

MILJENKA GALIĆ  
IVAN RADMAN-LIVAJA

*Arheološki muzej u Zagrebu  
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## VTERE FELIX – POJASNA GARNITURA IZ VARAŽDINSKIH TOPLICA

**UDK 73.923.3: 739.71 (36)**  
**Izvorni znanstveni rad**

*Autori obrađuju jedan stari nalaz iz Varaždinskih Toplica, odnosno okove pojasne garniture tipa VTERE FELIX pronađene 1962. godine u unutrašnjosti južne prigradnje kupališne bazilike. S obzirom da se takve pojasne garniture pripisuju vojnicima, čini se da bi ovaj nalaz predstavljao još jedan prilog hipotezi o vojnicima kao redovitim posjetiteljima ovog kupališnog kompleksa.*

Dugogodišnje istraživanje foruma i kupališnog kompleksa u Varaždinskim Toplicama (*Aquae Iasae*) značajno je pridonijelo boljem poznavanju urbanog života u tom dijelu Panonije.<sup>1</sup> Istraživanje tog lokaliteta obogatilo je naše spoznaje i saznanja ne samo o rimskoj arhitekturi – kako sakralnoj tako i svjetovnoj – već i o rimskoj skulpturi, a brojni epigrafički nalazi dodatno su rasvijetlili brojna pitanja o prošlosti tog dijela Panonije. Brojnost atraktivnih nalaza, primjerice kamena plastika, zidne slikarije i natpisi donekle je u publikacijama posvećenima lokalitetu *Aquae Iasae* zasjenila sitni arheološki materijal, koji uostalom i nije brojan. Ipak, i među manje spektakularnim arheološkim nalazima s tog lokaliteta postoje vrlo zanimljivi predmeti koji nedvojbeno zaslužuju detaljniju znanstvenu obradu.<sup>2</sup> Jedan takav nalaz je pojasna garnitura pronađena 25. srpnja 1962. godine. U izvješću o iskopavanjima objavljenom 1970. godine u *Vjesniku Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu*, istraživači Branka Vikić i Marcel Gorenc spominju da su u unutrašnjosti južne prigradnje kupališne bazilike pronađeni brončani okovi pojasa u obliku slova te kao mogućnost čitanja nude TEOFILAE, uz napomenu da će pojasna garnitura biti naknadno znanstveno obrađena (VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ – GORENC 1970: 132). Terenska nam dokumentacija daje uvid u

1 VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ – GORENC 1958; VIKIĆ 1961; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ – GORENC 1961; von PETRIKO-VITS 1968; VIKIĆ – GORENC 1969: 10–15; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ – GORENC 1970; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1973; GORENC – VIKIĆ 1975; GORENC – VIKIĆ 1980; cf. redovita izvješća koja su B. Vikić-Belančić i M. Gorenc objavljivali u *Arheološkim pregledima* od 1959. do 1973. te od 1976. do 1980. god.; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1996; za novija istraživanja cf. NEMETH-EHRLICH 1997; NE-

METH-EHRLICH 1997bis; NEMETH-EHRLICH – KUŠAN 1999; KUŠAN-ŠPALJ 1999; NEMETH-EHRLICH – KUŠAN 2003; NEMETH-EHRLICH – KUŠAN 2006

2 Zahvaljujemo kolegicama Dori Kušan i Dorici Nemeth-Ehrlich, voditeljima istraživanja u Varaždinskim Toplicama, koje su nam ljubazno omogućile pristup terenskoj dokumentaciji i dale sve potrebne informacije o okolnostima nalaza.



Ilustracija 1

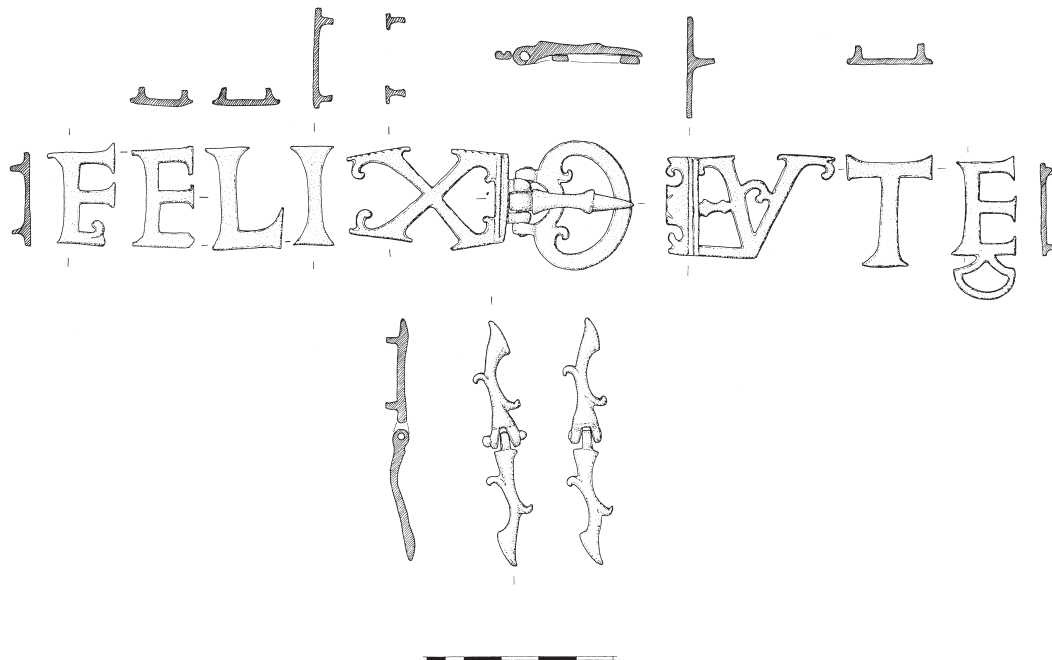
dotadne podatke o okolnostima nalaza. Tako B. Vikić-Belančić u dnevniku iskopavanja na dan 25. srpnja 1962. god. piše kako su u samom jugoistočnom uglu, iznad još neotvorenog odvodnog kanala, između zida južne prigradnje i istočne stijene iskopa nađeni dijelovi jednog brončanog pojasa sa slovima, na relativnoj dubini od 3,10 m. U službenom izvješću o istraživanjima i preliminarnoj zaštiti antičkog kupališnog kompleksa u Varaždinskim Toplicama od 7. rujna 1962. godine, M. Gorenc i B. Vikić-Belančić također opširno opisuju kontekst nalaza. Na temelju tlocrta i njihovih opisa može se točno odrediti mjesto nalaza, a zanimljiv je i podatak da je nedaleko od pojasa otkrivena i jedna zlatna perla u obliku profiliranog valjka. Pojasni okovi pronađeni su u blizini jedne ploče od pješčenjaka, odnosno poklopca na istočnom kraju velikog južnog kanala, kojih 30 cm iznad njezina nivoa.

Usprkos iscrpnom opisu arheološkog konteksta, nije lako dati odgovor na pitanje kako je ova pojasna garnitura uopće tamo završila. Nema dvojbe da su okovi pronađeni iznad kanala unutar južne prigradnje, no kako je cijeli taj prostor pretrpio višestruke preinake tijekom kasne antike, teško je sa sigurnošću tvrditi da je mjesto nalaza pojasne garniture ujedno i mjesto gdje je pojasna garnitura prvotno bila odložena. Naime, tijekom niveliranja podova i nasipavanja terena u kasnoj antici pojasni okovi su lako mogli biti pomaknuti. Ipak, treba napomenuti da je pojasna garnitura, izuzev dva okova, pronađena gotovo cjelovita, što implicira da nije riječ o slučajno otpalim okovima već o opasaču koji je s pripadajućom garniturom ukrasnih okova svojedobno bio odbačen, odnosno pohranjen. Kožni opasač je razumljivo istrunuo, no okovi su ostali na okupu, te se stoga može pretpostaviti da građevinski radovi izvođeni tijekom kasne antike nisu bitno poremetili njihov izvorni stratigrafski položaj.

Kao što je već spomenuto, garnitura je gotovo kompletna jer je od izvornih 12 elemenata sačuvano 10 elemenata. Iako pojedinačni nalazi elemenata *VTERE FELIX* pojasnih garnitura nisu rijetki jedina dva primjera gotovo cjelovitih garnitura potječu iz dva grobna nalaza. Prvi registrirani nalaz te vrste potječe iz jednog groba otkrivena 1950. godine tijekom zaštitnih istraživanja u francuskom gradu Lyonu.<sup>3</sup> Riječ je o iznimnom otkriću jer su uz kostur pokojnika pronađeni i njegov

3 WUILLEUMIER 1950: 146–148; Treba napomenuti da je već 1896. godine Josip Brunšmid objavio jedan fragmentirani okov u obliku slova V, pronađen u Novim Banovcima. Taj je okov nesumnjivo pripadao nekoj *VTERE*

*FELIX* garnituri, ali ga je Brunšmid, u nedostatku analogija, interpretirao kao brončano slovo nekog natpisa. BRUNŠMID 1896: 178–179, sl. 149.

