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Piotra Dyczka

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Agnieszka Tomas

A NEW DEDICATION TO JUPITER AND JUNO BY VETERANS AND ROMAN CITIZENS FOUND AT NOVAE

Abstract: In 2023, excavations by the Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw team in Sector XIII at Novae uncovered a fragmentary inscription on a column dedicated to Jupiter and Juno by veterans of *legio I Italica* and Roman citizens (*consistentes*) settled in the vicinity of the fortress. The inscription, possibly dating to the first three decades of the second century, attests to the presence of a local quasi-municipal administration, most probably active within the *canabae*.

Keywords: Novae, *Moesia inferior*, *legio I Italica*, *canabae*, veterans, *consistentes*, quasi-municipal administration, epigraphy

In 2023, the excavations in Sector XIII (*retentura*) at Novae¹ brought to light a fragment of an inscribed column. The stone was discovered in the northern part of the excavated area, in Trench “N” [Figs. 1 and 2]. It was found within one of two large Late Roman pits containing orange burnt clay.² Both pits had been dug from the upper level of Layer *b*, tentatively dated to the last quarter of the fifth century to the second third of the sixth century. The pit in squares XXIV 151/152 contained several limestone elements, including a fragment of a fluted column near its western edge (78/23w) and the inscribed column near its eastern edge (191/23w),³ both at an elevation of 54.71 m. a.s.l. Adjacent to the latter, a rectangular stone block was found in a standing position. All of these limestone elements were likely prepared for calcination to produce lime for use in concrete.

The fragmentarily preserved column (height 67 cm, diameter 30 cm) was cut from hard greyish limestone [Fig. 3], characteristic of the local Hotnitsa limestone quarries. The inscription occupies approximately half of the column’s horizontal surface (53 × 56 cm). An additional carved mark, in the shape of the letter *D*, is visible on the reverse side [Fig. 4]. The central part of the inscribed field is weathered, parts of the stone have orange discolourations, and a thin calcareous layer obscures portions of the lettering [Fig. 3]. The height of the letters ranges between 5.5 and 7.2 cm.

¹ The research project entitled “Discovering the *praetorium*. Layout, chronology and function of the commander’s residence in the Roman legionary fortress Novae (today Bulgaria)”, no. UMO-2024/53/B/HS3/03816, received financial support from the Polish National Science Centre, which made it possible to work in the Bibliothek der RömischGermanischen Kommission in Frankfurt and publish this monumentartefact. I am

deeply grateful to Florian Matei-Popescu and the anonymous reviewer who gave me advice and critical notes while preparing the final version of this text.

² See TOMAS, JĘCZMIENOWSKI 2025, fig. 12.

³ Inv. no. 2/25w. The column is currently stored at Novae, in the Bulgarian archaeological base.



Fig. 1. Novae 2023. Sector XIII, Trench “N”.
Layer *b* and the Late Roman pits (photo by A. Tomas)



Fig. 2. Novae 2023. Sector XIII, Trench “N”.
Fragment of a column with an inscription shown in the context of discovery (photo by A. Tomas)



Fig. 3. Fragment of a column with dedication to Jupiter and Juno found at Novae in 2023 (photo by A. Tomas)



Fig. 4. A stonecutter's sign visible on the back side of the column from Novae (photo by A. Tomas)

The inscription was carefully carved and displays a distinctive style. However, the stonecutter appears to have struggled with the concave surface of the column, resulting in irregular spacing and alignment of the letters [Fig. 5].

