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JUPITER'S CULT AT THE TERRITORY OF VIMINACIUM

ABSTRACT

From the total of nine monuments dedicated to the cult of Jupiter, six of them are dedicated to Jupiter alone, as Capitoline Jupiter. Among the three others, one is dedicated to the Capitoline Triad, to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, as well as other deities of the Roman pantheon and the Imperial cult. Among the remaining two monuments, one is dedicated to Jupiter and the ruling emperor, while the second one is dedicated to Jupiter, other deities of the Roman pantheon and the Lares. Dedicants of the votive monuments dedicated to Jupiter are mostly members of higher and high social strata.

KEYWORDS: ROMAN ERA, VIMINACIUM, JUPITER, CULT.

So far, at the territory of Viminacium,¹ there are nine votive monuments dedicated to Jupiter, both as a single deity or in groups with other deities. Among the votive monuments dedicated to Jupiter and other deities, one monument is dedicated to the Capitoline Triad, other Roman deities and emperor, one to Jupiter and the ruling emperor and one to Jupiter, other Roman deities and the Lares.

The earliest monuments dedicated to Jupiter were already collected by Vulić (cat. nr. 2, 3, 4, 7), while the remaining monuments were noted during the eighties of the last century (cat. nr. 1, 5, 6, 8, 9).

Originally, Jupiter was a heavenly deity and he ruled the weather conditions (Замуровић 1936:

220; Срејовић и Цермановић-Кузмановић 1979: 183). In time, he turned into the supreme deity of the Roman Pantheon. Since he was the god of heaven and light, all the annual days of the full moon (*idae*) were dedicated to him. Every month, on this very day, the supreme priest would sacrifice a white sheep, while at the beginning of vintage, he would sacrifice a lamb. Jupiter was the protector of winegrowers and grapevine, since this fruit depends on weather conditions most. As the deity who rules weather conditions, he was also connected to land fertility. In times of drought, prayers for rain were sent to Jupiter. Through wine, he was most likely also connected to libation and the cult of the dead. He was often connected with Mars and Liber, as well as with Terminus, since as the god who throws lightnings, he also ruled borders.

The dedication to Jupiter as Capitoline, *O(p-timus) et M(aximus)*, made a powerful protection of the empire. In all of the provinces and cities,

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including Viminacium, such dedication belongs to the most numerous ones (cat. nr. 1–5, 8, 9). After establishing a provincial city or town, one of the initial tasks of builders and architects was to erect a temple resembling the one in Rome and dedicate it to Capitoline Jupiter (Срејовић и Цермановић-Кузмановић 1979: 184). In the Capitoline temple in Rome, Sibylline Books were kept, all of the important documents and laws. There was no doubt that in the Capitoline temples in various provincial towns, all of the important documents and laws were kept, too. Certainly, Viminacium also possessed such a temple. Dedication to the Capitoline Triad, Jupiter, Juno and Minerva (cat. nr. 9), referred to a complete protection of the empire and the society. This indicates a good relationship between the Roman state and its society, confirming that in Viminacium also, the society and its organization were based on the standards of the Roman socio – political system. In the Capitoline temple, while entering adult age, young men offered sacrifices to the Capitoline Jupiter, while consuls and most likely magistrates in provinces, took their oaths.

We tend to think that dedication to Jupiter as the supreme and the most powerful one (*Optimus et Maximus*), actually the biggest and the best, contained all of the features of Jupiter as a deity, while by adding certain attributes, his specific features were highlighted. His most common attributes are *Fulgator*, the one that gets angry, i.e. Jupiter the Thunderer, further on *Cohortalis*, the protector of cohortes, and finally *Sacrum*, the sacred one. The attribute *Conservator*, found in Viminacium, was not so common. The attribute *Conservator* is encountered on two inscriptions from Viminacium (cat. nr. 6 and 7). It marks Jupiter as a guardian deity, a savior, who rescues people from trouble.

