2023 Volume 10

STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA



The University of Shumen Press

KONSTANTIN PRESLAVSKY UNIVERSITY OF SHUMEN
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA

THE ROMAN PROVINCIAL SOCIETY IN THE LOWER DANUBE

Vol. 10,
2023

Shumen University Press

STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA

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Published with the financial assistance
of Project RD-08-138/ 1.03.2022
of the Faculty of Humanities at Shumen University

ISSN 2367-5446

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Contents

Introduction 7

Plamen Petkov, On some problems about the Bastarnae, Moesi and Dacians 12

Vladislav Zhivkov, Hoard of bronze trulla from Almus and the Dacian wars of Domitian 30

Ana Honcu, Veterans of Italian origin in the province of Upper Moesia 53

Kalin Stoev, Ivo Topalilov, The early colonial society of Ratiaria 67

Lucreţiu Mihailescu-Bîrliba, Rural Lower Moesia as a source of recruitment: evidence from inscriptions about soldiers' origin 81

Chiara Cenati, Victoria González Berdús, Latin verse inscriptions from the Limes of Moesia inferior 98

Stefan Yanakiev, Being a Thracian at the frontier: cultural affiliation of the Thracian population living at Novae in Moesia Inferior 149

Atanas Danov, Grave Structures from the Roman Necropolis at Gramada, Vidin Region 166

Ivo Topalilov, Varbin Varbanov, Coins discovered during an archaeological excavation on the territory of Philippopolis in 2023 185

Andrzej B. Biernacki, Elena Klenina, The *ptochotrophium* in Novae (Moesia Secunda) Preliminary results of the study 209

Contributors to the volume.....244

INTRODUCTION

This issue of Studia academica Šumenensia (SAŠ) is dedicated to the Romans on Lower Danube. Although the topic has been repeatedly discussed in research, conferences, colloquiums, projects and doctoral dissertations, it is still far from being exhausted. And this is so not only because of the different scale of research due to its specificity in the individual modern countries that the mentioned region includes, but also because of the intensive archaeological excavations, which provide new, heterogeneous in nature, material that requires interdisciplinary studies. It is a topic about the conquests of the Roman state, of the Roman *limes*, of the Roman state exemplified by the provinces, Romanization, society, culture, and the integration of provincial society into the *pax Romana*, as well as of the "Romans" themselves in the region, and the interplay and complex relationships between the foreigners, who were not necessarily Roman citizens, and the natives, either direct or indirect, etc. This is an all-encompassing topic, combining various aspects of the life of ancients in these lands which requires the use of a complex approach. For this reason, historians, archaeologists, epigraphers, philologists and numismatists have been invited to participate in the current SAŠ issue.

The first article is the study of Plamen Petkov, who examines some aspects of the campaign of Marcus Licinius Crassus, who in 27 BC. triumphed over *Thraecia et Geteis*. He defends the idea that the reason and cause of the military operations were the aggressive actions of the Bastarni, whose state organization, after the inclusion of the Dardanians and the Triballi, extended from the delta of Istros as far as beyond the river Oskios and who also undertook campaigns to the south of Hemus. Their offensive put the province of Macedonia under

direct threat. As a result of the successful campaign, Marcus Licinius Crassus conquered the lands of the future provinces of Moesia and Thrace. Subsequently, the Danube *Limes* was formed and existed in the considered sector during the next six centuries. Despite of being orderly and solid, at certain times, though rarely, it was breached, which had a devastating effect on the lands lying south of it. Vladislav Zhivkov's research deals with one of these breaches, which examines a collective find of metal vessels with one handle (*casseroles* or *trulla*) found in Lom (ancient Almus). These vessels were used for drinking, cooking, and eating and are part of the Roman military equipment. The author associates this find with the auxiliary military unit that was stationed between the reigns of Claudius and the Flavians, and its concealment is associated with the destruction of the military camp that happened in 84/85 as a result of a Dacian attack. Subsequently, a few decades later, a Roman vicus was built on the ruins of the camp, most likely during the reign of Hadrian.

The incorporation of the Lower Danube lands into the Roman Empire, their pacification and integration into the *pax Romana*, can be traced in several ways. One of them is presented in the article by Ana Honcu whose study provides an overview of veterans of Italian origin who settled in the province of Upper Moesia after their military service. Based on the onomastics found in the inscriptions dated from the end of the 1st century AD to the first half of the 2nd century AD, she identifies 11 veterans, 10 of which served in *legio* V*II Claudia* and one in *legio IIII Flavia Felix*. The veterans originated from northern Italy (especially Aquileia, Placentia and Vicetia) which area was a source for the legionaries of the *legio VII Claudia* in the 1st century AD.

The role of veterans in the governance of local municipalities is examined in the study of Kalin Stoev and Ivo Topalilov, using the example of the colony of Raciaria, which is generally believed to have been founded as a military colony after Trajan's Dacian Wars. The epigraphic monuments at present do not allow us to accept the main governing and leading position of the veterans in the colony, but rather reveal that from the very beginning, the colony was a center of attraction for aristocrats from the western part of the empire.

Numerous inscriptions and military diplomas present the Lower Danubian lands as a source for recruits for the Roman army, and Praetorian cohorts and fleet consequently. The study of Lucrețiu Mihailescu-Bîrliba reveals evidence for the rural territories of Moesia Inferior of which that of Nicopolis ad Istrum provides a density of mentions, possibly due to its large territory and huge population. The inclusion of soldiers in the praetorian cohorts during the Severans' period may suggest the replacement of the praetorians by new ones loyal to the emperor. The study shows that the recruitiment started from the very beginning of Roman rule in the region, in the middle of 1st century and itensified since the time of the Severans.

It seems that with the Roman army along the Lower Danubian limes the verse inscriptions habit expanded. The study of Chiara Cenati and Victoria González Berdús discusses the production of such inscriptions in Moesia inferior which appear only at the end of the second / beginning of the third century. It is concluded that the distribution of the verse inscriptions and their metres and topics follows the specific patterns of the settlements and two factors seem to have favoured their diffusion in the region: the new cultural habits of the veterans who had served in the urban units and the strong cultural influence of Tomis.

The lands of the lower Danube are characterized by their heterogeneous population, but also by their own society, containing different social strata and origins. And this is not accidental given the character of the region, belonging to the Roman *limes*, but also containing inherited centuries-old Hellenic traditions through the West Pontic Hellenic colonies, as well as belonging to Thrace, which has its own specific path of development. There are not many such cases in the empire with a similar mixture, which also affects the specificity of the culture of the region.

Two of the studies in this issue of SAŠ deal with society through the representatives of the local population and reveal how they were influenced. Stefan Yanakiev's study deals with the Thracians in the local military, administrative and civilian structures in Novae (in Moesia Inferior). He believes that the legionary headquarters of *legio I Italica* located between the "civilized" society of the Balkan south and

barbaricum to the north, between the highly Latinized West and the Hellenic ἀποικίαι to the East is one of the most important links in the provincial system along the Lower Danube. It is at such a dynamic point that it is significant to clarify the participation of the Thracian population in the local society, its motivation and realization in the structures created by the authorities and the methods used for this.

The author of the second study is Atanas Danov, who presents the results of the archaeological excavations of the necropolis near the town of Gramada, belonging to a villa rustica from the 3rd century AD, falling within the administrative territory of Ratiaria. It is flat, and biritual, with 42 burials, the ratio of cremations to inhumations being 3:1. All inhumations are child burials, with almost no inventory, usually in a simple pit. In cremations, the burning of the body was carried out outside the burial facilities, which also contained a more significant inventory.

Undoubtedly, a significant part of the events that took place along the Lower Danube found their echo in the neighboring lands, and in particular - Thrace. Actually, the connection between them is particularly close, bearing in mind the fact that some of these lands were part of Thrace, at least until the middle of the 1st century, with a significant part of them remaining within the newly formed Roman province of Thrace and afterwards, until the time of the Severans. The archaeological excavations of a Roman and late Roman settlement located near Philippopolis in Thrace reveal one such example. Ivo Topalilov and Varbin Varbanov's research report presents a primary study of the numismatic material discovered during the excavations, which highlights the development of the partially explored settlement, namely: the Thracian uprising in 21 AD against the Romans, the integration of these lands in the *pax Romana* at the time of the Flavians, the economic prosperity at the time of the Severans and the barbarian invasions in the last quarter of the 4th century, known as the "Gothic Wars". All these events of a different nature witnessed during the research of an archaeological site in Thrace, have their direct connection with the Lower Danube lands and the events that took place there.

The so-called “Gothic Wars” in Thrace in 378-379 shook the empire to its foundations. They probably had an influence on the development of the cult of the relics of Christian saints, which gained extreme popularity from that moment on. It is no coincidence that at that time many new martyriums were built, and a considerable part of the basilicas became martyrdoms. The development and popularity of the cult of relics eventually led to the construction of spacious basilicas next to the martyr buildings to accommodate all the faithful who wished to participate in the liturgical activities accompanying the veneration of their cult. A last study in the current issue of SAŠ by Andrzej B. Biernacki and Elena Klenina addresses precisely this issue, based on a complex of rooms located south of the great basilica that was part of the episcopal complex at Novae (Moesia Secunda). The complex itself has been interpreted as a *ptochotrophium* and was a shelter for the poor and pilgrims who probably visited the tomb of the martyr Saint Lupus in Nove. The complex was built at the beginning of the 5th century as the last part of the *episcopium*.

Ivo Topalilov, Svetlana Nedelcheva

STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA 10, 12-29
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On some problems about the Bastarnae, Moesi and Dacians

Plamen Petkov

Abstract: Through Appian, it can be explained why Marcus Licinius Crassus has received a triumph for his victories *Thraecia et Geteis*, and why the Bastarnae, the main adversary, *prima facie* are missing from the triumphal fasciae. However, this is only at first look. The Bastarnae had included in *Geteis* in the same way, like the case of Clondicus, the chieftain of the Bastarnae, who was named Cloelius, leader of Getae, by Appian. In modern historiography, there an of the domination of the Scordisci and the Bastarnae over Thracian dynastic houses is underestimated. This is the reason for the wrong interpretation of some events affecting the military and political processes in Thrace. The rulers in the Dobruja area from the late 2nd – first half of the 1st century BC, best known from the numismatics and the epigraphy, were probably Bastarnae. They were the most powerful military people in the region. Their aggression was the reason for the conquest of the lands of the future provinces Moesia and Thracia by Marcus Licinius Crassus.

Keywords: Bastarnae, Moesi, Getae, Dacians, Scythians, Thracians

Резюме: Сведенията на Апиан могат да се обяснят защо Марк Лициний Крас получава триумф за победите си Thraecia et Geteis и защо бастарните, основният противник, липсват в триумфалните фасти. Това обаче е само на пръв поглед. Бастарните са включени в Geteis по същия начин като предводителя на бастарните Клондик, който е наречен Клоелий, предводител на гетите, у Апиан. В съвременната историография се подценява доминацията на скордиските и бастарните над тракийските династични домове. Оттук и погрешното тълкуване на някои събития, засягащи военно-политическите процеси в Тракия. Владетелите в Добруджа от края на II – първата половина на I в. пр. н. е., известни най-вече от нумизматиката и епиграфиката, вероятно са бастарни. Последните са най-дълго доминиралите в региона. Техните нападения стават причина Марк Лициний Крас да завоюва земите на бъдещите провинции Мизия и Тракия.

Appian[1] wrote that 20,000 Getae led by Cloelius (Κλοίλιος) crossed the Istros River because they had an agreement with the Macedonian king Perseus, who had to pay 1,000 gold staters to their leader, 10 per horseman and 5 per each of the infantry, i.e. the total amount exceeded 150,000 gold staters. However, Perseus sent as a gift to Cloelius some chlamydos, gold ornaments and 10,000 in gold. Information about the relations between the Antigonids and the barbarians at this decisive moment for Macedonia is found in other authors too, but they do not mention the Getae anywhere but refer to the Bastarnae and their leader Clondicus, whose military actions were well reflected in the written records.[2]

Through Appian, we can explain why in 27 BC Marcus Licinius Crassus received a triumph for his victories *Thraecia et Geteis* and the Bastarnae, the main opponent, are conspicuously absent from the triumphal fasti.[3] However, this is only at first sight, for they are included in the *Geteis*, as Appian does with Clondicus, whom he calls Cloelius. Indeed, the Romans understood the difference very well and distinguished the Getae from the Thracians in the best way - the way of war. The difference between the communities of the Daco-Moesi[4] and the Thracians was reflected in the formation of the two provinces of

[1] App. *Mac*. 18.1-3; the account was preserved in the collection *On Virtue and Vice*; Appian's source was Valerius Maximus, and the primary information source was probably the general's report to the senate or data from a direct participant in the battles; it must be borne in mind that the military information which has reached us through the mediation of the preserved ancient authors derives primarily from such reports or narratives of participants in the battles; without them, we would never know what happened on the battlefields; this makes military data particularly valuable and paramount.

[2] Polyb. 25.fr.6; Liv. 40.57.2-9; Liv. 40.58.1-8; Liv. 41.19.3-11; Liv. 44.26.2-13; Liv. 44.27.1-6; Diod. 30.fr.19 = *Exc. de Virt. et Vit*., p. 580; Oros. 4.20.34; Petkov 2010, 560–564; Petkov 2011, 51–55.

[3] Fast. Triumph. M(arcus) Licinius M(arci) f(ilius) M(arci) n(epos) Crassus pro a(nno) DCCXXVI / co(n)s(ule) ex Thraecia et Geteis IV Non(as) Iul(ias); the absence of the Bastarnae and the Moesi in the triumphal fasti at the expense of *Thraecia et Geteis* has already been noticed by Papazoglu 1969, 324.

[4] For the Daco-Moesian community, see Venedikov 1960, 532–533, 539–543; Georgiev 1960, 83–86, 91–94, 107–111; Georgiev 1963, 71–74; Georgiev 1977, 271–272; Venedikov 1982, 142–148; for the province of Moesia, see Marquardt 1892, 180–188.

Moesia and Thrace.[5] It was Marcus Licinius Crassus who carried out the conquest and created the provinces.[6] It was Marcus Licinius Crassus

[5] 48 AD it is found as early as 1740 in the chronicle of Eusebius-Hieronymus - Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi ... opera omnia, 8, Verona, 1740, p. 663, ed. Vallarsi D.); D. Vallarsi explains to this place: Serius hoc alii, et propius ad fadem, differunt and cites the contradictory paragraphs in Seut. Div. Vesp. 8 and Eutr. 7.19.4, according to which Thrace was made a province by emperor Vespasian; the most authoritative evidence of St. Jerome of Stridon, who had in his hands so many authors lost to us, leads us, however, to look for a way of reconciling the two things, which could be accomplished if we suppose that emperor Vespasian turned into a province part of Thrace, which remained free under emperor Claudius, or the Thracians, after the latter's death, recovered their liberty, and were then again brought under the imperial power by emperor Vespasian, as in the case of Lycia (Suet. Div. Claud. 25; Suet Div. Vesp. 8) – see Cavedoni 1846, 144–145; in fact, Thrace may have been reduced to a Roman province even under emperor Tiberius; Tacitus has mentioned, when describing the rebellion of the so-called mountain Thracians, that in support of Gaius Poppaeus Sabinus Pomponius Labeon arrived with a legion from Moesia and the Thracian king Rhoemetalces II, at the head of the Thracians, those who remained loyal to Rome; but in the midst of the battle these additional Thracian troops, who meanwhile had got drunk, were mercilessly slaughtered by the mountain Thracians. They regarded them as traitors who had taken up arms to enslave their people and country (Tac. Ann. 4.47.1; 48.5); although Tacitus did not specifically note the death of Rhoemetalces II, it must be borne in mind that the fate of the Thracian king was not of particular interest to the Roman author to be explicitly attested, and he probably fell among the ruthlessly slaughtered Thracian renegades; hence, it is not clear to modern researchers what happened in Thrace between 26 and 38 AD, when Emperor Caligula placed on the Odrysian throne Rhoemetalces III, son of Cotys and Antonia Tryphaena, but also a blood relative of Mark Antony; after Rhoemetalces III was removed by the intrigues of his wife, in 46 AD Claudius merely restored Thrace to the position between 26–38 AD; he was not as favourable as his predecessor to the children of Cotys and Antonia Tryphaena and did not maintain the same relations with them - cf. Strazzulla 1902, 298, 300; about Antonia, daughter of Mark Antony, mother of Pythodoridas, grandmother of Antonia Tryphaena and great-grandmother of Rhoemetalces III cf. Strazzulla 1901, 80–94, where T. Momsen's hypothesis is very well defended; see however, the other hypothesis, based on H. Dessau, which was recently further developed and defended by Popova 2017, 123–124.

[6] Provincia, ae *f* [pro-vinco] – an area under Roman rule, outside Italy, conquered by war - Vinco; Vincere; Vici; Victus (conquer, break, overcome, etc.); the administration is a consequence of the conquest of the external territory and for a variety of reasons it can drag on in time, as it happened with Moesia and Thrace; in 171 BC for the first time the paths of the Thracians and the Licinians crossed, and this will have dramatic and tragic consequences for both sides; at the beginning of 130 BC, the consul and pontifex maximus for 131 BC. Publius Licinius Crassus Muncianus, during the rebellion at Pergamum, was taken prisoner by the Thracian mercenaries of Aristonicus and was killed by them after having provoked them purposely to do so that he might not give

who carried out the conquest and established the provinces. *Thraecia et Geteis* means that he triumphed over the Bessi, opponents of the Odrysians, organizing affairs south of the Haemus, and the victories over the Moesi and Bastarnae north of the Haemus to Istros.[7] The pretext and reason for the military operations of Marcus Licinius Crassus became the aggressive actions of the Bastarnae, who, by including the Dardanians and the Triballi in their state, expanded from the Istros delta across the Oskios River and then undertook campaigns to the south of Hemus. Their offensive puts the province of Macedonia under direct threat.

It should be considered that when Cassius Dio mentioned hostilities between Marcus Licinius Crassus and the Dacians, he referred precisely to the operations against the Moesi on the right bank of the Istros. Cassius Dio mentioned the Dacians and objectively represented the ethnonymic essence of the situation in the 2nd–3rd centuries AD, of which he had a good idea. But one must not forget that he had already informed us how he felt the necessity of warning that he had stuck to his sources not only in fact but in ethnonyms too.[8] In other words, the *Dacians* were his claim, and the *Getae* were mentioned in his source and were the result of the intervention of Octavian Augustus, which is why Marcus Licinius Crassus sent to fight against the Dacians led hostilities against the Getae. The delay in the formal sanctioning of the new Roman conquests was a consequence of the political controversy between Marcus Licinius Crassus and Octavian Augustus. The latter could not allow the Roman general to receive the *Spolia opima*[9] and thereby appear as a new Romulus. For this reason, the

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the enemy the honour of possessing so distinguished a captive; during the revolt of Spartacus that shook Italy between 73 and 70 BC, its victor, Marcus Licinius Crassus, went through some tough times before achieving victory; subsequently, Marcus Licinius Crassus, the grandson of the eponymous victor of Spartacus, actually became the conqueror of Moesia and Thrace; but that was the end, and the beginning of military contact between the Licinians and the Thracians was set in 171 BC when the Odrysian king Cotys inflicted a heavy defeat on the Italian cavalry led by Gaius Licinius Crassus.

[7] Premerstein 1898, 178–191.

[8] Cass. Dio 51.23.2; 51.27.2; cp. Columba 1910, 217; Papazoglu 1969, 316.

[9] *Spolia opima* received only three Romans - Romulus (Liv.1.10. 4-7; Propert. 4.10.5-6; Plut. Rom. 16), Aulus Cornelius Cos (Liv. 4.19-20; 4.30-31; Flor. 1.6; Plut. Marc. 8), who

Bastarnae, whose leader Deldo was killed in a personal fight, were not mentioned by name, but Marcus Licinius Crassus is too important a general with authority and positions in the army to be unceremoniously ignored. As a result, the Bastarnae and Dacians, and possibly other tribes, were united under the *Geteis*. Of course, the Romans, who had a clear idea of the nature of things, could not name the new province Getica, the Bastarnae were not subdued at all, and the subjugation of the Dacians was to be done by the gens Julia – a task which Octavian Augustus reserved for himself; as regards the Triballi and Dardanians, they had already been obliterated by the Bastarnae and could not give the name to the new province since they were not sobdued by the Romans.[10] The only possible solution remains: the newly acquired territory received the name of people against whom the Romans actually fought and defeated on the battlefield - the Moesi (in the same way the Romans called Hellas the province of *Achaea*, since in 146 BC Lucius Mummius *Achaicus* defeated the Achaean Union on the battlefield).[11] It seems to me that the Moesi were among those five parts

in the 5th century BC killed Lars Tolumnius, ruler of Veii, and Claudius Marcellus (Verg. Aen. 6. 856-860; Plut. Marc. 7-8; Flor. 1.20), who killed in 222 BC near Clastidium the Gallic leader Britomart in Plutarch or Virdomar in Annius Florus - see Papazoglu 1969, 317 and especially notes 80-83 about the intrigues of Octavian Augustus; Parfenov 2001, 27–39; Petkov 2012, 57–68; Stoev 2016, 61–78; Stoev 2017, 77–84.

[10] Cass. Dio 51.23.3 – the Bastarnae wiped out the remnants of the Dardanians and completed the military campaign against them, which had already begun in the 2nd century BC in alliance with the Antigonids; Premerstein 1898, 161-168.

[11] Some researchers believe that no Roman general fought against the Moesi in the Lower Danubian lands, and never was a people of that name conquered by the Romans; hence the grounds of Emperor Tiberius for giving the name Moesia to the new province are defined as completely unclear - Boteva 2014, 131; however, such considerations would be valid if it is possible to prove that the Moesians were not part of those Thracians or Illyrians over whom the authority of the Autariatae extended from the end of the 5th century BC until 335 BC, and subsequently, they were not affected by the power of the Scordisci *who ruled the region for the longest time*, i.e. after 280 BC to the campaign of Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiagenes in the 80s of the 1st century BC, which is a difficult task; to dispute Strabo is not easy since his information is in harmony with the evidence of other ancient authors such as Arrian, Plutarch, Justin, Polyaenus, Frontinus, etc., and forms a complete historical picture - cf. Columba 1910, 203–218; Columba 2011, 196–209; Gerov 1967, 17–62; F. Papazoglu rightly notes that the weakening of the military-political power of Triballi, Autariatae and Scordisci became the reason for the appearance of the Moesi on the historical scene

into which, according to Strabo,[12] the short-lived Dacian formation of Burebista broke up, i.e. in the 1st century BC the Moesi are part of the Dacians.[13] They were the object of attention for the ancient authors after their stay in the lands south of the Istros River, but mostly after they had come into contact with the Roman troops.

In the same way the Dardanians emerged from the darkness of time when Philip II conducted a military campaign against them. During almost the entire first half of the 4th century BC they were under the authority of the Autariatae,[14] which is why they were first mentioned

and the recording of their ethnonym by the ancient authors - Papazoglu 1969, 307; cf. Mócsy 1966, 103–108; however, she is of the opinion that there is no resettlement of the Triballi to the east under the pressure of the Autariatae, which for me is unconvincing compared to the source information - cf. Petkov 2017, 35–58; Petkov 2018, 117–139; besides everything else, the attempt at a chronological stratigraphy of the written sources is unacceptable, because D. Boteva systematized the ancient authors who have reached us; however, they only convey the information and are not a primary source; even if a source is detected, it still means nothing, since the source of the source is usually obscure or very difficult to determine; but especially in this case, it has long been convincingly assumed that the primary source of information about the military campaign of Marcus Licinius Crassus in 29-28 BC is the report to the senate of the Roman general himself, i.e. the Moesi are not only attested in a source from the 1st century BC, but also in *autopsia* - Groag 1926, 272; the accounts of Marcus Licinius Crassus (perhaps through an intermediary(s) have come down to us through the magnificent narrative of Cassius Dion; in this regard, the arguments presented by D. Boteva (2014, 115-117) and against the reliability of the information in the *periochae* of Titus Livius are not convincing; we also have *periochae* to the completely preserved books of Titus Livius, and it may be seen that there is no gross distortion of the information to suppose such concerning the Moesi; therefore, with D. Boteva, we are faced with a classic case where the desired is persistently presented as real by purposefully ignoring source information and historiographical hypotheses!

[12] Str. 7.3.11.

[13] The Moesi appear in literary sources precisely in connection with four Roman military campaigns between the 70s of the 1st century BC - 29/28 BC (of Gaius Scribonius Curion, Marcus Terentius Varro Lucullus, Gaius Antonius Hybrida, and Marcus Licinius Crassus); Burebista, Roles and Dapyx are undoubtedly Dacian rulers - Papazoglu 1969, 256–259; Xiraxus was evidently the ruler of the Bastarnae, for in one of their fortresses the captured Roman insignia of Gaius Antonius Hybrida were kept; in order to accept Xiraxus as a Moesian, Dacian, or Getic ruler, and hence Genukla as such a settlement, it must be supposed that at some time the Moesi, Dacians, or Getae took it from the Bastarnae, who, however, are: ...τὸ ἀλκιμώτατον αὐτῶν γένος... App. Mithr. 69; of course, there are no source indications for such an act.

[14] Str. 7.5.11.

by Justin in the time of Philip II. Justin[15] wrote that the Macedonian king organized and put things in order in Macedonia, after that, by treachery and cunning, he captured the territory of the Dardanians and other neighbouring peoples. The record could be dated to 359 BC, 356 BC or 344–343 BC, but the way of its introduction makes it more likely that it dates to the very reign of Philip II when he established himself on the throne and organized the affairs of Macedonia – inside the state and outside against their neighbours. Therefore, if the Moesi are a fiction, as certain scholars suggest, then the Dardanians must also be a fiction, but such a claim would be absurd.

The dominance of the Scordisci and Bastarnae[16] over the Thracian dynastic families has been underestimated in native historiography. From here follows a misinterpretation of some events that had an impact on the military-political processes in Thrace – for example, the campaign of Philip V in Thrace in 183 BC[17] against Odrysians, Bessi and Dentheletae and the campaign in 181 BC[18] against Dentheletae and Maedi. In 181 BC the Macedonian ruler climbed the highest peak of

[15] Just. 8.6.2-3.

[16] The first written record of the Bastarnae is not in the inscription in honor of Protogen, as assumed by Emilov 2018, 550; the Bastarnae were mentioned for the first time by Pompeius Trogus in the prologue to book 28, but in the text of the epitomist Justin, the information about them is not preserved; the events in the book relate between 233 BC when Laodamia (Deidamia) was killed, the royal power of the Pyrrhus house in Epirus had fallen, and 229 BC when the Macedonian king Demetrius II Soter died; the prologue to book 28 describes how, after the Epirus king Alexander II's death, the Epirotes killed Laodamia (Deidamia); in *excursus*, the rebellion of the Bastarnae is mentioned; then how the Macedonian king Demetrius II Soter was turned on the run by the Dardanians; how, after Demetrius II's death , his son's tutor became Antigonus III Doson, who conquered Thessaly and Caria in Asia and, aided by the Achaeans waged war against Cleomenes III and conquered Lacedaemon; after losing power, Cleomenes III fled to Alexandria and died there; in the form of *excursus* it is told about the First Illyrian War, which the Romans waged against the Illyrian queen Teuta; considering the deviation made by Pompeius Trogus, the mention of the Bastarnae may even refer to the end of the 4th - the beginning of the 3rd century BC, and could be related to the activity of the Celts on the Balkan Peninsula after the death of Alexander III in 323 BC.

[17] Polyb. 23.fr.8; Liv. 39.53.12-15.

[18] Liv. 40.21.1-4; 40.22.1-15; cp. Flor. 1.28, from which the military topographical mission of Philip V and Perseus is clearly visible, which is precisely why Demetrius was also isolated.

Haemus. It is clear from the sources that Philip V and Perseus carried out a military topographic survey because they wanted to survey the lands through which the Bastarnae had to pass from the Istros to the Adriatic Sea. The Antigonids secured in advance the situation among the Thracians to facilitate the arrival of the barbarians, and furthermore intended to build fortifications at the key passes against the Romans.[19]

The identified as Scythian rulers Kanit, Tanuza, Harasp, Akroza, Ellis and Sariak, who ruled in Dobruja, were most likely Bastarnae. In an inscription from Kaliakra,[20] published by M. Lazarov more than 30 years ago, Sariak is attested. The mentioned Antigonus, son of Heraclitus, from Stibera is also mentioned in Titus Livius.[21] It was this royal *hetairos* who conducted the negotiations between the Antigonids and the Bastarnae between 184 and 179 BC. The inscription marks the success of diplomacy of the Bastarnae and the beginning of the military campaign towards Dardania.

The barbarians moved along the route from Istros to Mesambria to Tonzos and thence to Hebros–Strymon.[22] Titus Livius wrote that among the Bastarnae was their aristocrat Cotto and one of the Macedonian royal hetairi Antigonus, who was often sent together with Cotto to revolt the Bastarnae.[23] From Titus Livius' text, the name of one

[19] Reinach 1910, 266–267; M. Tacheva, however, sees the actions of Philip V as a tourist action of an early ageing, virile, 59-year-old king and soldier who preceded the work of Aleko Konstantinov by 20 centuries! – Tacheva 1997, 56. M. Tacheva's idea about the mountaineering preferences of the Antigonids was transferred by D. Boteva to the Argeads and she decided Alexander III's route in 335 BC was across the Etropole heights! – see Boteva 2013, 95–99 and necessarily cf. Jochmus 1854, 81–84 and maps; Columba 1910, 203–218; Columba 1911, 196–208; Gerov 1967, 24–31; Petkov 2018, 117–139, which clearly shows the unsustainability of the idea in relation to the preserved literary tradition.

[20] IGBulg V 5003; Lazarov 1985, 47–50.

[21] Liv. 40.57. 2-9; 40.58. 1-8; 44.26.8-11.

[22] In Antiquity, this road was used by the Macedonian kings to the Istros delta: along it in 342-339 BC moved and returned Philip II; in 335 BC this was done by Alexander III, who had never passed along the northern ridge of Haemus; but in 179 BC the same was done by the Bastarnae towards Paeonia and Dardania.

[23] From the words of Titus Livius it is clear that Antigonus, son of Heraclitus, was often sent to diplomatic missions to the Bastarnae to induce them to move towards Dardania; however, he was hardly an *expert* at the court of Philip V on relations with the Thracians, as Emilov 2018, 550 assures us; the sources are silent about his expert activity among the Thracians, known only to individual postmodern scholars; we are

of the Bastarnian chieftains (perhaps the main leader) Clondicus becomes clear. Later, it is around the negotiations between Clondicus and Perseus that Antigonus is mentioned again. According to Titus Livius, when the Bastarnae, led by Clondicus, were at Desudaba in Maedica, where they established their military state, Perseus sent Antigonus to negotiate the recruitment of the barbarians to assist the Macedonian army against the Romans during the decisive stage of the Third Macedonian War, i.e. around the beginning of 168 BC.

As I have already noted, for Appian the Bastarnae were Getae, but according to Cassius Dio the Macedonian proconsul Gaius Antonius Hybrida was defeated at Istria by the Scythians Bastarnae supporting the Thracians in Moesia.[24] Tacitus[25] cannot at all decide whether to refer the Bastarnae (Peucini), the Veneti, and the Fenni to the Germanic or the Sarmatian tribes. It also seems that the campaign of Gaius Lucius against the Sauromatians was actually directed against the Bastarnae, as was that of Gnaeus Cornelius, son of Lucius, Lentulus against the Sarmatians.[26] Some authors define the Bastarnae as Sarmatians based on Strabo's text, where Scythians and Sarmatians are distinguished from Bastarnae, but it is stated that Sarmatians, Scythians, Bastarnae, Scordisci, Taurisci and Boii, mixed with Thracians, lived on both sides of the Istros – more on the other side of the river, i.e. on the left bank.[27]

From the mentioned examples, it becomes clear why the mention of Kanit as a Scythian king in one inscription[28] cannot be a significant argument for determining the epigraphically and numismatically attested rulers in Dobruja. Even less the Aryan names of these rulers.[29]

only informed that as close to the Antigonids, he was often sent with Cotto - a nobleman among the Bastarnae, to stir up the Bastarnae.

[24] Cass. Dio 38.10.1.

[25] Tac. *Germ*. 46.

[26] Cass. Dio 54.20.3; Flor. 2.29.

[27] Str. 7.3 2; Premerstein 1898, 155–157; Petkov 2012, 57–68.

[28] IGBulg I² 41.

[29] On the issue of the so-called Scythian rulers in Dobruja attested epigraphically and numismatically cf. Lazarov 1985, 47–50; Yurukova 1992, 159–165; Manov 2009, 236–241; Draganov 2010, 29–52; Draganov 2015, 25–84, 126–141; Lazarenko 2015, 192–196.

A.-J. Reinach[30] very astutely observes, regarding the importance and role of the Scordisci and Bastarnae in the military-political processes in Thrace, that in order to subjugate the area (or keep it in his hands) for the Macedonian king Philip V, there was nothing better than an alliance with the two Celtic peoples dominating Thrace, pressing it from the north-west and north-east – the Scordisci and the Bastarnae.

Strabo[31] wrote that there was another division left over from ancient times. Some were called Dacians, others Getae; the Getae were those who were towards Pontus and to the east, and the Dacians those who were in the opposite direction towards Germania and the springs of the Istros. According to Strabo, in ancient times the Dacians were called Daï, whence the slave names Geta and Daüs in Attica. However, it does not seem appropriate to the Amasian to connect the origin of the Dacians with the Scythian Daï living far away around Hyrcania. It is in these reasonings that he was misled, unlike Cassius Dio and Justin (Pompeius Trogus), who had a much better grasp of the essence of things. He then adds that among the Greeks, the Getae were better known than the Dacians because they were constantly making migrations on both sides of the Istros and because they mixed with the Thracians and Moesi.

Even more curious in this case is Cassius Dio,[32] according to whom those who lived on this side of the Istros, on the Triballi side, were part of the province of Moesia and were called Moesi (except by their nearest neighbours), and those on the other side of the river were called Dacians: because some of them were Getae, or because they were Thracians of the Dacian people who once inhabited the Rhodopes (at this place Cassius Dio does not change anything in the factology and ethnonyms of the source he follows, as he stated about his work; subsequently, when conveying his own view of things, he attests the Dacians as Scythians). *Apart from the nearest neighbours* must be understood in the sense that for the Romans, to whom Cassius Dio also belongs, there was no doubt that these were Moesi, but the Greek

[30] Reinach 1910, 264.
[31] Str. 7.3.12-13; see Cass. Dio 51.22.6-7; Just. 2.1.3 and Str. 11.8.2-9.
[32] Cass. Dio 51.22.6-7; see Papazoglu's translation 1969, 330–331, 461–462.

authors called them Getae. Cassius Dio[33] himself afterwards explained the paragraph precisely in this sense, writing that we call them Dacians, as they call themselves, as well as the Romans call them; and adds: *I am not ignorant that some Greek writers refer to them as Getae, whether that is the right term or not; for the Getae of whom I myself know are those that live beyond the Haemus range, along the Ister*.

The Dacians are also mentioned south of Haemus, which shows how well Cassius Dio grasped the essence of things in contrast to a number of modern scholars.[34] Thucydides writes about the Dacians around the events at Mycale in 413 BC. However, to P. Delev,[35] it seems historically unlikely that the Dacians from beyond the Danube are connected with the Rhodopes. But the sources report such a possibility as a real fact. Even P. Perdrize,[36] on the basis of the heavy silver coins with the inscription *Geta/Getas, king of the Edones*, hypothesizes that the Edones are of Getae origin.

The Greekauthors detected distinct differences but had some difficulties in determining them (in this regard, not much should be expected from Thucydides);[37] therefore, they often related the Daco-Moesian peoples to both Thracians and Illyrians but most often distinguished and separated them from the Thracians and the Illyrians, which is best represented through the Triballi case. However, the Bessi are also defined as a Thracian people by a single author (and that is a

[33] Cass. Dio. 67.6.2.

[34] Thuc. 7. 27.1-5; 7.29 1-5; 7. 30.1-3; Schol. Thuc. 7.27.1; see Cass. Dio 51.22. 7; St. Byz. 232 s. v. *Δῖον· πόλις*; Herod. *De pros. cath*. 12. p. 150.

[35] Delev 2014, 277.

[36] Perdrizet 1911, 108–119.

[37] Thucydides begins his work by saying that until the Peloponnesian War, there was no other significant military event in the life of the Hellenes, which demonstrates a complete lack of historicism, which impressed O. Spengler when developing his *Morphology* – Thuc. 1.1.1-2, but the essential point is that modern researchers consider that since Thucydides is reliable in relation to the Peloponnesian War, he is also so in relation to the Thracians, without having the slightest idea of the reliability of the sources, which he especially used for the Thracian history.

late scholion to the second canto of the *Iliad* - verse 532).[38] Herodotus[39] understood that those who were above the Crestonaeans, i.e. Satrae = Dii = Bessi, belonged to a separate community, compared to the Thracians = the Odrysians, but could express this only by differences in customs. He testified a considerable community, whose religious and political significance he perceived by the most characteristic mark – a thick, broad knife with an iron handle, used for cutting off heads, but he used a word close to σατέρι = satër.[40] As Thucydides[41] later corrected through the Dii μαχαιροφόρον, because of his great authority, no one hears anything more about the Satrae, and they completely disappear from the sources.[42] Bessi was the name of the religious caste, and its name embraced the community, which is why the name *Bessi* received the widest possible distribution.[43] The situation is identical with the

[38] Eust. *Comm. ad Hom. Il.* 2, v. 532 = T. I, S. 224 (ed. J. Stallbaum) ...ἦν δὲ καὶ ἔθνος Θρᾳκικὸν οἱ Βῆσσοι...; cf. Tacheva 1995, 9, who knows about the scholion, but has not seen it.

[39] Hdt. 5.3.2; Markova 2018, 17 about the revolt of Vologese, priest of Dionysus, notes that Cassius Dio distinguishes Bessi from Thracians; actually, the name Vologese is Parthian, and we know that in Central Asia lived the Massagetae (Sakas or in ancient Iranian sources), who were of Scythian (Turanian) origin; around the 3rd century BC several related peoples were united in the state organization of Dachae – among them the Parni played a major role – Str. 11.8.2-9; Wed. 7.3.12; Just. 2.1.3; see Tolstov 1948, 241–247.

[40] Hdt. 7.111.2.

[41] Thuc. 2.96.2.

[42] Thucydides contradicted Herodotus in many points related to the Thracian history: when the latter defined the Thracians as the most numerous people after the Indians, the former noted as such the Scythians, which was a delicate attitude to Herodotus; Herodotus wrote that a brother of Sitalces was at Scythians, Thucydides added the name of Sparadocus, etc.

[43] As has been noted already, if one does not distinguish the two related communities Daco-Moesi and Thracians (i.e. the Odrysian Kingdom from Teres to Rhoemetalces III), it will not be possible to define the significance of the military-political conflict between the Odrysian royal house and the Bessi priesthood, determining all significant events in Thrace in the 1st century BC to the time when Marcus Licinius Crassus transmitted the oracle of Dionysus to the Odrysian dynasty; this act repulsed the political ambitions of the Bessi priests forever; in 46 AD after the death of Rhoemetalces III, in whose veins the blood of Mark Antony flows also, the emperor Claudius turned Thrace into a province; he was not as favourable as his predecessor to the children of Cotys and Antonia Tryphaena and did not maintain the same relationships with them (cf. Marquardt 1892, 198–202; Strazzulla 1902, 288–303; Strazzulla 1903/1904, 430–431; however, cf. and Popova 2017, 123–124); it is not quite

name Thracians, derived from that of the Thracides at Delphi.[44] Therefore, the Satrae – Dii - Bessi are the Dacians, who, according to Cassius Dio,[45] once inhabited the Rhodopes, referred to by him as Scythians;[46] they had no basileis as they obeyed their authoritative priests.

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the same whether the persistent bloody conflict is intra-Thracian or between related but still different communities; in addition, it will not be possible to correctly assess some evidences: for example, Sall. 4.fr.18 (Serv. *ad Aen*. 604) and App. *Ill*. 30, according to which Marcus Terentius Varro Lucullus conquered the Moesians and Thrace also in the 70s of the 1st century BC; the only reason for the latter not to follow the fate of the Thracian Chersonese immediately after 72 BC is that Lucius Licinius Lucullus did not belong to his time, lost his army and left the glory to Gnaeus Pompey the Great; this also affects what his brother has conquered on the secondary front; according to Appian, the Moesians were neighbours of the West Pontic polis - Amm. Marc. 27.4.11. Eutr. 6.10; Fest. 9; Oros. 6.3.4, however, instead of the Moesi, they mention the Bessi; actually, the latter replace the ethnonym of the Moesi with the name of the priestly family of the Daco-Moesi, overlapping the community, and in fact there is no contradiction between the ancient authors; the situation resembles that of the Getae -Bastarnae under the same Appian and the *Fasti Triumphales*; in this connection is also the account of Cassius Dio 38.10.2 about the allies in Moesia around the actions of Gaius Antonius Hybrida; finally, in order to make things completely clear and devoid of historiographical clichés, it is only necessary to recall the insightful observation of F. Papazoglu that the ancient authors before the Romans came into contact with the Moesi called them Getae, but afterwards, when as a result of hostilities revealed their true name, the ethnonym of the Getae was preserved, which led to some controversy among the Greek and Roman authors.

[44] On the topic Satrae – Dii - Bessi cf. Sarafov 1973/1974, 121–191, where the author perceives that the Satrae were a significant part of the population of Thrace (Sarafov 1973/1974, 188), but rejects (Sarafov 1973/1974, 137–138) the logical assumption of Hahn 1854, 242, which led to a number artificial conjectures.

[45] Cass. Dio 51.22.6-7; see Str. 7.3.12; 11. 8.2-9.

[46] The problem may be further complicated, but instead it may shed light on some things left unexplained in the historiography, related to the Odrysians and the Odrysian royal dynasty, since the name Amadocus is Scythian and leads to the Scythian people Amadokoi, attested by Hellanicus, the record of which is kept by Stephen of Byzantium - Hell. fr.64 *Σκυθικά* = St. Byz. s. v. *Ἀμάδοκοι*; Herod. *De pros. cath.* 23. p. 150; the Amadokoi and objects related to them are also known later to Ptol. *Geog*. 3.5.16; 3.5.25; 3.5.28; the Scythian name Amadocus was transferred by the Greek authors as Sadok, Medocus, and Amadocus, who are the same ruler, i.e. the son of Sitalces - Rehdantz 1845, 237–239; Solari 1912, 47, note 4; the connection *Σκύ-θης, Σκέ-θυς, Σεύθης* is similar - cf. Strazzulla 1901. 368; in fact, Amadocus -amadokoi represents exactly the same position as Kavar - kavari (on the Kavars, see Str. 4.1.11-12.); in Solari 1912, 54 the very interesting assumption is also stated that Mesades was a Scythian son-in-law of Sparadocus, based on the names Octamasadas - Mesades; according to the author, Sparadocus could strengthen his kinship and friendship with Octamasadas

A. Fol[47] also allowed the possibility that, based on toponymic data, a movement of the Daco-Moesi could be observed, which, according to him, undoubtedly began in the western regions of the Balkan Peninsula and headed east/southeast, and the vanguard of the resettlement reached Asia Minor. The movement of the Daco-Moesi was caused by the displacement of the Illyrians and led to the preservation of partial Daco-Moesian enclaves east of the Haemus. According to A. Fol, a Daco-Moesian ethnic infiltration is possible in the case of the Geta/Getas, with the proviso that it was an enclave that came from the north. Subsequently, however, understandably, in 1975, he already took a radically opposite position and questioned the appropriateness of the

by giving his daughter in marriage to his son; even more curious is the information in Hesychius, from which it is clear that Odrys, the eponym of the Odrysians, was a Scythian king who fought on the side of Haemus against Byzas, king of Thrace - Hesych. 4.17-19 = FHG; from a fragment by Arrian it is understood that Thynos and Bithynos, sons of Odrys (about whom we were informed was a Scythian), were adopted by Phineus - Arr. *Bith*. fr.41 = Eust. *Comm. ad Dion. Per*. 793 = FHG; mythographic information about military actions of Scythians and Thracians is also contained in Diodorus, who refers to Dionysius Scytobrachion from Mytilene, who worked in Alexandria in the 2nd century BC – Diod. 3.52.1-4; 3.53.1-6; 3.54.1-7; 3.55.1-11; Diodorus writes that the Thracian ruler Mopsus and the Scythian ruler Sipylus defeated the Libyan Amazons in a great war and killed their leader Marina, whose tomb is praised in Hom. *Il*. 2. 810-815; Mopsus, banished by the Thracian king Lycurgus, at the head of exiled hetairoi entered the lands of the Libyan Amazons; the actions of the Thracians were supported by Sipylus, also driven from that part of Scythia bordering on Thrace; finally, as a suggestion, I will note that Teres created the Odrysian kingdom only after the retaliatory Scythian raid on the Hellespont - on this campaign, cf. Hdt. 6.40; Ctes. 12-13. fr.13.21; Str. 13.1.22; Lazarenko 2015: 75-88. any attempts to look for Odrysian rulers before Teres, distorting the information in Thuc. 2.29.2, are completely unacceptable; if there had been strong Odrysian kings before him, Thucydides would not have explained to his readers/listeners in Greece that Teres had nothing to do with Tereus - cf. Kabakchiev 2000: 14; the first Odrysian king was undoubtedly Teres, but at Diod. 12.50.1-3 the consolidation of Odrysian power is quite rightly associated with Sitalces, son of Teres, inasmuch as his father had difficulty even in imposing his authority on the Thyni, and the latter, a little later, when Xenophon made war against them, do not appear majestic on the battlefield; it is the hero Sitalces who is sung in songs by the Odrysians; the rest are historiographical speculations, devoid of even indirect argumentation in the sources - cf. Zhekov 2019, 272–275 with lit., which reaches an unacceptable extreme, considering that the Odrysian military potential instilled panic fear in the Achaemenids!; on the issues referred to in the note, it is best to refer to a complete re-reading of the forgotten Gobineau 1869 and Bellew 1880; Bellew 1891.

[47] Fol 1972, 70, 78–79, 105; cf. Fol 1975, 17–18, 26, 28–29.

term Daco-Moesi. In the cited book, A. Fol supports another good hypothesis (which he later also gave up!), namely about the migration of the Triballi to the east. The presence of the militarily powerful Triballi, Scythians and Bastarnae in the east explains the very scanty attestation of the Getae in written sources. In truth, if the spirit of modern historiographical suggestions is maintained, it is very curious to see why the Romans did not call the province Getica, but that is another big problem related to the nature of the Getae.

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STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA 10, 30-52
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Hoard of bronze *trulla* from Almus and the Dacian wars of Domitian

Vladislav Zhivkov

Abstract: The article examines a hoard of four bronze vessels, discovered by chance in the modern town of Lom, Northwest Bulgaria. One of them bears a stamp of P CIPI POLIBI (or POLIBII). Based on analogies the time of its burial can be placed in the 80s of the 1st century AD.

At this time a fort of an auxiliary unit existed nearby roughly between the reign of Claudius and the Flavians. It corresponds with the earliest cultural layer of the site (labeled ALMVS I). From it several archaeological features were excavated: probably part of the earthen wall, street or *via sagularis* and barracks. The street is disturbed by a pit used for a burial of a horse. All of the features are heavily burned. The archaeological material dates this destruction to the late 1st century AD with the latest coin of Domitian.

The current archaeological data from Northwestern Bulgaria and Northeastern Serbia supports a Dacian breakthrough in this general area during the reign of Domitian. The author believes it is possible that the hoarding of the bronze vessels and the destruction of the camp are the result of the massive raid in AD 84/85 in which the governor of the province was killed. Several decades later the ruins of the Early Imperial fort were leveled by river sand and upon it a Roman vicus was built.

Key words: Lower Danubian Limes, Moesia, Roman bronze vessels, P CIPI POLIBI, Dacian wars

Резюме: Статията разглежда колективна находка от римски бронзови съдове, открита случайно в град Лом, Северозападна България. На един от тях е запазен производствен печат с името на P Cipi Polibi (или Polibii). Според своите паралели, находката се датира в 80-те години на I в. сл. Хр.

Между управлението на Клавдий и Флавиите, под град Лом, е функционирал лагер на помощна част. Той отговаря на най-ранния пласт на обекта (означен като ALMVS I). В него са проучени няколко структури – вероятно част от землена стена, улица (*via sagularis*) и деструкции на казармена

постройка. Улицата е нарушена от яма, на чието дъно беше разкрит цял конски скелет. Загиването на лагера се поставя в късен I в. сл. Хр., като най-късните монети са на император Домициан.

Наличните археологически данни насочват към възможен вражески пробив в днешна Северозападна България и Североизточна Сърбия при управлението на Домициан. Авторът на настоящата статия смята, че е възможно укриването на бронзовите съдове да е свързано с дакийско нападение през 84/85 г. Няколко десетилетия по-късно, върху руините на лагера, е построено римски викус.

In the History Museum – Lom an interesting collective find is kept. It consists of four partly preserved metal vessels with one handle – *casseroles* or *trulla*. The exact circumstances of the discovery are unknown, but the items were found by chance together during the 60s-70s in the modern town of Lom (ancient Almus). Below is a description of the four vessels:

1. Bronze *trulleum*, almost entirely preserved. Conical shape, narrowing in its lower part. One handle with a disc-shaped ending, with incised decoration on the periphery. Rectangular stamp of P CIPI POLIBI (or POLIBII) placed longitudinally, worn. The vessel is 5.6 high; its diameter on the upper part is 10.5 cm; the diameter on the bottom is 7.1 cm. The stamp dimensions are 2.4 x 0.3 cm (fig. 1.1);

2. Partly preserved *trulleum*. About half of the "cup" remains with the whole bottom. The handle is missing. The vessel has a rounded conical shape, narrowing to the bottom. The vessel is 4.8 cm high; its diameter is 10.6 cm in the upper part and 6.2 cm in the lower (fig. 1.2);

3. Partly preserved *trulleum*. The "cup" is almost entirely preserved, but the handle is missing. Unlike the previous vessels, there is an incised decoration on the outer surface. Height of 5.7 high; its diameter in the upper part is 11 cm and 7.1 in the lower (fig. 1.3);

4. Heavily damaged *trulleum*, much larger than the previous three. Three shards are preserved. The bottom is fully preserved with part of the walls. Another shard belongs to the beginning of the handle. There is an incised decoration on the outer surface (consisting of vertical lines, arranged in a "palisade" motif). The reconstructed

dimensions of this vessel are 22 cm in diameter in the upper part, 11.4 in the lower; height of 12.8 cm (fig. 1.4).

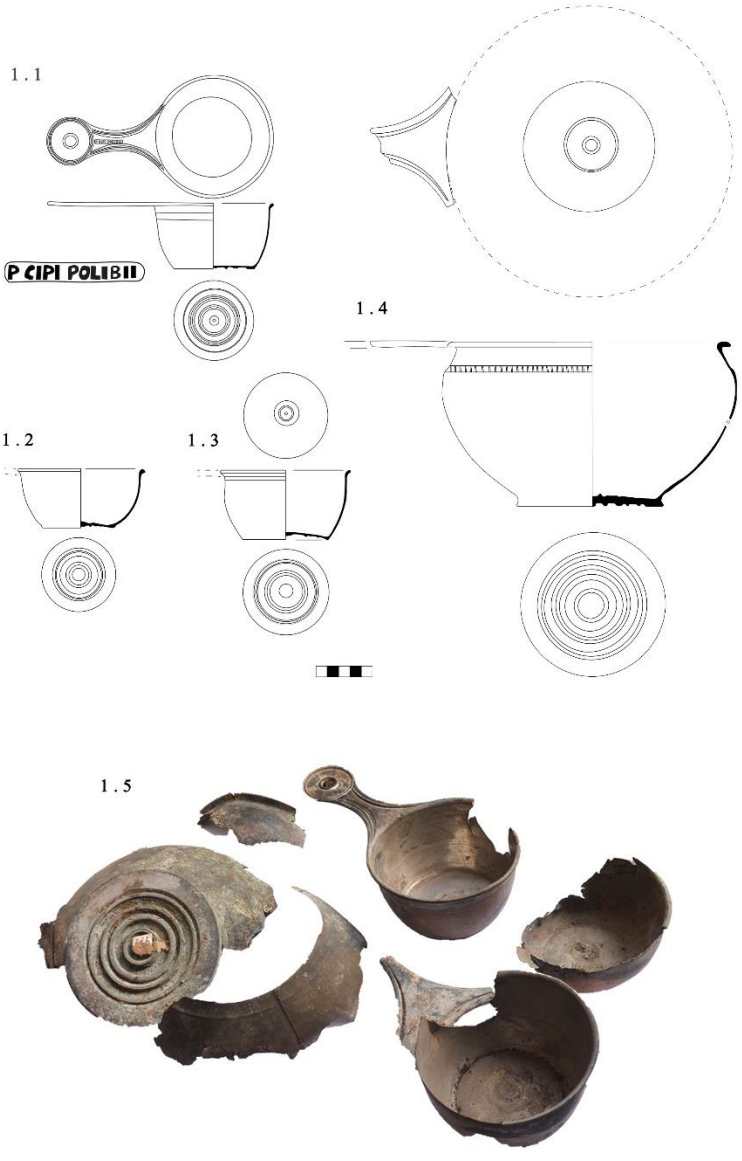


Fig. 1. 1-4. Bronze trulla from Almus. 5. Photo of the vessels (drawing: V. Zhivkov; photo V. Zhivkov).

