

THE *AEDES CONCORDIAE PANTHEAE
AUGUSTAE* AND THE “PANTHEON”
OF *GIGTHIS*. A POSSIBLE READING OF
CIL VIII 22692 (2ND C. CE)*

EL *AEDES CONCORDIAE PANTHEAE AUGUSTAE* Y
EL “PANTEÓN” DE *GIGTHIS*. UNA POSIBLE LECTURA
DE *CIL VIII 22692* (s. II D.C.)

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ABSTRACT

In *Gigthis*, during the principate of Marcus Aurelius, Marcus Ummidius Sedatus commissioned the construction of a temple consecrated to *Concordia Panthea Augusta* in the forum. This act was a tribute to his

RESUMEN

En *Gigthis*, durante el principado de Marco Aurelio, Marcus Ummidius Sedatus hizo construir en el foro un templo a la *Concordia Panthea Augusta*. El monumento, dotado de *pronaos*, un arco y una estatua de

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son's office as a decurion and included a *pronaos*, an arch, and a statue of the goddess. The dedicatory inscription (*CIL VIII 22693*) was accompanied by another one (*CIL VIII 22692*), of which only fourteen letters remain, engraved on the frieze atop the *aedicula* which housed the divine *simulacrum* at the bottom of the small *sacellum*. This contribution aims to propose a plausible reading of this inscription by reconstructing the missing letters and justifying the employed linguistic strategies, drawing insights from archaeological data related to the sanctuary and the broader context of the forum where it was situated.

la diosa, era un homenaje al decurionato de su hijo. La inscripción dedicatoria del edificio (*CIL VIII 22693*) estaba acompañada por otra (*CIL VIII 22692*), de la que solo se conservan catorce letras, grabada sobre el friso que coronaba el edículo que albergaba el *simulacrum* divino al fondo del pequeño *sacellum*. Este artículo pretende ofrecer una lectura plausible de esta inscripción integrando las letras que faltan y justificando las estrategias lingüísticas que se le aplican a través de los datos arqueológicos relativos al santuario y al contexto más amplio del foro en el que se encontraba.

KEYWORDS

Gigthis; Pantheistic Deity; Pantheon; *Pantheus* (-a, -um); Religious Landscape; *Ummidii*.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Gigthis; Deidad panteísta; Paisaje religioso; Panteón; *Pantheus* (-a, -um); *Ummidii*.

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LOCATED IN SOUTH-EASTERN TUNISIA, IN THE GULF OF GABÈS – also referred to as Lesser Syrtis – opposite the island of Djerba, the ancient site of *Gigthis* lies a short distance from Bou Ghrara, halfway between Jorf and Médenine.¹ Probably founded as a Phoenician *emporium*, it later became part of the Numidian kingdom and passed under Roman rule in 46 BCE after the Battle of Thapsus and the establishment of *Africa Nova*. From 27 BCE onwards, it joined the province of *Proconsularis* and then, with the new Diocletian order, the Tripolitania.² The site, first reported by Victor Guérin in 1860, was excavated from the end of the 19th century until the first two decades of the last one.³ It currently suffers from degradation that hinders and limits the exegetical interpretation of the monumental vestiges.⁴

The ruins, which cover an area of approximately 50 hectares, stand on a plateau at about 10 m above sea level, opening to the east towards the Gulf. They are bordered

1. The toponym is variously reported in the sources: Γιχθίς (Ptol., IV 3, 3); *Giti municipium* (var. *Gutti*) (*Itin. Ant.*, 60, 1); *Gigti* (*Tab. Peut.*, VI 5); *a Gitti de Tripoli* (*Itin. Marit.*, 518, 5); *Gigthi* (*Rav.*, III 5); *Gittit* (*Rav.*, V 5). See Desanges *et al.*, 2010, p. 150.

2. Cf. Lepelley, 1981, pp. 368-371; Gascou, 2003, pp. 233-234.

3. The location of *Gigthis* was identified by Guérin (1862, I, pp. 224-230) thanks to one inscription discovered on the site of the forum (*CIL VIII 22707*) mentioning the *Gigthenses*. The ruins underwent exploratory excavations in 1884 by Salomon Reinach and Ernest Babelon (see Reinach & Babelon, 1886, pp. 40-54), then from 1901 to 1906 under the initiative of Paul Gauckler (see Gauckler, 1902a; 1902b; 1907), and finally a more systematic study by Léopold-Albert Constans (1916a and 1916b) after the First World War. For recent studies on this site, see Ferchiou, 1981; Pisanu, 1990; Troussset, 1998; Bullo, 2002, pp. 199-207.

