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Family Relations in Mauretania Tingitana: An Analysis of the Epigraphic Evidence[1]

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Abstract. Funerary commemorations from Mauretania Tingitana are an important source of information on family relations in a Roman province. As in other provinces, nuclear relationships (93% of the total) predominate over those of the extended family (7%). Among nuclear family commemorations, 44% are dedicated by parents, 11% by children of the deceased, 30% by spouses and 15% by siblings. Compared with other provinces, Mauretania Tingitana has an unusually high proportion of descending (parent-child) and lateral (sibling) relations; this may reflect strong familial bonds that already existed in the pre-Roman culture. The inscriptions also allow observations about inheritance, identity, marital age, affection, and gender differences.
Keywords: Funerary Epigraphy; Kinship; Laudatory Epithets; Identity; Testamentary Obligations; Tombstones.

[es] Relaciones familiares en Mauretania Tingitana: un análisis de la evidencia epigráfica

Resumen. Las conmemoraciones funerarias de Mauretania Tingitana constituyen una fuente importante de información sobre las relaciones familiares dentro de una provincia romana. Así como en otras provincias, las relaciones nucleares (un 93% del total) priman sobre las de la familia extensa (7%). Entre las relaciones de la familia nuclear, el 44% de los dedicantes son los padres, el 11% los hijos del difunto, el 30% los cónyuges, y el 15% los hermanos. En comparación con otras provincias, Mauretania Tingitana muestra una proporción excepcionalmente elevada de relaciones descendentes (padres-hijos) y laterales (entre hermanos), lo que puede reflejar fuertes lazos de parentesco existentes en la cultura prerromana. Las inscripciones permiten además realizar observaciones sobre la herencia, la identidad, la edad de matrimonio, el afecto, y las diferencias entre géneros.
Palabras clave: epigrafía funeraria; epítetos laudatorios; identidad; lápidas sepulcrales; obligaciones testamentarias; parentesco.

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1. Introduction

When Quintus Caecilius Saturninus died in the colony of Tingis (modern Tangier) at the age of 21, his grieving mother Masonia Ismyrna paid for a marble tombstone on which she recorded not only the name and age of her very sweet son (*filio dulcissimo*), but also the fact that his father, another Quintus Caecilius Saturninus, had been a local aedile and duumvir. She asked those passing the tomb to wish that the earth might lie lightly upon him.[3] Inscriptions such as this are valuable sources for the study of social history and family relations in the Roman provinces.

The Roman family has, of course, been the subject of numerous studies.[4] But while much of the evidence for family life at Rome comes from literary sources, our chief resource for studying this phenomenon in the provinces is epigraphy. Previous researchers have investigated the Roman family in various parts of the Empire, from Lusitania[5] to Judaea.[6] However, some provinces have yet to be studied. In this article we analyze family relations in the African province of Mauretania Tingitana, to see how they compare with those from elsewhere.

Why study the Roman family in Mauretania Tingitana, when Roman family relations are already well known from studies of other provinces? The answer is that different areas of the Empire have different histories, different ethnicities, different degrees of romanization, and differences in the functioning of family relationships. There was no pan-Mediterranean family model; family patterns varied between and even within regions.[7] It is only by examining to what extent the family in each province was like those elsewhere, and by attempting to articulate an explanation for the ways in which it was different, that we can acquire an understanding of how family relations functioned in different parts of the Empire. The inscriptions of Mauretania Tingitana allow us to answer a number of interesting questions. For instance, was this a patriarchal society evidenced by numerous commemorations of fathers and grandfathers? What evidence is there for affection between parents and their children? Were boys more likely to be commemorated than girls? How do relations between siblings compare with those in the rest of the Roman world?

Mauretania Tingitana, a province straddling the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, lay at the western extremity of the Roman world. Despite the presence of Roman colonies and military garrisons,[8] it was never fully pacified[9] or assimilated.[10]

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3 Euzennat – Marion – Gascou – de Kisch 1982 (hereafter *IAM* II), 18.

4 E.g. Franciosi 2004; George ed. 2005; Rawson (ed.) 2010; Huebner 2011; Laurence – Stroemberg (eds.) 2012; Lamberti 2014; Edmondson 2015; Neri – Girotti 2016; Coltelloni-Tranoy – Parmentier 2017; Huebner – Nathan (eds.) 2017.

5 Curchin 2000; Edmondson 2005.

6 Guijarro 1997; Williams 2005.

7 Nathan 2017, 328.

8 On Roman colonization in Tingitana, see Hamdoune 1994; Bernard 2018b, 201-221; Torres-González 2018, 146-149, 157-159. On military garrisons, see Rebuffat 1987; Euzennat 1989; Labory 2009.

9 There were repeated revolts in Tingitana by indigenous *gentes* from the 1st to 4th centuries (Euzennat 1984; Gozalbes Cravioto 2002; Pierre 2014; Hamdoune 2018, 123-147); and in the 170s, incursions by *Mauri* into *Baetica* (Bernard 2018a; Bernard 2018b, 274-314). Le Roux (2004, 294) concludes that in Africa, outside the heartland of *Proconsularis*, "la paix n'a jamais été établie de façon durable".

10 Frézouls (1980, 92) regards Mauretania Tingitana as "[une] province marginale (...) Elle ne s'est romanisée que partiellement et sans doute assez superficiellement". Gozalbes Cravioto (2010, 532-533) characterizes Tingitana as a "sociedad de frontera", contrasting the romanized lifestyle of the cities with the tribal culture

Above a small but fertile littoral plain rose the rugged Atlas Mountains, home to diverse indigenous *gentes*,[11] some of whom lived at peace with Rome, while others raided or attacked Roman towns.[12] The social structure and family life of these semi-nomadic pastoralists is almost totally unknown,[13] although one precious Latin inscription, the *Tabula Banasitana*, records a viritane grant of Roman citizenship to Iulianus, *princeps* of the Zegrenses, his wife Ziddina and their four sons, because of his extraordinary service and loyalty.[14] However, most of our information on social history, likewise derived from Latin inscriptions, concerns the residents of the handful of Roman cities in the province, notably the colonies of Banasa and Tingis, the Claudian *municipia* of Volubilis and Sala,[15] the coastal towns of Tamuda, Thamusida and Ad Septem Fratres, and the military camps of Ain Schkour and Tocolosida (**Fig. 1**). Extensively excavated, Volubilis has produced the vast majority of these inscriptions. The epigraphic evidence is collected in two volumes of the series *Inscriptions antiques du Maroc*,[16] with a few subsequent discoveries published in *L'Année Épigraphique*. All of these are conveniently assembled in the Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss-Slaby.[17]

A practical methodology for studying Roman family relations was developed a quarter century ago by Saller and Shaw.[18] Using quantitative analysis of epigraphic data, they challenged the received opinion that the nuclear family was less important in Roman times than the extended family. They showed that the overwhelming majority of family relations recorded on funerary inscriptions are descending (from parent to child), ascending (from child to parent), conjugal (between spouses) or lateral (between siblings). Only a small number of epitaphs involved extended relations such as grandparents, uncles or cousins, who did not necessarily live in the same household. In this regard it is important to emphasize that the inscriptions only reveal family *relations*, not family *structures*.[19] For instance, in the epigraphy of Roman Egypt, 72,8% of the attested family relations involve the nuclear family,

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of the semi-nomadic peoples. Similarly, Hamdoune (2018, 53) sees Tingitana as "une région frontière" where "la zone sous contrôle effectif de Rome n'a jamais été élargie". On romanization and resistance in Africa, see Thébert 1978; Bénabou 2005; Leveau 2014.

11 On the location of these *gentes*, see Hamdoune 1993; and on their tribal structure, Hamdoune 2018, 97-98. The name *Mauri* used by ancient sources for the autochthonous peoples of this region varied in meaning over time, eventually becoming a generic term for recalcitrant or unassimilated Africans (Modéran 2010).

