

L'ARCHEOLOGIA DELLA MORTE IN ILLIRIA E IN EPIRO

CONTESTI, RITUALITÀ E IMMAGINI
TRA ETÀ ELLENISTICA E ROMANA

a cura di Giuseppe Lepore e Belisa Muka

Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Tirana 16-18 dicembre 2019
Accademia delle Scienze



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Vyron Antoniadis

NICOPOLITAN TOMBSTONES AND ALTARS ACROSS THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND THE SEARCH FOR AN ELUSIVE COLONY

Greek Poleis and Roman Colonies

Nicopolis is located on the neck of the peninsula of the Ambracian Gulf, north of modern Preveza in the region of Epirus, Western Greece. Octavian founded the city around 29 B.C.¹ after defeating Marc Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 B.C. Nicopolis, the city of victory, was built in order to commemorate Octavian's achievements, but also to revive southern Epirus, a hitherto depressed region². In this way, Octavian followed a long established Hellenistic tradition of kings and generals who founded cities after a major victory and an even older Hellenic tradition of creating a city by synoecism³.

While Octavian did found colonies in Greece⁴, the legal status of Actia Nicopolis has puzzled modern scholarship since the late 19th century⁵. Ancient testimonies are contradictory: most of them note that Octavian, before becoming Augustus, founded Nicopolis by synoecism of the surrounding Greek population⁶. They describe it as a *polis*, in Greek⁷, and as an *urbs* in Latin⁸. Even the name of Nicopolis is a direct reference to a city founded by Alexander III in northern Syria after the battle of Issos⁹. Only Pliny and Tacitus express a different opinion. Pliny implies a double status or two distinct adjacent settlements. He claims that Nicopolis was a free city and a Roman colony¹⁰. Tacitus mentions that Nicopolis was a colony founded by Augustus, but he also refers to a Greek city¹¹. The ar-

1 D.C. 51, 1-4.

2 ANDREOU 2007, p. 233; CHRYSOSTOMOU, KEPHALLONITOU 2001, p. 10.

3 JONES 1987, p. 104. In the case of Nicopolis, Epirote, Acarnian, Leukadian and Aitolian people were forced to abandon their hometowns in order to populate the new city (Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 7, 18, 9).

4 *Ibid.*, p. 102.

5 MOMMSEN 1887, pp. 320-322; KUBITSCHKE 1888, p. 246; KORNEIMAN 1901, p. 531; PAGE 1906, pp. 219-288. For recent discussions on the status of Nicopolis see: KAHRSTEDT 1950, p. 549; SARIKAKIS 1970a, pp. 91-96; JONES 1987, p. 99; PURCELL 1987, p. 71; GURVAL 1998, p. 68; RUSCU 2006, p. 247; ZACHOS 2007, p. 292, f.n. 85; LANGE 2009, p. 96; ANTONIADIS 2016, p. 34; DAUBNER 2018, p. 1.

6 Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 7, 18, 9; 5, 23, 3; 7, 18, 8; 8, 24, 11; 10, 38, 4; Strabo, *Geography*, 7, 7, 5-6; 10, 2, 2; D.C. 51, 1, 3; Servius, *Commentary on the Aeneid of Vergil*, 3, 276; Anthologia Palatina, 9, 553.

7 Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 7, 18, 9.

8 Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 18, 2.

9 Claudius Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, 5, 7, 7; JONES 1987, p. 106.

10 According to Pliny (*Naturalis Historia* 4, 5) there was a free city of Nicopolis and an Actian colony in the area, perhaps inhabited by veterans from the battle at Actium.

11 Tacitus mentions the city as *Nicopolim Romanam coloniam* (*Annales* 6, 5, 10), but he also calls it *urbem Achaiae Nicopolim* (*Annales* 2, 53).

archaeological finds unearthed at Nicopolis favour the view that it was a free Greek city: the public inscriptions, in Greek in their vast majority, attest to a *Boule* and a *Demos*¹². These were the council and assembly of the Nicopolitans, characteristics of Greek cities. Conversely, at Photice, located North of Nicopolis in Central Thesprotia, inscriptions in Latin and in Greek attest to an *Ordo Photicensium*¹³ and a *Συνέδριον Φωτικησίων* respectively¹⁴. This was an institution appropriate to a colony. The organization of the Actia games and the participation of Nicopolis in the Delphic Amphictyony with six votes¹⁵ also suggest a Greek city. In the city's cemeteries, most of the inscriptions are in Greek. The coins of the city bear exclusively Greek legends, commemorating local events and monuments and in rare cases a personified *boule*¹⁶. The only finds suggesting a colony, or rather a Roman establishment are related to the Roman building technology and architecture of the city¹⁷. Nicopolis was built according to the Roman orthogonal street plan. This city planning however, was not unknown to the inhabitants of the surrounding Greek cities, such as Ambracia, who populated the new city¹⁸.

