Sanctuaries in Roman Dacia

Materiality and Religious Experience

Csaba Szabó
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## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>ABRRD</td>
<td>Addenda for the Bibliography of Roman Religion in Dacia. Online: <a href="http://brrd2014.wixsite.com/brrd">http://brrd2014.wixsite.com/brrd</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>AÉ</td>
<td>L’Année épigraphique</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBRD</td>
<td>Boda, I. - Szabó, C., Bibliography of Roman Religion in Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2014</td>
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<td>CCAR</td>
<td>Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România</td>
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<td>Hörg, M. - Schwertheim, E., Corpus Cultus Iovis Dolicheni, Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain 106, Leiden, 1987</td>
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<td>CIGD</td>
<td>Ruscu, L., Corpus inscriptionum Graecarum Daciarum, Hungarian Polis Studies 10, Debrecen, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIL</td>
<td>Corpus inscriptionum latinum. Consilio et auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae editum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clauss-Slaby</td>
<td>Epigraphik Dantebank Clauss-Slaby</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSIR</td>
<td>Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani</td>
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<td>DMA</td>
<td>Digital Map of Apulum = Szabó 2016b</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDH</td>
<td>Epigraphic Database Heidelberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPRO</td>
<td>Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain (founded by M. J. Vermaseren)</td>
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<td>HA</td>
<td>Scriptores historiae Augustae</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDR</td>
<td>Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae I-III, București/Paris</td>
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<td>IG</td>
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<td>Petolescu, C. C., Inscriptii latine din Dacia. (Inscriptiones Latinae Dacicae), București 2005</td>
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<td>ILS</td>
<td>Dessau, Hermann. Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae Berlin 1892-1916, 3 vols</td>
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<td>LIMC</td>
<td>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, Zürich, München, Düsseldorf, 1981-1999 and 2009</td>
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<td>LSCG</td>
<td>Sokolowski, F., Lois sacrées de cités grecques, Paris, 1969</td>
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<td>lupa</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ubi-erat-lupa.org/simplesearch.php">http://www.ubi-erat-lupa.org/simplesearch.php</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>MMM</td>
<td>Cumont, F. V., Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra: pub. avec une introduction critique, Bruxelles, 1894-1896</td>
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<td>MNR</td>
<td>Museo Nazionale Romano, catalogues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>MNIT</td>
<td>Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei</td>
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<tr>
<td>MNUAI</td>
<td>Muzeul Național al Unirii Alba Iulia</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIR</td>
<td>Prosopographi Imperii Romani saec. I. II. III (2nd edn), Berlin 1933</td>
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<td>RIC</td>
<td>The Roman Imperial Coinage</td>
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<td>SEG</td>
<td>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum, 1923-</td>
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<td>ThesCRA</td>
<td>Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum 2004-2014</td>
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<td>TIR</td>
<td>Meredith, D., Tabula Imperii Romani: Map of the Roman Empire, based on the International 1: 1,000,000 map of the world, Oxford, 1958</td>
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<td>TLL</td>
<td>Thesaurus linguae Latinae, München, 1894</td>
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Dasas and Dazurius, two Illyrian men from the Mavioi tribe, lived close to the Pelješac peninsula, on the picturesque gulf of the Neretva (Narona) river – considered the coldest in the known world. Their tribe lived near various Illyrian groups that specialised in the long-distance trade of wine and olive oils in the Adriatic, but also in mining. Barely speaking Latin, the first language of the Roman Empire, the small Illyrian group worshipped their local divinities, with specific Illyrian names, adopting Roman religious practices already in Dalmatia. They learned from their parents, friends, teachers, neighbours how to name a god, a spirit, which had superhuman powers. They also learned in Illyricum what kind of objects, scents, prayers, dances or chants these divine agents needed. They knew where these divine agents could be addressed most effectively. In other words, they learned the ‘religious’ lesson and gained a religious knowledge, which probably included several common aspects from each group and family from this part of the Empire; however every single individual built this religious knowledge up differently, as their own identity.

At a certain moment between AD 106 and 271, Dasas and Dazurius, together with numerous other people from Dalmatia, changed their environment radically: they moved to Dacia, the latest province of Rome, once known as the Kingdom of the Dacians.

What did they know about this part of the world before they moved there? Hard to say. Perhaps only some legends from soldiers and merchants about a foggy, wild and barbarian province, where the feared enemy of Rome, the Dacians, lived in marvelous richness. They certainly knew that the province became part of the Empire, conquered by Trajan in the summer of AD 106 and celebrated in Rome on coins and all over the Roman world. With such ethnographic knowledge about the former kingdom of the Dacians, they left their homeland and moved into the mountains of the Apuseni. A world without seaside, without olives, a much colder, foggy and woody area, rich in gold and various other mines.

