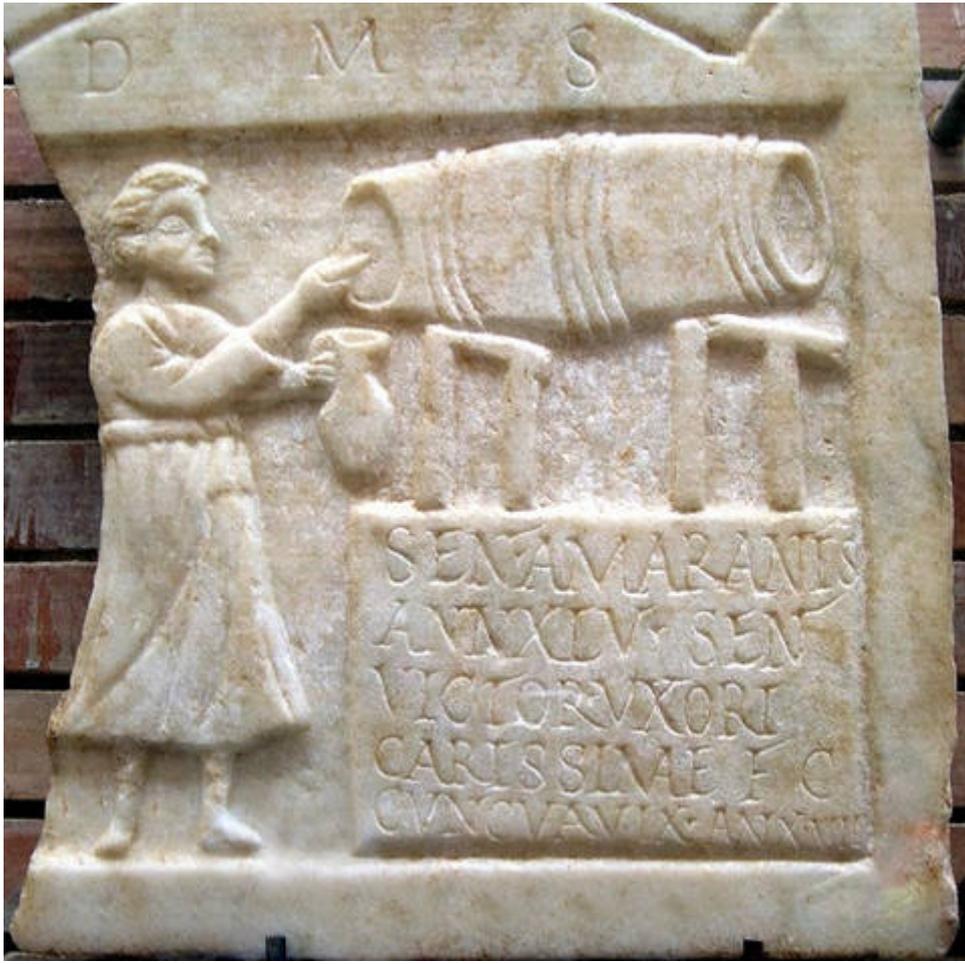


BELLARIA LXXXIII



WOMEN'S LIVES FROM ROMAN INSCRIPTIONS

By kind permission of Cambridge University Press, this series is based entirely on Emily A. Hemelrijk's superb *Women and Society in the Roman World: A Sourcebook of Inscription from the Roman West* (Cambridge 2021).

V RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE

Religion

Civic priesthoods

2 Eumachia, public priestess in Pompeii

CIL 10, 813

Pompeii

Early 1st century AD

Comment: this statue was set up in the rear of the building that Eumachia sponsored in Pompeii (see further below), commemorating her high status as public priestess



For Eumachia (daughter of Lucius), public priestess, the fullers [set this up].
Eumachiae, Luci filiae, sacerdoti publicae, fullones

30 A Greek priestess of Heracles in Britannia

*I/G*14, 2554

Corstopitum, Britannia

3rd century AD



Comment: presumably Diodora emigrated from Tyre and brought this cult with her.

Diodora, chief priestess, [set this up] for Heracles of Tyre
 [In verse] Ἡρακλεῖ / Τυρίω(ι) / Διοδώρα, / ἀρχιέρεια.

