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# FEMALE HEAD COVERING IN THE EARLY IMPERIAL PERIOD: QUESTIONS OF THE COVERED 'OTHER' AND THE IDEAL OF AUGUSTAN WOMANHOOD.

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ARTS

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For Sam



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## Thesis Summary

This thesis examines the nature of the literary evidence for female head covering in early imperial Rome (defined for this purpose as 31 BC- AD 68) via a socio-cultural analysis of early imperial poetry. Data is collected from searches in the *Thesaurus Latinae Linguae* (TLL) for the terms *amictus*, *palla*, *infula*, *vitta*, *mitra* and *flammeum*. Patterns as to the use of these head covering garments and adornments to characterise female protagonists in early imperial poetry are analysed and early imperial attitudes to covering are determined. It is proposed that attitudes to covering in early imperial Rome were not beholden to a single perspective and concluded that a complex discourse on covering existed in early imperial literature. The approach of the thesis is informed by a post-colonial feminist reading of Orientalism that allows for critique of previous scholars who have ‘other-ed’ ancient women vis-à-vis the use of terms such as ‘veil’. Application of this reading to the early imperial corpus elucidates information about gender roles in the Augustan era and provides insight into ancient Rome as a nuanced culture that possessed an array of social roles, values and ways of making meaning.





## Declaration

I, Elizabeth Smith, certify that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Date: 09/10/2014

Signature:



## Translations

The Loeb Classical Library editions have been used for the vast majority of references to Latin and Greek texts. Where an alternate translation has been used it is noted and cited in the Bibliography. Where I have amended the Loeb translation this is indicated in a footnote. Translations of Sextus Pompeius Festus' *De verborum significatu* (using W.M. Lindsay's second edition of Festus in his *Glossaria Latina*, vol. 4) and fragments of Varro in Nonius Marcellus are my own.

## Citations

Citation of modern sources will be confined to footnotes (in the short-title convention) with the full reference listed in the Bibliography. References to ancient sources, due to their frequency, will take place as in-text citations. Where numerous ancient works are cited footnotes will be used in order to reduce disruption to the body of text.

The Bibliography includes a list of all modern works cited in the footnotes. Where a translation has been used that is not the Loeb, this is also included in the Bibliography.

## Abbreviations

Abbreviations of standard Latin and Greek works follow those set out in the fourth edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (2012).



## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I thank my supervisor Dr. Lea Beness for her guidance, constructive criticisms, attention to detail and above all, friendship. Her willingness to share her passion and generosity with her time have made this process all the better for my growth not just as a learner but as a human being. I consider myself extremely lucky to have such a wonderful mentor. I would also like to thank Associate Professor Tom Hillard, Dr Trevor Evans and Associate Professor Paul McKechnie for their kind assistance with my research, as well as Associate Professor Malcolm Choat for his tireless work in convening of the Masters of Research program.

If this thesis considers what the 'ideal' woman in early imperial Rome was, it is in the process of writing it that I encountered women of unparalleled wisdom, resilience and kindness all around me. I trust that if Sulpicia had friends half as supportive as these, they would have encouraged her to write such rebellious musings. I thank (far too briefly) Dr Maryam Khalid, Lucinda Guzman, Dr Fiona Radford, Nicole Miles, Danielle Sass, Tanja Andric, Abigail Tweedie, Cassandra Grant, Alexandra Wrathall, Rebekah Hawkins, Emily Sheppard, Jess Smith and Rennie Johns for their friendship and perspectives. I also thank James Mallen for his wonderful calming presence, as well as Dylan Holloway for his continual support and for never failing to challenge my perspectives on any number of issues with lively discussion.

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Saving the best for last, to my parents Colleen and Gregg, to whom I owe the most. Your encouragement, support and love mean the world to me. There is not much in life I could have achieved without you first giving me the strength to believe I could. Thank you.



## Introduction

“Without history we aren’t able to grasp the implications of the ideas being advanced; we don’t hear the resonances of words; we don’t see all of the symbols contained – for example – in a piece of cloth that serves as a veil.”

Joan Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, p. 8.

