Vrkljan, *Posebnosti tipologije i ikonografije*, 230-231. However, the indicated fur on the left-hand side animal seems to point to its identification as a boar, rather than a pig; the curved horns on the right-hand animal belong to the ram, and not to the sheep.

misses his Phrygian cap; Sol holds a *rhyton* in his right hand and is shown wearing clothes, rather than being represented heroically naked, as customary.

Mithras and Sol are surrounded by four standing figures. The figure on the left wears a Phrygian hat and offers a *rhyton*; the analogous headware can be assumed on the right-hand side figure, who offers a cup. The two outer figures are shown with animal masks: the one on the left-hand side with the raven's mask and the one on the right-hand side with the lion's. They approach Mithras and Sol in a similar gesture like the inner two figures, although it is not clear what objects they hold in their hands. A seated lion and a *mensa tripes* with four loaves of bread are placed before the dining table.

Two more relief fragments were found, probably parts of the decoration of the arch on the revers: a fragment with arched frame and a representation of a Phrygian hat with two sun rays and another fragment with a representation of a base with a *krater* on top of it (fig. 3.138).

Literature: CIL III 14617; LUPA 22318; HD 052641; Patsch 1897, 634-643; Patsch 1899, 191-199; Skok 1915, 15; CIMRM 1896; Gabričević 1952, 19-25; Gabričević 1953, 142; Gabričević 1954, 49-56; Selem 1896, 202-203; Miletić 1996, 174-175, no. 27b; Bugarski 1996/1997, 230-234; Miletić 2001, 283-288; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 107-111, no. 26b; Lipovac Vrkljan 2002, 131-140; Cambi 2002, 439-445; Šačić 2014, 270.

23. Fragment of a relief

Find site: Konjic *mithraeum*.

Lost.

Measures: 0.163 x 0.115 x 0.015 m

Figure: 3.127.

Fragment of the relief made in red sandstone (C on the groundplan). The fragment shows an arm bent in elbow, perhaps part of the scene showing Saturn reclining on a rock.

Literature: Patsch 1897, 643; Patsch 1899, 199; CIMRM 1897.

24. Altar dedicated to Mithras

Find site: Konjic *mithraeum*.

Current location: National museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo.

Measures: 0.76 x 0.36 x 0.29 m

Date: c. 300 AD

Figure: 3.126.

The limestone altar is crowned with a simple profilation and carries the following inscription:

S(oli) I(nvicto) M(ithrae) / V<e=F>tur[i(us)] / Lucius / v(otum) s(olvit) (HD 052642).

Literature: CIL III 14222, 1; HD 052642; Patsch 1897, 644-655; CIMRM 1898; Clauss 1992, 146; Miletić 1996, 173-174, no. 27c; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 106-107, no. 26c; Šačić 2014, 270.

25. Tauroctony relief

Find site: Vratnica, near Lisičići.

Current location: Lapidary of the Franciscan monastery, Visoko.

Measures: 0.44 x 0.565 m

Date: 201 AD – 300 AD

Figure: 3.133.

The rectangular limestone relief was discovered accidentally on the private ploughland in Vratnica near Lisičići, approximately ten kilometers northwest of Konjic. Although Patsch mentioned numerous wall stones found together with the relief, the *mithraeum* was not found. The relief has a simple frame and carries a standard tauroctony scene. Mithras as a bull killer is in the center, flanked by Cautes on the right and Cautopates on the left. They are accompanied by the dog, the serpent, and the scorpion at their usual places, while the raven is perched on the cave arch. Bull's tail ends in three ears of wheat. The bust of Sol with a radiate crown is in the upper left-hand corner and in the upper right-hand corner a bust of Luna with a crescent is placed. The relief is damaged on the right-hand side (the right side of Cautes is missing, together with the frame), and the upper right and left side above the busts of Sol and Luna as well.

The bottom carries an inscription:

L(ucius) Antonius Menander Aphro/disieys(!) <I=L>nvicto / Au<g=C>(usto) v(otum) f(ecit)
(HD 052643).

Literature: CIL III 13859; ILJug 1748; HD 052643; LUPA 30621; Patsch 1896, 252-253; CIMRM 1893-1894; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 17; Zotović 1973, 20, no. 15; Miletić 1996, 177, no. 29; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 105-106, no. 25a; Šačić 2014, 271.

26. Votive stone slab with an inscription and graffiti

Find site: Bijelo Polje, Potoci near Mostar.

Current location: National museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo.

Measures: 0.78 x 0.325 x 0.163 m

Date: 301 AD – 400 AD

Figures: 3.134 – 3.137.

The monument was found in the hamlet Potoci, situated in the central part of the Bijelo polje, approximately ten kilometers north from Mostar. It was found on a private grassland called Grčine, along the right bank of the stream Potoci (Streams, today called Sušica). The bottom of the slab is damaged. Except for its smoothed sides the surface looks rather rough. The front has been divided with simple incised lines into three fields, the central one slightly higher and wider than the side ones. The central field carries a crude depiction of a rounded vessel (krater?), out of which two irregular wavy lines flow away to each side field. Two parallel

horizontal lines are incised at the bottom of the central field. Across the upper part of the slab, there is an inscription extending over its entire width:

Deo S//oli Invicto // Meteri // Aur(elius) Maximinus / Flavi(us) Marcellinus / Flavi(us) Marcellus.

LUPA, HD, Šačić: *Met(h)ri(!)*

Furthermore, below the vessel, there is a graffito: *Marcianus [---] IV / [---p?]in[us?] II ficus X.*

A similar graffito appears on the left side: *Rumanus (!)* (=Romanus).

The backside of the slab shows that it has been re-worked into a semi-column, which was left unfinished judging by its crude surface. Since the slab was found together with Juno's altar which also shows signs of secondary usage, it is possible that they were collected elsewhere and brought to Grčine, to be re-used as building materials or furnishings (of the Late Antique church?).⁵⁹² The slab was originally probably used as a fountain revetment.

Literature: AE 1906, 0184; ILJug 0112; CIMRM 1892; HD 022124; LUPA 30315; Patsch 1904a, 264-274; Patsch 1904b, 33-34; CIMRM 1907; Gabričević 1953, 185-187; Gabričević 1954, 51; Zotović 1973, 43, no. 59; Miletić 1996, 176, no. 28; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 111-112, no. 27; Šačić 2014, 272-274.

3.5 Southern Dalmatia

27. Mithraeum

Location: Sv. Juraj (Đurađ) hill, Cavtat (*Epidaurum*).

Date: late third/early fourth century AD?

The rock-cut tauroctony relief was discovered by local sailors in the nineteenth century. There have been no archaeological excavations at the site, and the relief was subsequently cut out from the rock, and built into the wall of the private house in Cavtat (part of the Collection Baltazar Bogišić, Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences). Moreover, the present church of Sv. Juraj (Đurađ, fifteenth century) and the adjoining cemetery have been built on the site, thus irreversibly destroying the remains of the *mithraeum* (figure 3.147). The site was first described by Sir Arthur Evans, and it is from his short report that the main features of this *mithraeum* are known. Besides the cult relief, Evans noted the outlines of the two square altars hewn out of the rock. He did not note any inscriptions on them. Furthermore, he found three small brass coins inside a natural rock fissure below the tauroctony relief: one of Aurelian (270-275 AD), one of Constantius Chlorus (293-306 AD), and one of Constantius II (337-361 AD).

⁵⁹² Bojanovski assumed that the late antique church was built above the *mithraeum* or in its immediate vicinity, Bojanovski, *BiH u antičko doba*, 97.

Although he found no traces of the rest of the building, Evans supposed it was artificially constructed against the natural rock, which can be presumed by the analogy with Kraljev stolac, Rajanov grič, and Jajce. Thus, the *mithraeum* at Sv. Juraj hill can be recognized as an example of the rock-temple type.

Literature: Evans 1877, 387-388; Evans 1883, 19-20; CIMRM 1883; Rendić-Miočević 1953, 271-272; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 19, fig. 3; Zotović 1973, 76, no. 103; Miletić 1996, 177-178, no. 30a; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 116-118, no. 32a-b; Bijadija 2012, 80; ROMIC II, 87-88, no. 16.

28. Rock-cut tauroctony

Find site: Sv. Juraj (Đurađ) hill, Cavtat (*Epidaurum*).

Current location: Baltazar Bogišić Collection, Cavtat.

Measures: 0.50 x 0.80 m

Date: late third/early fourth century AD?

Figure: 3.148.

The rectangular tauroctony relief measures 0.50 x 0.80 meters, and it once occupied the east side of the hill rock. The relief is badly worn out has several damages. It is currently displayed inside a dark space with limited options for on-sight investigation and recording. The main protagonists are discernable: Mithras and the bull occupy the central position, while Cautopates stands on the left-hand side with the lowered torch, and Cautes on the right-hand side hold the torch raised. Both torch-bearers stand with their legs crossed. The Phrygian cap is recognizable on Mithras' head, together with the folds of his fluttering cloak, and folds on his tunic. Bull's tail ends in three ears of wheat. Remains of the busts of Sol and Luna can be identified above the torch-bearers, while the animals (raven, scorpion, dog, and snake) are no longer discernible. The frame around the tauroctony scene seems to suggest it was once carved inside a rectangular niche.

Literature: Evans 1877, 387-388; Evans 1883, 19-20; CIMRM 1883; Rendić-Miočević 1953, 271-272; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 19, fig. 3; Zotović 1973, 76, no. 103; Miletić 1996, 177-178, no. 30a; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 116-118, no. 32a-b; Bijadija 2012, 80; ROMIC II, 87-88, no. 16.

29. Fragment of a tauroctony relief

Find site: Vragolov house, Cavtat (*Epidaurum*).

Lost.

Measures: 0.80 x 0.50 m

Figure: 3.149.

A fragment of the tauroctony relief, made of white marble,⁵⁹³ has been found in 1950 in Cavtat, in private possession of the family Vragolov.⁵⁹⁴ The fragment is today lost, and it is not known where was the relief originally found. It was never published, and only a brief description and

⁵⁹³ Rendić-Miočević reported the fragment he found at the Vragolov house was made of white marble. Otherwise, according to CIMRM and ROMIC II entries, the fragment was made of limestone.

⁵⁹⁴ This information comes from Rendić-Miočević. However, in his dissertation Gabričević mentioned the City museum in Cavtat as a place where the fragment was kept. According to the most recent information obtained from Helena Puhara, curator and archaeologist from Museums and Galleries of Konavle, fragment was indeed kept at the Vragolov house but it is not known where it is today.

a small photograph exists. The fragment belongs to the right-hand side of the tauroctony scene: Cautes (missing lower legs and top of his head) stands with his legs parallel to each other and holds a raised torch, while next to him a dog strives towards the bull's wound.⁵⁹⁵

Literature: Gabričević 1951, 28, no. 21; Gabričević 1954, 38, no. 20, fig. 4; CIMRM 1884; Rendić-Miočević 1953, 272; Miletić 1996, 178, no. 30c; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 117, no. 32c; Bijadija 2012, 82; ROMIC II, 88, no. 17.

30. Mithraeum

Location: Močići, Cavtat (*Epidaurum*).

Date: late third/early fourth century AD?

Figures: 3.150 – 3.154.

On the site called Tomina jama (Tom's cave), in the village Močići in Konavle (part of *ager Epidauritanus*), a limestone cave with a rock-cut tauroctony has been preserved (4.50 x 5.60 m). No archaeological excavations were ever conducted, and the present state of the locality (overgrown by vegetation and trees) make any survey difficult. The original appearance of the cave has altered through time, due to the exposure to the surrounding vegetation and weathering, as well as the human interventions. Since there was a source of potable water on the site, the lower part of the cave was at some point enclosed in a vaulted cistern by local villagers (the earliest note was made by Evans in the nineteenth century). Today, the vault is no longer there, however, the traces of the cistern are still visible in the floor tiling and parts of the cistern floor setting. Although it is difficult to discern the original appearance of the cave, it has been repeatedly noted in the literature that the *mithraeum* consists of *pronaos* and *cella*.⁵⁹⁶ The on-sight investigation did not yield any proof for this claim. The cave is missing its upper vault and sidewalls, which were probably removed when the cistern was installed; however, according to Evans's description and stone configuration on the upper part of the cave, the site was originally a proper cave.⁵⁹⁷

Literature: Evans 1883, 20-22, fig. 7; Gabričević 1952, 53, note 9; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 18, fig. 2; Rendić-Miočević 1953, 271-276=Rendić-Miočević 1989, 531-537; CIMRM 1882; Zotović 1973, 37-38, no. 48; Miletić 1996, 178-179, no. 31; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 118-119, no. 33; Cambi 2006, 207-208; Bijadija 2012, 81-82; Cambi 2013, 26; Perinić 2015, 215-228; Perinić 2016, 41, figs. 7 and 7a; ROMIC II, 86-87, no. 15; Lenke 2017, 71-72; Walsh 2019, 112, E.2.

⁵⁹⁵ Evans further described a white-carnelian gem he found in Cavtat, depicting a male figure sacrificing a bull before the burning altar, with a crescent moon and a rayed sun, as Mithraic. However, the figure lacks the characteristic Phrygian cap and billowing cloak, and seems to stab the bull in its back. Due to the fact that the figure cannot be positively identified as Mithras, the object is not included in the catalog. Gem is today lost. See Evans, *Antiquarian researches*, 23, fig. 8; Miletić, *Mitraizam*, 178, no. 30b; Lipovac Vrkljan, *Posebnosti tipologije*, 117-118, no. 32d; Bijadija, "Rimska religija," 83; ROMIC II, 88, no. 18.

⁵⁹⁶ The claim was first made by Rendić-Miočević, who confused the entire space in front of the cult-image with *pronaos*, i.e., ante-chamber, and indentified the vault below the cult-image with the entrance to the *cella*. The cult-image stood at the rear wall of the *cella* of Mithraic sanctuaries, hence, in Močići it is *cella* that is (partially) preserved. See Rendić-Miočević, "Da li je spelaeum," 272-273.

⁵⁹⁷ Evans, *Antiquarian Researches*, 21. This claim was also confirmed by Helena Puhara.

31. Rock-cut tauroctony relief

Location: Močići *mithraeum*, Cavtat (*Epidaurum*).

Measures: 0.60 x 0.45 m

Date: late third/early fourth century AD?

Figure: 3.155 – 3.157.

The rectangular tauroctony relief, ca. 4 meters above the current ground level, is facing east and bears a standard scene of Mithras sacrificing the bull. The shallow relief has a thick frame (damaged on the upper side and the sides, still visible in the greater part on the lower side), and is badly worn out. The cave vault is executed in imitation of rocky surface (observable on the better-preserved section below Luna).⁵⁹⁸ Below, Mithras is shown in semi-profile while stabbing the bull, wearing a two-layered tunic, a billowing cloak, and a Phrygian cap. Cautopates (left-hand side) and Cautes (right-hand side) flank the two main protagonists of the scene, holding inverted and raised torches, respectively. They are both standing in semi-profile, with their legs parallel to each other. A scorpion pinches the bull's genitals, while a snake and a dog strive towards bull's wound. In the pediment spandrels, Sol and Luna are depicted: while today only Sol's rays are partially preserved, the bust of Luna with a crescent on her shoulders is still discernible.⁵⁹⁹ Next to Sol, a raven is perched on the rim of the pediment.⁶⁰⁰ On the rock opposite to the tauroctony relief, another figural depiction has been recognized, of which only the legs survive (today very hard to discern, figure 3.157). Rendić-Miočević identified them as part of Silvanus' figure, however, Nenad Cambi has recently suggested a more plausible association with some Mithraic figure/scene.⁶⁰¹ Since the figure, or what is left of it, is barely discernible today, it is not possible to provide more details.

Literature: Evans 1883, 20-22, fig. 7; Gabričević 1952, 53, note 9; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 18, fig. 2; Rendić-Miočević 1953, 271-276=Rendić-Miočević 1989, 531-537; CIMRM 1882; Zotović 1973, 37-38, no. 48; Miletić 1996, 178-179, no. 31; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 118-119, no. 33; Cambi 2006, 207-208; Bijadija 2012, 81-82; Cambi 2013, 26; Perinić 2015, 215-228; Perinić 2016, 41, figs. 7 and 7a; ROMIC II, 86-87, no. 15; Walsh 2019, 112, E.2.

32. Fragment of a tauroctony relief

Find site: Church of St. John the Baptist, Ivanje brdo, Lopud island.

Current location: Treasury of the parish office, Lopud island.

⁵⁹⁸ The cave vault is usually described in literature as pediment; however, a more careful observation of the relief reveals that this is not the case. The section of the cave below the bust of Luna still shows signs of imitation of the rocky stone surface. Moreover, the section of the vault on the opposite side, although damaged and worn out, does not look as straight.

⁵⁹⁹ Beyond the rays, the depiction of Sol is hardly recognizable today. Evans' drawing depicts only a rayed star and a crescent, Evans, *Antiquarian Researches*, 21, fig.7 (image 12g). Gabričević, who was the first one to visit the site after Evans (1951), recognized the bust of Luna with a crescent, while for the Sol he assumed only the seven-rayed star, Branimir Gabričević, "Elementi mazdejskog vjerovanja na jednom natpisu iz Solina," *VAHD* 54 (1952): 53, note 9. His identification of seven-rayed Sol has been repeated in literature (see above). However, it is more likely that Sol was also depicted in a form of a bust, as customary. Similar design can be observed on the tauroctony from Lisičići and on the tauroctony from Pritoke (see appendix).

⁶⁰⁰ Lipovac Vrkljan erroneously described the raven as sitting on Mithras' fluttering cloak, Lipovac Vrkljan, *Posebnosti tipologije*, 119.

⁶⁰¹ Rendić-Miočević, "Da li je spelaeum," 273; Cambi, "Antički Epidaurum," 207-208; Cambi, "Religija Silvana," 26, note 46.

Measures: 0.30 x 0.25 x 0.35 m

Date: 3 AD.

Figure: 3.159 – 3.160.

A fragment of a tauroctony relief has been found during the excavations of the church of St. John the Baptist (eleventh century) in the 1980s (fig. 3. 160). The fragment is made of soft, yellowish stone and has been reworked on its back to adjust the slab for its new purpose (unknown). The preserved part (lower left-hand side) of the tauroctony scene is worn-out and has suffered several damages. The figure of Cautopates, holding an inverted torch with his right arm, is shown in semi-profile with his legs apart. He is wearing the usual attire, consisting of a short tunic and a cape. Only the rear part of the bull's body is preserved, with part of his hind leg and a tail, together with the outlines of Mithras' leg (broken off). The curved surface of the fragment suggests that the relief once stood in a rounded niche.

Literature: Šarić 1988, 113-115, fig. 2; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 115-116, no. 31; Bijadija 2012, 82-83; Zeman 2017, 20-22; ROMIC II, 86, no. 14.