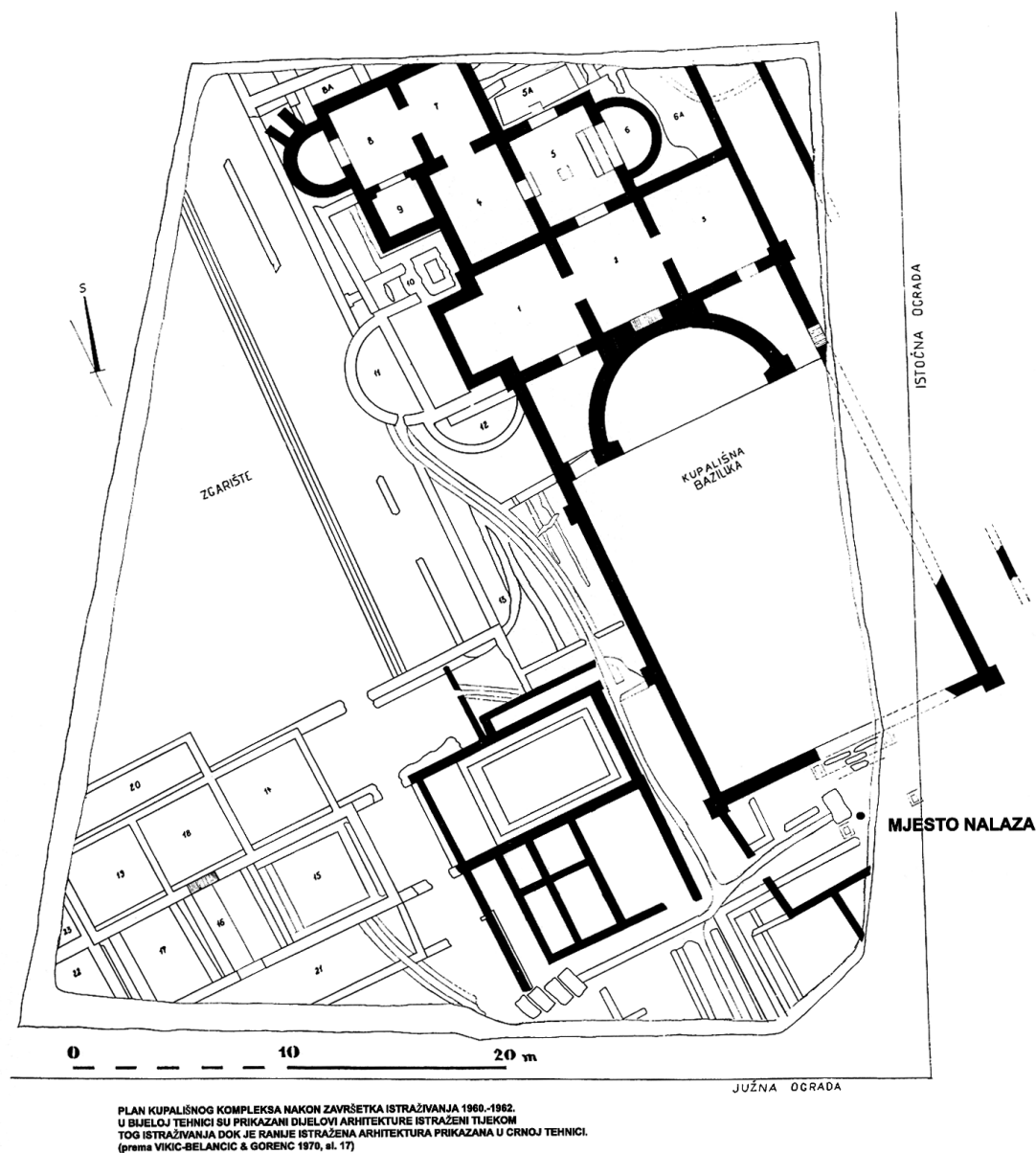


Ilustracija 2

mač, dijelovi korica mača, okovi opasača i remena za mač, jedna koljenasta fibula i 13 komada novca (jedan brončani te 12 denara među kojima su najrecentniji bila dva Komodova denara i jedan Septimija Severa). Wuilleumier je grob doveo u vezu s bitkom kod Lyona 197. godine između Septimija Severa i Klodija Albina, a s tom datacijom su se složili i istraživači koji su naknadno obrađivali lyonski nalaz (BULLINGER 1972: 278; ULBERT 1974: 211). Iako je Wuilleumier ispravno procijenio da je riječ o formuli *VTERE FELIX*, bio je mišljenja da slova *V* i *T* nedostaju, jer je slovo *V* pogrešno interpretirao kao ligaturu *AE*, kojoj nije mogao odgonetnuti smisao pa je pretpostavio da je riječ o genitivnom završetku neke riječi ženskog roda, možda naziva postrojbe. Duži niz godina nakon prve objave, Hermann Bullinger se pozabavio lyonskim nalazom i objavio analogije iz nekoliko europskih muzeja<sup>4</sup> gdje je otkrio pojedinačne okove u obliku slova koji su nedvojbeno izvorno bili dijelom *VTERE FELIX* pojasnih garnitura, te tako dokazao da lyonski primjerak nije izoliran slučaj. Međutim, ni on nije ponudio zadovoljavajuće rješenje za čitanje tzv. ligature *AE* (BULLINGER 1972: 278–282). Koju godinu kasnije, Günter Ulbert ponudio je točan odgovor: iako i on taj okov čita kao ligaturu, okrenuvši ga za 180°, čita ga kao *VT* i tako odbacuje sve špekulacije o značenju ligature *AE*. Ujedno je pravilno zaključio, za razliku od Wuilleumiera i Bullingera, da su okovi u obliku slova pripadali opasaču (*cingulum*) a ne remenu za mač (u suvremenoj literaturi često nazivan i *balteus*) te tako ponudio konačnu interpretaciju za lyonski vojnički grob (ULBERT 1974: 211–215). Potkraj 70-ih godina 20. stoljeća objava još jednog grobnoga nalaza dopunjava saznanja i spoznaje o pojasnim garniturama tipa *VTERE FELIX*. U bugarskom selu Ljuben otkriven je jedan ograđeni tumul sa dva paljevinska ukopa, po svemu sudeći dvoje supružnika. Muškarac je očito bio liječnik s obzirom na priloge, a osim medicinskih instrumenata u

4 Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, Museum Carnuntinum; Beč, Kunsthistorisches Museum; Ljubljana, Narodni Muzej;

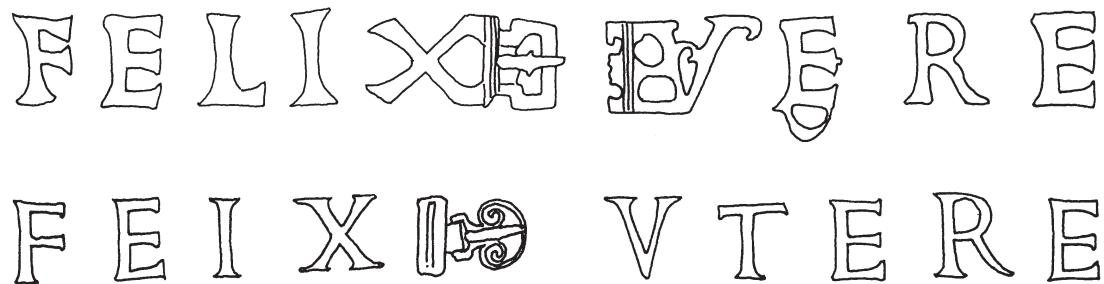
Budimpešta, Nemzeti Muzeum; Komárno, Podunajské múzeum



PLAN KUPALIŠNOG KOMPLEKSA NAKON ZAVRŠETKA ISTRAŽIVANJA 1960.-1982.  
U BJELOJ TEHNICI SU PRIKAZANI DIJELOVI ARHITEKTURE ISTRAŽENI TJEKOM  
TOG ISTRAŽIVANJA DOK JE RANJE ISTRAŽENA ARHITEKTURA PRIKAZANA U CRNOJ TEHNICI.  
(prema VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ & GORENC 1970, sl. 17)

Ilustracija 3

grobu je bio odložen i njegov opasač od kojega su se sačuvali srebrni okovi u obliku slova koji zajedno oblikuju rečenicu *VTERE FELIX* (nedostaje samo slovo L). Inače se ukop, zahvaljujući nalazu novca ali i ostalim predmetima, datira u kraj prve četvrtine 3. stoljeća, a Ovčarov ga pripisuje pripadnicima lokalne aristokracije (OVČAROV 1979: 33–34, 37–45). Liviu Petculescu se osvrnuo, u svom radu o *VTERE FELIX* okovima iz Dakije, i na ostale dotad poznate nalaze te zaključio da su takve pojasne garniture po svemu sudeći bile dijelom vojne nošnje tipične za trupe u podunavskim provincijama u razdoblju od posljednje četvrtine 2. st. do otprilike sredine 3. st., možda čak i do



Ilustracija 4 a i b

270-ih godina.<sup>5</sup> Hipoteza se temelji na činjenici da većina nalaza pojedinačnih okova potječe iz vojnih utvrda u tom dijelu carstva. Kad je o cjelovitim garniturama riječ, lyonska pojasna garnitura je nesumnjivo pripadala vojniku<sup>6</sup> a Petculescu ujedno smatra da je i pokojnik iz Ljubena bio vojno lice, odnosno vojni liječnik.

