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SIGLE ȘI ABREVIERI / SIGLE E ABBREVIAZIONI*

<i>ActaMN</i>	<i>Acta Musei Napocensis</i> , Cluj-Napoca.
<i>BHAC</i>	<i>Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium</i> , Bonn.
<i>BHL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i> , Bruxelles.
<i>EDR</i>	<i>Epigraphic Database Rome</i> .
<i>EDCS</i>	Epigraphische Datenbank Claus-Slaby, Eichstätt-Ingolstadt.
<i>EN</i>	<i>Ephemeris Napocensis</i> , Cluj-Napoca.
<i>FHDR</i> , II	<i>Fontes ad historiam Dacoromaniae pertinentes</i> , II, <i>De la anul 300 până la anul 1000</i> , București, 1970.
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i> .
<i>Occidente/Oriente</i>	<i>Occidente/Oriente. Rivista internazionale di studi tardoantichi</i> , Pisa-Roma.
<i>PIR</i>	<i>Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire</i> , éd. par A. Mandouze et al., 4 voll., Paris-Rome 1982-2013.
<i>PLRE</i> , I	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , I, A.D. 260-395, by A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, J. Morris, Cambridge, 1971.
<i>RE</i>	<i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> .
<i>RIC</i>	<i>The Roman Imperial Coinage</i> .
<i>RRMAM</i>	D. French, <i>Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor</i> , Vol. III, British Institute at Ankara, 2012-2016.
<i>SCIVA</i>	<i>Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche și Arheologie</i> , București.
<i>TD</i>	<i>Thraco-Dacica</i> , București.
<i>ThLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus linguae Latinae</i> .

* Cu excepția celor din *L'Année Philologique* și *L'Année Épigraphique* / Escluse quelle segnalate da *L'Année Philologique* e *L'Année Épigraphique*.

THE ROMAN BATH AT TIMACUM MAIUS – AN ARCHITECTURAL COMPLEX

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Keywords: *architecture, Roman bath, Timacum Maius.*

Abstract: *The area around today's Svrlijig was inhabited from the earliest days, which is confirmed by numerous prehistoric sites. This trend continued in the ancient period when the ancient road connecting Naissus and Ratiaria passed here. Based on the famous Roman itinerary, the Tabula Peutingeriana, it was assumed that the Timacum Maius road station was located in the vicinity of Svrlijig, which would later be confirmed. The discovery of the remains of a Roman bath, as well as numerous movable finds, represented new evidence that enabled a closer determination of the way station as well as its confirmation. Also, numerous findings of bricks with stamps testify to the builders and the time of construction. The architectural remains of the building, which according to its dimensions belong to the order of smaller baths, represent a significant find due to the spatial organisation and the time of construction. This type of buildings, according to the spatial disposition of the rooms, their relationship and purpose, can be classified as military architecture with certain overlaps with civilian buildings.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *arhitectură, baie romană, Timacum maius.*

Rezumat: *Baia romană de la Timacus Maius – un complex arhitectural. Zona din jurul actualului Svrlijig a fost locuită din cele mai vechi timpuri, fapt confirmat de numeroase situri preistorice. Această tendință a continuat și în perioada antică, când pe aici trecea drumul antic care lega Naissus de Ratiaria. Pe baza celebrului itinerar roman, Tabula Peutingeriana, s-a presupus că stația rutieră Timacum Maius se afla în apropierea orașului Svrlijig, ceea ce avea să fie confirmat ulterior. Descoperirea rămășițelor unei băi romane, precum și a numeroase descoperiri mobile, a reprezentat dovezi noi care au permis o determinare mai precisă a stației rutiere și confirmarea acesteia. De asemenea, numeroase descoperiri de cărămizi cu ștampile atestă constructorii și perioada construcției. Rămășițele arhitecturale ale clădirii, care prin dimensiunile sale aparțin ordinului băilor mai mici, reprezintă o descoperire semnificativă datorită organizării spațiale și perioadei de construcție. Acest tip de clădiri, conform dispunerii spațiale a încăperilor,*

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relațiilor dintre ele și destinației, poate fi încadrat în arhitectura militară, cu anumite suprapuneri cu clădiri civile.

Svrljig and its surrounding region represent an area in eastern Serbia that is both geographically and culturally highly interesting. The central part of this area is occupied by the Svrljig basin, which is encircled on all sides by high mountains such as Tresibaba, Kalafat, and the Svrljig mountains. It is one of the most prominent transverse basins within the Carpathian–Balkan arc of eastern Serbia, and also one of the more expansive basins in Serbia.¹ The area is characterised by rugged terrain, abundant in karst springs and forests (**Fig. 1**).

The Svrljig basin covers an area of approximately 500 km², with a length of 26 km and a width ranging from 4 to 8 km. Flowing through its central part is the Svrljiški Timok river, an important watercourse in the area, whose course also opens the basin toward neighbouring regions. To the north, between Tresibaba and Devica, the Svrljig basin opens into the Aleksinac basin via the broad saddle of Vetrište and the valley of the Toponička river. The north-eastern part of the basin connects with the valley of the Trgoviški Timok river and, further on, with the Knjaževac basin. Towards the south and south-west, the basin is enclosed by the Svrljig mountains and mount Kurilo, making passage possible only through saddles, the most notable being the Gramada pass, which connects it to the Niš basin. Given all these morphological characteristics, the Svrljig basin cannot be categorised as an isolated region; on the contrary, its position within the broader environment served as an important connective factor. It also held a significant role in transportation, owing to its geostrategic position, a fact recognised even during earlier periods of settlement in the area.²

Traces of human life discovered at sites within the Svrljig basin date back to prehistory, with a continuity traceable through Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and into the present day. The first researchers to visit this region during the second half of the 19th century, leaving behind descriptions of ancient remains, included Stevan Mačaj, Josif Pančić, Jovan Žujović, Colonel Jovan Dragašević, as well as Felix Kanitz, Milan Đ. Milićević, Konstantin Jireček, General Jovan Mišković, Mihailo Valtrović, and Nikola Vulić. Interest in this area persisted throughout the 20th century as well, notably with visits by Adam Oršić Slavetić,

¹ Голубовић 1992, 21.

² Petrović, Filipović & Milivojević 2012, 21.

and particularly significant research and reports produced after World War II by Đurđe Bošković, Mihailo Kostić, Petar Petrović, Felix Hofmann, Đoka Jovanović, Branko Gavela, and Dušan Mihailović.³ These researchers were drawn to significant finds from earlier epochs.

