

# Women and the Roman City in the Latin West

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WOMEN BEYOND ROME:  
TREND-SETTERS OR DEDICATED FOLLOWERS OF FASHION?\*

Alison E. Cooley

*Introduction: Women as Public Benefactors in Italy*

One of the most striking changes in city life in Italy between the first century BC and second century AD is the emergence of women as public benefactors and patrons. Between 150 BC and AD 150, the towns of Italy were transformed, with the construction of temples, *fora*, basilicas, theatres, baths, and amphitheatres, to name only some of the features of a typical townscape.<sup>1</sup> For the first hundred years or so of this process, men led the way, whether in their capacity as local magistrates supervising public building programmes, or as private benefactors paying for public buildings from their own funds.<sup>2</sup> By the second century AD, however, women had come into prominence, with the result that by the Antonine period we find public statues, building-inscriptions, and architectural designs all featuring the names and images of women in the towns of Italy and the western provinces.<sup>3</sup> From the mid-second century AD, some women were so integrated into civic life as to be co-opted as patrons of towns and of *collegia*,<sup>4</sup> or to be named 'City Mother',<sup>5</sup> although the holding of municipal magistracies remained barred to them. Women acted as benefactors mostly towards their home-towns (or those of their husbands), contributing substantial sums of money towards public buildings, distributions, alimentary schemes, and feasts.<sup>6</sup> The deification of

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<sup>1</sup> Patterson (2006) ch. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Alföldy (1997); Pobjoy (2000); Lomas (2003).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hemelrijk, this volume.

<sup>4</sup> Hemelrijk (2004a), (2004b), (2008); Raepsaet-Charlier (2005) 201–202, (2008).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Cenerini, this volume, Hemelrijk (2010).

<sup>6</sup> Raepsaet-Charlier (2005) 202–203.

imperial women created a new avenue through which women might make a contribution to public life as their priestesses.<sup>7</sup> Such priesthoods echoed aspects of local magistracies, with holders paying an entry fee on taking up office, making a variety of financial contributions to a town, and, in turn, being honoured with statues or public funerals.<sup>8</sup>

This chapter will explore the chronology and mechanisms whereby the fundamental shift occurred which resulted in the integration of women into the public space and municipal life of towns outside Rome. A single simple explanation will not suffice, since this shift should be viewed against a broad context of social, economic, political, and legal factors. Such an analysis would be beyond the scope of a single chapter; this discussion, instead, first sets out the legal framework within which some elite women gained more independence within the context of Augustan social legislation and the spread of marriage *sine manu*, and then delves more deeply into one particular aspect of the question. One innovation has already been mentioned—namely, the introduction of the cult of deified imperial women—but to what extent did imperial women set the trend for other women to take on new prominence in civic life as a whole? This chapter analyses the extent to which imperial women may have inspired other women to imitate their roles as public benefactors, and how far that imitation was a creative process rather than slavish copying. In some respects, non-imperial women may have been less constrained than the females of Augustus' family to adhere to conservative expectations of proper female behaviour. Besides, some evidence suggests that women in Italian cities beyond Rome took on prominent public roles before imperial women can have become influential models.

If we examine the contexts within which women were publicly commemorated before the Augustan era, we find that they were limited to particular geographical and social spheres. Some Roman women from senatorial families were honoured with public statues in the Greek East during the late Republic, in virtue of their relationships as wives or daughters (and more rarely mothers) of Roman magistrates. Some statues had even been set up before 184 BC, given that Cato spoke out against this practice in that year, but surviving epigraphic evidence points to the practice emerging more generally during the first century BC.<sup>9</sup> This pattern underlines how this was not an

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<sup>7</sup> Raepsaet-Charlier (2008) 1029.

<sup>8</sup> Raepsaet-Charlier (2005) 189–197; Hemelrijk (2006).

<sup>9</sup> Plin. *HN* 34.31.

Italian nor a Roman practice; it also differs from the pattern that emerged in Italy later on, since the women were honoured not because of their activities as public benefactors, but on account of their family ties to important Roman officials. In many cases too, the women were not honoured on their own, but alongside their male relations. The other principal difference lies in the fact that the women were probably not even themselves present in the provincial communities honouring them.<sup>10</sup>

Within Italy, a handful of women are known to have acted as public benefactors during the Republic in the context of religion, with a few inscriptions recording women funding religious building-works.<sup>11</sup> A sanctuary of *Bona Dea* at Ostia was modified during the mid-first century BC, possibly between 70/60 BC, by Octavia, wife of one of the town's leading magistrates: the cult's close association with elite women probably explains her involvement.<sup>12</sup> At Padula, Ansia Rufa paid for building-work at a grove, which was sanctioned by decree of the local council: 'Ansia Rufa, daughter of Tarvus, in accordance with a decree of the local councillors, saw to the construction at her own expense of an enclosure-wall, an outer-wall, and a gateway around the grove'.<sup>13</sup> These two examples illustrate how women might act as public benefactors within the realm of religion.

From the second half of the first century BC the post of *sacerdos publica* ('public priestess') also began to offer a context for female participation in civic life more generally. Most common in Campania, the office was associated with the cults of Ceres and Venus, but the activities of their priestesses went beyond those confines.<sup>14</sup> At Pompeii, we find public priestesses paying for public buildings and being honoured with public tombs.<sup>15</sup> The chronology of these inscriptions is often uncertain, but an inscribed architrave at Capua recording some sort of building-work by the town's *sacerdos Cerialis Mundalis* possibly dates from the mid-first century BC, in view of its lettering and use of limestone.<sup>16</sup> Such priestesses might receive public honours analogous to those received by members of the male elite, such as seat-tombs at Pompeii, and Sextia Rufa, public priestess of Ceres at Puteoli, may even

<sup>10</sup> Kajava (1990).

<sup>11</sup> Schultz (2006) 16, 59–61.

<sup>12</sup> Cébeillac (1973); Cébeillac-Gervasoni (2004) = *AE* 2004, 361.

<sup>13</sup> *CIL* 10, 292 = *ILLRP* 574: *Ansia Tarvi f. / Rufa ex d(ecurionum) d(creto) circ(a) / lucum macer(iam) / et murum et ianu(am) / d(e) s(ua) p(ecunia) f(aciendum) c(uravit)*.

<sup>14</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998).

<sup>15</sup> *CIL* 10, 810–813, 816, 998, 1074, *ILS* 6371.

