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PRIESTESSES' EUERGETISM IN ROMAN AFRICA: THE CASE OF *THVGGA*

■ *Abstract*

This paper examines the acts of evergetism by priestesses of the imperial cult (*flaminicae*) in the city of Thugga (Africa Proconsularis). This community represents an interesting case study, since in the African provinces it is the centre where the highest number of inscriptions concerning this typology of priestess is documented. It seems that acts of evergetism were a customary practice for almost every *flaminica*. Their contribution to the growth and the embellishment of the city was consequently extremely relevant. Also, some of them probably came from families with an indigenous origin that would be otherwise unknown to the epigraphy of Thugga.

Keywords: evergetism, female flamine, Thugga, Roman Africa.

During recent decades, the study of the female priesthoods in the Roman world has drawn the interest of many scholars, who have principally focused their attention on priestesses of the imperial cult in Italy and in the provinces of the Latin West. Among the most important contributions, it is worth mentioning the studies of Wolfgang Spickermann, Anne Bielman, and Regula Frei-Stolba dedicated to the social position of *flaminicae* in the provinces of Gaul and Germany (1). With regard to Roman Africa, the same topic has been investigated by Leïla Ladjimi Sebaï and, more recently, by Maria Silvia Bassignano (2). Maria Grazia Granino Cecere has given particular attention to the everget-

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(1) SPICKERMANN 1994; BIELMANN - FREI-STOLBA 1994.

(2) LADJIMI SEBAÏ 1990; BASSIGNANO 2004. The African *flaminicae* are also included in the book that the latter scholar dedicated to the African flamine (BASSIGNANO 1974).

ism of imperial *flaminicae* from the Italian cities, and Bassignano, Franco Porrà and Paola Ruggeri to the flamine in Sardinia (3). Finally, numerous recent articles by Emily Hemelrijk on public roles, benefactions and evergetism of the priestesses of the imperial cult in the Latin West deserve special mention (4). Basing her research on a *corpus* of more than 200 inscriptions, Hemelrijk has come to interesting conclusions regarding the acquisition of public honours by influential women between the first and the third centuries C.E. Acts of evergetism were an essential factor of this phenomenon, since they were often connected with the use of the *summa honoraria* requested for accessing priesthoods (5). Also, these women were in many cases rewarded by city councils with the erection of statues in public places (6). With reference to the geographic distribution of the *flaminicae*, it is noteworthy to stress that the African provinces show the largest amount of inscriptions recording this kind of priesthood (7). Moreover, although the majority of the attestations concerning female evergetism is primarily found in inscriptions from Italy, the texts from North Africa come immediately after (8). Furthermore, this region records a considerable increase of texts between the second half of the second and the third centuries C.E. (9), probably as a consequence of the great economic expansion enjoyed by these provinces during this period.

Although the studies of Bassignano, Ladjimi Sebäi and He-

(3) GRANINO CECERE 2008. On the female flamine in Sardinia: BASSIGNANO 2010; PORRÀ 2006; RUGGERI 2005.

(4) HEMELRIJK 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007.

(5) As underlined by HEMELRIJK 2012, p. 480. EAD. 2005, pp. 158-159 n. 71 stresses the extraordinary amounts of the *summa honoraria* requested for the African flamines. According to the scholar, this could indicate the singular importance that the members of this priesthood assumed in these regions. ECK 1997, pp. 307-309 does not consider the use of the *summa honoraria* and the donations *ob honorem* as acts of evergetism, since these actions were required when taking the office. According to BRUNN 2014, pp. 71-75, these contributions should be deemed as voluntary donations, seeing that people who run for an office were aware of the fact that they were expected to convert this money into benefactions.

(6) The relationship between women's public benefactions and honours decreed by the city is examined by HEMELRIJK 2013, pp. 74-77. WITSCHER 2013 investigates more in detail the cases represented by the benefactresses from the cities of Thamugadi and Cuicul (Numidia). Cf. also CHELOTTI-BUONOPANE 2008, who have examined the public statues dedicated to women in the Italian cities.

(7) According to the count of HEMELRIJK 2005, p. 140, at least 90 of the 220 *flaminicae* from Africa, Gaul, Germany, Italy and Spain belong to the African provinces.

(8) HEMELRIJK 2013, pp. 68-69 (diagram 1). The 48% of the 363 inscriptions attesting female evergetism collected by the scholar are from Italy. Africa Proconsularis and Numidia follow with the 25%.

(9) HEMELRIJK 2013, p. 69 (diagram 2).

melrijk have cast new light on the contributions of the African *flaminicae* to the prosperity of their cities, there are still matters that deserve further attention. The most important ones, in my view, are: *a*) the comparison between their benefactions and those of their male colleagues within their respective civic bodies, *b*) the role they played in the social advancement of their families, and *c*) their degree of independence from other prominent male relatives.

With particular reference to these three points, this paper will examine the case represented by the city of Thugga in Africa Proconsularis. This medium-sized town represents an interesting case study for at least two reasons. The first is the particular abundance of inscriptions recording *flaminicae* and their benefactions. This fact has already been noted by Ladjimi Sebaï, who observed that in Thugga donations for public buildings, spectacles or banquets were a customary practice for almost every *flaminica* (10). Secondly, the singular importance of evergetism in the growth of the city is a phenomenon that has been underlined by Marcel Le Glay in his study on evergetism and religious life in Roman Africa (11). Later, in a contribution concerning the municipal elites, Claude Briand-Ponsart noted the unique situation of Thugga in comparison to that of the Numidian city of Thamugadi, where the majority of the expenses for public buildings was incurred by the municipal administration, rather than by private individuals (12). There is no doubt that the favourable position enjoyed by Thugga – located more or less 100 kilometres south west from Carthage – greatly encouraged the economic development of this ancient city, whose prosperity according to Diodorus Siculus was known already in the fourth century B.C.E (13). In addition to this, it is worthwhile to note that beginning in the first century C.E. the community of Thugga was divided in two different groups that shared the same civic space. The first were the *peregrini* who constituted the *civitas* and descended from the pre-Roman population of this centre. The second were the Romans who founded the colony and their descendants, who formed a *pagus* that remained administratively dependent of Carthage until the reign of Mar-

(10) LADJIMI SEBAÏ 1990, pp. 668-669.