Juno represented one of the most important deities of the Roman Pantheon. She was respected from the very beginning, originally as a protectress of women, the goddess of the Moon and of the women in labour, the protectress of marriage. Her image is later gradually formed by divinisation

of all of the female genii (Junos) into one divine woman. (Perhaps one should here pay attention to the so-called psycho-factor, i. e. “mental association” of why Jupiter is also quite often associated with Genii, although at least so far, not found as such at the territory of Viminacium). In time, from a protectress of women, Juno grew into the protectress of primarily married women, family, birth and therefore also the entire Roman society and also of the Empire. As such, she was celebrated as a queen (*Regina*), the wife of Jupiter. She was also respected as a goddess that multiplies people, but also protects cities in times of war and even as a protectress of the army. In Viminacium, there is a monument dedicated to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, but also to other deities (cat. nr. 9). Here, Juno is described as *Regina*, the queen, indicating that she was respected as the wife of *Jupiter Rex*, the king, protecting the state and the people. In this case and as such, it is possible that she also protected the army, especially since the monument is dedicated to other deities, too. Such a dedication to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva belongs to the odd ones, since there is also a dedication to other deities. Nevertheless, apart from his independent cult, Jupiter is most commonly associated with either Juno or Juno and Minerva (See: Imamović 1977: 132–135; Zotović 2016: 18–19, n. 1–3). Another question is whether other deities include the ones with whom, apart from Juno and Minerva, Jupiter is most commonly associated with (Mars, Liber, Genii, see Zotović 2016: 18, 19–20), or this generally refers to all of the deities of the Roman pantheon. Such a dedication could be regarded as rather rare. It is also possible that the dedication is related to all of the deities, especially because of the Capitoline Triad. Due to the original importance of Jupiter within the dedication, it could also refer to other deities with whom Jupiter was associated with. For the time being, the question remains open, the same as the question of how many temples, apart from the Capitoline one, were there in Viminacium?

Minerva was the goddess originally celebrat-

ed as the protectress of all of the handicrafts and craftsmen, as well as schools, teachers and pupils. In Rome, Minerva's cult was introduced due to a prompt development of handicraft. She was often associated with the god Mars, as well as with Jupiter, although most commonly with Jupiter. She was also connected to music, since very often worshiped by flute and trumpet players. Later on, she was associated with the Greek goddess Athena. In all of these aspects, it is possible that she was connected to the army, since trumpet players were very much appreciated in the army. There was also a special school for trumpet players.

Besides, dedication to an emperor indicates socio-political spheres that influenced Roman social system. It also indicates that dedications to Capitoline Jupiter and the Capitoline Triad were of the utmost political and state importance. This is why dedications to emperors are often encountered together with dedications to Jupiter or the Capitoline Triad. So far, at the territory of Viminacium, only one dedication to Jupiter and to an emperor (cat. nr. 6) has been discovered, but also one dedication to the Capitoline Triad, Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, along with other deities and with the imperial cult (cat. nr. 9). Such dedications contributed to the even greater protection and security of the state. Dedications to Capitoline Jupiter and the imperial cult are not so rare. They are also encountered in Singidunum (Mirković 1976, n. 3, n. 4; Dušanić 1976, n. 101) and Naissus (Petrović 1979, n. 7, n. 8, n. 9, n. 11, n. 14). A special question is if, due to a dedication to the imperial cult, one is allowed to think of eurgotism.

One of the very interesting dedications includes the one to Jupiter, other deities and Lares. Such a dedication is rare, actually the only one so far from Roman times at the territories of urban centers in Serbia. Lares were good spirits, living in the upper world and protecting their heirs and their home (Замуровић 1936: 259). The domestic Lares were especially respected and sacrifices have been made to them on every home festive occasion. Busts and images of Lares were kept

near fireplaces, in special caskets (*lararium*), opened during every home festival. Offerings have been brought to them on special plates, containing different food. Just like all of the previously mentioned dedications, this one also indicates the state and political importance of Jupiter's cult. Along with other deities, he did not only represent a powerful protection of the state, but also of the entire society, empire and family.

If we look upon tectonic and morphologic features of the Viminacium monuments, we are likely to notice a rare appearance of monuments in the shape of cylinder. Before going further into detail, it is important to say that every votive monument represents a simplified temple entrance (Zotović 2016: 6). Basically, every votive monument consists of a pedestal, monument's body, containing the engraved inscription and monument's roof. Pedestals and roofs are separated from the body with a more or less highlighted profilation, the lower one, actually the pedestal, remaining undecorated, while the upper one, the roof, usually bore decoration (Imamović 1977: 126–127). The field with inscriptions was never positioned so low as with tomb monuments, confirming once more that votive monuments represent simplified temple entrances. In this case, the form of a cylinder (cat. nr. 7) literally imitates a temple column. The inscription field and its rectangular shape also represent a simplified temple column.

