

# *Roman Priestesses: the Case of Metilia Acte*

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**M**etilia Acte and her husband Junius Euhodus were buried in a sarcophagus discovered in Ostia, now in the Vatican (Fig.1).<sup>1</sup> The dedicatory inscription within the tabula on the lid provides us with valuable information concerning Metilia Acte and her husband (Fig.2). It reads:

D. M.

C. IUNIUS.PAL.EUHODUS.MAGISTER.QQ  
COLLEGI.FABR.TIGN.OSTOS.LUSTRI.XXI  
FECIT.SIBI.ET.METILIAE.ACTE.SACERDO  
TI.M.D.M.COLON.OST.COIUGSANCTISSIM

*D(is)                      M(anibus)*

*C. Iunius Pal(latina) Euhodus magister q(uin) q(uenalis)  
collegi fabrum tignuoriorum Ostis lustrum XXI fecit sibi et Metilia Acte sacerdoti  
M(agnae D(eum) M(atris) colon(iae) Ost(iensis) coiui(i) sanctissim(e)*<sup>2</sup>

[To the Manes (spirits of the dead): C. Junius Euhodus of the tribe Palatina, five-year magistrate of the twenty-first lustrum of the guild of the carpenters at Ostia, made (this monument) for himself and for his wife, Metilia Acte, priestess of the Great Mother of the gods at the colony of Ostia, most sacred (or most saintly woman)].<sup>3</sup>

The date of the sarcophagus has been determined from the XXI Lustrum of the guild, mentioned in the inscription: from 161 to 170 CE.<sup>4</sup>

Through examination of the inscription on the lid of this sarcophagus, this article hopes to show the importance and duties of Roman priestesses, and



Fig. 1: Sarcophagus of Metilia Acte and Junius Euhodus, from Ostia, now in the Vatican, Inv. No. 1195 (Photo DAIRome No. 72.590)



Fig. 2: Detail of the sarcophagus: the inscription within the *tabula* (Photo DAIRome No. 72.592)

particularly of Metilia Acte and her husband Junius Euhodus. The various elements depicted on the sarcophagus, as well as the connections with the myth of Alcestis that appears on the main panel of the sarcophagus, may enable us to gain a greater understanding of the roles of the deceased couple in the cults of Magna Mater and of Attis.

Several of the elements mentioned in the inscription require elucidation. First, as regards Junius Euhodus: what were the duties and privileges of a *magister* or president of the guild, held by him, and who were the *fabri tignarii*? The former had both civic and religious duties. His numerous civic duties included convening the assembly and presiding at their sessions; he was responsible for the strict observation of the statutes, oversaw the work for repair, improvement or decoration of the guild quarters; and in addition, he supervised the guild finances. Among his religious duties, he performed or oversaw sacrifices and presided at the banquets; on festive days he made libations of incense and of wine. In his official capacity he wore a white toga. The office of *magister* or president implied, in fact, a heavy charge; it was thus necessary to be wealthy in order to be eligible as *magister*. That the office also signified an honour is shown by the title being included on funerary monuments,<sup>5</sup> such as the sarcophagus studied here.

Who were the *fabri tignarii*? They were carpenters - their guild had intimate relations with the *dendrophori*, with whom they were frequently associated in inscriptions; sometimes the two guilds had the same patron.<sup>6</sup> The *dendrophori* were a guild of wood merchants, who in addition to their professional character, had a religious function in the cult of Attis, and they are known to have flourished in Ostia during the second century CE.<sup>7</sup> It was the *dendrophori* who brought the pine-tree, which they had cut down, into the temple on the day of mourning for Attis' death. It is possible that Junius Euhodus also belonged to the guild or association of the *dendrophori*. The display of Attis heads on each end of the lid reinforces the suggestion that Junius Euhodus' position in the cult may well have been as important as that of his wife.

