Bona Dea

-Means ‘Good Goddess’

-Was a term used by all - but not her true name

-She was sometimes referred to as ‘Damia’

-Possibly after the favorite Sacrifice, a female pig referred to as ‘Damium’

-Possibly derived from an ancient misreading of the Greek Demeter

-Some Scholars associate her with Fauna
Origins and Associations

- Greek- or at least inherited Greek cults
- Roman - Old agricultural goddess

- Healing, Fertility, Women
- Snakes
Worship

-Worshiped by the ‘damiatrix’- her priestesses

-Also Worshiped by the Vestals

-She had one festival on May 1st

-The other in December
Worship (cont.)

- May festival was on the Aventine
- December was held in the house of the Pontifex Maximus
- Hosted by his wife
- All males were removed (even animales)
- Sacrifices of ‘Milk and Honey’
  - Milk=Wine
The Bona Dea and Publius Clodius Pulcher

-A politician
-62 B.C.E
-Julius Caesar
-Disguised as a Female Harpist
-Caesar divorced his wife Pompeia
Conclusion

- Was most likely an archaic Roman Goddess
- Was a goddess of women, much like Vesta, and was worshiped by women
- Associated with Healing, Especially the healing of women
- Romans took her festival rules very seriously
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