Finding Accurate Information for the “Container 2” Element in MLA 8

One new element of MLA 8 is the need to identify a “container” or database where you found a source. This is “container 2” if you are citing an item that is part of a serial publication, especially a magazine, newspaper, or journal article. Many libraries now use a discovery layer over their catalog and databases and there is definitely room for interpretation for what MLA means by “container 2,” but the clearest trail back to the source would be the database in which the item resides rather than the discovery layer.

So, for example, if you follow the directions offered by the MLA Style Center (https://style.mla.org/works-cited-a-quick-guide-journal/), you might use Scout as container 2, and the Scout Permalink as the URL:

However, if you look at the record carefully, you will see that there is information leading you to a more accurate trail back to the source:

Another new element of MLA 8 is the inclusion of DOI when possible. DOI stands for “digital object identifier” and is a unique identifier that many publishers have adopted in order to provide a permanent path and identifiable marker to individual digital objects (such as journal articles and ebooks). This information can also be found in the item’s record in Scout and supersedes the inclusion of “container 2” + URL: