



Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts



University of Leiden

Publishers

Macedonian Academy
of Sciences and Arts



University of Leiden



Editorial Advisory Board

VERA BITRAKOVA GROZDANOVA
LAURENT BRICAULT
MIGUEL JOHN VERSLUYS

Preface by

VERA BITRAKOVA GROZDANOVA

Editors

ALEKSANDRA NIKOLOSKA & SANDER MÜSKENS





ROMANISING ORIENTAL GODS?

Religious transformations in the Balkan
provinces in the Roman period.
New finds and novel perspectives.

РОМАНИЗИРАЊЕ НА ОРИЕНТАЛНИ БОГОВИ?

Религиски трансформации во балканските
провинции во римскиот период.
Нови наоди и перспективи.

ROMANISATION DES DIEUX ORIENTAUX?

Transformations religieuses dans les provinces balkaniques
à l'époque romaine.
Nouvelles découvertes et perspectives.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
SKOPJE, 18–21 SEPTEMBER 2013

SKOPJE
2015



Издавачи

Македонска академија
на науките и уметностите



Universiteit Leiden



За издавачите

АКАД. ВЛАДО КАМБОВСКИ, ПРЕТСЕДАТЕЛ
PROF. DR. MIGUEL JOHN VERSLUYS

Уреднички одбор

ВЕРА БИТРАКОВА ГРОЗДАНОВА
LAURENT BRICAULT
MIGUEL JOHN VERSLUYS

Рецензенти

ЦВЕТАН ГРОЗДАНОВ
MIGUEL JOHN VERSLUYS

Редактор

ВЕРА БИТРАКОВА ГРОЗДАНОВА

Приредувачи

АЛЕКСАНДРА НИКОЛОСКА
SANDER MÜSKENS



CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	7
<i>Preface</i>	9
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	17

LAURENT BRICAULT

Cultes orientaux, égyptiens, alexandrins, osiriens, isiaques, ...: identités plurielles et <i>interpretationes variae</i>	19
---	----

ЛОРАН БРИКО

Ориентални, египетски, александриски, озириски, изијачки култови, ...: повеќеслојни идентитети и <i>interpretations variae</i>	27
--	----

VERA BITRAKOVA GROZDANOVA

Les cultes orientaux dans la Haute Macédoine, leur survie et leur adoption au temps romain	35
--	----

ВЕРА БИТРАКОВА ГРОЗДАНОВА

За ориенталните верувања во Горна Македонија и нивното опстојување и прифаќање во римска доба	73
---	----

Part I

Theoretical reflections on the understanding of Oriental cults in the Roman world

EVA M. MOL

Romanising Oriental cults? A cognitive approach to alterity and religious experience in the Roman cults of Isis	89
---	----

ELENI TSATSOU

“Φυλακτήρια πρὸς δαίμονας, πρὸς φαντάσματα, πρὸς πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πάθος”: the use of amulets in Greco-Roman and Late Antique Macedonia	113
---	-----

STEVEN HIJMANS

Competence and communication in Roman provincial art: the semantics of the “cookie-dough” style of small marble votive plaques in the Danube region.....	133
--	-----

DILYANA BOTEVA	
Romanising an Oriental God? Some iconographic observations on Sabazius.....	149
PERIKLES CHRISTODOULOU	
Sarapis, Isis and the Emperor	167

Part II

Case studies: understanding *les cultes orientaux* in the Roman Balkan provinces

SILVANA BLAŽEVSKA & JOVAN RADNJANSKI	
The temple of Isis at Stobi.....	215
ALEKSANDRA NIKOLOSKA	
Evidence of “Oriental” cults from the Republic of Macedonia	257
SLAVICA BABAMOVA	
Epigraphic traces of Oriental influences in Upper Macedonia in Roman times	279
LENČE JOVANOVA	
On some of the Oriental cults in the Skopje-Kumanovo region	293
VLADIMIR P. PETROVIĆ	
The cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in Moesia Superior: mining aspects.....	323
NADEŽDA GAVRILOVIĆ	
Asia Minor and Syrian cults and their main traits in the territory of the Central Balkans	333
ŽELJKO MILETIĆ	
Identification of Oriental figures depicted on military stelae from a Tilurium workshop	357
PALMA KARKOVIČ TAKALIĆ	
Presence of the <i>archigalli</i> on the Eastern Adriatic Coast. Examination of their role in the cult of Magna Mater and Attis.....	371
INGA VILOGORAC BRČIĆ	
<i>Dendrophori</i> of Colonia Pola	391
ANTE RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ	
Monuments of the Mithraic cult in the territory of Arupium (Dalmatia).....	403
LAURENT BRICAULT, SANDER MÜSKENS & MIGUEL JOHN VERSLUYS	
Epilogue: Eastern provinces with Oriental gods?	427
<i>List of contributors</i>	437

ASIA MINOR AND SYRIAN CULTS AND THEIR MAIN TRAITS IN THE TERRITORY OF THE CENTRAL BALKANS*

NADEŽDA GAVRILOVIĆ

Abstract

In the period of Roman reign in the Central Balkans, the cults and theologies from Asia Minor and Syria held an important place in the spiritual culture of the Romanised population. Besides considering the ways of penetration and distribution of the thus far known Asia Minor and Syrian cults, the aim of this paper is to emphasise their significance which, along with the dominant philosophical teachings of the 2nd and 3rd century AD, made them widespread throughout the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans. Certainly the most popular was the Metroac cult of Magna Mater and Attis, which was, judging by epigraphic and archaeological material mostly concentrated in the western and northern parts of the Central Balkans. Something similar can be said for the cult of the Thracian-Phrygian deity Sabazius, which is confirmed in all the parts of the Central Balkans. On the votive monuments the god bears the epithets Paternus, Augustus and *Κηρίωσ* and his apotropaic and soteriological functions have been attested by relief presentations, sculptures and ivory hairpins with heads in the shape of so-called hands of the god Sabazius forming the gesture of *benedictio latina*. The popularity of Jupiter Dolichenus is confirmed by numerous epigraphic and archaeological monuments dating from the 2nd to the 4th century AD, in which the god is presented alone or with his patera Iuno Dolichena. The cults of Jupiter Turmasgades, Jupiter Melanus, Jupiter Cidiessus, Zeus Okkonenos, Zeus Ezzaios and Zeus Synenos are confirmed by only a few, but nevertheless of great importance in epigraphic and iconographic sense, monuments. It is also important to mention that the cults of the lunar god Mên and the goddesses Artemis of Ephesus and Dea Syria were also known among the Romanised population of the Central Balkans, but presumably within small, closed communities in larger centres like Viminacium and Scupi.

Key words: Asia Minor – Syria – Central Balkans – cult – iconography – religious syncretism.

* This article is a result of my work on the project *Романизација, урбанизација и трансформација урбаних центара цивилног и војног карактера у римским провинцијама на тлу Србије* (број 177007) (Romanisation, urbanisation and transformation of urban centres of civilian and military character in the Roman provinces in the territory of present-day Serbia [no. 177007]), of the Ministry of Education and Science of Serbia.

Апстракт

Во времето на римското владеење на централен Балкан, култовите и теологијата на Мала Азија и Сирија имале важно место во духовната култура на романизираната популација. Покрај земањето предвид на начините на продирање и ширење на малоазиски и сириски култови досега познати, целта на овој труд е да се нагласи нивната значајност, која, покрај доминантните филозофски учења на II и III век наша ера, ги прави распространети во римските провинции на централен Балкан. Секако, најпопуларен бил метроачкиот култ на Магна Матер и Атис, кој, судејќи според епиграфскиот и археолошкиот материјал, е концентриран најмногу во западните и во северните делови на централен Балкан. Слично може да се каже и за култот на трако-фригиското божество Сабазиј, кој е потврден во сите делови на централен Балкан. На вотивните споменици богот ги има епитетите *Paternus*, *Augustus* и *Κιρίως*, додека неговите апотропејски и сотериолошки функции се потврдени со релјефни прикази, скулптури и игли за коса од слонова коска со глави во облик на т.н. „раце на богот Сабазиј“ во гест на *benedictio latina*. Популарноста на Јупитер Долихен е потврдена со бројни епиграфски и археолошки споменици датирани од II до IV век, каде што богот е претставен сам или со својата партнерка Јунона Долихена. Култовите на Јупитер *Turmasgades*, Јупитер *Melanus*, Јупитер *Cidiessus*, Севс *Okkonenos*, Севс *Ezzaios* и Севс *Synenos* се потврдени со само неколку споменици, иако од голема важност во епиграфска и во иконографска смисла. Важно е и да се напомене дека култовите на лунарниот бог Мен, на божицата Артемида од Ефес, како и на Деа Сирија се, исто така, познати меѓу романизираното население на централен Балкан, но веројатно во рамките на помали, затворени заедници во големите центри како Виминакиум и Скупи.

Клучни зборови: Мала Азија – Сирија – Централен Балкан – култ – иконографија – религиски синкретизам.

