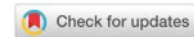


A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF POPULATION FROM THE EAST (HELLENIC-SPEAKING COUNTRIES) IN THE MUNICIPIUM ULPIANA IN THE SOUTH OF THE PROVINCE OF UPPER MOESIA

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Abstract: The paper presents the data regarding the inhabitants from the east (Hellenic speaking countries) in the municipium Ulpiana in the south of the province of Upper Moesia (Kosovo and Metohija). The occupation of Dardania and the establishment of the Roman province of Upper Moesia led not only to territorial but also to ethnic changes in this area, about which we are insufficiently informed. By conquering the territory of Dardania and establishing their authority over it, the Romans left a certain autonomy to its inhabitants, followed by urbanization and Romanization from the 1st to the 4th century. After occupying Dardania, there was a period of introduction of the local population into the Roman state-political order, as well as the organized settlement of colonists of oriental origin (Hellenic-speaking countries). The Roman administration introduced the local population in Moesia with a new period which brought new achievements to the conquered areas. Urbanization was carried out gradually, through the settlement of Roman citizens, the oriental population (Hellenic-speaking countries), and the served legionnaires, in colonies, followed by the promotion of native settlements to the rank of cities under Roman law, municipium. This process led to the integration of a significant part of the native population from the south of Upper Moesia (Kosovo and Metohija). A significant number of foreigners, settlers from the east (Hellenic-speaking countries) lived and worked in the south of Upper Moesia, primarily in urban areas. It should be noted that the majority of epigraphic monuments from the area of Kosovo and Metohija belong to Roman citizens who immigrated from the Romanized areas of the Empire. They mainly originate from the two largest city centers, Ulpiana near Gračanica and the Roman settlement near Sočanica, in the Ibar valley. Diverse archeological finds and epigraphic monuments shed some light on these processes in the municipium of Ulpiana.

Keywords: Settlers from the east, Dardania, municipium Ulpiana, Upper Moesia, Kosovo and Metohija.

Field: Social sciences

1. INTRODUCTION

With the occupation of Dardania in 28 BC, the Roman state devoted itself more intensively to consolidating and strengthening its authority in this area and its inclusion in the political and economic currents of the Empire (Zippel, 1877, pgs. 157–162; Filow, 1906, pg. 89; Alföldy, 1964, pg. 115; Webster, 1969, pg. 75; Паназоглу, 1988, pg. 143, 163–164; Ferri, 2001, pg. 55; Mirdita, 2015, pg. 145; Hajdari / Goddard / Kabashi, 2021, pg. 632–662). Until today, the date of the establishment of Moesia could not have been precisely determined. We believe that the administrative annexation of Dardania to the Roman state took its final form with the establishment of the province of Moesia in AD 12 at the earliest, and AD 15 at the latest, because narrative sources already call Moesia a province at that point (Tac. Ann. I 80; VI 39. See: Ferjančić, 2018, pg. 317; Самарџић, 2020, pg. 12–13).

In the territory of modern Kosovo and Metohija during the Roman period, as shown by the epigraphic monuments, in addition to peregrini from the ranks of the local population, there were also Roman citizens (cives Romani), either settlers or locals who acquired Roman civil rights under the emperors of the 2nd century and the first half of the 3rd century. A significant number of foreigners, settlers from the east (Hellenic-speaking countries) lived and worked in the south of Upper Moesia (Kosovo and Metohija), primarily in urban areas. It should be noted that the majority of epigraphic monuments from the area of Kosovo and Metohija belong to Roman citizens who immigrated from the Romanized areas of the Empire. They mainly originate from the two largest city centers, Ulpiana near Gračanica and the Roman settlement near Sočanica, in the Ibar valley (Papazoglu, 1969, pgs. 168–172; Čerškov, 1969, pgs. 61–63; Фидановски, 1998, pgs. 300–303; Hajdari / Goddard / Kabashi, 2021, pg. 632–662; Goddard, / Dabas, / Hajdari, / Berisha, / Mukai, / Bernollin, / Jedrusiak, / Laenger, 2022, pgs. 153–162).