The other elements in the inscription requiring clarification relate to Euhodus' wife. The reference to Metilia Acte as *sacerdos* or priestess of Magna Mater raises several questions: what was the role of a priestess in Roman cults and, more specifically, in the cult of the goddess Magna Mater? Who were the women chosen to be priestesses; what was their social status? Did Roman women in general participate in the religious rites of Magna Mater?

Despite the accepted view that, with a few exceptions, women played only an insignificant role in religion, there is evidence that Roman women, both as priestesses and as participants, did play an active part in various religious

cults, and especially in the cult of Cybele, which according to Plutarch was 'a religion of women and eunuchs'.<sup>8</sup>

The importance of women's roles in religion, and most especially in those cults in which "ecstasy", "frenzy" or "madness" were intrinsic elements, was attested from the Greek and Hellenistic periods on. Thus the "madness" of the prophetess at Delphi, of the priestess at Dodona, as well as of the Sibyl, was seen as divine.<sup>9</sup> Religious ecstasy or "enthusiasm" was characteristic of the cults coming from the East, according to Aristotle, who observed that certain melodies, such as the Phrygian with its wild and relentless music played on the flute, caused some persons to fall into a religious frenzy.<sup>10</sup> The character of the cult of Cybele (or Magna Mater, Magna Mater Deum or Magna Mater Idaea) was such that it led her followers into frenzy, induced by the clashing of cymbals, the beating of drums, and the shrill notes of the Phrygian flute.

The advent in Rome of Magna Mater has been studied by many scholars, and is thus unnecessary to deal here with the partly legendary, partly historical event, and the political circumstances connected with it. The Phrygian goddess became a Roman one, through her connection with Troy, as is told by Virgil's *Aeneas*, and though the Trojan connection had made her acceptable to the Roman state, this was not the case regarding the strange alien elements in her cult, mainly her Phrygian priests, the *galli*, who, in a frenzied state, had castrated themselves.<sup>11</sup>

Women, especially patrician women, seem to have played an important role in the early stages of Magna Mater's introduction into Rome. As told by Livy and Ovid, upon the goddess' arrival from Phrygia at Ostia, in 204 BCE, when her ship sank in the mud and none of the men were able to move it, it was a young patrician woman who succeeded where the men could not. Claudia Quinta, in some versions a Vestal Virgin, in others a matron, extricated the ship, after having invoked the goddess' help to prove her chastity, which had been doubted.<sup>12</sup> This event seems to be depicted on a first-century CE altar dedicated by Claudia Synthycha (Fig.3).<sup>13</sup> The statue of the goddess was then triumphantly passed from hand to hand by the patrician women who were attending, and taken to Rome to the Palatine, where she was placed in the temple of Victory, until her own temple was built in 191 BCE. Annual celebrations, with sacrifices, banquets and games were held in her honour.<sup>14</sup> The *Megalesia* or *ludi Megalenses*, which included *ludi scaenici*, were represented in front of the temple on the Palatine, with the statue of Magna Mater probably placed in its portal.<sup>15</sup> Ovid mentions that the legend of Claudia was presented on the stage, most probably in the *ludi scaenici*, performed since 194 BCE.<sup>16</sup> *Ludi circenses* were also part of the festival instituted in honour of the goddess.<sup>17</sup>



Fig. 3: Altar dedicated by Claudia Syntyche  
(after Vermaseren 1977b: Pl. CXIII)

The statue of Claudia Quinta, the Vestal Virgin, erected by the Senate in her honour in the portico of the temple of Magna Mater, miraculously survived unscarred the two fires which destroyed the temple.<sup>18</sup>

Although the organization of the priesthood of this cult is only vaguely known, both a high priest and a priestess appear to have occupied the top echelons of the priestly hierarchy.<sup>19</sup> The duties of the office would probably have included care of the statue of the goddess, the rites of purification, and the safekeeping of gifts.<sup>20</sup> It may be conjectured that the priestess participated prominently in the rituals celebrated from March 15 to 27 for Attis, as well as in the annual ceremonies for Magna Mater and Attis, instituted by the Emperor Claudius, which lasted from April 4 to 10.<sup>21</sup>

