

Lenče Jovanova

New Data on the Citizens of Scupi and Their Beleifs

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The topic on the beliefs and the spiritual life of the citizens of the Roman city of Scupi has not been substantially studied. This problem was partly tackled in the synthesized review of R. Marić on the antiquity cults on the territory of pre-war Yugoslavia.¹ Very few monuments in Scupi can be related to a certain religion or cult. Most of them, some 20, are epigraphic monuments. They were published, chiefly as epigraphic material, by A. Evans,² N. Vulić,³ B. Josifovska Dragojević⁴ and A. Keramitčiev.⁵ Only a few sculptures or votive monuments have been found so far, with representations of deities or the contents of a cult. V. Sokolovska studied the representations shown on round stone plastic.⁶ The votive monuments showing the Thracian horsemen were researched by A. Cermanović - Kuzmanović,⁷ while the votive

¹ Р. Марић, *Антички култови у нашој земљи*, Београд 1933; the monuments and the cults of Scupi are treated generally, within the classification based upon the belonging of the deities to a certain pantheon.

² A. Evans, *Antiquarian Researches in Illyricum*, Parts III-IV, *Scupi, Skopia and the Birthplace of Justinian*, Archaeologia vol. 49, Westminster, 1885, 87 et 119, fig. 56, (D(is) et D(eabus), 100, Fig. 47 (Fortunae), 109, fig. 49 (Hercul), p. 104, 108, fig. 48 (IOM), 92, 120, 121, fig. 58 (Deo Zbelturdo).

³ Н. Вулић, *Споменик Српске Академије Наука и Уметности (САНУ) ХСVIII*, Београд, 1941-48, n° 437 (*Dianae et Apollini*), n° 419 (*Silvano sacrum*, *Споменик САНУ LXXI*, Београд 1931, n° 550, (IOM Junoni Reginae Minervae), n° 90 (Iovi et Iunoni et Dracco et Draccenae et Alexandro), 211, n° 562, (Deo Libero patri), n° 540 (Quadriuis).

⁴ Б. Драгојевић Јосифовска, *Жртвеник од SCVPI, посветен на божицата Bellona, Жива Античка* 31, Скопје 1981, 181-185 (Deae Belonae); Eadem, *Један заветни жртвеник из Скупа, Жива Античка* 20, Скопје 1970, 153-57 (Nemesi Augustae), Eadem, *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure (IMS), Scupi et la région de Kumanovo, (IMS) vol. VI*, Beograd 1982, 57, n° 15, 16 (Deae Syriae), 58, n° 17 (Sanctissimae Deae Syriae), 59, n° 19 (Serapi).

⁵ А. Керамитчиев, *Неколику необјавени епиграфски споменици од Скопје и околината, Зборник на Археолошкоиот музеј Скопје* 4-5, Скопје 1961-66, 61, n° 1 (IOM Caelo et Terrae Pontoque), 63, n° 2, (IOM et Junoni Reginae).

⁶ В. Соколовска, *Античка скулптура во СР Македонија*, Скопје 1988, n° 122, Т. 49, сл. 2, (Demetra, Persefona); n° 167, Т. 66, fig. 7 (Dionis); n° 166, Т. 66, fig. 5 (Menada); n° 180, Т. 70, fig. 1 (Zeus-Jupiter); A. Evans, op. cit., 109; a reference to a statue of Mercury found in the village of Miladinovci, also the site of another monument dedicated to Hercules (note 2).

⁷ А. Cermanović Kuzmanović, *Corpus cultus Equitis Thracii V, Monumenta intra fines Iugoslaviae reperta*, Leiden 1982, 23-27, n° 32 (tip B -Katlanovo), n° 33 (type B - Sredno Konjare), n° 34 (tip B - Dobri Dol), n° 35 (type B - Semenište).

monuments representing the cult of the so-called Danubian horsemen were elaborated by Lenče Jovanova.⁸ Most of the monuments refer to the gods of the Roman pantheon: Jupiter, alone or accompanied by other deities,⁹ Juno,¹⁰ Minerva,¹¹ Hercules,¹² Diana,¹³ Fortuna,¹⁴ Liber Pater,¹⁵ Sylvan,¹⁶ the agricultural triad composed of Caelo, Terrae and Pontoque,¹⁷ all of the gods and goddesses and all of the other deities.¹⁸ The deities of the Greek pantheon are represented by Apollo¹⁹ and Nemesis.²⁰ Some of the other finds were dedicated to the Celtic goddess Belona,²¹ the Thracian deity Zbelturdo,²² as well as votive monuments dedicated to the Thracian horsemen,²³ the Egyptian god Serapes²⁴ and the Syrian goddess Deae Syriae.²⁵ There are also some local deities: Dracco, Draccenae (accompanied by the hero Alexander)²⁶ and Qvadriviis.²⁷ Some of the evidenced votive relief plates included representations of the so-called Danubian horseman.²⁸

⁸ Л. Јованова, Споменик од култот на т. н. Дунавски коњаници, *Maced. acta archaeol.* 14, Скопје 1996, 155-171, Eadem, Две оловни плочи од култот на Дунавските коњаници, *Maced. acta archaeol.* 16, Скопје 2005, 177-185.

