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Romanization of the western Illyricum from religious point of view

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The Romans likely regarded all of the peoples of *Illyricum* as belonging to a culturally coherent ethnic group, which they obviously did not.¹ Since their anthroponomy and toponymy show only small differences between them, it is only possible to differentiate several personal onomastic *formulae* belonging to northern, middle or southern Illyrian ethnic groups.² However, much bigger differences reveal religious systems and cults among the Illyrian peoples which leads to the conclusion that considerable differences existed on the Balkans area that later belonged to the Roman province of Dalmatia.

The religious aspect is much more important than anything else among cultural phenomena. This is why the Romans tried to absorb the local cults into their religion. Unfortunately, we can only draw conclusions about the indigenous religions on the basis of Latin inscriptions which reveal the phenomenon of Roman interpretation (*interpretatio romana*³), since pre-Roman strata

are almost nontransparent. Only archaeological findings can hint at such conclusions. It is possible to trace the continuity of the god-mother religion in the northern Adriatic area from pre-historic to historical times.⁴

As far as I understand the term, Romanization was a process which covers conveying the local peoples of a province to the Roman way of life. This process is not covered by the term acculturation since the latter does not encompass the political aspect of the process, which is extremely important. The huge Roman Empire was inhab-

a sacred place in their old religion where a priest dressed in woman's robes presides, but in the Roman way (*interpretatio romana*) they performed the cult of Castor and Pollux there known as Alcis who show the same god's nature (*numen*). There are no traces of foreign superstitions, they were honored as youths and as brothers". Cfr. Wissowa 1918, 1-49. Wissowa commented this passage so that these German divinities were of the same character. The only difference between German and Roman *numina* is the difference in names, but the divine nature is in essence the same. Thus Romans everywhere applied a kind of *interpretatio Romana*. That means that Tacitus, more or less rightly so, recognized some similarities between the religion and essence (*numina*) of the foreign gods. Tacitus gave them Roman names which the provincial peoples adopted and thus joined them to Roman culture. Sometimes they preserved the local name as a suffix, and sometimes this suffix disappeared over the course of time. This does not matter if for example a certain god was revered in Britain as *deus Cocidius*, as *deus Mars Cocidius*, or finally only as *Mars*, as it is the same god and the difference only serves to reveal three different stages of romanisation. About *interpretatio romana* cfr. Ferri 1976, 125-133. Ferri's approach to the problem is slightly different since the cults had the same Indo-European roots what was remarked by Romans. Ando 2002, 41-51. The paper of Heinemann 2012, 117-142.

⁴ About this cults in generally Gimbutas 1982 (rep. 2007), 152-196.

¹ As far as I am concerned, this is the reason why this name was given to such a huge region for administrative and practical purposes in the period when the Romans did not precisely know the ethnic and cultural structure of these people. The general name Illyrians could not be attributed to all of them that inhabited this large area.

² Rendić-Miočević 1948; Rendić-Miočević 1989, 711-728; Katičić 1962, 95-120; Katičić 1963, 255-293; Katičić 1963, 255-293; Katičić 1964, 23-33; Katičić 1976; Kurilić 2002, 123-148.

³ Tacitus, *De origine et situ Germanorum*, 43. Tacitus' passage was many times the subject of scholarly studies. This passage reads as follows: *Apud Nahannarvalos antiquae religionis lucus ostenditur. Praesidet sacerdos muliebri ornatu: sed deos, interpretatione Romana, Castorem Pollucemque memorant: ea vis numini; nomen Alcis. Nulla simulacra, nullum peregrinae superstitionis vestigium: ut fratres tamen, ut juvenes, venerantur*. English translation (N. Cambi): „Nahannarvali had

ited by a large number of peoples with different scales of indigenous cultures which were not easy to amalgamate on a sustainable level. This process was encouraged by the Roman central power. The *interpretatio* was not easy in the beginning, but resistance to the process, particularly in imperial times, diminished and gradually grew into a desire to accept the Roman way of life. The provincial elite were the bearers of these processes and their bilateral progress in local society.

A unique religious system did not exist on the territory of *Illyricum* before the Romans. Many ethnic entities developed different simple or even complex religious systems demonstrating the different character of their essence. Religion was one of the most important components of their cultures. Typical example of such phenomenon can be noticed among the Histrians, Liburni, Delmatae and indigenous people that lived south of the river Neretva.

Local goddesses bearing different names were revered among the Liburni. Every community had its own, unique goddess (for example *Ica*, *Avitica*, *Jutossica*, *Sentona*, *Latra*, *Ansotica*, etc.).⁵ Masculine gods seem to be almost unknown. The same characteristics can be observed among Histrian communities. There were other female goddesses such as *Boria*, *Eia*, *Iria*, *Histria*, *Nebres*, *Seixomnina*, *Trita*, with analogous religious characteristics to the Liburni.⁶ A common feature is that all of them were female divinities differing in their cult properties and competences (*numina*). Unfortunately, only a small number of monuments show depictions of these goddesses. They reveal some differences in their iconographic manifestations. *Avitica* from *Albona* (Labin) is represented as a seated goddess in a long garment with what is likely a *cornu copiae* (City Museum in Labin⁷). The goddess is to the right of the altar, which is decorated by a garland, as in Roman liturgy (Fig. 1). Symmetry would demand another figure to the left of the altar, but this side is not preserved. The inscription does not mention which figure could be there. Under the relief

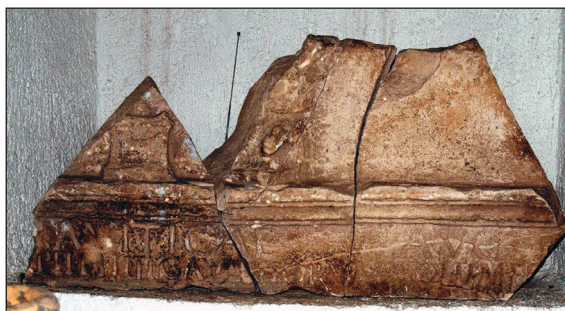


Fig. 1. The relief of *Avitica* from Labin

panel there is partially preserved inscription: *Aviticae Avg(ustae)/... T(iti) Gavili(orum) (servus) Voltimes*. Significantly, the monument was dedicated by the *servus* of the city elite Gavilii who still had the Liburnian name *Voltimes(is)*, which points to his Liburnian origin.⁸ The Gavilii were an autochthonous Liburnian family that was romanized early.⁹

Latra from Nedinum was represented as a standing figure in long robes with a scarf on her head, covering her hair (Fig. 2). In front of her is an altar bearing the letters: L(ibens)Lat(rae) M(erito).¹⁰ The relief is very primitive, as is the epigraph, but the iconographic idea is clear enough.

So there are two iconographic variants of Liburnian goddesses. The first is depicted as a seated goddess on her throne, dressed in long garments (*Auitica*), and the second standing (*Latra*) in the same type of dress. Their difference in posture does not matter in terms of religion. Both of them are mother goddesses that grant agricultural fertility.

However, *Auitica*'s and *Latra*'s iconographic features are completely different compared to *Anzotica*, the *Aenona* goddess represented as the very well known Roman *Venus*, revealing nude breasts and small, bearded effigy of *Priapus* (Fig 3), now in the Archaeological Museum of Split.¹¹ It is clear that *Anzotica* is more important than her son *Priapus* whose Liburnian name is unknown. It is quite uncommon that *Priapus* did

⁵ About that compare Medini 1972, 34-36; Medini 1984a, 7-32; Šašel Kos 1999, 75-80.

