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# Imperial Priestesses, Roman Models: Kinship Ties and Elite Identity in the Western Provinces

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## Introduction

At the end of the second century CE, Nahania Victoria, *flaminica perpetua* of Thugga, donated 70,000 sesterces for the erection of a temple to Mercury. This included statues, porticoes, and a market, which was to be built adjacent to the temple and was dedicated to the wellbeing of the emperor.<sup>1</sup> The donation, which she offered together with her husband, a *flamen perpetuus*, and *augur* of Carthage, constituted the fulfilment of their *pollicitae summae*, in addition to a sum *ob honorem flamonii perpetui*, offered on top of the required amount;<sup>2</sup> this was further increased by an additional 50,000 sesterces left behind by their son. This generous donation, offered *pago patr[i]æ*, was primarily meant to benefit the community through the modification of the urban religious and commercial landscape, but was further qualified by her husband's separate donation of 25,000 sesterces to provide *sportulae* and games to the *decuriones* and the entire population. The image presented by Nahania Victoria, a woman of local origin, whose public munificence not only transformed the topography of her home town, but, through the office of her husband, also linked it explicitly to the administrative centre at Carthage, was one of wife, mother, and benefactress.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, she was a public figure, a priestess of the imperial cult, whose embeddedness within the civic framework of her *pagus* was put prominently on display, alongside that of her immediate family.

Nahania Victoria, and priestesses like her, constituted part of a cult, which Dio claimed was common to all people, 'in so far as they [were] subject to the Romans,'<sup>4</sup> and which acted as a 'unifying factor' throughout the Empire.<sup>5</sup> Despite variations in its practices in the east and west, as well as between localities and provinces (also recognised by Dio), its development within the empire's civic urban frameworks showcased the interactions of the provincial population with what they saw to be Roman religious,

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<sup>1</sup> '*pro salute Imperatoris Caesaris*': AE 1904, 118 and *ILAfr* 517=*CIL* 8, 2648+26595a+26631+26635 and *LAfr* 516+*CIL* 8, 26482=*AE* 1906, 167; *CIL* 8, 26530 (includes dedication to emperor, Commodus); for a recent discussion on these inscriptions, see Bertolazzi 2016: 93-94; cf. Saint-Amans 2004: 329-335 for location of the temple and market in Thugga; Dossier 1.

<sup>2</sup> Hemelrijk 2006: 88 on *summae honorariae* and *ob honorem* donations as sums promised and paid in the pursuit and reception of civic honours.

<sup>3</sup> Bertolazzi 2016: 94f.

<sup>4</sup> *Dio* 51.20.7. Dio is one of our main literary sources referring to the significance of the imperial cult.

<sup>5</sup> Beard, North, and Price 1998: 349.

cultural, and social values.<sup>6</sup> The west in particular lacks evidence for comparable cults prior to Roman rule, creating a more explicit association of ruler-worship with the introduction of Roman civic institutions than in the eastern provinces of the empire.<sup>7</sup> Given this close relationship of Roman cultural and civic identity with the imperial cult, its priesthoods offered a unique communal stage for women, whose access to public office was otherwise strongly restricted; particularly the gendered aspects of this public role have received ample attention in recent scholarship.<sup>8</sup> In this context, a question arises: what kind of elite belonged to these provincial communities, which, through the introduction of civic and religious institutions, coloured itself Roman? The women of the upper-strata in provincial society can help to answer this question, as their 'structurally central' position in conceptualizing Roman family structure received a further means of articulation through the introduction of the imperial cult.<sup>9</sup>

As such, this paper will examine how *flaminicae* in the western provinces contributed to the articulation and projection of what they considered to be a collective Roman elite identity by means of their office, thereby promoting themselves and their kinship networks as members of the local ruling class with respect to their own communities and the Roman centre. The honours they received reflected negotiations with civic councils, thus associating them – and their families – with the political ruling classes in a manner which evinced a characteristically Roman elite colouring.<sup>10</sup> This paper will argue that, through the choice of many of these priestesses to emphasise their family connections in these contexts, we can observe the self-fashioning of provincial elites in imitation of a Roman model, which sought to create images not just of clothing, religion, and adhesion to Latinity, but especially of what they considered to be elite Roman kinship systems.<sup>11</sup> While the issues of gender, the provincial city, and religion will all be touched upon, the main focus will rest on how kinship ties were broadcasted in the public inscriptions of the *flaminicae* and how they might have been conceived of as a provincial interpretation of what existed at imperial centre.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Beard, North, and Price 1998: 318.