The most significant prehistoric sites are undoubtedly the caves, the most famous of which is the Prekonoška cave, also known as Velika Duvka, where investigations were conducted to confirm the presence of Paleolithic humans. Other notable caves include Samarska cave and Popšička cave, along with a prehistoric necropolis in the village of Palilula. The period of Antiquity is marked by sites located along the *Lissus–Naissus–Ratiaria* road (**Fig. 2**), particularly the settlement of Timacum Maius near the village of Niševac, where several structures have been uncovered, the most significant being the baths, urban communication systems, and a sewage system. It is also important to mention a small fortification from the third century located at the Gramada pass, over which the ancient road passed, as well as a luxurious Roman complex at Rumenjak in the village of Prekonoga.⁴ Sites from the Byzantine and mediaeval periods are fewer but nonetheless significant. Their limited number primarily reflects insufficient research and a lack of serious field reconnaissance. Nevertheless, several sites have been registered, such as the fortress of Svrljig (**Fig. 3**), the mediaeval Church of St Petka in the village of Ribare,⁵ the churches in the village of Banjica, including the Upper Church and the Church of St Stephen, as well as the Monastery of the Holy Archangel.⁶

The listed sites and the findings discovered therein testify to the existence of settlements from the earliest periods through to modern times in this region. These settlements were connected to surrounding areas, particularly the lower reaches of the Timok and Nišava regions, sharing similar characteristics and traits.⁷

Intensive construction activity in this area began with the Roman conquest in the first century CE and the incorporation of these territories into the Roman Empire, which necessitated the development of road infrastructure connecting the Adriatic coast with the central parts of the Balkan peninsula. Along with the construction of roads, road

³ Petrović, Filipović & Milivojević 2012, 27-41.

⁴ *Ibid.* 19.

⁵ Станковић 2003, 84-86.

⁶ Petrović, Filipović & Milivojević 2012, 35.

⁷ Михаиловић 2004, 135-144.

stations and settlements were established, as recorded in the famous Roman itinerary *Tabula Peutingeriana* from the fourth century CE (**Fig. 4**). Thus, on the stretch of the road from *Naissus* (modern-day Niš) to *Ratiaria*, three stations are recorded with the following distances: *Naisso XXVII Timaco Maiori X Timaco Minori XXVII Conbustica XXVII Ratiaria*.⁸ For the purposes of this study, the station of *Timacum Maius* (listed as “*Timaco Maiori*” on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*) is of particular significance, and our attention will be directed toward Svrlijig and its surroundings, where its placement is most plausible. The remains of the military fortification *Timacum Minus* and the civilian settlement that developed around it near the village of Ravna, close to Knjaževac,⁹ have already been identified. The possibility of *Timacum Maius* being located near the village of Niševac was initially proposed by Felix Kanitz.¹⁰ Further discussion of this hypothesis was provided by Jovan Dragašević and Petar Petrović, who concluded that the station was most likely situated in the vicinity of Niševac.¹¹ Confirmation of these assumptions emerged after 2008, when extensive archaeological investigations of ancient sites around Niševac were conducted, leading to the discovery of Roman architectural remains, urban communication systems, and a sewage system.¹² Earlier reports mentioned that during the construction of the Svrlijig–Knjaževac railway line, a brick structure was cut through, and that a structure by the Timok river, believed to be baths, was identified, although there is no detailed report on it, and its remains have not been preserved. Geographer Kostić also notes that remains of Roman baths were excavated near the Timok in Niševac, and some of these remains are still visible today.¹³

We must also mention the site on the left bank of the Kalnica river, a left tributary of the Svrlijški Timok, which is presumed to be a necropolis, as well as the existence of a masonry structure around a potable water spring in the southern part, believed to have been used for supplying the Roman settlement with water.¹⁴ In addition to these

⁸ Miller 1916, *TIR* K34, Naissus.

⁹ Petrović 1995, 40-41; Петковић & Јовановић 2001, 277-279.

¹⁰ Каниц 1986, 350.

¹¹ Петровић 1992, 124; Petrović 1995; Драгашевић 1877, 54.

¹² Petrović, Filipović & Milivojević 2012, 43.

¹³ Костић 1970, 53-69.

¹⁴ Petrović, Filipović & Luka 2014, 101.

structures, part of a larger Roman building was discovered, specifically two rooms equipped with a hypocaust heating system, and ceramic pipes and tubuli were found embedded in the walls for heating both the walls and upper floors.

The number, function, and quality of construction of the uncovered ancient architectural remains clearly indicate that there was a settlement here with the infrastructure of a road station, and perhaps even more. Moreover, geophysical surveys conducted over an area of about 1 hectare between previously excavated zones recorded larger regular rectangular anomalies, only in the eastern zone not following the previously discovered structures. The other anomalies could likely be linked to the overall Roman urbanisation pattern, as they follow the main axes of previously discovered buildings and urban planning principles (**Fig. 5**).¹⁵ These findings suggest the possibility of uncovering additional structures essential for the functioning of a road station at this location.

During archaeological excavations conducted between 2012 and 2014,¹⁶ a structure identified as *thermae* was discovered.¹⁷ It is located on the left bank of the Svrljiški Timok, on a spacious terrace (**Fig. 6**). The building is oriented lengthwise along the north-south axis, with a slight deviation toward the west. Part of the structure was damaged by heavy machinery during watercourse regulation works on the Timok river. The dimensions of the preserved part of the building are 12.40 meters by 8 meters, with the shorter side preserved to a length of 8 meters, while the longer side is completely preserved. The eastern wall has not survived. Based on the revealed construction layout, the ridge of the roof structure must have been positioned above wall 2, leading to the conclusion that it served as the central wall onto which the roof load was transferred. Thus, the total width of the building can be determined to be 9.5 meters, which matches the width of the canal that destroyed part of the wall during its excavation. Since no continuation of walls 3, 4, and 6¹⁸ was detected on the opposite side of the canal, the position of the eastern wall and the overall dimensions

¹⁵ Rummel, Petrović & Filipović 2012, 303-313.

¹⁶ The documentation used was from the excavations conducted by the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade.

¹⁷ Petrović et al. 2015, 44.

¹⁸ We would like to express our gratitude to Dr Vojislav Filipović, a participant in the excavations, for providing oral information.

of the building can be determined with considerable certainty (**Fig. 7**).