As part of the March ceremonies dedicated to Attis, the faithful submitted to fasting and abstinence for nine days. Then, on March 22 the pine-tree was brought in procession into the temple by the tree-bearers (carpenters and wood merchants) called the *dendrophori*. This was followed by a day of mourning for the death of Attis. Then came a day of blood, when the priests flagellated themselves. At the end of the mourning period, the festivities of the *Hilaria*

seem to symbolize the rebirth of Attis. After a day of rest, the statue of Magna Mater, led through the city accompanied by torches, was bathed in the river (a ceremony known as the *lavatio*).<sup>22</sup>

On the last day of the festivities, a long and magnificent procession took place, during which, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 'the Phrygian priest and priestess carried her image in procession through the city, begging alms in her name...striking their timbrels, while their followers play tunes upon their flutes in honour of the Mother of the Gods.'<sup>23</sup> It seems possible that the scene on a first century CE wall-painting in the Via dell' Abbondanza at Pompeii depicts such a procession: the statue of the goddess appears on a wooden bier, while a priest and priestess dressed in white stand nearby; the priestess holds a *tympanum*. The other participants are mostly women, holding various objects and musical instruments, such as *tympana* and *cymbala*.<sup>24</sup> The silver statue was bathed and purified in the river, and showered with flowers according to an ancient rite.<sup>25</sup> The scheme of the procession may have been similar to that of the Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus, though obviously not as extravagantly sumptuous. The literary description of this procession mentions that priests and priestesses walked behind the carriage of their god or goddess.<sup>26</sup>

### Priestesses of Magna Mater

Metilia Acte clearly was an important priestess of the Magna Mater cult in Ostia. As noted above, Ostia was the port to which the ship bringing the image of Magna Mater had arrived in 204 BCE; many Oriental followers had settled there,<sup>27</sup> and thus it was a thriving centre of Oriental cults, among which that of Magna Mater was one of the most important.<sup>28</sup> The Metroon, as well as a shrine of Attis, many statues, and inscriptions were found in the large sanctuary.

Inscriptions provide evidence for other priestesses of the cult of Magna Mater, from Ostia as well as from other Roman towns. A priestess named Salonia Euterpe, from the Metroon of the *Portus Augusti et Traiani Felicis* in Ostia, is mentioned in a funerary inscription.<sup>29</sup> Another priestess is depicted on a marble relief, dated first century CE: her upper body, placed before a large shell, is in high relief; the inscription below her figure reveals her name and status: '*Laberia Felicia, sacerdos maxima, matris deum magnae Idaeae*' (Fig.4).<sup>30</sup>

Numerous priestesses of Magna Mater (or Cybele) are known from inscriptions, such as Abba, of Histria in Thrace, a high priestess who was in charge of the great festival, and also provided a lavish public banquet.<sup>31</sup> The cultic office, as well as the related religious festivals and activities, was probably very costly, and this implies that the economic and social status of these women was high. Another high priestess of the goddess, whose husband was a high



Fig. 4: Relief of Laberia Felicia (after Vermaseren 1977b: Pl.CL)

priest, a senator and a *quindecimvir* who supervised the sacrificial rites, dedicated an altar to the 'almighty' Cybele and Attis;<sup>32</sup> while yet another priestess, Aelia Antigonā, mentions in an inscription that she had the tomb built for herself, for her beloved husband, their descendants and freedmen. These inscriptions come from a burial ground close by the Tiber, near the road from Ostia to Rome.<sup>33</sup> The priestess Claudia Synthychē dedicated the altar with the representation of Magna Mater's arrival that was found on the bank of the Tiber. A Phrygian cap, pedom and cymbals, all attributes of Attis, appear on the lateral panels of this altar (Fig.5).<sup>34</sup> A priestess of the goddess, Veronia Trophima, is mentioned in an inscription from Verona, dedicated by her husband.<sup>35</sup>