12 In an inscription of 144, the decurions of Sala thank M. Sulpicius Felix, prefect of the *ala II Syrorum*, for having liberated the town from habitual ravages and cattle thefts (*ab solitis iniuriis pecorumq(ue) iactura: IAM* II, 307). Earlier, Pliny (*HN* 5.5) described Sala as *infestum* (...) *Autololum gente*. Two inscriptions from the *castellum* of Tamuda, dating to around the end of the 3rd century, refer to *barbaros [qui Ta]mudam inru[perunt]* and *fugatis ho[stibus]*, suggesting attacks by indigenous *gentes* (*IAM* II, 55; Bernal Casasola – Hoyo Calleja – Ghottes 2018).

13 On the transhumant pastoralism of the pre-Roman inhabitants, see Ponsich 1980; Rebuffat 1988. On the difficulty of determining degrees of nomadism in this region, see Hamdoune 2018, 36-39, pointing to the existence of ancient villages and cemeteries as evidence of a settled lifestyle.

14 *AE* 1971, 534 (=*IAM* II, 94). The Zegrenses may have been subordinated to Banasa by *attributio* (Christol 1988, 333-336), and other *gentes* may have been attached to cities such as Sala and Volubilis by the same mechanism (Hamdoune 2018, 110-111). On the *Tabula Banasitana* see also Christol 2015; Hamdoune 2018, 66-67.

15 On Claudius' promotion of Volubilis, see *IAM* II, 448. On Sala as a *municipium* in the tribe Claudia, see *IAM* II, 307, 311. Cf. Gascou 1991; Hamdoune 2018, 46.

16 *IAM* II; Labory 2003 (hereafter *IAM* II-S).

17 www.manfredclauss.de.

18 Saller – Shaw 1984.

19 See Martin 1996, 41-42.

whereas Egyptian census records show that only 54,8% of households consisted of the nuclear family; the rest were extended or multiple families.[20] Unfortunately we lack comparable data on family structures from other provinces. However, as S. Armani points out, family relations, embodying changes from indigenous to Roman customs, open an avenue into the evolution of provincial society that has yet to be fully explored.[21] The salient, and still valid, fact in Saller and Shaw's findings is that, even though many people may have lived in extended families, the relationships recorded in funerary inscriptions are predominantly nuclear. These commemorations make it clear that the closest bonds were among members of the immediate family.

Figure 1. Mauretania Tingitana (after Panetier 2002, 46)

However, commemorative practice varied from province to province. Saller and Shaw provided comparative figures and percentages for several provinces such as Hispania, Britannia and Noricum. For Africa, presumably because of the huge number of inscriptions, they did not compile global figures but instead confined themselves to the data from three sites: the legionary base of Lambaesis, the veteran colony of Caesarea, and the Numidian town of Auzia. Even setting aside military inscriptions and focusing on civilian family relations, there were still significant differences among these sites. While the nuclear family represented about 90% of the family relations at all three towns, the proportion of descending nuclear relations ranged from 24% at Lambaesis to 43% at Caesarea; the ascending nuclear relations ranged from 18% at Caesarea to 32% at Auzia; conjugal relations ranged from 29% at Auzia to 38% at Lambaesis; and sibling relations ranged from 4% at Auzia to 10% at Lambaesis. Interesting as the evidence from these three towns is, they are of limited relevance to Mauretania Tingitana, which did not contain a royal capital or a legionary base.

20 Huebner 2011, 86-88.

21 "Les relations familiales et sociales, à travers leurs mutations, ouvraient une voie encore peu explorée pour mesurer les étapes et les processus complexes d'évolutions" (Armani 2004, 391).

Inscriptions are a valuable source of information on family relations, but it is important to realize their limitations. First, the sample they provide represents only those segments of the population that were literate and sufficiently affluent to honour deceased relatives with funerary monuments. Epigraphy was a function of literacy; families that could not read probably had no use for inscriptions. And literacy was not confined to Latin: we also have inscriptions in Greek, one of which is a family commemoration,[22] and stelae written in indecipherable Libyan, or bilingually in Libyan and Latin, though there are no detectable mentions of family relations.[23] Second, since nearly all the inscriptions involve one person commemorated by one or two others, they do not enable us to see the entire composition of the family, nor indeed whether the deceased and the dedicant lived in the same household. Third, certain social groups are seriously underrepresented. There are few tombstones of infants, and no commemorations of identifiably servile or libertine families at all. This is in contrast to the city of Rome, where many of the family epitaphs involve freedmen. The libertine families of Tingitana may have been not only less numerous than those in the capital, but also less able to pay for a monument. Fourth, the evidence has a strongly urban flavour; there are very few family inscriptions from rural sites,[24] and most of the inscriptions come from a single city, Volubilis. Other towns are weakly represented, and there are no family commemorations at all from the Roman colonies of Lixus and Zilil or the Mediterranean port of Rusaddir. This disparity is due largely to accidents of survival and the uneven progress of archaeology, as well as to the undoubted importance of Volubilis itself.

2. Analysis

Family commemorations from Mauretania Tingitana consist primarily of epitaphs, though there are also inscriptions in which a man is honoured by the city and a relative refunds the cost or pays for the erection of a statue to him,[25] or in which a family member sets up an honorific memorial to a local magistrate or *flaminica* in the city centre.[26] This involvement of the family in paying homage to a notable relative in a public space has been seen as a "privatization" of the forum, blurring the distinction between civic honours and a personal memorial.[27]

The inscriptions provide attestation of 153 family relations, of which 143, or 93%, are nuclear, while only 10 relations, or 7%, involve the extended family (**Fig. 2**). The 143 nuclear relations, together with the number of deceased persons by gender, can be broken down as follows (**Fig. 3**):

Descending: 63 (44%) – 42 males, 21 females
Ascending: 16 (11%) – 9 males, 7 females
Conjugal: 43 (30%) – 17 males, 26 females
Lateral: 21 (15%) – 14 males, 7 females

22 *SEG* 13, 621 (Volubilis, 3rd century).
23 Février – Galand – Vajda 1966, nº. 1-26.
24 *IAM* II, 71 (Suiar), 296 (Sidi Slimane), 339 (Azemmour).
25 *IAM* II, 132 (Banasa), 433, 448 (=*AE* 1992, 1943), 456 (Volubilis).
26 *IAM* II, 131 (Banasa), 429, 436, 437, 440, 443, 446 (Volubilis).
27 Lefebvre 2018, 49-52.

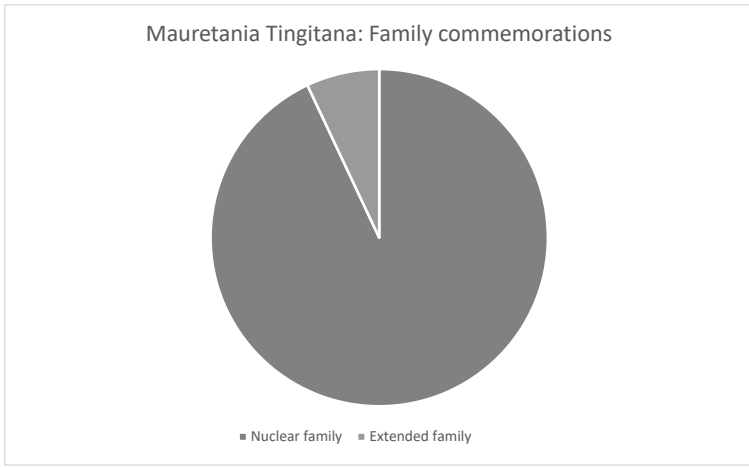

Figure 2. Mauretania Tingitana: Family commemorations

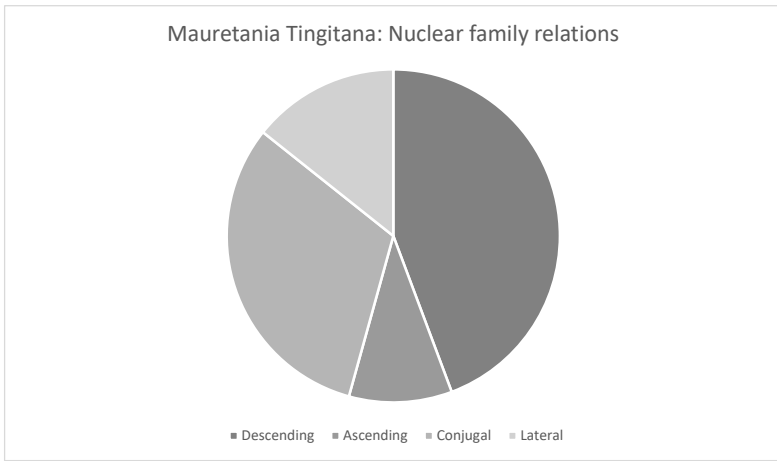

Figure 3. Mauretania Tingitana: Nuclear family relations

Not included in these calculations are inscriptions recording that the deceased was dear or dutiful to his family (*carus suis*; *pius in suis*),[28] or that he set up a tombstone for himself and his relatives (*sibi et suis*),[29] without mentioning a specific relationship. While *suis* in these inscriptions presumably (though not necessarily exclusively) refers to the members of the nuclear family, this could include parents, wives and children, and so does not fit into a single, identifiable category. Also excluded are inscriptions erected by an heir (*heres*), without specifying the relationship of the heir to the deceased.[30]