<sup>7</sup> On the cult in the east, see Frija 2016; cf. Price 1986, esp.78ff. for overview; possible models existed in the west, but we lack evidence for the pre-Roman period: Rives 2001: 427-8; Mattingly 2013.

<sup>8</sup> For overview, see Hemelrijk 2005: 137; cf. MacMullen 1990: 171-176 on female access to power.

<sup>9</sup> Hallett 2014: 5f. notes the essential role women played in the conceptualisation of the elite Roman family.

<sup>10</sup> Hemelrijk 2015: 13-15; Eck 2014 notes the importance of municipal offices for the collective articulation of Roman civic life for local upper classes; Bertolazzi 2016 for the special dynamic in Thugga.

<sup>11</sup> As Sebaï 1990: 665ff. and Hemelrijk 2005: 149 note, not all priestesses were presented in the context of their families, and we should not see their honours and benefactions as dependent on their relatives.

<sup>12</sup> Rather than reiterating the Romanization-debate, this paper will consider the 'Roman model' as something which is linked to the centre at Rome, through its terminology or its

## Roman Centrality and the *Flaminicae*

Before we engage directly with the *flaminicae* in the provinces, it is necessary to turn to the framework within which they functioned. The variability of the imperial cult throughout the empire, already noted by Dio, has received much attention.<sup>13</sup> Provincial and municipal imperial priesthoods depended on region and legal status of the communities in question.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, as Rives has stressed, the imperial cult was ‘an expression of Roman culture rather than native,’ even if its realisation could very well have been inflected by local customs.<sup>15</sup>

A set of laws from Narbo offer insight into the manner in which the imperial cult – at least on a provincial level – could be structured and modelled after a Roman concept.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, they exhibit a concern for the familial context of the priests, suggesting an interest in the formulation, or at least the augmentation, of social norms and the configuration of kinship ties. The *Lex de flamonio Narbonensis* is our most extensive document relating to the establishment of cult practices in the provinces, imposed by the central authority at Rome.<sup>17</sup> Discovered in 1888 within the provincial sanctuary of *Gallia Narbonensis*, the surviving thirty lines of text inscribed on a bronze tablet constitute five clauses of a *lex* enacted during the reign of Vespasian.<sup>18</sup> The fragment of the law outlines the establishment of the provincial imperial cult in Narbonese Gaul under the *flamen provinciae*, as well as the privileges and restrictions affecting the *flamen* and his wife, the *uxor flaminis* (l.1-8), the honours reserved for an *ex-flamen* (l.9-16), procedures for the replacement of a *flamen* (l.17-21), the convening place for the council at Narbo (l.22-4), and, lastly, the *flamen’s* accountability to and the involvement of the provincial governor.<sup>19</sup> As Fishwick has argued, setting out the scope of the law would have been beyond the legislative powers of the colony of Narbo, and must have been directed by the imperial administration.<sup>20</sup> The inclusion of the emperor in line 13,<sup>21</sup> regulating the location at which a statue for the man *qui flamonio abierit* could be erected (l.11), as well as the extensive privileges of the provincial *flamen*, which affected both his roles in *curia sua* and in *concilio provinciae Narbonensis* (l.14), all imply the involvement of the capital. This suggests an active interest on the part of the Roman authorities in the establishment of the imperial cult

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institution by imperial authorities. For an overview of the Romanization-debate and civic institutions, see Curchin 2004: esp.8-22 and Hemelrijk 2015: 18-35.

<sup>13</sup> Beard, North, and Price 1998: 348ff.; Rives 2001; Le Glay 1990: esp.79-80.

<sup>14</sup> Beard, North, and Price 1998: 315.

<sup>15</sup> Rives 2001: 427.

<sup>16</sup> Fishwick 1987: 15.

<sup>17</sup> Williamson 1987: 188-189.

<sup>18</sup> *CIL* 12, 6038 = *AE* 1987, 749; Williamson 1987 for text and commentary; cf. Fishwick 1987: 3-15; for an earlier dating of the *lex*, Abaecherli 1932: 267-268.

<sup>19</sup> Fishwick 1987: 5-14.

<sup>20</sup> Fishwick 1987: 5: a *lex data*; cf. Williamson 1987: 187.