4. Pisanu, 1990, p. 223.

to the north, on the shoreside, by a Byzantine citadel and a large necropolis bearing remains dating back to the 3rd or 2nd centuries BCE; to the west and north-west, on the hinterland side, by more necropolis and baths with gymnasiums; to the south, on the shoreside, by an alignment of several large and luxurious villas and, on the hinterland side, by a temple dedicated to Mercury. Between these borders, the topography curves gently into the valley that descends, from west to east, from the area of the market to the sea.⁵ The site's centre, with its forum and annexes, was on the northern slopes of this valley. The forum consisted of a large, paved rectangular esplanade (32 x 23 m) surrounded to the north, south, and east by a portico 7 m wide, with 11 red marble columns with Corinthian capitals at its front (and 19 on the longer sides). In and around it, the remains of several public and sacred buildings have been brought to light. They attest to the city's fervent public activity that began under Hadrian, which received impetus from its municipal promotion (*Latium maius*) attributed to Antoninus Pius or most likely to Marcus Aurelius.⁶ *Gigthis*' political, economic, and religious life reached its peak in fact between the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE, as shown by monumental and honorary inscriptions commemorating the initiatives of influential local families – such as the *Iulii*, *Memmii*, *Messii*, *Servaei*, and *Servilii* – as well as by numerous imperial dedications, dating back to the Antonine and Severian ages.⁷

Among the buildings that faced the north side of the forum, a small shrine just east of the northern entryway attracts our attention (Fig. 1). It is entirely built out of local limestone and accessed via two large, rather low walkways running under the northern portico.⁸ A narrow *pronaos* (2.70 x 5.50 m) opens off the latter. It was paved with the same slabs as the portico and was not closed, unlike the *cella*, which is about 6.50 m deep and whose well-preserved floor was decorated in a regular pattern with polychrome limestone and sandstone in yellow and red.

At the bottom of the small *sacellum*, resting on a large red limestone slab, there is a basement, about 1.10 m tall, 2.70 m wide, and 0.42 m deep, except for the upper part, where the depth increases, the back wall being rounded to form an apse. A yel-

5. Troussel, 1998, p. 3130.

6. *CIL* VIII 22707, 22737. See Chastagnol, 1997, who estimates that the city had already obtained the *Latium minus* from Hadrian. Cf. Lepelley, 1981, pp. 368-371; Gascou, 1982, I, pp. 192-193. *Contra* Ferchiou, 1991, no. 51.

7. Nevertheless, the in-depth analysis of the specific elements of architectural decoration conducted by Naidé Ferchiou at the *Gigthis* site has unveiled the presence of a significant urban and monumental layout in the city centre and forum. This layout seems to have been established as early as the Augustan and Julio-Claudian periods, following a systematic development scheme. See on this subject Ferchiou, 1991, pp. 70-72 and 74-76; Bullo, 2002, pp. 200-204.

8. The information is taken from Constans, 1916b, pp. 48-49.

low limestone covering, and, at the bottom, a red limestone moulding adorned the base. It supported an *aedicula* with a triangular pediment in yellow limestone, decorated with two twisted columns, which probably housed a statue discovered in 1902 lying among the debris of the shrine (Fig. 2).⁹ It is largely intact except for the broken right arm at the height of the elbow. The imposing *simulacrum* (more than 2 meters tall),¹⁰ now at the Musée National du Bardo, was made of fine-grained white marble and represented a female deity; the upper part was joined to the lower one with pins, whose fixing brackets can still be seen today. The goddess, veiled and crowned with ears of corn, appears sternly clothed with a long robe, and bears a horn of plenty in her left hand, while the right arm, almost completely lost, probably held a spear, whose lower part, touching the drapery, is still visible over a length of 63 cm (Fig. 3).¹¹

The identification of the divine figure depicted here as the goddess Concordia and the building as her shrine was made possible due to two inscriptions discovered in highly fragmentary status among the ruins: the first one, pertaining to the frieze of the *aedicula* (60 x 120 x 28 cm; hl. 8 cm), preserves the left portion only (CIL VIII 22692; Fig. 4, no. 1); the second inscription, carved on a large white marble plaque (67 x 185 x 3 cm; hl. 9.5-4.5 cm), was likely placed above the entrance of the shrine (CIL VIII 22693; Fig. 4, no. 2). This latter one informs us about the patron and the reasons behind the construction of the building. The text and its translation are as follows:¹²

Concor[di]ae Pantheae Aug(ustae) s[acr]um. / M(arcus) Um[m]id[iu]s Quir(ina) (tribu) Sed[ati]s a[e]dem qu[am] / [p]ro [de]curio[na]tu C(aii) U[m]mid[i] Q[uir]ina (tribu) Sed[ati] fil(i) / su[i] ex (sestertium) m(ilibus) n(ummum) [p]rom[is]s[er]at inla[t]is r[ei] publica[e] le[g]itimi[s] [(sestertium) - - - - - m(ilibus)] n(ummum) [pro] de[c]urio[na]tu a[di]ctis ae]dem a sol[ocum] sim[ulacrum] [Co]ncord[ia]e et [p]ro[na]um et arcum ex (sestertium) [m(ilibus) n(ummum) fec]it idemq[ue] de[d]icavit.