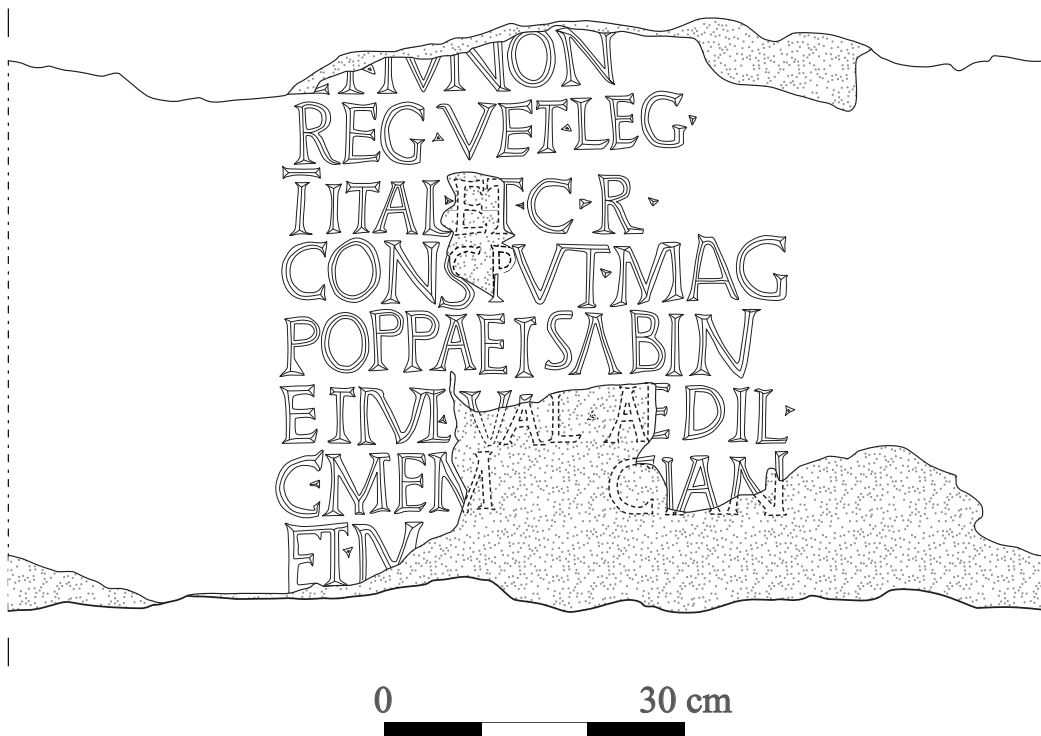


Fig. 5. Line drawing of the inscription from the column from Novae with dedication to Jupiter and Juno (drawing by A. Tomas)

The column contained the following text preserved in eight lines:

[---]
 EṬ•IVNON[II]
 REG•VET•LEG•
 4 I ITAL•[E]T•C•R•
 CONSPVT•MAG
 POPPAEISABINI
 ETIVL•VA[. . .]EDIL•
 8 C•MEM [. . .]CIANI
 ET•IV[---]

The inscription can be transcribed as follows:

[*I(oui) O(ptimo) M(aximo)*]
et Iunon(i)
Reg(inae) uet(erani) leg(ionis)
 4 *I Ital(icae) [e]t c(iues) R(omani)*
cons(istentes) PVT mag(isterio)
Poppaei Sabini
et Iul(ii) Va[l(entis) a]edil(is) vel [a]edil(ium)
 8 *C(ai) Mem(mi) [Mar]ciani vel [Mu]ciani*
et Iu[l(ii) ---]

The ligature *NI*, formed by elongating the second vertical stroke of the letter *N*, appears in lines 6 and 8, but is absent at the end of the name *Iuno* in line 2. Notably, the letter *A* in the name *Sabinus* lacks a crossbar, whereas it appears in the other two instances. Punctuation marks, in the form of small triangles, occur twelve times throughout the text.

Although the first line of the inscription is not preserved, the second line begins with *ET*, leaving little doubt that the name of Jupiter appeared in the missing portion. Since *Iuno Regina* is invariably paired with *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* (IOM),⁴ the god's name was most likely followed by these divine epithets.

Another possible reading in line 5 is (*sub cura*) *mag(istrorum)*.

The Addressees

Of the twenty-three dedications to Jupiter currently known from Novae, only two are addressed exclusively to Jupiter and Juno. Apart from the column discussed here, the second is a fragment of a pedestal (?) bearing such a dedication, made by a veteran of *legio I Italica*.⁵ In the remaining cases, Jupiter is venerated alone,⁶ as part of the Capitoline

⁴ Of the 139 cases recorded in *EDCS*, only two contain dedications to Jupiter and Juno Regina in which the first deity is not followed by an epithet (*CIL* XIII 6440 and 6441, both from Bad Cannstatt in Germania Superior, dated to the second decade of the third century).

⁵ *AE* 1998, 1136 (= *KOLENDO* 1999, Annex, pp. 66–67, no. 11 and fig. 6).

⁶ Sixteen cases: one to *Iuppiter* alone (*IGLNovae* 19), nine to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* (*IGLNovae* 20–23; *AE* 2010, 1412; *AE* 2015, 121 and 1215–1217); one to

Triad,⁷ or as the pre-eminent deity among all others.⁸ In one inscription he appears together with Diana.⁹

This column fragment must have belonged to a temple. The diameter of the preserved column fragment is 30 cm, which is slightly more than one Roman *pes* (29.6 cm). If the column belonged to the Tuscan or Roman-Doric order with the one-foot diameter, the ratio would be not less than 7.5:1 and perhaps even 8:1, as with a one-foot column from the *valetudinarium* at Novae.¹⁰ Therefore, its height would have been approximately 222–237 cm, which is quite substantial, as one has to add the heights of the base, the capital, and the entablature. If the column had been 237 cm tall, the entire front of the building would have been 3.8 to 4.1 m high, depending on the height of the entablature, the *distylos* would have been 1.8 wide, and *tetrastylos* 4.2 m wide.¹¹ Such dimensions would suit a small sanctuary or *aedicula*.