<sup>21</sup> [*Narbo*]ni intra fines eius templi statuae ponendae ius esto, nisi cui imperator...

at a provincial level in the west, as opposed to general practices in the east, where the formation of the cult relied more heavily on the discretion of the local councils and a tradition of inter-city competition.<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, though a significant portion of the document is lost, it illustrates some of the honours received by the provincial priests of the imperial cult in Narbonese Gaul, and highlights the legal relationship between the magisterial body and the *flamines*.<sup>23</sup> While the surviving fragments do not address the priestesses of the cult, the title *flaminica provinciae* is well attested in epigraphic evidence, in Narbo and elsewhere,<sup>24</sup> and scholars have inferred that parallels to their male counterparts must have existed in similar regulations (possibly within the same law) regarding their roles, dress, and the honours they could obtain upon fulfilment of their term.<sup>25</sup>

Williamson has suggested that the regulations for the provincial flamine bore a close resemblance to the Vestal Virgins at Rome, as well as the Republican *flamen Dialis*.<sup>26</sup> The honours and restrictions bearing on the *flamen* and his wife in particular reflect guidelines which existed at Rome. Similar to how the *flamen Dialis* had the right to sit on the Senate, the provincial *flamen* could participate in the provincial council and was accompanied by lictors (l.1-4). Moreover, he was granted a seat in the front-row at the games, among the decurions (l.5); his wife was permitted to attend the games, and could not be forced to swear an oath against her will (l.6-8), corresponding with the privileges granted to the Vestals.<sup>27</sup> While the political rights and duties of the *flamen* would not have applied to the imperial priestesses, public honours, such as a privileged seating at the games and the erection of a statue upon completion of their term seem likely, especially with respect to parallels in Rome.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Beard, North, and Price 1998: 349 claim that the cult in the east 'was a voluntary matter, [...]while in the west it was imposed by Rome'; Rives 2001 stresses that this view is simplistic, and that local variation impacted how the cult was instituted across the empire; provincial initiative in the west is also demonstrated by the petition sent from Spain to establish a temple to Augustus in *colonia Tarraconensi* (Tac. *Ann.*78).

<sup>23</sup> Fishwick 1987: 6.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. [...]la Iullina for *Gall. Narb.*: *CIL* 12, 2516; for distribution of the *flaminicae provinciae* in Africa and Spain, see Hemelrijk 2005: 168-170.

<sup>25</sup> Hemelrijk 2005: 146ff. There are far fewer examples of provincial priestesses than priests, with most coming from Spain (18 of 22 known *flaminicae provinciae*, see Hemelrijk 2015: 75). The erection of statues for an outgoing *flaminica*, for example, seems to have resembled that of the *flamines*: Sebaï 1990: 654-658.

<sup>26</sup> Williamson 1987; agreeing with Fishwick 1987: 7; Beard, North, and Price 1998: 357 mistakenly claim that the wife of the *flamen* was known as *flaminica*. For the *uxor flaminis*, see Hemelrijk 2005.

<sup>27</sup> Williamson 1987: 181.

<sup>28</sup> Hemelrijk 2006: 92ff. referring to the honours bestowed to the Vestals in Rome (see Tac, *Ann.* IV, 16, on to theatre-seats dedicated to the Vestals).

Hemelrijk opposes the view that the imperial flaminiae, and therefore the roles of the *flaminicae*, were modelled after the *flamen Dialis*.<sup>29</sup> While she acknowledges the parallels between the *uxor flaminis* and the Vestals, she argues that the differences between the priesthoods, especially regarding requirements for marital status and the term-length,<sup>30</sup> were too marked for the priests of the imperial cult to reflect the Republican priesthood beyond the name.<sup>31</sup> Instead, she proposes that the *flaminicae* imitated the women of the imperial family whom they worshipped, rather than being restricted by a more formal adherence to pre-existing institutions at Rome.<sup>32</sup> While she is correct in stating that regional variations and differences from the centre, such as the worship of living empresses and non-deified female members of the imperial household in the provinces,<sup>33</sup> might be indicative of the liberties elites could take in their practice of the imperial cult, she underplays the influence and replication of formal models as they existed at Rome in a provincial setting.<sup>34</sup> This is stressed by another document concerning the worship of the emperor at Narbo, the inscription of the *ara Narbonensis*,<sup>35</sup> which explicitly emphasises the centrality of Roman cult in the local practice. While its statutes concern the dedication of an altar to the *numen Augustum* by the *plebs* of Narbo during the reign of Augustus, rather than listing the appropriate regulations in full, the inscription simply refers to the provisions in place at the temple of Diana on the Aventine; it thus created an unambiguous link between the cult practices of the colony and the example on which it was based.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, the institution of Roman models to structure provincial, social, and civic life in view of religious practices is known from municipal charters, such as the *lex municipalis Troesmensium* and its parallels in Spain, which not only regulate priesthoods, but also explicitly refer to institutions at Rome.<sup>37</sup> Given that the *flaminicae* were tied into these legal frameworks, and that their participation, their duties, and public appearance (and possibly that of their immediate family) were circumscribed by Roman norms, members of the local elite, who took up these offices, would participate on a stage, which not only delineated their status, but also stressed their adherence

