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The Exceptional Case of Plancia Magna: (Re)analyzing the Role of a Roman Benefactress

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THE EXCEPTIONAL CASE OF PLANCIA MAGNA:
(Re)ANALYZING THE ROLE OF A ROMAN BENEFACTRESS

by

BARBARA F. CACERES-CERDA

A master’s thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

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(Re)analyzing the Role of a Roman Benefactress

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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This thesis analyzes the extravagant renovation of the Hellenistic gate complex funded by Plancia Magna, an elite woman from Perge, a city in the Roman province of Pamphylia. By using Plancia Magna as a case study, I hope to use her patronage of an outstanding architectural program to examine the dynamic roles elite women held under the Roman Empire in the late 1st century to 2nd century CE. Euergetism played a key role in developing cultural standards and civic obligations. Predominantly a male dominated practice, Plancia Magna stands out as one of its active and independent participants by commissioning the costly renovation of her city’s gate complex. Elite city members participated in euergetism in order to promote themselves by bestowing benefactions that would not only benefit their city, but also legitimize their social standing, family, and wealth. These costly endeavors ranged from costly architectural programs such as nyphaeums and theaters, to providing resources such as oil and food to their fellow citizens.

In the past, scholars, such as Sencer Sahin, Mary Boatwright, and Riet Van Bremen, focused on Plancia Magna’s familial ties in order to explain the few and unparalleled male references in the epigraphic evidence found in the gate complex. For example, while Plancia Magna included her father and brother in the statuary, they were uniquely identified by their connection to Plancia Magna. These scholars also focused on the absence of her husband or son by vigorously searching for any evidence that would essentially explain why she would decide not include them, rather than considering that she could have chosen to identify herself independently. Despite their efforts to provide a coherent historical timeline by analyzing the Plancii and Cornuti family, the two most prominent families of Perge, their work resulted in a forced analysis to justify her decisions behind the gate complex’s architectural, sculptural, and epigraphic program.

This study is an attempt to first provide a historical and cultural context of Asia Minor, in order to provide a backdrop for Perge throughout its political transitions from Alexander’s death, the Hellenistic dynasts, and ultimately to the Roman Empire. After understanding the political and cultural developments that shaped Perge, I delve into a detailed analysis of the Hellenistic Gate complex, which was renovated under the patronage of Plancia Magna. By analyzing her architectural, sculptural, and epigraphic choices, Plancia Magna’s position within Perge, and the Roman East, could be reasserted through her individuality and independence.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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None of my success would have been possible without the support and love from the two most hardworking individuals in my life, my mom and dad. Admiro la fuerza y resistencia que han tenido desde el principio para darnos un futuro mejor. Se merecen el mundo.

Finally, I am indebted to my partner and best friend, Thomas, for his constant encouragement and unconditional support. Your belief in me allowed me to focus on this incredibly rewarding achievement.

“Nevertheless, she persisted.”
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**Introduction**

“Am pridem, ex quo suffragia nullivendimus, effudit curas; nam qui dabat olim imperium, fæscæ, legiones, omnia, nunc se continet atque duas tantum res anxius optat, panem et circenses.”

It’s way back that they discarded their responsibilities—since the time we stopped selling our votes. The proof? The people that once used to bestow military commands, high office, legions, everything, now limits itself. It has an obsessive desire for two things only—bread and circuses.

- Juvenal, *Satire* 10 75-81

Plancia Magna is an exceptional example of a benefactress who did a good deed for her city by renovating an old, defensive structure at its entrance. This transformed the new gate complex into a critical symbol of pride for the Pamphylian city of Perge. At the same time, this act strengthened her ties with the city. This achievement should certainly not be equated to the endeavors of elite women elsewhere, as there isn’t comparable evidence that comes near Plancia Magna’s level of recognition. Not only should the renovation of the city’s Hellenistic gate complex be recognized for its extravagant and costly nature, but the minimal inclusion of her familial connections, particularly the lack of evidence depicting propaganda for a husband or son, and her distinct choice in statuary and epigraphic elements are what allow Plancia Magna to stand out. All of these factors are thus analyzed in this case study to provide substantial evidence for her position as a unique woman in the Roman Empire during the 2nd century CE. Foremost, it is important to recognize the social practice in which Plancia Magna was engaged in. While euergetism is deemed a male dominated tradition, it enabled her growth and fame within Perge.
The Rise of Euergetism

The concept of euergetism partly derives from the Hellenistic honorific decrees that honored individuals for their public activities known as euergesia. The Latin term liberalitas, the virtue of giving freely, and the Greek philotimia, desire of honors, also fall under this category of giving, but they encompass much larger connotations.\(^1\) Lacking an exact ancient equivalent, the modern term was first coined by the French historian Andre Boulanger in an attempt to explain a community’s expectation that wealthy members were meant to provide through public expenses and excellent.\(^2\) Euergetism allowed individuals to promote themselves and their families indirectly by what Emily Hemelrijk explains as creating “a lively competition for office among the local elite and maintained the social hierarchy within the town by legitimizing the power, authority and prestige of the elite.”\(^3\) Birth and rank were certainly not the only factors that determined an individual's civic status. The personal achievements they undertook by utilizing their wealth played a larger part in defining their roles and civic recognition. Free-born elite were automatically responsible for the distribution of their wealth by providing large spectacles or participating in the patron-client system.\(^4\) The reasoning behind benefactions and the commissioning of public works can be complex. While there could be several iterations of euergetism, such as small bequests of money to private clubs or even those made by an emperor to a city, Paul Veyne and Arjan Zuiderhoek identify a dominant political component. Benefactions normally came to constitute an ideological exchange between a wealthy citizen and his or her city through a public, political act where honors were instituted, but that also insinuated a targeted political agenda. Zuiderhoek takes it a step further and claims these politically charged benefactions explain the increase in euergetism

during the first, second, and third centuries CE in the Roman empire.\(^5\) Although, it is not enough to state that these members of the city bestowed benefactions in order to gain political advantages and elevate their social standing. Philanthropic reasons, such as hoping to improve their cities for the well being of others, are often glossed over. Yet, these elite members’ social status was still elevated, even if their intentions were purely philanthropic.\(^6\)

**Women and Euergetism in the Roman East**

As archaeological evidence has strongly supported, it was not rare in the 2nd century CE for women to make benefactions in the Roman Empire, especially in the Roman East. Women were active participants of this civic munificence by financing grand projects and providing entertainment and nourishment just like their male counterparts. Prompted as a result of their prominent civic positions, priestly positions, or simply as members of elite families, these costly endeavors reinforced these women’s statuses in their cities.\(^7\) It is often overlooked that Roman women also participated in the patron-client system, where they were active in several aspects of business. Not only were elite Roman women active participants, but freedwomen and non-elite women, who managed to accumulate wealth and establish connections, were able to take part in this patronage system as well. Miller concisely explains the benefits women gained from euergetism in the Roman empire:

> Benefaction and patronage practices offered women of means an avenue for power and prestige beyond the limitations of their gender. Women could not vote or run for office, but they could be and often were appointed to municipal public offices. Thus female patrons and benefactors did not only provide financial resources, but also received some modicum of power and influence in return for that patronage.\(^8\)

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\(^6\) Hemelrijk, “Priestesses of the Imperial Cult”, 90.
\(^7\) Barbara Caceres, “Female Munificence- Plancia Magna & The Hellenistic Gate,” (Unpublished paper, CUNY Graduate Center, 2015), 3.
The non-political offices held by women were: *prytania, stephaneophoria, demiourgia, hipparchia, archonship, basileia,* and *gymnasiarchia.* While the positions required largely ceremonial or religious duties, the most important qualification entailed a generous financial obligation. As attested by numerous inscriptions and her large renovation program, Plancia Magna gradually flourished in her civic career by holding several priestess titles, and by being named *demiourgos* at least three times in Perge. Despite the recognition Plancia Magna developed, she was not alone in the Roman East. Menodora is another example of a prominent benefactress in the Roman East. Also active in the 2nd century CE, from the neighboring city of Sillyon in Pamphylia, Menodora was honored by her city as a benefactress. Three inscriptions noted Menodora for the multiple positions she held including the donations she made that were linked to those positions (per her civic obligations). Aurelia Paulina, another benefactress hailing from Perge who lived under the reign of Septimius Severus, commissioned the building of a nymphaeum for the city. The inscription on the public work clearly discloses Aurelia had the nymphaeum built at her own expense, her Roman citizenship, and the religious positions she held in the city.

*Debating Women and Euergetism*

While the evidence is clear that women did bestow benefactions, and were appointed to various office holding positions, there are varying arguments concerning the flexibility women held during the Roman Empire that explore familial relations, legal leniencies, and even portrayals in public dedications. In the late 19th century, scholars, whose writings depicted the contemporary sentiments towards women, devalued the involvement they had despite the evidence that proved

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otherwise. Specifically, scholars such as Pierre Paris, have theorized women were only allowed to obtain positions of public authority by tying it to the political decline and degeneration of the Roman East. Elite women would not actually exercise power in the cities, but would provide for the cities through their wealth.\textsuperscript{12} His notion of the incapacity of women to hold a position of power and degeneration of the Greek cities under Roman control was a popular theory at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Although, it must be noted that the Roman East region flourished the most compared to other regions of the empire during the 1st to 6th centuries, contradicting Paris’ notion that women were only used as a last resort as the province decayed economically and politically.

Braunstein, writing around the same time as Paris, provided a different, but still subjective, explanation for women holding positions in their cities. He echoes J. J. Bachofen’s theory that \textit{Mutterrecht}, or matriarchy, survived from the pre-Greek period in the Roman East province in order to explain the recurring presence of women in civic roles. Yet he diminished women’s roles by stating that they only participated in nominal positions, such as priestesses.\textsuperscript{13}

During the 20th century, with the discovery of epigraphic evidence naming women from the Roman East that held power wielding positions, scholars have taken a more progressive approach, again influenced by their contemporary dynamics, in order to explain this understudied phenomenon. Yet, there are still debates amongst scholars regarding the independence women held in the Roman East. Riet van Bremen claims women were only active participants in civic benefactions since they were representatives on behalf of their families without any further motives. They were only carrying out their familial duties of contributing to the city in order to further establish their status, therefore they were not acting as independent individuals but as


members of a unit. On the other hand, Rachel Meyer, while she agrees with most of Van Bremen's claims, believes that there is enough evidence to suggest that a few exceptional women were able to act independently. By analyzing the case of Julia Antonia Eurydice, whom had the gerontikon at Nysa refurbished after her death, Meyers uses the legal context surrounding the execution of wills as evidence of her independence. In Eurydice’s case, her demands were fulfilled postmortem, without any interference from her only living family member, her son. Lastly, Elizabeth Forbis finds a distinction in public inscriptions honoring women in the Roman East and West. She notes that in the Eastern inscriptions women were praised for both their munificence and matronly duties with words such as castitas, pietas, pudicitia, and lanificium, but the terminology resulted in overshadowing the act itself. Meanwhile in the West, inscriptions focused mainly on praising and noting women’s public munificence lacking the devalorizing terms. This case study of Plancia Magna can undoubtedly justify and contest several of these arguments regarding women’s roles in the practice of euergetism.

**Exceptional Benefactress: Plancia Magna**

By undertaking a comprehensive study of the archaeological evidence of Perge, focusing heavily on the epigraphic and statuary remains of the city gate complex, the role of women in the Roman Empire can once again be considered in a more progressive light. The decisions behind Plancia Magna’s benefaction in the 2nd Century CE are best understood through an analysis of the Roman East’s political transitions that ultimately shaped Perge’s development.

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In the first chapter, I provide a concise understanding of the Roman expansion into Asia Minor, an unstable region that underwent several political transitions after Alexander’s death. Not only was the region shaped by new administrative and political elements, but the ideological agenda pushed by Augustus and manifested through Livia, paved the way for rising prominent members of the Greek cities in the East. Later, emperors such as Hadrian would focus on nurturing the cities’ local cultural identity while maintaining control over the region.

The second chapter focuses on Perge, the setting of this case study and a city largely affected by the power shifts discussed in the first chapter. While its building structures and city plans fit the mold of a standard Graeco-Roman city, it also reflects the transitions occurring since its Anatolian foundations, as well as the local traditions that were retained. To understand the nature of Plancia Magna’s benefaction in the context of her city, the overall euergetism practice is analyzed within Perge. This of course entails a discussion of the city’s most prominent family members, the Plancii and Cornutii, as identified through the epigraphic evidence remaining today.