(11) LE GLAY 1990, pp. 79-80.

(12) BRIAND-PONSART 2003, pp. 241.

(13) DIOD. 20.57.4. On the literary sources mentioning Thugga cf. DESANGES 1997.

cus Aurelius (14). They were normally ascribed to the same tribe prevalent among the citizens from the provincial capital, the Arnensis. The inhabitants from the *civitas* who obtained Roman citizenship, on the other hand, were usually ascribed to the Quirina. This separation, which involved two different city councils with their respective magistrates, ended in 205 C.E., when Septimius Severus granted full citizenship to the whole civic body. The existence of this bipartition for almost two centuries probably had the effect of fostering competition between the two communities and, in consequence, of increasing the number of individuals who aspired to obtain recognition through public offices. In this context, the flamine would have assumed exceptional relevance, since both communities probably shared the same priests (15). Therefore, it is not surprising that the acts of evergetism connected to this priesthood are the ones most frequently attested.

Next, I shall examine the benefactions of each *flaminica* in chronological order. Particular attention will be also given to both their social backgrounds and to the contemporary evergetic activities of their male colleagues, which will be reported in the tables at the end of each section.

The 1st century

Licina Prisca

This freedwoman is both the first *flaminica* involved in benefactions and the first *flaminica* documented in the city. During the reign of either Claudius or Nero, she built a temple at her own expense, supervised the building process and dedicated the new sanctuary to Venus Concordia. Her benefaction is recorded by an architrave that originally was placed above the main entrance of the building (Fig. 1) (16). This inscription is so far the only attes-

(14) On the topic cf. CHASTAGNOL 1997; S. Saint-Amans and L. Maurin in *Dougga* 2000, pp. 307-310; BRIAND-PONSART 2003, pp. 243-246; SAINT-AMANS 2004, pp. 59-68, 86-95, 108-110, 116-129, 160-166 with further references.

(15) Cf. the discussion in SAINT-AMANS 2004, pp. 123-125.

(16) *AEp* 1969/70, 650 (= *Dougga* 2000, p. 67). The inscription has been usually interpreted as a dedication to Venus and Concordia. However, according to SAINT-AMANS 2004, pp. 156-157, the text should rather refer to the syncretic cult of Venus Concordia. The remains of this temple have been identified near the area of the market. Cf. SAINT-AMANS 2004, pp. 315-317; KHANOUSSI 1998, pp. 24, no. 8.



Fig. 1. Photo by L. MOURIN in *Dougga* 2000, p. 67, fig. 40.

tation of a freedwoman who held the office of *flaminica*, a priesthood normally reserved only to freeborn individuals (17). The husband of Prisca, the freedman M. Licinius Tyrannus, is documented in another inscription acting as *patronus pagi* and restoring the temple of Tiberius (18). Unlike Prisca, he does not seem to have held any priesthood. Other inscriptions report the names of both Tyrannus and Prisca without any title. According to these texts, they financed together other important works, namely the construction of a *cella* with porticoes dedicated to Ceres Augusta (19) and a sanctuary to the same goddess in fulfilment of a vow for the safety of their patron (20). From the examination of these texts it is possible to ascertain a few facts about Licinia Prisca. The texts that record her benefactions together with her husband can be dated from before she was elected *flaminica*, since they record her name without any further title. Although of humble origins, after bestowing a series of benefactions together with her husband, she managed to be elected *flaminica*, thus occupying a distinguished position in the society of Thugga. This moment coincides with her biggest benefaction, i.e. the construction of the temple to Venus Concordia. The expressions *sua pecunia*, *faciundum curavit*, and *dedicavit* underline the autonomy of her initiative, which put her in a very singular position. Her visibility can therefore be considered similar to that of her *patronus* M. Licinius Rufus, who held the flamine of Augustus in Carthage and in 54

(17) BASSIGNANO 2005, p. 425. According to this scholar, in the African provinces the flamine could have been open to freedmen, at least during the early empire. Cf. also SMADJA 1998, pp. 976, 978; BRIAND-PONSART 2003, pp. 244-245.

(18) *CIL* VIII, 26518 = *ILTun* 1402 = *ILAFr* 519 = *AEP* 1905, 19 = *AEP* 1969/70, 651. On the figure of Licinius Tyrannus cf. POINSSOT 1969.

(19) *CIL* VIII, 26464 = *AEP* 1969/70, 648.

(20) *CIL* VIII, 26603 = *ILTun* 1433 = *AEP* 1969/70, 649.

C.E. built the market (21), and much higher than the one enjoyed by other benefactresses who lived during the same period. This is the case of Viria Rustica, Licinius Rufus' grandmother, whose name is mentioned among other benefactors in the inscription recording the construction of the temple of Tiberius (22). The same applies to Gabinia Felicula, who donated an altar to the Divine Augustus together with her husband, Iulius Venustus, *flamen divi Augusti*, and her son, Iulius Faustus (23). It is finally worth noting that there are no indications that either Viria Rustica or Gabinia Felicula ever held priesthoods.

The evergetic activities by *flamines* and *flaminicae* during the first century can be summarized as follows:

Name	Typology of flamine	Date	Benefactions	Value	Reference
Benefactions by flaminicae					
Licina Prisca	<i>flamin[ica perpetua?]</i>	late Julio-Claudian age	temple of Venus Concordia		cf. n. 16
Benefactions by flamines					
Iulius Venustus	<i>flamen Divi Augusti</i>	48-49	altar to Divine Augustus (together with his wife, Gabinia Felicula, and his son)		cf. n. 23
M. Licinius Rufus	<i>flamen Augusti Coloniae Iuliae Augusti Karthagini</i>	54	market place		cf. n. 21

Among those who held the flamine in Thugga during the first century, Prisca is the only one attested who donated a public building. In spite of her low social condition, therefore, she was one of the most illustrious representatives of this office who lived during this period.

