After the death of Augustus, the Roman senate proposed various tokens of honour for Livia, among which – in an overt allusion to Augustus’ title pater patriae – the title ‘mother’ or ‘parent’ of the fatherland (mater/parens patriae). Tacitus regards this as excessive adulation: “the Augusta was also much flattered by the senators. Some were of the opinion that she should be called ‘parent’ of the fatherland, others that she should be called the country’s ‘mother’; most held that ‘the son of Julia’ should be added to the emperor’s (i.e. Tiberius’) name”¹. Cassius Dio suggests that it was her extraordinary influence over Augustus that caused the excessive honour, as well as the precedence she desired to take over Tiberius: “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’”2.

Pleading for moderation in the honours for women, Tiberius refused her the titles3. Yet, after her death, the title ‘mother of the country’ reappeared: “because she had saved the lives of not a few of them, had reared the children of many, and had helped others to pay their daughters’ dowries, some took to calling her ‘mother of the country’”4. At first sight, these reasons, which stress her protection and her care for family life, seem very different from those mentioned earlier, which underline her authority with the emperor and her desire for power. Yet, both are in accordance with the Roman notion of motherhood, which, as Suzanne Dixon has shown in The Roman Mother, was a highly esteemed family role in Roman society, combining discipline and a position of authority with motherly love and care5.

Because of Tiberius’ opposition, Livia was formally denied the title ‘mother of the country’6, but in the second and third centuries some empresses received even more florid titles involving fictive motherhood. In 174, the younger Faustina was awarded the newly coined title ‘mother of the army’ (mater castrorum), which has no parallel in official male titles, and from Julia Domna onwards several Severan empresses were honoured as ‘mother of the army, the senate, and the country’ (mater castrorum et senatus et patriae)7. Though such titles were possibly occasioned by the presence of these empresses in the military camps, their precise meaning

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2 — Dio 57.12.3-4: ἐπί τε γὰρ τοῦ Αὐγούστου μέγιστον ἠδυνήθη καὶ τὸν Τιβέριον αὐτὴ αὐτοκράτορα πεποιηκέναι ἔλεγε, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐχ ὅσον ἐξ ἴσου οἱ ἄρχειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρεσβεύειν αὐτοῦ ὤλεν. ὅθεν ἄλλα τε ἐξὸς τοῦ γενομαισμένου ἐξεφέρετο, καὶ πολλοὶ μὲν μητέρα αὐτὴν τῆς πατρίδος πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ γονέα προσαλογεύεσθαι γνώμην ἐδωκαν (translation Loeb Classical Library, with some adjustments).

3 — Tác. Ann. 1.14.1: moderando feminarum honores dicitans. Suet. Tib. 50.3 relates that, offended by the proposal of the senate that he be called ‘son of Livia’ in honorific inscriptions, Tiberius rejected the title pares patriae for his mother. It should be noted, however, that he also rejected the title ‘father of the country’ for himself, see Dio 57.8.1 and Tác. Ann. 2.87.

4 — Dio 58.2.3: ὅτι τε οὐκ ἁλίγνους σφών ἐπεσώκει, καὶ ὅτι παῖδας πολλῶν ἐτετρόφει κόρας τε πολλοὺς συνεξεδεδώκει, ἀφ’ οὗ γε καὶ μητέρα αὐτὴν τῆς πατρίδος τινὲς ἐπωνυμαζόν.

5 — Dixon (1988). I here define ‘authority’ as informal, personal influence and dominance over others, as opposed to legal power.

6 — She may have borne the title unofficially outside Rome: the reverse of a coin portraying Livia from Leptis Magna in northern Africa carries the legend Augusta mater patriae; see Corbier (1998) 138 and Temporini (1978) 61. An inscription from Anticaria in Baetica calls her genetrix orbis; see CIL II/5, 748 = CIL II, 2038.

is unclear. Like the title proposed for Livia, they suggest motherly care and protection, as well as a position of esteem and authority vis-à-vis the army, the senate, and the fatherland. Should we therefore assume that they reflected an actual position of power, or were they purely nominal? What can we learn from similar titles for women of local importance in the cities of Italy and the Latin West?