<sup>16</sup> *CIL* 10, 3926; Chioffi (2005) no. 100; [http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=\\$RECapua\\_00100.jpg](http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=$RECapua_00100.jpg)—photograph.

have received a statue: 'To Sextia Rufa(?), daughter of Gaius, public priestess of Ceres, in accordance with a decree of the local councillors'.<sup>17</sup> The orthography, lettering, and onomastics of this marble plaque all point to an Augustan date, which suggests that some public priestesses may have received public statues as soon as imperial women started to be honoured with public statues at Rome. Other more localised priesthoods also emerged, such as *sacētis* at Cumae, which appears only on two fragmentary inscriptions. These appear to record a public benefaction by an individual woman, Luceia Maxima, on a fragment of a large architrave over three metres wide, bearing her name in letters 27.5 cm. high,<sup>18</sup> and honours given to her by the married women of the town (*matronae*).<sup>19</sup> Tentatively putting these two inscriptions together raises the possibility that Luceia Maxima may have acted as public benefactor, but perhaps within the context of an association of married women. It is possible, therefore, that some women were visible in public spaces in Italian towns from c.50 BC, whilst others received public honours at roughly the same time or even before imperial women did so at Rome.<sup>20</sup>

### *Legal Framework of Female Benefaction*

Before turning to the potential role of imperial women as exemplars, it is worth exploring how changes in the legal framework within which women were operating may have enabled women to adopt new roles as public benefactors by giving them a new level of control over their own property. An important shift that had occurred by the late Republic was a change in marriage practices. In earlier times, a woman commonly was transferred into her husband's power (*in manu*) upon marrying. As a result, anything a wife owned beforehand and anything she might acquire afterwards all passed to her husband or to his *paterfamilias*. A married woman had no property of her own until her husband died. This is made clear in Cicero's

<sup>17</sup> *AE* 2005, 341: Camodeca (2005) 164–168 no. 1: [Se]xtia C. [f. Rufai?] / [sa]cerdoti Ce[reris public(ai)] / ex [dec(reto) dec(urionum)].

<sup>18</sup> *AE* 2005, 369: Camodeca (2005) 175 n. 4: Luceia Cn(aei) filia) Maxima sacētis s(ua) p(ecunia).

<sup>19</sup> Inv. C.n.p. 000094, Museo Archeologico dei Campi Flegrei: [Luceiai Cn(aei) filia) M]aximā sacētis / [---] matronae. <http://museoarcheologicocampiflegrei.campaniabenculturali.it/visite-tematiche/galleria-di-immagini/RA00582172?page=759>. Cf. *CIL* 10, 688 for dedication to a *sacerdos publica* at Surrentum by *matronae*.

<sup>20</sup> Hemelrijk (2005) 316 n. 42; cf. Pollini (1993): Cartoceto Bronzes.



*Topica* 23, which states: 'When a woman comes into her husband's legal power (*manus*), everything which belonged to the woman becomes the husband's as dowry'. By the late Republic, however, marriages *in manu* had become rare, and wives were not usually legally controlled by their husbands. In addition, the social legislation of the Augustan era increased the possibility for women to have control over their property: Augustus' marriage legislation created a system whereby women who were mothers of three children might qualify to be exempt from guardianship. A woman who married *sine manu* remained part of her original family, or, if her *paterfamilias* had already died, would be independent (*sui iuris*) with a guardian to administer her property: Augustus introduced the innovation of allowing such women to be exempted from guardianship if they had borne three children.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, women from the upper classes might obtain an individual grant from the emperor even without having borne three children.<sup>22</sup> In this way, Augustus' legislation severely limited the impact of the institution of guardianship (*tutela*). The rise of financial independence among women might help to explain why some of these women then chose to pay for public buildings.

This shift in the legal status of married women opened up more opportunities for them to use their financial resources as they wished, and may have been a facilitating factor in their emerging roles in public life.<sup>23</sup> Not all the property of a woman fell under the authority of her *tutor*, but it did include urban land in Italy,<sup>24</sup> and this is precisely one of the basic elements that might sometimes be essential in sponsoring a public building. The public priestess Mamia at Pompeii, for example, built a temple at her own expense and on her own land, something which would potentially have required her guardian's approval, if she were subject to one.<sup>25</sup> The same is true of the public building-work of Terentia at Ostia, discussed later. Although Jane Gardner has rightly observed that we cannot know what proportion of women benefited from being released from guardianship, the fact that a new status was systematized may have created the expectation that from then on at least some women were expected to be able to control their own finances without external intervention.<sup>26</sup> These changes may not explain

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<sup>21</sup> Gai. *Inst.* I.194; Treggiari (1991) 29–32, ch. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Gardner (1986) 20; Dio Cass. 55.2.5–6.

<sup>23</sup> Wood (2001) 13.

<sup>24</sup> Gardner (1986) 18.

<sup>25</sup> *CIL* 10, 816.

<sup>26</sup> Gardner (1986) 5.

what motivated women to become public benefactors, but do at least outline the mechanisms whereby this became a possibility.

*Imperial Women as Exemplars*

The age of Augustus is often seen as a turning-point in defining women's place in public life: Augustus' social legislation of 18 BC generated political consequences for marriages and marital relationships, whilst Octavia and Livia took on high public profiles at Rome. It was characteristic of the Augustan era that the activities of imperial women evolved experimentally over time: 'Livia's position can only be understood through the perception that there was a graded range of activities lying between the totally domestic and the completely public, not a sharply defined boundary. Her role was developed through subtly exploiting a variety of positions in that range, at its most public verging on the male political world, but more often making use of the less sensitive intermediate zones of the range of possibilities'.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the beginning of the age of Augustus did not mark a sharp dividing-line for women at Rome. The turbulent times of the triumvirate had already brought about an unprecedented level of political activity and public representation among elite women.<sup>28</sup> With Hortensia, we find public oratory by a woman in the Forum; with Octavia we see the involvement of a woman in diplomacy; and with Fulvia we even witness a woman exercising military command.<sup>29</sup> First Fulvia and then Octavia appeared on coins minted in the East by Antony.<sup>30</sup> Nor is it simply the fact that these were three exceptional women who responded to crisis by taking control of what were more usually male spheres of activity, since the proscriptions threw into confusion the whole fabric of Roman society, among the upper classes at any rate, and brought politics into the Roman household. Another key moment was the granting of privileges to Octavia and Livia in 35 BC, by which they received honorific statues, tribunician sacrosanctity, and freedom from guardianship, privileges that no other women were ever to receive again.<sup>31</sup> By the end of the civil wars, if not earlier,<sup>32</sup> women had already broken out of the usual mould

<sup>27</sup> Purcell (1986) 87.

