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DAMNATIO MEMORIAE
IN THE INSCRIPTIONS FROM NOVAE (MOESIA INFERIOR)

The term *damnatio memoriae*¹ – or rather: *memoria damnata*² – referred to the act of removing a person who committed the worst, in the eyes of the Romans, crime: *perduellio* or *crimen maiestatis*³, from the collective remembrance. Both terms, *perduellio* and *crimen maiestatis*, meant generally the same: high treason, a crime leading to condemnation of the accused of being an enemy of the state – *hostis publicus*. The person convicted for *perduellio* / *crimen maiestatis* ceased to exist officially. His or her names were obliterated (*abolitio nominis*) from all public records such as civil servant lists (*fasti*), as well as removed from inscriptions⁴, especially those of official character, engraved on public buildings; wax masks (*imagines*) of the *damnati* were forbidden to be displayed during family funeral processions; literary works of their authorship were confiscated and destroyed; they were deprived of their property (expropriated); their last will (testament) was annulled; the date of the *damnati*'s birth was included in the ominous days (*dies nefastus*); the day of his or her death was publicly celebrated as an expression of

¹ RE IV 2 (1901), 2059–2062 s.v. *damnatio memoriae* (Brassloff); DNP 3 (1997), 299–300 s.v. *damnatio memoriae*; *Oxford Classical Dictionary*³, Oxford 1999, 427 s.v. *damnatio memoriae*; F. Vittinghoff's book *Der Staatsfeind in der römischen Kaiserzeit: Untersuchungen zur damnatio memoriae*, Berlin 1936, still remains a classic.

² In sources, the term *memoria damnata* is used; although the term *damnatio memoriae* is a modern „alteration”, it reflects precisely the Roman perception of memory and fame: the Romans believed that the deceased would enjoy life after death as long as he or she is kept in the memory of the living; in literature, the term first appeared in 1689, see E. R. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation: damnatio memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture*, Leiden–Boston 2004, 2; Vittinghoff, *op. cit.*, 64–74; H. I. Flower, *Rethinking damnatio memoriae: the Case of Cn. Calpurnius Piso Pater in A. D. 20*, CA, 17, 2, 1998, 156; cf. Pap., *Dig.* 31, 76, 9: *repetundorum legatorum facultas ex eo testamento solutorum danda est, quod irritum esse post defuncti memoriam damnatam apparuit, modo si iam legatis solutis crimen perduellionis illatum est*; further examples: Vittinghoff, *op. cit.*

³ Vittinghoff, *op. cit.*, 9–10; Flower, *op. cit.*, 156.

⁴ On this issue, see esp. M. Kajava, *Some Remarks on the Erasure of Inscriptions in the Roman World (with Special Reference to the Case of Cn. Piso, cos. 7 BC)*, [in] *Acta Colloqui Epigraphici Latini*, ed. H. Solin, O. Salomies, U.-M. Liertz, Helsinki 1995, 201–210.

gratitude and joy; it was allowed to destroy partly or totally their houses; their families were forbidden to use the *praenomen* of the condemned; their corpses were marred and lacerated; all their images were removed from public places and defaced, destroyed, or reworked⁵.

In the time of the Roman Empire, *damnatio memoriae* became the opposite of the emperor's apotheosis⁶. The Romans believed⁷ that the rulers, just like heroes, descended from the world of gods, to which they were supposed to return after death. The return, however, depended on the ruler's contributions and virtues, while their lack drew condemnation from the public. It was usually the Senate's role, though at times the emperor-successor's, to pass an opinion on the divine virtues of the late ruler⁸. In effect, the deceased could be consecrated, but also condemned if accused of high treason, which triggered proceedings aiming at depriving him of his dignity. If he was charged with discreditable conduct, *damnatio memoriae* was passed: then, all legal acts introduced by the condemned, all court orders, all deeds of gift could be totally or partly annulled (*rescissio actorum*), which only rarely happened, though.

In the political reality of the Roman Empire, *damnatio memoriae* became the weapon of the Senate against the emperor, as well as the emperor's against the opposition. Until the year 235, eleven emperors suffered *damnatio*⁹, but the frequency of condemning rulers increased dramatically in the years of the crisis, i.e. 235–284. Only few were „saved”¹⁰. The battle between the Senate and the emperor involved acts of annulling *damnatio memoriae*, too, the most well-known example being that of Commodus: first, the Senate condemned him (*damnatio*

⁵ Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation...*, 1–3; Idem, *Portraits, Plots, and Politics: damnatio memoriae and the Images of Imperial Women*, MAAR, 46, 2001, 41.

⁶ K. Christ, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit von Augustus bis zu Konstantin*, München 1988, 426.

⁷ See *DNP* 3 (1997), 299.

⁸ Suet., *Claud.* 11; Cass. Dio LX 4; Christ, *Geschichte...*, *loc. cit.*

⁹ Caligula (37–41), Nero (54–68), Galba (68–69), Otho (69), Vitellius (69), Domitian (81–96), Commodus (180–192), Geta (197–212), Macrinus (217–218), Elagabalus (218–222), Severus Alexander (222–235).