(21) *IL Afr* 559 = *ILTun* 1499 = *AEp* 1922, 109 = 1969/70, 652.

(22) *CIL* VIII, 26518 = *ILTun* 1402 = *IL Afr* 519 = *AEp* 1905, 19 = 1969/70, 651.

(23) *CIL* VIII, 26517 = *AEp* 1899, 124 = 1952, 106 = 1967, 548 = 1976, 702.

The 2nd century up to the age of the Antonines

Iulia Paula Laenatiana

Three fragmentary friezes from the ruins of the same building relate that this *flaminica perpetua* built a temple to Minerva at her own expense. Both the *CIL* and the *IL Afr* already record one frieze (24). Sophie Saint-Amans has recently published the other two inscriptions, which report on the same text. However, since neither the *AEp* nor other corpora record this edition, these inscriptions will be here reported in full. Several fragments of one frieze (A) have already been published in the *CIL* and the *IL Afr*, but Saint-Amans reproduced them with the addition of some inedited pieces. The last frieze (B) is completely new, and Saint-Amans published it by putting together other inedited fragments:

- A) *Pro s[a]lute Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) [T.] Aelii Hadr[i]ani Antonini [Aug(usti) Pii] liberorumq(ue) eius Iulia Paula Laenatiana ob honorem flaminatus sui perp[etui] - - - templum Minervae solo privato [exstruxit - - - et ob dedicatione]m pago et civi[tati] - - - et decu[rionibus] sportulas et [universo populo] gymnasium et epulum dedit. Curatoribus Asicio Adiutore et M. Ter[entio] - - -* (25).
- B) *[Pro salute Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) T. A]eli(i) Hadriani Antonini Aug(usti) Pii liberorumq(ue) eius Iulia Paula Laenati[ana] ob honorem flaminatus sui perp[etui] [- - - templum Minervae solo privato extruxit - - - et ob dedicationem pago et civitati - - - et decurionibus] sportulas et universo populo gymnasium et] epulum dedit. Cura[toribus] Asicio Adiuto[re] et M. Terentio Gell[- - -]* (26).

Iulia Paula's second *cognomen*, *Laenatiana*, suggests an adoption in the family of the *Iulii*, but no *Laenatii* are so far documented in Thugga. For now it is therefore impossible to identify her family connections. Unlike the other temples that had been previously built close to the city centre, the sanctuary was erected ca. 400 m north of the forum (27). The building project that Iulia Paula Laenatiana undertook assumed a notable importance for

(24) *CIL* VIII, 1472 = 26490 = *IL Afr* 518.

(25) *CIL* VIII, 1491 = 26525 = *IL Afr* 522 = SAINT-AMANS 2004, pp. 340, 342 no. 77.

(26) SAINT-AMANS 2004, p. 342 no. 78.

(27) Cf. the map in SAINT-AMANS 2004, p. 15 (building no. 10).



Fig. 2. Statue base dedicated to M. Aurelius. Photo by Epigraphik-Datenbank Clausß/Slaby.

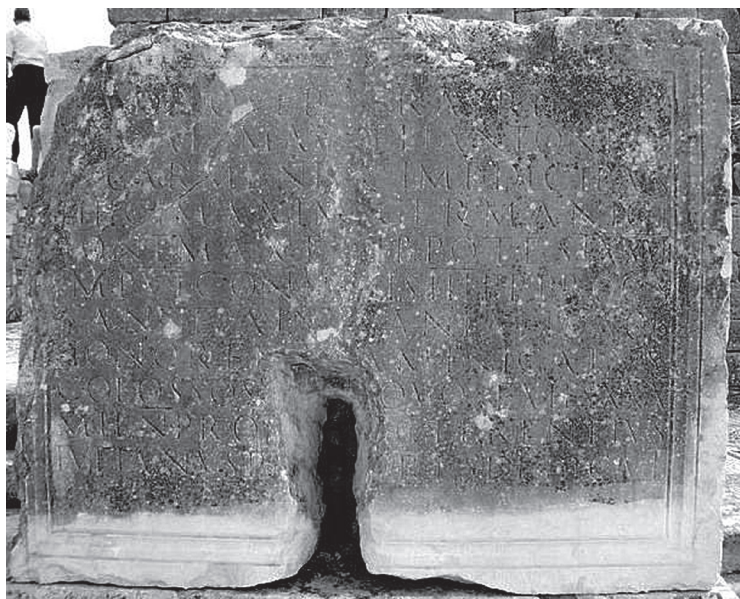


Fig. 3. Statue base dedicated to L. Verus. Photo by Epigraphik-Datenbank Clausß/Slaby.

the city. The temple, in fact, was located over a podium that stood above an extended yard surrounded by porticoes (28). The dimension of the whole area is certainly considerable, since it covers a surface that can be roughly compared to the space occupied by the capitol and the forum (29). At the time of Laenatiana another sanctuary of Minerva characterized by much more modest dimensions already existed, and it has been identified by the inscription carved on a statue base that is still present *in situ* and dated to the years between 83 and 89 C.E (30). The new temple of Minerva by Laenatiana was built only half a century later, since the inscriptions on the friezes A and B report dedications to Antoninus Pius. Both the conspicuous dimensions of Laenatiana's sanctuary and the existence of a previous smaller one are elements that indicate the relevance of the new building and, consequently, the exceptional position enjoyed by this *flaminica perpetua*. The considerable importance that the community of Thugga attributed to the temple is testified by several dedications from the area of this sanctuary, such as a small altar from the ruins of the temple that bears the name of L. Furusius Felix, a knight of local origin (31). This monument seems to attest to the fact that the sanctuary was highly regarded by the local elite, thus corroborating the prestige of both Iulia Paula Laenatiana and her family.

