

MULIERES IN MILITARY MILIEU OF TROESMIS¹

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Abstract

The current research focuses on the identification of certain patterns, specific to the analysis of women mentioned in the epigraphical records of an important military settlement of Moesia Inferior, Troesmis. The case study of female figures at Troesmis could serve as a reference for similar investigation of other military milieu of the same province regarding the subject.

Keywords: women, military milieu, Troesmis.

Our approach, based on an exhaustive exemplification of female presence in the military context of Troesmis,² is aimed especially at identifying the following parameters: family context (other family members and her status as *filia*, *mater*, *avia* or *uxor*), juridical and social status, mobility vectors, demographical aspects (e.g. age of death), anthroponymy (Greek female names in mixed onomastic formulas), epithets, linguistic features. We believe that such an approach, centered on the inscriptions from a representative military environment, such as Troesmis, can offer, by the exhaustiveness of attestations, an opportunity for a complete analysis and interpretation of the above parameters, as well as a comparison with other areas with military potential from Moesia Inferior.

The image of women in Moesia Inferior was not analyzed in its entirety and only some aspects, such as demographical issues, educational background, *origo* or onomastics have been discussed in specialized excellent works.³ The epigraphic evidence provides infor-

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² About the phenomenon of colonization in the military and civilian context of Troesmis, see Adam 2013, 115–131; Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2015, 141–146; Mihailescu-Bîrliba, Dumitrache 2015, 465–469; Mihailescu-Bîrliba – Dumitrache 2012; Alexandrescu 2016.

³ See the excellent research of Băltăc 2011; Cojocaru 1996, 135–148; Curcă 2012; Curcă 2013, 73–81; Curcă 2023, 545–552; Curcă – Zugravu 2005, 313–329; Dana 2007, 185–209; Dana 2014a; Dana 2014b, 21–41; Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2012a, 125–132; Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2012b, 147–156; Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2013,

mation about more than 30 women. The exegesis include the study of female characters in the military milieu also only at a sectorial level, while discussing mainly the milieu of veterans and the women who “just happened to be there in the picture.” Comprehensive and systematic contributions on the military environment and family of soldiers are very important in the current research on this topic.⁴

Onomastic Evidences

Antistia Antonina (funerary inscription, *first half of 2nd century AD*, *IScM* II,5, 175): [Antistius Zoticus (*maritus*) lived for 36 years; Atilia Fortunata (*mater*); probably freedwoman, she has the same *nomen gentile* as her husband; *origo* Ancyra]. Antistius Zoticus, whose name is from the hellenophone milieu, is also recorded in another inscription, no. 174. We also know Antistia Firmina from a bilingual inscription in Odessos, the families of Antistii in this province originated from Ancyra and are coming with the veterans of the legio V Macedonica, in the context of the Parthian wars of Trajan.⁵

Antonia Marcellina (funerary inscription, *end of 2nd century AD*, *IScM* II,5, 176): [Lucius Antonius Felix, *centurio legionis III Augustae*, *centurio legionis X Geminae*, *centurio legionis I Italicae* (*pater*), Didia Marcellina (*mater*), Antonius Didianus (*frater*); *origo mariti* Karthago].

Antonia Tyrannis (funerary inscription, *2nd century AD*, *IScM* II,5, 177): [*Liberta et heres* of Aulus Antonius Valens;⁶ *origo* Oescus].

Atilia Fortunata (funerary inscription, *first half of 2nd century AD*, *IScM* II,5, 174–175): C. Antistius Zoticus (*filius*), C. Antistius Valens (*maritus*), *veteranus legionis V Macedonicae* originated from Ancyra.

Attia A[-Jea[---]] (funerary inscription, *162–167*, *IScM* II,5, 185): Iulius Dizzace (*maritus*); Valerius Valens (*filius*), *miles legionis V Macedonicae*, died in the Parthian expedition. The name of the Iulius Dizzace is important, because it is a strong onomastic indicator of the presence of Thracian population in the *canabae* in this area.⁷

[Clau]dia (altar, *2nd century AD*, *IScM* II,5, 182): *ignotus* (*maritus*), Claudia Iuliana died at the age of 5 et Domitia Matrona lived for 3 years (*filiae*).