A few words should be said about the size and nature of the database. Saller and Shaw used 98 civilian family commemorations from Britannia, 101 from Germania

[28] *IAM* II, 59, 819.
[29] *IAM* II, 580, 648.
[30] *IAM* II, 252, 471, 508.

Inferior and 142 from Germania Superior, with which the 153 commemorations from Tingitana compare favourably. But the question arises, how statistically valid are results drawn from such small samples, which constitute only a minuscule proportion of the thousands of inscriptions that must originally have existed? Using standard statistical calculations for a population of unlimited size, a sample of at least 139 will be accurate to within 7 percentage points, 18 times out of 20.[31] Obviously a larger database would yield more precise results, but the available 153 commemorations from Tingitana are sufficient to indicate the relative proportions of family commemorations. Most of the family inscriptions are funerary. Curiously, none of them were found in known cemeteries,[32] though there is no particular reason to believe that cemetery inscriptions would differ significantly in content from funerary inscriptions found in other contexts. Some of the family inscriptions of Volubilis are honorific commemorations from the forum area, thereby foregrounding prominent families, but most were found elsewhere in the city. The resulting sample of inscriptions, while not random –since some sites have been excavated more than others– is certainly diverse, representing several cities and various types of people.

However, the data for this province are conspicuously skewed by the fact that more than four-fifths of the inscriptions come from a single town, Volubilis. To gauge the extent to which the data for nuclear relations are influenced by the preponderance of commemorations from Volubilis, we shall consider the two populations separately. A distinction should also be made between civilian and military commemorations. Saller and Shaw treated military populations (including those at Lambaesis and Caesarea) separately from civilian ones, including not only tombstones of soldiers but also those set up by soldiers to family members.

2.1. Civilian commemorations: Volubilis

Descending: 52 (43%) – 33 males, 19 females
Ascending: 12 (10%) – 7 males, 5 females
Conjugal: 33 (27%) – 14 males, 19 females
Lateral: 18 (15%) – 11 males, 7 females
Extended: 7 (6%) – 5 males, 2 females
Total: 122

[31] The standard formula for determining a statistically valid sample size (n) of an unlimited population is: $n = z^2 \times p\ (1\text{-}p) / e^2$, where z is the confidence level z-score (1,96 for a confidence level of 95%, or 1,65 for 90%, i.e. 18/20), p is the proportion of the population (default 0,05 if unknown), and e is the margin of error (Cochrane 1963, 75). For a confidence level of 90% with a 7% margin of error, the minimum sample is 2,7225 x 0,5 (1-0,5) / $0{,}07^2$ = 139.

[32] Mohcin (2020, 177-179) lists the provenance of the inscriptions of Tingis, including the cemeteries of Merchan and Bou Khach-khach, but none of the family commemorations from Tingis (*IAM* II, 13, 17, 19, 30, 34) were found in these cemeteries. Although numerous inscriptions of Sala come from cemeteries (Boube 1999, 138-146) the only two family commemorations from Sala (*IAM* II, 311, 859) were found in other contexts, one in the forum and the other on Cardo 5. The cemetery at Rirha has produced nine inscriptions (*IAM* II, 287-295, re-edited by Bernard 2016, 149-155), but none of them are family commemorations. Several burial sites have been found within the walls of Volubilis (listed in Boube 1999, 10) but none of them have produced family commemorations; the major cemeteries at Volubilis probably await discovery outside the walls.

2.2. Civilian commemorations: Other sites

Descending: 8 (44%) - 6 males, 2 females
Ascending: 1 (6%) – 1 female
Conjugal: 7 (39%) – 2 males, 5 females
Lateral: none
Extended: 2 (11%) – 2 males
Total: 18

Nine of these inscriptions come from the colonies of Tingis and Banasa, the remainder from other sites such as Tamuda, Sala, Thamusida and Ad Septem Fratres. Although the number of inscriptions is small, and in the case of lateral relations there are no surviving examples at all, it is noteworthy that the predominance of descending commemorations in the inscriptions of Volubilis is also evident at the other civilian sites. Again, ascending commemorations are much less numerous than conjugal ones.

2.3. Military commemorations

Descending: 3 (23%) – 3 males
Ascending: 3 (23%) – 2 males, 1 female
Conjugal: 3 (23%) – 1 male, 2 females
Lateral: 3 (23%) – 3 males
Extended: 1 (8%) – 1 male
Total: 13

There are 12 military inscriptions, recording 13 family relations. Three of the inscriptions come from Volubilis, two from the adjacent military camps, and seven from other sites. Three of the deceased are officers, eight are soldiers, and one is a veteran. Seven of the military men are deceased; two of these commemorations are ascending (by sons), two are lateral (by brothers), one is extended (by cousin), one is conjugal, and one is mixed (by mother and brother).[33] Of the five military men who dedicate epitaphs, two of the commemorations are descending (to sons), one is ascending (to mother) and two are conjugal.[34] In addition, it should be noted that Mauretania Tingitana has produced more than thirty military diplomas, in which auxiliary soldiers who had completed their service were granted Roman citizenship and *conubium cum uxoribus quas tunc habuissent.*[35] While these are not commemorative inscriptions, they do provide further evidence of conjugal relations, though it is not known if all the soldiers had wives. The auxiliary units in Tingitana were raised in several provinces (Hispania, Gallia, Syria),[36] but when the original members retired they would have been replaced by local recruits.

[33] *IAM* II, 34 (=*AE* 1998, 1598), 417, 451 (two relations), 816; *IAM* II-S, 859 (=*AE* 1991, 1749); *AE* 2000, 1811.
[34] *IAM* II, 30, 71, 296, 339, 480.
[35] *IAM* II, 80, 82, 234-246, 284-286, 745, 749, 803-813, 840, *IAM* II-S, 909-910; *AE* 2003, 2034; *AE* 2009, 1798.
[36] Rebuffat 1987, 66-71; Bernard – Christol 2009; Labory 2009.

2.4. Summary of family relations

Descending (total 63):

Mother to son 18; father to son 13; both parents to son 11; total sons 42.[37]

Mother to daughter 9; father to daughter 8; both parents to daughter 2; unclear dedicant to daughter 2; total daughters 21.[38]

Ascending (total 16):

Son(s) to father 7; daughter to father 2; total fathers 9.[39]

Son(s) to mother 3; daughter to mother 3; unclear dedicant to mother 1; total mothers 7.[40]

Conjugal (total 43):

Wife to husband 17.[41] Husband to wife 26.[42]

Lateral (total 21):

Brother(s) to brother 10; sister(s) to brother 3; unclear dedicant to brother 1; total brothers 14.[43]

Brother(s) to sister 6; sister to sister 1; total sisters 7.[44]

Extended (total 10):

Cousin (male) to cousin (male) 2; grandfather to grandson 1; granddaughters to grandfather 1; stepmother to stepson 2; daughter-in-law to father-in-law 1; nephew to uncle 1; nephew(s) to aunt 2.[45]

2.5. Chronological distribution

It would be advantageous to divide the family inscriptions into chronological groups, to document any changes in commemorative patterns over time. Such an undertaking, however, presents difficulties. Most inscriptions were published in transcription, without photographs or drawings. The series *Inscriptions antiques du Maroc* includes photographs of some of the most important or interesting texts, but many family epitaphs are not illustrated. The editors of *IAM* rarely suggest dates, except when consuls or emperors are named, though they sometimes cite dates proposed

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37 *IAM* II, 18, 60, 132, 133, 296, 311 (=*AE* 1998, 1606), 375b, 425, 431, 432, 435, 436+716, 437, 442, 447, 451, 456, 458, 460, 464, 465, 470, 478, 479, 480, 482, 527, 578, 594 (=*AE* 1987, 1103), 600, 602, 635, 636, 637, 650, 654, 658, 677, 715, 832; *IAM* II-S, 893 (=*AE* 1987, 1118); *AE* 2000, 1806.

