THE OLD FEMALE POWER:
HOW WOMEN SHAPED THE HISTORY OF ROME

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Abstract

My thesis aims to investigate the role and portrayal of women at critical points in Roman history, where they appear again and again in moments that shape its history.

My thesis will explore portrayal of the use of power by these women in our ancient sources. This ‘power’ will be examined through the concept of ‘power feminism’ as articulated by N. Wolf.

The scope of this investigation extends from the founding of Rome until the end of the Nero’s reign in 68AD and aims to investigate importance of women in shaping the course of history of ancient Rome. The study is divided into four chronological periods, which are in turn divided into case studies of women who are depicted in Roman history as using power to influence public events.

This author will consider how our ancient sources viewed female use of power, how women achieved power, what it was employed for, how its use changed Roman history and whether these women followed or set precedents. The research will attempt to ascertain whether the use of power by women at critical points in history changed the course of Roman history, and whether that use of power emerged and changed over time.

I certify that this work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution, and the thesis is my own composition, all sources have been acknowledged and my contribution is clearly identified in the thesis.

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

Rome was a patriarchal society, in which women were not permitted to vote or hold political or military office. Within this very particular socio-historical context, we see women depicted again and again in its history, from passive participants in major events, such as brides and victims of crime, to those infamous women who involved themselves in politics and the fight for supreme power. This thesis examines how women are represented in the written historical tradition as shaping the course of Roman history, and how the actions of such women can be interpreted from a power feminist perspective.[1]

The women whose portrayal will be examined in this thesis have been selected as high profile examples of the activities of such women – namely, women whose actions, real or imagined, the writers of narrative history saw fit to preserve: their activities range from involvement in the mythical founding of Rome to the death of Nero in 68 AD, as recorded by historians such as Livy, Cassius Dio, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Tacitus, supplemented with evidence from biographers such as Plutarch and Suetonius. Although this may seem like an unmanageable length of time, the fact that women could not directly participate in the military and political offices on which the historical narrative focuses resulted in frequent portrayals of Roman women as 'supporting characters' to the male protagonists/antagonists. Therefore the actions of women only make up a small percentage of Roman written history: focusing on their actions enables the author to cover such a wide period.

Such a wide scope also allows tracing of the creation of a psychology of female power in the rhetoric of ancient Rome. This will be achieved by identifying, contextualising and elaborating on the achievement of power and the use of various forms of power by women, and the effect of such actions upon the course of Roman history, as outlined below.[2] This study will thus depict and examine the integral role played by female possession and employment of power in Roman narrative history.

The recording of Roman history in the second century BC, according to Ernst Badian,[3] was prompted by Rome's military expansion and the subsequent curiosity about its origins from

[1] "Power feminism" is a phrase coined by Wolf, N., *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century*, New York: Vintage Books, 1994 to describe her brand of feminism, but has been more broadly applied to the writings of Katie Roiphe (*The Morning After: Fear, Sex and Feminism*, 1994), Camille Paglia (*Vamps and Tramps: New Essays*, 1994), Rene Denfeld (*The New Victorians: A Young Woman's Challenge to the Old Feminist Order*, 1995) and Christina Hoff Sommers (*Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women*, 1995).

[2] See this study, Introduction, p. 8-15.

[3] Badian, E., *Ancient Society and Institutions: Studies Presented to Victor Ehrenberg on his 75th Birthday*.

Rome's Mediterranean neighbours. Rome's written history can therefore be understood as depicting the perspective from which Romans viewed their own identity, as well as how Romans wished to be perceived by others.

To discuss female use of power, two questions must first be asked, 'Which women?' and 'What power?' First of all, the categories of women which this study will address may be understood broadly to embrace the literary constructs deriving from foundational, mythological or otherwise traditional oral-narrative modes of communication *and* actual women preserved in historically reliable and verifiable sources of evidence. Additionally, whether constructed or historical, these women also belong to a diverse range of social strata, ethnic origins, cultural backgrounds, economic conditions and religious affiliations. Second, the term 'power' requires definition, and this will require some exploration of the degree to which that definition may be perceived as loaded, especially in terms of positive and negative connotations. Additionally, in order to contextualise these connotations historically, the word needs to be understood from an ancient Roman perspective. Exploring *both* aspects of this study's focus will be essential if we are to analyse how women were perceived as wielding power.

Since this thesis is concerned with Roman women's use of power, its case studies are therefore restricted to the women of the elite who had access, through their husbands and sons, to the public sphere. The use of the term 'elite' here is not a reference to patrician or plebeian background, or even a person's level of personal wealth, but rather it reflects membership to the *nobilitas* during the Republican period, or connection to the imperial family during the archaic and Julio-Claudian periods. It is important to note and remember that these women formed only a tiny percentage of the women who lived in Rome during this time, therefore the actions of these women cannot be seen as representative of Roman women as a whole. Rather, their behaviour indicates that their privileged status, family connections, opportunism and personal skill allowed them to overcome some of the restrictions of their patriarchal culture and employ power in shaping Roman history, owing to their interactions with men and other privileged women.

'Auctoritas' and 'Potestas'

The Romans' understanding of power primarily consisted of two important and complementary components: *auctoritas* and *potestas*.[4] *Auctoritas* is a distinctly Roman term,[5] for which there

Oxford : Blackwell, 1966

[4] Galinsky, K. (1998), *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 10-20.

[5] Dio, 55.3: "For such is the general force of this word; to translate it into Greek by a term that will always be applicable is impossible." Please note that all trtanslations of ancient sources are as listed in the bibliography, unless otherwise stated.

is no direct English translation. K. Galinsky explains that *auctoritas* is difficult to define as it "… has multiple meanings, connotations and associations. It is precise without being limiting and it is elastic without being vague".[6]

The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* provides nine definitions of the term, including, "authorization, sanction, approval" and "a proposal, advice, recommendation".[7] T. Mommsen described *auctoritas* as "more than advice and less than command, an advice which one may not safely ignore."[8]

Earl considered it "the highest form of prestige,"[9] which was one of the political characteristics male senators gained from their possession of *virtus*. This *virtus* (manliness) arose from the practice of private morality[10] as well as "the winning of personal pre-eminence and glory by the commission of great deeds in the service of the Roman state".[11]

According to D. J. Svyantek, *auctoritas* represented "the perception that an individual was morally, intellectually and materially superior: this prestige was inherent in the individual".[12] Galinsky claims that "*auctoritas* is something that is granted not by statute but by the esteem of one's fellow citizens. It is acquired less by inheritance, although belonging to an influential family or group is accompanied by some degree of *auctoritas*, than by an individual's superior record of judgement and achievement,"[13] and that it "has strong moral connotations"[14]. Gunderson describes *auctoritas* as a "combination of esteem, credibility, and status that is characteristic of Roman social thought".[15]

These definitions allow modern scholars to start understanding the idea of *auctoritas* – an innate status and authority recognised by one's peers that indicated a moral, political, military and/or intellectual superiority. It was not reliant upon holding political or military office, but arose from the status of a person's ancestors and kinsmen, from political and military success, and from a person's own character. In Rome there was a socio-cultural expectation that compelled Romans to treat the words and thoughts of those people who possessed *auctoritas* with respect, and to obey directions given by them.

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[6] Galinsky, K., *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[7] *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, p. 206.
[8] Mommsen, T., *Römisches Staatsrecht*, Vol. 3, 2010, p. 2214.
[9] Earl, D.C. (1967), *The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome*, London: Thames and Hudson, p. 33.
[10] *ibid.*, p.23.
[11] *ibid.*, p.21.
[12] Svyantek, D. J. (1999), '"Make haste slowly": Augustus Caesar Transforms the Roman World', *Journal of Management History*, 5(6), p. 295
[13] Galinsky, K., *op. cit.*, p. 14
[14] Galinsky, K., *op. cit.*, p. 12
[15] Dugan, J. (2009), 'Rhetoric and the Roman Republic' In Gunderson, E. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 179.

While the peers of an elite male Roman citizen can be seen as his senatorial colleagues, Hortensia's admission that the *matronae* of the Roman *nobilitas* had originally approached the wives of the triumvirs to advocate for the remission of the war tax,[16] indicates a recognition of unofficial female networks within the *nobilitas* in which *auctoritas* could be brought to bear. However, this speech is only recorded in the history of Appian, who wrote in the second century AD, and he may have therefore assumed that a practice that was standard amongst his contemporaries was utilised and accepted in the triumviral period.

When viewed in relation to women, female *auctoritas* could be depicted both positively and negatively. In its positive form it is most commonly conceived of as *materna auctoritas*, which T. C. Brennan defines as "respectable women's authority"[17].

Notable examples of this socio-historical phenomenon include episodes described by sych Greek and Roman sources as Livy, Cassius Dio, and Plutarch, involving Cornelia, *mater Gracchorum*;[18] Veturia, mother of Coriolanus;[19] Mucia, mother of Sextus Pompeius;[20] the women protesting the repeal of the *lex Oppia*;[21] Hortensia, daughter of Q. Hortensius Catalus;[22] and Fulvia, wife of P. Clodius Pulcher, C. Scribonius Curio, and M. Antonius, [23] which will be discussed below.

J. K. Evans also claims that *materna auctoritas* could replace the role of *patria potestas* in the discipline of sons whose fathers had passed away.[24] Thus such widowed women possessed an extraordinary level of influence over their sons, which they could exert in the public sphere. According to Evans, this is seen in Gaius Gracchus' public justification on the withdrawal of legislation aimed at penalising M. Octavius by attributing it to the *auctoritas* exerted upon him by his mother Cornelia.[25] Evans observes that *materna auctoritas* could also be wielded in

[16] App., *B. Civ.*, , 4.32
[17] Brennan, T. C. (2012), 'Perceptions of Women's Power in the Late Republic: Terentia, Fulvia, and the Generation of 63BCE' in James, S. L. and Dillon, S. (eds.), *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 361
[18] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 123-130.
[19] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 84-90.
[20] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 145-147.
[21] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 100-107.
[22] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 131-134.
[23] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 135-144.
[24] Evans, J.K. (1991), *War, Women and Children in Ancient Rome*, London and New York: Routledge, p.192f.
[25] *ibid.*, p. 192.

negotiations during times of civil war, such as Veturia's speech to Coriolanus[26] and Mucia's intercession with Sextus Pompey.[27]

In Livy's account of the repeal of the *lex Oppia*, Cato states that he desired to say to the women mobilised against the law, "Could you not have made the same requests, each of your own husband, at home?"[28] Although he promptly follows with the declaration that the legislation of Rome should not be the concern of women, the passage indicates that even to the conservative Cato (or at least the equally conservative Livy's interpretation of Cato) it was an *acceptable* practice for women to exert their *auctoritas* by attempting to influence their menfolk on matters of pubic importance.

Hortensia's speech according to Appian is clearer on the subject. She states that the women originally approached the female relatives of the triumvirs "as benefitted women of our rank"[29], but they were forced to approach the triumvirs directly due to Fulvia's snub. Although the historicity of the speech is in question, it reflects a belief by contemporary male sources that the use of *auctoritas* with respect to a woman's male relatives, or in female aristocratic networks, was the proper avenue for the public concerns of Roman women.

Women in provincial Roman cities could also be publicly acknowledged for their exercise of *auctoritas*. Emily Hemelrijk's study of city patronesses in the Roman empire analyses the epigraphic evidence for city patronage by women.[30] She records that in the only *tabula patronatus* for a city patroness, Nummia Varia, a woman of senatorial rank and priestess of Venus Felix, that has been preserved the patroness is requested by the city "that she may deign to take us and our *res publica*, individually and universally, under the protection of her house and that, in whatever matters it may reasonably be required, she may intervene with the *auctoritas* belonging to her rank and protect us and keep us safe."[31] Hemelrijk acknowledges that such an open acknowledgement of authority is remarkable,[32] but states that "in contrast to the capital, where the ideals of female domesticity were sharply defended by the authors of the literary sources, these municipalities had no scruples in acknowledging the power of high-classed women - at least, if it served their interests".[33]

[26] *ibid.*, p. 192.
[27] *ibid.*, p. 192.
[28] Livy, 34.2.9.
[29] App. *B Civ.*, 4.32.
[30] Hemelrijk , E. A. (2004), 'City Patronesses in the Roman Empire', *Historia* 53(2), 209-245.
[31] *ibid.*, p. 223.
[32] *ibid.*, p. 224.
[33] *ibid.*, p. 234.

However, the female use of *auctoritas* is also portrayed negatively by our sources, often in relation to its use in private circumstances, in which women could influence public actions without requiring approval from their *paterfamilias* or *tutor*, as they were required for legal or financial dealings.

This fear of unchecked female power over a man holding high political office is evident in the portrayals of the empresses Messalina,[34] and later of Agrippina the Younger,[35] orchestrating *maiestas* trials during their marriages to Claudius. This portrayal continues in the depiction of Agrippina's influence over her son Nero in the early years of his reign as negative and abused for personal gain.[36]

Livia is represented by Tacitus as a complicit accomplice to the alleged murder of Germanicus after she exercises her *materna auctoritas* over Tiberius in order to have the charges against her friend Plancina dropped.[37]

Fulvia is also shown as bringing her *auctoritas* to bear publicly, firstly as the widow of Clodius, in instigating civil discord after her husband's death.[38] She is then portrayed as provoking a civil war with Octavian by using both the *actoritas* that she gained from her privileged background and first two marriages, as well as the *auctoritas* gained by her marriage to Antony.[39]

Francesca L'Hoir states that the attribution of masculine prerogatives such as '*auctoritas'* to women in Tacitus' *Annals* was in fact a deliberate technique employed by the author to characterise women in his histories as "usurpers of masculine power".[40] She believes that the use of words such as *auctoritas*, "which, when applied to men, traditionally connote legitimate forms of behaviour",[41] for women "not only masculinize Tacitus' female antagonists but, within the text of the *Annales*, also link[s] them thematically with each other".[42] She believes that this is because both *auctoritas* and *imperium* "connote male legitimacy, and are therefore inappropriate in reference to the gender which Roman beliefs identified with the loom".[43]

Potestas, by juxtaposition to *auctoritas*, is considered a legitimised power as it is sanctioned by the state. The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* defines *potestas* as "possession of control or command

[34] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 175-184.
[35] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 187.
[36] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 188-89.
[37] Tac., *Ann*., 3.15; further discussed in this study, Ch. 4, p. 165-166.
[38] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 137.
[39] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 140-144.
[40] L'Hoir, F. S. (1994), 'Tacitus and Women's Usurpation of Power', *The Classical World*, 88(1), p. 5.
[41] *ibid.*, p. 5.
[42] *ibid.*, p. 5.
[43] i*bid.*, p. 11.

(over persons or things) … in political or military contexts … in legal or quasi legal contexts", "a position of power, office, magistracy; also jurisdiction, authority", and "the right of legal or judicial decision".[44]

Paulus in the *Digest* states that "*potestas* has several significations: when applied to *magistratus*, it is *imperium*; in the case of children, it is the *patria potestas*; in the case of slaves, it is *dominium*".[45] However, as W. Smith notes, *potestas* is also applied to magistrates who do not possess *imperium*[46] and therefore is more likely to be considered, in reference to the political world, "the power that was delegated to any person by the state,"[47] inclusive of but not limited to *imperium*. D. J. Svyantek concurs: "*Potestas* represented the formal power that was available to the officeholder."[48] *Potestas* can be considered power derived from (and conditional upon) possession of military or political office, which allowed the holder to exert force upon his fellow citizens, or upon heading a family, and thus allowed to exert force upon its members.

In theory, Roman women were ineligible to hold office and therefore could not acquire *potestas*. However, as political power evolved into fewer hands in the late Republic and early Imperial periods our sources record instances of women performing actions that usually require the possession of *potestas*, such as Agrippina the Elder[49] and Fulvia[50] issuing commands in military camps. Although this power was not granted to them by the state, it is worth considering that the centralisation of power in the late Republic and early imperial period may have allowed certain elite women the chance to utilise their husband's and/or son's *potestas*. This is an idea that will be examined as we reach those few cases where a woman's actions may be considered to involve the use of *potestas*.

Nonetheless, women are primarily depicted as wielding *auctoritas*. The power of *auctoritas* in the Roman public world should not be underrated. David Shotter states that *auctoritas* "had enabled that body [the senate] effectively to govern the state, despite the facts that sovereignty rested with the *populus* and *plebs* and that the senior magistrates provided the executive branch".[51] In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus proudly proclaims that he **"**was supreme by virtue of *auctoritas*, but of *potestas* I had no more than those others whom I had as my colleagues in each office".[52] Of course, the *auctoritas* of the *princeps* after Actium was so great that few

[44] Glare, P. G. W. (1968 -1982), *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 1417.
[45] Paul., *Dig.* 50, 16, 215.
[46] Cic. *Clu.* 27, 74.
[47] Smith, W. (1890), *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, London: Walton and Maberley, p.873.
[48] Svyantek, D. J., *op. cit.,* p. 295.
[49] Tac. *Ann*., 1.69.
[50] Dio Cass., 48.10.
[51] Shotter, D. (1991), *Augustus Caesar*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 32.
[52] Aug., *RG*, 34.3.

would dare oppose his wishes. The significance of his statement, however, is that he did not follow his predecessors such as Sulla and Julius Caesar and rule by virtue of the dictatorship. Augustus may have wielded his *auctoritas* with great skill, but he avoided the reliance on *potestas* which had caused resentment under his predecessors.

Erik Gunderson in fact believes that "in extreme cases personal *auctoritas* could not only make one's speech persuasive; it could make speech itself superfluous". [53] The example he gives is Scipio Africanus avoiding prosecution by commenting at the trial that it was the anniversary of his triumph at the battle of Zama, after which he led those present to the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in 185 BC.[54]

It is important to note, of course, that the terms *potestas* and *auctoritas* are terms applied to and used by male Roman citizens of a certain status. Perforce, this study will use these terms to identify the kind of power possessed or expressed by women primarily because there is no female equivalent to such terms in a historically specific Roman context. A man's *auctoritas* reflected his *virtus*, for which he was rewarded with magistracies that granted him *potestas*. However, there is no female equivalent to *virtus*, as women's actions were supposed to take place in the domestic private sphere. Therefore a woman's worthiness could only be demonstrated by her private morality; traditionally "wifely obedience (the technical Latin term is *obsequium*), domesticity, chastity and fidelity to one man"[55] and "chastity, modesty, austerity, domesticity and devotion to husband and children".[56]

As we shall see in this thesis, in the times of crisis which necessitated public action by women, then actions performed in the service of the state were viewed positively, such as Veturia's intercession with Coriolanus circa 490 BC,[57] and Octavia's role as negotiator between Octavian and Antony in 35 BC.[58]

Judith Hallett's contrast between the real and ideal in her discussion of women in Roman elegy[59] is a particularly useful method of understanding the conflict between Roman ideas of feminine virtues and the portrayal of women's use of *potestas* and *auctoritas*. While Roman society retained the *ideal* of a submissive and domestically-focused woman, the *fact* that Roman women could and did wield *auctoritas*, and potentially *potestas*, is clearly documented.

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[53] Gunderson, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
[54] *ibid.*, p. 180.
[55] Hallett, J. P. (1973) 'The Role of Women in Roman Elegy: Counter-Cultural Feminism', *Arethusa*, 6, p. 242.
[56] Hemelrijk, E. A. (2002), *Matrona Docta: Educated Women in the Roman Elite from Cornelia to Julia Domna*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 7.
[57] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 84-90.
[58] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 148-151.
[59] Hallett, J. P. (1973), p. 245.

The other justification for the use of such terms associated with male preogatives is the fact that our written evidence for women's use of power in ancient Rome, whether it be positive, such as the *tabula patronatus* commemorating the use of *auctoritas* by Nummia Varia in the third century AD, or negative, such as Tacitus' portrayals of women such as Livia and the Agrippinae in the first century AD is masculinised. Men, in a patriarchal environment, write for other men, depicting actions regarding the 'male' world of politics and the military, and portray women as supporting characters to the male protagonists and antagonists. The actions of the women in this thesis are viewed through male lenses conceptualising power.

T. Hillard does remind us that "the general influence of women on the politics of the 1st century is a much overrated concept of modern scholarship, fed by the misogyny of our Roman sources"[60]. In his article "On the Stage, Behind the Curtain: Images of the Politically Active Women in the Late Roman Republic", he reminds modern readers of the negative stigma attached to the reputations of women perceived to be influencing the public life of Rome, both in their contemporary historical context, and in the later literary tradition, and notes in his discussion on *materna auctoritas:* "It can be noted here without argument … that allegations of a woman's influence on a Roman politician always served, as they often do in the modern world, to damage the credibility of that politician".[61]

This does not mean that the depictions of women employing *auctoritas* and *potestas* cannot be used, but rather that they must be used carefully. As Hillard states, "Attempting … to track down actual instances of such influence – that is to say, substantive evidence that is not anecdotal in character –is, of course, a vain quest."[62] Therefore this thesis must focus on the *portrayal* of women using *auctoritas* and *potestas* to shape the course of history and how analysis of that portrayal by using Naomi Wolf's concept of 'power feminism' can indicate the nature and evolution of how our male authors viewed women's use of power over the course of its history.

Secondary Literature Review

Feminist interpretations of ancient Roman history prevalent since the women's movement of the 1960s have emphasised the oppression of women in the extant narrative corpus.[63] By way

[60] Hillard, T. (1983), *'Materna Auctoritas*: The Political Influence of Roman Matronae', *Classicum*, 22, p. 10.
[61] Hillard, T. (1983), p. 11.
[62] Hillard, T. (1992), 'On the Stage, Behind the Curtain: Images of Politically Active Women in the Late Republic', In Levick, B., Dixon, S., Allen, P. (eds.), *Stereotypes of Women in Power: Historical Perspectives and Revisionist Views*, New York: Greenwood Press, p. 40.
[63] Notable examples include Pomeroy, S. B. (1975), *Goddesses, Whores, Wives & Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. London: Pimlico; Peradotto, J., Sullivan, J. P., *Women in the Ancient World: The Arethusa* Papers; Lefkowitz, M. R., *Women in Greece and Rome*; Skinner, M. (1986), *Rescuing Creusa: New Methodological Approaches to Women in Antiquity*, Lubbock, Texas: Texas Technology University Press.

of contrast, this thesis intends to analyse how women's use of power is said to have shaped the course of ancient Roman history from the founding of Rome in the 8th century BC until the death of Nero in 68 AD. Understandably, there is an immense quantity of scholarship pertinent to the subject, which it would be impossible to assess within the current word limit. Representative works of scholarship that illuminate the evolution of the methodology and theoretical perspective over last fifty years of scholarship regarding this topic. Consequently the following review of relevant secondary literature is intended to identify important themes and approaches rather than provide a comprehensive bibliographic overview.

One of the seminal works in this field, Sarah Pomeroy's *Goddesses, Whores, Wives & Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*,[64] examines the literary and archaeological evidence for women living in ancient Greece and Rome. While she does not employ late twentieth century feminist theory, her focus on recovering and discussing women's presence in Graeco-Roman history reflected one of the priorities of early feminist classicists – to write women back into history. Although its very broad scope resulted in a less specialised view of women in classical antiquity, the book is still an excellent introduction to the topic and the difficulties involved in identifying women in our male-centred evidence.

Another useful source for early feminist classicists was Mary Lefkowitz's and Maureen Fant's *Women's Life in Greece and Rome*.[65] Lefkowitz and Fant created a compendium of Greek and Roman material written by and about women, in English translation, on topics ranging from family relationships to involvement in religion and law. The sourcebook was originally published in 1982, and expanded versions were published in 1992, 2005 and 2016 due to its enduring popularity.

Early feminist classicists were often concerned with integrating feminist theory into the traditional critical apparatus of classical scholarship. Marilyn Skinner described a number of the difficulties involved,[66] a number of which involve issues affecting the discipline as a whole in the 1980 Anglophone scholarly world. One of the core problems was the marginalisation of the classics in academia, resulting from its irrelevance to current sociocultural developments in 1980s America, and the intellectual snobbery of classicists as the result of the historic prestige

[64] Pomeroy, S. B., (1975). This book is not the first work of academic scholarship produced on the topic of Roman women. It is mentioned here as indicative of the scholarship on women influenced by the feminist movement of the 1960s/70s, but for a comprehensive guide to previous scholarship, see the bibliography of Pomeroy's work, p. 251f.

[65] Lefkowitz, M., Fant, M. (1982), *Women's Life in Greece and Rome*, London: Duckworth.

[66] Skinner, M. (1987), 'Classical Studies, Patriarchy and Feminism: The View From 1986', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 10(2), pp. 181-186.

accorded to the role of Graeco-Roman antiquity, a "prestige disproportionate to its actual curricular status".[67]

Classical journals also were "excessively"[68] concerned with the use of customary form and structure rather than innovative content in submissions for publication. The use of "non-standard"[69] methodologies, such as post-structuralist theory, contemporary anthropological models, and Jungian, Freudian and Masrxist anaslysis, was regarded with "suspicion"[70] within the discipline. This engagendered an atmosphere of cautiousness amongst classicists who were reluctant to push the boundaries in their research. The classics community was also heavily hierarchized, with status predicated solely upon scholarly output. While female scholars were being gradually accepted into the discipline, and the study of women and gender in the field had been increasingly legitimised, studies continued to engage with male-authored "canonical"[71] texts and employed male-approved methodologies.

However, Skinner notes that the emerging recognition that scholarship was not value-free and that classicists needed to be aware of their disciplinary assumptions[72]. The emergence of cross-disciplinary work on women and gender, and questioning of the focus upon canonical classics sources also encouraged her critiques of existing scholarship on ancient women.[73]

In 1987 she was the editor of a special journal issue[74] which endeavoured to concentrate on new methods and approaches to the study of women in antiquity. In a review of this issue, Jane F. Gardner states that this "brief is variously interpreted [by the authors]; the common element is avoidance, subordination or reinterpretation of literary evidence, because of its 'male-oriented ideological bias'".[75]

The collection examined the problematic nature of the evidence of women in antiquity; methodological advances; female agency in Greek plays and epics; the etymology of terms referring to Athenian women and their cultural meaning, ancient gynaecology and the comparative independence and wealth of Spartan women.

These essays are significant for their determination to re-examine and reinterpret existing classical evidence in order to gain a more diverse understanding of women in antiquity. The study of women in classical antiquity continues to embrace new methodologies to analyse the

[67] *ibid.*, p. 182.
[68] *ibid.*, p. 183.
[69] *ibid.*, p. 183.
[70] *ibid.*, p. 183.
[71] *ibid.*, p. 184.
[72] *ibid.*, p. 185.
[73] *ibid.*, p. 186.
[74] Skinner, M., (1986).
[75] Gardner, J. F. (1988), 'Review: Women in Antiquity', *The Classical Review*, New Series, 38(2), p. 337.

evidence in new ways, including this author's use of Naomi Wolf's power feminism in this thesis.

As feminism became entrenched in the culture of Western society, feminist classicists fought to have the study of women and feminist interpretations of history incorporated into scholarship and university courses.[76] The search for acceptance and legitimacy by feminist classicists within the discipline was analysed by Barbara F. McManus' *Classics and Feminism: Gendering the Classics*,[77] who recorded the impact of feminist theory upon the study of classics in America.

McManus examined the development of the study of women in antiquity in American academia, beginning with the emergence of seminal works in the 1970s and the misogynistic reception that feminist classicists received at that time from their male colleagues and the American Philological Association. She then related the experiences of feminist classicists in surmounting these chauvinistic attitudes, and the impact that the study of gender and feminism had on both their scholarship; she also provides statistical documentation about the proportion of female classicists holding faculty and graduate student positions in American tertiary educational institutions.

It is this struggle for academic validity to which this thesis owes its conception, for this struggle by the early feminist classicists has enabled the flourishing of the study of women and gender in classical antiquity and its embrace of new critical theories and methodologies.

Pomeroy's later collection of essays in *Women's History and Ancient History*[78] reflected the changes to the study of women in ancient history subsequent to the publication of *Goddesses*. The collection considered the relationship between private and public spheres for women in antiquity, and the frequent interaction between the two. The book reflected the expanding corpus of work on ancient women, and the inclusion of this corpus of works not restricted to the 'classical' periods in Greece and Rome, a concept which this author has embraced in the decision for this thesis to include Rome's mythic regal period.

In the same year as this book was released, Pomeroy also published an article "The Study of Women in Antiquity: Past, Present, and Future"[79], in which she claimed that the two main problems with previous scholarship on ancient women were "the wholesale application of

[76] For several accounts of this conflict see Rabinowitz, N. S., and Richlin, A. (1993), *Feminist Theory and the Classics*, New York: Routledge, p. 1-16; McManus, B. (1997), *Classics and Feminism: Gendering the Classics*, Twayne: Prentice Hall International; Skinner, M. (1987).
[77] McManus, B. (1997), *op. cit.*
[78] Pomeroy, S. B. (1991), *Women's History and Ancient History*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
[79] Pomeroy, S. B. (1991a), 'Study of Women in Antiquity: Past, Present, and Future', *The American Journal of Philology*, 112(2), p.263-268.

theories of literary criticism by scholars who did not distinguish the study of men's ideas and images of women from the study of historical women"[80] and the fact that "some would-be historians of women who do distinguish the study of women's lives from the study of men's ideas about women were trained in literary rather than in historical methodology".[81] She also expressed her hope about the contributions to be made by art historians and archaeologists to the study of the "*realia*"[82] of ancient women's lives.

Amy Richlin's influential collection of essays about the study of the representation and objectification of women in ancient Greek and Roman literature and art[83] draws upon evidence from various media and genres. The contributions to this volume examined female characters in Attic tragedy and Old Comedy, erotic scenes on Attic vases, *erotikoi hypotheseis* (erotic fiction), the comparison of women to food by Athenaeus, erotic wall paintings in Pompeii, Ovid's many depictions of rape, and the rape of Lucretia and Verginia as a metaphor for the violation of the body politic.

This thesis only concentrates on literary evidence; nonetheless, it still examines representations of women created by men for a male gaze. As Richlin asserts, sexually provocative images of ancient Roman women, such as Messalina or Julia, must be viewed as pornography, not history, and accordingly treated with reservations. Her observation is particularly significant as politically powerful women are often depicted as sexually promiscuous.

The use of a multitude of evidence is also evidenced in the volume of essays comprising *Women in the Classical World*,[84] which is a book that discusses both evidence from various literary genres and visual evidence from archaeological and numismatic sources. This trend has allowed scholars to produce more comprehensive studies of ancient Greek and Roman women. Their approach is particularly beneficial as it provides additional and different information on women than that provided by ancient historiography, whose focus on war and politics – namely on foregrounding the thoughts, words and deeds of predominantly elite male Roman citizen soldiers and statesmen – has prejudiced its depiction of Roman women.

A series of quadrennial conferences on 'Feminism and Classics' has reflected the changing concerns for feminist scholars of ancient history from its inaugural meeting in 1992, to the latest in 2016. The original conference discussed such issues as the relationship between depictions

[80] *ibid.*, p. 265.
[81] *ibid.*, p. 266.
[82] *ibid.*, p. 266.
[83] Richlin, A. (1992), *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[84] Fantham, E., Foley, H. P., Kampen, N. B., Pomeroy, S. B., and Shapiro, H. A. (1995), *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text*, New York: Oxford University Press.

of women in the ancient world and their social and cultural context and the value and relevance of different forms of evidence in the search for historic women, from the traditional histories and biographies, to epigraphy and sculpture.[85]

A collection of papers from the second conference was edited for a special issue of the *American Journal of Philology* by Barbara K. Gold,[86] which focused upon encouraging the use of non-literary evidence, expanding the study of women in periods and places outside of classical Greece and Rome, supporting the application of literary critical theories to canonical texts, and seeking "to clarify, illuminate, and evaluate the relations between classical scholarship and the politics of social change."[87] The major goal of the third conference was to "address the generational shift in feminism, and especially within Classics".[88]

This emphasis upon the historical realities of women's lives in classical antiquity shifted in the fourth conference to "examine intersections of gender and other types of identity in relation to ancient Mediterranean geographical and social environments".[89] This was a response to the recognition in feminism that, although feminism referred to the experiences of 'women' as a unified collective group, in actuality women were a heterogeneous group whose experiences were shaped not only by gender, but by factors such as race, class, sexuality. This compelled feminist historians to identify not only the varied experiences of Roman women of different classes and races, but also the biases of previous scholarship in the field.

This evolving intellectual perspective on the historical tradition continued in the fifth conference, which focused on the gender delineation of physical space and how it was depicted, subverted, challenged and redefined in ancient literature and art.[90] This evolving historical perspective continued in the sixth conference, which focused on gendered delineations of physical space and how they were depicted, such as the "boundaries between male and female, slave and free",[91] wealthy and poor, citizen and foreign resident, and girl and woman.

The collection *Feminist Theory and the Classics*[92] was influenced by the evolution of feminist theory in the 80s and 90s, and is therefore a varied collection demonstrating the breadth of new

[85] Rabinowitz, N. S., Richlin, A., *op. cit.*
[86] Gold, B. K. (1997), 'Feminism and Classics: Framing the Research Agenda', *The American Journal of Philology,* 118(2), pp. 328-332.
[87] *ibid.*, p. 328.
[88] Feminism and Classics III website, accessed on 23.04.2016: http://cac-scec.ca/ccb/ccb6/ccb671.html .
[89] Skinner, M., and Vivante, B. (2004), 'Feminism and Classics IV: A Report', *The American Journal of Philology,* 125(4), p. 603.
[90] Feminism and Classics V webpage on the Interclassica website, accessed 23.04.2016: http://interclassica.um.es/de_interes/eventos/feminism_classics_v_bringing_it_all_back_home .
[91] 'Call for papers: Feminism and Classics VI: *Crossing Borders, Crossing Lines* on Brock University website, http://www.brocku.ca/conferences/feminism-classics-vi/CFP, accessed 28.07.15 .
[92] Rabinowitz, N. S., Richlin, A., *op. cit.*

interpretations of old evidence when a variety of feminisms are applied to the study of Graeco-Roman history.[93] The collection of essays challenged the singularity often applied to 'women' as a collective group in feminist classicism, and instead encouraged a more nuanced view of women in ancient history.

The field also broadened its enquiries to the study of women of colour in the classics.[94] Ivan van Sertima[95] explored the high profile women of colour in ancient history. While the majority of these women were from Egypt and other African nations and thus not 'classical' in the traditional sense, this influential volume re-wrote women of colour back into historical visibility by recording the role women of colour have played in the history and development of civilization

In the above-mentioned volume, *Feminist Theory and the Classics*,[96] Shelley P. Haley raised her own dissatisfaction with the classics discipline, and her desire to pay due respect to the African contribution to classics. She discussed and revised the negative interpretations both of Afrocentrist scholars and of Africans presented in classical texts. She stated that the Eurocentricism of classicists has resulted in the perception in scholarship of ancient Egyptians as 'white', which resulted in the failure to identify differing attitudes to women in the Mediterranean as possibly resulting from racial differences.

This is a very thought-provoking paper which challenges the cultural assumptions unconsciously applied by classicists in their interpretations. However, her example of Cleopatra as part of a black oral tradition does undercut her argument somewhat for, as M. Lefkowitz states, Cleopatra was culturally Macedonian Greek, not African Egyptian.[97] Nonetheless, the discussion of women of colour in ancient history is central to the third wave discussions of feminism in the classics, which recognises the different experiences of women from different racial backgrounds.

[93] *ibid.*
[94] van Sertima, I. (1988), *Black Women in Antiquity*, New Brunswick and New Jersey: Transaction and Haley, S. P., (1993), 'Black Feminist Thought & Classics: Re-membering, Re-claiming, Re-empowering' in Rabinowitz, N. S., Richlin, A., *op. cit*, pp. 23-43.
[95] van Sertima, I., *op. cit.*
[96] Haley, S. P., *op. cit.*, pp. 23-43.
[97] Lefkowitz, M., 'Review: Separate but Equal', *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, Third Series, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1996, p. 175.

The study of women and gender also incorporated studies regarding sexuality[98] and homosexuality.[99] The collection by Martha C. Nussbaum and Juha Sihvola,[100] the majority of which was derived from papers delivered at a conference held at the Finnish Institute at Rome in 1997, asked the questions 'how is erotic experience understood in classical texts of various kinds, and what ethical judgments and philosophical arguments are made about sex?' The collection is quite diverse and explores both homosexual desire and conjugal love, in Greek and Roman contexts. These essays also elucidated the commonalities between the two cultures' views of sex, including a prioritisation of reciprocity and enjoyment for both sexual partners.

In 2002 Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Lisa Avanger published a collection of essays[101] about Greek and Roman evidence for the homosocial and homoerotic relationships between women in antiquity. Rabinowitz discussed the critical terminology of gender and identity, as well as the political and theoretical positions, which affect the interpretation of this evidence. Other essays in the volume examine the poetry of Sappho, depictions of women on Greek ceramics and Attic tombstones, as well as the characters of Iphis and Ianthe in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Leaena and Clonarium in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*. The book concludes with an analysis of letters from church officials in fifth century Egypt which discuss homosexuality amongst female members of a monastery. These works reflect the expansion of the study of women in the classics to incorporate multiple and complex understandings of sexuality, gender and sexual identity.

The *realia* of Roman women's lives have also become a source of scholarship. Women's role as 'mother' is explored by Suzxanne Dixon,[102] although the nature of the evidence necessitates that it is more of a study of the stereotypes and ideals associated with motherhood in Roman culture. Nonetheless, the role of women in the private sphere of Roman culture is significant.

The interests of specialists in the field have only continued to increase, incorporating analyses presenting unexplored periods of time and geographic locals, such the rural landscapes of Greece and Rome.[103] The majority of work on women in ancient Greece and Rome focuses on women in urbanised areas, owing to the limited evidence for the lives of women in rural ancient

[98] Such as Nussbaum, M. C., Sihvola, J. (2002), *The Sleep of Reason: Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece and Rome*, Chicago and Illinois: University of Chicago Press and Skinner, M. (2005), *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell.
[99] Such as Rabinowitz, N. S., Auanger, L. (2002), *Among Women: From the Homosocial to the Homoerotic in the Ancient World*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
[100] Nussbaum, M. C., Sihvola, J. (2002), *The Sleep of Reason: Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece and Rome*, Chicago and Illinois: University of Chicago Press.
[101] Rabinowitz, N. S., Auanger, L., *op. cit.*
[102] Dixon, S. (1988), *The Roman Mother*, London and Sydney: Croom Helm.
[103] Scheidel, W. (1995), 'The Most Silent Women of Greece and Rome: Rural Labour and Women's Life in the Ancient World,' *Greece & Rome,* 42(2), pp. 202-217 and Scheidel, W. (1996), 'The Most Silent Women of Greece and Rome: Rural Labour and Women's Life in the Ancient World (2)', *Greece & Rome,* 43(1), pp. 1-10.

Greece and Rome. Walter Scheidel has noted that the focus of surviving literary and non-literary evidence on urban women warped the perception of modern scholars of the realia of all women's lives in antiquity.

Scheidel believes that up to 90% of the Mediterranean population was involved in the production of agriculture.[104] Despite the upper class ideal of women restricted to domestic tasks, he therefore made the case that female slaves and women in rural households would have been required to take part in the agricultural work, particularly in peak labour periods such as harvest.[105]

The degree to which women were needed would have been depended upon a number of factors, including the geological conditions, the preference for the plough or hoe, and the military obligations of the male members of the household.[106] This work explores the lives of the majority of women in antiquity, who were not the focus of classical literature. This thesis has embraced the study of such non-traditional time periods by beginning its study in archaic Rome. Contemporary feminist classicists also continue to discuss the rise and evolution of feminism and the classics.[107]

These conferences and publications reflect the growing complexity of the scholarship on women in ancient Rome. From a desire to discover and recover women in classical history, the scholarship has embraced multifaceted approaches which encourage the use of multiple forms of evidence and understand the differences in the identity of 'woman' in the ancient world. This plethora of feminist research has paved the way for the scope of historical scholarship to move beyond the patriarchal arenas of politics and military campaigns, and justifies works devoted to the study of women outside these realms.[108]

While it is abundantly clear that scholarship dealing with feminist or gender issues in the historical record displays a significant breadth and depth, the questions to be raised about the possession and use of power by Roman women have received limited attention. In regard to the latter questions, it is possible to cite only a few studies foregrounding the issue of female power in Roman historical narrative.

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[104]Scheidel, W., 1995, p. 207.
[105] Scheidel, W., 1995, p. 208 – 209, Scheidel, W., 1996, p. 1-2.
[106] Scheidel, W., 1995, p. 211-213.
[107] Such as in Bennett, J. M. (2006), *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press and Zajko, V. (2008), '"What difference was made?": Feminist modes of Reception' in Hardwick, L., Stray, C. (eds.), *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, Malden, Massachusetts; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 195-206.
[108] Gold, B. K., 'Feminism and the Classics: Framing the Research Agenda', *American Journal of Philology*, 118(2), p. 330.

Arlene W. Saxonhouse[109] provided a very brief introduction to the involvement of women in politics as described by canonical literary texts. Her discussion is expanded by Richard Bauman's study of women in politics and Anthony Barrett's biographies of Livia and Agrippina the Younger, which reflected the optimism of the early feminist classicists as they concentrated on illuminating the lives of women in ancient Rome and interpreting their actions.

Richard A. Bauman is one of the very few who has examined ancient Roman women over an extended period of time.[110] His work is an invaluable resource for the conduct of women in ancient Rome, and he establishes that, despite the fact that women were unable to formally involve themselves in politics, there exists in our literary, archaeological and epigraphic records evidence that women of Republican and early imperial Rome were consistently involved in the political processes of the state.

However, he shares an unabashed fascination with the notorious female characters of Roman history, and his wide scope also often results in a descriptive style instead of a more analytical and critical evaluation of the evidence. John Bendix notes that Bauman also rarely discusses the reliability and biases of his ancient sources and the effect of that unreliability upon his interpretation of the evidence.[111] Bendix believes that Bauman's retrospective view of female involvement in ancient Roman politics creates a deterministic history, rather than a history affected by changing societal and political climates.[112]

Anthony A. Barrett has written comprehensive biographies of both Livia[113] and Agrippina the Younger[114], which range widely in both their examination and interpretation of the evidence available. Biographies of ancient Romans by modern historians have generally been restricted to those men whose political and/or military power changed the shape of Rome – Cicero, Pompey, Julius Caesar, Augustus and his successors.[115] Barrett's decision to write biographies

[109] Saxonhouse, A. (1985), *Women in the History of Political Thought: Ancient Greece to Machiavelli,* New York: Praeger, p. 93-125.
[110] Bauman, R. A. (1992), *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome*, London and New York: Routledge.
[111] Bendix, J. (1993), 'Women and Politics in Ancient Rome', *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 04.02.02.
[112] *ibid.*
[113] Barrett, A. A., *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.
[114] Barrett, A. A., *Agrippina: Sex, Power, and Politics in the Early Empire*, London: Routledge, 1999.
[115] For example, Collins, Rev. W. L., *Cicero*, W. Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1900; Dorey, T. A., Scullard, H. H., *Cicero: Chapters by H. H. Scullard*, Routledge, London, 1968; Douglas, A. E., *Cicero*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968; Shackleton Bailey, D. R., *Cicero*, Duckworth, London, 1971; Stockton, D., *Cicero: A Political Biography*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1971; Everitt, A., *Cicero: The Life and Times of Rome's Greatest Politician*, Random House, New York, 2003; Leach, J., *Pompey the Great*, Rowman and Littlefield, London, 1978; Seager, R., *Pompey: A Political Biography*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1979; Greenlaugh, P., *Pompey: The Republican Prince*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1981; Southern, P., *Pompey the Great*, Tempus Publishing Ltd, Gloucestershire, 2002;Grant, M., *Julius Caesar*, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1932; Fuller, J. F.C., *Julius Caesar: Man, Soldier, and Tyrant*, Vol. 422, Da Capo Press, 1965; Balsdon, J. P. V. D., *Julius Caesar: A Political Biography*, Atheneum, New York, 1967; Bradford, E., *Julius Caesar: The Pursuit of Power*, H. Hamilton, London, 1984; Kamm, A., *Julius Caesar: A Life*, Routledge, London,

of these women reflects his perception of the importance of these women who could not hold office, but who were at the centre of political power in the Julio-Claudian era.

Fiona McHardy and Eireann Marshall's 2004 collection[116] analyses the influence of women in Greek, Roman and Egyptian societies upon cultural spheres traditionally defined as male, such as politics, science, law, medicine the arts, and the Roman family. This thesis examines the use of power by women only in political and military matters, and in ancient Roman history.

Judith Hallett's 2006 essay on Cornelia, [117] in a special issue of *Helios*, continues to investigate the impact of female familial connections upon political connections and values in Republican Rome is particularly relevant. This study continues the focus on female influence on the traditionally male world of politics, but expands its purview to a greater period of Roman history, and beyond familial connections.

The 1992 collection of essays on stereotypes of women in power[118] edited by Barbara Garlick, Suzanne Dixon and Pauline Allen examines the perception of women throughout history who have entered the realm of public influence. The collection is wide-ranging, with chapters on ancient Egypt and Rome, late antique Byzantium, medieval Iceland, China's Ming dynasty, fifteenth century Europe, the Victorian era, and twentieth century Australia. The authors establish that, despite the cultural, historical and geographical differences in context, women exerting power or authority have routinely been castigated with the use of similar pejorative stereotypes. This study expands upon the study of stereotypes by examining how and why power was utilised by women, but restricts its scope to Roman history.

Judith Hallett's 1984 study[119] of the power that elite women derived from their place within the family structure reflected the growing understanding in feminist classicism that the political actions of women needed to be viewed in relation to their social and cultural context. Hallett recognised the paradox whereby select women in upper class Roman society of the late Republic and early Empire wielded power and exhibited a high social profile despite the patriarchal socio-cultural context. Hallett claimed that this contradiction could be explained by studying the upper class women of ancient Rome in the context of their position within the

2006; Canfora, L., trans. by M. Hill and K. Whindle, *Julius Caesar*: The People's Dictator, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2007; and Billows, R. A., *Julius Caesar: The Colossus of Rome*, Routledge, New York, 2009.

[116] McHardy, F., Marshall, E. (2004), *Women's Influence on Classical Civilization*, London: Routledge.

[117] Hallett, J. P. (2006b), 'Introduction: Cornelia and Her Maternal Legacy' , *Helios*, 33(2), p. 119-148.

[118] Garlick, B., Dixon, S., Allen, P. (1992), *Stereotypes of Women in Power: Historical Perspectives and Revisionist Views*, New York: Greenwood Press.

[119] Hallett, J. P. (1984b), *Fathers and Daughters in Roman Society: Women and the Elite Family*, Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

familial structure. Hallett analysed women's familial relationships from an anthropological perspective. She stated that some women could be seen as 'structurally central' family members, i.e. "having some degree of control over their family's economic resources and being critically involved in its decision-making processes".[120]

Hallett examined the significantly close relationships between father and daughter in ancient Rome, which she termed 'filiafocality'. She believed that this is the foundation of elite women's influence in their roles as daughter, sister and mother. She cited the Roman tradition of daughters being named a feminised version of their father's cognomen as evidence of a peculiarly Roman close connection between father and daughter. This is supported by a cross-cultural comparison of such relationships in contemporaneous cultures. Hallett's analysis, however, de-emphasised the role of 'wife' in the Roman family dynamic, and its relation to social and political activity.

This thesis follows Hallett's study of an apparent paradox in Roman family history, in which select women of the elite classes are repeatedly depicted as holding and wielding power. However, instead of centring the analysis of this phenomenon in the family dynamic, this thesis attempts to reconcile this paradox through a power feminist interpretation of the literary evidence. The latter approach incorporates the notion of a women's familial role as a source of power, but it emphasises the roles of wife and mother far more heavily than Hallett.

The rhetorical concerns of Suzanne Dixon and Susan Fischler reflect the contemporary concern among feminist classicists with the patriarchal bias of our sources, and the effect their depictions of women in ancient Rome. Suzanne Dixon[121] discusses the depiction of Roman women who sought or gained power in the public realm as 'domineering dowagers' or 'scheming concubines'. Susan Fischler[122] examines "gender relationships and their bearing on power structures at Rome, and how male attitudes toward gender and power influenced the depiction of women within ancient literary texts"[123], concentrating on the imperial women from 31 BC to 68 AD.

The works of Fay Glinister and Katariina Mustakallio which concentrate on the women in Livy's first pentad, reflect the more recent concern with examining women in periods of history

[120] *ibid.*, p. 5.
[121] Dixon, S. (1992), 'Conclusion - The Enduring Theme: Domineering Dowagers and Scheming Concubines' In Garlick, B., Dixon, S., Allen, P. (eds.), *Stereotypes of Women in Power: Historical Perspectives and Revisionist Views*, New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 209-226.
[122] Fischler, S. (1994), 'Social Stereotypes and Historical Analysis: The Case of the Imperial Women at Rome,' In Archer, L., Fischler, S. (eds.), Wyke, M., *Women in Ancient Societies*. London: Routledge.
[123] *ibid.*, p. 115.

that are not traditionally 'classical'. Glinister[124] argues for the historicity of the early women depicted in our sources. However, considering the semi-mythical nature of this period, and its transmission through an oral tradition until Roman history began to be recorded in the second century BC, the accounts of archaic Rome that survive cannot be considered as historically accurate.

Katariina Mustakallio[125] claims that recent studies of Livy's early books have over-emphasised the subordinate role of Roman women. Although her case studies indicate that women rise to prominence in times of crisis, she does not develop her argument further by discussing the relation between Livy's depiction of early Roman women, the historic women of archaic Rome and the women contemporary to Livy.

Jasper Burns and Annelise Freisenbruch reflect a recent effort to publish studies aimed at a wider audience. Both Burns[126] and Freisenbruch[127] have published books discussing the sisters, daughters, wives and daughters of the emperors, contextualised in the rise and reign of each emperor. Freisenbruch is concerned with the lives of the imperial women from Octavia and Livia to Galla Placidia, while Burns examines only the women of the Julio-Claudian period. Freisenbruch discusses both the literary evidence as well as the role of imperial women in public art and coins, in which their public images became imperial propaganda. However, neither Burns nor Freisenbruch provided an in-depth analysis or original research, and therefore their works are best regarded as an overview of the topic rather than a critical study.

The majority of the evidence for any investigation of women in Rome is found in the ancient sources. Livy is the most useful and reliable source for the pre-Republican period, while Dionysius of Halicarnassus is a useful as a comparison. Modern scholarship on the regal period is scarce, and studies focusing on women even more so. Major figures such as Lucretia are examined for literary and artistic, rather than historical, purposes. Several prominent female figures from this period, such as Horatia and Tullia, are barely mentioned in any modern scholarship.

Livy was born in Patavium[128] – a town well known in his time for its conservative morals. His lifetime was marred by almost constant civil war, from Caesar's war with Pompey through to

[124] Glinister, F. (1997), 'Women and Power in Archaic Rome' In Cornell, T. J., Lomas, K., *Gender and Ethnicity in Ancient Italy*, Accordia Research Institute: London, pp. 115-127.
[125] Mustakallio, K. (1999), 'Legendary Women and Female Groups in Livy' In Setälä, P., Savunen, L., *Female Networks and the Public Sphere in Roman Society*, Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, pp. 53-64.
[126] Burns, J. (2007), *Great Women of Imperial Rome*, Routledge: London.
[127] Freisenbruch, A. (2011), *The First Ladies of Rome: The Women Behind the Caesars*, Vintage Books: London.
[128] Warrior, V. M. (2006), *Livy: The History of Rome Books 1 – 5*: *Translated, with Introduction and Notes*, Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 2006, p. vi.

the establishment of the Augustan principate. It is no surprise, therefore, that Livy's work depicts a degeneration from earlier, more virtuous times to a contemporary age of corruption and vice. Livy's account of the regal period has survived intact, unlike most of his work which survives only in summarised form. It is believed that Livy's history was held in great respect. Martial,[129] Suetonius[130] and Pliny the Younger[131] all make references to Livy, and the literary critic and rhetorician Quintillian praises his style.[132] Stylistic and literary similarities between these sources suggest that later writers used Livy as source for their work.