9. See Gauckler, 1902b, p. CXXVI.

10. Gauckler reported its height as 2.40 m (1902b, p. CXXVI), while Constans (1916b, p. 49) listed it as 2.25 m; L. Poinssot (in *CMA*, Suppl., p. 58, no. 1030) stated that it is 2.5 m tall. This does not invalidate the fact that the statue is monumental.

11. Gauckler, 1902b, p. CXXVI; *CMA*, Suppl. I, C, p. 58, no. 1030, tab. XXXVI; Constans, 1916b, p. 59.

12. The plaque is divided into 104 fragments. *CMA*, Suppl. I, D, p. 100, no. 1053; *AE* 1908, 119; *ILT* 19; *LBIRNA* 280; *ILPBardo* 3; *SIRAR* 3184. See Gauckler, 1902a, p. CCXXVI; 1907, p. 291, no. 2; Constans, 1916b, p. 49. The inscription, which is arranged in seven lines, shows writing in carefully engraved characters, separated by *hederae distinguentes* and triangular punctuation marks. The plaque is now preserved in the Musée National du Bardo, where the inscription is arranged according to the sequence of fragments.

“Consecrated to *Concordia Panthea Augusta*. Marcus Ummidius Sedatus, of the Quirine tribe, the temple he had promised in honour of the decurionate of his son Caius Ummidius Sedatus of the Quirine tribe for the sum of 6,000 sesterces, after offering the city (---) thousand sesterces according to the law, increased in honour of the decurionate, achieved and dedicated this temple by himself together with a *simulacrum* of Concordia, and a *pronaos* and an arch for 21,000 sesterces”.

The text commemorates the erection and consecration *ex novo* of an *aedes* to *Concordia Panthea Augusta*, featuring an arch, a *pronaos*, and a statue of the goddess. This project was carried out by Marcus Ummidius Sedatus, member of the Quirine tribe, in celebration of his son Caius attaining the position of decurion. The entire endeavour was funded with a substantial sum of 21,000 sesterces.¹³ Sedatus, acknowledged as *ornator patriae* on a statuary base found in the northeast corner of the forum (*CIL* VIII 22743; Fig. 4, no. 5),¹⁴ belonged to a presumably prominent family of *Gigthis*, the *Ummidii*.¹⁵ His son Caius, who achieved the position of decurion of *Gigthis*, as revealed in our inscription, was also honoured with a statue in the forum commissioned by the city. It was funded and set up by one of his sons, M. Ummidius Sedatus (*CIL* VIII 11043; Fig. 4, no. 3).¹⁶ Another statue was dedicated to him by his three sons altogether (*CIL* VIII 11042: M. Ummidius Sedatus, L. Ummidius Pacatus, C. Ummidius Haterianus). The base of this statue was discovered outside the northeast corner of the forum portico, in the courtyard of the adjacent “Temple B” (Fig. 4, no. 4). On the other side of the eastern gate, a similar base was dedicated by the *ordo* and the *populus* to L. Ummidius Pacatus, his second son (*CIL* VIII 11044). This testifies to the civic prestige his descendants enjoyed.

13. We might imagine that Ummidius Sedatus had promised 6,000 sesterces as the *summa honoraria* for the office of his son Caius. Further expenses, amounting to additional 15,000 sesterces, were sustained to complete the sanctuary and set it up magnificently. This is the only priced temple inscription from *Gigthis*, thus it is difficult to determine whether it was more or less expensive than other buildings in the city. See in this regard Sterret-Krause, 2012, p. 56.

14. This suggests that he likely made additional contributions to *Gigthis*. However, no archaeological or epigraphic evidence of these other donations remains.

15. Eight inscriptions in Africa mention the *Ummidii*: as pointed out by Syme, 1968, p. 92, three of them are only sporadic (*CIL* VIII 14744 = 25612, from *Bulla Regia*; 6202, from *Arsacal*; 7537, from *Cirta*), and the concentration is at *Gigthis*. For the inscriptions found in *Gigthis*, see Sterret-Krause, 2012, pp. 57-62.

16. This base was found on the western side of the entryway into the shrine from the portico.

According to Ronald Syme, who has conducted two studies on this family,¹⁷ the *Ummidii* of Africa owed their *civitas* and name (as their ancestor) to Caius Ummidius Quadratus, who held the position of *consul suffectus* in 118 CE. He had served as proconsul of Africa around 133/134 CE, before the promotion of *Gigthis* to the status of *municipium* of Latin law during the reign of Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius. This promotion in all probability resulted in significant economic and political advantages for Marcus Ummidius Sedatus. His noteworthy actions and contributions should therefore have taken place between the principate of Marcus Aurelius and the end of the 2nd century CE.¹⁸

It was due to the privileged political and social status achieved by his son that Marcus Ummidius Sedatus had this *sacellum* built and consecrated to the goddess. This euergetic act, as the detailed account of what was accomplished and the considerable expenses sustained reveal, primarily served as a public demonstration of his munificence towards other members of the *ordo* and the city. It was indeed conceived not only to exhibit the family’s adherence to municipal regulations by paying the requested *summa legitima*, but also to establish a monument that would leave a lasting trace of his family in the city’s memory.

