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**ON THE METHOD OF DETERMINATION OF LEVEL OF SOCIAL
ACTIVITY OF VETERANS IN PROVINCES OF THE ROMAN
EMPIRE (THE CASE OF LOWER MOESIA)**

Abstract

Active involvement of army veterans in local governance and religious life of provincial towns and villages of the Roman Empire is generally determined as the ratio of number of retired soldiers who were magistrates and priests to the total number of veterans, known from *all* the inscriptions found on the territory of a province. In the opinion of the author, this approach may lead to a misperception of this aspect of the former soldiers' life and consequently needs to be revised. This paper presents an alternative method of resolving the problem and outlines perspectives for its practical application on the example of material relating to the province of Lower Moesia.

Key words

Roman army, veterans, provinces, Lower Moesia, local governance, magistrates, priests

When determining the place of army veterans in a provincial society of the Roman Empire, researchers usually classify them as a privileged social stratum. Indeed, the respectable – given provincial standards – level of prosperity, exemption from several taxes and duties¹ and, until the beginning of the third century AD, the possession of Roman citizenship itself were beneficial to many retired military people, setting them apart from most provincials. These wealthy people could be expected to have taken an active part in social life of towns and villages where they lived. However, analyses of epigraphic sources yield some unexpected results. Namely, according to expert assessments, the proportion of veterans who were performing the duties of local magistrates and priests in provinces was very small in the total population of ex-soldiers living there. For example, K. Królczyk estimates that in the provinces of the Southern Danube region it amounted to 1.4 per cent in Raetia, 2.7 per cent in Noricum, 6.1 per cent in Dalmatia, 4.8 per cent in Upper Pannonia, 1.7 per cent in Lower Pannonia, 7.6 per cent in Upper Moesia, 7.9 per cent in Lower Moesia², and only 4.6 per cent for the region on average. This clearly incongruous with the notion of veterans as a prosperous social group. At the same time, none of the authors discussing retired servicemen in the Danube provinces attempted to find an explanation for such a contradiction. Meanwhile, it decisively changes the view of the status of veterans in a provincial society, in fact. After all, there is no doubt that at a time when participation in local self-government was prestigious, many former soldiers, who felt superior to new neighbors and pursued personal fulfilment in civilian life, aspired to such positions. If the above data is accepted, it appears that only one in about 70 veterans was an official in Raetia, one in 37 in Noricum, one in 16 in Dalmatia, one in 21 in Upper Pannonia, one in 58 in Lower Pannonia, one in 13 in Upper Moesia and one in 12–13 in Lower Moesia. Thus, it turns out that the privileges granted and the high financial standing opened the way to elective posts only to very few retired military men. However, does the evidence in epigraphic sources offer grounds for such a conclusion? This article focuses on this very question.

¹ A. Neumann, Veterani, [in:] K. Ziegler (ed.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft Suppl. 9*, Stuttgart 1962, col. 1601-1604; Yu.K. Kolosovskaya, K voprosu o sotsial'noy strukture rimskogo obshchestva v I-III vv. n. e. (*collegia veteranorum*), *Vestnik drevney istorii* 29, 4, 1969, p. 122-126; H. Wolff, Die Entwicklung der Veteranenprivilegien vom Beginn des 1. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. bis auf Konstantin d. Gr., [in:] idem, W. Eck (ed.), *Heer und Integrationspolitik. Die römischen Militärdiplome als historische Quelle*, Köln-Wien 1986, pp. 44-115 et seq.

² K. Królczyk, *Veteranen in den Donauprovinzen des Römischen Reiches (I.-III. Jh. n. Chr.)*, Poznań 2009, p. 149.

These percentages for each province and region as a whole represent the ratio of the number of veterans who were magistrates and priests to the total number of all retired soldiers attested in epigraphic material. For example, 9 to 147 for Dalmatia, 12 to 250 to Upper Pannonia etc.³ Of course, these percentages correspond to the known sources, but constitute no more than an arithmetic relation. Meanwhile, in these indices researchers see the answer to the main problem of similar calculations: how typical it was for former servicemen to actively participate in local government and religious life of the provinces? It seems that such an approach is in itself erroneous; it can lead to a significant distortion of an overall picture of this facet of veterans' life and needs to be revised.