Among the many cults of differing provenience in the Central Balkans during the period of Roman reign, an important place was occupied by the cults and theologies from Asia Minor and Syria. Along with the arrival of Roman conquerors in the 1st century AD and the beginning of the process of Romanisation, the first immigrants of Asia Minor and Syrian origin can be followed in the territory of the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans. Although the term ‘Central Balkans’ is not precisely determined in the scientific literature,¹ it is generally accepted that the central Balkans area comprises a small part of eastern Bosnia, a large part of Montenegro, Serbia and northern Macedonia, that is in the earlier Roman period: the eastern part of the province Dalmatia and the whole province Moesia Superior (from the end of the 3rd century AD parts of the provinces Dalmatia, Moesia Prima, Praevalitana, Dardania, Dacia Mediterranea and Dacia Ripensis, fig. 1).²

¹ In his monograph *Princely tombs during the early Iron age in the central Balkans*, A. Palavestra emphasises that “In geographical sense, the term of central Balkans is not precisely determined”. In his opinion, Central Balkans territory should be defined from Sarajevo in the west and Knjaževac in the east, to Belgrade in the north and Skorje in the south. See Палавестра 1984, 5.

² Cvijić 1987, 25–30. The Roman province Moesia Superior was, along with Moesia Inferior, part of the province Moesia, which was formed during the period of the reign of Emperor Augustus (31 BC – 14 AD). During the reign of Emperor Diocletian, the new provinces Dacia Ripensis and Dacia Mediterranea were formed on the territory of eastern Moesia Superior and western Moesia Inferior and Thracia, the new

The picture of the distribution of the autochthonous tribes in the pre-Roman period in the territory of the future Roman province Moesia Superior was not so simple – various Illyrian, Thracian, Dacian and Celtic tribes occupied parts of the aforementioned area. Upon the establishment of Roman reign, the areas occupied by the mentioned tribes were organised in *civitates peregrinae* and although the process of Romanisation was not aggressive or autarchic, the acceptance of Eastern cults depended on many elements which were more or less emphasised in certain parts of the central Balkans. In analysing Asia Minor and Syrian Cults in the Central Balkans, besides considering the ways of penetration and distribution of a certain cult (whether a certain cult had a Hellenistic background, for instance an already formed cult of Cybele which penetrated from Greece to southern parts of the Central Balkans, or whether a certain cult was distributed by Roman officials with a theology supported by the Roman state), one must take into account the ways of integration, adaptation and transformation of the cult, the influence of Roman official ideology, theology and iconography of a certain cult, the influence of philosophical teachings in a distinct period, *interpretatio orientalis* of certain autochthonous gods and goddesses and finally, the appearance of Christianity and its role in the suppression of Eastern cults and religions.

The epigraphic and archaeological monuments confirm the presence of numerous Asia Minor and Syrian gods and goddesses in the Central Balkans and their undoubted popularity among the indigenous population. Asia Minor cults of Magna Mater, Attis, Sabazius, Jupiter Dolichenus, Jupiter Turmasgades, Jupiter Melanus, Mên and Artemis of Ephesus have been confirmed by votive monuments and in various forms of archaeological material. The cults of Sol Invictus and Dea Syria also had their faithful devotees during the Roman period in the provinces of the Central Balkans. Not so well-known Asia Minor gods like Jupiter Cidiessus, Zeus Okkonenos, Zeus Ezzaios and Zeus Synenos were also worshipped inside small, closed communities in major centers like for instance Viminacium.

Maybe the most prominent of all Asia Minor cults in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans was the Metroac cult, the cult of the goddess Magna Mater and her consort, the god Attis. Analysis of epigraphic and archaeological material has shown that the Metroac cult was quite popular among the Romanised population of the Balkan provinces from the 2nd to the 4th century AD. The cult of the Phrygian Mother has been known from the early 1st millennium BC, but her name *Matar* has not been confirmed until the end of the 7th century BC in central Anatolia.³ This Phrygian goddess mother, whom Strabo and Julian called *φρυγίαν θεον μεγαλην*, differed from Greek and Roman goddess mothers not only in name, but also in terms of iconography and places of worship.⁴ Greek

province Dardania was formed on the southern part of Moesia Superior and the northern part of Moesia Superior became the province Moesia Prima: see Мирковић 1981, 92.

³ Showerman 1901; Graillot 1912; Cumont 1929; Vermaseren 1977; Naumann 1983; Turcan 1996; Roller 1999; Borgeaud 2004; Bøgh 2007. The name of the goddess Matar is known from several Paleo-Phrygian monuments found within the territory of present-day central Anatolia: Roller 1999, 65. On two monuments, besides the name of Matar, stood the word *kubileya*, which according to Roller (1999, 66) is a divine epithet and can be translated as “from the mountain”.

⁴ Graillot 1912, 14. The Phrygians represented the goddess mother as a mature woman in standing position with a high crown, a so-called *polos*, on her head, and holding falcons, eagles, lions or various kinds of

culture comes into contact with the Phrygian Mother Goddess in the 6th century BC and names her *Kybele*,⁵ building her Metroon at the agora of Athens at the end of the 5th century BC and celebrating her cult twice per year.⁶ In 204 BC, the cult of the Phrygian Mother Goddess was officially accepted in Rome and the goddess was named *Mater Deum Magna Idaea*, in short *Magna Mater*.⁷ Iconographically, the Romans presented the Mother Goddess similarly as the Greeks did, celebrating her cult with the *Megalensia* festivities from the 4th to the 10th of April every year.⁸ However, two elements of the *Megalensia* created a certain distance of the Roman people towards the cult of *Magna Mater* – her priests *galli* with *archigallus* and the specific way of performing the cult acts.⁹ Although the cult of *Magna Mater* and *Attis* evolved over the centuries, including the institutions of *taurobolium* and *criobolium* as an important part of the worship,¹⁰ the womanised images of the goddess' priests and very exotic, not to say, savage cult acts, remained until the perishing of the cult the main objections and strongest weapon in the hands of the goddess' opponents, particularly Christians.

The cult of *Magna Mater* has been confirmed in the eastern and southern parts of the central Balkans by two epigraphic monuments, three sculptures, two relief representations and one bronze appliqué. On an epigraphic monument from Arčar, Ratiaria the goddess bears the epithet *Augusta*,¹¹ which is quite rare in the European part of the Roman Empire – the epithet is confirmed in Senia, Senj in Dalmatia and in Lugdunum, Lyon in Gaul, but

vessels in her hands. She was usually represented inside the doors of a building, which corresponded with the fact that the monuments dedicated to the goddess were frequently found on the periphery or beside the city walls, which clearly signals her function as protectress of the city. Cf. Roller 1999, 110.

⁵ Greek poets like Hipponax and Simonides call the goddess mother *Kibeba*, while Pindar names her *Δεεσπονα Κυβελη μητηρ*, that is “The Mistress mother Cybele”, cf. Henrichs 1976, 255–257.

⁶ Naumann 1983; Roller 1999, 67–68 and 124; Vermaseren 1977, 23–24; Henrichs 1976, 255–257 and 271–276; Bøgh 2007, 307. The earliest mention of Meter appears in the 14th Homeric hymn from the late 6th century BC: Roller 1999, 122–123. The earliest Greek monument dedicated to *Cybele*, that is *μητηρ θεών*, was found at Athens' agora and dates from the 4th century BC; see *CCCA* II, no. 3. The Greek iconography of *Cybele* was quite different from the Phrygian one. The Greeks presented the goddess mother in Greek dress, sitting on a throne, holding a lion, some fruit or vessel in her hands, with two lions flanking her throne. Her cult was celebrated twice a year, in spring and in summer. The Greeks primarily worshipped her as the goddess of nature, fertility and as a chthonian goddess.

⁷ Graillot 1912; Gruen 1990; Burton 1996; Ovid, *Fasti* 4.249–254 and 264; Livy 25.1.7–8, 29.10.4; Turcan 1996, 36–37; Roller 1999, 281 f.

⁸ The Romans presented *Magna Mater* also as a mature woman sitting on a throne flanked by two lions, with the novelty in the attribute of the crown *corona muralis* on the head of the goddess, cf. Roller 1999, 276. For the description of the *Megalensia* see Ovid, *Fasti* 4.185–186; Summers 1996, 342–343.

⁹ Scientific opinions differ as to the matter of the origin and the meaning of the word *gallos/gallus* which signified the priest of *Magna Mater*. See, for instance, Roller 1999, 299; Lane 1996b, 123–127; Vermaseren 1977, 96. Ancient writers' descriptions of *galli* are at the least very strange – they were dressed in very colourful dresses, they wore make up, they had very long hair and while dancing during the festivities of *Megalensia*, they cut their bodies with a knife: Jope 1985, 258–261; Vermaseren 1977, 97; Roller 1999, 293.

¹⁰ The *taurobolium* (*ταυροβόλιον*, *ταυρόβολον*) was a ritual that signified the sacrificial killing of a bull. See Duthoy 1969, 57–59; Vermaseren 1977, 101. The first *taurobolium* dates to the period of Trajan's reign: Vermaseren 1977, 64; Lancellotti 2002.

