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# Female Patronage of Public Space in Roman Cities

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# **FEMALE PATRONAGE OF PUBLIC SPACE IN ROMAN CITIES**

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Senior Honors Thesis for Classical Studies and Urban Studies  
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## Introduction

Much of the public infrastructure in Roman cities, from aqueducts and porticoes to temples and bathhouses, were attributed to elites who funded such projects. In Italy, for example, public funds were rarely used for public works and entertainment; rather, cities depended on elites to finance public buildings, games, banquets, and other amenities.<sup>1</sup> The elites in this study include those of imperial, senatorial, and equestrian rank. Considering the cultural context of the Roman Empire, it is expected that most of these elites who were honored for financing urban building projects and representing cities were men. But while the occurrence of women serving as benefactors was far less frequent, it is frequent enough during the Principate (27 B.C.E. – 295 C.E.) to suggest patterns in their levels of civic involvement, the image they conveyed to the public, and the mark they left on urban space throughout the Empire. Despite the continuing social expectation for women to remain in the domestic sphere, wives of emperors and senators could use their wealth to at least be remembered through urban space, whether through the buildings they funded or the statues that honored them.

Investigating the cause for women's increased level of urban benefactions during the Principate can shed light on what might be significant about this phenomenon. Did laws and trends that gave women greater independence lead to their benefactions, or were benefactions a vehicle that advertently or inadvertently led to greater leadership roles, if at all? On the one hand, material benefactions were opportunities for women to have a pseudo-political career. But while greater civic involvement among elite women might initially suggest their heightened political

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Forbis, *Municipal Virtues in the Roman Empire: The Evidence of Italian Honorary Inscriptions*, Germany: B.G. Teubner Stuttgart und Lipzig (1996), 29.

power, female patronage of public space was complex and does not paint a clear picture about women's status in the Roman Empire.

This project studies the rise of female patronage of public space in Roman cities and seeks to find patterns across different geographic locations in the Empire as well as different classes of elite women. Starting with imperial women, I explore the potential influence they had on other elite women, and how their roles as mothers of the Empire helped bring them forth into prominent public spaces. Then, I consider the gendered public sphere in which women were becoming civically involved through urban patronage and benefactions, looking at the writings of Dio Chrysostom, a male politician in Prusa, regarding masculinity in politics and the separation of domestic and public life. From here, I look at the rest of the Greek Eastern world in which Dio lived, further investigating the ways in which domestic family life entered the public sphere as women were benefactors in a culture that praised their piety and chastity. Lastly, I turn back to Italy and the western provinces to see the ways in which female domestic virtues are brought into women's political involvement as both official patronesses, which was a uniquely Roman institution, and as general urban benefactresses. The underlying pattern across these various aspects of female benefactions in Roman cities is that women used domestic virtues and obligations to bring themselves into the public, male-dominated sphere. While men also used their family backgrounds as a vehicle and influence to enter the political world, they did not consider their world to be domestic at all. In contrast, women in the public sphere, specifically as urban benefactors, frequently justified their civic involvement with continuing past family traditions, fulfilling familial duties, and enhancing the future of her descendants. Thus, urban patronage for elite women in the Roman Empire represents a practice that allowed women to

blend the private and public spheres and as a result, influence and be commemorated through public space.

### *Defining Patrons and Benefactors*

Some of these elites were designated as the official patron of a city, which required local senate approval and was often chronicled in inscriptions. City patrons are viewed by some scholars as “the apparatus of government” in the Roman Empire. Not only did they contribute to a client city’s built environment by funding renovations and constructions of public buildings, but they also represented client cities’ interests in Rome and communicated between cities and the imperial government.<sup>2</sup> There are no Roman laws that formally state the requirements or expectations of being a *patronus*. *Tabulae patronatus* are honorary decrees, not legal contracts, that enumerate the agreements between the patron and client-community. We know of one thousand municipal *patroni* from inscriptions who officially received their title by a *decretum* of the town senate. However, benefactors often served as more informal patrons as well without receiving the official title of a *patronus*.<sup>3</sup> “The good patron (or, as the case may be, the good client) is also a good citizen. Tradition then sanctified this exercise of civic virtue.” Being a patron during the imperial period became much more honorific. Patrons were also recruited from more natives non-senators during this time, whereas during the Republic cities had coopted Roman senators that were not native to their cities.<sup>4</sup> In the second century C.E., patronage was mostly among the equestrians and municipal aristocrats. Nicols said, “As time went on, the

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<sup>2</sup> Claude Eilers, *Roman Patrons of Greek Cities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 84.

<sup>3</sup> John Nicols, “Pliny and the Patronage of Communities,” *Hermes* 108. Bd., H. 3 (1980): 367.

<sup>4</sup> Eilers (2002), 105-106.

honor was increasingly used not only to express thanks, but also to formalize the relationship between the community and its most important member(s).”<sup>5</sup>

Pliny the Younger, for example, was never coopted as a patron in his native Comum, but funded projects there.<sup>6</sup> He was, however, patron of Tifernum Tiberium and funded the construction of a temple in the city. In his letters, he states that he was co-opted as a patron there when he was “scarcely past boyhood” and that the town reveres him greatly when he visits. This is shown when he writes to Calpurnius Fabatus, his wife’s grandfather, “The people always celebrate my arrivals, regret my departures, and rejoice in my official titles, and so to express my gratitude (one always feels disgraced at being outdone in friendly feeling) I defrayed the cost of building a temple in the town.”<sup>7</sup> Eilers argues that the long interval of time between Pliny’s cooptation as a patron and his financing of the temple shows that benefactions were not expected of Pliny as a patron.<sup>8</sup> It is true that we cannot specifically discern the motives of either the town or of Pliny, but Pliny states himself that he built the temple in gratitude for the town’s kindness towards him. The town must have had some expectation that Pliny would eventually donate to the city. Because Pliny was from a wealthy elite lineage, the people of Tifernum Tiberium likely expected him to finance renovations. We know that Pliny inherited the elder Pliny’s large estate near Tifernum, so members of the community would have known that Pliny was incredibly wealthy.<sup>9</sup> Since the primary duties expected of patrons was to communicate the client city’s interests in Rome and advocate on its behalf, it can be argued that patrons like Pliny were

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<sup>5</sup> Nicols (1980), 382.

<sup>6</sup> Emily Hemelrijk, “City Patronesses in the Roman Empire,” *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Bd. 53, H. 2 (2004): 218-222.

<sup>7</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 4.1.1. (trans. Betty Radice).

<sup>8</sup> Eilers (2002), 103.

<sup>9</sup> Nicols (1980), 369.

venerated to that extent by client cities to gain favor for reasons other than benefactions. But it is difficult to believe that Pliny would be shown that much veneration (though perhaps he made the experience sound loftier than it really was) without the expectation that he would use his wealth for the benefit of the city.

It can be interpreted that material benefactions were not formally expected of urban patrons. Being an official patron did not necessarily mean being more likely than non-patrons to donate material benefactions. There is little overlap between benefactors and patrons. For example, in North Africa most of the 396 benefactions for which we have records are not by *patroni*; only in eleven are the patron and benefactor identical.<sup>10</sup> Nicols states that it was indeed expected of patrons to give material benefactions to client cities.<sup>11</sup> Civic liberality was not an obligation, but it was expected among ancient elites because it was such a crucial aspect of public life. For this reason, we have many inscriptions about material benefactions. Because benefactors needed to be both politically involved and wealthy (the latter was also required for the former), patronage and benefactions often coincided.<sup>12</sup>

Beyond official patrons, which was a Roman institution, elites across the Empire in both the Greek East and Latin West were benefactors. Women in power, from the imperial family to local elites, could fund urban building projects and be publicly honored for doing so in the form of honorific statues and inscriptions. Most of the elite women discussed in this study will be referred to as simply benefactors or benefactresses rather than a formal patroness, which is a title limited to the Latin West. Zuiderhoek states,

The fact that in honorific decrees benefactors are commonly praised for virtues that were not strictly euergetic but had far wider social and political connotations indeed suggests

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<sup>10</sup> Eilers (2002), 100.

<sup>11</sup> Nicols (1980), 367.

<sup>12</sup> Eilers (2002), 99-101.



that contemporaries did regard euergetism as an inextricable part of, and perhaps even an emblematic, of, political life in general.<sup>13</sup>

The *euergetism* that Zuiderhoek mentions originates from the Greek εὐεργετέω, which means “doing good deeds.” According to Domino Gygax, euergetism originates from the Hellenistic era and encompasses the notion of benefactors’ providing monetary donations towards cities, as well as the honors the cities granted to the benefactors.<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that this relationship was in some ways an exchange, not simply a one-sided transaction.

Therefore, elite benefactors were associated with virtues that were expected of elites. Particularly women in the Greek East were frequently described as pious or modest in inscriptions, which highlighted domestic virtues in a public setting. Imperial women also were praised as mothers of emperors in inscriptions, which furthered dynastic ideology and publicized imperial families. Though honorific decrees sometimes discussed female benefactors’ domestic virtues, such honors were still part of a political sphere that was limited to women and were thus significant for women to receive. Because urban benefactions were so tied to political life, they allowed women to gain entry into politics to an extent.

### *Methodology*

Since we are looking at antiquity, we rely on fragments of evidence. The evidence we have of elite benefactors and patrons exists mainly in the form of inscriptions, either on the buildings that were dedicated or on statues honoring the benefactor. Such statues were prolific throughout the Empire. Dio Chrysostom describes the incredible abundance of honorary statues in Rhodes, to the point where the Rhodians were scratching off the inscriptions on older statues

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<sup>13</sup> Arjan Zuiderhoek, “On the Political Sociology of the Imperial Greek City.” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 48 (2008): 422.

<sup>14</sup> Marc Domingo Gygax, *Benefaction and Rewards in the Ancient Greek City: The Origins of Euergetism* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 2.

and replacing them with new ones.<sup>15</sup> In Xanthos in Lykia, honorary statues line the main street leading to the agora. Though the presence of honorary statues was prevalent in some cities, as Dio Chrysostom stated, honoring women was still unique. Both women and men citizens in the Greek East were not usually honored with statues until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. But with the progression of the Roman Empire came the increased publicity of elite figures. Language in the honorary inscriptions for both men and women tell what was expected of all elite benefactors, and what differences existed between them. Inscriptions also reveal the types of buildings that might have been more likely to be funded by women, that patrons sponsored in general, and the gratitude expressed by the cities for such projects. Furthermore, inscriptions state the virtues expected of and associated with elite patrons, as well as regional differences that existed between the Greek East and the Latin West. For example, Hemelrijk states that honorific inscriptions may have made women more “masculine in the eyes of the ancient public” by being portrayed as high-ranking.”<sup>16</sup> Dedicatory statues and inscriptions not only identify who were the benefactors in a city and what they contributed to the urban fabric, but also reveal the virtues associated with or expected of elites. A crucial consideration in particular is the fabric of the city’s public space. Studying gender through urban space is crucial because urban space is intended to be somewhat permanent. The placement of honorary statues in public space can speak to the prominence attributed to these women and the social acceptance of their patronage.

Many of the buildings that the subjects of this study contributed to Roman society no longer exist. In addition to inscriptions that state what kinds of buildings these benefactors financed, other primary sources from this time period paint a picture of the urban fabric. Strabo,

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<sup>15</sup> D.Chr. 31.9 (trans. J.W. Cohoon and H. Lamar Crosby).

<sup>16</sup> Hemelrijk (2004), 231.

for example, illustrates the atmosphere of the city surrounding the Porticus Liviae in Rome.<sup>17</sup>

This building will be discussed further in Chapter 1. Another example of literature studied in this project is poetry, specifically that of Ovid. He claims that women act promiscuously in Rome's public spaces such as theaters, and temples. Ovid goes so far as to say, "Since certain women spend time there in order to meet a lover, why does a single portico stand open?"<sup>18</sup> This image of women entering public space is considered scandalous and dangerous, and here porticoes are depicted as morally suspect spaces. What would have Ovid thought about a woman sponsoring a portico's reconstruction? Ovid also states, "Everything has the power to corrupt perverted minds; and yet everything is safe in its own place."<sup>19</sup> On these lines, Milnor comments:

In Augustus' city, each thing has 'its own place', the proper occupation of which guarantees moral and social stability, which translates in turn to the 'safety' that Ovid invokes in these lines... Far from being passive objects, or even passive recipients, of ideological statements, women for Ovid are a disruptive presence in the landscape, as they refuse to see what they are supposed to see, to imagine what they are supposed to imagine, and to do what they are supposed to do.<sup>20</sup>

Though poetry does not present us with historical facts, it can give us a general idea of what an elite man like Ovid thought about the world in which he lived. Historians also tell us male perspectives on women during this time period. Dio Cassius, in particular, recorded events surrounding imperial women's greater financial independence and milestones of imperial women such as Livia and Octavia.<sup>21</sup> The historian Suetonius also tells us about Augustus' perspective on

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<sup>17</sup> Strab. V.236 (trans. Horace Leonard Jones).

<sup>18</sup> *Ov. Tr.* 2,285-6 (trans. A.S. Kline).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.301-2.

<sup>20</sup> Kristina Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: Inventing Private Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 54-58.

<sup>21</sup> Dio Cass. 49.38.1 (trans. Earnest Cary).

women in his family, which can help us understand the level of freedom Livia and Octavia possessed as his wife and sister, respectively.<sup>22</sup>

Lastly, primary sources such as letters and speeches show the duties and expectations of local politicians in the Empire. The letters of Pliny the Younger have already been referenced and will frequently be referenced again in this study. His correspondences with the emperor Trajan give insight into some of the governing practices in the Empire.<sup>23</sup> He is also connected with Dio Chrysostom, a politician from Prusa (a city in Bithynia) of whom we have the largest record of local political writings.<sup>24</sup> Dio's political speeches and discourses are often centered around public building projects and the need for cities to remain competitive by modernizing its public architecture. Furthermore, he connects urban benefactions to masculinity and portrays a very gendered public sphere that seems to have little room for women.

#### *Types of Roman Public Architecture*

Public buildings in the Roman Empire fell into three categories: religious, municipal/civic, and recreational/entertainment. It is important to distinguish the societal role of temples vs. porticoes vs. bathhouses. Though all these buildings are open to the public and are meant to foster interaction among urban citizens, they have very distinct functions and implications.<sup>25</sup> As we will see, it is significant when imperial women begin to fund buildings for civic use, since there had been a strong tradition of female priestesses being associated with religious buildings. But this does not mean that functions could not overlap between buildings in

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<sup>22</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 64.4-5. L (trans. J.C. Rolfe).

<sup>23</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 109.

<sup>24</sup> Tonnes Bekker-Nielsen, *Urban Life and Local Politics in Roman Bithynia: The Small World of Dion Chrysostomos* (Oakville: Aarhus University Press, 2009), 121.

<sup>25</sup> James C. Anderson, Jr., *Roman Architecture and Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 241.

different categories. For example, a temple is obviously a religious institution, but it can also be a landmark or an easily accessible meeting place. Knowing that the temple, often elevated in the landscape, is at the center of the town would help a lost stranger.<sup>26</sup> Vitruvius writes the following about the importance of making temples prominent in the urban fabric:

If the nature of the site interferes, the aspect of the temple must be so altered that the greatest possible part within the walls of the city may be visible from the temples of the gods. Also, if a sacred temple is raised along the riverside, as by the Nile in Egypt, it ought to seem to regard the banks of the river. Likewise if the edifices of the gods are about the public thoroughfares, they are to be so arranged that the passersby can look aside, and make their reverence in full view.<sup>27</sup>

Temples' names also were sometimes associated with the economic activities in the area. Civic business were often held in temples such as Senate meetings in Rome, trials, and seats of city offices. They could be public art galleries, as we will see in the Porticus Octaviae in Chapter 1, or serve legal and political functions (temples without full frontal staircases were meant to be a platform for public speakers).<sup>28</sup>

In the category of civic buildings are porticoes, basilicas, senate meeting houses, arches, fountains, and libraries. When discussing civic buildings, porticoes are especially crucial to female patronage of public space. Porticoes were colonnaded open spaces, sometimes surrounding temples and other central public buildings in the general forum (city center).<sup>29</sup> Thus, porticoes also had multiple functions, demarcating buildings of various uses as all part of the central and crucial public forum in the city.

Finally, recreational buildings were also a major facet of Roman public architecture. This category encompassed amphitheaters, baths, circuses, and concert halls (*odeum*). Baths were

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>27</sup> Vitr. 4.5.2 (trans. Frank Granger).

<sup>28</sup> Anderson (1997), 244.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 247-249.

special in this category in that they had the greatest diversity of functions. People of all genders and social classes could gather in baths while also cleaning themselves, distinguishing baths from other entertainment buildings that were for spectators rather than participators.

