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’. 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, Dolicens, 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, Speidel 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
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. The Dolichenus epithet is often referred to in a different way, however, for example: Dolichenius, Dolychenus, Dolochenus, Dollicenus, 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. 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.

2. SYRIA, DOLICHE (Δολίχη)

Doliche, 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

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3 BEARD, M. – NORTH, J. – PRICE, S.: The Religions of Rome. Vol. I. Cambridge 1998, 281.
4 For the possible causes, see TOTH, I.: Iuppiter Dolichenus-tanulmányok. [Iuppiter Dolichenus-Studien.] Budapest 1976, 9.
5 FEHÉR, B.: Bukkálos 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.

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Roman times,\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{8} The name of Jupiter was only added when the settlement became the centre of the Roman cult.\textsuperscript{9} This fact excludes the possibility of the Dulcenus form on Latin inscriptions having been created because of substrate/adstrate effects.\textsuperscript{10} József Herman\textsuperscript{11} 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{14} In addition, we also have evidence of an ethnic denomination in the form of Δόλιχος.\textsuperscript{15}

Most of the inscriptions found in Syria are in Greek (CCID 2, 3, 30, 33, 34), where the god is invoked as Θεῷ Δολι̣χηνῷ.\textsuperscript{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 Δολι̣χηνῷ (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

\textsuperscript{7} BLÖMER, M. – WINTER, E.: Commagene: The Land of the Gods between the Taurus and the Euphrates. An Archaeological Guide. Istanbul 2011.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{9} The relationship between Jupiter Dolichenus and the former deity was last discussed by BUNNESS, G.: The Storm-God in Northern Syria and Southern Anatolia from Hadad of Aleppo to Jupiter Dolichenus. In HUTTER, M. – HUTTER-BRAUNSAR, S.: Offizielle Religion, lokale Kulte und individuelle Religiosität [Alter Orient und Altes Testament 318]. Münster 2004, 57 – 82.
\textsuperscript{10} There is no interaction between Semitic and Latin in the name of Hadad and Dolichenus.
\textsuperscript{11} HERMAN, J.: Latinitas Pannonica. Filológiai Közlöny 14 (1968) 364–376, here 371.
\textsuperscript{12} Jupiter Heliopolitanus, Jupiter Hieropolitanus, Jupiter Turmazgades, Jupiter Tavianus, etc. DUNAND, F. – LÉVÉQUE, P.: Les Syncretismes dans les religions de l’antiquité: colloque de Besançon, 22–23 octobre 1973. Leiden 1975.
\textsuperscript{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 Δολι̣χη. For a review of the city’s variants see MERLAT, P.: Jupiter Dolichenus. Essai d’interprétation et de synthèse. Paris 1960, 2.
\textsuperscript{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’.
\textsuperscript{15} By the 6th century, Stephanus of Byzantium (Ethnika, Dian. 187) wrote about Doliche: ‘Ἐστι δὲ καὶ Δολίχην πόλις τῆς Κομμαγηνῆς. Εθνικόν Δολίχημος Ζεύς οἱ δ’ ἐπερχόμενοι Δολίχηνος λέγονται.’
\textsuperscript{16} SEG 32, 1386; SEG 32, 1391.
the territory of the Roman Empire. The worship of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Eastern territories never spread too far from its birthplace. The Latin-language inscriptions of the area are exclusively made by military origins, originating from the sanctuary district of Dura Europos and from Hierapolis; 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). Doliche as an attribute in many cases appears as an origin or a personal name. 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).

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, in Lambaesis. 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, 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, 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 sèvère que, malgré des variantes, ils revêtaient 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) Doliche / ex Syria vico Araba; Macedonia/Olooson (AE 1913, 2) in via supra / Geranas inter Azzoris [et] / Onoareae et Petraeas [in] / Dolichis; Pannonia superior/Poetovio (AE 2010, 1240) ex region[e] / Doliche / a vico / Arpuartura.
22 Numidia/Lambaesis (AE 1989, 875) Lucius Valerius Longinus Doliche; Rome (CIL VI 2312) Arruntia Doliche / fecit; Rome (CIL VI 29082) Vitelliae / libertas Dolichus; Rome (CIL VI 32624) I(i)lius (i)llius Ael(i)us Caius Doliche; Baetica/Italica (CIL II 5381) Satria / Dolica.
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 sal(ute) et incohmitate / Imper(eratoris) Caes(aris) Traiani Hadriani Augusti / Sex(tus) Iul(ius Maio)R legatus ipsius pro praetore / templum [i]ovii Optimo M(aximo) D(olichenus) dedi-cavit.
26 CCID 217 – Pro sal(ute) Imper(eratoris) Caes(aris) Traiani Hadriani Augusti / (p)ontificis m(aximi) port(a)m et maris(m) per / pedes lon(gum) C altu(m) pedes VII / inventus colons love(m) Dol(lchenum) i<\textless;N>pe(n)sa sua fecit.
27 Dating from the inscription of Sextus Procilius Papirianus praefectus vigilium 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.