The group of Dasas and Dazurius preserved their mother language and their unpolished Latin, chose a site on the Hăbad hill, where, together with other Illyrian groups, they built a small, rectangular building, where they continued to communicate with their gods in the manner, as they learned at home, on the bank of the Narona. Dasas and Dazurius worshiped Maelantonius, a divinity who is uniquely attested in the Roman Empire, on their poorly elaborated, rudimentary altar (Fig. 1). Maelantonius – whatever he might represent in the divine world, was part of the religious memory and

\[\text{Maelanto}/\text{nio Dasas / e(t?) Dazurius / pro salutae(?) / Maniatium / v(otum) s(olverunt) l(ibentes)}\]

Figure 1. Altar dedicated by Dasas and Dazurius in Alburnus Maior (source: AE 1990, 831=ILD 363, lupa 15241)

\[\text{AE 1990, 831=ILD 363=Ciongradi 2009, nr. 75.}\]
indigenous identity of the two movers. The small, rectangular building was at least in the beginning, the centre of the world for these Illyrians: a place where they can speak their mother language, speak with their gods in their home manner, meet their friends and make new connections. On this hill, more than 30 altars were found, several of them attesting different groups from Dalmatia. The number and position of the altars within the sanctuary suggest a regular, but not an intense activity on the hill. We do not know if there were charismatic religious entrepreneurs, priests acting at this site, making new narratives or strategies of communicating with gods. However, through their altars, they maintained a successful communication with their home divinities. They sacralised a space.

Dasas and Dazurius, and all the other people coming to Roman Dacia temporarily for some weeks, or months, or for long years of service might have had special, individual religious knowledge and habits when they arrived here, but the province itself, with its people, climate, geography, economy, administrative and political specificity, changed forever these movers and their religion too. The settlement of the two Illyrians was known as kastellum Ansium and was part of the larger administrative unit of the Aurariae Dacicae, the golden district of the province. The area was dominated by the local elite of Ampulum, but the strong influence of Apulum and its legion was also present. They lived and interacted daily with people from all over the Roman Empire and, perhaps, with Dacians too. This special condition from Dacia, from these mountains and small settlements, the new social and economic roles they gained with intense networking, changed their religious communication too. These dynamics in communication with gods, the religion in the making, is memorised most visibly in the changes of the sacralised space, which became now not only a transporter of indigenous, group identities, but also an agent of social competition and group networking. Maintaining such a special space was crucial for individuals, groups and settlements too. Some of these sacralised spaces remained small, almost invisible, used and visited by a single person, a family or a special group. Others however became large, monumentalised ‘instantiations’ in the architectural and natural landscape, gaining local or even provincial fame and visitors.

The sacralised space of Dasas and Dazurius, together with all the other hundreds of spaces where Romans communicated with divine agents, had a sudden end: its maintenance was dependent on human agency and the possibility of using special tools, in this case, a large number of altars, as votive offerings. After AD 271, or even a decade before, a large part of the population left the province, leaving the material presence of the Roman Empire without their human agency.

This case study of the Hăbad site represents the story of Dacia in a nutshell. It shows, how the former kingdom of the Dacians and the remaining, apparently rural population of the indigenous people, was suddenly cohabited by a large number of people from all over the Roman Empire. It illustrates also the economic and political motivations of the short- or long-term mobilities attested in the province and the major networks (familial and economic) bonding the population of Dacia between AD 106 and 271 with the rest of the Empire. The research history of this site was focusing till now on the publication of the excavation reports, cataloguing the altars and some of the small finds, establishing the ethnic and onomastic specificities of the human agency, and dealing with the epithets of gods and supposed syncretism of their religious communication. These focus points are common for almost every case study in Dacia.

What I intend to do in this book, is to go beyond Roman religion as part of the ‘Romanisation of Dacia’ and ask some new, sometimes radical, questions to highlight unasked dimensions of religion in Roman Dacia and in the archaeology of Roman religion in provincial contexts: what were the strategies and local appropriations to create, maintain and fail a sacralised space in Roman Dacia? What made a space more effective and intense in communication with divine agents? How does an individual or group bring religion into play in his/her interaction with other people? And finally: How did these special spaces, and the religious communication in them, shape and change individual and group identities? Following a radically new methodology, tested for the very first time in a case study from the Danubian provinces, this book will focus on the role of space sacralisation in the ‘Lived Ancient Religion’ approach.