The walls were built using roughly dressed local stone and brick, bonded with high-quality lime mortar, with a thickness of about 0.60 meters (2 Roman feet), while the foundation zone was wider, measuring 0.80 meters. Deviations from these dimensions are only noticeable in partition wall 6, which is somewhat thinner, measuring 0.50 meters. It is also noticeable that the walls on the western side are preserved several courses above the plinth zone, whereas the level of preservation decreases towards the east, terminating at the foundation zone (**Fig. 8**). The building is longitudinally divided into heated and unheated spaces. On the western side, there are two rooms: "C", measuring 5.60 by 3.80 meters, and "B", measuring 4.80 by 3.80 meters, both of which featured a hypocaust floor heating system, that is, *pilae* (small pillars) with a *praefurnium* (furnace). On the eastern side, in rooms "A" and "D", remains of two separate pools (*piscinae*) were discovered, which were not heated by the hypocaust system. It is important to note that cylindrical ceramic tubuli were registered in the external walls of the hypocaust-heated rooms "B" and "C", connected to the hypocaust cavity (**Fig. 9**). Additionally, remains of rectangular ceramic tubuli were found in the south-west corner of room "C" (**Fig. 10**). Tubuli were often attached to walls using iron holders shaped like the letter "T".¹⁹ However, an inspection of the documentation revealed no similar finds during the excavation,²⁰ suggesting that these were more likely attached using mortar and then the entire surface was plastered, a more economical construction method. In the middle of the southern wall of room "C", a *praefurnium* (furnace) was discovered, with a width of 0.55 meters and a maximum preserved height of 1.10 meters (**Fig. 11**). Based on the preserved remains, it cannot be definitively stated whether it was vaulted or had a flat top. It is evident that the bricks have changed structure, likely due to high temperatures, and that the stones used for the *praefurnium* walls have cracked, indicating that high temperatures were necessary for the bath's operation and purpose. On the exterior in front of the *praefurnium*, a surface of hydraulic mortar and an area used for fuel handling and servicing are visible, while the interior floor of the *praefurnium* was made of smoothed hydraulic mortar. Warm air heated in the *praefurnium* circulated through the hypocaust cavity,

¹⁹ Bouet 1999, 39–66.

²⁰ Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade.

heating the floors of rooms “C” and “B”,²¹ and later moved through the tubuli embedded in the walls of room “C” towards the upper zones of the walls. This raises the question of the purpose of the cylindrical tubuli within the wall mass; the only justified function would be to regulate the movement of hot air by opening and closing them, thereby adjusting the heating system’s temperature.²² Heating the walls with these tubuli would have been a secondary benefit, not the primary function, due to the insufficient number of cylindrical tubuli for effective heating. This solution is further confirmed in room “C”, where rectangular tubuli were likely placed across the entire surface of wall 1,²³ thus providing additional heating appropriate to the room’s purpose. Another unusual feature is that the lower hypocaust floor was not made of mortar, as is customary, but of pebbles over which the hypocaust pilae were built to support the upper floor (*suspensura*). In the area around the end of the *prae-furnium* channel in room “C”, the pebble layer was removed to examine the substructure; however, only compacted earth was found beneath. It is assumed that economic or time-saving reasons prevailed, avoiding the need for the mortar floor to cure and reach full strength. There is a theory that the pebbles were placed to accumulate heat and release it over a longer period even after the fire in the *prae-furnium* had been extinguished. However, fragments of the upper floor mortar (*suspensura*), that had collapsed into the hypocaust cavity, were found near the *prae-furnium* area, with a thickness of 0.30 meters.²⁴ Such a massive floor would have been far more effective in accumulating and gradually releasing thermal energy than a thin layer of pebbles. Based on the arrangement and spacing of the hypocaust pilae, the dimensions of the bricks used for the upper floor can be determined to be 0.60 by 0.60 meters. Large-format bricks (*bipedalis*) most commonly appear in villas and less frequently in baths (*thermae*).²⁵ It was also observed that during the construction of the pilae, larger bricks

²¹ Between rooms “B” and “C”, beneath wall 5, there was a channel through which warm air passed.

²² This is merely a suggestion, without any intention of imposing it as a definitive solution.

²³ The tubuli were discovered only on a section of wall 1 in the south-west corner of room “C” because that part of the wall was preserved above the plinth level, whereas on the other walls there was no surviving above-ground zone, and it remains unknown whether tubuli existed there.

²⁴ Petrović, Filipović & Luka 2014, 107.

²⁵ Bouet 1999, 121–169; Bouet 2003, 27; Yegül 2010.

approximately 0.30 by 0.30 by 0.05 meters in size were placed on the pebbles for better stability, with smaller bricks approximately 0.20 by 0.20 by 0.07 meters used above them, built up in seven courses. Based on the preserved height of the hypocaust pilae, it can be concluded that the upper floor (*suspensura*) rested on the wall plinth, thus ensuring structural stability both vertically and horizontally. An examination of the documentation revealed no evidence of decorative floor elements, and based on the fragments of purple-painted wall plaster, it is concluded that the walls had minimal decoration, suggesting a rather modest interior appearance, which could imply either a civilian or military function.

The other part of the building – rooms “A” and “D” – was equipped with pools/basins of estimated dimensions of 8.50 by 3.80 meters and 1.90 by 3.80 meters, respectively. In room “D”, the basin is smaller but somewhat better preserved, with more elements and details visible (**Fig. 12**). Two levels of the basin can be seen, forming a cascade-like structure. Its lower level is made of lime mortar, showing impressions of bricks, visible also along the western wall of room “D”. The bricks were encased in well-smoothed hydraulic mortar. The upper level consists solely of hydraulic mortar and likely served for seating. During excavation, it was noted that the lower level was broken through by a pit from a later period. Interestingly, after the pit was cleared, new layers of hydraulic mortar appeared. Immediately below the lime mortar layer, two more layers of hydraulic mortar were found, coated one over the other. Beneath the second hydraulic mortar layer, at a depth of 0.10 meters, another smoothed layer of hydraulic mortar was discovered, and 0.08 meters below that, yet another layer with a polished surface.²⁶ It is likely that multiple layers of hydraulic mortar were applied to ensure the waterproofing of the basin or that additional layers were added later due to leakage. The basin in room “A” is very poorly preserved and provides little information, except that it was lined with hydraulic mortar. It is clear that these rooms were not heated, at least not by the hypocaust system or hot air channels, although other heating methods cannot be entirely ruled out. Literature generally identifies these as cold pools (*frigidaria*),²⁷ a conclusion with which we mostly agree, though there is room for a slight modification in interpretation, which will be

²⁶ Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade.