6. ILLUSTRATIONS

2. TYPOLOGY OF MITHRAIC TEMPLES



Figure 2.4: Rock-temple, Rožanec



Figure 2.5: Rock-temple, Bourg-Saint-Andéol



Figure 2.6: Rock-cut tauroctony, Kato Thermes



Figure 2.7: *Mithraeum* in Fertőrákos



Figure 2.8: Tauroctony relief from Zgornja Pohanca



Figure 2.9: Cave "la Adam," Târgușor

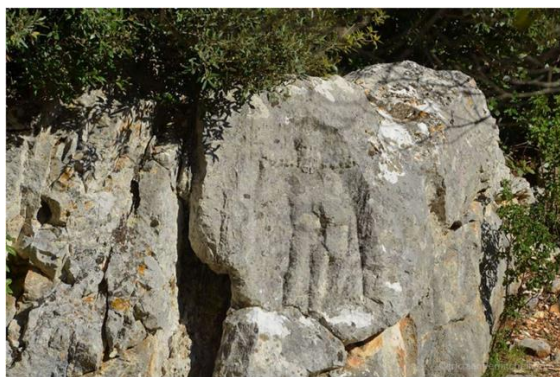


Figure 2.10: Hercules relief, Rasohe quarry



Figure 2.11: Rasohe quarry



Figure 2.12: Rock-cut relief of Dioscuri, Dračevo



Figure 2.13: Drawing of Jupiter's altar, Vital hill



Figure 2.14: Jupiter's altar, Vital hill



Figure 2.15: "Canape," Vital hill



Figure 2.16: Klis

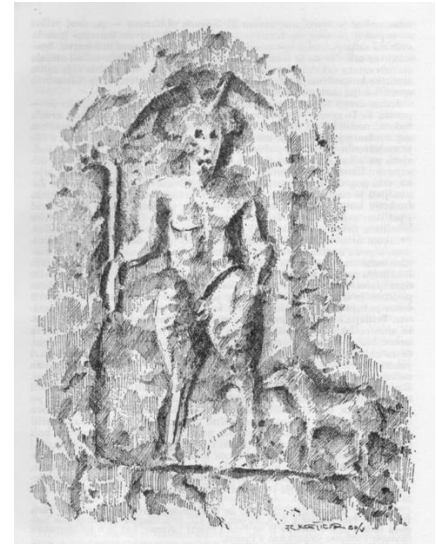


Figure 2.17: Drawing of rock-cut relief of Silvanus, Klis



Figure 2.18: Kozjak



Figure 2.19: Rock-cut image of Silvanus, Kozjak

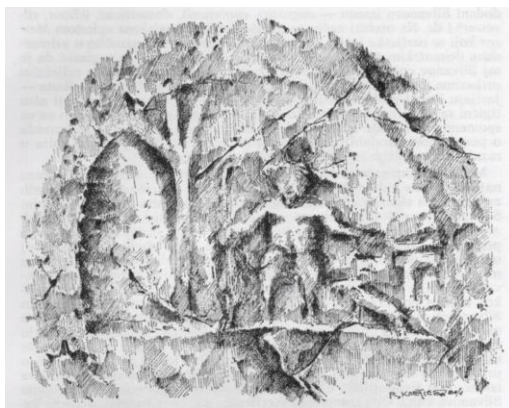


Figure 2.20: Drawing of Kozjak relief



Figure 2.21: Diana and Silvanus, Aequum



Figure 2.22: Entry to Vodna jama cave



Figure 2.23: Fragment of Nymphs and Silvanus relief



Figure 2.24: Drawing of Bindus Neptunus altars from Privilica



Figure 2.25: Spila Nakovana, Pelješac peninsula



Figure 2.26: St. Philip and Jacob cave, Marina



Figure 2.27: Rača cave, Lastovo



Figure 2.28: Inside of the Rača cave, Lastovo

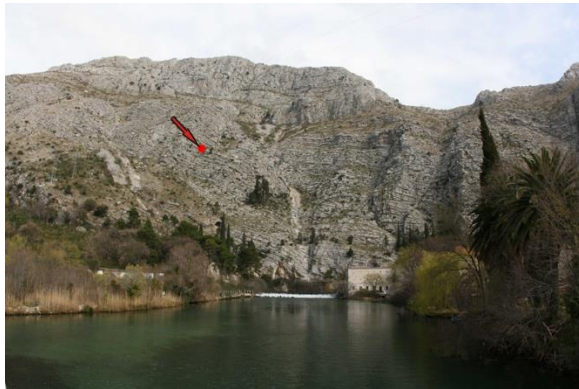


Figure 2.29: Vilina špilja (red arrow), Rijeka Dubrovačka



Figure 2.30: Inside of the Vilina špilja

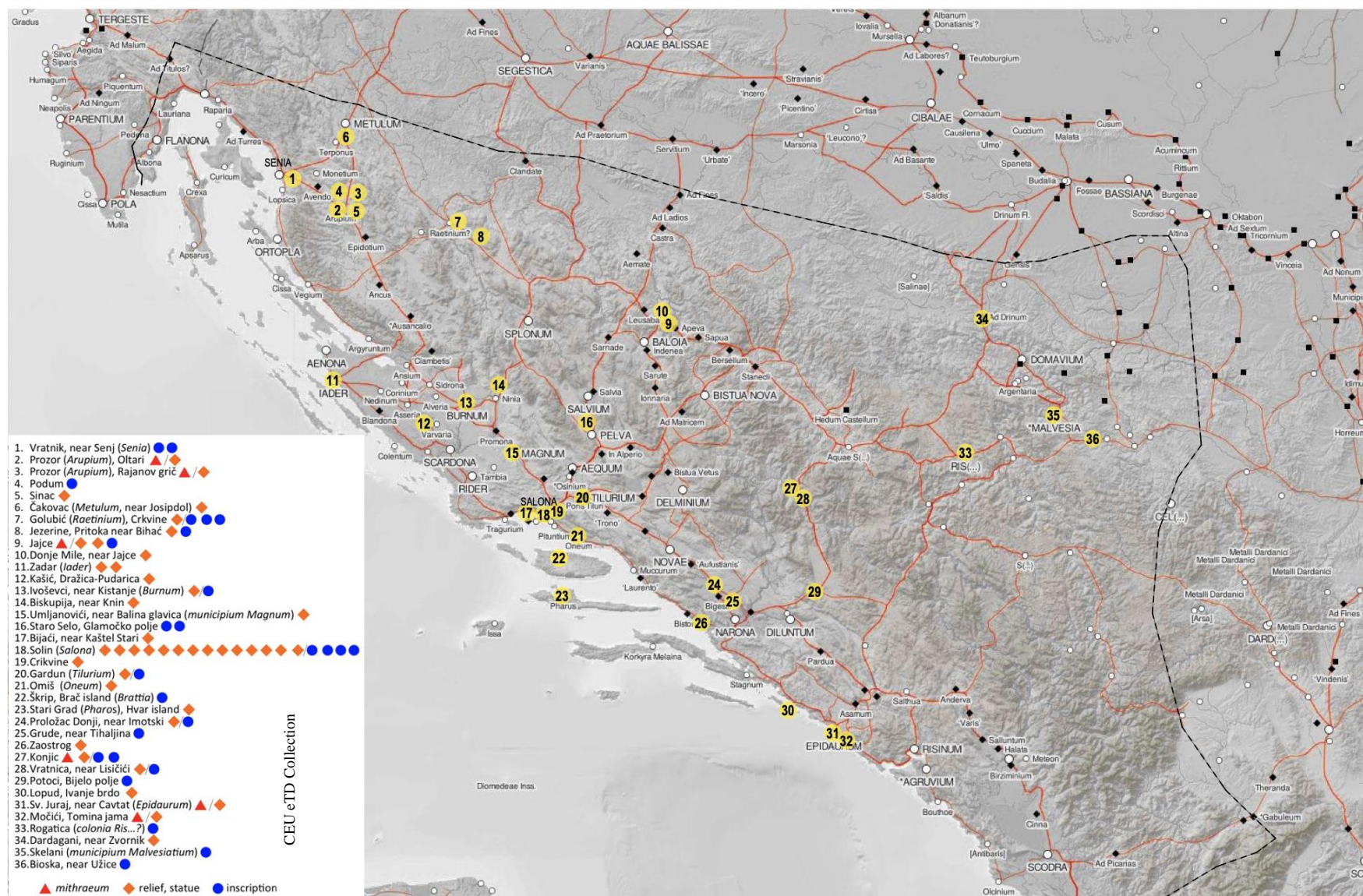


Figure 2.31: Mithraic sites from Dalmatia (N. Silnović)

3. TOPOGRAPHY OF MITHRAIC TEMPLES IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF DALMATIA

3.2 The Gacka River Valley



Figure 3.1: View of the Gacka valley



Figure 3.2: Gacka river

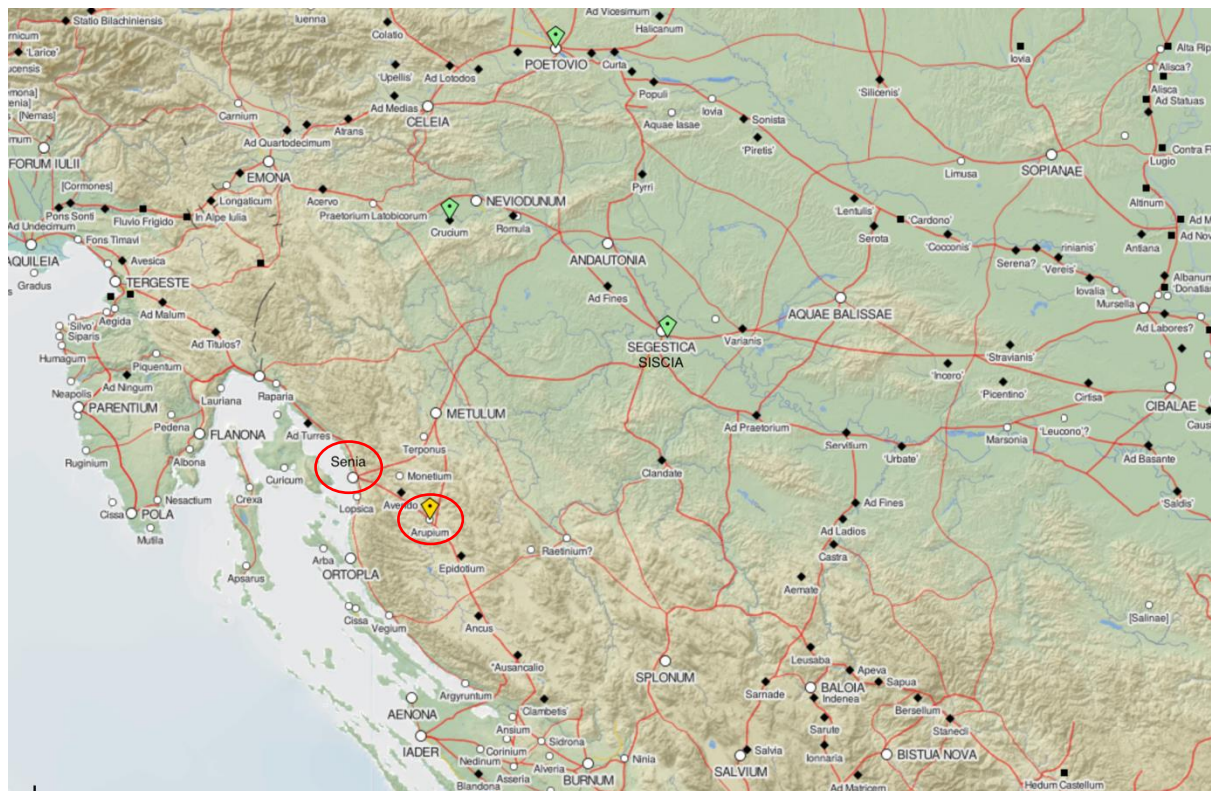


Figure 3.3: Location of *Senia* and *Arupium*

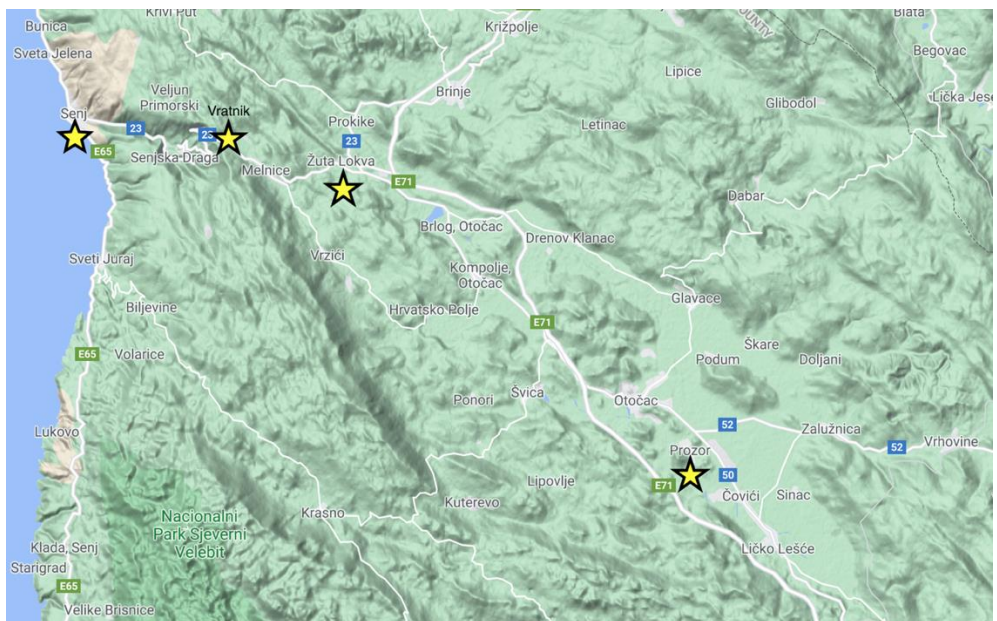


Figure 3.4: Map showing the location of Senj, Vratnik, Žuta Lokva and Prozor



Figure 3.5: View of Senj



Figure 3.6: View of Senjska draga and Vratnik

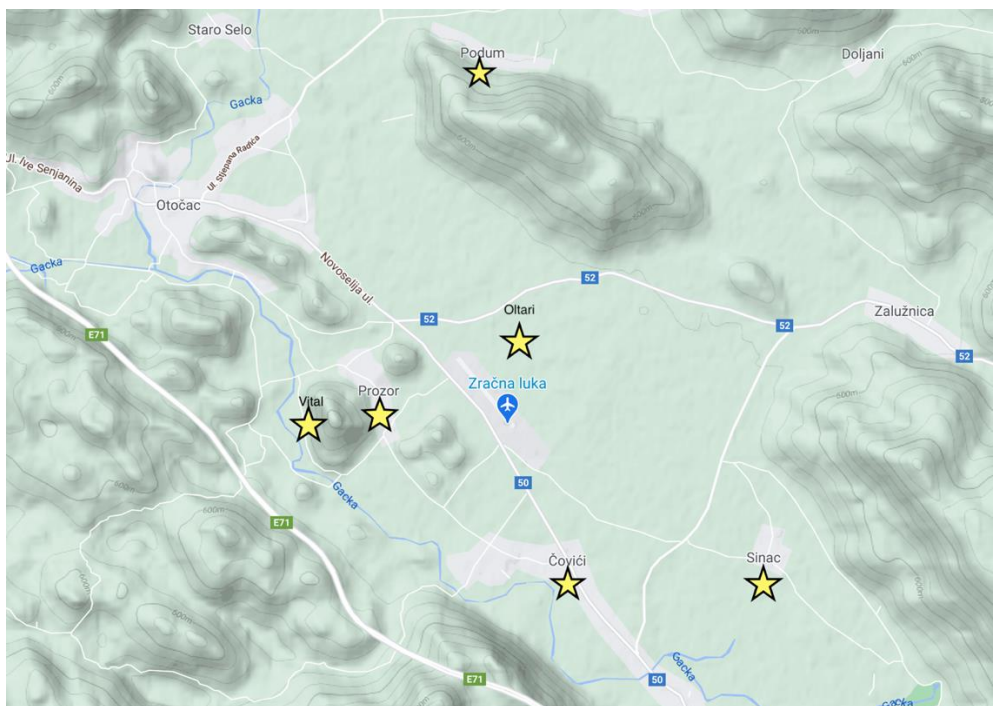


Figure 3.7: Mithraic sites in the Gacka valley



Figure 3.8: Votive altar from Vratnik



Figure 3.9: Side of a votive altar from Vratnik



Figure 3.10: Votive altar, Vratnik



Figure 3.11: Patera, votive altar, Vratnik



Figure 3.12: Patera, detail



Figure 3.13: Urceus, votive altar, Vratnik



Figure 3.14: Urceus, detail



Figure 3.15: Top of the altar, Vratnik



Figure 3.16: Torchbearers, Mitreo del Palazzo Imperiale



Figure 3.17: Mitreo del Palazzo Imperiale, drawing



Figure 3.18: Altar arrangement, Mitreo del Palazzo Imperiale



Figure 3.19: Triptych from Tróia

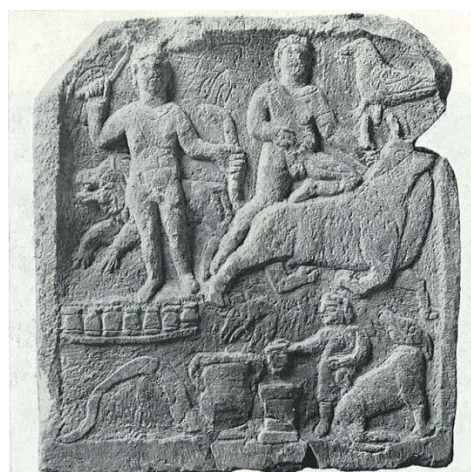


Figure 3.20: Relief from Lopodunum

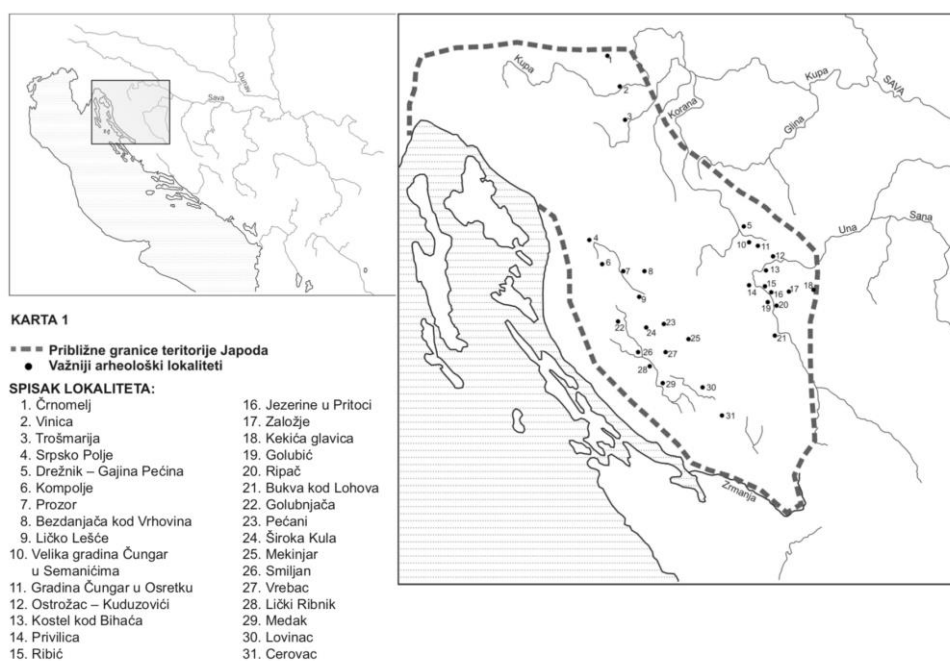


Figure 3.21: Map showing the Iapodean territory with important sites



Figure 3.22: View of *mithraeum* at Oltari (hidden by trees)