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<sup>29</sup> Hemelrijk 2005: 322f; Hemelrijk 2007: 138,146-148; Hemelrijk 2015: esp.49,73.

<sup>30</sup> The *Flamines Dialis* served for life, while, the imperial priesthood was usually held for a year, and did not bar priests from other civic offices. Scheid 1993: 77f.

<sup>31</sup> Hemelrijk 2005: 147.

<sup>32</sup> Hemelrijk 2007: 343.

<sup>33</sup> Worship of living empresses: *CIL* 6, 29711; Non-deified women: *ILGN* 638.

<sup>34</sup> Woolf 1996: 34ff.: there are variations across regions and time, which might be accredited to local culture and customs, or to a lack of a coherent agenda by the centre.

<sup>35</sup> *CIL* 12, 4333; see Kneissl 1980.

<sup>36</sup> L.21: ...*ceterae leges huic arae titulisq(ue) / eadem sunt quae sunt arae / Dianae in Aventino*. This was not an isolated phenomenon, as the same regulation has been found in Dalmatia, abbreviated and at a later date: *CIL* 3, 1933=*ILS* 4907; Ando 2009: 100f.

<sup>37</sup> For the *lex municipalis Troesmensium* as a Roman model for a municipal civic and religious structure, see Eck 2013; cf. Galsterer 2006 for municipal laws in general.

to the value systems associated with the centre.<sup>38</sup> Even if the provincials did not possess full knowledge of the laws and guidelines they were referring to, the close association to the power and wealth of Rome would have been understood.<sup>39</sup> The manner in which the cult, and the position of its priests and their families was seen as an extension of institutions which existed at the capital, thereby provided a conceptual, as well as a legal framework for provincials to present themselves as part of a Roman elite group.

The proposed parallels to the *flamen Dialis* would have presented a particularly pertinent model for the local elite. Cicero positions the Republican *flamines* among the most privileged offices available to the Roman patriciate, responsible for the ongoing functioning of the religious and political order of the Roman people.<sup>40</sup> Together with the Vestals, the flamine at Rome articulated the patriciate as the topmost kinship structure of the Roman community - one which was highly dependent on the ancestors and, under the principate, association with the emperor.<sup>41</sup> While the *flamines* of Republican Rome had to be patrician,<sup>42</sup> this was clearly not the case for the imperial priesthoods and the provincials holding them;<sup>43</sup> rather, it was the association of the priesthood with family networks which most closely resembled the traditional Roman elite in terms of their place in civic society – one which was tied into the civic structure of the local *municipium* or *colonia*, as well as the larger networks of inter-community connectivity defined by kinship relations – which contributed to the articulation of elite-collectivity.

### **The Civic Priesthood in the West**

The *lex* at Narbo exemplifies the extent to which the imperial cult at the provincial level oriented itself in accordance with the centre. It also reveals how the priesthoods of the cult were integrated into the civic structures of the communities.<sup>44</sup> This ‘civic model’ was especially prevalent in regions with a high density of towns and communities based on the Roman model, such as *municipia* and *coloniae*.<sup>45</sup> In the west, the

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<sup>38</sup> Eck 2013: 187.

<sup>39</sup> On the possible lack of understanding by provincials concerning the the *ara Dianae in Aventino*, see Ando 2009: 101; for the civic regulations displaying ‘Romanness,’ rather than stringent adherence to them, see Fear 1996: 162.

<sup>40</sup> Cicero, *Domo sua* 38; Rüpke, Eck, and Heil 2004: 289.