⁶ Jurkić 2005, 39-47; Šašel Kos 1999, 63-67.

⁷ Jurkić 2005, 121, 1. 1. The depiction is too small so the object is hard to accurately describe, but it is wider on the top and it comes to the hip of the seated figure. So the horn of plenty is almost certain.

⁸ Mayer 1957, 362-363; Šašel Kos 1999, 75-76.

⁹ Cfr. Wilkes 1969, 312 Gavilii probably were colonists from Aquileia. Those bearing local names were obviously slaves or freedmen.

¹⁰ CIL III 15042, Medini 1984b, 223-243, Pl. II, 1.

¹¹ Cambi 1980, 273-278.



Fig. 2. *Latra's relief from Nadin*

not develop cult in Liburnia later.¹² One of two epigraphs reveals that the iconographic characteristics of the goddess were adopted for the local *Anzotica*.¹³ The first epigraph records the name, the pronunciation of which was obviously different (*Andzotica*). Over several decades, *Anzotica* became *Ansotica*.¹⁴ The first inscrip-

¹² As far as I know, there is no epigraph dedicated to Priapus or his image in Liburnia. But there is evidence of Priapus in Dalmatia, in the form of a fragmented statue in the Archaeological Museum of Split (Fig. 4).

¹³ Année épigraphique 1938, 31; Suić 1969, 26, Pl. XXI, 1. The inscription is as follows: T(itus) Appvleivs T(iti) l(iberti) l(ibertus) Antigonvs Anzoticae

V(otvm) S(olvit)

¹⁴ This inscription (Année épigraphique 1940, 6) runs as follows:

Veneri Ansotic(ae)

Sacrvm

Baebia C(ai) F(ilia) Maximil

la ex testament(o)

L(uci) Corneli Bassi fecit

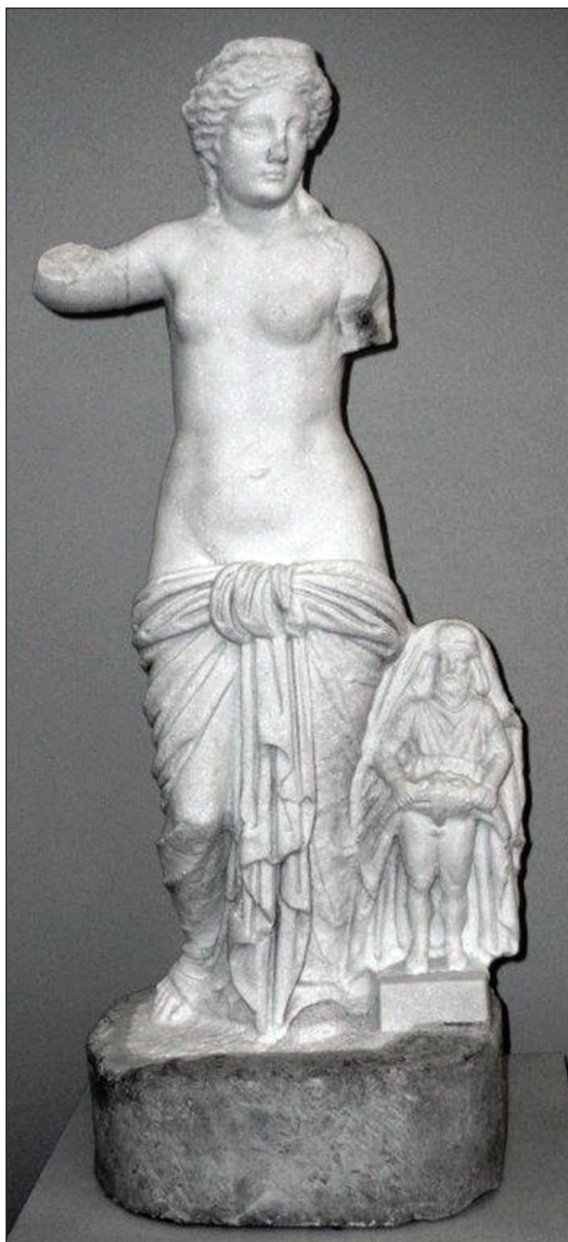


Fig. 3. *Venera Anzotika Archaeological Museum Split (AMS)*

tion shows that *T. Apulleius Antigonus*, a *libertus* of a certain *Titus*, was also a freedman. All the mentioned names bore *cognomina* and belonged to the modest social stratum. One of the liberti had the oriental *cognomen* *Anticonus*. However, it was not unusual that foreign people would adopt local cults, particularly belonging to the creed of their patrons. This first epigraph should be earlier than the second (the first decades of the 1st century AD or the second quarter of the same century). On the other hand, the second in-



Fig. 4. Priapus statue from AMS

scription is dedicated by local highly Romanized people who were already Roman citizens, having their *tria nomina* onomastic form. The statue belonged the second inscription, although both were found on the same site where there should have been a small temple (outside the town).¹⁵ The identification of *Ansotica* and the Roman *Venus* is linked with the Histrian *Iria* from Jasenovik (near Pula), since both divinities syncretized with the same Roman goddess.¹⁶ Obviously, this goddess was similar in character and iconography with the Liburnian *Ansotica*, despite their different names. Priapus, the god of fertility, together with Venus, shows their common agricultural character which is symbolized by the fruits in his robes.

Although the Liburnian pantheon was composed primarily of female characters, it's very likely that these goddesses, except *Anzotica*, were more or less of the same religious character and had not developed into a religious sys-

tem, according to preserved archaeological evidence. They were supreme goddesses, acting like mothers of the *civitas* and the surrounding terrain which were recorded in several inscriptions among the Histrians (*Histria Terra*).¹⁷ Given the close relations between the Histrian and Liburnian religions, it is strange that there were no dedications to the goddess *Terra* (for example *Liburnia terra*). Obviously, the Histrians had a higher sense of national consciousness and identity than the Liburnians, who were developing along more communal lines (Aenona, Asseria, Nedinum etc). Unlike the Liburnians, the Histrians had a kind of local Histrian federation of communities, the center of which was in *Nesactium*, which was crushed by the Romans.¹⁸ Their last king, *Epulo*, committed suicide in 171 BC. Such a federation never existed on the Liburnian territory. This is the consequence of their higher range of ethnic development.¹⁹ An altar from Bigeste, in what is Herzegovina today, is dedicated as an altar of *Terra Hillyrica* (not *Delmatica*), which is more precise in terms of Roman administration.²⁰ It is very significant to note that the inscription on this altar also mentions Jupiter, so it is very likely that *Terra Hillyrica* is rather divinized administrative, and not ethnic, term.

The *Japodes* in the western Illyrian hinterland (on the northern side of the mountain Velebit and the border of Pannonia) were not transparent enough in their original religious essence.²¹ The only Japodian known to us is *Bindus*, the god of water and fountains, who was assimilated with Roman *Neptunus*. The cult centre of this divinity was discovered in the valley of the river Una, near Bihać (Privilica).²² *Bindus*, according to current evidence, was not known in other parts of *Japudia*. This altar was dedicated by *Proculus Parmanicus* (Fig. 5).²³ Another altar is of *Titus*

¹⁷ Cfr. Jurkić 2005, 125, 1. 5; 126, 1. 5. 2 (*Histria Terra*) 126, 1. 5. 3 (*Histria*); 127, 1. 5. 4 (*Istria*); This goddess about cfr. Šašel Kos 1999, 68-69.

¹⁸ Matijašić 2009, 99-113.

