

OUTPUT T2.3

Learning Interaction (P07)

Title Learning Interactions – Late Antiquity Roman Festival “Bononia Comes to Life”	Final version 12/2022
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1. Topic

“Bononia Comes to Life”, was organized as a Late Antiquity Roman Festival in the town of Vidin involving professional re-enactment groups – Mos Maiorum Ulpiae Serdicae (ASP) and DVX Anticae where they presented several re-enactment performances (military actions, demonstrations, Roman liturgies, etc.), exhibition and interactive workshops with visitors and children. The name of the Festival was chosen in connection to the selected Living Danube Limes pilot site for Bulgaria – Bononia and the recent discoveries about the Western Gate of Bononia (located in the living area of “Kaletó” in the town of Vidin).

2. Objective/s

The Late Antiquity Roman festival “Bononia comes to life” aimed to (re)discover the Roman legacy, especially of the Roman city of Bononia and its connection to the Danube. The event aimed also to raise awareness of the importance of the Roman heritage of Bononia.

Key objectives:

- To enhance the living history events for learning interactions by experiencing various aspects of the Roman history, based on the Roman heritage richness of the town of Vidin
- To provide a network and opportunities for knowledge transfers between various target groups and among generations

3. Target Groups

The target groups of the Festival can be divided into several groups:

- International team of rowers of the reconstructed Roman lusoria „Danuvina Alacris“ - since the event was the part of the Connecting Cruise
- Media representatives/journalists/reporters: another target group were the media representatives, invited to disseminate the Festival and the arrival of the Danuvina Alacris. Representatives of the following National and Regional Media were present: Nova TV; BTV; BNT; TV Vidin, incl. Bulgarian Telegraphic Agency, Radio Vidin, etc.
- Regional and Local authority representatives: representatives of Municipality of Vidin (Mayor of Vidin), other cities/city halls along the Danube, representatives of museums (incl. Regional History Museum of Vidin), community centres, port of Vidin, etc.
- Re-enactors: Re-enactment association Mos Maiorum Ulpiae Serdicae, Re-enactment association DVX ANTICAE, re-enactment group Bagachin, young re-enactors (who performed the children’s workshop), etc.
- General public: visitors of the Festival, visitors of the Danuvina Alacris, people reached through social media (who learned about the event and shared information about it) – above 42 700 people only on Facebook

4. General Schedule

1 October 2022

10:30 Official opening of the event

- *Welcome speech by the Mayor of Municipality of Vidin, Dr. Tsvetan Tsenkov*
- *Welcome speeches by representatives of NTC BG Guide, CHI and ADRM-Danube*
- *Welcome speech by ASP – Regional History Museum of Vidin*
- *Welcome speech by ASP – Mos Maiorum Ulpiae Serdicae*

11:00 Presenting the participants

11:30 Presenting Roman equipment, weapons, archery, sealing, etc.

12:00 The Children in the Roman Heritage (Roman games' workshops with children)

12:30 Crafts and Occupations (demonstrations of roman clothes, hairstyle making, money and jewellery making, medical instruments, etc.)

13:00 Demonstrations of military equipment, weapons, and traditions

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14:30 Late Antiquity Fashion and Hairstyle

15:30 Early Christianity in the Late Antiquity

16.30 Ceremonial welcoming of the Lusoria ship and its crew in Vidin:

Roman Parade along Vidin port by the re-enactment groups

17:30 Military maneuvers and demonstrations

Visit of "Danuvina Alacris" by the public

2 October 2022

10:30 – 11:30 Visit of "Danuvina Alacris" by the public

5. Implementation Approach

The event was organized outdoors in front of the Baba Vida Fortress. The Fortress 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. In front of the fortress, as well as on the Western Gate of Bononia, were installed informational boards with bilingual information about Bononia, with the 3D panorama and QR codes of the 3D virtual reality reconstruction of Bononia.

Residents and visitors of the town of Vidin had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the roman way of life through re-enactment activities and exhibition part with the participation of

two of the largest groups for historical re-enactments in Bulgaria - Mos Maiorum Ulpiae Serdicae from Sofia and DVX Anticae from Svishtov.