<sup>41</sup> On the privileges of patricians and their development, see Duncan-Jones 2016, esp. chapter 2.

<sup>42</sup> Smith 2007: 39.

<sup>43</sup> The status of most priestesses is unknown; as suggested by the examples at Thugga, many came from local families, without direct prior connections to the imperial or municipal elite *ordines*. Cf. Bertolazzi 2016: 85ff.; also Hemelrijk 2015: 12-13.

<sup>44</sup> In the civic model, priests and magistrates were considered a part of the same system, rather than as distinct classes. See Gordon 1990: 235f.

<sup>45</sup> On urbanism as an ideology to reinforce Roman civic concepts, see Revell 2009: 40f.; Mackie 1990: 179 on the ‘urban consciousness.’

Mediterranean provinces of eastern Spain and northern Africa display the highest levels of urbanism, likely due to their easier communication with Rome and other urban centres.<sup>46</sup>

These regions are also the source of most of our evidence outside Italy pertaining to the priestesses of the imperial cult.<sup>47</sup> While these priestesses could not hold positions on provincial or municipal councils, their integration into the civic system was based on their participation in, and financing of, festivals of the imperial cult, providing them with a visible and public role within their communities. As such, the priesthood created a model which enabled women, in the proper context, to participate in civic life to an extent comparable to that of their male counterparts, at least where munificent acts and the reception of public honours by the local council were concerned. Through their participation and public representation, the *flaminicae* thereby contributed to the physical and ideological landscapes that defined and reinforced the experience of empire in their specific provincial contexts.<sup>48</sup>

However, in the case of female participation, one must be aware of the limitations and biases inherent to the evidence, especially regarding societal expectations and assumptions towards women throughout the culturally distinct regions of the empire. In particular, the comparably small volume of known inscriptions and the uneven survival of epigraphic material mean that any assumption about the representative nature of the material must be handled with caution.<sup>49</sup> Due to the cult's connection with a Roman civic framework and the associated requirements for public munificence, the epigraphic evidence regarding priestesses is skewed towards densely urbanised areas with communities of (or, as Hemelrijk argues, with aspirations for) the status of *colonia* or *municipium*.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, these inscriptions' images of the self-representation, and conceptualisation of kinship systems, of the provincial elite will inevitably also be reflections of the community's connectivity to the wider empire.

Local elites were of course not homogenous, or necessarily easily identifiable, groups.<sup>51</sup> While wealth certainly played a significant role in terms of access to offices, honours, gender, status, family connections, and membership in councils and

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<sup>46</sup> Mackie 1990: 180.

<sup>47</sup> Hemelrijk 2015: 18. Her corpus of inscriptions pertaining to female civic roles in the west includes 1196 examples, 46% are found in Italy, 25% in Africa Proconsularis and Numidia, 13% in Hispania Baetica and Tarraconensis.

<sup>48</sup> Sebaï 1990: 667-669; Gaspar 2012: 15f.

<sup>49</sup> See Hemelrijk 2015: 30-34, for the distribution and trends of women in civic roles within our epigraphic record, as well as for their relatively low numbers (1 to 2.42% in Italy, Africa and Eastern Spain). Cf. MacMullen 1982; also Duncan-Jones 1982: 360-362 on rate of 'inscription-survival' in Africa.

<sup>50</sup> Hemelrijk 2015: 20-22; Mackie 1990: Chapter 3.

<sup>51</sup> Sloop 2009: 418.



organisations also would have affected an individual's place within their community.<sup>52</sup> Membership in municipal councils served to stress certain elements of what it meant to be a member of a community's upper strata, but influence across several communities could also be portrayed through the depiction of kinship connections to other office-holders, indicating that the formulation of what it meant to not only be part of the local power structure, but also an actor in the imperial framework, could be closely associated with the public display of family ties.<sup>53</sup>

