NOTES ON THE FAMILY LINKS FROM LOWER MOESIA

Abstract: Departing from the quantitative data specific for Moesia Inferior from the Romans 1 by 1 database, and from the qualitative information from a previous paper, the present work has as goal to provide an overview on the attested family relations types in Moesia Inferior over a period of three centuries, in an attempt to map the corresponding epigraphic habits and specificities. While we are aware that a general approach might seem less prolific, since the specificities of each settlement, as well as of each century are lost in the generalisation, the intention is to contextualise the data and to highlight the general trends, bringing also forward some examples, from which more particular case studies can be further developed.

Keywords: population, family relations, epigraphic habits.

OVERVIEW OF THE DATA

From a statistical point of view, Moesia Inferior provides a high number of epigraphically attested individuals – 6,359, from a total number of 2,561 inscriptions.1 Compared to other provinces, such as Dacia (4,354)2 and Moesia Superior (2,356),3 whose population number are lower, the large number of attested individuals for Moesia Inferior can be explained through a different epigraphic habit, but also to a larger number of alba (109 – large compared to the other provinces), which obviously attest a higher number of individuals, but which seldom provide consistent prosopographical data.4 From a gender perspective, the female population is the least representative with 809 occurrences, while the male population is predominant with 5305 occurrences, to which we add also a number of 245 individuals whose gender could not have been established.

When it comes to these individuals, a large proportion are linked having smaller and larger networks, networks which can be familial, professional, or simply social, but in some cases the type of network cannot be specified. In some cases, the family connections were made not only based on the specific mentioning in the text, but sometimes it was deduced based on the onomastics (especially in the case of siblings, or that of sons and fathers).5 As expected, most relationship types are those between parents and children (479 sons, 147 daughters), followed by spouses (491) and siblings. Following these connections which appear to be the strongest we also have mentions of the extended family, among which the following: grandparents (15 grandfathers, 17 grandmothers) and grandchildren (12 granddaughters, 26 grandsons), uncles (18)/ aunts (3) and nephews (19)/ nieces (3), as

1 VARGA/PÁZSINT/BODA/DEAC 2018, 56.
2 VARGA/PÁZSINT/BODA/DEAC 2018, 56.
3 VARGA/PÁZSINT/BODA/DEAC 2018, 56.
5 VARGA/PÁZSINT/BODA/DEAC 2018, 52.

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well as cousins (3). Rare is also the attestation of in-laws: such as the fathers-in-law (24) and mothers-in-law (19), but also of daughters-in-law (12), and sons-in-law (24). In what concerns the few attestations of cousins, this type of relational link is not attested on the same monument, rather we deduce it by linking the other family members (fathers/mothers)⁶ (see for example the stemma from fig. 3.).

Besides these family relation types there are also other types of relations, which unfortunately do not offer significant information, the relation between the individuals being either unreadable or unspecified. More common is though the attestation of the extended family, which points to the existence of slaves, *alumni* (we have only three attestations of *alumni*: Achelaus and Krystallus, the *alumni* of Postumus, *a praefectus classis*,⁷ and Myrizmus *alumni* of Cosconius Ingenus),⁸ and freedmen, or heirs which are not related with the deceased, testamentary executors,⁹ tutors,¹⁰ or even *amici*.¹¹ Most commonly the quality of heir (*heres/ κληρονομος*) is held by family members, more precisely by wives (Aufidia Avita, Aurelia Faustina,¹² Valeria Crispina,¹³Antonia,¹⁴ etc.),¹⁵ sons (Iulius Capito,¹⁶ Caius Pompeius Magnus¹⁷ etc.), daughters (Petronia,¹⁸ Aurelia Aelia,¹⁹ etc.), but also brothers (Caius Iulius Festus,²⁰ Γίως *Ιούλιος *Ρουφίνος,²¹ etc.) and freedmen/freedwomen (Amanthus,²² Atticus,²³ Hermes,²⁴ Tiberius Claudius Zoticus,²⁵ Caius Iulius Hermes,²⁶ Antonia Tyrannis,²⁷ etc.), but more exceptionally also by army comrades, or individuals whose relation with the deceased is not specified.