Mainstream ‘Western’ discourses on head coverings, constructed through academic and popular representations, are shaped by dominant assumptions about gender and sex. Discussions about the burqa in post 9/11 ‘Western’ discourse, for example, deployed mainstream understandings of gender and sex in tandem with race to represent the backwardness of ‘the East’ and were used to justify military intervention.<sup>1</sup> Post-colonial feminist scholars have long identified the power relations that are reproduced in such discourses and have complicated mainstream understandings of oppression and agency vis-à-vis head coverings.<sup>2</sup> Although focused on the modern era, their approaches to head coverings, gender and agency are very much relevant to understanding head covering in the ancient world, where the custom is linked to civic parochialism and ‘Eastern’ influences. It is in this respect that Joan Scott’s statement is significant, as examining head coverings in the ancient world can assist in undermining the binary assumptions inherent in the resurgence of ‘Islamophobia’ post-9/11, in which head coverings serve to mark out immutable differences between ‘East’ and ‘West’ and reinforce the image of the wholly oppressed

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<sup>1</sup> M. Khalid, “Gender, Orientalism and Representations of the ‘Other’ in the War on Terror” *Global Change, Peace & Security* 23.1 (2011), pp. 15-29.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, C.T. Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” *Feminist Review* 30 (1988), pp. 61-88; M. Yegenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies. Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge, 1998); M. Khalid, “Gender, Orientalism and Representations”, pp. 15-29.

Middle Eastern woman.<sup>3</sup> An investigation into head coverings also serves to challenge the concept of ancient Rome as a purely 'Western' culture immune to 'Eastern' influences, contending dominant assumptions like the notion of female seclusion and the idea that the private sphere was the appropriate place for women.

In this thesis, my investigation will involve identifying and complicating contemporary and ancient constructions of the ancient Roman woman as a covered 'other'. Although ancient historians cannot, of course, remove the (mostly) male source tradition that constructed ancient women in this way, a post-colonial feminist approach to the ancient literary sources enables a study that attempts to recover their agency. This, by extension, allows for a more nuanced understanding of ancient 'womanhood' where female attitudes to covering are taken into account. Such a study prompts discussion about head coverings, where the polyvalent influences upon one society or religion are no longer reduced to easily digestible concepts. Furthermore, the study aims to undermine the perception of 'East' and 'West' as distinct categories, defining 'culture' as the "array of social roles, values, and ways of making meaning, which actors employ, depending on the resources and power available to them" as part of a "cultural repertoire".<sup>4</sup>

Broadly, this thesis fulfils these objectives via a study of the literary evidence for female head covering in early imperial Rome. Chapter One serves as a literature review that situates the thesis within key research. The first section explores research on head covering in ancient Roman contexts in order to identify the parameters of this scholarship and identify gaps that will be addressed in the thesis. The second section analyses the views proposed by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones in *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* (2003), the most comprehensive publication on female head covering practices in the ancient world to date. The outcomes of this analysis emphasise the necessity of

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<sup>3</sup> L. Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 2010 ed. [first published 2003]), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> A. Swidler, *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters* (Chicago, 2001) p. 24; S. Hylan, "Modest, Industrious, and Loyal: Reinterpreting Conflicting Evidence for Women's Roles" *Biblical Theory Bulletin* 44.1 (2014), p. 5.



introducing a post-colonial feminist approach to the conceptual framework of this thesis. The last section in Chapter One conducts a review of terminology relevant to previous studies on head covering, with particular attention being paid to the symbolic implications of the term 'veil'.

Chapter Two provides an outline and discussion of the various approaches and methodologies employed within the thesis. Like the previous chapter it is divided into three sections. The first section concerns the research strategy of the thesis, outlining which sources are selected for analysis and why. The second section focuses on the formal analytical processes that are employed to study this body of evidence. The third explains the key definitions and conceptual frameworks that are integral to the interpretation of the corpus of evidence. This involves the application of gender as a category for analysis and a post-colonial feminist approach to evaluate the conceptual frameworks that are employed by key texts discussed in the literature review of Chapter One.

Chapter Three presents a detailed analysis of the use of head covering garments and adornments within early imperial poetry. The chapter consists of five sections that address sequentially: the *amictus* (a type of outer garment) the *palla* (another type of outer garment), *vittae* and *infulae* (adornments for the head, discussed in the same section), the *mitra* (a type of cap) and the *flammeum* (a bridal head covering). Each section analyses the instances where the garment is mentioned in poetry of the early imperial period. The ways in which early imperial poets employed garments and adornments to characterise female protagonists as either ideal or deviant figures is scrutinised. The reasons why certain female protagonists were associated with particular head covering garments will likewise be explored. Furthermore, the association of specific garments with certain poetic themes (for example, the use of the *amictus* within female expressions of grief) will be the subject of examination.