<sup>28</sup> Cluett (1998).

<sup>29</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 1.1.6; App. *BC* 4.5.32, 5.10.93–95; Dio Cass. 48.4–15, 48.54.

<sup>30</sup> Wood (2001) 41–51.

<sup>31</sup> Dio Cass. 49.38.1; Hemelrijk (2005).

<sup>32</sup> Dixon (1983).

of the behaviour expected for their gender. Developments under Augustus should be seen as part of a continuing process rather than a sudden change.

In *Gender, Domesticity and the Age of Augustus*, Kristina Milnor set out to explore 'How and why the early Empire developed new ways of articulating 'correct' female behaviour, and what those new articulations had to do with the larger cultural transformations of the early Empire.'<sup>33</sup> She suggested that new features of the period included the participation of women in public life as builders and benefactors, patrons and property-owners. Similarly, Beth Severy analysed how 'the transformation of the imperial family into a public institution' resulted in 'important shifts in gender roles' as articulated through the person of Livia.<sup>34</sup> There is no doubt that these scholars are right to see a significant shift in the representations of women in literature, but epigraphic and archaeological evidence from beyond Rome offers a slightly different perspective, giving a more prominent role to the initiative taken by the women among Italy's municipal elite in raising their public profile within their cities and in going beyond what would traditionally be expected of their gender.

There is abundant evidence for the acknowledgement, encouragement, and influence of role models in fostering patterns of behaviour in the Roman world.<sup>35</sup> Augustus increasingly tried to control what role models were to be available in the city of Rome, arrogating to himself a role as ultimate exemplar for the rest of society, and perhaps aspiring in vain to create exemplars out of the women of his family.<sup>36</sup> It has been suggested that imperial women were regarded as exemplary in terms of the way they dressed and conducted themselves.<sup>37</sup> An anecdote in Macrobius relates how Julia teased her father by wearing rather risqué clothing one day and then sober dress the following. When Augustus asked her "How much more acceptable is this style of dress in the daughter of Augustus?" (*quantum hic in filia Augusti probabilior est cultus?*), Julia was quick to reply, "Of course, today I dressed myself for my father's eyes, yesterday for my husband's" (*hodie enim me patris oculis ornavi, heri viri*).<sup>38</sup>

In terms of the representation of women in art, there was a revival during the Augustan era of the wearing of the *stola* on top of the tunic, with

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<sup>33</sup> Milnor (2005) 1.

<sup>34</sup> Severy (2003) 213.

<sup>35</sup> Bell and Hansen (2008).

<sup>36</sup> Bell (2008) 11.

<sup>37</sup> Bell (2008) 17; Wood (2001) 1–3, 77.

<sup>38</sup> Macr. *Sat.* 2.5.5.

the *palla* added above this, pulled up over the head, or draped around the body. The imperial women depicted upon the *Ara Pacis* illustrate the new ideal, appearing in *stola*, *palla*, and with *vittae* in their hair,<sup>39</sup> even though not all women on the altar are veiled.<sup>40</sup> This is not to imply that the everyday clothing of women at Rome changed,<sup>41</sup> but the changing character of women's depictions in art articulated the fresh importance given to sexual morality by the Julian Law on Checking Adultery (*lex Iulia de adulteris coercendis*) of 18 BC. The wearing of the *stola* was the prerogative of wives of citizens (*matronae*), as the mark of legal marriage; their clothing should not be viewed simply as a mark of legal status, but as staking a claim to moral qualities too.<sup>42</sup> The increased prominence in art of women wearing *stolae* heralded a heightened preoccupation with female sexual morality rather than an actual change in day-to-day clothing.<sup>43</sup>

There is no evidence to support the assumption that Augustus legislated on the topic of women's dress, and, in fact, a passage in Dio Cassius dealing with the social legislation of 18 BC implies that Augustus did not consider it appropriate to legislate on women's dress.

[3] Meanwhile there was an outcry in the senate concerning the disorderliness of women and young men, as some justification as to why they were not readily making marriage contracts because of this; and they urged him to remedy this also ... [4] He first replied to them that he had laid down the regulations that were most necessary and that it was impossible for anything further to be decreed in a similar way. But then, under constraint, he said: "You yourselves ought to advise and order your wives just as you wish; that's what I myself do anyway." [5] Having heard this, they kept pressing him much more, wanting to learn the pieces of advice which he said he gave to Livia. And so he reluctantly said something about women's clothing and the rest of their adornment, and about their going out and self-control ...<sup>44</sup>

If we abandon the idea that citizen married-women were required by law to wear the *stola* on a daily basis, the possibility emerges that the images of imperial women which were becoming familiar throughout the peninsula disseminated new ideal representations of female clothing, as part of the moral order being encouraged by Augustus.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Sebesta (1997) 531, 535–537.

<sup>40</sup> Olson (2002) 392.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Harlow, this volume.

<sup>42</sup> Olson (2002) 391, (2008) 27–33, 113–114; Zanker (1988) 165–166.

<sup>43</sup> On the chronology of *stola*-portraits, see Scholz (1992) esp. 75–83.

<sup>44</sup> Dio Cass. 54.16.3–5.

<sup>45</sup> Wood (2001) 1.

One of the distinctively new activities undertaken by Livia and Octavia in the city of Rome was the sponsoring of public buildings, not just within the religious sphere of 'women's cults'. Although their names were associated with shrines of *Bona Dea*, *Fortuna Muliebris*, *Pudicitia Patricia*, and *Pudicitia Plebeia*, they were also sponsors of the *porticus Liviae*, *porticus Octaviae*, *crypta* and *chalcidicum*.<sup>46</sup> It has been argued that porticoes were perhaps regarded as suitable for sponsorship by women because they had no specific function within political life, but were instead associated with the enhancement of culture and society more generally by their incorporation of art collections and gardens.<sup>47</sup> The *porticus Octaviae*, for example, contained paintings and sculptures displayed in its garden, as well as a library.<sup>48</sup> In short, they were locations for the pursuits of *otium* rather than *negotium*. This, however, ignores the fact that the *porticus Octaviae* also included a *curia* where the senate could meet.<sup>49</sup> This model works even less well for *chalcidica*, spaces which are notoriously difficult to pin down, but which appear to have been connected with public business and commerce, notably auctions.<sup>50</sup> Also we should not ignore the *macellum Liviae*, a public market, even though it is not mentioned in any contemporary literary sources: this in itself is perhaps an indication that it was not considered a prestigious type of building at the time.<sup>51</sup> At issue is the extent to which similar activities by women in other Italian towns beyond Rome took their cue from such imperial benefactions.