Figure 3.23: Rock-cut tauroctony at Oltari



Figure 3.24: Rock-cut tauroctony at Oltari



Figure 3.25: Rock-cut tauroctony at Oltari



Figure 3.26: Detail of tauroctony relief, Oltari



Figure 3.27: Detail of Mithras' figure, Oltari

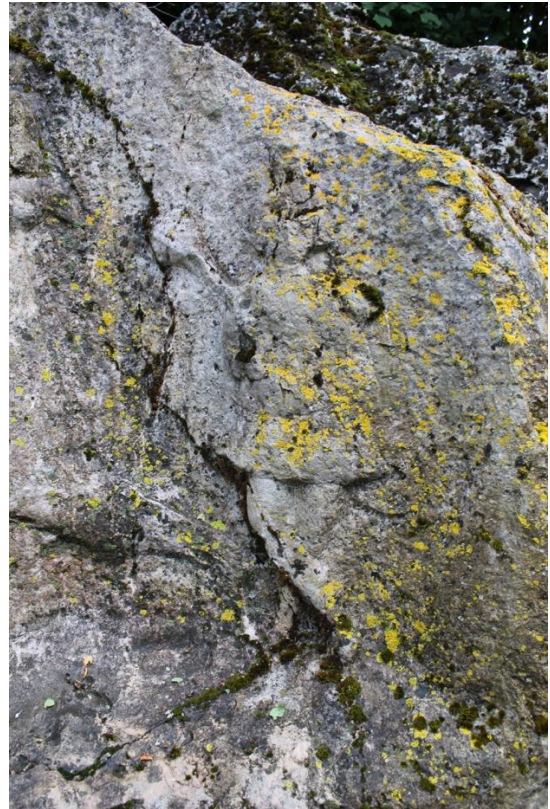


Figure 3.28: Cautes, tauroctony relief Oltari



Figure 3.29: Cautopates and rock-birth scene, tauroctony at Oltari



Figure 3.30: Upper part of the tauroctony relief, Oltari



Figure 3.31: Drawing of tauroctony at Oltari



Figure 3.32: View of the tauroctony relief at Oltari



Figure 3.33: View of the tauroctony relief at Oltari



Figure 3.34: Reconstruction of Vibianus' lamp



Figure 3.35: Vibianus' stamp



Figure 3.36: *Dupondius* from Oltari



Figure 3.37: Fragment of a cult-vessel with lizd



Figure 3.38: Fragment of a ceramic vessel decorated with snake, Crikvenica

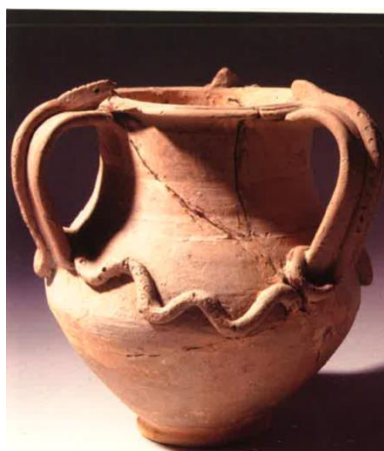


Figure 3.39: Snake decorated vessel from Mithraeum III, *Poetovio*

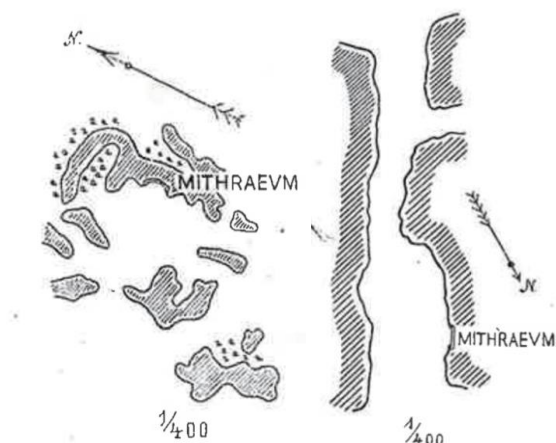


Figure 3.40: Drawing of a *mithraeum* at Oltari

Figure 3.41: Drawing of a *mithraeum* at Rajanov grič



Figure 3.42: Remains of *mithraeum*, Rajanov grič



Figure 3.43: *Mithraeum* at Rajanov grič, Čovići



Figure 3.44: *Mithraeum* at Rajanov grič, Čovići



Figure 3.45: *Mithraeum* at Rajanov grič, Čovići



Figure 3.46: Rock-cut tauroctony at Rajanov grič, Čoviči



Figure 3.47: Detail of tauroctony relief at Rajanov grič



Figure 3.48: Rock-birth scene, Rajanov grič



Figure 3.49: Torchbearer, left-hand side, Rajanov grič



Figure 3.50: Torchbearer, right-hand side, Rajanov grič

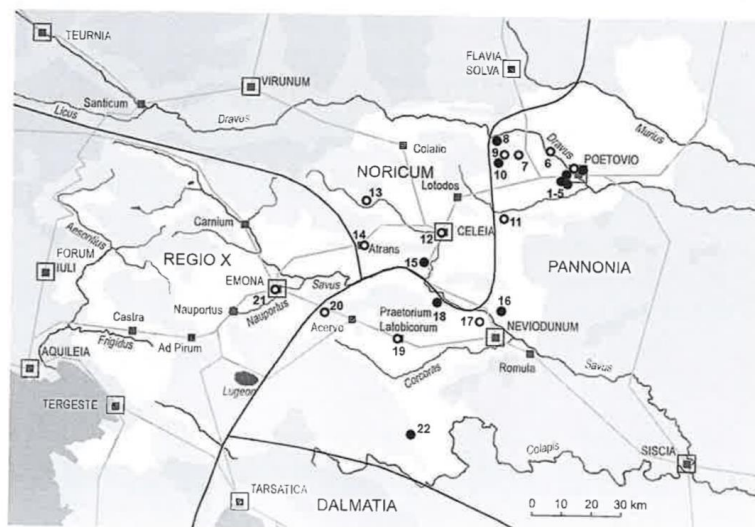


Fig. 1. Mithraic monuments in Slovenia. • original position or Mithraeum, ○ secondary position.

1–5 Ptuj, 6 Vurberg, 7 Hoče, 8 Ruše, 9 Šmartno, 10 Modrič, 11 Poljčane, 12 Celje, 13 Šentjanž, 14 Trojane, 15 Malič, 16 Zgornja Pohanca, 17 Krško, 18 Log pri Sevnici, 19 Trebnje, 20 Pristava pri Višnji Gori, 21 Ljubljana, 22 Rožanec (cartography © A. Preložnik)

Figure 3.51: Mithraic monuments in *Ager Poetoviensis*



Figure 3.52: Votive relief from Mithraeum III, Zgornji Breg, Poetovio



Figure 3.53: Votive relief from Ruše

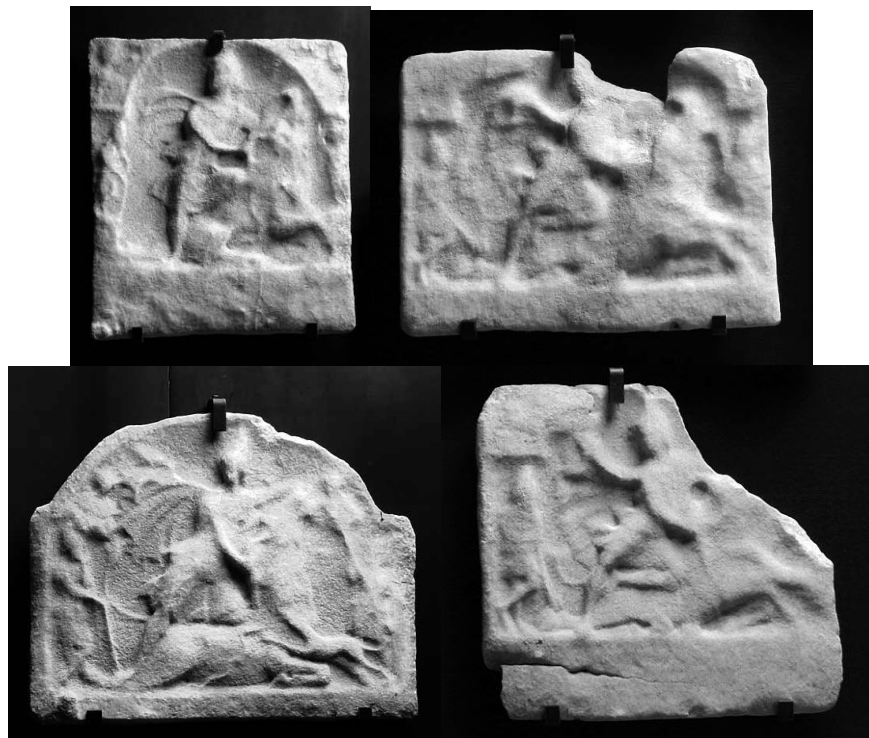


Figure 3.54: Votive reliefs from Ruše

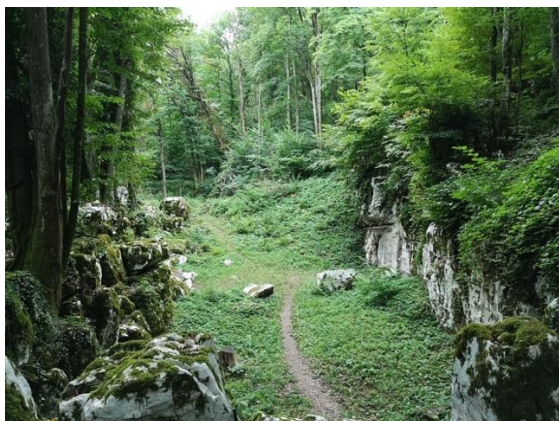


Figure 3.55: Mithraeum in Rožanec



Figure 3.56: Mithraeum in Rožanec



Figure 3.57 Tauroctony relief, Rožanec



Figure 3.58: Tauroctony relief, Rožanec



Figure 3.59: Rock-birth from Mithraeum I, Poetovio

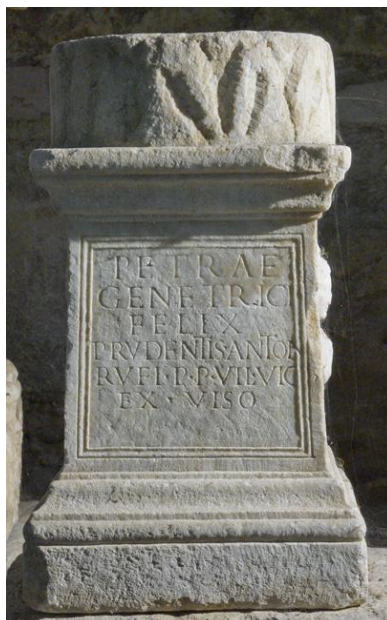


Figure 3.60: Rock-birth from Mithraeum I, Poetovio



Figure 3.61: Rock-birth, Mithraeum II, Poetovio



Figure 3.62: Rock-birth from Camporosso



Figure 3.63: Tauroctony relief from Sinac



Figure 3.64: Altar dedicated to Cautes, Mithraeum I, *Poetovio*

Figure 3.65: Altar dedicated to Cautopates, Mithraeum I, *Poetovio*



Figure 3.66: Relief showing Mithras' rock-birth, Mithraeum III, Poetovio



Figure 3.67: Relief showing rock-birth, Virunum



Figure 3.68: Comparison of Mithras' dress at the reliefs from Oltari (left) and Rajanov grič (right)



Figure 3.69: Iapodean urn from Ribić, near Bihać



Figure 3.70: Lateral side of an urn from Ribić



Figure 3.71: Mithraeum di Casa di Diana, Ostia



Figure 3.72: Mithraeum at Dura-Europos

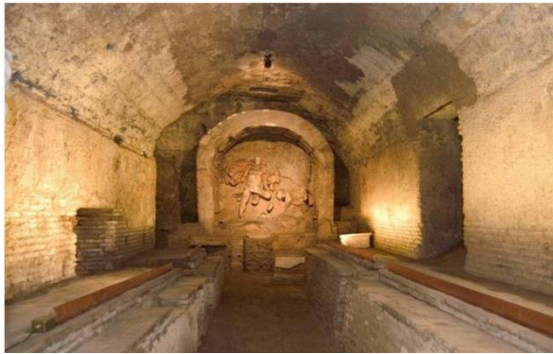


Figure 3.73: Mithraeum at S. Prisca, Rome



Figure 3.74: Reconstruction of altar arrangement at Mithraeum II, Phase I, Göglingen

3.3 The Vrbas River Valley



Figure 3.75: Canyon of the river Vrbas



Figure 3.76: Travertine cascades of the river Pliva



Figure 3.77: View of Jajce with the waterfall



Figure 3.78: Jajce waterfall

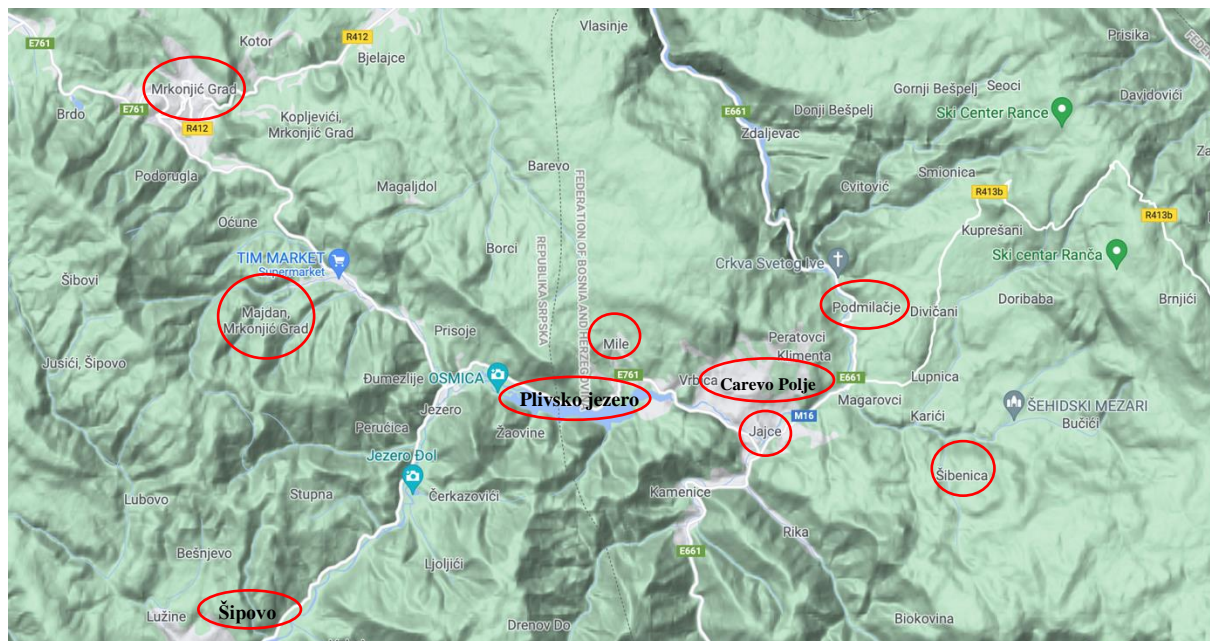


Figure 3.79: Jajce and the relevant sites in its surroundings



Figure 3.80: View of Jajce



Figure 3.81: *Mithraeum* in Jajce

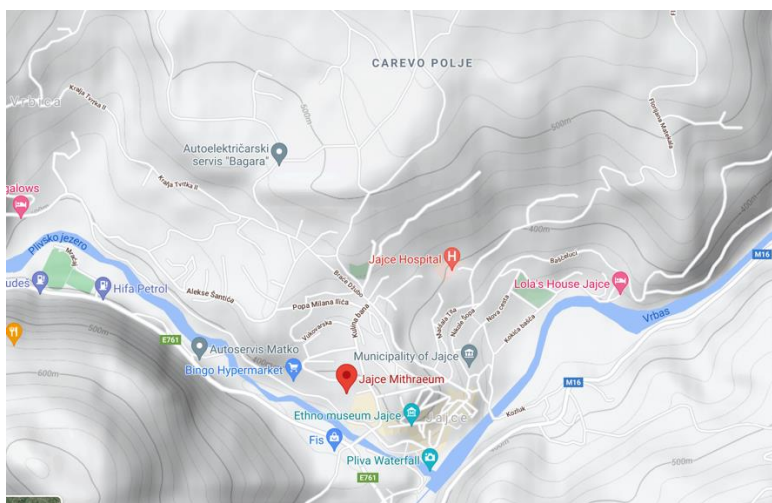


Figure 3.82: Location of the *mithraeum*, Jajce

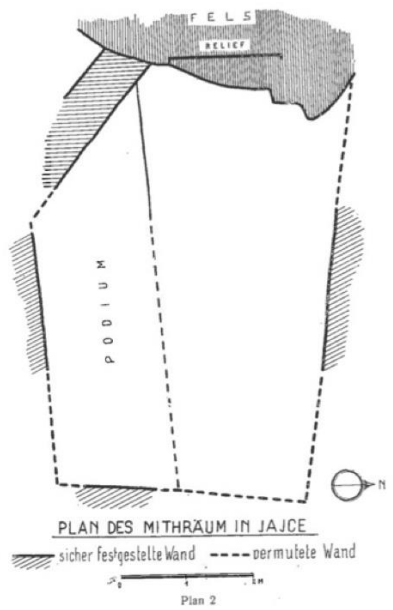


Figure 3.83: Groundplan of the *mithraeum*, Jajce



Figure 3.84: View of the podium



Figure 3.85: Junction of the *podium* and the natural rock



Figure 3.86: Junction of the *podium* and the natural rock



Figure 3.87: View of the *mithraeum*, Jajce



Figure 3.88: View from the entrance



Figure 3.89: One of the large altars found in front of the cult-relief, Jajce *mithraeum*