Lists of priests and priestesses mentioned in inscriptions from Campania, indicate that some of the latter held very important positions in the social and political life of the province. These included a priestess, Munatia Reditta, who



Fig. 5: Lateral panels of the altar of Claudia Syntyche (after Vermaseren 1977b: Pls. CXII, CXIV)

celebrated her investiture by making a *taurobolium*; the daughter of a consul who built a temple at her own expense; and another woman, who made a *taurobolium* in honor of the goddess and gave an offering to her.<sup>36</sup> The inscription appearing on the frieze of a sacrificial altar of the second century CE, from the island of Thasos, mentions that it was dedicated by the priestess of Cybele.<sup>37</sup>

A well-documented case is that of Plancia Magna of Perge in Turkey, who lived in the early second century CE, and was high priestess of Magna Mater for life, as well as priestess of Artemis, and of the imperial cult. She also held important public civic positions, and financed one of her city's most important public buildings: the monumental main city-gate, of which some parts are still visible. Placed along the walls of the city gate were statues of members of the Imperial family, the founders of the city, and her ancestors. There are also three statue bases on which once stood statues of Plancia, only one of which has survived (Fig.6).<sup>38</sup> The inscriptions on these inform us that they were dedicated to her by Perge's assembly and council, who bestowed on her the highest honours of her city. Her two meter high marble statue has survived. The crown on her head indicates that she was a priestess of the imperial cult: it is decorated with four imperial busts. This statue and others were placed in niches along



Fig. 6: Statue of Plancia Magna of Perge (after Inan, Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1979: No. 225)

the walls of the city gate, as can be seen in the reconstruction (Fig.7).<sup>39</sup>

It may be conjectured that many other priestesses of the cult of Magna Mater could be found all over the Roman empire. According to inscriptions, it seems that women represented about half the number of the *sacerdos* of Magna Mater.<sup>40</sup> It is also possible that many of the statues identified as representing Cybele could originally have had portrait heads, and thus may have been statues of priestesses, under the guise of the goddess.<sup>41</sup>

What was the role of these priestesses in the cult? Did they play an active part in the cult or was their office only an honorary one?

In the peninsula of Piraeus numerous monuments connected with the cult of the goddess have been found. These have provided ample information,

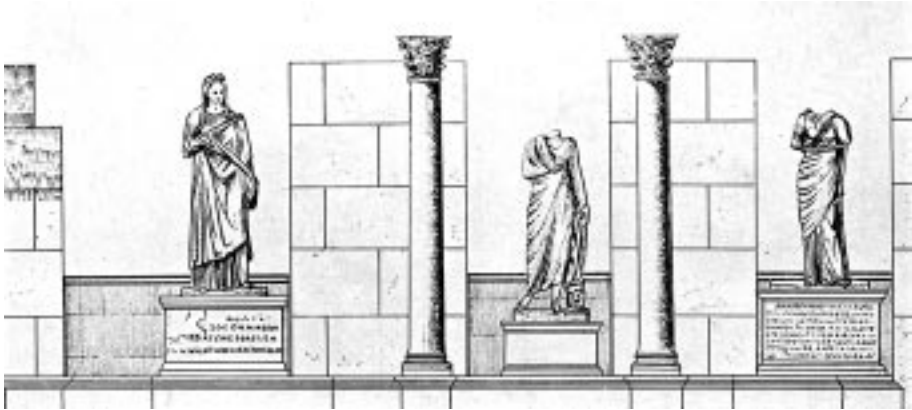


Fig. 7: Reconstruction of the city-gate of Perge (after Mansel 1975: Pl. 35)

including details of religious associations. The *Orgeones* of the Magna Mater, a religious society or association of the cult, was formed in the third century BCE. Many inscriptions related to the dignitaries of this association in the Piraeus testify to the role of the priestesses of this cult. Can this evidence be extended to later periods? The most ancient documents date from the beginning of the third century BCE, and the later ones are from the Imperial period.

