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ANTONINE WOMEN AND THE PLACE NAMES OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE*

Summary: The aim of this article is to draw attention to the increase in the number of place names derived from imperial women during the Antonine reign. The author first discusses toponyms whose etymology is clearly confirmed in the sources, followed by those that are more or less likely to have been derived from matrons associated with the Antonines. Special attention is given to a group of toponyms that could have commemorated the Antonine women and that have been omitted from the most important works on dynastic toponymy of the Roman Empire. In addition to approximating the number of place names derived from women close to the Antonines, the author attempts to place these toponyms in the context of the changes in the public presentation of women associated with the dynasty of the 'Golden Age', and to look at these appellations from the perspective of the renamed localities.

Keywords: Antonine dynasty, cities, place names, emperors, women, Roman Empire

KOBIETY Z KRĘGU ANTONINÓW I NAZWY MIEJSCOWE CESARSTWA RZYMSKIEGO

Streszczenie: Celem niniejszego artykułu jest zwrócenie uwagi na wzrost liczby nazw miejscowych pochodzących od kobiet związanych z cesarzami jaki miał miejsce za rządów Antoninów. Autor omawia najpierw toponimy, których etymologia jest jednoznacznie potwierdzona w źródłach, następnie te, których pochodzenie od matron związanych z Antoninami jest mniej lub bardziej prawdopodobne. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono grupie nazw, które mogły upamiętniać kobiety z kręgu Antoninów, a które zostały pominięte w najważniejszych opracowaniach poświęconych dynastycznej toponimii Cesarstwa Rzymskiego. Oprócz przybliżenia liczby nazw miejscowych pochodzących od kobiet bliskich Antoninom, autor stara się umieścić odnośne toponimy w kontekście zmian w publicznej prezentacji kobiet związanych z dynastią 'złotego wieku' oraz spojrzeć na te nazwy z perspektywy przemianowanych ośrodków.

Słowa kluczowe: Dynastia Antoninów, miasta, nazwy miejscowe, cesarze, kobiety, Imperium Rzymskie

* I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of this journal for their helpful comments. Responsibility for any shortcomings in this article rests solely with me. In this paper I use the following abbreviations: AE = "L'Annee Epigraphique" [Paris 1888 ff.]; CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, ed. T. Mommsen et al., Berlin 1863 ff.; EE = *Ephemeris Epigraphica. Corporis Inscriptionum Latinarum Supplementum*, ed. W. Henzen et al., vol. I-IX, Berlin 1872-1913; IGRR = *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes*, ed. J. Cagnat et al., vol. I-IV, Paris 1906-1927; RE = *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. G. Wissowa et al., Stuttgart 1893-1980; RPC = *Roman Provincial Coinage*, <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/> [30.06.2023]. Abbreviations for works by ancient and early medieval authors are mainly taken from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4th ed.), ed. S. Hornblower et al, Oxford 2012. For authors not included in this publication, I have tried to use abbreviations commonly used in the literature.

I use the term Antonine women to refer to the women associated with the dynasty that ruled Rome between 96 and 192 AD. Following a certain historiographical tradition, these emperors are conventionally called the Antonines, although, strictly speaking, Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian did not bear the name Antoninus.

A noteworthy feature of the toponymy of the Roman Empire is the appearance of place names derived from the women close to the emperors – their wives, mothers, sisters, or daughters. Sources often do not provide direct information about the circumstances in which such ‘dynastic names’ were created. Their creation may have been the initiative of the named or renamed cities, client kings as well as the emperors themselves. Despite the variety of initiators, each time a city was given a dynastic name, it represented a special distinction for the person commemorated, since, according to a widespread tradition, being an eponym was very often a privilege reserved for the city founder (κτίστης, *conditor*), who was surrounded by a nimbus of divinity. From this standpoint, the naming of cities after women close to the emperors may be evidence not only of the important role they played in the public presentation of the ruling family but also of attempts to ascribe to them – as part of this presentation – at least charismatic, if not divine, traits. It was rightly stated that ‘the practice of naming cities after imperial women [...] expressed the notion that empresses were the female progenitors of those cities and by extension their patron deities’¹. It should be noted that the reception of the aforementioned naming practice was rather slow during the early principate period. Matrons associated with the Julio-Claudian dynasty (27 BC–68 AD) were probably honoured in place names on six occasions, three of which related to initiatives by eastern client rulers², and only three cases (one indisputable) can be linked to action by the ‘central authority’³. The attention that Tacitus attaches

¹ D.N. Angelova, *Sacred Founders: Women, Men, and Gods in the Discourse of Imperial Founding, Rome through Early Byzantium*, Oakland 2015, p. 93.

² I refer to such place names as Iulias given to Bethsaida (Joseph. *AJ* 18, 28), Livias / Iulias, which was adopted by Betharamphtha (Joseph. *AJ* 18, 27. cf. Hieron. *Onom.* p. 49, ed. E. Klostermann) and Liviopolis in Pontus (Plin. *HN* 6, 11). This group does not seem to include Augusta in Cilicia Pedias, whose coins could indicate that it was named after Julia Augusta (Livia), see RPC I 4006–4011, 4013–4014. III 3318, 3319A. IX 1425, 1427. Cf. A. Maricq, *Res gestae divi Saporis*, “Syria”, 35, 1958, p. 313 (l. 29: Σεβαστή); A. A. Barrett, *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome*, New Haven–London 2002, p. 207. The era of this centre begins in 20 AD, that is, after the death or deposition of Philopator II (17 AD) and the assumption of direct control of this region by Rome. See M. Gough, *Augusta Ciliciae*, “Anatolian Studies” 1956, 6, s. 169.