A principal disadvantage of the procedure determining the degree of social activity of retired military people lies in the fact that researchers calculate the percentage of veterans who were magistrates and priests based on the total number of ex-soldiers, mentioned in *all* the inscriptions. However, due to the nature of its contents many of these texts cannot include information about the official capacities of the veterans. Illustrative examples in this regard comprise military diplomas and various lists of soldiers who were discharged from service. In theory, any of the veterans mentioned there could have subsequently become a magistrate or a priest, but it is impossible to determine whether that was the actual case. Sometimes the poor preservation of the inscription precludes stating whether a retired military officer was an official or not. In particular, this applies to the cases where the reference to the veteran survived in the inscription, but much of the text was lost, and its exact contents cannot be reconstructed. It is necessary to take into account that the mass settlement of the provincial land by former soldiers often began at a time when there was no municipal organization yet. Inscriptions from such periods do refer to veterans, but it is impossible to expect that some of them would mention local magistrates. I will not continue these examples, but let it be noted that all related epigraphic texts share one remarkable feature. These inscriptions record facts about the retired military on the territory of the provinces, but they may not contain any information about their duties of officials. With each text of this kind the number of known veterans in a province is increasing, while the number of magistrates and priests remains unchanged. No matter how many certificates of this kind we have, the ratio of the number of veterans who were

³ Ibidem.

officials to the number of all the retired military will always be zero, if it is reckoned solely on this basis. Such inscriptions cannot be compared against those in which one can speak of a civil career of the former soldiers. Therefore it would be ill-advised to take them into account when estimating the proportion of army veterans who could actively participate in the social life of a province. In my opinion, this figure should be determined by collating some comparable data. This means that calculations should take into account only those sufficiently well-preserved inscriptions in which information on veterans' civil career is conveyed or could have been contained, whether it is worthy of mention.

If such an approach is adopted, one should consider the prospects of its practical application, in this case relying on material concerning Lower Moesia. History of the veteran participation in local government and religious life of the province has been studied quite well⁴. The percentages of retired military veterans who were magistrates and priests is calculated with some degree of variation by a number of researchers. L. Mrozewicz, who addressed this issue at an early stage, stated that less than 9% of veterans discharged the duties of officials in Lower Moesia⁵. Later, I. Boyanov came to similar conclusions. According to him, no more than 10% of veterans were magistrates and priests in the Thracian lands⁶. Finally, according to K. Królczyk, inscriptions attest to 191 veterans in Lower Moesia, of whom 15 assumed the duties of officials, i.e. 7.9% as already mentioned⁷.

⁴ L. Mrozewicz, *Rozwój ustroju municypalnego a postępy romanizacji w Mezji Dolnej*, Poznań 1982, pp. 93-94; idem, *Munizipalaristokratie in Moesia Inferior*, *Eos* 70, 1, 1982, pp. 306-307; I. Boyanov, *Rimskite veterani v Dolna Miziya i Trakiya (I-III v.)*, Sofia 2008, pp. 265-270; idem, *Veterans and Society in Lower Moesia and Thrace during the Principate*, [in:] L. Vagalinski, N. Sharankov, S. Torbatov (ed.), *The Lower Danube Roman Limes (1st-6th c. AD)*, Sofia 2012, pp. 255-257; K. Królczyk, *Veteranen in den Donauprovinzen*, pp. 143-146; A. Martemyanov, *Veterany rimskoy armii – magistraty i zhretsy v Nizhney Mezii*, *Res Historica* 38, 2014, pp. 11-33. About veterans who were magistrates and priests in Scythia Minor (nowadays Dobruja) see also A. Aricescu, *Armata în Dobrogea Romană*, București 1977, pp. 196, 202-211; D. Aparaschivei, *Municipiul Troesmis. Instituții și elite*, Peuce (S. N.) 3-4, 2005-2006, pp. 191-204; L. Mihailescu-Bîrliba, V. Piftor, *Les vétérans membres de l'élite civile en Dobroudja romaine*, Peuce (S. N.) 3-4, 2005-2006, pp. 209-215.

⁵ L. Mrozewicz, *Rozwój ustroju municypalnego*, pp. 93-94; idem, *Munizipalaristokratie in Moesia Inferior*, p. 307; idem, *Arystokracja municypalna w rzymskich prowincjach nad Renem i Dunajem w okresie Wczesnego Cesarstwa*, Poznań 1989, pp. 159-160, 162; idem, *Die Veteranen in den Munizipalräten an Rhein und Donau zur Hohen Kaiserzeit (I.-III. Jh.)*, *Eos* 77, 1, 1989, pp. 67, 73-75.

⁶ I. Boyanov, *Rimskite veterani*, p. 269; idem, *Veterans and Society*, p. 257.

⁷ K. Królczyk, *Veteranen in den Donauprovinzen*, p. 149.

