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THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC RESEARCH OF THE CULT OF JUPITER DOLICHENUS

Summary: *Jupiter Dolichenus* was a Roman god, a so-called ‘Oriental deity’ whose mystery cult gained popularity in the 2nd century AD, reached a peak under the Severi in the early 3rd century AD, and died out shortly after. As for *Jupiter Dolichenus*, he is sometimes referred to by scholars as ‘Baal of Doliche’ or ‘Dolichenian Baal’.¹ The name Baal is derived from the term Ba‘al, meaning ‘owner’ or ‘lord’, and the word must have been used as a title for gods in general. Over six hundreds monuments – mainly inscriptions – of the Dolichenian cult have come to light from the Eastern and Western parts of the Empire. The name *Jupiter* with the epithet *Dolichenus* – from the original name of Doliche – appears in inscriptions in many incorrect forms including *Dolichenius*, *Dolychenus*, *Dolochenus*, *Dolicenus*, *Dolcenus*, *Dulcenus*, *Dolucens*.

Which of the above epithets reflects the original Syrian form and tradition? Is it possible that *Dulcenus* is the original and correct form of the deity’s name, or is it just another vulgar change which appeared separately in time and space? This paper tries to prove the latter with the help of the LLDB. The Dolichenian cult is thought to have first been introduced by Syrian merchants and auxiliary soldiers, including troops from Commagene (the province that includes Doliche). In the light of the names of the priests of *Jupiter Dolichenus*, Speidel² states that the Jupiter Dolichenian cult in the army was largely supported by Syrians and other Orientals.

Key words: *Jupiter Dolichenus*, *Dulcenus*, Syrian traders, *Syri negotiatores*, Vulgar Latin, inscriptions

1. INTRODUCTION

The main deity of the town of Doliche in Syria, known as *Jupiter Dolichenus*, was widely worshipped in the area of the Roman Empire from the beginning of the 2nd

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¹ TURCAN, R.: *The Cults of the Roman Empire*. Oxford 1997, 161.

² SPEIDEL, M. P.: *The Religion of Iuppiter Dolichenus in the Roman Army*. Leiden 1978, 9.

century AD until the middle of the 3rd century. His popularity peaked under the *Severi* along the northern frontiers of the Roman Empire. *Jupiter Dolichenus* had several different names in antiquity, but his full name is *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus*: he borrowed his general epithets from the Capitoline *Jupiter* through the *interpretatio Romana*. Most of our data about divine names come from dedicatory inscriptions, which are by far the most common type of inscriptions concerning religious life throughout the Empire. The name is most often abbreviated on the inscriptions in the form *I.O.M.D.*³ The *Dolichenus* epithet is often referred to in a different way, however, for example: *Dolichenius*, *Dolychenus*, *Dolochenus*, *Dolicenus*, *Dolcenus*, *Dulcenus*, *Dolucens*.

To date, more than 450 inscriptions of the cult have been found in five provinces along the northwestern frontier of the Roman Empire: in the Rhine-Danube frontier, Italy, Britain and Northern Africa as well as in the Balkan region. They are distributed in the border areas of the Roman Empire, with most of the evidence for this cult found close to military settlements. At the same time, the traces of the cult are missing from Gaul and Hispania, Asia Minor, Aegyptus, and areas outside the territory of Commagene in Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia.⁴

Answering the question of what effects and processes created the form *Dulcenus* requires complex investigation; we also have to examine whether regional variations influenced the Dolichenian cult. Firstly, we must look at relevant Latin inscriptions displaying the name of the god from the eastern area, especially Syria. Secondly, we must examine inscriptions mentioning the name of the town of Doliche. Thirdly, we must examine inscriptions erected by individuals of Syrian descent who contributed greatly to the spreading of the *Dolichenus* cult, such as the Syrian merchants and cult priests. At the same time, we should also take a look at the inscriptions that appear first in western provinces, as they are the ones we can expect to best reflect the normative form of the name of the god. While doing so, we should establish whether variants developed in the everyday life of local populations or in the whole empire at the same time, and whether they existed from the beginning or appeared only with the emergence of new settlements. This is a complex task.⁵

2. SYRIA, DOLICHE (Δολίχη)

Doliche,⁶ the town the god in question was named after is now located in southeastern Turkey. The sanctuary of *Dolichenus*, which served as the centre of the cult in

³ BEARD, M. – NORTH, J. – PRICE, S.: *The Religions of Rome*. Vol. I. Cambridge 1998, 281.