Even the choice of the goddess Concordia as the recipient of the *aedes* was not arbitrary; it was a deliberate selection to seek her benevolent influence for the new decurion’s success in his responsibilities. Concordia was invoked to ensure her active involvement and protection throughout his career so that it would proceed harmoniously and under the auspices of the most appropriate divine mediator to grant the *pax hominum*.

The two onomastic attributes given to the goddess in the dedicatory formula should then be understood in light of these intentions. They were intended to exalt,

17. Syme, 1968 and 1979.

18. The genealogy of this family is debated. Syme, 1968, p. 92, believes that the “inscriptions (...) at *Gigthis* (...) commemorate in various ways the honors and public services of a single prominent family, viz. *C. Ummidius Sedatus*, his sons *C. Ummidius Haterianus*, *L. Ummidius Pacatus*, *M. Ummidius Sedatus*, his grandson *C. Ummidius Sedatus*”. Constans, 1916b, p. 50, proposed a different stemma, where Marcus Ummidius Sedatus represented the first generation, Caius Ummidius Sedatus the second, and Lucius Ummidius Pacatus, Caius Ummidius Haterianus, and Marcus Ummidius Sedatus the third. Both scholars agree, however, in placing Marcus Ummidius Sedatus in the middle of the 2nd century CE. Other scholars have followed Constans (see Benzina Ben Abdallah in *ILPBardo*, p. 5, no. 3) and indeed the language of *CIL VIII 11043* seems to require that *C. Ummidius Sedatus* was the middle generation between two men named Marcus, his father and his son. We follow Constans’ stemma: Marcus Ummidius Sedatus (benefactor); Caius Ummidius Sedatus (decurion); Lucius Ummidius Pacatus, Caius Ummidius Haterianus, and Marcus Ummidius Sedatus (sons of the latter). Cf. Sterret-Krause, 2012, p. 55.

enhance, and emphasise most comprehensively and unmistakably the supreme and extensive nature of the goddess's prerogatives. Hence, the choice of the adjective *Panthea* (unique concerning the goddess) was aimed at contextually celebrating and concurrently elevating her unparalleled and utmost divine power to the highest degree, signifying her as "all divine" or "utmost divine".¹⁹ The term *Augusta*, for its part, stressed her divine rulership on human affairs, highlighting her authority and significance.²⁰

In pursuing the examination of this monument, we mentioned that the excavations not only revealed the marble plaque originally positioned at the sanctuary's entrance but also uncovered the remnants of an *aedicula* adorning the apse of the *cella*, which likely lodged the statue of the goddess. With two limestone spiral-fluted columns surmounted by white marble composite capitals, the *aedicula* supported an inscribed frieze (60 x 120 x 28 cm), a band with a leaf-and-dart motif, and a triangular tympanum decorated with a single rosette.

The preserved left portion of the inscription on the frieze consists of thirteen letters and part of the fourteenth (8 cm high), reading *CONCORDIAE INPA[---]*, with a *hedera distinguens* positioned between the two words.²¹ Based on the reconstructed appearance of the *aedicula* at the Musée National du Bardo in Tunis, the relatively small size of its frieze suggests that the inscription most likely indicated a consecration to the goddess, as the term *Concordiae* implies. It can thus be deduced that the final part of the text contains the word *sacrum*. While it often figured in inscriptions in an

19. The prevailing interpretation suggests that the use of the adjective *pantheus*, *-a* to various divinities during the Imperial age reflects the "*mouvement du syncrétisme religieux*" (Bayet, 1957, p. 222) wherein Greco-Roman paganism allegedly faced the emergence of "*entités complexes*" (Picard, 1954, pp. 226-227) combining the virtues of "all the gods" (from *pas, pasa, pan*, "all, total"). However, we propose an alternative argument. We argue that *pantheus*, *-a* does not conceptualise a divine abstraction combining all gods and goddesses. Instead, according to the intensive value of *pas, pasa, pan* in Greek compounds, it qualifies a god as "very, completely divine". See in this regard Benedetti, 2022 and 2024. This perspective contends that the onomastic attribute does not isolate the divine instance as it refers to in an absolute sense. Rather, like other onomastic attributes aimed at celebrating a divine power occasionally deemed the most appropriate interlocutor for fulfilling a specific request, *pantheus*, *-a* functions as a qualitative relative superlative. It represents the highest form of acclaim that, relevant to a specific context or circumstance, seeks the favour and effective attention of the addressed divine power.

20. *Concordia* is addressed as *Augusta* in 17 inscriptions, five of which were found in *Africa Proconsularis*. On "Augustan" deities, see Villaret, 2019. In *Africa Proconsularis*, the onomastic attribute *Augustus/-a* concerns about 80% of religious dedications, such that it cannot be considered particularly significant in the possible "imperial" connotation of this deity. As early as the end of the 1st century CE, this attribute was subject to such indiscriminate use in religious testimonies that it gradually shifted from its original meaning tied to the imperial household to a very common, honorary title.

