# With Her Own Money: Female Benefactions, Urban Space, and Power Relationships in Ancient Rome

by

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# Abstract

While it is generally accepted that monumental public buildings in the ancient world communicated the power and wealth of their benefactors, whether and how this equation worked when the person funding the construction was female is a matter of current debate. Studies of this phenomenon have understood women's building benefactions as primarily about promoting the careers of their male relatives and/or as a substitute for their own political career. Often, it is assumed that women's choice of building type was circumscribed by tradition so that they built only "appropriate" structures, like temples. While not denying that these dynamics may have played a part in women's choices, the current study seeks a more nuanced and culturally meaningful discussion by placing the female benefactors themselves at the centre of the discussion and by parsing the urban landscape in terms that aid a deeper understanding of their project(s). Starting from the surviving epigraphic data for women's public building benefactions, this study is comprised of six case studies—five in Italy and one in Roman North Africa—that examine eleven excavated structures paid for by elite women between the first and third centuries CE. To understand better the social dynamics at play in the ancient world, these six studies take a close look at the benefactors in question and their familial connection to the cities where they built. Each study also explores the historical context, urban setting, and decorative programs of the buildings in question including debates concerning the scope and meaning of each benefaction. Contrary to scholars who assume a gendered aspect to building, this study argues that the available evidence does not support the assumption that women were restricted to the construction of certain types of public structures, nor that women's public buildings should be understood as concerned with the careers of male relatives. Rather, this study argues that the evidence points to the existence of a female hierarchy that mirrored that of elite males within which women expressed their elite status, wealth, and access to agency and competed using the same "vocabulary" as that exploited by wealthy and powerful men.

# Preface

This thesis is an original work by Karin S. Tate. A portion of the discussion in chapter 6 concerning the Porticus Liviae and Porticus Octaviae is published as "Contested Constructions: Cassius Dio and the Framing of Female Participation as Builders" in a forthcoming book, *Cassius Dio in His Intellectual Context: Greek and Roman Pasts,* Adam Kemezis, Colin Bailey, and Beatrice Poletti, editors. Brill, 2022.

In loving memory of

Connie Abrook

Alberta Tate

Brenda Thiessen Cram

&

Lisa Weintraub

*Dux Femina Facti*

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## Abbreviations

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| *AE* | *L'Année epigraphique.* |
| *Bull. Com.* | *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica del Comune di Roma.* |
| *Bull. Ist. Arch.* | *Bullettino dell'Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica.* |
| *Bull. Ist. Stor. Ital.* | *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano.* |
| *CIL* | *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.* |
| *EAOR* | *Epigrafia anfiteatrale dell'Occidente romano.* P. Sabbatini Tumolesi, G.L. Gregori, ed. Rome 1988—. |
| *ERAssisi* | *Epigrafi lapidarie romane di Assisi.* G. Forni, ed. Perugia 1987. |
| *ILLRP* | *Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae.* 2 vols. A. Degrassi, ed. Florence 1957, 1963. |
| *ILAfr* | *Inscriptions latines d'Afrique (Tripolitaine, Tunisie, Maroc).* R. Cagnat, A. Merlin, L. Chatelain, eds. Paris, 1923. |
| *ILP* | *Le iscrizioni latine di Paestum.* M. Mello and G. Voza, eds. Naples, 1968. |
| *ILS* | *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae.* ed. Dessau, H. Berlin 1962. |
| *ILTun* | *Inscriptions Latines de la Tunisie.* Paris 1944. |
| *LTUR* | *Lexicon Topigraphicum Urbis Romae.* Eva Margareta Steinby, ed. |
| *NSA* | *Notizie degli scavi di antichità.* |
| *PIR*$^{1}$ | *Prosopographia Imperii Romani Saeculi I, II, III.* E. Klebs and H. Dessau, eds. Berlin 1896-98. |
| *PIR*$^{2}$ | *Prosopographia Imperii Romani Saeculi I, II, III.* 2d. Groag, E., and A. Stein, eds. Berlin 1933—. |
| *RIC* | *The Roman Imperial Coinage.* 6 vols. H. Mattingly, E.A. Sydenham, and R.A.G. Carson, eds. London 1923-51. |
| *RPC* | *Roman Provincial Coinage.* M. Amandry, A. Burnett, P.P. Ripolles, eds. London 2005. |
| *SNG ANS* | *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum.* Collection of the American Numismatic Society, pt. 2 Lucania. Hyla A Troxell. 1972. New York 1972. |

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| *SNGCop* | *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*. The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, Danish National Museum, pt. 3 Lucania (Poseidonia)-Bruttium. Copenhagen, 1942. |

# *Introduction*

An increasing number of academic texts have over the last few decades focused on the apparent contradiction of women as public figures—that is, the dichotomy between the expectations and limitations Roman society placed on women versus the literary, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence suggesting that this is not the whole picture. The conversation has developed gradually under the influence of an interest in adding women and other marginalized populations to our understanding of history. It has grown from discussions concerning the public presence and private clout of Rome's empresses and recently been expanded to include elite women outside the imperial house and women of other strata of Roman society. At the same time, much attention has been paid to public spaces and structures, and to the relationship between builder and the urban vocabulary of building. This work seeks to combine the two discussions, asking how we are to understand the prominent and very public participation of women who funded public structures. Were such women transgressive? How do they fit into our understanding of Romanization, urbanization, and the purpose and meaning of civic benefaction? In short, this work is concerned primarily with expanding our understanding of Roman society via the window of female public participation as benefactors of public structures; as builders and restorers of shrines and temples, baths, theatres and amphitheaters, porticos, and basilica, during the first three centuries of the imperial period. What makes this inquiry unique is that it considers the meaning and implication of women's participation not just through the act of building, but via the vocabulary of urban space: setting, proximity, form, and decoration. It assumes that buildings not only hold meaning as individual structures but that spatial relationships reveal a society's priorities.[1]

[1] Favro 1996, 8–9. Thomas 1993, 20, 28.

Not considered citizens in the full sense, women in ancient Rome occupied a liminal space in their society as simultaneous insiders and outsiders. They could not vote, hold public office, participate in the military, or appear in court except in limited circumstances. But even with the public aspects of their lives circumscribed by custom and law, women nevertheless participated in the public sphere alongside men as benefactors, including of buildings, laying out sometimes enormous amounts of money to see a project through to completion. The main problem is that buildings paid for by women have, when studied at all, not received the same attention as those funded by male benefactors, on the apparent assumption that women lacked reasons for building as compelling or straightforward as those of men. Indeed, public building has been much studied as regards male political activity and is usually framed as a means of declaring one's possession of wealth and power; of asserting one's rightful claim to public attention and status as, for example, the successful conqueror of a foreign people or holder of high public office. Women, it is held, were to concern themselves with home and family. Still, for women no less than for men, paying for structures intended for public use inserted the benefactor into public life because of the natural interplay between building and meaning and the impact public structures had on citizens' understanding of their society and its import on the world stage. Dedicatory inscriptions attached to the structures they paid for connected each building patron's name with a place, and each place carried meaning. A concentration on public structures was chosen, therefore, because it presents a unique opportunity to explore a place of apparent tension or liminality: the contrast between the exclusion of women from public participation in civic life versus their claim on spaces in that same public sphere through building.

In terms of theory and approach, perhaps the main problem with work on women's participation as builders of public structures has thus far been the inattention to the phenomenon on its own terms. Instead, for the most part scholars ignore women's various contributions, often misattributing their structures as actually built by a man or sidelining them

as unique exceptions to the rule that building spoke to socio-political necessities deemed the preserve of men alone. We must wonder then: what was a woman expressing when she built? Some have proposed that women must have built to further the public prominence of their male relatives or that women stepped in to fill a gap created by men disincentivized by an imperial system that rendered competition for power meaningless.[2] What these interpretations have in common is that they place men at the centre of the subject and therefore miss other potential readings of the evidence. This study seeks an interpretation that puts women at the centre in the hopes that doing so will result in an enhanced understanding of how women lived and functioned in a society seemingly marshalled against their civic expression.

This study joins in a conversation that has been evolving since at least the 1990s. Notably, a PhD dissertation by Margaret Woodhull, completed in 1999, framed the empress Livia as the prototype female public benefactor. Woodhull argued that women who funded public structures were creating their own *res gestae* because they were denied access to other forms of civic participation, and were asserting their "female priorities" when they built.[3] The idea of women possessing or "building" a public persona has been picked up by others, most recently by Emily Hemelrijk in her 2015 book, *Hidden Lives, Public Personae: Women and Civic Life in the Roman West*, which examines epigraphic evidence for women's public contributions, including building inscriptions as well as those on altars and statues. The notion is a compelling one and seems to explain the phenomenon of women funding building projects, but it needs expanding and would profit from being problematized and explored in more depth. That is why the current study takes a different approach. What can we learn about the nature of women's public participation as commissioners of public structures if we shift the theoretical framework through which it is examined? More specifically, if we approach female public

[2] For example, Petersen 2006, 51; Caballero 2001, 198-199; Van Bremen 1996, 5 and 297-302; Caballero 1997, 109-140.
[3] Woodhull 1999, 20-24; 105-107; 227-231.

building the same way men's benefactions have been—as part of a society-wide phenomenon whose underpinnings were rooted in specific hierarchical considerations, does that change our interpretation? The problem with the public persona theory is that it is at once obvious and vague and can lead down some potentially misleading channels.

Borrowing from spatial and feminist theory and taking female participation as a manifestation of social realities and not as an activity extraneous or subsidiary to that of men, this study seeks to understand the nature of those realities and the mechanisms they suggest. The real question is, since women could not have a *cursus honorum*, what was the point of developing a public persona? Was competition their intent? If so, with whom were they competing? Is it legitimate to say that a building stands in for public achievement or functions as a substitute for civic participation of the type men undertook? Were the implications of public benefaction different for women than for men? Woodhull's assertion that women were expressing their feminine priorities is surely based upon the understanding that women were invested in the roles society dictated for them—a fair assumption, given the nature of Roman society but, again, one that rather too easily becomes a gloss of social realities rather than a means of understanding them. Using geographic case studies to examine more closely the types of structures that women built and where, this study explores the possibility that these fantastically wealthy and well-connected female benefactors were expressing their public powers, not attempting to create them. After all, if buildings can be understood as testifying to the powers of a wealthy man to patronize his community, what is the evidence for assuming a different paradigm for women? Each of the individual case studies here describes structures paid for by women and explores each woman's family history in the city within which each chose to build. By tracing connections between the type of structure chosen and its placement in the urban environment we may gain insight into the import and meaning of each structure. Ultimately, we can see that the social status of each of these women required a performative aspect; that women took up their obligation to act as community leaders whose personal and

family connections were advertised in the most expensive way possible—by building substantial public structures the implications of which were simultaneously political *and* personal. The emphasis is on social hierarchies and, in particular, on women as constituting a separate *ordo* within Roman society, competing within their own social hierarchy for prominence and in order to proclaim their own comparative worthiness by asserting their influence, wealth, and/or familial prestige in the context of community memory just as the female members of the imperial house did and as the wives, mothers, and sisters of leading men before them.

# *1—Approaching the Topic*

> With the best intentions in the world, single-minded researchers have … penned women into a γυναικεῖον of the library shelves. Instead of this scholarly apartheid I think that research into these sharply defined social categories could very productively focus on what institutions, structures, attitudes and mores helped weaken the definitions. Then we could cease simply to reproduce the ancient official version—which would be antiquarianism—and, instead, reinterpret using our own perceptions and questions—which is history.
>
> Nicholas Purcell 1986

## The Nature of the Evidence

Our evidence for structures built during the first three centuries of the imperial era (the range of this study) is literary, epigraphic, and material (that is, derived from archaeological excavation). Thanks to the 'epigraphic habit,' the propensity of Romans to document their achievements by inscribing them on stone, more than 300 inscriptions survive to attest to women who funded the construction or reconstruction of public structures. In some cases, an inscription specifies the type of building commissioned and the nature of the work for which the benefactor was directly responsible. Inscriptions frequently assert that the person named took responsibility (*fecit*, i.e.., "made [this]") and paid for the work with her own money (*sua pecunia*). Phrases that clarify the nature of their involvement (*faciundum curavit*, "oversaw the work being done") or indicate the scope of the work undertaken (*a solo*, "(built) from the ground up") are less frequently employed.[4] Literary works can supplement the information provided by inscriptions about a particular structure or reference a place whose dedicatory inscription has not survived. In most cases, these are valuable yet frustrating references, as authors tend to assume the reader's knowledge of the building in question.

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[4] Admittedly, inscriptions are not unproblematic as the 1992 study by Edmund Thomas and Christian Witschel makes clear. Their study examines instances where the language of building inscriptions and the archaeological record do not agree and concludes that certain words were either used loosely in order to exaggerate the scope of the work undertaken—as, for example, when a building's dedicatory inscription claims that the structure was built from the ground up (*a solo*) but archaeological investigation suggests that it was in fact a reconstruction of a previously existing structure.

But while inscriptions and literature are invaluable pieces in the puzzle, there is more to a building than simply knowing that it existed and who paid for it. Buildings inhabit physical space; they establish the nature and import of an urban area (civic/political/public versus commercial/domestic/private). Civic structures suggest the nature of the society that prioritized, designed, and built them because, unlike individual homes or businesses, they are understood as communicating important shared ideas related to civic identity, and as representing larger social realities. As Umberto Eco observed, structures are "a datum of culture," for the meaning they convey through their distinct forms.[5] Studies that focus on the urban environment, then, begin with the understanding that meaning is communicated predominantly, but not solely, through the arrangement of buildings according to a hierarchy of building types and locations whose import derives from their centrality or proximity to major thoroughfares or to ideologically charged structures or to areas for public gathering. When taken together, public structures create the image of the city as decidedly Roman, or not, regardless of their placement within the urban landscape even while their own meaning is amplified or expanded by their association to surrounding elements. And because of this connection between building and meaning, the archaeological remains of structures are a valuable source of information. The size, degree and type of decoration and the building's placement within the urban environment all communicate information about both the construction of social meaning and the priorities and interests of the individual who funded the building project.

So far, studies of ancient Roman monumental public architecture (baths, temples, basilicae, fora, archways, etc.) have tended to connect building with the interests of victorious generals or of emperors.[6] Building in Rome is seen as part of the creation of an imperial ethos (the emperor's obsession and sole prerogative) and Rome's image as capital or, magnified out to

[5] Eco 1986, 60.
[6] Boatwright 1987; Favro 1996; Gorrie 1997; Rehak 2007; Zanker 1988.

the provinces, as key to furthering the careers of elite males in the context of status-conscious competition.[7] Both the act of building (that is, funding building projects) and buildings themselves are taken as signs of male power, and, more specifically, of constructing an image for builder and his city. The emphasis has, in broad terms, therefore been decidedly on the actions of those men at the top of the social hierarchy. But while building has traditionally been connected with the possession of political power, wealth, patronage, or influence, the implications of elite female activity as financers of public building projects has very rarely been explored and usually not assigned these same meanings. It is the convergence of these ideas—that public buildings communicated civic ideals and priorities and that those who paid for these structures placed themselves at the centre of a discourse of power, wealth, and influence—that poses difficulties when women acted as the public benefactor. Rather than focus solely on the information conveyed by building inscriptions, though, this study examines the physical remains of particular structures and locates the ideologies they convey within the urban environment. Archaeological details allow an assessment of the scope and cost of the structures involved,[8] and have the potential of contributing nuanced details that are arguably key to understanding more fully the social constituency of female munificence. Besides the indispensable questions of the social mechanisms behind the apparent acceptability of women using their money to build in public, we might ask whether there are patterns, for example, to the placement of public buildings paid for by women — or in the types of buildings built by imperial women and elite women outside of Rome — and, if so, what they might mean.[9] Since

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[7] Boatwright 1987; Zanker 1988; Veyne 1990; Favro 1996; Gorrie 1997; Rehak 2006; Thomas 2007; Zuiderhoek 2009.
[8] Werner Eck 1992, 320–21.
[9] While there is little to suggest that elite women besides those of the imperial family built in Rome itself, a few literary references attest that they did. Dio, 55.8.4: Polla, the sister of Marcus Agrippa, reportedly paid for the construction of the Porticus Vipsania (completed after 7 BCE, according to Dio, by Augustus) and for embellishments to the "racetracks." As for structures, Hemelrijk 2015, 30-35, formulates statistics of incidences of female building using inscriptions, though without separating the evidence into instances by type of structure. She also excludes imperial women from her study.

we know that the Romans assigned meaning to physical spaces, though, and that certain areas of the city were imbued with greater significance than other areas, we can use archaeological records to add to our understanding of the import of these benefactions.[10] Are there correspondences in this regard between Rome and beyond — were women in Rome building certain types of structures and employing certain decorative schemes that were echoed in Italian cities and were these types still preferred the further one moved from the center? Even within a given locality, questions concerning what a building situated on a major thoroughfare or in the forum might have communicated to the passersby are surely significant. Is it possible that the building in question participated in an apparent thematic program with nearby structures and, if so, what are the implications of this? What might have been the experience of a visitor to the city upon encountering the constellation of structures in a given area?

For the most part, so far, when structures paid for by women are studied, the interpretation offered for their decision to undertake such a costly public benefaction was in order to promote the careers of their male relatives.[11] This family-centered explanation is undoubtedly true for both female and male public benefactors and yet men, we are told, built in order to assert their own individual claim to public attention, while women built in order to proclaim that of their families. In a sense, this is understandable. After all, Roman women were (officially, at least) excluded from public life; they could not vote, hold public office, or participate in public debate. This meant that women were barred from participation in any of the aspects of civic life that garnered glory and public attention for their male counterparts. Indeed, public attention, for women, often held the potential charge of being transgressive. Women were not supposed to seek the public eye. And yet during the first three centuries of the imperial age, especially, women were commissioning monumental structures of the same kind

[10] See works such as Rehak 1998; Zanker 1988.
[11] Interpretations emphasizing female support for male political activity has been put forward, notably, by Boatwright 1991; Eck 2013; van Bremen 1996.

to which we impute so much meaning when they are built by men. This is significant if we think in terms of women figuratively occupying physical spaces in the city from which they were usually barred via the structures they commissioned or restorations they funded. Buildings—and especially buildings as monuments or places of remembrance—when paid for by women offer an opportunity to explore the relationship between women and public space despite the long-held belief that public space in the Roman conception was purely a male domain.

## Research Context & Theoretical Considerations

Historians have long debated the implications of 'public' and 'private' in ancient Rome, usually treating the two as opposites: the public sphere (political spaces: the forum, basilica, curia, comitium) is imagined as an entirely male environment while women were consigned to the private sphere, the *domus*.[12] This is reinforced by Roman authors who asserted continually that women did not belong where business or statecraft were being practiced. Putting it succinctly, the jurist Ulpian wrote that *feminae ab omnibus officiis civilibus vel publicis remotae sunt* ("women are separated from all civil and public functions").[13] Clearly, though, we must question the accuracy of the picture presented by Roman authors when it is nearly devoid of women and when the women who do appear are presented as little more than examples to admire or reject. Can it be true that women were in every way outside of the "public" sphere and had no influence at all on the workings of the everyday world? After all, it is impossible to imagine that Roman women were merely either model wives and mothers or grasping harpies intent on power to which they have no legitimate claim. And even if they were either of those things, the question as to how and why they came to build remains.

Even with clichés and (mis)representations aside, though, there are several issues that hinder our ability to understand the Roman versions of concepts like "space" and "public" or

[12] The vocabulary Roman's used for "public" and "private" in the modern sense are not directly translatable.
[13] Ulpian, *Dig*. 50.17.2. Also *Dig*. 5.12.2 and 16.1.1.

"private." First, we may unintentionally or unconsciously simplify concepts that are difficult to map out, probably because everyday life is messy and inconsistent whereas the documents from which we work represent neat interpretations worked out by their authors with the gift of hindsight. As Amy Russell has pointed out, notions of public and private in Republican Rome (and later as well) were anything but clearly defined and were often contested.[14] This should be a caution against taking Roman authors' assessments at face value. The apparent binary opposition of the concepts of public and private would be unfortunate, as well, if it tempted us to assume a domesticity for Roman women that mirrors modern Western notions.[15] One solution to this potential pitfall is to, as Lefebvre and others intimated, think of space in terms of places built to accommodate the needs of different segments of Roman society. It has been theorized, for example, that "public" spaces in the Roman Republic were defined as those where the rights and duties of citizenship were exercised.[16] The Forum Romanum was therefore the political and legal heart of the city because it was the location of the Curia, Comitium, and Rostra. Thanks to the collocation of these buildings, the Forum Romanum was where citizens acted as a collective, participating in statecraft, debating, and enacting legislation that worked to guarantee the peaceful continuance of society. Following this, it makes sense that women should be conceived as essentially of the "private" sphere since their limited citizenship excluded them from any of the actions that were hallmarks of full citizenship. The alienation of women from the centres of power are mirrored in Livy, for example, where Roman society is presented as primarily male, and women as foreigners stolen out of necessity to ensure the continuance of the fledgling state. Livy's projection of this situation onto the past shows us at the very least not only that this was how men of his time conceived of their society but that they believed that in the past Roman

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[14] Russell 2016, 11.
[15] And even these Western traditions are a fairly recent tradition, historically speaking, and applicable only to women of the upper and upper-middle classes, as having a wife at home advertised a man's ability to provide for his family. Working class women and farming women have always worked both inside and outside the home.
[16] See Sibley 1995, 74-75, Boatwright 2011, 108.

men felt the same. In a very real way, then, women are *defined* as lacking any right to participation in official affairs. Thanks to this relationship to the state, it seems inevitable that women's presence in public spaces like the Forum would be controversial, even offensive, to traditional Roman sensibilities. Ironically, the habit of projecting modern religious sensibilities onto ancient Roman ones is revealed not only in the scholarly habit of ignoring or sidelining female religious leadership, for example, but also through the tendency of scholars to assume that shrines, temples, etc., were building types that women could fund unproblematically.[17]

This formula concerning space and its use, however, applies, too, to helping us understand where women belonged—or didn't belong. We look immediately to the household (*domus*) and see that even there "women's spaces" were not clearly delineated. Roman authors clearly associated women with the domestic sphere, and yet the elite domus of the Republican and imperial periods were intimately connected to the public persona of the householder, the *paterfamilias*, as revealed in the axial arrangement of the domus' main rooms. The entrance of these homes led into the atrium where the *pater* awaited his *clientes'* daily *salutatio*, and the atrium led directly to the householder's *tablinum* or office. Vitruvius comments on the housing requirements of important men in his discussion of domestic architecture, stating that the atria of office holding magistrates ought to mimic that of public architecture, such was the connection between a man's home and the business of the state.[18] Family-use rooms were arranged *around* the rooms used principally by the *pater*. The women of the household, so famous for working wool—if they did work wool—used the atrium only after the man of the house and his cadre of

[17] Olivier de Cazanove and John Scheid are two scholars who deny women any agency in traditional Roman religious practices, especially sacrificial capacity. See De Cazanove 1987, 167-168 and Scheid 1992, 379, for examples.

[18] Vitruvius 6.5.1-2. The *nobiles* engaged in public office need homes "…non dissimili modo quam publicorum operum magnificentia comparatas, quod in domibus eorum saepius et publica consilia et private iudicia arbitriaque conficiuntur."

followers had made their way to the forum or the baths.[19] Women's space in Republican Rome was thus largely provisional and conditional, much like their claim to public space.

Women's appearance in civic (public) life was always contested and this appears not to have changed much over time, even while women became public figures with the advent of the imperial period. As Augustus' reign was established, though, his initial attention, which was focused on consolidating his powers, turned towards restoring traditional religion and mores to the Roman people. To achieve this, Augustus used his *auctoritas* to implement legislation aimed at reviving the birth rate and penalizing private conduct perceived as contrary to his aims. Consciously not-a-dictator, Augustus' stance as arbiter of traditional morality was necessarily centered on himself as *princeps* of the senate, *pontifex maximus,* the top man among the College of Priests, and *paterfamilias* of a household, the base unit of Roman society. The *potestas* always possessed by the *paterfamilias* was thus amplified through Augustus as *pontifex* and applied to the state. How modern scholars have framed and interpreted the complex interplay of social and cultural dynamics and the performative aspect of architecture is the focus of this chapter. As the emphasis here is on women as opposed to civic life in general or civic benefaction overall, we will begin with the question of women and Rome's public life.

We may trace an interest in women in ancient Rome beginning in the early twentieth century, inspired, in all likelihood, by the advent of women's suffrage. Helen E. Wieand was an early pioneer, not only as a woman publishing in a field dominated by men but as a scholar whose descriptive research explored Roman women's legal and social statuses, using comparison with the strictures placed on Greek women to establish context and provide contrast.[20] Especially interesting, though, are instances when Wieand draws from contemporary

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[19] Severy 2003, 21, comments that the loom belonging to the woman of the house was displayed in the atrium because it represented family respectability and would have possessed the same symbolic import as her husband's military trophies. Her emphasis on the social weight to the Roman *matrona* is important, though it does not mitigate the liminality of women even in their own homes.

[20] Wieand published an article in two parts, "The Position of Women in the Late Roman Republic" in 1917 while still a student at Bryn Mawr. She received her PhD in Latin in 1920.

experience to comment on the ancient world—a comparison, for example, between how Roman society relegated women to exerting private influence on their male relatives as a replacement for direct civic involvement, and the arguments against women's suffrage actively endorsed by women who opposed it.[21] Following Wieand, a smattering of articles in a similar vein were published between 1920 and 1970. These tended to describe evidence for Roman male attitudes towards women or reiterate the restrictions placed on female action without much critical assessment.[22] Starting in the 1960s, however, and moving through the 1980s the timbre of scholarship about women shifted markedly from naming the sources for female activity in ancient Rome to questioning how scholars had been approaching and interpreting that evidence.

Nicholas Purcell's 1986 paper, "Livia and the Womanhood of Rome," sought to reposition Livia's influence, historically understood as informal and unwarranted, as rooted in legitimate relational structures. To achieve this, Purcell gathered the fragmentary historical clues that hint at the complementarity of male-female social standing and "powers" in the highly stratified and class-divided society of ancient Rome and followed them to their logical conclusions.[23] Livia's position, Purcell argued, was neither strictly private nor entirely public but generated as a result of honours granted her combined with her standing as wife of the Princeps. As such, Livia was the *de facto* leader of the *ordo matronarum,* the elite women of Rome acting as a group. Purcell looked most closely at two aspects of Livia's role, "Livia the patron" and "Livia the mediator." Although he did not consider Livia's role as builder in great depth, the fact that he highlighted her role as patron to the citizens of the city — most particularly the female elite — who mediated public and private through her agency as *mater patriae*, was ground-

[21] Wieand 1917a, 389.
[22] To be fair, some of the scholarship during this early period is remarkable for undertaking a topic not taken very seriously at the time.
[23] Purcell 1986, 78–105.

breaking. In Purcell's estimation, Livia's social standing and the honours she has been given by the state implied a quasi-political role, but he left for further debate the question of whether Livia's achievements and honours had a broader impact on the lives of women generally. Still, it is not to this image of women as actors and mediators that most subsequent scholars returned when crafting their own explorations of the relationship of imperial women to the public sphere. This can only be termed a lost opportunity, as Purcell's intriguing proposition of a female *ordo* as well as of an implied and technically informal—but nevertheless actual—*auctoritas* attached to Livia (and all later empresses) has been largely downplayed in most subsequent scholarship.[24] Even more, one of the implications of Purcell's study—that elite women in other locations might have possessed some degree of *auctoritas* as well and sought channels for its expression—has so far been barely touched upon as a viable rationale for study.

Far too often, in fact, the emphasis has remained on the great man with women as secondary characters—a view which, to be fair, is only the logical outcome of studying ancient history as it has been constructed and presented so far.[25] Marleen B. Flory, one of the few English-speaking scholars to write almost exclusively on women in ancient Rome, focused on female potential as creators of heirs for the establishment of dynasty and on the ways that Augustus skillfully manipulated the public image of his sister and wife for political advantage.[26] Any interplay between female public action and private agency is almost nullified in her interpretations, and the women become passive recipients of *undeserved* public honours. This emphasis on women as pawns in an imperial 'propaganda' game prevailed among works produced during the 1990s, especially, following as it does some highly influential works from

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[24] Purcell 1986, 81.
[25] Smethurst 1950, 86-87, articulated the underlying assumption in his study of women in Livy's *History*: that Rome's was a warrior society and, as such, the only activities and attributes that mattered pertained to that. "In such an historical design," he wrote, "women must necessarily play the subordinate parts of foils…"
[26] Flory 1993, 292-294. Italian scholar Francesca Cenerini shares this emphasis on women as vital to the establishment of dynastic aspirations, though this seems to me reductive—and fairly obvious.

the preceding decades that applied heavily political (i.e., androcentric) interpretations to social, artistic, and architectural expression during the Principate. By the 1990s, though, there was clearly an on-going debate over whether Roman women experienced over time anything like an increase in autonomy.[27] In the midst of this, Flory chose a traditional philological approach and applied it not only to the portrait statues of Octavia and Livia that were part of the honours granted them in 35 BCE, but to her interpretation of the Porticus of Livia as well.[28] She returned continually to the themes of motherhood and domesticity and how these were subject to political manipulation in the imperial era. For the most part, then, Flory's interpretations were themselves androcentric in that she took Roman male representations of reality at face value when we have good reasons to suspect that women took on a broader range of preoccupations, work, and obligations than such emphases acknowledge. Even more, though, Flory was a political historian and saw imperial women as mostly passive players in the game of imperial power politics. This study avoids both pitfalls by, in the first place, parsing the androcentric assumptions to which the study of women in the ancient world has been prone and in the second place by defining legitimate power as possessing aspect both public and private, official, and unofficial.

Returning for a moment to this question of whether we can get a good sense of women's lived reality from ancient sources, the on-going debate over whether our modern notion of emancipation applies to the shifts that took place in Roman society with regards to women is, I think, somewhat misdirected and has resulted in an emphasis on making direct comparisons with Roman men that was only partially successful in helping recover women's historical participation and its meanings. With regards to female activity in the public sphere, only Riet van Bremen's 1996 monograph, *The Limits of Participation: Women and Civic Life in the Greek*

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[27] Cantarella 1987, 135–70. Cantarella used primarily legal documents as her source, and she argues that Roman women experienced a slow but progressive improvement in their legal rights over time.
[28] Flory 1984, 309-330.

*East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, addressed the issue at hand. Van Bremen challenged the notion that there may have been an increasing amount of personal agency available to women over time, arguing that women did not think of themselves as active agents but as part of a family that required promotion and a public persona.[29] Indeed, Van Bremen's assessment of ancient society highlights the segregation of the sexes and sees in this not the exclusion of women, but their possession of a complementary role in the public sphere that was nevertheless subordinate to the needs and priorities of men and of the family group. Her research was clearly exhaustive, though her interpretive turn that women always acted in subordination to men made her unable to account for civic building in which males were not central.[30] In many ways this work was ground-breaking, and today could be said to embody the debate over whether women in the ancient world acted "in their own right," as men are thought to have, or were ultimately constrained by tradition and co-opted into public action that served only male interests. Still, it is not as though women were alone in being constrained by the requirements of allegiance to family or the need to build a public persona worthy of one's lineage. This pressure was, if anything, even more heavily placed upon men and we might argue that men were also taught to prioritize the needs of the family unit in the context of community expectations. Even more to the point, we must wonder to what degree men thought of themselves as "active agents" and whether that notion is as self-explanatory as it appears. Regardless, women's activities as public priestesses, benefactors, and patrons can only be considered secondary as long as we are focused on what is "primary," which is, by this definition, what is male. Putting it another way, there had to have been an internal logic to

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[29] Van Bremen 1996, 96.
[30] Van Bremen 1996, 100-103, discusses the public benefactions of a woman named Publia Plancia Aurelia Magniana Motoxaris (of Selge), who built monumentally while her brother, Perikles, did not. Van Bremen argues that Motoxaris was active in the public sphere because she had to stand in for her deceased mother as her father's public companion.

women's public benefactions, one through which status and dignity were asserted within their own sphere of influence and action.

To understand women's contributions to the built environment, then, works that consider ancient urban structure and organization become as central as those concerning the place of women. One work is the 1986 second volume of William L. MacDonald's two volume study of Roman imperial architecture, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire: II, An Urban Appraisal.* Key to MacDonald's exploration of urban space was the concept of "urban armatures," or areas of movement and public activity which bound cities together. MacDonald conceived of the armature as an organizational feature of Roman urbanism that unified and provided coherence and meaning to cities, "a sense of place, of perceived location, but also…of affirming that one's town belonged to the interlocking mosaic of communities making up the Roman world."[31] MacDonald takes urban space as a unity and sees meaning in the juxtaposition of public buildings one with another. Formal and functional relationships are highlighted, and the urban environment taken as an organic whole. MacDonald does not dismiss the importance of studying individual structures but argues convincingly that each building needs to be understood as part of its larger physical and psychic context. This is applicable to the current study not only as a general principle but as a framework through which the implications of each structure might be understood more fully. It is worth noting that MacDonald highlights the importance of understanding how ancient cities, unlike modern cities, did not concentrate one or two building types into a special designated neighborhood or area but tended to mix domestic, commercial, and civic structures throughout, with areas focused on political activity having pride of place. In the case studies here, except for structures built in a city's main forum, each building existed in an area not designated specifically for entertainment or for business or for habitation. This shifts the emphasis away from the idea that neighborhood alone assigned

[31] MacDonald 1986, 30.

meaning to the structure in question and broadens it to take into consideration other key elements like main roads, city gates, the forum, as well as to neighboring buildings.

It is unfortunate that works explicitly focused on women in the ancient world are not more specific and plentiful, as one is left to extrapolate from studies of Roman men how the female sphere might have actually functioned in contrast to the ways that it is described in works by ancient men. Paul Zanker's study of meaning in architecture in *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, for example, is important for the template it establishes as much as for what it explicitly discusses. Zanker marked changes the first emperor wrought in the decoration and extravagance of temples throughout Rome, observing that while Augustus saw to these religious projects, he left secular ones to his family members and friends, especially Marcus Agrippa. Zanker does not treat Livia's work at restoring temples, but his observations concerning Augustus' prioritization of cults that were close to his heart, such as Apollo, Venus, and Mars Ultor, could serve as a model for understanding Livia's work in this area as well. More broadly, the emphasis on building as public competition and on the overlap of private and public in the late Republican and early imperial eras might be advantageously applied to a study of female building, especially to work done by imperial women in the city of Rome.

Paul Rehak's study of the Augustan monuments of the Campus Martius in his book *Imperium and Cosmos: Augustus and the Northern Campus Martius* also invites a potentially useful theoretical template.[32] This work, along with the earlier work of Diane Favro on Augustan Rome, was what first made me think about monuments and their placement in Rome as possessing particular meanings.[33] Favro's book, especially, is illuminating because it provides a starting point, one to which Rehak clearly harkens. *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* picked up on the conversation about Roman cityscapes evidenced in MacDonald's work, exploring the

[32] Completed by colleagues following his death in 2004.
[33] Rehak, 2006; Favro, 1996.

relationship between the iconography, scale, and form of buildings and the narratives naturally constructed by those experiencing the urban landscape that tied them together. For both Favro and Rehak, the meaning of buildings lay not in individual structures but in their interplay with the surrounding urban setting. "Like words in a text," Favro wrote, "buildings do not stand alone, but have to be read as part of a phrase or sentence."[34] In many ways, Favro's and Rehak's work also expand and comment on that of Zanker, whose concentration on symbolism is taken to its logical conclusion through examinations of spatial arrangements as likewise possessing significance. Research by Ray Laurence, David Newsome, and others expands on these ideas even further, as they explore movement through cities like Rome and Pompeii. In these works, seemingly insignificant details like vistas and sight lines come to the fore, as do the placement of smaller city features—the crossroads, altars, and fountains that marked the movement of one space into another. With regards to all this, it only makes sense to assume that buildings maintained their social significance regardless of the gender of the person who funded their construction. Indeed, as Martin Locock wrote in the introduction to his book, *Meaningful Architecture: Social Meanings of Buildings*, buildings can be understood as "…a mode of creating and transmitting social statements."[35] It is by examining objects—in this case, buildings—in their physical context that meanings (the plural is important) can be derived. If we think in terms of buildings as holding meanings, and the possible meanings of the built environment becoming more accessible through comparison and context, then we can begin to parse the negotiation of social tensions that may be contained in these meanings.

And yet, with all this work the only study that applies a spatial analysis specifically to the study of monuments built by women in Rome (or anywhere) is the doctoral dissertation already mentioned. In 1999 Margaret L. Woodhull of the University of Texas at Austin explored the

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[34] Favro 1996, 10.
[35] Locock 1999, 1.

location and decorative schemes of three structures commissioned by imperial women in Rome during the first century CE and three built by elite women in Roman Campania.[36] According to Woodhull, elite women commissioned buildings to create a public persona for themselves and to express their "female concerns." For imperial women, she states, this relates directly to their role as *mater patriae*, while other elite women expressed their importance as holders of civic priesthoods.[37] But while these factors may arguably be at least partially established by the evidence, by emphasizing "female concerns" Woodhull passes over a potential political dimension of the spaces she discusses. Her main influence in this interpretation is Carolyn Valone, who studied the building patronage of women during the Early Modern period in Italy, and who categorized their contributions into three broad categories: religious; those related to social welfare; and funerary commemoration, all of which relate back to the theme of "female concerns."[38] This is unfortunately too modern a period with which to draw comparisons, however, and this skewed Woodhull's interpretation. After all, it is likely that female public action was restricted or at least significantly altered with the advent of Christian authority, which funneled female benefactors towards these building types (religious, social welfare related, and funerary) as most worthy of their attention, while types related to entertainment, for example, were disparaged as secular and frivolous. This difference between the eras is indicative of the shift in emphasis from 'pagan' Rome and its priorities to the Christian world with its emphasis on morality and difference from what came before.

There is also the issue of whether such differing interpretations of the meaning and impact of public space are necessary when women, and not men, are the builders. In this case, this may be the result of an interpretation owing much to the analytical emphases of the 1990s.

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[36] Woodhull looks at the Porticus of Livia on the Oppian Hill, the Porticus of Octavia in the Circus Flaminius, and the Temple of the Deified Claudius on the Caelian Hill, all at Rome, as well as at the structures built by Eumachia adjacent to the forum at Pompeii, Mamia's Temple of the Genius Augusti, also in Pompeii, and Salvia Postuma's Arch of the Sergii at Pola, Istria (modern Pula, Croatia).
[37] Woodhull 1999, 78-79 and 132.
[38] Valone 1994, 129–46.

For example, Woodhull interprets structures paid for by the two most prominent female members of Augustus' household, his sister Octavia and wife Livia, as promoting traditional female roles by "…engendering three-dimensional spaces that manifested their public roles as representatives of the domestic realm and procreative forces."[39] This emphasis on the essential domesticity and fecundity of women as the locus of their valuation in a male-dominated society is not necessarily mistaken, but the evidence does not automatically support the interpretation that this is why they built and what their buildings expressed. After all, an examination of the inscriptional evidence shows that women built not just temples or monuments that could double as funereal commemorations, they also sponsored theatres, amphitheatres, aqueducts, bridges, roads, and basilicae.[40] This leaves us, unless we take any building that facilitates entertainment or supports infrastructural concerns as filling the category of "social welfare," with a lot of construction efforts paid for by women that fall outside of Woodhull's categories. Her other assumption, that women were creating a public persona for themselves and giving expression to a uniquely female focus that had to fit within the strictures established by Roman convention is likely accurate though by working from a single-hierarchy assumption about social arrangements and power groupings in Roman society she misses aspects that would otherwise come to the fore. It is the work of this study to concentrate on these missing aspects.

Still, Woodhull's work was very useful in helping hone the research questions. It is important to acknowledge that the various groups within Roman society inevitably experienced that society differently, but the assumption that we can divide the works commissioned by

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[39] Woodhull 1999, 69.

[40] Hemelrijk 2015, 134-154 provides a thorough discussion of the evidence related to other sorts of civic benefactions and contributions on the part of women. Women were active on various levels besides building, they funded public banquets (*epulae*), distributions (of various things: cakes, oil, money, etc.), theatrical productions and games of all sorts. They also played a significant role in the *alimenta*, the child-welfare schemes hosted by the emperors, but aside from one case in Baetica Hispania (in Cartima, where a Junia Rustica reimbursed the public taxes of her town, '*vectigalia publica vindicavit*'), there is little evidence to suggest that female benefactors were much involved in reducing or remitting taxes as some male benefactors are known to have done.

women into neatly gendered categories wants critiquing, especially when we consider that, since women commissioned all sorts of public structures gender cannot have been *the* deciding factor in what a benefactor chose to fund. What is left to be determined is a picture of women as civic benefactors that teases ancient realities from modern assumptions.

Coming nearly twenty years after van Bremen and Woodhull, Emily Hemelrijk's *Hidden Lives, Public Personae: Women and Civic Life in the Roman West* (2015), stands alone as comprehensive investigation of the public contributions of women in the Western portion of the Roman empire during the imperial age. Written as something of a companion to van Bremen's earlier work and much informed by it, Hemelrijk offers a balanced and sweeping examination of the pertinent epigraphic and literary evidence that is especially useful for the inscriptions she includes—tables of inscriptions take up 195 pages, or nearly half the book, almost two-thirds of them attesting to public buildings paid for by women.[41] Still, the focus is not the buildings themselves but dedicatory inscriptions from monuments that women funded with their own money, either on their own or alongside only one other benefactor.[42] As the epigraphic evidence alone demonstrates, female contributions were significant, with women often acting entirely on their own in this type of beneficence. This makes clear that the complex issue of female participation in building is not an insignificant or peripheral one. Rather, according to Hemelrijk, public benefactions granted women a role in public life and "lent them a distinct civic identity."[43] Teasing out the nature of this civic identity is a complicated business and her look at the evidence for women's associations (chapter 4) is key. Epigraphic and literary evidence

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[41] Hemelrijk 2015, provides 338 inscriptions that record "all substantial donations to cities and to the citizens and non-citizen residents, or to specific groups among them, initiated and paid for by non-imperial women." More than 200 of these are inscriptions from public buildings and other structures paid for by women. The rest are epitaphs, statue bases, and/or votive altars. Since Hemelrijk was looking for evidence of female participation in all aspects of public life, she divides her body of inscriptions accordingly, and many women appear in more than one index. See pp. 113-115 for her rationale.
[42] Overall, Hemelrijk avoids bringing into the conversation public benefactions that originated from groups whether families, *collegia*, or the like. Instances where a husband, brother, or son are named in an inscription *are* noted.
[43] Hemelrijk 2015, 179.

suggests, she says, that women arranged themselves into groups designated by social standing, wealth, and their husbands' career status, and in this they mirrored the social hierarchy to which men adhered.[44] This is why it is important to contextualize women's actions in terms of the hierarchies within which they were acting. Not doing so would be like studying male public benefactions without a consideration of the complicated networks of personal and public patronages or competition for prestige appointments that drove their actions. And while both Woodhull and Hemelrijk agree that women combined their desire to present themselves publicly as possessing both high status and wealth with display of the public virtues that women were expected to observe, it is the hierarchical consideration that grounds Hemelrijk's discussion of the phenomenon. It is not made central to her discussion, but I think it deserves greater integration into the complex of ideas we use to understand the phenomenon of female benefactors.

This study, therefore, places women's benefactions within their own social hierarchies while using a spatial analysis to explore the nature of these benefactions. Buildings are performative, and it is therefore vital to consider their social, cultural, and local contexts. Examining the builder's familial, political, and cultural background along with considering the structure's typology and placement in the urban landscape offers insight into the degree of influence, wealth, and prestige that these public benefactors possessed. Ideally, a close examination of the structures themselves will also yield some hint of the funder's priorities and intention in building. Analysis must consider meanings conveyed by the type of structure and its placement set alongside, or against, decorative elements like the quality and quantity of marbles used in floors and walls and any statuary that survived. As discussed, there is a difference between the question of whether building as an activity was considered gendered and whether the buildings commissioned by women fit into certain gender-specific categories. This is

[44] Hemelrijk 2015, 213-218 on groupings of women and 1999, 12-15.

important because once we start to think of structures in terms of "acceptable" or "unacceptable" contributions we risk letting the shorthand stand in for a thorough exploration of the meaning of a building via its various components and its connection with the surrounding area and communication with the viewer/user.

## Ancient History and Feminist Theory

Ancient history and feminist theory intersect precisely at the place of exploration outlined above. Women, defined by their sex as both physically and mentally weaker than men, were bound by socially constructed rules governing their ability to act in public, accrue or access wealth and resources, and to form business relationships that might make public benefaction, especially of buildings, a possibility. When discussing the building commissions of women, therefore, we need to be aware of the social and cultural constraints they bore uniquely from men. We also need to find a way to think and discuss these things without being bogged down by our own culturally inculcated biases and historical perspective. This section attempts to chart a way forward.

At the most basic level, we need to question the assumption that whatever men did should be considered 'normative' while what women did must be exceptional deviations from this norm. In the case of acting as building benefactor, it is not enough to answer the 'why?' with an answer premised on norms established through a study of what motivated men. Likewise, anytime we assume that the writings, for example, of a woman represent her *particular* experience, while a male author's work reflects *human* experience, we are operating from a cultural bias. Related to this is the necessity of confronting the assumption that what ancient (male) authors wrote about women should be taken as unproblematically reflecting lived reality. Indeed, it is probably more realistic to take ancient texts as ideological assertions made by members of the socially dominant group who interpreted all other groups through their own

frame of reference.[45] The degree to which modern historians accept the picture of Roman society as presented by ancient authors has shifted over time, but arguably continues to influence how we understand women in the ancient world.

At this point we return to the need for models of analysis. The critical theory perspective formulated by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, while not directly applicable to this study, offers an approach that circumvents the blind spot of androcentric analysis. Although her work is focused on the early Christian Church and on feminist biblical exegesis, the time period is roughly analogous and the general goals of her epistemology — "to reconstruct and construct a *different* socio-historical reality" — employ theoretical frameworks and methodologies that (re)write women into history.[46] The feminist critical theory developed by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, therefore offers an approach to textual sources, especially, that takes into consideration the social forces underlying their accounts. Schüssler Fiorenza, a theologian and bible scholar, is concerned primarily with a theology that challenges structures and cultural practices that oppress women and all "others." And while ensuring that modern theory is not artificially applied to the ancient world is important, it seems to me that her critical analysis is useful as a tool for discerning an approach to the ancient texts through which our understanding of women's place in the ancient world is gained. Schüssler Fiorenza's analysis highlights the way that both the authors of ancient texts and the minds of modern readers are imprinted with what she calls a *kyriocentric* standpoint, and in this it is especially useful.[47] This term, *kyriocentric*, describes a complex social arrangement of dynamic, layered systems of oppression dominated by a lord or master, whether that's the emperor, landowner, slave owner, husband, wealthy elite

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[45] Schüssler Fiorenza 1989, 28.
[46] Schüssler Fiorenza 1989, 24.
[47] Schüssler Fiorenza 1989, 20, note 8, in which she defines *kyriocentric* [from the Greek κύριος or master-centered] as the system through which propertied elite Western men have benefitted from the exploitation of women and all "others" in Roman society who were disqualified based on racial, classist, or cultural/religious distinctions.

or equestrian male to whom all others were subordinated.[48] In her vision, focusing on *systems* of oppression avoids an overly subjective reading of the text. This idea of highlighting systems rather than individual motivations is useful for the study of ancient history because it points to the need for greater attention to those aspects of building patronage specific to women, in particular their readiness to fund public structures that signaled male priorities. Other structures of domination include the legal liabilities written into Roman property law or which arose from certain marriage forms and from the institution of *tutela mulierum*, which framed women as legally incompetent their entire lives. Related to these are the less formal but equally limiting cultural expectations such as the ban on women attending the senate, forum, military camps, or courts. These, we can see, are all systems of oppression that existed in the Roman imperial world that may have circumscribed the degree of female access to public acts such as building or dictated the types of buildings they could contribute. Such an approach, rather than being limiting, opens the field of study by presenting more nuanced categories for analysis. As Schüssler Fiorenza points out, gender is often a smokescreen for limitations and privileges that are, in reality, related to class, race, age, etc.[49]

This last point clarifies the fact that heterarchical relationships are at issue and not the single pyramidal hierarchy so often used to image relationships in the ancient world. Indeed, the dominant paradigm through which we view Roman society is as a static pyramidal hierarchy. As Christopher Smith pointed out in a 2016 address at the British School at Rome, such a model is "…weak in dealing with alternate power bases…and the complication of the subdivisions of Roman society."[50] Following the traditional view, female activity in the public sphere is almost inexplicable because of women's subordinate position within Rome's social hierarchy, but that is

[48] Schüssler Fiorenza 2001, 172.
[49] Schüssler Fiorenza 2001, 158.
[50] Christopher Smith, "Power in Early and Middle Republican Rome," Public Lecture, BSR Events, Rome, 27 April 2016 (unpublished, quoted with permission).

only because, as noted above, we are assuming that male activity=normal and female activity=exceptions to this norm. What if, in fact, the Romans saw nothing particularly abnormal about female activity in the "public" sphere? How this might have worked by turning to heterarchy as a model that offers a counterbalance to androcentric assumptions by allowing another way of ranking our evidence.[51] The single vertical axis is removed, and the various branches of socio-political interaction are more apparent. If a hierarchical arrangement is imaged as a pyramid in which each level is subordinate to the one above it, in a heterarchical arrangement the picture is that of interconnected nodes, like a web or fishnet. Questions concerning the interplay of civic participation, social, and power relationships and the role (or not) of gender present themselves: Was it the negotiation of power that was being played out vis-à-vis public space, or were other dynamics primary — influence, wealth, social standing, or something else? In the case of women, the need to negate the possible implications of their public activity or explain them by making female builders "honorary men," becomes unnecessary.[52] Instead, elite female action is one of the nodes of activity that connect or intersect with that of elite males in a fabric made up of various groups and their complementary and competing interests. We might posit, for example, that elite women occupied a sphere of influence and action that was separate from, while sharing the basic premise of, that of elite men. Indeed, it is possible that traditional hierarchical model can be retained if we admit that there was not one overarching hierarchy, but multiple versions arranged identically and working alongside one another.

Assuming a heterarchical arrangement of multiple simultaneously existing social hierarchies, one must wonder if adopting the prevailing practice of using female gender roles in Roman society (idealized *matrona*, *mater*, *univira*) as a starting point is useful. Indeed, doing

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[51] Crumley 1995, 1–5.
[52] Gordon 1990, 230.

so marginalizes female building by beginning from a place wherein it is taken as lacking potentially political implications.[53] Instead, it is vital that the discussion be broadened by assuming that their building commissions shared in the prevailing public/political discourse, that their assigned social roles carried politically-charged implications, and that instances of female participation in the life of the community as patrons of building projects, by virtue of their rarity relative to projects commissioned by men, were more, not less, powerfully communicative of their relative influence and standing as elite women in their communities.

## Methodology

The starting point for my study was collecting useful data both of structures and the women who paid for them. Fortunately, the vast bulk of this work had been done for me and could be found, all together, in Emily Hemelrijk's 2015 book, which records inscriptions related to women in public life from across the western empire — 1,196 in all — 207 of them building inscriptions. But while Hemelrijk's references were arranged according to the name of the benefactress and divided among several different tables,[54] I found it useful to arrange them according to geographic location, so I created an Excel sheet and made columns for each important bit of information: location arranged according to Roman province (and region, for Italy), the benefactor's name, the appropriate epigraphic database references (*CIL, ILS*, *AE*, etc. as found in Hemelrijk's database), and each benefactor's dates, rank, and priesthoods, if known. The text of each inscription was also noted, as was other information such as whether another person was named. To this new configuration of Hemelrijk's database I added building or building restoration projects attributed to female members of the imperial house whether by

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[53] I am using "political" in the broad sense, as human activity in the public sphere and not in the narrow sense that considers only action that culminates in political office.

[54] The pertinent ones are Tables 3.1 Religious buildings; 3.2 Infrastructural Works; 3.3 Structures for Entertainment; 3.4 Utilitarian buildings and civic amenities. Others record public priesthoods, banquets, games, festivals,

inscription or literary reference.[55] I excluded dedications that named a husband, son, or brother as co-dedicator but kept those that named multiple women, as with the Burbuleia sisters of Minturnae (Italy), for example.[56] I wanted to make sure that the structures I studied were funded solely by women. This left me with 197 inscriptions covering nearly all the western provinces, but predominantly Italy and North Africa.

| Provinces | Cities | Instances | Benefactors | Inscriptions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Italy | 61 | 109 | 97 | 99 |
| North Africa | 28 | 50 | 49 | 50 |
| Spanish Prov. | 20 | 23 | 23 | 23 |
| German Prov. | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Gauls | 8 | 9 | 8 | 9 |
| All Others | 7 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| Totals | 132 | 208 | 193 | 197 |

Fig. 1—Table of Inscriptions referring to female-funded structures.

I then set out to determine which of the available inscriptions related to a public structure that had been discovered, excavated, and published.[57] As it turned out, fulfilling the first two requirements was not particularly difficult, but the final one—published excavation reports—was more difficult. To track down excavation reports, and beginning with Italy, the province with the greatest density of inscriptional evidence,[58] I began with the *CIL,* both to see the full text of the inscription (not always provided by Hemelrijk) and because the editor's note almost always referenced other versions or locations of records of the text, but also excavation bulletins related to the inscription's discovery. Most often, unfortunately, the excavation bulletins did not return enough information to create a case study, despite the often-fascinating nature of what *had* been found. One such example is that of Forum Sempronii near

[55] There were fifteen of these.
[56] *Burbuleia [...]a et Burbuleia Procula...* These sisters paid for the Tribunal and dedicated a statue of Victoria Augusta in the curia at Minturnae during the mid-second century CE. *AE* 1982, 157.
[57] A "public" structure was one built to be used by members of the community. The structure in question could be built on public or private land — it is use, not location, that determines whether something is public or private for the purposes of my study.
[58] See Hemelrijk 2015, Fig. 1.1 for a table that shows the geographical distribution of the inscriptions in her database.

Fossombrone, in Regio V (the Marche region) of Italy, where an inscription composed of three fragments recorded the presence of a *templum Matris Deum* built by a Pomponia M. f. Marcella using money left in the will of another woman, Baebidia Pr[...].[59] Forum Sempronii, an ancient market town founded and renamed under Roman influence, was first excavated in 1879 and 1880, and the archaeological bulletins from those *scavi* report evidence of a paved street (a portion of the Via Flaminia, as it turns out) and steps leading to what was thought to have been a temple, but no way to definitively connect the remains with the inscription. Modern reports concerning the archaeological area, which is currently open to visitors, confirm that the details of the city's remains are known largely from building inscriptions that cannot be usefully connected to what has been uncovered. This is more or less the state of most of the sites related to the inscriptions in Hemelrijk's database. I could find no substantial information for any of the sites in the areas of modern Spain, France, or Germany, and abandoned hope of being able to do so. Of the areas under consideration, it is perhaps no surprise that most of the available information was for sites in Italy and North Africa. In the end, I initially gathered information on twenty locations in Italy (including Rome), two in North Africa (Thugga and Bulla Regia), and one in the Roman province of Dalmatia (Salona, outside Split, Croatia). The cities that were selected for the case studies that appear here were chosen because they were not only representative of the sort of structures commonly funded by women, but their sites had been fully explored and the results published. Other sites, where *in situ* remains are visible but which remain either unexcavated or unpublished (and therefore inaccessible) will have to wait for the future. Admittedly, two of the structures may, at first glance, appear anomalous: Mineia's basilica in Paestum and the baths of Julia Memmia in Bulla Regia. The former is one of only two such structures in the database and it was included because it represents a possibility—that despite what modern scholars have decided about the nature of women's building benefactions

[59] *CIL* 11.6110.

in the ancient world, women of elevated status or ambition, or both, did pay for structures that were overtly political in nature.[60] The bathing complex funded by Julia Memmia in North Africa, on the other hand, was chosen because it stands as the most thoroughly studied example of all the *balnea* and *thermae* that appear in the database. Compared to the basilica form, bathhouses and bathing complexes were funded by women more commonly than one might expect—a dozen inscriptions attest that women paid for, restored, and/or decorated baths in Italy and the Spanish provinces, especially.[61] What makes Julia Memmia's bath complex worthy of study is not only its size and complexity, which are impressive, but the fact that it represents the only certain example of a bathing complex in North Africa paid for by a woman. This being the case, these baths are both intriguing and unique. The fact of her very generous benefaction suggests that the influence and connections of elite women were far-reaching. More on this in the appropriate study.