Interestingly, most pieces of evidence indicating that Nicopolis was a colony were discovered far away from the city, in other regions of the empire. The most important find is an honorific inscription discovered near Kavala, in Macedonia, Northern Greece¹⁹. Octavius Secundus, a military officer, was honoured with the *ornamenta* of the *duoviri*. In this text, Actia Nicopolis is mentioned next to the word "*coloniae*". This suggests that Actia Nicopolis and perhaps Ulpia Nicopolis in Thrace were colonies, or that at a certain point they were refounded as colonies²⁰. Further, there are inscribed tombstones and votive offerings belonging to Nicopolitan legionaries discovered in the European Continent and in Britain. Four of these veterans belonged to the *Sergia* voting-tribe²¹. Scholars claim that these legionaries were citizens of Actia Nicopolis²². This view is based on the fact that Augustus founded, especially in Asia Minor, colonies whose citizens belonged to the *Sergia tribus*²³. Accordingly, the same could have happened to Actia Nicopolis if it were a colony.

12 For a catalogue of the Greek and Latin inscriptions discovered at Actia Nicopolis see ANTONIADIS 2016, pp. 33-34.

13 *CIL* III Suppl. II. 12299.

14 In Greek: [Τὸ συνέδριον Φωτικη(σίων)]. See EVANGELIDIS 1914, 241; SAMSARIS 1994, pp. 19-20.

15 Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 10, 8, 3-5.

16 KARAMESINI-OKONOMIDOU 1976, p. 39; CALOMINO 2012, p. 109. On the contrary in the case of the Roman colony of Patras founded by Augustus in 14 B.C., coin legends in Latin refer to the legal status of a colony. See AGALOPOULLOU 1989, pp. 445-447.

17 ZACHOS 2007, pp. 155-171.

18 BOWDEN 2007, p. 137.

19 For a recent discussion on this inscription see RUSCU 2006, pp. 247-255; BRÉLAZ 2014, pp. 206-210, no 78; DAUBNER 2018, pp. 1-5.

20 CORNWELL 2017, pp. 106-116; LANGE 2009, p. 101.

21 TAYLOR 1962, p. 21.

22 RUSCU 2006, pp. 253-254.

23 PAGE 1906, pp. 219-288. See also DAUBNER (2018, p. 5, f.n. 22) who dismisses this view.

The aim of this paper is not to provide a conclusive answer on the legal status of Actia Nicopolis, but to shed light on the following questions related to the four military officers of the *Sergia tribus*.

- Did all of them originate from the same Nicopolis?
- And which can this Nicopolis be, since there were at least eight cities with this name in the Roman Period.

The paper examines the arguments that link these veteran legionaries to a single hometown against the epigraphic, topographic and archaeological evidence. It is suggested that other Nicopoleis, especially Ulpia in Thrace could also be the actual place of origin of some of these legionaries. The study concludes that the impact of these tombs and pedestals on the search for the Nicopolitan colony must be reassessed. Further, the only voting-tribe that seems to be related with the Epirote Nicopolis is Quirina, a fact so far overlooked by other investigators. This, however, does not necessarily imply that Augustus founded Actia Nicopolis as a colony. This is a preliminary report of a wider research focusing on the legal status of Actia Nicopolis.

Fighting and dying for the Empire

On September 13, 1792, workers discovered a tombstone while digging the foundations for the construction of a house in East Hayes, Bath, United Kingdom. The city's name in Roman times was *Aquae Sulis*, a small town renowned for its baths dedicated to the goddess *Sulis Minerva*. The tombstone was found in the area of the Roman cemetery of *Aquae Sulis*. The *Bath Chronicle*²⁴ first published the inscription and there was no information regarding an associated grave. In the surviving part of the inscription²⁵, which probably dates to the first century A.D., one reads about Antigonus, of the voting-tribe *Sergia*, from Nicopolis, aged 45, who was *emeritus* of the Twentieth Legion²⁶.

