

**Hemelrijk, E.A. (2009) "Women and sacrifice in the Roman Empire", in Hekster, O., Schmidt-Hofner, S. en Witschel, Ch. (eds), *Ritual Dynamics and Religious Change in the Roman Empire. Proceedings of the Eighth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Heidelberg, July 5-7, 2007)*, Brill (Impact of Empire vol. 9), Leiden/ Boston, 253-67.**

The notion that women were excluded from animal sacrifice has long been taken for granted; it has only recently been called into question. Most discussion focuses on women in classical Athens, but the notion of female sacrificial incapacity is defended for the Roman world as well. This paper first re-examines the evidence (mainly from the literary sources) that is adduced to uphold this view. Then, the vexed question whether women participated in blood offerings will be discussed on the basis of epigraphic and archaeological evidence pertaining to priestesses of the imperial cult, of Ceres and of local cults in the western part of the Roman Empire.