¹⁰ It is absolutely certain that *damnatio memoriae* was not passed upon Gordian III (238–244): he was consecrated as Divus Gordianus (D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabellen: Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*, Darmstadt 1996, 194). Gordians I and II first suffered *damnatio memoriae* in the area where Maximinus Thrax reigned; after his fall, *damnatio* was annulled, and they were both consecrated as Divi Gordiani (Kienast, *op. cit.*, 188–189). Also Claudius II Gothicus passed away as Divus Claudius (268–270), being one of the very few who died a natural death (Kienast, *op. cit.*, 228). There is no certainty concerning Gallienus (253–268): inscriptions with his obliterated name were preserved, but Claudius II Gothicus consecrated him as Divus Gallienus (Kienast, *op. cit.*, 215). A truly radical example is the case of Decius: first, he was consecrated, and after a few weeks, condemned (*damnatio memoriae*; Kienast, *op. cit.*, 203 with the relevant sources).

memoriae), and then, under pressure from Septimius Severus, revoked the decision and carried out his apotheosis¹¹.

Examples of *damnatio memoriae* passed upon high state dignitaries are well proven too. To the most spectacular belong the cases of Sejanus (L. Aelius Seianus)¹² and Plautian (C. Fulvius Plautianus)¹³, the prefects of the praetorian guards, the first of Tiberius, the latter of Septimius Severus. An equally famous figure was Avidius Cassius from the nearest entourage of Marcus Aurelius, sentenced to *damnatio memoriae* after a crushed rebellion and shameful death¹⁴. Undoubtedly the greatest interest among researchers, however, has recently been aroused by the case of Cn. Calpurnius Piso pater, obviously due to the discovery and publication of the famous *senatus consultum de C. Pisone patre*¹⁵.

Damnatio memoriae could also be passed upon a specific community, a good example being Legio III Augusta from Africa. In 238, this legion, commanded by Capellianus, the governor of Numidia¹⁶, suppressed the usurpation of the Gordians in *provincia Africa*, keeping allegiance to Maximinus Thrax. However, after the final defeat of the latter and Gordian III's coming to power, III Augusta was disbanded and imposed *abolitio nominis*¹⁷. In Lambaesis, the camp of the legion, the name of III Augusta was removed from all inscriptions, also those which commemorated the unique visit of Emperor Hadrian in 128¹⁸.

* * *

In the epigraphic material from Novae, eleven inscriptions with traces of obliterated names of the persons sentenced to *damnatio memoriae*, re-

¹¹ Kienast, *op. cit.*, 149; under the rule of Macrinus, Commodus was condemned again, though only temporary (*Ibidem, loc. cit.*).

¹² Suet., *Tib.* 48; Cass. Dio LVIII 12.4–5; see: D. Henning, *L. Aelius Seianus: Untersuchungen zur Regierung des Tiberius*, München 1975, 139–156, esp. 146.

¹³ Cass. Dio LXXVII 2–4.

¹⁴ PIR² A 1402; A. Birley, *Marc Aurel: Kaiser und Philosoph*, München 1968, 333–343; R. Syme, *Avidius Cassius: his rank, age, and quality*, [in] *Idem, Roman Papers V*, Oxford 1988, 689–701; *DNP* 2 (1997), 369; Kienast, *op. cit.*, 142–143.

¹⁵ See W. Eck, A. Caballos, F. Fernández, *Das senatum consultum de Cn. Pisone patre*, München 1996; *Uchwała senatu rzymskiego w sprawie Gnejusza Pizona ojca*, ed. T. Fabiszak, Poznań 1998; cf. Flower, *op. cit.*; Kajava, *op. cit.*; R. J. A. Talbert, *Tacitus and the senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre*, *AJP*, 120, 1999, 89–97; Varner, *Portraits, Plots...*, 1–2.

¹⁶ PIR² C 404.

¹⁷ Y. Le Bohec, *La Troisième Légion Auguste*, Paris 1989, 453; the legion was rebuilt in 253, *Ibidem*, 463–464.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 372–375; M. P. Speidel, *Emperor Hadrian's speeches to the African Army – a new Text*, (Monographien der Römisch – Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Band 65), Mainz 2006, esp. 28–29 (with an excellent photograph).

moved in antiquity, were preserved¹⁹. These are, obviously, exclusively official texts²⁰.