²⁷ Petrović & Filipović 2015, 44.

discussed later.

The interiors of the bathhouse rooms were filled with a layer of rubble from the collapsed hypocaust upper floor – above the pebble layer, followed by a layer mostly composed of roof tiles, and finally a rubble layer of charred stones of various sizes, burned wall bricks, and soot. The large amount of burned material and soot suggests that the structure most likely perished in a fire. During the excavations, a significant number of movable finds were uncovered, dominated by iron nails distributed across the building's entire surface. This indicates that the structure had a wooden roof, for which nails were necessary, and the large amount of soot mixed with roof tiles further confirms this. Numerous amorphous lead fragments were also found, sometimes aligned in lines, suggesting the possible existence of lead pipes used to supply the bath with water. In addition to these finds, fragments of pottery, window glass, animal bones, fibulae, coins, lead seals, and painted wall plaster were discovered. Notably, bricks with stamps were also found – nine bricks built into the bathhouse walls bore stamps with the inscription COH I CRET (*Cohors I Cretum*), belonging to the First Cohort of Cretans (**Fig. 13**). It is known that this auxiliary unit comprised about five hundred soldiers, and that its presence has been confirmed only at Naissus within the territory of Moesia.²⁸ The discovery of these stamped bricks greatly aids in dating the bathhouse: knowing that the First Cohort of Cretans was active during the first century, specifically in the mid-first century, we can conclude that the baths were built during the first half of the first century CE. Furthermore, if the military was involved in brick production and construction, it can be assumed that the cohort was stationed here and that a fortification existed where the soldiers were housed, until their eventual transfer first to Upper Moesia and later their involvement in Trajan's Second Dacian War.²⁹

Analysing the construction layout of the building, we can clearly observe the division of the interior space into two blocks, eastern and western (**Fig. 14**). The eastern block was not heated, while the western block was heated using a hypocaust system. Structurally, this was a simple building featuring three longitudinal walls that supported the roof structure, while the transverse exterior walls formed the gables.

²⁸ Petrović & Filipović 2021, 132.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 133.

The interior walls, although massive, served only as partitions. The roof construction was most likely wooden, as suggested by the large quantity of soot and the numerous iron nails used to connect the wooden elements, while the roof surfaces were covered with *tegulae* and *imbrices*. The roof was probably gabled along the longitudinal axis, constructed in a system of wall plates and ridge beams supported by rafters. This type of roof was simple yet provided adequate protection from all atmospheric influences. The construction system also dictated the arrangement of the entrance doors, interior doorways, and windows. Due to the limited preservation of the walls, it is possible to confirm communication only between rooms “B” and “C”, with a passage located at the centre of wall 5. The positions of other openings can be inferred based on architectural principles and logic. The location of the entrance is determined by the function of the space, and analysing the spatial organisation,³⁰ we can identify room “B” as the *apodyterium*, that is, the entrance and changing room. Thus, the entrance can be expected to be located on wall 1 or wall 3 of room “B”. It is situated within the heated block but sufficiently distant from the *praefurnium*, where temperatures would be very high. Furthermore, it is separated by walls from the other rooms it connects to through passages. The placement of the entrance door is largely determined by the presence of tubuli in the middle of the wall mass, suggesting it could be located on either the northern or western wall. Proportionally, the tubulus on wall 3 allows space for one door, while the tubulus on wall 1 leaves room for two window openings. Additionally, wall 1 is best preserved in the area of room “B”, several courses above the plinth zone, and no traces of a threshold or doorframe are visible at that height, meaning the entrance most likely existed on wall 3 of room “B”, closer to wall 2. Such a position for the entrance would allow for the placement of one or two window openings on wall 1, although it is not certain at what height they would have been positioned. Also, placing the entrance on the side opposite the *praefurnium* prevents smoke from entering the bathhouse upon entry. Room “C”, situated next to the *praefurnium* and adjacent to a room with a pool, has been identified in the literature as the *caldarium*,³¹ with which we agree. Rooms “A” and “D”, as previously

³⁰ Rooms “A” and “D” are pools, and room “C” is the warmest room in the bathhouse, so the only possible entrance would have been into room “B”.

³¹ Petrović & Filipović 2015, 34.

mentioned, have been characterised as *frigidaria*;³² however, we would not classify both pool rooms under the same designation. Room “D”, with its large and shallow pool, should be classified as the *frigidarium*, while room “A” should be classified as the *tepidarium*. The reason for this distinction lies in the fact that room “A” is smaller in area, with a smaller and shallower pool that would be easier to heat, especially considering its immediate proximity to room “C”, the warmest room in the bathhouse. This type of spatial relationship is characteristic and can be observed in numerous examples of Roman-period bathhouses. For a detailed explanation, see I. Bjelić’s work on *caldaria* within bath complexes.³³ We could also consider the possible existence of an *alveus*, through which the water in the basin might have been heated, especially since numerous pieces of amorphous molten lead were found, possibly remnants of water pipes, as well as a pipe/drain³⁴ at the southern wall 4, the exterior wall of room “A”. While this remains a hypothesis, it certainly merits consideration. In this spatial arrangement, the logical solution would be for room “A” to be entered from room “C”, while room “D” would be accessed from room “B”. Room “C” could have a window positioned at the centre of wall 1, between the tubuli located in the middle of the wall mass, as wall 4 houses the *praeefurnium*, making it impossible to place a window above it. The rooms with pools, “A” and “D”, could be illuminated by windows positioned in the upper zone of the eastern wall, as recommended by Vitruvius.³⁵

In addition to considering the structural characteristics and spatial organisation, the social aspect concerning the usage of the space is also very important. Based on the remains of the bathhouse, we cannot definitively identify its users; we can only make assumptions by comparing it to similar examples from the same time and geographic context. Moreover, based on its size, we can conclude that this bathhouse could not accommodate more than six to eight users at a time, thus suggesting it had a more private character. This is a small bathhouse, with a gross area of 117 m², and should be classified as a *balneum*. The most similar example of a *balneum* in our region, considering its time of construction and organisational layout, is the military bath-

³² *Ibid.* 44.

³³ Bjelić 2021, 7-34.

³⁴ Taken from the excavation journal, documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade.