### *The Limits of Imitation: Livia and Eumachia*

Livia is often singled out as having served as a role model for how other women could act as public patrons, and the most often cited example which offers a clear case of direct imitation of Livia is Eumachia at Pompeii.<sup>52</sup> A public priestess from a wealthy local family, Eumachia funded the construction of arguably the most impressive of all the buildings around the Forum, replacing the shops and private houses that had previously flanked it (Fig. 1).<sup>53</sup> The building's dedicatory inscription appeared twice, once in

<sup>46</sup> Purcell (1986) 88–89; Kleiner (1996) 32–33; *CIL* 6, 883; Dio Cass. 55.8.3; Ovid, *Fast.* 5.157–158.

<sup>47</sup> Milnor (2005) 59–60.

<sup>48</sup> Richardson (1976) 61–64; Viscogliosi (1999).

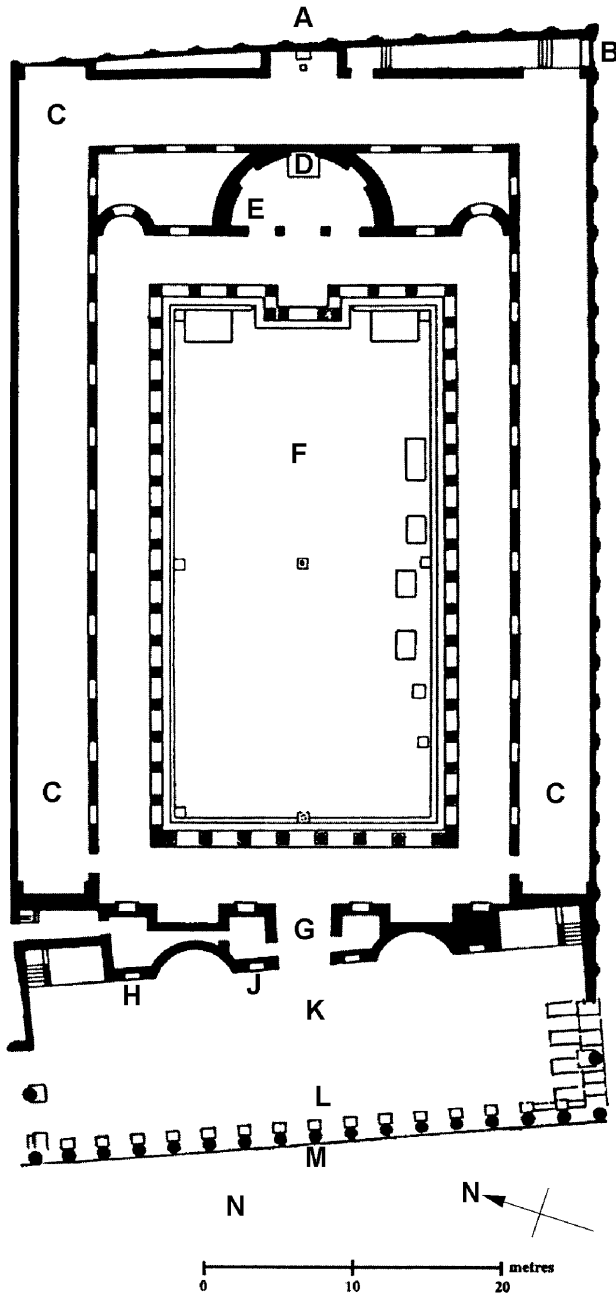
<sup>49</sup> Dio Cass. 55.8.1; Boyd (1953) 156.

<sup>50</sup> Fentress (2005).

<sup>51</sup> De Ruyt (1983) 163–172, esp. 166–167.

<sup>52</sup> Severy (2003) 213; Davies (2008) 209.

<sup>53</sup> Maiuri (1973) 53–66, 91–99, figs 19–25, 45–53.



*Fig. 1.* Plan of Eumachia's Building (L.H. Davies).

grandiose form over its main entrance (M), and again on a smaller scale above the secondary rear entrance to the building (B): 'Eumachia, daughter of Lucius, public priestess, in her own name and that of her son, Marcus Numistrius Fronto, built at her own expense the *chalcidicum*, crypt and portico in honour of Augustan Concord and Piety and also dedicated them.'<sup>54</sup> Eumachia highlighted her role as public priestess, and stated that in paying for the public building she dedicated it to Augustan Concord and Piety, in the name of her son as well as on her own account. In doing so she echoed the actions of Livia at Rome.<sup>55</sup> The *porticus Liviae* was built by Augustus in Livia's name, and was dedicated in January 7 BC by Livia and her son Tiberius.<sup>56</sup> A few months later, on 11th June, Livia then dedicated an *aedes* of *Concordia* within the portico.<sup>57</sup> The structure of Eumachia's building encourages us to draw comparisons between the two niches within the building (A, D), in its main courtyard and on its rear corridor (Fig. 2). In the less prestigious space (A) was found a statue of Eumachia herself dedicated by the fullers. This depicted her dressed in tunic, *stola*, and cloak, with an idealizing portrait.<sup>58</sup> Eumachia's relegation to the back corridor, though the building's sponsor, suggests that the more prestigious space within the courtyard may have depicted imperial or divine figures. If it is correct to suggest that Livia herself occupied the focal niche in the main courtyard, it is tempting to see Eumachia's statue being located deliberately on a parallel axis to Livia's.