Based on the morphology and the dimensions the Lom hoard consists of two types of vessels – three small and one large. All of the vessels are made of copper alloy, most probably bronze – typical for all

Roman *trulla*.[1] This type of vessel was used for drinking, cooking, and eating; based on images on the Column of Trajan they are part of the Roman military equipment.[2] They are commonly found with strainers when used for wine drinking.[3]

The hoard from Lom has an exact analogy in Howard Castle, Northern Britain.[4] Another similar hoard is found in Kingston – where amongst the *trulla* there are strainers.[5] Similar vessels are attested in a grave in Farskov, Denmark.[6]

Most important for the date of the hoard from Lom is the stamp on the first vessel (fig. 1.1). The stamp says: "**P**(VBLIVS) **CIPI**(VS) **POLIBI**(IVS)". The stamp is worn and difficult to read, especially at the end. The name can be read as POLIBII or POLIBI. This producer is attested in the two similar hoards from Britain. From Bulgaria a stamp of Polybius is present on a single vessel found in the village of Chitak, Plovdiv district.[7] Polybius was a major producer during the second half of the 1st century AD[8] and his stamped vessels are known from Northern Europe,[9] Britain,[10] Poland,[11] Balkans, especially the western half,[12] the Northern Black Sea,[13] and the Apennines.[14] The workshop of Polybius was located in Southern Italy, most probably in Capua.[15] Based on the numerous finds, Jürgen Kunow proposes a chronology of the Polybian production between the reigns of Claudius/Nero and Domitian.[16] For Britain, J. Bennett and R. Young suggest the time of the Flavians as the

[1] About the use of terms: Mustață 2011, 236.
[2] Koster 1997, 56.
[3] Jovanović 2010, 194.
[4] Petrovzsky 1993, 77.
[5] Worrell 2006, 458.
[6] Kunow 1985, cat. 58–60, note 44.
[7] Nenova-Merdzhanova 2008, 41, fig. 27.
[8] Castoldi 1991, 24.
[9] Neergaard 1892, 199–200; Eggers 1951; Boesterd 1956, 7; Koster 1993, 303–304.
[10] Haverfield 1892, 228–231.
[11] Kołoszuk 2015.
[12] Kunow 1985, kat. 16–23.
[13] Simonenko 2011, 225.
[14] Petrovzsky 1993, kat. C22.
[15] Kunow 1985, 220–221; Petrovszky 1993, 182.
[16] Kunow 1985, 220.

main period of distribution of Polybian production.[17] Recent research, considering the many finds from Pompeii and Herculaneum, gives ground to establish the most extensive time of production in the 80s of the 1st century.[18] This is the probable time when the four vessels from Lom were hidden and never recovered by their owner.

The largest vessel (№ 4) differs from the rest. Although fragmented the form of the item can be reconstructed and easily identified as Egger 144 or Gödäker type. Trulla of this group are separated by several variants by Petrovzsky. The example from Lom has the specific "palisade" decoration typical for the V.b variant.[19] The type is known with several examples from Eastern Europe – Pannonia, Dacia, and Northern Black Sea.[20] Those *trulla* are Gaulish production typical for the second half of 1st century AD and the presence of such vessels with Polybian production is attested in Farskov, Denmark.[21]

Chronology and periodization of Almus. This find is of great significance for the reconstruction of the events in the last quarter of the 1st century AD, especially when compared to the new data from the excavations during seasons 2018-2020. As these excavations remain limited in short reports[22] and the summarizing articles proceed them and now are old[23] it is necessary to present the general periodization and the characteristics of the 1st century layer of the site here.

The ancient Roman fortress is situated in the northern part of the modern town of Lom, Montana district. It has a rectangular form with dimensions about 200 m (south-north) and 250 m (east-west). The walls are 2.20 m thick almost everywhere (thicker only around the western gate – 3 m). Upon the site 14 modern living complexes were built which destroyed much of the central part of the fort (fig. 2). Excavations were conducted during the 1980s by Valeri Stoichkov, who

[17] Bennett & Young 1981, 41–42.
[18] Petrovzsky 1993, 226–250.
[19] Petrovzsky 1993, 80.
[20] Treister 2020, 32 with literature.
[21] Petrovzsky 1993, 79–80.
[22] Emilov *et al*. 2019; Stoichkov & Zhivkov 2020; Stoichkov *et al*. 2021.
[23] Ivanov 2003; Stoichkov 1987; Stoichkov 1995.

excavated the western wall. This wall was constructed at the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century – a construction date that is confirmed by later excavations (with earliest coins of Constantine the Great). In 2015 rescue excavations started on the western gate of the Late Roman fort.[24] The research on the western wall was renewed in 2018 until today. This latest phase of excavations revealed for the first time intact archaeological features from the 1st century AD.

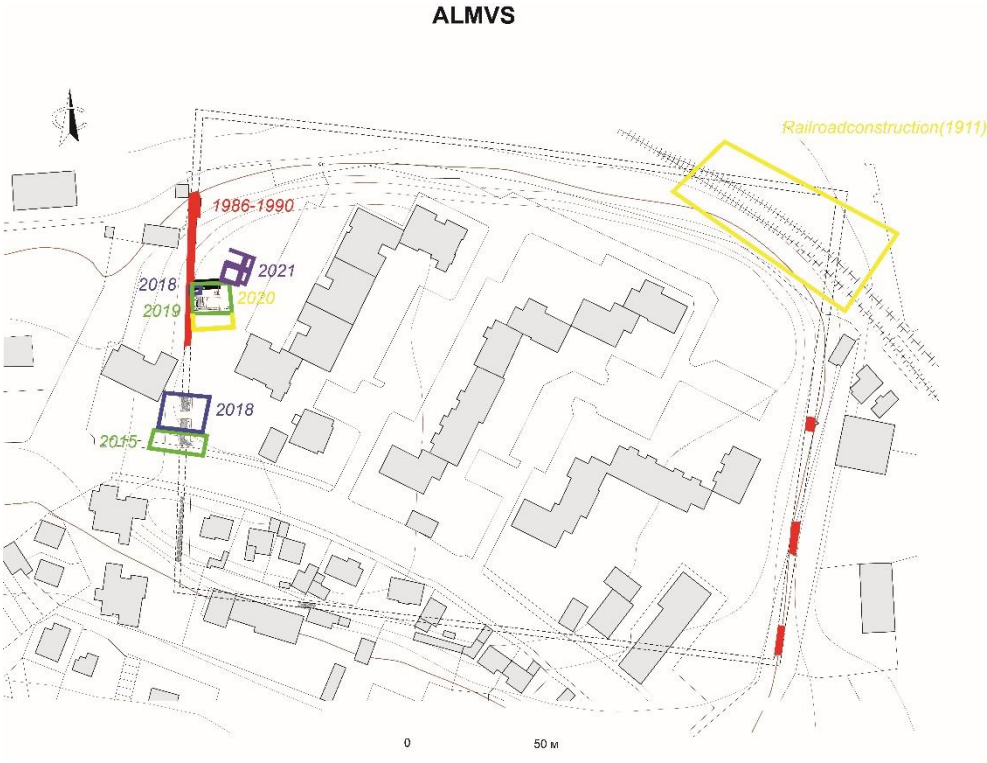


Fig. 2. Plan of the fortress with excavated parts (drawing: V. Zhivkov).

In 2018 a test trench was made – from the ground level of the 4th century down to the sterile soil. This survey revealed two earlier settlements that were the main focus for the team in the next two years. A periodization was established for the period of 1st-4th century AD which includes three separate periods (labeled with Roman numerals). They correspond to well-defined layers visible in all profiles (fig. 3.1-3):

[24] Stoichkov 2016.

- **ALMVS III**. This period corresponds with the construction of the western wall. The layer has a gray colour and is 0.50 m thick. ALMVS III period consists of two phases – the second one (younger) starts with reconstructions when a building (probably a military barracks) was built next to the fortress wall. The earliest coins from this layer are of Constantine the Great; the latest are of Theodosius I. The layer is heavily burned and wooden dwellings were built upon it (they are labeled ALMVS IV and generally attributed to the 5th century AD; the Late Antiquity is outside the focus of the present article).

- **ALMVS II**. Beneath the ground level of the Late Roman period around 150 sq. m of the fallen roof was excavated. In the westernmost part a poorly preserved wall of the corresponding building was excavated. Beneath the roof, a street with a direction north-south (a *cardo?*) orientation was excavated. Inside the pebble of this street, two coins were found – one of Trajan and one of Hadrian, providing a *terminus post quem* for the beginning of the ALMVS II period. The latest coins, found under the tiles are of Severus Alexander. This layer is also heavily burned, well seen by the wooden construction of the roof, turned into a coil.

- **ALMVS I**. Beneath the layer of 2nd-3rd century is a leveling layer of river sand. It covers a dark gray, burned layer that consists of materials only from the second half of the 1st century AD. This earliest period lay directly on the sterile loess. ALMVS I is concomitant with the hoard presented above and is the main focus of the present article.

Almus in the 1st century AD

ALMVS I consist of several archaeological features (fig. 4.1). In the westernmost part, an earthen wall was excavated (fig. 4.5). It was heavily disturbed by the foundation of the Roman building from the period ALMVS II and the fortress wall of ALMVS III. What remains is a band of rammed earth. 1.80 m in front of it there is a line of stones that probably formed the front of the rampart. As this feature is heavily damaged its interpretation as an earth and stone rampart should be considered as a hypothesis.

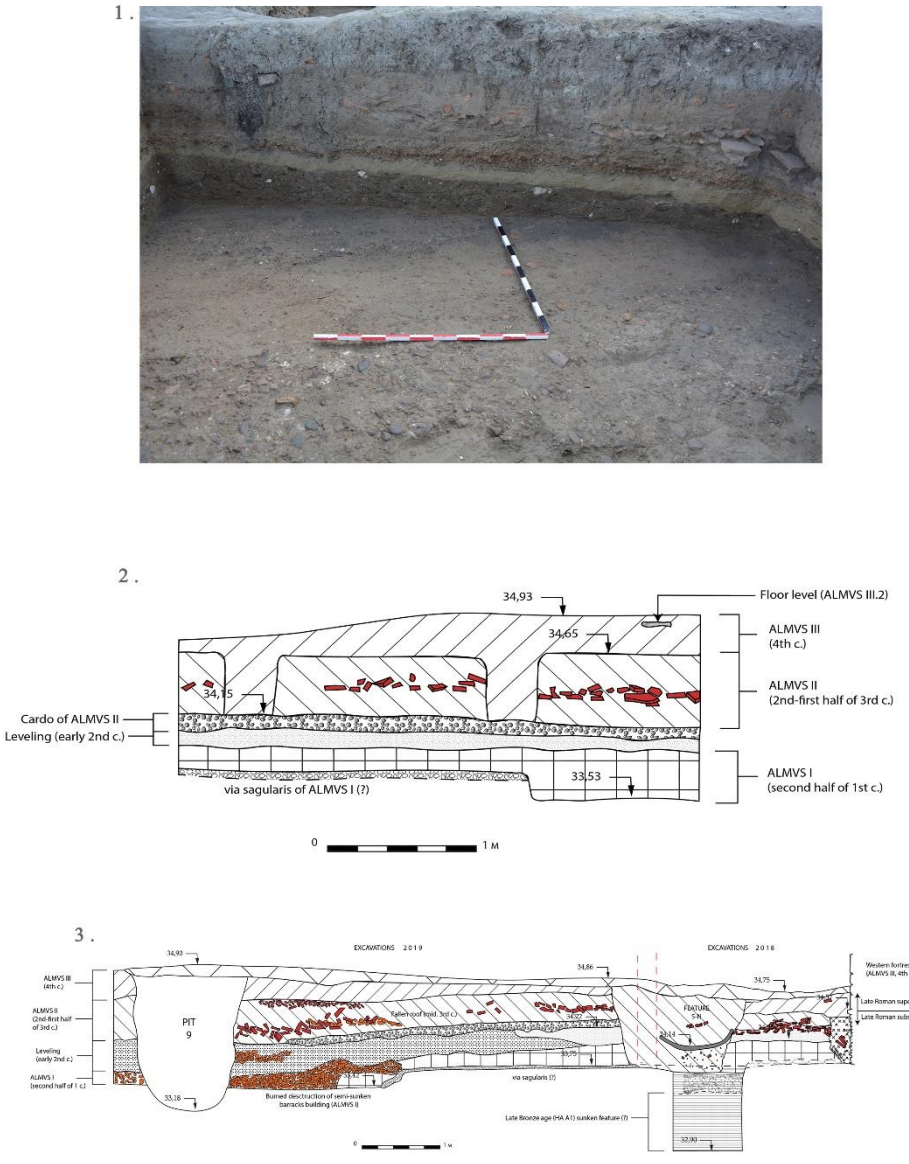


Fig. 3. Stratigraphical sections of Almus
(photo: V. Zhivkov; drawing: V. Zhivkov).

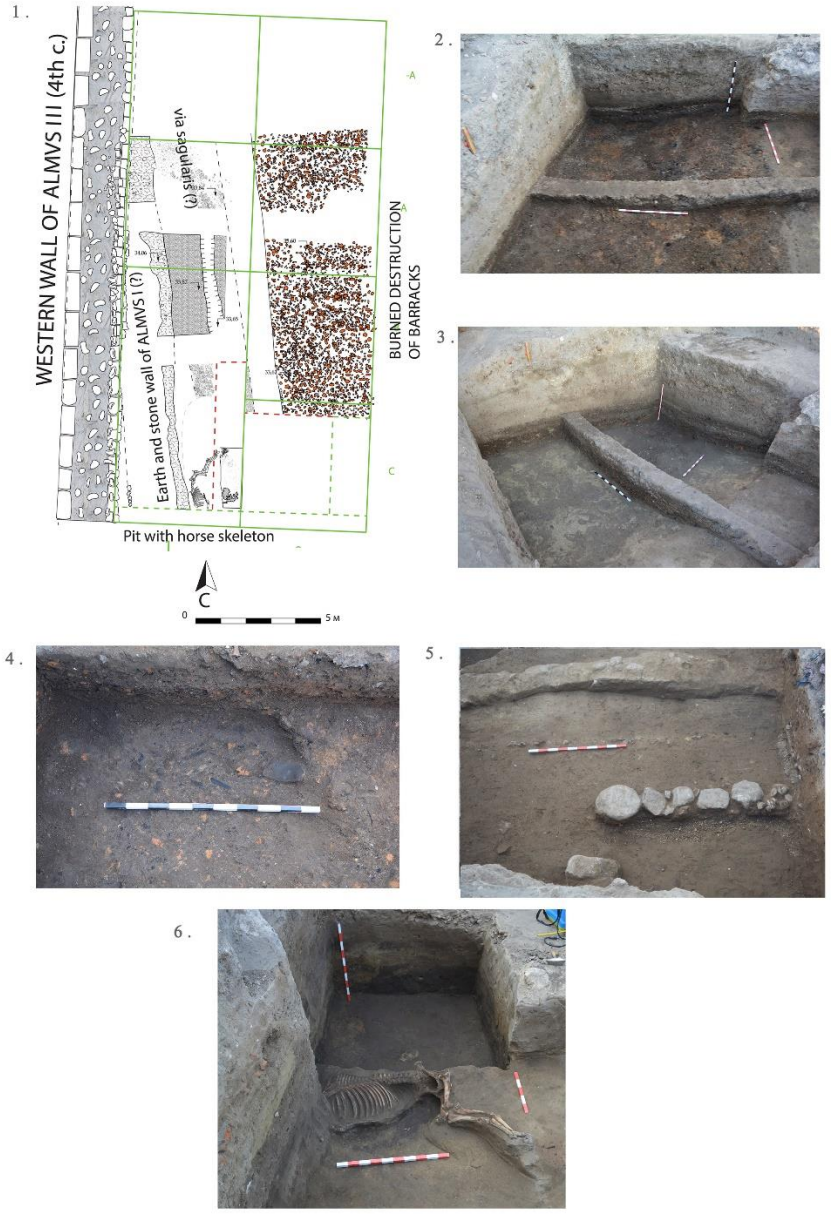


Fig. 4. 1. Plan of the excavated archaeological features from the 1st century AD (ALMVS I). 2-4. Burned barracks from the 1st century AD. 5. Remains of the earthen wall (?) at the via sagularis. 6. Horse skeleton in a pit. (photo: V. Zhivkov; drawing: V. Zhivkov).

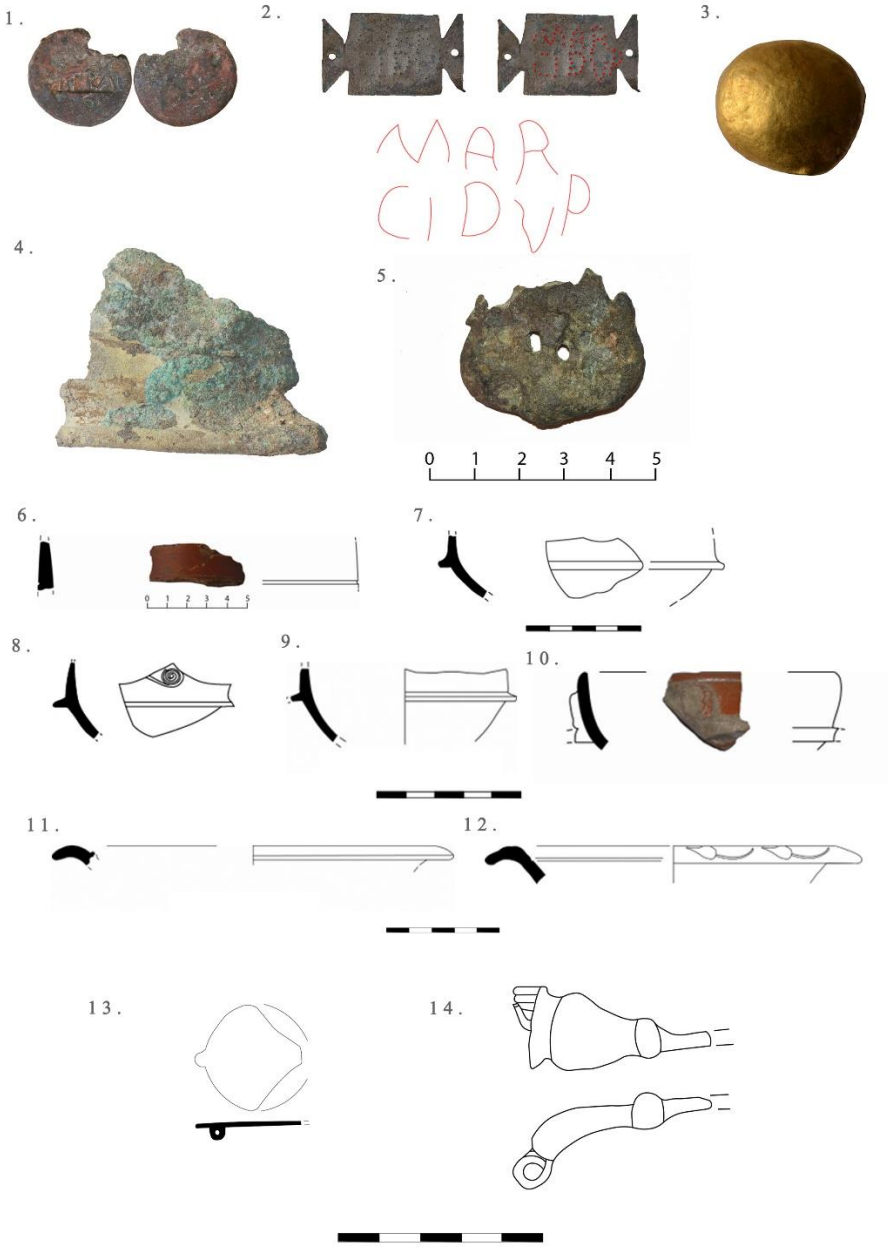


Fig. 5. Finds from the 1st century AD. 1. Countermark coin, found next to the horse skeleton. 2. Bronze tablet with inscription MARCI DUP 3. Golden phalerae 4. Part of bronze helmet. 5. Pendant from horse ammunition. 6-12. Terra sigillata. 13-14. Bronze brooches
(photo: V. Zhivkov; drawing: V. Zhivkov).

Immediately to the east, a street was excavated (fig. 4.1, 5). It is orientated north-south and made of rammed pebbles. The street is 3.10 m wide.

On the other (eastern) side of this street, a large destruction of burned clay luting was excavated (fig. 4.1-4). They are part of a destroyed building, made of wood and clay. The feature is semi-sunken. No postholes were found. This feature is partly excavated because it is larger than the trenches. Currently, it measures 16 (south-north) x 4.70 m (east-west), but continues to the south and east outside of the excavated area.

Those three features are typical for the Early Imperial forts of the Empire. It seems almost certain that part of the *vallum* (the wall), *via sagularis*/*intervallum* (the street), and part of the soldier's barracks were excavated – all situated at the western end of the camp (maybe the *retentura* of the fort).

It is noteworthy that the street was disturbed by a pit that provides further inside for the end of the site. This pit is beneath the layer of leveling sand which gives solid ground to date it in the ALMVS I period or synchronously to the rest of the features. At the very bottom of the pit, a skeleton of a horse was found (fig. 4.6). It is placed on its right side in anatomical order. Near the skeleton, a coin with a TICA countermark[25] was found (fig. 5.1). The presence of this pit is quite surprising and extremely unusual for a Roman fort. The only possible explanation is that the animal died when there was no access out of the camp – most probably a siege or the pit was dug by someone who is not part of the garrison. In the second case, the fortress should have stopped to exist. In this scenario, the horse should be buried by someone different than the Roman army.

Besides the unusual pit and the commented hoard of vessels, there is more evidence of a cataclysm in Almus. As mentioned above the layer is heavily burned. It is well known that the Roman army burns its former camps when leaving (at least the temporary ones – Jos. BJ, 5.4). Beneath the destruction of the barracks, however, expensive and personal finds were found that should not have been left behind. Worth

[25] For the date of the countermarks see note 37.

mentioning is a bronze tablet from a box that belonged to Marcus, *duplicarius* in the stationed unit (fig. 5.2; the tablet states: MARCI DUPL/ICARIUS[26]) and a golden phalera (fig. 5.3) and part of a helmet (fig. 5.4). A pendant from horse ammunition (fig. 5.5) is the first of his kind from Bulgaria. It belongs to type L of M. Bishop[27] used during the time of the Flavians.

Although the discovered materials will be published in full somewhere else, the Samian ware should be examined briefly. It belongs to Italian and Gaulish centers. Although there is a single form Consp. 18.2 or 19.2 (fig. 5.6) with Tiberian date,[28] most of the forms belong to variants of Consp. 34 (fig. 5.7-10).[29] Most numerous are shards of Gaulish vessels Drg. 35, 36, and 37 (fig. 5.11-12), typical for *Graufesanque* production centers in the time of the Flavians and Trajan.[30] The discovered coins[31] belong to Augustus (1),[32] Agrippa (2),[33] Claudius (2),[34] Vespasian (1),[35] Germanic (1, minted under Titus),[36] and Domitian (1, uncertain RIC). Two coins bear AVG+TICA countermark and four TICA.[37] Similar dating goes for the only two brooches discovered in the

[26] Another inscription which is still unpublished was discovered in Late Antiquity pit. It is part of gravestone made of white marble. The deceased served as IMAGINIF [ER LEG(IONIS)/COH(ORTIS)] [EIUS] -DEM, DECU[RIO---] (ALAE EIUSDEM?). Both decurion and duplicarius are officers in Roman *alae* (the first three ranks in *turma*). Based on the other finds and the horse skeleton, it is quite possible that in the 1st century there was cavalry unit stationed in Almus.

[27] Bishop 1988, 96, 107.

[28] Ettlinger *et al*. 1990, 82–86; Dimitrova-Milčeva 2000, cat. 4

[29] Ettlinger *et al*. 1990, 112, Late Tiberian – Flavian.

[30] Brukner 1981, 19–20; Dimitrova-Milčeva 2000, 14; Hayes 2008, cat. 36; Kabakchieva 2000, 55.

[31] The coins from Almus were identified by V. Varbanov. They will be published elsewhere.

[32] RIC I.432.

[33] RIC I.58.

[34] RIC I, 99, 100.

[35] RIC II, 481.

[36] RIC II, 228.

[37] for this type see Martini 2003, 10 who places them in the reign of Nero or later. In the recent year several sites from 1st century AD were excavated. Usually, they have coins up to Claudius. The brooches from these sites provide solid ground for continued development in the second half of the century. Based on this data it is possible that the "Moesian" countermark TICA and TICA+AVG belong entirely to the

layer. The first is disc-shaped/*Scheibenfibel* (fig. 5.13). They appear from the middle of the 1st century.[38] Typical for the Western provinces there are few finds from Bulgaria with similar dating.[39] The other brooch (fig. 5.14) is of the arched type. They are the most common type in the second half of the 1st century in Moesia, belonging to type 9 of E. Gencheva.[40]

Based on all said above it can be concluded that ALMVS I existed for several decades. The camp was probably established around the middle of the 1st century and ceased to exist in the last decades of the same century, with secure *terminus post quem* provided by the latest coin of Domitian. The site was violently terminated which is attested by the hidden bronze vessels, the burial of the horse, and the burning of the soldiers' barracks. There is no data for renewed life here until the reign of Hadrian (see ALMVS II above). But what may have caused this destruction?

The Dacian Wars of Domitian

The most devastating events in Moesia in the late 1st century AD were the Dacian wars of Domitian. However, they are poorly attested in the written sources. This is mostly because the main source *Histories* of *Tacitus* survives only up to AD 70.[41] Thus, the information is provided by *Cassius Dio* (who lived mostly in the 3rd century), *Paulus Orrosius* (from the 4th century) and *Jordanes* (from the 6th century). Brief references are present in *Suetonius* and *De vita et moribus Iulii Agricolae* of *Tacitus*. All those sources however lack exact geographical references. This is probably because the missing part of Tacitus' *Histories* was very explicit according to Orrosius.[42] This lack of details for the Dacian wars of both Domitian and Trajan is the reason that the campaigns are reconstructed on a hypothesis based on names of

Flavian period and especially Domitian as suggested on another basis by R. Martini (Martini 2003, 10–11).

[38] Aparaschivei 2017, 41.

[39] Gencheva 2004, 66.

[40] Gencheva 2004.

[41] Wheeler 2010, 1189 – with more comments on the written sources.

[42] Wheeler 2010, 1189; *Oros.*7.10 – "*But Cornelius Tacitus, who wrote an exhaustive history of these events…*".

settlements (for example Nicopolis; Tropeum Traiani; Sexaginta Prista, Nigrinianis, etc.) and the images on the Column of Trajan. For the time of Domitian, even the Roman antagonist is a matter of dispute – some scholars see two Dacian states, one of Dorpaneus/Diurpaneus (in Wallachia) and another (in the Carpathians and Transylvania) led by Decebalus who succeeded Duras,[43] other believe that it was only one state led by the two rulers successively.[44] The war started with a surprise Dacian crossing of the Danube in AD 85/86 (or possibly in the second half of 84).[45] The governor of Moesia Oppius Sabinus faced them in battle in which he lost his entire army and his own life. According to Jordanes the Dacians even took his head.[46] The exact place of the initial Dacian breakthrough and the major Roman defeat is a matter of dispute.[47] Most scholars place it between the legionary camps of Novae (now Svishtov) and Oescus (now Gigen) in modern Central Northern Bulgaria.[48] A strong point of the localization is the presumed altar made by Domitian in Adamclisi (later Tropeum Trajani) at the site of this defeat.[49] In his massive study on the Dacians wars of Domitian and Trajan, Al. Stefan also proposes that the initial breakthrough was in the East, after which the Dacian army marched west and south of the Danube.[50] The other hypothesis is proposed by T. Sarnowski.[51] Based on the coins hoard of Boljetin and Tekija he suggests that the western part of Moesia, or the future Moesia Superior, was the place of the initial breakthrough. A somewhat similar localization (around Iron Gates and

[43] Ivanov 1999, 102–103 who generally follows Strobel 1989, 40.
[44] Daicoviciu 1965, 140; Kabakchieva 2000, 24; those authors support that Dorpaneus/Diurpaneus and Duras are one and the same predecessor of Decebalus and the Dacian state is only one; exhaustive overview of the different opinions is published by Dimitrova 2020, 124–125.
[45] see Stefan 2005, 400–402 about the exact date.
[46] Jord. Get. 76.
[47] Varbanov 2005.
[48] Gudea 2005, 340 – east of Almus and west of Durostorum; Gerov 1949, 9; Ivanov 1999, 103; Gencheva 2002, 8 – at the place of the future Nicopolis ad Istrum.
[49] Probably first proposed by Pârvan 1926, 114; Syme 1936, 170; different opinion – Poulter 1986.
[50] Stefan 2005, 399-402, well-illustrated on fig. 189.
[51] Sarnowski 1988, 48.

Banat) is proposed by M. Griffin.[52] The Western hypothesis of Sarnowski is further supported by V. Varbanov who included the coin hoards from Northwestern Bulgaria – Koynare, Komoshtitsa, and Kozloduy.[53] It should be noted that Komoshtitsa is situated 15 km southeast of Almus. Several more finds can be added to the list in Northwestern Bulgaria, although uncertain. One comes from Ohoden - if the latest coin indeed is with Flavian countermark as suggested.[54] Another hoard was found in Prevala, now dispersed.[55] The coin hoard of Dolni Dabnik[56] and Letnitsa[57] were found in Northcentral Bulgaria, relatively close to the region of interest. Belitsa hoard, Silistra district is the only Flavian hoard found far to the east. The hypothesis of Sarnowski was further supported in recent years. With the publication of a new silver hoard from the area of Mačvanska Mitrovica, Serbia[58] a new horizon was defined. It consists of the collective finds of silver items from Bare, Tekija, Radenković-Crkvine in Northeastern Serbia and Poiana (now Rovinari) in Oltenia. The horizon is called Bare-Tekija. It is provided by *terminus post quem* for hoarding in AD 81 based on the latest coins from the eponymous finds.[59] The only known Roman fort to have suffered in this period is probably Boljetin at the Iron gates.[60] This subphase however goes up to the time of Hadrian(!) when the fort was abandoned, according to the excavator. In Bulgaria, besides Almus, there are only two other possible destructions on the Limes in the time of interest. The first is a burned barracks from the second phase of the wooden camp in Novae.[61] A lime production site was destroyed 20 km further east, near Krivina, by an enemy attack. The *terminus post quem*

[52] Griffin 2000, 111.
[53] Varbanov 2005, some with *aurei*.
[54] Paunov & Prokopov 2002, cat. 47.
[55] Gerasimov 1934, 468 (Prevala) – with single coin of Galba send to the museum in Sofia.
[56] Filov 1910, 224.
[57] Gushterekliev 1995.
[58] Guštin & Popović 2017.
[59] Guštin & Popović 2017, 69-70.
[60] with hoard of denarii with latest issue of Domitian in AD 81 – Popovich 1987; correspond with the second subphase of the first phase – 1b after Zotovich 1984, 211–212, 219.
[61] Gentscheva 1999, 32.

here is provided by a coin minted in AD 76, found in the burned layer.[62] However, outside the limes, many of the unfortified native settlements in Northwestern Bulgaria from the 1st century AD ceased to exist.[63] Those sites should be presented in another study. For Northwest Bulgaria, it should be pointed out that the Roman fort of Conbustica (modern Kladorub, Vidin district, next to the road Ratiaria - Naissus) also seized to exist in the late 1st century AD,[64] but the reason is not suggested by the excavator.[65]

The Dacian wars of Domitian resulted in the general reorganization of the Eastern Danubian limes. The major consequence is the division of Moesia into Inferior and Superior along the Kiabros/Cebrus river. This is usually placed in AD 86, the same year Germania was separated, however, there are also earlier suggestions.[66] Some scholars believe that reorganization in particular was carried out in the camps between Almus and Durostorum which suffered the major Dacian strike.[67] For the Lower Danube, most of the building activity however is usually dated in the Trajanic time or later.[68] In Almus it seems that the settlement was not renewed until the time of Hadrian (based on the two coins from the street level that date the beginning of the next building period). The appearance of a Roman *vicus* is probably connected with the administrative reforms of Hadrian when the site became the westernmost settlement in Moesia Inferior.[69] This adjustment of the border is usually explained by two, not mutually exclusive hypotheses. The first connects it with the organization of ore

[62] Vagalinski 2011, 55.
[63] Still unpublished; general comments by Zhivkov 2022, 18, 23, 34.
[64] Luka 2022, 303.
[65] In my opinion it is highly likely that Conbustica, along Almus was destroyed during the Dacian raids under Domitian. The latest coin from Kladorub is exactly of Domitian (Luka 2022, 303). The live here was renewed after more than two centuries, during the Late Roman period (Luka 2014, 286).
[66] Mirković 1996, 35 – gives AD 85; for this debate – see Southern 1997, 94.
[67] Gudea 2005, 340.
[68] Overview in Ivanov 2012; similar view for the Iron Gates area: Jęczmienowski 2015, 130.
[69] Gerov 1988, 107.

(mainly silver) transportation from Western Haemus[70] or the food supply of the Lower Moesian garrisons in the east.[71] It seems likely that, underlining its function as a supply center, at this time the site received its Latin name: Almus ("nourishing"), although most scholars believe it was named after the river.[72] In this regard, it is noteworthy to mention the general data, provided by *Claudius Ptolemy*. The easternmost town in Moesia Superior is Ratiaria of the Moesi (east of Dorticum and nothing between them). In Moesia Inferior, starting from the Cebrus River in the west, the first mentioned site is Regianum (now Kozloduy). The absence of Almus (although Ptolemy is obviously not exhaustive in his work) in the *Geography* is to be noted, especially when keeping in mind that it describes the settlements in the Trajanic period. Almus had its importance to some degree in the 2nd-3rd century when it was a *portorium* in Moesia and a supposed major riverport in *Regio Montanensium*.

The archaeological data presented here, at least at the current level, supports the destruction of Almus in the massive Dacian invasions in AD 84-86. Clear evidence for this attack is present mainly in the West, especially in Northeastern Serbia. No attempt was made to rebuild the camp in Lom (even as preparation for the two Trajanic campaigns!) and upon its ruins, a Roman settlement with a different function was built in the third decade of the 2nd century. It seems that at the time of this devastating Dacian attack, the owner of the bronze vessels hid them (probably in the settlement next to the fort). He probably lost his life in the catastrophic events and the items remained in the earth until today.

[70] Duch 2017, 375; Rankov 1983, 54; Tatscheva 1996, 177; Tacheva 2000, 88; Tacheva 2004, 61.

[71] Stoev 2016.

[72] Mladenov 1918, 86–90; Georgiev 1977, 248; Yanakieva 2009, 21–22; Beševliev 1970, 119. Tomaschek 1894, 2, 92 was the first to propose Thracian origin of the name Almus, however he raises the question if the name is not connected with the Latin word *almus*. The site is mentioned three times by ancient authors and in all cases the settlement – a road station: Tabula Peutingeriana; Itinerarium Antonini Augusti 219.4; camp of *cuneus equitum stablesianorum* by Notitia Dignitatum Orientis XLII.19; settled by Huns after the battle of Nedao according to Jordanes, Getica 266; major reconstruction in 6th century according to Procopius, De Aedificiis IV.6.

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Vétérans d'origine italienne dans la province de Mésie Supérieure[1] (Veterans of Italian origin in the province of Upper Moesia)

Ana Honcu

Abstract: This study provides an overview of veterans from the Italian Peninsula who settled in the province of Upper Moesia after their military service. The research takes an onomastic approach and attempts to explain the reasons for the preference for this option. The inscriptions date from the end of the 1st century AD to the first half of the 2nd century AD. Of the 11 veterans identified, 10 served in the *legio VII Claudia* and one in the *legio IIII Flavia Felix*. As regards the origin of the veterans, northern Italy (especially Aquileia, Placentia and Vicetia) was an important recruitment area for the legionaries of the *legio VII Claudia* in the 1st century AD.

Key words: Upper Moesia, veterans, *origo*, north Italy, legio VII Claudia

Резюме: Това проучване изследва ветераните от Италианския полуостров, които след военната си служба се заселват в провинция Горна Мизия. За целта е използван ономастичният подход и се прави опит да се обяснят причините за предпочитанието към тези земи. Надписите датират от края на I в. от н. е. до първата половина на II в. от н. е. От идентифицираните 11 ветерани, 10 са служили в VII Клавдиев легион, а един - в IIII Щастлив Флавиев легион. Що се отнася до произхода на ветераните, важен район за набиране на легионери от VII Клавдиев легион през I в. от н. е. е била Северна Италия (особено Аквилея, Плаценция и Вицетия).

À l'époque du Haut-Empire, l'Italie a fourni la plupart de recrues parmi les légionnaires. C'était tout à fait explicable, car les légions devaient être composées des citoyens, et depuis l'époque républicaine, la

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situation n'a beaucoup changé avec l'époque d'Auguste.[2] Tibère a été le premier à envisager la possibilité d'un recrutement plus important de provinciaux,[3] mais pourtant, les soldats des légions ont en plupart encore longtemps des origines italiennes.

L'objet de cet article est constitué par l'analyse des vétérans ayant leur origine dans la péninsule italienne, qui ont resté après leur service en Mésie Supérieure. Il faut préciser qu'il s'agit du territoire qui formera après 86 la Mésie Supérieure, même avant cette date. Cette analyse concernera une approche onomastique et un essai d'expliquer les raisons de leur établissement dans la province. Je vais commencer avec les vétérans qui mentionnent d'une manière sans équivoque leur origine, en ordre chronologique, en continuant avec ceux dont l'origine n'est pas mentionnée, mais qui peuvent avoir une telle *origo*. Il est vrai que les Italiens constituent seulement une partie des vétérans « étrangers » établis en Mésie Supérieure, mais l'observation d'un lien entre la chronologie et le pays d'origine des anciens militaires sera nécessaire.

M. Petronius Severus[4] est originaire de **Placentia,** dans le nord de l'Italie, où les citoyens sont inscrits dans la tribu Veturia.[5] Il est mort à 90 ans (âge peut-être improbable, mais de toute façon il est mort certainement âgé), après avoir servi 28 ans dans la *legio VII Claudia.* La légion a stationné à partir du règne de Néron en Mésie, puis en Mésie Supérieure, ayant son camp à Viminacium. Dans le cas de Petronius Severus, le nom du défunt au nominatif sans avoir été précédé par la formule *Dis Manibus* indique une datation probable de la fin du Ier siècle, voir aussi l'âge avancé du vétéran. Petronius Severus a été recruté lorsque la légion était encore stationnée en Dalmatie, puis il est arrivé avec la légion en Mésie, où il est resté jusqu' à la fin de sa vie. On ne sait pas s'il a été marié ou s'il a eu d'enfants, mais voir son âge, il est possible que même s'il a eu une femme ou d'enfants, ceux-ci n'avaient pas survécu. L'épitaphe est érigée par un de ses affranchis.

[2] Forni 1953, 60.
[3] Forni 1953, 60.
[4] Nr. 1. du supplément épigraphique. Je vais citer les sources mentionnant les vétérans d'origine italienne en Mésie Supérieure d'après les références du supplément épigraphique.
[5] Hanslik 1941, col. 1896–1810.

Même s'il ne mentionne pas dans l'inscription le statut de vétéran,[6] **Manius Epidius Pudens**[7] peut être considéré en tant que tel, parce qu'il a servi dans l'armée pendant 30 ans, après avoir vécu 60 ans. Originaire du municipe de **Vicetia**, à l'est de Verona, sur la *via Postumia*, son gentilice dérive du nom d'un fleuve divinisé - Epidius. Epidius Pudens appartenait à la tribu Menenia, où étaient inscrits les habitants de Vicetia et qui a de nombreuses attestations dans la cité. Le gentilice Voconius de son épouse est d'origine vénète ou étrusque, elle porte aussi, indiqué en ordre inverse, un cognomen grec, Charitio, indiquant un statut d'affranchie.

Un autre vétéran qui mentionne son origine est **L. Valerius Dexter**,[8] originaire d'Aquilée. Il est inscrit dans la tribu Velina, prédominant parmi les citoyens romains d'Aquilée.[9] Giovanni Forni a enregistré 40 citoyens d'Aquilée inscrits dans la tribu Velina, et 42 autres inscrits dans 18 autres diverses tribus.[10] L'attestation de Dexter à Scupi en tant que décurion de la colonie rend la datation à partir de Domitien, mais non très plus tard, car il manque toujours la formule *Dis Manibus* et le nom du défunt est au nominatif. En plus, il est décédé à 45 ans, donc peu après la fin de son service. Il faut observer qu'au-delà de son statut de vétéran, il dispose certainement d'une aisance matérielle qui facilite son ascension en tant que décurion.

Un autre vétéran d'Aquilée est **T. Abudius Priscus,**[11] appartenant à la même tribu que Valerius Dexter. Il a servi toujours dans la VII[e] légion Claudia. L'inscription date de la fin du Ier siècle, voir le nom du défunt du nominatif et l'absence de la formule *Dis Manibus*. Il a été commémoré par sa femme, Felicula, qui était probablement son affranchie. Bien que Abidius Priscus n'a pas mentionné pas dans l'inscription, comme le feront les deux prochains vétérans dont nous parlerons, il était sans doute l'un de ces vétérans qui ont participé à la première déduction à Scupi, réalisé lors d'un des Flaviens.

Quelques inscriptions attestant des vétérans en Mésie Supérieure peuvent être rattachés à la colonisation flavienne, mais seulement quatre mentionnent les expressions *deductus*/*deducticius*, et deux d'entre eux prouvent leur origine italienne: **Quintus Petronius**

[6] Dragojević—Josïfovska 1972, 319–324.
[7] Nr. 2.
[8] Nr. 3.
[9] Forni 1989, 52.
[10] Forni 1989, 60.
[11] Nr. 4.

Rufus[12] et **Caius Rauconius Verecundus**,[13] tous les deux mentionnant l'origine de la tribu Scaptia (quatre autres monuments du territoire de Scupi mentionnent également la tribu Scaptia sans mentionner le lieu de naissance). La tribu Scaptia est attestée surtout en Italie du Nord (Reg. Faesulae, Florentia, Vetulonia, reg. X, Forum Iulium), en Dalmatie (dont, dans 4 cas, est mentionné *domo* Florentia- en dernière instance il s'agit aussi d'Italie), et en Macédoine (seulement 2 fois).[14] Le premier personnage peut être lié de M. Petronius Severus, mais celui-ci est inscrit dans la tribu Veturia. Il est probable que Q. Petronius Rufus appartenait à une branche plus large de la *gens* Petronia, mais toujours attestée dans le nord de l'Italie. Le cognomen Rauconius est attesté pour la première fois en Mésie Supérieure, n'étant pas trouvé dans d'autres provinces. Une affranchie *Rauconia M. f. Secunda* est attestée à Aquilée.[15] Il n'est pas exclu donc que Rauconius Verecundus soit originaire d'Aquilée, d'autant plus qu'il y a d'autres militaires d'Aquilée recrutés dans l'armée romaine. Comme je l'ai mentionné, les textes datent de l'époque flavienne, certainement de Domitien, lorsque la colonie de Scupi a été fondée.

Comme les *commilitones* vétérans colonisés à Scupi, **M. Pomponius Marcellus**[16] et **L. Apuleius Valens**[17] mentionnent l'origine de la tribu Scaptia, le dernier précisant le nom de la ville-Berua. On apprend que M. Pomponius Marcellus, vétéran de la légion *VII Claudia Pia Fidelis*, a combattu 35 ans et a vécu 85 ans. Bien que sa ville natale n'est pas indiquée, on pourrait lui attribuer des origines italiennes, en tenant compte de la répartition de la tribu Scaptia. Son monument funéraire a une caractéristique intéressante qui mérite attention. Sur le socle, sous l'inscription, deux objets sont présentés en faible relief, dont l'un ne peut pas être identifié et l'autre, avec sa forme, indique qu'il s'agit d'un certain outil - un instrument. Très probablement, c'est une *ascia*[18] légionnaire, instrument et symbole de l'inhumation.[19] En ce qui concerne le cas de **L. Apuleius Valens**, ce

[12] Nr. 5.
[13] Nr. 6.
[14] Kubitschek 1882, 272.
[15] IA II, 1479.
[16] Nr. 7.
[17] IMS VI, 43.
[18] Koraćević 1983, 218.
[19] Amable & Couchoud 1954, 29. La consécration d'une tombe sous l'*ascia* est un rite funéraire dont les exemples les plus anciens se rencontrent parmi les légions romaines cantonnées en Dalmatie vers le milieu du Ier siècle de notre ère.

vétéran était originaire soit de Berua en Italie du Nord (Pline, H.N., III, 19, 130), dont la tribu n'est pas connue en fait, soit de Beroia en Macédoine comme le suggère A. Mócsy.[20] Je pense qu'il s'agit dans ce dernier cas de la cité de Macédoine, comme l'a montré A. Mócsy, suivi par E. Birley et Fl. Matei-Popescu.[21] C'est pourquoi je ne l'ai pas inclus dans mon petit corpus. Les inscriptions datent, comme les autres, de la fin du Ier siècle, d'après le nom des défunts au nominatif et l'absence de *Dis Manibus*.

L'origine du vétéran **Marcus Antonius Fronto**[22] est incertaine, mais il pourrait venir d'Italie. Il y a d'abord la datation du Ier siècle, due à l'absence de la formule *Dis Manibus* et à la forme de nominatif du nom de sa femme défunte. Les Antonii de Dalmatie sont venus d'Italie au début de l'Empire, fort probablement étant à l'origine des anciens affranchis du triumvir.[23] Fronto est attesté partout dans l'Empire, mais c'est un cognomen italien.[24] Le gentilice Saevia de son épouse apparaît pour la première fois à Scupi, mais n'est documenté qu'une seule fois en Italie, dans Latium et Campanie (Regio I),[25] et une seule fois en Gallia Belgica.[26] Il est donc possible qu'Antonius Fronto soit originaire d'Italie. Trois autres inscriptions avec ce *nomen* gentille ont été identifiées à Scupi.[27]

Il y a plusieurs Aufidii mentionnés en Mésie Supérieure, donc deux sont des vétérans de la VII[e] légion Claudia (**Lucius Aufidius Celer**[28] et **Caius Aufidius Pudens**[29]). Les occurrences des Aufidii sont nombreuses et ils se retrouvent partout dans l'Empire, mais la plupart ont une origine italienne. L. Aufidius Celer est vétéran et décurion de la colonie de Scupi. L'absence de la formule *Dis Manibus* et le nom du défunt au nominatif indique une datation peu après la fondation de la colonie, c'est-à-dire la fin du I[er] siècle ou tout début du II[e]. L'autre texte sur C. Aufidius Pudens date du debut du II[e], en tenant compte, d'un côté, de l'absence de la formule *Dis Manibus*, mais de l'indication au

[20] Mócsy 1970b, 191, n. 23.
[21] Birley 1986, 213; Matei Popescu 2010, 41; mais aussi Luciani 2016, 99–129.
[22] Nr. 8; voir aussi Basotova 2007, 405–409.
[23] Alföldy 1969, 59; Alföldy 1964, 167–179.
[24] Un Marcus Antonius Fronto est attesté à Rome, CIL VI 38007.
[25] CIL X 3753.
[26] OPEL IV, 43.
[27] IMS VI 33, 81, 87.
[28] Nr. 9.
[29] Nr. 10.

datif du nom du défunt, et de l'autre côté de l'attestation de la tribu Papiria et du fait que le vétéran a vécu plus de 70 ans. L'inscription a été trouvée à Ratiaria, où les citoyens ont été inscrits dans la tribu Papiria. S. Ferjančić pense qu'il a été *deductus*,[30] contrairement à l'opinion de B. Gerov, qui est d'avis qu'Aufidius Pudens s'est installé ici sous le règne de Vespasien.[31] Il est fort probable que son service en Mésie Supérieure a commencé sous Vespasien, mais l'appartenance à la tribu Papiria plaide en faveur de l'hypothèse de S. Ferjančić. Pourtant, il faut rester prudents là-dessus, car un L. Aufidius Rufus de la même tribu est attesté à Ostie. Comme dans cette période (fin du I^er^ siècle début du II^e^ siècle) les plus nombreux soldats viennent d'Italie, on pourrait supposer qu'Aufidius Pudens auraient facilement pu être un italien.

Au II^e^ siècle, un texte atteste **L. Calpurnius Tertius**,[32] ancien porteur d'aigle (*aquilifer*) de la IV^e^ légion Flavia Felix, stationnée à Singidunum après les guères daciques, plus précisément, sous Hadrien. Pourtant, la datation ne peut pas être que dans les premières décennies de ce siècle, à cause de l'absence de la formule *Dis Manibus*. Ce qui surprend est l'âge du défunt (30 ans), trop jeune pour un vétéran. Soit il s'agit d'une erreur de lapicide, ou bien il a été gravement blessé ou gravement malade et a reçu la *honesta missio*. Les Calpurnii sont souvent attestés dans les inscriptions d'Istrie et de Liburnie. Comme la légion a stationné à Burnum (en Dalmatie) avant d'être envoyée en Dacie, il n'est pas exclu que Calpurnius Tertius soit liée à la gens Calpurnia de Dalmatie, famille dont le nom est attaché aux Calpurnii Pisones (donc italiens, en dernière instance), qui possédaient des biens en Liburnie. Pourtant, son origine italienne ne peut être affirmée d'une manière tranchante.

Une autre famille italienne présente dans l'environnement militaire de Ratiaria et Timacum Minus est *gens* Trebia.[33] Il semble que les *Trebii* des provinces danubiennes sont originaires de la partie septentrionale de l'Italie, peut-être d'Aquilée, où ils sont attestés dès la première moitié du Ier siècle.[34] Même si l'inscription ne le mentionne pas, il est également possible qu'au moins C. Trebius Valerianus a obtenu l'*honesta missio* et se serait installé à Ratiaria.[35]

[30] Ferjančić 2002, 285, nr. 336.
[31] Gerov 1949, 76, nr.30.
[32] Nr. 11.
[33] Topalilov 2021, 72–73.
[34] Topalilov 2021, 71.
[35] Topalilov 2021, 73.

Les autres vétérans qui sont restés en Mésie Supérieure portent des gentilices impériaux: Iulius, Aelius, Aurelius. Les anciens combattants avec le gentilice Iulius proviennent probablement de familles qui ont immigré en Mésie Supérieure d'autres provinces, car les souverains de la dynastie julien-claudienne n'ont pas poursuivi une politique d'octroi de droits civiques en Mésie. Cependant, en l'absence d'indication de tribu ou d'origine géographique, il est difficile de leur attribuer des origines italiennes, surtout tenant compte de la datation des inscriptions - la plupart en IIème siècle. Seul Caius Iulius Longinus, qui mentionne qu'il est *deductus* à Scupi, pourrait avoir eu une origine italienne.[36] Les vétérans portant les gentilices impériaux Ulpius, Aelius[37] et Aurelius proviennent probablement de familles appartenant à la population épichorique de la Mésie Supérieure, ou sont originaires de certaines des provinces voisines.[38] Il en va de même pour les vétérans avec le gentilice militaire Valerius.

En ce qui concerne le fameux *laterculus* contenant une liste de soldats qui sont recrutés en 169 et libérés en 195,[39] on a constaté que les données sur le domicile ont été conservées pour 142 soldats. Les plus nombreux étaient des légionnaires originaires de Mésie Supérieure (environ 102 ou 104). Un nombre beaucoup plus réduit de recrues venaient d'autres provinces balkaniques – Mésie Inferieure, Dalmatie et Macédoine; de Dacie et de l'Est de l'Empire. Aucun recru d'Italie ou de l'une des provinces occidentales n'a été observé parmi ces soldats, car l'augmentation du nombre de provinciaux dans les légions a diminué le nombre d'indigènes italiens.

Comme nous l'avons mentionné, les anciens combattants - fondateurs de la colonie et immigrants, étaient d'origine hétérogène: Italiens, Gaulois, Espagnols, Syriens, Macédoniens ou originaire de Dalmatie. La plupart des vétérans se sont installés à Scupi (9 vétérans), un à Ratiaria et un à Singidunum.

Sur les 11 soldats d'origine italienne, 10 vétérans ont servi dans la VII[e] légion Claudia et un dans la IV[e] légion Flavia Felix. La plupart dépassent le service militaire préétabli, restant dans l'armée. Il est possible de les classer en deux groupes: le premier serait constitué de ceux qui sont restés près du lieu de service, et le second serait ceux qui

[36] IMS, VI, 52.
[37] Lié à l'octroi du droit civil à l'époque des empereurs Hadrien et Antonin le Pieux (dans presque tous les cas, ce sont les gentilices Publius et Titus).
[38] Stoev 2017, 273.
[39] IMS II, 53.

sont rentrés dans leur patrie après avoir été démobilisés de l'armée.[40] Il y a plusieurs raisons pour ceux qui n'ont pas rentré chez eux après le service. Sauf les vétérans installés par l'empereur pour fondés une colonie, les anciens militaires trouvent un certain confort matériel dans la province de service, bénéficiant d'une aisance qui, associé à la distance qui séparait la province de service avec leur lieu d'origine, contribuaient à leur installation dans le pays où ils avaient effectué le service militaire. Il faut observer que cette aisance contribue aussi à leur ascension dans la société provinciale. L. Valerius Dexter et L. Aufidius Celer sont également décurions à Scupi. Quant à leur origine, on observe que la région du nord de l'Italie était au premier siècle une zone importante pour le recrutement de soldats dans la légion VII Claudia. Dans le cas où il s'agit d'une origine certaine, les cités de naissance des soldats sont Aquilée (deux fois), Placentia et Vicetia. On remarque également que le nord prédomine massivement sur le centre-sud, et cette supériorité numérique s'est maintenue tout au long de l'Empire.[41] G. Forni pense que les conditions sociales et économiques, mais aussi un plus grand raffinement de la vie, avaient diminué la densité de population dans le sud.[42] Cette logique sur la démographie peut être discutée, mais il est sûr que le nord fourni la grand plupart de recrues pour les légions au Ier siècle. En ce qui concerne la diminution du nombre d'Italiens dans toutes les légions, celle-ci s'est faite progressivement et les conditions du service militaire et la colonisation des vétérans dans d'autres provinces étaient la raison principale de ce phénomène.

Le choix onomastique reflète l'attachement aux traditions culturelles propres ou un simple conservatisme onomastique. Parmi les soldats, les *cognomina* sont majoritairement en rapport avec les traits physiques et psychologiques ou avec les qualités martiales requises: Celer, Crescens, Firmus, Longinus, Maximus, Pudens, Valerius, Valens.[43]

Les textes épigraphiques ont fourni des informations directes sur l'origine de 23% des vétérans attestés dans les provinces des Balkans. Après S. Ferjančić, les inscriptions de vétérans des provinces des Balkans indiquent une présence de (47 %) des Italiens et (53 %) des provinciaux- une mesure presque égale, mais il faut faire aussi attention

[40] Ferjančić 2002, 83.
[41] Forni 1953, 66.
[42] Forni 1953, 66.
[43] Kubitscheck 1882, 270, 272.