³⁵ Vitr. *De arch.* 10.4.154.

house at Timacum Minus.³⁶ A temporally close counterpart is the bathhouse at *Municipium DD*, dated to the second century.³⁷ Other nearby bathhouses do not match chronologically, having been built in later periods, nor conceptually, as they are much larger and differ organisationally.³⁸ In seeking analogies across the broader territory of the Empire, several potentially comparable examples were found, such as bathhouses at Regensburg–Königswiesen, Mauern Diedesdorf, Ravna (Timacum Minus), Cascais Velhos, and many others (**Fig. 15**).³⁹ However, all these examples belong to civilian structures, specifically *villae rusticae*, and were built outside fortifications.

From all the above, the *balneum* at Timacum Maius can be described as a block-type bathhouse, of small size, with a rectangular ground plan and a reduced number of rooms, yet optimally designed for functional operation. It did not feature elaborate interior or exterior decoration. It was built in an optimal location, near a watercourse that ensured a sufficient water supply for its functioning. It was equipped with a hypocaust floor heating system and water supply pipes. Based on analogies, it can be assumed that it likely belonged to a *villa rustica* rather than to a military facility, although military use cannot be ruled out entirely. Based on the finds of stamped bricks from the First Cohort of Cretans, the construction can be dated to the middle of the first century CE, while minor finds from the excavations suggest that by the mid-fourth century CE the structure was repurposed for residential use.⁴⁰ We can state with certainty that the bathhouse was destroyed by fire, although the exact time remains unknown, most likely during one of the Hunnic invasions.

This is one of the oldest bathhouses within the territory of present-day Serbia and is highly significant for further analysis and study of structures of this type. Therefore, it would be highly desirable to reconstruct and conserve the architectural remains and present them to the broader public.

³⁶ Bjelić 2020, 147-151.

³⁷ Čerškov 1970, 70-76.

³⁸ For reference, see Јерemiћ & Гојгић 2012, 22-27.

³⁹ Sedlmayer 2017, 359, 361, 362.

⁴⁰ Petrović & Filipović 2015, 44.

ABBREVIATIONS

- TIR – J. Šašel, ed. *Tabula Imperii Romani: Naissus, Dyrrachion, Scupi, Serdika, Thessalonike*, 1976, Ljubljana, L'institut archéologique de l'Académie Slovène des Sciences et des Arts; Sofia, Union académique internationale.
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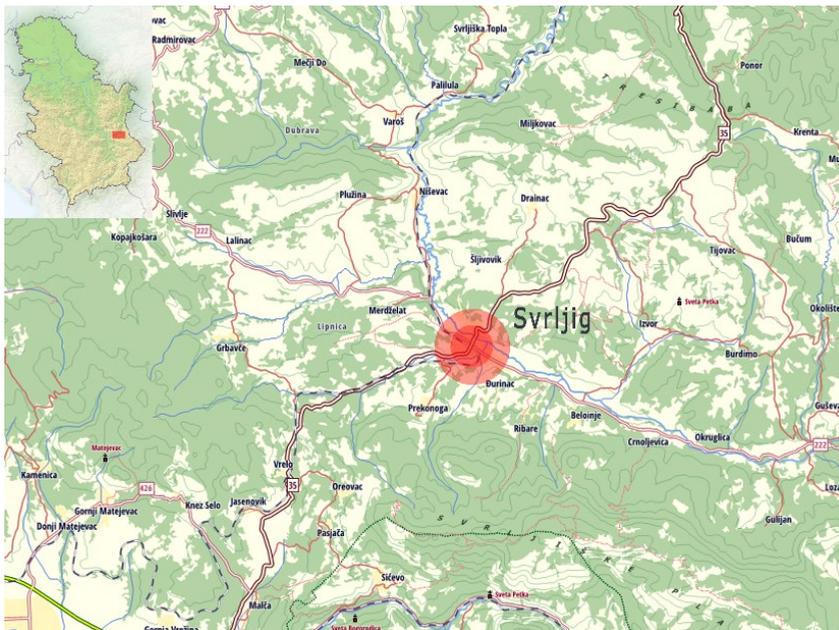