¹⁹ About this process Matijašić 2009, 41-47.

²⁰ *Iscriptiones Latinae* 1963, 1915; Šašel Kos 1999, 67.

²¹ About *Japodes* their religion and arts cfr. Raunig 2004; Olujić 2007.

²² There are several inscriptions. About these altars cfr. Raunig 1972; Cambi LIMC VIII, 1, s. v. *Neptunus-Bindus* 500; Katičić, 1995, 157-160; Kukoč 2009, 235-248 figs 359-362.

²³ The inscription (CIL III 14325) runs as follows: *Bindo Neptuno*

¹⁵ Abramić 1940, 174. The building was not excavated although the remains of architecture were found.

¹⁶ Jurkić 2005, 128, 1. 6.

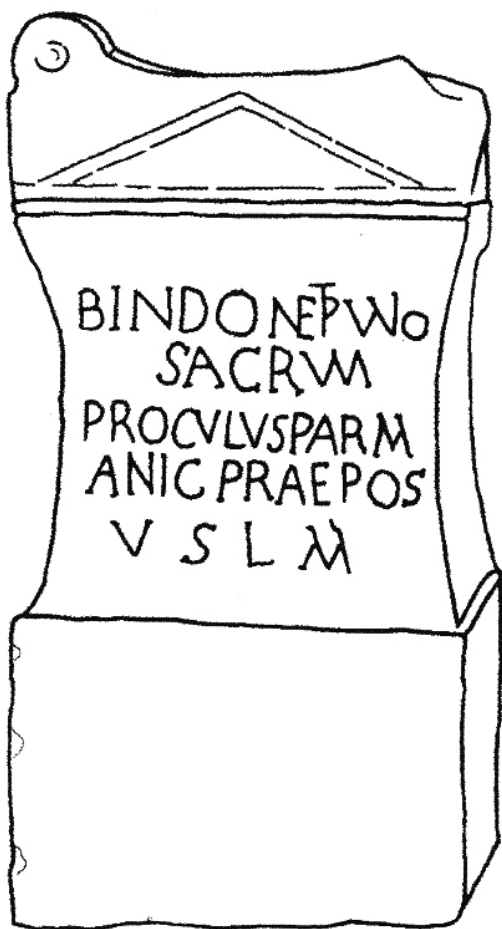


Fig. 5. Altar dedicated to Bindus Neptunus by Proculus Parmanicus

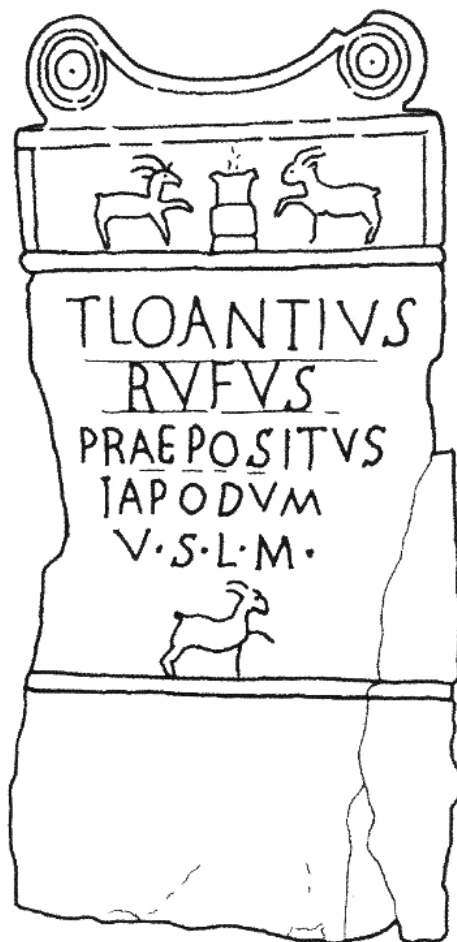


Fig. 6. Altar probably dedicated to Bindus Neptunus by Loantius Rufus

Loantius Rufus praepositus Japodum (Fig. 6). *Votum* is surely dedicated to *Bindus*, although the epigraph does not mention that, since it was discovered on the same site.²⁴ All of the mentioned inscriptions fortunately complete each other, and the three people were *praepositi* of the Japodes (a kind of local chieftain). The first *praepositus* had an anomalous name: *Proculus Parmanicus*. Both of them are *cognomina*, and while *Proculus* is Latin, *Parmanicus* is obviously an epichoric name.

Sacrum

Proculus Parma

nicvs praeps(itus)

v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)

²⁴ This epigraph (CIL III 14328) is as follows: T(itus) Lo-

antius

Rufus

Praepositus

Japodum

V(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)

The other altar was also dedicated by a *praepositus* who had Latin *tria nomina* T(itus) *Loantius Rufus*. Although it was not specified whose *praepositus* the person was, he was undoubtedly Japodian. This might mean that *Bindus* had already become *Neptunus*, but we cannot say for certain. The third altar clearly depicts the iconography of Neptune on one and Triton on other side. Obviously, Neptune's iconography (attributes: fish and a scepter) was also well suited to *Bindus* (Fig. 7).²⁵ On the other hand, the iconography of Triton (mixed creature of fish and man) belongs to Neptune's religious world. The male goats represented on both sides of the altar in the gable, and another below the inscription, are a hint to the very popular practice of sacrificing this animal in the long centuries of the ancient periods.²⁶ This

²⁵ Cfr. the inscription CIL III 14324.

²⁶ Iliad, 21, 132, 23, 146, Oudyssea, 11, 727.

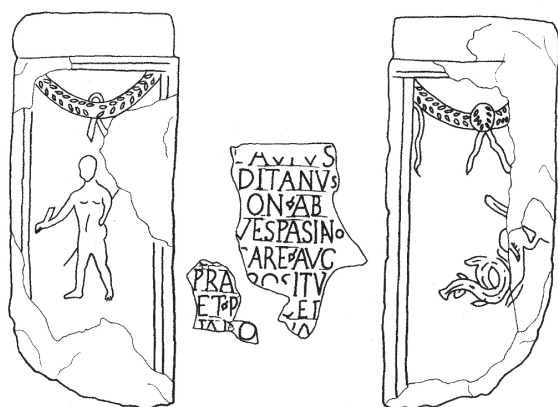


Fig. 7. Altar of Bindus Neptunus

indicates that a more or less complete water pantheon existed with the Japodians. A Roman iconographic influence is evident, but it corresponds to the Japodian notions of the god. The process of the Romanization of the Bindus religion lasted through the 1st century AD.²⁷ A very important question arises: was the main sanctuary of the Japodes located at Privilica? The three dedications of the *praepositi Japodum* or *praepositi* and *principes*, would hint to such a supposition, but it is far cry from proof since the proper role of these two functions is not quite clear. Were they chieftains of a larger Japodian territory or only of the community at Privilica in the vicinity of Bihać? According to parallels among other Illyrian peoples, similar titles belonged to the high functionaries of smaller communities.²⁸ *Bindus* was likely not the only Japodian god, but this water god, like the Roman Neptune, had his own thiasos. The existence of other water sanctuaries is very probable, but unsupported. The sanctuary at Privilica was certainly very important since it was built into a temple.²⁹

On the contrary, the *Delmatae*, the southeastern neighbors of the Liburni and Japodes had quite a different religious system, in which *Silvanus* and *Diana* were the main divinities. The names *Silvanus* and *Diana* prevailed after the end of the process of Romanization (*interpreta-*

tio Romana).³⁰ Unfortunately, their indigenous names are unknown, but many sources speak in favor of their original Dalmatian provenience.