Finally, the third chapter focuses on a detailed analysis of Plancia Magna’s renovation of the Hellenistic gate complex. A detailed description of the archaeological epigraphic and statuary data sets up a discussion of her programmatic choices. Her conversation with two audiences is observed through her bilingual inscriptions and the individuals she included in the statuary, such as the imperial family and legendary founders of Perge. While it was not directly stated in any of her inscriptions, it is apparent that Plancia Magna directly made decisions about the building program, in particular about the portrayal of her identity. This is further established when comparing elements of building program and inscriptions to those found outside of the gate complex in which she has been commemorated not only by her own freedmen, but the *demos* and *boule* as well. The findings of this thesis contest the assumptions women were only passive participants in the realm of euergetism as a result of their familial connections, or even that the decline in male participation
would explain the hike in women participating. Not only does Plancia Magna emerge as her city’s most commemorated benefactor, supported by the abundance of honorific inscriptions, but she substantially surpasses her male familial counterparts in establishing a lasting name within Perge.
Chapter 1

Asia Minor: Cultural stability despite political transitions

From Alexander to the Hellenistic Dynasts

It is important to briefly discuss the historical and political changes that affected Asia Minor since Alexander’s death in the 4th century BCE, which could perhaps provide a backdrop to our understanding of Plancia’s decisions and status in the early 2nd century CE. The Greek cities in Asia Minor flourished under Alexander’s control, and after his death, the Hellenistic royals began to offer benefactions in an attempt to sway the Greek cities in their favor as they attempted to gain political dominance. This display of competition amongst the Hellenistic rulers, as we will learn, certainly trickled down to the local elites in the manner of euergetism, particularly with the intention of gaining admiration and political status in their cities. Ultimately, this competitive climate also resulted in a rising rivalry amongst the cities.\(^\text{17}\)

As the Hellenistic rulers attempted to maintain control over the Greek cities, they weren’t particularly interested in keeping administrative control over them as they hoped to avoid the financial responsibilities. The combination of the political instability after Alexander’s death with the Hellenistic rulers’ focus on political dominance over administrative control, left the Greek cities fairly autonomous. Their local political activity flourished and their command of governmental administration was strengthened as a result of this gradual liberation.\(^\text{18}\)

Simultaneously, as noted by Polybius, the Romans were embarking in their own successes in several wars, in a period he has identified as the start of universal history:

...from this time forth History becomes a connected whole: the affairs of Italy and Libya are involved with those of Asia and Greece, and the tendency of all is to unity. This is why I

\(^{18}\) Dmitriev, *City Government*, 301.
have fixed upon this era as the starting-point of my work. For it was their victory over the Carthaginians in this war, and their conviction that thereby the most difficult and most essential step towards universal empire had been taken, which encouraged the Romans for the first time to stretch out their hands upon the rest, and to cross with an army into Greece and Asia.\textsuperscript{19}

Although Boatwright points out, it was not a simple act of aggression by the Romans that facilitated their success in the eastern Mediterranean, but rather the fragile and unstable environment under the Hellenistic dynasties.\textsuperscript{20} While the Romans fought against Carthage in a series of Punic Wars between 264–146 BCE, they were concurrently involved in the Macedonian Wars between 214–148 BCE, with its first war likely triggered by Rome’s presence in the Adriatic after the Second Punic War. Domination over Greece and Asia Minor was sought by three kingdoms: the kings of Macedon, the Seleucids of Syria, and the Ptolemies of Egypt. Additionally, alliances were developed between smaller and larger states also seeking power. This series of shifting power alliances amongst the different governing bodies led to the Macedonian Wars.\textsuperscript{21}

\textit{Introducing the Romans}

The first phase of Roman intervention in the region began with the First Macedonian War dating to 215–205 BCE between the Romans and Macedon. The Macedonians, led by King Philip V, formed an alliance with Hannibal, the Carthaginian general. On the other hand, the Romans allied with cities, leagues, and kings that feared Macedon, which included the Aetolian league and Pergamum.\textsuperscript{22} Considering both sides were distracted and engaged in other burdens, this war was dissolved and ended with the Romans and Philip coming to an accord in the Peace of Phoenice.\textsuperscript{23} Despite this accordance, this marked Rome’s first intervention in the region. After the second war

\textsuperscript{19} Polybius 1.3.6
\textsuperscript{20} Mary T. Boatwright, \textit{The Romans: From Village to Empire} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 127.
\textsuperscript{21} Boatwright, \textit{The Romans}, 128.
\textsuperscript{22} Boatwright, \textit{The Romans}, 128.
\textsuperscript{23} Boatwright, \textit{The Romans}, 128.
against Carthage, Attalus of Pergamum, Rome’s ally in the First Macedonian War, urged Rome to intervene in Greece which had been weakened after the war and fell under the Macedons. This initiated the Second Macedonian War (200–196 BCE). Rome came through triumphantly once again, with Philip V agreeing to withdraw from Greece and paying Rome an indemnity.²⁴

It was after the Second Macedonian War that the Roman consul Titus Quinctius Flamininus declared the liberty of Greek cities at the Isthmian Games of 196. This type of proclamation was integral to Hellenistic diplomacy, which allowed the Romans to adapt themselves to the local customs while maintaining their authority.²⁵ It was at this point that there was a surge in cooperation and communication between the Greek cities and the Romans. While the Romans fought Macedon, the Seleucids led by Antiochus III regained control over their lands, including the region in Asia Minor which surrounded Pergamum.²⁶ The small fleet Antiochus sent to Greece initiated the Seleucid War. At this point the Romans managed to push them out and defeated Antiochus’ forces in Thermopylae. Later, they crossed the Aegean and joined forces with Eumenes, the king of Pergamum. It wasn’t until 189 BCE that Antiochus was defeated by an army led by Lucius Cornelius Scipio, and was forced to abandon all claims to the region, surrender resources, and pay an indemnity.²⁷ Through waves of treatises, the Romans followed a similar structure to that of the Hellenistic dynasts by granting legal status and privileges to those cities that complied via political governance. The process was not the same across all Greek cities as some initially resisted in order to maintain autonomy, although soon after their defeat, they appealed for privileges.²⁸

²⁴ Boatwright, *The Romans*, 128.
²⁵ Boatwright, *The Romans*, 130.
²⁶ Boatwright, *The Romans*, 130.
²⁷ Boatwright, *The Romans*, 130.
²⁸ Dmitriev, *City Government*, 301.
The next critical war against the Macedonian monarchy, which not only ended the Antigonid kings but also cleared the passage for Rome’s dominance, occurred between 171–168 BCE. This war was triggered by the complaints made by Eumenes of Pergamum against Perseus, Philip V’s successor, who had married the daughter of Seleucus IV, Antiochus’ successor, King of Syria.\(^{29}\) Similar to the previous wars, Rome defeated the Macedonian army at Pydna. Perseus was captured, imprisoned, and taken back to Rome by Lucius Aemilius Paullus, the leading Roman general at Pydna, where he was paraded. Macedon, on the other hand, was divided into four regions, with the King’s properties falling under direct Roman control.\(^ {30}\) It is important to note that Rome’s successes in Asia Minor allowed Roman citizens from the Italian mainland to also take advantage of the expansion. These citizens, most of which were *negotiatores*, or businessmen, migrated to cities in Greece and Asia Minor with the hope of gaining profits from the new resources acquired.\(^ {31}\)

It wasn’t until after 64 BCE when Pompey focused on restoring Pontus as a Roman province after a series of wars known as the Mithridatic wars, that we begin to see a different dynamic amongst the Greek and Asia Minor cities, particularly with local elites. Rome’s stronger hold over the region was recognized by these individuals, who either easily embraced the changes and authority placed on them or asked to obtain city status under the empire. The different dynamics and eagerness in each city continued to evolve into a habit of competition. This involved projects to set their cities up for preferential treatment and consideration by the Romans as centers.

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\(^{29}\) Boatwright, *The Romans*, 131.

\(^{30}\) Boatwright, *The Romans*, 132.

\(^{31}\) Boatwright, *The Romans*, 132.
of governmental administration, such as the embellishment of public works, buildings, and games.\textsuperscript{32}

\textit{Livia’s Legacy}

The period between the late 1st century BCE to the early 1st century CE was transformative for the Romans in Asia Minor. It was during this time under the governance of Augustus and his family that there was a clear shift from institutional to personal loyalty.\textsuperscript{33} Not only was there a surge in euergetism and a continual incorporation of Graeco-Roman features in these cities, but the Augustan ideologies, primarily those portrayed by Livia, contributed to a rise in women benefactors in the Roman East.\textsuperscript{34} R. A. Kearsley suggests that the “Hellenistic tradition of female prominence in Asia Minor led the Graeco-Roman cities to embrace, with an especially enthusiastic zeal, the Augustan ideology which allowed Livia a pre-eminent role as both a representative of the imperial family and also of a broader range of Roman ideals.”\textsuperscript{35} From the start of his political career, Augustus was carefully crafting Livia’s public profile. In his war against Antonius in the 30s BCE, he positioned Livia as the ideal Roman matron while he waged war against Cleopatra, a foreigner. Livia came to symbolize the ideal woman who was devoted to her family and made clothes at home. Yet, she also led a very public life in which she was granted honors by the state, and had several statues erected in her name.\textsuperscript{36} While having set up Livia up for his early political agenda, Augustus continued to support her financial and social freedom. He knowingly contradicted himself while enforcing conservative and traditional moral legislation upon the elite.

\textsuperscript{34} Kearsley, “Women and Public Life”, 98.
\textsuperscript{35} Kearsley, “Women and Public Life”, 103.
\textsuperscript{36} Kearsley, “Women and Public Life”, 104.
members of society.\textsuperscript{37} The \textit{lex iulia de maritandis ordinibus} of 18 BCE and the \textit{lex Papia Poppaea} of 9 CE, focused on establishing moral rules for elite members of society in elevating marriage and an increase in offspring. While they established guidelines awarding marriage, they also created a series of penalties against adultery and celibacy.\textsuperscript{38}

Phrases such as \textit{femina princeps} and \textit{Romana princeps} were used to describe Livia, which provides us with a clear understanding of how Romans viewed her and political involvement at the time. It can be assumed Livia participated in activities women were normally left out of, all while embodying the ideal wife and public influencer personas.\textsuperscript{39} In Asia Minor, the epigraphic evidence also points to an imitation of the imperial family’s nomenclature. Augustus incorporated the terminology \textit{primus et solus} (first and only) in his benefactions, and similarly soon after, the same phrase (πρώτος καὶ μόνος) in Greek starts to appear in these cities:

\begin{verbatim}
 ή Βουλή καὶ ό δήμος
 Πλανκίαν Μάγναν
 Μ. Πλανκίου Οὐάρου
 καὶ Πόλεως Θυγατέρα
 ίέρειαν τῆς ’Αρτέμι-
 δος καὶ δημιουργόν
 ίέρειαν Μητρός Θεών
 διά Βίον πρώτην καὶ
 μόνην, εὔσεβη καὶ
 φιλόπατριν\textsuperscript{40}
\end{verbatim}

While this fascinating example of this terminology use dates to the early 2nd century CE, it establishes the continuance and legacy of the Augustan ideologies. This phrasing is repeatedly found in several inscriptions erected by the city of Perge in honor of Plancia Magna, their leading benefactor and most exceptional woman emerging from this period and region.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37} Kearsley, “Women and Public Life”, 104.
\textsuperscript{39} Kearsley, “Women and Public Life”, 104.
\textsuperscript{40} Sencer Sahin, \textit{Inschriften Griechischer Städte Aus Kleinasien: Die Inschriften Von Perge} (Bonn Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Nordrhen-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999), #118, 157.
\textsuperscript{41} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #118, 157.
Balancing Local Autonomy and Centralization

While Augustus’s agenda, which focused on establishing moral legislations and elevating the imperial family to reflect ideal standards, led to the *pax romana*, it isn’t until Hadrian’s reign that there was a heavy focus on the Roman East. This was fueled by Hadrian’s strong interest in the culture of the Greek and eastern cities. The cities of Asia Minor benefitted and took advantage of this situation in order to gain the favor and attention of the emperor. As Mary Boatwright notes, there seems to be two overarching themes that emerge from his reign. Hadrian focused on the “dissemination of norms by Rome, the central power; and the delicate balance between an emperor’s encouragement of local autonomy and the manifestation of his preeminence.” This is clearly observable in the city of Perge, where this case study emerges from. While Hadrian only managed to grant Roman citizenship to individuals from one polis and established a *municipium* in Chersonese in the Greek East since this region was already well urbanized by his reign, he did establish a few “new” cities in Mysia, the north western corner of Asia Minor. Cities that Hadrian did not believe were hellenized enough were deemed *poleis* instead of the usual *coloniae* or *municipia* from other regions of the empire. This strategic move allowed Rome to maintain control over these cities by establishing treatises, and continuing to allow the reinforcement of their local heritage not only in their social activities, but also in their administration. As observed in Plancia Magna’s bilingual epigraphic evidence from her architectural program in the early 2nd century, Perge, at the time a *poleis* under Hadrian, was given enough lenience in its administrative affairs. As previously mentioned, Hadrian wanted to provide cities with the opportunity to retain their local

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42 Rouche, “Floreat Perge!”, 216.
traditions, which ultimately allowed Greek to remain as the primary language for public works and governmental work.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{45} Boatwright, \textit{Hadrian and the Roman Cities}, 41.
Chapter 2

Perge’s Historical Context

Early Development & Foundation

Perge is located in the Pamphylia province of Asia Minor, in what is modern day Antalya (Fig. 1). While this city lies in ruins, it flourished under its Hellenistic and Roman periods. Even though Pamphylia was incorporated under the Roman empire in the late 1st century BCE, Perge didn’t acquire the title of metropolis until under Tacitus’ reign at the end of the 4th century CE, which marked it as the leading metropolis in Pamphylia, with Side, its competitive neighbor, coming at a close second. There isn’t enough evidence to establish a definitive understanding of Perge’s foundation and early development, as a majority of its prominent remains are attributed to the Roman Imperial period. The information that has been gathered so far from archaeological finds, supported by historical, sculptural, and philological data, is enough to provide a general outline of its origin.