Female cult personnel

62 Eviration: a woman receiving the testicles

*CIL*13, 510

Lactora, Gallia Aquitania

24 March AD 239

Comment: this celebrates the dedication of Eutyches as a eunuch-priest of Magna Mater [Cybele] on her 'Day of Blood' (he was probably a Greek slave: castration of Romans was forbidden). Valeria Gemina came from an important local family. Dedicated to the Mother of the Gods. Valeria Gemina has received the masculine power (uires, i.e. testicles) of Eutyches on the ninth day before the Kalends of April (24 March) under the priesthood of Trajanus Nundinius when our Lord Gordianus and Aviola were consuls.*

**She may have removed the testicles herself or simply received them.*

Sacrum Matri Deum. Valeria Gemina vires ecepit Eutychetis VIII Kalendas Apriles, sacerdote Traiano Nundinio, domino nostro Gordiano et Aviola consulibus.

Dedicants and Devotees

63 Women participating in the Secular Games of Augustus

CIL 6, 877

Rome

17 BC



Comment: the Ludi Saeculares, an ancient celebration of the end of the saeculum (110 years) were revived by Augustus in 17 BC, from 31 May to 3 June. The marble inscription is preserved only in fragments.

[2 June. Lines 123-31] Then Marcus Agrippa headed the 110 married mothers of families, who had been chosen in advance, in the following prayer: 'Juno Regina. If there is anything better for the Roman people and the Quirites [official term for Roman citizens collectively], we 110 married mothers of families on bended knee pray, beg and beseech that you increase the power and majesty of the Roman people and the Quirites in war and at home [*words omitted*] and that you may grant eternal victory and health to the Roman people and the Quirites and that you may favour the Roman people and the Quirites and the legions of the Roman people and the Quirites, and that you may safeguard and enlarge the state of the Roman people and the Quirites and that you may be favourable and well-disposed to the Roman people, to the Quirites, to the Board of Fifteen for performing sacrifices, to us, our

houses and our families. [...] This we 110 married mothers of families of the Roman people and the Quirites on bended knee pray, beg and beseech.'

[Line 138] The matrons held ritual banquets (in the same way).

[3 June Lines 147-9] ... and when the sacrifice was completed, twenty-seven boys, who had been chosen in advance and whose fathers and mothers were still living, and as many girls, sang a hymn (on the Palatine) and in the same way on the Capitol. Quintus Horatius Flaccus composed the hymn [his *Carmen Saeculare*].

[Lines 123-131] *deinde CX matribus familias nuptis, quibus denuntiatum erat ..., Marcus Agrippa praeit in haec verba: Iuno Regina, ast quid est quod melius siet populo Romano Quiritibus ... matres familias CX populi Romani, Quiritium nuptae genibus nixae te ... precamur, oramus, obsecramusque, uti tu imperium maiestatemque populi Romani, Quiritium duelli domique auxis, utique words omitted sempiternam victoriam valetudinem populo Romano, Quiritibus duis faveasque populo Romano, Quiritibus, legionibus populi Romani, Quiritium remque publicam populi Romani, Quiritium salvam serves maioremque faxis, uti sies volens propitia populo Romano, Quiritibus, XVviris sacris faciundis, nobis, domibus, familiis, ... matres familias CX populi Romani, Quiritium nuptae genibus nixae precamur, oramus, obsecramus.*

[Line 138] *matronae sellisternia habuerunt ...*

[3 June Lines 147-9] *sacrificioque perfecto, pueri XXVII, quibus denuntiatum erat patrimi et matrimi, et puellae totidem carmen cecinerunt; eodemque modo in Capitolio. carmen composuit Quintus Horatius Flaccus.*

Women's Dedications

89 To the Matronae Boudunneihae

RSK98

Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium, Germania inferior

AD 151-200



Comment: the three Matronae were Celtic goddesses worshipped in Germany, Gaul and N. Italy. The woman who set this up had a Latinised name. Note their round bonnets and the bowl of fruit on the woman's lap on the right.

Dossonia Paterna [set this up] for the Matronae Boudunneihae
Matronis Boudunneihis Dossonia Paterna.

Public Life

Civic Benefactresses

2 Eumachia of Pompeii

CIL 10, 810

Pompeii

Early 1st C AD



The Eumachia building

Comment: the function of this large complex is not fully understood. It probably served a number of different purposes.

Eumachia, daughter of Lucius, public priestess, built in her own name and that of her son Marcus Numistrius Fronto the columnar porch, the covered gallery and the portico at her own expense and she dedicated it to Concordia Augusta and to Pietas. *Eumachia, Luci filia, sacerdos publica, nomine suo et Marci Numistri Frontonis, filii, chalcidicum, cryptam, porticus, Concordiae Augustae Pietati sua pecunia fecit eademque dedicavit.*

7 Ummidia Quadratilla, benefactress of Casinum

CIL 10, 5183

Casinum, Italy

AD 90-100

Comment: Pliny (Ep.7.24) offers an obituary of Ummidia, describing her heathy lifestyle, her family and private life (she died aged 79), but makes no mention at all of the personal benefactions listed here.



