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### Sacerdotes piae: priestesses and other female cult officials in the western part of the Roman Empire from the first century B.C. until the third century A.D.

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## Epilogue: Priestesses in Pompeii

This thesis has been ordered more or less thematically – not only for the sake of clarity, but also because in most cases the sources do not permit us to sketch a picture of the lives of individual priestesses. The evidence available in Pompeii however, provides us with the opportunity to bring together several important themes of this study and shows how these might have worked together in reality. We can get a glimpse of women who held important priesthoods and acted as benefactresses; of priestesses who were members of a local elite that was closely connected by ties of kinship; of women who were conscious of their own prestige, and whose standing was recognized by others. Therefore, the final part of this thesis is virtually exclusively devoted to the famous priestesses of Pompeii.

### *Pompeii and the main priesthoods held by to women*

Pompeii was no important town, but it was relatively wealthy. Both Ceres and Venus, the two goddesses of whom various priestesses have been attested in Campania, were worshipped in Pompeii and had their own official cults. The cult of Ceres was pre-Roman, and was influenced by the Greek Demeter cults of southern Italy. Although archaeological evidence shows that Ceres was worshipped in many domestic shrines, no temple has been excavated in Pompeii. Possibly, it was not built in the city centre, but was extra-urban (cf. Vitruvius, chapter 1).<sup>1</sup> The worship of Venus (or Herentas – the Oscan Venus) was probably also pre-Roman, and the goddess combined local Pompeian traits with universal Roman characteristics.<sup>2</sup> Venus was more important in Pompeii than the Capitoline triad and than Ceres and therefore, her priesthood was a very prestigious position.<sup>3</sup> Venus' cult was promoted by Sulla; she became the patroness of the colony and was known as Venus Fisica or Venus Pompeiana.<sup>4</sup> The shrine of Venus was likely located at the Via Marina, to the south-west of the forum. It was richly decorated and built on large terrace overlooking the Gulf of Naples.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peterson (1919) 222, 230, 231, 232; Castrén (1975) 71; Savunen (1997) 123; De Caro (2007) 80; Small (2007) 201 endnote 2.

<sup>2</sup> Peterson (1919) 6, 19, 236, 285; Castrén (1975) 92; Beard (2008) 280.

<sup>3</sup> Peterson (1919) 242; MacMullen (1980) 209. See also Van Andringa (2009) 81.

<sup>4</sup> Peterson (1919) 247; Tran Tam Tinh (1984) 56, 58; MacMullen (1980) 209; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 96; Descœdres (2007) 16; Beard (2008) 280; Van Andringa (2009) 35.

<sup>5</sup> Peterson (1919) 253; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 96; Descœdres (2007) 16; Ling (2007a) 121; Westfall (2007) 136; Small (2007) 186. See also Ling (2007b) 108-109; Beard (2008) 284.

Various priests and priestesses have been attested on inscriptions from Pompeii.<sup>6</sup> The important priesthoods were all reserved for members of the most prominent local families.<sup>7</sup> Apart from a priestess of the imperial cult, several *sacerdotes Cereris* and *sacerdotes publicae* and one *sacerdos Veneris et Cereris* are attested on inscriptions.<sup>8</sup> In chapter 2 I have suggested that the Pompeian *sacerdotes publicae* served Venus<sup>9</sup> because the priestesses of Ceres were explicitly called *sacerdotes Cereris*. This is another argument in favour of the importance of the priesthood of Venus, for *sacerdotes publicae stricto sensu* likely served the most important local deities, as I have suggested in chapter 2.<sup>10</sup> The greater importance of the *sacerdotes Veneris* is also supported by the fact that none of the Pompeian priestesses of Ceres seems to have acted as benefactress,<sup>11</sup> while the women who served Venus – Eumachia being the most famous – did give benefactions. However, the other Italian *sacerdotes Cereris* were no benefactresses either.<sup>12</sup> Only Flavia Ammia, *sacerdos Cereris* in Capena (cat.no.53), may have used her money for the public good (see chapter 5). Furthermore, the two Capenan women serving Ceres and Venus were praised for their benefactions.<sup>13</sup> It seems that the priestesses of Ceres (and Venus) from Capena were more involved in the system of euergetism than their Pompeian and other Italian colleagues in service of Ceres, but the reason remains unclear.

#### *Sacerdotes publicae and a collegium of Pompeian priestesses?*

On one Pompeian inscription, several priestesses of Ceres and Venus are mentioned together. This inscription is the best proof of the supposition that the Pompeian *sacerdotes publicae* served Venus, for I cannot see why, if a *sacerdos publica* served Ceres (instead of Venus), the name of this goddess would not also be included in Eumachia's title, like in that of Aquvia Quarta and the Heia Rufulai.<sup>14</sup> The inscription – a painted text – was found in the building of Eumachia:<sup>15</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Maybe also on fresco's: some depict women who may have served Ceres, because of – amongst other thing – the torches they are carrying, Rumpf (1941) 25-30. Bernstein (2007) 533: depiction of a priestess of Venus.