¹¹ For *Augusta* see *CIL* VIII, 1776, 16440, 23400 and 2340; *AE* 1911, 22; *AE* 1913, 24; *AE* 1955, 142; *AE* 1957, 92a.

it is more common in Africa Proconsularis and Numidia.¹² Since the votive monument does not mention the name or the occupation of the dedicant, it can only be presumed that he was a military official, as is the case with the majority of the dedicants to Magna Mater Augusta. The second votive monument from Kostolac, Viminacium is dedicated to *Mater Deum* by G. Valerius Vibianus and the cause for erecting the statue of the goddess is the restitution of the temple of god Neptune.¹³ Dedications to *Mater Deum* are very frequent, especially in Dalmatia, Italy, Gallia Narbonensis and Africa. Marble statues of Magna Mater from the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans represent the same iconographic type – a female figure seated on a throne, in a long chiton, at times with himation and diadem and veil or *corona muralis* on her head, with lions flanking the throne. It is the most common iconographic type of Magna Mater representations known in the Roman period, modelled after the cult statue of the goddess made by Agorakritos in the 5th century BC.¹⁴ The marble statue from Viminacium dated to the 2nd or 3rd century AD is quite interesting since the animal presented beside the goddess is not a lion, but probably a panther with a necklace around its neck (fig. 2).¹⁵ I am aware of only one representation of panthers flanking the throne of Magna Mater – the marble stela found in Cotyaeum.¹⁶ With the obvious monumentality of the sculpture and details like the richly pleated dress and throne decorated with cassettes and diagonal strips, either an Asia Minor origin of the sculptor or syncretistic merging of the cults of Cybele and Dionysus can be presumed. The fragmented statue from Mediana represents the torso of the goddess, while the sculpture from Karataš (fig. 3) represents the head of a mature woman with diadem and veil, which could be identified as Magna Mater or her priestess.¹⁷ Representations of Magna Mater with diadem and veil are known from the Piraeus relief¹⁸ and Ince Blundell Hall (now Museum of Liverpool),¹⁹ but on the other hand, the goddess' priestess was represented in the same way, which is confirmed by, among others, the statue of the priestess Laberia Felicla from the Vatican Museum,²⁰ Plancia Magna from Perge, a marble bust from Ptuj,²¹ and the funerary stela of Obelia Maxuma from Pula.²² A bronze appliqué from Timacum Minus, Ravna (fig. 4) could represent Magna Mater

¹² On the votive monument from Senia see Medini 1981, 494, no. 2; on the votive monument from Lugdunum see *CIL* XIII, 1756; for Africa Proconsularis see *CIL* VIII, 1776, 16440, 23400 and 23401; for Numidia see *AE* 1911, 22; *AE* 1913, 24; *AE* 1955, 142; *AE* 1957, 92a; *CIL* VIII, 2230.

¹³ A votive monument dedicated to *Neptuno Conservatori* was also found in Viminacium and confirms, along with the monument dedicated to *Mater Deum*, the existence of the cult of the god Neptune in Viminacium: see *IMS* II, 38.

¹⁴ Naumann 1983, 310–342, nos. 123–421; Borgeaud 2004, 7, 13, and 22 f.

¹⁵ Tomović 1992, 81, fig. 29, nos. 1–2.

¹⁶ In his analysis of the marble stela found in Cotyaeum, Vermaseren (in *CCCA* I, no. 139) suggests to identify the animals as panthers (“on the lower part a goddess clad in *polos* and long mantle stands between two leaping animals – panthers?”).

¹⁷ It is well-known that Magna Mater was represented with a diadem and veil, as were her priestesses, e.g. Claudia Syntyche, Laberia Felicla, Plancia Magna, Metilia Acta. See *CIL* VI, 492; *CCCA* III, no. 258; Boatwright 1991.

¹⁸ *CCCA* II, no. 310.

¹⁹ *CCCA* VII, no. 65.

²⁰ Vermaseren 1977, 57 and 109, pl. 41.

²¹ *CCCA* VI, no. 112.

²² Girardi Jurkić 1972, 51.

because of the *corona muralis* on the woman's head, which characterises the goddess in question as the protectress of the city.²³ It is a well-known attribute of Magna Mater, called *turrita* by Virgilius, but other goddesses like Tyche, Artemis of Ephesus and Ceres were also represented with turreted crown. The iconography of a woman's image on a silver plaque from the Tekija, Transdierna hoard is also problematic because it represents the goddess in chiton standing in a *naiscos* with a *corona muralis* on her head. In her right hand, the goddess holds a *patera* from which a snake is eating and behind her is a big plant with large leaves and a poppy-head (fig. 5). Many authors interpreted the Tekija plaque in different ways, identifying the goddess as Cybele, consort of Dis Pater or Persephone.²⁴ After careful analysis of all Tekija plaques and examining of other iconographic analogies like bronze plaques from Berlin with similar images of Cybele and Sabazius, in my opinion we are dealing either with a representation of Cybele or a syncretistic figure of Cybele-Demeter.²⁵ So far, it can be concluded that in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans, Magna Mater was worshipped as a goddess of nature and protectress of military officials, salesmen, administrative officials, freedmen, slaves and women, but also as chthonian goddess. Unlike other important centres, like for example Salona, no temples or *cognatio* or *collegia dendroforum* have been confirmed within the territory of the Central Balkans, or any traces of the rituals *taurobolium* or *criobolium*.²⁶ It can only be presumed that, analogously to other Roman provinces, the cult of Magna Mater in the Central Balkans disappeared in the 4th century AD, partly because of the decline in popularity of pagan cults, as opposed to the rising popularity of Christianity.

The cult of the consort of Magna Mater, the Phrygian god Attis,²⁷ in the Central Balkans is confirmed only by archaeological material – one bronze statue, three bronze appliqués, one fragmented terracotta and more than 54 funerary monuments with the image of Attis *tristis* (Attis *funerarius*). The majority of the mentioned funerary monuments – mainly of the *cippus* type,²⁸ particularly in the western parts of the Central Balkans, had the image of the Phrygian god Attis, better known as Attis *tristis*, on their

²³ The attribute of *corona muralis* is the characteristic attribute in Hittite and later, in Assyrian and Persian iconography. In Greek art, the *corona muralis* appears in the Hellenistic period and goddesses like Magna Mater, Tyche and Fortuna are represented with this kind of attribute. See Metzler 1994.

²⁴ Macrea 1959, fig. 50; Јовановић 1990.

²⁵ The goddess Cybele was assimilated with the goddess Demeter from the late 6th century BC, which is proved by a votive statue of Demeter from a sanctuary in Gela from Sicily. Many writers, among them Pindar as well, emphasise that Demeter and Cybele were actually one and the same goddess. See also Roller 1999, 175.

²⁶ There are three confirmations of *cognatio* of Magna Mater in the Roman province Dalmatia. See Medini 1981, 344 and 639.

²⁷ The cult of the Phrygian god Attis was confirmed in the 4th century BC in the territory of Asia Minor, while the first iconographic representation of the god originates from a votive stela from Piraeus: *CCCA* II, no. 308.

²⁸ Funerary monuments of the *cippus* type represent funerary altars in a cuboid shape, whose height can stretch over 1.5 m. Three sides of these monuments are ornamented with vegetable, geometric and/or figural motifs and there was an inscription on the front. In the eastern part of the Roman province of Dalmatia, funerary monuments of the *cippus* type appear from the end of the 1st century AD. See Зотовић 1995, 24–29.

lateral sides.²⁹ The fact that the iconographic type of Attis *tristis* is represented in almost all thus far known monuments of the god, stresses his chthonic function as dominant as well as the moment of grief and mourning after deceased and lesser the wish of the dedicant that the deceased will reach the same faith as the god – rebirth and new life. The symbolism and the question of the knowledge of the theology of the Metroac cult in these parts of the Roman Empire has been thoroughly discussed by many scholars in the past³⁰ and my intention is to just briefly point out some of the characteristics and aspects of Attis iconography: a chart of all thus far known funerary monuments with the image of Attis *tristis* in the territory of the Central Balkans has shown that two areas of their distribution can be distinguished – the area of Podrinje and Polimlje (sites such as Donje Štitarevo, Rogatica, Goražde, Pljevlja, Užice, Visibaba, and Ježevica) and the area around Viminacium. Although Attis is always represented faithfully as in the Phrygian version of the myth – as a young, standing shepherd with a Phrygian hat on his head, dressed in belted *tunica manicata* and *anaxyrides*, who leans on his *pedum* or sometimes on a torch held downwards in his hand, we can distinguish three main iconographic types: 1). representations of Attis *tristis* without attribute, 2). representations of Attis *tristis* with *pedum* held downwards, and 3). representations of Attis *tristis* with torch held downwards.