The texts date back to the years 182–235 (see table). Apart from one inscription, they all refer to the Severan dynasty, i.e. Geta, Elagabalus, and Severus Alexander, as well as Caracalla's wife Fulvia Plautilla, or his father-in-law, Fulvius Plautianus. None of the preserved inscriptions can with certainty be dated to the times of Domitian. Commodus is mentioned only in one inscription, not counting the texts from the Severan period, i.e. the famous *titulus pictus* from 176–180, from which his name was not erased²¹. The situation can certainly be ascribed to a coincidence, but in my opinion there is little chance of finding an inscription with the obliteration of Commodus' names in Novae, which was a military camp. Septimius Severus, then the governor of the province Pannonia Superior²², was presumably not very eager to take official steps. He preferred to wait for the course of events²³. At the time, Moesia Inferior was governed by his brother P. Septimius Geta²⁴, who undoubtedly listened carefully to the directives issued in Carnuntum, especially that the new emperor in Rome Publius Helvius Pertinax paid homage to Commodus, who had been condemned by the Senate, arranging for his remains to be deposited in the Mausoleum of Hadrian²⁵. On the other hand, Didius Iulianus,

¹⁹ See below: the Catalogue.

²⁰ So was, in my opinion, inscription number (11), even though the restoration of the fountain was carried out by two veterans. It is impossible, however, that they should reconstruct the fountain only for their own sake, and without the approval of the whole community.

²¹ ILatNovae 38 = GrLatNovae 57; cf. E. Bunsch, L. Mrozewicz, *C. Sannucius Maior im titulus pictus aus Novae (ILatNovae 38 = IGrLatNovae 57)*, ZPE, 165, 2008, 241–248.

²² Kienast, *op. cit.*, 196.

²³ Contrary to the inhabitants of Oescus in western part of Moesia Inferior who demonstrated a great zeal, removing Commodus' names and titles from the architrave of the temple of Fortune erected shortly before (192): [[Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) L(ucio) Aurelio Commodo Aug(usto) pio felici Sarmatico, Germanico maximo, Brittanico, pont(ifici) max(imo), tr(ibunicia) pot(estate) XVII, imp(eratori) VIII, co(n)s(uli) VI, p(atr) p(atriciae), divi Marci Antonini pii Germani(ci) Sarmati(ci) fil(io), divi Pii nepoti, divi Hadriani pronepoti, divi Traiani Parthici abnepoti, divi Nervae adnepoti]] [Cnaeo Su]jellio Rufo, leg(ato) pr(o) [pr(aetore) prov(inciae) / Moesiae inferioris - - - (duum)vir] q(uin)q(uennalis) col(onia) et M(arcus) C[- - -]lus Dec(urio) [- - -] praefecti et patroni collegi(i) fabr(um) ob amorem patriae et c[ivium] tem]plum Fortunae a sol[o cum ornament]tis et status locis em[ptis om]nique impendio suo fe[cerunt]. The inscription was impressive, stretching over two verses, each measuring 28,8 m, so the full length of the inscription was 57,60 m. The height of the letters is 8,0 cm. Obliteration must have been made, in my opinion, in the first months of 193, still before the death of Pertinax; see: AE 1987, 893; T. Ivanov, *Der Fortuna-Tempel in der Colonia Ulpia Oescensium in Moesia Inferior (heute VR Bulgarien)*, [in] *Recherches sur la culture en Mésie et en Thrace (Bulgarie), I^e–IV^e siècle* (= *Izvestija na Arheologičeskija Institut*, 37, 1987), 7–60, esp. 27–38; R. Ivanov, *Das römische Verteidigungssystem an der unteren Donau zwischen Dorticum und Durostorum (Bulgarien) von Augustus bis Maurikios*, BRGK, 78, 1997, 551.

²⁴ A. Stein, *Die Legaten von Moesien, Diss. Pannonicae I/11*, Budapest 1940, 81–82.

²⁵ SHA *vita Commodi* 17 ed. Hohl; Kienast, *op. cit.*, 148.

who seized power after the murder of Pertinax by praetorians, was treated as an enemy by Severus.

Inscriptions with traces of erasure

Nr	Titulus	The obliterated person	Date*	Remarks
1	IGrLatNovae 3	M. Petronius Sura Mamertinus	182	obliteration – 191
2	ILatNovae 42 = IGrLatNovae 63	Geta	198	obliteration – 212
3	IGrLatNovae 60	Geta	198/209	obliteration – 212
4	ILatNovae 40 = IGrLatNovae 61	Geta	198/209	obliteration – 212
5	ILatNovae 41 = IGrLatNovae 62	Fulvia Plautilla and / or Fulvius Plautianus and Geta	202/205	obliteration – 205 and 212 (?)
6	ILatNovae 28 = IGrLatNovae 47	Geta	15.5.208	obliteration – 212 (twice)
7	ILatNovae 18 = IGrLatNovae 33	Elagabalus	218/222	obliteration – 222
8	AE 2004, 1243	Elagabalus	222/235	obliteration – 235
9	ILatNovae 13 = IGrLatNovae 25	Severus Alexander	5.10.227	obliteration – 235
10	AE 1999, 1330	Severus Alexander	227	obliteration – 235
11	AE 2004, 1244	Severus Alexander	222/235	obliteration – 235

* Of the origin of the inscription.