38 *IAM* II, 87, 462, 475a, 476, 515, 523, 531, 535, 543, 545, 566, 579, 617, 641, 665, 672, 832, 834; *IAM* II-S, 889 (=*AE* 1987, 1114), 896 (=*AE* 1987, 1121); *AE* 2000, 1806.

39 *IAM* II, 417, 433, 438, 441, 446, 584 (=*AE* 1987, 1102), 624, 661; *AE* 2000, 1811.

40 *IAM* II, 30, 131, 467, 519, 735, 833; *SEG* 13, 621.

41 *IAM* II, 429, 448 (=*AE* 1992, 1943), 514, 528, 542, 614, 624, 626, 628, 660, 663, 761, 816, 843 (=*AE* 1998, 1600), 844 (=*AE* 1998, 1601); *IAM* II-S, 891 (=*AE* 1987, 1116), 902 (=*AE* 1987, 1126).

42 *IAM* II, 13, 17a, 71, 255, 259, 339, 443, 469, 561, 562, 563, 564, 568, 582, 598, 606, 610, 616, 618, 668, 673, 684, 768, 784, 831; *AE* 2000, 1807.

43 *IAM* II, 34 (=*AE* 1998, 1598), 81, 424, 426, 444=445, 451, 455, 458, 466, 513, 530, 599, 677bis; *IAM* II-S, 899 (=*AE* 1987, 1123).

44 *IAM* II, 370b, 463, 468, 477, 532; *IAM* II-S, 885 (=*AE* 1987, 1109), 897 (=*AE* 1987, 1122).

45 *IAM* II, 152, 434, 440, 457, 547, 621, 623, 662; *IAM* II-S, 859 (=*AE* 1991, 1749); *AE* 2000, 1806.

by earlier scholars. Cesaretti usefully offers dates for the honorific inscriptions of Volubilis, as does Hamdoune for military inscriptions,[46] but this leaves most of the funerary inscriptions undated.

The shape and decoration of the monuments are not closely datable, so we must rely on epigraphic formulas, personal names, and letter forms. The first of these is not very helpful. The formulas H.S.E., S.T.T.L. and O.T.B.Q. have no chronological value; neither do D.M. and D.M.S., which are used interchangeably in African inscriptions.[47] The use of superlative epithets begins already in the 1st century.[48] The word *memoria*, which implies a date in the 2nd or 3rd centuries, is found in only two family inscriptions.[49]

The *tria nomina* of male citizens are commonly found in the 1st to 2nd centuries. *Duo nomina*, omitting the *praenomen*, usually point to a date in the 2nd or 3rd centuries.[50] References to filiation, voting tribe and *origo* disappear in the latter half of the 2nd century.[51] The name Aurelius was borne by individuals who received citizenship through the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212, though the inhabitants of Banasa received it under Marcus Aurelius.[52]

Letter forms offer possibilities for dating some inscriptions. The monumental capitals of the 1st century are easily distinguished from the librarial script of the Antonine and Severan periods. However, many inscriptions are not palaeographically datable, since different scribes used a variety of letter forms, and several alphabets could exist simultaneously.[53] A study of more than 6.000 African inscriptions concluded that, while letter forms can be used to date official inscriptions, they are not reliable for private epitaphs.[54] The editors of *IAM* often describe the letters in qualitative terms such as "soignées", "très belles", "peu régulières", "grossières", "maladroites", but these may be less indicative of date than of the engraver's competence. In any case, nearly all of the funerary inscriptions from Volubilis (the largest group of family commemorations) lack published photographs, making it impractical to study the lettering. Luckily, many can be dated by other criteria.

Those inscriptions that can be tentatively dated yield the following distribution of commemorations:[55]

- 1st century: 6 descending, 1 conjugal, 2 lateral, 1 extended, total 10.[56]

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46 Cesaretti 2008, 58-61; Hamdoune 1993-1995.

47 Lassère 1973, 23, 112.

48 *IAM* II, 424, 440, 446-448, 475, 479. This is in contrast to Hispania, where superlative epithets indicate a date of ca. 100 or later (Haley 1991, 129).

49 Lassère 1973, 121; *IAM* II, 296, 618.

50 Salway 1994, 131.

51 Hamdoune 1993-1995, 131.

52 *Aurelii Banasitani*: *IAM* II, 125 (162).

53 "il existait en Afrique plusieurs types de capitale monumentale" (Picard 1966, 66); "plusieurs alphabets pouvaient coexister" (Lassère 1973, 10).

54 "Mais il serait imprudent de se fier à des critères paléographiques pour des monuments privés (...) Au contraire, la masse des épitaphes ordinaires (...) n'offre qu'un alphabet gauche d'où il ne semble guère qu'on puisse tirer des éléments de datation. Il faudra se résigner à n'utiliser la paléographie" (Lassère 1973, 10).

55 Most of the suggested dates of funerary inscriptions are based on personal nomenclature, a useful but not infallible criterion. It can only be hoped that if a few dates are wrong, the rest are correct.

56 *IAM* II, 424, 425, 440, 447, 448, 458 (two relations), 465, 475, 479.

- 1st-2nd centuries: 4 descending, 2 ascending, 2 conjugal, total 8.[57]
- 2nd century: 5 descending, 4 ascending, 1 conjugal, 3 lateral, 2 extended, total 15.[58]
- 2nd-3rd centuries: 24 descending, 4 ascending, 20 conjugal, 10 lateral, 4 extended, total 62.[59]
- 3rd century: 7 descending, 3 ascending, 3 conjugal, 1 lateral, 1 extended, total 15.[60]
- 3rd-4th centuries: 1 conjugal.[61]
- Not datable: 38.[62]

The large number of commemorations in the 2nd-3rd centuries reflects the peak of the so-called "epigraphic habit" in Africa.[63] The almost total lack of later inscriptions is explained largely by the abandonment of Volubilis, the source of most of the family commemorations ca. 285.[64]

From these figures, representing over 70% of family inscriptions, it can be seen that descending commemorations are dominant in all periods, while the number of ascending relations is consistently small. The proportion of conjugal commemorations varies, but rarely exceeds 30%. Thus, there is no period in which we see a significant change from the overall pattern for Tingitana.

3. Discussion

As elsewhere in the Roman world, nuclear family commemorations greatly outnumber all other types. The proportion of nuclear family relations in Tingitana (93%) is consistent with Saller and Shaw's figures for the civilian populations of Lambaesis and Auzia, both with 91% nuclear family commemorations.[65] The evidence does not necessarily prove –contrary to the conclusion of Saller and Shaw– that the nuclear family was the dominant familial configuration,[66] since it is possible that more distant relatives may have lived in the same household; but it does demonstrate that bonds among close kin were the strongest. The small number of attested grandparents may be partly the result of low life expectancy. Saller found that only 19% of Roman men

57 *IAM* II, 18, 431, 432, 443, 478, 514, 626, 661.

58 *IAM* II, 30, 81, 87, 311, 370, 375, 433, 434, 438, 451, 462, 467, 470, *IAM* II-S, 844, 859.

59 *IAM* II, 13, 17, 60, 131, 132, 339, 426, 455, 468, 469, 476, 480, 515, 519, 523, 527, 528, 530, 531, 532, 535, 542, 547, 563, 566, 579, 582, 584, 598, 602, 610, 614, 617, 618, 621, 623, 641, 658, 660, 662, 663, 665, 668, 672, 677 (two relations), 715, 816, 832, 834, *IAM* II-S, 843, 885, 889, 891, 893, 896, 897, 899, 902; *AE* 2000, 1806, 1807, 1811.