For women, the notion of 'status dissonance' has served to stress their inability to hold political office, regardless of their wealth and ability to use it.<sup>54</sup> The priesthood of the imperial cult would have helped to accentuate the position a woman held within the community, through its formalised place within the civic structure, as well as through its association with the Roman centre, and consequently Roman social norms.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, while the nuances of kinship ties and the regional variations in continuity of local customs are often lost to us, the *flaminicae* and their inscriptions remain the outward projection of an elite social architecture that attempts to present itself in accordance with what Corbier calls Roman 'modes of cultural expression.'<sup>56</sup> The public presentation of the *flaminicae* with their explicit tie to a 'Roman' institution, could have served to establish a link between family and community, and even links between communities, through the depiction of family ties. This indicates an elite consciousness that saw itself embedded in civic structures, but also used them to extend its reach and create an overlapping network of intercommunal relations, based on public institutions, and represented by public honours and dedications. Evidently, the notion of belonging to the civic elite, while focused on one's home community, could include a connection to the greater region - through civic office, but also, importantly, through kinship relations.<sup>57</sup>

In terms of our epigraphic evidence, the participation of the priestesses in the civic framework is best represented by honorific inscriptions outlining the *summae honorariae* and gifts *ob honorem* paid to obtain office, and the honours they received from the councils in lieu of the political benefits open to their male counterparts. In order to secure civic office, candidates were expected to pay (often substantial)<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Revell 2009: 191ff.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Mattingly 2013: Chapter 8.

<sup>54</sup> Hemelrijk 2006: 86 on status-inconsistency; Sloopjes 2009: 420 for 'dissonance' among the wealthy.

<sup>55</sup> Gaspar 2012: 15f.

<sup>56</sup> Corbier 2005: 257.

<sup>57</sup> Sloopjes 2009: 421.

<sup>58</sup> A salient example is Ascia Victoria, a *flaminica perpetua* in Thugga (3<sup>rd</sup> century CE). She added to the *summa honoraria* for her priesthood, donating an additional 100,000 sesterces to secure the flaminiate for her daughter, highlighting the sums necessary to compete for a priesthood. (*CIL* 8, 26591=*ILTun* 1427); for a discussion of the peculiarity of this amount, see Bertolazzi 2016: 99; also Duncan-Jones 1982: 102-103.

sums, *summae honorariae*, limiting the competition for these offices to the upper-strata of society.<sup>59</sup> Any promises to add to these amounts while running for office (*pollicitatio*) were enforceable by law.<sup>60</sup> Inscriptions detailing fulfilment of these requirements therefore exemplify how *flaminicae* could present themselves and their family as part of the Roman civic system.

Priestesses such as Maria Lucina,<sup>61</sup> and Iulia,<sup>62</sup> who were *flaminicae* in Mustis during the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, both paid not only their *summa honoraria*, but went above and beyond the required costs, dedicating gifts to the imperial family, as well as to the *curiae*, *decuriones*, and the remaining citizens. Thus, Maria Lucina and her two sons donated 10,000 sesterces for a temple, *sportulae* for the *decuriones*, and *epula* for the *cives* of their community, all in addition to the *summa ob honorem* required for the youngest son. The dedication serves to emphasise not only the role of Maria Lucina as the *flaminica* of Mustis, but also draws attention to her family's connection to the greater *Imperium Romanum*, with her sons holding imperial offices at provincial levels; one as an *advocatus fisci patrimonii* in *Africa Proconsularis* and *Gallia Narbonensis*, the other (probably) on a military posting in *Britannia inferior*.<sup>63</sup>

Iulia on the other hand used the dedication of a statue to *Ceres Augusta* to display the tradition of her ancestors, in which she is participating through her office. *Imita[ta paren]tes maioresq(ue) suos, qui munifici in [patriam] extiterunt*, she situates the payment of her *legitima summa honoris* and the additional sums she donated towards an annual *epulum* and a *munus*, in the context of her family's munificence, particularly stressing the role of one of her forefathers as *flamen perpetuus*. Consequently, the expression of her kinship-ties portrays Iulia and her sons, who were responsible for erecting the statue, as members of a family which had gained eminence both through the taking up of public office within the Roman civic structure, and the munificent acts it had undertaken for the community across multiple generations.

All these factors, linking the office of the *flaminicae* to the processes of civic competition through formalised acts of munificence, family tradition, and kinship networks extending beyond the city itself, contributed to the projection of an image which would have been distinctively Roman. The manner in which these women – or the family units they represented and were a part of – chose to present their own kinship-ties, and the circumstances in which they did so, were circumscribed by a framework of civic life that was imposed or adopted under Roman rule. Both Maria

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<sup>59</sup> For *summae honorariae* in Africa, see Duncan-Jones 1982: 82-88; Spickermann 1994: 189 on the considerable wealth required to acquire the *flaminica*.