⁹ A. Evans, op. cit., 104 et 108, fig 48 (IOM); Н. Вулић, Споменик САНУ LXXI, Београд 1931, n° 550, (IOM Junoni Reginae Minervae sanctissimae ceterisque diis deabusque), n° 90 (Iovi et Iunoni et Dracco et Draccenae et Alexandro); А. Керамитчиев, op. cit., 61, n° 1. (IOM Caelo et Terrae Pontoque), 63, n° 2, (IOM et Junoni Reginae).

¹⁰ Н. Вулић, Споменик САНУ LXXI, Београд 1931, n° 550, (IOM Junoni Reginae Minervae sanctissimae ceterisque diis deabusque); А. Керамитчиев, op. cit., 63, n° 2, (IOM et Junoni Reginae); М. Басотова, Давина Кула Чучер - латински натписи, *Македонско наследство* 8, Скопје 1998, 81, fig. 2 (IOM et Junoni ...).

¹¹ Н. Вулић, Споменик САНУ LXXI, Београд 1931, n° 550, (IOM Junoni Reginae Minervae sanctissimae ceterisque diis deabusque).

¹² A. Evans, op. cit., 109, fig. 49 (Hercules); includes a reference to the discovery of the statue of Mercury in the village of Miladinovci.

¹³ Н. Вулић, Споменик САНУ ХCVIII, Београд 1941-48, n° 437 (Dianae et Apollini).

¹⁴ A. Evans, op. cit., 100, fig. 47 (Fortunae).

¹⁵ Н. Вулић, Споменик САНУ LXXI, Београд 1931, 211, n° 562, (Deo Libero patri), n° 549; in the Church of St. Nicholas in the village of Barovo, a votive relief was included in the construction, showing figures that could be identified as Liber and Libera.

¹⁶ Н. Вулић, Споменик САНУ ХCVIII, Београд 1941-48, n° 419 (Silvano sacrum).

¹⁷ А. Керамитчиев, op. cit., 61, n° 1 (IOM Caelo et Terrae Pontoque).

¹⁸ A. Evans, op. cit., 87 et 119, fig. 56 D(iis) et D(eabus); Н. Вулић, Споменик САНУ LXXI, 1931, n° 550 (IOM Junoni Reginae Minervae sanctissimae ceterisque diis deabusque).

¹⁹ Н. Вулић, Споменик САНУ ХCVIII, 1941-48, n° 437 (Dianae et Apollini).

²⁰ Б. Драгојевић Јосифовска, Један заветни жртвеник из Скупа, *Жива Анџика* 20, Скопје 1970, 153-157 (Nemesi Augustae).

²¹ Б. Драгојевић Јосифовска, Жртвеник од SCVPI, посветен на божицата *Bellona*, *Жива Анџика* 31, 1981, 181-185 (Deae Belonae).

²² A. Evans, op. cit., 92, 120, 121, fig. 58 (Deo Zbelturdo).

²³ А. Сermanović Kuzmanović, op. cit., 23-27, n° 32, 33, 34, 35.

²⁴ В. Драгојевић Јосифовска, IMS vol. VI, Београд 1982, 59, n° 19 (Serapi).

²⁵ Ibid, op. cit., 57, n° 15, 16 (Deae Syriae), 58, n° 17 (Sanctissimae Deae Syriae).

²⁶ Н. Вулић, Споменик САНУ LXXI, 1931, n° 90 (Iovi et Iunoni et Dracco et Draccenae et Alexandro).

²⁷ Ibid, n° 540 (Qvadriviis), deities of the cross-roads; В. Драгојевић Јосифовска, IMS VI, p. 57, n° 13, relates them to the deities Biviae and Triviae typical of Germanic and Danube provinces.

²⁸ See note 8.

It is obvious that the number of monuments dedicated to the deities of the official pantheon is the highest. In the past several years that number increased with the discovery of two more new epigraphic monuments dedicated to Diana and Jupiter, the subject matter of this article.

1. Votive monument (altar?) dedicated to the goddess Diana

In the course of the preventive excavations on the site of Crkvište in Novo Selo in 1983,²⁹ among the discovered finds there was an Ionic impost capital that had probably been previously used as a votive altar or a plate dedicated to the goddess Diana.³⁰ (Fig. 1)

The monument is made of a good quality local limestone. The dimensions of the impost are: upper side 65 x 37 cm; lower side 40 x 37 cm, height 19 cm. The preserved height of the impost, that is, the primary thickness of the monument leads to the conclusion that it was a votive altar and not a plate. (Fig. 2) This assumption is supported by the uneven surface and the roughly carved upper and lower ends of the inscription field, which is indicative of secondary smoothing of the primary lower dressing, typical of the votive altars. Each of the two frontal sides of the impost capital is decorated with

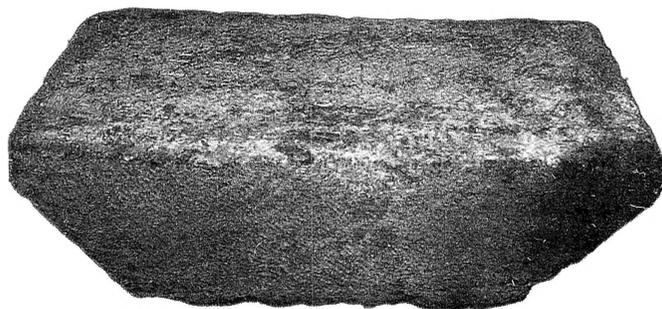


Fig. 1. Impost capital - previously used as a votive altar dedicated to the goddess Diana