60 *IAM* II, 259, 296, 417, 437, 442, 457, 460, 464, 513, 543, 545, 606, 628, 833; *SEG* 13, 621.

61 *IAM* II, 71.

62 The total number of inscriptions is 149, some of which contain more than one family relation.

63 Meyer 1990, 81-87. At Volubilis, for example, of the 66 inscriptions naming emperors, 47 date to the Antonine and Severan periods (Le Bohec 1989, 342). See however the caveats in Beltrán Lloris 2015, 141-143.

64 Epigraphic and numismatic evidence suggests that the southern part of the province, including Volubilis, was abandoned around the beginning of Diocletian's reign and the frontier moved north to the river Loukos: Rebuffat 1992.

65 Saller – Shaw 1984, 150.

66 Saller – Shaw 1984, 145-146 ("the nuclear family was the main type of familial organization").

had a father alive by the time they were thirty;[67] thus, most grandfathers would not have lived long enough to see their grandchildren reach adulthood. Commemoration of an aunt or grandmother may have special significance because these relatives sometimes raised children whose mothers died in childbirth.[68] Close ties between cousins are also interesting, given that cousins in Roman Africa sometimes married one another,[69] though in our inscriptions they are all male.

In comparison with other regions, the family inscriptions from Tingitana show an abnormally high proportion of descending (parent-child) and lateral (sibling) relations, and an unusually low proportion of ascending (child-parent) relations. The proportion of conjugal relations (30%), while substantially smaller than the 40% in Latium, is nevertheless consistent with Saller and Shaw's figures for the Mauretanian towns of Auzia (29%) and Caesarea (30%). The rate of lateral relations, representing 15% of nuclear commemorations or 14% of all family dedications, is the highest in the empire. By contrast, Saller and Shaw found that "brothers and sisters never constitute more than 11 per cent of all dedicators and the proportion is usually closer to 6-8 per cent".[70] The extremely low proportion of ascending relations (11%) is comparable to 11% in Republican Rome and Latium, and 10% in Britannia, though the small size of the samples from all these areas limits their statistical validity.[71] However, while there are obvious analogies between Tingitana and Britannia (Atlantic locale; similar dates of conquest and municipalization; large military garrisons), the similarity in ascending relations is not reflected in other family categories. In fact, Tingitana and Britannia have diametrically opposite proportions of descending and conjugal relations (Tingitana 44% descending, 30% conjugal; Britannia 45% conjugal, 32% descending).

The rate of descending relations in Tingitana (44%) is well above the 36% in Latium and more than double the rate in Cisalpine Gaul (21%), though paralleled by the 43% at Caesarea. However, my study of family inscriptions in Lusitania documented an even higher proportion (60%) of descending relations in the Conventus Scallabitanus, which includes the district of Olisipo.[72] Edmondson suggests that this shows strong ties between parents and children, which continued even after the latter married.[73] The fact that an unusually robust rate of descending relations occurs in some regions but not in others cannot be a product of romanization, since at Rome itself the rates of descending relations, as tabulated by Saller and Shaw, are only 31% among the senatorial elite and 33% among the lower classes. Therefore the elevated number of descending relations in our province appears to reflect strong parental bonds that were already prevalent in the pre-Roman (Libyan or Punic) culture. An unusually large proportion of parent-child commemorations could also result from high child mortality, but this is not borne out by the data from Tingitana. Only 36% of sons (10 out of 28) and 21% of daughters

67 Saller 1987, 33.

68 Dixon 1992, 28, 162.

69 Corbier 2005, 269-279.

70 Saller – Shaw 1984, 136.

71 Based on 16 examples in Tingitana and 16 in Britannia.

72 Curchin 2000, 337.

73 Edmondson 2005, 200-201. This assumes that some at least of those commemorated had married and left home. It is also understandable that a parent might bury an adult child if the latter was single or widowed; or if, contrary to the nuclear model, a young married couple lived under the parental roof; or if a daughter in a non-*manus* marriage remained under her father's control. But there is no reason why any of these situations should pertain to Lusitania or Tingitana and not to other provincial areas, so Edmondson's explanation seems reasonable.

(3 out of 14) whose ages are recorded were younger than 15, so the overwhelming majority (64% of sons and 79% of daughters) died in late adolescence or adulthood.

The extraordinarily high proportion of lateral relations (15%) suggests that the Tingitanan family was a cohesive unit with close bonds between siblings. This could have been due in part to the composition of households; for instance, it was not unusual in the Roman world for adult brothers to live together.[74] The deceased siblings range in age from 17 to 40. The commemorations notably include two by the Roman senator T. Ocratius Valerianus and his brother Q. Ocratius Titianus, *vir egregius*, to their half-brother and half-sister C. Caecilius Flaccus and Caecilia Romana; and one by Valerianus alone to the same Titianus.[75] Amphora evidence suggests that the Ocratii had investments in the Baetican oil business.[76]

The most surprising aspect of the small proportion (11%) of ascending (child-parent) relations in Tingitana is its contrast to the evidence in neighbouring Mauretania Caesariensis. Ascending dedications comprise 32% of the nuclear commemorations at Auzia (a 2nd-century *municipium*)[77] and an astounding 42% of those in the Christian community of Altava, despite the fact that Christian epigraphy generally places less emphasis on ascending relations.[78] To explain this phenomenon, and based on his previous work on the importance of elders (*seniores*) in African society, Shaw hypothesized that social relations in towns of the African countryside "were hierarchical, from 'junior' to 'senior' elements in the population" as part of "an intensely 'patriarchal' and traditional society".[79] The remarkably low proportion of ascending relations in Tingitana, drawn principally from the inland site of Volubilis (an indigenous town elevated to municipal status) appears to contradict this assumption.

Dixon suggests that a situation with fewer ascending than descending relations points to high child mortality; that is, children do not live long enough to commemorate their parents.[80] But the opposite premise is also possible, that many parents may have died before their children reached adulthood and were instead commemorated by a spouse or sibling. A high mortality rate would account also for the fact that most of the sons and daughters of known age who are buried by parents are children or teenagers, i.e. few children who died at higher ages still had parents alive to memorialize them.[81] Most of the commemorated spouses of known age died at 35 years or younger.[82] Yet while many people may have died relatively young, there are two examples of a mother or grandfather reaching age 80,[83] though this round figure may be an approximation. On the other hand, the mortality of young children is notoriously underrepresented in family inscriptions; we find only nine sons, two daughters and one sister between the ages of one and ten.[84]

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74 Bradley 1991, 125; Huebner 2011, 75.

75 *IAM* II, 426, 455, 463; cf. *PIR*², O12-13; Hamdoune 2010; Lefebvre 2012, 203-204.

76 Des Boscs 2019, 376-386.

77 *CIL* VIII 9046, 9049.

78 Shaw 1984, 472-473.

79 Shaw 1984, 479-480.

80 Dixon 1992, 92.

81 Among children of known age, 18 out of 28 sons and 9 out of 14 daughters were below the age of 20. The oldest son is 33, the oldest daughter 24.

82 Among spouses of known age, 9 out of 15 husbands and 11 out of 14 wives died at age 35 or younger. Death in childbirth or in complications from pregnancy no doubt accounts for some of the female examples.

83 *IAM* II, 30, 623.