<sup>60</sup> Rescript of Trajan on the requirement for magistrates to pay promised sums (*Dig.* 50.12.14). Bertolazzi 2016, (note 43).

<sup>61</sup> *CIL* 8, 1578. Dossier 2.

<sup>62</sup> *AE* 1968, 588. Dossier 3.

<sup>63</sup> Tomlin 1988: 145.

Lucia and Iulia were able to use the framework of their office – particularly the requirement of *summae honorariae* and the additional gifts *ob honorem* which supplemented them – to locate themselves and their families firmly within the social hierarchy of their local contexts, and, in the case of the former, within the larger imperial setting.<sup>64</sup> By distinguishing which individual groups were to receive specific benefits, the women displayed their own position in relation to the other members of the community; while Maria Lucina chose to honour the *decuriones* of her community in a different manner than the larger citizenry, Iulia went further, distinguishing between members of the *classis prima* of the *curia Augusta*, and the other *curiae* of the city, in an act of munificence meant to evoke the acts and offices of her ancestors. Importantly, these distinctions stress the association with certain groups based on Roman-style census qualifications, which served to accentuate the social and political hierarchies within the community.<sup>65</sup> *Pollicitatio* and *summa* were acts of public display integrating the whole family in a process which involved not only public benefaction, but also an explicit connection to public office and the municipal *ordines*. Both cases constitute powerful examples of how the *flaminicae* portrayed not only aspects of the underlying local and supra-local social order in which they and their families took on a prominent role, but the ways in which their kinship networks were tied into the cross-communal connections, which, by virtue of Roman rule, linked them with even the most distant parts of the empire.<sup>66</sup>

### **Conclusion: Connectivity, Kinship, and the Flaminiate**

The imperial priesthood, then, could be used to portray interpretations of what it meant to be part of the provincial elite under Roman rule. By allowing women not only to participate on a public stage (which, in itself, might have been nothing new),<sup>67</sup> but to do so within a civic framework that was explicitly linked to the emperor and to models of religious and civic life as they existed at Rome, the imperial cult allowed the *flaminicae* to make a statement about their own status in their community, as well as about their family's position and its relationship to the larger Roman system.<sup>68</sup> Rather than being able to claim membership to one *uterque ordo*, these women used the public duties and honours related to their office to stress their own interaction with local and supra-local institutions associated with Roman power, and were further able to present ancestors, spouses, and descendants as members of a group that carried these traditions forward, establishing links between the local and the imperial spheres. Their public presentation with the explicit tie to a 'Roman style' institution, which

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<sup>64</sup> Bertolazzi 2016, on status articulation through the flaminiate.

<sup>65</sup> On census requirements and the shaping of the local curial classes, see Zuiderhoek 2009: 4f.

<sup>66</sup> The reach of family networks beyond the local level was in itself often consciously associated with Roman power: Slotjes 2009; this was made expressly clear in the case of Maria Lucina, by the inclusion of her sons and their imperial offices.

<sup>67</sup> Edmondson 2005: 189f. on divergences from Roman norms in provinces.

<sup>68</sup> *Flaminicae* were not, however, wholly dependent on male-relatives: Sebaï 1990.

constructs links between family and community – and even between communities – through family ties by virtue of this office, indicates an elite consciousness that saw itself embedded in civic structures, but also used them to extend its reach and create an overlapping network of intercommunal relations, based on public institutions, and represented by public honours.

Returning to Nahania Victoria, her ties to Carthage through her husband, and the inclusion of her son in the inscription concerning the *summae* she donated to reconfigure the urban landscape of Thugga, express her family's relationship to the Roman reconfiguration of the local social hierarchy, not just in her own community, but also with respect to the greater province. Like the two *flaminicae* at Mustis, it was her office, as much as her relationship with her male relatives, which created an image of how they believed a provincial elite family under Roman rule could, and possibly ought to have looked like. But what the examples of Nahania Victoria, Maria Lucina, and Iulia show us, is a conceptualisation of kinship that could be accentuated by the role of the *flaminica* – one which women who stood as a link between the community and their relatives took up and emphasised in the context of their own public presentation – one they clearly chose to colour Roman.