⁴ For the possible causes, see TÓTH, I.: *Iuppiter Dolichenus-tanulmányok*. [Iuppiter Dolichenus-Studien.] Budapest 1976, 9.

⁵ FEHÉR, B.: *Bujkáló adatok Aquincumból a nem szabályos nyelvhasználatra* [Hidden data illustrating non-normative linguistic usage from Aquincum] [*FIRKÁK II*]. Győr 2012, 173 – 179, here 173.

⁶ Doliche was located between the Euphrates River and the Taurus Mountains, in the Kingdom of Commagene, and was situated close to the intersections of important trade routes and military roads that connected it with Edessa, Carrhae, Samosata, Antioch, and other destinations well beyond the Near East.

Roman times,⁷ lies on the top of the mountain Dülük Baba Tepesi. On this hill stood a former shrine, and it was an important place of worship before the Roman area. The god *Hadad* or *Zeus Hadados* was honoured here.⁸ The name of Jupiter was only added when the settlement became the centre of the Roman cult.⁹ This fact excludes the possibility of the *Dulcenus* form on Latin inscriptions having been created because of substrate/adstrate effects.¹⁰ József Herman¹¹ dealt with this type of transcriptional uncertainty, and said that the phenomenon can be seen as a striving for a better reflection of the original pronunciation.

With the Roman conquest, the cult underwent a major transformation, and the Dolichenus epithet appearing after makes it clear that the cult comes from Doliche, as opposed to the other Syrian gods who were also identified with *Jupiter*.¹² The name of the settlement appears only in the Hellenistic era in literary sources, and even there it has various forms, so it is uncertain whether *Dolicha* or *Doliche* was the original name.¹³ This uncertainty of form is also reflected in ancient *itineraria*. Ptolemy is the first who mentioned *Doliche* in Commagene, and then it is mentioned in the *Itinerarium Antonini* as one of the stations of the road from Cyrrhus to Samosate.¹⁴ In addition, we also have evidence of an ethnic denomination in the form of Δόλιχος.¹⁵ Most of the inscriptions found in Syria are in Greek (CCID 2, 3, 30, 33, 34), where the god is invoked as Θεῶ Δολιχηνῶ.¹⁶ Inscriptions from the cult centre Doliche and its immediate vicinity appeared from 57–58 AD. Their language is uniformly Greek, and the god is mentioned as Δολιχηνῶ (CCID 2–15). Among the dedicators we can find a certain Βαράδαδος bearing theophoric name (CCID 2) – that is, Hadad's son – and this name appears in two more inscriptions related to the Dolichenian cult from

⁷ BLÖMER, M. – WINTER, E.: *Commagene: The Land of the Gods between the Taurus and the Euphrates. An Archaeological Guide*. Istanbul 2011.

⁸ In the Syrian inscriptions the deity is called several names, like *Theos Epekoos*, the 'listening god'. Other popular epithets of the same god in this area included 'Great-sighted god', 'holy god' *Theos Dolichenus*, *Zeus Magistos*, etc. COLLAR, A.: *Religious Networks in the Roman Empire. The Spread of New Ideas*, Cambridge 2015, 84.

⁹ The relationship between *Jupiter Dolichenus* and the former deity was last discussed by BUNNENS, G.: *The Storm-God in Northern Syria and Southern Anatolia from Hadad of Aleppo to Jupiter Dolichenus*. In HUTTER, M. – HUTTER-BRAUNSAAR, S.: *Offizielle Religion, lokale Kulte und individuelle Religiosität* [Alter Orient und Altes Testament 318]. Münster 2004, 57 – 82.

¹⁰ There is no interaction between Semitic and Latin in the name of *Hadad and Dolichenus*.

¹¹ HERMAN, J.: *Latinitas Pannonica. Filológiai Közlöny* 14 (1968) 364–376, here 371.

¹² *Jupiter Heliopolitanus, Jupiter Hieropolitanus, Jupiter Turmazgades, Jupiter Tavianus*, etc. DUNAND, F. – LÉVÊQUE, P.: *Les Syncrétismes dans les religions de l'antiquité: colloque de Besançon, 22–23 octobre 1973*. Leiden 1975.

¹³ The name of the settlement in literary sources may also refer to Doliche of Thessaly. Ptolemy, *Geogr.* V 14.8. On Greek inscriptions, however, it typically appears as Δολίχη. For a review of the city's variants see MERLAT, P.: *Jupiter Dolichenus. Essai d'interprétation et de synthèse*. Paris 1960, 2.