From the times of Commodus, however, one inscription (1) with obliterated names of a person sentenced to *damnatio memoriae* was preserved. It is a votive altar in honour of Bonus Eventus²⁶, founded in 182 by the Primipilar of the 1st Italian legion, M(arcus) Maesius Geminus, in 182, when the consuls were²⁷ M. Petronius Sura Mamertinus and Q. Tineius Rufus. The obliteration concerns

²⁶ The official character of the monument is unquestionable, see: J. Kolendo, *Le rôle du primus pilus dans la vie religieuse de la légion*, „Archeologia”, 31, 1981 (1982), 50, nr 1.

²⁷ A. Degrassi, *I fasti consolari dell'Impero Romano*, Roma 1952, 50.

the first one: Ma[[mertino]] et Rufo. His name (*agnomen*) Ma[[mertinus]] was not erased very carefully²⁸. The first two letters are quite visible.

M. Petronius Sura Mamertinus²⁹, *consul ordinarius* in 182, was a son of M. Petronius Mamertinus³⁰, *consul suffectus* in 150. His grandfather, Marcus Petronius Sura³¹, was an equestrian, a procurator in the times of Hadrian. Mamertinus became Marcus Aurelius' son-in-law, married to his daughter Cornificia, and thus Commodus' brother-in-law. As in case of all his sons-in-law, Marcus Aurelius introduced him to the circle of *patricii*. Sura was killed by order of Commodus shortly after 190³², when his brother Septimianus acted as *consul ordinarius*³³. Along with Mamertinus, his son Antonius³⁴ and his brother Septimianus³⁵ were murdered. The reason remains unknown.

In the epigraphic corpus from Novae five texts with obliterations refer to P. Septimius Geta, the son of Septimius Severus and brother of Caracalla. He was murdered in 212, presumably by Caracalla himself, and sentenced to *damnatio memoriae*. Apparently, obliterations in all five texts could not be made earlier than in 212. Inscription number (5), however, remains a riddle. Preserved very fragmentarily, it was presumably dedicated to the whole *domus imperatoria* in the years 202–205, i.e. at the time when Fulvia Plautilla was Caracalla's wife³⁶. And indeed, obliterations in the third line might have been applied to the names of Plautilla and / or her father Fulvius Plautianus³⁷. The names of Geta must have directly followed the names of Caracalla (Antoninus). Moreover, it can be assumed that the obliterations were carried out twice: first, Plautilla's (and / or Plautianus')³⁸ names were removed in 205 after Plautianus was murdered and Plautilla sent into exile on Lipari, and then in 212 after Geta's death and his *damnatio memoriae*.

A remarkable example of *damnatio memoriae* is an inscription with a heading *signum originis* carved in the base of a statue unveiled on May 15, 208 (6). Two sides

²⁸ On this issue cf. Kajava, *op. cit.*

²⁹ SHA *vita Commodi* 7, 5ff ed. Hohl; RE XIX 1 (1937), 1224–1225, nr 71 (W. Hoffmann); PIR² P 311; DNP 9 (2000), 676, nr 12.

³⁰ PIR² P 287.

³¹ PIR² P 310.

³² IgrLatNovae, p. 45 ad n. 3: „mis à mort de Commode en 190 ou 191”.

³³ PIR² P 312.

³⁴ PIR² P 272: Petronius (Sura?) Antoninus.

³⁵ SHA *vita Commodi* 7,5 ed. Hohl.

³⁶ PIR² F 564; DNP 4 (1998), 702.

³⁷ PIR² F 554; DNP 4 (1998), 708–709.

³⁸ On the dramatic course of events connected with the overthrow of Fulvius Plautianus see: Cass. Dio LXXVII 2–4; Herodian III 11–12; M. Platnauer, *The Life and Reign of the Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus*, London 1918, 130–133; J. Hasebroeck, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Septimius Severus*, Heidelberg 1921, 136–138; A. Birley, *Septimius Severus, the African Emperor*, London 1971, 230–233; T. Kotula, *Septymiusz Sewerus: cesarz z Lepcis Magna*, Wrocław 1987, 79–84.

of the base were inscribed: the frontal part with the main text, an invocation *pro salute dominorum nostrorum*, and dedicated to Aquila (the eagle), whereas one of the side parts with a dating formula. Geta's names and titles in the frontal inscription were meticulously obliterated: in the second verse the letter N from the triple *nostrorum* was erased: NN[[N]], being, however, clearly legible in spite of the erasure. In the third and fourth verse, the words [[et P(ublii) Septimi(i) / Getae nob(ilissimi) Caes(aris)]] were erased, while in the fifth [[et Caes]], which had followed the word AVGVSTI. In the side part, analogically to the front, the third N from the abbreviation NN[[N]](ostrorum trium) was removed, as well as Geta's name and title – [[et Geta Caes(are)]] – in the third line. Contrary to what the editors of IGrLatNovae suggest³⁹, I suppose that the title *Caesar* was obliterated too, just as it was in the front.

