

# INVICTO MITHRAE SPELAEUM FECIT: MITHRAIC TEMPLES IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF DALMATIA

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## Abstract

*This paper deals with Mithraic temples, the so-called mithraea, from the Roman province of Dalmatia. Since there is no scholarly consensus about the number of mithraea in Dalmatia, this paper looks closely at the sites usually identified as mithraea and offers their new evaluation based on the clearly established criteria: the existence of sculptural or epigraphic evidence explicitly related to the cult of Mithras. The paper further addresses their typology and provides an updated list of mithraea in natural settings in and outside Roman Dalmatia. Finally, the paper argues against the traditionally assumed primitive and rural character of Mithraic caves and rock-temples in Dalmatia.*

**Keywords:** *cult of Mithras – mithraeum – Dalmatia – typology – freely-built temple – cave – rock-temple.*

## Introduction

The cult of Mithras and its rich material evidence discovered throughout the Roman province of Dalmatia has attracted considerable scholarly attention over the past seventy years. It suffices to mention that since Branimir Gabričević's doctoral dissertation (1951), which can be taken as the beginning of the scientific study of the cult of Mithras in Dalmatia, four more doctoral dissertations dealing with the same subject appeared.<sup>1</sup> The topic does not cease to fascinate scholars, and new material continues to emerge.<sup>2</sup> Still, despite such a long history of research, there are some aspects

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1 Gabričević 1951; Miletić 1996; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001; Karković Takalić 2019; Silnović 2022.

2 Cambi 2017, 23–29.

of the cult that so far have not received sufficient attention. This is particularly the case with Mithraic architecture, which has been rarely addressed systematically, with one recent exception.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, this paper aims to offer an updated overview of Mithraic sanctuaries from Dalmatia and provide a comprehensive insight into this complex topic. Since there is no scholarly consensus about the number of *mithraea* in Dalmatia, all the sites where the existence of a *mithraeum* is traditionally assumed will be carefully reconsidered. The generally large number of assumed *mithraea*, whose number varies in the literature, indicates that an updated and revised catalog of these buildings is needed.<sup>4</sup> It also shows that the identification of Mithraic places of worship is more complex than it initially appears.

### What is a Mithraic temple?

Mithraic temples are widely perceived to be easily recognizable buildings distinguished by their canonical ground plan. They are simple structures conceived as rectangular and symmetrical buildings, with a characteristic tripartite internal division of space (fig. 1). The cult room (*cella*, a) is usually sunken below ground level and consists of a central aisle flanked by raised *podia* (b). The rear wall of the *cella* is reserved for placing the cult-image showing Mithras killing the bull (the so-called tauroctony). The *cella* is accessed by stairs through an entrance hall (*porticus*, c), which is generally built on the ground level, and one or more service- or ante-rooms (d) are installed in it.

These multifunctional rooms (*apparatoria*) were used to prepare and store food consumed during the communal meal, shared by the worshipers reclining on *podia* inside the *cella*.<sup>5</sup> Otherwise, they could have been used as storage rooms for various kitchen equipment and ritual paraphernalia or as changing rooms where worshippers could have dressed appropriately for partaking in the ritual.<sup>6</sup> Other essential furnishings included a water basin installed near the entrance to the *cella*, where cult participants washed their hands before entering the temple proper.

The Mithraic temple is usually referred to by the Latin term *mithraeum* (pl. *mithraea*), a modern neologism used to denote these buildings.<sup>7</sup> *Templum* and *speleum/spelaenum* are most frequently used in Mithraic inscriptions to denote a *mithraeum*; terms like *antrum*, *aedes*, *fanum*, and *sacraria* are also attested, albeit less regularly.<sup>8</sup>

3 Silnović 2022.

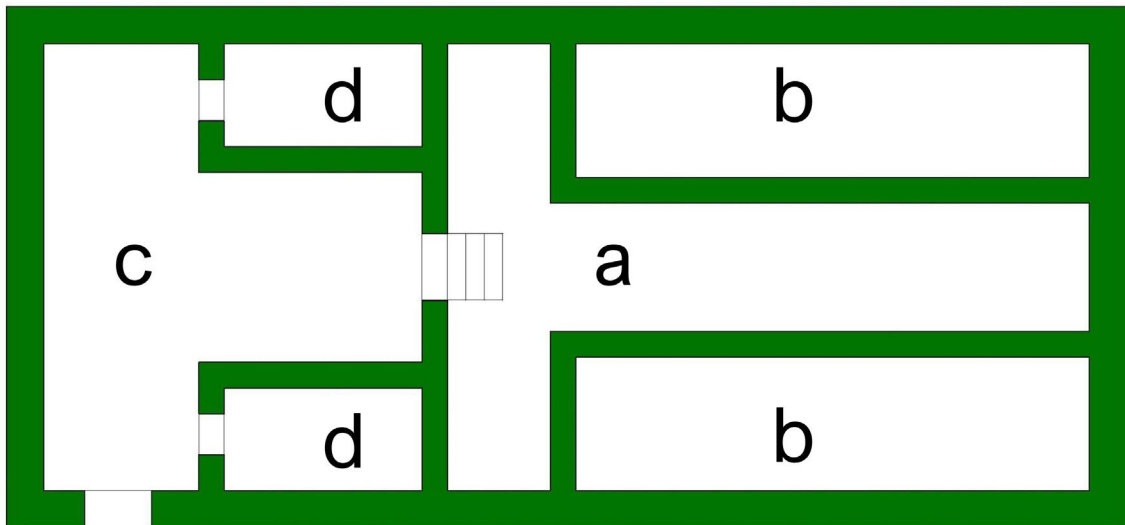
4 A total of 160 *mithraea* were suggested by Klenner 2012, 113, cf. n. 5. Their number was recently lowered to around 130 by Bricault, Veymiers and Amoroso 2021, 20–21 (with a map).

5 The communal meal was the most important ritual celebrated in Mithraic temples, see Hultgård 2004, 299–324; Klöckner 2011, 200–225; Martens 2016, 117–127.

6 For an overview of the possible functions of these rooms see Schatzmann 2004, 12–14; Hensen 2021, 219–220.

7 Since the term became a standard designation for Mithraic temple it will be used in this paper. On the history of the term see Bricault and Roy 2021, 205.

8 In Italy, a term *crypta* (“grotto” or a “vault”) denoting a *mithraeum* is encountered on an inscription from Ostia das well (CIMRM 315). For an overview of the terminology see Clauss 2012, 48, 50 and Bricault and Roy 2021, 205–208.



**Fig. 1. Ideal ground plan of a mithraeum (N. Silnović)**

Only one inscription from Dalmatia refers to a Mithraic sanctuary. An altar found in the vicinity of St. Mark's church in Vratnik (near ancient *Senia*, Senj, Croatia) contains a dedicatory inscription made by Hermes, a slave serving within the *portorium*, who set up a *spelaeum* at his own expense (c. 160–170 AD).<sup>9</sup> The current evidence does not indicate whether other terms were used to denote a *mithraeum* in Dalmatia.

Based on such a simple and characteristic ground plan, the archaeologists had a seemingly easy task, and they could identify a Mithraic temple even in cases where any other evidence, epigraphic or iconographic, was missing. Vermaseren's catalog (1956/1960), the only comprehensive catalog of Mithraic monuments, listed seventy-three *mithraea*, many identified solely based on their characteristic ground plan.<sup>10</sup> Although the pitfalls of such a method are more than obvious, the canonicity of these buildings was only recently questioned.<sup>11</sup>

Not all cult rooms with side *podia* can be associated with the cult of Mithras. Such tripartite spaces are further encountered in tombs and mausolea, where a banquet in commemoration of the dead would take place, or in temples or banqueting rooms associated with different cults in the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East.<sup>12</sup> The already existing type of banqueting room, widely used in various religious contexts where communal dining was practiced, was also borrowed by worshippers of Mithras, whose central ritual consisted of shared meal.

9 *AE* 1894, 22 = *CIL* III, 13282 = lupa 6023 = *HD* 028597 = *CIMRM* 1846 = *ROMIC I*, 74 no. 8. No traces of the actual *mithraeum* were found here.

10 Vermaseren 1956/1960. For a more recent overview of *mithraea* discovered in *Germania Inferior* see Biller 2003, 49–70; for *Germania Superior* see Hensen 2000a, 93–110; for *Germania Superior* and *Inferior*, *Raetia* and *Belgica* see Wiegels 2000, 289–300.