The implementation approach included the following:

- *Re-enactment activities*

Two of the largest groups re-enactments in Bulgaria - Mos Maiorum Ulpiae Serdicae from Sofia and DVX Anticae from Svishtov, made residents and visitors of the town of Vidin experience and immerse themselves in the roman way of life. Their re-enactment activities included: demonstrations of Roman life, culture, tradition, and crafts, such as cold forging, jeweler making, medical and surgical instruments, coins made with double sided matrix, weapons including specify words and shields, etc. They also showed roman clothes and hairstyles, as well as battles between the Roman legions and the Barbarian mercenaries as well as a Roman Liturgy performed in Latin.

- *Exhibitions and demonstrations*

During the event, recreated roman items were exhibited for display and purchase such as swords and shields in wood, coins, jewellery, etc. The two re-enactment groups Mos Maiorum and DVX Anticae prepared an exhibition of numerous items and demonstrations of Roman life, culture, tradition, and crafts, such as cold forging, jewellery making, medical and surgical instruments, coins made with double sided matrix, weapons including specify words and shields, etc.

- *Kids' corner and interactive workshops*

A special corner for kids was formed attracting the younger Festival visitors. The specially trained for the purpose kids from the local community center "Tsvyat" (by CHI) showed to the public various Roman board games and tactics. Everybody was able to play a game and to feel like a Roman.

- *Welcoming the Roman Lusoria "Danuvina Alacris"*

As a welcome gesture to the arrival of the Roman Lusoria the reenactors made a march to the Vidin port followed by all visitors, where they witnessed the Roman welcoming. As part of the re-enactment, an important message was delivered to the captain of the Roman crew by the Bononian garrison from the Emperor itself.

- *3D Virtual reality of Bononia*

In front of the Baba Vida Fortress (the Festival main venue) was installed an informational board with bilingual information about Bononia, the 3D panorama of Bononia and the QR codes leading to the 3D virtual reconstruction and the Living Danube Limes application. All festival visitors were able to learn more about Bononia and some key facts and figures, as well as less known information. A second informational board is installed at the current excavations at the Western Gate of Bononia in the living area of "Kaletu".

- *Visitors' experience*



Visitors of the event were thrilled by the Roman liturgy and the Roman games for kids. Shooting with arrows was quite an experience for everyone. Representatives of National Tourism Cluster “Bulgarian Guide” met a group of American tourists and invited them to come to visit the festival. The group was quite thrilled to immerse themselves into the Roman times. Visitors were able to learn about the cruise by interacting with the crew and asking them about their experience they had in their journey along the Danube, and by visiting the boat and to take photos with some of the crew members.

- *Promotion and dissemination of the event*

It was important that the event reached as much groups as possible in Bulgaria. Many regional and national media (TV, newspapers, journalists) were invited to cover the event and made interviews with the organizers, as well as with representatives from the crew and from the reenactment groups to talk about the Roman history and the challenges that the rowers met on their journey along the Danube.

6. Learning Approach

Knowledge gained and transferred

The success of the festival and the huge interest of the visitors, not only residents, but also foreign tourist groups showed that Vidin has a tremendous potential in becoming a cultural heritage destination. The collaboration between the local community centre and representatives of museology and re-enactment groups training younger generation to keep and preserve the Roman traditions and way of life, is one of the most useful tools to promote Vidin and more specifically Bononia pilot site.

The living history festival was a great dissemination tool to inform locals, visitors and tourists about the Roman heritage and its connected history through games, exhibitions, and workshops.

Through the event the knowledge about the Roman heritage in Vidin, about Bononia and the various traditions (and games) of the Romans was transferred not only to residents of Vidin and other settlements nearby, but also to foreign tourists and visitors of the Festival. During the event, two organized tourist groups from USA, who were on a cruise tour along the Danube, were among the visitors in the event. NTC BG Guide took the opportunity to introduce them the Living Danube Limes project, to explain the purpose of the festival and invited them to see the “Danuvina Alacris” on its arrival in Vidin Port. They were able also to learn more about Bononia.