³ This remark applies to the names *Praetorium Agrippinae* (*Tab. Peut.* II 2. por. AE 1999, 1102) and *Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensis* (e.g. CIL XIII 7827, 8255; AE 2004, 981. 2010, 975) as well as to Augusta in Cilicia Pedias mentioned in the previous footnote. The colony at Abellinum was to bear the epithet *Livia*, according to a hypothesis derived from Livia (e.g. see V.A. Sirago, *Il Sannio Romano. Caratteri e persistenze di una civiltà negata*, Roma 2000, p. 58). Leaving aside the evaluation of the opposite hypothesis, which links it to M. Livius Drusus (for a discussion of this hypothesis and the arguments for rejecting it, see. S. T. Roselaar, *Public Land in the Roman Republic. A Social and Economic History of Ager Publicus in Italy 396–89 BC*, Oxford 2010, p. 323, note 125), it should be recalled that Theodor Mommsen (*Die Italischen Bürgercolonien von Sulla bis Vespasian*, „Hermes” 1883, 18, p. 164) underlined ‘unsichere Lesung’ next to the corresponding epithet. The only inscription mentioning this title, from 240 AD, has not survived, while another copy of it gives the epithet *Lenia* instead of *Livia*. See Ch. Hülsen, *Abellinum*, [in:] RE, Bd. 1/1, hrsg. G. Wissowa, Stuttgart 1893, col. 28.

to the appearance of Agrippina the Younger as an eponymous founder of the colony⁴ suggests that such a situation was seen as unusual in the mid-first century AD (both from the perspective of Tacitus and his sources). In the Flavian period (69-96), the commemoration of imperial women in the names of cities may have applied to two colonies in Asia Minor, but their titles may also derive from Augustus⁵. Previous studies devoted to dynastic toponymy of the Roman Empire have not paid due attention to the noticeable increase in the number of 'feminine' dynastic place names during the reign of the Antonines (96-192). A similar observation applies to the vast majority of studies on the public image of women associated with the imperial family⁶. This situation seems to be a consequence of the omission of certain names in the classic, but now more or less outdated, works devoted to the toponymy of the Roman Empire. The purpose of this paper is to attempt to approximate the scale of the phenomenon of commemorating Antonine women in the place names and to situate this practice in the context of the changes taking place in the public presentation of the imperial women. Finally, I would like to consider what bearing such dynastic names might have meant for the renamed localities themselves.

In attempting to estimate the extent of the phenomenon of honouring women associated with the Antonines in the toponymy of the Roman Empire, a distinction must be made between place names for which the sources provide direct information on the eponym or the circumstances of the nomination and those for which the etymology (and sometimes even the approximate date of their creation) is not explained in the source material. In the case of the first group, literary and epigraphic sources make it possible to identify two women who lent their names to the Antonine foundations: Trajan's sister Ulpia Marciana and Marcus Aurelius' wife Annia Galerina Faustina (Faustina II). In honour of his sister, Trajan gave the name of Marcianopolis to the city that he had founded in Lower Moesia, as reported by

⁴ See Tac. *Germ.* 28; *Hist.* 1, 57; *Ann.* 12, 27.

⁵ According to a certain hypothesis, the titles *Julia Augusta* borne by the colonies Germa (CIL III 284. 285) and Ninica (RPC III 3218-3225, 10287) may be derived from Titus' daughter Julia Augusta (Flavia Julia/ *Julia Titi*), see J.G.C. Anderson, *Exploration in Galatia cis Halym*, Part II: *Topography, Epigraphy, and Galatian Civilisation*, "The Journal of Hellenic Studies" 1899, 19, p. 87. However, according to Friedrich Vittinghoff (*Römische Kolonisation und Bürgerrechtspolitik unter Caesar und Augustus*, Wiesbaden 1952, p. 78) these were Augustus' colonies. The titles *Julia Augusta*, held by Ninica, were linked to Augustus by Stephen Mitchell (*Iconium and Ninica: Two Double Communities in Roman Asia Minor*, "Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte" 1979, 28, p. 430). Cf. B. Levick, *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor*, Oxford 1967, p. 199.

⁶ E.g. see U. Hahn, *Die Frauen des römischen Kaiserhauses und ihre Ehrungen im griechischen Osten anhand epigraphischer und numismatischer Zeugnisse von Livia bis Sabina*, Saarbrücken 1994, pp. 304-305; D.N. Angelova, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

P. Herennius Dexippus⁷, Ammianus Marcellinus⁸, and Jordanes⁹. An anonymous cosmographer from Ravenna, writing at the turn of the seventh and eighth centuries, similarly stated that *Marcianopolim civitatem Traianus imperator pro amore Marciae [sic] sororis suae aedificasset*¹⁰. Marcianopolis, like some other Thracian cities, also bore the title *Ulpia*¹¹, which elsewhere was more typical of colonies and *municipia* than of *civitates peregrinae*¹². In the case of the wife of Marcus Aurelius, it is known from the juxtaposition of a certain fragment of the *Vita Marci Antonini Philosophi* and epigraphic testimonies that Halala, at the foot of the Taurus Mountains, was called Faustinopolis in memory of Faustina II, who died there. Although the relevant passage in the biography of Marcus Aurelius does not mention such an appellation, its author reports that the emperor elevated the *vicus* in Cappadocia, where his wife died, to the status of a colony. At the same time, he was to see to the deification of Faustina II, the construction of a temple dedicated to her on the site of her death, and the establishment of a grant for poor girls, known as the *Puellae Faustinae*¹³. Inscriptions confirming the existence of the colony of Faustinopolis date from the reign of Gordian III (238-244)¹⁴.

Among the sources relating to the foundation of Marcianopolis and Faustinopolis, those that refer, even laconically, to the circumstances of these events are particularly noteworthy. According to the *Vita Marci Antonini Philosophi*, the establishment of the colony was a posthumous commemoration of Faustina II, closely linked to her consecration and cult. Although, as mentioned above, the name Faustinopolis does not appear in the biography of Marcus Aurelius, the establishment of the colony is mentioned, along with initiatives to commemorate the late *Augusta*. According to Jordanes, Trajan was prompted to found Marcianopolis by a miraculous event witnessed by his sister's maid or daughter (*puella sororis*): a golden jug she had dropped into the river while bathing, empty, sank to the bottom and later floated to the surface by itself¹⁵. It should be noted that only Jordanes suggests that Trajan's sister visited

⁷ *FGrHist* 100 F 25: Μαρκιανούπολις. Identical form: Hierocl. 636, 2; *Not. episc.* 1, 39. 493. 510. 6, 39. 7, 39. 8, 39. 548. 9, 459. Cf. RPC IV/1 (temporary nos.) 4319-4321, 4997, 5640, 8356, 9525. VI (temporary nos.) 1362-1706. VII/2 1328-1491. VIII (ID) 27763-27773.