The removal of the mentioned parts of inscriptions was probably carried out by means of a chisel, the letters destroyed with diagonal cuts. As it has already been said, the third N in the abbreviation NN[[N]] is quite easily legible, but other letters were removed successfully. The words [[ET CAES(aris)]] after AVGVSTI in the fifth line on the frontal side were wiped out more „brutally”: since the diagonal cuts had not been sufficient, the sculptor, perhaps by means of an additional instrument (a skewer?), deepened the cut, which is now clearly noticeable.

The removal of the third [[N]] in the abbreviation in the second line, and [[ET CAES]] in the fifth must have had a special meaning, as these particular notes strongly emphasized Geta's position: being *dominus*, but not the emperor (IMMPP), and therefore not deserving the title⁴⁰, he was treated as Septimius Severus' and Caracalla's equal (*domini NNN*).

The name of Elagabalus was removed from two *tituli*. One of them is a votive offering in honour of Mars Victor, founded by the *primus pilus* of the first Italian legion, M. Valerius Mucacentius (7)⁴¹. Despite the obliteration, the letters in the third line are easily legible: M AVR ANTON. The second *titulus* is an

³⁹ See: IGrLatNovae, 83.

⁴⁰ In IGrLatNovae (nr 47) the editors, wrongly assuming that IMMPP was followed by a third, allegedly obliterated P, adopted the following reconstruction: IMMPP[[P]], i.e. *pro salute... imp(eratorum trium)*. However, there are no traces of erasure in the stone after IMMPP, the surface being totally smooth, the verse finishing with an ornamental punctuation mark formed into a zigzag, the function of which was probably to fill the empty space, so that the second line was equal to the third. The ordinator would have had to triple the letter M too, if the consistency shown in the editing of the whole inscription was to be maintained; the abbreviation would have been then: IMMPPPP (!). Geta received the title of emperor first in 209, along with the title Augustus (*augustus*), see: Kienast, *op. cit.*, 166. The reconstruction of the side part is similarly inconsistent in IGrLatNovae: in the fourth line there must have been a third letter D, thus DD[[D]] [nn[[n]](ostrorum trium)]; the same concerns [[Caes(are)]]; see above. Moreover, the lection of the inscription (in capital letters) omitted the double G in the word AUGG.

⁴¹ J. Kolendo, *Les nouvelles inscriptions des primi pili de Novae*, „Archeologia”, 39, 1988 (1990), 93–99.

inscription related to the building of a temple for Sol Invictus; commemorating its erection, it is a *titulus sacer* as well (8). Here, the obliteration was carried out very thoroughly, and only due to some other factors it is ascertainable that the erasure concerned Elagabalus.

Elagabalus and his mother Iulia Soaemias were murdered on March 11 or 12, 222⁴². We have an exceptionally detailed description of actions taken after their death⁴³: both of them were beheaded, their clothes torn off, the naked corpses dragged in the streets of Rome, and finally cast into the Tiber from Pons Aemilius, not far from the outlet of Cloaca Maxima⁴⁴. The maltreated body of Elagabalus was insulted as *tiberinus*, *tractaticius*, and *inpurus*⁴⁵. The Senate passed *damnatio memoriae*⁴⁶.

The last three inscriptions (9, 10, 11), all *tituli sacri*, are related to the person of Severus Alexander (222–235)⁴⁷. The first is a votive offering Iovi Optimo Maximo Depulsori, carried out on October 5, 227 by G. Baienius Ianuarius, the *primus pilus* of the first Italian legion⁴⁸, *pro salute* [[M(arci) Aurel(ii) Severi Alexandri]], with the participation of the governor of the province and the legate of the legion. The names of the emperor (I.3) are legible despite obliteration⁴⁹.

⁴² Kienast, *op. cit.*, 172.

⁴³ Cass. Dio LXXX 20,2; SHA *vita Heliogabali* 17, 1–6 ed. Hohl; *Epitome de Caesaribus* 23, 5–7; *RE VIII A 1* (1955), 403 (M. Lambertz); Kienast, *op. cit.*, 172; G. Alföldy, *Zwei Schimpfnamen des Kaisers Elagabal: Tiberinus und Tractatitius*, [in] *Bonner Historia-Augusta Colloquium 1972/1974*, Bonn 1976, 16.

⁴⁴ According to Cassius Dio (LXXX 20,2) only Elagabalus was cast into the river, while Iulia Soaemias' body was abandoned somewhere in town.