Since half of the known dedications to IOM from Novae were made by civilians and veterans,¹² such a sanctuary likely existed in the *canabae*, although another one in the neighbourhood cannot be excluded. Based on the find spots, Jerzy Kolendo suggested that at Novae, the sanctuary of Jupiter must have been located somewhere along the Danube riverbank.¹³ Its placement within the *valetudinarium* should be excluded,¹⁴ but an extramural location outside the *praetentura sinistra*, or in its vicinity, should be considered a possible site within the *canabae*.¹⁵ A sanctuary of Jupiter Optimus Maximus existing in the *canabae legionis XI Claudiae* is also attested epigraphically at Durostorum.¹⁶

Dedications to IOM, as well as joint dedications to IOM and Iuno Regina made by local authorities and communities in Lower Moesia are not rare.¹⁷ It has been noted that such dedications were specifically made by *cives Romani consistentes*.¹⁸ The official cult of IOM in *canabae legionis* was an important aspect of religious life, and served as an expression of loyalty and gratitude to the emperor.¹⁹

Consistentes and Quasi-Municipal Authorities

Those who settled near legionary camps were initially under the authority of *curatores*.²⁰ As these communities—like more eminent *vici*—grew in size and gained autonomy, they often adopted forms of quasi-municipal administration.²¹ In the frontier provinces, veterans played a relatively

IOM Depulsor (*IGLNovae* 25), four to IOM Dolichenus (*IGLNovae* 26, 27, and likely 28; *AÉ* 2008, 1187), and one in Greek (Θεός Ζεύς, *IGLNovae* 174); see SARNOWSKI 2015, p. 513 (total given as fourteen). I do not include *IGLNovae* 115, which is very doubtful.

⁷ Two cases: *IGLNovae* 24; NARLOCH, ŻELAZOWSKI 2023, pp. 290–292, no. 4.

⁸ Two cases: *AÉ* 1999, 1330, and possibly *IGLNovae* 64 (*et dis deabusque*). Tadeusz Sarnowski also included *IGLNovae* 12 with dedication to *Dii militares*, where Jupiter would be by implication in the first place.

⁹ *AÉ* 2004, 1249.

¹⁰ DYCZEK 2001, p. 94. I would like to thank Jakub Kaniszewski who shared several observations concerning this matter.

¹¹ In the Doric or Roman-Doric orders the basis is 1/6–1/8 of the column shaft, the capital 1/5–1/6 of the column shaft, the entablature 1/4 of the column shaft.

¹² Civilians: *IGLNovae* 20–23 and *AÉ* 2015, 1213; veterans: *IGLNovae* 24, 28, 64 and *AÉ* 1998, 1136; 2004, 1249; NARLOCH, ŻELAZOWSKI 2023, p. 290.

¹³ KOLENDO 1999, ad no. 11.

¹⁴ SARNOWSKI 2015, p. 515.

¹⁵ *IGLNovae* 20, 23 (at the riverbank); *AÉ* 2015, 1213 (during excavations in this sector).

¹⁶ *CIL* III 7474 = *ILS* 2475 = *ISM* IV 91 and see DONEVSKI, MATEI-POPESCU 2021, p. 332.

¹⁷ MROZEWICZ 1993, p. 95. Joint dedications to *IOM* and *Iuno Regina*: *ISM* V 77 (by *quinquennalis territorii Capidavensis*); *CIL* III 7466 = *ILBulg* 128; *ISM* I 351, 368; *ISM* V 63, 64 (by *magistri vici*). At Durostorum these were municipal authorities, but the ties with the legion are obvious (*ISM* I 94).

¹⁸ BOURIGAUULT 2007, p. 85; ZOUMBAKI 2024, p. 133.

¹⁹ MROZEWICZ 1993; TOMAS 2017a, p. 168.

²⁰ *CIL* XIII 1900 = *ILS* 7025; *CIL* XIII 1921 = *ILS* 7024; *ILS* 2465; *CIL* V 3375; 3376.

