

Temple of Diana in Timacum Minus and Some Aspects of Cult of Diana in Territory of Serbia

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Three votive monuments dedicated to the cult of Diana have been identified to date in the territory of Roman Municipium Timacum Minus. Two of them are related to erection and restoration of the temple of Diana. According to onomastic formulae of the dedicants' names, the first monument may be dated into the period of Emperor Hadrian's rule or immediately after it, and the other into the period of the reign of Marcus Aurelius or directly following it. The main methodological approach in this paper was researching Diana's cult in general, and then also examining analogies to votive monuments from Timacum Minus in the territory of Serbia. Even though there have been only five such monuments identified to date, analogies show that it was already in 2nd century that the influence of Romanisation in the territory of Serbia was well under way, and that in worshipping Diana, her companions the nymphs, and Apollo-Diana-Silvanus, it was indeed Roman deities that were being worshipped and not *interpretatio Romana* of indigenous deities. Socio-economic position of the dedicants indicates that they belonged to middle or upper social strata (*legatus legionis VII Claudiae piae fidelis, duumvir, pontifex, eques Romanus*).

Keywords: Roman period, Timacum Minus, Diana's cult, dating of erection and restoration of the temple, analogies to Diana's cult in the territory of Serbia

Introduction

Three votive monuments dedicated to Diana have been identified to date in the area of Roman Timacum Minus, the site of Ravna near Knjaževac. Two of them are related to the erection and restoration of the temple of Diana. In total, five analogies to monuments to Diana were identified in the territory of Serbia, one of which is a votive monuments dedicated to Apollo-Diana-Silvanus cult symbiosis, and one to the nymphs, Diana's companions.

The main objective of this paper is to date the monument dedicated to Diana in Timacum Minus, determining in particular the time of erection and restoration of Diana's temple, and then also to date the analogies in the territory of Serbia. The next important point is to identify the socio-economic position of the dedicants, and thus also the extent of their Romanisation. The final part of the paper attempts to answer the question whether the name of Roman Diana hides *interpretatio Romana* of indigenous deity of woodland and hunt or not.

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Main Directions in Research

Main directions in research in this paper were based on several steps. The steps concern the following: 1) key features of the cult of Diana; 2) the temple of Diana in Timacum Minus, identification of its erection and restoration, as well as their dating; and 3) analogies to the cult of Diana in the territory of Serbia and dating them as well, and, in addition, also identifying the socio-economic position of the dedicants and the extent of their Romanisation. Therefore, epigraphic sources served for orientation, and also as general source for onomastic formulae of the dedicants, used as guidelines for dating the monuments. What could not be covered in this paper is the site of the temple itself, since archaeological excavations to date have not yet provided data on its location.

This paper also attempts to reach a conclusion whether adoration and veneration of Diana served to conceal the worshipping of indigenous deities of woodlands and hunt that are as yet unknown, or if this is the case of a broader extent of Romanisation, of devotion to Diana in her natural position as a Roman goddess.

Cult of Diana

Diana was an Italic goddess of fertility, motherhood, and wild animals. Her name was derived from Indo-European root *di*, which means “to shine”. Thus, she is also a goddess of celestial light, along with Jupiter, Juno, and Janus. She was often identified as Jana, so in some mythological lexicons, it may be found that Jana is another name for Diana (Zamurović, 1936). Also in mythological lexicons, she is often not separated from Artemis, and frequently when Diana is looked up the reference points to Artemis (Zamurović, 1936). It was very early on that Diana was equated with the Greek goddess Artemis, already in 399 (BCE) before common era at the great *lectisternium* in Rome (Srejšović & Cermanović-Kuzmanović, 1979). As such, she is a daughter of Zeus and Leto and Apollo’s twin sister, born in the island of Delos (see below the dedication “*dea virago Delia*”). As a goddess of celestial light, she was also equated with Luna.

As a goddess of stars, she was the one that lovers prayed to. She was especially revered as a goddess of the Moon, goddess of childbirth and hunt, carrying a quiver and arrows, protecting groves, and dancing with the nymphs. She protected women in labour and nursing mothers in particular, and in some of her temples, such as the one in Rome, for instance, between Viminale and Esquillino, only women were admitted.