²⁹ Д. Каламагдеска Михаилова, Доцноантичка Агеа масерја сипста од Ново Село - Зелениковско, *Македонско наследство*, 20, Скопје 2002, 23-38; В. Лилчић, *Македонскиот камен за боговиите, христијаниите и за живојитој по живојитој*, vol. II, Скопје 2002, 638-639, n° 46, fig. 1b-v, 2-5; on the site of Crkvište, in the center of the village, remnants were excavated of a single-nave mediaeval church which included architectural elements of an older Early Christian basilica. The archaeological structures found on the site Ramnište and the impost capital found on the site of Crkvište are stored in the Museum of the City of Skopje. The impost capital is part of the stone monument collection, entered under no. 144 (mus. ev. n° 2616).

³⁰ В. Лилчић, *Македонскиот камен за боговиите, христијаниите и за живојитој по живојитој*, vol. II, Скопје 2002, 638-639, n° 46, fig. 1b-v; *Idem*, op. cit., vol. I, Скопје 2001, 176-177; a reference to the impost capital (with a photograph) in the context of his research of stone plastics as an architectural element, without an epigraphic analysis of the inscription.

an Early Christian relief cross. The crosses are with widened limbs and decorated with extended carved canals characteristic of the 6th century.³¹ (Fig. 3)

The assumption that the mediaeval church was preceded by an Early Christian basilica whose architectural elements also included this impost capital can be further elaborated with the assumption that the Early Christian basilica itself had been preceded by a small temple dedicated to the goddess Diana.³²



Fig. 2. Impost capital - lateral and upper side with inscription field

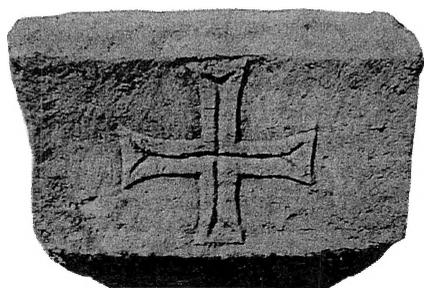


Fig. 3. Impost capital - frontal side decorated with an relief cross

The text is written in seven rows with deeply carved Latin letters. The rows are even, of equal length and do not contain divided words, with one exception in the second row: the separated name of Ru/fri. The text is characterized by substantial symmetry and literacy, which is indicative of the official nature of the inscription, and also of the probable education of the *ordinator*. The letters are evenly carved with a uniform size of 3 cm. The punctuation is correctly used and the

words triangular are separated with triangular serifs. The only punctuation mark that is missing is in the third row between the words *Iusti* and *c(larissimi)*.

Ligatures are used only twice: in the first row: (AE -) and in the sixth row (VM -).

³¹ В. Лилчић, *Македонскиот камен за боговије, христијанијие и за живоиоит по живоиоит*, vol. II, Скопје 2002, 639, n° 46, fig. 1b-v.

³² *Ibid*, 638-639, figs. 2-5; The author supports his claim with the presence of a massive Ionic Roman capital made of travertine found on the same site.

The inscription reads: (Fig. 4)

DEAE DIANAE
AMABILIS RV
FRI IVSTI C(larissimi) V(iri)
ANCILLA PRO
SALVTE SVA
ET SVORVM EX
VOTO POSVIT

To the goddess Diana, Amabilis, slave to Rufrius Iustus, notably deserving statesman, dedicated her vow, for one's own health, and of the close ones.

There is just one other epigraphic monument found so far on the territory of Scupi - the sacrificial altar from Katlanovo, also dedicated to Diana, but accompanied by Apollo.³³ The torso of a female statue found in Bardovci was identified by some researchers as Diana,³⁴ that is, Persephone or Demeter.³⁵

Diana is a deity that belongs to the official Roman pantheon. On the territory of *Moesia Superior* the cult of Diana was usually worshiped as official, with no traces of *interpretatio romana* of some local indigenous deity,³⁶ unlike the neighbouring provinces *Dalmatia*,³⁷ *Macedonia*,³⁸ *Thrace*



Fig. 4. Inscription field of the votive altar? dedicated to the goddess Diana

³³ Н. Вулић, Споменик САНУ ХСVIII, Београд 1941-1948, н° 437; В. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS vol. VI, Beograd 1982, 50, н°2; It is obvious that in this case we have an *interpretatio romana* of the goddess Artemis with Diana. This identification occurs frequently, especially in the provinces and regions near the Hellenic regions. In the republican period the Italic goddess Diana took over not only the functions but also the iconographic features of Artemis.

³⁴ Н. Вулић, Споменик САНУ LXXV, Београд 1933, 207, н° 546.

³⁵ В. Соколовска, Античка скулптура во СР Македонија, Скопје 1988, н°122, Т. 49, сл. 2.

³⁶ R. Marić, op. cit., 57-58; M. Mirković - S. Dušanić, IMS vol I, Singidunum et le Nord - Ouest de la Province, Beograd 1976, н° 89; M. Mirković, IMS II, Viminacium et Margum, Beograd 1986, н° 5, 298; P. Petrović, IMS III/2, Timacum Minus et la Vallée du Timok, Beograd 1995, н° 2, 3, 4, 14; primarily considers the attribute *Augusta*.