Ancient sources provide us with a legendary origin story typical of a Greek city of the time. Strabo, a citizen from Asia Minor who lived during the region’s transitional political phases, cites Herodotus’ Histories (7.91) in his Geography to describe the origin of Pamphylia, which encompasses Perge and all its neighboring cities such as Side and Syllium. They state that after the Trojan war Amphilochus and Calcas led a mixed group of Greek and Achaean survivors to Anatolia. Thus, the Pamphylians are noted as the descendants of these men. While some settled in Perge, others moved on to other cities across Pamphylia, in excursions led by Mopsus, where they went as far out as Cilicia and Phoenicia. Following the rubric of the common city origin story,

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46 Boatwright, “Plancia Magna of Perge”, 249.
47 Rouche, “Floreat Perge!”, 216.
these men and their followers stumbled upon the native Anatolian city after spending time at sea in the aftermath of the Trojan war. Rather than focusing their efforts on founding a new city, they decided to integrate themselves into the already established society. Strabo’s and Herodotus’ accounts are corroborated by later sculptural evidence found in Perge dating to the Roman Imperial period. In the Hellenistic Gate complex, which was commissioned by Plancia Magna, statue bases were found that were inscribed with commemorations to the city’s *ktistai*, or legendary founders, such as Calcas and Mopsus.

Archaeological evidence provides a more definite reconstruction of the city’s origins than the literary evidence contributed by ancient scholars. It also allows us to track Perge’s growth and structural implementations along with the city’s several political transitions. Foremost, we can associate the city’s origin as Anatolian by its name. The word Perge has an Anatolian root, while other Pamphylian cities such as Side and Aspendos are Greek.\(^4^9\) While previous excavations in the 2nd half of the 20th century focused on the prominent remains of the city, particularly those from the Roman period, those undertaken by scholars such as Haluk Abbasoglu and Wolfram Martini between 1996-2004 contributed to understanding the pre-Hellenistic background of Perge. It appears the site was first occupied as early as the Chalcolithic period.\(^5^0\) These dates were confirmed by the discovery of two burials, that signified the presence of a settlement in the area. This occupation continued steadily throughout the Bronze age until the Achaeans settled in the area.\(^5^1\)

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\(^{49}\) Abbasoğlu, “The founding of Perge”, 176.
\(^{51}\) Martini, “Topographie und Architektur”, 57
Urbanization under Transitions

Geographically, Perge is located nearly 4 km east of the Cestrus (Aksu) river (Fig. 2), 11 km north of the Mediterranean coast, and sits on a flat hill that was 60 m above sea level. The city was also naturally surrounded by two hills. This strategic location protected this settlement from coastal threats, facilitated the development and flow of trade routes, and allowed ongoing relations with its neighbors. At first the city was only situated on the top limits of the acropolis, but as its eastern section began to develop into a basic city plan structure, which incorporated city blocks and thoroughfares, combined with a distinct decline in the production of its local pottery, it is evident that the 4th century BCE was a transformative period for Perge, possibly as a result of Alexander’s presence in Asia Minor, and specifically while he stopped in Perge in 334 BCE. This shift also seems to explain the small city’s subsequent expansion and spread down the slope into the southern plains during this period, which later became prominent areas during the late Hellenistic and Roman phases. During this time, defensive fortifications were not necessary. Perge had openly received Alexander as it remained a satrapy of Pamphylia and Lycia while he assumed control over the region. Soon after Alexander’s death, Pamphylia fell under the control of several Hellenistic dynasts in a tumultuous and unstable period for the region. Falling under the mishaps of the Wars of the Diadochi, control over Perge was mainly held by the Seleucids. In response, Perge ramped up its defensive systems by erecting fortification walls with three gates in the east, west, and south that enclosed the city, which added to the existing natural defensive features provided by the two low surrounding hills.

52 Abbasoğlu, “The Founding of Perge”, 175.
54 Abbasoğlu, “The Founding of Perge”, 177.
56 Abbasoğlu, “The Founding of Perge”, 177.
Despite the instability, Perge continued to flourish as it acquired certain Greek elements in its architectural, civic, and religious institutions. The city plan layout implemented as it expanded down the acropolis speaks to the architectural assimilation. It is evident that the local native deities were likened to the gods of the Greek pantheon and were at some point replaced by them. Regardless of the assimilation of Greek elements, Perge continued to retain some of its native features. While Artemis Pergaea was the city’s local goddess by the Roman period, its Anatolian origins still appeared by choice. An inscription, dating to the 5th century BCE, was reused at a Roman nymphaeum that identified Artemis Pergaea, the city’s goddess, in the archaic Pamphylian dialect as Wanassas Preia, perhaps once an Anatolian nature goddess (Fig. 3).

ΜανάΨαι Πρείαι Κλε ύτας Άραράμω νασίρροτας ἄνέθεκε ἐπιστάσι

Inscribed on a block of limestone, this repurposed inscriptions was found in 1976 during the excavations near an ancient fountain. Numismatic evidence also conveyed both references of Artemis Pergaea and Wanassa Preia, which supports the lasting usage of the archaic dialect. From the 1st century BCE to the 2nd Century CE the Wanassas Preia citation was included on coins to identify Artemis Pergaea. Interestingly, Plancia Magna held the title of priestess of Artemis Pergaea and the Mother of Gods, which certainly identifies the native deity. Inscriptions, such as the one erected in honor of Plancia Magna by the city, are repeatedly found across the city that tie the contemporary and ancestral elements.

It wasn’t until the Romans joined the Pergamene kingdom in 190 BCE to fight against the Seleucid king Antiochus III, that Pamphylia came on the radar of the Romans. After the treaty of Apamea was signed in 188 BCE, Pamphylia was under Pergamene control until it was passed on to

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58 Sahin, Die Inschriften, 2.
59 Sahin, Die Inschriften, 2.
the Romans in 133 BCE. Interest in Perge increased towards the end of the 2nd century BCE due to its natural geographic features, such as the accessible harbors. Jurisdiction over Pamphylia shifted between the provinces of Asia, Cilicia, and Galatia. Under Roman control, the city underwent extensive restructuring, and renovations were made to its gates, roads, and nymphaeums, most of which were commissioned by local elite families. Two principal roads, the cardo maximus and the decumanus maximus, divided the city unequally (Fig. 4). The cardo maximus (Fig. 5), which begins at the Southern Gate, deviates at one point as a result of pre-existing Hellenistic buildings in the city. These thoroughfares were colonnaded with porticoes during the reign of Tiberius and incorporated a distinct way station feature (Fig. 6). In the middle of the cardo maximus there is evidence of a water channel connected to the northern nymphaeum, which ran southward towards the entrance gate. The full development of the north to south main street was not completed until Hadrian’s reign. This can be deduced by the presence of two architectural structures, a triumphal arch located at its southern end and nymphaeum gateway standing at its northern end, which opened up access to the acropolis, that dated to the early 2nd century CE.

The coexistence of Hellenistic and Roman elements is marked by the presence of baths, fountains, a theater against a hill, a stadium, and an agora. Despite undergoing Romanization, which was further facilitated by the enthusiasm from the city’s most elite members who recognized the capacity for personal benefits and gains, Perge maintained several Hellenistic features, a dominant feature of Roman cities in the East. From the start cities were given the flexibility, to

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62 Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 5.
64 Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 5; The use of the term “Romanization” is solely to briefly reference the process in which the Roman empire dominated the Mediterranean. This term is heavily debated amongst scholars as it does not clearly explain the complexity of the occurrences during this period, nor does it explain the choices, or lack of, available to those dominated by the Romans. It was originally coined in the 1912 publication by Francis Haverfield, where it spoke to the process of acculturation in landscape, culture, and citizenship. Recent scholarship has focused on archaeological data that points to a local resistance to this process, such as through the term “nativism.” Either way, while this term has gained popularity and is used frequently to describe the infiltration of the Romans in other societies,
Rome’s benefit that is, to undertake their own civic administration. This included tax collections, census registrations, and at times even provided shelter and transport for visitors passing through on business. These Roman cities were even able to establish their own relationship networks with surrounding cities and/or high ranking members of society. This form of autonomy, which created a mutual benefit between both sides not only through a cultural exchange but through goods, kept the cities in compliance with Rome’s set of laws, religion, and values.

The Graeco-Roman culture was even reinforced by emperors such as Hadrian. Under Hadrian we see an unparalleled interaction with Roman cities in the east. During his reign, he focused on bolstering and investing in the local heritage of each city, which was further supported by the Second Sophistic movement that occurred during this period and that shared a few similar notions. Rome’s promotion and embrace of the cities’ unique historical backgrounds further encouraged these cities to uplift their legendary founders and pre-Roman roots. One of Hadrian’s initiatives included the creation of the Panhellenic council around 131/32 CE, which attested by a decree in honor of Hadrian found in Thyateira. These cities would be granted membership only if they proved “Hellenic genos through direct descent from its original formative elements—the Ionians, the Dories, and the Aeolians.” In order to reinforce a city’s prestige and chances in obtaining recognition, there were several attempts to trace the city’s foundation to heroes of Greek origin. This included colonists who came from Greece or were returning home from wars. The statuary and inscriptions incorporated into Plancia Magna’s gate complex perfectly manifest a citizen’s desire to honor celebrated members of Perge. Here, both legendary and contemporary

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It is important to keep these complexities in mind. See Drinkwater “Romanization” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, Woolf *Becoming Roman* (1998), Haverfield, *The Romanization of Roman Britain* (1923), and Webster, “Creolizing the Roman Provinces” *AJA 105* (2001).

65 Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire*, 8.
members of the city were incorporated, while simultaneously celebrating the imperial family with an honorific arch.

_Euergetism in Perge_

As previously stated, most buildings and public structures in Perge were commissioned by members of the city’s elite. Their intentions were certainly two-fold. As active practitioners of euergetism, these citizens used their donations as a way to promote and elevate their city and fellow citizens, while brilliantly benefitting personally from the recognition bestowed upon them locally, that would certainly elevate them regionally as well. While many times these benefactions resulted from requirements imposed by the political office individuals held or a position tied to a priesthood or Imperial cult, these acts were not always tied to a civic or religious position. This notion accentuates the privilege held by these elite members, who took on every opportunity to display their wealth in an effort to improve their social standing, remind others of their wealth, or simply to reaffirm their status within the city.\(^{69}\)

Several commissioned public works have been found throughout Perge in prominent locations. A typical and fundamental feature of a Greco-Roman city, a theater was built outside the city walls into a hill. This endeavor was financed by Marcus Plancius Rutilius Varus, who is identified as a Roman senator from Perge, who was both a quastor and propraetor under Nero, and most likely Plancia Magna’s father.\(^{70}\) C. Iulius Cornutus and his wife dedicated a *palaestra* to Nero, which was strategically positioned near the east-west colonnaded street of the city.\(^{71}\) The *palaestra* was also connected to a bath complex that was probably built in the late 1st century CE, commissioned by C. Plancius Varus, and dedicated to Vespasian. Evidence demonstrates that it

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\(^{70}\) Abbasoğlu, “The Founding of Perge”, 183.

\(^{71}\) Abbasoğlu, “The Founding of Perge”, 180.
was renovated several times and used up until the late antique period.\textsuperscript{72} A triumphal arch standing on an intersection (Fig. 7) and dating to around 80 CE, was dedicated by the brothers Demetrius and Apollonius. It honored all three Flavian emperors, but focused primarily on the contemporary emperor, Domitian. Two full lengthened inscriptions survive that provided the context for the dedication and Perge’s status as a Neokoros, a city with an established imperial cult, during that time.\textsuperscript{73} While they were all efforts by elite members of Pergaian society to elevate themselves and their family name, the renovation of the Hellenistic city gate complex and construction of the honorific arch commissioned by Plancia Magna are perhaps the most prominent in this city’s development history (Fig. 8).

\textit{The Plancii & Cornuti}

Before delving into a stylistic and historical analysis of Plancia Magna’s renovation of the Hellenistic city gate complex and honorific arch, it is necessary to briefly delineate her lineage in order to attempt a coherent and logical explanation of her programmatic choices using the evidence we have from the site. Plancia Magna hails from a prominent Pergaean family that can be traced in the city as far back as the early 1st century CE. The Plancii were a wealthy family thought to have migrated to Perge, possibly from Atina in Latium, during the Republic as negotiatores seeking to expand their business and explore new opportunities.\textsuperscript{74} Considering that the family nomen Plancius is unique, it becomes easier to track the movements of the family to the east as well as their later return to the west. Years later, descendants would return to Rome as senators pursuing political endeavors, while maintaining their main residence and strong connection to the East. The family’s wealth was no longer strictly rooted in the mercantile business, but grew through property holdings

\textsuperscript{72} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, 103.
\textsuperscript{73} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, 72.
in Perge as well as ownership outside of the city in Anatolian territory. With their involvement in commerce and land ownership, the Plancii were also able to elevate the family to the same level as those in the Anatolian aristocracy, to the extent that they were eventually equated to the city’s founders as a result of their benefactions, civic involvement, and social status.\(^\text{75}\)

Even though the epigraphic evidence from Plancia Magna’s city gate complex allows us to identify M. Plancius Varus and C. Plancius Varus as her father and brother, respectively, a clear timeline and explanation of their roles is still incomplete. This is a result of fragmentary inscriptions found not only in Perge, but also throughout Asia Minor that would help establish the family’s reach across the region. Since the first excavation in Perge in 1946, under the direction of Arif Müfid Mansel, scholars such as Shelagh Jameson and Stephen Mitchell, writing in the 1960s and 1970s, attempted to fill out the Plancii timeline with the sparse evidence available to them.\(^\text{76}\)

While they set up the groundwork, as more evidence appeared after further excavations in Perge and in other cities in the regions, such as Attaleia and Germa, contemporary scholars, such as Mary T. Boatwright and Sencer Sahin were able to continue to develop and reevaluate the original assumptions.

A Latin inscription found in Germa (Fig. 9), a city in the Roman province of Galatia, lists M. Plancius Varus’s, Plancia Magna’s father, early senatorial career:

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M. PLANC[IO M.F.?]
VARO XVIRO STL.
IUD., Q. PRO PR. PRO
UINCIARUM ACHA
IAE ET ASIAE
P. CORNELIUS P. F.
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\(^{75}\) Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 6.
Inscribed onto a gray marble column and buried into the foundation of a mosque porch was his *Cursus Honorum*, which listed the political roles he held in chronological order: *Decemvir stlitibus iudicandis, Quaestor pro praetore prov. Ponti et Bithyniae, Tribunus plebis, Praetor, Legatus pro praetore prov. Achaiae, Legatus pro praetore prov. Asiae* The Latin nature of this inscription is attested by the late 1st century BCE (between 25–21 BCE) establishment of Germa, also known as Colonia Iulia Augusta Felix Germa, as a colony by Augustus. It would seem plausible that the intended audience for this inscription would be the citizens of this “Romanized” city. Another fragmentary inscription found much closer to Perge in Attaleia, replicates this chronology in Greek, which further cements our understanding of his senatorial career. It appears to have been set up in honor of Varus by a friend, who was a prominent citizen in Attaleia:

πόντου καὶ βεθυ-
νίας, δήμαρχον,
στρατηγὸν, πρεσβευ-
τὴν καὶ ἀντιστρά-
την ἐπαρχεῖον
’Αχαίας καὶ Ἄσιας,
Μάκος Σε<η>προώνιος
’Αλβανὸς ἀρχιερέως
καὶ ἀγωνοθετής,
ἐπαρχος ἱππέων ὑπᾶς
Σεβαστῆς Γερμανικ-
αῶης, τὸν ἑαυτοῦ φίλον

The inscription from Attaleia was only produced in Greek despite Attaleia also being subdued by the Romans. This linguistic decision points to the patrons sole intention to converse with a Greek audience within the city, perhaps in an effort to gain local favor and recognition.

These inscriptions prove that M. Plancius Varus elevated his family’s name in the mid-1st century CE through his political endeavors, which involved duties both regionally and overseas. Tacitus allows us to date his position as ex-praetor around 69 CE. Tacitus records that M. Plancius Varus, during his time as praetor, brought charges against Dolabella, one of his intimate friends, by exposing his flight from custody, and volunteered himself to lead the prosecution. Without any substantial proof, Plancius Varus later rescinded his original charges in an attempt to dismiss the case, although his delayed remorse came too late for Dolabella, who was already prosecuted.\textsuperscript{81}

These sources allow us to date the start of his political career under Nero’s reign in the 50s or 60s. He held his next three offices before 68 CE, and the later positions held under Vespasian. Mitchell dates the commissioning of the Germa inscription to probably after his appointment to Asia, but before the proconsulship of Bithynia, between 73–77 CE.\textsuperscript{82}

While it is certain that the M. Plancius Varus referenced by Tacitus is the same M. Plancius Varus from Perge, and the same honoree from the Latin Germa inscription, and the Greek Attaleian inscription, there are still some inconsistencies in the exact timeline of the positions he held. Inscriptions and coins found in the Bithynian cities of Nicaea and Nicomedia name Varus as the proconsul of the Province of Pontus and Bithynia. These later positions are listed by the previous inscriptions found in Germa or Attaleia. They also don’t provide clear evidence if he held the title of consul of Asia at all.

The extent of his family’s interactions with the Cornuti, another elite Pergeian family, is also still debated. The Cornuti are said to come from Perge. The most renowned member of the Cornuti family was C. Iulius Cornutus who is noted by Pliny the Younger in his \textit{Panegyricus} as his friend and colleague.\textsuperscript{83} Multiple inscriptions on limestone blocks bearing his name were found

\textsuperscript{81} Tacitus, \textit{Histories}, 2.63
\textsuperscript{82} Mitchell, “The Plancii”, 28.
\textsuperscript{83} Pliny the Younger, \textit{Panegyricus}, 90.3.
standing on the lintels of the gymnasium’s *palaestra*. This portion of the building was dedicated to Nero, interestingly both in Greek and Latin, and it was located right below the Acropolis in the northwestern section of the city (Figs. 10–11):

[Κλαυδίφ Καίσαρι Γερ ανικφ]
Σεβαστφ Νέ[ρωνι Γ. Ιούλιος Κορν]οθτός καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ
cαὶ / [κατεσκεύασαν] καὶ ἀνέθηκαν

CLAUDIO CAESARI GERMAN[ICO AUGUSTO NERONI]
C. LULIUS CORNUTUS CUM UXO[RE CAESIA TERTULLA(?)] LOCAVIT
IDEMQUE CORNU[US DEDICAVIT]

These two inscriptions represent the most robust of the set, which not only name Cornutus, but include his wife, and note Nero as the honoree in the dedication. In his analysis, Sahin incorporates the name “Caesia” for Cornutus’ wife into the second inscription in Latin by referencing the first inscription, which is in Greek, that supposedly includes the first three letters of a Roman woman’s name, “Kai”.  

Jameson and Mitchell originally and incorrectly (due to limited evidence) deduced that C. Plancius Varus, Plancia Magna’s brother, was adopted by a descendant of the Cornuti family. They noted that C. Plancius Varus carried part of the nomenclature of C. Iulius Plancius Varus Cornutus, who commemorated his father C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus in an inscription from Tusculum.

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84 Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, 52.
85 Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, 54.
86 Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, 53.
87 Jameson, “Cornutus Tertullus”, 55.
88 Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, 114.
By including his father’s *cursus honorum*, he is chronologically listing the positions C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus held, which at the same time establishes his own social standing and lineage. It is assumed that Cornutus started his career in the 70s CE by serving as *adlectus inter praetorius* from 73–74 CE, *legatus pro praetore* of the province of Cretae and Cyrenarum from 76–77 CE, proconsul of the province of Narbonensis in 100 CE, *consul suffectus*, and proconsul of the Africæ province from 116–117 CE. John Jameson and Mitchell’s assumptions regarding the relationship between the Plancii and Cornuti have been debunked as epigraphic evidence found in Perge near Plancia Magna’s city gate complex confirms that her brother was not adopted by the Cornuti, and C. Iulius Plancius Varus Cornutus was in fact Plancia Magna’s son with C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus. This clarifying evidence plays a crucial role when analyzing Plancia Magna’s statuary and epigraphic decisions behind her benefaction.

Within Perge, Plancia Magna’s euergetism surpasses her father and brother’s attempts in providing benefactions through public works. So far both men are only associated with one fragmentary inscription each. Her father, M. Plancius Varus, is connected to the construction or restoration of the city’s only theater located outside of the city walls. An inscription (Fig. 12), on three fragmentary limestone pieces with the lower portions missing, was found in the theater entrance ruins identifying a Marcus Plancius Rutilius Varus, that must have been placed on the face of a monumental building:

\[
\begin{align*}
[M]\acute{\alpha}ρκος\ [\pi\lambda]\acute{\alpha}[\nu]κιος\ \text{Po[tei]} \\
[\lambdai]ος\ Ου\acute{\alpha}[\rhoω\tauη\muιας\ \kai\ \\text{ant}]- \\
[\sigma]\tau\acute{\alpha}τη\gamma[\nu\epsilon\piarχειας \\
[\Pi\\acute{o}ντ]ουρ\ \kai\ \text{Be\thetaυ\nuιας}^{91}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{89}\) Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, 112-113.  
\(^{90}\) Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, 112-113.  
\(^{91}\) Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, 62.
It noted he held the position of *quastor* and *propraetor* for the province of Pontus and Bithynia, which certainly ties him to the same M. Plancius Varus, Plancia Magna’s father, identified in the epigraphic evidence of the city gate complex, the Germa inscription, and the Attaleia inscription.⁹²

Her brother, C. Plancius Varus, also seems to have commissioned the construction of a building central to citizens’ daily activities. Located outside of the city walls as well, west of the South gate, a fragmentary inscription (Fig. 13) was found in the ruins of a bath-gymnasium complex:

```plaintext
C. PLAN[CIUS M.F.]
VARUS [ALIPITER[IUM CUM OMNI]
[ORN]AMEN[NTO        ]
    . . [                    ⁹³
```

It seems to have expanded over time as it came to incorporate the city walls at some point and was used in late antiquity, but the original construction of the *alipiterion* was most likely financed by C. Plancius Varus in commemoration of Vespasian during his reign as denoted by the inscription. The archaeological evidence easily supports Plancia Magna’s presence, surpassing all even within her own family, in Perge through the numerous inscriptions constantly elevating her name, which were not only commissioned by her, but also those commissioned by the city and her freedmen.

⁹² Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, 62.
Chapter 3

Plancia Magna’s Hellenistic Gate Complex

“Odi hanc ego quae repetit volvitque Palaemonis artem
servata semper lege et ratione loquendi
ignotosque mihi tenet antiquaria versus.
haec curanda viris? opicae castiget amicae
verba: soloeциsmum liceat fecisse marito.
nam quae docta nimis cupidit et facunda videri
crure tenus medio tunicas succingere debet,
caedere Silvano porcum, quadrante lavari.”

I loathe the woman who is forever referring to
Palaemon’s Grammar and thumbing through it, observing all the
laws and rules of speech, or who quotes lines I’ve never heard, a
female scholar. Do men bother about such things? It’s the language
of her philistine girlfriend she should be criticising. Husbands
should be allowed their grammatical oddities. The fact of the
matter is that the woman who longs to appear excessively clever and
elloquent should hitch up a tunic knee-high, sacrifice a pig to
Silvanus, and pay just a quarter to enter the baths.

- Juvenal, Satire 6 451-447

Serving as one of three defensive gate structures for Perge during the 3rd to 2nd centuries
BCE, the monumental southern entrance of the city took on a new functional role during the height
of Roman control in Pamphylia. This particular gate faced the coast, which was closer and more
vulnerable to possible foreign invaders. Just as the region transitioned into a more peaceful period
under the Romans, the necessity of defensive structures diminished. This Hellenistic southern
entranceway was later renovated in the early 2nd century CE under the authority of Plancia Magna,
a wealthy elite woman from Perge, who transformed it into an elaborate symbol of the city’s status.
While this structure was no longer strictly used to keep out invaders, it developed into a welcoming
city gate entrance that served the role of portraying the city’s image and status within the Roman
East.

95 Boatwright, “The City Gate”, 191.
The Archaeological Context

The city gate complex at Perge consists of three main sections (Fig. 14). Visitors would first come up to the two circular towers, walk through a narrow short hallway that opened up into a horseshoe shaped courtyard, and then walk under an honorific arch in order to finally set foot in the city.\textsuperscript{96} A. M. Mansel initiated the excavations near the southern entrance in 1946, and worked in the area into the late 1960s. Subsequent archaeological work and analyses were undertaken by H. Lauter in 1972, followed by Haluk Abbasoglu, W. Martini, and Selma Bulguru in the 1990s.\textsuperscript{97} In the late 20th to early 21st century CE, Sencer Sahin performed extensive analyses on the epigraphic findings retrieved from the multiple excavations across the site. At first there were some discrepancies in the dating of the Southern Gate complex. Mansel, who first excavated at Perge, initially dated the entire city gate complex to the Hellenistic period. This implied that it would have served as an extremely elaborate and costly defensive structure. Lauter, working a decade later, only attributed the towers to a Hellenistic date. It wasn’t until the work undertaken in the later excavations that Abbasoglu and Martini were able to break the dating down into three more accurate phases.\textsuperscript{98} First, the towers and a portion of the western wall were attributed to the Hellenistic period, dating to the 3rd century BCE. It was also evident that the courtyard was originally circular in plan, and the walls were not aligned with the towers, assuming a later integration. Second, functioning as later additions, the walls possibly date to the very early years of the \textit{pax romana} period, when Perge was already under Roman control at the beginning of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century CE. In the third and final phase, dating to the early 2nd century CE at the start of the Hadrianic period, the courtyard was revetted with marble and decorated with many statues in which it emerged as a prominent structure and symbol. The horseshoe shape was created with the

\textsuperscript{96} Abbasoğlu, “The Founding of Perge”, 177.
\textsuperscript{97} Abbasoğlu, “The Founding of Perge”, 177.
addition of the honorific triple arch. It was during this third and final phase, that Plancia Magna commissioned her renovation program of the city gate complex.