The next Nicopolitan is *L. Calavius Vitalis* of the *Sergian* voting-tribe, aged 55²⁷. He was a veteran from the First Legion²⁸. His tombstone was found at Scarbantia, modern-day Sopron in Hungary. The funerary stele was found in 1911. It dates between 31 A.D. and 130 A.D.²⁹.

The next tombstone³⁰ belongs to *Tib. Claudius Niger*, a *veteranus* of the First Italian Legion. He was 60 years old. The tombstone was found in

24 *Bath Chronicle*, 13 September 1792. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1792-0913?NewspaperTitle=Bath%2BChronicle%2Band%2BWeekly%2BGazette&IssueId=BL%2F00221%2F17920913%2F&County=Somerset%2C%20England>. Date accessed 5/6/2020.

25 *RIB* 160 = *CIL* VII 51; *RUSCU* 2006, p. 253, f.n. 61.

26 [...] / *Ser(gia)* (tribu) *A[nt]igonus* / *Nic(opoli)* *emeritus* ex / leg(ione) *XX an(norum) XLV* / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / *G(aius)* *Tiberinus* heres / f(aciendum) c(uravit).

27 *L(ucius)* *Calavius* / *L(uci)* f(ilius) *Sergia* / *Nicopolis* / *Vitalis* / *veteranus* / leg(ionis) *I an(norum) LV* / h(ic) s(itus) e(st), *HDO20987*.

28 *AE* 1914, 101 = *RIU* 182; *RUSCU* 2006, p. 253, f.n. 62.

29 *FARKAS, GABLER* 1994, p. 41.

30 *D(is)* *M(anibus)* / *Tib(erius)* *Claudi(us)* / *Tib(eri)* f(ilius) *Sergia* / *Nicopoli* / *Niger* *vet(eranus)* leg(ionis) / *I Ital(icae)* *vi(xit)* *an(nos) LX* / *Tib(erius)* *Cl(audius)* *Zoticus/ lib(ertus)* et *he(res)* f(aciendum) c(uravit), *HDO42096*.

Nicopolis ad Istrum in present-day Bulgaria. This is of a slightly later date, from 151 A.D. to 200 A.D.³¹.

The last inscription³² comes from a votive offering by a Nicopolitan military man of the *Sergia* voting-tribe. He was *P. Aelius Apollinaris* and he had served at *cohors VI praetoria* for 17 years. He dedicated a statue with its base to *Jupiter Conservator*. This base was found in Rome and dates to A.D. 148³³.

Kubitschek³⁴ in his analysis on the Roman voting-tribes assigned Actia Nicopolis, as a colony, to the *Sergia* tribe. He based his argument for supporting that the Epirote Nicopolis was a colony on three of these inscriptions and to Tacitus³⁵ and Pliny³⁶. He did not include the epitaph of *L. Calavius Vitalis*, since his publication predates the discovery of the tombstone in 1911. Other contemporary authors, however, were more reluctant to believe that Nicopolis was a colony: a few years after Kubitschek's publication, Page argued, in his book on the history of Somerset, that Actia Nicopolis was "a proper Greek town"³⁷. He also left open the possibility that a municipal foundation was attached to Nicopolis. He cited *Octavius Secundus* inscription as the only case where Actia Nicopolis is mentioned as a colony. He even considered how the Nicopolitan legionaries of the *Sergia* tribe could be linked to the Actia Nicopolis. He explained that, since Augustus established many colonies belonging to the *Sergia* tribe, then it would not be illogical to assume that Actia Nicopolis also belonged to the same tribe³⁸. However, Octavian founded cities in North Africa as well and *Sergia tribus* is not attested in the inscriptions recovered from the Roman colonies at Mauretania founded after 25 B.C.³⁹.

Those who restudied the inscriptions ignored Page's short but valuable analysis and they claimed that these legionaries were citizens of Actia Nicopolis based on Kubitschek's argument⁴⁰. Even Sarikakis who wrote a detailed paper supporting that Actia Nicopolis was a free Greek city⁴¹, includes Apollinaris in the prosopography of Actia Nicopolis by citing the analysis of *ILS* which is also based on Kubitschek's arguments⁴².