<sup>7</sup> Savunen (1997) 143; Van Andringa (2009) 82; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 96, 97, e.g. all *male* priests from Pompeii had been important local magistrates; Beard (2008) 300.

<sup>8</sup> In addition, a Greek inscription records a priestess of Demeter Thesmophoros, *IG* 14, 702; see chapter 3, footnote 77. This Terentia Paramone seems to have been no public priestess. There is no other evidence for the cult of Demeter Thesmophoros in Pompeii, Savunen (1997) 136. Cf. Castrén (1975) 72.

<sup>9</sup> Castrén (1975) 71; Savunen (1997) 130.

<sup>10</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 97. Cf. Peterson (1919) 231; Castrén (1975) 71.

<sup>11</sup> Savunen (1997) 143.

<sup>12</sup> Tettia Casta from Naples had also acted as benefactress, but she served Demeter instead of Ceres. Furthermore, the Puteolian Stlaccia had made some gifts. As she served the *Cereres* instead of Ceres and lived as the only Italian priestess of Ceres in the third century AD, she cannot simply be compared to the other Italian *sacerdotes Cereris*.

<sup>13</sup> Cat.no.51 and 52.

<sup>14</sup> It could also be a dative singular, meaning 'for Heia Rufula'.

<sup>15</sup> Cat.no.94; Savunen (1997) 133.

*Eumachia [L(uci) f(ilia)] / sacerd(os) publ(ica) / et / Aquvia M(arci) [f(ilia)] Quarta / sacerd(os) Cereris publ(ica) / [et] / [Heiai Ru]fulai(!) / [M(arci) et L(uci) f(iliae)] sacerdotes / [Cer]eris publ(icae)*

“Eumachia, daughter of Lucius, public priestess and Aquvia Quarta, daughter of Marcus, public priestess of Ceres and the Heiai Rufulai, daughters of Marcus and Lucius, public priestesses of Ceres.”

Not much is known about the women mentioned here, except from Eumachia. The *Heii* are mentioned only one other time on a Pompeian inscription, probably from a later date.<sup>16</sup> Aquvia Quarta stemmed from a very old *gens*, perhaps an Etruscan one.<sup>17</sup> Likely, she was a contemporary of Eumachia.<sup>18</sup> Savunen writes that Aquvia Quarta may have been the colleague of Eumachia in a *collegium* of *sacerdotes Cereris* and *sacerdotes Veneris*. Chronologically, they would have been organised in pairs as follows: Lassia and Mamia; Eumachia and Aquvia Quarta; Holconia and Clodia; Istacidia Rufilla and Alleia Decimilla. Finally, Alleia, daughter of Cn. Alleius Nigidius Maius (Alleia Nigidia), held the combined priesthood of both Ceres and Venus.<sup>19</sup>

We have seen in chapter 3 that supposition of a college of priestesses in itself is not unlikely, and that there is some evidence that may point to the existence of *collegia* of *sacerdotes* of Ceres. There is also epigraphic evidence for colleges in the Venus cult: from Corfinium stems an inscription that records two women as *sacerdotes Veneris*.<sup>20</sup> However, mixed *collegia* of priest(esse)s active in *different* cults have not been attested, as far as I know. Furthermore, there is no Pompeian evidence that backs Savunen’s suggestion, and the inscription quoted above in which Eumachia is mentioned together with Aquvia and the other priestess(es) of Ceres (how would these fit in Savunen’s theory?) is no proof of a *collegium*. It only shows that they could be recorded together on the same inscription.

### *Priestesses of Ceres*

The names of three Pompeian women who had been *sacerdotes Cereris* (apart from Aquvia Quarta and the Heiai Rufulai), and of one who served Ceres and Venus together, have been preserved on stone.<sup>21</sup> Lassia, *sacerdos publica Cereris*, is the earliest attested Pompeian priestess.<sup>22</sup> She belonged to one of

<sup>16</sup> *NS* 1961, 200; Castrén (1975) 71; Savunen (1997) 138.

<sup>17</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 105.

<sup>18</sup> Savunen (1997) 138.

<sup>19</sup> Savunen (1997) 143. Cf. Della Valle (1934) 9.

<sup>20</sup> Cat.no.64.