Metaphorical motherhood, as expressed by the title *mater patriae*, was not restricted to the empresses. In the second and third centuries, we find some thirty records of mothers of cities (*mater coloniae* or *municipii*) or of civic associations (*mater collegii*) in the cities of, mainly central, Italy and in some cities in the Balkan and Danubian provinces. Moreover, in a religious context, female cult officials were sometimes addressed as mothers: as 'mother of the sacred rites' (*mater sacrorum*), for example. Other fictive kinship titles for women are also found, though these are rare in the Latin West. We occasionally encounter a 'daughter' of an association (*filia collegii*), or even a 'foster-daughter' (*alumna*) of a town, or a group of women presenting themselves as 'sisters' (*sorores*). Female kinship metaphors, especially that of 'daughter' of a city, occur more frequently in the cities of the Greek East, where they start slightly earlier. Here,
however, I restrict myself to the cities of Italy and the Latin-speaking provinces, with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the meaning and function of the title of ‘mother’ in these regions. Was there any connection between the fictive motherhood of some empresses and that of local women in the Latin West, or should we assume that, in the Latin West, fictive kinship titles were introduced under Greek influence?

Let us start with the – relatively rare – mothers of cities; they are six in number spread over five cities in central Italy in the second and third centuries AD (see Table 1). Motherhood of a city was an official title, bestowed by the local council and carved on the public statue or tomb of the woman in question, together with the record of her priesthood or other services to the city. The women honoured with this title were of some importance in their cities. Though their rank is not indicated, they must have been from wealthy and well-respected local families: four of them were priestesses of the imperial cult; one (nr. 2: Cantia Saturnina) even held priestages in two different cities12. Apart from holding expensive public priestages, two women (nos. 4 and 5) are praised for their ‘merits’ and ‘munificence’, which points to benefactions and possibly other services to their cities. Four women (nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5), finally, were honoured with a public statue, an honour reserved for local notables. In the eyes of members of the senatorial order in Rome these women may have seemed of little distinction, but in their own cities they must have been the leading ladies.

This brings us to their title: ‘mother’ (mater) or ‘parent’ (parens) of their cities, a title which, in the Latin West, hardly ever occurs outside the imperial family13. What did these titles mean and why were they granted? In contrast to a ‘daughter’, a title which suggests youthful promise, we may expect that a ‘mother’ of a city was a mature woman of wealth and 61-74 and 145-167.

12 For priestesses of the imperial cult, see Hemelrijk (2005), (2006), and (2007).
13 Neglecting ‘mothers’ of cities, Corbier (1998) 138 assumes that, apart from coins honouring Agrippa as municipi parens or municipi patronus parens in Gades, and Livia as mater patriae in Leptis Magna (see n. 6 above), fictive kinship terms were not used in the cities of the Latin West. Indeed, unlike parens of collegia, the title has virtually no male parallel outside the imperial family: no patres of cities are known to me in Italy or the Latin West before the fifth century AD (CJ 8.12, 10.44.3.1 and 11.33.2.3; pater civitatis, and CJ 3.43.1.1 and 8.51.3.3: pater et defensor civitatis). Possibly the title pater was reserved for the emperor; CIL 3083 (Falerii, It. 7) honours Augustus as pater patriae et municipi. However, I did find one non-imperial parens et patronus municipii(i) of unknown date: CIL XI, 5175 (Vettona, It. 6). In the absence of ‘fathers’ of cities, the nearest male counterpart for the title mater municipii (vel sim.) is the rare princeps coloniae or civitatis, which is occasionally used for local benefactors and other men of great wealth and merit: AE 1913, 214 (Capua, It. 1, 1st c.): princeps/coloniae nostrae; CIL IV, 1177 (Pompeii, It. 1): principi coloniae. Plin. Ep. 7.24.8 calls Gaius Cassius, the founder of the Cassian School of jurisprudence, Cassianae scholae princeps et parens. For the more common usage of princeps gentis and princeps civitatis in Roman North Africa, see Kotula (1965), who argues that the men thus honoured were indigenous tribal chieftains who, in the course of time, transformed into civic magistrates.
proved merit. As is apparent from the four priestesses of the imperial cult and from the examples of Avidia Tertullia and Numisia Secunda Sabina (Table 1, nos. 2-5), munificence, or more generally civic merits, were reasons for the title. This is supported by the (much earlier) decree in honour of the well-known city patron, magistrate, and benefactor of Herculaneum, Marcus Nonius Balbus, who is characterized as a man showing the attitude of a parent (parentis animum) towards the city, manifest, above all, in his manifold liberality. Yet, munificence or holding a public priesthood cannot have been the only reason for awarding the title; there were hundreds of benefactresses and priestesses in the cities of Italy and the western provinces who, as far as we know, were never hailed as ‘mother of the city’.