Ruscu, who supports that Nicopolis was a double community and includes in her argument the four inscriptions, is also primarily based on

31 *CIL* III 6144; CONRAD 2004, pp. 216-217; RUSCU 2006, 253, f.n. 64.

32 P(ublius) Aelius P(ubli) f(ilius) Ser[gi]a Apollin(aris(?)), / Nicop(oli), factus mil(es) ann(or)um XXI, missus / honesta missione ann(or)um XXXVII, ex coh(orte) / VI pr(aetoria), ((centuria)) Vitani Corneliani, ex voto / Iovi Conservat(ori) et comm(anipularibus) suis et / fut(uris) signum cum base d(onum) d(edit) l(ibens) m(erito). / C(aio) Bellicio Torq(uato) / P(ublio) Sal(vio Iuliano) `co(n)s(ulibus).

33 *CIL* VI 375 = *ILS* 2104; RUSCU 2006, p. 253, f.n. 63.

34 KUBITSCHKEK 1888, p. 246.

35 Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, 4, 5.

36 Tacitus, *Annales*, 6, 5, 10.

37 PAGE 1906, pp. 219-288.

38 *Ibid.*; DAUBNER 2008, p. 5, f.n. 22.

39 MACKIE 1983, pp. 332-358.

40 RUSCU 2006, pp. 253-254, f.n. 65.

41 SARIKAKIS 1970a, p. 68.

42 *Ibid.*; *ILS* 2104.

Kubitschek⁴³. Lange⁴⁴ who argues for two different establishments, a free city at Nicopolis and a small colony at *Actium* also thinks that Ruscu is probably right in her views regarding the Nicopolitan legionaries even if evidence is hardly conclusive.

Daubner on the other hand, who claims that Nicopolis was a colony, dismisses the connection between *Sergia* tribe and Actia Nicopolis on the grounds that there are other inscriptions which connect certain Nicopolitans with the *Papiria* voting-tribe⁴⁵. He is the first scholar to make this valuable remark. The Nicopolitans who belong to the *Papiria tribus* are: *P. Tencio Vindex* of the *Papiria* voting-tribe. His tombstone was found at ancient *Apulum* (Alba Ioulia). He was a citizen of Nicopolis⁴⁶. He also was a *bouleutes*, a member of the council (*boule*) of a Nicopolis. The inscription dates between A.D. 180 and A.D. 230⁴⁷.

The funerary stele⁴⁸ of another Nicopolitan, *L. Baebius*, of the *Papiria* voting-tribe was found in ancient Valeriana (Bregare), North Bulgaria⁴⁹. The inscription dates between A.D. 101 and 150 A.D.

Most of the inscriptions of the aforementioned Nicopolitans belonging to the *Sergia* and *Papiria* voting-tribes, were discovered near Nicopolis ad Istrum. In fact, one of them was discovered in the cemeteries of the city. The context of these finds draws a sharp antithesis with the archaeological evidence from the cemeteries of Actia Nicopolis where none of these tribes is attested in any context. No doubt Actia Nicopolis has splendid funerary monuments, appropriate for a city founded by Augustus after his victory against Marc Antony and Cleopatra⁵⁰. However, from the funerary inscriptions published so far from this city, not only the *Sergia*, but all voting-tribes are nowhere to be found with a major exception: Sarikakis in his study on the prosopography of Nicopolis argues that three Nicopolitan Roman citizens belonged to the *Quirina* voting-tribe. The first of these Nicopolitans is *Γαῖός Κυρῖν-ος*. This is an inscription depicted on a cinerary urn found in a grave in the East cemetery⁵¹ of Actia Nicopolis. Sarikakis notes the possibility that Rhomaios who published the inscription had misread the depicted name *Κυρῖν-ος* and that it might actually be the voting-tribe *Κυρῖνα* (*Quirina*)⁵². The second is *Κλαύδιος [Α]ουῖδιηνός Νικοπολείτης*, a poet.