Chapter Four builds upon the analysis provided in Chapter Three to present a broader discussion of the various attitudes to covering in early imperial literature. The first section concerns the use of head covering gestures in mortuary themes and, using the later

evidence of Plutarch, proposes that Roman women covered their hair while grieving except at funerals where the hair was worn uncovered and loose. Instances in early imperial poetry where women are depicted as covering their heads to express grief are also hypothesised as emulating an idealised kind of modesty rather than a reflection of custom. This latter hypothesis informs the second section, where the use of covering language to convey tone and emotion within poetic devices in early imperial poetry is discussed. This section also analyses the use of covering garments within metaphor and imagery, with a view to considering the notion of covering as a possibly deceptive or dangerous act. This consideration is especially relevant to the third and final section, which compares and contrasts the gendered attitudes to covering across varying genres. This comparison illuminates the existence of an early imperial discourse on female covering, which based its perceptions of covering on assumptions relating to the dominant male/submissive female understanding of gender roles. This section culminates in the assertion that the poems attributed to Sulpicia complicated mainstream understandings of agency within this discourse and concludes that early imperial attitudes to covering were not given to a single perspective.

## Chapter One: Review of Current Scholarship

This chapter will provide an overview of the scholarship which has considered the issue of head covering within ancient Roman contexts. Threads of argument within the scholarship will be identified and the thesis situated within a necessary boundary for study. A review of Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones' book *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* will follow and will serve as a platform from which to adapt post-colonial feminist theory within the methodological approach of the thesis. The scholarship relevant to this process will be summarised. A brief survey of terminology will also be supplied, which will be addressed further in the following methodology chapter.

### Studies on head covering in Rome

Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although a few academic centres and museums had been established for the study of ancient dress, the main publications on ancient clothing were encyclopaedic.<sup>1</sup> In regards to head covering, Daremburg and Saglio's French *Dictionnaire des antiquités Grecques et Romaine* (1837-1919), and William Smith's English *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (1890) contained dedicated entries to the *amictus*, *palla*, *pallium*, and *ricinium* among other garments, as well as discussion of the bridal head covering known as the *flammeum*.<sup>2</sup> Following on from these works, antiquarian manual type publications, such as Sir John Edwin Sandys' *A Companion to Latin Studies* (1910), described types of head covering within the wider context of Roman dress for male and female categories.<sup>3</sup> In the mid-twentieth century, works which discussed Roman dress

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<sup>1</sup> L. Bonfante, "Introduction" in eds J.L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante, *The World of Roman Costume* (Madison, 2001 ed. [first published 1994]), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "amictus", "barba", "coma", "matrimonium", "pallium", "rica, ricinium", "velamen, velamentum", and "velum" in eds C.V. Daremburg and E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités Grecques et Romaine* (Paris, 1837-1919); "amictus", "palla", "ricinium" and "flammeum" in eds W. Smith, LLD, W. Wayte, G. E. Marindin, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (London, 1890).

<sup>3</sup> J.E. Sandys, *A Companion to Latin Studies* (Cambridge, 1938 ed. [first published 1910]), p. 195.

included their discussion within attempts to draw attention to the 'daily life' of female categories. J.P.V.D. Balsdon's work *Roman Women: Their History and Habits*, asserted on the basis of varied sculptural representations in the *Ara Pacis* that by the time of Augustus, "it was a matter of indifference" whether women covered their heads while out of doors.<sup>4</sup> The works of Margaret Bieber presented an alternative angle, wherein her comprehensive publications on Greek and Roman dress emphasised the (now contestable) nature of Roman 'copying' of Greek 'original' customs, particularly in relation to head covering practices. Her studies on head covering focused on both male and female examples in the same publications, with Bieber citing copious amounts of literary and statuary evidence in *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age* (1955), "Roman Men in Greek Himation (*Romani Palliati*) a Contribution to the History of Copying" (1959), and the much later *Ancient Copies: Contributions to the History of Greek and Roman Art* (1977).<sup>5</sup> Evidence of female and male head covering has not been examined in the one work since that of Bieber.<sup>6</sup>

An interesting anomaly in the literature warrants discussion at this mid-twentieth century point. Following the advent of second wave feminism, feminist ancient historians did not undertake any significant studies on women's dress in the ancient world. While suggesting a reason for this gap in the literature is somewhat speculative, it is reasonable to propose that as establishing 'women' as a viable topic for research in its own right was the priority of second wave feminism, clothes and costume were thus perceived as trivial topics, at least

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<sup>4</sup> J.P.V.D. Balsdon, *Roman Women: Their History and Habits* (London, 1962), p. 252.