⁴⁵ See above; cf. Alföldy, *op. cit.*, 11–21, esp. 16: „der Tiberinus der Name – oder Beiname – eines Fisches war, von dem allgemein bekannt war, dass er sich inter duos pontes [i.e. where the outlet of Cloaca Maxima was – LM] mit Fäkalien mästete, und den man für besonders unrein halten musste. Der sarkastische Inhalt des Schimpfnamens bedeutete nicht nur »den in den Tiberis geworfenen«, sondern war doppelsinnig: Elagabal, der Unreinste aller römischer Kaiser zu Lebzeiten, sollte wie der dreckigste Fisch an der dreckigsten Stelle des Tiberis schwimmen – und sich dort wie der Fisch mit stercus ernähren“; 17: „Tiberinus (...) nicht nur auf den Tod des Kaisers, sondern auch auf sein schmutziges Leben hinwies“ Inpurus, 17: „Mit Inpurus war sicherlich nicht nur der Tod, sondern auch die Lebensart des Kaisers gemeint; dies geht aus anderen Stellen der Historia Augusta, in denen er als inpurus, inpurissimus oder ähnlich bezeichnet wurde, eindeutig hervor.“ Tractatitius, 18: „Mit Tractatitius wurde also allem Anschein nach nicht nur der schmähliche Tod, sondern auch die unwürdige Lebensart Elagabals verhöhnt – etwa wie mit den Namen Tiberinus und Inpurus; der Name bezeichnete den Kaiser zugleich als den Herumgeschleiften nach seinem Tod und den Besudelten in seinem Leben“.

⁴⁶ SHA *vita Heliogabali* 17, 4 ed. Hohl; ILS 466, 468, 470–472, 479, 480; on the coins: A. Kindler, *The «damnatio memoriae» of Elagabal on city – coins of the Near East*, „Schweizer Münzblätter“, 30, 1980, 3–7; on the military diploma: S. Dušanić, P. Petrović, *Epigraphic contributions from the National Museum of Niš*, „Živa Antika“, 12, 1962–1963, 380–385.

⁴⁷ *RE II 2* (1896), 2526–2542 (P. Groebe); *DNP 11* (2001), 486–487.

⁴⁸ Cf. Kolendo, *Le rôle du primus pilus...*, 55.

⁴⁹ J. Kolendo, *Inscription de l'an 227 en l'honneur de Jupiter Depulsor découverte à Novae*, „Archeologia“, 19, 1968 (1969), 128.

From the year 227, though without an indication of the precise date, comes an inscription in honour of Jupiter, Minerva, and all other gods collectively⁵⁰, founded by Q. Tineius, probably the *primus pilus* of the first Italian legion (10)⁵¹. The range of the obliteration, stretching over four lines, is surprising⁵². *Damnatio memoriae* was passed upon two persons: Severus Alexander and his mother Iulia Mamaea. It seems that all names of the condemned, as well as their titles, were consistently removed⁵³.

The last inscription (11) can be dated, due to the a) obliteration, and b) dedication [diis deabusque] omnibus, back to the Severan dynasty. A thorough analysis⁵⁴ of all dedications of this kind in Danubian and Balkan provinces made it possible to demonstrate that most inscriptions of known date containing such a dedication originate from the period of Severus Alexander's reign. In all probability, the discussed *titulus* dates from this period as well.

Severus Alexander, along with his mother Iulia Mamaea, died in dramatic circumstances in March 235 in the area around Mainz⁵⁵, during the campaign against the Germanic tribes. Maximinus Thrax, having been acclaimed emperor by the rebel troops, gave the order to kill Severus Alexander and Iulia Mamaea. The Senate passed *damnatio memoriae*. In 238 Gordian III annulled the decision and consecrated Severus Alexander as Divus Alexander⁵⁶.

Obviously, the interesting fact is that all the obliterated texts, besides the inscription from 182 (1), refer to the Severan dynasty. No explanation for the phenomenon can be put forward with certainty. The time of the Severi witnessed epigraphic boom and was the most favourable period of the development of Novae. After the Severan dynasty, we observe the decline of the epigraphic habit⁵⁷, which

⁵⁰ Editio princeps: R. Ivanov, *Eine neue Lateinische Inschrift aus Novae*, [in] *Der Limes an der unteren Donau von Diokletian bis Heraklios*, Sofia 1999, 115–116; cf. the comment in AE; E. Bunsch, J. Kolendo, J. Żelazowski, *Inscriptions découvertes entre 1998 et 2002 dans les ruines du valetudinarium à Novae*, „Archeologia”, 54, 2003, 53.

⁵¹ J. Kolendo's proposition, [in] E. Bunsch, J. Kolendo, J. Żelazowski, *Inscriptions découvertes...*, 53, n. 52; AE 1999, 1330 suggests that it might concern *le commandant d'une légion ou un gouverneur d'Mésie inférieure, qui aurait dédié le monument*.

⁵² Photograph: Ivanov, *Eine neue Lateinische Inschrift...*, 115.

⁵³ So were the names and titles of Commodus in the inscription from Oescus, stretching over 28,8 m (see above, n.23).

⁵⁴ Kolendo, as in note 26, 50–55, esp. 53.