Nanneia Instania Fida

A few years later after Laenatiana's benefaction, this *flaminica* promised (*promisit*) two colossal statues (*colossos duo*) of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus *ob honorem flaminicatus*. The inscriptions on two statue bases document this benefaction (Figs. 2-3) (32). The amount of money that Nanneia Instantia Fidia spent for the placement of the statues, 30,000 sesterces, is one the highest attested in North Africa. With regard to statues

(28) SAINT-AMANS 2004, pp. 220, 340. Reconstructive drawings of this building have been published by EINGARTNER 1992, p. 223 (nos. 129, 130).

(29) Cf. the comparative tables reported by SAINT-AMANS 2004, pp. 215-217.

(30) *AEP* 1997, 1655. About the temple cf. SAINT-AMANS 2004, pp. 338-339.

(31) *AEP* 1987, 1022. The first edition of the text by BENZINA BEN ABDALLAH 1986, p. 86 no. 222 (related by the *AEP*) reports the reading *L. Eurusius* in l. 2. However, *Furusius* is to be preferred, since the family is attested by other funerary texts from Thugga (*CIL* VIII, 26712; *MAD* 431).

(32) *CIL* VIII, 26529 = *ILTun* 1406 = *AEP* 1908, 164 (L. Verus) and *ILAFr* 561 = *AEP* 1914, 176 (M. Aurelius).

dedicated to emperors, it is second only to the sum donated by two other women from Sabratha, Anicia Pudentilla and Manlia Macrina, who spent 38,000 sesterces for two statues dedicated to Marcus Aurelius (33). According to the *tribunicia potestas* of this emperor, the two statues were dedicated in 173. At this time Instania Fida was already dead, since the monuments were dedicated by a *proheres*. Consequently, it is likely that Instania Fida's promise was made around the time the capitol was built, i.e. between the years 166 and 169 (34). Since the remains of a big pedestal have been noted a little west of this edifice, it has been also suggested that the colossal statues were part of the same building project (35). According to Louis Maurin, Instania Fida's benefaction could represent the initiative of a family from the *pagus* (36). However, the indigenous origin of both names Nanneia and Instania seems rather to hint at her belonging to the *civitas* (37). A solution to the problem appears difficult, since attestations of these *gentilicia* are scant. A L. Instanius Fortunatus appears at the time of Hadrian as *curator* of the works for the construction of the temple of Concordia, Frugifer and Liber Pater (38). Another L. Instanius Commodus Asicius was awarded a statue base by the city council after having been *duumvir* and *aedilis*, but the monument is dated to the middle of the third century for its contents, linguistic peculiarities and paleographic features (39). No other Nanneii of relevance are documented in Thugga nor in Africa Proconsularis (40). In a word, it seems that some relatives of Nanneia Instania Fida had belonged to the decurional class, but it is impossible to determine whether the family belonged to the *civitas* or to the *pagus*. Her flaminiate can at any rate be considered more prestigious than the responsibility of *curator* held by Instanius Fortunatus. Also, the two colossal statues of Aurelius and Verus in the area of the capitol certainly

(33) IRT 22 = AEp 1925, 102. Cf. DUNCAN-JONES 1982, pp. 94-99.

(34) Cf. the examination of the text (CIL VIII, 1471 = 15513 = 15514 = ILTun 1379) by L. Maurin in *Dougga* 2000, p. 87 no. 31.

(35) L. Maurin in *Dougga* 2000, p. 28; SAINT-AMANS 2004, p. 126.

(36) *Dougga* 2000, p. 28.

(37) SAINT-AMANS 2004, p. 126.

(38) CIL VIII, 1493 = 15520 = 26467 = 26469a = 26469b = ILTun 1389 = ILAfr 515.

(39) CIL VIII, 26601 = AEp 1993, 1754. Cf. N. KALLALA in *Dougga* 2000, pp. 198-199 n. 78.

(40) The only exception is a funerary text from Thugga that records a Nanneia Sperata: CIL VIII 27084.

had a great visual impact and can be considered as a completion of the capitol itself. Consequently, the prestige conferred by this benefaction to Instania Fida and her family was visible, and it probably contributed to significantly increasing the social status of both the Nanneii and the Instanii. This is well demonstrated by the honours that the city bestowed to L. Instanius Commodus Asicius some decades later.

Nahania Victoria

During the reign of Commodus, several inscriptions record that the *flaminica perpetua* Nahania Victoria, together with her husband Q. Pacuvius Satorus, *flamen perpetuus* and *augur* of Carthage, donated 70,000 sesterces to build and decorate a temple of Mercury with two *cellae*, statues and porticoes. A supplementary sum of money was also designated for the construction of the market square and its surrounding porticoes (41). This is the first case of joint evergetism between a *flamen* and a *flaminica* in Thugga (42). It is interesting to note that the use of money from two separate patrimonies is suggested not only by other plural verbs like *extruxerunt* and *excoluerunt*, but also by the additional sum paid by the sole Pacuvius Satorus for the *sportulae* and the spectacles. Additionally, the expression *pollicitis summis* indicates that they made separate promises of money in order to promote their election. The total of 70,000 sesterces, which presumably included also the respective *summae honorariae*, was accordingly recorded into the *acta*, and the fulfilment of the promise became, according to the law, binding (43). As in the case of Iulia Paula Laenatiana, the constructions financed by

(41) CIL VIII, 1497 = 15508 = 26484 = *ILTun* 1396; CIL VIII, 1503 = 15532 = 26482 = *IL Afr* 516 = *AEp* 1906, 12; CIL VIII, 26485 = 26595a = 26631 = 26635 = *IL Afr* 517; CIL VIII, 26530 = 26533 = *IL Afr* 523 (with dedication to Commodus); *AEp* 1904, 118; *AEp* 1914, 167.