#### *Cultural and Historical Considerations*

These are among several cultural, historical, and economic considerations when thinking about why women became benefactors. The need for financial resources could have also necessitated the acceptance of women's donations. Perhaps because the number of willing and able benefactors declined in the second century, cities were more open to having female benefactors. It was not uncommon for women to be involved in financial transactions of various kinds. The *Digest* discusses hundreds of imperial responses to female litigants, showing a large number of financial transactions in which women were involved.<sup>30</sup> It is important to emphasize that the primary factor in a woman's ability to be a patron or a benefactor was her wealth. Along with wealth came status, which is why the theme of family comes forth in this study. Women who were wealthy came from families of wealth and traditions of being benefactors. Therefore, a woman's role of continuing family tradition and being a virtuous daughter could bring her into the public eye, combining the domestic and the public spheres. MacMullen states that most people in the Empire were more concerned about their reputation in their native cities than in Rome, which led many senators and their wives to maintain influence in their native towns.<sup>31</sup> Such influence could be garnered through funding public infrastructure.

This study also considers the geographic location of cities studied, as there are cultural differences between the Greek East, which experiences cultural transition after coming under

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<sup>30</sup> Ramsay MacMullen, *Changes in the Roman Empire: Essays in the Ordinary*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 163.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

Roman rule, and the Latin West. It is difficult to find a clear geographic point in Italy that serves as a point of separation between the Greek East and the Latin West, as a long and complex history of mixed identities, ethnicities, and languages characterizes the region.<sup>32</sup> Italy itself contains both cities that are Greek-speaking provinces as well as Latin-speaking ones, and of course it contains the capital Rome. When looking at benefactors and patrons of the Latin West, the evidence we have is concentrated in central Italy and northern Africa. The tradition and importance of family exists in all regions, but it can manifest in different ways. Familial tradition in the Greek East, for example, led to elite women's visibility in the public sphere as they were obligated to maintain their native cities. In this case, urban patronage might have underscored a woman's ties to her family rather than form her individuality. As time passes in the Roman period, "the more marked the *distance sociale*, and the more developed the exemplary image of the elite-family and the paternalistic relationship between benefactor-politician and people."<sup>33</sup>

The size of cities can also be an important factor. Smaller cities seem to have had a higher concentration of women in power than larger ones throughout the Empire, but there are exceptions. Obviously, imperial women had tremendous influence in Rome, as will be discussed in the first chapter. In the large city of Corinth, Junia Theodora was honored through senatorial decrees for hosting travelers in her home. One of these decrees stated that she "help[ed] to promote a friendly disposition toward us among all the leading people."<sup>34</sup> In this example,

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<sup>32</sup> Gary Reger, "Ethnic Identities, Borderlands, and Hybridity" in *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Jeremy McInerney, 112-126 (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 121.

<sup>33</sup> Riet Van Bremen, *Limits of Participation: Women and Civic Life in the Greek East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Netherlands: J.C. Gieben (1996), 164.

<sup>34</sup> D. I. Pallas et al., *BCH* 83 (1959) 498f.

money alone could not bring Junia Theodora to her status; her network, connections, and actual influence among people brought her to her high status.<sup>35</sup>

It would also be useful to look at general elite motivations for donating public buildings to cities. Benefactions could come in various forms, including festivals, games, monetary distributions, grain distributions, banquets, or public infrastructure. Why might an elite choose to donate a building above other things? In a letter to the Ephesians, Emperor Antoninus Pius writes about how donations for buildings are more permanent than donations for festivals.

I have agreed to all his requests for supplemental funding and welcomed the fact that he has not chosen the usual method of those engaged in political life who, for the sake of immediate prestige, lavish their funds on shows and grain distributions and prizes for the games, but has chosen a way by which he may make the city more imposing in the future.<sup>36</sup>

Such a notion of permanence might indeed have incentivized elites to choose buildings over games, festivals, or temporary events. As Van Abemma said, “The elite classes of the Roman Empire constantly sought to maintain their social status not only through munificent acts towards fellow citizens but also through the ‘monumentalizing’ of that very kindness.”<sup>37</sup> Ng describes buildings as “social instruments” that donors could use within their communities to establish reminders of their generosity and status.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, a patron who used private funds to repair a public building that was previously donated was able to have his or her name inscribed on the structure with the amount of money donated. Thus, buildings were not entirely permanent

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<sup>35</sup> MacMullen (1990), 168.

<sup>36</sup> *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 850.

<sup>37</sup> Laura Van Abemma, “The Autonomy and Influence of Roman Women in the Late First/Early Second Century CE: Social History and Gender Discourse” (PhD diss, University of Wisconsin – Madison, 2008), 31.

<sup>38</sup> Diana Ng, “Commemoration and Elite Benefaction of Buildings and Spectacles in the Roman World” in *Journal of Roman Studies* 105 (2015), 101.



and the names associated with them could change.<sup>39</sup> Banquets, games, or festivals brought “renewed public attention” to what might have been an outdated or forgotten structure.<sup>40</sup> This is why we often see in inscriptions that an elite donates both funds to repair or construct a public building coupled with a festival or banquet to commemorate the occasion. Either way, elites used public spaces in their cities to fulfill their duties and to establish political influence.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 120.

## Chapter One: Exemplary Imperial Women

Imperial women themselves served as frontrunners in urban patronage, for they became more visible in the public sphere as Emperors sought to legitimize their dynasty. There is no denying that imperial women had a position of power and influence simply due to proximity to the emperor. Women connected to the emperor had power in many forms beyond financial means; they could hand out lesser offices, consulships, governorships, procuratorships, favors, pardons, and judicial decisions.<sup>41</sup> But as we will see, imperial women also held a special kind of power because of their place in fostering dynasties. Flory states, “Imperial dynastic policy gradually admitted women to the prestige of public representation in the most frequented and politically symbolic areas of Rome.” As a result of these factors, imperial women arguably started trends in which it became more common for women to be commemorated through statues and to leave a handprint of their public influence through civic architecture in Rome.<sup>42</sup>

### *Rebuilding Rome as the Royal Family*

The emperor Octavian inherited his father Caesar’s building program, which included an extensive reorganization of Rome. Though most of it was not realized, Octavian executed parts of the plan. He sought to make Rome not only beautiful but also functional, as roads and basic infrastructure needed to be repaired. This required galvanizing wealthy senators to help improve Rome’s urban fabric, but he was not entirely successful.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps this is why Octavian turned to the women in his family as a source of funding for the vast number of projects that would be necessary to make Rome a worthy capital. Octavian himself sponsored and oversaw many

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<sup>41</sup> MacMullen (1990), 169.

<sup>42</sup> Marleen B. Flory, “Dynastic Ideology, the *Domus Augusta*, and the Imperial Women: A Lost Statuary Group in the Circus Flaminius,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 126 (1996): 287-288.

<sup>43</sup> Anderson (1997), 88-89.

projects, repairing 82 temples in Rome by ordering the surviving descendants of temple patrons to repair their ancestors' buildings and repairing the remaining ones himself.<sup>44</sup> However, he also paved the way for his wife Livia (58 B.C.E. – 29 C.E.) and sister Octavia (69 B.C.E. – 11 B.C.E.) to restore buildings. These two women were among the first female imperial benefactors, especially in terms of public buildings. Attaching glory and honor to Livia and Octavia's buildings could also have motivated other elites to also receive such prestige.

Furthermore, Octavian passed legislation that aided imperial women's involvement in urban building projects. One such law allowed elite women to be exempted from guardianship if they had three children. Previously, a woman's guardian would have had authority over her property especially in urban land in Italy. As a result of this legislation, women could have greater agency over the use of urban land and could therefore designate it for public buildings.<sup>45</sup> Octavia and Livia were also granted sacrosanctity due to Augustan legislation. Prior to this legislation, women had less autonomy with financial decisions, as noted in Cicero: "When a woman comes into her husband's legal power (*manus*), everything which belonged to the woman becomes the husband's as dowry."<sup>46</sup> A historical account of the shift that occurred when Octavian granted sacrosanctity to his sister Octavia and wife Livia, the following excerpt from Dio Cassius records the beginning of Octavia and Livia's greater sense of independence:

After this he left Fufius Geminus [there] with a small force and himself returned to Rome. The triumph which had been voted to him he deferred, but granted to Octavia and Livia statues, the right of administering their own affairs without a guardian, and the same security and inviolability as the tribunes enjoyed.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Diane Favro, *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome*, (New York: Cambridge University Press 1996), 106.

<sup>45</sup> Alison E. Cooley, "Women Beyond Rome: Trend-Setters or Dedicated Followers of Fashion?" in *Women and the Roman City. in the Latin West*, eds. Emily Hemelrijk and Greg Woolf (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2013), 27.

<sup>46</sup> Cic. *Top.* 23 (trans. Tobias Reinhart).

<sup>47</sup> Dio Cass. 49.38.1.

Augustus replaced the porticos around the temples of Juno Regina and Jupiter Stator in Octavia's name. The imperial family's involvement in restoring temples and other civic buildings promoted fiscal pragmatism, as it was much cheaper to repair buildings than to build new ones. Such projects also heightened the reputation of donors and beautified public and sacred spaces, thereby making Rome a worthy capital of an empire.<sup>48</sup> The *Res Gestae*, which was the written record of Augustus' principate, gives immense credit to Marcus Agrippa (Augustus' friend and future son-in-law) and Augustus himself for redesigning Rome, but excludes Livia. Octavia and Julia were also excluded. Because the *Res Gestae* focused on the grandeur of Augustus' military and political accomplishments, the deeds of women in his family may have been ignored.<sup>49</sup> Regardless, it was new for imperial women to sponsor public buildings outside the religious sphere. Though Livia and Octavia were associated with shrines, they also established civic buildings such as porticoes.<sup>50</sup> The Porticus Octaviae had space for the Senate as Cassius Dio tells us: "Tiberius on the first day of the year in which he was consul with Gnaeus Piso convened the senate in the Curia Octaviae, because it was outside the pomerium."<sup>51</sup> It also housed a library, a collection of paintings and sculptures, fountains, and a garden and was located near the Theater of Marcellus in Rome.<sup>52</sup>

Upon Octavian's death, Livia's son Tiberius came to power in 14 C.E. He was much less interested in civic architecture than his stepfather. Yet, he still dedicated two projects to his mother—the Macellum Liviae (a large market) and the Porticus Liviae. The Porticus Liviae was

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<sup>48</sup> Favro (1996), 106-7.

<sup>49</sup> *I. Ankara* 1.

<sup>50</sup> Cooley (2013), 31.

<sup>51</sup> Dio Cass. 55.8.1.

<sup>52</sup> Diana E. E. Kleiner, "Imperial Women as Patrons of the Arts in the Early Empire" in *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome*, eds. D.E.E. Kleiner and S.B. Matheson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 32.

among the largest public buildings in Rome during the Augustan age at 8,625 sq. m.<sup>53</sup> Located on the north slope of the Oppian hill, the Porticus Liviae was elevated and would have been prominent in the urban landscape.<sup>54</sup> Greek geographer Strabo describes the physical context of the Porticus Liviae:

And again, if, on passing to the old Forum, you saw one forum after another ranged along the old one, and basilicas, and temples, and saw also the Capitolium and the works of art there and those of the Palatium and Livia's Promenade, you would easily become oblivious to everything else outside. Such is Rome.<sup>55</sup>

The Porticus Liviae also supported the Emperor's campaign for moral reform among the Roman elite. During the Republican period, the land belonged to the House of Vedius Pollio and was given to Augustus in his will. Repurposing the land for public recreational use represented the Emperor's desire to confront the extravagant tendencies of Republican aristocrats. Tiberius and Livia both dedicated the building in 7 B.C.E. Dedicating the portico to Livia also conveyed a sense of moral behavior to be expected of Roman elite women. At the center of the portico was the Shrine to Concordia, of which Livia was the sole sponsor and dedicant.<sup>56</sup> *Concordia* referred to both the political concord of military success and the marital concord that united the imperial family. In this case, *Concordia* represented more of the unification of the imperial family. The dedication took place on 11 June in the year of 7 B.C.E., on which other dedications and festivals associated with women and family life had occurred in the past.<sup>57</sup> At the heart of the Porticus Liviae was a shrine that reminded visitors of Livia's role in bringing forth the blood line of the imperial family. The *Res Gestae* also enumerates temples Livia commissioned that also focused

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>54</sup> Sanjaya Thakur, "Femina Princeps: Livia in Ovid's Poetry" *EuGeStA* 4 (2014): 180.

<sup>55</sup> Strabo V.236.

<sup>56</sup> Dio Cass. 54.23.6; Cooley (2013), 33.

<sup>57</sup> Kleiner (1996), 32.

on female and family life. For example, Livia repaired the Temple of Bona Dea on the Aventine, and Ovid writes that she did so to “imitate her husband and follow him in everything.”<sup>58</sup> So while it was significant that Livia and Octavia were the first imperial women who sponsored civic architecture, we must keep in mind that they were consistently associated with feminine and domestic virtues.

### *Honorific Statues as Dynastic Indicators*

Another way in which imperial women gained presence in urban space is through statues. The statues that Octavian granted to Livia and Octavia along with their sacrosanctity in 35 B.C.E. were likely voted for by the Senate. Because the Senate typically voted for public honorific statues, Flory argues that these statues were voted for by *senatus consultum*. The only precedent for the voting of statues for women is the statue for Cornelia at the end of the second century B.C.E. at the porticus Metelli in Rome, but this was a more Hellenistic tradition than a Roman one. Thus, the statues for Octavia and Livia in 35 B.C.E. is a better Roman precedent.<sup>59</sup> Though there had already been a history of honoring women with statues for their relation to male Roman magistrates, these were the first instances of a senatorial vote for honorific statues. Honoring women through statues for their role as public benefactors rather than just wives, daughters, or sisters to magistrates also began in the Augustan era.<sup>60</sup> It seems that through these statues, Octavian wanted to draw attention to his family line. Honorific statues served as political propaganda in other ways as well. During 40-31 B.C.E., many statues of Octavia were established in the Greek East for Antony to align with Hellenistic traditions. This likely led

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<sup>58</sup> Ov. *Fast.* 5.157-8 (trans. James G. Frazer).

<sup>59</sup> Marleen B. Flory, “Livia and the History of Public Honorific Statues for Women in Rome.” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 123 (1993): 296.

<sup>60</sup> Cooley (2013), 25.

Octavian to use propaganda in the Latin West in response. Another possibility is that the statues could have announced the new social status of triumvirs' wives as a result of the grants of sacrosanctity. Though we do not know for sure the location of the statues, Flory notes that at least one was likely near the temple of Venus Genetrix built by Julius Caesar in order to associate Livia and Octavia with the founding mother of the imperial family.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, Dio Cassius writes that the annual Iudi Veneris Genetricis allowed the public to spend time in this space.<sup>62</sup> If Flory's hypothesis is correct, then the location of the statues in Rome's urban fabric would have reinforced dynastic ideology and shown a level of prominence given to either imperial woman.

Cassius Dio also informs us of a statue for Livia to memorialize her son Drusus, who died in 9 B.C.E. These two grants of statues occur at the earliest phases of the Imperial period. These instances represented the continuation of a tradition in which men were honored for public service through statues.<sup>63</sup> The statue granted to Livia in 9 B.C.E. was based on *merita*, which is the first known instance where this is applied to a woman. It is also interesting that as a result of her son's death, Livia herself is portrayed in the statue. Typically, the deceased person was memorialized in the statue. Though at first glance it may seem that Livia was merely being honored for her role as a mother, it is significant that she transcends norms by being depicted instead of her son. Flory suggests that Livia was granted the statue to be recognized "as a mother whose child was of such value to the state."<sup>64</sup> It was through motherhood that Livia was

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<sup>61</sup> Flory (1993): 293-5.

<sup>62</sup> Dio Cass. 49.42.1

<sup>63</sup> Favro (1996), 288-292.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 298-299.

memorialized as having a critical role in the wellbeing of the state and was essentially made permanent in Roman public space.

*Women and Public Space in Roman Literature*

It seems that imperial men justified and utilized women's greater presence in the public sphere to strengthen a dynasty. But how did other men in Roman society view these changes? The increased presence of women in public monuments and spaces during the Imperial period appears to contradict the emperors' conservative views about female modesty and domesticity. Suetonius wrote the following about Augustus:

“He brought up his daughters and granddaughters so that they even became accustomed to weaving and spinning and forbade them to speak or do anything except publicly and that was not fit to be entered in the imperial diary. He kept them from contact with strangers, to the point that he wrote to Lucius Vinicius, a noble and distinguished young man, that he had ‘behaved badly because he went to visit my daughter at Baiae’.”<sup>65</sup>

Even though this excerpt focuses on Augustus' descendants rather than his wife, it still sheds light on how he wanted his female relatives to conduct themselves in public. Much of Livia's civic involvement, such as restoring the temple of the Bona Dea or dedicating a shrine to Concordia, can seem more domestic by nature. The refoundation of the temple of Fortuna Muliebris was also founded by Livia, and its inscription is as follows:

Livia, daughter of Drusus, wife of Caesar Augustus - - - - -  
The emperors Caesar Severus and Antoninus, Augusti, and Geta most noble Caesar and Julia, Augusta, mother of the Augusti - - - - - have restored (it).<sup>66</sup>

We do not know what if any virtues about Livia were stated in this inscription, but she is described as a daughter of a man and the wife of a man, which we will see is common in

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<sup>65</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 64.4-5. L.

<sup>66</sup> *CIL* 6, 883. Trans. Gary Reger.



inscriptions throughout the empire. Not only does reference to her family add context to her status, but it also reinforces Augustus' reputation.

Thus, Augustus cannot be interpreted as expanding Octavia and Livia's presence in the public eye for their own sake, but rather to legitimize his own family line. These events, "if [they] trespassed on the line between male and female worlds in order to bolster dynastic claims, seemed to build on rather than disturb Roman cultural traditions."<sup>67</sup> The mothers of successors are commemorated most openly during this time period, and Livia's crucial role as the birther of Rome's future leader brought her into public space. Towards the end of Livia's life, the "principle of a ruling house" was granted, which gives the mother of a successor a public position.

Livia's role as the mother of a successor is also seen in Roman poetry. The idea of *domus Augusta* first appeared in Ovid's poetry in 8 C.E. and continued to be used during the last six years of Augustus' reign. This phrase describes Augustus' family in a dynastic way, but referring to the imperial family as a whole through *domus Augusta* did not cover up Livia's individual identity.<sup>68</sup> Rather, Ovid refers to Livia either by name or individually, which is not how he had previously written about female relatives of the *princeps*. For example, Ovid writes: "nor should you avoid the portico which, interspersed with old paintings, holds the name of its author, Livia."<sup>69</sup> Livia is portrayed as "the binding figure between Augustus and Tiberius."<sup>70</sup> Therefore, Livia became known as an important public figure that was the link in the Augustan line.

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<sup>67</sup> Flory (1993), 304-306.

<sup>68</sup> Flory (1996), 293-299.

<sup>69</sup> *Ov. Ars.* I.71-72: nec tibi vitetur quae priscis sparsa tabellis porticus auctoris Livia nomen habet.

<sup>70</sup> Thakur (2014), 176.

As discussed in the introduction, there is some evidence of men writing about women in public space as corrupt and disruptive to society. Ovid questioned why porticoes continue to exist when they are spaces for adulterous women to meet their lovers.<sup>71</sup> Imperial women were likely viewed differently from lower class women, so perhaps Ovid would not have been too troubled by Livia and Octavia's sponsorship of public buildings, especially since Octavian paved the way for them and had his own personal motives for involving imperial women in building sponsorship. When discussing places where women should spend their free time, Ovid writes, "Monuments which the sister [Octavia] and wife [Livia] of the leader have built, and that of his son-in-law [Agrippia], crowned with naval honors."<sup>72</sup> So even though Ovid encourages women to spend time in Livia and Octavia's porticoes, he talks about them here in reference to Augustus. This furthers the idea that Livia and Octavia's buildings were meant to glorify Augustus and the imperial dynasty.

Nonetheless, Livia, Octavia, and other imperial women were entering public space in more prominent ways than had existed before for high-ranking women and in a cultural context that associated public space and women with moral suspicion. Livy's belief that men lacked control over their wives was noted in the introduction chapter. He wrote under Augustus and thus his account is reflective of the social climate at that time. The following excerpt, which was from Cato's speech on the Lex Oppia recorded by Livy, speaks more specifically to women's increased financial independence below:

Our ancestors permitted no woman to conduct even personal business without a guardian to intervene in her behalf; they wished them to be under the control of fathers, brothers, husbands; we (Heaven help us!) allow them now even to interfere in public affairs, yes, and to visit the Forum and our informal and formal sessions. What else are they doing

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<sup>71</sup> Ov. *Tr.* 2,285-6 (trans. Arthur Leslie Wheeler).

<sup>72</sup> Ov. *Ars.* III.391-392: *quaeque soror coniunxque ducis monimenta pararunt / navalique gener cinctus honore caput.*

now on the streets and at the corners except urging the bill of the tribunes and voting for the repeal of the law?<sup>73</sup>

Cato is troubled by the waning tradition of male guardians' supervising women's public affairs. It is interesting that the act of interfering in public affairs is coupled with women's ability to freely visit the Forum. The image of women being on the streets is associated with political lobbying. These depictions of women in public space suggest that even if women could freely move about public space, it was not viewed as completely innocent or ordinary. Though this speech is set in the 190s B.C.E., we can cautiously assume that the viewpoints presented here are representative of the more traditional attitudes during Augustus' time. Such considerations make women's sponsorship of public buildings rather radical.

#### *Livia's Legacy*

Upon Livia's death in 29 C.E., the Senate voted to build an arch for her, which entered completely new territory. No other woman had been given such an honor. Cassius Dio wrote that although Tiberius objected to deifying his mother or doing more to memorialize her beyond the typical public funeral, the Senate ordered that all women mourn her death for a full year. He states the following:

“For in the time of Augustus she wielded the greatest influence and she used to declare that it was she who had made Tiberius emperor; therefore she was not content to rule on equal terms with him, but wished to take precedence over him. As a result, various extraordinary measures were proposed, many persons expressing the opinion that she should be called ‘mother of the country,’ and many that she should be called its ‘parent.’”<sup>74</sup>

‘Parent’ is translated from γονεύς, which is masculine in gender and often refers to the father. However, it can also apply to a woman because it can also mean “parent” in general. Typically,

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<sup>73</sup> Liv. 34.11 (trans. William Heinemann).

<sup>74</sup> Dio 57.12.3-4.

we see it in the plural, referring to ‘parents,’ i.e., both father and mother. It is unusual to see it only referring to Livia here. Augustus was titled *pater patriae* (father of the fatherland), and some members of the Senate wished to call Livia *mater patriae* (mother of the fatherland).<sup>75</sup> Tacitus thought this title was excessive, and there was debate among the Senate whether she should be called “parent” or “mother.”<sup>76</sup> Cassius Dio lists the following reasons the Senate wished to grant Livia this title: “because she had saved the lives of not a few of them, had reared the children of many, and had helped many to pay their daughters' dowries.”<sup>77</sup> Ultimately, Tiberius objected and Livia was not granted the title, but imperial women in the future such as Faustina and Julia Domna were called *mater*.<sup>78</sup> Cassius Dio goes on to say that Livia was revered because of her chastity and the way she stayed out of the way in her husband’s affairs.<sup>79</sup> Being a well-mannered wife, somewhat ironically, led to the Senate’s unprecedented effort to dedicate a structure as prominent as an arch to a woman. “Because they are women, their relationship with political power always appears tangential and their building projects, therefore, untainted by hope for personal gain.”<sup>80</sup> However, Livia’s arch was never realized because Tiberius refused to fund it, either individually or through state funds. Regarding this event, Tacitus wrote that Tiberius believed “compliments to women must be kept within bounds,” and that he “regarded the elevation of a woman as a degradation of himself.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Emily Hemelrijk. “Fictive Motherhood and Female Authority in Roman Cities.” *Journal EuGeStA* 2 (2012), 201.

<sup>76</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.14.1 (trans. J. Jackson).

<sup>77</sup> Dio Cass. 58.2.3.

<sup>78</sup> Hemelrijk (2012), 202.

<sup>79</sup> Dio Cass. 58.2.2-6.

<sup>80</sup> Milnor (2005), 63.

<sup>81</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.14.2.

This historical event reveals the tension that existed in the context of Livia's time, in which male rulers still checked the power and influence given to women. Tiberius felt threatened by the great amount of honor the Senate wanted to give his deceased mother. But that the Senate was willing to face conflict with the emperor to advocate for great honors for Livia is telling. Though their reasons for desiring to grant Livia such honors is partly domestic in nature, viewing her as a mother of the state who took care of its citizens, she clearly had some political influence. Livia was very close to be remembered in public space that no woman had been commemorated before through an arch. Regardless, she was still memorialized through statues and civic buildings, along with Octavia, in revolutionary ways for imperial women.

#### *Imperial Influence on Local Women*

Scholars have suggested that imperial women might have been role models for other elite women and that this might have motivated them to be patrons. Benefactors followed emperors' examples of *liberalitas* and *largitio* starting in the second century B.C.E. For emperors, this was political strategy to gain support from provinces and cities. During this time, wealth became more concentrated in the wealthy few, which resulted in more specific language about financial generosity in inscriptions. The purpose of honorary inscriptions was to not only express gratitude to the benefactors, but also to attract financial support from other wealthy elites.<sup>82</sup> Acts of generosity in themselves reflected Roman values.<sup>83</sup> It also might have been "less controversial" for women to be in power in provinces, for they were not overshadowed by the imperial family.<sup>84</sup> Hemelrijk states, "in Rome the public role of upper-class women was both controversial in the light of traditional Roman values and overshadowed by that of the women of the imperial family,

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<sup>82</sup> Forbis (1996), 41.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 101-103.

<sup>84</sup> Hemelrijk (2004), 226.

whereas in the eyes of the municipal elite the power of women of senatorial rank must have seemed impressive indeed.”<sup>85</sup>

Eumachia of Pompeii, priestess of the city’s patron goddess Venus Pompeiana and patroness of the guild of fullers, is one such woman suggested to have emulated Livia. The guild of fullers constituted clothing makers, cleaners, and dyers and was one of the most influential trade guilds in Pompeii because of the wool’s industry’s prominence there.<sup>86</sup> After inheriting her father’s wealth from brick manufacturing, Eumachia married into an elite family in Pompeii. She constructed a portico for the guild of fullers, which probably served as the guild’s headquarters. Professional associations gained a presence in the city’s hierarchy by being linked with elite patrons and benefactors.<sup>87</sup> The building was commissioned around the time when her son was running for public office.<sup>88</sup> Thus, Eumachia is another example of wherein a woman’s building project benefits her male relative’s political career.

Because the building is dedicated to Emperor Tiberius and his mother Livia, whose statue was inside the building, some have speculated as to whether she emulated Livia’s portico in Rome. Eumachia’s porticus was also part of an Augustan project to redesign the east side of the Forum of Pompeii. As the largest and most elaborate building in the forum, Eumachia’s portico had two separate entrances to the Forum and was a vital component to the aesthetic of the space.

Over each of the two entrances was the following inscription:

EUMACHIA L F SACERD[os] PUBL[ica], NOMINE SUO ET M NUMISTRI  
FRONTONIS FILI CHACIDICUM, CRYPTAM, PORTICUS CONCORDIAE  
AUGUSTAE PIETATI SUA PEQUNIA FECIT EADEMQUE DEDICAVIT.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women’s Life in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook in Translation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

<sup>87</sup> Zuiderhoek (2008), 428.

<sup>88</sup> Elaine Fantham, Helene Peet Foley, Natalie Boymel Kampen, Sarah B. Pomeroy, H.A. Shapiro, *Women in the Classical World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 332.

Eumachia daughter of Lucius (Eumachius), public priestess, in her own name and that of her son, Marcus Numistrius Fronto, built with her own funds the porch, covered passage, and colonnade and dedicated them to Concordia Augusta and to Pietas.<sup>89</sup>

Statues to Concordia Augusta and Pietas juxtapose the statue of Livia, as these were deities often associated with the empress. Eumachia also dedicated the building to her son, the younger Marcus Numistrius Fronto, just as Livia dedicated her building to her son Tiberius.<sup>90</sup> Eumachia's building features niches in both the main courtyard and the rear corridor, as in Livia's portico.<sup>91</sup> The frieze designs on both porticoes include insects, birds, and animals, but are not exactly the same.

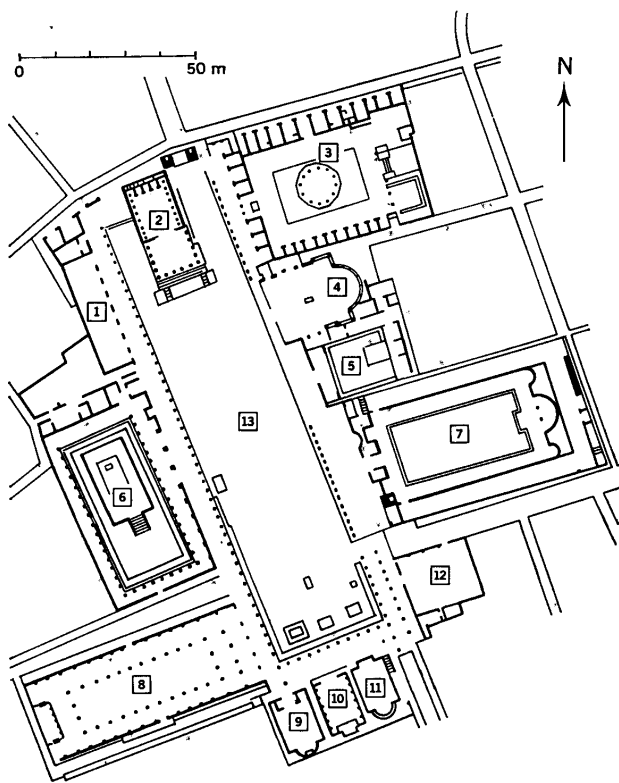


Figure 1: Forum of Pompeii plan (Woloch, 47)

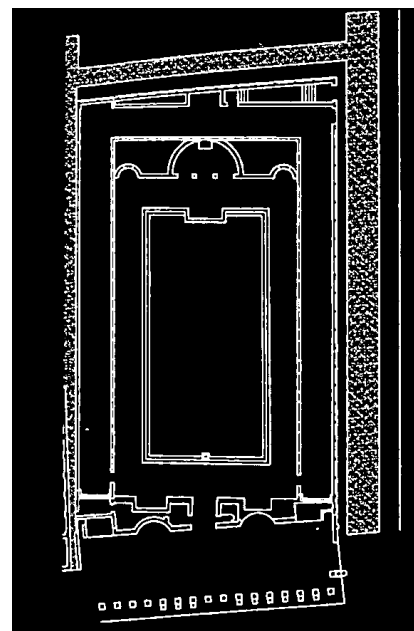


Figure 2: Porticus of Eumachia Plan (Kleiner, 31)

<sup>89</sup> *CIL* 10, 810-811; trans. Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant.

<sup>90</sup> Kleiner (1996), 33-34.

<sup>91</sup> Cooley (2013), 33.

In 15 B.C.E., Mineia funded the rebuilding of Paestum's basilica. The inscription states, "Mineia daughter of Marcus, wife of Gaius Cocceius Flaccus, mother of Gaius Cocceius Iustus, built the basilica from its foundations and the portico and all the pavings in front of the basilica with her own money."<sup>92</sup> Within the basilica were statues of Mineia's male relatives as well as a statue of herself, further emphasizing the importance of familial relationships in Roman society. Her husband Cocceius Flaccus was a *quaestor* under Julius Caesar in 44 B.C.E. and was assigned to the province of Bithynia.<sup>93</sup> Paestum minted bronze coins (*semis*) to commemorate Mineia's building, of which there is no imperial occurrence. Cooley thus argues that Mineia had even more agency and influence than imperial women, leading us to believe that local Italian women might not have needed imperial influence to sponsor building projects.<sup>94</sup>



Figure 3: Paestum coins to commemorate Mineia's basilica (University of Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 4.37g)

Another example is near Paestum at the sanctuary of S. Venera, which was remodeled by Sabina and her granddaughter Valeria sometime between 50 B.C.E. and 30 C.E. The inscription states, "Sabina, daughter of Publius, (?) wife of Flaccus, saw to the construction at her own expense of a shrine (?) for the goddess built from the ground upwards and decorated with

<sup>92</sup> *Paestum* 163 (dated by De Carolis, trans. Alison Cooley).

<sup>93</sup> *Paestum* 85; Cooley (2013), 38.

<sup>94</sup> Cooley (2013), 40.



plasterwork, seating, and pavings, and she also approved it.”<sup>95</sup> To describe Sabina’s involvement in the project, the verb *probavit* is used. This term was used to describe male magistrates’ supervisory role during the Republican era and was seldom associated with women.<sup>96</sup> Another inscription from Cosilinum near Padula, Italy uses the same verb for honoring Plotia Rutila’s benefaction: “Plotia Rutila saw to the construction of the lowest section of theatre-seats and the platform for the stage, by decree of the local town councilors, and she also approved it.”<sup>97</sup> Saying these women approved their projects connotes greater authority than simply paying for a project. Because imperial women are not described in this same language, Cooley posits that local women had more power in their benefactions, and that they might instead have set a precedent for imperial women to follow.<sup>98</sup> However, it is clear that imperial women were under pressure to solidify family lines and propagate a moral agenda. The language in their honorary inscriptions might have been constrained by this social context. It is difficult to conclude whether imperial or local women were the true frontrunners in urban patronage because they were operating in similar but different social contexts. Culturally, women were more restricted from the public sphere, but imperial and local women had different agendas. I would argue that each group contributed to the increasing authority and opportunity of the other, and that influence both ways was very likely. Regardless, this time period saw women’s greater ability to shape the urban fabric of Roman cities and to be memorialized in that fabric.

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<sup>95</sup> *Paestum* 157, *AE* 1996, 468: Sabina P.f. [---] / Flacci ux[or sacellum(?)] / deae a solo fa[bricandum] opera tector[iopoliendum] sedes et pavim [enta de sua] / pecunia fac[iunda cur(avit)] / eademque p[rob(avit)] (trans. Alison E. Cooley).

<sup>96</sup> Cooley (2013), 41.

<sup>97</sup> *Paestum* 158: [Pl]otia Ruti[la] / [sp]ectacula im[a(?)] / [m]aenian(a) et pul[p(itum)] / [s]caenae d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) su[a] / [pe]c(unia) fac(iundum) cur(avit) ead(em) / [q]ue probavi[t] (trans. Alison E. Cooley).

<sup>98</sup> Cooley (2013), 42.

Hemelrijk supports the argument that imperial and local women mutually influenced each other. There are around 30 records of ‘mothers of cities’ (*mater coloniae/municipii*) during the second and third centuries C.E. These examples are mainly found in central Italy, with a few in the Balkan and Danubian provinces. Some have speculated that motherhood was influenced by imperial women, especially since Livia was almost deemed mother of the country. However, there is evidence for local mothers before any imperial ones, and Hemelrijk argues that these local women were trendsetters in both motherhood and civic munificence. It was likely that imperial and local women in Italy mutually influenced each other. This official title of motherhood was given by the local council and carved on a public statue of the tomb of the honorand. Motherhood was hierarchical, and the title was intended to make citizens look up to her. The difference between motherhood and patronage is that a patroness’ reputation and social connections would increase the city’s prestige due to its association with her, whereas a mother was more likely to be part of the city’s community.<sup>99</sup> This will be discussed later in Chapter 4 about the Latin West.

### *Conclusion*

This role of familial ties in bringing women into public space is not limited to the imperial family. Thus, the context of an honored woman’s family should not be ignored, especially in the imperial family whose power and influence rests on lineage. In the Greek East, rulers’ female relatives had historically been honored with statues along with husbands, fathers, sons, or brothers. The βουλή or δῆμος would grant statues to both a Roman magistrate and his female relatives to gain favor.<sup>100</sup> Augustus’ family left their mark on the urban fabric mainly

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<sup>99</sup> Hemelrijk (2012), 203-211.

<sup>100</sup> Flory (1993), 291.

through repairs, for much of the city was already built. Often, they added porticos to buildings to “screen” them from the city in order to isolate them. This created a sense of order and imperial propaganda. The Imperial family’s projects covered 10 hectares of Rome.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Favro (1996), 171.

## Chapter Two: A Man's World – Public Service and Masculinity<sup>102</sup>

The public sphere wherein members of the elite invested in the beautification the city and were honored with public, permanent displays of gratitude was male-dominated. Particularly in the Greek East, urban patronage was associated with masculinity and was expected of virtuous and dutiful elite citizens. Men could be engaged in civic politics for a long period of time, following in the traditions of their ancestors. Similar to the Latin West, men usually became a member of the town council if they were able to take on magistracies. Men's political careers began when they 'sat in' council meetings when they were young, and eventually became members of the assembly until old age. But for women, civic titles did not guarantee a political career; titles only lasted for one year. Though women could gain much public exposure and experience in that year, urban political systems gave women only a small portion of the opportunities that men were granted. There are some exceptions where women held positions for life, such as in the case of Cosconia Myrton, who was *stephanephoros* of Smyrna. But overall, civic titles were much more limited for women.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Partly adapted from Joy Kim, "Dio Chrysostom: Urban Elite Patronage in the Roman Empire," written for HIST 334: Cities and Provinces of the Roman Empire, Prof. Gary Reger, 2016.

<sup>103</sup> Van Bremen (1996), 85-86.



Figure 4: Map of the Province of Bithynia (Inger Bjerg Poulson)

The writings of Dio Chrysostom of Prusa (c. 40 C.E. – 115 C.E.) in the Roman province of Bithynia elucidate both the motivations behind and the gendered framework of his political involvement. Bekker-Nielson said, “For no other local politician of the Roman world do we possess anything approaching the amount of detail at our disposal concerning the life and career of Dion ‘Chrysostomos.’”<sup>104</sup> Thus, it is interesting that the local politician of whom we have the greatest amount of detail so frequently associates masculinity with civic involvement. The reason that elites’ investing in the city was so crucial was that they created the public image for the city inspired by intellect and virtue. Dio also compares public service to being a war hero, stating, “But when we come to men, they require crowns, images, the right of precedence, and being kept in remembrance; and many in times past have even given up their lives just in order that they

<sup>104</sup> Tonnes Bekker-Nielsen, *Urban Life and Local Politics in Roman Bithynia: The Small World of Dion Chrysostomos* (Oakville: Aarhus University Press, 2009), 121.

might get a statue...”<sup>105</sup> Aligning with the prevalent view of his contemporaries, Dio believed men to be stronger than women.<sup>106</sup> Thus, he equated masculinity with power, leadership, and success, and it was crucial for him as an elite to display that identity publicly. Dio’s deep involvement in the urban public sphere was not only part of the expectation of the intellectual elite, but also an arena to display a masculine public image. Honor and virtue he wanted to memorialize through the shaping of urban space, as evidenced in this excerpt:

For the pillar, the inscription, and being set up in bronze are regarded as a high honour by noble men, and they deem it a reward worthy of their virtue not to have their name destroyed along with their body and to be brought level with those who have never lived at all, but rather to leave an imprint and a token, so to speak, of their manly prowess.<sup>107</sup>

Here, “manly prowess”<sup>108</sup> is equated to the deeds deserving of honor, which includes financial generosity and urban benefactions. “Control of images is the sign and performance of power,” Goldhill states.<sup>109</sup> For Dio and other urban elites, honorific statues and other physical evidence of their benefactions and good deeds was their performance of power, and this performance of power had a masculine quality.

Dio speaks more on the importance of men’s public image when he says, “But I observe that it is not from the pursuit of eloquence alone but also from the pursuit of wisdom that men of character and distinction are being produced here in Prusa.”<sup>110</sup> Coupled with the importance of public speaking was the pursuit of wisdom. Roman education emulated that of the Greeks, to

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<sup>105</sup> D.Chr. 31.16,.

<sup>106</sup> Richard Hawley, “Marriage, Gender, and the Family in Dio,” in *Dio Chrysostom: Politics, Letters, and Philosophy*, ed. Simon Swain (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 127.

<sup>107</sup> D.Chr. 31.20.

<sup>108</sup> τῆς ἀνδραγαθίας can also be translated as bravery or manly virtue.

<sup>109</sup> Simon Goldhill, “The Erotic Eye,” in *Being Greek Under Rome*, ed. Simon Goldhill, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2001), 160.

<sup>110</sup> D.Chr. 44.10.

whom oratory was an indispensable part of education.<sup>111</sup> Elsewhere, Dio considers concern for the city to be an “appropriate function” for wise men.<sup>112</sup> Thus, concern for the city indicated that one was a wise man, while being wise and a good public speaker meant that one had character and distinction. Dio does not mention women, though there is evidence of local female patrons in Prusa.

### *Dio’s Role in the Urban Renewal of Prusa*

Dio’s writing also elucidates the motivations elites might have had for being urban patrons. In *Discourses* 40, he says, “[buildings and festivals and independence in the administration of justice] I say, make it natural for the pride of the cities to be enhanced and the dignity of the community to be increased and for it to receive fuller honour both from the strangers within their gates and from the proconsuls as well.”<sup>113</sup> Cities were honored and ranked within provinces by the Empire, which meant that the urban fabric needed to be open, expedient, and aesthetically pleasing.<sup>114</sup> In presenting his vision of what a beautified Prusa could be, Dio says, “I mean my desire to make our city the head of a federation of cities.” The types of architectural indicators Dio wanted to construct in Prusa included colonnades, fountains, fortifications, harbours, and shipyards.<sup>115</sup> For instance, the *metropolis* of Nikomedia had colonnaded streets around the agora, architectural indications of the city’s status in Bithynia,

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<sup>111</sup> Cheryl Glenn, *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997), 57.

<sup>112</sup> D. Chr. 47.3.

<sup>113</sup> D. Chr. 40.

<sup>114</sup> Bekker-Nielsen (2009), 47.

<sup>115</sup> D. Chr. 45.

which prompted Dio's project for colonnaded streets in Prusa.<sup>116</sup> Dio calls upon the Prusans to look to the precedents of Smyrna, Ephesus, Tarsus, and Antioch.<sup>117</sup>

Correspondences between Pliny, the governor of the province of Bithynia which contained Prusa, and Trajan shed light on the relationship between the Emperor and provincial elites in regards to urban renewal. Pliny's letters to Trajan regarding matters in Prusa show that the city never reached the status that Dio wished. Pliny writes of the dilapidated bathhouses that desperately need to be funded. But their letters also show the importance of civic architecture in a city's status; Pliny says that by funding the bathhouse project through private individuals, the "splendor of [Trajan's] reign" will be magnified.<sup>118</sup> Trajan's response that the project should continue without increasing taxes also shows the fiscal necessity of private benefactors like Dio in maintaining urban fabrics.

It is clear that Prusa's urban fabric was frequently on Dio's mind, as his portico project is the most frequently mentioned benefaction in his speeches. What he says about the portico in his speeches also reveals the process by which some elites initiated urban building projects. After returning from exile, Dio revealed his project to construct a new portico in Prusa, inspired by a letter from Trajan stating the emperor's desire for a more beautified Prusa. It was common for emperors to send letters of encouragement to benefactors, sometimes including donations of money. Dio led an embassy to Rome that garnered new revenues for construction.<sup>119</sup>

The process of Dio's benefaction was an example of an official 'promise' (*hyposchesis*). This entailed a citizen's dedication to constructing or repairing a public building, frequently on

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<sup>116</sup> D. Chr. 51.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Plin. *Ep.* X, 23.

<sup>119</sup> C.P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 111.



condition of his election to office. It also required that the citizen was obligated to finish a project he began. Dio's promise does not specifically include a reward for himself, but it states that he had to contribute his own funds and gain support from the public to use public funds. He brought the proposal forward in the council house and theater, and it was approved by the city and Roman authorities when citizens did not object to the project. The forthcoming turmoil that resulted from Dio's portico project will not be discussed in detail here, but many of Dio's speeches are centered around convincing the public that his project is worthwhile, despite the public's concerns about old buildings being demolished, the lengthiness of the project, and the suspicion that Dio had embezzled public funds.<sup>120</sup> Much of his efforts to repair his image indicate the role that urban building projects had in painting the reputation of a member of the elite. The tremendous effort Dio put into this particular project, and his desire to increase Prusa's status, also sheds light on the way elites' political careers centered around urban renewal.

#### *The Importance of Speaking Like a Man*

It is clear that public speaking is vital in the role of an urban elite and benefactor, especially for Dio. He delivered speeches to convince the public that his project was worthwhile, and to combat allegations against him throughout the arduous process of constructing his portico. But it is interesting that when he discusses the art of public speaking, which is instrumental to all aspects of his political career, Dio cites masculine qualities. Gleason said, "Public speaking, even more than literary writing, was the hallmark of the socially privileged male."<sup>121</sup> Men practiced vocal exercises because being a skilled orator was crucial to their political careers, and thus, their execution of elite duties. There were many ways in which elites needed to use public speaking in

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>121</sup> Maud Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 67.

their societal roles. In addition to conducting business with the city council, elites needed to welcome imperial officials with oratory or make requests to the emperor. Every time an elite male was in public, he was under scrutiny. Young men were trained from the age they reached manhood, which would have been about sixteen. In the early Republic, young men followed mentors to learn rhetorical skills, legal knowledge, and morals. The Greeks had a much more systematic approach to teaching rhetoric that was eventually adopted in the Latin West. It was expected to know some Greek in the West as well.<sup>122</sup> Dio's specific speeches to the Prusan assembly show that urban elites had to convince the assembly that their projects would be worthwhile. While provincial elites certainly held much power, they could not merely impose a project on the city if the assembly did not approve.

Maud Gleason discusses Dio in her work about masculine identities in the Roman Empire, noting that Dio taught men how to speak with confidence and without a hint of effeminacy, both of which he deemed crucial to being a public leader. Such a gendered characterization of public speech was common among Roman elites. Speakers wanted to avoid being "soft," "broken," or "unmanly."<sup>123</sup> The following excerpt from Seneca describes how a man's physical mannerisms can be observed in such a way to reveal his character.

"Absolutely everything is significant if carefully observed. And it is possible to draw conclusions about someone's character from the most minute signs. A man who is sexually dissolute, for example, is revealed by his walk, by a single gesture, by the way he answers a simple question or touches his head with his finger, and by the way he moves his eyes."<sup>124</sup>

Though this passage does not speak to a man's gendered qualities in public speech, it does illustrate the association of male character with the display of gender. Cicero, on the other hand,

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>124</sup> *Sen. Ep.* 52.12 (trans. Richard M. Gummere).

specifically discussed masculinity in the context of public speaking. He thought it was important for orators to have a “vigorous and manly posture of the upper body that derives not from actors and the stage but from the army or even the wrestling grounds.”<sup>125</sup> Gleason summarizes this phenomenon of encouraging masculine oratorical skills when she states, “The specter of gender indeterminacy—even gender reversal—always lay in wait for potential deviants from the norms of correct deportment.”<sup>126</sup>

This leads to the question of how widespread Dio’s views about the masculinity of civic leadership were among elites in the Roman Empire. Were female benefactors’ money simply accepted for infrastructure improvements, or were they seen as influential public figures? Were women intruding the male sphere by being benefactors? There is some evidence of women who generally spoke in public as advocates. The first example that will be discussed here is from the Republican period, but provides some cultural context for the influence women could have as speakers. In 42 B.C.E., an edict from the triumvirs required 1400 of the wealthiest women to submit a valuation of their property during wartime. These women would be penalized if they concealed or undervalued their property, and a portion of these penalties went towards funding the war.<sup>127</sup> Here, Hortensia speaks on behalf of the elite women in opposition to this edict:

Hortensia, the daughter of Quintus Hortensius, when the triumvirs burdened the matrons with a heavy tribute and no man dared take their defence, pleaded the case before the triumvirs, both firmly and successfully. For by bringing back her father’s eloquence, she brought about the remission of the greater part of the tax. Quintus Hortensius lived again in the female line and breathed through his daughter’s words. If any of her male descendants had wished to follow her strength, the great heritage of Hortensian eloquence would not have ended with a woman’s action.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Cic. *de Orat.* 3.59.220 (trans. E. W. Sutton, H. Rackham).

<sup>126</sup> Maud W. Gleason, “Elite Male Identity in the Roman Empire” in *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire*, eds. D.S. Potter and D.J. Mattingly (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 75.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-70.

<sup>128</sup> V. Max., 8.3 (trans. Mary Lefkowitz and Maureen Fant).

Hortensia is described as having tremendous influence over men in power. Her father Quintus Hortensius was a respected orator, and this passage goes so far to say that he “lived again in the female line and breathed through his daughter’s words.” Despite Hortensia’s being a woman, the passage says that the “great heritage of Hortensian eloquence” lived on. While this example depicts Hortensia as an anomaly in being able to extend her influence through public speech, it also shows that it was possible for a woman to instigate political change. Her antiwar arguments also parallel those of Greek literary woman (e.g. Andromache, Lysistrata) who were revered in Greek culture.<sup>129</sup>

There are further examples during the Imperial period wherein women exert influence through their speech. Firstly, There is evidence of women’s electioneering in Pompeii. Women’s names show up in electoral graffiti in Pompeii wherein they endorse candidates both with and without husbands.<sup>130</sup> In Pliny’s correspondence with Trajan, we learn that Furia Prima accused Flavius Archippus of forgery and requested that Pliny show her petition to the emperor Trajan.<sup>131</sup> In his response, Trajan says he read the petitions of both Furia Prima and Flavius Archippus, showing that women could have their voices heard by the emperor. With this incident having occurred in Prusa, elite women in Dio’s hometown could voice their concerns. Nothing is said in this example about Furia Prima’s gender, perhaps suggesting a sense of normalcy associated with women’s ability to be litigants. The following passage from Valerius Maximus, however, portrays a female litigant in a very gendered manner:

Amasia Sentia, a defendant, pleaded her case before a great crowd of people and Lucius Titius, the praetor who presided over the court. She pursued every aspect of her defense diligently and boldly and was acquitted, almost unanimously, in a single hearing.

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<sup>129</sup> Glenn (1999), 67-70.

<sup>130</sup> Lefkowitz (1992), 152.

<sup>131</sup> Plin., *Ep.* 10.58-60.

Because she bore a man's spirit under the appearance of a woman, they called her Androgyne.<sup>132</sup>

While this example shows that women could address a praetor and exert political influence, she is considered to be successful "because she bore a man's spirit." This example suggests that a woman's vocal presence in the public sphere was only justified when she was seen as a man. To this, Gleason states, "To exhibit courage or excellence (*virtus*) was by definition to exhibit the qualities of a man (*vir*)."<sup>133</sup> Even when women were welcomed and respected as orators in the public realm, it was in a realm where masculine virtues were the norm and the standard.

Another example of a female speaker portrayed in a gendered manner is Gaia Afrania, also from Valerius Maximus, although she is portrayed much less positively:

Gaia Afrania, the wife of the senator Licinius Buccio...represented herself...by constantly plaguing the tribunals with such barking as the Forum had seldom heard, she became the best-known example of women's litigiousness. As a result, to charge a woman with low morals, it is enough to call her 'Gaia Afrania'...for it is better to record when such a monster died than when it was born.<sup>134</sup>

In contrast to the laudatory description of Amasia Sentia, Gaia Afrania is described as "barking" while being "the best-known example of women's litigiousness." A woman defending herself in court is depicted here as being a 'monster.' Would a man defending himself passionately also have been portrayed negatively, or would it have been a masculine and therefore good speech? Dio did not believe skilled public speakers should exhibit a hint of effeminacy, and Cicero thought orators should be confident with a 'vigorous, manly posture.' These suggest that a man defending himself passionately would have been praised, but perhaps Gaia Afrania was criticized not for her passion, but rather her lack of moral values. Dio's orations make clear that wisdom

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<sup>132</sup> V. Max., 8.3.

<sup>133</sup> Gleason (1999), 67.

<sup>134</sup> V. Max., 8.3.

and virtue were expected of elite men and that he was not exempt from such expectations. Though it was politically expedient for Dio to assert masculinity and power, this could come off as tyranny, as he is accused of being a tyrant on multiple occasions, most notably for “tearing down the city and all its shrines.”<sup>135</sup> In order to combat these allegations, he often posed as an advocate of the people (δημιος), which other urban elites also saw as a strategy to gain influence.<sup>136</sup> It was not merely the ability to speak convincingly that Dio needed to be respected politically, which shows that all urban elites were expected to have dignity. This suggests that Gaia Afrania would not have been respected even if she was a man. However, this example does make it seem that Gaia Afrania’s gender is connected to the lack of respect she is given as a litigant. The passage from Valerius Maximus suggests that because she is such a barker, she is the best known example of women’s litigiousness.

*Dio’s Family Business of Honor*

Much of male elites’ effort to speak eloquently and gain prestige from urban building projects was because they looked to family traditions as an example for behavior. This is seen in the example of Scipio, a twenty-year-old male member of the elite who is described by Polybius as afraid of being a weak spokesman for his family, pressured by the expectations of him to well represent his family.<sup>137</sup> Again, being a strong speaker is associated with elite success, and here we see the desire of a male elite to be politically successful and represent his family well. Dio came from a lineage of wealth and connections to Rome, for his maternal grandfather was friends with a Roman emperor (presumed to be Claudius). Dio’s grandfather and mother were granted Roman citizenship as a result of this friendship. However, there is no record of Dio’s

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<sup>135</sup> D.Chr. 47.

<sup>136</sup> Bekker-Nielsen (2009), 133.

<sup>137</sup> Polyb. 31.23-24 (trans. H.J. Edwards).

father being a Roman citizen, which means that Dio likely had to earn his own citizenship instead of inheriting it.<sup>138</sup> Both of Dio's parents had contributed to and been honored by the city of Prusa. His father was thanked for "guiding the city justly" and his mother was granted a sacred image and shrine, which was the highest honor a city could give. Such an honor had become rare during the imperial period, as members of the imperial family monopolized the honors. Jones notes that Dio's mother could not have simply received honors because of her husband's status. Her contemporary, Junia Theodora, who will be discussed in Chapter 3, received part-divine honors upon her death for her service to the cities of Lycia.<sup>139</sup> Thus, Dio himself was part of a familial tradition of continuing public generosity.

In his 44<sup>th</sup> discourse, Dio lauds his son, nephew, and other young men in Prusa who compete with each other "in character and repute," for this was a sign of patriotism.<sup>140</sup> The people of Prusa exhibited a level of respect for Dio's mother that suggests that he had to live up to his mother's reputation as much as or perhaps more than his father's reputation. It is interesting that Dio continually lauds male relatives and only speaks of competitions of character and repute among men, when his mother was given the highest honor a city could give.

### *Conclusion*

Looking into the political career and family background of Dio Chrysostom sheds light on the way the public sphere was very gendered, in this case for elites in the Roman Greek East. His collection of discourses discusses expectations for elite men, which include urban benefactions, oratorical skills, wisdom, and concern for the city. These discourses integrate

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<sup>138</sup> J. L. Moles, "The Career and Conversion of Dio Chrysostom," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 98 (1978): 82.

<sup>139</sup> Jones (1978), 105.

<sup>140</sup> D.Chr. 44.

notions of masculinity with civic involvement and urban renewal, showing that female benefactors operated in a male-dominated sphere. Dio makes it clear that it was common for elites to engage in urban building projects, as he speaks continuously about Prusa's need to be modernized to the level of competing cities in the Bithynian province. But because he associates such urban engagement with masculinity, it brings the question of whether women received pushback for funding building projects in the same manner that Dio did.

Furthermore, we have seen that public speaking was crucial to Dio's efforts to promote a construction project. Though we have little evidence of women convincing assemblies to accept their money for a building, the few pieces of evidence we have for female orators in general show that it is uncommon for a woman to be given a platform. The example of Amasia Sentia praises a woman for her speaking skills by likening her to a man, suggesting that her skills are attributed to her not being like a woman. On the other hand, Gaia Afrania is portrayed negatively and is not compared to a man at all; rather, she is deemed the "best-known example of women's litigiousness" as a barker. Despite our lack of evidence of female benefactors speaking in public about their projects, looking at these examples of female orators might paint a picture of what female benefactors had to face if they needed to speak before an assembly of men.

Lastly, Dio's life shows us the importance of an elite's family background in continuing traditions of benefactions and civic honor. Interestingly, Dio's mother was more prominent than his father and probably was a better example for him politically since his father was not a Roman citizen. Yet, he describes the Roman political world as strictly masculine. One man alone cannot tell us the social climate of an entire region, but the vast number of speeches we have from Dio sheds some light on the gendered nature of the political sphere.



### Chapter Three: Regional Considerations in the Greek East

The part of the Roman Empire from which Dio Chrysostom came was the Greek East, including Asia Minor, modern day Greece, Egypt, the Levant, and some parts of southern Italy. Greek colonies in southern Italy retained somewhat of a Greek identity until the second century C.E. For example, the southeastern Italian district of Apulia had a long, multiethnic history. Though the elite in that region had learned Latin after they came under Roman rule in 244 B.C.E., it was influenced by both Greek settlements from the eighth century B.C.E. as well as the non-Latin and non-Greek Oscan culture and language.<sup>141</sup> So while most of Italy is considered to be part of the Latin West, we will group the southern portion into the Greek East. This half of the Empire had a strong tradition of benefactions for both men and women before the period of the Principate. As Greek society became increasingly hierarchical, elites justified their wealth by funding urban building projects. The number of honors given to citizens increased after the Social War (357-355 B.C.E.) and benefactors proliferated in the Greek East. But these events brought increased tension among the general population (*demos*). As a result, honoring benefactors started being controlled by the *polis* and became more systematic, as did the benefactions themselves.<sup>142</sup> On this, Domino Gygax said, “the other key aspect of *euergotism* – the capacity of the polis to award honors – provided the *demos* with some power in its relationship with an elite that was looking for ways to compete, express its social superiority, and accumulate symbolic capital.”<sup>143</sup>

#### *The Hellenistic Roots of Euergotism*

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<sup>141</sup> Reger (2014), 121.

<sup>142</sup> Domino Gygax (2016), 180.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Female benefactors were typically priestesses, but the example of Archippe suggests it was possible to serve as a benefactress without a religious title. This example predates the Empire and both looks to previous Hellenistic practices and forward to those that were carried into the Empire. Van Bremen dates Archippe's benefactions to 160s or 150s B.C.E.<sup>144</sup> This was before the destruction of Corinth in 146 B.C.E., which marked the end of Macedon's independence. The example of Archippe shows the history of euergetism that existed in this region before Roman rule, but it should be noted that the destruction of Corinth was not the singular pivotal point when the Greek East entirely became Roman provinces. Rather, it was a long process that brought the Greek East into the Empire. The eight decrees we have about Archippe, who was native to Kyme in Asia Minor, total to almost 300 lines inscribed in the pillars of the *bouleuterion* (council house or assembly house) that she funded. She also oversaw the construction of the sanctuary of *Homonoia* in the *agora*.<sup>145</sup> These inscriptions to Archippe are fairly representative of the typical honorary inscriptions of this time period and of the shift that occurred in honorific practices from the early Hellenistic period.<sup>146</sup> A gilded bronze statue was voted to be established in her honor.

Van Bremen argues that while it was extraordinary for a woman to receive such an honor, it was at a time when this practice was "losing some of its exclusiveness." Furthermore, Van Bremen believes that Archippe was connected to the Seleucid court, probably through marriage, in order to be given the honor.<sup>147</sup> Archippe never had a priesthood or other religious office in Kyme, which was the typical way women were given honors. She is also listed with 29 other

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<sup>144</sup> Riet Van Bremen, "The Date and Context of the Kymaian Decrees for Archippe," *Revue Des Études Anciennes* 110 (2008): 358.

<sup>145</sup> *Homonoia* was the goddess of concord, unity, and oneness.

<sup>146</sup> Van Bremen (2008), 358-359.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

women and eleven men in an inscription about a group of people who purchased a property with a stoa (covered walkway or portico) in Kyme.<sup>148</sup> The men are listed in the first column, while the women take up the remaining three columns. Archippe was one of many women in her town who were wealthy enough to purchase a property and to be publicly commemorated as doing so. This is merely one example of the types of financial activities in which elite women engaged in the Greek East.

In order to better understand the context in which female elites in this part of the Empire participated in urban benefactions, we must first look at the cultural shifts that occurred as the Greek East became part of the Roman Empire. Then, we look at the Roman institution of patronage and its nuances in the Greek East, as language regarding patronage and benefactions might have held different meanings in this region than in the Latin West. Because Greek cultural notions about women are different than Roman ones, we also investigate such cultural differences when considering women's civic involvement. Lastly, this chapter will discuss the role of family background in Greek elite women's benefactions and how this relates to this project's greater theme of family connections. In the following chapter we will return to the Latin West to compare and contrast practices examined here in the Greek East.

### *Greek Urban Life Under Roman Rule*

When discussing the Greek East, we must first consider the cultural implications of the Greek world coming under Roman rule. There is debate among scholars over how much the Greek East was 'Romanized', if at all. How much did Greek culture remain, and how did the Greeks integrate themselves into the Roman Empire? Specifically, what did this mean for Greek urban life, particularly for urban elites? Strabo's writing seems to depict a divide between Greeks

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<sup>148</sup> *IK Kyme* 37.50-62 (trans. Gary Reger).

who have become Romans and those who have not. When describing Greece's struggle to impose their influence on Sicily, Strabo states:

Now, apart from the Tarentines, Rhegines and Neapolitans, they [the Greeks] have become barbarians, and some have been captured and held by the Lucanians and Bruttians, and by the Campanians – in name, that is, but in reality by the Romans. For they themselves have become Romans.

Did being Roman mean being a barbarian to Greeks? In the context of power struggles and war, language will expectedly have a tone of “us vs. them.” When it comes to the phenomenon of urban elite benefaction, there seems to be both a strong tradition of euergetism that had already existed in the Greek East as well as a standardization of practices throughout the Roman Empire. It is also important to note that we have far more epigraphic evidence about urban elites in the eastern empire than in western and Italian cities.<sup>149</sup>

Hellenization and Romanization were not “one-way processes,” and the cultural transitions that occur in the Greek part of the Roman Empire are multi-faceted. Especially in southern Italy, there had already been much interaction between Oscan and Greek culture even before the region came under Roman control.<sup>150</sup> We must keep this in mind while considering the ways Roman and Greek culture came together, especially in terms of urban elite life. Even before Roman rule, urbanization was an indicator of civilization in Greek culture. Greeks considered the *polis* a center a civilized life.<sup>151</sup> A *polis* had self-governing legal status, while a rural village was subject to a *polis*. Cities could be recognized as being urbanized and therefore more civilized by its public architecture and infrastructure. Pausanias writes in the second

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<sup>149</sup> Kathryn Lomas, “Urban Elites and Cultural Definition: Romanization in Southern Italy,” in *Urban Society in Roman Italy*, eds. Tim Cornell and Kathryn Lomas (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 107.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 108-109.

<sup>151</sup> Bekker-Nielsen (2009), 45.

century C.E. about the dilapidated city of Panopeus: “no government building, no theater, no *agora*, no aqueduct and no fountain.”<sup>152</sup> Panopeus was sacked by Sulla’s troops in 86 B.C.E. and never fully recovered.<sup>153</sup> Thus, public infrastructure defined a city’s status, and benefactors contributed to a sort of gentrification of client cities. Commonly, male urban elites were elected to positions such as the eponymous magistracy or the council and was expected to either repair public buildings or pay cash for the city to execute some other public service, as seen in the previous chapter with Dio Chrysostom. Dio believed his native Prusa could compete with other cities in the province if it had beautiful architecture like colonnades that were featured in higher-ranking cities. Even during the Republican period, Greeks used their connections to Rome to positively impact their cities, so it was not new for elites to lobby with Rome.<sup>154</sup>

Roman emperors frequently deferred to governors who had similar authority to that of a Roman magistrate, and rarely imposed Roman constitutions on Greek cities.<sup>155</sup> We know of the *lex Pompeia* from the letters of Pliny the Younger, who was governor of the province of Bithynia (where Dio Chrysostom’s Prusa was located). His correspondences with the emperor Trajan describe the *lex Pompeia*, but the original text does not remain. It was composed by Pompey the Great, who tasked himself with creating a provincial code in the territories of Bithynia and Pontus. Though the code establishes a framework for local governance and inter-city relations, it mostly relegates matters of daily life to the laws of individual cities. For example, property rights and other aspects of civil law remained under the purview of local government, as seen when the

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<sup>152</sup> Pausanius 10.4.1 (trans. Bekker-Nielsen).

<sup>153</sup> Bekker-Nielsen (2009), 57.

<sup>154</sup> C.P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 106.

<sup>155</sup> Greg Woolf, “Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East,” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (1994): 123.

emperor Trajan tells Pliny that cities' outstanding debts should be claimed according to the laws of each city.<sup>156</sup> The jurist Gaius in the second century C.E. discusses the *Les Bithynorum*, which regulated the conditions for women to enter contractual obligations.<sup>157</sup>

This is not to say that Greek cities were not affected by Roman rule. Greek cities became larger and urban populations grew. These cities also acquired Roman hierarchies, establishing equestrian and senatorial classes for the wealthy. The Roman state supported this process of hierarchization because elites could serve as intermediaries between cities and the state. Elites' wealth and connection to Rome allowed them to adopt Roman culture in the form of competitive euergetism. Edifying their own personal status and identity, as well as meeting expectations of being a good urban and Roman citizen, contributed to elites' desire to be benefactors. Woolf does not attribute this to a desire for elites to become more Roman, but rather to their desire to remain Greek.<sup>158</sup> Being an urban benefactor had other societal implications as well. Due to the increasing wealth disparity in Greek society, benefactions helped to "justify and legitimate elite positions."<sup>159</sup> Urban councils became more oligarchic in late Hellenistic period, but Roman rule formalized this phenomenon. Honoring these members of the elite for their benefactions also publicized good relations between the rich and common and portrayed the elite as being very virtuous.<sup>160</sup>

There is debate over how 'Romanized' politics became in the Greek East as the Roman Empire expanded. Did urban elites operate differently under Roman rule than before? If elite practices remained the same in the Greek East, did this lead to differences from elite practices in

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<sup>156</sup> Pliny, *Ep.* 109.

<sup>157</sup> *Inst.* 1.193.

<sup>158</sup> Woolf (1994), 116-123.

<sup>159</sup> Zuiderhoek (2008): 435.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

the Latin West? Zuiderhoek notes that elites in the Greek East would not have been able to force assemblies to vote a certain way, as evidenced by Dio Chrysostom's struggle to convince Prusa to revamp the city.<sup>161</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, politicians used public speaking to convince assemblies to undertake building projects.

Scholars have also debated the extent to which the Greek east was politically and culturally "Romanized" under Roman rule. They have looked to urban architecture and the layout of cities for evidence of Italian influence. Although some Roman architectural influence is seen in the Greek Eastern countryside in the form of aqueducts and villas, most architectural influence was seen in urban areas. Roman-Greek cities transformed in physical appearance. The emergence of bath-gymnasiums in the Greek East is the most prominent evidence of Roman cultural influence. During the Augustan period, Hellenistic gymnasia were converted to Roman baths. Though the practice of bathing already existed in Greek culture, Roman cycle of baths and monumental bathhouses were introduced. These bathhouses were usually paid for by the wealthiest elites, including Dio Chrysostom. Such architectural influence should not, however, be interpreted as the erasure of Greek culture. While Romans saw material culture and morality as central to their identity, Greeks looked more to religion, culture, and language as unifying forces.<sup>162</sup> There were also some types of Roman architecture that are seldom found in the Greek East. While baths in the far western provinces were frequently associated with the imperial cult, that was rarely the case in the Greek East, although there are several examples of temples related to the imperial cult. Some architectural elements traditional to Greek urban space remained, especially *bouleuteria* (Greek council chambers) and other monumental buildings.

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 422.

<sup>162</sup> Woolf (1994), 130.