<sup>21</sup> Cormack (2007) 597 suggests that a certain Vesonina who was buried in a tomb near the *Porta Nocera* together with M. Cerrinius Restitutus, may also have been a priestess of Ceres. The grave monument contains a statue of Vesonina, depicting her with a torch and a small animal in her hands. Therefore, a link to Ceres is easily made. As there is no further evidence of the possible priesthood of Vesonina, I will not discuss her.

<sup>22</sup> Savunen (1997) 137.

the most prominent pre-Roman *gentes* in Campania that owned estates in the peninsula of Surrentum and was related to the *Eumachii*.<sup>23</sup> Lassia was born sometime between 80 and 70 BC. She was the heiress of the family, and via her and her granddaughter Clodia the possessions of the family probably passed into the hands of the *Clodii*.<sup>24</sup> Lassia was married to the *scriba* A. Clodius,<sup>25</sup> who was possibly of low birth and had been *magister pagi* after 27 BC.<sup>26</sup> Their son, A. Clodius Flaccus,<sup>27</sup> who had links to other famous Pompeian families like the *Holconii*, was the father of Clodia. Clodia was, like her grandmother, *sacerdos publica Cereris*. She was wed to Cellius Calvus, son of the equestrian Lucius Cellius and member of one of the most powerful local families in Augustan times.<sup>28</sup>

The *gens Clodia* presumably originated from Puteoli or Rome, and was involved in agriculture and the production of wine.<sup>29</sup> A. Clodius Flaccus was a member of the Pompeian aristocracy. He had been *duumvir* (twice; the second time together with M. Holconius Rufus in 2 BC) and *quinquennalis*. In addition, he had been military tribune – and was therefore of equestrian rank – and gave benefactions on the occasion of his election.<sup>30</sup> Clodia, who survived all her family members and inherited a great amount of wealth, had been former owner of a freedwoman whose function is described as *porcaria publica* (public pig keeper). Because of the priesthood of her patroness, it is possible that the freedwoman bred and kept the pigs that were used as sacrificial victims for Ceres (cf. chapter 4).<sup>31</sup>

The *gens* to which Alleia Decimilla, the third *sacerdos publica Cereris*, belonged, was linked to the *Eumachii* and the very wealthy *Nigidii* from Capua. The *Alleii* were active in trade. Alleia Decimilla's father, M. Alleius Minius, had possibly adopted her future husband, Marcus Alleius Luccius Libella.<sup>32</sup> Alleia Decimilla herself, who – like Clodia – survived all her family members, had been *sacerdos publica Cereris* in the years around AD 25-30, while her father and husband had been *aedilis*, *duumvir*, *praefectus quinquennalis* and *decurio* respectively. Alleia's son was very young when he became *decurio*, something which was very honourable.<sup>33</sup>

The last Pompeian priestess who served Ceres, Alleia (Nigidia) held the only joint priesthood of Ceres and Venus attested in the town. Several explanations for the creation of this new combined

<sup>23</sup> Ward (1998) 328; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 103.

<sup>24</sup> Castrén (1975) 94; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 103.

<sup>25</sup> According to Castrén (1975) 65, the office of *scriba* was very respectable.

<sup>26</sup> Franklin (2004) 24-25. Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 104. Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba suggest that political aspects played a role in the appointment of Lassia: 'La prêtise de Lassia, exercée peu après la creation de la colonie romaine de Pompéi, pourrait être interprétée comme un geste de réconciliation politique de Rome envers l'aristocratie indigène.' However, there is no evidence to support this.

<sup>27</sup> Demougin (1988) 667, writes that Lassia was wed to A. Clodius Flaccus.

<sup>28</sup> Castrén (1975) 94, 95, 97; Franklin (2004) 23; Demougin (1992) 100; Savunen (1997) 137; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 104.

<sup>29</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 104.

<sup>30</sup> Castrén (1975) 94, 95.

<sup>31</sup> Van Andringa (2009) 84.

<sup>32</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 105; Franklin (2004) 50.

<sup>33</sup> Castrén (1975) 104.

priesthood have been offered, but none is convincing.<sup>34</sup> Alleia (Nigidia) descended from another branch of the *Alleii* than Alleia Decimilla.<sup>35</sup> She lived during the reign of Nero<sup>36</sup> and became priestess as a result of the high position of her father Cn. Alleius Nigidius Maius,<sup>37</sup> according to Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba.<sup>38</sup> Alleius Nigidius Maius, who was adopted by Cn? Alleius Nobilis, (son of a?) freedman, and Pomponia Decharis, freedwoman of the important commercial family of the *Pomponii*,<sup>39</sup> had been *flamen Caesaris Augusti* in AD 55/56 and was called – perhaps unofficially – *princeps coloniae*. Additionally, he had acted as benefactor to his town.<sup>40</sup> Mouritsen writes that Cn. Alleius Nigidius Maius was ‘by far the most successful’ of the magistrates who descended from freedmen.<sup>41</sup> He ‘enjoyed one of the most brilliant careers we have documented in the last generation before the Vesuvian eruption.’<sup>42</sup> Alleia was granted a burial paid with public money (see below). Nothing is known about a husband or children she might have had.<sup>43</sup>