The earliest known writer of Roman history is Quintus Fabius Pictor who, in the late third century BC, wrote a history from Rome's founding to his own time,[133] and is named as a source by Livy for this period.[134] He also cites Lucius Calpurnius Piso (consul in the late second century BCE),[135] and the first century BCE writers Valerius Antias,[136] Licinius Macer,[137] and Aelius Tubero.[138] Livy is believed to have used public documents, including the *Annales Maximi*, the *Fasti Consulares Capitolini*, the *Fasti Triumphales*, and inscriptions recording ancient laws and treaties. From such a quantity of evidence, "only fragments of the consular and triumphal lists have survived, but these generally corroborate the literary record"[139]. Livy also mentions the Linen Books (*Libri Lintei*), an "otherwise-unknown source that apparently contained a list of magistrates that was at variance with other records he consulted"[140]. These early works themselves depended upon family histories kept by aristocratic families, which were often embellished, as well as oral traditions. For much of his work, however, Livy fails to cite sources for his work, and so modern scholars are left to conjecture at their reliability.

Livy acknowledges the difficulties associated with the long chronological distance from the subject when dealing with the regal period. He also recognises that patriotic exaggeration may have affected his sources' reliability – "It is the privilege of antiquity to mingle divine things with human, and so to add dignity to the beginnings of cities."[141]

[129] Mart., 14.190.
[130] Suet., *Dom.*, 10.
[131] Plin., *Letters*, 6.20.
[132] Quint., *Institutio Oratoria*, 10.1.32.
[133] Warrior, *op. cit.*, p. xii.
[134] Livy, 1.44, 1.55, 2.40.
[135] Livy, 1.55, 2.32, 2.58.
[136] Livy, 3.5, 4.23.
[137] Livy, 4.7, 4.20, 4.23.
[138] Livy, 4.23.
[139] Warrior, *op. cit.*, p. xiv.
[140] *ibid.*, p. xii.
[141] Livy, pr.7.

G. Forsythe believes that Livy felt obligated in his role as an historian to record all versions of an historic tradition, despite his personal judgement of their value.[142] Forsythe has argued that, in cases where the historical narrative supplies several variants, Livy will yield to the earliest account, or the most common, or most probabilistic. Most often, however, he will supply the reader with all versions but refuse to make a direct judgement, commenting only indirectly[143].

Livy states in the preface to his history that his intention is to write the history of

> "the life and morals of the community; the men and the qualities by which through domestic policy and foreign war dominion was won and extended. Then as the standard of morality gradually lowers, let him follow the decay of the national character, observing how at first it slowly sinks, then slips downward more and more rapidly, and finally begins to plunge into headlong ruin, until he reaches these days, in which we can bear neither our diseases nor their remedies."[144]

In order to depict such a degeneration of society, Livy is keen to portray the early Romans as more virtuous, disciplined people "untainted by the intrusion of later foreign corrupting influences."[145] In order to do so, G. Forsythe argues that Livy will include historically unreliable stories if they continue his moral programme.[146] To this end, women in Livy's history are "simply the passive instruments of man's downfall,"[147] or symptoms of it.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus is another essential source for the early history of Rome. He was a contemporary of Livy, very close in age but born in a very different part of the Roman Empire. Dionysius came from the Hellenised East of Asia Minor, but lived and taught in Rome for over twenty-two years.[148] Dionysius shared many of the same sources as Livy, as well as oral accounts "from men of the greatest learning,"[149] who remain unnamed. Despite their shared sources, their accounts often differ in details, which are often attributed to Dionysius' less critical approach to his sources, and "lavish and rhetorical"[150] style.

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[142] Forsythe, G. (1999), Livy *and Early Rome: A Study in Historical Method and Judgement*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, p. 48-49.
[143] Warrior, *op. cit.* p. xix.
[144] Livy, pr. 9.
[145] Forsythe, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
[146] *ibid.*, p. 66.
[147] Smethurst, S. E. (1950), 'Women in Livy's *History*', *Greece and Rome,* 19(56), p. 83.
[148] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 1.7.
[149] *ibid.*, 1.7.
[150] Forsythe, G., *op. cit.*, p. 67.

The two historians also wrote with different intentions – Dionysius was writing in Greek for a Greek audience unacquainted with many Roman customs and laws. He claims in his preface that many of those under Roman dominion were misinformed regarding the early history of Rome, and believed that "having come upon various vagabonds without house or home and barbarians, and even those not free men, as her founders, she in the course of time arrived at world domination, and this not through reverence for the gods and justice and every other virtue, but through some chance and the injustice of Fortune, which inconsiderately showers her greatest favours upon the most undeserving"[151]. Dionysius is therefore intent upon relating the early history of the Romans, and illustrating that "Rome from the very beginning, immediately after its founding, produced infinite examples of virtue in men whose superiors, whether for piety or for justice or for life-long self-control or for warlike valour, no city, either Greek or barbarian, has ever produced"[152]. Dionysius is therefore keen to show, not a degeneration from virtue, but a society that is inherently virtuous and worthy of her great dominion. The rhetorical flourishes for which Dionysius is often criticised by modern scholars can be attributed to his belief that history should be written for a broad audience and should entertain as well as inform.[153]

Cassius Dio was born circa 155 AD in Nicaea in Bithynia. He was a Roman senator who was twice consul,[154] and who was given proconsular commands in Smyrna,[155] Africa[156] and Pannonia.[157] He was well-liked by Severus Alexander, with whom he held his second consulship. He was forced, however, to administer it *in absentia* as the Praetorian Guard threatened him over anger at his discipline of the legions in Pannonia.[158]

Cassius Dio's *Roman History* was published in 80 books, which began with the mythical founding of Rome by Aeneas, and ended in 229 AD. A number of his books remain largely extant, but some survive only in summarised or fragmentary form.[159] Despite Dio's Roman citizenship, he decided to write his history in Greek. He states that his work is intended to provide knowledge of Roman achievements in peace and war to both Romans and non-Romans.[160]

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[151] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 1.4.
[152] *ibid.*, 1.5.
[153] *ibid.*, 1.8.
[154] Dio Cass., 76.16.4, 80.5.1.
[155] Dio Cass., 79.7.4.
[156] Dio Cass., 80.1.2.
[157] Dio Cass., 55.23.5.
[158] Dio Cass., 80.4.2.
[159] Books 1-36 survive in fragmentary form, books 37-54 are almost entirely extant, book 55 has considerable gaps, books 56-60 are complete, and books 61-80 are in fragmentary form.
[160] Dio Cass., 1.1.

Peter M. Swan claims that Dio disapproved of female involvement in politics, which was reflected in his negative portrayal of Livia and Julia Domna.[161] Dio also strongly disapproved of any disruption to the traditional stratification of Roman culture and politics[162] and thus the involvement of imperial freedmen in the actions of imperial women earned his censure.

Polybius was a Greek historian of the second century B.C., who grew up in Arcadia[163] but was sent in 167 B.C. as a hostage to Rome as a result of his father's involvement in the Achaean League.[164] In Rome he was popular amongst the aristocratic families of Rome, and was employed by Aemilius Paulus to tutor his two sons, Fabius and Scipio Aemilianus.[165] Polybius chose to remain in Rome after the Achaean hostages were released in 150 BC due to his close friendship with Scipio,[166] whom he would accompany in 146 BC to the capture and destruction of Carthage.

Polybius' *Histories* chronicle Roman history from the late third century B.C. to the mid-second century, and are concerned with depicting the rapidly expanding dominion of Roman power to cover the majority of the "inhabited"[167] (Mediterranean) world.[168] He also states that "the soundest education and training for a life of active politics is the study of History, and the surest and indeed the only method of learning how to bear bravely the vicissitudes of fortune, is to recall the calamities of others".[169] As such, he believes that military and political experience is necessary for any historian,[170] and that the best source materials are interviews with those present at the event.[171]

Due to his time spent in Rome, in particular with Scipio Aemilianus, and his preference for contemporaneous evidence, Polybius' incorporation of women in his history often draws upon his own interactions and first hand anecdotes. This, in addition to his need to explain points of Roman culture to his Greek audience, means that Polybius will include valuable digressions, such as his account of Scipio Aemilianus executing his adoptive grandmother's (and paternal aunt's) will.[172] However, his personal connection and involvement in the history also results in a degree of bias in his interpretation.

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[161] Swan, P. M. (2004), *The Augustan Succession: An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio's Roman History Books 55-56 (9 B.C.-14 A.D,* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, p. 6.
[162] *ibid.*, p. 4-6.
[163] Walbank, F. W., *Polybius*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972, p. 7.
[164] *ibid.*, p. 7-8.
[165] *ibid.*, p. 8.
[166] *ibid.*, p. 10.
[167] Polyb., 1.1.
[168] Polyb., 1.1.
[169] Polyb., 1.1.2.
[170] Polyb., 12.28-28a.
[171] Polyb., 12.27.
[172] Polyb., 31.26.

Biographers such as Plutarch and Suetonius are often criticised for their selectivity of sources. Ancient biographies were written with a moralistic purpose, and the entire depiction of the subject was framed around that principle. This meant that biographers were more selective than other sources in what information they included, as it had to fit their purpose. Strong women could therefore be used to illuminate the weak character of the subject, and women who stayed within the bounds of the *domus* could be juxtaposed to men who exceeded the limitations of proper behaviour. Suetonius in particular has been criticised for not being discriminating in his choice of sources, although he had access to the imperial archives, for he would also include common rumours. Fortunately, however, their focus on the personalities of their subjects allowed them to include personal details and anecdotes about their subjects' private lives, in which women figured prominently, and which would have otherwise been lost.

Plutarch was born circa 46 AD in Chaeronea in Boeotia, where he remained for most of his life. He studied mathematics and philosophy at the Academy of Athens under Ammonius in 66-67, and became a Roman citizen at an unknown point in his life. Nevertheless, Plutarch dedicated his civic energy to his hometown, serving as mayor, magistrate, and archon of his municipality. Plutarch also represented Chaeronea on various missions to foreign countries. He was also admitted to the mysteries of Apollo, and served as one of the two priests of Apollo at Delphi in the latter years of his life.

Plutarch published a number of moral essays and biographies of prominent Greek and Roman statesmen. His biographies of leading Roman senators, such as Tiberius Gracchus, Mark Antony, Pompey the Great, and Cicero, feature Roman women, although they are not the primary subject of the work, and therefore their depiction is influenced by their relationship to the male characters in Plutarch's works.

Bradley Buszard's study of the speeches attributed to women in Plutarch's *Lives* notes that such female speeches demonstrate rhetorical skill and a capacity for civic-minded action.[173] However, Plutarch tends to only portray women positively if they act within societal norms in the domestic sphere, or if their public actions are the result of "males in their lives fail[ing] to act appropriately."[174] Thus female usage of power in Plutarch should be considered as a reflection of the failure by women's male relatives to control and protect them, which creates

[173] Buszard, B. (2010), 'The Speech of Greek and Roman Women in Plutarch's Lives', *Classical Philology*, 105(1), p. 111.
[174] *ibid.*, p. 112.

extraordinary situations necessitating female action. Women's ordinary lives remained subordinate to the desires and ambitions of their male relations.[175]

Suetonius was born circa 69 AD, in Hippo Regius in Africa. He was of equestrian rank and a close friend of Pliny the Elder,[176] who describes him as "a most excellent, honourable, and learned man".[177] Through this friendship, Suetonius came into favour with Trajan and Hadrian. He served as secretary of studies and director of imperial archives under Trajan. He became Hadrian's secretary, but was dismissed in 119 because of over-familiarity with the empress Sabina.[178]

His biographies of the 'Twelve Caesars,' Julius Caesar to Domitian, are Suetonius' only completely extant work, although versions of his other works, including moral essays and biographies of grammarians, survive in fragmentary form. Suetonius' time as the director of imperial archives would have provided him with access to a great deal of privileged information from the history of the principate. However, Suetonius' inclusion of rumours into his biographies results in a less than critical approach to his source material.

Molly M. Pryzwansky[179] believes that an analysis of Suetonius' depiction of the actions of imperial women reveals Suetonius' opinions on ideal female conduct. She notes that Suetonius' concentration on his male subjects results in a fragmented view of the imperial women,[180] which she believes that Suetonius manipulates to "elucidate certain aspects of their associated men".[181] She examines the importance of the role of mother to imperial women,[182] with women such as Atia and Octavia portrayed positively, and imperial mothers who were heavily involved in their sons' lives, such as Livia and Agrippina the Younger, depicted negatively.

Pryzwansky then examines Suetonius' portrayal of the imperial women in their position as wives.[183] Suetonius represents those wives who operate within traditional societal norms positively, while denigrating the overt political or sexual actions of imperial women such as Agrippina the Younger and Messalina. Pryzwansky also notes that Suetonius mentions (allegedly) sexually promiscuous women of the entire imperial family, such as Drusilla and

[175] *ibid.*, p. 113.
[176] Pliny, *Epp.*, 1.24, 3.8, 5.10.
[177] Pliny, *Epp.*, 10.94.
[178] Hadrianus, 11.3.
[179] Pryzwansky, M. M. (2008), *Feminine Imperial Ideals in the Caesares of Suetonius*, Duke University Classical Studies: ProQuest.
[180] *ibid.*, ch. 1.
[181] *ibid.*, p. iv.
[182] *ibid.*, ch. 2.
[183] *ibid.*, ch. 3.

the Julias, far more frequently than he discusses those women whose chastity remained unchallenged.[184] This resulted in the transmission of a largely negative portrayal of imperial women which does not equally represent all members of the imperial household.

Suetonius' depiction of imperial women can therefore be seen to reflect his view about their, and all women's, ideal behaviour and testify to societal norms applied to elite female conduct. Suetonius praises those imperial women who do not involve themselves in the political actions of their male relatives, and incorporates the *topos* of sexual promiscuity attributed to imperial women in a manner disproportionate to the actual number of imperial women accused of such conduct. The women in his biographies illustrate the complex role of imperial women, whose relationship to the emperor necessitated a public profile, but who were still constrained by the social mores proscribed for elite Roman women.

Tacitus was born circa 56 AD in Gaul or northern Italy.[185] He notes in his *Histories* that his political career began during the reign of Vespasian, and he continued to advance through the *cursus homorum* under Titus and Domitian.[186] His political career was successful; he was admitted as a quindecimvir and praetor circa 88 and suffect consul in 97, although it is not clear if he was nominated for the position by Domitian or Nerva. Epigraphical evidence indicates that Tacitus was governor of Asia from 112-113. He also had a successful career as an advocate and orator, with Pliny describing his style as "σεμνῶς" (solemn).[187] He married the daughter of Gnaeus Julius Agricola, who was the governor of Britain circa 77 – 84.

He produced monographs on his father-in-law and the lands and people of the Germanic tribes, as well as a *Dialogue on Orators*. His historiographical works have been invaluable for modern scholars, and include his *Histories*, which record the events of the Roman principate from the accession of Galba to the death of Domitian, and the *Annals*, which chronicle the earlier history of that institution from the death of Augustus to Nero. Unfortunately, the *Annals* is not entirely extant; parts of books five and six are missing, all of books seven to ten are lost, some of book eleven is missing, and book sixteen breaks off abruptly, which indicates that the latter sections are lost.

Francesca L'Hoir notes that Tacitus alludes to the works of Livy, Cicero, Sallust, Virgil, Ovid, Horace and Seneca in the *Annals*.[188] Tacitus also references anonymous authors

[184] *ibid.*, ch. 4.
[185] Woodman, A. J. (2004), 'Introduction' In Woodman, A.J., *Tacitus, The Annals: Translated with Introduction and Notes by A. J. Woodman*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, p. xii.
[186] Tac., *Hist.*, 1.1.3.
[187] Pliny, *Ep.*, 2.11.17.
[188] L'Hoir, F. S. (2006), *Tragedy, Rhetoric, and the Historiography of Tacitus' Annales*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 2f.

regularly,[189] as well as citing Pliny the Younger,[190] Cluvius Rufus[191] and Fabius Rusticus.[192] He also records the use of the memoirs of Agrippina the Younger[193] and the general Corbulo,[194] as well as the speeches[195] and letters[196] of Tiberius, the daily gazette[197] and the *publica acta*.[198] Ronald Syme[199] claims that Tacitus used the *acta senatus* extensively, but they are only referred to on one occasion.[200] L'Hoir also believes that Tacitus' *Annals* were influenced by prototypes of regal figures typical in Greek tragedy.[201]

Anthony Woodman remarks that Tacitus' decision to begin his *Annals* at the death of Augustus is "striking and significant: this was the moment at which it became clear that the autocratic system of government established by Augustus over forty-five years was no transitory phenomenon but was destined to endure and that, for the period covered by the *Annals*, its endurance was inextricably associated with an imperial dynasty."[202]

Tacitus' description of the principate under the Julio-Claudians is largely negative. It is concerned primarily with domestic affairs[203] and the recurring presence of *delatores* (accusers) and *maiestas* trials (treason trials).[204] Tacitus believed that history should be utilised to gain praise for the virtuous and to critique those who performed evil deeds. Therefore his depiction of the Julio-Claudian principate is a study in moral shortcomings, both in the senatorial body and in the *domus Augusta*, owing to the concentration of power in the hands of the *princeps* and his court[205].

Woodman considers Tacitus' criticism of the institution of the principate "curious"[206] as he was politically successful during the Flavian principate. Sandra Joshel, however, articulates Tacitus' dilemma, remarking that he wrote ""from the complex point of view of a senator, a member of the ruling class whose actions and speech were constrained by the power of the *princeps*, and of a provincial whose very position as senator depended on the institution of the

[189] See a discussion of these references in Woodman, A. J., *op. cit.*, p. xiv.
[190] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.69.2, 13.20.2, 15.53.3.
[191] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.20.2, 14.2.1-2.
[192] Tac., *Ann.*, 15.61.3.
[193] Tac., *Ann.*, 4.53.2.
[194] Tac., *Ann.*, 15.16.1.
[195] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.81.1, 2.63.3.
[196] Tac., *Ann.*, 6.6.1.
[197] Tac., *Ann.*, 3.3.2, 13.31.1, 16.22.3.
[198] Tac., *Ann.*, 12.24.2.
[199] Syme, R. (1984), 'How Tacitus Wrote *Annals* I-III' in Syme, R., *Roman Papers*, Oxford: Clarendon, p. 1014-42.
[200] Tac., *Ann.*, 15.74.3.
[201] L'Hoir, F. S. (2006), p. 2f.
[202] Woodman, A. J., *op. cit.*, p. xii.
[203] *ibid.*, p. xiii.
[204] *ibid.*, p. xiii.
[205] *ibid.*, p. 118.
[206] *ibid.*, p. xi.

Principate"[207]. Furthermore, Ronald Mellor notes the influence of the reign of Domitian on Tacitus' depiction of the Julio-Claudian principate.[208] Although Tacitus was politically successful, Mellor believes that "yet the scars of those years inform all his writing".[209] It is unclear whether Tacitus felt guilt over his success under Domitian's tyrannical regime or complicity in its actions.[210] Nonetheless, Mellor believes that Tacitus used the actions of the Senate under Domitian as a model for the relationship between the Senate and the Julio-Claudian emperors.[211] The Julio-Claudian period was also significant as a transformative period for the Senate, as its previous executive power became subsumed by the *princeps* and the imperial household. [212]

An inscription of Claudius' speech before the Senate in 48 AD regarding the admittance to the Senate of Gallic Roman citizens, which was also recorded by Tacitus, has been preserved in epigraphic form.[213] Woodman notes that the main points of the speech preserved in Tacitus correlate to the inscription, but the rest of Tacitus' account, which is portrayed as direct speech, is vastly different.[214] Woodman believes that it was standard practice for direct speech in ancient historiography to convey the correct meaning of the speech, but with rhetorical alterations by the historiographer.[215] Nevertheless, both direct and indirect speech in Tacitus should be considered cautiously by modern scholarship.

He is often critical of women in his narrative; especially those who he believed were able to wield a considerable amount of influence. He believed that this conduct transgressed acceptable gender boundaries and was another symptom of the decline of Rome[216]. However, in his exploration of this subject he devotes considerable effort to chronicling the activities of elite imperial women, and is thus one of our most detailed sources on the influence of such women in this period. Tacitus' characterisation of Julio-Claudian women is therefore influenced by his moral judgement of the Julio-Claudian principate, and his experiences under the tyrannic rule of Domitian.

The study of women in Roman history also presents a further set of problems. One of the most widely recognised and discussed problems is the biases and motivations of the authors of our

[207] Joshel, S. R. (1995). "Female Desire and the Discourse of Empire: Tacitus's Messalina." *Signs* 21(1), p. 53.
[208] Mellor, R. (1993), *Tacitus*, New York and London: Routledge, p. 8.
[209] *ibid.*, p. 8.
[210] *ibid.*, p. 8.
[211] *ibid.*, p. 8.
[212] O'Gorman, E. (2000), *Irony and Misreading in the Annals of Tacitus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 2.
[213] Tac., *Ann.*, 11.24.
[214] Woodman, A. J., *op. cit.*, p. xvi.
[215] *ibid.*, p. xix.
[216] Corbier, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

literary texts, and their effects upon the representations of women preserved in their writing. Tacitus is one of the most widely remarked upon sources in this context because of his memorable portrayals of the women of the Julio-Claudian era. Tacitus' *oeuvre* has been examined, *inter alia*, by such scholars as R. Develin,[217] S. G. Daitz[218] and R. Mellor.[219] Even the less sensationalist Livy is shown by S. E. Smethurst to have shaped his female characters to further his aim of providing examples of virtuous behaviour for his audience to imitate.[220] B. Buszard examines the speeches attributed to women by Plutarch, in an attempt to understand Plutarch's own views of women, establishing that Plutarch's writing reflects a higher estimation of women that that previously attributed to him by earlier feminist scholarship.[221] M. M. Pryzwansky similarly examines Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars* in an attempt to understand the qualities of feminine behaviour idealised by Suetonius.[222]

T. Hillard's article "On the Stage, Behind the Curtain: Images of the Politically Active Women in the Late Roman Republic"[223] reminds modern readers of the negative stigma attached to the reputations of women perceived to be influencing the public life of Rome, both in their own historical context, and in the literary tradition.

The most comprehensive book addressing the multitude of issues facing scholars of Roman women is S. Dixon's *Reading Roman Women.*[224] She explores both the factors that affect the representation of Roman women in our ancient sources, as well as the personal and contextual baggage that affects our reception of the evidence, and thus our interpretation. It is an invaluable tool in the study of Roman women for its depth and comprehension of the topic.

The portrayals of ancient Roman women are further complicated by the cultural biases of our male writers. Their patriarchal contexts ensured a hostile attitude towards women's involvement in the public sphere, and especially in political processes at the highest level. Women wielding power occupied an "emblematic role"[225] and were therefore demonised and used by patriarchal mouthpieces as a justification for the continued elimination of women from

[217] Develin, R. (1983), 'Tacitus and Techniques of Insidious Suggestion. Revised version of paper presented at a Seminar on Thucydides and Tacitus (1977: Melbourne)', *Antichthon*, 17, pp. 64-95.
[218] Daitz, S. G. (1960), 'Tacitus' Technique of Character Portrayal', *The American Journal of Philology*, 81(1), p. 30-52.
[219] Mellor, R. (2011), *Tacitus' Annals: Oxford Approaches to Classical Literature,* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
[220] Smethurst, S. E., *op. cit.*, p 80-87.
[221] Buszard, B., *op. cit.*, pp. 83-115.
[222] Pryzwansky, M. M., *Feminine Imperial Ideals in the Caesares of Suetonius*, on Duke Universities Libraries webpage, 2008-04-23, http://hdl.handle.net/10161/627, accessed 28.07.15.
[223] Hillard, T. (1992), 'On the Stage, Behind the Curtain: Images of Politically Active Women in the Late Republic', in Garlick, B., Dixon, S., Allen, P. (eds.), *Stereotypes of Women in Power: Historical Perspectives and Revisionist Views*, New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 37-64.
[224] Dixon, S. (2001), *Reading Roman Women: Sources, Genres and Real Life*, London: Duckworth.
[225] *ibid.*, p. 154.

public life, as well as to highlight the lack of *virtus* displayed by other men within the historical narrative.[226]

This was often achieved through the positive and negative rhetorical stereotypes employed by ancient writers. As a result, any search for the 'historical truth' about these women is fruitless; the closest we can come is to examine the image of these women given to us by our sources. T. Hillard's statement regarding the study of women's political actions in the late Republic can be extended to cover the portrayal of all Roman women in the public sphere – "It can be argued that, whatever the reality in the late Republic, any 'evidence' of politically active or politically motivated women originates in political polemic. It consists of allegation rather than observation; it alleges non-observable activities; it is aimed at reducing the credibility of politically powerful men with whom the women are legitimately or illegitimately associated".[227]

Power Feminism

As we can see, there exists a spectrum of approaches to understanding the interaction of Roman women and power, reflected in classical scholarship and related literary studies during the latter third of the 20th century and the first decade and a half of the 21st century. Building on the socio-historical and cultural knowledge derived from this diversity of methodological and intellectual engagements with the tradition of republican and early imperial Roman historiography, this author believe that elements of Naomi Wolf's "power-feminism" approach can provide fresh insights into the roles and positions of elite women as represented in the historical narratives of ancient Rome.

Naomi Wolf's book *Fire with Fire*[228] advocates a form of feminism that encourages contemporary western women to use their legal, political and financial power to promote their own self-interest as well as to support the feminist movement. She claims that, in addition to the estrangement of women "from their own movement",[229] the feminist cause is hampered by those feminisms which have "developed maladaptive attitudes",[230] and by the fact that "women lack a psychology of female power to match their new opportunities".[231] These "maladaptive attitudes"[232] she collects under the heading of 'victim feminism', which she believes "casts

[226] Saxonhouse, A., *op. cit.*, p. 106-7.
[227] Hillard, T. (1992), *op. cit.*, p. 46-7.
[228] Wolf, N., *op. cit.*, p. 58-59.
[229] *ibid.*, p. xvi.
[230] *ibid.*, p. xvi.
[231] *ibid.*, p. xvi.
[232] *ibid.*, p. xvi.

women as sexually pure and mystically nurturing, and stresses the evil done to these 'good' women as a way to petition for their rights".[233]

Wolf instead advocates "for feminism to re-contact its power base: women. All women. Not just those women who support every tenet of an ideologically pure feminism, but every woman everywhere who is interested in equal rights, without any litmus test on specific issues such as abortion, pornography, sexuality, or political affiliation",[234] and for women to "to learn the ways of economic and political power, and to wield that power effectively to foster women's interests".[235] She argues against the popular feminist idea of biological essentialism and the abolition of contemporary value systems, and instead encourages women to exploit the power granted to them within contemporary value systems to compel change: "The status quo is not subtle, the only language it understands is that of money, votes, and public embarrassment."[236]

Wolf's attitudes to controversial topics such as sexual and domestic violence and the media depiction of feminism are targets for her critics. In her approach to sexual and domestic violence she advocates a rejection of the glorification of the status of victim.[237] However, Wood argues that for those affected by such violence accepting the status of victim is necessary to enable their "transformation from a helpless victim to an empowered survivor".[238]

Wolf's criticism of the media's depiction of feminism and feminist concerns also draws the ire of a number of critics. Wolf is concerned with changing the popular stereotype of feminism which perpetuates the distancing of the majority of women from the movement, as well as raising the public profile of feminist concerns and women's issues. J. Kammer, however, argues that "female journalists and women in the news speak of women's issues far more often than prominent males give voice to the concerns of their gender".[239]

This work is considered by some reviewers to be "stale",[240] "shallow"[241] and "a whirlwind of … unsupported statements".[242] Wolf's reliance upon "anecdotal, first-person accounts"[243] is unpopular with academic reviewers but, as L. Hazleton states, it is a style well-suited to her aim

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[233] *ibid.*, p. xvii.
[234] Hazleton, L. (1994), 'Book Review: Power Politics Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century by Naomi Wolf', *The Women's Review of Books*, 11(5), p. 1.
[235] *ibid.*, p. 1.
[236] Wolf, N., *op. cit.*, p. 318-9.
[237] Hazleton, L., *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[238] Wood, J. T. (1996), 'Book Review: Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How to Use It', *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 82(2), p. 180.
[239] Kammer, J. (1994), 'Book Review: Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century', *Nieman Reports*, 48(1), pp. 107.
[240] *ibid.*, p. 107.
[241] *ibid.*, p. 107.
[242] Rollins, K. (1994), 'Book Review: Fire with Fire', *Public Interest*, 116, pp. 124.
[243] Collins, C. (1994), 'Book Review: Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century', *Commonweal*, 121(4), p. 22.

of reaching a wide audience, including those who feel disenchanted with the feminist movement.[244] Wolf's tendency towards unsupported generalisations is also a target for critics. Hazleton believes that this habit is part of Wolf's aim to be accessible to a non-feminist audience.[245] However, such generalisations undermine her authority on feminism and feminist concerns, which she uses to justify the need for power feminism.

For example, Wolf's description of 'victim feminism' is "more congruent with current popular opinion than with the experience and knowledge of many who have studied and lived feminism".[246] She does not record other feminist scholars who are involved in discussions of the same issues, such as feminist use of power or female sexual desire, and as such she fails to recognise the plethora of opinions and ideas that exist within feminist circles.

This lends itself to the most prevalent critique of Wolf's book: her failure to accept the variations in women's experiences as a result of factors other than gender, such as race, class and sexuality, and the need to address these differences within feminist theory and practice.

As Wood notes, Wolf's "advice to women to use their money and position to gain power speaks only to those women who have money, status, and influence".[247] Although Wolf does admit that "economic equality with men is not going to guarantee economic equality among women",[248] Musolf notes that "she articulates no plan-of-action that would restructure the distribution of wealth".[249] Moreover, R. Hammer believes that Wolf's preoccupation with economic parity results in her silence on the multifaceted concerns of feminism.[250]

Her call to individualistic action and responsibility is also seen as drawing upon a "larger cultural narrative that celebrates individual choice and accountability and minimizes cultural constraints on personal identity and choices".[251] This self-determinist approach also depoliticises the movement[252] and absolves institutionalised oppression and inequality of responsibility for gendered inequality by placing responsibility for progress on individual action, regardless of circumstances.[253]

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[244] Hazleton, L., *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[245] Hazleton, L., *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[246] Wood, J. T., *op. cit.*, p. 180.
[247] *ibid.*, p. 174.
[248] Musolf, G. R. (1995), 'Book Review: Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How to Use It by Naomi Wolf', *Sociological Review*, 9, p. 106.
[249] *ibid.*, p. 106.
[250] Hammer, R. (2002), *Antifeminism and Family Terrorism: A Critical Feminist Perspective*, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, p. 55.
[251] Wood, J. T., *op. cit.*, p. 172.
[252] hooks, b. (1996), 'Dissident Heat: Fire with Fire', In Bauer, N. M., and Perry, D. (eds.), *"Bad Girls"/"Good Girls*": *Women, Sex & Power in the Nineties*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, p. 64.
[253] Hammer, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

This author believe that the theoretical criteria of this form of feminism can be applied critically to the examination of women in ancient Rome. There are, of course, several difficulties with using a guide to the changing direction of feminism as a critical theory for this thesis. The first is addressing the issues raised above. The stylistic foibles of Wolf's work are irrelevant to its use as a critical discourse.

This author will use the examples in the Roman historical narrative of female victims of sexual violence, such as Rhea Silvia and Verginia, to explore Wolf's depiction of victim feminism. These case studies will demonstate the limitations of Wolf's theory in relation to her attitudes to the victims of domestic and sexual violence, as well as provide a comparison on the effect use of power exhibited by victim feminist and power feminist approaches.

What must be addressed, however, is the fact that Wolf's ideas do not focus on the differences in experiences of women of different backgrounds who do not have the same access to 'power' that underpins Wolf's assumptions about the viability of 'power feminism'. Her cursory nod to the disparity in the social, cultural and economic lives of women is to encourage women to donate to feminist causes and vote for feminist politicians. Wolf encourages women to embrace power without acknowledging that such power arises from positions of privilege that are not accessible to all women. In applying Wolf's ideas to a critical discourse examining the actions of women in ancient Rome this criticism reappears, in that usually only the women of elevated status and wealth could exert *auctoritas* and *potestas*. The restriction in the scope of this thesis to an analysis of women depicted in literary works, in order to keep its source material at a manageable quantity, reinforces the focus upon elite women, as Roman history is a history of the actions of its elite members. Therefore, it is important to note that this thesis is only able to examine the effect upon the course of Roman history of *elite* women.

As discussed above, there is quite a body of work on women in ancient Rome, and in particular Richard Bauman's *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome* has already examined the interaction of women and power affecting the political issues of Republican and early Imperial Rome. However, this author believes that Bauman's interpretation of the evidence was heavily influenced by second wave feminism and that a power feminist approach can reveal greater complexities in the relationship between women and power in ancient Rome.

In our post-feminist world, this author fears that we often take a simplistic view of the topic of female usage of power in a patriarchal culture as wholly negative. However, Roman culture allowed women to be present at dinner parties where political discussions and decision-making took place; women could canvass for votes on behalf of husbands and sons; and a man could

even honourably withdraw legislation at the behest of his mother.[254] Clearly Roman society was more accepting about women's use of power than many other patriarchal cultures. The focus by "power feminism" on the individual as well as the collective use of power, both in serving one's own interests and those of women in general, allows for a closer examination of the relationship between women and power in ancient Rome.

Moreover, the influence of power feminist ideals upon Western culture in the early twenty-first century is significant. In popular culture, characters such as Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Veronica Mars, Wonder Woman and Supergirl have become power feminist icons. In 2013 Sheryl Sandberg, the Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, released her book *Lean In* – a power feminist proposal about business leadership and development. Female politicians such as Hilary Clinton have also tapped into the power feminist movement by encouraging voters to use their economic and political power to advance the needs of women by voting for her. Even in other academic disciplines, such as cultural studies, there has been a tentative and conditional acceotance of the power feminist movement.[255]

Nonetheless, the concept of power feminism is of limited applicability as a blueprint of practical actions for an audience of women who were *not* granted the same legal, political and financial rights as men, as is the case in the period of history examined by this thesis. To understand how to use Wolf's ideas as a critical tool we must go back to the original aims of the theory: to attract more women to the feminist movement, to replace "victim feminist" attitudes, which prioritise women's experiences as victims, with a power feminist approach, which focuses on women's agency, and to create a "psychology of female power".[256] We can disregard the first principle as irrelevant in the study of a patriarchal context. The second principle can be considered as the replacement of a 'victim feminist' analysis of history, which examines the subjugation of women, to a power feminist approach which examines women's use of power both as individuals and as a group to further both their own interests and/or collective interests. The third principle, the creation of a psychology of female power, requires studying how such power hass been and can been used, by analysing a series of high profile events involving women's use of power over a long chronological period.

So this study will be asking:

- How did the women achieve/wield power?
- For what purpose/s was power used?

[254] Plut., *GG.*, 4.
[255] Rowe, A. C. (2009), 'Subject to Power – Feminism Without Victims', *Women's Studies in Communication*, 32(1), pp. 12-35.
[256] Wolf, N., *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

- How did women's actions reportedly change the course of Roman history?
- How did the ancient writers view these actions?
- Did these women follow the precedents set by earlier women, and did they become a precedent for later women?

This thesis argues that through this analysis, we can examine how the use of power by women encouraged and enabled other women to follow and can show how women's use of power can in fact advance the rights and responsibilities and role of women in public life.

The present study is divided chronologically, into the Regal Period, the Early and Middle Republic, the Late Republic and the Early Imperial period. Within each period, each woman who appears in the literary tradition is looked at individually. Although some women, such as Livia and Octavia, span the Late Republic and early Imperial periods, the evidence will be divided into historical activity prior to, and after, the battle of Actium.

The first chapter examines those women whose activities during the regal period are cited in the historical record.

This chapter covers Roman history from the eighth century BC to the sixth century BC. It opens with Rhea Silvia's alleged rape by Mars and the birth of Remus and Romulus; then the abduction of the Sabine women and their intercession at the outbreak of war between the Romans and the Sabines; the betrayal of the Roman citadel by Tarpeia; the murder of Horatia by her brother and its legislative effect, Tanaquil's role in the succession of Servius, the actions of Tullia and the rape of Lucretia.

The second chapter focuses on the women of the early and middle Republic. This chapter includes the successful intervention of Veturia with her son Coriolanus in the fifth century BC, ending his war on his native Rome, the rape of Verginia and the revolt against the decemvirs circa 449 BC, the poisoning trials of 331 BC, the protest seeking the repeal of the *lex Oppia* in 195 BC and the women involved in the Bacchanalian conspiracy in 186 BC.

Chapter three analyses the political actions of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi in the late second century BC, and her continued use in political propaganda, the speech of Hortensia to the triumvirs in 42 BC, the political machinations and alleged military command of Fulvia in the mid-first century BC and the peace-keeping abilities of Octavia, demonstrated most aptly in her role as emissary between Antony and Octavian in 35 BC.

The final chapter deals with the early imperial period and will examine the public actions of Julia the Elder which resulted in her exile in 2 BC, the accusations of murder made against Livia throughout her life and her intercession in the trial of Plancina in 33 AD, the role of

Agrippina the Elder in the Rhine in 14 AD and the rumours of a *partes Agrippinae* (a political faction headed by Agrippina) in 26 AD, the judicial influence of Messalina and the implications of her 'marriage to Gaius Silius' in 48 AD, and the political actions and murder accusations made against Agrippina the Younger in the first half of the first century AD.

The author's research examines the representation of many women said to have been involved in shaping Roman history over an extended period of time from a power feminist perspective. This analytical study is important in order to understand the role of Roman women in a greater historical context than that in which they have previously been examined, and to investigate how women in Roman society employed *auctoritas* and *potestas* in ways that built upon previous precedents and would become precedents for later women, in order for the elite women of Rome to effect, if not change, Roman history.

CHAPTER ONE: THE REGAL PERIOD

Introduction

According to the surviving literary tradition, the regal period of Roman history dates from the mythical founding of Rome by Romulus circa 771 BC until the expulsion of the Tarquins and subsequent installation of a Republican form of government in 510 BC. These tumultuous centuries are said to have witnessed the transformation of Rome from a collection of vagrants and abducted maidens to a fully functioning city-state. The fledgling state is depicted in the historical narrative as having begun to display its military prowess in battles against neighbouring communities. So, too, the Etruscans to the north of Rome, and the Greek colonies to the south,[1] influenced Roman culture and politics in developing a communal self-identity. This identity was strengthened during the rise to power of the Etruscan Tarquin dynasty.[2] In relation to the present study, we should note that the Etruscan acceptance of elite women's prominence in the public life of the city was to prove a lasting influence on Roman culture.

Of course, it is important to note that this version of the early history of Rome, preserved by Livy, Ovid and Dionysius Halicarnassus, is a myth, adapted by family histories, aural transmission and the biases of our historians.[3] While this thesis focuses on written representations of women in Roman history, it should be remembered that the archaeological evidence from this era indicates instead a slow amalgamation of small villages to create the city of Rome.[4]

In this chapter this author will use Wolf's theory of power feminism and the questions posed in the introduction to study the actions of Rhea Silvia and the birth of Romulus and Remus; the abduction and rape of the Sabine women; the betrayal by Tarpeia of Rome to the Sabine army; the death of Horatia; Tanaquil's involvement in the accessions to the kingship of both her husband and her son; the dynastic machinations of Tullia; and the rape of Lucretia and the impact of her decisions on ensuing events. This author will look at how the use of *auctoritas* and *potestas* has been portrayed by our sources, and whether these socio-political and cultural sources of power were employed actively by the women or passively, through the agency of those around them. This thesis will then examine how these women were able to achieve power despite legal and political handicaps; how our sources record these incidents, how the women

[1] Cornell, T. J. (1995), *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars*, New York: Routledge, p. 86f.
[2] *ibid.*, p. 122f.
[3] *ibid.*, p. 1-26.
[4] For further reading about the archaeological history of early Rome see Cornell, *op.cit.*, chapters 3 and 4.

employed these powers for both themselves and those around them; how their actions are said to have changed the course of Roman history and how their actions set precedents for later women, as well as how they built upon the precedents that had been set by those before them.

Rhea Silvia

One of the first women that we come across in the narrative history of Rome is Rhea Silvia, otherwise known as Ilia, the mother of Romulus and Remus. Livy gives the basic details of the story: the brothers Numitor and Amulius inherited the kingdom of Alba Longa upon the death of their father, king Proca.[5] Through trickery Amulius seized sole control of the territory and, to prevent challenges from his brother's family, he arranged for the death of Numitor's son, and the consecration of Rhea Silvia, daughter of Numitor, as a Vestal Virgin.[6] However, several years later, Rhea Silvia was raped in the grove of Mars and gave birth to twin sons, Romulus and Remus. Although she claimed that Mars had raped her, Amulius indicted her for breaking her vows as a priestess.[7] She was imprisoned, and her children ordered to be drowned.[8]

Achievement of Power

Rhea Silvia possessed *auctoritas* in a variety of guises: socio-political – a status-dependent authority inherited as a member of the royal family of Alba Longa and sharing the Julian name from the family of the legendary hero Aeneas; religious – a state-sanctioned authority traditionally gained as a Vestal Virgin; and quasi-divine – a mythological authority conferred as a woman raped by a god. The ability of a woman to inherit *auctoritas* is evidenced in this thesis in the examples of such historical women as Cornelia,[9] Julia the Elder[10] and both Agrippinas.[11] After Romulus and Remus founded the city of Rome, Rhea Silvia's *auctoritas* would have increased owing to her membership in the royal families of two cities, although she is not mentioned further by our surviving historical sources.

Rhea Silvia conforms to the conceptualisation of 'victim feminism' as defined by Wolf in opposition to her construction of power feminism. Although Wolf's coined the phrase 'victim feminism' to describe aspects of the contemporary feminist movements as she viewed them, the term is still useful to analyse depictions of women from a power feminist perspective. Rhea Silvia gains additional power through her identity with victimhood and powerlessness.[12] Unlike power feminism, which focuses exclusively on the use of female agency, overlooking women's oppressions,[13] Rhea Silvia remains a passive character whose identity is in part defined by her status as a victim of Amulius and Mars.

[5] Livy, 1.3.
[6] Livy, 1.3.
[7] Livy, 1.4.
[8] Livy, 1.4.
[9] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 123-130.
[10] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 156-163.
[11] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 170-174, 185-189.
[12] Wolf, N., *op. cit.*, p. 147.
[13] Wolf, N., *op. cit.*, p. 58-59.

Dio claims that Amulius took these actions because he feared an oracle who predicted that "the children of Numitor" would kill him.[14] He also believed that Rhea's life was spared as a result of pleas from Amulius' daughter, and so instead the twins were given directly to the shepherd Faustulus.[15] A far more elaborate version of the myth appears in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who claims that, although most of his sources state that Mars was the father of the twins, there were those who believed it was one of her enamoured suitors, or Amulius himself, arrayed as Mars.[16] The belief that it was indeed Mars who raped Rhea was supported by supernatural omens which occurred at that time.[17] Dionysius also records that Amulius denounced Rhea's pregnancy in front of a "council,"[18] in which Numitor argued for her innocence, but the councillors voted to appease Amulius.[19] Dionysius' sources disagree about Rhea's subsequent fate: he records that she was either imprisoned openly, put to death, or spared upon the pleas of Amulius' daughter and secretly incarcerated.[20] His version records that the twins were placed in the Tiber, but that the myth of the she-wolf may have been a misinterpretation arising from the fact that a term for prostitute in use at that time was *lupa*, and that the shepherd Faustulus' wife may have previously been a prostitute.[21] Plutarch similarly adduces the etymology underpinning this theory.[22]

Rhea Silvia is also mentioned repeatedly in Ovid's *Fasti*. The Augustan poet does not question the paternity of her children, but instead continues to mention the fact of their divine lineage.[23] In Ovid's interpretation of the legend, Rhea went into the grove of Mars to collect sacred water, but rested her head and slept.[24] Mars desired her and "possessed her"[25] as she slept. When she awoke, she was pregnant, but only remembered dreaming of two palm tress growing, her uncle Amulius attempting to destroy them, and a she-wolf and a woodpecker (both animals sacred to Mars) protecting the trees.[26] He also states that images of Vesta "covered their eyes with their virgin hands: / The altar of the goddess certainly trembled when her priestess / Gave birth, and the fearful flame sank to its own ashes."[27] This is the only surviving reference to omens from

[14] Dio Cass., 1.5.
[15] Dio Cass., 1.5.
[16] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 1.77.
[17] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 1.77.
[18] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 1.78.
[19] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 1.78.
[20] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 1.79.
[21] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 1.84.
[22] Plut., *Rom.*, 4.3.
[23] Ov., *Fast.*, 2.383-421; 3.1-98; 3.183-4; 4.23-26.
[24] Ov., *Fast.*, 3.11-20.
[25] Ov., *Fast.*, 3.21-24.
[26] Ov. *Fast.*, 3.27-38.
[27] Ov. *Fast.*, 3.45-48.

Vesta upon the defilement of her priestess Rhea Silvia. In his *Amores*,[28] Ovid claims that after the birth of her sons she wandered along the banks of the Tiber, dishevelled and ashamed. The river god Anio took pity upon her and offered marriage. Here Ovid ascribes to Rhea Silvia the same mindset he accords to Lucretia following her infamous rape: she is firstly stunned to silence, and then exclaims that she would rather die than be an example of a living adulteress and defiled priestess of Vesta. She threw herself into the river, whereupon Anio took her as his wife.

Ovid is clearly inspired by an earlier account of Rhea Silvia by Ennius, which survives only in fragmentary form.[29] In this account, Rhea describes to her sister a dream in which her father's voice tells her that "first there are hardships to be borne by you; but after that, your fortunes will rise again from a river."[30] Later in the *Annals*, Amulius gives the order that she be thrown into the Tiber, but she is joined in marriage to Anio, and thus survives.

Rhea Silvia is a figure ignored for the most part by modern academic scholarship. No doubt this is due to the difficulties inherent in examining a character so deeply embedded in a founding myth. The few mentions that she does receive tend to consist of a comparison with other violated Roman women, such as the Sabine women, Lucretia or Virginia, and a comment about the sexual violence prevalent in Roman history.

J. D. Noonan uses Rhea Silvia as an example in his exploration of the theme of shame,[31] but ignores her role as a historical figure. C. Connors is one of the few scholars who focus on Rhea herself, concentrating on her portrayal by Ennius and Ovid. She comments that, in the majority of tales regarding a god desiring a mortal woman, "little is said of the woman beyond that she is pleasing to the god."[32] However, Ennius and Ovid both explore the rape of Rhea Silvia from the perspective of the victim, and the issue of a female subjectivity produced by male authors has been an object of much recent discussion. Although most scholars believe that Ovid's account engenders sympathy, or adds to the titillation of the audience, Connors argues that Ennius and Ovid are attempting to "penetrate"[33] her mind, in the moment that her body is penetrated by Mars.[34] In doing so they are able to self-reflexively draw attention to the skill of their art.[35]

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[28] Ov. *Am.* 3.6.45-82.
[29] Ennius, *Annals*, 32-48, preserved in Cic. *de Div.*, 1.40-41.
[30] *ibid.*, 1.41.
[31] Noonan, J. D. (1993), 'Daunus/Faunus in "Aeneid" 12', *Classical Antiquity*, 12(1), p. 118-122.
[32] Connors, C. (1994), 'Ennius, Ovid and Representations of Ilia', *Materiali e discussion per l'analisi dei testi classici*, 32, p. 99.
[33] *ibid.*, p. 100.
[34] *ibid.*, p. 99-100.
[35] *ibid.*, p. 99-100.

Rhea Silvia's *auctoritas* was depicted as not used to benefit her, but to confer legitimacy on her sons in their decision to found Rome. They gained *auctoritas* through their membership in the royal family of Alba Longa, as well as Rhea Silvia's claims of their divine ancestry.

Ancient Perspectives

Probably the most informative views on the role of Rhea Silvia in the shaping of Roman history come from J. De Luce and A. Fraschetti, in their broader discussion of the contributions of myth, legend and history to the evolution of Roman society and culture. J. De Luce clearly defines the differences between myth, legend and folklore,[36] and declares that "Roman traditional stories are often a combination of all three kinds of narrative and frequently appear in the sources as Roman history."[37] Fraschetti believes that the consistent elements of the story had value in Roman culture, and that the characters were "figures of memory"[38] used by later Romans to create a consistent account of their most distant past. Myth also allowed the Romans to connect themselves to the oldest cities in Latium, and even to Troy.[39] Cornell summarises the myth's importance succinctly – "the Roman foundation legend provides evidence, first and foremost, of how the Romans of later times chose to see themselves, and how they wished to be seen by others."[40] As an important character in the Roman founding myth, Rhea Silvia can be seen to play a role as a genealogical agent in Rome's self-definition.

Due to Rhea Silvia's status as by far the most mythical woman to be examined in this study, it is a futile endeavour to attempt to view her as a historical figure. She is instead useful as an example of the important role attributed to women by Romans in their history. Although she may have had a passive role in political events, she nonetheless is said to have given birth to the founder of Rome and provided him a justification to rule by way of the royal lineage inherited from his mother. It was this right that inspired the twins to create their own kingdom. The claims made for Rhea Silvia – namely, that Mars fathered her children – raised Romulus to the level of a semi-divine founder hero. Mars is an unusual choice for a rape myth – Jupiter and Apollo were the far more common culprits. However, the god of war as the father of Romulus justifies Rome's military prowess and dominion: an important fact when the story first began to be recorded in the late third century, corresponding to the period when Roman *imperium* was expanding rapidly. The involvement and importance of Rhea Silvia in the

[36] De Luce, J. (2005), 'Roman Myth', *The Classical World*, 98(2), p. 202-3.
[37] *ibid.*,p. 203.
[38] *ibid.*, p. 6.
[39] *ibid.*, p. 10.
[40] Cornell, T. J. (1995), *op. cit.*, p. 60; cited by Fraschetti A. (2001), *Roman Women*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 6, n. 15.

founding myth of Rome foreshadow the rest of Roman history – a narrative where women were to be key players, shaping and changing the course of this great empire.

The Effect of Their Actions

The legitimacy and *auctoritas* conferred upon Romulus and Remus once their heritage was known contributed to their decision to found the city of Rome, instead of merely inheriting the kingdom of Alba Longa. Her effect on the history of Rome is not significant as her exertion of passive power is related only to her position as mother to Romulus and Remus, as is indicatred by her disappearance from the historical narrative following the birth of the twins.

Precedents

Rhea Silvia became the first woman in a series whose role as the victim of sexual violence in the historical narrative was to affect Roman history. The Sabine women, Lucretia and Verginia would follow in her footsteps.[41] Rhea Silvia also became a precedent for the women of the Julio-Claudian period, whose importance in the historical narrative was also heavily reliant upon their role as transferring legitimacy to male heirs.[42]

[41] See this study, Ch. 1, p. 50-56, 75-80; Ch. 2, p. 91-94.
[42] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 161.

Sabine Women

The rape of the Sabine women is one of the most recognized events in the regal period of Roman history. It represents a moment in Rome's foundation history in which a group of women are said to have played an important role in shaping the course of Rome's rise to power. Distilled to its essential ingredients, the Sabine women are said to have borne Rome's first sons, intervened in the battle between their Sabine fathers and Roman husbands, and negotiated the first alliance with a foreign nation.