(42) According to BASSIGNANO 2005, p. 410 no. 31, it is not clear whether Pacuvius Satorus held the flamine in Thugga or in Chartage, where he had been *augur* (cf. also WESCH-KLEIN 1990, p. 234 no. 12). In my view, the possibility that he was a *flamen* of Thugga remains the more probable one, since the promise of the 70,000 sesterces was presumably made by both Satorus and Victoria to advertise their candidacy to the flamine.

(43) A rescript of Trajan (*Dig.* 50.12.14) prescribes that the sums of money that were promised by either the new magistrates or those who had sponsored their candidacy must be paid. In case of death the fulfilment of the promise was up to the heirs. On this topic cf. GARNSEY 1971, especially pp. 120-121; HAYASHI 1989; LEPORE 2012 with further references.

Saturus and Victoria were not absolutely new for the city of Thugga. The new market, in fact, was probably superimposed on a previous one built in 54 C.E. by M. Licinius Rufus, the patron of Licinia Prisca (44). The temple of Mercury, on the other hand, seems to be a novelty, and it was located on the north side of the market with its portico in direct contact with the capitol (45). Consequently, the new complex formed by the temple, the market and their porticos significantly changed the monumental aspect of the city and gave exceptional visibility to their financiers. This is particularly true for Nahania Victoria. Her *gentilicium* is surely of local origin, and, although other Nahanii appear on funerary inscriptions (46), she is the only documented member of her family who held a public office. Finally, her prominent and autonomous position in the marriage with Pacuvius Saturus is suggested by the *cognomen* Victorianus given to their son (47).

Maedia Lentula

Although she is the first *flaminica* documented in Thugga during this century, her case must be treated separately. An inscription carved on a fragmentary architrave reports that, during the early reign of Hadrian, her father Q. Maedius Severus, built a temple dedicated to Fortuna Augusta, Venus Concordia and Mercurius in his name and in the name of his daughter (48). Consequently, Maedius Severus should be considered the only benefactor. This is stressed not only by the expression *facturum se promiserat*, but also by *exornavit idemque dedicavit*. This text cannot therefore be taken into consideration as an act of evergetism that involves a *flaminica*.

In the course of the second century the benefactions by *flamines* and *flaminicae* can be summarized as follows:

(44) *ILAfr* 559 = *ILTun* 1499 = *AEP* 1922, 109. Cf. SAINT-AMANS 2004, p. 336.

(45) Cf. SAINT-AMANS 2004, pp. 15 (map of the city), 329-335.

(46) *CIL* VIII, 1527-1528, 15544, 27078; *MAD* 850.

(47) A few years later, a similar case is represented by the *flaminica perpetua* Asicia Victoria and her daughter Vibia Asicianes. See *infra*.

(48) *CIL* VIII, 26471 = *ILTun* 1392 = *AEP* 1904, 116 = *Dougga* 2000, p. 265.

Name	Typology of flamine	Date	Benefactions	Value	Reference
Benefactions by flaminicae					
Iulia Paula Laenatiana	<i>flaminica perpetua</i>	Reign of Antoninus Pius	a) temple of Minerva; b) <i>sportuale</i> to the decurions; oil for bathing and banquet to the populace		cf. nn. 24-26
Nanneia Instania Fida	<i>flaminica</i>	reign of M. Aurelius	two colossal statues to M. Aurelius and L. Verus	30,000 HS promised <i>ob honorem flaminicatus</i>	cf. n. 32
Joint benefactions between flamines and flaminicae					
Q. Pacuvius Satorius, Nahania Victoria	<i>flamines perpetui</i>	reign of Commodus	a) temple of Mercury with porticoes, statues and adornments; b) market place with porticoes; c) cash foundation for the donation of <i>sportulae</i> (Pacuvius Satorius only)	a) 70,000 HS promised <i>ob honorem flamonii</i> ; b) unknown; c) 25,000 HS sesterces (by Pacuvius Satorius only)	cf. n. 41
Benefactions by flamines					
A. Gabinius Datus (father)	<i>later flamen perpetuus divi Augusti</i>	reign of Hadrian	construction of the temples of Concordia, Frugifer and Liber Pater	50,000 HS. This sum was initially promised and later increased.	<i>CIL</i> VIII, 1493 = 15520 = 26467 = 26469a = 26469b; <i>CIL</i> VIII, 26468; <i>AEp</i> 1997, 1663a-b
M. Gabinius Bassus (son)	<i>flamen perpetuus divi Augusti</i>				
A. Gabinius Datus (son)	<i>flamen divi Titi</i>	reign of Hadrian	decoration of the temples to Concordia, Frugifer, Liber Pater and Neptunus with statues, marbles and other embellishments		<i>CIL</i> VIII, 26470
P. Marcius Quadratus	<i>flamen divi Augusti</i>	reign of M. Aurelius and L. Verus	theatre		<i>CIL</i> VIII, 1498 = 26528; <i>CIL</i> VIII, 26606-26608

Name	Typology of flamine	Date	Benefactions	Value	Reference
L. Marcus Simplex	later <i>flamen perpetuus</i> , <i>flamen divi Augusti col. Iuliae Karthaginis</i>	reign of M. Aurelius and L. Verus	capitol (together with his brother L. Marcus Simplex Regillanus)		<i>CIL</i> VIII, 1471 = 15513 = 15514
C. Iulius Martialis Catapala	<i>flamen perpetuus</i>	2 nd century (?)	unknown building		<i>CIL</i> VIII, 26602-26602a
Calpurnius Faustinus	<i>flamen Augusti perpetuus</i>	2 nd century (?)	distributions of wheat		<i>AEP</i> 1997, 1651