The amphitheatre at Casinum

[From the amphitheatre] Ummidia Quadratilla, daughter of Gaius, built the amphitheatre and the temple for the citizens of Casinum from her own resources.

[From the theatre] Ummidia Quadratilla, daughter of Gaius, from her own resources restored for the citizens of Casinum the theatre that had been adorned at the expense(?) of her father and had collapsed due to old age. To celebrate the dedication she gave a banquet to the decurions, the people and the women.

[From the amphitheatre] *Ummidia, Cai filia, Quadratilla amphitheatrum et templum Casinatibus sua pecunia fecit.*

[From the theatre] *Ummidia, Cai filia, Quadratilla theatrum, impensis[?] patris sui exornatum[?] vetustate collapsum, Casinatibus sua pecunia restituit et ob dedicationem decurionibus et populo et mulieribus epulum dedit.*

12 Caelia Macrina, donor of a child support scheme in Terracina

CIL 10, 6328

Tarracina, Italy

Mid-2nd century AD

Comment: this generous child-support scheme (alimentum)—they were fairly common in Italy—subsidised girls as well as boys and was expected to last in perpetuity.

Caelia Macrina, daughter of Gaius, left 300,000(?) sesterces in her will for the construction of this building, and [...] sesterces for its decoration and upkeep. In memory of her son Macer, the same Macrina left 1,000,000 sesterces to the citizens of Tarracina, so that, from the income of this sum, under the title of *alimenta*, the following amounts are to be paid to 100 children (of both sexes): to each citizen boy 5 *denarii* (20 *sesterces*) per month, to each citizen girl 4 *denarii* (16 *sesterces*) per month, the boys up to the age of sixteen, the girls up to fourteen years of age, in such a way that always 100 boys and 100 girls in succession receive the payments.

Caelia, Cai filia, Macrina ex testamento HS CCC fieri iussit, in cuius ornatum et tutelam HS ... reliquid. eadem in memoriam Macri, filii sui, Tarricinensibus HS decies centena milia reliquid, ut ex reditu eius pecuniae darentur centum pueris alimentorum nomine: singulis mensibus singulis pueris colonis denarii V, puellis colonis singulis in menses singulos denarii IIII, pueris usque ad annos XVI, puellis usque ad annos XIII, ita ut semper C pueri, C puellae per successiones accipiant.

17 Annia Aelia Restituta, benefactress and imperial priestess of Calama

CIL 8, 5366

Calama, Numidia

AD 161-169



Annias' theatre

Comment: note that the five public statues that were set up to recognise Annia's generosity were paid out of public funds.

For Annia Aelia Restituta, daughter of Lucius, perpetual priestess of the empresses, because of her outstanding generosity towards her fellow citizens since she had spontaneously promised to embellish her home city with a theatre. To show their gratitude towards her, the city council unanimously decided to set up five statues from public funds.

Anniae Aeliae, Luci filiae, Restitutae, flaminicae Augustarum perpetuae, ob egregiam in suos cives liberalitatem, theatro pecunia sua exornandae patriae sponte promisso. ad referendum gratiam ordo universus statuas numero quinque de publico faciendas decrevit.

Patronesses and 'Mothers' of Cities and Associations (*collegia*)

24 Nummia Varia, city patroness and priestess

CIL 9, 3429

Peltuinum Vestinum, Italy

AD 242

Comment: the affection for Nummia and references to her benevolence, dignity, authority (etc.) are striking.

[*Time and place of the meeting and names of leading magistrates*]

Since all decreed that 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 also her parents always did, that she should rightfully and unanimously be made patroness of our city, in the hope that by offering this honour, which is the most important honour in our community, to her so illustrious excellency, we may be more and more renowned by the distinction of her benignity and in all respects be safe and protected. When asked for their opinion on this matter they decided as follows: *quod universi verba fecerunt Nummiam Variam, clarissimam feminam, sacerdotem Veneris Felicis, ea adfectione 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 apud nos potissimus, tantae claritati eius oblato dignatione benignitatis eius gloriosi et in omnibus tuti ac defensi esse possimus. quid de ea re fieri placeret, de ea re ita censuerunt:*