While this case study focuses on the extensive renovation of the Hellenistic gate complex, which occurred around 119–122 CE, it is also important to consider events occurring the years before and after this period for a full context. In order to begin to understand Plancia Magna’s intentions in designing and commissioning the renovation of the city’s gate complex, an architectural and archaeological analysis of the complex is crucial.

First, by narrowing the exterior and adding rectangular piers between the once defensive towers, the viewers’ attention could be redirected to the newly decorative courtyard and arch. The circular towers, dating to the 3rd century BCE, were made using ashlar masonry, and measured about four storeys each (Fig. 15). During the renovations, the oval courtyard’s paved walls were rebuilt which altered its plan leaving it to resemble a horseshoe shape. The once high perimeter walls were also shortened to 11 m. Inside the irregularly shaped courtyard were two levels of statue niches that measured less than one meter deep each. The first and second level held fourteen statues each, for a total of twenty-eight, that could be argued were strategically placed in accordance to Plancia Magna’s programmatic agenda. The walls were revetted in marble (Fig. 16), and they were decorated with a Corinthian columnar façade reminiscent of a scaenae frons, a Roman stage building. This type of façade “symbolized wealth and taste throughout the Roman empire in the second century CE [and was] repeated in a late second-century reconstruction of the city gate at Side, about 50 km. east of Perge.” The pedestals that once supported the Corinthian columns were attached to the marble walls. The original sizing of the niches closest to the towers

100 Boatwright, “Plancia Magna of Perge”, 250.
101 Boatwright, “City Gate of Plancia”, 192.
103 Boatwright, “The City Gate”, 193.
104 Boatwright, “The City Gate”, 193.
were altered during the series of renovations that occurred in the 2nd century CE. The niches on the lower level are rectangular with rounded tops, while the second level niches are rectangular but alternate between straight and arched lintels (Fig. 17).\footnote{Boatwright, “The City Gate”, 192.}

The recovery of some statue bases with inscriptions from the site indicate that the lower niches most likely once held statues of Olympian gods. The second tier, on the other hand, held statues of the city’s legendary founders and benefactors. Excavated in 1953 and dating to 120/121 CE, the recovery of inscribed statue bases identifies some of the legendary founders mentioned by Strabo and Herodutus, such as Mopsos, Kalchas, and Leonteus, and so “corroborate the arrival of the Achaeans in Pamphylia.”\footnote{Pekman, History of Perge, 60.} Included in this group were Plancia Magna’s own father and brother, who are also named as founders, but in a contemporary sense. The inclusion of M. Plancius Varus and C. Plancius Varus among the ranks of legendary founders reinforces the family’s elite status as aiding in Perge’s growth and success, which of course is proactively done by Plancia.\footnote{Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 7.} Actual statues were not found for this group of legendary founders and benefactors, but the epigraphic evidence on the bases allows for a reconstruction and understanding of the identities of these individuals.

The honorific triple arch was erected 22 m. north of the towers right at the end of the courtyard (Fig. 18). Architecturally this could be considered a visual hindrance for visitors’ view into the city from the courtyard, yet its position at the end of the courtyard allowed it to frame the entrance into Perge. The triple arch was made from local limestone, and it was revetted with imported marble in order to complement the materials of the decorative courtyard. It was 9.10 m. wide, and in measuring 20 m. in length, it surpassed the courtyard’s width and almost equaled its
depth. As it framed the entrance into the city, “the arch rose on a marble-paved platform, access to which from the court was obtained by means of a wide flight of four steps”. The footings of the arch allow us to mark its exact location (Fig. 19). The two outer pylons were thick in comparison to the two internal thinner pylons, which created arches of different sizes (3.40 m & 2.50 m wide respectively). In front and behind the middle pylons were two columns on free standing pedestals. While that was an unusual arrangement, these freestanding features are paralleled by contemporary arches honoring Hadrian, such as in Attaleia and Athens. Fragmentary blocks for two tabulae ansatae, tablets with handles, were found at the doorways of the gate which confirmed Plancia Magna’s benefaction to the city. Large Latin and Greek block letters informed two different audiences that Plancia Magna dedicated the arch, and in essence the renovation of the city gate complex, to her city. The remnants of two different sizes of marble decor not only allowed an estimate of its size, but also helped determine that it was a two-tiered honorific arch. The four pylons indicate triple archways with the larger outer pylons equipped with aediculae in the front and back, and niches on the sides for statuary. In an attempt to pay tribute to Rome and establish Perge’s loyalty, Plancia Magna had statues of Diana Pergensis, Perge’s deity, along with statues of the Imperial family such as Divus Augustus, Divus Nerva, Divus Traianus, Hadrian, Divae Matidia, Plotina, and Sabina Augusta placed on the arch, which were identified by bilingual inscriptions.

110 Boatwright, “The City Gate”, 195.
111 Sahin, Die Inschriften, 119.
**The Sculptural and Epigraphic Program**

It is apparent that the renovation of the courtyard is undoubtedly dedicated to Plancia Magna’s native city, and while the arch’s dedication to the city is confirmed by its *tabulae ansatae*, its statuary and bilinguality allows for an honorific allegiance to the emperor and the empire. This is attested by the manner in which statues were identified, for example statue bases in the courtyard were only dedicated in Greek while those on the arch, which was a tribute to Rome, were dedicated both in Latin and Greek. Another incentive which dominated the city’s and its elites ambitions was their participation in the Panhelleneia festivities that were held in Athens every year. In order “to enable Perge to participate[...] it had to prove that the city could trace its foundation back to the heroes of Greek origin. For this reason, recourse was taken to mythology, and numerous legends about Trojan heroes were adopted.”

The excavations conducted in Perge’s city gate complex since the 1950s mainly uncovered evidence that consisted of statue bases. These findings allowed scholars to identify the chosen individuals represented in the courtyard. The few fragmentary marble sculptural pieces found indicate that the lower niches of the courtyard once held greater than life-sized statues of major and minor Olympian gods. This is not only attested by the right size of the lower niches, but by the smaller height of the top niches. Included in this group were two Dioscuri, Hermes, Apollo, Aphrodite, Pan, Heracles, and another unknown male. The top niches most likely housed statues of the city’s legendary founders and more recent benefactors, who were all equated as *ktistai*. The group of fragmentary bases found on the site so far have identified of the following legendary founders (Figs. 18–24):

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114 Sahin, “Perge Kentinin”, 47.
115 Boatwright, “ The City Gate”, 194.
The founder Mopsos, son of Apollo, the Delphian. 116 Two iterations of his legend note him as the son of Apollo or Rhacius. He is primarily known for his occupancy of the region after the Trojan War, which entailed some tension with the local population and later coexistence. 117

The founder Kalchas, son of Thestor, the Argive. 118 He is best known for his role as a soothsayer in the Trojan wars. The inclusion of Kalchas in the sculptural program contradicts the story that after taking refuge in Colophon, he died of grief after losing a soothsaying contest to Mopsus. It corroborates another legend that he did indeed reach Pamphylia and help found cities in the region. 119

The founder Leonteus, son of Koronis, the Lapith. 120 Leonteus entered Troy in the wooden horse and was one of the first heroes to set foot in the city. Various versions of the legend indicate that he either died by Hector’s hand or returned to his homeland. The inclusion in Plancia Magna’s courtyard indicates a new version to his story. 121

116 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #106, 139.
117 Pekman, History of Perge, 65.
118 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #101, 136.
119 Pekman, History of Perge, 62.
120 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #103, 137.
121 Pekman, History of Perge, 64.
The founder Machaon, son of Asklepios, the Thessalian. This inscription also notes that the name of temple of Zeus Machaonios derives from his name. He is also known for being a chief surgeon during the Trojan War, and entering the Trojan city in the wooden horse.

The founder (Mi)nyas, son of Ialmenos, son of Ares, the Orchomenian. His father shared the kingship of Orchomenos with his brother, and led their citizens to fight in the Trojan War. Although there is no mention of Minyas participating in the Trojan War. His presence in Perge introduces a new version to his story.

While Strabo and Herodotus mentioned Perge’s legendary founders in their works, only a few of those ktistai listed have been identified through the statue bases so far. A statue base has not been found for Amphilochus, who was named as a founder by both historians, while Rixos and Labos, who were not mentioned but were included in the courtyard, most likely had some local cults (Figs. 25–26):

The founder Labos, son of Dae, the Delphian. Labos is unknown in Greek mythology, but is connected to the Labiads of Delphi. His inclusion in the courtyard indicates some possible involvement in the development of Perge.

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122 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #104, 138.
123 Pekman, History of Perge, 63.
124 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #105, 138.
125 Pekman, History of Perge, 65.
126 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #102, 136.
The founder Rixos, son of Lykos, the Athenian, of which Rhixo’s foot. This inscription identifies that Rixos, who is also not mentioned in Greek mythology, was the son of Lykos, who probably gave the name to the Lycian province.

Since the evidence for the upper niches is made up of fragmentary bases, Sencer Sahin suggests that they were initially bronze statues but were reused during antiquity. Sahin’s conjecture is based on Pausanias’s observations in Athens, when he came across similar bronze statues of *ktistai* with such bases. Sahin further supports his argument by noting the holes on the surfaces of the statues bases that would have once supported them.

Despite focusing on the phase of Plancia Magna’s renovation of the city gate complex, it is important to note that the evidence also suggests renovations that occurred afterwards. In the initial excavation reports, Mansel briefly mentions the statue placements and simply assumes the deities would have been on the lower niches, and places the founders and benefactors on the upper level without any strategic installation, presumably taking into consideration the height of the niches.

Sahin was the first scholar to undertake a full analysis of the statuary placements within the courtyard. Throughout his work, Sahin argues that the deities were actually placed on the lower niches well before Plancia Magna’s renovation and were moved to the upper niches to join the legendary founders during the major renovation. He also hypothesizes the inclusion of about seven founders of Roman background. Besides Plancia Magna herself and her father and brother, the Cornuti, the prominent Pergaean family associated with the Plancii through marriage, would have

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128 Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, #107, 139.
130 Sahin, “Perge Kentinin”, 47.
been represented, such as C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus, C. Iulius Plancius Varus, C. Rutilius Plancius Varus. Boatwright also seems to incorporate the Olympian deities as part of Plancia Magna’s sculptural program, although this might be a result of a full dependence on Mansel and Sahin’s analyses.

A few years after Sahin’s claim, Bulguru argued otherwise. Taking into consideration the archaeological evidence found rather than making assumptions of statues that could have existed, she focuses the placement on the sides in which the fragmentary statues were found, and the statue bases found in situ. Unlike Sahin, Bulguru doesn’t create specific groupings based on Greeks, Romans, founders, or gods. Her analysis places the deities at the bottom niches considering their larger than life size statues. Rejecting Sahin’s assumption, Bulguru claims that the height of the upper niches are too short to accommodate the Olympian statues, with the addition of their statue bases. A further analysis on the inconsistency of the deity statue sizes including some that were almost three dimensional also implies that perhaps they were not part of the same project, and rather, were incorporated to the courtyard program in later refurbishments. It would appear that the statues in the courtyard would mainly have detailed fronts as they were placed into niches and would not be seen in the round. The incorporation of statues in the round would imply placement in a location where it would be almost completely visible.\footnote{133}

In the architraves, in the niches of the pylons, and on the top of the triple arch stood statues identifying both living and deceased members of the imperial family. Impressively, most of the imperial family members are women. The members first focused on the contemporary emperor and his family followed by previous prominent members: Hadrian, \textit{Divae} Marciana, Plotina, \textit{Divae} Matidia, Sabina \textit{Augustae}, \textit{Divus} Nerva, and \textit{Divus} Traianus. Diana Pergensis (or Artemis Pergaia),

the city’s deity, and *Tyche* (or Genius), the tutelary spirit of the city, were also represented amongst the Roman imperial family members. 134 While the arch focused on establishing a connection to the imperial family, notably the arch was not dedicated to Rome or the Imperial family, but rather Plancia Magna chose to dedicate it to her city, Perge (Figs. 27–29):

**PL AN CIA M A R C I F M AG N A**

**P A T R I A E**

Πλα[νκία Μάγνα]α Θυγάτηρ Μ.
Πλα[νκίου Ούάρο]υ τή πατριόi135

While the Imperial statues were outnumbered by that of the legendary founders and prominent individuals found in the courtyard, Plancia made sure to not only include the current imperial family, but also gave homage to previous emperors. 136 Augustus was crucial in establishing a connection to the roots of the Roman empire, while Nerva and Trajan’s inclusion were spearheaded by their relation to Hadrian, the emperor at the time of the renovation 137 (Figs. 30–32):

[DIVO].....AUGUSTO  
[DIVO].....NERVA[E]  
[PLAN]CIA M.F. MAGNA  
PLANCIA M.F. [MAGNA]  
[Θεώ] Αύγούστω  
[Θεώ Νέρουα  
[Πλανκία]α Μάγνα138  
[Πλα]νκία Μάγνα139

**DIVO.....TRAIANO**

**PLA[NCI]A M.F. MAGNA**

Θεώ Τραιανώ  
Πλανκία Μάγνα140

Distinct features of the statue bases found at the site help date the monument to between 119–122 CE. First, the nomenclature chosen for the female imperial family members establishes

134 Boatwright, “The City Gate”, 194.  
135 Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, #86, 120.  
136 Boatwright, “Just Window Dressing?”, 64.  
137 Boatwright, “The City Gate”, 194.  
138 Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, #91, 128.  
139 Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, #92, 128.  
140 Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, #93, 129.
the dating to the period after Trajan’s death and before Plotina’s death. Another factor was Hadrian’s statue base which lists his tribunician power, dates this statue to 121 CE (Fig. 33):

[IMP. CAESARI DIVI] TRAIANI
[PARTHICI F., DIVI N]ERVAE N.
[TRAIANO HADRIA]NO AUG
[PONT MAX TRIB P]OTEST V
[COS III PLANCIA M F] MAGNA]

Τραιανοῦ Παρθικοῦ υἱῶ, Θεοῦ
Νέρους υἱωνό, Τραιανοῦ Ἀδρια-
νό Σεβαστό ἀρχιερει μεγίστω
δημαρχικήν ἀρχιερει μεγίστω,
δημαρχικής ἐξουσίας τὸ ἐ’
ὑπάτω τὸ γ’ Πλανκία Μάγνα

Both his lineage and political endeavors are listed: Hadrian is Trajan’s son, Nerva’s grandson, and pontifex maximus or chief priest; he also held tribunician power and was consul three times.