It is generally agreed by the ancient sources that the Romans sent an envoy to the neighbouring cities requesting the right of intermarriage, but all refused them.[43] Romulus instead decided to invite the people from these cities to a religious festival in Rome;[44] and, at a pre-arranged signal, he had the young men of Rome seize the virgins and carry them off.[45] The neighbouring cities, excluding the Sabines, attacked Rome and were defeated.[46] The Sabines attacked, and gained entry to the city as a result of its betrayal by Tarpeia.[47] The Sabine women in the intervening period had legally married the Roman men, and bore them children.[48] These women interceded,[49] and the two cities agreed to a truce: they would become a single power, governed by both a Roman and a Sabine king.[50]

Our ancient sources disagree on the motivation behind the mass abduction. Livy claims that Romulus was provoked by the refusal of the other cities to allow intermarriage. Rome had a dearth of females following its influx of asylum-seekers, and "its greatness threatened to last for only one generation, since through the absence of women there was no hope of offspring, and there was no right of intermarriage with their neighbours."[51] While Plutarch records a version that Romulus planned the abduction as a pretext for war,[52] he favours the belief that Romulus was motivated by "seeing his city filling up at once with aliens, few of whom had wives, while the greater part of them, being a mixed rabble of needy and obscure persons, were looked down upon and expected to have no strong cohesion; and hoping to make the outrage an occasion for some sort of blending and fellowship with the Sabines after their women had been kindly entreated".[53] Dionysius of Halicarnassus supports this idea, claiming that Romulus

[43] Livy, 1.9.1; Plut., *Rom.*, 9; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.30.2.
[44] Livy, 1.9; Plut., *Rom.*, 14; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.30.3-4.
[45] Livy, 1.9; Plut., *Rom.*, 14; Cic., *de Rep.*, 2.12; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.30.4-5.
[46] Livy, 1.10-11; Plut., *Rom.*,16-17; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.32-36.
[47] Livy, 1.11; Plut., *Rom.*, 17; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.38-40.
[48] Dio Cass., 1.5; Livy, 1.13; Plut., *Rom.*, 19, Cic., *de Rep.*, 2.12; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.30.6.
[49] Dio Cass., 1.4-7; Livy, 1.13; Plut., *Rom.*, 19; Cic., *de Rep.*, 2.13; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.45-46.
[50] Dio Cass., 1.7; Livy, 1.13; Plut., *Rom.*, 19; Cic., *de Rep.*, 2.13; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.46.
[51] Livy, 1.9.
[52] Plut., *Rom.*,14.1.
[53] Plut., *Rom.*,14.2.

intended to conciliate Rome and its neighbours by intermarriage.[54] When their request was refused, he determined to achieve these ends by force, with the support of his grandfather Numitor.[55]

M. Beard believes that this disagreement over the motivation behind the rape of the Sabine women is indicative of an attempt by Roman historians to revise their earliest history.[56] She suggests that the mass abduction and rape of women from neighbouring cities were not part of the image Rome wished to project to the rest of the world as it rose to power. However, the myth was likely far too entrenched to be discarded and thus the historians of Rome were compelled to justify the event by ascribing to it motivations of necessity and political acumen. She quickly undermines Livy's attempts at justification – "no sooner has he made that effort to de-sexualize the whole encounter, than he lets sexuality right back in again with a series of admissions: some women were more desirable than others; some Romans got the first pick; some of the best women, already chosen, had even to be protected from violation by other Romans."[57] Livy's Romulus reasserts the political motives behind the act, but then concedes that feelings (*animi*) are involved.[58] The sweet-talking employed by the Roman men may have been strategic, but it does change the status quo - "however it started, the encounter of Romans and Sabine women ends (this round at least) firmly locked into the discourse of seduction and desire."[59]

N. Bryson takes a far different perspective, claiming that

> "sanctioned and indeed devised by the king, it can hardly count as transgression of any of the laws of the Roman state: culminating in marriage and the procreation of legitimate offspring, its sexual aspect is fully within the law regulating sexual conduct. All that is missing is the bestowal of the Sabine daughters on their new husbands by their Sabine fathers".[60]

In his view, the legitimisation of the rape by marriage and the honourable status given to the Sabines appear to erase the violence done to these women.

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[54] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.30.2.
[55] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.30.2.
[56] Beard, M. (1999), 'The Erotics of Rape: Livy, Ovid and the Sabine Women', in Setälä, P., and Savunen, L. (eds.), *Female Networks and the Public Sphere in Roman Society. Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae*, 22, Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, p. 4-5.
[57] *ibid.*, p. 6.
[58] Livy, 1.9.
[59] Beard, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
[60] Bryson, N. (1986), 'Two Narratives of Rape in the Visual Arts: Lucretia and the Sabine Women', in (eds.) Tomaselli, S., and Porter, R., *Rape: An Historical and Cultural Enquiry*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 156-7.

However, the event can be viewed somewhere between these two extremes. Sources claim that the marriages were consummated by the many references to the children of the Roman men and Sabine women. However, the language used by our ancient authors is far more ambiguous. Our Latin authors use the verbs *rapio*[61] and *rapto*,[62] which both mean to seize or carry off.[63] Plutarch uses the term ἁρπάζω[64] which can mean to seize (especially of booty or prey) or to rape.[65] Interestingly, while he uses a far more negatively charged term, he places a speech blaming the Sabine men for the rape into the mouth of Hersilia, the Sabine wife of Romulus.[66] This is not to say that the Sabine women were not thought to have suffere, or that their abduction and forced marriages were not viewed as traumatic. However, from the view of our ancient sources, the emphasis was on the *seizure* of these women as property from a neighbouring people rather than the wrongs done to the individual women.

This interpretation is especially relevant when we consider Gary Miles' claim that in contemporary rural Greek culture, there is a:

> "perception that bride theft is analogous to the theft of livestock. In both cases the immediate object of the theft is not the primary goal but rather the means for establishing an alliance between the thief and the relatives/owners of the stolen object. In particular, such theft is perceived as a way in which the thief may display his manhood, his resourcefulness, establish that he is someone to be reckoned with, and in this way command the recognition of individuals or family groups who might otherwise be indifferent or hostile to him."[67]

Since Livy, Plutarch and Dionysius all consider the Sabine women not to be valuable in themselves, but as a means to an end, Miles' words seem particularly relevant. This attitude is evident at the start of Livy, where he claims that "whilst it [Rome] had received divine assistance, courage and self-reliance were not wanting".[68] Here we see a glimpse of the perspective from which Romans wanted to view themselves: not reliant upon divine support, but carried forth by the *virtus* of its (male) citizens.

Although in the beginning of this myth the Sabine women are portrayed as objects in a display of resourcefulness and courage by Roman men, their role as wives, mothers and daughters

[61] Cic., *de Rep.*, 2.12.
[62] Cic., *de Rep.*, 2.13.
[63] Glare, P. G. W. (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968-1982, p. 1523-4.
[64] Plut., *Rom.*, 14.5.
[65] Liddell, H. G., and Scott, R. (2007), *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, London: Simon Wallenberg Press, p. 73.
[66] Plut., *Rom.*,19.
[67] Miles, G. B. (1997), *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome*, New York: Cornell University Press, p. 186-7.
[68] Livy, 1.9.4.

enables them to actively establish peace and bring two peoples under the banner of one city, changing the course of Roman history.

Ancient Perspectives

While all of our sources agree that the Sabine women physically intervened in the war between the Sabines and the Romans, thus establishing peace, they disagree on the extent of the women's influence.

Dio records that the Sabine women, led by Hersilia, intervened as the two sides formed opposing ranks, preparing to start the battle. As a group they pleaded with both sides to make peace, reminding both sides of their familial ties to the women – "if you are indeed irreconcilable and some bolt of madness has fallen upon your heads and drives you to frenzy, then first kill us on account of whom you are fighting, and first slay these children whom you hate, that with no longer any name or bond of kinship between you may avoid the greatest of evils — the slaying of the grandsires of your children and the fathers of your grandchildren".[69] The women also physically intervene by tearing their clothes, and placing themselves and their children in the way of the men and their swords.[70] At this display both sides wept and came together and organised a truce.[71]

In Livy's version of the myth Hersilia was the wife of Romulus, and she pleaded on behalf of the Sabine women for mercy to be shown to their families after the Romans defeated the Antemnates' army.[72] They, as well as the Crustuminians, were given Roman citizenship after their defeat.[73] When the army of the Sabines gained entry to Rome by the betrayal of Tarpeia, the Sabine women "went boldly into the midst of the flying missiles"[74] and placed themselves between the two battling armies. As a group they pleaded with both sides to cease,[75] and blamed themselves for the war: "turn your anger upon us; it is we who are the cause of the war, it is we who have wounded and slain our husbands and fathers"[76]. The armies were swayed by these entreaties and agreed to peace.[77] The Livian speech reflects a far more personal and emotional appeal through direct discourse.[78] By attributing the speech to the Sabine women as a whole, the virtues displayed in this episode reflect upon the entire group.

[69] Dio Cass., 1.6.
[70] Dio Cass., 1.7.
[71] Dio Cass., 1.7.
[72] Livy, 1.11.
[73] Livy, 1.11.
[74] Livy, 1.13.
[75] Livy, 1.13.
[76] Livy, 1.13.
[77] Livy, 1.13.
[78] Buszard, B., *op. cit.*, p. 101.

According to Plutarch, the Sabine women rushed onto the battlefield during a break in the combat, shouting and lamenting.[79] Hersilia, who in this version was the abducted wife of a Sabine nobleman called Hostilius, led the protests against both sides.[80] In this speech she attributes the majority of the blame to the Sabine menfolk for coming to avenge their daughters only after they had formed emotional ties, entered marriages and even had children with their Roman captors.[81] The leaders from both sides were thus induced to discuss the matter between them, and arrived at an agreement for peace.[82]

Cicero is the briefest of all our sources. Stating that the battle looked undecided, he informs his readership that "Romulus made an alliance with Tatius, king of the Sabines, at the intercession of the matrons who had been so abducted".[83] By allocating to Rome's ruler syntactical prominence as subject of the pivotal narrative testimony, Cicero is clearly at pains to emphasise the role of Romulus; and, conversely, to diminish the role played by the Sabine women at this critical juncture in Roman history.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus indicates that the mercy shown to the Antemnates and of the Caeninenses is a result of Romulus' political judgement, combined with careful discussion with the Senate.[84] He attributes the idea of intercession and the speech making of the women to Hersilia,[85] who he believes was the mother of an abducted Sabine maiden.[86] The women petitioned the Roman senate to attempt to bring the two nations together.[87] They were granted permission, with conditions,[88] and Hersilia begged the leaders of the Sabines to make peace with the Romans,[89] but claimed that, in relation to the terms of the peace, "the leaders, coming together by themselves, might settle them with a view to the advantage of both parties."[90] After a discussion of the Sabine council an agreement was made and the leaders of each side met and concluded a treaty of friendship.[91]

Dionysius' account emphasises the need for the sharing of power. He emphasises that the women petitioned the Roman Senate as a group, and the Senate, not Romulus, decided on a course of action. The Sabine king needed confer with his "councillors,"[92] and Hersilia urges the

[79] Plut., *Rom.,* 19.
[80] For more information on Plutarch's speech for Hersilia read Buszard, B., *op. cit.*, p. 100-104.
[81] Plut., *Rom.,* 19.
[82] Plut., *Rom.,* 19.
[83] Cic., *de Rep.*, 2.13.
[84] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.35.
[85] *ibid.*, 2.45.2.
[86] *ibid.*, 2.45.2.
[87] *ibid.*, 2.45.3-4.
[88] *ibid.*, 2.45.4.
[89] *ibid.*, 2.45.6.
[90] *ibid.*, 2.45.6.
[91] *ibid.*, 2.46.1.
[92] *ibid.*, 2.46.1.

men to meet to discuss a treaty. The reason for such an emphasis might be due to the consolidation of power in fewer and fewer hands in Dionysius' lifetime, and the subsequent nostalgic idealisation of governmental decisions placed in the hands of many.

In his *Fasti*, Ovid attributes the intercession to the wife of Romulus, but does not name her.[93] The Sabine women intercede just before the commencement of battle, with their children in their arms.[94] He claims that the infants were encouraged to call out to their grandfathers, even those who could not yet speak.[95] On both sides, "weapons and the passions of the warriors fall",[96] and "fathers-in-law and sons-in-law grasp each other's hands."[97] No mention is given of a formal peace treaty.

Achievement of Power

The Sabine women are portrayed as using their familial *auctoritas* to intercede between the Roman and Sabine armies, and persuade them to negotiate peace. The Sabine women are said to have used the fact that they held familial *auctoritas* with their fathers in the Sabine armies and spousal *auctoritas* with their husbands in the Roman army. Livy also notes how the women physically placed their children between the two armies as a symbol of the family ties that now bound them.

Use of Power

The Sabine women used their *auctoritas* to persuade the Romans and the Sabines to negotiate a formal peace treaty. David Konstan believes that the actions of the Sabine women act to highlight and contrast with the betrayal of Tarpeia[98] (discussed below). In Livy's version of the myth, the Sabines risk their lives to petition for peace, showing far more loyalty to the Romans who abducted them from their families. In contrast, Tarpeia has a far stronger reason to be loyal to the Romans, but is swayed by her emotions to betray her city. These two cases encapsulate misogynistic fears about women; their transferal from one household to another could be used to better both families, but made them suspected of divided loyalties.[99]

The Effect of Their Actions

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[93] Ov., *Fast.*, 3.206.
[94] *ibid.*, 3.217-218.
[95] *ibid.*, 3.223-4.
[96] *ibid.*, 3.225.
[97] *ibid.*, 3.226.
[98] Konstan, D. (1986), 'Narrative and Ideology in *Livy*: Book I,' *Classical Antiquity*, 5, p. 212. The events surrounded Tarpeia's betrayal are discussed below in this study, Ch. 1, p. 57-60.
[99] This is discussed further in the study of Tarpeia; see this study, Ch. 1, p. 59-60, p. 58.

The peace treaty that resulted from the intercession of the Sabine women is said to have prevented war between the Roman and Sabine armies. This ensured that Rome did not risk destruction shortly after its founding.

Precedents

The account of the Sabine women's intervention marks the beginning of the narrative tradition of women interceding in times of crisis, as would be represented in the narratives featuring the legendary Veturia and the historical Octavia. Additionally, the Sabine women utilised networks of women to exert their power, as a feature of "power feminism" as defined by Wolf. This precedent would be repeated in times of crisis, such as when the matrons accompanied Veturia to confront Coriolanus,[100] the women protested for the repeal of the *lex Oppia*[101] and wealthy Ropman joined Hortensia in opposing the triumvirs' war tax on women.[102] Livy's depiction of these events may be coloured by drawing upon the contemporary speech of Hortensia, nonetheless, the presence of these episodes in the historical narrative indicates a pattern of women's intercession during times of crisis in Rome's history.

Gary Miles views the myth of the Sabine women as symbolic of Roman marriage: from the bride leaving her family and coming under the authority of her husband, to her assimilation into her new household/family.[103] This assimilation is reflected by the changing roles of the Sabine women from "largely incidental objects caught up in a conflict between males, to action, as agents in the reconciliation among men." He also notes that the abduction of the women is indicative of the "Romans' perception of themselves not as an autochthonous people but as a self-made community of immigrants."

[100] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 84-90.
[101] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 100-107.
[102] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 131-134.
[103] Miles, G. B., *op. cit.*, p. 189.

Tarpeia

All of our sources agree that during the war with the Sabines, the Roman girl Tarpeia is said to have admitted foreign enemies of Rome into the citadel.[104]

Achievement of Power

Tarpeia possessed *auctoritas* as the daughter of a Roman military commander, as well as religious *auctoritas* in Propertius' version of the myth. Her daring to admit the Sabine army to the citadel borders on *potestas*, and indicates that in times of martial crisis *auctoritas* could be used by women to exert a degree of *potestas*.

Use of Power

According to Livy she was bribed by the king of the Sabines[105] but crushed to death by their shields afterwards,[106] either so that the city would be seen to have been taken by force,[107] or as a warning to traitors.[108] Livy does acknowledge another version of the myth in which she asks for "what they had on their left arms",[109] referring to the golden armbands and rings they wore, but they deliberately misinterpreted this statement and piled their swords upon her instead.[110] Livy does admit another version of this story, in which she was expressly asking for their shields when she requested "what they had on their left arms,"[111] in order to aid the Romans, but that the Sabines realised her intent and killed her instead.[112]

Plutarch also records Tarpeia's request for that which the men wore on their left arms,[113] although he only records the motivation of bribery.[114] He also mentions and dismisses an account of the myth in which Tarpeia was the daughter of Tatius, and living with Romulus "under compulsion".[115] In an aetiological detail, Plutarch also claims that the Tarpeian Rock, from which traitors were thrown to their death, was named after this selfsame Tarpeia.[116]

Dionysius of Halicarnassus gives us two versions of the events. One version is the repeated version, in which she desires their gold jewellery and asks for what they have on their left

[104] Livy, 1.11; Plut., *Rom.*, 17; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.38-40.
[105] Livy, 1.11.
[106] Livy, 1.11.
[107] Livy, 1.11.
[108] Livy, 1.11.
[109] Livy, 1.11.
[110] Livy, 1.11.
[111] Livy, 1.11.
[112] Livy, 1.11.
[113] Plut., *Rom.*, 17.2.
[114] Plut., *Rom.*, 17.2.
[115] Plut., *Rom.*, 17.5.
[116] Plut., *Rom.*, 18.1.

arms.[117] The other version in Dionysius comes from the works of Lucius Piso, who claims that Tarpeia was instead motivated by a desire to perform a noble act and so asked for what they had on their left arms, in order to strip them of their shields later.[118] Piso states that Tarpeia sent a messenger to Romulus informing him of her plan, and asking him to send reinforcements, but the messenger defected to the Sabines, and the shields she had demanded killed Tarpeia.[119] Dionysius favours the version put forward by Piso because of the monument erected in honour of Tarpeia, and the annual libations dedicated to her[120]

In Propertius' version of the myth,[121] Tarpeia was a Vestal Virgin who fell in love with Tatius as she collected water for the goddess.[122] She is torn between her duties to Rome and the goddess, and her newfound infatuation,[123] but eventually decides to betray Rome to the Sabines, asking marriage to Tatius in return.[124] She believes that such a marriage can bring about reconciliation between the two warring peoples, much as the Sabine women were able to achieve – "as your bride I can part the armies locked in battle."[125] Tatius, however, punishes her treachery by crushing her beneath the shields of his men.[126] This is by far the most sympathetic treatment of Tarpeia; Propertius allows us, as his audience to her thoughts, to see her struggle. Yet ironically, it is in this version that her betrayal is the most horrific, for she is not only disloyal to her country, but also her religious vows.

The Effect of Their Actions

Tarpeia's actions would have put Rome in serious danger of destruction by the Sabines in the early days of the city. If the Sabine women had failed in their intercession, the Sabine army might have conquered Rome. It is notable, however, that Tarpeia represents an early depiction of a woman of her own power. Tarpeia is portrayed as conscious of her ability to admit the Sabine forces into the citadel in exchange for her demand for "what they had on their left arms",[127] and thus demonstrates an essential tenet of Wolf's power feminism; that women should recognise their own power and be willing to exert it.[128]

Ancient Perspectives

[117] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.38.3-4.
[118] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.38.3.
[119] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.39.1.
[120] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 2.40.2-3.
[121] Prop., 4.4.
[122] *ibid.*, 4.4.15-22.
[123] *ibid.*, 4.4.31-46.
[124] *ibid.*, 4.4.55-62.
[125] *ibid.*, 4.4.59.
[126] *ibid.*, 4.4.89-91.
[127] Livy, 1.11.
[128] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 58-59.

In addition to the difficulties inherent in the study of depictions of the mythical Tarpeia, the use of the elegiac poet Propertius must be considered carefully. Maria Wyke notes that Propertius' elegies are shaped strongly by the Hellenistic and Roman elegiac traditions[129] and the "political, moral and literary discourses of the Augustan period."[130] Furthermore, Wyke records that Propertius' poetry was influenced by the works of contemporary elegiac poets[131] and the changing pattern of patronage in the Augustan era.[132]

Kerrill O'Neill states that Propertius' poem on Tarpeia was the result of the influence of the influence of contemporary politics.[133] O'Neill observes that in Propertius' previous book, he dreams that he can write nationalistic poetry, but he is dissuaded from this course of action by Calliope and Apollo.[134] In 3.9 the poet is more overt; he addresses his patron Maecenas, who he claims is attempting to make Propertius write on grander topics, but he argues for writing iin accordance with his choice of subject.[135] O'Neill identifies 4.4 as an aetiological myth, claiming that Propertius was pressured to write the poem by his patron.[136] However, Propertius alters the traditional motive of greed, attributed to Tarpeia, into love, and the poem adopts the tone of Propertius' amatory elegies.[137] Propertius' account of the myth of Tarpeia is therefore heavily influenced by the expectations of Propertius' patron in order to accommodate the tone of Augustan policies, and his subsequent decision to depict the myth in the matter of an elegy.

Gary Miles believes that the Tarpeian myth should be analysed in its connection to the myth of the Sabine women.[138] The treachery of Tarpeia and the loyalty of the Sabine women characterise the possible and contradictory behaviours of women – "The point of the story, then, is not so much that women are inherently disloyal, but that, being perceived by men as constitutionally susceptible to emotions of desire and love, their motives are regarded as inherently suspect, difficult to predict … and difficult even after the fact to determine with confidence."[139] He also believes that Livy's account complicates these gender distinctions further still, for the feelings of *cupiditas* and *amor* which led to loyalty from the Sabine women and disloyalty from Tarpeia, are blamed by Livy's Roman abductors for their seizure of the

[129] Wyke, M. (2002), *The Roman Mistress: Ancient and Modern Representations*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 14.
[130] *ibid.*, p. 17-18.
[131] *ibid.*, p. 23.
[132] *ibid.*, p. 23.
[133] O'Neill, K. (1995), 'Propertius 4.4: Tarpeia and the Burden of Aetiology', *Hermathena*, 158, p. 53.
[134] Prop., 3.3.21-24; discussed in O'Neill, K., *op. cit.*, p. 55.
[135] Prop., 3.9.3-6; discussed in O'Neill, K., *op. cit.*, p. 55.
[136] O'Neill, K., *op. cit.*, p. 57.
[137] *ibid.*, p. 58.
[138] Miles, G. B. *op. cit.*, p. 208.
[139] *ibid.*, p. 209.

Sabine women.[140] If Roman men are susceptible to those passions whose association with women justifies their subjugation, then "men are revealed to be no more competent to govern rationally than are women,"[141] and are as great a threat to Rome as Tarpeia.[142]

Robert Brown also sees Tarpeia's deceit as a contrast to the extraordinary loyalty of the Sabine women towards Rome.[143] However, he also claims that Livy's version uses the Tarpeia myth to highlight the duplicity of the Sabine army, and its parallel with the seizure of the Sabine women. In each case there is betrayal[144], a religious setting[145], careful planning by the attacking party[146] and they both involve "imposition of male control upon young virgins"[147]. In this context Tarpeia is merely a tool of the Sabines, who are willing to use deceit and trickery to enact vengeance upon the Romans.

Although it will never be clear whether Tarpeia was a traitor or attempting to be heroic, or even if she existed at all, she nonetheless remained as a figure in the Roman consciousness as a reminder of the vulnerability of the state to the emotions of its women

Precedents

Agrippina the Elder's actions in the early years of the 1st century AD have affinities with Tarpeia's use of *auctoritas* to wield a degree of *potestas* during a crisis. As discussed below,[148] Tacitus appears to portray the incident positively, but uses the character of Tiberius to voice criticisms of Agrippina's behaviour, since, as Tarpeia's actions illustrate, the use of *potestas* in times of crisis could have dangerous consequences.

[140] *ibid.*, p. 209.
[141] *ibid.*, p. 210.
[142] *ibid.*, p. 210.
[143] Brown, R. (1995), 'Livy's Sabine Women and the Ideal of Concordia', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 125, p. 305.
[144] Livy, 1.9.6, 1.9.13, 1.11.6.
[145] Livy, 1.9, 1.11.
[146] Livy, 1.9, 1.11.5.
[147] Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 305.
[148] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 173.

Horatia

Horatia is one of those interesting female characters of early Roman history whose actions are minor, but have important consequences. The story begins with the peace between the Romans and the Sabines disintegrating.[149] Both sides agree that the matter will be settled by a battle between their champions, who are soon selected – three brothers from Rome, and their three Sabine cousins.[150] At the end of the fight only one man survives – a Roman; the Romans will now rule over the Sabines.[151] The survivor, Horatius, entered Rome bearing the spoils of his victims.[152]

Achievement of Power

Horatia possessed *auctoritas* as a member of the Roman aristocracy, which was increased when her brothers defeated the Sabine champions in combat. Horatia's agency in this episode is in response to her victimhood and its use by male characters within the historical narrative, and thus Horatia can be viewed as compatible with Wolf's victim feminism archetype.[153] The use of her passive power by others enforced legislative change, but it did not address the issue of the divided loyalty experienced by Roman women.

Use of Power

According to Livy, Horatia had been waiting for her brother outside of the Capene Gate.[154] When she caught sight of him garbed in the cloak of her cousin, to whom she was betrothed, she wept and cried out the name of her betrothed.[155] Horatius was so infuriated by her grief that he killed her on the spot.[156] The onlookers were horrified, and brought him to the king, who was reluctant to bear the responsibility for executing the hero of Rome.[157] The king instead appointed *duumviri* to judge his case and they convicted him, claiming that they could not acquit even an innocent man under that law.[158] He appealed their decision, and it was brought before the judgement of the people, who were influenced by the pleas of Horatius' father. He was acquitted, but required to provide certain expiatory sacrifices and pass under a beam across the street "as under a yoke."[159]

[149] Livy, 1.23.
[150] Livy, 1.24.
[151] Livy, 1.25.
[152] Livy, 1.26.
[153] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p.147-49.
[154] Livy, 1.26.
[155] Livy, 1.26.
[156] Livy, 1.26.
[157] Livy, 1.26.
[158] Livy, 1.26.
[159] Livy, 1.26.

Dio's account[160] is concise, containing only the bare facts of the story, while Dionysius of Halicarnassus is both verbose and critical in his version of the tale. Horatia is judged in the eyes of Horatius as immodest in rushing out to see him.[161] Dionysius attributes her with immoderate passion for her beloved, which prompted such behaviour, comparing her to a "maenad."[162] Upon seeing her brother in the cloak of her cousin she began wailing and crying, before haranguing her brother for slaying his kinsman.[163] He in turn criticised her for grieving for her betrothed, instead of mourning her deceased brothers or rejoicing in the victory of Rome.[164] His language becomes more vitriolic before he stabs her, motivated by "his hatred of baseness."[165] According to Dionysius, the Romans of this period were so stern and savage that they glorified this action.[166] Charges were brought against Horatius,[167] and the king was torn between punishing a man who had broken the law (of putting a person to death before a trial) and executing a man who had brought glory to Rome[168] - especially since his father, "to whom before all others both nature and the law gave the right of taking vengeance in the case of his daughter"[169], argued against his guilt. The case was given to the judgment of the people, who acquitted him[170].

Livy is the only historian who states that Horatius was charged with *perduellio* (treason),[171] while Dionysius,[172] Festus and Florus[173] all record a tradition in which Horatius was charged with *parricidium* (murder of kin). Bauman claims that this latter version was an invention, introduced into the story in the second century by the Gracchans, in order to counter the Optimate version which accused Horatius of *perduellio.*[174] Ogilvie believes that the charge of treason was given because Horatia was guilty of *proditio* since she had mourned for an enemy,[175] and thus Horatius was not accused of murder, but of usurping the state's authority by executing a criminal who had not been sentenced to death.[176] According to A. H. M. Jones, Julius Caesar introduced the charge of *perduellio* into the Horatius myth in 63 BC in order for

[160] Dio Cass., 2.6.
[161] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 3.21.2.
[162] *ibid.*, 3.21.3.
[163] *ibid.*, 3.21.4-5.
[164] *ibid.*, 3.21.5-6.
[165] *ibid.*, 3.21.7.
[166] *ibid.*, 3.21.7.
[167] *ibid.*, 3.22.1.
[168] *ibid.*, 3.22.4-5.
[169] *ibid.*, 3.22.5.
[170] *ibid.*, 3.22.6.
[171] Livy, 1.26.
[172] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*,, 3.22.
[173] Flor., 1.1.3.6.
[174] Bauman, R. A. (1969), 'The Duumviri in the Roman Criminal Law and in the Horatius Legend', *Historia: Einzelschriften*, 12, p. 27f.
[175] Ogilvie, R. M. (1970), *A Commentary on Livy Books 1-5*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 114.
[176] *ibid.*, p. 115.

him to be able to charge Rabirius with treason.[177] However, Jones fails to explain how Cicero, who defended Rabirius, made no comment at this hasty reconstruction of the *perduellio* charge.[178] His interpretation also fails to explain why the magistrates felt compelled to follow the precedent of this version of the Horatius trial, if it had just been invented.[179]

Watson believes that the disagreement of the sources supports Livy's accuracy, as "we can understand that details that were accurate but came subsequently to seem peculiar were cut out by some later writers. But we cannot so easily assert that later writers invented absurd details which were inserted into the tale and accepted".[180] As Merrill states, there is no evidence of disagreement with Livy's use of *perduellio* by his contemporaries.[181] In fact, Cicero's *pro Rabirio* describes a trial for *perduellio* in which the same procedure was followed, and in fact appears to be based on the Horatius trial.[182]

Watson views Horatius' act as treason, stating that Horatius' "did not adhere to his father's enemies."[183] He argues that, just as the charge of treason could be applied to the relationship between a citizen and the king or a client and his patron, so could it be attributed to an act by the member of a household against the *paterfamilias*.[184] It is recorded in Festus that a law enacting the death penalty for striking the *paterfamilias* dated from the time of Romulus.[185] Watson believes that it is "reasonable to suppose that killing a person subject to one's own *paterfamilias* was in the same category of a domestic offence punishable by an external process".[186] Although this might not have been the usual charge for such a crime, it was no doubt the most politically expedient.[187]

Merrill makes a valid point by stating that "the attribution of a legal process of the alleged type to so early a date is almost certainly anachronistic."[188] Such a statement is supported by the assertion that the appeal to the people in this case was not officially recognised as *provocatio*, but likely rather the insistence of a mob of Roman citizens for the acquittal of their hero. This simplifies the matter quite significantly. Although the historians of the late Republic and imperial period attempted to delineate the trial in the specific legal terms required of their

[177] Jones, A. H. M. (1972), *The Criminal Courts of the Roman Republic and Principate*, Oxford : Blackwell, p. 43f.
[178] Watson, A. (1979), 'The Death of Horatia', *The Classical Quarterly New Series*, 29(2), p. 446.
[179] *ibid.*, p. 446.
[180] *ibid.*, p. 436.
[181] Merrill, E. T. (1918), 'Some Remarks on Cases of Treason in the Roman Commonwealth', *Classical Philology*, 13(1), p 37.
[182] Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 436-7.
[183] *ibid.*, p. 440.
[184] *ibid.*, p. 440.
[185] *ibid.*, p. 440.
[186] *ibid.*, p. 440.
[187] *ibid.*, p. 440-41.
[188] Merrill, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

context, Horatius' trial was not so sophisticated. The essentials of the story are what remain; Horatius was depicted as not punished by his father, so he was brought before the king, the duumviri and the people for judgement. The other incongruity regarding this event is the assertion by Livy that the law would not allow the duumviri to acquit Horatius under the terms of the law. Dionysius does not mention these magistrates, but rather transfers judgement from the king to the people.

A. Magdelain claims that the *duumviri* were able to acquit or condemn Horatius but, in order to illustrate that the final decision lay with the Roman people, Livy fabricated this detail, as "it would have been inelegant to let the duovir spontaneously pronounce a condemnation."[189] Watson, who believes that "a successful appeal to the people from a spontaneous and unfettered condemnation by the duoviri" [190] would make the power of the people appear even greater, contradicts this view.

Bauman claims that the *duumviri* were introduced to the story by the Gracchans because of their mandatory condemnation, thus necessitating Horatius' appeal to the people. Ogilvie believes that the instructions for the *duumviri* were "the subject of statute,"[191] and that, in the case of Horatius, "there was no stated provision for acquittal."[192] Horatius was instead able to demand *provocatio*.[193] Watson claims that although a charge of *parricidium* would be more obvious in this case, the king preferred a charge that allowed him to pass the odium of convicting a national hero onto the *duumviri*.[194] The *duumviri* then claim that the law would not allow them to acquit Horatius; thus they avoid blame for condemning him, and the final decision is passed onto the citizen body; "the whole people has to be implicated in any judgement."[195]

Ancient Perspectives

It is very interesting that our two main sources for this period present us with such very different interpretations of Horatia's behaviour. Dionysius uses the event to illustrate the perennial theme of Greek myth: the hero brought low by a woman. This interpretation is guided by his motivation in writing his history: to convince his Greek-speaking audience that the Romans attained their supremacy in the Mediterranean world by their virtuous habits and military skill. In this light, Dionysius vilifies not only Horatia's actions, but her character, thus exonerating Horatius from the censure he receives in Livy.

[189] Magdelain, A. (1973), 'Remarques sur la Perduellio', *Historia* 22, p. 405 ff.
[190] Watson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 446.
[191] Ogilvie, R. M., *op. cit.*, p. 115.
[192] *ibid.*, p. 116.
[193] *ibid.*, p. 116.
[194] Watson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 441.
[195] Watson, A., *op. cit.*, p. 121.

Livy, on the other hand, had lived through an extensive period of civil war. As Joseph (J.B.) Solodow states, the generals whose careers brought about the fall of the Republic "all won distinguished victories for the state, all upon their return inspired fear for the future in many of their fellow-citizens".[196] Solodow draws our attention to this issue, for he claims that the same quality ("the willingness to sacrifice oneself for the good of the commonweal") that made him a hero against the Albans, led to the murder of his sister[197]. He believes that Livy is drawing his audience to the question: "are the qualities important to war and empire compatible with civil society?"[198]

Livy ends the episode by relating the requirement of expiatory sacrifices, and the passing under a beam, as under a yoke, which still survived in his day, which was called the Sister's Beam (*tigillum sororium*).[199] Ogilvie does reveal that "those who passed through it were purified from harmful forces whether of blood-guilt or of effective hostility (*iugum*). Thus the young boys were initiated at the altar of Janus Curiatius and passed out to battle. On their return the pollutions of blood and battle-fever had to be cleansed by passing under the *tigillum* before they could take their place in the peaceful community."[200]

Ogilvie believes that, although at first glance the historicity of the Horatia narratives appears to be confirmed by the contemporary geographical markers – the *pila Horatia*, the *tigillum sororium* – are in fact "false etymologies."[201] Most notably, the *tigillum sororium* was not only situated away from the route of the Horatii and Curiatii as described by our sources, but Ogilvie believes that the beam gained its epithet from the altar of Juno Sororia nearby. Interestingly the twin altar to Juno Sororia was that of Janus Curiatius, which may have given rise to the legend of a battle with the Curiatii.

The Effect of Their Actions

Nonetheless, the Horatia myth can now be seen as foreshadowing the problems evident in the late Republic, associated with generals returning from battle, and their re-integration into civic society. This myth reflects the need for Roman soldiers to leave behind their battle habits and instincts as they passed under the beam and into the city in order to avoid civic discord, as well as reflecting the divided loyalties of women upon marriage.

[196] Solodow, J. B. (1979), 'Livy and the Story of Horatius, 1.24-26', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 109, p. 260.
[197] *ibid.*, p. 254-5.
[198] *ibid.*, p. 255.
[199] Livy, 1.26.
[200] Ogilvie, R. M., *op. cit.*, p. 117.
[201] *ibid.* p. 117.

Precedents

The majority of the scholarship regarding Horatia is concerned with how the incident affected the men in the narrative, and neglect to address Horatia's role independent of her brother's trial. She becomes a symbol of the recurring issue of the divided loyalty of women. This theme is examined repeatedly in Roman history, from the Sabine women and Tarpeia through to Octavia.

In a marriage, especially a marriage including *manus*, a woman's loyalties were not her own, they had to change according to the identity of her guardian. Horatia's engagement to one of the Curiatii meant that she was, in a sense, between two loyalties – one to Rome and her father, and another to her fiancè and the Sabines. The Sabine women and Tarpeia are represented as displaying the extremes of this loyalty, and Horatia's actions were far less dramatic; she simply grieved for a man whom she had loved and lost. What perhaps should be remembered here is that there was no outcome to this battle which would not have caused Horatia to grieve. The necessities of a patriarchal society meant that women would always have divided loyalties, and divided grief.

Tanaquil

Tanaquil was said to have been the wife of Lucius Tarquinius, the son of a Corinthian living in Tarquinii, who immigrated to Rome to further his chances of a political career.[202] He quickly established himself in political circles and, when the king died, had himself voted into the office of king.[203] He was killed by the sons of his predecessor Ancus Marcius (or their accomplices), who believed that the sovereignty was their right.[204] As Tarquinius lay dying, Tanaquil is said to have closed access to the palace and posted hopeful messages of recovery to the people.[205] She asked her son-in-law Servius Tullius to act as regent for her children, and only after he was established and accepted as caretaker king, did Tanaquil allow reports to circulate of her husband's death.[206]

Achievement of Power

Tanaquil is depicted as achieving *auctoritas* as the wife of Lucius Tarquinius, who succeeded Ancus Marcius as Roman king. She utilised her *auctoritas* in the transmission of information to the 'media' during the death of her husband in order to prevent proactive opposition to the accession of Servius Tullius. In this act she can be seen as embracing Wolf's power feminism, which strongly advocates the employment of media in the female use of power.[207]

Use of Power

Tanaquil is said to have ensured a smooth succession for her own son-in-law Servius Tullius by concealing her husband's death until Servius' succession was secure. Her long period as the Roman queen may have allowed her to establish a network of trusted staff to assist her in the succession. In Dio's account, no mention is made of Tanaquil until the death of Tarquinius. Even then, her role is minor; she and Tullius pretended to tend to Tarquinius, and "exchanged mutual pledges that Tullius should take the sovereignty but surrender it to Tanaquil's sons when they became men."[208] She reassured the people that Tarquinius was recovering, and Tullius meanwhile would manage the affairs of state.

In Livy's version of the event, Tanaquil prepares poultices in the hope of her husband's recovery,[209] but also summons Tullius in case he does not recover.[210] His Tanaquil pleads with

[202] Dio Cass., 2.8; Livy, 1.34; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 4.47.
[203] Dio Cass., 2.8; Livy, 1.35; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 4.46.
[204] Dio Cass., 2.8; Livy, 1.40; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 3.73.
[205] Dio Cass., 2.9; Livy, 1.41.5; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 4.5.
[206] Dio Cass., 2.9; Livy, 1.41.6; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 4.4-5.
[207] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 154.
[208] Dio Cass., 2.9.
[209] Livy, 1.41.1.
[210] *ibid.*, 1.41.1.

Tullius to take the throne, to protect herself and avenge Tarquinius.[211] She also claims that he is destined to rule, reminding him of omens which occurred in his youth.[212] Tanaquil's message to the people gave a vivid description of Tarquinius' 'injury',[213] but Tullius took up the role of king on ostensibly delegated authority, until the sounds of mourning in the palace revealed the fact of the king's death.[214]

The version recorded in Dionysius is by far our most detailed account. There is a far greater presence of omens, and his Tanaquil is knowledgeable in the ways of augury, and other divination.[215] After failing to oust Tarquinius by blaming him for the disappearance of the augur Nevius,[216] the sons of Ancus Marcius pretended to reconcile with Tarquinius.[217] Their next attempt was far more successful. According to Dionysius, Tanaquil helped Tullius gain the throne because he was her son-in-law, and because the omens of his youth and rumours of divine conception[218] meant that he was fated to rule Rome.[219] She engineered the seizure of power, as she was afraid that her grandsons would be killed if the sons of Ancus Marcius gained power, and only asked that Tullius transfer power to them when they came of age.[220] Dionysius justifies this deviation from tradition, by claiming that due to the ages of the participants, and the knowledge of their length of rule, it is impossible for Tanaquil's children to have been infants at that time.[221]

The Effect of Their Actions

As stated above, the sons of Tarquinius' predecessor believed that they should have inherited the Roman throne, and it was in fact their faction that was involved in the murder of Tarquinius. Tanaquil's technique of ensuring a smooth succession meant that the Tarquin dynasty continued to hold the throne. This would in turn lead to the expulsion of the kings and the establishment of the Republic.

Ancient Perspectives

It is interesting to note that, unlike the odium generally associated with women involved in succession politics by our ancient writers, Tanaquil's image is generally positive. It is possible

[211] *ibid.*, 1.41.3.
[212] *ibid.*, 1.41.3.
[213] *ibid.*, 1.41.5.
[214] *ibid.*, 1.41.6.
[215] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 3.47.
[216] *ibid.*, 3.72.
[217] *ibid.*, 3.73.
[218] *ibid.*, 4.2.
[219] *ibid.*, 4.4.
[220] *ibid.*, 4.4.
[221] *ibid.*, 4.6-7.

that our later authors had the precarious nature of Augustus' succession plans in mind as they composed their histories.[222] After Augustus' near-fatal illness in 29 BC, and his continuing ill health throughout his remaining years, the youth of his grandsons, their deaths in 4 AD and 2AD, and the roles of Agrippa and Tiberius as possible regents or successors were no doubt a subject of much speculation. Augustus was much in the position of Tarquinius Priscus for most of the late first century BC – he was in the position to establish a dynasty, but lacked a male heir of age. Although this can only remain as hypothetical conjecture, it is not unthinkable that Livy and Dionysius would be careful not to denigrate Tanaquil or Servius Tullius in their histories when it appeared likely that Livia and Tiberius would be imitating their actions.

It should also be remarked upon that Ogilvie and others believe that the reigns of the Tarquins coincided with Etruscan control of Rome. The period traditionally attributed to the Tarquins (616-578 and 534-510 BC) coincides with a dramatic increase in the archaeological evidence of Etruscan artefacts in Rome.[223] In addition, Tarquinius is "a Latinized form of the common Etruscan name *tarxna*."[224] He believes that the Roman historians could not dispute the presence of the Tarquins in the king lists of Roman tradition and that "Rome had fallen into the hands of a foreign power but … [they were] equally reluctant to explain this humiliation by an Etruscan conquest of Rome."[225]

Further detail is furnished by Léon Homo, who believes that rather than a Tarquin dynasty interrupted by the reign of Servius Tullius, as the annalistic tradition claims, Rome in the sixth and seventh centuries BC was dominated by a series of warlords, in continuing waves of invasion.[226] T. N. Gantz, however, believes that Livy and Dionysius preserve the history of a real Tarquin dynasty from this period, precisely because the evidence they preserve does not bare the hallmarks of a careful annalistic fabrication.[227]

Instead, he claims that "the fact that all the people noted as gaining or attempting to gain power in sixth-century Rome are closely related to each other"[228] is evidence that the Tarquins established a dynasty, and the avenue to power was through a relationship with the Tarquin family. In this light, the reign of Servius Tullius seems less likely to be a Roman interruption to Etruscan rule of Rome, but rather the rule of the son-in-law of the king, whose heirs were

[222] Livy died in 12 AD, two years before the death of Augustus, and could therefore have not been influenced by the events surrounded Augustus' death and Tiberius' accession.
[223] Ogilvie, R. M., *op. cit.*, p. 140-1.
[224] *ibid.*, p. 141.
[225] *ibid.*, p. 142.
[226] Childe, V. G. (trans.)(1968), Homo, L., *Primitive Italy and the Beginnings of Roman Imperialism*, London: Routledge, p.115.
[227] Gantz, T. N. (1975), 'The Tarquin Dynasty', *Historia: Zeitschrift fur Alte Geschichte*, 24(4), p. 540.
[228] *ibid.*, p. 546.

too young to take the crown upon his death. As such Tanaquil, if not an actual historical figure,[229] is likely to have been based upon a queen from this dynasty.

Precedents

Much has been made of the similarities between Tanaquil's method of concealing Tarquinius' death, and the methods employed at the deaths of Augustus and Claudius. Bauman believes that the account of Tanaquil borrows from the fact of Livia's actions.[230] He bases this upon the reference in Fabius Pictor to Tanaquil burying Arruns Tarquinius, and a possible identification of Tanaquil with a figure preparing Tarquinius Priscus' body for burial.[231] In addition, the early imperial period shows a pattern of disinformation: Tiberius' death was announced prematurely,[232] reports of Gaius's death circulated so quickly that people thought that they had been engineered by Gaius himself,[233] Claudius' death was concealed in the manner of Tarquinius and Augustus,[234] after Nero's death the populace didn't believe the reports circulated,[235] and Domitian announced Titus' death while he was still dying.[236] Trajan's death was also concealed, although not at the palace, in order to give Trajan's wife Plotina time to organise the deathbed adoption of Hadrian.[237] The actions of Tanaquil, and these imperial concealments, share a common thread: "in all those cases a great lady of character and determination takes decisive action to forestall a threat to the heir apparent."[238]

There is also a great deal of similarity between the two cases, the latter of which can be more easily verified. For example, Servius Tullius is treated as a son by Tarquinius, but is in fact his son-in-law and co-ruler. In addition, in the Dionysius account, Tanaquil appeals to Tullius to make the elder grandson the "hegemon"[239] (leader), rather than the "basileus,"[240] which he used freely when discussing Tarquinius and which indicates a change to the office of *princeps*. The only difficulty with this theory is that Livy is recorded to have published the first pentad as early as 27-25 BC,[241] and Dionysius' history is believed by some scholars to date to 7 BC,[242] in which case neither author could have been influenced by Augustus' death. Although Augustus

[229] Ogilvie, R. M., *op. cit.*, p. 142.
[230] Bauman, R. A. (1994), 'Tanaquil-Livia and the Death of Augustus', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 43(2), p. 179.
[231] *ibid.*, p. 181.
[232] Tac., *Ann.*, 6.50.
[233] Suet., *Cal.*, 60.
[234] Tac., *Ann.*, 12.68-9.
[235] Suet., *Nero*, 57.
[236] Dio Cass., 66.26.
[237] Dio Cass., 69.1.
[238] Bauman, R. A. (1994), p. 182-3.
[239] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 4.4.8.
[240] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 4.4.8.
[241] M. Fuhrmann, Kl.P. 3 (1969), 695.
[242] M. v. Albrecht, KI.P. 2 (1967), 70.

himself thought that he was dying in 29 BC, and suffered continuing ill health throughout his life, it is unlikely that Livy could have known the circumstances surrounding Augustus' death and Tiberius' accession, especially since there was no precedent for such a succession. Bauman believes that the date of publication for Dionysius' work can be realistically placed after Augustus' death,[243] and that Livy edited his pentad after publication, as he did with the account of the *spolia opima*, in order to "establish a 'respectable' antecedent for the drama of Augustus' death,"[244] although it is unlikely that such a dramatic revision would go unremarked upon by his contemporaries.

Nonetheless, through her ambition, quick thinking, and augural abilities, Tanaquil ensured the accession of two of Rome's last three kings. Unlike her daughter-in-law, she did so without bloodshed or civic strife, and even accomplished the difficult task of achieving the praise of the misogynistic male authors.

[243] Bauman, R. A. (1994), p. 187.
[244] *ibid.*, p. 188.

Tullia

As Tanaquil's sons reached manhood, according to Dio, Tullius kept delaying the transfer of power to them.[245] The younger brother was patient, but the elder one saw the throne as his due, and was desperate to gain the sovereignty.[246] He and his brother were married to the two daughters of Tullius.[247] The elder brother and his sister-in-law are said to have both been ambitious. Our sources agree that they killed their respective spouses, married each other, and began conspiring to usurp Servius Tullius, and establish Tarquin as the king of Rome.[248] After gaining supporters, it is said that Tarquin summoned the Senate and gave a speech denouncing his father-in-law.[249] When Tullius attempted to rebut him, Tarquin seized him and threw him down the stairs of the Senate House.[250] Tullius headed home in his injured state, and Tarquin sent people to kill him on his way.[251] Tullia was said to have been the first to salute her husband as king, and is infamous for having run over the body of her father in her chariot on her way back to the palace.[252]

Achievement of Power

Tullia inherited *auctoritas* as a member of the Tarquin royal family, which was increased when her second husband gained the throne. Tullia is portrayed as willing to engage with traditional male power structures such as the assembly through the agency of her husband,[253] as well as to have been aware of her own power[254] as a member of the royal family. This is an example of Wolf's power feminism in action.

Use of Power

Tullia is depicted as using her position within the family to incite Tarquinius Superbus to murder his spouse and kill his father-in-law. Like many of the women in this period, the actions of Tullia are preserved in the physical features of Rome, as our ancient sources claim that Tullia's horrific act of running over her father's body gave the name to that street – '*Vicus Scelestus*', or 'Wicked Way'.[255] This is likely an aetiological invention, attributed to the final queen of Rome.

[245] Dio Cass., 2.10.
[246] Livy, 1.46.
[247] Dio Cass., 2.10; Livy, 1.42.
[248] Dio Cass., 2.10; Livy, 1.46-47.
[249] Livy, 1.48.
[250] Dio Cass., 2.10; Livy, 1.48.
[251] Livy, 1.48.
[252] *ibid.*, 1.48.
[253] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 150.
[254] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 150.
[255] Ov. *Fast.*, 6.609.

The Effect of Their Actions

Tullia's actions enabled the accession of the final royal family in Rome's early history, thus provoking the violence which would lead to the establishment of the Republic. There is very little discussion on Tullia in modern scholarship. She is universally maligned by our sources, described as "wicked"(*scelestus*),[256] "impious"(*ἀνόσιος*),[257] and "evil" (*malum*)[258]and her actions are described as "horrible and inhuman" (*foedum inhumanumque inde traditur scelus*).[259]

Much like the younger Agrippina, Tullia is unable to escape the odium of being the mother of an historical figure accused of reprehensible crimes. This was no doubt compounded by the later need to validate the expulsion of the Tarquins by portraying the last generation as so corrupt that no part of their reign was honourable, with even their coronation steeped in hubris.

Ancient Perspectives

Livy attributes the entire evil scheme to Tullia as the "originator of all the mischief."[260] He describes her goading Tarquin, urging him to action.[261] Interestingly, Livy describes her desire to match the achievements of Tanaquil in passing on the control of Rome.[262]

Dionysius' version introduces Tullia's sister, and claims that while Tullia tried to incite her husband to action,[263] her sister attempted to dissuade Tarquin.[264] Tullius was aware of their designs and pre-empted them, summoning the Senate and defending his actions as both guardian and king.[265] Tullia urged Tarquin to effect a reconciliation,[266] after which he summoned the Senate.[267] In this account Tullia urged Tarquin to send men to kill her father, lest he incite the people against them.[268]

In the *Fasti*, Ovid also describes this Tullia, entering the temple of Fortuna after her father's death, and his statue exclaiming, "hide my face, lest it should see the execrable visage of my

[256] Livy, 1.48.5; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.*, 4.28.2.
[257] Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.*, 4.30.4, 4.39.1, 4.39.3.
[258] Livy, 1.46.
[259] Livy, 1.48.7.
[260] *ibid.*, 1.46.
[261] *ibid.*, 1.47.
[262] *ibid.*, 1.47.
[263] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 4.28.3.
[264] *ibid.*, 4.28.3.
[265] *ibid.*, 4.33-36.
[266] *ibid.*, 4.38.1.
[267] *ibid.*, 4.38.2.
[268] *ibid.*, 4.39.2.

own daughter."[269] A bystander threw a toga over the statue and, according to Ovid, Fortuna prophesied that if the statue were uncovered, modesty shall be cast to the winds.[270]

Precedents

The representation of Tullia became a precedent for the women of the late Republic and early Empire who involved themselves in politics and succession plans, such as Fulvia, Livia and Agrippina Minor. Tullia became the rhetorical prototype for the ruthless and ambitious woman who was dedicated to the promotion of her husband or sons to positions of power, and who was universally disliked by our patriarchal writers. However, whether such a depiction was retroactively applied, or used as a precedent by our sources is never going to be established with certainty. Such a character portrayal is emphasised by her placement between the well-regarded Tanaquil and the moral *exemplum* of Lucretia. She illustrates the abuses to which a monarchic government is vulnerable, which would have been a point of note as power centralised in fewer and fewer hands towards the end of the Republic.

[269] Ov., *Fast.*, 6.615-16.
[270] *ibid.*, 6.619-20.