21. *CMA*, Suppl. I, D, p. 100, no. 1052; *CIL* VIII 22692; *ILT* 18; *ILPBardo* 2; *SIRAR* 3183.

abbreviated form, given the significance of the architectural support upon which it was to be inscribed, it is plausible that it was engraved in its extended form. Therefore, the gap between the visible letters and the word *sacrum* would likely have accommodated at most 5-6 additional letters. Given these considerations, since the word *Concordiae* is separated from the following letters by a *hedera distinguens*, it could be surmised that, much like the commemorative inscription in the *pronaos* (*Concordia Panthea Augusta*), the name of the goddess was followed by an onomastic attribute. However, there are no epigraphic or literary references to attributes of Concordia beginning with *inpa-* or *impa-*. This absence points us toward an alternative solution. In this regard, the archaeologist Paul Gauckler, in his excavation reports,²² suggested that the frieze inscription should be read as *Concordiae in p[antheo sacrum]*. This interpretation has been accepted by subsequent scholars, as it seems to accommodate the missing letters (5 + space) and linguistically aligns with the dedication inscription at the entrance, which mentions a “pantheistic” deity. As a working hypothesis, we aim to adopt Gauckler’s suggestion, albeit cautiously,²³ by focusing on its meaning, and consequently explore its potential interpretation. If the inscription did indeed present itself in this manner, it would likely refer to the consecration (*sacrum*) of the *aedicula* or possibly the entire monument to Concordia (*Concordiae*) within (as indicated by the preposition *in*) something – presumably a “space”.

The designation of this space would derive from the neuter form of the adjective *pantheus*, -a, -um, functioning as a noun. But what did this *pantheum*, in which Concordia was allegedly included, correspond to? Two possible hypotheses can be considered in this regard.

Firstly, the term *pantheum* could have referred to the sanctuary of the goddess, where a deity named as *Panthea Augusta* was worshipped for her superlative merits. The *aedes*, designated as a *pantheum*, would thus have received a name characterising it as an “entirely divine” place, following our proposed interpretation of *pantheus*, -um. This denomination might therefore have been chosen due to the presence of a deity whose power was invoked and exalted to the highest degree within (*in*) this sacred place.²⁴ However, another hypothesis can be envisaged, which leads us to con-

22. Gauckler, 1907, p. 290, no. 1.

23. This hypothesis indeed poses an epigraphic challenge. While the word CONCORDIA is followed by a *hedera distinguens*, the letters INP appear very close together. This is a relative problem, given the common occurrence of epigraphic cases in which separating marks are not consistently placed and are frequently omitted, especially between the preposition and the noun that follows it.

24. This hypothesis is also presented in similar terms by Benzina Ben Abdallah (*ILPBardo* 2). The author suggests that *Concordia in Pantheo* should be regarded as synonymous with the *Concordia*

sider the broader context of the *Gigthis* forum, where (*in*) the goddess would have been situated along with her temple.

Facing the square from the western side stood the so-called “Temple A”. It was positioned atop a 3.30-meter-tall podium accessible via a monumental staircase.²⁵ It featured a single-cell structure, hexastyle design, and was almost peripteral *sine postico*. Notably, a rectangular tribune was located on its facade, set within the staircase at half-depth, aligning this structure with a temple typology prevalent during the Julio-Claudian era.²⁶ Several statues of emperors, including Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius and local magistrates, were dug up in its vicinity,²⁷ allowing for the possible dating of this complex to the mid-2nd century CE, coinciding with the most significant construction phase of the forum.²⁸ Despite its prominent position within the square, pinpointing the identification of this temple as a *Capitolium* at that time is challenging due to the complete absence of epigraphic documentation. Complicating matters further, remnants related to Egyptian cults were found near the temple, making the structure’s identification even more elusive.²⁹

Immediately south of “Temple A”, there are vestiges pointing to the historical antiquity of the forum of *Gigthis*. Notably, a small quadrangular room (measuring 6.5 x 9.8 m) hosted a *sacellum* dedicated to the *Genius Augusti*, along with a statue dedicated to it (*CIL* VIII 11019). The discovery of the marble portrait of Augustus *velato capite* in the forum probably pertains to this site, although its precise identification remains uncertain.³⁰

In the northeast corner of the square, directly accessible through a secondary entrance, stood the so-called “Temple B”. This structure, dating back to the early Imperial period,³¹ possessed a view over the road leading from the east through its triple access points. Its identification was made possible through the discovery of an inscribed lintel (*CIL* VIII 22694), commemorating the financial support provided by

Panthea mentioned in the dedicatory inscription of the sanctuary.

25. Constans, 1916b, pp. 26-34. Cf. Bullo, 2002, pp. 202-203.

26. Ferchiou, 1991, p. 75.

27. Constans, 1916b, p. 33.

28. The Corinthian marble columns and capitals also date to the 2nd century CE. Cf. Bullo, 2002, p. 202.

29. Constans, 1916b, pp. 29-33. These include a crocodile head, a female figure with an Isiac hairstyle, a head of Serapis, a fragment of a clay lantern depicting the *Navigium Isidis*, and the remains of a marble frieze that probably belonged at the base of the building’s tribune.