I decided not to pursue a case study on Pompeii, where two very famous buildings attest to the wealth, influence, and public participation of two women, Eumachia and Julia Memmia, both of whose buildings faced onto the city's busy Forum. Pompeii is much studied, and while Eumachia's structure has been used as a point of comparison for both the Porticus Liviae in Rome and Mineia's basilica in Paestum, it seemed preferable to concentrate on sites that have received considerably less attention. I did not wish to produce yet another study of Eumachia's much-studied structure, but to leave room for less well-known places and their buildings. Studies in English on Casinum or Paestum are few and far between, whereas Pompeii has received a great deal of attention from English-speaking academics. I wished to pursue the

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[60] Besides Mineia's, the other basilica in Italy was built at Verona by a woman whose name does not survive intact (*CIL* 5.3446; first century CE). Two others are from outside Italy: Hispania Baetica (*CIL* 2.1979; second century CE) and Gallia Lugdunensis (*CIL* 13.3079; first century CE).

[61] Baths make up 6.25% of all the inscriptions in the database, a not insignificant number when one considers the cost of undertaking such a potentially complex structure.

lesser-known situations though, that said, were there room here for a study of Eumachia's building, especially, I would have included it.

As I conducted my research it quickly became clear that, given the distribution of sites that had been sufficiently excavated and published, I would end up concentrating on Italy and North Africa. Word count constraints forced me to narrow my sights considerably, and I decided to include the four case studies and eleven structures presented here. My chosen case studies are presented according to their location, though in the case of Rome and Casinum multiple projects are discussed under a single heading. Together, these studies represent a cross section of types of structures and local circumstances. That said, while several of the inscriptions in the database note structures funded by priestesses of the imperial cult none of them are discussed in detail here. Many of these appear to have been a separate sort of benefaction, an obligatory payment (*summa honoria*) that the newly appointed priestess made to her city. Rather than overextend this study, then, each of the instances of building studied here is by an individual woman using her own resources (*sua pecunia*) and acting not as part of a group, organization, or priestly class. The reasons for their benefaction may be varied, but of course we cannot know each woman's personal motivations. In a few instances we can make a very good guess at the impetus behind the benefaction but in only one instance do we know for certain why the project was undertaken. It is likely not an accident, however, that several of these benefactions date to the period when Augustus was encouraging cities to urbanize by building or improving following the example that he and his court were setting in Rome.[62] During this period benefactors willing to fund large 'Roman' structures like theatres, amphitheatres, and circuses would have been in high demand. This stands contrary to the argument that female benefaction indicated decline, and that women (and children) were only invited to act as building patrons because fewer men were taking on this civic duty. In fact, it seems, women were paying for structures during the

[62] See Nichols 2014, 104-115 for his discussion of Augustan urban policy and *aemulatio principis*.

heyday, so to speak, of urbanization and Romanization, both in Italy and, somewhat later, in North Africa.

## The Case Studies

Following Hemelrijk's proposition that the logical next study would concentrate on the buildings themselves, this study presents case studies of eleven different structures funded by a woman acting alone during the first three centuries of the imperial period. As outlined above, these studies were chosen because they represent a 'snapshot' of the types of buildings most commonly funded in the ancient world, and because these sites were extensively excavated, explored, and published. Chronologically, these case studies span a period of roughly the first century BCE to the mid-third century CE. Each place has received quite a lot of attention from European scholars but has not been much attended to by those writing in English. The studies describe eleven different structures. Three were in Roman Casinum, one in Paestum, one in Bulla Regia, and six in Rome. Since the focus of these studies is not the structure or structures alone but their relationship to the urban environment, I think this is a logical approach. In each case, the urban setting provides the 'backdrop' for each study.

The information these studies contain is presented in roughly the same order in each. First, the location is introduced with a brief discussion of that city's history in order to provide context for the discussion that comes later. Next, the structure(s) in question are introduced and discussed, with histories of their discovery and excavation. As far as possible, the purpose is to set each structure within its local environment and to discuss the details of its original plan and decoration in the context of the urban fabric, as much as it is known.

Relevant studies pertaining to the structures are then explored and their interpretations considered. This introductory portion may include a discussion of the benefactor and her family context and their relationship to the city, though where this falls in the discussion depends upon the nature of the evidence. Overall, though, each individual benefactor's historical context is obviously a vital component of the discussion so that the nature of the benefaction can be

explored as fully as possible. The emphasis is on whether and how these structures demonstrate that the builder was advertising her standing in the community. Questions of connection, networks, and patronage are also brought to the fore. Each case study ends with a brief discussion of the main conclusions drawn from that study.

Before these studies are presented, however, it seems vital that some groundwork concerning the various contexts and contentions of female participation in public be considered. Looking first at theories of urban space and the meaning of public buildings and then moving to questions of law and custom, it becomes apparent that what has so far been left out of modern studies of women in public are questions of motivation. These necessarily take us to the question of hierarchy and social connection—the twin mobilizing factors for all Roman public action.

# *2—Discussion: Women in Public*

Before we can explore the meaning of the public benefactions illustrated in each of the case studies, it is important to look at issues particular to women's circumstances during the periods in question. Studies such as those by Cantarella (1987), Rawson (2010), Setälä (1998), Kleiner and Matheson (2000), and many others, have worked to elucidate the daily lives of women in the Roman world. As these studies inevitably show, evidence of women's lives and actions is practically non-existent if only literary sources are considered but plentiful, if sometimes difficult to interpret, when epigraphic, artistic, and archaeological evidence is included. These recent studies emphasize, unsurprisingly, that Roman society privileged men and male endeavors while excluding women from the all the markers of citizenship men enjoyed—holding public office, participation in public debate, and access to voting. It is worth noting, however, that while women were not, strictly speaking, citizens, and their independence was circumscribed by law and custom, focusing only on women's socially constructed domestic roles and the various impediments that hampered their full participation in Roman society is not helpful. It becomes necessary to 'flip the narrative.' Understanding how women may have had access to the wealth and influence required to sponsor a massive public building requires not only knowledge of the legal and social shifts that took place over time, but possible differences between the dictates of custom and lived reality. After all, there is neither a single static 'snap-shot' of Roman society that can be applied to each generation, nor was the law as it was written identical to the law as it was lived. This chapter explores some of the forms and customs that had an impact on a woman's ability to act as a building patron. The goal is to present a nuanced discussion of the issues raised and to ascertain whether any legal, social, or cultural shifts facilitated (or impaired) women's ability to fund public buildings during the periods in question. It is the contrast between the official picture and the lived reality (as much as it can be discerned) that is key here. This chapter sets the stage for a fuller understanding of

this phenomenon by making sure that we know where the money came from, how the mechanisms of benefaction may have worked when women were involved, and whether female building patrons represented a divergence from a supposed "norm." Following these brief explorations, conclusions will be offered in the final chapter.

## Public and Private Space in Roman Society

Historians have long debated the implications of 'public' and 'private' in ancient Rome, commonly treating the two as binary opposites: the public sphere (embodied in political spaces: the forum, basilica, curia, comitium) is imagined as an entirely male environment in which women had no place. A woman's place, as the adage goes, was in the home, the *domus*.[63] This separation is reinforced by Roman authors who asserted continually that women did not belong where business or statecraft were being practiced; as the jurist Ulpian wrote, *feminae ab omnibus officiis civilibus vel publicis remotae sunt* ("women are separated from all civil and public functions").[64] And while it was clear that Roman society was legally divided this way, the question of the lived reality remains. Can it be true that women were in every way outside of the "public" sphere and had no part at all in the workings of the everyday world?

Even with binary (mis)representations aside, though, there are several issues that hinder our ability to understand the Roman versions of concepts like "space" and "public" or "private." First, we may unintentionally or unconsciously simplify concepts that are difficult to map out, especially given that their perspective is so foreign to our own. The ancient documents from which we work represent neat interpretations worked out by their authors with the gift of hindsight, and as such they present an "idealized" version of real life. It is worth recalling Amy Russell's point concerning "public" and "private" in Republican Rome as undefined and in

[63] The vocabulary Roman's used for "public" and "private" in the modern sense are not directly translatable.
[64] Ulpian, *Dig*. 50.17.2. Also *Dig*. 5.12.2 and 16.1.1.

constant need of negotiation.[65] This highlights the necessity of being alive to the fact that things that are later presented as long-standing social "givens" were once points of contention and negotiation. Real life is messy and humans inconsistent in the application of supposed "norms." So where to begin?

Since this study approaches women in the ancient world from the perspective of space—spaces used, taken up, inhabited, and built—it may help to begin with concepts of space and its uses. Theorists like Henri Lefebvre have argued that built space (the embodiment of 'public' and 'private') should be considered expressions of and accommodations to the needs of different segments of society. But does this apply to an ancient context? It has been theorized that Republican "public" spaces were defined as those where the rights and duties of citizenship were exercised.[66] The Forum Romanum, for example, was the political and legal heart of the city because it was the location of the Curia, Comitium, and Rostra, the places where citizens acted as a collective, participated in statecraft, and debated and enacted legislation that guaranteed the peaceful continuance of their society.[67] Since women were excluded from participating in the activities that marked these spaces as important, it makes sense that they should be perceived, almost by default, as belonging to the "private" sphere. We may see this mirrored in Livy, for example, where Roman society is represented as male, and women as foreigners stolen out of necessity to ensure the continuance of the fledgling state. Certainly, the story illustrates for us how men of Livy's time conceived of their society: as essentially and radically male. Women were later additions *defined* by their lack of participation in official affairs. Thanks to this relationship to the state, it seems inevitable that women's presence in public spaces would be controversial, even offensive, to traditional sensibilities.

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[65] Russell 2016, 11.
[66] See Sibley 1995, 74-75, Boatwright 2011, 108.
[67] Baily 2002, 17-18; Weintraub 1997, 11-12.

In fact, as already stated, we simply do not know the extent of female alienation from official public space. Contention over the presence of women in public spaces at Rome, especially the Forum Romanum, apparently continued throughout Rome's long history. This is reflected in the literary sources, which remind us constantly of the transgressive nature of women's relationship with central public spaces in the city. This was so pronounced that women were, until the imperial age, rarely represented even on art displayed in these places.[68] Still, women are known to have had access to public spaces even if their presence there was considered a violation of societal norms. A woman could defend herself in court, something which, although untraditional, was allowed and not unknown.[69] We may assume, in addition, that women were present at public events like state funerals.[70] The first known public funeral for a woman—that of Julia, daughter of Julius Caesar—was conducted in 54 BCE; this event, given the ideological nature of elite funerary practices, raised a woman to the centre of public attention. We may argue that the honour redounded to Julia's father (and we may not doubt that his ego demanded it), but the fact remains that the mere fact of her public funeral raised her and, by implication and by establishing a precedent, other elite women to the status of public figures. Women were certainly active in religious festivals and rituals, though not in all cults or at all times.[71] Around religion, interestingly, debates rage as to women's ability to participate

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[68] Boatwright 2011, 119-122 discusses the absence of artistic representations of women in the Forum Romanum during both the Republic and imperial periods.

[69] Val. Max. 8.3, provides three examples: a Maesia of Sentinum defended herself before the Praetor and a crowd of onlookers *non solum diligenter sed etiam fortiter* and was nicknamed 'Androgyne' for her boldness; a senator's wife, Carfania, was so litigious that her name was used ever after for any woman who appeared in court too frequently; and Hortensia, daughter of the famous orator, famously declaimed before the triumvirs on behalf of Rome's richest matrons. Note that the first two instances imply that it while it was perhaps not unusual for women to appear in court, doings so too often or in too forthright a manner was cause for censure. Hortensia's appearance before the triumviri was certainly transgressive but her skill won praise for being like her father's. See App. *B.C.* 4.32-34.

[70] Suet. *Iul.* 84 describes "many of the women" (*matronae…pleraeque*) throwing their jewels and the clothes of their children onto Caesar's funeral pyre and Cass. Dio 75.4.4 has both senators and their wives attending the funeral of Pertinax in 193.

[71] The cult of Mithras, for example, was open only to males as, supposedly, was the cult of Hercules—but see the discussion of the temple of Hercules restored by Publica, below.

actively, probably because the relationship between politics and religion in Roman society was never clearly delineated.[72] Still, we cannot assume that religion was a neutral activity as far as women's involvement is concerned, as the senate's suppression of the rites of Bacchus makes clear.[73]

So, if public spaces were built by and for men, following the logic of the theory that built spaces expressed social priorities, then it should be fair to assume that the Romans set aside the domestic or private sphere as women's particular domain. Indeed, this is usually how this is framed by historians of the ancient world. But when we look to the Roman home (*domus*) we see that even there "women's spaces" were neither uncontested nor clearly delineated. Roman authors claim that women belonged to the domestic sphere, and yet the elite domus of the Republican and imperial periods were intimately connected to the public persona of the householder, the *paterfamilias*. In terms of the built environment, this was revealed by the arrangement of the domus' main rooms; the entrance led into the atrium where the *patronus* awaited his *clientes'* daily *salutatio*, and the atrium led directly to the householder's *tablinum* or office. Vitruvius comments on the housing requirements of important men in his discussion of domestic architecture, stating that the *atria* of office-holding magistrates ought to mimic that of public architecture, such was the connection between a man's home and the business of the state.[74] Family-use rooms were arranged *around* the rooms used principally by the *paterfamilias*. The women of the household, so famous for working wool—if they did work

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[72] Olivier de Cazanove and John Scheid are two scholars who deny that women possessed agency in traditional Roman religious practices, especially sacrificial capacity. See De Cazanove 1987, 167-168 and Scheid 1992, 379, for examples.

[73] Livy 39.8-19; *Senatus consultum de bacchanalibus* (186 BCE): *CIL* 12.581=*ILS* 18=*ILLRP* 511. Ironically, the habit of projecting modern religious sensibilities onto ancient Roman religion is revealed not only in the scholarly habit of ignoring or sidelining female religious leadership but also through the tendency of scholars to assume that shrines, temples, etc., were building types that women could fund unproblematically.

[74] Vitruvius 6.5.1-2. The *nobiles* engaged in public office need homes "…non dissimili modo quam publicorum operum magnificentia comparatas, quod in domibus eorum saepius et publica consilia et private iudicia arbitriaque conficiuntur."

wool—used the atrium only after the man of the house and his cadre of followers had left to make their way to the forum or the baths.[75] Women's domestic space in Republican Rome was, much like their claim to public space, largely provisional and conditional. In this regard, then, our theory appears to fail. There do not seem to have been specific places or types of structures built to accommodate the needs of women. Rather, women were expected to accommodate, both literally and figuratively, the spaces built by and for men.

This returns us to Livy. In his narrative of the capture of the Sabine women, Livy presents a retrojection of an idealized male society. Women, in this world, are outsiders—the "other"—and their relation to the state asserted as forever liminal. There are therefore no spaces that evoke particularly female activities or associations, as these are assumed contained in the home despite the home being purpose-built for the *pater*. Even the home, within which women were expected to remain and where they performed their feminine roles—their own version of civic *pietas*—offered them no actual "place" of belonging. It might make sense, given this, that women expected no purpose-built structures. Instead, they used other means to craft a sense of belonging and participation.

This may help make sense of the fact that women's appearance in civic (public) life was always contested and that this appears not to have changed much over time, even after women became public figures with the advent of the imperial period. As Augustus' reign was established, though, his initial attention, which focused on consolidating his powers, turned towards restoring traditional religion and mores to the Roman people. To achieve this, Augustus used his *auctoritas* to implement legislation aimed at reviving the birth rate and penalizing conduct detrimental to his aims. Consciously not-a-dictator, Augustus' stance as arbiter of traditional morality was necessarily centered on himself as *princeps* of the senate and

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[75] Severy 2003, 21, comments that the loom belonging to the woman of the house was displayed in the atrium because it represented family respectability and would have possessed the same symbolic import as her husband's military trophies. Her emphasis on the social weight to the Roman *matrona* is important, though it does not mitigate the liminality of women even in their own homes.

*paterfamilias* of a household, the base unit of Roman society. The *potestas* always possessed by the *paterfamilias* was thus amplified through Augustus and applied to the state. The built environment at Rome began to be treated as space that should reflect the powers and authority of the emperor, just as a private villa reflected the wealth, position, and powers of its owner. The connection between space as an expression of public values and action was shifted to emphasize the emperor's relationship with the city and its people—and, by extension, the whole empire. We may see in this Hellenistic precedents, as it was common during the Hellenistic period for a city's elite to treat the whole city as their *oikos* and to bestow benefactions on their city's citizens as one might, in a Roman context, provide gifts to one's *clientes*.[76] Regardless, in the Roman imperial context, and since public space was so imbued with meaning for the Romans, it is worth considering that building was used by women as part of their own on-going social dialectic, but of what? Excluded from full citizenship, was it a "public persona" as posited by Woodhull and Hemelrijk? But to what end? Mary T. Boatwright, in an article on women and gender in the Forum Romanum, argues that the Forum was a place that "…helped construct changing concepts of masculinity."[77] Did women engage in building to define femininity or was it something else?

Since the built environment not only embodies social values but constructs identities then we might observe that it would be maintained and reproduced by those whom it serves.[78] After all, the members of the elite were deeply invested in their respective cities owing not only to Rome's role as model city but also to pressures for a place higher in the social hierarchy. We know that the built environment established and preserved the social standing of the elite and that cities across the empire highlighted their 'Romanness' by providing local versions of Roman

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[76] Van Bremen 1996, 12-15; 299, saw euergetism by women during the Hellenistic period as related to "liturgical obligation" for women of wealth. More recent studies are those by Ferrandini 2000, Stavrianpoulou 2006, Beilman 2003 and 2012; Carney 2012.
[77] Boatwright 2011, 110.
[78] Sibley 1995, 76; Økland 1998, 139.

structures like amphitheatres, theatres, circuses, etc., while also using approved Roman governmental forms and adopting Roman cultural and social practices. For the elite outside of Rome, building was as important as it was at Rome—with the very important exception that it was actually easier for a member of the elite to build in provincial towns and cities. Clearly, understanding how women fit into the 'building patron' paradigm is not straightforward, especially since the ancient sources do not necessarily reflect lived reality, but an ideal world premised on the male citizen.

## Women & The Law

Epigraphic evidence begins to record female public building benefactions in the late Republic, which should lead us to wonder why.[79] It is possible, of course, that evidence for earlier structures no longer survives but aside from that the answer may lie in Roman law because it determined, in part, women's access to wealth and their ability to use it as they wished—the law is where social mores and state organization intersect. Thinking in terms of systems of oppression, it is in the law that we find the root of any supposed disadvantage women experienced in terms of access to public benefaction. If building represented participation in a public dialectic of definitions of femininity and the place of women in Roman society, then we might expect changes in the laws that otherwise hindered such participation. On the surface, Roman law appears static and unapologetically invested in perpetuating the subordination of women, yet despite how marriage forms, inheritance laws, and *tutela mulierum* are represented in most ancient texts and modern textbooks, however, not even these monolithic institutions remained unchanged over time. And as with anything, there must have been a dynamic interplay between laws and actual practice. There is just one caveat to this discussion—the law, especially Roman law, is complicated and requires years of intense study to reach specialization

[79] Hemelrijk 2015, 126-129 for discussion. Women's benefactions began later in the provinces outside Italy; for example, beginning during the first century CE in the North African and Spanish provinces.

status, so while this chapter explores the restrictions placed on women and the changes that these underwent in order to shed light on their implications for women's public benefactions, it is not an in-depth analysis of each nuance of the law.

### *Marriage & Inheritance*

It is something of a platitude that from Rome's earliest time marriage *cum manu* was standard. *Manus,* (lit. "hand" in the sense of 'power or authority over') was the legal term for the power with which a husband was imbued that subordinated a wife to her husband's authority. There were three ways that a man gained "power" (*manus*) over his wife: *Usus* (continual "use," in this case a full year of uninterrupted co-habitation resulted in *manus*)*, Coemptio* (a special form of *mancipatio* or "purchase" except the "purchase" resulted in *manus,* not slavery), and *Confarreatio* (a ritual involving the exchange of spelt cakes confined mostly to patricians desiring certain priesthoods).[80] *Manus* legally removed a woman from her father's *potestas* (power) and placed her under the *potestas* of her husband or his *paterfamilias*, if still living.[81] In this case, her wealth and property became the legal property of her husband or his *paterfamilias*.[82] The fact that a woman married *cum manu* could own no property of her own had obvious pitfalls for both the woman and her family. It also obviously negatively impacted the access women had to accruing wealth. First, if the woman was the only surviving child of her father his estate would necessarily go to another relative, as his daughter was legally no longer part of his *gens* and could not be his heir. A woman married *cum manu* also had no legal

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[80] Only *Confarreatio* was indissoluble. Under the terms of *Usus*, a woman could avoid falling under the *manus* of her partner by absenting herself from their home for three nights each year. See Gaius, *Inst.* 1.108-115; Nicholas 1962, 82-83. It is interesting that the law understood from very early on that women and their families might wish to avoid the effects of *manus.*

[81] *Patria potestas* gave the *paterfamilias* moral and legal authority over the members of his *familia,* including the power of life and death over his children and *cum manu* wife. There are, however, strong indications that this latter power was rarely, if ever, actually used. In all other senses, though, the *patria potestas* of male citizens had few checks. Gaius, *Inst.* 1.55; *Cod.* 8.47.10; *Dig*. 48.9. Later developments, though, significantly weakened *patria potestas*, esp. during the imperial period. *Dig*. 48.9.5: Hadrian sentenced a father who killed his son for committing adultery with his step-mother and *Cod.* 8.46.3: severe punishment reserved for the magistrate.

[82] Gaius, *Inst.* 2.98.

relationship to her own children as she was *in locum filiae* in relation to her husband. As a result, despite the fact that a woman could make a legal will, her children could not inherit from her. Instead, her nearest agnate held the claim to her estate. Both of these—a woman not being her father's heir and not being able to leave bequests to her own children—privileged agnatic relations and placed the woman in a position subordinate to, and dependent upon, her husband, first of all, but also her tutor. This brings us to the question of *tutela perpetua mulierum*—the lifelong guardianship of women.

### *Tutela Mulierum*

There were two types of *tutela* or guardianship in the ancient Roman world: *tutela impuberum* was the legal guardianship of underage children and, just as in modern states, the understanding was that it was the guardian's task to protect children who were not under the protection of their father from being taken advantage of and/or making decisions that might have a negative impact on their social standing or their patrimony.[83] In this sense, *tutela impuberum* was framed as primarily in the interests of the child. This was not true of *tutela perpetua mulierum*, however, as the understanding behind it was that even adult *sui iuris* women were in special need of guidance owing to their supposed mental incapacity and emotional instability.[84] It was a guardian's job, in this case, to protect the interests of the woman's agnatic successors, which is why the *tutor* was, until the reign of Claudius, her nearest agnate.[85] It is worth noting, though, that women were only required to seek the authorization of their tutor with regards to *res mancipi*. This, as the name suggests, concerned property (slaves,

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[83] In Roman terms, individuals not under the *potestas* of a *paterfamilias* were *sui iuris*. For the underaged, this state presented clear disadvantages.
[84] Gaius, *Inst*. 1.144: "Veteres enim voluerunt feminas, etiamsi perfectae aetatis sint, propter animi levitatem in tutela esse."
[85] A *tutor* was appointed in one of three ways, but two were most common. A *Tutor testamentarius* was appointed in the will of a woman's *paterfamilias*; a *Tutor legitimus* was appointed when no *tutor testamentarius* had been stipulated and, according to rules set out in the XII Tables, this had to be the woman's nearest agnate. In the case of a woman suing her *tutor* for mismanagement or some such reason, a *Tutor praetoris* could be temporarily appointed. Watson 1967, 115-130.

beasts of burden), land (in Italy only), and various legal rights regarding the use of land or water (such as rights of way, etc.). A woman could not buy, sell, or mortgage any of these things without permission, and there were also bars against her borrowing or lending money without consent, as a woman might otherwise borrow against her estate.[86] It is astounding, given all this, that women were ever public benefactors, seeing that most of the instances in question involved land in Italy and would have presumably constituted substantial drains on their estates. It was precisely this that *tutela mulierum* was intended to circumvent.

### *Modifications & Legal Loopholes*

Seeing that the law was thus martialed against women, it was technically impossible that a woman could ever sponsor a building project *sua pecunia* without the explicit support of her guardian. Leaving aside for the moment the implications of the formula *sua pecunia*, for all we know some women who built must have done so with the cooperation of men capable of granting them the legal agency they lacked in and of themselves. But while there must have been cases where a woman sponsored or repaired a public building with her own money after gaining her guardian's approval, this cannot have happened in a marriage with *manus*, as all property was the husband's. The scenario seems much more likely after marriage *cum manu* fell out of use, which had certainly happened by as early as the second century BCE.[87] While we may want to assume that this happened because women grew to prefer having access to their own money, the unpopularity of *manus* marriages is more probably attributable to the Roman emphasis on agnatic succession and the desire to keep as much wealth and property in the family as

[86] Gardner 1995, 234-235; Jakab 2013, 125. By the late Republic a woman also needed her guardian's approval to marry *cum manu* or to offer a dowry to her intended husband. Cicero, *pro Flacco*, 34.84; *pro Caecina* 25.73; Watson 149-150.

[87] This is also the period after which evidence for women's public building benefactions begin to appear. It is impossible, unfortunately, to prove definitively one way or another the degree of coincidence involved here.

possible.[88] Freed from *manus*, women remained part of their father's *gens* and inherited along with their siblings, which practically speaking meant that women had unprecedented access to money and property.[89] This addressed the problem of wealth and property devolving outside the immediate family, at least in part, but not the issue of a woman's ability to bequeath her property to her own children, who belonged to their father's *gens*. In terms of a woman's estate, wealth and property inevitably still went, not to a woman's nearest relations, her children, but was dispersed among her male agnates. Interestingly, laws introduced during the mid-second century read like responses to the new circumstances presented by the absence of *manus* marriage. One noteworthy example is the *lex Voconia*, introduced in 186 BCE, by which women were barred from being heir to the estates of men of the first census class. The implications of this were that while marriage practice changed in light of the unfairness implicit in the legal standing of women, legal impediments still barred daughters of the elite from inheriting from either their fathers or their mothers. The wealthiest families found themselves much in the place they had been when marriage *cum manu* was still the common practice.

We might see the *lex Voconia* as a reaction to the fact that women were inheriting (in whole or in part) from increasingly vast estates. This was, after all, the period when immense sums were flowing into Rome from abroad and the elite were amassing wealth on a scale hitherto unknown. This inspired pushback from traditionalists and there was a period during which moderation, likely mirroring social and economic pressures, and tradition were in tension. Still, rather than change civil law, the ever-traditional Romans let the urban praetors

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[88] There has been no discussion of dowry (*dos*) here because it seems unnecessarily complicating. In most cases the dowry (or part thereof) was returned to the woman in the event of divorce or to her family in the event of her death. If there was no prior agreement as to the disposition of the dowry upon the end of marriage, the woman could sue for its return. Here too, though, there is evidence that the law reflects the increasing independence afforded women, as the dowry being the husband's possession in the early Republic shifted through the Augustan era, during which the wife's consent was required if her husband wished to sell or mortgage land attached to it. By the time of Justinian, a husband's claim to his wife's dowry was almost non-existent. See Watson 1967, 66-76 and Nicholas 1962, 88-90.

[89] The Romans had no concept of primogenitor and women inherited equally with their brothers.

modify it on an *ad hoc* basis to match changing understandings. For example, as early as the second century BCE praetor's edicts allowed children to make a claim on their mother's estate along with her closest agnatic relatives.[90] With regards to *tutela,* there is evidence that moderations to the letter of the law were introduced even during the Republic. Gaius mentions a development in which a man could stipulate in his will that his wife (married *cum manu*) was to choose her own tutor, an interesting cheat around the requirement for a *tutor* at all.[91] Presumably, the woman would choose someone reliably amenable to her plans.

Arguably some of the most important changes to the institution of *tutela perpetua* happened during the reign of Augustus, when the *Lex Papia Poppaea et Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* (18 BCE) was introduced into law. This far-reaching set of laws sought a course correction on Roman society of staggering magnitude. Not only did the new laws purport to entice couples of the elite and equestrian orders to produce more offspring, they did so by setting up an array of carrot-and-stick propositions that governed everything from the age at which a man might seek certain magistracies to his eligibility for important offices like that of consul.[92] Not everyone accepts that encouraging population increase is an adequate explanation for the imposition of these laws, however, and posit instead that the actual goal was likely the preservation of family property by discouraging testators from indulging in the common practice of leaving substantial bequests to outsiders.[93] But leaving the details of that aside, the

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[90] Nicholas 1962, 248. This remedy, *Bonorum possessio*, accommodated changes in society's sense of who constituted an heir.

[91] For *tutor testamentarius* see Gaius, *Inst.* 1.150, and Watson 1967, 146-148 for discussion. Livy 39.19.5 in his description of the Bacchanalian Conspiracy of 186 BCE reports that the woman who denounced the Bacchic rituals to the authorities was rewarded by being allowed to choose her own tutor under a special *senatus consultum.* Livy specifically mentions that this *optio tutoris* was granted according to the precedent set by a husband's ability to do the same. Watson 1967, 148, speaks of this as though it proves the Republican date of this practice, but since Livy was writing during the reign of Augustus the most we can say for sure is that by that time giving women a choice was likely common.

[92] For eligibility, see Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.51. Generally, Suet. *Aug.* 34, Dio 54.16, Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights,* 2.15. Tacitus claims at *Ann.* 3.25 that these laws had little effect on the birthrate. Wallace-Hadrill questions the legitimacy of birthrate as a rationale for these laws, which he sees as intended to

[93] Wallace-Hadrill 1981, 64f makes an excellent case for this as the actual import of this set of legislation.

most important aspect of the *lex Iulia* was that it offered, in part, freedom from *tutela* to freeborn mothers of three or more children.[94] This was obviously significant, though it may have been less a novel change than the formalization of already widespread attitudes.[95] Seen as laws chiefly governing inheritance, the *lex Iulia* gave women the ability to write their own wills and bequeath property to their own children. For example, a woman who had borne at least one child to her husband was entitled, within certain limits, to inherit from his estate. This contrasts with former laws, which required a strict attention to the separate interests of the man's and woman's families. By allowing women to inherit from their husbands when they shared a child, Augustus was signaling the official recognition of a new sense of "family."[96] The couple, having created a new family, were entitled first and foremost to protect and foster their collective interests. Exempted from the *lex Voconia*, women could also inherit large estates.[97] None of this was insignificant for it meant, essentially, more wealth in the hands of more women and this had obvious implication for their ability to fund large public building projects.

Changes continued during the imperial period. Notably, the *Lex Claudia*, passed by the emperor Claudius as a prelude to marrying his niece, Agrippina, dispensed with the requirement that a tutor be the woman's agnate and henceforth tutors were chosen from the woman's *gens*.[98] Whether these changes relaxed the strictures of the institution is debatable, but they set the stage for the further dismantling of what was in all likelihood not much more than a convention, at least for women of free birth. Even during the era of Cicero, women already possessed a way around guardianship,[99] and Gaius states, in fact, that the necessity of seeking a tutor's permission had by his time become a mere formality.[100]

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[94] Freedwomen had to have four or more children to qualify.
[95] Jakab 2013, 125.
[96] Wallace-Hadrill 1981, 65.
[97] Wallace-Hadrill 1981, 65.
[98] Gaius, *Inst*. 1.171; 1.157.
[99] Cicero, *pro Murena*, 27.
[100] Gaius, *Inst*. 1.190.

> *Feminas vero perfectae aetatis in tutela esse fere nulla pretiosa ratio suasisse videtur; nam quae vulgo creditur, quia levitate animi plerumque decipiuntur et aequum erat eas tutorum auctoritate regi, magis speciosa videtur quam vera; mulieres enim, quae perfectae aetatis sunt, ipsae sibi negotia tractant et in quibusdam causis dicis gratia tutor interpoint auctoritatem suam, saepe etiam invitus auctor fieri a praetore cogitur.*
>
> [After a discussion of *tutela impuberum*] But why women of full age should continue in wardship there appears to be no valid reason; for the common allegation, that because of their levity of disposition (*quia levitate animi*) they are readily deceived, and that it is therefore right that they should be controlled by the sanctionary power of a guardian, seems rather more specious than true, for women of full age administer their own property, and it is a mere formality that in some transactions their guardian interposes his sanction; and in these cases he is frequently compelled against his own will to give his sanction, often even being forced to approve by the praetor.[101]

But even with the legal changes wrought by Augustan marriage legislation, tension between the desire to honour an evolving definition of 'family' as a unit of cognates and the resulting wealth and influence of elite women remained an issue. Echoes of this are evident in the speech Livy gives M. Porcius Cato during his account of a senatorial debate over the repeal of the *Lex Oppia* (in 195 BCE), which among other things restricted the amount of money a woman could possess.[102] According to Livy, Cato's objections to the repeal of this law are framed as pertaining mostly to the issue of female autonomy—something best seen as indicating debates current during Livy's lifetime. We may assume, therefore, that here Livy is replicating the traditionalist perspective still current when he was writing. Livy's Cato objects especially to women being out in public contrary to *auctoritas,* and ignoring *verecundia* (the sense of shame that governs behavior) and even the *imperium virorum*.[103] He even alludes to the dangers of any group (including women, presumably) meeting together without official sanction and hints at the possibility of sedition.[104] Summing up social tradition and former legal understanding of the

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[101] Gaius, *Inst.* 1.190. Translation by Edward Poste 1904, with modifications.
[102] Livy, 34.1-7.
[103] Livy, 34.1.5.
[104] Livy, 34.2.7. Calling upon the precedent set by the plebs retreating to the Sacred Mount in the early Republic.

place of women, Livy has Cato assert that women had always been barred from state matters, even in private discussions, but that by his day this had degraded into attempting to rescind laws that kept women dependent on their husbands, as tradition dictated they should be. That Cato's speech is countered by the moderate and more progressive one placed into the mouth of the opposing Tribune is further argument for this scenario being the author's retrojection of tensions present in his own age onto a past that still flourished in elite males' understanding of themselves.

It should be clear, then, that although women were subject to various legal disadvantages, the impact of these disadvantages on proposed public benefactions could well have been negligible—or at least negotiable. Understandings concerning equitability in marriage, the right of cognates to inheritance, the definition of what constituted the family unit, and the legitimacy of *tutela mulierum* all changed over time with the result that women could be in full command of their own substantial resources. Indeed, by Gaius' time the restrictions on a woman's ability to act independently were being seen as increasingly irrelevant. It is therefore probably not a coincidence that the periods during which most evidence for female activity as public benefactors of building projects is found were the second and third-centuries CE, the period roughly contemporaneous with Gaius' *Institutiones*.

## Women as participants in Roman Society

Following on this, it seems essential that we recognize the place that women occupied in Roman society despite their disenfranchisement and alienation from "official" civic and military life. Women had always had their part in the *res publica* alongside men, and despite how they are frequently disparaged and sidelined in histories, their part was not nearly as marginal as we might imagine if we judge by written histories.[105] As Dionysius of Halicarnassus pointed out in

[105] Van Bremen 1996, 155, pointed this out, too, if in a distinctly traditionalist tone: "…segregation and different treatment certainly prevailed, but so did integration: to talk of exclusion of women is to misunderstand the essential complementary nature of civic conviviality and commensality."

relation to Rome's religious landscape, it took the participation of the entirety of the human population to worship the divine properly and appropriately.[106] Everyone had a part to play in the community. Rather than dwell on what women could *not* do in Roman society, then, it is more useful for this discussion to focus on those elements of traditional understanding that eventually drew them more and more into the public sphere.

It is difficult to claim that women ever held 'power' in the sense that men did because that requires that they possess the legal capacity for full participation in politics—voting rights, ability to stand for office, etc., as well as access to the military, for these are the things upon which the definition of 'power' were premised. Rather, women had access to an *auctoritas* that, while different in tone than that possessed by powerful men, was nevertheless real. Traditionally, this was invested in a woman as wife and chief woman of a household. This role involved overseeing the correct religious observations in the home, keeping accounts, and managing social arrangements, which included arranging marriages for the children of the family when they came of age but, intriguingly, its legal definition depended on neither her role in the family nor her status relative to her closest male relatives. Rather, the *Digest of Roman Law* records Ulpian's assertion that a *materfamilias* was any woman of moral standing whether wife or widow, free or freed.[107] This implies that, like a man, a woman's public performance of personal moral integrity raised her social standing; something surely not inconsequential in terms of her ability to establish important connections and thereby pursue her own plans. Further, as a person in possession of her own wealth and resources, a *sui iuris* woman married

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[106] Dion. Hal., 2.22.1.

[107] Ulpian, *Dig*. 50.16.46.1. *"matrem familias" accipere debemus eam, quae non inhoneste vixit: matrem enim familias a ceteris feminis mores discernunt atque separant. proinde nihil intererit, nupta sit an vidua, ingenua sit an libertina: nam neque nuptiae neque natales faciunt matrem familias, sed boni mores."* ("We ought to regard as the *materfamilias* she who has not lived dishonourably [*non inhoneste*]. For mores distinguish and separate a *materfamilias* from other women. It makes no difference whether she is married or a widow, freeborn or freed; for neither marriage nor birth makes a *materfamilias*, but good morals."). Translation Parkin and Pomeroy 2007, 124.

*sine manu* could own property and there is plenty of evidence that women owned homes in the city and estates in the country. It stands to reason, as well, that a widow could inherit at least a portion of her wealthy husband's estate and have full recourse to the entirety of her estate as well as the concomitant *auctoritas* that was hers as a widow, especially if her husband had been a man of note. Such a woman could also own slaves and manumit them as it suited her. This implies, of course, that upon the manumission of slaves under her *potestas* such a woman became their *patrona*. Women were not excluded, then, from the ability to have *clientes* and form relationships with them and we might assume that the wealthier the woman, the greater her network of such relationships might be. Livia, for example, sponsored the marriages of daughters of many "impoverished" elite families, and this created a series of social obligations that placed her in the position of *patrona* to these families.[108] Presumably, she was not the first elite woman to act in this way, nor was she the last.

But despite being able to build their own wealth and social networks, the fact remained that women were barred from public office and other civic practices. Instead, our sources show us again and again that women held private, not public, sway, and that this was considered normative—though whenever a woman's private influence was too public both she and the male in question were censured. One famous example of women's private influence being held as an expectation comes to us from Appian, who recorded the events of the civil war between the assassins of Caesar and Octavian and his supporters. Appian relates that the triumvirs, Octavian, Marcus Antonius, and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus placed a tax on 1400 of Rome's richest women to raise money for their campaigns.[109] The women, incensed by the injustice inherent in the triumvirs' demand, first approached the women closest to the triumvirs, apparently with the understanding that registering their displeasure with these particular

[108] Dio 58.3.

women might achieve the resolution they sought: the cancellation of the tax. The connection between such private petitions and the ability of the women (Octavian's sister and Antonius' wife and mother) to influence their menfolk is clear because it is only after being rebuffed by Antonius' wife, Fulvia, that the women resort to making a public petition before the magistrate's tribunal in the Forum. After supplying Hortensia's speech, in which she argues that since women have no part in the civic or military life of the city, they should be exempt from the obligations and punishments that might otherwise accompany their participation, Appian makes a point of stating the reason for the triumvirs' displeasure:

> …οἱ τρεῖς ἠγανάκτουν, εἰ γυναῖκες ἀνδρῶν ἡσυχαζόντων θρασυνοῦνταί τε καὶ ἐκκλησιάσουσι, καὶ τὰ δρώμενα τοῖς ἄρχουσιν ἐξετάσουσι, καὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν στρατευομένων αὐταὶ οὐδὲ χρήματα ἐσοίσουσιν·
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> …the triumvirs were angry that women should dare to hold a public meeting when the men were silent; that they should demand from magistrates the reasons for their acts, and not furnish money while the men were serving in the army.[110]

The juxtaposition between the men and women in this context could not be more pointed. Essentially, the women are censured for acting like men because the more normal course was for women to work subtly, behind the scenes.

Tensions in the relationship between women and public life continued into the imperial period, and stories related by Roman historians recount many times that women overstepped the boundaries of the appropriate even while they held important roles, unofficially, as advisors. One senatorial debate, relayed by Tacitus, is striking for the clarity of the connection between women, their ability to create networks, and their role as private advisors. During the reign of Tiberius, Tacitus tells us, a senator named Aulus Caecina Severus introduced legislation that would ban wives from accompanying their husbands to imperial posts abroad. He argued that women, if not kept under strict control, were "*saevum, ambitiosum, potestatis avidum*." ("harsh,

[110] Appian, *Civil Wars* 4.34 (145). Translation by Horace White.

ambitious, greedy for powers.")[111] Another complaint, that women were ordering soldiers around and conducting military drills, seems overwrought,[112] though it is significant that he claims that when the wife of the commander is present "…duorum egressus coli, duo esse praetoria…" ("…there were two to cultivate, two government houses…").[113] The implication here is that men were suspicious of women who wandered outside of their own sphere, which had clearly never been solely domestic despite male fantasies to the contrary. Indeed, the fear that women would grasp at power hints that a sense of genuine female authority (*auctoritas*) existed, one that originated not only in her status as wife but as, presumably, in her own right as a *materfamilias*.

This sense, that women possessed an *auctoritas* by virtue of their status as wives and mothers and because of their own public comportment or reputation did not disappear when public attention had become focused on one man and his family; it was amplified. It should be pointed out, however, that Augustus' ascent to power coincided with the already-increasing legal freedoms and social prominence of women, as has just been discussed. Augustus' grant of unprecedented honours to Octavia, his sister, and Livia, his wife, was undoubtedly powerful in laying a foundation for increased standing of women as possessing *auctoritas* in their own right—actually if not officially. In the past, changes developed organically and gradually as social pressures combined with expediency pressed Roman men to open civil and social opportunities for women, but under Augustus change had official endorsement even if it was originally aimed at raising his own status and standing amongst the senatorial elite. In 35 BCE, Octavia and Livia were granted tribunician *sacrosanctitas*, public statues, and power over their own financial resources, likely by a *senatus consultum* pressed by Augustus (then Octavian), and while these

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[111] Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.33.
[112] The editors of the Loeb edition point out that this may be an allusion to the behavior of Plancina, wife of Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso. According to Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.55, she attended cavalry drills and cohort maneuvers.
[113] Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.33.

conferrals are usually contextualized against the backdrop of the propaganda war between Octavian in Rome and Antonius, who had spurned Octavia for Cleopatra, their effect was to confer upon Livia and Octavia an unquestionable increase in *auctoritas* and social *gravitas* and *dignitas* that was probably designed to be conceived of as emanating from Octavian.[114] Still, the ramifications of these honours would have resided with the women. To top it off, the two were also awarded public statues in the city and thus further raised above all other women in Rome. This addition is particularly striking because up to this point the only statue of a women known in Rome who was not mythological was that of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi.[115] Possessing personal agency by a grant from the senate was one thing but these statues, wherever they were placed, positioned Octavia and Livia in the public eye alongside great and powerful men and inserted living women into Rome's public space—the very space used by men, according to Boatwright, to negotiate changing notions concerning masculinity and its exercise in citizenship.

The honours conferred on imperial women continued into the Julio-Claudian period. One of the earliest was in 9 BCE, when Livia received the honour of public statues again following the death of her younger son, Drusus, while on campaign in Dalmatia.[116] This was accompanied by her official enrollment among women with the *ius trium liberorum*, the rights of mothers with three children (discussed above). This was intended to console her by publicly acknowledging her loss and honouring her for having raised sons for Rome.[117] The honours granted to her in 35 and 9 BCE undoubtedly positioned her as preeminent among women and made her a public figure on a scale usually reserved for men.[118] But these were not the only

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[114] La Bédoyère 2018, 55.
[115] Dio 48.38.1, following Augustus' successes in Illyricum. As Flory 1993, 288-292, and Boatwright 2011, 120-122, has shown there were a handful of statues of women in Republican Rome, though the one of Cornelia in the Porticus Metelli may have been the only one of a historical woman. Hemelrijk 2005, 310, argues that most of the statues, mentioned only by Augustan authors, constitute an "invented tradition" employed to serve as precedents for statues honouring Octavia and Livia.
[116] Dio 55.2.5-7.
[117] Dio 55.2.5.
[118] Flory 1993, 302f, argues that Livia's "deeds" for Rome were her sons, Tiberius and Drusus, who were instrumental to Augustus' military successes and key as potential heirs to power.

honours Livia received during her lifetime. After the death of her husband, she was, by stipulation in his will, adopted into the Julian *gens* and given the title *Augusta*, officially raising her social clout even more, if that were possible. After deifying the dead emperor, the senate made Livia a priestess of his cult and allowed a lictor to accompany her when she appeared publicly in this capacity.[119] Later, during her son's reign, she was allowed to drive a *carpentum* (a covered cart that traditionally only the Vestals were allowed to drive, carts being barred from the city during the day).[120] She was also seated with the Vestals in their viewing box at the theatre. Cassius Dio, looking back from the third century CE, commented that she was more exalted than any woman in Roman history,[121] and, indeed, all these honours gave her the cumulative status far above even that of the Vestal Virgins. But while the relationship created between Livia and the Vestals is fascinating, the main point here is that her status—and, by association, the status of subsequent empresses—was raised to an unprecedented level as a direct result of Livia's unique position vis-à-vis the state. That this had an impact upon women across the empire, but especially at Rome and in Italy, is the subject of the next section.

## A Hierarchy of Women

To appreciate the heights that Livia's public reputation and personal powers reached during and immediately following the reign of her husband, we must consider them within the context of the sphere to which she belonged by birth and tradition: the so-called *ordo matronarum*. In his 1963 book, *Matronalia: essai sur les dévotions et les organisations culturelles des femmes dans l'ancienne Rome*, J. Gagé argued for the existence of an organized group of matrons—often referred to in our sources as the *ordo matronarum*—that functioned alongside the *ordines* of men (senatorial, patrician, equestrian) in all spheres of Rome's

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[119] Dio 55.46.1-4. Note that "A shrine voted by the senate and built by Livia and Tiberius was erected to the dead emperor in Rome…"
[120] The symbolism of a woman literally driving her own conveyance cannot have been lost on the Romans.
[121] Dio 57.12.2.

religious life.[122] In this section, the implications of this separate sphere will be considered beyond its religious function in terms of the access to public action and influence it afforded its members. Since it seems clear that women received respect and status vis-à-vis their public reputation and the reputations and standing of their fathers and husbands, it will be argued that the structure of Roman society made it inevitable that women constituted a separate set of *ordines* among Rome's various social hierarchies and inevitable, also, that these should possess influence and even power in the public sphere to whatever degree their status implied. Contrary to the emphases applied by some, the fact that these groups lacked official recognition or the ability to participate fully in civic decision-making this interpretation does not render them irrelevant to history.[123] Rather than working to establish the precise nature and function of a woman's *ordo*, however, this section considers the possibility that, like men, women defined their place in society by membership in a particular class (*ordo*) and competed within their group for recognition and primacy.[124]

That women comprised their own orders within Roman society is implied in the literary and epigraphic sources. Inscriptions from around the western provinces and in Italy mention groups of women who organized and were active in their communities, whether dedicating statues or attending public banquets. Often, they are noted as *mulieres* ("women") or *matronae* (lit.: "wives"), as in the *mulieres Trebulanae* of Trebula Mutuesca (Regio VII) who dedicated a statue to the city's *patrona*, or the *matronae* of Surrentum (modern Sorrento) who erected a statue in the temple of Venus (*Huic matronae statuam…in aedem Veneris*) to a public priestess

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[122] Gagé 1963, *passim*.
[123] Boëls-Janssen 1993, 275; 2008 223-264 argued that the term *ordo* applied only to those groups who received official recognition in the senate. Cf. Valentini 2012, 49ff., who argues that the *ordo matronarum* was a legitimate *ordo*, established by ancient tradition, not statute.
[124] With regards to this, it is important to understand that when a society is organized along androcentric perspectives and priorities its members have no way of understanding social organization except in exactly those androcentric terms. See Bourdieu 2001, 13-14 and 33-34.

of Venus, whose name is now lost.[125] Clearly, then, at least part of the function of these groups of women was to act publicly in the name of their own group, in a variety of contexts and situations. What is especially interesting in inscriptions is the repeated use of certain social concepts that were applied to both men and women. At Lanuvium (modern Lanuvio, in Lazio), for example, the people of the town set up a public statue for a certain equestrian Gaius Sulpicius Victor, and in return he gifted the *decuriones*, Augustales, and senators (*curiis*) with money, and a *curia mulierum* with an *epulum duplum* (double banquet).[126] The parallelism that exists in the inscription between the male and female groupings is suggestive. Emily Hemelrijk has argued that since Lanuvium was at that time still dividing its voting population into *curiae,* it is possible that the political function of these groups had, by the time the inscription was made, devolved into purely religious and/or social organizations.[127] This supposes, however, two things: that anything in ancient Roman society was "purely religious," and that the inclusion of women negates any potential political implications in the term *curia*. That said, *curia* may have been used to denote a club or society whose membership was restricted to a certain subset of the population; clearly, the precise meaning is unclear.[128] Nevertheless, the fact that the women were included as a separate class of *curia* within the overall social grouping does, as Hemelrijk allows, suggest that the women in question were likely the most prestigious members of the female population.[129] The important point, however, is that the women were marked out using a vocabulary identical to that used to denote the men. Since social arrangements were necessarily

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[125] Trebula Mutuesca *AE* 1964, 106=*AE* 2002 +398 (mid-second century CE); Surrentum, *CIL* X.688 (early first century CE).
[126] *CIL* 4.2120=*ILS* 6199. See also Hemelrijk 2015, 206.
[127] Hemelrijk 2015, 206-207.
[128] Fagan 1999, 270, argues that *curia* meaning a club with restricted membership applied mostly to North Africa, though in this context this definition is not that far off from that of a *conventus* in the sense used at Rome.
[129] Hemelrijk 2015, 207. See also Pasqualini 2005, 262, who highlights the singularity of this 'public and official' mention of such a group and argues that they were a religious organization associated with the worship of Juno Sospita, and Thonemann 2010, 175, who dismisses the *curia mulierum* as the wives of one of the groups mentioned in the inscription.

defined according to androcentric priorities, this only makes sense, since the chief organization principle had to prevail. Of course, then, women were thought of as constituting their own social hierarchy, and that their hierarchies, like those of men, were marked out and celebrated as distinct.

At Rome, where the wives of the senatorial class garnered attention (both positive and negative) from ancient authors, demarcations of status illustrate that all-female groups mirrored male organizational patterns and customs. Valerius Maximus, writing in the mid-first century CE, uses the term *ordo matronarum* twice, in both cases in reference to the matrons of Rome acting as a group. In the first instance, he refers to the action of the matrons of Rome to save it from the seditious general Coriolanus. In the story, discussed further in Chapter 6, the women organized to debate whether an embassy to Coriolanus consisting of his wife and mother and Rome's chief matrons might not persuade him to put aside his martial designs.[130] Hierarchy within the group of women is expressed in how they arranged themselves in the carriages as they prepared to travel to Coriolanus' camp outside the city walls. Later, as a result of their success, the Senate granted the matrons certain privileges and honours—among which were the requirement that men make way for them in the street and the right to wear purple clothing and gold sequins.[131] In the other instance, as we have seen, Rome's wealthiest women are taxed by the *triumvirs* in an effort to fund the prolonged civil war. In protest, the women go to the forum where their chosen spokesperson, Hortensia, delivers an impassioned plea before the outraged men. Hortensia's speech is described as on behalf of the *ordo matronarum*, the group unfairly burdened by the tax.[132] Apparently, male authors of Roman history noticed the *ordo* of matrons when their public action intruded on male action or space, like the forum. But how this *ordo* worked is more mysterious. Again, literature contains only hints. We know, too, from Livy, the

[130] Val. Max. 5.2.1.
[131] Val. Max. 5.2.1.
[132] Val. Max. 8.3.3.

legendary story of the Sabine women intervening to prevent war from destroying the community into which they had been brought as captives.[133]

Valerius Maximus also describes women meeting to confer—undoubtedly through some solemn ceremony—a *corona pudicitiae* (lit.: "crown of virtue") to women who were *univirae*—those who have only had one husband.[134] We should compare this to the account provided in the *Historia Augusta* about a *senaculum* of women that met on the Quirinal Hill. In the *Historia Augusta,* this body is mocked for producing *senatus consulta ridicula* like who greeted whom first in the street and who got to wear jewels on her shoes. That skepticism is the right response to this description is clear from the fact that the author seems intent on discrediting the young emperor, Elagabalus, whose foreign customs did not sit well with the embedded Roman aristocracy. One way that this is conveyed is mid-way through the paragraph, where the author weighs Elagabalus' *senaculum* against tradition, which was meetings of a body of women referred to as a *conventus matronarum*,

> *Fecit et in colle Quirinali senaculum, id est mulierum senatum, in quo ante fuerat conventus matronalis, sollemnibus dumtaxat et si umquam aliqua matrona consularis coniugii ornamentis esset donate, quod veteres imperatores adfinibus detulerunt et iis maxime quae nobilitatos maritos non habuerant, ne innobilitate remanerent.*[135]
>
> "He established on the Quirinal Hill a *senaculum,* that is a women's senate, where before had been an assembly of women which met only on festival days and when a woman was granted the ornaments of consular marriage (that the emperors of old had given to their wives) and all the more to those whose husbands were not nobles, so that they should not remain of lower status."

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[133] Livy 1.13.
[134] Val. Max. 5.2.3. The use of *coronae* as rewards is known from the military, where a variety of "crowns" were awarded for displays of valor, protecting fellow soldiers, saving the life of a citizen, etc. Maxfield 1981 is useful here. Of course, military awards were all centered on service as an expression of *virtus* and civil rewards were the same, such as the *corona civica*, which was famously awarded to Julius Caesar, Augustus, and subsequent emperors.
[135] *HA,* Elag. 4.3-4.

The main complaint here is apparently that the young prince had made formal what until then had been kept resolutely informal. Details concerning the composition of this *senaculum*—whose leading woman was the empress or mother of the emperor—illustrate that the Romans believed organizations should be arranged according to prevailing social hierarchies. This makes the detail about the women debating and voting on details pertaining to their own sphere, although aimed at belittling Elagabalus, useful because it confirms what we see in other sources—namely that Rome's elite matrons organized in order to discuss matters pertinent to them. Suetonius makes brief mention of the *conventus matronarum*, and although his anecdote denotes stereotypical female behavior,[136] other sources make clear that this same body met to render decisions when asked. For example, after going through the appropriate channels to achieve their goal of establishing a temple for the worship of Fortuna Muliebris, the matrons were invited to choose a priestess for the new cult from among themselves, something which surely must have been conducted via ballot, and they are specifically described as voting to choose from a prepared list of 100 candidates the woman who should dedicate a *simulacrum Veneris*.[137] Another example comes from Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*. Here, a *senatus consultum* issued by the assembly of women weighed in on which precious stones were best.[138] Each time women acted in concert—such as in the story of Coriolanus or when protesting unfair taxation or canvassing for the appeal of legislation but also during religious rituals—the overall picture is of elite women as constituting their own group much in the same way the Roman

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[136] Suet. *Galba*, 5, has Galba's mother-in-law striking Agrippina (mother of Nero) for having designs on her son-in-law.

[137] Dion. Hal. *Rom. Ant.,* 55.4 for priestess of Fortuna Muliebris. Pliny the Elder, *NH* 4.120 on vote from prepared list.

[138] Pliny, *NH* 37.23 (85). *Hactenus de principatu convenit mulierum maxime senatusconsulto. Minus certa sunt de quibus et viri iudicant…* ("Up to this point there is agreement as to which stones are supreme, the question having been largely settled by a senatorial decree of the women's assembly. There is less certainty regarding the stones about which men too pass judgement…"). Translation based on Hemelrijk 2015, 216. Pliny goes on to criticize the men for their inability to decide as the women had, their preferences being dictated by caprice and competition. The similarities between this passage and that from the *HA* criticizing the women's *senaculum* for arguing about gems on one's shoes are striking and highlight how women's behavior was used to endorse or censure male decision-making.

senate was a body inside the larger group of elite males. Both groups met to consult, debate, and issue decisions, and both were premised on a hierarchy that during the imperial period had the emperor/empress as leader and, in an earlier era, apparently focused on the sisters, mothers, and wives of Rome's leading men.

Women were integral to the Roman conception of their state—they were "the other" and not the main actors, but neither were they insignificant. Still, our sources record the matrons only when they are acting to save the city (Rome) or protesting unfair restrictions—in other words, when their sphere "bumped into" that of men. It is worthwhile noting, however, that each of the examples where the *ordo matronarum* becomes involved in politics revolves around the question of legitimate displays of wealth. In Livy's account of the debate over the *Lex Oppia*, the women organize to protest the continued restrictions on their wealth and its display, something that also marked the social standing of men and had been returned to them following the cessation of hostilities with Hannibal. The sense of justice expressed by the Tribune L. Valerius in his speech to the senate is therefore worth emphasizing as it lends formal voice to the outrage the women felt at the breaking of a social contract established by Romulus.[139] Given that men were allowed to enjoy the fruits of peace, it would be unjust to deny them to the women, Valerius argues, precisely because women constituted one of the *ordines* integral to the state.[140]

As far as the composition of the *ordo matronarum* is concerned, it is clear that it was the elite matrons of Rome exclusively. In each instance where they are specifically mentioned, it is always the women of the elite class undertaking some public action. That women of the lower

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[139] Livy 1.9. Following the capture of the Sabine women, Romulus promised the women that if they submit, they will be made partners in all the fortunes of the state (*…illas tamen in matrimonio, in societate fortunarum omnium civitatisque…fore…*). Again, this needs to be understood as a retrojection of (idealized) contemporary understandings onto the remote past.