Although a priest and a priestess were simultaneously in office, the priest seems to have had less importance than the priestess, for there are more inscriptions referring to priestesses than to priests. According to these, the priestess was chosen by drawing lots; her office was for one year, but she could be chosen for a second year. Her duties included the upkeep of the temple, and she had to tend to all that concerned the service of the goddess, particularly the sacrifices offered by the community. The most important part of her ministry was to preside at the celebration of the festivities and of the mysteries. The *Orgeones* rewarded her zeal and piety by giving her honours. A privilege given to the priestesses after they ended their sacerdocy, was membership in a sort of council charged with the supervision of the celebration of the cult.<sup>42</sup> The first reference to a priest is found in an inscription from 163/64 CE, indicating that at this time a State priest was appointed, probably when, under Marcus Aurelius, the cult became a State cult. This inscription appears under the portrait of the priestess Melitine, found in the Metroon of the Piraeus, where she mentions that 'she had been priestess under the priest Philemon' (Fig.8).<sup>43</sup>

It seems reasonable to assume that these data relating to the status of the priestesses of the cult of Magna Mater refer not only to this cult in the Piraeus, but also to all parts of the Roman empire; in other words, they indicate that



Fig. 8: Portrait of the priestess Melitine  
(after Vermaseren 1977b: Pl. LXXXI)

Roman priestesses held positions, duties and privileges similar to those of the Piraeus priestesses. Furthermore, it is important to remember that Magna Mater was frequently associated or merged with other goddesses, such as Isis and Demeter,<sup>44</sup> and thus priestesses would officiate for more than one goddess, as seen above in the case of Plancia Magna. The evidence for the priestesses of Isis is abundant;<sup>45</sup> an inscription dated to the end of the first century CE from south Italy, mentions that the priestess of Isis was also a priestess of Diva Julia (daughter of Titus) and of Cybele. There is evidence that some priestesses held office for a year, while others, especially in the Roman period, held it for life.<sup>46</sup> Is it possible to apply this information to fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge of the priestesses of Magna Mater?

Many of the honors and privileges granted to priestesses of other gods and goddesses and of the imperial cult are known, suggesting that this granting of honors might also be the case for the priestesses of Magna Mater. Such honors



Fig. 9: Detail of the lid of the Ostia sarcophagus (Photo DAIRome No. 72.593)

are mentioned on the inscription for the priestess Berenice, who lived in Syros in the second or third century CE, and who became priestess of the heavenly gods, celebrating the rites at her own expense, and was crowned with a gold wreath.<sup>47</sup> Another high priestess of the imperial cult, priestess of Demeter and 'all the other gods', who had built a temple with several cult statues in it, was herself honoured with statues whose inscriptions relate her benefactions to her city.<sup>48</sup> Among the other privileges that priestesses received was that of sitting on a throne high up in the theatre, presiding over shows and games, and being crowned by the city or by followers of a cult.<sup>49</sup>

Musical instruments associated with the cult of Magna Mater are depicted on both sides of the inscription on the lid of the Ostia sarcophagus: Phrygian flutes, tambourines (*tympana*) and *cymbala* (Fig.9). These musical instruments were already attached to the cult of the Mother of the gods from early times;<sup>50</sup> she was even said to have invented them.<sup>51</sup> Played during the rites, their music led the devotees into an ecstatic state and frenzy.<sup>52</sup> Euripides mentioned that the *tympanon* of Magna Mater had been adopted by the Dionsysiac cult and noted the connection of the cult of the Magna Mater with the cult of Dionysos.<sup>53</sup> The cymbals and tambourines provoked the state of frenzy or the 'possession of the initiate by the divinity'.<sup>54</sup> Both *tympana* and *cymbala* were played exclusively by women,<sup>55</sup> further suggesting the important role played by women in these cults. A *pedum*, appearing also on the lid, alludes to Attis, for it is one of the attributes of this god (Fig.10).