Figure 3.90: Side view of the altar



Figure 3.91: Two small altars



Figure 3.92: Statue of Cautopates



Figure 3.93: One of the larger altars



Figure 3.94: Small altar with inscription



Figure 3.95: Cult-relief, Jajce *mithraeum*



Figure 3.96: Detail of cult-relief, Jajce



Figure 3.97: Raven, Jajce tauroctony relief



Figure 3.98: Scorpion, Jajce tauroctony relief



Figure 3.99: Snake, Jajce tauroctony relief



Figure 3.100: Gable with palmettes



Figure 3.101: Cautopates



Figure 3.102: Cautes



Figure 3.103: Intervention in Jajce *mithraeum*



Figure 3.104: Intervention in Jajce *mithraeum*



Figure 3.105: View of the rock, Jajce *mithraeum*



Figure 3.106: Right-hand side of the tauroctony relief

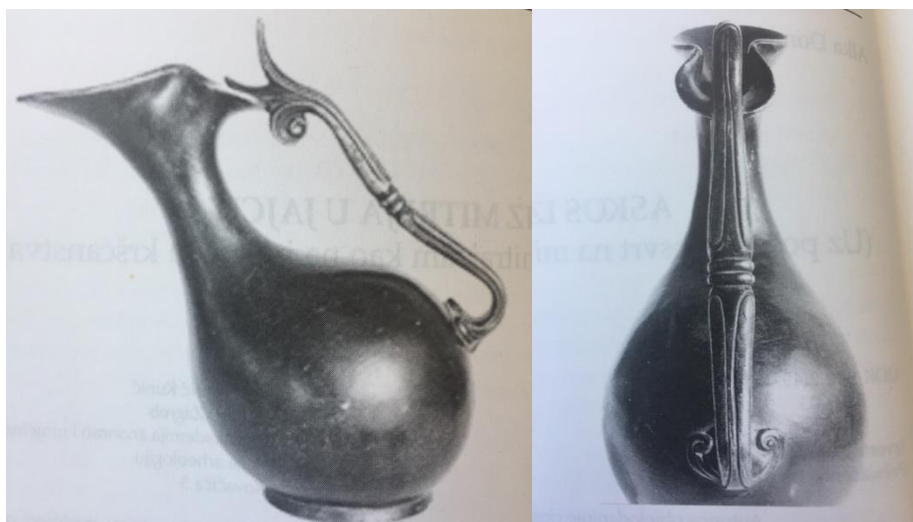


Figure 3.107: Askos from Jajce *mithraeum*



Figure 3.108: Lion statue



Figure 3.109: Lion statue



Figure 3.110: Lion statue



Figure 3.111: Lion statue



Figure 3.112: Lion statue



Figure 3.113: Lion statue



Figure 3.114: Tauroctony relief from Apulum



Figure 3.115: Tauroctony with leafy wreath, Dacia



Figure 3.116: Tauroctony with gabled pediment, Dacia



Figure 3.117: Tauroctony relief from Donje Mile



Figure 3.118: Tauroctony relief from Lopadea Nouă

3.4 The Neretva River Valley

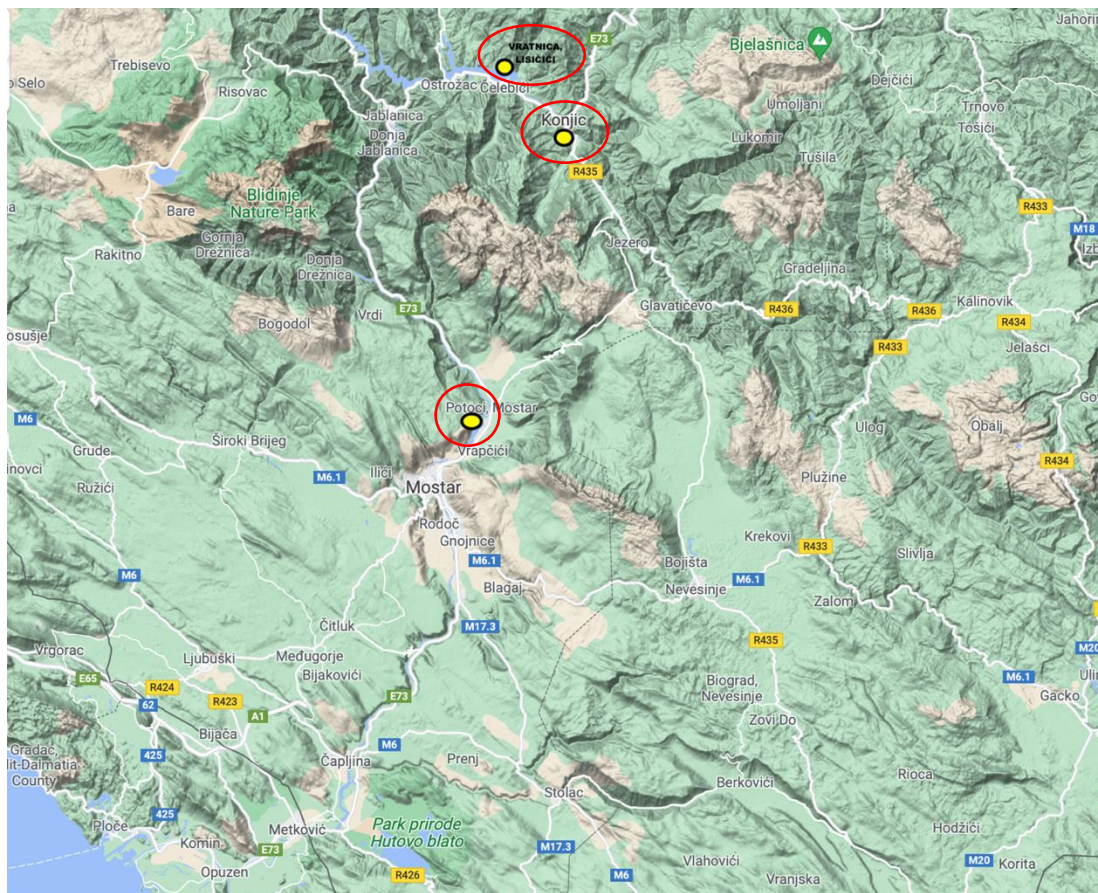


Figure 3.119: Neretva valley with marked Mithraic sites



Figure 3.120: Upper Neretva valley



Figure 3.121: River Neretva, near Konjic

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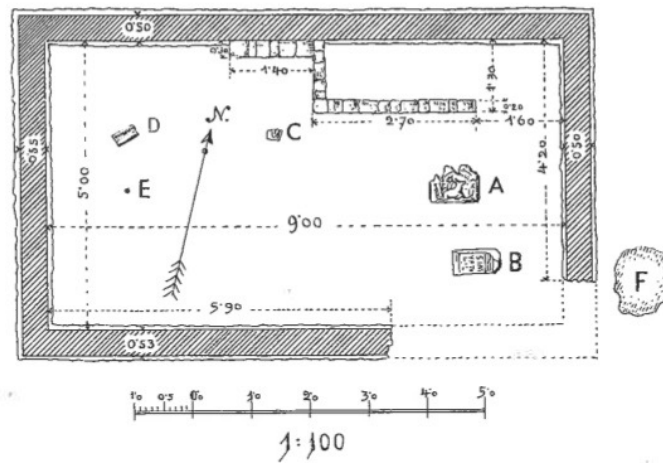


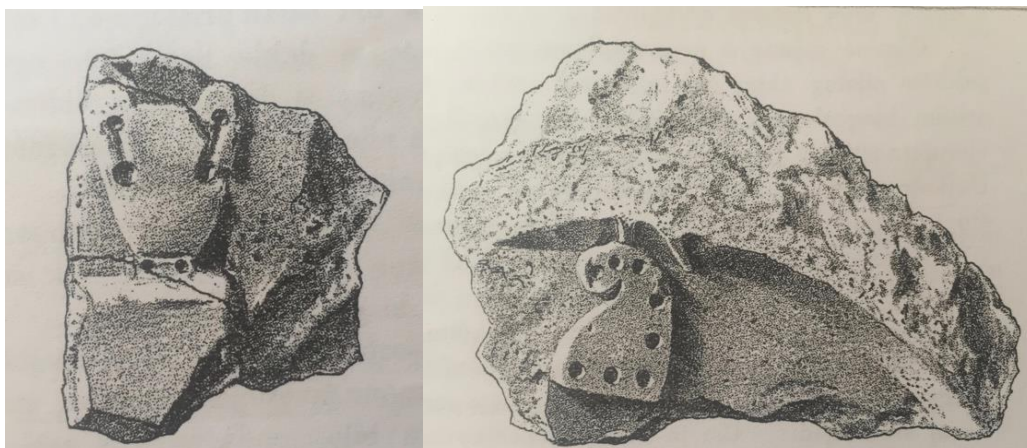
Figure 3.125: Groundplan of the *mithraeum*, Konjic



Figure 3.126: Votive altar, Konjic *mithraeum*



Relief 3.127: Relief fragment in red sandstone



Relief 3.128: Drawings of relief fragments from the *mithraeum* in Konjic



Figure 3.129: Tauroctony relief from Konjic, front side



Figure 3.130: Tauroctony relief from Konjic, rear side

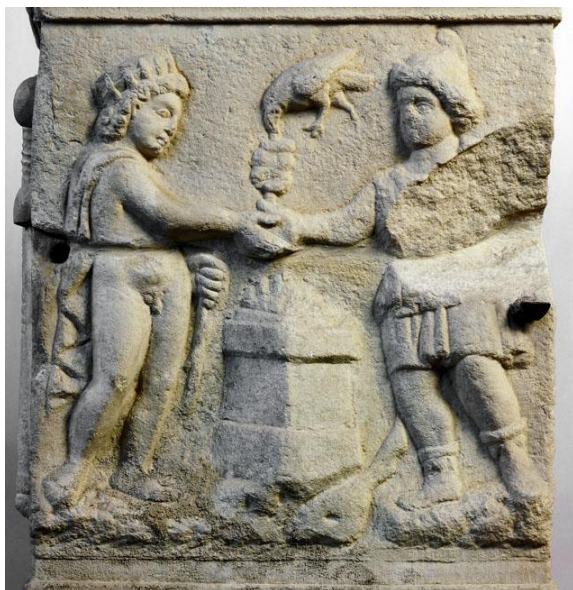


Figure 3.131: Altar with the handshake scene, Mithraeum III, *Poetovio*

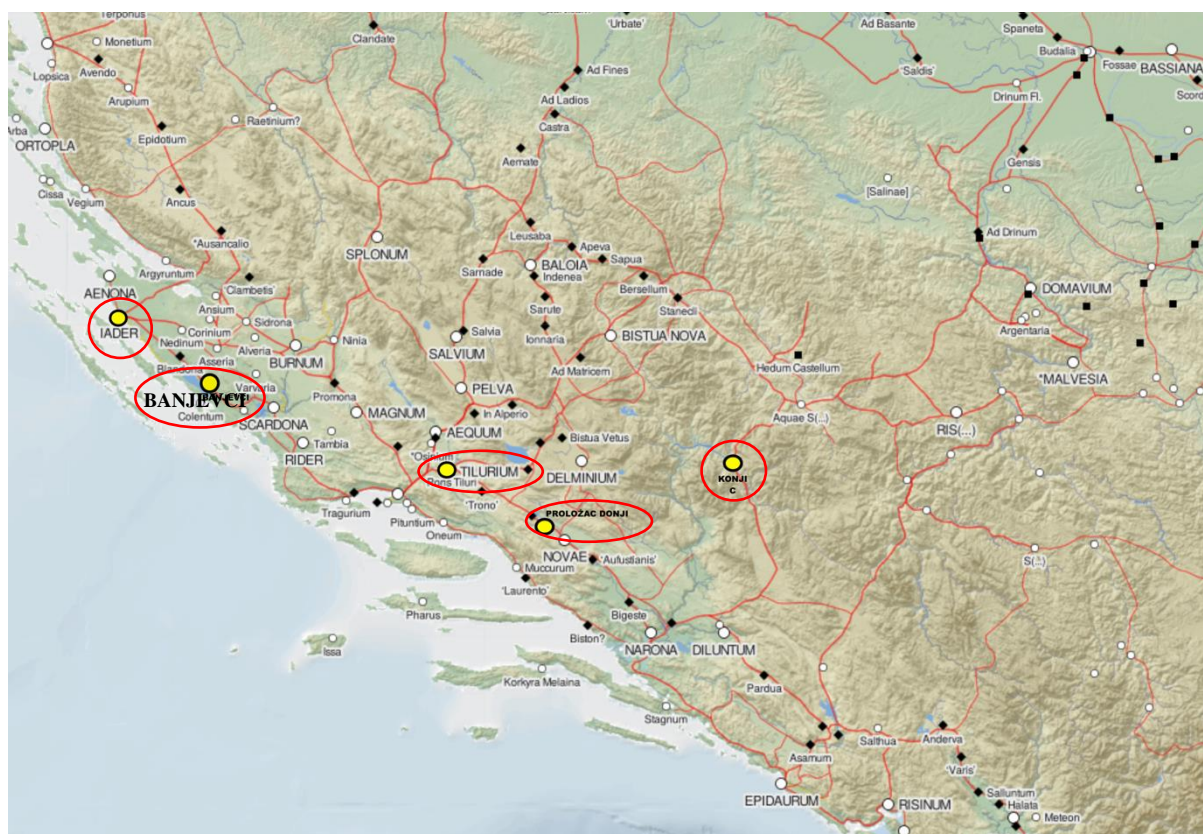


Figure 3.132: Sites with double-sided reliefs, Dalmatia (Iader, Banjevci, Tilurium, Proložac Donji, Konjic)