Benefactions by *flamines* are undoubtedly more consistent than those financed by *flaminicae*. It is, however, necessary to stress that the majority of the donations by male priests were monopolized by two families, the Gabinii (group of sanctuaries Concordia, Frugifer, Liber Pater and Neptunus), and the Marcii (theatre, capitol). Among these families no *flaminicae* are attested, although some women of the Gabinii are occasionally involved in benefactions (49). Donations by *flaminicae*, on the other hand, seem in general to reflect the affirmation of female figures without the support of prominent male members of their families (the only exception is Maedia Lentula, who in any case cannot be considered a benefactor). Their recourse to the *pollicitatio ob honorem* (Nanneia Instania Fida, Nahania Victoria) is also noteworthy. It indicates that, in the case of the female flamine, the election campaigns were very intense, and candidates were ready to make conspicuous promises in order to obtain support for their candidacy from the decurions and the populace (50). Moreover, considering the probable lack of other donations by Nahanii and Nanneii Instanii (either ancestors or contemporary), this phenomenon is likely to be linked to their need to consolidate

(49) A statue base discovered not far from the sanctuaries built by members of this family bears the name of Gabinia Beata, the wife of A. Gabinius Datus, without any other title (*ILTun* 1511 = *AEP* 1924, 29). Another text reports the name of Gabinia Processa, who participated in the construction of the colonnade around the forum together with her father, A. Gabinius Felix Faustinianus, and her brother, Gabinius Datus (*CIL* VIII, 26524 = *ILAFr* 521 = *AEP* 1914, 175).

(50) According to HEMELRIJK 2005, p. 149, local senates elected imperial priestesses, sometimes after consulting the popular assembly. On the *pollicitatio* cf. supra n. 43.

their prestige immediately after the election. Among the *flamines*, this circumstance affects the case of Pacuvius Saturus, who acted together with Nahania Victoria.

The 3rd century from the age of the Severans up to the reign of Gallienus

Asicia Victoria

An inscription on two blocks from the area of the forum records that Asicia Victoria, *flaminica perpetua*, promised and later paid 20,000 sesterces for golden gates that were placed *ad ornamentum rostrorum* (51). Also, increasing the *summa honoraria* for her priesthood, she donated 100,000 sesterces for the flamine of her daughter, Vibia Asicianes. In recognition of Victoria's civic-mindedness, the city decreed a statue to each of them (52). The consistent sums of money that Asicia Victoria donated to the city allowed her to acquire a distinguished position in a period that was particularly important for the community of Thugga. The sum of 100,000 sesterces donated to the city to establish a foundation is one of highest attested in North Africa, and the most conspicuous paid by a woman for such purposes (53). The statues were decreed by the councils of both *pagus* and *civitas* (*uterque ordo*), but were set up a little later by the *municipium* that Septimius Severus created in 205 (*res publica municipii Septimi Aureli Liberi Thuggae*), who abolished the distinction between the two communities and united them in a sole body. The name of Asicia Victoria was already known in the public life of Thugga before her flamine and her benefactions. A nephew of hers, [- -]ius Minervianus, who had been awarded the patronage of both *pagus* and *civitas*, set up a statue in her honour (54). The text reports only her name without the title of *flaminica perpetua*, which in the later inscriptions represents the apex of her influence in public affairs. Victoria's authority is also testified by a statue base that together with her husband, M. Vibius Felix Marcianus, she set up in hon-

(51) CIL VIII, 26593 = ILAfr 534b = AEp 1907, 160 = 1908, 163.

(52) CIL VIII, 26591 = ILTun 1427 = Dougga 2000, p. 188.

(53) Cf. DUNCAN-JONES 1982, pp. 102-103.

(54) CIL VIII, 26592.

our of her father Asicius Adiutor (55), the aforementioned *curator* of the temple built by Iulia Paula Laenatiana. Unlike Victoria, Marcianus does not seem to have held any priesthood, and he did not take part in the benefactions of his wife. Both the Asicii and Vibii belonged to the decurional class, and the name Marcianus seems to suggest a connection between the Vibii and the influential Marcii (56). In spite of this, the evidence indicates that Victoria played a leading role in her family. The name of her daughter, Asicianes, whose flamine she sponsored with the largest of her benefactions, is in this regard particularly worth mentioning. All in all, the position of Asicia Victoria appears to be quite similar to that enjoyed by Nanneia Instania Fida. Although some of their male relatives had already played minor roles in the public life of the city, both the flamine and the connected benefactions allowed their families to significantly increase their prestige and visibility. It is probably not a coincidence that some decades later the *gentilicia* of the Instanii and the Asicii appear together in the name of a distinguished personality, the aforementioned L. Instanius Commodus Asicius Adiutor (57).

Iulia Gallitta

As reported above, her name appears together with that of her husband Gabinius Rufus. In a well-researched study Louis Maurin and Sophie Saint-Amans have been recently recomposed and republished the frieze with the dedicatory inscription that decorated the temple of Caelestis (58). Given both the complexity of this inscription and the many people involved, the text will be reported here in full:

*At deas Caelestes argenteas fabricanda[s II - - - ex HS - - - mil(i-
bus) n(ummu)m), qu]ae Aburnius Avillius [Fe]lix testamento suo
ab heredibus suis praestari voluit, [rei p(ublicae)] ded[erunt].
Templum deae Caeles[tis Aug(ustae), ex] pollicitat[i]one G]abini*

(55) CIL VIII, 26589.

(56) L. Maurin and S. Saint-Amans in *Dougga* 2000, p. 187. CIL VIII, 1493 = 15520 = 26467 = 26469a = 26469b = *ILTun* 1389 = *IL Afr* 515 reports a M. Vibius Gemellus as *curator* of the temple to Concordia, Frugifer and Liber Pater at the time of Antoninus Pius.

(57) Cf. *supra* n. 55.

(58) *Dougga* 2005, pp. 183-208 (*AEp* 2005, 1689).

Rufli patris ob] honorem flamonii perp[etui] itemq(ue) Iuliae Gallitae matris, ex HS LX mil(ibus) n(ummum) coeptum est inlatis q(uo)q(ue) rei p(ublicae) Thuggensium ante diem dedicationis, HS XXX mil(ibus) [n(ummum)] die dedi[ca]tionis rei p(ublicae) n[u]meratis ex testamento Avilli[ae c.2 V]enustae, ex quorum reditu sportulae et ludi praest[e]ntur. Q. Gabinius Rufus Felix Beatianus, multiplicata a se pecunia ob honorem parentum su[oru]m H[S - - - mil(ibus) n(ummum) ad ornamentum patriae su]ae sua liberalitate constitutis, [p]erfecit, excoluit et cum statuis ceterisque solo privato dedicavit, ludis edi[tis, da]tis sportulis et epulo et gymnasio (59).