**NUCLEAR FAMILIES**

As abovementioned, the nuclear family is the most widespread and this relationship type is especially rendered on funerary monuments, as one would expect. From a quantitative point of view, even before the mention of wives or husbands, children are the most likely to be mentioned on the monuments. Despite attesting exclusively the nuclear family, some inscriptions record a high number of children, such as an inscription from third century AD Capidava which attests the family of Aurelius Hermes and Aurelia Melite; apparently they had seven children which survived them, six sons and one daughter,²⁸ similarly, another family from Tomis had six children²⁹ (and the list could go on³⁰). In other contexts the inscriptions specify the fact that the couple had common children,³¹ implying therefore also the existence of step-children, while in other contexts reference is made to children but not to their names.³² Overall, sons (479) are much more often mentioned on the monuments than daughters (147), but not wives (491), which should be seen more as an epigraphic habit than the reality; moreover, the funerary inscriptions are the most common type of inscriptions in Moesia Inferior, recording therefore more seldom their live events (as opposed to Dacia, for example, where votive inscriptions surpass the funerary ones in number³³).

After children, spouses are the second numerous relational link in the inscriptions of Moesia Inferior, and when it comes to marital life, in rarer instances (but especially in the Greek epitaphs),³⁴ the monuments mention the number of years of marriage,³⁵ or the age at which the woman got married (13,³⁶ 24, ³⁷ 25³⁸). When it comes to the epitaphs of wives, they sometimes even make reference to the qualities which they had in their marital life: such is the case of Eīg uży of Dionýsos who lived without reproacht and with faith,³⁹ that of Mytróν, sober and wise,⁴⁰ or that of Kyplíllἡ the wife of Άνδρος who was considered to have had a bright wisdom in marriage and life.⁴¹ These virtues, as well as others which are specific for wives represent a standard description of women bound to the domestic sphere.⁴² However, in rarer instances, such as that of Titia Matrina the wife of Cocceius Elius from Capidava, her economic power is expressed on the funerary monument which she shares with her husband, through the statement that she died at 30 years old *ad villam sua*.⁴³ The same economic power results in the case of another couple, the veteran [---] Severus from Oescus, and his wife Marcia Marcella,⁴⁴ attested at Novae and whose tomb was situated on a large plot of 80 x 80 pedes, which was not to be shared with their descendants.⁴⁵

Wives in general do not stand out, they are mostly mentioned only for the domestic role they had, but in a few instances, there are from illuminious

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⁶ AE 1951, 7 = ILBulg 382a; AE 1892, 111 = CIL III 6145 = CIL III 12342 = ILBulg 378.
⁸ CIL III 7471.
⁹ CIL III 12399 = ILBulg 120 = CONRAD 2004, 240, no. 427.
¹⁰ ILBulg 75 = AE 1957, 295.
¹² CIL III 7477 = ISM IV 116.
¹⁴ ILBulg 65.
¹⁵ IL I 276 = AE 1927, 61.
¹⁶ CIL III 12477 = ISM V 7.
¹⁷ CIL III 12409 = ILBulg 431.
¹⁸ CIL III 6192 = ISM V 202.
²⁰ AE 1982, 846.
²¹ IGBulg II 598 = SEG 1, 317 = SEG 3, 564.
²⁷ CIL III 6201 = ISM V, 177.
As a consequence of professional geographical mobility of their fathers or husbands, women were also forced to change their place of origin, including the province. Such is the case of Eumena wife of Αμφιρρήνας Κορυφάς and Τομής,47 her father was from Hermione, while her mother was from Athens, and the funerary epigram mentions the fact that her father and her first husband were not killed and that due to their profession she travelled to many places. In other cases, such as the one of the brothers T. Flavius Valens and T. Flavius Alexander, their wives (Valeria Fortunata and Marcia Basilissa)50 seem to have come from Amastris with them to Troesmis.