Fig. 1

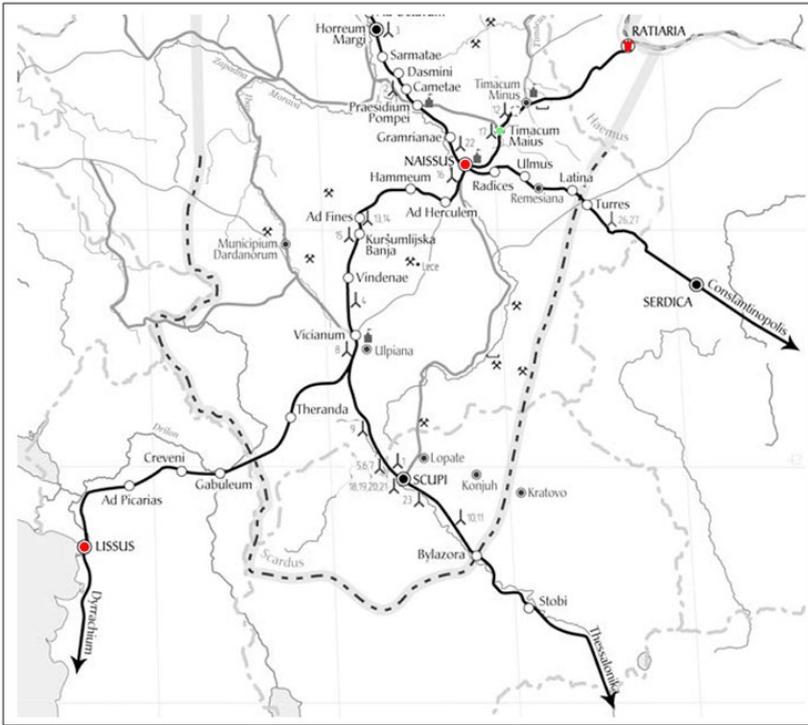


Fig 2

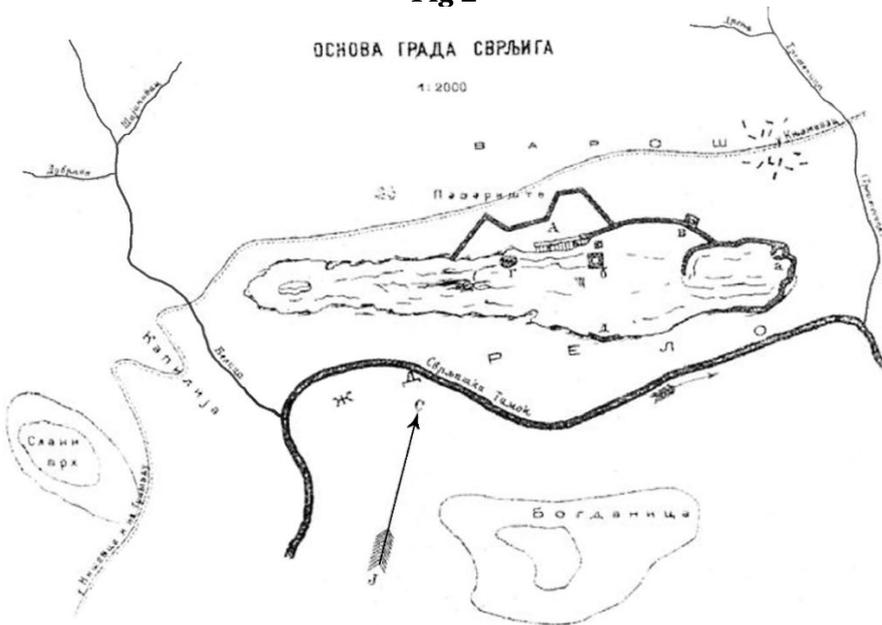


Fig. 3

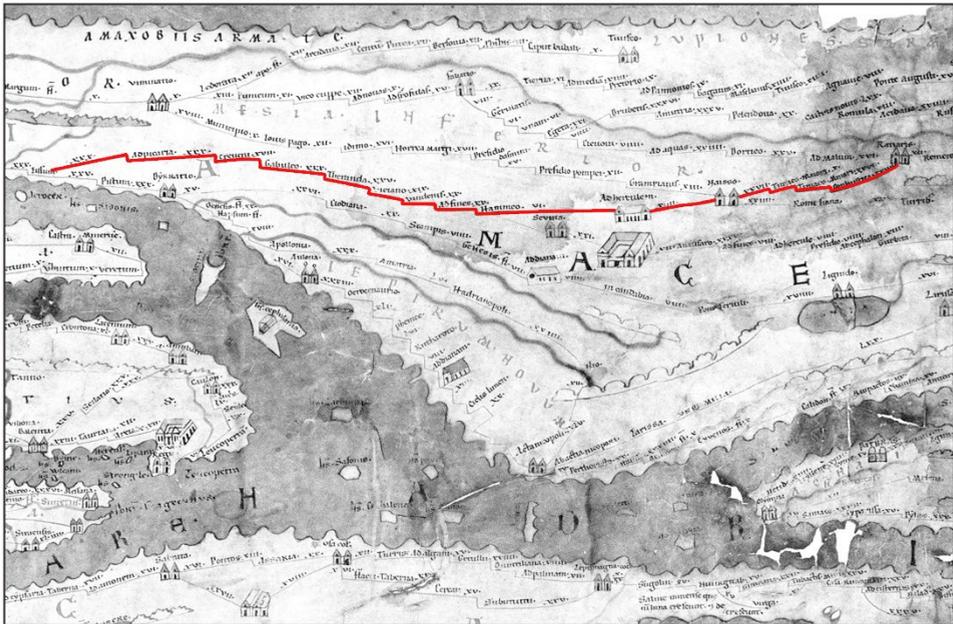


Fig. 4