Although all of the monuments are rather damaged, two of them still bear visible ornaments (cat. nr. 6 and 8). There is an engraved triangular tympanon with a rosette in the middle (cat. nr. 6), as well as leaf-shaped signs used to separate words (cat. nr. 8). Engraved triangular tympana are also encountered on tomb monuments, resembling entrances to a deceased's home. With votive monuments, there is once more the case that they represent temple entrances. Since in Viminacium, all of the votive monuments to Jupiter are quite damaged, one cannot speak about favored ornaments. Palmettes are represented in angles of different tomb monuments and it can be presumed

that they were reduced to a simple decorative element, without a deeper symbolic meaning, the same as rosettes.

Due to the small number of finds, the frequency of monuments on different sites can be described as sporadic. The only site with a different picture is Kostolac, actually the site Viminacium, revealing the greatest number of the monuments discovered so far. Once again, this indicates the existence of a temple dedicated to Jupiter in Viminacium, but also to the Capitoline Triad. A separate question includes the monument finds from Smederevo, since it is not known whether they were brought there or that Viminacium possessed a special organization as a municipality. It would be a bold presumption that the territory of modern Smederevo was organized as a group of Roman citizens from the great Roman center in Viminacium, actually as a *concelliabulum*.

Another interesting fact is that on votive monuments from Viminacium dedicated to Jupiter, no dedicant names remained preserved or they were simply not stated. For the areas that possess cult analyses, including the cult of Jupiter, like the inland of the province of Dalmatia (Imamović 1977) and its eastern part (Zotović 2016), one can speak about the socio – economic status of dedicants. They were either Roman citizens, romanized inhabitants, Orientals, free citizens, former slaves or still enslaved (Imamović 1977: 129), but also members of the middle or higher social strata (Zotović 2016: 9). In this case, parallels cannot be drawn, except maybe for the eastern part of the Roman province of Dalmatia. According to the art of making monuments or according to dedication on them, one can tell whether dedicants of the votive monuments dedicated to Jupiter at the territory of Viminacium belong to the members of higher or high social stratum.

All of the monuments dedicated either to Jupiter alone or also to other deities can be dated into a broad chronological span, from the middle of the 2nd to the middle of the 3rd century.



Fig. 1

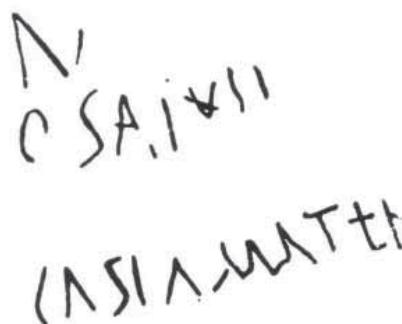


Fig. 2



Fig. 4

CATALOGUE



Fig. 3



Fig. 5

1. Altar, lime, dimensions 86 x 40 x 50 cm. Damaged in the lower right angle.

Site: Smederevo

Bibliography: Mirković 1986, 69, n. 17.

Dedication: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)*. (Fig.1)

2. Altar, lime, dimensions 28 x 26 x 16,5 cm. Rather damaged.

Site: Kostolac

Bibliography: Вулић 1909, 121, nr. 31; Mirković 1986, 69–70, n. 18.

Dedication: [*I(ovi) O(ptimo)*] *M(aximo)*. (Fig. 2)

3. Altar, lime, dimensions 80 x 34 x 48,5 cm. Rather damaged.

Site: Viminacium

Bibliography: Вулић 1909, 119, nr. 126; Mirković 1986, 70, n. 19.

Dedication: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)*. (Fig.3)

4. Altar, lime, dimensions 36 x 36 x 25 cm.

Site: Čair

Bibliography: Вулић 1905, 84, nr. 15a; Mirković 1986, 70, n. 20.