It is generally accepted that monuments exhibiting representations of Attis *tristis* without any attribute are the oldest and they clearly signal the chthonic function of the deity as the guardian of the deceased. An interesting detail on some of these monuments is the posture of the god's palm, which is turned towards the viewer like in the monuments from Komini, Montenegro or Kremna in western Serbia. Analogous representations are known from Gaul and in the opinion of H. Graillot the described gesture of the hand implies the god imparting a blessing upon the deceased. Representations of Attis *tristis* with *pedum* held downwards are most numerous (fig. 6) and similarly to the representations of winged geniuses of death and Mithras' *dadophoros* with downturned torches in their hands, they represent Attis as chthonic deity, but also as a psychopomp who leads the souls of the deceased to heaven. Monuments with Attis *tristis* holding a torch held downwards in one hand are particularly widespread in the area of Municipium S and Komini and although it is generally accepted that they attest to the chthonic or/and celestial character of the deity, the direct Mithraic influence cannot be disputed. That applies especially to a *cippus* from Pljevlja, the area where the Mithras cult was very strong, where one Attis holds a torch downwards, while the other Attis holds a torch up.³¹ Syncretistic representations of Attis and some indigenous deity are not unknown; on the

²⁹ The image of Attis *tristis* or Attis *funerarius* on the majority of the funerary monuments from the Central Balkans, represents a sad, thoughtful young man in a standing position, dressed in a tunica belted around the waist, with a Phrygian hat on his head, usually holding a *pedum* or more rarely a torch in one hand, with his chin resting upon his other hand and his arm across the waist. This image of the Phrygian god expressed the melancholy and sadness of Magna Mater's consort, who mutilated himself and died. Therefore, Attis *tristis* is the symbol of pain and grief over the deceased, but on the other hand analogously to his fate, he also expresses the hope for the rebirth of the deceased and for his new, better life.

³⁰ Sergejevski 1934, 30; Kojić 1963; Zotović 1969, 437; Garašanin and Garašanin 1951; Vasić 1973; Zotović 1973; Imamović 1977; Medini 1981; Zotović 1995; see in detail Gavrilović 2010, 116–120.

³¹ Vulić 1931, 122, no. 296; Kojić 1961, 12, fig. a.

monument from Mijovilovac a very primitive representation of Attis with a beard and a goat can be seen and it represents a syncretistic image of the gods Attis and Silvanus. An interesting and unique representation of Attis is known from the fragmented sarcophagi from Viminacium, where Attis is represented naked, without his Phrygian hat and with *pedum* raised upwards in one hand and a syrinx in the other hand. Nude representations of Attis are not so rare in the Roman period, nor are representations of Attis with *pedum* and syrinx, especially in terracottas, which were found in the territory of the Central Balkans as well. A bronze statue of unknown provenience of a young nude man with a Phrygian hat, a rabbit in one hand and a short *pedum* in the other from the National Museum in Belgrade (fig. 7), recognised in older literature as the god Attis, in our opinion does not represent the Phrygian deity, but the genius of winter, protector of the deceased, also represented on the ‘Dumbarton Oaks sarcophagus’ and on the sarcophagus from Emporium in Spain.³² The bronze appliqué from Ritopek and two bronze appliqués of unknown provenience in the shape of Attis’ head represent rudimentary provincial works, which analogously to similar finds from other Roman provinces represent funerary finds with apotropaic and eschatological symbolism. A fragmented terracotta of Attis was found in the sacrificial horizon of one of the graves in the Viminacium necropolis and judging from this context, its chthonic but also eschatological character can be presumed, as is the case with similar terracottas from Amphipolis and Cumae.³³ Unfortunately, no temple of the god has been confirmed until now and judging by the traces of violation of the image of Attis *tristis* on funerary monuments from the Central Balkans, it can be presumed that since the monuments were in some way ‘carriers’ of the Metroac message of salvation and rebirth and since the god was quite an antithesis to the image and word of Christ, the cult of Attis probably disappeared in the 4th century.

The cult of the Thracian-Phrygian god Sabazius is confirmed throughout all of the Central Balkans, except in the west.³⁴ On a votive monument from Kuline, Ravna Sabazius has the usual epithets *Paternus* and *Augustus*, while on a votive monument from the vicinity of Pirot, Sabazius is called *Κιπίωος*, which is the god’s frequent epithet in Thracia and Moesia Inferior.³⁵ Three ivory hairpins with heads in the shape of so-called hands of the god Sabazius, making the *benedictio latina* gesture, were found in

³² For details see Rumpf 1954; a very interesting iconographic example of the genius of winter presented as Attis can be perceived on a sarcophagus from Emporia (Spain): see García y Bellido 1967, 60, no. 15.

³³ Tran tam Tinh 1972, 90.

³⁴ The eternal literary polemics about the origin and name of the god Sabazius range between older authors who are more inclined to believe that the god was of Thracian origin, while younger authors treat the deity as a Phrygian god: Eisele 1909; *RE* I A.2, 1540–1551, s.v. *Sabazios* (H. Schaefer); Cumont 1942, 60; Macrea 1959, 329; Picard 1961, 131; Tacheva-Hitova 1978; Johnson 1984, 1587; Turcan 1996, 315 f.; *LIMC* 8, 1069, s.v. *Sabazios* (R. Gicheva). The first account of Sabazius in Asia Minor comes from an inscription from Sardes, dated to the 4th century BC: Lane 1979, 37–38; Johnson 1984, 1587–1589; *CCIS* III, 2–6. The name of the god Sabazius (*Σαβάζιος*) is probably derived from the Illyrian word for bear, *sabaya*; cf. Turcan 1996, 315; *LIMC* 8, 1068, s.v. *Sabazios* (R. Gicheva). Sabazius was worshipped as the god of one’s destiny, protector of one’s life, the saviour, the invincible, but also as the god of fertility and a chthonian deity.

³⁵ The epithet *Κιπίωος* along with the name of the god Sabazius is known from the votive monuments from Serdika, Dragoman and Sportela (area of Pautalia): Тачева-Хитова 1982, 262, no. 8; 265, no. 12; 266–267, no. 16.

necropolises at Pontes and Viminacium. Votive hands of the god Sabazius represent a specific group of cult monuments of this deity, though scientific opinions differ as to their symbolism.³⁶ Always in the gesture of *benedictio latina*, the votive hands of Sabazius have various attributes in the shape of the god's animals like snake, lizard, frog, turtle, eagle, ram, pine cone, objects, musical instruments and human figures. On Sabazius hands from Pontes and Viminacium, a snake and a pine cone are shown, symbolising fertility, regeneration and immortality (fig. 8). Bearing in mind the apotropaic and soteriological symbolism these artefacts clearly carry, it is understandable why they were used in the cult of the dead and why they were deposited in the graves of the deceased. A silver plaque from the Tekija hoard (fig. 9), with the representation of a mature, bearded man in *naiscos* was found together with the previously mentioned silver plaque with a presumed image of Magna Mater. The unknown male deity was identified as Sabazius, Dis Pater or Hercules in earlier literature and without going into detail, it is important to emphasise the fact that Sabazius was frequently represented in *naiscos* and that iconographic details like vegetative ornaments, caduceus and *labrys* from the Tekija plaque are analogous to similar iconographies like the one from the votive plate from Copenhagen.³⁷ The already mentioned two bronze plaques from Berlin, with images of Cybele and Sabazius, also represent a very close analogy.³⁸ In sites like Viminacium, Ravna and Mediana near Naissus, several fragmented statues of a tree enveloped by a snake or with a turtle beside it were found and could represent a part of an iconographic scene which belonged to the Sabazius cult. A very interesting bronze statue of a pine tree with Sabazius' bust, a pine cone, an eagle and a snake was found in Vidin, like a quite puzzling and obviously syncretistic iconographic representation of Sabazius and a few other gods on the gem of a gold ring found in Vinik, in the vicinity of Naissus (fig. 10). The standing figure of the deity presented in profile is turned towards the column with a snake. Sabazius wears a helmet, and holds a *pedum* and an oval object. There is an eagle on the top of the column and a ram in front of the deity. I am not aware of a direct iconographic analogy, but there is a strong iconographic similarity with a bust of Sabazius from the Vatican Museum and a cast with a negative of Sabazius' image from Zadar. It is clear that we are dealing with syncretistic representations of Sabazius, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars and Attis and in that context it is important to mention iconographic analogies like the Mercury representation on a silver pot from Berthouville in Gaul and the representation of Hermes on a stela found in Kertch.³⁹ Although the cult of the god Sabazius was obviously very widespread and popular in the territory of the Roman

³⁶ Authors like Blinkenberg and Johnson thought that the characteristic gesture of the votive hands, *benedictio latina*, symbolised the goodness of the god and his protection: Johnson 1984, 1595. Other authors thought that the hand's position implied a gesture which followed a certain expression or speech, or that the three fingers of the votive hand of the god Sabazius symbolised a triad – Sabazius, Persephone and Zagreus. See Hajjar 1978, 469 f. Tacheva-Hitova was of the opinion that the votive hands of Sabazius symbolised fertility in nature and god's rules and thought: Тачева-Хитова 1982, 288–289.

³⁷ Mano-Zissi (1957, 33–39, nos. 34–35, pls. 23–24) thought that the male image on the silver plaque represented the god Sabazius, Macrea (1959, fig. 50) thought it was the Celtic god Dispater, while Picard and Lane agree with the opinion of Mano-Zissi and with the identification of the male figure as the god Sabazius (Lane 1980, 24–25; *CCIS* II, no. 80).

³⁸ *CCIS* II, no. 81.

³⁹ Јовановић 1990, 90; Kobylina 1976, 11.

provinces of the Central Balkans, no sanctuary of the god has yet been confirmed. By epigraphic and archaeological testimonies it can be presumed that in the Central Balkans, Sabazius was worshipped as the god of the fatherland, protector of the Emperor and the state, a god with clear eschatological and apotropaic dimensions, protector of soldiers, salesmen, craftsmen, slaves, but also women, which is implied by the discovery of a hairpin with a head in the shape of the so-called votive hand of Sabazius in a woman's tomb in Viminacium. The devotees of the god Sabazius belonged to different social ranks – there were humbler worshippers (like those buried with ivory hairpins in their graves), but also wealthier ones, like the owner of the golden ring with a gem carrying the image of syncretistic deity from Vinik. Because of its 'bacchanalian' character, Sabazius' cult particularly affronted the Christian dignitaries and it disappeared by the end of the 4th century AD.

The cult of Jupiter Dolichenus has been confirmed by numerous epigraphic and archaeological monuments in the territory of the Central Balkans, from the 2nd to the 4th century AD.⁴⁰ The god Jupiter Dolichenus represents the syncretism of two gods: Baal, from Doliche, and the most important Roman god, Jupiter. On votive monuments from the Central Balkans, Baal from Doliche is usually honoured as *Iovi Optimo Maximo Dolicheno*, although there are a few monuments dedicated to Dolicens, Dulceno and Dolicino which implies an Oriental origin of the dedicants.⁴¹ Usually, votive monuments are dedicated to one god alone, but there are few monuments dedicated to this god and one or more other deities, like the monument from Ratiaria which is dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus and the genius of colonia Ratiaria or the votive monument from Prizren, which is dedicated to Asclepius and the genius of Jupiter Dolichenus. Most of Jupiter Dolichenus' monuments were erected for the health of dedicant and his family, but also *pro salute imperatoris*. The locating of epigraphic monuments dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus showed that they are mostly concentrated in or near military camps along the Danube *limes* from the end of the 2nd century AD. Although viewed as primarily *deus militaris*, analysis of the dedications showed that Jupiter Dolichenus was also venerated by priests, Syrian merchants, slaves and freedmen as a god of victory, protector, iatric deity and protector of mines and miners. Iconographic representations of Jupiter Dolichenus faithfully follow the established canon: he is represented as a mature, bearded man standing on a bull, holding a *labrys* and a bundle of thunderbolts in his hands, while Juno Dolichena stands on a doe, usually with a *patera* and a sceptre in her hands (fig. 11). The statues of the god found in the Roman fortifications Čezava, Castrum Novae and Hunia Alba near Vidin show Jupiter Dolichenus according to the iconographic model of a Roman 'Emperor in armour'.⁴² Beside statues, two fragmented triangular votive plates of Jupiter Dolichenus were found in Egeta, Brza Palanka and Jasen. On the votive

⁴⁰ The god Jupiter Dolichenus is actually of Asia Minor origin, which is implied by formulas *ubi ferrum nascitur, ubi ferrum exoritur* found on several votive monuments dedicated to the god. See Merlat 1951, 26, no. 24; 151, no. 170; 235, no. 240; 306, no. 315.

⁴¹ The votive monument from Ratiaria is dedicated to *Iovi Optimo Maximo Dolicens*: Zotović 1966, 85, no. 30. The base of the statue from Veliko Gradište, Pincum has an inscription dedicated to *Iovi Optimo Maximo Dulceno*: Zotović 1966, 101–102, no. 44. A *tabella ansata* from Čezava is dedicated to *Iovi Optimo Maximo Dolicino*: Bošković-Robert 2006, 48, no. 50.

⁴² Tomović 1992, 72, nos. 62–63.

plate from Egeta, Jupiter Dolichenus is represented with busts of Sol and Luna, Castor and Pollux, and with his attributes *labrys* and thunderbolt (fig. 12). Somewhat more intriguing is the iconography of the votive plate from Jasen, where Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Dolichena are represented in the centre, with a large wreath symbolising the goddess Victoria above and a libation scene below. Chronologically, both votive plates date to the beginning of the 3rd century AD, which coincides with the growing popularity of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Central Balkans. Unlike the previously mentioned deities and the lack of architectural remains of their temples, there is one temple of Jupiter Dolichenus, which has been confirmed in the site Brza Palanka.⁴³ The temple was round, with its entrance on the north side, built from stone and pebbles, with altar in the room measuring 3.5 x 3.8 m. It is no surprise to find a temple dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus in an important military camp, as Ravna (Tillacum Minus) was in the Roman period. As paganism gradually collapsed and Christianity arose, the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus became one of the most hated pagan cults, because of the god's popularity among ordinary people. The latest monument of Jupiter Dolichenus from the Central Balkans is dated to the middle of the 3rd century AD. After that period, there is no further confirmation of the god's cult in the territory of the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans.

The cult of Jupiter Turmasgades is confirmed by one single fragmented representation of a bull's head with bird claws on it, which was found in Viminacium.⁴⁴ The iconography of a fragmented statue coincides with the god's representations known from Rome, Romula and Ulpia Traiana Sarmisegetusa, differing only in whether there is a horse's, deer's, or goat's head under the bird claws.⁴⁵ Also a local Baal from Commagene, Turmasgades shared a sanctuary with Jupiter Dolichenus at Dura-Europos and was identified with Helios Mithras in an inscription from Dolicheneum at Dura-Europos.⁴⁶ Bearing in mind numerous epigraphic and archaeological confirmations of immigrants and soldiers of Oriental origin in Viminacium, it can be presumed that the cult of Jupiter Turmasgades as a victorious god of military success was also favoured among them. Close territorial analogies from Dacia (e.g. Micia, Romula, Sarmisegetusa) only strengthen the aforementioned hypothesis.

Epigraphic monuments dedicated to Jupiter Melanus, Jupiter Cidiessus, Zeus Okkonenos, Zeus Ezzaios and Zeus Synenos are characteristic confirmations of the

⁴³ Jupiter Dolichenus' temple in Brza Palanka was discovered in 1962, a year after the accidental discovery of four sculptural groups of the god and Iuno Dolichena, fragments of relief representations of the god, the *tabella ansata* with the inscription, two statues of the eagle and several Roman coins. See Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965, 173 f. It is also possible that a sanctuary of Jupiter Dolichenus existed in Ravna, Tillacum Minus: *IMS* III.2, 42.

⁴⁴ Зотовић 1977, 34, no. 7. The god Turmasgades was a local Baal from Commagene who was syncretised with the Roman god Jupiter. It is generally presumed that the name of the god, Turmasgades, can be loosely translated as "the place of adornment" and that the god was originally from the mountain area. See Gilliam 1974; Tudor 1947, 272; Drijvers 1980, 173.

⁴⁵ On the monument found in Rome, Jupiter Turmasgades is shown as an eagle catching the head of the deer: see *LIMC* 8.1, 98, s.v. *Turmasgades* (M. Bărbulescu), no. 2. A votive monument from Romula bears the image of an eagle standing on the head of a deer, see Tudor 1947, 271. The votive monument from Ulpia Traiana Sarmisegetusa exhibits the figure of an eagle holding a goat or a deer: see Popa and Berciu 1978, 36–37, no. 36, pl. 13.1.

⁴⁶ Drijvers 1980, 173.

faithfulness of Asia Minor immigrants to their local gods. Jupiter Melanus was an Asia Minor local god whose cult has been confirmed by four votive monuments from the south of Serbia.⁴⁷ The epithet *Melanus* was derived from the name of the place where he was venerated – either *Mela* in Bithynia or *Melokome* in central Phrygia.⁴⁸ The dedicants of all four votive monuments from Ulpiana and the vicinity of Prizren are of Asia Minor or Syrian origin. It can be presumed that the dedicants of Jupiter Melanus were veterans, slaves and Asia Minor immigrants who worked as miners in the Dardanian mines and the inscriptions show that in the Central Balkans he was venerated as protector of mines and miners. Individual examples of other Asia Minor gods are confirmed by several votive monuments dedicated to Zeus Okkonenos, whose epithet was probably derived from the name of the Bithynian city, and Zeus Ezzaaios and Zeus Cidiessus, whose epithets were probably derived from the names of the Phrygian cities Azanoi and Kidyessos. In which manner they were worshipped is unfortunately unknown.