Okovi u obliku slova pojasne garniture iz Varaždinskih Toplica, iako srodni garniturama iz Lyona i Ljubena, pokazuje i određene tipološke razlike. Oni svojim oblikom odgovaraju kapitali te se tako ne razlikuju od onih iz Lyona i Ljubena te većine ostalih pojedinačnih nalaza.<sup>7</sup> Ipak, za razliku od lyonskih i ljubenskih okova, slova *F* i *X* iz Varaždinskih Toplica posjeduju male izbojke, odnosno svijene nastavke, a alka na dnu slova *E* nije spojena s donjom hastom u dvije točke (kao što je to slučaj s lyonskim primjerkom) već se spaja pomoć središnjeg izbojka. Jedno slovo *E* sa slično oblikovanom alkam čuva se u muzeju u Komárnu, drugo je pronađeno u Rumunjskoj, u auksilijarnom logoru Micia a još jedno pronađeno je u Brigečiju i čuva se u Narodnom muzeju u Budimpešti (BULLINGER 1972: 281, fig. 3a; PETCULESCU 1991: 392–393, fig 74.1.2; TÓTH 1981: 147–148.). Najveća razlika u odnosu na lyonsku i ljubensku garnituru tiče se dvodijelne kopče, odnosno pređice spojene sa slovom *X*. Varaždinskotoplička pređica ima polukružni okvir te zglobni pregib pomoću kojeg je spojena sa slovom *X*. S unutarnje strane okvira nalaze se dva izbojka, inače posve tipična za ovaj tip pređice. Trn ima zadebljanu bazu te zadebljani prelaz na zašiljeni vrh, a zanimljivo je da svojim oblikom dosta podsjeća na lyonski primjerak.

Konstruktivski varaždinskotoplička garnitura odgovara lyonskoj garnituri samo što potonja ima pređicu s pravokutnim okvirom, dok bugarski primjerak nema šarnir već se za pojasni okov spajao pomoću limene pločice savijene oko rubova manjeg pravokutnog okvira smještenog iza

5 Pretpostavku o podunavskom porijeklu *VTERE FELIX* garniture iznio je i Ulbert, predloživši sličnu dataciju, od sredine 2. do sredine 3. st.; ULBERT 1974: 213; OLDENSTEIN 1976: 88; PETCULESCU 1991: 392–394; U međuvremenu je u dunavskim provincijama registrirano još pojedinačnih okova *VTERE FELIX* garnitura, što dodatno osnažuje navedenu hipotezu; TÓTH 1981: 147–148; RADMAN-LIVAJA 2004: 95, kat. 286–287; 2005: 940–941, kat. 21; Na 15. ROMEC kongresu u Budimpešti 2005. godine, I. Radman-Livaja prezentirao je 8 okova *VTERE FELIX* garnitura iz Novih Banovaca koji će biti publicirani u jednom od slijedećih brojeva *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies*; možda se *VTERE FELIX* garniturama mogu pripisati i neki nalazi iz Ptuja, MIKL-CURK 1976: 32, kat. 2068–2070

6 Taj je vojnik možda skončao u Lugdunumu došavši s dunavskog limesa. Iako je Wuilleumier vjerovao da je riječ o vojniku poražene vojske, dakle pripadniku britanskih trupa Klodija Albina, čini se ipak vjerojatnijim da je pali vojnik pripadao Septimijevoj vojsci. Jedan nalaz okova iz Dura Europosa (slovo *V*) možda također potječe iz podunavskih provincija jer nije isključeno da je garnizon Dure bio pojačan trupama dovedenim s dunavskog limesa, cf. ULBERT 1974: 213; OLDENSTEIN 1976: 88; BISHOP – COULSTON 1993: 153; JAMES 2004: 24–25, 79 (cat. 78), 240–241

7 Jedina slova koja svojim izgledom izrazito odudaraju od uobičajenog oblika su okovi s nekih lokaliteta u Dakiji kod kojih su slova okružena stiliziranim viticama: PETCULESCU 1991: 393; PETCULESCU 1995: 119.

trna.<sup>8</sup> Inače se dvodijelne kopče s predicom »D« oblika i središnjim zglobnim spojem datiraju u drugu polovinu 2. st. a uporaba im se nesumnjivo proteže i u 3. st. (OLDENSTEIN 1976: 212). Okov u obliku slova *V*, koji se na zakopčanom opasaču nalazio nasuprot kopči, vrlo je sličan lyonskom primjerku. Za razliku od ostalih slova u garnituri (ali i slova *V* iz Ljubena), to slovo ne odgovara izgledom standardnom slovu *V* rimske kapitale već je izvedeno s okomitim pločastim nastavkom s lijeve strane. Taj je nastavak spojen sa slovom *V* s tri prečke a vanjski rub mu je raščlanjen s dva svijena nastavka i središnjim pravokutnim izbočenjem ukrašenim urezima. Ujedno su i krakovi slova *V* spojeni središnjom prečicom izvijenog oblika, a završetak desnog kraka ukrašen je svijenim nastavkom identičnim onima na slovima *F* i *X*. Okov u obliku slova *V* iz Varaždinskih Toplica vrlo je sličan istoznačnom lyonskom okovu<sup>9</sup> te jednom okovu iz Carnuntuma (BULLINGER 1972: 279, fig. 2.b), no čini se najbližiji fragmentiranom okovu iz Dura Europosa (ULBERT 1974: 214, Abb. 5.1; JAMES 2004: 79, cat. 78).

S obzirom da većina sačuvanih okova u obliku slova *V* ima i pločasti nastavak s lijeve strane (cf. BULLINGER 1972: 279, fig. 2; ULBERT 1974: 214, Abb. 5), nije začuđujuće da je tako oblikovano slovo *V* dugo vremena zbunjivalo istraživače koji su u njemu prvo vjerovali prepoznati ligaturu *AE*, a zatim *VT*. Ova potonja interpretacija, zbog nedostatka slova *T* u lyonskoj garnituri, činila se logičnom, no postojanje slova *T* u varaždinskotopličkoj garnituri, u kombinaciji sa slovom *V* koje izgledom odgovara lyonskom okovu, ukazivalo bi na veliku vjerojatnost da je i na lyonskom opasaču izvorno postojao okov u obliku slova *T* koji je, po svemu sudeći, otpao prije nego što je vojnik sahranjen. Uostalom, nađeno je više okova u obliku slova *T*,<sup>10</sup> te se s velikom sigurnošću može pretpostaviti da je svako slovo formule *VTERE FELIX* izvorno imalo svoj okov na pojasnim garniturama ovog tipa te da ligature na njima zapravo nisu ni bile korištene.

Pojasnoj garnituri iz Varaždinskih Toplica nedostaju dva slova, odnosno jedno slovo *R* i jedno slovo *E*, zadnja slova riječi *VTERE* (odnosno imperativa prezenta glagola *utor, uteris, uti*). Nedostajuće slovo *E* nesumnjivo se nije razlikovalo od sačuvana dva okova s tim slovom (iako vjerojatno nije imalo alkicu poput prvog *E* u riječi *VTERE*), a za *R* možemo pretpostaviti da izgledom nije odudaralo od uobičajenog kapitalnog *R*.

Lyonska pojasna garnitura imala je i dva privjeska koji su izvorno bila zakačena za dvokraki kraj remena koji se provlačio kroz predicu. Privjesci izduženog, čunjastog oblika poput onih s lyonske garniture nisu rijetki i datiraju se uglavnom od sredine 2. st. do prvih desetljeća 3. st. (OLDENSTEIN 1976: 144–146), no zabilježeni su i dvodijelni zglobni privjesci pojasnih garnitura, datirani otprilike u isto razdoblje, odnosno u drugu polovinu 2. st. i prvu polovinu 3. st. (OLDENSTEIN 1976: 147; JAMES 2004: 84–85). Dvodijelni zglobni privjesci iz Varaždinskih Toplica svojim izgledom su srodni tzv. trubljestim ornamentima, odnosno ukrasnim okovima s pojasnih garnitura i konjskih ormi koji svojim oblikom podsjećaju na isprepletene trube (OLDENSTEIN 1976: 203–207; KOŠČEVIĆ 1991: 74). Zanimljivo je da su u Sisku pronađena dva fragmenta vrlo sličnih dvodijelnih zglobnih privjesaka koje također možemo pripisati pojasnim garniturama i koji zasada oprimjenjuju nama jedinu poznatu direktnu analogiju topličkim privjescima.<sup>11</sup> Inače se trubljesti ornamenta datiraju od sredine 2. st. do u rano 3. st., no pitanje je može li se njihova uporaba protegnuti do sredine 3. st.

