

OUTPUT T2.2

Pilot Action (P13)

Report

Title Output T. 2.2
Pilot Actions for preserving and management of natural and cultural heritage and resources developed and/or implemented

Date 2021-2022

Venue Vidin, Bulgaria

Implementing partner(s) NTC BG GUIDE
National Tourism Cluster “Bulgarian Guide”

Name of Pilot site Bononia/Vidin

Project ID DTP3-1-359-2.2

General description

Bononia (the ancient name of Vidin, Bulgaria) had been selected as the pilot site for Bulgaria, taking into account the latest Roman excavations and findings in the town of Vidin. The main aim was to increase the visibility of Bononia and the Roman heritage and past and to contribute to the development of the town of Vidin as a tourist destination.

Bononia is located near the Danube bank and was part of the cities and fortifications of the Roman Danube Limes. It is believed that the name originates from the Latin word "bonus", which means "good". Although known by the Roman historical sources, Bononia hasn't been truly explored so far.

The Fortress "Baba Vida" (nowadays, it is the only fully preserved fortress in Bulgaria) was built on the remains of the ancient city of Bononia, whereas from Bononia the best preserved is the eastern corner tower, which was later built into the foundations of the Baba Vida Fortress.

Recently, in the living area "Kaleto", the archaeologists found parts of the **Western Gate and the Wall of the ancient city of Bononia**. The Western gate of the fortress spreads on an area of 20 hectares under the present city. The remains are expected to be under all over the town of Vidin.

In the area of the famous Vidin Synagogue is presumed to be the center of the Roman Military Camp, as geophysical surveying has shown traces of ancient ruins there as well. Being so deep in the ground, has preserved the remains from bad weather conditions and treasure hunters.

Same as the Roman fortification Bononia in the past, the modern town of Vidin is the first port on the Danube River when entering Bulgaria.

Since Bononia is not well known even among Bulgarians, further visibility measures and awareness raising were needed. Therefore, different stages were implemented, and various tools were used. The developed within the Living Danube Limes project VR model is a first of its kind for the Vidin Roman heritage in general, and for Bononia fortress in specific, since no such interpretation models are displayed. This will allow visitors to discover Bononia in its original shape and to understand more about its history through time. The 3D model will also complement the ongoing archeological excavation work at the western gate, which will reveal to visitors much more secrets and stories about the Roman legacy in Vidin.

The VR reconstructions for Bononia can be easily accessed by the general public onsite by scanning the QR codes of the Living Danube Limes app (available on Google Play Store and Apple store) or online by accessing to the project website (<https://livingdanubelimes.eu>) and accessing the VR reconstructions of the pilot sites by scanning the relative QR code.

Agenda/Stages

The Pilot Actions for preserving and management of natural and cultural heritage and resources developed and/or implemented were divided into several stages starting from 2021:

I. Data Gathering

- **April 2021:** Preliminary pilot site (research) visit by NTC BG Guide representative, data gathering, holding interview with the main archaeologist for the Bononia excavations
- **October 2021:** Pilot site visits by NTC BG Guide, ADRM and CHI representatives, meetings with stakeholders

II. Research and Development

- **November 2021:** Local Focus Group 1, online event, organised by NTC BG Guide
- **March-April 2022:** Online survey for the visibility measures, conducted by NTC BG Guide
- **June 2022:** Local Focus Group 2 & Visibility Workshop, organised by NTC BG Guide with the support of CHI and ADRM-Danube

III. Implementation

- **October 2022:** The informational boards were installed in front of Baba Vida Fortress before the beginning of the Roman Festival “Bononia Comes to Life”, which venue was exactly near the Fortress. The event was organised on 1st October 2022 and all visitors and guests were able to read about Bononia in English or in Bulgarian, to see the 3D panorama and to test the 3D virtual reconstruction, incl. the crew of the lusoria Danuvina Alacris
- **November 2022:** The tailor-made 43’ interactive kiosk was installed at the premises of the RHM-Vidin

IV. Testing

- **December 2022:** NTC BG Guide representative tested jointly with representatives of RHM-Vidin the installed Interactive Kiosk InfoDart, as well as the 3D virtual reconstructions of Bononia at the beginning of December 2022 and disseminated information about the created “Virtual corner at the premises of the Museum” which led to increased numbers of visitors to the museum.

Participating Partners and Stakeholders

National Tourism Cluster “Bulgarian Guide” (NTC BG Guide)

Regional History Museum of Vidin (RHM-Vidin), ASP

Association of Danube River Municipalities (ADRM-Danube)

Centre for Heritage Interpretation (CHI)

Municipality of Vidin

Preparatory phase

The preparatory phase was divided into two stages which included pilot site’s visits and meetings with stakeholders, and a research and development stage covering discussions with stakeholders during the two local focus groups and the visibility workshop, as well as the online survey for visibility measures conducted with the representatives of the Regional History Museum of Vidin, Municipality of Vidin. The appropriate object (the ancient Roman fortress Bononia) to be VR-reconstructed was selected after consultations with the main archaeologist of the Bononia excavations and after the conducted by LBI ArchPro geomorphological survey and research.