¹⁴ Tabula Peutingeriana, segmt. X, A, 2 and *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti*, Asia, 184, 1–4: 'Dolicha is 10 miles from Sicos Bassilisses, 14 miles from Zeugma, 20 miles from Gerbedisso and 25 miles from Hanuea'.

¹⁵ By the 6th century, Stephanus of Byzantium (*Ethnica*, *Dian.* 187) wrote about Doliche: Ἔστι δε καὶ Δολίχηνή πόλις τῆς Κομμαγενῆς. Εὐθνικὸν Δολιχαῖος Ζεὺς οἱ δ' ἐπιχώριοι Δολιχηνοὶ λέγονται.

¹⁶ SEG 32, 1386; SEG 32, 1391.

the territory of the Roman Empire.¹⁷ The worship of *Jupiter Dolichenus* in the Eastern territories never spread too far from its birthplace.¹⁸ The Latin-language inscriptions of the area are exclusively made by military origins, originating from the sanctuary district of Dura Europos and from Hierapolis;¹⁹ these can be dated to later times, during the Severan dynasty (CCID 32, 39). Inscriptions from the Greek-speaking area are very rare, mainly from Thrace, most of them from Augusta Traiana (CCID 50, 51, 52).²⁰ Doliche as an attribute in many cases appears as an origo²¹ or a personal name.²² The name of the town is also shown as *Dulca* from the Pannonian Brigetio (AE 1911, 222) or *Dolica* on an inscription from Aquincum (CIL III 3490).²³

3. EARLIEST INSCRIPTIONS

I will now briefly discuss the chronological distribution of reliably dated inscriptions showing that the first proofs of the cult appeared in the northern and eastern borderlands for the first time during Hadrian's reign,²⁴ in Lambaesis.²⁵ They were found in Northern Africa in a building inscription from 125/126 AD and at Carnuntum in Pannonia on an inscribed block dedicated by a Dolichenian youth group between 128–138, commemorating the construction of a gate and of a portion of the wall of a sanctuary,²⁶ in both cases referring to an already established community and a temple of the cult. Due to the reading and the context of earlier inscriptions,²⁷ the datation of this inscription is uncertain. Another temple was found during the reign of Antoninus

¹⁷ Dacia, Apulum (CCID 154) and Rome (CCID 363).

¹⁸ MERLAT (n. 13) 1960, 9 '...en Syrie même que Jupiter Dolichenus avait ses concurrents orientaux les plus dangereux, Zeus Hadados, Jupiter Héliopolitain, les dieux palmyréniens, et leur rivalité était d'autant plus sôvère que, malgré des variantes, ils revêtient tous des aspects assez semblables dans les zones de diffusion assez strictement délimitées.'

¹⁹ AE 1998, 1430.

²⁰ From Cillae (CCID 54) and another from Thrace: *IGBulg* V 5600; V 5587; III.2 1590 and III.1 1527.

²¹ Provincia incerta (AE 1995, 1565) *Dolich(e)* / *ex Syria vico Araba*; Macedonia/Olooson (AE 1913, 2) *in via supra / Geranas inter Azzoris [et] / Onoareas et Petraeas [in] / Dolichis*; Pannonia superior/Poetovio (AE 2010, 1240) *ex region(e) / Dolich(e) a vico / Arpuartura*.

²² Numidia/Lambaesis (AE 1989, 875) *L(ucius) Valerius Longinus Dolich(he)*; Rome (CIL VI 2312) *Arruntia Doliche / fecit*; Rome (CIL VI 29082) *Vitelliae / I(ibertus) Dolichus*; Rome (CIL VI 32624) *Iu(ius) C(ai) f(ilius) Ael(ia) Caius Dolich(he)*; Baetica/Italia (CIL II 5381) *Satria / Dolice*.

²³ During the *Septimii*, the mass immigration from the East, especially of the Greek begins to Pannonia. The two largest centres of this immigration were Aquincum and Brigetio.

²⁴ COLLAR (n. 8) 2015, 79; where she writes about the location of the first proofs and the network of connections.

²⁵ CCID 620 – *Pro s[alute] et incolunitate / Imp(eratoris) Cae[s](aris) Traia[ni] Hadriani Augusti / Sex(tus) Iuli[us] Maior legatus ipsius pro praetore / templ[um] I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) dedicavit*.

²⁶ CCID 217 – *Pro sal(ute) Imp(eratoris) C(aes)aris Tra(iani) Hadr(iani) Aug(usti) / p(ontificis) m(aximi) porta(m) et muru(m) per / pedes lon(gum) C altu(m) p(edes) VII / iuvent(us) colens love(m) Dolichen(um) i<m=N>pe(n)sa sua fec(it)*.