[140] Livy 34.7.1. *Omnes alii ordines, omnes homines mutationem in meliorem statum rei publicae sentient: ad coniuges tantum vestras pacis et tranquillitatis publicae fructus non perveniet*? ("All the other orders, all men will feel the change for better in the state: shall your wives alone get no enjoyment from national peace and tranquillity?") That the women are included among *omnes alii ordines* is arguably implicit, though subject to interpretation. See Purcell 1986, 83, for discussion.

classes were excluded is implied first by the clear divisions that existed in Roman society between male social classes.[141] More explicitly, the dual cults of *Pudicitia Patricia* and *Pudicitia Plebeia*, for example, illustrate the fact that women organized themselves according to social standing and that there were insignia and honours assigned to that standing. The story of how two distinct cults of Pudicitia came to be, as recorded by Livy, makes clear that one of the things the *matronae* did was police the membership of their group. This suggests a quasi-formality to their organization and its role that mirrors the public sphere of men, whose inclusion or exclusion from certain ranks made or broke careers.[142] Here, the woman ousted, Virginia, born into a patrician family but married to a man of inferior rank, founds a cult of female chastity (*Pudicitia*) for women of the plebeian class.[143] To drive home the point that women organized themselves in the same way as men, Alessandra Valentini points out that the historical context for the disagreement between Virginia and the *ordo matronarum* is the Struggle of the Orders, during which plebeian men demanded a greater degree of participation in running the state. In this instance, the struggle that marked plebeian male aspirations for political participation is mirrored in the personal struggle of a woman who takes for herself the power denied her by the *ordo* of elite women. The story works as an explanation for these cults because this mirroring was embedded in the mindset of Roman men and women.

The apparent informality of the various female associations noted (but never explained) by ancient authors should not, therefore, be taken as incidental. On the contrary, the policing of these groups—especially, perhaps, the *ordo matronarum*—should wake us up to the social pressures that adhered to female competition and the need for an appropriate public persona.

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[141] Hemelrijk 2015, 213 sees a division among the various groups of women that implies differing hierarchies for women of differing classes.
[142] See Valentini 2012, 57-60 for a longer discussion of this episode and its implications in terms of the *ordo matronarum*.
[143] Livy 10.23.6-10. Another incidence of policing the membership of the *ordo matronarum* may be found in Plaut. *Cist.* 1.28.

It is not difficult to accept that a society as patriarchal as Rome's would be arranged so that a mirroring of male roles was the chief way for women to express and live out their own status. Rome's was, after all, a society based on interpersonal relationships and tradition. Even the emperor's powers were framed largely in terms of his role as *paterfamilias* to his own household and, by extension, that of the state. Given this, it must have only seemed natural that the emperor's closest female relative should have the role of societal *materfamilias* with all the pressures and obligations—and access to influence and "soft" power—that implied. Anything less would have deprived the leading woman of her rightful place and, by implication, impugned the emperor's dignity. A Republican example of these dynamics is evidenced in the women-only nocturnal rites of Bona Dea, which were hosted each December by the wife of a magistrate holding *imperium* (i.e.., a consul or praetor) in her home. That the wife's status reflected that of her husband is apparent in her hosting role and the fact that she participated alongside the priestesses, pouring the libation of wine during the sacrifice of a sow.[144] In this she was, in a sense, reflecting the powers of her husband, and in the fact that these rituals were performed *pro populo*—for the Roman people as a whole.[145] This is supported by the outcome of the infamous infiltration of the rituals in 62 BCE by Publius Clodius Pulcher, which were being hosted by Julius Caesar's wife, Pompeia. Clodius supposedly entered the home dressed as a female flute player to rendezvous with Pompeia. Caesar's subsequent divorce from Pompeia was inspired, he is reported to have said, because "I require that my family be free from suspicion and accusation."[146] For an imperial example we can turn to the senatorial debate following Livia's death in 29 CE, as described by Cassius Dio. The senate proposed, Dio says, that Livia be

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[144] As DiLuzio 2016, 212, points out Plutarch (*Cic*. 19) has the matron host herself performing the sacrifice but argues that Cicero's version of the rites (in which the Vestals perform the sacrifice) is the more accurate version because his wife Terentia had hosted the rituals herself the year that he was consul (63 BCE). Cicero *Har*. *Resp*. 12, 37.
[145] For more on the rituals, see Cicero, *Har*. *Resp*. 37; Brouwer 1989, 359-370; Versnel 1993, 228-288; Boëls-Janssen 1993, 429-468; Staples 1998, 13-51; DiLuzio 2016, 212-213.
[146] Suet. *Caes*. 74.

granted the title *mater patriae* or 'Mother of her Country,' the feminine version of Augustus' title, *pater patriae*.[147] Implicit in such declarations is the expectation that the women of the imperial house reflect the dignity of the emperor's standing, which is really just an extension and amplification of the expectation that any woman of standing enhance her husband's public reputation by demonstrating her irreproachable morality. So, while the *ordo matronarum* was never officially recognized, matrons were nevertheless separated out by virtue of their sex and the *gravitas* and *auctoritas* conferred on them by their traditional prominence as mothers, wives, and models of virtue.[148] The informal nature of both the Roman state, despite all its organizational factors, and the liminal relationship of women vis-à-vis the state would require this.

The circumstances that allowed these various constructions were the result of emerging or established cultural and social elements that encouraged increased public participation on the part of women, but which were premised on a social hierarchy of women. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the social and legal changes that Roman society experienced during the period between the late Republic and the early third-century CE. As the preceding section has shown, the gradual loosening of the bounds of *tutela perpetua mulierum* and changes to the law introduced more possibility into women's lives, especially in terms of their ability to amass wealth. But other developments growing up alongside these social and legal shifts played an equally important part in creating the atmosphere under which women with sufficient wealth might leave their mark. As each of these components is important in terms of setting up the framework within which to understand female participation in public as the commissioners of building projects, they will be discussed here in turn starting with collective action and then more individual considerations.

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[147] Dio 57.12.4.
[148] Boëls-Janssen 2008, 37-38.

## *Social Heterarchies*

Returning to the concept of heterarchy raised in the introduction, it is worthwhile considering the possibility that Roman society is best envisioned as a series of inter-connected social hierarchies and not as a single monolithic pyramid with the emperor at the top, as has so long been the case. If we break Roman society down to its component parts, we can see that there were numerous individual hierarchies operating side by side: the emperor plus senators, equestrians, and likely even among slaves, the ranking of whose employments was based on status (indoor versus outdoor; urban versus rural, etc.). It may be helpful to think of these as sites of competition that functioned separately but alongside the others. Their common element was competition for status, influence, and power—though how the latter was defined clearly differed amongst groups. In this way they operated as inter-connected modes of action within the larger social paradigm. In other words, thanks to the androcentric predisposition of Roman society, the same ranking system created to differentiate the achievements of the top men one from another were at play in other hierarchies as well. The epigraphic evidence combined with the available literary evidence pertaining to women seem to bear this out. Whether at the imperial court or within each community, Rome's matrons quite naturally separated themselves into a group ranked according to status much in the way that elite men did. At Rome there was an *ordo matronarum* and at Lavinium a *curia mulierum* that was likely ordered on the same general principle—a group of leading women who, although lacking the *gravitas* of Rome's matrons, organized for various sorts of community participation. This *ordo* or *curia*, both unofficial and a recognized social unit, was mocked by the authors of the *Historia Augusta*, where the notion of a formally sanctioned *senaculum* for women is belittled based on the sorts of things the women "debate" during their sessions (supervised by the emperor's mother). Whether this scenario was intended to lampoon the excesses of the teenaged emperor Severus Alexander or not, the anecdote is instructive. First, it confirms that the idea of elite women as their own "senate" was not wholly foreign to Romans. Their concern over who was allowed to

wear jewels on her shoes and who should salute whom first when meeting in public are exactly the sorts of things expected of women whose lives have been circumscribed by exclusion from more serious matters. This view has been twisted for effect, however, as women were more often considered capable of conducting business and even of understanding matters of political importance. The ridiculousness of the women's debates here redounds to the foolish young emperor.

Be it *senaculum, curia* or *ordo*, however, the factors determining where a woman stood within the hierarchy were many, reflecting the reputation and careers of her immediate (male) family members followed by the status and career of her father, her brothers, and her *gens*. This is not at all different from the male experience, as a man's reputation and status were likewise premised on family relationships and the careers of his progenitors. The parade of actors wearing the *imagines* of esteemed ancestors that was a feature of elite funerary display through the Republic and imperial periods is one small bit of evidence of this much larger social reality.

That women would adhere to the same social ranking categories as their men folk even while being barred from any sort of civic participation would only seem natural to a subordinated portion of the population. In modern parlance, the women had internalized the social hierarchy and naturally arranged themselves according to the acknowledged markers of status and avenues to prestige allowed them. As women gained the power to amass their own wealth and property, and as they had the personal agency to use their wealth for projects that seemed meaningful to them or which allowed them to act as patrons to communities where they had ties of patronage or obligation passed on from previous generations, they were able to undertake projects that placed them in the public eye in a way that would not damage their reputations.

In the next four chapters eleven different structures are examined in an effort to ascertain a greater understanding of the purpose and context of public building commissions by women in the western Roman empire. In each case, literary, epigraphic, and archaeological

evidence will be explored and discussed in light of the varying topographical, familial, and urban contexts of each benefaction. As will be apparent, despite the limited range of building options open to benefactors, there was no such thing as a "stock" benefaction owing to the varied meanings that the type, placement, inscription, and decoration introduced in each instance.

# 3—Case Study: Casinum

The site of Casinum is located about 120 km southeast of Rome in the Liri River valley at the base of an outcropping of a mountain called Monte Cassino. The area was settled by the Volscians sometime during the seventh century BCE and subsequently occupied by the Samnites, but there is evidence to suggest occupation as early as the tenth century BCE. The mountain's summit was entirely walled early in the area's history, and portions of these early cyclopean walls remain. Although little mentioned in ancient texts, we know that Casinum was built on a portion of the Via Latina and conquered by the Romans in 312 BCE for use as a strategic site during the Samnite Wars of the fourth and third centuries BCE. Later, Hannibal, too, wanted to exploit its strategic location but mistakenly ended up in Casilinum instead.[149] When he finally reached Casinum, Hannibal's army camped outside its walls for two days, Livy says, "laying waste to the whole area," before sacking it in 208.[150] The rebuilt Casinum held the status of a *municipium sine suffragio* and became a *colonia* when the members of the Second Triumvirate settled their veterans there.[151] The *Liber Coloniarum*, a fourth century catalogue of land allocations in Italy, refers to Casinum as an *oppidum* or fortified town and reports that it was founded by legionary soldiers, which may refer to these veterans.[152] Agricultural activity at Casinum is documented by Cato and Varro, the latter of whom maintained a villa near the town.[153]

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[149] Livy, 22.13. Hannibal's guide, who had misunderstood his Latin, was flogged and then crucified for his mistake.
[150] Livy, 26.9.
[151] Casinum was under the influence of Marcus Antonius, who for a time apparently inhabited the villa formerly owned by Varro. See Cicero, *Phil.* 2.103-105.
[152] Most scholars seem to interpret this as meaning that the *colonia* was established by Octavian, Marcus Antonius, and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, but this is not clearly established in the ancient sources.
[153] Cato the Elder, *De Agricultura* in 162 books, and Marcus Terentius Varro, *De Re Rustica* in three books. Varro's villa was apparently situated a short distance from the town, near the Gari (now Liri) River.

Knowledge of the layout of the town itself is known primarily from early maps and from later archaeological investigations. Two temples, one to Apollo and the other to Jupiter, and a Roman citadel (*arx*) stood on the site now occupied by the monastery of Monte Cassino, on the mountain's summit.[154] Walls encircling the *arx* extended from summit down and around the townsite—a circuit of just over four kilometers. The city itself was located on a portion of the southern slope just inside the lowest portion of the defensive walls. Unfortunately, both the monastery and the remains of Casinum's forum lower down the mountain were destroyed when the American Air Force dropped 1400 metric tons of explosives on the site in 1944.[155] Bombing nearly erased many of the Roman structures left in the area, though segments of Roman roads, remnants of houses and other structures, including evidence of an aqueduct, had been successfully documented prior to the outbreak of war. Only a portion of the city's grid is understood, however, and the remains of the Roman forum and an untold number of other valuable elements were lost.[156]

What can be discerned, however, shows three stages of urban development, though there is some debate as to which structures belong to which phase.[157] At any rate, it is clear that Augustan restructuring overwrote the Republican urban plan almost entirely.[158] Proposed maps of the city show a small grid with six streets running down the slope and four traversing it.[159] Perhaps thanks to logistical difficulties presented by the slope, the city appears to have reached its maximum capacity by the end of the first century CE, with an area of about 10 hectares and a

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[154] The original monastery of Monte Cassino was built by Benedict of Nursia (St. Benedict) in 529. It was usual practice to situated Christian structures over top ancient temples.
[155] The Allies mistakenly believed that the Germans were using the monastery as an observation point to hinder allied progress towards Rome. A 1944 newsreel documents the destruction: https://youtu.be/u8afP6GetP8 (last accessed 05/8/21).
[156] Portions of the forum's terrace are thought to have been discovered on private land not far from the current location of the archaeological museum.
[157] Tanzilli 2007, for example, contradicts the conclusions drawn by Coarelli 1992.
[158] Tanzilli 2007, 97.
[159] Tanzilli 2007, 97, calls the city plan "fusiform" meaning narrow at both ends and wider in the middle and in a geometric way this appears correct.

population of no more than 5,000.[160] It was also during the reign of Augustus that the city was monumentalized, with the construction of the theatre, in the south-western portion, adding a vital Roman element. To compensate for the slope, the city was terraced, allowing flat planes for building sites as well as large open areas. This is especially evident at the lower portions of the city including immediately outside the walls at the southeastern-most part, where the amphitheatre, which stood close to the city walls adjacent a branch of the Via Latina, would later be constructed. This thoroughfare, the Via Latina, approached the city from the west and, as it came near to the city walls, split into two branches. One entered the city at the Porta Romana and continued parallel to the walls before exiting from the Porta Campana on the south-eastern side.[161] The other branch continued slightly south before turning east and running parallel to the city walls, meeting its companion branch just outside the Porta Campana, slightly east of and above the amphitheatre. In this way, travelers could either stop at Casinum for lodging and food or continue on their way without entering the city at all. This would also have facilitated visitors coming from the countryside or nearby towns to the amphitheatre when spectacles were being hosted.

Despite centuries of neglect, and in spite of the Allied bombs, two structures from the Roman era remain relatively intact: the theatre, discovered partially buried and in a ruined state, and an amphitheatre, the external structures of which miraculously still stand.[162] Of these, only the theatre has been systematically excavated, though the entire archaeological area has more recently been the object of studies using radar and digital scanning.[163] Inscriptions found

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[160] Tanzilli 2007, 98, based on the number of seats in the theatre, placed at between 1,700 and 2,100; see also Sear 2006, 122. The capacity of the amphitheatre is estimated to have been about 4,000.
[161] This portion of the Via Latina corresponds to the modern Via del Crocifisso, which runs directly in front of the Museo G. Carettoni, where many of the artefacts from the excavation of the theatre are displayed.
[162] No identifiable trace remains of the temple referred to the inscription discovered at the amphitheater (*CIL* X.5183=*ILS* 5628).
[163] Cigola *et al.*, 2016 document 3D laser scans of the archaeological area at Cassino (theatre, tomb, amphitheatre, Via Latina, and other smaller remains). These are further discussed in Cignola *et al.,* 2018.

*in situ*, however, allow us to connect the names of local dignitaries with the structures in question. Two names stand out: those of Ummidia Quadratilla and her father, Gaius Ummidius Durmius Quadratus. Before discussing these two notables, however, it is important to explore the structures with which they, but especially Ummidia Quadratilla, are associated. Following that, we may return to the subject of the family in question and how these structures participated in Casinum's urban configuration and established the *Ummidii* in Casinum and beyond.

## Ummidia Quadratilla & the *Ummidii*

Our knowledge of the wealthy matron Ummidia Quadratilla at Roman Casinum comes from both epigraphic and literary sources.[164] Ummidia was the grandmother of a close associate of Pliny the Younger who, in writing to inform his friend Rosianus Geminus of her death, provided further detail about the character and interests of this wealthy matron. From Pliny we learn that Ummidia enjoyed vigor until almost eighty, was apparently responsible for raising a grandson and granddaughter, and occupied her free time with games of checkers (*ludus calculorum*). Her special interest, though, lay in watching the troupe of pantomime actors that she owned.[165] Naturally, perhaps, and mostly owing to this latter pastime, Ummidia was the object of public attention, which Pliny describes with some disdain.[166] Other information concerning this woman and her family is unclear. Onomastic studies, notably by Sir Ronald Syme in 1968, are mired by a confusion of connections obscured by time. The relationship of, for example, an M. Durmius, *monetalis* c. 19 BCE, to Ummidia is subject to debate.[167] Much more certain, however, is the fact that Ummidia Quadratilla was the daughter of one Gaius Durmius

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[164] Carettoni, *NSA* 1939, 129 = *AE* 1946, 174 (theatre); *ILS* 5628 = *CIL* 10.5183; Maiuri, *NSA*, 1929, 29-30 = Fornari, *Bull. Ist. Stor. Ital.*, 1932, 20ff (amphitheatre); Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 7.24.
[165] Pliny, *Letters*, 7.24.
[166] Pliny, *Letters,* 7.24.7.
[167] Syme 1968, 73; *PIR*² D 209.

Ummidius Quadratus, whose family originated from Casinum.[168] From what we can tell, Ummidius worked his way up from entry-level offices like those of *praefectus frumenti dandi ex senatus consulto* (prefect in charge of grain distribution at Rome) and *decemvir stlitibus iudicandis* (member of a court charged with hearing civil cases)—positions that were a necessary prelude to a senatorial career. These he likely held in the final years of Augustus' reign. By late 14 CE, he had attained the office of *quaestor of Divus Augustus and Tiberius Caesar*. In 16 he was *aedile curulis* and, impressively, one of three *curatores tabularum publicorum* hand-picked by Tiberius to assist in organizing the public records.[169] By 18 CE he was *praetor aerarii* and by 37 he had begun serving in administrative posts outside of Italy.[170] An inscription from Lusitania places him there in 37, administering oaths of allegiance to the new emperor Gaius Caesar Germanicus (Caligula) following the death of Tiberius.[171] The culmination of his career came in about 40 CE, under Gaius, when he finally achieved the consulship.[172] Apparently a capable administrator, he was granted the prestigious post of governing with proconsular powers in Syria under Claudius, probably around the year 50.[173] Tacitus mentions C. Ummidius Durmius Quadratus twice in the *Annals*—the last time in a context that can be dated to 59 or 60.[174] It is assumed that he died there around 60 CE.

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[168] Her name is the result of a late-republican practice of daughters bearing both the feminine version of their father's *nomen* and the feminine diminutive of the father's *cognomen*.
[169] Dio 57 (58).16.2 provides the year that Tiberius instituted this office; F. Millar 1964, 35.
[170] Syme 1968, 73, supposes that Quadratus ought to have been consul earlier but somehow fell from favor.
[171] *CIL* 2.172. Tiberius died in March of that year.
[172] Syme 1968, 74, proposes 38 or 39 for the date of his consulship but rounds up to 40.
[173] Josephus, *Jud. Ant*. 10.6.1-2 and *Bell. Jud.* 2.12.3-6 describes an incident between Galileans and Samaritans that was brought before Quadratus because the imperial procurator, Ventidius Cumanus, had been taking bribes. Cumanus was sent to Rome in 52, was tried by Claudius, and exiled. This places Quadratus in Syria in at least 51/52.
[174] Tacitus, *Ann.,* 14.26. See also Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* 2.12.3-6; *Ant. Jud.* 20.6.1-2. A milestone, dated to 56 CE, discovered appears to feature his name: *AE* 1907, 194: [Nero Cl]audius/[Caesar A]ug Germanicus/[Trib. Pote]s Bis Cos/[designat]us Iterum/[Viam] ab Antiochea/[Fecit ad N]ovam? Colon[ia]m/[Ptolemai]da Milia Passu(um)/[CCXX]XIII/m. p. l. [X]XXXVII/[C. Ummidi]o Durmio/[Quadrat]o Leg Pro Pr. See *PIR*[1] V.606; Syme 1968, 73f.

Unsurprisingly, what we can surmise about Ummidia Quadratilla is gleaned from sources far less clear than the inscriptions attesting to her father's administrative career. Going by the approximate date of Pliny's letter and subsequent onomastic studies, we can guess that she was born circa 28 CE and died in about 107,[175] though nothing certain is known about her husband or children.[176] Pliny inconsistently supplies names, extoling the virtues of his young protégé, a Gaius Ummidius Quadratus Severus Sertorius, Ummidia's grandson and principal heir, but neglecting to name either his (presumably deceased) father or sister and co-heir. This granddaughter to Ummidia may be the same woman attested in the *Fasti Ostiensis* for 115.[177] Curiously, both grandchildren bear the name of their grandmother, a fact which may indicate a fictive adoption.[178] Regardless, it seems that Ummidia was probably her father's only surviving child, as she seems to have received a very substantial inheritance from him, something that seems less likely had she had a brother.

Such relative uncertainty concerning her background makes it difficult to reconstruct Ummidia's life beyond saying that she was a member of the Roman senatorial class and that she must have married someone who was not quite as high in social status as herself otherwise her grandchildren would not have decided to add her family name to theirs. We also know that

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[175] Beaujeau 1975, 110f., argues that Syme based his assessment on a no longer followed belief by Mommsen, that the letters of book seven were all written in 107. He proposes that this letter dates to between 107-109 and most likely to the autumn of 108.

[176] Raepsaet-Charlier 1988, 829, lists G. Durmius Ummidius Quadratus as her father, her husband as a Sertorius (both following Syme), and her son as Severus Sertorius.

[177] Vidman, *Fasti*² 48; 112-113, argues that the Ummidia Quadratilla named by the *Fasti Ostiensis* must be the granddaughter, though this is not certain. Raepsaet-Charlier 1988, 828, comments that "…une telle mention dans les Fastes d'une femme qui ne soit pas de la famille impériale, même si elle est l'épouse d'un patron de la colonie, assurément exceptionnelle, nous invite à la prudence…" Still, it is otherwise difficult to see why this woman would have the same name as our Ummidia. If this *is* Ummidia's granddaughter, she made a good marriage, to Quintus Asinius Marcellus, consul of 99 (but cf. Oliver 1947, 156).

[178] Women could not legally adopt, but it is possible that Ummidia's grandchildren took their maternal great-grandfather's name in order to facilitate social mobility; see Syme 1968, 83f. The grandson must have married well because later generations of *Ummidii* had excellent connections; a Marcus Ummidius Quadratus Annianus was Marcus Aurelius' nephew and maternal cousin of the emperor Commodus. He was executed following a failed assassination attempt of that emperor in 182. Our ability to trace the family line ends with his death.

Ummidia owned a house in Rome because Pliny mentions that his young protégé inherited a house in Rome from his grandmother.[179] This, we might surmise, had been her primary residence and as it was fairly common for the wealthy to maintain a villa in the vicinity of a town or area that they patronized and/or in which they had roots, she may have maintained a residence in or near Casinum as well.

## The Theatre

Fig. 2—The theatre at Casinum showing location on mountain's slope, remains of the cavea, the scene building, and *porticus post scaenam*. (photo: KS Tate)

Initial excavation of Casinum's theatre took place between 1934-1936 and uncovered a complex originally dated approximately to the end of the first century B.C. or early Augustan

[179] Pliny, *Letters* 7.24.9. Her house at Rome originally belonged to Gaius Cassius Longinus (suffect consul, 30 CE), an ancestor of the assassin of Julius Caesar and the founder of the Cassian School of jurisprudence at Rome.

period, and refurbished in the late first- or early-second century A.D.[180] The cavea, which is oriented south-east in order to exploit the existing slope of the mountain, was a perfect hemicycle measuring 53.5 m across with a seating capacity of 1,700-2,100.[181] The exterior of the theatre was backed by a portico (*porticus post scaenam*), a typically Vitruvian feature.[182] As one approached the theatre from the road that ran along a natural terrace on the slope and continued north-east to the city's forum, one would have entered the external porticoes and from there into the orchestra. These porticos were essentially extensions of the perimeter walls of the cavea and were plaster-faced with Second Style frescos painted on the walls, the floors paved with marble.[183] The remains of a water reservoir suggest the presence of a fountain. At the time of excavation, the portico on the western side was in the best state of conservation, with the lower part of two columns still in place and a Second-Style painting still partially visible. This featured a red background, divided by images of columns and thin pillars rendered in light yellow.

Two vaulted side entrances (*additi maximi*) on either side of the scene building were paved with large stone slabs and led directly into the *orchestra*. These were likely crowned with tribunals (*tribunalia*) for special guests. At the *ima cavea* (lowest) level, a corridor, and a meter-tall balustrade (*balteus*) in Lunese marble separated the orchestra from the cavea seating. Behind the *balteus*, stairways radiated up into the higher levels of seating.[184] On the other side, within the *orchestra*, special provision was made for seating (*bisellia*) for magistrates and local

[180] Carettoni 1939, 139. Based on the approximate dates of inscriptions found in the theatre, as well as the use of *opus reticulatum*. Coarelli 1992, 97f.
[181] Sear 2006, 221.
[182] Vitruvius, *de Arch.* 5.9.1.
[183] Carettoni 1939, 109. Based on the lower edge of the plaster work on the wall of the portico, Carettoni's team determined that the limestone slab floor was originally paved with marble.
[184] Two further entrances into the *ima cavea* were discovered on the northern and southwestern sides of the structure. These were accessed from the road above the theatre.

dignitaries on a series of low concentric semi-circular steps.[185] The floor of the orchestra was paved in coloured marble. Studies of the layout of this theatre confirm that this feature, the *orchestra*, did *not* conform to the "ideal" established by Vitruvius but was carefully planned to best make use of the slope while also keeping the midday sun out of spectators' eyes.[186]

Three stairways radiating up from the orchestra divided the cavea into four *cunei,* while two *praecinctiones*, or walkways, divided the seating horizontally into lower, middle, and upper sections. Two further stairways along the outside of the cavea provided ease of access to the outer seats. The cavea was capped in the upper-most section by a barrel-vaulted ambulatory (*crypta*) that was closed towards the cavea except for openings for the stairs.[187] Two short sections of the upper gallery's façade (facing the cavea) are still preserved in part, each featuring pilasters crowned with tympana, alternately triangular and semi-circular in shape.[188] Here, as in most other portions of the theatre except for the *scaenae frons* and orchestra, the decoration was relatively humble, with columns of brick and pilasters carved from local stone all covered in painted plaster. The remains of a room measuring roughly 5 m. wide was discovered in the back wall of this ambulatory, and the dimensions of this space and its location above the cavea has some scholars posit the existence of a temple at this level, as at the Theatre of Pompey at Rome.[189] The fact that this room provided entrance into the *summa cavea* from a paved road on

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[185] The orchestra at Casinum does not conform to the Vitruvian ideal in various particulars. Perhaps notably, the circle meant to delineate the orchestra is set further from the stage. See Sear 2006, 122, and Vitruvius 7.5.

[186] Small 1983, 58-60; Fabbrini 1993, 54. The theatre opened toward the SE. The imaginary circle that formed the core of a Roman theatre in Vitruvius' plan ought to have been bisected by the line representing the stage front, with one half of the circle becomes the *orchestra* while the other the width of the stage building. At Casinum, 70% of the imaginary circle was that the orchestra.

[187] Fabbrini 2001, 47.

[188] The remains of this ambulatory are now entirely gone but in 1936 it was still discernible once vegetal overgrowth was removed. Two intact sections remained and were studied. See Fabbrini 2001, 47ff. for discussion and figs. 5-8 (pages 75-78) for images.

[189] Furhmann 1941, col 555, who calls it temple-like, "…eine kleine tempelartige 'Ädikula'"; Hanson 1959, 74; Sear 2006, 122; cf. Carettoni 1940, 87-88. Carettoni says nothing about the possibility of a temple integrated into the ambulatory at the top of the theatre.

the outside complicates this identification. Another small section of the seating, built above the ambulatory, was accessed via two short ramps built against the external wall of the building.[190]

The stage (*pulpitum*), almost 15 m. long, was faced with semicircular and rectangular niches covered with painted plaster and crowned by a frontal frieze, 38 cm high, that featured griffins, tendrils, palmettes, garlands, and bucrania rendered in Luna and coloured marbles.[191] Behind, a rectilinear *scaenae frons* rose two stories. Stairways led up from the back of the stage area to the second level of this structure. Archaeological excavation indicates that the *scaenae frons* at Casinum originally probably lacked the decoration added in a later phase, which consisted of columns, cornices, facing, and flooring all made of or faced with costly colored marbles sourced from around the empire. This later work, dated to the late first-century or early second-century CE, was confined mostly to the most visible interior aspects of the theatre: the orchestra, stage, and *scaenae frons*. Based on fragments of columns and capitals found *in situ*, it is apparent that elements carved from multi-colored marbles graced the two-level *columnatio*. Carettoni, who oversaw the 1936 excavation, assigned to the first level the smooth column drums of *Africano* marble. This *Africano* has a mottled grey and white surface with veins of deep purple. On the upper level were columns made of Oriental alabaster. Based on the discovery of Corinthian capitals in this area, Carettoni reasoned that the two levels of the *scaenae frons* were of different orders.[192] All of the column drums recovered from the area of the stage are significantly larger than those belonging to the upper gallery of the theatre's cavea, which featured fluted columns made of white Luna marble dated to the earlier phase of construction.

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[190] Ghini and Valenti 1995, 103f.
[191] Carettoni 1940, 86; 1939, 117f.
[192] Carettoni 1940, 87. Carettoni's assumption of two different orders is not really borne out by the evidence since only Corinthian columns were found. It is entirely possible that there was only the single order on both levels of the *columnatio* of the *scaenae frons*, as at the theatre of Vollaterae, for example.

Like most Roman theatres, Casinum's had the traditional three stage doors built into the *scaena*—the *valva* or *porta regia*, or central entrance onto the stage for the actors, and two subordinate stage doors or *hospitalia* on either side. Evidence indicates that the *porta regia* was larger than the other two and was faced with elaborately carved cornices of Luna marble.[193] Each fragment was decorated identically, and featured palmettes, Lesbian kyma with bead and reel, and dentils. A wide semicircular decorative astragalus below the dentils simulated a wreath, its horizontal scale pattern broken by plain vertical bands meant to depict the ribbons holding the wreath together. A single spiraled column drum in pavonazzetto marble belonged, it was surmised, to the ornamental frame of the *porta regia*. Such was the contrast between the decoration of the cavea and primary focal points of the theatre that Carettoni remarked in his report that the ornate and highly-colored marbles used on the *scaenae frons*, stage, and orchestra provided a striking contrast to the humbler decoration of the remainder of the theatre, which was constructed primarily of local limestone or brick faced with painted plaster, and featured decorative pieces in white Luna marble, as witnessed in the theatre's upper gallery. The use of *opus reticulatum* on all the exterior walls and Second Style painted decoration in the cavea and exterior porticos help date the original construction of the theatre to the late first-century BCE, though Filippo Coarelli has argued that it should be given an earlier date: to soon after the city was made a *colonia*, around 40 BCE.[194] A multitude of statue fragments were recovered from the area of the *scaenae frons* during excavation—the largest fragments belonging to an over-sized head, identified as a portrait of Augustus that was, in all likelihood, part of a larger-than-life statue of the emperor, the torso of a horse, and fragments of a portrait

[193] It is an interesting feature of the theatre at Casinum that the *regia* was especially wide and ornate and dominated the stage while the two *hospitalia* were evidently outside of the sightlines of the audience entirely. Much of the action on stage must have taken place centre stage, therefore, while the wings were used for costume changes and storage—a conclusion supported by the absence of back-stage rooms usually purpose built for this sort of activity. See Carettoni 1940, 85-86; Ghini and Valenti 1995, 105.
[194] Sear, 122; Carettoni 1992, 139. See the discussion of chronology in the Casinum chapter.

statue identified as, perhaps, Lucius Caesar, grandson of Augustus.[195] The only statue found nearly intact is of a nude of an unidentified man in heroic pose that dates to the Republican period.[196]

Damaged by the 1944 bombing, the theatre was partially restored during the 1950s. Restoration work was completed in 2001, and the theatre is now used by the municipality for outdoor concerts, with new seating in the cavea and the remains of the scene building covered by a wooden stage. The reticulate walls and some of the remaining painted plaster are still visible to visitors.

Taking full advantage of the mountain's slope, Casinum's theatre was in many ways not unlike theatres in other Roman *colonia* from the same period and has been compared to the small theatre in Pompeii in terms of size and capacity.[197] Long known by locals, by the time it was excavated at least of third of the theatre was buried and the exposed portion much robbed out.[198] Of the exposed portion, all of the steps of the seating area, the *cavea*, had been removed and the remains of the stage's constructed backdrop, the *scaenae frons*, dismantled and stripped of its marble revetments.[199] The portions of the structure not attached to the mountain had been further damaged by earthquakes and the colonnaded gallery that once topped the structure was mostly collapsed and entirely overgrown. Millstones found in the upper gallery suggest reuse at a later date.

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[195] Fragmented inscriptions found in the cavea attest to the presence of statues dedicated to Gaius and Lucius.
[196] This and many other fragments are now in the Cassino archaeological museum, across the road from the theatre.
[197] Sears 2006, 122.
[198] The details of this excavation were published in *Nsc* XV (1939).
[199] For the most part, it seems, the marble mined from the theatre was incorporated into the nearby abbey. See Carettoni 1939, 14. This was the monastery destroyed by Allied bombing in 1944.

The initial (1934-36) excavation, led by Gianfilippo Carettoni, concentrated on uncovering, and exploring the *cavea* and yielded a large quantity of sculptural and decorative fragments and various inscriptions, all in a fragmentary state. Notable among these was a white-marble slab which, judging by its find site, had dropped from the wall below the tribunal, a seating area for special guests above the arch of one of the covered *additi maximi* or main entrances into the orchestra area. Of the three fragments of this slab, which Carettoni labeled *a*, *b*, and *c*, fragments *a* and *b* measure 24 x 32, 4 cm and 30 x 20 x 4 cm respectively.

Inscribed in well-executed lettering over four lines, the height of which diminishes from the top down (line one: 8.5 cm; line two: 7.5 cm; line three: 7 cm; line four: 6.5 cm), the inscription refers to a Ummidia Quadratilla and her father, Gaius Ummidius Durmius Quadratus. The text of this inscription was originally published in 1939 by lead archaeologist, Gianfilippo Carettoni and has been the object of some debate, mostly regarding Carettoni's restoration of the fragmentary text. At issue is the fact that although three fragments were discovered, Carettoni's restoration of the text was tentative at best.[200]


Fig. 3—Portion of fragment *a. Museo Nazionale Archeologico di Cassino*. (photo: KS Tate)

[200] Carettoni 1939, 129 = *AA* 56, 1941, col. 559 f = *AE* 1946, 174. Carettoni's reconstruction was as follows: *Ummidia qu*ADRATI*lla* • *in* • *b* • *c* • *VM/middi.* • *patri*S. • *SVI* • *scaenam* • *vetus*TATE/*corruptam* • *su*A PEC*unia* • .....TIONEM/.....*a* • *so*LO. • ET .....DEDIT.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) | …ADRATI… | b) | ……VM | c) | …… |
| | ... • SVI •... | | ....TATE | | ..... I ..... |
| | ...A • PEC.... | | ....IONEM | | ....AIT..... |
| | ……O • ET... | | ....DEDIT | | ....VLIER.... |

Considering only her name and a reference to the restoration of the theatre the only secure elements of the text as discovered, Carettoni assigned *a solo* ('from its foundations') to the last line of fragment *a* and decided not to incorporate fragment *c* at all.[201] A restoration suggested in 1992 by Maurizio Fora combined a reconsideration of the prior restoration with forensic examination and suggested the following:

*[Ummidia C(ai) f(ilia) Qu]drati[lla theatr]um*
*[impensis? patri]s sui [exornatum? vetus]tate*
*[collapsum Castinatibus su]a pec(unia) [res]titu[it et ob dedica]tionem*
*[decurionibus et popu]lo et [m]ulier[ibus epulum] dedit*

Ummidia Quadratilla, daughter of Gaius, restored for the people of Casinum with her own money the theatre that had been decorated at the expense of her father because it was collapsing from old age and on the occasion of its dedication she gave a dinner for the decurions, the people, and the women[202]

Fora, pointing out that these types of inscriptions were highly formulaic, argued that taking line spacing into consideration while incorporating all the known elements of the usual formula could recover the most likely text, even while certain elements of the inscription remain entirely speculative.[203] Meanwhile, his forensic examination of the fragments themselves allowed him to restore portions that Carettoni arguably misread, especially in fragment *c* where, for example, what Carettoni read as an A is more likely a T that has a portion of a V following it just

[201] As Fora 1992, 272, points out, Carettoni not only left the words on fragment *c* out of his suggested translation of the inscription, he also chose to leave *mulier,* which is clearly indicated by [---]ULIER[---] in line 4, out of consideration entirely. What appears clear is that Carettoni had incorrectly assigned the designation *c* to the fragment that ought to have been labelled *b*.
[202] All translations are the author's unless otherwise noted.
[203] Fora 1992, 270. For example, [*vetus*]*tate* at the end of line two is rather easy to restore, yet could refer to the theatre itself, to its original builder (whose name is lost), or to specifics of the restoration. Two key elements, the *impensis* with which line two begins, and the *exornatum* are also suggestions considered very likely based on other similar inscriptions.

at the break so that Carettoni's *[---]AIT[---]* becomes Fora's *[---]TITV[---]*, which he understandably suggested should be restored as *[---res]titu[it…].*[204] Crucially, Fora's incorporation of fragment *c* restores *[m]VLIER[ibus…]* to the text and in doing so reveals an important detail about Ummidia Quadratilla's relationship to the people of Casinum.

## *The* Epulum *at Casinum*

The *epulum* or public banquet was at one time associated primarily with religious festivals and was part of the celebration of the feast connected with the given rites. Eventually, though, the religious connection was weakened enough that public banquets were held for a variety of reasons, but always to celebrate some special occasion. In a sense, an *epulum* distilled Roman social relationships into one central performative element—the person of the benefactor the "master of the feast," so to speak, hosting high-ranking members of the community (or, on occasion, the entire community), who were given gifts that corresponded to their social rank. The reciprocal nature of the entire event was made evident in the action of gift exchange—the community honoured the benefactor even while the benefactor feasted the community. This was an exhibit of patronage on a large scale. In an imperial context, the benefactor stood in relation to the community as the emperor did to the entirety of Roman society, and the people of the community returned the benefaction with honour, attention, and praise.

As it turns out, when it comes to female benefactors hosting public banquets, the epigraphic record is meagre, with only about ten percent of the known inscriptions mentioning a female host, and all of these took place under the empire and in Italy.[205] Whether the lack of correspondence between instances of building dedications and the epigraphic record on this

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[204] Fora's suggestion that there is a barely noticeable V after the very clear TIT is likely, but not easily detected. I have seen, but not handled, these fragments and could not discern a down stroke but Fora had the benefit of a hands-on forensic inspection and argues that the first stroke of the V is along the break in the stone. Given this, *restituit* is undoubtedly correct. Carettoni was clearly mistaken when he suggested that the first letter was an A as the visible lower stroke is clearly perpendicular and not angled, as in the A clearly visible on the first fragment (frag. A).
[205] Donahue 2004, 107.

regard is simply due to a lack of survival of pertinent inscriptions or something else is difficult to say. As Emily Hemelrijk rightly points out, public dinners and the like were probably simply not mentioned in most inscriptions as they were details extraneous to the main event, the public benefaction, whatever it was.[206] We know, though, that banquets were commonly associated with building dedications, so it is worth paying attention to the details provided when one is mentioned, as they provide insight into local social networks and ranking of these relationships both in societal terms and in terms of the priorities of the sponsor. In this instance, the inscription marking the dedication of Casinum's refurbished theatre specifically mentions that Ummidia Quadratilla sponsored the *epulum* and that among those present were the *decuriones* (Casinum's ruling magistrates), the *populus* (here, arguably the male citizens), and the *mulieres*.[207] We cannot be sure the precise composition of this latter group. It was likely made up of the wives of the most prominent citizens of the city, though it could also have referred to all the wives of the *populus* mentioned just prior. In either case, it is interesting that the women are separated out as constituting their own group. This aligns with what we have seen concerning female groupings in other contexts and fits with the vocabulary employed in provincial settings referring to the women of a municipality acting as a group.[208] I think that what is happening here is that Ummidia Quadratilla is acknowledging the women because theirs is the group to which she belongs and among whom her status takes special precedence. As Van Bremen pointed out in her book on female participation in the Greek East, society was divided along gendered

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[206] Hemelrijk 2015, 140.

[207] Fagan 1999, 170, on the difficulty of pinning down the precise meaning of *populus* in Latin inscriptions. Surely the context was local.

[208] As we have seen, at Rome the elite women—the *matronae*—were referred to as the *conventus matronarum* when they met to discuss topics pertinent to their class or to reward members with the insignia of their status. Beyond Rome, however, the vocabulary is different, and the word most used on inscriptions to denote the women of a municipality as a group was *mulieres*. Indeed, a *curia mulierum* has been noted in a rare inscription from Lanuvium. *CIL* 4.2120=*ILS* 6199. See also Hemelrijk 2015, 206; Fagan 1999, 270, on *curia* as a club; Joseph 1943, 39, without supporting evidence, refers to this as a "woman's debating club." See also above, Chapter 2.

lines.[209]Had she been at Rome, she would have included her peers, the *matronae*, among those she hosted at such a function, so it only makes sense that she should also do this—albeit in a more comprehensive manner—at Casinum, where she was acting as patron to the entire populace. In other words, by including the women and marking them as a special group at the *epulum* she is saying that while her status among the population of Casinum was of the highest order, it was especially so among the women.

## *Building Chronology*

As for the structure itself, debates concerning its chronology persist, with most scholars following Carettoni and placing its construction in the early years of the Augustan era.[210] This determination is based on the use of *opus reticulatum* in the outer walls, the decoration of the carved lintels from the *scaenae frons*, and the discovery of Second Style paintings on portions of wall found around the cavea and in the porticos in front of the building (*porticus post scaenam*).[211] Another consideration, of course, is more general evidence for early Augustan-era restructuring in the city itself. Famed archaeologist, Filippo Coarelli, has argued, however, for an even earlier date, claiming that the original benefactor of the theatre project was M. Terentius Varro who, according to literary references, owned a villa nearby.[212] This would put

[209] Van Bremen 1996, 145 (divide between men and women); 150-151 (in public, male and female groups did not mix); 155 (frames the segregation of women as evidence of the "complementary nature of civic conviviality and commensality").
[210] Carettoni 1940, 88; Hanson 1959, 73-74; Pensabene 2007, 101-122; Betori and Tanzilli 2009. Bejor
[211] Carettoni 1940, 87-88.
[212] The villa and its famous aviary are described in *De Re Rustica* III.5.8-18.

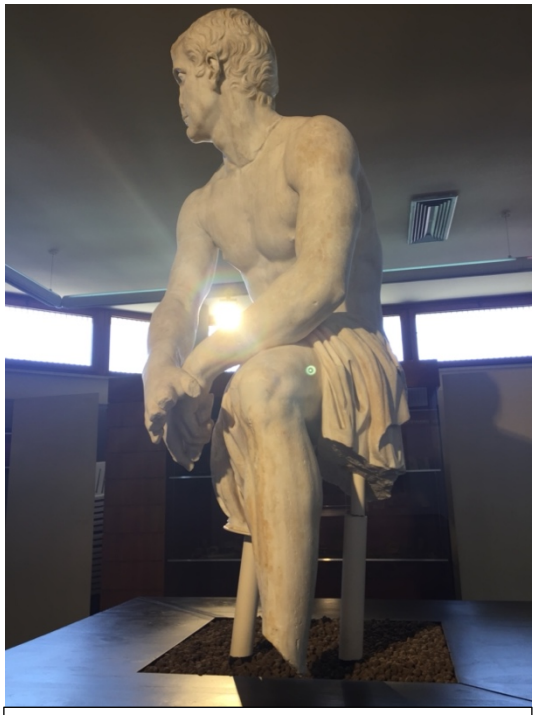

Fig. 4—Statue discovered in a well behind the scaenae frons. Dated to the Republican period. (photo: KS Tate)

the date of original construction at about 40 BCE. The discovery of a statue of a male nude in heroic pose in the drainage basin located behind the *scaenae frons* is, Coarelli argues, a portrait of Varro.[213] Coarelli's evidence for Varro's patronage at Casinum is entirely circumstantial, however, as there is nothing that connects Varro to the theatre except the fact that he owned a villa in the area. Coarelli appears to be working backward using the presence of *quasi opus reticulatum* in local stone as an indication of an earlier date. This may be correct, though this feature alone does not necessarily bespeak a strictly Republican date. In fact, reticulate walls were very frequently constructed starting from the late second-century BCE right through the early second-century CE. Indeed, the use of this technique was often related to the skill levels of local builders and not just to trends current in Rome.[214] The brick stamps found in the theatre do suggest a late Republican or early imperial date, but this only returns us to our original question. If we remove Varro from consideration as the building's original patron, we are left with a structure the construction of which was likely begun later than 40 BCE, perhaps in the first decade or so of Augustus' power.

Other sculptural elements found in the theatre may help with dating but as might be expected are likewise not definitive. Many pieces of broken statues and other decorative elements, discovered during the 1936 excavations, were catalogued in the report and are now in

[213] But cf. Betori and Tanzilli 2009, 247-248.
[214] Sommella 1988, 155-156: ease of transport and use of construction techniques that matched the abilities of local craftsmen figured largely in theatre construction in areas outside of Rome.

the Museo Nazionale Archeologico di Cassino, but these have only recently been the object of in-depth study.[215] The most recent are a book by Pensabene and Vacca published earlier this year, and an article by Bosso dated to 2007. Each offers an overview, some remarks concerning the artistic lineage of select pieces, and an idea of the rough dates of these items.[216] Among these are, unsurprisingly, portraits of imperial family members. Portions of a larger-than-life head and a part of an arm with carved drapery suggest a statue, 2.4 m (7 ft., 8 in.) tall, depicted, perhaps, in a seated position.[217] Stylistic features strongly suggest that the head is of Augustus,[218] while fragmented portraits in Luna and Corinthian marble have been identified by inscriptions as those of his grandsons, Gaius and Lucius Caesar.[219] The inscriptions, erected by order of the Senate at Casinum (*Conscriptorum Consulto*), and statue fragments were discovered near the *scaenae frons*, the highly decorated scene building behind the stage (*pulpitum*). These were likely set up in the theatre between 2 BCE, when Lucius assumed the *toga virilis* and both youths stepped into more weighty public roles, and 4 CE, when grief surrounding the death of Gaius was still fresh.[220] The majority of the statue fragments discovered during excavation—most

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[215] The most recent work on Casinum's theatre is by Pensabene and Vacca, 2021. A guide to the entire archaeological park was published in 1995 by Ghini and Valenti provides a brief overview but, surprisingly, these objects have not received the attention they deserve. Carettoni's report provides only a catalogue with very brief physical descriptions. Pensabene and Vacca's work offers as in-depth a study as is probably possible at this point.

[216] Bosso, 2007, 123-140.

[217] Bosso 2007, 130, argues for a seated position because of the overall size of the statue suggested by the dimensions of the head discovered during excavation. Given its apparent size, the statue would have been too tall for the *scaenae frons* had it been in a standing posture. A comparison may be made here to a similar statue found in the theatre at the Augustan colony, Emerita Augusta, in Lusitania (Merida, Spain). Agrippa dedicated this theatre in 15 BCE, though the *scaenae frons* was apparently redone a mere seven years later. There, a larger-than-life seated statue of the empress Livia inhabited a large niche directly above the *valva regia* of the scenic backdrop. See Pensabene 2007, 35.

[218] The fragment is of left side of the head, with an ear, part of the lower jaw, hair, and nape of the neck visible.

[219] Carettoni 1939, 128 and note 1. These inscriptions are missing the names of the dedicants though comparison with other inscriptions that use the same formula strongly suggest dedications to Lucius and Gaius Caesar.

[220] Fabbrini 1993, 61, suggests the later date. The importance of this occasion should not be underestimated. Cassius Dio 50.12.1 reports that the bodies of the young men (Lucius died in Massilia, Gaul, in August, 2 CE and Gaius in Lycia, southern Turkey, in February 4 CE) were escorted to Rome by the military tribunes and by the chief men of each city. We should note that neither of the inscriptions

of which seem to have belonged to the stage area—date to roughly the same era. In addition to the monumental statue of Augustus and portraits of his unfortunate grandsons were fragments of statues identified as a young Tiberius and, perhaps, a portrait of Drusus Major. Such an assemblage of portrait statues of imperial family members makes it probable that these were part of the display on the *scaenae frons*, which was likely populated with statues of other imperial family members as well as, perhaps, local notables and theatre benefactors.[221]

Both the arrangement of imperial statues on the *scaenae frons* and the chronology of the theatre as suggested by Coarelli are familiar from other Roman theatres in Italy much influenced by Rome, especially southern Latium and Campania. This suggests that construction of Casinum's theatre began during the last decades of the first century BCE when the bulk of the structure was built using local stone and decorated with Luna marble.[222] Additions and embellishments to the *scaenae frons* came later and were refreshed as tastes changed. The building process for a public structure as expensive to build as a theatre was, after all, a drawn-out affair, and the local elite were expected to participate by offering gifts of money, resources, or both.[223] Augustan restructuring undertaken in the whole city extended, apparently, to the theatre and, indeed, the nature of the stones used in the cavea compared to the *scaenae frons* suggests that the first phase of restructuring in the theatre was of this portion of the complex. It was, after all, under Augustus that the *scaenae frons* of many theatres in Italy were redecorated with colored marbles.[224] The use of colored columns and marble revetment brought an aura of

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found inside the theatre make note of their deaths, which may suggest that they were erected while both youths were still alive.

[221] Carettoni 1939, 128, for the inscriptions to Gaius and Lucius. A fragment of a head taken by some as a portrait of the emperor Hadrian is clearly a later addition. See Bosso 2007, 131, for her interpretation of this "head of Hadrian."

[222] Coarelli 1992, 99, argues that the 'quasi-reticulatum' of local stone used at Casinum's theatre was a feature of work before about 30 BCE and uses this to settle on a date in the middle of the first century BCE.

[223] Sear 2006, 11; Pensabene 2007, 21-22.

[224] Penasbene 2007, 11. Pensabene argues that theatres like that at Casinum were remodelled to mimic the decorative richness of theatres at Rome, especially the Theatre of Pompey (restored by Octavian in 32 BCE) and the Theatre of Marcellus, also restored by the *princeps*.

glamour and a taste of Rome to the provincial cities. The *scaenae frons* was further embellished with statues of the imperial family, with the larger-than-life sized statue of Augustus as the central element, probably in the place of honour directly above the *porta regia*.[225] The next question unites inscription with archaeological evidence. Can we tell which part of the theatre's construction and/or decoration was contributed by the *Ummidii*?

If the inscription has been correctly restored, Ummidia Quadratilla restored (*restituit*) her father's earlier contribution to the theatre.[226] This could be almost anything, though excavation in the area of the *scaenae frons* produced clues that restoration and redecoration of this portion of the theatre took place subsequent to its original construction, and that the additions included the group of sculptures of imperial family members.[227] It was usual for the *scaenae frons* to feature a greater degree of decoration than the rest of the theatre, but the types of stone discovered here suggested a subsequent phase during which a variety of polychrome marbles were installed on the *scaenae frons*, stage front, podium, and orchestra.[228] The *scaenae frons*, which consisted of two levels, boasted columns made of cipollino, a white marble with green veins that originated from Euboea off the coast of Greece, yellow and pink *breccia*, a volcanic stone with a mottled surface highly prized by the Romans, and *Africano* marbles sourced from Asia Minor. These were featured across the length of the decorative scene while columns of oriental alabaster, likely from quarries in Egypt, framed the *porta regia* and

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[225] As at Emerita Augusta, Lusitania (Mérida, Spain), where a larger-than-life statue of a seated Livia is positioned in a large niche directly above the *porta regia*. See Pensabene 2007, 35. (As an aside, the term *porta regia* is not ancient. Vitruvius used *valvae regiae* in the plural because they were folding double doors. See Burrell 2015, 12. I am using the term that has shown up most frequently in my research.)

[226] This rules out suggestions like that of Michaela Fuchs, who posits that Ummidia paid for general renovations of the theatre and for a *cuneus mulieribus* (seating reserved for the city's matrons). See Fuchs 1987, 155.

[227] Carettoni 1939, 140.

[228] Carettoni 1939, 138: The contrast that Carettoni is making is with the materials used for columns and their capitals elsewhere in the theatre, which were of stone or brick covered with stucco. This was found all along the portico at the top of the *cavea* and along the back (least visible) wall of the *scaenae*. Fabbrini 2001, 55f., discusses the construction techniques used in the *pulpitum*, *scaenae frons*, and orchestra in somewhat more detail than Carettoni.

supported delicately carved archivolts of Luna marble.[229] In addition, it appears, colored marble revetment covered the walls of the *scaenae frons,* the stage floor (*pulpitum*) and front (*proscaenium*), and extended out over the floor of the orchestra. Small herms with visages of Dionysus, god of theatre, stood along the stage front. The result would have been striking, especially since the remainder of the theatre was much more plainly adorned. Carettoni remarked on the stark differences between the columns of the *scaenae frons* and elsewhere in the theatre complex, "La ricchezza della *frons scaenae* contrastava con la semplicità decorativa delle altri parti del teatro: in pietra (o mattoni) ricoperta di stucco erano le colonne e i capitelli dei portici, in pietra il cornicione che coronava la sommità della cavea come le colonne e semicolonne che ornavano, sporgendo dalla linea del muro di fondo, la parete posteriore della scena."[230] We may surmise from this that the *scaenae frons* at Casinum was one of those that underwent restructuring and redecoration during the Augustan age or a little later.