During the 2nd local focus group organized on 30th June 2022 at the conference hall of Municipality of Vidin, NTC BG Guide and the representatives of the other Bulgarian partners, ADRM and CHI, reviewed the issues of the sustainable protection of cultural heritage and tourism. During this meeting partners highlighted that the most pressing issue for the Roman cultural heritage in Vidin is the lack of informational signs and the fact that those sites are not accessible for people with disabilities. During the visibility workshop organized on the same day, on 30th June 2022, NTC BG Guide conducted a survey

among the presented stakeholders to collect information about the most appropriate options for the implementation tools that will ensure the visibility of the VR reconstructions of Bononia through QR codes.

Implementation and Testing approach

Based on the results from the previous phase, the installation of visibility measures was realised into two stages. The first stage included installation of informational boards at key locations and the second stage included the installation of a tailor-made interactive 43' kiosk (InfoDart) with installed Living Danube Limes application. The following visibility tools were developed and installed in several locations (at the excavation site of the Western Gate of Bononia, at Baba Vida Fortress, at the premises of the Regional History Museum of Vidin):

- ✓ 2 informational boards (4 x 3 m) with bilingual information about Bononia, with the 3D panorama and QR codes of the 3D VR. One of the boards is located in front of the Western Gate of Bononia, the other in-front of Baba Vida Fortress at the most visible and visited by visitors' location.
- ✓ 2 smaller informational boards (A1 format) with bilingual information about Bononia, the 3D panorama and QR codes were further produced. One of them is located at the Western Gate of Bononia on the other part of the excavation site, the other one is located at the entrance of the Info center at Baba Vida Fortress, thus allowing all visitors and tourists to get familiar with the Bononia story.
- ✓ Interactive 43' kiosk, forming the "Danube Limes VR Corner" at the premises of the Regional History Museum of Vidin, displaying the Living Danube Limes application, with a QR code for the 3D panorama of Bononia.
- ✓ Stickers with the QR code of the 3D Virtual Reality reconstruction of Bononia at several locations

Archaeologists and technical staff from the Regional History Museum of Vidin took part at the installation process. NTC BG Guide further tested the interactive kiosk possibilities on-the-spot at the very beginning of December 2022, as well as the installed informational boards. Representatives of the Regional History Museum, as well as of NTC BG Guide and other local stakeholders tested the QR code on their mobile phones.



Photo 1: Installation of the interactive kiosk



Photo 2: Testing of the interactive kiosk, Living Danube Limes App and VR reconstruction of Bononia



Photo 3: QR codes on the kiosk



Photo 4: 3D QR Codes in other locations

4.1. Inside the RHM-Vidin



4.2. At the entrance of Baba Vida Fortress



4.3. At the Epigraphic Centre



4.4. Krastata Kazarma Museum



4.5. Living Danube Limes app QR code at the entrance of the Art Gallery, Vidin



Photo 5: Informational Board at Western Gate (4x3 m) with 3D panorama and QR codes



Photo 6: Informational Board in front of Baba Vida Fortress (4x3 m) with 3D panorama and QR codes



Photo 7: Small informational Board at the Western Gate of Bononia (A1 format) with 3D panorama and QR codes



Photo 8: Small informational Board (A1 format) at the Entrance of Baba Vida Fortress with 3D panorama and QR codes



Dissemination

The installation of the interactive kiosk and the created “A Danube Limes Virtual Corner” at the Regional History Museum of Vidin was widely disseminated in national, regional and local (incl. National radio, etc.). The installation of the informational boards was visible at the Roman Festival “Bononia Comes to Life”.

Some Links to publications (non-exhaustive list):

Bulgarian National Radio:

<https://bnr.bg/vidin/post/101748851/vazstanovka-na-antichnata-krepost-bononia-napravi-muzeat-vav-vidin>

Bulgarian News Agency:

<https://www.bta.bg/bg/news/bulgaria/regional-news/oblast-vidin/376146-virtualen-kat-na-dunavskiya-limes-mozhe-da-se-vidi-v-istoricheskiya-muzey-konak>

National media (in connection to the Roman Festival and the lusoria cruise, highlighting the created 3D model of Bononia):

https://www.actualno.com/vidin/kysnoantichen-rimski-festival-presvzdade-atmosferata-na-bononija-vyv-vidin-news_1820682.html

Local media:

<http://www.niebg.net/d2020/content/3d-%D0%B2%D1%8A%D0%B7%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82-%D0%B1%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F-%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%B6%D0%B5-%D0%B4%D0%B0-%D0%B1%D1%8A%D0%B4%D0%B5-%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%B4%D1%8F%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B2-%D0%BC%D1%83%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%B9-%E2%80%9E%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%B0%E2%80%9C>

Regional media



<https://utroruse.com/article/885586/>

Dissemination of the 3D VR in connection to the Living History Festival and the lusoria “Danuvina Alacris”

<https://www.focus-news.net/novini/regioni/Rimski-festival-vuv-Vidin-presuzdade-atmosferata-na-Bononiya-1412253>

Target groups:

Target groups reached through the pilot action:

Target groups (in accordance to AF section C.2.2)	Target value	Institutions/interest groups/key persons present at the event
local public authorities	3	Municipality of Vidin Municipality of Lom City Hall Novo Selo
regional public authorities		
national public authorities		
higher education and research		
education/training centres and schools		
SME (small and medium enterprises)		
general public	Above 1000	Visitors of the festival
interest groups including NGOs	1	Cultural Centre “Tsvyat”
international organisations under national law		
international organisations under international law		
sectoral agencies		
infrastructure and (public) service providers		