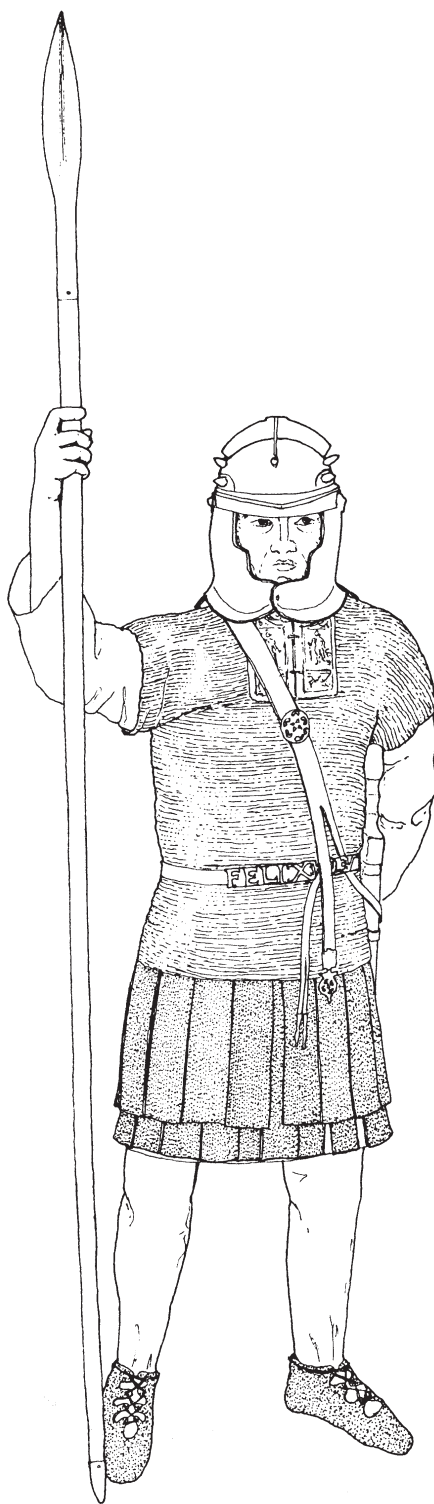
8 Takva konstrukcija kopče je dosta tipična za drugu polovinu 2. i prvu polovinu 3. st.; OLDENSTEIN 1976: 213–216

9 BULLINGER 1972: 279, fig. 2.a; ULBERT 1974: 212, Abb. 4.2; BISHOP–COULSTON 1993: 133, fig. 92

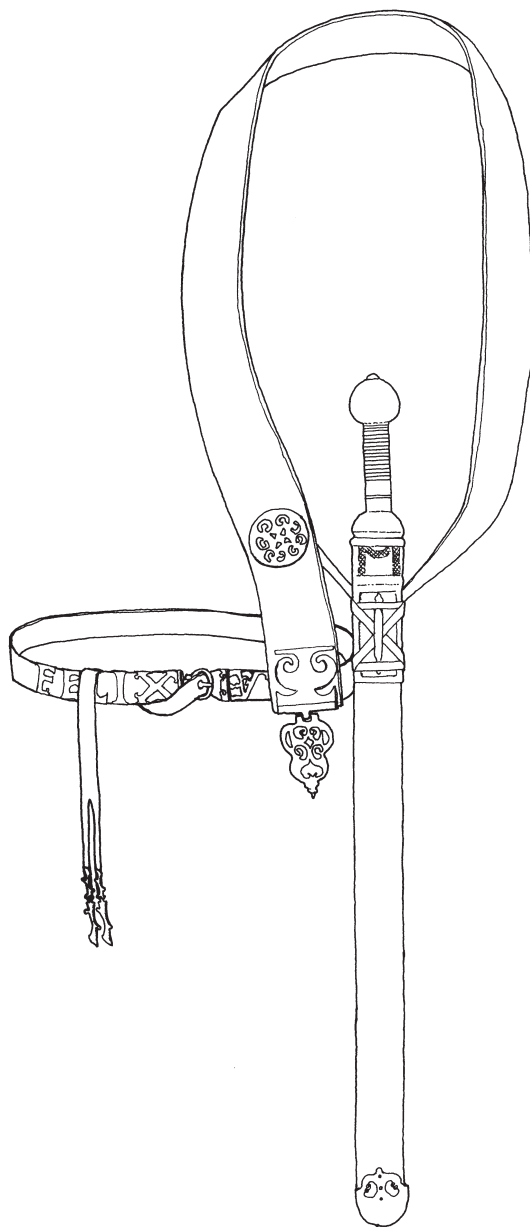
10 BULLINGER 1972: 281–282, fig. 3. f, g; OVČAROV 1979: 37, fig. 6; TÓTH 1981: 147–148; Dva okova u

obliku slova *T* pronađena su u Novim Banovcima (objavu priprema I. Radman-Livaja)

11 RADMAN-LIVAJA 2004: 95, kat. 288–289; iz Siska potječu još 2 okova u obliku slova iz *VTERE FELIX* garnitura, jedno »I« slično topličkom okovu te jedno stilizirano »R« (RADMAN-LIVAJA 2004: 95, kat. 286–287)



Ilustracija 5



Ilustracija 6

S obzirom na sve navedeno, šira datacija pojasne garniture iz Varaždinskih Toplica nije uopće sporna te se takve pojasne garniture okvirno mogu datirati od sredine 2. do sredine 3. st., možda čak i koje desetljeće duže.<sup>12</sup> Nažalost, kontekst nalaza ne pomaže nam osobito za uže dati-

<sup>12</sup> ULBERT 1974: 213; KOŠČEVIĆ 1991: 74, 100; PETCULESCU 1991: 394; BISHOP–COULSTON 1993: 153



ranje varaždinskotopličke garniture *VTERE FELIX*. S obzirom na sličnosti s lyonskom garniturom, bili bi skloni datirati je malo ranije u okviru tog razdoblja, odnosno na prijelaz iz 2. st. u 3. st. Budući da se dvodijelna kopča sa središnjim zglobnim pregibom i trubljasto ornamentirani dvodijelni privjesci također mogu datirati u to vrijeme, takva uža datacija nije isključena, no trebalo bi je prihvatiti s oprezom. Primjerice, bliska analogija za okov V iz Varaždinskih Toplica, izrazito sličan okov iz Dura Europosa nije precizno datiran u razdoblje od 165. do 256. godine, a ukoliko pretpostavimo da potječe iz razdoblja opsade Dura Europosa, to bi značilo da je bio u uporabi tijekom 255. ili 256. godine. Dakako, čak i ako to jest slučaj, ne može se isključiti mogućnost da je bio korišten više desetljeća. Ipak, takve nas nedoumice i nepoznanice sprečavaju da sa sigurnošću preciznije datiramo pojasnu garnituru iz Varaždinskih Toplica te se moramo zadovoljiti okvirnom datacijom od posljednje četvrtine 2. st. do sredine 3. st.

Ostaje pitanje kako se ova pojasna garnitura našla u Varaždinskim Toplicama, s obzirom da se taj tip prvenstveno dovodi u vezu s vojskom. Čini se posve vjerojatnim da je ovaj vojnički opasač bio odložen, odnosno poklonjen kao votivni dar. Nema dvojbe da kupališni kompleks u *Aquae Iasae* nije isključivo imao svjetovnu namjenu već je zahvaljujući izvoru također imao i ulogu svetišta (GORENC – VIKIĆ 1975: 38; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1975: 38–41; 1996: 12). Osim, naravno, hramova tome u prilog svjedoče brojni votivni natpisi posjetitelja kupališta.

Običaj zavjetnog odbacivanja predmeta u rijeke, jezera ili izvore potječe iz pretpovijesti i nije prekinut ni u rimskom razdoblju. S obzirom na motive ljudi koji su dolazili u termalna lječilišta, davanje zavjetnih darova božanstvima od kojih se očekivala pomoć, odnosno ozdravljenje, nije nimalo začuđujuće. Jedno od najbolje istraženih svetišta sagrađenih uz termalna vrela u rimskom svijetu je nedvojbeno svetište Sulis Minerve u mjestu *Aquae Sulis*, današnji Bath u Velikoj Britaniji (CUNLIFFE 1971; CUNLIFFE – DAVENPORT 1985). Riječ je o termalnom kupalištu povezanom s velikim hramskim zdanjem, te je usporedba s kupališno-hramskim kompleksom u Varaždinskim Toplicama posve primjereno. Tijekom iskopavanja svetog izvora u sklopu svetišta Sulis Minerve otkriveni su brojni predmeti koji se većinom mogu interpretirati kao votivni darovi (CUNLIFFE 1971: 27–28). Riječ je ne samo o novcima (SELLWOOD 1988: 279–380; WALKER 1988: 281–358) i olovnim pločicama s kletvama – *defixiones* (TOMLIN 1988: 59–277) već i osobnim predmetima kao što su dijelovi nošnje te nakit (HENIG et alii 1988: 21–33), brončano posuđe<sup>13</sup> pa čak i vojna oprema.<sup>14</sup>

S obzirom na primjer svetišta Sulis Minerve, nema razloga odbaciti mogućnost da je neki vojnici svoj opasač posvetio kao zavjetni dar nekom božanstvu tijekom svog boravka u *Aquae Iasae*.