The main god was *Silvanus*,³¹ and his female pair (not wife) was *Diana*.³² The constituent part of this system were the *Nymphae* (*Silvanae*, *Fontanae*, *Salutares*, etc.), which were the bearers of natural forces, abundance, and health. Together they formed part of a more developed religious system of nature (woods, fountains, fauna, growth, agriculture etc). The main problem is whether *Silvanus* is an indigenous Delmatian god or the Italic *Silvanus*.³³ On the other hand, all Croatian scholars are of the opinion that *Silvanus* was an autochthonous god that was syncretized with the Italic *Silvanus*.³⁴ This discussion remains unfinished, but in my opinion, the Roman *Silvanus* had no influence in the religious content or iconographic features of the *Silvanus* known in central Dalmatia. The Romans offered only the name to the god (not the iconography). In my opinion, the case of *Silvanus* is an instructive example of Tacitus' *interpretatio Romana*, and also of its reversible process, *interpretatio indigena*.³⁵

The iconography of *Silvanus*, *Diana* and the *Nymphae* developed in Dalmatia under Greek, not Roman, influence. When the *Delmatae* came to the littoral (the area between *Tragurium* and *Epetium*), Salona soon became the main port of this area for commerce and communication to the inland. The *Delmatae* were the closest neigh-

³⁰ Cfr. note 3. In Croatian archaeological literature this term was used very often. Cfr. Rendić Miočević 1989, 432; Rendić-Miočević 1989, 461-465; Rendić-Miočević / Šegvić 1998, 7-11; Rendić-Miočević 2003, 408-419. These problems also were studied by other authors.

³¹ About the iconographic repertory of *Silvanus*, *Diana* and *Nymphs* cfr. von Schneider 1885, 37-46; Schneider's system was elaborated by Rendić-Miočević 1989, 469-479 (*Silvanus* alone), 479-488 (*Silvanus* and *Nymphs*), 488-496 (*Silvanus* with other gods), 496-501 (*Silvanus* and *Nymphs* and other gods).

³² *Diana* was depicted alone, together with *Silvanus* and the *Nymphs*, and with official Roman gods. *Diana* alone never appeared with *Nymphs*. *Nymphs* are always followers of *Silvanus*.

³³ Some scholars do not share the opinion of the indigenous origin of *Silvanus* in Dalmatia. Cfr. Dorsey 1992, 68-70; Nagy 1994, 763-773.

³⁴ Cfr. note 33.

³⁵ Ferguson 1974, 214-220. The author calls such a process *interpretatio Celtica*. The indigenous peoples gladly accepted the Roman interpretation after a certain period.

²⁷ The inscription CIL III 14324 mentions a donation to Titus Flavius ditanus of the emperor Vespasian (69-79 AD).

²⁸ For example *princeps municipii Riditarum* Cfr. Rendić-Miočević 1989, 872-890.

²⁹ Cfr. CIL III 14327.

bors of the Greek settlements on the islands (Issa and Faros), and on the coast (Tragourion and Epetion). The Greek merchants had trade relations with the hinterland. In such contacts, the iconography of the *Delmatae* main god with mixed features (of a man and male goat) borrowed the image of the Greek Pan, although the latter was not a direct religious pair.³⁶ This identification with Silvanus occurred after the *interpretatio graeca* of the Delmatean god, who logically had his Dalmatian (unknown) name.³⁷ The Greek name Pan was not clear enough for Italic settlers, soldiers and merchants who inhabited these parts of Illyricum a century or so later. Salona, as the main port of the *Delmatae*, was in the close vicinity of the Greek settlements, unlike the other parts of *Illyricum*.³⁸ The syncretistic process developed there over several centuries. From there the iconography expanded into other parts of the *Delmatae* territory, even more deeply inland, where the indigenous religion was also very popular. That is the reason why the Greek *Pan* became the artistic model for the Dalmatian *Silvanus*, even before Roman penetration. The Italic *Slivanus* was completely different, and his image was unknown in Dalmatia in the early period of Roman penetration.³⁹ So, *Silvanus*, together with *Diana* and the *Nymphae Fontanae*, *Silvestres* or *Silvanae*, is depicted on many reliefs from the 1st century AD. The mixing of the peoples caused an acculturation process which was not limited to the local population, since it also became popular among newcomers of various kinds. All of the above mentioned confirms the role of Salona, which is evident from the presence of the largest number of *Silvanus*, *Diana* and *Nymphae* epigraphic and other (sculptural) monuments.

Sometimes *Silvanus* was depicted alone. Such an example is a fine relief from Libovac near Salona (in Archaeological Museum Split).⁴⁰ The image is almost a copy of Pan's image (the human torso and arms, bearded head, male goat-legs and an erect penis). Behind him there is a

large figure of a male goat (Fig. 8). This figure, as well as a *Silvanus* relief from Salona that was built in (the destroyed) house Mikelić, are artistically fine reliefs (Fig. 9).⁴¹ A high-quality limestone relief of *Diana* hunting (in the movement of taking an arrow from the quiver), known for its classical iconography but unfortunately fragmented, is also from Salona (Fig. 10).⁴² These reliefs are on the same level as, or are even much better than, other Roman cult images. They were probably executed in the same Salonitan workshop. The reliefs of *Silvanus* and *Diana* are evidence of their own cult, though they might be images dedicated in the same sanctuary.

However, *Silvanus* and *Diana* were rather often shown together indicating that they belonged to the same religious complex. A fine example of the cult unity is a relief executed in the rock near the Roman colony Aequum, now taken out from the rock, which is kept in the Archaeological Museum of the Franciscan monastery in Sinj (Fig. 11).⁴³ Many reliefs depict *Silvanus* and the *Nymphs*. The iconography of the *Nymphs* shows their character, function and service in the same religious system: one group shows an oak leaf or a small tree (*Nymphae Silvanae* or *Silvestrae*) in their hands (Fig. 12), while the other group holds reeds (Fig. 13) or some other water objects such as shells (*Nymphae Fontanae*, Fig. 14).⁴⁴

Silvanus and the *Nymphs* constituted a religious unity together. *Silvanus* was on the top of this system. The *Nymphs* dance to *Silvanus*' music (syrinx) as is depicted on a very instructive relief from Klis (Fig. 15). The *Nymphs* obviously had their own divine essence (*numen*), but they acted on *Silvanus*' music. *Diana* was also added to this entity, as is shown on some reliefs.⁴⁵ The influence of *Silvanus* expanded as far as the Pannonian territory. *Silvanus* is depicted seated on a rock while playing his syrinx. The *Nymphs* are

⁴¹ Cambi 2013, 26, Fig. 14.

⁴² To my knowledge, it is not published. It is displayed in the southern part of the portico of the Archaeological Museum of Split.

⁴³ Abramić 1952, 323, Pl. VI; Cambi 2005, 186, Fig. 186.

⁴⁴ *Nymphae* with shells cfr. Religions and Cults in Pannonia, 64, br. 33; Maršić 1997, 103-124, Fig. 1-7. *Nymphae* appeared without *Silvanus* at Varaždinske Toplice, unlike on the arae from Topusko (Vidasus – Thana-Silvanus). It is curious since Topusko was renowned for its hot and healing spring, even in ancient period.

⁴⁵ Cambi 2013, 19-20, Fig. 5.

³⁶ About Pan Herbig 1949; Borgeau 1979; N. Marquardt 1995. The Pan iconography stems from Greek influence, while the *interpretatio Romana* renamed Pan into *Silvanus* without changing the religious essence and the iconography.