Amphitheaters, an obvious indicator of Roman civilization, also were not commonly built in the Greek East.<sup>163</sup>

*Roman Patronage in the Greek East*

By a Roman definition, city patrons contributed to a client city's built environment by funding renovations and constructions of public buildings. They also represented client cities' interests in Rome and communicated between cities and the imperial government.<sup>164</sup> This title of city patron was more widespread in Latin inscriptions and holds a different meaning from simply a benefactor. *Patroni* appeared in the Greek East in the second century B.C.E., eight of whom can be identified in the first decade in Asia. Though some scholars attribute the appearance of patrons to the implementation of Roman social customs, patrons first appear in the Greek East a century after Romans had already been active in the area. Roman businessmen came in droves into Asia as a result of the Gracchan reforms. Perhaps patronage originated from a need for greater representation in Rome on behalf of Asian cities.<sup>165</sup> Some scholars actually argue that it was not the Romans who influenced Greek patronage, but rather the opposite. They suggest that Hellenistic euergetism influenced Roman patronage to include more material benefactions.<sup>166</sup> It was likely that influence occurred both ways, as is frequently the case when two cultures integrate.

*Patron* (πάτρων) does not appear in Greek literature until the end of the first century B.C.E. It is not a Greek term or an institution, but rather it was borrowed from the Roman term. Previous to this term, Greek referred to benefactors as *euergetes* (εὐεργέτης). This term is used

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 126-127.

<sup>164</sup> Eilers (2002), 84.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 138-143.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 99.



more as an honorific title that praises someone for his or her benefactions. *Patron*, on the other hand, is used when referring to a long-term relationship with a client.<sup>167</sup> Many of the terms used to refer to patronesses such as *beneficia*, *official*, *gratia*, etc. were transliterated into Greek for use in the eastern provinces. The term *patronissa*, which is the feminine of the borrowed *patron*, was used in some parts of the Greek East. Just as in the Latin West, these patronesses were honored by individuals, “the council and people,” or by entire cities.<sup>168</sup>

#### *Greek Views on Women*

Honorary statues for women were located all over Greek cities in prominent locations. It seems in some ways that views about women in the Greek East were more conservative than in other parts of the Empire. Plutarch states that “it is more often the custom for women to be veiled” in the Greek East.<sup>169</sup> When addressing the city of Tarsus (in modern day Turkey), Dio Chrysostom looks specifically to the behavior of women when assessing the morality of the city:

In days gone by, therefore, your city was renowned for orderliness and sobriety, and the men it produced were of like character; but now I fear that it may be rated just the opposite and so be classed with this or that other city I might name. And yet many of the customs still in force reveal in one way or another the sobriety and severity of deportment of those earlier days. Among these is the convention regarding feminine attire, a convention which prescribes that women should be so arrayed and should so deport themselves when in the street that nobody could see any part of them, neither of the face nor of the rest of the body, and that they themselves might not see anything off the road. And yet what could they see as shocking as what they hear? Consequently, beginning the process of corruption with the ears, most of them have come to utter ruin. For wantonness slips in from every quarter, through ears and eyes alike. Therefore, while they have their faces covered as they walk, they have their soul uncovered and its doors thrown wide open. For that reason they, like surveyors, can see more keenly with but one of their eyes.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 109-110.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>169</sup> Plut., *Moral.* 267A (trans. W.C. Helmbold).

<sup>170</sup> D.Chr. 33.48-49.

The strict conventions about women's attire in Tarsus may have been due to oriental influences in this area.<sup>171</sup> But despite Tarsus' custom of covering women, Dio believes the city is still morally corrupt as evidenced by the way women have been corrupted "with the ears," coming to "utter ruin." Whether the custom of veiling was prevalent throughout the Greek East is not as telling about cultural views about women as is investigating how they are viewed in the context of public space. Here, Dio is less concerned with how much women are exposing their bodies than he is with the things women are exposed to in public space.

But in other ways, it seems that it was more culturally acceptable and expected for women to be civically involved in Greek cities in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, even before the Empire came into being. This is partly because of the tradition of elite benefactions from both men and women that had already existed for centuries. During the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., elite women in Greek cities were public servants primarily through religion, either through priesthoods or female-only festivals. Priestesses in the third century B.C.E. were increasingly expected to fund their own office and sanctuaries, treated very much like civic officials, and eventually became elected positions. Perhaps in the context of a conservative society, Greek women found avenues for political involvement through religious positions that associated them with domestic virtues in the public sphere. It is also important to consider the role of women's husbands in helping them gain public offices. Sometimes women were given a title simply because their husbands held office, so it is difficult to discern which women in the Greek East were not given titles in this way. This practice applied to high-priesthoods, the presidency of provincial federations (Asiarchs, Pontarch, etc.), and the local gymnasium. The

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<sup>171</sup> *Dio Chrysostom: Discourses 31-36*, trans. J.W. Cohoon and H. Lamar Crosby (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 319.

imperial cult also usually required the appointment of a married couple, or sometimes a father and daughter, as priest and priestess.<sup>172</sup>

*Euergetism as a Family Affair*

As stated earlier, wealth became more concentrated in a small group of landowners in the second and early first centuries B.C.E., a distinct elite class emerged as well. For centuries before the Imperial period, it became more common for Greek elites to use their own funds to pay for buildings, banquets, and other benefactions. This phenomenon was called *euergetism*. Elites competed with each other over how much they gave to the city, and even entirely tried to avoid tapping into public funds to gain more honor. Benefactions also became like a family business. The heir of a benefactor was obligated to finish if the original benefactor died, which was not uncommon considering how long building projects often took. A foreign heir had to finish the building or give the community one-fifth of his inheritance. An heir native to the city could either finish the building or give the city one-tenth of his inheritance. It was very common for buildings to be unfinished, so women might also have been encouraged to take up their relative's project to avoid urban decay.<sup>173</sup> Women could also be elected into public office and were part of this competition of donating among elites, funding bathhouses, temples, theaters, and other buildings. They continued to be priestesses as well, but even these positions became increasingly political. Priestesses often paid for festivals, banquets, games, and temple construction or restoration.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ng (2015), 108.

<sup>174</sup> Riet Van Bremen, "Women and Wealth" in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, eds. Averil Cameron and Amelie Kuhrt (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 224-225.

Part of understanding the public role of elite women in Greek cities is to investigate how much autonomy they had in wealth management. Long before the implementation of Roman law in the Greek East, the Gortynian Code and Attic Law gave a woman full ownership of her dowry, even if the marriage ended. The dowry was also part of a daughter's inheritance.<sup>175</sup> Thus, the legal context allowed for a woman's control of her finances to some extent within the context of family, but practices differed in different cities. It became standard for public officials to pay for benefactions during the Imperial period, and there was even a fee with entry into the town council. Thonemann states that influence through wealth led to "a general depoliticization of public life," which in turn allowed women to fulfill previously male-only roles.<sup>176</sup> Wealth became a much more important qualification for civic involvement than gender. On the other hand, it should also be noted that women still had to be under the control of a *kyrios* and could not use their wealth without permission. So while some legal shifts allowed women to have a little more autonomy in wealth management, it was still relatively limited.

As discussed earlier, the amalgamation of the Greek East into the Roman Empire established an imperial aristocracy of senatorial and equestrian families, as well as a provincial aristocracy. Provincial aristocrats gained power through offices and priesthoods of the imperial cult and gained wealth from owning large estates in less urbanized areas of central Anatolia. However, more densely urbanized portions of the Greek East had elites who already owned large estates and therefore could have enough wealth to sponsor projects and exert political influence. A woman's wealth allowed her to do many things for the city. Public involvement typically entailed multiple duties and acts of generosity. Corinthian resident Junia Theodora, for example,

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<sup>175</sup> Van Bremen (1996), 197-202.

<sup>176</sup> Peter Thonemann, "The Women of Akmoneia," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 100 (2010): 163-164.

is honored in an inscription for several types of benefactions. She intervened amidst a period of turmoil in Lykia, where people had risen up and murdered Roman citizens.

“The people of Patara have decreed: Whereas Junia Theodora, a Roman resident in Corinth, a woman held in highest honour...who copiously supplied her own means many of our citizens with generosity, and received them in her home and in particular never ceased acting on behalf of our citizens in regard to any favour asked...”

The example of Junia Theodora also shows the motives behind honoring benefactors with inscriptions, as the inscription continues, “it urges her to increase her generosity to our native city and of her good will, and the knowledge that our people also would not cease in their good will and gratitude to her and would do everything for the excellence and the glory that she deserved.”<sup>177</sup> As seen throughout the empire, inscriptions intended to encourage benefactors to continue donating in the future. In this case, Junia was not merely honored for financial generosity, but she was instrumental in protecting Roman citizens during a time of crisis.

Inscriptions in the Greek East during the Roman period also point to a familial context, as they highlighted familial connections and ancestry in addition to the generosity of the benefactor. Van Bremen discusses this phenomenon of emphasizing a female benefactor’s role in the context of family: “Even those women who were active in civic offices and priesthoods, or undertaking liturgies—the Archippes and Epies of Roman times—emerge less as zealous citizens than as members of prominent families, cocooned in webs of relations and connexions, of expectations and obligations.”<sup>178</sup> For example, Menodora of Pamphylia came from a tradition of gymnasiarchs and paid for the construction of a temple of with porticoes. She also publicly distributed bushels of wheat.<sup>179</sup> Benefactions could come in the form of public infrastructure or

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<sup>177</sup> *Pleket* 8.

<sup>178</sup> Van Bremen (1996), 166.

<sup>179</sup> IGR 3.800-802 (trans. Ramsay MacMullen).

other contributions to the city. A family who had a tradition of funding building projects and lacked financially capable male offspring looked to females to continue the tradition. An inscription from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E. in Euromos in Anatolia shows one such example:

Menekrates son of Menekrates, chief doctor of the city, serving as *stephanephoros* [dedicated] the column with a round moulding and a capital, his daughter Tithphaine, who was also herself *stephanephoros*<sup>180</sup> and *gymnasiarchos*<sup>181</sup> having planned (it).<sup>182</sup>

Here, Menekrates executed work on a column that was initiated by his daughter Tithphaine. It is possible that Menekrates was finishing Tithphaine's work because she had died, but the text does not say. Inscriptions often connect women to husbands or other male relatives, which to some can cast doubt on the extent of an elite woman's "independence" in a modern sense of the word. Hereditary offices, particularly religious ones, and a husband's career often determined a woman's civic involvement.<sup>183</sup> Sponsorship of buildings was often shared among relatives, and building projects continued over several generations.<sup>184</sup> Because elite families were the most notable in Greek cities, it was important for women to be very visible in public life to exhibit familial solidarity.<sup>185</sup> Buildings and monuments were physical representations of a family's wealth and status. Van Bremen states, "Female wealth represented family wealth, and female generosity contributed to a family's status."<sup>186</sup> As a result, Greek inscriptions often heighten virtues and qualities of women that were socially expected of them, such as chastity and devotion to a husband. In Termessos, a town in Asia Minor, a famine plagued the city. Atalanta promised

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<sup>180</sup> Chief official of the city.

<sup>181</sup> Head of the gymnasium.

<sup>182</sup> *CIG* 2714: Μενεκράτης Μενεκράτους, ἀρχίατρος τῆς πόλεως στεφανηφορῶν τὸν κίονα σὺν σπείρη καὶ κεφαλῇ προνοησαμένης τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ Τιθφαίνης τῆς καὶ αὐτῆς στεφανηφόρου καὶ γυμνασίαρχου (trans. Joy Kim).

<sup>183</sup> Van Bremen (1996), 82.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

to pay for a yearly distribution of wheat to the “mass of the people.” The inscription honoring her states that she is “modest” and “adorned with every feminine virtue,” showing another example of traditional female virtues being reflected in an honorary inscription. She is honored with a bronze statue in the very center of the city near the stoa of Attalos.<sup>187</sup>

In some cases, a woman jointly paid for a project with her husband. Females serving as *gymnasiarchoi* in inscriptions are all during the imperial period and have been identified in twenty-eight Greek cities, mostly in Asia Minor.<sup>188</sup> The *gymnasium* used to be for training future soldiers and was thus restricted to men. But in the Hellenistic and Roman eras, the *gymnasium* included libraries and became more of a public area for the whole population, though sometimes women were only allowed on special religious occasions.<sup>189</sup> These women shared the title with their husbands in more than half of the examples.<sup>190</sup> Rather than serving as a symbolic figure, female *gymnasiarchoi* seem to split the duties of the role with their husbands, as shown in the example below:

In the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the victory of Caesar  
The settlement honored  
Iolla, daughter of Menekratos,  
And Menandros Son of Attalos  
Who became an Elder<sup>191</sup> and  
Took care of the aqueduct  
Piously and justly<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> *TAM III* 1: 4 and 62 (trans. Riet Van Bremen).

<sup>188</sup> Van Bremen (1996), 68-69.

<sup>189</sup> Konstantinos Mantas, “Public and Private,” *Polis: Revista de ideas y formas politicas de la Antigüedad Clasica* 12 (1999): 183.

<sup>190</sup> Van Bremen (1996), 68-69.

<sup>191</sup> A member of the *gerousia*, and institution of elders in many Greek *poleis*. See Nikolaos Giannakopoulos, “The Gerousia of Akmonia,” *Gephyra* 10 (2013) 13-31.

<sup>192</sup> *TAM V* Lydiae 1430-1431 (trans. Gary Reger).

Though this inscription honors both husband and wife, it speaks of piety and justice. This shows that women were not unique in being described as pious or chaste, as these were virtues desired by all elites.

But being a benefactor did not entail independence from family and the domestic sphere for women; it was rather a continuation of familial tradition, as we saw with imperial women in Chapter 1. Piety and chastity likely meant different things for men and women. For women, such virtues were associated with the domestic sphere. This connection to family still does not undermine the significance of the mark women left on prominent public spaces through building sponsorship and the permanence of their statues. Not until the first century C.E. was it acceptable for women's statues to be in public spaces, largely because of blurring between private and public statues. City councils and assemblies used such monuments to set expectations for other wealthy elites. Family monuments and buildings was an "invasion of public spaces" that created a context in which women could become more visible and civically involved.<sup>193</sup> The following inscription from the first century C.E. states that Chryso Artemon funded the operation of the bath at Limyra (city in Lycia off southern coast of Asia Minor) "at her own expense."

The boule and demos of Limyra and the young men and the gerousia and the resident Romans honored Chryso Artemon daughter of Ornimythos son of Meleagros, resident of the city, who was wife ----- served as gymnasiachos of the young men [and old men?] ----- of landed property and justly the purchase ----- and provided oil at her own expense for the young men and the old men and all the other citizens, and gave back to the city the oil assigned to her by the demos and the money appropriated for the operation of the bath and did the operation at her own expense, analogously to the excellence of her ancestors.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Van Bremen (1996), 187-188.

<sup>194</sup> Michael Wörrle, "Epigraphische Forschungen zur Geschichte Lykiens IX. Gymnasiarchinnen und Gymnasiarchen in Limyra," *Chiron* 46 (2016) 403-451 at 404-428 no. 1, trans. Gary Reger.



Male elites frequently funded baths and provided expenditures for the oil (the soap of the ancient world) in the anointing rooms.<sup>195</sup> In the Greek East, gymnasiarchoi of both men and women displayed their wealth by funding or running the gymnasium themselves, just as Chryso does here. The inscription states that she “gave back to the city” the funds to pay for the oil and the operation of the bath, which was a common practice for gymnasiarchoi. Typically, these terms would have been negotiated before Chryso was even appointed as gymnasiarch, including the term that she would be the cost herself. It was not unusual that Chryso would have had this leverage to be given this title as a woman, for it was much more important that she had the financial means to do so. Again, we see connections made to her family, but this inscription greatly emphasizes that Chryso is continuing a family tradition. It states twice that she provided services to the city “at her own expense,” and that all this was done “analogously to the excellence of her ancestors.” Thus, connections made to a woman’s family did not water down her civic contributions in the Greek East, but rather allowed women to enter the public sphere. It was considered a just and noble thing for women like Chryso to independently contribute her finances to the betterment of the city as her ancestors had done.

### *Conclusion*

The importance of an elite woman’s family background when she engages in urban benefactions is evident in the Greek East. While Greek inscriptions are more likely than Latin ones to describe an honorand’s piety and chastity, this does not mean Greek women had more restrictions or a more domestic role in the public sphere than women in the Latin West. The Greek East had a stronger and longer tradition of female benefactions than the Latin West. Though it is unclear how much the phenomenon of Greek euergetism influenced Roman

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<sup>195</sup> Gleason (1999), 83.

patronage and vice versa, there seems to be at least some degree of mutual influence. During a time when Roman social order entered Greek society and urban elites needed to justify their wealthier status, women were able to find a way to be more politically involved through financial generosity.