In the Roman provinces, different indigenous deities were worshipped under Diana’s name, especially goddesses of woodlands and hunt. Thus, Diana was widely favoured in the continental part of the province of Dalmatia (Imamović, 1977).

Diana’s Temple in Timacum Minus

In the area of Timacum Minus, the site of Ravna near Knjaževac, three votive monuments in all were identified that were dedicated to Diana. Two of them mentioned the erection and restoration of the temple. The monument erected by T. Aelius Mucianus with his wife named Tullia (see Figure 2) mentions the building of the temple. The monument simply states “*templum fecerunt*” (Petrović, 1995). In that monument, Diana was mentioned as Diana Agustae. Diana was mentioned in the same way, as Diana Agustae, also in the monument dedicated to Diana by M. Aurelius Quadratianus (see Figure 3). It was him, as the monument says, who “*ex voto restituit*”, restored the temple (Petrović, 1995).

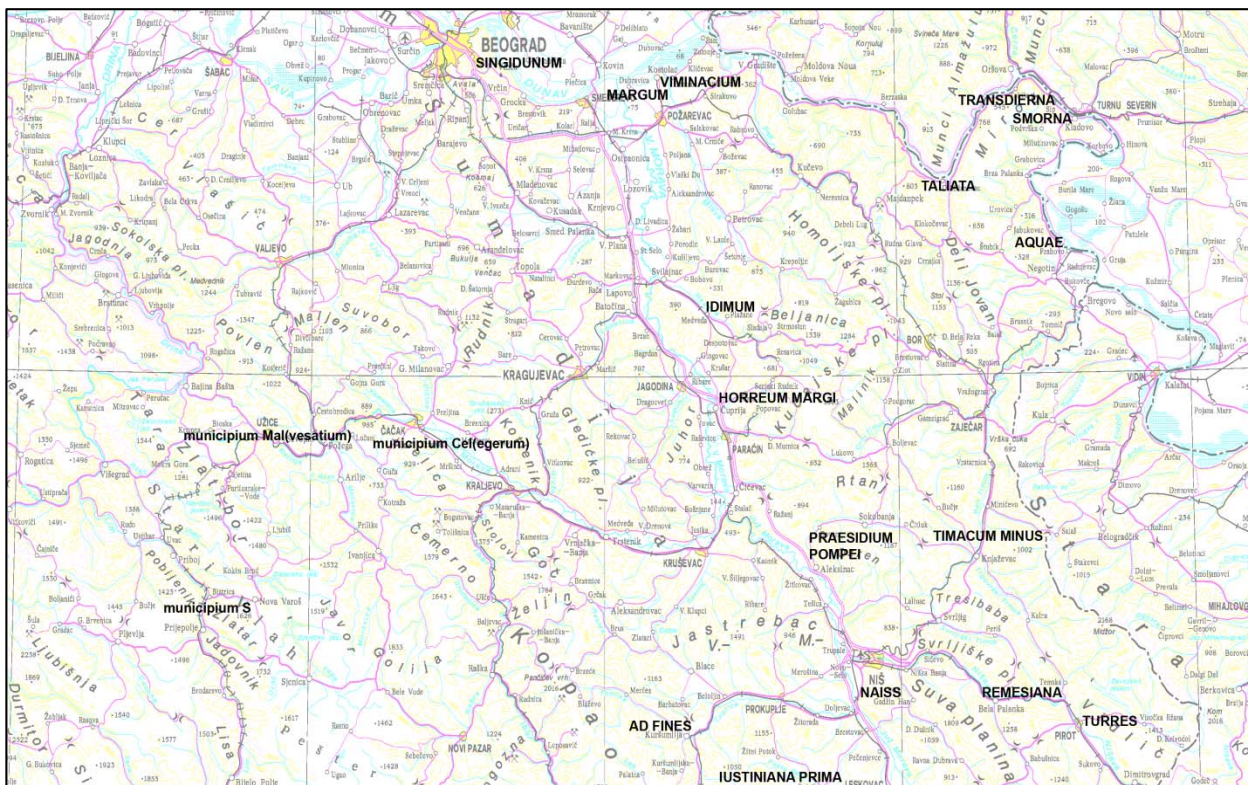


Figure 1. Central Serbia in the Roman period.