³⁷ D. Rendić Miočević, Ilirske pretstave Silvana na kulturnim slikama s područja Dalmata, *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja*, n.s. X 1955, 5-40; in most of the cases Diana is worshiped as *interpretatio romana* of a local goddess or a syncretism with her. E. Imamović, *Antički kultni i votivni spomenici na području BiH*, Sarajevo 1977, 83-91, 169-171.

³⁸ In the region of Macedonia the cult of Diana was only incidentally worshipped. Most of the monuments are dedicated to Artemis. There are numerous examples of syncretism or identification that

and Moesia Inferior.³⁹ The number of monuments is rather low, mostly including votive monuments and rarely relief representations or sculptures.⁴⁰ As to the iconographic aspect, the established iconographic scheme of the goddess Artemis - Diana was usually practiced.⁴¹ We think that in the case of our monument we should accept Diana as a deity of the official Roman pantheon, primarily because of the relation of the dedicator to a person of high official position such as Rufrius Iustus (clarissimus vir).

We already noted that the dedicator was Amabilis,⁴² a slave to Rufrius Iustus, who erected the altar to the goddess Diana for her own health and the health of all her close ones.

What is especially significant in this inscription is the name of the master of Amabilis, Rufrius Iustus, who was described with the attribute clarissimus vir,⁴³ which generally points to senatorial origin.⁴⁴

A respectable person of high official rank, Q. (?) Valerius Rufrius Iustus, was a proconsul in the province of Macedonia during one of the years in the period between 220 and 235.⁴⁵ The mentioning of the nomen gentile of Rufrius was previously established in an inscription from Scupi,⁴⁶ dedicated to Rufria Maxima, the mother

is, *interpretatio graeca* of part of the competences of some local goddess. (S. Düll, *Die Götterkulte Nordmakedoniens in Römischer Zeit*, München 1977, 58-72, n° 33-76, with older literature quoted; B. Битракова Грозданова, За верувањата во антиката по долината на Вардар, in *Религија и уметносии во антиката во Македонија*, Скопје 1999, 192-198, with cited literature).

³⁹ Т. Стојанов, „Артемидида“, во *Крайка енциклопедија, Тракијска древност*, Софија 1993, 24-25; G. Kazarow, *Thrace (Religion)*, RE, IIR. VI (1936), 505 sqq; J. Тодоров, *Паганизъм в Долна Мизия през първите три века след Христия*, Софија 1928, 61 sqq; In Thrace and Moesia Inferior the cult of Diana was widely spread. In regards to the contents and the iconography it was matched with the cult of Artemis. There are examples of identification, that is *interpretatio romana* of part of the competences of some local deities, usually with the Thrace goddess Bandida. (Д. Попов, *Тракијска богиня Бендида*, Софија 1981; И. Маразов, *Бендида - Великата богиня. Проблеми на искуството* 3, Софија 1994, 25-35).

⁴⁰ R. Marić, op. cit., 57-58; M. Mirković - S. Dušanić, *IMS vol I*, Beograd 1976, n° 89; M. Mirković, *IMS II*, Beograd 1986, n° 5, 298; P. Petrović, *IMS III/2*, Beograd 1995, n° 2, 3, 4, 14; two monuments include notes on a temple of Diana in Timacum Minus; M. Tomović, *Roman Sculpture in Upper Moesia*, Beograd 1992, 52-53, 65-76, 82-83, 88, 92-94, 122.

⁴¹ R. Marić, op. cit., 57-58; M. Tomović, op. cit., 65-76, 92-94.

⁴² I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, Helsinki 1965, 24, 73, 98, 282.

⁴³ R. Cagnat, *Cours d'epigraphie Latine*, Paris 1914, 88-112.

⁴⁴ A. Nagl, *RE 1A* (1914), 1202 s.v. Rufrius Nr. 2; I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, Helsinki 1965, 252; the cognomen *Iustus* is of Latin origin and had already been known on the territory of Scupi (B. Dragojević Josifovska, *IMS*, Beograd 1982, 66, n° 31).

⁴⁵ IG (Inscriptiones Graecae, Berlin 1873) X 2, 1, n° 143, 144, 173; Th. Sarikakis, *ΡΩΜΑΙΟΙ ΑΡΧΟΝΤΕΣ ΤΗΣ ΕΠΑΡΧΙΑΣ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑΣ, ΑΡΧΑΙΑ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ II*: 27 v. Chr. - 284 n. Chr., *ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ* 1977, 112-113; A. Aichinger, “Die Reichbeamten der Römischen Macedonia der prinzipatsepoche”, *Arheološki Vestnik* 30, Ljubljana 1979, 603-683, n° 40; F. Papazoglou, “Gouverneurs de Macédoine”, *Жива Антика*, 29/2, Скопје 1979, 248, note 98-99; besides his descent from the senatorial family, Rufrius and his high official position, he was related to the members of the Claudius family which was one of the largest and most respected in Thessalonica (IG X 2, 1, n° 183-185, 173, 209, 168, 177).