Claudia Aglais (funerary inscription, *2nd century AD*, *IScM* II,5, 181): Claudia Hedistes (*filia*). Both mother and daughter bear a Greek name.

185–188; Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018; Mihailescu-Bîrliba – Curcă 2010, 139–153; Pázsint 2017, 49–70; Pázsint 2019, 1–33; Pázsint 2022, 133–144; Pázsint 2023, 429–454; Mihailescu-Bîrliba – Piftor 2009, 419–451; Piftor 2007–2008, 135–145; Piftor 2009, 25–35; Varga *et al.* 2018, 37–63.

⁴ Cf. very detailed and well documented works of Tomas with excellent interpretation of sources (2009/2010, 139–152; 2015, 93–124; Tomas 2017a, 225–257; Tomas 2017b).

⁵ Mihailescu-Bîrliba – Curcă 2018, 107.

⁶ About her *patronus*, Aulus Antonius Valens, Mihailescu-Bîrliba (2018, 175) states that he could be a member a family of a former *miles* of *legio V Macedonica*.

⁷ Mihailescu-Bîrliba – Dumitrache 2012, 123; Dana 2014a, 151.

- Claudia Hedistes** (funerary inscription, 2nd century AD, *IScM* II,5, 181). Claudia Aglais (*mater*): Regarding her name, it has been hypothesized that her mother was the *liberta* of his father.⁸
- Claudia Iuliana** (funerary inscription, 2nd century AD, *IScM* II,5, 182): 5 years old... [Clau]dia (*mater*), Domitia Matriona (*soror*).
- De[cu]ria Procula** (funerary inscription, 2nd century AD, *IScM* II,5, 196): Valerius Firmus (*maritus*), *veteranus legionis V Macedonicae*; *origo* Nicaea, Bithynia; Valerii Firminus et Firmianus (*fili*).
- Didia Marcellina** (funerary inscription, end of 2nd century AD, *IScM* II,5, 176). L. Antonius Felix (*maritus*), *origo* Carthago, *centurio legionis III Augustae*, *centurio legionis X Geminae*, *centurio legionis I Italicae*; Antonia Marcellina (*filia*), Antonius Didianus (*filius*).
- Domitia Matriona** (funerary inscription, 2nd century AD, *IScM* II,5, 182): 3 years old;... [Clau]dia (*mater*), Claudia Iuliana (*soror*).
- Flavia Maximilla** (altar, 151–154, *IScM* II,5, 155): Titus Flavius Alexander (*pater*); *origo* Ancyra; Iulia Florentina (*mater*).
- Flavia Respecta** (altar, 151–154, *IScM* II,5, 155): Titus Flavius Alexander (*pater*); Iulia Florentina (*mater*), *origo* Ancyra.
- Iulia Florentina** (altar, 151–154, *IScM* II,5, 155): Titus Flavius Alexander (*maritus*), *veteranus legionis V Macedonicae*, *quinquennalis canabensium*, *origo* Ancyra), Flavius Alexander, Valens, Piso (*fili*), Maximilla, Respecta (*filiae*).
- Iulia Hermai[s]** (funerary inscription, 2nd century AD, *IScM* II,5, 190). She lived for 4 years. Caius [Iul(ius)] Marinus (*pater*).
- Iulia No[---]** (funerary inscription, 2nd–3rd century AD, *IScM* II,5, 195): [---]ns (*maritus*), [-]jellicius (*filius*).
- Iulia Urbica** (funerary inscription, first half of 2nd century AD, *IScM* II,5, 189): G. Iulius Antoninus (*pater*), *centurio legionis XII Fulminatae*. G. Iulius Theseus (*libertus*) erected the inscription.
- L[---] Res[ti]tuta** (funerary inscription, 2nd century AD, *IScM* II,5, 203): *ignotus (maritus)* from Oescus; the *nomen gentile* is missing from the inscription;
- Licinia Clementiena** (altar, 159–160, *IScM* II,5, 158): Lucius Licinius Clemens (*grandfather*), *origo* Nicopolis, *veteranus legionis V Macedonicae*, *quinquennalis canabensium et decurio*; Licinia Veneria (*grandmother*);
- Licinia Veneria** (altar, 159–160, *IScM* II,5, 158): perhaps a freedwoman, Licinius Clemens (*maritus*), *origo* Nicopolis, *veteranus legionis V Macedonicae*, *quinquennalis canabensium et decurio*; Lucia Licinia (*filia*);
- Lucia Licinia** (altar, 159–160, *IScM* II,5, 158): Licinia Veneria (*mater*); Lucius Licinius Clemens (*pater*), *veteranus legionis V Macedonicae*, *quinquennalis canabensium et decurio*.
- Marcia Basilissa** (funerary inscription, post 170, *IScM* II,5, 184); 50 years old, Flavius Alexander (*maritus*), *origo* Amastris.