Figure 2. Votive monument to Diana mentioning the restoration of her temple.

The first onomastic formula, T. Aelius Mucianus, indicates that it was in the times of Emperor Hadrian that he obtained the Roman citizenship right. Since the exact time of his receiving the Roman citizenship right is not known, or how long he lived, the monument may be dated into the period of Emperor Hadrian or immediately after his death. The case of already mentioned M. Aurelius Quadratianus is similar; judging by *gentilicium* Aurelius, it was during the period of Emperor Marcus Aurelius that he obtained the Roman citizenship right, so the monument may be dated into the period of reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius or immediately after his death. Thus, the temple of Diana was built in the period of Emperor Hadrian or immediately after his reign, and it was restored in the period of Marcus Aurelius or immediately after his rule. The fact that the monument was erected by T. Aelius Mucianus together with his wife by the name of Tullia, in a single-member formula, without *gentilicia*, indicates middle class of citizens who rose above their status because of their ample means. Thus, it can be inferred that the temple was most probably of smaller size, but it is still an important indication of Romanisation in these parts. In addition, it concurs with the fact that the period of Emperor Hadrian and immediately after his death was the period when Romanisation was more and more present. Also, the fact that Diana here is found in her natural, Roman, position, as Diana Augusta, clearly conveys that Romanisation was well under way during the time of Emperor Hadrian and Emperor Marcus Aurelius.

The third monument was dedicated to Diana as Dianae, no attributes, and the name of the dedicant was not preserved, so the monument could not be dated (Petrović, 1995) (see Figure 3).