Coarelli has suggested two possibilities concerning interventions by Ummidia Quadratilla and her father at Casinum's theatre. On the one hand, he says, it may be that the father contributed funds to supply the statues that graced the niches of the *scaenae frons* which, as we have seen, reveal a decidedly Augustan theme.[231] Presumably, then, following the inscription as restored, Ummidia would have refreshed the statuary of the *scaenae frons*. It is potentially problematic, though, that while the statuary discovered in the theatre seems to speak to an earlier phase of Augustus' reign, Quadratus' public career began somewhat later.[232] Admittedly, the evidence is fragmentary, but one would think that if Quadratus were supplying

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[229] Carettoni 1939, 138; the architectonic fragments associated with the *scaenae frons* are listed p. 121. Breccia was regarded by the Romans as one of a number of architecturally useful precious stones. It was employed mostly for columns and wallcovering.
[230] Carettoni 1939, 138-139.
[231] Carettoni 1939, 113. Among those found in the area of the *scaenae frons* were a bust of a youthful Tiberius, a larger than life-sized head worked in Luna marble that Carettoni identified as Augustus, a torso wearing a lorica cuirass decorated with griffins and a Gorgon's head, and a head expertly worked in Luna marble tentatively identified as that of Lucius Caesar. Numerous other statue fragments could not be assigned to any particular portrait.
[232] As noted above, he was quaestor in 14 CE.

statues of his benefactors to the theatre in his hometown he would provide the most up-to-date portraits. This makes the likelihood of his having supplied a portrait of Gaius or Lucius Caesar seem less probable.[233]

Another possibility put forward by Coarelli is that Ummidia's father participated in funding a complete restoration of the scene building that she subsequently completed. Here, he argues that *inchoatum* ("begin" or "start") could replace *exornatum* ("ornamented" or "embellished") in the second line of the inscription.[234] The problem is that since *exornatum* belongs with *theatrum* the substitution of *inchoatum* for *exornatum* changes the meaning of the inscription substantially—so that it reads as though Ummidia restored the *theatrum* begun by her father. This is an interesting proposition, but it is not supported by the inscription found in the theatre as restored and it directly contradicts the assertions made in the inscription found in the amphitheatre, which are discussed below. It is an attractive possibility, but not one supported by the structure's chronology as established by the archaeological evidence. The theatre was built, clearly, over a decade or more.[235]

Another scenario is that Quadratus paid to have the entire *scaenae frons*, its *pulpitum* (stage) and orchestra decorated with colored marble revetment, perhaps during the early stage of his career as a way of furthering his personal status and reputation or advertising his rise in fortune. That he may have been responsible for the statuary displayed in the niches is possible as well but those could just as plausibly have already—at least in part—been present. This might explain why not all the portraits of imperial family members are contemporaneous to Quadratus' career. If he *was* responsible for installing coloured marbles in the theatre, it is

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[233] Though it has been noted that tributes to Gaius and Lucius are documented into the reign of Tiberius. See Fuchs 1987, 170.
[234] Coarelli 1992, 98.
[235] See also Fuchs 1987, 26, who dismisses the idea that Ummidia's father could have been responsible for the theatre in part for reasons of chronology. Fuchs also cites a fragmentary dedication by a *patronus* on which offices (notably that of *praefectus*) are listed that were never held by Quadratus. For this, see Carettoni 1939, 196.

plausible that at least some of these elements required restoration for one reason or another twenty years or more after its original installation.[236] After all, judging by inscriptions referring to other Roman theatres, fire, earthquake, or even damage related to structural insecurity were all real probabilities as the scene building was the most prone to needing major renovations, if not complete restructuring.[237] It could therefore be that all or some of the marble revetment put in place by Ummidia's father suffered damage owing to structural deficiencies over the course of time or to earthquake. We know that an earthquake of considerable strength shook the region around Mt. Vesuvius in February of 62.[238] Evidence indicates that it was of a magnitude commonly felt at a distance of 100 km, roughly the distance from Vesuvius to Casinum.[239] This and others are considered precursors to Vesuvius' Plinian eruption in 79. Even if earthquake activity in the Bay of Naples area was not the source of damage at Casinum, the Apennines are themselves prone to seismic disruption and it is entirely possible that an earthquake damaged the theatre at Casinum several times during its active use. It could also be that exposure to the weather faded, chipped, pitted, or otherwise damaged it. This is made more plausible still when we consider that the most resilient marbles were white ones like Luna or Pentelic, which were employed for structural elements like cornices, arches, and architraves precisely because of their strength and durability. Coloured marble, on the other hand, is particularly susceptible to wear and tear because the chemical elements in marble that create the colors are actually impurities that weaken the internal structure of the stone.[240] It is also worth keeping in mind that Roman law required that reconstruction efforts use new materials rather than recycling old ones.[241] If

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[236] But cf. Coarelli 1992, 98.
[237] Sear 2006, 19, provides a series of examples of cities in which the *scaenae frons* suffered damaged and had to be rebuilt.
[238] Tacitus, *Ann.* XV.22.1; Seneca, *NQ* VI.1.1-3.
[239] Cubellis et al. 2007, 141; Cubellis and Marturano 2013, 1.
[240] Bradley 2006, 28.
[241] Cicero, *Verr.* 2.1.56.146 quotes portions of Roman law to the effect that portions of any work cut out for restoration must be replaced, and that the contractor may keep the old material for himself. Thomas and Witschel 1992, 149.

Ummidia paid for the *scaenae frons* of Casinum's theatre to be refreshed, she would have needed to import new stones to do it.

We know that Quadratus died in Syria around 60 CE and that he had been stationed there circa 50. This means that if he were to sponsor work on the *scaenae frons* he was most likely to have done so before he was sent to Syria by Claudius. Coarelli argues that it is unlikely that the marbles would need replacing in mere decades, but if Quadratus' contribution was made decades earlier and not immediately preceding his posting in Syria—and/or they were damaged by earthquake—repair or replacement seems more likely. Is it possible, then, that Ummidia replaced the damaged marbles of the *scaenae frons* (and perhaps also some or all of the statuary) that had been contributed by her father?[242] If Ummidia's father had paid for the decoration of portions of Casinum's theatre with colored marbles when he began his career in the last years of Augustus' reign, it may well have needed repair and/or replacing by the time of his death in 60. At this point, Ummidia would have been in her 30s and the recipient of at least a portion of her father's presumably substantial fortune. She may even have been the only child or sole surviving family representative, things which, if true, would speak to the importance of her undertaking this project herself.[243]

Both the timing and the significance of these changes are important. We know that many Italian theatres were outfitted with colored stones during the Augustan era. As an up-and-coming member of Casinum's elite, what better way for Ummidius to express ambition and success simultaneously than by being the patron who paid for such an ambitious addition? That polychrome marbles were a marker of prestige is undoubted in our ancient sources. Studies of attitudes over time show that polished coloured marbles replaced pure white marbles, like Luna,

[242] In agreement, see Pensabene and Vacca 2021, 54.
[243] Whether Ummidia Quadratilla had siblings, especially brothers, is a question that cannot be answered given the evidence available to us, but the scope of her wealth suggests she did not. Eugenio Polito 2013, 1456, suggests that her husband and any brothers and sons must have died prematurely.

in the imaginations of Rome's elite class as symbols of Roman imperial power and prowess.[244] Competition among the elite to use these prized stones in their various building projects had, by the first century CE, far outstripped their interest in marbles like Luna. We might consider the chronology of the construction of Casinum's theatre, then, as showing this on provincial scale—local limestone and brick predominates in the earliest stages of the theatre's construction, when its supporting structures and cavea were being built up, and this was supplemented with Luna marble for column capitals, cornices, etc., representing late first century BCE sentiments that white Luna marble best communicated luxury and wealth. By the time Ummidia's father was embarking upon his career in imperial administration, tastes and priorities were shifting. White marble for decorative elements no longer appealed, and it was certainly not capable of conveying the shades of meaning with which colored marble was increasingly imbued. As a result, competition for these imperial stones expressed power and status and conveyed the utmost prestige.[245] The fact that the *scaenae frons* was fitted with coloured marble from a variety of locations across the empire not only attests to this as a possible later addition but points to the adoption of a decided connection between wealthy benefactor and imperial supply channels that these additions implied.

A possible timeline for Casinum's theatre, then, is as follows: construction began during the early years of Augustus' power and influence and continued for the next few decades, with statues of Gaius and Lucius Caesar added perhaps around 2-5 CE. Those features of the theatre that speak to a timeline beginning in the last decades of the first century BCE attest to this. That a member of the prestigious *Ummidii* would contribute substantially to the theatre's construction is of the highest probability as enrobing the most focal point of the theatre with

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[244] Bradley 2006, 21-28 discusses how the Romans assessed the value of colored marbles as well as the importance of distance in determining their relative prestige, 26. De Nuccio and Ungaro 2002 is a more complete study of marbles, their valuation, and uses.

[245] Bradley 2006, 27f. See also J. André's 1949 study of Latin references to color in relation to marble, and their implications.

expensive coloured marbles both added to the theatre's prestige and attested to the *Ummidii's* elevated social standing. When this might have been exactly is open to supposition, but it was likely near the beginning of Quadratus' career. If a man wanted to celebrate his entrance into the Senate at Rome, something Ummidia's father, surely a *novus homo*,[246] earned circa 14 CE, he may have done it by funding the decoration of his hometown's rather humble theatre complex. Such a celebratory mood might equally have been inspired by having captured favorable imperial attention, such as Quadratus earned in 16 when he was one of three selected by Tiberius for a newly created post. Another likely episode for such a lavish outlay of monies was the occasion of his appointment to the consulship, which Quadratus held in about 40 CE. Gifting colored marbles from around the empire—Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor—to the modest theatre in his hometown attested not only to Quadratus' wealth, highlighting his success to his home community, it demonstrated his connectedness as well. Marble quarries were, after all, imperial possessions and being able to attain colored marbles proved his access to imperial networks. After his death 60 CE in Syria, his daughter and (principle?) heir, Ummidia Quadratilla, could have then used some of her inheritance to fund a lavish redecoration of the *scaenae frons* using stones brought in from all over the empire, thus maintaining her father's initial contribution after two decades or more of wear and tear and re-establishing the eminence that these colored stones implied. Problems of stone acquisition would have been the same for Ummidia as for her father decades earlier, as her project required huge sums of money and access to fresh supplies of these expensive marbles to restore the façade appropriately. As the daughter of a prominent senator and woman of senatorial rank, it is not at all unlikely that she possessed the wealth and connections required to see this project to completion. It may have been at this time that the dedicatory inscription detailing her father's career was also publicly erected in the city's forum. These would have been more than adequate ways to celebrate the life of a man so important to

[246] Coarelli 1992, 98; Syme 1968, 73.

his community, his family, and the empire. Set within the context of her other civic contributions, such a project would certainly have cemented her position as public patron of the highest order at Casinum and beyond.

The mechanisms of this much are clear. The restoration of a building—or even the claim of restoration—called public attention to the importance of that structure to the community and reasserted family connections to both the city in question and the public benefactions of the family involved. Family identity was, after all, tied not just to status but to place and it was in the interests of paying homage to one's family and advertising family fortunes that such projects were undertaken. Indeed, regardless of the precise nature of Ummidia's restoration of the theatre, the fact that her work was tied in the inscription to her father's original contribution attested to her *beneficia*, as a member of the *Ummidii*, to their hometown. It also paid homage to her father's memory and kept their family uppermost in the local collective memory. Indeed, the use of *vetustas corruptum* in her dedicatory inscription served to honour her father's original achievement and signaled a continuity of public benefaction on the part of the *Ummidii*. This reinforced Ummidia's *pietas* as the one who honoured her father's achievement.[247] Ummidia took over where her father had left off, thus cementing her reputation as an important public benefactor and Casinum's leading lady.

[247] Thomas and Witschel 1992, 147.

## The Amphitheatre (& Temple)

Fig. 5—Roman amphitheatre at Casinum. At the top left a portion of the Via Latina is just visible. (Photo: KS Tate)

One of the most intact Roman amphitheatres in south-central Italy, the amphitheatre at Roman Casinum is situated just outside ancient Casinum's walls, on the mountain's southern slope, into which it is partially built. On the south-eastern side the structure is free standing while on the north-western it is attached to the slope and the seating is mostly resting on the mountain. A portion of the Via Latina, a main road leading to Rome from Capua to the south, traces the slope directly above the amphitheatre's north-western side. The main axis of the amphitheatre is situated so that it is roughly-parallel to this road, and to the matrix of the Augustan colony inside the city walls. Scaled to suit the community, Casinum's amphitheatre is a smallish elliptical measuring roughly 85 m x 69 m at the exterior walls and 52 x 36 m within the arena. Judging by the objects found inside it, it appears that this amphitheatre was used for gladiatorial contests and hunting exhibitions into at least the third century CE.

The amphitheatre is delimited by a continuous wall of *opus reticulatum* roughly 2.60 m tall, portions of which still feature, at the topmost portion, the stone corbels meant for holding

the rods to which the retractable canopy or awning (*velum*) would have been attached.[248] In this exterior wall are six entrances, regularly arranged. Five of these were on ground level and one near the top of the cavea on the north-western slope. Of those at ground level, two are on the main axis and the other three on the freestanding, south-eastern, side of the building. Each is framed by large limestone blocks with a decorated keystone. The two main entrances corresponding to the main axis of the structure led into barrel-vaulted corridors, 4.25 m wide and 16.50 m. long, with direct access into the arena that could be closed off from the arena by a gate or door.[249] On each side of these main entrance corridors, short stairways lead to a *podium* or seating area for officials and visiting dignitaries,[250] as well as stairs into the *ima cavea*. The other three ground-level entrances all provide access to stairs leading into the seating area; these were accessed from a small road that ran along the eastern side of the amphitheatre. A sixth entrance located on the north-west slope was accessed from the road that ran along the top of the terraced embankment into which the structure is built; this led directly into the uppermost seating. Of this entrance only the vertical supports remain.

The interior of the amphitheatre is much robbed out, with all the seating and most of the stairs missing except for fragments. Although there were originally eight *cunei*, these are now almost entirely overgrown with grass. The floor of the arena is compacted earth, now overgrown. The arena wall (*balteus*) is still mostly intact and was originally covered in decorative marble slabs. Two small rooms were to be found on either side of the short axis of the arena, though their purpose is not known.[251] Likewise, a series of rectangular rooms interrupted the enclosing wall on the north-western slope and were aligned with the paved street above. These also are

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[248] Golvin 1988, 114.
[249] The thresholds of these gates are still *in situ*.
[250] Golvin 1988, 114.
[251] Golvin 1988, 114. On the south side, this room measured 3 x 2.20 m and could be opened directly to the arena by a small door (1.2 m); on the northern side, the room was 3 m deep. Golvin surmises that the stairway, still preserved, led to a gallery or box seat.

without discernible function, although some have suggested that the larger room, the walls of which were faced with marble revetment, is the *templum* to which the dedicatory inscription refers, while others argue that given its relationship to the main entrances, it was a tribunal for dignitaries.[252]

There were no substructures in the amphitheatre at Casinum as at the Colosseum in Rome. A small square dugout area in the arena floor that is connected to a covered channel leading to the south was likely a cistern for collecting water and channeling it outside the structure.

Two inscriptions referencing Ummidia Quadratilla were found in the immediate vicinity of the amphitheatre, which stands just outside the southern gate in the city's defensive walls, the *Porta Campana*, less than 200 m from the theatre. The first inscription, discovered in 1757, is thought to have been positioned on the interior above one of the principal entrances to the upper precinct of the structure:[253]

*UMMIDIA C(ai) F(ilia)*
*QUADRATILLA*
*AMPHITEATRUM ET*
*TEMPLUM CASINATIBUS*
*SUA PECUNIA FECIT*
(Ummidia Quadratilla, daughter of Gaius,
built with her own money an amphitheatre
and temple for the people of Casinum)

The stone slab on which it was expertly carved is roughly a meter square (slightly wider than tall); with well executed letters 14-22 cm (5.5-8.5") high.

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[252] Ghini and Valenti 1995, 95; cf. Golvin 1988, 114.
[253] Fora 1991, 203-204; *CIL* 10.5183 = *ILS* 5628. The stone is now in the wall of the *galleria lapidaria* in the abbey of Monte Cassino.

The other inscription found in the amphitheatre was first discovered in 1923 buried in the ground directly below the place it had once occupied above the main entrance on the structure's western side.[254] Intact, it was 4.05 m long and almost a metre tall (0.9 m), with an incised frame surrounding the text comprised of finely-carved letters 15-16 cm (roughly 6") high: *UMMIDIA C(ai) F(ilia) QUADRAT]ILLA / ASCONIA SECUNDA* (Ummidia Quadratilla Asconia Secunda, daughter of Gaius). Ever cautious, Sir Ronald Syme suggested that this may have been a different person, perhaps a sister or half-sister of our Ummidia.[255] A study of inscriptions from other amphitheatres in this part of Italy, however, indicates that it was common practice to place one plaque inscribed with the benefactor's full name as a complement to the one that attributed the building to that person using a shortened version of their name, with filiation.[256] If this is correct, then it is likely that both inscriptions refer to the same person. This doubles the impact of the inscription that lays claim to the amphitheatre and a temple (*templum*) that may have been nearby.

Fig. 6—Looking down into arena from Via Latina on hill above. (Photo: KS. Tate)

The mystery of this temple's type and location will likely never be solved. That there was a temple is beyond dispute and attempts at identifying or at least plausibly suggesting a location for this temple have been numerous. A small room found set into the seating on the west side of the amphitheatre has been identified as a possible *sacellum* but is probably too small to qualify

[254] Carettoni 1939, 82. Carettoni remarks that the space on the wall where it had once been was still discernible. Fora 1991, 204, reports that until the Allied bombing in 1943 this block had been intact, but tremors caused by the bombing caused it to break in two.
[255] Syme 1968, 79.
[256] Fora 1991, 205.

plausibly for the use of the word *templum*, and Carettoni suggested that this feature was likely at the top of the cavea as at the Theatre of Pompey in Rome.[257] In terms of its dictionary definition, a *templum* should be an area delineated according to augural ritual and that seems to imply a structure of larger dimensions than either of these suggestions allow. It appears, however, that the Romans were not as concerned with precision in their terminology as we are now and attempts at establishing precise distinctions for *templum* or *aedes* have proved problematic.[258] Nevertheless, several rectangular rooms discovered in the immediate vicinity of the amphitheatre during an excavation conducted during the early 1970s were interpreted as the *templum* in question, but this is, of course, not definitive.[259]

Debates concerning the dating of the amphitheatre are, like those concerning the theatre, based primarily on the use of *opus reticulatum* in the exterior walls. Rather than settle prematurely on a very early date, we should, as discussed above, consider other factors that might explain the use of this technique, such as a local preference or the absence of workmen familiar with up-to-date techniques. Compounding the issue here is the fact that the amphitheatre has not received the same attention from archaeologists as the theatre.[260] A further issue is that scholars arguing that Ummidia Quadratilla cannot have been responsible for the construction of the amphitheatre seem to assume that if she were responsible for it, it must have been built in the early 100s CE, but here they are probably confounding the date of construction

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[257] Carettoni 1940, 89-93.

[258] Suggestions have ranged from an *aedes* being constructed on public land while a *templum* was built on private land to a *templum* being delineated by a portico while an *aedes* was not. Castagnoli 1984 provides a good overview of the issues.

[259] The excavation report has never been published, so the dimensions of the rooms are not available. Bosso 2007, 128, reports claims that the temple was eventually incorporated into the church of S. Pietro, which was destroyed in 1621. This is based on Medieval sources (not supplied) that report that this church was built over a pagan temple. See also Coarelli 1992, 101; Carettoni 1940, 92f.

[260] An exploratory trench was dug inside the arena of the amphitheatre in 1988, but the scope of this work was quite limited. This trench returned several small objects almost all of which were dated to between the first century BCE and the second century CE. Among these, bronze coins, various glass and blown-glass fragments, gaming tesserae, and various bronze domestic items: a needle, three nails, tweezers, a key, and a ring. All of these items are now in the Cassino Archaeological Museum.

with the date of Pliny's letter (about 107). Indeed, it seems more likely that Ummidia Quadratilla funded the amphitheatre when she was younger, perhaps around the same time that she paid for the restoration of the theatre, which I suggest was likely around the early 60s CE. This puts the date of her projects during the reign of Nero, the last of the Julio-Claudians, and makes the continued use of *opus reticulatum* in Casinum more probable,[261] as it is entirely conceivable that a small backwater nearly 120 km froma Rome would be slightly behind the times when it came to employing the latest building techniques. If the two projects were roughly contemporaneous, another explanation could be that *opus reticulatum* was employed at the amphitheatre to maintain a sense of unity between the two structures, despite other options being available.

We may accept that it is likely that the amphitheatre was plausibly constructed during the reign of Nero, but one more issue requires attention—that of the veracity of the inscriptions in question. In his article about Casinum's theatre, Coarelli argued that it is possible that *fecit* in the inscription from the amphitheatre is unhelpful in determining the degree of building or rebuilding involved in Ummidia's amphitheatre project; that it actually indicated a much less significant participation on Ummidia's part than the construction of the whole building and nearby (adjoining?) temple.[262] In support of this, he points to a study of the language of building dedications published in 1992 by Thomas and Witschel, which argues that Roman building inscriptions should not necessarily be taken at face value.[263] Here he certainly has a point; *fecit* is neither as descriptive nor as unproblematic as one might assume; the inscription provides no further detail and the lack of systematic excavation denies us some potentially valuable information. Coarelli notes that Ummidia may have in fact been responsible for some very costly contribution to the amphitheatre (he suggests marble seating), and that she then took

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[261] Sear 1982, 76.
[262] Coarelli 1992, 100.
[263] Thomas and Witschel 1992, 150, argue that while words indicating restoration work were likely to be accompanied by qualifying descriptions, and that forms of *facere* did not necessarily indicate the extent of the work done.

responsibility for the entire structure as a way of bolstering her own local reputation.[264] His point cannot be entirely ruled out, as this project in conjunction with that of the theatre would have served to embed her name and that of her family even further in the local community's social hierarchy. As with the theatre, though, it is impossible to say with any surety how this played out at Casinum's amphitheatre. It could be that since the dedicatory inscription found in the theatre stipulates that Ummidia restored (*restituit*) *that* structure she would not be shy about using the same descriptor for the amphitheatre project.[265] On the other hand, it is clear that *restituit* in the theatre inscription was required in order to draw attention to the earlier work of her father (and her own *pietas*), and it could be that restoration of the amphitheatre was a project that allowed her to take responsibility for the whole, though this seems unlikely. At the risk of sounding naive, though, we could give the inscription the benefit of a doubt and assume that Ummidia Quadratilla paid for the construction of the amphitheatre and a temple that was presumably nearby, but we must admit that the evidence does lend itself to question. Even suspending judgment concerning the degree of her interventions at the amphitheatre, both that project, whatever its scope, and her beneficence in funding the construction (or restoration) of a temple served multiple social purposes. As the family representative who was perhaps the only heir to her father, Gaius, Ummidia Quadratilla's patronage of Casinum bolstered the reputation of her family but also her own personal reputation and, as the owner of a troupe of pantomimes, her own financial interests as well. It is worth noting that if Ummidia is guilty of claiming a greater degree of intervention than was the fact, she was simply following the example of many great men before her. The main point here is that she acted as a city patron, and targeted projects that would have garnered her a great deal of positive attention.

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[264] Coarelli 1992, 102.
[265] Fora 1991, 213, makes this same point.

## Spatial Considerations

As noted above, the site of ancient Casinum shows evidence of three developmental phases, with reorganization discernible and datable to the late-Republican and Augustan periods.[266] It was during this latter period that the slope on which the city was built was terraced and monumental structures imposed. A grid, as much as was possible, was also instituted—one that allowed something of the famous Roman grid with central axis. This latter, however, was never as clearly established as at places built on level ground. The city was surrounded by a wide circumference of walls that enclosed not only urban centre but also a large swath of fields and, at the summit, the military and religious centre—the *arx*. Again, much of ancient Casinum was erased by Allied bombing during the Second World War and what remains is subject to not inconsiderable debate. The city's Roman forum, for example, was for a long time thought to have been located outside of the city walls but has now been more plausibly restored to the lower city grid, though its precise location is not clearly established. Based on the available evidence—in this case the discovery of ancient pavement, three fluted column drums, and a statue base that came to light during the construction of a new house in the 1970s—some scholars argue that Casinum's forum was located at the about halfway between the theatre and amphitheatre.[267] For the purposes of this chapter, however, we will be ignoring debates concerning the development of the city and concentrate on the collocation of the structures for which Ummidia Quadratilla was responsible.[268]

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[266] Bejor 1979 argued that the theatre at Casinum was erected "poco prima o all'inizia dell'età augustea"; Sommella 1988, believed that the monumental structures belonged to the initial phase of the colony—ie, under the Second Triumvirate—with restorations in the early imperial period; Ghini and Valenti 1995, 33, date the theatre to what they call the "età triumvirale-augustea" while the amphitheatre belongs (p. 93) to the "primissima età imperiale." Scholars of ancient architecture are apparently fond of splitting hairs.
[267] Tanzilli 2007, 97-98; Valenti 1995, 619-621; Ghini and Valenti 1995, 33-34, posit a close collocation of theatre, city baths (not found), the temple mentioned in the amphitheatre's inscription, and the forum.
[268] Another structure that figures largely in the works of modern scholars is the so-called 'Tomb of Ummidia Quadratilla,' the collocation of which in relation to the theatre-amphitheatre-forum relationship is suggestive of high posthumous honours, if it is indeed Ummidia's tomb. Unfortunately, nothing has yet


Fig. 7—Casinum archaeological park from above. (Image Copyright: Google Earth 2019)

If we could fly over the ancient site of Roman Casinum, we would see that the theatre was central to the urban reorganization performed probably early during the reign of Augustus. Arranged on a grid that was organized by areas of use, Casinum's public spaces were on the lower portions of the slope, closer to the city walls, than areas that show evidence of housing, which were on streets up the slope from the walls. A map of the ancient city shows how central the theatre was to the urban arrangement, though it was placed slightly off centre from the forum. If we think of the topography of the city with its sloping terrain, however, we should perhaps consider that the city would not have been experienced strictly in terms of N/S and

been discovered in the area of this structure that fixes its identity. Coarelli 1992, 108 argues briefly for a late first-century BCE date and that it was the tomb of Varro, but Cf. Betori and Tanzilli 2009, 251-252, who argue that, based on construction techniques, it must have been constructed in the mid-first century CE at the earliest and perhaps to the mid-second century CE at the latest.

E/W movement, but according to the plane on which one was situated relative to other portions of the city. In this sense, then, we note that the main entrance to the theatre and the presumed location of the forum were on the same horizontal plane. This meant that the same paved road that delineated the top of the forum square ran to the porticos that allowed entry into the theatre's orchestra. Further up the slope, above the theatre structure resting on the slope, another paved road ran past the place of access into the upper levels of the cavea. This upper urban area, judging by the remains that have been found there, was principally dedicated to housing and a few infrastructural works such as the cistern that received water from the aqueduct that fed the city. The placement of the theatre on this plane therefore suggests in the first case a desire to emphasize its relationship with the forum, and in the second an interest in ensuring that all had access to the theatre. Interestingly, seeing as the theatre was placed along the slope equidistant between the forum and the southwestern city walls, it was also easily accessed by those traveling from outside the city; anyone entering the city through the Porta Romana would have had easy access to the theatre thanks to a road that intersected the Via Latina Nova inside the city walls, turned left, and led directly to the theatre's lower entrance area.

The centrality of this structure is hardly surprising, given that theatres served as local focal points. It is important to keep in mind that the modern conception of theatres (or amphitheatres) solely as places of entertainment do not apply to the Roman context, where spectacle itself was imbued with social, political, and religious associations. A theatrical complex, then, was a place where political, religious, and societal rites were performed and taken in. At Rome, the first permanent theatre was constructed by Pompey the Great in 55 BCE and it was this structure that seems to have set the bar for later structures.[269] Serving as both

[269] Along with the theatre of Marcellus at Rome (begun by Julius Caesar and completed by Augustus), the theatre of Pompey became the blueprint for subsequent theatres, both at Rome and beyond. See Bejor 1979, 128f; Pensabene 2007, 10-21.

popular focal point and lightening rod for Pompey's opponents, the theatre showcased Pompey's power, influence, and wealth in the context of the already heated contest among the late-Republican dynasts. With its mammoth cavea, temple situated at the cavea's summit, and enormous quadriporticus stretching out behind the main theatre structure, Pompey's theatre was not just an entertainment complex, it was in a sense a spatial embodiment or expression of both public and political life.[270]

Outside of Rome, these same elements came into play but with slightly different orientations. As at Rome, the theatre promoted urban life and appealed to all classes of people. Theatres were important additions to towns wanting to declare their social, political, and cultural allegiance with Rome as theatres both promoted and declared a Roman-style social and political life precisely because of the confluence of social, religious, and political associations they embodied. Theatres drew people into the city from surrounding areas and raised the status of the city or town that boasted one above those that did not. Theatres were therefore central to urban planning and were usually placed inside the city walls either at the centre near the forum or in the proximity of both forum and city walls.[271] Even theatres with modest post-scaenae porticoes, as at Casinum, could serve a more political function as they were frequently used for gatherings that required both adequate seating for those attending and a statue of the emperor to witness the proceedings.[272]

As we have seen, Ummidia Quadratilla's amphitheatre stands just outside the city walls not far from the theatre. Amphitheatres were often built very near to or just outside the city

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[270] The senate evidently met in one of the rooms (curia?) in Pompey's portico: Gellius XIV.7.7. Pompey's portico is much mentioned in the ancient sources: Cic. *de Fato* 8; *de Off*. II.60; Cat. 55.6; Ovid *AA* I.67; III.387; Prop. IV.8.75; Mart. II.14.10; XI. 1.11, 47.3; Dio 44.16 attesting to its popularity as a gathering space.

[271] Bejor 1979, 131-133. At Verona the Augustan theatre is situated directly across from the forum whereas at Asculum (mod. Ascoli Piceno, Marches) the theatre was near the city wall where the Via Salaria entered.

[272] Bejor 1979, 133; Boatwright 1990 184-185; Coarelli 1992, 87 for the extra-entertainment aspect of Roman theatres.

walls because this facilitated the movement of crowds to and from shows. Indeed, a stretch of the Via Latina (which connected Capua to the south with Rome) passed very near to Casinum's amphitheatre as it crossed the slope working its way north. A section of this pavement is still visible on the slope just above the amphitheatre. This stretch of the Via Latina was connected to a subsidiary road that took spectators directly to the structure's *summa cavea* and to pathways that led to the principal entrances further down the slope. This would have undoubtedly made it easy for people coming from city and country to attend spectacles hosted at Casinum. Further, people following the Via Latina from the south on the way towards Rome would have seen the amphitheatre as they approached the city, an undoubtedly impressive sight. Even those traveling from the north and bypassing the city using the bifurcation of the Via Latina Nova that skirted the lower city walls could not escape encountering this prominent structure. It therefore confirmed Casinum's status to even the casual passing traveler. In terms of experience for those entering the city, anyone arriving through the *Porta Romana* was first made aware of the city's monumental centre; they would encounter the amphitheatre immediately upon leaving via the *Porta Campana*. At the same time, those traveling north on the Via Latina would have entered the city through the *Porta Campana* and found themselves on the road leading directly to the forum and, from there via a single right turn, to the theatre. There was therefore a clear spatial connection between amphitheatre, theatre, and the political centre of the city, one that would have been experienced whenever people traveled from town to the amphitheatre for *ludi* or from outside the city to the theatre for theatrical *spectacula* and games. Since Ummidia Quadratilla paid for the construction of the amphitheatre it seems clear that she was intentionally creating tangible, readily experienced space for herself and her family within the urban fabric of the

city.[273] It is possible, though unverifiable, that Ummidia may have owned the land on which the amphitheatre was constructed.

Still, what is clear is that as a member of a notable family, Ummidia played her part in ensuring that the family name retained its prominence in its hometown. Indeed, it was thanks to this family that Casinum flourished during the imperial period. The inscription from the theatre makes clear that she acted as a patron to the city, paying for the refurbishment of the theatre and then hosting a public dinner to celebrate its completion. As a high-status local dignitary Ummidia would, in all likelihood, have been present in Casinum for the dedication of the newly restored theatre. We should certainly imagine her pantomimes performing in the theatre, perhaps as part of the newly dedicated work's inauguration. During this event, Ummidia Quadratilla and attending family members would undoubtedly have sat in one of the tribunals, boxes reserved for visiting dignitaries that were situated above the entrances to the orchestra. In this way, she played the part of a magistrate or an empress without herself holding that status. Outside of Rome, the elite could practice what at Rome was the sole provenance of the imperial family and their inner circle. They formed the core of their city's inner circle.

## *Pliny's Letter regarding Ummidia Quadratilla*

Despite the survival of two structures associated with her and their dedicatory inscriptions, it is as usual difficult to discern much about Ummidia Quadratilla beyond her relative wealth and status. Luckily, we can turn to a letter the younger Pliny wrote to a friend informing him of Ummidia's death in about 107 CE.[274] In order to keep this discussion brief, I will point to two pertinent passages: in the first, Pliny extols the merits of Ummidia's grandson, Gaius Ummidius Quadratus Severus Sertorius, with whom Pliny had been connected thanks to Ummidia's influence and support. In the other, he describes himself and the young Quadratus

[273] Ghini and Valenti 1995, 34, claim that the amphitheatre was built on land owned by Ummidia Quadratilla but do not provide references for this information.
[274] Pliny the Younger, *Letters 7.24.*

attending a performance by a group of pantomimes owned by Ummidia. As is clear, critique of Ummidia is a key feature of Pliny's letter, as he works to separate himself and her grandson from any stain to their reputations that might accrue because of Ummidia's personal proclivities, which he frames as reflecting her female weakness.

> *Vixit in contubernio aviae delicatae severissime, et tamen obsequentissime. Habebat illa pantomimos fovebatque, effusius quam principi feminiae convenit. Hos Quadratus non in theatro, non domi spectabat, nec illa exigebat*.[275]
>
> "He lived with his self-indulgent grandmother yet in the utmost personal austerity and entirely in accordance with her wishes. She kept a troupe of pantomimes whom she cherished more enthusiastically than was proper for a leading woman. These Quadratus never watched either in the theatre or at home, nor did she require it."

As one may infer from its tone, Pliny's letter is more than a little judgmental about Ummidia's chosen pastimes, which he judges as *delicata* (luxurious or self-indulgent). Still, the letter is only superficially about her—its real aim is to reinforce for the reader the pristine reputation and character of the grandson despite his grandmother's inclinations.[276] Pliny drives his point home with a revealing anecdote.

> This incident will surprise you as it did me. The last Sacerdotal Games were opened by a performance of mime, and as we left the theatre together Quadratus said to me: "Do you realize that today was the first time I have seen any of my grandmother's freedmen dancing?" So said her grandson; but meanwhile people who were completely unknown to Quadratilla were running to the theatre to pay their respects to her—though it shames me to use the word "respect" for their fawning attentions—jumping up and clapping to show their admiration, and then copying her every gesture with snatches of song.[277]

These "fawning attentions" as Pliny chooses to call them, were in fact a common sort of interaction between audience and civic benefactor and are recorded between the people of Rome and the emperor at performances in the amphitheatre, theatre, and circus. There are several things going on here, but much of Pliny's indignation seem to originate in the fact that such

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[275] Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 7.24.3-4.
[276] Note the contrast between *aviae delicatae* in line 3 and *principi feminae* in line 4.
[277] Pliny the Younger, *Letters,* 7.24.6-7.

attentions, paid to a woman, smacked of scandal—as did all things related to the theatre, especially, perhaps, when it came to mimes precisely because they were a bawdy, popular form of theatrical entertainment, and therefore "common."[278] Quadratus may not have seen them performed before (if we can believe that), but Ummidia owned them, and that in itself implied both untoward extravagance and a personal moral failing. Even worse is the possibility that Ummidia made money from her mimes, another disreputable undertaking to a man such as Pliny. It is possible, as Richard Sick has pointed out, that she was not only watching her mimes perform to while away the hours, as Pliny implies, but making money from them. This is plausible and possible, and if true would have been, for Pliny, another stroke against her as business as a means of making money was perceived by the senatorial class as debased. Actually, though, this would have been quite canny, as owning pantomimes was a potentially lucrative undertaking. Pantomimes were extremely popular—the historian Cassius Dio relates an instance when a popular mime refused to perform at games in honour of Augustus because he thought the wage being offered was too low.[279] An emergency meeting of the senate had to be convened and more funds found so that his demands could be met lest rioting erupt over the mime's absence.

Given the popularity of this type of entertainment, it is worth considering that Ummidia's interest in owning a troupe of pantomimes went beyond merely watching them practice. Surely, she also hired them out and made money from the venture. In addition to giving Pliny cause to make clear his charge's innocence, then, Ummidia's involvement as owner of mimes puts another face on her *beneficia* at the theatre at Casinum, as it would make her

[278] Note Pliny's moralizing condemnation of this form of entertainment in *Panegyricus* 54.1.
[279] Dio, 56.47.2.

restoration of Casinum's theatre in part a business venture or at least as smacking of self-interest.[280]

Indeed, Pliny devotes a sizeable portion of his letter to an anecdote in which he and the younger Quadratus attend a performance by Ummidia's pantomime's. Most scholars assume that they were in Rome, which is, after all, where Ummidia must have had her principal home, but the mention of Sacerdotal Games does not exclude the possibility that they may have been in Casinum.[281] It is difficult to say, as Romanized cities in Italy adopted the priestly colleges of Rome and could have had, on a smaller scale, their own 'sacerdotal games.' Still, the point here is that as men were most often the sponsors of public entertainments, we can imagine wealthy men booking Ummidia's mimes for performances.[282] Doing this would put these men in a position of obligation to Ummidia as owner of the mimes, thus granting her a degree of social clout not traditionally available to a woman. This was enough to warrant Pliny's criticism of her personal choices, which he diminishes by placing them in the reader's mind as the result of feminine leisure and (implied) lack of propriety. But the fact that she was publicly playing the part of patron and that the crowd's attentions were focused on her just as they would have been on any other (male) public benefactor clearly offended Pliny's sense of decorum. Importantly, it is not her *public* benefactions that drew Pliny's censure (he makes absolutely no mention of her contributions to Casinum's urban space, probably because he is not concerned with what went on outside Rome) but the attention she garnered from the crowd—attentions that were hers because she was hosting a public performance and was patron to the performers and, by extension, the crowd.

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[280] Sick 1999, 340-342. In addition to the question of family obligation, then, this helps us make sense, perhaps, of her interest in restoring the theatre. The amphitheatre remains less closely connected to Ummidia, except in the sense that she appears to have been interested in entertainments.
[281] Sick 1999, 340, assumes Rome; Beaujeau 1975, 116f., argues Pliny means the Capitoline Games. Thanks to Dr. Angela Kalinowski for this point.
[282] Sick 1999, 342.

Clearly, we can say along with Woodhull and Hemelrijk that all this activity constructed a public persona for Ummidia, but one wonders why it is necessary to frame these projects as the female equivalent of a male *cursus*. Women inhabited their own social sphere, which was expressed in a social hierarchy that fit meaningfully within male structures while also being separate from them. The sphere women inhabited mimicked male priorities like competition as an expression of status, but it was entirely informal. In other words, the comparison with the male *cursus honorum* is misleading. Like men, a woman's status was established at birth but unlike a man, a woman's status advanced primarily through marriage and/or inheritance.[283] For women like Ummidia Quadratilla, the interest lay in performing the status they possessed, because Rome's was a performative society. Did one have status if it was not advertised? Unlike their lower-status sisters, such elite women did not *need* to patronize public buildings, but they did because of the obligations their position in the social hierarchy required. Women like Ummidia, who apparently inherited a very substantial estate, were more like the emperor, whose deeds did not advance his social standing but reinforced and expressed it instead. Indeed, in terms of her building projects at Casinum, she certainly seems to have mimicked the scale and intention of imperial projects at Rome. At Rome, the emperors found that the projects that garnered them the most positive PR, so to speak, and the ones into which they invested the most money were those related to public entertainment—think of the massive imperial bathing complexes, especially, but also the theatre of Marcellus and the Flavian amphitheatre, each of which was a focal point of programmatic building in the city. Ummidia's building at Casinum, although on a scale appropriate for a city that size, nevertheless displays a level of ambition unusual in terms of female benefactions. Seeing, then, that Ummidia paid for the restoration of the theatre and if she built the amphitheatre from the ground up further suggests a purposeful

[283] Within this framework, some women—mostly those of equestrian origins—sought priesthoods as a way of establishing their social standing, but the most elite women did not need such outward shows of public participation to express their standing.

collocation of structures. Indeed, as the case study suggests, we are dealing with what ought to be termed an "Ummidian entertainment complex" because of the spatial proximity of the forum and Ummidia's amphitheatre and theatre. Indeed, aside from work paid for by a Petronia at Asisium (mod. Assisi), who left money in her will for the completion of an amphitheatre begun by her brother, this is the only amphitheatre that we know for certain was paid for by a woman in the Western provinces.[284] Given the wording of the inscription found in the amphitheatre, it is more than likely that the temple she paid for was central, since it was apparently not in the amphitheatre itself and would have offered a counterbalance and connection to the other structures if it were in the forum. Regardless, Ummidia's projects were close to the political and commercial heart of Casinum, and this ably communicated the status she possessed there. Her obligation to her father and the city where her family originated was why she built there, but her buildings reframed and reconstructed these connections much in the way an empress may express her status and wealth—and her position among women—as being of the highest order.

[284] For Petronia, see *CIL* 11.5406. Another instance is not secure but seems likely: *CIL* 9.21—*OTACILIA M F SECUNDILLA / AMPHITHEATRUM* (broken slab; Rudiae, Regio II, Italia). A third woman paid for the installation of a water system, perhaps in her city's amphitheatre: *CIL* 5.3222— *NOMINE/Q Domiti Alpini/Licinia Mater/Signum Dianae et Venationem/et Salientes T(estamentum) F(ieri) I(ussit)* (Licinia, mother, ordered by testament that a statue of Diana, a beast hunt, and fountains be made in the name of her son, Quintus Domitius Alpinus)(Large cippus uncovered near the amphitheatre; Verona, Regio 10, Italia).

## Conclusions

What makes Casinum interesting is that it provides a unique instance of a series of public benefactions that have, for the most part, survived the centuries relatively intact, and where information about their benefactor may be derived from epigraphic and epistolary survivals. Thanks to this, it also presents a ready opportunity for reflection on the interplay of structures within the larger urban environment. In the case of Casinum, it seems clear that the theatre interacts with both the forum and with the extra-urban amphitheatre built by Ummidia Quadratilla using her own money. The location of the temple also mentioned in this inscription is not known, though we might imagine that it was in the forum, the most likely location for a temple in a city as limited by its topographical constraints as Casinum.[285]

Taking the structures in question separately, the theatre appears to have been central to the Augustan restructuring of the city, and was a focal point for the city, both in terms of offering typical Roman-style entertainments and lifestyle, but in availing the local elite of an opportunity to participate in building and enhancing a structure so important to the Roman esthetic. Participation in building or beautifying the city's theatre gave this group—surely relatively small given the size of the population—the chance to participate in displays of status and wealth. Ummidia Quadratilla, who likely lived primarily in Rome from at least the time her father entered the senate, participated as well. Her refurbishment of the theatre was on another level from that of the local ruling elite, though, and she undoubtedly stood out not only among the women of the city but among the male citizens as well. This provides an interesting glimpse at the nuance of Roman hierarchical considerations, as a woman of senatorial class could make an impression in a provincial city much in the way that a man might. By paying to restore her father's contribution to Casinum's theatre, she was doing exactly this, and the dedicatory

[285] But cf. Coarelli 1992, 101, who placed it not far from the amphitheatre based on the discovery of two Ionic capitals near the so-called Tomb of Ummidia Quadratilla. There is, however, little evidence to connect these capitals with the temple attributable to this benefactress.

inscription sees her hosting an *epulum* where she acted as public benefactor to the magistrates, citizens, and important women of the city. We must consider, too, that there was likely a statue of Ummidia Quadratilla in her restored *scaenae frons* perhaps in a central position or simply among those of the imperial personages who were depicted and commemorated there. That this was likely is suggested by the *scaenae frons* at nearby Suessa Aurunca, where the theatre was restored by the sister of the empress Sabina, Matidia the Younger.[286] Here, a polychrome statue of Matidia was discovered among the statuary fallen from the theater's decorative scene. This is thought to have been featured in the niche above the stage's central door. As an arm's-length member of the imperial house, Matidia may have been considered eligible for this honour whereas at Casinum Ummidia arguably may not have been. Still, the possibility is intriguing and certainly makes sense if Ummidia Quadratilla was the leading woman Pliny considered her. As the restorer of the *scaenae frons* and generous benefactor to the whole city thanks to her other substantial contributions to the urban complex, it could be that a statue of this lady stood looking back at the crowd as they attended *ludi* in the theatre she and her father beautified.

[286] Woodhull 2019, 215-220, Cascella 2013, 79-80. Wood 2015 is a comprehensive study of the statue found in the theatre at Suessa.

# *4—Case Study: Paestum*

Famous for the skeletal remains of three monolithic Doric temples, Paestum has a long history of documented habitation. First established as a Greek colony built on the coastal plain near the River Sele (on the Gulf of Salerno, in Campania) as early as the seventh-century BCE, the city was originally named Poseidonia. It is the Greeks who established the orthogonal street grid and marked out areas for sacred, civic, and residential structures. Archaeological evidence of an agora with *ekklesiastérion* is attested as a central feature. Strabo reports that Poseidonia was taken over by the Lucanians during the sixth or fifth century BCE and while they appear not to have made any major changes to the arrangement of the city streets or built any surviving monuments, their tombs attest to their presence.[287] It is they who renamed the city Paistom. The Romans first intervened in this area during the third century, though the record is vague on when the Romans first encountered the Poseidonians. At any rate, a Roman colony with Latin rights was certainly established at Poseidonia by 273 BCE during Rome's consolidation of power in the region. With the establishment of this colony, the city's name was changed to Paestum and the city significantly reconfigured to mark the occasion. Archaeological excavations have revealed that while the Roman colony was built up alongside the famous monolithic Greek temples, it overwrote much of the earlier Greek city, especially at the centre. Existing streets were converted to Roman equivalents, with *decumani* and *cardines*, and gates at the cardinal points. At the centre, a new purpose-built forum measuring 157 x 57 meters was established in the western portion of the city, replacing the Greek agora and demolishing the *ekklesiastérion*.[288] Tabernae interspersed with various small religious structures lined the

[287] Strabo *Geog*., 5.4.13, tells us that these Greeks came from Sybaris, a Greek colony on the southern coast of Italy, on the Gulf of Taranto.
[288] The eastern side of the forum and roughly half of the nearby amphitheatre have been obliterated by a modern road. Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 10.

forum,[289] while the north side was dominated by a stepped semi-circular comitium and a temple set on a high podium.[290] Other features on or near Paestum's forum changed over time, with major additions and improvements taking place in the last decades of the first century BCE. Most notably, an amphitheater was built in the northwest corner of the forum and on the southern side a formerly open area populated only by a small Italic temple dedicated to Mater Matuta was monumentalized by the addition of a basilica.

Despite these known features, other details of Roman Paestum must be extrapolated from other important centers nearby—Pompeii, or Puteoli, for example.[291] Indeed, the population of Paestum during this period is not securely known, but the walls of that city were twice the circumference of Cosa, north of Rome, with which Poseidonia is often compared and which had an estimated population of 7,500.[292] We can also say, based on evidence for building activity in the city, that Paestum enjoyed benefactions from a competitive local elite from at least the first century BCE through the second century CE. A major contribution to all this activity is a building that represents a significant contribution on the part of a woman: the forum's basilica. What we know of this woman and her family is, however, limited to the epigraphs left behind in the basilica she funded, and the building inscription found during excavation. We know that her name was Mineia, daughter of Marcus, and that hers was an equestrian family that made good. We know that she had a connection with the cult of Bona Dea at Paestum and a healthy ego, as evidenced by coinage she had struck bearing her image and that of her basilica. All of this is discussed in the section covering the basilica and its contents, though, so it is best at this point

[289] Post-war excavation by Sestieri revealed a structure identified at the time as a Lararium. Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 10.
[290] The eastern portion of the Forum, which includes half of the amphitheatre, is underneath a modern road and has not been excavated.
[291] Mitchell 1985, 44.
[292] Mitchell 1985, 42.

to move directly into consideration of the urban layout, especially that of the Roman forum, the location of the basilica she funded.

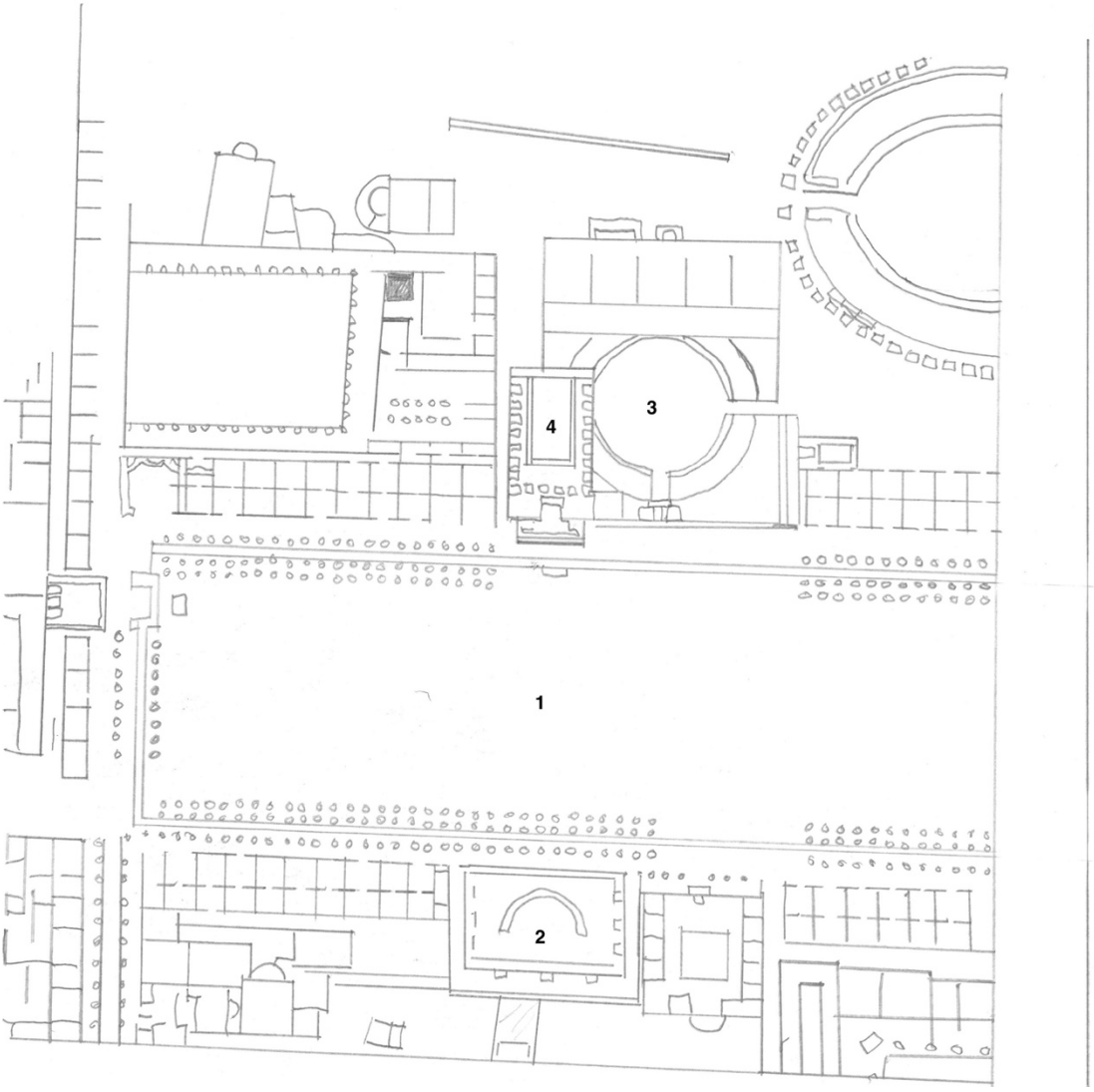


Fig. 8—Plan of the central area of excavated Roman Paestum
(Drawing by KS Tate based on plan by Parco Archaeologico di Paestum)
Legend: 1: Forum; 2: Basilica/Curia; 3: Comitium; 4: Temple of Mens Bona (Templum Pacis)

## The Roman Forum and Basilica

The Roman forum at Paestum was first located during the mid-nineteenth century, following the discovery of the Temple of Peace in 1830. Excavations, which did not begin in earnest until 1907, were not particularly systematic. Several treasures were pulled from the ground in the area of the basilica, the most notable being a statue of the emperor Claudius as Pontifex Maximus.[293] These early twentieth-century explorations, funded by the *Soprintendenza di Napoli* and headed by Vittorio Spinazzola, saw the eventual clearing of the forum area and the discovery on the south side what was at that time identified as a gymnasium.[294] At the end of the 1920s and into the early 1930s archaeologists of the *Soprintendenza*, now headed by Amedeo Maiuri, sought to uncover the Roman forum, walls, urban roadwork, and area of the ancient Greek Temple of Ceres.[295] It was during this period that the forum area was explored, but no report was ever published.[296] With activities suspended during WWII, it wasn't until 1952 that the southern side of the forum received its first detailed exploration. Further work completed in 1974 and published in 1980 by Emanuele Greco and Dinu Theodorescu identified five distinct phases on the site of Mineia's basilica. The first three phases date to Paestum's earliest history, predating the Roman colony. Belonging to the fourth phase is a structure the archaeologists designated a basilica and assigned a date range of between the first and third centuries CE. These dates do not correspond to epigraphic evidence concerning Mineia and her family, which indicate that her civic contribution was more likely built in the final decade or so of the first century BCE. A later structure (phase five) is even less promising a candidate as it was dated by

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[293] Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 18. Using this statue as a *terminus ante quem*, Greco states that a rough chronology for the basilica is sometime from the early empire to the reign of Claudius (r. 41-54 CE); La Greca 2005, 102.
[294] Spinazzola 1912, 113.
[295] A. Mauri, *Boll dell. Ass. Int. di Studi Mediterranei*, I.1, 1930, 26f.
[296] Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 1. This appears to have been largely a hunting expedition fueled by fascist ideology. Indeed, Greco comments that "…l'interesse fu puntato unicamente su aspetti antiquariali…" which might explain why results were not systematically collected and published. See also the brief history of excavations at Paestum during the fascist era by La Greca 2005, esp. 100-108.

Greco and Theodorescu to the "late imperial age" or the third or fourth centuries CE, though it is this phase, some argue, that more accurately represents Mineia's contribution.[297] Which of these is the structure sponsored by Mineia? This is a question worth exploring because of the implications inherent in the two different structural forms. For that reason, I have decided to take the time to explore the two variations and discuss the possibilities.

## *Identifying Mineia's Basilica*

The fourth phase structure replaced an open space ("piazzetta" in the report) created by the earlier demolition of a temple built on the site during the fifth century BCE. This building measured about 29.5 m. along its north-south axis and nearly 18 m. from east-west.[298] A row of columns or perhaps pilasters along the northern façade, which faced the forum, created a series of entrances that drew the visitor in from the covered colonnade that circumnavigated the forum. Inside, column bases, some still *in situ*, show that two rows of columns created three interior naves of unequal dimensions.[299] Fragments of Corinthian capitals attest to the order used. Because the length of the span between the columns is so great (5.5 m. or roughly 18 feet), the archaeologists surmised that this structure could not have supported a second story, and that a series of skylights probably served to let light into the interior. Other elements provide clues as to the use of the space: occupying a prominent position along the western wall of the central nave was the rectangular base of what was perhaps a tribunal, while at the northwest

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[297] Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 16. Cf. Torelli 1988, 109.

[298] Few precise measurements for this phase of construction are provided in the published report. This is an estimate based on figures provided in the description of the later phase, that of the Curia. See Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 33-34. Torelli argues that this same space was used as a macellum during the third phase and that the covered well or basin that was a feature of this site was a pool used to contain mollusks for sale. See Torelli 1988, 67, fig. 6.

[299] Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 33, provide measurements for the northern and central naves, but not the southern one. The northern nave had a centre distance (the distance from the centre of the northern wall to the centre of the columns of the first row) of approximately 6.53 m. The columns were spaced 5.5 m apart. Theodorescu surmises that the first two naves created by these rows of columns were roughly the same size (i.e., 6.53 m.) but that the southern one must have been narrower. The columns of both the forum portico and the interior of the basilica measured 0.8 m. in diameter.

wall a small rectangle of travertine slabs may have provided a base for a monument. On the exterior, a narrow passageway on the west side connected the forum with a roadway to the south, an area nearly empty of structures and dubbed the "Roman Garden" by archaeologists. It is evident, Greco and Theodorescu report, that the southern nave of this Basilica overwrote this roadway as well as the front of an Italic temple that once faced it.[300] Fragments of Arretine pottery discovered inside a covered well in the southern quadrant of the building provide the lower end of the date range for this phase, while a more specific mid-first century CE date is thought confirmed by the earlier discovery in this area of a statue of Claudius as Pontifex Maximus.[301]

The structure of the fifth and final phase, the so-called Curia, is described as a large rectangular hall 29.60 m along its east-west axis. Probably two stories in height, this building was dubbed the Curia (as distinct from the Basilica) because of the presence of a semi-circular wall on the interior that was thought to have carved a meeting space out of the open interior. Holes in the floor indicate where poles or supports had been placed; these may have supported a curtain (*vela*) that could be drawn across to create a private meeting area. Like the Basilica, this phase of the structure had three openings along the northern façade. The key change to the structure was the expansion on all sides except the north. This was accomplished by the addition of a corridor that engulfed both the western passageway between the Basilica and part of the adjoining taberna. This peripheral corridor opened onto the forum's portico on the east and west sides of the building. The corridor also incorporated the roadway to the south, while doors built on the southeast and southwest corners allowed the road to pass through the furthest part of the structure, maintaining the connection between the back of the building and pathways

[300] Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 34, remark that this road may have been incorporated into the southern nave but could not discern whether it was or not.
[301] Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 18, notes: "I termini cronologici, ci portano, dunque, agli inizi dell'Impero; se si considera che nel 1907 Spinazzola rinvenne qui la statua dell'imperatore Claudio, si può ipotizzare che la Basilica in questione è stata edificata all'epoca di questo imperatore o poco prima." The covered well belongs to the previous phase.

further south and to the macellum immediately to the east.[302] The most important aspect of this addition, however, was that it allowed the outer walls to bear the weight of the roof rather than the series of interior columns, allowing the possibility of a second story.

Greco and Theodorescu do not mention Mineia, nor do they use any of the evidence for her public intervention to discuss either phase of this structure. Since evidence for phase three (273 BCE to the first century CE) indicates that this was a period during which this area on the southern side of the forum was empty of structures and used as a "piazzetta," Mineia's structure must be that of either phase four or five. Using the statue of Claudius as Pontifex Maximus to date the phase four structure, however, is complicated by the fact that its discovery, made during the spring of 1907, came about during rather disorganized digging in the forum area and we have no idea of an exact context.[303] According to La Greca, who studied the diaries of those involved in the 1907 dig, the statue was found in front of the Temple of Peace, not in the area of the basilica on the other side of the forum. If true, it seems probable that the statue was either originally in the forum or belonged to the temple. It is tempting to think that the Temple of Peace may have been used as a Capitolium during the imperial era as its central position on a high podium overlooking the rest of the forum evokes Capitolia in other Roman colonies. There is no solid evidence for this, however. Still, it is difficult to reconcile the available archaeological report with the evidence for Mineia and her basilica, and this understanding is key to parsing the significance of her contribution. In the next section, the epigraphic and numismatic evidence for Mineia's public benefaction and its probable nature will be explored before the 1980 archaeological report is assessed considering other more recent scholarship.