Figure 3.133: Tauroctony relief from Vratnica, Lisičici

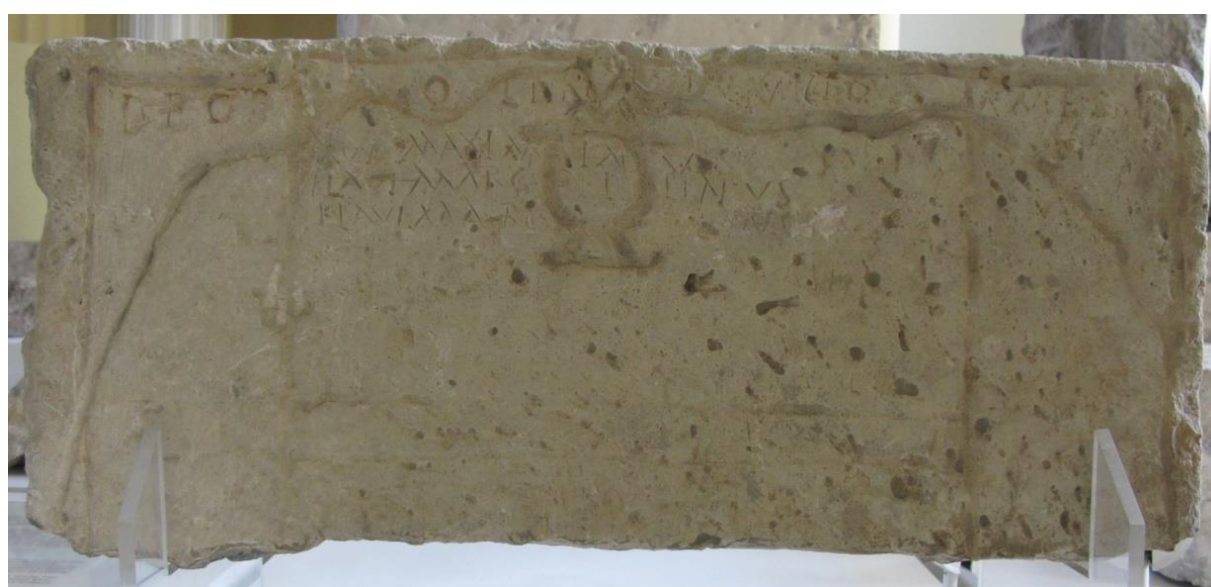


Figure 3.134: Votive slab, Potoci

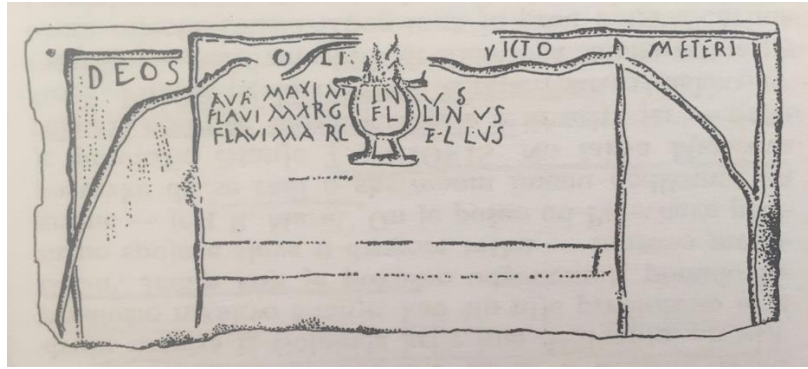


Figure 3.135: Drawing of the Potoci slab

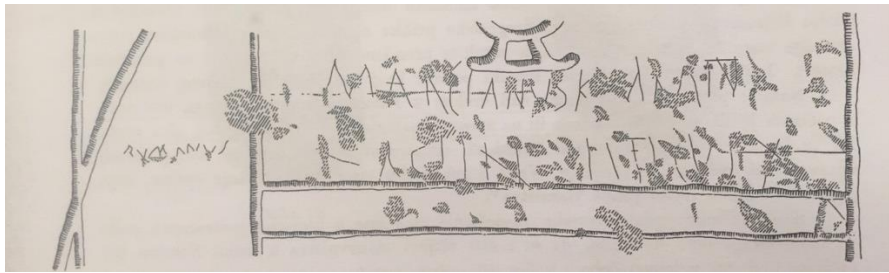


Figure 3.136: Drawing of the Potoci slab

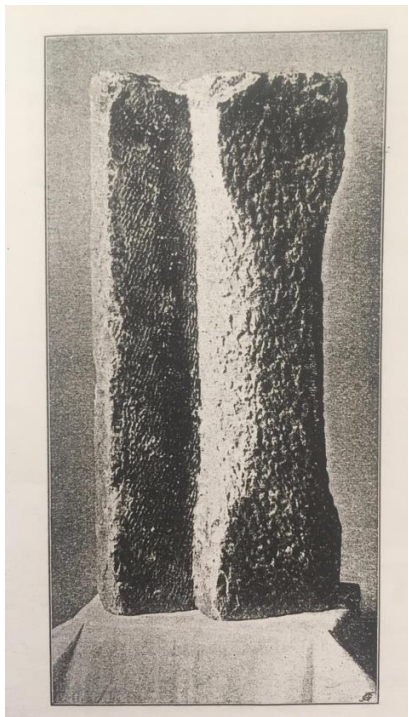


Figure 3.137: Back side of the Potoci slab



Figure 3.138: Altar from Aquincum

3.5 Southern Dalmatia



Figure 3.139: View of the south Dalmatian coast



Figure 3.140: View of the south Dalmatian coast

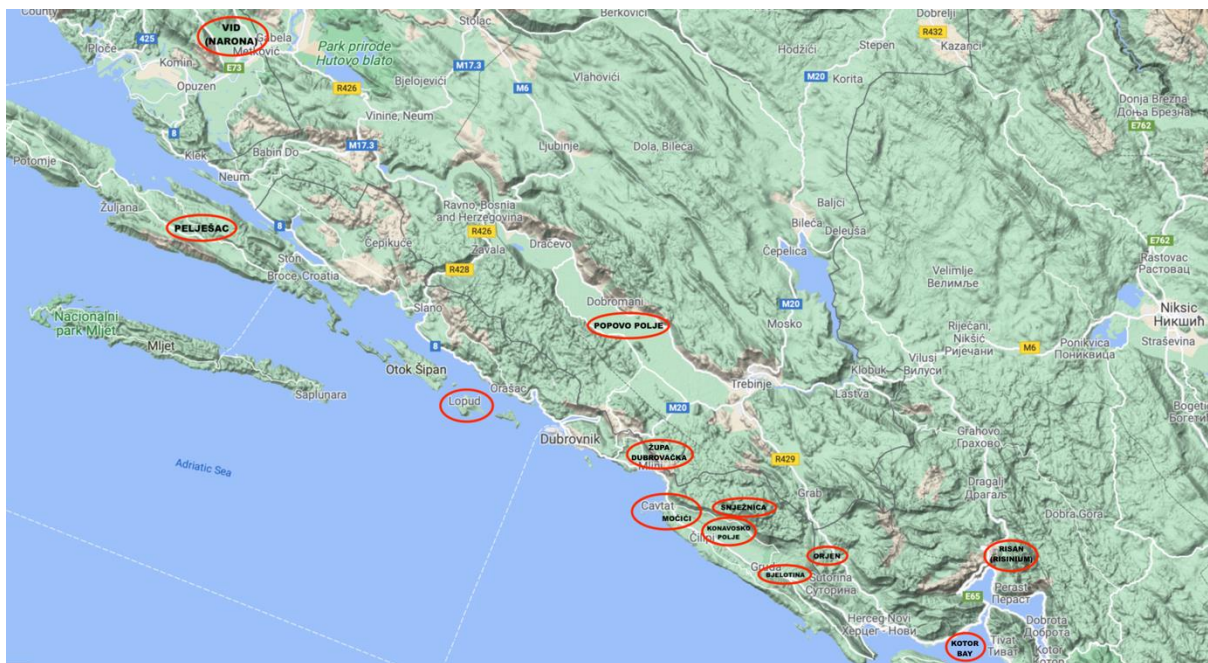


Figure 3.141: Map of southern Dalmatia with relevant sites



Figure 3.142: Konavosko polje with mountain Snježnica



Figure 3.143: Elaphites

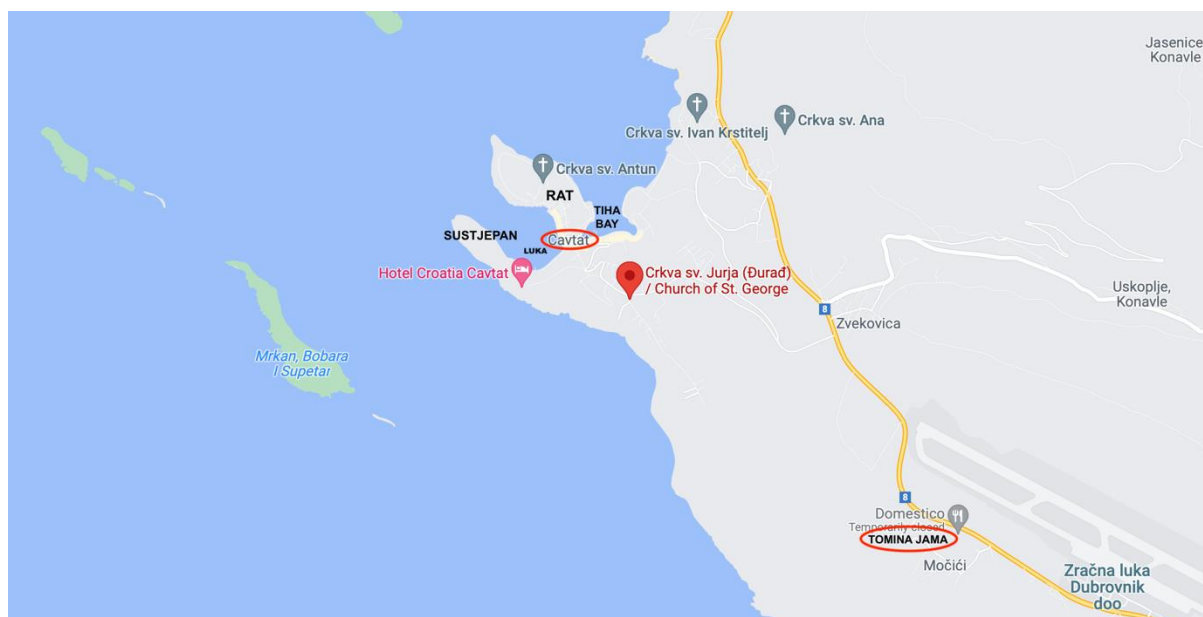


Figure 3.144: Cavtat (*Epidaurum*) with Sv. Juraj (Đurad) and Tomina jama

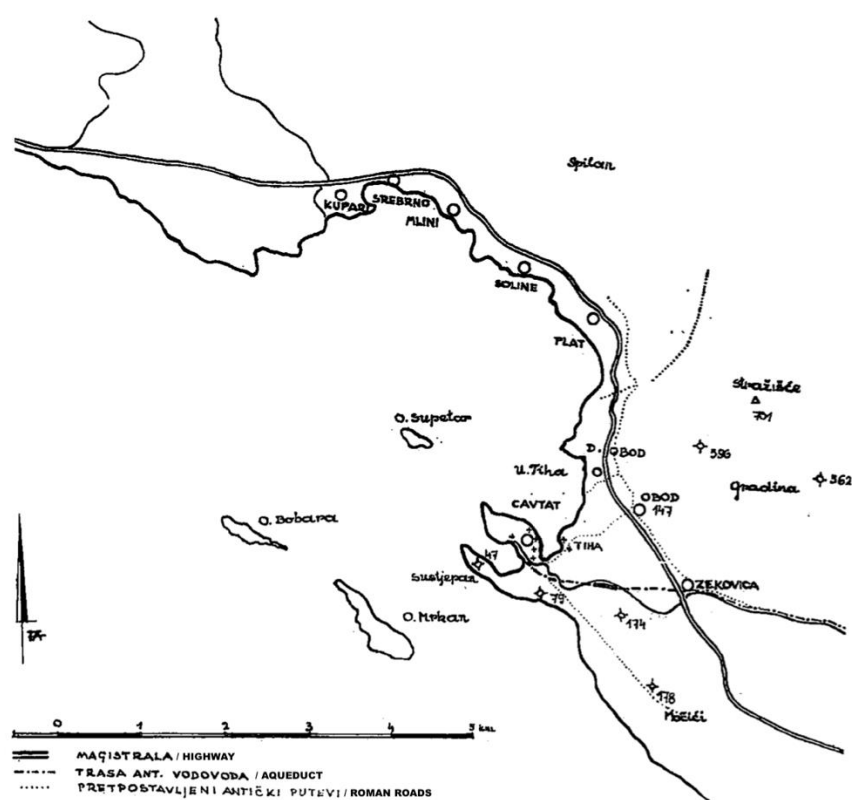


Figure 3.145: Topography of Cavtat with Roman roads and aqueduct

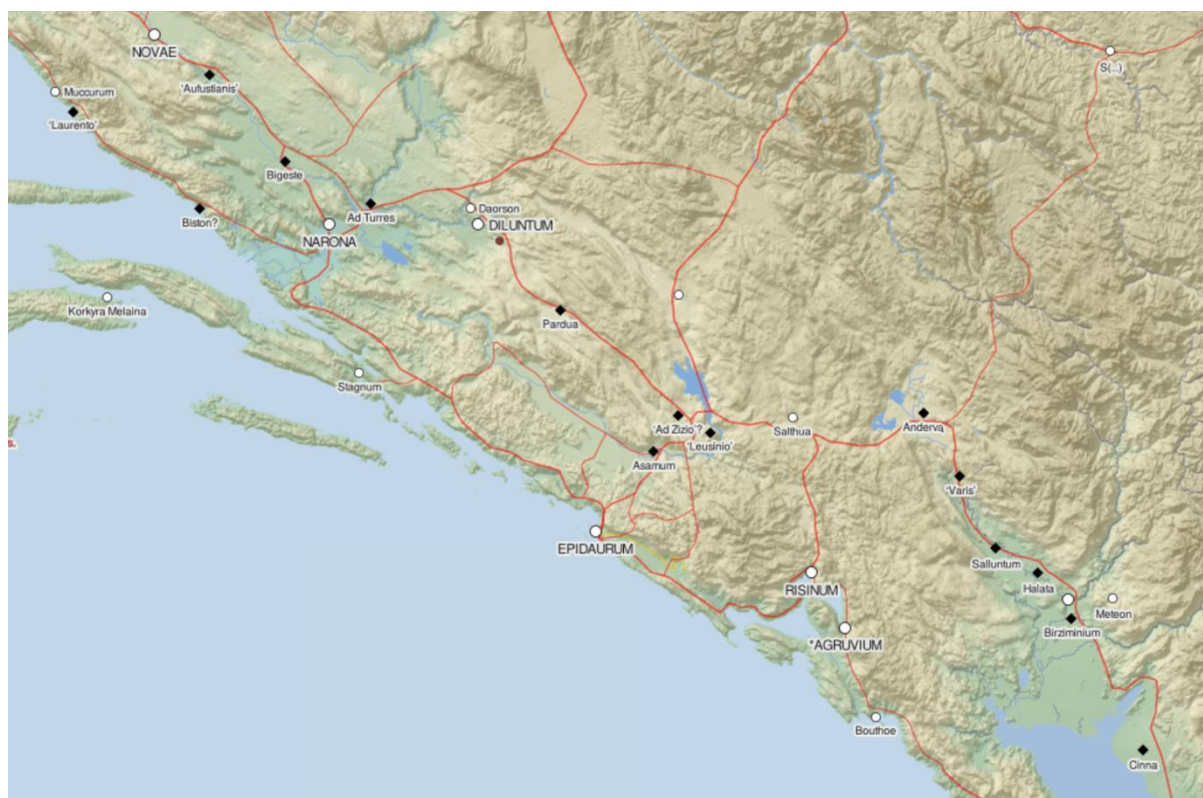


Figure 3.146: *Epidaurum* and its road network



Figure 3.147: The church and the cemetery of Sv. Juraj (Đurad), Cavtat



Figure 3.148: Tauroctony relief from Sv. Juraj (Đurađ) hill



Figure 3.149: Fragment of the tauroctony relief from Vragolov house, Cavtat



Figure 3.150: *Mithraeum* in Močići (Tomina jama)



Figure 3.151: *Mithraeum* in Močići (Tomina jama) with the cistern



Figure 3.152: View of the rock opposite to the tauroctony

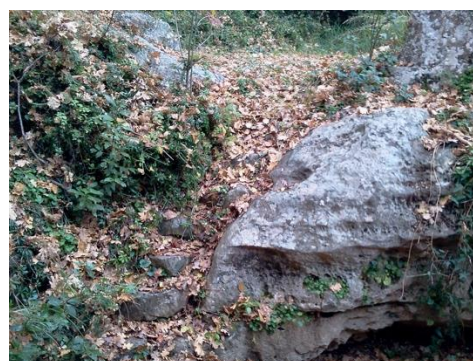


Figure 3.153: Rock opposite tauroctony relief



Figure 3.154: *Mithraeum* in Močići (Tomina jama)