³⁷ Cfr. Rendić-Miočević, Silvan 1989, 466-468.

³⁸ Cfr. Strabo VIII, 5, 5.

³⁹ About Italic *Silvanus* Simon 1990, 200-205 (s. v. *Silvanus*).

⁴⁰ Bull. Dalm. XXXIX, 1916, 25; Rendić-Miočević Silvan 1989, 471, Pl. LXXIX.

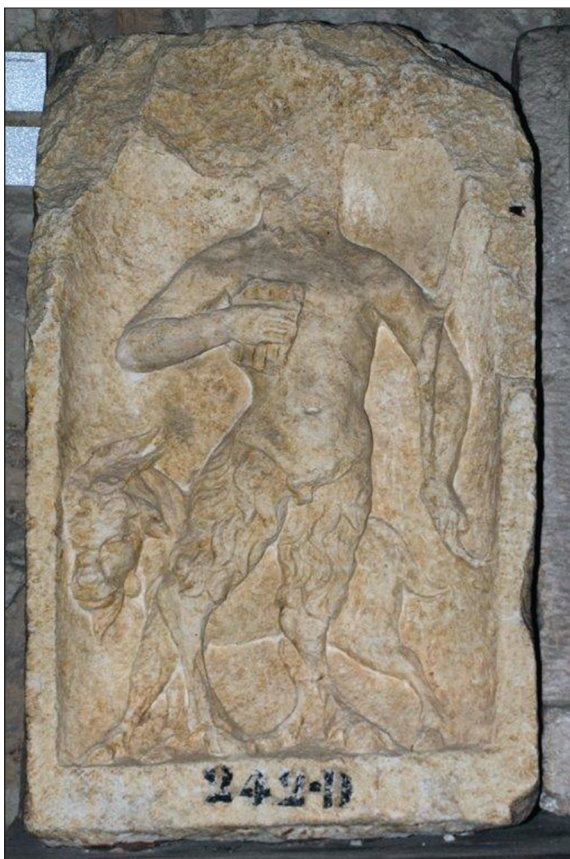


Fig. 8. *The relief of Silvanus from Salona*



Fig. 10. *Diana's relief from Salona*



Fig. 11. *Diana and Silvanus from Aequum*



Fig. 9. *Silvanus relief from Salona (ex Mikelić's house)*



Fig. 12. *Nimfe Silvanae. Knin vicinity*



Fig. 13. *Nymphae Fontanae*, Salona



Fig. 14. *Silvanus and Nymphae with shells*. The vicinity of Knin

dancing (the first and third hold handkerchiefs) and holding each other's hands.⁴⁶ The relief demonstrates that Silvanus belonged to a circle of his divine creatures to whom he gave the rhythm of their movement. The Nymphs were subordinate to Silvanus. They were in charge of the natural cycle of the forests, waters and vegetation. The syrinx in Silvanus' hand indicates that his music, simple and pastoral, moves natural forces.⁴⁷ Two groups of three Nymphs are always depicted separated: three of them as *Fontanae*, and three of them *Silvanae* or *Silvestres*. One very significant characteristic is that the Nymphs are usually depicted together with Silvanus, never alone, unless a group of three women from Opačići near Glamoč (one on the statuary pedestal) are

⁴⁶ Rendić-Miočević 1989, 481-482, LXXXV, 1.

⁴⁷ A very interesting hypothesis was put forward by Selem 2005, 425-431. Selem assumed that the relationship between the indigenous and oriental religions was cosmic music.



Fig. 15. *Silvanus piping und Nymphae dancing*, Klis

not Diana and Nymphs (Fig. 16). They are represented without attributes as adherents of Diana, but the goddess, on the other side, has trees and a two-handled water jug. The other relief shows Silvanus and Diana (Fig. 17). The two reliefs from Opačići (one certainly of Silvanus and Diana) were the products of the same hand, and very probably belonged to the same sanctuary.⁴⁸

There is a very significant inscription that sheds more light on the *Delmatae* religion and its relation to the Roman one. This epigraph mentions the reconstruction (from the foundations) of Jupiter's temple with his *consentio* (harmony) *deorum dearumque*, Silvanus with *Nymphae Fontanae*, and *Silvanus* with *Nymphae Silvestres*.⁴⁹ The inscription was found in the vicinity of Klis, and is now in the Archaeological Museum of Split (Fig. 18).⁵⁰ This inscription is very important since it demonstrates how a local system was included in the Roman's Jupiter religion, namely in the same *consentio deorum dearumque*. This means that Silvanus, along with the Nymphs,

⁴⁸ Rendić-Miočević 1989, 549-550, Pl. LXXXVII, 1, 2; Iamović 1977, 324, no 26, Fig. 26, 336, no 47, Fig. 47.

⁴⁹ The inscription was discovered during excavations of the early Christian church at Klapavica near Klis. Cfr. Bulić 1907, 118; Alföldi 1969, 118, 159; Rendić-Miočević 1989, 480; Šašel Kos 1993, 204, no 2 and 207; Zaninović 2007, 205-206.

⁵⁰ The inscription is as follows:

Im]perio Domini Iovis
Op]timi Maximi ivssit sibi aedem cvm svo Consentio
Deor(um) Dearv[m]que?
S]ilvestri(u)m Nymphis Fontanis cvm Sil[vano Nymphis
Silvestrium cvm Silvano Fe[. . . .
]nia Astice cvm svo pare conivgi et
Favsto VI et Avg(ustalis) a solo restituit



Fig. 16. *Diana and Nymphae or Adorants, Opačići, Bosnia and Herzegovina*



Fig. 17. *Silvanus and Diana, Opačići, Bosnia and Herzegovina*



Fig. 18. *Klis the epigraph mentioning Jupiter' consentio deorum dearumque silvestrium*

was adopted into the official Roman religion. Silvanus and the Nymphs, as a local system, were adopted and became part of Jupiter's religion. Jupiter's temple near Klis is dedicated to Jupiter, along with other Roman gods and goddesses. Each group of Nymphs had their own Silvanus. In this case, one Silvanus was the leader of the *Nymphae Fontanae*, and the other was the leader of the *Nymphae Silvestres*, with both groups as part of the *consentio deorum dearumque silvestrium*. That means that Silvanus had his indigenous pantheon which was included in Jupiter's system by means of (*adoptio*), thus this local thiasos became a part of Roman religion.⁵¹ This was normal procedure for the *interpretatio romana*. An epigraph from Salona mentions only the *Consentio deorum* without any other specification.⁵² It not very probable that there is any other *consentio* except, as mentioned, Jupiter's. In this context, it is necessary to emphasize that the temple was erected by Jupiter's decree.

This form of adoption (*consentio*) into Roman religion is confirmed by a relief depicting *Silvanus*, three Nymphs and *Jupiter* from Karakašica near *Aequum* (now in the Archaeological Museum of the Franciscan monastery in Sinj).⁵³ The group of Nymphs is between Jupiter on the right and Silvanus on the left side (Fig. 19), who were iconographically represented as leaders of Nymphs. However, on the Klis inscription, two Silvani who had their own group of Nymphs

⁵¹ About *adoptio* cfr. Heinzmann 2012, 126-128.

⁵² CIL III 1935. This *consentio* very likely consisted of Jupiter and the two corresponding Silvani groups.

⁵³ Rendić-Miočević 1989, tab. LXXX; Cambi 2005, 46, Sl. 53.