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[302] This structure was identified as a macellum because of its spatial arrangement: a central courtyard, paved in marble, onto which smaller rooms or stalls opened. Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 12 and Fig. 49 (Phase 5).
[303] La Greca 2005, 102.

## Mineia and her Basilica

That Mineia paid for the basilica at Paestum is certainly implied by the building's dedicatory inscription, recorded on a rectangular marble slab more than 145 cm (4.76 ft.) long and 45 cm tall (1.5 ft.), discovered during excavations in 1931:

*[Mineia M. f. C. C. Coc]ce[i F]lacci, [m]ate[r]*
*C. (?) Coccei Ius]ti ab fundamentis*
*[basilicam e]t ante ba[silicam sua p]ec[unia*
*fecit porticus pavim]entaque omnia*[304]

(Mineia, daughter of Marcus, (wife) of Caius C. Cocceius Flaccus,
Mother of Caius Cocceius Iustus, built from its foundations the basilica,
its porticus and all pavements in front of the basilica, with her own money.)

Five further inscriptions relating to Mineia and her family members were discovered in fragments inside the basilica. Each must have identified statues, now missing. These inscriptions, carved on slabs of white marble inscribed with well-formed lettering, provide almost all the information that we presently have concerning the individuals in question. Unfortunately, the plaques' fragments were discovered piecemeal during digs in the 1920s and '30s and so are not much help in determining the phase to which they originally belonged. Mario Torelli has argued that each was affixed to one of the six niches still visible when one visits the (phase five) ruins, below statues depicting the individuals in question. That the niches currently visible are the original location of these plaques is not verifiable, however, though what is clear is that Mineia had constructed a family gallery in a public space in the heart of Paestum's

[304] *ILP* 163. *[— — Coc]ce[i F]lacci [— —]ate[— —]i[— — a]b fundamentis / [— —]t ante ba[— — p]ecu[nia — — pavim]en[t]aque omnia*. White marble slab, smooth front and back, found in fragments. Currently in the Paestum Museum (Inv. 612-615). Circular holes at the corners and quadrangular holes 30 cm in from each end illustrate that the slab was once fixed to the building using metal pins and clamps. The inscription itself is described as "…molto regolare con lettere eseguite con estrema cura e incise profondamente." (very regular with letters formed with extreme care and deeply engraved). The above reconstruction, M. Torelli 1980, 110.

political and commercial space.[305] Of these, aside from one identifying Mineia herself, all are dedications to Mineia's male relatives, positioning them among the prominent members of Paestan society. It is significant, however, that Mineia was among this group:

*[M]ineia*
*[M. f. uxor]*[306]

The longest, however, is for her husband, C. Cocceius Flaccus, whose *cursus* is provided in the brief inscription.

*[C. (?) Cocceio f.] Cn.*
*[Fla]c[co quaesto]ri lecto*
*ab div[o Caesa]re legato*
*M. Ota[cili Crassi] in Bithynia*
*pro [pr(aetore), agros de Ap]amaea divisit*
*Min[eia (M. f.)] uxor*[307]
(Mineia, daughter of Marcus, wife,
[dedicated this] to C. Cocceius Flaccus, son of Gnaeus,
raised to the quaestorship by the divine Caesar,
as legatus pro praetore to M. Otacilius Crassus in Bithynia
he divided the land at Apamaea.)

This is a brief *cursus* with some curious elements that are not as easy to date as it might appear. First, in line three, the reference to *divus Caesar* raises the question of which Caesar is meant. The editors of *ILP* state that the reference has to be to Claudius or a later emperor because in their opinion the lettering does not suggest an Augustan date and neither Tiberius nor Caligula was deified.[308] The reference to former Pompeian supporter Manius Otacilius

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[305] There are six niches in the walls of the phase five Curia, but only five inscriptions have been discovered. Torelli 1996, 155, surmises that a sixth inscription referred to her son, Iustus, named in the building's dedicatory inscription.
[306] *ILP* 84. The *ILP* editors record simply "[M]ineia" but Torelli 1996, 155, adds the second line. It seems a fair assumption that this inscription would not have omitted her filiation or her standing as wife. Two of the three pieces of the slab on which this inscription appeared were discovered in 1962 during restoration work on a church in Paestum, where they had been re-used as building material.
[307] *ILP* 85.
[308] *ILP* 164, p. 128. "Per l'imperatore che qui compare non penserei ad epoca anteriore a Claudio; Caligola e Tiberio non ebbero il titolo di *divus* e i caratteri epigrafici non possono certo farsi risalire ad Augusto."

Crassus, however, would seem to rule this out and suggest instead that this *divus* is either Julius Caesar, who pardoned an Otacilius Crassus following the civil war, [309] or Augustus, though that would date the inscription to after 14 CE, the year that Augustus died and was deified. Torelli argues for the former based on the inscription's reference to Flaccus having been adlected into the senate. His supposition is derived from the fact that the *Lex Cassia* (45 BCE) gave Caesar the right to create new senators.[310] In fact, though, Augustus also created new senators: in 33 BCE (possibly), and in 30 BCE using powers given to him by the *Lex Saenia*.[311] This means that Flaccus could have been made a senator as early as between 46 and 44 BCE (by Caesar),[312] or as late as 30 BCE (by Augustus). In all fairness to Mineia, however, it could have been that she commissioned the inscription honoring her husband after the death of Augustus (hence *divus Caesare*) even though Augustus was alive when the post was granted.

The detail concerning Flaccus' posting as *legatus pro praetore* in Bithynia does not narrow the field as much as one might like. The mention of M. Otacilius Crassus, mentioned above, would suggest the earlier date given his participation in Caesar's civil war as a proponent of Pompey the Great, but if Otacilius Crassus was only a few years older than Augustus that would make him prime age for a provincial governorship by the time Octavian took power and Bithynia became an imperial province in 27 BCE. It may be that Flaccus, adlected to the senate by Octavian in 30, was sent to Bithynia under the proconsul Otacilius Crassus after 27. The

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[309] This may be the Otacilius Crassus who appears in Caesar's *de Bello Civili* 3.28-29, as a ruthless adherent of Pompey's faction—in charge of troops stationed at Lissus (Illyria), he ordered the slaughter of boatloads of Caesar's new recruits who surrendered to him after being promised that their lives would be spared. Eck *New Pauly* sv. 'Otacilius' says that he probably died during the reign of Augustus. Two other men with the same name take us to too early a period: a consul in 261 BCE and praetor in 214 BCE. The only other contender was suffect consul in 88 CE, which is perhaps too late.

[310] Torelli, 1988, 155, proposes that Flaccus was raised to the quaestorship by Julius Caesar in 44 and assigned to Bithynia in 42. Cf. Rémy 1989, 59.

[311] See Tacitus, *Ann.* 11.25, and Dio 52.42.5 for the law of 30 BCE. Augustus also mentions this in the *RG*, 8.1.

[312] The pertinent case here may be as described by Cassius Dio, 43.47.2-3. On this occasion, in 45 BCE, Caesar appointed forty new quaestors and fourteen praetors, and filled the ranks of the senate with those who lacked the appropriate background. If it has been interpreted accurately, this inscription stands as the only surviving epigraphic evidence of this occasion.

inscription also tells us, however, that Flaccus had a hand in dividing the land at Apamea. This makes the earlier date seem more likely and to support the argument for adlection by Caesar, as *Colonia Julia Concordia Apamea* was founded, it is generally agreed, around 45 BCE.[313] Others have pointed out, however, that the colony's name suggests that it could just as well have been founded by Mark Antony or Augustus.[314] Gaps in our knowledge of Bithynia's provincial administrators mean that such lists are not much help, though Dalaison and Ferries, using Torelli's reconstruction of the inscription, argue that M'. Otacilius Crassus and C. Cocceius Flaccus had to have been sent to Bithynia sometime between October 42 BCE (Battle of Philippi) and autumn of 40, when a more certain appointment—that of Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus— took place.[315] Two chronologies thus present themselves: Flaccus was either adlected in 44 and sent to Bithynia by the triumvirs in 42 or he was raised to senatorial rank in 30 and his post in Bithynia dates to after 27.[316] This is important because of the impact it has on the chronology of Mineia's basilica—on which more, below. Torelli and Rémy both assume that Flaccus died before taking up another commission, leaving Mineia a wealthy widow with the resources necessary to fund a contribution to the forum's restructuring and this does seem the most likely explanation for the brevity of his career.[317]

Besides the statue dedicated to her husband, Mineia's basilica featured those of her brothers, Marcus and Lucius, and a grandson named Aequus:

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[313] Dalaison and Ferries 2019, 392, state that the triumviral refoundation almost certainly took place between winter of 42/41 and fall-winter 40/39. Also, Torelli 1988, 155.
[314] Blanco-Pérez 2015, 136-138. While a *terminus post quem* of 45 is largely accepted, reference to *Concordia* suggests to some Mark Antony, which would mean a foundation date during the time of the Second Triumvirate. Still, a coin dated to 27 BCE with the legend *IMP(erator) C(aesar) DIVI F(ilius) S(enatus) C(onsulto) C(oloniam) R(estituit)* clearly refers to Octavian, who apparently restored or affirmed Apamea's status following the civil war. See Grant 1969, 256-257 for the legend.
[315] Dalaison and Ferries 2019, 392, n. 8.
[316] Rémy 1989, 59, argues that because the legates of Quaestorian, Tribunician, and Praetorian rank for Pontus-Bithynia are known, M' Otacilius Crassus (and C. Cocceius Flaccus) must belong to the reign of Augustus, a period with many lacunae in the *fasti* of magistrates for this region. Still, this implies an early Augustan date, as the gap is apparently between Appius Claudius Pulcher (27/26 BCE) and Gaius Marcius Censorius (c. 14/13 BCE).
[317] Torelli, 1988, 155; Rémy 1989, 22 and 59.

*M(arco) Mineio M(arci) f(ilio)*
*M(arci) n(epoti) Flacco tr[ib(une)]*
*mil(itum) Mineia [sor]or*[318]
(Mineia, his sister, to Marcus Mineius Flaccus, son of Marcus,
grandson of Marcus, military tribune.)

*L(ucio) Mineio*
*M(arci) f(ilio) M(arci) n(epoti)*
*Mineia sor(or)*[319]
(Mineia, his sister, to Lucius Mineius, son of Marcus, grandson of Marcus.)

*[C. (?) Co]cce[io]*
*[C. (?) f. C. (?) n.] Aequo*
*[Min]eia avia*[320]
(Mineia, his grandmother, to Caius Cocceius Aequus,
Grandson of Caius.)

While there is no evidence to corroborate the lives or careers of these three individuals, it is important to note that the inclusion of all these statues inside the basilica constitute a "family gallery," that provides important clues both to the chronology of the building and, perhaps, to the rationale for its construction in the first place.

## *Settling the Chronology*

When we gather all this evidence together it is clear that a woman named Mineia, member of a prominent local *gens* who had married into another important local family, paid for a public building directly on the forum at Roman Paestum but beyond that the details are by no means as clear. First, there is the issue of chronology. The information provided by the inscriptions from

[318] *ILP* 81.
[319] *ILP* 82.
[320] *ILP* 83, where it appears as "[----------]cce [-------]/[---------]Aequo/[-------Min]eia avia." This restored version is proposed by Torelli 1996, 155.

the basilica imply that C. Cocceius Flaccus may have died prematurely leaving Mineia a wealthy widow with a son to raise. When one considers that the dedications inside the basilica include one to her grandson, Torelli and others have argued that she waited until she was at least middle-aged with a grown son and a grandson needing advancement to make this particular benefaction to her city.[321] Further, while we have seen how Flaccus' career does not help much in clarifying the matter, the later dates for his time in Bithynia (after 27 BCE) help place her basilica near the end of the first century BCE or even the early first century CE, or roughly in line with the phase four structure identified by Greco and Theodorescu, except for the difficulty of reconciling the image on the coin with their suggestion that this phase of the building could not have supported an upper story. We are left, therefore, having to reconcile the archaeological findings with the evidence at hand which is, admittedly, scanty, and prone to alternative interpretations.

Given this, it is important to take a moment and try to discern whether Mineia's basilica better fits the description of the fourth or fifth phase structure described in the published findings. First, the phase four Basilica, dated to between the first and third centuries CE, is in form very reminiscent of a style epitomized by the basilicas at Cosa (dated to 150 BCE) or Pompeii (dated to 100 BCE). Based on this, it has been argued that this phase more properly belongs to the second-century BCE.[322] Indeed, studies of basilica development in Italy highlight two main types.[323] The first, which looks a lot like the phase four Basilica at Paestum, was essentially an extension of the cover afforded by the forum's portico that featured longitudinal rows of columns that divided the interior space and made it a suitable space for meeting and conducting business. Light and air were brought into the structure by a clerestory, or second

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[321] Torelli 1996, 111-113; Cooley 2013, 40.
[322] Torelli 1988, 109, based on phase four being an "open-type" basilica—a form, he says, not compatible with the chronology suggested by Greco and Theodorescu.
[323] J. B. Ward Perkins 1954, 71-74.

story composed solely of windows. As the form evolved, this internal colonnade developed into a means of emphasizing the central nave, which became wider and was more clearly the focal point of the structure. Vitruvius' description of the basilica he designed for the city of Fanum (*Colonia Julia Fanestris*, modern Fano) in 27 BCE is often understood as typifying the late Republican Basilica.[324] This was a rectangular structure with a soaring central nave lit by a clerestory and surrounded by an internal portico with upper gallery. Although the evolution of the basilica was by no means strictly chronological—the open basilica remained a feature of Roman building practices into the third century CE—it does seem to describe roughly the changes in form that the basilica at Paestum underwent between phases four and five. Essentially, the phase five Curia was a retrofit that converted the phase four Basilica into a more up-to-date version of the basilica form: solid walls with engaged columns replaced the rows of interior columns and must have supported a second story. Along the northern façade, as described above, three stepped entranceways created by gaps in the thick walls replaced the columned façade of the fourth phase structure. Whether there were second floor galleries has not been established, but both the limited space and interruption presented by walls on all sides discourage the supposition. The fifth phase Curia was evidently comprised of a large open rectangle with three entrances along the front, walls on the west and east into which niches were built between the engaged columns (three on each side), and wide openings at the southwest and southeast ends allowing movement from the main space into the ambulatory that ran along

[324] Vitruvius V.1.6-10.

Fig. 9—Interior of Basilica. (Photo: KS Tate)

all sides of the structure except the north, where it was still fronted by the Forum's covered portico. The large hemispherical wall in the centre of the structure may have been a later addition. Its purpose is not entirely clear, but in the absence of the more typical apse in which the magistrate's tribunal was erected, this structure may have afforded the necessary privacy for trials and other sorts of official meetings.

## *The Coinage of Mineia M F*

Fig. 13—Example of Mineia's Bronze AE Semis. (Photo from Ancient Coin Traders. CC BY 4.0)

Further evidence for the building is provided by a coin featuring Mineia's name and image.[325] This issue, which appeared both as bronze *semis* and *quadrans*, is unusual for several

[325] *SNG ANS* 804; *SNGCop* 1373.

reasons. First, Paestum was one of very few Italian cities that still had the right to mint its own currency after 212 BCE, when the Romans introduced the denarius and began to demonetize Italian currency.[326] Next, the obverse image—of a woman, her hair up in a small bun at the nape of her neck—arguably depicts Mineia herself.[327] Torelli has argued this image is of Mens Bona, a goddess whose worship was especially enthusiastic at Paestum, and others have suggested Venus, but there seems little reason to think of a goddess when the legend—MINEIA M F—clearly identifies Mineia using the same simple formula as the inscription identifying her statue inside the basilica she funded.[328] The absence of divine attributes such as a crown or diadem further supports this interpretation, as does the fact that if this is supposed to be the goddess this rendering is entirely different than other images of Mens Bona on Paestan coinage, where the goddess is depicted seated inside a temple. In each case, the legend reads BONA MEN.[329] Further, in each version of the coin the nodus hairstyle on the female figure is clearly visible. This style featured a small wave or roll of hair at the forehead and a simple low chignon (hair twisted into a bun) at the back.[330] Often, the hair was braided or twisted along the hairline on each side before being gathered into the bun at the nape. Popular during the first century BCE and worn by imperial women like Livia and Octavia, this hairstyle was a marker of status and adherence to social norms then applied to women.[331] This also supports the notion that a human woman is being depicted, and not a goddess.

The reverse image on this coinage shows a two-storied structure fronted by what seems to

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[326] Burnett 1982, 126; Crawford 1976, 152. Coins issued by small local mints like that at Paestum were always of small denominations (*quadrans* are worth ¼ of an *as*; *semis* were worth ½) and never found very far from their point of origin. Samples of Mineia's coin have been discovered in Paestum and at Pompeii, about 74 km away. See Carbone 2014, 80-83.
[327] We could add to this list the fact that the only other such private issue was that by two of Paestum's magistrates depicted *dextrarum iunctio*. See Carbone 2014, 17-24.
[328] Torelli 1993, 204.
[329] Crawford 1973, 52; Cooley 2013, 39, for other images of Mens Bona.
[330] For coinage of Livia and Octavia, see Harvey 2020, 48; 67-76.
[331] On the *nodus* hairstyle, see Harvey 2020, 46-49; Winkes 2000, 29-38.

be a portico with rooflines that extend out from the sides of the structure. The second floor consists of a bank of windows. The legend, P S / S C (on either side of the structure) are in the same order whether read left to right or top to bottom. Based on precedent set by other coinage minted at Paestum, Michael Crawford argues convincingly that this should be read as *P(aestum) S(emis) S(enatus) C(onsulto)*.[332] This image has been interpreted as depicting Mineia's basilica, and that seems the most reasonable explanation given the image and legend on the obverse. Why the coin was minted remains a mystery, though it is logical to assume that it was intended to commemorate her contribution to the city, perhaps as a unique monetary gift to the local elite and dignitaries who attended the public banquet (*epulum*) she would have hosted when the building was dedicated. Indeed, Michael Crawford and others have argued that small issues such as this may have been given out as gifts and provided the town with a source of revenue via important persons willing to pay to have coins specially minted.[333] The PS / SC stamped on the coin implies that it (the coin or the structure, or both) was allowed by a vote of the local magistrates and there is no doubt that Mineia was a member of one of the city's most prominent *gentes* and easily had the necessary clout and wealth to issue a coin. Regardless, the fact there was more than a single issue in *quadrans* and *semis* denominations implies not only that Mineia wished to advertise her building achievement and was willing to further patronize her city by paying for multiple issues of the same coin, it was more than just a party favor—it may also have been used by the city of Paestum to supplement issues coming from Rome.[334] In each version of the coin, the details on the obverse change slightly, but the obverse image is always of a woman and the reverse image a two-story building with a gabled roof, though the fineness of the details

[332] Crawford 1973, 55.
[333] Crawford 1976, 152; Burnett 1982, 128-129.
[334] Burnett 1982, 129; Crawford 1973, 18-19.

is more apparent on some and the placement of the legend changes.[335] It is worth considering which phase of the structure is depicted on the coin, as it might prove useful in determining the building's chronology.

The main question is which version of the structure aligns more accurately with the proposed date of its construction, the last decade of the first century BCE or early first century CE. Pointing to the substantial use of *opus vitattum* as evidence that phase five should be earlier,[336] Mario Torelli has argued that this type of stonework (horizontal rows of stone interspersed with rows of brick) proves that the visible remains of this structure belong to the late first century BCE whereas the excavators used this same element to date the fifth phase building to the third or fourth centuries CE without providing criteria. This disagreement is both understandable and a good example of how difficult it can be to date a structure based solely on building technique. *Opus vitattum* was first used in central Italy during the late second century BCE but continued in constant usage well into the fourth century CE and is often one of the key dateable features of buildings from that period.[337] One variant, much used during the first century CE in Latium and Campania, saw local stone interspersed with layers of brick and is well-documented at Pompeii. It is possible, as Torelli argues, that the structure identified as phase five had walls of *opus vitattum* mistakenly dated to much later when they actually date to the late first century BCE and that the portion of the phase five structure that actually belongs to

Fig. 10—Detail of brickwork, interior. (Photo: KS Tate)

[335] Carbone 2014 points to four distinct issues. On some versions, the female depicted on the obverses faces left with the legend curving around the right side while on others she faces right, and the legend is on the left. In yet another issue, the figure faces right, and the legend is below.
[336] Torelli 1988, 109, argues that the fifth phase Curia dates to about 10 BCE.
[337] Anderson 1997, 155-156.

the third or fourth centuries CE amounted to the addition of the hemicycle at the centre of the basilica's open space along with some repair work.[338] According to Jean-Pierre Adam, however, it is precisely because this technique was employed across such a broad chronological range that it is useless for establishing a structure's date.[339] As for other datable elements, Torelli points to what he says are Third Style wall paintings on the walls of the visible ruins of phase five (his Mineian structure). This element is also relatively ambiguous, however, as everything except the very bottom of the wall paintings is lost and the remainder difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct. The most compelling components of the so-called phase five structure that suggests Mineia's handiwork are the statue niches that line the side walls. These, Torelli argues, fit the dedicatory inscriptions perfectly and it is upon this coincidence that much of the weight of his argument seems to rest.[340] It is entirely possible, however, that Mineia's basilica featured these statues even without the neatly articulated niches in which to place her family statues. The statues could have been free standing around the interior of the building, or together on a low platform such as is suggested by the stone base discovered at phase four along the eastern wall

Fig. 11—North wall of Basilica with remains of wall decoration. (Photo: KS Tate)

[338] Torelli 1988, 109-110; Auricchio, 2010, 62-63.
[339] Adam 1994, 213.
[340] Torelli 1988, 110-111. He posits the existence of a lost sixth inscription based on the fact that there are six niches.

of the basilica. Perhaps coincidentally, following the plan provided by the archaeological report for the phase four basilica, when the space taken up by the tribunal is excluded, there are five spaces (one each at the end of each aisle plus one opposite the tribunal in the central nave). This would provide enough space for the five known inscriptions and their statues and dispense with the need to surmise a missing sixth, as Torelli does.

What is missing in these arguments, however, is consideration of how well the building's dedicatory inscription aligns with phase four of the archaeological evidence. Following Torelli's own reconstruction of this inscription, Mineia paid for the construction of the basilica plus the portico and its pavements,[341] and it is clear that the basilica and the portico along the southern side of the forum were contemporaneous at phase four but at phase five the portico must have already been in place.[342] According to the archaeological report, this portico consisted of a Tuscan colonnade was 7.40 m (25 ft) wide and raised above the level of the forum by two steps. It was bounded by mostly reused columns. That a covered portico and basilica were built on the southern side of the forum during a period when the local elite were monumentalizing the Roman city, fits the dates in question. It was during this same period that the amphitheatre was constructed at the southeastern end of the forum and the portico circumnavigated the entire space.[343] A series of public fountains funded by *duoviri* C. Sextilius

Fig. 12—Portico and exterior of Basilica (Photo: KS Tate)

[341] All that remained at the Basilica level of the pavements is a beaten earth floor. Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 14.
[342] Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 32-33.
[343] Pedley 1990, 115. This building campaign represents a second phase of construction in Roman Paestum, the first dating to the third century immediately following Roman colonization.

L.f. and P. Claudius C.f. also date to this period.[344] This suggests that Mineia's public benefaction of a new basilica on the southern side of the Forum was part of a renewal of the Roman colony spurred, probably, by political events happening during the end of the first century BCE and the increased Romanization of the city, especially of its leading citizens, as the reign of Augustus was established.

This leaves us with another issue, however: the archaeologists' assertion that the columns of the phase four building could not have borne a second story, which seems contrary to what is represented on Mineia's coinage. A closer look at the evidence may, however, suggest another possibility. Theodorescu, who composed the assessment of the archaeological findings but inconsistently supplied details, reports that the columns of the interior of the phase four Basilica were about 0.80 m in diameter, the same diameter as the engaged columns noted in phase five. For the former he reports no height calculation, but for the columns of the phase five Curia he proposes a height of 9.50 m (12 diameters or 32 ft.),[345] which implies that the Basilica could have had columns this height as well. This height makes a second story clerestory very likely and would be in keeping with other basilicas dated to the late first century BCE. As with other basilicas of this type, timber trusses would have allowed the engineers to span the distance between the columns.[346] It is entirely possible, therefore, that this basilica presented a profile much like that featured on the coin Mineia minted to celebrate her achievement. It is worth noting, too, that the addition of a tribunal at the western end of the central nave was already a well-established late-Republican design.[347] Further, the basilica at Paestum, unlike Pompeii's second century BCE basilica, had its long side facing the forum, a standard orientation by the

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[344] *ILP* 144-153.
[345] Greco and Theodorescu 1980, 37. This puts the height of the cornice at approximately 25.60 m, or nearly 84 feet.
[346] The span between columns in the Curia is reported as being between 4.17 and 4.30 m compared to 6.53 m for the at least two of the naves of the Basilica. Wooden timbers allowed the Romans to span all these distances with relative ease.
[347] A similar structure is visible at the far end of the basilica at Pompeii.

late Republican and early imperial periods.[348] In terms of the development of the city, therefore, the evolution of the space inhabited by the basilica was inevitable, even necessary, in order to compete with other Roman cities. If we understand the phase four Basilica as the structure that resulted from Mineia's benefaction, we are not required to depart very far from the chronology suggested by the archaeologists and can allow for later developments in city infrastructure and public building. This interpretation of the evidence also means that the *ab fundamentis* of the building inscription was not an exaggeration, as would be the case if the building were from phase five, but an accurate description of Mineia's intervention.

## Spatial Considerations

Situated on the southern side of the Forum, Mineia's lofty structure declared fidelity to a uniquely Roman architectural form and the organization it implied, its interior Corinthian order rising in contrast to the Forum's old-fashioned Tuscan colonnade. Since the southern side of the building would have received the most light—adhering to Vitruvius' advice that a basilica should be placed so as to receive adequate sun—the upper clerestory windows were necessary to bring light through to the front while ensuring that the northern façade remained a relatively cool and welcoming place on blazing summer days. We can imagine, given the period during which it was constructed, that Mineia's basilica took advantage of contemporary decorative themes, with polychrome marble floors and Third Style painted walls, but this is conjecture as this structure was later demolished to make way for the later phase. What is certain is that this basilica filled a gap where there had not been a construction for generations and should be considered a major contribution to the urbanization of Roman Paestum. Based on information gained through

[348] The seminal study of the basilica was published by Gabriel Leroux in 1913, and labelled an orientation such as at Pompeii, where the short end of the basilica faced the Forum, the "Greek type" based on the Greek Megaron and in contrast to the later "Oriental" or "Italic" type, which mimicked, Leroux claimed, the great halls of Egypt. The latter were oriented with their long side facing the forum. See Müller 1937, 250; 253-254 for assessment.

systematic excavation, it appears that the Mineian basilica participated in the Romanization of the forum that took place during the late first century BCE or early first century CE.

Further, since it was situated directly across from the Temple of Peace, Mineia's basilica created and participated in an axial arrangement of monumental builds the meaning of which can only be appreciated by considering the implications of these various structures. The collocation of Comitium, where the people met to debate and vote, and the main temple of the Forum, towering over neighboring structures on its lofty podium and built as a sign of loyalty to Rome following the turbulence of the Punic Wars, combined to declare the allegiance of the city to Rome's authority. In the early Augustan context, too, the Republican implications of these structures were reinforced by the addition of a basilica built on a plan that recalled to the viewer the great basilicae of the Forum Romanum, with an arcaded exterior on both north and south sides that tied the Roman centre to the great remains of the Greek city, surely a source of pride for the inhabitants. The addition of a basilica on the southern side of the Roman Forum directly opposite the Temple of Peace and its adjoined Comitium cemented the experiential expression of loyalty and authority by providing a space for meetings, commercial ventures, and, with the addition of a tribunal on the western wall, for the full expression of Roman authority in a municipality with a burgeoning identification with the capital and all it represented.

## Conclusions

Paestum is an especially interesting study because despite the assertions that women did not fund "political" structures, it is here that a woman not only funded the construction of an overtly political structure, she also set inside it a gallery of her men folk with herself at their centre. It is the presence of her own statue that should make us wonder whether it wouldn't be mistaken, therefore, to content ourselves with an interpretation that emphasizes her wish to

enhance the reputation of her male relatives.[349] While there was likely an element of this, as with any family enterprise—one thinks of the tomb of the Scipios at Rome—the possibilities are not limited to this alone. If interpretations put forward by Torelli and Rémy are correct, then her husband may have been dead by the time Mineia made her building contribution. Torelli has posited as well that her son, Iustus, may also have died before the basilica was constructed and that it was this fact that influenced her desire to put his name along with her own in the building's dedicatory inscription. These suggestions give the basilica a sepulchral flavor but are only supposition even if the apparently abrupt career of C. Cocceius Flaccus does seems to require an explanation.[350] The real import of this assortment of statues, surely, is the family gallery aspect. Such galleries have been found all over Italy, are connected to works of public euergetism, and often feature inscriptions on which family relationship is explicitly noted. Mineia's basilica at Paestum with its gallery of family members is not the only one in the area to have received such treatment. At Herculaneum, a group of statues, two male and two females, was found inside a structure later recognized as the basilica. Inscriptions identify the figures as the father, mother, and brother of the proconsular *patronus* of the city, Marcus Nonius Balbus.[351] Likewise, other examples from Tusculum, Ostia, and Suessa Aurunca attest to the practice of a prominent citizen highlighting their public euergetism by representing themselves in a family context. At Paestum, the assortment has a nice symmetry by offering in joint display members of the *Mineii* and the *Flacci*, two of the city's prominent families. It is surely important that Mineia is the common factor among these male representations, especially given that aside from her husband, the men honoured here had unremarkable careers. One might conclude that Mineia's statue was in fact the intended focal point of this 'family gallery.'

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[349] As Torelli 1980, 111, does when he says, "…nella basilica costruita da Mineia…monumento dell'ascesa al laticlavio del marito, C. Cocceius Flaccus…"
[350] It does seem unlikely that Flaccus was alive when the basilica was constructed though Torelli's suggestion that the son was also dead is just that.
[351] Granino Cecere 2012, 347-349. See also the studies by Muscettola 1982, 2-16, and Torelli 2004, 117-149.

Torelli's proposition that these statues inhabited the six niches inside the phase five structure with Mineia and her brothers on one side and Cocceius Flaccus, their son and grandson on the other helps make sense of this grouping and constitute the strongest evidence in support of his theory that the phase five basilica was her construction. Still, though, the inscribed plaques were discovered without any note of which stratus they belonged to, so the connection must remain a theory. If we think of the phase-four basilica instead, it makes sense to place Mineia's statue on the podium opposite the tribunal in the central nave with those of her brothers on either side of her at the end of each aisle. Her husband's statue could well have been placed on the base to the right of the tribunal as though to assert his association with Roman authority, and the statue of their grandson on the other side of the same central platform. Regardless, the practice of creating these family galleries has to be related to the Roman understanding that any individual advancement or achievement honoured not only the person being lauded but the entire *familia* and contributed to the status of the *gens*—a reality expressed in public funerary ritual, which involved a parade of actors dressed as the deceased's prominent ancestors as a way of contextualizing their worthiness of public attention and the status he or she held in life and to which they could still laid claim in death. This public exaltation of private connections illustrates how closely the two were intertwined in Roman social and political life. From a woman's perspective, placing oneself publicly as the central figure among the men of one's family, as Mineia did, illustrates that on the most basic level the Roman Self existed essentially and ultimately in a family context, unseparated from their own personal achievements or goals. Within this context, Mineia was clearly advertising herself and her own achievements by displaying these statues inside the basilica she paid for. These men and their achievements attested to her social, moral, and personal worthiness just like a parade of actors dressed as important ancestors did in the funerary context. The dedicatory inscriptions may therefore be understood as performative of Mineia's own initiative as public euergete: in other words, she is just as much using their images to advertise her own status as she is putting

forward the memory of their contributions to Paestan society. Mineia was claiming her space in the public imagination as the matriarch of her family. In a sense, she not only reflected the glory of her men folks' careers and/or potential, but she also embodied it and it is this impulse that claims her place as one of the leading matrons of Paestum, one deserving of prominence and attention.

# *5—Case Study: Bulla Regia, Africa Proconsularis*

The ancient city of Bulla (Hammam Darradji, near modern Jendouba) on the plains of the Bagradas (mod. Medjerda) River in northern Africa 60 km in from the coast was founded around 1000 BCE. Situated on fertile river plains in an area noted for its cereal production, Bulla had, by 300 BCE, become an outpost on the trade route that connected Utica, near the mouth of the Bagrades on the eastern coast, and Hippo Regius to the north. Perhaps most famous to Roman historians because the Battle of the Bagrades River took place just south of this city in 203 BCE during the Second Punic War, this area had long been subject to the political and cultural influence of Carthage and was therefore strongly Punic. In the late 150s Bulla and the territory around it was granted to the Numidian king, Masinissa, who had fought as an ally to Rome during the Punic Wars. It is commonly reported that it was Masinissa who added 'regia' to its name to denote its status as a royal capital, but evidence for this is far from definitive.[352] By 46 BCE the Romans had direct control of the city and Bulla Regia was integrated into the newly established Africa Nova and around this same time was awarded with the status *civitas libera*,[353] which meant that it could remain self-ruling even while officially part of Roman territory. Based on the evidence of an inscription found at Bulla Regia, it appears that at some point that community was granted the status of a *municipium*.[354] It was not until the reign of Hadrian (r. 117-136) that the city's status was changed to that of a *colonia,* and the citizenry granted full citizenship rights. A formal name change accompanied this amendment in status as well, and Bulla Regia became known officially as *Colonia Aelia Hadriana Augusta Bulla Regia*.

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[352] Broise and Thébert 1993, 377. The authors of the Baths' excavation report argue that it is uncertain whether Bulla Regia ever served as a royal capital as is often reported and that it is more likely that it enjoyed some sort of special status and served as an occasional princely residence. Cf. Broughton 1929, 30.

[353] Pliny, *NH* 5.22, lists Bulla Regia among the *oppidum liberum* of North Africa.

[354] *ILAfr* 458 = *AE* 1964, no. 177, which is undated, honours the equestrian L. Julius Cerealis, first citizen of the municipium Bulla Regia to become *Flamen Augusti Perpetuus*.

Perhaps best known now for its unusual underground houses, an adaptation to the climatic realities of inland Africa, Bulla Regia's urban remains, which date to the second and third centuries CE and later, attest to a thriving, successful city whose elite were invested in engaging Roman power and culture. In terms of the urban setting, this investment is attested by the presence of all the vital Roman amenities: amphitheatre, theatre, Forum, Capitol, temples, and bathing establishments of various sizes. Of this latter type, five are known but the largest by far were the *thermae* discussed in this study, the Memmian Baths. Built sometime around 220 CE, this structure appears to have been used until well into the fifth or perhaps sixth century, when it was abandoned.[355] Still, the thermal baths at Bulla Regia have long been well-known thanks to the fact that the north wall of the frigidarium featuring its central window has remained standing to its full height. This bath complex, much of it buried for centuries, was first described by Charles Tissot following his visit in 1853. Subsequent published descriptions of the site provided maps of no great precision and debated the typology of the site's most visible structure. The first excavation of this complex took place in 1889/90 under the direction of L. Carton. Perhaps most famous for their meticulous documentation of this site, R. Cagnat and H. Saladin first published on Bulla Regia in the 1880s, but it was Carton who was responsible for exploratory work at the baths from 1909 until his death in 1924.[356] Except for a publication discussing the state of the building so far (1914), further work was neglected until 1955, when the clearing of debris resumed, and some restoration work was undertaken. It was during this post-war period that archaeologists took a more in-depth look at varying portions of the urban topography: The Forum and its porticoes were excavated in 1949-52, for example, and the amphitheatre, the next most prominent ruin after the Memmian baths, was explored during the

[355] Broise and Thébert 1993, 386-387.
[356] Broise and Thébert 1993 discuss the history of excavations at the Memmian baths, 5-15. During this time work mostly consisted, according to Broise and Thébert, with clearing debris from the rooms and cataloguing finds.

1960-61 season. In 1975 the first general study of the Memmian baths assessed all the work to date. Three years later, excavations resumed. The most in-depth report published so far is the result of excavations undertaken during the late 1970s and published in three volumes by the l'École Française de Rome.[357]

Identified as the Memmian Baths thanks to two inscriptions discovered *in situ*, these baths fit into a backdrop of self-promotion by the local elite, some of whom rose to prominence in Rome's imperial administration. Unlike other structures built during this period in North Africa, this building was not, so far as we know, built by a priestess discharging her obligations to the city by building a monumental structure, nor was this benefactor promoting a son or husband with political aspirations. Instead, this bath complex stands as a monument that figuratively cemented a woman and her family into the everyday fabric of life in a city situated on the plains of the wealthy province, Africa Proconsularis.

## The Memmian Baths

The thermal baths at Bulla Regia were situated in the southern part of the city on a rise in elevation overlooking the plain. The whole complex was comprised of more than 2,880 $m^2$ of space, with rooms built on three levels to accommodate the slope. At the northern end, the principal entrance faced a street that ran along the top of the hill on which the baths were situated, and which was fronted by a façade consisting of a covered portico (1 on the plan—Fig. 13) 5 m wide and 45 m long that was raised from the street by two grey limestone steps. This colonnaded façade was once decorated with painted stucco, now missing almost entirely, and closed on each end with solid walls, with the cistern that fed the baths built up against the eastern side of the structure. On the north face of this cistern, accessible from the street, was a public fountain much used through the centuries that the baths were in commission.[358]

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[357] The one that I have worked from most extensively is Vol. II *Les Thermes Memmiens*. Two other volumes—on the inscriptions and the sculptures—are as yet unpublished.
[358] Broise and Thébert 1993, 97.

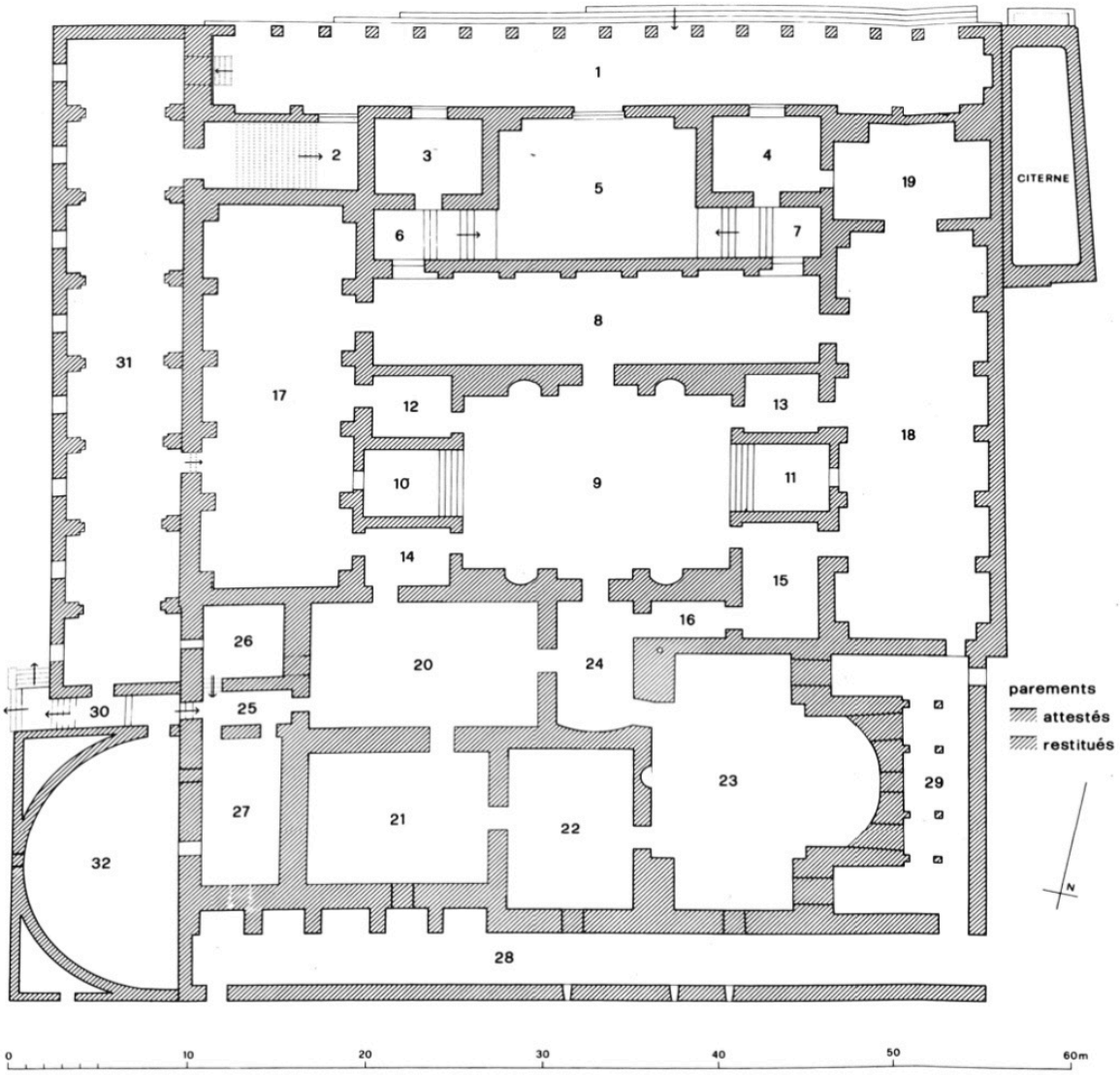


Fig.14—Plan of the Memmian Baths (Image Copyright: Broise and Thébert, 1993. Used with Permission)

Proceeding into the complex, the portico opened into a large central vestibule (5) or entrance area 11.4 m x 8.8 m that featured a bench that ran the length of the south wall. Above this bench was a large south-facing window that looked out over the rest of the complex, situated lower down the slope. The ceiling of this room was comprised of barrel-vaults on east and west with a central rib vault supported by two large piles and by the walls of the neighboring rooms. Barrel vaulted stairwells (6 and 7) allowed one to descend directly from this vestibule down to the next level. Here a vast rectangular room (8) measuring 26 x 5.75 m served as the cloakroom. This

identification is based on the fact that the mosaic design on the floor appears to make allowances for benches and lockers that must have been placed along the northern wall in the recesses created by a series of blind arcades (seven in all, each 40 cm deep and roughly 2.6 m wide) that ran its length.[359] Zenithal lighting let in natural light.[360] Two long rectangular north-south oriented rooms (17 and 18) flanked the cloakroom at right angles and ran the length of the structure, bracketing the complex's cold rooms. Labelled indoor palaestrae, these rooms led either into the huge central frigidarium or, via doors at their southern ends, directly into the circuit of hot rooms at the furthest end of the complex. The one to the west (17) was paved with black and white mosaic floors and had walls punctuated by blind arcades and crowned with rib vaults. The eastern gym (18) featured a polychrome mosaic floor in a geometric design and was joined to a smaller room on its north end that has been interpreted as a "treatment room" (19). This room was paved with a black and white geometric pattern of circles and squares highlighted here and there with red tesserae. The ceiling consisted of a groin vault.

The frigidarium, the north wall of which is still preserved to its full height (15.5 m), constituted the hub of the central portion of the baths. A large window at the top of this wall let in light without the heat a south-facing window would have generated. At more than 170 $m^2$ (15.6 x 10.9 m overall), the walls of this room were punctuated by semi-circular niches on either side of the doorways that allowed movement to/from the cloakroom (8) or the tepidarium (24) to the south. The entire floor of the frigidarium was covered with polychrome mosaic flooring whose pattern represented a famous scene: a labyrinth with a laurel garland standing in for the breadcrumbs the hero Theseus dropped as he advanced to kill the Minotaur. A large central

[359] Broise and Thébert suggest that the niches contained storage for bathers' clothing, but it also seems likely, based on the model of other bathing establishments, that the niches contained statues and the expansive, blank, southern wall featured wooden storage units and perhaps a bench upon which those changing could sit.
[360] Lighting created by the addition of a row of skylights, light tunnels, or a rise in the roofline to accommodate a bank of windows.

medallion, almost entirely destroyed, is thought to have depicted this monster.[361] The portions of the floor inside the niches, meanwhile, featured polychrome mosaic in a "basket" design. The ceiling of the frigidarium is gone but the remains of the departure points of its arches make reconstruction possible: two lateral barrel vaults 2.4 m wide created a square above the centre of the room taken up by a rib vault set on a wooden framework.

For ease of access, two pools of cold water were set into small rooms (10 and 11; each 5.75 x 4.2 m) encompassed by the frigidarium, a feature that created a series of smaller rooms (12, 13, 14, 15) that served as connection points to other areas. The entrance to each pool was framed by archways, the interior walls of the rooms clad with colored marble. The pools themselves were each 1.2 m deep and accessed by a series of stone steps faced with marble; the bottom of each pool was lined with white tile and slightly slanted towards drainage holes set under the lowest step in one pool and under the northern wall in the other. Small windows let in light from the palaestra behind.

The hottest portion of the complex was unsurprisingly situated on the southernmost side, the rooms arranged not on a symmetrical plan as was usual in imperial *thermae*, but in a circuit oriented counterclockwise according to use.[362] First one entered the tepidarium (20), a moderately large room (8.10 x 4.4 m) that could be accessed from a vestibule (24) directly south of the frigidarium or, if one wished, from the west palaestra (17) via one of the small intermediary rooms (14) created by cold pool (10). In either case, these intermediary rooms marked a sort of boundary between cold and hot portions of the complex and likely prevented unnecessary heat loss. Next one entered the Destrictarium (21) (10.5 x 8.5 m), a warm room where one could be scraped or rubbed down before entering the laconicum ("dry oven") (22) (9.8 x 7.2 m). This was the hottest room and was designed, much like modern saunas, to induce

[361] Broise and Thébert 1993, 37.
[362] Broise and Thébert 1993, 61.

a detoxifying sweat. One's visit culminated in the caldarium (23), a large rectangular room situated at a right angle to the cloakroom and frigidarium whose eastern wall was dominated by a huge apse. Pools on three sides (north, south, and east) left an area of 8.85 x 9.5 m in which bathers could circulate. With walls more than six meters high crowned with a large central rib vault,[363] the combination of height and plentiful water, this room seemed designed to dissipate the laconicum's extreme heat and induce a sense of relaxation and ease.

Clearly, this was a huge building project that must have cost many hundreds of thousands of sesterces and may, without exaggeration, be fruitfully compared with imperial baths elsewhere in North Africa and even at Rome. Although smaller in scale than the Hadrianic Baths at Lepcis Magna or the Antonine Baths at Carthage, the Memmian Baths nevertheless evoked these and other cavernous imperial-style thermae in the richness of its decoration and prominence of its profile within its urban setting. These baths also arguably participated in communicating imperial power and the participation of the woman—a member of the prominent *Memmii*—who commissioned them, in that power. Constructed in *opus Africanum* using blocks of local stone ranging in size from very large ashlars to small filler stones to create an impressively vast space, these baths must have been one of the most impressive symbols of Roman culture and sophistication in this relatively small North African city.

As with grand imperial thermae, the frigidarium of the Memmian Baths took pride of place at the centre of this symmetrically arranged portion of the complex. Following a typical African modification of bath design, two modestly sized cold pools face one another across the vast central square of the frigidarium.[364] It is worth noting that the frigidarium design of the Memmian Baths echoes the pattern of imperial complexes like that of the then brand-new Baths of Caracalla at Rome, where two large barrel-vaulted chambers symmetrically placed in the east

[363] Broise and Thébert 1993, 65.
[364] Yegül 2010, 134, on this African modification of the traditional Roman frigidarium design.

and west walls contained the cold pools. At Bulla, the imperial design is echoed while adjusting for scale and local preferences; the four semi-circular niches of the Memmian Baths' frigidarium are therefore decorative features and the cold pools arranged as outlined above, their walls creating smaller access rooms or transitional areas between exercise and the cold and heated zones.

As one transitioned into the circuit of heated rooms from the frigidarium, however, any hint of imperial symmetry disappeared. Instead, the remaining rooms were arranged so that bathers progressed in a counterclockwise direction towards the caldarium and, after it, into a smaller room from which the bather could either repeat the heated circuit or return to the frigidarium or the eastern gymnasium. This counterclockwise movement in the southern portion of the building created a second axis within the spatial arrangement of the structure. This abrupt departure from the classic imperial symmetry is the reason scholars classify this type of bath as "Half-Axial."[365] Clearly, since the heated rooms break the axial symmetry of imperial baths, they are their own spatial entity. The question, though, is what this shift in emphasis might have communicated to the bathers of Bulla Regia. In Fikret Yegül's account of Roman baths in North Africa, it is exactly the break from axial symmetry that, according to Yegül, removes this structure from consideration as an imperial-style bath, but that does not mean that it did not fully express imperial power and Roman ascendancy to those experiencing its offerings. Rather than ignore the potential implications of this feature, though, we ought to explore them.

In the case of the Memmian Baths, the frigidarium remains the focal point of the bathing block, and it is around this space that the initial set of rooms essential to the bathing experience are clustered and evenly arranged. Upon initially entering the building, bathers would have experienced the same sense of controlled yet lofty and luxurious space as those entering larger, strictly symmetrical imperial bathing establishments. That is, until one reached the central

[365] Yegül 2010, 133-135, 144-145.

space, the frigidarium, which was also the starting or focal point of the heated circuit. From here, bathers proceeded in a leftward path through the increasingly hot rooms until returning to the frigidarium for a cold plunge. Since axiality as an expression of imperial power has been removed, this route itself must be the key communicative element. It is interesting to note that the preference for left turns or counterclockwise circuits seems to have been embedded in the Roman psyche, as studies of Roman maps, itineraries, roadways, the placement of Rome's fourteen Augustan regions, the regions of provincial Italy, the circuit of a Roman triumph and elite funeral processions, indicate.[366] And while we do not know about Punic or native preferences for spatial arrangement, with this feature the bath's architects (whether intentionally or not) embedded within the bathing complex a visceral experience that was decidedly Roman. This means that although the Memmian Baths do not conform to the strictly symmetrical imperial type, they nevertheless participated fully in communicating what these great bathing establishments were meant to communicate: the power and reach of empire that brought leisure and peace. This connection between design and spatial arrangement is necessarily joined with the decorative scheme of the structure because it is with all these taken together that visitors experienced the impact of empire and the power and wealth of the elite who brought it to them. The next section therefore discusses the decoration of the Memmian Baths as an avenue to understand better the culture in which Julia Memmia's structure participated before going on to explore Julia's family and the connection of her building with the local urban environment.

[366] Gargola 2017, esp. 182-183 uses Varro to discuss the counterclockwise arrangement of space during the late Republic; Salway 2012 examines Roman worldview via itineraries both described and mapped; Favro and Johanson 2010, 15-16 discuss funeral processions from home to forum; and Aretini 1998, explores the concepts of "left" and "right" in the Roman imagination.

## *Marble and other Decorative Elements*

As with many Roman public buildings, the baths at Bulla Regia were eventually abandoned and much of the stone robbed out, meaning a disappointing lack of decorative elements through which to reconstruct the building's former glory. The 1970 excavation report catalogues the discovery of much colored stone and polychrome marble fragments but aside from various fragments of statues and some carved pillars, the generations of robbers were fairly thorough. What *was* left behind suggests that sheets of marble were used to clad the walls with color, though painted plaster played an important role as well, especially in the rooms not directly related to the bathing circuit.

Among the marbles found, Cipollino (*Marmor Carystium*), a white marble with green veining quarried on the Greek island of Euboea, was clearly the most used decorative stone at the baths. It was employed extensively in the portico at the entrance of the complex and in many of the bathing rooms including, especially, the frigidarium and the rooms surrounding it.[367] The two other most commonly used marbles were Chemtou (*Giallo Antico*), a beautiful yellow stone very popular at Rome, and Cap de Garde, a whiteish stone with distinct grey or blue-grey veins.[368] Giallo Antico was quarried at Simitthus (modern Chemtou) only about 20 km from Bulla Regia while Cap de Garde had to be transported from 140 km away along the coast near Hippo Regius. All were found in abundance as fragments of revetment of varying thicknesses,[369] but they were also used for smaller elements, as for example in the caldarium where wall sconces carved from *Giallo Antico* were found or in the frigidarium, where door jambs were made of Cap de Garde.[370] In all cases, wall decoration was achieved by dividing the wall into

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[367] Broise and Thébert 1993, 110-113.
[368] Other stones were used as appropriate. Serpentine, a patterned green or yellow stone, was also used as wall cladding and found in abundance in the frigidarium. Other stones were found in smaller quantities: a yellow limestone with a very fine grain, a green marble flecked with black, and various types of schist, a hard stone often used as paving, was employed on the walls of room 14.
[369] Broise and Thébert 1993, 112.
[370] Broise and Thébert 1993, 65; 277.

fields, a strategy also employed in the Baths of Caracalla at Rome.[371] In the case of the frigidarium, for example, the lower portion of the wall was sheathed in a white marble with blue veins (Cap de Garde?) and the upper with Cipollino; a decorative molding separated the two fields.[372] The same white marble lined the rooms that housed the cold-pools. Passageway walls, doorways, and the stairs into the pools were made of a fine-grained pale yellow limestone.[373] Interestingly, all the rooms related to bathing were lined with colored marbles but those pertaining to associated activities like exercise, massage, or changing, were decorated instead with painted plaster.[374] Fragments discovered in these rooms indicate that again the walls were divided into fields—in the west palaestra (17) bands of yellow ochre and black delimited white fields painted with floral motifs and in the east palaestra (18) painted panels of black, red, and yellow ochre imitated *opus sectile* designs with geometric patterns.[375]

But while it is apparent that most walls were lined with colored marbles, there were also clues as to the original decoration of the ceilings. In room 12, for example, an abundance of glass tesserae—green, red, white, yellow, and gold—littered the floor below the vault from which they had apparently fallen.[376] Indeed, glass mosaic is attested on all the vaults where there was sufficient evidence and, in the east gym, also lined the top of the wall near the ceiling.[377]

As for sculpture, works carved in the round were found mainly in the main entrance, the caldarium, and in the east gym, though it is surmised that these 'collections' were gathered at a

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[371] DeLaine 1997, 24 (general description); 69-70; 75.
[372] Broise and Thébert 1993, 280.
[373] Broise and Thébert 1993, 277-279.
[374] Broise and Thébert 1993, 277. The one exception to this hierarchy of decoration was room 14, the intermediary between Frigidarium and Tepidarium, which received the same marble treatment as the other bathing rooms. Broise and Thébert theorize that was because of its transitional nature. It was part of the bathing rooms despite not being dedicated specifically to some part of the bathing ritual.
[375] Vibert-Guigue in Broise and Thébert 1993, 290-294.
[376] Broise and Thébert 1993, 113.
[377] Broise and Thébert 1993, 280.

later date and grouped into a few rooms for the purposes of display.[378] Notably, statue bases dedicated to Julia Memmia and her father were found in the two central stairwells (6 and 7, respectively), and it seems likely that this is where their larger-than-life statues stood originally.[379]

What is apparent from all this data is that Julia Memmia paid a significant amount to build and decorate these baths. As Janet DeLaine points out, cost analysis of any structure in the ancient world is hindered by the absence of ancient figures and depended very much on all the variables involved.[380] North African inscriptions provide a few hints as to the cost of *thermae*: baths at Thagura (Taoura) cost 400,000 sesterces while baths at the towns of Mastar and Gibba were 100,000 sesterces each.[381] And while we do not know the relative sizes of these baths for comparison, DeLaine's landmark study of the Baths of Caracalla makes clear that the outlay had to have been considerable given the myriad resources necessary and the number of workmen, skilled and unskilled, required to execute a project of this size and complexity. What is evident is that even the medium-sized Memmian Baths would have required excellent planning not only in design but execution. Scores of laborers and craftsmen had to be hired, animals necessary for the transportation of building supplies and for laboring onsite found and hired, and resources (bricks, marble, ingredients for mixing concrete, etc.) had to be sourced and their (timely?) transport arranged for. Evidence suggests that none of this was necessarily straightforward. There was always the potential that financing issues, bureaucratic red-tape, or some other issue would hinder the smooth execution of the project. Several letters exchanged between Pliny the Younger and Trajan demonstrate the sorts of issues cities ran up against when building large

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[378] Broise and Thébert 1993, 280-281. This practice was observed elsewhere in North Africa and even in Bulla Regia, as for example in the temple of Apollo, where statues had obviously been arranged in a sort of museum setting. It is difficult to know where these statues originally stood, though the large, sculpted niche of the Caldarium and the four niches in the Frigidarium seem likely places for some.
[379] Broise and Thébert 1993, 282. See the appropriate chapter for discussion of these inscriptions.
[380] DeLaine 1997, 207ff.
[381] Duncan-Jones 1982, 91.

public structures. In this exchange, Pliny, then governor of Pontus-Bithynia on the southern coast of the Black Sea, is concerned with construction problems he witnessed in the cities of Nicomedia, Nicaea, and Claudiopolis.[382] Pliny complains to the emperor that these cities were having trouble completing their projects competently and keeping them within a given budget. The sheer scale of the abuses Pliny discovered in Pontus-Bithynia suggests that large building projects were potential money pits. Fortunately for Julia Memmia, highly sought-after marbles were quarried not far from Bulla Regia, and this implies lowered transportation costs. Since Bulla Regia was near a river, too, the largest stones could have been floated up the river and then carted overland to the building site. This practice of making use of local quarries, which may have been owned by the nearest city or by local wealthy individuals, helped keep costs reasonably low and ensured that money circulated in the local economy.[383] In this way, those who financed large building projects like the Memmian Baths acted as benefactors to an entire area much the way that the emperor did at Rome.