The cult of the lunar god Mên has not been confirmed epigraphically in the Central Balkans, but only by two bronze statues found in Viminacium and Obrenovac, near Singidunum. Although the majority of the monuments of the god Mên were found in the north-eastern part of Lydia, antique tradition considers Mên a Phrygian deity.⁴⁹ Known by numerous epithets, Mên was frequently mentioned on so-called confessional inscriptions from Meonia because of his vengeful nature, and he is generally represented as a young man in Oriental dress, with the symbol of a half-moon on his shoulders.⁵⁰ His close connection to Attis can be recognised not only by the same animals and attributes present in their iconography, but also in inscriptions from the 4th century AD from Rome dedicated to the god Menotyrannus and mutual apotropaic and soteriological aspects.⁵¹ A bronze statue from Viminacium represents Mên as a rider⁵² and iconographic analogies can be drawn with the statue from the Sackler Museum and a statue from the museum in Burdur.⁵³ Since the statue of the god Mên was found beyond the borders of the military camp in Viminacium, it can be presumed that its owner was of Oriental origin and that the statue was in his private *sacrarium*. The bronze figurine from Obrenovac represents the syncretistic deity Mên-Somnus, with Phrygian hat and small wings on his back (fig. 13). The syncretism of Mên and Somnus can easily be explained by their mutual role as chthonic deities and psychopomps. Iconographic analogies can be found with a bronze statue from Cambridge and a relief from the Izmit museum.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Votive monuments dedicated to the god Jupiter Melanus were found in Ulpiana (three monuments) and in the vicinity of the site Prizren. See Душанић 1971, 256.

⁴⁸ Душанић 1971; Pačović-Pešikan 1990, 614.

⁴⁹ Ričl 1995, 41–42.

⁵⁰ *CMRDM* I, no. 4; III, no. 61. Sometimes a symbol of a half-moon on votive and funerary monuments substitutes the god's image – in the opinion of Cumont, the motif of half-moon in the context of the cult of the god Mên on funerary monuments symbolised the belief of the dedicant that the soul of the deceased will continue its life in the astral sphere: Cumont 1942, 244–246.

⁵¹ Turcan 1996, 68; Lancellotti 2002, 136.

⁵² On the majority of monuments featuring the god Mên as a rider he usually rides a horse, and only rarely a ram, panther or a chicken. See *CMRDM* III, 101–102.

⁵³ *LIMC* 6, 468, s.v. *Men* (R. Vollkommer), nos. 99 and 104.

⁵⁴ *LIMC* 6, 468, s.v. *Men* (R. Vollkommer), nos. 99 and 104.

The goddess Artemis of Ephesus is shown only on two gems of unknown provenience and judging by the motifs of moon and star on the first gem, and torch on the other gem, syncretism with the goddess Hekata or Selena can be presumed.⁵⁵ Of course, without any epigraphic confirmations, we cannot presume the existence of a cult of the goddess Artemis of Ephesus.

The cult of Dea Syria is confirmed by two votive monuments. One of these was found in Dolno Nerezi, Skopje and the cause of the dedication of the monument was the building of the goddess' temple.⁵⁶ The monument dates to the end of the 1st century AD and considering the reason for the dedication of the monument, it can be presumed that the dedicant had significant financial means. The identity of Dea Syria on the second votive monument found at Skopje fortress is somewhat dubious, but if the reading proposed in *IMS* is accepted, it would be the only inscription known so far in which the goddess has the epithet *Sanctissima*.⁵⁷ The monument also dates to the end of the 1st century AD, but contains no information about the origin or social status of the dedicant.⁵⁸ The reason for the scanty confirmation of the cults of Artemis of Ephesus and Dea Syria can perhaps be explained by the fact that since outside of their place of origin, the two goddesses were frequently identified with Magna Mater, which may have been the case with their cults in the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans too.

The cult of the Imperial Sol Invictus, the sun god who was particularly favoured during the reigns of Elagabalus and Aurelianus, was favoured in the Central Balkans not only among Roman soldiers but also among administrative officials and ordinary people. The cult of Sol Invictus has been confirmed by two votive monuments from the vicinity of Naissus and Pljevlja on which the god is called *Invictus* and *Sacrum* and on 13 gems with representations of Sol's bust, Sol standing, driving a quadriga or riding a horse. Besides the usual symbolism of Sol Invictus as the god of victory, success, military triumph, but also as pacificator, source of goodness and light and invincible protector, it is clear that he was also respected as a celestial and eschatological god, who protected his devotees not only during their mortal lives, but also after their deaths. Besides the mentioned monuments dedicated to Sol Invictus, it is interesting to mention the find of a bronze railing (fig. 14) consisting of cancelli and herms with busts of Sol, Luna, Asclepius and Hygiea, found in a villa with peristyle built by Constantine the Great in Mediana, Naissus.⁵⁹ This railing was placed at the entrance of a small shrine dedicated

⁵⁵ Pliny states that the image of Hecate stood in the temple of the goddess Artemis in Ephesus and C. Boner describes the examples of magic amulets which bore the images of the goddesses Artemis of Ephesus and Hecate. Cf. Arnold 1989, 23 f.

⁵⁶ *IMS* IV, 37.

⁵⁷ The epithet *Sanctissima* is confirmed beside the names of the goddesses: Caelestis in Africa Proconsularis, see *AE* 1904, 17; in Leptis Magna: *CIL* VIII, 22; in Italy: *CIL* XI, 1282; beside the name of goddess Diana in Dacia: *AE* 1959, 330; beside the name of the goddess Terra Mater in Rome: *CIL* VI, 771; beside the name of Magna Mater in Africa Proconsularis: *CIL* VIII, 4864; in Italy *CIL* V, 3438; beside the names of Roman Emperresses in Dacia *AE* 1998, 1092–1093, 1095, and 1104; in Lucitania: *CIL* II, 110 and 4607, and *AE* 1930, 150; in Moesia Inferior: *CIL* III, 14211; in Rome: *CIL* VI, 1092, 1095–1096, 40763, and 40684; in Asia: *AE* 1914, 80.

⁵⁸ *IMS* IV, 15.

⁵⁹ Vasić 2004.

to the aforementioned deities, in the apse of the triclinium of the villa and it was buried immediately before the invasion of Goths in 378 AD. It is presumed that the railing was brought to Mediana by Emperor Julian, whose admiration for the god Sol was well-known, during his stay in Naissus in the year 361 AD.

No less interesting is the discovery of a votive monument dedicated to Theos Hypsistos from Pirot, which confirms the existence of the god's cult in the territory of the Central Balkans. The god has the epithet *epekoos*, which implies the attentiveness of the god towards his worshippers and his readiness to listen to their prayers.⁶⁰ The geographically closest votive monuments dedicated to Theos Hypsistos *Epekoos* are those from Serdika and Asenovgrad.⁶¹ In the text of the votive monument from Pirot, there is also a mention of the god's *Θίασος*, the community of the god's devotees led by the priest Augustianos. In the opinion of some authors, the existence of *thiasos* and the mentioning of *προστατης*, imply a very organised cult community of the god's worshippers who had rules about their organisation, festivities held in the god's honour, the god's temple and its organisation.⁶² Whether that is true or not, we can only be certain of the chronological time-frame when the monument was dedicated, that is during the 2nd or early 3rd century AD.⁶³

After this brief overview of Asia Minor and Syrian cults in the territory of the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans confirmed so far, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1). The cults of Magna Mater and Attis were introduced to the Central Balkans from the territory of the province of Dalmatia as a completely formed religion, in the early 2nd century AD and were diffused mainly by administrative officials, merchants, slaves and freedmen. While Magna Mater was honoured as an Imperial deity, protectress of trade, perhaps as goddess of thermal springs and celestial goddess, Attis was primarily a chthonic god. Although funerary monuments with the motif of Attis *tristis* were found in urban centres like Municipium Malvesatium and Viminacium, they were also found in smaller sites like Ježevica, Otanj, Visibaba, and Karan, which implies a high degree of popularity of this type of Attis' representations in the western parts of the Central Balkans. But it does not imply that the population was well acquainted, or acquainted at all, with Metroac theology, the practising of cult rites of *taurobolium* or *criobolium* or that *collegia dendroforum* and sanctuaries of Magna Mater and Attis existed at all, as was the case in neighbouring Dalmatia.

2). The cult of the god Sabazius was imported from Thrace and it was primarily popular in the northern and eastern part of the Central Balkans, where Thracian influence was quite dominant. The dedications to the god were made calling him *Augustus*, *Paternus* and *Κίριως* and his iconographic representations were canonised: Sabazius is always represented as a mature man with a beard and the usual attributes like pine cone, snake, eagle, and so on. In the territory of the Roman provinces of the Central Balkans,

⁶⁰ The epithet *epekoos* is confirmed by the names of numerous deities such as Sabazius, Mên, Pluto, Asclepius and Sarapis, and the goddesses Artemis Anaetis, and Kora. See *CMRDM* III, 78–79.

⁶¹ Tacheva-Hitova 1977, 292–294.

⁶² Tacheva-Hitova 1977, 292–294.

⁶³ Levinskaya 1996, 89.

the god was respected as the god of the dedicant's fatherland, master of life and fate of his devotees, but also as the protector of one's home and family. His apotropaic and eschatological dimension is quite clear, as is the fact that most of his worshippers were of Asia Minor, Thracian and Greek origin, by occupation soldiers, merchants, slaves and freedmen.