In the historical literature, the problem of the localization of Ulpiana has attracted considerable attention. Cartographic sources do not mention it, although it was located at an important crossroads. Most researchers today believe that its name is hidden, in a corrupted form, in the name of the road station

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Vicianum, presented by Tabula Peutingeriana or Peutinger Table (Tab. Peut. 557. Уп. Вулић, 1938, pg. 10; Поповић / Чершков, 1956, pgs. 324–327; Чершков, 1957, pg. 69; Паровић-Пешикан, 1982, pgs. 57–74; Фидановски, 1998, pgs. 258–349; Петровић, 2007, pgs. 94–95; Самарџић, 2021, pg. 127–137; Самарџић, 2021, pg. 211–223; Hajdari / Goddard / Kabashi, 2021, pg. 632–662; Самарџић, 2022, pg. 325–332; Goddard, / Dabas, / Hajdari, / Berisha, / Mukai, / Bernollin, / Jedrusiak, / Laenger, 2022, pgs. 153–16 2; Самарџић, 2023, pg. 185–207). The remains of Ulpiana were found about 1.5 km west of the Gračanica monastery and 7.5 km southeast of Priština, near Ugljar and Čaglavica. The settlement is located on a plain, which is bounded in the north by the Gračanka small river, and in the south by the slopes of Drenovac. Its remains – fortification walls (400 x 400 m) and other structures – were first noticed, visited, sketched, and described by Đ. Bošković. The remains of the ancient walls at the site of Gradine or Stare gradine are twice the size of the fortifications. In addition, in several places, Bošković observed walls at the height of the vaults, and in the fields a large number of bricks of the Roman format (0.31 x 0.41 x 0.4 m), as well as several fragments of architectural plastic decorated with relief ornaments (part of a wreath, a large number of decorative marble slabs 1.8 cm thick, a large capital, two stair bases, one stela) (Бошкович, 1928, pgs. 269–272). A significant number of Roman spolia from the ancient Ulpiana in the foundations and walls of the Gračanica monastery was also mentioned by Vulić (Вулић, 1931, pgs. 192–193, nos. 515–518) and Parović Pešikan. A Roman tombstone with a badly damaged inscription was built into the plinth on the southern side: NE[- - -] / AD[- - -] / ME[- - -] / vix(it) [an(nis) ? - - -] / PA[- - -] / PE[- - -]. (Паровић-Пешикан, 1982, pg. 57. Уп. Бошкович, 1926/1927, pgs. 269–272). Parović Pešikan found the remains of Roman tombstones in the altar and a part of a marble pillar (length 0.64 m and diameter 0.25 m) in the narthex. In the facade wall, a large marble block decorated with cyma (1.67 x 0.58 x 0.27 m) was observed, while she noted a stone sarcophagus in the gate of the Gračanica monastery, in front of the church (2.17 x 0.68 x 0.86 m) (Паровић-Пешикан, 1982, pgs. 60–61).

2. ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM OF EPIGRAPHIC MATERIALS