<sup>5</sup> M. Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age* (New York, 1955), pp. 130-133, 172-177; "Roman Men in Greek Himation (*Romani Palliati*) a Contribution to the History of Copying" *Proceedings of the American Philological Society* 103.3 (1959), pp. 374-417; *Ancient Copies: Contributions to the History of Greek and Roman Art* (New York, 1977), pp. 132-173. Bieber's contributions also extended to encyclopaedic works of the mid-twentieth century, authoring the entry "Costume, Historical Development, the Ancient World," in ed. B.S. Myers, *Encyclopaedia of World Art: Volume IV* (New York, Toronto, and London, 1961), pp. 19-26.

<sup>6</sup> This is except for sections of Sebesta and Bonfante's edited collection, for my discussion of this work see p. 8ff. Although the parameters of this thesis do not allow space for a complete male/female comparison, this project aims to establish the groundwork for a more broad investigation of the corpus, as will be outlined further in the following chapter.

when compared to the priority at hand.<sup>7</sup> Ancient costume prior to the first and second wave had been studied mainly within antiquarian traditions by scholars (namely those previously mentioned) who described clothing as a visual identifier that physically differentiated the social status of women and men within ancient societies. The antiquarian nature of these studies did not allow for 'women's' history to be perceived as a worthwhile undertaking, discrete from military and political studies, which had been so much at the core of capital H History to date. Only once 'women's' history was seen as a worthwhile topic for investigation in its own right could the more detailed elements of women's lives, such as clothing, be established as important topics for enquiry. This accounted for the later increase in volume of these studies contemporaneous with third wave feminism, which are discussed later in this review.

Although not falling within these third wave attempts, Ramsay MacMullen's 1980 publication "Woman in Public in the Roman Empire" should be noted as one of the most influential pieces of scholarship on Roman head covering to date, given the number of later scholars who referenced the work. In "Woman in Public", MacMullen asserted that while many women from the lower working classes and the Eastern provinces experienced similar freedoms to the elite, they would have covered their heads as a widespread traditional formality.<sup>8</sup> Elite Roman women, however, would have gone uncovered by way of imitating

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<sup>7</sup> K. Milnor, "Women" in eds A. Barchiesi and W. Scheidel, *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies* (Oxford and New York, 2010), p. 815: "It was not until the 1970s that critics began systematically to challenge the 'silence' which had been imposed on ancient women and to question whether something could be done about it (most notably in Pomeroy 1975, but cf. Finley 1965). We are indebted to these pioneering studies for filling in some of the spaces which had been left in our picture of the ancient world – for pointing out what could actually be said about the lives of biologically female adult human beings in antiquity."

<sup>8</sup> R. MacMullen, "Woman in Public in the Roman Empire" *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 29.2 (1980), p. 218: "Women of humbler classes went veiled, but these others behaved exactly like their counterparts observed in Italy, fully visible, indeed making their existence felt very fully in public."

changes in style at the imperial court.<sup>9</sup> By focusing on the stark contrast apparent in the epigraphic sources of public women found in Pompeii and the Italian provinces, MacMullen was the first scholar to imply a prescriptive nature to the ancient literary evidence on head covering. However, within this implication, as well as his emphasis on the nature of women as 'public', he for the most part cited evidence that did not actually contain mentions of head covering practices.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, while some later scholars referenced MacMullen as an authority on female head covering, his hypothesis incited noticeable debate in later scholarship.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, MacMullen was referenced frequently in the early 1990s edited collection, *The World of Roman Costume*, a publication which significantly altered the consideration of clothing in the Roman period. As one of the first large publications to progress beyond the antiquarian style, the editors Judith Lynn Sebesta and Larissa Bonfante identified the topic

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<sup>9</sup> MacMullen, "Woman in Public", p. 218: "... women who imitated the changes in style that went on at the imperial court, changes depicted in the provinces by portraits of the ladies of the imperial house, were the richer ones, the more open to the new ways ...".