Catering to the current emperor, his inscription is the longest and most detailed throughout the gate complex. With the nomenclature employed on Plotina’s base that is missing the Diva term (Fig. 34), and Matidia’s, who does have the Diva title indicating she is no longer living (Fig. 35), the bases provide an approximate date between 119 to 122 CE.  

PLOTINA[E AUGUSTAE]
PLANCIA M.F. [MAGNA]
Πλωτείνη Σεβαστή
Πλανκία Μάγνα

DIVAE MATID[IAE]
PLANCIA M.F. MAG[NA]
Θεά Ματιδία
Πλανκία Μάγνα

The naming convention used for Sabina, Sabina Augustae, is a bit puzzling in terms of the dating previously mentioned (Fig. 36):

SABINA AUGUS[TAE]
PLANCIA M.F. MAG[NA]
Σαβείνη Σεβαστή
Πλανκία Μάγνα

141 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #94, 129.
142 Boatwright, “Plancia Magna of Perge”, 252.
143 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #97, 132.
144 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #98, 133.
145 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #99, 133.
If the arch statuary was placed between 119–122 CE, then Sabina would not have been awarded this title yet. It wasn’t conferred until after 128 CE. Sahin concludes this explains that the dedications were not all made at the same time.\textsuperscript{146} This concept might be even further corroborated by the fact that Sabina might have accompanied Hadrian during this travels to the Greek East between 128–33 CE, and her statue might have been erected in preparation for Hadrian’s visit to Perge.\textsuperscript{147} His first visit to Pamphylia was intended for 122/23 CE, however his journey was altered and did not make it back out to the region until around 129–131 CE.\textsuperscript{148} This provides a plausible explanation for Plancia Magna’s extravagant renovation in the early 120s, and then incorporation of Sabina’s statue base with the contemporary nomenclature of \textit{Augustae} in an attempt to prepare Perge for Hadrian’s visit.

\textit{The Function of Bilingual Inscriptions}

The inscriptions found on the statue bases from the arch differ stylistically from the ones in the courtyard. A striking characteristic of the evidence from the arch is its bilinguality. It can be assumed that this was strategically done under Plancia’s guidance in order to bridge both Roman and Greek audiences. While the courtyard is devoted to Perge through the incorporation of its legendary founders and patrons, as an elite woman descended from a Roman family in a city under Roman regulation, it was appropriate that the imperial family was designated as the arch’s focus. Another prominent difference found in the epigraphic formatting is Plancia Magna’s identification. The Greek inscriptions are missing the connection to her lineage, while the Latin ones indicate the connection through the abbreviation “M.F.” This Latin abbreviation on inscriptions stands for “the daughter of Marcus,” and it is an abbreviation commonly used throughout the empire, especially

\textsuperscript{146} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #99, 133.
since Marcus was a common praenomen (personal name). The tabulae ansatae is the only inscription within Plancia Magna’s city gate complex that is an exception (Figs. 37–38):

DIANAEPERGENSI
PLANCIA M.F. MAGNA
’Αρτέμιδι Περγαία
Πλανκία Μάγνα

[G]ENIO CIVITATIS
PLANCIA M.F. MAGNA
Τύχη τῆς πόλεως
Πλανκία Μάγνα

DIVAE MARCIANAE
PLANCIA M.F. MAGNA
Θεά Μαρκιανή
Πλανκία Μάγνα

This disparity brings light to Plancia’s intention to communicate with different audiences at once. By including the nomenclature that would connect her to her lineage in the Latin inscription, Plancia Magna follows the standard Latin epigraphic format. Yet it is still ambiguous why the same was not employed in the majority of the Greek translations. By comparing the inscriptions in the courtyard with those on the arch, it is assumed that it was not entirely necessary for them to relay the same information. As already stated, the courtyard was dedicated to Perge and its solely Greek inscriptions addressed citizens well aware of Plancia’s lineage and social status. The bilingual inscriptions on the arch further attest to this, as the paternal connection was not necessary for further identification on the Greek section of the bilingual inscriptions. Taking it a step further, perhaps a reasonable explanation for the missing familial notations in the Greek inscriptions is that they reflect Plancia Magna’s choice to identify herself in this manner. It would only add to the evidence that Plancia made the decisions behind the renovation of the city gate complex. This assumption is further attested through the comparison between these and various dedications (discussed later in this chapter) found outside of the gate complex in which Plancia Magna is honored by her freedmen and city. Those Greek honorary inscriptions identify Plancia Magna with

149 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #89, 127.
150 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #90, 127.
151 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #96, 132.
152 Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 12.
her familial connections, such as her father and husband, a component that certainly stands out in the inscriptions commissioned by Plancia herself.

Familial Inclusions and Exclusions

A thorough analysis of the epigraphic evidence from the courtyard sets up this extraordinary case that further establishes Plancia Magna’s position as an elite woman not only within Perge, but across the Roman Empire as well. Through an analysis of a corpus of inscriptions, Rachel Meyers has found that while women are typically thanked for their benefactions or noted for their virtues, most of the time they are overshadowed by the inclusion of male family references.\textsuperscript{153} In examining this idea in the context of this case study, it is apparent that Plancia Magna is exceptional. There is no direct indication of propaganda incorporated to elevate her family members in their pursuits for political office, or pompous promotion of her family’s legacy for their benefit. In fact, it appears that the inclusion of her father and brother along the ranks of \textit{ktistai} in the courtyard was a deliberate attempt to validate her own status as an elite member of the city. They were included in the ranks of \textit{ktistai} not because they were believed to have actually founded the city, but rather received this title for their services and benefactions to the city. This is supported by the evidence found in the inscriptions of her father and brother’s statue bases, that were once located on the second level of the gate complex courtyard (Figs. 39–40):

\begin{verbatim}
[κτίστης]
[M.] Πλάνκιος Ούδρος
[πα]τήρ Πλανκίας Μάγνης
Περγαίος\textsuperscript{154}

κτίστης
Γ. Πλάνκιος Ούδρος
ἀδελφός Πλανκίας Μάγνης
Περγαίος\textsuperscript{155}
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{153} Meyers, “Reconsidering opportunities”, 155.
\textsuperscript{154} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #108, 140.
\textsuperscript{155} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #109, 141.
Here M. Plancius Varus and C. Plancius Varus are uniquely identified by their relation to Plancia Magna. The Greek πατήρ is applied to describe M. Plancius Varus as the father of Plancia. Similarly, ἀδελφός is used to identify the brother’s relation to Plancia. This structure is typically found in honorific inscriptions of women, where they are identified through their familial relationships rather than their own identity and non-maternal roles. The terms normally utilized to identify them are daughter, sister, wife, or mother. While her father was no longer politically active by the beginning of the 2nd century CE, her brother was still establishing his position in Pamphylia. Their local benefactions were not only limited but the evidence is still uncertain as the evidence recovered identifying them as the benefactors is so minimal and fragmentary both at the theater and bath complex. These circumstances only strengthen the argument that their inclusion wasn’t an attempt to promote their endeavors.

To further support that Plancia did not intend to promote her family or any of their future political endeavors, to date there is no mention of Plancia Magna’s husband or son anywhere within the gate complex. This is despite the epigraphic evidence found outside of the complex linking Plancia Magna to C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus by marriage, and as mother to Iulius Plancius Varus Cornutus in a couple of inscriptions. An inscription found in the public square in front of the city gate identified Plancia Magna as the daughter of M. Plancius Varus, niece of King Alexander, and wife of Gaius Julius Cornutus Tertullus (Fig. 41).

[Πλανκίαν Μάγναν]
[M. Πλανκίου Ούάρου]
καὶ Πόλεως Θυγατέρ[α]
ανεψιάν Βασιλέω[ς]

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156 Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 11.
157 Sahin, _Die Inschriften_, 140.
158 Sahin, _Die Inschriften_, 141.
159 Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 11.
160 Sahin, _Die Inschriften_, 112-113.
This statue base was erected by her freedman, M. Plancius Pius. While he makes sure to list out her lineage, interestingly enough on another base inscription he had erected in her honor, he only focused on her office holding status.\(^\text{163}\)

Gaius Iulius Cornutus Tertullus was probably born 43 or 44 CE and may have married Plancia Magna between 100–110 CE. In following the timeline listed by his \textit{cursus honorum} found in Tusculum, he led a long career holding several offices in the Roman East, and took up his last post in Africa as proconsul between 116–117 CE, where he died.\(^\text{164}\) If we follow this timeline, then we would assume Plancia Magna was a widow at the time of her benefaction to Perge.

Their son, Gaius Iulius Plancius Varus Cornutus, would have been beginning his political career at the time of Plancia Magna’s major renovation of the hellenistic gate complex.\(^\text{165}\) As previously mentioned, he erected an inscription noting his father’s \textit{cursus honorum} in Tusculum. Found in three fragments, the large marble block was inscribed on both sides. This inscription identifies C. Iulius Plancius Varus Cornutus as a legate of Cilicia during the reign of Hadrian, dating to about 120 CE.\(^\text{166}\) Perhaps erecting his father’s \textit{cursus honorum} not only fulfilled his father’s last wishes, but hoped to further establish his own social status and elevate his position as an active participant in the political realm of the region. The inscription also points to C. Iulius Plancius Varus Cornutus not being present in Perge at the time of his mother’s renovations since he would have been in Cilicia. Plancia Magna also dedicated a bilingual inscription to her son. It was

\(^{162}\) Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #122, 160.
\(^{163}\) Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #122, 160.
\(^{164}\) Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, 113.
\(^{165}\) Boatwright, “Just Window Dressing?”, 65.
found in 1957 on the north side of the main entrance, most likely next to the south exit of the oval courtyard, in fifteen fragmentary pieces (Fig. 42):

C. IULIUS PLANCIUS [C. F. VA]RO 
M. F. M[AG]NA MA[T]ER 
Π Ιου[λίω Πλανκίω Οὐρον] 
ρώ Κο[ρνουτό Πλαν- 
κ[ά] Μάγνα] ή μήτ[ηρ]167

The location in which this inscription was found brings up questions regarding the possible inclusion of her husband and son in the courtyard. Sahin theorizes that the plate could have possibly been attached to one of the walls in the revetted courtyard, or even in one of the niches in which the *ktistai* would have been placed.168 While this inscription is bilingual in the same format as those inscriptions found on the arch, it would not fit in with all of the solely Greek inscriptions found in the courtyard where all of the founders and patrons were found. Besides the inscription from Tusculum and the one near the courtyard, there was another inscription on a marble statue base, measuring 90 cm in diameter with letters 4.5 cm high, found in Perge’s agora in 1967 on the west side of the main road just north of the arch, in which the *boule* (the city’s council) and *demos* (the people) honor him (Fig. 43):

η βουλή καὶ ο ὁ δήμος 
Γ’ Ιουλιων πλανκιων 
Ουαρον κορνουτον 
τον πατρώνα και ευεργετη[ν] 
στεφανωθέντα παντα 
τα αθληματα θεμιδος 
Ουαρειου ενεκαπηριδος 
τειμη στ[ρ]ιν169

The inscription notes the following important aspects: C. Iulius Plancius Varus Cornutus was proclaimed victor in all disciplines at the sixth execution (fourty-one years since they were

initiated) of the Varus-Agon games, and was honored as a patron and benefactor of the city. The games were most likely donated by his grandfather, M. Plancius Varus. Sahin points out that he was probably not an athlete himself since the inscription identifies him as a patron and benefactor in relation to the games. He probably simply took over the costs of financing the games.  

Considering her son held a political position outside of Perge and was also honored by Perge once, Plancia Magna certainly could have included him in her statuary program. Yet, during the planning and execution of her benefaction, she simply chose to establish herself independently from familial relations by excluding her husband and son.

Scholars have attempted to explain Plancia Magna’s programmatic choice, in particular the exclusion of her husband and son. While some have conjectured that she wasn’t married into the Cornuti family yet by providing varying timelines of C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus’ career, others have simply used the notion she was a widow as enough evidence to explain her choices to exclude them. As Boatwright concludes, at the time of Plancia’s renovation, Cornutus Tertullus would have been well over 80 and as confirmed by the inscription erected by his son in Tusculum, he was already dead by 117 CE. This also puts Plancia in her early to late 20s during the renovation.  