11 See, for example, the discussion about several such cases in Carnuntum, in Gassner 2005, 80–90; Kandler 2011; Kremer 2021, 251–256 (with previous literature). On the problematic identification of several *mithraea* in Rome see Van Haepelen 2022, 115–126.

12 For tombs and mausolea see Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2000, 300–321; for the side *podia* in the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East see Schwarzer 2008, 104–190.



**Fig. 2. Mithraeum in Jajce (N. Silnović)**

Likewise, not all surely identified *mithraea* follow the “canonical” tripartite ground plan. *Mithraea* from Dalmatia, for example, already show that diversity is present in the design of these buildings. *Mithraea* from Jajce (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Konjic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) have only one left-hand *podium* (figs. 2, 3).<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the *mithraeum* from Hawarte (Syria, pl. 1 no. 17) has an L-shaped podium along the eastern and southern walls. So far, these “unusual” arrangements have been explained as a result of ritual changes among the Late Antique Mithraic communities and as a signal of the cult’s decline.<sup>14</sup> However, single or otherwise uncanonically shaped *podia* are not necessarily a sign of any particular change in the ritual. They are simply a practical solution to various space demands, or they can be related to the smaller sizes of their Mithraic communities.<sup>15</sup> In Jajce, the construction of the *mithraeum* was conditioned by the rocky terrain configuration and the surrounding swamps; the *mithraeum* in Hawarte was installed in an artificial cave, perhaps originally hollowed out for some other purposes, while the *mithraeum* in Konjic was built on the sloping and foresty terrain which certainly posed some limits to the building.

13 For Jajce see Sergejevski 1937, 11–18; for Konjic see Patsch 1897, 629–656.

14 Walsh 2018, 21. See Gordon’s (justified) criticism of Walsh’s argument in Gordon 2019, 461–475. A similar argument was put forward by David 2016, 175 and David 2020, 105. Here the author presents another example of a *mithraeum* with a single podium, the so-called Mithraeum of the Colored Marbles from Ostia. The identification of this building as a *mithraeum* rests on insufficient evidence and its Mithraic character cannot be ascertained, see also Van Haepere 2019, 455–461.

15 Usage of mobile, wooden *podia* cannot be excluded as well.

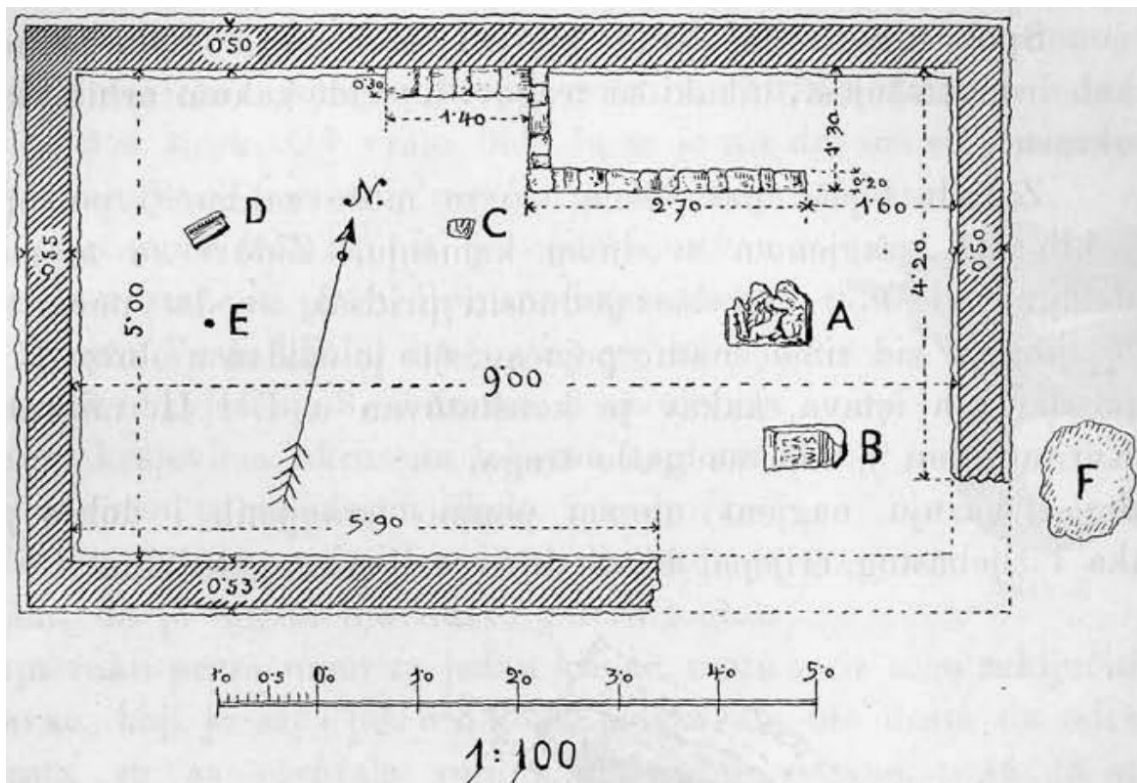


Fig. 3. Ground plan of the mithraeum in Konjic (Patsch 1897, 630, fig. 2)

Despite the seeming uniformity of *mithraea*, there is a great diversity in their internal arrangements, building techniques, and dimensions.<sup>16</sup> This is especially visible in the design of the altar area, which, according to Siemers-Klenner, is a distinguishing feature of each *mithraeum*.<sup>17</sup> In Ostia, with the highest number of *mithraea* within one city,<sup>18</sup> not one altar arrangement closely resembles any other.<sup>19</sup> The altar arrangements at Oltari (*Arupium*, Prozor, Croatia) and Rajanov grič, Čovići (*Arupium*, Prozor, Croatia), which lie close to each other and are similar in many ways, differ from each other in many details and are far from identical (figs. 4, 5).<sup>20</sup>

Besides tripartite buildings, another type of sacred space is usually associated with the cult of Mithras – caves. Caves were first identified as authentic places of Mithraic worship by Franz Cumont, whose idea was inspired by the well-known passage from Porphyry (*De antro nympharum*, 6):

“As Eubulus says, Zoroaster was the first to dedicate a natural cavern in the nearby mountains of Persia, having flowers and streams, in honoring Mithras, the maker and

16 Hensen 2021, 223.

17 Siemers-Klenner 86–87; Gordon 2019, 466.

18 On the number of *mithraea* in Ostia see Van Haepere 2019; Van Haepere 2021, 349.

19 Gordon 2019, 466. On Ostian *mithraea* see Van Haepere 2019; Van Haepere 2021, 349–356.

20 Beck 1984, 356–371; Rendić-Miočević 2015, 257–278. About the design of the altar arrangements at Oltari and Rajanov grič see Silnović 2024a, forthcoming.



**Fig. 4. Mithraeum at Oltari (N. Silnović)**

father of all. The cavern represented for him an image of the cosmos that Mithras created; the things in the cave were in accordance with symmetrical distances, conveying symbols of elements and seven zones of the cosmos. Then, after this Zoroaster, there also took hold among others the tradition of expounding the mystic rites through caves and caverns, either naturally formed or human-made<sup>21</sup> (emphasis by the author).

It is in a cave where Mithras sacrificed the bull, as depicted on cult images adorning the rear wall of each *mithraeum*. Mithras is shown victoriously pressing the slumped animal under the semicircular arch, emulating the cave vault in these images. Although cave ambiance was often imitated by Mithraic temples (sunken *cella*, vaulted ceilings, lack of natural light, decoration, etc.), caves were rarely used for Mithraic cult purposes, both in Dalmatia and elsewhere (tab. 2 and further in the text).

Despite this fact, scholars are eager to associate caves, natural or artificial, with Mithraic cult activities even when explicit evidence is missing. One extreme example of such an approach is a book by Claudia Sagona on the cult of Mithras in Malta, in which the author identifies no less than thirty *mithraea* in various caves and caverns, as well as in rock-cut *hypogea*, based solely on “certain architectural features”.<sup>22</sup>

A recently published site at Gradišče (Austria) is an excellent example of how difficult it is to identify a “Mithraic cave” when there is no explicit evidence to rely on.<sup>23</sup>

21 Translation from Nilüfer Akçay 2019, 63. On Franz Cumont see further in the text.

22 Sagona 2009. No epigraphic evidence of the worship of Mithras was ever found in Malta, and the author’s argumentation rests on highly problematic iconographical clues.