⁸ *Amm. Marc.* 27, 4, 12: Marcianopolis. Identical form: *Rav. Cosm.* 4, 6 (p. 185, ed. M. Pinder, G. Parthey). Cf. *CIL* III 14416. V 892. VI 2808, 32624, 32640, 36764; *AE* 1989, 876. 2000, 1268. 2001, 2159. 2013, 2188

⁹ *Jord. Get.* 93.

¹⁰ *Rav. Cosm.* 4, 6 (p. 185, ed. M. Pinder, G. Parthey).

¹¹ *AE* 2001, 2166. Cf. *AE* 2014, 1624.

¹² Cf. I. Topalilov, *Ulpia Topeiros. The Imperial Nomen Gentilicium in a City-Title in Roman Thrace*, "Studia Europaea Gnesnensia" 2022, 24, p. 88.

¹³ *HA, Marc.* 26, 4-9.

¹⁴ *CIL* III 12213 (*Faustiniana col[onia]*); *AE* 1964, 3 (*col[onia] Faustinopolit[a]norum*).

¹⁵ *Jord. Get.* 93.

the place named after her. At one time Max Fluß doubted whether Ulpia Marciana had visited Marcianopolis¹⁶. According to Hildegard Temporini, on the other hand, Jordanes' account may reflect a local tradition about her visit¹⁷. Regardless of that, Faustinopolis and Marcianopolis seem to illustrate different circumstances in the adoption of dynastic place names. The account concerning the alleged supernatural phenomenon preceding the foundation of Marcianopolis may reflect a tradition linking Ulpia Marciana to the foundation myth of the city. In the public presentation of the emperor's sister, this fantastic story may have served as a further confirmation of her charismatic qualities: in fact, such a character of Ulpia Marciana was already implied by her very appearance in the role of city founder.

The number of place names that can be associated with total or almost total certainty with women close to the Antonines is much smaller than the number of toponyms whose association with matrons important to this dynasty is very plausible, but not directly confirmed in the sources. Among the latter, there is no indication to doubt that the person honoured in the name of Plotinopolis in Thrace was Trajan's wife Pompeia Plotina. One of the earliest attestations of this appellation, in the form of an ethnic legend ΠΛΩΤΕΙΝΟΠΟΛΙΤ(ών), is provided by coins dating from the governorship of L. Pompeius Vopiscus (158-160)¹⁸. There are probably not many years between the issue of these coins and the mention of the city by Ptolemy¹⁹. What is important, however, is that all the evidence suggests that the source from which Ptolemy drew information about this city was produced during the reign of Trajan²⁰. It also seems that Faustina I or II was commemorated in the name of a certain town in Upper Pannonia, which is attested by three undated inscriptions. A certain funerary inscription mentions Julius Nero, a soldier of the *cohors III praetoria*, hailing from the *pes Faustinianum* in Upper Pannonia²¹. The term *pes*, as used here is rather vague in the context of administrative division. It could have meant either a smaller settlement or the territory of some town²². Another tombstone inscription mentions Candidus

¹⁶ M. Fluss, *Marcianopolis*, [in:] RE, Bd. 14/2, hrsg. W. Kroll, Stuttgart 1930, col. 1506.

¹⁷ H. Temporini, *Die Frauen am Hofe Trajans. Ein Beitrag zur Stellung der Augustae im Principat*, Berlin-New York 1978, p. 89.

¹⁸ RPC IV/1 (temporary nos.) 2701, 3521; M. Τασακλάκη, *Η νομισματοκοπία της Πλωτινιόπολεως και της Τοπείρου. Συμβολή στην Ιστορία της ρωμαϊκής επαρχίας της Θράκης*, Κέρκυρα 2020, pp. 382-383.

¹⁹ Ptol. *Geog.* 3, 11, 13: Πλωτινιόπολις. Cf. *It. Ant.* 175, 7, 322, 7 (Plotinopolis); Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 7, 36: (Πλωτινούπολις); Hierocl. 635, 13 and *Not. episc.* 1, 490, 7, 261, 8, 544, 9, 455 (Πλουτινούπολις); *Rav. Cosm.* 4, 6 (p. 185, ed. M. Pinder, G. Parthey: Plutinopolis).

²⁰ See Ptolemy's *Geography. An Annotated Translation of the Theoretical Chapters*, ed. and trans. by J.L. Berggren, A. Jones, Princeton 2000, pp. 23-25.

²¹ CIL VI 2494.

²² See A. Šačić Beća, *Rimske administrativne jedinice na pretpostavljenoj teritoriji panonskog naroda Oserijatâ: municipium Faustinianum i Servitium!* *Roman administrative units on the presumed terri-*

Valentinus, a native of Pannonia *eques numeri singularium* and *civis Fausti(ni)anus*²³. Both inscriptions were probably created after Septimius Severus had formed the new Praetorian guard. The assumption that the terms *pes Faustinianum* and *civis Fausti(ni)anus* refer to a place name created in the Antonine era seems to be supported by an inscription on a certain sarcophagus from Siscia in which Pontius Lupus, *scriba* of the *munic(ipium) Faus(tinianum)*, was buried. An alternative reading of the city's name has been proposed, *munic(ipium) Flav(ium) Sc(arbantia)*²⁴. Such a reading, however, seems less convincing²⁵. On the inscription from Siscia, the sister of the deceased, Pontia Victorina, is mentioned²⁶. The *cognomen* of this woman, coined from the word *victor*, was popular in Pannonia after the Marcomannic wars (ca. 166-180), which corresponds well with the proposal to date the sarcophagus to the second half of the second century²⁷. Given this, and the fact that the inscriptions in question seem to refer to the same locality²⁸, the reconstruction of the official name of this town as *municipium Faustinianum* and its inclusion in the toponymy of the Antonine period seem to have some justification. More problematic is the case of *civitas Faustianensis*. In an inscription dated 22 April 321, a community called this way honoured its patron, a certain Q. Aradius [Rufinus] Valerius Proculus²⁹. Brigitte Galsterer-Kröll seems to have mistakenly identified this city with the Pannonian *municipium Faustinianum*³⁰ whereas the said inscription makes it possible to locate *civitas Faustianensis* on the territory of Byzacena³¹. Considering the date of the inscription and the lack of other evidence for this name, the etymology of the epithet *Faustianensis* can only be a matter of speculation. It seems to derive from a woman bearing the name of *Faustina* rather than *Fausta*. This would support the exclusion of Constantine the Great's wife, Flavia Maxima Fausta (as well as the *damnatio memoriae* that affected the empress who was probably killed on her husband's orders in 326³²). However, it is difficult to

tory of the Pannonian community of the Oseriates: municipium Faustinianum and Servitium, "Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja Bosne i Hercegovine u Sarajevu/ Herald of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo" 2017, 54, pp. 118-119.