Still, while *Giallo Antico* was locally sourced, Cap de Garde had to be transported from Hippo Regius and Cipollino was brought in from Greece, undoubtedly at considerable cost. As with any building project using polished stone for the decorative elements, one had to be prepared to pay enormous sums to achieve the desired look and whole workshops of craftsmen must have been employed. Inscriptions found in bathing complexes show just how expensive marbles could be. In one inscription, an F. Catullus bequeathed 75,000 denarii for marble revetment for the baths at Mandeure, Germania Superiore—a vast sum capable of buying enough grain to feed 3,000 Romans for a year.[384] In another, a benefactor at Vaison-la-Romaine (Gallia Narbonensis) spent 50,000 sesterces on marble for the baths' porticoed entrance

[382] Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10.37, 39.
[383] Pensabene and Gasparini 2015, 98-100.
[384] *CIL* 13.5416.

alone.[385] Cost appears not to have been a prohibitive factor for public benefactors like Julia Memmia, however, as Cipollino comprises the majority of still extant marble fragments. That she was willing to pay for this show is explained by the fact that imported marbles like Cipollino possessed ideological meaning, communicating Roman power, and celebrating the prominence and influence of leading families.[386] It was necessary that the structure reflect, in its use of expensive stone, the status and wealth of the benefactor—a necessary, not frivolous, consideration. This vocabulary of building was not personal, it was established by custom and driven by competition. When assessing the cost of construction and decoration of a structure the size of the Memmian Baths, (modest by imperial standards) DeLaine's conclusion that the decoration of the Baths of Caracalla amounted to no more than 15% of the overall cost of the structure should make us pause.[387] As a complex of considerable size and cost, therefore, richly decorated with marbles from North Africa and abroad, the Memmian Baths must have made an enormous impact on visitors and citizens of Bulla Regia alike. But as DeLaine points out, such structures were only superficially a declaration of *pietas* towards family, gods, and *patria*, and should be understood as assertions of their builder's power to connect with the networks required to obtain resources.[388] Poised on the city's southern end very close to the main road from Carthage past Bulla Regia, the Memmian Baths reflected positively on the entire city.

## The *Memmii*

All our knowledge of the benefactor in question, Julia Memmia, comes from inscriptions, although the information is rather limited. Two of the most important inscriptions were discovered in the vestibule of the baths she funded. The first is carved with precision onto statue base—a limestone block 180 x 60 x 47 cm on which the elegant lettering is fitted neatly (though

[385] *CIL* 12.1357.
[386] Pensabene and Gasparini 2015, 97.
[387] DeLaine 1997, 218-219.
[388] DeLaine 1997, 11.

not too precisely) inside an incised border. Both front and back of the stone are inscribed, which suggests that the statue of Julia Memmia was situated so that the reader could walk around it. On one side, much damaged at the bottom, is written the following dedication:

*[Iul]iae Me[m]mia[e]*
*[Pris?]cae Ruf[a]e Aemi*
*[liana]e Fidi[anae] Claris*
*[simae et sanctis]s[imae] [F]eminae*
*[C. Memmi Fidi I]ul(i) Albi Consularis*
*[viri patr]oni et alumni fil(iae) ob*
*[praecip]uam operis sui thermarum*
*[magnifi]centiam qva et patriam*
*[suam e]xornavit et salvti civium*
*[----------]ico consulere*
*[--- dignata] est*
*[---] bene et eius*
*[--- pa]tronae et [ // ]*[389]

(To Julia Memmia Prisca Rufa Aemiliana Fidiana
most illustrious and [revered?] woman,
daughter of C. Memmius Fidius Iulius Albius
a man of consular rank, city patron and native son,
is honoured on account of her works,
the extraordinary thermal baths
by which she beautified her hometown
and (provided) for the health of its citizens
--- [?]ico she was worthy
--- well and her ---
--- to the patroness and ---)

This inscription expressly identifies Julia Memmia Prisca Rufa Aemiliana Fidiana as the baths' benefactor and a daughter of Caius Memmius Fidius Iulius Albius, a man noted as

[389] *ILAfr* 454a; see also *PIR²* M 487. The inscription breaks off on this side and continues on the other side of the stone, where it is badly damaged and almost indecipherable. This restoration of the inscription deviates from that recorded by the editors of *ILAfr*, who had suggested *nobilissimae* in the lacuna after *claris[simae]*. Pflaum 1970, 164 (*AE* 1973, 578) argues that Julia Memmia would not have had *nobilissima* applied to her as this title was reserved for members of the imperial house. Pflaum suggests *sanctissima*, "…plutôt que d'attribuer une dignité a cette *clarissime*, qui si elle l'avait usurpee, lui aurait valu de gros ennuis."

*consular vir*, *patronus*, and *alumnus*. Memmius was a man of consular rank, having achieved the consulship in 191 or 192. That he was *patronus*, patron of the colony, as well, makes sense as patrons were frequently members of the local elite, chosen, we might assume, not only for their vast resources but for their personal interest in making a mark on their native city. *Alumnus*, in inscriptions from most other places in the Roman west, means something like "native son." In North Africa, however, it was also used as a show or mark of gratitude to civic benefactors.[390] As with the other municipia or *colonia* of the empire, the desire to participate in Roman politics and stand out among one's fellow citizens is often taken as a barometer of Romanization and, indeed, Julia Memmia's father was by all accounts a very influential and powerful member of the African elite who made his career in imperial administration. We may surmise that he had contributed to the built environment at Bulla Regia himself, though nothing bearing his name has survived.

The use of the word *patrona* (in the dedicatory dative) in this inscription indicates that Julia Memmia had, like her father before her, been co-opted as an official patron of the city. Such a co-option required a *decretum decurionum* or formal decision on the part of the local senate and was a mark of honour towards Julia Memmia and her family that highlights the importance of the *Memmii* to Bulla Regia.[391] Since this honour was more often granted to men than women, though, it also signals a phenomenon worth discussing. Twenty-one instances of officially co-opted female patrons (*patronae civitatis*) exist in the epigraphic record but, of those, only thirteen are beyond doubt.[392] What's more, only a handful are attested in Italy while

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[390] Brancato 2015, no. 71. Another example, *CIL* 8.25515, also comes from Bulla Regia. In this building dedication a local senator is described as *alumnus et patronus rei publicae* for funding the construction of a temple. The Latin implies someone brought up or fostered (a "nursling," i.e., a pupil or disciple) but also one who nourishes or brings up. Despite this supposed dual purpose, I have translated it here it as "native son," as was done by Fagan 1999, No. 187.

[391] The *Memmii* were a very powerful and influential family with relations in other North African cities. See Corbier 1982, 691-740 and Hemelrijk 2004a, 217, for *patronae* in other cities related to Julia Memmia.

[392] Nicols 1989, 120-121.

ten of the thirteen secure instances are from North Africa and the majority of those from Africa Proconsularis.[393] Even more, most of these date to the third century CE. This may indicate a North African openness to the presence of women in the public sphere, one which Nicols proposes may have been related to the template provided by the Severan women, who collectively received more honours and public roles than had empresses before them.[394] If this were the only factor, however, one might expect to see more instances of female civic patrons across the empire. The number of known instances being higher in North Africa implies that the potential combination of influences was, in fact, more complex and difficult to isolate. Regardless, rank was clearly a vital factor in determining which women would be co-opted as all the *patronae* in Africa Proconsularis held senatorial rank (*clarissimae feminae*) and, more specifically, had male relatives who had attained the consulship.[395] Most of the time, these women provided benefactions to the community in the form of public buildings. We should not take from this, though, that cities wanted only buildings from their *patronae* or that they were co-opted because of their benefactions. Indeed, the inscription honouring Julia Memmia does not state that she was co-opted *because* she built a bath for the citizens of Bulla Regia. Indeed, she is named as *patrona* before the baths are even mentioned. Nicols emphasizes that the male relative of women co-opted as city patrons is frequently mentioned in the inscriptions dedicated to the *patrona* and takes from this that having a father of consular rank was the deciding factor. Hemelrijk argues, however, that in provincial cities the pool of potential candidates from which to choose —those who had the money, connections, and sense of *patria* to function as benefactors—was small and this can lead to the conclusion that the honour was somehow

[393] The other three are Italian, from the towns of Pitinum Pisaurense (*CIL* 11.6354=*ILS* 6655), Tarquinia (*CIL* 11.3368), and Peltuinum (*CIL* 9.3429=*ILS* 6110).
[394] Nicols 1989, 121-128.
[395] Interestingly, this was not true for men, for whom rank was less of a consideration than wealth as men of senatorial and equestrian rank are nearly equally represented in the epigraphic record. See Nicols 1989, 129 and 138.

hereditary.[396] Keeping important families—their wealth and connections—as resources for the municipality was undoubtedly at least partly the goal of Bulla Regia's civic counsellors. The emphasis placed on Julia Memmia's solicitation for the health of Bulla Regia's citizens is, though, an intriguing detail. It calls to mind associations usually made in conjunction with imperial bathing complexes built on the grandest possible style at the behest of the emperor who was therefore understood as the patron of the entire city, someone whose magnanimity benefitted both poor and well-off alike. This was arguably an innovation of the Augustan era and began when Agrippa, who died in 12 BCE, stipulated in his will that the sumptuous *thermae* in the Campus Martius bearing his name should be made free to the public. This began the tradition of free (or cheap) access that the bathing public enjoyed from Augustus' reign onwards. Emily Hemelrijk has suggested, given the wording of the dedicatory inscription, that Julia Memmia left a bequest in her will for the upkeep of her baths, hence the emphasis on her providing for the health of her community.[397]

On the other side of this same block a lengthy inscription is much worn and with many lacunae. As it turns out, it records a letter from Julia Memmia to the city council of Bulla Regia informing it of her decision to build the baths and dedicate them to the memory of her father.[398] That he had died before the baths were constructed is confirmed by the second inscription, on a

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[396] Nicols 1989, 129; Hemelrijk 2015, 232-233.

[397] Hemelrijk 2015, 236 and Table 5.1. Hemelrijk does not stipulate, but she may be inferring this from the fragmented text of *ILAfr* 545b.

[398] *ILAfr* 545b. Owing to the many lacunae this inscription is very difficult to decipher, and I have not been successful in translating it out sensibly or in finding a restoration. The text in *ILAfr* is dubious in places: NV[---]M / OBT[---]NIAE[---]ORI[---]IS / domini patri[s ---] / [---] aedili [---]rio etia[m ---]/A oreque[---]EVMDOCITNV[---] / TVA[---]ITI[---]IVLMVMCV[---]IS [---]/VOS PER[---]ISSEI[---] h[o]rtatur ad rem[uneran]/da vestr[a] OI[---]VIA ita enim et singulis [---]/liu[m] VER[---] pu[b]lici ad promerendos EI[---] / esti[-]mer[-] semper C C item CI[---]AIAIO[---] / vos condigner[---] dari posset VCII[---] / mihi QVET [v]estris [u]tilitatibus esset V[---]/NIVSNIVO[1]E[---] fortuna [h]omini NOV[---] / [---]arunt [---]TVNVM SO[---] / [---]B[---]VMDO[1]SEI[---]mate lavac[---] / in[---]suos nunc ita [--- m]inima ad [---]/qu(e) [---]ae SV[---]EDI[---]vae iussit [---] / AM[---]NRV[---]IIEA[---]tis ex sestert/iis M [tr]ibus num[m]um demeo vobis fa[---]L[---]ta / O[---]onem SVI[---]AS [---] / [---]NASII[---]VMA[--]VI[---] / [---]itate OP[---] / [--- i]n epistulis quae IV/A[---]ve therma [---] / [---]va[l]ere [---]V[l]ani. Among the elements that are fairly clear in this inscription is the sum of 3,000 sesterces (*ex sestert/iis M(illibus) [tr]ibus num[m]um*), which is obviously for some portion of the project, or represents some reduction from a total. See Duncan-Jones 1982, no. 419; Broise and Thébert 1993, 350; also, Fagan 1999, No. 187.

statue base, discovered in the bath building but likely not in its original position:[399]

*C(AIO) MEMMIO C(AI) FIL(IO) QUIR(INA)*
*FIDO IULIO ALBIO C(LARISSIMAE?) M(EMORIAE?) V(IRO?)*
*OV[---]TP C[---]PIR*[400]
(Dedicated to the most illustrious memory of Gaius Memmius Fidus Julius Albius,
son of Gaius, of the Quirina tribe ---)

Fortunately, we know the entire *cursus* of Julia's father thanks to inscriptions discovered not only in Bulla Regia but elsewhere.[401] Based on this evidence, we know that C. Memmius of the tribe Quirina[402] had been *tribunus laticlavius* of Legio II Augusta in Britannia, quaestor in the province of Asia, *aedilis cerealis* (aedile responsible for the grain supply), *Legatus pro praetore* of the province of Africa,[403] *iuridicus* for northern Italy (Regio IX Transpadana), proconsul in Baetica, curator of the Via Flaminia, *Legatus pro praetore* of Noricum,[404] and a priest of the *Sodales Titii*.[405] He was *consul designatus* in 191 or 192,[406] which was the pinnacle but not the end of his political career as he was apparently governor in Moesia, Pannonia, or one

[399] Broise and Thébert 1993, 351. The stone had been cut and, presumably, moved. The upper portion was found in the hypocaust of the caldarium.
[400] *ILAfr* 453 = *AE* 1916 76. Measurements: .40m x 0.55 m.: Letters: .065 – 0.05 cm.
[401] *CIL* 8.12442, discovered at Vina, and 11928, discovered at Uzappa (Ausafa). *CIL* 3.15208 = *AE* 2006, 12 = *AE* 2008, 20 = AE 2016/17, 76 was found in Noricum. Inscriptions referencing C. Memmius found at Bulla Regia are *CIL* 8.25527 = *ILTun* 1244, *ILAfr* 453 and 454.
[402] The Quirina tribe is closely associated with *municipia* and *coloniae* founded by the Flavian emperors.
[403] *CIL* 8.25527 = *ILTun* 1244.
[404] Noricum was, until the reign of Antoninus Pius (r. 138-161), one of the imperial provinces without legions. The implications for the status of this post are clear. Legio II Pia would have, however, been stationed in Noricum during Memmius' tenure there making Memmius commander of that legion as well as governor of the province.
[405] The *Sodales Titii* was an ancient priestly college of which very little is known. Tacitus, *Hist*. 2.95, relates that Romulus created this priesthood to worship the deified King Tatius. The priesthood was restored during the imperial era and may have been related to the *Sodales Augusti*.
[406] *CIL* 3.15208. In this wonderfully precise inscription from Noricum, the primus pilus and another soldier of Legio II Italica Pia honoured Memmius as *cos des* on the 18th of September in the year Popillius Pedo Apronianus and M Valerius Bradua Mauricus were consuls (191).

of the Germanies in 193.[407] Julia Memmia's father was therefore among Rome's most prestigious senators and presumably close to the imperial court.[408]

That C. Memmius made his way into the elite at Rome should come as no surprise. By the second century CE North Africans were increasingly prevalent in the imperial administration. After all, this region provided most of the grain to Rome and vast numbers of animals for the games there as well. It only makes sense, then, that men who were active in their native communities might wish to reach for greater prestige by undertaking careers in imperial service. Indeed, it was precisely Africa's importance to Rome that helped local men enter the mechanisms of the state.[409] Elite families in Africa Proconsularis had, as in Italy, became wealthy from land ownership or mercantilism, or both. Often, a family's elite standing began with talented sons entering civil service as equestrian procurators and culminated in the family reaching *clarissimus* status. Such men (and their families) must have taken up residence in Rome while maintaining homes and estates on their native soil. Based in Bulla Regia, the branch of the Memmii to which Caius and his daughter belonged were likely in this group. It is likely that Caius maintained an estate in and/or near his home city and one in Rome, too, a fact suggested by the offices that he attained. So far so good, but our knowledge of Julia Memmia's life does not extend past a nominal understanding of her status in the larger community. Onomastic studies of Africa Proconsularis' elite families suggest connections and intermarriages but do not enlighten us regarding Memmia's immediate family. We know that she likely married, but that is not certain, and that she evidently acted as family spokesperson by building the bath complex in Bulla Regia to stand as a permanent marker of her father's importance to the community, which suggests that she may have been the eldest (or only) daughter and had no

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[407] *PIR*[2] M 462. *CIL* 8.25527 is fragmentary. PR P/ [---]RIS is taken as indicating that he was *Legatus pro praetore* to either of the Germanies (*inferioris* or *superioris*), Moesia, or Pannonia.
[408] An inscription from Vina (Municipium Auralia Vina; Henchir-El-Meden) also refers to him as QVIR, which is a reference to the *quattuorviri*, the four-man council that ruled imperial *colonia*.
[409] Corbier 1982, 698.

brothers, but even that is uncertain. It may have not been unusual for the wealthy and connected daughter of a consular man to have such decisions and resources within her purview. Still, questions persist: was it she or the officials of Bulla Regia who initiated the project and what were the mechanisms by which decisions were made? Did Julia Memmia provide only financial support for the project or was she more intimately involved in the process, as inscriptions sometimes attest? We may surmise that the land upon which the baths were built was offered to the Memmii by the quattuorviri as a show of respect to the memory of C. Memmius but, again, we cannot know for sure. We do not even know where or when C. Memmius died. Our knowledge of his career ends in 193, the turbulent year that saw five contenders for imperial power.[410] At this point, Memmius must have been middle aged so it is conceivable that he lived into the 200s and may have only recently died when work began on the complex dedicated to his name. If the planning of the baths did not start until after his death, we should certainly assume that his daughter inherited a large portion of his estate, and it was this that she used to fund the baths in her family's hometown. One thing is clear: this construction was as much a tribute to the pietas, wealth, and status of his daughter as it was to her father's power and status.

## The Memmian Baths in the Urban Environment

Even though Bulla Regia has not been excavated to the extent that the original urban grid can be discerned in detail, the baths funded by Julia Memmia occupied an important focal point. Situated on a height of land and rising some 30 feet above the ground level, this bath complex was prominent in the surrounding area—a fact attested to by the striking height of the frigidarium's still-standing north wall. Meanwhile, the mix of residential and commercial that was a hallmark of Roman cities ensured that the baths were close to public gathering areas and

[410] Following the assassination of Commodus in 192, 193 saw Pertinax, Didius Julianus, Septimius Severus, and the governors of Britain, Clodius Albinus, and Syria, Pescennius Niger, attempt to establish themselves as emperor.

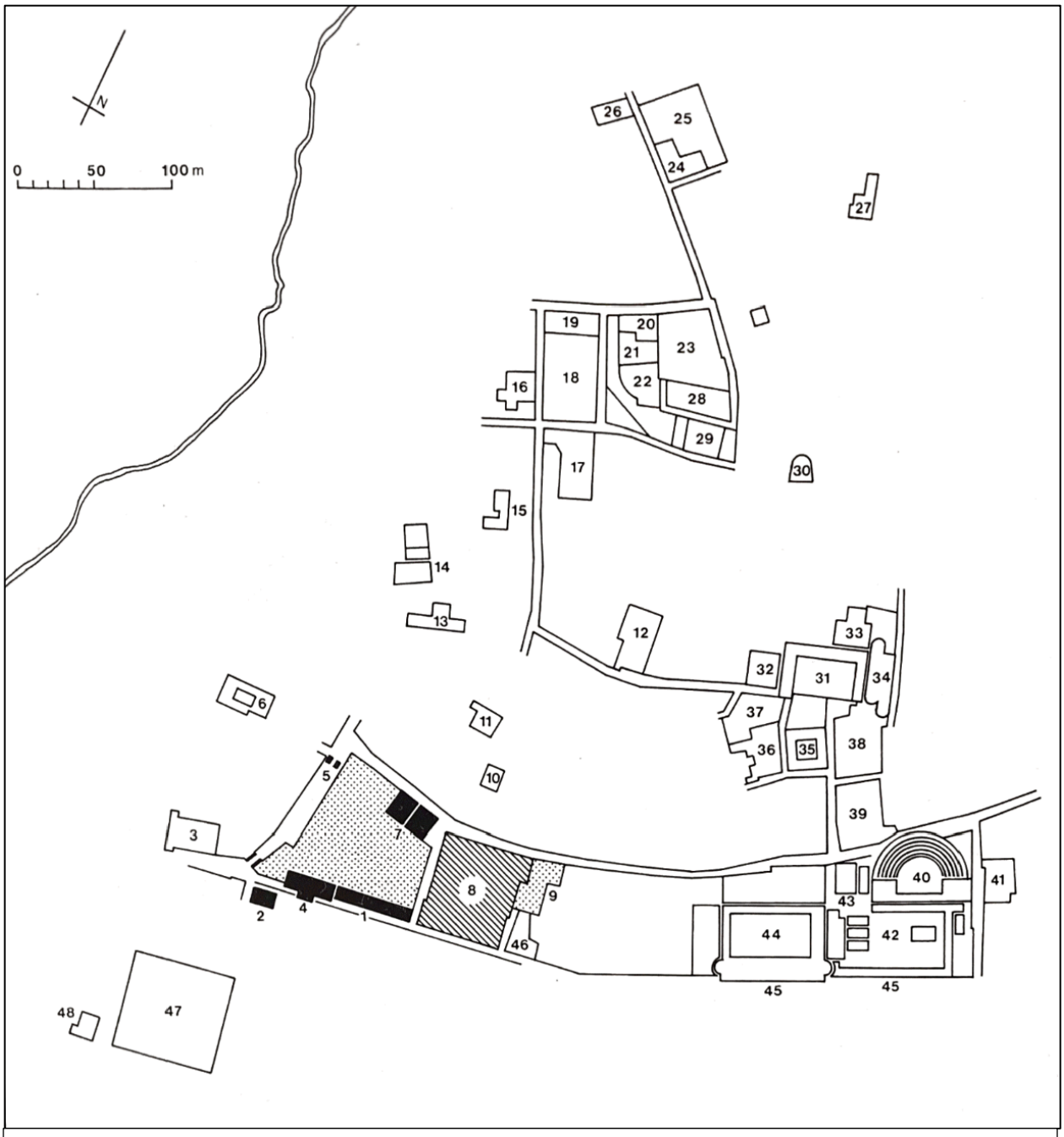


Fig. 15—Map of excavated remains of Bulla Regia (Image Copyright: Broise and Thébert, 1993. Used with Permission)
Features: 1 & 3. Cisterns. 7. Temples. 8. Memmian Baths. 9. Temple (?) of Diana. 10-13. Houses. 14. Christian Basilica. 15-25. Houses. 26. Baths. 27. Baths. 28-29. Houses. 31. Forum. 32. Capitolium. 33. Temple of Apollo. 34. Basilica. 35. Market. 36-37. Houses. 38. Unidentified. 39. Baths. 40. Theatre. 41. Baths. 42. Monumental Esplanade 43. Temple of Isis. 44. Esplanade. 45. Retaining Walls 46. House 47. Southern baths (later) 48. Church.

not far from the centre of the city. This section of this study will examine the immediate area of the Memmian Baths and discuss movement through and around the city in terms that highlight the connectedness and visibility of this grand complex.

Excavation in the area of the Memmian Baths reveals several phases of construction, an indication of constant updating financed, no doubt, in large part by the local elite. A glance at the map of Bulla Regia's excavated structures and roads shows immediately that the Memmian Baths stood in juxtaposition to the city's official centre, the forum, which was not far to the northeast. Before its construction, however, the land on which the baths were constructed appears to have been occupied by residences.[411] This was cleared — the homes and land purchased by Julia Memmia (?) — to make way for the new bathing complex. Evidence suggests that at around the same time—the end of the second or beginning of the third century CE—the immediate surroundings were updated: the road running along the top of the hill was paved and sewers were installed. The remains of steps on the northern side of the road, opposite the Memmian Baths, suggests the presence of small shops.[412] To the west, traces of two large temples (roughly 14 x 17 m on podiums of 3.5 m) have been uncovered, oriented towards the same road as the Baths. As these temples have been dated to the third century CE or just before, it is worth pausing here to comment on this collocation. Temples were the most-constructed type of structure in the ancient world and hubs of everyday activity. People visited to propitiate the deities to which the temples had been dedicated (the deities in this case are not known), meaning that the areas were temples stood were presumably well attended. Temples frequently served as landmarks by which one might navigate the urban environment. The discovery of portions of a monumental construction immediately to the west of these temples, floors paved in

[411] Broise and Thébert 1993, 355. To the east was a not-clearly identified building dedicated to Diana and behind that, perhaps connected to it, remains of a structure identified tentatively as a house that indicates that this area had perhaps once been residential.
[412] Broise and Thébert 1993, 356-357.

black and white mosaic and walls lined with marble veneer, suggests another large temple, also dated to the 200s CE. The presence of these structures would have made this area a hub of activity, drawing people from outside the immediate neighborhood. By 230 this western area may have featured a large open-air palaestra.[413] The importance of this area is underscored by the fact that the roadway delineating the western limit of this apparently sacred area was more than 10-meters wide and clearly a main thoroughfare.[414]

We may read the evidence attesting to successive phases of construction and reconfiguration in this area of the Memmian Baths as an assertion on the part of the city's elite to move their city into the modern era in order to express its importance and centrality as an economic centre. We should consider, too, that Julia Memmia's purchase of residential land on which to build her bath complex attests to her desire that the baths make an important contribution to an area considered significant enough to warrant constant updating. Important in its own right, this area was also connected to other leisure complexes and to the commercial heart of the city. A short distance to the east was the city's theatre and, around it, a terraced area populated with monuments, including a sizeable temple to Isis. Two smaller bathing establishments happened to be in this immediate area, arranged very near the theatre, which suggests a particular devotion to bathing on the part of the people of Bulla Regia, but also a practical proximity to the massive cisterns further up the hill, a short distance west of the Memmian Baths. A road branching off and running northward from the theatre led past the *macellum* directly to the city's forum, which was surrounded on three sides by a covered portico and open towards the south. The Capitolium stood west of this and a temple to Apollo directly to the north. The vast area north of the Memmian Baths is unfortunately mostly unexcavated, though the remains of two houses are partially visible. That this area was largely residential,

[413] Broise and Thébert 1993, 366, figs. 364-a (early third century configuration) and 364-b (mid-third century).
[414] Broise and Thébert 1993, 360.

perhaps for more middle-class citizens, should be considered. The proximity of a residential area would also help make sense of the evidence suggesting that the public fountain on the northeastern façade of the Memmian Baths saw continuous use for as long as the baths functioned.[415]

## Conclusions

Even without full knowledge of the road system in Bulla Regia, it is still possible to assert that the area of the Memmian Baths served as an important urban focal point. Situated on a key roadway that functioned as part of the urban armature, the Memmian Baths were readily seen by those travelling into or past Bulla Regia. Externally, its gleaming silhouette attested to the city's success and importance, but it was once one entered the bath complex's decorated interior that one experienced the grandeur that bespoke imperial power. Those who could read the inscriptions would know that this building was built by the daughter of one of the city's most prominent and important citizens and in his honour but even those who could not read would experience Roman power and culture as they proceeded through their bathing ritual. They would have known that this building was available to them thanks to the benefactions of the extremely rich and powerful. This awareness was vital to perpetuating the importance of Julia Memmia's father and the *Memmii* more generally, but also of cementing Julia Memmia's reputation and status as one of Bulla Regia's leading women. Everything about the location of her building did this, in fact. The Memmian Baths' immediate vicinity appears to have been important enough to warrant successive restructuring and constant modernization, but even more, in the memories of those who knew the area pre-construction, the bath complex attested to her connectedness to the ruling class and power to participate in reconfiguring the cityscape.

[415] Broise and Thébert 1993, 95-97; 330. The large number of coins and ceramic fragments, as well as the abundance of handles belonging to small amphorae found here suggest that the fountain was used frequently and continually for centuries.

The bathing complex itself spoke to her ability to mobilize a vast army of skilled and unskilled laborers and gain access to natural resources from around the Mediterranean. She was clearly *femina princeps* in Bulla Regia and even outside her small city in Africa Proconsularis.

# *6—Case Study: Rome*

This last case study is unlike the others in that it is more comprehensive, covering several pre-imperial and imperial builds in the city of Rome. It is also dissimilar in that when it comes to Rome one does not have to dig too deep to find a wealth of information about its layout, development, and monuments. Compendia like Platner and Ashby's *Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome,* the *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, Richardson's *Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, Coarelli's *Rome and Environs* and others provide detailed knowledge of known structures, while the city both as idea and place of memory and experience have recently been the focus of a lot of scholarly attention.[416] Those who study the city have charted the city as image and mapped *loci* of meaning in and around Rome.[417] The last point of divergence is that this chapter is part study and part discussion on the implications of women building in the city, especially during the imperial period. This is to provide points of comparison with the case studies that come before, and to establish that there was meaning to women's building projects beyond the usual "they were advertising the careers of their male relatives" or "advancing their women's concerns." The situation in Rome was, as one might expect, different than in Italy or the other provinces. The difficulty with writing about building in Rome, generally, is that unlike other cities in this study Rome has seen centuries of continuous occupation on the same relatively small area. Rome is therefore overwritten with era after era of buildings, with Republican and imperial ones very near the bottom of the heap. Some, of course, have been excavated but most have not. Only a portion of one of the literally hundreds or thousands of *insulae* in early-imperial Rome has survived to this day, for

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[416] Important monographs concerning Rome's built environment are Anderson 1997, Stambaugh 1988, Coarelli 2007, Claridge 2010. We cannot leave out, as well, Stanford University's digital *Forma Urbis Romae*. Earlier studies of the Severan marble plan of Rome are Lanciani 1893-1901, Rodriguez Almeida 1980.

[417] Important works are Favro 1996 (Augustan Rome), Edwards and Woolf 2004 (Rome as sign). Rehak 2006 (The Augustan Campus Martius).

example.[418] Indeed, one of the most important structures as far as this chapter is concerned, the Porticus Liviae, a massive public portico built during the late first-century BCE, has never been excavated owing to the nature of the area under which its remains lay. This chapter therefore differs considerably from all the other case studies in that here buildings are discussed based almost entirely on epigraphic and/or literary references, with few references to the composition of archaeological remains. Rome is vital to this study, however, because it was the capital and the epicentre of building activity—and arguably served as the blueprint for all other building in provincial cities across the empire.[419] As many details have been included as possible, therefore, and a discussion of the topographical considerations of each structure has been added so far as the evidence will allow. Admittedly, however, the paucity of useful information makes it very difficult—little survives, even of the epigraphical data, to make discerning social and political relationships nearly impossible without relying on other types of information, all of which were written by men.

There are other implications that are arguably even more applicable at Rome than the rest of the empire, for example the pitfall of generalizing across a broad period. Those who conclude that women in Rome built little because there is a lack of evidence for their building, or because there are gaps in the evidence from one period to another are making the mistake of taking too broad a view and failing to consider the evolution of Roman society. During the imperial period, for example, courtly expectations shifted according to prevailing social mores, the circumstances under which the emperor came to power, and the nature of his relationship with family, city, and senate.[420] A dance between the contingencies of contemporary

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[418] The so-called Insula dell'ara Coeli, tucked beside the Altrare della Patria at the base of the Capitoline Hill by the stairs to S. Maria in Aracoeli. It is not open to visitors.
[419] The homogeneity of building typologies across the empire has been much studied. Notable among these studies are Gros, 1996, and Wilson-Jones, 2000, but others abound. MacDonald, 1982, 1986, considered urban organization as well as building typology. Others focus on particular building types, such as Stamper, 2005, Golvin, 1988 (in two volumes), or Wilmott (ed.), 2009.
[420] Kleiner 1996, 28.

circumstances and the emperor's personal take on his powers and prerogatives was continual and would have dictated the extent to which women could fund public structures as well as which kinds of structures were considered "appropriate" and how often their participation was acknowledged. It is for this reason that this chapter uses both a synchronic and diachronic approach, examining evidence for women-funded public buildings at Rome in a way that takes into consideration period or reign-specific circumstances. A synchronic approach allows a close consideration of each individual structure while the diachronic take allows us to explore and draw conclusions about the development of women's ability to fund public structures in the capital, especially after the advent of imperial power and the unique circumstances that it introduced to building in the city.

One additional issue warrants mentioning, and that is the problematic attribution of building works to the emperor when our evidence suggests otherwise. In part, this may be explained by the fact that the ancient authors themselves are not always clear on the origins of a structure, or their own biases or literary intent determined how they reported on or to whom they attributed a structure. One famous example of the former is Dio's attribution of the Pantheon to Agrippa simply because the building's prominent dedication says so.[421] In this he cannot be blamed, but it highlights the problem. Modern bias also comes into play, of course, as does the established tendency to treat ancient authors as definitive. Most modern scholars accept, for example, Cassius Dio and Suetonius' attribution of the Porticus Liviae and Porticus Octaviae to Augustus rather than examining the evidence with greater care. In this case, two sources are accepted as unproblematically representative of reality while glossing over those that supply a contrary view. It is perhaps not surprising that those references that are accepted as accurately representing historic reality are also those that reinforce modern assumptions

[421] Dio, 53.27.2-3. Dio is certainly describing the structure he knew, which had the vaulted roof he describes added when it was rebuilt during the reign of Hadrian.

about gender roles in antiquity and that building in public represented military and political success and power and nothing else. This leaves little room for the phenomenon of women who commissioned the construction or restoration of public structures, especially at Rome.

In this chapter, because I am interested in testing whether the pattern at Rome was the same as the general pattern seen in Italy, there is a broader consideration of all the available evidence, with building projects at Rome compared to, as outside the capital, the social standing of their benefactors, where known. Instead of concentrating on a single structure and the woman who paid for it, in this chapter the scope is wider to explore more deeply women's building activity at Rome and whether it may have served as a model for women elsewhere in the empire. But while that is straightforward, what is more complicated is challenging the confusion and ambiguity of the literary sources, especially. This chapter therefore inspects closely the surviving evidence for imperial commissions revealed by a mixture of inscriptional and literary evidence, taking into consideration the fact that the latter were demonstrably driven by traditional ideologies that demanded that the male relative (the emperor in these cases) be credited with the construction of the buildings described.[422] Indeed, it is at Rome more than perhaps anywhere else that there is not a dearth of buildings paid for by women, but a failure of proper attribution by authors ancient and modern. After all, how can we properly understand the relationship between women and building if the structures they paid for are attributed to their male relatives? After a discussion of the epigraphic evidence for pre-imperial and imperial builds, this chapter examines the literary record, highlighting areas complicated by conflicting reports, historic misunderstandings, and, potentially, intentional obfuscation.

[422] Inscriptions may arguably be tainted by ideological considerations as well, of course, though if an inscription attests to a woman as the benefactor of a public building it seems unlikely that this is an instance of such, given that building in the city was considered a male pursuit.

## The Epigraphic Record

Five inscriptions in our corpus attest to works paid for by women at Rome, and two of these are from buildings paid for by women who were *not* part of the imperial household. The fact that both non-imperial building commissions dates to between the early first century BCE and the early first century CE suggests that women were building in the city before construction became the province of the imperial house alone and implies that the women of the imperial house may have taken over the role of building in the city at roughly the same time as did the emperor. All the pre-imperial builds are temples, which again is not surprising given that temples were among the most frequently commissioned structures in the ancient world.[423] Perhaps surprisingly, however, these temples are not associated with priestesses, but with women whose connection with the cults in question are unknown.[424]

The other three structures attested by the epigraphic record belong to buildings paid for by female imperial family members—Livia (the Temple of Fortuna Muliebris), Agrippina the Younger (Temple of the Deified Claudius), and Julia Domna, whose name is connected with that of Hadrian's wife, Vibia Sabina, on an inscription that likely belonged to a structure important to Rome's *matronae*.[425] The epigraphic evidence, however, is outnumbered by literary references, which supply knowledge of structures for which neither physical remains nor dedicatory inscriptions survive.[426] When extant inscriptions and literary references are combined, nine

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[423] In this study, of the 106 projects reflected in the corpus of building inscriptions from Italy specifically, 36 (34%) are temples. This is in line with Mcdonald's 1986 study of Roman structures in North Africa, in which temples (excluding *capitolia*) constituted the majority (20%) of the building types found there. McDonald, 1986, 129.

[424] Of the 67 temples that appear in the database of structures whose benefactors were women, only ten were funded by priestesses, and nine of those were in North Africa. In Italy, priestesses (*flaminicae*) more often appear as benefactors of other sorts of public buildings. In North Africa, however, nearly half (9 of 16) of the *flaminicae* who funded public structures paid for the construction or restoration of temples.

[425] Langford 2013, 72, argues that this inscription, *CIL* 6.997 (= *ILS* 324) may not have been a building but a statue or monument. Mommsen, commenting in the *CIL* entry, suggested that it was related to the meeting place of the *conventus matronarum* or *senaculum* mentioned in the *Historia Augusta*.

[426] See Dio 56.46.3 and Pliny, *NH* 12.94 for the Temple of the Deified Augustus in Rome built by Livia and Tiberius; Ovid, *Fasti* 5.157-158 for Livia's restoration of the Temple of Bona Dea Subsaxana; Dio 55.8.4

structures can be securely identified as having been built by the women of the imperial house or a close female friend. There are eleven if we accept that the Julia Domna/Sabina inscription is a building dedication,[427] and that Julia Domna restored the Temple of Vesta and House of the Vestals in the Forum as Charmaine Gorrie has proposed. Before addressing the issues presented by the addition of the literary record, let us look at the structures attested by epigraphic evidence alone. As we have seen, these fall into two categories: pre-imperial and imperial. With these things in mind, the starting point of this discussion takes us outside of the city, to the fourth milestone on the Via Latina.

## Late Republican Builds

As it stands, there is no evidence for construction projects funded by women before the first century BCE anywhere in the empire, and then only in Italy until the beginning of the imperial period.[428] For the most part, scholarly attention to women's building at Rome has been limited to imperial constructions but the inclusion of this earlier period, although limited by the small number of building dedications discovered, is nevertheless suggestive. Two late Republican structures to which inscriptions found at Rome attest appear to have been funded by members of Rome's elite *matronae*, though neither have been identified and excavated. The dedicatory inscriptions are sufficiently descriptive that we can understand that they were both temples, but since there are no archaeological remains to study, we cannot know the dimensions of these structures, nor can we examine them in relation to their surrounding environment. One of these temples was dedicated to the goddess Bona Dea and the other to Hercules and although a thorough examination of these structures is not possible there is the opportunity of drawing

for Polla's sponsorship of the Portico of Agrippa (Dio reports that she also adorned the Circus but cf. 49.43.2, where he attributes this to Agrippa); Plotina's shrine to Pudicitia, for example.

[427] Julia Domna's name appears on several other building inscriptions from Rome, though always accompanied by those of her husband and son(s). The singularity of this sole independent dedication deserves closer inspection.

[428] Hemelrijk 2016, 20, fig. 1.2 for chart showing chronological and geographic spread.

some interesting conclusions in terms of the overall picture especially with regards to the connection between the social standing of the dedicator and her building. There is also an interesting insight offered by the inscription belonging to the temple dedicated to Hercules, as it flies in the face of a long-held assumption that women were barred from participation in the cult of Hercules at Rome.[429]

> *Publicia L(ucii) f(ilia) | Cn(aei) Corneli A(uli) f(ilius) uxor | Hercole aedem | valvasque fecit eademque | expolivit aramque | sacram Hercole restitu(it) | Haec omnia de suo et virei [fecit] | faciundum curavit.*[430]
>
> Publicia, daughter of Lucius, wife of Gnaeus Cornelius the son of Aulus, built this temple for Hercules and its doors, and she embellished it and restored the altar sacred to Hercules. All these things she did with her own and her husband's resources, and she oversaw the work being done.

Here is a temple and altar to Hercules whose construction or restoration was funded by a dedicant and presumed adherent of his cult who was a woman. Celia E. Schultz has shown, however, that contrary to the assumed ban on participation by women in the cult of Hercules at Rome, women were devotees of his cult except at the Ara Maximus.[431] Clearly, based on the inscription, Publicia was involved in some way with the cult of Hercules because she used her own money as well as that of her husband, Gnaeus Cornelius, to (re)build one of Hercules' temples and restore an altar to

Fig. 16—Building dedication, Temple of Hercules, Rome. (Source: *Epigraphic Database Roma* CC BY:SA 4.0)

[429] Schultz 2000, 291, esp. notes 3 and 4, lay out the relevant issues and references.
[430] *CIL* I².981 = VI.30899 = *ILS* 3423 = *ILLRP* 126. Found in the vicinity of the Colline Gate, Rome.
[431] See Schultz 2006, 60-69 for a discussion of female devotees of Hercules at Rome.

him.[432] The details offered by this inscription are interesting, as is how it reveals Publicia's priorities. First, in the same formulation used by male dedicators, and as is usual in all the inscriptions studied here, she identifies herself using her filiation (*Lucii filia*), indicating to the public that she is a freeborn woman, the daughter of a Roman citizen. Her filiation is placed before the name of her husband and his family (*Cn(aei) Corneli A(uli) f(ilius) uxor*) because it is she, not he, who is the primary dedicant. The emphasis provided by putting *uxor* at the end of the phrase lays claim to the status that accompanied the title while still positioning Petronia as the central figure. Theories that early imperial women like Livia were at the forefront of this sort of public participation are tested by this inscription, which has been dated to between 100 and 50 BCE based on paleographic considerations.[433] Although it has been suggested that it was Augustan marriage legislation that opened the door to women funding public building projects, this inscription suggests that this is not true because it predates that legislation.[434] If the dating is accurate, this means that elite matrons were involved in building in the city decades before the practice was highlighted by imperial women.[435] A closer consideration of the wording of this inscription is instructive.

Although neither Publicia nor her husband can be identified with any certainty,[436] their names reveal that both Publicia, daughter of a Lucius Publicius, and her husband Gnaeus Cornelius hailed from established families. The *Publicii* were of solid plebeian origins, while the *Cornelii* were a large and ancient family with both plebeian and patrician stems. Even though

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[432] This may well be a family devotion to a god. Such a practice was commonplace during this period and later.
[433] *Epigraphic Database Roma*. Carmen Carraro, editor. (2014): http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/res_complex_comune.php?do=book&id_nr=EDR101218&partid=1. Last accessed, 19 July 2021. Contra the usefulness of paleographical dating, see Saastamoinen 2010, 40-41.
[434] Hemelrijk 2015, 340f.
[435] Hemelrijk 2015, 340. Hemelrijk's suggestion that it was female benefactors in Italy and the Greek East who influenced later imperial women unfortunately ignores this inscription, which suggests inspiration from earlier to later generations of women *at Rome* and posits a potential continuity of building practice among Rome's elite women.
[436] Henzen, *Bull. Ist. Arch.* (1878), 102.

these individuals cannot be securely identified, this was clearly a wealthy couple, and we may guess that they were either from the rich plebeian stems of their respective *gentes* and/or Publicia married into the patrician *Cornelii*.[437] Indeed, her rise in status might explain the addition of her husband's name and his filiation.[438] This might also explain the combination of *uxor* plus the her husband's name in the genitive—the implication being that her husband was someone who mattered and was therefore worth including in the building inscription. Livia would do this as well, on the building inscription on the Temple of Fortuna Muliebris.[439] The wording of the inscription indicates, further, that Publicia and Gnaeus were married *sine manu*, because the inscription testifies that the temple was funded *de suo et virei*—with her own and her husband's resources. Had they been married *cum manu,* Publicia would not have had any resources of her own as they would have been subsumed into the estate of either her husband or his *paterfamilias*.[440] The separation of resources mentioned in the inscription was entirely in keeping with Roman law and practice, which dictated that in marriages *sine manu*, both parties maintained control of their own personal resources, which were kept strictly separate even to the point of gifts between spouses being disallowed by law.[441] Here, the inscription indicates that

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437 Palmer, 1996: 93, suggests that Publicia was "…apparently of noble descent and in marriage to an apparent patrician." See also Michael Crawford, *RRC* no. 380: a denarius depicting Hercules slaying the Nemean lion minted in 80 BCE by a C. Publicius Q.f. That this may be a relative of our Publicia is suggestive but not proven. Palmer ties this coin to a suggested affiliation between the *Claudii* and the cult of Hercules; Palmer, 92ff.

438 Other possibilities present themselves, such as the prospect that most female benefactors of public buildings were widows, which seems unlikely but possible, or that the female dedicator wishes to mark the fact that she had her husband's permission to undertake her building project. The most likely in my opinion, however, is that the woman in question wishes to avail herself of the public status marker of *matrona*.

439 One of the striking features of this text is this combination *uxor* plus husband's name in the genitive because it appears in only two other inscriptions in the database: it appears on the inscribed architrave of the Temple of Fortuna Muliebris (on which, see below), which was restored by Livia early, it is thought, in Augustus' reign, and (probably) in an inscription from the amphitheatre at Asisium (modern Assisi) that names a Petronia who oversaw the completion of the building begun by her deceased brother. For the former, see *CIL* 6.883 and below; for the latter, see *CIL* 11.8023=*AE* 1988, 537a=*AE* 1999, 490. That this combination appears to have been more common during the late Republican and early imperial periods may suggest approximate dates for these inscriptions. See Martina 2015, 67-68, for a discussion of the dating and use of this formula.

440 See Jane F. Gardner 1986, 71ff.

441 Bierkan, Sherman, and Stocquart, 1907, 311ff.

each spouse was in possession of her/his own estates, while the specific mention of her use of the husband's money not only honours this but implies that the husband's contribution was entirely his choice—the implication being that while her husband approved the project, the temple was Publicia's undertaking. This is in keeping with what we know about shifts in Roman marriage customs from the second and third through the first centuries BCE, when marriage *cum manu* was replaced by a preference for marriages *sine manu*.[442] Publicia's access to her own money implies that Publicia's *paterfamilias* must have been dead and she *sui iuris*, or legally independent. Of course, Publicia would have been under tutelage, but it does not seem to have had an impact on her ability to build a temple. Nor would it, necessarily. Women by this period had quite a bit of control over their own affairs despite tutelage. Cicero laments the fact that thanks to lawyers' tricks women had become so independent that having a guardian had become merely a form,[443] and the permission of a tutor was required only when the family's property was at stake. So, for example, permission was required for a woman to free a slave, undertake a marriage *cum manu*, or make a will.[444] A public building is more likely to have been considered a family asset as it enhanced the status and prestige of the family when it was built and for generations. That Publicia had both the resources to invest in and the authority to oversee this project does not appear to have been as unusual as we might believe.

What this inscription presents to us, therefore, is a woman who highlights her high social status, proclaims equally her own and her husband's families—though she is likely using her husband and his rank as a status marker—and identifies herself as a Roman matron of good standing who was likely married *sine manu* and was *sui iuris*. Further, the wording of the inscription emphasizes that Publicia built the temple with its double or folding doors (*valvas*),

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[442] Gardner, 1986, 13, points out that this preference for *sine manu* marriage is likely attributable as much to a desire to keep property and money within the *familia* as to any 'humanistic' trend with regards to women's roles. Still, she allows that "the early establishment of separate property for husband and wife has important consequences for the social and economic independence of women." See p. 27, note 35.
[443] Cicero, *pro Murena* 27.
[444] Gardner, 1986, 18.

embellished it, and restored the altar, which would have stood outside the temple. It is her voice that proclaims the project hers and makes a point of highlighting the accomplishment represented by the doors. Seeing that Publicia was concerned to emphasize this feature, we should probably assume that they were something to behold, brass, perhaps, carved or otherwise decorated, and highly polished.[445] Furthermore, Publicia stipulates that she arranged for and oversaw (*faciundum curavit*) the work, a point not often highlighted on buildings dedicated by women, and one which indicates that Publicia was the active agent in the project and was not simply providing money for it or undertaking the work to highlight the career of a male relative.[446] The wording of this inscription makes clear that Publicia was not simply acting on her husband's behalf or in any way acting outside of societal norms, or at least we might assume because people do not usually advertise their social transgressions in dedications etched in stone.[447] Rather, her husband clearly approved of the project because he contributed some of his own funds as well, and it seems clear that this project was entirely in keeping with both her legal rights and, possibly, accepted practice.

In terms of spatial considerations, it is unfortunately impossible to pinpoint the location of Publicia's temple to Hercules with any precision. In what is perhaps a common mix-up concerning the location of the inscribed slab's first discovery and the implications of this, the 19th century archaeologists who first published this inscription provide conflicting reports and conclusions. Wilhelm Henzen, writing in March of 1878, reported that the inscription was copied while still *in situ* under a house at no. 42 Via del Principe Amedeo (very close to Termini

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445 Pliny, *NH* 34.7, says that brass was commonly used for temple doors, either for the door sills or the door itself. Brass looks like gold but would not have been nearly as expensive.

446 Saastamoinen 2010, 239-240, points out that *faciundum curavit* was commonly used in the inscriptions he studied in imperial North Africa (appearing in just over 3% of the inscriptions or 33 times in 1002 inscriptions) and was most common during the first c. BCE/CE. This same frequency is not replicated in my database, where *faciundum curavit* appears once (less than 1% of the time).

447 While many scholars recognize that women were specifically barred from the worship of Hercules only at the *Ara Maxima* at Rome, others believed that women were banned from worshipping Hercules at all. Mommsen's commentary in *CIL* VI.337 "…mulieres Herculem non colunt."; Palmer, 1996: 93, n. 87; cf. Celia E. Schultz 2000, 291, n. 3.

Station, then under construction).[448] Rodolfo Lanciani, meanwhile, suggested that the Temple of Hercules built by Publicia was likely the same one mentioned by Livy as standing outside the Colline Gate, and based this supposition on his by no means certain understanding that the inscription was discovered during the construction of the then-new *Palazzo delle Finanze* (Ministry of Finance building) at Via XX Settembre, 97, a site about 1.4 km away from the site proposed by Henzen but very close to the site of the former Colline Gate.[449] It seems likely that in this case Lanciani is confounding the discovery of this slab with the portions of the Colline Gate that were exposed while the Ministry of Finance was under construction (1871-1876). If so, then Lanciani's association of the Temple of Hercules built by Publicia with the Temple of Hercules featured in a passage in Livy that describes Hannibal's advance towards the Colline Gate during the Second Punic War seems unlikely, though it is true that the inscription's find spot corresponds roughly to the area of the Colline Gate.[450] The slab could have been moved from outside the Servian Walls and used in the construction of the house at Via Principe Amedeo is entirely plausible. Unfortunately, however, a connection is not provable. On the other hand, Henzen's assertion that the inscription was found in the basement of a home in the general location where elite villas were uncovered during earth-moving work supports further the idea that Publicia and her husband were associated with Rome's elite. Still, the only thing that we can say for certain about this particular Temple of Hercules is that it was dedicated by an apparent female devotee of the cult who wished to advertise that she used her own money as well as

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[448] See *Bull. Ist. Arch.* (Roma, 1878), 102 and *Bull. Comm.* (1878), 94. Lanciani notes that the inscription was acquired by the *Commissione* in May of 1878.

[449] Lanciani, *Bull. Comm.* (1878), 94: "Lastra di travertino di met. 0,34 x 0,34 x 0,03, *forse* ritrovata negli sterri del palazzo delle Finanze." [emphasis is mine]; Livy, 26.10.3: "Hannibal had now moved his camp to the Anio at a distance of three miles from the City. From this position, he advanced with a body of 2000 cavalry towards the Colline Gate as far as the temple of Hercules, and from that point he rode up and made as close an inspection as he could of the walls and the situation of the City." *The History of Rome*, Vol. 4. Everyman's Library, Ernest Rhys, ed. Translated by Rev. Canon Roberts (London, J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1905).

[450] The Ministry of Finance has been in the same palazzo on Via XX September since its inauguration in 1876. Portions of the Colline Gate were destroyed to build this structure, the construction of which began in 1871. This building and Termini Station were part of the same building programme in Rome.

monies supplied by her husband to build or restore a temple and its altar to the god both she and her husband worshipped, and that may have been associated with his family—a notion made more likely by the fact that this was essential a "family" project though Publicia was clearly its instigator and overseer.

Publicia's temple was unique in the sense that it suggests that women were devotees of Hercules at Rome, despite supposed prohibitions. As the inscriptions clearly indicates, Publicia was proud of her contribution. It, in turn, likely raised her social standing in the sense that it advertised to those who could read its dedication that she funded and oversaw the construction of the temple and restoration of the altar sacred to the god she may have also worshipped. Her audiences, in no particular order, were her fellow devotees, other women at Rome, and the general population.

The other two inscriptions available to us from this period refer to temples dedicated to Bona Dea. The first is an inscribed stone found in the early 1930s during work on the foundations of a house on the Caelian Hill behind the still-extant military hospital. The slab, which is in the archaeological museum on the Caelian, measures 0.29 m high by 0.45 m long, by 0.07 m thick. It is believed to have been originally fixed to the foundations of the temple to which it refers.[451] Although relatively small, the inscription is precisely carved and framed with a double border. Two snakes, sketched below the inscription, crawl from left and right towards a small brazier or altar depicted at the bottom centre in a fashion commonly seen on wall paintings discovered at Pompeii. Snakes were also associated with Bona Dea because her temple on the Aventine Hill, the temple of Bona Dea Subsaxana, was connected to a pharmacy where there were snakes, a creature associated with healing (and ophthalmology in particular). Bona Dea of the Aventine was therefore a healing goddess whose attributes were snakes and a

[451] Cumont 1932, 2.

cornucopia.[452] The finely executed lettering, all uppercase, suggests a probable first century CE date:

BONAE DEAE S(acrum)
SVLPICIA SEVERA
MAIOR AEDEM
CUM SIGNO D(onum) D(edit)[453]

Sacred to Bona Dea.
Sulpicia Severa the Elder
has given this temple and statue as a gift.

Again, it is not possible to identify Sulpicia, though we can say that since she had the money to pay for an inscription carved by a clearly gifted and precise hand and to build a temple to Bona Dea on the Caelian Hill, the location of many elite homes, she must have been a member of Rome's elite.[454] The size of this *aedes* is, however, difficult to gauge. In keeping with this, Sarolta Takács suggests that this shrine was private, probably attached to a house, and bases her supposition on the inscription's use of *signum*, which she says indicates that the statue was ornamental and not sacred.[455] This raises the issue of how we are to understand the nature of a statue indicated by *signum*. Do we know how the Romans categorized statues of divinities? To what degree do the modern categories of sacred versus profane, cult image as opposed to decoration apply to the Roman world? In a study published in 2010, Sylvia Estienne examined both inscriptions and literature to determine Romans' religious vocabulary.[456] Her research showed that while *simulacrum* was more often used specifically to denote a cult statue, the

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[452] Takács 2008, 101; Brouwer 1989, 347.
[453] *AE* 1933, 143; Brouwer 1989, 16-17 and 272. *D.D.* could be either *Dedit Dicavit* (given and dedicated) or *Dono Dedit* (given as a gift). Brouwer, 31, points out, contra Cumont's insertion of *Dedit Dicavit*, that *Dono Dedit* was the more common usage. I am following Brouwer, 17.
[454] Epigraphic Database Rome: http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/res_complex_comune.php?Bibliografia[]=HD024015 (Last accessed 30 December 2021).
[455] Takács 2008, 105.
[456] Estienna, 2010, 259. These terms, Estienna points out, were in contrast to *statua* or *imago*, both of which denoted an image of a human as opposed to a god or goddess.

distinction between this word and *signum* is not always clear. *Simulacrum* is of later use and often clearly denoted a cult statue while *signum* is the more ancient and more commonly used word in both literary and epigraphic evidence for "the visible sign, which allows perception of the invisible, especially the divine."[457] Based on this distinction and given the date of this inscription, it seems plausible that the author of the dedication could have used *signum* to indicate a statue placed inside a shrine that was not intended as mere ornament. Aside from the fact, therefore, that it was discovered in a residential area there seems no reason to conclude, as Takács has, that this was a private shrine. We may not be able to tell the size of this *aedes* from the inscription alone, but a public place of worship seems more likely than a domestic one since the dedication of the space necessitated an audience to witness Sulpicia's gift to the goddess. This fits with what we know about Roman urban planning, which rejected placing temples (*aedes*) only along major thoroughfares or in politico-religious areas.