²⁷ Dating from the inscription of Sextus Proculus Papirianus *praefectus vigilum* on an inscription (CCID 434) in 92 AD, or a fragmented inscription (CCID 639) that can be dated to Nerva's reign, although the early date is disputed.

Pius at Baclava (*AE* 1998, 1156). The earliest inscriptions use standard abbreviations and dedicate the altar ‘To Jupiter Best and Greatest of Doliche’,²⁸ each time as *Dolichenus*.

4. THE CULT DISTRIBUTORS AND THEIR INSCRIPTIONS

The rapid spread of the cult from Doliche to the West was very likely caused by a combination of military, commercial, and social activities. Its proliferation in the western provinces is mainly related to the movement of troops in the Doliche region from various areas.²⁹ First of all the military seems to have played a role in the cult’s spread and it is considered as the ‘culture carrier’ of the cult to Europe; it was most likely not auxiliaries but Roman soldiers who were responsible for transmission of the cult.³⁰ The other major group responsible for the spread of the Dolichenian cult were the zealous missionary priests³¹ who came almost exclusively from the Eastern provinces, mainly from the territories of the Doliche sanctuary and from Syria,³² with their distribution work happening under the Severan dynasty.³³ The priests of *Dolichenus* appeared in great numbers in those parts of the Empire where the cult had a strong base from earlier times, especially in Pannonia,³⁴ Moesia, Dacia, Britain,

²⁸ *CCID* 434 – Rome: *Iovi Optimo Maximo / Dolicheno*; *CCID* 620 – Numidia/Lambaesis: *templ[um] I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno)*; *CCID* 217 – Pannonia Superior/Carnuntum: *Iove(m) Doli(chen)um*; *CCID* 275 – Pannonia Superior/Praetorium Latobicorum: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno)*; *AE* 1998,1156 – Regnum Bospori/Balaklava: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Doliche[no]*; *CCID* 151 – Dacia/Apulum: *[I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)] / D(olicheno)*; *CCID* 172 – Dacia/Pejceja: *I(ovi) [O(ptimo) M(aximo)] / Dol[icheno]*; *CCID* 564 – Britannia/Condercum: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) [M(aximo) Dolicheno]*.

²⁹ SOLIN, H.: Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt. Eine ethnisch-demographische Studie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der sprachlichen Zustände. In *ANRW* II.29.2 (1983) 587–789, here 629–647. The cult has long been closely associated with the Roman military, and analysis of the epigraphic data shows the traditional suggestions for the spread of this cult demonstrates the mobility of the officers in the army.

³⁰ DÉSZPÁ, L. M.: *Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus and the Re-Imagination of the Empire: Religious Dynamics, Social Integration, and Imperial Narratives*. In NAGEL, S. – QUACK, J. F. – WITSCHER, C. (eds): *Entangled Worlds: Religious Confluences between East and West in the Roman Empire. The Cults of Isis, Mithras, and Jupiter Dolichenus*. Tübingen 2017, 113–182.

³¹ For the entire compilation of relics, see TÓTH, I.: *Sacerdotes Jovis Dolicheni*. *Studium* 2 (1971) 23–28.

³² Among the inscriptions made by priests, there is only one where the dedicator is specified, naming himself as Syrius (*CCID* 443). However, among the names we usually encounter distinctive Semitic and Greek names. In the case of Latin names, the Eastern origin is sometimes revealed by the father’s Semitic or Greek name. Just one example, from Dacia/Apulum (*CCID* 154): *Flavius Bar/hadadi*, son of *Flavius Barhadadas* a peregrine of Eastern origin. This inscription may be of particular interest, as the name *Barhadadas* means ‘Hadad’s son’. There is another priest wearing this name from Syria (*AE* 1940, 72 = *CCID* 3), which suggests that the creator was more closely tied to Doliche’s main deity. For further examination of the names of the Dolichenian priests, see TÓTH: *Sacerdotes* (n. 31) 19.

³³ Most of the inscriptions can be dated between 180 and 250 AD, see the inscriptions of the priests in detail, TÓTH: *Sacerdotes* (n. 31) 23–24.

³⁴ TÓTH: *Sacerdotes* (n. 31). Titles of Dolichenus priests in Pannonia Inferior/Sárpentele (*CCID* 200) *tot(ius) pr(ovinciae) / sacerdot[is]*; among Pannonia Superior’s inscriptions, from Carnuntum, it is common to name the high priest of the community, see *CCID* 219, 221, 229, 231; and Gerulata (*CCID* 234).