Prisustvo vojnika među posjetiteljima i korisnicima termalnog kompleksa *Aquae Iasae* posvjedočeno je s nekoliko votivnih natpisa koji potvrđuju da su vojnici posjećivali to kupalište tijekom dužega razdoblja (RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ 1975: 43–44; 1991–1992: 74; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1996: 21–22). Na natpisima se tako spominju pripadnici XIII. legije *Gemina* i XIV. legije

13 Svaka brončana posuda nije nužno morala biti votivni dar s obzirom na očiglednu praktičnu namjenu takvih predmeta u jednom kupalištu, no kako više posuda nosi ugravirane posvete poput *Deae Suli Minervae*, votivni karakter barem dijela posuda nije upitan; HENIG et alii 1988: 5, 9–21; TOMLIN 1988 bis: 55–57

14 Riječ je o jednom brtvenom prstenu katapulte (*modiolus*), u ovom kontekstu nesumnjivo votivnom daru. Zavjetno poklanjanje oružja bilo je posve uobičajeno u antici, premda je mahom riječ o osobnom naoružanju. Ipak, barem jedan arheološki nalaz u Španjolskoj (Azaila)

kao i neki helenistički i rimski reljefni prikazi dokazuju da votivno odlaganje artiljerijskih sprava u svetištima nije bio izniman slučaj. Nalaz iz Batha je interpretiran kao votivni poklon vojnika božici Minervi, zaštitnici mehaničkog umijeća; HENIG et alii 1988: 5, 8–9; Zanimljiva je podudarnost da je prema riječima istraživača B. Vikić i u Varaždinskim Toplicama pronađen jedan kameni projektil, unutar temelja zapadnog drvenog objekta. U nedostatku fotografija, crteža i preciznijih detalja, nemoguće je odrediti točnu prirodu i namjenu tog predmeta, pa nećemo špekulirati o značenju tog nalaza; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1973: 123, bilješka 101

*Gemina*.<sup>15</sup> Istraživači Varaždinskih Toplica, B. Vikić i M. Gorenc, uostalom, smatrali su da su vojnici u nekim razdobljima bili i glavni posjetitelji toplica, posebice u ranocarskom razdoblju.<sup>16</sup>

Publicirani natpisi, iako malobrojni, nedvojbeno upućuju da su vojnici u toplice zalazili još od 1. st. te da su ih posjećivali i tijekom idućih stoljeća.<sup>17</sup> Većina posjetitelja, bilo da su bili civili ili vojnici, vjerojatno nije za sobom ostavljala votivne natpise već su se zadovoljavali manjim zavjetnim darovima. S obzirom na izraženu simboličku važnost vojničkog opasača u rimskom svijetu, posebice u očima vojnika,<sup>18</sup> posve je moguće da je netko zavjetovao svoj opasač i ostavio ga u svetištu. Čak i ako pretpostavimo da vlasnik opasača nije bio vojnik (iako zasada gotovo svi nalazi, izuzev ljubenskoga čija atribucija ostaje nesigurna, upućuju da je riječ o elementu vojne nošnje), nema razloga odbaciti interpretaciju da je riječ o votivnom daru.

Ukoliko se prihvati ova hipoteza, ostaje neriješeno pitanje mjesta gdje su takvi zavjetni darovi odlagani. Glavni izvor u središtu forumskog prostora, odnosno Nimfej-bunar,<sup>19</sup> činio bi se kao vjerojatno mjesto za odlaganje votivnih darova, no ova pojasna garnitura zasigurno ne potječe iz izvora. Mjesto nalaza garniture nam nažalost ne daje nikakve podatke o eventualnoj sakralnoj ili votivnoj namjeni te lokacije u razdoblju kad se inače datiraju pojasne garniture tipa *VTERE FELIX* (okvirno druga polovina 2. st. i prva polovina 3. st.). Opsežni građevinski radovi izvedeni u 4. stoljeću izbrisali su tragove prethodnih građevina na tome mjestu, ako je nešto uopće tamo i postojalo. Kako nema indicija o postojanju nekih objekata na lokaciji južne prigradnje uz baziliku prije 4. st., bespredmetno je nagađati o njihovoj eventualnoj funkciji. Stoga do daljnijega ostaje otvoreno pitanje kako ali i kada je pojas završio u nasipu u prostoru južne prigradnje.

Ipak, iako je smatramo malo vjerojatnom, treba spomenuti i hipotezu da je opasač mogao biti izgubljen, bilo nepažnjom vlasnika, bilo tijekom nekog dramatičnog događaja, primjerice požara ili neprijateljskog napada na *Aquae Iasae*. Po svemu sudeći, požari nisu bili rijetka pojava. B. Vikić-Belančić je tako identificirala jedan paljevinski sloj u naseobinskom kompleksu (otprilike na kilo-

15 CIL III 10890 (LJUBIĆ 1879: 42; BRUNŠMID 1906/1907, 85–86 br. 196; HOFFILLER – SARIA 1938: 205, AIJ 458), *Marcus Aurelius Cassius, beneficiarius consularis*; CIL III 10893 (HOFFILLER – SARIA 1938: 207, AIJ 462; von PETRIKOVITS 1968: 90), *Marcus Rutilius Lupus, legatus Augusti legionis XIII Geminae*; CIL III 4118 (LJUBIĆ 1879: 41–42; HOFFILLER – SARIA 1938: 207, AIJ 463; von PETRIKOVITS 1968: 90), *Marcus Fabius Fabullus, legatus Augusti legionis XIII Geminae*; RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ 1975: 37–46 (ŠAŠEL 1978: 195–196, ILIug 1167), *Titus Flavius Domitius Valerianus, centurio legionis XIII Geminae Martiae Victricis Severianae*; ŠAŠEL 1978: 196, ILIug 1172, nepublicirani žrtvenik posvećen Nimfama od strane primipila Lucija Larija Celera. D. Rendić-Miočević (RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ 1975: 43, bilj. 27) ispravlja čitanje B. Vikić i M. Gorenc (VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ – GORENC 1970: 151, bilj. 13) koji su mislili da je riječ o časniku XIV. legije, no čini se da je riječ o pripadniku XIII. legije; U literaturi se također spominje nekoliko nepubliciranih votivnih natpisa koje su vojnici i beneficijari posvetili nimfama i Fortuni (ŠAŠEL 1978: 196, ILIug 1171, VIKIĆ – GORENC 1969: 11). Na jednom se natpisu (CIL III 10893; HOFFILLER – SARIA 1938: 207, AIJ 462) spominje i XXII. legija ali u sklopu *cursus honorum* dedikanta Marka Rutilija Lupa, koji je u trenutku posvećivanja natpisa bio legat XIII. legije, a u mlađim danima služio je kao tribun u XXII. legiji. Iz

natpisa nije razvidno da li je riječ o *legio XXII Primigenia* ili *legio XXII Deioteriana*.

16 VIKIĆ 1961: 49; GORENC – VIKIĆ 1963: 116–117; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ – GORENC 1970: 151–152; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1973: 123; Tu hipotezu, navodeći analogije, zastupao je i von Petrikovits (von PETRIKOVITS 1968: 90–93)

17 Natpis CIL 4118 (*Marcus Fabius Fabullus, legatus Augusti legionis XIII Geminae*) datira se u vrijeme Neronove vladavine, a CIL III 10893 (*Marcus Rutilius Lupus, legatus Augusti legionis XIII Geminae*) datira se u flavijevsko razdoblje, odnosno u vrijeme od 69. do 84. godine. Natpis koji je objavio D. Rendić-Miočević (*Titus Flavius Domitius Valerianus, centurio legionis XIII Geminae Martiae Victricis Severianae*), zahvaljujući datiranju po konzulima, može se pouzdano datirati u 231. godinu. Natpis beneficijara Marka Aurelija Kasija je teže precizno datirati, no s obzirom na onomastičku formulu (*tria nomina*) i gentilicij *Aurelius*, razdoblje od kraja 2. do sredine 3. st. bilo bi prihvatljiv okvir za dataciju.

18 KOŠČEVIĆ 1991: 93–94; BISHOP – COULSTON 1993: 196; FEUGÈRE 1993: 225–231; RADMAN-LIVAJA 2004: 86

19 GORENC – VIKIĆ 1975: 39–42; GORENC – VIKIĆ 1980: 12; KUŠAN-ŠPALJ 1999: 111–114

metar udaljenosti od kupališnog kompleksa) koji je nalazima datiran u vrijeme vladavine Marka Aurelija, i koji autorica pripisuje elementarnoj nepogodi, odnosno razornom požaru ili možda neprijateljskom djelovanju tijekom neke provale za markomanskih ratova.<sup>20</sup> Istraživači su pretpostavljali da su *Aquae Iasae* pretrpjele razaranja i tijekom neke gotske provale u drugoj polovini 3. st. (GORENC – VIKIĆ 1975: 41), a postoji i jedan nepobitan epigrafički dokaz da je kupalište svakako barem jednom stradalo u požaru: u poznatom natpisu CIL III 4121 (LJUBIĆ 1879: 34–35; HOFFIL- LER – SARIA 1938: 210, AIJ 469) izričito se spominje da je car Konstantin obnovio kupalište nakon razornog požara. Konačan kraj, po svemu sudeći nasilan, naselje je zadesilo vjerojatno za vrijeme rata Teodozija Velikog i uzurpatora Maksima 395. godine (GORENC – VIKIĆ 1975: 38; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1996: 30).

Premda zapravo nema pokazatelja da je pojasna garnitura iz Varaždinskih Toplica izgubljena zbog nekog dramatičnog događaja, ta se hipoteza ipak ne može potpuno odbaciti, barem ne dok se ne pronađu pouzdani materijalni dokazi o odlaganju zavjetnih darova u sklopu kupališnog kompleksa.