23 Hinker 2022. Similarly, caves at Zillis and Aventicum (Avenches) in Switzerland were identified as *mithraea* without explicit evidence of the cult. For Zillis see Rageth 2001, 111–126: for Avenches see De Pury-Gysel 2012, 170–177.



**Fig. 5. Mithraeum at Rajanov grič (N. Silnović)**

Despite many archaeological finds, no image or inscription related to the cult of Mithras was discovered here. Nevertheless, the fact that the cult place is located inside the cave, according to Christoph Hinker, indicates Mithras as a probable deity that was worshipped here.<sup>24</sup>

### **Mithraic temples in the Roman province of Dalmatia**

There is no consensus on the number of *mithraea* in the Roman province of Dalmatia (tab. 1). Their varying number indicates the difficulty of identifying some of these sites as Mithraic places of worship as well as the lack of criteria for identifying a Mithraic sanctuary. In the eight major catalogs of Mithraic monuments from Dalmatia produced so far, *mithraea* were treated only sporadically, with one recent exception.<sup>25</sup> Gabričević dedicated only four pages of his dissertation to *mithraea* and identified five of them.<sup>26</sup> Contrary to Gabričević, Zotović covered a wider territory of ex-Yugoslavia and identified twenty-five *mithraea* (eight from Dalmatia), based both on the actual architectural remains or the inscriptions mentioning the foundation or renovation of a *mithraeum*.<sup>27</sup>

24 Hinker 2022, 165. Particularly interesting is the author's discussion of analogous Mithraic cult places from the Eastern Alps and the Balkan region, including several examples from Dalmatia. They are all discussed further in the text.

25 Gabričević 1951; Zotović 1973; Miletić 1996; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001; *ROMIC I*; *ROMIC II*; Karković Takalić 2019; Silnović 2022 (entirely dedicated to Mithraic architecture from Dalmatia).

26 Gabričević 1951, 53–57; he also included Črnomalj, which is actually located in *Pannonia superior*, see Selem 1980, 78–80.

27 Zotović 1973: Vratnik 19 (no. 13); Jajce 26–27 (no. 30); Konjic 29–31 (no. 35); Mile Donje 34–35 (no. 46); Močići 37–38 (no. 48); Rajanov grič 61 (no. 73); Oltari 67 (no. 86); Sv. Juraj 76 (no. 103).

While Gabričević and Zotović were undoubtedly more interested in Mithraic iconography and epigraphy, *mithraea* were nevertheless analyzed along the sculptural and epigraphic monuments. The two doctoral dissertations from 1996 and 2001 also primarily dealt with sculptural monuments, and *mithraea* appear solely as part of the catalog entries.<sup>28</sup>

However, the number of identified *mithraea* seems to be increasing. Željko Miletić identifies ten *mithraea* in Dalmatia,<sup>29</sup> while their number rose to twelve in Goranka Lipovac-Vrkljan's catalog.<sup>30</sup> Two catalogs of monuments of "Oriental deities" from Croatia collected by Petar Selem and Inga Vilogorac Brčić also need to be mentioned.<sup>31</sup> Since they concentrate on the territory of the Republic of Croatia, only *mithraea* from the Croatian part of Roman Dalmatia are included.<sup>32</sup>

The relatively high number of *mithraea* in Dalmatia is further maintained by Palma Karković Takalić, who lists nine Mithraic temples in her recent doctoral dissertation dedicated to "mystery cults" in Dalmatia.<sup>33</sup> The exact number of *mithraea* was recently suggested by Christoph Hinker as well. However, the author is concerned only with sanctuaries located in natural settings (adapted rock-niches and caves).<sup>34</sup> Finally, in my recent doctoral dissertation, I have positively identified only six *mithraea*.<sup>35</sup>

Identifying a *mithraeum* is a complex task, and each site needs to be evaluated on its own, considering all the available evidence (architectural remains, epigraphic and sculptural monuments, small finds, etc.). In this paper, I consider the following evidence as the sole conclusive indicators for identifying *mithraea*: only structures with explicit epigraphic (inscriptions dedicated to Mithras) and/or sculptural (tauroctony reliefs or other sculptures related to the cult of Mithras) evidence can be unequivocally identified as *mithraea*.<sup>36</sup> This does not mean, as discussed further in the text, that identifying places lacking this kind of evidence as *mithraea* should be entirely dismissed. It only means that without reliable evidence, it is not possible to identify them as such conclusively.

28 Miletić 1996; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001.

29 Miletić 1996: Vratnik 148 (no. 1); Oltari 150–151 (no. 2), Rajanov grič 151–152 (no. 4); Jajce 170–171 (no. 22); Donje Mile 172 (no. 23); Konjic 173–174 (no. 27); Sv. Juraj 177–178 (no. 30), Močići 178 (no. 31); Rogatica 181 (no. 36); Lever Tara 182 (no. 38).

30 Lipovac Vrkljan 2001: Vratnik 85–86; Oltari 62; Rajanov grič 64; Golubić 67; Crikvine 94–95; Jajce 102–103; Donje Mile 104–105; Konjic 107; Sv. Juraj 117; Močići 118; Dardagan 119–120; Lever Tara 124–125.

31 *ROMIC I*; *ROMIC II*.

32 *ROMIC I*: Oltari 70–71 (no. 4); Rajanov grič 71–72 (no. 5). *ROMIC II*: Močići 86–87 (no. 15); Kapelica 87–88 (no. 4); Sv. Juraj 87–88 (no. 16).

33 Karković Takalić 2019, Crikvine (426); Sv. Juraj (451); Močići (451–452); Oltari (459–464); Rajanov grič (465–470); Jajce (481–484); Donje Mile (484–485); Lever Tara (512–514).

34 Hinker 2022, 156–157, 162–163.

35 Silnović 2022, 53.

36 Based on the related methodological problems with identifying architectural remains of *capitolia* in the provinces, similar criteria was suggested by Crawley Quinn and Wilson 2013, 129–133. On the problematic nature of identifying some *mithraea* in Rome and Ostia see Van Haepereen 2019, 82; Van Haepereen 2022, 115–126.



Mithraic sculptures and inscriptions dedicated to Mithras found outside the context were frequently considered reliable proof of a *mithraeum*'s existence near their discovery site.<sup>37</sup> These objects were often moved and reused for various purposes, and taking them as indicators of *mithraea* is difficult.<sup>38</sup>

### a) Sites that can be positively identified as *mithraea*

Based on the proposed criteria, six Mithraic temples can be positively identified in Dalmatia: Oltari, Rajanov grič, Jajce, Konjic, Sv. Juraj and Močići (fig. 9).<sup>39</sup> Architectural remains of *mithraea* at Oltari (tab. 2, no. 1), Rajanov grič (tab. 2, no. 2), Jajce (tab. no. 3) and Močići (tab. 2, no. 4) are still preserved and can be visited, while the *mithraea* in Konjic and Sv. Juraj (tab. 2, no. 5) had a less fortunate fate. The archaeological remains of the *mithraeum* in Konjic are today overgrown by the forest and no longer visible. However, Patsch, who excavated the *mithraeum* in 1897, published a detailed report including the ground plan of the building with all the finds from the site (fig. 3).<sup>40</sup> The rectangular *mithraeum* (9 × 5 m) consists of one room, the *cella*, built on a single level.<sup>41</sup> The northern wall was sunk into the hill, while the remaining walls rose freely. A local limestone stone was used for its construction, cut in irregular blocks and bound with lime mortar.<sup>42</sup> It appears that the *mithraeum* was vaulted and had a tiled roof.<sup>43</sup> The floor was made of earth, sand, and broken stones. Only the north *podium* was identified (1.30 m wide, 4.30 m long). Besides the well-known double-sided tauroctony relief, an altar dedicated to Mithras by a certain Lucius Veturius<sup>44</sup> and a significant amount of small finds and animal bones were also found.<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, the *mithraeum* at Sv. Juraj Hill in Cavtat (tab. 2, no. 5) no longer exists.<sup>46</sup> The badly worn-out rock-cut tauroctony (fig. 10), accidentally discovered by local sailors in the nineteenth century, was cut out of the rock, and, subsequently, the church of St. George and the adjoining cemetery was built on the site.<sup>47</sup> Sir Arthur Evans gave the first description of the discovery.<sup>48</sup> Besides the cult relief, Evans noted two square altars hewn out of the rock, encircled with a small gutter.<sup>49</sup> He also found three small brass coins inside a natural rock fissure placed below the tauroctony relief: one of

37 See the sites discussed in the b) section of the text.

38 See also examples discussed by Van Haepelen 2022, 117–120.

39 Silnović 2022.

40 Patsch 1897, 629–656.

41 Patsch 1897, 631.

42 Patsch 1897, 632.

43 Patsch 1897, 633.

44 *CIL* III, 14222 = *HD* 052642 = lupa 30326.