A flying Victory is depicted holding each side of the tabula with the inscription. That flying Victories figuring on Roman funerary monuments



Fig. 10: Detail of the lid of the Ostia sarcophagus (Photo DAIRome No. 72.591)

symbolize the victory of the deceased over death and evil spirits is well-known,<sup>56</sup> this meaning may perhaps be traced to earlier works of art, such as Apulian vases.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, Victories could also suggest the apotheosis of the deceased, as implied by the representations on South Italian funerary vases.<sup>58</sup> This symbolism certainly became even more evident in Roman works of art, which antedate the Ostia sarcophagus.<sup>59</sup> There is, moreover, another possible reason for the inclusion of this motif on the Ostia sarcophagus: Victory was associated with many other gods and goddesses, including Cybele.<sup>60</sup> It should also be remembered that the goddess, on her arrival, was at first brought into the temple of Victory on the Palatine.

Next to each Victory a burning torch is placed diagonally with the flames downwards. While lowered torches are acknowledged as a symbol of death,<sup>61</sup> burning torches do have a more extensive range of meaning. Their role in funeral ceremonies and their depiction on funerary monuments have been dealt with by various scholars.<sup>62</sup> The symbolism of torches on funerary monuments is well-known, assuring the survival of the soul of the deceased.<sup>63</sup> However, it is possible to perceive that, in the context of this sarcophagus and of the cult of Magna Mater and Attis, torches might have acquired additional symbolical nuances. Fire could provide a mortal with immortality according to ancient beliefs;<sup>64</sup> later, fire was considered as one of the elements that had a role in the purification of the soul.<sup>65</sup> Torches had an important role in the cult of gods, and in the mysteries of Demeter and Persephone, Dionysos, and Magna Mater. Torches were important in the procession of the solemn entry of the pine-tree brought by the *dendrophori* during the March festivities for Attis, as well as on

other days of the festivities dedicated to the god and to Magna Mater.<sup>66</sup> Thus, this seems to again point to the deceased couple as initiates and active followers of Magna Mater and Attis. It should, moreover, be noted that Persephone appears on the main panel of the sarcophagus, holding a burning torch, and thus providing an additional suggestion of initiation rites.<sup>67</sup>

Why did Junius Euhodus choose the theme of Alcestis for the sarcophagus in which he and his wife would be buried? A Roman viewer could probably perceive that Euhodus' motives for the choice may have been diverse. It is important to note that the heads of the mythical heroes, Alcestis and Admetus, are portraits of the deceased couple, Metilia Acte and Junius Euhodus, thus emphasizing their complete identification with the immortals. Alcestis' death placed in the central part of the panel formed the main focus of attention: she represented the absolute devotion of the wife who, in a supreme sacrifice, gave her own life so that her husband could be saved.<sup>68</sup> Alcestis' return to life and her reunion with her husband depicted on this sarcophagus, would signify the hope of the deceased couple, Metilia Acte and Junius Euhodus, that they too would merit the same fortune, in light of Metilia Acte's saintly life and her dedication to the goddess, as well as by Junius Euhodus' participation in the initiation and mysteries of the cult of Magna Mater and Attis. Junius Euhodus had probably undergone initiation into the mysteries of Attis, suggested by the Attis heads on the corners of the lid of this sarcophagus; this is reinforced by the attributes of the god - the *pedum*, the *cymbala*, the *tympana*, and the flute. The days of abstinence and fasting cleansed the initiate, who was then ready through the frenetic music of these instruments to attain ecstasy; maceration and flagellation of the body also contributed to this state of body and soul.<sup>69</sup> The piety of the priestess Metilia Acte, to which Junius Euhodus added his own, would certainly be seen as allowing them both to triumph over death and become immortal.