Being mother of a city suggests an exclusive and enduring relationship; after all, unlike with sisters and brothers, or children, one has only one mother. Therefore, I suspect that a city had only one mother at a time – if it had a mother at all; the title is found only in a few cities in central Italy in the second and third centuries and may have been restricted to that area and period; possibly, its occurrence in so relatively small an area points to inter-city rivalry. In any case, the title mater implies a privileged and probably lifelong relationship between the city and a woman of local importance. Unlike the term ‘sister’ (soror), which suggests a relation of equality, motherhood indicates a hierarchical relation, with the mother as the superior partner and the citizens looking up to her. Yet, the title also suggests proximity, albeit fictive: the social distance between the mother and the people of her town is presented as not too great for a personal, emotional relationship to be at least imaginable.

An emotional relationship of this kind is apparent in the epitaph of Lucia Fonteia Concordia, who died at the age of seventy leaving children and grandchildren, and “whom the citizens always addressed as mother” (see Table 1 nr. 6: quem(!) / semper cives matrem appellaverunt). Though

14 — Apart from three ‘foster-daughters’ (alumnae, see n. 10 above), I have found no ‘daughters’ (filiae) of cities in the Latin West, but in the Greek East ‘daughters’ of cities are relatively frequent. The title seems to denote an ‘early commitment rather than an achievement’ on the part of the ‘daughter’; see van Bremen (1996) 167-170 and 348-357. Apuleius Met. 4.26.3 suggests that ‘son’ of a city was an official title for a promising young man of distinguished family: speciosus adulescens inter suas principalis, quem filium publicum omnis sibi civitas cooptavit (“a handsome young man, first among his peers, whom the citizens unanimously co-opted as the ‘public son’”), but I found no ‘sons’ of cities in inscriptions from Italy and the Latin West. Apuleius may have encountered the concept in the Greek world. For sons of cities in the Greek East, see Canali de Rossi (2007).
15 — AE 1947, 53 = AE 1976, 144 (Herculaneum, It.1, 1st c.): parentis animum cum plurima liberalitate.
16 — For benefactresses in Italy and the Latin West, see Hemelrijk (forthcoming in 2013).
the inscription is late and probably belongs in a Christian context, this remark suggests civic motherhood rather than a possible religious function; therefore this inscription may be included here. It shows that being the mother of a city was not merely an official title to be added to a woman’s name in inscriptions; rather the word ‘mother’ was actually used by the people when talking to, or about, her in daily life. If the emendation of this badly damaged inscription is correct, the text continues by relating that the citizens brought wine and candles to conduct her funeral. Thus, the people expressed an emotional tie with the mother of their city, addressing her as mother during her lifetime and conducting her funeral after death.

In agreement with the ideal of familial pietas, the relationship between a mother and her city was mutual and enduring: in gratitude for certain services provided by the mother – which are only briefly referred to in the inscriptions – the city and people honoured her by co-opting her as the city’s mother and erecting a public statue for her. And in return, she was expected to care for them as long as she lived. For example, in gratitude for the munificence of Numisia Secunda Sabina (Table 1, nr. 4), the common people (plebs) collected money among themselves for a public statue. In the inscription she is praised as sacerdos Augustae, mater municipii et coloniae and “the first of all women” to receive a statue from the people, whereupon she rewarded them by giving each citizen four sesterces at its dedication. The claim that she was the first woman to be honoured with a public statue, though not necessarily historically correct, suggests that in the eyes of the people the relationship was a special one.

In short, motherhood of a city suggests a hierarchical and affectionate relationship between a wealthy and highly placed mother and the people in the role of her children. It was a personal, reciprocal, and enduring relationship, in which the mother and the people were expected to render mutual – but distinct – services, and which lasted until the death of the mother. The personal and affectionate nature of the relationship, and the element of duration, may have distinguished it from other, more ephemeral exchange relations between the cities and members of the wealthy .
elite. The restriction of the title to central Italy (if not merely a figment of the chance survival of evidence) may point to local fashion, inter-city rivalry, or the influence of imperial kinship titles. The rarity of the title suggests that it was a special honour, not to be awarded to every benefactress or priestess21. Within the city, a mother seems to have been a figure of authority and motherly care, who inspired filial affection and loyalty among the citizens. For the women so honoured, the title was a source of pride; it was recorded on their statue bases and tombs together with their civic priesthoods and munificence.