Besides these more exceptional cases, we also have more common ones, in which their involvement is religious, more precisely within public and private cults, which is accordance with their perceived role in society.53

Even though they are harder to trace down, there are also cases in which we notice that the wife was the second one; this is the case of Aurelia Dusia54 wife of Seutes,55 and this derives from the fact that she is mentioned as Seuti coius, not as the mother of the deceased (Aurelius Erculanus). Epigraphically attested is also the wife of Aurelius Erculanus, Claudia Dusia,56 and their children (Aurelius Erculanus, Claudia, and Vindicia).56 Based on the nomina as well as the personal names/ cognomina of the member of the family, and on the finding spot (vicus Quintioniis), we might assume that we are dealing with a family of locals who were granted the citizenship with Caracalla. In other cases, the “status” of second wife is explicitly mentioned in the text, as in the following example [---] ἡ ἑτέρα [γυνή] [αὐτοῦ] ὡς ἐκ τῶν Ἀσκληπιείων θησαυροῦ.57

Mentions of fathers and sons, as well as brothers are quite frequent and among them there are numerous families in which at least one of the member was an active soldier (overall in Moesia Inferior we have attestation of 726 active soldiers) or a veteran (overall in Moesia Inferior we have attestations of 464 veterans), while in some exceptional cases one can trace (as expected) a wide involvement in the military life of some families. Such a case is that of the brothers Pontici from Amastris:56 Julius Ponticus, part of the legio V Macedonica (unknown rank), and his brothers Julius Ponticus from the same legion (veteran), Sentius Ponticus, miles of the same legion, and Sentius Ponticus, veteran of the same legion. Despite the fact that of two them have one nomen, and the other two another nomen, they are brothers since the relation is twice explicitly mentioned, and considering the age difference they joined the army in different moments.52 Other five Pontici (Vettius Ponticus from Tomis, Lucius Numerius Ponticus from Durostorum, Iulius Ponticus x 2 from Troesmis and Durostorum, Valerius Ponticus from Halmyris)56 are attested in Moesia Inferior in a close timeframe, mostly as military personnel, but except for one (Iulius Ponticus)57 who might be related to them and who was also a veteran of the V Macedonica at Troesmis, they are not related with these family members from Amastris. However, even in this case, we are probably speaking of the previously mentioned elder brother since it would be a bit too peculiar to have three Iulii Pontici from the same family.

When it comes to brothers exceptional are the cases where they die at an early age (age is especially mentioned when their age at death is low);58 among these cases we have one, that of Ἡρακλίων and Ἱσαγόρας,59 who were interpreted by the editors as twins (the only case from Moesia Inferior), dying following an epidemic, or an accident.70 In general the reasons behind their death are for the most part unknown, with some exceptions, among which we mention the case of Ποντίας, a child of the age of 3 years, who died, as her
brother Πωντιανός, because of a serious illness.\textsuperscript{71} Other inscription record only the tragic death of all the children of a family, such as Εἰσίδωρος from Nikomedia (of 17 years) and his sister Ζύμη.\textsuperscript{72}

Besides these examples there are also rarer ones, those which invoke step-brothers or step-parents (Aurelius Sabinus was the privignus of Aurelius Silvanus, having also a step-sister, Aurelia),\textsuperscript{73} and those which indicate adoption, as in the case of Χρύσαμος, son of Γαῦδων, who was adopted by Ἀχιλλᾶς, and as a result was also the brother of Χρύσαμος, son of Χρύσαμος.\textsuperscript{75} Both brothers are attested at Tomis as part of an association of δευτεροφόροι dedicated to Cybele, and Χρύσαμος was also a member in an association dedicated to Dionysos at Istrōs.\textsuperscript{76} Another such example comes from Istrōs, from an inscription which is dated during the 2nd/1st century BC, where an ignotus,\textsuperscript{77} might have been the adopted son of Μενεχάρμος.\textsuperscript{78} Among the cases which mention step-parents we have an epigram from Novea,\textsuperscript{79} in which we find also the phenomenon of code-switching,\textsuperscript{80} the text of the epigram is in Greek and Latin and they are not identical. The inscription informs us that Basileus was the son of Kyzikios and of an unnamed woman, and the step-son of Secunda, the second wife of his father. His mother apparently died before him, and considering his age, she might have even died in childbirth.

Close relations between individuals, can be expressed also through less precise terms such as <ντροφος (brought up together), which might point either to foster-brothers, or slaves who were brought up in the same household.\textsuperscript{81}

**EXTENDED FAMILIES**

As mentioned, in rarer cases when it is explicitly mentioned in an inscription, or when we can correlate the individuals, we have proofs of more extended families; these have not only an increased number of members, but also a greater variety of family relations, mentioning for example three generations and extended genealogical trees (inclusion of in-laws for example).