Books by I. Boyanov and K. Królczyk contain special sections where all known epigraphic evidence of the presence of veterans in Lower Moesia is listed. Today, these lists may be extended, because each year brings new information about veterans. However, these lists certainly reflect the current body of sources and, secondly, the researchers themselves were focused on this data in their calculations, and this must be considered when comparing results. Therefore, one should try to determine what proportion of veterans who had settled in Lower Moesia lands could have been magistrates and priests, leaving a number of inscriptions unchanged.

The section entitled „Epigraphic documentation”⁸ in the book by I. Boyanov includes 222 inscriptions dated to the first-fourth centuries AD⁹.

First of all, let us exclude from this list some documents that capture the end of military service and contain no information about the later life of the veterans. These are 32 military diplomas¹⁰ and the list of soldiers of *Legio V Macedonica*, who retired in 134 AD in Troesmis in Scythia Minor¹¹. *As a result, only 189 inscriptions remain out of the total of 222.*

The next step would be to define the range of inscriptions which relate to the time when veterans had no opportunity to participate in local government or they did not even seek to do so. First of all, these are the inscriptions from the first and the fourth century AD. The first century AD is a time when local government in Moesia had not yet emerged. The only exceptions in this case are the Western Pontic cities. It is worth noting that inscriptions indicating the presence of veterans among the townspeople in the first century and the beginning of the second century AD, were found only in Tomis¹². No similar evidence has been found in Histria¹³, Callatis, Dionysopolis, or Odessos. In the fourth century, many veterans had to act as *curiales*, and their sons were even required to assume that duty under Roman law¹⁴.

⁸ Hereinafter – ED.

⁹ I. Boyanov, *Rimskite veterani*, pp. 313-388.

¹⁰ ED 3, 5, 13-18, 84, 88, 94, 95, 98-102, 108-111, 117, 120, 121, 129-131, 174, 175, 191, 210, 219.

¹¹ ED 158 = ISM V 137.

¹² ISM II 8 (= CIL XVI 21), 170, 172, 176 and, possibly, 169.

¹³ The inscription of the first century AD on the gravestone of veteran L. Campanius Verecundus, published by I. Boyanov (ED 185), has no connection to the city of Histria in Moesia. It was located on the coast of the Istrian peninsula in the Adriatic Sea (see CIL V 8185 comm.). *Consequently, at this stage of the calculations there remain 188 inscriptions of interest.*

¹⁴ See G.Ye. Lebedeva, *Rannevizantiyskoye zakonodatel'stvo o veteranakh* (po dannym kodeksov Feodosiya i Yustiniana), [in:] Z.V. Udal'tsova (ed.), *Vizantiyskiye ocherki*, Moskva 1977, p. 153. Cf. Z. Petrusheva, *Veteranite prez kásnata antichnost*, *Minalo* 11, 3, 2004, p. 28.

However, at that time it seems that the participation in the municipal government had lost its former prestige¹⁵, therefore the retired military no longer considered it necessary to emphasize their involvement in it by making any inscriptions. The fact remains that *all* the epigraphic evidence pertaining to magistrates and priests in Lower Moesia (according to D. Aparaschivei, there are about 230 individuals of this kind) belong to the second-third centuries AD¹⁶. Simultaneously, more than one hundred of these inscriptions can be dated as accurately as particular years, and only one of them¹⁷ refers to the period of Trajan's reign. All other inscriptions were made later. It follows that chances of finding officials among veterans living in Lower Moesia in the first decades of the second century AD, at least until the time of Hadrian's Principate, are practically reduced to zero. On that basis, I think, 16 inscriptions from the first century AD¹⁸, 10 inscriptions dated to the fourth century AD¹⁹, as well as 16 inscriptions dated to late first century or early second century AD²⁰ should be excluded from the list compiled by I. Boyanov.

Before the remaining 146 inscriptions are addressed, it is necessary to determine the criteria for the compilation of epigraphic database on veterans. Of course, it should include all texts in which it is explicitly stated that the person mentioned was a veteran (*veteranus*, *emeritus*, *missicius*, βετρανός, ούετρανός, παλαιστρατιώτης, έστρατευμένος etc.). Designations such as *ex signifero*, *ex decurione*, *ex duplicario* and the like, as well as various forms of references to the discharge from service (*missus honesta missione*, *vixit post missionem annis X* and so on) attest equally definitely to retired military personnel. Finally, sometimes the context itself helps to infer that the person mentioned in the inscription is a veteran. As an example, one could cite the inscription from the territory of the Roman city Durostorum in Lower

¹⁵ W.T. Arnold, *The Roman System of Provincial Administration to the Accession of Constantine the Great*, Oxford 1906, p. 262, 265-266. Cf. D. Aparaschivei, *Oraşele romane de la Dunărea Inferioară (secolele I-III p. Chr.)*, Iaşi 2010, p. 133-134.