1.1. Space sacralisation and the Lived Ancient Religion approach

The case study presented above and the major questions I addressed, introduced some of the key theoretical notions operating within this book. Notions such as space sacralisation, religious appropriation, religious individualisation, group identities and strategies of maintaining religious communication are just a few of the major innovations of a new school in the study of Roman religion, called the Lived Ancient Religion (LAR) approach.

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1. Bloch 1944: 77 cited by Albrecht et al. 2018
2. Rüpke 2012: 198 using the notion of „radical alternative“.
3. On religion in the Danubian provinces, see: Zerbini 2015; Szabó 2018a; Szabó 2018b.
entitled *Lived Ancient Religion: Questioning ‘cults’ and ‘polis religion’*, financed by the European Research Council and embedded in the research group on ‘Religious individualisation in historical perspective’ aimed to question some of the major characteristics of Roman religious studies from the last few decades. The methodological background of the project was presented in numerous paradigmatic publications, showing itself a dynamic evolution of notions and terminological clarifications. Its methodological core lies in the critical approach on older assumptions that focused on polis religion, cults and religions essentialised as the ultimate religious agents, archaeology of religion reduced to an archaeology of belief systems, the marginality of the individual, as religious agent, or the contractual presentation of ‘ancient Roman religion’ and ‘Oriental religions’. The LAR approach criticised also the old assumption, that all inhabitants of ancient societies were ‘religious’ in the same way, depth or manner (*homo religiousus* fallacy). Finally, the project united Christianity, Judaism, magic, and the so-called ‘pagan’ religions under the same research focus in a well-established geographic area, named as ‘Mediterranean’ religion. Instead of these old assumptions, Roman religion is presented in the LAR approach as a ‘religion in the making’, focusing on the ‘inherently dynamic quality of those cultural products that we identify as a religion in the course of historical analyses’. The project introduced several notions from contemporary religious studies and anthropology. Lived religion itself derives from the contemporary American school of religious studies, although its original meaning changed in the last decade, describing now mostly everyday religious experiences. LAR however does not try to focus exclusively on everyday religion. Instead, it tries to go beyond the dichotomy of subjectivity and communicative action. To do so, the project focused on individual religious appropriations, a notion from M. de Certeau defined here as ‘the situational adaptation and deployment of existing practices and techniques, institutions, norms and media to suit contingent individual or group aims and needs’. Religion, competence plays another important role in this approach. Defined shortly as prioritising personal engagement, knowledge and skill, facets of religious competence (knowledge agency, identity, communication) were used to describe the experience and knowledge necessary for the success of religious action. Mediality and the situational meaning are other aspects which can guide us to understand more deeply the religious actions of the Romans and, generally, ancient peoples. Analysing the tools of religious communication, the project shifted its focus from agency to so-called religious ‘instantiation’, defined as the focus on the form and content of religious agents, mostly on material agency, but also narrated religions, such as the embodiment, or the narrated body as religious instantiation.

Temporality and spatiality played a secondary role in the LAR project, highlighted only in the last publications. It created also a space taxonomy, focusing on primary, secondary, and shared spaces in religious communication (Fig. 2). Instead of focusing on the false dichotomy of public and private, urban and rural, military and civilian, small and monumental, this space taxonomy analyses the visibility, accessibility and connectivity of these sacralised spaces with their human agency, but also with other similar spaces and the broader environment. Sacralisation here is defined, therefore, as a spatial strategy of religious communication between humans and super-human divine agents. As a result of sacralisation, ‘special’ spaces of various size, position, visibility, accessibility and connectivity can be created.

Creating such places could have various beginnings in primary, secondary and shared spaces. In primary spaces, such as the body of a pilgrim, a house shrine, a portable altar or the micro-space of using miniature objects (gems, amulets), the relationship of humans and divine agents could be much more personal, individualised. Individual religious appropriations are much higher in this category. One can find great lacunae in this present study when it comes to this category: our sources of primary sacralised spaces in Dacia are very poor. The LAR project itself produced few case studies from this category, using mostly I. Introduction

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8 Fuchs-Rüpke 2015b; Rüpke 2016; Rüpke 2018; Gasparini et al. 2018. See also: Szabó 2017.
9 In comparison with Rüpke 2012, 2014; Raja-Rüpke 2015b; Laneri 2015; Leisten-Sonik 2015.
10 Albrecht et al. 2018. See also: Versluis 2013; Alvar 2017.
11 Albrecht et al. 2018.
12 Rüpke 2018: 1-5.
13 Albrecht et al. 2018. For several other major questions, see: Rüpke 2018: 9.
14 Albrecht et al. 2018: 2.
15 Albrecht et al. 2018. For an earlier definition, see: Rüpke 2012: 197.
16 Albrecht et al. 2018: 3.