43 KUBITSCHKE 1888, p. 246.

44 LANGE 2009, p. 101.

45 DAUBNER 2008, p. 5, f.n. 22.

46 [P(ublio)] Tenac(io) P(ubli) fil(io) / [P]ap(iria) Vindici / [(centurioni) leg(ionis) XXII Pri/mig(en)ia) buleutae / civitatis Ni/copolitanor(um) / P(ublius) Tenac(ius) Gemel/linus Aug(ustalis) col(oniae) / Apul(ensis) libertus / t(estamentum) p(onendum) c(uravit) l(ocus) d(at)us d(ecreto) d(ecurionum), HD009712.

47 AE 1972, 0467; CIL III 1481.

48 L(ucius) Ba[eb]iu[s] L(uci) f(ilius) / Papi[r(ia) --- d]o(mo) / Nico(poli) v[ix]it / ann(os) L[---]MN / L(ucius) Baebius Cle/me(n)s iunior / frater bene / merenti po/suit h(ic) s(itus) est, HD042409.

49 CIL III 12397.

50 See ZACHOS – KARAMPA 2015.

51 ANTONIADIS 2016, pp. 42-43.

52 RHOMAIOS 1916, p. 52, phot. II; SARIKAKIS 1970b, p. 96, no 97. It is impossible to distinguish between *Κύρῖν-ος* and *Κυρῖν-α* in the photograph of Rhomaios' publication.

The inscription was found at Delphi dates to the end of the first century A.D./beginning of the second century A.D.⁵³. This poet was also a citizen of other cities, but it seems that he first places his Nicopolitan citizenship. The third is *Φαβιανός*, a Nicopolitan of the Quirina voting-tribe⁵⁴. Apart from a distinguished military officer, he was high-priest of the Imperial cult and *αγωνοθέτης* (judge/president) of the Actia games. This inscription was found at Samos⁵⁵.

Regarding funerary inscriptions of Roman citizens with a military career found at Actia Nicopolis, only one is known so far: this was *C. Eppius Ferox*, a veteran military officer⁵⁶, who served the *Classis Ravennae* or the Praetorian fleet of Ravenna for 20 years and died at Nicopolis at the age of 60⁵⁷. The title Praetorian was first given to the Fleet of Ravenna in 71 A.D. It was Vespasian who settled the veteran sailors of the fleets in various cities and colonies as Roman citizens and *Ferox* was one of them⁵⁸. As we can see in the inscription the votive tribe of *Ferox* is omitted. This does not necessarily mean that Romans were absent from Nicopolis, on the contrary there are funerary inscriptions, written in Greek, that belong to Roman citizens⁵⁹ even before the Antonine Constitution which granted Roman citizenship to all the freemen of the Empire in 212 A.D.

In map 1 one can see the findspots of funerary and votive inscriptions of the Nicopolitans who belonged to the *Sergia*, *Papiria* and *Quirina* voting-tribes. The location of various Nicopoleis is also shown in the same map. While the limited number of the finds is not of a real statistical value, one wonders if this distribution could mean that Nicopolis ad Istrum and not Actia Nicopolis was the hometown of the legionaries of the *Sergia tribus*. As far as we know *Nicopolis ad Istrum* or *Ulpia Nicopolis ad Istrum* was founded by Trajan in 101 A.D. as a free Greek city. Nicopolis ad Istrum seems a better candidate, even if this is purely conjectural, related to the concentration of legionaries in the northern borders of the empire during various invasions.

It is also clear that not all legionaries from Nicopolis belonged to the *Sergia* tribe. As these inscriptions show, there were others who belonged to different tribes. Therefore, there is no conclusive evidence that these belonged to the same cluster. One cannot even know whether all of them come from the same Nicopolis. Apart from Actia Nicopolis and *Nicopolis ad Istrum*, there are at least six more cities which bear the name Nicopolis in the Balkans, Asia Minor and Egypt during the Roman Period (fig. 1). It

53 [...] Κλαύδιος Κυρίνα / [Α]ουιδιηνός ποιη / [τή]ς Νικοπολείτης / [κα]ί Κορίνθιος καί / [Πα]τρειὺς καί Ἀργεῖος / [κα]ί Λακεδαιμόνιος / νικήσας δις / [Α]πόλλωνι Πυθίῳ. FD III 1.542; SARIKAKIS 1970b, p. 74, no 71.

54 [...] του Τιμοκράτους υἱός · Κυρεῖνα · Φλαβιανός · Νεικοπο/[λίτης]].