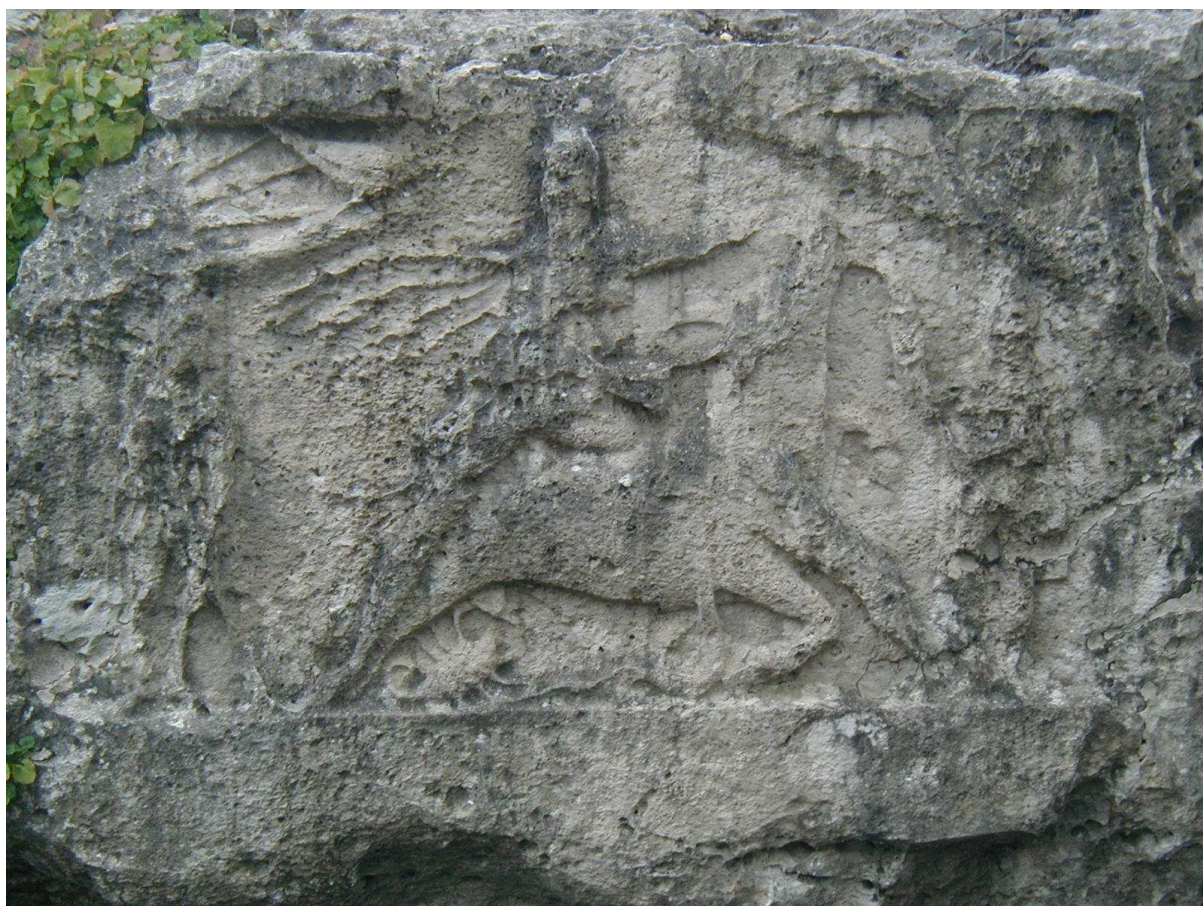


Figure 3.155 Tauroctony relief , Močići

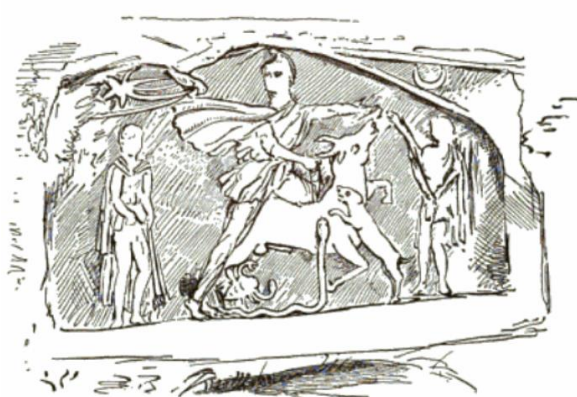


Figure 3.156: Drawing of the tauroctony, Močići



Figure 3.157: Remains of a figure, Močići



Figure 3.158: Lopud island with relevant sites



Figure 3.159: Fragment of tauroctony relief, Ivanje brdo, Lopud island



Figure 3.160: Church of St. John the Baptist, Lopud

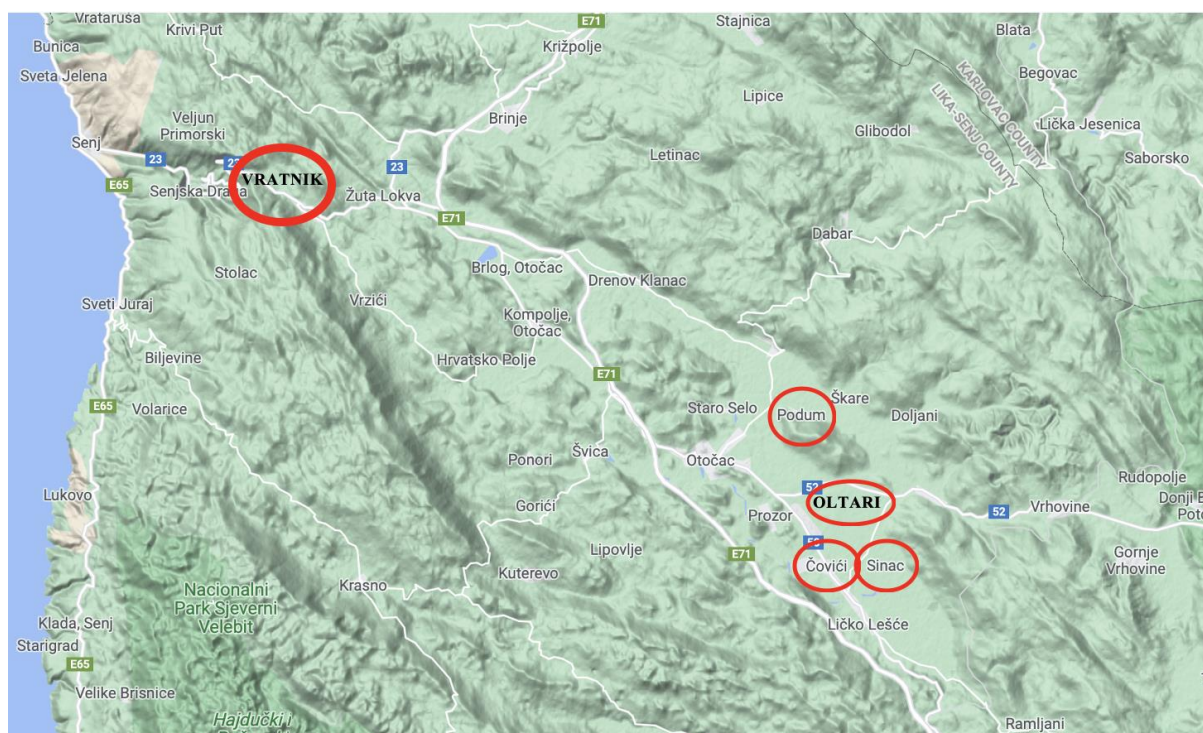


Figure 3.161: Mithraic sites in the Gacka valley

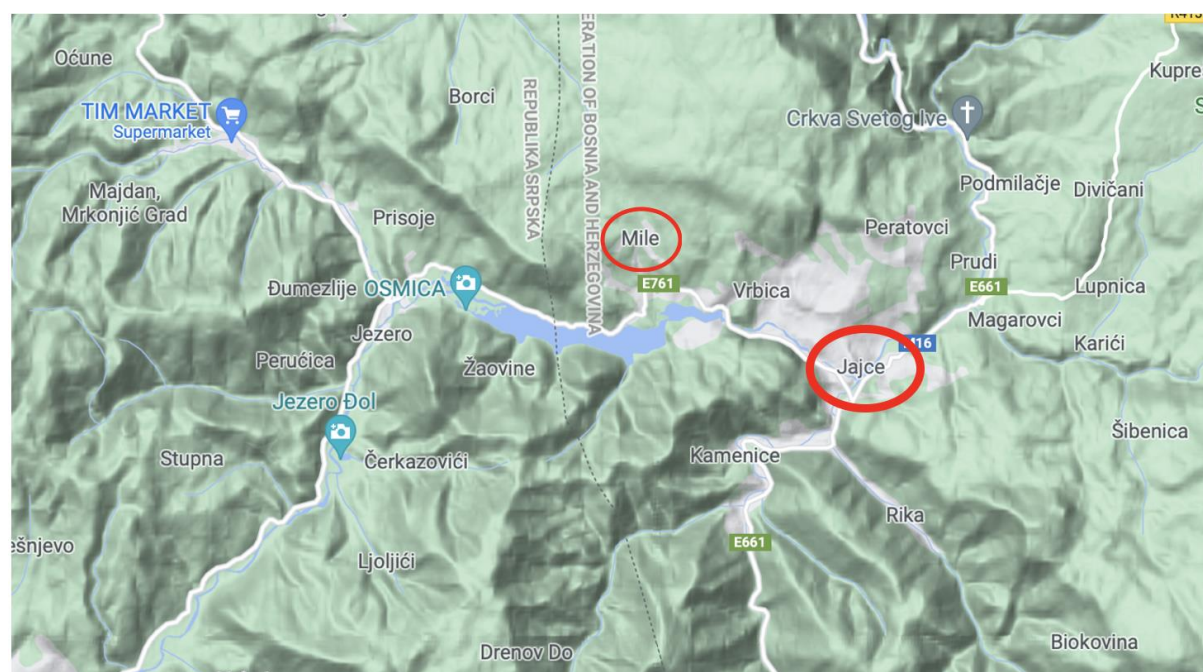


Figure 3.162: Mithraic sites in the Vrbas valley



Figure 3.163: Mithraic sites in the Neretva valley

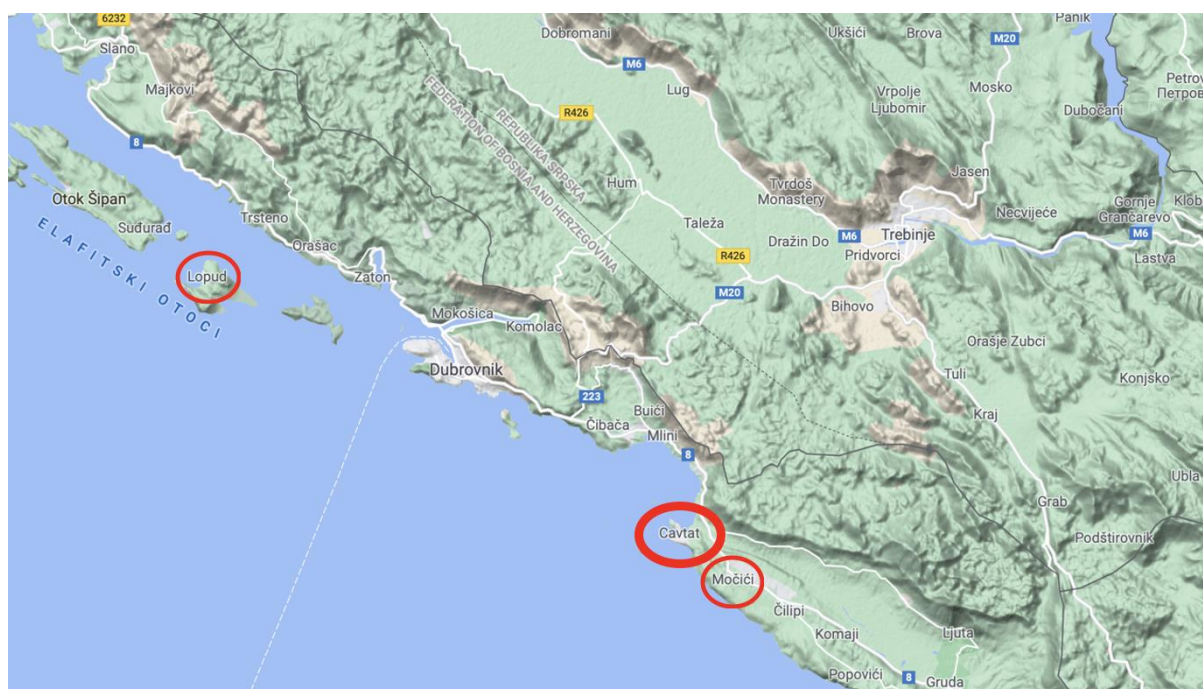


Figure 3.164: Mithraic sites in the southern Dalmatia

APPENDIX 1 - MITHRAIC SANCTUARIES

	Province	Settlement	Dates	Precise location	Dimensions of <i>cella</i> , construction type	Selected bibliography
1.	<i>Britannia</i>	<i>Borcovicium</i> (Housesteads)	end of IIc./beg. IIIc. -beg. IVc.	built over a natural spring, outside of the main fort in the adjoining <i>vicus</i> , close to the temple of Mars Thincus, and another temple built over a natural spring	12.8x4.8m; wooden roof and podia, flagstone pavement	CIMRM 852; Allason-Jones 2004, 184; Walsh 2019, 101, no. A.1.
2.		<i>Brocolitia</i> (Carrawburgh)	end of IIc./beg. IIIc. ; refurbished throughout IIIc.; destr. by mid-IVc.	c. 70m S of the SW angle of the Roman fort, overlying a natural spring, close to the temple of Coventina. Next to the <i>mithraeum</i> , an open-air shrine was dedicated to Nymphs, dismantled by the turn of the IVc.	7.92x5.58m/12.80x5.89m; stone podia, clay and oak boards for the floor in phase 2; phase 3: clay-brick with some masonry from previous phases, reused stone and clay for the floor, wattle fronted podia, oak roof posts	CIMRM 844; Allason-Jones 2004, 183-184; Walsh 2019, 101-103, no. A.2.
3.		Inveresk (East Lothian)	mid-IIc.	750m from the E gate of the Roman fort	6x5.40m; timber	Hunter et al. 2016, 119-168.
4.		<i>Londinium</i> (London)	c. 240-250 AD-ca.mid IVc. (transf. into Bacchus sanctuary?)	E bank of the Walbrook stream, W of the Forum Basilica, SE of the fort at Cripplegate; bordered to the N and S by housing	19.27x7.84m; mortared rag- stone rubble foundations, coursed Kentish ragstone walls; 4 phases	CIMRM 810; Shepherd 1998; Walsh 2019, 103-104, no. A.3.
5.		<i>Vindobala</i> (Rudchester)	late IIc. or early IIIc.; phase II: IIIc.-1/2 IVc.	the slope of the hill, outside the SW angle of the roman station	12.96x7.93m	CIMRM 838; Allason-Jones 2004, 184; Walsh 2019, 15.

6.	<i>Dacia</i>	<i>Municipium Septimium Apulense</i> (Apulum III, Alba Iulia)	after ca.150/170 AD-mid IIIc., abandoned	within <i>pomerium</i> of the <i>municipium</i> , 200m from the SW corner of the Roman fort, 300m from the N edge of the necropolis, surrounded by domestic area?	6x7.5m; stone foundations, timber-framed superstructure	McCarty, Egri, Rustoiu 2020, 123-143; Szabó 2021, 58-59.
7.	<i>Dalmatia</i>	<i>Arupium</i> (Oltari/Kraljev stolac, Prozor)	second half IIc.- mid IVc.?	in the valley of the river Gacka, near the <i>municipium</i> and Roman quarry; rock-temple	1x1.58x0.76m size of the tauroctony; constructed against the rock-face, traces of roof tiles	See catalog no. 5-6.
8.		<i>Arupium</i> (Rajanov grič, Prozor)	end of IIc. - mid IVc.?	in the valley of the river Gacka, near the <i>municipium</i> and Roman quarry, right bank of the Rajan creek; rock-temple	1.45x1.40m size of the tauroctony; constructed against the rock-face	See catalog no. 7-8.
9.		Jajce	late III/early IVc.	on the wetland area called Bare, gently sloping terrain on the left bank of the river Pliva; rock-temple	7.00x4.50m; rock-cut tauroctony, marlstone blocks for the remaining walls	See catalog no. 9.
10.		Konjic	early-mid IIIc.	in the valley of the river Neretva, right bank of the Trstenica stream, on the slopes of Repovica hill, the proximity of <i>municipium</i> ?	9.00x5.00m; stone-built, stamped clay and pebbles floor	See catalog no. 21.
11.		<i>Epidaurum</i> (Sv. Juraj/Đurađ hill, Cavtat)	late III/early IVc.?	on the hill, close to <i>Epidaurum</i>	?; constructed against the rock-face	See catalog no. 27.
12.		<i>Epidaurum</i> (Tomina jama in Močići, Cavtat)	late III-early IVc.?	5km from <i>Epidaurum</i> ; inside a natural cave, in a hilly and heavily forested area	4.5x5.6m; in a natural limestone cave	See catalog no. 30.

13.	<i>Gallia</i>	<i>Augusta Treverorum</i> (Trier)	end of IIIc.-late IV.c.?	within the vast sanctuary zone on the right bank of the river Moselle in the valley of the Altbach, 150m S of the large imperial baths, in a NW wing of a large private house	8.70x4m	Gose 1972, 110-117; Walters 1974, 23-29; Roy 2013, 364; Walsh 2019, 115-116, G.1
14.		Bourg-Saint-Andéol	beg. IIIc.?	the plateau between two streams	h.2m, w.2.08m constructed against the rock-face, traces of gabled roof	CIMRM 895; Walters 1974, 4-5; Lenk 2017, 61-80.
15.		<i>Burdigala</i> (Bordeaux)	early IIIc.-destr. beg. IVc.	immediate vicinity of <i>villa suburbana</i> , S edge of the Roman settlement (outside <i>castrum</i>), surrounded with housing	18.40x10.3m, partially cut into natural limestone bed-rock, <i>opus mixtum</i> walls	Gaidon-Bunuel 1991, 49-59; Walsh 2019, 116, G.2.
16.		<i>Civitas Tungrorum</i> (Tienen)	early IIIc.; renovated shortly before 250-270 AD; mid IVc. abandoned	next to a road in the SW periphery of the <i>vicus</i> , 100m from the S border of the cemetery, surrounded by pottery workshops	12x7.50m (external); timber frame, bordered by a palisade	Martens 2004b, 25-56; Walsh 2019, 119, G.8; Martens, Ervynck, Gordon 2020, 11-22.
17.		<i>Forum Claudii Vallensium Octodurensium</i> (Martigny)	150-200 AD-late IV.c. abandoned	within the sanctuary zone, SE periphery of the settlement	14.40x8m (internal); stone masonry, bordered by a palisade	Wibl� 2004, 135-146; Walsh 2019, 116-117, G.3; Wibl� 2020, 65-76.
18.		<i>Auliomagus</i> (Angers)	late IIc; phase 2: middle IIIc.-early Vc. destr.	inside <i>domus</i>	10.05x5.88m	Brodeur 2020, 35-46.
19.		Les Bolards (Nuits-Saint-Georges)	mid to late IIIc.-late IVc.	2km from thermal spring at La Courtavaux, a few meters N to the sanctuary	?; partially submerged	CIMRM 917; Walters 1974, 11-17; Roy 2013, 361-363; Walsh 2019, 117, G.4.

				zone, devoted in part to the cult of healing source?		
20.		Mackwiller	mid IIc.-mid IVc. burnt, destr.	in a rural setting, near the <i>villa</i> , alongside a small timber shrine (transformed into a spring sanctuary)	10x8.19m	CIMRM 1329; Hatt 1955, 405-409; Roy 2013, 364-365; Walsh 2019, 117-118, G.5.
21.		<i>Pons Saravi</i> (Saarebourg)	late IIc.-late III/IVc.	along the S bank of the river Saar on the military road between Metz and Strasbourg, close to fortifications and city gates, near the natural spring	6.20x5.48m?; local limestone, the back wall built into the side of the hill; floor and benches of beaten clay, partially timbered?	CIMRM 965; Walters 1974, 17-22; Walsh 2019, 118, G.6.
22.		Septeuil (Yvelines)	mid-IIIc.-380s AD destr.	inside nymphaeum, near a large temple dedicated to Apollo or a bath-house, periphery of the <i>vicus</i>	8.20x5.20m; stone and mortar, wooden nave pavement, and podia	Gaidon-Bunuel 1991, 49-59; Walsh 2019, 118-119, G.7.
23.		<i>Venetonimagus</i> (Vieu-en-Val-Romey)	late III-late IVc.	close to the thermal baths and Apollo's sanctuary, proximity of a natural spring; sanctuary area of the Roman <i>vicus</i> ?	10.60x3.40m; stone building	CIMRM 909; Walters 1974, 5-11; Walsh 2019, 119-120, G.9.
24.	Germania	<i>Aquae Mattiacae</i> (Wiesbaden)	1/2 IIIc.-260 AD (?)	dug into a hillside on the edge of the Roman town	13.70x7.30m; cut into natural sandstone rock, grey-blue slate outer walls	CIMRM 1230; Schwertheim 1974, 106-111, no. 86; Walsh 2019, 14.
25.		Bornheim/ Sechtem	phase 1: mid IIc.; phase 2: 1/2 IVc.; phase 3: 2/2 IVc.; destr. ca. 400AD	to the N of a Roman <i>villa rustica</i> , periphery of <i>vicus</i> ?	Phase 1 and 2: 13.50x6.80m; phase 3: 8x6m; phase 1: clay floor, stone foundations, mortar; tuff stone for podia; phase 3: a solid mass of gravel in yellowish mortar	Ulbert 2004, 81-88; Wulfmeier 2004, 89-94; Walsh 2019, 105-106; B.2.
26.		<i>Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium</i>	mid IIc., destr. 2/3 IIIc.	NE residential quarter, just inside city walls, in a cellar of private atrium-house	ca.11x6m	Ristow 1974, 11-15, 25-31; Schwertheim 1974, 17, no. 11; Gordon 2009, 399-400.

		(Cologne Mithraeum II)				
27.		Dieburg	late IIc.-260AD destr.	well 3m W to the <i>mithraeum</i>	11.20x5.60m; built of trachyte from Eppertshausen near Dieburg, wooden pronaos	CIMRM 1246; Schwertheim 1974, 159-168, no. 123; Gordon 2009, 402.
28.		<i>Durnomagus</i> , (Dormagen)	?	in a field near Dormagen, the long underground room beneath vaulted chamber?	11.60x2.90m	CIMRM 1011; Schwertheim 1974, 11-13, no. 8.
29.		Groß-Gerau	late IIc.-ca. 260AD	periphery of <i>vicus</i>	12x6.30m; 12 wooden posts on stone foundations	Göldner, Seitz 1990, 2-8; Huld-Zetsche 2001, 342-343.
30.		Großkrotzenburg	end II.-mid IIIc.(?)	NW from the fort, outside of <i>vicus</i> , in the W part of Roman graveyard	10.50x2.30m; stone and brick walls, wood-clay pronaos	CIMRM 1148; Schwertheim 1974, 130-134, no. 113; Hensen 2000b, 90.
31.		Güglingen I	150/165AD-230/240AD, partially plundered and burned	N periphery of the <i>vicus</i> , 70m from the road	11.90x7.30m; stone-built, tiled roof (rebuilding phase inside the cult room)	Siemer-Klenner 2020.
32.		Güglingen II	phase 1: late Trajan/Hadrianic period; phase 2: mid IIc.-165 AD (burned); phase 3: beg. IIIc.-230/240 AD, partially plundered and burned	E periphery of the <i>vicus</i> , 70m from the road	phase 1: 6.80x4m; phase 2: 8.63x5.20m; phase 3: 8.49x5.10m; phase 1: wooden posts and wooden podia; phase 2: beams stabilized with stones; phase 3: stone foundations, timber frame, brick roof, enclosed with palisades	Siemer-Klenner 2020.

33.		<i>Mogontiacum</i> (Mainz, Ballplatz)	before 140AD-mid IVc.	in center of civil settlement, near the main road (not in <i>canabae</i>)	overall: 30m long?	Huld-Zetsche 2008.
34.		Mundelsheim	unknown (1/2 IIc.?- ca.250AD	the periphery of <i>Straßen- vicus</i>	7.20x5.50m (internal); limestone blocks	Planck 1990, 177-183; Hensen 2000a, 101-104; Huld-Zetsche 2001, 341- 342.
35.		Neustadt- Gimmeldingen	325AD consecrated, destr. by fire (?)	rural setting, on a steep slope, near the stream	(?)partially excavated; wooden roof	CIMRM 1313; Schwertheim 1974, 179-183, no.140; Walsh 2019, 106, B.3.
36.		<i>Nida</i> (Frankfurt- Heddernheim I)	mid IIc.-? ca.260AD	NW part of <i>vicus</i>	12.50x7.90m; irregular stones and brick	CIMRM 1082; Schwertheim 1974, 66-77, no. 59; Huld- Zetsche 1986, 17-21; Gordon 2009, 402.
37.		<i>Nida</i> (Frankfurt- Heddernheim II)	late IIc.- used throughout IIIc.	NW part of <i>vicus</i> , 150m W from Mithraeum I	14.60x6.60m, stone foundations and walls	CIMRM 1108; Schwertheim 1974, 77-79, no. 60; Huld- Zetsche 1986, 22-25, Gordon 2009, 402.
38.		<i>Nida</i> (Frankfurt- Heddernheim III)	mid IIc.-mid IIIc.	S part of the <i>vicus</i> , close to fort	11.51x6.77m; sunk below ground level, wooden construction for <i>pronaos</i>	CIMRM 1117; Schwertheim 1974, 79-87, no. 61; Huld- Zetsche 1986, 26-39; Gordon 2009, 398, 402.
39.		Ober-Florstadt	mid IIc.?	85m from the N corner of the fort, on the slope of the hill	ca.13.40-13.90x6.40-7.73m; brick walls	CIMRM 1074; Schwertheim 1974, 53-55; no. 50.
40.		<i>Oedenburg</i> , (Biesheim)	mid IIc.- destr. ca. 270AD?- reused until late IVc.	the periphery of <i>vicus</i> ; well inside <i>mithraeum</i>	7.30x7m (external); basalt masonry blocks, clay and gravel nave floor	Petry, Kern 1978, 5-32; Plouin 2004, 9-19; Fortuné, Rentzel 2012, 227-255; Walsh 2019, 104-105, B.1.
41.		Reichweiler- Schwarzerden	III-IVc.?	marshland N of the village, close to a stream	1.5.15m?; rock-cut tauroctony; wooden construction with a gabled roof	CIMRM 1280; Schwertheim 1974, 178-179; no. 139; Walsh 2019, 106, B.4.

42.		Riegel, Kaiserstuhl	mid IIc.-uncertain	built over part of a long-abandoned fort	9.90x7m (external); lime and sandstone; clay floor, wooden pronaos, wooden roof?	Hensen 2000a, 98-101; Huld-Zetsche 2001, 343; Mayer-Reppert, Fingerlin 2007, 328-532.
43.		Stockstadt I	c.210 AD-260AD (burned)	SE of fort and <i>vicus</i> , 17m from <i>Dolichenum</i> , graveyard S of <i>mithraeum</i>	13.00x7.80m; stone built, wooden pronaos?	CIMRM 1158; Schwertheim 1974, 135-145, no. 116; Hensen 2000b, 90-92.
44.		Stockstadt II	ca. 157AD-ca. 209 AD (260 AD the latest, (burned))	on a slope, close to river Main; well in its vicinity, close to the graveyard	11.50x6.50m; brick and clay, loam and tiles roof, wooden podia	CIMRM 1209; Schwertheim 1974, 146-150; no. 117; Hensen 2000b, 90-92.
45.		Strasbourg-Königshoffen	phase 1: ca. 145 AD; phase 2: ca. 225 AD; phase 3: ca. 270 AD	partially encircled by the river Mühlbach	14x6m; phase 2 16.50x8.75m; wooden benches and wooden roof, plastered walls	CIMRM 1335; Forrer 1935, 174-182; Gordon 2009, 402.
46.		<i>Taunum</i> (Friedberg)	180AD	E slope of town, near the crossing of Roman roads (one of them lead to the entrance to the sanctuary)	11x5.45m, sunken below ground level	CIMRM 1052; Schwertheim 1974, 46-52, no. 47.
47.		Wiesloch	mid IIc.?-mid IIIc. (not violent)	periphery of <i>vicus</i> , junction of main road Mainz/Augsburg-Speyer/Bad Wimpfen, graves on the precincts of the <i>mithraeum</i>	5.70x4.60m; phase 1: wood/turf (fire), phase 2: Fachwerk	Hensen 1994, 30-37; Hensen 2000a, 104-109; Hensen 2000b, 87-94; Huld-Zetsche 2001, 342.
48.	Hispania	<i>Vicus Augusti</i> (Lugo)	320/350 AD-mid IVc.	Inside a large <i>domus</i> , near <i>statio</i>	15.70x7m; rectangular <i>cella</i> and four ante-rooms; schist stone;	Alvar, Gordon, Rodríguez 2006, 267-277; Klöckner 2014, 98-99; Alvar 2019, 182-190, no. 3.09.
49.	Italia	Marino	160-170 AD-end IVc.	Alban Hills, south of Rome, near the ancient <i>Castrimoenium</i> ; inside a	29.90x8m	Vermaseren 1982; Bjørnebye 2007, 57-58.

				cistern, near the large residential complex		
50.		Ostia (Mitreo delle Pareti Dipinte)	ca. 162 AD	domestic quarters and peristyle of the house	17.75x4m (2 phases)	CIMRM 264; Becatti 1954, 60-68; White 2012, 486-488.
51.		Ostia (Mitreo delle Sette Sfere)	ca. 170-190 AD	room annexed to house (Domus del Apuleio)	11.20x4.95m (2 phases)	CIMRM 239; Becatti 1954, 47-51; Gordon 1976, 119-165; Beck 2000, 551-567; White 2012, 441, no. 2.
52.		Ostia (Mitreo delle Sette Porte)	ca. 170-180 AD	the <i>cella</i> of a converted warehouse (<i>horrea</i>) adjacent to an insula	7.05x5.80m (2 phases)	CIMRM 287; Becatti 1954, 93-99; Beck 1979, 515-530; White 2012, 441, no.3.
53.		Ostia (Mitreo degli Animali)	ca. 198 AD	commercial edifice (?) adjacent to precinct wall of Campus Magna Matris	16.30x4.50m	CIMRM 278; Becatti 1954, 87-92; White 2012, 445-451.
54.		Ostia (Mitreo Aldobrandini)	Antonine age (phase 1), age of Caracalla (phase 2); used until first years of IVc.	rectangular edifice abutting the city walls, near the tower next to the ancient meander of the Tiber	ca. 20.40-23.28x3.94m (partially excavated); two lateral walls in <i>opus testaceum</i> , eastern wall in <i>opus quasi reticulatum</i> , western wall in <i>opus reticulatum</i>	CIMRM 232; Becatti 1954, 39-43; White 2012, 441, no. 6; Melega 2020, 114-115.
55.		Ostia (Mitreo del Palazzo Imperiale)	ca. 193-200 AD or 200-225AD	rectangular hall of the peristyle of a large insula and bath complex	16.70-85x5.35m (2-3 phases)	CIMRM 250; Becatti 1954, 77-85; White 2012, 459-465.
56.		Ostia (Mitreo della Planta Pedis)	204-211AD	hall (loggia) with piers adjacent to <i>horrea</i>	12.00x8.5m (2 phases)	CIMRM 272; Becatti 1954, 77-85; White 2012, 489-490.
57.		Ostia (Mitreo di Lucrezio Menandro)	IIIc.	rooms of a private domus in an <i>insula</i> complex	8.15x4.20m (1-2 phases)	Becatti 1954, 17-20; White 2012, 442, no. 9.