²¹ *CIL* III 6166 = *ISM* V 154, Troesmis (two *magistri*, one *aedilis*).

prominent political role, and their participation in local assemblies, including those of the *canabae*, alongside other Roman citizens, was particularly significant. This is well attested also in the Lower Danubian provinces.²²

The dedicators described themselves as *veterani et cives Romani consistentes*. The verb *consisto* has various meanings, including ‘to stop at a point’, ‘to break one’s journey’ or ‘to reside’, ‘to settle’, ‘to live’.²³ In inscriptions found near legionary bases, veterans and Roman citizens described themselves as *consistentes ad canabas legionis*, *canabis legionis*, or *consistentes ad legionem*.²⁴ Inscriptions from the north-eastern part of Lower Moesia attest to a significant number of settlements of *cives Romani consistentes*. Alexandru Avram distinguished four categories of communities which included Roman citizens: 1) *cives Romani consistentes* in a peregrine town (*civitas*); 2) *cives Romani consistentes* near the Roman military base (*canabae* or *vicus*); 3) *veterani et cives Romani consistentes* in rural communities (*vici*); 4) *cives Romani consistentes*, sometimes along with veterans, forming a double community with peregrine colonists (e.g. *c.R. et Lai consistentes*).²⁵

One should note that the groups, composed of both veterans and Roman citizens, were active both near military bases²⁶ and in non-military settlements in the provincial interior.²⁷ A substantial number of *territoria* without municipal status are attested in Moesia Inferior, many of them governed by quasi-municipal authorities of such kind.²⁸ In conclusion, the presence of *veterani et cives Romani* does not by itself indicate the type of the settlement under their authority, but rather its size and significance.

The formula *veterani et c.R. consistentes* refers to a group of Roman citizen settlers abroad forming a local civic body and possessing a certain collective legal identity.²⁹ The *veterani* and *cives Romani* had leaders of their organisation, empowered to exercise *potestas* within a certain area. This could have been a part of the *canabae* on *ager publicus*,³⁰ but the land surrounding legionary fortress must have remained under the control of the legionary legate,³¹ as we see this through the organised planning of some quarters of the *canabae* and the attested instance of a legionary legate acting as a judge in a private case.³²

To understand the legal organisation of such groups, it is worth summarising what we know of the Roman municipal administration. Typically, it was composed of the *ordo* with two or more chief executive magistrates (*IIviri*, *IIIviri* etc.), presiding over the local senate (*ordo decurionum*), two *aediles*, and a *quaestor*. The chief magistrates served for a term of twelve months, and they possessed *ius dicendi*: the right to administer justice. They held primary political authority, oversaw public revenues, established the religious calendar, and performed religious rites during their term of office. The *aediles*, as junior magistrates, were responsible for supervising the grain supply

²² KRÓLČYK 2009, pp. 145–146, 149; cf. the previous state of knowledge presented by MROZEWICZ 1989.

²³ OLD, pp. 414–417.

²⁴ CIL III 6166 = ISM V 154, Troesmis: *ad canab(as)*; ISM V 141, Troesmis: *canab(is)*; IDR III/5.2, 438, Apulum: *kan(abis)*; CIL III 3505, Aquincum: *ad leg(ionem)*.

²⁵ AVRAM 2007, p. 91.

²⁶ E.g. *ad legionem II Ad(iutricem)*, CIL III 3505 = ILS 2473.

²⁷ E.g. *in vicus Bad[---]*, AE 2021, 1128.

²⁸ MATEI-POPESCU 2019, esp. p. 98.

²⁹ See RE, IV, 1901, s.v. *consistere* and col. 1173–1200 and s.v. *conventus*, col. 922–926 (E. Kornemann); DE RUGGIERO 1961, pp. 620–623, s.v. *consistentes* (without author) and 1189–1200 s.v. *conventus* (A. Schulten);

BÉRARD 1992, p. 95; BÉRARD 1993, esp. pp. 72–83; KOVÁCS 2013, pp. 146–147; TOMAS 2017a, pp. 167–168; ZOUMBAKI 2024.

³⁰ VITTINGHOFF 1974; TOMAS 2017a, pp. 10–14 with references to older literature.

³¹ The liaisons between the quasi-municipal authorities of the *canabae* and the legionary command are visible in the epigraphic texts: CIL III 7474 = ISM IV, 91, Durostorum, AD 144–148; AE 1957, 266, Troesmis, AD 138–161; AE 1960, 337, Troesmis, AD 138–160; AE 1975, 756 = ISM V 141, Troesmis, AD 142–144; IDR III/5.2, Apulum, AD 117–200. See also RAEPSAET-CHARLIER, DEMAN 1973, p. 190.