As previously stated, a significant number of foreigners, settlers from the east (Hellenic-speaking region) lived and worked in the area of municipium Ulpiana, in the south of Upper Moesia (Kosovo and Метохија), as evidenced by epigraphic monuments (Душанић, 1971, pgs. 254; Душанић, 1975, pg. 136; Паровић-Пешикан, 1982, pgs. 60–61). Priests of the Syrian cult of Jupiter Dolichenus are mentioned on the damaged votive altar (0.70 x 1.50 x 0.20 m) found in the vicinity of Gračanica, not far from Ulpiana. The text reads: I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) / pro salute d[[d(ominorum) nn(ostrorum)]] / Imp(eratoris) Aug(usti) / Victor Demetri et De/metrius Ambibi sace[r]/dotes eiusdem dei s(olverunt) v(otum) [- - -] / [- - -] (ILJug 1416. Уп. Вулић, 1931, pg. 192 no. 510; Марић, 2003, pg. 110, 154; Čerškov, 1969, pg. 67; Mirdita, 2007, pg. 71). Erasing a part of the imperial title in the second line (damnatio memoriae) indicates the rule of the Severus dynasty, primarily Caracalla, when the name of his brother Geta was erased from the monument (Hörig/ Schwertheimer, 1987, pg. 86 no. 115; Mirdita, 1981, pg. 248, no. 219 (18)). The name Demetrius appears for both priests (LGPN vol. I, IA). It appears in inscriptions throughout the Empire (Italy, Spain, Gallia Belgica, Gallia Narbonensis, Dalmatia, Pannonia, Noricum, Dacia, Britain, Gallia Lugdunensis, Upper Moesia, Lower Moesia, Rhaetia). In the case of the first dedicator, Victor, it is his father's name, while in the case of the second dedicator, it is his name. It indicates that the two priests could be from one of the Hellenic-speaking provinces of the Roman Empire. Neither of the two dedicants has a nomen gentile, which testifies that they were Roman citizens (Matijašić, 2002, pg. 59). The name of the father of the second dedicant is particularly interesting. Namely, Ambibius (OPEL I 91) is quite rare and appears on a small number of inscriptions found throughout the Roman Empire (AE 1977, 0125; AE 1991, 1376; IMS VI 85).

Settlers from the east are witnessed on one altar from the Church of St. Nicholas near Prizren. The text reads: I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Melano / Martinus [Se]ptimius / [Cae]sonius / [Gall]icanus / [exvoto(?)] pos(uerunt) (ILJug 531a=AE 1972, 501). Based on the inscriptions, we see that Jupiter appears in Kosovo and Метохија with the epithet Melanus. Mirdita dated the inscription to the second half of the 2nd century or the first half of the 3rd century (Mirdita, 1981, pg. 262 no. 303 (8)), while Grbić stated that Jupiter Melanus could be equal to Zeus who bears the epithet Melenus, attested on Trajan's coin from the Phrygian city of Dorylaeum (Asia Minor), and that the settlers, who came to trade or make crafts as they did in their homeland, brought with themselves the reverence of this deity to Moesia (Grbić, 2015, pg. 129–130). This coincides with Dušanić's assumption that the dedicators of this monument were settlers, the Bithynians, from Asia Minor, who dedicated the altar to Zeus of Mela, the patron of this place in Bithynia, whose epithet Melanus is a Bithynian dorism for Melenus, which appears on Trajan's coins of the Phrygian city Dorylaeum. This author explained that the presence of these four dedicants in these

non mining regions is the result of the spread of Bithynian cults from the area in Dardania where their presence was related to the production of mines, or they passed through these regions and left behind this dedication (Душанић, 1971, pgs. 256–257). According to the names of the dedicants, we cannot conclude that they came from the Hellenic-speaking regions, but since the absence of nomina gentilia is evident, we can assume that they were peregrines, slaves, or freedmen who lived and worked in ore-bearing areas (Душанић, 1971, pg. 257) or were Romanized (Grbić, 2015, pg. 130).