⁸ Mihailescu-Birliba 2018, 175.

- Marcia Basiliss(a)** (funerary inscription, *post 170, IScM II,5, 160*): *mater dendrophorum*, T. Valerius Marcianus (*maritus*); Valeria Longa (*soror*).⁹
- Petronia...** (funerary inscription, *2nd century AD, IScM II,5, 202*): *ignotus (pater), centurio legionis I Italicae, legionis X Fretensis, V Macedonicae*.
- Publicia Cyrilla** (funerary inscription, *106–162, IScM II,5, 192*): freedwoman, *origo Bithynia*. Caius Publicius Niger (*maritus*), *miles legionis V Macedonicae*.
- Rascania Phoebe** (funerary inscription, *2nd century AD, IScM II,5, 193*): perhaps a *liberta*; T. Rascanius Fortunatus (*maritus*), *medicus*.
- Scribonia Melitine** (funerary inscription, *106–162, IScM II,5, 188*). She probably belonged to the family of Scribonii from Oescus.¹⁰
- Tiberia Claudia** (funerary inscription, *first half of 3rd century AD, IScM II,5, 180*): she lived for 50 years; [Pu]blicius Viator, *augur municipii (maritus)*.
- Valeria Fortunata** (funerary inscription, *first half of 2nd century AD, IScM II,5, 184*): she lived for 60 years; Titus Flavius Valens (*maritus*), *veteranus legionis V Macedonicae*, *origo Amastris*.
- Val(eria) Longa** (funerary inscription, *post 170, IScM II,5, 160*): T. Valerius Marcianus (*frater*).
- Ignota** (funerary inscription, *106–170, IScM II,5, 172*): is necessary to mention P. Aelius Abi[---], *veteranus legionis V Macedonicae*.
- Ignota** (fragmentary inscription, *2nd century AD, IScM II,5, 209*), *uxor of ignotus* from *legio XI Claudia Pia Fidelis*.

Regarding the **chronology** and **typology of inscriptions**, the majority are from the second century AD and belong to the funerary context. Most of the inscriptions indicating women (*coniuges / maritae / uxores, sorores, matres, aviae, filiae et nepotes*) are dedicators for their husbands or *patroni* and from a **juridical** perspective, are *cives Romanae*, as well as *libertae*. The veterans and their families were very well integrated in the local society of the *canabae* and played an important part from the **social** perspective. In the case of the family of Lucius Licinius Clemens (*IScM II,5, 158*), *veteranus legionis V Macedonicae*, a *quinquennalis canabensium et decurio* at Troesmis, all the members of his family (*coniux, filia, nepotes*) are attested.¹¹ Due to the military mobility of their husbands or brothers, we can observe certain **mobility vectors** of women, especially from Ancyra, Amastris, Carthago or Oescus towards Troesmis. It is the classic case when the family, due to the recruitment policy, followed the *miles* and settled there.¹² From a **demographic** point of view, the epigraphical records are very poor in information (mentioned in a few cases is the age of death): e.g. Claudia Iuliana (*IScM II,5, 182*): 5 years; Domitia Matriona (*IScM II,5, 182*): 3 years; Iulia Hermais (*IScM II,5, 190*): 4 years; Tiberia Claudia (*IScM II,5, 180*): 50 years; Valeria Fortunata (*IScM II,5, 184*): 60 years. The **onomastics** is represented, in most cases, by Roman-sounding names, but also the

⁹ About the discussion on the two females with the same name, Marcia Basilissa, see Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018, 171.