Africa, and of course in Rome. Based on our present knowledge, we know more than seventy inscriptions describing a cleric or priest of the cult.³⁵ We do not know the exact cause and date of the Western migration of these priests, but we do know that it begins after 183 AD, in connection with the establishment of Roman settlements in the Danubian provinces and the colonization related to it. These priests, who called themselves chosen by *Dolichenus*,³⁶ popularized their god with the help of the Emperor's propaganda.³⁷

The inscriptions of *Dolichenus*' priests are largely abbreviated leaving only a few inscriptions that are relevant to the study. A Moesian inscription (*CIL* III 7520) cites the form *Dolchenus* and another the form *Dolychenus* (*CIL* III 14445). There are two fully inscribed dedications with the name of the god in Dacia: from Apulum as *Dolichenus* (*CIL* III 7760) and from Romuliana as *Dol(icheno)* (*CCID* 104). The only Dalmatian inscription that also mentions the god in a fully inscribed form is from Salona (*CIL* III 8785). In the evidence from Pannonia,³⁸ from where the second most inscriptions related to Dolichenian priests came from after Rome, the name of the god is shown several times in the abbreviation *Dol(icheno)*.³⁹ The inscription from Sárpentele (*CIL* III 3343), which was erected by all the priests of the province Pannonia, was dedicated to *Dolc(heno)* without the I. The name is fully written as *Dolichenus* in Carnuntum (*CIL* III 11130), and also in Rigomagus (*CIL* XIII 7786). Another dedication from Mogontiacum (*CIL* XIII 11812) refers to *Dolicensus*. The monuments from Rome are almost always inscribed fully, with just one case of *Dolenceni* (*CIL* VI 30944), and one case of *Dolcheno* (*CIL* VI 415).⁴⁰ On an inscription from Latium/Puteoli, the name is shown in the form of *Dol(icheno)* (*CIL* X 1577), and on another from Tarracina in the form of *Dolicheni* (*CIL* X 6304). The dedications from Ariminum (*CIL* XI 6788 and 6789) both refer to *Dolicheno*. The name appears in only one case in the form of *Duli(cheno)*, on an inscription from Latio (*CIL* XIV 110). A Rhaetian inscription (*CIL* III 11926) mentions *Doloceni*, which is known from Roman examples.

In addition to priests, Eastern, primarily Syrian traders also played an important role in the western spread of the Dolichenian cult. The inscriptions of people who describe themselves as *Syri negotiatores*⁴¹ are outstanding in the provincial material

³⁵ TÓTH: Sacerdotes (n. 31).

³⁶ Rome/Aventin hill (*CCID* 381) *Quos elexit I.O.M.D. sibi servire*; Moesia superior/Romuliana (*CCID* 104) *...sacerdos servus eius*

³⁷ TÓTH: Sacerdotes (n. 31).

³⁸ Acumincum (*CIL* III 3253); Carnuntum (*CIL* III 11131); Carnuntum (*CIL* III 11130); Carnuntum (*CIL* III 4401); Carnuntum (*CIL* III 11133); Carnuntum (*CIL* III 11132); Gerulata (*CCID* 234).

³⁹ After the city of Rome, from Carnuntum the inscription dedicated by most priests are known. TÓTH: Sacerdotes (n. 31) 23.

⁴⁰ *AE* 1940, 72 and 73; *AE* 1938, 65; *CIL* VI 31181.

⁴¹ Dacia/Apulum (*CIL* III 7761) *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) / Aurelii / Alexan(der) et Fla(v)us Suri / negotia(tores)*; Dacia/Sarmizegetusa (*CIL* III 7915) *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno) / Gaius G[a]ianus e[t] / Proculu[s] / Apollofan[es] / Suri neg(otiatores)*; Moesia Superior/Viminacium (ZPE-203-243,9) *Aur(elius) Maxim[us] / Surus ne[gotiat(or)]*; Rome (*CIL* VI 367) *iussu Iovis / Dol<i>=</i>Y>chen(i) / P(ublius) Aelius Myron / neg(otiator)*; Germania superior/Mogontiacum (*CIL* XIII 11812) *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Dolic(h)en[o] / G(aius) Iul(ius) Mater(nus) neg(otiator)*

of the Dolichenian inscriptions. The names of the worshippers of the Dolichenian cult in Pannonia reveal that non-military votum performers were almost exclusively Oriental.⁴²

In the inscriptions made by the priests of the cult we can already often observe the tendency to write the name of their god erroneously. The CH ~ C alternation can be observed most often. This orthographic mistake is already apparent in the Roman Empire from the 1st century BC. Another phenomenon is the loss of an accentuated vowel in the second syllable. The most interesting form is *Dolocenus*, where an acoustic assimilation can be observed; however, the number of examples is limited, which makes it hard to draw any solid conclusion⁴³ (*CIL* III 11926).