More specifically the following knowledge was gained and transferred to residents and visitors:

Parts of the Agenda	Knowledge gained and transferred
<i>Welcome speeches</i>	- Bononia and why the Festival was named “Bononia comes to Life”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information about Living Danube Limes project and the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme - Living history events and re-enactment groups missions
<i>Presenting Roman equipment, weapons, archery, sealing, etc.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roman weapons (visitors were able to try the Roman weapons and to gain more knowledge about them) - Roman archery (visitors were able to shoot arrows like the Romans) - Roman sealing (visitors were able to have their own Roman seal)
<i>The Children in the Roman Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roman games for children - Roman traditions - Gamification
<i>Crafts and Occupations (demonstrations of roman clothes, hairstyle making, money and jewellery making, medical instruments, etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roman way of life - Roman traditions and crafts - Roman historical storytelling - Roman jewellery making, etc.
<i>Demonstrations of military equipment, weapons, and traditions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roman weapons and their use
<i>Late Antiquity Fashion and Hairstyle</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roman dress traditions - Traditional hairstyles
<i>Early Christianity in the Late Antiquity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roman liturgy
<i>Ceremonial welcoming of the Lusoria ship and its crew in Vidin</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roman greetings - Storytelling, etc
<i>Military maneuvers and demonstrations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roman military techniques - Roman battle
<i>Visit of "Danuvina Alacris" by the public</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rowing techniques - Storytelling - Roman shipbuilding traditions, etc.

7. Case Study: Living History Event (Late Antiquity Roman Festival "Bononia Comes To Life")

7.1. Contribution to Project Objectives

The results of the respective Living Danube Limes event contribute to the following project deliverables/outputs/general incentives:

Deliverable D.I7.1.2: Implementation of suitable visibility measures

Deliverable D.T2.2.2: Connecting Danube River cruise

Deliverable D.T2.3.2: Implementation of virtual reality reconstructions on pilot sites

Deliverable D.T2.5.1 Living history festivals and events

T2.2 Presentation and testing of the Virtual Reality Reconstructions for developing a holistic and sustainable tourism concept

T2.3 Learning Interactions

T3.2 Digital infrastructure development along the Danube

T3.5 Increasing the visibility of the Roman Danube Limes

Deliverable D.T3.3.1 Mobile-based digital infrastructure – the Living Danube Limes App

Deliverable D.T3.3.2 Web-based digital infrastructure - the Living Danube Limes Database

Deliverable D.T3.4.1 Physical reconstructions and visibility measures

7.2. Recapitulation of Organisers

As planned in the agenda, in the late afternoon and despite of the weather conditions and the heavy rain, the Roman lusoria “Danuvina Alacris” passed slowly in front of the audience and the Festival visitors gathered at the Baba Vida Fortress. The reenactors started their march to the Vidin port and all visitors followed them, where they witnessed a Roman welcoming, which provoked huge interest.

Key knowledge gained during the event was the concentration of information about the Roman way of life and more specifically about Bononia, making visible the Roman heritage to larger public, while one of the most powerful tools for transferring knowledge was the direct contact with the Roman site, the various demonstrations, the traditions, the games, the Roman lusoria, etc.

In a nutshell, the organization of Roman living history events in the town of Vidin might further contribute to shaping the image of the town as a “Festival destination”. Because Vidin is the town in Bulgaria, that has the most preserved architectural monuments from various eras, one of which is the Roman.

7.3. Annex A: Event Report

The living history event was planned and organised as a Late Antiquity Roman Festival, representing various activities. It included several re-enactment performances (military actions, demonstrations, Roman liturgies, etc.), and had an exhibition part with the involvement of 2 professional re-enactment groups – Mos Maiorum Ulpiae Serdicae and DVX Anticae. Special workshops and Roman games were presented for children.

For further details refer to D.T.2.5.1 – Event Report, Late Antiquity Roman Festival “Bononia Comes To Life” held in October 2022 in Vidin, Bulgaria



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7.4. Annex B: Supporting Materials (Photos)

Selected photos from the Festival