After Pacuvius Satorius and Nahania Victoria, Gabinius Rufus (father) and Iulia Gallitta are the only other married *flamines* attested in Thugga. It seems improbable that the words *ex pollicitatione* apply to Gabinius Rufus alone. The following expression *itemque Iuliae Gallitae* is likely to be referred not only to the *honos flamonii perpetui*, but also to the *pollicitatio* of the 60,000 sesterces (60). The two spouses, therefore, would have paid this sum of money together. The example provided by Pacuvius Satorius and Nahania Victoria, who shared the costs of the temple dedicated to Mercurius for an amount of 70,000 sesterces, was therefore followed by Gabinius Rufus and Iulia Gallitta, who offered a sum that is slightly inferior to that deposited by their predecessors. It is not impossible to identify Iulia Gallitta with a relative of the Iulia Paula Laenatiana, who built the sanctuary of Minerva. Thus, Gallitta could have continued a family tradition of service in the flamine and bestowal of benefactions. Another inscription, which is more or less dated to the same period of the construction of the sanctuary to Caelestis, reports the name of another *flaminica* belonging to a *gens Iulia*, Iulia Maxima, who is honoured *ob insignem splendorem filiorum* (61). A connection between Laenatiana, Gallitta and Maxima remains hypothetical. Nonetheless, their names are documented during a period that ranges from the reign of Antoninus Pius to the first half of the third century. This makes it possible that the example provided by Laenatiana encouraged other enterprising women from the same family to pursue a public recognition through the flamine.

(59) *CIL* VIII, 1500-1502 = 15509 = 26458.

(60) L. Maurin and S. Saint-Amans in *Dougga* 2000, pp. 206-207 suggest the same interpretation.

(61) *CIL* VIII, 26628 = *ILAf* 540.

Botria Fortunata

After the construction of the temple of Caelestis and the end of the Severan age no evergetic activities are attested until the second half of the third century. A certain recovery can be noted during the reign of Gallienus, when the city received the title of *colonia*. In 261, as reported by a fragmentary frieze that was originally placed above the internal quadriporticus of a sanctuary consecrated to Tellus, the *flaminica perpetua Botria Fortunata a solo extruxit, excoluit* and *dedicavit* a new temple to this deity (62). The remains of the temple have been identified in a quadrangular building characterized by three apses and located in a very central position, ca. 60 meters south from the capitol (63). Despite the lacuna after the name of Botria Fortunata, another frieze that dominated the entrance to the main *cella* relates her full title, that is *flaminica perpetua* (64). A third frieze that was probably placed over the entrance, reports the dedication *Telluri Augustae sacrum* (65). Since the shape of the letters of this inscription appears to be significantly more regular and older than the one that characterizes the texts with the name of Fortunata, some scholars suggest that her intervention was a restoration rather than a construction *ex novo* (66). Since the cult of Tellus was strictly connected to that of Pluto, who is mentioned as *Genius Thuggae* by several texts and was venerated in this temple (67), it is plausible that a previous sanctuary already existed. However, both the expression *a solo extruxit* and the lavish inauguration could suggest a complete rebuilding of the structure. Also, given the importance that the cult of Tellus and Pluto had in Thugga, her benefaction cannot be considered a minor one. In a particular moment such as the re-foundation of the city, the re-building of a sanctuary connected to the cult of the *Genius Thuggae* must have had a strong symbolic significance, thus conferring to this *flamini-*

(62) CIL VIII, 1505 = 15510 = 26558 = ILAfr 530 = Dougga 2000, p. 119.

(63) Cf. the map in SAINT-AMANS 2004, p. 15. About the structure of this building cf. SAINT-AMANS 2004, p. 360-361.

(64) ILAfr 553.

(65) ILAfr 552.

(66) SAINT-AMANS 2004, p. 198; L. Maurin in Dougga 2000, p. 120; FERCHIOU 1989, p. 331.

(67) Pluto as *Genius* of Thugga: CIL VIII, 26495-26496; ILAfr 550 = AEp 1914, 168. An altar to this deity, ILAfr 549, comes from the ruins of the temple. On the cult of Pluto and Tellus in Thugga cf. SAINT-AMANS 2004, pp. 98-102 (Pluto), 109-108 (Tellus).

ca a prominent role in public life. It is finally worthwhile to note that she is the only attested member of her family whose origins are evidently local.

Between the Severan age and the reign of Gallienus, the benefactions by *flamines* and *flaminicae* can be summarized as follows:

Name	Typology of flaminiate	Date	Benefactions	Value	Reference
Benefactions by flaminicae					
Asicia Victoria	<i>flaminica perpetua</i>	Severan age	golden gates for embellishment of the <i>rostra</i>	20,000 HS <i>ex pollicitatione</i>	cf. n. 51
			cash foundation for <i>sportuale</i> , bathing oil, banquets and theatrical spectacles	100,000 HS	cf. n. 52
Botria Fortunata	<i>flaminica perpetua</i>	261	temple of Tellus	unknown sum <i>ex summa flamonii perpetui</i>	cf. n. 62
Joint benefactions between flamines and flaminicae					
Gabinus Rufus, Iulia Gallitta	<i>flamen perpetuus, flaminica perpetua</i>	reign of Severus Alexander	beginning of the works for the sanctuary of Caelestis	60,000 HS promised <i>ob honorem flamonii perpetui</i>	cf. n. 59
Benefactions by flamines					
L. Octavius Victor Roscianus	<i>flamen [perpetuus?]</i>	195	temple of Saturnus	100,000 HS through a legacy	<i>CIL</i> VIII, 1482 = 15504 = 26498
[- - -] us Felix Iulianus	<i>flamen perpetuus</i>	265	portico in the forum	unknown sum <i>ex summa fla[monii perpetui]</i>	<i>CIL</i> VIII, 10620 = 15521 = 15246a-b = 26559