45 Patsch 1897, 635–652.

46 Bijadžija 2012, 79–80 fig. 7.

47 The relief is today preserved in the Collection of Baltazar Bogišić, Cavtat.

48 Evans 1877, 387–388; Evans 1883, 19–20.

49 Evans 1883, 19.

Aurelien (270–275 AD), one of Constantius Chlorus (293–306 AD), and one of Constantius II (337–361 AD).<sup>50</sup>

Although Evans found no architectural traces of the remaining parts of the *mithraeum*, he correctly assumed that it must have been artificially constructed against the natural rock.<sup>51</sup> Without the rock-cut tauroctony relief, it would have been hard to identify Oltari as a Mithraic sanctuary since only some small finds were found at the site.<sup>52</sup> Most interesting among them is a fragment of a dark grey-brown cult vessel decorated with a lizard appliqué, which belongs to the well-known group of vessels usually decorated with snakes (*Schlangengefäße*) and other animals (frogs, lizards, tortoises, etc.).<sup>53</sup> Although they are frequently associated with the Mithras cult, *Schlangengefäße* were also used in other cults (Sabazios, Liber, Aesculap, Silvanus).<sup>54</sup>

The conspicuous rock formation bearing the rock-cut tauroctony relief is the sole preserved part of the *mithraeum* at Oltari. The natural setting incorporating various rocky features and the absence of the actual architecture made some scholars conclude that the space functioned as an open-air sanctuary.<sup>55</sup> However, fragments of roof tiles (*tegulae, imbrices*) discovered on the site indicate that the *mithraeum* was once roofed.<sup>56</sup> Although no traces of solid architectural remains were found, a simple structure consisting of four wooden posts was recently proposed.<sup>57</sup>

Carl Patsch, who provided one of the earliest descriptions and a drawing of the site, described it as an enclosed space determined by high ridges, of which the two longer ones face each other and create a spacious room in between.<sup>58</sup> Most of these rocks are no longer preserved, but a structure combining the rocky ridges and wooden construction is likely to have existed here. Moreover, various glass and ceramic kitchenware fragments indicate that a shared meal was practiced at the site.<sup>59</sup> This would have required spaces for its preparation, consumption, and storage, which obviously could not have taken place *sub divo*.

Similarly, the rock-cut tauroctony relief at Rajanov grič is the only remain of a former *mithraeum*. Here, too, an open-air sanctuary was suggested.<sup>60</sup> Based on the description and a drawing provided by Carl Patsch, the space of the *mithraeum* was, similarly

50 Evans 1883, 20.

51 Evans 1883, 19.

52 These include some coarse-ware sherds, fragments of a larger *terra sigillata* plate, fragments of *Firmalampen*, two small fragments of glass vessels, fragments of *amphorae*, a lump of lead with a nail, a yellowish quartz, and seven bronze coins, see Pavelić 1897, 158. In the more recent survey, a *dupondius* (probably of Anotoninus Pius), fragments of everyday coarse ceramics and of fine ceramic plates of African provenance, and a *Firmalampe* with a stamp of *Vibianvs* were found, see Kolak 2012, 555–557.

53 Kolak 2012, 555.

54 Bird 1996, 119–127; Gassner 2004, 229–238; Berger-Pavić and Stökl 2017, 97–125.

55 Zotović 1973, 121; Glavičić 2001, 223; Hinker 2022, 162.

56 Pavelić 1897, 158; Kolak 2012, 556.

57 Kolak 2012, 556.

58 Patsch 1900, 82–83 fig. 31.

59 See n. 54.

60 Zotović 1973, 121; Glavičić 2001, 223; Hinker 2022, 162.

to Oltari, formed by several rows of high ridges, forming narrow gorges.<sup>61</sup> These ridges created a semi-enclosed space, which, as at Oltari, could have been abutted using a light wooden construction that would have perished with time.

A rock-cut tauroctony relief is also preserved in the *mithraeum* in Jajce, along with architectural remains. The *mithraeum* (7 × 4.6 m) has a trapezoidal ground plan, and its western part incorporates the natural marl rock (with the rock-cut tauroctony relief), while the remaining parts of the temple were built using the irregular, roughly processed marlstone blocks.<sup>62</sup> The walls were constructed without foundations, indicating a light roof construction, while the floor was made of beaten earth and sand.<sup>63</sup> Only the remains of the left podium are preserved (width 1.80 m), while the exact location of the north wall is unknown as the stone blocks were not found in their original position.<sup>64</sup> Other finds include the statuette of Cautopates found with three small altars on the podium, three other altars found in front of the cult relief, and a recently discovered lion statuette.<sup>65</sup>

Another rock-cut tauroctony relief is preserved in the *mithraeum* in Močići, on the Tomina jama site.<sup>66</sup> The *mithraeum* is located in a natural limestone cave whose original appearance has altered through time. The lower part of the cave was at some point enclosed in a vaulted cistern whose remains are still visible on the floor.<sup>67</sup> The cave is missing its upper and side walls, which were probably removed when the cistern was installed. On the opposite side to the tauroctony relief, traces of another rock-cut figure are preserved, interpreted as Silvanus or some Mithraic figure.<sup>68</sup>

### **b) Sites that can not be unequivocally identified as mithraea**

The *mithraeum* at Vratnik was often presumed, based on the previously-mentioned inscription donated by a slave, Hermes, and on another altar carrying a dedication to Mithras, which was found built into the base of one of the saint's sculptures in the St. Michael's church (tab. 1).<sup>69</sup> Josip Brunšmid surveyed the site in 1898 and recognized what he thought was the foundation of the southern wall of a *mithraeum*.<sup>70</sup>

He further noticed that the site was already dug over and made a note of several fragments of various vessels found scattered around the surface of the surveyed area: the shattered bottom of a lamp, a few pieces of large wine amphorae, and fragments of long, narrow bricks presumably used for the floor of the *mithraeum*.<sup>71</sup> Although

61 Patsch 1900, 84 fig. 32.

62 Sergejevski 1937, 13.

63 Sergejevski 1937, 13.

64 Sergejevski 1937, 13.

65 Sergejevski 1937, 14–16; on the lion statuette see Silnović 2024b, 637–646.

66 Bijadžija 2012, 81–82 fig. 8.

67 Evans 1883, 20–22 fig. 7.

68 Rendić-Miočević 1989, 531–537; Cambi 2006, 207–208.

69 *ILJug* II, 920 = *HD* 020913 = *CIMRM* 1847 = *ROMIC* I, 76–77 no. 9.

70 Brunšmid 1898, 189–190.

71 Brunšmid 1898, 189–190.

Hermes' altar mentions a *spelaeum*, and it seems reasonable to assume that the *mithraeum* was located near the site of its discovery, its exact location remains open. Senia (Senj) and its hinterland are rich in Mithraic finds, and the altars could have been brought to the site from elsewhere.<sup>72</sup> The nature of Brunšmid's finds remains hard to evaluate as no further archaeological excavations were conducted at the site, and none of the finds can be explicitly associated with the Mithras cult.

Another *mithraeum* was often assumed at Donje Mile, near Jajce (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Here, a tauroctony relief was found in 1912 on the right bank of the river Pliva.<sup>73</sup> The relief was discovered in the vicinity of the creek called Pećine (caves) by some locals, after which Carl Patsch, who first published the monument, visited the site hoping to find the remains of the *mithraeum*.<sup>74</sup> Although he did not find them, he assumed that the *mithraeum* must have been located nearby, where the relief could have been attached to some surrounding cliff.<sup>75</sup>

His assumption was later adopted by Zotović and other scholars, who all presumed a *mithraeum* at this place (tab. 1).<sup>76</sup> Similarly to Vratnik, a *mithraeum* could have existed somewhere in the area where the relief was found, but since the relief was found out of the context and no archaeological excavations were ever conducted at the site, this is not possible to confirm. Thus, the relief can not be taken as evidence of a *mithraeum* at the site.

In Lever Tara (Montenegro), on a site called Preslica, a shallow arched niche was carved into the cliff (fig. 6).<sup>77</sup> Next to it, outlines of an altar were carved in the rock as well, bearing a dedication *Invicto Aug(usto)*, dated to 270 AD.<sup>78</sup> The natural rock setting was taken as an indicator of the Mithraic character of the site, and it was assumed that a tauroctony relief was once placed inside the niche (tab. 2).<sup>79</sup>

Although natural rock is frequently used for carving the tauroctony image in Dalmatia (Oltari, Rajanov grič, Jajce, Močići, Sv. Juraj), such reliefs and associated cult spaces are not exclusive to the cult of Mithras. Several reliefs depicting Silvanus are found similarly carved into the natural rock, and a rock-cut relief of Hercules from the Rasohe quarry (island of Brač) or a rock-cut relief of the Dioscuri from Dračevo on the river Neretva (near Čapljina) should be mentioned as well.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, Silvanus'

72 Overview of finds from the area in Rendić-Miočević 2015, 403–426.

73 Patsch 1925, 137–139. The relief is today lost.

74 Patsch 1925, 137–139.

75 Patsch 1925, 139.

76 *CIMRM* 1906; Zotović 1973, 34; Beck 1984, 363 n. 18; Miletić 1996, 172 no. 23; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 104 no. 24.a; Karković Takalić 2019, 484; Hinker 2022, 162–163.

77 Patsch 1896, 292 fig. 77.

78 *AE* 1998, 1027 = *CIL* III, 13849 = *CIMRM* 1888 = *HD* 042305. I am grateful to the Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture of Montenegro, for the information and photographs of the Lever Tara site.

79 Patsch 1896, 292 fig. 77; *CIMRM* 1887; Zotović 1973, 38–39 no. 49; Miletić 1996, 182 no. 38; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 124–125 no. 39; Karković Takalić 2019, 512–514; Hinker 2022, 162.

80 About the rock-cut images of Silvanus see Rendić-Miočević 1982, 133–135; Perinić 2016, cat. nos. III/23, III/24, III/75; about Hercules on Brač see Cambi 2013, 5–19; about the Dioscuri see Paškvalin 1973, 53–59.



**Fig. 6. Lever Tara (courtesy of the Ministry of Culture Montenegro)**

sanctuaries in Dalmatia are likewise placed in natural settings and caves.<sup>81</sup> Although the niche at Lever Tara contains a hole that was probably used for fastening a relief plate, it is not possible to guess, based solely on a natural setting, who and what it represented.

The dedication *Invicto Aug(usto)*, which appears on the inscription, was taken as a further indication of its Mithraic character. Although Mithras, the Invincible Sun God, is frequently invoked as *Invicto*, *Invicto Augusto*, *Soli invicto*, etc., these designations are found associated with different deities (Hercules, Silvanus, Sol, etc.) and their link with Mithras in the absence of a clear contextual or other epigraphic or sculptural evidence, is not possible to confirm.<sup>82</sup> Another similar example is Pljevlja (*municipium S...(?)*) (Montenegro), where an altar bearing a dedication *Soli in/victo sac(rum)* was found secondarily built in the fountain.<sup>83</sup> Its Mithraic character was recently dismissed based on analogous arguments.<sup>84</sup> Thus, without explicit sculptural or further epigraphic evidence mentioning Mithras, it is impossible to confirm its Mithraic character.

81 Cambi 1998/2000, 99–112; Demicheli 2010, 175–185.

82 A good survey of the problems of identifying Mithras with Sol invictus in Berrens 2004.

83 Patsch 1896, 277 no. 2 fig. 42; *ILJug* III, 1701 = *CIL* III, 12751 = *CIMRM* 1886; its Mithraic character is unquestioned by Zotović 1973, 41; Miletic 1996, 181 no. 36; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 124 no. 38. a; and Karković Takalić 2019, 509–510. The altar is currently kept in the Homeland museum in Pljevlja.

84 Gavrilović Vitas 2021, 145, 244 no. 2. It is unclear why Hinker assumes a mithraeum here, see Hinker 2022, 162, cf. note 635. His citation refers to Lever Tara and not to Pljevlja.

A *mithraeum* in Golubić (Raetinium, near Bihać, Bosnia, and Herzegovina) is assumed based on the numerous Mithraic finds from the area (tab. 1).<sup>85</sup> However, none of the Mithraic monuments from Golubić was found in situ: two stone blocks bearing dedications *Fonti* and *Leoni* were reused as a building material, while the tauroctony relief was found thrown among the numerous spolia on the hill called Crkvina.<sup>86</sup> Wilhelm Tomaschek, who first investigated the site, noted foundations of a building that he identified as a *sacellum* (13.5 × 8 m), and shortly after, Vaclav Radimsky interpreted them as remains of a *mithraeum*.<sup>87</sup>

Later excavations, however, revealed that these foundations belonged to a medieval church, although an earlier Roman wall was also noticed, whose original function could not have been specified at the time.<sup>88</sup> Since the site was repeatedly dug over, the chances that the remains of the *mithraeum* survived (if they ever existed at this place) are low. It is also impossible to ascertain if the relief, as suggested by Patsch, was set up in the same *mithraeum* as the two stone blocks or if they come from different temples.<sup>89</sup>

Besides these monuments, another altar dedicated to Mithras was found close to the nearby lapodean necropolis in Jezerine, a village on the opposite side of the river Una.<sup>90</sup> Apart from the altar, a tauroctony relief was also found at the exact location.<sup>91</sup> Both monuments were discovered near the river, covered in a thick layer of tuff, which prompted Segejevski's logical conclusion that the *mithraeum*, if ever erected at this place, must have been destroyed by the water.<sup>92</sup>

The number of Mithraic monuments discovered in Golubić points to the existence of a Mithraic community (possibly even more than one) and consequently to the existence of Mithraic temple(s). Without architectural remains, their exact location remains speculative.<sup>93</sup>

In 1965, a tauroctony relief was found in the Roman quarry at Dardagan (near Zvornik, Bosnia and Herzegovina) (fig. 7).<sup>94</sup> The relief was found together with some scattered fragments of a clay vessel, a fibula, and four bronze coins as well as several

85 Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 67 no. 7. a; also Karković Takalić presumes two *mithraea* in Golubić, see Karković Takalić 2019, 475–478.

86 About stone blocks see Tomaschek 1881, 469; Radimsky 1893, 57 figs. 38, 39; *Fonti*: *CIL* III, 13276<sup>b</sup> = *ILJug* 216b = *HD* 033259 = lupa 23787; *Leoni*: *CIL* III, 10042, 13276a = *ILJug* 216a = *HD* 033256 = lupa 23787. Today kept in the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. About the tauroctony relief see Tomaschek 1881, 467–468; Brunšmid 1905, 63–65 fig. 123, lupa 8830. The relief is kept in the Archaeological museum in Zagreb.

87 Tomaschek 1881, 468; Radimsky 1893, 54.

88 Čremošnik 1956, 128–129.

89 Patsch 1897, 656.

90 Sergejevski 1939, 8 no. 1; *HD* 033982 = lupa 30501. Today kept in the Archaeological Museum in Split.

91 Sergejevski 1939, 8–9 no. 2 fig. 1. The relief is unfortunately lost.

92 Sergejevski 1939, 7.

93 See the discussion of similar cases in Van Haepere 2022, 120.

94 Kosorić 1965, 49–56; Bricault and Roy 2021, 79 fig. 24. The relief is kept in the Museum of Eastern Bosnia, Tuzla.



**Fig. 7. Tauroctony relief, Dardagani (N. Silnović)**

hardly recognizable figures carved in the rock, which Milica Kosorić associated with the cult of Mithras.<sup>95</sup> The site was thus identified as a location of another *mithraeum* in Dalmatia, although the *mithraeum* itself was never archaeologically attested (tab. 1).<sup>96</sup>

The relief, made of local limestone, is particularly interesting. It is only roughly carved, while some details are treated rudimentarily. Leaving the compositional and iconographical peculiarities aside, the overall impression is of unfinished work. The intention was undoubtedly to emulate the rocky ambiance of the cave; some parts of the relief show traces of various carving tools without the final finishing and smoothing. Other than this relief, there is no other material evidence of the cult of Mithras in Zvornik.