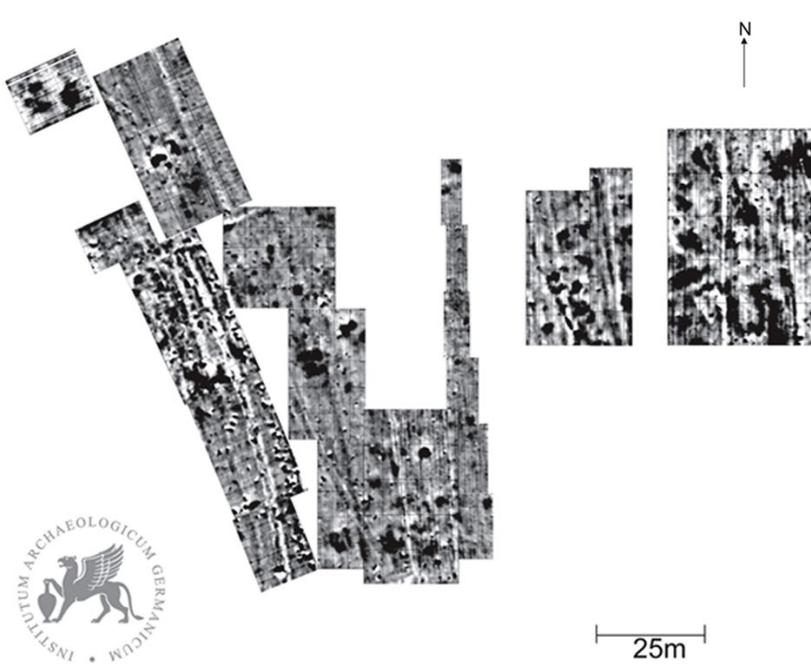


Fig. 5

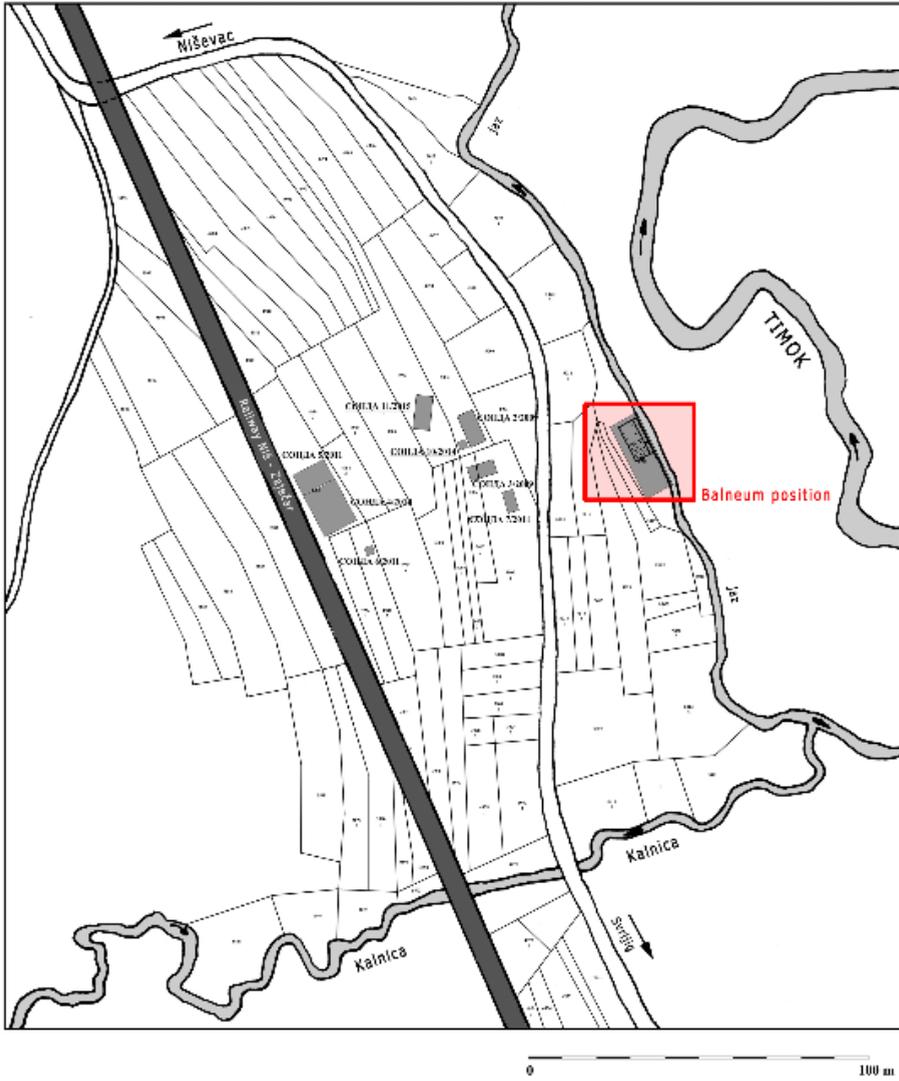


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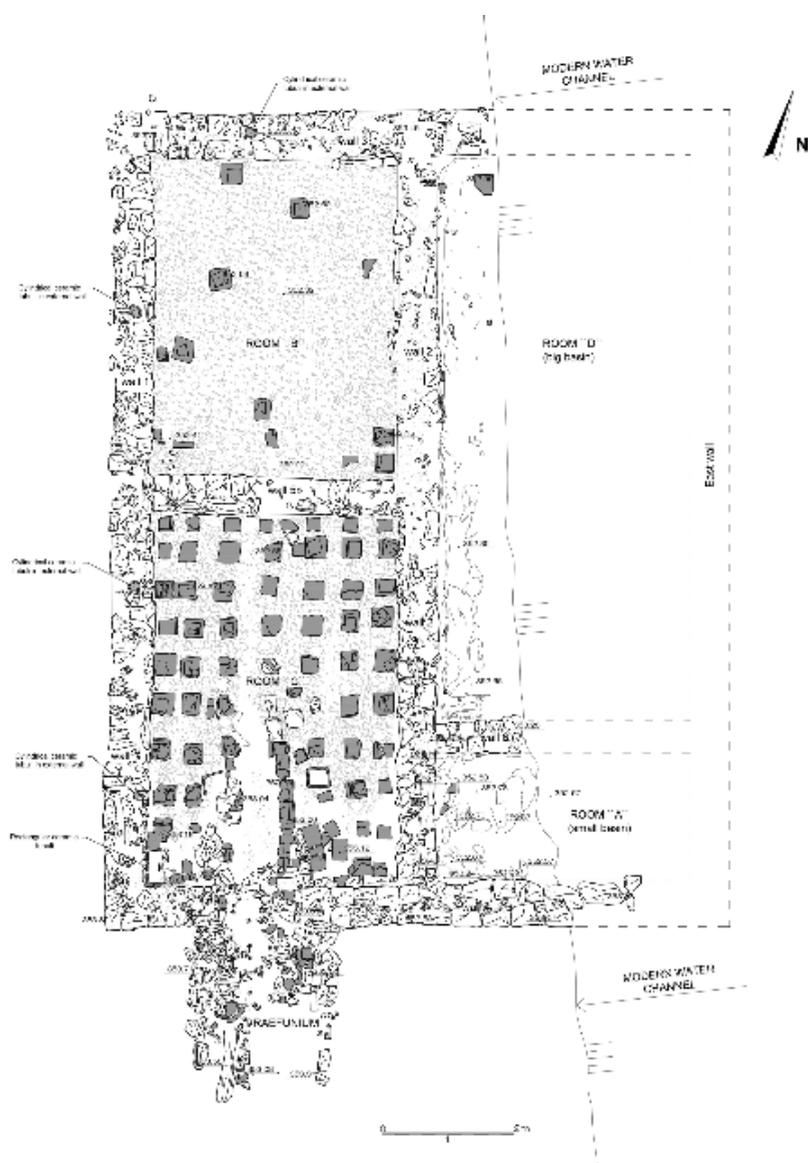


Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

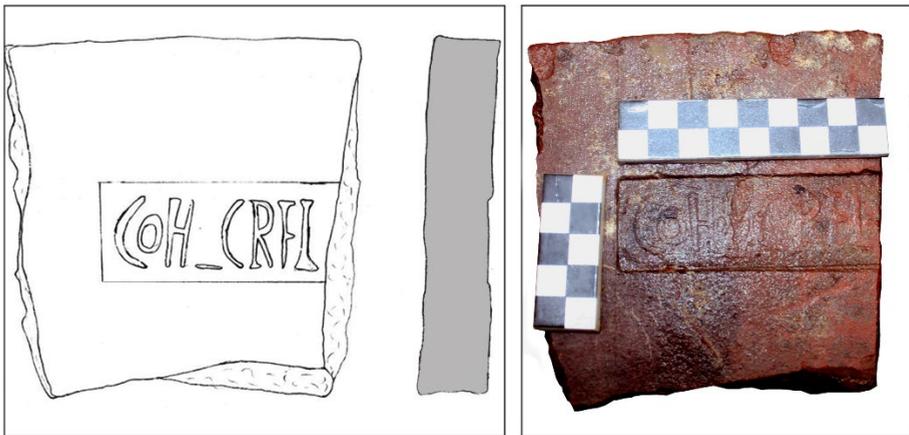
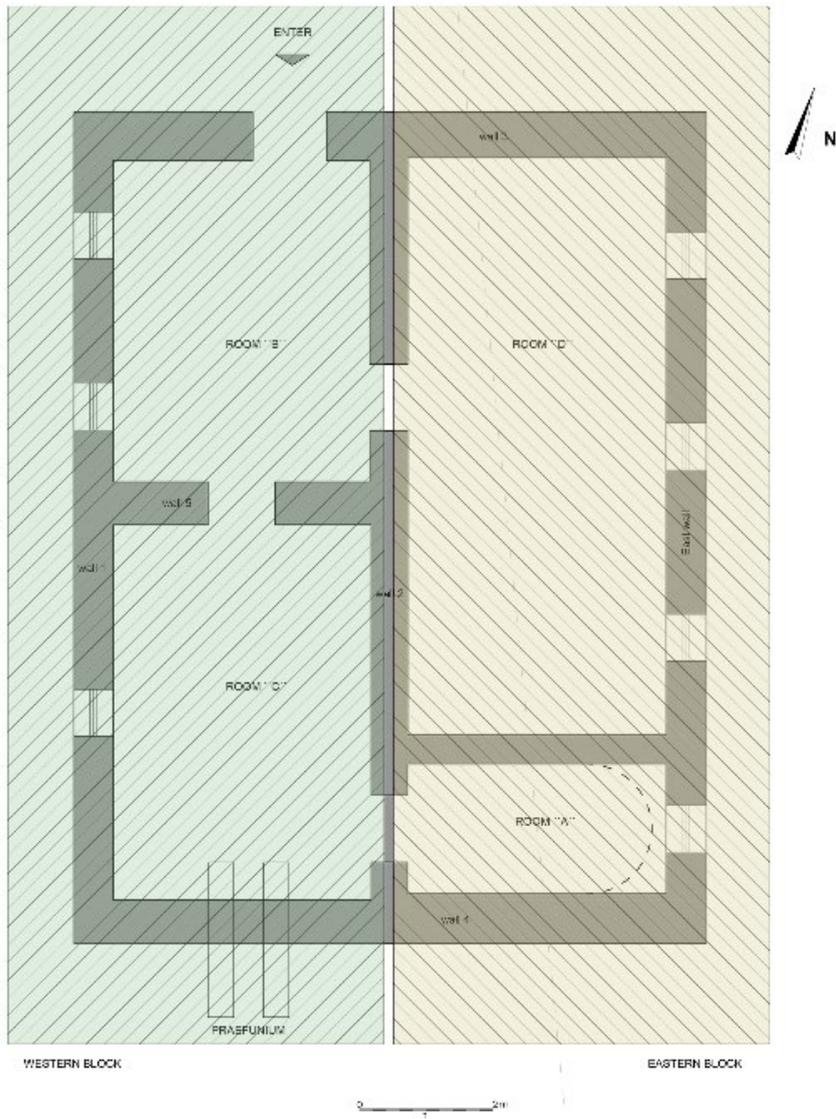


Fig. 13

**Fig. 14**

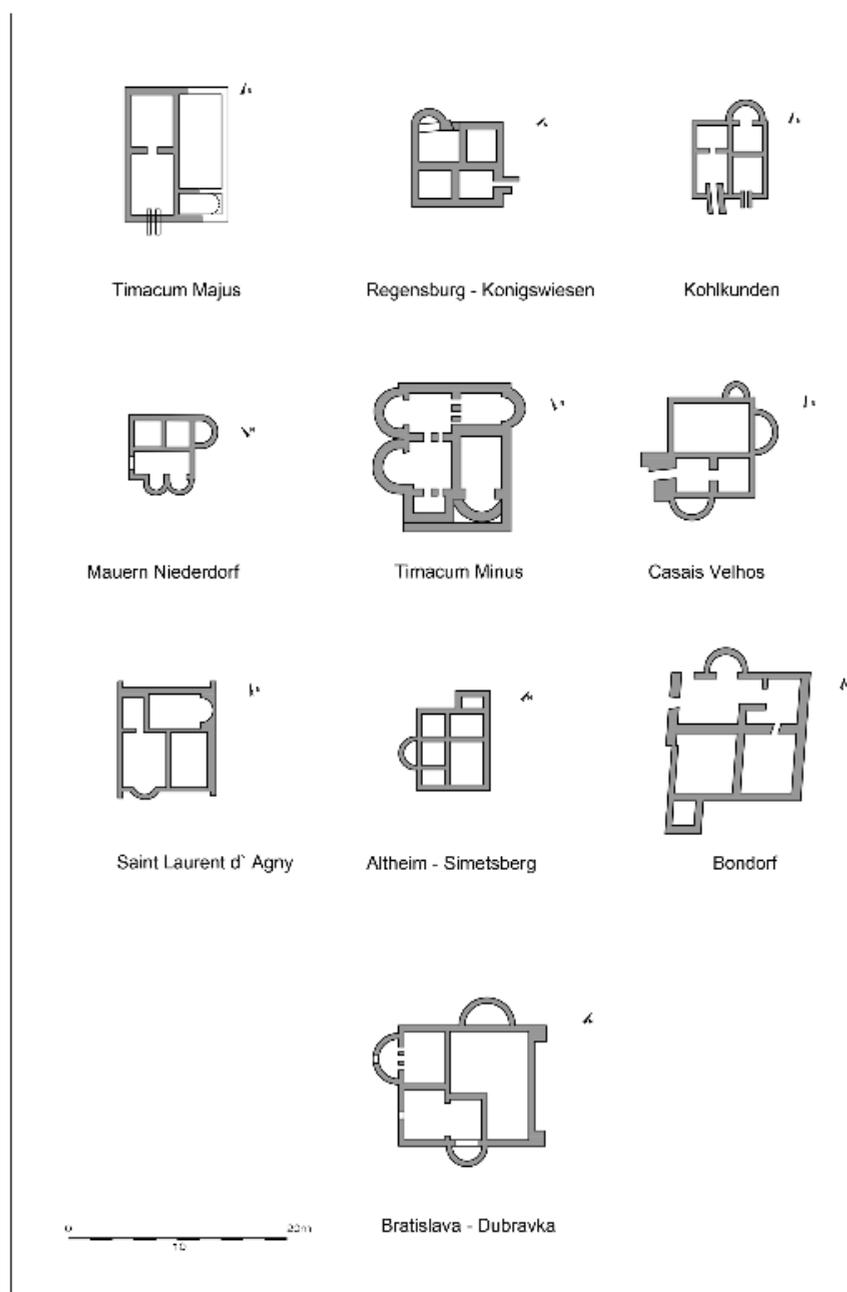


Fig. 15

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