In the same way, settlers from the east were mentioned on a votive altar that was found in Laplje Selo. The reconstructed text reads: I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Melcid / Ael(ius) Octa/vianus ve(teranus) cum / suis v(otum) p(osuit) (Mirdita, 1981, pg. 251 no. 236 (35); Mirdita, 2007, pg. 39). Mirdita noted that Jupiter appears with the epithet Melcid in the inscription. Based on Jupiter's epithet, he assumed that he was an immigrant from Asia Minor, and based on the imperial nomen gentilicum of the dedicant (he received civil rights from Caracalla in AD 212) and the palaeographic characteristics of the inscription, he roughly dated the monument to the 3rd century (Mirdita, 1980, pg. 187; Ferjančić, 2002, pg. 291). Parović Pešikan and Peja read the inscription as follows: I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Mel(ano) Cid(iesso) / Ael(ius) Octa/vianus / v(ir) e(gregius) cum / suis v(otum) p(osuit) (Parović-Pešikan, pg. 1982, 70; Peja, 1984, pg. 60). Parović Pešikan read the abbreviation Mel() as Mel(ano), referring to the above-mentioned monument from Prizren, while he did not provide a solution for the second epithet, unlike Peja who read this abbreviation as Cid(iesso) (after the name of a small place in the western part of Phrygia – Kidyessos). Parović Pešikan and Peja believe that these epithets of Jupiter are related to the cities in Asia Minor, so they believe that these settlers were from Asia Minor in Dardania, whose presence is most likely related to mining production (Parović-Pešikan, 1982, pgs. 70–71; Peja, 1984, pgs. 60–61).

This origin of the deities to whom the previously mentioned inscriptions were devoted leads us to look for the source of some other cults recorded on the Dardanian monuments of the Roman period in Asia Minor (Душанић, 1971, pgs. 257–258). It is assumed that the cult of Zeus Aezanensis/Aezaniticu should also be connected to the northern regions of Asia Minor, attested on a votive altar from Ulpiana that was found in 1958 on the so-called western necropolis. The text reads: Ἀπολλώνιος Ὑμενέλου Ὑάνεστισε Ὑτόν βύσμιον θεῶ Διὶ Ὑέζζαιφ (ILJug 524. Up. Душанић, 1971, pg. 258 image 3; Mirdita, 1981, pg. 247 no. 209 (8)). Dušanić dated the inscription to the 1st or the 2nd century. His attention was particularly drawn to Zeus's attribute Ἑζζαῖος, for which there is no analogy. In his opinion, it could be connected with the famous Zeus's sanctuary of the city of A(i)zanoi, on the border of Phrygia and Bithynia (Душанић, 1971, pgs. 258–259). Dušanić assumed that the dedicant of the monument, Apollonius, was an immigrant or a descendant of immigrants from Phrygia, who maintained a connection with his birthplace by revering this deity. It is also assumed that he came to Dardania for mining (Душанић, 1971, pgs. 258–259).

A tombstone (1.65 x 0.76 x 0.30 m) made of white marble was found in Peća. The text reads: D(is) M(anibus) / Ulp(io) Attico / et Ulp(iae) lanu/ariae et Ulp(io) / Thalaso / Pasades uxor / marito et filiae / et nepoti bene / meritis posuit (ILJug 64. Up. Evans, 1885, pg. 68 fig. 27; Vulić, 1931, pg. 53 no. 117; Papazoglu, 1964, pg. 61 no. 44a; Papazoglu, 1969, pg. 179 no. 52a). The inscription can be dated to the 2nd century (Mirdita, 1981, pg. 259 no. 283 (24)). Papazoglu stated that there are no analogies for Pasades and it is probably a local name (Papazoglu, 1969, pg. 179 no. 54). Loma assumed that the name Pasades is an abbreviated form, without the case suffix, which is common in Latin epigraphy when the name is accompanied by a congruent word written as a whole, uxor in this case. She believes that it is an ethnonym derived from one of the most common Latin suffixes -ensis. The name would read Pasadensis (Pasadian woman), after a city in Caria in Asia Minor, attested as Pasada, Pasanda, Passanda, while the ethnonym would read Pasandeuus. Loma stated that names of geographical origin often appear in the nomenclature of slaves and freedmen, which also applies to the name Thalasa(s)us in this inscription (Kajanto, 1965, pgs. 47, 51; Loma, 2010, pgs. 28–29). It is assumed that this inscription refers to Trajan's colonists, i.e., settlers from Asia Minor to western Dardania (Душанић, 1971, pgs. 258, 261; Loma, 2010, pgs. 28–29).