5. DULCENUS

Let us now examine the *Dulcenus* form, which has dozens of known examples in the Empire, from a linguistic point of view by reviewing the religious-historical circumstances. The adstrate/substrate effect of the name of *Jupiter Dolichenus* can be ruled out in the name variations appearing on the inscriptions, as the former god was honoured as Hadad or Baal. Zeus/Jupiter, with an adjective from the name of Doliche emerged over the *interpretatio Graeca* and *Romana*. Where *Dolichenus* is called *Dulcenus*, *Dulchenus*, *Dolychenus*, etc, we can see a Vulgar Latin variant. In the next section, I will take a look at the results of the Computerized Historical Linguistic Database of the Latin Inscriptions of the Imperial Age⁴⁴ to examine the linguistic background of the *Dulcenus* form.⁴⁵

The name of the god appears in the Roman Empire sixteen times as *Dulceno* or *Dulcheno*. There are eight inscriptions in Noricum,⁴⁶ one in Moesia Superior,⁴⁷ one in Dalmatia,⁴⁸ two in Dacia,⁴⁹ three in Pannonia Inferior,⁵⁰ and one inscription in Ostia⁵¹

⁴² *CIL* III 3908; *CIL* III 11131; *CIL* III 11133; *CIL* III 4401; *CIL* III 11130; *CIL* III 10991; *CIL* III 3253; *CIL* III 10243.

⁴³ This form of assimilation occurs several times in the cult's corpus: Pannonia Superior/Aquae Balissae (*CCID* 277); Britannia/Habitanum (*CCID* 557); Britannia/Vindolanda (*AE* 2010, 790); Rome (*CCID* 356 and 357).

⁴⁴ For describing changes, I use the categories of the LLDB Database.

⁴⁵ ADAMIK, B.: In Search of the Regional Diversification of Latin: Some Methodological Considerations in Employing the Inscriptional Evidence. In BIVILLE FR. ET AL. (eds): *Latin vulgaire – latin tardif IX. Actes du IX^e colloque international sur le latin vulgaire et tardif*, Lyon, 6 – 9 septembre 2009. Lyon 2012, 123–139.

⁴⁶ Maur an der Url – *CCID* 300, 304, 305, 310, 312, 313, 314, 316.

⁴⁷ Moesia superior/Pincum – *CCID* 86; BODA, I. – TIMOC, C.: Notes on the Dolichenian Monument of Pincum / VelikoGradište (*CIL* III 14503,1 = *AE* 1902, 20). *Starinar* 66 (2016) 121–127; Museum of Banat (Timișoara) Pongrácz Collection, Inv. N. 1300.

⁴⁸ Dalmatia/Salona – *CCID* 122.

⁴⁹ Ampelum – *CCID* 146 and Domnesti – *CCID* 138.

⁵⁰ Tokod (*CCID* 182); Lussonium (*CIL* III 3316 = MERLAT, P.: *Répertoire des inscriptions et monuments figurés du culte de Jupiter Dolichenus*. Paris 1951, N. 65); Aquincum (*CIL* III 3461 = 13366 = MERLAT N. 71).

⁵¹ The inscription made by the Misenum fleet – *CCID* 440.

and Raetia.⁵² All of these inscriptions come from the provinces of the Danube region, apart from the Misenum fleet inscriptions. Most of the evidence for the cult comes from this area, i.e. primarily the *limes* area, where soldiers and oriental traders constituted the majority of worshippers.⁵³ In many cases, in the local variant of Latin it is possible to identify elements not indigenous but imported at the conquest of the province with the first Latin-speaking newcomers, who were mostly military troops. Since these military units came from different territories, the linguistic corpus of the times right after colonisation is quite heterogeneous.