## Chapter Four: Regional Considerations in the Latin West

We will now look at the remaining portion of the Empire including and west of central Italy and northern Africa. The examples of benefactresses and patronesses in the Latin West are concentrated in central Italy and northern Africa because these were the most urbanized regions. Hemelrijk argues that women could have more autonomy and influence in smaller, local cities than in Rome.<sup>196</sup> The cities and provinces of the Roman Empire were arenas for local elite women to impact urban space. As discussed in Chapter 3, there was a Roman notion of patronage that was an official office in cities. This institution was rarer in the Greek East, where many types of priesthoods and offices were available to women in the urban elite. But in the Latin West, being a *patrona* was the main way for elite women to have a political title. Elite women could be benefactresses, but these were not official political titles; rather, these women funded buildings as a family tradition or as a way of heightening their reputations. There were also mothers of cities and *collegia*, who will not be discussed here because they were usually of lower social rank. Yet it is important to note that this was another way for women to be honored with public statues in their hometowns and were able to be very visible and respectable in the public eye.<sup>197</sup>

### *Portrayal of Elite Women in Latin Literature and Epigraphy*

Roman imperial literary texts written by aristocratic males, including Plutarch, Seneca, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, and Dio Cassius, praise women for chastity, marital and motherly devotion, and housework. For example, the historian Livy recounted the controversial repeal of the Oppian law in 195 B.C.E. The law was originally passed in 215 B.C.E. in Rome which

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<sup>196</sup> Emily Hemelrijk, “Public Roles for Women in the Cities of the Latin West” in *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, eds. S. L. James and S. Dillon (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), 479.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 483.

limited women's financial spending or use of expensive goods. This included wearing more than half an ounce of gold, wearing a multi-colored dress (since colors were expensive), and riding a carriage in the city.<sup>198</sup> Livy's account of the debate states the opinions of those who were against repealing the Oppian law:

If each of us, citizens, had determined to assert his rights and dignity as a husband with respect to his own spouse, we should have less trouble with the sex as a whole; [2] as it is, our liberty, destroyed at home by female violence, even here in the Forum is crushed and trodden underfoot, and because we have not kept them individually under control, we dread them collectively.<sup>199</sup>

It is merely one example of the rather conservative descriptions of women from this time period.

Other historical and literary accounts of this nature are discussed in the introduction chapter.

However, Forbis argues that elite women are portrayed differently in Italian honorary inscriptions during the first three centuries C.E. in that they are wealthy and generous benefactresses.<sup>200</sup> Epigraphic evidence shows us that women had a significant role in civic life throughout the Empire, but literary authors fail to portray the extent of women's involvement. Perhaps this is indicative of men's perceptions of women in the political sphere.<sup>201</sup> One of the most telling examples of this is that of Ummidia Quadratilla, whose death Pliny recounts in a letter to Rosianus Geminus. He says she had "a sound constitution and sturdy physique which are rare in a woman."<sup>202</sup> Though Pliny discusses Ummidia's troupe of mimic actors (which he considers "unsuitable in a lady of her high position), he does not discuss her involvement in shaping Casinum's urban landscape.<sup>203</sup> Inscriptions from Casinum state that she built a temple

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<sup>198</sup> Lefkowitz (1992), 143.

<sup>199</sup> Liv. 34.1-2.

<sup>200</sup> Elizabeth Forbis, "Women's Public Image in Italian Honorary Inscriptions." *The American Journal of Philology* 111, no. 4 (1990): 493-4.

<sup>201</sup> Hemelrijk (2012), 489.

<sup>202</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 7.24.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

and amphitheater and funded several public events.<sup>204</sup> When Pliny describes the way people were “running to the theater to pay their respects to her,” he seems much more displeased with her legacy among mimic actors.<sup>205</sup> Pliny’s account contains subtle commentary about gender, while dedicatory inscriptions to Ummidia simply state her financial generosity to the city.

Whereas Greek inscriptions blend the private and public domains, Latin inscriptions generally tend to more simply state the facts.<sup>206</sup> The commonalities of language among Italian honorary inscriptions provide examples. The signifier for a formal patron in an inscription was *dignissimus*, but it is not nearly as prevalent as the term *merita*. Forbis posits that *merita* was more commonly used because it represents the favors done in a patron-client relationship, whereas *dignissimus* is more of a title. She said, “It seems the Italians felt more comfortable describing the actions of a non-patron in terms of patronage, rather than his or her actual person.”<sup>207</sup> In the Latin-speaking West, titles for women such as *clarissima femina* (which identified senatorial women) indicate financial generosity and appear frequently with *merita*, which is the most common term in honorary inscriptions. *Merita* implies favors between patrons and clients, especially for local elite patrons. This term, along with *liberalitas* and *beneficia*, define civic virtues as opposed to the more traditional domestic virtues often stated in inscriptions of the Greek East. These virtues refer to general goodwill expected of citizens rather than gender-specific virtues.<sup>208</sup> Honoring benefactors in inscriptions may have come from

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<sup>204</sup> *CIL* X.5183 = *ILS* 5628 (trans. Emily Hemelrijk).

<sup>205</sup> *Plin. Ep.* 7.24.

<sup>206</sup> Forbis (1990), 496.

<sup>207</sup> Forbis (1996), 25.

<sup>208</sup> Hemelrijk (2004), 229.

Hellenistic traditions as well. Southern Italian cities may not have accepted *patronae* because of their Greek heritage.<sup>209</sup>

The ‘epigraphic tradition’ increases during the first two centuries C.E. as people wanted to “participate in the monumentalization of one’s own family.”<sup>210</sup> Women often funded honorary statues themselves or demanded one in exchange for their benefactions. Such statues not only increased the prestige of her family, but also allowed women to be memorialized in public space.<sup>211</sup> So again, we see women being able to be more visible in the public arena due to their roles in a family context. This is evident both with patronesses and benefactresses in the Latin West. Even though, as we shall see, inscriptions in the Latin West tend to associate patronesses and benefactresses with more civic rather than domestic virtues, women’s role in their family is still a vital part of their public building projects.

#### *Patronage as a Political Office*

Patronage in the Roman Empire is divided into four categories: patron of a *libertus* (freedman), patron of free-born individuals of lower social status, patron as an advocate (*patronus causae*), and the patron of a community.<sup>212</sup> The final definition of patronage will be discussed here. Official city patrons were expected to not only finance building projects, but also “to protect the city” and be a “defender of the public cause.” They did this by providing legal support for the client city and advocating on its behalf. Thus, it was important for patrons to have connections in Rome, especially with the emperor. This process was certainly promoted by the Roman state, which wanted to coopt elites as the intermediaries between their cities and the state,

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<sup>209</sup> John Nicols, “Patrona duitatis: Gender and Civic Patronage,” in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History V*, ed. Carl Deroux (Brussels: Revue des Etudes Latines, 1989), 136.

<sup>210</sup> Van Abbema (2008), 27.

<sup>211</sup> Hemelrijk (2012), 483.

<sup>212</sup> Nicols (1980), 366.

especially in matters of tax collection and the preservation of public order. Since wealth was so important in this, there was also increasing maldistribution of wealth in the East, as in the Roman world generally.

Male city patrons were expected to intervene for their client cities because they were often senators or equestrians in the imperial service. Senators' wives could be patrons of cities while travelling to Rome and throughout the Empire with their husbands, serving as advocates along the way. Nicols notes that being co-opted as a town's patron allowed a woman to be an "honorary member of the town council."<sup>213</sup> Patronage was an opportunity for women to be civically involved in prominent ways. In other words, "civic munificence was one of the few ways in which [patronesses] could leave their mark on the city...female munificence changed the notion of exemplary womanhood."<sup>214</sup>

Patronage was a flexible institution, and does not seem to differ much from the typical roles of other urban elites.<sup>215</sup> It was a social, not legal institution, meaning that there were no formal laws in the Latin West regarding the responsibilities of and requirements for being a patron.<sup>216</sup> The act of generosity itself should originate from good character and a loving relationship with the community receiving the benefaction. However, character was always secondary to wealth. Official *patroni* were coopted by local senates through a decree of *decuriones*. Patrons were added to a list, the *album decurionum*, which enumerated the patrons and town council. Cities could also have multiple *patronae* at one time.<sup>217</sup> *Patronae* were to care

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<sup>213</sup> Nicols (1989), 118.

<sup>214</sup> Emily Hemelrijk, "Female Munificence in the Cities of the Latin West," in *Women and the Roman City in the Latin West*, eds. Emily Hemelrijk and Greg Woolf (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2013), 80-81.

<sup>215</sup> Hemelrijk (2004), 416.

<sup>216</sup> Forbis (1990), 12.

<sup>217</sup> Hemelrijk (2012), 210.

for the client city, both financially and in serving as a mediator with the central government in Rome based on language from inscriptions on honorary statue bases and the *tabulae*, the bronze tablet on which the *album decurionum* was often engraved.

Honorary inscriptions use terms such as *munificentia*, which during the Severan dynasty helped to standardize the cooptation of female elite patrons.<sup>218</sup> The occurrence of female *patronae* also aligns with the beginning of the Severan dynasty, with the earliest *patronae* being Abeina and Seia in the early 190's C.E.<sup>219</sup> Inscriptions in the Latin West serve two functions, according to Forbis. Firstly, inscriptions express gratitude to patronesses in order that they might continue to donate in the future. Secondly, the inscriptions state which virtues and qualities were the standard for earning recognition. Though the content of inscriptions were officially decided by the local senate, honorands had some say in what they said. These honorific statues that featured the inscriptions were usually located in or in front of the buildings the honorand sponsored. Such statues were in well-visited locations such as temples, baths, or in the *agora*.<sup>220</sup>

So, who were these patronesses of the Latin West? According to Nicols, we know of 21 women of the 1200 known official urban patrons from 50 B.C.E. to 327 C.E.<sup>221</sup> Some of these women might be the patron of a private person or a *collegium* because inscriptions do not always clarify whether someone is a *patronus municipii* or *coloniae*, which indicate a city patron. Hemelrijk disagrees with Nicols' classification of an official patroness; she holds that when the city, town council (*ordo decurinum*), or the citizen body (*plebs urbana*) calls a woman a *patrona* in the honorary inscription, she should be considered as such.<sup>222</sup> Thus, we must keep in mind that

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<sup>218</sup> Nicols (1989), 139.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>220</sup> Hemelrijk (2004), 228-231.

<sup>221</sup> Nicols (1989), 137.

<sup>222</sup> Hemelrijk (2004), 213.



Nicols' criteria was more restrictive and he may have underestimated the true number of *patronae*, but it is a close estimate of the number of female patrons in the Latin West.

Geographically, 12 of Nicols' examples are found in North Africa and seven in central Italy. Though these occurrences are concentrated in these regions of the Empire, they include cities of varying size. Looking at the cases of female *patronae* in local contexts indicates that the ratio of female to male patrons was not incredibly low. The three main regions of central Italy wherein female cooptation is accounted for, Umbria, Etruria, and Corfinium, have a female to male ratio of 1:22, 1:16, and 1:7, respectively. Half of the known evidence is in the form of stone *tabulae*, and the other half are statue bases.<sup>223</sup>

Just as seen with benefactors in the Greek East, wealth and status were prerequisites for being a *patrona*, as 11 of the 13 known *patronae* by Nicols' definition are of senatorial rank.<sup>224</sup> These women probably owned property and/or lived in urban areas. Of the 18 women Hemelrijk considers to be *patronae*, 14 are of senatorial and three are of equestrian status. Though Nicols and Hemelrijk's collections of female *patronae* slightly differ in numbers, they both demonstrate that most of the women were high-ranking. This is because patronesses needed to control a vast amount of wealth to fund public buildings.<sup>225</sup> During the first and second centuries C.E., *optimus* was a common term in honorary inscriptions, which meant "high moral quality" and was meant for very wealthy benefactors.<sup>226</sup> Thus, it seems that immense wealth was a norm among urban patrons and that morality was associated with benefactions. Wealth is what allowed women to be patrons and to gain such recognition in the first place. Forbis states that for women and men

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<sup>223</sup> Nicols (1989), 118-128.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Hemelrijk (2004), 214-215.

<sup>226</sup> Forbis (1996), 21-28

alike, “their best opportunity for public recognition” was “in various forms of financial largesse.”<sup>227</sup> She also states, “To qualify for membership, one’s sex and social prominence were insignificant; one’s wealth simply had to make a financial difference in the community.”<sup>228</sup> *Modestia* was also used to describe men and indicated modesty, while *pudicitia* was used to describe a woman’s sexual purity. However, only 11 percent of Italian honorary inscriptions for women use *pudicitia*. Most inscriptions use the same language for both genders. Even if a woman’s *pudicitia* was emphasized, their financial generosity was always indicated in the inscriptions.<sup>229</sup> Between male and female patrons in the Latin West, Hemelrijk finds no fundamental difference between male and female patrons.<sup>230</sup>

As in Greek inscriptions, family links were made in honorary inscriptions. It was common for male relatives to be mentioned; of the 13 known cases of *patronae* in central Italy (by Nicols’ definition), 12 reference male relatives of the honoree, with the exception of Abeiena. This makes sense because women derived their social rank from their nearest male relatives and was thus a social norm. Hemelrijk argues that women’s connections to male relatives in inscriptions does not mean that women were merely chosen because of their family or marriage. Women could have been able to exert more political influence in cities because they could stay behind while their husbands were in Rome.<sup>231</sup> Furthermore, city patronage was not hereditary. While the names of children were sometimes included in cooptation decrees to show the continuity of the relationship between a family and a client city, *decuriones* could choose whomever they liked to be a patron. For example, L. Accius Iulianus Asclepianus of Utica was

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 83-86.

<sup>230</sup> Hemelrijk (2004), 424.

<sup>231</sup> Hemelrijk (2004), 218-219.

honored with his wife Gallonia Octavia Marcella and unmarried daughters, Accia Asclepianilla Castorea and Accia Heuresis Venantium, all as *patronae perpetuae*.<sup>232</sup>

Some gender difference is seen in the lack of activities mentioned in some inscriptions to female benefactors, as in the example of Domitia Melpis and her husband Quintus Petronius Melior. Marble plaques with inscriptions dedicated to each of them were found in the baths of Tarquinii, implying that they were both involved in the baths' renovation. The inscription for her husband is as follows: "For the very best of patrons, since he favoured the city and repaired the baths."<sup>233</sup> But the inscription for his wife does not mention what specifically she funded or did, though she is identified as a *patrona*: "For Domitia Melpis, a woman of senatorial rank, wife of the consular Quintus Petronius Melior, the *ordo decurionum* and citizens of Tarquinia <set up this statue> for their most deserving *patrona*."<sup>234</sup> Domitia's inscription does not describe her in terms of domestic virtues such as piety and chastity that are more prevalent in Greek inscriptions. Though it does not directly connect her to the act of funding the bath, the inscription is very straightforward about her deserving honors as the city's *patrona*.

Domitia Melpis is one example of a woman who is honored alongside her husband, but instances also exist where women are independently honored for very specific acts. One such example is that of Nummia Varia, who was coopted as *patrona* in Peltuinum Vestinum in Italy during 242 C.E. The inscription on her *tabula* holds the same form given to men, showing a sense of gender equity:

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>233</sup> *CIL* 11, 3367: patron op/timo, quod rem p(ublican) fove/rit et thermas resti/ tueri (trans. Emily Hemelrijk).

<sup>234</sup> *CIL* 11, 3368: Domitiae Melpidi c(larissimae) f(eminae) /coniugi Q(uinti) Petro/ni Melioris viri / co(n)s(ularis), / ordo et cives / Tarquiniensium / patronae dig/nissimae (trans. Emily Hemelrijk).

Nummia Varia, a woman of senatorial rank, priestess of Venus Felix, has started to act with such affection and good-will towards us in accordance with her custom of benevolence, just as her parents too have always done, that she should rightfully and unanimously be made *patrona* of our *praefectura* in the hope that by offering this honour, which is the highest in our city, to her so illustrious excellency, we may be more and more renowned by the repute of her benevolence and in all respects be safe and protected (...) All members of the council have decided to proffer to Nummia Varia, a woman of senatorial rank, priestess of Venus Felix, in accordance with the splendour of her high rank, the patrocini-um of our praefectura, and to ask from her excellency and extraordinary benevolence, that she may accept this honour which we offer to her with willing and favourable inclination and that she may deign to take us and our res publica, individually and universally, under the protection of her house and that, in whatever matters it may reasonably be required, she may intervene with the authority belonging to her rank and protect us and keep us safe.<sup>235</sup>

The language in this inscription has a sense of submission and reverence towards Nummia Varia. She is referred to as “illustrious excellency” and her position of *patrona* is said to be the highest honor in the city. When emotion is displayed in inscriptions to patronesses such as in this example, it is not because the honorand’s domestic virtues are being highlighted. Rather, the emotions point to a hierarchical relationship that places the patroness on a pedestal.<sup>236</sup> This is also another example of a woman following in the footsteps of her family, though it is interesting that in this example, both of her parents are mentioned. Not only is her benevolence referenced, but also her protection of the city. Nummia was respected not simply for her financial generosity, but for her advocacy and overall work towards the city’s betterment. No husband is mentioned,

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<sup>235</sup> *CIL* 9, 3429: Nummiam Variam c(larissimam) f(eminam) sacerdotem Veneris Felicis, ea adfecti/one adque prono animo circa nos agere coepisse pro instituto / benevolentiae suae, sicut et parentes eius semper egerunt, ut / merito debeat ex consensu universorum patrona praefecturae / nostrae fieri, quo magis magisque hoc honore, qui est aput nos potissimus, tantae claritati eius oblato dignatione benignitatis eius glori/osi et in omnibus tuti ac defensi esse possimus, (.) Placere universis conscriptis Nummiae Variae, c(larissimae) f(eminae) sacerdoti Veneris / Felicis, pro splendore dignitatis suae patrocini-um praefecturae nos/trae deferri petique ab eius claritate et eximia benignitate, ut hunc / honorem sibi a nobis oblatum libenti et prono animo suscipere / et singulos universosque nos remque publicam nostram in cl/ientelam domus suae recipere dignetur et in quibuscumque / ratio exegerit, intercedente auctoritate dignitatis suae, tutos de/ fensosque praestet (trans. Emily Hemelrijk).