### *Priestesses of Venus*

Four *sacerdotes* of Venus are attested epigraphically – that is: if the Pompeian *sacerdotes publicae* indeed served this goddess. The priestess Mamia descended from a family that belonged to the group of the first non-colonial families acquiring decurial rank in Pompeii. However, nothing is known about her close family members.<sup>44</sup> Mamia is the earliest *sacerdos publica* attested epigraphically in Pompeii. She had a temple built of either the *Genius Augusti*, or – which is the most recent view – of the *Genius Coloniae*.<sup>45</sup> Of the priestess Eumachia no fewer than six inscriptions recording her name have been

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<sup>34</sup> Peterson (1919) 251 argues that as a result of the growing popularity of Venus the priestesses of Ceres had fewer tasks to fulfil and started to pay more attention to Venus. Castrén (1975) 72; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 98, write that the joint priesthood of Venus and Ceres could have been the result of a decline of one (perhaps both?) of the cults. Savunen (1997) 139-140, thinks that the joint priesthood can be linked to a shortage of money after the earthquake, which made it difficult to find women who were able to hold an (expensive) priesthood. She writes that the fact that Alleia was no *sacerdos publica* but only *sacerdos*, in contrast to the former priestesses of Ceres and of Venus, is an argument for this hypothesis, but it remains rather speculative.

<sup>35</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 106. Cf. Mouritsen (1997) 69.

<sup>36</sup> Savunen (1997) 139.

<sup>37</sup> Via his parents, Cn. Alleius Nigidius Maius was linked to the *Eumachii*, though the exact nature of this link, which is only based on Eumachia’s tomb, is not known. His adoptive mother Pomponia Decharis was buried in the tomb of Eumachia. His adoptive father Alleius Nobilis, probably a freedman was buried there as well; D’Ambrosio and De Caro 11OS nr.13. Several of Maius’ own freedmen were also buried in this tomb, Mouritsen (1997) 68-69; Franklin (1997) 436.

<sup>38</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 106. Cf. Mouritsen (1997) 68.

<sup>39</sup> Castrén (1975) 109; Franklin (2004) 92.

<sup>40</sup> *CIL* 4. 1177b; Castrén (1975) 69; Franklin (1997) 437, 444; Mouritsen (1997) 68; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 106; Franklin (2004) 93, 94.

<sup>41</sup> Mouritsen (1997) 67-8. Cf. Franklin (2004) 91.

<sup>42</sup> Mouritsen (1997) 68. Cf. Franklin (1997) 434: Cn. Alleius Nigidius Maius ‘grew to be arguably the most important Pompeian of his day.’

<sup>43</sup> Ward (1998) 331.

<sup>44</sup> Franklin (2004) 36. The *gens Mamia* is not further attested in Pompeii, though it was prominent in Herculaneum, Gold (1993) 283.

<sup>45</sup> Cat.no.96. Mouritsen (1988) 119; Savunen (1997) 52, 130-131; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 98-99.

preserved, on three of which she is called *sacerdos publica*.<sup>46</sup> The *Eumachii* were an old Campanian *gens* that had been living in Pompeii for a long time. The family possessed much wealth, in the form of vineyards and potteries. Eumachia herself was also very rich, probably as a result of the double heritage she received from her father and her husband.<sup>47</sup> The well-known statue of Eumachia, a gift from the cloth-cleaners, was found in the *aedificium* that was built by her (see also below).<sup>48</sup>

Holconia held her public priesthood of Venus some time after Eumachia. There is no evidence that she was married.<sup>49</sup> Holconia's *gens* is only attested in the town of Pompeii and nowhere else. In Augustan times, the family was probably the one held in greatest esteem in the town. It was involved in the production of wine and of roof tiles.<sup>50</sup> Holconia's father was the benefactor Marcus Holconius Rufus, an important man with an impressive career; apart from several municipal offices, he had held the priesthood of Augustus Caesar. Holconia's uncle or brother, M. Holconius Celer had been *Augusti sacerdos* and *sacerdos divi Augusti*.<sup>51</sup> These two *Holconii* had been the first priests in the imperial cult of Pompeii.<sup>52</sup> Holconia herself had likely been honoured with a statue, but its location is unknown.<sup>53</sup>

Istacidia Rufilla lived a little later than Mamia, Eumachia and Holconia. She only left behind a short epitaph, on which – again – no husband is mentioned.<sup>54</sup> Like the other priestesses, Istacidia stemmed from a rich and influential local family, which members were buried in an impressive mausoleum.<sup>55</sup> Savunen suggests that Istacidia as *sacerdos publica* may have served in the imperial cult instead of that of Venus, for various *liberti* of the *Istacidii* had been *ministri Augusti*.<sup>56</sup> However, in my opinion this is highly unlikely, considering the fact that the other Pompeian *sacerdotes publicae* were most likely *not* involved in the imperial cult.