3). As for the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, the cult which is confirmed by 17 epigraphic sources and 16 archaeological monuments, it is known from the beginning of the 2nd century AD and it reached the peak of its popularity in the 3rd century AD. Mainly, the cult of the god was concentrated in military camps along the Danube *limes*, which would imply that soldiers were the main worshippers of the god's cult. Although at one moment I was inclined towards M. Speidel's opinion that the Roman army did not play a key role in the diffusion of the Dolichenus cult and that other categories of population like traders, slaves and freedmen were also very important, I am now more inclined to agree with A. Collar, that the officers and soldiers of the Roman army by an open system of communication made a major contribution in the diffusion of the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Central Balkans.⁶⁴ In the Central Balkan Roman provinces, Jupiter Dolichenus was primarily honoured as the god of military success, but also as iatric deity and protector of mines and miners.⁶⁵ Otherwise, iconographic representations of god and his parea Juno Dolichena are canonical, except representations from Egeta, where the temple of the god, a Dolicheneum, was confirmed. The presence of other Asia Minor deities like Mên, Jupiter Turmasgades, and Zeus Melanus can be explained by immigrants of Asia Minor origin who brought the aforementioned cults from their fatherland and who had their communities in Viminacium and probably Ulpiana. They were mostly soldiers, traders or miners. Unfortunately, the scantiness of data on votive monuments with dedications to the mentioned deities does not allow any hypothesis about the theology of the cults in question.

As in other parts of the Roman Empire, Asia Minor and Syrian cults in the Central Balkans disappeared in the 4th century due to a slow decline of pagan cults on the one hand and Christianity on the other. In certain sites, like Mediana, Naissus, the parallel coexistence of paganism and Christianity in the 4th century has been confirmed by the find of a bronze railing with herms and busts of the pagan deities Sol, Luna, Asclepius and Hygiea and two Christian basilicas with Christogram. It is once more a confirmation that the beliefs of mystery cults and religions were transferred and kept alive in Christian doctrine, which, among other things, also proclaimed hope in *renatus in aeternum* – rebirth and immortal life of believers.

⁶⁴ Collar 2011.

⁶⁵ The votive monument from Prizren, dedicated to Asclepius, Telesphorus, Hygiea and the genius of Jupiter Dolichenus, confirms that it was dedicated by men who were miners and worked in a nearby mine.



Fig. 1 – Map of Moesia Superior (after Mirković 1981, 73)



Fig. 2 – Viminacium (after Tomović 1992, 90–91, n. 87, fig. 29.1–3)



Fig. 3 – Karataš (after Tomović 1992, 92, n. 89, fig. 24.3)



Fig. 4 – Timacum Minus (after Петровић & Јовановић 1997, 86, n. 4, fig. 4)



Fig. 5 – Tekija hoard (after Mano-Zissi 1957, 33–35, n. 34, pl. 23)



Fig. 6 – Tučkovo (after Ферјанчић, Јеремић & Гојгић 2008, 64–66, cat. 16, fig. 16)



Fig. 7 – National Museum Belgrade (after Величковић 1972, 62, n. 91, fig. 91)

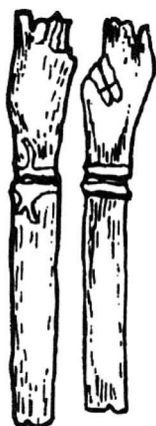


Fig. 8 – Hands of the god Sabazius (after Petković 1995, n. 342, pl. 16.2)



Fig. 10 – Vinik, Naissus (Niš) (after Јовановић 1977, 87–90, fig. 1)



Fig. 9 – Jupiter Dolichenus from Tekija hoard (after Mano-Zissi 1957, 35-39, n. 35, pl. 24)



Fig. 11 – Dolichenus and Iuno Dolichena (after Sreјović & Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987, 94, n. 38)

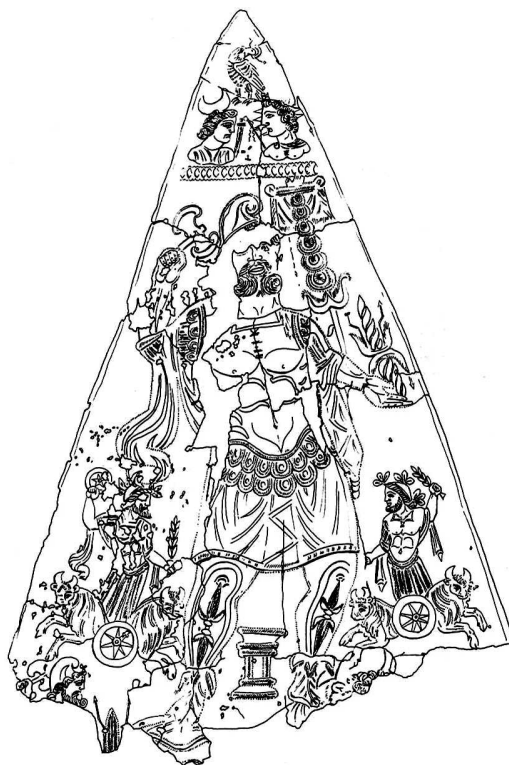


Fig. 12 – Egeta Iupiter Dolichenus (after Pop-Lazić 1977)



Fig. 13 – Obrenovac (after Ružić 2006, 256, n. 331)



Fig. 14 – Mediana (<http://klubputnika.net/profiles/blogs/medijana-arheolo-ki-park>)

Bibliography

Arnold 1989

C.E. Arnold, *Ephesians, power and magic: the concept of power in Ephesians in light of its historical setting*, Monograph series 63, Cambridge 1989.

Boatwright 1991

M.T. Boatwright, *Plancia Magna of Perge: Women's Roles and Status in Roman Asia Minor*, in S.B. Pomeroy (ed.), *Women's History and Ancient History*, Chapel Hill 1991, 249–273.

Bøgh 2007

B. Bøgh, *The Phrygian Background of Kybele*, in *Numen* 54 (2007), 304–339.

Borgeaud 2004

P. Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods. From Cybele to the Virgin Mary*, Baltimore 2004.

Bošković-Robert 2006

A. Bošković-Robert, *Le culte de Jupiter en Mésie supérieure*, Paris 2006.

Burton 1996

P.J. Burton, *The Summoning of the Magna Mater to Rome (205 B.C.)*, in *Historia* 45 (1996), 36–63.

Collar 2011

A. Collar, *Military Networks and the Cult of Jupiter Dolichenus*, in E. Winter (ed.), *Von Kummuh nach Telouch. Historische und archäologische Untersuchungen in Kommagene*, Asia Minor Studien 64, Bonn 2011, 217–245.

Cumont 1929

F. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, Paris 1929⁴.

Cumont 1942

F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 35, Paris 1942.

Cvijić 1987

J. Cvijić, *Balkansko poluostrvo i južnoslovenske zemlje II*, Beograd 1987.

Drijvers 1980

H.J.W. Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, ÉPRO 82, Leiden 1980.

Душанић 1971

С. Душанић, *Нови Анџинов епиграф из Сочанице и metalla municipii Dardanorum*, in *Antiquité Vivante* 21 (1971), 255–261.

Duthoy 1969

R. Duthoy, *The taurobolium: its evolution and terminology*, ÉPRO 10, Leiden 1969.

Eisele 1909

T. Eisele, *Sabazios*, in W.H. Roscher (ed.), *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* 4, Leipzig 1909, 232–264.

Ферјанчић, Јеремић & Гојгић 2008

С. Ферјанчић, Г. Јеремић, А. Гојгић, *Римски епиграфски споменици Чачка и околине*, Чачак 2008.

Garašanin and Garašanin 1951

М. Garašanin and D. Garašanin, *Arheološka nalazišta u Srbiji*, Beograd 1951.

García y Bellido 1967

A. García y Bellido, *Les religions orientales dans l'Espagne romaine*, ÉPRO 5, Leiden 1967.

Gavrilović 2010

N. Gavrilović, *The cults of Asia Minor and Syrian deities in Roman provinces of Central Balkans*, PhD-diss. University of Belgrade 2010.

Gilliam 1974

J.F. Gilliam, *Iupiter Turmasgades*, in D.M. Pippidi (ed.), *Actes du IXe Congrès International d'Études sur les Frontières romaines, Mamaïa, 6–13 septembre 1972*, Köln 1974, 309–314.

Girardi Jurkić 1972

V. Girardi Jurkić, *Rasprostranjenost kulta Magnae Matris na području Istre u rimsko doba*, in *Histria Archaeologica* 3 (1972), 43–68.

Graillot 1912

H. Graillot, *Le culte de Cybèle. Mère des Dieux à Rome et dans l'Empire romain*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 107, Paris 1912.

Gruen 1990

E. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy*, Cincinnati classical studies 7, Leiden 1990.

Hajjar 1978

Y. Hajjar, *A propos d'une main de Sabazios au Louvre*, in M.B. de Boer and T.A. Edridge (eds.), *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren I. Recueil d'études offert par les auteurs de la série Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain à Maarten J. Vermaseren à l'occasion de son soixantième anniversaire le 7 avril 1978*, ÉPRO 68.1, Leiden 1978, 455–472.