The *Dulcenus* form reflects the following language changes: /o/ > V, *syncope praetonica*⁵⁴ and /ch/ > C. There is a correlation between the phenomena of vowel change in the first and second syllable. The frequency of the dropping out or deletion of the unstressed vowels, that is, the syncope, in imperial and Late Latin was related to the change /o/ > V in both stressed and unstressed syllables. The frequency of syncope is not surprising in cases where the /o/ > V change was also realized.⁵⁵

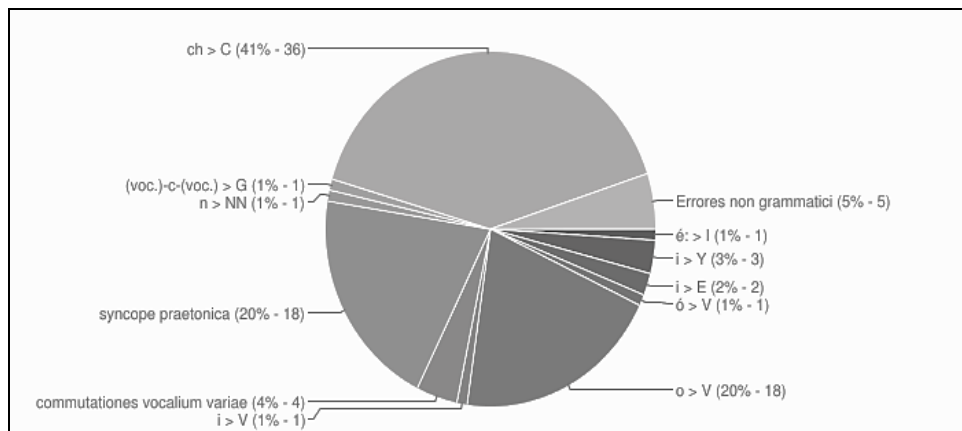


Diagram: Linguistic mistakes in the name *Dolichenus* (LLDB)⁵⁶

⁵² Statio Vetonianis (Pfünz) – CCID 481.

⁵³ At the same time, it should be noted that the cult was not only popular among soldiers and traders, but also among the civilian population. Apart from just one or two exceptions, inscriptions dedicated to *Jupiter Dolichenus* erected by civilians were found mostly along the *limes*. Accordingly, the cult was most popular among civilians in settlements where there was a military camp or a larger commercial centre.

⁵⁴ ADAMIK, B.: *The frequency of syncope in the Latin of the Empire. A statistical and dialectological study based on the analysis of inscriptions.* In POCCETTI, P. ET. AL. (eds): *Latinitatis Rationes. Descriptive and Historical Accounts for the Latin Language.* Berlin – Boston 2016, 3–21.

⁵⁵ For the most recent study concerning the correlation between vocalic confusions in accented and unaccented syllables and syncope, see ADAMIK, B.: *A Study on the Dialectology of Vulgar Latin Vocalic Mergers: The Interaction between Confusion of Vowel Quality, Syncope and Accent.* In GARCÍA LEAL, A. ET AL. (eds): *Latin vulgaire – latin tardif XI: XI Congreso Internacional sobre el Latín Vulgar y Tardío (Oviedo, 1–5 de septiembre de 2014).* New York – Zürich – Hildesheim 2017, 183–194.

⁵⁶ While the literature often talks about “mistakes” or “faults”, it is important to note that these are actually phenomena reflecting linguistic change. They are mistakes only according to classical Latin standards, while they actually evidence current language use.

The Diagram clearly shows that in the inscriptions dedicated to *Dolichenus*, we are facing a very common phenomenon in the /o/ > V change and the *syncope praetonica*. The /ch/ > C change belongs to the group of grammatical mistakes that are results of acoustic changes that had already happened or had been in progress for a long time (*Errores quasi orthographici*). These orthographic misunderstandings had been around for so long and were so widespread that they do not provide additional information. From the time of the Old Latin period, it was always a tendency in spoken language to simplify hard consonants, such as the aspiration of the unvoiced occlusive consonants c, p, t (as ch, ph, th). The distribution visible in the above chart is consistent with the linguistic profiles of the relevant provinces, and neither of the phenomena are specific to the worshippers of *Dolichenus*.