What is clear from this short overview of the familial ties of the Pompeian priestesses is that they all belonged to the most important decurial *gentes*,<sup>57</sup> that most of them were related to each other and that

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<sup>46</sup> Cat.no.93 (containing two inscriptions); 94; 95; *AE* 1992, 277; D'Ambrosio and De Caro (1983) 11OS nr. 13. Savunen (1997) 133.

<sup>47</sup> Mouritsen (1997) 69; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 100; Beard (2008) 161. Eumachia's husband M. Numistrius Fronto had been *Ivvir* in AD 2-3, but nothing more is known of this man, Franklin (2004) 34-35.

<sup>48</sup> Moeller (1972) 324; Savunen (1997) 53; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 100; Zanker (1998) 97. The nature of the link between the priestess and the *collegium* is uncertain. It has been suggested that Eumachia was patroness of the fullers, but this is debated, Savunen (1997) 56; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 100.

<sup>49</sup> Ward (1998) 329.

<sup>50</sup> Franklin (2004) 18; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 102.

<sup>51</sup> Castrén (1975) 69, 97; D'Arms (1988) 53 56-58; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 102; Franklin (2004) 20; Ling (2007b) 69. As these two *Holconii* were involved in the imperial cult, Savunen (1997) 134-135, thinks that possibly Holconia was also priestess of the imperial cult. In my opinion this is unlikely, regarding the title of Eumachia.

<sup>52</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 102.

<sup>53</sup> Cat.no.97. Savunen (1997) 134. See also Mürer, forthcoming.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Ward (1998) 330.

<sup>55</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 103. Castrén (1975) 71, 100 however, writes that Istacidia was probably related to N. Istacidius Cilix, who did not belong to the highest elite.

<sup>56</sup> *CIL* 10, 910. Savunen (1997) 135. Several other *liberti* of the *gens Istacidia* were *ministri* of Mercurius, Maia and Augustus together, *CIL* 10, 888 = *ILS* 6390.

<sup>57</sup> Mouritsen (1988) 119; Ward (1998) 320.

their male family members were important civic magistrates. This shows that all members of the main families – both men and women – played important roles in consolidating the position of the local elite. Municipal offices, be they religious or political, were divided between the most prominent families who governed the town.

### *Pompeian priestess-benefactresses*

As we have seen in the previous chapter, religious offices were closely linked to the system of euergetism. No wonder that the four main benefactors in Pompeii had held priesthoods.<sup>58</sup> Two of these four Augustan benefactors were women and their generosity consisted of considerable gifts. The large buildings of Eumachia and Mamia in the centre on the forum show clearly the prominence of these priestesses-benefactresses in their town.

Mamia's temple, which is much smaller than the building of Eumachia though still impressive,<sup>59</sup> shows many similarities to the temple of Divus Julius and Venus Genetrix in Rome.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps this choice for copying parts of the Roman Venus temple was made to stress Mamia's priesthood of Venus Pompeiana. The carvings on the altar of the temple are related to the Augustan images of the *Ara Pacis*.<sup>61</sup> The building of Mamia's temple on the forum presumably led to an increase of the priestess' social prestige, which was also reflected in her burial place that was granted by decree of the decurions (see below).<sup>62</sup>

Of Eumachia, two gifts are known. The first is a *sigillum*, mentioned on a marble plaque found in several fragments under the temple of Venus.<sup>63</sup> The inscription continued on another plaque, which was fastened to the first on the right-hand side. Perhaps this second plaque contained the words *sacerdos publica*, for Eumachia's priesthood is missing in the first part of the inscription. Otherwise, the *sigillum* could have been erected before Eumachia acquired her religious office. Savunen suggests that the *sigillum* may signify a statue of Eumachia herself, or any other statue erected by her.<sup>64</sup> Erecting a statue for oneself, or paying for a statue granted by others, was not uncommon (see chapter 5). However, as the word *sigillum* generally refers to small figurines or reliefs, I think that it is more likely that Eumachia's *sigillum* was an object with a religious connotation, something that is also suggested by its find-spot.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Savunen (1997) 60.