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17 On religious communication and its cultural and social aspects in provincial cases, see: Rüpke 2014: 104-108.
18 Rüpke 2018: 11.
21 Based on the space taxonomy of D. Clarke. See: Raja-Rüpke 2015b: 5. See also: Smith 1987: 28; Smith 2004.
22 See also Szabó forthcoming.
23 For the rich bibliography on spatial aspects of religion, see: Cancik 1986. See also: Cancik 2008: 3-60; Coomans et al. 2012, especially their inspiring introduction on the evolution and role of sacralised spaces in secular or non-religious societies; Moser-Feldman 2014: 1-13; Laneri 2015. See also: Brockman 2011: XIII-XIV. For other models, see also: Smith 2004: 325; Knott 2011. See also: Albrecht et al. 2001: 20; Fontana 2013: 1-11; Shaw 2013: 1-11; Jaffe 2015: 4-8; Meier-Tillessen 2014; Raja-Rüpke 2015b; Laneri 2015; Leisten-Sonik 2015.
24 On the notion of ‘special’, see: Taves 2009; and for a critique of this Knott 2010.
25 For the notion of micro-space, see: Raja-Rüpke 2015b: 5.
The LAR space taxonomy in Roman Dacia

Sacralised places in primary spaces

Apahida (CIL III 7656), Căianu (CIL III 7655), Mera (ILD 607), Sic (CIL III 6247), Vâlcele Aiud (CIL III 942–3), Berghin (IDR III/4, 41), Dragu, Daia Română (CIL III 7788), Gușterița, Valea Nandrului, Sebeș (IDR III/4, 18), Sâmaclăuș (IDR III/4, 89), Vintul de Jos, Orlea, Ciumăfaia. In numerous houses in urban settlements (for example in Apulum) and military contexts (Marcu 2004; Petruț 2015). Possibly III.3.

Sacralised places in secondary spaces

Alburnus Maior (I.1-4), Almășu Mare (III.2), Ampelum (III.3, III.4), Apulum (I.6,7,8, II.3, II.8, 9, 10, III.6-17), Caransebeș (III.21), Cincșor (III.22), Cioroia Nou (III.18-19), Decea Mureșului (I.15), Dierna (III.23), Dobroța (II.11, III.24-25), Gherla (III.26-27), Mică (I.20, I.21, II.12, II.13, III.29-31), Napoca (III.34-37, 39, 40), Peștera Veterani (III.41), Peștera lui Traian (III.42), Pojejena (III.43), Porolissum (I.23, I.24), Potaissa (II.14, III.44-47), Praetorium (I.28), Râzboieni Cetate (III.49), Romula (III.50), Sarmizegetusa (I.34, I.43, I.46, I.47, II.16,III.56-59), Samum (III.52-53), Slăveni (I.50, III.61), Sucidava (III.62), Tibiscum (I.52, II.19, III.65-66), Valea Sângeorgiului (III.67)

Sacralised spaces in shared spaces

Ampelum (II.1, III.5), Apulum (I.5, II.2, II.4-6), Arcobadara (I.9), Buciumi (I.10), Caransebeș (III.21), Călugăreni (I.11), Câmpulung-Jidova (I.12), Cigmău (I.13), Cumidava (I.14), Drobeta (I.16), Germisara (I.17), Gîlău (I.18), Gredistea Muncelui (III.28), Inlăceni (I.19), Micia (III.32), Napoca (III.38), Peștera Veterani (III.41), Peștera lui Traian (III.42), Pojejena (III.43), Porolissum (I.22, I.25), Potaissa (I.26-27), Praetorium (I.28), Racovița (I.29), Râcari (I.30), Râzboieni Cetate (III.49), Reculum (I.31), Romula (III.49-50), Sarmizegetusa (I.33, I.35-42, I.44-45, III.54-55), Samum (I.32), Sâcelu (III.60), Slăveni (I.50, III.61), Sucidava (II.18), Tibiscum (I.51), Vârâdia (I.54)