Iako nije bitno pridonio rješavanju kronoloških pitanja u vezi s pojasnom garniturom tipa *VTERE FELIX*, nalaz varaždinskotopličke pojasne garniture barem je razriješio nedoumicu u interpretaciji okova s prikazom slova V. Treba se nadati da će neki budući nalazi dodatno rasvijetliti preostale nedoumice.

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<sup>20</sup> VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1973: 116, 118–119, 121; GORENC – VIKIĆ 1975: 45; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1975: 41; 1996: 15, 29

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### POPIS ILUSTRACIJA – LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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5. Rekonstrukcija hipotetičnog izgleda rimskog vojnika na prelazu 2. u 3. st.  
Reconstruction of the hypothetical appearance of a Roman soldier at the transition from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.
6. Rekonstrukcija hipotetičnog izgleda opasača zajedno s remenom za mač.  
Reconstruction of the hypothetical appearance of the belt together with a balteus.

### VTERE FELIX BELT SET FROM VARAŽDINSKE TOPLICE

The several year long investigation of the forum and bathing complex in Varaždinske Toplice (*Aquae Iasae*) has significantly contributed to a better understanding of urban life in that part of Pannonia.<sup>1</sup> The investigation of the site has enriched our knowledge not only of Roman architecture, both sacral and secular, but also of Roman sculpture. The many epigraphic finds shed additional light on a number of questions regarding the history of that part of Pannonia. Because of the quantity of interesting discoveries, such as stone sculptures, wall paintings and inscriptions, small archaeological objects – which do not appear in great numbers – have been somewhat relegated to the background in publications dedicated to the site of *Aquae Iasae*. Nevertheless, there are very interesting artefacts even among the less spectacular archaeological finds from the site, which

1 VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ – GORENC 1958; VIKIĆ 1961; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ – GORENC 1961; von PETRIKOVITS 1968; VIKIĆ – GORENC 1969: 10–15; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ – GORENC 1970; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1973; GORENC – VIKIĆ 1975; 1980; cf. Regular reports published by B. Vikić-Belančić and M. Gorenc in Arheološki

pregled (Archaeological Reports) from 1959 to 1973 and from 1976 to 1980; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1996; for more recent investigations cf. NEMETH-EHRLICH 1997; 1997bis; NEMETH-EHRLICH – KUŠAN 1999; KUŠAN-ŠPALJ 1999; NEMETH-EHRLICH – KUŠAN 2003; 2006.

undoubtedly merit detailed scientific analysis.<sup>2</sup> One such find is a belt set found on 25 July 1962. In the excavation report published in 1970 in the *Journal of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb*, the excavators Branka Vikić and Marcel Gorenc mention that letter-shaped bronze belt fittings were found in the interior of the southern annex of the baths' basilica. They put forward their reading of the text as TEOFILAE, adding that the belt set would undergo scientific analysis at a later time (VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ – GORENC 1970: 132). Fieldwork documentation gives us additional information regarding the circumstances of the discovery. Thus in the excavation diary entry on 25 July 1962, B. Vikić-Belančić says that in the southeastern corner, above the as yet unexcavated channel, between the wall of the southern annex and the eastern section of the trench, pieces of a bronze belt with letters were found at the relative depth of 3.10 m. In their official report on the investigation and preliminary protection of the ancient thermal complex in Varaždinske Toplice of 7 September 1962, M. Gorenc and B. Vikić-Belančić also give a lengthy description of the context of discovery. The ground plan and their descriptions make it possible to precisely determine the finding spot, and it is also interesting that a gold bead in the shape of a profiled cylinder was found in the vicinity of the belt. The belt fittings were found near a sandstone slab, that is a lid at the eastern end of the great southern channel, some 30 cm above its level.

In spite of the detailed description of the archaeological context, exactly how this belt set ended up there in the first place is not an easy question to answer. There is no doubt that the belt fittings were found above the ditch within the southern annex, but because the entire area underwent repeated reconstruction during late antiquity, it can hardly be claimed with certainty that the finding spot of the belt set is also the place of its original deposition. This is because the levelling of the floors and accumulation of soil in late antiquity may easily have contributed to the displacement of the belt fittings. Still, it should be mentioned that the belt set, with the exception of two fittings, was found almost complete, which suggests that we are not dealing with some accidentally detached fittings but with a belt that was discarded or deposited, together with the accompanying set of decorative fittings. The leather belt has understandably decayed, but the fittings remained together and it can thus be presumed that construction works carried out during late antiquity did not substantially disturb their original stratigraphic position.

As has already been mentioned, the set is almost complete, because 10 of the original 12 elements have been preserved. Although individual finds of elements of the *VTERE FELIX* belt sets are not rare, the only two specimens of almost complete sets come from two grave assemblages. The first registered find of that type originates from a grave discovered in 1950 during salvage excavations in the French city of Lyon.<sup>3</sup> This was an exceptional discovery, because, along with the skeleton of the deceased, his sword, pieces of the sword scabbard, fittings from a belt and a balteus, a knee fibula and 13 coins (1 bronze coin and 12 denarii, the most recent of which were 2 Commodus' denarii and one of Septimius Severus) were also discovered. Wuilleumier linked the grave with the battle at Lugdunum in 197, fought between Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus, and this dating was accepted by the researchers who subsequently analysed the Lyon find (BULLINGER 1972: 278; ULBERT 1974: 211). Even though Wuilleumier correctly concluded that the letters made up the formula *VTERE FELIX*, he believed that the letters *V* and *T* were missing, as he

2 We thank our colleagues Dora Kušan and Dorica Nemeth-Ehrlich, in charge of the excavations in Varaždinske Toplice, who kindly gave us access to fieldwork documentation and provided us with all the necessary information on the circumstances of the find.

3 WUILLEUMIER 1950: 146–148; It should be mentioned that already in 1896 Josip Brunšmid published a fragmented fitting in the shape of the letter *V*, found at Novi Banovci. This fitting undoubtedly belonged to a *VTERE FELIX* set, but, lacking analogies, Brunšmid interpreted it as the bronze letter from an inscription. BRUNŠMID 1896: 178–179, sl. 149.

incorrectly interpreted the letter *V* as the ligature *AE*, to which he was not able to attribute any meaning, so he assumed that he was dealing with a genitive ending of a word of female gender, possibly the name of a unit. Many years after the first publication, Hermann Bullinger tackled the Lyon find and published analogies from several European museums<sup>4</sup> where he discovered individual fittings in the shape of letters that undoubtedly originally formed parts of *VTERE FELIX* belt sets, thus demonstrating that the Lyon specimen is not an isolated case. However, he did not offer a satisfactory solution for the reading of the so-called ligature *AE* either (BULLINGER 1972: 278–282). A few years later, Günter Ulbert offered the correct answer: even though he also read the fitting as a ligature, by rotating it 180° he read it as *VT* and thus discarded all conjectures about the meaning of the ligature *AE*. At the same time, he correctly concluded, in contrast to Wuilleumier and Bullinger, that the fittings in the shape of letters belonged to a waist belt (*cingulum*) and not to a sword belt (in contemporary literature often also termed a *balteus*), thus offering the final interpretation for the Lyon military grave (ULBERT 1974: 211–215). At the end of the 1970s another publication of a grave find complemented our knowledge on the belt sets of the *VTERE FELIX* type. An enclosed tumulus with two cinerary burials, most likely representing a married couple, was discovered in the Bulgarian village of Ljuben. The man had obviously been a physician, judging by the grave goods, and in addition to medical instruments the grave also contained his belt, of which were preserved silver fittings in the shape of letters, together forming the sentence *VTERE FELIX* (only the letter *L* is missing). The find of a coin but also some other objects were the basis for dating the burial to the end of the first quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and Ovčarov attributes it to members of the local aristocracy (OVČAROV 1979: 33–34, 37–45). In his work on the *VTERE FELIX* fittings from Dacia, Liviu Petculescu commented on the remaining finds known at that time and concluded that in all likelihood such belt sets formed part of the military outfit typical of the troops in the Danubian provinces in the period between the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> until approximately the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, perhaps as late as the 270s.<sup>5</sup> This hypothesis is based on the fact that most finds of individual fittings originate from military forts in that part of the Empire. When it comes to complete sets, the Lyon belt set undoubtedly belonged to a soldier,<sup>6</sup> and Petculescu also believes that the deceased from Ljuben had been in the army, i.e. a military physician.