Some support for the idea that Eumachia was imitating imperial monuments at Rome is found in the inscription honouring Romulus, found outside the front of the building, which is itself modelled upon the *elogium* from the *Forum Augustum* at Rome.<sup>59</sup> A similar fragmentary inscription of Aeneas was later identified in the spoils removed from the forum area.<sup>60</sup> August Mau suggested that these belonged to the small niches to the left of the entrance, where a copy of one of them is now displayed.<sup>61</sup> This visual link with the

<sup>54</sup> *CIL* 10, 810–811: *Eumachia L(uci) fili(a) sacerd(os) publ(ica) nomine suo et / M(arci) Numistri Frontonis fili(i) chalcidicum cryptam porticus Concordiae / Augustae Pietati sua pecunia fecit eademque dedicavit*. Photographs—[http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=\\$CIL\\_10\\_00810.jpg](http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=$CIL_10_00810.jpg); [\\$CIL\\_10\\_00811\\_2a.jpg](http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=$CIL_10_00811_2a.jpg); [\\$CIL\\_10\\_00811\\_1.jpg](http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=$CIL_10_00811_1.jpg); [\\$CIL\\_10\\_00811\\_2.jpg](http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=$CIL_10_00811_2.jpg); [\\$CIL\\_10\\_00811\\_3.jpg](http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=$CIL_10_00811_3.jpg).

<sup>55</sup> Moeller (1975); Richardson (1978).

<sup>56</sup> Dio Cass. 54.23.6; 55.8.1; Panella (1999).

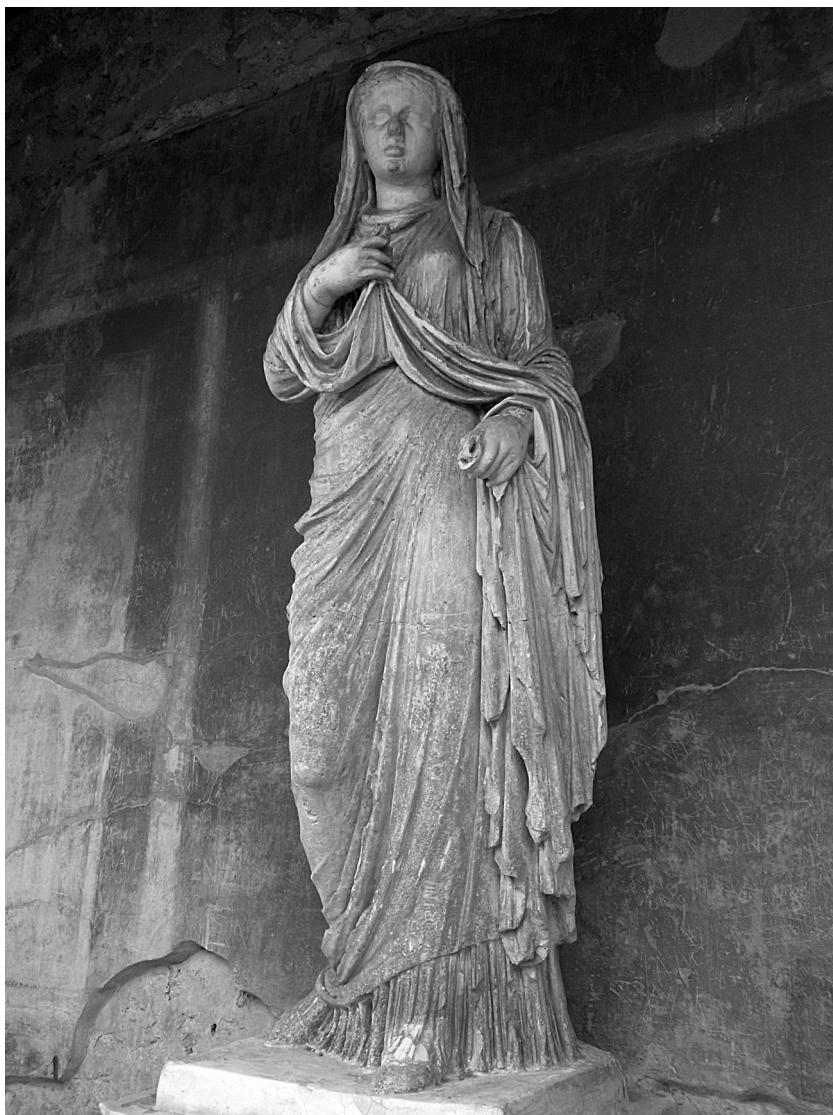
<sup>57</sup> Ovid. *Fast.* 6.637–648; Flory (1984).

<sup>58</sup> *CIL* 10, 813; Eumachia's statue: Naples Museum, inv. 6232; Bonifacio (1997) no. 11.

<sup>59</sup> *CIL* 10, 809.

<sup>60</sup> *CIL* 10, 808 + 8348 = D 63.

<sup>61</sup> Mau (1899) 115.



*Fig. 2.* Statue of Eumachia, cast in situ (L.H. Davies).



capital would not have been wasted upon the inhabitants of Pompeii: the Sulpicii archive from Puteoli illustrates how people living around the Bay of Naples might be expected to attend bail summons in the *Forum Augustum*, whilst a wax tablet from Herculaneum mentions a delegation of town councillors approaching the urban praetor, whose tribunal was also located in the *Forum Augustum*.<sup>62</sup>

The degree to which Eumachia was imitating Augustan imagery has, however, gradually been inflated over the last four decades. For John Dobbins, for example, 'Eumachia was to Pompeii as Livia was to Rome'.<sup>63</sup> It is tempting to make a comparison of the design of the doorframe at the main entrance of Eumachia's building with the lower decorative frieze on the *Ara Pacis* enclosure.<sup>64</sup> Although both designs do feature acanthus scrolls peopled with delicately carved birds, insects, and other animals, Kurt Wallat has demonstrated that the doorframe did not belong to Eumachia's Building.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, other ideas that were originally proposed as attractive hypotheses have later solidified into fact. For example, it has been asserted recently, without discussion, that the main niche in the interior courtyard of the building contained statues of Livia, flanked by personifications of *Concordia* and *Pietas*.<sup>66</sup> The actual finds are not quite so unambiguous. Excavation reports for 2nd August 1818 record that a headless, draped, female marble statue was found, holding part of a kind of cornucopia. The description of the statue fits what we would expect for a statue of Livia, namely a figure wearing an ankle-length tunic with gilded edges, with two further over-garments. A few days later, on 8th August, we read of the discovery of some other marble hands, two without fingers, but one seemingly belonging to a male statue since it was carrying some sort of object, possibly a sceptre, between two fingers.<sup>67</sup> Whereas Mau suggested that these originally represented *Concordia* with the features of Livia (but note that no head was found) flanked by Tiberius and Drusus,<sup>68</sup> Richardson offered an alternative suggestion that Livia might have been flanked by *Concordia* and *Pietas*. Whilst he originally put this suggestion forward purely as an attractive hypothesis, the presence of a statue of Livia alongside *Concordia* and

<sup>62</sup> *TPSulp.* 14–15; *AE* 2006 305.