²³ CIL VI 3241.

²⁴ <https://edh.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD074367> [22.06.2023].

²⁵ At least in the light of some pictures of the inscription: <http://lupa.at/4310> [nos. 1-4; 22.06.2023].

²⁶ CIL III 3974.

²⁷ M. Šašel Kos, *The Residents of Siscia: A Population Study*, "Epigraphica" 2018, 80, pp. 279-280.

²⁸ P. Kovacs, *Territoria, pagi and vici in Pannonia*, [in:] *Studia epigraphica in memoriam Géza Alföldy*, hrsg. W. Eck, B. Fehér, P. Kovács, Bonn 2013, p. 135.

²⁹ CIL VI 1688.

³⁰ B. Galsterer-Kröll, *Untersuchungen zu den Beinamen der Städte des Imperium Romanum*, „Epigraphische Studien” 1972, 9, p. 124 (no. 353): 'Civitas Faustianensis: VI 1788 [sic] (321 n.)'.

³¹ Cf. N. Lenski, *Constantine and the Cities: Imperial Authority and Civic Politics*, Philadelphia 2016, p. 220.

³² Testimony to her *damnatio memoriae* is believed to be the silence about her in *Vita Constantini* by Eusebius. Cf. H.A. Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine*, London-New York 2004, p. 58.

determine whether the name *civitas Faustianensis* referred to Faustina I or II or perhaps to Elagabalus' third wife, Annia Aurelia Faustina. If the latter possibility could be proved, it would mean that the phenomenon of naming cities after Antonine women transcended the chronological caesuras of the Antonine Age. It cannot be ruled out. Annia Aurelia Faustina was, after all, the great-granddaughter of Marcus Aurelius. Her marriage with Elagabalus was, as Barbara M. Levick notes, 'a splendid advertisement for the claims of the emperor [i.e. Elagabalus – M.J.] to his own link with the Antonines'³³.

Apart from the *municipium Faustinianum* and the colony of Faustinopolis, the other settlements mentioned above, named after the Antonine women had the status of a peregrine community. According to some theories, a woman or women associated with the Antonines was honoured in the nomenclature of yet another colony, Thamugadi in Numidia, founded by Trajan in the year 100. On two inscriptions commemorating the foundation of the colony, Thamugadi boasts the titles *Colonia Marciana Traiana Thamugadi*³⁴. A third epigraphic attestation of the epithet *Marciana*, in the form *Marchian(a)*, dates from the 4th century³⁵. Another title, *Ulpia*, is also attested for Thamugadi³⁶. Of all the colonies founded by Trajan, only Thamugadi is known to have received the title *Marciana*. Its etymology has been variously explained. Johannes Assmann saw it as a reference to the emperor's *praenomen*, believing that a similar title referring to Marcus Aurelius was borne by the colony of Edessa³⁷. Contrary to his interpretation, many scholars have seen the title *Marciana* as a reference to Ulpia Marciana³⁸. Among them, Xavier Dupuis claims that the title of the Numidian colony helps to establish the date when Ulpia Marciana became *Augusta*³⁹. According to Thomas H. Watkins, on the other hand, the colonial titulature of

³³ B.M. Levick, *Faustina I and II. Imperial Women of the Golden Age*, Oxford 2014, p. 152.

³⁴ CIL VIII 17842, 17843.

³⁵ AE 1913, 25.

³⁶ CIL VI 1803.

³⁷ J. Assmann, *De coloniis oppidisque Romanis, quibus imperatoria nomina vel cognomina imposita sunt*, Langensalzae 1905, p. 115 (no. 123). In the same work, however, on p. 131 (no. 143), he states with regard to Edessa, that *a M. Aurelio colonia solum cognomen Marciae accepisse videtur [...]*. Coins of this city having reverse legends such as ΚΟΛΩ ΜΑΡ ΕΔΕΚΚΑ or ΜΑΡ ΑΥΡ ΑΝΤ ΚΟΛ ΕΔΕΚΚΑ (RPC VI 1772 and 7748, temporary nos.) indeed seem to suggest a title derived from an imperial *praenomen*, but this title does not refer to Marcus Aurelius, as the colony in Edessa was founded by Caracalla. W. Ball, *Rome in the East. The Transformation of an Empire*, London-New York 2016, p. 99.

³⁸ For example, see W. Barthel, *Römische Limitation in der Provinz Africa*, "Bonner Jahrbücher" 1911, 120, p. 101; B. Galsterer-Kröll, *op. cit.*, p. 77 (she notes that, unlike Agrippina the Younger and the colony in Lower Germania bearing her name, nothing is known to connect Trajan's sister with Thamugadi); H. Temporini, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-189; U. Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 304 (she pays attention to the existence of *curia Marcia* in this town).

³⁹ See X. Dupuis, *Trajan, Marciana et Timgad*, [in:] *L'Afrique, la Gaule, la religion à l'époque romaine. Mélanges à la mémoire de Marcel Le Glay*, ed. Y. Le Bohec, Bruxelles 1994, pp. 220-225.

