

Hemelrijk, E.A. (2012) “Fictive motherhood and female authority in Roman cities”, *Eugesta 2*: 201-20.

This paper discusses the meaning and function of female kinship titles in the Latin West, focusing on the title of mother of a city or a *collegium*, on the basis of a small corpus of Latin inscriptions recording mothers of cities and *collegia* in the cities of – mainly central – Italy and a few cities in the Balkan and Danubian regions in the second and third centuries AD. It is argued that the title of *mater* implies a lasting and hierarchical relationship between a locally prominent woman of wealth and the city or collegium she fostered. Like the title *mater patriae* (or *mater castrorum et senatus et patriae*), which was granted to some women of the imperial family in the second and third centuries, it is characterized both by authority and loving care. Thus, metaphorical motherhood indicated a position of female authority in male institutions, cast in socially acceptable terms.