55 IG XII, 6 2:821; SARIKAKIS 1970b, p. 83, no 175.

56 SARIKAKIS 1967, pp. 178-179.

57 Dis Manibus / C(aius) Eppius Ferox vixit / annis LX militavit / annis XX in classe pr(aetoria) / Ravennate cuius heres / faciendum curavit.

58 SARIKAKIS 1967, pp. 178-179.

59 SARIKAKIS 1970b, p. 67, f.n. 6.

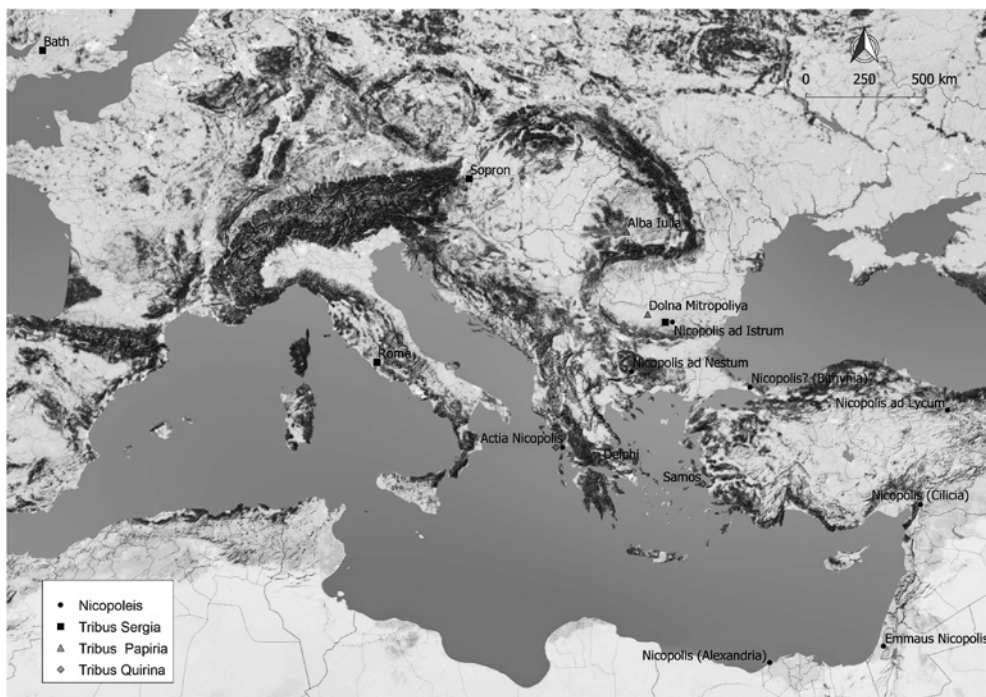


Fig. 1. The findspots of Nicopolitan tombstones attesting the *Papiria*, *Sergia* and *Quirina* voting-tribes in conjunction with the location of various Nicopoleis (Vyron Antoniadis)

seems that none of the rest ever had the status of a colony, even if Roman citizens and veterans were living in those cities. What is very interesting though is that there were other Nicopolitans who were eager to specify their hometown, since they were aware that there were many Nicopoleis. Such an example is *Marcus Aurelius Syrio*, son of *Marcus*. He dedicated an altar to Jupiter *Optimus Maximus*, Juno *Regina* and Minerva in Carlisle (*Lugvalium*) near Hadrian's Wall. He explicitly states in the altar's inscriptions that he belongs to the *Ulpia* tribe from Nicopolis of Thrace⁶⁰.

Conclusion

From the analysis of the funerary and votive inscriptions, it is very hard to associate the four Nicopolitan legionaries of the *Sergia* voting-tribe with a specific Nicopolis. The same holds true for those belonging to the *Papiria tribus*. If, however proximity to a Nicopolis is important, then the only city which could be linked to both voting-tribes is *Ulpia Nicopolis ad Istrum*. One of the tombstones was found in the cemetery of the city and another one in Valeriana (Dolna Mitropolija), a nearby city. If the latter had relations with *Ulpia Nicopolis*, it seems more logical that a *bouleutes* of this *Ulpia Nicopolis* died and was buried there and not someone from Actia Nicopolis. Accordingly, the funerary evidence from Actia Nicopolis suggests that the local Roman citizens had their tombstones in Greek and that they were probably indifferent to depicting their voting-tribe. One, however, must not omit the possibility that *Quirina* was an important voting-tribe at Actia Nicopolis. On