We may now turn to mothers of collegia, who are more common and somewhat more widespread than mothers of cities: 26 mothers of collegia are recorded in 21 inscriptions, mainly in central Italy, the Balkan and Danubian regions, and - a single case – in Spain (see Table 2). They are attested in roughly equal numbers and the same areas as fathers of collegia, but there are no indications whatsoever that ‘mothers’ were the wives of ‘fathers’22. Like a father, a mother was officially co-opted by an association23, but the inscriptions are mostly vague about the reasons for their co-optation. Let me start with an unusually detailed example. On 11th March in the year 153, the collegium of Aesculapius and Hygieia in Rome drafted a statute (lex collegii), which was carved on a large marble plaque in their clubhouse. It records important donations by Salvia Marcellina in memory of her husband, an imperial freedman, and of his superior:

“Statute of the collegium of Aesculapius and Hygia. In memory of Flavius Apollonius, imperial procurator in charge of the picture galleries, and of his assistant, the imperial freedman Capito, who was her most excellent and devoted husband, Salvia Marcellina, daughter of Gaius, donated to the collegium of Aesculapius and Hygia the domain of the shrine with a pergola, a marble statue of Aesculapius, and an adjoining roofed terrace, in which the members of the said collegium may dine”24.
Apart from this, she gave 50,000 sesterces to the collegium as a perpetual fund for banquets and distributions among its members, to which her brother-in-law, Publius Aelius Zeno, father of the collegium, added 10,000 sesterces: “The same Marcellina gave and donated to the collegium mentioned above 50,000 sesterces for sixty men on the condition that no more than sixty members are to be admitted”25. These substantial gifts allowed her to stipulate detailed conditions regarding their use: establishing the number of members to be admitted, the burial conditions for deceased members, and regulations for the communal feasts and distributions of the association (see below)26. Thus, by means of her donations, Salvia Marcellina exercised a decisive influence on the organization of the collegium, which was acknowledged by the prominent recording of her name in large letters at the head of the text (see fig. 1).

Her donations and her resulting authority within the collegium earned her both the title mater collegii and a place of honour in the distributions of the association. As was common in such distributions, a strict hierarchy was observed among the recipients: the chief office-holders received the largest portions and the other members smaller ones, each according to his position or status. Let us take the following example from the seven annual meetings that were prescribed in the statute:

“that on the thirteenth day of the Kalends of October (= 19 September), on the most felicitous anniversary of our Emperor Antoninus Pius, Father of our fatherland, hand-outs are to be distributed in the temple of the deified emperors, in the shrine of the deified Titus: for the perpetual quinquennalis, Gaius Ofilius Hermes, or whoever is in charge at the time, three denarii, for Aelius Zeno, ‘father’ of the collegium, three denarii, for Salvia Marcellina, ‘mother’ of the collegium, three denarii, for the immunes two denarii each, for the curatores two denarii each, and for the ordinary members one denarius each”27.

This inscription tells us several things about a mother of an association. Firstly, we may assume that Salvia Marcellina’s donations earned

25 — Eadem Marcellina collegio s(upra) s(cripto) dedit donavitque HS L m(ilia) n(ummum) hominibus n(umero) LX sub hac condicione ut ne plures adlegantur quam numerus s(upra) s(criptus).
26 — Flambard (1987) 234-239; Liu (2007) 241 convincingly argues that substantial donations, such as those of Salvia Marcellina, greatly influenced the organisation of collegia, in some cases even amounting to a reorganisation of the association. In accordance with his smaller gift, the place of Publius Aelius Zeno in the statute is much more modest than that of Salvia Marcellina; his gift is mentioned towards the end of the inscription.
27 — Uti XIII K(alendas) Oct(obres) die felicissimo n(atali) Antonini Aug(usti) n(ostri) Pii p(atris) p(atris) sportulas dividerent in / templo divorum in aede divi Titi C(ai) Ofilio Hermeti q(uin) q(ennalibus) / vel qui tunc erit |(denarios) III Adio Zeno patri collegi(i) |(denarios) III Salviae Marcellinae matri collegi(i) |(denarios) III imm(uniis) / sing(ulis) |(denarios) II cur(atoribus) sing(ulis) |(denarios) II populo sing(ulis) |(denarios) I.
her the title *mater collegii* and, with this title, a place of honour in the distributions of the association: she received the same sum as the highest official, the *quinquennalis*, and the father of the *collegium*. Secondly, she was not only a person of esteem as the mother of this all-male *collegium*, but – as the wife of a deceased member and the sister-in-law of the father of the association – she was also an insider, who was honoured within the clubhouse. Thirdly, by means of her donations, Salvia Marcellina had a decisive influence on the organization of this male bastion; this is recognized by the statute – which is governed by her stipulations – and by the prominent recording of her name in the inscription. In sum, as the mother of the *collegium*, she was an insider who enjoyed a position of esteem and authority, a position she owed mainly to her munificence.