<sup>59</sup> She may have built the temple on her own land, Ling (2007a) 122-123; Ling (2007b) 69. For a short discussion of the temple, see Dobbins (2007) 163-164 and Van Andringa (2009) 49-53.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Ling (2007b) 69. Castrén (1975) 96, writes that Mamia's temple was not constructed without consent of the *princeps* himself.

<sup>61</sup> Zanker (1998) 95; Dobbins (2007) 164.

<sup>62</sup> Gold (1993) 283; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 99.

<sup>63</sup> *AE* 1992, 277: *Eumachia L(uci) f(ilia) / sigillum (posuit)*. Not included in the catalogue, for Eumachia's priesthood is not mentioned.

<sup>64</sup> Savunen (1997) 134.

<sup>65</sup> *Sigilla* could for instance be depictions of the *Lares*, Dubourdiou (1989) 88, 267-278.



Eumachia's other gift was – and still is – very impressive: her *aedificium* was the largest building on the Pompeian forum, together with the *basilica*. The precise date of the building and its function are contested, but this is of no importance here. The *aedificium* shows similarities to the *Porticus Liviae* on the *forum Augusti* in Rome and to the temple of Concordia that was restored by the later emperor Tiberius in AD 10.<sup>66</sup> In front of Eumachia's building in the Via dell'Abbondanza stood a fountain with a depiction of Concordia, which may also have been built by Eumachia. Both the fountain and the *aedificium* emphasize *abundantia* and *concordia*. It seems that Eumachia wanted to show her loyalty to the imperial house and wished to be connected with Livia and with Augustan ideology.<sup>67</sup> Additionally, the building was in accordance with the expectations that people had from wealthy priests and priestesses. Furthermore, it reminded the Pompeians of the family of Eumachia's husband, the *Numistrii*, mentioned on two identical inscriptions attached to the building.<sup>68</sup> Modern scholars have noted another possible reason for the building of Eumachia's *aedificium* and have linked it to the career of Eumachia's son,<sup>69</sup> who is mentioned in the building inscriptions:<sup>70</sup>

*Eumachia L(uci) f(ilia) sacerdos public(a), nomine suo et / M(arci) Numistri Frontonis filii, chalcidicum, cryptam, / porticus Concordiae/ Augustae Pietati sua pecunia fecit / eademque dedicavit*

“Eumachia, daughter of Lucius, public priestess, in her own name and that of Marcus Numistrius Fronto, her son, made the colonnade, the covered passage and the porch for Concordia Augusta and Pietas of her own money and also dedicated them.”

The dedication of Eumachia's famous building must have taken place shortly before her son Fronto acquired his duumvirate, and therefore it has been suggested that this impressive gift may have helped to promote his career (which makes it likely that the building was erected around AD 3 or 4).<sup>71</sup> This view is contested by Ward, who stresses the fact that Eumachia's name stands first in the inscription

<sup>66</sup> Moeller (1972) 323, 232, 234-235; Castrén (1975) 101; Mouritsen (1988) 119, 121; D'Arms (1988) 53; Savunen (1997) 53; Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 101; Zanker (1998) 97; Franklin (2004) 33; Dobbins (2007) 166; Beard (2008) 51, 213; Van Andringa (2009) 55. For a discussion of the building of Eumachia, see Wallat (1997) 31-105. Generally, in the first and second century AD Rome served as a model for Italian cities, Patterson (2006) 177.

<sup>67</sup> D'Arms (1988) 53; Savunen (1997) 53-55.

<sup>68</sup> Savunen (1997) 55.

<sup>69</sup> Benefactions given by men could be used to advance one's own career, Ando (2000) 307. Edmondson (2006) 274 writes about benefactresses: '(...) many female benefactresses clearly hoped that their munificence would help further the careers of male members of their family; their husbands, sons, or brothers were often named on the monuments that honored such women for their generosity.' However, we have seen in chapter 5 that women did not have an independent claim to rank and that this may be another reason why (the positions of) their male relatives are often recorded elaborately.

<sup>70</sup> Cat.no.93.

<sup>71</sup> Moeller (1975) 235; Savunen (1997) 55; Zanker (1998) 93; Dobbins (2007) 166; Bernstein (2007) 530-531; Beard (2008) 214; Van Andringa (2009) 55. Cf. chapter 5: Iulia Paulina's priesthood helped promote her husband's career.

and that she must have been the one ‘at the center stage’, and not her son.<sup>72</sup> However that may be, the building is proof of Eumachia’s prominent role in the public life of Pompeii.