30. Reinach & Babelon, 1886, pp. 43 and 50; Constans, 1916b, pp. 34-35.

31. Ferchiou, 1981, p. 70.

the *flamen perpetuus* Marcus Iulius Mandus during the principate of Marcus Aurelius.³² His contribution facilitated the construction of the paved courtyard and the archway leading to the building, which was dedicated to *Liber Pater Augustus*. The monument was south-facing and featured a courtyard (23.5 x 14.7 m), which had a combination of paved and lime surfaces and was enclosed by a portico of 28 columns of yellow marble on three sides. At the centre of the courtyard, there was a quadrangular chapel that did not feature a podium. These architectural elements demonstrate a strong local influence and suggest the presence of a pre-existing Punic cult in the area.³³

The first monument encountered beneath the north portico, upon exiting Temple B, is a small stone shrine measuring 3.70 m in depth and 5 m in width. Access to the shrine is granted through a 1.80-m-wide threshold, which is preceded by a step and flanked by two columns, with their bases still in place. The walls of the shrine retain remnants of a plaster covering, and the flooring, in reasonably good condition, closely resembles that of the portico.³⁴ The attribution of this temple to Hercules is supported by the discovery of a sculptural representation of the Nemean lion or the *leonté*, as well as a marble head depicting the god crowned with vines.³⁵ This overtly Dionysian attribute is justified by the longstanding association between these two deities in Africa, dating back to Punic times, a historical bond that the *Gigthis* forum also seems to reinforce.³⁶

The identification of the so-called “Temple C”, located immediately to the west and accessed through the rear wall of the portico, remains uncertain.³⁷ This was a modest shrine designed in the form of a small distyle temple, situated atop a 1.3-m-tall podium. It was originally built during the Julio-Claudian period and likely underwent reconstruction during the Hadrianic era.³⁸ It faced a small, paved courtyard.

32. M. Iulius Mandus is also known from the dedication of a statue (*CIL VIII 22728*) erected to him by the Senate of *Gigthis*, at the unanimous request of the people’s assembly, for his “repeated munificence” (*ob multiplicem eius munificentiam*). We have here a memento of that munificence.

33. Cf. Constans, 1916b, pp. 41-44. For the Punic cult in the area, see Pisanu, 1990, pp. 228-229.

34. A large square plinth, about 5 m on a side, rests against the back wall. Under the porch, opposite the entrance, is a large grey limestone plinth (1.40 x 1.10 m), preceded by a smaller yellow limestone plinth (60 x 60 cm). Cf. Constans, 1916b, pp. 44-46.

35. Cf. Constans, 1916b, pp. 45-46.

36. The frequent association of Liber and Hercules in Africa can be traced back to their corresponding Punic substrata, *Shadrappa* and *Milkashtart*, the two joint patrons of the city of *Lepcis Magna* in Tripolitania. See in this regard Cadotte, 2007, pp. 253-266 and 284-295.

37. Constans, 1916b, pp. 46-48.

38. Cf. Ferchiou, 1989, no. I.II.B1.5.

The paved road that runs alongside the sanctuary of Concordia to the west is situated on a considerably higher level compared to the forum. To access the road after exiting the portico, one must ascend two rather tall yellow limestone steps. On the opposite side of the road, there is an oblong room measuring 6 m in width and 3.30 m in depth. This room opens at the same level beneath the portico. On both sides of the entrance, there are large pedestals about 37 cm tall, each supporting column bases made of solid red limestone. These bases supported smooth columns made of yellow limestone. The walls are similarly constructed to those of the sanctuary of Concordia, with remnants of a fairly thick plaster coating. The floor is made of concrete, except for the rear part where a square measuring 70 cm on each side appears to mark the location of a pedestal.³⁹ This room served as a sanctuary dedicated to Apollo, established in 162 CE by M. Ummidius Annianus Quadratianus. At least, this is what is inferred from an inscription, whose fragments were found in this room (*CIL VIII 11029*).

Finally, in the northwest corner of the forum, there were buildings related to the political life of the town, including the *curia*. It was a hall preceded by a vestibule, flanked by tiers and with niches on the walls.⁴⁰ Next to the *curia* and connected to it, another room was interpreted as the city's treasury (*aerarium*), although some scholars suggest it might be a *tabularium*, where archival documents were probably stored in the niches on the wall.⁴¹

The overview of *Gigthis'* forum area has revealed that this space accommodated not only a few buildings associated with the city's political and social life but also a collection of cultic structures dedicated to specific deities. These deities appear to symbolise the public religious life of the city and reflect the personal aspirations of notable individuals within the *municipium*, as demonstrated by the temple of Concordia *Panthea Augusta*. The resulting scenario is that of a diverse yet well-defined religious landscape consisting of seven sacred spaces, primarily shaped by the contributions of benefactors seeking to assert their presence and express their religious preferences within the urban context.