We may not be able to securely identify either Publicia or Sulpicia or the placement of the structures they funded, but their sense of ownership is in each case, clear. What is also clear is that women were building in Rome prior to the advent of the imperial period during which women's public benefactions became more public and contested.

## Imperial-Period Projects

Building in the city became the sole prerogative of the imperial house early on in Augustus' principate. This is often discussed as though the participation of early imperial women like Livia, the wife of Augustus, was novel when, in fact, evidence for women's participation as builders, as the cases of Publicia and Sulpicia suggest, there was little to no change in the perceived acceptability of a woman building in Rome between the end of the Republic and the beginning of the imperial era. We must remember, too, that in the East there already existed a long tradition of benefaction on the part of royal women who established early

[457] Estienna 2010, 259.

on their ability to act as benefactors to cities. In most cases, it is inscriptional evidence that reports their work as *euergetes*, while the literary record says very little.[458] For example, the benefactions of Seleucid queen, Laodike III (c. 240-190 BCE), wife of Antiochos III, are attested by inscriptions found in the cities of Iasos, Teos, and Sardis in Asia Minor.[459] Through her interaction with these cities, Laodike took care to establish lines of communication and goodwill with places that had suffered capture by her husband's armies and promised to use her influence with her husband to their gain. Even before the Hellenistic period, though, royal women like Euridice (405-c. 365 BCE), mother of Philip II of Macedon, were involved in protecting their interests (and that of their children) in part through public benefaction. Euridice paid for the construction of a sanctuary to Eucleia (goddess of glory associated with brides) at Aigia (modern Vergina), and acted as patron to women through this cult.[460] Scholars Gillian Ramsey, Anne Beilman, and Elizabeth Carney have all argued, in fact, that Greek culture and tradition accommodated, even approved, patronage of cities by female members of Hellenistic royal houses and, following them, elite female citizens partly because the city was conceived of as an extended household (*oikos*), and because Hellenistic royalty was understood as balanced via a joint rulership, often (but not always) comprised of siblings.[461] This earlier evidence is not usually regarded, however, and only very rarely has female-funded building been examined in any comprehensive way.[462] Indeed, it is only more recently that scholars like Woodhull,

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[458] Carney 2012, 306.
[459] Ramsey 2013, 20-37. Inscriptions from cities in Asia Minor—Iasos, Teos, and Sardis, commemorate Laodike's public interventions during the second century BCE, which involved gifts to these cities aimed at playing benefactor to specific female portions of the population such as girls whose families could not afford dowries (as at Iasos). An interesting Roman comparison may be found in Dio 58.2.3, where he reports that Livia provided dowries to senatorial families who could not afford to marry off their daughters.
[460] Carney 2012, 309. Euridice was the mother of Philip II of Macedon, who was himself father of Alexander the Great.
[461] Ramsey 2013, 28-32; Bielman 2012, 247; Carney 2012, 304.
[462] The major works on female-funded structures in the Roman empire remain Van Bremen 1996 (for the Eastern empire) and Hemelrijk 2015 (for the Western empire).

Hemelrijk, and Cooley have paid attention to the entire body of epigraphic evidence for women's building activity in Rome and not simply considered it on a case-by-case basis.[463]

That said, structures built by female members of the imperial house are usually treated cursorily in the literary sources, and the proper attribution of some structures is controversial because of confusion and/or obfuscation on the part of ancient authors. Unsurprisingly, disagreements as to attribution engage with notions—both ancient and modern—of what was "appropriate" for women and highlight the degree to which female participation in the public sphere was a source of tension or contention in the ancient world. Since the 1990s scholars writing about women who commissioned public buildings have usually depicted these commissions as representing "women's concerns" like fertility and/or motherhood. Marion Woodhull's 1999 PhD dissertation provides an excellent example of this type of argument. Woodhull argues that Livia's building projects were connected to Augustus' moral reforms to return popular attention to traditional female preoccupations. Woodhull also points out that Livia figuratively created her own *res gestae* by building and took up the traditional mater-familial role on a city-wide scale. The focus on "women's concerns" should, as this section argues, be seen as subordinate to the construction of a public persona for the *princeps femina* as consort to her husband, the emperor, who wished his household to stand at the forefront of Roman civic culture and the pinnacle of its social hierarchy.

## The Temple of Fortuna Muliebris

In January of 1831 two fragments of a monumental marble architrave were discovered along with other, smaller, portions of a structure in the area of the Via Latina at a distance from Rome corresponding to ancient reports of the location of this temple. The finds were published that same year, and the find spot noted as "…presso il condotto delle acque Claudia e Aniene

[463] Still, Woodhull's book based on her 1999 dissertation has yet to be released, and Hemelrijk 2015 did not treat the imperial builds at Rome at all. Cooley's 2013 article foreshadowed Hemelrijk's more comprehensive work, while including structures paid for by imperial women.

nuovo, ove passa la Marrana e vicino al casale detto di Roma vecchia, a sinistra della via di Albana." (Near the conduit of the Aqua Claudia and Anio Nuovo, where it passes the Marrana and in the area of Casale Roma Vecchia, to the left of Via di Albana). The editors mistakenly attribute the inscription to Caligula's wife, Livia Orestilla (Suet. *Caligula*, 25.1; cf. Dio, 59.8.7) instead of Livia, wife of Augustus. Although the inscription on the inscribed fragments does not explicitly declare itself as belonging to the Temple of Fortuna Muliebris,[464] the connection established between the architrave and the temple was suggested by the find spot, which corresponds roughly to the "fourth milestone" designation—a correlation accepted and highlighted by Henzen, the editor of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*.[465]

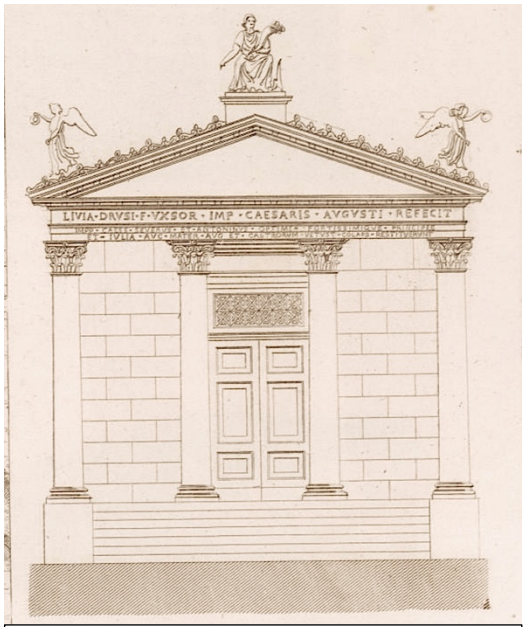


Fig. 17—Canina's 1856 drawing of the Temple of Fortuna Muliebris (Image: public domain)

It was noted archaeologist Luigi Canina who, upon examining the discoveries, connected them to the legendary temple. Based on his examination of the inscribed fragments (and some other architectonic fragments discovered in 1831 but now lost), Canina argued that the fragment beginning with Livia's name constituted the right corner of the architrave of a tetrastyle temple of modest proportions. Using marks noticeable on the underside of the stone, Canina calculated the intercolumniation and from there the whole front of the building.[466] Unfortunately, while he published reconstruction drawings of the temple and of the temple precinct, he did not supply exact

[464] The two fragments represent portions of a monumental architrave. Luigi Canina, writing in 1854, reports seeing three fragments in the Tabularium of the Capitoline Museums. See Lusnia, 2014, 213.
[465] *CIL* VI.883. *Bull. Ist. Arch.*, 1831, 28. See the discussion offered by Lusnia, 2014, 212-213. For a map of the location and discussion of the chronology of this discovery, see Quilici Gigli 1981, 550.
[466] Canina 1854, 61.

measurements.[467] As imagined by Canina, the temple of Fortuna Muliebris stood on a paved platform surrounded by two concentric rectangular walls. That Canina depicts the temple with Corinthian columns is not far-fetched, because by the time Livia was in a position to restore select structures in Rome the Corinthian order had replaced older styles as the dominant type used in temple construction.[468] While admitting that dating the temple is almost impossible, de Caprariis and Petracco, who published a 2016 article on architectural fragments thought to belong to this temple that they found in the Capitoline storerooms, suggest the likely date of Livia's intervention to between 35 and 20 BCE. [469]

Carved in elegant letters whose height varies by line, the inscription reads:

*LIVIA* [DR]*USI F VXS*[OR CAESARIS AUGUSTI. . . . . .]
*IMPP C*[AES] *S SEVERVS ET ANTO*[NINUS AVGG ET GETA NOBILISSIMUS CAESAR]
*ET* [IVLIA] *AVG MATER AV*[GG. . . . . RESTITVERVNT]

Livia, daughter of Drusus, wife of Caesar Augustus (restored this)
The emperors Caesar Septimius Severus and Antoninus Augustus and most noble Caesar, Geta, | and Julia Augusta, mother of the Augusti…restored this[470]

The Temple of the Fortune of Women was originally built in the fifth century BCE at public expense following the withdrawal of seditious general, Coriolanus, who was persuaded by the entreaties of Volumnia, his mother, and Vergilia, his wife, to give up his plan of attacking Rome with his army of Volscians.[471] Given the theme of this and Livia's other known building projects in the city—the temple of Bona Dea Subsaxana, the Porticus of Livia and shrine to Concordia—it only makes sense to connect her building projects ideologically with those of her

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[467] Canina 1856, Tav. LXXVI.
[468] Stamper 2005, 68f.
[469] But see de Caprariis and Petacco 2016, 12-14, where they discuss their discovery in the storerooms of the Capitoline collection fragments matching those drawn by Canina. Among these, two portions of a cornice with decorative palmettes and swirls. At Roma Vecchia farmhouse, apparently another storeroom for ancient fragments, they note a slab inscribed with [DR]VSI F V[xor…], which they propose may have originated from the temple or temple area.
[470] *CIL* VI. 883. Letter heights: *Bull. Ist. Arch.,* 1831, 28; in the first line the letters are 10 inches high, in the second, 6 inches, and in the last line, 3 inches. Translation is the author's.
[471] For the entire episode, Plut., *Coriolanus,* 33-37; for the temple funded with public money, *Coriolanus* 37; Livy, 2.40.12; Dion. Hal., 8.56.2; Val. Max., 1.8.4; 5.2.

husband. Her patronage of cults associated with Rome's *matronae,* or elite matrons arguably sought a restoration of idealized tradition just as much as Augustus' building in the city. Another reality to consider is how Livia's choice of building projects was related to, and articulated, her standing as the highest-ranking matron in Rome—the wife of the Princeps.

Erected in direct response to the saving action of the women at the place where the intervention took place, the suburban temple of Fortuna Muliebris stood at the fourth milestone from the city on the Via Latina.[472] Presumably, this temple honoured the socially acceptable but usually private female role of advice-giver, as it was Volumnia's entreaties that swayed her son from war. According to the story as presented by Plutarch, the senate, in thanksgiving, offered the matrons whatever they desired.[473] The matrons asked that they be allowed to erect a temple using money collected from among their numbers. This would, however, have set the cult outside of the sanctioned state cult, so instead the Senate erected the requested temple and cult statue using public funds—and the matrons contributed to the project from their own monies as well.[474] The women, in company with the appropriate magistrates, Plutarch says, dedicated the temple in 487 BCE and paid for a second statue, which reportedly spoke on the day of its dedication saying, "Dear to the gods, O women, is your pious gift of me."[475] The goddess, it seems, approved the matrons' willingness to credit her with Rome's safety.

The story of this temple's founding in fact suggests a couple of elements important to our understanding of just how acceptable it was for a woman to commission a structure at Rome—at least during the lifetimes of the authors who reported the event. First, there is the question of

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[472] It is for this reason that Lusnia 2104, 212-214, excludes it from her study of Severan building in Rome, but since the construction of this temple was undertaken in response to the action of Rome's elite matrons and later restored by Rome's first empress it only makes sense to consider it.
[473] Plut., *Coriolanus* 37.
[474] This seems entirely in keeping with usual practice, as it was the Senate's job to control public religious expression at Rome. If the women had been allowed to pay for the temple themselves, it would have been private, not public. Using public funds to construct the temple and dedicate it in the presence of magistrates and the women meant that the cult of Fortuna Muliebris became a public cult at Rome, hence its priestess' ability to offer sacrifice on behalf of the Roman people.
[475] Plut., *Coriolanus* 37.

agency—the ability to participate in society in a meaningful way. The stories as presented by our ancient sources depict female influence and agency as having the potential to intercede in a positive way in events at Rome. The details of accounts by Livy, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch differ in some details but all ascribe the founding of the temple of Fortuna Muliebris to female intervention that saved the state.[476] In Plutarch's account, it took the leadership of one woman to rally the matrons to influence Volumnia and Vergilia toward trying to mollify Coriolanus' hostility. This woman, presumably a fiction, is named Valeria by Plutarch and is described as divinely inspired, which was undoubtedly an acceptable explanation for female action. When Valeria had successfully convinced the women that their intercession was necessary and the women approached the senate to ask for permission to leave the city and visit Coriolanus in his camp, the senate took this seriously. Following her lead, the combined impetus of the women working within their own social grouping changed the course of Roman history much in the same way that the intercession of the Sabine women saved Rome generations earlier.[477] The matrons fulfilled their role and, in response, their actions in saving the state were officially recognized and honoured in a way that made sense to everyone—by building a temple. Indeed, although in Plutarch's account the women were required to go through the accepted channels to have their temple officially sanctioned, the fact that their proposal was taken seriously because it could be explained as divine intervention implies in the first place that women were perceived as capable of being conduits for divine action and could act on behalf of the state with the active support of the gods. It is surely important as well that women paying for the construction of a temple is not reported as an outrage or offense. Clearly, the idea of women commissioning a temple was neither unheard of nor offensive to the sensibilities of Romans living when these accounts were written.

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[476] Livy 2.40.12; Dion. Hal. 8.39-57; Val. Max. 1.8.4, 5.2.
[477] Livy 1.9-10.

Clearly, women in Roman society were deemed capable of rendering socially accepted service to Rome, in this instance through their ability to intercede with their male relatives. This was the acknowledged female role—especially of the *materfamilias*.[478] It is this capacity for positive influence and participation that Livia may well have been honouring and, in a sense, appropriating to herself, when she restored the temple.[479] Livia's role in Roman society was, after all, loftier and more prominent than that of other elite matrons. As consort to the emperor, Livia's position in society was necessarily enlarged—the *materfamilias* to all of Rome, in a sense.[480] Thinking again of Hellenistic precedents, Livia's position in the social and political spheres at Rome echoes eastern ideas of the role of the royal consort in the vein of Laodike III and those like her who ruled alongside their husbands, though with Roman emendations to the idea.[481] It makes sense that she should choose to restore a structure that honoured this female capacity for influence, especially when that structure was built as the result of female agency in the public sphere. Given this, we might read Livia's funding of this temple's restoration as her public acknowledgment of the importance of her own role alongside that of her husband.

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[478] This is why Coriolanus' mother leads the embassy to her son's camp and not his wife. Volumnia was the elder matron and the *materfamilias* of his household.

[479] There were presumably earlier interventions to keep the structure viable over the more than four centuries between its construction in 488 BCE and Livia's restoration, but no record of these earlier works has survived. Indeed, we only know about Livia's and that of the Severans thanks to this marble architrave and its inscription.

[480] Woodhull 1999, 78f.

[481] I hope it is not going too far to point out that Augustus' decision to emphasize the status and roles of his wife and sister—in part through unprecedented honours granted them in 35 BCE (Dio 49.38.1)—is evocative of the dynamic apparent in Hellenistic royal couples where the queen's dual roles of sister and consort were emphasized. On this see Ramsey 2013, 28-30. Even if Augustus did not borrow his idea of monarchy from the Greeks, his emphasis on a close-knit imperial family guiding the state as though a household certainly recalls the basic configuration of Hellenistic royalty, with a Roman twist.

Indeed, the monumental inscription on the entablature of the temple of Fortuna Muliebris was crafted to highlight this reality.

## *The Inscription*

Reconstructing the inscription is made difficult, however, by the fact that these fragments clearly comprise only part of the whole. Markings and metal fittings on the back of the fragment bearing Livia's name indicate its original position on the building and prove


Fig. 18—Inscribed architrave discovered in 1831, now in the Antiquarium del Celio.
(Source: *Epigraphic Database Roma* CC BY:SA 4.0)

unequivocally, according to Quilici Gigli, that it belonged to the architrave and that this fragment came first. A gap is evident between the two fragments, though the upper line on the second fragment is clearly a portion of Livia's filiation: *Livia Drusi F.* The line ends with *Uxs*[or], which must have been followed by her husband's name in the genitive, as this formulation was used regularly during the late Republic and early Principate.[482] This represents roughly a third of the whole, Quilici Gigli estimates, a fact that renders Canina's guess that the

[482] Martina 2015, 67-68 points out that the female members of Augustus' family were commonly referenced in inscriptions using a formula that cited the marriage link using the husband's *cognomen* in the genitive. See also Cantarella 1996, 50-51, outlines the development of female names, from early Rome through the imperial period. The formula used by Livia (her name plus patronymic and gamonymic) was relatively common during the late republican and early imperial periods.

temple was tetrastyle not unlikely.[483] It only makes sense that the gap after the name clearly implied by *Uxsor* in all likelihood belonged to *Restituit*, since Livia's contribution was to rebuild the fourth century BCE structure. If the correlation of this architrave with the Temple of Fortuna Muliebris described by our ancient sources is correct (and the identification has generally been accepted), the date of Livia's restoration should probably be placed during the late first century BCE based on stylistic considerations and on the formula used.[484]

The second and third lines of the inscription clearly denote a subsequent restoration during the Severan building programme of the third century CE. This latter inscription can be viewed in light of a broad program of building and restoration in Rome undertaken by Septimius Severus (r. 193–211 CE) and his family to consolidate his rule and align the new (and foreign) imperial family with Rome's illustrious past.[485] Unlike the family effort the Severan inscription proclaims, however, Livia's appears to have been a solo project, ordered and funded by Livia herself. So, beside her own personal resume, marked by the names of her father and husband, what could Livia have been signalling to her fellow citizens in choosing this structure for restoration?

The inscription is all that survives, that element of the temple that declared to the passerby and to those who visited the temple throughout the year as well as during annual festivals that this place had received imperial attention through restoration. Commenting on this inscription, Anthony Barrett, Nicholas Purcell and Mary T. Boatwright have each connected Livia's use of her filiation, its placement before the name of her husband with her supposed interest in emphasizing her personal agency and independence.[486] This is a good point, of

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[483] Quilici Gigli 1981, 556.
[484] De Caprariis and Petacco 2016, 15, argue that the *terminus post quem* that corresponds to the award of *sacrosanctitas*, freedom from *tutela*, and the honour of public statues to Livia and Octavia in 35 BCE. It is worth noting that if De Caprariis and Petacco are correct, then the restoration as provided in the *CIL* is incorrect, as Octavian did not receive the title *Augustus* until 27.
[485] For more on Severan building see, for example, Lusnia 2014; Gorrie 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2007; Daguet-Gagey 2004.
[486] Barrett 2002, 205; Purcell 1986, 88; Boatwright 1991, 518.

course, but what is noteworthy is the fact that Livia used the same formula employed in inscriptions in which a man was the builder and, more precisely, used the formula commonly applied to a married woman.[487] By publicly proclaiming the citizenship and free status granted through her father as well as her status as an elite matron achieved through marriage, Livia and other women using this formula were purposely claiming their right to their elevated social standing, and proclaiming that status more precisely than would have been the case with the father's name alone.[488]

For Livia, as for the other women discussed in this section, following established usage made sense in the context of a society in which male activity was considered normative. Since most inscriptions were executed on behalf of male benefactors, a woman making her own building dedication would naturally want to employ the same formulation on her inscription because she was acting as a public benefactor in the same way as a male public benefactor. After all, just as for men, a woman's filiation declared descent from a citizen father and was a marker of status. Filiation also flagged an individual's place in the family hierarchy and advertised one's standing in society. This was especially true in Livia's case, as she was a member of one of Rome's most distinguished families, the *Claudii*. Her father was Marcus Drusus Livius Claudianus (born Appius Claudius Pulcher but adopted by Marcus Drusus Livius, the Tribune of the Plebs whose murder in 91 BCE was a precursor to the Social Wars of the late Republic), a man distinguished more by his lineage than his political career but nevertheless intimately tied to Rome's leading families.[489] By using this marker of her status in her building inscription, Livia was advertising not only her relationship to a great man but membership in a distinguished

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[487] See above, note 448.
[488] A woman's social standing came to her first from her father and, once married, from her husband. See Ulpian, *Digest* 1.9.8.
[489] Livia's father is known to have reached the office of Praetor, but his career is otherwise not known. *PIR* 294. Given that the first recorded consul from among the *Claudii* was Appius Claudius Sabinus Regillensis (cos. 495 BCE), it is possible that Livia was aware that she would have had female relations among the group of women supposedly involved in petitioning Coriolanus' female relations. A Sabine connection is also not to be ruled out.

family line whose history stretched back all the way to the year in which Coriolanus supposedly tried to attack his homeland. Building inscriptions were public documents and making the public aware of one's social placement was necessary for women no less than for men. That said, it is worth noting that while filiation is ubiquitous on building dedications, not every female benefactor included her husband's name in the formula. This formula is particularly interesting because out of all the inscriptions from Italy in our database, in only three others does the female dedicator put both her filiation and *uxor* plus her husband's name in the genitive.[490] This, it is clear, was the female dedicator's personal social resume—she had no military or civic offices to advertise, but she could advertise her father and husband's names.[491] Indeed, when one examines many dedicatory inscriptions it becomes clear that for some the declaration of citizenship is the most that they could assert while others had important family names, priesthoods, and/or social connections to declare. It is possible that a husband's name may have been included only when his standing in the community was especially noteworthy, but it may also be that married women funded public structures less often than widowed or single women or simply that a woman might wish to mark a project as entirely her own by leaving her husband's name from the inscription. Whether the inclusion of a husband's name in the formula denoted his public approval of it cannot be discerned from an inscription. One possibility is that during the period in question—the late first century BCE and early first century CE—married

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[490] Beside Publicia and Livia, the others are (1) *Petronia C(ai) f(ilia) Galeoni(s Uxor)*, from Assisi, who completed the amphitheatre begun by her brother and paid for its decoration. *CIL* 11.5406 = *ERAssisi* 49 = *EAOR* 2.61 = *CIL* 11.8023 = *AE* 1988 537a = *AE* 1997 490 = *CIL* 11.5432 = *ERAssisi* 50 = *EAOR* 2.62. The fragmentary nature of this inscription makes the inclusion of *uxor* a matter of supposition. At issue is whether *Galeonis* was her husband's first name or her father's cognomen. See G.L. Gregori, 1989, pp. 79-80, nr. 62 (4) for discussion; and (2) Octavia at Ostia who paid for the benches, the plastering of the portico, and the roof of the kitchen at the temple of Bona Dea: *Octavia M.f. Gamalae (uxor) portic(um) poliend(am) et sedeilia faciun(da) et culina(m) tegend(am) D(eae) B(onae) curavit*. *CIL* 14.25 = *AE* 2004, +361 = *AE* 1973, 127 = Brouwer 1989, no. 63.

[491] The first known dedicatory inscription honouring a woman is that to Cornelia, the first woman to receive a public statue. This statue does not survive, but its base was recovered from the ruins of the Porticus Octaviae. The dedication reads, *Cornelia Africani F(ilia)/Gracchorum*. This is so compact as to be almost cursory, though it tells us quite a bit about Roman priorities and identity politics.

women who funded substantial public structures included their husbands in the dedication because attention to traditional social mores demanded it. But there may be even more to it than that, for on the other hand Cicero claims that *uxor* was the term used for a woman who, although married, was not subject to her husband's *manus*.[492] It is possible, then, that Livia was also calling attention to her standing as a woman free from *manus* and *sui iuris*—in possession of her own estate and the power to determine its use. Regardless, the rituals and social functions that accompanied a building dedication provided a high-profile occasion during which the building benefactor was the centre of attention. In this case, we can imagine Livia and her husband presiding at a public banquet in honor of the newly restored temple. With both their names on the monumental frieze, Livia and Augustus would have benefitted from the prominence and status this conferred on them both, something that is possibly even more momentous if we accept that this project was undertaken near the beginning of Octavian's career.

Livia's use of this formula on her building inscription is understandable if we think in terms of her as having both a family pedigree and a marriage to a man whose status was such that it demanded inclusion.[493] Certainly, her marriage to Augustus defined her status and made her exceptional. The remarkable act, however, was the building that advertised her personal wealth and freedom to act independently. The wording of the inscription marked Livia as unique within Roman society more than it declared her independence; the building did that. Her participation in her husband's restoration of the city seems remarkable when set within the larger context of women's exclusion from most forms of participation in public life, but less so when viewed as the continuation of a history of building in the city by both men and women,

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[492] Cicero, *Top.* 3.14. "Genus enim est uxor; eius duae formae: una matrum-familias, eae sunt, quae in manum convenerunt; altera earum, quae tantum modo uxores habentur." ("For "uxor" is a genus of which there are two forms: one is "matres-familias," those who have come under *manus*; the other those who are held only as "uxores" (wives)."

[493] In fact, Livia's illustrious family contrasts with her husband's decidedly equestrian and plebeian origins. His social and political prominence, however, were impossible to ignore.

especially if we understand that this was an arena in which women could—and did—operate on a more-or-less level ground with men.

## *Spatial Considerations*

Livia's restoration of the temple of Fortuna Muliebris would have brought the ancient temple to mid-first-century BCE tastes while likely enhancing its structural integrity. It may also have re-ignited the ritual observances attached to the temple. We might imagine that, like her husband, Livia's restoration of ancient temples was likely accompanied by a restoration of dormant practices as well. The temple of Fortuna Muliebris may have acted as a locus of religious activity for Rome's elite matrons that helped them express and consolidate their identity as a group within Rome's social and political hierarchies. Dionysius tells us that the senate originally allowed the women to select the priestess of the cult from among their own members and that they chose Valeria, the same woman who had instigated their saving action.[494] He also tells us that her first act as priestess was to sacrifice on the December 1 anniversary of the event and offer prayers for the whole Roman people. We do not know whether the sanctuary of Fortuna Muliebris remained an active one in the centuries between its founding in 488 and restoration by Livia sometime in the late first-century BCE, but if it did it is likely that on the anniversary date especially the matrons as a group processed to the shrine, re-enacting the original procession of women from the centre through the city gate and out to the temple that

[494] Dion. Hal., 55.4.

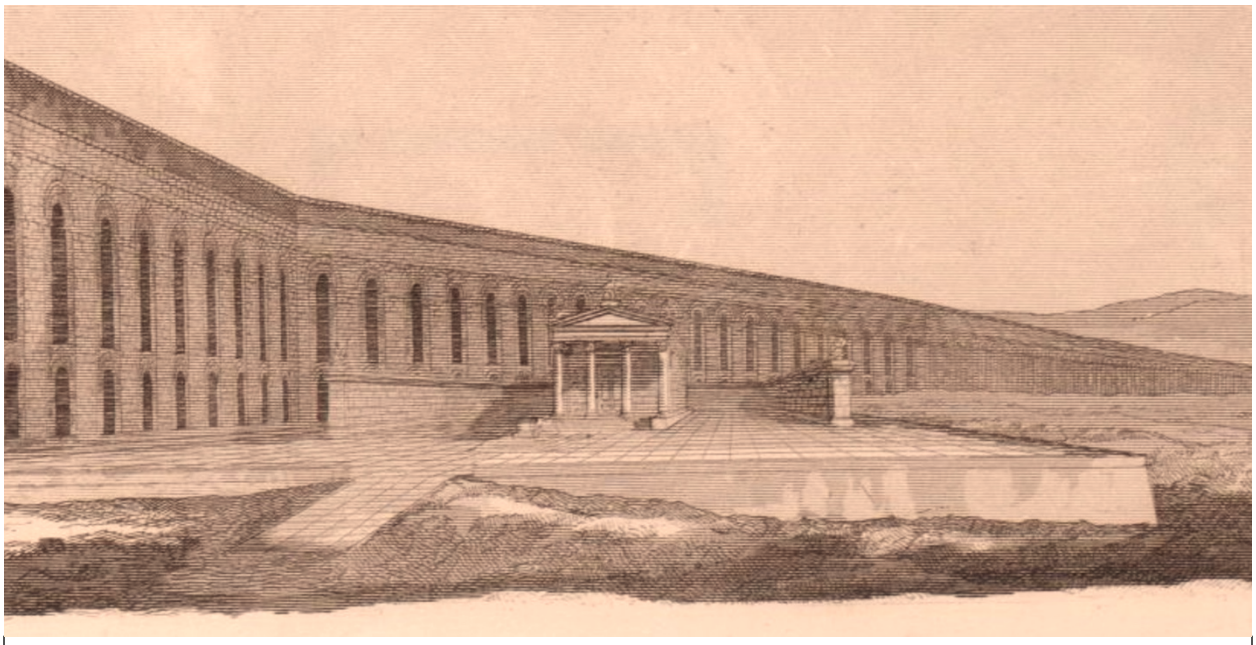

Fig. 19—Canina's drawing of the Temple and its precinct, with the Claudian aqueduct in the background. (Image: public domain)

marked the spot where female intervention had saved the state from a seditious general.[495] Wearing their best clothes, the women would have processed through the city to the gate to carts (*pilenta*) waiting, as the sources describe, to take them to the distant temple precinct. Such a procession would have been an occasion for the women to honour the action of their status as descendants (as a class) of worthy predecessors while showcasing their social standing, wealth, and finery. Processions were ritualized display, and moving through the city and then out of it to the fourth milestone would have brought the women honour and prestige as they took part in a spectacle embedded in Romans' shared collective memory.[496] Livia was likely part of these processions just as she was on the occasion of the dedication of the Ara Pacis.[497] Given the arrangement of women as described in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' narrative of the original

[495] Östenberg 2015, 13-22, for more on movement through the city and its performative nature during the Republic, especially the importance of the house, Capitol, Forum, and city gate as important topographical points that recur in various types of processions, and Brännstedt 2015, 37-46, on the connection between Livia's increasing political importance and her movements in the city.
[496] Bartman 1999, 92-93.
[497] On her birthday, 30 January, in 9 BCE. She is depicted on the exterior panels of the Ara Pacis along with her husband and other members of the imperial family.

event, it seems likely that if the women did process to the temple, they would have respected the order established by traditional modes of distinction. In Dionysius' account the women, leading their children, after retrieving Veturia and Volumnia and the sons of Coriolanus from their home, moved through the city to its gate where the consuls had readied mules and carts (*pilenta*) and "a great many other conveyances."[498] It is interesting to note a detail provided here—that when Coriolanus' mother first addressed her son in the Volscian camp she "…placed the wife of Marcius with his children and the most prominent of the Roman matrons near her…" (Καὶ ἡ Οὐετουρία παραστησαμένη τήν τε γυναῖκα τοῦ Μαρκίου καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ τὰς ἐπιφανεστάτας τῶν ἐν Ῥώμῃ γυναικῶν πρῶτον…)[499] Volumnia was not the "most prominent of the Roman matrons," but Veturia honours her apparently secondary role as Marcius' wife by placing her at the head of the deputation next to herself. The implication is that this woman's presence will impress, and likely help persuade her son. Indeed, rank is emphasized throughout Dionysius' account, and he states in several places that it was rank and relationship that possessed the power to impress those receiving entreaties (in this case first Veturia and then Coriolanus himself).[500] Indeed, besides the attention to rank that marks each of the various accounts provided by our ancient sources, the elite matrons are also described as observing protocols and proceeding with Valeria's suggestion using a vocabulary that recalls senate proceedings. This attention to the official protocols and officially sanctioned action on behalf of the state is

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[498] Dion. Hal., 8.44.
[499] Dion. Hal., 8.46.1.
[500] It is clear that a hierarchy of relationships was observed. In Dion. Hal., 8.40, it is the appearance of women of rank along with Coriolanus' children that will sway him, "…and us suppliant women—ourselves too of noble birth—carrying in our arms these infants…"; 8.43, it is the female relations of Veturia who urge her to intercede with her son, "…and all the rest of the women who were connected by friendship or kindred with either of them remained there, beseeching her and embracing her knees…"; 8.44, leaving Rome in the carriages prepared by the consuls, "The women were attended by the senators and many other citizens, who by their vows, commendations and entreaties lent distinction to their mission." In 44, Coriolanus is impressed by the women's disregard for their rank and its privileges, "…he was at first astonished at the assurance of the women in resolving to come with their children into an enemy's camp without a guard of men, neither showing regard any longer for the modesty becoming to free-born and virtuous women, which forbids them to be seen by men who are strangers…"

undoubtedly why the priestess of Fortuna Muliebris could sacrifice on behalf of all Rome's citizens. This was not "just" a women's-only cult, but one established using official channels (a *senatus consultum* and meeting of the assembly in the Forum) on behalf of all Romans. By funding the restoration of the temple, Livia was connecting her public role with that of the women who originally accomplished the salvation of the state and advertising her political import as the woman with the most influence in the household of the leading man. Her benefaction also lent an air of legitimacy and respect for tradition to the unusual power differential playing out in Rome at the time.

## The Temple of Bona Dea Subsaxana

One structure that we can with confidence attribute to Livia is the temple to Bona Dea Subsaxana on the Aventine. Of this place Ovid says only that there was a *moles* (translated in the Loeb as "knoll") that was called *saxum* or Rock, and that it was here that the temple to the Good Goddess, Bona Dea, was built, *Sub Saxo* or below the *saxum*, a stone outcropping on the southeastern slope of the Aventine Hill.[501] Ovid tells us that the Senate founded this temple, and that it was dedicated by an heiress with the family name *Clausi*.[502] There are no surviving remains of this temple, but Ovid and Propertius record that Livia funded its repair around the same time that her husband was restoring other temples in the city.[503] Even without archaeological remains to examine, the implications of Livia's restoration of the Aventine temple of Bona Dea should not be underestimated. Ovid claims that Livia was imitating her husband, and, indeed, we must place her patronage of these temples within the context of the era's moral reforms, but not necessarily the way that Ovid appears to mean it, as though Livia's actions were an imitation of her husband's without import of their own. Undoubtedly, the imperial couple's restoration of temples was meant to stand as an outward manifestation of their *pietas* and

[501] Ovid, *Fasti*, 5.149.
[502] Ovid, *Fasti*, 5.153-155.
[503] Ovid, *Fasti*, 5.147-158; Prop., 4.9.

shared intent to restore Roman traditional religion. What is being reflected here is the way in which Romans understood their civic community and its constituents. There was a male sphere and a female sphere that worked together to preserve and, in this case, restore, the state. In this reading, Augustus' restoration of temples highlighted his *pietas* and associated him with certain gods and their ability to protect and restore the state, and Livia's work as building patron associated her with cults significant for their cultural weightiness in terms of the positive participation of Rome's matrons as active and equal contributors in the preservation of the city. With the temple of Bona Dea Subsaxana, a connection between the cult at Rome, Rome's matrons, and the city's leading woman is even more explicit than in the case of Fortuna Muliebris.

There were two annual celebrations of Bona Dea's cult in Rome. The first of May saw the annual celebration commemorating Claudia Quinta's dedication of the temple at the Aventine, and in December the rites of Bona Dea were celebrated at night, hosted at the home of the leading magistrate (consul or praetor) by that magistrate's wife.[504] This December ritual was observed only by elite *matronae* in good moral standing who were, perhaps, *univirae* as well.[505] In each case, the rituals in question honoured the goddess in her role as protector and healer of the state, and while the rites involved in the May rituals are not well-understood, we know that from the response prompted by the Clodius affair that the December rites involved the removal of everyone and everything male from the hostess' home and the laying out of Bona Dea's cult statue on a couch ready to participate in the festivities and that these included banqueting,

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[504] May celebrations of Bona Dea: Ovid, *Fasti*, 5.147-158, Macrobius, *Sat*., 1.12.21; the December rituals are famous for the notorious scandal caused by populist statesman, Publius Clodius Pulcher's infiltration of the rituals. Clodius dressed as a flute-girl to seduce the hostess, Caesar's wife Pompeia. The story is told by Plutarch, *Caesar,* 9-10; both Dio 37.45, and Suetonius, *Caesar*, 6.2 and 74.2 emphasize Caesar's decision to divorce his wife due to the suspicion cast on her because of the scandal. See also Cicero's invective against Clodius in *De Har. Resp.,* 44

[505] Flory 1984, 318, n. 29, suggests that only matrons who had been married only once (*univirae*) could celebrate the December ritual though Welch 2004, 69, n. 29, counters that if this were so then Livia would not have qualified because Augustus was her second husband. The fact is, however, that exceptions to established custom and even law were in many cases made for members of the imperial family.

music, and blood sacrifice officiated by the Vestal Virgins in which the priestess sacrificed a pregnant sow *pro populo* and that the stomach was offered to the goddess.[506] It is important that, as with the cult of Fortuna Muliebris, prayers during this rite were made on behalf of the people of Rome for the wellbeing of the whole state because this makes clear that female ritual action was conceived of as integral to the religious well-being of the whole community, and not just the women.[507]

Interpretations of the weight given Livia's action have varied. As has been mentioned, Ovid's assertion that Livia restored the temple of Bona Dea "…that she might imitate her husband and follow him in everything" reveals his elite male perspective concerning her motivations and honours Augustus rather more than Livia. Modern scholars are much more ready to attribute agency to Livia herself. According to Tara Welch, Livia's intention was to advertise her adherence to prevailing moral requirements by making clear her adherence to traditional notions of *pudicitia*, the ultimate litmus test of a matron's worthiness.[508] This may indeed have been on Livia's mind because, in traditional Roman terms, proof of her merit would have been absolutely necessary if Augustus' household were to be viewed as worthy of the highest respect. Gossip concerning the paternity of Livia's second son and the circumstances of their wedding supposedly swirled, however, and the real point is perhaps that Augustus possessed the power and *auctoritas* to make the question of her personal *pudicitia* academic. The real point is that her *pudicitia* needed to be performative, perhaps in answer to the gossip. More importantly, however, Welch also emphasizes that by restoring their temple Livia also positioned herself as "sponsor" of Rome's *matronae*. This is clearly true, as by putting her

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[506] Plutarch, *Caesar* 9-10.
[507] Our understanding of Roman religion usually precludes the idea that women could pray in any official way for the state, which implies that during that ritual they stood for the state, something women were thought incapable of by virtue of their gender. This and other rituals imply that this perception is mistaken. For more see Cicero, *de Leg.,* 2.9.21. Scheid 1992, claims that female sacrificial incapacity was the norm, but cf. DiLuzio 2016 for examples of priestesses who sacrificed regularly for the Roman people.
[508] Welch 2004, 71.

substantial economic resources at the disposal of the *matronae* and restoring the temple necessary for one of their few *pro populo* rituals, Livia was embedding herself relative to the rest of the women as someone with the social capital, the *auctoritas,* to render them beholden to her for this gift. It is therefore not necessary to go further, as Attilio Mastrocinque has, and argue that Livia deliberately created a new manifestation of the Bona Dea cult at Rome that was specifically patrician and centred on herself as its high priestess.[509] In support of this Mastrocinque has argued that Livia's restoration of the temple of Bona Dea Subsaxana was intended to connect her with the woman who originally dedicated the temple and who, according to legend, was, like Livia, a member of the *Claudii*. Ovid's account on this point may contain an error, though, as the surviving manuscripts provide two versions of this founding woman's *gens,* both as genitive plurals—*Clausorum* or *Crassorum*. It is on this supposed connection with the *Clausi*—the *Claudii* having been founded by a Clausus—that this interpretation stands, and it is by no means certain. Brouwer, whose study of the Bona Dea cult is considered formative, wrote that evidence for this was unclear at best, and Ambasciano takes pains to debunk it.[510]

What is interesting is that of the cult centres we know Livia chose to restore, each is associated in some significant way with female *action,* specifically with the *matronae* and the rituals they performed as a group that were on behalf of the whole population (*pro populo*), not just to the abstract qualities of idealized womanhood. In keeping with her standing in society, Livia chose to restore temples that were notable, officially sanctioned, antique centres of female ritual action—and by doing so she positioned herself as patron to other women, both patrician and plebeian. Just as importantly, Livia's choices indicate particular attention to *place* as integral to the memory of historic female activity, whether it referred to a particular event in the

[509] Mastrocinque 2011, 171.
[510] Brouwer 1989, 266; Ambasciano 2016, 126-127.

past or a public cult in which the prayers and sacrifices were performed by women. The temples that she paid to restore were, after all, female spaces carved out of a masculine cityscape. For the December ritual celebrating Bona Dea, even the home of a magistrate *cum imperio* was transformed into a female-only space from which the male powerholder was banished and where even images of males were hidden.[511] Livia's chosen restoration hints at a vision of women as not only participating fully in maintaining the ritual balance in the relationship between city and gods, but as "others" capable of claiming space and power within their own sphere. It was important that Livia be understood as the leader of this important group.

Another way of viewing Livia's choices in the temples of Fortuna Muliebris and Bona Dea Subsaxana, therefore, is to acknowledge that she may well have been attaching herself to projects that allowed her to patronise the female portion of the population, and places that aligned her public image with goddesses who represented saving protection (Fortuna Muliebris) and healing (Bona Dea) on a state-wide scale. Her restoration of these places spoke to Livia's *specific* role as *materfamilias* at Rome, which although officially informal in nature and ideologically connected to her as woman and wife of the emperor was in fact more, as expressed in the *pro populo* aspect of these cults and their rituals. We may see, therefore, that in her choice of buildings to patronize, Livia was expressing her own independence and capacity for action, and positioned herself as *femina princeps* alongside her husband, the princeps.

## The Porticus of Livia and Shrine to Concordia

Unfortunately, again, no identifiable remains of this large *quadriporticus* (four-sided portico) survive and archaeological exploration has been necessarily limited by the density of the area in question. Intriguingly, the location of this structure was not even known until the

[511] The implications of this reversal, given the Roman notion that a man's *domus* represented his standing and dignity, deserves further investigation the scope of which is outside that of this study.

discovery of the Severan marble plan, which features several fragments marked with its name.[512] Judging by this map, the portico was situated on the Oppian spur of the Esquiline Hill, built onto a terrace straddling the brow of the Esquiline and connected to the ancient Clivus Suburanus by a wide double stairway.[513] This roadway, the Clivus Suburanus, was a main thoroughfare that split off from another main artery, the Argiletum, which started in Rome's political and religious centre and wound its way north, leaving the Forum from between the Basilica Aemilia and the Curia. As the Clivus Suburanus, the road passed between the two spurs of the Esquiline, the Oppian and Cispian, and on into the vast Subura, where middle- and lower-class Romans made their homes. It continued through this area and on to the Porta Esquilina, the gate in the Servian Walls from which the Via Labicana and the Via Tiburtina exited the city and continued south-east.[514] It was, as Juvenal complained, a street teaming with traffic at all hours of the day and night,[515] and it was from this road that one climbed a wide stair up to the main entrance to the Porticus Liviae.

There are questions, however, as to whether this vast portico was paid for by Livia herself or by her husband. According to Cassius Dio, it was the emperor's project, part of his program of building patronage, that he named for his wife. In book 54, after relating Augustus' inheritance from his former protégé, Vedius Pollio, Cassius Dio tells his readers that Augustus had Pollio's urban villa at Rome torn down and replaced with a vast portico that he named for his wife,

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[512] Carettoni, Colini, Cozza, and Gatti 1960, nos. 10l, 10p, 10q, 10r, and 11a. See also Stanford University's *FUR* project online at: http://formaurbis.stanford.edu. (Last accessed 30 December 2021).
[513] Panella 1987, 612ff.
[514] Richardson 1992, sv. 'Porta Esquilina'. The ancient port of entry is still marked by the so-called Arch of Gallienus, which stands on the Via San Vito under which is the ancient Clivus Suburanus. This arch was originally Augustan but rededicated to the emperor Gallienus in 262 CE by an *eques* named Aurelius Victor (not the author of the same name).
[515] See Juvenal *Sat.* 3 for life in the Subura, including the noise of the streets and crush of human traffic.

Livia.[516] In this, his story echoes that in Suetonius.[517] Yet only these two authors make this claim, while Pliny the Elder, Festus, Strabo, and Ovid all attribute the portico to Livia.[518] Strabo numbered it among the wonders of Rome, noting that Augustus, his friends and family members—including his wife and sister—all contributed to the city "in their zeal for building."[519] Indeed, the poet Ovid, who, like Strabo, lived during Augustus' reign, specifically names Livia as the portico's builder—*Porticus auctoris Livia nomen habet*.[520] Modern scholars, like those before them, are divided on the subject. Platner and Ashby claim that Augustus began the project, but that Livia completed and dedicated it, while Panella in the *LTUR* follows Dio in attributing the portico to Augustus.[521] In his *New Topographical Dictionary*, however, Richardson credits Livia, citing but not discussing Dio and Suetonius.[522] The main point, though, was picked up by Platner and Ashby—Augustus inherited Pollio's luxury home on the Oppian Hill in Rome and made sure that Pollio's wish for a monument was thwarted by tearing down

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[516] P. Vedius Pollio was an equestrian partisan of Augustus' who may have been made responsible for Asia following Actium. See Syme 1961, 28-29. Noted for his avarice and *luxuria*, Pollio is best remembered for his man-eating *muraenae*, as Dio, Seneca, *de Clem.* 1.18 and *de Ira* 3.40.2; Pliny, *NH* 9.77 (where Pollio is described as *amicis divi Augusti*); and Tertullian *de Pallio*, 5.6, each relates. Pollio had made Augustus his principal heir, stipulating in his will that some monument should be built to him (Pollio) in the city. Instead, Augustus destroyed Pollio's luxury villa (now his own property) and the *Porticus Liviae* was built in its stead. Cass. Dio 54.23.5–6. ὁ οὖν Αὔγουστος τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ ἐς ἔδαφος προφάσει τῆς ἐκείνου κατασκευῆς, ὅπως μηδὲν μνημόσυνον ἐν τῇ πόλει ἔχῃ, καταβαλὼν περίστῳον ᾠκοδομήσατο, καὶ οὐ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ τοῦ Πωλίωνος ἀλλὰ τὸ τῆς Λιουίας ἐπέγραψεν. ("Augustus razed Pollio's house to the ground, on the pretext of preparing for the erection of the other structure, but really with the purpose that Pollio should have no monument in the city; and he built a colonnade, inscribing on it the name, not of Pollio, but of Livia.")

[517] Suetonius, *Aug*. 29.

[518] Pliny the Elder, *NH,* Strabo, *Geog.*, 5.3.8, For a more complete assessment of this issue, see Tate (forthcoming), 211-216.

[519] Strabo lists as those whom Augustus let build in the city his friends, sons, wife, and sister. Strabo's reference to "sons" must be due to confusion, as Augustus says in his *Res Gestae* that he built the portico of Gaius and Lucius and put their names on it. *RG* 20.3. Augustus does not take credit for either the Portico of Livia or that of Octavia, however.

[520] Ovid, *Ars Amat*., 1.71-72.

[521] Platner and Ashby 1929, sv. 'Porticus Liviae'; C. Panella, "Porticus Liviae" in *LTUR*, 127-129. See also Flory 1984, 309, n. 1; Richardson 1976, 62, argues that Suetonius wrongly attributed the portico to Augustus. For the possibility that Dio was following Suetonius, see Tate (forthcoming), 213-222.

[522] Richardson 1992, s.v. 'Porticus Liviae'. Opening his description of the portico, Richardson simply says, "a large portico on the Oppius in Regio III adjacent to the Thermae Traiani, which was built by Livia, the wife of Augustus, and dedicated in 7 B.C. as part of the triumph of Tiberius."

his villa; Livia then funded the construction of a new portico that surrounded a sacred area—the shrine to Concordia, which all sources agree she dedicated to her husband. Just how this worked must be teased out from the sources available to us, and we have been blinded by centuries of accepting that Augustus alone is at the heart of this story and privileged Dio, who lived hundreds of years after the fact.

As we have seen, Dio claims, along with Suetonius, that Augustus had Pollio's house demolished, built the portico in its place, and named it for his wife. Since Suetonius' biography predates Dio's *History*, we should begin there, and Suetonius' attribution of the structure to Augustus must be understood in the context of his text and his authorial intent as a biographer. In 28, Suetonius positions Augustus as rebuilder of the state following the lengthy civil war, quoting from an edict purportedly published by Augustus on the topic of the restoration of the state:

> *Ita mihi salvam ac sospitem rem p. sistere in sua sede liceat atque eius rei fructum percipere, quem peto, ut optimi status auctor dicar et moriens ut feram mecum spem, mansura in vestigio suo fundamenta rei p. quae iecero.*
>
> May I be privileged to establish the State in a firm and secure position and reap from that act the fruit that I desire; but only if I may be called the author of the best possible government, and bear with me the hope that when I die the foundations which I have laid for the State will remain unshaken.[523]

Following this, Suetonius uses Augustus' building activity to link the idea of firm political foundations through a revised Augustan constitution to a related topic, the restructuring of the city's built environment, to align it more completely with the conceptualized ideal capital. In *Aug* 29, Suetonius says:

> *Quaedam etiam opera sub nomine alieno, nepotum scilicet et uxoris sororisque fecit, ut porticum basilicamque Gai et Luci, item porticus Liviae et Octaviae theatrumque Marcelli.*

[523] Suet. *Aug*. 28.

> He constructed some works too in the name of others, his grandsons and nephew to wit, his wife and his sister, such as the colonnade and basilica of Gaius and Lucius; also, the colonnades of Livia and Octavia, and the theatre of Marcellus.[524]

Here, Augustus' building in the city is a concrete expression of his political and personal aspirations. By building, the *princeps* demonstrates his *pietas* to the gods and establishes himself as patron of the city and its people, weaving himself into the fabric of the city as thoroughly as he wove himself into its political structures through his various powers and offices. Suetonius' list of the public buildings that Augustus undertook on behalf of his relatives, then, fleshes out his portrait of Augustus as the great restructurer and establishes him as one of Suetonius' "good emperors" who built for the benefit of the public (unlike Nero, for example, whose construction work was evidence of an unmanly obsession with personal luxury).[525] We should consider, then, the possibility that Suetonius wanted to attribute as many public acts of building as possible to the first emperor, especially if the list could include two such well-known and ideologically charged structures.

In Ovid's *Fasti*, however, a different view is presented to us, one less intent on Augustus as rebuilder of state and city but focused, instead, on the Princeps as moral *exemplum*. In the *Fasti*, Ovid explicitly connects Augustus' exemplarity, the tearing down of Pollio's urban villa, and the construction of the Porticus Liviae but does not claim the construction of the portico for Augustus. Rather, he divides the praise equally between Augustus and Livia:

> *Te quoque magnifica, Concordia, dedicat aede*
> *Livia, quam caro praestitit ipsa viro.*
> *disce tamen, veniens aetas: ubi Livia nunc est*
> *porticus, immensae tecta fuere domus;*
> *urbis opus domus una fuit spatiumque tenebat*
> *quo brevius muris oppida multa tenent.*
> *haec aequata solo est, nullo sub crimine regni,*
> *sed quia luxuria visa nocere sua.*
> *sustinuit tantas operum subvertere moles*

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[524] Suet. *Aug*. 29.4. This is a reversal of Strabo's assertion in *Geog*. 5.3.8. Texts and translations of Suetonius are taken from Rolfe's edition (Loeb Classical Library, 1914).
[525] Suet. *Nero* 30–31; Wallace-Hadrill 1995, 168–169.

> *totque suas heres perdere Caesar opes:*
> *sic agitur censura et sic exempla parantur,*
> *cum vindex, alios quod monet, ipse facit.*
>
> To you too, Concordia, Livia dedicated a magnificent temple, which she offered to her dear husband. Nevertheless, listen, coming age: where the portico of Livia now is once stood an enormous home, it was like the work of a city and occupied a space larger than that of many towns. It was levelled to the ground, not on account of any criminal charge, but because its luxury was considered harmful. Caesar took upon himself to overturn such a vast work and to destroy so much wealth to which he himself was the heir: this is how to act as censor and this is how to set an example when the claimant does himself what he advises others to do.[526]

On the surface, this passage seems to corroborate Dio and Suetonius' attribution of the Porticus Liviae to Augustus, but a closer look calls this into question. In the *Fasti*, Augustus destroyed (*subvertere*) Pollio's home and Livia dedicates (*dedicat*) a shrine to Concordia on that spot. Ovid says no more than that. Ovid's Augustus is praised for tearing down, not building; personal luxury is destroyed, which is what makes Augustus an *exemplum*. Private extravagance is destroyed to make room for Livia's shrine, and this is clearly the intended parallel: the emperor's moral sense checks luxury and allows the construction of a remarkable new public area in the heart of the city. This text does not actually speak to who constructed the porticus, though Roman tradition would dictate that the building bears its patron's name. In the *Ars Amatoria*, though, the connection is explicit: Livia is the portico's *auctor*.

That Livia's new construction supported and built upon the themes developed by her husband's regime, though, is beyond question. Straddling the space between rich and powerful elite and the humble, the Porticus Liviae was open to all Romans. Pliny the Younger mentions meeting a friend "under the shade of Livia's portico," while his uncle, the elder Pliny, related a particularly Plinian detail: an extraordinary grape vine wound its way all along the portico, providing each year not only shade but hundreds of liters of wine.[527] By all accounts, with its

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[526] Ovid *Fast*. 6.637–648 (Translation is the author's).
[527] Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 1.5.9; grape vine, Pliny, *NH*, 14.11.


Fig. 20—*Forma Urbis Romae* fragment showing the Porticus Liviae. (Image: Wikiwand, Porticus Liviae. Copyright CC BY-SA 4.0)

gardens, fountains, and art displays, the Porticus Liviae offered respite from urban woes. Again, although none of the original decoration of this building has survived and even the precise placement of its shrine is a matter of debate, we should connect the portico's interior gardens and symbolism of the massive grape vine that Pliny describes with Augustan imagery carved so lusciously on the Ara Pacis Augustae. It seems very likely that the imagery of vines and vegetation was intentionally echoed inside Livia's portico, as it linked Augustan ideals as displayed on artwork and building decoration of the era with the everyday experience of those who visited there.

Another feature, however, one apparently added subsequent to the completion of the main structure, added a dual religious and political dimension—a shrine to Concordia. This shrine, Ovid tells us, was dedicated by Livia to her husband on the festival of the *Matralia* (June

11). This festival honoured the goddess Mater Matuta, a divinity associated with childbirth, motherhood, and the nourishment of children, and celebrated the natal day of her temple in Rome's Forum Boarium. As such, its connection with Livia's portico and shrine demands examination.

## *The Location of the Shrine to Concordia*

On 1 January 7 BCE, Dio tells us, Tiberius and Livia together dedicated the "precinct of Livia" (τὸ τεμένισμα τὸ Λίουιον ὠνομασμένον), which we should identify as Livia's portico surrounding the shrine (*aedes*) dedicated to Concordia.[528] It is important that we note that this event was separate from the dedication of the shrine to Concordia, which Ovid records as having involved Livia alone.[529] This took place on June 11, the festival of the *Matralia*.[530] There has been some debate about the precise location of this shrine, though a location within the Porticus Liviae has been accepted by most scholars. Two considerations strongly suggest that this was the case. First, Ovid tells the story of the destruction of Pollio's villa and (implied) construction of the Porticus Liviae in the same narrative addressed to Concordia and goes on to note Livia's

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[528] On the dedication, Dio, 55.8.1-3. Tiberius, who had just celebrated at triumph, was standing in for Augustus, who was still away on campaign. Some have argued that τεμένισμα must refer only to the altar that Ovid, *Fasti*, 6.637, clearly says Livia built and dedicated to Augustus. Nevertheless, a scan of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* for this word in Dio's text shows that he only used this word when referring to sacred enclosures, which the *Porticus Liviae* would have been with the addition of the *aedes*. (See Dio 42.26.2; 52.35.5; 53.1.3; 53.26.5; 57.9.1; 65.6.1; 89.24.3 for his use of this word.) The other possibility, of course, is that Livia had a shrine to Concordia built somewhere else in the city, though Ovid's text clearly connects shrine and porticus in the telling of the story of Pollio's house and its demolition by Augustus prior to his description of the dedication of the shrine. An argument put forward by C. J. Simpson in 1991, that Ovid means that Livia participated in the constitution of Tiberius' restoration of the Temple of Concord in the Forum has not been generally adopted, and the understanding that this *aedes* is to be understood as part of the Porticus Liviae has remained.

[529] Buildings were not always dedicated immediately following their completion, a fact that makes precise dating from documented dedications difficult. See Flory 1984, 311f.