Lucretia

The most widely known, and used, account of the rape of Lucretia is Livy's rather austere version.[271] During the siege of Ardea, during the reign of Tarquinius Superbus circa 510 BC, the prince Sextus Tarquinius held a drinking party, at which the male guests hotly debated the moral character of their wives. The prince's cousin, Collatinus, suggested that they make an impromptu visit to their wives to observe their behaviour during their husbands' absence.[272] While the princes' wives were feasting and drinking, Collatinus; wife, Lucretia, was virtuously spinning wool.[273] Sextus conceived a desire for her, and returned to her house several days later as a guest and, creeping into Lucretia's room during the night, he attempted to satisfy his lust.[274] He pleaded with her, threatened to kill her, and only was able to achieve her submission by threatening to kill both her and a slave, then claim that he had punished them for committing adultery together.[275] She summoned her father and husband to her the following day, informed them of the ordeal she had suffered at the hands of Sextus, and asked that they pledge to punish Sextus for her violation.[276] They pledged their word, and she stabbed herself and died, proclaiming "It is for you,' she said, 'to see that he gets his deserts: although I acquit myself of the sin, I do not free myself from the penalty; no unchaste woman shall henceforth live and plead Lucretia's example."[277] Following her death, Brutus, who had accompanied Lucretia's husband Collatinus, stirred the population to revolt, expelled the Tarquins and founded the Republic.[278]

Achievement of Power

Lucretia gained her *auctoritas* as a member of the aristocracy, married to a nephew of the king. Her *auctoritas* increased posthumously as her virtuous behaviour and the circumstances of her suicide, especially her refusal to be a model for unchaste women in future, played a major role in the reaction to the display of her corpse to the populace of Rome.

Use of Power

Dionysius of Halicarnassus does not record a drinking party, but instead claims that Sextus had long desired Lucretia, and stayed at Collatinus' house while he discharged his duties in Collatia.[279] Sextus, in this account, not only threatens to kill Lucretia, who refuses to submit,

[271] Livy, 1.57-60.
[272] *ibid.*, 1.57.
[273] *ibid.*, 1.57.
[274] *ibid.*, 1.58.
[275] *ibid.*, 1.58.
[276] *ibid.*, 1.58.
[277] Livy, 1.58.
[278] *ibid.*, 1.59.
[279] Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.*, 4.64.

but also promises to marry her and make her queen of the Romans should she agree.[280] She only submits after the same threat about the slave, but the next morning travels *to* her father.[281] She requests him to "send for as many of your friends and kinsmen as you can."[282] She begs her father to avenge her, before telling of her ordeal and committing suicide. Word was sent to her husband, who was accompanied by Brutus, and the revolution began.[283]

In Ovid's poetic version, Lucretia's perspective is given far more consideration – "What could she do? Fight? In battle a woman loses. / Cry out? But the sword in his right hand restrained her. / Fly? His hands pressed down hard on her breast."[284] She is far more emotional the following morning than Livy's Lucretia; "Three times she tried to speak, three times desisted, / And a fourth time, gaining courage, still couldn't raise her eyes."[285] Unlike Livy's Lucretia, who refused to be an example for the unchaste, Ovid's heroine refused to forgive herself for her forced submission.[286] Fragments of Cassius Dio's version assert that Sextus' motivation for the assault was a desire to ruin her reputation.[287] Livy's interpretation of the legend of Lucretia is as an exemplum of chastity. Even in our other sources less concerned with moral lessons, she is depicted as a vulnerable, tragic figure. Timothy Peter Wiseman believes that the dramatic nature of the Lucretia narrative is the result of the myth's evolution from a lost Roman tragedy detailing the fall of the Tarquins.[288]

Ancient Perspectives

P. K. Joplin considers Lucretia to be a "surrogate victim."[289] Since the Roman populace could not attack the Tarquins directly, Lucretia was sacrificed to the violence of the Tarquins. As the violated victim, she "redirects the internal strife and unifies the populace against a common enemy."[290] Finally the populace is simultaneously provided with the justification and incited to overthrow the Tarquins.

L. Bueler understands Lucretia to be a typical example of the "tested woman plot,"[291] in which a woman's moral character is determined by her sexual obedience. Since women have

[280] *ibid.*, 4.65.
[281] *ibid.*, 4.66.
[282] *ibid.*, 4.66.
[283] *ibid.*, 4.67.
[284] Ov. *Fast.* 2.801-803.
[285] *ibid.*, 2.823-24.
[286] *ibid.*, 2.830.
[287] Dio Cass. 2.11.
[288] Wiseman, T. P. (1998), *Roman Drama and Roman History*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press, ch. 3.
[289] Joplin, P. K. (1990), 'Ritual Work on Human Flesh: Livy's Lucretia and the Rape of the Body Politic', *Helios*, 17, p. 52.
[290] *ibid.*, p. 65.
[291] Bueler, L. E. (2001), *The Tested Woman Plot: Women's Choices, Men's Judgements, and the Shaping of Stories*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, p. 12.

traditionally been considered as subordinate to men in Western tradition, their sexual behaviour has been focused on their responses to the actions of men;[292] and therefore "female chastity consists of refusing to engage in sexual relations in the face of male-initiated opportunity."[293] The test tends to occur in the context of competing male characters, and requires the woman to make a decision in which her true moral character is revealed.[294] Lucretia's situation is further complicated, as she is given the choice to refuse and have her name shamed posthumously, or to submit but speak in her own defence afterwards.[295] Lucretia chooses the latter, ensuring that her father and husband are able to clear her name, and punish the wrongdoer.

S. H. Jed claims that the Lucretia myth originally followed "a Roman expedition to Athens with the intent of appropriating those legal customs which could eventually be codified in the laws of the Twelve of the Twelve tables."[296] Since the expulsion of the kings and the instituting of two new laws to the Twelve Tables immediately follow the tragedy of Lucretia, Jed believes that, in order to justify and legitimise the change of regime, later annalists inserted the myth.[297]

Sandra Joshel maintains that the violated woman became a metaphor for the penetration of a man's house by another man, and thus an attack on the man's masculinity.[298] Lucretia's suicide can thus be justified because it eliminates reminders that Collatinus' domain was violated.[299]

The Effect of Their Actions

Joshel's interpretation of Lucretia leaves her as the passive victim of male desires, and uninvolved in the shaping of Roman history. N. Bryson, however, believes that Lucretia played a part in what was to follow her rape. Bryson realises this vital fact – that Lucretia's femininity prevents her from enacting her revenge, especially since "the revenge she asks for from her men is not personal revenge on Tarquin, but political revenge on 'the tyrants'."[300] To punish Sextus Tarquinius, the crown prince, one would need the authority of his father, the king. Tarquinius Superbus is described by Livy committing underhanded and outrageous crimes, and thus seems unlikely to have permitted the murder of his eldest son. Therefore, it is clear that in order for Lucretia to be avenged, actions would have to be taken against both Sextus Tarquinius and the king, Tarquinius Superbus. Lucretia, as a woman, could not wield the necessary political

[292] *ibid.*, p. 12.
[293] *ibid.*, p. 12.
[294] *ibid.*, p. 13.
[295] *ibid.*, p. 23.
[296] Jed, S. H. (1989), *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism (Theories of Representation & Difference)*, Bloomington: John Wiley & Sons, p. 2.
[297] *ibid.*, p. 2.
[298] Joshel, S. R. (2002), 'The Body Female and the Body Politic: Livy's Lucretia and Verginia', In McClure, L. K., *Sexuality and Gender in the Classical World: Readings and Sources*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 176.
[299] *ibid.*, p. 179.
[300] Bryson, N., *op. cit.*, p. 164.

power against them, and nor would she have been permitted to rouse popular opinion by addressing the populace directly. Constrained by the cultural limitations placed upon her gender, Lucretia was forced to enact her revenge through the men in her life. As such, Bryson argues, she commits suicide as "a means of arousing her house to vengeance upon another house."[301] This is only partially true – she is not merely galvanising her menfolk against another "house", but against the *royal family*. It would be unreasonable to assume that Lucretia was prompting the overthrow of the kings and the establishment of the Republic; she could not have foreseen the strong will and keen intelligence of Brutus hidden beneath the mask of a dullard, nor his strong republican leanings. However, the expulsion of Tarquin Superbus and his sons, and the placement of a new king on the throne, would have been within the realms of possibility.

The conflicting interpretations of Lucretia's actions encapsulate the difficulty of reading her use of power in relation to power feminism. An understanding of Lucretia as a passive victim, whose identity as a victim drives the action is consistent with Wolf's definition of victim feminism.[302] However, the above analysis instead indicates a fulfilment of the power feminist notion of a willingness to act politically, and engaging in a situation in which she is at a disadvantage, in order to receive what she determines that is needed.[303]

A. G Lee discusses the essential problem of the story: why did the innocent Lucretia commit suicide?[304] Livy uses the occasion to continue the metaphor of Lucretia as a symbol of chastity – "although I acquit myself of the sin, I do not free myself from the penalty; no unchaste woman shall henceforth live and plead Lucretia's example."[305] Lee gives a far more psychological explanation – "With her knowledge largely limited to the four walls of her house, her complete devotion to her husband, her unaffected simplicity, her emotional and rather impulsive nature, is it not natural that she should kill herself after the shock of the terrible experience which she has endured?"[306] This interpretation, however, does not take into the political motivations mentioned by our source material.

Ovid's version of her suicide ends with an important declaration – "I deny myself the forgiveness that you grant."[307] It is important to remember that, although compelled by Sextus' threats, she submitted to him. Richard Bauman confronts the legality of the question: in Rome was consent under duress considered adultery?[308] His thorough investigation reveals that the

[301] *ibid.*, p. 164.
[302] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 147-149.
[303] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 321-322.
[304] Lee, A. G., 'Ovid's "Lucretia" ["Ouid's Lucretia"]', *Greece & Rome*, 22, no. 66, (1953), p. 109.
[305] Livy, 1.58.
[306] A. G. Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
[307] Ov. *Fast.* 2.830.
[308] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 552.

issue began to be addressed in the late Republic,[309] but there is no evidence for such legal consideration during the regal period. Augustine muddies the waters with his comments upon the death of Lucretia,[310] claiming that she must have either been "betrayed by the pleasure of the act, and gave some consent to Sextus,"[311] or the shame of the deed so horrified her that "with the Roman love of glory in her veins,"[312] she decided suicide would attest to her state of mind and testify to her innocence.

Bryson believes that her decision had been made far earlier,[313] as she could endure death, but not the shame of ruined honour, including the shame it would bring upon her father and husband. Lucretia postpones her death in order to defend her honour and ensure punishment for Sextus.[314]

These theories tend to overlook one simple but important fact – Lucretia's suicide was deliberate and public. Suicide tends to be a private act, but Lucretia committed hers in front of her father and husband. Nor was her suicide an impulsive response to a moment of volatile emotion: in every account of Lucretia's suicide she has the dagger concealed on or by her person, for immediate use. If we accept Bryson's theory above, that is that Lucretia demanded an overthrow of the Tarquins to avenge herself, then she would have had to accept that her private shame would have to be made public knowledge to provide provocation to the populace. However, her very dramatic suicide transformed her from an object of pity into a martyr, and providing the impetus for a revolt.

If one can accept the possibility presented by Bryson of Lucretia as having an active and deliberate role in the actions following her death, then one must consider the complication in the story – Brutus. Brutus' presence at the confession and suicide of Lucretia is an accident. Brutus only confesses to his pretence of imbecility *after* her death. Lucretia could not have known that he would accompany her husband to her summons, nor that he was in fact an intelligent and politically skilled man. She had depended upon her father or husband to avenge her honour. Brutus merely seized the opportunity to overthrow the Tarquins, at whose hands he had suffered so much, with the heroic justification of avenging a ravished honour, and with the full support of the people and army. No mention of a republic is made previous to this by any of the characters, but it is understandable that Brutus, who had lost his family to the Tarquins'

[309] *ibid.*, p. 552.
[310] Augustine, *City of God*, 1.19.
[311] Augustine, *City of God*, 1.19.
[312] Augustine, *City of God*, 1.19.
[313] Bryson, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
[314] *ibid.*, p. 166.

tyranny, and had watched their abuse of power first-hand, would not wish to see absolute power restored to a single person.

Tradition dictates that Brutus must be the hero of the revolution, and so Lucretia's father and husband are skilfully sidelined. These are the men whom she demanded should avenge her, and who an audience would expect to be leading the fight against the Tarquins. To balance both demands, the character of Collatinus is feminised. Lucretia ends her life with the traditionally masculine choice of blade, and Ovid even commends her as "a woman with a man's courage."[315] By comparison, Collatinus is lost to grief as Brutus takes up Lucretia's call for vengeance. In Dionysius of Halicarnassus' account, Brutus must castigate Collatinus over his grief, and focus him upon the task of vengeance.[316] Most importantly, Collatinus must choose between loyalty to his paternal family, and loyalty to his deceased wife, which is an inversion of the conflict usually experienced by Roman women. Livy only discloses Collatinus' Tarquin ancestry *after* the revolt,[317] but the other sources admit that fact as they introduce him. Collatinus is therefore trapped in the classic female conundrum of divided loyalty between two families. One last important fact is that rape in ancient Rome was considered an offence against the woman's husband or father. Collatinus was thus in a sense attacked through his wife by Sextus, and his failure to respond to that attack metaphorically emasculates his character. This allows the manly hero figure of Brutus to command the events in the historical narrative.

Precedents

Lucretia's assault and suicide as an impetus for political change would be repeated with the character of Verginia in the early Republic. Thus Lucretia can be seen to not only have inspired a revolution, but in fact to be driving the action by her suicide. Collatinus is feminised by our sources to reconcile the different facts of the Lucretia legend, and establish the pre-eminence of Brutus.

[315] Ov. *Fast.* 2.847.
[316] Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.70.
[317] Livy, 2.2.

Conclusion

The sources for the women of this period are largely consistent with one another, but still not considered historical by modern scholarship, as discussed in the literature review above. The consistency between our sources is attributable to their use of a shared earlier source, which is no longer extant. The earliest written sources, in turn, relied on a performative and oral tradition, which would have been influenced by the context of its reception. However, it is the reliance upon this tradition for the material in this period, in addition to the considerable chronological distance between the events of the regal period, which give rise to concerns about the accuracy of the source material. The distance of our authors from the regal period also increases the likelihood of their depiction of monarchic Rome becoming influenced by their own historical context, in particular the actions of Augustus and the Julio-Claudians. Despite concerns about the historicity of the evidence for this period, the regal period of Rome is still an invaluable resource in examining how Roman writers regarded women as shaping the course of Roman history.

As stated above, Rome's history was only transmitted into written format around the third century BC, and thus Rome's written history was also influenced by the city-state's coalescence of its self-identity as its military campaigns expanded Rome's dominion through the Mediterranean. Therefore the study of the representation of the role of women reveals how Rome wished to depict the role of women within its society to its subjects and allies in the Mediterranean.

Rome's early history demonstrates the integral role that women played in shaping the path of this great city. The women of this period gained their *auctoritas* through their familial connections to elite and royal males, as well as their own displays of leadership. *Auctoritas* was utilised largely in an active manner. Rhea Silvia, the Sabine women, Horatia and Lucretia used their *auctoritas* to benefit the Roman state as a whole, while Tarpeia, Tanaquil and Tullia employed their *auctoritas* to benefit themselves and their family members.

Regardless of their historicity of these accounts, the socio-political and cultural legacy bequeathed by the narrative tradition relating to these women may have set precedents for women living during the tumultuous period of Rome's republican and imperial history – notably, the legendary Veturia and the historical Octavia – to intercede in civil war. In addition, Livia would emulate Tanaquil's method of organising familial succession in the first century AD, and sources about Lucretia's violation motivating political change are echoed in accounts of Verginia.

CHAPTER TWO: THE EARLY & MIDDLE ROMAN REPUBLIC

Introduction

This chapter begins after the expulsion of the Tarquins and the subsequent establishment of a Republican government by Brutus and the Roman people circa 510 BC. While over three hundred years may at first glance appear too broad a sweep of republican chronology, it should be remembered that the historical record for this timeframe treats Rome's expansion through the Mediterranean. As a result of this focus on matters *domi militiaeque* involving the state and the battlefield, women do not feature as heavily in the narrative dealing with this period due to the military and political restrictions on their involvements.

Victory at Veii in 396 BC helped Rome establish predominance in Italy. Rome's later battles with Carthage in the three Punic Wars from 264 BC to 146 BC motivated the creation of a navy and strengthened her military reputation. Following Macedon's defeat in 197 BC and the subsequent hegemony over the Greek states, Rome's military supremacy in the Mediterranean was firmly established.

Rome experienced its first serious internal conflicts in the Struggle of the Orders – the name given to a series of confrontations between the plebeian and patrician classes from 494 BC to 287 BC. These clashes arose in response to the political and legal disparities that existed between the two groups, and resulted in the establishment of the office of plebeian tribune. To ensure greater legal equality, Roman law was codified into the Twelve Tables in 449 BC and displayed publicly.

Rome's expansion and military success also created cultural and social change as a great deal of wealth flowed into the households of the Roman elite, followed closely by Hellenic cultural influences such as philosophy and art, often mediated by an influx of slave tutors. This provoked a great deal of vocal resistance from conservative intellectuals and politicians like Cato, but the voices of those advocating traditional values were in the end insufficient to the task of stemming the popularity of Greek influences in Rome.

In this chapter this author will examine episodes which reflect the role of women with each of these formative historical movements: in relation to Rome's domestic military affairs, the role of Veturia and the women of Rome in convincing Coriolanus to halt his march on Rome; in the context of Rome's politico-legal history, the importance of the death of Verginia in ending the rule of the decemvirs, and the protest of Rome's elite women against the Oppian Law; and, in relation to the socio-cultural evolution of the republican period, the place of women executed

in the poisoning trials of 331 BC and of those involved in the Bacchanalian affair, and the speech of Hortensia. Each of these case studies will be analysed from a power feminist perspective, focusing on the significant uses of *auctoritas* and *potestas* in the early and middle Republic.

Veturia

According to our ancient sources, the Republican form of government was instituted in Rome after the expulsion of the Tarquins, with an emphasis on limited and shared tenure of power. However, disparity between the conditions of the plebeian class and those of the patricians sparked dissent, and resulted in the plebeians refusing to march out of the city, despite the fact that Rome was at war with the Aequi and Volscians.[1] They instead abandoned the city *en masse*, and assembled on the Sacred Hill. The patricians agreed to the terms of the plebeians – that they be allowed to elect their own officials to represent them.[2] These magistrates became known as the plebeian tribunes.

As a result of this plebeian action there arose a serious corn shortage in Rome,[3] which predominantly effected the plebeian citizens. When corn was sourced from Sicily, a debate arose in the Senate in regards to the price for which the Senate should sell the corn. The patrician war veteran Marcus Coriolanus argued that the Senate should set a high price for the corn. He believed that this would cause famine amongst the plebeian class, and would force them to relinquish their tribunes in exchange for the Senate lowering the price on corn. The plebeian class was angered when they heard of Coriolanus' speech and the plebeian tribunes, as defenders of the interests of their class, set a date for his trial.

According to Livy, Coriolanus did not appear at the trial and was condemned in his absence,[4] although Dionysius of Halicarnassus does record a version where Coriolanus appeared and argued in his defence, but was still judged guilty.[5] Nonetheless, Coriolanus went into exile amongst the Volscians, who were enemies of Rome. Coriolanus became a commander in their army and marched on Rome, defeating the Latin cities in his path. Senior members of the Senate were sent to negotiate with him, but were unsuccessful,[6] as were the Roman priests who were also sent.[7] The men of Rome prepared for war.

The Roman women went to the temples and, according to Dionysius[8] and Plutarch,[9] at the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, a patrician woman by the name of Valeria encouraged the women present to plead with Coriolanus' wife, Volumnia, and mother, Veturia, to intervene.[10] They

[1] Livy, 2.32.
[2] Livy, 2.33.
[3] Livy, 2.34.
[4] Livy, 2.35.
[5] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 7.34.
[6] Livy, 2.39.
[7] Livy, 2.39.
[8] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.39.2-5.
[9] Plut., *Cor*., 33.
[10] Plutarch, however, names Coriolanus' mother Volumnia and his wife Vergilia.

agreed to do so and the women went in a body to the camp of Coriolanus.[11] He was unmoved by the tears of the women, but rose to greet his mother.[12] Veturia gave a passionate speech and, in the versions of Dionysius[13] and Plutarch,[14] throws herself at his feet. Coriolanus was swayed by her arguments, and withdrew his forces from Roman territory. Some of Livy's sources record that Coriolanus was killed by the Volscians, who were angered by his withdrawal.[15] However, Fabius Pictor recorded that Coriolanus lived in exile to a great age.[16] In Rome a temple was built and dedicated to Fortuna Muliebris to memorialise the courage of these women in saving the city.[17]

Achievement of Power

Veturia uses her *materna auctoritas* in order to convince Coriolanus to abandon his war with Rome. This is the second occasion[18] where we see an element of Rome's female population[19] depicted as a united group endeavouring to broker peace with foreign forces. As in the war with the Sabines, male negotiation techniques had failed to resolve the conflict, and the women resorted to exploiting their familial connections with the attacking forces. As in the case study of the Sabines, the women utilise female societal networks to exploit their *auctoritas* in a power feminist manner.[20]

It is important to note that, apart from Dionysius' record of reluctant sanction of the group by the Senate,[21] these women have no official authority or power to negotiate terms or establish a peace treaty. However, in the face of the failure of male political and religious authority,[22] the women as a group decide upon this action. Dionysius records Valeria as being "moved by some divine inspiration"[23] while in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Plutarch's account is more explicit: "[W]e … are come as women to women, obeying neither senatorial edict nor consular command; but our god, as it would seem, taking pity on our supplication, put into our hearts an impulse to come hither to you and beseech you".[24] This divine guidance gives patriarchal

[11] Plut., *Cor.*, 34.
[12] Plut., *Cor.*, 34.
[13] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.54.1.
[14] Plut., *Cor.*, 36.
[15] Livy, 2.40.
[16] Livy, 2.40.
[17] Livy, 2.40.
[18] The first being the intercession of the Sabine women, see this study, Ch. 1, p. 50-56.
[19] Plutarch's account of the event is the only one that makes reference to the rank of the women involved, Plut., *Cor.*, 33.
[20] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 310-316.
[21] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.43.6.
[22] Even the priests sent to negotiate with Coriolanus were unsuccessful (Livy, 2.40).
[23] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.39.
[24] Plut., *Cor.*, 33.3.

justification for the decision of these women to venture action so far from their accepted societal roles, as well as underwriting the success that they achieve in doing so.

Ancient Perspectives

This image of a group of women speaking in a public place would have been familiar to Livy and Dionysius from the contemporaneous speech given by Hortensia and the elite women of Rome in the Forum in 42 BC opposing the triumviral tax on women.[25] It is possible that the historical precedent associated with Hortensia's address provided Livy, Dionysius and Plutarch with an *exemplum* familiar to their readers and sufficiently impactful to permit retrojection of such an incident to an earlier period – a tried and tested historiographical ploy strengthened by the parallels to the intercession of the Sabine women, which both authors make explicit in their separate narrative accounts.[26]

Furthermore, it is likely that the depiction in the narrative tradition of the women of Rome approaching Coriolanus as a large group, rather than simply sending his wife and mother as envoys, was designed to strengthen parallels between this episode and the speech of Hortensia. Although only Veturia and Volumnia could exploit their familial connection to Coriolanus, the other women and children in mourning garb were symbolic of the innocent Romans who would perish if the Volscians took Rome.

The Roman women are silent in front of Coriolanus. Even his wife Volumnia is given neither a vocal nor an active role by any of our authors; the focus of the episode is completely upon his mother Veturia. Coriolanus' regard for his mother is shown in the marks of respect recorded by all of our sources: Livy and Plutarch note that Coriolanus gets down from his tribunal,[27] and in Dionysius he also ordered his lictors to remove the axe from the fasces, and to lower the rods, as was customary "when inferior magistrates meet those who are their superiors".[28] Dionysius attributes this to Coriolanus' "concern to show his veneration for the tie of kinship",[29] while Plutarch believes that Coriolanus "thought he owed his mother the filial gratitude also which would have been due to his father".[30] However, Coriolanus is not the only man in Roman history who demonstrated great respect and devotion to his mother: Cornelia famously convinced Gaius Gracchus to withdraw legislation, Mucia was sent to negotiate with Sextus Pompey in 39 BC, and Tiberius' mother Livia was able to get her son to drop the charges levelled against her friend Plancina, to name but a few examples. Mothers held an important place in Roman

[25] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 100-107, Ch. 3, p. 131-134.
[26] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.40.4 and Plut., Romulus, 33.3.
[27] Livy, 2.40; Plut., *Cor*,. 34.
[28] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.44.
[29] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.44.
[30] Plut., *Cor.*, 3.

culture. Suzanne Dixon states that the "salient role of the women portrayed admiringly in Latin literature was as disciplinarians, custodians of Roman culture and traditional morality". She believes that, although a mother's authority rested upon convention rather than legal right, as in the case of the *paterfamilias*, it was nonetheless strong enough for their sons to accede to their wishes, even in cases where it was not in their best interest to do so. It is possible that Veturia's advanced age and irreplaceable role in his life allowed her more freedom in her actions than Coriolanus' wife.

It is interesting to note that the speeches recorded by our three main sources differ in content, although they are all in agreement that it was Veturia who spoke. Livy's account is characteristically brief. He portrays her as angry, demanding "whether it is to an enemy or a son that I have come?"[31] She claims that his bitterness should have been softened by his return to Rome, and that unless he changed his mind she would be the ruin of the city of Rome, sealing the fate of the women who accompanied her, by having produced such a son.[32]

Dionysius' account assigns Veturia a more personal appeal. His Veturia is concerned with repaying the kindness of the women who helped her and Volumnia after Coriolanus' departure.[33] She claims that he can end the attack without betraying the Volscians, and that he need not punish all of Rome for the mistakes of a few.[34] She also reminds him that she gave him "body and soul",[35] and that for all she has sacrificed it would be wrong for him to not do this for her – "In return for all this I, who was never a burden to you nor ever shall be as long as I live, ask this favour of you — that you will be at last be reconciled to your fellow citizens and cease nursing that implacable anger against your country".[36]

Plutarch's version of the speech given by Coriolanus' mother is also a personal appeal. She must see either her homeland or her son destroyed if he continues, but if he changes his mind both he and the Volscians will have their reputations enhanced.[37] She claims that honouring her request would be "pious",[38] and if he does not then she will commit suicide.[39]

Use of Power

Despite the differences in each account, all our sources depict Veturia as asserting her maternal *auctoritas* in her speech to her son to deter him from attacking Rome. Buszard has examined

[31] Livy, 2.40.
[32] Livy, 2.40.
[33] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.46.
[34] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.48-50.
[35] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.51.1.
[36] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.52.2.
[37] Plut., *Cor.*, 35.
[38] Plut., *Cor.*, 36.3.
[39] Plut., *Cor.*, 35.3.

the three versions of Veturia's speech. He identifies Veturia's speech in Livy as poorovididing no background character information on Veturia then having her open her speech "bold, angry, and vicious"[40] to shock his audience.[41] However, her argument in Livy is concerned with assimilating herself with Rome, and thus the fate of Rome with her own. While this proves effective with Coriolanus, Buszard believes that the speech strips her of her individuality: "her personality does not exist outside of her speech, and her entire speech is devoted to the assimilation of herself and her native city, so she effectively becomes Rome personified".[42]

Plutarch, however, develops Veturia's character[43] and her relationship with her son throughout his biography. Buszard believes that Plutarch "implies that Coriolanus misapprehends the proper relationship between his mother, virtue, and glory".[44] As discussed above,[45] the appropriate aim for a Roman senator was the pursuit of *gloria* through displays of *virtus* enacted on behalf of the state. Plutarch asserts that, "for other men glory was the goal of virtue; for him, the goal of glory was his mother's happiness".[46] Buszard believes that this devotion to his mother in place of the devotion that he owed his country was responsible for Coriolanus' decision to attack Rome: "… once he has been driven from Rome and can no longer please his mother by performing his civic duty, his ties to Rome are severed".[47] However, Buszard fails to explain how attacking Rome while his mother was still in residence was consistent with his "inappropriate" devotion to his mother.

Nonetheless, in the speeches attributed to Veturia by Livy and Plutarch, she asserts her *materna auctoritas* by castigating him for endangering those women who had cared for herself and his wife after he left Rome, attempting to persuade him that ending his march on Rome is in the best interests of all parties. When these tactics prove unsuccessful, Veturia identifies herself with Rome, thus exploiting her son's affection by causing Coriolanus to consider Rome with the appropriate devotion which he has focused on her.

The Effect of Their Actions

Buszard notes that for all her lengthy speeches and emotive rhetoric in Dionysius, it is Veturia's physical action of throwing herself at her son's feet that breaks Coriolanus' resolve.[48] Plutarch

[40] Buszard, B., *op. cit.*, p. 104.
[41] *ibid.*, p. 104.
[42] *ibid.*, p. 105.
[43] Plutarch identifies Veturia as Volumnia in his *Coriolanus*.
[44] Buszard, B., *op. cit.*, p. 107-8.
[45] See this study, Introduction, p. 9.
[46] Plut., *Cor.*, 4.3.
[47] Buszard, B, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
[48] *ibid.*, p. 106.

also depicts Volumnia's speech ending with her throwing herself at his feet.[49] Livy's description does not have Veturia on the ground, but instead "his wife and children embraced him, and all the women wept and bewailed their own and their country's fate".[50] It is informative that, while the narrative record gives precedence to a woman's voice on this occasion, it is only after physical action that Coriolanus' resolve fails and he concedes to his mother. In Dionysius this action is foreshadowed by the words of Valeria in the temple: "his heart is not so hard and invulnerable that he can hold out against a mother who grovels at his knees".[51] Whether this can be considered as a technique to confirm divine guidance in the endeavour, or simply the wisdom of Valeria, it is noteworthy that even when a woman's speech is so integral to the story, the female voice alone cannot direct the actions of male affairs.

It must be remembered, too, that Veturia's rhetoric is a literary creation of Livy, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Plutarch, influenced by Rome's performative history tradition. T. P. Wiseman believes that this tradition informed and preserved a great deal of Rome's early history, prior to the advent of the literary historical record: "even in the form we have them, absorbed into continuous historical prose, the great stories fall naturally into dramatic scenes".[52] Ogilvie similarly identifies on Veturia's speech in Livy as subject to the influence of this tradition.

Nonetheless, the episode, and Veturia's use of maternal *auctoritas* through her persuasive rhetoric and actions are useful in their representation of the role of Veturia in using her *auctoritas* to end a civil war after the *auctoritas* of the political and religious male leaders failed to do so.

Precedents

The accounts in Livy, Dionysius and Plutarch of Veturia's intervention build upon the history of intercession established by the Sabine women, a history continued into the tumult of the late republic. In fact, it is more than likely that our authors were influenced by the actions of women such as Octavia and Mucia, who successfully mediated between various parties during the late Republic. Importantly, Veturia's role in the event is represented as historically significant: in brief, that in extreme circumstances a woman's ability to influence a man's actions by appealing as much to his emotions as to his reason can achieve a successful outcome where solely male words and actions have failed. Although female participation in the public arena was

[49] Plut., *Cor.*, 36.
[50] Livy, 2.40.
[51] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 8.39.
[52] Wiseman, T. P. (1994), *Historiography and Imagination: Eight Essays on Roman Culture*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press, p. 12.

discouraged, Veturia is seen to have been used as an honourable precedent for women in the messy environment of civil war, where elite female *auctoritas* and explicitly feminine qualities, such as *pietas*, *pudicitia*, and *concordia*, are far more suited than traditional *virtus* to achieve peace.

Verginia

Following the abolition of the monarchy circa 771 BC, one of the first major recorded political upheavals involving a woman concerns Appius Claudius' attempted rape of the plebeian maiden Verginia. Appius Claudius was one of the decemvirs entrusted with the task of establishing the written laws of Rome that would become known as the Twelve Tables. According to Livy, Appius Claudius noticed Verginia as she crossed the Forum on the way to classes. Appius lusted after her, but she refused his advances. When Verginia could not be persuaded or bribed to betray her chastity, Appius Claudius solicited the assistance of his client Marcus Claudius in a scheme to satisfy his lust.[53] Marcus claimed at the tribunal of Appius that Verginia was the daughter of his slave, and therefore his property.[54] Since Verginia's father was absent, stationed against the army of the Aequi, Appius declared that Marcus should have custody of Verginia until her father's appearance. Her supporters protested, however, and Appius reluctantly bowed to public pressure, allowing her to stay with her family.[55]

The next day her father Verginius, summoned from camp, appeared with her at the tribunal.[56] Appius declared Marcus' version of events to be correct, and Verginia to be his slave.[57] Verginius pulled his daughter aside and stabbed her, then escaped from the city to his military camp, while her grandfather, Numitorius, and her betrothed, Icilius, displayed Verginia's body to the people, and Icilius spoke of the abolition of tribunician power and the right of appeal.[58] Verginius meanwhile stirred his comrades to a revolt, and they marched on Rome. Occupying the Aventine, they were joined by the army stationed against the Sabines, and many of the plebeian citizens.[59] The inaction of the Senate motivated them to move to the Sacred Hill,[60] imitating the secession of the plebs which led to the creation of the office of tribune. As a result, the decemvirs agreed to relinquish power, and the office of tribune and the right of appeal were reinstated.[61]

Achievement of Power

Verginia plays a passive role within the narrative, as it is the image of her lifeless body which exerts *auctoritas* upon the plebeian class of Rome. This is exploited by Verginia's fiancée, father and grandfather. Her fiancée, Icilius, had previously held the office of plebeian tribune,

[53] Livy, 3.44.
[54] Livy, 3.44.
[55] Livy, 3.45.
[56] Livy, 3.47.
[57] Livy, 3.47.
[58] Livy, 3.48.
[59] Livy, 3.50-51.
[60] Livy, 3.52.
[61] Livy, 3.57.

and can be seen as demonstrating his political acumen in displaying Verginia's body to the crowd, and then turning his speech about Verginia's death into a critique of the decemvir's abolition of tribunician power and right to appeal. Verginius returned to camp and roused his fellow soldiers to mutiny. Verginia's post-mortem *auctoritas* therefore became the impetus for revolt. Notably, this *auctoritas* derives from her identity and definition within the narrative, which allows her male relatives to utilise her victimhood as an impetus for political change. This use of the identity of victim to exert power is consistent with Wolf's definition of victim feminism,[62] as demonstrated in the case studies of Rhea Silvia,[63] Horatia,[64] and Lucretia.[65] Her identity of victim created a form of passive power that acted as impetus for significant political change.

Use of Power

Ogilvie believes that this negative depiction of Appius Claudius arose from the mixed feelings shared by the plebs regarding the Twelve Tables: "[T]he plebs had demanded the safeguard of a codified legal system. When they had won it, they were profoundly dissatisfied with it because it revealed and enshrined the full extent of the disabilities under which they lay."[66] He asserts that this contradiction created the myth of two decemviral boards – one just and fair, and the other tyrannical.[67] As this myth expanded, the story of Verginia became attached to the latter decemvirs, and the high profile of Appius Claudius caused his name to be attached to the role of villain.[68] Wiseman concurs with this premise, and believes that this development was in the work of Valerius Antias.[69] His evidence for this is the fact that Cicero did not make mention of Appius Claudius' role in the Verginia narrative in his speeches attacking Clodius and Clodia, but does later in his *de Finibus*.[70] Wiseman believes that this omission supports the idea that Appius' name was connected with the attack on Verginia in the intervening period. However, Vasaly argues that in his attacks on Clodius and Clodia, Cicero had aimed not to alienate the entire Claudian *gens*, especially due to their marital connections to Pompey and Brutus.[71] Joshel believes that Livy portrays his heroes as possessing *disciplina*,[72] and thus characters such as Appius and Tarquin display the effects of its antithesis – men overcome and ruled by their lust

[62] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 147-49.
[63] See this study, Ch. 1, p. 45-50.
[64] See this study, Ch. 1, p. 61-66.
[65] See this study, Ch. 1, p. 75-81.
[66] Ogilvie, R. M., *op. cit.*, p. 452-53.
[67] *ibid.*, p. 453.
[68] *ibid.*, p. 453.
[69] Wiseman, T. P. (1994), p. 104-15.
[70] *ibid.*, p. 121-30.
[71] Vasaly, A. (1999), 'The Quinctii in Livy's First Pentad: The Rhetoric of Anti-rhetoric', *The Classical World*, 92(6), p. 213-4, n. 30.
[72] Joshel, S. R., (2002), p. 118.

and other volatile emotions.[73] Our ancient sources are also not in agreement: Dionysius claims that power corrupted Appius,[74] while Livy states that his tenure as decimvir revealed his true character.[75]

Verginia's role in the event, however, is as an example of the possible abuses of magistrates given unchecked power. Joshel believes that the female body in Livy's accounts of Lucretia and Verginia is a metaphor for the "body politic", [76] and thus the attempts to preserve Verginia's chastity at any cost are also aimed at preserving the state.[77] Vasaly furthers this metaphor in her examination of Livy's portrayal of the Appii Claudii in the first pentad. Livy portrays Appius' attempt to despoil Verginia as the result of "lust",[78] which Vasaly believes is portrayed as analogous to his "lust for power and the satisfaction of that lust through despotism".[79] Both his rule as decimvir and treatment of Verginia depict a desire to dominate and control free Romans, which he attempts initially through guile and persuasion, while later he depends upon the use of judicial and physical force.[80] As a result, Vasaly believes that Livy employed Verginia as a symbol of the Roman plebs; mute and passive, possessed by fear before the tyranny of Appius.[81] Part of this is the connection that Livy makes between her chastity and the freedom of the plebs.[82] This is done firstly by subjugating the issue of her chastity to her status as a free citizen. Unlike Lucretia, with whom many comparisons are drawn, Verginia is not given the decision herself to submit to Appius, but rather her status as a freeborn citizen must be established to protect herself from violation. Vasaly also believes that the symbolism is continued by the character of Icilius, who as the betrothed of Verginia and a former tribune of the plebs, is both a defender of the *libertas* of Verginia and the people.[83] The attack on Verginia is therefore used as evidence that "the plebs is seen as vulnerable, frightened, and defenceless – capable of violation without its legal safeguards of *provocatio* and the tribunician veto".[84]

Effect of Actions

Verginia's function in the story goes beyond simply being a foil for the male characters. Without a violated woman as the impetus for revolt, the narrative of plebeian dissidence against the decemvirs required the insertion of a private citizen capable of instigating the revolt. After

[73] *ibid.*, p. 118.
[74] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 11.35.4.
[75] Livy, 3.36.
[76] Joshel, S. R. (2002), p. 117.
[77] *ibid.*, p. 117.
[78] Livy, 3.44.1, 3.44.2, 3.44.6.
[79] Vasaly, A., *op. cit.*, p. 219.
[80] *ibid.*, p. 219-20.
[81] *ibid.*, p. 219-20.
[82] *ibid.*, p. 220.
[83] *ibid.*, p. 220-21.
[84] *ibid.*, p. 222.

all, at this point in the political development of the republic there were no plebeian tribunes. This mobilisation of the populace by a private citizen would have been far more provocative and threatening to the patricians and decemvirs alike, and would have been less likely to have achieved a peaceful resolution between the patricians and the plebeians.

Ancient Perspectives

Interestingly, this episode is placed after long passages about anti-tribunician polemic from the authors, likely inherited from their patrician sources. Livy and Dionysius remind their audience of why, despite the discord the tribunes could cause, the office was necessary in Rome to safeguard the freedom and rights of the plebs since the existing political and judicial power structures were not adequate to the task and prone to abuse. It is an important point to remember, as the tribuneship remained a contentious issue until its power was overshadowed by the force of the generals in the late Republic, and thus the narrative is likely to have been employed by, and perhaps even influenced by, the pro-tribunate politics of the middle and late Republic.

Precedents

Much has been made of the similarities between the death of Verginia and Lucretia. They are depicted as victims of a plot by a tyrant to rape them, and their deaths became the impetus for change from the (tyrannical) political power structures. However, Verginia is not simply a plebeian Lucretia. She is not a self-aware woman, urging revenge and in control of her own mortality. She is instead a mute, motionless pawn caught between opposing male politicians with their own agendas. Her body is manipulated by these men – Marcus grabs her,[85] escorts her to Appius' tribunal,[86] she reappears at the tribunal escorted by her father,[87] is pulled aside by him after the verdict,[88] and her deceased body is put on display by Icilius and Numitorius.[89]

[85] Livy, 3.44.
[86] Livy, 3.44.
[87] Livy, 3.47.
[88] Livy, 3.47.
[89] Livy, 3.48.

Poisoning Trials of 331 BC

Livy records that in 331 BC in Rome the leading citizens were falling ill from the same illness which proved fatal to most.[90] At this time a serving woman approached Quintus Fabius Maximus, the curule aedile, who claimed that the illness was a result of poisoning by Roman matrons.[91] She escorted the members of the Senate to those she believed were guilty, and these twenty matrons were brought to the Forum, as well as poisons found within the houses.[92] Two of these women, Cornelia and Sergia, claimed that the tinctures were remedies for the present illness. At this, the informer challenged the matrons to imbibe the solutions, which they agreed to do, and all were killed.[93] Livy claims that 170 matrons were charged and convicted in relation to the poisonings.[94] Interestingly, Livy claims that "their act was regarded as a prodigy, and suggested madness rather than felonious intent".[95] The Romans thus elected a dictator to drive a nail in as expiation.[96]

Achievement of Power

The mass poisonings perpetrated by the elite matrons of Rome cannot be considered to be a use of *auctoritas*. However, that does not mean, by exclusion, that they are a demonstration of *potestas*. The definition of *potestas* discussed in the introduction refers to power legitimately conferred upon men through due political process or legislature, and which gives a man the right to use force against another citizen.

As per the discussion above, women were not permitted to hold political or military office, and therefore could not wield political *potestas* as described. *Potestas* could also be exerted by the male head of a family upon its members, regardless of age or gender. This *patria potestas*, however, was also exclusively the right of men. Nonetheless, the use of poison by women against the elite men of Rome can be considered a use of force (through the agency of poisons) against fellow citizens, some of them family members. Due to the transgressive nature of women using force against men in Roman culture, there is no accurate term to describe these elite women's actions in terms of the discourse of power in Republican Rome, yet *potestas* would be the closest definition.

The matrons in this narrative used their knowledge of herbs and medicinal plants, and it should be considered that both Roman poisons and medicines were derived from plants. Additionally,

[90] Livy, 8.18.4.
[91] Livy, 8.18.4-7.
[92] Livy, 8.18.7-8.
[93] Livy, 8.18.9.
[94] Livy, 8.18.10.
[95] Livy, 8.18.11.
[96] Livy, 8.18.12-13.

the domestic role of women in the household which allowed them access to food and drink, in a supervisory role, as well as their responsibility to tend to the ill and infirm, allowed them access to kinsmen, who were some of the most powerful men in Rome, in their unguarded moments, in order to poison male members of the aristocracy. The use of a female network to utilise power is prescribed by Wolf.[97] Wolf advocates its use in exercising political power and creating a psychology of power and to promote the political and economic desires of fellow women.

Use of Power

C. Herrman proposes a theory that the poisonings were part of the activities of a faction of patrician women who were seeking equality of civil and political rights in Rome, and were willing to employ criminal behaviour to that end.[98] This idea appears to be a retrojection of values from the author's socio-political milieu than analysis of the available evidence.

R. A. Bauman believes that the poisoning trials, in addition to the *stuprum* trials of 295 BC and the Bacchanalian affair in 186 BC, were part of an attempt by patrician matrons to secure matrimonial reform.[99] Due to their legal and political handicaps he declares that the matrons had to resort to "extra-constitutional"[100] actions directed at public figures.[101] However, this idea appears to be based upon his conviction that later actions by women which would be considered conspiracies would "almost invariably signify a protest of some sort".[102]

Both Herrman and Bauman postulate the mass poisoning as part of actions by patrician women aimed at changing the legal standing of women in Roman society. However, they fail to provide any evidence of how one was supposed to lead to the other. Despite the many deaths in 331 BC and both the trial by ordeal and the large public trial, Livy records no demands by any of the accused matrons for legal reform.

J. Gaughan remarks that the concoctions being brewed by the original twenty matrons may have indeed been curative brews, as Cornelia and Sergia claimed.[103] Livy admitted that a plague of some description had effected the patrician class of Rome, and women were often considered bearers of herbal knowledge.[104] Gaughan believes that the pandemic afflicting Rome posed a

[97] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 310-316.
[98] Herrman, C. (1964), 'Le role judiciaire et politique des femmes sous la republique romaine', *L'antiquité classique*, 33(2), p. 48.
[99] Bauman, R. A., (1992), p. 17.
[100] *ibid.*, p. 17.
[101] *ibid.*, p. 17-18.
[102] *ibid.*, p. 18.
[103] Gaughan, J. E. (2010), *Murder was Not a Crime: Homicide and Power in the Roman Republic*, Austin: University of Texas Press, p. 45.
[104] *ibid.*, p. 45.

"threat to [the] social order",[105] as the deaths of many senators would effect the running of the state. Therefore, she believes, the Romans of 331 BC attributed blame to human design so that the disease could be controlled and social order restored.[106]

H. N. Parker believes that the poisoning trials were part of a larger collection of attacks against Roman matrons that occur frequently during times of external threat or civil unrest.[107] Parker lists a series of trials for adultery[108] and poisonings,[109] as well as the execution of Vestal Virgins in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. He raises the valid question: "Why was this fear directed against matrons, women at the center of society, rather than solely against the old, the widowed, the unprotected, or other societally marginal women, as in the European witch craze?"[110]

He believes that the answer lies in the fear that is embedded in patriarchal societies of women as both attached to their father's family and their husband's.[111] He believes that this split loyalty led to the idea of a woman "as a potential traitoress to her new family, as a potential witch to her husband and poisoner of his children".[112] Thus, although matrons are at the centre of Roman society, women as a whole in Roman culture are marginalised and therefore become excellent scapegoats in times of social unrest.[113]

Effect of their Actions

While the guilt of the elite women convicted of murder by poison is still a matter of discussion, the immediate effects of their actions are explicit. The twenty women originally accused were killed by their own infusions, a further 170 matrons were convicted and put to death. The potential to manipulate the makeup of the senate through the murders of which they were accused is comprehensible, and would be used subsequently by Hostilia Quarta in the murder of her husband, Calpurnius Piso, in order to assist her son in achieving the consulship. However, the number of casualties of the alleged plot appeared to be successful as a deterrent for mass poisonings.

Ancient Perspectives

[105] *ibid.*, p. 45.
[106] *ibid.*, p. 45.
[107] Parker, H., N. (2004), 'Why Were the Vestals Virgins? Or the Chastity of Women and the Safety of the Roman State', *The American Journal of Philology*, 125(4), p. 589.
[108] The *stuprum* trials of 295 BC (Livy 10.31.6); exile of Roman matrons in 213 BC (Livy 25.2.9).
[109] In addition to the poisonings of 331 BC he includes the poisoning trials of 184 (Livy, 39.41.5-6); the trial of Hostilia Quarta (Livy 40.37.1-7).
[110] Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 590.
[111] *ibid.*, p. 590.
[112] *ibid.*, p. 591.
[113] *ibid.*, p. 591-92.

Valerius Maximus states that the women "had poisoned their husbands in a secret plot",[114] but Livy discloses that he does not wish to believe the account, and that not of all his sources are in agreement that the deaths of the elite men resulted from poison rather than disease.[115] Livy's hesitation strengthens the theory of Parker that the women accused of poison were the result of hysterical scapegoating in the manner of witchcraft trial during the Middle Ages.

In addition, in his brief analysis of the episode S. E. Smethurst makes an excellent point: apart from the description of their actions as "wicked",[116] Livy does not attribute blame to the 190 matrons involved in the poisoning plot, instead attributing it to "madness"[117] and stating that the Romans believed it to be a prodigy.[118] Usually unrest or pestilence in Rome was attributed to errors in religious observance or a Vestal Virgin having broken her sacred vow of chastity. In fact, over a century later, the involvement of women in the potentially treasonous Bacchanalian affair[119] was ascribed to the immorality of those involved.[120] However, Livy's use of the term '*prodigii*' indicates a supernatural force at work. Livy's account now seems to recall the actions of legendary figures such as Hercules, who was driven mad by Hera and slew his family. However, Livy does not record any religious hubris which would occasion such a reaction in his discussion of the poisonings. The previous mention in Livy's narrative of divine intervention may be able to justify a divine retribution.

Livy records that before the battle against the Latins both consuls had a dream featuring an enormous and majestic man who stated that "in whichever host the general should devote to death the enemy's legions, and himself with them, that nation and that side would have the victory".[121] During the battle, Livy records that Decius offered up a prayer to a host of gods and then plunged into battle with "an aspect more august than a man's, as though sent from heaven to expiate all anger of the gods, and to turn aside destruction from his people and bring it on their adversaries".[122]

Following this divine intervention, the Romans fail to completely crush a revolt by the Latins in reaction to Roman confiscation of land. Livy records that Tiberius Aemilius Mamercinus abandoned his campaign to return to Rome upon the news that his colleague had received a triumph.[123] After receiving disapproval from the Senate for his actions he "administered his

[114] Val. Max., 2.5.3.
[115] Livy, 8.18.1-3.
[116] Livy, 8.18.9.
[117] Livy, 8.18.11.
[118] Livy, 8.18.11.
[119] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 108-118.
[120] Livy, 39.8.6.
[121] Livy, 8.6.9-10.
[122] Livy, 8.9.10.
[123] Livy, 8.12.7-9.

consulship in the spirit of a seditious tribune".[124] The intervening years were also marked by the frequent appointment of dictators, so much so that concern was raised in the Senate.[125] Through such an examination it is possible to establish a pattern of divine retribution upon Rome through the agency of the Roman matrons as punishment for the social and political unrest after such unprecedented divine contribution. Thus we can see both the representation by Livy or his sources that they were an act of divine retribution. Parker's scenario of scapegoating women as marginal elements of society, however, provides a far more likely hypothesis for what actually occurred, but that the story was preserved in its current form as an *exemplum* of divine reprisal.

Precedents

The *topos* of women as poisoners can be seen as a consequence of the male fear of women's divided loyalty and male vulnerability to women within the domestic context, as discussed above. This stereotype in perpetuated by the majority of female names recorded by our ancient sources in their discussion of infamous poisoners, including Canidia,[126] Martina, [127] and Locusta.[128] The utilisation of poison as a 'woman's weapon' would be seen again during the Bacchanalian affair, and accusations of poisoning are frequent in the scholarship for the Julio-Claudian period. Livia is accused of the widespread use of poison by Tacitus, including in hastening the death of Augustus and the removal of Julia's sons, Gaius and Lucius, from the succession plans through murder. Tacitus records that Sejanus orchestrated the death of Tiberius' son Drusus by having his wife Livilla administer poison. Agrippina the Elder is accused by Tacitus of using poison to murder Claudius, in order to ensure her son's succession. These examples, however, attest the individual use (or alleged use) of poison became more common, while alleged mass poisonings became infrequent.

[124] Livy, 8.12.10.
[125] Livy, 8.17.4.
[126] Horace, *Sat*., 2.1.56.
[127] Tac., *Ann.*, 2.69-74, 3.7.
[128] Suet., *Claud.*, 44; Suet., *Nero*, 33.3, 34.

The Oppian Law

As Rome's empire expanded throughout the Mediterranean it came into conflict with Carthage, which was a well-established naval and trade empire. The network of alliances for Rome and Carthage drew the two nations into conflict in 264 BC,.[129] In the First Punic War, the Roman forces defeated Carthage at the Aegates Islands in 241 BC. Consequently, Carthage was required to evacuate Sicily and pay Rome a considerable war indemnity.

The defeat destabilised Carthage politically, militarily, and financially for many years, but in 218 BC the Carthaginian general, Hannibal, crossed the Alps and invaded Italy from the north. Hannibal defeated the Romans at the Trebia in 218, Lake Trasimene in 217 and, most significantly, his forces defeated the numerically superior Roman forces at Cannae in 215 BC.[130]

This defeat was one of the most famous in Rome's history. Livy and Polybius record that between 55,00 and 70,000[131] Romans died at Cannae, and a national day of mourning was declared. Livy also records that there were many subsequent ill omens in the city.[132] Following the significant Roman losses at the Battle of Cannae, several of Rome's Italian allies transferred their allegiance to Carthage, including Capua and Tarentum.[133] Additionally, at this time Philip V, the *basileus* of Macedon, pledged his support for Hannibal's forces,[134] thus provoking the First Macedonian War.[135]

It was in this atmosphere of unprecedented crisis that in 215 BC that the *lex Oppia* was enacted, which stated that no woman should have more than one *semuncia* of gold, nor wear a versicoloured garment, nor ride in a carriage within one mile of the city of Rome except in the performance of public rites.