Thamugadi referred to both Trajan's sister and parents, and by evoking the memory of the emperor's mother Marcia, it emphasised the ties connecting Ulpia and Flavii⁴⁰. On the other hand, the thinkable link between the colonial titles and the *tria nomina* that Trajan bore by his *dies lustricus* finds some support in the observation that in Thamugadi the *decumanus maximus* indicated the sunrise on the emperor's birthday (18 September)⁴¹. However, the sources do not allow the origin of the title *Marciana* to be clearly determined, and the problem also seems to be inconclusive for linguistic reasons. The epithet *Marcianus* may have been derived from both the name *Marcus*⁴² and the gentile name *Marcus*.⁴³ Although in theory the title *Marcianensis* could be derived from the name Marciana (cf. Agrippina > *colonia Agrippinensis*⁴⁴), in the case of Thamugadi its absence can be explained. Relatively often in the nomenclature of colonies or *municipia*, the adjective ending in *-ensis*, usually placed at the end, referred to the traditional toponym, and this has not changed in the case of Thamugadi⁴⁵. The title *Marciana* borne by this colony could have been a reference to Trajan as well as to his mother or sister. The role played by Ulpia Marciana in the succession plans of the childless Trajan would seem to suggest that the title *Marciana* referred to her, while the proximity of the epithets evoking the emperor and a woman close to him (*Traiana* next to *Marciana*) would find an analogy in the titulature of the predecessor of modern Cologne (*Claudia* next to *Agrippinensis*).

In their works on the toponymy of the Roman Empire, J. Assmann, and B. Galsterer – Kröll have omitted certain names whose derivation from women associated with the Antonines cannot be ruled out. Édouard Cat suggested that the name of the Mitidja plain, near Algiers, came from Salonia Matidia (68-119), a niece

⁴⁰ See Th.H. Watkins, *Colonia Marciana Traiana Thamugadi: Dynasticism in Numidia*, "Phoenix" 2002, 56, pp. 84, 93-94, 96.

⁴¹ See W. Barthel, *op. cit.*, p. 107-111; Th.H. Watkins, *op. cit.*, p. 87; J.A. Dufton, *The long-term aspects of urban foundation in the cities of Roman Africa Proconsularis*, [in:] *Rome and the Colonial City. Rethinking the Grid*, ed. S. Greaves, A. Wallace-Hadrill, Oxford-Havertown 2022, p. 194.

⁴² E.g. AE 1929, 158: [s]odalis Marcian[us] Antoninianus [Comm]odian[us Helvianus] Severianus Ant[onini]anus.

⁴³ E.g. Cic. *Balb.* 39 (*foedus Marcianum*); Liv. 25, 12, 1 (*carmina Marciana*).

⁴⁴ Cf. Plin. *HN* 4, 106; Tac. *Germ.* 28. *Hist.* 1, 56, 2. 1, 57, 1. 4, 20, 4. 4, 25, 3. 4, 55, 3. 4, 56, 2. 4, 63, 1. *Ann.* 12, 27, 1. Suet. *Vit.* 10, 3;

⁴⁵ In my opinion, this is illustrated by the example of the aforementioned *colonia Agrippinensis*, which is also referred to in the sources as *colonia Agrippina* (Amm. Marc. 15, 8, 19; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33, 12. 37, 3). Although the sources explicitly document this appellation for the 4th century, it is noteworthy that Tacitus (*Germ.* 28) refers to the inhabitants of the colony as *Agrippinenses*. E.g. cf. CIL III 386b (Philippi > [colonia] Philippensis; Apri > [colonia] Aprensis); AE 1966, 74 (*Romula* [Hispalis] > [colonia] Romulensis) AE 1982, 520 (*Italica* > [colonia] Italicensis); AE 2014, 635 (*Olaurum* > [municipium] Olaurense). Dynastic titles ending in *-ensis*, which certainly did not suggest the replacement of traditional toponyms (such as *Neronensis* for Puteoli, CIL X 5369), are much rarer.

of Trajan, who owned land there⁴⁶. He based his hypothesis mainly on the inscription that records the demarcation of the boundaries of the *coloni Kasturenses* under Severus Alexander. The inscription in question mentions a place called *Matidia*⁴⁷. According to him, Salonia Matidia could also have given her name to the nearby *Paccianis Matidiae*⁴⁸ mentioned in the *Itinerarium Antonini* (and in the form *Paccianis Matize* in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*⁴⁹), as well as to *Rusibricari Matidiae* (also mentioned in the latter source⁵⁰). Another inscription from the first half of the third century documents the restoration of the old border *inter kastel[l(um)] Gurolensem et Medianum [M]atidianum Alexandrianum Tiliruensem*⁵¹. Salonia Matidia or her daughter Mindia Matidia (85 – after 161) may have given her name to a place in Etruria. *Liber Pontificalis* mentions *insulam Mattidiae, quod est montem Argentarium*⁵². This settlement seems to be identical to Monte Argentario on the Tuscan coast. It may have been close to *Portus Traianus*, which Ptolemy located on the coast of Etruria⁵³. Although the latter appellation functioned in later centuries in a distorted form as *Portus Troianus*⁵⁴, its derivation from Trajan seems highly probable. The proximity of *Insula Matidiae* and *Portus Traianus* seems to provide a certain premise for the inclusion of the first toponym in the cluster of place names commemorating Antonine women⁵⁵. The name of the Umbrian village of Matigge seems to derive from the Latin form *Matidiae*⁵⁶. This

⁴⁶ É. Cat, *La Mitidja*, [in:] *idem, Essai sur la province romaine de Maurétanie Césarienne*, Paris 1891, p. 114.

⁴⁷ CIL VIII 8812 (the inscription refers to the fields forming the border of Matidia – *agri definitionis Matidiae*).

⁴⁸ *It. Ant.* 18, 4.

⁴⁹ *Tab. Peut.* III 1.

⁵⁰ *Tab. Peut.* II 1. Cf. H. Dessau, *Rusibicari*, [in:] RE, Bd. 1A/1, hrsg. W. Kroll, K. Witte, Stuttgart 1914, col. 1237.

⁵¹ AE 1907, 5.

⁵² *Lib. Pontific.*, p. 183, ed. L. Duchesne.

⁵³ Ptol. 3, 1, 4. This *Portus Traianus* is different from the one mouth of the Tiber or Centumcellae. L. Banti, *Traianus Portus*, [in:] RE, Bd. 6A/2, hrsg. W. Kroll, K. Mittelhaus, Stuttgart 1914, col. 2091.