à l'*epigraphic habit*. Lorsque nous nous tournons vers les vétérans qui sont restés dans les provinces balkaniques là où ils avaient servi, nous pouvons constater que seulement 27 % d'entre eux étaient italiens et 73 % avaient été enrôlés parmi les locaux.[44] Les vétérans originaires d'Italie sont attestés, en Mésie Supérieure surtout au Ier siècle et en quelques cas dans la première moitié du IIe siècle. Cela confirme les recrutements massifs des Italiens parmi les légions tout au long du Ier siècle. Au cours du IIIe siècle, aucun Italien n'avait été attesté dans les légions pannoniennes et mésiques.[45]

Les inscriptions sur les pierres tombales ne donnent pas une image réaliste de la composition ethnique de la population, car elles sont placées par une population majoritairement romanisée qui accepte la nomenclature romaine officielle. Sur les 340 noms connus à Scupi d'après les inscriptions, 270 ont une formule onomastique latine, ce qui devrait indiquer une romanisation au moins onomastique poussée de la région. D'après l'analyse des cognomens faite par A. Uchi, 71% sont latins, 16% grecs, 4% thraces et 9% autres. Bien sûr, ces relations de pourcentage ont changé avec la découverte de nouvelles inscriptions au cours des trente dernières années, mais l'élément latin reste toujours dominant.[46] Toujours à Scupi, les différences de morphologie, d'ornementation et du matériau des monuments reflète davantage le statut socio-économique du défunt que de son origine ethnique.[47] Les influences italiennes sont plus reconnaissables dans la culture matérielle, à travers l'importation d'objets du quotidien. Une partie importante des découvertes datés à la fin du Ier et à la première moitié du IIe siècle sont des importations de provinces occidentales ou de produits avec des influences italiennes notables.[48] Les autels funéraires et les sarcophages de Scupi ont une composante italienne clairement reconnaissable, avec certaines influences du sud-est hellénistique.[49] L'impulsion pour l'apparition de cette forme a probablement été donnée par les anciens combattants immigrés.[50]

Une dernière remarque : il n'y a aucune mention des Italiens dans les unités auxiliaires de Mésie Supérieure. Cela ne signifie pas

[44] Ferjančić 2002, 227.
[45] Ferjančić 2002, 227.
[46] Mócsy 1970a, 139-180.
[47] Jovanova 2015, 88, note 62.
[48] Jovanova 2015, 88, note 64.
[49] Jovanova 2015, 34.
[50] Jovanova 2015, 37.

qu'elles n'ont pas existé, mais ces mentions ont été certainement peu nombreuses, à cause du droit de cité déjà détenu par les Italiens.

Liste des vétérans d'origine italienne mentionnés en Mésie Supérieure

	Vétéran	**Provenance**	**Légion**	**Lieu d'établissement**	**Datation**
1	M. Petronius Severus	Placentia, Italie	*legio VII Claudia*	Scupi, Bardovci	fin du Ier siècle
2	Manius Epidius Pudens	Vicetia, Italie	?	Scupi, Zlokučani	fin du Ier siècle
3	L. Valerius Dexter	Aquilée, Italie	*legio VII Claudia*	Scupi	fin du Ier siècle
4	T. Abudius Priscus	Aquilée, Italie	*legio VII Claudia*	Scupi	fin du Ier siècle
5	Quintus Petronius Rufus	Tribu Scaptia, Italie	*legio VII Claudia*	Scupi, Kučevište	fin du Ier siècle
6	Caius Rauconius Verecundus	Tribu Scaptia, Italie	*legio VII Claudia*	Scupi, Brazda	fin du Ier siècle
7	M. Pomponius Marcellus	Tribu Scaptia, Italie	*legio VII Claudia*	Scupi	fin du Ier siècle
8	M. Antonius Fronto	Italie ?	*legio VII Claudia*	Scupi	fin du Ier siècle
9	L. Aufidius Celer	Italie ?	*legio VII Claudia*	Scupi, Barovo	fin du Ier siècle ou tout début du IIe
10	C. Aufidius Pudens	Italie ?	*legio VII Claudia*	Ratiaria	début du IIe siècle
11	L. Calpurnius Tertius	Italie ?	*Legio IIII Flavia Felix*	Singidunum	premières décennies du IIe siècle

SUPPLÉMENT ÉPIGRAPHIQUE

1. Bibliographie: IMS, VI, 55
Localisation: Scupi, Bardovci
Datation: fin du Ier siècle
M(arcus) [Pe]tronius M. f (ilius) Vetu/r[i]a Placen/tia Severus / vet(eranus) leg(ionis) VII / C(laudiae) p(iae) f(idelis) meruit / annos XXVIIII / vixit annis LXXXX / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / Petronius Teres / patrono bene / merenti de suo / f(aciendum) c(uravit).

2. Bibliographie: IMS, VI, 60.
Localisation: Scupi, Zlokučani
Datation: fin du Ier siècle
M(anius) Epidius / M(ani) f(ilius) Vicetia / Pude(n)s Menenia / vix(it) ann(os) LX mil(itavit) / ann(os) XXX Charitio / Voconia co(n)iux / co(n)iugi / h(ic) s(itus) e(st).

3. Bibliographie: AE 2010, 1403.
Localisation: Scupi
Datation: fin du Ier siècle
L(ucius) Valerius / L(uci) f(ilius) Vel(ina) Dexter / Aquileia vet(eranus) / leg(ionis) VII aedil(is) / et decur(io) col(oniae) / vixit an(nos) XXXXV / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / Venustus et / Arescusa lib(erti) f(aciendum) c(uraverunt).

4. Bibliographie: IMS VI, 48.
Localisation: Scupi
Datation: fin du Ier siècle
T(itus) Abudius T(iti) f(ilius) / Vel(ina) Priscus A/quileia vet(eranus) / leg(ionis) VII C(laudiae) P(iae) F(idelis) vix(it) / ann(os) LXXXV / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / Felicula con(iunx) / f(aciendum) c(uravit).

5. Bibliographie: IMS, VI, 54.
Localisation: Scupi, Kučevište
Datation: fin du Ier siècle
Q(uintus) Petroni/us M(arci) f(ilius) Sca(ptia) / Rufus / vet(eranus) leg(ionis) VII C(laudiae) p(iae) f(idelis) / deducticius / t(itulum) f(ieri) i(ussit).

6. Bibliographie: IMS, VI, 56.
Localisation: Scupi, Brazda
Datation: fin du Ier siècle
C(aius) Rauconi[us] / C. f. Scaptiae / Verecundus / veteranus leg(ionis) / VII C(laudiae) p(iae) f(idelis) mil(itavit) in signi(s) / ann(is) XXXII deduct[u]s / ded(uctione) vi[x]it ann(is) LXX / h(ic) s(itus) e(st).

7. Bibliographie: Ferjančić 2002, nr. 331
Localisation: Scupi
Datation: fin du Ier siècle
M(arcus) Pompo/nius M(arci) f(ilius) Scaptia / Marcellus / vet(eranus) leg(ionis) VII/ C(laudiae) p(iae) f(idelis) militavit / annis XXXV / vixit an(nis) LXXXV / h(ic) s(itus) e(st).

8. Bibliographie: AE 2008, 1178.
Localisation: Scupi
Datation: fin du Ier siècle
Saeviae / Basillae / vix(it) ann(os) / L h(ic) s(ita) e(st) / M(arcus) Antoni/us Fron/to vet(eranus) leg(ionis) / VII C(laudiae) P(iae) F(idelis) con/iugi b(ene) m(erenti) po/suit

9. Bibliographie: IMS VI, 49.
Localisation: Scupi, Barovo
Datation: fin du Ier siècle ou tout début du IIe siècle
L(ucius) Aufidiu[s L(uci?) f(ilius)] / Celer vet(eranus) [leg(ionis) VII] / C(laudiae) p(iae) f(idelis) dec(urio) c[ol(oniae) Scup(inorum)] / vixit an(nis) [±5] / Capito f[il(ius)….] / h(eres) [f(aciendum) c(uravit)].

10. Bibliographie: Ferjančić, nr. 336.
Localisation: Ratiaria
Datation: début du IIe siècle
C(aius) Aufidio / [Cai?] f(ilio) Pap(iria) / [Pu]denti / [vete(rano) le]g(ionis) VII C(laudiae) P(iae) F(idelis) / [- - -] LD / [vixit an]n(is) LXX [- - -

11. Bibliographie: IMS I, 33 .
Localisation: Singidunum
Datation: premières décennies du IIe siècle

L(uci) Ca<l=I>pur(ni) Terti / vet(erani) e<x=T> aquil(ifero) (le)g(ionis) / IIII Fl(aviae) F(elicis) vix(it) ann(os) XXX / L(ucius) Ca<lp=IR>ur(n)i(us) Inamorio/tius(?) Concitatus / armatura / legion(is) eiusd(em)

AE -Année Épigraphique, Paris.

CIL – Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.

IA – Inscriptiones Aquileiae, Udine.

IMS – Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure.

OPEL IV – Onomasticon provinciarum Europae Latinarum IV, Vienne.

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STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA 10, 67-80
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The early colonial society of Ratiaria

Kalin Stoev, Ivo Topalilov

Abstract: According the common opinion, Ratiaria is probably founded as military colony, after the Dacian wars of Trajan. However, the investigation of the earlier inscriptions from the colony doesn't corroborate the opinion that the veterans or other representatives of the military were the stratum that had the most influential or leading position in the city. From the earliest times there are traces that municipal aristocracy from towns of West of the Empire played an important role in establishing the position of the earliest elites in Ratiaria.

Key words: Ratiaria, colony, Romanization, epigraphy, Dacian wars

Резюме: Според общоприетото мнение Рациария вероятно е основана като военна колония след дакийските войни на Траян. Изследването на по-ранните надписи от колонията обаче не потвърждава мнението, че ветераните или други представители на армията са прослойката, която е имала основната управленческа и водеща позиция в града. Има следи, че още около времето на основаването на колонията, тя е била притегателен център за аристократи от Запада на империята, оказали влияние на елитите на Рациария.

It is suggested that *colonia Ratiaria,* or *colonia Ratiariensium*,[1] was founded as a military (veteran) colony in the time of Trajan, with the exact date still remains unknown. The idea that the founding occurred somewhere after the end of the Dacian wars of Trajan is plausible. The earliest inscriptions that mention the name of the colony are probably from Hadrianic date.[2]

Historiography suggests that there was a legionary camp in Ratiaria after AD 23, when it was mentioned for the first time in the

[1] Although *colonia Ratiariansium* (Stoev 2014b) was the original, "official" name of the city (s. *colonia Oescensium*, *colonia Sarmizegetusiensium*), here we prefer mainly the form Ratiaria, that is commonly used in the bibliography).
[2] Velkov 1980, 61–64.

Moesian garrison consisting of two legions.[3] It may be the camp of *Legio IV Scythica*.[4] B. Filov, followed by other scholars, believes that in the time of Domitian, by the division of the province, *Legio IV Flavia* arrived in Ratiaria.[5] Up to now, there is no conclusive evidence for either the first or the second hypothesis.[6] Recently, mostly on the basis of numerous stamped bricks of *Legio IV Flavia* and especially *Legio VII Claudia*, it is supposed that by the end of the 1st century AD, a *vexillatio a legio* was stationed there. Presumable at some point Ratiaria could have been a standing point for auxiliary troops, such as *ala Gallica*, as well as *cohors I Cretum*, and *cohors VIII Gallorum*.[7] An argument for a pre-Trajanic military presence is due to the evidence about the other Trajanic colonies: Sarmizegetusa, Colonia Ulpia Traiana, and Timgad.[8]

Another notorious conundrum about the early history of Ratiaria was the question whether the city was founded as a veteran colony, through *deductio* of the former legionaries. This idea, which often perpetrated and is pretty plausible from strictly logical point of view, does not, however, find arguments in the epigraphic evidence so far.[9] This uncertainty inevitably requires a wider discussion about the earliest civic settlement at Ratiaria, the demographic and social profile of the population and hence the importance of the colony in the social development of the Roman province of Upper Moesia, which discussion is also the purpose of the following text.

We are still poorly informed about the pre-Roman ethnic composition of Ratiaria, as the population began to be witnessed massively in the epigraphic monuments only at the time of the founding of the colony around the time of the Trajanic wars.[10] We can assume that, as in other Roman settlements along the borders of the Empire, Roman merchants had settled also in Ratiaria immediately

[3] Tac. Hist. 85.
[4] Domaszewski 1891, 165; Velkov 1980, 63.
[5] Filow 1906, 6; Syme 1928, 48; Gerov 1953, 2; Giorgetti 1980, 24.
[6] Ivanov 1999, 86.
[7] Velkov 1980, 63–64; Ivanov 2014, 143–170; Stoev 2014b, 168–169 with literature.
[8] See Stoev 2015 with literature.
[9] Discussion see in Gerov 1949; Ferjančić 2002, 78–79; Stoev 2014b, 170 with literature
[10] Mócsy 1970.

after the conquest.[11] Up to now, we have six fully informative inscriptions that can be dated to the end of 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century AD according to their epigraphic characteristics, and thus to offer some starting points for the study of the ethnic composition of Ratiaria and its territory before the emergence of the colony. Only two of them[12] can be referred to as a testimony of settling veterans from a legion (or its *vexillatio*) in the area. These are the funerary *stelae* of the veterans C. Aufidius Pudens and C. Valerius Firmus with his homonymous son, both decuriones in the colony.[13] They early date is based on the presence of a complete Roman citizen's nomenclature, including name, *tribus* and *filiatio*. The missing birthplace (*origo*), which is a key element in the designation of the Roman citizen, is a ground for dating in the 1st – 2nd century. In addition, in both inscriptions, the veterans were marked with the *Papiria tribus* to which the colonies that were founded in the time of Trajan and the following emperors belonged.[14] This designation is of particular interest to our topic, as it seems that the veterans who have been settled by Nero and the Flavians do not usually refer to the *tribus* of the newly established colony, but keep the tribe of their previous place of residence and *origo* in their inscriptions,[15] so the conclusion is inevitable that after the Trajan's war with the Dacians and the official ascension of Ratiaria in colonial rank, they were conscribed into the new imperial *tribus* of *Papiria*. Logically then, we should date *C. Aufidius Pudens* and *C. Valerius Firmus*' settlement in Ratiaria after the foundation of the colony, and not during some veteran deduction.

Determining the ethnic and geographic origin of the aforementioned veterans is hampered by the lack of *origo* in the inscriptions, but this is a phenomenon that the researcher of *Ratiaria* and other cities in the Danube provinces often encounters. However,

[11] Velkov 1980, 61–62.

[12] Diverging opinion see in Ferjančić 2002, 80. We should exclude L. Herrenius Germanus and L. Valerius Bassus from her list (Nos. 335, 338): the former due to the unsure reading of *Legio IV Flavia* on the inscription, the later because of the plain *tria nomina*, without other elements of the Roman nomenclature.

[13] Detchev 1932/1933, No. 13; AE 1938, 89 (= Ferjančić 2002, Nos. 336, 337).

[14] Kubitschek 1889, IV-276.

[15] Stoev 2014b, 170; Stoev 2015, 127–128.

C. Aufidius Pudens' name (*nomen gentilicium*) gives some indications. The name is of Italic origin, characteristic of central and northern Italy, and it is also common among freedman of Italian families residing in Dalmatia and Pannonia. It is attested in the Hellenic lands of Delos and Macedonia.[16] It is worth mentioning that the *Aufidii* are among the earliest Roman families, settled and involved in economic activities in the Roman East[17] and some inscriptions from Thracian and Moesian lands indicate them both among the elites of veteran colonies[18] and as descendants of the "republican" *Aufidii* from the Eastern provinces.[19] In the case of C. Aufidius Pudens, a provenance from Dalmatia or Pannonia, probably from the families of Italian veterans from the legions of these provinces - as exemplified by other *Aufidii* in these provinces (another *Caius Aufidius* of apparent Illyrian descent is witnessed in Pannonia),[20] is likely, but we could not surely exclude the possibility that the influential Eastern families of the *Aufidii* are involved in his genealogy.

The origin of C. Valerius Firmus is also complex, as the *nomen gentilicium* Valerius is popular in all provinces of the Empire. *Firmus* is a common cognomen, typical for the naming of the *limes*.[21] In this case, however, in view of the early date of the possible recruitment (just little after mid-first century AD), we must again prefer the Western origin, which could be Italian or Dalmatian, or from the Roman communities in Asia Minor. The latter hypothesis can be corroborated by another inscription, pertaining to an early settler, such as, for example, *L. Antonius, Quirina, Verus*, *Sagalassus*, who, despite the lack of an explicit indication in the partially preserved inscription, probably belonged to the military. In this case, the *tribus* shows clear origin from Asia Minor, a large part of whose cities are listed in the *Quirina*.[22] This origin is corroborated by the geographical

[16] Tataki 2006, 110; Alföldy 1966.
[17] Andreau 2001, 121.
[18] IGBulg IV 2239; CIL III 8194.
[19] CIL I 3440; CIL I 2943. S. Stoev 2017, 296.
[20] https://lupa.at/167 (= Vorbeck 1980, No. 227).
[21] Mócsy 1983.
[22] Grotefend 1863, 7.

agnomen Sagalassus, meaning a provenance from a town in the Pisidia area.[23] Other evidence in this regard could be seen in the presence of veterans of *Legio VII Claudia* from these lands.[24] The evidence listed above leads to the conclusion that the early settlement in Ratiaria was done by Roman veterans or soldiers of generally Western origin (Italic, Pannonian or Dalmatian) or originated from the Eastern provinces.[25]

A newly find stela, which is among the earliest found in the necropolises of the Roman colony, reveals another person of Italian origin, namely C. Trebius Valerianus. It could be suggested that in this case we have the second part of the classical epitaph which means that the name of the deceased is unknown and we are therefore dealing with the person who in fact set up the stele. It is very likely that originally the inscription bore the names of two *Trebii*, at least one of which would be a *centurio* (an obscure object presented on the stone could be interpreted as a *vitis*), who belonged to this group of veterans settled in Ratiaria in the first years of establishment of the colony, probably of a *vexillatio*, if not the legion itself, stationed in the last decades of 1st century. It remains unclear if C. Trebius Valerianus and his unknown brother entered the *ordo decurionum* or was he one of the active soldiers known also from the funerary *stelae* found in Ratiaria among which are the centurions Coelius Ingenuus, Q. Cornelius Graptus and C. Numitorius Seneca; his typically 'military' type stele may suggest that he was in fact still in military service.[26]

A similar case is provided by a recently discovered epigraphic testimony that mentions a soldier of *Legio VII Claudia*, Luccius Capito,[27] whose name suggests that he could have been recruited in the Danube provinces of the empire or Dalmatia.[28] The inscription,

[23] Susini 1995.
[24] Speidel 1980, 734.
[25] See also the characteristics of the *fibulae* from the territory of Ratiaria in 1st – 2nd century AD: Haralambieva 2014.
[26] Topalilov 2021, 67–73.
[27] Considered to be an *optio*: Hristov & Ivanov 2010 (= Eck & Ivanov 2010, 201 = AE 2010, 01392). We suggest a revised reading: C(aius) Luccius (!) / Capito / mil(es) leg(ionis) / VII <O=C> l(audiae) p(iae) f(idelis)/ Fortun/ae v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).
[28] See Alföldy 1969, 94–95.

which is the dedication to Fortuna, a deity popular among the soldiers, attests a well-developed urban life that has arisen alongside the places of various troops in the second half of the 1st century. The last two monuments could strongly speak in favor of the supposition for a military camp in pre-colonial Ratiaria, but not in favor of formation of veteran settlement prior to the colony foundation.

A newly published funerary inscription is probably the most revealing evidence in this regard:

Dis Manib(us). / [L.] Coelio, L(uci) f(ilio), / Romil(ia) Firmino / [A]test(e), praef(ecto) coh(ortis) II / [G]allorum, trib(uno) milit(um) leg(ionis) IIII F(laviae) F(elicis), / [pr]aef(ecto) alae II Pannon(iorum), / [d]onis donato bello [D[(acico)], / [II] viro Atestinor(um) vix(it) (annis) X[..] / Syril(l)us (?), lib(ertus) et heres [...]/ f(aciendum) c(uravit).[29]

The initial publication with comments on the inscription was already made. The text reveals the career of L. Coelius Firminus from Ateste, who had served as an equestrian officer in the Roman army. For his service he had been awarded *dona militaria*. The military commands of Firminus are mentioned in ascending order - *praefectus cohortis, tribunus militum legionis, praefectus alae*, and are no exception to the usual *militiae equestres* in this period. His military career probably began while he was in position of a duumvir (?) in his hometown Ateste. He most likely died shortly after the end of the Second Dacian War (AD 106). The episode, after which Coelius received the *dona*, is the capture of the Dacian king Decebal; we are dealing with the leader of the force responsible for this task. [30]

Some further epigraphical remarks on this inscription allows a more profound look in the genesis of Ratiaria's early society. The inscription shows that the entire military career of L. Coelius Firminus took place in the lower Danube region - in the neighboring provinces of Moesia inferior and Moesia superior. This should not be a coincidence and is rather unusual for the career of a Roman *eques*. We

[29] Reading after the first publication Stoev & Topalilov 2019, 269.
[30] Stoev & Topalilov 2019, 267–270.

must also say that all of the troops mentioned in the inscription after the war remained as occupying forces in Dacia.[31] Besides, it is already pointed out in the literature that Trajan had led his first war against the Dacians, especially with the army of the Danubian provinces.[32] This would mean that Coelius was a general during the Trajanic Dacian wars, who, on account of his experience in the field and perhaps because of his good knowledge of Moesia inferior and superior, had been further promoted to the command of other troops of the army.

The reasons for this unusually specialized career deserve further discussion. Was it just a coincidence that an *eques* from Ateste was active in the Danubian areas and that exactly the Dacian wars of Trajan formed his career? Ateste was one of the cities pertaining in the economic network of Aquileia.[33] The region of the Italian trading giant seems like an ideal "breeding ground"[34] for *ordo equester*. Aquileia, the hometown of L. Coelius Firminus' father[35], dominated trade between northern Italy and the Danube region.[36] The elites of the two cities were closely connected - and we also see in the case of *Coelius* that the son of a man, who was *Sevir* of Aquileia was *Duovir* in Ateste.

A possible explanation requires a closer look at the careers of the Roman *equites* of Aquileia / Ateste: it is certain that a purely military *cursus equester* in the provinces was rather unusual for the equestrian order of these cities. The data shows a common career model for the *equites* from these towns: they usually pursued military careers in the urban cohorts of Rome, or, when only Duumviri or other magistrates were mainly active in the city.[37] L. Coelius Firminus seems to be a rather unusual case when an *eques* from Ateste or Aquileia,

[31] Ardevan 2007, 139 141; Holder 2006, 155–156; *cohors II Gallorum* is mentioned in Dacia inferior only after the reorganization after Hadrian (Matei-Popescu 2010, 208–209).
[32] Holder 2006, 154; Matei-Popescu & Țentea 2006, 132.
[33] Roncaglia 2018, 104–105.
[34] Devijver 1992, 66.
[35] The father of Coelius Firminus was presumably L. Coelius Septumus, known from an inscription from Aquileia (CIL V 819; s. Stoev & Topalilov 2019, 268).
[36] Zaccaria 2010, 53–78.
[37] We are currently acquainted with 38 members of *ordo equester* from Aquileia and Ateste (according to the research in Clauss-Slaby database, 06.06.2024)

who had pursued the *tres militiae* in the provinces after his duumvirate in the city.[38] A slightly similar case presents the inscription of C. Minicius Italus, which had the commando of numerous troops after being a IIIIvir iure dicundo and was awarded with *dona* from a campaign of emperor Vespasian.[39] Therefore, the career of Coelius Firminus is neither characteristic for the municipal aristocracy in Aquileia and Ateste, nor accidental, and could be explained more by some peculiar circumstances that might be associated with Ratiaria.

In any such career ("*eventful*" in the words of H. Devijver, because of a war situation in a certain region), we must choose between two promotional mechanisms - the first is a direct imperial order, or command of another high-ranking general. The second mechanism is connected with the social patronage. Here we must count on a senator's protection, but also on the interests that a family in a particular region had and the influence that these families could exert on the imperial administration in order to promote its members to a service in a particular region.[40]

From a direct call we cannot say anything safe, due to the lack of clues; the governorship of a certain L. Coelius Rufus in the province (*Moesia superior*) falls too late – in AD 120.[41] From the letter of Pliny the Younger we know a former consul, Coelius Clemens,[42] but nothing implies that he stood in any relation to our Coelius Firminus. From the *Coelii*, probably a Spanish family, influential in the time of Trajan and Hadrian, comes a *legatus pro praetore* of Dalmatia.[43] Information on relationship of Coelius Firminus to this family is not attested.

The question arises as to how much Ratiaria has become of interest to the municipal nobility of these cities. Perhaps it is not

[38] Some exceptions could be CIL V 8276; Inscr. Aqu. II, 2808; AE 1975, 408; AE 1956, 15. Some early examples (Augustan?) show a combination of *praefectus iure dicundo* or *decurio* with military command (Inscr. Aqu. II, 2859, CIL V 2504; AE 1906 76).
[39] CIL V 875 (= Insc. Aqu. I 495).
[40] On the mechanisms of equestrian promotions see Devijver 1992, 69.
[41] Stein 1940, 40–41.
[42] Plin. X, 51.
[43] On this see Dietz 1976, 406; Wilkes 1969, 85–87. From these *Coelii* probably origins the future Emperor D. Caelius Balbinus.

without significance that we find a *duovir* from an aristocratic family of Aquileia in military service in an important "trading hub" on the Danube like Ratiaria. The interests of the particular families from Aquileia, especially in this region, can therefore be explained by the favorable economic position of Ratiaria. It has already been shown elsewhere that some members of the elites of Ratiaria emancipated themselves in part from the families of the customs tenants from the Danube countries and came to the forefront of local society (see also below).[44]

The fact that Coelius Firminus was buried here, and not in his hometown, could also indicate that he also had land in the area of the future colony. The grave stone was donated by his *libertus*. Further testimonies from Ratiaria could help is to identify some possible descendants of Coelius Firminus: evidence from the stamped brocks, found in the colony brings to light the names of the manifacturers *Lucii Coelii* (*L(uci) Coel(i) Sat(urnini); L(uci) Coel(i) Ing(enui); L(uci) Coel(i) CR (GR?); L(uci) Coel(i) Primi*),[45] who judging by the same praenomen and nomen, may have had descent from freedmen of the former. Other inscriptions show that the later descendants (?) of this family held higher military positions (Coelius Saturninus, Coelius Ingenuus).[46]

The above-mentioned inscriptions and prosopographical data do not imply massive veteran colonizations, but rather suggest a relatively low importance of the veteran element in the creation of the urban community after the founding of the colony. It is a fact that only in one case – that of the mentioned L. Valerius Firmus,[47] we testify a military person occupying a position in the city's institutions. Consequently, the hypothesis of D. Giorgetti that Seventh Legion

[44] Stoev 2014b, 172–176.

[45] Morfova 1963, 27–33 and Rakeva-Morfova 1970, 33–43; Velkov 1980, 68; Bollini 1980, 93–127 (especially 121–122); Ivanov 2014, 155; Petulescu 2020, 351–352.

[46] CIL III 6293.

[47] A presumed Flavius from *ala Claudia Nova* (?) is marked as a decurio by A. Mocsy and D. Georgetti, but the reading in CIL, the catalog of B. Gerov and in M. Tacheva is different: s. Stoev 2014 with literature. Another example – of a horseman named *Fuscus* from ala Gallica is partially preserved and lacks cognomen or some other positions of the deceased (Hošek & Velkov 1958, 32–39).

veterans massively occupied seats in the local government of the city,[48] must be denied. As we already mentioned, the Papiria *tribus* designates that they were settled along after the foundation of the colony, hence there were probably not significant veteran communities in the area. Thus, although being a colony, presumably founded in connection with the Danubian wars of Trajan, the early society of Ratiaria was marked by the stronger influence of the civic element in its institutions and civic life and the case of L. Coelius Firminus seems to corroborate the hypothesis that the Western trade elites also had part in the formation of the colonial society.

In this regard, it is worth noting the discrepancy between the names of veterans and members of *ordo decurionum* of the colony (others than generally popular names like Valerius)[49] and the high epigraphical representation of the *augustales* in Ratiaria.[50] Generally speaking, this class consisted mainly of freedman, for which the opportunity to show off their wealth, given the social and legal deficits of their position as *liberti*, and thus the impossibility to be part of the official "senate" of the colony, was seemingly important enough to their own "council".[51] It is also to be presumed that the freedman, respectively some of the *augustales* in the Roman Empire were often involved in trading activities, which were at fact an important source for their wealth.[52] The given data are sufficient to conclude that the geographical location of Ratiaria and probably other factors determined not only its military, but also the economic profile of its early society.

[48] Giorgetti 1980, 25–26; Mócsy 1970, 107.

[49] Mocsy 1970, 107.

[50] More on the topic: see Stoev 2014a, 251-268; Stoev 2104b, 172-175 with literature; Topalilov & Bru 2016, 217–223; on the augustales see also Yanev 2009, 305.

[51] Ross Taylor 1914, 231–253; Vandevoorde 2015, 34.

[52] The example of Petronius' character Trimalchio seems to be rather eloquent: cf. Finley 1999², 36.

AÉ *Année Épigraphique*, Paris.
CIL *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum, Berolini*
InscrAqu Brusin, J.B. (ed) (1991/1993) *Inscriptiones Aquileiae*, vol. I-III. Udine.
IBulg Mihailov, G. (ed) (1958-1997) *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae.* Serdica.

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STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA 10, 81-97
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Le milieu rural en Mésie Inférieure comme source de recrutement: l'évidence des inscriptions sur le lieux d'origine des militaires

Rural Lower Moesia as a source of recruitment: evidence from inscriptions about soldiers' origin

Lucreţiu Mihailescu-Bîrliba

Abstract: This article analyzes the evidences of epigraphic texts mentioning the rural territories of Moesia Inferior as a source of recruitment. We try to explain the high frequency of the mentions in the territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum, without neglecting the other rural milieus.

Key words: Moesia Inferior, rural milieu, Roman army, recruitment

Резюме: Статията анализира свидетелствата на епиграфски текстове, в които се споменават селските територии на Moesia Inferior като източник на рекрутиране на войници за римската армия. Авторът се опитва да обясни голямата честота на споменаванията на територията на Никополис ад Иструм, но не пренебрегва и другите селски средища.

L'étude des soldats issus du milieu rural de Mésie Inférieure a été favorisée par le nombre accru des diplômes militaires découverts ces dernières années. La plupart d'entre eux proviennent du marché des antiquités et, même si le lieu exact où ils ont été dénichés demeure bien sûr officiellement inconnu, le nom des soldats et des unités militaires indique leur possible découverte dans le milieu rural de la Mésie

Inférieure et l'origine probablement rurale elle aussi de leurs bénéficiaires. Même si ce type de sources reste toujours dans la catégorie du "possible" ou du probable, il est indispensable de les prendre en considération. La problématique soulevée est liée à la politique et aux périodes de recrutement dans cette province, à la mobilité des soldats et certainement, au retour des militaires dans leurs foyers ou à leur établissement en d'autres lieux après la *honesta missio*. Je vais analyser les textes épigraphiques qui mentionnent les lieux d'origine des militaires provenant du milieu rural de la province.

Les **Annexes 1** et **1.1** de la fin de l'article présente les principales cités dont le milieu rural a fourni des recrues pour l'armée romaine. Bien sûr, les informations provenant des sources peuvent tronquer la statistique générale. Par exemple, proviennent de Dimum 16 cas, la deuxième dans la statistique par une seule source attestant des soldats actifs dans les cohortes prétoriennes.[1] De même, les individus originaires du *uicus Agatapara*, *ciuitas Audecenses,* sont mentionnés dans un seul texte à Rome.[2] De toute façon, Nicopolis ad Istrum représente la cité sur laquelle les sources fournissent l'information la plus abondante. Il faut noter que toutes les sources datent du III^{e} siècle lorsque Nicopolis appartenait à la Mésie Inférieure.

Le territoire de Nicopolis ad Istrum a été discuté par L. Ruscu qui pense qu'il s'agissait d'un grand espace comparable à celui d'Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa en Dacie.[3] Il a été occupé par une population hétérogène.[4] Ce territoire a été retracé par L. Ruscu par suite de la découverte de plusieurs bornes de frontière : selon l'autrice, la Mésie Inférieure était divisée par la province de Thrace, le seul élément de liaison entre Novae et Sexaginta Prista étant le Danube. L'hypothèse semble séduisante mais rappelons que Nicopolis ad Istrum a été une *ciuitas stipendiaria* et non une *colonia*. Pourtant, l'ampleur du territoire rural de Nicopolis ne peut pas être ignorée. L'existence d'une *regio* est prouvée par une inscription de Rome[5] qui mentionne également un

1 CIL VI 2391.
2 CIL VI 2807.
3 Ruscu 2007, 226–229.
4 Ruscu 2017, 45–46; Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018, 121.
5 CIL VI 2933.

uicus. Il s'agit de l'épitaphe du marchand Aurelius Diza et de sa femme Putina. Le marchand est né d'après le texte, dans la région nicopolitaine, dans le *uicus Saprisara*. La pierre funéraire est érigée par un prétorien, Aurelius Herculanus. De toute façon, l'importance de la cité est visible juste après Trajan, sous Hadrien, lorsque la cité reçoit son nom.[6] Vu que la population de Mésie Inférieure et de Thrace est intensivement recrutée dans les cohortes prétoriennes à l'époque des Sévère, il n'est pas exclu qu'Aurelius Herculanus soit originaire de cette même région. D'ailleurs, la précision des noms géographiques renforce une telle hypothèse. En traitant des Nicopolitains dans les cohortes du prétoire et dans la flotte impériale à la fin du II^{e} siècle et au début du III^{e}, les sources sont comme on l'a vu, assez nombreuses. D'ailleurs, trois textes encore attestent des *uici* dans la *regio Nicopolitana*. Un diplôme militaire de 221 est accordé à M. Aurelius Bassus, originaire du *uicus Bres[---]*, du territoire de Nicopolis.[7] Le bénéficiaire d'une *constitutio* de 224 est le marin M. Aurelius Victor aussi dit Drubio, originaire du *uicus Dizerpera*. Le nom de son fils est M. Aurelius Valerius.[8] Enfin, le quatrième texte, un diplôme militaire trouvé en Bétique et daté de 217 à 225, atteste toujours un marin de la flotte de Ravenne, Quirinalis, fils de [---]ura, provenant des environs de Nicopolis ad Istrum, d'un village nomme [---]tsitsi.[9] Les premiers éditeurs pensaient que cette forme finale désignait le lieu d'origine de sa femme. Nous ne reprendrons pas cette discussion en détail mais rappelons néanmoins ses points essentiels. M. Roxan, même si elle est d'accord avec cette hypothèse, n'exclut pas celle où le toponyme peut désigner aussi le lieu d'origine du bénéficiaire.[10] À notre avis, P. Weiß a montré d'une manière convaincante que la forme finale [---]tsitsi peut être précédée du mot *uico*, lieu d'origine de Quirinalis.[11]

6 Voir Topalilov 2018, 340–349, qui fait la connexion (corectement à mon avis) entre cet évènment et la campagne d'Hadrien contre les Iazyges. Voir aussi Țentea & Matei-Popescu 2015, 109–130; Țentea *et al*. 2021, 289–293.

7 RMD IV, 317.

8 RMD V, 463.

9 Eck & Fernandéz 1991, 209–216.

10 RMD III, 201, *sub numero*.

11 Weiß 2000, 279–280. Pour la discussion en détail, voir Mihailescu-Bîrliba & Răileanu 2014, 196–197.

Nicopolis ad Istrum et très vraisemblablement son territoire ont constitué un réservoir de recrues sous les Sévère et peu après pour les cohortes prétoriennes. On rappelle ainsi L. Septimius Purula[12] et C. Valerius Bassus[13] libérés en 208, L. Marius Maximus qui a fini le service en 212,[14] M. Aurelius Artemidorus libéré en 222,[15] T. Flavius Mucianus mentionné dans un diplôme de 225,[16] C. Iulius Gaianus,[17] M. Aurelius Celsus,[18] C. Valerius[19] et M. Aurelius Marcus[20] devenus vétérans en 226, M. Aurelius Secundus bénéficiaire d'une *constitutio* de 228,[21] M. Aurelius Aulutralis libéré en 231,[22] P. Camurius [---] qui a terminé son service en 233,[23] Doles, fils de Marcus, libéré en 244,[24] M. Aurelius Mucianus vétéran en 248.[25] Un *laterculus* pour les prétoriens de Rome évoque encore cinq militaires originaires de Nicopolis ad Istrum – M. Aurelius Solanus, M. Aurelius Potitus, M. Aurelius Veranus et M. Aurelius Paternus.[26]

En ce qui concerne les marins originaires du milieu rural de Nicopolis ad Istrum, on observe que dans les diplômes militaires ils sont mentionnés avec leur nom de citoyen, suivi de la formule *cui et* et de leur nom thrace. Comme la plupart des bénéficiaires retournaient chez eux, la mention du *uicus* et du nom thrace pouvait leur servir de document d'authenticité en diverses situations. D'ailleurs, P. Weiß remarque avec raison que cette formule *cui et* n'est pas rencontrée jusqu'à cette époque-là.[27]

12 RGZM 49.
13 RGZM 50.
14 RMD V, 455.
15 Sharankov 2009, 58–61.
16 RMD IV, 310.
17 RGZM 54.
18 RGZM 58.
19 Eck, Pangerl 2019, 194–196.
20 CIL XVI 143.
21 RMD II, 132.
22 RGZM 61.
23 RGZM 62.
24 Narloch 2020, 282–284.
25 RMD V, 474.
26 Benefiel 2001, 221–232.
27 Weiß 2000, 279–280.



Fig. 1. Borne miliaire du Philippe l'Arabe où est mentionné le *territorium Abrittanorum* (ubi-erat-lupa.org/monument 20839)

Comment s'explique le nombre élevé de recrues dans le cas de Nicopolis ad Istrum ? Nous pensons qu'au-delà de l'ampleur de son territoire, la population y était assez nombreuse. Par conséquent, un nombre important de recrues est envoyé dans les flottes impériales et dans les cohortes prétoriennes. Cet état de fait est à mettre en relation avec la politique initiée par Septime Sévère qui a recruté parmi les prétoriens des gens originaires des provinces balkano-danubiennes. Les nombreuses occurrences de Nicopolis ad Istrum proviennent de l'époque des Sévère et regardent exclusivement les cohortes et flottes prétoriennes. Il est vrai que dans les cohortes prétoriennes, se trouvaient des éléments venus d'autres milieux villageois, attestés par des manifestations épigraphiques individuelles, surtout après la fin du service comme c'est le cas pour Aurelius Dalenis (Callatis),[28] Aurelius Marcus (Sacidava)[29] ou Flavius Decebalus et Aurelius Ianuarius (Novae).[30]

Exception faite de Nicopolis ad Istrum, les milieux ruraux d'Oescus, Novae, Marcianopolis et Noviodunum sont le plus souvent mentionnés. Il s'agit d'un côté, de cités assez importantes dont le milieu rural est assez peuplé – à Oescus et à Novae il y avait aussi les *canabae* des légions – et de l'autre, la situation économique assez

28 ISM III, 237.
29 ISM IV, 188.
30 ILB 82.

prospère comme c'est le cas de toutes les cités ci-dessus. Il faut aussi remarquer Abrittus qui a lui aussi un territoire assez large. L'organisation de la campagne d'Abrittus dans un *territorium* est prouvée par une borne miliaire datant du temps de Philippe l'Arabe[31] (fig. 1). Cela signifie que cette organisation date d'une période plus haute, probablement du II^e^ siècle ap. J.-C. P. Kovács pense que dans de pareils cas où il s'agit de petites communautés, le mot *territorium* peut être l'équivalent d'un *uicus militaris*.[32] Dans ce cas-ci, nous lui donnons raison. L'existence de structures villageoises indigènes est indiquée par la mention de deux *komai*, attestées dans deux textes rédigés en grec – l'un est bilingue – mais où les personnages sont des Thraces. De la première *komè* nommée Masciobria provient Aurelius Mucianus qui voue un autel pour Jupiter et Junon.[33] La deuxième *komè* n'a pas de nom mentionné dans le texte. On sait qu'Aurelius Roemetalkes avec son père Martialis, vétéran, ont effectué un don au village.[34] Il semble par conséquent que ce territoire était assz peuplé. Pourtant, il ne faut pas exclure comme cause de ces mentions assez nombreuses le hasard des découvertes car demeurent encore des territoires villageois aux populations denses et dont les occurrences des inscriptions manquent.

En guise de conclusion, comme lieu d'origine des militaires, les occurrences les plus nombreuses stipulent Nicopolis ad Istrum (voir aussi fig. 2 concernant la distribution des mentions). Elles datent de l'époque des Sévère et les militaires sont recrutés exclusivement dans les cohortes prétoriennes et les flottes impériales. Pourtant, les nombreux diplômes militaires dont le lieu de découverte n'est pas connu, mais qui proviennent de l'espace balkanique (beaucoup d'entre eux de Mésie Inférieure), peuvent changer cette statistique, au moins pour le I^er^ et pour le II^e^ siècles.

31 AE 1985, 765.
32 Kovács 2013, 144; il indique l'exemple de plusieurs *territoria* en Pannonie, Mésie et Dacie où étaient stationnées des troupes.
33 IGB II, 749.
34 IGB II, 750.

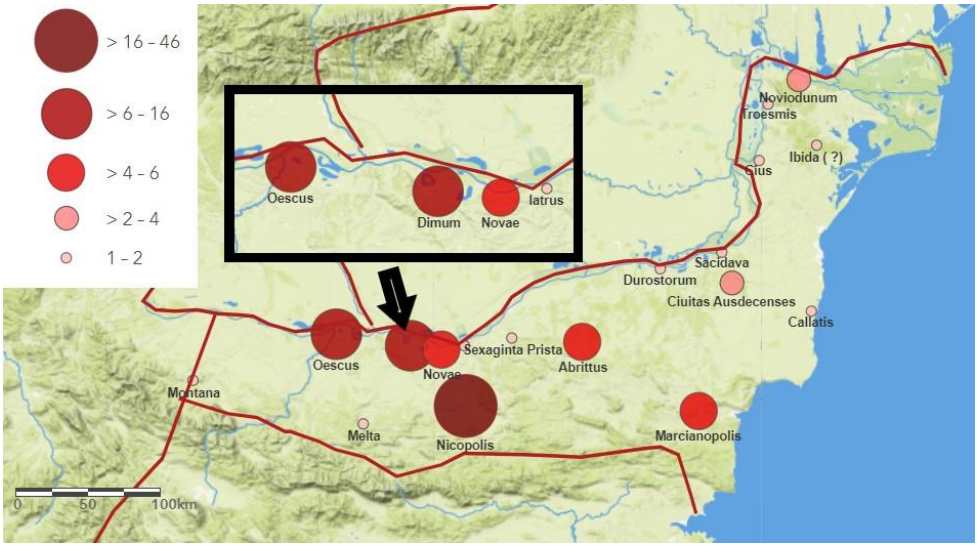


Fig. 2. La distribution des attestation attestant le milieu rural comme lieu d'origine des militaires recrutés en Mésie Inférieure (© Dr Ana Honcu)

AÉ - *Année Épigraphique*, Paris.

CIL – *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berlin.

IGB - *Inscriptiones Grecae in Bulgaria repertae*, Sofia.

ILB - *Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae*, Sofia.

ISM - *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris*, Bucarest-Paris.

RGZM - *Römische Militärdiplome und Entlassungsurkunden in der Sammlung des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums*, Mainz.

RMD - Roman Military *Diplomas*, London.

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Annexe 1. Les milieux ruraux d'origine des militaires
Note: Nicopolis ad Istrum sera dénommé simplement Nicopolis

No	Nom	Unité	Origine	Source	Datation
1	Romaesta Rescenti f..	*ala Gallorum et Thraecum Antiana*	Spiurus (Durostorum ?)	CIL XVI 3	18.06.54
2	Tarsa Duzi f.	flotte de Ravenne	Mihai Bravu (Ibida ?)	Chiriac *et al.* 2004, 265–269 + Petolescu & Popescu 2007, 147–149	5.04.71
3	Cotus Tharsae f.	*ala I Thracum Victrix*	Abrittus	RGZM 3	8.09.79
4	Durises Bithi f.	*cohors IV Thracum*	Abrittus	CIL XVI 158	14/30.01.80
5	Gorius Stibi f.	*cohors Musulamiorum*	milieu rural de Nicopolis ou de Novae	AE 1939, 126	7.11.88
6	Cardentes Bithicenthi f.	*ala ueterana Gallica*	Disdiv[---] (?)	Eck & Pangerl 2006, 215–218	12.05.91
7	Seuthes	*ala ueterana Gallica*	Gradište (Oescus ?)	RMD I, 5	12.05.91
8	M.Antonius Rufus	*cohors II Gallorum*	*Abrettenus*	ISM IV, 2	14.08.99
9	Tarsa Tarsae f.	*coh. I Tyriorum sagittariorum*	milieu rural de Novae	RGZM 10	13.05.105
10	G. Valerius Herculanus	vétéran, *ala II Arauacorum*	*uicus Rami[---]* (Cius ?)	ISM V, 117	II^{e} s.
11	Mucatralis Sitae	*cohors Flauia Bessorum*	milieu rural d'Oescus	ILB 64	II^{e} s.
12	M.. Ulpius Valerius	*eq. sing.*	Oescus (probablement milieu rural)	RMD III, 158	8.04.133
13	Clagissa Clagissae f.	*cohors II Mattiacorum*	milieu rural de Nicopolis ou de Novae	CIL XVI 83	28.02.138
14	T. Flavius Martialis	vétéran, *eq. sing.*	Oescus (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 31146	138

15	P. Aelius Naso	vétéran, *eq. sing.*	Oescus probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 31146	138
16	Bithus Solae f.	*numerus Illyricorum*	Palamartsa (Abrittus ?)	RMD I, 39	13.02.140
17	[---] Dolati f.	flotte impériale	milieu rural de Novae	RMD II, 106	6.10.142
18	Siasis Decinaei f.	*cohors III Brittonum*	Caecom (?) *ex Moesia*	RGZM 31	20.01.151
19	Anonyme	-	nord de la province	Chiriac *et al.* 2006, 383–390	156
20	T. Valerius Marcianus	*legio V Macedonica*	*canabae Troesmensium*	ISM V, 160	170
21	G. Iulius Martialis	vétéran, *leg. VII Claudia*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL III 14507	195
22	Aurelius Metrodorus	vétéran, *leg. VII Claudia*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL III 14507	195
23	M. Aurelius Timotheus	vétéran, *leg. VII Claudia*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL III 14507	195
24	C. Valerius Filiscus	vétéran, *leg. VII Claudia*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL III 14507	195
25	C. Valerius Marcus	*cohors II praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RGZM 52	7.01.198
26	C. Iulius Iulianus	flotte de Ravenne	Noviodunum (probablement milieu rural)	RMD V, 449	20.12.202
27	Anonyme	cohorte prétorienne	milieu rural de Iatrus	RMD IV, 305	203-207
28	Valens Cai f.	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32523	204
29	L. Septimius Purula	*cohors I praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RGZM 49	22.01.208
30	C. Valerius Bassus	*cohors IX praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RGZM 50	22.01.208
31	M. Aurelius Martialis	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32640	209-210

32	M. Aurelius Clementinus	prétorien	Marcianopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32640	209-210
33	L. Marius Maximus	*cohors VI praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RMD V, 455	212
34	M. Aurelius Solanus	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	Benefiel 2001, 221–232	217-225
35	M. Aurelius Potitus	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	Benefiel 2001, 221–232	217-225
36	M. Aurelius Veranus	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	Benefiel 2001, 221–232	217-225
37	M. Aurelius Paternus	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	Benefiel 2001, 221–232	217-225
38	M. Aurelius Vitalis	prétorien	Durostorum	Benefiel 2001, 221–232	217-225
39	[---]urae f. Quirinalis	flotte de Ravenne	*uicus [---]tsitsis* (Nicopolis)	RMD III 201a	217-225
40	C. Valerius Gaianus	*cohors VI praet.*	Nicopolis	RGZM 54	7.01.218
41	M. Aurelius Bassus cui et [---]	flotte de Ravenne	*uicus Bres[---]* (Nicopolis)	RMD IV, 317	221
42	M. Aurelius Artemidorus	*cohors VII praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	Sharankov 2009, 58–61	7.01.222
43	[---] Mucatralis f.	*eq. sing. Aug.*	*uicus Thuiuri[---] ex Moesia Inferiore* (?)	RMD V, 462	7.01.223
44	C. Valerius Drigiti f. Valens	*eq. sing.*	*ex Moesia inferiore*	RGZM 55	7.01.223
45	M. Aurelius Victor cui et Drubio	flotte de Ravenne	*uicus Dizerpera* (Nicopolis)	RMD V, 463	224
46	Flavius Mucianus	*cohors IX praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RMD IV, 310	7.01.225
47	M. Aurelius Statianus, cui et Apta	flotte de Ravenne	*uicus Zinesdina Maior* (Nicopolis)	RMD IV, 311	18.12.225

48	M. Aurelius Celsus	*cohors III praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RGZM 58	7.01.226
49	C. Valerius	*cohors VII prae/*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	Eck & Pangerl 2019, 194–196	7.01.226
50	C. Valerius Gaius	*cohors IX praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RMD V, 467	7.01.227
51	M. Aurelius Bithus	*cohors I praet.*	Marcianopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RMD V, 469	7.01.230
52	Anonyme	-	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	Eck & Pangerl 2019, 201–202	7.01.230
53	M. Aurelius Aulutralis	*cohors V praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RGZM 61	7.01.231
54	Fl. Iulius Iulianus	*eq. sing.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RMD V, 471a	7.01.232
55	P. Camurius Crescens	*cohors V praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RGZM 62	7.01.233
56	Anonyme	flotte impériale	*uicus [---]* (zone de Marcianopolis)	Eck & Pangerl 2014, 339–340	Héliogabale-Alexandre Sévère
57	[---] cui et Zur[---]	flotte impériale	*uicus Calmouia* (?)	Eck & Pangerl 2014, 340–341	Héliogabale-Alexandre Sévère
58	Anonyme	flotte impériale	*uico [---] ex Moesia Inferiore*	Eck & Pangerl 2014, 342–343	222-235
59	Flavius Decebalus	vétéran, *leg. I Italicae*	milieu rural de Novae	ILB 82	222-235
60	Aurelius Ianuarius	vétéran, *leg. I Italicae*	milieu rural de Novae	ILB 82	222-235
61	M. Aurelius Marcus	*cohors X praet.*	milieu rural de Nicopolis	CIL XVI 143	7.01.226
62	Aurelius Diophanes	*ex praetoriano*	milieu rural de Nicopolis	ILB 438	227

63	M. Aurelius Secundus	*cohors I praet.*	milieu rural de Nicopolis	RMD II, 132	25.12.228
64	Aurelius Mai[---]	*cohors VI praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
65	Sulpicius [---]	*cohors V praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
66	Aurelius[---]	*cohors III praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
67	Aurelius M[---]	*cohors VII praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
68	Aurelius P[---]	*cohors V praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
69	Iulius [---]	*cohors praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
70	Aurelius [---]	*cohors praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
71	Aurelius[---]	*cohors praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
72	Anonyme	*cohors praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
73	Anonyme	*cohors praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
74	Anonyme	*cohors praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
75	Anonyme	*cohors IV praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
76	Anonyme	*cohors III siue IV praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
77	[---]rinus	*cohors IX praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
78	[--- Satu]rninus	*cohors III siue IV praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
79	Iulius [---]	*cohors V siue VI, VII, VIII. IX praet.*	*regio Dimesis*	CIL VI 2391	241
80	Anonyme	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 3786	243
81	Marcus, fils de Doles	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	Narloch 2020, 282–284	244
82	M. Aurelius Mucianus	*cohors IX praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	RMD V, 474	7.01.248
83	C. Iulius [---]	*cohors I praet.*	Oescus (probablement milieu rural)	RMD V, 475	7.01.248

84	M. Aurelius Bassus	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32627	après 212
85	M. Ingenuuius Super	prétorien	Noviodunum (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32627	après 212
86	M. Aurelius Aquilinus	prétorien	Noviodunum (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32627	après 212
87	Valerius Herculanus	*eq. sing.*	*natione Moesiae Inferioris*	CIL VI 3292	III^{e} s.
88	Anonyme	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 2399	III^{e} s.
89	Anonyme	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 2399	III^{e} s.
90	Anonyme	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 2399	III^{e} s.
91	Anonyme	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32912	III^{e} s.
92	Anonyme	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32912	III^{e} s.
93	Anonyme	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32912	III^{e} s.
94	Flavius Valens	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32623	III^{e} s.
95	[---] Maximus	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32623	III^{e} s.
96	C. Iulius Valens	prétorien	Oescus (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32624	III^{e} s.
97	Aurelius Capitolinus	prétorien	Oescus (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32624	III^{e} s.
98	P. Aelius Caius	prétorien	Oescus (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32624	III^{e} s.
99	[---] Alexander	prétorien	Oescus (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32624	III^{e} s.