Phyllis Culham believes that the visibility of luxury items, such as religious instruments crafted from precious metals, at a time of economic distress for the state, may have been considered as "walking (or riding) acknowledgements that not everyone was suffering and

[129] For further reading on the Punic Wars see Bagnall, N., *The Punic Wars: Rome, Carthage, and the Struggle for the Mediterranean*, Macmillan, 2005; Hoyos, D., *A Companion to the Punic Wars*, 2011; Goldsworthy, A., *The Fall of Carthage: The Punic Wars 265-146BC*, 2012.
[130] Livy, 21.52f.
[131] Polybius, 3.117.
[132] Livy, 21.62.
[133] Polybius, 3.118.
[134] Polybius, 7.9.
[135] For further reading please see Head, D., *Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars*, 2012; Gruen, E., *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, 1986; Eckstein, A. M., *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome*, 2007.

sacrificing".[136] The introduction of the *lex Oppia* arrested civil dissensions and enforced a sense of *communitas* by preventing competitive displays of wealth and status by the women of Rome.

In 195 BC, twenty years after the *lex Oppia* was introduced, Livy states that two tribunes, Marcus Fundanius and Lucius Valerius, proposed the repeal of the *lex Oppia*. Livy is the only source for this event. They were opposed by their fellow tribunes Marcus and Publius Iunius Brutus, and Livy records that many distinguished men spoke for each side of the argument, including M. Porcius Cato, the consul of that year, and L. Valerius, who was one of the tribunes proposing the repeal of the law.[137] Cato's preoccupation with the behaviour of the elite Roman matrons dominates his speech against the repeal of the *lex Oppia*. He appears to both condemn and fear the collective power of wealthy women in Roman society. Cato blames the husbands of the matrons protesting for the repeal for not controlling their wives,[138] and claims that their laxity has allowed the women as a group to become a source of dread.[139] Cato's speech is also concerned with the influence of post-war luxury on Roman culture, and his belief that the *lex Oppia* was necessary to curb elite women's appetite for such expensive goods. He portrays their motivation for the repeal as concerned only with luxury items[140] and motivated by the desire to show them off. [141] He claims that the *lex Oppia* was necessary because, prior to the law's enactment, women were not concerned with the collection and display of wealth,[142] but now that their greed has been contained "it has been, like a wild beast, first rendered angry by its very fetters and then let loose."[143] Interestingly, Cato also references the tale of Papirius Praetextatus in his speech. Papirius Praetextatus accompanied his father to a meeting of the Senate while still in his youth. When he returned home his mother pressured him to reveal what the Senate had discussed to he lied and told her that the Senate had discussed the question of whether it was better for one man to have two wives or one woman to have two husbands. While Papirius received praise for distracting his mother with a falsehood, the episode is an excvellent example of the *materna auctoritas* that could be brought to bear by elite Roman women.

Livy records the response to this speech given by the tribune L. Valerius. He claims that Cato's shock at the behaviour of the wealthy Roman matrons was unwarranted as there are historical

[136] Culham, P. (1982), 'The "Lex Oppia"', *Latomus*, 41(4), p. 791.
[137] Livy, 34.2-8.
[138] Livy, 34.2.1.
[139] Livy, 34.2.2.
[140] Livy, 34.3.9.
[141] Livy, 34.4.13.
[142] Livy, 34.4.6-9.
[143] Livy, 34.4.19.

precedents for a group of women involving themselves publicly in matters that concern them.[144] Furthermore, he argues that the Oppian Law should be repealed because it was an emergency measure introduced in a time of economic distress by the state during the Second Punic War,[145] and he implies that the gold held by women in excess of one *semuncia* was confiscated by the state to fund the war effort. However, as Culham notes, there was no provision in the *lex Oppia* for "the transfer of excess holdings in gold over the licit *semuncia* to the treasury instead of to male relatives".[146] In addition, she points out that much of the gold worn by women would in fact be owned by men, and actually it may be more useful to consider the law as referring to the amount of gold a woman could have display or possess in public.[147]

Valerius instead considers the luxuries prohibited under the terms of the Oppian Law to be elite women's "badges of honour"[148], a compensation for their debarment from the religious and political offices of the state.[149] Valerius also addresses the discriminatory nature of the law, which unfairly restricted the access of women to luxury items, while failing to address the increasing use of luxury items by the male elite.[150] However, he restricts the comparison to the issue of personal adornment and avoids discussion of the use of the increased wealth by male members of the senatorial class in the Republican competition to acquire power and influence within the state.[151] Valerius also states that female use of the luxury items would be easily regulated by Roman men, as he believes that the "weak"[152] and "frail"[153] Roman matrons actually prefer the domination of male control.[154]

The repeal was passed in the Senate. However, Livy recirds that the above-mentioned Bruti threatened to exercise their tribunician veto to prevent the repeal of the law. Livy records that the wealthy women collectively "beset the doors of the Bruti" until the threat of veto was withdrawn and the repeal was passed.

Livy's style of presenting opposing speeches here, gives mouthpieces to both sides to the argument regarding the repeal of the *lex Oppia*. It also demonstrates the limitations of the power of elite women upon political matters, for they could exert theirt *auctoritas* in private

[144] Livy, 34.5.7, 34.5.8, 34.5.9, 34.5.10.
[145] Livy, 34.6.16.
[146] Culham, P. (1982), p. 787.
[147] Culham, P. (1982), p. 787.
[148] Livy, 34.7.8.
[149] Livy, 34.7.8.
[150] Livy, 34.7.1-3.
[151] Culham, P. (1982), p. 793.
[152] Livy, 34.7.7.
[153] Livy, 34.7.14.
[154] Livy, 34.7.12-13.

and public meetings with senators, but their exclusion from public office ensured that they could not argue for their own rights in the Senate.

Achievement of Power

Livy does not name any of the elite women whom he alleges approached senators in the forum, merely referring to them as "matrons". However, we can assume that the women who are protesting for the repeal of the law would be those women to whom the law would be applicable. Those women who could afford one *semuncia* of gold jewellery, carriages and expensive dyes for their clothing would most likely have belonged to the wealthy senatorial class. Therefore these women would not only have inherited a from their ancestors, but they are likely to have had male relatives who held high ranking military and political positions.

Therefore these women individually hold a great deal of *auctoritas* , and as a group in the public and mail political area of the forum, approaching individual senators who they most likely knew personally, they must have wielded a great deal of collective *auctoritas*. The elite women of Rome can be seen here utilising the tenets of power feminism advised by Wolf, in the use of existing female networks to exert power, and exerting their power to benefit women collectively.[155]

Use of Power

Culham, in her discussion of the importance of colour in Roman society, notes that the prohibitions listed in the *lex Oppia* correspond to those preserved in Greek epigraphcal texts,[156] and Culham claims that "both sets of restrictions reduce women's freedom to use and display wealth, and do this to maintain social control over women".[157] She uses the example of the restriction of 'versicoloured' clothing. Livy, in his depiction of the appeal against the *lex Oppia*, appears to consider the term in this context to refer to purple clothing.[158] Yet in late antique legal literature "versicolor garments seem to have been reasonably distinct from purple and from other colored garments of such economic value that they had been accorded legal definitions".[159] Culham believes that the expression referred to "garments banded with a contrasting color"[160] or "a garment finished and dyed in such a way that its nap presented a

[155] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 310-316., 149.
[156] Culham, P. (1986), 'Again, What Meaning Lies in Colour!', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 64, p. 236; for a discussion of the restrictions in Greek culture see Mills, H. (1984), "Greek Clothing Regulations: Sacred and Profane?", *ZPE*, 55, p.256.
[157] Culham, P. (1986), p. 238.
[158] Livy, 34.3.9, 34.4.10-14.
[159] Culham, P. (1986), p. 237, citing Ulpian *Dig.* 32.70.12 and Paulus 33.2.32.5.
[160] Culham, P. (1986), p. 237.

shimmering or chameleon-like appearance".[161] Whichever is the correct definition, versicoloured garments were clearly considered to be luxury items, and Culham believes that this is due to the use of colour and pattern in both societies as a marker of status, although she claims that the Romans' use of colour symbolism to denote age, status, class, sex, and religious or political role was far more complex and "omnipresent".[162] She believes that this abundance and complexity of the use of colour as a status symbol explains the strong reactions the law provoked in post-war Rome. She notes that the use of colour therefore was likely used in a competitive display of status by women.[163] However, this author believes that the complicity of Roman men for the repeal of the *lex Oppia*, as indicated by their failure to prevent their womenfolk publicly protesting the legislative change, derives from the male use of women and their status symbols. Such use would allow Roman senators to advertise their family's status and 'compete' publicly with other families without running the risk of being considered avaricious.

Livy states that the matrons thronged the streets of Rome and approached senators, begging for their support of the repeal of the *lex Oppia*.[164] In a similar, and better documented, protest by women in the late Republic, Hortensia states in her speech that the *matronae* of the Roman *nobilitas* had originally approached the wives of the triumvirs to protest for the remission of the war tax, as per accepted custom.[165] In fact, in the speech that Livy attributes to Cato in the senatorial debate regarding the repeal of the *lex Oppia*, he states that the matrons could have made their requests for the repeal of the law directly to their husbands.[166] It can therefore be considered a reasonable assumption that, if women took the extraordinary step of protesting in the streets of Rome, then they would have also have taken the less-transgressive step of exerting their *auctoritas* on the senators through their female relatives.

While Cato may disapprove of female involvement in politics, the public and communal display of *auctoritas* in the protest of the elite women of Rome, magnified by personal interventions with individual senators, as well as, most likely, exertion of their *auctoritas* more privately through the female relatives of the senators, proved ultimately successful.

Subsequently, when the Bruti threatened to utilise their tribunician veto to prevent the repeal of the *lex Oppia*, Livy describes these elite women of Rome as blockading the door of the

[161] *ibid.*, p. 237.
[162] *ibid.*, p. 239.
[163] *ibid.*, p. 239-40.
[164] Livy, 34.1-5.
[165] App., *B. Civ.*, 4.32.
[166] Livy, 34.2.9.

Bruti (*unoque agmine omnes Brutorum ianuas obsederunt*).[167] The term *obsideo* denotes a use of force, in contrast with the traditional stereotype of women as gentle. This unusual sight, combined with their collective *auctoritas* may have dissuaded the Bruti from their actions.

Effect of their Actions

Kelly Olson states that "influence and authority were dramatised in the ancient world in ways that were visually apparent".[168] She believes that this visualisation of authority permeated all aspects of Roman life, including architecture, art, religious activities and social interaction.[169] As such, she believes that "symbols of power or rank such as clothing helped to visualize hierarchies of power",[170] and therefore visual cues were "essential"[171] to the perception of rank and influence. Moreover, she considers these "symbols"[172] to be able to denote gradations of wealth and power to particular Roman audiences.[173]

The importance of the *lex Oppia*, and the protest for its repeal, must therefore be considered within this context. While the *lex Oppia* may have removed a cause of civil dissension during the Second Punic War, it resulted in a period of twenty years during which many of the traditional signs of status were unavailable to elite women. As Livy notes in the speech of Valerius,[174] women had no insignia of office as men did to denote their rank, and therefore they relied heavily on the use of clothing and adornment to visualise their position in society.

These luxury items of self-presentation were considered necessary in elite Roman society to maintain the *dignitas* of a woman's natal family and her husband's family.[175] Pliny the Elder is recorded as having settled 50,000 sesterces on the young daughter of his friend Quintilianus in order for her to be provided with clothing and attendants fitting for her position, to preserve the *dignitas* of her position.[176]

Polybius also depicts Scipio as gifting his mother with his adoptive grandmother's (and paternal aunt's) religious equipment. Polybius records that Scipio's mother's "means were not

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[167] Livy, 34.8.2.
[168] Olson, K. (2008), *Dress and the Roman Woman: Self-Presentation and Society*, New York: Routledge, p. 5.
[169] *ibid.*, p. 5.
[170] *ibid.*, p. 5.
[171] *ibid.*, p. 5.
[172] *ibid.*, p. 5.
[173] *ibid.*, p. 6.
[174] Livy, 34.7.8
[175] Bartman, E. (2001), 'Hair and the Artifice of Roman Female Adornment', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 105(1), p. 1-2; D'Ambra, E. (1996), 'The Calculus of Venus: Nude Portraits of Roman Matrons' in Kampen, N. B., *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece and Italy*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press; D'Ambra, E. (2000), 'Nudity and Adornment in Female Portrait Sculpture of the Second Century A.D.' in Kleiner, D. E. E., Matheson, S. B., *I Claudia II: Women in Roman Art and Society*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
[176] Pliny, *Epp.*, 6.32.

sufficient to maintain a state suitable to her rank",[177] and thus she had remained in her house during public religious events.[178] However, after being given Aemilia's equipment she began to attend public religious events once more.[179] The appearance of luxury items at public events such as religious occasions were clearly thus a matter of primary importance. Marilyn Skinner notes that "male kin have a covert stake in women's status symbols: insofar as they testify to the achievements of husbands or fathers".[180]

The demonstration of rank and influence through the use of clothing and adornment was also vital for matrons' welfare in a public setting. Valerius Maximus records that a path would be cleared for a matron as she walked down the street, and it was forbidden to touch her at a judicial summons. Pliny states that there was a common proverb in Rome which stated that a pearl is a woman's Iictor,[181] as the recognition of a woman's elite status ensured her safety.

The ability for a woman to exert her *auctoritas* in a public setting, as has been demonstrated previously in this thesis in the case studies of the Sabine women, Horatia, and Veturia, must have been hampered by their inability under the *lex Oppia* to participate visually in the discourses of power in Rome. The loss of women's visual symbols of status also effected the elite men of Rome. As discussed above, the adornment of a woman in luxury items which signified her rank was considered essential to the *dignitas* of her male relatives.

Ancient Perspectives

It is important to note here that this speech is not believed to be a preserved oration of Cato's, nor even likely to be based upon a speech preserved in Livy's time. In his commentary of Livy, J. Briscoe supports this hypothesis with the fact that no fragments of a speech against the *lex Oppia* survive, despite the fact that we have fragments "of a very large number of Cato's speeches".[182] In fact, Briscoe notes that speeches by Cato that we know to have been preserved, such as his speech on the money of King Antiochus,[183] his speeches against the senators expelled from the Senate during his censorship,[184] and his speech in support of the Rhodians,[185] were referenced within Livy's history but not recorded.[186] Briscoe believes that

[177] Polybius, 31.26.6.
[178] Polybius, 31.26.7.
[179] Polybius, 31.26.7.
[180] Skinner, M. (2011), *Clodia Metelli: The Tribune's Sister*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press York, p. 42.
[181] Pliny, *NH*, 9.114.
[182] Briscoe, J. (2012), *A Commentary on Livy: Books 41-45*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, p. 39.
[183] Livy, 38.54.11.
[184] Livy, 39.42.6-7.
[185] Livy, 45.25.2-4.
[186] Briscoe, J., *op. cit.*, p. 39.

Livy chose to write a speech for Cato at this point *because* no speech was extant, so he was not plagiarising Cato's work.[187] Thus this speech should be considered a construction by Livy which I believe reflects his conservative views of women in late Republican politics, retrojecting them into the mouth of Cato, for whom such views would have been consistent. Thus Cato's speech becomes prophetic**,** predicting the increasing influence of elite women, such as Cornelia, Hortensia, Fulvia,[188] Octavia[189] and the Agrippinas,[190] in political matters, as well as the Bacchanalia affair[191] which would follow, all inspired by the precedent of the female involvement in the repeal of the *lex Oppia*.[192] It is important to note, however, that Livy remains our only surviving source for this episode, and therefore there is no additional corroboration that these events took place. Nonetheless, the episode is important in the study of the *depiction* of women's use of power.

Precedents

This episode is an excellent study in the collective power of women. Despite their lack of legal or political power, through sheer presence in public space and public protests they are able to initiate and support advocacy for legislative change within the Roman state. It is interesting to note that, unlike Hortensia and the women addressing the triumvirs in the first century BC, the women who protested for the repeal of the law did not have their direct speech recorded. Although Cato complains of the women addressing the senators, none of their arguments are repeated in the public debate. Instead, the discussion regarding the repeal of the Oppian Law becomes a competition between two male stereotypes of women.

Livy's Valerius' states that the protest by the elite women of Rome for the repeal of the *lex Oppia* was not unprecedented, [193] as Roman matrons had publicly involved themselves in state matters, such as the intercession of the Sabine women, [194] the negotiation with Coriolanus, [195] when they donated their gold to ransom the city from the Gauls,[196] and when they welcomed the Idaean Mother to the city during the Second Punic War.[197] However, the examples given by Valerius are of collective actions at times of danger to the state. The protest for the repeal of the *lex Oppia* is differentiated from these previous cases in that there

[187] *ibid.*, p. 39-40.
[188] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 135-144.
[189] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 148-151.
[190] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 170-174, 185-199.
[191] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 108-118.
[192] Livy, 34.2.4.
[193] Livy, 34.5.7.
[194] Livy, 34.5.8; See this study, Ch. 1, p. 50-56.
[195] Livy, 34.5.9; See this study, Ch. 2, p. 84-90.
[196] Livy, 34.5.9.
[197] Livy, 34.5.10.

is no public danger. Rather, the elite women of Rome are able to employ their collective *auctoritas* in a public setting in order to demonstrate their interest in relation to legislature which affects their rights.

The Bacchanalian Affair

In 186 BC the Roman Senate suppressed the Bacchanalian mystery cult not only within Rome, but also the cities of its Italian allies. Despite the focus of contemporary scholarship upon political motivations for the affair, this author believes that this episode can be viewed as a reaction by the male ruling elite to suppress and control the growing influence of Roman women, which was reflected in the scholarship by the elevation to heroine of the freedwoman Hispala.

Our primary source for this affair is Livy, who states that the Bacchanalian cult was introduced to Etruria by a Greek man, from whence it took hold and spread to Rome "like the contagion of a pestilence".[198] He claims that, although the cult was guilty of debauchery, "perjured witnesses, forged seals and wills and evidence … poisonings and secret murders",[199] the corrupt activities of the cult were unknown until it was revealed by Publius Aebutius and Hispala Faecenia.

Aebutius' father had passed away some years previously, and thus his estate had come under the control of his stepfather, who had mismanaged it.[200] Livy states that the stepfather and mother convinced Aebutius that he must be initiated into the Bacchanalia as fulfilment of his mother's vow, and through this initiation they intended to corrupt him.[201] As the preparation for the initiation required ten days of celibacy, Aebutius informed his freedwoman mistress Hispala of his impending initiation. She revealed to him that she had been initiated while she was still a slave in attendance with her mistress, and that it was "the factory of all sorts of corruptions".[202] She convinced him not to be initiated, and when he informed his stepfather and mother, he was expelled from the house.[203]

Aebutius informed the consul of the information regarding the Bacchanalia given to him by Hispala.[204] The consul then summoned Hispala and interrogated her about the claims which she, after being reassured of protection, confirmed.[205] The consul then informed the Senate of his investigations, which decreed that "an inquiry should be conducted regarding those persons who had come together or conspired for the commission of any immorality or crime".[206] Postumius also spoke on the rostra to the citizens of Rome to warn them of the measures that

[198] Livy, 39.9.1.
[199] Livy, 39.8.7-8.
[200] Livy, 39.9.3.
[201] Livy, 39.9.3.
[202] Livy, 39.10.6.
[203] Livy, 39.11.1-2.
[204] Livy, 39.11.3.
[205] Livy, 39.12-13.
[206] Livy, 39.14.7-8.

the senate was taking against the Bacchanals, and the evil that he believed they had perpetrated.[207]

Ancient Perspectives

Livy's account of the actions of the Senate can be verified by a bronze tablet found at Tiriolo in Bruttium which records a letter sent by the consuls of 186 BC to the cities of its Italian allies regarding the *senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus*.[208] The text bans Bacchic shrines and prohibits participation in Bacchic rites without permission from the Roman Senate. No men are allowed to be priests of the cult, and neither men nor women can act as administrative officials for the cult. The cult is also forbidden from having a common fund and from holding secret ceremonies, and initiates are prohibited from exchanging oaths. Performance of the rites, if granted permission by the Senate, can involve no more than two men and three women. The edict also commands a public proclamation of the contents of the letter, the preservation of the edict upon a bronze tablet. In addition, it insists upon the immediate destruction of existing Bacchic cults, as well as the directive that violations of the edict will result in capital punishment.

This preserved decree largely supports Livy's account of the Senate's actions in dismantling the cult in 186 BC. However modern scholars treat Livy's corresponding narrative about the revelation of the activities of the Bacchic cult with a great deal of scepticism. Adele Scafuro, in her analysis of the Hispala narrative, believes that the two "narrative strands"[209] in Livy's account of the Bacchanalia affai, i.e., the Hispala tale and the account of the Senate's response, were amalgamated into a single narrative before the account reached Livy.[210] This belief in separate strands of the narrative based upon stylistic differences[211] allows analysis of the veracity of each "strand" separately; i.e., the historicity of Livy's account of the actions of the Senate, that we are able to corroborate, does not verify the historicity of his romantic Hispala tale.

Scafuro's article identifies the multitude of New Comedy elements within the narrative, including language common to New Comedy plays, comic intrigue, such as Postumius' plan to pretend to walk in on a conversation between Aebutia and Sulpicia, and stereotypical characterisation, such as the wicked stepfather or Aebutius as a virtuous lover of a courtesan.[212]

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[207] Livy, 39.15-17.
[208] *CIL* I^2.581 = *ILS* 18 = *ILLRP* 511.
[209] Scafuro, A. (1989), 'Livy's Comic Narrative of the Bacchanalia', *Helios*, 16(2), p. 119.
[210] *ibid.*, p. 120.
[211] *ibid.*, p. 119-120.
[212] *ibid.*, p. 125.

The most notable correlation is the use of the recognition plot, in which the Greek protagonist falls in love with a virtuous lower class woman whom he is forbidden to marry because only a child of two 'citizens' can be considered a citizen.[213] Over the course of any play which makes use of this plot device, it is revealed that the object of his affection was in fact a child of two citizen families but her identity had been lost through kidnapping or accident. By the end of the play she is restored to an elite status and the protagonist is free to marry her.[214] However, in the Hispala narrative she is granted certain elite privileges of elevated rank, such as the right to alienate her property, of marriage outside her *gens*, the option of a *tutor* and the right to marry a man of free birth without any disgrace attaching to that man.[215] This is a departure from Greek New Comedy traditions, which never allows for a non-citizen to be granted citizenship rights.[216] Scafuro fails to explain why Livy makes such a decision but my hypothesis, expanded below, regarding the Bacchanalian scandal as a senatorial reaction against Roman matrons, would justify the deviation from the New Comedic paradigm. The heroine could hardly be revealed as a permanent member of the class disrupting the socio-political landscape of Rome.

P. Walsh believes the tale supports T. P. Wiseman's hypothesis that early Roman historians, who were used as source material by Livy, appropriated material from plays as part of their research.[217] Thus these authors may have simply borrowed the dramatic Hispala narrative from an earlier Roman play.[218] These authors were writing in Greek for Greek audiences, who were familiar with the "conventions of New Comedy",[219] which may have caused them to use or invent a narrative following a familiar paradigm.

However, it is not only the dramatic character of Hispala that has led modern scholars to doubt Livy's record of events. Postumius' speech in Livy explicitly states that the Romans were aware of the meetings of the Bacchanalian cult as a result of "their din and cries at night, which echo throughout the City".[220] Livy records that the membership of the cult numbered in the thousands[221] and many were caught trying to flee Rome after the decree of the senate.[222] Archaeological evidence from southern Italy, Campania and Etruria attests to the popularity of

[213] *ibid.*, p. 121.
[214] *ibid.*, p. 126.
[215] Livy, 39.19.5.
[216] Scafuro, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
[217] Walsh, P. G. (1996), 'Making a Drama out of a Crisis: Livy on the Bacchanalia', *Greece & Rome Second Series*, 43(2), p. 200, referring to n. 41. Wiseman, T. P. (1994), ch. 1.
[218] *ibid.*, p. 201.
[219] *ibid.*, p. 201.
[220] Livy, 39.15.6.
[221] Livy, 39.17.6.
[222] Livy, 39.17.5.

the Dionysiac cult as far back as the 4th and 3rd centuries BC.[223] The plays of Plautus[224] also provide evidence that the Bacchanalian cult was well-known in Rome. The contemporary dramatist makes frequent allusions to the Bacchants and their rites, which suggests a familiarity of the audience with those rites. The image conveyed in his plays is largely negative: "the worshippers of Bacchus conduct revels, engage in violence and engender fear. Worse yet, they are reckoned as raging, irrational and insane".[225] Gruen believes that these allusions portray the stereotype of the Bacchant in the mind of the Roman public.[226] This is significant as Plautus' plays thus prove that "the decision to dissolve the sect did not come from sudden revelation of its existence."[227] The Hispala narrative thus challenged, we must instead re-examine the account and look for other motivations for the brutal suppression.

Livy states that the motivation for the Senate's actions was the criminal tendencies of Bacchic worshippers and Postumius' allegation that the cult members were aiming to overthrow the state. The list of crimes attributed to the cult is wide-ranging: "perjured witnesses, forged seals and wills and evidence",[228] "poisonings and secret murders"[229] and rape of young men.[230] According to Livy, the combination of such morally reprehensible and criminal tendencies of worshippers prompted a severe response from the Senate.[231]

This idea is supported by R. A. Bauman, who believes that the restrictions placed upon the cult following 186 BC confirm his theory that the crimes were committed "to generate funds for the cult",[232] which is why the senate decreed that the cult could no longer have a common fund and that meetings could not be attended by more than five people, as this was the number required to witness wills, etc.[233] However, Gruen notes that the Tiriolo inscription makes no mention of the crimes to which Livy refers.[234] Moreover, a *senatus consultum* would not have been required for the Bacchanalian suppression if their criminal tendencies were as prolific as Livy would have us believe, as these crimes were already covered under existing legislation.

The other solution offered to us by Livy as motivation for the brutal suppression of the Bacchanalian cult is the hypothesis that the cult was attempting treason. Yet even Livy's Postumius seems to believe this, stating, "It [the Bacchanalian cult] is already too great to be

[223] Pfiffig, A. J. (1975), *Religio Etrusca*, Graz, p. 293-5.
[224] Plautus, *Amph.*, 702-705; *Aul.*, 408-13; *Bacch.*, 53, 371-2; *Casina*, 979; *Men.*, 828-841.
[225] Gruen, E. (1990), *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy*, Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, p. 50.
[226] *ibid.*, p. 51.
[227] *ibid.*, p. 51, my italics.
[228] Livy, 39.8.7.
[229] Livy, 39.8.7.
[230] Livy, 39.10.7.
[231] Livy, 39.14.4.
[232] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 343.
[233] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 343.
[234] Gruen, E., *Studies*, p. 6.

purely a private matter: its objective is the control of the state".[235] He also refers to the Bacchanalian cult as a *coniuratio*, which is often translated as 'conspiracy'. However, Gruen also records that '*coniuratio*' was a rhetorical term that held no legal meaning, but it would "deliver a duly alarming effect upon popular opinion".[236] Moreover, to Livy's audience the term would recall the fear engendered by the Catilinarian conspiracy.

Certain characteristics of the cult no doubt could be considered suspicious, as Gruen observes, such as conducting meetings by night, and in a grove bordering the Aventine, which had a tradition as a rallying point of the Roman plebs.[237] The crimes that Hispala accuses the Bacchanals of, such as forging wills and being perjured witnesses, would be familiar to Livy's contemporaries as the crimes engaged upon by Catiline and his associates ahead of their conspiracy.[238]

As John North notes, one of the difficulties with such a belief regarding the motivation for the suppression of the Bacchanals is the varied interpretations placed on evidence regarding the characteristics of the Bacchanals. In Apulia the suppression of the Bacchanalia became a "slave-war",[239] while the archaeological evidence from Etruria "implies a degree of public acceptance and support at a high level" for the Bacchanalian cult;[240] and in Rome and Campania the names recorded in the evidence suggest that "at least the leadership came from well-off, though not top-ranking families".[241] Even the narrative in Livy supports the idea of a cult spanning all classes of Roman society. C. Gallini unites this evidence into her theory of an apolitical group of Bacchanals from widely different groups, united by their shared perception of marginalisation from contemporary society.[242] However, as Gruen explains, the names of those involved, including those accused of being the heads of the conspiracy by Livy, can be traced to politically active families: "these persons do not belong in a category of social outcasts".[243] Even in Livy's narrative the senators fear for themselves when the Bacchanalian affair is revealed,[244] which indicates membership included the high ranking senatorial class.

However, even Livy's Postumius must admit that, while he believed that they aimed for control of the Roman state, "their impious compact still limits itself to private crimes, since as yet it

[235] Livy 39.16.3.
[236] Gruen, E., *Studies*, p. 47.
[237] Gruen, E., *Studies*, p. 47.
[238] Sallust, *Bell. Cat.*, 16.
[239] North, J. A. (1979), 'Religious Toleration in Republican Rome', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 25, p. 94.
[240] *ibid.*, p. 94.
[241] *ibid.*, p. 94.
[242] Gallini, C. (1970), *Protesta e integrazione nella Roma antica*, Bari: Laterza, p. 16-17, 28-44.
[243] Gruen, E., *Studies*, p. 59.
[244] Livy, 39.14.4.

does not have strength enough to crush the state".[245] In addition, if the movement had been involved in a political conspiracy then the Bacchanals would have been charged with treason, "and Livy would not have portrayed Postumius as circling around that concept without ever coming to grips with it".[246]

Another suggestion by scholars is Hispala's accusation that the innovations introduced to the cult by the Campanian priestess Paculla Annia changed the nature of the cult to a far more immoral group.[247] These alterations included the introduction of men into the cult, an increase in the number of meetings per year, a change from meetings during the day to the night time,[248] and the recent restriction in admission to people less than twenty years of age.[249] Gruen, however, argues that in Greece nocturnal meetings of Bacchic cults can be traced as far back as the fifth century BC,[250] and the introduction of men into these cults in Greece is dated to the fourth century.[251] In addition, he records that if the cult did restrict its age limit for initiates, then surely that would mean that new members would be the children of current members, and thus would indicate that the cult, despite Livy's accusation, was not focusing on expanding its membership, but rather consolidating it.[252] Although there is not enough evidence to determine if the cult did increase its number of meetings, such a change alone could not have provoked such a strong response from the senate.

P. G. Walsh believes that Hispala's claim of systematic sexual abuse, particularly of young men, provoked outrage amongst the senators.[253] J. Scheid also focuses upon Hispala's mention of young men, but from a gendered perspective, claiming that the initiation of young men into the cult provoked the senate's response, as this allowed women to take "the place of both the father and the city".[254] Initiation at a young age ensured that the boy made his oaths to the Bacchic cult before he embarked upon his military and political careers. The reduction of the number of male Bacchants may have been intended to reduce the likelihood of the sexual abuse of young men. However, the Triolo inscription would appear to contradict these theories, as it is concerned with the officials of the cult, the common fund and upon restricting the number of

[245] Livy, 39.16.3.
[246] Bauman, R. A. (1990), 'The Suppression of the Bacchanals: Five Questions', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 39(3), p. 346.
[247] Livy 39.13.9.
[248] Livy 39.13.8-9.
[249] Livy 39.13.14.
[250] Gruen, E., *Studies*, p. 53.
[251] Gruen, E., *Studies*, p. 52.
[252] Gruen, E., *Studies*, p. 53.
[253] Walsh, *op. cit.* p. 200.
[254] Scheid, J. (1992), 'Religious Roles of Roman Women' in Pantel, P. S., Goldhammer, A. (eds.), *A History of Women in the West: From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 398.

Bacchants present as rituals. No mention is made regarding the age of the participants, or regarding any sexual conduct within the cult.

S. A. Takács believes that Livy's accusations of crime and debauchery by the Bacchic cult were a result of the moralising tradition of Roman history writing,[255] and that the senate's reaction was a desire to reinforce the senate's role in sanctioning the introduction of foreign cults into the religious landscape of Rome.[256] The focus of the senatorial edict upon dismantling the cultic organisational structure, and ensuring that Bacchic worship continued only in small groups "under strict state supervision"[257] indicates to Takács that "a compromise had been brought about that did not impede the reciprocal relationship between the Romans and their gods".[258]

Takács believes that it was not the worship of Bacchus, or even a "Bacchanalian menace"[259] that provoked the senate, but it was rather the "non-Roman"[260] elements of the cult, in which the cultic mysteries and the oaths connecting the Bacchanals were prized over the duty to family and country.[261] She concludes that the suppression of the Bacchanalian cult was the result of a desire by the senate to restrain Hellenistic influences over public life, as well as demonstrate its control over both Rome and Italy.[262]

However, as J. A. North so astutely observes, "the Romans were willing at almost all stages of their history to accept foreign cults and practices: evidently something more is needed to provoke action".[263] In fact, in the third century BC, many foreign gods and cults were imported into the city, including Asclepius, Dis Pater and Proserpina, Venus Erycina and the Magna Mater from Asia Minor. The fact that the cult had existed for quite some time in Italy, as discussed, makes it seem unlikely that the cult would only now raise objections based upon its origins.

Gruen believes that the Hispala narrative recorded by Livy was in fact part of a "staged operation"[264] to justify the brutal suppression of the Bacchanalian cult. The motivation behind the affair, he believes, was a "shift in emphasis in Roman foreign policy, and an assertion of collective authority by the Roman senate".[265] Following the end of the Punic Wars, and the

[255] Takács, S. A. (2000), 'Politics and Religion in the Bacchanalian Affair of 186 B.C.E.', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 100, p. 305.
[256] *ibid.*, p. 302.
[257] Takács, *op. cit.*, p. 308.
[258] *ibid.*, p. 308-9.
[259] *ibid.*, p. 307.
[260] *ibid.*, p. 307.
[261] *ibid.*, p. 307.
[262] *ibid.*, p. 310.
[263] North, J. A., *op. cit.*, p. 86.
[264] Gruen, E., *op. cit.*, p. 64.
[265] *ibid.*, p. 65.

subsequent defeats of the Aetolian confederacy and Antiochus, Rome was able to form treaties which allowed her to withdraw from the East and focus on matters in Italy, which included attempting to gain control of Cisalpine Gaul and the establishment of colonies in northern Italy.[266]

This period also witnessed the rise of pre-eminent generals, such as M. Acilius Glabrio and M. Fulvius Nobilior, following their successes in the East, to an unprecedented level of popularity. The early 180s, however, saw these men become "principal targets of abuse and attack".[267] Gruen believe that the senate staged the threat of the Bacchanalian cult in order to demonstrate the power of the united senate as a whole, not only in Rome but also over its Italian allies.[268] However, Gruen himself states that in fact in the early 180s Rome's attitude to the Latins and Italians was quite generous.[269] For example, Rome allowed Capua to regain the privilege of intermarriage with Rome,[270] and the Roman populace elevated three cities to the status of fully enfranchised municipalities.[271] This hardly accords with a senate desperate to assert its control over its allies.

Our only other significant piece of ancient evidence on the Bacchanalia comes from Cicero, who states, "it is most diligently ordained that the clear daylight should be the safeguard of female virtue in the eyes of the multitude, and that they should only be initiated in the mysteries of Ceres, according to Roman custom. In reference to this topic, we have an extraordinary instance of the severity of our ancestors in the public prosecution and punishment of the Bacchanals by the Senate, supported by the consular armies".[272] It is interesting that to Cicero the topics of the suppression of the Bacchanalian cult and female virtue are so closely related. If we examine Postumius' speech in Livy, he tells the people of Rome that "a great part of them [the Bacchanals] are women, and they are the source of this mischief".[273] Scheid also grants that "women were at the center of the 'conspiracy'".[274]

The author believes that the association in the Roman consciousness between women and the suppression of the Bacchanalia has not been sufficiently addressed by modern scholars. As discussed above,[275] there is no evidence of changes within the cult that would have incited the Senate to such drastic action, so instead it appears that changes in the socio-political landscape

[266] *ibid.*, p. 65-7.
[267] *ibid.*, p. 70.
[268] *ibid.*, p. 74-5.
[269] *ibid.*, p. 45.
[270] Livy, 38.36.5-6.
[271] Livy, 38.36.7-9.
[272] Cic., *de Leg*, 2.15.
[273] Livy, 15.9.
[274] Scheid, *op. cit.*, p. 399.
[275] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 113.

of Rome altered the perception of the Bacchanalian cult to something far more threatening in the eyes of the Senate.

Achievement of Power

The great losses of the Punic Wars[276] enriched the matrons of Rome under the directions of the Twelve Tables which stipulated equal provisions for daughters and sons. S. Pomeroy also believes that "the freedom to write wills favouring women, combined with a growing trend toward small families, had allowed a great deal of wealth to fall into the hands of women".[277] In addition, the success of the Eastern campaigns brought a great deal of wealth and luxury into the city,[278] a wealth that was no doubt shared amongst upper class women. This wealth would have made them more influential in the public sphere through Republican traditions such as patronage which were open to them. In addition, the appeal by elite Roman women against the Oppian Law displayed the influence that these matrons could exert upon Roman policy-making, despite their legal and political handicaps. Scheid may have been quite accurate in describing the Roman matrons in this period as "a larger problem that Rome had to face".[279]

The Roman Senate countered this growing wealth with the Oppian Law of 215 BC, which limited the amount of gold that a woman could possess, and prohibited many displays of wealth, as well as the Voconian Law of 169 BC, which restricted the wealth that could be inherited by upper class women. Livy also indicates that the wealth of wards, widows and single women were donated to the Roman treasury during the Second Punic War.[280] Although the wives of the successful generals from Rome's Eastern campaigns shared in their husbands' increased *auctoritas*, it would also have been diminished by the series of high profile prosecutions of these generals discussed by Gruen.

Thus the Roman matrons' growing wealth and *influence* were actively targeted by the Senate in the early second century BC, and their influence upon public policy, despite the notable exception of the appeal against the Oppian Law, continued to be hampered by their lack of legal and political power. In fact, the only legitimate power available to women of Republican Rome was religious power, such as that of a Vestal Virgin. However, such power was limited and these roles were encumbered with restrictions upon behaviour and lifestyle that would no doubt have made them unappealing to most upper class women. The Bacchanalian cult, however,

[276] For further information, see this study, Ch. 2, p. 100.
[277] Pomeroy, S. B. (1994), p. 162.
[278] Livy, 39.6.6-9.
[279] Scheid, *op. cit.*, p. 399.
[280] Livy, 24.18.13.

gave women the authority of a priestess without the restrictions enforced by supervision of a senatorial authority.

Use of Power

If we re-examine Walsh's premise regarding the suppression of the Bacchanals[281] from this social context, a different picture begins to emerge: the cult was an unauthorised group not subjugated to the control of the Senate, with a well-organised network spanning Italy, amassing wealth in a common fund, and involving men and women of all classes. These Bacchanals were bound together by oaths sworn to the cult, replacing the loyalties traditionally demanded first and foremost to the *pater familias* and the *patria*.

The association of women with the suppression of the Bacchanalian cult in Roman cultural memory can be considered from a power feminist perspective, in which the matrons of Rome found in the Bacchanalian cult an access to religious power, through an engagement with traditionally male power structures, such as religious cults.[282] This access to power, this author believes, intimidated and outraged the Senate, who actively re-established patriarchal control through the dismantling of much of the cult administration and the punishment of female Bacchants by their *paterfamilias*. For those without a male guardian able to do so, the state inflicted the punishment, re-establishing patriarchal control over the affairs of the state

Precedents

As with the poisoning trials discussed above,[283] a lower class woman becomes the heroine in a narrative in which the women of higher rank in Rome are involved in inappropriate behaviour. The severity of the Senate's crackdown on the Bacchanalian cult may be considered a sufficient deterrent, for there was no repeat of this incident, although that may be considered more as a result of the greater *auctoritas* available to elite women in the late Republic as a result of the centralisation of power.

The Effect of Their Actions

Thus the suppression of the Bacchanalian cult viewed from the context of the growing power of the Roman matrons can be understood as a demonstration of senatorial and patriarchal authority over the elite women of Rome. The senatorial crackdown destroyed the vast network, abolished the common fund, and reduced the worship of Bacchus to a small ritual that could not be used as a tool for political activism, and which required senatorial approval. Gruen

[281] Walsh, *op. cit.*, p. 200.
[282] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 150.
[283] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 95-99.

describes the Bacchanalian affair as "a demonstration – a posturing by the leadership to exhibit senatorial authority"[284] which this author believes is an accurate definition but, rather than a display of authority over the Roman populace, it was a display over the elite matrons of Rome whose growing influence in the second century BC threatened to transform the social and political landscape of Rome. This thesis therefore posits that the suppression of the Bacchanalian cult destroyed an attempt by the elite women of Rome to challenge the traditional religious roles available to women.

[284] Gruen, E., *Studies*, p. 72.

Conclusion

The early and middle Republican period witnessed many notable changes in the uses of power by women. The women of this period are portrayed as displaying a tendency to operate in groups as well as individually. In this way, the elite women of Rome can be seen as embracing the Republican ethos of communal possession of power. The Republican political structure, with its focus on shared and limited custody of power, may have also influenced this pattern as the elite women of Rome needed to exert *auctoritas* upon a large number of senators in order for change to be effected through the traditional Republican political structures, and this would have been more easily achieved by a large number of women. In addition, as political and military power became centralised into fewer hands in the late Reoublic and early imperial period, fewer Roman senators were needed to enact political change and therefore individual women could bring their *auctoritas* to bear with greater effect. Furthermore, it is likely that our ancient sources extended their idealised vision of the Roman past to the activities of elite Roman women in these periods. Historians such as Livy were concerned with depicting the degeneration of Roman society from virtue and nobility to the pursuit of selfishness and greed, and therefore the actions of Roman society in the early and middle Republican era were often portrayed by our ancient sources in an idealised manner in order to contrast them with contemporary political and social culture of Rome. It is probable that the Roman historians also idealised the behaviour of the elite Roman women in the early and middle Republican era, and that such idealisation included depicting the women as working together in order to benefit the State and each other.

This group dynamic allowed these women to employ their combined *auctoritas* that resulted from their aristocratic social status and, in the case of Veturia, *materna auctoritas*. Apart from the early case of Verginia, these women all actively use their *auctoritas* to influence events around them.

The source material for this period moves from depictions of the early Republic, which appear to be heavily influenced by the retrojections of current events by the sources, to the more historical period of the middle Republic.

Apart from the civic-minded speech of Veturia and the tragic case of Verginia, the women of this period act for the advantage of Rome's elite women. The actions of these women prevented a civil war and the possible annihilation of Rome, provoked the removal of the decemvirs, influenced the repeal of the Oppian law and triumviral war tax, as well as the more sinister influence of the removal of certain male politicians by poison and the behind-the-scenes

manoeuvring of the Bacchanals. Thus these women can be seen to have caused significant military, legislative and political changes in this period of Roman history.

It is also evident that the women of this period are depicted as building upon, and in fact going further, than their regal predecessors. For example, Veturia builds upon the precedent of intercession displayed by the Sabine women and is able to end Coriolanus' march on Rome.

CHAPTER THREE: THE LATE REPUBLIC

Introduction

The late Republican period was a period of great social, political and military turmoil, which resulted in the political and military pre-eminence of a select few leading citizens. This period dates from the election of Tiberius Gracchus to the Battle of Actium.

The expansion of the Roman empire through the Mediterranean caused a great deal of wealth to flow into the city as the result of the spoils of war. As discussed above in the account of the protest for the repeal of the *lex Oppia*, traditionalists such as Cato the Elder believed that this wealth had a corrupting influence upon the morals of Roman citizens.

Appian notes that the rapid expansion of the Roman borders led to the exploitation of the use of public land by the wealthy elite of Rome.[1] This had led to the creation of vast estates staffed only by slaves, which in turn disadvantaged the rural poor. Obligations to provide citizens for military service could take them away from their property for months on end.

Tiberius Gracchus was elected to the office of plebeian tribune on the platform of land reform to address and curb this imbalance.[2] He exploited the unique privileges and abilities of the tribunate, such as the veto and ability to convene the *concilium plebis* in order to introduce and ratify his policies, which were unpopular with the senatorial elite whom they targeted.[3] However, his strategic approach to the role of tribune incited opposition that ultimately led to his murder, and that of his supporters, at the hands of conservative senators.[4] This was to begin a factional rivalry between the people pleasing *populares* and the conservative and aristocratic-focused *optimates*, which would last until the principate of Augustus.

This factional division was exacerbated when Tiberius' younger brother Gaius Gracchus was elected tribune. He expanded his brother's unconventional use of the office much further, promulgating a myriad of legislature that he considered worthy of address.[5] His actions angered the Optimate faction and Gaius met his brother's violent fate.[6]

[1] App., *B. Civ.*, 1.7-8.
[2] App., *B. Civ.*, 1.9.
[3] App., *B. Civ.*, 1.10.
[4] App., *B. Civ.*, 1.16.
[5] App., *B. Civ.*, 1.21-23.
[6] App., *B. Civ.*, 1.26.

In the politics of greater Italy, the Latin allies of Rome pushed for Roman citizenship but were rejected. This provoked the 'Social War' in which Rome battled the Latins, and resulted in the *lex Julia*, which granted full citizenship to the Italians.[7]

The subsequent peace allowed the popular generals Marius and Sulla to contend with each other for supremacy, including marching their armies on the city.[8] After Marius' death,[9] Sulla was elected dictator.[10]

Marius' introduction of the standing army and professional soldier addressed the issues of the increasing magnitude of the urban poor as well as the dwindling number of land-owning citizens who had fulfilled the previous demands for soldiers. However, because each army's general became their patron, petitioning the senate for land or money to recompense the soldiers, their loyalty became directed toward their commander rather than to Rome. This loyalty produced circumstances in which armies would oppose the Senate in matters concerning their commander, and saw the advent of Roman armies marching on the city of Rome, which would become a regular feature of the civil wars of the first century BC.

After Sulla's resignation from the dictatorship, the ineffectual debates of the Senate inspired Julius Caesar, Gnaeus Pompey and Marcus Crassus to form the First (and unofficial) Triumvirate.[11] However, after Crassus' death in Parthia,[12] the accord between Pompey and Caesar declined into civil war.[13] Pompey was defeated and Caesar was elected dictator.[14]

This aroused fears that Julius Caesar was aiming at monarchic rule, and thus he was assassinated in 44 BC.[15] His death caused the rise to prominence of his nephew and heir, Octavian. Octavian, Cesar's cousin Mark Antony and Marcus Lepidus formed the Second (and official) Triumvirate.[16] They divided the running of the empire between them, and published proscription lists of their mutual enemies.[17]

[7] App., *B. Civ*., 1.53.
[8] Plut., *Sulla*, 9, Plut., *Marius*, 42-3.
[9] Plut., *Marius*, 45.5-7.
[10] Plut., *Sulla*, 33.1.
[11] Plut., *Caes.*, 13.3-5.
[12] Plut., *Crass.*, 31.5.
[13] Plut., *Caes.*, 29 – 47.
[14] Plut., *Caes.*, 57.
[15] Plut., *Caes.*, 60, 66.6-14.
[16] App., *B. Civ.*, 1.5.1; Plut. *Ant.*, 19.1.
[17] Plut., *Ant.*, 19.

After the exile of Lepidus in 36 BC[18] and Octavian's victory over Sextus Pompeius' naval forces,[19] Antony and Octavian's rapport deteriorated. In 31 BC Octavian defeated the forces of Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium,[20] leaving him the sole ruler of Rome.

In this chapter this author will consider how the actions of Cornelia, Hortensia, Fulvia, Mucia and Octavia illustrate aspects of what Wolf defines as power feminism.

[18] Plut., *Ant.*, 55.1.
[19] App., *B. Civ.*, 5.119-122.
[20] Plut., *Ant.*, 68.1.

Cornelia

Cornelia was the second daughter of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (Scipio the Elder), famous for defeating Hannibal in the Second Punic War. Cornelia married Tiberius Gracchus (the Elder) and the marriage produced twelve children, only three of whom survived to adulthood. Her only surviving daughter, Sempronia, married Scipio Aemilianus Africanus (Scipio the Younger), who also gained the cognomen Africanus for his defeat of the city of Carthage in the Third Punic War. According to Plutarch, it was an unhappy marriage, and produced no children.[21]

Cornelia's surviving sons, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, polarised second century politics through their unconventional use of the tribunician office to bypass the Roman Senate and their legislation which favoured the urban plebs. Both men faced strong opposition from the Senate and were violently murdered.

Achievement of Power

Scipio the Elder retired to the country after accusations of bribery and treason were levelled against him in an attempt to discredit his reputation and curb his popular support. Nonetheless, Scipio was regarded as a hero in Rome, and Cornelia would have inherited considerable *auctoritas* from this and other familial connections such as her maternal uncle Lucius Aemilius Paullus.

Cornelia's marriage to Tiberius Gracchus the Elder would have increased her *auctoritas*, for Plutarch's story of Cornelia's engagement to him indicates his positive reputation. Cornelia's mother protests that she was not consulted before Scipio contracted the marriage agreement, until she hears that the bridegroom is Tiberius.[22]

He interprets the sudden betrothal of Tiberius and Cornelia as a show of gratitude by Scipio for Tiberius interposing his veto as plebeian tribune in 187 BC, thus saving Scipio from prosecution. However, as Cornelia would have only been a few years old at the time, Suzanne Dixon believes that this story has been conflated with a similar account of Tiberius Gracchus the Younger's engagement to his wife Claudia.[23]

In addition to these connections, Cornelia's *auctoritas* would have been increased by the extraordinary military success of her son-in-law Scipio the Younger. In fact, Plutarch records that Cornelia regularly upbraided her sons with the complaint that she was known as the mother-

[21] App., *B. Civ.*, 1.20.
[22] Plut., *TG*, 4.
[23] Dixon, S. (2007), *Cornelia: Mother of the Gracchi*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 5.

in-law of Scipio, rather than the mother of the Gracchi.[24] Plutarch also records that Cornelia received, and refused, a proposal of marriage from Ptolemy. While this is not corroborated by our other asncient sources, it indicates the status to which Cornelia was esteemed.

Use of Power

Cornelia is praised highly for her role in her sons' education, and the role that it played in their careers, as discussed below. Elite women in Republican Rome received the same basic education as their male counterparts, but when male children were educated in rhetoric and philosophy, women traditionally were instead instructed on the running of a household, and their literary education was dependant upon the desires of their parents.[25] The influence of Greek learning emphasised the study of philosophy, and its related branches such as geometry, to the education of elite women. Emily A. Hemelrijk cites the treatise of C. Musonius Rufus, which survives only in fragmentary form, and argues for the education of women in philosophy in order to encourage them to acquire the virtues espoused by influential philosophies such as Stoicism, leading to their moral excellence in their role as wives and mothers.[26] The education of male offspring was the responsibility of a son's father. However, in the case of a widow such as Cornelia, a mother would be required to organise her son's education. As Hemelrijk notes,[27] an excellent education was essential for a successful political career, and the prior education of such widows would thus encourage responsible decision-making in that regard. Therefore, the praise that Cornelia received for her use of her considerable wealth to hire Stoic philosophers as the tutors of Tiberius Gracchus and Gaius Gracchus can be understood in the context of their extraordinary success. This use of economic resources in order to effect political change is a key tenet of Wolf's power feminism.[28] Plutarch also believes that this Stoic influence on Tiberius was at least partly responsible for his decision to pursue his radical land reform policies,[29] as discussed below.[30]

Cornelia is portrayed as freely wielding her maternal *auctoritas* to influence current events. She reportedly used this to pressure her sons into public visibility and attempted to dissuade Gaius from violent actions, as discussed below[31]. Cornelia utilised her *auctoritas* famously in requesting legislative changes from her younger son. Plutarch records that Gaius Gracchus

[24] Plut., *TG.*, 8.
[25] Hemelrijk, E. A., *Matrona Docta: Educated Women in the Roman Elite from Cornelia to Julia Domna*, Routledge, London and New York, p.18f.
[26] Hemelrejk, p. 61-62.
[27] *ibid.*, p. 19.
[28] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 149.
[29] Plut., *TG*, 8.4.
[30] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 126f.
[31] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 129.

withdrew a measure that prevented the re-election of any magistrate who had been deprived of his office by the people.[32] This law had been an attack on Marcus Octavius, who had been deposed from the tribunate by Tiberius Gracchus. Gaius attributed his change of heart on the following day to the request of his mother. According to Plutarch the people acceded to her wishes "for they honoured Cornelia just as much for her sons as they did for her father".[33]

This statement attests to the official recognition not only of a woman's involvement in the creation of legislation but also shows that the *auctoritas* of this woman had been identified as its cause. Moreover, Plutarch does not disparage Cornelia's role, but rather appears to depict the episode as evidence of the popular support for Gaius and Cornelia. The event, therefore, can also be considered to indicate that both Gaius and Plutarch's audiences considered her involvement an appropriate and legitimate use of maternal *auctoritas* in elite Roman society, that is for a mother to exert her *auctoritas* on matters up to and including public policy.