58.		Ostia (Mitreo delle Terme di Mitra)	2/2 IIc.	vaulted service corridors beneath a bath complex	15.37x4.55m; <i>opus testaceum, opus listatum</i>	CIMRM 229; Becatti 1954, 29-38; White 2012, 442, no. 10; Melega 2020, 118-119.
59.		Ostia (Mitreo presso Porta Romana)	2/2 IIIc.	portion of <i>horrea</i>	14.96x5.90m	CIMRM 238; Becatti 1954, 45-46; White 2012, 442, no. 12.
60.		Ostia (Mitreo della Casa di Diana)	2/2 IIIc.	two vaulted rooms on the ground floor of a rebuilt <i>insula</i>	8.00x6.10m	CIMRM 216; Becatti 1954, 9-20; White 2012, 452-459.
61.		Ostia (Mitreo di Felicissimus)	2/2 IIIc.- abandoned end IVc.	inside a Hadrianic <i>medianum</i> house	10.35-11.10x4.05m; northern side in <i>opus listatum</i> , southern wall in <i>opus testaceum</i> .	CIMRM 299; Becatti 1954, 105-112; White 2012, 443, no. 14; Chalupa, Glomb 2013, 9-32; Melega 2020, 117.
62.		Ostia (Mitreo dei Serpenti)	end of IIIc.	in one of the most interior rooms of a tenement with <i>tabernae</i> , located in a residential district south of <i>Decumanus</i>	11.97x5.15m; eastern wall in <i>opus mixtum, opus testaceum</i> , and <i>opus listatum</i> ; western wall <i>opus reticulatum</i> .	CIMRM 294; Becatti 1954, 101-104; White 2012, 443, no. 15; Melega 2020, 115- 117.
63.		Ostia (Mitreo di Fructosus)	2/2 IIIc.	inside a vaulted cellar of a small temple belonging to a guild seat south of the <i>Decumanus</i>	5x6m; <i>opus listatum</i>	Becatti 1954, 21-28; White 2012, 442, no. 11; Melega 2020, 117-
64.		Ostia (Mitreo dei marmi colorati)	IVc.-first decades of the Vc.	inside N part of the previous ' <i>caupona</i> del dio Pan', part of late Hadrianic block called the Building of Two Staircases; the suburban area outside Porta Marina	7.20x3m; paved with different types of reused marble	David 2020, 105-112.
65.		Ponza	IIIc., abandoned	natural cave, just outside one of the island's ports, below Palazzo Tagliamonte in the Salita Scalpellini	10.90x6.45-6.90m; vaulted chamber of irregular construction, floor made of	Vermaseren 1974; Beck 1976, 1-19; Beck 1977-78, 87-147; Bjørnebye 2007, 58-

					stamped earth, <i>stucco</i> on the walls and ceiling	59; Walsh 2019, 113-114, no. F.2.
66.		Rome (Castra Peregrinorum/S. Stefano Rotondo)	ca. 180AD; phase 2: end IIIc.; in use until early Vc.	W side of Caelian hill, barracks of Castra Peregrina	phase 1: 10x4.5m; phase 2: 10x9.5m; <i>opus testaceum</i> brickwork phase 1; <i>opus vittatum mixtum</i> (tufa blocks with mortar) in phase 2	Lissi-Caronna 1986; Griffith 1993, 26-31; Bjørnebye 2007, 29-31; Schuddeboom 2016, 235-236.
67.		Rome (S. Clemente)	late IIc./early IIIc.-late IVc. (walled up and filled in, foundations of the basilica)	inside <i>cryptoporticus</i> of a Roman <i>domus</i>	9.6x6m	CIMRM 338; Griffith 1993, 45-61; Bjørnebye 2007, 4142Schuddeboom 2016, 236.
68.		Rome (Via Giovanni Lanza 128)	late IVc.-early Vc.	inside the cellar of a <i>domus</i>	2.70x2.20m; brick and <i>opus reticulatum</i> ; no podia	CIMRM 356; Griffith 1993, 67-71; Bjørnebye 2007, 50-51; Schuddeboom 2016, 236.
69.		Rome (Palazzo Barberini)	late IIc.; phase 2: 2/4 IIIc.; abandoned beg. Vc.	<i>cryptoporticus</i> of a <i>domus</i> in a wealthy residential area	11.83x6.25m; <i>opus testaceum</i>	CIMRM 389; Griffith 1993, 77-81; Bjørnebye 2007, 38-39; Schuddeboom 2016, 237-238.
70.		Rome (Forum Boarium, Circus Maximus)	late IIIc. or early Vc.	in four barrel-vaulted rooms belonging to imperial building near the gates of Circus Maximus	unknown; marble walls, pavements, and podia.	CIMRM 434; Griffith 1993, 124-130; Bjørnebye 2007, 34-36; Tavolieri, Cifardoni 2010, 49-60; Schuddeboom 2016, 239.
71.		Rome (Santa Prisca)	late IIc.-phase 2 ca. 220AD-early Vc.	inside a late Trajanic <i>cryptoporticus</i> of a <i>domus</i> beneath the church of S. Prisca	Phase 1: 11.25x4.20m; phase 2: 17.50 x 4.20m	CIMRM 476; Vermaseren, Van Essen 1965; Griffith 1993, 131-138; Bjørnebye

			(filled up with rubble)			2007, 44-47; Schuddeboom 2016, 240.
72.		Rome (Terme di Caracalla)	early IIIc.-early Vc.	in the subterranean service area at the western edge of the Baths of Caracalla	23x9.70m	CIMRM 457; Griffith 1993, 144-148; Bjørnebye 2007, 47-49; Schuddeboom 2016, 239-240.
73.		Rome (Crypta Balbi)	beg. IIIc.-phase 2 end IIIc./beg.IV c.-mid Vc. (filled up with rubble)	south end of Campus Martius, south vaulted room of <i>insula</i> adjacent to the theatre and porticus	31.50x12m	Ricci 2004, 157-165; Saguì 2004, 167-178; Bjørnebye 2007, 32-34; Schuddeboom 2016, 238-239.
74.		S. Giovanni di Duino (Timavo), near Trieste	2/2 IIc.-end IVc.?	2km from the source of Timavo river, in a natural cave on the hill slope	ca. 48m ² , w. of a nave 2.60m; roof tiles and wooden truss	Stacul 1976, 29-38; Walsh 2019, 114-115, no. F.4.
75.		S. Maria Capua Vetere, <i>vico Caserma</i>	½ IIc. -mid IVc. (carefully cleared and filled with rubble)	in one of the vaulted <i>cryptoportici</i> , near the old <i>Capitolium</i>	12.80x3.49m (internal); the height of the vault 3.22m (three phases)	CIMRM 180; Vermaseren 1971; Bjørnebye 2007, 55-57; Walsh 2019, 113, no. F.1.
76.		<i>Spoletium</i> (Spoleto, 'I Casini')	early IVc.-late IVc. (abandoned, burnt)	just outside city gates, part of a large dwelling?	21.20x3.90m; aisle and walls paved with marble	CIMRM 673; Walsh 2019, 114, no. F.3.
77.		Vulci	mid IIIc.	built into a natural slope, between the slave-quarters of a large <i>domus</i> and the so-called 'House of <i>Cryptoporticus</i> '	13.20x5.10m	Sgubini Moretti 1979, 259-276; Walsh 2019, 115, no. F.5.
78.	Macedonia	Kato Thermes	II-IIIc.(?)	Rhodope mountains, well in its vicinity	rock-cut tauroctony	Klenner 2012, 121-122.

79.	<i>Moesia</i>	Biljanovce, Kumanovo	½ IIIc.?	N slope of the Kraste hill, stream Derven N of the <i>mithraeum</i> , settlement on the hill above?	7.50x5.40m; broken stones and mud, brick, tufa for the stairway, stuccoed tufa blocks for the walls	CIMRM 2201; Jovanova 2015, 298-300; Nikolovski 2015, 78-79.
80.		Kreta, near <i>Oescus</i>		12km S of Danube, right bank of the Vit, inside the quarry complex, hewn into the rock	7x6m	CIMRM 2256; Bottez 2006, 290; Alexandrescu, Topoleanu 2019, 180.
81.		La Adam, Târgușor		in a natural grotto, close to the well		CIMRM 2303; Alexandrescu 2016, 243-262.
82.		<i>Novae</i> (Svišov)	end of II/beg.IIIc.-250/251 AD destr.?	300m from the SW corner of the legionary fortress, close to the S edge of <i>canabae</i>	c. 10x8m(N part is missing); stone and bricks	Bottez 2006, 290-294; Tomas, Lemke 2015, 227-247; Bottez 2018, 253-256.
83.	<i>Noricum</i>	<i>Ad Enum, Pons Aeni</i> (Mühltal am Inn)	mid to late IIc.-ca.395AD	on a hillside 70m from the right bank of the river Inn, the periphery of the <i>vicus Pons Aeni</i> (seat of customs station); linked to the bridge over Inn nearby, close to the main road <i>Iuvavum-Augusta Vindelicum</i>	12.10x8.75m, stone walls with mortar, tiled roof, wooden porch	Steidl 2008, 53-58; Steidl 2010, 72-110; Walsh 2019, 106-107, no. C.1.
84.		<i>Celeia</i> (Zlodejev graben, Zgornja Pohanca)	260/268AD-?	on the slope of a ravine in Pohorje, in a natural grotto under a slightly projecting rock	4.60x4m; enlarged artificially, in some parts supported by brick-work, traces of wood	CIMRM 1457; Lovenjak 1998, 124-130.
85.		<i>Immuriu</i> (Moosham)	end II.-IIIc.	sunk into the slope of the hill, close to <i>mansio (statio?)</i> and S to the neighboring <i>vicus</i>	?	CIMRM 1402; Kovacsovics 1998, 287-297; Jochade-Endl 2011, 23.
86.		<i>Lentia</i> (Linz)	end of III-end of IV.c, burnt	inside the sanctuary zone, alongside the temple dedicated to Capitoline	5.10x2.70m; partially using pre-existing building; mortar	CIMRM 1414; Jochade-Endl 2011, 17-31; Walsh 2019, 107, no. C.2.

				Triad and a temple of <i>Dea Roma</i> and the <i>Genius Augusti</i>	floor, vaulted, wickerwork and loam roof	
87.		Ruše	mid IIIc.(?)	at the end of the gorge, between the slopes of Pohorje and the Drava riverbed, next to the crossing over the river, at the mouth of the torrential stream; partially sunk into the hill, close to Roman necropolis, vicus or <i>villa rustica</i> (?)	3.20x5.50m, vaulted (flooded by artificial lake)	CIMRM 1447; Skrabar 1922, 15-20; Preložnik, Nestorović 2018, 284-285.
88.		Schachadorf, Wartberg an der Krems	268-392AD, burnt	close to the town of <i>Ovilava</i> , one of the main imperial administrative centers in Late Roman Noricum; <i>statio</i> ?	length 8m	CIMRM 1409; Jochade-Endl 2011, 24; Walsh 2019, 109, no. C.3.
89.	<i>Numidia</i>	Lambaesis	end II/early IIIc.-early IVc.	outside the military camp, in the former <i>principia</i> of the small 'East Fort' in the upper city, directly adjoining the baths attached to the temple of Asclepius, not far from the Capitol and the 'anonymous temple'	18.40x8.40m (overall); irregular rubble stones, plaster on the inside	Le Glay 1954, 269-278; Walsh 2019, 120-121, no. I.1.
90.	<i>Pannonia</i>	<i>Aquincum</i> II (Budapest, Mithraeum of Victorinus)	end IIc.?	area of wealthy private housing, interspersed with workshops, baths, <i>collegium iuventutis</i> , and a brothel, NE of the forum	15.03x7.06m; stone-built	CIMRM 1750; Gordon 2009, 406-407; Mráv, Szabó 2012, 120-122.
91.		<i>Aquincum</i> IV	mid IIc.; rebuilt	in a residential area near S city-walls of the civil town,	phase 1: cast floor, yellow clay northern podium; phase	CIMRM 1767; Zsidi 2001, 38-48; Gordon 2009, 406-


		(Budapest, Mithraeum of Symphorus)	begin. IIIc.-late IIIc.?	ca. 150m S of the Mithraeum of Victorinus	2: 17x9m; stone foundations, yellow pounded clay floor	407; Walsh 2019, 108-109, D.1.
92.		<i>Brigetio</i> (Komárom)	early IIIc.	in the <i>canabae</i> S of the legionary fortress, 2km W of <i>municipium</i> , 400m from Dolichenum	8.50x3.70m	CIMRM 1723; Gordon 2009, 405; Szabó 2021, 233-238.
93.		<i>Carnuntum</i> I (Petronell)	Early IIc.-early IVc.	in a cave on the NW slope of the Kirchügel in Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, edge of the outer <i>canabae</i> , 400m from the <i>castra</i>	? (destroyed by quarrying); a mix of natural stone and masonry	CIMRM 1664; Gugl, Kremer 2011, 164-166; Kremer 2012, 330-331; Gordon 2009, 403-404; Walsh 2019, 109, D.2.
94.		<i>Carnuntum</i> III (Petronell)	½ IIc.-restored early IVc.-?	in the immediate vicinity of the civilian town, in the western <i>canabae</i> near the auxiliary fort, within a cult area including a <i>Dolichenum</i>	23x8.5m; ashlar and brick	CIMRM 1682; Gugl, Kremer 2011, 167, 170-172, 175-181; Kremer 2012, 332-334; Walsh 2019, 109-110, D.3.
95.		<i>Poetovio</i> I (Ptuj) CEU eTD Collection	mid IIc.-IV.c.	the right bank of river Drava, partially sunk into the river terrace; series of small sanctuaries dedicated to Vulcan, Venus, and other deities; dedications to Holy spring and Nymphs 100m N of Mithraeum; three wells S of Mithraeum, enclosed water spring inside; close to the cemetery; main road <i>Celeia-Poetovio-Savaria</i> 200m N of Mithraeum	7x9m; wooden vestibule with pebble floor, hard loam floor inside the sanctuary, a smaller space north of it (treasury?)	CIMRM 1487; Vomer Gojkovič 2001, 105-106; Vomer Gojkovič, Djurić, Lovenjak 2011; Vomer Gojkovič 2018, 265; Preložnik-Lovenjak 2018, 279.
96.		<i>Poetovio</i> II (Ptuj)	beg. IIIc.-mid IVc.	just beyond an area with three wells, ca. 20m S from the Mithraeum I, built atop	13.70x7.30m; stone-built, covered with lime mortar	CIMRM 1509; Vomer Gojkovič 2001, 106-107; Ertel 2001, 167-178; Vomer

				the spring, a sanctuary for Nutrices and Jupiter (?)		Gojkovič 2018, 265-267; Preložnik-Lovenjak 2018, 279; Walsh 2019, 110, D.4.
97.		<i>Poetovio</i> III (Ptuj)	?; phase 2: mid IIIc.-2/2 IIIc.; abandoned in late IVc.	the right bank of the river Drava, close to the main road <i>Celeia-Savaria</i> ; adjacent to the temple of Nutrices or Magna Mater, in the quarter of luxurious Roman <i>villae suburbanae</i> ; immediate vicinity of a large villa, belonged to its estate (?)	11.20x6.85m; phase 2: 16x8m; central part paved with pebble, later additions in brick; podia covered with compacted soil, masonry and wooden construction	CIMRM 1578; Vomer Gojkovič 2001, 107; Žižek 2001, 125-166; Ertel 2001, 167-178; Vomer Gojkovič 2014; Vomer Gojkovič 2018, 267-268; Preložnik-Lovenjak 2018, 279-281; Walsh 2019, 110-111, D.5.
98.		<i>Poetovio</i> V (Ptuj)	½ IIIc.-end IVc.	the left bank of river Drava, N edge of the settlement, 250m from the main road leading <i>Celeia-Savaria</i> , a residential and industrial area with workshops and graveyard	ca. 8x6m, only partially preserved	Tušek 2001, 191-215; Ertel 2001, 167-178; Vomer Gojkovič 2001, 270-272; Preložnik, Nestorović 2018, 283; Walsh 2019, 111-112, D.6.
99.		Rožanec	mid IIc.-beg. IVc.	the slope of the hill, close to the Roman road, inside an abandoned Roman quarry	36x13m; tauroctony carved into the natural rock	CIMRM 1481; Selem 1980, 78-89; Lovenjak 1998, 286-287; Korošec 2001, 373.
100.		<i>Savaria</i> (Szombathely)	?-IVc. burned	in the area of <i>sacra peregrina</i> surrounding the temple of Isis, inside <i>insula</i> S from the W part of the S city walls	4x3m? not fully excavated; limestone, clay-brick wall	Kiss 2011, 183-191.
101.		Šárkezi	late IIc.; enlarged ½ IIIc.-beg. IVc.?	12km from colony <i>Herculia</i> , on an important road to <i>Aquincum</i>	23x10m (overall); limestone, wooden-framed superstructure	CIMRM 1809; Nagy 1950.