100	C. Valerius Sabinianus	prétorien	Oescus (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32624	III^e s.
101	M. Aurelius Provincialis	prétorien	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 32624	III^e s.
102	Flavius Mucianus	*cohors V praet.*	Nicopolis (probablement milieu rural)	AE 1980, 141	III^e s.
103	Valerius Victorinus	*cohors V praet.*	Oescus (probablement milieu rural)	CIL VI 2760	III^e s.
104	Aurelius Cotus	vétéran, *ala II Arauacorum*	milieu rural de Sexaginta Prista	AE 1940, 34	III^e s.
105	Aurelius Mucco	*cohors X praet.*	*uicus Pereprus* (Melta)	CIL VI 2736	III^e s.
106	Flavius Proclianus	*cohors III praet.*	*uicus Agatapara (ciuitas Ausdecenses)*	CIL VI 2807	III^e s.
107	Claudius Mucianus	*cohors V praet.*	*uicus Agatapara (ciuitas Ausdecenses)*	CIL VI 2807	III^e s.
108	Aurelius Valerianus	*cohors V praet.*	*uicus Agatapara (ciuitas Ausdecenses)*	CIL VI 2807	III^e s.
109	Valerius Maximus	*cohors V praet.*	*uicus Agatapara (ciuitas Ausdecenses)*	CIL VI 2807	III^e s.
110	Aurelius Valeriuns	*cohors III praet.*	*uicus [---], natione Mesacus*	CIL VI 2818	III^e s.
111	Aurelius Dalenis	ex-prétorien	*uicus Amlaidina* (Callatis)	ISM III, 237	III^e s.
112	Aurelius Marcus	ex-prétorien	probablement Sacidava	ISM IV, 188	III^e s.
113	Aurelius Longinus	prétorien	milieu rural d'Oescus ?	ILB 171	III^e s.
114	Valerius Rufus	vétéran	*uicus Vorouum Minor* (Montana ?)	Conrad 2004, 260	III^e s.
115	Diurdanus Decibali f.	vétéran	probablement Sacidava	ISM IV, 189	III^e s.
116	Aurelius Pirurus	*ala* inconnue	milieu rural de Melta	ILB 259	III^e s.
117	Aurelius Drigissa	vétéran	milieu rural de Novae	ILB 133	après 212
118	M. Aurelius Mucianus	vétéran, *leg. I Italicae*	milieu rural de Novae	ILB 430	après 212

119	Aurelius Dizze	vétéran, *leg. I Italicae*	milieu rural de Nicopolis	ILB 430	après 212
120	Aurelius Clarianus	*leg. I Adiutrix*	*regio Marcianopolitanorum*	CIL V 892	après 212
121	Mucianus	*legio*	Oescus	ILB 155	III^{e} s.
122	Valerius Longinianus	*leg. XI Claudia*	*castellum Abritanorum*	CIL V 942	III^{e} s.
123	Anonymes	prétoriens	*ex regione Marcianopolitanorum*	CIL VI 32583	III^{e} s.

Annexe 2. La situation quantitative concernant l'origine rurale des militaires

Cité	**Nombre d'occurrences**
Nicopolis	46 ou 48 (10 ou 12 textes proviennent certainement du milieu rural nicopolitain)
Dimum	16
Oescus	15 (4 textes proviennent certainement du milieu rural d'Oescus)
Inconnue	8 (6 textes proviennent certainement d'un milieu rural)
Marcianopolis	6 (3 textes proviennent certainement du milieu rural de Marcianopolis)
Novae	5 ou 6
Abrittus	5
Ciuitas Ausdecenses	4
Noviodunum	3
Durostorum	2
Melta	2
Sacidava	2
Troesmis	1
Ibida (?)	1
Montana	1
Iatrus	1
Cius	1
Sexaginta Prista	1
Callatis	1

STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA 10, 98-148
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Latin verse inscriptions from the Limes of Moesia inferior*

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Abstract: Verse inscriptions spread along the Roman *limes* mainly with the Roman army, but in each province this happens with specific dynamics and at a different pace. A specific trait which distinguishes Moesia inferior from the other provinces is that Latin verse inscriptions appear only at the end of the second / beginning of the third century. This paper provides an overview of the production of Latin verse inscriptions in the settlements on the *limes* as well as in the immediate hinterland of the province, and studies the factors and forces that contribute to the spread of an epigraphic poetic habit. The use of different rhythms and meters are analysed along with the most common themes, which are treated in the poems. Among these, the address to the wayfarer seems to be very popular, especially among the veterans in the hinterland. The distribution of the verse inscriptions and their metres and topics is not casual but follows the specific patterns of the settlements. This allows us to identify specific fingerprints in defined micro-contexts. Two factors in particular seem to have favoured the diffusion of verse inscriptions in this region: the new cultural habits of the veterans who had served in Rome and the strong cultural influence of Tomis.

Keywords: *Carmina epigraphica*, Moesia inferior, *limes*, Roman army

* This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No. 832874 – MAPPOLA). Its final stages received support from the Spanish Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación under the project RETHINKING. Repensando la Antigüedad Romana: enfoques inclusivos y tratamientos innovadores de la poesía epigráfica latina (Ref. PID2022-141426NB-I00). A preliminary version of this paper was presented by Chiara Cenati on the occasion of the 2023 Convegno della Romanità Orientale at Accademia di Romania in Rome and at the University of Warsaw in 2024. Comments and feedback from the audience were gratefully received. We are especially grateful to Sven Conrad, Florian Matei-Popescu and Agnieszka Tomas for their precious advice. Introduction, section 1 and section 3 are single-authored by C. Cenati. All epigraphic evidence is compiled in the Appendix (Section 4) at the end, T-references in the sections 1 and 2 point to that part of the paper.

Резюме: Стихотворните надписи се разпространяват по римския лимес заедно с римската армия, но във всяка провинция това се случва със специфична динамика и с различно темпо. Специфична черта, която отличава Moesia inferior от останалите провинции, е, че стихотворните надписи се появяват едва в края на II/началото на III в. В настоящата статия е направен преглед на създаването на стихотворни надписи в селищата по лимеса, както и в непосредствения хинтерланд на провинцията, и са изследвани факторите и силите, които допринасят за разпространението на поезията. Анализира се използването на различни ритми и метруми, както и най-често срещаните теми, които се третират в стихотворенията. Сред тях обръщението към пътешественика изглежда е много популярно, особено сред ветераните във вътрешността на страната. Разпределението на стихотворните надписи и техните метруми и теми не е случайно, а следва специфичните закономерности на селищата. Това ни позволява да идентифицираме специфични отпечатъци в определени микроконтексти. Изглежда, че два фактора са благоприятствали разпространението на стихотворните надписи в този регион: новите културни навици на ветераните, които са служили в Рим, и силното културно влияние на Томи.

Introduction

The present paper has two principal aims: first, it provides an overview of the production of Latin verse inscriptions along the Lower Danube in the Roman province of Moesia inferior, and secondly, it studies the underlying factors and driving forces that contributed to the spread of a poetic habit in this region.

A prime unifying factor is, of course, the presence of the Roman army in a territory that was exposed to a large segment of the *limes* and that, initially, hosted two, and then, subsequently, three legions in addition to several auxiliary units and the fleet.[1] There are numerous other aspects to be considered, though. One aspect in particular that deserves special attention is the range of social dynamics as well as thematic and formal poetic clusters that contribute to a varied spread of the poetic habit along the Danube, both in the main urban centres that formed after the departure of military units and in the hinterland of the province, where the presence of native Thracians is more visible in the various villages and smaller settlements. A second aspect that merits attention is the relatively late and scattered appearance of an epigraphic poetic production in the province, especially when compared to the patterns observed in other border cities on the Rhine

[1] On the army in Moesia inferior see Matei-Popescu 2010.

and on the Middle Danube, like Viminacium or Carnuntum. We explore some of the possible reasons behind this.

We exclude from the present paper, however, the major cities that were situated by the Black Sea shore, where the dynamics that underlie the spread of epigraphy in verse are altogether different, not least due to the substantial impact and influence of the Greek and Hellenistic epigrammatic tradition.[2] Among these cities, especially Tomis must be recognised as an exception from the dynamics palpable in other parts of the region, and it thus deserves separate treatment. As a Roman city, Tomis shared a greater number of similarities with the Trajanic foundations on the Thracian Black Sea coast than with the Hellenistic cities of Moesia inferior, where Roman citizens were separated by the Greek population.[3] Tomis was also the seat of the governor,[4] and its central role in the province is reflected in the formation of one of the richest dossier of verse inscriptions in the ancient world, in which it is possible to trace a great range of different traditions. Verse inscriptions from Tomis are mainly in Greek, but also in Latin and date from the Hellenistic period to Late Antiquity. These inscriptions represent all social strata from ordinary people to gladiators[5] to members of the provincial elite and soldiers at the service of the governor, as well as to veterans who settled in the countryside.[6]

As one of the main centres of the Pontic trade network, Tomis represented a crossroad of people of different origin. Communities formed by immigrants from the Eastern provinces, Pontus et Bithynia in the first place, are nevertheless more consistent and are also captured in verse inscriptions.[7] The origin of the city and its special status are highlighted in the verses, which are currently the subject of several studies in the context of the ERC-funded project MAPPOLA.[8]

[2] See Peek 1964; Nollé Oller Guzmán 2016.
[3] Buzoianu & Bărbulescu 2012.
[4] See Piso 2014 on the seat of the provincial governor.
[5] On the amphitheatre of Tomis see Streinu 2015/2016, 177–184 and Streinu 2021.
[6] Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018, 362.
[7] Kruschwitz 2023.
[8] Autopsies of all verse inscriptions from Tomis have been performed by the team MAPPOLA in September 2021. On Greek verse inscriptions see Kruschwitz 2023. On some Latin verse inscriptions from Tomis see Cenati 2024.

1. Geographical distribution of the epigraphic evidence and historical analysis

Following the lower course of the Danube, we encounter several military fortresses and forts along the *limes*, some of which gradually turn into civil settlements after the departure of the army.

Three verse inscriptions (**T1–3**) come from one of these centres, Oescus, the headquarters of the legio V Macedonica perhaps until the end of the Dacian war in A. D. 107, or, arguably, only until A. D. 103,[9] subsequently turned into a *colonia*. All three of these inscriptions date to the urban phase of Oescus in the third and fourth century, when the city, part of the province of Dacia ripensis, hosted once again the legion V Macedonica, and they solely document the presence of civilians in this settlement. Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that the habit of composing verses was started as early in the first century by the Italic soldiers serving and then settling there.[10] **T1** is not *stricto sensu* a verse inscription, but exhibits rhythmical sequences and rhetorical elements (see below). It refers to two people who died a violent death in Oescus, Sex. Vibius Valens and Valerius Ingenuus. A veteran, C. Vibius Fronto, from Brixia, had settled here in the first century (CIL III 12348 = ILBulg 51 = Conrad 2004, no. 482). The two Vibii of this inscription might therefore descend from former soldiers of Italic origin. The text no. **T2**, the remains of a marble column with funerary verse inscription, arguably representing a cenotaph, clearly refers to the noble birth of the deceased (*generosa proles*),[11] who, according to P. Cugusi, had died far away from his motherland. Even more fragmentary is **T3**, a funerary monument for a child, whose name was probably Iulianus. In both cases, the literary style of what remains of the text hints to the high social position of the families who commissioned the epigraphic poem (see below).

[9] The year 107 is favoured by Strobel 1984, 189–190; an argument for 103 was made by Matei-Popescu 2010, 47. Kabakchieva 2014, 184, followed by Aparaschivei 2010, 83 argues in favour of a proclamation of the colony in A. D. 106.

[10] See Stoev 2015 on the veterans settling in Oescus.

[11] For the same motive see CLEMoes 23 from Ratiaria, which is dated to the same period.

There is one further inscription that must be attributed to Oescus. It was discovered in Nikopol, however, used as *spolia*, in the same way that other monuments were transported there during the Ottoman period.[12] The item in question is a sarcophagus with a long funerary poem dedicated by one Fronto, *dispensator Augustorum nostrorum Moesiae inferioris*, to his deceased wife Aelia (**T4**). Name and status of Fronto are clearly expressed in the initial prose part of the inscription, whereas the wife is only mentioned in the poem, with no further biographical information, but with an array of common poetic *topoi*.

Two Latin verse inscriptions, both dated to the third century, come from the legionary fortress of the legio I Italica in Novae (**T5** and **T6**).[13] One of them (**T5**) was set up by a high-ranking officer of the legion. It is an *ex voto* on a statue base[14] by one C. Baienius Ianuarius, *primus pilus* from Celeia, dedicated to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Depulsor, whose cult was widespread in Noricum and Pannonia.[15] The monument is inscribed on three of its sides, but only side C, detailing the military career of Baienus from the *probatio*, to the centurionate and finally to the primipilate is written in hexameters.[16] The inscription **T6**, in turn, a Greek-Latin bilingual funerary stele does not show any connection between the mentioned characters and the army. At the top, the stele displays portraits of a mother and her young son, buried jointly by one Kyzikios, who might be the father, and one Secunda. The name

[12] Tomas 2016, 179. The piece has erroneously been attributed to Nicopolis in CLEMoes 26 and Cugusi 2007, 105–106. On the reuse of other monuments from Oescus in Nikopol s. Tomas 2016, 11.

[13] From Novae also three Greek verse inscriptions are known. A fragmentary poem in hexameters seems to be addressed to an emperor, perhaps Hadrian (IGLNovae 175). One fragmentary funerary epigramme, dated to the late second century is dedicated to a Euchrotis (IGLNovae 181), while a funerary poem in elegiac couplets commemorates the child Drakontis and her siblings in the third century (IGBulg II 741 = IGLNovae 182).

[14] The designation of the monument as an *ara* in the verses must be a poetic licence (see CLEMoes 36 and Piso 2017).

[15] See Kolendo 1968, especially on the meaning of the cult of Iuppiter Depulsor on the *limes*.

[16] For an interpretation see Piso 2017.

of the dedicator and the language might suggest a (potential) origin of these individuals from Asia minor.

Not far from Novae, in Iatrus, a *castellum* in Late Antiquity,[17] a funerary monument was found, whose text ends in the abbreviated statement *opto sit tibi terra levis*.[18] The lower part of a further funerary inscription for a former legionary *primus pilus* in Sexaginta Prista, where auxiliary units were stationed, but legionary soldiers from the neighboring legions were also present, preserves the same formula.[19] These two documents can clearly not be considered as verse inscriptions and have therefore not been included in the Appendix, but they show the circulation and use of one of the most common poetic clauses. Similar situations in other areas of the *limes* will be respectively discussed within this paragraph.

Moving further eastwards along the Danube, the next verse inscription (**T7**) was discovered in Transmarisca, a Roman fort where the presence of the *cohors I Thracum Syriaca equitata* is attested for the second century,[20] and where veterans settled after their active service.[21] As all inscriptions from Transmarisca are connected to the army,[22] it is, thus, possible that the individual mentioned in this inscription, one Valeria, who died at the age of thirty, was the wife of a soldier. Only one inscription comes from the fortress of Durostorum, home to the legio XI Claudia from the end of the Dacian war until the end of the third century (**T8**).[23] Unfortunately, the piece is very fragmentary, but at least it preserves the *cognomen* of a deceased legionary centurion called Valens.

[17] Matei-Popescu 2010, 238.

[18] ILBulg 342: *- - - - - - / [- - - co/]niug[i - - -] / [- - -]ille PV[- - -] / [- - -]imo ne[- - -] / [- - -]co nep(oti?) [- - -] / mil(iti) gener[o - - -] / Gaius Max[imus Mart]/ialis fi[lii ei]/s b(ene) m(eritis) [p(osuerunt)] / o(pto) s(it) [t(ibi)] / t(erra) [l(evis)].* Cf. Tomas 2016, 175.

[19] AE 1957, 284: *- - - - - - /erne Au[rel(io)] / Saturnino e/x p(rimo) p(ilo) o(rnato) o(rnamentis) vix(it) ann(is) / LI et Flavia co/niu(n)x eius {eius ei} / vixit annis / XXX ERAX / AGLAIS eo/rum posu/it s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis).*

[20] Matei-Popescu 2010, 232–235.

[21] AE 1939, 101, 102; AE 2004, 1265.

[22] CIL III 6151; AE 1939, 101; AE 2011, 1134.

[23] Matei-Popescu 2010, 276.

Sacidava has yielded two verse inscriptions. The link of this settlement with the army is very strong, as it was the auxiliary fort of the *cohors I Cilicum milliaria equitata sagittariorum* before A. D. 134 to the end of the third century.[24] Before A. D. 114, the *cohors IV Gallorum* was stationed here.[25] Yet, neither of the verse inscriptions found there can unambiguously be connected with these auxiliary units, since they date to a later period. Valerius Onesimus of **T9** had died in Pannonia Valeria, where he probably was a commanding officer in the rank of a centurion to divisions formed by soldiers detached from the legions I and II Adiutrix, both stationed in Valeria province.[26] He had previously served in the legio II Herculia[27] which was based in Troesmis after A. D. 286, and where he had probably started his *militia*. The second inscription from Sacidava (**T10**) is preserved only with its lower part where the name of the wife of the deceased as well as those of their children are preserved. This could be the funerary monument of either a soldier or a civilian.

The territory of Capidava, close to Sacidava, a fort of the *cohors I Ubiorum* first and of the *I Germanorum* later,[28] was under the control of the legio XI Claudia. Its position was favourable to commerce, which led to the prosperity of the zone and to the enstablishment of rural *villae*.[29] In Capidava a very simple verse inscription was found (**T11**). It is dedicated by Aurelius Gaius[30] to his deceased wife. Aurelius Gaius might have been a soldier, who, as it often happens in the case of verse inscriptions, chose not to declare his link to the army. Similarly to the two texts from Sacidava, the inscription from Capidava, too, does not

[24] Matei-Popescu 2010, 201–205.
[25] Matei Popescu 2010, 210–212.
[26] Brennan 1979, 166.
[27] The expression *militiam colere* would be a paraphrase used as synonym for *militavit* (Brennan 1979, 163).
[28] Matei-Popescu 2010, 242–243.
[29] For one *villa* attested epigraphically see CIL III 13737 = IScM V 30: *Dis Manibus / Cocceius Vitales vix{s}it / annis L et Coc(ceia) Iulia co/niunx{s} eius vix{s}it annis / XL obiti ad villam suam Coc/ceius Clemens et Coc(eius) He/lius fili(i) patri et matri be/ne merentibus titulum / posuerunt*; and 14214,20 = IScM V 29: *Dis / Manibus / Coc(ceius) (H)elius pos(uit) / vivo suo sibi / et Titi(a)e Matri/n(a)e co(n)iugi su(a)e / bene merenti qu/(a)e vixit ann(os) XXX / obita ad vil(l)a(m) / sua(m) titulum po/suit*.
[30] In CLEMoes AURGAIS is interpreted as a Gothic name.

exhibit a complete poem, but a text characterised by expansive poetic segments at its beginning and the end. The distinction between verse inscriptions and prose texts is often just as blurry as that, and hard boundaries do not exist. It is therefore also worth mentioning that poetic traces, though not a proper poem, can be observed in a further funerary inscription from Capidava in an abbreviated closing line *o(pto) s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis)*.[31]

Judging by the language, the only verse inscription from Troesmis ought to be dated to the third century (**T12**). The very simple text of this funerary inscription displays common metrical formulae that unconventionally precede the invocation of the Spirits of the Departed. The part that contains the information about the people involved in the creation of the monument is lost. It is more likely, however, that these individuals were civilians rather than soldiers, as Troesmis became a *municipium* under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus[32] after the legio V Macedonica, stationed there for 50 years and based in Oescus before that, had been moved to Potaissa, Dacia Porolissensis.

The military role of Noviodunum, headquarters of the Danubian fleet Flavia Moesica, on the other hand, is perfectly visible in the only Latin verse inscription from this centre, dedicated by the prefect of the fleet, one Postumus, to two *alumni praefecti,* Krystallus and Achelous, in the third century (**T13**).[33] The exact identity of the prefect is unknown, but the two *alumni* were not originally from Noviodunum. The name of the first *alumnus*, Krystallus, attested only in this inscription, does not help to solve the puzzle about his birthplace, which has been identified with Hispania or with Moesia inferior, according to different restitutions of the name of a river, partially lost in the lacuna.[34] The second *alumnus* bears the more common name

[31] IScM V 38: *D(is) M(anibus) / F[- - -]/e mag(ister?) de/dicante / co(n)iuge Val(eria) / Casta et n/ati et fra/tres / posueru/nt / o(pto) s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis).*
[32] Vd. the *lex Troesmensium* in Eck 2016.
[33] On this inscription see also Massaro 2023, 50, no. 27. A contemporary Greek funerary verse inscription, found in Tulcea, close to Noviodunum, is dedicated by Timotheos from Teos to a friend from the same city (IScM V 288 = SEG 25, 804 = AE 2013, 1446).
[34] Cf. *I[b]e[r]ic(um)* (Barnea 1975) and *I[s]t[r]ic(um)* suggested by Cugusi 1995a and by the same author in CLEMoes 40. None of these readings, however, is compatible with

Achelous, the name of a river; in this case a birthplace by Tyana in the province of Cappadocia seems to be clear.

If we move from the river to the hinterland of the province, we observe a more rural landscape with few major cities which are not connected to the army, as Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis, as well as several small rural settlements and *villae*,[35] whose inhabitants also included the personnel and the slaves employed there. In this part of the province, military units controlled the Haemus passes as well as mining districts and quarries. A widespread phenomenon in the hinterland of Moesia inferior and Thrace was the recruiting of local population mostly for auxiliary units and legions. These soldiers used to return to their places of origin at the end of the service. Therefore, part of the population of these rural settlements was formed by veterans who were born in the province and had properties in the countryside.[36] Communities of *veterani consistentes*, together with *cives Romani*, but also with Thracian speaking populations, such as the *Bessi*, were also common in the countryside of Moesia inferior,[37] as legionary veterans stayed in the province where they had served for long.

Flying over the province from East to West, we encounter first verse inscriptions in Montana and in its large territory. Montana was a mining and quarrying area. The army was present there to secure the mining activities and consisted at first of auxiliary units, which were then replaced by *vexillationes* of the legions I Italica from Novae and XI Claudia from Durostorum.[38]

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the traces of letters on the stone, according to the autopsy of the inscription by C. Cenati and F. Matei-Popescu (February 2024). A birthplace in the Castra Martis, suggested by Donati 1987, 128–129 has to be discarded as well. The several unclear parts of this inscription will be addressed in a forthcoming new edition by C. Cenati and F. Matei-Popescu.

[35] See for example AE 2004, 1281 (*[- - -] Fl(avio) R[omano] / dec(urioni) ter(r)i(torii) A[eg(yssensis) v(ixit) ann(os)] / XL s(upra) s(cript)i Ati[lianus] / dum vive[bat vic]o / VRBIIN[- - -] / obitu[s ad villam s(uam)] / f(ieri) i(ussit) IM[- - -] / ses[quiplicarius]*) from Aegyssus where the expressions *obitus* / *obita ad villam suam* can be found.

[36] Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018, 301.

[37] Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018, 299–301. On the careers of the descendants of veterans see Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018, 313–315.

[38] On Montana see Velkov 1980; Velkov 1987 and Rankov 1983.

The first verse inscription in our dossier was written on a famous marble altar which now is lost. Mallia Aemiliana (**T14**), who had set up the monument, was of Italic origin, as most of the people who dedicated monuments in the sanctuary of Diana and Apollo in Montana were. The presence of Mallia in particular, has to be linked to the revenues deriving from the exploitation of mines and quarries, in which the family of Mallia must have been involved privately. Mallia belongs to a family who had access to public distributions of grain in Rome, or she might have paid the monuments using the profits made from the bran that individuals who benefitted from the grain benefitting distribution used to sell.[39]

Furthermore, a dedication to Apollo and Diana in Montana, written in verse, has been set up by the governor of Thracia, Appius Claudius Martialis, together with his wife and children, in A. D. 161 (**T15**).[40] The style as well as the use of Phalaecian hendecasyllables in this text place it closer to an erudite literary production (see below).

The verse inscriptions from the territory that surrounds Montana, in turn, are completely different in nature. Whereas in Montana we find in general inscriptions dedicated by officers of the Roman army who were quite certainly coming from all over the empire, in its surroundings we experience a completely different scenario. The number of verse inscriptions concentrated between Montana and present-day Vratsa is comparatively, and perhaps surprisingly, high (**T16–20**). With the only exception of **T19**, all inscriptions can be linked with certainty to soldiers of Thracian origin who had returned to their native places at the end of their military service. Whereas the praetorian soldier Aurelius Longinus (**T16**), who had served in the capital of the empire, has a common Roman name, his parents, to whom the inscription is dedicated, have Thracian names: the father is called Scaris, son of Busila[41] and the mother's name is Sura, daughter of Pyrula. Another inscription from the same location of **T16**, Chomakovtsi, dedicated by a veteran to himself and his wife, ends with the clause *sit*

[39] On the first interpretation see Zaccaria 2015, 532–534.
[40] On the dating see Matei-Popescu 2010, 88 and Zaccaria 2015, 538.
[41] On the name Scaris cf. Dana 2014, 306, on the name Busila Dana 2014, 74.

tibi terra levis in abbreviation.[42] In **T17**, we have the veteran Valerius Tzita who was commonly called in the army by his 'Roman' name Vitalis. The unit he served is not mentioned in the inscription, and the same is true for the units of his two sons, *milites* both of them. Unlike their father, the three sons carry Roman names, Florentinus, Vitalis, and Laurentius. **T18** runs on a funerary monument dedicated by one Valerius Rufus to his wife Aurelia, daughter of Zuraturmes.[43] Also the deceased wife of Aelius Firmus (**T19**), veteran of the legion XI Claudia, may have had a Thracian name, now lost in the lacuna.

A pattern which we observe here is, in fact, that a first generation of Thracians entered in contact with the Latin language and culture, perhaps after the service in the legions and in Rome as praetorians, and adopted the use of composing verses. A general trend is the gradual inclusion in the Roman system, which is also visible in the changes in the onomastics throughout the generations (the parents wear Thracian names, while their children have Roman names). The possibility to reconstruct an entire family's history, as well as the different degrees of contact with Roman culture, is particularly striking in **T20**, where the dedicant, Maximus, must be a Thracian native, because he does not exhibit the *tria nomina*, but an idionymic followed by a patronymic, exactly as his father Marcus and his grandfather Crispinus do. The name of his mother is also formed by an idionymic and a patronymic, but in this case the grandfather has a Thracian name, Ziles.[44] By contrast, the wife, Sempronia Antonia, shows a Roman name. The poetic part in this set of inscriptions is reduced to the invitation to the passer-by to stop and read, as we will see in more extent below.

In this area, rich in verse inscriptions, two further texts from Orehovitsa preserve very simple metrical clauses.[45] The first of these inscriptions is written on a massive stele – its letters measure 4–6,5 cm:

[42] CIL III 6131 = ILBulg 168: *D(is) M(anibus) / Ma[r]c[i]an[u]s / vet(eranus) ex ordi/nato vixit / annis CIIII / et Veneria Va/lentina qui et / Pelma coniu(n)x / carissima vi/vo suo sibi / fecerunt / s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis)*.

[43] Dana 2014, 411.

[44] Dana 2014, 397.

[45] The use of abbreviated metrical clauses becomes even more significant if we think that these are the only two inscriptions from this location.

it contains the clause *o(pto) s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis)* in abbreviation.[46] The second inscription from Orehovitsa is also a stele, fragmentary, ending in the formula *s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis)*.[47]

A long verse inscription comes from a mausoleum near Melta (**T21**), a *mansio* on the road from Oescus to Philippopolis, at an important crossroads between the two provinces of Moesia inferior and Thracia.[48] In the verse part, the deceased wife of Florens speaks in first person (see below). The construction of a mausoleum for her burial suggests that at least Florens came from a wealthy family.[49] Another very fragmentary inscription from the same mausoleum may have been written in verses as well.[50] Like in other parts of the hinterland of Moesia inferior, the *vici* were inhabited by veterans, soldiers, and by an indigenous population. The culture of this area therefore must have been highly varied, yet the epigraphic language was emphatically Latin.[51] In the third century, the territory of Melta was the target for mass recruitment of soldiers for the Moesian legions, some of them transferred to the units in Rome.[52] This might have had an impact on the subsequent production of verse inscriptions. A very similar situation can be observed in Dimum, a military *statio*, for which, however, no verse inscriptions are attested.[53]

From an area of the interior of the province, today Nedan, a former *beneficiarius legati* of the legio I Italica dedicated a circular funerary building, perhaps a mausoleum,[54] to his daughter and to a friend. The dedicant and the two deceased are clearly of Thracian origin (**T22**). The presence of veterans in this small area is well documented, among these also veterans of the praetorian cohorts, as attested in a

[46] ILBulg 148: *O(pto) s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) [l(evis)].*
[47] ILBulg 149: - - - - - - / *[- - -]O[- - -] / [- - -]LML[- - -] / [- - - meren]/tib(u)s p[os(uit)] / s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) [l(evis)].*
[48] Tab. Peut. VII, A2 and Bâltâc 2011, 98.
[49] The name Satia, daughter of Evaristus has been suggestively supplemented by Nedeljković 2009.
[50] ILBulg 247: - - - - - - / *[- - -] mat[r]ona sac(erdos) marit[o - - -] / [- - - sub]terreno et lapide [- - -]* / - - - - - -.
[51] Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018, 133–134.
[52] CIL VI 2736 and Cenati 2023, 112–113 on the praetorians from Melta in Rome.
[53] CIL VI 32549 and Cenati 2023, 113.
[54] The inscription runs on the front and right side of an architrave.

military diploma from Butovo.[55] It is interesting to notice that here a fragment of another potential verse inscription was found, whose text ends in the clause *sit tibi terra levis*, here in *scriptio plena*.[56] The upper part of this monument, originally containing a dedication to a deceased wife set up by a husband during his lifetime, is lost, but it may well have been in verse. The formula *sit tibi terra levis* in *scriptio plena* also appears on another local funerary stele, found in present-day Varbovka. In this case, the monument is complete, and it therefore can be said with certainty that this piece, in turn, clearly was not written in verse; yet the rhythmical clause written out between the name of the deceased and those of the dedicants, in a text otherwise full of abbreviations, is certainly worthy of note.[57]

A large territory was assigned to Nicopolis ad Istrum, a city founded by Trajan.[58] This territory constituted an important recruitment area for the *limes*, especially for legionary soldiers, who were subsequently transferred to the praetorian cohorts in Rome, after few years of service in the legions during the third century. After their service, many veterans returned to their birthplaces, as attested by military diplomas that were found locally.[59] In the territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum, one verse inscription was found (**T23**).[60] It is a limestone funerary stele dedicated to a soldier, a *bucinator* of the *cohors II Mattiacorum*, a unit that was stationed in Sostra, south of Melta, from the reign of Antoninus Pius to Septimius Severus, controlling the Balkan road.[61] The soldier's being a member of the Roman army is also highlighted by the iconography with a representation of a horseman. The presence of the *nomen* Spurennius, a rare name of Italic origin,

[55] RMD II 132.

[56] CIL III 12412: - - - - - - / *[- - -]us co[niugi] / bene mere[n]/ti et sibi se [vi]/vo sit tibi te/[r]ra levis.*

[57] ILBulg 411: *D(is) M(anibus) / G(aius!) Iulius G(ai!) fil(ius) / Gaeianus vi/xit annis / XX sit tibi / terra levis / G(aius!) Iulius Vale/ns pater et / Pompeia In/genua mater / fil(io) pientis(simo) / b(ene) m(erenti) p(osuerunt) et sibi / vivis.* Cf. Tomas 2016, 187.

[58] On Nicopolis ad Istrum see Ivanov 1994, Poulter 1995 and Topalilov 2018.

[59] Cenati 2023, 114.

[60] On this inscription see also Massaro 2023, 49–50, no. 24

[61] Cf. Matei-Popescu 2010, 222–224.

otherwise known only in Pompeii,[62] as well as the use of *praenomina*, could suggest an early dating for the inscription, which nevertheless because of the iconography and palaeography cannot be dated earlier than the beginning of the third century.[63] The fact that he mentions family members, mother and brother, suggests that the soldier was a native of this region, perhaps a descendant of slaves of an Italic family, who then served the army not far from his birthplace. Moreover, the poetic part is limited to a few formulae at the beginning as well as at the end of the text.

Three verse inscriptions come from Abrittus (**T24–26**), initially a Thracian stronghold and centre of a strategia, which then became an auxiliary fort, where during the late third century a *numerus scutariorum* was stationed,[64] a unit guarding the second defense line of the Danubian *limes*. During late antiquity, Abrittus became a bishopric centre. All inscriptions date to the late phase of Abrittus in the third / fourth century. The content of **T24** is partially obscure. The text contains metrical clauses which seem to express a testamentary will of the deceased, who had designated his nephew as substitute heir following the death of his own children (*nepotem herede(m) substituit*). The name of the father of the nephew (i. e. the brother of the deceased), Zinama, reveals a Thracian origin of the family. The monument **T25**, a still unpublished, long, late antique funerary inscription gives a voice to the deceased, one Victorina. Finally, a rhythmical inscription of the fourth century[65] attests a Romulianus *praepositus equitum Dalmatarum Beroeensium comitatensium*[66] (**T26**), who set up a funerary monument for his young daughter Romula[67]. The use of verses to display the importance of the family, which can proudly claim generations of

[62] CIL IV 3985, 3992.
[63] Conrad 2004, no. 328.
[64] Cf. Matei-Popescu 2010, 238; Matei-Popescu 2010a; Matei-Popescu 2019.
[65] For the precise dating see Kolb & Ivanov 2016.
[66] On this military unit which must have been stationed in Abrittus, see Kolb & Ivanov 2016, 297–298.
[67] According to Kolb & Ivanov 2016 Romula is Valerinus' wife. The text needs a revision in several parts, which will be addressed in a forthcoming publication.

officials of the Roman army (*Romulus vir magnus ex praeposito tribunus*) is typical for this period.[68]



Fig. 1: The distribution of verse inscriptions along the limes of Moesia inferior and its hinterland (map from db.mappola.eu)

We conclude this geographical and historical overview, with evidence from the territory of Marcianopolis, a city founded by Trajan which developed under Antoninus Pius,[69] from where two Latin verse inscriptions have come to light.[70] The first one is a very fragmentary text lamenting the premature death of a father (**T27**).[71] The name of the dedicant, Laelius, is preserved. The second text was found between Marcianopolis and Sexaginta Prista (**T28**).[72] It is the funerary stele of a

[68] See **T2** above and discussion.

[69] Tacheva 1994 and Tacheva 1995, 427–434.

[70] Among the centres in the interior of Moesia inferior, Marcianopolis is the one which has restituted the larger group of Greek verse inscriptions, which show the influence of the coastal cities on the Black Sea (IGBulg II 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 828).

[71] CIL III 14213, 1 = CLE 1806, a fragment of a late antique building inscription which probably was set on a city gate, found in Plachidol, in the territory of Marcianopolis, has not been included in this study, as it does not fit to any of the research questions addressed here. CLEMoes 41 was also found not far from the ancient Marcianopolis, in Vojvoda. This inscription has been excluded as well, because, judging from the content, it is probably from Odessus.

[72] A completely different register and style can be recognised in one Greek epitaph from the region of Novi Pazar, dedicated by a father to his son, heroized after his death (IGBulg II 796).

soldier who had served in the *numerus scutariorum*, most likely in Abrittus, who was arguably buried in his birthplace, as the Thracian name would seem to imply.[73] Finally, similiar to other places, also in the territory of Marcianopolis a funerary inscription preserves the unabbreviated *sit tibi terra levis* formula.[74]

2. Aesthetic Appraisals: Observations on Rhythmical and Thematic Designs

2.1. On Rhythm and Meter

The geographic overview shows a very rich and varied poetic landscape. Naturally, a closer look at the verse production of each individual urban centre and settlement allows us not only to pinpoint local practices and micro-contexts, but also to establish connections between one another, which, in turn, proves that this cultural practice did not spread completely at random.

One of the more telling devices in order to understand this phenomenon is the geographical distribution of metrical schemes and patterns. The picture that emerges is clearly that of a territory in which the settlements further to the west (Oescus, Novae, Montana, Melta and their surroundings) were significantly more exposed to this specific epigraphic habit. Although its presence and influence is still noticeable further east, the use of canonical metrical schemes clearly decreases in favour of emergence of more irregular forms. As we will see, the exception to this general tendency is Noviodunum, where the presence of the Danubian fleet, the *classis Flavia Moesica*, must have played a crucial role.

All verse inscriptions from Oescus and Novae but one are written in a dactylic rhythm, and they are characterised by their relative length and complex style. The exception to this (**T1**) is an inscription that previously has not even been classified as a *carmen*. Although it does not follow any canonical metric scheme, its tone is markedly different

[73] Cf. Dana 2014, 336: *Sudicentu(h)us*.
[74] CIL III 12445: - - - - - - / *[- - - S]ecun[dus - - -] / [pra]efectu[s iure] / dic(undo) sit tib[i terra] / levis*.

from the rest of the preserved prose inscriptions from Oescus. Perhaps the tragic death of Vibius Valens and Valerius Ingenuus was what prompted Vibius Secundinus, the brother of the first, to seek for a more expressive message engraved in the stone. Thus he followed a double purpose: he stated that their death had been avenged (*gratul(or) pare[nti] n(ostro) / qui bono praeside / sanguen n(ostrum) vindik(avit)*), and he praised the life of his brother using a sequence in which an iambic cadence can be traced (*sine ullo / praemio et sine ul/la ira vix(i) a(nnis) XXVIII*). The structure *semper / sine… sine…* is particularly frequent in verse inscriptions, usually to express the notion that a deceased had lived an honourable life, without any big accolades or recognition but also without a mean spirit.[75] In this particular case, it additionally emphasizes the unfairness of his killing.

The prevailing influence of dactylic rhythms might still be noticeable in Transmarisca and Durostorum, further east. Only two pieces from these settlements are included in our corpus. The first of them (**T7**) is a clear example of adaptation of Ovid's epitaph in *Tristia* 3.3.73 ff., also attested in another piece of this corpus (**T25**). Although in the inscription from Transmarisca the deceased is a woman, the opening of Ovid's imagined inscription has been included without adapting the relative pronoun.[76] Despite not following a clear metrical scheme, the composition maintains a strong dactylic rhythm. In contrast, **T8**, from Durostorum, is rather harder to classify due to its very fragmentary nature. Neither of the two sets of restorations – the first from Bücheler and the second (the ones included in our appendix) from Mommsen for the *CIL* – can be considered certain and they do not allow us to get a clear understanding of what the full content of the piece might have been. It seems reasonable to accept that the interrupted word at the end of the first line is either *forma* or some term from the same root. As for the previous one, however, it would be

[75] CLEAfrique 102: *Sin/e {n}ullo dolore sin/e crimine vitae*; CLE 813 add.: *quae vixit mec(um) sine dolo sine fraude ann(os) XX*; CLE 477: *semper honeste / praestiti quod potui semper sine lite recessi*; CLE 134: *vixi quam diu potui sine lite / sine rixa sine controversia / sine aere alieno*.

[76] *Hic ego qui iaceor Va[leria]*; s. Buonopane 2018, 17–18 and CLEMoes 39 for further linguistic analysis.

perhaps simpler to restore *[q]uae* instead of *[conspic]uae* (Bücheler) or *[aq]uae* (Mommsen). The same sequence (*quae forma*) is attested in a fragmentary verse inscription from Carthage.[77]

Moving further east along the *limes*, the material that we have knowledge of from Sacidava, Capidava and Troesmis (**T9–12**) confirms the tendency that we observed in Transmarisca and Durostorum. The presence of the poetic habit can be attested through the use of *topoi* and expressions common in verse inscriptions, which shall be explored in the following section, but they are never employed within a regular metrical scheme. The only exception to this is **T11**, where it is possible to find a complete hexameter (*tunc vixi bene vixi, sine nulla crimina vixi*). Zarker mentioned that both *resta viator* (l. 2) and the closing *resta viator lege titolo* might have been intended as verse.[78] As will be explored, it is perhaps more accurate to analyse the use of this sequence within its geographical context, as it seems to have been very common in the area, especially during the third century. Thus, its use might not necessarily respond to a conscious poetic effort, but to a trend within the epigraphic habit.

The easternmost verse inscription in this corpus, also along the *limes* (**T13**, from Noviodunum) shows a very significant change in comparison with what we have just observed. This piece, which includes a double inscription, has more in common in terms of both style and metric with the material from Tomis than with anything coming from nearer settlements. The first funerary inscription, dedicated to the *alumnus* Krystallus, is written in iambic dimeters, not very usual in verse inscriptions, whereas the second, dedicated to the also *alumnus* Achelous, follows the structure of elegiac couplets.[79] Interestingly, a similar connection between *alumni* and military is attested in one inscription from Tomis, also dated during the third century.[80]

If we move to the hinterland, the situation is to an extent analoguous to the one along the *limes*. Starting from the westernmost

[77] AE 2011, 1758.
[78] Zarker 1958, no. 147.
[79] For a comment on the style of this poet see Massaro 2023, 33.
[80] CLEMoes 62.

point (Montana and its surrounding area), we find the biggest cluster of verse inscriptions of this corpus with pieces dating from the third century until the fifth (**T14–20**). Both **T14** and **T15** (Montana) are votive verse inscriptions, the first of them was written in the form of an elegiac couplet and the second following the scheme of the Phalaecian hendecasyllable. As for the pieces coming from its surrounding area, their connecting element is both the presence of the topic of the address to the wayfarer and the use of iambic rhythm. At times it is not entirely possible to rule out whether this has been achieved by chance or not (e.g. **T18**, the hard to read **T19**, classified as *commaticum* by Cugusi, or **T20**). In turn, despite the presence of some irregularities, **T16** and **T17** seem to follow the scheme of the iambic senarius. The study of this micro-context poses some interesting questions, as it clearly shows the strong link between form and content when it comes to this particular *topos*, despite the fact that the use of iambic rhythms tends to fade out in Late antiquity.

The use of classical *topoi* and sequences and canonical metrical schemes can still be attested in the two verse inscriptions preserved from Melta and its surrounding area (**T21** and **T23**, both dated during the third century). The first of them is an interesting case, as it is written in dactylic hexameters with a few pentameters in between. In the past it was explained as the result of putting together sequences taken from different verse inscriptions but, as explored by Nedeljković,[81] their disposition does not seem to be casual. The text no. **T23** includes the last elegiac couplet that we find in this corpus (*sentiant: spes vite nostre fueras, nu(n)c quis ubi iaceas, indicat iste lapis*), linked once again to a common poetic topic.[82] The notion that the Manes are able to hear the prayers of the relatives and feel their pain (*Si modo sunt Manes, sentient*), which, in turn, will allow them to rest easy, is common in prose and verse compositions.[83]

[81] Nedeljković 2009, 170.
[82] Massaro 2023, 30–31 doesn't consider the first verse a hexameter, but a sort of 'prosa affettiva', followed by an isolated pentameter.
[83] See the same idea, also in the form of an elegiac couplet, in CLE 1324, from Puteoli, dated during the second century and the first half of the third century. See also Massaro 2023, 30 and Cenati, *forthcoming*.

The verse inscriptions that have come to us from Abrittus (**T24–26**) are of slightly later dating (around the fourth century) and showcase exclusively dactylic rhythms. **T26** includes just one verse at the end of the inscription, in clear contrast with the rest of the pieces from this settlement, which include relatively long poems. If one includes the name *Romula* within the versified part, the result is a more or less correct heptameter (*Romula filia vestra magnam (!) dolorem in pectore fixi(t)*). In any case, it is quite likely that the sequence was the product of putting together several poetic clichés: on the one hand, *magnum dolorem* is attested in other verse inscriptions and literary texts but naturally with at least one more syllable between the words in order to avoid the accidental trochee between *magnum* and *dolorem*.[84] On the other hand, the notion of this kind of pain being stuck in one's chest or spirit also has a long tradition.[85]

Finally, the last two pieces of our corpus are quite different from each other. Whereas the preserved fragment in **T27** (Marcianopolis) seems to indicate that the original piece included a long poem in a dactylic rhythm, **T28**, from the surrounding area of Marcianopolis. It simply includes in an abbreviated form yet another form of address to the wayfarer (*r(esta) viator et lege)*, which could fit into the scheme of an iambic dimeter.

2.2. Topics and Imaginary

With regard to the actual content of the poems and the most frequently employed *topoi* within them, also considering that almost all of the inscriptions collected here are funerary in nature, we find a rich and diverse landscape with a certain prevalence of imagery related to the *mors immatura*. For the sake of clarity, we arrange the material thematically rather than geographically.[86]

[84] E.g. *magnumque dolorem*, Sil. Ital., Pun. 13, 384; *magnu(m) liqu(i)sti d[o]lore(m)*, AE 1954,142; in both cases at the end position of the hexameter.
[85] See, e.g. Cic. Phil. 2.64: *miserum me! consumptis enim lacrimis tamen infixus haeret animo dolor*.
[86] We will follow the same organisation of the poetic *topoi* as Hernández 2001.

Lamentatio

As just mentioned, almost all of the expressions of grief and lamentation that appear in the present corpus of verse inscriptions are related, in one way or another, to untimely or unexpected deaths. One of the oldest expressions of this notion is that of the *ordo turbatus*,[87] which seems to be present in **T3**. Although the text has been preserved in a very fragmentary state, the first three lines of fragment A seem to express that something – most likely the funerary rites – that the deceased should have carried out for his parents (with the possible restitution *debe[bas]*) had been done for him (*tibi*) instead because destiny (*Fatis*) so wanted. Immediately after, *raptus* (followed by the very likely restitution *m[orte]*) emphasizes the sudden nature of Iulianus' death. Traditionally, the following line has been restored as *materno [ab ubere]*, which would sit very well with the idea of the deceased having been snatched away from life. However, and without completely discarding this restoration, it should be acknowledged that all epigraphic instances of *ab ubere*,[88] as well as most literary ones,[89] employ *matris* – or the genitive of another noun – and not *materno* or the ablative of another adjective. What is more, *materno [ab ubere]* would not fit into a dactylic pattern.[90] The number of verse inscriptions in which the adjective *materno* is used is not high,[91] but they cover different contexts. A further possibility, is, of course, to understand this term as a personal name that would likely indicate from whom the deceased had been snatched away. Though purely speculative, one might also consider the possibility that one Maternus had died as well

[87] The origin and dissemination of the *par parenti topos*, the oldest formulation of the *ordo turbatus*, has been studied by González Berdús & Kruschwitz 2023.

[88] CLE 2002 (Africa Proconsularis): *[Q]uam cito ab / ubere matri/[s] abstulit atr/a dies*; CLE 1576 (Roma): *hic sum matris ab ubere raptus*.

[89] See Verg. georg. 3.187; Hor. carm. 4.4.14; Aus. parent. 5.9.

[90] The clearest parallel for this restitution is Stat. Ach. 1.858 (*ut leo, materno cum raptus ab ubere*), where the sequence is disjointed.

[91] CLE 751 (Dalmatia): *Hic puella iacet pr[imis cito rap]/ta sub annis Silvia [materno reno]/vans in nomine fletus*; CLE 1319 (Latium et Campania): *Iustus ego non paterno set materno nomine dictus*; CLEPann 6: *en (!) hoc mat[erno] / te terra t[egit monumento(?)]*.

(perhaps *raptus m[orte - - -] / [- - - una cum] Materno*), replicating the structure of **T1**.

Incidentally, this inscription (**T1**) is one of the several cases of *mortes immaturae* documented in this corpus. There seems to be a distinct wish to include in the poems that the deceased died in sudden or traumatic circumstances. **T1** is definitely the most expressive one in that regard and it hints to a case of *mors singularis*: as mentioned, the poetic voice speaks in the first person to tell that he himself as well as his relative had been killed but without providing any specifics.[92] Murders *a latronibus* are often documented in funerary inscriptions, so it could very well be the case here, but there is not enough evidence. **T25** is an interesting case, as one might detect a slight contrast between the tone of the overall poem and its ending. The deceased, a woman by the name Victorina, regrets her destiny, which cut her life short at the age of 45. As it is often stated in verse inscriptions, it is said that she was not allowed to live longer than what was her fate, but she finds some solace in the knowledge – and so she says, addressing her husband, Ursinus – that their three children will take care of the funerary monument. Nearing the end, however, she states she 'was killed with an undeserved death by mistake' (*falso indigna morte perempta*).

Two of the *carmina* (**T6** and **T21**) mention that the cause of death was an illness. It is rather interesting that, in the first of them (**T6**), this piece of information is included in the Greek section (μοίρῃ ὑπ'ἀρ/γαλέῃ προδαμεὶς / νούσῳ τε βαρείῃ), but not in the Latin (*s(e)pul/tus pr(a)ecipiti leto iu(v)en/is fatorum lege peracta*), i. e. in a part that is overall less expressive and more succinct. This is probably due to the fact that, as their names suggest, father and son were of Greek origin – which would make Greek their first language. The sudden death of Basileus occurred as he was 'plucking the first flowers on his cheeks' (πρῶ/τον ὑπὲρ γενύων / ἄνθεα δρεψάμενον), referring to the age in which he was starting to have, and to remove, facial hair. Similarly,

[92] Dessau included a collection of *mortes singulares* in ILS 8499–8530. For verse inscription narrating violent deaths see e.g. CIL XIII 2182.

Krystallus, the first *alumnus* commemorated in **T13**, is said to have been 'robbed of his tender youth' (*primaev(a)e pubis indigus*).[93]

In turn, the young female commemorated in **T21**, who died fourteen years old, tells in the first person how she 'withered before the eyes of her dear husband' (*margebam (!) Florenti caro m[ar]ito*)[94] and, in another example of the *topos* of the *ordo turbatus*, that her death prevented her from being pious towards her parents (*[sic d]isceptarunt / fata ne pia esse(m) patri nec mat[ri - - -]*). It is not certain, however, that the inscription used the term *morbus*, the Latin counterpart of the Greek νόσος. Further on, it is stated that the deceased left her cruel bed *post mort[- - -]*. Seure filled this lacuna with *post mor[tem invita] reliqui*,[95] whereas Nedeljković suggested *post mor[bi accessum] reliqui*. Even though the latter would fit nicely with the illness narrative, other supplements – whether Seure's or other possibilities, without correct metrics having to be a deciding factor, such as with the more common sequence *post mor[tis casum]* – should not be rejected out of hand. Indeed, Nedeljković's interpretation suggests that the deceased was already ill when she got married and that this union had never been consummated precisely because of this. Tragically, the day when she looked 'too pleasing for her husband' (*ut n[imis essem blanda] / marito*) and finally lost her virginity, it resulted in a bout of illness and, ultimately, her death. It might simply be a case of the literary topic of the matrimonial bed turned into a deathbed, however, which is denoted by the mention of the *crudelis thalamos*.[96]

Aelia, the woman commemorated by her husband Fronto in **T4** is also said to have been taken away undeservedly and too soon (*nam meruit haec multa suis pro laudibus a me – / inmeritae propere solventem fila dearum*). With a clear reference to the Orpheus' myth, the husband addresses Proserpina to tell her that, had she, Proserpina, listened to

[93] See CLEMoes 40–40bis for literary parallels of this formulation.
[94] We mainly follow the edition and restitutions by Nedeljković 2009.
[95] Seure 1916, 380.
[96] Another tool to highlight the tragedy of a destiny that looked hopeful is the *lusus nominis*, that is, the wordplay based on the meaning of the personal names of the deceased and/or their family members. Nedeljković (2009, 170) proposed that this resource played an important role in the construction of this poem. See Michalopoulos 1997 for a study of this tool in Latin verse inscriptions.

him, she would have understood what an extraordinary person Aelia had been and how unfair it was that the thread of her life had thus been cut short.

The epitaph for Romula (**T26**), who died seven years old,[97] is an interesting case as none of the ideas connected to the topic of the *mors immatura* have been employed. All but the last two lines of the text are written in prose, and they give details about her parents, her place of birth, and her grandfather's career. Only after that, by means of a striking *tamen* (*vi/xit tamen Romula an(nos) / VII*), we learn of Romula's very early death. The end of the inscription states in its poetic form that her death caused enormous grief (*Romu/la filia vestra magnam / dolorem in pectore fixi(t)*).[98] One might explain the richness of personal details about her family as a way of highlighting the social position of the deceased and perhaps, at the same time, expressing that, in spite of all of that, which would have meant an honourable and stable public position for them, her death hurt them all the same.

Finally, the very fragmentary piece **T27** also seems to mention an untimely death. The reference to a 'wicked death' (*inpro[b]a mors*) that prematurely (*an[t]e di[em*) snatched away the deceased speaks in favour of that interpretation.[99]

Lamenting death far away from the homeland is another common poetic topic. It is attested with certainty in both funerary commemorations that are included in the already mentioned **T14**. The first of them states that the deceased was *Romanus infans editus* and that, after being an *alumnus* and having seen towns of Hispania and the north of Africa (*alumnus castris [- - -] / Hibera postquam videri[t] / et Maura longe moenia*), he finally found his final rest in Moesia (*acta quiescit Moesica*). The second one follows the same structure, clearly

[97] Kolb & Ivanov 2016, 297 proposed that the seven years were not Romula's age, but the time she had spent with the aforementioned Valerinus, whom they interpreted to be her second life companion after Romulus. See Salomies 2018, 161–162 about this point.

[98] A very similar expression of grief can be found in CLE 987 (Rome), dedicated to a boy who died at the age of four (*vos vestros natos concustodite parentes / ni(!) dolor in toto pectore fix{s}us eat (!)*).

[99] Also suggested by Cugusi in CLEMoes 47.

influenced by Vergil's epitaph (*extima Cappadocum Ponti / qua(e) iungitur orae me genuit / tellus moenia sunt Tyan[ae]*).

The second one, **T2**, dedicated to an individual of a high social status (*sancti proles generosae*), is not an equally certain case. Cugusi suggested an interpretation along the lines of a death far away from home for line 4 (*ut procul a muris habeas placidus sine[- - -]*).[100] Yet, the inscription is too fragmentary to allow for any certainty; then again, this verse may well have expressed that the deceased rested peacefully even though far away from his homeland.

The idea that relatives of a deceased once had great hopes in them, and that, after their passing, there is little reason to persevere is also present in this corpus (**T23**). Here, Lucius Spurennius Herculanus and one Flavia Paula erected a monument for one Lucius Spurennius Rufus, their brother and son, respectively. The thought is introduced by another one that already foreshadows the nihilist attitude and the frustration expressed in the composition: if there are any gods of the Underworld at all (*si modo sunt Ma/nes*), they ought to listen to what the relatives have to say.[101] This is followed by an opposition between what Herculanus and Flavia Maxima had hoped for vis-a-vis their present reality: the inscription marks what is left of their beloved one (*spes vi/te (!) nostre (!) fueras, nu/c (!) quis ubi iaceas, indi/cat iste lapis*).

Consolatio

One of the most frequent ideas used to provide some comfort in the face of death is that of its inevitability and how no one can change the destiny that has been set. This is the sense of both Seure's restitution for the last lines of **T21** (*(o) genitores! [quid fletis? nam fata potest quis] rumpere? Nemo*) and also of Nedeljković's (*ego nunc moneo genitore[s fatorum legem] / rumpere nemo [potest]*). **T7**, where Valeria grieves in the first person the short life she was granted, includes the idea that one can not live any longer than the years that have been allotted for them

[100] CLEMoes 34.
[101] For parallels of this topic see Cugusi CLEMoes 25.