¹⁶ D. Aparaschivei, *Oraşele romane de la Dunărea Inferioară*, pp. 319-342, tab. VII-XXVII.

¹⁷ The inscription in question, mentioning a *quinquennalis perpetuus* in a dedication to Trajan, is dated to 103-116 AD and originates from Callatis, see ED 211; D. Aparaschivei, *Oraşele romane de la Dunărea Inferioară*, p. 342, tab. XXVII, 1.

¹⁸ ED 6, 19-26, 45, 46, 49, 61, 66, 67, 218. It seems correct that our further calculations should include the inscriptions from the first century and the early second century AD from Tomis (ED 190, 192, 193), where participation of veterans in local self-government was, as noted, quite possible at that time.

¹⁹ ED 11, 37-39, 50, 51, 135, 146, 209, 221.

²⁰ ED 27, 29-31, 41, 42, 58, 68, 69, 89, 96, 118, 122, 145, 171, 211.

Moesia, discovered near the village of Ostrov, Constanța district. It begins with the words: *D(is) [M(anibus)] / C(aio) Val(erio) C(aii) Val(erii) filio Colonia Ulp(ia) / Zermizegetusa Iuliano p(rimo) p(ilo) / leg(ionis) XI Cl(audiae) p(iae) f(idelis) qui vixit ann(is) / LXXXVIII...*²¹. According to the literal meaning of the text, C. Valerius Iulianus should be considered to be an acting *primipilus*, especially as the epitaph was found near the location where *legio XI Claudia* in which he served was stationed. However, although it is known that some centurions remained in service for more than forty or even fifty years²², it is difficult to imagine that a man of such a respectable age as C. Valerius Iulianus was able to stay in the ranks. Therefore, it is possible to state with a high degree of confidence that military service was a thing of the past in his case²³. It needs to be noted, however, that indirect evidence relating to veterans should be taken into account only when it provides genuinely valid reasons to do so, and some inscriptions from I. Boyanov's epigraphic appendix do not meet this requirement.

As an example, among the inscriptions testifying to the presence of army veterans on the territory of Lower Moesia, I. Boyanov mentions the dedication from Callatis with the following content: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / et Iunon[i] / Reginae / T(itus) Flaviu[s] / Sabin[us] / pos[uit] / pro s[al]ute) / Imp(eratoris) T(iti) [Ael(ii)] / Antoni[ni]*²⁴. According to the author, the dedicator was a man „with Flavian Romanization, which he could have obtained as a result of military service”²⁵. However, it is difficult to recognize such a conclusion as sufficient grounds for classifying T. Flavius Sabinus as a veteran or his direct descendant, especially given that this inscription dates back to the reign of Antoninus Pius.

According to I. Boyanov, Marcus(?)²⁶ Aurelius Flavius, known from a third-century from the village of Tvărditza, Shabla district in north-eastern

²¹ M. Bărbulescu-Munteanu, A. Rădulescu, *Colonia Ulpia Zermizegetusa pe o inscripție din Dobrogea*, *Pontica* 15, 1982, pp. 155-156, fig. 1; *AE* 1983 880.

²² E. Birley, *Some Legionary Centurions*, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 79, 1989, p. 114; L. Mrozewicz, *Victoria Aug(usta) Panthea Sanctissima*, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 57, 1984, pp. 181-184; A.V. Makhlayuk, *Armiya Rimskoy imperii. Ocherki traditsiy i mental'nosti*, *Nizhniy Novgorod* 2000, p. 78, n. 83.

²³ Incidentally, there is no full guarantee that the deceased was a veteran, even in this case. At least, L. Mihailescu-Birliba believes that he continued to serve until his death: „d'un primipile de la *legio XI Claudia Pia Fidelis*, C. Valerius Iulianus, originaire de Sarmizegetusa, mort en service à 88 ans!” (L. Mihailescu-Birliba, *La mortalité des légionnaires en Mésie Inférieure*, *Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica* 20, 2014, p. 177).

²⁴ *ED* 212 = *ISM* III 249.

²⁵ I. Boyanov, *Rimskite veterani*, p. 385.

²⁶ See *IGBR* I² 1 comm.