⁵⁴ Cf. F. Inghirami, *Storia della Toscana compilata ed in sette epoche distribuita*, vol. 3, Fiesole 1841, p. 69; L. Banti, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

⁵⁵ Frank E. Brown (*Cosa I: History and Topography*, “Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome” 1951, 20, p. 21) has suggested that place names such as *insula Matidiae* might reflect the economic changes taking place in the second and third centuries on the Etrurian coast (the acquisition of large landed estates by the imperial *ratio privata*).

⁵⁶ See G. Uggeri, *L'insediamento rurale dell'Umbria Meridionale tra Tardoantico ed Altomedioevo*, [in:] *L'Umbria meridionale fra tardo-antico ed altomedioevo. Atti del convegno di studio. Acquasparta 6-7 maggio 1989*, ed. G. Binazzi, Assisi 1991, p. 15. It is sometimes supposed that the two water pipes (*fistulae aquariae*) with the inscription *Matidiae aug(ustae) fil(iae)* found on the Borghese family estate between Monte Porzio Catone and Frascati attest to the existence of a villa there belonging to a matron associated with the imperial family. CIL XV 7822. Cf. T. Ashby, *The Classical Topography of the Roman Campagna: Part I*, “Papers of the British School at Rome” 1902, 1, p. 244 (note 1); M. Bonanno Aravantinos, *La villa di “Matidia” nell’area dell’Osservatorio Astronomico a Monte Porzio Catone: nuovi dati dalle recenti indagini archeologiche*, [in:] *Residenze imperiali nel Lazio. Atti della Giornata di studio*.

appellation may also have referred to the estate of one of the two famous women called Matidia, and over time (if not from the beginning) came to function as a place name.

Another toponym, possibly derived from the woman associated with the Antonines, is particularly interesting. Hierocles lists a city in Pisidia called Sabinai (Σαβίνοι)⁵⁷. Walther Ruge noted that this name was perhaps confirmed in a distorted form (*ethnicon* Δαβενός) on a certain inscription from Saghir (Syria), but he emphasised the uncertainty of this view⁵⁸. The connection between Δαβενός and Σαβίνοι was once advocated by William M. Ramsay, who argued that ‘Sabinai ought to be corrected Dabinai’⁵⁹, but ultimately concluded that the name Σαβίνοι could be related to Vibia Sabina⁶⁰. However, he did not elaborate on this view. Arnold H. M. Jones has also considered the derivation of Sabinai from Vibia Sabina⁶¹. Although the testimony of Hierocles is late (6th century) in relation to the age of the Antonines, and the name Σαβίνοι is not confirmed by other ancient itineraries or geographical works, some indications do not allow us to exclude the commemoration of Hadrian’s wife in the name of the above-mentioned Pisidian city. Apart from the other examples of her commemoration in Pisidia⁶², a clue to the etymology of this name seems to lie in the passage of *Synecdemus* where Sabinai are mentioned. It cannot be excluded that the origin of this toponym is somehow related to another place name mentioned in the Pisidian list of Hierocles. This remark does not refer to the Limenai (Λιμέναι)⁶³ immediately preceding them in this list, but to the Hadrianopolis⁶⁴ mentioned six items further on. The Pisidian Hadrianopolis was also known as Hadrianoi (Ἀδριανοί)⁶⁵.

Monte Porzio Catone, 3 aprile 2004, a cura di M. Valenti, Monte Porzio Catone 2008, pp. 91-100. In this case, however, there is no trace that the existence of this estate had any influence on the formation of the place name. The name *Pons Matidiae* (AE 1975, 137) can hardly be considered a place name, although in the Antonines’ era it happened that the noun *pons* was part of a (*de facto*) dynastic place name (cf. *Pons Aelius*).

⁵⁷ Hierocl. 672, 5.

⁵⁸ W. Ruge, *Sabinai*, [in:] RE, Bd. 1A/2, hrsg. W. Kroll, K. Witte, Stuttgart 1920, col. 1570.

⁵⁹ W.M. Ramsay, *The Graeco-Roman Civilisation in Pisidia*, “The Journal of Hellenic Studies” 1883, 4, p. 40. Cf. *Idem*, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, London 1890, p. 412.

⁶⁰ *Idem*, *Res Anatolicae III: Ecce iterum Pisidia*, “Klio. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte” 1930, 23, p. 251.

⁶¹ A.H.M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, Oxford 1971, p. 415 (note 35). The author suggests that the name in question was originally that of a village, albeit one with a certain degree of autonomy, which was elevated to the status of a city ‘at the end of the third century’. *Ibidem*, p. 141.

⁶² Such as the statue on the agora at Cremna, the inscription at one of the gates of Antioch of Pisidia dedicated to her and Hadrian, or the remains of a statue from Sagalassus, which is believed to have depicted her. See P. Talloen, *Cult in Pisidia: Religious Practice in Southwestern Asia Minor from Alexander the Great to the Rise of Christianity*, Turnhout 2015, pp. 163-165, 223; T.C. Brennan, *Sabina Augusta: An Imperial Journey*, Oxford 2018, p. 139.

⁶³ Hierocl. 672, 4.

⁶⁴ Hierocl. 672, 11 (Ἀδριανούπολις).

⁶⁵ See G.E. Bean, *Notes and Inscriptions from Pisidia: Part I*, “Anatolian Studies” 1959, 9, p. 110 (inscription no. 80). Cf. A. S. Hall, *The Milyadeis and Their Territory*, “Anatolian Studies” 1986, 36, p. 141; *Barrington Atlas of Greek and Roman World*, ed. R.J.A. Talbert, Princeton 2000, p. 999.