(*si nec a[lios] / nisi quot fata tribuerunt c[um] / tribent*), a thought also present in another inscription from the nearby Abrittus.[102]

In contrast to these instances, which are based on the idea that there is nothing that could have been done to prevent the death of a loved one, this corpus also includes a handful of examples that mention actions that are within the power of the relatives and that will in some way comfort them. The first one is **T1**, where this is presented as something that has already happened: the poetic voice, representing the deceased, thanks his father for having avenged him and his relatives' killings (*Gratul(or) pare[nti] n(ostro) / qui bono praeside / sanguen n(ostrum) vindik(avit)*).

The idea that the deceased left relatives behind that will take care of the funerary monument is quite common in verse epigraphy. This duty is most often placed on the children, as is the case in the aforementioned unpublished inscription from Abrittus. However, **T24** (also from Abrittus) reports the case of a man whose two children – and probably also his wife – had died before him (*cum coniuge cara {a}edi{di}/mus ex nobis dyo pia pigno/ra natos quos parva vita / fortuna inimic{e}a peremit*), using a very similar expression to refer to the number of children as that found in the unpublished inscription. In order to prevent the funerary monument from remaining neglected, he designated new heirs (*ex Zinama prolem viventi/um earumque nepotem he/rede(m) substituit*). Interestingly enough, the term *pignus* (in the context *[- - -] ipse pignus su[- - -]*) is also used in the fragmentary **T27** from the nearby Marcianopolis. As already mentioned, there is a reason to believe this inscription developed the topic of the *mors immatura*, so perhaps the term was used with the same sense as in the previous examples.

Lastly, the same idea appears, although not explicitly, in **T21**. As rightly interpreted by Nedeljković,[103] this is what hides behind the deceased's hope of her husband's ashes being covered by golden soil when he dies, as this would mean that he took care of her funerary monument. The key parallels in this case are CLE 1308, where the whole

[102] Lupa 20853 + 20852.
[103] Nedeljković 2009, 164–165.

thought is articulated (*quisqu/[is] huic tumulo pos/uit ardente(m) lucer/nam illius ciner/es aurea terra tegat*), as well as a fragment from the Digest that includes a *conditio* so the former servants can fullfil the same wish (Dig. 40.4.44: *Saccus servus meus et Eutychia ancilla mea sub hac conditione liberi sunto, ut monumento meo alternis mensibus lucernam accendant et solemnia mortis peragant*).[104] It seems sensible to understand *aureus* here in the sense of 'perfect', 'without fault' or 'exemplary', referring to the wish for both proper funerary rites and also proper maintenance of the monument after that, that is, whoever takes care of another person's burial receives themselves the best possible treatment when their time to pass comes.[105]

Laudatio

Although the formulary in **T11** with regards to how the deceased led their life (*tunc vixi bene vixi, sine nu/lla crimina vix(i)*) is similar to that of **T1** (*sine ullo / praemio et sine ul/la ira vix(i) a(nnis) XXVIII*), there is a stark difference in tone. Whereas in the latter it is used to emphasize the unfairness of the deceased's killing, in the former it is used as a true form of praise.

The praise of those virtues considered to be more fitting of a woman finds an outstanding example in **T4**, which to a certain point bears comparison with the epitaph for Allia Potestas.[106] However, the portrait presented by Fronto, Aelia's widower, is much more traditional. We find that in several cases the funerary inscription is used as a means of indirectly praising the family to which the deceased belonged and thus highlight their social status. That is the case of the aforementioned

[104] The same idea is present in a graffito from Ostia (Zarker 1958, no. 123: *ego memini quenda crissasse puellam / cuius cineres aurea terra tegat*) and another inscription from Brescia with a very similar text *(Qui primus docuit teneram crisare puellam illius cineres aurea terra tegat*, Gregori & Massaro 2005, 153–156. On this topic and its different interpretations, see Massaro 2005, 151–157, where it is understood as a wish for a blissful afterlife, and Cugusi 2006.

[105] Indeed, a similar metaphoric use of *aureus* can be found in a fragment from Pliny the Elder, where he reports that a plant with multiple medicinal uses was called the "golden goblet" by physicians (Plin. NH 24.96: *medetur morbo regio et ipsa pota et decoctum eius, item pectoris vitiis; urinam ciet, alvum solvit, vulvas purgat, quamobrem aureum potorium medici vocant*).

[106] CIL VI 37965 = CLE 1988.

T2, where we find *proles generosa* referring to the family of the deceased. This sequence became more popular in late Antiquity and during the Middle Ages, but it is already attested in the first century A.D., twice in tragedies from Seneca.[107] This form of *laudatio* is also visible in **T25** and **T26**. In the first of them the poetic voice merely states that she lived "a noble and free life from the lineage of her parents" (ll. 6–7: *nobilis ingenua vita / ad stirbe (!) parentes (!)*). In contrast, most of **T26** is devoted to the military achievements of the men in the family.

Although the Roman army is profusely attested in this corpus, military life is not used as a poetic topos. Most often than not the connection with the army is expressed in the prose section of the inscription. However, a couple of them deserve highlighting: the first (**T22**) is a remarkable case of a brother-like bond among soldiers. The veteran Marcus Aurelius Mucianos planned the funerary monument while he was still alive for himself, his daughter and his friend and also veteran Aurelius, who is referred to as *vet(erano) fratri*. As for the fragmentary **T9** it was dedicated to Valerius Onesimus by his wife and children. Despite not following any metrical scheme, one could see the influence of epic poems in the expression *digne locutus* (for example, Verg. Aen. 6.662). The mention of the military follows right after, so it is possible that in this particular case it was used as an element of the *laudatio*.

A widespread theme: the address to the wayfarer

Next to all the *topoi* that we have analysed so far, the address to the wayfarer through a number of different sequences proves to be the most widespread theme in this corpus. Nonetheless, it is rather striking that its presence is in most cases the only poetic marker we find in the inscription. Besides this, a geographical approach shows that it is absent from the westernmost settlements of the limes, such as Oescus and Novae, and that it is mostly spread in the east. However, Montana and Melta and the region around them are once again the exception to this rule.

[107] Sen. Med. 110: *Candida thyrsigeri proles generosa lyaei*; Oed. 110: *occidis, cadmi generosa proles*.

As mentioned before, Montana is the place of provenance of the only votive inscription in elegiac couplets in this corpus, which includes by itself some common themes of epigraphic poetry, such as having set the monument according to one's economic means. The pieces that come from the surrounding area of Montana (**T16–20**) include generally short inscriptions with the deceased's personal information and some form of address to the passer-by. Only in one case it appears abbreviated (**T17**: *Tu viator qui tr/ansis, rest(a), leg(e) tit(ulum) o/biter. Le(ge) et rep(ete) 's(it) d(is) M(anibus) t(uis) / t(erra) p(ropitia?)'*, classified as iambic senaries by Lommatzsch). Each of them asks the traveller to stop and read the inscription in a different manner.[108] That is also the case of **T23**, coming from the region of Melta, where a short *valete viatores* is included in the prose section after the inscription, consisting of one elegiac couplet. However, in **T21**, from Melta, the address is part of the opening of the inscription (*Siste viator iter animum[que intende sepu]lc{h}ro / et lege quam dure sit mihi v[ita d]ata*).

The rest of documented cases originate from the settlements to the east, mostly along the *limes*.[109] The only exception is **T28**, coming from Marcianopolis, which includes *R(esta) viator / et lege* in its beginning and, as mentioned before, although it cannot be considered a verse inscription, it certainly shows the influence and spread of the poetic habit. The situation is analogous in the inscriptions from the *limes* (**T9–12**, coming from Sacidava, Capidava and Troesmis): they follow very irregular metrical patterns and in all of them but one (**T12**) the address to the wayfarer is included at the very end of the text, following a prose section.

[108] For the address to the passer-by in a prose inscription from this region see also CIL III 12392.

[109] Several inscriptions from Tropaeum Traiani (IScM IV 57 = AE 2004, 1273), Halmyris (CIL III 13739 = IGLR 168: *valete lectores*) and Capidava (CIL III 12478; IScM V 33, 37, 52), attest the popularity of this topic. This could also depend on an influence of the Greek formula χαῖρε παροδεῖτα (s. for instance IGBulg II 843, 844, 864, 872).

3. Outlook: some further thoughts on the poetic habit along the limes of Moesia inferior

In contrast to other *limes* provinces, there is no evidence that in Moesia inferior Latin verse inscriptions appeared at the same time as the army. From what is preserved, the earliest Latin verse inscriptions date from the second half of the third century and appear simultaneously in the *limes* settlements as well as in the hinterland. The reason for the lack of evidence (which by no means is related to a lack of production and fruition of verse compositions) has been explained by P. Cugusi with the political instability of the province, always on the war front.[110] Starting only in the third century and continuing in the fourth century, the phenomenon of writing epigraphic verses seems to spread and develop within a relatively short period of time, which witnesses the wave of prosperity in the province in the early Late antiquity. However, similarly to the case of other *limes* provinces, even if with an evident delay, the production of verse inscriptions on the *limes* of Moesia inferior is clearly linked to the army. Similarly to other provinces, military topics are rarely attested as well, if compared with inscriptions in prose. These are replaced by the much more common funerary themes in *carmina epigraphica*, like the expression of grief, the praise of the deceased, the premature death or the very simple *topos* of addressing the wayfarer.

The distribution of Latin verse inscription in the province is not casual. It is almost always possible to pinpoint specific practices depending on the local context or the social structure of the ancient settlement, which are particularly favourable to the production of epigraphic poetry. Specific micro-contexts can be detected for example in the sanctuary of Apollo and Diana in Montana, where next to the many votive inscriptions in prose, some exquisite verses were produced by members of the élite following precise literary models. Dactylic metres seem to be popular in the area aroung Oescus and Novae, while Thracian veterans in the hinterland of the province seem to be affectionate to the custom of addessing the wayfarer with simple verses in their funerary monuments. A widespread pattern in the third as well

[110] CLEMoes 152–153.

as in the fourth century is the clear difference in styles and register which can be appreciated when reading inscriptions set up by the élites on the one hand, often identified with high ranking soldiers, and those commissioned or composed by common people on the other hand.

Finally, the present overview and analysis allow us to recognise two possible factors that lead to the habit of composing verse inscriptions. The first seems to be the contact with Rome and with the Imperial court, which can be especially observed in the return of soldiers transferred from the Moesian legions to the urban units to their homeplaces in the third century after the end of the service. These, settling back in the villages of origin together with their families, took with them a cultural baggage of years of life in the capital, which included new cultural experiences and epigraphic habits. The trend of composing verses, especially for funerary monuments, at least for middle and lower social strata, might have been introduced or reintroduced by them. The role of the veterans setting up family monuments is also very representative, as we can read in their inscriptions the intention of conveying specific messages by setting up the monuments during their lifetime. The mention of two or three generations in the texts also shows the rootedness of the families on the territory contextually with their progressive integration in the Roman social and cultural system.

Furthermore, the contact with Italy and Rome can be detected in the case of the élites, sometimes having their roots directly in Rome. The connection between the production of verses and the contact with the Imperial court continues in Late Antiquity, as some of the soldiers are part of the imperial *comitatus*.

The second factor that influences the production of verses doesn't come from the capital, but from the main cultural hub of Moesia inferior, especially in the late third century, the provincial administrative centre Tomis. In a couple of inscriptions, indeed, the influence of the poetic production of Tomis is very clear. The most significant example for this is the use of the incipit of the Ovid's epitaph *hic ego qui iaceo* in two inscriptions. This testifies on the one hand the great cultural influence that Tomis had on the whole province from the advanced third century, but it also shows on the other hand the

popularity of the verses written by Ovid for his own tomb, which allows us to think that these were in fact engraved on his funerary monument, whose location until today is still unknown.[111]

4. Appendix[112]

T1) Oescus: Conrad 2004, no. 457; ILBulg 90; Beševliev 1952, no. 87 = AE 1957, 297; HD017573 (third century): *D(is) M(anibus). / S(extus) Vibius Valen[s] / immere(n)s hic o[c]/cisus sum una cum / Val(erio) Ingenuo adfi/ne meo. Sine ullo / praemio et sine ul/la ira vix(i) a(nnis) XXVIII. / Gratul(or) pare[nti] n(ostro) / qui bono praeside / sanguen n(ostrum) vindik(avit) (!) / S(extus) Vibius Secundinus / fratri piissimo po(suit). S(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis).*

To the Spirits of the Departed. Sextus Vibius Valens, I was killed here without deserving it together with my relative Valerius Ingenuus. With neither a reward nor resentment I lived 28 years. I thank our father who avenged our blood with a good defender (?). Sextus Vibius Secundinus to his most pious brother. Might the earth rest lightly upon you.

T2) Oescus: ILBulg 94; Beševliev 1952, no. 98; CLEMoes 34; Lungarova 2012, no. 176; CLE 2645; HD042560 (fourth century): *- - - - - - / [- - -]M[- - -] / [- - - ex]imio construxit [- - -] / vas[- - -]is sancti proles generosae [- - -] / ut procul a muris habeas placidus sine [- - -] / uti PISTRIDIGENIS contentus trame[- - -] / posuit nati melior bivii satis ampl[- - -] / [- - -]cernis suos nactus celebra[v]ere La[res - - -] / [- - -]s subnixas pulchra colum[na - - -] / - - - - - -*

... built to an extraordinary ... venerable, of noble offspring ... so that you, peaceful, have far away from the walls without ... happily... the

[111] On the traditions regarding Ovid's tomb, starting from Eusebius see Trapp 1973.
[112] The texts in this Appendix are not new editions, as autopsies of the inscriptions were not possible. We provide here our reading, based on previous editions.

best of the children put at a crossroad large enough … they celebrated her Lares … protected by a beautiful column.

T3) Oescus: ILBulg 95; CLEMoes 33; CLE 2644; HD042561 (third century): Frg. A: *- - - - - - / [- - -]am debe[- - -] / [- - -] tibi Fatis ia[- - -] / [- - -] raptus m[orte - - -] / [- - -] materno [ab ubere - - -] / [- - - pr]ofligere [- - -] / [- - -]an quiet[- - -] / - - - - - -* // Frg. B: *- - - - - - / [- - -]biae to[- - -] / [- - -] nunc [- - -] / [- - -] Iuliano [- - -] / [- - - pi]entissim[o - - -] / [- - -]mo be[- - -] / - - - - - -*

Frg. A: … have to… to you, to the Fate … snatched away by the death … from the motherly [breast] … to overthrow … quiet // Frg. B: … now … Iulianus … the most pious …

T4) Nikopol: CIL III 754 = CIL III 7436; CLE 492; ILBulg 145; CLEMoes 26; HD042622 (A. D. 198–209): *[D(is) M(anibus?)] / et b(onae) m(emoriae). Fronto Augg (ustorum) nn(ostrorum duorum) dispens(ator) Moes(iae) inf(erioris). / Floribus ut saltem requiescant membra iucundis / Aeliae carae mihi nunc hoc inclusae sepulcro, / regina Ditis magni regis, [p]recor hoc te – / nam meruit haec multa suis pro laudibus a me – / inmeritae propere solventem fila dearum, / quae globo Parcarum revoluta cuncta gubernant. / Qualis enim fuerit vita, quam deinde pudica, / si possem effari, cithara suadere(m) ego Manes. / Haec primum casta, quot te audire libenter / et mundi spatia Ditis quoque regia norunt. / Hanc precor Elysiis iubeas consistere campis / et myrta redimire comas et tempora flore. / Lar mihi haec quondam, haec spes, haec unica vita, / et vellet quod vellem, nollet quoque ac si ego nollem, / intima nulla ei quae non mihi nota fuere, / nec labos huic defuit, nec vellerum inscia fila, / parca manu set (!) larga meo in amore mariti, / nec sine me cibus huic gratus nec munera Bacchi, / consilio mira, cata mente, nobili fama. / Carmini, possessor, faveas, precor, ac precor ut t{l}u / hanc tituli sedem velles decorare quodannis / et foveas aevi monumentum tempore grato / roscida si rosula seu grato flore amaranthi / et multi{s} generum pomis variisque novisque, / ut possit toto refoveri temporis anno.*

To the spirits of the Departed and to the good memory. Fronto, treasurer [manager?] of our emperors in the province of Moesia inferior.
May at least the rests of my dear Aelia, now locked in this tomb, queen of the great king of Underworld, rest among pleasant flowers, I beg you – because she has deserved a lot from my side for her merits – you, who have broken too early to her, who did not deserve it, the threads of the goddesses who govern all the turns of the spindle [?] of the Parcae.
If I had been able to tell how exemplary her life was and how honest, perhaps I could have persuaded the spirits of the Dead with the lyre. She was chaste above all, as much as the ends of the world and the reign of Pluto know that you listen gladly (??).
I beg you to allow her to stay in the Elysian fields and encircle her hair with myrtle and her temples with flowers.
Once she has been my home, my hope, my only reason to live and she wanted what I wanted and she did not want what I did not want; she had no secrets that she did not confide to me and she was never idle nor was she unable to spin the wool. She was frugal in her expenses, but generous in love for her husband; neither was the food pleasing to her without me, nor the gifts of Bacchus; she was of admirable wisdom, of clever mind and renowned reputation.
I beg you, owner, take care of this poem, and please, I pray you, decorate the place of this epitaph every year, and take care of this monument to eternity when the weather is favourable with dewy roses or with the beautiful amaranth flower and with many different and various and new fruits, so that it will revive during the whole year.

T5) Novae: ILNovae 13; IGLNovae 25; ILBulg 272; CLEMoes 36; Kolendo 1968, 117–144 = AE 1972, 526; Schmidt Heidenreich 2013, 455; Piso 2017 = AE 2017, 1221; CLE 2643; HD009856 (A. D. 227): A: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Depulsori / [pr]o salute d(omini) n(ostri) / [[M(arci) Aurel(i) Severi Ale]]/[[xandri]] Pii Felicis / Aug(usti) / G(aius) (!) Baienius G(ai) (!) f(ilius) Clau/dia [I]anuarius Cele/ia p(rimus) [p(ilus)] leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) Seve/rianae ex voto posu/it.* // B: *Dedic(atum) III Non(as) Oct(obres) / Albino et Maximo c[o(n)s(ulibus)] / per L(ucium)*

Mantennium Sa/binum leg(atum) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) / et Servaeum Corne/lianum leg(atum) leg(ionis). // C: *[A]diutrix legio prim[um] tirone / probat[o] / [It]alica prima cum compare / centu[rio]ne / [- - -]cto Baienium /* (vacat) */ [- - -]al[- - -]uma felice / pot[ente]m / [ex iussu] dom[ini R]omam misist[i] / e[undem] / [impen]sa Iovi [sua prim]us pilus tibi / san[cto] / [ex v]oto posuit po[- - - Ia]nuarius / a[ram(?)].*

A: To Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Depulsor, for the safety of our Lord M. Aurelius Severus Alexander Pius Felix Augustus C. Baienius Ianuarius, son of Caius, of the tribus Claudia from Celeia, *primus pilus* of the legion I Italica Severiana dedicated this after a vote.
B: Dedicated on the 5th of October under the consulate Albinus and Maximus by the Imperial legate pro praetore L. Mantennius Sabinus and the legate of the legion Servaeus Cornelianus.
C: The legion Adiutrix at first, being recruited as a soldier … promoted to centurion in the legio I Italica with his fellow… Baienius …. by order of the emperor you sent him to Rome. After becoming *primus pilus*, Ianuarius dedicated an altar following a vote at his own expense to you, saint Iuppiter.

T6) Novae: ILBulg 325; IGLNovae 107; CLEMoes 35; Conrad 2004, no. 398; SEG 47, 1153; CLE 2642; HD044382 (middle of the third century[113]): Θ(εοῖς) Κ(αταχθονίοις). / Οὔνομά μοι / Βασιλεύς / κεῖμαι δ' ἅμα / μητρὶ θανού/σῃ μοίρῃ ὑπ' ἀρ/γαλέῃ προδαμεὶς / νούσῳ τε βαρείῃ. / Κυζίκιος δέ με θά/ψεν ἀγακλείτη τε / Σεκούνδα πρῶ/τον ὑπὲρ γενύων / ἄνθεα δρεψάμενον. // *D(is) M(anibus). / Monte sub hoc tegito(r) (!) / Basileus ecce s(e)pul/tus pr(a)ecipiti leto iu(v)en/is fatorum lege peracta / quem genuit mater mecum / iacet ispa (!) sepulta. Kyzyci/o mihi factus honos. // Simul atque Secunda.*

To the Spirits of the Departed. My name is Basileus. I lie together with my mother because of a hard fate subdued by a severe disease.

[113] Conrad 2004, no. 398, according to the style of the portraits and the palaeography.

Kyzikios buried me and the famous Secunda, me who was plucking the first flower on the cheeks.
Here under this mound I am buried, Basileus, a young boy killed by a sudden death accomplished the law of the fates. My mother who gave me birth lies also buried here. Kyzycius made this honour for me together with Secunda.

T7) Transmarisca: Adamești eanu 1935/36; CLEMoes 39; Conrad 2004, no. 308; Buonopane 2018; CLE 2646; HD042059 (end of the third / beginning of the fourth century[114]): *D(is) [M(anibus)]. / Hic ego qui iacior Va[leria] / dicta fuisse ter denos an[nos] / quia pari blandum si nec a[lios] / nisi quot fata tribuerunt c[um] / tribent nec Iuppiter ipse l[- - -] / datarum et [- - -]ci[- - -] / vitam nam dum [eramus iuve]/nes amata fuis[se] / ilo (!) caro me s[- - -] / mihi et sibi [- - -]*

To the Spirits of the Departed. Here I, who lie here, was called Valeria. I lived for thirty years since it is not allowed to live more if not what the fates assigned when they assign, nor Iuppiter himself … given and …. life indeed as we were young I was loved … to that dear me and to himself.

T8) Durostorum: CIL III 12458; CLE 1707; IScM IV 123; HD043560 (second century / third century): *- - - - - - / [- - - q]uae form[a] / [- - - prox]umo (!) com[pito (?)] / [- - - l]apidi situs / [- - - Val]ens ((centurio)) l(egionis) XI Cl(audiae) co[- - -] / - - - - - -*

… form of the water … at the next crossroad … under a tombstone… Valens, centurion of the XI legion Claudia…

T9) Sacidava: Gostar 1963, 305–306 = AE 1963, 182; IScM IV 197; Brennan 1979 = AE 1979, 536; CLEMoes 65; HD017224 (first half of the fourth century): *- - - - - - / [- - -] quaerent/[- - - legion]um Ad(iutricum) ((obitus)) Val[e]/[ria]. Digne locutu/[s] militia(m) colui(t) / legionis II He(r)culie*

[114] Dating on the base of the onomastics, the palaeography and the iconography. Conrad 2004, no. 308 dates the inscription to the third century.

(!) / Valerius Onesim[us] / centurio qui vixit a/nnos quinquagint/a et mises (!) septe(m) Valeri/a Marcellina coniux p/ientissima superstans / cum filibus (!) su{u}os (!) hu/c (!) titulum posuerunt. Avete [v]oi (!) viatore[s].

… of the legions Adiutrices, dead in the province Valeria. Speaking with dignity, he served in the legion II Herculia. Valerius Onesimus, centurion, who lived fifty years and seven months Valeria Marcellina the most pious wife who survived him, dedicated this epitaph with his children. Farewell, You, passers-by!

T10) Sacidava: IScM IV 182; Scorpan 1977, 218, no. 7 = AE 1977, 754; Conrad 2004, no. 290; HD020743 (second half of the second century / beginning of the third century[115]): *- - - - - - /diva Claudia co/niux et Iul(ii) Sev(e)ru(s) / et Salvius et Severa / et Claudia patri / bene merit{e}o po/suerunt. Legi tu l/ector. Sit tibi ter(r)a leves (!).*

… the wife Claudia, Iulii Severus and Salvius, Severa and Claudia had made this for their father who well deserved it. You, reader, read. May the earth rest lightly upon you.

T11) Capidava: Florescu 1935/1936, 381–382, no. 156 = AE 1939, 89; Adameșteanu, FA 3 (1948), 221, no. 2229 = AE 1951, 105; IScM V 43; CLEMoes 37; Conrad 2004, no. 244; CLE 2647; HD021915 (second half of the third century[116]): *Tunc vixi bene vixi, sine nu/lla crimina vix(i). Resta viator. / Acril(la) Trygitiani vixit / convirginio ann(os) XII et / moritur ann(os) XXXV / et demisit natos III / Aur(elius) Gai(u)s posuit mem/oria coniugi sue (!). / Resta viator l/ege titolo(m) (!).*

As long as I lived, I lived well, I lived with no blame. Stop for a little, passer-by. Acrilla, daughter of Trygitianus lived with her husband for twelve years, dies at the age of thirty-five and she left behind three

[115] Dating after IScM IV 182.
[116] Conrad 2004, no. 244, especially because of the finding context.

children. Aurelius Gaius had this made for his wife. Stop for a little passer-by. Read the epitaph.

T12) Troesmis: CIL III 12484; IScM V 208; CLEMoes 60; CLE 3053; HD043239 (third century): *Quisque henc (!) / memoriam le/xerit (!) sit illo (!) / semper bene / sit t(i)b(i) semper / b(e)ne. D(is) M(anibus). / - - - - - -*

Whoever reads this memorial, may he be always well. May you always be well. To the Spirits of the Departed.

T13) Noviodunum: Barnea 1975, 258-261 = AE 1977, 762; IScM V 281 = AE 1980, 84; Solin 1981; Vassileiou 1983 = AE 1984, 793; Cugusi 1985, 228–231; Solin 1985 = AE 1987, 897; Gamberale 1989 = AE 1989, 639; Cugusi 1995b = Cugusi 2016, 1605–1610; Courtney 1995, 54, 250–251; Cugusi 2000 = Cugusi 2016, 1610–1643; CLEMoes 40; Brancato 2015, 57; cf. Cugusi 2007, 77; CLE 2648 (third century): *- - - - - - / [- - -]AV[- - -]iuv[- - -]a[- - -] / [K]rystallus alumnus / Postumi praef(ecti) class(is) / aput (!) fluen[te]m (!) ++e+ic(um) / Romanus infans editus / alumnus castris mari[- - -] / Hibera postquam videri[t] / et Maura longe moenia / acta quiescit Moesica / primaev(a)e pubis indigus / ut verna florum germin[a] / vento feruntur Thracio.* / (vacat) / *Achelous alumnus / Postumi praef(ecti) c(lassis) / extima Cappadocum Ponti / qua(e) iungitur orae me genuit / tellus moenia sunt Tyan[ae] / Hermogenes genitur nom[en] / [mihi erat] Acheloo artibus / [Romanus infan]s editus ingen(io) / [- - -f]orma a homine[s - - -] / iam gemitu [- - -] / - - - - - -*

Kristallus, foster-son of the admiral Postumus. Born as a Roman infant and a nurseling in the *castra*... by the river ..., after seeing the towns of Spain and, from a distance, of Mauretania, he rests on the Moesian shore (?), robbed of his tender youth, as the spring buds of flowers are carried off by the Thracian wind.

Acheolous, foster-son of the admiral Postumus. The outer Cappadocian land, where it borders on Pontus, gave me birth; the city was that of Tyana, my father was Hermogenes, the name Acheolous (was bestowed on me), given birth... with humane accomplishments...

(Translation adapted from E. Courtney, Musa Lapidaria)

T14) Montana: AE 1902, 71; ILS 9275; CLE 2037; CLEMoes 32; Velkov & Aleksandrov 1994, no. 46; Lungarova 2012, no. 40; Zaccaria 2015, 528–534 = AE 2015, 1199; HD031896 (second half of the second century[117]): A: *Cum primum / veni Monta/nis et numi[n]a / vidi, deabus / votum vovi, / ut potui pos/[u]i.* // B: *Mallia Ae/miliana do/mo Roma fr[u]/mento [p]ubli/co cum fili[o] suo / m(onumentum) restitui[t].*

A: As soon as I came to Montana and contemplated the divine majesty, I made a vow to the goddesses and, according to my means, I erected this monument.
B: Mallia Aemiliana from Rome, belonging to a family benefiting from the public corn, restored this monument with his son.

T15) Montana: Velkov & Aleksandrov 1994, no. 48; Settipani 2012, 63–66 = AE 2012, 1262; Lungarova 2012, 42; Zaccaria 2015, 534–543 = AE 2015, 1200; HD072719 (A. D. 161): A: *Apollini et Dianae / Appius Cl(audius) Martialis / [A]nius (?) Silvinus leg(atus) / Augustor(um) leg(ionis) I Italic(ae) / cum Sextia Titi / filia Torquata / [c]oniuge et liber(is) / - - - - - -* // B: *Montis praesidibus / deis Nicivosi natis / dei(s)que in insula va/ga Nili voto coniugis / atque liberorum / aram dedicat Appi/[us Cl(audius) Martialis] / - - - - - -*

A: To Apollo and Diana. Appius Claudius Martialis, Annius Silvinus legate of the legion I Italica with his wife Sextia Torquata, daughter of Titus and their children …
B: Appius Claudius Martialis dedicates the altar after a vow of his wife and children to the patron gods of the snowy mountain, born of Jupiter on the wandering island of the Nile…

T16) Chomakovtsi: ILBulg 171; Conrad 2004, no. 506; HD042424 (third century): *D(is) M(anibus). / {H}ave viator. Si stu/diosus es siste et / perlege. Aureli(us) / Longinus mil(es) pre/torian(us) (!) Scarini Bu/sile (!) pat(ri) pien(tissimo) vix(it) ann(is) LXX / et Sura(e) Pyrulae matri pi/entis(simae) superstanti titulu(m) / bene merentibus pos(uit).*

[117] See Velkov & Aleksandrov 1994, no. 46; CLEMoes 32.

To the Spirits of the Departed. Be well, passer-by. If you wish, stop by and read. Aurelius Longinus, praetorian soldier to Scaris, son of Busila, his most pious father, who lived 70 years, and to Sura daughter of Pyrula his most pious mother who survived him. He set up the epitaph to those who well deserved it.

T17) Glava: CIL III 12396; ILBulg 150; CLE 1879; CLEMoes 38; Conrad 2004, no. 504; HD042422 (end of the third / beginning of the fourth century[118]): *Tu viator qui tr/ansis, rest(a), leg(e) tit(ulum) o/biter. Le(ge) et rep(ete) 's(it) d(is) M(anibus) t(uis) / t(erra) p(ropitia?)'. / Val(erius) Tzita qui et Vi/talis vet(eranus) et Florenti/us filius mil(es) et Vitalis / fil(ius) mil(es) Tzita pater / posuit Laurent{z}io / [f]ilio suo carissim[o].*

You traveller, who pass by, stop and read this inscription on the way. Read and repeat / read and rest "may the earth be light on your Manes". His father Valerius Tzita, also called Vitalis, a veteran, and his sons Florentius, a soldier, and Vitalis, a soldier. The father Tzita erected (the monument) for his beloved son Laurentius.

T18) Vorovum minus:[119] Velkov & Aleksandrov 1994, no. 110 = AE 1969/70, 568; Conrad 2004, no. 503; HD012298 (first half of the third century[120]): *D(is) M(anibus). / Val(erius) Rufus vet(eranus) ex vico Vor/ovo minore vivo suo / sibi et coniugi su(a)e Aurel(iae) Zuraturmeni / memor/iam fecit insuper sol/um [s]uum qui est annoru/m LXV. Valeat viator. / Vivat qui leget.*

To the Spirits of the Departed. The veteran Valerius Rufus from the vicus Vorovum minus had this monument erected during his lifetime for himself and his wife Aurelia Zuraturmes on his land. He is 65 years old. Be well, passer-by. May live the one who reads.

[118] Conrad 2004, no. 504.
[119] The *vicus* is erroneously always called in the publications Vorovum Minor.
[120] Conrad 2004, no. 503.

T19) Reselets: Beševliev 1952, no. 68; ILBulg 178; Gerov 1976, 65, no. 7 = AE 1976, 613; CLEMoes 58 Conrad 2004, no. 515; HD012573 (first half of the third century[121]): *D(is) M(anibus). / [Resta,] viator, et / [titulum (?) l]ege si lex e/[st leger]e (?) tibi. / P(ublius) Aelius / [F]irmus vet(eranus) / [le]g(ionis) XI Cl(audiae) se vivo / [sibi et - - -]tani coniugi / s(uae) b(ene) m(erenti) p(osuit).*

To the Spirits of the Departed. Stay, passer by and read the inscription, if you are used to read. P. Aelius Firmus, veteran of the legion XI Claudia had this set up during his lifetime for himself and for his wife … who well deserved it.

T20) Koynare: ILBulg 154; CLEMoes 59; Conrad 2004, no. 505; CLE 3057; HD042423 (second half of the third century[122]): *[D(is) M(anibus)]. / Viator qui trans]/[is, r]est(a), perlege. Me vi/vo posui ego Maximus / Marci patri meo Marco / Crisp[in]i qui vix(it) an(nis) LXXX / et Valeriae Zileni matri / meae qui vix(it) an(nos) LX / et Senpromiae (!) Anton(i)ae / coniugi meae pientissi/mae qui (!) vix(it) ann(is) XXXVII / bene merentibus pos(ui).*

To the Spirits of the Departed. Traveller, who pass by, stay, read (this). I, Maximus, son of Marcus, had this set up during my lifetime for them who well deserved it: my father Marcus, son of Crispinus, who lived 80 years, my mother Valeria, daughter of Ziles, who lived 60 years and Sempronia Antonia, my most pious wife who lived 37 years.

T21) Chavdartsi, in a mausoleum close to Melta: AE 1916, 122; ILBulg 248; CLEThr 1;[123] Cugusi 2008, 251–252; Nedeljković 2009 = AE 2009, 1201; HD026220 (third century): *D(is) M(anibus). / Siste viator iter animum[que intende sepu]lc{h}ro / et lege quam dure sit mihi v[ita d]ata ipsum / margebam (!) Florenti caro m[ar]ito in XIIII / annum mors mihi saeva fuit [sic d]isceptarunt / fata ne pia esse(m) patri nec mat[ri - - -*

[121] Conrad 2004, no. 515.
[122] Conrad 2004, no. 505. Cugusi (CLEMoes 59) dates this monument to the fourth / fifth century.
[123] The inscription is erroneously assigned by Cugusi to the *carmina* of Thracia.

]TEMRE / pie (!) f{a}emine (!) caste (!) pro pieta[te lacr]imas / satiavi fata superba nomine [- - -]/rest{t}[o voca]bar qui nuncquam sc[eleratus erat quoad] / ab impia fata disceptata die ut n[imis essem blanda] / marito crudelis thalamos post mor[bi accessum] / reliqui teque rog(o) comis dolea(t) tibi pulch[ra futura] / quod mea virginitas mort[al]i somn[o sepulta est] / isque tuas cineres aurea terr[a tegat vosque] / ego nunc moneo genitore[s fatorum legem] / rumpere nemo [potest].

To the Spirits of the Departed. Stop your walking, passer-by, turn your soul to my grave and read how cruel was the life that I was given. I withered before the eyes of my dear husband Florens and died a horrible death at the age of fourteen. So the fates decided that I should never get to be pious to my father nor to my mother (...) instead of this gesture of pity I have satisfied the proud destiny with tears. I was called ..., who was never unhappy until the day chosen by the evil fate for me to be too pleasing for my husband, when I died from the cruel bed after an attack of illness. And I ask you, my companion, to be sorry that my virginity, which was about to become beautiful, now lies buried by the sleep of death, and may this (viz. the sleep of death) cover your ashes with golden soil. And to you, my parents, I now remind you: no one can break the law of destiny.

T22) Nedan: CIL III 12408; ILBulg 430; CLE 2247; CLEMoes 61; CBI 649; Tomas 2016, 168–169; HD042813 (third century): *[Hanc mortis sedem extr]uxit sibi vivus amicus qua nunc / [ipse iacet simul et - - -] M(arcus) Aurel(ius) Mucianus vet(eranus) ex b(ene)f(iciario) leg(ati) leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) / [- - -] Muciane (!) fil(iae) eius et Aurel(io) Dizze vet(erano) fratri fec(it). / Mucianus / fecit.*

A friend built this dwelling for the death during his lifetime, where now [he himself is also buried...] The veteran ex beneficiarius of the legate of the legion I Italica M. Aurelius Mucianus ... had this made for his daughter Muciana and his brother and veteranus Aurelius Dizze. Mucianus had this made.

T23) Obedinenie: CIL III 12437; ILBulg 395; CLE 1323; CLEMoes 25; Conrad 2004, no. 328; HD042091 (third century): *D(is) M(anibus). / Si modo sunt Ma/nes, sentiant: spes vi/te (!) nostre (!) fueras, nu/c (!) quis ubi iaceas, indi/cat iste lapis. L(ucius) Spuren<n>i/us Herculanus frater et / Fl(avia) Paula mater L(ucio) Spuren/nio Rufo b(ucinatori) c(o)h(o)r(tis) Mattia/corum militanti an(nis) XX / bene merenti posue/runt. Valete viatores.*

To the Spirits of the Departed. If the spirits of the Underworld exist, let them listen to us: you had been the hope of our life, but now, who you are and where you are buried, this gravestone indicates it. The brother Lucius Spurennius Herculanus and the mother Flavia Paula set up this monument to Lucius Spurennius Rufus, trumpeter of the *cohors Mattiacorum*, serving 20 years in the army and well deserving (this tribute). Farewell travellers.

T24) Abrittus: Kazarov 1926/1927, 102–103, no. 26; CLEMoes 42; CLE 2650 (third century): *- - - - - - / [- - -]yir[-]ann[- - -] / [- - -]NITPIREO tetr(e?) X annos / vixi cum coniuge cara {a}edi<di>/mus ex nobis dyo (!) pia pigno/ra natos quos parva vita / fortuna inimic{e}a peremit / ex Zinama prolem viventi/um earumque nepotem he/rede(m) substituit qui nostri / Manesve [s]epulcris vivit / [- - -]rus este qu[- - -] / - - - - - -*

… I lived 10 years with my dear wife. We gave birth to two pious pledges, whom a hostile destiny killed in their little lives. He designated as heir the offspring of Zinama of those who survived and their nephew, who lives and the Manes of our burial…

T25) Abrittus. This inscription is still unpublished, therefore its transcription is not reproduced here. Pictures are available online in lupa.at: Lupa 20853 (frg. A) and Lupa 20852 (frg. B). For an interpretation of frg. A see Buonopane 2018.[124]

[124] During the preparation of this paper the two fragments of this inscription have been published separately in CLE 2651-2652.

T26) Abrittus: Kolb & Ivanov 2016; Salomies 2018, 157–165 (fourth century): *Romulianus p(rae)p(ositus) eqq(uitum) Dalm(atarum) / Beroe(e)nsium comitate(nsium) / et Fl(avia) Maxima casta con/iux eius filiae suae d/ulcissimae Romula[e] / oriundae ex prov(incia) [- - -] / cives (!) Aquisene[nses] / ubi v[ixerunt par]/entes avius a patre / Romulus vir magnu[s] / memorat(a)e ex p(rae)p(osito) trib(unus) / q(ua) comite factus / Valerinus ipsa dig/nitate secutus (!) vi/xit tamen Romula an(nos) / VII q(ui) memoriam feci/mus nobi<li>ssima gra/tia ipsa hic tamen Romu/la filia vestra magnam / dolorem in pectore fixi(t).*

Romulianus, commander of the Dalmatian imperial field cavalry of Beroe and Flavia Maxima, his chaste wife, to their sweetest daughter Romula, native of the province of ..., a citizen from (...), where her parents also lived and Romulus, her grandfather from her father's side, a prominent man, tribune of the aforementioned (unit), promoted from the rank of commander. After being promoted to *comes*, his successor in the rank was Valerinus. However, Romula lived for seven years and we erected this last monument in her honour. Here Romula, your daughter, has stuck a great pain in your chests.

T27) Veliki Preslav, Marcianopolis: CIL III 7469; CLE 2246; Kalinka 1906, no. 429; CLEMoes 47; HD043041 (third / fourth century?): *- - - - - - / [- - -]niam primus [- - -] / [- - -] hanc macu[l]am [- - -] / [- - -]a reliquit [q]ui [- - -] / [- - -] crudele vider[e - - -] / [- - -] ipse pignus su[- - -] / [- - -] dulcior huic [- - -] / [- - - m]ihi luc[e]ret r[- - -] / [- - -]us [q]uem an[t]e di[em - - -] / [- - -]uit inpro[b]a mors [- - -] / [- - -]ac s[ed p]ar[s] ab ad [- - -] / [- - - qu]e superpo[- - -] / [- - -]cet iam credas [- - -] / [- - -] L(a)elius hic patri [- - -] / [- - -]o corpore [f]a[t]o [- - -] / [- - - f]rater compre[- - -] / [- - - a]b[s]i[t in]vid[ia] / [- - -]tri.*

... first ... this dishonour ... left ... see cruel ... the pledge itself ... sweeter to him ... for me would shine ... whom prematurely ... the unfair death ... but part ... you believe ... Laelius here to his father ... the body because of his destiny ... the brother ... may jealousy be far away ...

T28) Novi Pazar, on the road that connected Marcianopolis to Sexaginta Prista: CIL III 7465; Conrad 2004, no. 322; HD042071 (end of the third / beginning of the fourth century[125]): *R(esta) viator / et lege Var(ius) / Sudicin/tis (!) milex (!) / vixit a/nnis XL / qui mili/tavit in nu/mero scu/tariorum / cuius cara / mater Sus/a eregi{i}t (!) / titulo(m) (!) / viator.*

Stop, passer-by, and read. The soldier Varius Sudicenthus lived 40 years, who served in the *numerus scutariorum*, and whose dear mother Susa set up the inscription, passer-by.

AE: *L'Année Epigraphique*, 1888–.

CBI: Schallmayer, E., Eibl, K., Ott, J., Preuss, G. & Wittkopf, E. (1990) *Der römische Weihebezirk von Osterburken, I. Corpus der griechischen und lateinischen Beneficiarer-Inschriften des Römischen Reiches* (Stuttgart).

CIL: *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berolini 1863–.

CLE: *Carmina Latina epigraphica*, Leipzig, Berlin 1895–1897, 1926, 2023.

CLEAfrique: Hamdoune, C. (2011) *Vie, mort et poésie dans l'Afrique romaine d'après un choix de Carmina Latina Epigraphica* (Bruxelles).

CLEMoes: Cugusi, P. & Sblendorio Cugusi, M. T. (2008) *Carmina Latina epigraphica Moesica* (Bologna).

CLEPann: Cugusi, P. & Sblendorio Cugusi, M. T. (2007) *Carmina Latina epigraphica Pannonica* (Bologna)

CLEThr Cugusi, P. & Sblendorio Cugusi, M. T. (2008) *Carmina Latina epigraphica Thraciae* (Bologna).

IGBulg: Mihailov, G. (1958-1997) *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae* (Sofia)

IGLNovae: Božilova, V. & Kolendo, J. (eds) (1997) *Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae (Mésie inférieure)* (Bordeaux)

[125] Conrad 2004, no. 322.

IGLR: Popescu, E. (1976) Inscripțiile grecești și latine din secolele IV-XIII descoperite în România (București).

ILBulg: Gerov, B. (1989) *Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae* (Sofia).

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ILS: Dessau, H. (1892–1916) *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae* (Berolini).

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IScM V: Doruțiu-Boilă, A. (1980) *Capidava, Troesmis, Noviodunum* (București).

RMD: Roxan, M. M. & Holder, P. A. (1985-2006) *Roman military diplomas* (London).

SEG: *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 1923-.

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STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA 10, 149-165
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Being a Thracian at the frontier: cultural affiliation of the Thracian population living at *Novae* in *Moesia Inferior*

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Abstract: The focus of this study is *Novae* (in *Moesia Inferior*) and the Thracians in local military, administrative and civilian structures. My interest was provoked by the success of Roman provincialism, which led a particular person, their family or a group of people in a settlement to call themselves "Romans" or "Greeks". The processes known as Romanization and Hellenization depended on a number of factors, such as the presence of Roman legionary and auxiliary units, administration and urbanization, production and trade, etc. To these factors can be added the military-political aspirations of the emperor, the central and provincial authorities, as well as the geographical features of an area. In this case, the legionary headquarters of *legio I Italica* is one such specific point. With its location – between the "civilized" society of the Balkan south and *barbaricum* in the north, between the highly Latinized West and the Hellenic ἀποικίαι in the East – it is one of the most important links in the provincial system along the Lower Danube. It is at such a dynamic point that it is interesting to trace the Thracian population and clarify its participation in the local landscape, its motivation for this and the methods of realization in the structures created by the authorities.

Key words: *Moesia Inferior*, *Novae*, Roman limes, Thracians, Roman army, Social structure, Urbanization, Administration

Резюме: Обект в настоящото изследване е *Novae* (в *Moesia Inferior*) и проявленията на тракийския елемент в местните военни, административни и цивилни структури. Интересът в тази посока е провокиран от успехите на римския провинциализъм, които карат даден човек, неговото семейство или група от хора в конкретно населено място да се назоват „римляни“ или „елини“. Те зависят от редица фактори, като например присъствие на римски легионни и помощни части, администрация и урбанизация, производство и търговия, etc.

Към тези фактори могат да се прибавят военно-политическите стремежи на императора, на централните и провинциалните власти, както и географските особености на дадена област. В случая легионния лагер на *legio I Italica* е една такава специфична точка. Със своето местоположение – между „цивилизованото“ общество на балканския юг и *barbaricum* на север, между силно латинизирания Запад и елинските апойкии на Изток – той е едно от най-важните звена в провинциалната система по Долния Дунав. Именно в една такава динамична точка е интересно да се проследи тракийското население и да се изясни неговото проявление в местния ландшафт, неговата мотивация за това и методите за реализиране сред създадените от властта структури.

After the subjugation of the lands along the Lower Danube by Rome and the creation of the province of *Moesia*, the imperial apparatus of Augustus undertook the creation of a unified defense system, and this is a well-realized fact. It is known in the scientific literature by the term *limes*, and its original design was to facilitate coordination in command and opened the possibility of countering the invading "barbarian" tribes from the left bank of the river. That is why it is one of the key elements for the protection of the province. The aim of this study, however, is not to highlight its qualities, but to consider its existence through the prism of Roman provincialism. This judgment lies on the idea of *limes* as an additional independent organism in the Thracian lands. Through the line with the fortified facilities, the physical presence of the Empire was declared. The inhabitants living nearby certainly watched disturbingly the construction of this "protective net" of unprecedented magnitude, which lay claims to their lands and clearly states *ab hinc* complete submission. At the same time, the foundations are laid for urban core with the potential to play the role of a leading center of the peregrinal community. The necessity of them stems from the fact that north of the Balkan Mountains there are no urban-type settlements, which *de facto* are one of the pillars of the Roman provincial authority.[1] From the imposed model, the victims are the residents of small villages and the people living in their huts in remote places. In the scientific literature, their habitats are often referred to by the terms *canabae* and *vici*. They

[1] On the situation with the Roman urbanism and its Romanization aspect see Ando 2006, 182–185; Revell 2009, 44–57.

were responsible to the head of the corresponding administrative organization. And since the military structures dominate in the newly founded *Moesia*, it is expected that they have a role in the management of the mentioned units.[2] Therefore, a system was deployed on the ground, in which the militaries were the foundation of provincial Roman society.[3] The possession of Roman citizenship was important there and the financial capabilities of the person and his family. It is at such a dynamic point of the Roman Lower Danube Limes that it is interesting to trace the Thracian population. The main focus of the study is on clarifying Thracians' participation in the local landscape, its motivation for this and the structures created by the authorities.

A considerable amount of material was found from the camps of the legionnaires, auxiliary and naval units along the Danube, and therefore it would be more appropriate to concentrate efforts on a specific place. The problem here is its definition. After a preliminary examination of the epigraphic material from the *limes*, however, one cannot help but note that *Novae* stands out with the number of attested persons of Thracian origin. The military camp of *legio I Italica* definitely played a role in the penetration of Rome into the region. In addition, because of its location – between the civilized Greek-speaking world of the Balkan south and *barbaricum* in the north, between the strongly Latinized West and the Hellenic *ἀποικίαι* in the East – it is one of the most important links in the provincial system along the Lower Danube. Its geographical and Romanization positions are a convincing enough argument for subjecting the epigraphic material to a thorough analysis.

Perhaps the most famous representative of this ethnic layer, not only in limes, but also in the province, is M(arcus) *Val(erius) M(arci) Val(eri) Mucacenti fil(ius) Quir(ina) Flavianus*, *domo Cirta*, whose name appears on a pedestal for a statue of *Mars Victor* (fig. 1.) with an

[2] The connection in government between the civil and military communities is always present in the territories that are to be organized into provinces (Abott & Johnson 1926, 10–12). This especially applies to border regions (Mócsy 1974, 239). On the situation with administration of the peregrines' communities in the Moesian lands see Gerov 1988, 22–23.

[3] Speidel 2014, 319–321.

honorary inscription in Latin for the prosperity of Elagabalus (218 – 222; IGLNovae 33, pl. 13, 33):

Marti Victori leg(ionis) I Ital(icae)
Antoninianae pro salute
Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) [[M(arci) Aur(eli) Anton(ini)]]
Pii Felicis Aug(usti)
5 divi Antonini fil(i)
M(arcus) Val(erius) M(arci) Val(eri) Mucacenti
fil(ius) Quir(ina) Flavianus, domo
Cirta, p(rimus) p(ilus) ex eq(uite) Romano.
Aquilae d(ono) d(edit).

Translation: "To the Mars *Victor* from the I Italian Antonine legion for the well-being of Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Pious, Joyful, Augustus, son of the Divine Antoninus. Marcus Valerius Flavianus, son of Marcus Valerius Mucacentus, from the Quirine tribe, native of Cirta, *primus pilus* and a Roman horseman. From Aquiala as a gift".

The nomenclature thus formulated automatically emphasizes the image of the Thracian who is proud of his position in the Romanized structures[4] of the alleged *municipium*.[5] This is not accidental given his positions in the ranks of *legio I Italica Antoniniana*. The position of

[4] Aleksandrov 2010, 283; Aleksandrov 2013, 237.

[5] Despite the success in the archaeological studies of the ancient remains near Svishtov, it is difficult to talk about municipal status, given that there is one and a controversial example for this. The urban appearance of *Novae* is best recognized from the 4th century onwards, having become the topographic successor of the earlier military camp (Dinchev 2016, 37). It is these details that instigate the attention of B. Gerov in his analyses: "This settlement did not receive the regulation of either colony or municipia, as far as can be judged by the epigraphic and literary information. No inscriptions are known from it so far to speak of its administration as canabae, as is the case with Troesmis in Dobrudzha" (Gerov 1950/1952, 98). According to the classification of V. Dinchev, in Late Antiquity it belonged to the group of medium-sized cities (Dinchev 2001, 227).

primus pilus is one of the most prestigious in the officer's military system of Rome. It is well paid and opens a number of doors.[6] However, there is hardly a Thracian who reached these positions thanks to his diligence in military affairs. *Marcus Valerius Flavianus* may have been helped by his father, *Valerius Mucacentus*, who, judging by his nomenclature, has an older Romanism, which contributes to the self-esteem of its representatives.



Fig. 1. Honorary inscription in Latin to Mars Victor from the legionaries of legio I Italica Antoniniana, initiated by Marcus Valerius Flavianus, native of Cirta, for the well-being of Elagabalus (218 – 222). The image is taken from the Epigraphic Database Haidelberg, Nr. 009440.

Particularly for this family, it can be said that its achievements were due to the activities of its members in foreign territories. Guidelines for this are derived from the mentioned origin of *Marcus Valerius Flavianus – Cirta*. The city is located in North Africa and is one of the main centers of Romanism in this part of the continent.[7] This means that the father's (or even grandfather's) service requires his living at this remote point of the *imperium Romanorum*. Subsequently, he was able to adapt and survive, and then the achievements continued to be relevant for the family through *Marcus Valerius Flavianus*.

How old was the Thracian family that participated in the Romanization of social structures, it is impossible to say with great certainty. Guidance in this regard should probably be sought in the

[6] As K. Gilliver calls them, they are the "backbone" of the Roman army (Gilliver 2007, 190).

[7] The details of the beginning of the Romanization of *Cirta* and the presence of foreigners are examined in the study of Fentress 2006, 7–10.

cognomen *Flavianus*. The use of the name of *gens Flavia* at such a late time may be intended to emphasize precisely the family's connection with their ancestors, responsible for their connections to the military echelon of the last decades of the 1st century. According to the statistics of the material from the Eastern Provinces, there is a trend in its use as a *cognomen* in the naming system of individuals and this practice aims to emphasize the prestige of people with this type of nomenclature.[8] In this case, an additional factor turns out to be the military path. He prompted the use of *Flavianus* at the expense of another "conventional" Thracian name, similar to the father's *cognomen Mucacentus*.

The circumstances of the appearance of *primus pilus* and a prestigious horseman of Thracian origin in *Novae* – positions that mark the peaks of provincial society,[9] also deserve attention. If one examines this case as a "Thracian who wants to return to his native lands", an interesting picture is revealed, according to which the roots of the family should be sought precisely in this place or in the region. Most likely, it is about the rise of an earlier representative from *vicus* to the early military camp. Its smooth and progressive prosperity among military positions gradually affected the other members, and then the heirs.

Valerius Mucazenus ending up in *Cirta* is not surprising given the well-attested Thracian presence in Africa. It seems that the western provinces of the continent, such as *Mauretania Tingitana*, *Mauretania Caesariensis* and *Numidia*, were set as a conducive training grounds for Thracians and high officers.[10] Their capacity did not go unnoticed by the Roman authorities, judging by their policy in the time of the Severan dynasty, which was characterized by the prioritization of officer recruits

[8] The percentage of these names in some provinces illustrates not only the degree of Romanization and the pace of the pervasive cultural processes of the Latin West. Some research finds that they bring prestige to their holders, as stated in Keenan 1974, 283–304.

[9] Aleksandrov 2013, 20–22.

[10] Reflections on the matter are made in Stoev 2017, 110–111, note 273. More about the Thracians and Dacians in the African lands during the Hellenistic and Roman era, see Fol 1965, 299–310; Fol 1968, 1–17; Fol 1969, 194–274; Velkov & Fol 1977; Dana 2003, 166–186.

from the mentioned sections for the Lower Danube limes.[11] Having already found himself in a Romanized and Militarized environment, he continued his development among that part of the population that had adopted the Roman culture and language.