<sup>236</sup> Hemelrijk (2012), 482.

which shows that Nummia Varia is capable of funding and intervening for the city on her own.<sup>237</sup> The example of Nummia Varia also shows that patronage shifted during the imperial period to be more about an honor that the city gave to an individual rather than about the relationship between senator and city as it had been during the Republic.<sup>238</sup>

In terms of the types of public buildings patronesses funded, they were mostly religious buildings (56 percent). Though this might suggest that it was more socially acceptable for women to display their piety by focusing on temples, we must keep in mind that temples were the most frequent public structures in any Roman city. To contribute to the erection of a temple was to influence a very prominent part of an urban landscape. Of their other dedications, 25 percent of the public buildings patronesses funded were utilitarian and gave amenities to the city, including bathhouses and porticoes. 12 percent were infrastructural, meaning aqueducts, roads, and arches, although aqueducts were closely associated with baths since aqueducts were constructed to supply baths with water. Seven percent of the buildings were for entertainment such as theaters. These percentages are garnered from Hemelrijk's definitions of public buildings, but as stated in the introduction, there can be much overlap among these categories. According to the three types of public buildings as listed in the introduction, baths and theaters would be part of the recreational category, while Hemelrijk's infrastructural buildings would be grouped with porticoes and other civic buildings.

Regardless of how we define the categories of public buildings, one of the main takeaways is that women more frequently funded religious buildings than others, a pattern that existed throughout the Empire. Within categories, there also seems to be a divide in what types

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<sup>237</sup> Hemelrijk (2004), 223.

<sup>238</sup> Eilers (2002), 106.

of buildings patronesses sponsored. They established many bathhouses, but no *curiae* (assemblies, councils, or courts); aqueducts, roads, and arches, but rarely walls and fortifications; theaters but no circuses.<sup>239</sup> Of course, we must keep in mind that simply because we do not have evidence for the occurrence of women funding certain types of buildings does not necessarily mean that it never occurred. Some would argue that such patterns suggest that women were restricted to urban benefactions in a gendered sense, in that they could only fund buildings that were socially acceptable. If it was not acceptable for women to fund assemblies, councils, or courts, this could mean that they were barred from being involved in buildings connected to the male political realm. Or, if women did not fund defense infrastructure such as walls and fortifications, it could be because these were also male-dominated spheres. At the same time, women funded porticoes where senate meetings were held. It would make sense that women would not fund military infrastructure, but this does not undermine the significance of their shaping urban spaces that were frequented by men and women alike. Bathhouses, roads, arches, aqueducts, and temples were all essential to urban landscapes and to bettering the urban life of both sexes.

#### *General Elite Benefactresses in the Latin West*

Beyond the women who were officially deemed patrons of cities, many more elite women contributed to urban landscapes through general benefactions. Unlike in the Greek East, benefactions did not usually lead to civic offices in the Latin West. But the titles of *patronae* may have been influenced by municipal offices in the Greek East.<sup>240</sup> Women in the Latin West were limited to financing public buildings, feasts, games, and other distributions (such as grain)

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<sup>239</sup> Hemelrijk (2013), 72-73.

<sup>240</sup> Nicols (1989), 136.

or serving as priestesses of the imperial cult. Being a priestess also often required paying for public buildings in her honor. All women of the elite “were expected to display ‘spontaneous’ generosity.”<sup>241</sup> We have seen this theme with city patrons as well, wherein elites are not formally expected to fund public buildings and other amenities, but it is rather an unspoken rule.

Women of non-senatorial status were more likely to be general benefactors rather than patronesses, as we saw senatorial women overwhelmingly represented among patronesses.<sup>242</sup> As with patronesses, the evidence available for benefactresses is concentrated in the mid-first to second centuries and is geographically concentrated in central Italy and northern Africa. A good number of benefactresses are found in Spain as well.<sup>243</sup> This pattern makes sense because these are the areas of the Latin West that were heavily urbanized. Hardly any civic benefactresses or imperial priestesses are known from the northwestern portion of the Empire including Britannia, Gallia Belgica, and Germania Inferior.

In the city of Thugga, which was near Carthage in North Africa, the most prominent and wealthiest family, the Gabinii, had dominated the town elite for over two centuries. A daughter of that family, Gabinia Hermiona, provided building material for the construction of the town’s circus from the family’s limestone quarry.<sup>244</sup>

The temple of Victory over the Germans of our lord, which Gabinia Hermonia ordered to be made in her will from 100,000 HS [*sesterces*], has been completed and dedicated; by that will on the day of dedication and thereafter every year she instructed that a banquet be given by her heirs for the *decurions*, [and] likewise she returned to the *res publica* a field which is called “circus” according to the wish of the people.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Hemelrijk (2012), 479-480.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 481.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 487.

<sup>244</sup> Mariette de Vos, “The Rural Landscape of Thugga” in *The Roman Agricultural Economy: Organization, Investment, and Production*, eds. Alan Bowman and Andrew Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 194.

<sup>245</sup> *AE* 2003.2013: templum Victoriae [Germanicae d]omini nostri, quod G[a]binia Hermonia testamen[to suo ex] HS c m(ilibus) n(ummum) fieri iussit, perfectum et dedicatum es[t q]uo

There is no mention in this inscription of Gabinia's husband or other male relatives. Rather, her name alone holds enough power and influence. She also continues the family tradition of benefactions by establishing that her descendants will give an annual banquet. By making it possible for the people of Thugga to enjoy the temple, the plot of land called circus (whose use is apparently up to the city), and annual banquets, Gabinia Hermiona shaped vital aspects of public life. Because of this, she brought prestige and honor not only to her ancestors but also to her descendants.

In another example, Marcia Aurelia Ceionia Demetrias paid for the restoration of the baths in Anagni, a city in central Italy.

On account of the dedication of the baths, which they restored after much time to their original appearance, at their own expense, the senate and people of Anagn(ia) have decided to set up a statue of Marcia Aurelia Ceionia Demetrias, *stolata femina*; at the dedication of which [i.e., the statue] she gave to the decurions 15 [*denarii*, presumably], to the *seviri* 12, to the people 10 each, and a feast sufficient for everyone.<sup>246</sup>

Recently, it was discovered that Marcia had been incorrectly identified as the Marcia who was Emperor Commodus' concubine. Rather, Flexsenhar suggests that Marcia was a freeborn woman (*stolata femina*) married to the imperial freedman Sabinianus and that the couple was jointly honored as civic benefactors.<sup>247</sup> If Flexsenhar's hypothesis is correct, then we can compare the honorary inscriptions dedicated to both husband and wife. The inscription dedicated to Marcus Aurelius Sabinianus, Marcia's presumed husband, is stated below:

(Statue) of Euhodus. For Marcus Aurelius Sabinianus, freedman of the emperors, patron of the Anagnian community and also of the collegium of wine/oil distributors, decurialis

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testamento die dedicationis et dei[nceps] quodannis epulum decurionibus ab her[e]dibus suis dari praecepit, item agrum qui appellatur circus ad vo[l]uptatem po[p]uli rei publ(icae) remisit (trans. Gary Reger).

<sup>246</sup> *ILS* 406; *CIL* 10.5918 (trans. Gary Reger).

<sup>247</sup> Michael Flexsenhar, "Marcia, Commodus' 'Christian' Concubine and *CIL* X 5918," *TYCHE—Contributions to Ancient History, Papyrology and Epigraphy* 31, no. 1 (2017): 137.



for the order of the lictors of announcers and likewise of porters, but also a former decemvir. On account of his love for his hometown and its citizens, because he restored with his own money the baths that had long been neglected through carelessness, the senate and people of Anagni decreed that a statue, (financed) from his bequests, be put up to him. On the occasion of the dedication [he gave] 5 denarii to the decurions, 2 to the seviri, and 1 denarius to (each) of the people, and a public banquet sufficient for all.<sup>248</sup>

The two statues on which these inscriptions were found were discovered together and were likely next to each other in the baths. A plaque was also possibly somewhere else in the building that stated the couple's joint roles.<sup>249</sup> In his case, even though Marcus Aurelius was the official patron of Anagni, Marcia had the opportunity to be publicly honored for benefactions to the city. The language in both inscriptions is fairly similar, with a little more veneration shown to Marcus Aurelius since he was the town's official patron. But the spouses both did somewhat of the same thing, giving money at the dedication of the statue, although Marcia gave more. Marcia gave the decurions 15 denarii (presumably), the seviri 12, and the people 10, while Marcus gave five, two, and one, respectively.

Nearby in the same region of Latium, a priestess Agusia Priscilla was honored with a statue in the city of Gabii. She bore the costs of the statue herself, and the inscription states that she followed in the footsteps of previous priestesses (*exemplo inlustrium feminar(um)*):

The Gabinians have taken care to set up publically a statue for Agusia Priscilla, daughter of T(itus), priestess of Hope and the Safety of Aug(ustus), by d(ecree) of the d(ecurions), because, after having paid out money on account of her priesthood as an example to high-status wom(en), she also promised that she would repair the portic(us) of Hope, which had been damaged by age, since she did enough for everyone for religion, having sponsored excellent games for the health of the princeps Antoninus Aug(ustus) Pius,

<sup>248</sup> *CIL* X 5917 = *ILS* 1909: Euhodi / M(arco) Aurel(io) Sabiniano / Augg(ustorum) lib(erto), patrono / civitatis Anagninor(um), / itemq(ue) collegi(i) caplato/rum, decuriali decuriae / lictoriae popularis denuntiatorum / itemq(ue) gerulor(um) sed et decemviralis / s(enatus) p(opulus)q(ue) A(nagninus) erga amorem patriae / et civium quod thermas longa incuria / neglectas sua pecunia restituer[-] / statuam ex leg(at)is suis ponend(am) cen [suer(unt)] / ob cuius dedic(ationem) dedit decur(ionibus)] |(denarios) V sexv(iris) |(denarios) II pop(ulo) |(denarium) I et epul(um) suffic(iens) (trans. Michael Flexsenhar).

<sup>249</sup> Flexsenhar (2017), 145.

father of the fatherland, and for his children, a garment having been given. She returned to the people the cost of the statue, content with the honor. P(lace) g(iven) by d(ecree) of the d(ecurions).<sup>250</sup>

This inscription also highlights the example that was set to other women through these benefactions. Just as Agusia looked to the example of priestesses before her, she also sets a precedent for virtuous behavior for future priestesses.

Lastly, the following example is from Cartima in modern-day Spain. This part of the Empire also had significant enough urbanization to have some examples of elite female benefactresses. Here, Iunia Rustica was a priestess who funded a variety of projects as listed below:

Iunia Rustica, daughter of Decimus, first and perpetual priestess in the municipium of Cartima, restored the public porticoes that were ruined by old age, gave land for a bathhouse, reimbursed the public taxes, set up a bronze statue of Mars in the forum, gave at her own cost porticoes next to the bathhouse on her own land with a pool and a statue of Cupid, and dedicated them after having given a feast and public shows. After having remitted the expense, she made and dedicated the statues that were decreed by the council of Cartima for herself and for her son, Gaius Fabius Iunianus, and she likewise made and dedicated at her own cost the statue for Gaius Fabius Fabianus, her husband.<sup>251</sup>

In this example, it is made clear that Iunia Rustica independently used her funds for many buildings and amenities in the city, but she even paid for statues for her husband and son. Hemelrijk points out that Iunia's husband had no independent claim to a public statue. Therefore, Iunia took complete credit for establishing the family group of statues and for bringing her family into prominent public space.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has summarized the characteristics of elite female euergetism in the Latin West, which occurred mainly in two forms—official patronage and general elite benefactions.

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<sup>250</sup> *ILS* 6218; *CIL* 14.2804 (trans. Gary Reger).

<sup>251</sup> *CIL* 2.1956 = *ILS* 5512 (trans. Emily Hemelrijk).

These practices were similar to Greek benefactions and offices, but differed in that patronage was a Roman institution. A wider variety of political offices were available to women in the Greek East, whereas in the Latin West patronage was the main avenue of civic involvement. The Greek East had a longer history of women funding urban building projects and being honored through public statues. However, we have seen differences in the form and content of inscriptions such that Greek inscriptions blend the public and private domains, while Latin inscriptions for women hold similar form to those for men. These epigraphic differences can seem as if women in the Latin West were considered more equitable to men than in the Greek East. Despite these differences, the pattern of women's role in their family continues to exist in the Latin West. Even though Latin inscriptions may not explicitly state domestic virtues like those in the Greek East, we still see that women followed family traditions of generosity and tried to establish traditions for future generations through benefactions.

It is difficult to decipher whether Roman notions of female civic involvement were more 'conservative' or 'liberal' than Greek ones by modern ideals of these terms. Likewise, it is difficult to understand whether the idea of patronage influenced the few occurrences of official patronage in the Greek East, or whether it was rather inspired by a strong Greek tradition of benefactions. Regardless, it is important to look at the ways elite women's political involvement through urban benefactions was somewhat standardized in the urbanized portions of the Latin West.

## Conclusion

This study sought to find patterns in female benefactions among different regions of the Roman Empire, considering the cultural and historical differences between the Greek East and the Latin West. It also aimed to find patterns among various elite women, from imperial to senatorial and equestrian. But across these regional and social differences, women indeed became more visible in the public eye as a result of funding urban building projects, and they were able to do so by bringing the domestic sphere into the public. Though this manifested in somewhat contrasting ways, the underlying theme is that women's role as mothers and daughters within the context of a family allowed them to become more civically involved in Roman cities. The heightened trend of elite women funding urban infrastructure during the period of the Principate is not representative of their unbridled and newfound independence so much as it signals the way their family backgrounds justified their political involvement. This results in a more complex picture of elite women's status during this time.

We cannot generalize too much across these women from different geographic regions and different social backgrounds. Language in Greek inscriptions that underscore piety and chastity does not necessarily mean that Greek Eastern women had less political leverage than women of the Latin West, where inscriptions were generally more straightforward. Likewise, we cannot immediately assume that since Greek women had a longer history of holding political office and being granted honorary statues, their culture was more open to female politicians. The differences that existed between the Greek East and Latin West were nuanced and complex, as were the differences that existed between the cities within these regions. However, we see similar themes of women inheriting wealth and status from their families that allowed them to influence public space and gain some political power as a result. Even women that did not hold

an official title such as a patroness or gymnasiarch were able to shape public space, and in the Roman Empire, that equated political power.

This theme of women blending the public and private domains through urban benefactions is also seen across women of different social standing and political role in their respective cities. During this period of the Principate, imperial women were for the first time commemorated through public space in the form of statues for having a dynastic role in birthing future leaders of the Empire.<sup>252</sup> These women also built porticoes and other public buildings that served as political spaces in Rome. Women in the Greek East funded public buildings as a result of holding some sort of political office or having husbands in political office. Their culture strongly emphasized their family backgrounds and brought the private into the public sphere as Van Bremen states: “What normally went on within families was brought explicitly into the open, and decisions about spending were debated, imposed, or resisted in the public sphere.”<sup>253</sup> Although Van Bremen argues that this resulted in greater restrictions on women’s freedoms because their business was being brought out in public, I argue that while we cannot say women were significantly more independent by modern standards as a result of their greater presence in the public sphere, it is still significant that they were more visible in public space. Lastly, both official patronesses and general benefactresses in the Latin West were seen as more influential based on the prestige of their family or husbands. On this, Hemelrijk said, “a woman of a distinguished senatorial family might be highly influential because of the prestige of her rank, family and social connections. In comparison with her senatorial husband, who was mostly occupied in Rome, she may have had more time to spend on behalf of her native city.”<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Flory (1996), 298.

<sup>253</sup> Van Bremen (1996), 301.

<sup>254</sup> Hemelrijk (2004), 218.

Among these geographic, social, and political factors, elite women were generally able to be more visible in the public sphere as a result of their family backgrounds. This is reflective of the cultural expectation at this time for women to be associated with the domestic sphere as well as the income disparities that restricted political influence to the upper classes throughout the Empire. Even though men such as Dio were able to enter political life primarily through the wealth and prestige of their families, elite women were seen as bringing the private sphere into the public. Yet, it is still significant that women across the Empire were shaping urban space, that their statues were visible to the public, and that their names were inscribed into the urban landscape. Studying culture and society through urban space is crucial because it is intended to be somewhat permanent. It shows who was capable of influencing this space and therefore people's daily lives, economic and political activities, and social interactions. Urban space was part of people's daily lives and therefore reflects what the ruling classes wished to impose on their society. Thus, looking at the urban fabric and public spaces of cities throughout the Roman Empire tells us who had power, how they wanted to shape urban life, and how they were perceived in society as seen in this particular study of elite women.

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