Bulgaria, could have been a veteran as well. On the other hand, the author himself observes – quite aptly – that it is not clear from the text whether this man, captured by the barbarians and subsequently liberated, served in the Roman army in fact: Ἀὐρ(ήλις) Φλάβ[ι]ς *vacat* Μ(ἄρκος) / ἱερεὺς λη/φθις ὑπὰ (*sic*) / τῶν βαρ/βάρων, σω/θις ἐλθῶν / -----²⁷.

Boyanov's list of sources relating to veterans also includes the inscription from late second – early third century AD from the territory of the ancient city of Montana, where a *princeps vici* Aurelius Victorinus is mentioned²⁸. In so doing he drew on B. Gerov, who believed that this name denotes „a person who served in the troops or born in the family of a veteran”²⁹. The fact that Aurelius Victorinus was such a person is certainly possible, but nothing to that effect is mentioned in the dedication itself: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) et [Iunoni reginae]. / Aur(elius) Victorinus Victoris fil(ius) / princeps vici Tautiomosis / I(ibens) v(otum) s(olvit) m(erito)*³⁰.

Of course, it is not necessary to deny categorically that any of the three inscriptions mentioned above refers to veterans; however, there are actually no serious grounds to consider them to have been veterans. If, trying to identify retired military people among the provincials, one employs the criteria proposed by I. Boyanov in these cases³¹, veterans can be seen in almost all the people with Roman names known from epigraphic sources, which would be greatly incorrect.

In some instances, individuals mentioned in the inscriptions continued or were able to continue in the military service. For example³², I. Boyanov possibly cites the list of 16 servicemen of *Legio I Italica* from Roman Almus³³ because two *evocati* were mentioned there. However, as we know, *evocati* re-enlisted for extra service³⁴, and did not add to the civilian population of

²⁷ ED 222 = IGBR I² 1.

²⁸ ED 12.

²⁹ B. Gerov, *Zemvladenieto v rimska Trakiya i Miziya (I-III v.)*, *Godishnik na Sofiyskiya universitet. Fakultet po klasicheski i novi filologii* 72, 2, 1977, p. 81.

³⁰ V. Velkov, G. Aleksandrov, *Epigrafski pametnitsi ot Montana i rayona, Montana 1994*, p. 62.

³¹ Note that I. Boyanov similarly gives reasons for the inclusion of some of the inscriptions in the epigraphic appendix, dedicated to Thrace (see ED 230, 232, 247, 254, 257, 271, 272, 288, 295-302, 304, 310), and this circumstance must be taken into account, determining the range of epigraphic data on veterans living in this province.

³² It's not possible to present in this article all the noteworthy inscriptions. The work in which this will be done is currently being prepared for printing.

³³ ED 1 = CIL III 14409¹.

³⁴ R. Cagnat, *Evocati*, [in:] Ch. Daramberg, E. Saglio, E. Pottier (ed.), *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines d'après les textes et les monuments* 2, Paris 1892, pp. 867-868; Fiebiger,

the province where their unit was stationed. Therefore, they cannot be counted among the veterans who settled in Lower Moesia. In the dedication to Nemesis from Almus, Caesidius Amandus quite definitely features as a *beneficiarius consularis*. ...*Caesidius Amandus b(ene)f(iciarius) v(iri) c(larissimi) co(n)s(ularis) v(oto) p(osuit)*³⁵ rather than veteran. Furthermore, I. Boyanov includes four centurions who had not reached the age of sixty among the veterans³⁶. For example, concerning the centurion L. Antonius Felix mentioned in the inscription from Troesmis³⁷, the author writes thus: „One can probably speak of a veteran here. This is suggested by the age of the centurion, and the fact that the legions mentioned were not located in Moesia Inferior”³⁸. Boyanov arrives at the conclusion on the basis of the following information: *L(ucio) Antonio / L(ucii) fil(io) Arnensi / Felici, Kartha/gine, (centurioni) leg(ionis) III / Aug(ustae), (centurioni) leg(ionis) X Gem(inae) / [(centurioni)]leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) vixit / annis LVIII...*³⁹. However, as previously noted⁴⁰, the centurion could have equally well remained in military service at the age of 59. As for the deployment of military units mentioned in the inscriptions, the history of *Legio I Italica* is connected, first of all, with Lower Moesia. Moreover, it was found that a part of it was stationed in Troesmis for a certain period of time after 168 AD⁴¹.

In total, Boyanov’s catalogue comprises 12 such texts⁴², in which reference is made to civilians or active military personnel instead of veterans; after removing them from the list *only 134 inscriptions are left*.