This is confirmed by the evidence about other mothers of *collegia*, though the texts mentioning them are much more concise. We know of quite a few mothers of associations from *alba collegii*, the official membership lists of *collegia*. In these lists, which were carved on large stone tablets hung on the wall of the clubhouse, the mothers received a place of honour: their names are usually recorded among, or immediately below, those of male officials, before the ordinary members. Though some *alba collegii* list more than one mother, it is probable that they were co-opted successively, and that a *collegium* had only one mother at a time. Salvia Marcellina’s generosity seems to have been exceptionally lavish; some other mothers bestowed smaller benefactions on their *collegium*. Moreover, some inscriptions hint at ceremonial activities performed by mothers – for example overseeing the dedication of a statue in the name of the *collegium*, which resemble the tasks of fathers and other male officials.

Like mothers of cities, most mothers of *collegia* were probably married women and mothers in the biological sense, but – apart from Salvia Marcellina – we do not know whether they were widowed when receiving the title. Occasionally, a mother was co-opted because of the merits of her husband (Table 2 nr. 8: Egnatia Salviana), but the reverse also occurred: a

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28 — *AE* 1977, 265b: five ‘mothers’ listed after the patrons but before the *amatores*, the scribes, and the ordinary male members. *CIL* XI, 1355 = *ILS* 7227 (side B): 29 *patroni*?, two *immunes*, three mothers, and two *filiae* followed by some male members and one *bisellarius*. *CIL* XIV, 256 = *AE* 1955, 182 = IPOstie-B, 344: patrons, *quinquennales*, and a *mater* are followed by fourteen *honorati* (ex-magistrates), and ca. 320 ordinary members. *AE* 2001, 854: the *mater* and the *sacerdos Augustalium* are listed as the last two of the *patroni allecti*. *CIL* III, 7532 = *ILS* 4069: the mother heads the list of members (otherwise all male). *CIL* III, 870 = *ILS* 4061: the name of the ‘spirarches’ (the leader of the *collegium*) extends over two columns: the left column lists 27 male members, the right one 16 female members headed by a *mater*.

son co-opted because of the merits of his mother, for instance (see Table 2 nr. 10: Memmia Victoria). Mothers are found relatively often, finally, in the few collegia that had women among their members. In one album collegii a mother actually heads the list of the female members (see n. 28), which suggests that mothers may have had some role in the selection or supervision of female members. With a few high ranking exceptions (see Table 2, nos. 8, 10 and 19: Egnatia Salviana, Memmia Victoria, and Fabia Lucilla), mothers were of the same social class as most members and officials of collegia, to whom some were actually related. Thus, mothers were, as a rule, insiders of the collegia with which they were associated. In accordance with their usually modest social status, mothers of collegia received no public statues, nor did they hold any public priesthoods. Instead, they were honoured within the collegia, but proudly carried the title throughout their lives and added it to their names on their private monuments: their tombs and dedications.

To get a clearer view of mothers of cities and collegia, we may offset their role against that of patronesses of cities and collegia, with whom they are sometimes confused in modern studies. These patronesses were of much higher standing: almost all were of senatorial or equestrian rank. Though often originating from the cities they favoured, most senatorial patronesses lived at least part of their lives in Rome; as a consequence, their relationship to the cities they patronized was much more remote. Moreover, the social distance between the people of a local town, or collegium, and a woman of senatorial or equestrian rank made the relationship a more formal one. This is underlined by the official co-optation decrees which were offered to patrons and patronesses, but not to ‘mothers’. In these decrees, which were engraved on bronze plaques, the city or collegium adopted a humble attitude towards the patroness, addressing her in a tone of great deference. Let us consider a fragment from the decree for Nummia Varia, for example, who was co-opted in 242 as a city patroness by the small town of Peltuinum Vestinum in central Italy:

“It pleases the members of the council to confer on Nummia Varia, a woman of senatorial rank, priestess of Venus Felix, in accordance with the splendour of her high rank, the patronage of our praefectura, and to request of her excellency and extraordinary benevolence that she accept this honour we offer her with willing and favourable inclination; and that she deign to take us and our res publica, individually and universally,

30 — Clemente (1972) indiscriminately lists matres collegii among the patrons of collegia; Waltzing (1895-1900) vol. I, 430, too, suggests that mothers and patronesses may have been the same persons, but see Hemelrijk (2008).