⁴⁶ B. Dragojević Josifovska, *IMS vol. VI*, Beograd 1982, 63, n° 27; the monument was found in secondary use in the walls of the Kale fortification which points to its origin from the city territory of the site of Scupi. The text reads: (a) Rufriae Ma/ximae matri / sanstissi/mae Liboni/us Severus / v(ir) c(larissimus) consula/ris; (b) Scupinorum / Ravennatium / Ariminensium / Vulsenensium / Asisensium / Alisciensium / Nucerinorum / Attidiensium / Beneventanorum.

of another high official, Libonius Severus (consularis), a former consul.⁴⁷ She was of noble origin, that is, she came from the senatorial family Rufrius,⁴⁸ and same family our Rufrius Iustus descended from.

At present, the family relations between Rufrius Iustus and Rufria Maxima and her son Libonius Severus are based only on assumptions.⁴⁹

The name of the dedicator Rufria Amabilis⁵⁰ has been established in an entirely identical form on two tombstones excavated near the region of Bujanovac, which leads to the same person. She erected these monuments in the honour of her brother Ulpus Clemens and her mother Ulpia Andia.⁵¹ The mother of Rufria Amabilis, Ulpia Andia, was of indigenous (Illyric) origin.⁵² The nomen gentile Ulpus of the brother differs from the nomen gentile Rufria (Rufrius) of the sister which leads to the conclusion that they were children from two different marriages of Ulpia Andia.

The presence of Amabilis in our inscription, in the role of slave⁵³ to her patron Rufrius Iustus, casts a new light on the understanding of the family and cliental relations between the persons mentioned. In the time when our inscription was written, Amabilis was still a slave, which can be assumed from the dating on the inscriptions Amabilis had erected to her mother and her half-brother; this happened in the time when she was liberated from slavery.⁵⁴ Since Amabilis was a slave, we might suppose that in

⁴⁷ Ibid, 64, n° 27, with the quoted literature. Although the text does not state it explicitly, Libonius Severus was probably the *curator rei publicae* of the cities whose citizens are mentioned in the inscription. It is interesting that apart from Scupi and Alisca (fortification in Lower Panonnia without the status of a municipality or colony), all the other cities are on the territory of Italy.

⁴⁸ A. Nagl, RE 1A (1914), 1202 s. v. Rufrius Nr. 2; B. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS vol. VI, Beograd 1982, 63, n° 27.

⁴⁹ Rufria Maxima and Rufrius Iustus bear the same *nomen gentile*. There is a possibility that they were siblings or father and daughter, which is less probable because in that case the inscription dedicated to Maxima should be of a later date, which is not incidental. There is also a possibility that Rufrius Iustus and Libonius Severus are sons to Rufria Maxima from different marriages.

⁵⁰ The existence of the same *nomen gentile* Rufrius and the cognomen leads to the fact that it is the same person from our monument.

⁵¹ П. Петровић, Епиграфски прилози са врањског подручја, *Врањански гласник* 5, Врање 1969, 361; Idem, IMS, vol. IV, Beograd 1979, n° 120, 121; The dedicator of these inscriptions is the same person: Rufria Amabilis. The monument was found in Veliki Trnovac near Bujanovac. Rufria Amabilis dedicated it to her brother Ulpus Clemens. The second monument, found near the village of Ristovac was erected by Rufria Amabilis in the honour of her mother Ulpia Andia. The family name of Andia - Ulpia, speaks of the local origin of an Early Romanized family from the time of Trajan. This leads to the assumption that the family comes from Scupi or Ulpiana. The discovery of the inscription in Scupi dedicated to Rufria Maxima (B. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS vol. VI, Beograd 1982, 63, n° 27) and the inscription addressed in this paper assures us in the conclusion that this family comes from Scupi.

⁵² F. Papazoglu, *The Central Balkan Tribes in Pre-Roman Times*, Amsterdam 1978, 226; Eadem, Дарданска ономастка, *Зборник Филозофског факултета у Београду*, Београд 1964, књ. VIII-1, 55, believes that it is Illyric and relates it to the name Andes, -ntis, which can be found in Dalmatia. The name Andia was found on the territory of Dardania only twice, in inscriptions from Niš and Prizren.

⁵³ Although not specifically noted, Amabilis was supposed to have some of the higher functions such as *serva vilica* or similar. It is certain that she was not an ordinary slave, judging by her financial capacities to erect the three mentioned monuments (one votive and two tombstones).

⁵⁴ Rufria Amabilis was the freedwoman of Rufrius Iustus.

the time when Andia gave birth to her, she herself was also a slave.⁵⁵ The fact that her mother and brother have the same nomen gentile (Ulpius) points to the fact that Andia and her husband, the father of Clemens, were the freedman of the same person with the family name Ulpius or that Clemens was an illegitimate son of Andia, born after her liberation. However, the children had different fathers, Amabilis probably being the elder child, born in the period while Andia was still a slave.⁵⁶

The two inscriptions found earlier in the region of Bujanovac, where Amabilis is signed as the dedicator, are dated to the first half of the 2nd century.⁵⁷ Having in mind the new information referring to a particular historical figure (Rufrius Iustus) related to Amabilis, we think that the mentioned dating should be shifted to the first half of the 3rd century.