Eleven inscriptions either do not mention former soldiers at all, or veterans are mentioned, but the sense of the text does not imply any information on their civilian careers⁴³. Let us consider some examples.

Evocati, [in:] G. Wissowa (ed.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 6, Stuttgart 1907, col. 1148-1152.

³⁵ ED 2 = CIL III 14208.

³⁶ ED 65, 133, 139, 167.

³⁷ ED 167 = CIL III 6185 = ISM V 176.

³⁸ I. Boyanov, *Rimskite veterani*, p. 373.

³⁹ ISM V 176.

⁴⁰ See note 22.

⁴¹ E. Ritterling, *Legio. Bestand, Verteilung und kriegerische Betätigung der Legionen des stehenden Heeres von Augustus bis Diocletian*, [in:] W. Kroll (ed.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 12, Stuttgart 1924-1925, col. 1409-1416; R. Ivanov, *Dolnodunavskata otbranjitelna sistema mezdu Dortikum i Durostorum ot Avgust do Mavrikiy*, Sofia 1999, pp. 90-91; F. Matei-Popescu, *The Roman Army in Moesia Inferior*, Bucharest 2010, pp. 79-84.

⁴² In addition to the reviewed inscriptions, see ED 7, 36, 220.

⁴³ ED 87, 91, 112, 123, 143, 166, 172, 195, 213, 214, 217.

Three inscriptions cited by I. Boyanov speak of T. Iulius Saturninus⁴⁴ and L. Minicius Natalis Quadronius Verus⁴⁵. Both had actually served in the army and, notably, on the territory of Lower Moesia⁴⁶, while their later activities were also connected with this province for some time. It seems that on this basis I. Boyanov included the inscriptions devoted to these individual in his catalogue. However, neither T. Iulius Saturninus nor L. Minicius Natalis Quadronius Verus were veterans in the strict sense, that is former military men who deserved the right to *missio honesta* as a result of long-term service. In their case, command posts were no more than the initial steps of a political career, which L. Minicius Natalis Quadronius Verus, for example, held at the age of about twenty for some two or three years. In addition, both of these former commanders stayed in Lower Moesia only as part of their duty, unlike the veterans who settled there for permanent residence; having received new appointments, both left the province. Finally, and this is the clinching element in this case, the positions they held in Lower Moesia were substantially surpassed any municipal rank. Therefore, even if they were formally veterans, it is difficult to imagine that *conductor publici portorii Illyrici utriusque et Ripae Thraciae* T. Iulius Saturninus or *consularis, legatus Augusti provinciae Moesiae Inferioris* L. Minicius Natalis Quadronius Verus could have „concurrently” fulfill the duties of city magistrates. They were representatives of the higher elite of the provincial society, and there is practically no chance of finding any indications of their involvement in local self-government in the inscriptions.

The epitaphs of the sons of former soldiers represent examples of a different kind. They quite definitely mention veterans, but only in order to

⁴⁴ ED 143 = AE 1934 107 = ISM V 10; ED 87, cf. AE 1928 153; B. Gerov, Romanizmät mezhdun Dunava i Balkana 2, Godishnik na Sofiyskiya universitet. Filologicheski fakultet 48, 1952-1953, p. 361, no. 74. About T. Iulius Saturninus see PIR² IV, 3, pp. 270-271, no. 548; T. Sarnowski, Die ritterlichen Tribunen der legio I Italica, [in:] L. Mrozewicz, K. Iłski (ed.), Prosopographica, Poznań 1993, pp. 69-70, 75, 79; M. Tacheva, Vlast i sotsium v rimska Miziya i Trakiya, Sofia 2000, pp. 79-80, 83-84, 87-89, 91; L. Mihailescu-Birliba, L'inscription de T. Iulius Saturninus à Dierna et l'affermage du *publicum portorii Illyrici*, *Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica* 16, 2010, pp. 146-147, n. 10.

⁴⁵ ED 213 = IGRR I 653 = ISM III 114; cf. AE 1996 1345. On L. Minicius Natalis Quadronius Verus see Groag, L. Minicius Natalis Quadronius Verus, [in:] W. Kroll (ed.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 15, Stuttgart 1932, col. 1836-1842; PIR² V, 2, pp. 293-295, no. 620; B.E. Thomasson, *Laterculi Praesidium* 1, Göteborg 2009, p. 50, no. 20:082.