³² WILMANN 1981.

and marketplaces, maintaining temples and public infrastructure, as well as managing aspects of local policing. The *quaestor* carried out financial and accounting functions.³³

The organisations of veterans and Roman citizens, which could form a quasi-municipal entity, were led by two *magistri*, who, from a certain point in time, may have exercised *ius dicendi*,³⁴ as previously the right to rule in legal cases was held by the *legatus legionis*.³⁵ The number of other officials is unclear. Inscriptions attest the presence of *aediles*, *quaestores*, *quinquennales*, *curiales*, and even *decuriones*.³⁶ Smaller settlements were typically governed by one or two *magistri* only.³⁷ Quasi-municipal communities may have had a single *aedilis*. For example, in Troesmis, the authorities of the *canabae* consisted of two *magistri*, one *aedilis*, and a *quinquennalis* acting as a *censor*.³⁸ Similarly, a single *aedilis* is attested in Castra Regina.³⁹

The organisation of veterans of *legio Italica* and Roman citizens, as attested in the inscription from Novae, appears to have been overseen by two *magistri* and one or possibly two *aediles*. The name of the first *magister* is given in the genitive case, which would imply that the *veterani et cives Romani consistentes PVT* were under their supervision. This could be expressed by the formula *sub cura magistrorum*⁴⁰ or *magisterio* (under their magistracy).⁴¹ Lines 7 and 8 preserve a fragment of the word *aedil(is)* or *aedil(es)*, followed by the names of two individuals: C. Mem(mius) [---]cianus and Iu[](ius) [---]. If the second individual held the same office, this structure would be consistent with standard municipal administration. However, in light of evidence from Troesmis, it is also possible that the final person named in the Novae inscription was not a second *aedilis*, but another member of the authorities or some other benefactor.

The name of the first *magister*, Poppaeus Sabinus, is fully preserved on the stone. His name suggests that Roman citizenship had been granted to one of his ancestors between AD 15 and 35 by C. Poppaeus Sabinus, governor of the combined provinces of Moesia, Achaia, and Macedonia.⁴² The *gentilicium* Poppaeus was extremely rare in the provinces.⁴³ Notably, this name is not attested elsewhere in Lower Moesia or beyond Italy. The name of the second *magister* is only partially preserved as *Iul(ius) Va[---]*, which may have been Iulius Valens or Iulius Valentinus. Unlike the distinctive name of Poppaeus Sabinus, Iulius Valens or Valentinus is quite common name, suggesting that the first *magister* may have been the more prominent figure.

The *gentilicium* Memmius for the *aedilis* is well attested in Lower Moesia, including the case of Q. Memmius from Novae, a civilian dedicator to IOM.⁴⁴ His *cognomen* could plausibly be restored as [Mar]cianus or [Mu]cianus; both are common, with the latter particularly characteristic of the Thracian milieu and well attested in the vicinity of Novae.⁴⁵ The second name is preserved only by its initial two letters, which most likely belonged to the *nomen* Iulius.

³³ EDMONDSON 2006, pp. 272–274.

³⁴ *AE* 1972, 445 = 1974, 502. The reading proposed by András Mócsy: [m]ag(ister) c(ivium) R(omanorum) i(ure) d(icundo) is more convincing than that presented by the editors: [s]ac(erdotis) G(e)r(ulatensis) I(ovis) D(olicheni). See Mócsy 1980 (1992), p. 369; Kovács 2001, p. 49.

³⁵ WILMANN 1981.

³⁶ Kovács 2000, pp. 41–42.

³⁷ *ISM* V 62, Ulmetum (one *magister*); *ISM* I 344–347, Histria, vicus Secundini (two *magistri*). Some more significant settlements had more developed authorities, as was the case for vicus *Quintionis* in Lower Moesia, which had a *quaestor*: *ISM* I 324–328, Sinoe/vicus Quintionis (two *magistri* and a *quaestor*).

³⁸ *CIL* III 6166 = *ISM* V 154, Troesmis; APARASCHIVEI 2005, pp. 192–195.

³⁹ *CIL* III 14370,10.

⁴⁰ *AE* 2021, 1128, Mihai Bravu/vicus Bad[---]: ---]ve[t(er-ani)] et c(ives) R[omani] / consist[entes] vico Bad[---] / sub cura [---].

⁴¹ *CIL* III 6167 = *ISM* V 157, Troesmis: c(ives) R(omani) Tr[oesmi consist(entes) mag(isterio) Ge]mini Aquil[ini et ---]man(---) qui et Sic[---] / [per]missu [---].

⁴² *PIR*² VI P 847.

⁴³ *NOMENCLATOR*, p. 229.

⁴⁴ *IGL* Novae 22, AD 101–250.

⁴⁵ BEŠEVLIJEV 1965, p. 35; TOMAS 2016, p. 166, E.4 (*ILBulg* 338, Dimum), pp. 168–169, E.19 (*ILBulg* 430, Butovo). Other *cognomina* such as Roscianus, Atticianus, and Euticianus are also possible, but rare.