The letter-shaped fittings of the belt set from Varaždinske Toplice, although similar to the sets from Lyon and Ljuben, exhibit certain typological differences. In terms of shape they correspond to Roman capitals, and therefore do not differ from those from Lyon and Ljuben and the majority of the remaining individual finds.<sup>7</sup> Still, in contrast to the Lyon and Ljuben fittings, the

4 Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, Museum Carnuntinum; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum; Ljubljana, Narodni Muzej; Budapest, Nemzeti Múzeum; Komárno, Podunajské múzeum

5 The assumption on the Danubian origin of the *VTERE FELIX* set was also put forward by Ulbert, who proposed a similar dating, from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century; ULBERT 1974: 213; OLDENSTEIN 1976: 88; PETCULESCU 1991: 392–394; In the meantime, additional individual fittings from the *VTERE FELIX* sets were registered in the Danubian provinces, lending further support to the mentioned hypothesis; TÓTH 1981: 147–148; RADMAN-LIVAJA 2004: 95, cat. 286–287; 2005: 940–941, kat. 21; At the 15th ROMEC congress in Budapest in 2005, I. Radman-Livaja presented 8 fittings from *VTERE FELIX* sets from Novi Banovci which will be published in one of the forthcoming issues of the Journal of

Roman Military Equipment Studies; it is possible that certain finds from Ptuj can also be attributed to *VTERE FELIX* sets, MIKL-CURK 1976: 32, cat. 2068–2070

6 This soldier may have ended up in Lugdunum, having arrived there from the Danubian limes. Although Wuilleumier believed that it was a soldier from a defeated army, that is, a member of the British troops led by Clodius Albinus, it seems more likely that the fallen soldier belonged to Septimus' army. A find of fittings from Dura Europos (the letter *V*) may also originate from the Danubian provinces, because it is possible that the Dura garrison was reinforced by troops brought in from the Danubian limes, cf. ULBERT 1974: 213; OLDENSTEIN 1976: 88; BISHOP – COULSTON 1993: 153; JAMES 2004: 24–25, 79 (cat. 78), 240–241

7 The only letters whose appearance distinctly differs from the usual shape are fittings from some sites in Dacia,



letters *F* and *X* from Varaždinske Toplice contain small projections, i.e. curved extensions, while a ring at the base of the letter *E* is not connected with the bottom bar at two points (as is the case with the Lyon specimen), but is joined by means of a central projection (one letter *E* with a similarly shaped ring is in the museum in Komárno, another one was found in Romania, in the auxiliary camp Micia, while a further one was discovered in Brigetio and is in the National Museum in Budapest; BULLINGER 1972: 281, fig. 3a; PETCULESCU 1991: 392–393, fig 74.1.2; TÓTH 1981: 147–148). The biggest difference with regard to the Lyon and Ljuben sets consists in the buckle attached to the letter *X*. The Toplice buckle has a semi-circular frame and a hinged joint, by means of which it was attached to the letter *X*. In the interior side of the frame there are two projections, quite typical for this type. The tongue has a thickened base and a thickened transition to the pointed end, and it is interesting that its shape is rather reminiscent of the Lyon specimen.

In terms of construction, the Toplice set corresponds to the Lyon one, only the latter has a buckle with a rectangular frame, while the Bulgarian piece does not have a hinged joint. Instead, it was attached to the belt fitting by means of a small plate of sheet metal, bent around the edges of a smaller rectangular frame, positioned behind the pin.<sup>8</sup> The two-piece buckles with a "D"-shaped frame and a central hinged joint are dated to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, and their use undoubtedly continues into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (OLDENSTEIN 1976: 212). A fitting in the shape of the letter *V*, positioned on the belt opposite the buckle, is very similar to the Lyon specimen. In contrast to the other letters in the set (but also the letter *V* from Ljuben), this letter does not correspond in terms of shape to the standard letter *V* of the Roman capital letters, but is executed with a vertical plate-shaped extension on the left side. This extension is joined with the letter *V* by means of three bars, and its outer edge is executed in the form of two curved extensions and a central rectangular projection decorated with incisions. At the same time, the arms of the letter *V* are joined with a curved central small bar, while the terminal of the right arm is decorated with a bent extension, identical to those on the letters *F* and *X*. The V-shaped fitting from Varaždinske Toplice is very similar to the corresponding fitting from Lyon (BULLINGER 1972: 279, fig. 2.a; ULBERT 1974: 212, Abb. 4.2; BISHOP – COULSTON 1993: 133, fig. 92) and a fitting from Carnuntum (BULLINGER 1972: 279, fig. 2.b), but its most similar match might be a fragmented fitting from Dura Europos (ULBERT 1974: 214, Abb. 5.1; JAMES 2004: 79, cat. 78).

Considering that the majority of the preserved V-shaped fittings also have a plate-shaped extension on the left side (cf. BULLINGER 1972: 279, fig. 2; ULBERT 1974: 214, Abb. 5), it is not surprising that the letter *V* shaped in this manner had been a cause of confusion among researchers, who at first believed they had recognized the ligature *AE* and subsequently *VT*. The latter interpretation, on account of the lack of the letter *T* in the Lyon set, seemed logical, but the existence of the letter *T* in the set from Varaždinske Toplice, in combination with the letter *V*, shaped correspondingly to the Lyon fitting, would indicate that in all probability the Lyon belt originally contained a *T*-shaped fitting, which had, it seems, fallen off before the soldier was buried. After all, fittings in the shape of the letter *T* were found in several instances,<sup>9</sup> and it can be quite safely assumed that each of the letters of the formula *VTERE FELIX* originally had its fitting on belt sets of this type, and that no ligatures were in fact used on them at all.

where the letters are surrounded by stylized tendrils: PETCULESCU 1991: 393; PETCULESCU 1995: 119.

<sup>8</sup> This kind of buckle construction is quite typical for the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century; OLDENSTEIN 1976: 213–216.

<sup>9</sup> BULLINGER 1972: 281–282, fig. 3. f, g; OVČAROV 1979: 37. fig. 6; TÓTH 1981: 147–148; Two fittings in the shape of the letter *T* were found in Novi Banovci (their publication is being prepared by I. Radman-Livaja).

Two letters are missing from the belt set from Varaždinske Toplice i, i.e. the letter *R* and the letter *E*, the last two letters of the word *VTERE* (that is the imperative of the present of the verb *utor; uteris, uti*). The missing letter *E* undoubtedly did not differ from the two preserved fittings with that letter (although it probably did not have a small ring like the first *E* in the word *VTERE*), and in the case of *R* we can assume that its shape did not differ from the usual capital *R*. The Lyon belt set also contained two pendants, originally attached to the two-armed belt terminal that passed through the buckle. Elongated conical pendants such as those from the Lyon set are not rare and are generally dated from the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century until the first decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (OLDENSTEIN 1976: 144–146). However, two-piece hinged pendants of belt sets are also documented, dated approximately to the same period, i.e. the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (OLDENSTEIN 1976: 147; JAMES 2004: 84–85). The two-piece hinged pendants from Varaždinske toplice are similar in shape to the so-called trumped-shaped ornaments, i.e. decorative fittings from belt sets and horse harnesses, whose shape is reminiscent of intertwined trumpets (OLDENSTEIN 1976: 203–207; KOŠČEVIĆ 1991: 74). It is interesting that in Sisak two fragments of very similar two-piece hinged pendants were found, which we can likewise attribute to belt sets and which at the moment represent the only direct analogy to the Varaždinske Toplice pendants known to us.<sup>10</sup> Otherwise, the trumpet-shaped ornaments are dated from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century until early in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, but it is questionable whether their use can be extended until the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Taking into account all that has been said, the wider dating of the belt set from Varaždinske Toplice is not contentious in the least, and such belt sets can be approximately dated from the middle of the second until the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, perhaps even a decade or two later.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the context of the find is not very helpful for a more precise dating of the Toplice *VTERE FELIX* set. Considering the similarities with the Lyon set, we would be inclined to date it somewhat earlier within that period, that is to the transition from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. As the two-piece buckle with the central hinged joint and the trumpet-shaped decorated two-piece pendants can likewise be dated to that period, such narrower dating is not excluded, but should be accepted with caution. For instance, a close analogy for the *V* fitting from Varaždinske Toplice, a remarkably similar fitting from Dura Europos, has not been precisely dated within the period between the years 165 and 256 AD, but if we suppose that it originates from the time of the siege of Dura Europos, this would mean that it was in use during the year 255 or 256 AD. Of course, even if this were the case, the possibility that it was used over the course of several decades cannot be excluded. Still, such ambiguities and unknowns prevent us from securely dating with more precision the belt set from Varaždinske Toplice, so we have to satisfy ourselves with a general dating from the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> until the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

The question remains as to how this belt set came to be found in Varaždinske Toplice, considering that this type is primarily connected with the army. It seems quite probable that the belt set was deposited, that is offered as a votive gift. There is no room for doubt that the thermal complex in *Aquae Iasae* did not serve an exclusively secular purpose, but that because of its spring it also played the role of a sanctuary (GORENC – VIKIĆ 1975: 38; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1975: 38–41; 1996: 12.). In addition to the temples, numerous votive inscriptions by the visitors to the baths also underpin such an assumption.

<sup>10</sup> RADMAN-LIVAJA 2004: 95, kat. 288–289; Sisak is the place of origin of a further two fittings in the shape of the letters from the *VTERE FELIX* sets, one »I« similar to the fitting from Varaždinske Toplice and one stylized »R« (RADMAN-LIVAJA 2004: 95, kat. 286–287).

<sup>11</sup> ULBERT 1974: 213; KOŠČEVIĆ 1991: 74, 100; PETCULESCU 1991: 394; BISHOP – COULSTON 1993: 153.