102.		Scarbantia (Fertőrákos)	beg. IIIc.- mid IIIc., abandoned	in the vicinity of the auxiliary road (part of Amber Road), towards <i>Scarbantia</i> and <i>Carnuntum</i> ; stream flows next to the sanctuary, into the nearby lake Fertő	eastern and southern wall use natural rock as a wall, northern and western are built of brick; trapezoid shape: 5.22x5.22- 5.38x3.47m (overall)	CIMRM 1636; Tóth 2007.
103.	Raetia	Centum Prata (Kempraten, Rapperswil-Jona)	late IIIc.- late IV./early Vc., 3 phases	close to the shore of lake Zurich, outside settlement area, 200 m west of the Seewise sanctuary area (north-western edge of the <i>vicus</i>)	8x10m, partially hewn into the natural rock; phase 1: stone construction; phase 2: wooden or timber-loam construction, phase 3: mixed construction	Ackermann et al. 2020, 47- 63.
104.	Sardinia et Corsica	Mariana	second half of the II/beg.IIIc., abandoned and destroyed end IV/beg.Vc.	along the old bed of the river Golo	irregular <i>cella</i> , 11.40m (west wall), 9.50m (east wall) x 4.50m (north wall), 6.10m (south wall); pebbles and tiles with lime mortar	Chapon 2020, 77-86.
105.	Syria	Dura-Europos	phase I c.169AD; phase II 209-211AD; 240AD- 256AD filled with sand and earth	NW of the city, in the Roman military quarter, inside a private house	4.65x5.80/10.90m	CIMRM 34; Dirven, McCarty 2020, 165-181.
106.		Hawarte	beg.IVc.- end IVc., sacked and filled with debris	in a series of natural caves lying close to the village, under the church of Archbishop Photios	6.46-7.20x4.80m; ashlar	Gawlikowski 2020, 183-190.



107.		<i>Caesarea Maritima</i>	II or IIIc.- end IIIc.	SW zone, in one of the vaults underneath the audience hall of the <i>praetorium</i> of the Roman financial procurator, south of the temple platform	13.50x5.00m; kurkar (local calcareous sandstone), founded on a bedrock	Bull et al. 2017; Ratzlaff 2020, 157-164.
108.		<i>Doliche</i> (Dülük)	early IIIc.- end IIIc.?	two to a large extent artificial caves at the W flank of Keber Tepesi, quarrying area	10.00x7.00m; 7.00x10.00m	Schütte-Maischatz, Winter 2004; Gordon 2007, 602-610.



APPENDIX 2 – MITHRAIC SITES IN DALMATIA



	Site	Object, Date	Image	Transcription (where needed)	Selected bibliography	Current location
1.	Bijaći, near Kaštel Stari (Croatia)	Two fragments of a tauroctony relief			Gabričević 1954, 38, no. 24a, 24b; Silnović 2014, 44-45, fig. 3.12; CIMRM 1909; ROMIC II, 78, no. 4.	Archaeological museum, Split.



(Photo: Archaeological musem, Split).


2.	Bioska, near Užice (Serbia)	Votive altar, 201 AD – 270 AD	 <p>(Photo: LUPA 29887).</p>	<i>In(victo) M(ithrae) / T(itus) Aur(elius) Seve(rus) l(ibens) p(osuit)</i>	Mesihović 2011, 257, no. 15; AE 1976, 00599; HD 012531; LUPA 29887.	National museum, Užice.
3.	Biskupija, near Knin	Fragment of a tauroctony relief	 <p>(Photo: Zoran Alajbeg, MHAS).</p>		Gunjača 1956, 87, fig. 10; ROMIC II, 76, no.1.	Museum of Croatian archaeological monuments, Split.



4.	Crikvine	Tauroctony relief, 101 AD – 190 AD	 <p>(Photo: LUPA 24997).</p>		<p>Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 6; Uroda 2008, 69-69, fig. 5; Silnović 2014, 38-39, fig. 3.6; CIMRM 1871; ROMIS 162-163, no. 4; LUPA 24997.</p>	Archaeological museum, Split.
5.	Čakovac (<i>Metulum</i> , near Josipdol)	Fragment of a lion- headed god	 <p>(Photo: Brunšmid, 1904, fig. 43).</p>		<p>Brunšmid 1904, 234, no. 43; Miletić 1996, 153, no.6.</p>	Archaeological museum, Zagreb (Croatia); lost?


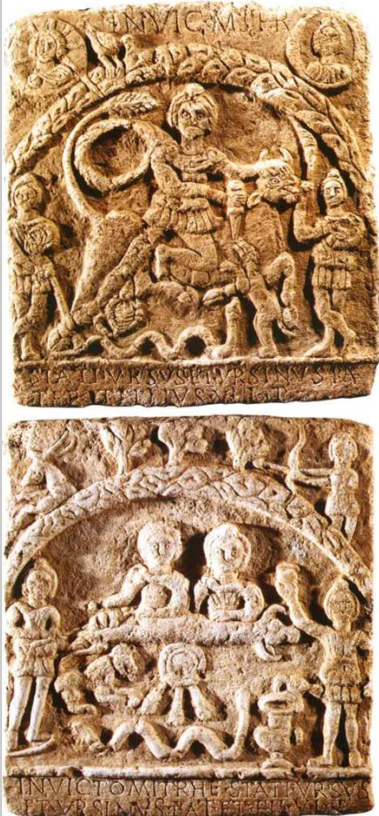
6.	Dardagani	Tauroctony relief, 301 AD - 350 AD			Kosorić 1965, 49-56.	Museum of Eastern Bosnia, Tuzla.
7.	Gardun (<i>Tilurium</i>)	Two fragments of a double-sided tauroctony relief with an inscription, 151 AD – 300 AD		-----? <i>Invi?</i> <i>Jcti</i> / <i>pos/uit</i>	Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 7, fig. 1; ILJug 01, 0142; CIMRM 1857-1858; HD 033094; ROMIC II, 77, no. 3.	Archaeological museum, Split.

8.	Golubić (<i>Raetinium</i>), Crkvine	Tauroctony relief with inscription, 171 AD – 300 AD		<i>Aure/lius / Ma/ximus / Pantadie/[nus]</i>	Gabričević 1954, 37, no.12; CIL III 10034; CIMRM 1911; ROMIC II, 77, no. 3; HD 052640; LUPA 8830.	Archaeological museum, Zagreb.
9.		Votive inscription on a stone block, 201 AD – 300 AD		<i>Leoni / F(---)(?) P(-- -)(?) R(---)(?) O(-- -)(?) I(---) R(---) S(-- -)</i>	Gabričević 1953, 141-142, fig. 1b; CIL III 10042=13276a; ILJug 01, 0216a; CIMRM 1913; HD 033256.	The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo.



10.		Votive inscription on a stone block, 201 AD – 300 AD	 <p>(Photo: The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina).</p>	<i>Fonti / F(---)(?) P(---)(?) R(---)(?) O(---) I(---) R(---) S(---)</i>	Gabričević 1953, 141-142, fig. 1a; CIL III 13276b; ILJug 01, 0216b; CIMRM 1913; HD 033259.	The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo.
11.	Grude, near Tihaljina	Votive altar, 161 AD – 180 AD CEU eTD Collection	 <p>(Photo: LUPA 23739).</p>	<i>D(eo) I(nvicto) M(ithrae) a[c] Ge]/niis sac[r(orum)] / Augusto[r(um)] / Rus(---) Pin(nes) mi/les / co(hortis) prim(ae) / Bel(garum) immunis / libens merito / posuit</i>	CIL III 12810; CIMRM 1889; HD 053180; LUPA 23739	The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo.



12.	Ivoševci (Burnum)	Fragment of a tauroctony relief with inscription, 151 AD - 330 AD	 <p>(Photo: Archaeological museum, Zadar).</p>	<i>[---]rus eq(ues) R(omanus) donu[m] dedit]</i>	Suić 1965, 95, fig. 4; ILJug 02, 00833; AE 1971, 00301; HD 011491; ROMIC I, 83- 84, no. 13.	Archaeological museum, Zadar.
13.	Jezerine, Pritoka near Bihać	Votive altar, 201 AD – 300 AD	 <p>(Photo: Sergejevski 1939, table 5, image 4).</p>	<i>I(nvicto) M(ithrae) s(acrum) / C(aius) O(---) C(---) / pro s(alute) / sua v(otum) / l(ibens) s(olvit)</i>	Sergejevski 1939, 8, no.1; CIMRM 1908; ILJug 03, 01679; HD 033982; LUPA 30501.	Archaeological museum, Split.



14.		Tauroctony relief, 201 AD – 300 AD	 <p>(Photo: Sergejevski 1939, 8, image 1).</p>			Sergejevski 1939, 8-9, image 1; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 13; CIMRM 1907.	Lost.
15.	Kašić, Dražica-Pudarica	Double-sided tauroctony relief, 180 AD - 230 AD	 <p>(Photo: Archaeological museum, Zadar).</p>			Medini 1975, 39-83; Pedišić, Krnčević 1992, 52-55; Bugarski 1996/1997, 221-237; ROMIC I, 80-83, no. 12.	Archaeological museum, Zadar.



16.	Omiš (<i>Oneum</i>)	Fragment of a tauroctony relief, 101 AD – 290 AD	 <p>(Photo: Cambi 2017, fig. 1).</p>			Cambi 2017, 23-26, fig. 1; ROMIC II, 89, no. 19.	Built in the Torjun fort, Omiš.
17.	Proložac Donji	Double- sided tauroctony relief with inscription, 250 AD - 330 AD	 <p>CEU eTD Collection</p>		<p>Front: <i>Invic(to)</i> <i>Mithr(ae) / Stati</i> <i>Vrsvs et Vrsinvs Pa /</i> <i>ter et Filivs V(otum)</i> <i>L(ibentes)</i> <i>P(osuerunt)</i></p> <p>Reverse: <i>Invicto</i> <i>Mithr(a)e Stati Vrsvs</i> <i>/ et Vrsinvs Pat(er) et</i> <i>Fil(ivs) V(otum)</i> <i>L(ibentes)</i> <i>P(osuerunt)</i></p>	Gudelj 2006; ROMIC II, 80- 82, no. 9; EDCS 35300793.	Zavičajni muzej Imotske krajine, Imotski.

			(Photo: Gudelj, 2006).				
18.	Rogatica (<i>colonia</i> <i>Ris...?</i>)	Votive altar, 171 AD – 300 AD			<i>Invicto Mit(h)r(ae) / P(ublius) Ael(ius) Clemens / Iunior / Ivir et q(uin)q(uenn)alis / [-] -] ti vet(eranus) / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)</i>	Bojanovski 1967, 47-49, fig. 5; Mesihović 2011, 125-126, no. 4; AE 1976, 0533; AE 2009, 1028; ILJug 02, 0624; HD 012315.	Lost.
(Photo: Bojanovski 1967, fig. 5).							
19.	Skelani (<i>municipium</i> <i>Malvesiatium</i>)	Votive altar, 151 AD – 300 AD CEU eTD Collection			<i>Tran[situ] / Dei M[ithr(ae)] /... / Host[ilius] / [-]oni[---]</i>	Patsch 1909, 148-149, fig. 53; CIL III 14219, 8; ILJug 3, 1533; CIMRM 1900; HD 052644.	Lost.
(Photo. Patsch 1909, 148, fig. 53).							

20.	Solin (<i>Salona</i>)	Fragment of a tauroctony relief, 150 AD – 190 AD	 <p>(Photo: N. Silnović, 2013).</p>		Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 2; Silnović 2014, 33-34, fig. 3.2; CIMRM 1860; ROMIS 163-164, no. 5; LUPA 24996.	Archaeological museum, Split.
21.		Fragment of a tauroctony relief, 201 AD – 290 AD	 <p>(Photo: N. Silnović, 2013).</p>		Gabričević 1954, 38, no. 23, fig. 6; Silnović 2014, 35, fig. 3.3; CIMRM 1866; ROMIS 166, no. 9.	Archaeological museum, Split.



22.		Fragment of a tauroctony relief, 150 AD – 190 AD	 <p>(Photo: N. Silnović, 2013).</p>		Gabričević 1954, 38, no. 26, fig. 9; Silnović 2014, 35-36, fig. 3.4; CIMRM 1868; ROMIS 165, no. 8.	Archaeological museum, Split.
23.		Fragment of a tauroctony relief, 150 AD – 190 AD	 <p>(Photo: N. Silnović, 2013).</p>		Gabričević 1954, 38-39, no. 27, fig. 10; Silnović 2014, 36-37, fig. 3.5; CIMRM 1869; ROMIS 166, no. 10.	Archaeological museum, Split.



24.		Fragment of a tauroctony relief, 201 AD - 290 AD	 <p>(Photo: N. Silnović, 2013).</p>		Gabričević 1954, 38, no. 22, fig. 5; Silnović 2014, 39-40, fig. 3.7; CIMRM 1865; ROMIS 163-167-168, no. 12.	Archaeological museum, Split.
25.		Fragment of a circular relief, 201 AD – 290 AD CEU eTD Collection	 <p>(Photo: N. Silnović, 2013).</p>		Gabričević 1954, 39, fig. 11; Silnović 2014, 41-42, fig. 3.8; CIMRM 1870; ROMIS 161, no. 2.	Archaeological museum, Split.

26.		Fragment of a tauroctony relief with inscription, 1 AD – 300 AD			-----]or inp[-----	Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 4; Silnović 2014, 33-34, fig. 3.2; CIMRM 1862-1863; CIL III 14243/1; ILJug 03, 02053; HD 034416; ROMIS 168-169, no. 13.	Archaeological museum, Split.
27.		Fragment of a tauroctony relief, 201 AD – 290 AD CEU eTD Collection				Gabričević 1954, 38, no. 25, fig. 8; Silnović 2014, 43-44, fig. 3.10; CIMRM 1867; ROMIS 164, no. 6.	Archaeological museum, Split.

(Photo: Tonći Seser, Archaeological Museum Split).



(Photo. N. Silnović, 2013).


28.		Fragment of a tauroctony relief, 201 AD – 290 AD	 <p>(Photo: N. Silnović, 2013).</p>		Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 5; Silnović 2014, 44, fig. 3.11; CIMRM 1864; ROMIS 165, no. 7.	Archaeological museum, Split.
29.		Tauroctony relief, 201 AD – 290 AD CEU eTD Collection	 <p>(Photo: N. Silnović, 2013).</p>		Gabričević 1854, 37, no. 1; Silnović 2014, 45-46, fig. 3.13; CIMRM 1859; ROMIS 161-162, no. 3.	Archaeological museum, Split.



30.		Circular tauroctony relief, 250 AD – 290 AD	 <p>(Photo: Archaeological museum, Split).</p>		Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 3; Silnović 2014, 52-66, fig. 4.1; Silnović 2016, 56-75; CIMRM 1861; ROMIS 158-160, no. 1.	Archaeological museum, Split.
31.		Miniature tauroctony relief, 201 AD – 290 AD	 <p>(Photo: Archaeological museum, Split).</p>		Silnović 2014, 46-448, fig. 3.14; Silnović 2018, 291-304.	Archaeological museum, Split.


32.		Fragment of a relief with lion-headed god, 201 AD – 290 AD	 <p>(Photo: Tonći Seser, Archaeological Museum Split).</p>		Cambi 2017, 27-29, fig. 5.	Archaeological museum, Split.
33.		Tauroctony relief	 <p>(Photo: Tonći Seser, Archaeological Museum Split).</p>		Miletić 1996, 168-169, no. 17s; ROMIS 167, no. 11.	Archaeological museum, Split.

34.		Votive plate, 171 AD – 300 AD	 <p>(Photo: LUPA 24968).</p>	<i>D(eo) Inv(icto)</i> <i>M(ithrae) / L(ucius)</i> <i>Corn(elius)</i> <i>Apalaus/tus pro</i> <i>s(alute) M(arci) Vivi /</i> <i>Cresti amic(i)</i> <i>kariss(im)i / ex voto</i> <i>p(osuit)</i>	Silnović 2014, 71, no. 6; CIL III, 08678; CIMRM 1873; ROMIS 173- 174, no. 18; HD 053173; LUPA 24968.	Archaeological museum, Split.
35.		Votive altar, 151 AD – 300 AD	 <p>(Photo: Tonći Seser, Archaeological Museum Split).</p>	<i>Deo M[ithrae</i> <i>Invicto?] /</i> <i>ceteris[que dis</i> <i>dea]busqu[e</i> <i>immor]/talibu[s --</i> <i>-]/lius [---] / a</i> <i>milit[iis ---] / [-----</i>	Silnović 2014, 70, no. 2; CIL III, 08677; CIMRM 1872; HD 053172; ROMIS 170- 171, no. 15.	Archaeological museum, Split.



36.		Votive altar, 151 AD – 300 AD		<i>Petr(a)e / Gene/trici</i>	Silnović 2014, 70, no. 3; CIL III 08679; CIMRM 1874; ROMIS 171- 172, no. 16; HD 053174.	Archaeological museum, Split.
37.		Votive altar, 151 AD – 300 AD		<i>D(eo) I(invicto) S(oli) M(ithrae) Ter/entius Dalm/ata MANTIVS / v(otum?) s(olvit?) in hono/rem amic(orum) / suorum</i>	Mardešić 1987, 95-97; Silnović 2014, 71, no. 5; AE 1989, 00601; HD 018318.	Archaeological museum, Split.

38.	Stari Grad (Pharos), Hvar island	Fragment of a tauroctony relief			Rendić- Miočević 1996, 122, no. 6; ROMIC II, 79, no. 6.	Dominican monastery, Stari Grad, Hvar island.
(Photo: Lipovac Vrkljan, 2001, table XVII, fig. 1).						
39.	Staro Selo, Glamočko polje	Votive altar, 151 AD – 300 AD		<i>D(eo) I(nvicto)</i> <i>[S(oli)] M(ithrae) /</i> <i>pao[...]/ cvi[-] i[...]</i> <i>/ pokv[...]/ attir[</i>	Sergejevski 1933, 7, no. 2; Mesihović 2011, 485, no. 5; ILJug 03, 1634; CIMRM 1915; HD 033935.	Lost.
40.	Škrip, Brač island (Brattia)	Votive altar, 151 AD – 250 AD		<i>S(oli) I(nvicto)</i> <i>M(ithrae) / Iulius /</i> <i>Bubalus</i>	CIL III 03095=10102; CIMRM 1877; ROMIC II 78- 79, no. 5; HD 053176	Built in the private house, Škrip, Brač island.

41.	Umljanovići (<i>municipium</i> <i>Magnum</i>)	Tauroctony relief	 <p>(Photo: Joško Zaninović, Archives of the City museum, Drniš).</p>			Lipovac Vrkljan 1996/1997, 49- 60; ROMIC II, 76- 77, no. 2.	Built in a private house, hamlet Mešini, near Drniš.
42.	Zadar (<i>Iader</i>)	Tauroctony relief, 150 AD	 <p>(Photo: Archaeological museum, Zadar).</p>			Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 2; Suić 1965, 93- 94, fig.1; Medini 1984/1985, 64- 66, table 1; CIMRM 1879; ROMIC I, 77- 78, no. 10; LUPA 24299.	Archaeological museum, Zadar.

43.		Two fragments of a double-sided relief, 201 - 290 AD			Suić 1965, 94-95; fig. 2, 3; Medini 1985, 68-71, table 2; ROMIC I, 79-80, no. 11.	Archaeological museum, Zadar.
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(Photo: Archaeological museum, Zadar).

44.		Fragment of a lion-headed god, 201 AD – 250 AD	 <p>(Photo: Archaeological museum, Zadar).</p>		Cambi 2003, 101-117.	Archaeological museum, Zadar.
45.	Zaostrog	Fragment of a tauroctony relief, 201 - 290 AD	 <p>(Photo: ROMIC II, 113, fig. 7).</p>		ROMIC II, 80, no. 8.	Franciscan monastery in Živogošće.

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