On the Meaning of *PVT*

The word *cons(istentes)* is followed by the abbreviation *PVT*. The damaged surface between the letters *S* and *P* in line 5 makes it impossible to reconstruct an *A* and interpret the phrase as *[a] pu<d=t>*, since this preposition would require a place name to follow.⁴⁶ In the absence of a preposition, the word *consistentes* should be followed directly by a place name in the locative case, such as *consistentes Abritto*, *consistentes Augusta Traiana* or *consistentes Bostrae*.⁴⁷

The word following *consistentes* could also indicate the administrative status of the place in the locative case, for example *vico*, *castello*, or *municipio*,⁴⁸ *regione*,⁴⁹ or *pago*. Among these, the abbreviation *PVT* would fit only the reading *consistentes p(ago) Ut(---)*.⁵⁰ There are instances in which a civilian settlement near an auxiliary fort is referred to as a *pagus*, with its inhabitants described as *veterani et pagani consistentes*.⁵¹ Notably, an auxiliary fort with the name of Utus was located at the modern Gulânsko gradište, on the Vit River.⁵² What is more, a relief of Jupiter was once documented on the high rocky Danubian riverbank near Utus, cut within an *aedicula* and dedicated by a *vexillatio legionis V Macedonica*.⁵³ However, a dedication made by settlers of the *pagus Utensis* would be more appropriate near Utus itself than near Novae, given that the fort was located approximately 70 km west of Novae.

Since the column was found in the fortress, it would be natural to link it with the *canabae*. The basic problem is that *consistentes* did not point explicitly to the fortress's civilian settlement, as we know for example from Apulum, Troesmis, and Lugdunum.⁵⁴ Omitting the name or status of the settlement, which does not appear in expressions containing the word '*consistentes*' could mean that in this case it was obvious for the readers in the name of which settlement the organisation was acting.

In such a case, the inscription should be understood as follows:

[*I(oui) O(ptimo) M(aximo)*
et Iunon(i)
Reg(inae) uet(erani) leg(ionis)
 4 *I Ital(icae) [e]t c(iues) R(omani)*
cons(istentes) (ad canabas) put(eum) [ornauerunt vel simile] mag(isterio)
Poppaei Sabini
et Iul(ii) Va[l(entis) a]edil(is) vel [a]edil(ium)
 8 *C(ai) Mem(mi) [Mar]ciani vel [Mu]rciani*
et Iu[l(ii) ---]

⁴⁶ E.g. *CIL* VIII 20834, Rapidum.

⁴⁷ *AE* 2010, 1421a (Abrittus); *AE* 1933, 90 (Augusta Traiana); *IGLS* XIII.2, 9475 (Bostra).

⁴⁸ E.g. *AE* 2021, 1128, Mihai Bravu: *consist[entes] vico Bad[---]*; *ISM* V 62, Ulmetum, *consistentes vico Ulmeto*; *ISM* I 343, Histria: *consistentes reg(ione) Si[---] vico Secundini*; *RIB* III 3503, Veluniate, Britannia: *consistentes castell[o] Veluniate*; *CIL* XIII 7317, Mogontiacum: *consistentes kastello Mattiacorum*; *CIL* III 860, Napoca: *consistentes municipio*.

⁴⁹ *ISM* I 343. In rare cases, attribution to a bigger administrative unit is given, e.g. *CIL* III 5212, Celeia: *cives Romani [e]x Italia et aliis provinciis in Raetia consistentes*.

⁵⁰ *Pagi* could have their own *magistri* and *aediles*. E.g. *CIL* IX 726; *CIL* III 1405 = *IDR* III.3, 69 (*magister pagi*); *CIL* XII 1377 = *ILS* 5614; *CIL* IX 3316 = 3317 = *ZPE* 221, 267 (*aedilis pagi*).

⁵¹ *AE* 1980, 780, Micia; *AE* 1948, 132, Rapidum.

⁵² TORBATOV 2021, pp. 31–32 and n. 12.

⁵³ *ILBulg* 134 = *AE* 2001, 1732. The monument is lost, but most probably it can be dated to the late third or the fourth century; see TOMAS 2016, p. 175, E. 137.

⁵⁴ *IDR* III 5.2, 438, Apulum: *consist(entes) / kan(abis) leg(ionis) eiusd(em)*; *CIL* III 6166 = *ISM* V 154, Troesmis: *cons(istentes) ad / canab(as) leg(ionis)*; *CIL* XIII 1954, Lugdunum: *in kanab(is) consist(entes)*.

Other epigraphic finds from Novae indicate the existence of the source of water or the fountain in the vicinity of the fortress. In this context, it is worth drawing attention to a stone with an inscription found reused in the late Roman portico residence over the ruins of the military hospital at Novae:⁵⁵

[I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) ? et dis deabusque] / omnib(us) p[ro] salute I[mp(eratoris) Cae-
saris] / M(arci) A[ur(eli) Anto]n(ini) [Pii Felicis Aug(usti)] / C(aius) Val(erius) Longinus v[e]
t(eranus) ex imag(inifero) le[g(ionis) I Ital(icae?) et --] / Vale(n)s vet(eranus) ex c(ustode)
a(rmorum) leg(ionis) s(upra) [s(cripta) --- fon]tem ? a sol[o restituerunt ?].