84 *IAM* II, 311 (=*AE* 1998, 1606), 464, 478, 578, 600, 602, 617, 636, 654, 715; *IAM* II-S, 885, 896 (=*AE* 1987,

Fewer women than men in Tingitana are dedicants in conjugal and lateral relations, yet more mothers than fathers memorialize deceased children, especially sons. This is interesting because in the African towns sampled by Saller and Shaw (Lambaesis, Auzia, Caesarea), substantially more fathers than mothers commemorate children. In the case of Tingitana, this could conceivably be because the fathers died first, yet the figures for conjugal relations suggest that many husbands outlived their wives. A more likely explanation is a close maternal bond between mothers and their children. Such bonding may even have existed in blended families, for there are two dedications from stepmothers to stepsons (*privigni*).[85]

Unlike those in some other provinces, the conjugal inscriptions from Tingitana do not mention how long the couple was married, which, in combination with the age of the deceased, would enable us to calculate their age at the time of marriage. However, as Shaw has demonstrated, it is possible to obtain an impression of marital ages by observing at what age persons begin to be commemorated by a spouse rather than by a parent.[86] In Tingitana, three wives died between the ages of 16 and 18, but there are no epitaphs of husbands under 25.[87] Of course, it is likely that most of these persons married at an earlier age than the one recorded, since it would be a remarkable coincidence if they all died in the year they were married.[88] In general, however, these data are consistent with Shaw's conclusion that girls tended to marry in their late teens, men in their mid- to late twenties.[89] But not everyone married, and even those who married but lost a spouse might be buried by a parent. Of adult children commemorated by parents, the two oldest daughters were 24, while the two oldest sons were in their early thirties.[90]

In three non-conjugal memorials to women (one descending, two ascending), the deceased is identified not only by filiation but also by "uxoriation", naming her as the wife of a certain man.[91] This naming practice was particularly common among upper-class women,[92] but may have been copied by those who emulated them. In one of these inscriptions the deceased is a *flaminica* at Banasa; in another, the husband bears the *tria nomina* of a Roman citizen. The fact that the husbands of these women are not participants in the commemorations makes it likely that they are already dead.

The male-heavy gender imbalance among the recipients of descending (parent-child) commemorations seems to suggest that parents either had more sons than daughters (whether through exposure of girl babies or higher female mortality) or considered male children more worthy of commemoration. Most likely it was a combination of both factors. Epitaphs from Italy similarly commemorate twice as many boys as girls, largely as a result of low social estimation of females.[93] Again,

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1121).

85 *IAM* II, 152, 457. Saller – Shaw (1984) do not discuss stepchildren, but Bradley (1991, 140-141) lists them among relatives "well beyond the confines of the nuclear grouping". On affectionate stepmothers see Rawson 1986, 36 and note 113.

86 Shaw 1987, 36-38.

87 Wives: *IAM* II, 255, 563, 673. Husband: *IAM* II, 663.

88 In another study, Shaw (2002, 231) found that only 2% of Roman marriages ended with the death of one spouse during the first year of marriage.

89 Shaw 1987, 43.

90 Daughters: *IAM* II, 832, 834. Sons: *IAM* II, 435, 658.

91 *IAM* II, 131, 467, 475.

92 Edmondson 2015, 568.

93 Gallivan – Wilkins 1997, 246.

the figures for lateral relations (siblings) in Tingitana suggest either that there were more brothers than sisters, or that brothers were more likely to be commemorated.

In several cases a commemoration is made jointly by multiple persons, such as parents to a deceased child, brothers to a sibling, or sons (*filii*, a term which could also mean sons and daughters) to a deceased parent. Alternative combinations of dedicants include *uxor et liberti*, *uxor et filii*, and *frater et mater*.[94] In two epitaphs, parents commemorate both a son and a daughter. In one of these double burials the deceased, Iulius Clarus and his sister C[lar]a, appear to be twins, as they are both 24 years old.[95]

In three inscriptions the dedicant specifies that he is setting up a memorial to his wife or brother in accordance with their will (*ex testamento*), which in one case is a soldier's will.[96] Fulfilling the conditions of a will, which could include an obligation to erect a monument,[97] was necessary in order to inherit property from the deceased. Roman law laid particular emphasis on honouring the terms of a soldiers' will.[98] But the number of monuments responding to a testamentary requirement may have been considerably greater than those that specifically mention it. Meyer has argued that the legal obligations of heirs "provided the underlying motivation for deceased-commemorator inscriptions" and "could be understood to be present even when not explicitly stated". By this reasoning, the tombstone was not just a personal dedication to a departed loved one but a public advertisement that the commemorator had discharged his testamentary duty.[99] Meyer's conclusion is unlikely to apply to the dedications by parents to dead children, many of them minors, which must have been motivated by genuine affection. However, it may be valid for other categories such as ascending, conjugal, fraternal and extended. In any event, the naming on the tombstone of not only the deceased but also (contrary to modern custom) the dedicant, served to memorialize both individuals. Their appearance together in the commemoration of death was the final expression of family solidarity.

To appreciate the rationale for family funerary inscriptions, we need to consider not only the motivation of the commemorator but also that of the deceased. Whether expressed in a written testament or orally as a deathbed request, the wish for a tomb inscription reflects a basic human desire to be remembered. Moreover, the monument must be set up in an obvious place, such as a cemetery or roadside, where it can attract readership. The inscription preserves the memory of the deceased for posterity, publicly displaying their status and attributes to acquaintances and strangers alike.[100] Thus, for instance, family epitaphs from Tingitana identify the deceased as a decurion,[101] a priestess,[102] a soldier,[103] a *negotians*,[104] or a recipient of

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94 *IAM* II, 429, 458, 624.

95 *AE* 2000, 1806; *IAM* II, 832 (twins). On twins with cognate names, cf. Dasen 2005, 62-63.

96 *IAM* II, 13, 17, 34.

97 *Dig.* 28.5.45; 28.7.6; 29.2.86.2.

98 *Dig.* 29.1; *Cod. Just.* 6.21.

99 Meyer 1990, 76-78.

100 Carroll 2006, 18-19. Cf. *Dig.* 11.7.2.6 (Ulpian): *Monumentum est, quod memoriae servandae gratia existat.*

101 *IAM* II, 311 (=*AE* 1998, 1598), 432, 435, 442.

102 *IAM* II, 440: *[Fabi]ae Birae / [I]zeltae f(iliae) / flam{a}inicae / primae in muni/cipio Volub(ilitano)*. Cf. Lefebvre 2009, 125.

103 *IAM* II, 34 (=*AE* 1998, 1598): *[---] Vellico mil(iti) n(umeri) Germ(anorum) / [transl(ato) ad ad]iu(tandam) alam Ham{m}ior(um)*; *IAM* II, 816: *Annius Afrinus / Abdatis |(sesquiplicarius) al(a)e Ha(miorum)*.

104 *IAM* II, 513: *[Aure]l(ius)] Phili/[pp]us Syrus / negotians*.

the *equus publicus*.[105] Of course, this desire for remembrance would not apply to the epitaphs of young children, who are unlikely to have requested them. In such cases the inscription is rather a spontaneous decision by the bereaved parents to memorialize their beloved and prematurely deceased offspring.

Despite the presence of colonies in this province, it is rarely possible from the inscriptions to distinguish Italian immigrant families from romanized Libyan or Punic ones.[106] In any event, the two groups would soon have merged into a composite provincial society. Latin epigraphic culture, imported from Italy, was adopted by those provincials who wished to appear Roman, as were Latin names. However, clues to the identity of persons appearing in the inscriptions may be detected in the structure of the name, the mention of *tribus* or *origo*, or the use of non-Latin *cognomina*.[107] Persons bearing *tria nomina* are likely to be Roman citizens (or in some cases Junian Latins),[108] but this is no guarantee of Italian origin since Roman citizenship was also given to some peregrines (municipal magistrates for instance). In fact, the nomenclature of those with *tria nomina* indicates that many were enrolled in Claudia, the voting tribe assigned to new Roman citizens from Volubilis.[109] These persons, then, are clearly romanized provincials. Among the apparent citizens with Latin *nomina gentilicia*, six (M. Caecilius Ibzatha, Valerius Manar, Fabia Bira, Valeria Myggyn, Gabinia Babbus, Caecilia Dideiia) have Libyan *cognomina* and are presumably of autochthonous descent.[110] Fabia Bira's father bears the Libyan name Izelta, while her husband's father has the Punic name Bostar.[111] On the other hand, persons with a single name, such as Blanda and Res(ti)tutus, are probably not Roman citizens; they could be peregrines, slaves, or informally freed slaves.[112] A dedicant named Maurus is certainly indigenous, as is the bearer of the non-Latin name Dorgellus and (if the names are read correctly) Renex son of Maral.[113] Immigrants from other provinces appearing in family commemorations include persons from Baetica[114] and Syria.[115]

Epigraphy sometimes enables us to reconstruct family relations among local elites. Previously studied examples include the Calpurnii and Gabinii of Thugga,

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105 *IAM* II, 424 (*equo publico designatus*), 425 (*equo publico exornatus*).