The latter toponym is linked to Hadrian not only by its etymology but also by the toponymic pattern used in its creation. It was based on the plural nominative of the founder's (or eponymous patron's) name. This type of place name is relatively rare among Roman dynastic place names and is particularly characteristic of the toponymy associated with Hadrian. Apart from Pisidia, Hadrianoi are confirmed in Mysia⁶⁶, on the island of Cephalonia⁶⁷, and there is reason to believe that, as in the case of the city in Pisidia, both Hadrianopolis and Hadrianoi⁶⁸ were referred to Palmyra. The name Hadrianoi is the plural nominative of the Greek version of Hadrian's *cognomen*, while Σαβίναί is the same grammatical case of the *cognomen* borne by his spouse. It is, therefore, possible that in Pisidia, similarly constructed place names borne by two nearby urban centres referred to both the emperor and the woman close to him. An analogous situation can be found in other parts of the Empire during the Antonine period: in addition to the Etrurian coast (*Portus Traianus – Insula Matidiae*), it also occurred in Thrace (*Traianopolis – Plotinopolis*). Despite his relationship with Antinous, Hadrian publicly emphasised the importance of the women associated with the dynasty (it was even jokingly remarked that he was perhaps the only man in history to make his mother-in-law a goddess⁶⁹). The philhellenism of this emperor also found expression in the restoration of old Greek place names and the creation of new ones based on patterns having illustrious traditions. He restored the old name Mantinea to Antigoneia, while the cities called Hadrianoi seem to refer to the toponymic pattern used by Philip II to create a dynastic appellation when he founded Philippi (Φίλιπποι). Moreover, the name Sabinai may have brought to mind perhaps the most famous Greek toponym – Athens. (Ἀθῆναι – Σαβίναί).

It is not possible, on the basis of the sources available, to determine the exact number of toponyms associated with Antonine women. However, in the light of what has been said, there seems to be no doubt that the number of toponyms derived from the women associated with the Antonines, the dynasty that ruled for 96 years (96-192), was higher than the number of analogous place names created during the 122 years from Augustus to Domitian (27 BC–96 AD). The former may have comprised up to 13 localities, including two colonies and one *municipium*, as well as ten peregrine

⁶⁶ Hadrianoi pros Olympon (Adranos): RPC III 1602-1618 A. IV/2 502-507, 11306; Philostr. *VS* 9 [581]; *Not. episc.* 1, 197. 3, 131. 8, 208. 9, 117. 10, 256. 13, 115; Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 7, 36; Hierocl. 693, 5; Georg. Cypr. 197.

⁶⁷ Hadrianoi (Panormos): AE 2013, 1399.

⁶⁸ In addition to the form of Hadrianopolis (Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Πάλμυρα. Cf. EE V 705 a) or Hadriana Palmyra (Ἀδριανὰ Πάλμυρα, AE 1941, 80. Cf. IGRR III 1056) *Hadriani Palmyreni* (AE 1939, 180. Cf. IGRR I 1169; CIL VIII 2505; EE V 1275) are confirmed.

⁶⁹ F. Coarelli, *Rome and Environs: An Archaeological Guide*, trans. by J.J. Clauss, D.P. Harmon, Berkeley-London 2007, p. 291.

communities or settlements whose legal status is unclear. The toponyms discussed, their variants, location, and references in the sources are listed in Table 1⁷⁰.

The geography of the toponyms listed in Table 1 is noteworthy: three appellations were borne by the urban centres in the Balkans (Marcianopolis in Lower Moesia, Plotinopolis in Thrace, and the *municipium Faustinianum* in Upper Pannonia), two toponyms refer to the cities in Asia Minor (Faustinopolis in Cappadocia and Sabinai in Pisidia), and two place names are found in Italy (*Insula Matidiae* on the Etrurian coast and modern Matigge in Umbria), while as many as six toponyms refer to African localities (*Matidia*, *Paccianis Matidiae*, *Rusubricari Matidiae* and *castellum Medianum Matidianum Alexandrianum Tiliruense* in Mauretania Caesariensis, *colonia Marciana Ulpia Traiana Thamugadi* in Numidia and *civitas Faustianensis* in Africa proconsularis). At least some of the places, located in Africa and Italy, seem to denote estates of wealthy matrons linked to the Antonines, Salonia Matidia or her daughter Mindia Matidia. In addition to the aforementioned Mindia Matidia, Trajan's mother Marcia, and Marcus Aurelius' great-granddaughter Annia Aurelia Faustina, the group of women associated with the Antonines who gave their names to the various settlements of the Roman Empire could include Ulpia Marciana, Salonia Matidia, Pompeia Plotina, Vibia Sabina, Faustina I and Faustina II. These six women share certain characteristics. All were consecrated posthumously (in 112, 119, 123, 136 or 137, 140 and 175, or 176 respectively) and all bore the title of *Augusta*⁷¹. The written sources provide relatively little information about them, but the coins, inscriptions, statues, and buildings associated with them suggest a great dynamism in their public presentation. In the light of the considerations presented in this article, at least one more important indication of their prominence can be added: their commemoration in the toponymy of the Roman Empire. It seems that the increase in the number of place names related to the imperial women under the Antonines reflects the significant role played by these matrons in the dynastic plans of the emperors. Their peculiar position becomes understandable when we consider the situations in which four successive emperors (Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius) had no natural male offspring or were childless, in which the succession plans took into account the offspring of the emperor's sister (Ulpia Marciana) or in which an *Augusta* ensured the transmission of imperial power by bearing several children for the emperor (Faustina II). In these circumstances, the

⁷⁰ With the exception of toponyms nos. 5, 7 and 10, the locations in Table 1 are based on the *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (see footnote 67). For the location of the *municipium Faustinianum*, see A. Šačić Beća, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

⁷¹ See A. Kolb, *Augustae-Zielsetzung, Definition, prosopographischer Überblick*, [in:] *Augustae. Machtbewusste Frauen am römischen Kaiserhof? Herrschaftsstrukturen und Herrschaftspraxis. II: Akten der Tagung in Zürich 18-20.9.2008*, Berlin 2010, s. 25-28. In addition to these six women, only Commodus' elder sister Annia Aurelia Galeria Lucilla and his wife Bruttia Crispina were given the title *Augusta* between 96 and 192 AD.