The presence of so many eminent personages, such as Libonius Severus and Rufrius Iustus, persons of high official rank and senatorial origin, points to the fact that those families probably had large estates - latifundia on the territory of Scupi. There is indirect evidence to support this assumption. There are two inscriptions from the territory of Scupi and Kumanovo referring to persons who were freedman, heirs or clients to the family Libonius, and who probably managed these estates.⁵⁸

The same conclusions refer to the family of Rufrius. The family of Amabilis obviously had libertine-cliental relations with the family of Rufrius. According to the epigraphic monuments, besides the aristocratic families of Libonius and Rufrius, the senatorial family of Furius also had a large estate on the territory of Scupi.⁵⁹ This family had large properties in Scupi and in Kosovo.⁶⁰

According to the location of the finds, we can suppose the approximate location of the properties of the family of Rufrius. One of the estates was probably covering the fertile valley by the river Vardar, on the site of the present-day villages of Novo Selo - Zelenikovo.⁶¹ The other estate was somewhere in the Kumanovo-Bujanovec region.

⁵⁵ Andia was a slave either to Rufrius Iustus or, which is more probable, to a patron with a *gentile name* of Ulpius.

⁵⁶ R. Cagnat, op. cit., 50-61, 81-87; J. F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society*, London 1986, 205-231.

⁵⁷ П. Петровић, Епиграфски прилози са врањског подручја, *Врањански гласник* 5, Врање 1969, 361; Idem, IMS vol. IV, Beograd 1979, n° 120, 121, the dating was made according to the consecrative formula and the appearance of the monuments.

⁵⁸ B. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS VI, Beograd 1982, 63, n° 27, 75, 224, C. Lib. Crescens (*augustalis*) found in the village of Bardovci and C. Lebonius (!) Catus et Libonia found in Lopate were probably freedman or descendants of freedmen from Libonius Severus.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 34, n° 10, 28; the inscriptions were set by the slaves - managers of the estate (*servus vilicus*) of C. Furius Octavianus, cos. suff. of 223 g. in Moesia Superior.

⁶⁰ Е. Чершков, *Римљани на Косову и Метихију*, Београд 1969, 53, 93, note 155; A. Mócsy, *Gessellschaft und Romanisation in der römischen Provinz Moesia Superior*, Budapest 1970, 31-32, 86-87; М. Паровић Пешикан, Нови епиграфски прилози из Улпијане, *Жива Анџика* 33/1, Скопје 1983, 47-60; the Furius family had family-clientele relations with the family of Pontius whose members had large estates in Kosovo.

⁶¹ In the district of the village of Novo Selo there are remnants from the Roman Period. Somewhere in this fertile field was probably the estate with the villa rustica of the Rufrius family. This area retained its function in the periods that followed. In the 4th century it was owned by an unknown landlord who

Votive altar dedicated to Jupiter

A votive altar was found not far from the central part of contemporary Skopje.⁶² It was made of good quality limestone. The upper and the lower right angles were broken, as well as a part of the lower side of the monument. The damages are old, that is, they were not made in the process of excavation.

The preserved dimensions of the monument are 63 x 35 x 33 cm. The upper part is set in a 13 cm high frame, separated from the inscription field with a triple S relief and a narrow frame of 6 cm. The preserved part of the inscription field is 42 cm high. (Fig. 5)

The text is written evenly in seven rows with deeply carved Latin letters of a uniform size of 4.5 cm. Only the dedication in the first row is carved with larger letters of 5 cm. The punctuation is correctly used and the words are separated with triangular serifs. There are no ligatures.

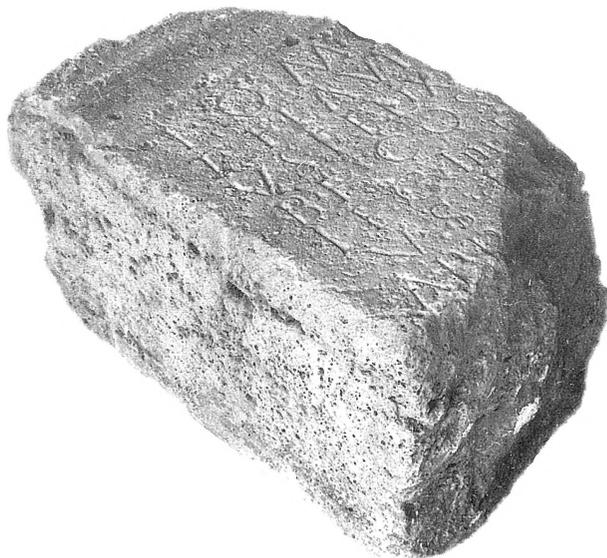


Fig. 5. Votive altar dedicated to Jupiter

had been a deserving soldier with many commendations (Д. Каламагдеска Михаилова, *op. cit.*, 23-38). This might seem to be too brave a supposition, but the possibility remains that the unknown landlord of the 4th century could have been some of the descendants or heirs to the family of Rufrius.

⁶² The monument was found incidentally in the process of digging a cellar of in an individual house at 25a Serava Street in 1995. Following the report of the owner (Alili Salajdin) in 2004 the Museum of the City of Skopje made an assessment of the situation and established it as an independent find, apart from any archeological context. The monument was purchased and now it is kept in the collection of stone monuments of the Museum of the City of Skopje entered under n^o. 150 (mus. inv. n^o. 2857).