The benefactions of both Mamia and Eumachia can be compared to those of the other priestesses-benefactresses discussed in chapter 5. They show that these priestesses, even though they were never able to hold formal political power in Pompeii, had found a way to enhance their public prestige and both consolidate and show off the high standing they already possessed.<sup>73</sup>

#### *Grave monuments built by Pompeian priestesses*

In section 4.2 of the previous chapter I have discussed the public honours that could be bestowed on priestesses. Public burials were the most important; they were less often granted than statues. Several Pompeian priestesses were honoured with a public burial.<sup>74</sup> Alleia Nigidia might be the only priestess in the catalogue whose funeral (instead of only the place for the grave monument, which was much more common) was paid with public money.<sup>75</sup> However, this is highly uncertain. Alleia’s grave monument was built sometime between AD 62 and 79. In contrast to Alleia’s epitaph, that of Mamia leaves no doubt about the role of the *ordo* in her funeral; she was granted public land for her tomb:<sup>76</sup>

*M[am]miae P[ublii] f[iliae] sacerdoti / publicae locus sepultur(ae) datus / decurionum decreto*

“To Mamia, daughter of Publius, public priestess, the burial place is given by decree of the decurions.”

The inscription belonged to a *schola*-tomb, of which eight have been discovered in Pompeii. Three of these tombs were the grave monuments of women, and all (except perhaps one, lacking an inscription) were built for members of the local elite who had received a public burial.<sup>77</sup> Mamia’s tomb, probably erected between AD 14 and AD 25, stood outside the *Porta di Ercolano* and was built near those of other prominent Pompeians.<sup>78</sup> Both the type of the grave monument as well as its location near the tombs of other important members of the elite and the fact that the place had been granted by the *ordo*, reflected and enlarged Mamia’s social standing. As nothing is known about Mamia’s direct family members (parents, husband or children) it seems that she had acquired this great honour because of her own merits. Zimmermann and Frei-Stobla write: ‘Les tombeaux individuels étaient alors beaucoup

<sup>72</sup> Ward (1998) 326. Cf. Beard (2008) 214-215.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Beard (2008) 215.

<sup>74</sup> In Pompeii, burials in impressive monumental tombs like those of the priestesses’ were often carried out on the initiative of the *ordo*, Mouritsen (2005) 46.

<sup>75</sup> Cat.no.92. Savunen (1997) 157.

<sup>76</sup> Cat.no.98. Franklin (2004) 36.

<sup>77</sup> Savunen (1997) 153; Cormack (2007) 586-588. The publicly paid *scholae*-tombs are generally quite modest in scale and form, as Mouritsen (2005) 47, writes.

<sup>78</sup> Ward (1998) 323.

plus rares que les tombeaux destinés à une famille ou à un clan familial; on peut donc en déduire soit que Mamia n'avait plus de parenté proche soit que les honneurs funèbres lui étaient explicitement et personnellement destinés en récompense de son sacerdoce et non au tant que membre d'une famille éminente.<sup>79</sup> Apart from her priesthood, Mamia's benevolence will certainly have helped to be granted a public burial place.

The priestess Clodia also received public land for her grave monument, as the accompanying inscriptions show us.<sup>80</sup> The first of these inscriptions was Clodia's own<sup>81</sup> and the second was the priestess Lassa's,<sup>82</sup> Clodia's grandmother who was likely married to the *scriba* Aulus Clodius, mentioned on the third inscription.<sup>83</sup> Lassa was also buried *decreto decurionum*.<sup>84</sup> The fourth inscription records Clodia's father, Aulus Clodius Flaccus.<sup>85</sup> This inscription ends with the statement that Clodia had built this monument *sibi et suis*. The last epitaph mentions Lucius Cellius Calvus, Clodia's husband, who had been *decurio*.<sup>86</sup> In the inscriptions set up by Clodia the offices of her male relatives are extensively enumerated, which shows the social prominence of her family. We should not forget though, that Clodia's name was inscribed in much bigger letters than the others, and as Ward rightly remarks, in 'a world in which inscriptional public relations mattered, this must not be passed over lightly. Clodia was obviously seeking public recognition.'<sup>87</sup>

The inscription recording the priestess Istacidia does not mention a public burial, and the epitaph belonging to the *aedicula*-grave of the *Istacidii* has not been preserved. Nevertheless, because the grave monument may have been built within the *pomerium* of Pompeii, it is possible that this elite family was also granted a *funus publicum*. The grave monument that was located behind Mamia's *schola*-tomb, was about ten metres high, which made it clearly visible.<sup>88</sup> Like Istacidia, the priestess Alleia Decimilla did not receive a *funus publicum* – that is to say, her epitaph has not been preserved – but took care of the burial of her relatives in a tomb built on public land near the Herculanean gate (see figure 9).<sup>89</sup> She buried her husband Marcus Alleius Luccius Libella, *duumvir* and quinquennial prefect, and her son Marcus Alleius Libella, who was already *decurio* when he was seventeen. Alleia Decimilla's father Marcus Alleius Minius was buried on public costs elsewhere, near the Stabian

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<sup>79</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 99. Cf. Savunen (1997) 154.