106 The senatorial Ocratii at least appear to have originated at Sena Iulia (Siena) in Etruria, as suggested by the 1st century inscription of *L. Oc[rati]us Sena natus* (*IAM* II, 626; Des Boscs 2019, 377). Another Etrurian immigrant (and his parents) came from Ferenti (*IAM* II, 296 = Bernard 2016, 156).

107 On personal nomenclature as a criterion of identity, see Álvarez Melero 2018, 187-189. On the nature of provincial identity, see Le Roux 2011, 11-15.

108 Weaver 1997, 56.

109 *IAM* II, 311 (=*AE* 1998, 1606), 375b, 429, 437, 451, 455, 457, 465, 478; *IAM* II-S, 859 (=*AE* 1991, 1749).

110 *IAM* II, 424, 440-442, 477, 660; see Le Bohec 1989, 348; Rhorfi 2015, 781.

111 *IAM* II, 440, 448. Bostar is apparently derived from BDŠTRT "in the hand of Astarte": Bénabou 2005, 571 n. 358.

112 *IAM* II, 17, 636. Freedmen sometimes chose to record only their slave names (McInerney 2019, 166).

113 *IAM* II 578, 635, 831; Le Bohec 1989, 348. Cf. *Coelius Dorg(- - -)* at Misenum (*CIL* X 3367).

114 Valeria Bastula of Corduba is commemorated by her son Valerius Severus (*IAM* II, 30), and Mamilia Lucilla of Conobaria by her husband L. Valerius Saturninus (*IAM* II, 469). The same Mamilia Lucilla appears in an inscription from Conobaria (*CIL* II 1294=*AE* 1999, 892) erecting a statue to her son L. Acilius Albanus. On these immigrants see Gozalbes Cravioto 2006, 1342-1343; Morales Rodríguez 2008, 1209-1215; Álvarez Melero 2018, 190.

115 Aurelius Philippus, a Syrian trader, commemorated by his brothers (*IAM* II, 513); Aurelia Sabina of Syria, commemorated by her daughter Celestina (*SEG* 13, 621); Bolanius Sabinus, a Syrophoenician, commemorated by a cousin (*IAM* II, 547); and two other Syrophoenicians, Salutius and his deceased wife Domitia (*IAM* II, 582). On Syrians in Tingitana, see Rhorfi 2006, 397.

the Iulii and Titinii of Theveste, and the Claudii and Gargilii of Cuicul.[116] At Volubilis, a pair of inscriptions attest four generations of the Valerius family. The local magistrate M. Valerius Honoratus, son of Tuscus, is commemorated by his son Valerius Tuscus, who also buries an 18-year old son bearing the same *tria nomina* as his grandfather.[117] A marital union between two other elite families is evidenced in the dedication by Q. Claudius Saturninus and his wife Flavia Germanilla to their 8-year old son M. Claudius Germanus. We learn from other inscriptions that Flavia Germanilla was *flaminica provinciae*, and that Claudius Saturninus was heir of his kinswoman Claudia Procula, *femina honestissima.*[118]

Another family prominent in the epigraphy of Volubilis is the Fabii. If Fabius Saturninus in *IAM* II, 466 is the same as L. Fabius Saturninus in *IAM* II, 468, then it would seem that L. Fabius Saturninus, L. Fabius L.f. Romanus, Fabius Manlianus, Fabia Rusticilla and Fabia L.f. Manliana are all siblings.[119] Moreover, Fabia Manliana is married to L. Pompeius Senior, whose sons M. Pompeius Antonianus and L. Pompeius Manlianus appear in four texts, commemorating their parents and each other.[120] Further Fabii appear in another pair of texts. These reveal that Fabius Izelta's daughter Fabia Bira, *flaminica prima* at Volubilis, was commemorated by her nephews Fabius Crispus and Fabius Caecilianus and by Crispus' son M. Fabius Rogatus, who later died aged 17 and was interred by his father.[121]

But the elite family *par excellence* at Volubilis is the Caecilii, whose members account for 40% of the recipients of public honours.[122] Particularly revealing are the inscriptions of the Caecilii Caeciliani, an elite family in the 2nd to 3rd centuries (**Fig. 4**). Caecilius Caecilianus II, an aedile, duumvir and flamen, and his wife Valeria Manlia commemorate their deceased daughter, Caecilia Caeciliana I.[123] Their son, (Caecilius) Caecilianus III, marries Manlia Romana, who erects dedications to her father-in-law (the aforesaid local magistrate) and to her son, the decurion L. Caecilius Clemens I.[124] This Clemens marries a certain Caecilia Caeciliana II who sets up memorials to her father Q. Caecilius Plato, to her son the ex-duumvir L. Caecilius Clemens II, and to L. Caecilius Fronto, her husband's son by a previous marriage.[125] It is unclear whether this family is related to M. Caecilius Caecilianus of Volubilis, who commemorates his father M. Caecilius Lucanus Caecilianus.[126]

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116 Aounallah – Ben Abdallah 1997; Brouquier-Reddé – Saint-Amans 1997; Lefebvre 2010; Salcedo de Prado 2006; Dorbane 2020.

117 *IAM* II, 446-447. Cf. Lassère 1977, 516-517. As Bénabou (2005, 572) observes, there are several branches of Valerii at Volubilis, one of them represented by the notable local magistrate M. Valerius Severus (*IAM* II, 448 = *AE* 1992, 1943; cf. Lefebvre 2009, 124).

118 *IAM* II, 464, cf. 365, 471, 505; Lefebvre 2000.

119 *IAM* II, 466-468.

120 *IAM* II, 427, 444-445, 467; Lefebvre 2002.

121 *IAM* II, 440, 465.

122 Lassère 1977, 513-515; Christol 1986, 95; Lefebvre 2012, 200-204.

123 *IAM* II, 462.

124 *IAM* II, 434, 436.

125 *IAM* II, 435, 438, 457. Corbier (2005, 277) suggests that this may be an example of close-kin marriage. But there is no evidence that L. Caecilius Clemens of the tribe Claudia is a blood relative of his father-in-law, Q. Caecilius Plato of the tribe Galeria.

126 *IAM* II, 554.

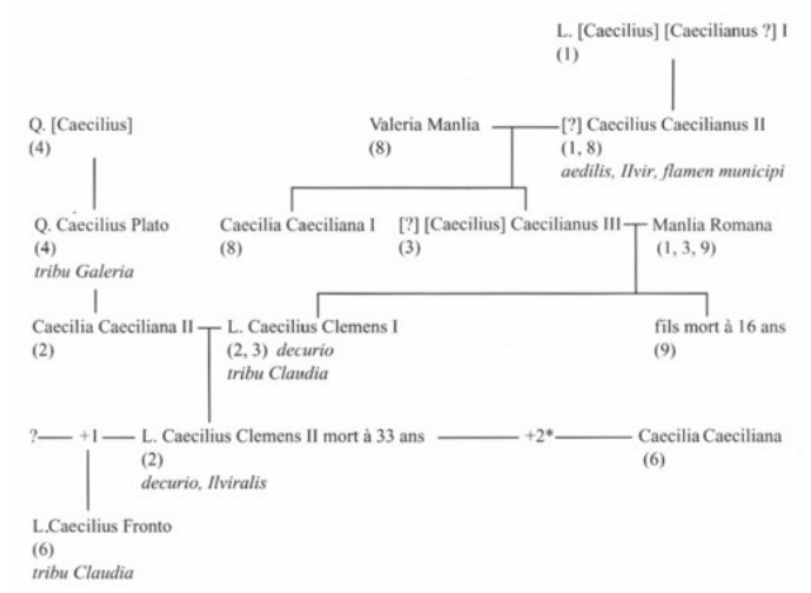

Figure 4. *Stemma* of the Caecilii Caeciliani (after Lefebvre 1993)

Also of particular interest are the inscriptions from Ain Schkour, an auxiliary fort (*castellum*) 3,5 km north of Volubilis and headquarters (*praetorium*) of the *cohors I Asturum et Callaecorum.*[127] This site has yielded two mortuary dedications from parents to daughters,[128] and two from sons to a father or mother. None of the commemorators is explicitly a soldier, though one is the son of a former member of the emperor's cavalry bodyguard (*equites singulares*).[129] The other son, Sextilius Honoratus, bears the same *nomen gentilicium* as his mother but not the same as her *coniunx* Iulius Crescens, which suggests that Honoratus may be the illegitimate son of an auxiliary soldier who lacked the *ius conubii.*[130] While it is not impossible that women and children lived in the barracks,[131] these inscriptions may rather imply the existence of a *vicus* or *canabae*, a civilian settlement outside the camp. Such a settlement has in fact been discovered, just south of the *castellum*.[132]

The death of a family member triggers an emotional or sentimental response that is sometimes expressed in the tomb inscription.[133] Affection plays an important role in the decision to provide a loved one with a funeral and gravestone to keep

127 *IAM* II, 821.