31 — For city patronesses, see Hemelrijk (2004), Kajava (1990), and Nicols (1989); for patronesses of collegia, see Hemelrijk (2008).
under the protection of her house (in clientelam domus suae), and that, in whatever matters it may reasonably be required, she may intervene with the authority (auctoritas) belonging to her rank to protect us and keep us safe”32.

As a woman of a consular family, Nummia Varia ranked high above the decurions of a local town, as is apparent from the deferential tone of the decree. High-ranking patronesses such as Nummia Varia were, to some extent, outsiders to the affairs of the cities or collegia they patronized. One of the duties of a patroness was to enhance the prestige of the city or collegium by associating her name with theirs and to protect its interests by means of her social connections. A mother, by contrast, was part of the city or collegium she fostered. Though excluded from civic office and often from membership of a collegium on account of their gender, mothers occupied a prominent position within these civic bodies.

Mothers of cities and collegia and the imperial mothers of the army, the senate, and the country are roughly contemporary; both are found in the second and early third centuries AD. Yet this is not simply a matter of imitation of the empresses by local women; if we exclude the abortive attempt to hail Livia as ‘mother of the country’, local mothers of cities are attested slightly earlier than imperial ones (see Table 1, nos. 2 and 3). There is a crucial gap in the first half of the second century, with the much less prominent women of the families of Trajan and Hadrian, whose background was less exalted than that of both their Julio-Claudian predecessors and their Antonine and Severan successors; as far as we know, they did not receive the title mother of the country33. Possibly, women of local importance were trendsetters in this respect as they were in other fields, such as civic munificence. This accords with recent ideas that the influence between women of the imperial family and prominent women of high-ranking (local) families was mutual, rather than only one way, from imperial women to other female citizens34.

A possible mutual influence notwithstanding, both imperial and local ‘mothers’ seem to be a product of their times, the second and third centuries: this period shows a marked preference for the language of family affection and family metaphors to describe the relationship between the elite and the people. Riet van Bremen has explained the occurrence of

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32 — CIL 9, 3429 = ILS 6110: Placere universis conscriptis Nummiae Variae, (clarissimae) 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 dignotur et in quibuscunque / ratio exegerit, intercedente auctoritate dignitatis suae, tuto delfensivo praetert; Hemelrijk (2004).


34 — Cooley (forthcoming in 2013), Hemelrijk (2005b) 317 with references.
mothers of cities in the Greek East by the increasing “verticalization” of
the relationship between the wealthy elite and the citizens, which was
expressed by familial terms. Like the metaphorical mothers in the Latin
West, mothers of cities in the Greek East were usually women of very
high standing or prominent benefactresses, who were granted the title for
life. Yet, there are no indications that the introduction of the title in
the West occurred under Greek influence, and the title daughter of a city,
which was much more common in the Greek East than that of mother, is
hardly found in the West (see n. 14 above).

Though usually explained as a way to legitimate the rule of the elite,
the use of kinship metaphors has a special meaning for women: despite
their exclusion from political office, fictive motherhood allowed women
a position of authority within a city or collegium, a role which was cast
in socially acceptable terms. This furthered their integration into civic
life. The Roman notion of motherhood was especially opportune, since
it implied both authority and motherly love and care. It provided official
recognition for both empresses and meritorious local women, and gave
them a civic role, each at their own level. Like pater patriae, the title of
‘mother of the country’ suggests an enduring and hierarchical relation-
ship characterized by venerability and authority, on the one hand, and
proximity and loving care, on the other. Thus, the title both recognizes
and mitigates her power, just as it simultaneously exposes and bridges
the social divide between the empress and the people. Mater castrorum et
senatus et patriae further specifies this motherly care and protection by the
empress, extending it to soldiers, senators, and citizens.