The question of whether the cult of Magna Mater promised immortality to its initiates has been raised. Recently this question has been very thoroughly examined by Sfameni Gasparro, who concluded that, in contrast with many other cases in which this thesis seems difficult to prove, the belief in resurrection and immortality seems clearly expressed in the case of this particular sarcophagus, by the conjunction of various factors.<sup>70</sup> As exposed here, the contents of the inscription, the Attis heads, the musical instruments and the *pedum*, the flying Victories, and the torches on the lid, when taken together in context, and when linked with the myth of Alcestis on the main panel of the sarcophagus, all seem to corroborate these beliefs.

It is hoped that the examination of the sarcophagus and the inscription on its lid, presented in this article, will contribute to a better understanding of the status of Roman priestesses of the cult of Magna Mater, Mother of all the gods. While the high social position of the couple buried in the sarcophagus seems clear, the importance of the roles of Metilia Acte as priestess of Magna Mater, and of Junius Euhodus as magister of the carpenters has, I believe, been shown here; the latter may also have been a member of the *dendrophori*, in the cult of Magna Mater and Attis in Roman Ostia. Despite the somewhat incomplete direct evidence provided by inscriptions, literary sources and works of art, these may throw light upon the important role of women in Roman religion in general, and in the cult of Magna Mater in particular.

## Notes

- 1 Robert 1969: 31, No. 26; Wood 1978: 499-502; Mucznik 1999.
- 2 Robert 1969: 33.
- 3 Wood 1978: 499-500.
- 4 Robert 1969: 32 ; Wood 1978: 500.
- 5 Waltzing 1968: I, 385-399.
- 6 *Ibid.*: I, 241, 444.
- 7 *Ibid.*: II, 122-123, 148; Cumont 1956: 57-58; Pensabene 1982: 70.
- 8 Staples 1998: 4-8; Sfameni Gasparro 1982: 472; Plut. *Amat.*13, 756 C.
- 9 Plato, *Phaedrus*, 244.
- 10 Aristotle, *Politics*: VIII.7.4, VIII. 7.9-10.
- 11 Vermaseren 1979a: 38-63, 96; Wiseman 1984: 117-128; Beard 1994: 165-170.
- 12 Ovid, *Fasti* IV.291-325; Livy, XXIX.10-14.
- 13 Vermaseren 1977 b: 45, No.218, Pls.CXII - CXIV; Beard *et al.* 1998, 2: 45-46.
- 14 Livy XXIX,14; Ovid, *Fasti* IV.357.
- 15 Vermaseren 1977a: 125; Pensabene 1982: 76, the *ludi* seem to have taken place in front of the temple of the goddess.
- 16 Ovid, *Fasti*: IV. 326; Bremmer 1979: 10.
- 17 Ovid, *Fasti*: IV.305-360.
- 18 Valerius Maximus 1.11 (first century CE), mentions that the statue stood intact on its base, during the two fires which destroyed the temple of *Mater Deum*; Fantham *et al.* 1994: 220, and see Fig. 7.7, for a coin with the depiction of the statue.
- 19 Wissowa 1971: 320-21.
- 20 Kraemer 1992: 81.
- 21 Scullard 1981: 97-100; Carcopino 1942: 48-75.
- 22 Vermaseren 1977: 113-124.
- 23 Dion. Hal.: II.19.4-5.
- 24 Vermaseren 1977a: 108-109; Vermaseren 1978: 17-19, No. 42, Pls. XI -XVII.
- 25 Ovid, *Fasti*: IV. 340-345; Cumont 1956: 52-57.
- 26 Rice 1983: 11, 60.
- 27 Bieber 1969: 40.
- 28 Meiggs 1977: 354-64; Squarciapino 1962: 1-19.