⁴⁶ T. Iulius Saturninus was a *tribunus militum legionis I Italicae*, and L. Minicius Natalis Quadronius Verus – *tribunus militum legionis XI Claudiae*.

emphasize the origin of the deceased. Here is one of these inscriptions: *C. Arrius Quintianus bis/duumviralis et augur mun(icipii) / Troesmens(is) vet(erani) filius et Clau/dia Servata uxor se vivi[s] me/moriam sibi fecerunt curan/tibus Arriis Qu[i]ntiano filio et Ia/nuario lib[er]to*⁴⁷. As can be seen, judging by the fact that even name of the father-veteran is not mentioned at all, the authors of the epitaph were not supposed to mention any facts from his biography. In this case, even if he had occupied some positions after the discharge, no reflection of this fact is to be found in the inscription.

Three inscriptions cannot be deemed to contain any information about the civil career of former soldiers because they do not appear in the text individually, but as a social group, without specifying any individual names: *veterani* or *veterani et cives Romani* make dedications⁴⁸ or build a temple⁴⁹.

Thirteen inscriptions are so seriously damaged that it is impossible to state conclusively whether they really mention veterans⁵⁰. Just how unreliable such evidence can be is illustrated by a fragmentary inscription under the image of the Thracian Horseman from the sanctuary of Asclepius at the Glava Panega source in the Yablanitza district⁵¹. I. Boyanov, referring to the publication by G. Mihailov, asserts that this inscription consists of one word – βετρανός (sic! – A.M.), while offering no commentary on the fact. Meanwhile, G. Mihailov himself is very cautious about his own conjecture that it could be the word [-β]ετρανός?. Moreover, he duly remarks the text is so poorly preserved that one cannot even say whether it is Greek or Latin (!)⁵². We may also note that, judging from the photograph and the drawing of the inscription⁵³, the letters *E* and *T* are only guessed by G. Mihailov. In fact, only the right-hand section remained from the former, corresponding more likely to the Latin letter *C* or *sigma lunatum*, with the letter *I* following right after it.

⁴⁷ ED 195 = CIL III 7560 = ISM II 244.

⁴⁸ ED 112, 123.

⁴⁹ ED 166. The formula *veterani et cives Romani* can be seen in eight further inscriptions from Lower Moesia (ISM I 324, 326-328, 330-332; V 233). However, all these texts are very likely to refer to veterans who were magistrates in *vicus Quintionis* and *vicus Nov(us?)*, see A. Martemyanov, *Veterany rimskoy armii*, pp. 28-30.

⁵⁰ ED 32 = AE 1957 296 = ILBR 66; ED 33 = AE 1956 230 = ILBR 76; ED 56 = IGBR II 586; ED 63 = ILBR 242=243; ED 64 = CIL III 12398, 14207⁴⁰ = ILBR 249; ED 70 = ILN 35; ED 76 = ILN 63; ED 124 = V. Beshevliev, *Epigrafski prinosi*, Sofia 1952, p. 68, no. 115; ED 151 = AE 1972 540 = ISM V 131; ED 196 = CIL III 7557 = ISM II 247; ED 200 = CIL III 14214²⁹ = ISM II 225; ED 202 = M. Bărbulescu-Munteanu, A. Rădulescu, *Descoperiri epigrafice recente*, Pontica 14, 1981, pp. 167-169; ED 204 = CIL III 12499 = ISM II 264.

⁵¹ ED 56 = IGBR II 586.

⁵² IGBR II 586 comm.

⁵³ IGBR II, tab. 26, no. 586.

Of course, it could be the letter *T* which had lost its upper fragment and G. Mihailov's inference may be correct. However, it is impossible to obtain any proof of this and consequently, there is no certainty that the inscription refers to a veteran.

As a result, we have 110 inscriptions that mention 118 retired soldiers. Hence the percentage of veterans who performed duties of magistrates and priests in Lower Moesia should be determined based on this number. According to the inscriptions, we know no fewer than 20 of such individuals⁵⁴. Consequently, the proportion of veterans who took active part in local self-government and religious life of the province is determined by the ratio of 20 to 118 which translates into *16.9%*.

A similar picture emerges when one refers to the material from the catalog compiled by K. Królczyk⁵⁵. Along with other data, it enumerates 25 military diplomas, 29 inscriptions from the first century – early second century AD and from the end of the third century – the fourth century AD, six collective mentions of veterans and 14 texts whose poor preservation does not allow potential reference to veterans to be conclusively determined. Besides, for the reasons mentioned above, the sources relating to the three *evocati* as well as the two epitaphs of veterans' sons can be dismissed⁵⁶. As a result, the list contains information on 116 former military people. On this basis, we can say that *17.2%* of the veterans who settled in the lands of Lower Moesia assumed the roles of magistrates and priests.