⁵⁵ RE II 2 (1896), 2539 (P. Groebe); L. Schumacher, *Römische Kaiser in Mainz*, Bochum 1982, 85–87; Idem, *Die Sicilia in Mainz-Bretzenheim. Zur Lokalisierung der Ermordung des Kaisers Severus Alexander*, „Mainzer Zeitschrift”, 99, 2004, 1–10; Idem, *Zabójstwo cesarza Sewera Aleksandra w „Sicilia” pod Moguncją*, Poznań 2006 (Xenia Posnaniensia, series altera, 28).

⁵⁶ Kienast, *op. cit.*, 177–178.

⁵⁷ Out of 69 inscriptions of known date and possible to date from Novae, as many as 30, which is ca. 43%, date from the years 193–244, see: L. Mrozewicz, *Datierte Inschriften aus Novae*, [in] *Römische Städte und Festungen an der Donau*, hrsg. M. Mirković, Beograd 2005, 193–198; only two inscriptions can with certainty be dated back to 235–300: ILatNovae 46 = IGrLatNovae 67 from

was certainly due to the destabilization of the Danubian border lasting practically until the times of Diocletian. We therefore miss the desirable documentation. With reference to the pre – Severan times, on the other hand, it must be noted that there was no chance for the obliterated inscriptions to appear in the second century, while in the first century the only „candidate” could have been Domitian, but no inscriptions from his period were preserved. Unfortunately, the preservation of sources is ruled by chance, often determining a historian’s work.

Obliterations were carried out either by means of a hammer only, or by a hammer and a chisel. The strokes left traces of thin diagonal cuts, making the inscription illegible in the chosen part. Sometimes, the letters were removed only superficially, carelessly, and incompletely (1), which from the point of view of an epigrapher has a positive meaning, as it allows for a relatively reliable completion of the *lacunae*. In Novae, such a case was an inscription from the time of Elagabalus (7), devoted to Mars Victor. In the obliterated part the rests of the condemned emperor’s name (Elagabalus) are legible: M ARV ANTON. In inscription number (6), in the second verse on the front, the contour of the letter N, and on the side part the remains of ET GETA, are clearly visible. Some letters from Geta’s names in inscription number (4) were also only superficially erased: in the preserved part we can easily read [et P(ublii Sep)/[[timii Geta[e nobilis/sim<i> Cae]]][saris---]. But apart from these cases, in none of the inscriptions from Novae traces of letters in the obliterated fields are preserved. This proves that the obliterations were carried out very thoroughly⁵⁸. Considering the technique of the execution of obliterations, inscription number (3) deserves a special attention. It seems that the sculptor, having obliterated the letters, levelled the surface by means of especial tool, thus showing care about the „aesthetic” aspect⁵⁹.

Catalogue of Inscriptions

1. IGrLatNovae 3: 182

Bono / Eventui / leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) / M(arcus) Maesius / Geminus / Bononia p(rimus) p(ilus) / d(onum) d(edit) Ma[[m(ertino)]] et Rufo (consulibus)

238/244; IGrLatNovae 47bis from 250/280; three can be dated from the 4th century: ILatNovae 67 = IGrLatNovae 117 from 290–350; IGrLatNovae 75 from 290/380; ILatNovae 68 = IGrLatNovae 118, after 300; and three from 430–432: T. Sarnowski, *Drei spätkaiserzeitliche Statuenbasen aus Novae*, [in] *Römische Städte und Festungen an der Donau*, hrsg. M. Mirković, Beograd 2005, 224–225; one from the 5th/6th century: ILatNovae 82 = IGrLatNovae 134b, years 481/560.

⁵⁸ On (11) see: E. Bunsch, [in:] E. Bunsch, J. Kolendo, J. Żelazowski, *Inscriptions découvertes...*, 56: „La troisième ligne du texte a été très soigneusement martelée. Les lettres ont été d’abord martelées à la pointe, puis poncées, ce qui les a rendues complètement indéchiffrables”.

⁵⁹ Cf. IGrLatNovae 60 – photograph on 249.

2. ILatNovae 42 = IGrLatNovae 63: 198

[Caesa]ri [---] / [[Getae] I [---] / [C(aius) Titius] Cl(audia tribu) Similis [---] / [---] Au[g]g(ustorum)] nn(ostorum duorum) [---]

3. IGrLatNovae 60: 198/209

Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) L(ucio) Se[ptimio Severo Pio] / Pertinaci Aug(usto) A[rab(ico) Adiab(enico) Parth(ico) Max(imo)] / pontif(ici) max(imo) tri[b(unicia) pot(estate) --- imp(eratori) --- co(n)s(uli) ---] / p(atri) p(atriciae) p[roco(n)s(uli) et] / Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) M(arco) Aur[elio Antonino Pio / F]elici Aug(usto) tri[b(unicia) pot(estate) --- imp(eratori) --- co(n)s(uli) --- et] / [[P(ublio) Septimi]o G[[etae nob(ilissimo) Caesari]] / [Im]p(eratoris) L(ucii) Sept(imii) Sever[i Aug(usti) fil(io) Imp(eratoris) M(arci) Aur(elii) Anto/nini Pii] Aug(usti) <f>ratr[i ---]