Fig. 19. *Silvanus, Nymphs and Jupiter, Karakašica*

were mentioned. One Silvanus is the leader of the *Nymphae Silvestres* while the other is the head of the *Nymphae Fontanae*. The two Silvani with their groups of Nymphs (the first group consisting of two and the second of three Nymphs) with different attributes (reeds in the hands of the first, and a tree in hands of the second group) appear only on the relief from Carevo Polje near Jajce in Bosnia (Fig. 20).⁵⁴ Both of them are usually portrayed with a syrinx and pastor's staff (*pedum*). Both of them are iconographically identical. The idea of two divine groups probably existed in the imagination of the indigenous people (the two Silvani as brothers who lead their own Nymphs). This rare relief clarifies and verifies the inscription from Klis. So the Klis inscription and the Carevo Polje relief prove that the two Silvani and the two groups of Nymphs formed the essence of the natural cyclic religion of the Delmatae. Together with the Roman gods Mercurius, Hercules and Diana, Silvanus was depicted on the relief from Danilo in the Dalmatian hinterland thus confirming their adoption into the Roman religious system (Fig. 21).⁵⁵

Silvanus had several epithets: *Silvester*, *Domesticus*, *Messor*, *Cohortalis* etc. All of them reveal a different cult character of Silvanus which belonged to his original properties. However, the

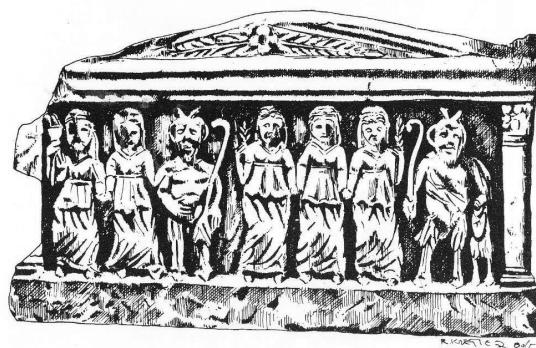


Fig. 20. *Two Silvani and two groups of Nymphae, Carevo polje near Jajce*



Fig. 21. *Diana, Silvanus and Mercury, Danilo Gornje*

most numerous reliefs and epigraphs bear the epithet *Augustus*. Obviously, this last one was the link between the indigenous religion and the emperor, as well as the Roman official religion, and serve as further evidence of the Romanization of the *Silvanus* religion.

A epigraph specimen in honor of an emperor (Trajan) comes from Salona (Fig. 22).⁵⁶ The inscription was a lintel of a temple constructed in honor of Silvanus for the emperor's rescue. It is very significant that the location for the temple was given by the town council. Two private persons built the temple from its foundations and connected it to the water conduit. Obviously the water was necessary for their rituals. Silvanus

⁵⁴ Paškvalin 1964, 151; Rendić-Miočević 1989, 515-516, tab. LXXXVIII.

⁵⁵ Abramić 1928-29, 49-54, tab. IV, 1; Rendić-Miočević 1989, 494, tab. LXXXV, 2; Gunjača 1968-69, (Split 1977), 177-183, Sl. 1, 2; Medini 1983, 20-25, Sl. 1; Lipovac Vrkljan / Miletić 1999-2000, 155-164, Sl. 3. This relief is evidence for the acceptance of Silvanus in the religious society of official Roman gods.

⁵⁶ The inscription (CIL III 8684); Šašel Kos 1994, 205, no 4 runs as follows:

Silvano Avg(usto) Sac(rum) voto suscepto pro salve Imp(eratoris) Caesaris Nervae Traiani optimi Aug(usti) Ger(amici) Dacici N(umero) II Trophimus Ser(vus) (et) Amandianus dispens(ator) a solo fecit et aquam induxit l(ocus) d(atus) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)

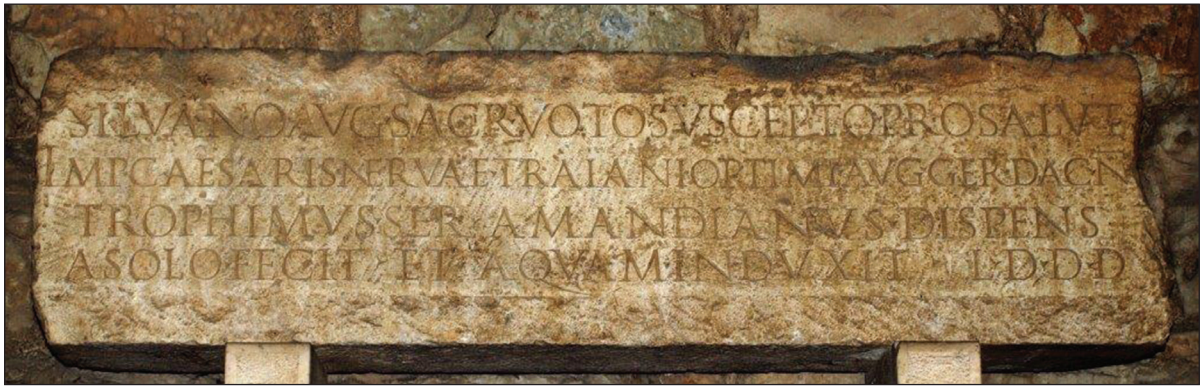


Fig. 22. The lintel of Silvanus' sanctuary Salona



Fig. 23. Silvanus and Nymphae relief from Geremia palace. Now in Avignon



Fig. 24. The Silvanus mask in the coffered ceiling of Diocletian's palace

has the attribute *Augustus* indicating a link to the emperors.⁵⁷

A relief of Silvanus and Nymphs was published by R. Adam.⁵⁸ It was built up in the house Geremia in the vicinity of Diocletian's palace. This relief is kept now in the Calvet Museum in Avignon (Fig. 23).⁵⁹ Silvanus displays the standard iconographic characteristics and *Nymphae Fontanae* are characterized by reeds. The iconography is standard, but the epigraph is extremely important. In the Adam publication the inscription was not visible, but the picture clearly shows the inscription: . . . PRO SALVTE D(omini) N(ostri) GAI POS(uit). Who was *dominus nos-*

ter Gaius? The only possibility is that this modest relief was a pious, almost familiar dedication for the salvation of the emperor: *Gaius Valerius Aurelius Diocletianus* since he was the only emperor to bear the *praenomen* Gaius after the appearance of the formula *dominus noster*, in the 3rd century AD.⁶⁰ This relief is also evidence of the presence of the late cult of Silvanus in Dalmatia. The head of a young Silvanus with ram's horns in the coffered ceiling from Diocletian's palace is also evidence for the significance of Silvanus cult in the epoch of the tetrarchy (Fig. 24).⁶¹ The formula *pro salute* was a form very often used for emperors and high-ranking officers. In this case, it was likely used to express danger or the illness

⁵⁷ This about cfr. Tassaux 1997, 77-84.

⁵⁸ Adam 1764, Pl. LIV. This relief was published later in CIL III 1974. It was given to Museo Nani in Venice. Later the whole collection was sold to Avignon.

⁵⁹ For the photo of the relief many thanks goes to Rendić-Miočević, ex director of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb. The photo was shot by the curator of the same Museum I. Radman Livaja in Avignon.

⁶⁰ Demandt 2007 (Neue Auflage), 260. For the first time the title "d. n." appeared in Hadrian's period, but normally after Alexander Severus.

⁶¹ Cambi 2013, 26, Fig. 15.