Dedication: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)*. (Fig.4)

5. Altar, lime, dimensions 170 x 47 cm. Rather damaged due to weather conditions and its lower left corner missing.

Site: Smederevo

Bibliography: CIL III 8106; Mirković 1986, 70–71, n. 21.

Dedication: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)*. (Fig. 5)

6. Altar, lime, dimensions 45 x 24 x 18 cm. At the top, there is a carved triangular tympanum, in the middle, there is a rosette. In the outer corners, there are palmettes.

Site: Kostolac

Bibliography: Mirković 1986, 71, n. 22.

Dedication: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Cons(eruatori) Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) L. Sept(imii)*

Sever[i] Pert(inacis) Aug(usti). (Fig. 6)

7. Altar, lime, cylinder shaped, dimensions 60 x 26 cm.

Site: Kostolac

Bibliography: Вулић 1931, 127, nr. 310; Mirković 1986, 71–72, n. 23.

Dedication: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Cons(ervatori)*. (Fig. 7)

8. Altar, lime, dimensions 49 x 48 x 15 cm. The lower monument part is missing. On the upper part, there are acroterii. In the first inscription row, the words are separated with carved leaves.

Site: Čair

Bibliography: Mirković 1986, 72, n. 24.

Dedication: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Dis Deabusq(ue) et Larib(us) domest(icis)*. (Fig. 8)

9. Altar, lime, dimensions 80 x 35 x 37 cm. The upper monument part, down to the beginning of the inscription, is missing.

Site: Kostolac

Bibliography: Вулић–Премемерштајн 1900, 15, nr. 3; Mirković 1986, 72–73, n. 25.

Dedication: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) m(aximo) Iunoni Reg[i]nae Minervae ceterisque Dis Deabusq(ue) pro salute domino[r(um)]n(ostrorum duorum) Severi et An[toni]ni Aug(ustorumduorum)*. (Fig. 9)

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Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

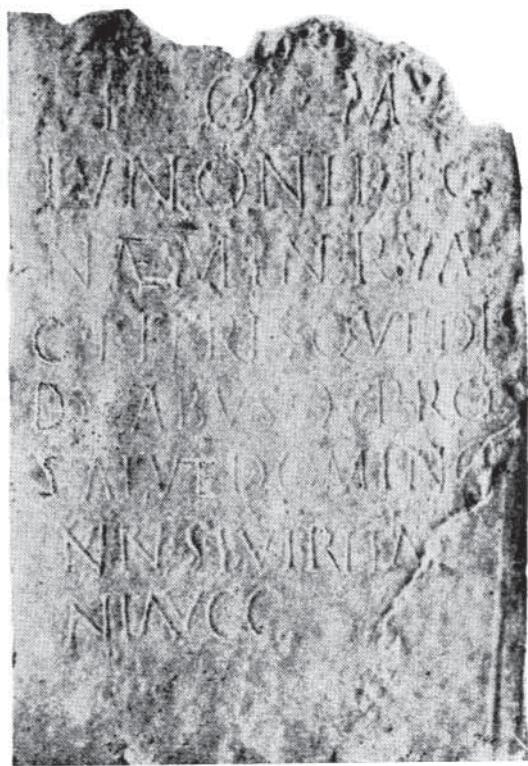


Fig. 9

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REZIME
JUPITEROV KULT NA PODRUČJU
VIMINACIJUMA**KLJUČNE REČI: RIMSKI PERIOD,**
VIMINACIUM, JUPITER, KULT.

Na području Viminacijuma konstatovano je do sada ukupno devet votivnih spomenika posvećenih bogu Jupiteru, samostalno i u kulturnim zajednicama sa drugim božanstvima. Od votivnih spomenika posvećenih Jupiteru i drugim božanstvima mogu se konstatovati jedan spomenik Kapitolskoj trijadi, drugim bogovima i boginjama rimskog panteona i caru, jedan Jupiteru i vladajućem caru, i jedan Jupiteru i drugim bogovima i boginjama rimskog panteona i domaćim Larima. Sve ove posvete govore o tome od kolikog je značaja bio Jupiterov kult za zaštitu, ne samo države, već celokupnog društva i porodice. Dedicanti su pripadnici višeg ili visokog društvenog sloja. Svi spomenici se mogu datovati u širi hronološki period od sredine II do sredine III veka.