<sup>63</sup> Dobbins (1994) 689.

<sup>64</sup> Zanker (1998) 95–96.

<sup>65</sup> Wallat (1995).

<sup>66</sup> Kleiner (1996) 33.

<sup>67</sup> Fiorelli (1860) *Pars Tertia*, 210–211; cf. Fiorelli (1862) *Pars Quarta*, 19.

<sup>68</sup> Mau (1899) 112, 116.

*Pietas* has now taken on the status of fact.<sup>69</sup> Given the lack of published photographs of the sculptural material, however, we should regard the matter as still open.

If we look more closely at the chronology of the buildings dedicated in Pompeii and Rome, the degree of reliance of Eumachia upon Livia becomes less clear-cut. Eumachia's building has been variously dated by different scholars to between 9 BC and AD 22.<sup>70</sup> Although Livia incorporated a shrine of *Concordia* within her portico in 7 BC, for *Concordia Augusta* we have to wait until Tiberius' re-dedication of the temple of *Concordia* in the Roman Forum in AD 10, when the existing cult of *Concordia* was modified to represent *Concordia Augusta*. Admittedly, Tiberius had vowed this reconstruction to *Concordia* at the same time as his mother was building her shrine to *Concordia*, so it is possible that the idea of *Concordia Augusta* was in the air already in 7 BC. Nevertheless, it remains uncertain whether or not the cult of *Concordia Augusta* had been officially established at Rome at the time when Eumachia dedicated her building. In any case, it seems that the inclusion of *Pietas* alongside *Concordia* was Eumachia's own combination.<sup>71</sup> If this is so, then this provides an excellent example of individual members of the local elite tapping into imperial ideology and not waiting for definite guidance before taking trends slowly developing at Rome, in new directions. Rather than viewing Eumachia as slavishly copying imperial precedent, therefore, we could view her as an active agent in disseminating and further developing ideas only slowly emerging at Rome.

### *Female Benefactors at Ostia and Paestum*

At Ostia, Terentia, wife of Cluvius, installed a well-head in one of the town's sanctuaries of *Bona Dea*,<sup>72</sup> and also built *crypta* and a *calchidicum*, as commemorated upon an inscribed architrave: "Terentia, daughter of Aulus, wife of Cluvius, built the crypt and *calchidicum* on her own land at her own expense in accordance with a senatorial decree and decree of the local coun-

<sup>69</sup> Richardson (1978) 268.

<sup>70</sup> Dixon (2008) 57 n. 3; probably erected c.9–3 BC; Kleiner (1996) 33; AD 22; Dobbins (1994) 647; first decade of first century AD; Moeller (1975) 234–235; c. AD 3/4; Mau (1899) III: Tiberian date, AD 14–22.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. La Rocca (1999) for doubts that an altar to *Pietas Aug.* was dedicated at Rome in AD 22.

<sup>72</sup> *AE* 2005, 304.

cillors'.<sup>73</sup> The co-operation of Roman senate and local town council is striking in this case, but fits into a context whereby Rome was still taking an interest in regulating public space at Ostia. The construction of a temple of Vulcan during the Julio-Claudian period was also sanctioned by the Roman senate.<sup>74</sup> In addition to this architrave, the following inscription has been preserved on marble, dating to 12th January AD 6:

*M(arco) Lepid[o] L(ucio) Arru]ntio / [co(n)s(ulibus)] pridie idus Ian(uarias) / [Tere]ntia A(uli) f(ilia) Clu(v)i (uxoris) cryptam [et] / [ca]lchidicum solo suo su[a] / [pecuni]a [e]x s(enatus) c(onsulto) et d(ecurionum) d(ecreto) quod / [decretum fa]ctum est at[---] / [---]+++RIS[---]+E+A / [scrib(endo) adfue- r(unt)] Q(uintus) Setinus Volscus / [---]+a Ilviri proximo / [---] decretum fecerunt / [ut eadem di]e qua crypta et / [calchid(icum) Caes]ari dedicatum esset / [---]+o Caesari sacrificium / [atque Pietati] publice facerent / [ac permit]te- rent.<sup>75</sup>*

The fragmentary state of this decree poses several problems of interpretation, but the following translation traces its meaning in outline:

In the consulship of Marcus Lepidus and Lucius Arruntius (i.e. AD 6), on 12th January, Terentia, daughter of Aulus, (wife) of Cluvius, (built/ dedicated) a crypt and *calchidicum* on her own land, at her own expense, in accordance with a decree of the senate and in accordance with a decree of the local councillors; this (?)decree was passed at ... (?) ... present at the drafting were Quintus Setinus Volscus (another name missing here) joint chief magistrates, on the next day(?) ... (?) they made a decree that on the same day on which the crypt and *calchidicum* had been dedicated to (?)Caesar ... (?) they should make and allow a sacrifice to ?Gaius/Lucius? Caesar and *Pietas* publicly.

This text, fragmentary though it is, suggests that her dedication of the buildings was accompanied by rituals honouring members of the imperial family (perhaps deceased), and raises the possibility that these rituals, rather than the building itself, may have been what attracted the intervention of the senate. Terentia too wanted to associate her benefaction with expressions of imperial ideology and loyalty, and may have been involved in formulating new rituals to commemorate a member of the imperial family. In contrast to Eumachia, there is nothing to suggest that Terentia herself held a priesthood, in virtue of which her actions could have been interpreted.

<sup>73</sup> *Terentia Auli filia) Cluvi / cryptam et calchid(icum) solo suo sua pecun(ia) fecit ex s(enatus) c(onsulto) et d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)*—*AE* 2005, 301, 303. Zevi (1997); Licordari (1984).

<sup>74</sup> *AE* 1986, 115; Van Haepelen (2007) 43–44.

<sup>75</sup> Manacorda (2005) = *AE* 2005, 303.