Henrichs 1976

A. Henrichs, *Despoina Kybele: ein Beitrag zur Religiösen Namenkunde*, in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 80 (1976), 253–286.

Imamović 1977

E. Imamović, *Antički kultni i votivni spomenici na području Bosne i Hercegovine*, Biblioteka Kulturno nasljeđe, Sarajevo 1977.

Johnson 1984

S.E. Johnson, *The Present State of Sabazios Research*, in *ANRW* 2.17.3, 1583–1613.

Jope 1985

J. Jope, *Lucretius, Cybele and Religion*, in *Phoenix* 39 (1985), 250–262.

Јовановић 1977

А. Јовановић, *О једном синкретистичком сјоменику из IV в. н. е. са Виника код Ниша*, in *Нишки зборник* 4 (1977), 87-90.

Јовановић 1990

А. Јовановић, *Прилоз проучавању сребрних амблема из Текије*, in *Гласник Српског Археолошког Друштва* 6 (1990), 29–36.

Kobylyna 1976

M.M. Kobylyna, *Divinités orientales sur le littoral nord de la Mer Noire*, ÉPRO 52, Leiden 1976.

Кojić 1961

S. Kojić, *Nekoliko problema iz kultova autohtonih u našoj zemlji*, PhD-diss. University of Belgrade 1961.

Кojiћ 1963

С. Кojiћ, *Један прилоз проучавању религије Илира у римско доба*, in *Starinar* 13 (1963), 223–230.

Lancellotti 2002

M.G. Lancellotti, *Attis Between Myth and History: King, Priest and God*, RGRW 149, Leiden 2002.

Lane 1979

E.N. Lane, *Sabazius and the Jews in Valerius Maximus: A Re-examination*, in *Journal of Roman Studies* 69 (1979), 35–38.

Lane 1980

E.N. Lane, *Towards a Definition of the Iconography of Sabazius*, in *Numen* 27 (1980), 9–33.

Lane 1996a

E.N. Lane (ed.), *Cybele, Attis and related cults. Essays in memory of M.J. Vermaseren*, RGRW 131, Leiden 1996.

Lane 1996b

E.N. Lane, *The Name of Cybele's Priests, the Galloi*, in Lane 1996a, 117–134.

Levinskaya 1996

I. Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*, *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting* 5, Grand Rapids 1996.

Macrea 1959

M. Macrea, *Le culte de Sabazius en Dacie*, in *Dacia* 3 (1959), 325–339.

Mano-Zissi 1957

Dj. Mano-Zissi, *Nalaz iz Tekije*, *Antika* 2, Beograd 1957.

Medini 1981

J. Medini, *Maloazijske religije u rimskoj provinciji Dalmaciji*, PhD-diss. University of Zadar 1981.

Merlat 1951

P. Merlat, *Répertoire des inscriptions et monuments figurés du culte de Jupiter Dolichenus*, Paris 1951.

Metzler 1994

D. Metzler, *Mural Crown in the ancient Near East and Greece*, in S.B. Matheson (ed.), *An Obsession with Fortune. Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*, Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin, New Haven 1994, 76–85.

Мирковић 1981

М. Мирковић, *Римско освајање и организација римске власти*, in С. Турковић (ed.), *Историја српског народа I*, Београд 1981, 66–106.

Naumann 1983

F. Naumann, *Die Ikonographie der Kybele in der phrygischen und der griechischen Kunst*, *Istanbuler Mitteilungen. Beiheft 28*, Tübingen 1983.

Палавестра 1984

А. Палавестра, *Кнежевски гробови сџаријеџ звезденог доба на централном Балкану*, Посебна издања 19, Београд 1984.

Parović-Pešikan 1990

М. Parović-Pešikan, *Novi spomenik Jupitera Melana iz Ulpijane*, in *Arheološki vestnik 41* (1990), 607–616.

Petković 1995

S. Petković, *Rimski predmeti od kosti i roga sa teritorije Gornje Mezije*, *Posebna izdanja (Arheološki institut, Belgrade, Serbia) 28*, Београд 1995.

Петровић & Јовановић 1997

П. Петровић & А. Јовановић, *Културно благо Књажевачког краја*, Београд 1997.

Picard 1961

Ch. Picard, *Sabazios, dieu thraco-phrygien: expansion et aspects nouveaux de son culte*, in *Revue Archéologique 2* (1961), 129–176.

Pop-Lazić 1977

P. Pop-Lazić, *A Votive Plate of Iupiter Dolichenus, Brza Palanka-Egeta*, in *Archaeologia Jugoslavica 18* (1977) 41–44.

Popa and Berciu 1978

A. Popa and I. Berciu, *Le culte de Jupiter Dolichenus dans la Dacie romaine*, *ÉPRO 69*, Leiden 1978.

Ricl 1995

M. Ricl, *Svest o grehu u maloazijskim kultovima rimskog doba: ispovedanje ritualnih i etičkih sagrešenja u meonskim i frigijskim kultovima*, Београд 1995.

Roller 1999

L.E. Roller, *In search of God the Mother: the Cult of Anatolian Cybele*, Berkeley 1999.

Rumpf 1954

A. Rumpf, review of G.M.A. Hanfmann, *The Season Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies 2, Cambridge 1951, in *American Journal of Archaeology* 58 (1954), 176–179.

Ružić 2006

M. Ružić, *Kultna bronzana plastika u rimskim provincijama severnog Balkana*, PhD-diss. University of Belgrade 2006.

Sergejevski 1934

D. Sergejevski, *Rimska groblja na Drini (neizdati spomenici)*, in *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja u Bosni i Hercegovini* 46 (1934), 11–41.

Showerman 1901

G. Showerman, *The Great Mother of the Gods*, in *Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin* 43, Philology and Literature Series 1.3 (1901) 221–333.

Срејовић & Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987

Д. Срејовић & А. Цермановић-Кузмановић, *Римска скулптура у Србији*, Београд 1987.

Summers 1996

K. Summers, *Lucretius' Roman Cybele*, in Lane 1996a, 337–365.

Tacheva-Hitova 1977

M. Tacheva-Hitova, *Dem Hypsistos geweihte Denkmäler in Thracien (Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der antiken Religion III)*, in *Thracia* IV (1977), 271–301.

Tacheva-Hitova 1978

M. Tacheva-Hitova, *Wesenszüge des Sabazioskultes in Moesia Inferior und Thracia*, in M.B. de Boer and T.A. Edridge (eds.), *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren III. Recueil d'études offert par les auteurs de la série Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain à Maarten J. Vermaseren à l'occasion de son soixantième anniversaire le 7 avril 1978*, ÉPRO 68.3, Leiden 1978, 1217–1231.

Тачева-Хитова 1982

М. Тачева-Хитова, *История на источните култове в Долна Мизия и Тракия*, София 1982.

Tomović 1992

M. Tomović, *Roman Sculpture in Upper Moesia*, Monographies 24, Beograd 1992.

Tran tam Tinh 1972

V. Tran tam Tinh, *Le culte des divinités orientales en Campanie en dehors de Pompéi, de Stabies et d'Herculanum*, ÉPRO 27, Leiden 1972.

Tudor 1947

D. Tudor, *Jupiter Turmasgadis à Romula*, in *Dacia* 11–12 (1945–1947), 271–272.

Turcan 1996

R. Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, Cambridge 1996³.

Васић 1973

М.Р. Васић, *Надгробни споменици у римској провинцији Далмацији од I до IV века н. е.*, PhD-diss. University of Belgrade 1973.

Vasić 2004

М. Vasić, *Bronze Railing from Mediana*, in *Starinar* 53–54 (2004), 79–110.

Величковић 1972

М. Величковић, *Римска ситина бронзана пластика у Народном музеју*, Београд 1972.

Vermaseren 1977

М.Ј. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis, the Myth and the Cult*, London 1977.

Vulić 1931

Н. Vulić, *Antički spomenici naše zemlje*, in *Spomenik Srpske Kraljevske Akademije* 71 (1931), 4–259.

Вучковић-Тодоровић 1965

Д. Вучковић-Тодоровић, *Светилиште Јулијана Долихена у Брзој Паланци*, in *Starinar* 15–16 (1964–1965), 173–182.

Zotović 1966

Лј. Zotović, *Les cultes orientaux sur le territoire de la Mésie supérieure*, ÉPRO 7, Leiden 1966.

Зотовић 1969

Љ. Зотовић, *Представе младишког пара на надгробним цијусима Јужославије*, in *Starinar* 20 (1969), 431–440.

Зотовић 1977

Љ. Зотовић, *Прилози проучавању Турмасџадовог кулџа*, in *Starinar* 27 (1977), 33–40.

Зотовић 1973

М. Зотовић, *Југозападна Србија у доба Римљана*, in *Užički zbornik* 2 (1973), 7–40.

Зотовић 1995

Р. Зотовић, *Римски надгробни споменици источног дела провинције Далмације*, Ужице 1995.