Figure 2. The LAR space taxonomy in Roman Dacia

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literary sources,\textsuperscript{26} magic,\textsuperscript{27} or case studies with abundant sources of both literary and archaeological evidence.\textsuperscript{28} In secondary and shared spaces, however, the factors are much more diverse and the number of tools used by the \textit{homo faber}\textsuperscript{29} in creating sacralised places are much higher. Instantiated religion can be attested much more easily in such case studies, as many of the examples presented here later will show. Religious communication in secondary and shared spaces means also social and political competition and the intensification of the activity of religious providers, entrepreneurs and other social actors.\textsuperscript{30} LAR produced numerous case studies in this category, focusing on complex sanctuaries,\textsuperscript{31} Palmyrian priests,\textsuperscript{32} Isiac groups,\textsuperscript{33} Bacchic associations,\textsuperscript{34} and sacralised spaces from the Near East.\textsuperscript{35}

Integrating the LAR taxonomy in the systemic model of past societies of G. Clark, and with the space archaeology of D. Clarke, can give us a much more accurate approach to Roman religion and its material agency too.\textsuperscript{36} In this model (\textit{Fig.3.}), sanctuaries (shared/public, secondary and primary spaces) are interpreted as semi-micro spaces, influenced by urban factors (citification)\textsuperscript{37} and by larger systems, macro-spaces, such as provinces, customs-systems (\textit{Publicum Portorium Illyrici}), large economic units and clusters (Black Sea area, Danubian provinces, Adriatic area, Silk Road, Amber Road), or the Roman Empire itself.\textsuperscript{38}

This book presents carefully selected examples from all of these spaces, although this sharp distinction of spatial taxonomy is not always adaptable for our case studies, numerous examples showing overlapping and a constant interaction between them. Instead of choosing one particular aspect of the materiality of sacralised spaces, such as architecture\textsuperscript{39} or the art-historical analysis of objects,\textsuperscript{40} I will present the archaeological sources as tools and products in the process of sacralisation and religious communication in a cultural-historical framework.\textsuperscript{41} In this approach, the rich variety of objects will lose some traditional labels such as ‘provincial’,\textsuperscript{42} ‘Christian’,\textsuperscript{43} ‘votive’ or ‘cultic’ artifacts, the focus of the analysis being on the use and occasional agency of them in space sacralisation and other forms of religious communication.

The materiality of Roman religion used and accumulated through religious experiences contributed to the maintenance of the sacralised spaces. In this process, inscriptions and figurative monuments, known also as instantiated religious agents – the most significant part of the corpus of this work – played an important role, connecting humans and gods beyond the limits of time and space. As the title of this book already suggests, this work will focus on the materiality of space sacralisation and its role in religious communication, sometimes memorised as religious experiences of the ancient people from Dacia.\textsuperscript{44}

I.2. Rethinking sacralised spaces in Roman Dacia: a research history

The above-presented approach is tested on a province, which is often cited only as a footnoted case study in Western scholarship.\textsuperscript{45} To understand the aims and sources of this work, a short, historiographic retrospection is necessary beforehand.

Roman sacralised spaces and their materiality were always present in the geographic and cultural landscape of the ex-territory of Dacia.\textsuperscript{46} Although few of the sacralised spaces from Roman times were used who are the intended subject of study, but the symbolic process is easily inverted, and peoples under terms such as ‘cultures’ become viewed principally as labels for groups of artefacts, which are the immediate subjects of analysis. The focus is then on the relationship between the objects themselves, which in the 1960s became the centre of interest. (Hicks 2010: 53). Almost none of the sanctuary-monographs focus on the ritual/agent-based approach, presenting the architectural and material features through the role-identity theory of objects. On this approach, see: Weiss 2012: 200, fn. 111, with further bibliography. See also: Weiss 2015.

\textsuperscript{41} Some of the archaeological material used as tools in maintaining the sacralised space were used also before the existence of the place (everyday pottery, architectural elements, Bauornamentik for example), while others (specific cultic pottery, instrumenta sacra, magical gems, reliefs, etc.) were produced as a consequence of space sacralisation. Still, they are not only products of religious experience but also tools for maintaining sacralised spaces. See also: Taylor 1997: 187.

\textsuperscript{42} Versluys 2014: 7.

\textsuperscript{43} Rebillard 2015: 427.

\textsuperscript{44} In my book I use the intensively discussed notion of ‘religious experience’ as the short- or long-term effect of religious communication on the individual or group. See also: Taves 2009.

\textsuperscript{45} Dészsa 2012. See the research history below.