As such, we have a few remarkable cases, as the one of Lucius Licinius Clemens,\textsuperscript{82} from Nicopolis (probably Nicopolis ad Istrum)\textsuperscript{83} and veteran of the legio V Macedonica, who was also a quinquennalis canabensis et decurio at Troesmis,\textsuperscript{84} being therefore part of the veterans who after their discharge became part of ‘Troesmis’ municipal elite. Being part of the elite, he makes a dedication to the Emperor in which is mentioned his wife (Licinia Veneria – probably his freedwoman), his daughter (Lucia Licinia), as well as his nephews (Iulius Clemens, Octavius Clementianus, Licinia Clementiena, Octavius Clemens, Licinius Clemens, Octavius Licinius). In this case, we have a very well-off family, who belonged to the local elite, and whose mentioning is related to the head of the family becoming quinquennalis canabensis. The nephews of the veteran give further leads on the family: all three have different nomina, which might point to either them being step brothers, either as undertaking the nomina of the grandfathers; two of them bear the nomina of their mother (Licinius), which might also point to the lack of Roman citizenship of the father,\textsuperscript{85} one of them has the nomen Iulius, while the remaining three children share the nomen Octavius. L. Mihăilescu-Bîrliba and I. Dumitrache\textsuperscript{86} have suggested that based on the nomen Octavius, this family might be related with that of another veteran of the *legio V Macedonica*, Marcus Octavius Domitius,\textsuperscript{87} also from Nicopolis. A funerary monument is dedicated to his brother Marcus Octavius Aper, a medicus (a military medicus?), and their mother Lisame Polla. According to the ages of the deceased, the mother had her first child at sixteen years old at the earliest. In this case as well, the mobility of these family members is based on professional reasons, enrolment in the army, and healthcare service.\textsuperscript{88}

Another such example comes from Tomis, where we have three generations mentioned on the same monument: Catilia Respecta and his husband Sempronius Rufinus (the latter is not explicitly mentioned in the inscription) – both being deceased, Sempronia Rufina their daughter (deceased) with her husband Allidius Rufus, and their children (Allidius Secundinus – deceased, C. Allidius Rufinus, C. Allidius Rufus). As in the previous case, the origin of the first generation is different from the finding spot of the monument (Ratiaria), being possibly the reason for which the extended family is mentioned on it.

The overall epigraphic evidence, which is also rendered through these examples, seem to show that the mentioning of multiple generations is especially present there were the individuals originate from other settlements or even provinces.\textsuperscript{89} The members of these extended families seem to belong both to the upper echelon of society (the previously mentioned example), and to the lower one (for example the case of the family of Primus son of Carus from Marcianopolis\textsuperscript{90} besides him mentioned is made on the monument of his mother (Tertia daughter of Primigenius), as well as his son (Primanus), and his father (Carianus son of

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\textsuperscript{71} ISM II 377.
\textsuperscript{72} ISM II 328.
\textsuperscript{73} IGLNovae 107 = IBLulg 325 = IGBulg V 5262 = SEG 47 1153; IGLNovae 104bis; ISM I 337.
\textsuperscript{74} ISM II 83 = SEG 27 399.
\textsuperscript{75} ISM II 99 = SEG 19 477; ISM I 100 = SEG 17 342; ISM II 83 = SEG 27 399.
\textsuperscript{76} For the involvement of individuals in associations coming from both, Histria and Tomis, see RUSCU 2014, 139 – 152.
\textsuperscript{77} ISM I 123 = SEG 24 1134.
\textsuperscript{78} The word φρονεῖ is in the lacuna of the text, but D.M. Pippidi, the editor of the inscription, considers that the word is the one missing.
\textsuperscript{79} IGLNovae 106 = IBLulg 325 = IGBulg V 5262 = SEG 47 1153.
\textsuperscript{80} For the phenomenon of code-switching in Moesia Inferior see CURCĂ 2011, 71-80; CURCĂ 2012.
\textsuperscript{81} ISM II 269 = SEG 27, 406.
\textsuperscript{82} ISM V 158.
\textsuperscript{83} VULPE 1953, 562-568 considers it to be Nicopolis from Judea (since during the campaign from the time of Vespasian and Titus the legion V Macedonica was despatched there), MIHĂILESCU-BÎRLIBA/ DUMITRACHE 2012, 56 considers it to be Nicopolis ad Istrum.
\textsuperscript{84} On this character see: MIHĂILESCU-BÎRLIBA/PITFOR 2005-2006, 212; MIHĂILESCU-BÎRLIBA/DUMITRACHE 2012, 36-57, 145.
\textsuperscript{85} MIHĂILESCU-BÎRLIBA/DUMITRACHE 2012, 57.
\textsuperscript{86} MIHĂILESCU-BÎRLIBA/DUMITRACHE 2012, 57.
\textsuperscript{87} AE 1935, 70; CONRAD 2004, 211-212, no. 316.
\textsuperscript{88} PÁZSINT 2019 (in print).
\textsuperscript{90} AE 2004, 1303 = CONRAD 2004, 210, no. 312.
Carianus) and his brother (Acutus son of Geminus); therefore social status could be a reason for association and display of appurtenance in the case of elite families, while in the case of lower social status families it is somehow a necessity.

