

Abstract FIEC 2009

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Preferred panel 12: *Social and Political Dimensions of Kinship: Family, Neighbourhood, City.*

Title: **Fictive kinship as a metaphor for women's civic roles**

Length of paper: 20 minutes

Outline of content:

The role of women in Roman civic life is often described in terms of family relations: women are addressed as “mothers” of Roman cities (*mater coloniae* or *municipii*), as “mothers” or “daughters” of associations (*mater* or *filia collegii*), and as “mothers” of religious rites (*mater sacrorum*) or synagogues (*mater synagogae*). When acting as a group, they are sometimes presented as “sisters” (*sorores*). What roles or functions are hidden behind these fictive kinship relations? Why were these women addressed in the terminology of kinship? And what differences can be found between “mothers”, “daughters” and “sisters”? Though parental metaphors are frequent in the cities of the Greek East as well, this paper will focus especially on the cities of Italy and the Latin-speaking western provinces in the first three centuries AD.

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