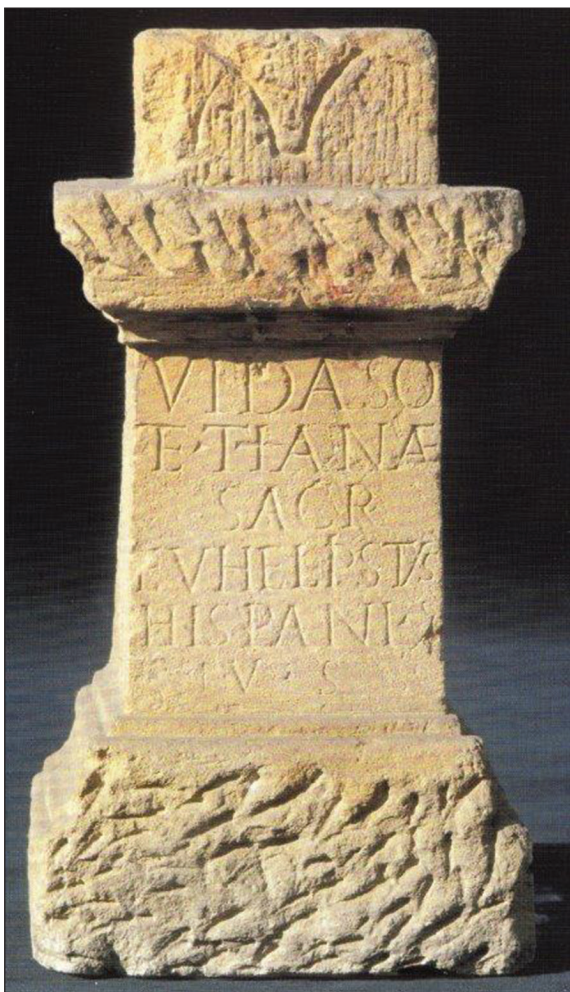


Fig. 25. Altar dedicated to Vidasus and Thana, Topusko

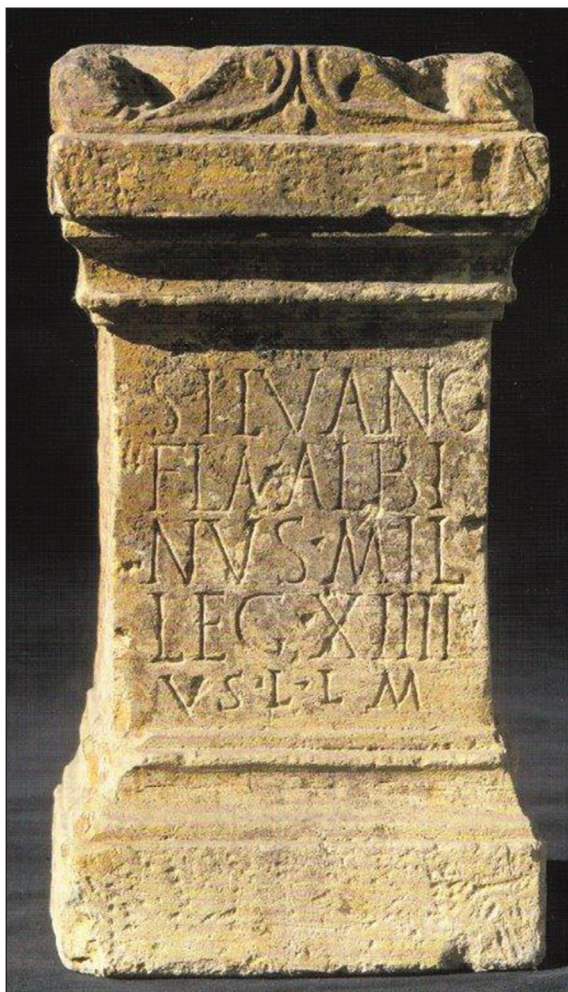


Fig. 26. Altar dedicated to Silvanus, Topusko

of the emperor.⁶² According to existing evidence, the cult of Silvanus disappeared after the early 4th century.

So these reliefs and epithets reflect the process of how the Dalmatean pantheon was incorporated into the Roman religious system. This developed religious system of the Delmatae was not easily conveyed into official religion, so it was adopted (*adoptio*) and included within *consentio* of *dei deaeque silvestres*. This is the method of unification for the whole system, and not only a single god. Thus we can say that the Dalmatean and Roman religions became unified. The Ro-

manization process was finished during the middle principate period.

There is series of reliefs of Silvanus and Nymphs, of which the latter aren't attributed. Thus it is impossible to decipher which kind of Nymphs they belonged to, but they could represent both natural cycles. The iconographic characteristics and epigraphic evidence of Silvanus and the Nymphs, points to a developed indigenous system of religion, which, according to statistics, must have its origin in central Dalmatia. There are more than a hundred epigraphs and reliefs in the Delmatae area.⁶³ This statistic serves as substantial evidence that the Silvanus,

⁶² Cfr. Fischwick 1991, 393, 423, 424, 425, 428, 431. Compare also Turcan 1978, 1056-1059 and Jinyu Lin 2009, 258, 259. It is true that the salvation of all citizens might be guaranteed only by the safe government of a safe emperor.

⁶³ Matijašić / Tassaux 2000, 81-117, Fig. on p. 78. The survey on pages 105-112 (altogether 89 examples). But there are at least 15 more epigraphs or reliefs which were not registered, or are new finds.



Fig. 27. Silver coin of Ballaios

Nymphae and Diana religions might have begun in this region.

Is it possible to discover the Delmatean name of Silvanus? A. Mayer tried to make a linguistic link between several altars dedicated to Silvanus and Diana found at Topusko (*Ad Fines* or *Quadratum*) on the border of Roman Dalmatia and Pannonia.⁶⁴ The altars were dedicated to the gods *Vidassus* and *Thana* (Fig. 25), as well as to *Silvanus* (Fig. 26). Since salutary hot springs were already known at Topusko in the Roman period, these gods were very likely linked to hot water springs. There are, however, differing opinions as far as the religious character of *Vidassus* and *Thana* is concerned.⁶⁵ Whether these are indigenous names for Silvanus or Diana is not quite certain, but it is very enticing to connect them to Silvanus, since a similar altar was dedicated to this god.⁶⁶ The latter inscription belongs to the final stage of Romanization. *Vidasus* and *Thana* might be connected with Silvanus and Diana, but only on the restricted area of Topusko. An inscription from Lika shows that Silvanus' religion was known on the territory of the *Japodes*.⁶⁷ The influence of Silvanus' religion has also been observed in other parts of Illyricum. All of them, in my opinion, were a result of religious influence



Fig. 28. Diana Lucifera with torches. Archaeological Museum of Franciscan Monastery at Sinj

⁶⁴ The name is preserved on 4 altars together with Thana (CIL III 3941, 10819=14354, 23), cfr also Hoffiler / Sarja 1938, no 516, 517, 518; Mayer 1943, 187-191; Mayer 1957, 359-360, s. v. Vidasus.

⁶⁵ Vidasus and Thana as the healer-god pair of the hot springs, which are abundant in Topusko cfr. Kuntić 2005, 329-351. Silvanus is not known as healer but he appears as savior, especially when endangered emperors are in question. *Nymphae Fontanae* with shells are the *numina* of such sulphur and hot springs.

⁶⁶ Sanader 2001, 113-118, Fig. on p. 115.