The Effect of Their Actions

Cornelia is credited with changing the course of Roman history by providing her sons with an exceptional education, for reportedly pressuring her sons into public careers, supporting Gaius by hiring armed men to support Gaius and conspiring to murder Scipio Africanus the Younger.

Plutarch,[34] Quintilian[35] and Cicero[36] praise Cornelia for the excellent education she provided for her sons. She also regularly entertained philosophers and educated friends. This education and academic influence is believed to have effected their careers in both the oratorical skill displayed by both men was considered crucial to their political success, as well as, in the case of Tiberius Gracchus, the philosophical beliefs which shaped his political decisions.

Plutarch highly praises both Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus for their differing, but exceptional, rhetorical abilities.[37] He states that "the speech of Gaius was awe-inspiring and passionate to exaggeration, while that of Tiberius was more agreeable and more conducive to pity".[38] Both men employed this ability to sway popular opinion. When Tiberius spoke to the people in his proposal of the agrarian law, Plutarch declares that "such words as these, the product of a lofty spirit and genuine feeling, and falling upon the ears of a people profoundly moved and fully aroused to the speaker's support, no adversary of Tiberius could successfully withstand".[39]

[32] Plut., *GG*, 4.
[33] *ibid.*, 4.
[34] Plut., *TG*, 1.
[35] Quint., *Inst. Orat.*, 1.1.6.
[36] Cic., *Brutus*, 104, 210-11.
[37] Plut., *TG*, 2.3, 10.1, 16.3; Plut., *GG*, 1.3, 2.4, 3.2, 4.1.
[38] Plut., *TG*, 2.3.
[39] Plut., *TG*, 10.1.

When Gaius was first elected tribune Plutarch claims that "he was at once first of all the tribunes, since he had an incomparable power in oratory and his affliction gave him great boldness of speech in bewailing the fate of his brother".[40] It is clear then that their rhetorical ability was considered an important part of their political success.

The political philosophy that would shape both Tiberius' and Gaius' careers is believed by Plutarch to be the result of the influence of Diophanes the rhetorician and Blossius the philosopher.[41] Diophanes was an exile from Mitylene, while Blossius was a Campanian who had studied under the Stoic Antipater of Tarsus and had been employed by Cornelia as one of Tiberius' teachers.[42] Following Tiberius' death Diophanes was killed and Blossius was put on trial before the consuls, but was acquitted and left Italy.[43]

Stoicism encouraged the cosmopolitan idea of helping one's fellow man, which accords with Tiberius' speeches in which he stated that he was proposing the agrarian law to help the poor Roman people. Although we will never know with any certainty whether Stoicism effected Tiberius' policies, the fact that the issue was raised[44] and that Blossius was put on trial[45] argues for its plausibility as at least partially motivating Tiberius' agrarian legislation. Tiberius was a talented orator with an impressive political pedigree: he hardly needed to choose such an unconventional path to prominence. His choice to use the tribuneship and focus on this particular legislation must have been motivated by more than simply a desire for public attention.

The effect of the education of the Gracchi on their political success and philosophies partly accounts for the praise given to Cornelia for her influence on their education. This particular focus may also be the result of her success at a task which was contemporaneously considered to be a paternal responsibility. Plutarch, for example, describes Cato the Elder educating his son in fighting, riding, athletics, literature and law.[46]

Plutarch records the accusation that Cornelia was responsible for the extraordinary actions taken by Tiberius and Gaius because she had "frequently upbraided her sons that the Romans as yet rather called her the mother-in-law of Scipio than the mother of the Gracchi".[47] However,

[40] Plut., *GG*, 3.2.
[41] Plut., *TG*, 8.4.
[42] Plut., *TG*, 8.5.
[43] Plut., *TG*, 20.3-4, Val. Max, 4.7.1.
[44] Dixon, S. (2007), p. 42-3.
[45] Plut., *TG*, 20.
[46] Plut., *Cato Maior*, 20.6-7.
[47] Plut., *TG*, 8.

as Burckhardt and von Ungern-Sternberg[48] have observed, it would have been unreasonable of Cornelia to expect her elder son to distinguish himself greatly in the lowly tribunate rather than the higher magistracies. They believe that this claim is the result of a retrojective tradition which defines Cornelia by her status as 'Mother of the Gracchi'.[49] Thus Cornelia is portrayed as demanding that they become 'the Gracchi' so that she can inhabit her esteemed role in Roman history.

However, that role was far from a passive one. Plutarch also records that she sent armed men to support Gaius after he and Fulvius "resolved to oppose the consul by force".[50] Although it is impossible to establish with any degree of certainty whether Cornelia was responsible for employing pastoral thugs, Dixon notes that "leading figures on both sides of the many political battles of the period 133–121 BCE were regularly attended in public by large crowds of supporters and that many of them would have been armed or chosen for their intimidating appearance".[51] Considering Cornelia's extensive client base in Campania, it is plausible that Cornelia sent some of them into Rome to support Gaius.[52]

The other accusation against Cornelia is that she was responsible for, or party to, the murder of Scipio Africanus the Younger in 129 BC. Despite his marriage to Sempronia, Scipio was a conservative politician who had been a long-term opponent to Tiberius Gracchus' agrarian law and his unconventional use of the tribunician office as a legislative position. Upon hearing the news of Tiberius' assassination, Scipio is reported by Plutarch to have said, "So may all who engage in such lawless conspiracies perish".[53]

The agrarian law had nonetheless remained in the aftermath of Tiberius' death, and the land commission continued with the redistribution of land set out in its provisions. However, there were complaints from the Italian allies over the commission's judgements on some difficult cases, and so they approached Scipio to be their spokesman.[54] Scipio persuasively argued that "the legal actions should be heard not by the land commissioners, since they were regarded as prejudiced by the litigants, but by others".[55] The consul Tuditanus was appointed to hear the cases while the land commission continued with the redistribution.[56] Scipio's decision to advocate for the interests of the Italian allies aroused a great deal of ill will amongst the people

[48] Burckhardt, L. and von Ungern-Sternberg, J. (1994), 'Cornelia, Mutter der Gracchen', in (ed.) Dettenhofer, M. H., *Reine Männersache? Frauen in Männerdomänen der antiken Welt*, Koln: Weimar, p 111-12.
[49] *ibid.*, p. 112.
[50] Plut., *GG*, 13.2.
[51] Dixon, S. (2007), p. 22.
[52] *ibid.*, p. 22.
[53] Plut., *TG*, 21, quoting Homer, *Od.*, 1.47.
[54] App. *B. Civ.*, 1.19.
[55] *ibid.*, 1.19.
[56] *ibid.*, 1.19.

of Rome who felt that in this matter he was opposing their best interests and favouring those of the Italians.[57] Appian records that Scipio's enemies "proclaimed that he was completely set on undoing Gracchus' law and to this end intended an armed massacre".[58]

Shortly afterwards Scipio was found deceased at his home.[59] Appian claims that his body was unmarked,[60] but Plutarch states that his body had "the marks of various blows".[61] Appian provides the possible causes of death – murder by Cornelia (assisted by Sempronia), suicide or murder by unknown assailants.[62] Plutarch, however, believes that Scipio was murdered either by Fulvius Flaccus, a political ally of Gaius Gracchus and public opponent of Scipio, or Gaius himself.[63] it is important to note that these authors were writing subsequent to the Julio-Claudian dynastic conflicts in which accusations of poisoning play a repeated role.

If we focus upon the accusation of murder against Cornelia, the only motivation for her to commit murder is the belief that Scipio was about to attempt to repeal Tiberius' agrarian law. However, if we examine the evidence for this belief, it seems unlikely. Firstly, Gaius Gracchus was active at Rome in this period and popular with the people, a fact he would no doubt have exploited to preserve his brother's law. Moreover, as stated above, Scipio had lost most of his popular support in Rome after his intercession on behalf of the Italian allies. In fact, even the Italians were not such staunch supporters after the consul Tuditanus led a campaign against the Illyrians instead of giving judgement on the land commission cases.

Importantly, Appian even notes that in Scipio's speech on behalf of the Italian allies, he was careful to avoid criticising the agrarian law.[64] Although Scipio opposed the legislation, it appears he realised the political fallout from critiquing it directly. This is at odds with the impression that he was about to propose the repeal of the same law, especially at a time when he lacked both popular support and support from the Italian allies. If we accept then that it is highly implausible that Scipio had planned to repeal the agrarian law, then Cornelia is left with no motivation for the murder of her son-in-law.

Ancient Perspectives

Cornelia has received a generally positive reputation, even from those writers such as Cicero who strongly disapproved of the actions of her sons.[65] S. Dixon believes that this is, at least in

[57] *ibid.*, 1.19.
[58] *ibid.*, 1.20.
[59] *ibid.*, 1.20.
[60] *ibid.*, 1.20.
[61] Plut., *GG*, 10.
[62] App., *B. Civ.*, 1.20.
[63] Plut., *GG*, 10.
[64] App., *B. Civ.*, 1.19.
[65] Cic., *Brutus*, 104, 210-11.

part, the result of a whitewashing of Cornelia's image into a stereotyped Roman devoted wife and mother by Augustus when he included her statue in the porticus Octaviae.[66] However, Cornelia's reputation was not wholly positive. T. Hillard and L. Beness[67] believe that Gaius Gracchus' insults preserved in Plutarch[68] reflect a belief that Cornelia's fused genitals at birth[69] were an omen to warn of the dangers that would be brought from her womb. Even Cicero states that "'If Publius Scipio had not given his daughter Cornelia in marriage to Tiberius Gracchus and if through her Gracchus had not sired the two Gracchi, such great seditions would not have been born".[70]

Cornelia's use as a tool of political propaganda by both the later *populares* and *optimates* became a precedent for the kind of indirect power that could be wielded by women who were kinsmen of politically powerful men, as would be demonstrated by later Roman women such as Octavia and Julia. The most notable example for Cornelia's use in the rhetoric between the political factions of the late Republic is the letter preserved in Cornelius Nepos in which Cornelia begs Gaius to cease his actions, both to care for her in her old age and to preserve Rome.[71] This letter has been the subject of much scholarly discussion as to its veracity, but indicates an engagement with media as advocated by Wolf,[72] although it is unclear whether the letter was published in Cornelia's lifetime.

Bauman believes that the letter, if not correct in its entirety, was "adapted [from] his material without destroying its essential veracity".[73] Judith Hallett suggests that the letter not only was written by Cornelia,[74] but a fragment from *ad Herennium* was authored by her as part of the letter,[75] and thus the letter in its entirety was an entreaty to her son by invoking the name of her father.[76] Hallett postulates that the letter was circulated, or at least made available as part of an archive, after her death, and that it was attributed to Cornelia because its "style and sentiments"[77] were considered characteristic of her. Hallett believes that the letter served as a model for Livy and Virgil's speeches in which Roman mothers castigated their children for endangering the state.[78]

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[66] Dixon, S. (2007), p. 56-8.
[67] Beness, J. L., and Hillard, T. (2013), 'Insulting Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi', *Antichthon*, 47, pp. 61-79.
[68] Plut., *GG*, 4.
[69] Pliny, *NH* 7.69.
[70] Cic., *de Inventione*,1. 91.
[71] Nepos, fr. 1.1-2.
[72] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 154.
[73] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 43.
[74] Hallett, J. P. (2006b), 'Introduction: Cornelia and Her Maternal Legacy', *Helios*, 33(2),p. 127f.
[75] *ibid*., p. 134.
[76] *ibid*., p. 134-5.
[77] *ibid*., p. 124.
[78] *ibid*., p. 128.

Hemerijk claims that the influence of successive political factions upon the evidence that survives from Cornelia, including the letter, have so altered the data that modern scholars cannot determine the historical veracity of any of the extant evidence about Cornelia.[79]

Dixon believes that the letter is likely to be a doctored version of a genuine letter by Cornelia, which was altered by later propagandists.[80] Instinsky's analysis identified the use of Optimate buzzwords in the letters, and Dixon believes that the first passage of the letter may be genuine, while the rest of the preserved fragment was the result of optimate propaganda attempting to depict Cornelia as having attempted to protect the state from her son, in the manner of Veturia and Coriolanus, that arose due to her political significance.[81]

As Hemerijk states, modern scholars cannot completely uncover the historical Cornelia from the evidence that survives. However, the emphasis by our sources on Cornelia's continuing pride in her sons, even after their deaths,[82] and the indications in these sources of her continual support of her sons' careers, does not correspond to the image of Cornelia castigating her younger son for following the example of his elder brother's political career. Nonetheless, the circulation of the letter in the late Republic indicates that her *auctoritas* as a political figure continued after her death, and she was invoked in the continuing factional conflict between the *populares* and the *optimates*.

Precedents

Cornelia's publicly recognised influence on Gaius Gracchus' legislation would set a precedent for Livia's intercession during Tiberius' reign to save her friend Plancina.[83] In her use of maternal *auctoritas* she can be seen as following the precedent of Veturia, who exerted her *auctoritas* over her son Coriolanus in order to avert civil war,[84] although Livy's depiction of Veturia may have been modelled upon the actions of Cornelia. The significance of the public display of Cornelia's maternal *auctoritas* in a less troubled situation, by comparison, is that Veturia is praised for exerting her *auctoritas* in a crisis, while Cornelia is acknowledged for exerting her *auctoritas* without the excuse of an extraordinary situation. However, the actions of her sons, which she encouraged and supported, would deepen the factional divide between the *optimates* and *populares* in Roman politics.

[79] Hemelrijk, E. A. (2002), p. 196.
[80] Dixon, S. (2007), p. 27.
[81] *ibid.*, p. 27.
[82] Plut., *GG*, 19.
[83] Tac., *Ann.*, 3.17; see this study, Ch. 4, p. 165-66.
[84] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 84-90.

Hortensia and the Elite Women of Rome

Valerius Maximus records that, in 42 BC Hortensia, daughter of the famous orator Hortensius,[85] led a crowd of wealthy women into the Forum after their appeal to the wives of triumvirs against the tax placed on them failed.[86] After admitting their failure through the 'proper' channels,[87] Hortensia gave an impassioned speech to the triumvirs seated at a tribunal, explaining that their lack of civic duties should preclude them from being taxed, especially to fund a civil war.[88] According to Appian, the rulers were furious at the presumption of the women who had dared hold a public meeting with them, demanding accountability from the magistrates and refusing to provide funds while men furnished the manpower for the war.[89] However, the opinion of those citizens in the Forum had been swayed by Hortensia's speech, and so on the following day the triumvirs reduced the number of women to be taxed from 1400 to 400, and introduced a new tax on men who possessed more than 100,000 drachmas.[90]

Achievement of Power

Hortensia would have gained *auctoritas* through her familial connection to her father, Hortensius, whose speeches accorded him a great deal of *auctoritas*. In addition, the silent presence of the elite women who accompanied Hortensia needs to be considered. These women are described only as "the women";[91] however, as the war tax was imposed upon the 1400 wealthiest female Roman citizens, it is a logical conclusion that these women who accompanied Hortensia would be the women directly affected by the introduction of the tax. These women are likely, therefore, to have been members of the elite families and have possessed male relatives who held significant military and political positions. Regarding the inheritance of familial *auctoritas* displayed in the discussion of Cornelia above, these women would likely have possessed a great deal of *auctoritas* between them, and the *auctoritas* exerted by their combined public presence in the Forum cannot be discounted. As with the protest for the repeal of the *lex Oppia*, the elite women of Rome utilised the existing female networks, as Wolf suggests that power feminism entails,[92] to exert their power effectively.

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[85] Hortensius's body of work included giving a speech before the Senate defending the cause of Africa (Cic., *de Oratore*, 3.229); defence of the king of Bithynia (Cic., *de Oratore*, 3.229); he was one of the advocates defending Pompey's right to the possession of property inherited from his father (Cic., *Brutus*, 230); representation of Sextus Naevius (*TLRR* 126); and defence of C. Verres (Cic., *Ver.*, 1.31). For further details of Hortensius' career, and his relationship with Cicero, see Dyck, A. R., 'Rivals into Partners: Hortensius and Cicero', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 57 (2), 2008, pp. 142 – 173.
[86] Val. Max., 3.3.; also mentioned in App. *B. Civ.*, 4.32 and Dio Cass., 47.14-17.
[87] App., *B. Civ.*, 4.32.
[88] *ibid.*, 4.32-33.
[89] *ibid.*, 4.34.
[90] *ibid.*, 4.34.
[91] App., *B. Civ.*, 4.32.
[92] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 310-316.

Use of Power

Hortensia's actions suggest that it was considered proper in the first century BC for elite women to convey their political concerns to the other wives and mothers of the leading citizens of Rome. As Fulvia, the wife of the triumvir Marcus Antonius, had rebuffed their attempts to discuss the matter with her, the elite women of Rome made the decision to speak to the triumvirs themselves. This tactic provided a twofold effect, for not only could the women present their case to the triumvirs, but they could also attempt to sway public opinion. This is significant, as women's exclusion from public life ensured that their opinions were not received by a wide audience, standing in stark contrast to the opinions expressed by male senators who could give speeches from the *rostra*.

Moreover, the speech of Hortensia and the *auctoritas* exerted by her colleagues proved successful at enacting legislative change. The triumvirs did not repeal the tax completely, but the reduction of the number of women affected by the tax from 1400 to 400 indicates a significant victory.

Valerius Maximus records that Hortensia and the elite women of Rome decided to approach the triumvirs directly after no Roman senator was willing to act as their advocate. In this context, one might infer that the elite women of Rome were able to exploit their unique position within the state as possessors of *auctoritas* who were less likely to be victims of the triumvirs' proscriptions than the male senators. The matrons could not hold political or military office, and therefore could not be considered to possess a political threat to the Triumvirate, in the manner of many of the male senators who were proscribed. However, as the outrage caused by the triumvirs' use of lictors against the women in this episode attests, a use of force against the matrons of Rome was extremely unpopular. Thus the matrons can be seen, in a way, to utilise their *auctoritas* in a situation in which they had less fear of retribution for their actions than their male kinsmen.

Additionally, the decision of the matrons to approach the triumvirs directly after Fulvia rebuffed their attempts, and no senator would advocate for them, indicates a recognition of their own power, as advocated by Wolf as a necessary component for power feminism.[93] The matrons then employed the tools of patriarchal power structures, which is an essential element of Wolf's power feminism, in order to advance their own interests.[94]

The Effect of Their Actions

[93] Wolf, N., *op.cit.,* p. 58-59.
[94] Wolf, N., *op.cit.,* p. 58-59.

An exclusion of women from political office had generally prevented them from being able to publicly address legislative issues. The speech that Livy attributes to Cato in his discussion of the repeal of the *lex Oppia* states that men allowed matrons to "visit the *contiones* and *comitia*".[95] However, it is unclear if this is rhetorical hyperbole.

Nevertheless, by performing the scenario attributed to the protest for the repeal of the *lex Oppia* a few generations previous,[96] these women were not only able to give their opinion on political matters in a public arena, but also to force a publicised change in policy as a result of popular political support for their stance. The women were also able to articulate publicly the disparity in civic rights between men and women, and argue that, if they do not have the right to participate in the political or military decisions that led to the war, then they should not be required to finance it.

Ancient Perspectives

In his account of this event, Appian does not offer a judgement on the use of *auctoritas* by Hortensia and the elite women of Rome. However, he does accord a speech to Hortensia, although it is not clear if it is an historically accurate account of her speech. Quintilian records that her speech "is still read and not merely as a compliment to her sex",[97] which indicates that her speech, or a version of it, was circulating in his time. However, as no fragments of her speech survive elsewhere we are unable to determine if Appian's speech is a rhetorical creation. Nonetheless, the attribution of an eloquent and rhetorically skilled speech to Hortensia indicates that Appian concurred with Quintilian's assessment of her skill, which is particularly notable as elite women did not traditionally receive training in rhetoric.

Valerius Maximus, however, represents Hortensia's actions, and that of her colleagues, as entirely inappropriate for their station, stating that she was a woman whose "natural condition and the cloak of modesty could not keep silent in the Forum and the courts of law".[98] Josiah Osgood believes that Valerius Maximus' claim that the women could not find a senator who was willing to act as their advocate in this matter was an attempt by the author to "exonerate"[99] Hortensia for her challenge to societal and patriarchal norms. However, the continual circulation of her speech indicates that any censure for her actions in her own era cannot have been severe enough to warrant its condemnation.

[95] Livy, 34.2.11.
[96] Livy, 34.1-7. Livy remains our only source for this episode, and thus its historicity is not established.
[97] Quint., *Inst. Orat.*, 1.1.6.
[98] Val. Max., 8.3.3.
[99] Osgood, J. (2006), 'Eloquence under the Triumvirs', *The American Journal of Philology*, 127(4), p. 542.

Bronwyn Hopwood believes that the speech of Hortenia was published and publicly available, in the manner of the orations of elite men in Rome, as both Valerius Maximus[100] and Quintilian[101] reference to a surviving copy of the speech which they believe to be genuine.[102] Hopwood claims that Appian placed the speech of Hortenia immediately following the proscription edict of the triumvirs, in order that a contrast could be drawn and the hypocrisy of the triumvirs be made evident.[103] She also believes that Livy used the publicly available speech of Hortensia as a model for the speech of Valerius in the protest for the repeal of the *lex Oppia*.[104]

Precedents

This episode is a rare example of a communal use of *auctoritas* in the manner ascribed to the Sabine Women, the women who accompanied Veturia to persuade Coriolanus to cease his march on Rome, and the women protesting for the repeal of the *lex Oppia*, in the late Republican period. Additionally, Hortensia and the elite women who accompanied her to the Forum exert their combined *auctoritas* in order to benefit themselves, rather than to benefit their male relatives. By contrast, the majority of the case studies in this chapter depict individual use of *auctoritas*, designed to benefit a woman's husband or son/s, such as the case studies of Cornelia and Fulvia. This pattern reflects the governmental centralisation of political and military power in this period. The public and collective nature of their protest drew upon the precedent for public protest by women in the earlier appeal against the *lex Oppia*. It is notable that in both cases the women proved successful in achieving their aims.

[100] Val. Max., 8.3.3.
[101] Quint., *Inst. Orat.*, 1.1.16.
[102] Hopwood, B. (2015), 'Hortensia Speaks: An Authentic Voice of Resistance?' in Welch, K. (ed.), *Appian's Roman History: Empire and Civil War*, Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, p. 313-317.
[103] Hopwood, B. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 310-312.
[104] Hopwood, B. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 315-316.

Fulvia

Fulvia was the daughter of Marcus Fulvius Bambalio, whose family was a long-established plebeian but noble family, with a strong senatorial history[105]. However, after 125 BC the family was not mentioned on the consular lists. Charles L. Babcock believes that Fulvia's father's wealth[106] motivated her first husband, Clodius', desire for the union with his daughter, in order to finance his burgeoning political career[107].

The date of Fulvia's marriage to Publius Clodius Pulcher is not recorded by our surviving sources, but by Clodius' death in 52 BC, the union had produced two children[108]. Fulvia's actions in the intervening years must remain a matter of speculation, for she does not draw the attention of our sources until the murder of Clodius and the trial of Milo.

According to Asconius in his commentary on Cicero's *pro Milone*, Fulvia displayed Clodius' body in the atrium of his house, displaying Clodius' wounds and grieving over his body[109]. Fulvia and her mother Sempronia also provided moving testimonies at the trial of Milo for the death of Clodius[110].

In 51 BC Fulvia married Gaius Scribonius Curio, another politician of the *populares*. Curio was elected tribune in 50 BC, and was killed while fighting with Julius Caesar's forces in Numidia in 49 BC.

Fulvia married Marcus Antonius circa 47 or 46 BC, after his tenure as Master of the Horse, during which Plutarch alleges that Antony's drinking, licentiousness and extravagance undermined his popular support in Rome.[111] This behaviour earned Julius Caesar's displeasure. In 44 BC, several years after his marriage to Fulvia, and with her strong support, Antonius was elected consul.[112]

After Julius Caesar's murder in the same year, Antonius entered into the second triumvirate with Marcus Aemilius Lepidus and Gaius Octavianus (Octavian). After the three men defeated the murderers of Julius Caesar in the Battle of Philippi, the administration of the empire was divided amongst them. Antonius was given control of the East, including the war on Parthia, and he based himself in Egypt.

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[105] Babcock, C. L. (1965), 'The Early Career of Fulvia', *The American Journal of Philology*, 86(1), p. 3.
[106] Cic., *Phil.*, 3.16.
[107] Babcock, C. L., *op. cit.*, p. 4 – 5.
[108] Cic., *Phil*. 2.48.
[109] Asconius, *Pro Milone*, 28.
[110] *ibid.*, 35.
[111] Plutarch, *Ant.*, 9.
[112] App., *B. Civ.*, 3.8.51.

Octavian, who had been given control of Rome and Italy, was responsible for distributing land to the veterans of the triumvirs. Looking after Antony's interests in Rome, Fulvia and Mark Antony's brother Lucius cultivated the favour of the magistrates, the aristocracy, the troops and the veterans.[113] Fulvia was accused of bringing her children before Octavian's troops, begging them not to forget the fact that Antony was their patron.[114] Both sides had written to Antony, but he had replied in vague terms and did not commit to either side.[115] Fulvia and Lucius managed to raise nine legions, and won over two of Octavian's legions in Rome.[116] Dio records that "Fulvia girded on a sword, gave out the watchword, and even harangued the soldiers"[117] in the manner of a general. Eight Antonian legions captured Rome from Lepidus, who had been given control of the city.[118] Octavian was eventually able to force Fulvia and Lucius to retreat into Perusia, where they were besieged.[119] The Antonian forces relied on reinforcements from other Antonian generals from Italy and Gaul, but without instructions from Antony, they refused to engage Octavian's forces.[120] Starvation forced the capitulation of the city, and Fulvia fled to Sicyon, reportedly dying after Antony refused to see her.[121]

Achievement of Power

The established senatorial background of the Fulvii would have ensured that Fulvia inherited *auctoritas*. While Fulvia's father did not add to the senatorial *auctoritas* of the line, Lilly Ross Taylor believes that Fulvia was the stepdaughter of Lucius Licinius Murena, the consul of 62.[122] This supposition attempts to explain the election of the unknown Pinarius Natta to the pontificate, by hypothesising that Fulvia's mother Sempronia had three marriages.[123] The first, to a Pinarius, produced the above-mentioned Pinarius Natta, the second to Fulvia's father, Marcus Fulvius Bambalio, and the third to Lucius Licinius Murena. This is based upon Cicero's statement that the pontifex presiding at the dedication of his Palatine property was both the brother-in-law of Clodius and the stepson of Murena[124]. The name of Murena's stepson is given by Cicero in his *pro Murena*[125]. Taylor claims that the sister described by Cicero "has Fulvia's

[113] Dio Cass., 48.5-7.
[114] App., *B. Civ.*, 5.14.
[115] *ibid.*, 21.
[116] *ibid.*, 24.
[117] Dio Cass., 48.10.
[118] *ibid.*, 48.13.
[119] *ibid.*, 48.13-14.
[120] App., *B. Civ.*, 5.31.
[121] Dio Cass., 48.28.2-3.
[122] Taylor, L. R. (1942), 'Caesar's Colleagues in the Pontifical College', *The American Journal of Philology*, 63(4), p. 396-7.
[123] *ibid.*, p. 396-7.
[124] Cic., *Dom.*, 118, 134, 139.
[125] Cic., *Mur.*, 73.

characteristic energy"[126], and that the assimilation of the sister of Natta with Fulvia eliminates the otherwise unattested presence of a previous wife of Clodius. The position is speculative, but if Taylor is correct, then Fulvia would have inherited significant *auctoritas*.

Clodius' extraordinary career and high levels of public support amongst the populace of Rome would likely have been reflected in Fulvia's own *auctoritas*. This was strengthened by the notoriety that she gained for displaying Clodius' body and testifying at Milo's trial.

Fulvia's marriage to Curio was quite brief, but Curio belonged to a well-established patrician family and thus the marriage would have benefitted Fulvia's *auctoritas*.

By the time of Marcus Antonius' marriage to Fulvia, Julius Caesar's cousin Antonius wielded significant *auctoritas* and *potestas*, having commanded Julius Caesar's left wing at the Battle of Pharsalus and fulfilled the position of the Master of the Horse, and, finally, his status as one of the three most powerful men in the state under the terms of the triumvirate.

Kathryn Welch believes that, while Fulvia's image may have benefitted from Antonius' *auctoritas*, his *auctoritas* in turn was enhanced by the political support that Fulvia brought to the marriage[127]. She was also one of the few high-profile leaders of Clodius' faction left in Rome after a series of trials aimed at his associates: "she was the widow of the people's hero, the mother of his children, the visible symbol and reminder of his presence".[128]

The accusations that have haunted Fulvia's legacy the longest are Octavian's allegations that she played an integral role in the Perusine War in 41-40 BC. Although women could not hold *imperium*, she had previous experience in a military camp, having accompanied Antony to Brundisium. As noted, Dio claims that Fulvia sent commands to the forces under Antonine control in Italy, that she would wear a sword, give the watch-word to the soldiers, and even harangue the soldiers.[129] These actions are far beyond the purview of *auctoritas*, and correspond more closely to the *potestas* exerted by a military general. However, Fulvia could not possess the role and authority of a general, as women could not hold military office. As the legions at Perusia were under the command of Lucius Antony and Mark Antony, Dio may be depicting an assumption of *potestas* in her husband's name, due to his absence to the East. This assumption of *potestas* by Fulvia indicates an extraordinary use of power within the overtly

[126] Taylor, L. R., *op. cit.*, p. 397, n. 34.
[127] Welch, K. E. (1995), 'Antony, Fulvia, and the Ghost of Clodius in 47 B. C.', *Greece & Rome, Second Series*, 42(2), p. 192.
[128] *ibid.*, p. 187.
[129] Dio, 48.10.

patriarchal structure of the Roman military, fulfilling Wolf's claim that power feminism requires interaction with male power structures[130] to a considerable degree.

Use of Power

Diana Delia believes that Cicero's silence regarding Fulvia in the 50s BC indicates that her political role was minor;[131] but, as Babcock asserts, her political acumen did not suddenly materialise upon her marriage to Antony.[132] Instead, Welch believes that Cicero's silence can be attributed to the fact that "Cicero's treatment of Fulvia develops over time"[133] and according to political circumstances. Babcock believes that Fulvia was involved in the establishment of Clodius' *collegia*, but there remains insufficient evidence to prove her involvement. Fulvia's first political act was at the death of Clodius. Here we can see that the use of *auctoritas* melded with natural behaviour and customs. According to Asconius,[134] the body of Clodius was brought to his house and displayed in the atrium to his supporters who had gathered there. Fulvia appeared and pointed out his wounds while lamenting over Clodius' body. Welch believes that Fulvia's decision to continue the display of Clodius' body to the fevered populace, and her testimony in the trial of Milo,[135] were not signs of grief but high profile actions with political implications.[136]

Welch also believes that this influence can be seen in the rapid elevation of Gaius Scribonius Curio, her second husband, after their marriage.[137] Previously an *optimas*, Curio campaigned for the tribunate instead of the aedileship, and as suffect consul was instrumental in winning Antony the augurate.[138]

Dio attributes to her a great deal of influence on the *acta Caesaris*, such as her prevention of the triumph being granted by the Senate until she approved of the plan.[139] We have seen in the case studies of Livy's account of the protest for the repeal of the *lex Oppia*[140] and evidence for Cornelia's influence over Gaius Gracchus' legislation[141] that it was considered acceptable for a wife or mother to exert her *auctoritas* over her male relatives in a private setting in order to enact political change. In fact, Hortensia's speech to the triumvirs protesting the war tax

[130] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 150.
[131] Delia, D. (1991), 'Fulvia Reconsidered' in Pomeroy, S. B. (1991b), pp. 197-207, p. 198-9.
[132] Babcock, C. L., *op. cit.*, p. 20.
[133] Welch, K. E. (1995), p. 188.
[134] Asconius, *Pro Milone*, 28.
[135] Asconius, *Pro Milone*, 40.
[136] Welch, K. E. (1995), p. 188.
[137] *ibid.*, p. 188.
[138] *ibid.*, p. 188.
[139] Dio Cass., 48.4.
[140] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 100.
[141] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 124-125.

explicitly states that the elite women of Rome approached the wives and mothers of the triumvirs to request that they exert their *auctoritas* against the measure, but that Fulvia had refused them.[142] E. Huzar says of this period that "political manipulation, guile, complex planning, and insatiable ambition were not his [Antony's] natural skills. Now he displayed them as never before and rarely later. One senses Fulvia as the Grey Eminence".[143] Fulvia's political acumen is supported by Babcock's assertion that he does not believe it was coincidental that she "attached herself legally to the three most promising young *populares* of their generation at just about the time when that promise was being realized".[144]

In the time of the triumvirs, Fulvia was accused by the ancient sources of having added names to the proscription lists in order to rid herself of personal enemies.[145] For example, she and Antony demanded the proscription of Cicero, who had defamed them both in his *Philipics*, orations attacking Antony. Delia interprets the accusation of her involvement to powerful Augustan propaganda that attempted to shift the odium of the triumviral proscriptions of 43 to Lepidus, Antony and Fulvia.[146] Babcock, however, concedes that "one would like to dismiss these horrors out-of-hand, but proscriptions there were, cruelty and avarice existed without doubt, and as Octavian cannot by all his propaganda be absolved of his share, neither can Antony and Fulvia, the latter prominent enough to have allowed the development of the propaganda, have been without guilt".[147] Babcock makes a strong argument – Octavian's propaganda rested on the public perception that Fulvia was involved in the proscriptions. If that assumption is true, then Fulvia wielded a great deal of influence, by being able to organise the deaths of her and Antony's enemies without trial in an officially sanctioned manner, and would thus have strengthened Antony's political strength by removing high-profile conservatives who wielded a great deal of *auctoritas* in a politically volatile environment. The depiction of Fulvia's use of *auctoritas* and *potestas* is focused upon her usage of male structures of power, aligning her with Wolf's characterisation of power feminism.[148]

The Effect of Their Actions

Antony's marriage to Fulvia followed Caesar's censure over Antony's conduct in Italy during his absence which even Antony's most stalwart defenders could not endorse.[149] Plutarch attributes Antony's re-emergence on the political scene after his marriage to Fulvia as a result

[142] App., *B. Civ.*, 4.32.
[143] Huzar, E. G. (1986), 'Mark Antony: Marriages vs. Careers', *The Classical Journal*, 81(2), p. 100.
[144] Babcock, C. L., *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[145] App., *B. Civ.*, 4.29.
[146] Delia, D., *op. cit.*, p. 201.
[147] Babcock, C. L., *op. cit.*, p. 21.
[148] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 150.
[149] Plut., *Ant.*, 9-10.

of his 'reformation' under her influence,[150] and Welch believes that "Antony and Fulvia, once in alliance, became a formidable political force in the city".[151] In fact, she declares that without his marriage to Fulvia, Antony would not have been able to withstand the attacks of both Octavian's supporters and the Ciceronian Senate.[152]

Ancient Perspectives

It is likely that these events have been highly distorted by propaganda intending to portray Fulvia as an androgynous, power-hungry monarchist. Although scholars are divided as to the exact extent of Fulvia's contribution to the war, Delia seems to be correct in attributing it to the fact that "Octavian and Antony may have found in Fulvia a convenient excuse for an estrangement that had now become an embarrassment".[153] So why did Fulvia take up such a controversial role? Delia believes that Fulvia was required to support Lucius by her maternal devotion, as "the only ineluctable legacy from Antony to their children was his name; Fulvia was obliged to champion the reputation and authority that his name conveyed in order to preserve their patrimony intact".[154] It is important to note that Fulvia was acting in the name of Antony,[155] whether he supported her actions or not.

Fulvia had first been the victim of a targeted attack in Cicero's *Philipic* orations, speeches which he gave after Antony had been declared a public enemy. Octavian and Antony were also happy to use the now deceased Fulvia as a scapegoat for the Perusine war when they signed the Treaty of Brundisium.[156] Octavian would have tarnished her reputation further in the anti-Antonian propaganda that he released in the lead up to the Battle of Actium.

Almost all of our ancient sources attribute to Fulvia a role in the events which led to the Perusine War. Appian[157] and Plutarch[158] portray Fulvia as reluctant to support Lucius' rhetoric and actions against Antony until she is swayed by her jealousy of Cleopatra, and is convinced that Antony will return to Rome if the conflict escalates. Plutarch makes no mention of Fulvia during the Perusine War until she fled Praeneste at its conclusion,[159] but he claims that Antony was told by friends that Fulvia had instigated the matter.[160] The *Periochae* of Livy similarly depict

[150] Plut., *Ant.*, 10.
[151] Welch, K. E. (1995), p. 192.
[152] *ibid.*, 193.
[153] Delia, D., *op. cit.*, p. 205.
[154] *ibid.*, p. 204-5.
[155] Although she was credited with organising the civil war, Fulvia could only stir up support by claiming concern over Antony's honour, such as in App., *B. Civ.*, 5.14.
[156] Plut., *Ant.*, 35.
[157] App., *B. Civ.*, 5.3.19.
[158] Plut., *Ant.*, 30.2.
[159] Plut., *Ant.*, 30.1.
[160] Plut., *Ant.*, 30.2.

Fulvia as inciting Lucius' actions, but not involved in the warfare herself.[161] Suetonius, in contrast, attributes the Perusine War entirely to Lucius' actions.[162] Appian claims that Fulvia raised an army to support Lucius in Perusia,[163] but was otherwise largely uninvolved in the war.

Velleius Paterculus claims that Fulvia was at Praeneste, but that she was using the city as her "base of operations" (*haec belli sedem Praeneste ceperat*).[164] The language used indicates a belief that Fulvia's distance from Perusia did not prevent her involvement in the progress of the war, and can be viewed as implying that Fulvia was issuing instructions to the forces at Perusia from her residence. Such an act would traditionally be the responsibility of the general of the legions, and thus Fulvia can be seen as exerting the *potestas* of a general. As discussed above,[165] Fulvia could not possess *potestas* as she could not hold the political or military office required for its authority. However, it is possible that she appropriated Antony's *potestas* as triumvir by virtue of her marriage and the turbulent political atmosphere, in order to exert *potestas* despite her military and political restrictions. This complements Velleius' description of her as possessing a masculine mind and temperament.[166] Fulvia's use of *potestas*, which is a traditionally male form of power, is understood by Velleius only by eliminating Fulvia's femininity. We see similar themes in the depiction of Agrippina the Elder by Tacitus.[167]

Dio represents Fulvia as domineering with both Mark Antony and his brother Lucius.[168] He shows Fulvia as involved in opposing Octavian with Lucius from Lucius' initial actions.[169] Dio portrays Fulvia as possessing political *potestas* in Antony's absence, with Dio stating that she "managed affairs herself, so that neither the senate nor the people transacted any business contrary to her pleasure".[170] Dio also ascribes to Fulvia military *potestas* in his description of her during the Perusine War.[171] Her actions of giving the watchword and issuing commands are the duties of a general and thus, as with the example of Velleius Paterculus, indicate her possession, or appropriation, of *potestas*. Florus also makes references to Fulvia "girding herself with the sword of her husband's service".[172] However, Weir believes that this reference is metaphorical, not literal.[173]

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[161] Livy, *Per.*, 125.
[162] Suet., *Aug.*, 14.
[163] App., *B. Civ.*, 5.4.33.
[164] Vell. Pat., 2.74.3.
[165] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 137.
[166] Vell. Pat., 2.74.3.
[167] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 185-189.
[168] Gowing, A.M. (1992), *The Triumviral Narratives of Appian and Cassius Dio,* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, p. 79.
[169] Dio, 48.5.4.
[170] Dio, 48.4.1.
[171] Dio, 48.10.4.
[172] Florus, 16.2.2.
[173] Weir, A. J. (2008), *A Study of Fulvia,* Queen's University*:* Department of Classics, Master of Arts, p. 129.

According to Appian, Antony reproached Fulvia for her role in the Perusine War after she fled Praeneste.[174] Dio notes that Octavian and Antony reconciled after Fulvia's death, and believes that this indicated that Fulvia was the source of their conflict, or that her death allowed both parties to attribute blame to her and therefore absolve themselves of responsibility and utilise her as an excuse for an estrangement which was no longer politically expedient.[175] Plutarch, however, claims that Antony placed the responsibility of the Perusine War on Fulvia after Octavian indicated that he would not accuse Antony of involvement.[176]

The extent of Fulvia's contribution to the actions of the Perusine War can only be speculated on. In addition to the disagreement among the sources, the authors' patriarchal aversion to the image of a woman wielding *potestas* would have influenced their depiction of Fulvia. The motivations of our authors would have affected their interpretation of the evidence. For example, Fulvia's use as a negative *exemplum* could encourage hyperbole in her depiction, and biographical themes integrated into historical accounts of Antony's behaviour shaped the representations of Fulvia in order to portray Antony as easily influenced.[177] Octavian and Antony's decision to attribute to Fulvia the blame for the Perusine War would have affected the portrayal of her during this period, as well as the anti-Antonian propaganda issued by Octavian prior to the Battle of Actium. Nonetheless, Fulvia's representation by our sources can be viewed as an extensively documented account of a woman in Roman history wielding power.

Additionally, sling bullets inscribed with graffiti have been found at the battle site at Perusia. The inscriptions are fragmentary, but they are believed to refer to Lucius' baldness, Octavian's effeminacy and Fulvia's sexual promiscuity in crude insults. J. T. Ramsey states that such qualities are stock slurs in political invective. [178] Hallett notes that these insults indicate that Fulvia was held in some esteem by the troops at Perusia, for otherwise their purpose of antagonising the Antonine soldiers would not have been effective.[179] She compares this to the epigram in Martial,[180] in which source the Perusine War is claimed to have been Fulvia's desire to have sex with Octavian in order to retialiate for her husband's affairs, and Octavian's fear of such due to his implied homosexuality.[181] Martial's epigram can be seen as an insult upon both Fulvia and Octavia for their roles in the Perusine War,

[174] App., *B. Civ.*, 5.6.59.
[175] Dio, 48.28.3.
[176] Plut., *Ant.*, 30.5-6.
[177] Plut., *Ant.*, 10.6.
[178] Ramsey, J.T. (2007), 'Cicero's Thirteenth Philippic: A Unique Solution to a Rhetorical Dilemma,' in Berry, D. H., Erskine, A., *Form and Function in Roman Oratory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., p. 159-160.
[179] Hallett, J. P. (1977), 'Perusinae Glandes and the Changing Image of Augustus', *The American Journal of Ancient History*, 2, pp. 151-171.
[180] Martial, *Ep.*, 11.20.
[181] Hallett, J. P. (1977), *op. cit.*, p. 151-171.

while the *glandes* form part of a military tactic used by each side in order to antagonise the other.

Livy, Suetonius, Florus and Plutarch do not mention Fulvia's location during the war, but Appian,[182] Velleius Paterculus[183] and Dio[184] state that Fulvia remained at Praeneste, in which case she would not have been in a position to see the *glandes*.

Allison Weir believes that "Fulvia must have held some sort of reputation among the soldiers that Lucius mustered in order for her name to have held any sort of significance.[185] These graffiti were a method for taunting enemy soldiers. Weir believes that the degree of Fulvia's involvement is a matter of speculation, but the graffiti indicate that her connection to the Perusine War was publicly accepted to the degree that her name was slandered by Octavian's soldiers to ridicule their enemy.[186]

Precedents

Fulvia followed the precedent of women such as Veturia and Cornelia by appealing for support for her husband in the Forum. In 43 BC, when Antony was governor of Cisalpine Gaul and the Senate declared Antony a public enemy, Fulvia and Antony's mother Julia reportedly went to the houses of the leading senators, begging for assistance. The following day they appealed in the clothing of suppliants to those heading to the Senate house. This dramatic action won back some political support for Antony among the senators. It is important to note, however, that Veturia and Cornelia were widowed, and acted on behalf of their sons, while Fulvia was acting on behalf of her husband and his brother. As discussed above in the case studies of Veturia and Cornelia, maternal *auctoritas* was considered appropriate, particularly in its use by widows. Livy made clear in his account of the protest for the repeal of the *lex Oppia* that it was considered suitable for a wife to exert *auctoritas* in putting forward her wishes to her husband regarding public matters. Fulvia's public petitions on behalf of Antony, however, indicate that the political climate of the late Republic had prioritised the political careers of matrons' husbands. Delia's belief in the importance of Antony's career upon the future prospects of Fulvia's children is pertinent to recall here, as the extraordinary popularity and careers of Octavian and Sextus Pompey indicated the extraordinary position that the sons of great generals could inherit.

[182] App., *B. Civ.*, 5.21.1.
[183] Vell. Pat., 2.74.3.
[184] Dio Cass., 48.10.3.
[185] Weir, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
[186] Hallett, J.P., 'The Perusine Glandes and the Changing Image of Augustus', *American Journal of Ancient History*, Vol. 2 No. 2, 1977, p. 154.

The accusations of Fulvia's involvement at Perusia would also become a precedent for the controversial actions of Agrippina the Elder in her husband's military camp. Both women could not hold *potestas* as they could not hold political or military office. However, they are depicted in our sources as appropriating their husbands' *potestas* in a military environment. Agrippina is merely portrayed as refusing to let her husband's orders be reversed, but her actions are more fully substantiated. Fulvia is depicted as acting outside of the direction of her husband, and in fact giving orders, but the ancient sources are so biased against her that the degree of her involvement at Perusia is unclear.

Mucia

Mucia Tertia was the daughter of Q. Mucius Scaevola, who had been pontifex maximus and held the office of consul in 95 BC. He was a supporter of Sulla, and was killed by Marian forces in 82 BC. Mucia's mother divorced Scaevola prior to his death in order to marry Q. Caecilius Metellus Nepos. This second marriage produced two stepbrothers to Mucia, both of whom would be elevated to the position of consul.

Mucia married Pompey the Great in 79 BC. The union produced three children – Gnaeus Pompeius (Pompey the Younger), Pompeia Magna and Sextus Pompeius. In 62 BC Pompey sent Mucia a notice of divorce. Our sources record that allegations of infidelity by Mucia prompted the divorce,[187] but Shelley P. Haley believes that the cause of the separation was political expediency.[188] She suggests that the rumours of adultery were used by our sources, such as Plutarch, to justify the divorce without contradicting his characterisation in their works as a devoted and faithful husband.[189]

After a civil war with Julius Caesar, Pompey was killed as he fled to Egypt in 48 BC. Following the death of Julius Caesar, Sextus Pompey, Pompey the Great's youngest son, was proscribed for his involvement in the Battle of Munda against Julius Caesar. Sextus was based in Sicily and the head of a large naval fleet. Many of those proscribed by the Second Triumvirate fled to Sextus in Sicily. Sextus' fleet blockaded the shipping trade to Rome, and the shortage of corn in Rome caused public uproar, with the people pressuring Octavian and Antony to negotiate peace with Sextus Pompey.

Achievement of Power

Mucia would have gained a great deal of *auctoritas* from her familial connections. Her father, stepfather and stepbrothers all achieved the high office of consul, and her father had possessed the highest religious office – that of *pontifex maximus*.

Her marriage to Pompey in 79 BC would have gained her a great deal of *auctoritas* as a result of his extraordinary success in his military campaigns. Her divorce from Pompey, and the subsequent allegations of adultery, may have reduced her *auctoritas*, but her remarriage indicates that such damage is not likely to have been significant, considering the fact that she was able to contract a marriage to a successful senator.

[187] Asconius, *Pro M. Scaur.*, 17; Plut., *Pomp.*, 42.7; Suet., *JC*, 50.1.
[188] Haley, S. P., 'The Five Wives of Pompey the Great', *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 1985, p. 51.
[189] *ibid.*, p. 51-2.

She also possessed *auctoritas* over her children. Appian states that the populace of Rome protested outside of her Roman residence for her to intercede with her son Sextus Pompey, even threatening to burn her house to the ground.[190]

Ancient Perspectives

In contrast to the previous episodes depicting the intercession of the Sabine women[191] and Veturia,[192] our ancient sources provide very little information about the role of Mucia in organising the Treaty of Misenum. These episodes record not only the actions of the women, but also the speeches that were given, although they may be rhetorical inventions.

The silence of Appian may be indicative of Augustan influence over the history of Mucia. While Augustus was able to exploit the intercession of his sister, Octavia, in his conflict with Antony through his own propaganda justifying the civil war, Mucia was the ex-wife of Pompey the Great. Therefore her role in bringing about the Treaty of Misenum would conversely draw attention to the failure of Octavian to either defeat Sextus in battle or to negotiate peace. It was this failure which had enabled Sextus' blockade of Italy, which led to famine and riots in Rome.

Use of Power

The fact that the populace of Rome had protested for Mucia's intercession,[193] and that Augustus employed her as an envoy to Sextus to organise the negotiation,[194] indicates that she was believed to wield *auctoritas* over her son.

Mucia's intervention allowed for the successful negotiation of the Treaty of Misenum. As a result of this treaty, Sextus was authorised to retain his control of Sicily and Sardinia, as well as gaining control of Corsica and the Peloponnesus.[195] Sextus was also promised a future augurate and consulship. In exchange, Sextus agreed to end his blockade of Italy, supply Rome with grain and halt his piracy. Thus the famine in Rome was ended, and a (temporary) peace was established.

The Effect of Their Actions

Welch notes that the Treaty of Misenum undermined Sextus' claim to be the defender of the Republic, when the proscribed Romans who had fled to him return to Rome under the treaty's

[190] App., *B. Civ.*, 5.69.
[191] See this study, Ch. 1, p. 50-56.
[192] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 84-90.
[193] App., *B. Civ.*, 5.69.
[194] App., *B. Civ.*, 5.72.1.
[195] App., *B. Civ.*, 5.72.

terms.[196] However, as Piotr Berdowski notes, Sextus' strength was in naval forces, and he lacked the military legions necessary to battle Octavian in Italy.[197] Under the treaty he gained legitimacy through the possession of the offices of consul and augur. Berdowski states that "only the alliance with Antony might change the balance of power and open new possibilities for Sextus".[198] It is therefore possible that the treaty was part of a delaying tactic while he (unsuccessfully) attempted to convince Antony to ally with his forces against Octavian, as they had done in the previous Brundisian War.

Precedents

As discussed above,[199] Mucia can be seen to have behaved in the fashion of the legendary Sabine women and Veturia for intercession with her male relative/s during a time of danger to the state. However, unlike the above examples, Mucia did not make the decision to intercede unprompted. Rather, she was encouraged by the violent threats of the populace, as well as Augustus' request that she act as his envoy to Sextus. This is a significant development, which would be emulated by Octavia, in which a woman's intercession during civil war was sought by male authorities and sanctioned by them. The use of *materna auctoritas* in times of civil war can thus be seen as legitimised and given an official role, as well as legitimising her interaction with male power structures in a power feminist manner.[200]

[196] Welch, K. (2012), *Magnus Pius: Sextus Pompeius and the Transformation of the Roman Republic*, Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, p. 285.
[197] Berdowski, P. (2015), *Res Gestae Neptuni Filii. Sextus Pompeius i Rzymskie Wojny Domowe*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, p. 45.
[198] *ibid.*, p. 45.
[199] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 147.
[200] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 150.