The eastern population remained faithful to the gods of their homeland. The Orientals who were settled in Upper Moesia did not renounce their identity, also confirmed in religion. Those in Kosovo and Metohija also accepted Roman official gods but assimilated with oriental deities. The cult of Mithras, the Iranian god of the sun, joined the oriental cults in Dardania. In modern historiography, it is believed that the cult of the god Mithras came to the Roman provinces of the central Balkans via the Danube limes and Aquileia (Zotović, 1966, pg. 6; Zotović, 1968, pgs. 69–70; Zotović, 1971, pg. 83; Zotović, 1973, pg. 133; Imamović, 1977, pgs. 277–283; Gavrilović-Vitas, 2017, pgs. 193–194; Gavrilović-Vitas, 2018, pgs. 185–188). The cult of Mithras was present in the 2nd and 3rd centuries in Dardania (Mirdita, 2007, pgs. 75–79; Самарџић, 2020, 215–217). This cult is attested in the epigraphy within the customs stations in Dardania (Petrović, 1975, pg. 130 no. 9, 10; pg. 132 no. 15) where the dedicant was a slave (of oriental origin)

(Zotović, 1966, pg. 30; Zotović, 1973, pg. 109; Mirdita, 2007, pg. 80). He was contrascriptor Apollonidus who was relocated from Lamud near Kumanovo to Visianum near the town of Čaglavica not far from Gračanica. His monument, dedicated to Mithras, is dated to AD 211 (Petrović, 1975, pg. 130 no. 9, 10; 132 no. 15 = Mirdita, 1981, pg. 241 no. 171).

3. CONCLUSION

Epigraphic monuments from the area of the municipium of Ulpiana, mentioning persons of Greek or oriental origin (Hellenic-speaking countries), are dated to the reigns of Antoninus (AD 98–192) and Severus (AD 193–235). It is assumed that these were freedmen and slaves who were relocated from Asia Minor by means of imperial decrees from large imperial estates and overpopulated cities to mining areas and settlements in the south of Upper Moesia (Ulpiana). In Kosovo and Metohija, the peregrini were mentioned on the votive altar from Ulpiana, dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus by his priests Victor, son of Demetrius, and Demetrius, son of Ambibus. The veneration of this cult is connected to the presence of foreigners who came to economically developed areas such as the area of Kosovo and Metohija. The settlement of foreigners to work in mines and the presence of Bithynians as excellent workers in quarries and mines was corroborated throughout Kosovo and Metohija. These claims are supported by the epigraphic evidence found during the excavation of the Church of St. Nicholas near Prizren in 1962, mentioning Iuppiter Melanus, to whom this altar is dedicated. Jupiter could be the same as Zeus who has the epithet Melenus, attested on Trajan's coin of the Phrygian city of Dorylaeum (Asia Minor). The presence of inhabitants from Asia Minor in Dardania is most likely related to mining production. It is assumed that one peregrine is corroborated on the votive altar from Ulpiana, discovered in 1958 on the so called western necropolis. It is believed to be a Phrygian cult, and that the dedicant Apollonius was an immigrant from Phrygia. In Ulpiana, in 1959, at the site of the western necropolis, a votive altar was discovered on which Jupiter's epithet was recorded as Melcid. His dedicant, Aelius Octavius, could be a descendant of settlers from Asia Minor. One peregrine was also confirmed on the altar that was found in Prizren. The altar is dedicated to Asclepius, Telesphorus, Hygia, the genius of Dolichenus, and the genius of the cohort. The dedicant Surus, son of Heraclitus, could be from Syria. This is primarily indicated by the dedication to the Genius of Dolichen, who was named paternus deus. The epithet paternus indicates that it is a deity of the homeland.

It is assumed that the settlers of Greek or Oriental origin (Hellenic-speaking countries) in the areas of Kosovo and Metohija were part of the population – freedmen and slaves – who were relocated by imperial decrees from Asia Minor, large imperial estates, and overpopulated cities to areas rich in ore and settlements in the Balkan provinces. It is believed that this organized migration policy aimed to contribute to intense mineral exploitation and the improvement of the economy in those areas.

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