Fig. 6. Inscription field of the votive altar dedicated to Jupiter

The inscription reads: (Fig. 6)

I (ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)
T. FLAVI
VS FELIX
B(ene)F(iciarius) CO(n)S(ularis)
LEG(io) IIII F[L](aviae)
V(otum) S(olvit) L(ibens) [M(erito)]
AR(am) P(osuit)

To Jupiter, the best and the most eminent, Tiberius Flavius, beneficiarius consularis of the IIII Flavian legion, gladly fulfilled his vow and placed an altar.

Only seven inscriptions dedicated to J(upiter) O(ptimus) M(aximus) have been recorded on the territory of Scupi, and only one is dedicated only to Jupiter.⁶³ Of the remaining inscriptions, two were dedicated to the group with Juno,⁶⁴ and the others to the group with Juno, Minerva and all the goddesses and gods;

Juno, Dracco, Draccenae and Alexander; the triad Caelo, Terrae and Pontoque.⁶⁵

Our votive monument is the second that includes a dedication to the Capitolin Jupiter without some other deity. On the territory of Scupi (village of Nerezi), besides the epigraphic monuments, a marble sculpture of Jupiter has also been found; the sculpture is the most representative specimen found on the territory of Moesia Superior.⁶⁶

Out of a total of 14 epigraphic monuments dedicated to the deities of the Roman pantheon, the majority of them - seven - refer to Jupiter. Two of the dedicators are high magistrates in the city (decuriones, aediles), one of them is manager (servus vilicus) of the estate of Furius Octavius, and one is beneficiarius consularis, (as our dedicator. Research shows that in the other cities of Moesia Superior, most of the worshipers of the cult of Jupiter were representatives of the city administration or army officers of higher social status.⁶⁷

The dedicator of our monument was T. Flavius Felix, who was the beneficiarius consularis of the III Flavia legion posted in Singidunum.⁶⁸ The family name Flavius is one of the

⁶³ B. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS VI, Beograd 1982, 51, n° 6.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 52-53, n° 8; M. Басотова, Давина Кула Чучер - латински натписи, *Македонско наследство* бр. 8, Скопје 1998, 81, сл. 2.

⁶⁵ B. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS VI, Beograd 1982, n° 7, 9, 10.

⁶⁶ B. Соколовска, op. cit., n° 180, T. 70, fig. 1; M. Tomović, op. cit., p. 111, n° 160.

⁶⁷ M. Mirković - S. Dušanić, IMS vol I, Beograd 1976, n° 3 - 15, 79, 80, 86, 87, 90-103; M. Mirković, IMS II, Beograd 1986, n° 17-24, 293, 315, 316; P. Petrović, IMS III/2, Beograd 1995, n° 126, 5, 127; P. Petrović, IMS vol. IV, *Naissus-Remesiana-Horreum Margi*, Beograd 1979, n° 6-25, 62, 63, 65, 101, 117.

⁶⁸ M. Mirković - S. Dušanić, IMS I, Beograd 1976, 27 -30; only one more inscription was found in Scupi belonging to a veteran of the legion IV Fl (B. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS VI, Beograd 1982 n° 38).

most frequently used names on the territory of Scupi, which is not surprising, considering the fact that in the period of the Flavius family Scupi acquired the status of a colony.⁶⁹ The cognomen Felix is of Latin origin.⁷⁰ The name formula of the dedicator does not provide us with sufficient data that would enable us to be more specific in terms of its origin.⁷¹

As *beneficiarius consularis*, T. Flavius Felix was a member of the units of the local police that were a particular category of the military class. He was stationed in a beneficiary outpost, probably somewhere near the place of the monument. From the territory of Scupi This is the second inscription on the territory of Scupi referring to a person in this type of service. The dedicator of the previous monument, which was also dedicated to Jupiter,⁷² was a member of the VII Claudia legion.⁷³ Almost all of the known units that served in the beneficiary outposts in the region of Roman Dardania were under the command of the VII Cl legion.⁷⁴ There is only one more monument from Ulpiana referring to a *beneficiarius consularis* who belonged to the IV Fl legion.⁷⁵ Therefore, the logical question is whether the control over the roads and the regions in the province was divided between the Moesian legions VII Cl and IV Fl. Unfortunately, this question remains open due to the lack of epigraphic monuments.⁷⁶

The *beneficarii consulares* belonged to a special category of the military cast. They served in the legions, but were under the authority of the headquarters of the provincial legate (governor).⁷⁷ As smaller military administrative units, they were posted in the

⁶⁹ B. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS VI, Beograd 1982, n°18, 58, 59, 103, 116-120, 124, 174.

⁷⁰ I. Kajanto, op. cit., 13, 22, 26, 29, 30, 57, 71, 72, 73, 134, 272; B. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS VI, Beograd 1982, n° 68; although this cognomen was widely spread, in Scupi it was established in just another instance.

⁷¹ I. Kajanto, op. cit., 13, the cognomen Felix is typical for the freedman. The *nomen gentile* can, however, point to the fact that the family was liberated in the time of the Flavii.

⁷² B. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS VI, Beograd 1982, 53, n° 9; the monument was found in Blace. It was dedicated to the group of Jupiter with Juno, Minerva and the other deities.

⁷³ B. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS VI, Beograd 1982, 53, n° 9, M. Aurelius Titianus was the *beneficiarius consularis* of the legion VII Cl. The inscription was dated to 200 AD according to the names of the consuls. И. Микулчиќ, *Скопје со околните њврдини*, Скопје 1982, p. 54, believes that this beneficiary outpost was posted on the border between the city territories of Scupi and Ulpiana, on the road connecting the two cities.