- 29 Squarciapino 1962: 15.
- 30 Vermaseren 1977b: 68-9, Pl. CL.
- 31 Kraemer 1992: 84 and n. 27.
- 32 Vermaseren 1977a: 47-48.
- 33 *Ibid.*: 57.
- 34 Vermaseren 1977b: Pls. CXII, CXIV.
- 35 *Ibid.*: 69.
- 36 Tran Tan Tinh 1972: 93, 99, 120.
- 37 *Ibid.*: 80, pl. 28; *Thasos* 1967: 137, No. 40, Figs. 89, 80.
- 38 Inan, Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1979: No. 225; Van Bremen 1983: 235; Fantham *et al.* 1994: 363-4; Boatwright 1991: 249-55.
- 39 Mansel 1975: Pl.35.
- 40 Kraemer 1992: n. 27.
- 41 Bieber 1969: 39, 40.
- 42 Foucart 1975: 20-22, 85.
- 43 Vermaseren 1977a: 35; 1982: 69, 95, no.315, Pl.LXXXI.
- 44 Dunand 1973: 266-68, and n. 4, mentions dedications to Isis and Magna Mater. For the association of Magna Mater with Demeter see, among other scholars, Sfameni Gasparro 1982: 473.
- 45 Heyob 1975: 89-110.
- 46 *Ibid.*: 90-91.
- 47 Kraemer 1988: No. 82.
- 48 Van Bremen 1988: 223, and n. 6.
- 49 MacMullen 1980: 215. In Athens priestesses had assigned seats in the Theatre of Dionysos, see McClees 1920: 9.
- 50 *Homeric Hymns* XIV; Pindar, *Dithyrambs*: Fr. 79 b; Eur. *Bacch.*:123-9.
- 51 Diod.Sic.: II.2-4.
- 52 Catullus, *Poems*: 63.
- 53 Eurip. *Bacch.*: 59-60,78,129-30; Burkert 1987: 25.
- 54 Burkert 1987: 35.
- 55 Anderson 1994: 185.
- 56 Cumont 1942: 101, 165, 487.
- 57 This concept may have been inherited by the Romans from various sources: such as vases from South Italy, where the funerary character of Nike/Victoria is already manifest. For some fifth century BCE vases, see Goulaki-Voutira, 1992: 880, Nos. 364-366. Apulian vases, most of which were found in tombs, would also have offered the same ideas. See Schauenburg 1987:199-232.
- 58 Nike holds a crown towards Herakles, while nearby Deinaira holds a folded garment, see a fourth century BCE Sicilian calyx krater, Trendall 1989: III. 428.
- 59 On a funerary altar dated c. 41-68 CE, two Victories hold a large wreath with the dedicatory inscription within it; see Altmann 1975:101, Nr. 86; Reinach 1912: 515,4. See also on funerary urns, Sinn 1987: Nos. 496, 626, especially 687. For an almost identical representation of flying Victories holding a *tabula* on a late Hadrianic sarcophagus, see Vollkomer 1997: No. 252. See also Sinn 1987: Nos. 496, 626, and esp. No. 687.
- 60 Daremberg and Saglio 1963: 844.
- 61 Cumont 1942: 341.
- 62 Rushforth 1915: 149-164; Daremberg and Saglio 1963: 1390.
- 63 Torches used from ancient Egypt in funeral ceremonies and in the cult of the dead and of the gods, were adopted by Greeks and Romans, who attached further

- significance, see Cumont 1949: 48-51.  
 64 *Hymn to Demeter* II, 238-242, 300 (trans. Evelyn-White, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass., London 1977).  
 65 Servius, *Comm.in Verg.Aen.* VI, 738-747; Burkert 1987: 98.  
 66 Turcan 1961: 49-50. Torches appear in the wall-painting at Via dell'Abondanza, representing a procession of Magna Mater, see above n. 24.  
 67 Muznik 1999: 75-76.  
 68 *Ibid.*  
 69 Cumont 1959: 116-117,121.  
 70 Sfameni Gasparro 1985: 84-106, esp. 98.

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