<sup>80</sup> Clodia is also commemorated in the necropolis of the Porta Nocera by one of the freedmen of the family, Mouritsen (2005) 49.

<sup>81</sup> Cat.no.101.

<sup>82</sup> Cat.no.102. Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 103.

<sup>83</sup> *CIL* 10, 1074c: *A(ulus) Clodius / M(arci) f(ilius) Pal(atina) scriba / magist(er) pag(i) Aug(usti) / fel(icis) sub(urbanus)*. Patterson (2006) 238: in Pompeii many descendants of *liberti* were members of the *ordo*.

<sup>84</sup> Although we have seen in the previous chapter that the words *decreto decurionum* might have been linked to her priesthood, instead of her burial place.

<sup>85</sup> *CIL* 10, 1074d = *AE* 2003, 312.

<sup>86</sup> *CIL* 10, 1074e: *L(ucius) Cellius L(uci) f(ilius) / Men(enia) Calvos(!) / decurio / Pompeis*. Franklin (2004) 25 writes that Clodia may have recorded Calvus' position as *decurio* as an 'attempt to add distinction to her rather unaccomplished husband in the presence of her remarkably distinguished father.'

<sup>87</sup> Ward (1998) 328.

<sup>88</sup> Von Hesberg (1992) 141, 167.

<sup>89</sup> Cat.no.100.

gate.<sup>90</sup> Even if Alleia Decimilla herself was not publicly buried, having close family members who were granted a *funus publicum* and having her name recorded on the epitaph of her husband and son, certainly underlined the priestess's social prominence and let her share in the honour granted to her husband and son.



Figure 9: Epitaph erected by Alleia Decimilla

Eumachia's eye-catching mausoleum was located near the Porta Nocera.<sup>91</sup> It was ten times as big as a normal tomb and had alternating niches, containing reliefs and free-standing sculpture. Carved altars stood on a terrace in front of the tomb.<sup>92</sup> Mouritsen argues that Eumachia's tomb 'whose scale and décor broke all precedents', may have been a key factor in 'speeding up' and finally ending the process of elite competition using grave monuments.<sup>93</sup> This would imply that it was a woman who 'won' this competition. The accompanying epitaph was plain and did not mention Eumachia's priesthood; it could be either incomplete or the mausoleum was built before she was appointed as priestess and before the *aedificium* on the forum was erected.<sup>94</sup> Eumachia's tomb contained several bodies, though no other *Eumachii*.<sup>95</sup> The inscriptions that have been preserved mention several *Alleii* – for example Alleius Nobilis, adoptive father of Cn. Alleius Nigidius Maius – and therefore, Savunen suggests that Eumachia was possibly remarried to an Alleius.<sup>96</sup> Together with her *aedificium* on the

<sup>90</sup> *AE* 1891, 166 = *EE* 8, 318.

<sup>91</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 101; Cormack (2007) 586. Most tombs near the Porta di Nocera were built by freedmen, so Eumachia's mausoleum is an exception.

<sup>92</sup> Cormack (2007) 592.

<sup>93</sup> Mouritsen (2005) 50. The *forum* was a better location for this elite competition, Mouritsen (2005) 54, 55.

<sup>94</sup> *Eumachia L(uci) f(ilia) sibi et suis*; D'Ambrosio and De Caro (1983) 11OS nr. 13. Mouritsen (2005) 47 suggests that this omission is in line with the simple character of many epitaphs of the Pompeian elite.

<sup>95</sup> Though other *Eumachii* are known, e.g., a possible brother of Eumachia, L. Eumachius Fuscus, who was aedile in AD 31/32 (*CIL* 10,899; 900).

<sup>96</sup> Savunen (1997) 62-63.

forum, Eumachia's mausoleum shows the self-confidence, pride, wealth and influence of this priestess.<sup>97</sup>

Again, the picture that emerges from the burials of the Pompeian priestesses is that of prominent elite women who were conscious of their own social standing and that of their family, and who spent their money on extravagant grave monuments to consolidate and enlarge this standing. As may be clear, the Pompeian priestesses are a perfect example of elite women who were related to each other, held the available municipal priesthoods, acted as *evergetes* and tried to be remembered in perpetuity – which they managed fairly well.

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<sup>97</sup> Zimmermann and Frei-Stolba (1998) 101.