<sup>10</sup> This is except for one footnote, which cites the literary evidence of Plutarch, Eusebius and the much later Tertullian, as well as Palmyrene reliefs (MacMullen, "Woman in Public", p. 208, n. 4). The contested nature of 'public' as opposed to 'private' has been investigated in depth prior to and after MacMullen's work. For a recent investigation into public and private life in the Augustan era, see K. Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the age of Augustus. Inventing Private Life* (New York, 2005), pp. 1-46.

<sup>11</sup> M.M. Levine, "The Gendered Grammar of Ancient Mediterranean Hair", in eds H. Eilberg-Schwartz and W. Doniger, *Off with Her Head! The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture* (London, 1995), p. 104: "Throughout the Empire, even for aristocratic matrons, the covered head persists as an ideal, and for lower-class women, probably as a reality ... As Ramsay MacMullen has argued, lower-class Roman women throughout the Imperial period, at least in the Eastern provinces, continued to conform in practice to the persistent ideal of covered hair for married women". Judith Lynn Sebesta ("Symbolism in the World of Roman Costume", in eds Sebesta and Bonfante, *The World of Roman Costume*, p. 46) also cites MacMullen, stating "MacMullen has discussed how widespread among various classes and in various provinces was the custom of veiling". Sebesta (p. 52 n. 31), however, did not engage with MacMullen's contention that most members of the elite went with their head uncovered, instead disputing this component of MacMullen's theory in a footnote: "Nonetheless, a number of statues exist showing an empress veiling her head with a *palla*".

of Roman 'costume' as a socio-historical undertaking in its own right. Within Sebesta and Bonfante's collection, several chapters discuss Roman female head covering in relation to other garments, the most informative in Chapter Two, "Symbolism in the Costume of the Roman Woman".<sup>12</sup> This chapter authored by Sebesta, asserts that Roman *matronae* habitually wore the woollen *palla* or 'mantle' when in public as a way of protecting her married status from "impure things".<sup>13</sup> Sebesta repeated this hypothesis in a later contribution to *Gender and the Body in the Ancient Mediterranean*.<sup>14</sup> The legitimisation of ancient clothing as a topic for academic study as advanced by Sebesta and Bonfante has since led to individual items of ancient costume being studied for their socio-cultural impact.<sup>15</sup>

In the late 1990s these socio-cultural studies were evolving as a part of the scholarship on women and gender in the ancient world, when post structural and third wave gender theories of performativity and the body were beginning to influence historians, courtesy of feminist theorists.<sup>16</sup> Historians who considered the performance of 'bodies' in conjunction

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<sup>12</sup> Sebesta, "Symbolism in the Costume of the Roman Woman", p. 47, 48ff. See also in *The World of Roman Costume*: S. Stone, "The Toga: From National to Ceremonial Costume", p. 20; L. La Follette, "The Costume of the Roman Bride", pp. 54-57, 59; H. Bender, "*De Habitu Vestis*: Clothing in the *Aeneid*", pp. 149-151; D.R. Edwards, "The Social, Religious and Political Aspects of Costume in Josephus", pp. 154-155; B. Goldman, "Graeco-Roman Dress in Syro-Mesopotamia", p. 165, 174; L. A. Roussin, "Costume in Roman Palestine: Archaeological Remains and the Evidence from the Mishnah", p. 186, 188; R.A. Gergel, "Costume as a Geographic Indicator: Barbarians and Prisoners on Cuirassed Statue Breastplates", p. 198 and N. Goldman, "Reconstructing Roman Clothing", figs. 13.2b, 13.4, 13.7, pp. 228-229.

<sup>13</sup> Sebesta, "Symbolism in the Costume of the Roman Woman", p. 49.

<sup>14</sup> Sebesta, "Women's Costume and Feminine Civic Morality in Augustan Rome", in ed. M. Wyke, *Gender and the Body in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford, 1998), p. 111.

<sup>15</sup> In *The World of Roman Costume* the *palla* is mainly considered in conjunction with other garments such as the *stola* (an undergarment of the Roman *matrona*) and *vittae* (woollen bands for the hair). See for example Sebesta, "Symbolism in the Costume of the Roman Woman" p. 49.