Going back to the inscription on which we focused, we could therefore advance the hypothesis that the *pantheum* in which Concordia (and, indeed, its sanctuary) was to be placed was the forum of the city itself. In other words, *pantheum* could have been a name coined by the devotee to characterise this space which, by the presence of other sanctuaries and, consequently, other deities all around it, was "manifestly,

39. Cf. Constans, 1916b, pp. 52-53.

40. It was identified as such by Cagnat, 1917, p. 298. See Troussset, 1998, p. 3131.

41. See Balty, 1991, pp. 60-63.

eminently divine”.⁴² According to this hypothesis, the presence of several deities would have contributed to increasing the sacred “charge” of this place, in which Marcus Ummidius Sedatus intended to inscribe himself with his own cult foundation.

In conclusion, the term *pantheum* from *CIL VIII 22692*, if it indeed occurred there, considered in light of the information derived from the sanctuary where the inscription was located and the forum of *Gigthis* where the temple stood, could have had several possible meanings or interpretations. In the context of *Gigthis*, far from outlining an “all-embracing” and “exhaustive” representation of the divine powers, the adjective *pantheus*, *-um* rather possibly testifies to an effective linguistic tool, creatively forged, and was adopted to highlight and amplify the “sacredness” of a place.⁴³ It could have designated, on the one hand, the temple of a single deity, by virtue of the “totally divine august” power that inhabited it. On the other hand, it could have denoted the forum itself, referred to as a *pantheum* since it was a space enriched with divine “presences”. As its history and stratifications over time show, this space was

42. The expression *in pantheo* recurs in Pliny (*N.H.* IX 58, 121; 34, 13), and in two acts of the *fratres Arvales* (*CIL VI 2040-2041*) referring to items arranged or events that took place closer to or within Rome’s renowned *Pantheum*. This expression is also found in a dedicatory inscription, dated between 180-192 CE (*AE 1968, 227*), discovered out of its original context in Astorga (ancient *Asturica Augusta in Hispania Citerior*). It was found alongside seven other monuments resembling altars in appearance but closer in thickness to steles, all bearing dedications from various *procuratores Augusti of Hispania Citerior* to different deities. Cf. García y Bellido, 1968; Diego, 1968; Mossong & Abascal, 2019. Our inscription records a dedication “to the gods and goddesses that it is right and proper to invoke in a/the? *pantheum*” (*dis deabusque quos ius fasque est precari in pantheo*) by the *procurator Augusti* Publius Aelius Hilarianus for the well-being of the emperor Commodus. It seems that Hilarianus adopted the adjective *pantheus* (*-a, -um*) as a noun to designate a specific “space” within which a plurality of deities was to be housed, specifically those appropriate and suitable to be invoked for the emperor’s health. The lack of precise information makes it difficult to identify this *pantheum* and its possible configuration. However, while presenting this hypothesis with due caution, it cannot be ruled out that the *pantheum* Hilarianus referred to was a “space” where the dedications of the other *procuratores* mentioned may also have been housed. Indeed, several scholars argue that these monuments, forming a cohesive set, were probably originally located in the same place, likely significant for these *procuratores* who wished to leave a testimony of their service and religious involvement in the city. Given the presence of a plural yet determined group of deities, mirroring the religious preferences of these agents, such a “space”, like in the context of *Gigthis*, could indeed be a *pantheum*, *i.e.* a “space” particularly charged with the divine, “manifestly divine”.

43. The adjective *pantheus* (*-a, -um*) did not necessarily designate a temple, as evidenced by another inscription from the African context (*AE 1941, 46, 190-211 CE*), specifically from ancient *Thamugadi* (modern Timgad in Algeria). It bears a dedication to the *Genius* of the colony. Here, the adjective *pantheus* (*-a, -um*) refers to an *arcus* near which (*ad*) a statue of Mars was to be placed. It was offered by the veteran Marcus Pompeius Pudentianus along with statues of the reigning princes (Septimius Severus and Caracalla) and Julia Domna, and other gifts for the community, once he was promoted as *flamen perpetuus* at the end of the 2nd century CE. For the analysis of this inscription, see Benedetti, forthcoming.

the result of successive remodelling through a specific divine selection, contextually significant and representative of individual cultic agencies (such as the Concordia of the *Ummidii*) and the city's religious life.