[530] The *Matralia* was marked by women's prayers first for their nieces and nephews and then for their own children. The cult statue was decorated by a *univira* (woman who had had only one husband), and a lone female slave was invited into the temple and then driven out with slaps and blows to the head. Ignoring the symbolism of this last ritual for the moment, attention should be drawn to the fact that a shrine to Fortuna Virgo stood within the temple of Mater Matuta in the Forum Boarium. This collocation of two deities within one temple offers the potential of a connection, for Livia, between Fortuna Muliebris and the Fortuna associated with Mater Matuta.

dedication of the shrine to her husband. Flory supposes that Ovid may have been employing "rhetorical exaggeration" in joining the two stories, but this seems unlikely.[531] Then there is the fact that the earlier dedication by Tiberius and Livia was, according to Dio, of a sacred precinct—τεμένισμα. While not conclusive, this at least suggests that the Porticus Liviae was the location of Livia's shrine (*aedes*) to Concordia, despite claims to the contrary.[532]

The Porticus Liviae and, arguably, its shrine to Concordia, are featured on fragments catalogued as 10opqr on the *Forma Urbis Romae*, the Severan marble plan.[533] The feature at the centre, with a circle surrounded by two rectangles of increasing size has been identified as the likely location of the *aedes Concordia*, probably because it was normal for temples to be at the centre of their precinct.[534] Still, it is interesting that Platner and Ashby discount the possibility that this feature could have been the *magnifica…aede* that Ovid describes Livia dedicating in *Fasti* 6.637, and I'd like to take a moment to consider their hesitation. In their estimation, the feature in question was unworthy of this adjective because it seems too small.[535] I think, in the first place, that they misjudged the relative size of this feature. After all, the porticus itself was approximately 120 meters long and 70 meters wide, and taking the size of the internal feature visible on the *FUR* relative to this, it was clearly not an insignificant element since the largest rectangle would have measured approximately 20 x 14 meters and the interior one roughly 10 x 6.66.[536] If we imagine that this was in fact a shrine to Concordia, then the outermost enclosure

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[531] Flory 1984, 301.
[532] Carettoni, Colini, Cozza, and Gatti 1960, 69, identified the structure at the centre of the Porticus Liviae as a fountain. Coarelli 1974, 206, identified it differently: "Al centro della piazza, un edificio rettangolare, probabilmente un recinto, che contiene un altro elemento, mostra singolari somiglianze con la pianta dell'Ara Pacis." See Flory 1984, 310, n. 5 for identification of this structure with the shrine to Concordia.
[533] Available online at the *Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romae Project*, http://formaurbis.stanford.edu/fragment.php?record=48. (Last accessed 30 December 2021).
[534] As, for example, in the Porticus Octaviae, on which, see below.
[535] Platner and Ashby 1929, sv. 'Concordia, Aedes' "the small rectangular structure marked on the Marble Plan (frg. 10) can hardly have been a temple deserving of the epithet *magnifica* (HJ 316)."
[536] This assumes that the Porticus Liviae was 120 x 70 m, as stated by the editors of the Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romae website, sv. Stanford 10opqr.
https://formaurbis.stanford.edu/fragment.php?record=3&field0=adjoins&search0=10lm&op0=and&fiel

(the largest rectangle) would have been nearly double the size of the Ara Pacis Augustae, which measures 11.65 x 10.62 m, and is therefore closer in size to the smaller of the two rectangles depicted. The innermost circle remains a mystery unless this is meant to depict the altar itself. At any rate, contrary to Platner and Ashby's assertion, *magnifica* seems suitable for a shrine of this size—that is assuming that this was the *aedes* that Livia dedicated to Concordia, and this cannot be claimed with any surety. We cannot even say for sure whether *magnifica* was meant to refer to the *size* of the structure or the beauty of its adornment, something about which we unfortunately know nothing. Regardless, it is possible that the shrine to Concordia was housed in one of the enormous *aediculae* that appear in the western and eastern sides of the porticus.

This brings us to the intent behind the dedication. Ovid tells us that Livia devoted the shrine to Concordia to her husband, and this has led some scholars to stress that in this case the goddess in question was being honoured as the guarantor of harmony in the imperial marriage and is usually framed as a result of the ideological preoccupations of the Augustan era, when an emphasis on marriage and bearing children came to the fore.[537] This is at odds with Concordia's more usual associations, which was as the guarantor of political harmony within the state. There is no reason to think, though, that the message had to be so one-sided. Barbara Levick charted the use and development of Concordia as a political slogan and conservative ideal by men from Opimius, who sought to suppress the Gracchi, to Cicero, who used Concordia as a rallying point to make his case that the equites had been alienated by the senatorial class.[538] Levick argues that Concordia had always been associated with the senate's ability to rule, with the importance of

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d1=all (Last accessed 30 December 2021) and Panella 1987. Others, notably Favro 1996, 171, place the size of the portico at 115 x 75 m.

[537] Flory 1984, 312-315, shifts the focus away from the marriage of Livia and Augustus, arguing that the dedication of Livia's shrine to Concordia, dated by Ovid to June 11, the *Matralia*, means that the shrine was meant as a "symbol of women's lives" and connects this manifestation of Concordia with the ideal of a peaceful family life. Zanker 1988, 139, perhaps following Flory, agrees, stating that in this instance, "Unlike in her cult in the Forum, Concordia was to be worshipped as a goddess of family happiness." Woodhull 1999, 105-107, argues that Livia and Augustus' marriage was a symbol of a new conception of Concordia, one meant as an example for couples everywhere in the empire.

[538] Levick 1978, 217-222.

peace between *ordines*—whether patrician and plebeian or senatorial and equestrian—but that under the empire the notion became fixed on the *person* of the emperor and the harmony between him, his family, and his closest friends and associates. The traditional notion of Concordia as ensuring political harmony remained, but with a new aspect focused on a single all-important individual and the relationships that made his success possible.[539] The fact that Concordia had long been thought of as overseeing domestic relations as well provides an added dimension to Livia's shrine, but to think that the domestic meaning was the sole intent is to limit the scope of the message unnecessarily.

One way to reconcile these issues and retain the full import of Concordia's varied associations is to see Livia's dedication to Augustus as in keeping with her husband's own practice—that is, as encompassing the traditional while adding novel aspects. Earlier temples of Concordia had essentially enshrined the notion that unity would prevail no matter what chaos arose to threaten it at home and had been fixed on senatorial power as a uniting force despite its own internal factionalism. Personal tributes to Concordia were more often featured on epitaphs to faithful husbands and wives, as mourning morphed the turmoil of everyday life into a fictive perpetual harmony. Livia's *aedes*, then, can be meaningfully read as both homage to domestic harmony and a gift from a wife to her husband, the man who had restored domestic harmony to Rome, from the woman whose personality, especially her social and political astuteness, made possible his continuing successes in the political sphere. The twin aspects of Concordia are thus brought together—she is at once the goddess who oversees political relations within the Roman state *and* the imperial household. This new dual-aspect Concordia was indeed a unique creation of the early imperial age, stressing Augustus' role in ending civil conflict and ensuring peace in the empire while celebrating the family at the heart of power. Livia, as his consort, was as much

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539 Levick 1978, 227. It was not until later, under Nero, when the phrase *Concordia Augusta* was used on coinage as a public attribute of the relationship between the emperor and his mother, but Levick projects this notion back onto the shrine Livia dedicated to Augustus as well.

bragging about her powerful husband as she was treating the public sphere as a continuation of their domestic one, a throwback to the attitude of the elite during the Hellenistic era, when the whole city was treated as their *oikos*. Livia's construction of an *aedes* to Concordia within the surrounding embrace of a monument built with her private funds made that shrine both public and personal. But seeing this as solely personal or uniquely focused on family relations is reductive and diminishes Livia's status to that of ordinary wife. That Livia dedicated this shrine on the same date as the *Matralia* suggests the desire to highlight the fact that her husband, together with herself, were the couple guiding, nourishing, and protecting the Roman people. Livia, as the first matron of Rome, may well have also been subtly recalling the saving action of Rome's *matronae* as one of the *ordines* Concordia oversaw as her role as guarantor of peace between the various segments of society. The associations that made these varied readings possible were not new to the first imperial couple, they were hardwired into the Roman understanding of the nature of the relationship between *paterfamilias* and *materfamilias*. Augustus and Livia were simply the first couple to have enough influence (*auctoritas*) to treat the city as their extended *familia*.

## Livia as *Femina Princeps*—Leader of Rome's Matrons

It was the symbolic weight of the temples of Fortuna Muliebris and Bona Dea Subsaxana that likely influenced the decision for Livia to restore and then imbue them with new associations. These temples, so clearly connecting Rome's elite matrons to the safety and security of the city, also allowed Livia to position herself as their patron and *de facto* leader. As the wife of the Princeps, Livia was part of the evolution of the Roman state away from Republic and towards one-family dynastic rule. The grant to her (and her sister-in-law, Octavia) in 35 BCE of *sacrosanctitas* and freedom from tutelage was followed, in 9 BCE, by the grant of

financial freedom as an honorary mother of three children.[540] Her choice to use her financial freedom was likely encouraged and sanctioned by Augustus, who also encouraged his close friends and family members to build in the city.[541] By funding the restoration of these temples and building a massive public portico on the Esquiline Hill, Livia positioned herself as patron to the *matronae*. We do not know the exact nature of Livia and Augustus' building program, especially in terms of how decisions were made, but Ovid's observation that Livia's building was in imitation of her husband implies that the decision was hers.[542] We can imagine, then, that Augustus' approval, while necessary, could be generalized and Livia being left to choose structures appropriate to her own sphere—that is, relating to her role as first among women. Like her husband, then, she was in a position to use building in the city to place herself at the top of the social hierarchy of which she was a member. In fact, we see evidence that Livia acted as patron to Rome's *matronae* in other places besides her building campaign. Cassius Dio provides us with an account of a debate in the senate following Livia's death in A.D. 29 in which the senators vote that an arch be constructed in her honour—a distinction, Dio emphasizes, that had never before been conferred on a woman.[543] This they did because she had helped rear their children (in monetary terms, presumably), and helped to pay their daughters' dowries (…καὶ ὅτι παῖδας πολλῶν ἐτετρόφει κόρας τε πολλοῖς συνεξεδεδώκει…). The clear intent is that Livia gave money to certain senators who although possessing elite status had presumably fallen on hard times. Although custom dictated that the male head of the household provide a dowry for his daughters, the recipients of Livia's financial aid would equally have been their wives and children.[544] It was the mother of every household who saw to the day-to-day expenses of raising

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[540] Dio 49.38.1 (grant of 35 BCE); Dio 55.2.5 (9 BCE). This last was an honour conferred on her following the death of her son, Drusus.
[541] Suetonius, *Aug*. 29.
[542] See above, p. 184ff for discussion.
[543] Dio 55.2.1-3.
[544] It was the responsibility of the father to provide a dowry (*dos profecticia*) for daughters under his *potestas*, which is probably why Dio represents the senators as particularly grateful for Livia's

children, even if the money came from coffers owned by their husbands or their husbands' *paterfamilias*.[545] Money given to the raising of children would have alleviated the difficulties—both personal and social—of these women as much as their husbands. By giving dowries to impoverished elite families Livia was not only making it possible for the daughters of those families to become *matronae,* she was also allowing the young women affected to maintain a dignity and status that was their birthright.[546] This was in line with the regime's social reforms, of course, and may be framed as Livia promoting her husband's policies. At the same time, in keeping with Roman understanding of gift giving and the creation of social obligation, Livia, in each case, set herself as patron towards these mothers and brides—and their husbands/fathers—thereby binding them to herself in an informal patron-client relationship.

## The Portico of Octavia

Like the Portico of Livia, this structure was listed by Dio and Suetonius among those built by Augustus, when it was arguably actually constructed by the woman whose name it bore—his sister, Octavia. Situated near the northern boundary of the area called the Circus Flaminius, a portion of the Campus Martius populated with victory temples and through which triumphal parades passed, the Porticus Octaviae was a massive public portico that encompassed the temples of Jupiter Stator and Juno Regina. Dio tells us that this structure was built by Augustus using the spoils of his Dalmatian campaign (in 33 BCE; the area was formally

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benefaction. See Gardner 1998, 85-93, Gardner 1986, 105ff, and Corbier 1991, 187ff on dowries (and their recovery).

[545] Severy 2003, 11-12, women had a share in the household expenses, too, through their dowry, and management of the household accounts. See also Dixon 1983, 78-101, and Gardner 1986, 97-109.

[546] Dowry (*dos*), for example, was, according to Roman law, a gift from a woman to her husband-to-be, or from the property of a father or *paterfamilias*. Ulpian 6.2: *Dotem dicere potest mulier quae nuptura est … item parens mulieris virilis sexus per virile sexum cognatione iunctus, velut pater avus paternus. Dare promittere dotem omnes possunt*. (A woman about to marry can unilaterally promise a dowry (*dicere dotem*) … likewise, the woman's male ascendant who is related in the male line, for example, a father or paternal grandfather; but all persons can give or formally promise a dowry (for a woman).) For discussion, see Frier and McGinn 2004, 75-76, 79. Livia's intention here quite clearly reinforced Augustan moral legislation for it allowed the daughters in question to marry another of their rank and multiply the numbers of children of their social class.

arranged into a province in 27).[547] Here, however, Dio is clearly confused because Augustus specifically notes in his *Res Gestae* that he used the spoils from Dalmatia to restore the Porticus Octavia—a nearby but unrelated structure—and allowed the portico to retain the name of its builder.[548] This portico was originally built by Gnaeus Octavius in 168 BCE. In a clarifying entry, Festus states that there was both a Porticus Octaviae and a Porticus Octavia, but points out that the one nearer the theatre of Marcellus was funded by Octavia.[549] This *porticus* was a complete restoration and reworking of the Porticus Metelli, which had originally been constructed around 146 BCE by Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus.[550] It was decorated both before and after its Augustan restoration with famous works of art, many of them brought from Macedon by Metellus—including the Granikos Monument (also known as the *turma Alexandri*), a group of life-sized bronze equestrian statues originally commissioned by Alexander the Great.[551] As such, this portico originally stood as a monument to Metellus and his military successes. This, as much as its age, arguably made it a candidate for later Augustan restructuring, as turning personal monuments into public ones was a practice developed by the early imperial household.[552] In fact, there is a hint at the contemporary attitude towards the Metellan portico and its neighboring structures in the work of Tiberian-era author, Velleius Paterculus, who refers to these monuments as the direct result of the *privata luxuria* of the age.[553] Restored at

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547 Dio, 49.43.8: ἐπειδή τε οἱ Δελμάται παντελῶς ἐκεχείρωντο, τάς τε στοὰς ἀπὸ τῶν λαφύρων αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς ἀποθήκας τῶν βιβλίων τὰς Ὀκταουιανὰς ἐπὶ τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτοῦ κληθείσας κατεσκεύασεν. "And after the Dalmatians had been utterly subjugated, he erected from the spoils thus gained the porticos and the libraries called the Octavian, after his sister." (Loeb translation).

548 *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, (ed. Cooley, 2009), 19.1; Coarelli 2007, 267; Pliny, *NH, 34.13*.

549 Festus, 188 L. *…theatro Marcelli propriorem Octavia soror Augusti fecit*. Olinder 1974, argued that the Porticus Octavia was later restored by Q. Caecilius Metellus and incorporated into his portico. Evidence in support of this supposition is, however, lacking. See John R. Senseney 2011, 422-426, for a useful discussion of these two public porticoes.

550 *LTUR*, sv. 'Porticus Octaviae'; Vell. Pat. 1.11.3; see Boyd 1953 for detailed discussion.

551 Granikos Monument: Vell. Pat. 1.11.3, Pliny, *NH,* 34.64.

552 See discussion of Porticus Liviae, above. Augustus and his family reworked the Circus Maximus, essentially turning it into an area commemorating the imperial family.

553 Vell. Pat. 2.1.2. *Tum Scipio Nasica in Capitolio porticus, tum, quas praediximus, Metellus, tum in circo Cn. Octavius multo amoenissimam moliti sunt, publicamque magnificentiam secuta private luxuria est*. Compare 1.11.5. Velleius wrote his *History of Rome* in about 30 CE, under the emperor Tiberius, Augustus' immediate successor.

least twice in its history—after a devastating fire in 80 CE and again in 203—it was apparently considered important enough to warrant repeated preservation and improvement, likely because of its size and placement, its massive collection of important art, and its ideological associations.[554] Much of the evidence for this structure is literary, but the physical remains evident in the Via del Portico d'Ottavia attest to its size and stature, while an inscription on the monumental propylaea bearing the names of Septimius Severus and Caracalla records that they carried out a restoration of the portico in 203.[555] Archaeological investigations undertaken in the 1990s reveal that this Severan restoration was extensive but, intriguingly, is not reflected on the marble plan, which shows an earlier version of the complex instead.[556] Much of the decoration of the Porticus Octaviae as it is now known therefore dates from the Severan era, but we can assume that Octavia would have had it decorated in a manner in keeping with other buildings remodeled during the Augustan era.

Although scholars tend to assert it, that attribution of the Porticus Octaviae to Octavia (and not Augustus) is not difficult. Festus' entry, mentioned above, is plain enough and Velleius Paterculus states clearly two important points: that the Portico Metelli surrounded two temples, and that it had, by his time, been renamed the Porticus Octaviae.[557] This assertion is supported by Pliny the Elder, who says *…in Metelli publica porticu, quae statue nunc est in Octaviae operibus*.[558] Indeed, Pliny's repeated use of *Octaviae opera* should compel us to believe that Octavia funded its restoration, just as a similar phrase would if it described the works of Augustus. Then there is the record of Ovid, who mentions the reworked portico in the *Ars*

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554 Dio enumerates major structures damaged by the fire of 80 at 66.24.2. The portico was likely restored by Domitian on this occasion.
555 *CIL* VI.1034 offers the inscription attesting to the restoration work funded by Septimius Severus and his son, Caracalla.
556 Rossetto 1996, 267. Domitian likely restored the structure after the fire of 80, but the extent of his restorations and whether they changed the overall plan of the structure is not known.
557 Vell. Pat. 1.11.3ff: *…Metellus Macedonicus, qui porticus, quae fuerunt cricumdatae duabus aedibus sine inscription positis, quae nunc Octaviae porticibus ambiuntur, fecerat…*
558 Pliny, *NH*, 34.31 in reference to the statue of Cornelia found inside the portico.

*Amatoria* in his discussion of the best places to meet women. According to Ovid, it was Marcellus, Octavia's son and Augustus' son-in-law and heir apparent, who began work on the portico, which was completed by his mother following his death.[559] This is plausible and fits with the chronology as far as it can be discerned. After all, we know that Marcellus and Augustus' stepson, Tiberius, arranged military exhibitions as aediles in 25 BCE.[560] It is possible that Marcellus began a restoration of the Porticus Metelli around this time but that it was left unfinished when he died midway through 23.[561] As mother of the dead heir-presumptive, it makes sense that Octavia could have been responsible for completing the restoration work, and that she was responsible for its various known additions. These included a *schola* or *curia* (where the senate met on at least two occasions) mentioned by Pliny, as well as a library with Greek and Latin collections, which Plutarch says Octavia dedicated to her son.[562] Seeing the Porticus Octaviae as the result of Octavia's decision to invest in the completion of her son's project makes sense of Pliny's repeated references to the portico as the works of Octavia.[563] This positions Octavia's restoration and completion work as a public display of both her substantial financial resources and her capacity for personal agency, though the act of *pietas* that the mother displays towards her son and his frustrated ambitions is invoked by the renaming of the monument.

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[559] Ovid, *Ars Am.* 1.69-70. Ovid's phrase, *mater addidit* implies that Octavia added to or increased the structure, aside from merely completing it. Indeed, as Woodhull 2003, 24, rightly points out, it makes little sense for scholars to privilege the two later sources, Dio and Suetonius, at the expense of Festus and Ovid, both of whom lived and wrote during the time in question.
[560] Dio 53.26.1 (25 BCE, Tiberius and Marcellus are aediles); 53.28.
[561] L. Richardson Jr. 1976, 63.
[562] *Schola*: Pliny, *NH,* 35.114, 36.22; curia: 36.28; meetings: Dio, 55.8 and Josephus, *Bell. Jud.,* 7.5.4; libraries: Suetonius, *de Gramm.*, 21 (librarian identified); Plutarch, *Marc.* 30.6.
[563] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, 34.31, 35.139, and 36.15 for items referred to as *in Octaviae operibus*. The connection between Octavia and the portico is strengthened by the existence of several tombs belonging to individuals who worked in the portico's library, which were found in the household columbarium of Octavia's daughter, Marcella: *CIL* 6.4431-33, 4435, 4461; Boyd 1953, 157.

The placement of this portico is known primarily from four fragments of the *Forma Urbis Romae*, one of which is labeled [PORTI]CUS OCTAVIAE ET FIL[I].[564] According to this, the Porticus Octaviae was certainly within the boundaries of the Circus Flaminius, the southern portion of the Campus Martius once marked off by the *Petronia amnis*, a stream that had long been used as a ritual dividing marker between the so-called Circus Flaminius and the Campus Martius to the north. By the Augustan period, however, this stream had been culverted, essentially joining the two areas. The implication of this is that topographical associations could be, and apparently were, generalized to the entire area.[565] Along with this change, Augustan-era construction refashioned the area with a cohesive blanket of ideologically charged structures designed to restore places of long memory and ritual, and position the Princeps and his family in the fabric of the Roman city. It is in the northern Campus Martius, that Augustus began, perhaps as early as 31 BCE, to build his mausoleum.[566] His sundial and altar to Augustan peace, voted to Augustus by the senate in 13, would be constructed slightly to the south. His right-hand man, Marcus Agrippa urbanized the centre of the Campus, immediately south of the mausoleum and directly north of the Porticus Octaviae, rebuilding the Pantheon, constructing monumental public baths with an artificial lake (the *stagnum Agrippae*), and completing the Diribitorium and Saepta, where voting had taken place during the Republic, and which had been begun by Julius Caesar.

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564 I am following Richardson 1976, 63, in his restoration of this inscription. Richardson argues that it must refer to Octavia's son, Marcellus, because Augustus renamed the nearby theatre, begun by Julius Caesar, for Marcellus and because the library and *curia* inside the *Porticus Octaviae* also bore his name. This may accord with Ovid's assertion (*Ars. Am.* 1.69-70) that Marcellus began work on the building and Octavia completed it, with additions, after his death. Others, however, argue that *FILIPPI* must be the correct reading as it fills the appropriate space and because the *Porticus Filippi* may have been nearby. See E. Rodríguez Almeida 1981; Richardson 1976, 27. The fragments in question are plates 21 and 28 in Lanciani 1990, and Stanford 31vaa, 31bb, 31cc, 31ii.

565 See Woodhull 1999, 87-93 and Favro 1996, 171-175 for discussion of the history and significance of this part of the city.

566 The exact date that the mausoleum of Augustus was built is a subject of debate. Von Hesberg (1994) has argued, based on stylistic considerations, that it was begun around 31 BCE. See Strabo 5.3.8 for a description of the mausoleum and surrounding area. Suetonius *Aug.* 100.4 describes the area, which was opened to the public in 28 BCE when the mausoleum was presumably completed. It was not yet completed when Marcellus was buried in it following his death in 23. See Dio 53.29.5-6.

It is within this context that we must think of Octavia's porticus, which was tied ideologically to both the area of the Circus Flaminius and the more northern structures. This is a shift away from an argument put forward by Woodhull, which emphasizes Octavia as mother and "…a figure with potential for fecundity," and frames the Porticus Octaviae as "…a logical extension of her role in the imperial family dynamics."[567] In this line of thinking, the message of Octavia's portico is divorced from its topographical context, referencing not the surrounding martial and commemorative themes but "her role as *exemplum* of the idealized female."[568] The rationale for this is the supposed Augustan emphasis on women as producers of heirs appears on the surface to connect with Octavia's intention in completing the portico, but if we consider the competitive nature of Roman society, even among its women, and the meaning attached to building in the city, then it is necessary to introduce these considerations to our interpretation of the structure.

First, it cannot be argued that Augustan ideology did not make the female members of the imperial house more evident and public, but whether heirs were the main (or only) point of this centrality deserves critique. We must also consider whether the Porticus Octaviae communicated these themes the way that Woodhull has claimed it must have done. After all, the Porticus Octaviae was built in that portion of the Campus Martius most closely related to military parades and victory monuments, and it is difficult to see how womanly concerns would have been adequately communicated by knowledge of the benefactor's sex alone. This portico was part of a building campaign that wrote imperial themes into a vast area, but it cannot have stood for the idealized female, as its size, orientation, and decoration participated in the broader, masculine, themes communicated by the place where voting enclosures were erected during the Republic, where armies trained and assembled, and which was populated with

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[567] Woodhull 2003, 23.
[568] Ibid.

manubial temples and other commemorative builds. Standing beside the Theatre of Marcellus, which was begun by Julius Caesar and completed and dedicated by Augustus sometime around 13 BCE,[569] the Porticus Octaviae also stood in the immediate vicinity of porticos built by noted generals Gnaeus Octavius, who defeated Perseus of Macedon at sea, and L. Marcius Philippus, consul of 56 BCE, triumphator in 34 or 33, and step-father to Augustus.[570] His Porticus Philippi, which was also a complex created by the addition of a portico around a more ancient temple, appears on the *FUR* to have butted up against the southern wall of the Porticus Octaviae.[571] On the northern side of Octavia's portico stood the temple of Apollo Medicus, vowed in 433-431 BCE by cos. C. Iulius following a plague. Rebuilt in 176 BCE, this temple was rebuilt again by C. Sosius (cos. 32 BCE) on an entirely new plan and dedicated following his victory over Judea in 34 BCE. Thanks to these structures, the Porticus Octaviae, even with the feminine name on its propylaeum, pointed to masculine endeavors.

In a sense, then, we must ask whether, even with these martial associations, the place didn't articulate something about the *gravitas* of Octavia herself and her position as key—even if female—player in the political fortunes of Rome. If anything, when we consider the complex of meanings that this structure must have evoked, in the forefront are its function as public and political meeting place and, in the background, Julian family shrine—but the emphasis remained on the public and political.[572] We may see the shifting meanings and implications of the place overall echoed in the items on display within the confines of the portico itself. Like many public porticoes, the Porticus Octaviae functioned as a sort of outdoor art gallery and here, from what we can tell from surviving descriptions, the martial nature of the place was echoed in

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[569] Philippus restored the second-century BCE temple of Hercules Musarum and surrounded it with a portico; Coarelli, 2007, 268, dates the dedication of this new complex to about 29 BCE.
[570] L. Marcius Philippus was the second husband of Atia, Octavia and Augustus' mother. Richardson 1977, 355, 359; Syme 1986, 54, 403, 512-513 (stemma).
[571] Coarelli 2007, 267; Richardson 1976, 355. The temple of Hercules Musarum was built between 187-179 BCE by M. Fulvius Nobilior.
[572] See Gorrie 2007 for discussion of the imposition on the northern Flaminian Circus of a decidedly Julian theme and the exploitation of this theme by the Severans.

the works on display. The visitor would undoubtedly have been aware of the mix of messages offered as he or she was walking through its shaded halls, for among the artworks Octavia's portico inherited from the Porticus Metelli, Pliny tells us, was a statue of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, a statue whose meaning and implications must have accrued a new shade of meaning once the portico housing it had been refigured and renamed after a woman who had lost a son in whom so many hopes had also been placed. Pliny tells us, likewise, that works by the famed Greek painter, Antiphilus, were *in schola* at Octavia's portico. These paintings, one of Alexander and Philip with Minerva and another of Hesione recalled to the viewing public great Greek generals (Alexander the Great and his father, Philip of Macedon) joined with one of the deities of the Capitoline Triad, Minerva.[573] The painting of Hesione is likewise interesting, as she was the daughter of Laomedon, king of Troy, and sister to Priam, whom he ransoms from slavery to Heracles.[574] This is an interesting addition because even while it recalls to the viewer the story of Troy, much mined by Augustus for its ideological associations with Rome's founder, Aeneas, it concentrates on Hesione who was called upon to pay for her father's offenses by being sacrificed to a sea monster. Her rescue by Heracles, who gave her as a trophy to his companion, Telemon of Salamis, offers a tale of a woman used to prevent national disaster (sacrifice to the sea monster) and then married against her will to the victor's companion. These themes must have resonated with Octavia, a woman not unfamiliar with being a pawn in the political games of men.

This is quite a different emphasis than is usually allowed the Porticus Octaviae, even when Octavia's active participation as builder is accepted and acknowledged. Indeed, even more than Livia's portico on the Esquiline, the Porticus Octaviae has usually been perceived largely as

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573 Even though Antiphilus lived and worked under Philip of Macedon (382-336 BCE), the fact that his paintings were on display in Rome must have been read by the Romans as proof of their superiority. A painting of Philip and Alexander with Minerva, a member of Rome's Capitoline Triad, must have been taken as a realignment of the meaning and implications of these men's achievements to emphasize Roman supremacy over even these great historical figures

574 Ovid, *Met.* 11.194ff, Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bib.* 3.12.7.

a family undertaking—begun by Marcellus and completed by his mother, the sister of the Princeps. After all, as has frequently been pointed out, the Julio-Claudians, as the first dynasts, needed a non-threatening way of framing their identity as ruling family.[575] One way of accomplishing this was to shift the emphasis subtly from rule by community of equals to rule by another sort of community: the family, which was already ideologically framed as functioning, ideally, as a microcosm of the state. Borrowing judiciously from Hellenistic understandings, the ruling family positioned itself as a miniature of Roman society and prototype for others.[576] In the new milieu, women like Livia and Octavia were invited to move into the public sphere and participate alongside their male relatives in patronizing the city just like women in the Hellenistic east had done for centuries. Octavia's intervention in her son's project, set within this context, does not preclude the fact that the project also signposted her status as sister of the Princeps and showcased her personal *auctoritas* and *gravitas*. After all, public action fixated attention on the source of that action. Indeed, it is useful to frame Octavia's patronage of this portico in terms of her place within the elite female hierarchy at Rome in addition to considering the broader implications of the family image. The complement of extraordinary honours that she and Livia had received elevated them both far above the status any other Roman woman had yet achieved and made their ability to engage in large-scale public building possible, even necessary. After all, not only were they in the rather unique position of having the power to use their wealth as they chose, they were also closely related to the man who made decisions concerning building in the city. Seeing that women had contributed to the public landscape during the Republic by funding temples and shrines, as has been show above, Octavia and Livia were placed in the position of possessing a status so lofty that large-scale building benefactions were required of them no less than of the source of their honours—Augustus. But where Livia, as

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[575] Woodhull 1999, 84ff, who argues that Augustus was self-consciously anti-autocratic in his public persona and used family participation in the public sphere to shield himself from charges of despotism.
[576] Carney 2013, 304.

wife of the Princeps, was encouraged to build from the ground up on a site that had been cleared by her husband, Octavia as the sister of the Princeps required a project that did not rival that of her sister-in-law. Completing the building project originally intended to celebrate the public career of her son, Augustus' probable heir, suited the situation entirely. The grieving sister of the emperor could monumentalize her role as mother of a son who was a promising young statesman and her brother's heir by completing his public project and dedicating part of it to him. It is very possible that Octavia knew her son's plans for the complex, and that she completed it along those lines. Naming these new components for Marcellus made sure to embed him in the local topography, even while the entire complex was renamed to indicate who had completed it, as was custom. As a complement to her action, her brother funded the completion of the nearby theatre and dedicated it to her son in a fitting show of mourning and remembrance.

## Conclusions

As we have seen in each of the case studies so far, there is no one dynamic or impetus that inspired women to fund a public structure. Some, such as those that led Publicia and Sulpicia to fund temple spaces are unfortunately lost to time. The rationale for imperial women, though, is more accessible mostly because of the enormous public attention they garnered by virtue of their rank and socio-political significance. For Octavia, the completion of her son's building project was undoubtedly important for her as a mother, but it cannot have been only about the mother-son bond or else she would not have named the building for herself. As the possessor of tribunician *sacrosanctitas* and frequent political intermediary between husband and brother, Octavia's personal *auctoritas* made her capable of bearing the weighty associations, both cultural and political, with which this portico was imbued. Being the sister and not the wife of the emperor worked here in her favor as she was able to associate herself with this portico without its political implications seeming to threaten her brother's *dignitas*.

For Livia, an entirely different paradigm played out for she was the emperor's consort and precedent demanded something different from her than from Octavia. It is a hallmark of Augustus' reign that the rationale for imperial power rested not just in a magistracy like the consulship being held in perpetuity, but on the emperor drawing from a creative mix of real public powers (control of the armies and tribunician power) and private *auctoritas*. Indeed, it was during Augustus' time in power that the relationship of ruling man to the senate and the rest of the citizenry was made to reflect that of the *paterfamilias* to his *familia*. Following this new equation, female presence and involvement in the 'public' sphere was rendered almost inevitable. The leading man (*princeps*) required a leading woman (*Romana princeps* in the words of the anonymous author of the *Consolatio ad Liviam*, while *femina princeps* was employed by Ovid),[577] and this positioned Livia to occupy a social position relative to other women that was equivalent to that held by Augustus more generally. When Augustus began to invite his friends and close family members to fund monumental constructions in the city, it may have been only natural, given the wealth of precedents both from the Hellenistic East and in Italy, for Livia to receive an invitation to undertake an appropriate building program of her own. That she funded the restoration of monuments associated with female collective action indicates that she was thinking of herself as the leader of the elite *matronae* at Rome—she was, like her husband, expressing her leadership. That this was held as her rightful position is evident also in her other social activities: she funded the monumental portico that replaced the immense palace Augustus inherited from Vedius Pollio and had torn down, and she provided dowries to daughters of impoverished senatorial families, as it was her role to support the goals of the regime her husband had founded. She was given the status markers possessed by the Vestal Virgins. After her husband's death, she was adopted by the terms of his will, granted the title *Augusta*, became a priestess of the cult established by his deification and was accompanied by

[577] *Consolatio ad Liviam* 349-356 and Purcell 1986, 78 and n. 2. Ovid, *Pont.* 3.1.125.

lictors when executing her duties as such. Along with her son, Tiberius, she erected a statue of Augustus.[578] Pliny the Elder tells us that she funded the construction of the Temple of the Divine Augustus.[579] It was her duty to do so, as his wife and one of his principal heirs (Tiberius was the other). She owed him her status as Rome's leading woman, but she possessed her own formidable *auctoritas*, too, and she expressed it, in part, by building.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to say with any surety that the building activity of Livia and Octavia set a precedent that was followed by subsequent imperial women in the same way that subsequent emperors mirrored Augustus' emphasis on building in the city as a metaphor for establishing a secure state. The evidence is scanty to say the least. An ambiguous inscription providing evidence of something dedicated by the empress Sabina to Rome's matrons and later rededicated by Julia Domna only hints at the possibility that *some* empresses may have funded public structures, but this is hardly conclusive. It is difficult, though, to argue by precedents alone as each case of building benefaction seems to have been very time specific. That is, dictated more or less by the nature of the relationship between imperial house, senate, and city of Rome. The Julio-Claudian women appear to have had more freedom to contribute to Rome's cityscape than did the women of later dynasties—so far as we can tell. Vibia Sabina may have paid for a reconstruction of the building used by the matrons for their meetings, but it is hard to say. History records nearly nothing about her to help us believe this was her role (aside from the fact of her being empress), and while the building activity of her half-sister, Matidia the Younger (all of it outside of Rome), indicates that women of the imperial house did fund building activity during this period, this is usually interpreted as indicating that then current definitions of

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[578] Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.64. Livia's name precedes that of Augustus on the inscription. See also Grether 1946, n. 73 and Gagé 1931, 16.

[579] Pliny, *NH* 12.94 but cf. Dio 57.10.2, who credits Tiberius. Known only from (conflicting) literary mentions and a depiction on a coin minted under Gaius Caligula, this temple was, according to Pliny, constructed on the Palatine. Richardson 1992, sv. 'Augustus, Divus, Templum', calls it "one of the thorniest problems in all of the topography of ancient Rome," and places it somewhere in the unexcavated area behind the Basilica Julia.

imperial propriety kept Sabina from building benefaction but did not apply to her sister.[580] We simply cannot know if the second century CE really was one during which imperial women were discouraged from acting as building benefactors at Rome. The Severans, for their part, were very active in restoring structures in and around Rome but Julia Domna's name does not appear alone like Livia's did, except in that one instance. Indeed, despite their having restored both the Temple of Fortuna Muliebris and the Portico of Octavia, Severan building was usually framed as a family enterprise or the work of Septimius and Geta. This may signal a shift away from the original Augustan emphasis on the imperial house as model for rule—where the public roles of imperial women were not only tolerated but actively encouraged, and towards an increasing emphasis on the emperor as absolute ruler whose power was invested in him less by virtue of his *auctoritas* and more because he had the armies at his command.

[580] Matidia the Younger's benefactions and connections were extensive and far-reaching and, unlike those of her sister, well-documented. Woodhull 2019 and Cascella 2013 provide the most recent scholarship.

# *7—Conclusions*

Each of these case studies shows a woman who positioned herself in the public sphere by funding the construction (or reconstruction) of a major public structure. Each woman, despite a legal reality and traditional sensibility that denied her full participation in broader society, used her resources to participate publicly and contribute to her community. In this final chapter, I would like to draw together the various themes that rose from my research by answering the questions that were the starting point of that research. First, though, a few caveats. As these few case studies have made clear, neither the mechanisms in question nor the underlying motivations of women acting as benefactors through public building lend themselves to declarations readily generalized to the entire body of women who built. Rather than being able to draw comprehensive messages about women as builders during the periods in question there is instead a complex matrix of factors that must be taken into consideration in each individual instance. Some of the details are unknowable—where did the woman get her money? How did she navigate the complicated network of interactions necessary to see the building through to completion? It might be fair to assume that she hired a male business manager to make the necessary connections for her. In large part, though, the answers to the details about how building sponsorship worked when a woman held the purse strings must be inferred from the evidence at hand, which is the fact of the building itself. But rather than spend a lot of time on the very broad questions, I am more interested in the cultural mechanisms that encouraged or inspired women to sponsor public buildings. If women were supposed to be primarily domestic and retiring, why did they place themselves and their names so prominently in the public sphere? The usual answers do not satisfy—women shoring up the careers of their male relatives or stepping up when male benefactors were unwilling or in short supply provide answers which, while not necessarily "wrong," reflect a version of history in which men are the centre of the question. I have tried to shift the paradigm just enough to get at what Roman history might look

like if women are situated as the protagonists. If we approach the question from the perspective of women as the main characters in the drama of history, do the outcomes change? Let us begin with a few fundamental questions the answers to which were implied throughout but not explicitly addressed.

## Chronological considerations

As we have seen, the projects explored here express a range of intentions and cultural-social relationships that are usefully read in their local context. We must wonder, however, why the number of women building appears to rise during the imperial period. In Rome, building during the Republic was the provenance of prominent families. Later, it was reserved for the emperor and members of the imperial family. Augustus and his court served as the model. He acted as building patron and invited his close friends and family to do so as well. This is why we see Livia taking so active a part in building in the city. Compared to later empresses, so far as we know, she was the most active as a builder, but she was also doing what elite women had been doing for some time. Certainly, in terms of who could build in Rome, one-man rule narrowed attention to an even smaller subset of the population than before but otherwise deviated little from established practice. Livia's restoration of temples important to the *matronae* at Rome indicate her interest in mirroring the ideological import of the work her husband was doing. But whether we should understand Livia's building projects as establishing a template used by all empresses for all time is difficult to say. First, we must note that the so-called "epigraphic habit" had the same range, so when we are interpreting women builders, we may well end up chronicling the simple fact that during these centuries people paid attention to documenting activity that was later not documented. Still, from what we can tell Augustus' activity became the template for the building programmes of later emperors, but there are major lacunae in the evidence for the building projects of their female consorts and relatives. Another factor is historical context. After all, political expediency and social mores did change over time; it would be unreasonable of us to expect that the power and influence of the *ordo matronarum* might not

wax and wane as these things shifted and changed. This might help explain the apparent drop in imperial benefactions during, for example, the mid-second century, but not the fact that women like Ummidia Quadratilla were making grand contributions to their hometowns during the same period. It is more than likely, indeed, that public benefactions for imperial women became more circumscribed at certain periods but outside Rome the picture was quite different. Likewise, we know that Pompeia Plotina, empress of Trajan, dedicated an altar to Pudicitia, but if she contributed to the built environment in any other way, our sources are silent.[581] Meanwhile, Matidia the Younger, the half-sister to Vibia Sabina, Hadrian's wife, paid for the construction of a bridge at Portus and a road, theatre, and library at Suessa Aurunca, where her family had land.[582] Sabina herself did not build in the city so far as we know. As we have seen, though, the silences are sometimes misleading, as a dedicatory inscription marking Julia Domna's restoration of a structure originally dedicated by Sabina attests.[583] The emphasis, then, must always be on the individual circumstances and local context of each benefaction. The story of the family to which each benefactor belonged tells the story, as Roman society was premised on social connections.

## Gender

Answering the question of whether gender was the central issue in whether a woman built or not, the answer would appear to be 'no.' After all, the martialling of personal resources and the range of potential motivations appear practically identical whether the benefactor was male or female. Personal connection, assertion of prominence, and, often, remembrance and

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[581] Juv. *Sat*. 6.308. A series of coins was issued depicting, on the obverse, a bust of Plotina and, on the reverse, the altar to Pudicitia on which is pictured the goddess standing on a curule chair. *RIC* II Trajan 733 (denarius).
[582] *AE* 1975, 137 (bridge); AE 1991, 492 (road); *AE* 2006, 317 = *AE* 2008, +389 (theatre); *CIL* X.4760 (library); *CIL* IX.6083.84 (land). Multiple statues of Matidia the Younger at Suessa confirm her patronal status at this city. See Boatwright 1991, 528.
[583] Above, ch. 6. *CIL* VI.997=*ILS* 324. *Iulia Aug mater Augg et castrorum Matronis restituit/Sabina Aug Matronis*.

advertisement of family came into play for elite men as well as for women. That these priorities were shared by both sexes indicates, we might assume, that they shared a focus on expressing status and jockeying for public memory. In a way, then, the understanding that men funded public structures to establish a memory of a civil or military success while women highlighted family and the career of male relatives appears to cohere. When we consider, on the other hand, that Rome's was a society where motivations other than prevailing androcentric ones did not exist, we must question an interpretation that suggests a uniquely female approach to building. It seems unlikely, first of all, that women were motivated to express socially acceptable "women's concerns" when these were not overtly public concerns. What is the evidence, after all, that there was pressure on women to build in "socially acceptable" terms when in fact they paid for the construction of a wide variety of structures and infrastructural elements that cannot be said to possess hints of the feminine? Even within the context of the very limited number of structures that make up these case studies there are none that can be usefully understood as expressions of specifically female concerns. Likewise, arguing that women were constructing a public persona, while perhaps applying well to women of the lower ranks, does not quite fit for the women who comprise the sample here. In each case, the women in question were by virtue of birth and/or marriage enormously wealthy and well-connected members of their social order and what they chose to build contributed to the local context in a way that was congruent with their status. It is difficult to see how Ummidia Quadratilla's contributions at Casinum or Julia Memmia's bath complex at Bulla Regia connect to specifically female priorities or concerns, and it is likewise hard to accept that Mineia's basilica at Paestum constructed a public persona for her, as though, as a member of the prominent *Memmii* and widow of a man raised up by Caesar, she was not already an important public personage. For provincial women like Mineia, who appears to have resided principally at Paestum, the expression of her importance within her own milieu was more clearly the point. Women like Ummidia Quadratilla and Julia Memmia, who built in provincial cities connected to their families by bonds of origin and patronage, did not

need to create a public persona there; their lofty standing in that context was expressed, not created. At Rome, where they undoubtedly had homes, it would have been much different.[584] There, they would have been members of Rome's *conventus matronarum* and lower in rank than the empress and wives of members of the emperor's court. Building outside the capitol allowed them to express their status in a setting where it mattered more—both to them personally and to the collective memory of their families. The provincial cities of the Latin West were *loci memoriae* for elite Romans, both male and female, whose families rose from the provincial elite to make their mark on the larger stage.

Neither does there seem to be any difference in the types of buildings that women chose to fund compared to men. It is true that women appear to have acted as benefactors to public building projects less often than did men, but when it came to building *types*, women funded the construction of the same sorts of structures. This returns us to the question of whether there was such a thing as an "appropriate" project for a woman. The assertion, for example, that female benefactors preferred to fund religious structures, while seemingly supported by the epigraphic record, is, I think, misleading. In fact, when we look at the sorts of buildings public benefactors preferred to build it should be no surprise that temples were the most commonly constructed type of building across the whole empire. Indeed, our knowledge of the actual range of typologies constructed under the empire is skewed by the fact that temple podia tend to outlast senate houses, for example.[585] Add to this the fact that a city needed only one curia and one or two basilicae, depending on the city's size, while the number of deities requiring temples was potentially vast and it is easy to see that of course when anyone—male or female—funded a building it was likely a temple.

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[584] Ummidia's house in Rome is known both by archaeological evidence and by mention in Pliny's letter. That Julia Memmia owned a home in Rome is implied by her father's career, and by the fact that arrangements for the bath complex at Bulla were apparently made through correspondence.
[585] MacDonald 1986, 128-129.

The fact that we think of temple building as an appropriately female endeavor (if women *must* build, let them build temples) is a sign that we have overwritten Roman realities in this case with notions of building that more rightly belong to later eras.[586] During the Republican period through the first three centuries of the Roman imperial age, in fact, temples were more often built by men than women. We think of the Republican victory temples that dotted the landscape of early-to-mid Republican Rome, or how Augustus bragged in his *Res Gestae* that he built or rebuilt more than eighty temples in the city of Rome alone. In every case, temples were evidence of the sponsor's *pietas* and/or offered to a god in thanksgiving for some success the builder wished to keep in the public eye. They stood as prominent markers of his devotion to Rome and its traditions and added to his *dignitas*. The same must be understood of women who funded temple constructions, despite their dearth of military victories or magisterial might. A look at the epigraphic database indicates that when a woman funded a temple it was often because she was associated with the cult in question, though not always as a priestess. More devotees of freed or decurial status seem to have built and dedicated temples (*aedes* or *templum*) than did women of senatorial status, who invested their money in more high-profile undertakings.

Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest that there was a separate set of associations for women who built compared to men. When Ummidia Quadratilla had a temple constructed for the people of Casinum in the second century CE, she was making an important contribution to the city while simultaneously signalling her *pietas* and devotion to traditional Roman values using the same bank of meanings that would have held had she been male. It might be more constructive to think of buildings as possessing a set of meanings attached to their form and function that did not deviate according to the gender of the builder. Even to those citizens who

[586] I have not come across a study that charts the shift from temple/church building as a particularly female endeavor, if it ever was, but the association with women and religion is the result, I think, of a Christianizing of our view of history.

could read the dedication Ummidia had erected in the amphitheatre to mark her donations for eternity, *templum* denoted a form that signalled certain things, with only the particulars changing—the deity to whom it was dedicated, whether it was votive or not, etc. These were meanings that must have worked to the advantage of the public benefactor, regardless of their sex.

Concomitant with this is the general assumption that women did not build "political" structures. Here, we run into the problem of asserting strict categories to public structures in which multiple associations coexisted even as one or two tended to dominate. Theatres, for example, were not used solely for entertainment and in fact often served as venues for meetings that required space for all the citizenry so that debates could be heard by all, and votes counted. The political implications of this are obvious. Likewise, a public portico like the one refurbished by Octavia was both a place for the performance of personal virtues, status, and wealth, and a meeting place for business of all sorts, including meetings of the senate. There is no reason to think that Octavia was barred from sharing in the implied meaning(s) of the Porticus Metelli when she had its renovations completed after her son's death. After all, she was the sister of the Princeps, the wife of Marcus Antonius, and mother of the heir-apparent, M. Claudius Marcellus. She had appeared on provincial coinage along with her husband and instigated diplomatic efforts to calm the relationship between her husband and brother. As late as 35 BCE, she undertook a mission to take troops and money to Antonius in Egypt.[587] Her status and *auctoritas* may have come, originally, from the men in her life, but she established for herself a reputation premised definitively on her own actions and personal integrity. There is no reason to think that the meaning of the Porticus Octaviae was interpreted as particularly "feminine" because of her gender. Indeed, the performance of "feminine virtues" was not without a

[587] Appearing on the coinage of Marc Antony: *RPC* I.1462-63, 1469-70, 1755, 2519, 2574, 2998-3001. Diplomacy: Plutarch *Antony,* 35 (before Antonius' and her brother's meeting at Tarentum in 37 BCE), 53-54 (brings money, troops, and supplies to Antonius while he's in Egypt, 35 BCE).

controversial element, women being insiders and the 'other'—outsiders—in their own culture simultaneously.

The cross-over between building type and gender considerations is highlighted, especially, in the basilica Mineia funded at Paestum. Like theatres and porticoes, a basilica was multi-use in the sense that it accommodated business meetings in its shaded portico and hosted engagements both personal and official on the interior. It was a focal point of public activity as much as it was a place of formal transactions. When the magistrate was at work, of course, public trials were staged and decisions made, and it is from these judicial activities that the basilica gets its weighty associations. But while it is true that what survives of the epigraphic record does not reflect many instances of such benefactions by women, there is nothing to indicate that women were barred or discouraged from building this type of structure. Still, of the more than 200 building dedications in the database only four refer to basilicas, and each of these dates to between the late first century BCE/first century CE and the second century CE.[588] One possible explanation, of course, is that this speaks more to feelings then-prevalent regarding women involved in the public sphere. It seems plausible, but impossible to verify definitively, that the relationship of the imperial house vis-à-vis the city during the earlier period of imperial power stimulated this sort of benefaction and that this shifted as the nature of imperial rule and sensibilities at Rome changed over time. What is clear, however, is that the women acted, each within her own sphere and according to her personal social standing.

As to the question of how the public would have interpreted the structures paid for by female benefactors – since women paid for the same sorts of structures that men did, it seems unlikely that the public would have had a different experience interacting in the space that those buildings delineated. Is that reflected in the interpretations offered by scholars, though? A lot of

[588] For other basilicae built by women, see note 65, above. Of course, the low survival rate of such buildings (and their dedicatory inscriptions) must be factored into why this number is so low.

work has been done to, in a sense, "feminize" the space of Livia's portico especially, with scholars emphasizing the grape vine that wound its way around the interior, the play of water, or the cool of the shade. For the ordinary Roman, the Porticus Liviae supposedly made possible a softer experience of urban Rome than would otherwise be available. But all the porticos surely afforded that; what is the difference, after all, of strolling in the shade of the Porticus Agrippae, for example, or the Porticus Liviae or Octaviae? Only if a visitor could read, and then only if they noticed the building dedication, the inscription on the architrave, or the honorific statue of the builder that undoubtedly inhabited some space within or at the entrance to the building in question, would the space itself reveal its patron's gender. To those who knew that a woman had sponsored a major public structure may have made an impression. It would certainly have conveyed that she possessed the wealth and influence necessary to build but whether that read as transgressive is unlikely. As we have seen, women of the highest rank could and did receive public honours, were sometimes made the patronesses of cities, and were believed to possess the *auctoritas* that made them capable of being worthy of these honours. For women of wealth and connection, funding a public building expressed the status that she already possessed, and was made possible by the potentially vast network of connections that she had with other women and the wider community but especially, at the most elite levels, within the imperial court.

## Social Connection & Hierarchy

This is where hierarchical considerations come in, and the notion that Roman society was made up not just of a network of male connections, patronages, and competitions, but of a corresponding network of these things for women, too, operating on the same levels (elite, equestrian, freed, etc.). The fact that Roman society was so utterly androcentric practically dictates that it should have been so. Leaving women out of the equation because we assume that this is what the Romans did does an injustice to Roman sensibilities concerning how the world should be ordered and what should drive human enterprise. But the apparent liminality of women in Roman society does confuse things. As we have seen, the relationship of a married

woman to her husband's family (which included her own children) was that of an outsider—a member of another family with a different *paterfamilias*—even while she lived in their shared home. What we forget is that women were valued members of the household, bearers of their husbands' and fathers' reputations and possessors of status by virtue of being *materfamilias* (a word with personal overtones, not just those rising from her marriage) and participants in the family *consilium*.[589] The fact that we tend to see their structures as pertaining strictly to social or "family concerns" when the benefactor was a woman compared to a more overtly political reading applied when the benefactor was male tells us as much about modern prejudices as Roman priorities. When assessing a building project, then, using a heterarchical approach, women should be understood as expressing their place (of pre-eminence or otherwise) within the *ordo* to which they belonged.

What is certain, therefore, is that in each case the benefactions in question served to enshrine the builder as a major public benefactor and connect her public prominence to her family—that is, to history. At Casinum, Ummidia Quadratilla rebuilt the theatre to which her father had contributed before her, but she also funded the construction of a temple and an amphitheatre in a corresponding location just outside the city walls. The collocation of theatre and amphitheatre in Casinum's topography suggests that they were ideologically related: the *Ummidii* provided for the leisure and enjoyment of the people of Casinum and supplied their hometown with monuments that distinguished it from surrounding cities. Mineia in Paestum, meanwhile, embedded herself in the very heart of her city, the forum, and constructed a family gallery because family memory was of prime importance. Given that her brothers and son do not appear to have had especially noteworthy careers, it is probably fair to say that family was the point of this gallery. Placing the two families—*Memmii* and *Flacci*—before the community's attention ensured that they would be remembered. Central to this family gallery was Mineia

[589] Ulpian, *Dig*. 50.16.46.1.

herself, and we may understand the gallery as intended to highlight Mineia's personal status and familial import before the whole community. If one were to apply a modern psychological explanation to this phenomenon, the tendency of women in patriarchal societies to emphasize and take pride in the achievements of their sons, brothers, and husbands as though they were their own might be appropriate. One thinks of Dio's assertion that Livia, "…in the time of Augustus…possessed the greatest influence and…always declared that it was she who had made Tiberius emperor…"[590] Still, that a woman might want to be remembered as associated with a man as moderately successful as Mineia's husband is not necessarily only to advance him—especially if he is already deceased—but to declare her importance in the context of their community. The fact that she minted coins featuring her own image and that of her building indicates that she wished to be understood as a leading figure in Paestan society. The example of Julia Memmia in Bulla Regia also has a couple of possible readings and there is no reason to think that only one of them is correct. First, it is clear from the partial inscription discovered in the bath complex that Julia built the bath to honour the memory of her deceased father. That there was also a statue of herself in one of the two main stairwells as well as one of him, though, speaks to her desire to receive the credit for this impressive bathing complex and be remembered as the person keeping her father and his career before the eyes of his home city. She was declaring *both* her father's worthiness of public memory *and* her own. The bath house is also an interesting choice for a public benefaction with such a decidedly memorial flavour. It reads as though it was important to Julia Memmia—a *patrona*—that her role as civic benefactor place her at the centre of the community's daily activities. Reminding the population of her father's important civic career established her *pietas* and contributed to her *dignitas*.

This was no less true for Livia, who by virtue of her marriage needed to establish herself as preeminent of all women. With more at stake, it was important that Livia be especially careful

[590] Dio 57.12.3.

in her choice of location and scope of project. Indeed, Livia's choices reveal a keen appreciation for the place of Rome's matrons in history. She understood that by virtue of her marriage to the *princeps* she was the most important woman in Rome.[591] Note that the inscription she placed on the Temple of Fortuna Muliebris did not employ a formula unique to women; she used the same one used by men—one rooted in Romans' shared history. The words she chose declared the status (*uxor Augusti*) through which she had a role within her own *ordo*—Rome's elite matrons—comparable to her husband's, in the senate. In keeping with this relationship, she also chose (or convinced her husband, or decided in conjunction with him, we cannot be sure) to fund a massive public portico on the Oppian spur of the Esquiline Hill overlooking a main thoroughfare to and from the *Subura*, the sprawling suburban district just outside the centre. Building here was a strategic choice for the imperial couple—Augustus contributed land recouped from the destruction of Pollio's villa and Livia funded the construction of the portico from her own vast resources. This portico declared the cooperation of the imperial couple with its central shrine to Concordia because together they had restored a large privately-owned area to the people of Rome. It also expressed their interest in celebrating collaboration between *ordines,* and this included the *ordo matronarum* as informal counterpart to the senatorial order. In a very real sense, too, it celebrated their shared status as socio-political fulcrums, moving or shifting all portions of Roman society (male and female) towards a renewal of Rome's glory.

Despite the complex variety of factors that weigh in on our interpretation of women's public building benefactions, what is clear is that women, while formally barred from civic participation, could and did take part in the public sphere—through their influence and status, and by means of their wealth and connectedness. Like their male counterparts, their building

[591] A possible avenue of further study would connect the concept of "public families" during the Republic with the ideological emphasis of the early imperial period.

activity expressed their status in society, proclaimed their wealth and influence, and contributed meaningfully to the communities large and small to which they had a personal attachment through family, marriage, or both. Women built prominently and in prominent spaces, enhancing the urban environment in which they moved and lived. Whether we see the significance of their public participation or not depends largely on whether we subscribe to the androcentric view promulgated by ancient authors. Flipping the narrative lets us see that gender was not central, even if sexism inspired men to sideline, ignore, or overwrite female benefactions.

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