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 CIL 8, 1578  
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### Dossier of discussed Inscriptions

#### 1. Nahania Victoria (AE 1914, 167)

Q(uintus) Pacuvius Sator fl(amen) perp(etuus) augur c(oloniae) I(uliae) K(arthaginis) e[t] Nahania [Victo]ria fl(aminica) perp(etua) a[d ---] / [---] omnique cultum ampliata pecunia fecerunt item porticum et [area]m macelli pago patr[i ---]

#### (AE 1906, 12)

Q(uintus) Pacuvi[us] Sator fl(amen) perp(etuus) augur c(oloniae) I(uliae) K(arthaginis) et Nahania Victoria uxor eius fl(aminica) perp(etua) opu[s] templi Mercuri quot(!) M(arcus) Pacuvius Felix Victorianus filius eorum codicillis suis ex HS L mil(ibus) fieri iussit amplius ipsi ob honorem fl[amonii] perp(etui) ex] HS LXX mil[ibus] pollicitis [sum]mis templum Mercuri et cellas duas cum statu[s] et port[icibus] et ornamentis / omni[bus] ---]ae ex(s)truxerunt et excoluerunt item civitati Thugg(ae) HS XXV mil(ia) Q(uintus) Pacuvius Sator fl(amen) perp(etuus) daturum se pollicitus est ex cuius summae reditu quotannis decurionib[us] sport[ul]ae darentur et ob diem [dedication]is

ludos scaenicos et sportu[las] decurionibus utriusque ordinis et univer[so populo dedit]  
**(AE 1904, 118)**

[Q(uintus)] Pacuvius Sator fl(amen) perp(etuus) augur c(oloniae) I(uliae)  
K(arthaginis) et Nahania Victoria fl(aminica) perp(etua) [opu]s templi Mercuri quot(!)  
M(arcus) Pacuvius Felix Victorianus filius eorum codicillis suis ex HS L mil(ibus) fieri  
iussit amplius ipsi ob honorem ffl(amonii) perp(etui) / [--- patri]ae extruxerunt et  
excoluerunt item civitati Thugg(ensi) HS XXV mil(ia nummum) Q(uintus) Pacuvius  
Sator fl(amen) perp(etuus) daturum se pollicitus est ex cuius summae reditu  
quotannis decurionibu[s] sportulae praestarentur]

## **2. Maria Lucina (CIL 8, 1578)**

pro salute Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) [Marci Aureli Antonini Pii Felicis Aug(usti) et Iuliae  
Soaemiadis Aug(ustae) matris castr]orum Maria Lucina flam(inica) et L(ucius) Fulvius  
Kastus Ful/[vianus --- proc(urator) prov(inciae) Africae tr]act(us) Kart(haginis) et  
Galliae Narbo[nensis --- et L(ucius) Fulvius ---] Britanniae inferior(is) fili(i) eius cum ob  
honor(em) eiusd(em) / [--- promisissent adiectis ex li]beralitate sua amplius HS  
X[mil(ibus) n(ummum) --- fecerunt et ob dedicationem sp]ortulis decurionibus et epulis  
civibus datis

## **3. Iulia (AE 1968, 588)**

Cereri Aug(ustae) sac(rum) pro [salute] / Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) M(arcus) Aureli(i)  
Severi A[lexandri] / Pii Felicis Aug(usti) [[et Iuliae Mamaeae Aug(ustae)]] / [[matris  
Aug(usti)]] et senatus et cas[trorum et pa]triae munus quod Iulia Q(uinti) f(ilia) [---  
ho]nestae memoriae flaminica imi[tata paren]tes maioresq(ue) suos qui munifici in  
[patriam] / extiterunt id est C(aium) Iulium C(ai) f(ilium) Cor(nelia) Fe[licem] /  
Felinianum fl(aminem) perp(etuum) qui statuam lov[i Victo]ri in foro posuit patriae  
suae per decr[etum] / universi ordinis promisit inlata suo [tempo]re legitima summa  
honoris et ampliu[s curi]ae honestiss(imae) Aug(ustae) classi prim(a)e summam  
p[ecu]niae dignam ex cuius usuris annuis redac[tis] / omnib(us) annis in perpetuum  
epularetur t[ri]buit donoq(ue) dedit epulumq(ue) decedens ob dedi[c(ationem)] / curiis  
dari iussit Q(uintus) Iulius Felix frater eius / et Iulius Homullus et Iulius Honoratus eius  
/ ab ea statuam adlat(am) statuer(unt) et epulo curiis dato ded(icaverunt)