Moving further south to Paestum, we encounter a couple of women who surpassed any precedent supplied by imperial women in terms of their public self-presentation, the tone of their involvement in civic life, and their prominence within the urban landscape. Most is known of a woman called Mineia.<sup>76</sup> In c.15 BC, she paid for the town's basilica to be rebuilt, as revealed by an imposing inscription: 'Mineia daughter of Marcus, wife of Gaius Cocceius Flaccus, mother of Gaius Cocceius Iustus, built the basilica from its foundations and the portico and all the pavings in front of the basilica with her own money'.<sup>77</sup> Although the inscription claims that she 'built' the basilica, archaeological investigation in the forum has shown that there was a predecessor to Mineia's basilica. Mineia's project was extensive, however, and even involved moving the location of the shrine of *Mater Matuta*. Inside the basilica, she set up a series of statues of which only the inscribed bases remain, honouring members of her family: her brothers, son, grandson, and husband. Each inscription mentions the family relationship between Mineia and the honorands.<sup>78</sup> Mineia herself was also represented by a statue.<sup>79</sup> The inscription honouring her husband, Cocceius Flaccus, records that he had been promoted by Julius Caesar by being adlected *quaestor* in 44 BC and sent to Bithynia.<sup>80</sup> Given that his career, as recorded in the honorific inscription, appears to end abruptly at that point, it seems that he did not live long enough to enjoy further promotion.

What is extraordinary, however, is the fact that the town decided to mint small-value bronze coins (half-*as*/ *semis*) in commemoration of Mineia's building-work (Fig. 3). On one side of the coins is a female head with the legend MINEIA M F, 'Mineia, daughter of Marcus'; on the other side is an image of a two- (sometimes three-) storeyed building, presumably the basilica itself, with the letters P S S C,<sup>81</sup> *P(aestanorum) s(emis) s(enatus) c(onsulto)*, 'semis of Paestum, in accordance with a decree of the senate' (i.e., of Paestum).<sup>82</sup> The most obvious interpretation of the female figure is that this is a portrait of Mineia herself. Mario Torelli has interpreted the

<sup>76</sup> Torelli (1996).

<sup>77</sup> Paestum 163: [Mineia M.f. C. Coc]ce[i F]lacci [m]ate[r] / [C. Coccei Ius]ti ab fundamentis / [basilicam e]t ante bas[ilicam sua p]ecu[nia] / [fecit porticus pavim]entaque omnia. Date of 15 BC: De Carolis (2002) 47.

<sup>78</sup> Paestum 81–83.

<sup>79</sup> Paestum 84.

<sup>80</sup> Paestum 85.

<sup>81</sup> Crawford (1973) no. 38a/b/c.

<sup>82</sup> Burnett, Amandry, Ripollès (1998) 159.



Fig. 3. Paestum *semis*, commemorating Mineia's basilica, obverse and reverse. © University of Oxford, Ashmolean Museum: On loan from Somerville College (4.37 g).

female figure as representing *Mens Bona*, an important local deity, who was depicted on other coins minted by local magistrates.<sup>83</sup> These other coins, however, represent *Mens Bona* as a seated figure within a temple, labelled BONA MEN, quite a different image from this modish female, with her *nodus*-hairstyle.<sup>84</sup> The contemporary looks of the portrait, accompanied as it is by the word 'MINEIA', point in a different direction, and invite viewers to make the identification with Mineia herself.

The practice of minting bronze coins at Paestum was itself an unusual phenomenon of the time within Italy, which can be paralleled at only a handful of other Italian towns.<sup>85</sup> There is an unexpected variety in the individuals and different types of magistrates named as being responsible for issuing coins, with *duoviri*, *quattuorviri*, a *praetor*, *duoviri quinquennales*, and *patroni*. A wide range of scenes was also depicted on the coins. The coins were of all of low denomination and did not circulate significantly beyond their place of issue. It has been argued that the coins may have been special commemorative issues to fund *sportulae* (cash-distributions), which could have been used as small change for Roman *denarii*, struck by individuals who paid for the coins to be issued.<sup>86</sup> In support of this

<sup>83</sup> Torelli (1993) 204.

<sup>84</sup> Crawford (1973) 93 no. 33a.

<sup>85</sup> Crawford (1973).

<sup>86</sup> Burnett (1982) 128–129; Harl (1996) 47.

theory is the legend EPVL DED on another issue, which can be expanded as EPVL(AM) DED(ERVNT), commemorating the occasion when L. Venedius and D. Fadius 'gave a feast'.<sup>87</sup> Although in our case the supposition that Mineia paid for the issue remains unsubstantiated, this does not undermine the rare distinction she received from the town of her rebuilding of the basilica being commemorated on coinage. This type of public honour was unparalleled among contemporary imperial women.

The exact chronology of Mineia's public benefactions is unclear, but towards the end of the first century BC seems a good estimate, giving her time to have become a grandmother. Mineia, therefore, may have been a wealthy widow who used her private wealth to promote the male members of her family over three generations. Another inscription containing a dedication to her by the *magistri Mentis Bonae* suggests that she may have been a prominent figure in that important local cult too, but there is no allusion to her as a priestess.<sup>88</sup> Nor was she the only prominent female benefactor at Paestum.

Just outside Paestum lies the sanctuary of S. Venera, where, again, we find women prominent among the cult's benefactors. The sanctuary was long established, dating back to the early fifth century BC. Sometime between 50 BC and AD 30 this sanctuary was extensively remodelled by two women: Sabina first of all, and later her granddaughter Valeria.

*Sabina P. f. [---] / Flacci ux[or sacellum(?)] / deae a solo fa[bricandum] opere tector[io poliendum] sedes et pavim[enta de sua] / pequnia fac[iunda curavit] / eademque p[ro]b[avit]*

Sabina, daughter of Publius, (?) wife of Flaccus, saw to the construction at her own expense of a shrine(?) for the goddess built from the ground upwards and decorated with plasterwork, seating, and pavings, and she also approved it.<sup>89</sup>

Valeria later added *strongyla*, a word whose meaning is unclear.

*[Vale]ria Sabin[i uxor?] / [Sabi]nae neptis p[rivigna] / [C. Fla]ccei Flacci V[er] / [stro]ngyla de s[ua pecunia] / [faciund]a cu[ravit].*<sup>90</sup>

Valeria, (?) wife of Sabinus(?), granddaughter of Sabina, stepdaughter of Gaius Flacceius Flaccus (?), saw to the construction of the *strongyla* at her own expense.

<sup>87</sup> Crawford (1973) no. 35/1.

<sup>88</sup> *Paestum* 18.