Given the nature of the consecration, *Marcus Valerius Flavianus* imitated his father and his ancestors. It was erected on behalf of the *legio I Italica Antoniniana*, and with its address to *Mars Victor* and the placement of the statue of the deity in the local sanctuary, or more likely in the *principia* itself,[12] it clearly proclaims its intentions to distinguish himself not only from the peregrinal community of the surrounding area, but also from the Romanized one in (or close to?) the settlement. According to research at *Novae*, it is composed exclusively of veteran settlers and their descendants. The latter hold themselves responsible for the urban appearance of the settlement, like other cities in the province such as *Durostorum*, *Troesmis* and *Tropaeum Traiani*.[13] Therefore, this act is an appropriate identifier in environments with a dominant military element.

Information about the other Thracian, impressive with his growth, is found in the Latin dedication (on a limestone plinth or statue pedestal?) from the first half of the 3rd century (fig. 2). In this case it is about *T(itus) Aur(elius) Bithus* (IGLNovae 49, pl. 19, nr. 49):

[– – – – – – – – – – – – – –]
T(itus) Aur(elius) Bithus
praef(ectus) cas(trorum).

[11] Stoev 2017, 120–121.

[12] A normal practice in places such as *Novae* at least according to one of the latest findings of this type. Information about them see in Łajtar 2021, 121–129.

[13] At least this view was held in the older literature (Żiromski 1997, 18). According to the latest research, the *canabae* of the military camp is dominated by Roman citizens, while the peregrinal names among the people (of Thracians, Dacians, Celts, Illyrians, etc.) are detected only in 5% of the total number of analyzed nomenclatures. Interesting is the number of Greek names, which also stands out and approaches that of the Roman ones. Some credit for the circulation of Latin anthroponymy must also be awarded to the liberators. The analyses with the comments of these details have been shared just recently in Tomas 2021, 39–63.

Translation: "...Titus Aurelius Bithus, a camp prefect".



Fig. 2. Dedication (?) in Latin by the camp prefect Titus Aurelius Bithus. The image is taken from the Epigraphic Database Haidelberg, Nr. 042615.

He was also the most impressive Thracian advanced in provincial society through the elevator qualities of the Roman army. Indicative in this respect is the occupied post of *praefectus castrorum*. Unfortunately, the state of the inscription and the nomenclature thus formulated by the stonemason do not allow generalizing analyses of its advance. Yet the anthroponyms in his naming system manage to provide us with a certain amount of information. Focusing first on his *praenomen* and *nomen gentile*, there is no way not to impress the release of the typical *gens Antonia praenomen Marcus* and its replacement with *Titus*. Modelling in this way probably comes to show Romanization in particular circumstances. It is hardly possible to specify its date here, but we can assume that it took place in the time of Marcus Aurelius (161-180) or Commodus (180-192). Most likely, it is a question of prosperity related to the tense situation on the limes during the years of the reign of the two emperors. The shortage of personnel forces prompted the authorities to turn to the peregrines in the provinces,[14] thereby strengthening the defense of limes and the ties with the limes-*κοινή*. However, as it was seen from the example of *Marcus Valerius Flavianus*, the advance to the top of the provincial military command did not come so easily and depended on a number of factors, one of which was the extended participation of the family in the Roman army. It is therefore possible that *Titus Aurelus Bithus* possessed a similar *cursus*. The difference between the two is their success in *primi ordines*. It is entirely possible that the *prefectus*

[14] Dobson 1955, 2–15; 143–153.

castrorum was the next step in the development of *Valerius Flavianus*.[15] The proof of this is in the degree of development of the Romanization within them. While with him there are indications of hereditariness, here *Titus Aurelius Bithus* (probably?) has more recent Romanism, which at the same time is no obstacle to prosper in one of the important *municipia* of the province.

The other impressive Thracian who succeeded in advancing to the post of *primus pilus* was *M(arcus) Aurel(ius) Ulpia Teres, Pautalia*. He is responsible for placing an *ara* or statue pedestal with inscription in Latin addressing *Iupiter Optimus Maximus* for the well-being of Caracalla (Sarnowski 2015, 522–523, abb. 1a-d, nr. 1):

Inscription on the front:		I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)
		pro salute d(omini) n(ostri) Imp(eratoris)
		M(arci) Aurel(ii) Antonini
		Pii Aug(usti) et Iuliae Au-
	5	gustae matri Aug(usti)
		et castrorum
		M(arcus) Aurel(ius) Ulpia Teres
		Pautalia p(rimus) p(ilus) leg(ionis)
		I Ital(icae) Antonini-
	10	anae.
Left side:		Dedicatum
		kal(endis) Mai(i)s
		G(aio) Iuḷ(io) Aspṛo II
		et Iụl(io) Aspro
	15	co(n)ṣ(ulibus).

Translation: "To the Greatest and Best Jupiter for the well-being of our Lord the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Pious, Augustus, and Iulia Augusta, mother of Augustus and to all the forts. Marcus Aurelius Teres, from the Ulpian tribe, native of Pautalia, *primus pilus* of the I Italian Antonine legion. Dedicated on 1 May,

[15] According to research, before reaching the post of *praefectus castrorum*, one must pass through the position of *centurio* and *primus pilus* (Maxfield 1981, 204). More on the *praefecti castrorum* in *Moesia Inferior* see Aleksandrov 2013, 106–108.

when a consul was Gaius Iulius Asper, for the second time, and Iulius Asper".



Fig. 3.1. Limestone base for statue with honorific inscription in Latin addressing Iupiter Optimus Maximus for the well-being of Caracalla (211 - 217) by Marcus Aurelius Teres, primus pilus from the I Italian legion. (Sarnowski 2015, 522, abb. 1a, nr. 1.).

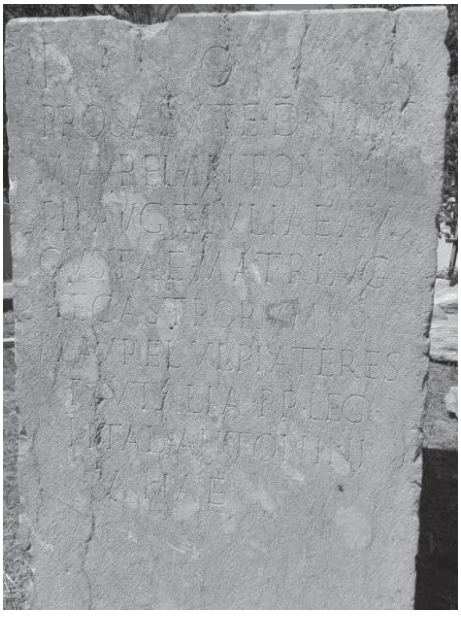


Fig. 3.2. Limestone base for statue with honorific inscription in Latin addressing Iupiter Optimus Maximus for the well-being of Caracalla (211 - 217) by Marcus Aurelius Teres, primus pilus from the I Italian legion. (Sarnowski 2015, 522, abb. 1b, nr. 1.).

The interesting thing about the man who became famous by reaching the high command of the provincial armies is that he came from *Pautalia*, a city located in the Roman province of *Thracia*. He even inserted the pseudo-tribe *Ulpia* into his onomastic formula, thus demonstrating his belonging to the privileged stratum of society from the neighboring province. In terms of Romanization, however, it cannot be said to be superior to the other two. Judging by the peregrine *cognomen Teres* – a very old Thracian name,[16] it is quite possible that its

[16] For its derivatives take a look at Detschew 1957, 499–502.

citizenship is due to the changes after the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. On the other hand, given the peculiarities of the previous two examples, it is hardly necessary to interpret his cursus in this way. As it was evidenced by them, and in view of the other *primipilares* from the military camp, it becomes clear that this position in *Novae* does not happen to random people, and because of that this Thracian is quite likely to owe his advance among the military ranks of the Roman army to an earlier representative with some positions in the mentioned circles.



Fig. 3.3. Limestone base for statue with honorific inscription in Latin addressing Iupiter Optimus Maximus for the well-being of Caracalla (211 - 217) by Marcus Aurelius Teres, primus pilus from the I Italian legion. (Sarnowski 2015, 522, abb. 1d, nr. 1.).

Strong peregrinal features are in the dedication of another *Iulius*, whose name is written on a relief of Sabazius with a Latin inscription (Fig. 4). It was found in the sanctuary of Asclepius at *Novae* (AE 1998, 1137):

Sabadio(!) sac(rum).
Iulius Do-
le(n)s cum suis p(osuit).

Translation: "Dedication to Sabazius. Iulius Dole(n)s with his (own expenses) placed (the monument)".

Of interest are both the very context of the act and the cognomen of the initiator: *Dole(n)s*. In anthroponymic terms, its popularity among the Thracians on both sides of Stara planina mountain range is well attested. Statistically, however, the examples south of the mountain, in

particular along the valley of the Maritsa River and its tributaries, prevail compared to those in the north, which are only 7.5%.[17] A curious fact is that some of its bearers in military diplomas are designated as *Bessi*, and in *Moesia Inferior* the other two inscriptions in which it is read are derived from *vicus Quintionis*[18] – an environment saturated with the same elements.[19] Perhaps this is not accidental and the numbers are intended to suggest the appearance of a person from a particular layer with roots in a certain Thracian area. It is not clear what *cursus* assists in the *Iulius Dole(n)s*'s appearance in the legionary center of *legio I Italica*, but it would not be wrong to think that it is in the direction of army circles.

Another anthroponym very typical of the Thracians might be attested on a fragment of votive tablet dedicated to Mithra around 2nd – 3rd century (fig. 5). The problem with it is that there are two versions for reading the formula:

According to IGLNovae 38, pl. 15, nr. 38:	According to the reading of V. Najdenova (AE 1999, 1329):
[Mu]catral(us?) ex v(oto) p(osuit).	[– – Deo(?)] Ca[uti (?) Mi]t(h)rae ex v(voto) p(osuit).
Translation: "Mucatral(us?) (have made/dedicated) according to a vow".	Translation: "To the Divine Cauti Mithra (have made/dedicated) according to a vow".

According to the first interpretation on the remnants of the dedication, it is clear that *[Mu]catral(us?)* takes care of its making.[20] In this case, it is rather strange the appearance of a peregrine in the

[17] About *Doles*, *Dolens*, *Δολης* and *Δωλης* see Detschew 1957, 146–147; and Dana 2014, 157–159.
[18] ISM I, 330 and ISM I, 335.
[19] For them, see the detailed study by Avram 2007, 91–109 and that by Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2019, 435–441.
[20] This is how the name in the corpus is written with the inscriptions of J. Kolendo and V. Božilova (IGLNovae 38). Later, in his Onomasticon, D. Dana recorded it with the ending in the third declension: *[Mu]catral(is)* (Dana 2014, 240).

"strongholds of Romanism" such as *Novae*. But of course, exceptions always should be expected. If the reading of the inscription is correct, then one can observe a religious dedication of particular individual who decides to express his gratitude to the Iranian deity (in its sanctuary?).[21] Otherwise, if the second reading suggested by V. Najdenova is considered, then one can observe a dedication to Mithra with an interesting epithet as the name *Cauti* is met mostly in the East. It is associated with the image of youth with an uplifted torch, while his companion *Cautopali* is with inverted torch.[22]



Fig. 4 Altar of Sabasius with dedicatory inscription in Latin by Iulius Dole(n)s. Image is taken from Ubi Erat Lupa, nr. 22287. Photo: Ortolf Harl, 2012.



Fig. 5 Fragment of a relief of Mithra with Latin inscription. The image is taken from the Epigraphic Database Haidelberg, Nr. 042601.

It seems that for now it is impossible to conduct more precise research on the person responsible for its placement. Even if it is about a Thracian, it should not be excluded that he himself originated in the

[21] On the cult of Mithras and its sanctuary in Novae see Tomas & Lemke 2015, 227–243.
[22] Cumont 1903, 129.

vicinity of the military camp or even in the other outskirts of the province.[23]

In view of the examples examined, an idea is created of Novae's leading role in the performance of well-trained staff. First of all, their degree of Romanization stands out. Those who managed to obtain the post of *primus pilus* showed their integration into Roman culture. Obviously, the requirement for the more important and responsible positions is that the people have mastered part of the Roman way of life. For the aspiration of the command, it is hardly necessary to seek a logical explanation, since commands and maneuvering of the military ranks require considerable knowledge of the Latin language. Secondly, the degree of dedication to Roman values is impressive. In fact, their nomenclature suggests that the development of the described scenarios is happening in a relatively late period. This is understandable, as it takes time for the Romanization to spread among the inhabitants of *Moesia* and later *Moesia Inferior*. On the other hand, some of the examined people are a product of an "older Romanism". Perhaps here it is appropriate to think in the direction of prestige and whether these people are not descendants of people with earlier contact with the Romans through the participation in the Roman army. Of course, this *cursus* is not surprising since it is typical for the border regions of the Empire. Nowhere on the *limes*, however, is there such a number of Thracians with similar positions in the military hierarchy and with such strong links with the Romanized society in or around a military camp. The quantity, and the very "quality" of dedications of the examined *primipilares* is the proof that *Novae* is shaping up as a favorable environment for the appointment of Thracians incorporated into the Roman culture.

This practice also sheds light on the degree of permeability of military command. There is hardly any need to think about a

[23] In the next epoch, that of Dominat, it cannot be said that there were proves for the expression of the Thracians in *Novae*. A *Dizzo*, which is read in *graffiti* from the *valetodinarium* of the military camp in the first half of the 4th century, quite well illustrates the ability of people of this ethnic composition to infiltrate key places in *Moesia Secunda* in Late Antiquity (AE 2011, 1125): Dizzo Ebctasiaque / atamo; More details on the context itself see in Płóciennik & Żelazowski 2011, 77–84.

compromise. *Novae* was built in one of the most neuralgic points on the Lower Danube *limes* and the acceptance of people from this ethnic stratum of the population as heads of defense clearly illustrates the vote of confidence in some successful individuals. If the origin from the Thracian families of the *optio Aurelius Domnio*[24] and the *centurio Aurelius Maturus*[25] is provable,[26] then the impressions on the role of *Novae* as a mediator for the manifestation of the peregrine component in an environment strongly saturated with Roman and Romanizing individuals are strengthened.

AE – *l'Année Épigraphique*, Paris.

IGLNovae – J. Kolendo, V. Božilova, *Inscriptopns Grecques et Latines de Novae (Mésie Inferieure)*, Bordeaux, 1997.

ISM – *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris*. Vol. I (ed. D. M. Pipidi); Vol. II (ed. I. Stoian); Vol. III (ed. Al. Avram); Vol. IV (ed. E. Popescu); Vol. V (ed. E. Doruțiu-Boilă); Vol. VI.2 (ed. A. Avram, M. Bărbulescu et L. Buzoianu). Editura Academiei Române, Bucharest/Diffusion de Boccard, Paris, 1975-2018.

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[24] IGLNovae 67

[25] AE 1925, 10

[26] As it is suggested in Stoev 2017, 105.

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STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA 10, 166-182
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Grave Structures from the Roman Necropolis at Gramada, Vidin Region

Atanas Danov

Abstract: The necropolis is located 4,5 km to the southeast of the town of Gramada, Vidin Region. It was studied in part during rescue archaeological excavations in 2019. The necropolis, dated within the 3rd century AD, falls within the territory of Ratiaria and belongs to the *villa rustica* west of it, explored during the same season.

Forty-two graves at the necropolis by Gramada have been excavated. The necropolis is flat, biritual, with a 3:1 ratio of cremations to inhumations. Entombment is presented by fourteen graves, all belonging to infant, immature individuals. The graves with entombment are without grave goods or with little grave goods, most frequently consisting of a clay cup and single strings worn during the lifetime of the deceased. The inhumation grave structures are ordinary burial pits and such partly encircled with stones, as well as one in the form of a horseshoe made of stones.

Cremations are presented by twenty-eight graves. In all cases, the bodies were cremated outside the burial structures where small quantities of burnt bone remains were laid for what were rather memorial reasons. It should be stressed that the graves with cremations are much richer in grave goods. The grave structures with the rite of cremation are more varied, with the graves in ordinary grave pits, such covered with stones and pits partially marked/surrounded with stones being the most numerous, followed by a structure made of roof tiles (tegulae) and horseshoe-like structures made of stones. No characteristic and repetitive feature in orientation of the graves was observed. The two rituals are not divided into distinctive zones.

Key words: Roman necropolis, cremations, inhumation, Gramada

Резюме: Некрополът се намира на 4,5 км югоизточно от гр. Грамада, Видинско. Той е проучен частично по време на спасителни археологически разкопки през 2019. Некрополът попада в територията на Рациария и принадлежи на villa rustica, проучвана през същия сезон, западно от него. Датира се в границите на III в. сл. Хр.

От некропола при гр. Грамада са проучени четиридесет и два гроба. Той е плосък, биритуален, като съотношението на кремациите спрямо инхумациите е 3:1. Трупополагането е представено от четиринадесет гроба, като всички са на детски, неизраснали индивиди. Гробовете с трупополагане са без инвентарни

или с малко количество инвентар, представен най-често от една керамична чаша и единични нанизи, носени приживе от покойника. Гробните съоръжение при инхумациите са обикновени гробни ями и такива оградени частично с камъни, както и едно съоръжение с подковообразна в план форма, изградено от камъни.

Кремациите са представени от двадесет и осем гроба. Изгарянето на тялото при всички е извършено извън гробните съоръжения, като в тях по-скоро поменално е поставяно малко количество горели костни останки. Трябва да се подчертае, че гробовете с трупоизгаряне са значително по-инвентарни. Гробните съоръжения при обреда на кремиране са по-разнообразни, най-многобройни са гробовете в обикновени ями, такива покрити с камъни и ями частично оградени с камъни, съоръжение изградено от керемиди (тегули) и съоръжения с форма на подкова, изградени от камъни. Не се наблюдава специфика и постоянство относно ориентацията на гробовете.

Трябва да се отбележи, че няма зонално разделение на двата ритуала.

The necropolis is located on slightly sloping arable land facing south, 4.5 km to the southeast of the town of Gramada, Vidin Region. The river Vidbol winds on its way some 1.5 km to the east. Further south, the gradient of the terrain increases, with the so-called Zeblyashki Dol gully located at some 0.7 km (map 1). The necropolis was studied[1] in part during salvage archaeological excavations[2] in 2019.[3] To the north, it continues outside the easement route drawn by the developers. The necropolis falls within the territory of Ratiaria and belongs to the *villa rustica* west of it and explored during the same season. Several necropolises on the territory of Ratiaria were studied entirely or in part in recent years. In addition to the one at Gramada, one should mention the two necropolises at Sinagovtsi village[4] and one at Slana Bara,[5] Vidin Region.

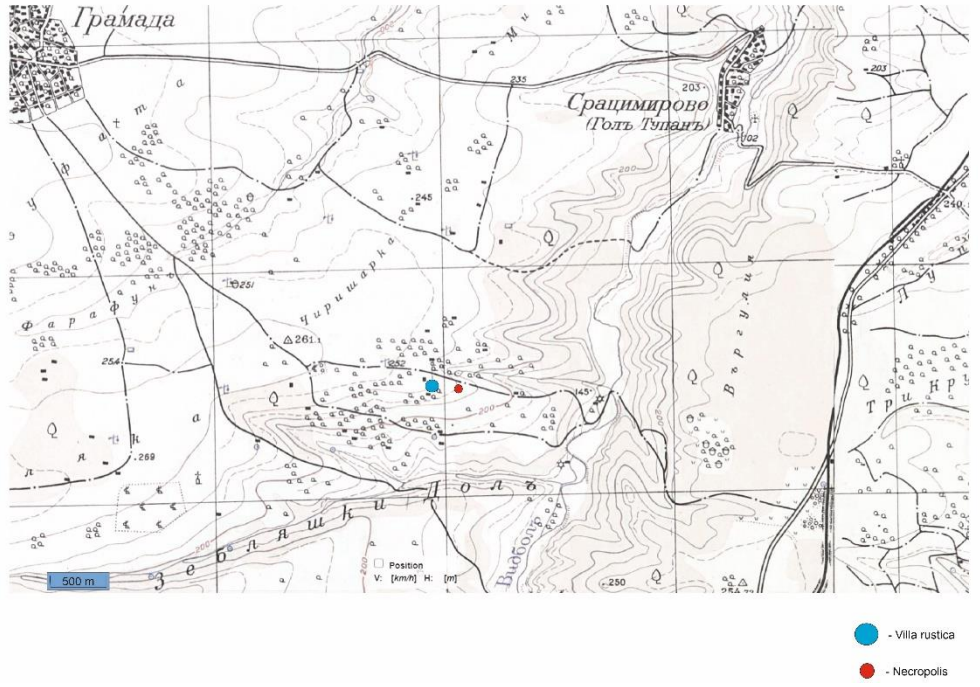
[1] The excavations were headed by Assoc. Prof. Stefan Alexandrov (NAIM-BAS) and Assoc. Prof. Zdravko Dimitrov (NAIM-BAS), to whom I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to publish the results presented here.

[2] Named according to Permit No 67/07.03.2019: Site 13/1012 under project 'Extension of the gas transmission infrastructure of Bulgartransgaz EAD parallel to the northern (main) gas pipeline to the Bulgarian-Serbian border', stage 'Linear part' – substage A, falling within the tenure of the town of Gramada, Vidin Region.

[3] Alexandrov *et al.* 2020, 897–898, Dimitrov *et al.* 2020a, 26, Dimitrov *et al.* 2020b, 86–102.

[4] Two necropoli have been excavated at Sinagovtsi village. One is biritual, comprising 140 graves and dating from the 1st century BC – 1st century AD. The second necropolis includes 11 graves, all with the ritual of cremation, dated in the 2nd- 3rd century AD (Dimitrov 2022, 46).

[5] At Slana Bara, Vidin Region, a necropolis with 79 grave structures was partly excavated, dated by archaeologists in the 3rd -4th century AD (Manev & Klisuranov 2022, 53).



Map 1. The location of Villa rustica and the necropolis at Gramada.

Forty-two graves of the necropolis at Gramada have been excavated (plan 1). All graves are found at a depth of 0.30 to 0.60 m below contemporary terrain level, which largely explains the poor preservation of some of the structures. Here we should not the interesting situation where the removal of the topsoil within the boundaries of the necropolis revealed an area covered with what at first seem chaotically scattered stones (plan 2). They probably marked the graves, the initial position of some of them being compromised as a result of soil cultivation. That the graves had visible markers is also indicated by the fact that no overlapping/crossing and disturbance was observed at the surveyed structures. The necropolis is flat, biritual, with a 3:1 ratio of cremations to inhumations.



Plan 1. General layout of the graves from the necropolis at Gramada (drawing: A. Danov).

Entombment is presented by fourteen graves, all belonging to infant, immature individuals. Regarding the orientation[6] of the burials with inhumation, one should note that most individuals were laid with the head pointing west and south, with deviations. Due to very poor bone preservation, the body position[7] is difficult to recover. Where possible, it should be underscored that the individuals were laid on their backs, flexion at the knees being observed at the lower limbs,[8] as well as extension, the upper limbs being bent at the elbows and placed on the torso. The graves with entombment are without grave goods or with little grave goods, most frequently consisting of a clay cup and single strings worn during the lifetime of the deceased. The inhumation grave structures[9] are ordinary burial pits and such partly encircled with stones, as well as one in the form of a horseshoe made of stones.

Cremations are presented by twenty-eight graves. In all cases, the bodies were cremated outside the burial structures where small quantities of burn bone remains were laid for what were rather memorial reasons. It should be stressed that the graves with cremations are much richer. The grave goods include: pottery vessels (glazed jars and oenochoae, as well as cups made of light-coloured sandy clay), lamps, iron knives, coins,[10] and others. The grave inventory is supplemented by items worn during the lifetime of the deceased, such as items of costume and jewellery. It should be noted that in the case of all graves with cremation, the grave goods were laid in the grave separately, while the dress and the jewellery accompanied the deceased on the pyre. The grave structures with the rite of cremation are more varied, with the graves in ordinary grave pits, such covered with stones and pits partially marked/surrounded with stones being the most numerous, followed by a structure made of roof tiles (tegulae) and horseshoe-like structures made of stones. No characteristic and repetitive feature in orientation of the graves was observes.

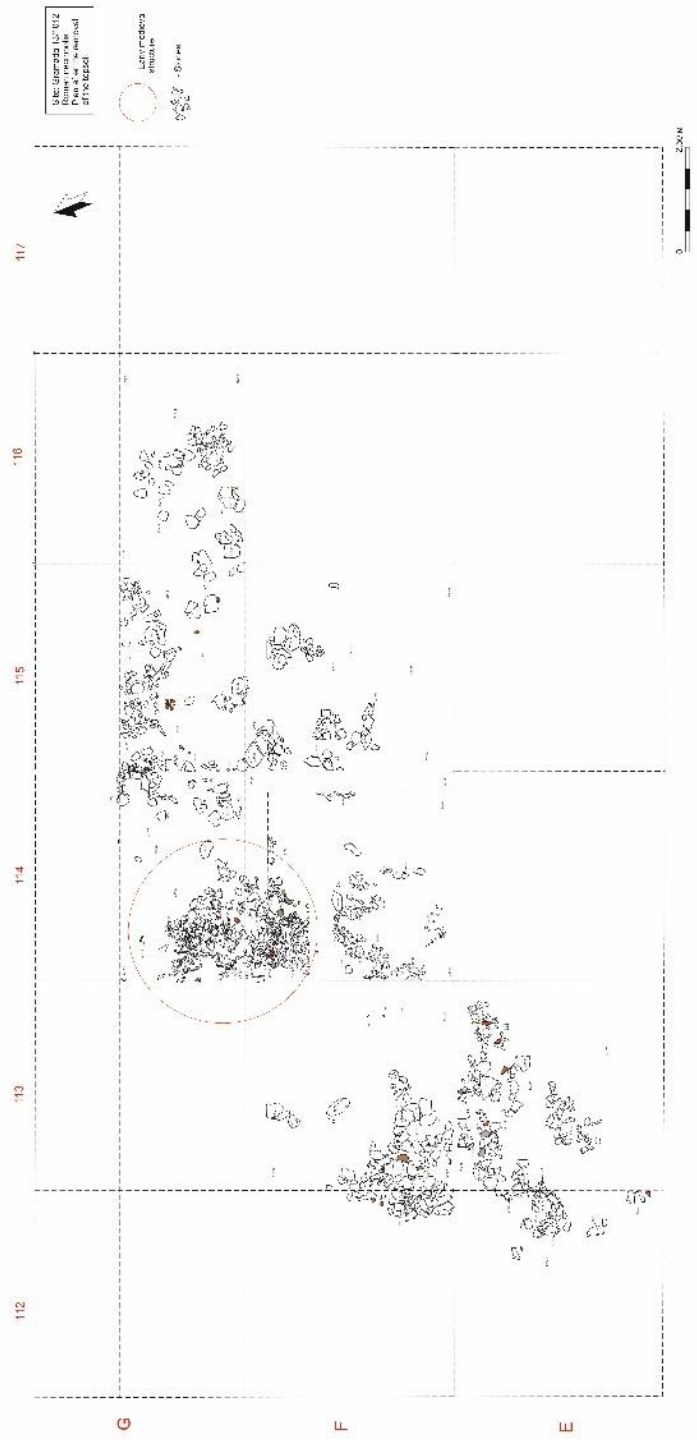
[6] Only two individuals are laid with their heads pointing to the north and one – to the east.

[7] The position of the limbs is not definitive in nearly all cases, as the laid individuals were infants and the bones are very badly preserved.

[8] In one individual, Grave No 5.

[9] Due to the shallow depth of burial the burial pits are difficult to distinguish against the brown cultural layer.

[10] The discovered coins number four and were minted by the emperors Severus Alexander (222–235), Probus (276–282), and Aurelian (270–275).



Plan 2. General layout of the situation within the necropolis, after the removal of the topsoil (drawing: A. Danov).

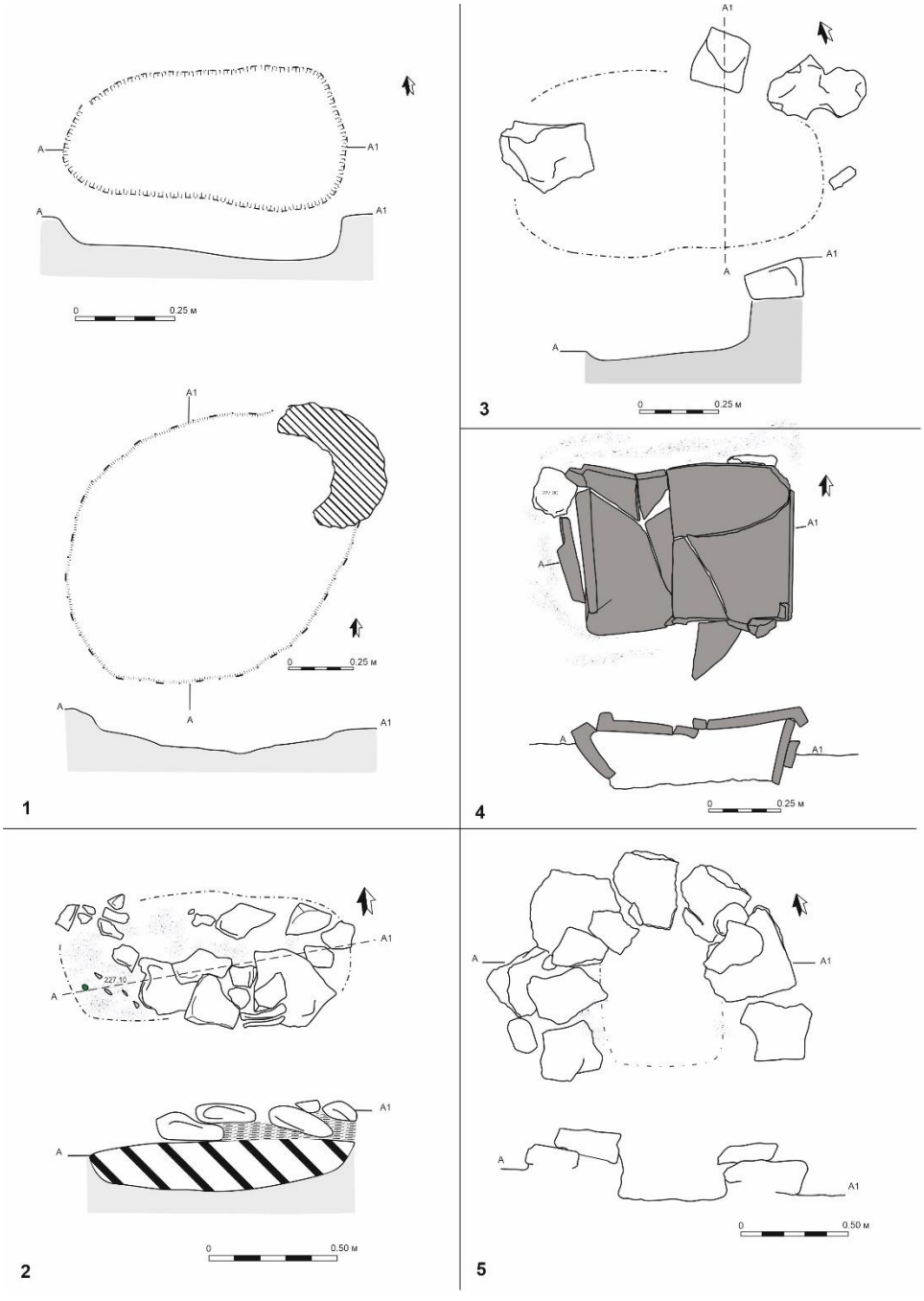


Table I. Types of burial structures. Ordinary grave pits (1); Pits covered with stones (2); Pits partially enclosed with stones (3); Grave structure made of tegulae (4); Stone grave structure with horseshoe shape (5)

(drawing: A. Danov; photo: A. Danov).

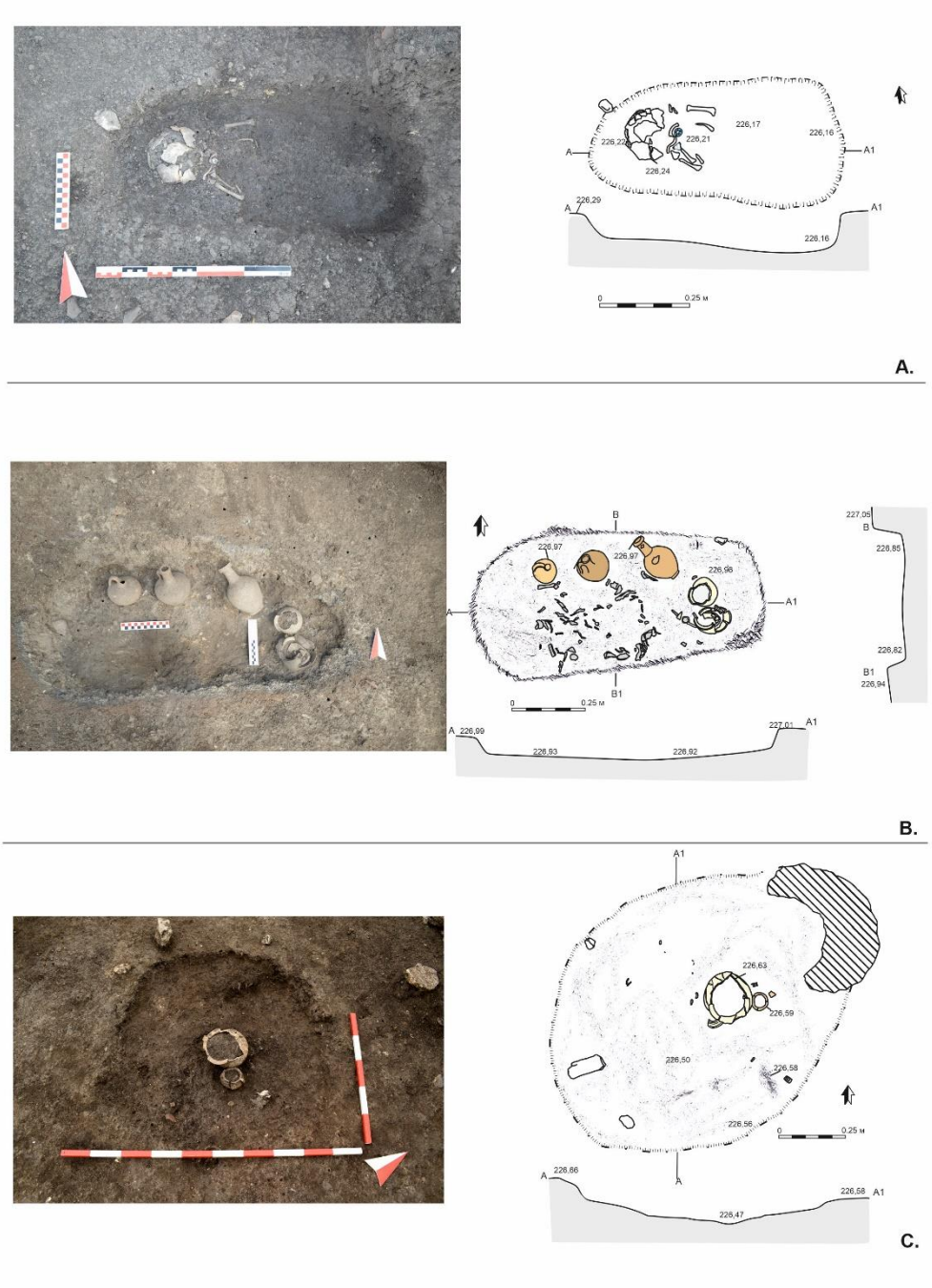


Table II. Ordinary grave pits. Grave No. 30 – inhumation (A); Grave No. 28 – cremation (B); Grave No 11 – cremation (C) (drawing: A. Danov; photo: A. Danov).

The end of the necropolis must be in the last quarter of the 3rd century AD.

Grave structures (Table I, 1-5):

1. *Ordinary grave pits (Table I, 1)(Table II, A.-C.).*

This type of grave structure is the most frequently encountered one, established in the case of both rituals and registered at a total of thirty-three graves. In some cases, there is one stone inside or next to the pit, which could be interpreted as a marker of the grave. The pits are dug into a pre-dating cultural layer.[11] They are oval or close to rectangular, elongated in plan shape.

In the case of cremation, part of the grave pits are clearly distinguishable by their charred to orange-red boundaries (Table II, B).[12] In most of these cases, the thickness of the pit walls varies between 1 and 5 cm. Where there are well-preserved, clearly outlined pit contours in cremation, the structures reach a maximum length[13] of 1.40 m. A large number of necropolises on the territory of Moesia Superior have been excavated on the territory of former Yugoslavia,[14] forming the group of the so-called Mala Kopašnica - Sase type.[15] The majority of the burial pits with the cremation ritual from the ancient necropolis at the town of Gramada are of the most ordinary type of structures with slightly burnt walls and oval/oblong shape (Table II, B). [16] But some of the cremation burial structures are pit graves, the borders of which are not burnt and there are almost no traces of the pyre, only grave goods and a very small amount of burnt remains of the deceased are found. The pit graves from Gramada find their parallels in terms of shape, type and size in the type 1 and 4 grave structures from the necropolis at

[11] The entire necropolis is situated on a settlement and pits from the Late Neolithic and Middle Bronze Age.

[12] The charring was the result of deliberate purification of the grave pit, by fire or the placement of the still warm remains of the pyre (coals, embers, etc.), certainly not the result of cremation *in situ* in the grave pit.

[13] In almost all cases the length of the burial structures is slightly less than or around 1 m.

[14] Some of the excavated necropoli: *Viminacium, Margum, Singidunum, Scupi, Naissus, Vindenis*, *Mala Kopašnica,* Sase (Raičković 2011, 9).

[15] This is a large group of graves with cremations named after the eponymous sites of Mala Kopašnica at Lescovac and Sase at Srebrenica, Bosnia (Garašanin 1968, 6).

[16] Raičković 2011, 7.

Davidovac (Table II, C).[17] It should be underscored that none of the excavated grave structures could be likened to the so-called *a etage*[18] or stepped[19] grave pits, known in literature as Mala Kopašnica - Sase type II.[20]

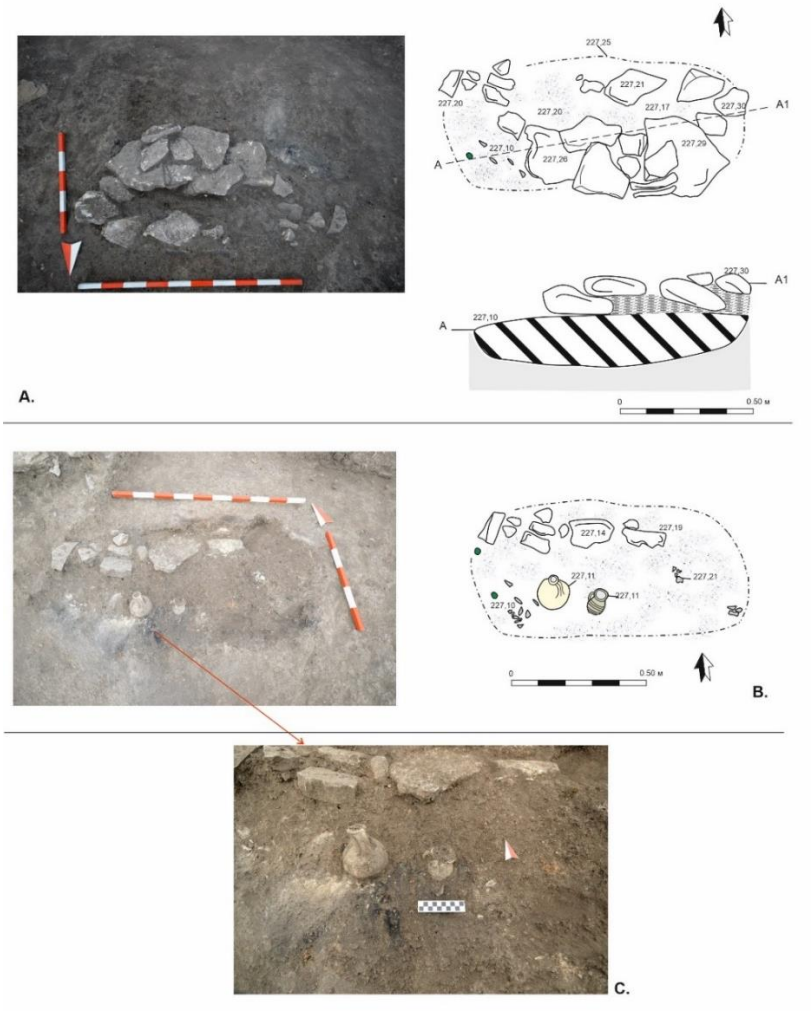


Table III. Pits covered with stones. Grave No. 41 – cremation. Graphic and photo documentation at the level of detection of the structure (A); Graphic and photo documentation after lifting the stones (B); Photo in detail of part of the grave goods (C) (drawing: A. Danov; photo: A. Danov).

[17] Petković 2017, 158-159.
[18] Raičković 2011, 7.
[19] Getov 1970, 1–11.
[20] These are large burial pits comparable in size to typical adult burials.

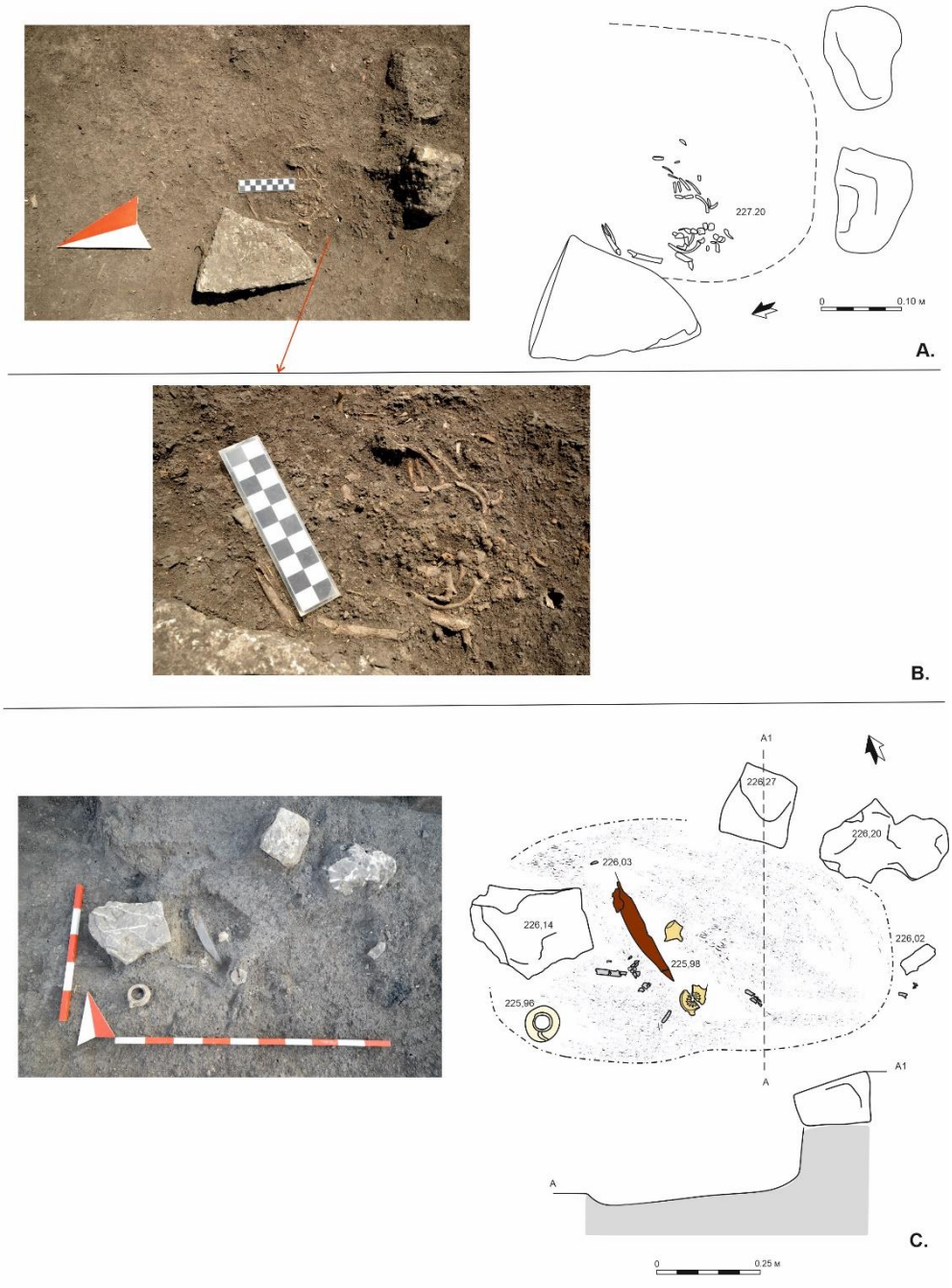


Table IV. Pits partially enclosed with stones. Grave No. 6 – inhumation. Graphic and photo documentation of the grave (A.); Detailed photo of the skeleton from a grave No. 6 (B); Grave No. 38 – cremation. Graphic and photo documentation of the grave (C) (drawing: A. Danov; photo: A. Danov).

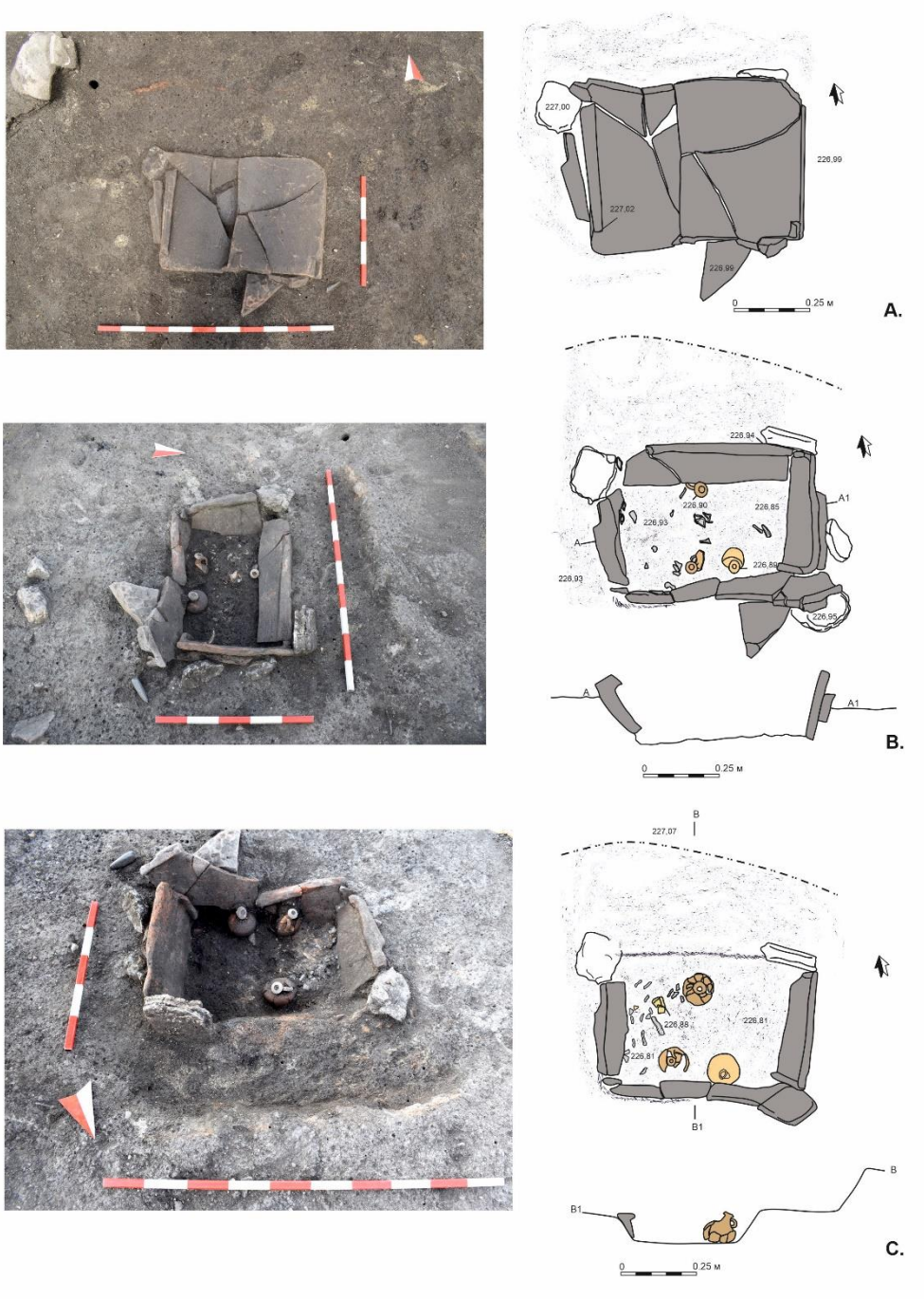


Table V. Grave structure made of tegulae. Grave No. 25 – cremation. Graphic and photo documentation of the detection level of the facility (A); Documentation at stages of the study (B, C) (drawing: A. Danov; photo: A. Danov).

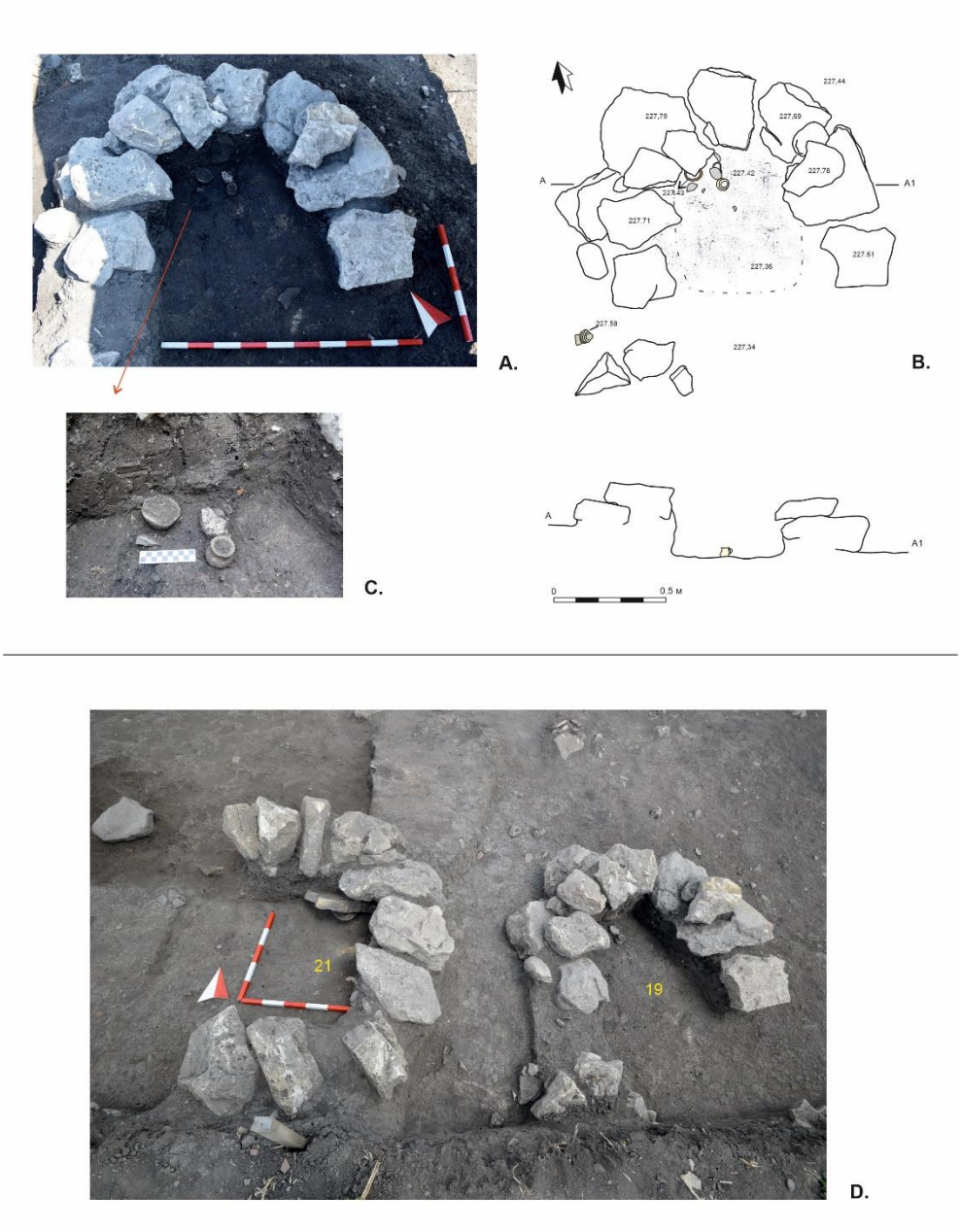


Table VI. Stone grave structure with horseshoe shape. Grave No. 19 – cremation. Graphic and photo documentation of the grave (A, B). Detailed photo of the grave goods of grave No. 19 (C); Photo of the grave structures - grave No 19 (cremation) and grave No. 21 (cremation) (D) (drawing: A. Danov; photo: A. Danov).