At the local level, mothers of cities and collegia are presented in a nur-
turing and benevolent role, as caring mothers who were entitled to the
affection and respect of their ‘children’. Their authority and social status
are underlined by the honorific statues accorded them and their promi-
nent position in the membership lists and distributions of their collegia.
The question of whether we should understand fictive motherhood as an
honorific title or a functional role is perhaps misleading. Motherhood
as a metaphor was sufficiently broad to cover both honour and authority,
thus conveniently blurring the distinction between the two. In this way,
it allowed women a socially acceptable position in male institutions. As
mothers of the country, the town, or a civic association, both imperial
and local women were granted a position of esteem and authority in the
very same public bodies that excluded them from more formal leadership
roles.

35 — See van Bremen (1996) 156-70 on “the domestication of public life”; further Harland
(2007) and Jongman (2002).
Table 1: ‘Mothers’ of Cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Ancient site</th>
<th>Type of inscription and monument</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Social status</th>
<th>Civic title</th>
<th>Priesthood</th>
<th>Public honour and dedicatory</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Caesia Sabina</td>
<td>CIL XI 7993, Fulginiae, lt. 6</td>
<td>honorary, marble plaque</td>
<td></td>
<td>after 125</td>
<td>dec(urionum)</td>
<td>pares municipii</td>
<td></td>
<td>public statue</td>
<td>parens municipii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cantia Saturnina</td>
<td>CIL XI 407 = ILS 6657, Ariminum, lt. 7</td>
<td>honorary, statue base</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mater coloniae</td>
<td>flaminica and sacerdos divae Plotinae in Ariminum and Forum Sempronii</td>
<td></td>
<td>public statue</td>
<td>d(urero) dec(urionum) / publice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. udia (=Petro?) nilla</td>
<td>CIL XI 408, Ariminum, lt. 7</td>
<td>funerary, marble plaque</td>
<td>after 137</td>
<td>mater(!) coloniae</td>
<td>flaminica, sacerdos(!) divae Sabinae</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Numisia Secunda Sabina</td>
<td>AE 1998, 416, Interamnia Praetutriorum, lt. 5</td>
<td>honorary, marble plaque</td>
<td>2nd half of 2nd c.</td>
<td></td>
<td>mater municipii et coloniae</td>
<td>sacerdos Augustae</td>
<td></td>
<td>public statue</td>
<td>pleps(!) ... aere collat(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Avidia Tertullia</td>
<td>CIL XI 5752, Sentinum, lt. 6</td>
<td>honorary, statue base(!)</td>
<td>2nd ... early 3rd c.</td>
<td></td>
<td>mater municipalis</td>
<td>flaminica</td>
<td></td>
<td>public statue</td>
<td>ordo Viviradium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. L. (ucia) Fonteia Concordia</td>
<td>CIL XI 2538 = ILCV 1578, Clusium, lt. 7</td>
<td>funerary stele</td>
<td>late 3rd c.</td>
<td></td>
<td>quern(!) / semper cives ma/trem appellave/ runt</td>
<td>casta / pudica sapientis uno contenta / marito</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37 — The inscriptions have been listed in chronological order, starting with the undated inscriptions.
Table 2: ‘Mothers’ of collegia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Ancient site</th>
<th>Inscription and monument</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Social status</th>
<th>Benefactions</th>
<th>Title and justification</th>
<th>mater of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Claudia</td>
<td><em>CIL</em> IX, 5450 = AE 1999, 599 = <em>ILS</em> 7248</td>
<td>Falerii Piceni, It. (5)</td>
<td>funerary stele</td>
<td></td>
<td>freed-woman</td>
<td>mater / sodalic(i) fallon(um)</td>
<td>sodalicium fallonum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gavillia Optata</td>
<td><em>CIL</em> IX, 2687</td>
<td>Aesernia, It. (4)</td>
<td>funerary inscription</td>
<td></td>
<td>freed-woman</td>
<td>mater colleg(i) / centona-nor(um)</td>
<td>collegium centonanorium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Licinia Macedonica</td>
<td><em>CIL</em> II, 3229 = <em>ILS</em> 7308</td>
<td>Laminium, Hisp.Tar.</td>
<td>statue base for Allia Candida</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mater</td>
<td>collegium [Rom?]-anense maius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pomponia Victorina</td>