Thus, in my opinion, when determining the level of social activity of veterans one should consider only those inscriptions which meet the following criteria. Firstly, these texts contain or *could have* contained information about the civil career of ex-soldiers. Secondly, they should date to the time when municipal organizations and, accordingly, local self-government in the province existed. Thirdly, the preservation of these inscriptions should be sufficient in order to determine whether the veteran

⁵⁴ Usually no more than 15 of such veterans are named (L. Mrozewicz, *Arystokracja municypalna*, pp. 159-160, 162; idem, *Die Veteranen in den Munizipalräten*, pp. 67, 73-75; I. Boyanov, *Rimskite veterani*, pp. 267-268; K. Królczyk, *Veteranen in den Donauprovinzen*, pp. 143-146, 149); however, the analysis of epigraphic data warrants the supposition that a number of other former soldiers may have been involved in the management of towns and villages of Lower Moesia, see A. Martemyanov, *Veterany rimskoy armii*, pp. 13-31.

⁵⁵ Królczyk K., *Tituli veteranorum. Veteraneninschriften aus den Donauprovinzen des Römischen Reiches (1.-3. Jh. n. Chr.)*, Poznań 2005, pp. 127-154.

⁵⁶ In this case it is not possible to refer to the specific positions of the catalog, since the inscriptions in it are not numbered.

could have been an official or not. The results obtained on the basis of such approach indicate that magistrates and priests did not account for 8-10%, as it is generally considered, but ca. 17% of all the veterans who had settled in Lower Moesia. At the same time, there is no doubt that many former soldiers were tired after long years of service, suffering from old wounds and diseases, and were indifferent to public life. Assuming that this applied to no less than half of the veterans, this would mean that elective offices were available to *one third of the ex-soldiers who aspired to obtain these posts*. It is unlikely that such a ratio was typical for the majority of the population in the province, and every third peasant, artisan or small merchant could become a magistrate or a priest. Thus, the marked contradiction between the evidence of legal texts and epigraphic sources, mentioned at the beginning of the article, disappears. Epigraphic sources evincing the participation of retired soldiers in the social life of cities and villages of Lower Moesia becomes an important confirmation that army veterans constituted quite a successful and socially active stratum of provincial society.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the proposed calculation method may prove as efficient when used to determine the degree of veterans' social activity in other provinces of the Roman Empire. In some cases, the indicators reflecting this contribution can change significantly, as for Lower Moesia, while in other cases the variations will not be as substantial. Be it as it may, these indicators will be obtained on the basis of a more accurate approach than the one employed by researchers so far.

Summary

Active involvement of retired soldiers in local governance and religious life in the provinces of the Roman Empire is usually measured by the researchers as generally determined as the ratio of the number veterans who were magistrates and priests to the total number of former warriors, known from *all* the inscriptions. In the opinion of the author, such an approach is erroneous and needs to be revised. The determination of the level of social activity of veterans should rely only on those inscriptions which meet the following criteria should be considered. Firstly, these texts contain or *could have* contained information on the civil career of ex-soldiers. Secondly, they should refer to the time when municipal organizations and, accordingly, the local self-government in the province existed. Thirdly, the preservation of these inscriptions should be sufficient in order to determine whether the veteran could have been an official or not. The results obtained on the basis

of such approach indicate that magistrates and priests did not account for 8-10%, as it is generally considered, but approximately 17% of all the veterans who had settled in Lower Moesia. At the same time, there is no doubt that many former soldiers were tired after long years of service, suffering from old wounds and diseases, and were indifferent to public life. Assuming that this applied to no less than half of the veterans, elective offices were available to one third of ex-warriors who were eager to obtain these posts. It is unlikely that such a ratio was typical for the majority of the population of the province, and every third peasant, artisan or small merchant could become a magistrate or a priest. Thus, epigraphic sources relating to the participation of retired soldiers in the social life of cities and villages of Lower Moesia becomes an important confirmation that army veterans formed quite a successful and socially active stratum of provincial society.

Abbreviations

AE – L'Année épigraphique, Paris
 CIL – Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin
 IGBR – Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae, Sofia
 IGRR – Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes, Paris
 ILBR – Gerov B., Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae, Sofia 1989
 ILN – Božilova V., Kolendo J., Mrozewicz L., Inscriptiones latines de Novae, Poznań 1992
 ISM – Inscriptiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine, București
 PIR² – Prosopographia Imperii Romani. Saec. I. II. III. Editio altera, Berlin

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