⁶⁷ Medini 1975, 87-88.

from the central part of the Roman province of Dalmatia.⁶⁸

Were there other local gods or divine creatures in central Dalmatia except Silvanus, Diana and the Nymphs? There is only slight evidence for such divinities, but there are more local gods

⁶⁸ About Silvanus in Dardania, Upper Moesia cfr. Mirdita 2007, 45-46, 170.

such as: *Tadenus* (syncretised with *Apollo*),⁶⁹ *Talanso*,⁷⁰ *Tato*⁷¹ (Illyrian *deus patrius*), and *Armatas*⁷² (probably the *translatio* of the Delmatean war god of an unknown name, a kind of Roman Mars⁷³). An altar, dedicated to *Talanso*, an unknown local god, was discovered in a village on Livanjsko polje near Livno, which belonged to the original heart of the Delmatean territory. Curiously, the altar was dedicated by Delmatean sailors (*classiciani*), probably after their discharge from military service. So such a divinity might be linked with water or even the sea.

Diana, together with *Silvanus* and the Nymphs, was rarely recorded in inscriptions and reliefs to the south of *Narona*, even though this very important ancient town was close to Delmatean territory. As far as I know, only one such inscription was found around *Narona*,⁷⁴ so we can safely conclude that this area did not have a close religious relationship with the Delmatean territory.

A female goddess, very similar to the Greek *Artemis* or Roman *Diana*, without Nymphs, evidently prevailed in southern Dalmatia, either on the littoral or in the hinterland. This goddess also didn't reveal a consistent and complex religious system. The *Artemis* cult in southern Dalmatia is confirmed by her image on the obverse of the coins of Illyrian king Ballaios circa 167 BC–135 BC, i. e. before stronger Roman penetration (Fig. 26). The silver and bronze coins were found in large quantities in southern and central Dalmatia.⁷⁵ The silver specimens were rare, but mostly very fine, especially the portrait of the king.⁷⁶ The king wanted to depict the main goddess of his territory on the reverses on all coin emissions. This goddess, dressed in a short tunic like on Ballaios' coins, is shown walking with torches.

⁶⁹ CIL III 13868; Marić 1933, 21–22.

⁷⁰ Mayer 1957, 328. This name is preserved on an altar from Livno. It was found before the World War II. It was lost long ago in the Archaeological Museum of Split, but it appeared during a new revision of stone material (thanks to the curator Mario Radalj). Mayer thought that *Talanso* is the name of a genius.

⁷¹ Suić 1996, 129–137.

⁷² Marić 1933, 28. Two altars with this god's name were found in the vicinity of Deleminium (Županjac).

⁷³ About *translatio* cfr. Heinzmann 2012, 120–126.

⁷⁴ CIL III 1773.

⁷⁵ Brunšmid 1898, 88–98, Pl. VI–VII, Marović 1988, 81–145, Pl. 81–145, Pl. XIV–XXII.

⁷⁶ Cambi 2000, 24–26, Pl. 5, figs 12–15.

Diana's iconography with torches is also attested to in the central Dalmatia (*Aequum*), only several centuries later, since such a statue is preserved in the Archaeological Museum of the Franciscan Monastery Museum at Sinj (Fig. 27).⁷⁷ This statue was probably imported from Asia Minor to Dalmatia in the 3rd century AD. But such iconography was familiar to the local people, and is likely the reason for the commission of such kind of a statue.

Significantly, a very important temple, although in the Roman period, was dedicated to *Diana* in *Doclea* (the centre of Illyrian Docleatae), which previously belonged to the kingdom of Ballaios.⁷⁸ The Illyrian god *Medaurus* or *Medaurus* was revered in the town of *Rhisinium* (Risan in the Kotor Bay).⁷⁹ This cult is mentioned in several locations where Illyrian soldiers or sailors were stationed. *Medaurus* iconography is quite different from that of other gods known in Dalmatia. He was depicted as a horseman and warrior. According to epigraphs or historical sources, the god was a healer. His iconography seems to be far removed from such characterization. However, *Medaurus* might be the rescue god who saves lives from diseases, and not only those of soldiers but other people as well. In this sense *Medaurus* is linked with *Silvanus*, but their depictions were quite different.

There are different points of opinions concerning the Illyrian pantheon. Many scholars proposed that the Illyrians did not a developed enough cosmology that could offer a base for their religious practices, unlike the Celts, Thracians or Schytians.⁸⁰ In my opinion, this is not quite correct. This assertion is certainly wrong when the Delmatae are in question. These central Dalmatian people had an obviously developed system of religion, which was soon melded with the official Roman religion, as I tried to show here. Jupiter's *consentio deorum dearumque silvestrium* was a substantive liturgical part of Jupiter's religion, and was worshipped not only by local peoples

⁷⁷ Cambi 2005, 156–157, Fig. 231.

⁷⁸ Sticotti / Jelić / Iveković 1913, 80–98. Pl. 47 (the bust of *Diana* in the gable).

⁷⁹ Marić 1913, 23–26; Rendić-Miočević 1989, 523–530; Cambi 1997, 819.

⁸⁰ Cfr. Wilkes 1996, (2nd ed.), 244–247; Cfr. also Ferri 2012, 135–137. Seems that Zequo 1995 (the citation according to N. Ferri) speaks on the Illyrian pantheon.

but also by colonists and other newcomers from other parts of the Roman Empire.

Rezime

Romanizacija zapadnog Ilirika. Religijski aspekt

Nema jedinstvenog sustava religija na ilirskim područjima. Većina narodnosno i povijesno afirmiranih etnija imaju svoja vlastita međusobno znatno različita božanstva, a neki i razvijenije sustave. Tipičan primjer su Liburni i Delmati. Liburni su imali različita lokalna božanstva u najvažnijim naseljima (Nedinum, Corinum Asseria, Aenona itd.). Zajednička im je karakteristika da su to samo ženska božanstva koja se po vjerskom i ikonografskom sadržaju međusobno razlikuju. Po tome su Liburni srodni Histrima. Naprotiv, južni susjedni narod – Delmati imaju drugačiji, ali najrazvijeniji religijski sustav u kojemu su Silvan i Dijana glavna božanstva i koji je nastao na središnjem dalmatinskom prostoru u predrimskom razdoblju. Sastavni dijelovi te religije su Nimfe (Fontanae odnosno Silvestrae, tj. vodene, odnosno šumske), koje su pomoćnice i donositeljice različitih prirodnih pogodnosti i bogatstava. Ikonografija se Silvana razvila u Saloni i otud proširila na druge dijelove Dalmacije. U formiranju ikonografije ulogu je odigrao lik grčkog Pana koji je Silvanu samo sličan, ali ne i identičan. Italški Silvan, kako u religijskom sustavu, tako i ikonografskom obliku, nema nikakve veze s religijom u Dalmaciji. Posebno je važan natpis iz Klapavice blizu Klisa koji u rimski religijski sustav (Jupiter) uvodi dva Silvana s dvije različite skupine Nimfa. Dva Silvana s dvije skupine Nimfa javljaju se na reljefu iz Careva polja kod Jajca u Bosni i Hercegovini, što je potvrda klapavičkog natpisa. Nimfe nisu Dijanine nego Silvanove pomoćnice koje djeluju plešući na Silvanovu glazbu (siringa). One također imaju svoju božansku bit (numen). Pojavu Silvanove religije izvan središnjeg dalmatinskog dijela Ilirika treba tumačiti kao utjecaj toga područja. U unutrašnjosti rimske Dalmacije neki su narodi bili pod delmatskim utjecajem, a neki su razvili svoja lokalna božanstva, ali ne i sustave. U južnoj Dalmaciji, kako primorskoj, tako i unutrašnjoj, nema religijskog sustava, a predominira žensko božanstvo (Diana), bez pratnje Nimfa.

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