IMAGES

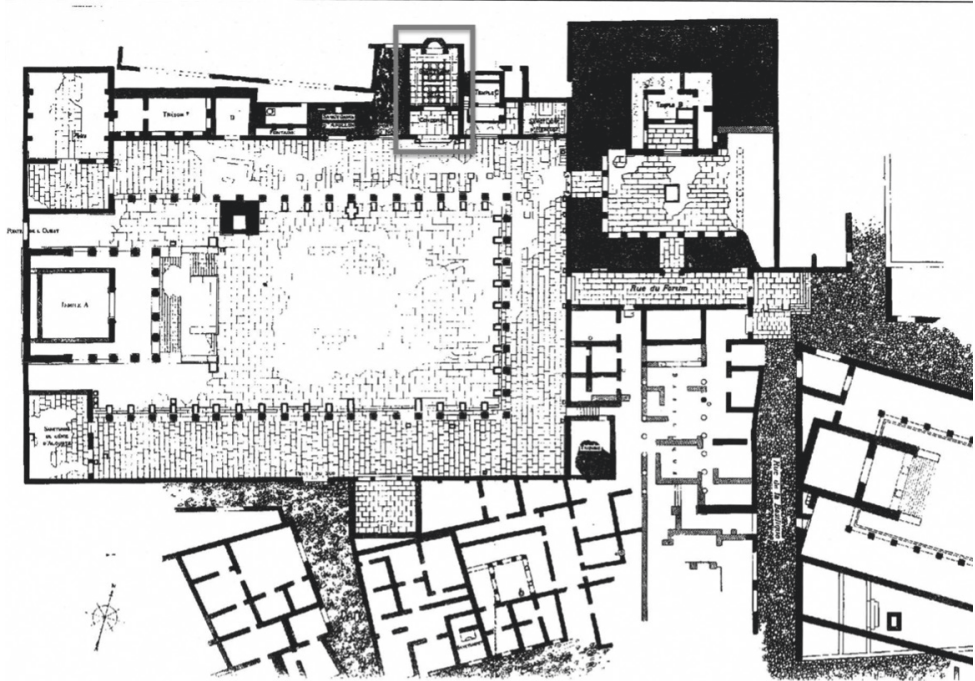


Fig. 1. Plan of the forum at *Gigthis*, showing the location of the building.
From Constans, 1916a, plate II, modified by the author.



Fig. 2. Reconstructed aedicule with the statue of Concordia. From *CMA, Suppl.* I, C, tab. XXXVI.



Fig. 3. Over-life-size statue of Concordia at the Musée du Bardo of Tunis. From: Wikimedia Commons, licensed under the CC-BY-2.5 license. Author: Giorces (07/06/2007). URL: <https://it.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Giorces-Bardo25.jpg>.

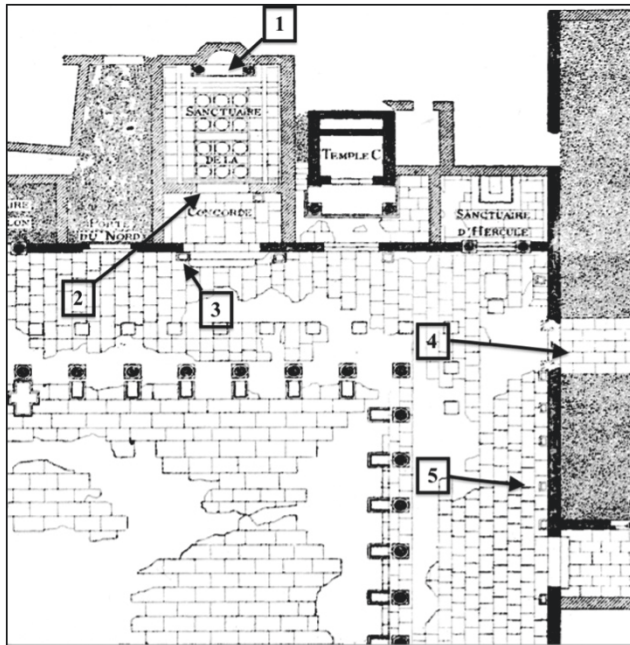


Fig. 4. Detail of the northeast corner of the forum at *Gigthis*, showing the shrine of *Concordia Panthea Augusta*, and the spots where its inscriptions and the dedicator’s family were found. From Constans, 1916, plate II, modified by the author. Legend: 1. Aedicule inscription and statue; 2. Main dedicatory inscription; 3. Statue base of Caius Ummidius Sedatus; 4. Statue base of Caius Ummidius Sedatus; 5. Statue base of Marcus Ummidius Sedatus.

ABBREVIATIONS

AE: Cagnat, René *et alii* (eds.) (1888-). *L'année épigraphique*. Paris.

CIL: Mommsen, Theodor *et alii* (eds.) (1863-). *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*. I-XVII. Berlin.

CMA, Suppl.: Drappier, Louis *et alii* (eds.) (1910). *Catalogue du Musée Alaoui. Supplément*. Paris: E. Leroux.

ILPBardo: Ben Abdallah, Benzina (1986). *Catalogue des inscriptions latines païennes du Musée du Bardo*. Rome: École française de Rome.

ILT: Merlin, Alfred (1944). *Inscriptions Latines de la Tunisie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

LBIRNA: Saastamoinen, Ari (2010). *The Phraseology and Structure of Latin Building Inscriptions in Roman North Africa*. Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica.

SIRAR: *Sylloge Inscriptionum Religionis Africae Romanae* (<https://humanidadesdigitales.uc3m.es/s/nuevo-sirar/page/home>).

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