The examination of these seems to confirm some of the trends that have already emerged during the second century. Considering the absence of other relevant members of their families, Iulia Gallitta, Asicia Victoria and Botria Fortunata appear to have acted with a notable degree of independence. This is particularly true for Asicia Victoria, whose leading role in the family and ben-

efactions made her one of the most distinguished personalities in Thugga. As in the previous decades, the recourse to the *pollicitatio* is still more evident in the case of donations by *flaminicae*. The benefaction of Botria Fortunata indicates the rise of another family of indigenous origin otherwise little known, thus representing a case similar to those of Nahania Victoria and Nanneia Instania Fida. Finally, it is worthwhile to note that, unlike the second century, benefactions by *flaminicae* and *flamines* are almost equivalent in value. This phenomenon should be connected to a general increase of female evergetic acts in Thugga during this period. A Gabinia Hermiona, in fact, donated 100,000 sesterces for the construction of a temple dedicated to the *Victoriae Augustae* of Caracalla (68). However, although her initiative aimed to celebrate the imperial house, there is no evidence that she was a priestess of the imperial cult.

Conclusions

The flaminates in Thugga are almost always connected with conspicuous public benefactions. *Flaminicae* are not an exception to this custom. Their acts of liberality cover a very long period, that is more than two centuries, from the construction of the temple to Venus Concordia by Licinia Prisca during the late Julio-Claudian age until the building of the sanctuary to Tellus by Botria Fortunata at the time of Gallienus. The period characterized by the greatest expansion of this phenomenon stretches from the late second century to the first three quarters of the third.

Although both the quantity and the value of the benefactions by female priests are in general inferior to those of their male colleagues, it is possible to observe a constant increase in the value of benefactions by *flaminicae*. This growth culminates during the third century, when the amount of money spent by these priestesses is almost equivalent to that of their male colleagues. In many cases *flaminicae* financed public works with considerable visual impact on both the sacred landscape and the embellishment of their city. With regard to the first element, the most significant

(68) CIL VIII, 1483 = 15505 = 26546 = 26639 = 26650 = ILAfr 527 = AEp 1997, 1654 = 2003, 2013 = 2005, 1686 = 2007, 174. About the inscription and the sanctuary cf. the detailed analysis by L. Maurin, S. Saint-Amans and V. Brouquier-Reddé in *Dougga* 2005, pp. 33-76.

examples are not only the sanctuaries built by Licinia Prisca, Iulia Paula Laenatiana and Botria Fortunata, but also the temples whose constructions were financed by priestesses together with their husbands, such as the temple of Mercury by Nahania Victoria and the temple of Caelestis by Iulia Gallitta. Other important contributions marked their presence in public life, such as the two colossal statues of M. Aurelius and L. Verus that Nanneia Instania Fida set up in the area of the capitol, and Asicia's donation for the distribution of *sportulae* and for theatre plays. The amounts of money that were spent for these benefactions, 30,000 sesterces and 100,000 sesterces respectively, are the largest so far documented in Thugga and among the most consistent ones in North Africa. It is therefore clear that they were very rich women who, in order to reach a prominent position in the city, ran for the only office they were allowed to hold, a public priesthood. The use of the *pollicitatio* to promote the election to the priesthood is documented in the case of two *flaminicae* running alone (Nanneia Instania Fida and Asicia Victoria), and two *flaminicae* running with their husbands (Nahania Victoria and Iulia Gallitta). Individual *flamines*, on the other hand, use the *pollicitatio* in one case only, e.g. M. Gabinius Bassus. This could demonstrate that in many cases women had to compete harder for their elections.

In this regard, it must be underlined that from the second to the third century the most notable benefactions involving *flamines* were bestowed by members from the two most distinguished families devoted to evergetic activities, i.e. the Marcii (construction of the theatre), and the Gabinii (construction and embellishment of the sanctuaries of Concordia, Frugifer, Liber Pater, and Neptune, construction of the temple of Caelestis). To these *gentes* it is possible to add the Iulii Catapaliani (construction of an unknown building), and the Octavii (rebuilding of the temple of Saturnus). Although some female members of these families were active in evergetic activities (the foremost example is the temple to the Victories of Caracalla donated by Gabinia Hermiona), there are no attestations of *flaminicae*.

On the other hand, many *flaminicae* come from local families with no attestations of prominent male members, and, most of all, public benefactors. This is the case of the Asicii, the Botrii, the Nahanii, and the Nanneii Instanii. Therefore, in Thugga the female flamine and the public benefactions connected to this office played a great role in the social climbing of many nearly

unknown families. The frequent promises (*pollicitationes*) of benefactions *ob honorem* could indicate a notable effort to promote both themselves and their families through the acts of evergetism connected to the flaminiate. In this regard, it is interesting to note that among the North African *flaminicae* such a concentration of *gentilicia* of indigenous origin (Nanneia Instania, Nahania, Botria) can be observed only in Thugga.

It is also important to stress that in some of these families women played fundamental roles. The inscriptions that report the benefactions of Botria Fortunata and Nanneia Instania Fida seem to confirm this fact, since they record neither spouses nor other male individuals from their families. The case of Asicia Victoria is still more interesting. Her role in both promoting the career of her daughter Vibia Asicianes and honouring her relatives significantly obscured the image of her husband, M. Vibius Felix Marcianus, whose last name seems to suggest a connection with the distinguished family of the Marcii.

Conclusively, the agency of the *flaminicae Thuggenses* offers a key example of the extraordinary levels of autonomy, influence and participation in public life that North African women from both elites and middle classes reached between the end of the first century and the third century C.E. Both the access to the flaminiate and the conspicuous benefactions usually connected to this office seem to have represented an important instrument of social affirmation for women from families lacking prominent male members and benefactors.

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