Octavia

Octavia was the daughter of Gaius Octavius, who was a Roman governor and senator. Her stepfather was L. Marcius Philippus, who was the consul of 56 BC. She was the great-niece of Julius Caesar and sister to Octavian.

Circa 54 BC she married C. Claudius Marcellus Minor, who was consul in 50 BC. The marriage produced two daughters and a son. Suetonius records that Julius Caesar wished to force her to divorce Marcellus in order to betroth her to Pompey the Great, following the death of Julius Caesar's daughter Julia.[201] However, Octavia did not wish to divorce her husband, so Pompey refused.

After Marcellus' death in 40 BC, Octavia married Mark Antony to cement Octavian and Antony's political alliance following the Perusine War and the death of Fulvia.[202] The marriage required permission from the Senate as Octavia had not observed the required mourning period.[203] Octavia travelled through Rome and Greece with Antony, and the marriage produced two daughters. Octavia returned to Rome when Antony returned to the East and resumed his affair with Cleopatra.

Octavia continued to act as mediator between both triumvirs in 35 BC,[204] which earned her popular support.[205] Antony's treatment of Octavia became central to Octavian's anti-Antonine propaganda, but Octavia refused to leave Antony's house and allow her marriage to cause civil war.

Antony sent Octavia a notice of divorce in 32 BC[206] and, with Octavia no longer connecting Octavian and Antony, Octavian decided to prepare for war. Antony was defeated at the Battle of Actium, and committed suicide in 30 BC.[207]

As Octavian began to consolidate his position as *princeps*, he promoted Octavia's son Marcellus, and arranged his marriage to Octavian's only child, Julia.[208] This was generally considered a sign that Marcellus was being groomed for a role in Octavian's succession plans.

[201] Suet., *JC*, 27.
[202] Plut. *Ant.*, 31.3.
[203] Plut. *Ant.*, 31.3.
[204] Plut. *Ant.*, 35.
[205] Plut. *Ant.*, 35.
[206] Plut., *Ant.*, 57.2.
[207] Plut., *Ant.*, 77.
[208] Suet., *Aug.*, 63.1.

However, he passed away in 23 BC.[209] Seneca reports that Octavia was inconsolable, and retired from public life.[210]

Achievement of Power

Octavia inherited *auctoritas* from her father, who was a governor, and her stepfather, who had held the consulship. Her distant connection to Julius Caesar would have increased her *auctoritas*, as well as her marriage to Marcellus, who was consul in 50 BC.

Her brother's meteoric rise to prominence following the death of Julius Caesar would have greatly impacted her *auctoritas*, as did her marriage to the successful politician, C. Claudius Marcellus Minor. Her marriage to Antony in 40 BC resulted in her having close relationships to both remaining triumvirs, which would have undoubtedly increased her *auctoritas*.

Octavia and Livia were both also granted emancipation from *tutela*, permission to be depicted in statues, and tribunician sacrosanctity in 35 BC by an act of the Senate.[211]

Ancient Perspectives

The marriage between Mark Antony and Octavia was organised as part of the Treaty of Brundisium[212], and Plutarch records that the people of Rome celebrated the marriage, believing that it would bring an end to the continuous civil wars.[213] This was a clear example of a marriage sealing an alliance, although Octavian was probably aware of the advisability of arranging a wife for Antony who was favourabl inclined to him politically after his conflict with Fulvia. Octavia was able to use her close relationship to both men to encourage peace between them. For example, Plutarch records that, when Octavian failed to meet Antony at Brundisium, Octavia voluntarily travelled to meet her brother and entreated him to join Antony.[214] In the exchange of military forces, Octavia is credited with gaining further concessions from each for the other.[215] The perceived influence of Octavia demonstrates the influence, whether real or imagined, that a woman who was linked to the two most powerful men of her age could hold.

Despite a humiliating rebuff from Antony in 35 BC,[216] Octavia assisted his friends in Rome and discouraged Octavian from going to war on her account until Antony sent her a bill of divorce in 32 BC.[217] Later accounts of her behaviour were publicised as part of Octavian's propaganda

[209] Suet., *Aug.*, 63.1.
[210] Sen., *ad Marciam*, 2.4.
[211] Dio Cass., 49.38.1.
[212] Plut., *Ant.*, 10.
[213] *ibid.*, 31.
[214] *ibid.*, 35.
[215] *ibid.*, 35.
[216] Dio Cass., 49.33.3
[217] Plut., *Ant.*, 54.

campaign,[218] for Plutarch declares that Antony was "hated for wronging such a woman".[219] E. Huzar extrapolates from the information further, claiming that the marriage was no longer politically expedient for either of the triumvirs.[220] After Octavian's defeat of Sextus Pompey, and his increasing control over Rome and Italy, he was no longer reliant on Antony and the marriage became "irrelevant".[221] Antony in turn needed Cleopatra's assistance to finance his Parthian campaign and secure his southern flank during the invasion.[222] Although this reliance on a foreign female ruler would offend Roman sensibilities, Huzar believes that "Antony trusted that Parthian victories would put his reputation above reproach".[223]

The Effect of Their Actions

Rather than negating the influence of Octavia, this theory conversely supports her indirect power, as both men used her as a reason to prevent civil war. Only when they had the necessary forces and finance behind them could they allow the marriage to be repudiated, a fact which attests to her indirect influence on Roman politics, for it was her presence in the marriage that enabled these two powerful men to justify the postponement of civil war and influence on the two men.

Dio informs us that in 35BC, the Senate clamoured to grant Octavian a triumph for his victories in Illyricum: instead he convinced them to grant to his sister Octavia and his wife Livia emancipation from *tutela*, permission to be depicted in statues and tribunician sacrosanctity.[224] Such an act was unprecedented, in that he was allowing the honour due to him be redirected towards the two most important women in his life, and moreover in an officially sanctioned manner.

Use of Power

The most discussed aspect of the Senate's decision was the grant of tribunician sacrosanctity to both Livia and Octavia.[225] Modern scholars, including Richard Bauman[226] and Marleen Boudreau Flory,[227] believe that this was a move orchestrated by Octavian in order to give him a pretext for war with Antony. Octavia's name is placed first in Dio's discussion of the grant,[228]

[218] *ibid.*, 55.
[219] *ibid.*, 54.
[220] Huzar, E. G., *op. cit.*, p. 105-7.
[221] *ibid.*, p. 105.
[222] *ibid.*, p. 107.
[223] *ibid.*, p. 107.
[224] Dio Cass., 49.38.
[225] Dio Cass., 49.38.
[226] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 93f.
[227] Flory, M. B. (1993), 'Livia and the History of Public Honorific Statues for Women in Rome', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 123, p. 293f.
[228] Dio Cass., 49.38.

which indicates that she was the primary beneficiary of the settlement, although Bauman alleges that both women received the honours so as to show equality to the wives of the triumvirs.[229] Bauman believes that the important thing to note is that they were granted *tribunician* sacrosanctity, which was a benefit of a political office.[230] There was a precedent for sacrosanctity given to women such as that offered to the Vestal Virgins, but this protection held religious connotations. Bauman believes that this was a conscious decision by Octavian, so that Antony's mistreatment of his sister could be converted from a domestic grievance to a matter of state,[231] for Antony would have then challenged the authority of Rome by insulting a citizen who held the protection belonging to an official governmental position. This is substantiated by Plutarch's assertion that Octavian permitted his sister to meet with Antony in Athens in 35 BC, in the hope that she would be insulted and Octavian would thus have a pretext for war.[232] The fact that the grant of tribunician sacrosanctity to a woman was not repeated supports Bauman's thesis that it was a calculated wartime act that had served its purpose and was deemed too dangerous to repeat.[233] It was able to legitimise and sanction the female use of male structures of power by Octavia, as advocated by Wolf.[234]

Precedents

Octavia is treated favourably by the written sources, a fact which was assisted by Octavian's propaganda portraying her as the wronged virtuous Roman wife and bereaved mother as counterpoint to the Egyptian Cleopatra. Nonetheless, her mediation between Octavian and Antony, following the precedent of the Sabine women and Veturia before her, won praise from those devastated by the civil wars. It should be noted that, like Fulvia,[235] Octavia acted on behalf of her husband, as well as her brother, unlike the earlier examples. The centralisation of power in the late Republic resulted in the unprecedented levels of *auctoritas* and *potestas* held by Octavian and Antony, which therefore focused Octavia's energy upon their political and military actions.

[229] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 97.
[230] *ibid.*, p. 94.
[231] *ibid.*, p. 97.
[232] Plut., *Ant.*, 53.
[233] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 97.
[234] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 150.
[235] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 135-144.

Conclusion

The women in the Republic demonstrate engaged in individualistic action as well as collective action. They were reliant upon their *auctoritas* and *potestas* which they gain from their familial and marital connections. These women actively utilise their power and, especially in the cases of Cornelia and Octavia, impressively display their organisation skill and forethought.

The source material for this period is plentiful but unfortunately is influenced by the biases of both the authors and those of the imperial family.

This power was used by Octavia to establish and maintain peace between Octavian and Mark Antony, and by Cornelia and Fulvia to advance the careers of the Gracchi and Antony respectively. The actions of Cornelia ensured the success of the Gracchi, who demonstrated the political possibilities of the office of plebeian tribune. Fulvia promoted and supported the career of her husband Antony, almost succeeding in promoting him to the sole ruler of the Roman empire.

Octavia continued the conduct attributed to the Sabine women and Veturia for intercession in civil war. Fulvia became a precedent for Agrippina the Elder in the use of *potestas* in her husband's name.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE EARLY IMPERIAL PERIOD

Introduction

This era spans the period from the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, until the end of the reign of Nero in 69 AD.

In order to avoid the accusations of monarchic intent that incited the assassination of his uncle Julius Caesar, Octavian claimed to 'restore the *res publica*'[1] and asserted that he was merely an ordinary senator.[2]

After Augustus' death, his stepson Tiberius was named his successor as *princeps* in a novel and awkward meeting of the Senate.[3] In 19 AD Tiberius' adopted heir Germanicus died in Antioch amongst accusations of magic and murder.[4] Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso was charged with murder[5] and chose to commit suicide.[6] Tiberius and his mother Livia also came under a great deal of suspicion for their role in the matter.[7]

The charge of *maiestas* (treason) became a common tool used against those who were considered critical of the regime or the Julio-Claudian family.

Tiberius tired of the demands of the role of *princeps* and in 26 AD he retired to the island of Capri,[8] relaying his orders via mail. This gave the Praetorian Prefect Sejanus the opportunity to exploit his power in Rome. Sejanus used his influence to better his position and rid himself of his enemies, including Germanicus' widow[9] and two eldest sons.[10] Sejanus was executed in 31 AD after Antonia warned Tiberius of Sejanus' activities.[11]

Germanicus' youngest son Gaius (Caligula) succeeded Tiberius as *princeps* in 37 AD.[12] However, his erratic behaviour and excessive expenditure provoked his assassination by the Praetorian Guard.[13]

His uncle Claudius, who was saluted as *princeps* while the Senate debated the possibility of a return to Republican government, succeeded him in the role.[14] While the Senate reluctantly

[1] Aug., *RG*, 34.
[2] Aug., *RG*, 34
[3] Suet., *Tib*., 24.
[4] Suet., *Tib*., 52.3.
[5] Tac., *Ann.*, 3.10.
[6] Tac., *Ann.*, 3.16.1.
[7] Tac., *Ann.*, 3.3.1.
[8] Suet., *Tib.*, 39-40.
[9] Tac., *Ann.*, 5.3.
[10] Tac., *Ann.*, 5.3.
[11] Josephus, *BJ*, 18. 180.
[12] Suet., *Caligula*, 13.
[13] Suet., *Caligula*, 59.
[14] Suet., *Claud.*, 10.3-4.

confirmed Claudius' appointment,[15] the incident set the tone for Claudius' interactions with them for the rest of his reign.

After he had his third wife Messalina executed owing to her bigamous marriage to Gaius Silius in 48 AD,[16] Claudius married his niece Agrippina the Younger[17] and adopted her son Nero.[18]

After the death of Claudius,[19] Nero succeeded him as *princeps*.[20] His reign began well under the stable influence of Seneca and Burrus,[21] but it quickly deteriorated as his fascination for the arts dominated his attention. He had his mother Agrippina killed in 59 AD,[22] and in 64 AD he was popularly suspected of involvement in the Great Fire of Rome.[23] His popularity continued to dwindle and in 69 AD he was forced to flee Rome and commit suicide.[24]

The new political structure of the principate and the close relationship between the affairs of state and the *domus Augusta* allowed the women of the imperial family a chance to push boundaries as they explored the limits of the power invested in their new roles.

The reliance by men upon the connections created by their female relatives, by birth and by marriage, to powerful positions within the state increased the *auctoritas* of the women of the Julio-Claudian family.[25] Additionally, maternal lineage became more prominent as men began to depend upon their maternal familial connections to famous ancestors to gain *auctoritas*.[26]

In this chapter this author will study the actions of Livia, Julia I, Agrippina the Elder, Messalina and Agrippina the Younger for their use of *auctoritas* and *potestas* through the actions advocated by Wolf in her definition of power feminism, such as women's manipulation of patriarchal power structures. Most significantly, the women of the imperial family recognised their own power and leadership qualities, often as blood kin of male leaders, and created a psychology of power for the women of the *domus Augusta* as they began to define the roles of women under the Principate.

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[15] Suet., *Claud.*, 10.4.
[16] Tac., *Ann.*, 11.26.
[17] Suet., *Claud.*, 39.2.
[18] Tac., *Ann.*, 12.25-26.
[19] Tac., *Ann.*, 12.67.
[20] Tac., *Ann.*, 12.69.
[21] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.2.
[22] Tac., *Ann.*, 14.7.
[23] Tac., *Ann.*, 15.38.
[24] Suet., *Nero*, 57.
[25] Hallett, J. P. (2012), 'Women in Augustan Rome' in James, S. L., Dillon, S., *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 372-385.
[26] *ibid.*, p. 374.

Julia the Elder

After Antony and Cleopatra's defeat at Actium in 31 BC,[27] Augustus emerged as the victor of the turmoil of the late Republic. The civil wars at Pharsalus, Naulochus and Actium, as well as the proscriptions carried out by the triumvirate, had eliminated those who opposed Augustus, and in Rome the turbulent civil wars that had defined the late Republic were finally at an end.

Octavian 'restored' the *res publica* to the Senate in 27 BC and was granted the titles of '*Princeps*' and 'Augustus' as well as control over a number of provinces for ten years, including all of Hispania and Gaul, Syria, Cilicia, Cyprus, and Egypt.[28] Moreover, command of these provinces provided Octavian with control over the majority of Rome's legions.

In this way Augustus was able to avoid the long-term use of the office of dictator, no doubt mindful of the fate of Julius Caesar. Instead, he created a unique situation in which power was monopolised by one man, but he held no exceptional political position outside of the *cursus honorum*. Augustus, in his *Res Gestae*, states that he was an ordinary senator, who only surpassed other senators in his *auctoritas*.[29]

Augustus' claims to be an ordinary senator, however, were proven false by the marriages that he contracted for Julia, his only child. Julia was the daughter of Augustus and his second wife, Scribonia.[30] Even Julia's birth involved scandal, for her father divorced Scribonia shortly after the birth of his daughter, in order to marry the heavily pregnant Livia.[31] Suetonius states that Julia was raised in Augustus' household, forced to observe an almost ascetic mode of living.[32]

Marriages through the Republican period had been contracted, and broken, for matters of political and economic expediency. The frequency of divorce as a result of this practice is believed to have resulted in the decline in marriage in *manu*s. A marriage in *manus* conferred the power of *patria potestas* over a woman from her father to her husband. This had been traditionally the favoured form of marriage during the early and middle Republican period. However, as marriages of a man's female relatives began to be used to cement political and economic alliances, and thus were also broken when such alliances were no longer expedient, divorce became far more frequent amongst the elite families of Rome. It became impractical to continue to transfer the power of *patria potestas* over a woman and thus the practice fell out of

[27] Plut., *Ant.*, 66.
[28] Aug., *RG*, 34.
[29] Aug., *RG*, 34.
[30] Suet., *Aug.*, 63.1.
[31] Suet., *Aug.*, 62.
[32] Suet., *Aug.*, 64.2.

favour, and marriages more regularly contracted with the *patria potestas* remaining with a woman's father.

In the marriages of Augustus' daughter, Julia the Elder, her father broke with Republican tradition and arranged marriages for the sake of dynastic potential rather than political and economic expediency. The peace in Rome after the Battle of Actium, as well as Augustus' undeniable pre-eminence in the state, allowed him to arrange marriages within his own extended family, thus ensuring that the political *auctoritas* gained by such a union was centralised in his family, rather than gained by another.[33] As Augustus' daughter, Julia gave legitimacy to her husbands' connections to the crown, and provided heirs that continued the Julian bloodline.[34] The power of such a maternally-forged connection was not negligible, as Augustus himself had initially claimed his right to power as a relative of, and heir to, his grandmother's brother Julius Caesar.[35]

Julia's first husband was her cousin Marcellus, the son of Octavia and her first husband, Gaius Claudius Marcellus.[36] Julia and Marcellus married in 25 or 24 BC, but he passed away from illness in 23.[37]

After his premature death, Julia was then married to Augustus' close friend and general Marcus Agrippa,[38] with whom she had five children.[39] Agrippa had been joined to the Julio-Claudians in 28 BC by his marriage to Octavia's daughter Marcella, whom he was obliged to divorce in order to marry Julia.[40]

Although Agrippa may seem like an unusual choice for such a prestigious bride because of his equestrian background, his military skill and political prominence, including shared consulship and censorial powers with Augustus,[41] had elevated Agrippa to a position of exceptional importance, no doubt highlighted by his designation as Augustus' heir during the *princeps*' serious illness of 23 BC.[42] In fact, Dio records that Augustus' close friend Maecenas warned

[33] Severy-Hoven, B. (2003), *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire*, New York and London: Routledge, ch. 6.
[34] *ibid.*, p. 178-9.
[35] Suet., *Aug.*, 8.2.
[36] Suet., *Aug.*, 63.
[37] Suet., *Aug.*, 63.
[38] *ibid.*, 63.
[39] *ibid.*, 64.
[40] Suet., *Aug.*, 63.
[41] For more detail regarding Agrippa's military and political roles see Fantham, E. (2006), *Julia Augusti: The Emperor's Daughter*, New York: Routledge, p. 45-55.
[42] Dio Cass., 53.30.

Augustus that he had made Agrippa so powerful that Agrippa must either become his son-in-law or have him killed.[43]

Julia and Agrippa were married in 21 BC, and their union produced three sons and two daughters. Augustus adopted all of Agrippa's sons – Gaius, Lucius and Agrippa Postumus – in their youth.[44] This was quite an unusual decision. E. Fantham states that adoption in Roman families usually involved adult men due to the high rate of death in childhood.[45] The adoption of all of his grandsons as very young men strongly indicates a desire for dynastic succession despite the unofficial nature of the role of *princeps* at this point.

Marcus Agrippa fell ill and passed away in 12 BC.[46] Julia was then married to her stepbrother Tiberius.[47] The marriage was an unhappy one, and Tacitus believed that it was partly responsible for Tiberius' decision to retire to Rhodes in 6 BC.[48]

Achievement of Power

Augustus' unique political position impacted the women of the *domus Augusta* as well. As the only offspring of Augustus, Julia held a great deal of associated *auctoritas*. While women's display of familial *auctoritas* appears in the mid and late Republic, as evinced by that inherited by Cornelia from her father, Scipio Africanus,[49] and that inherited by Hortensia from her father Hortensius,[50] as well as acquired through marriage, as Fulvia did with Clodius,[51] Augustus' unprecedented levels of *auctoritas*, which allowed him to remain an "ordinary senator"[52] with an extraordinary realm of influence, ensured that Julia's inherited *auctoritas* was considerably more than that of the women examined previously in this thesis.

In addition, Elaine Fantham discusses Augustus' use of Julia in propaganda for his regime, such as her image on statues and on coins.[53] Julia's role in transferring legitimacy to her husbands' and children's claims to the succession can also be viewed as elevating her *auctoritas*.

Macrobius records that Julia was well aware of her *auctoritas*, stating that although her father may have forgotten that he was Augustus, she could not forget that she was Augustus'

[43] Dio Cass., 54.6.
[44] Suet., *Aug.*, 64.
[45] Fantham, E. (2006), p. 92.
[46] Suet., *Aug.*, 63.2.
[47] Suet., *Aug.*, 63.2.
[48] Tac, *Ann.*, 1.53.2.
[49] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 123-124.
[50] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 131.
[51] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 136-137.
[52] Aug., *RG*, 34.
[53] Fantham, E. (2006), p. 134f.

daughter.[54] According to Wolf, the recognition of power is an important step in the use of power,[55] and Julia was to become part of the process of creating a psychology of power[56] in the newly created Principate.

Use of Power

In 2 BC, Augustus banished his daughter Julia on the charge of adultery and sent a bill of divorce to her in Tiberius' name.[57] Her mother Scribonia accompanied Julia into exile, and she was treated as no longer belonging to his family. Augustus exposed her conduct in a letter to the Senate,[58] which was followed by a series of trials against her alleged lovers. Iullus Antonius, the son of Antony and Fulvia, who was brought up by Octavia, was the only man condemned, although he was allowed to commit suicide.[59] The other men involved were sentenced to banishment under the terms of the *lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis*.

According to Pliny, Julia had been committing adultery from the time of her marriage to Agrippa, and yet it was only in 2 BC that she was held accountable for her actions. Augustus' letter to the Senate was used as Pliny's source for his account of Julia's crimes,[60] which not only included adultery, but "nocturnal revels"[61] in the Forum and on the rostrum, and accusations that she had placed a chaplet on the statue of Marsyas.[62] Such behaviour hardly seems conspiratorial, so from where did the rumours arise?

Seneca states that "his [Augustus'] failing years were alarmed by his daughter and the noble youths who were bound to her by adultery as if by a military oath; again he had to fear a woman in league with an Antony."[63] Pliny is more candid – "the adultery of his daughter, and the discovery of her parricidal designs."[64] Richard Bauman finds this scenario unlikely, as Pliny is our only source for a conspiracy.[65] Also, as the wife of Tiberius and mother of Gaius and Lucius, Julia would soon hold a preeminent position within the state. The light sentences passed on her lovers support the belief that this was not a treasonous crime. Although Iullus Antonius' penalty was harsh, Hallett believes that Augustus' decision to punish Iullus Antonius so severely was

[54] Macrob., *Sat.*, 2.5.8.
[55] Wolf, N., *op. cit.*, p. 58-59.
[56] *ibid.*, p. 307f.
[57] Suet., *Aug.*, 65.
[58] *ibid.*, 65.
[59] Dio Cass., 55.10.15.
[60] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 113.
[61] Sen., *de Ben.*, 6.1-2.
[62] *ibid.*, 6.1-2.
[63] Sen., *Brev. Vit.*, 4.5.
[64] Plin., *HN*, 7.149.
[65] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 114.

the result of Augustus' past experiences with his mother Fulvia,[66] and the Julian connections made explicit in his name.[67]

Bauman believes that the rebellious spirit of Julia and her coterie of young friends intensified in 2 BC, as did her father's reaction to the news.[68] In February of that year, Augustus was awarded the title of *pater patriae*, which Bauman describes as "a transfer of the state into the power of Augustus, as if into the power of the head of a family,"[69] and with which Augustus ends his list of official achievements in the *Res Gestae.*[70] Bauman believes that Julia and her friends demonstrated their contempt for this accomplishment by their acts in the Forum and on the rostra, and most especially concerning Marsyas' statue.[71] Bauman attempts to capture the importance of the statue within the episode by reference to Augustus' association with Apollo, and claiming that the chaplet crowned Marsyas as a better lawyer than Apollo.[72] However, while he realised the significance of the mention of the Marsyas statue, he did not explore the importance of the character of Marsyas and its political implications in Julia's time.

In Greek mythology, the tale of Marsyas involves a foolish satyr who discovers a flute and, once accomplished on the instrument, challenges Apollo to a competition.[73] Not surprisingly, he is defeated by the god, and is flayed alive for his hubris. The Etrusco-Roman Marsyas myth, on which this statue was literally based, concerned a satyr who was revered for his oratory and for imparting the knowledge of augury.[74] Joanna Niżyńska claims that, following the "usurpation of the prophetic power of independent augurs by those associated with Apollo (and controlled by Augustus),"[75] the princes began to emphasise the Greek versions of the myth, most of which did not include Marsyas' prophetic abilities.[76] If we place Julia's action of crowning the statue of Marsyas in this framework, its importance becomes evident.

Augustus' promotion of the worship of Apollo – even to the extent of placing a statue of himself with the god's attributes in his temple – allows the figure of Apollo to be seen as symbolic of Augustus.[77] Julia can therefore be seen as publicly displaying contempt for his

[66] Hallett, J. P. (2006a), 'Fulvia, Mother of Iullus Antonius: New Approaches to the Sources on Julia's Adultery at Rome', *Helios*, 33(2), p. 154.
[67] *ibid.*, p. 157-60.
[68] *ibid.*, p. 116.
[69] *ibid.*, p. 116.
[70] Aug., *RG* 35.1.
[71] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 117-8.
[72] *ibid.*, p. 117-8.
[73] Herodotus, *Histories*, 7.26.
[74] Diod. Sic., 3.58.3.
[75] Niżyńska, J. (2001), 'Marsyas's Howl: The Myth of Marsyas in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Zbigniew Herbert's "Apollo and Marsyas"', *Comparative Literature*, 53(2), p. 159.
[76] *ibid.*, p. 159.
[77] *ibid.*, p. 159.

high-handed use of his authority.[78] Bauman notes that Julia herself was interested in literature, and that many of her companions held literary aspirations.[79] It is not unlikely then that they felt empathy with Marsyas' suffering, and saw a correlation with the censorship in their own generation.

This is further supported by the transmission of jokes about Julia preserved in Macrobius in which she successfully trumps her father's attempts to curb her behaviour.[80] Amy Richlin believes that, as a result of Augustus' assumption of the title '*pater patriae*', Julia, as his daughter, "becomes a living metaphor for the state."[81] Richlin therefore believes that the jokes about Julia were intended for an audience of Romans of Julia's generation, or younger, who wished that Augustus had less power to interfere with the personal lives of Romans.

In her actions, therefore, Julia was also displaying support for those who dared to challenge the authority of the venerable Augustus.[82] These actions accord with Wolf's advice for women to utilise the media to publicly embarrass male politicians in order to effect change.[83] However, for Julia, the consequences were tragic as she died in exile.

His daughter's public subversion of his reforms and role within the state, both in her adultery and in the crowning of Marsyas, were no doubt the source of Augustus' anger and humiliation. Her high profile and the public context of her actions ensured that Augustus would have to deal with her challenge to his authority. However, her exact role within the events may never be established with certainty, as it was no doubt an episode that Augustus did not wish to be widely known,[84] and consequently the surviving accounts of the event are frustratingly vague.

In addition, Donald Earl claims that in senatorial Republican Roman culture, there was no separation of private and public life, as the Romans believed that the *domus* was a microcosm of the state, and therefore the circumstances of a man's private life would be reflected in his use of public office.[85] In this context, the title of *pater patriae* can be understood to denote Augustus' supremacy and dominion over Rome, as a Roman *pater* has over his family. Julia's public adultery, occurring shortly after his award of the title *pater patriae*, would have

[78] Sanderson, B., and Keegan, P. (2011), 'Crowning Marsyas: the Symbolism Involved in the Exile of Julia', *Studia Humaniora Tartuensia*, 12, accessed 28.07.2015 http://sht.ut.ee/index.php/sht/article/view/12.A.2.
[79] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 115.
[80] Macrobius, *Sat.*, 2.5.4, 2.5.6, 2.5.8, 2.5.9; discussed in Richlin, A. (2014), *Arguments with Silence: Writing the History of Roman Women*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 97.
[81] Richlin (2014), p. 96.
[82] Sanderson, B., Keegan, P., *op. cit.*
[83] Wolf, N., *op. cit.*, p. 154.
[84] Seneca, *Ben.*, 6.2.
[85] Earl, D. C., *op. cit.*, p. 32.

undermined his authority as a leader, for if he could not control the actions of those in his *domus*, then he would be viewed as unable to govern the people of Rome.

Effect of Power

Julia's public actions not only resulted in her exile, but would have threatened the legitimacy of her sons, Gaius and Lucius, who played a key role in Augustus' succession plans. Our sources do not record any alternate theories as to the parentage of the boys, and in fact Macrobius records that Augustus was reassured by Julia's children's similarities to their father.[86] Macrobius claims that this was because Julia only committed adultery while pregnant.[87]

Sarah T. Cohen believes that Augustus' decision to exile Julia to Pandateria established the concept of exile to an island as the standard punishment under the Principate.[88] Exile had been used previously as a punishment in the late Republic, but generally in Roman history exile had been a voluntary decision by an elite citizen who had been convicted of a crime in order to avoid punishment.[89] Cohen does note that there are instances in Republican Rome in which a father could exile his child by virtue of his *patria potestas*, to a particular place.[90] She notes that Augustus' decision to exile Julia may well have been through the use of his *patria potestas*, rather than by official decree. However, the men exiled at the same time for committing adultery with Julia would not have come under Augustus' powers as *pater familias*, and thus their punishment must have been enacted officially. Cohen believes that the blurring of Augustus' private and public roles under the Principate is evident in this episode.[91] She claims that Augustus likely condemned them privately, as he did with Julia, and the Senate ratified his decision, despite its unconstitutional basis. Exile to an island became a common imperial punishment for both members of the Julio-Claudian family and members of the senatorial class.

Ancient Perspectives

The *topos* of sexually licentiousness is often employed in ancient Rome to denigrate women whose actions did not correspond to the traditional social *mores*. Nonetheless, the sheer number of accusations of unchastity against Julia, the jokes preserved in which she uses her infidelity as a source of humour, and the complete acceptance by our sources of the accusations indicate

[86] Macrob., *Sat.*, 2.3-4.
[87] Macrob., *Sat.*, 2.9.
[88] Cohen, S. T., 'Augustus, Julia and the Development of Exile *ad Insulam*', *Classical Quarterly*, 58(1), p. 2016.
[89] Polybius, 6.14.7.
[90] Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
[91] Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

that the image of Julia's adultery, while possibly exaggerated, are likely based upon her real actions.

Suetonius records that Augustus sent a letter to the Senate detailing Julia's crimes and punishment.[92] Our sources do not record if they were able to access this letter in their research, but it is likely that the contents of the letter were widely disseminated after that senatorial meeting. The details are likely to have been obscured from that point, however, as Suetonius records that Augustus regretted informing the Senate of the details of Julia's indiscretions.[93] As Kristina Milnor notes, however, Augustus' legislation on adultery "sought concretely and specifically to expose an unfaithful woman to public scrutiny, rather than allowing, as had been traditional under the Republic, the situation to be handled within the sphere of the family."[94] Augustus was therefore required to publicise Julia's action, and in fact the charges of adultery should have been addressed in a trial.[95]

Macrobius, as mentioned above, preserves jokes attributed to Julia which portray her as unchaste and playful.[96] He is, however, careful to denounce her adultery in his preface to the section.[97] In contrast, Tacitus does not record an analysis of Julia's actions, but instead uses the event to criticise Augustus, claiming that he overstepped his own laws by punishing adultery as treason.[98]

Precedents

Julia's exile set a precedent for the treatment of transgressive women in the imperial family during the Julio-Claudian period. Julia's namesake daughter,[99] her granddaughters Agrippina the Younger[100] and Livilla,[101] and Claudius' wife Messalina[102] were all accused of adultery by those who held power; these women suffered exile or death. This was the result of the important role of women in the succession of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. As these women were often the transmitters of legitimacy, their reproductive actions affected the Julio-Claudian family and the state. Additionally, the transformation of the *domus Augusta* as the centre of political decision-making in Rome resulted in the private actions of the *domus Augusta* became a matter of public

[92] Suet., *Aug.*, 65.2.
[93] Suet., *Aug.*, 65.2.
[94] Milnor, K. (2005), *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: Inventing Private Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 152.
[95] *ibid.*, p. 151-52.
[96] Macrob., *Sat.*, 2.5-9.
[97] Macrob., *Sat.*, 2.1-2.
[98] Tac., *Ann.*, 3.24.
[99] Suet., *Aug.*, 65.4.
[100] Suet., *Caligula*, 24.3.
[101] Tac., *Ann.*, 4.3.
[102] Tac., *Ann.*, 11.26.

interest. Thus the sexual affairs of Julio-Claudian women had political implications and therefore became a public matter.

Livia

Livia was the daughter of Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus, who was a member of the patrician Claudii and became praetor in 50 BC. Livia was married to Tiberius Claudius Nero, who was proscribed for his opposition to Octavian. Tiberius and Livia fled to Greece,[103] and returned to Rome under the amnesty outlined in the Treaty of Misenum. Octavian scandalously divorced Scribonia on the day that she gave birth to his daughter Julia,[104] and Tiberius was convinced to divorce Livia, despite the fact that Livia was pregnant with his child.[105] Shortly after the birth of her child in 38 BC, Livia married Octavian.

As Augustus became established as *princeps*, accusations of poisoning are levelled at Livia for the deaths of Marcellus,[106] Gaius Agrippa,[107] Lucius Agrippa[108] and Augustus himself.[109] Livia's eldest son, Tiberius, succeeded Augustus to the role of *princeps*,[110] and Livia was posthumously adopted in Augustus' will and granted the title of Augusta.[111] She became a priestess in the cult of the deified Augustus.[112]

The sources record an uneasy relationship between Livia and Tiberius during this period, until his retirement to Capri in 26 AD.[113] When she passed away in 29 AD Tiberius did not attend the funeral, and instead he had Gaius deliver the funerary oration.[114]

Achievement of Power

Livia would have inherited *auctoritas* from her father's membership in the patrician Claudii. Her *auctoritas* may have been reduced by the proscription of her husband, but her divorce from Tiberius Claudius Nero in 39 BC and subsequent marriage to Augustus would have given her a great deal of *auctoritas*.[115] The promotion of Octavian to the position of *princeps* would have especially affected Livia's *auctoritas* as well.

[103] Dio Cass., 48.15.3.
[104] Suet., *Aug.*, 62.
[105] Tac., *Ann.*, 5.1.
[106] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.3.
[107] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.3.
[108] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.3.
[109] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.5.
[110] Suet., *Tib.*, 24.
[111] Tac., *Ann.*, 8.1.
[112] Vell. Pat., 2.75.3.
[113] Suet., *Tib.*, 40.
[114] Tac., *Ann.*, 5.1.
[115] Suet., *Aug.*, 62.

Her *auctoritas* would also have been increased by the grant of tribunician sacrosanctity and freedom from a tutor in 35 BC.[116] After the death of Augustus, his elevation to divinity,[117] the succession of her son and the grant of the title *Augusta* would also have been beneficial to her.

Her image was also promoted through the establishment of honorific statues, her dedication of public buildings, such as the *Porticus Liviae*[118] and a shrine to Concordia,[119] and the lictor who was granted to her in her position as priestess of the divine Augustus.[120] Livia was also recognised for her patronage in the decree issued by the Senate following her intercession in the trial of Plancina.[121] Livia's patronage of the future emperor Galba,[122] as well as her support of communities, such as the petition of Aphrodisius to Augustus for the grant of free status,[123] increased her *auctoritas*.

Use of Power

The suspicion of murder attached itself first to Livia in the latter years of Augustus' reign, when our sources claim that the battle for dynastic precedence dominated the intrigues inside the palace. Livia was believed to have orchestrated the deaths of Julia's sons Gaius and Lucius, Augustus' adopted heirs,[124] Gaius had perished from wounds he received in battle in Armenia,[125] and Lucius had taken ill and died while travelling to the Spanish armies.[126] Barrett dismisses the accusations because, although possible,

> "the complications of arranging poisoning at a great distance should arouse more than the usual scepticism about such charges. It would be stretching the record to the length of incredulity to suggest that Livia had been in league with Addon."[127]

The next accusations arose at the death of Augustus, for which the ancient sources record fears that Livia had hastened the death of her husband to prevent reconciliation with Agrippa Postumus and ensure the succession of Tiberius.[128] Tacitus records a rumour that Augustus had travelled in secrecy to visit Agrippa in exile on Planasia.[129] Livia's decision to station troops

[116] Dio Cass., 49.38.
[117] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.10.
[118] Dio Cass., 55.8.2.
[119] Ovid, *Fasti*, 5.157-58.
[120] Barrett, A. A. (2002), p. 160.
[121] *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre*, 2.109-20.
[122] Suet., *Galba*, 5.2.
[123] Barrett, A. A. (2002), appendix 17.
[124] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.3.
[125] *ibid.*, 1.3.
[126] *ibid.*, 1.3.
[127] Barrett, A. A. (2002), p. 53. Addon wounded Gaius in Syria, see Dio Cass. 55.10.
[128] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.5.
[129] *ibid.*, 1.5.

around the property at Nola where Augustus lay dying, and issue positive updates until the final announcement – that Augustus was dead and Tiberius was his heir – was also considered dubious.[130] Augustus' death, however, hardly bears the hallmarks of assassination. He was elderly and had been reducing his public appearances as a result of his failing health, such as cancelling his morning *salutatio* in 12 AD, and asking the Senate's indulgence for not joining them at public banquets.[131] Barrett also cites Augustus' ill health as an impediment to the fanciful theory of a discreet visit to Planasia and back without Livia's knowledge.[132] Livia was also a well-known user of herbal remedies, which Barrett believes may have contributed to poisoning rumours.[133]

It should also be remembered that, although Livia's actions may have seemed unusual, there was no precedent at this stage for the succession as *princeps*, especially as Augustus had not officially held a position that could be inherited. Our sources are divided on whether Tiberius arrived at Nola before Augustus' death,[134] but the single edict announcing Augustus' death and her son's succession[135] indicates that Livia felt the need to establish Tiberius' claim to the throne before the role of the *princeps* within the state was challenged.

Tacitus believes that Livia had instructed Piso and his wife Plancina to harass, undermine and even to kill the popular Germanicus.[136] Whatever the truth of the matter, Plancina was arrested and charged along with her husband in regards to the affair upon her return to Rome.[137] Originally, she had remained loyal to her husband but in the face of public fury and decreasing chances of his survival, Plancina appealed to her friend Livia for help.[138] Tiberius was thus forced to speak on her behalf, asking the Senate to drop the charges in deference to Livia's wishes.[139] Livia's role in the affair was made public: in the Piso Decree, the Senate declared their "obligation to accede the request of Livia, *optume de r(e) p(ublica) merita* (having served the state excellently)."[140] This phrase denotes public service to the state, which the Senate described as her role as the mother of the emperor Tiberius and the favours she had granted to men of all ranks. The decree then states that "Livia's wishes should be granted because she was

[130] *ibid.*, 1.5.
[131] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 64.
[132] *ibid.*, p. 64.
[133] *ibid.*, p. 112.
[134] Suet., *Aug.*, 98 states that Augustus and Tiberius held a serious meeting shortly before Augustus succumbed to his illness, while Tac., *Ann.*, 1.5 asserts that it was unknown whether Tiberius arrived before his adoptive father's death.
[135] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.5.
[136] Tac., *Ann*., 2.43.
[137] *ibid.*, 3.15.
[138] *ibid.*, 3.15.
[139] *ibid.*, 3.17.
[140] Barrett, A. A. (1999), p. 169.

entitled to supreme influence (*plurumum posse*) in any request that she might put to the Senate, by right and deservedly (*iure et merito*)."[141] This is the first publicly acknowledged example of a woman successfully using her connection to the emperor to intercede on behalf of her friends.

Livia is also believed by Tacitus to have protected several friends and clients, as well as Agrippina the Elder and her sons, from the persecutions of Sejanus.[142] Tacitus records a popular belief that Livia had suppressed Tiberius' orders to arrest Agrippina and Nero.[143] He does admit, however, that the only evidence for this was their condemnation so soon after Livia's death. There was, in fact, an increase in treason trials after the death of Livia: according to Barrett, "in AD 30, six were charged; in 31, seven; in 32 eighteen; in 33, ten known by name and twenty anonymous."[144] Although there is no proof of a connection, as Barrett informs his readers, what is of greatest importance is the fact that the people considered such a degree of influence viable.[145] Whether fact or fiction, the readiness of the people to believe the rumour indicates that she was considered to hold enough influence over Tiberius that he would not have dared act against Agrippina when his mother lived.

The Effect of Their Actions

Livia is believed to have shaped Augustus' dynastic plans through her murder of several of Augustus' potential heirs, as discussed above.[146] Despite the problematic nature of these accusations, they indicate the belief that Livia could exert her *auctoritas* to eliminate the rivals to her son's chances of succession.

Livia also played an important role in the accession of Tiberius to the position of *princeps*. This is significant as there was no direct precedent for this change of power. Tanaquil's actions in the accession of Servius Tullius[147] can be considered a precedent to a degree, but she was co-ordinating the succession of an established monarchic position. However, due to the anti-monarchic attitude prevalent in Roman culture and the previous assassination of Julius Caesar amongst accusations of monarchic aspirations,[148] Augustus held no superior office in the governing of the state. He states in his *Res Gestae* that he possessed greater *auctoritas* than all other Romans, but he possessed no more *potestas* than his colleagues.[149]

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[141] *ibid.*, p. 170.
[142] Tac., *Ann.*, 5.3.
[143] *ibid.*, 5.3.
[144] Barrett, A. A. (2002), p. 220.
[145] *ibid.*, p. 221.
[146] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 165-166.
[147] See this study, Ch. 1, p. 67-71.
[148] Plut., *Caes.*, 60, 66.6-14.
[149] Aug., *RG*, 34.3.

In 23 BC, he was granted tribunician *potestas* and proconsular *imperium* which did not lapse upon his entry into Rome.[150] However, these powers were still invested in Republican offices. This refusal to define his unique position within the state meant that Augustus could not decree that Tiberius should inherit his pre-eminence within Rome, but only that he be heir to Augustus' private possessions. Augustus had ensured Tiberius' possession of tribunician *potestas* and proconsular *imperium*, in addition to command of campaigns in Illyricum and Germany,[151] which indicated his desire for Tiberius to succeed him.

The novel political situation had the potential to instigate civil war in the manner of the late Republic. Livia's actions in controlling the news of Augustus' death until she issued a single edict announcing Augustus' death and her son's succession,[152] prevented days of political uncertainty, which would have had the potential for the organisation of public demonstrations of civil discord and avoided the days of senatorial debate on the role of *princeps* within the state as happened in the elevation of Claudius.[153]

Livia's intercession, through the agency of Tiberius, in the senatorial trial of Plancina following the death of Germanicus resulted in strengthening the public suspicion of her (and Tiberius') involvement in the death of Germanicus.[154]

Ancient Perspectives

Suetonius provides little evidence on the activities of Livia, as the focus of his works was the lives of Augustus and Tiberius, and as such female figures were mentioned only to further the characterisation of his subjects. Dio relates the actions of Livia during Augustus' and Tiberius' reigns, but part of his work for this period survives only in epitomised form, and he is largely uncritical of his source material.

Tacitus' portrayal of Livia in his *Annals* is largely negative, but Tacitus depicts a consistently negative image of the actions of the Julio-Claudian women. Barrett believes that Tacitus' portrayal of Livia was also impacted by the strong tradition against the actions of Agrippina the Younger in the reign of Claudius, due to the similarities in the portrayals.[155]

Precedents

[150] Suet., *Aug.*, 27.5.
[151] Suet., *Tib.*, 16.1.
[152] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.5.
[153] Suet., *Claud.*, 10.4.
[154] Tac., *Ann.*, 2.82, 3.11; Dio, 57.18.10.
[155] Barrett, A. A. (2002), p. 244-46.

The allegations of poisoning made against Livia in the deaths of Marcellus, Gaius Agrippa, Lucius Agrippa and Augustus recall the accusations of murder levelled against Tullia and the matrons of 331 BC. According to Livy, the matrons accused of poisoning senators in 331 BC are depicted as changing the political landscape through murder, in the same way as Livia is viewed in these episodes. The dynastic motivations behind the murders orchestrated by Tullia in the regal period are a much closer precedent.

The actions of Livia at the death of Augustus are almost identical to the accounts of Tanaquil's actions at the death of Tarquin in the regal period. However, as much of the evidence for the regal period is contemporary to, or post-dates, the Julio-Claudian dynasty and therefore the similarities are more likely to be the result of retrojection by our authors, rather than Livia utilising precedents from early Rome.

Agrippina the Elder

Agrippina the Elder was the daughter of Marcus Agrippa and Julia the Elder, the daughter of Augustus. After her father's death, her mother was remarried to Tiberius. When Julia was exiled for adultery in 2 BC, the young Agrippina was raised by Augustus' wife Livia.

In 5 BC, Agrippina was married to her cousin, Germanicus. He was the son of Drusus, Livia's son by her first marriage, and Antonia Minor, Octavia's daughter by Mark Antony. The marriage was reportedly a happy one, and produced nine children, six of whom survived to adulthood.

When Tiberius was adopted by Augustus, he was required to adopt Germanicus, and thus Germanicus became strongly involved in the succession plans.[156] Germanicus and Agrippina enjoyed a great deal of popular support. At the death of Augustus and upon the accession of Tiberius, the Germanic legions revolted, offering to support Germanicus if he wanted to claim the title of *princeps*. Agrippina accompanied Germanicus to the military camps in Germany and his travels in the East. After his death, Agrippina carried Germanicus' ashes to Rome, and Tacitus depicts crowds of mourners watching her progression.[157]

After Germanicus' death, Agrippina's relationship with Tiberius deteriorated. In 29 Agrippina and her two eldest sons, Drusus and Nero, were arrested. Agrippina was exiled to the island of Pandateria, and she died in 33. Drusus died in incarceration in Rome, while Nero committed suicide. Agrippina's name was subject to *damnatio memoriae*, but her memory was promoted by her son Gaius upon his accession.

Achievement of Power

Agrippina the Elder gained her *auctoritas* from her illustrious family history and membership in the Julio-Claudian family. Her mother was the daughter of Augustus, her brothers Gaius and Lucius were adopted by Augustus as part of his succession plans, and her stepfather succeeded Augustus as *princeps*.

This was enhanced by her marriage to the popular general Germanicus, who was the son of the popular younger son of Livia and the daughter of Octavia and Antony. His military success only increased his *auctoritas*, and subsequently that of Agrippina.

[156] Tac., *Ann.*, 4.57.
[157] Tac., *Ann.*, 3.1-2.

Agrippina also featured prominently in imperial propaganda. Statues of Agrippina which promoted her as the wife of Germanicus and mother of his children were also erected.[158] Tacitus also records evidence of the private collection of images of Agrippina and her family. He states that the populace of Rome surrounded the *curia*, carrying *effigies* of Agrippina and her son Nero, when the letter of Tiberius denouncing them was read to the Senate.[159] This indicates that Romans collected private images of the Julio-Claudian family, and that such images could be used to indicate political support for members of the imperial family.[160]

Agrippina is depicted as quite cognizant of her *auctoritas* deriving from these connections. Tacitus records an instance in which Agrippina harangued Tiberius, as he was sacrificing to the deified Augustus, for his persecution of her friends and family, stating that Augustus' divine spirit dwelt not in stone but in herself and his descendants.[161] According to the precepts of power feminism articulated by Wolf,[162] Agrippina, like her mother Julia,[163] recognised the power that she derived as a descendant of Augustus, and was willing to employ it.

Use of Power

In 15 AD, while Agrippina accompanied her husband who was stationed at the Rhine River in Germany, she forbade the destruction of the temporary bridge over the Rhine into the camp, thus saving the lives of the soldiers who returned.[164] She thanked them as they crossed the bridge, and distributed clothes and dressings to those in need.

These tasks were traditionally performed by a general, and hence Tacitus depicts Sejanus as provoking Tiberius' jealousy of Germanicus and Agripppina.[165] It is important to note, however, that Agrippina was not issuing commands or girding herself with a sword, as Fulvia had been accused of doing.[166]

Agrippina had ensured that the standing orders were not countermanded by fear induced by rumours. Agrippina's actions in welcoming the soldiers and distributing clothes and bandages were traditionally under the purview of military officials. However, McHugh believes that

[158] For a statue of Agrippina the Elder from Leptis Magna dated to her lifetime see Wood, S. (1988), '*Memoriae Agrippinae*: Agrippina the Elder in Julio-Claudian Art and Propaganda', *American Journal of Archaeology* 92(3), p. 441. For further information on the evolution of Agrippina's statuary image during her lifetime, and during successive regimes, see Wood, S., *op. cit.*, pp. 409-426.
[159] Tac., *Ann.*, 5.4.
[160] Wood, S., *op. cit.*, p. 418.
[161] Tac., *Ann.*, 4.52.
[162] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 58-59.
[163] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 158.
[164] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.69.
[165] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.69.
[166] Dio Cass., 48.10.

Agrippina's actions did not cross the boundaries of appropriate behaviour for a Roman matron in exceptional circumstances.[167]

After Germanicus' death, Tacitus claims that Sejanus, the Praetorian Prefect, was intent upon convincing Tiberius that Agrippina the Elder was aiming for power (*dominatio*),[168] and that the court was being split into two factions, one of which was called *Partes Agrippinae* (Agrippina's Party):[169] as Bauman points out, it is the most political term that Tacitus had applied to any woman by this point.[170] Tacitus claims that Sejanus undertook a policy of eliminating the leaders of the *Partes Agrippinae*, beginning with the trials of Gaius Silius and Titius Sabinus.[171] The latter was accused of scheming with the leader of the revolt, and delaying the appropriate steps to subjugate the rebellion.

Bauman suggests that this is possible, as the leaders of the revolt had gained citizenship from Julius Caesar, and as a Julian Agrippina was likely to have been able to tap into Caesar's Gallic client base.[172] In addition, Tacitus declared that many of the people, hearing rumours of the riot, welcomed the idea of changes even at danger to themselves because of their hatred of the regime.[173] Bauman believes that this fact indicates that a member of the royal family was implicated in the revolt.[174] In 29, a letter from Tiberius to the Senate denounced Agrippina and Nero, not on charges of treason, but rather for insubordination and homosexuality, respectively.[175] It is believed that these were common political accusations in the period. Bauman believes that the *Partes Agrippinae* was conspiring, but for the removal of Sejanus, not Tiberius.[176] David Shotter, however, believes that while Tacitus' account of the incident indicates that Tiberius considered the charges to be likely, it is far more probable that Sejanus utilised the charges as a pretext for removing the supporters of Agrippina, and receiving Tiberius' agreement to do so.[177]

Ancient Perspectives

Tacitus provides our only surviving account of the incident on the Rhine bridge. He states that Agrippina "assumed the duties of a general" (*militibusque, ut quis inops aut saucius, vestem*

[167] McHugh, M. R. (2012), '*Ferox Femina*: Agrippina Maior in Tacitus' *Annales*', *Helios*, 39(1), p. 77-81.
[168] Tac., *Ann.*, 4.17.
[169] Tac., *Ann.*, 4.17.
[170] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 145.
[171] Tac., *Ann.*, 4.18.
[172] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 146.
[173] Tac., *Ann.*, 3.44.
[174] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 146-7.
[175] Tac., *Ann.*, 5.3.
[176] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 153.
[177] Shotter, D. (2000), 'Agrippina the Elder: A Woman in a Man's World', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 49(3), p. 350-351.

et fomenta dilargita est).[178] L'Hoir believes that the language employed by Tacitus indicates Agrippina's correspondence to the *dux femina* stereotype.[179] Shotter claims that her usurpation of a masculine role indicates that Tacitus viewed Agrippina in the manner in which he would depict her namesake daughter and her "masculine despotism"[180] upon her marriage to Claudius. Barrett believes that Tacitus' technique of criticising Agrippina's actions through the agent of Tiberius allows him to state Tiberius' thoughts, while undermining his statements due to his role as ineffectual leader.[181]

McHugh believes that, since Agrippina did not take part in military action, Tacitus does not consider her role at the Rhine bridge to be transgressive.[182] In juxtaposition, Plancina's decision to take part in cavalry exercises and infantry manoeuvres provokes Tacitus' judgement that she failed to keep herself within what was fitting for a woman.[183]

John Percival claims that Tacitus' positive portrayal of Agrippina's outspoken opposition to Tiberius after the death of Germanicus results from his contemporary experiences.[184] Percival believes that Tacitus' experiences under Domitian resulted in his approval of those who opposed tyrannic leaders, rather than remaining servile, and thus Tacitus depicts Agrippina as the tragic heroine opposing tyranny.[185]

Effect of Their Actions

Agrippina's actions no doubt improved her popularity with the army, but Tacitus depicts the opposite effect on Tiberius. In fact, the sinister figure of Sejanus emerges here for the first time in Tacitus' narrative, although he had likely been elected Praetorian Prefect long before. Agrippina's use of her *auctoritas* worried Tiberius and is believed to have contributed to her exile and death, as well as that of her two eldest sons. This left the young Caligula as Tiberius' only available successor.