6. SILVER VOTIVE PLAQUES FROM MAUER AN DER URL

In a particular subject group, the *Dulcenus* form is very common. The silver plates belonging to the Dolichenian shrine⁵⁷ of Locus Felicis⁵⁸ (Mauer an der Url) provide the largest corpus of the name variant *Dulcenus*.⁵⁹ We do not know the sanctuary itself, only the bronze vessels discovered in 1937, together with 88 metal and clay objects⁶⁰ that once belonged to the sanctuary and could have been hidden underground during the 3rd century German invasion. From the inventory of the shrine, a total of 28 silver plaques were found, and such a large discovery is unique in the Empire. One of the offerors of these silver plaques, called *Marina*,⁶¹ is also known from a silver plate, which he offered to *Iuno Regina*.⁶²

Examining the demographic composition of the silver plates, it can be stated that the dedicators were always local, indigenous people, and in 10 cases, women.⁶³ The people mentioned on the silver plates had names with some kind of moral meaning such as *Iusta*, *Probus*, *Vera* and *Victura*.⁶⁴ The inscriptions from Mauer an der Url are all dated to the period between the end of the 2nd century and the middle of the 3rd century AD. These silver vows form a coherent group based on their creation. They share the same iconographic and shaping style, which makes it likely that they

⁵⁷ NOLL, R.: *Das Inventar des Dolichenus Heiligtums von Mauer an der Url (Noricum)*. Wien 1980.

⁵⁸ This area is in Noricum, but just 130 km from Vindobona, near the Pannonian border, where it was one of the stations of the military road along the Danube.

⁵⁹ *AE* 1995, 1565; *AE* 1913, 2; *IDRE*-2, 448; *AE* 2010, 1240; *CIL* III 567; *CIL* VI 2312; *CIL* VI 29082; *CIL* VI 32624; *RIU*-2, 533.

⁶⁰ Among the relics found here, there are no stone monuments; there must have been some of them, and they are probably in the sanctuary yet to be discovered. The votive offerings found, made of silver, were probably displayed around the entrance to the shrine, and they were sometimes decorated with representations of *Jupiter Dolichenus*. NOLL, R.: *Der große Dolichenusfund von Mauer an der Url. Führer durch die Sonderausstellung. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. Antikensammlung*. Wien 1938.

⁶¹ Semitic *mārīnā* which means 'our lord', NOLL: *Dolichenusfund* (n. 60) 54.

⁶² From the context it is clear that *Iuno Dolichena* is the *paredra* (female counterpart) of *Jupiter Dolichenus*.

⁶³ NOLL: *Dolichenusfund* (n. 60) 71. *CCID* 314 is also referred to the Celtic name of *Matugena*.

⁶⁴ *CCID* 303, 304, 305; MERLAT (n. 50) 28 call attention to this.

came from the same workshop. The *Dulcenus* form that appears in the third of the inscriptions reflects the graver's Vulgar Latin parlance.

7. SUMMARY

Comparing the different name varieties in the inscriptions, we can conclude that the original, normative name of the god was *Jupiter Dolichenus*. It appears in inscriptions in the form *Dulcenus* or *Dulchenus* only starting from the 3rd century, following the changes in the living language, thus representing only a segmented part of the community of the worshippers of *Dolichenus*. The existence of linguistic changes is evident from how this linguistic vulgarism cannot be found in inscriptions erected by the priests of *Dolichenus* themselves, who were the main carriers of the cult in these regions, but who came from the immediate vicinity of the cult centre in the province of Syria. Moreover, this linguistic change does not occur in the name of θεῶ Δολιχηνῶ in the Greek-speaking areas, which is another testimony to the *Dulcenus* or *Dulchenus* etc. forms reflecting linguistic phenomena in Vulgar Latin. Accordingly, the forms different from *Dolichenus* are not separate epithets, but ways how the engraver used their own "regular" spelling to reflect the current pronunciation.

One of the most remarkable observations regarding relevant inscriptions is that the ones including a faulty version of *Dolichenus* all come from military sites, and the dedicators themselves are often soldiers.⁶⁵ The most authentic information about the social status, cultural background, and origin of the people who erected inscriptions is often provided by the very nature of their language use.

It should also be emphasized that the cult of *Jupiter Dolichenus* was much closer to the worshippers than the official cults. This is proven by how many more vulgarisms are found in the inscriptions dedicated to him compared to those dedicated to official deities. It seems that the relationship between human and god was more flexible in these cases, which resulted in the use of less constrained forms of communication. While the Roman population officially worshipped the gods of the state, it seems that in reality many expected providence not from them, but from the so-called Oriental gods.

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⁶⁵ Silvanus and Leonides, on the Pincum's inscription, served as a *signiferi* of an unnamed *legio* (CCID 86), the centurion, *Publius Caius Valerinus*, served in *legio X Fretensis* (CCID 138). *Aurelius Secundus*, a veteran of the *legio II Adiutrix*, had a shared altar for *Dolichenus* and *Heliopolitanus* in Aquincum (CCID 183). The Misenum fleet soldiers offered colonization to *Dolichenus* (CCID 440).