\textsuperscript{46} Despite this, in his Foreword of the first – and until now the only synthesis on Roman temples of Dacia – Mihai Bărbulescu emphasised that the sanctuaries of Roman Dacia were never observed and remained unknown to the next generations: Pescaru-Alcu 2000: Foreword.
Sanctuaries in Roman Dacia

in any form by later societies, their presence is attested in the antiquarian tradition since the 15th century. As the mutilated Jupiter statue from the Colonia Aurelia Apulensis shows, the most prominent temples and sanctuaries of the province were visible in Early Medieval times too. In the 1690s, L. F. Marsigli was able to draw the outlines of the Ara Augusti and the provincial forum from Sarmizegetusa, while, in 1715, G. Ariosti described standing Roman statues and possible temples of Apulum. The first report about a discovery of a sanctuary comes from A. Bartalis and Gy. Aranka, from the end of the 18th century, while in the 19th century the number of discovered or identified Roman sacralised spaces increased significantly. Except

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Figure 3. Roman Empire and it’s spaces in D. Clarke’s space theory

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47 Szabó 2015f.
48 Szabó 2004a: 83–119. In the text I use the short denomination of the Roman city (Sarmizegetusa). In Romanian literature there are numerous versions still in use (Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa or Colonia Sarmizegetusa). In the case of the Roman finds from Sarmizegetusa Regia, the Dacian capital, I emphasise the difference.
49 Szabó 2014b.
50 Szabó 2013a.
51 Aranka 1796, Szabó 2014a.
52 See also: Boda 2014b; Szabó 2014b.
for the seminal work of Pál Király on the Mithraeum from Sarmizegetusa, none of the publications tried to contextualise the finds and the sacralised places discovered.

In the first half of the 20th century more than 30 sanctuaries were identified in urban and non-urban settlements, mostly in Tibiscum, Porolissum, Micia, Sarmizegetusa and Apulum. The archaeologically attested sites excavated between 1918 and 1989 are relatively well documented, although none of them were published in monograph form. The epigraphic and statuary material discovered in this period, however, suggest that numerous sacralised places have now vanished in Napoca, and especially in Apulum, due to the severe urbanisation of these sites since the 13th and 14th centuries, and which accelerated in the Habsburg era. Although this period produced numerous important studies and books on the religious life of the province, the spatial and ‘lived’ aspects of religion were not emphasised in these works. Roman religion in Dacia was understood and presented as spiritual interferences or specific case studies of religious syncretism. Although the number of possibly identifiable sacralised spaces in Dacia is reflected by the dozens of urban settlements and hundreds of rural environments uncovered recently, the Romanian literature focused almost exclusively on shared and secondary spaces (public temples and houses of small-group religions), the sacralised spaces in the domestic and private spheres being almost totally neglected. Roman archaeology in Romania had always two major focus points: forts (Limesforschung) and, rarely, urban archaeology. This is one of the main reasons why this present work cannot deal in details with funeral and domestic (household) religion within the perspective of the LAR approach.

A milestone in the research is represented by the discovery and systematic excavation of the Liber Pater shrine from Apulum between 1989 and 2003, which revolutionised the archaeology of religion in Romania and introduced numerous new questions and aspects in the local academic discourse (I.6). This case study is the best application to date of new field methods (GIS, geophysical surveys, single context recording, archaeobotany and archaeozoology) and international collaboration. Unfortunately, as with many other important case studies from the province, this one remains unpublished. Due to its exceptionally rich material evidence, this site has produced to date the most relevant studies on lived Roman religion from Dacia. Similarly, the excavations of the Dolichena from Porolissum and Mehadia I.23, 28), the shrine of Domnus and Domna from Sarmizegetusa I.37) and the Mithraeum from Apulum I.7) represent a development in the archaeology of Roman religion in Dacia. Some relevant publications and catalogues appeared after 2000, although focusing mostly on architectural and topographic features of sanctuaries and temples of the province.

55. See also: Oltean 2007: 190-192. On funeral religion in Dacia, see Bărbulescu 1993; Popa 1993; Gudea 2008. See also: Opreanu 2008.

56. There are numerous cemeteries excavated in recent years in the conurbation of Apulum and Porolissum, but none of them were published systematically: Petru et al. 2010; Bounegru 2011; Bounegru 2017. See also: Oltean 2007: 190-192. On funeral religion in Dacia, see also: Bărbulescu et al. 2003.

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61. On the landscape of the province and an incomplete list of Roman sites, see: Bărbulescu et al. 2005; Oltean 2007; Gudea 2008. See chapter IV.5.


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66. Although the archaeology of religion is evolving rapidly due to the above-mentioned new discoveries and excavations, a large part of the literature still reflects old topics and currents, focusing exclusively on architecture, iconography and material typology.