Devotion to water sources expressed by people related to Novae is also attested by the inscription found at Nikopol, some 50 km to the west of Novae. However, in this case, the original place of the monument's erection is not certain:⁵⁶

Dianae Aug(ustae) pr[o] / [s]alute M(arci) Aurel[i] / [A]ntonini Pii Aug(usti) / Arius Gory-
phus p(rimus) p(ilus) leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) / Antoniniana fonte refec[it]o arboribus institu-
tis / deae d(onum) d(edit) cura[n]te / Ario Diogeniano.

Alternatively, a place name beginning with *Put(---)* and referring to some other settlement can be taken into consideration. The Latin word *puteus* meaning 'well' or 'pit' is attested in several regions of the Empire, including Ad Putea in Thrace (modern Riben) and Centum Putea in Dacia (modern Surducu Mare).⁵⁷ The most notable and closest is the site of Ostrite Mogili situated 2.7 km to the east of the fortress. Its area is quite significant as it covers more than 10 ha,⁵⁸ being comparable to Tropaeum Traiani (10.5 ha) or Abrittus (10 ha), but its ancient name remains unknown.⁵⁹ However, the names of *vici* appearing in inscriptions are almost always preceded by their administrative status, e.g. *vicus Ulmetensium*, *vicus Celeris*, *vicus Secundini*, etc., therefore *consistentes* would be followed by *vico quodam*. While a toponym derived from the word *puteus* is not a *conditio sine qua non* for the presence of a well, contrary to the *canabae*, such water sources have not been identified at Ostrite Mogili.

Dating

The newly discovered column bearing a dedication to Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Juno Regina is difficult to date precisely. However, the style of the lettering is more consistent with second-century inscriptions from Novae than with earlier and later examples.⁶⁰ The recurring *NI* ligature finds its closest parallels in inscriptions carved at the beginning of the second century.⁶¹ Taking into consideration the settlement dynamics around Lower Danubian legionary bases, the shape of the letters, and the names of the dedicants, the fragment can be reasonably dated to the first half of the second century. This proposed dating aligns well with the later date of the inscription referring to the probably Severan *municipium Novensium*, namely a dedication made by

⁵⁵ *IGLNovae* 64 and see TOMAS 2017b, p. 231.

⁵⁶ *AE* 1957, 282 and see TOMAS 2016, p. 178.

⁵⁷ Also Putea and Putea Nigrorum in Africa, Ad Putea in Hispania, Centum Putea in Syria; see *TM Geo* 29845, 63127, 36761, 41768, 49953, 40978, 42052, 40989.

⁵⁸ The archaeological material is spread over a surface of 15 ha, but the westernmost part of the site yields signifi-

cantly fewer finds; see TOMAS 2017a, p. 159; TOMAS 2023, p. 65.

⁵⁹ TOMAS 2017a, pp. 77–79.

⁶⁰ MROZEWICZ 2010, pp. 92–96, tabs. I–IV.

⁶¹ MROZEWICZ 2010, p. 99.

an *Augustalis m(unicipii) N(ovensium)*.⁶² The lack of additional evidence, together with the relatively late date of this inscription, could suggest that the *municipium* emerged no earlier than the late second or early third century, and was therefore more likely to have developed out of the *canabae*.⁶³ However, the significance of the nearby *vicus* at Ostrite Mogili in the second century should not be underestimated.⁶⁴

Conclusion

Given the epigraphic and geographical context of the fortress and the findspot of the inscription, the most probable place of origin is the *canabae*. At Novae, the *canabae* situated to the west of the legionary fortress was much bigger than the nearby *vicus* at Ostrite Mogili. Although the exact extent of the settlement is impossible to reconstruct due to modern land use, the distribution of archaeological material covering approximately 80 ha suggests a settlement of quite considerable size.⁶⁵ Sources of water existed both in its vicinity and at a distance from the fortress.⁶⁶

The abbreviation *PVT* may refer to a water source (*puteus*), which could have existed either within a small sanctuary dedicated to Jupiter and Juno or as an independent *aedicula*. The inscription indicates a sizeable settlement with a quasi-municipal organisation, inhabited by Roman citizens and veterans. From an archaeological perspective, such a settlement was certainly the *canabae*. Nevertheless, the lack of reference to the *canabae* in the text of the inscription leaves open the possibility that *PVT* is an abbreviation of the toponym referring to the nearby *vicus* at Ostrite Mogili. In such a case, its name would presumably have been derived from *puteus* ('well' or 'pit').