However, recent research conducted at the quarry in Dardagan has revealed a large complex of open-cast underground extraction of limestone and has shown that Dardagan was the main source of stone blocks and unfinished stone products with which Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia) was supplied between the second and fifth centuries AD.<sup>97</sup> A further examination of Kosorić's archaeological reports and original photographs confirmed that the relief was found outside the complex, where it ended up on a pile of rubbish collected by the workers from the quarry.<sup>98</sup>

95 Kosorić 1965, 49.

96 Miletić 1996, 179–180 no. 33; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 119–120 no. 35. a; Karković Takalić 2019, 510–511.

97 Đurić et al. 2012, 471–479.

98 I am thankful to Dr. Dženan Brigić from the Museum of Eastern Bosnia in Tuzla for allowing me the access to the archival documentation.

The unfinished tauroctony relief was, therefore, most likely a product of the local workshop that was operating here.<sup>99</sup> Since the cult is otherwise unattested in the area, the relief was probably intended for export, perhaps even to Sirmium, where the cult of Mithras is otherwise attested and where the limestone products from Dardagan were regularly exported.<sup>100</sup>

The site of Crikvine in Rupotina (near Salona, Solin, Croatia) is another location where a *mithraeum* was assumed (tab. 1). A tauroctony relief was discovered reused as a lid on one of the medieval tombs adjoining the church of St. Elijah, and the remains of a Roman building with an apse (*villa rustica*?) from the same site were immediately recognized as a potential *mithraeum* (fig. 8).<sup>101</sup>

However, no further details about the interior arrangement of this apsidal room are known, and its cultic purpose remains unverified as well. As the graves inside and around the church destroyed the ancient architecture, only traces of walls and some parts of the floor were found.<sup>102</sup> There are no further finds from the site that would imply a *mithraeum* here.

The tauroctony relief was found with several other reused Roman monuments, and although they were most probably all found at the site or its immediate vicinity, they could have been brought from elsewhere as well. The nearest location with rich material evidence of the cult of Mithras is Salona, which boasts the highest concentration of Mithraic finds from a single settlement in Dalmatia and is only three kilometers south of Crikvine.<sup>103</sup>

At the site called Kapelica (small chapel), located above Uroši hamlet in the Godača massif (near Sinac, Croatia), a niche cut into the natural rock containing fragments of some figural representation was spotted.<sup>104</sup> The site is recognized as another potential *mithraeum* (tab. 1), although its Mithraic character is impossible to ascertain, as minefields nowadays surround the site. Until the opportunity arises when the site investigation will be possible, the site can not be positively identified as a *mithraeum*.

Rogatica (*colonia Ris...* (?), Bosnia and Herzegovina) is another site with a *mithraeum* in a natural cave.<sup>105</sup> An altar dedicated to Mithras was discovered in 1967 in the vicinity of a Toplik stream and a cave at a depth of 6 meters and under a 4-meter-thick layer of tufa.<sup>106</sup> Besides some Roman *tegulae*, Ivo Bojanovski did not mention any other finds

99 Silnović 2023, 193–217.

100 Mithras in Sirmium: lupa 5710; lupa 5711; on the export of limestone products from Dardagan to Sirmium see Đurić et al. 2006, 103–137.

101 Bulić 1909, 53–57; *CIMRM* 1871 = *ROMIS* 162–163 no. 4 = lupa 24997. The existence of a *mithraeum* here was further supported by Miletić 1996, 165 no. 17h; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 94–95 no. 18. a; and Karković Takalić 2019, 426. The relief is preserved in the Archaeological Museum in Split.

102 Uroda 2008, 73–74; Uroda 2010, 61–75.

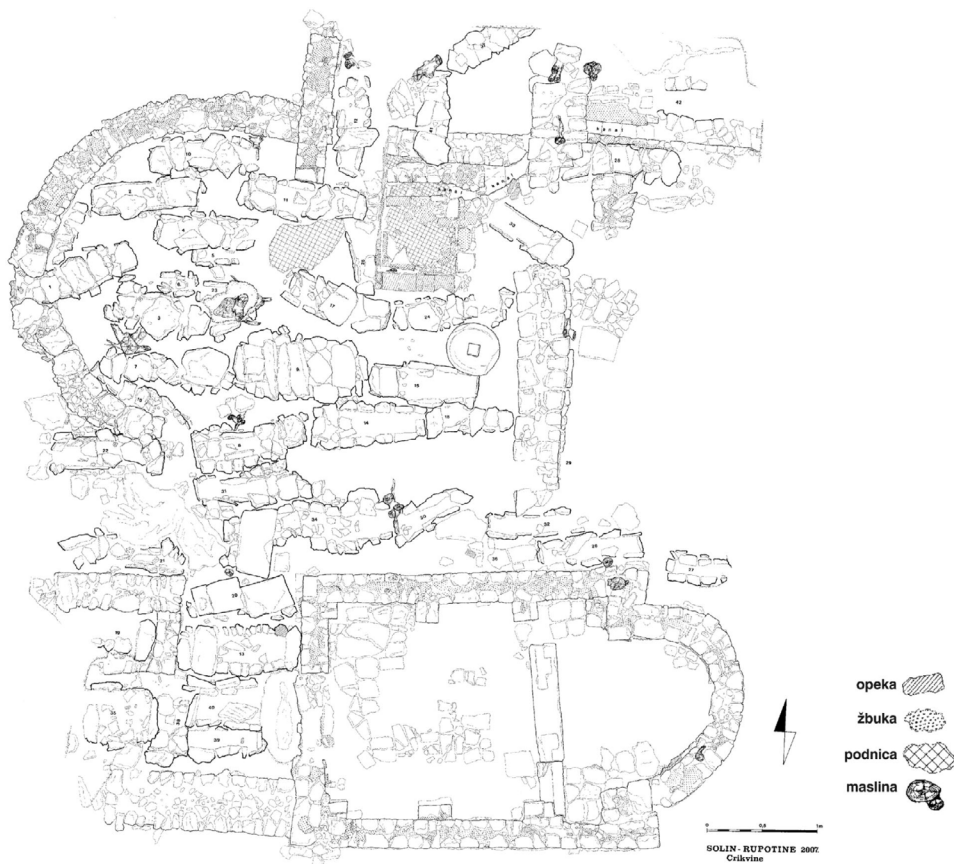
103 Silnović 2015, 103–116.

104 The site was first mentioned by Rendić-Miočević 1982, 130; also in Rendić-Miočević 2015, 414; *ROMIC II*, 87–88 (no. 4).

105 Hinker 2022, 163; Šačić Beća 2018, 115, 120 no. 2.

106 Bojanovski 1967, 47–49; *AE* 1976, 0533 = *AE* 1009, 1028 = *ILJug II*, 624 = *HD* 012315. The altar is currently kept in the Museum of Old Herzegovina in Foča.





**Fig. 8. Ground plan, Rupotine (Uroda 2008, 72, Fig. 3)**

from the spot, and the relationship between the said cave and the altar is unclear as no further details about the circumstances of this find are available.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, it is impossible to associate the altar with the cave.