67. Most relevant, and to date the only comprehensive catalogue of ‘temples’ in Roman Dacia, is the book by A. R. Pescaru and D. Alicu, later extended by some supplementary articles of D. Alicu. Their work introduced a typology based on archaeologically attested, epigraphically attested and presumed or uncertain temples. The book does not have a well-defined terminology for sacralised spaces and is focused mainly on architectural features, typology, chronological
Studying Roman religion of Dacia in Romania was for a long time but a single chapter of the ‘cultural life’ of the province. It was presented as a consequence of the ‘deep Romanisation’ and the ‘massive presence of the Latin-speaking element’ in the society, proving the large-scale mobility exemplified in almost all of the major Romanian works, with the proverbial reference of Eutropius (VIII, 6.2): ‘ex toto orbe Romano’. Traditional approaches present the materiality of Roman religion in secular old categories, dealing with ethnic and geographic pantheons, emphasising the supremacy of ‘Italic cults and divinities’, limiting their bibliographies to the old French literature and giving a much higher focus on the institutionalised tools of religion, such as priesthood, temple architecture, and the ‘Greco-Roman’ cults. Important studies, focusing on the ‘Oriental’ cults, emphasised the dichotomy with the traditional Roman religion. Religion appeared as an already prepared, fixed norm and language, acculturated by the Romanised society of Dacia. Due to the political situation, scholars from phases, and short presentations of the buildings. Their list dates from 2002 and has not been updated: Pescaru-Alicu 2000; Alicu 2002; Alicu 2004; Marcu 2009. Another important work regarding the temples and sanctuaries of Sarmizegetusa was published in German, without a relevant impact in Romanian or Western literature: Schäfer 2007. See also: Szabó 2014d.

65 Macrea 1969: 338-404 (on religion, 358-404). Art and literary usually is presented just before religion, including religion as one aspect of the cultural life of the province is still practised. See also: Gudea-Lobüscher 2006: 64-89 dedicates, however, an integrated chapter on cults; Ardeven-Zerbini 2007: 175-186; Bărbolese 2010. On research history see: Szabó 2014d.


67 Pescaru 2010: 272. His short summary on Roman religion – published perhaps not accidentally in the same year as the new edition of the great companion volume on the history of Romanians, where M. Bărbolese wrote the synthesis on Roman religion – is a perfect example of the old, but still very popular discourse which dominates Romanian scholarship on Roman religion. See: Pescaru 2010: 264-272. It is pointed out that he had studied Dacia, he had translated ‘a very large number of men from the whole Roman world, to people the country and the cities; as the land had been exhausted of inhabitants in the long war maintained by Decebalus’. translated, with notes, by the Rev. John Selby Watson. London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Convent Garden (1853). This quotation is constantly cited by every Romanian scholar as the ‘deep Romanisation’ and the ‘massive presence or the whole of Dacia’. There is no mention of the ‘Oriental’ cults, which are still practised. See also: Gudea-Lobüscher 2006: 64-89 dedicates, however, an integrated chapter on cults; Ardeven-Zerbini 2007: 175-186; Bărbolese 2010. On research history see: Szabó 2014d.


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70 Here one need to highlight the great influence and success of the small and almost unaccessible book of W. Jones from 1929, cited even today especially in American literature. See: Byros 2011. Due to the rich network of M. Vermes, however, the materiality of Roman religion from Dacia is relatively well represented in the EPRG series. Especially C. Daicoviciu, E. Condurachi, M. Gramatopol, S. Sanie and A. Bodor had a large international network with French, German and English scholars which influenced the accessibility of the Romanian material by foreign scholars, but also, the exchange of new ideas and books from the West. The great publicity of the Apulum journal contributed also to some kind of internationalisation of the field already in the 1970’s. See: Matei-Popescu 2007; Szabó 2014d.

71 On the recent state of research and the perspectives see: Nemeti-Marcu 2014; Szabó 2014d.

72 1% of the material: sources of the book

This research presents carefully selected case studies (around 30) from the 142 sacralised spaces attested or presumed from the territory of Roman Dacia (AD 106-271) through their material evidence (Fig.4). The selection was guided especially by the methodology presented above, but also by some pragmatic factors, such as the accessibility (or inaccessibility) of the material, which in many cases is still not published or only partially available. In some cases, the examples were selected because of their importance and the current disregard in the Romanian archaeological heritage or academic discourse. This book does not discuss in detail the sacralised spaces of transformations and appropriations. Important to mention the review of Toynbee written by A. Bodor, the works of M. Gramatopol, C. Pop, M. T. Marinescu and recently, the works of A. Diaconesco, although the emphasis is still on the elaboration (technical skills, workshop networks) and iconographic typologisation instead of a social history of Roman art in Dacia. See: Stewart 2008.