128 *IAM* II, 832, 834.

129 *AE* 2000, 1811: *Bellicu(s) / Bellicanu(s) / eq(ues) ex sin/gularib(us) / vix(it) ann(is) [- - -] / Cl(audius) Mode(stus) / fil(ius) p(osuit).*

130 *IAM* II, 833: *Sextilia Aemilia / coniunx Iuli / Crescentis vix(it) / ann(os) LXX. Sextil(ius) / Hon(oratus) matri pien/ti et pi(i)ssim(a)e or/[navit] et fecit*.

131 Women's and children's shoes have been found in the auxiliary fort of Vindolanda in Britain, suggesting the presence of concubines in the barracks: van Driel-Murray 1995, 8-12. Similarly in Germany, feminine artifacts have been found about the barracks of the auxiliary forts of Oberstimm and Ellingen, and infant skeletons in the latter, presenting "very strong evidence for the presence of mothers and their children" (Allison 2010, 177).

132 Euzennat 1989, 266-267.

133 Shaw 1991, 67.

their memory alive, and this may be reflected in the laudatory epithets applied to the deceased.[134] To some extent these adjectives are merely formulaic; for example, the commonest epithets applied to all nuclear relations are those connoting "dutiful" (*pius*, *piens*, *piissimus*, *pientissimus*). The expression *bene merens* ("well deserving"), frequently applied by wives to their husbands, is also not particularly emotive.[135] One wonders if this is because marriages were usually contracted for social or economic advantage rather than for love. But other epithets, chosen by the person paying for the inscription, may reveal more personal and tender feelings. Grieving parents, no doubt heartbroken at being predeceased by their children, call their sons *dulcissimus* or *carissimus*,[136] while a bereaved mother is *bene amata*.[137] A cherished wife is *innocentissima* or *incomparabilis*.[138] The adjective *optimus* is applied to husbands and wives, but also to a cousin or uncle.[139] A son, daughter, father, brother or husband may be *indulgentissimus*.[140] Sometimes the epithet is attached to the dedicant rather than the deceased. Thus, *pius* and its compounds can refer to a grieving mother, daughter, husband, brothers or sisters,[141] while a parent mourning a child is *indulgentissimus*.[142]

4. Conclusions

Commemorative epigraphy provides an interesting perspective on family relations in Mauretania Tingitana, documenting the close social ties that linked individual members of nuclear or extended kinship units. The percentages presented in this paper, based on a finite number of commemorations derived mostly from one city, can only be considered an approximation of the figures that would be obtained if we had more complete data. However, the facts that descending relations outnumber ascending relations by a ratio of 4:1, and that extended relations account for only 7% of the total, are too striking to be merely fortuitous. These proportions suggest a trend that would probably be apparent even in a larger sample.

Commemorations within the nuclear family account for more than nine-tenths of the recorded relationships, greatly outnumbering those involving more distant relatives (grandparents, cousins, and so on). Although some literary sources suggest that extended kin played a prominent role in family life,[143] this is not reflected in the family commemorations from Tingitana. As already noted, family structure (which could include extended relatives or even non-relatives living in the same household) is not synonymous with family relations, specifically the tendency of the deceased to be commemorated by their closest kinfolk. Within the nuclear family, descending (parent to child) commemorations are by far the most numerous, followed by

134 Cébeillac 1981; Curchin 1982; Nielsen 1997; Carlsen 2020.

135 *IAM* II, 514, 614, 816; *IAM* II-S, 843 (=*AE* 1998, 1600), 844 (=*AE* 1998, 1601). Cf. Rawson 1986, 26, on the lacklustre epithets applied to deceased husbands.

136 *IAM* II, 18, 296, 425, 435, 464.

137 *IAM* II, 523.

138 *IAM* II, 13, 582.

139 *IAM* II, 13, 469, 628; *IAM* II-S, 859 (=*AE* 1991, 1749); *AE* 2000, 1806.

140 *IAM* II, 436+716, 441, 444-445, 448, 475a, 478.

141 *IAM* II, 513, 530, 545, 606, 665.

142 *IAM* II, 456 (mother to son); *IAM* II-S, 889 (=AE 1987, 1114) (father to daughter).

143 Nathan 2017, 334.

conjugal commemorations; the number of ascending (child to parent) and lateral (sibling) commemorations is much smaller. This pattern can be appreciated not only at Volubilis (which provides by far the most inscriptions) but also at other towns in the province.

A diachronic analysis of the family inscriptions, which span the first three centuries AD, detects no significant differences in commemorative patterns from one period to another. Not enough is known about most of the individuals named in the inscriptions to determine whether there are variations in commemorative patterns between families of different social or cultural backgrounds. However, it can be affirmed that those persons commemorated and commemorating include elite families such as the Caecilii and Valerii, Roman citizens, peregrines, soldiers, and immigrants. Moreover, onomastics suggest that some of the families were of Libyan descent. Despite this apparent socio-cultural diversity, the inscriptions do not present a complete cross-section of provincial society, since rural residents, indigenous *gentes* and the lower classes (slaves, freedmen and the poor) are not represented.

The proportions of ascending and conjugal commemorations are comparable to those in some other parts of the Roman world. However, an unusually high rate of descending and lateral commemorations suggests strong familial bonds that may be partly inherited from pre-Roman family structures. This conclusion is reinforced by epigraphic indications that even the Roman citizens in this province (or at Volubilis at any rate) consisted largely of romanized indigenes; and it is further confirmed by the fact that some of the recorded names of the deceased and their relatives are Libyan. Nearly twice as many boys as girls are the subject of descending commemorations, suggesting a preferred social status for the former. Adults were twice as likely to be commemorated by a spouse as by a sibling. The low proportion of ascending relations possibly reflects a short life expectancy for adults and children, whereby the latter either predeceased their parents or were not old enough to erect a memorial to them. The hypothesis of a traditional patriarchal society seems invalidated by the fact that there are only nine commemorations of fathers and one of a grandfather.

It should be emphasized that the surviving family commemorations in Tingitana come almost entirely from urban areas, predominantly Volubilis. Despite the assertion that in Africa "the rural regions and especially the marginal zones were cultivated and thus exposed to Roman patterns of life",[144] there is insufficient evidence for Roman family relations in rural areas. However, this deficiency may be due to a failure to identify and excavate rural cemeteries, rather than to the absence of family commemorations in the countryside. However, it is also possible, indeed probable, that rural folk were less likely than urban dwellers to erect a Latin funerary monument, either because their native language was non-Latin or because they were not attuned to the Roman "epigraphic habit".

Epigraphy cannot provide a complete picture of family relations in a Roman province. The impoverished, the illiterate and the enslaved of Mauretania Tingitana are not represented, nor are the countryfolk or the semi-nomadic peoples living in the hills. Yet the inscriptions are none the less informative about family relations among a substantial portion of the urban populace. They offer us a tantalizing glimpse of a romanized provincial society with close-knit family units influenced by indigenous tradition. Comparative work is needed in the other provinces of North Africa, to

[144] Haase – Steinacher 2017, 224.

discover how their wealth of epigraphic data can contribute to our understanding of regional variations in Roman family relations.

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