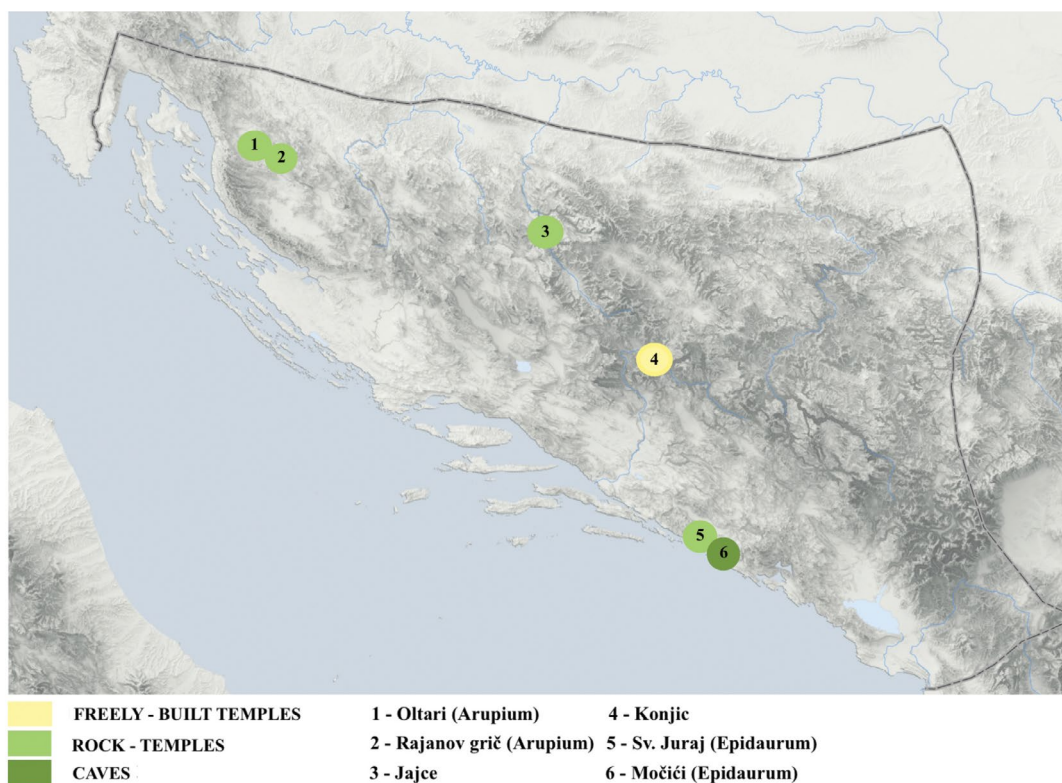
### **Typology of *mithraea* in Roman Dalmatia**

Depending on the kind of their construction, two basic types of Mithraic temples can be distinguished in Dalmatia:

1. Freely-built temples (artificially constructed temples)
2. Temples in natural settings:
  - a) Caves (natural or artificial)
  - b) Rock-temples, i.e., temples constructed against the rock face.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Bojanovski 1967, 49.

<sup>108</sup> A similar classification was also suggested by Gabričević 1951, 53–54; and recently by Hensen 2017, 385–386; Hensen 2021, 216–217. See also a brief remark by Beck 1984, 363–364. Although typological classification of *mithraea* is a complex issue and should include various factors, like altar arrangements etc., it is here limited to the basic construction type. See the discussion in Bricault and Roy 2021, 169–170.



**Fig. 9. Mithraea in Dalmatia (N. Silnović)**

Based on the identified mithraea in Dalmatia, the second type prevails, with five examples (fig. 9): one can be identified as a natural cave (Močići), and the remaining four are rock-temples (Oltari, Rajanov grič, Jajce, Sv. Juraj). The first category is represented by only one example – the *mithraeum* in Konjic.

It should be noted that the current ratio is far from conclusive. It is based solely on positively identified *mithraea*, while their original number was undoubtedly much higher. Therefore, it is impossible to guess which type was dominant in Dalmatia. In places with dense urban structures, like Salona or Iader (Zadar, Croatia), it is more likely that the first type was more present, which, of course, does not exclude the possibility of Mithraic caves or rock-temples located somewhere in their surroundings.

Surprisingly, no *mithraeum* was ever found in Salona, where, judging by the sheer number of Mithraic finds, several sanctuaries must have existed, either inside or outside the city perimeters.<sup>109</sup> Ejnar Dyggve tried to estimate their approximate location based on the find spots of some of the Mithraic monuments.<sup>110</sup> He suggested locations of altogether five *mithraea*: one near the theater, one near the amphitheater, one in the eastern part of the town, and two outside the city walls.<sup>111</sup> However, since none

<sup>109</sup> Silnović 2015, 103–116; Silnović 2018, 291–304.

<sup>110</sup> Dyggve 1951, 8.

<sup>111</sup> Dyggve 1951, 8. A similar proposal was recently made by Karković Takalić 2019, 426–435, maps 5 and 6, who uses find spots of Mithraic monuments in order to establish potential locations of *mithraea*.

of these monuments was found in situ, the exact location of *mithraea* in Salona is impossible to ascertain.

Even if it is impossible to offer a conclusive typological analysis of *mithraea* in Dalmatia, the stark contrast in the number of *mithraea* located in natural settings in Dalmatia (five within one province) and other provinces is evident (tab. 2). Outside Dalmatia, three examples are confirmed in Pannonia superior (tab. 2, nos. 6, 7, 8), two in Moesia inferior (tab. 2, nos. 10, 11), two in Syria (tab. 2, nos. 17, 18), and one in each Noricum (tab. 2, no. 9), Gallia Narbonensis (tab. 2, no. 12), Germania inferior (tab. 2, no. 13), Raetia (tab. 2, no. 14), Italia (tab. 2, no. 15), and Macedonia (tab. 2, no. 16).

Four of these are natural caves (tab. 2, nos. 9, 11, 15, 17), one is an artificial cave (tab. 2, no. 18), while the remaining *mithraea* are rock-temples (tab. 2, nos. 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16). If taken all together, rock-temples are the most represented type (twelve), while only six caves are used as *mithraea* (natural or artificial). When their total number (eighteen) is compared to the overall number of *mithraea*, it seems that the freely-built temple was the preferred type and not the “authentic” cave.

### **Some observations about naturally located *mithraea* in Dalmatia**

So far, the high concentration of *mithraea* located in natural settings in Dalmatia was understood as a result of several factors. One is the province’s favorable physical and natural environment with the predominant karst landscape. Such landscape is rich in natural caves and various rocky features, readily available to Mithraic communities in the surroundings of almost every settlement.<sup>112</sup> According to some scholars, the other factor was the low social status of the cult’s members, who belonged to the poor and rural layers of the society, resulting in “rustic” Mithraic architecture.<sup>113</sup> The idea of the poor and rural character of the Mithraic cult in Dalmatia resulted from the traditional perception of Roman Dalmatia as an underdeveloped province.<sup>114</sup>

Franz Cumont first made the association of ritual usage of caves with primitive rural societies, which he related to his theory of the Persian origins of the cult of Mithras.<sup>115</sup> Contrary to these rural and uncivilized origins of (cave) *mithraea*, it is in the civilized urban environment of the (Western) Roman Empire that the final stage of their development was ultimately achieved in the form of the freely-built temples.<sup>116</sup> Cumont’s ideas continue to be influential, and scholars are still eager to prove the Persian origins of the cult and continue to associate caves with the supposed homeland of the cult.<sup>117</sup>

112 Gabričević 1951, 54; Siemers-Klenner 2020, 241.

113 Gabričević 1951, 56; Zotović 1973, 121.

114 Džino 2014, 1–39; Džino 2016, 193–212.

115 Cumont 1896, 55.

116 Cumont 1896, 57.

117 For example, Schütte-Maischatz and Winter argue for the early date of *mithraea* in Doliche (second half of the second century AD), Schütte-Maischatz and Winter 2004, 124, 126; see arguments for a later date in Gordon 2007, 610. Also see Nielsen 2014, 161. On Cumont and the Persian character of the cult see Gordon 2017, 289–325.



**Fig. 10. Tauroctony-relief, Sv. Juraj (courtesy of Ivan Alduk, Conservation department, Imotski)**

Most recently, Ines Siemers-Klenner also proposed the Cumontian scenario (although not explicitly) of the development of the Mithraic temple.<sup>118</sup> Caves and rock-temples, according to Siemers-Klenner, are characteristic of the first phase of the cult, and *mithraea* from Dalmatia are given as an example.<sup>119</sup> The later stage of the cult's development is marked by the appearance of the freely-built temples, which, according to Siemers-Klenner, first appeared in Germania superior.<sup>120</sup>

The idea of a strictly linear development from natural cult sites to monumental stone architecture has long been criticized.<sup>121</sup> None of the Mithraic caves or rock-temples, both in Dalmatia and outside the province, seems to support this idea. Caves and rock-temples were continuously used from the early second until the late fourth century AD, alongside the freely-built temples, and were not restricted to the initial stage of the cult. Mithraic usage of caves is not a temporally bound phenomenon and does not signify an underdeveloped stage of the cult when proper Mithraic architecture (freely-built temples) was supposedly still nonexistent.

While the exact topography of most of the Roman settlements where these *mithraea* are found (Arupium, Jajce, Epidaurum) is not fully understood, the somewhat romantic idea of the secluded location of these *mithraea*, far away from the public eye, should be abandoned. Recent research has shown how Mithraic temples were integrated into

118 Siemers-Klenner 2020, 240–241.

119 Siemers-Klenner 2020, 240–241.

120 The early date of phase 1 of Mithraeum II in Güglingen (c. 114/125 AD) must be taken with some reservations as the date is conjured based on the indirect evidence, see Siemers-Klenner 2020, 241.