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Pius at Baclava (AE 1998, 1156). The earliest inscriptions use standard abbreviations and dedicate the altar ‘To Jupiter Best and Greatest of Dolichene’, 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. 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. The other major group responsible for the spread of the Dolichenian cult were the zealous missionary priests who came almost exclusively from the Eastern provinces, mainly from the territories of the Doliche sanctuary and from Syria, with their distribution work happening under the Severan dynasty. 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, Moesia, Dacia, Britain,

28 CCID 434 – Rome: Iovi Optimo Maximo / Dolichen; CCID 620 – Numidia/Lambaesis: temp[um Iovi] O(ptimo) M(aximo) Do[lichen]; CCID 217 – Pannonia Superior/Carnuntum: Iove(m) Dolich[eno]; CCID 275 – Pannonia Superior/Praetorium Latobicorum: Iovi O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olichen); AE 1998,1156 – Regnum Bospori/Balaklava: Iovi O(ptimo) M(aximo) Do[lichen]; CCID 151 – Dacia/Apulum: [Iovi O(ptimo) M(aximo)] / Dolichen; CCID 172 – Dacia/Pojejena: [Iovi] O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Dolichen; CCID 564 – Britannia/Condrecum: Iovi O(ptimo) M(aximo) [Dolichen];

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 DÉSZPA, 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. – WITSCHEL, 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 Syrus (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 Barhadadi, son of Flavius Barhadasi a peregrine of Eastern origin. This inscription may be of particular interest, as the name Barhadasi 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/Sárpetele (CCID 200) tot(iue) pr(oviniae) / sacerdote[s]; 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 *Dolic(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 *Dolicenus*. The monuments from Rome are almost always inscribed fully, with just one case of *Doloceni* (*CIL VI* 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 *Dolichenus*. The name appears in only one case in the form of *Dul(icheno)*, on an inscription from Latium/Puteoli, the name is shown in the form of *Dol(icheno)* (*CIL* X 1577).

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...

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\(^{35}\) 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 / Alexander et Flu[vius] Suri / negotiatores*; *Dacia*/Sarmizegetusa (*CIL* III 7915) *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olichenus) / Gaius G[ae]ianus / Apollofanes / Suri negotiatores*; *Moesia Superior*/Viminacium (*ZPE-203-243,9) *Aur(elius) Maxim[...]/ Surus negotiator*; *Rome* (*CIL VI* 367) *iusso Iovis / Dol(<i=Y>chen/) / P(ublius) Aelius Myron / negotiator*; *Germania superior*/Mogontiacum (*CIL XIII* 11812) *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)/ Dolic(heno) / G(aia)us Iul(ius) Mater/nus negotiator*.
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 accented 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/Habitancum (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 colloque international sur le latin vulgaire et tardif. Lyon, 6 – 9 septembre 2009. Lyon 2012, 123–139.
46 Mauer 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). Stinarar 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. 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. 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 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.

![Diagram: Linguistic mistakes in the name Dolichenus (LLDB)](image)

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 POCETTI, 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 Latin 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.

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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 praetoni-ca. 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 shrine of Locus Felicis (Mauer an der Url) provide the largest corpus of the name variant Dulcenus. We do not know the sanctuary itself, only the bronze vessels discovered in 1937, together with 88 metal and clay objects 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, is also known from a silver plate, which he offered to Iuno Regina.

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. The people mentioned on the silver plates had names with some kind of moral meaning such as Iusta, Probus, Vera and Victura. 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

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57 NOLL, R.: Das Inventar des Dolichenus Heiligums 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 mārînâ which means 'our lord', NOLL: Dolichenusfund (n. 60) 54.
62 From the context it is clear that Juno Dolichenia 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.

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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 θεῷ Δολιχηνoley 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. 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).

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