⁷⁴ М. Мирковић, *Бенефицијарна станица код Новог Пазара, Жива Анџика*, XXI/1, Скопје 1971/1, 263-266; М. Паровић Пешикан, *Нови епиграфски прилози из Улпијане - II, Гласник Српског археолошког друштва (САД)* 9, Београд 1993, 35-37; the road to the north of Ulpiana intersected with the route connecting Macedonia, i. e. Scupi, with Dalmatia. There were several beneficiary outposts along this route: Ulpiana, Vučitrn, Kosovska Mitrovica, Slatina and N. Pazar, which was confirmed with the monuments to the *beneficarii consulares* of the legion VII Cl.

⁷⁵ М. Паровић Пешикан, *Нови епиграфски прилози из Улпијане - II, САД* 9, Београд 1993, 35-37.

⁷⁶ B. Dragojević Josifovska, IMS VI, Beograd 1982, 173, n° 227; an inscription found in the village of Lopate mentions an active soldier, *librarius consularis*, from the legion IV Fl. Despite insufficient evidence, it could be assumed that if the northern road had been controlled by the legion VII Cl, the eastern road may have been controlled by the legion IV Fl.

⁷⁷ A. Domaszewski, B. Dobson, "Die Rangordnung des römischen Heers", *Booner Jahrb. Bd. 14*, Graz-Köln 1967, p. 32, 38, 40, 48; Р. Иванов, "Принципалес в канцелариите и штабовете на Горна и Долна Мизия в дн. Северна България през Принципата", *Археология* 26, София, 1984/2-3, 45-59.

beneficiary outposts near the main roads or the economical and trading urban centers. Their basic task was to provide the safety of the traffic and the roads, to control the transportation of goods, to collect and safeguard the taxes consisting of agricultural products, the so-called *annona*. They also had certain authority over the functioning of the customs offices, especially considering the supervision of the security and the control, in order to prevent frauds and smuggling of goods.⁷⁸

This institution was, basically, considered to have acquired a more substantial significance as late as the 2nd century, and it reached its absolute peak by the mid 3rd century, especially in the period of the rule of the Severii dynasty.⁷⁹

The inscription does not include information that could be useful for its precise dating. According to the paleographic characteristics of the text layout (the form of the letters, the ligatures), it can be dated from the end of the 2nd to the beginning of the 3rd centuries.⁸⁰

We think that the dedication to Jupiter by the *beneficiarius consularis* Titus Flavius Felix was located in an immediate vicinity to the beneficiary outpost where he served. The site where it was found indicates that the location of the beneficiary outpost made possible the control of the road that ran by the left bank of the Vardar, that is, the main road that leads to the East, to Stobi and Serdica.⁸¹ This beneficiary outpost was located at the access road to the city of Scupi, which was not unusual.⁸² We can assume that the purpose of this outpost was to control the junction of the main East road with some of the local roads that lead to the North, towards Mt. Skopska Crna Gora, where there were many settlements and private property.⁸³

The examination of these two votive monuments provides the data on the beliefs and the composition of part of the population of Scupi. At the same time, it also yielded new knowledge on the history of Scupi in the second half of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd centuries. Of special importance is the evidence for the presence of the renowned senatorial aristocratic family of Rufrius that owned a large estate on the territory of Scupi. Of no less importance is the evidence for the existence of a beneficiary outpost by one of the main roads that led to Serdica.

⁷⁸ Р. Иванов, *op. cit.*, p. 45-59; M. Mirković, *Beneficarii Consularis and the New Outpost in Sirmium*, *Roman Frontier Studies* 1989, *Proceedings of the XV International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, Exeter 1989, p. 255 sqq.

⁷⁹ Р. Иванов, *op. cit.*, p. 45-59 with quoted literature; *Idem.*, „Два натписа на *beneficarii consulares* от Абритус”, *Археолоџия* 35, Софија 1993/3, pp. 26-30.

⁸⁰ П. Петровић, *Палеоџрафија римских најпјиса у Горњој Мезији*, Београд 1975, 88, 108-121, 146; the absence of the attribute *Antoniniana* for the legion, which had been in use since the time of Caracall (after 213), supports the claim concerning the dating.

⁸¹ There is still not sufficient material and epigraphic evidence. If we assume that the route leading to the North was controlled by the legion VII Cl. (note 75), perhaps the route leading to the East was controlled by the legion IV Fl.

⁸² М. Паровић Пешикан, *Нови епиграфски прилози из Улпијане - II*, *Гласник САД* 9, Београд 1993, 35-37; В. Поповић, *Станица бенефицијара у Сирмијуму, Sirmium град царева и мученика*, *Сремска Митровица* 2003, 187-191; S. Ferjančić, *Settlement of legionary veterans on the Pannonian Limes*, in *Römische Städte und festungen an der Donau*, Београд 2005, 68-79.

⁸³ И. Микулчиќ, *Територија Скупа, Жива Анџиука*, 21, 1971, 465; А. Мусу, *Gesellschaft und Romanisation der römischen Provinz Moesia Superior*, Budapest 1970, 61-75; В. Josifovska, *IMS VI*, Београд 1982, 29.