73 One can observe the supremacy of F. Cumont and R. Turcan. In some works, especially from the Cluj School of epigraphy and Roman provincial archaeology, the dominant presence of A. Dossowskezy and Wissowa is more evident.


75 Pescaru-Alicu 2000.


77 Sanie 1989. See also: Carbó-Garcia 2010a for a slightly better, but still, ambiguous approach.

78 Few studies existed till recently, where art in Roman Dacia was analysed in details and focusing on local particularities, abroad up until 1990 used the materiality of Roman Dacia, almost exclusively, based on great corpora and works published before 1948.

Recently, the rich material evidence of Roman religion from the territory of Dacia is under a new focus. The accelerated internationalisation of classical studies and Roman ‘provincial archaeology’, and the urge of interdisciplinarity, has created a vast bibliography, which tries to fill the gaps of historiography, creating new catalogues and introducing new trends and topics in the research. The present work can be enrolled in this tendency too, testing the methodological framework of ‘The Sanctuary Project’ and the ‘Lived Ancient Religion’ approach on the materiality of Roman religion from Dacia.

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78 Few studies existed till recently, where art in Roman Dacia was analysed in details and focusing on local particularities, abroad up until 1990 used the materiality of Roman Dacia, almost exclusively, based on great corpora and works published before 1948.
I. Introduction

Sarmizegetusa, which has had much more attention in recent years in Romanian and Western literature too. Most of the examples focus on the reinterpretation of already published material, but a significant number of artifacts and case studies presented here were discovered by the author and represent new sources for the materiality of Roman religion from Dacia.\textsuperscript{83} A large part of the selected case studies are sacralised spaces revealed by systematic excavations, but some of the presented material in the corpus comes from older excavations, where the archaeological context is problematic or unsecure. In these cases, the interpretations need to be reduced on a particular aspect or segment of the methodological model, focusing on the worshipper, as religious agent. The two most significant groups of evidence for Roman religion in Dacia are the inscriptions and figurative monuments. In both cases this research aims to show the importance of these types of materials as the most common tools and products of the processes of space sacralisation and their maintenance.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{83} Especially in Chapter II.9.

\textsuperscript{84} Recent studies focus intensively on \textit{instrumenta} inscriptions as sources of religious individuation and experience. On epigraphy and religion, see: Scheid 2012; Witschel 2014. On a new approach of altars as sources of religious experience, see: Busch-Schäfer 2014.

Figure 4. Map of Dacia with the archaeologically, epigraphically attested and presumed sanctuaries (map based on Schäfer 2007, 357, abb. 1. with the kind permission of the author)
The main aim of this work is to present for the very first time the already known, as well as some unpublished material evidence of Roman religious communication as tools and products of space sacralisation and everyday, lived religious experiences. It will use for the first time a case study from the Danubian provinces, an area of the Roman Empire often ignored by the leading works on Roman religious studies.85

Sacralised spaces are not presented here as architecturally defined places known as sanctuaries or temples, but as examples of ritual density and accumulation of religious materiality, augmented by other spaces, such as city walls,86 forts,87 the countryside,88 or modern, artificially created fictional/ideological spaces.89 The study aims also to implement some terms already accepted by the Western literature, such as the discussion on ritual deposits (favissae),90 or the Roman nature of the Mithras cult.91 Other notions, such as the ‘small-group’ religions, ‘embodiment’, ‘religious market’ and ‘religious entrepreneurs’, need to be placed within Romanian literature.

This book intends to create a dialogue between various disciplines (mostly the archaeology of religion and religious studies) through cases studies from Dacia, where this approach has not yet been tested. In this sense, the work could also serve as an intriguing experiment for other case studies of the Roman Empire.

85 See also: Alföldy 2004; Zerbini 2015; Szabó 2016c; Szabó 2016d; Szabó 2018a; Szabó 2018b. For my new project on Roman religious communication in the Danubian provinces see: www.danubereligion.com. Last accessed: 15.09.2018.
86 Chapter II.2.
87 Chapter II.3.
88 Chapter IV.
90 See Chapter II.8.
91 Still cited as ‘the Persian cult’ or ‘the cult of Mithra’ or even ‘Mitra’, many of the Romanian references still use the old-fashioned Cumontian terminology. On the Persianism of the Roman Mithras, see: Gordon 2017b.