NOTABLE FAMILIES

Moesia Inferior has a complex historical background and evolution, which is also reflected in the juridical statuses of the settlements, its population, and its social structures. In this context, the local elite has diverse backgrounds, and in the following lines we will bring forward some examples.

As representative of the indigenous elite from Nicopolis ad Istrum we have two interrelated families, that of Florus son of Gerulo and his wife Cassia Nice, with their son Festius,99 and that of Florus' sister Dentusucus,100 his brother in law Severus son of Severus, as well as his nephews Silvanus and Marcus.101 Both Florus and Severus were buleutai at Nicopolis, being therefore part of the ordo decurionum. In these cases where we have three generations we notice the use of Roman or peregrine personal names, along with a peregrine patronymic, while in the last generation there is a preference for Roman personal names, pointing to an eagerness of the indigenous population to Romanise.102

Among more extraordinary examples of families is that of the pontarch ῾Ερμάφιλος from Istros who is related to ποντάρχης citizens from the governor of the province, L. Minicius and Kallatis, whom, according to the Minucianii, the representatives of the elite at Istros later, it is not excluded for them to have been also part of the ordo decurionum.103 After a few decades we find attestations of two more Minucianii at Kallatis: Τίτος Αἴλιος Μινίκιος Πουδενς and Kallatis, whom, according to the Minucianii, the representatives of the elite at Istros and Kallatis, whom, according to the nomen, received the citizenship from the governor of the province, L. Minicius Natalis Quadrionius Verus.

Another example is that of Τίτος Κομίνιος Εὐξενίδης, ποντάρχης and ἄρχων τῆς ἰμαντίας from Istros, who was also a priest for life of the association of Ποσειδωνιασταί and whose family ties extended up to Kallatis, where other family members were attested.104 Among these, two of them were also pòntarchoi: Τίτος Αἴλιος Μινίκιος Αθαναίων (πρῶτος ποντάρχης) and ᾿Ατταλος, both from the association of Ποσειδωνιασταί and his son Τίτος Αἴλιος Μινίκιος Μοσχίων, members of an association of Φιλοκόννησι. Even though they are attested much later, it is not excluded for them to have been also part of the Minucianii, the representatives of the elite at Istros and Kallatis, whom, according to the nomen, received the citizenship from the governor of the province, L. Minicius Natalia Libu xia 105

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CONCLUSIONS

We departed with the intention to provide a general overview on the family links which are attested at the level of Lower Moesia, and as expected, the nuclear family is the most commonly mentioned, which is more of an epigraphic habit (specific also for other provinces), than a result of archaeological finds. However, mostly in funerary contexts, more extended family networks are present, especially when we deal with families with other geographical origins which settled in Moesia Inferior. In the case of the elite, the extended family is mentioned also in other types of inscriptions, which makes the association to a certain family member to bring prestige to the individuals (such is the case of [῾Ατταλο]ς). Of course, these are general assumptions, and the study of families should be treated in more individual terms, at the level of each city, and century by century, the present work having only the intention to represent an introduction to such a study.

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Fig. 1. Map of Moesia Inferior (from the Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire).
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