<sup>89</sup> *Paestum* 158; Torelli (1993) no. 2. Photograph: [http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=\\$Paestum\\_00158a.jpg;\\$Paestum\\_00158.jpg](http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=$Paestum_00158a.jpg;$Paestum_00158.jpg).

<sup>90</sup> *Paestum* 157 = *AE* 1996, 468; Torelli (1993) no. 5. Photograph: [http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=\\$AE\\_1996\\_00468.jpg;\\$Paestum\\_00157.jpg](http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=$AE_1996_00468.jpg;$Paestum_00157.jpg).

The family relationship between the two women is explicitly mentioned in this inscription: Valeria (wife of Sabinus or with the *cognomen* Sabina) identifies herself as granddaughter of Sabina, and step-daughter of Gaius Flacceius Flaccus, a local magistrate and patron.<sup>91</sup> It is unusual to mention the relationship of granddaughter alongside filiation, and shows how the relationship between Valeria and Sabina was deliberately highlighted. The women were presented within their family context rather than as independent individual benefactors. Given that the sanctuary has been identified as associated with the cult of Venus, a prominent role for women is arguably less surprising than was the case for the town's basilica.<sup>92</sup> Torelli suggested that the renaissance of the cult perhaps reflected the rise of the cult of Venus Genetrix at Rome,<sup>93</sup> but the addition of circular water-proofed structures (the mysterious *strongyla?*), perhaps connected with ritual bathing, maintained a strong local flavour for the cult.

Whether or not we wish to label this as 'women's cult', it is worth pausing to look in detail at the inscription commemorating the patronage of Sabina transcribed above, particularly the remarkable phrasing at the end of the inscription, *fac[iunda cur(avit)] / eademque p[rob(avit)]*.<sup>94</sup> Although we have other examples where the verb *curavit* is used to describe a woman's involvement in a building-project, the verb *probavit*, by contrast, attributes to Sabina the sort of supervisory role more commonly found among male magistrates of the Republican era. This is not a unique example, either. An inscription from Cosilinum near Padula (*Regio* III) used the same language in commemorating the benefaction of Plotia Rutila, who paid for the refurbishment of the theatre:

[P]lotia Ruti[la] / [sp]ectacula im[a(?)] / [m]aenian(a) et pul[p(itum)] / [s]caenae d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) su[a] / [pe]c(unia) fac(iundum) cur(avit) ead(em) / [q]ue probavi[t].<sup>95</sup>

Plotia Rutila saw to the construction of the lowest section of theatre-seats and the platform for the stage, by decree of the local town councillors, and she also approved it.

No wonder that the original editor thought that something must be missing from the start of this inscription, suggesting that a man's name was missing,

<sup>91</sup> Silvestrini (2000) 81 argues for the reading 'Valeria Sabina' rather than 'Valeria wife of Sabinus'. Flacceius Flaccus: Torelli (1993) 220–221.

<sup>92</sup> Pedley and Torelli (1993) 195 no. 1, 210 no. 7, 223–226, 236–237; Silvestrini (2000).

<sup>93</sup> Torelli (1999) 179.

<sup>94</sup> *Paestum* 158.

<sup>95</sup> *Suplt* 3 (1987) 47 no. 2 = *AE* 1988, 405.

followed by [*cum Pl*]otia Rutila, '[with] Plotia Rutila'.<sup>96</sup> He could only assume that Plotia Rutila was included in the inscription as wife of the actual benefactor. Now that the inscription has been rediscovered and published with a photograph, however, it is clear that Plotia Rutila was solely responsible for paying for the work to be done, and for supervising and approving the building-work. Although far from a precise science, the lettering forms of the inscription are suggestive of a date in the late Republic, before the Augustan revolution allegedly liberated women to do this sort of thing. This dating is also suggested by the use of limestone, and by use of the word *spectacula* to refer to the building-project. An Augustan date cannot be excluded, but it certainly shows women participating in civic life in a way that is strikingly parallel to their male counterparts, and it shows that at least some women in the cities of Italy went far beyond the expectations raised by imperial role models.

### *Conclusion*

Material evidence, therefore, especially inscriptions and coins, can open our eyes to the impact made by individual women in Italian towns from the mid-first century BC onwards. The Augustan era does seem to have marked a change of pace in the activity of female benefactors in Italy, and the legal changes of the period may go some way to explaining how this could come about. In terms of what motivated women to act as public benefactors, much of our evidence points to the importance of the family context, and this is as true of the imperial women as of the local elite. Without doubt Livia did act as a role model for other elite women in Rome and Italy to some extent, but there is a dangerous simplicity in attributing too much influence to her. Simple imitation of Livia even among later imperial women is rare;<sup>97</sup> instead, we should see the Augustan period as a period of experimentation in defining women's public roles, with women among the local elite taking the lead both in creatively imitating imperial women and also in acting in an innovative way. Instead of assuming that influence extended only in one direction, outwards from Rome, we should not exclude the possibility of mutual influence.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, non-imperial women may actually have been freer to act without the constraints of having to conform to expectations

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<sup>96</sup> *Inscrit* 3.1, 120 no. 208.

<sup>97</sup> Purcell (1986) 96–97.

<sup>98</sup> Hemelrijk (2005) 317.



governing their behaviour. We have seen how some women acted within the context of their families, supporting Milnor's argument that the Augustan era is characterised by 'ways in which women were used in conversations about, and constructions of, the urban environment as a means of mediating between civic and domestic ideals'.<sup>99</sup> Religion provided another framework within which women could act as public benefactors. This did not only apply to what might be regarded as female cults, such as that of the *Bona Dea*. Towns in Campania in particular fostered the role of *sacerdos publica* as being one that created opportunities for women to spend their money for the public good. Some women, however, acted outside the religious sphere, and made public benefactions to their towns in ways that do not appear to be restricted by a sense of what might seem appropriate to their gender. Although chronological indicators are often vague, there is enough cumulative evidence to suggest that such women were not always imitating imperial role models, but were themselves innovators and possibly trend-setters. It is difficult to judge quite how exceptional were women like Eumachia, Terentia, Mineia, Valeria, Sabina, and Plotia Rutila, but they illustrate the start of a process which led to the integration of women into the landscape of the towns of Italy by the second century AD, and suggest that non-imperial women were just as important as their imperial counterparts in pushing forwards the boundaries traditionally set for female behaviour.

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<sup>99</sup> Milnor (2005) 48.

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