Van Bremen on the other hand disregards Boatwright’s arguments and sees it as a way to “explain away the non-involvement of her husband’s family in the conceptual program of the gate-complex.” She offers a counter argument claiming that instead of Plancia marrying C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus at a young age, she was in fact much older and commissioned the renovation when she was in her 60s and at the end of her civic career. While Van Bremen’s argument can prove convincing when considering the vast age difference between Plancia Magna and C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus, it cannot be completely dispelled when analyzing the evidence that stacks up

170 Sahin, Die Inschriften, #128, 165.
171 Van Bremen, Limits of Participation, 106.
172 Van Bremen, Limits of Participation, 106.
173 Van Bremen, Limits of Participation, 106.
against her older age. Numerous honorific inscriptions that were erected by the city after the renovation of the gate complex imply Plancia Magna still had a very long career ahead of her. Erected by the *boule* and *demos*, an inscription on the narrow side of a limestone base which had two holes on the top to support a bronze statue was found near the Severan nyphaeum (Fig. 44):

\[
\text{ή Βουλή και ό δήμος}
\text{Πλανκίαν Μάγναν}
\text{Ούάρου και Πόλεως}
\text{Θυγατέρα δημιουργόν}^{174}
\]

Considering the only official title mentioned in this inscription was her role as *demiourgos*, this establishes it as one of the earliest dedications made to her amongst the other epigraphic evidence where multiple honors are listed. For example, there is a marble statue inscription dedicated by *geraioi* on which the lower portion of the statue was still in place:

\[
[\text{oί γερ}]\text{αιοί}
[\text{Π}]\text{λανκίαν Μάγναν}
\text{Μ. Πλανκίου Ούαρου}
\text{και πόλεως Θυγατέρα}
\text{iέρ[ε]ιαν τής Αρτέμι-
δ[ος]} \text{και δήμιο}{[υ]}\text{γό[ν]},
[\text{iέρειαν}] \text{Μη[τρ]ός Θεώ[ν]}
[\text{διά Βίου} \text{πρότην κ[αί]}
[\text{μόνην, ε]σεβή κ[αί]}
[\text{φ[ι]λόπατριν}^{175}]
\]

Here, Plancia Magna is honored not only as the daughter of M. Plancius Varus, the city and *demiourgos*, but she is also acknowledged as the priestess of Artemis and of the mother of gods, two new additions to her status and civic involvement.\(^{176}\) An inscription found on the north side of the city honoring Plancia Magna notes she impressively held the office of *demiourgos* three times: (Fig. 45)

\(^{174}\) Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, #117, 156.
\(^{175}\) Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, #121, 159.
\(^{176}\) Sahin, *Die Inschriften*, #121, 159.
Its location away from the southern gate complex and the rest of her honorific dedications near the intersection of two crossroads is slightly questionable, though Sahin assumes it was unlikely the statue would have been relocated to the northern area of the city where there was an abundance of rock material.\textsuperscript{178} Her position as \textit{demiourgos} at Perge is also noted by a statue inscription commissioned by one of her freedmen, M. Plancius Varus Alexander, found on a display wall erected near the city gate complex.\textsuperscript{179} Another crucial element to this epigraphic evidence is the missing reference to her husband. Plancia Magna did not erect these honorific statues therefore the nomenclature applied would certainly included her ties to her husband, C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus. Leaning towards Boatwright’s argument, it seems that he was indeed not present in Plancia Magna’s life, or further living, during this time.

Despite the debates surrounding her husband’s death and inconsistencies in dating, her son was still alive and pursing his own political career in the region. This would have provided Plancia Magna would a great opportunity to further elevate her son’s status by including him in her statuary program alongside her father, brother, and legendary founders of the city. Out of all the members of her family, her son was the youngest to benefit from such an honor as he was developing his career. Despite the lack of evidence, Sencer Sahin theorizes that Plancia Magna did

\textsuperscript{177} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #125, 163.
\textsuperscript{178} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #125, 163.
\textsuperscript{179} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #124, 161.
in fact include her son and husband within the group of Perge’s founders and benefactors.\textsuperscript{180} He includes a conceptual reconstruction of the courtyard niches, where he groups seven patrons of Roman origin (Fig. 46). Other than Plancia’s father and brother, he incorporates Plancia, her husband, son, and her two brother in laws.\textsuperscript{181} So far this epigraphic evidence is missing from the site leaving Sahin’s theory baseless.

\textit{Legal Considerations}

There were a series of Roman laws that set up women’s legal restrictions leading up to the 2nd century CE. This meant there were official limitations restricting women that Plancia Magna would have dealt with considering her elite status. Commonly known as the sumptuary laws, the \textit{lex Oppia} and \textit{lex Voconia} were instituted to regulate consumption, particularly that by women. The \textit{lex Oppia} was passed in 215 BCE during the second Punic War, but was repealed in 195 BCE after it was largely contested by women, a rare occurrence in Roman history. The \textit{lex} “specifically governed the rights of women to possess or display certain luxury items; under the law, women were forbidden to wear multicolored clothing, ride in a carriage within a mile of Rome (except on festival occasions), and have more than half an ounce of gold.”\textsuperscript{182}

The \textit{lex Voconia}, which passed around 169–168 BCE, barred women from gaining power and wealth. The restrictions and enforcements of this law are described by sources such as Cicero, Gaius, and Ulpian.\textsuperscript{183} The \textit{lex Voconia} was comprised of two provisions: The first barred recipients from receiving a larger share of an estate than the primary heir, while the second dictated women

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{180} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, 143.  \\
\textsuperscript{181} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, 143.  \\
\textsuperscript{183} Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 13.
\end{flushleft}
could not be designated as heir by an elite testator.\textsuperscript{184} Suzanne Dixon concludes this law was introduced in response to the rise of wealthy women during the simultaneous Punic and Macedonian wars, at a time when the male population was understandably depleted. The luxury exhibited by women during and after these wars was deemed as “distasteful”.\textsuperscript{185} As a result, this legislation was strategically constructed so that it “affected only the wealthiest group in the state-the group which, as it happened, was most influential in promulgating legislation [and] members of other census categories remained free to institute sisters, wives and daughters as heirs”.\textsuperscript{186} While the lex Voconia was not completely repealed, there were a couple of legislations that relaxed the provisions. The more critical of these was the \textit{lex Papia Poppaea} instituted by Augustus in 9 CE to modify the previous \textit{lex Iulia de Maritandis Ordinibus} passed in 18 BCE. While this law involved many complex provisions regarding the subject of marriage, its purpose was to encourage it along with procreation by placing penalties on celibacy and adultery, such as punishing those who were unmarried by a specific age. Women were thus rewarded with privileges or exempt from the laws provisions if they had a certain number of children.\textsuperscript{187}

Despite how restrictive these laws were intended, the reception by those members of society directly affected clearly shows how ineffective they could be. In many cases, women were still listed in wills as heirs and recipients of their own share of an estate.\textsuperscript{188} Returning to Plancia Magna, none of the evidence currently available has pointed to how she obtained her wealth, which enabled her to commission the renovation of the Hellenistic Gate. According to the only evidence that we have, we only know that Plancia Magna was the daughter of M. Plancius Varus, had a brother, and was married and had a son at one point. This meant that by traditional Roman practice,

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{185} Dixon, “Breaking the Law,” 520.
\textsuperscript{186} Dixon, “Breaking the law”, 519.
\textsuperscript{188} Dixon, “Breaking the Law,” 521.
\end{footnotesize}
after her father’s death, she would have split the estate with her brother, and most likely received less than half of the estate according to the restrictions of the *lex Voconia*. Although at the time of the renovation it seems that her father was still alive supporting the possibility that M. Plancius Varus might have emancipated Plancia Magna from *patria potestas*.\(^{189}\)

Since the epigraphic evidence found outside of the city gate complex confirms Plancia Magna was married, there are a couple of scenarios in which her financial freedom can be broken down into. First, if her marriage to C. Iulius Cornutus Tertullus was *cum manu*, she would have only kept property she previously owned, for the exception of her dowry that would have automatically passed into her husband’s possession. Since this type of marriage was no longer prominent during this time, she would have most likely been married *sine manu*. This entailed controlling any property she previously owned, and obtained after marriage without limitations.\(^{190}\)

Since the evidence tends to point to Plancia Magna being a widow at the time of her renovation, it only further supports the assumption that her marriage had truly been *sine manu* providing her with full rights over their property. The lack of any mention of her husband in the city gate complex gives a compelling indication that Plancia Magna’s wealth was solely hers and used at her own discretion. Her financial freedom is evident from what remains of the Hellenistic gate, as she does not include her husband yet only insinuates a mere possible source of it, her father.\(^{191}\)

Ultimately, Roman laws, such as the *lex Voconia* that no longer applied to contemporary attitudes were socially dismissed and rather than moving to officially abolish the law, citizens underwent extensive measures to evade it.\(^{192}\)

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190 Meyers, “Reconsidering Opportunities,” 152.
191 Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 14.
A Woman Honored

Inscriptions play an important role in public monuments in that “by singling out deserving individuals for public admiration they ensured the gratitude of such people who then might be moved to make further benefactions in the community [and] in doing so, they also proclaimed which virtues, achievements, and gracious acts would earn others similar public recognition and prominence.”193 Inscriptions and statues in and near the gate complex loudly attest Plancia Magna as a civic donor, priestess of the imperial cult and daughter of the city. Visitors to Perge would approach the city and immediately see her name on the statue bases and the inscription on the honorific arch, where Perge’s Greek origins are tied to the Roman Imperial family. The statuary absence of Plancia Magna in the gate complex does not lessen her role, as her name is consistently noted base after base.

While she was present in the gate complex epigraphically, outside, she was honored by the city and its members both through statuary and inscriptions (Fig. 47). The two statues erected on a display wall just outside of the southern gate towers by her freedmen, Marcus Plancius Pius and Marcus Plancius Alexander, further pronounce her importance. Honorific statues usually stood in urban, public settings along central avenues, in key intersections, placed on monumental facades, or even prominent positions within public buildings.194 The display wall in which these statues were found, measured 10 m. in length, and was in fact a reinstallation dating to the Severan period. The statues themselves date to the Hadrianic period.195 Sahin suggests that Plancia Magna’s statues originally formed part of an honorific monument to her but were later dismantled.196 While the first statue erected by M. Plancius Pius is complete, the second erected by M. Plancius Alexander has a different body style and is missing the head. Between these two statues stood a third unidentifiable

193 Forbis, “Women’s Public Image”, 495.
194 Trimble, Women and Visual, 184.
196 Trimble, Women and Visual, 192.
male statue measuring 1.87 m. high that is now headless and is missing an inscription.\textsuperscript{197} The display was joined to the gate’s western tower, and was completely revetted in marble. The niches were all 1.10 m. deep, but varied in width depending on the statuary.\textsuperscript{198}

Despite the differences between Plancia’s statues, the inscriptions are identical in format.\textsuperscript{199} The inscriptions honor Plancia Magna as the priestess of the Imperial cult, as daughter of the city, and \textit{demiourgos} (a city official or magistrate) while using the same terminology employed for males in this period (Fig. 48):\textsuperscript{200}

\begin{verbatim}
[Πλανκίαν Μάγναν Μ. Πλανκίου]
[Οὐάρου καὶ Πόλεως Θυγατέρα]
[ίέρειαν τῆς ’Αρτέμιδος καὶ]
[δημιουργὸν τὸ δε[ύτερον]
[ίέρειαν Μητρὸς Θεῶν διά [Βίου]
[άρχιέρειαν τῶν Σεβασ[τῶν]
Μ. Πλάνκιος τὴν πατρώνισσαν\textsuperscript{201}
\end{verbatim}

The almost complete inscription and intact statue found in 1970 near the left niche of the honorary monument outside of the gate towers was commissioned by M. Plancius Pius and lists the following: Daughter of M. Plancius Varus, daughter of the city, priestess of Artemis, city magistrate for a second time, priestess of the mother of gods for life, and high priestess of emperors: \textsuperscript{202}

\begin{verbatim}
Πλανκίαν Μάγναν Μ. Πλανκίου
Οὐάρου καὶ Πόλεως Θυγατέρα
ιέρειαν τῆς ’Αρτέμιδος καὶ
dημιουργὸν τὸ τρίτον
ιέρειαν Μητρὸς Θεῶν διά Βίου
ἀρχιέρειαν τῶν Σεβαστῶν
Μ. Πλάνκιος ’Αλέξανδρος
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{197} Boatwright, “City Gate of Plancia”, 201.
\textsuperscript{198} Boatwright, “City Gate of Plancia”, 201.
\textsuperscript{199} Trimble, \textit{Women and Visual}, 192.
\textsuperscript{201} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #123, 161.
The completely preserved statue inscription that was found in 1970 near the right niche of the display wall was commissioned by M. Plancius Varus. Alexander lists the following: Daughter of M. Plancius Varus, daughter of the city, priestess of Artemis, city magistrate three times, priestess of the mother of gods for life, and high priestess of emperors (Fig. 49). The fact that this statue noted Plancia holding the position of city magistrate three times not only emphasizes her successful capacity as a city member, but also that this statue was commissioned after the first one.\textsuperscript{204}

They render a strong emphasis on her social status, service to the city, and honors awarded. It could also be stated that she was a patron to freedmen wealthy and influential enough to erect marble statues to her in one of the most central and public spaces of the city.\textsuperscript{205} A notable mention in the inscriptions points to Plancia holding the highest office of \textit{demiourgos} in the city twice. Holding office not only required an immense amount of money for civic obligations, but also meant the official would also need to have the capacity to participate in other civic endeavours outside of those required by the position.\textsuperscript{206} Even more impressive is that Plancia was the only female \textit{demiourgos} of Perge.\textsuperscript{207} Again, this not only continues to highlight Plancia’s extraordinary feats within the city as a wealthy woman, but also accentuates it was done without a heavy influence and reflection on her prestigious background and lineage.

The only aspect of these statue and inscription combinations that portrayed a sense of realism and individuality were the inscriptions that listed her accomplishments and social status.\textsuperscript{208} Even though there aren’t other statues to use for comparison for Plancia Magna, it is obvious the statue heads were certainly not veristic but highly idealized. The hair is parted in the center and

\textsuperscript{203} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #124, 161.
\textsuperscript{204} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, #124, 161.
\textsuperscript{205} Trimble, \textit{Women and Visual}, 185.
\textsuperscript{206} Trimble, \textit{Women and Visual}, 185.
\textsuperscript{207} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, 107.
\textsuperscript{208} Trimble, \textit{Women and Visual}, 185.
pulled back in rippling waves to a bun under the veil, emoting a classicizing hairstyle reserved for female portraits of divine figures and/or personifications. Her face appears symmetrical with smooth round cheeks and a small mouth with curving lips. The eyes are the typical large almond shaped, and the only wrinkles found are on the neck. Despite the indication Plancia Magna might have been middle aged at the time of her benefaction (following Boatwright’s conjecture Plancia was in her early 20s at the time of her benefaction), and these statues were erected well after her commissioning the gate complex, there is no indication of age in these statues other than youth.209

The function of clothing on statuary has often been debated. Catherine de Grazia Vanderpool claims our notion of the ancient Greek and Roman fashions are based off what is portrayed in the various mediums of art available to us. She essentially argues the clothing might not directly reflect what these individuals wore on a daily basis similarly to the “heroic horseback statues of modern dictators reflect[ing] their normal mode of transportation.”210 While the incorporation of the crown on Plancia Magna’s statue serves to identify her status as a priestess of the city, her veil could actually be an accurate representation of her attire rather than simply evoking a uniform. The 2nd century CE writer Polemo describes his visit to the Temple of Artemis in Perge and notices that women were fully veiled as they went about their days in what seemed to be the local custom.211

The similarities between her statues and that of the empress Sabina from the honorific arch are remarkable. Citizens and visitors would not need to know about Sabina but could see the relation to Plancia Magna’s statues outside of the gate. Interestingly enough, Sabina, Hadrian’s wife and Trajan’s grand-niece, was usually represented as a young woman with features reminiscent of the classical and idealizing styles of the 4th century BCE. Similar to Plancia, even

209 Trimble, Women and Visual, 166.
Sabina was portrayed as the “eternal girl, ever the young, nubile niece” despite being middle aged. The stylistic choices of both statues visibly bridged the imperial woman to the local patroness in a way transforming Plancia Magna into a representation of the empress in Perge (Figs. 50–51). This is a valid argument to the extent that Sabina’s statue portrays a popular form, the Large Herculaneum style. This style originated in the Hellenistic Period and was used extensively in the Roman Empire particularly for statues depicting the Imperial family. This type of sculptural form depicts “voluminous drapery typical of Late Classical and Hellenistic portraits, the graceful but firmly earthbound poses and the blend of solemn dignity with coy revelation of feminine curves.” Even though the naming comes from two statue types, large and small, excavated in Herculaneum in the early 18th century, they represent the largest corpus of female statuary, in particular, for women in the Greek East during Plancia Magna’s time in the 2nd century CE. They were used for public monuments that honored living women or were even included in funerary programs.

Not only was Sabina’s statue erected in this fashion in Perge, but the other statuary of imperial women, such as Faustina the younger, followed suit. Sabina’s statue from the arch also depicts a young woman with idealized facial and hair features, in that it could even be thought that the same artist sculpted both Sabina’s and Plancia Magna’s statues. Boatwright questions whether the images of imperial women in architectural settings intended to give specific or special meanings, or if they were simply window dressing, such as an embellishment or giving homage to the state. Before Augustus the number of women represented by statues in the Republican period was almost non-existent, in that they could be counted by hand. In the 2nd century CE this was

213 Boatwright, “Just Window Dressing?” , 66
certainly not the case. It is under Augustus through his agenda that we begin to see women portrayed, in particular the imperial women such as Livia, which then allowed others to easily follow suit.\textsuperscript{217}

It is important to reiterate that Plancia’s statues were erected after the imperial ones from the honorific arch. Plancia’s freedmen, who were citizens of Perge, had a strong admiration for Plancia Magna, one that certainly was shared by the other citizens of Perge, leading them to portray her in a familiar fashion of importance and grandeur as that of an imperial family member. Plancia most likely had some say in the styling of her statues and certainly had a say in her own commissioning of Sabina’s statue on the arch. If this is the case then it is not surprising that she also chose to have the other statues in similar fashion portraying female members of the imperial family among the ranks of emperors and city founders. Essentially the similarities between both depictions represent Plancia Magna as the presence of the empress in the city, as patroness and daughter of the city. The positioning of her statues, her visual similarity to Sabina’s statue, her renovation of the city gate complex, the numerous inscriptions naming Plancia Magna and the erection of the honorific arch were all strategic decisions undertaken in order to demarcate Plancia’s rank and high status among the elite of Perge.\textsuperscript{218}

One noticeable aspect of the inscriptions honoring Plancia Magna is that they are lacking the phrasing identified by Elizabeth Forbis. Forbis extensively compares the honorary inscriptions between women in the Roman East and West. She concludes that women in the east were identified mainly through private virtues delineating their matronly roles, while women in the west were identified through their status and role in the community. Words such as \textit{castitas, pietas, pudicitia, lanificium, fides, diligentia, obsequium, modestia,} and \textit{probitas,} were all used to indicate

\textsuperscript{217} Boatwright, “Just Window Dressing?”, 61-62.
\textsuperscript{218} Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 9-10.
the virtues of women.\textsuperscript{219} The absence of these words in the epigraphic evidence found in and near the Hellenistic gate complex presents an exception to Forbis’s findings.\textsuperscript{220} To further support the claim, Trimble explains that the virtues attributed to Plancia Magna are gender neutral.\textsuperscript{221} The phrase \textit{eusebe kai philopatrin}, pious and loving her country, is also used for male inscriptions.\textsuperscript{222} In the inscriptions Plancia had included in her renovation and despite the stylistic inconsistencies between the Greek and Latin inscriptions, Plancia ensures that the correct information is relayed across all audiences. Ultimately it is her name in large finely engraved letters that strongly emphasises her ownership over the renovation of the city gate complex, without the presence of downgrading titles.\textsuperscript{223} 

\textsuperscript{219} Forbis, “Women’s Public Image,” 494.
\textsuperscript{220} Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 13.
\textsuperscript{221} Trimble, \textit{Women and Visual}, 194.
\textsuperscript{222} Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 13.
\textsuperscript{223} Caceres, “Female Munificence”, 11.
Conclusion

A visitor approaching the city would see the two statues and dedications of Plancia Magna and pass through the narrow opening between the towers to see the highly decorative courtyard with statues of its founders and patrons meant to establish Perge’s legitimacy. The inscriptions on the courtyard’s statue bases would only help the visitor identify the important members of Perge’s past and present, while they also repeatedly reinforced Plancia Magna’s role in commissioning the lavish renovation. Before they could step into the city, they would encounter a large honorific arch with statues of members of the imperial family which showed the close ties between Perge and the Roman empire. Here the two large bilingual *tabulae ansatae* and the bilingual statues bases would bring to focus the programmatic purpose of the city gate complex, to elevate and remember the local deities, founders, and patrons, while maintaining a close connection and allegiance to Rome. Plancia Magna’s agenda was brought full circle through the stylistic similarities found in her honorific statues that followed the large Herculaneum woman type form at the entrance of the gate complex to Sabina’s statue on the imperial arch.

This case study focused on tying together the political transitions that set up Perge’s development with Plancia Magna’s exceptional role as her city’s most prominent benefactor and civic participant. It is also important to elevate that while Perge’s benefactions were mainly commissioned by men, there was one other female benefactor who fulfilled her civic obligation to give to her city, not only as an elite member but as an office holding citizen. Aurelia Paulina donated a nymphaeum to Perge in the 3rd century CE. Also holding an important role as the city’s priestess, she similarly commissioned a major public work that was essential for the city’s daily function. While this way station was a particularly critical component of a Roman city in the East, it differed stylistically and epigraphically. The inscription reflects that largest distinction between Aurelia’s and Plancia’s benefactions:
Aurelia Paulina, priestess for life of asylum-granting Artemis Pergaia, daughter of Apellas the son of Dionysus and Aelia Tertulla, formerly the priestess of the imperial cult in the city of Sillyium alongside her deceased husband Aquilius the son of Kidramuas, was presented with Roman citizenship by Commodus.

She built and inaugurated this nymphaeum and all its ornamentation at her own expense.\textsuperscript{225}

While Aurelia is noted as the benefactress of this public work at her own expense, the dedicatory inscription also “provides Paulina’s lineage, marital situation, priestly offices, and status as a Roman citizen.”\textsuperscript{226} In contrast, as previously mentioned, Plancia’s few Latin inscriptions on the arch are the only ones that include any mention of her father, while the numerous statues bases from the courtyard promote her as the sole dedicator lacking her lineage.

The evidence of her family members contributions to Perge is minimal in comparison to the numerous inscriptions naming Plancia Magna. While her father, M. Plancius Varus, might have commissioned the construction of the city’s theater, and her brother is connected to the bath complex near the southern gate entrance, the scarce evidence pointing to their benefactions and

\textsuperscript{224} Sahin, \textit{Die Inschriften}, 229.
\textsuperscript{225} Longfellow, \textit{Roman Imperialism}, 186.
\textsuperscript{226} Longfellow, \textit{Roman Imperialism}, 186.
lack of honorific inscriptions by the city proves that Plancia Magna solely elevated her family’s name within Perge. Similarly, the Cornuti, another prominent family in Perge, associated with Plancia Magna through marriage, are lacking in the archaeological evidence. C. Iulius Cornutus, her husband’s father, is the only member connected to a public work, the city’s gymnasium located in the northwestern section of the city. The only other pieces of evidence from these two elite families comes from a bilingual dedication erected by Plancia Magna for her son, C. Iulius Plancius Varus Cornutus. He was also honored by the demos and boule in an inscription found in Perge’s agora, near the gate entrance, for his benefaction in which he probably financed the Varus-Agon games. Despite their limited involvement in the city, and their position as prominent elite males, Plancia Magna surpassed these individuals substantially. The multiple honorific inscriptions erected for Plancia Magna by the demos and boule reiterate the city’s respect and acknowledgement for her as a respected office holding member. Holding the position of demiourgos three times was certainly an impressive feat.

By taking a multifaceted approach in analyzing the epigraphic and archaeological record of Plancia Magna’s renovation of the Hellenistic Gate, I was able to investigate and reject arguments that diminished the roles of women in the Roman East. The nature of the statuary agenda, epigraphic formatting, and her city’s numerous honorific recognitions imply that Plancia Magna was an elite woman capable of making her own decisions. The costly renovation of the gate implies she was able to manage her own wealth, and it clearly solely elevated Plancia Magna’s social status, rather than those of her family members. It is also evident that Plancia Magna exceptionally crafted her own identity through the epigraphic evidence as the typical lineage references were missing from all of the Greek inscriptions within the gate complex. Not only did she chose the audiences she wanted to communicate with through the bilingual inscriptions and statuary, but she became the bridge and symbol between Rome and her city. The inscriptions found
on the statue bases of Plancia Magna outside of the gate complex, the courtyard and arch bases, and the dedicatory arch inscription drastically differ from the typical honorary inscriptions found across the empire that typically depicted a matronly and virtuous image of benefactresses. The Greek inscriptions found outside of the gate complex did identify her as daughter of M. Plancius Varus, as they were erected by the boule and demos and she did not have a deciding role, yet they still acknowledged her position within the city as an independent member, without diminishing her role as a prominent benefactress, and woman.
FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of Asia Minor.
Source: By Richard A. LaFleur and Tom Elliott with modifications
Figure 2. Perge’s acropolis and its surroundings.  

Figure 3. Inscription from Roman Nymphaeum, Perge.  
Figure 4. Perge site plan with modifications.  
Available from: ARTstor, Inc.  
Figure 5. View from Gate to Street to North, Perge.  
*Source:* Bryn Mawr College (MJM-02770)  
(accessed March 30, 2018).

Figure 6. Overview of Perge.  
Figure 7. Front & back of triumphal arch commissioned by Demetrius and Apollonius, Perge. 

Figure 8. Perge City Gate Complex.
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