‘All members of the council have decided to bestow upon Nummia Varia, a woman of senatorial rank, priestess of Venus Felix, in accordance with the splendour of her dignity, the patronage of our city, and to ask from her excellency and extraordinary benignity, that she deigns to regard this honour we offer to her with willing and favourable inclination and to accept us individually and our state universally under the patronage of her house. And in whatever matters it may reasonably be required, may she intervene with the authority ensuing from her dignity and keep us safe and protected. And they decided that a bronze tablet with the text of this decree of ours is to be offered to her by the chief magistrates Avidiacus Restitutus and Blaesus Natalis, and by Numisenus Crescens and Flavius Priscus, the foremost men of our order.’

placere universis conscriptis Nummiae Variae, clarissimae feminae, sacerdoti Veneris Felicis, pro splendore dignitatis suae patrocinium praefecturae nostrae 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 clientelam domus suae recipere dignetur et in quibuscumque ratio exegerit, intercedente auctoritate dignitatis suae, tutos defensosque praestet. tabulamque aeneam huius decreti nostri verba continentem offerri ei per Avidiacum Restitutum et Blaesium Natalem, quinquennales, item Numisenum Crescentem et Flavium Priscum, primores ordinis nostri viros, censuerunt.

33 Fabia Lucilla, mother of the builders and textile workers

CIL 3, 1207

Apulum, Dacia

3rd century AD

Comment: clearly Fabia Lucilla saw her association with builders and textile workers as an important part of her identity.

For Publius Aelius Silvanus, son of Publius, of the voting tribe Papiria, former duumvir and priest of the *colonia* Apulum and a Roman knight of blessed memory. Fabia Lucilla, daughter of a man of blessed memory, mother of the associations of

builders and textile workers of the above mentioned colony, set this up for her most loving father-in-law.

Publio Aelio, Publi filio, Papiria, Silvano, Ilvirali et sacerdotali coloniae Apulensis, equiti Romano egregiae memoriae viro. Fabia Lucilla, egregiae memoriae viri filia, mater collegiorum fabrum et centonariorum coloniae supra scriptae, socero sui amantissimo.

Public Statues

38 A generous couple

CIL 11, 405

Ariminum, Italy

13 January AD 169

Comment: praise for a woman's virtues is common on epitaphs, but rare on honorific inscriptions.

For Aurelia Calligenia, wife of Titius Sabinianus, Roman knight, a most chaste and honourable woman. The association of builders of the most splendid city of Ariminum set this up because of the munificence of both towards them. The location was granted by decree of the decurions. The statue was dedicated on the Ides of January (13 January) when Quintus Sossius Priscus Senecio and Publius Coelius Apollinaris were consuls. To celebrate its dedication, 4 sesterces each were donated to the decurions.

Aureliae Calligeniae, Titi Sabiniani, equitis Romani, pudicissimae honorificentissimaeque feminae collegium fabrum splendidissimae civitatis Ariminensium ob munificentiam in se ab utrisque conlatam. locus datus decreto decurionum. dedicata Idibus Ianuariis Quinto Sossio Prisco Senecione, Publio Coelio Apollinare consulibus. cuius dedicatatione singulis decurionibus HS nummum IIII.

Women and electoral notices in Pompeii

Comment: some 2,500 electoral notices painted on the walls of house, taverns, etc. have been found in Pompeii, about fifty naming women supporters of a candidate, though they had no vote and could not stand for office. But clearly there was value in their support. Such support was organised by the individual candidates; in contrast to today's practice, they did not themselves put up notices of their own masterful suitability for the job.



50 CIL 4, 3678

Statia and Petronia ask you to please elect Marcus Casellius and Lucius Albucius as aediles. May there be such citizens in the colony forever!

Marcum Casellium et Lucium Albucium aediles oro vos faciatis, Statia et Petronia rogant. tales cives in colonia in perpetuo!

51 CIL 4, 3527

Appuleia, together with her neighbour Mustius, the fuller and Narcissus, asks you to please elect Pupius as duumvir for administering justice.

Pupium Ivirum iure dicundo oro vos faciatis, Appuleia cum Mustio vicino fullone et Narcissus vos rogat.

52 CIL 4, 7866

Comment: her name may suggest that Maria was Jewish.

Maria asks you to please elect Gnaeus Helvius Sabinus as an aedile who is worthy of the state.

Cnaeum Helvium Sabinum aedilem dignum rei publicae oro vos faciatis, Maria rogat.

Next week: Diogenes Laertius on the sayings of the philosophers: no.1—Socrates