<td><em>CIL</em> VI, 8796 = <em>ILS</em> 1700</td>
<td>Rome, It. (1)</td>
<td>votive base</td>
<td></td>
<td>freed-woman!</td>
<td>a statue for Liber</td>
<td>mater(er) / colleg(i) Liber patris</td>
<td>collegium Liber patris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Salvia Marcellina</td>
<td><em>CIL</em> VI, 10234 = <em>ILS</em> 7213</td>
<td>Rome, It. (1)</td>
<td>marble plaque; lex collegii</td>
<td>153</td>
<td></td>
<td>mater colleg(i)</td>
<td>collegium Aesculapii et Hygiae</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Corpus</td>
<td>Ancient site</td>
<td>Inscription and monument</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Social status</td>
<td>Benefactions</td>
<td>Title and justification</td>
<td>mater of</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Egnatia Salviana</td>
<td>ae 1998, 282 = ae 2000, 243</td>
<td>Lavinium, It. (1)</td>
<td>statue base set up by Egnatia Salviana for her husband</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>eques-trian</td>
<td>she is co-opted as mater in recognition of the benefaction of her husband, who is co-opted as patron in the same inscription</td>
<td>collegium dendrophorum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Memmia Victoria</td>
<td>CIL XI, 5748 = ILS 7220</td>
<td>Sentinum, It. (6)</td>
<td>bronze saeule patronatus for her son</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>decurial / eques-trian(?)</td>
<td>materis numeri nostris; her son is co-opted as patron in honore a(t)que dignitate Memmiae Victoriae</td>
<td>collegium fabrum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Flavia Festa</td>
<td>ae 2001, 854</td>
<td>Lernurn, It. (1)</td>
<td>marble plaque; album Augustalium</td>
<td>late 2nd c.</td>
<td></td>
<td>mat(er) Augustae</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Placidia Damale, que et Rufina</td>
<td>CIL III, 8833</td>
<td>Salona, Dalm.</td>
<td>funerary stele</td>
<td>2nd – 3rd c.</td>
<td></td>
<td>matri / vernacular(/um) optimae / et incom / parabili feminae</td>
<td>collegium vernacularorum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Lepidia Iulia, Titinia Crispina and Numitoria Felicitas</td>
<td>CIL XI, 1355 = ILS 7227</td>
<td>Luna, It. (1)</td>
<td>marble plaques; album collegii</td>
<td>2nd – 3rd c.?</td>
<td></td>
<td>mat(res)</td>
<td>collegium dendrophorum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Claudia Arria</td>
<td>CIL XIV, 326</td>
<td>Ostria, It. (1)</td>
<td>marble plaque listing contributors to a fund</td>
<td>2nd – 3rd c.?</td>
<td>freed-woman?</td>
<td>HS 6,000(?) for a fund for the communal celebration of birthdays</td>
<td>mater(iss)</td>
<td>collegium dendrophorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Corpus</td>
<td>Ancient site</td>
<td>Inscription and monument</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Social status</td>
<td>Benefactions</td>
<td>Title and justification</td>
<td>mater of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Menia Iuliana</td>
<td><em>CIL</em> III, 7532 = <em>ILS</em> 4069 = <em>IScAE</em> II, 129</td>
<td>Tomis, Moes. Inf.</td>
<td>marble stele; <em>album collegii</em></td>
<td>late 2nd – early 3rd c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mater Romano rum subscriptorum collegium Romanorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Fabia Lucilla</td>
<td><em>CIL</em> III, 1207 = <em>IDR</em> III 5, 2, 483</td>
<td>Apulum, Dacia</td>
<td>funerary stele(?) for her father-in-law</td>
<td>3rd c.</td>
<td>equestrian</td>
<td></td>
<td>mater collegium / fabrum et cent (anaria)</td>
<td>collegia fabrum et centonaria riorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Herois Cy[s] enia, Eusebia Prima, Aurelia Herais, Lartia Felicitas and Sera Chreste</td>
<td><em>AE</em> 1977, 265b</td>
<td>Clasiss, lr. (8)</td>
<td>marble plaque; <em>album collegii</em></td>
<td>287-304</td>
<td>freed- women</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mater</td>
<td>unidentified collegium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: CIL = Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, ILS = Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, IScAE = Inscriptiones Selectae in Codicibus Epigraphici, AE = American Journal of Archaeology, IDR = Inscriptiones Dacicae Romanicae.*
Fig. 1. *Lex collegii Aesculapii et Hygiae* (Rome, Vatican Museum), Photo by the author
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