121 See, for example, Mylonopoulos 2008, 51–83; Sporn 2015, 340.

the wider spatial settings of the settlements and at the relatively accessible areas.<sup>122</sup> While the topographical patterns vary from region to region, the general trend of locating *mithraea* on the outskirts of the settlements, either inside or directly outside their perimeters, was recently observed.<sup>123</sup> The *mithraea* in *Arupium*, *Jajce*, and *Epidaurum* were all located near the settlements as elsewhere in provinces.<sup>124</sup>

Table 1: *Mithraea* located in natural settings

Nr.	Site (Province)	Location and type	Evidence (epigraphic and/or iconographic)	Date	Literature
1	Rajanov grič, <i>Arupium</i> (Prozor) (Dalmatia)	natural setting, near the <i>municipium</i> and Roman quarry, on the right bank of the Rajan's creek; rock-temple	rock-cut tauroctony	second half of the second - mid fourth century AD (?)	Fras 1835, 228-229; Ljubić 1882, 19; Patsch 1900, 84-85; Brunšmid 1901, 112; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 11; CIMRM 1852; Zotović 1973, 61, no. 73; Beck 1984, 356-371; Miletić 1996, 151-152, no. 4; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 63-65, no. 4a-b; Rendić-Miočević 2015, 403-426; ROMIC I, 71-72, no. 5; Walsh 2019, 112, E.1.
2	Oltari/Kraljev stolac, <i>Arupium</i> (Prozor) (Dalmatia)	natural setting, near the <i>municipium</i> and Roman quarry; rock-temple	rock-cut tauroctony	second half of the second - mid fourth century AD (?)	Ljubić 1882, 12-28; Pavelić 1897, 158; Patsch 1900, 82-84; Brunšmid 1901, 110-112; CIMRM 1851; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 10; Glavičić 1968, 19; Zotović 1973, 67, no. 86; Medini 1975, 89; Beck 1984, 356-371; Miletić 1996, 150-151, no. 2b-c; Glavičić 2001, 223; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 62-63, no. 3a-b; Kolak 2012, 555-557; Glavičić 2013, 97-98; Rendić-Miočević 2015, 403-426; ROMIC I, 70-71, no. 4; Walsh 2019, 33, 112, E.1.

122 Arnhold 2015, 301–302; Hensen 2000a, 400–402.

123 On the various topographical contexts see Hensen 2000a, 400–401; Hensen 2000b, 87–94; Hensen 2017, 400–402; Hensen 2021, 224–225; Bricault and Roy 2021, 176–204.

124 A detailed topographical discussion of *mithraea* in Dalmatia in Silnović 2022.

3	Jajce (Dalmatia)	natural setting, in a wetland area called Bare (swamp), on the left bank of river Pliva, close to the <i>municipium</i> ; rock-temple	rock-cut tauroctony	late third/early fourth century AD	Sergejevski 1937, 11-18; CIMRM 1901-1905; Zotović 1973, 26-27, no. 30; Miletić 1996, 170-171, no. 22a; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 101-104, no. 23a; Walsh 2019, 112, no. E.3.
4	Močići, Tomina jama <i>Epidaurum</i> (Cavtat) (Dalmatia)	natural setting, 5km from Epidaurum, in a hilly and thickly forested area; natural limestone cave	rock-cut tauroctony	late third/early fourth century AD (?)	Evans 1883, 20-22, fig. 7; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 18, fig. 2; Rendić-Miočević 1953, 271-276=Rendić-Miočević 1989, 531-537; CIMRM 1882; Zotović 1973, 37-38, no. 48; Miletić 1996, 178-179, no. 31; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 118-119, no. 33; Cambi 2006, 207-208; Bijadžija 2012, 81-82; Cambi 2013, 26; Perinić 2015, 215-228; Perinić 2016, 41, figs. 7 and 7a; ROMIC II, 86-87, no. 15; Lenke 2017, 71-72; Walsh 2019, 112, E.2.
5	Sv. Juraj, <i>Epidaurum</i> (Cavtat) (Dalmatia)	natural setting, on the hill of Sv. Juraj; rock-temple (destroyed)	rock-cut tauroctony	late third/early fourth century AD (?)	Evans 1877, 387-388; Evans 1883, 19-20; CIMRM 1883; Rendić-Miočević 1953, 271-272; Gabričević 1954, 37, no. 19, fig. 3; Zotović 1973, 76, no. 103; Miletić 1996, 177-178, no. 30a; Lipovac Vrkljan 2001, 116-118, no. 32a-b; Bijadžija 2012, 80; ROMIC II, 87-88, no. 16.
6	Fertőrákos, <i>Scarbantia</i> (Sopron) (Pannonia Superior)	natural setting; rock-temple	rock-cut tauroctony, tauroctony relief, inscriptions	beginning - mid third century AD	CIMRM 1636-1647; Tóth 2007.
7	Rožanec, Črnomelj (Pannonia Superior)	forest canyon; rock-temple	rock-cut tauroctony, inscriptions	first half of the second century AD	CIMRM 1481-1483; Selem 1980, 78-79; Lovenjak 1998, 286-287;
8	Mithraeum I, <i>Carnuntum</i> (Petronell, Bad-Deutch- Altenburg) (Pannonia Superior)	natural setting at the foot of Kirchenberg hill, outer edge of <i>canabae</i> ; rock-temple (destroyed)	tauroctony reliefs, dedications	c. 100 AD (?)	CIMRM 1664-1680; Gugl, Kremer 2011, 164-166; Kremer 2012, 330-331; Walsh 2019, 109, D.2.

9	Zgornja Pohanca, Zlodejev greben, <i>Celeia</i> (Celje) (Noricum)	natural cave	tauroctony reliefs, inscriptions	third century AD (?)	CIMRM 1457-1461; Lovenjak 1998, 124-130.
10	Kreta, near <i>Oescus</i> (Moesia Inferior)	south bank of the river Vit, inside a quarry; subsequently enlarged with stone blocks; rock-temple	tauroctony reliefs, inscriptions	?	CIMRM 2256-2262; Bottez 2006, 290; Alexandrescu, Topoleanu 2019, 180.
11	Târgușor, La Adam (Moesia Inferior)	3km from the village; natural cave	tauroctony reliefs, inscriptions	?	CIMRM 2303-2309.
12	Bourg-Saint-Andéol (Gallia Narbonensis)	plateau between two streams, constructed against the steep rock-face, traces of gabled roof; rock-temple	rock-cut tauroctony	second century (?)	CIMRM 895-897; Walters 1974, 4-5; Lenk 2017, 61-80.
13	Reichweiler-Schwarzerden (Germania Inferior)	marshland north of the village, close to a stream, wooden construction with a gabled roof against the steep rock-face; rock-temple	rock-cut tauroctony	third century AD (?)	CIMRM 1280-1281; Schwertheim 1974, 178-179, no. 139; Walsh 2019, 106, B.4.
14	<i>Centum Prata</i> , (Kempraten, Rappersweil-Jona) (Raetia)	northern shore of lake Zurich, partially hewn into the natural rock, stone construction (phase 1), wooden or timber-loam construction (phase 2), mixed construction (phase 3); rock-temple	tauroctony relief, inscriptions	late third – late fourth/early fifth century AD	Ackerman et al. 2020, 47-63.
15	San Giovanni di Duino (Trieste) (Italia)	on the hill slope overlooking the coast; natural cave	two tauroctony reliefs	late second (?) – end of fourth century AD	Stacul 1976, 29-38; Walsh 2019, 114-115, F.4.

16	Kato Thermes (Macedonia)	Rhodope mountains, well in its vicinity; rock-temple	rock-cut tauroctony	second - third centuries (?)	Klenner 2012, 121-122.
17	Hawarte (Syria)	close to the village, under the church of Archbishop Photios; series of natural caves	frescoes with Mithraic scenes	beginning - end of fourth century AD	Gawlikowski 2020, 183-190; Walsh 2019, 122-124, J.3.
18	<i>Doliche</i> (Dülük), Commagene (Syria)	beneath the ancient hilltop settlement, inside abandoned subterranean quarries; artificial cave	rock-cut tauroctony reliefs	early – end of fourth century AD (?)	Schütte-Maischatz, Winter 2004; Gordon 2007, 602-610; Walsh 2019, 122, J.2.



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