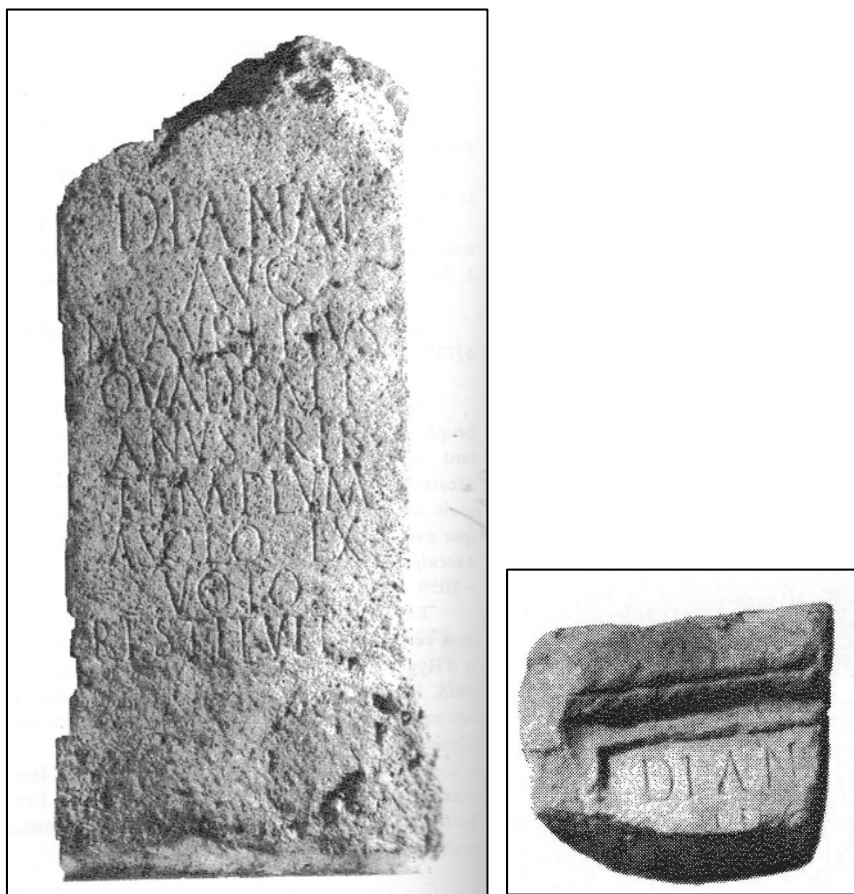


Figure 3. Fragment of a votive monument dedicated to Diana

Analogies to Diana's Cult in Territory of Serbia

In the territory of Serbia, the analogies to the cult of Diana occur infrequently and sporadically. Bearing dedications to Diana, they appear, one each, in the areas of Roman cities Singidunum, Viminacium, Dardania and modern day Prijepolje (perhaps Roman *municipium S*) (see Figure 1). In the area of Singidunum, there was one monument dedicated to Diana as Dianae, with no attributes (Vulić & von Premerštajn, 1900; Mirković, 1976). The same instance was in the area of Viminacium where Diana was mentioned as Diane with no attributes (Vulić & von Premerštajn, 1900; Mirković, 1976). In the territory of potential *municipium S*, there was also one votive monument dedicated to Diana, but this time with specific attributes. The goddess was identified as “*Dea virago Delia*” in charge of “*quod [debeo] felix ego*”, or as maiden Delia Diana credited with the good fortune of the dedicant (Zotović, 2002). This aspect confirms the worship of Roman Diana, maiden and merciful, who gracefully looked on the dedicant and bestowed happiness in life upon him. Also, interesting is the dedication from the territory of Viminacium, cult symbiosis of Diana, Apollo, and Silvanus, i.e., Apoloni-Dianae-Silvano (Mirković, 1988). It is possible that Diana was connected to Silvanus through hunting, with the meadows and woods that Silvanus rules and where Diana hunts, while with Apollo she was associated through brotherly-sisterly connection, as Diana from Delos (Zamurović, 1936).

The dedication to nymphs, Diana's companions, from the area of Dardania, is of special interest (Vulić & von Premerštajn, 1900; Petrović, 1979). Although nymphs may be linked to the cult of Apollo as well, here they may be identified as Diana's companions, since the dedication reads *nymphis salutaribus*, i.e., nymphs that deserve credit or are beneficial for health. In addition to good fortune in life, Diana could, together with the nymphs, also grant health and long life.

All the analogies may be dated into the period of 2nd century. The dating was conducted based on onomastic formulae and *gentilia* in them. Thus, the dedicants from the areas of Singidunum and Viminacium, were a certain Antonia Procla and a certain M. L. Maximus, who was a *legatus legionis* of the military unit VII Claudia pia fidelis, while the dedication to Apollo, Diana, and Silvanus was made by a certain Aelius Valentinus, *duumvir colonie* Viminacium. The dedication to Diana Delia in the area of Prijepolje was made by T. Aurelius Saturninus *equus Romanus*, a Roman knight. The monument to nymphs was made by a certain *pontifex* Catus Celer, whose wife and sons have no *gentilia*, so this monument as well may be dated into the period prior to year 212. According to *gentilia*, most monuments may be dated into the periods of Emperors Hadrian or Marcus Aurelius, while the dedicants' functions indicate that in these cases as well Diana was accepted in the territory of Serbia as a Roman goddess, with no *interpretatio Romana* of the Roman cult to the autochthonous.

Conclusion

Temple of Diana in Timacum Minus was built at the time of Emperor Hadrian or immediately following his rule. It was restored at the time of Marcus Aurelius or also immediately after his reign. Dedicants of votive monuments to Diana from Timacum Minus belong to the middle social stratum, rising above that level due to their economic power. The same case is with the dedicant from Singidunum area, while dedicants from the areas of Viminacium, Dardania and modern day Prijepolje belonged to the higher social strata (*legatus legionis VII Claudiae pae fidelis*, *pontifex*, *duumvir*). All the monuments belong to the period of 2nd century, and *interpretatio Romana* was not identified for dedications to the cult of Diana. On the contrary, Diana was here in her natural position of Roman goddess of light, fertility, childbirth, and wild animals.

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