60 RIB 3460.

the contrary, in the territory of the city of Nicopolis ad Istrum it seems that most of the Roman citizens wanted to advertise their voting-tribe on their epitaph⁶¹. This might be a further indication of the hometown of the Nicopolitan legionaries who died and were buried in Bath, Rome and Scarbantia. The most important fact however is that none of the Nicopolitans of the *Sergia* voting-tribe can be used to support that Actia Nicopolis was a Roman colony.

61 See RUSCU 2006, p. 253, f.n. 60.

Abstract

Γύρω από το νομικό καθεστώς της Ακτίας Νικόπολης που ιδρύθηκε από τον Αύγουστο στην Ήπειρο, υπάρχει ένας έντονος προβληματισμός από την αρχαιότητα. Για κάποιους θεωρείτο ρωμαϊκή αποικία και για άλλους ελεύθερη πόλη. Επίσης έχει υποστηριχθεί ότι πιθανώς συνδύαζε δύο καθεστώτα, δηλαδή τόσο της αποικίας όσο και της ελεύθερης πόλης. Ήδη από το 1889, ορισμένοι ιστορικοί υποστήριξαν ότι η Νικόπολη ήταν ρωμαϊκή αποικία. Το βασικό τους επιχείρημα στηρίχθηκε σε επιτύμβιες στήλες Νικοπολιτών λεγεωνάριων που ανήκαν στη Σεργία φυλή και είχαν βρεθεί σε διάφορα μέρη της ρωμαϊκής αυτοκρατορίας από τη σημερινή Βουλγαρία μέχρι τη Μεγάλη Βρετανία. Επίσης έχει υποστηριχθεί ότι οι συγκεκριμένοι λεγεωνάριοι δεν ανήκαν σε καμία από τις άλλες γνωστές Νικοπόλεις. Αυτή η εργασία επανεξετάζει τα επιγραφικά και αρχαιολογικά δεδομένα βάσει των οποίων υποστηρίχθηκε η παραπάνω υπόθεση. Ο συγγραφέας επιχειρώντας μία μελέτη των συμφραζομένων των επιτύμβιων και αναθηματικών επιγράφων αμφισβητεί την άποψη ότι η Ακτία Νικόπολη ήταν αποικία και διερευνά τις περίπλοκες σχέσεις των βετεράνων με τις γενέτειρές τους και τους τόπους αποστράτευσής τους αντίστοιχα. Το παρόν άρθρο συγκρίνει τα αρχαιολογικά και επιγραφικά δεδομένα προκειμένου να διερευνήσει τους ρωμαϊκούς πολιτικούς θεσμούς σε σχέση με την ίδρυση ρωμαϊκών εγκαταστάσεων στον ελλαδικό χώρο.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Ακτία Νικόπολη, Επιτύμβιες επιγραφές, Ρωμαϊκές αποικίες, Ρωμαϊκή Ήπειρος, Σεργία ψηφοφορία-φυλή.

Actia Nicopolis, a foundation of Augustus in Epirus, has been viewed by ancient and modern scholarship as either a free Greek city, a Roman colony, or a double community. Modern historians, as early as 1889, associated funerary evidence discovered in various areas of the Roman Empire, ranging from modern-day Bulgaria to Great Britain, with legionaries that belonged to the Sergia voting-tribe and thus to the supposed colony in Epirus. This association has led other scholars to imply that the Romans of Actia Nicopolis belonged to the Sergia votive-tribe and links of those legionaries to other Nicopoleis of the Empire should be excluded.

This paper revisits the textual and archaeological evidence and proposes a contextual study of the graves and funerary and votive inscriptions that have been used for supporting the aforementioned arguments. The author challenges the view that Actia Nicopolis was a colony and explores the complex relations of the veterans with their hometowns and places of retirement respectively. The paper contextualizes archaeological and epigraphic funerary evidence in order to shed light on Roman political institutions in relation with Roman establishments in Greece.

Keywords: Actia Nicopolis, Funerary inscriptions, Roman colonies, Roman Epirus, Sergia voting-tribe.

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