The quasi-municipal administration attested in the inscription functioned as a preliminary form of local self-government in settlements, including those adjacent to legionary bases, and often served as a precursor to formal municipalisation.⁶⁷ As the earliest known evidence of quasi-municipal authorities operating in the vicinity of Novae, the inscription is of critical significance for understanding the role of the *canabae legionis I Italicae* and the status of the surrounding territory prior to municipalisation.

Abbreviations

AE

CIL

EDCS

IDR III

L'Année épigraphique

Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum

Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss Slaby

Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae, vol. III, *Dacia Superior 2. Ulpia Traiana Dacica (Sarmizegetusa)*, ed. I. I. RUSSU, in collaboration with I. PISO and V. WOLLMANN, Bucharest 1980; I. PISO, *Inscriptions d'Apulum*, vol. III/5, parts 1 and 2, Paris 2001.

⁶² *IGLNovae* 39, AD 180–250.

⁶³ TOMAS 2017a, pp. 159–161.

⁶⁴ Once the site was considered as a possible *municipium*, but after conducting surveys at the site twice—in 2000 and in 2014—and the analysis of the results, this idea became more doubtful, based on the archaeological findings. See TOMAS 2006; cf. TOMAS 2017a, pp. 159–161.

⁶⁵ For a detailed discussion of the area and identified structures, see TOMAS 2017a; TOMAS *et alii* 2020.

⁶⁶ TOMAS 2011, p. 7; TOMAS 2016, p. 139, Site V and p. 160 (Carevec/Tsarevets); TOMAS 2017a, p. 52 (postulated wells

in the *canabae*), p. 56 (in the extramural residence) and p. 119; TOMAS 2023, p. 64 (in the building to the south of Novae), p. 222 (in Carevec). A fragmentarily preserved building inscription found at Novae which concerns the renovation of some structure by two veterans (*IGLNovae* 173, AD 222–235) contains letters which were read as *fon]tem a sol[o restituerunt]*, but a letter T is not certain, therefore *aedem* cannot be excluded; TOMAS 2017a, pp. 50–54.

⁶⁷ MROZEWICZ 1985, p. 87.

<i>IGLNovae</i>	J. KOLENDO, V. BOŽILOVA, <i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae (Mésie Inférieure)</i> , (= <i>Ausonius – Publications. Mémoires</i> 1), Bordeaux 1997.
<i>IGLS XIII.2</i>	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latine de Syrie</i> , vol. XIII.2, <i>Bostra (supplément) et la plaine de la Nuqrah</i> (= <i>Bibliothèque archéologique et historique</i> 194), eds. M. SARTRE, A. SARTRE-FAURIAT, Beyrouth 2011.
<i>ILBulg</i>	B. GEROV, <i>Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae</i> , Serdicae 1989.
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , ed. H. DESSAU, Berolini 1892–1916.
<i>ISM I</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Daciae et Scythiae Minoris. Series altera: Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris Graecae et Latinae</i> , vol. I, <i>Inscriptiones Histriae et vicinae</i> , ed. D. M. PIPPIDI, Bucharest 1983.
<i>ISM IV</i>	<i>Inscriptions de Scythie Mineure</i> , vol. IV: <i>Tropaeum-Durostorum-Axiopolis. Recueillies, traduites et accompagnées de commentaires et d'index.</i> , ed. E. POPESCU, București 2015.
<i>ISM V</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Daciae et Scythiae Minoris. Series altera: Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris Graecae et Latinae</i> , vol. V, <i>Capidava – Troesmis – Noviodunum</i> , ed. E. DORUȚIU-BOILĂ, Bucharest 1980.
<i>NOMENCLATOR</i>	<i>Nomenclator provinciarum Europae Latinarum et Galliae Cisalpiniae cum indice inverso</i> (= <i>Dissertationes Pannonicae</i> III/1), eds. A. MÓCSY, R. FELDMAN, E. MARTON, M. SZILÁGYI, Budapest 1983.
<i>OLD</i>	A. SOUTER <i>et alii</i> , <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> , Oxford 1968.
<i>PIR²</i>	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i> , second edition, vol. VI, eds. L. PETERSEN, K. WACHTEL, Berlin – New York 1998.
<i>RE</i>	<i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Neue Bearbeitung</i> , ed. G. WISSOWA, Stuttgart – Weimar 1894–1980.
<i>RIB III</i>	<i>The Roman Inscriptions of Britain</i> , vol. III, <i>Inscriptions on Stone Found or Notified between 1 January 1955 and 31 December 2006</i> , eds. R. S. O. TOMLIN, R. P. WRIGHT, M. W. C. HASSALL, Oxford 2009.
<i>TM</i>	<i>Trismegistos. An Interdisciplinary Portal of the Ancient World</i> , https://www.trismegistos.org (accessed on 30.07.2025).
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i> .

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