¹⁰ Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018, 174.

¹¹ Pázsint 2019, 6.

¹² See a detailed analysis: Curcă – Zugravu 2005, 313–329; Pázsint 2019, 6; Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018, 170–171.

anthroponymic formula *Nomen gentile Latinum + Cognomen Graecum* is very well emphasised, especially in the cases of mixed marriages. Its occurrences can be identified in Moesia Inferior mainly, in the latinophone *limes* area, but also in the west-Pontic region, Nicopolis ad Istrum or Marcianopolis. At Troesmis 9 such names are attested: Claudia Aglais (*IScM* II,5, 181),¹³ Claudia Hedistes (*IScM* II,5, 181),¹⁴ Antonia Tyrannis (*IScM* II,5, 177),¹⁵ Iulia Hermai[s] (*IScM* II,5, 190),¹⁶ Marcia Basiliss(a) (*IScM* II,5, 160),¹⁷ Marcia Basilissa (*IScM* II,5, 184),¹⁸ Publicia Cyrilla (*IScM* II,5, 192),¹⁹ Rascania Phoebe (*IScM* II,5, 193),²⁰ Scribonia Melitine (*IScM* II,5, 188).²¹ Unlike other areas of Moesia Inferior, female **epithets** are very rare in the Troesmis inscriptions. We recall the case of Publicia Cyrilla (*bene merenti*), a freedwoman from Bithynia to whom an epitaph was erected by her husband, Caius Publicius Niger. Regarding the **linguistic features**, we have records of Vulgar Latin particularities: *Melitine*²² instead of Mellitine (*IScM* II,5, 188), *Iuliane*²³ instead of Iulianae (*IScM* II,5, 182); *Clementiena*²⁴ instead of Clementiana (*IScM* II,5, 158).

The study of women in the epigraphic inventory from Troesmis constitutes a landmark for the research of all female characters from the military environment of Moesia Inferior. Starting from the critical analysis of the inscriptions, we can identify the existence of common and/or different patterns within the province, depending on the ethno-linguistic specificity of the research area. Also, the comparative method and contrast analysis can have an essential role in researching the disjunction between the civilian versus the military environment. We believe that by corroborating the specific methods of epigraphic investigation and spatial analysis, it is possible to create a complete image of women in the military environment and to enlarge the perspectives on female's presence in epigraphical records of this province.

ABBREVIATIONS

IScM II,5 – E. Doruțiu-Boilă, *Inscriptiones Daciae et Scythiae Minoris antiquae*. series altera: *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris graecae et latinae*, vol. 5: *Capidava, Troesmis, Noviodunum*, Bucharest 1980.
LGPV IV – P. M. Fraser et al., *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, vol. IV: *Macedonia, Thrace, Northern Regions of the Black Sea*, Oxford 2005.

¹³ Solin – Salomies 1988, 56; *LGPV* IV, 5.

¹⁴ Solin – Salomies 1988, 56; *LGPV* IV, 151.

¹⁵ Solin – Salomies 1988, 17; *LGPV* IV, 336.

¹⁶ Solin – Salomies 1988, 98; *LGPV* IV, 124.

¹⁷ Solin – Salomies 1988, 112; *LGPV* IV, 66.

¹⁸ Solin – Salomies 1988, 112; *LGPV* IV, 66.

¹⁹ Solin – Salomies 1988, 150; *LGPV* IV, 205.

²⁰ Solin – Salomies 1988, 154; *LGPV* IV, 351.

²¹ Solin – Salomies 1988, 165; *LGPV* IV, 227.

²² Mihăescu 1960, 110–111.

²³ Stati 1961, 48–51.

²⁴ Stati 1961, 36.

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