Precedents

Agrippina's actions at the Rhine bridge can be considered as a contrast to the actions of Fulvia.[186] As discussed above, Fulvia's precise actions and influence over the events of the Perusine War cannot be established with any certainty. However, she was publicly associated

[178] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.69.
[179] L'Hoir, F. S. (1994), p. 20-21.
[180] Shotter, D. (2000), p. 346.
[181] Barrett, A. A. (2002), p. 22.
[182] McHugh, *op. cit.*, p. 78-80.
[183] Tac., *Ann.*, 2.55.
[184] Percival, J. (1980), 'Tacitus and the Principate', *Greece & Rome*, 27(2), p. 119-133.
[185] *ibid.*, p. 129.
[186] For a discussion of Fulvia's quasi-military actions see this study, Ch. 3, p. 140-144.

with the war during its progress, as evidenced by the graffiti on the sling bullets uncovered at the site. Fulvia was depicted, therefore, as exercising *potestas* to varying degrees.

Agrippina's actions blur the line between *auctoritas* and *potestas*. It is unclear if Agrippina exercised her *auctoritas* in a way usually requiring *potestas,* if her *auctoritas* was so great that it could be utilised like *potestas* or if she assumed Germanicus' *potestas,* by virtue of her marriage and in preserving her husband's interests. The third option is doubtful as, unlike Fulvia in the Perusine War, she is not recorded as invoking her husband's name. The two remaining options are more probable, but it is difficult to distinguish which is applicable. This most likely reflects the issue of the extraordinary *auctoritas* held by members of the Julio-Claudian family, which remained unregulated and which could be exerted with a force no less powerful than *potestas*. Nonetheless, the successful outcome of her actions ensured that her actions were portrayed in a far more favourable light than Fulvia's.

The concept of a political faction in the imperial court spearheaded by a woman would be continued by Agrippina's namesake daughter following the deterioration of her relationship with Nero during his regime. However, Agrippina the Elder is depicted only as having her name attached to a faction, while Tacitus' portrayal of Agrippina the Younger's actions involves her actively communicating with senatorial and military contacts, accumulating funds, and willing to publicise the claim of Britannicus.[187]

[187] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.8.

Messalina

In 41AD, Gaius was killed in a conspiracy, and Suetonius records that Claudius was discovered by a member of the Praetorian Guard who conveyed him to the Praetorian camp, and hailed him as *imperator*.[188] The Senate, meanwhile, was discussing the possibility of the abolishment of the Principate and a return to Republican government. Suetonius claims that the populace clamoured for a single ruler, and named Claudius. When word of the Praetorian Guard's actions reached the Senate, which remained locked in debate, they reluctantly sanctioned the accession of Claudius to the position of *princeps*.

Messalina had previously given birth to a daughter, Octavia, and several weeks after Claudius' accession she gave birth to a son, Britannicus. Messalina is described as wielding a great deal of influence over Claudius, such as orchestrating the trials of several citizens. In 48, Messalina performed a marriage ceremony with the senator Gaius Silanus in Claudius' absence. The imperial freedman Narcissus informed Claudius and Messalina was killed.

Achievement of Power

Messalina inherited a great deal of *auctoritas* from her connections to the Julio-Claudian family. Both of her parents were grandchildren of Augustus' sister Octavia, and her grandfather L. Domitius Ahenobarbus was the first husband of Agrippina the Younger, and father to Nero, who would succeed Claudius as *princeps*.

Messalina was married to Claudius in the early years of Gaius' reign, as Claudius began his public career and Gaius publicized his Julio-Claudian heritage. It is therefore likely that, despite the disrespect shown to Claudius by some members of the imperial court during Gaius' reign, the marriage to one of the few surviving family members of the *princeps* increased Messalina's *auctoritas*. Claudius' elevation to the role of *princeps* in 41 would have raised Messalina's *auctoritas* exponentially.

Use of Power

[188] Suet., *Claud.*, 10.2.

Messalina is portrayed as orchestrating and influencing several criminal trials during Claudius' reign, including those of Gaius Appius Junius Silanus, Valerius Asiaticus, Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, Marcus Vicianus and Livilla, sister of Agrippina the Younger.

Suetonius states that Claudius was "wholly under the control of these [the imperial freedmen] and of his wives, … he played the part, not of a prince, but of a servant lavishing honours, the command of armies, pardons or punishments, according to the interests of each of them, or even their wish or whim; and that too for the most part in ignorance and blindly".[189] Dio's account refers to the combined influence of "Messalina and the imperial freedman,"[190] stating that "whenever they desired to obtain any one's death, they would terrify Claudius and as a result would be allowed to do anything they chose".[191]

Unfortunately Tacitus' account of the early years of Claudius' reign is no longer extant. The surviving history opens with the trial of Valerius Asiaticus, in which Messalina is portrayed as orchestrating the charges.[192] Dio and Tacitus both depict the trials as absurd and as not following traditional procedure.

Dio records that Silanus was executed after the imperial freedman, Narcissus, informed Claudius that he had dreamt of Silanus assassinating Claudius. Dio records that Messalina then "exaggerated its [the dream's] significance".[193] He claims that these charges were inspired by Silanus' refusal to commit adultery with Messalina.[194]

In Tacitus' account of the trial of Asiaticus, the senator was arrested and then tried by Claudius in the latter's bedroom.[195] Tacitus states that Messalina arranged for Publius Suillius Rufus to charge Asiaticus with corruption of the military, adultery and sexual effeminacy,[196] but that she actually was motivated by her jealousy over his supposed affair with Poppaea Sabina, and her desire for the gardens of Lucullus, which he owned.[197]

These depictions of farcical trials motivated by petty and licentious provocations obscures the importance of these trials. Gaius Appius Junius Silanus was the commander of Hispania Tarraconensis, which would have provided him with a great deal of military *auctoritas*, which Claudius lacked as a result of his sheltered upbringing. Claudius' accession had proven that elevation to the role of *princeps* required only the support of the armed forces; as the

[189] Suet., *Claud.*, 29.1.
[190] Dio Cass., 60.14.1, 60.15.5, 60.17.5, 61.31.2.
[191] Dio Cass., 60.14.1.
[192] Tac., *Ann.*, 11.1.
[193] Dio Cass., 60.14.4.
[194] Dio Cass., 60.14.3.
[195] Tac., *Ann.*, 11.2.1.
[196] Tac., *Ann.*, 11.2.1.
[197] Tac., *Ann.*, 11.3.

Praetorian Guard had elevated Claudius, the provincial legions could promote Silanus. In fact, the German legions had offered to do so for Germanicus after the death of Augustus,[198] and the legions of Egypt, Judaea and Syria would do for Vespasian after the death of Nero.[199]

Dio records that Messalina co-ordinated the death of Pompeius, the son-in-law of Claudius, because she feared that he would be a rival for her son Britannicus' claim to the principate. There is strong evidence to support this claim. Pompeius was married to Claudius' elder daughter, Antonia, and Ehrhardt believes that Claudius designated Pompeius and Lucius Junius Silanus Torquatus, who was betrothed to Claudius' younger daughter Octavia, as potential heirs while Britannicus was still in his youth. In addition to the marriage alliances to the *princeps'* family, both men were *vigintiviri*, quaestors, prefects of the city during the Latin festival, both were Fratres Arvales,[200] both received a five-year acceleration of magistracies,[201] both men accompanied Claudius to Britain, and both men brought the official news of his victory to Rome,[202] both men accompanied Claudius during his triumph,[203] and distributed largess to the crowd in Claudius' name.[204] Additionally, Pompeius could claim descent from a number of late Republican leaders, including Pompey the Great, Cornelius Sulla, Lucius Cornelius Cinna, and Marcus Licinius Crassus. Therefore, Pompeius would have possessed a strong claim to the succession if Claudius had died, and possibly be more acceptable to the Senate than another youthful *princeps*, after the precedent of Gaius. It is notable that Antonia was subsequently married to Faustus Cornelius Sulla Felix, the half-brother of Messalina.[205]

Dio records that Messalina arranged for charges of adultery to be brought against Livilla, although he claims that Messalina was actually provoked by Livilla's beauty, and because Livilla neither paid Messalina honour or flattered her.[206] She was exiled and then her death was ordered by Claudius.[207] Livilla possessed impeccable Julio-Claudian connections as the daughter of Germanicus and Agrippina the Elder, sister of Gaius, adoptive granddaughter of Tiberius, great-granddaughter of Augustus, and niece of Claudius. Livilla had also indicated

[198] Tac., *Ann.*, 1.31.
[199] Suet., *Vesp.*, 6 – 7.
[200] Dio Cass., 60.5.8.
[201] C. Ehrhardt notes that an acceleration of magistracies was granted to Marcellus, Tiberius, Drusus the Younger, Germanicus' son Nero, and Aemilius Lepidus; see Ehrhardt, C. (1978), 'Messalina and the succession to Claudius', *Antichthon*, 12, p. 60.
[202] Dio Cass., 60.21.5.
[203] Dio Cass., 60.23.1.
[204] Dio Cass., 60.25.7.
[205] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.23.
[206] Dio Cass., 60.8.5.
[207] Dio Cass., 60.8.5.

political inclinations, as she had been implicated in a conspiracy against Gaius and had been exiled to the Pontine islands with her sister Agrippina the Younger.[208]

Although Livilla could not become *princeps*, her husband could be considered as an ideal candidate for the position. Livilla was married to Marcus Vicinius, who had been consul twice and had held the position of the proconsul of Asia. After the assassination of Gaius, he had been proposed as a potential successor to the principate in the Senate.[209] His marriage to Livilla provided him with a connection to the imperial family and, unlike Agrippina the Younger's son Nero, he was old enough to act as *princeps*. Vinicius survived the downfall of his wife, but died amongst accusations of poisoning.[210] Livilla's death removed Vicinius' connection to the Julio-Claudian family, and prevented her from conferring the honour upon another eligible senator, and it is likely that this influenced the decision to exile Livilla.

Valerius Asiaticus was a wealthy and influential senator from Vienne in Gaul. This area was a source of many of Rome's soldiers.[211] He was the first Gallic citizen admitted into the Roman Senate under Claudius, and the first to reach the office of consul. He married Lollia Saturnina, the sister of Gaius' third wife Lollia Paulina. After the assassination of Gaius, Asiaticus was one of the candidates proposed in the Senate as a possible successor to the principate.[212] The charges brought against him, as discussed above,[213] are depicted by Tacitus as motivated by Messalina's jealousy and greed.[214] However, his connections to the soldiers in the provincial legions and his popularity within the Senate indicate a more political motive for his trial. Messalina's involvement in the criminal trials of Claudius' reign can therefore be considered as politically calculated to remove threats to Claudius and Britannicus.

Dio and Tacitus both attribute Messalina's bigamous marriage to Messalina's excessive licentiousness, which caused her boredom with adultery. Tacitus states that she was tempted by "untried debaucheries",[215] and, as Dio explains, she "conceived a desire to have many husbands".[216]

An examination of Messalina's prior actions by Tacitus and Dio by Barbara Levick, however, reveals a deliberate pattern of exile and execution upon dynastic threats to herself or her son's

[208] Suet., *Caligula*, 24.3; Dio, 59.22.6-8.
[209] Josephus, 19.251-2.
[210] Dio Cass., 60.27.4.
[211] Tac., *Ann.*, 11.1.
[212] Josephus, 19.251-2.
[213] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 176.
[214] Tac., *Ann.*, 11.3.
[215] *ibid.*, 11.26.
[216] Dio Cass., 61.31.

position.[217] The most prominent of these was Julia Livilla, the sister of Gaius. She was married to M. Vinicius, who had been proposed as a candidate by the Senate to become *princeps* after Gaius's death.[218] Her Julian credentials exceeded those of Claudius himself, and she had already proven that she would risk all for an attempt at the throne. In 41 she was exiled again, to Pandateria, and later killed.[219] In 43, the daughter of Tiberius' son Drusus and Germanicus' wife, Claudia Livilla, another Julia, was brought up on charges of immorality.[220] The Junii Silani, and the descendants of the great Republican generals such as Sulla, Pompey and Crassus were either neutralised by advancement into non-threatening roles, or killed.[221]

In Levick's later discussion of Messalina's marriage,[222] she states that Messalina had lost the support of the freedmen following her role in the execution of Asiaticus. Levick claims that Silius intended to utilise his relationship with Messalina to encourage the replacement of Claudius' advisors with senators who would guide Claudius to follow a more pro-senatorial policy. The marriage is therefore considered a charade, in the manner of Nero's later marriages to Pythagoras and Sporus,[223] performed as a show of good faith of her agreement to participate in Silius' scheme.[224]

While marriages were used through the Republican period to cement political alliances, these were legitimate marriages, whereas Messalina's marriage to Claudius invalidated her marriage to Silius.[225] The concept of a symbolic marriage is possible, but this author would like to posit an alternative suggestion.

Messalina's marriage to Silius as a method of sealing a political alliance, and a precursor to Silius' accession to the role of *princeps*, is strengthened by a legitimate marriage to Messalina. Bigamy was illegal under Roman law, and any attempt to annul Messalina's marriage to Claudius would have seriously damaged Britannicus' right to succession. However, if Messalina and Silius had been party to a conspiracy that had planned for the assassination of Claudius during his journey to Ostia, then Messalina's hurried marriage to Silius would have been authentic, and Silius would have been well-positioned to ensure the succession of Britannicus in the Senate, thus avoiding the difficulties presented in Claudius'

[217] Levick, B. (1975), 'Julians and Claudians', *Greece & Rome*, ser. 2, 22, p. 56-64.
[218] *ibid.*, p. 56.
[219] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.42.3.
[220] *ibid.*, 13.32.
[221] Levick, (1975), p. 57-61.
[222] Levick, B. (1990), *Claudius*, London: Batsford, p. 67.
[223] *ibid.*, p. 67. For the marriages of Nero see Tac., *Ann*., 15.37; Suet., *Nero*, 29; Dio Cass., 62.28.2-3, 63.13.1-3.
[224] Levick, B. (1990), p. 66.
[225] Levick, B. (1990), p. 67.

accession, most likely while nominating himself for the position of regent as a result of the marriage to Messalina.

Naturally, this hypothesis is largely speculative. No attempt on Claudius' life during his travel to Ostia is recorded, and dynastic conspiracies are usually, by their nature, a matter of speculation. Bauman critiques the idea of Messalina's marriage as part of a conspiracy against Claudius by questioning Messalina's sudden decision to resort to such extreme measures when previously she had dealt with her victims through the courts, as well as the dubious likelihood of risking her power and pre-eminent position within the state on an uncertain enterprise.[226]

Claudius' only claim to the principate was his membership in the Julio-Claudian family. Even so, as C. Ehrhardt explains, the dynastic succession in the Julio-Claudian family involved the successor's inheritance of his predecessor's "private property, including his slaves, and taking his place as patron of his *clientes*, who included his freedmen".[227] While Gaius had not named a successor, Claudius had no right to claim an inheritance from Gaius because Germanicus' adoption by Tiberius had legally destroyed their familial relationship. The reality was that Claudius had gained his position due to the power of the Praetorians – "his elevation was a naked military usurpation, and this was unmistakable at the time".[228] In addition, due to the tumultuous nature of his accession, in which the Senate debated the possibility of a return to a Republican form of government, Claudius faced a hostile Senate, which led to a number of conspiracies aimed at his assassination and overthrow.

Considering Claudius' opposition and recurring ill health, it is likely that Messalina held concerns about the fate of her young son and herself if Claudius died before Britannicus reached adulthood. The deaths of Gaius's wife and daughter[229] would no doubt have served as a strong warning.

Ehrardt believes that Claudius considered the possible need for a regent for his very young son,[230] and therefore he promoted Cn. Pompeius and L. Silanus, the husbands of his two daughters, as the successors to his position.[231] Although this may have put Claudius' mind at

[226] Bauman, R. A. (1992), p. 65-66.
[227] Ehrhardt, C., *op. cit.*, p. 51.
[228] *ibid*., p. 52.
[229] Suet., *Caligula*, 59.
[230] Ehrhardt, p. 53-4.
[231] Ehrhardt, p. 59-61.

ease, the accession of either of these men would spell a demotion, of sorts, to Messalina, as well as damage Britannicus' chances of succession, especially after Claudius' daughter Antonia gave birth to a son.[232]

The widowhood of Agrippina the Younger in 47 may have also posed a threat to Messalina, as Agrippina's Julian heritage was impeccable, and she had a son who was several years Britannicus' senior. The popular support demonstrated by the populace at the Secular Games[233] may have caused Messalina to feel threatened. Considering the swift exile of Agrippina's sister, Livilla,[234] orchestrated by Messalina, it is astonishing that Agrippina was not exiled on trumped up charges. Agrippina and Nero's popular support may have caused Messalina or Claudius to hesitate in fear of a public backlash. Additionally, Claudius had divorced his previous wife, Aelia Paetina, to marry Messalina, as his public career began under Gaius' rule. Aelia Paetina was the adoptive sister of Sejanus, and Claudius' divorce of her and subsequent marriage to Messalina demonstrate a degree of political expediency in both distancing himself from Sejanus and providing himself with further Julio-Claudian connections. It is therefore not unfeasible that Messalina feared divorce and replacement by the more popular Agrippina.

The Effect of Their Actions

Messalina's 'marriage' to Gaius Silius is believed by our ancient sources to have had political consequences which threatened Claudius' position as *princeps*. The hypothesis of this author further raises the concept of the marriage as an attempt by a wife of the *princeps* to confer legitimacy upon a potential successor by virtue of her *auctoritas* as the wife of Claudius and the mother of Britannicus. This can be seen from the perspective of power feminism as a recognition of her own power,[235] which was necessary for her involvement in a plan to utilise that *auctoritas* to shape the accession of the *princeps*.

Such an experiment was not repeated by later imperial women, but her failure in the attempt allowed for the marriage of Agrippina the Younger to Claudius and the subsequent adoption of Nero by Claudius, ensuring his accession to the position of *princeps* after Claudius' death in 54 AD.

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[232] Suet., *Claud*., 12.
[233] Tac., *Ann.*, 11.11.
[234] Dio Cass., 60.8.5.
[235] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 58-59.

Ancient Perspectives

The portrayal of Messalina by our ancient sources is largely defined through the rhetorical *topos* of sexual licentiousness. Pliny records a report that Messalina had out-performed a notorious prostitute with twenty-five clients in a day and night.[236] Juvenal claims that Messalina would leave the palace of an evening, and would work at a brothel all evening under the name 'She-Wolf', in an attempt to satiate her sexual desire.[237] Juvenal also records an account of her wedding to Gaius Silius.[238] Dio asserts that Messalina forced many matrons to commit adultery in the palace as their husbands watched,[239] and to act as prostitutes in the palace.[240]

Levick believes that Messalina's licentiousness was exaggerated, but that "in the main she used sex as a means of compromising and controlling politicians."[241] However, Joshel states that "modern historians' attempts to define Messalina's agency as a historical figure cannot escape Tacitus's construction of her excessive desire that produces chaos and emasculates, of her violence, and of her ambiguous voice that moves the narrative but is essentially mute."[242] She believes that the portrayal of Messalina was the result of her role within the historical narrative as both a sign and an agent in the discourses of sexuality and power and therefore an historical reality cannot be distinguished in her depiction by our sources.

Messalina is the product of a senatorial tradition hostile to Claudius as a result of the manner of his accession. Claudius centralised power within the *domus Augusta* as a result of this conflict with the Senate. As Earl has stated,[243] the *domus* was considered a microcosm for the state, and therefore Claudius' failure to dominate his freedmen and wives, and the depiction instead of his subservience to them, portray his innate incapability to successfully rule the Roman empire.

The influence of stereotypes in a hostile tradition ensures that Messalina's historical character cannot be separated from her depiction as the personification of sexual desire. Nonetheless,

[236] Pliny, *NH*, 10.83.
[237] Juvenal, *Satires*, 6.115.
[238] Juvenal, *Satires*, 10.333-338.
[239] Dio Cass., 60.18.2.
[240] Dio Cass., 61.31.1.
[241] Levick, B. (1990), p. 56.
[242] Joshel, S. R. (1995), 'Female Desire and the Discourse of Empire: Tacitus's Messalina', *Signs*, 21(1), pp. 50-82.
[243] Earl, D., *op. cit.*, p. 33.

the portrayal of Messalina by our sources indicates the power which the ancient authors believed that women of the Julio-Claudian family could wield.

Precedents

The depiction of Messalina's political and judicial influence draws upon the precedents of Cornelia and Fulvia, and was to provide a precedent for her successor as Claudius' wife, Agrippina the Younger. Cornelia's involvement, however, was restricted to requesting that her son rescind a proposed law designed to target an enemy of his brother.[244] Fulvia's actions during the triumvirate, particularly her use of the proscription lists to remove enemies of Antony and herself, is a far closer parallel. However, as discussed above,[245] it is unclear to what degree she was involved and what has been attributed to her by subsequent propaganda.

The fact that Messalina, as a woman in Rome, was required to use male senators and freedmen as her agents means that her involvement in political and judicial matters will never be clear. As Levick notes, many of the trials in which Messalina is implicated by our sources removed potential threats to Claudius' regime.[246] However, due to the difficulties presented by our sources, it is not clear if Claudius was her oblivious pawn or willing accomplice in any of these acts. In fact, Messalina's death may have provided Claudius with an excuse to attribute to her a great many of the judicial activities in the earlier period of his reign which had exacerbated the animosity of the senate.

The adultery and bigamous marriage of Messalina recalls the treasonous fears inspired by the adultery of Julia the Elder.[247] Seneca remarks on the latter occasion that "again Augustus had to fear a woman in league with an Antony."[248] Suetonius records that after Messalina's marriage to Silius, Claudius continued to ask if he was still emperor.[249]

The political implications of the sexual affairs of the Julio-Claudian women are a result of the role of these women in conferring legitimacy upon potential heirs, and the subsequent dynastic implications associated with their reproductive function. The centrality of the *domus*

[244] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 124-125.
[245] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 139.
[246] Levick, B. (1990), p. 67.
[247] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 156-163.
[248] Sen., *Brev. Vit.*, 4.5.
[249] Suet., *Claud.*, 36.

Augusta to the governing of the state ensured that the private actions of its members had political implications.

Agrippina the Younger

Agrippina was the daughter of Agrippina the Elder and Germanicus. She was therefore the great-granddaughter of Augustus and the adoptive granddaughter of Tiberius. Her youth was marked by tragedy, with the death of her father in 19 AD and the arrest of her mother and two eldest brothers in 29 AD. All three would die during the course of Tiberius' reign. She was raised by Livia and Antonia after her mother's exile.

In 28 AD Agrippina was married to Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, whom Suetonius describes as "a man hateful in every walk of life".[250] After the death of Tiberius, the marriage produced one child – the future emperor Nero.

Tiberius' death in 37 AD resulted in the elevation of Agrippina's surviving brother, Gaius, to the position of *princeps*. Agrippina and her sisters Drusilla and Livilla were granted a number of honours by Gaius.

In 39 AD Agrippina and Livilla were exiled for their involvement in a conspiracy to assassinate Gaius and elevate their brother-in-law, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, to the position of *princeps*. Lepidus was executed, and Agrippina and Livilla were exiled to the Pontine Islands.

Both sisters were recalled from exile after the accession of Claudius. Agrippina married Gaius Sallustius Crispus Panienus, and regained custody of Nero. Livilla was exiled and killed in 41 AD after charges of adultery were made against her. Crispus passed away in 47, and Agrippina's son Nero inherited the bulk of his substantial wealth.

In early 49 AD, after the bigamous marriage and death of Messalina,[251] Agrippina married the emperor Claudius. He adopted Nero, and a betrothal of Nero to Claudius' daughter Octavia was organised after charges of incest were brought against Octavia's previous fiancé, Lucius Junius Silanus Torquatus.

Claudius died in 54 AD, amongst rumour of poisoning. Nero was elevated to the role of *princeps*, and Agrippina played a significant role in the early years of his reign.[252] After their relationship deteriorated, however, our sources claim that Nero attempted her murder several times, before accusing her of plotting to assassinate Nero, and ordering her execution.

Achievement of Power

[250] Suet., *Nero*, 5.1.
[251] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 175-184.
[252] See this study, Ch. 4, p. 188.

Agrippina inherited a great deal of *auctoritas* as a result of her connections to the imperial family. Her father, Germanicus, had been in line to the succession, and was extremely popular with the people and the army. Agrippina's similarly named mother had possessed significant *auctoritas* as the result of her Julio-Claudian connections, which increased when she became the focus of public sympathy following the death of Germanicus and her exile to Pandateria.

Agrippina the Younger was connected to all of the Julio-Claudian rulers, and her *auctoritas* would have increased proportionately as they were elevated to the role. Agrippina was the great-granddaughter of Augustus, the adoptive granddaughter of Tiberius, the sister of Gaius, the wife and niece of Claudius, and the mother of Nero.

Her *auctoritas* was also enhanced by the accumulation of honours granted to her in successive reigns. After Gaius became *princeps*, Agrippina and her sisters were granted the privileges of the Vestal Virgins, the ability to witness games in the circus from the imperial seats, and the inclusion of their names in the annual prayers to the emperor and the vows of allegiance.[253] During her marriage to Claudius, Agrippina was granted the use of the *carpentum* and the title of 'Augusta'.[254] After Nero succeeded Claudius, Agrippina was made a priestess of the deified Claudius and provided with two lictors.[255] The watchword given by Nero was "the best of mothers".[256]

Agrippina was also featured in imperial propaganda in the reigns of Gaius, Claudius and Nero, most notably on coinage.

Early in the reign of her brother Gaius, Agrippina was depicted as the goddess *Securitas* with her sisters on the reverse of a *sestertius*.[257] During the reign of Claudius, she figures on the gold and silver coinage wearing the corn-ear crown of Ceres.[258] In *aurei* and *denarii* dated to 54AD, Agrippina appears on the obverse of the coins, facing Nero.[259] The images are the same scale, and the coin lists both of their titles. The *aurei* and *denarii* from 55 AD, however, feature Agrippina and Nero side-by side, with Nero at the forefront, and Agrippina's titles relegated to the obverse.[260]

Use of Power

[253] Dio, 59.3.4.
[254] Dio, 60.33.2.
[255] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.2.
[256] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.2; Suet, *Nero*, 9.
[257] Keegan, P. (2007), '"She is a mass of riddles": Julia Augusta Agrippina and the Sources', *Ancient History: Resources for Teachers*, 37(2), p. 8.
[258] *ibid.*, p. 8.
[259] *ibid.*, p. 9.
[260] *ibid.*, p. 9.

According to our sources,[261] Agrippina and her sister Livilla were involved in a conspiracy with their deceased sister's widower, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, to assassinate Gaius and elevate Lepidus to *princeps*. Gaius sent a letter to the Senate denouncing them for adultery and treason. According to Suetonius, Gaius publicised their letters at the trial, and dedicated three daggers to Mars Ultor.[262] Lepidus was executed, and Agrippina and Livilla were exiled to the Pontine islands.[263]

After Agrippina's marriage to Claudius, our sources recount that she, like Messalina, orchestrated charges against her enemies,[264] as well as influencing Claudius' political decisions.[265] Dio states that she dominated Claudius,[266] and thus she "had more power than Claudius himself".[267] These statements must be considered carefully, however, as declarations of women holding power were routinely used to depict the surrounding men as emasculated and incompetent.

The death of Claudius was also considered an assassination organised by Agrippina the Younger. Our sources are all in agreement on this point, and on the point that her purpose was to ensure Nero's succession before she was repudiated as Claudius' wife.[268] The tale is firstly discredited by the varying reports of the method of the poisoning. Suetonius records two versions: that Claudius was poisoned while dining with the priests in the citadel, or that he died at a family banquet.[269] One version has the poison being effective quickly; the other states that Claudius recovered and poison was re-introduced either by gruel or enema. Tacitus also records also that the first poisoning attempt failed, but that the doctor Xenophon was then bribed to administer poison to Claudius through a feather down the throat.[270] The evidence for this was apparently that Nero referred to mushrooms as 'food of the gods,'[271] as the poison had been sprinkled on mushrooms.

Barrett dismisses the poisoning charges, claiming that the death of a man who had suffered ill-health throughout his life was hardly suspicious, and in the *Apocolocyntosis* Claudius is carried off by Fever, not poison.[272] In addition, Suetonius admits that many magistrates had died that

[261] Suet., *Caligula*, 24.3; Dio, 59.22.6-8.
[262] Suet., *Caligula*, 24.3.
[263] Dio, 59.22.6-8.
[264] Suet., *Claud.*, 29.1, Tac., *Ann.*, 12.4, 12.22.1, 12.22, 12.42, 12.59, 12.64-65; Dio, 60.31.8, 60.32.1, 60.32.3, 60.32.4, 60.33.
[265] Suet., *Claud.*, 29.1, Tac., *Ann.*, 12.27, 12.42.
[266] Dio, 60.33.
[267] Dio, 60.33.
[268] Suet., *Claud.*, 43-4; Tac., *Ann.*, 12.66-67.
[269] Suet., *Claud.*, 44.
[270] Tac., *Ann.*, 12.67.
[271] Suet., *Nero*, 33.
[272] Barrett, A. A. (1996), p. 141.

year[273] and, in fact, Claudius' freedman Narcissus had retired to Sinuessa for his health problems.[274] Suspicions were also heightened by Agrippina's concealment of the death until arrangements for Nero's accession were ready.[275] In this instance she has the clear precedent of Livia and, as Barrett remarks, such arrangements would have been organised beforehand if Claudius' death had been planned[276].

After Nero's accession to the role of *princeps*, Suetonius states that "he left to his mother the management of all public and private business".[277] Tacitus states that she was "burning with all the passions of illicit power" that Seneca and Burrus attempted to counter.[278] He also states that Agrippina opposed the reversal of the legislation of Claudius through her position as a priestess of the deified Claudius.[279] However, he claims that her *materna auctoritas* weakened as a result of Nero's infatuation with Acte.[280] Dio states that, at the time of his elevation to *princeps*, Agrippina managed all of the business of the empire for Nero, including receiving embassies and sending imperial letters.[281]

This assumption of political duties culminates in the narratives of Dio[282] and Tacitus[283] in the attempt by Agrippina to join Nero at the public tribunal at which he is receiving the embassy from Armenia. Seneca and Burrus are shown as encouraging Nero to greet his mother before she reaches the tribunal in order to avoid a scandal.[284] Dio remarks that Agrippina had accompanied Claudius in his performance of his official duties, and was seated at a separate tribunal which "was one of the most remarkable sights of the time".[285] Her attempt to join Nero at his tribunal symbolises her attempt to show an equal share in power.

Tacitus claims that she planned to elevate Britannicus to the supreme power, since Nero was attempting to sideline her.[286] She reminded Nero that it was her actions that had put him on the throne, and suggested that she would take Britannicus to the Praetorian camp: "there, let the daughter of Germanicus be heard on the one side; on the other, the cripple Burrus and the exile Seneca, claiming, forsooth, by right of a maimed hand and a professorial tongue the

[273] Suet., *Claud.*, 46.
[274] Tac., *Ann.*, 12.66.
[275] *ibid.*, 12.68-9.
[276] Barrett, A. A. (1996), p. 142.
[277] Suet., *Nero*, 9.
[278] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.2.
[279] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.5.
[280] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.12.
[281] Dio, 61.3.2.
[282] Dio, 61.3.3.
[283] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.5.1.
[284] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.5.1; Dio, 61.3.3.
[285] Dio, 60.33.7.
[286] Tac., *Ann.*, 13.14.

regency of the human race!"[287] Agrippina's threats were considered serious enough that Britannicus was soon poisoned on Nero's orders.[288] Tacitus records that she then started hoarding money, and met with members of the army and the aristocracy, "which indicated that she was in quest of a leader and a faction."[289] Nero responded by removing her military watch and German bodyguards, and removed her from the palace to the house of Antonia.[290] Tacitus declares that this was the beginning of her downfall and, although Nero claimed that she had been killed after sending a slave to assassinate him,[291] the suggestion was not considered credible by the contemporaneous sources.

The Effect of Their Actions

Agrippina's actions allowed the smooth accession of her son Nero to the role of *princeps*. She also was able to exert a degree of political power in the early years of Nero's reign, although the degree to which she was successful is a matter of speculation.

Ancient Perspectives

Agrippina was always to be frustrated by the limitations placed upon her by her womanhood for, although she had the political acumen and ambition to rule, she was forced to do so only through male relatives. Her portrayal has been coloured by her connections to two deeply unpopular rulers – Claudius and Nero. This is particularly relevant in her position as the widowed mother of Nero, considering the Roman belief in the widowed mother's authority over her sons, demonstrated by case studies such as Veturia[292] and Cornelia.[293] The incapability of Nero as a ruler therefore reflected her failings as a mother, and colours the ancient depictions of Agrippina. Her use of male structures of power to exert her *auctoritas* in a power feminist manner also transgressed accepted societal boundaries and likely contributed to her negative depiction.

Precedents

Agrippina can be clearly seen to be drawing upon the precedents set by both the legendary Tanaquil and the historical Livia in ensuring an easy succession of power, Fulvia and Messalina in influence over politics and Livia and Tullia in utilising poison to alter the political landscape.

[287] *ibid.*, 13.14.
[288] *ibid.*, 13.15-6.
[289] *ibid.*, 13.18.
[290] *ibid.*, 13.18.
[291] *ibid.*, 14.7.
[292] See this study, Ch. 2, p. 84-90.
[293] See this study, Ch. 3, p. 123-130.

Conclusion

The actions of the women in this period are more opportunistic than those of the women in the late Republic, although this may reflect the greater opportunities for women in the Julio-Claudian family to exert *auctoritas* in the Principate. They actively use both their *auctoritas* and *potestas* to advance the careers of their sons, rather than the previous focus upon the careers of their husbands.

The source material for this period is quite thorough, but unfortunately is again affected by the bias of our sources as well as the *damnatio memoriae* of several members of the imperial family, including both Julia I and Agrippina II.

These women changed history through their manipulation of the succession and attempts to use their role to promote other men to the role of *princeps*.

It is interesting that for all the novelty of the imperial privilege, they continued to base their actions upon the precedents set by the women before them. Livia used Tanaquil's method for ensuring a smooth succession, while Agrippina the Elder built upon Fulvia's use of her husband's *potestas*.

CONCLUSION

In *Fire with Fire*, Naomi Wolf records a conversation that she held with several female university students, in which one student, talking about power, said, "I went through my history book and there were hardly any women. They're not there. The examples are not there. If you don't show women role models – that women can get in positions of power – then why should you even try?"[294]

As a student of Roman history, this author found this notion of the absence of female power in the pre-modern era quite bewildering. While women never wielded power to the same degree as the male members of patriarchal societies, the vivid and powerful characters of Roman women such as Veturia, Fulvia and the Agrippinae had always fascinated me in my studies. Yet, how much of this image was invective and rhetoric?

The term 'power' is in itself a loaded term, with a multitude of meanings. This study has followed the Roman definitions of power as both *potestas* and *auctoritas,* as discussed above.

There are, of course, limitations inherent within this study. This thesis examines a history that was in itself reliant upon previous sources, including biased sources such as family histories and oral history. The historians themselves would have had their portrayals of these women affected by their own bias as well. Not only would their patriarchal context colour their portrayals of women wielding power, but the political connections of these women also affected their interpretation. Fulvia, for example, was denigrated by Cicero in his *Philipics*, by Augustus in his propaganda against Antony, and even by Antony after his reconciliation with Augustus (Octavian). Thus, the portrait of Fulvia that survives is largely negative and it is only by reading between the lines that scholars such as C. Babcock and D. Delia can begin to comprehend the political acumen displayed by Fulvia in her lifetime.

However, while we cannot necessarily obtain an historically accurate image of these women, we still learn a great deal from the depictions preserved by our ancient sources. These portrayals allow us to see how female use of power in the historical narrative was perceived by patriarchal Roman culture, and the role it played in Rome's self-identity.

The large chronological scope of this work is integral to understanding how the elite women of Rome were able to create a psychology of female power by building upon the precedents of the previous actions of women. Unfortunately this means that my study encompasses

[294] Wolf, N., *op.cit.*, p. 271.

approximately eight hundred years of Roman history. Here this author lacks the scope to examine every woman mentioned by our ancient sources. Women have therefore been selected which this author believes reflect the time period in question, and which are relevant to the study. Nonetheless, had this author possessed an indefinite length of time to write, women such as Cloelia, Livilla (the wife of Drusus the Younger), Drusilla (the favourite sister of Gaius), Chelidon, Praecia and Antonia, amongst others, as well as the discussions about signs of honour such as honours and statues, would have made interesting additions to this work. However, this author instead focused on those individuals that she believed were the most relevant in both their use of female power and historical importance.

To keep this study to a manageable length this author chose to focus only on the written representations of women in Roman history. Nonetheless, for a more complete picture of female power this study should be supplemented with archaeological, numismatic and epigraphic evidence.

Finally, it is important to recognise that, while this author refer to 'Roman women' as a whole throughout this paper, only a small percentage of the female population of Rome would have possessed the relevant financial capital and *auctoritas* necessary to wield their power in an effective way. This is partly because the women known to our sources, and mentioned in their source material, were generally only women from very high profile families. In addition, as discussed above, N. Wolf's self-determinist form of feminism "speaks only to those women who have money, status and influence".[295] As an analytical theory it also tends to focus on those women who possessed all three traits. As J. Hallett notes, "forbidden to vote or hold political office, women could not have possibly exerted an influence on political affairs that even vaguely approximated their representation in the general population".[296] However, for those select women with the wealth, connections and relationships necessary to exert influence, the obstacles to their direct participation in the political processes at Rome could be overcome to some degree through their use of *auctoritas* and *potestas*. This is documented in the episodes of the protest for the repeal of the *lex Oppia*, Cornelia's influence over the political careers of Tiberius Gracchus and Gaius Gracchus, the legislative and military influence ascribed to Fulvia, and the use of *maiestas* trials by Messalina and Agrippina to remove Claudius' political rivals.

Ancient Perspectives

The record of the regal period is heavily reliant upon the work of Livy, whose determination to use his history as a repository of positive and negative *exempla* is reflected in his depiction of

[295] Wood, J. T., *op. cit.*, p. 174.
[296] Hallett, J. P. (1984), *op. cit.*, p. 243-4.

women in this period whose actions are shown as selfless and performed for the benefit of Rome, or as self-serving and to the detriment of the state. This is demonstrated in the case studies of the Sabine women and Tarpeia. The Sabine women place themselves in danger on the battlefield and use their familial *auctoritas* in order to persuade both the Roman and Sabine armies to negotiate a peace treaty. Tarpeia, in contrast, is portrayed as motivated by either lust or greed to betray Rome and admit the Sabine army into the citadel. This juxtaposition highlights the exemplary practices that Livy wants his audience to address and assimilate: the women of Rome must not be guided by their baser desires, but should instead only use their *auctoritas* in exceptional circumstances, and in service to the state.

Our knowledge of women acting at key moments in the history of the early and middle Republic also relies heavily upon Livy, supplemented with the works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Cassius Dio, Polybius and Plutarch. Livy's portrayal of Republican women illustrates a decline from the golden age of the early Republic towards the chaos of the late Republic. This is represented in the early Republic by the virtue of Verginia, which is used to provoke the revolt against the control of the decemvirs, and in the efforts of Veturia and the matrons of Rome to dissuade Coriolanus from marching on Rome. In the middle Republic, women are depicted as employing their *potestas* and *auctoritas* in the poisoning of aristocratic males in 331 BC, and in the female involvement in the Bacchanalian affair.

The history of the late Republic is illuminated primarily by the biographies of Plutarch. However, the history of this period has been heavily influenced by later Augustan propaganda. This can be seen in the censure displayed in representations of Fulvia's character: "her desire was to govern those who governed or to command a commander-in-chief".[297] In contrast, Octavia is described as "a wonder of a woman … who in addition to her beauty possessed great dignity of character and good sense."[298]

The Julio-Claudian period is dependent upon the *Annals* of Tacitus. A. W. Saxonhouse believes that Tacitus' histories can be seen as "attempts to explore the origins of this decline [of morality], to understand what it was about the particular political configuration in the Rome of the Principate that led to this decline."[299] As such, he tended to portray the women of the Julio-Claudian family as abusing their unprecedented levels of *auctoritas*. For example, he portrays Livia as involved in the death of Agrippa Postumus in order to ensure that Tiberius succeeded Augustus unchallenged in the role of *princeps*. He depicts Messalina as using her *auctoritas* as

[297] Plut., *Ant.*, 10.
[298] Plut. *Ant.* 31.
[299] Saxonhouse, A., *op. cit.*, p. 112.

the wife of the *princeps* in order to satisfy her lust. Agrippina the Younger is shown as using her *auctoritas* to ensure her son's succession to the role of *princeps*.

Achievement of Power

Although women could not hold legal or political power, they used the only power available to them, as advocated by N. Wolf, which was *auctoritas*. This *auctoritas* was reliant upon the *potestas* and *auctoritas* wielded by their male relatives and, as such, reflected the changing political contexts of Roman society.

The basis of women's access to power reflects the changing political context of Roman society. During the regal period Roman women achieved power through their relationship to the reigning royal family. This can be seen in the actions of Rhea Silvia, Tanaquil and Tullia. As Rome adopted a Republican form of government, women such as Veturia and the women who campaigned for the repeal of the Oppian Law gained their *auctoritas* from their membership in the elite patrician class from which the senators were usually drawn. However, as power became more centralised in the late Republic, the wives and mothers of the great generals, including Cornelia, Fulvia and Octavia, found that their *auctoritas* increased exponentially in correlation to that of their husbands, brothers and sons. After the establishment of the Augustan principate, high levels of *auctoritas* became the domain of female members of the Julio-Claudian family, such as Livia, Julia, Agrippina the Elder, Messalina and Agrippina the Younger. Thus women achieved power by exploiting their connections to male family members.

Use of Power

The ladies of the regal period are typified by their exemplary words and deeds: their actions are either motivated by concern for the state and its citizens, or by personal gain. The Sabine women reveal their loyalty to their Roman husbands despite their abduction and rape, and place themselves in danger to broker peace, demonstrating an acceptable use of *auctoritas*. In the same episode, Tarpeia shows the other side of that *auctoritas*, by betraying her country. It is an excellent example of the 'tested woman plot' that L. E. Bueler explores, with the Sabines 'passing' the test by acting selflessly, while Tarpeia succumbs to her lust or greed.[300] Horatia employs her *auctoritas* passively post-mortem to demarcate the limits of male *potestas* within the city. Tanaquil and Tullia use their *auctoritas* to ensure dynastic succession but, again, while Tanaquil utilises her *auctoritas* to prevent a civil war by leaving the succession undecided, Tullia conspires in her father's assassination to improve her own status. In Livy's early Rome women wielding power are only capable of two extremes of behaviour.

[300] Bueler, L. E., *op. cit.*

The women of the early and middle Republic are depicted as acting for the benefit of the state, as well as to the advantage of the elite women of Rome. This again follows the tenets of power feminism as outlined by Wolf, in which women are encouraged to act in their own as well as for communal self-interest. Veturia and the matrons of Rome halt Coriolanus' march on Rome through the exploitation of *materna auctoritas*. The elite women of role combined their *auctoritas* through communal protests for the repeal of the Oppian Law. The negative aspect of communal female exploitation of *auctoritas* is in the female involvement in the poisoning trials of 331 BC and the Bacchanalian scandal. The sharing of power amongst the elite men of Rome gave more women *auctoritas*, and thus led to more communal action by women.

The women of the late Republic are represented as using their power to advance the public careers of their sons and husbands. Cornelia is portrayed as employing her considerable financial assets as familial *auctoritas* to further her sons' careers through education, clients and armed supporters. Fulvia is depicted as transferring the *auctoritas* she possessed with the *popularis* faction in Rome as the widow of Clodius to her successive husbands. Octavia's role as mediator and self-appointed negotiator was able to stave off civil war until her divorce from Anntony.

The use of power in the early imperial period was almost exclusively driven by attempts to manipulate the dynastic succession, usually to benefit the women's sons. Livia was the first to be accused of such actions by our sources, after Augustus' grandsons were killed and her son Tiberius succeeded Augustus as *princeps*. Some scholars have perceived even Julia's exile as the result of a failed coup.[301] Tiberius feared the dynastic machinations of Agrippina the Elder to such a degree that Sejanus was able to fuel his fear by alleging that Agrippina was the head of a political faction within the court. Messalina's bigamous marriage can also be seen as an attempt to secure the throne for her son Britannicus. Agrippina the Younger was not only accused of assassinating her husband Claudius in order to ensure her son's succession, but she is portrayed by Tacitus as having threatened to advance Britannicus' claim when Nero began to disobey her.

Though recorded in historical literature other than Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, many depictions of women's use of power appear to been affected by Livy's approach to the deployment of historical characters in his narrative: namely, to provide *exempla* to contemporary Romans, as well as the Roman tendency towards idealising the past. That said, there is a distinct pattern of women's actions becoming less civic-minded and more self-serving.

[301] Sen., *Brev. Vit.*, 4.5; Plin., *HN*, 7.149.

Effect of their Actions

This study demonstrates that the women of ancient Rome evidently used their access to *auctoritas* and *potestas* to change Roman history through military, political, and dynastic avenues.

Women affected the military landscape of Rome through their intercessions and use of *potestas*. From the Sabine women through to the efforts of Veturia and Octavia, the women of Rome are said to have used their *auctoritas* to prevent civil wars which could have destroyed the city. Fulvia's use of *potestas* in her attempt to safeguard Antony's interests in Italy could have caused civil war and changed the outcome of later events between Antony and Augustus. Agrippina the Elder used *potestas* in the name of her husband to prevent a strategic bridge being destroyed. Thus she preserved the lives not only of the German legions but also those of her husband and heir to the *princeps*, Germanicus.

The outrages perpetrated against Lucretia and Verginia prompted political reform, both in the expulsion of the Tarquins and establishment of the Republic, and in the end to the rule of the decemvirs. The women of Rome were also able to use their *auctoritas* to provoke legislative change, such as in the repeal of the Oppian Law, Hortensia's speech causing the triumvirs to abandon their plans to tax 1400 Roman women, or even Cornelia being publicly credited by Gaius Gracchus as the reason behind his withdrawal of legislation. Fulvia used her power as the widow of Clodius to transfer the support of the *populares* to Mark Antony and advance his career to the position of triumvir. In imperial Rome Julia the Elder used her public actions to make a political protest. Agrippina the Elder was accused by Sejanus of using her *auctoritas* to create her own political faction to oppose Tiberius and advance the cause of her own sons for the succession. This author believes that Messalina also planned to use her *auctoritas* as wife of the *princeps* to organise a coup and legitimise Claudius' successor.

The women of Rome also used their *auctoritas* in attempts to engineer dynastic succession. Tanaquil can be seen as instrumental in promoting the interests of her husband as well as ensuring a smooth succession for her son. Livia and Agrippina the Elder copied Tanaquil's technique in order to prevent challenges to the accession of their sons. Livia was also accused of murdering Gaius and Lucius in order to place Tiberius next in line for the throne, while Agrippina was accused of murdering Claudius before he could indicate his preference for Britannicus over Nero as his heir.

It is important to note in all of these cases that women were not supposed to be able to effect military, political or dynastic change. Women were excluded from public life on the basis of a

belief in their incapability of intellect. Yet, we can see that these women were able to overcome their legal handicaps and influence the public life of Rome in significant ways.

Many of the actions of the women depicted in the case studies in this thesis appear to benefit women's male relatives, rather than the women directly, such as the intercessions of Mucia[302] and Octavia,[303] and the dynastic machinations of Livia,[304] Messalina[305] and Agrippina the Younger.[306] Wolf's theory of power feminism advocates the use of power by women to benefit women individually, as well as collectively.[307] However, power feminism was conceived in a context of female access to political, economic and legal power, which was not available to the women of ancient Rome.

Due to their debarment from public office, Roman women were often forced to operate in the public sphere through the use of male agents, and their *auctoritas* was dependent upon, and proportional to, the *auctoritas* of their male relatives. Therefore, women can be seen to benefit from the actions that they perform to the advantage of their male relatives.

The patriarchal bias of our ancient sources may have influenced their depiction of Roman women as motivated to act in a way which benefits their male relatives. However, this pattern can be seen to reflect a cultural ideal of female action regularly induced by a desire to benefit their male relatives in ancient Rome.

The male relatives who are advantaged by the actions of Roman women are women's husbands and sons. Despite the impermanence of marriages during the Republic, as marriages were used to confirm changing political alliances, the use of power by women to benefit their husbands is more common during the late Republican period. Due to the centralisation of power in this era, marriage to prominent politicians and military generals conferred extraordinary *auctoritas*. As women could not hold political or military office, marriage provided women an avenue in which to increase their *auctoritas*.

The use of power by women to benefit their sons is most evident in the early Imperial period. As *auctoritas* was predicated upon membership in the imperial family and relationship to the *princeps*, women could only increase their own *auctoritas* through marriage within the imperial family, or through the succession of their son/s to the position of *princeps*. Our sources depict the Julio-Claudian *principes*, from the time of Augustus, as being responsible for marriages

[302] See this study Ch. 3, p. 145-147.
[303] See this study Ch. 3, p. 148-151.
[304] See this study Ch. 4, p. 164-169.
[305] See this study Ch. 4, p. 175-184.
[306] See this study Ch. 4, p. 185-189.
[307] Wolf, N., *op. cit.*, p. 310-316.

within the Julio-Claudian family. This was likely done with dynastic intentions. However, it restricted imperial women to promoting the dynastic interests of their sons in order to increase their own *auctoritas*. It is likely that this was augmented by the fact that women in Rome were generally much younger than their husbands, and therefore far more likely to outlive them. In the atmosphere of exile and death accorded to dynastic threats of the *princeps* which defined the Julio-Claudian period, imperial women may have been concerned with their future safety in their efforts to promote their sons to the position of *princeps*.

We can see that women's access to power increased over time and, in correlation, women's actions became more self-interested. It can be seen that the greater women's access to power in ancient Rome the more women used that power to advance their own interests or that of their male relations (which would, in turn, increase their own *auctoritas*).

This power was used to change the political, military and dynastic history of areas from which women were excluded. Women increased the scope of their use of power, building upon previous precedents and establishing a psychology of power from which later women could draw.

Our sources' representation of women's use of power was coloured by their patriarchal bias. This led to similar actions being portrayed as acceptable or transgressive based upon the power of the individual woman.

Thus a power feminist approach allows us to see how women were changing their society themselves, despite their handicaps. Although they were not promoting the cause of all women, they were fostering communal and personal interests and using their available power to execute them. This study highlights the fact that while women changed Roman history, their actions and attitudes were in turn influenced by political and social changes in Roman society.

Women are represented so much in Roman history because that history cannot be recorded without them: they are integral to the political, military and dynastic changes in Rome. This study demonstrates that, while restricted politically and legally, a small percentage of women in ancient Rome were able to wield power. Although it was not *potestas*, the women of Rome used the power available to them, worked within existing power structures and adapted to changes in them, and used their power for both themselves and their community. Thus, by reading the evidence from a power feminist perspective, we can see how the women of Rome were capable of using their own power to change the course of their city's history.

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