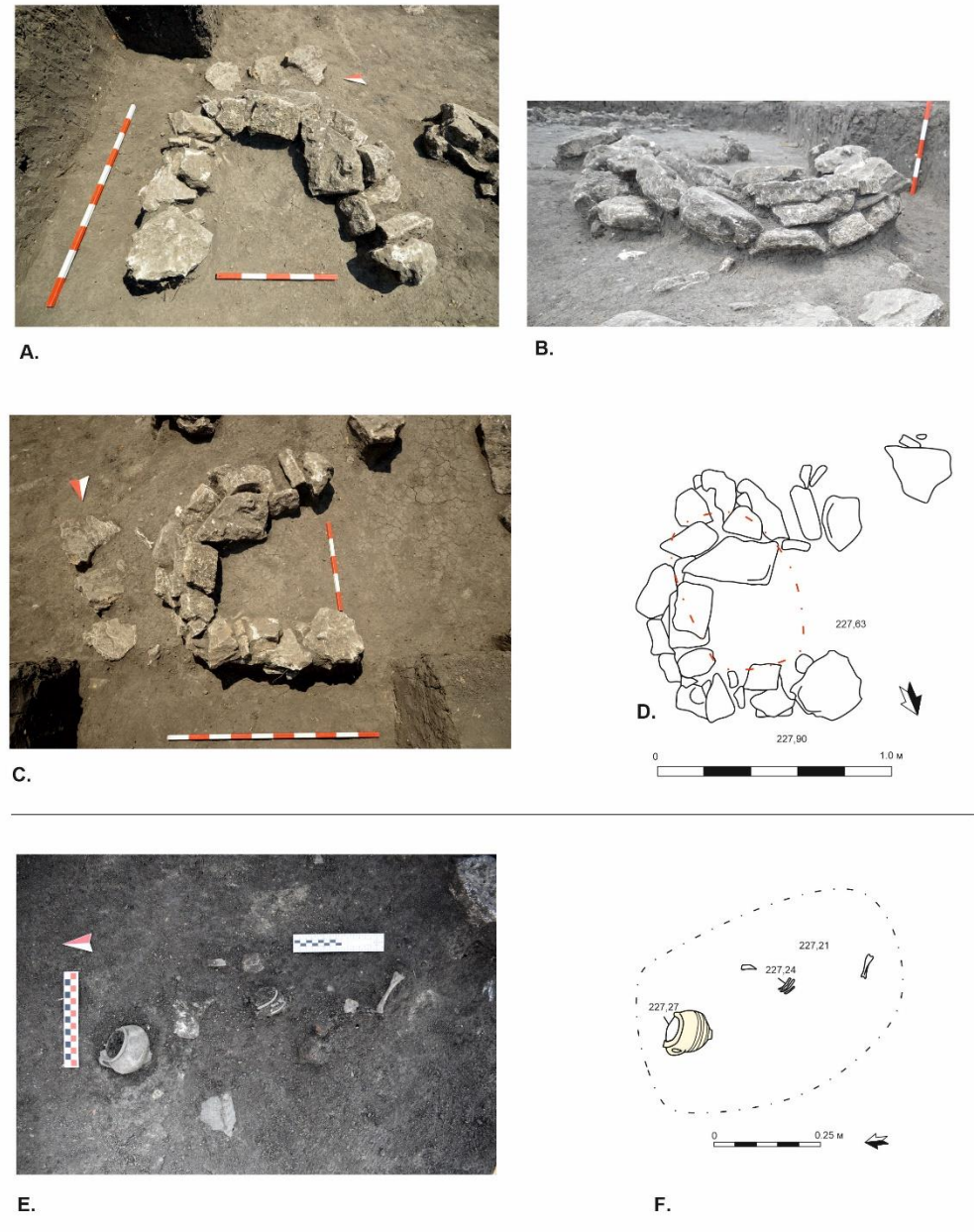


Table VII. Stone grave structure with horseshoe shape. Grave No. 40 – inhumation. Graphic and photo documentation of the stone structure (A-D); Graphic and photo documentation of the grave after the dismantling of the stone facility (E-F)
(drawing: A. Danov; photo: A. Danov).

There are various interpretations regarding the dominance of this type of grave structures in Moesia Superior and Pannonia and the ethnic origin of those buried in this type of graves, which is not the subject of the present paper but is in itself a complex problem and one difficult to resolve because of the considerable territorial spread of these particular grave structures.

Graves with inhumation are characterized by a near rectangular pit (Table II, A). In these cases, the situation regarding the detection of the burial pits is more complicated due to the similar composition, structure and colour of the fill and that of the surrounding terrain. They frequently cannot be detected before the skeleton is reached.

2. *Pits covered with stones (Table I, 2) (Table III, A-C.).*

This type of structure is found at two grave[21] with cremation. It is characterized by that the still warm remains from the byre and the grave goods were laid in a grave pit dug in advance, after which a thick stone 'coat' was piled on top. In grave No. 41, for example, the stones are flat, placed horizontally in various sizes (ranging up to 0.25-0.30 m). In the northern part of the grave, the stones have fallen into the loose pit and are exposed at depth. It cannot be said with certainty whether the accumulation of a stone 'coat' over a burial pit had a purely rational, functional purpose or a certain ritual character. The grave structure is east-west oriented.

3. *Pits partially enclosed with stones (Table I, 3) (Table IV, A-C.).*

This type of grave structure is also found in both rituals. In inhumations, it is presented in just a single grave (Table IV, A-B).[22] In cremations, it is observed in four graves. The characteristic feature of this structure is that there are two, three or several rough stones along the borders of the burial pit. Rather, they function as a kind of marker of the grave pit.

4. *Grave structure made of tegulae (Table I, 4) (Table V, A-C.).*

This type of grave structure is represented only at grave No 25 of the necropolis, a cremation burial. It is built of flat tiles, in a pre-dug, rectangular pit. The burial structure is covered with two horizontally

[21] Grave No 37 and No 41 from the total necropolis numbering.
[22] Grave No 6 from the total necropolis numbering.

placed tegulae (with sizes: length 0.55 m × width 0.40 m × thickness 0.05 m; length 0.53 m × width 0.35 m × thickness 0.05 m). Broken stones were recorded in the northeastern and northwestern parts of the grave (with size: 0.10 × 0.15 m), probably placed to support the tegulae. The walls of the burial structure are made of vertically placed fragments of flat tegulae. The terrain was used for the bottom: red-brown earth with traces of charring. To the north of the structure with tegulae a 0.30 m wide low step has been made, fire baked (to orange) and clearly discernible on terrain. The orientation of the grave along its long axis is east - west. Grave structures made of construction terracotta (bricks and tegulae) are typical of Roman times.[23] These ceramic materials continued to be used in the construction of burial structures in Late Antiquity.[24]

5. *Stone grave structure with horseshoe shape (Table I, 5) (Table VI, A-D.) (Table VII, A.-F.).*

This type of structure was registered in three graves.[25] Two of them are with the ritual of cremation (Table VI, A-D) and one — with inhumation (Table VII, A.-F.). This type of structure is characterized by their horseshoe form and are made of rough or flat stones, the stonework being preserved to a height of from 2 to 4 rows (Table VII, B). It was made with dry masonry, without mortar. These structures have dimensions of some 1×1.5 m. Their entrance/opening faces west or south. The grave offerings and the remains of the deceased were placed in a grave pit. The structure was constructed after the burial pit was filled in, enclosing and partially overlapping the pit. Upon recording and subsequently in the process of studying these stone structures, it was noted that they were filled with stones at the top, and with earth, single animal bones and small charcoal at depth. The question here is whether these structures were 'opened' after the burials for memorial practices or were filled in after their construction.

[23] Vojvoda *et al*. 2021, 39, Zotović & Jordović 1990, T.CLVI, G1 –183.
[24] Nikolić *et al*. 2021, 15–40.
[25] Graves with cremation No 19 and No 21 and grave with inhumation No 40 from the total necropolis numbering at Gramada.

It should be noted that there is no zonal division of the two rituals. Interestingly, all laid individuals are of infant age,[26] which raises important questions about the ancients' understanding of the nature of rituals and the relationship between the laying of children and the cremation of adults. Were children perceived as 'innocent', 'sinless' and 'pure' and therefore not in need of cremation, i.e. purification by fire? A correlation between ritual and the age of individuals is also observed for grave goods. Why is it in much less quantity, i.e. poorer, in the laid individuals? Does this mean that there was an understanding that children did not have the same needs in the 'afterlife' as adults, or was it rather a dependency between items enjoyed in life?

The publication of the grave goods from the necropolis at the town of Gramada is a small step towards its subsequent full publication. The research and publication of necropolises from the Principate period on the territory of Ratiaria would fill in a 'blank' in Bulgarian academic literature. It would be interesting to see whether the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type graves continue to be dominant as in the rest of Moesia Superior, or there are certain regional peculiarities in the area to the east of the Timok river that would warrant further reflection on the composition of the population inhabiting the territory of Ratiaria.

Unfortunately, the large necropolises belonging to *Colonia Ulpia Traiana Ratiaria* in the localities of Paralozite, Kakarmish, Yaliyata and Babuya have largely been destroyed by grave robber raids in the first decade of the 21st century.[27] The necropolises of Ratiaria have never been the target of systematic archaeological study, the data we have on them being rather the result of salvage excavations following construction/agricultural activities and to some extent the fruit of chance discoveries.[28]

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[26] The laid individuals are definitely children; anthropological analysis of the cremated ones still has not been completed to associate them to a certain age group.
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STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA 10, 185-208
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Coins discovered during an archaeological excavation on the territory of Philippopolis in 2023

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Abstract: The main purpose of this article is to present very briefly the coins discovered during rescue archaeological excavation of an ancient and late antique settlement located in the hinterland of Philippopolis. The significance of the discovered coins is of particular importance for the study of the relationship between the city and its adjacent rural territory in the pre-Roman, Roman and Late Antique periods. In the case of Philippopolis, these connections remain beyond the attention of scholars for the time being. The significance of the coins discovered is clearly evident in the fact that among them there are some that have not been found so far during archaeological excavations in Bulgaria, and others are unknown to science.

Key words: Hellenistic, Roman, Late antique, coins, Philippopolis, Thrace

Резюме: Основната цел на настоящето съобщение е да представи съвсем накратко откритите по време на спасителни археологически проучвания на антично и късноантично селище, разположено в хинтерланда на Филипопол, монети. Значението на откритите монети е от особена важност за изследването на връзката между града и прилежащата му селска територия в предримската, римската и късноантичната епоха. В случая с Филипопол, тези връзки за момента остават извън вниманието на учените. Значението на откритите монети ясно проличава във факта, че сред тях има такива, които до този момент не са откривани по време на археологически разкопки в България, а други са неизвестни за науката.

In 2023, an archaeological excavation was carried out at the so-called "Site No. 7", located in the lands of Plovdiv and these of the village of Yagodovo and the village of Brestnik. The excavation is a continuation of the borehole survey conducted in 2019 under the supervision of Dr. Milena Raicheva.[1] During the preliminary survey, buildings belonging to

[1] Raicheva & Georgieva 2020.

an ancient villa and a late antique settlement were discovered in Area III and Area I, respectively, and a pit field dating to the Early and Late Iron Age was uncovered in the area between them (II).[2] The results of the new excavation confirm to a large extent the observations made, although some refinements need to be made in individual cases, including the dating of settlements and structures as well as the identification of some of the latter. The scarcity of small finds in general, as well as of ceramic material from the Roman and Late Antique areas, let to date the discovered structures generally between the 2nd and 4th centuries. In some of the cases, the ceramic material allows to distinguish two phases, where the 4th century one is extremely clear. They are also documented in the archaeological excavation, as will be discussed later in the text.

In contrast to the late 3rd-4th century settlement, the early periods on site are less clear, mainly due to the conventionality of the ceramic material found. In the course of the archaeological excavation, a certain amount of coins have been discovered, which could shed more light on the beginning of the settlements, their end, development, deeper integration into the economic zone of the nearby Philippopolis, etc. It is their presentation that is the main task of the present text. In order to do so, however, it is necessary to give a short description of the main results of the archaeological excavation.

The archaeological site is located east, northeast and southeast of the Mound "Lauta". The eastern slopes of the mound rise above the site and thus divide the site into two parts, north (area III) and south (area I), where the settlements of the ancient and late antique periods are located. On the slopes themselves, 33 pits have been excavated, dating from the second phase of the Early Iron Age to the Roman period. At a later date, part of the area was incorporated into the Ottoman farmstead located at the eastern foot of the mound (fig. 1). The elevation, albeit slight, of the eastern slopes of the mound above the surrounding terrain prevents a direct visual connection between the settlements revealed in Area I and Area III.

Area III

During the archaeological excavation in the northern and central part of the area the remains of two outbuildings were excavated. They are built of rubble and river stones, cemented on mud solder, with walls

[2] Raicheva & Georgieva 2020, 978–981.

0.70 m width and preserved up to 0.80 m high. Both buildings have been partially excavated (fig. 2).



Fig. 1. The pits found in Area II (photo: Seslav Ivanov).

Three rectangular rooms have been partially uncovered from the northern building, which is L-shaped with two phases: a central room with addition of two more rooms to it, one on the west and one on the north. The excavated section measured 14 m (E-W) x 10 m (N-S), with the building developing in a northerly and easterly direction, beyond the limits of the survey area. On the east a significantly greater quantity of ceramic material was detected on the surface than in the excavated area. The scatter of ceramic material covers an area of at least 24 acres.

A clay floor is attested, made of yellow clay up to 4 cm thick, with a heavily ruined earthen hearth in the south-eastern corner of the main room, and a pithos in the south-western corner. The roof is supported by a timber post with a rubble stone base. Among the finds, along with the coins, are two clay loom weights and a fragment of a terracotta tile with an image - a fruit tree and a snake standing under it.

An annex (shed?) was attached to the building from the west in which a well was uncovered.

Two walls of an earlier building dating to the Roman period were recorded within the shed. A terracotta head of the goddess Athena was uncovered nearby, but in the late antique layer.

Of the second building, the eastern part was uncovered: 18 m (E-W) x 10 m (N-S), with two construction phases were also detected by the construction technique. Of the first phase, four rooms were partially excavated, three of them arranged in a chain, in front of which a fourth,

elongated, was added to the east. Subsequently, the latter was turned into a peristyle by as the three masonry square steps for wooden piers reveal. The floor level was clayish, the roof was of thatch.

To the east of the building, a pit with a circular opening and a diameter of 1.30 m was excavated with materials of Roman period.

The stratigraphy within the area consists of four layers: a ploughsoil averaging *ca*. 30 cm, followed by a greyish layer with the presence of archaeological material (cultural layer), which is associated with periods of occupation synchronous with the late farm buildings (Building 1 and Building 2), followed by a dark brownish, clayey, inhomogeneous layer with limestone inclusions, without archaeological material and finally a yellow sandy layer, without any archaeological material again, which is recorded at a depth of less than 1.20 m from the modern surface.



Fig. 2. The structures of two phases discovered in area III (drawing: Eli Filipopva on a photo of Seslav Ivanov).

The massive ceramic material and coin finds date the structures in Area III to the 2nd-4th centuries AD.[3] The first phase can be broadly dated to the 2nd - mid-3rd century, while the second phase can be dated to the second half/late 3rd - 4th century. The general paucity of small finds and the relatively small quantity of pottery is noteworthy, probably

[3] The ceramic material on the site was processed by Tsvetelina Slavkova (IM - Septemvri).

indicating a population flight. The settlement does not continue west of the existing railway line.

Area I

During the excavation, the remains of a chain building, 22 pits, and half of a dug-in dwelling were uncovered. The building itself has been significantly destroyed by modern cultivation. It is a three-bay building in a chain plan, orientated north-south, made by walls of rubble stones bonded with mud (fig. 3). It extended up to 20 m in length and 10 m in width in the excavated area and developed in an easterly direction, beyond the limits of the area.



Fig. 3. The bulding and pits discovered in area I (photo: Seslav Ivanov)

The floor level was made by clay, the roof was supported by a timber, buttressed pillar strengthened with small stones and fragments of building pottery. The level was marked by two coins and a ring, and large fragments of domestic pottery, but the low concentration of small finds and domestic pottery (tableware was in a small percentage) suggests an economic character.

Twenty-two pits were recorded below the floor level of the building, one of which fell below the partition wall of the south room. They ranged in depth from 0.20 - 0.60 m, all characterised by a low concentration of domestic pottery. Small charcoal flakes and highly broken fragments of building pottery were also found in their filling.

From this period, a possible dwelling measuring 4.50 x 2.10 m was also partially excavated. It developed in an easterly direction, outside the limit of the studied area. This structure recorded the highest concentration of domestic pottery in the whole sector, dating to the 2nd century.

The archaeological material from these periods shows no significant differences, indicating that the two periods followed each other closely, within a short period of time.

The filling of one of the pits, pit No. 8, contained mixed fragments of Iron Age and Roman domestic pottery. The depth of this pith is over 2.50 m and it is the only one of this type detected in this sector.

The pottery is generally dated to the 2nd-4th centuries.

Coins

During the archaeological excavation 55 coins were found: four of them are Hellenistic, 15 are Roman, 33 are Late Roman, 2 are Ottoman and 1 is unidentified (Plate 3, 45). In Area I, 17 coins were found, 11 of which are Roman (from the last third of the 1st to the middle of the 3rd century) and the remaining 6 are Late Roman (from the 4th century). Four coins were found in Area II: 3 Roman and 1 from the early 4th century. In Area III, 4 Hellenistic coins, 1 Roman (3rd century), 31 Late Roman (second quarter of the 4th to mid-5th centuries) and 2 Ottoman coins were found.

- Hellenistic coins

Despite the small number, the pre-Roman coins found at the site deserve special attention. The earliest one is an anepigraphic one (Plate I, 1) and no such coin has been found during archaeological excavations in Bulgaria so far. It is also missing in Bulgarian catalogues of pre-Roman coins.[4] It is defined as an imitation of the coins of Skostok I (based on the similarity of the rider on the reverse), and is dated to the period 270-240 BC. The distribution of the type with a shield under the rider was mainly limited in the Plovdiv and Pazardzhik regions. According to Stavri Topalov, the Celts and their relations with the Odrysians played a role in this imitative coinage.[5] We belive that a later dating (also 2nd century BC) is possible, but at this stage of research it is impossible to be precise.

[4] Yurukova 1992; Peikov 2011.

[5] Topalov 2016, 155–160, 314–316.



Plate 1. Hellenistic and Roman coins found during the excavation (photo: Varbin Varbanov).

The second coin is a heavily barbarised imitation of a drachm of Alexander III (Plate I, 2). Imitations of the type were very popular in Thracian lands and are also found south of the Balkan Range, unlike the barbarized ones of Philip III. In the literature, the more heavily barbarized imitations are dated to the 2nd-1st centuries BC.[6] The lack of a summary publication on their circulation in southern Bulgaria does

[6] Topalov 2016, 294.

not yet allow to refine their dating. It is clear, however, that in the north of the Balkan they circulated until the 1st century.[7]

The third coin is an issue of the Odrosa type, which is common exclusively in the Plovdiv area (Plate I, 3). The specimen in question is overprinted on an earlier coin, which cannot be determined. For this reason, the reverse is unclear, as is not the case with most of the known coins. The dating of the type is placed within the 2nd-1st century BC.[8]

The last pre-Roman coin is a bronze issue of Rhoemetalces I, small denomination (Plate I, 4). Similar ones have also not been found during archaeological excavations (or at least not published).

- Roman coins

Their concentration is in Area I, as noted above. As denominations, they are represented by 2 denarii (suberati), 1 sestertius, 11 provincial bronze issues, and 1 Antoninian: Vespasian - 1, Trajan - 3, Antoninus Pius - 2, Septimius Severus - 2, Caracalla - 1, Geta - 1, Julia Paula - 1, Julia Mamea - 1, Gordian III - 1, and 1 undetermined (Plate I, 5-13, Plate II, 14-19). Quite logically, six of the provincial bronze coins were struck at Philippopolis, one each at Serdica, Pautalia, Hadrianopolis, Nicaea, and one has an indeterminate mintmark. Five are large and six are small denominations. The issues presented are dated to the first half of the 2nd century and the early to mid-3rd century. Only one coin, an Antoninian of Gallienus, is from the second half of the third century. It should be noted the obliterated provincial bronze coin (late 2nd-early 3rd century), which has a circular countermark with the letter Δ (Plate II, 18). According to Vladimir Penchev, these countermarks were most probably placed in Philippopolis, in the period 250-260.[9] In our opinion, the countermarking of coins in Thrace was done until the middle of the 3rd century. Most of the mints in Thrace ceased their activity under the Severans, but their coins were in circulation in the second half of the 3rd century. It is unlikely that the countermarking process was just after the destructive Gothic invasions in the middle of the century, which had a particularly strong impact on Philippopolis.

- Late Roman coins

[7] Varbanov, forthcoming.
[8] Koichev 2003, 14–68; Topalov 2009, 73–120; Peikov 2011, 37–39.
[9] Penchev 1994, 33–37.



Plate 2. Roman and Late antique coins found during the excavation (photo: Varbin Varbanov).

All the coins found are of small denomination and were actively involved in circulation. Their concentration is in Area III, with the following rulers represented:

- 324-363 period (12 coins) - Constantine I - 1, Helena - 1, Constantine II - 1, Constans - 1, Constantius II - 2, Constantius II/Julian - 2, unspecified rulers of the family of Constantine I - 2 and a commemorative of Rome – 2 (Plate 2, 20-28, Plate 3, 30-31)

- 364-378 period (2 coins) - Valens - 1, Valentinian I/Valens – 1 (Plate 3, 32-33)

- 378-401 period (6 coins) - Theodosius I - 1, Arcadius - 2, family of Theodosius I – 4 (Plate 34-39)

- period 406-435 (3 coins) - family of Theodosius I - 2, Theodosius II – 1 (Plate 3, 40-42)

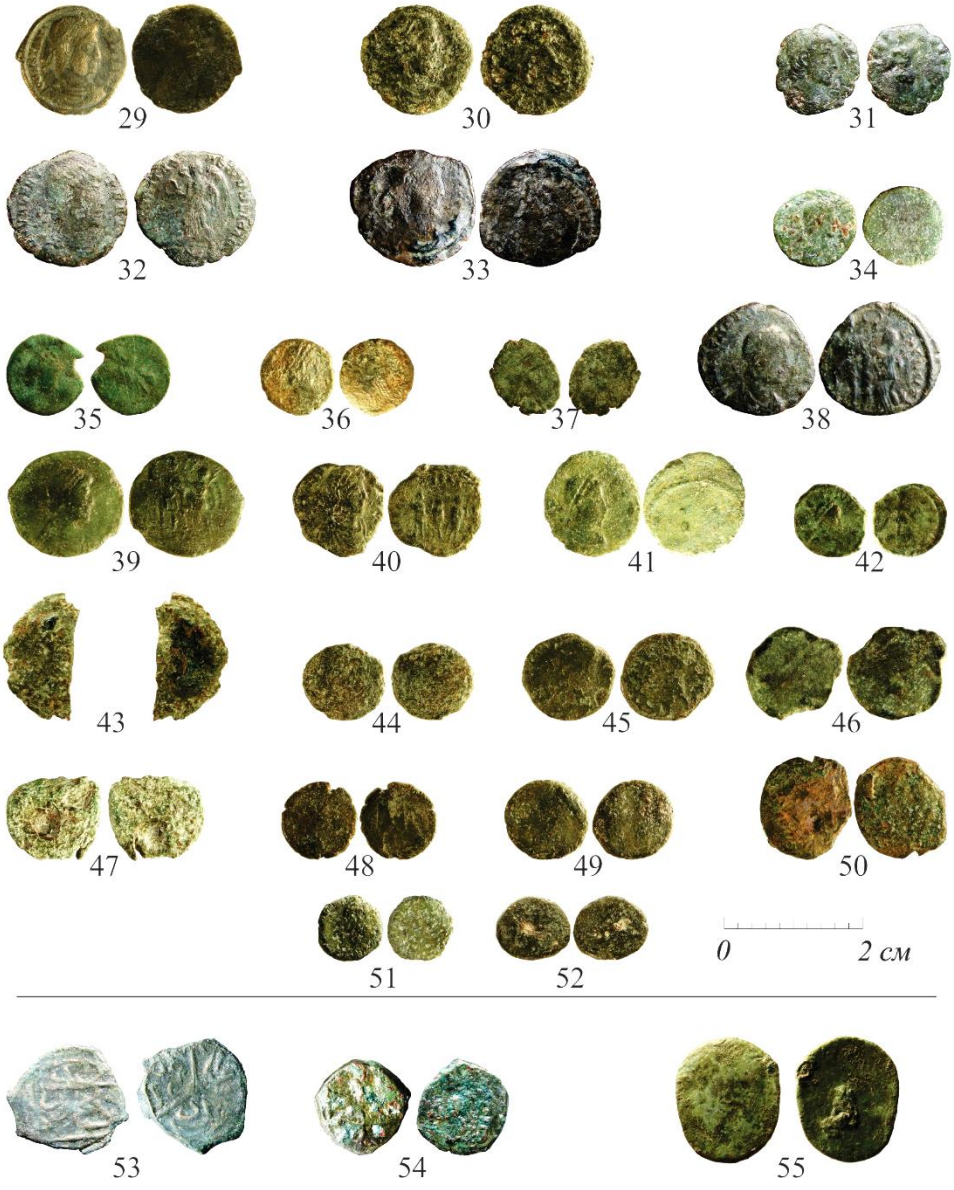


Plate 3. Late antique and Ottoman coins found during the excavation (photo: Varbin Varbanov).

Ten of the coins are heavily Illegible and can be generally assigned to the 4th- first half of the 5th century. Only for four of the coins mintyard can be identified with certainty: Constantinople - 3 and Thessalonica - 1.

- Ottoman coins (Plate III, 53-54)

The two issues found are from the fallow in Area III. Only one has been identified - a mangar of Murad II, minted in Edrine, 828 (Hijra).[10]

In conclusion, it can be said that the purpose of the article is only to put the discovered coins into circulation in a timely manner. Analyses and conclusions will be possible after the full publication of the results and the discovered materials from the archaeological excavation, as well as after the publication of the coin complexes from the other studied sites on the territory of Philippopolis. However, the main periods of occupation in the studied area can be indicated according to the numismatic data:

- the Hellenistic/Late Hellenistic period;
- the 2nd-mid 3rd century period;
- the 4th-mid 5th century.

Catalogue:

- Hellenistic coins*:*

1. Imitative anepigraph coin (imitation of Skostos coins ?)
Obv. Beardless male head with diadem left.
Rev. Schematic depiction of horseman with flowing chlamid galloping left. Below horse - oval object (shield ?) and straight horizontal line.
06.06.2023, Area III, sq. J 1; N- 2,70 m, W- 1,05 m, h -154,74 m, building 4
Small find No. 57, AE, 3,53 g, 17,4 mm, 5 h
Topalov 2016, № 314-316
date: 3rd century BC (?)

2. Anepigraphic imitation of a drachm, type Alexander III-Philip III Aridaeus
Obv. Head of Heracles with lion skin right.

[10] The coin was determined by Dr. Nevyan Mitev (RHM-Dobrich), to whom we express our thanks.

Rev. Seated figure left (Zeus?)
12.06.2023, Area III, sq. I 12; S - 2,43 m, W - 1,84 m, h - 154,34 m
Small find No. 68, AR, 3,28 g, 16,7-17,1 mm, 12 h
date: 3rd-2nd century BC (?)

3. coin, type Odrosa
Obv. Head of Heracles with lion skin to the right.
Rev. Obscure image (bull left ?).
05.07.2023, Area III, trench 12, 1,5 m south, outside the excavated area
Small find No. 86, AE, 2,99 g, 18,8-18,3 mm, 11 h (?)
Peikov 2011, type I
date: 2nd-1st century BC

4. Rhoemetalces I
Obv. ΣΕΒΑ[ΣΤΟΥ], axe to the right (inscription in front of it in two lines).
Rev. [ΡΟΙΜΗΤΑΛΚΟΥ], curule chair, right.
21.05.2023, Area III, sq. H 17; S - 0,50 m, E- 1,95 m, h- 155,13 m
Small find No. 32, AE, 1,59 g, 13,8-13,3 mm, 7 h
Topalov 2009, № 33; Peikov 2011, type VII-VIII; Yurukova 1992, № 154-156
date: 10 BC - 12 AD.

- Roman coins (1st-3rd century):

5. Vespasianus, denarius suberatus or fouree Ephesus, 71 AD
Obv. [IMPCAES]ARVESPASAVGCOSIIITRPPP, laureate head right
Rev. CONCORDIA AVG, Ceres seated left on high-back throne, holding grain ears, and cornucopiae,
in exergue: [EPE]
24.05.2023, Area I, sq. S 5; S - 1,10 m, E - 1,50 m, h - 154,39 m
Small find No. 85, Æ, 2,80 g, 17,2-18,2 mm, 6 h
RIC II², part I, 164, № 1428

6. Trajan, sestercius, 114-116 AD
Obv.
[IMPCAESTRAIANOO]PTIMOAVGGERDACPM[TRPCOSVI.PP],
laureate bust of Trajan right.
Rev. Illegible inscription, Fortuna seated left, holding rudder and cornucopiae.
04.05.2023, Area I, sq. H 8; N - 0,92 m, E - 0,97 m, h - 154,57 m

Small find No. 1, 24,29 g, 31,5-33 mm, 12 h
Woytek 2010, № 505 or 542, RIC II, 290, № 652

7. Trajan, Nicaea
Obv. [AVTN]EP[T]PA[IANOCKAICAP ΓEP], laureate bust of Trajan right.
Rev. altar with double doors.
in exergue: [ΔIOC]
02.06.2023, Area I, sq. F 8; N - 1,30 m, W - 1,10 m, h - 154,20 m
Small find No. 52b, *Æ,* 4, 10 g, 18,3-20,7 mm, 6 h

8. Trajan, Philippopolis
Obv. [IMPCAENE]RTRAAVGG[ERDACPMPMTRPCOSVPP], laureate bust of Trajan right.
Rev. [ΦIΛIΠΠOΠOΛ]EI[T]ΩN, Artemis moving right, drawing arrow from quiver over shoulder with her right hand and holding bow in left.
02.06.2023, Area I, sq. F 8; N - 1,30 m, W - 1,10 m, h -154,20 m
Small find No. 52a, *Æ,* 2,08 g, 15 mm, 6 h
Mushmov 1924, № 10

9. Antoninus Pius, Philippopolis
Obv. AVTAIAΔP[I ANTΩ]NEINOC, laureate head to right.
Rev. ΦIΛIΠΠOΠ OΛEITΩN, Dionysus standing left, holding thyrsus and grape.
12.06.2023, Area II, trench 10, bulk
Small find No. 70a, *Æ,* 4,15 g, 19,3-18,2 mm, 6 h
Mushmov 1924, № 66

10. Antoninus Pius, Philippopolis
Obv. AVTAIAΔPI ANTΩN[EIN], laureate head to right.
Rev. ΦIΛIΠΠO ΠO[ΛEITΩN], Tyche standing left, holding cornucopia and rudder.
12.05.2023, Area I, sq. G 12; N - 0,90 m, W - 0,60 m, h - 154,68 m
Small find No. 20, *Æ,* 3,88 g, 18-18,9 mm, 6 h
Mushmov 1924, № 84

11. Septimius Severus, Philippopolis
Obv. [AVK]·Λ·C CЄVH[POC], laureate head to right.
Rev. ΦIΛIΠΠOΠOΛI, lion standing right.
in exergue: TΩN

08.06.2023, Area I, sq. K 8; N - 0,80 m, E - 2,40 m, h - 154,73 m
Small find No. 63, Æ, 4,19 г, 18,3-17,4 мм, 1 ч
Varbanov 2007, № 1303

12. Septimius Severus (Philippopolis? – Mushmov 1924, № 293)
Obv. [...] CEVHPOCΠ, laureate head to right.
Rev. Illegible inscription, Nemesis standing left, holding a short scepter in lef hand.
23.06.2023, Area III, trench 15, bulk
Small find No. 81b, Æ, 13,26 g, 29,9-30,1 mm, 6 h

13. Caracalla, Serdica
Obv. AVTKMAVPHCEVHANTΩNEINOC, head with radiate crown (?), right.
Rev. OVΛΠIAC CEPΔIKHC, Ares standing right, naked, wearing helmet. His right hand is rised, and the left holding shield and spear.
20.05.2023, Area I, sq. G 6; S - 1,10 m, E - 0,70 m, h - 154,61 m
Small find No. 26a, Æ, 17,17 g, 30,1 mm, 12 h
Hristova & Zhekov 2007, № 12.18.11.11

14. Geta, Pautalia
Obv. [CEΠTI] ΓETACKAI, bust right.
Rev. ΠAVTAΛIΩTΩN, cupid (genius) with wings, on a lion walking right.
03.06.2023, Area I, sq. F 14; N - 1,0 m, W - 0,30 m, h - 154,28 m
Small find No. 54, Æ, 4,95 g, 18-19,6 mm, 6 h
BMC Thrace, 146, № 42

15. Julia Paula, Philippopolis
Obv. IOVΛ[KOP]N ΠAVΛACEB, diademed and draped bust of Julia Paula to right.
Rev. [MHTPO]ΠOΛEΩCΦIΛIΠΠOΠOΛEIΩCNEΩKOPOV, Hygieia standing front, head to right, feeding serpent from patera.
12.06.2023, Area II, trench 10, bulk
Small find No. 70b, Æ, 13,95 g, 27,7-28,9 mm, 6 h
Mushmov 1924, № 551

16. Julia Mamaea, denarius - suberatus
Obv. [IO]VLIAMA-M[AEAAV]G, bust of Julia Mamaea, diademed, right.

Rev. V[E]S T A, Vesta, veiled, draped, standing left, holding palladium in right hand and up-right sceptre in left hand.
20.05.2023, Area I, sq. G 6; S - 1,10 m, E - 0,70 m, h - 154,61 m
Small find No. 26b, Æ, 2,53 g, 19,2-19,9 mm, 12 h
RIC IV, II, 99, № 360

17. Gordian III, Hadrianopolis
Obv. AVTKMAANT ΓOPΔIAANOCAVΓ, laureate, and draped bust right.
Rev. AΔPI ANOΠ OΛEITΩN, Homonoia with kalathos standing left, holding phiala and cornucopia; at feet left, altar.
15.06.2023, Area I, sq. H 5; h - 154,40 m
Small find No. 73b, Æ, 8,49 g, 27,5-25,9 mm, 7 h
Yurukova 1987, № 467

18. obscure ruler (Commodus/Severan dynasty?)
Obv. Bust right, erased, with round countermark under chin, with Δ in it.
Rev. Illegible, standing figure?
15.06.2023, Area I, sq. H 5; h - 154,40 m
Small find No. 73a, Æ, 8,48 g, 26,4-26,5 mm, 7 h

19. Galien, Antioch, 263 AD
Obv. GALLIENVS AVG, bust bust with radiating crown to the right.
Rev. VICTORIA AVG, Victory advancing left, holding wreath with right hand and palm with left hand; star in left field.
20.06.2023, Area II, trench 11, eastern half, bulk
Small find No. 77, Æ/AR Antoninianus, 3,77 g, 20,8-20,5 mm, 12 h
Göbl 2000, № 1615, RIC V, part I, 183, № 587, Siscia

- Late Roman coins (4th-5th century):

20. Helena, Constantinople, 326-327 AD
Obv. FL HELENA–AVGVSTA, diademed and draped bust of Helena, wearing a mantle, to right.
Rev. SECVRITAS-REIPVBLICE, Securitas, draped, standing left, raising robe with right hand and lowering branch with left hand. In the left field – A.
in exergue: CONS
20.06.2023, Area II, trench 14, western half, bulk

Small find No. 78, Æ follis, 3,05 g, 18,3-19,1 mm, 12 h
RIC VII, 571, № 11

21. Constantinus I, Thessalonica, *330-333 AD*
Obv. CONSTANTI–NVS MAX AVG, bust right, with rosette-diadem, drapped, cuirasse right.
Rev. GLOR–IA EXERC–ITVS, two soldiers, helmeted, stg. looking at one another, reversed spear in outer hand, inner hand on shield resting on ground; between them, two standards.
in exergue: SMTSA
21.05.2023, Area III, sq. H 16; N - 2,30 m, E - 2,10 m, h - 154,99 m
Small find No. 31, Æ follis, 2,23 g, 17,3-17,9 mm, 6 h
RIC VII, 524, № 183

22. Constantine II, 330-336 AD (Constantinople ?)
Obv. CONSTAN[TINV]SIVNNOBC, bust right, with rosette-diadem, drapped, cuirasse right.
Rev. GLOR–[IA EXERC]–ITVS, two soldiers, helmeted, stg. looking at one another, reversed spear in outer hand, inner hand on shield resting on ground; between them, two standards.
in exergue: [....]
23.06.2023, Area III, trench 15, bulk
Small find No. 81a, Æ follis, 2,25 g, 17,6-16,8 mm, 12 h

23. City of Rome Commemorative, 333-335 AD, Constantinople
Obv. VRBS–ROMA, bust of Roma left in plumed helmet, imperial cloak & ornamental necklace.
Rev. Wolf & twins left, 2 stars above.
in exergue:·CONSIA
04.05.2023, Area III, sq. I 15; S - 0,15 m, W - 2,0 m, h - 155,48 m
Small find No. 5, Æ follis, 2,47 g, 17,1-17,2 mm, 12 h
RIC VII, 582, № 85

24. City of Rome Commemorative, 330-337 AD
Obv. VRBS–ROMA, bust of Roma left in plumed helmet, imperial cloak & ornamental necklace.
Rev. Wolf & twins left, 2 stars above.
in exergue: [...]
07.05.2023, Area I, 5 m SE from sq. H 7, h - 154,69 m
Small find No. 9, Æ follis, 2,29 g, 17,3-16,4 mm, 5 h

25. Constans, 337-340 r., unknown mint
Obv. [D N CONS]TA–NS P F [AVG], laureate head to right.
Rev. GLOR–IA EXER–[CITVS], two soldiers, helmeted, stg. looking at one another, reversed spear in outer hand, inner hand on shield resting on ground; between them, one standard.
in exergue: [...]
21.05.2023, Area III, sq. I 16; S - 2,0 m, E - 0,30 m, h - 155,17 м
Small find No. 30, *Æ,* 1,54 g, 14,9-15 mm, 12 h

26**.** Constantine I's dynasty, 335-340 AD., unknown mint
Obv. D N CONSTAN[....], laureate head with rosette-diadem to right.
Rev. [GLORI–A EXER–CITVS], two soldiers, helmeted, stg. looking at one another, reversed spear in outer hand, inner hand on shield resting on ground; between them, one standard.
in exergue: [...]
03.06.2023, Area III, sq. H 18; N - 1,80 m, W - 1,55 m, h - 154,75 m
Small find No. 53, *Æ,* 1,35 g, 14,7-14,8 mm, 6 h

27. Constantine I's dynasty, 335-340 AD., unknown mint
Obv. Illegible, bust to right.
Rev. Illegible, two soldiers with a standart between them (GLORIA EXERCITVS's type?).
09.06.2023, Area III, sq. I 13; N - 1,40 m, W - 1,10 m, h - 154,78 m
Small find No. 62, 0,93 g, 14,4-14,2 m, 12 h (?)

28. Constantius II, 347-348 AD, unknown mint
Obv. [D N CONSTAN]–TIVS P F AVG, laureate head with rosettes to right.
Rev. VOT / XX / MVLT / XXX in four lines within wreath.
21.05.2023, Area I, sq. G 15; N - 0,86 m, W - 1,19 m, h - 154,39 m
Small find No. 21, *Æ,* 1,30 g, 13,8-14 m, 6 h

29. Constantius II, 337-361 AD, unknown mint
Obv. CONSTANTI-VSPFAVG, bust right, with rosette-diadem, drapped, cuirasse right.
Rev. Negative impression of a bust of the Emperor to the left (probably from a stuck coin on the die seal).
10.05.2023, Area III, sq. H 11; N - 1,10 m, E - 1,40 m, h - 154,95 m
Small find No. 14, *Æ,* 1,26 g, 16-15,9 mm, 12 h

30. Constantius II, Constantius Gallus or Julian II, 350-361 AD, Heraklea?
Obv. Illegible inscription, drapped and cuirasse bust to right.
Rev. Illegible inscription, the image is of FEL TEMP REPARATIO type: a soldier stabs a falling horseman with a spear.
in exergue: [...]HA
09.06.2023, Area I, sq. F 8; N - 2,00 m, W - 1,0 m, h - 154,73 m
Small find No. 64, Æ, 1,87 g, 16-16,3 mm, 6 h

31. Constantius II or Julian II, 355-363 AD, unknown mint
Obv. Pearl-diademed, draped, and cuirassed bust right.
Rev. [SPES REI–PVBLICE], Constantius II, helmeted and wearing military attire, standing facing, head left, holding globe in right hand and inverted, vertical spear in left.
29.05.2023, Area I, sq. G 18; S - 1,18 m, E - 1,52 m, h - 154,28 m
Small find No. 38, Æ, 0,94 g, 13,3-12,1 mm, 12 h

32. Valens, 364-367 AD, Constantinople
Obv. D N VALENS P F AVG, pearl-diademed, draped, and cuirassed bust right.
Rev. SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE, Victory advancing left, holding wreath in right hand and palm in left.
in exergue: CONS[Є]
04.05.2023, Area III, sq. H 12; N - 1,46 m, W - 1,90 m, h - 155,48 m
Small find No. 8, Æ3, 2,42 g, 17-17,4 mm, 6 h
RIC IX, 216, № 21(b)4

33. Valentinian I / Valens, 364-378 AD., unknown mint
Obv. D N VA[...], pearl-diademed, draped, and cuirassed bust right.
Rev. [SECVRITAS] REIPVBLICAE, Victory advancing left, holding wreath in right hand and palm in left.
20.05.2023, Area III, sq. I 16; N - 0,86 m, W - 2,35 m, h - 155,16 m
Small find No. 27, Æ (detached periphery above the bust), 1,39 g, 17-18,3 mm, 6 h

34. Theodosius I, 378-388 AD, unknown mint (Cyzicus ?)
Obv. [DN THEODO] SIVSPGAVG, pearl-diademed, draped, and cuirassed bust right.
Rev. VOT / X / MVLT / XX, in four lines within wreath.
in exergue: [..K]A

19.05.2023, Area III, while cleaining, h - 154,90 m
Small find No. 23a, Æ4, 0,79 g, 11,7-12,1 mm, 6 h

35. Valentinian II, Theodosius I, Arcadius or Honorius, 388-395 AD, unknown mint

Obv. Illegible inscription, pearl-diademed, draped, and cuirassed bust right.

Rev. [SALVS REI–PVBLICAE], Victory advancing left holding trophy and dragging captive.
08.05.2023, Area III, sq. H 10; N - 3,30 m, W - 1,60 m, h - 154,99 m
Small find No. 11, Æ4, 0,78 g, 11,9-11,5 mm, 12 h

36. Valentinian II, Theodosius I, Arcadius or Honorius, 388-395 AD, unknown mint

Obv. Illegible inscription, pearl-diademed, draped, and cuirassed bust right.

Rev. [SALVSREI–PVBLICAE], Victory advancing left holding trophy and dragging captive (?).
04.05.2023, Area III, sq. H 11; N - 2,15 m, E - 1,20 m, h - 155,38 m
Small find No. 4, Æ4, 1,02 g, 11,3-10,9 mm, 12 h

37. Valentinian II, Theodosius I, Arcadius or Honorius, 388-395 AD (?), unknown mint

Obv. Illegible, bust to right ?

Rev. Illegible, [SALVS REI–PVBLICAE], Victory advancing left holding trophy and dragging captive (?).
20.05.2023, Area III, sq. I 16; N - 1,05 m, E - 0,30 m, h - 155,18 m
Small find No. 28, Æ, 0,49 g, 11-13,8 mm

38. Arcadius, 395-401 AD, unknown mint

Obv. D N ARCADI–[VS P F] AVG, pearl-diademed, draped, and cuirassed bust right.

Rev. [VIRTVS]–EXERCITI, emperor standing facing, head right, resting on grounded spear and shield, to his right, Victory standing facing, head left, wearing a palm in the left hand, crowning him.
04.05.2023, Area I, sq. G 10; S - 1,20 m, E - 1,40 m, h - 154,45 m
Small find No. 2, Æ3, 2,11 g, 16,5-17,4 mm, 12 h

39. Arcadius, 395-401 AD, unknown mint

Obv. D N AR[CADIVS]PF AVG, pearl-diademed, draped, and cuirassed bust right.

Rev. [VIRTVS–EXERCITI], emperor standing facing, head right, resting on grounded spear and shield, to his right, Victory standing facing, head left, wearing a palm in the left hand, crowning him.
04.05.2023, Area I, sq. H 9; S - 2,10 m, E - 1,10 m, h - 155,47 m
Small find No. 6, *Æ3*, 2,33 g, 15,5-17,3 mm, 12 h

40. Arcadius, Honorius or Theodosius II, *406-408 AD, unknown mint*

Obv. [...], pearl-diademed, draped, and cuirassed bust right; star behind the bust.

Rev. [GLOR–IA ROMA–NORVM], three emperors standing facing, two outermost taller with heads toward centre holding spear and hand on shield, centre holding spear.
19.05.2023, Area III, while cleaning, h - 154,90 m
Small find No. 23b, *Æ3*, 1,41 g, 13,6 mm, 6 h

41. Honorius or Theodosius II, 408-423 AD.

Obv. Illegible inscription, pearl-diademed bust right; star behind the bust.

Rev. Illegible inscription, the image is of GLORIA ROMANORVM type, two emperors standing facing with heads turned toward each other (?).
04.05.2023, Area III, sq. I 10; N - 0,35 m, E - 2,15 m, h - 155,45 m
Small find No. 7, *Æ*, 1,74 g, 15,5-14,2 mm, 11 h

42. Theodosius II, 425-435 AD, unknown mint

Obv. [THEODOS]IVS P F AVG, pearl-diademed bust right.

Rev. [CONCORDIA AVG], Victory facing, holding two wreaths in both hands up.
12.05.2023, Area III, sq. H 10; S - 0,36 m, E - 0,76 m, h - 154,95 m
Small find No. 17, *Æ*, 1,04 g, 10,7-10,9 mm, 12 h

43. Obscure emperor and mint,4th century

Obv. Illegible inscritpion, bust to right?

Rev. A figure standing facing with raised right hand (possibly type SECVRITAS–REIPVBLICAE, 364-378 AD).
01.06.2023, Area III, sq. H 18; N - 1,10 m, W - 1,40 m, h - 155,0 m
Small find No. 48 (1/2 preserved), *Æ*, 0,81 g, 18,6-10,5 mm, 6 h

44. Obscure emperor and mint, 4th century – beginning of 5th century
Obv. Illegible.
Rev. Illegible.
08.05.2023, Area III, sq. H 14; S - 2,20 m, E - 1,10 m, h - 155,10 m
Small find No. 13, Æ, 1,12 g, 11,2-12,2 mm

45. Obscure emperor and mint, 4th century – beginning of 5th century
Obv. Illegible.
Rev. Illegible.
31.05.2023, Area III, sq. G 10; N - 0,01 m, W - 1,0 m, h - 155,02 m
Small find No. 45, Æ, 1,53 g, 12,8-13,4 mm

46. Obscure emperor and mint, 4th century – beginning of 5th century
Obv. Illegible.
Rev. Illegible.
04.05.2023, Area III, sq. H 10; N - 0,80 m, E - 1,15 m, h - 155,42 m
Small find No. 3, Æ, 0,91 g, 13,6-12 mm

47. Obscure emperor and mint,4th century – beginning of 5th century
Obv. Illegible.
Rev. Illegible.
31.05.2023, Area III, sq. J 13; S - 1,0 m, W - 1,45 m, h - 155,03 m
Small find No. 47, Æ, (chipped, impacted and oxidized), 0,89 g, 12,3-10,7 mm

48. Obscure emperor and mint,4th century – beginning of 5th century
Obv. Illegible, bust to right?.
Rev. Illegible.
01.06.2023, Area III, sq. J 12; S - 3,09 m, E - 1,48 m, h - 155,30 m
Small find No. 50, Æ, 1,08 g, 11,4-11,5 mm

49. Obscure emperor and mint,4th century – beginning of 5th century
Obv. Illegible.
Rev. Illegible.
09.06.2023, Area III, sq. H 9; N - 2,40 m, E - 1,90 m, h - 154,99 m
Small find No. 60, Æ, 1,07 g, 11,6-12,3 mm

50. Obscure emperor and mint,4th century – beginning of 5th century
Obv. [.....], pearl-diademed, draped, and cuirassed bust right.

Rev. Illegible (VIRTVS–EXERCITI' type], emperor standing facing, head right, resting on grounded spear and shield, to his right, Victory standing facing, head left, wearing a palm in the left hand, crowning him ?, 395-401 AD).
19.05.2023, Area III, sq. I 16; S - 1,70 m, E - 1,0 m, h - 155,52 m
Small find No. 22, Æ3, 0,97 g, 14,7-12,8 mm

51. Obscure emperor and mint, first half of 5th century
Obv. Illegible, bust to right.
Rev. Illegible.
23.05.2023, Area III, sq. I 16; S - 1,28 m, W - 0,60 m, h - 154,94 m
Small find No. 35, Æ, 0,54 g, 9,5-9,3 mm

52. Obscure emperor and mint, first half of 5th century
Obv. Illegible, bust to right.
Rev. Illegible.
25.05.2023, Area III, sq. H 18; N - 0,80 m, W - 2,0 m, h - 155,33 m
Small find No. 36, Æ, 1,28 g, 9,4-11 mm

- Ottoman coins (15th-16th century):

53. Murad II, Edirne (1421-1444 AD)
Obv. Inscription in Arabic – name and title of the ruler
Rev. Inscription in Arabic.
Small find No. 34, Æ mangir, 2,23 g, 16,8-16,7 mm

54. Obscure ruler
Obv. Illegible.
Rev. Illegible.
Small find No. 15, Æ, 2,75 g, 14-14,7 mm
- Obscure date:

55. Obscure date *(Hellenistic ?)*
Obv. Bust to right?
Rev. Illegible.
23.06.2023, Area I, sq. F 7; N - 1,60 m, E - 1,10 m, h - 154,40 m
Small find No. 84, Æ, 3,82 g, 18,3-15,2 mm

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STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA 10, 209-243
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The *ptochotrophium* in Novae (Moesia Secunda) Preliminary results of the study

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Abstract: The object of our research is a complex of premises located south of the large basilica to be a part of the bishopric complex in Novae (Moesia Secunda). It is one of the largest facilities of this type in the Balkan Peninsula and the best-explored one and consists of the Early-Christian episcopal basilica with an atrium, the episcopal residence, a basilica minor, a southern complex interpreted as a *ptochotrophium*. In 1998–2006, the *ptochotrophium* was explored in detail by the Adam Mickiewicz University Archaeological Expedition. The main task of the research was the study of the spatial layout and determination of the functional purpose of the premises, as well as their preserved interior decoration and equipment. The study has provided evidence that the complex constituted a shelter for the poor and pilgrims who probably visited the tomb of the martyr St. Lupus in Novae, a facility rarely preserved. A complex of rooms adjoining the southern side of the episcopal basilica in Novae was erected in the early 5th century as the final section of the *episcopium*. The present writers interpreted the southern complex as an almshouse or a *ptochotrophium*. There are two essential premises for this conclusion: Firstly, there are no signs that the complex featured a hospital, which would classify it as a *xenodochium*, and secondly, it was equipped for the cooking of large amounts of food for its visitors and provided ample room for eating meals, as evidence the ovens set up under the porticos and the substantial sizes of the refectories and the storerooms. Furthermore, the monks operated *xenodochia* in the monasteries or near them, while the complex in Novae was a bishopric.

Keywords: Novae, Moesia Secunda, early-Byzantine period, episcopal complex, *ptochotrophium*

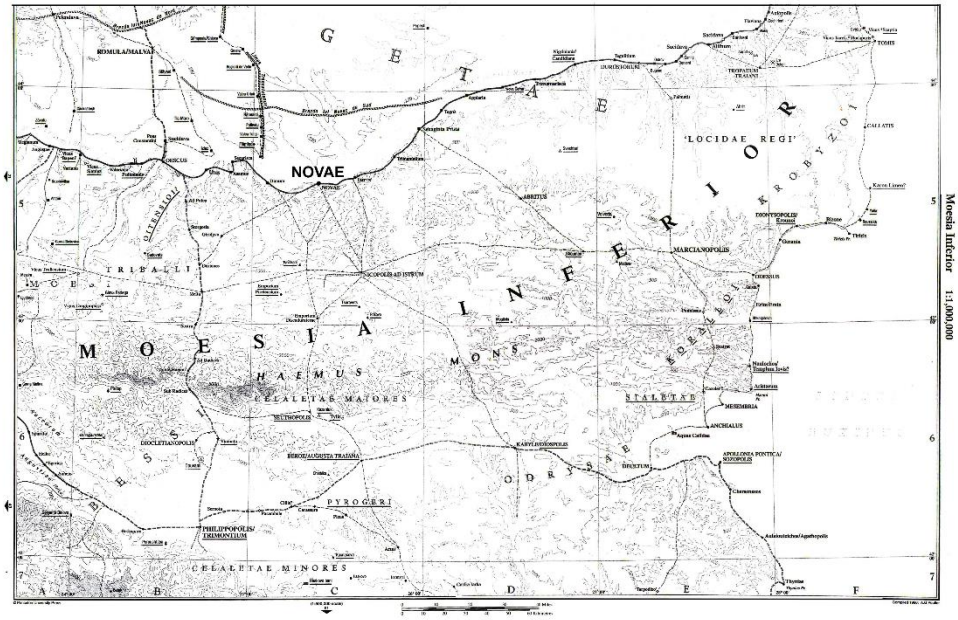
Резюме: Обект на нашето изследване е комплексът от помещения, разположен южно от голямата базилика, която е била част от епископския комплекс в Novae (Moesia Secunda). Той е един от най-големите обекти от този тип на Балканския полуостров и най-добре проученият и се състои от раннохристиянска епископска базилика с атриум, епископска резиденция, малка базилика и

южен комплекс, интерпретиран като *ptochotrophium*. В периода 1998-2006 г. *ptochotrophium* е подробно проучен от археологическата експедиция на университета „Адам Мицкевич“. Основната задача на изследването е проучването на пространственото оформление и определянето на функционалното предназначение на помещенията, както и на запазената им вътрешна украса и мебелировка. Проучването предостави доказателства, че комплексът е представлявал подслон (съоръжение, което рядко се запазва) за бедните и поклонниците, които вероятно са посещавали гроба на мъченика Свети Лупус в Нове. Комплексът от помещения, прилежащи към южната страна на епископската базилика в Нове, е издигнат в началото на V в. като последна част на *episcopium*. Настоящите автори интерпретират южния комплекс като милостилница или *ptochotrophium*. За това заключение има две съществени предпоставки: първо, няма признаци комплексът да е бил болница, което би го класифицирало като *xenodochium*, и второ, той е бил оборудван за приготвяне на големи количества храна за посетителите и е предоставял достатъчно място за хранене, за което свидетелстват пещите, разположени под портиците, и значителните размери на трапезариите и складовете. Освен това монасите са управлявали *xenodochia* в манастирите или в близост до тях, докато комплексът в Нове е бил епископски.