Table 1. Toponyms derived or possibly derived from women associated with the Antonines, their variants, location, and source references

No.	Toponyms and their variants	Location	Source references
1	<castellum> Medianum [M]atidianum Alexandrianum Tiliruense	Mauretania Caesariensis; modern Bir bou Saadia (Algeria)?	AE 1907, 5
2	civitas Faustianensis	Africa proconsularis/ Byzace- na; unlocated	CIL VI 1688 (321 AD)
3	a) co[l(onia) Mar]c[i]ana Tr[ai] ana Th[amuga]di b) colonia Ulpia Thamugadi	Numidia; modern Timgad (Algeria)	a) CIL VIII 17842 (100 AD). Cf. CIL VIII 17843; AE 1913, 25 b) CIL VI 1803
4	a) Faustianiana col(onia) b) col(onia) Faustinopolit[a]norum	Cappadocia; modern Başmakçı (Turkey)	a) CIL III 12213 b) AE 1964, 3 Cf. <i>HA, Marc.</i> 26, 4-9
5	insula Matidia, quod est mons Argentarius	Etruria (Italy, region VII); modern Monte Argentario	<i>Lib. Pontific.</i> , p. 183, ed. L. Duchesne
6	Matidia	Mauretania Caesariensis; near modern el Mehiriss (Algeria)	CIL VIII 8812
7	Matidia*	Umbria (Italy, region VI); modern Matigge	The modern name of the Um- brian village Matigge probably comes from the Latin word <i>Matidia</i>
8	a) Μαρκιανούπολις b) Marcianopolis c) Ulp(ia) Marcianopolis	Moesia Inferior; modern Reka Devniya (Bulgaria)	a) Dexipp. frg. 25 [= <i>FGrH</i> 100 F 25]; Hierocl. 636, 2; <i>Not. episc.</i> 1, 39. 493. 510. 6, 39. 7, 39. 8, 39. 548. 9, 459. Cf. RPC IV/1 (temporary nos.) 4319-4321, 4997, 5640, 8356, 9525. VI (temporary nos.) 1362-1706. VII/2 1328-1491. VIII (ID) 27763- 27773 b) <i>Amm. Marc.</i> XXVII 4, 12; <i>Jord. Get.</i> 93; <i>Rav. Cosm.</i> 4, 6 (p. 185, ed. M. Pinder, G. Parthey). Cf. CIL III 14416. V 892. VI 2808, 32624, 32640, 36764; AE 1989, 876. 2000, 1268. 2001, 2159. 2013, 2188 c) AE 2001, 2166. Cf. AE 2014, 1624
9	a) Paccianis Matidia b) Paccianis Matize	Mauretania Caesariensis; modern Merdja (Algeria)?	a) <i>It. Ant.</i> 18, 4 b) <i>Tab. Peut.</i> III 1
10	a) pes Fausti<ni>anum b) munic(ipium) Faus(tinia- num). Alternative reading: munic(ipium) Flav(ium) Sc(arbantia)	Upper Pannonia; near the confluence of the Una and Sava rivers (the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina)	a) CIL VI 2494. Cf. CIL VI 3241: [c]ivis Faustianus b) CIL III 3974.

No.	Toponyms and their variants	Location	Source references
11	a) Πλωτινόπολις b) <Πλωτεινόπολις> c) Plotinopolis d) Πλωτινούπολις e) Πλουτινούπολις f) Plutinopolis	Thrace; modern Didymoteicho (Greece)	a) Ptol. <i>Geog.</i> III 11, 13 b) RPC IV/ 1 (temporary nos.) 3480, 3522, 4555-4558, 7644-7646, 7804-7806, 9605-9606, 11164, 17178, 17206, 17226 c) <i>It. Ant.</i> 175, 7. 322, 7 d) Socrates <i>Hist. eccl.</i> 7, 36 e) Hierocl. 635, 13; <i>Not. episc.</i> 1, 490. 7, 261. 8, 544. 9, 455 f) <i>Rav Cosm.</i> 4, 6 (p. 185, ed. M. Pinder, G. Parthey)
12	Rusubricari Matidiae	Mauretania Caesariensis; modern Zemmouri el Bahri / Mers el Hadjedje (Algeria)	<i>Tab. Peut.</i> II 1
13	Σαβίνα	Pisidia; unlocated	Hierocl. 672, 5

emphasis on the charismatic qualities of the imperial women became an important part of the public presentation of the Antonine dynasty. The emphasis on the divine nature of these matrons served to reinforce the earthly power of the men close to them. In addition to the feminine virtues attributed to them, the patronage they exercised during their lives and their posthumous consecration, an important part of the official presentation of these women was their role as divine city founders.

Last but not least, it is worth trying to look at the place names associated with Antonine women from the perspective of the cities that bore them. Although the sources do not tell us directly what significance the adoption of the appellations listed in Table 1 had for the renamed places, they do provide some analogies. Leaving aside names that may have referred (at least initially) to private estates, the toponyms listed in Table 1 cannot be considered in isolation from a phenomenon of inter-city rivalries⁷². This often manifested itself in a 'struggle for names and titles' or, as Louis Robert said, alluding to Dio Chrysostom's phrase for the rivalries between Nicaea and Nicomedia, the 'guerre des titres'⁷³. A dynastic name may have emphasised the links between the elite of a particular centre and the imperial family, but it may also have been an attempt to create such special links. It may have contributed to the prestige of the renamed city, especially if it did not have the status of a colony or municipium, or, in the case of Greek *poleis*, such prestigious titles as *neocoros*, *metropolis*, etc. The titles

⁷² E.g. cf. M. Sartre, *L'Asie Mineure et l'Anatolie d'Alexandre à Dioclétien: IV^e siècle av. J.C.-III^e siècle ap. J.C.*, Paris 1995, pp. 261-270.

⁷³ See L. Robert, *La Titulature de Nicée et de Nicomédie: la gloire et la haine*, "Harvard Studies in Classical Philology" 1977, 81, p. 4-5.

of colonies and *municipia*, derived from rulers and members of their families, referred to civil and administrative rights granted by the emperor to officials, decurions, or entire communities. The two place names in Table 1 are notable in this context. The inscriptions that mention the colony of Faustopolis and (if this reading is correct) the *municipium Faustinianum*, give the name of these places in a form that seems to allude only to a woman. It should be noted that both the emperor and a woman (or women in the case of Thamugadi) close to him were commemorated in the titles of the colonies founded on the site of modern Cologne and (presumably) Timgad. Of course, the inscriptions in question may not have included all the titles of these centres. Even if this was the case, the names *colonia Faustinopolitanorum* (or *Faustiniana*) and *municipium Faustinianum*, which are quite unique among colonies and municipia, may suggest that the renamed communities saw the woman as their main patron. For this reason, these appellations seem to deserve no less attention than the sheer increase in the number of place names derived from imperial women during the reign of the Antonines.

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