4. ILatNovae 40 = IGrLatNovae 61: 198/209

[--- pro] / [s]alute Im[p(eratorum duorum) L(ucii) Sep]/timi Severi[i] / et M(arci) Aurel[ii Antonini] / Pii felic(is) Aug(usti) [et P(ublii) Sep]/[[timi) Geta[*e* nobils/sim<i> Cae]]][saris---] / RES in fr[--- po]/suit C[---]

5. ILatNovae 41 = IGrLatNovae 62: 202/205

[---]I et Antonini] / [---] et Iuliae [Domnae] / [[---]] / [---]cinae

6. a-b ILatNovae 28 = IGrLatNovae 47: 15. 5. 208

a. signum originis / pro salute dominorum nn[[n]](ostorum trium) impp(eratorum duorum) / Severi et Antonini Augg(ustorum duorum) [[et Publii) Septimi(i) / Getae nob(ilissimi) Caes(aris)]] et Iuliae Augustae / matris Augusti [[et Cae]]s(aris) et kastrorum / M(arcus) Aurelius M(arci) f(ilius) Aelia (tribu) / Paulinus Ovilavis p(rimus) p(ilus) / leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) Aquilae d(ono) d(edit)

b. felicissi[mis tem]/poribus dd[d(ominorum) nn[[n]](ostorum trium)] / imp(eratore) Anton[ino Aug(usto)] /ter [[et Geta Caes(are)]] / iterum co(n)s(ulibus) i[dibus] / Mai(i)s dedi[cante] / Iul(io) Faustin[iano] / co(n)s(ulari) et Val(erio) [...] /tiano le[g(ato legionis)]

7. ILatNovae 18 = IGrLatNovae 33: 218–222

Marti Victori leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) / Antoninianae pro salute / Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) [[M(arci) Aur(elii) Anton(ini)]] / Pii Felicis Aug(usti) / Divi Antonini

fil(ii) / M(arcus) Val(erius) M(arci) Val(erii) Mucacenti / fil(ius) Quir(ina) Flavianus domo / Cirta p(rimus) p(ilus) ex eq(uite) Romano / Aquilae d(ono) d(edit)

8. AE 2004, 1243: 218–222

[Pro salute Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris)] / [[M. Aur(elii) Antonini Pii Fel(icis) Aug(usti)]] / [---] leg(io) I Ital(ica) A[n]ton(inina) / per --- / --- prae]f(ectum) leg(ionis) s(upra) s(criptae) tem[plum Solis Invicti --- / --- f]abricavit praebe[nte?] ---] / ---] lio Gratiliano V[--- leg(ato) Aug(usti) p(o) pr(aetore)] / curatione Secund[ini ---] Cf. E. Bunsch, J. Kolendo, *Inscriptions découvertes...*, 44–50, nr 1.

9. ILatNovae 13 = IGrLatNovae 25: 5. 10. 227

a. I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Depulsori / [pr]o salute d(omini) n(ostri) / [[M(arci) Aurel(ii) Severi Ale/xandri]] Pii Felicis / Aug(usti) / G(aius) Baienius G(ai) f(ilius) Clau/dia (tribu) [I]anuarius Cele/ia p(rimus) [p(ilus)] leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) Seve/rinae 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)

10. AE 1999, 1330 a–b: 227

a. I.O.M. Iunoni Minerva[e] / ceterisqu(e) dis dea/busque immortalib[us] pro sal(ute) d(omini) n(ostri) Imp(eratoris) / M. Aurel(ii) Severi A/[lexandri] P(ii) F(elicis) Aug(usti) divi / Magni Ant(onini) P(ii) f(ili) divi Severi / nep(oti) pont(ificis) max(imi) trib(unicia) pot(estate) V / co(n)s(ulis) II p(atris) p(atriciae) optimi prin/cipis et Iuliae Mameae matris Aug(usti) / et cast(orum) et]] senat[us] ac / [patr]iae Q. Tineius [---/]

b. [Alb]ino et Ma/ximo cos

R. Ivanov, *Eine neue Lateinische Inschrift...*, 115–116; see the commentary in AE; E. Bunsch, J. Kolendo, J. Żelazowski, *Inscriptions découvertes...*, 53.

11. AE 2004, 1244: 222–235

[I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)? et diis deabusque] / omnib(us) p[ro] salute I[[mp(eratoris) ---/ ---]] / C. Val(erius) Longinus v[e]t(eran)us ex imag(inifero) le[g(ionis) I Ital(icae) et ---] / Vale(n)s vet(eran)us ex c(ustode) a(rmorum) leg(ionis) s(upra) [s(criptae) fon?]tem a sol[o restituerunt?]

E. Bunsch, J. Kolendo, J. Żelazowski, *Inscriptions découvertes...*, 50–55.

Illustration 1: Damnatio memoriae in Novae