Introduction

The Roman legionary camp and early-Byzantine town of Novae (near Svishtov, Bulgaria), one of the most important strongholds on the border of the Empire, is among the best studied facilities of this type in the area of the Lower Danube (fig. 1). A systematic exploration of Novae began with the Warsaw University Archaeological Expedition, led by Professor Kazimierz Majewski. Since its inception, the deputy director of the expedition was Professor Stefan Parnicki-Pudełko of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. In 1970, last mentioned scientist established the Archaeological Expedition of the Adam Mickiewicz University to Novae, which he also headed during the long period of 1970–1988. In 1990–2016, the head of the International Interdisciplinary Archaeological Expedition "Novae" of the Adam Mickiewicz University was Dr. Andrzej B. Biernacki. The early-Christian complex of the bishopric was discovered and explored in 1974–2010.[1] The structures of the bishopric were erected in the territory of the former Roman camp, in an *insula* which had housed an extensive complex of the legionary baths, abandoned and destroyed during the wars with the *foederati* in 376–382.

[1] Biernacki & Czerner 2013; Biernacki *et al.* 2013.



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Fig. 1. A map of Moesia (after Talbert 2000, 22). 2. A topographical plan of Novae. Construction phases III–IV, 5th–6th century (created by E. Klenina based on an outline plan by S. Parnicki-Pudełko, A. B. Biernacki, T. Sarnowski, P. Dyczek and E. Genčeva).

The earliest mention of a bishop of Novae in the written sources comes from the early 5th century.[2] According to the written sources, the bishopric was established between 430 and 449,[3] and archaeological finds suggest that its edifices began to be built in the first quarter of the 5th century.[4] The borders of the complex are fairly precisely delineated on three sides by the area of the former Roman *insula*, which in the north reached the *via principalis*, in the east, the *via vicinaria*, opposite the impressive *principia*, and in the west, a smaller street parallel to the latter; the southern border of the complex has not been determined in detail, but it certainly was not identical with the perimeter of the area of the legionary baths.

The complex of the bishopric in Novae, one of the largest facilities of this type in the Balkan Peninsula and the best explored one, consists of:

- an early-Christian episcopal basilica the *atrium*,
- a large detached baptistery in the *atrium*,
- a *basilica minor*,
- the episcopal residence,
- a *ptochotrophium*.

The *ptochotrophium* was explored in detail by the Expedition of the Adam Mickiewicz University in 1998–2006.[5] The subject matter of the study was the spatial layout of and the communication between the rooms as well as their preserved internal decoration and fittings, e.g., the wooden floors (their joists were laid on plinths placed at regular intervals inside stone blocks), a stone platform for pressing grape juice and kitchen ovens. The study has provided evidence that the complex constituted a shelter for the poor and pilgrims who probably visited the tomb of the martyr St. Lupus in Novae,[6] a facility very rarely uncovered by archaeologists.

[2] Dimitrov 1992, 84.
[3] Ilski 1984, 305–309; Parnicki-Pudełko 1995, 54.
[4] Biernacki & Klenina 2002, 188–190.
[5] Biernacki & Klenina 2002, 187–195; Biernacki & Klenina 2003, 86–88; Biernacki 2013, 36–39.
[6] Biernacki 2005, 72; Biernacki 2013, 36–39, figs. 9, 21, 23; Czerner 2013, 56–80, plans I–VI, fig.15.

Historical Context

The available written sources report that a bishop of an unknown name had his see in Novae in the 6th century.[7] He is mentioned in reference to the visit of Peter, the brother of emperor Maurice (582–602), to Novae on the eve of the day of St. Lupus in 597.[8] The latter was St. Lupus of Novae, a faithful servant of the Great Martyr St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki, present at the death of his master in a prison in the latter city on November 8, 306.[9] Lupus soaked his clothes with St. Demetrius' blood, took a ring from his hand, and used these objects to heal the sick. He became famous in Thessaloniki, and many sick came to him. When emperor Galerius (305–311) learnt about this, he had Lupus beheaded by the sword on August 23, in the year between 306 and 311.

In the Eastern Church, St. Lupus is often mentioned along with St. Nestor, but this is apparently a later tradition.[10] St. Lupus' day generally falls on the anniversary of his martyrdom and death on August 23.[11] As this was a significant regional feast in Moesia Secunda, the emperor's brother Peter interrupted his important military activity to come to Novae for the celebration in 597. Unfortunately, there is no reliable proof in the written sources of the latter city's relation to the cult of the saint. One may suppose that the saint's relics were transferred to the city, probably in the mid-5th century, during the office of bishop Secundinus, at a time when the basilica *extra muros* was being built with a sepulture under the altar. Obviously, this fact does not explain why St. Lupus became the patron of the city. The transfer of his relics to Novae certainly made the latter a popular destination for pilgrims from the north-western coast of the Black Sea, who—according to indirect evidence—came to the city even from such fairly distant locations as Chersonesus Taurica: In the port district of Chersonesus, a ceramic bread stamp was found with an image of St. Lupus in full armor with a spear and a shield (his typical iconographical representation) with the text on

[7] Ilski 1995, 80.
[8] Biernacki 2005, 54.
[9] Baziór 1994, 102; Klenina 2009, 15–16.
[10] Walter 2003, 230.
[11] Delehaye 1912, 258; Biernacki 2005, 68–72; Klenina 2006, 137.

the double rim: "St. Lu[p]us' blessing",[12] conceivably used for the decoration of *eulogiae* and brought to the city by a pilgrim who had been to Novae.[13] This fact confirms the popularity among the faithful of the pilgrimage center in Novae in the province of Moesia II. Incidentally, Chersonesites also went on pilgrimages to Ephesus (Asia Minor), as indicate finds of *amphorisci* produced in the latter city and related to the cult of St. John the Baptist.[14]

Two other relics alongside those of St. Lupus attracted pilgrims to Novae. South of the southern aisle of the episcopal basilica, a *martyrium* was built between 480 and 518, where the relics were kept in a stone reliquary. The edifice was torn down in the mid-6th century. Archaeological excavation revealed a recess for a reliquary under the stone slabs of the floors. The actual reliquary is an ark or a sarcophagus made of local limestone. The lid of the reliquary was decorated with a relief of a Greek cross with—on the right—the image of a man standing on the top of a column,[15] possibly St. Simeon Stylites the Elder. The container probably held the saint's relics, which during liturgies were laved with oil poured through an opening in the lid; later, the oil was distributed among pilgrims in *ampullae*.

The other relic was kept in the *basilica minor* (functioning in 518–557), in a parallelepipedal limestone reliquary under the altar, a chest containing a small piece of bone. This is a rare instance of a false relic worshipped in the sixth century, as a DNA analysis has demonstrated that the bone is animal rather than human,[16] a fact of which the parishioners and pilgrims obviously were not aware when a priest gave them *ampullae* with the oils that had laved the relic. We do not know the name of the saint worshipped in this manner in the *basilica minor*.

Architectural and Archaeological Data

The complex with side wings identified as the *ptochotrophium* adjoined the southern wall of the episcopal basilica and had the external

[12] Golofast *et al*. 1991, 32.
[13] Klausen-Nottmeyer 1995, 922–927.
[14] Lochner *et al*. 2005, 649–650; Klenina 2009, 17.
[15] Biernacki 2005, 67.
[16] Biernacki 2005, 68.

dimensions of 53.30 m × 22.25/26.80 m, surrounding on three sides a rectangular courtyard of the size of 29.40/29.60 m × 11.50/12.00 m with the porticos. The wide entrance was in the wall of the southern aisle of the basilica, exactly in the middle of the courtyard rather than in the middle of the length of the aisle (figs. 2–4), suggesting that the layout of the *ptochotrophium* had been designed while the church was still being built.



Fig. 2. Novae. The latera pretorii sinistra. A southern aerial view, year 2022 (photo by M. Atanasov).

The erection of the complex and the porticos was apparently a single construction project (fig. 5). The same material was used for both, e.g. the same lime mortar with an admixture of finely crushed ceramics. All the walls constitute a single design. All is placed on solid foundations, often reaching down to earlier Roman structures. Most walls were put up in the *opus mixtum* technique; the width is between 0.60 and 0.80 m.



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Fig. 3. A 3-D computer reconstruction of the ptochotrophium in the bishopric complex in Novae (created by Bartosz Biernacki and Andrzej B. Biernacki). 1. The episcopal basil-ica and the ptochotrophium. A south-western view from above. 2. The southern portico and the courtyard of the ptochotrophium. A view from the eastern side of the southern portico.

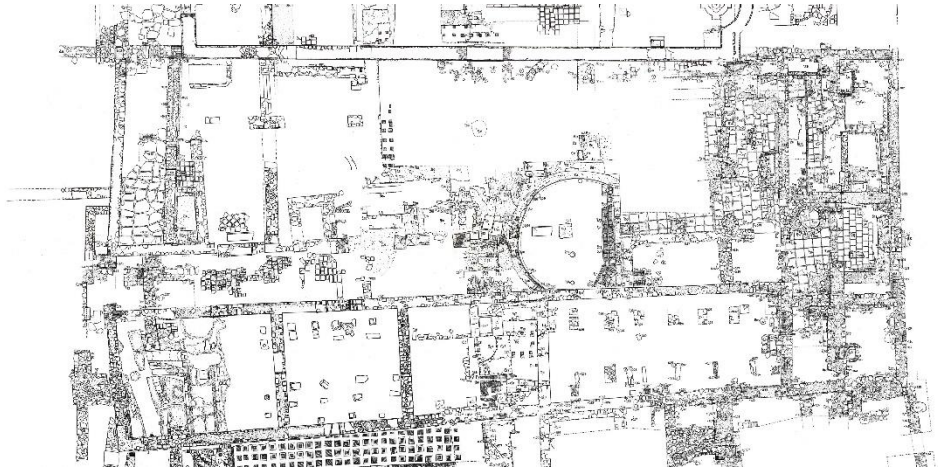


Fig. 4. An architectural plan of the ptochotrophium in the bishopric complex in Novae (drawing by A. B. Biernacki, S. Medeksza and R. Czerner).

The porticos which surround the courtyard on three sides are placed on deep quadrangular, occasionally circular foundations, supporting the columns which held the wooden shed roof. Bases of the columns, preserved *in situ* and one found separately, and a base of a pillar with an attached column, differ from one another in sizes and profiles; they were obviously reused, as many other Roman architectural elements and details in all the structures of the episcopal complex in Novae.

The *ptochotrophium* was easily accessed from the other structures of the *epsicopium* and from the outside (fig. 5) through five entrances. Three were in the north: an entrance from the southern aisle of the basilica to the courtyard, in the middle of the latter's length, of the width of 2.00 m; a passage from the narthex of the basilica directly to the adjoining room in the west; and a narrow passage to the eastern portico at the *via vicinaria* in the east, at the outer corner of the episcopal basilica; there was also a door to room B in the south, and the main entrance, of the width of 2.40 m, in the west, which led to a spacious corridor between the western and the eastern wing (the corridor constituted an extension of the southern portico).

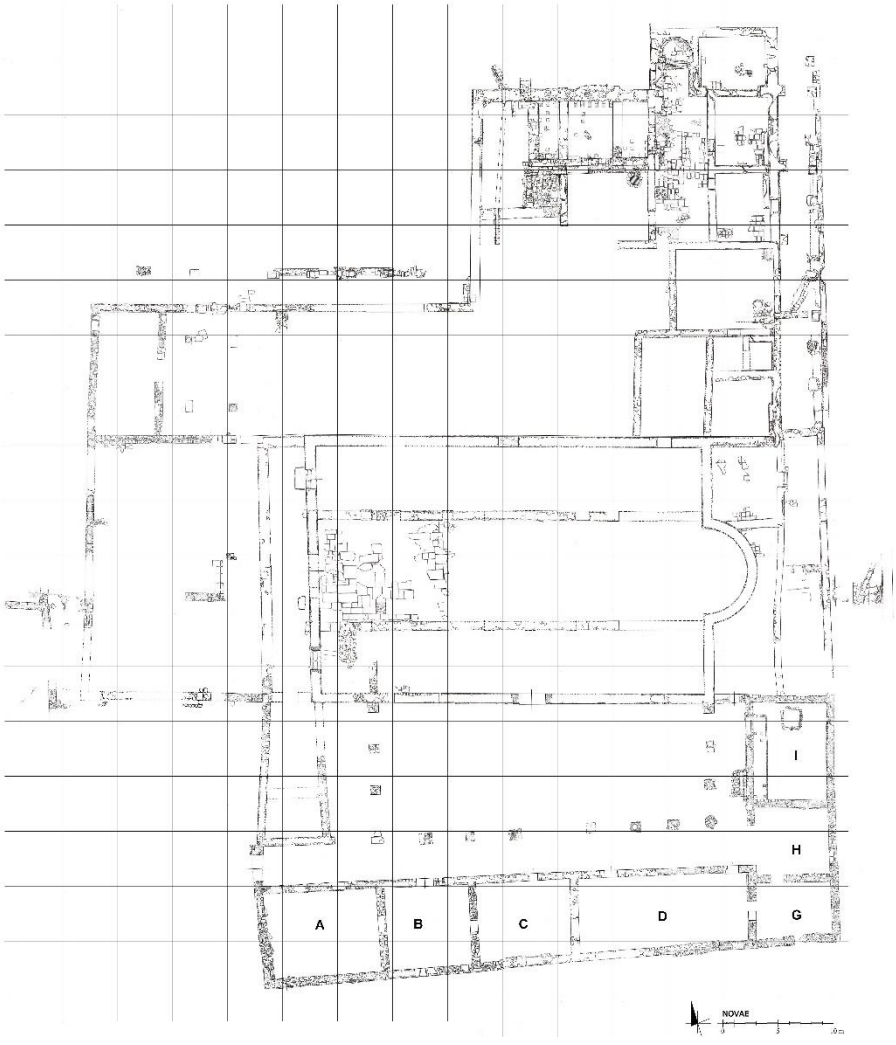


Fig. 5. An outline plan of the bishopric complex in Novae (Moesia Secunda) of the first half of the 5th century (Czerner 2013, 87; based on an outline plan by A. B. Biernacki, S. Medeksza and R. Czerner).

The large courtyard allowed for communication between the various rooms and divided the *ptochotrophium* into wings. The western wing was in fact an extension of the narthex to the south. Initially it consisted of two rooms of unequal sizes; the wall dividing the rooms was pulled down in a later phase of construction. The first room apparently communicated with the adjoining portico in the north, but the

possible passage was destroyed when a tomb was set up at its place at a later time. In the first phase of construction, the western wing probably housed the *skeuophylakion*, the storage room for—primarily—the *vasa sacra*.[17] According to source texts from the 5th–7th century, the *skeuophylakion* was where the celebrant and the deacons received gifts from the faithful taking part in the liturgy and distributed the Eucharist, and whence the procession carrying the consecrated bread and wine went to the main altar.[18] In the following phase of construction the room was pulled down and the *skeuophylakion* was moved to room A in the south-western corner of the *ptochotrophium* (fig. 5).

The southern portico consisted of eight bays supported by eight columns, one shared with the eastern portico, and a pillar shared with the western one. The average spacing of the supports is app. 3.50 m, and in two cases almost 4 m. The depth of the portico amounted to 3.50 m, the same as the width of the corridor leading to the western entrance.

Four rectangular rooms have so far been encountered south of the courtyard of the *ptochotrophium* (figs. 2, 4–5). The rooms in the southern wing and in the south-eastern corner were laid out one behind another and communicated with one another. Besides, each one had its own entrance from the portico in the north; the biggest one, the fourth from the west, which was the refectory, had two entrances in the first phase. The external width of the wing gradually diminishes from 9.35 m in the west to 7.55 m in the east, and the internal width, respectively from 7.75 to 6.10 m.

The westernmost room (fig. 5, room A) has the dimensions of 7.50–7.70 (along the "north–south" axis) × 9.90–10.15 m (the "west–east" axis). All of its walls were made of stones and bricks of various sizes, laid in stripes and irregularly, and bound with lime mortar. The thickness of the walls is between 0.60 (a part of the western wall) and 0.80 m (the southern wall), and they are extant up to a height of between 1.50 and 2.50 m. The western, northern and southern walls were parts of a single structure, while the eastern wall was put up separately. A walled-up entrance of the width of 1.20 m, leading to the corridor, was found app.

[17] Biernacki & Klenina 2003, 82–97; Baldini 2014, 128.
[18] Baldini 2014, 128.

0.65 m above the original floor of the room. It was most probably related to the passage.



Fig. 6. General view of the sigma-shaped mensa sacra (photo by A.B. Biernacki).

Another entrance, of the width of app. 1.50 m, was identified in the eastern wall. In the stratum featuring pieces of charcoal, ashes and other burnt matter, directly under the débris of roofing tiles and fragments of bricks, which are functionally related to the basilica and its auxiliary rooms, numerous fragments of two early-Christian *mensae* were discovered *in situ*; one of these is sigma-shaped and has bas-relief on its edges. The stratum consists of vestiges of a violent fire which collapsed the entire structure of the roof including the ceramic tiles. The 155 identified fragments of the *mensa*, after being reassembled, yielded app. two thirds of this unique relic. The *mensa* was thoroughly restored and reconstructed in Poznań in the years 2000–2003 (fig. 6). Now it has been established that it was sigma-shaped, its base was 127 cm wide and its height was 137 cm, and that it was decorated with a stripe of bas-relief 11.5 cm wide at the edge of its top.

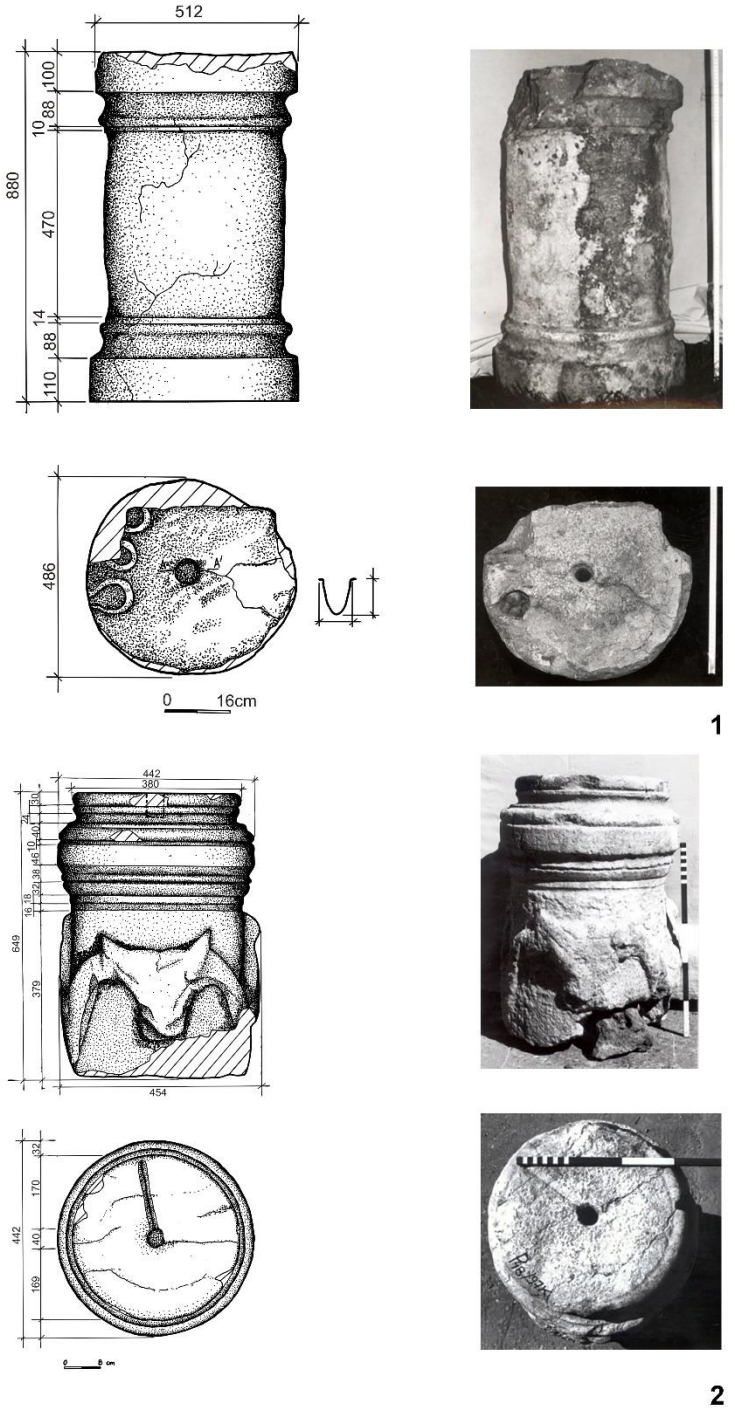


Fig. 7. Two monolithic circular limestone pedestals from room A (drawing and photo by A.B. Biernacki).

The relief scenes, arranged in strips, represent a wide variety of subjects and symbols: images of boar hunting with hounds, fights of a bear with a horse, a bear with a griffin, a lioness with a unicorn and a lion with a bull, a scratching donkey, two tritons, dolphins (including an image of Eros riding on a dolphin's back), and two women's profiles, one of them wearing a *corona muralis* (this is probably Tyche). The results of our investigation suggest that the sigma-shaped *mensa* from Novae was imported from Asia Minor or Constantinople and made in the late 4th or early 5th century.[19]

Furthermore, two fragments of monolithic circular limestone pedestals were found (fig. 7). One is the upper part of a circular pedestal with a column base at the top. Badly jagged decorative *bucrania* are visible on the sides. It is conspicuous that the *bucrania* were removed very carefully. The other circular pedestal, which is entirely preserved, has a height of 0.88 m and the diameters of the base and the top of 0.53 m. In the upper part of the side of the pedestal, the last vestiges of the first line of a Latin inscription have remained. Only one word may be reconstructed: "*Augustae*." Evidently the text was carefully hammered out when the pedestal was reused. The location of the two pedestals suggests their purpose when they were reused: they served as the legs supporting the marble *mensae* in the room. The Christian nature of the room and the function of the *mensae sacrae* was reason enough to remove the inscription and the decorations from the pedestals. During the exploration of the floor of the interior, an arrangement of four stone blocks was discovered. The tops of the blocks are at a similar elevation. Apparently they were supports of the wooden joists of the wooden floor. Evidently, the room was originally a *skeuophylakion*, where Christians kept vestments and liturgical vessels and brought foodstuffs both for the religious services and for the subsistence of the bishop and his household. The foodstuffs were stored on the marble *mensae*.[20] The *terminus post quem* of the fire, established based on numismatic material, is the year 420. The remains of the fire, including a burnt stone *stela*,

[19] Biernacki 1999, 75–82.
[20] Biernacki & Klenina 2002, 189; Biernacki & Klenina 2003, 86.

were buried in soil, and the resulting new floor level was laid with ceramic slabs. In the early 6th century the western entrance was walled up, and room A could now be accessed only from the neighboring room B (fig. 14).

East of the described room, another, smaller interior was discovered, of the dimensions of 7.20–7.30 (west–east) × 7.50 m (north–south) (fig. 5, room B, 8/1). The technique of erection and the applied material and mortar are the same as in the previous room. Reused stone blocks and architectural details, arranged in several stripes, were unearthed in this room; they were also used as supports of the joists of the wooden floor. The nineteen items of various sizes (the largest one is 0.80 × 0.35 × 0.45 m, and the smallest one, 0.43 × 0.30 × 0.22 m) are laid out in several rows. The reused architectural elements and details include pieces of an architrave, a water tank and a stone altar. Their heights vary, but their tops are virtually at the same level. On these supports, parallel wooden joists had been placed, to which the wooden floor planks had been nailed. A large number of iron nails used to secure the planks were found during the exploration of the two rooms. The room could also be accessed directly from the north, from the corridor, through an entrance of the width of app. 1.25 m. There was yet another entrance in the eastern wall, of the width of app. 1.70 m. Due to the bad preservation of the latter entrance, it was impossible to determine its precise size.

The third room (fig. 5, room C) in the complex south of the court, of the dimensions of 8.20 m × 8.15 m × 7.20/7.80 m, was discovered in 2002. Initially it has three entrances, from the east, the west and the north. The southern door was walled up in the early 6th century, when a stone platform was put up at its northern wall; of the size of 2.10 m × 2.30 m and elevated 1.00 m above the floor of the room, the platform was used for pressing grape juice (fig. 14). The substruction of the platform was made of rough stone and greenish clay. The original dimensions of the platform at the northern wall were not less than 6.80 m (length) × 2.10 m (width). The stone floor is surrounded on all sides with brick walls bound with hydraulic mortar. In the south and the north, the walls of the platform were covered with white lime mortar with sand and finely crushed brick. There is a discharge opening in one of the

monolithic slabs of the platform in the south. A stone *mortarium* has also been found, which might have been used for pouring grape juice. Apparently wine was made in this room, both for liturgical purposes and for ordinary consumption. In the south-eastern corner of room C, there is another platform, of the dimensions of 1.49 m × 2.06 m and 0.58 m high, made of large stone blocks. The floor of room C was made of wooden boards fastened to joists by iron nails. The fourth room, the easternmost of those known so far, was partly unearthed in 2003 at a length of 7.50 m. Its width is 6.80 m. Each of these rooms had its own entrance from the portico of the court. Dedicated doors provided direct communication between the rooms along the "west–east" axis.

In the year 2004, room D (fig. 5, 8/2, 11, 14) of the complex of the *ptochotrophium* was exposed and explored in detail;[21] this is located south of the episcopal basilica and apparently constituted the refectory. The most conspicuous alteration to the complex after 488 was the addition of wooden floors in the southern wing, where its principal interiors were, which raised their bottom surfaces by some 0.5 m. In the 6th century, the building was badly damaged by two strong earthquakes in 518 and 557. In the first half of the same century (after 518), the complex of the bishopric in Novae, including the *ptochotrophium*, underwent gradual structural modifications: To begin with, the southern portico (the last one) was pulled down, which altogether changed the appearance of the columned courtyard. On the site of the southern portico, an annex was built in the east with two rooms corresponding to those in the western annex. It had an entrance in the north near the eastern corner (its stone threshold is extant) leading to the eastern room, which in turn communicated with another room. The remnants of a kitchen oven in the latter interior indicate that it was a utility room, apparently the kitchen of the nearby refectory. Badly damaged by the earthquake of 557, most edifices of the complex of the bishopric of Novae were later repaired,[22] but some, e.g. the *basilica minor*, were never rebuilt. Consequently, the original layout and function of the complex of the *ptochotrophium* vanished. The cataclysm produced a layer of destruction

[21] Czerner 2013, 64, 67, 71, 76–78.
[22] Biernacki 2005, 60, 62; Dashkov 1996, 59.

containing unique archaeological material including items from the refectory. At the time of its operation, a western passage in the northern wall provided access from the inner courtyard to the refectory.



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Fig. 8. The southern wing of the ptochotrophium: 1. Room B: A view from the south-eastern side. 2. Room D: A view from the east (photo by A. B. Biernacki).

Near the passage, fragments of "Palestinian" *amphorisci* were found at elevations of 51.20–50.80 and 50.30–50.05 m ASL, mostly in assemblages in the north-eastern part of the room, along its northern wall (fig. 9). At the elevation of 50.24 m ASL, a coin of Anastasius I (491–518) was also encountered.[23]



Fig. 9. The early-Byzantine amphorisci from room D of the ptochotrophium (photo by A. B. Biernacki).

[23] Klenina 2009, 21.

It is believed that *amphorisci* of this type were produced in Caesarea Cibyra in the province of Caria (now Gölhisar in south-western Turkey), where archaeological excavation has yielded rejected items and vestiges of waste products[24] from between the early 5th and the mid-7th century.[25] Presumably, such *amphorisci* began to be imported to Novae after 536, when Moesia Secunda became a part of the newly established *quaestura exercitus* together with Scythia, Caria, Cyprus and the Cyclades.[26]

In the south-eastern corner of the refectory, directly at the entrance which provided access from the neighboring room G, a unique assemblage of more than twenty *Spangenhelme* was discovered (fig. 10/1–2).[27] Apparently, the helmets had originally been kept on a wooden rack whose remnants (burnt beams) were encountered in the explored layer. The helmets were discovered at the elevation of 50.90–50.77 m ASL in a layer of destruction, buried under stones, bricks and tiles mixed with a large amount of lime mortar, all coming from the walls and the roof of the refectory.[28]

Among the utensils discovered in the refectory, of particular interest are remnants of bronze vessels. One of these is a small boiler, deformed by the collapse of the roof in the refectory. Its flanged rim and spherical general shape, slightly swollen at the bottom, are noticeable. Also striking is the large thickness of its material. According to Evgenija Genčeva,[29] a vessel of a similar shape with a lid has been found in Augusta Traiana (Stara Zagora); it is dated to between the second half of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th century.[30] In the present writers' view, however, on a closer study the forms of the two vessels turn out to be fairly different. Obviously, both were used to cook and serve hot food in refectories, dining rooms or other utility or dwelling interiors.

[24] Japp 2005, 239.
[25] Lochner *et al*. 2005, 649.
[26] Klenina 2006, 134–135.
[27] Biernacki 2012, 91–104.
[28] Biernacki 2012, 95.
[29] Genčeva 2013, 168–169, 177, 203–205, tables XXV–XXVII.
[30] Čolakov & Ilieva 2005, 53–85, Tafel I, 8–9, Abb. 12–16.

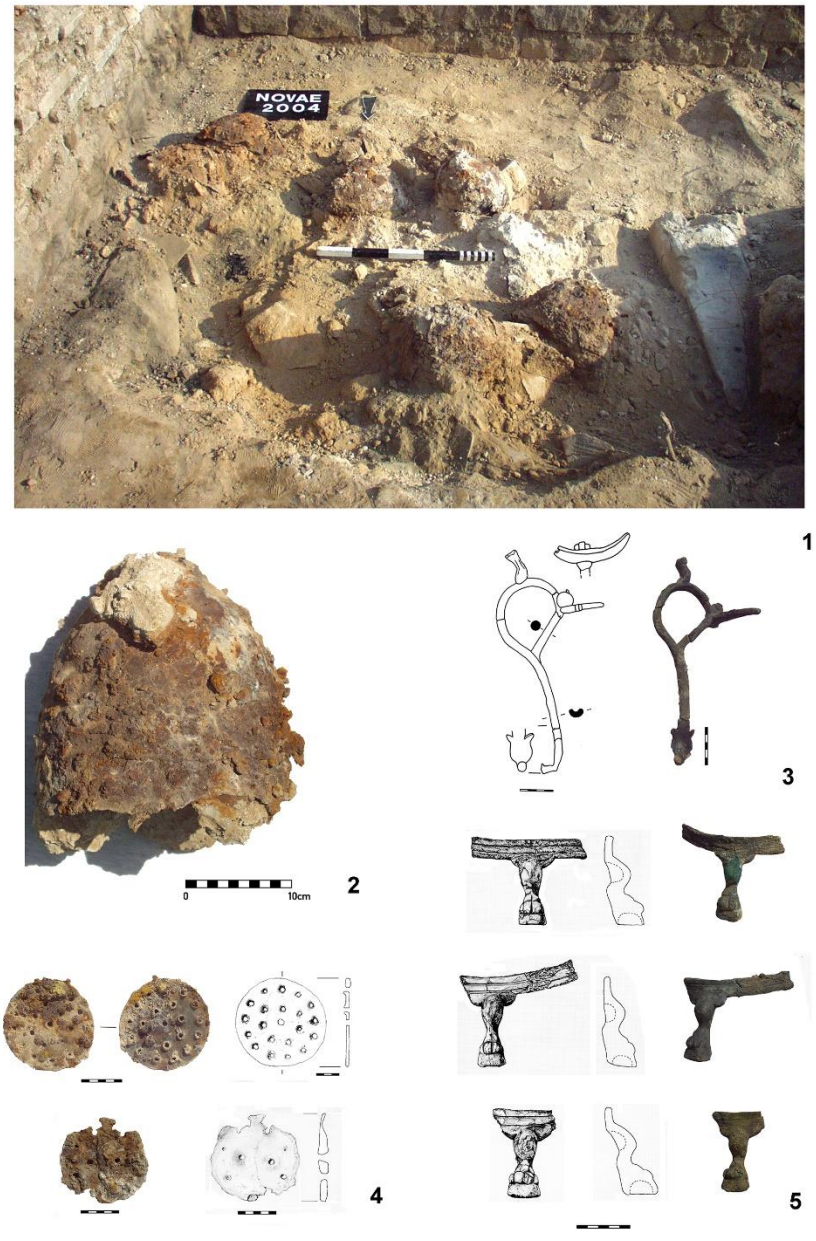


Fig. 10. 1. The corpus of iron helmets in the south-eastern refectory of the pto-chotrophium of the complex of the bishopric of Novae. A view from the north. 2. An iron helmet from the ptochotrophium (Photographs by A. B. Biernacki). 3. An S-shaped bronze handle of an authepsa. 4. Perforated circular iron plates: fire grates of an au-thepsa. 5. A round bronze tripod of an authepsa on legs shaped as a lion's paws, broken into five parts. Drawing by M. Nowak, photographs by A. B. Biernacki, computer pro-cessing of illustrations by E. Klenina.

The boiler from the *ptochotrophium* in Novae was apparently used placed on a bronze tripod which has been found near it. Another interesting item is an S-shaped handle of a peculiar shape made of forged bronze (fig. 10/3). Beside vessels, two perforated circular iron plates have been discovered in the refectory, of maximum diameters of 12.00 cm, used as fire grates (fig. 10/4). Directly at the bronze vessel, a broken tripod made of mold-cast bronze was found in the refectory of the *ptochotrophium*. Each of its small legs has the shape of a lion's paw placed on a round plate; the legs are connected by a slightly ellipsoidal hoop of the diameter of 27.50 cm (fig. 10/5). The total height of the tripod is 8.5 cm. It was used to support a bronze vessel, whether filled with glowing charcoal, or an *authepsa*, or containing food. In the latter case, the vessel would hold hot food and would be placed on the tripod to protect a wooden floor or tabletop from burning; E. Genčeva[31] considers this proposition unlikely, since a stone or earthenware plate would be more practical. Yet another object deserves a mention: a partly damaged piece of sheet bronze rolled into a truncated cone. This was discovered near the bronze kettle, handle, perforated plates and tripod, all described above. The occurrence of all these items in one place suggests that they, as well as the bronze boiler, are components of an *authepsa*, or an Ancient self-boiler.

An *authepsa* was a bronze vase or urn used for heating water or wine and—primarily—for keeping them hot for a longer time. The Greek word "*αὐθέψης*" literarily means "a self-boiler." The word appears only once in a Latin source text, with reference to the preparation of "*calda aqua*," or hot water for drinking, as well as to the mixing and heating of wine with the addition of aromas or herbs.[32] While the extant specimens of Roman *authepsae* are made of bronze, these complex utensils could very likely also have been made of more expensive precious metals, as suggests a passage in Aelius Lampridius' biography of Antoninus Elagabalus:[33] "Primus deinde authepsas argenteas habuit, primus etiam caccabos. Vasa deinde centenaria argentea scalpta et

[31] Genčeva 2013, 168.
[32] Pitarakis 2005, 674.
[33] Pitarakis 2005, 674; Historia Augusta. Aeli Lampridi Antoninus Heliogabalus, 19, 3.

nonnulla schematibus libidinosissimis inquinata" (English translation by David Magie: "Moreover, he was the first to use silver urns and casseroles, and vessels of chased silver, one hundred pounds in weight, some of them spoiled by the lewdest designs").

The stratigraphy and the locations of the components of the *authepsa* from Novae indicate that it represented type Ia and was kept and used in the refectory of the *ptochotrophium* in the complex of the bishopric damaged in the earthquake of 557. Typologically, it resembles *authepsae* from western Asia Minor the most. Accordingly, it is tentatively concluded that it was imported from a craftsman's workshop in an early-Byzantine city of Asia Minor or in Constantinople.[34]

The eastern wing (fig. 5, 11–12) was of the length of 33.00 m (internally 31.50 m) and the width of 8.35 m in the south and 8 m in the north (internally 6.90 and 6.65 m respectively), and consisted of three rooms of the internal lengths of (from the south) 5.10 m, 6.15 m and 8.80 m. The southernmost room G communicated with the southern wing in the west and with the central room H in the north; room H, in turn, featured an opening 3.50 m wide in its western wall leading to the portico in line with the main entrance to the complex (fig. 5, 13/1). The last room, room I, had only one door, leading to the portico at the northern end of the western wall (fig. 5, 13/2). In the second phase of construction, the floor level of room I as well as the threshold of the door were raised by 0.30 m; the space under the new level of the threshold was walled up as a transverse duct was laid there. A similar duct, slightly wider and higher, passed at the western corner of the southern wall, whose part was removed for that purpose. The rims of the openings of the two ducts are made of single vertical stone slabs. Between the openings of the ducts, a brick wall 15 cm tall sets out a space of the width of 1.15 m. The extant remnants of suspension posts suggest that a hypocaust was in place. Thus, the space between the new low brick wall and the western wall of the room had to be closed to ensure the circulation of the heated air supplied by the ducts; the stone rims of the latter were obviously exposed to high temperatures for a prolonged period. The furnace was presumably in the northern part of room H. Evidently, only a

[34] Biernacki & Klenina 2016, 525–538.

section of the floor was heated. The same room featured also a small cellar, almost square, of the dimensions of 1.50 × 1.60 m and the depth of app. 1 m, buried in the middle of its northern part and laid with crushed stones bound with clay mortar.[35] The present writers assume that room I was used in the first half of the 5th century as a library and a *scriptorium*, a supposition which must be ultimately confirmed by a comparative study.

The eastern portico, of the depth of 3.00 m, similarly to the western one consisted of three bays of the lengths of 3.55–3.60 m, the northernmost one supported by a pillar. Between the middle and the southern bay, directly at the wall, a kitchen oven was set up at an early phase of construction, partly below the ground.[36] Accordingly, the northernmost room of the western wing may have been used as a kitchen at that time. Most probably the wing was used in the late 5th and the early 6th century for utility purposes, although the only evidence of this are later furnishings found in its rooms.

The most conspicuous alteration to the complex of the *ptochotrophium* in the years 488–518 was the addition of wooden floors (their wooden joists were laid on plinths placed at regular intervals inside stone blocks), which raised the bottom surface by some 0.5 m (fig. 11). The new floor ensured more comfortable sleep and rest for pilgrims visiting the grave of St. Lupus in Novae. The addition of the new floor coincided with the probable time of the *translatio* of the martyr's relics from the cemetery basilica *extra muros* to the freshly constructed *martyrium* adjoining the eastern load-bearing wall of the episcopal basilica. Importantly, the *martyrium* was accessible from the south through a small gate in the wall which enclosed the eastern portico of the *ptochotrophium* from the north.

As the floors of the *ptochotrophium* were raised, obviously the thresholds of the doors had to be lifted accordingly (fig. 14). During that operation in room D after the year 518, the eastern door providing access from the portico (originally the room had two such doors) was entirely walled up and a rectangular niche was thus produced.

[35] Czerner 2013, 66–67.
[36] Czerner 2013, 63–64.

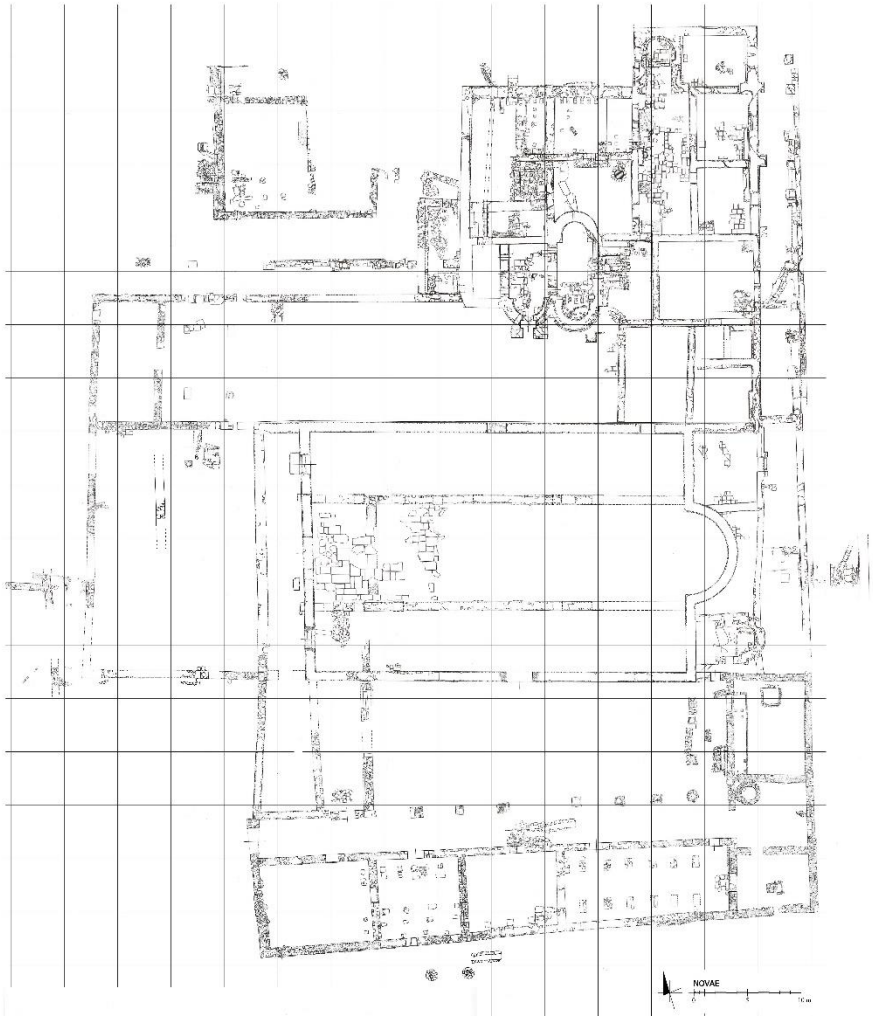


Fig. 11. An outline plan of the bishopric complex in Novae (Moesia Secunda) in the years 488–518 (Czerner 2013, 87; based on an outline plan by A. B. Biernacki, S. Medeksza and R. Czerner).

In room G, the eastern entrance was widened from 0.90 to 1.50 m and the northern one was moved by 0.20 m to the south through taking out a section of the wall on one side and adding one on the other; the resulting new passageway was not any more on the axis of room D but instead exactly in the center of the western wall of room G. The bottom level of the latter interior was raised by 0.55 m but a wooden floor was not laid there. The level of the threshold was also heightened

accordingly, and proper access was provided by three steps made of uneven slabs of stone.



Fig. 12. The eastern wing of the ptochotrophium: A view from the south (photograph by A. B. Biernacki).

Changes also took place in room H, north of the latter (fig. 11). Its original entrance door of the width of 3.60 m was narrowed down to 1.60 m through the addition of two sections of wall on the sides. Furthermore, in the north-western corner a new structure was put up, ellipsoidal outside (2.40 m along the "west–east" axis × 2.10 m along the "north–south" axis) and circular inside (of the diameter of 1.35 m). Its wall is the thickest in the west. The structure was made of crushed stone and bits of ceramic building material bound with clay. It could not have been a water tank as it was not plastered and thence must have been very leaky; it could not have constituted the casing of a well as there is no opening in the floor of the earlier baths, occurring 0.20 m below the structure's foundation; neither could it have been a part of an oven or a chimney, as it bears no traces of burning or soot.



Fig. 13. The eastern wing of the ptochotrophium. 1. Room H: A view from the east. 2. Room I: A view from the north-east (photographs by A. B. Biernacki).

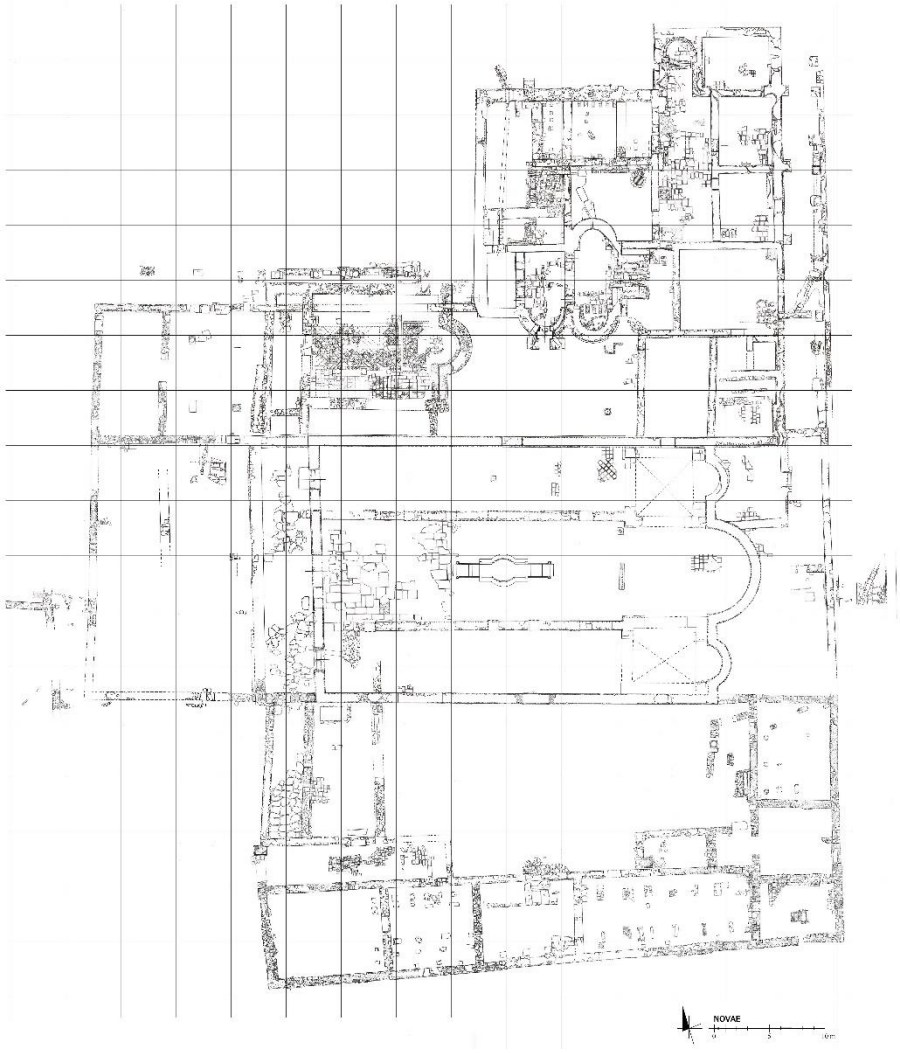


Fig. 14. An outline plan of the bishopric complex in Novae (Moesia Secunda) in the years 518–557 (Czerner 2013, 87; based on an outline plan by A. B. Biernacki, S. Medeksza and R. Czerner).

Very conceivably it was a silo for the storage of granular foodstuffs requiring a dry environment, e.g. grain.

An issue to be settled is whether the complex of the *ptochotrophium* had a second story. There is no evidence of this from the first phase of its construction. Perhaps a second story was built in the period 488–518; the three steps made of slabs of stone and extant in

room C might have constituted the lower section of wooden stairs at the southern wall of the room (fig. 11). The width of the first, largest stone step amounts to 1.65 m, while the space between the steps and the western wall is only 0.75 m. A second story would be expected in a *ptochotrophium*, a facility providing shelter to many poor and pilgrims, where—in this case—most of the ground floor was used for other utility purposes. The exploration of room D revealed a large fragment of the southern wall of the building, made of dried bricks, which had fallen into the interior during an earthquake, probably the southern wall of the second story. Furthermore, the door leading to the north in the south-eastern corner room (room G) was walled up at a certain time, after which the room could be accessed only from the largest, western room (room D) of the complex. It was at the site of the walled-up door that the above-mentioned remnants of the three stone steps were discovered, a possible evidence of the addition of a second story sometime in the first half of the 6th century.

Additional proof that the southern complex constituted a *ptochotrophium* is the corpus of more than six thousand animal bones dated to the first half of the 6th century, found south of room A. The bones had obviously been cooked with meat and thus are identified as remnants of food. An archaeozoological study has established the species of the animals, the types of bones and the techniques of cutting. More than 80% of the corpus are pigs' bones. These include relatively few bones from the heads and the feet; traces of cutting at the joints indicate that dressed half- or quarter-carcasses were brought to the kitchen of the *ptochotrophium* from slaughterhouses.[37] Apparently they were delivered to the only southern entrance to the complex, which provided almost direct access to the kitchen and was away from the elegant interiors of the bishopric. The bones were dumped near the kitchen, west of the mentioned southern entrance, in the ruins of the former baths, which at the time were below the ground level. The dump was surrounded with walls and probably roofed, to prevent cats and dogs from taking the scraps away.

[37] Makowiecki & Makowiecka 2013, 295–297.

Conclusion

The *ptochotrophium*, a complex of rooms adjoining the southern side of the episcopal basilica in Novae, was erected in the early 5th century as the final section of the *episcopium*. It had several entrances: there was a passage from the narthex of the basilica to the western wing of the *ptochotrophium* as well as another one from the southern aisle of the church directly to the courtyard of the *ptochotrophium*; one could also access its eastern portico from the area behind the eastern façade of the basilica. The kitchen in the southern wing had its own door in the south, used for deliveries. Finally, there was the entrance to the main corridor in the west. The western wing, the smallest one, was divided into two rooms of unequal sizes. The original application of most rooms of the southern wing is not clear. The first one from the west, room A, was conceivably used as a *skeuophylakion*, as indicate the finds of ornately decorated *mensae sacrae*, on which the faithful typically placed their gifts and the deacons prepared the Eucharist. The room was soon destroyed by a fire and it is not known whether its former purpose was kept up afterward. The neighboring room, which had an entrance from the outside, was initially a passageway and subsequently a utility interior, used in the first half of the 6th century for making wine. The next room was the refectory, the biggest interior in the complex. The eastern wing was a utility section with various cellars and silos. One of its rooms is very tentatively identified as a library and a *scriptorium*. The room at the corner could have been used for sanitation purposes, as a small bathtub has been discovered there. It was in the same room that three steps made of slabs of stone were found, possibly the lower section of wooden stairs leading to the second story. The existence of a second story is postulated because the ground floor did not provide enough sleeping space and the four ovens in the kitchen must have served a large number of accommodated people.

The present writers identify the complex of rooms south of the episcopal basilica in Novae as an almshouse or a *ptochotrophium* (*πτωχοτροφεῖον*). There are two essential premises for this conclusion: Firstly, there are no signs that the complex featured a hospital, which would classify it as a *xenodochium*, and secondly, it was equipped for the cooking of large amounts of food for its visitors and provided ample

room for eating meals, as evidence the ovens set up under the porticos and the substantial sizes of the refectories and the storerooms. Furthermore, *xenodochia* were operated by monks in monasteries or near them, while the complex in Novae was a bishopric.

The memory of the cruel persecution of the early Christians made charity for the needy faithful a major virtue of this religion. The apostles appointed deacons not only to assist the bishops and other priests in the liturgy, but also to serve the poor and provide aid to the needy. Consequently, the word "*diaconia*" denoted an establishment where the Church accommodated and fed the poor. Some faithful could object to the fact that the male deacons served persons of all ages and of both sexes, and accordingly deaconesses began to be appointed to do charitable work; their age and recognized piety allayed suspicion. Obviously, it was only with time that the Christian Church became involved with charity. *Liber Pontificalis*, known as *Chronica Damasi de gestis romanorum pontificum*, which specifies the number of priests ordained in Rome by Popes, does not mention a single ordination of a deacon by the first two successors to St. Peter; only in the pontificate of St. Clement uninterrupted entries on the ordination of deacons begin to appear. St. Fabian divided the communities of Rome into districts supervised by deacons to facilitate their service. The deacons' principal duty was to point out the poor to the bishop and charitable parishioners. The customary meetings of the faithful at a frugal meal on Sundays provided an easy manner of learning about the number of the poor, the nature of their needs and the means of providing aid. The deacons made lists of the names of the poor for the bishop himself or for the archdeacon. Such a procedure was necessary because only the bishop knew in detail both the needs of the faithful and the resources of the Church. In cases of absolute necessity, the deacons had the right to give some aid on their own initiative without having consulted the bishop. Deacons, familiar with the fates of members of a Christian community, could arrange with the rich the dates when the latter would offer meals to the needy; the deacons only directed the recipients of such charity to proper addresses.[38]

[38] Beaurepaire 1856, 172–173.

In the 4th century, individual acts of charity apparently became less frequent; after the declaration of Christianity as the official state religion of the Roman Empire, various types of charitable institutions and facilities began to appear, including *xenodochia*, *ptochotrophia* and *gerocomia*.[39] The differences between them are sometimes vague to a modern scholar, as the written sources contain only brief mentions of their purposes without detailed descriptions of the designs of the buildings. Thus, according to the Code of Justinian, a *ptocheum* (*ptochium*, *πτωχεῖον*)[40] or a *ptochotrophium* (*πτωχοτροφεῖον*)[41] was a hospice for the poor,[42] and a *xenodochium*, a hospital.[43] St. Hieronymus also describes a *xenodochium* as a hospital.[44] Modern scholars believe that *xenodochia* also served as inns placed on the route of pilgrimages (e.g. the Camino de Santiago de Compostela and the Via Francigena), were operated by monks and offered shelter and food.[45] According to Guenter B. Risse, the *xenodochium* was a Church institution that appeared in the Byzantine time.[46] Finally, it has been established that in the 6th century, there was a *ptocheum* under the invocation of St. Phocas in Chersonesus Taurica, as proves the inscription on a red-clay stamp for the production of *eulogiae* found in the port district of that city on the square in front of the "Church with Arcosolia" in block 1 during the excavation conducted by L. G. Kolesnikova.[47]

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[39] Malaspina 1975, 29-173; Milewski 2020, 42.
[40] Cod. Just. 1, 2, 15.
[41] Cod. Just. 1, 3, 35.
[42] Gaffiot 1934, 1271.
[43] Cod. Just. 1, 2, 17 (Gaffiot 1934, 1699).
[44] Hieronymi aliorumque epistulae et opuscula 66, 11.
[45] Dey 2008: 398–422.
[46] Risse 1999, 82.
[47] Golofast *et al*. 1991, 30, No. 16.

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