The custom of the votive disposal of items into rivers, lakes or springs has its roots in prehistory and was not interrupted in the Roman period. Considering the motives of people visiting the thermal spa, the offering of votive gifts to the divinities from which help or a cure was expected is not in the least surprising. One of the best investigated sanctuaries built next to thermal springs in the Roman world is without doubt the sanctuary of Sulis Minerva in *Aquae Sulis*, present-day Bath in Great Britain (CUNLIFFE 1971; CUNLIFFE – DAVENPORT 1985). This is a thermal bath connected with a large temple building, and the comparison with the bathing and temple complex in Varaždinske Toplice is more than fitting. During the excavation of the sacred spring within the sanctuary of the Sulis Minerva numerous items were discovered, the majority of which can be interpreted as votive gifts (CUNLIFFE 1971: 27–28). These are not only coins (SELLWOOD 1988: 279–380; WALKER 1988: 281–358) and lead curse tablets (TOMLIN 1988: 59–277), but also personal items such as costume fittings and jewellery (HENIG et alii 1988: 21–33), bronze vessels<sup>12</sup> and even military equipment.<sup>13</sup>

Taking into account the example of the Sulis Minerva sanctuary, there is no reason to reject the possibility that a soldier dedicated his belt as a votive gift to a deity during his sojourn in *Aquae Iasae*.

The presence of soldiers among the visitors and users of the *Aquae Iasae* bathing complex is testified by several votive inscriptions confirming that the soldiers frequented the baths over an extended period of time.<sup>14</sup> The inscriptions thus mention members of the XIII Legion *Gemina* and the XIV Legion *Gemina*.<sup>15</sup> The excavators of Varaždinske Toplice, B. Vikić and M. Gorenc were, after all, of the opinion that during certain periods soldiers formed the mainstay of the bath's users, particularly in the early imperial period.<sup>16</sup>

12 Every bronze vessel was not necessarily a votive gift, if we keep in mind the obvious practical use of such objects in a bath. However, as several vessels carry engraved dedications such as Deae Sulis Minervae, the votive nature of at least some of the vessels is beyond doubt; HENIG et alii 1988: 5, 9–21; TOMLIN 1988bis: 55–57.

13 This is a catapult washer (*modiolus*), in this context undoubtedly a votive gift. The votive offering of weapons was quite usual in antiquity, although it mostly involved personal weapons. Still, at least one archaeological find in Spain (Azaila), as well as some Hellenistic and Roman relief scenes prove that the votive depositing of artillery gear in sanctuaries was not an exceptional occurrence. The Bath find has been interpreted as a soldier's votive gift to the goddess Minerva, the patron of mechanical skills; HENIG et alii 1988: 5, 8–9; It is an interesting coincidence that, according to researcher B. Vikić, a stone projectile was also found in Varaždinske Toplice, within the foundation of the western wooden building. The lack of photographs, drawings and more precise details makes it impossible to determine the precise nature and purpose of this object, so we will not speculate on the significance of the find; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1973: 123, note 101.

14 RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ 1975: 43–44; RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ 1991–1992: 74; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1996: 21–22.

15 CIL III 10890 (LJUBIĆ 1879: 42; BRUNŠMID 1906/1907, 85–86 br. 196; HOFFILLER & SARIA 1938: 205, AIJ 458), Marcus Aurelius Cassius, *beneficiarius consularis*; CIL III 10893 (HOFFILLER – SARIA 1938: 207, AIJ 462; von PETRIKOVITS 1968: 90), Marcus

Rutilius Lupus, *legatus Augusti legionis XIII Geminae*; CIL III 4118 (LJUBIĆ 1879: 41–42; HOFFILLER – SARIA 1938: 207, AIJ 463; von PETRIKOVITS 1968: 90), Marcus Fabius Fabullus, *legatus Augusti legionis XIII Geminae*; RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ 1975: 37–46 (ŠAŠEL 1978: 195–196, ILJug 1167), Titus Flavius Domitius Valerianus, *centurio legionis XIII Geminae Martiae Victricis Severianae*; ŠAŠEL 1978: 196, ILJug 1172, an unpublished altar dedicated to the Nymphs by *primus pilus* Lucius Larius Celer.

D. Rendić-Miočević (1975: 43, note 27) corrects the reading by B. Vikić and M. Gorenc (1970: 151, note 13) who thought that it was an officer of the XIV Legion, whereas it would seem that it was in fact a member of the XIII Legion; The literature also mentions a few unpublished votive inscriptions dedicated to the Nymphs and Fortuna by soldiers and beneficiaries (ŠAŠEL 1978: 196, ILJug 1171, VIKIĆ – GORENC 1969: 11). One inscription (CIL III 10893; HOFFILLER – SARIA 1938: 207, AIJ 462) mentions also the XXII Legion but as part of the *cursus honorum* of the dedicant Marcus Rutilius Lupus who, at the time of the dedication of the inscription was a legate of the XIII Legion, while as a younger man he had served as a tribune in the XXII Legion. It is not clear from the inscription whether it was the *legio XXII Primigenia* or the *legio XXII Deiotariana*.

16 VIKIĆ 1961: 49; GORENC – VIKIĆ 1963: 116–117; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ – GORENC 1970: 151–152; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1973: 123; Stating analogies, von Petrikovits also supported this hypothesis (von PETRIKOVITS 1968: 90–93).

Published inscriptions, albeit scarce, undeniably indicate that soldiers frequented the baths from as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and that they continued to visit them in the centuries that followed.<sup>17</sup> Most visitors, whether civilians or soldiers, most probably did not leave behind votive inscriptions but satisfied themselves with smaller votive gifts. Considering the prominent symbolic significance of a military belt in the Roman world, especially from a soldier's point of view,<sup>18</sup> it is perfectly possible that someone offered his belt and left it in the sanctuary. Even if we assume that the owner of the belt was not a soldier (although virtually all the finds discovered so far, except the Ljuben find whose attribution remains uncertain, seem to be items of military outfit) there is no reason not to interpret it as a votive gift.

If this hypothesis is accepted, we are left with the unsolved question as to the location of the place where such votive gifts were deposited. The main spring in the centre of the forum space, that is the Nymphaeum-basin (GORENC – VIKIĆ 1975: 39–42; 1980: 12; KUŠAN-ŠPALJ 1999: 111–114), would appear to be a likely location for the deposition of votive gifts, but this belt set definitely does not originate from the spring. Unfortunately, the finding spot does not offer any information as to the possible sacral or votive purpose of the location in the period to which belt sets of the *VTERE FELIX* type are usually dated (roughly the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century). Large-scale construction during the 4<sup>th</sup> century erased the traces of previous buildings on that spot, if any had in fact existed at all. As there is nothing to indicate the existence of buildings on the location of the southern annex next to the basilica prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, there is no point in speculating about their possible function. Therefore, there is as yet no answer to the question of how or when the belt ended up in the southern annex.

Still, even though we do not consider it very likely, we should mention the hypothesis that the belt could have been lost, either through the owner's negligence or during some dramatic event, such as a fire or an enemy attack on *Aquae Iasae*. It seems that fires were not a rare event. B. Vikić-Belančić identified a conflagration layer in the settlement complex (at about a kilometre's distance from the bathing complex), which was dated by finds into the period of Marcus Aurelius' reign, and which the author attributes to a natural disaster, i.e. a destructive fire or perhaps an enemy action during an incursion at the time of the Marcomannic wars (VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1973: 116, 118–119, 121; GORENC – VIKIĆ 1975: 45; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1975: 41; 1996: 15, 29). The excavators supposed that *Aquae Iasae* suffered further destruction during a Gothic incursion in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (GORENC & VIKIĆ 1975: 41), and there is also indisputable epigraphic proof of at least one fire in the baths: the well-known inscription CIL III 4121 (LJUBIĆ 1879: 34–35; HOFFILLER – SARIA 1938: 210, AIJ 469) states that emperor Constantine reconstructed the baths after a destructive fire. The settlement met its final end – a violent one it would seem – probably during the war between Theodosius the Great and the usurper Maximus in 395 AD (GORENC – VIKIĆ 1975: 38; VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ 1996: 30).

Although there are actually no indications that the belt set from Varaždinske Toplice was lost in the course of a dramatic event, this hypothesis nevertheless cannot be entirely discarded, at least

17 The inscription CIL 4118 (Marcus Fabius Fabullus, legatus Augusti legionis XIII Geminae) is dated to the period of Nero's rule, while CIL III 10893 (Marcus Rutilius Lupus, legatus Augusti legionis XIII Geminae) is dated to the Flavian period, that is the period from 69 to 84. The inscription published by D. Rendić-Miočević (Titus Flavius Domitius Valerianus, centurio legionis XIII Geminae Martiae Victricis Severianae) can be dated with certainty to the year 231 AD, on the basis of consular Fasti. The inscription

of the beneficiarius Marcus Aurelius Cassius is more difficult to date precisely, but taking into account the onomastic formula (tria nomina) and the gentilicium Aurelius, the period from the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century would be an acceptable framework for dating.

18 KOŠČEVIĆ 1991: 93–94; BISHOP – COULSTON 1993: 196; FEUGÈRE 1993: 225–231; RADMAN-LIVAJA 2004: 86.

not until reliable material proof has been found regarding the deposition of votive gifts within the bathing complex.

Despite the fact that it has not contributed to solving the chronological questions connected with belt sets of the *VTERE FELIX* type, the find of the Toplice belt set has at least resolved the ambiguity regarding the interpretation of the fittings in the shape of the letter *V*. We hope that future finds will shed additional light on the remaining uncertainties.

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