<sup>16</sup> Namely, J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York, 1990). Butler's work has since been influential in many areas of historical writing, including Jennifer Trimble's work

with the way they were dressed, by extension sought to understand the symbolism of various ancient garments, including head coverings. In 1995, Howard Eilberg-Schwartz and Wendy Doniger's edited collection *Off with Her Head! The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture*, sought to analyse the symbolic connections between the head and sexuality in the ancient world. Within the collection, contributors Molly Myerowitz Levine, Mary Rose D'Angelo and Carol Delaney discussed head coverings as an integral sub-topic in terms of approaching the female head as a sexual construct.<sup>17</sup> Levine, in her discussion on the linguistic origins of the head, hair and sexuality, asserted a protective reason that *matronae* covered their hair, a very similar theory to that of Sebesta.<sup>18</sup> D'Angelo's contribution considered head covering in Christian texts such as Tertullian and St Paul, a corpus of evidence which Richard Oster, Elaine Fantham, and Kristi Upson-Saia have interrogated in depth since.<sup>19</sup> The temporal parameters of D'Angelo's contribution when compared to Delaney's, who considered the modern head covering debate in Turkey, and the Mediterranean scope of Levine, indicated the relevance the topic of head covering possesses to both ancient and modern time periods.

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on statuary 'performativity' (see the chapter "Portraiture" in Trimble's book *Women and Replication in Roman Imperial Art and Culture* [New York, 2011], pp. 150-205).

<sup>17</sup> Levine, "Gendered Grammar", pp. 76-130, M.R. D'Angelo, "Veils, Virgins, and the Tongues of Men and Angels. Women's Heads in Early Christianity", pp. 131-164 and C. Delaney, "Untangling the meanings of hair in Turkish society", pp. 53-75, in eds Eilberg-Schwartz and Doniger, *Off with Her Head!*.

<sup>18</sup> Levine, "Gendered Grammar", p. 103: "Like the city of Rome itself, the ideal Roman matron must be literally impregnable to invaders". However, Levine does not agree with Sebesta that *matronae* covered their hair routinely, this being reserved for the lower classes, as I have discussed in n. 11 of this chapter in relation to MacMullen's "Woman in Public".

<sup>19</sup> Richard Oster as one of the earlier historians to address this topic in "When Men Wore Veils to Worship: Historical Context of I Cor. 11:4" *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988), pp. 481-505 has since been refuted by Elaine Fantham in "Covering the Head at Rome: Ritual and Gender" in eds J. Edmondson and A. Keith, *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture* (London, 2008), pp. 158-171. Kristi Upson-Saia's more recent work, *Early Christian dress: gender, virtue and authority* (New York, 2011), has considered multiple aspects of Christian dress including head covering. The wealth of scholarship on this topic of head covering in late-antique and Christian Rome makes for an interesting grouping of perspectives and warrants a separate historiographical study.



A few smaller publications have theorised on the topic of Roman head covering in isolation without engaging in feminist theory. These scholars, like the aforementioned MacMullen, for the most part have drawn attention to the prescriptive nature of the literary evidence which refers to women covering their heads. In 2008, Elaine Fantham emphasised a distinct prescriptive nature to the literary evidence within an Augustan context, drawing the conclusion that “Augustus had lost the battle, and the proper use of traditional headgear was preserved only in the representing the heroic past”.<sup>20</sup> Fantham thus agreed with MacMullen that the Roman female elite most probably went uncovered in favour of more popular fashion trends. However, Fantham’s work focused on the wooden bands known as *vittae* and *infulae*, which were primarily used to adorn a woman’s hair rather than as a covering, so there was little direct evidence to support her theory on covering itself. In the same year, Kelly Olson also approached the prescriptive nature of literary evidence, considering the entirety of Roman clothing in her publication *Dress and The Roman Woman. Self-presentation and Society*.<sup>21</sup> However, on the practice of head covering, Olson did not agree with MacMullen or Fantham, asserting that for the women of lower working classes the way the *palla* was affixed would have been impractical for manual labour and thus abandoned.<sup>22</sup> For the female elite, a decision to cover the head was most probably up to the discretion of the individual or her family.<sup>23</sup> In direct opposition to MacMullen, Olson posited further that prominent women would have had more reason to wear a head covering in public as a symbolically moral feature of their desired reputation.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Fantham, “Covering the Head at Rome”, p. 168.

<sup>21</sup> K. Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman. Self-presentation and Society* (New York, 2008), p. 11: “... many of the details of female dress in the literary sources are prescriptive: the discourse on clothing often specified an ideal moral system, not necessarily social practice”.

<sup>22</sup> Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 35. Olson (p. 35) based this assertion on the conclusion of Alexandra Croom in *Roman Clothing and Fashion* ([Stroud, 2000], p. 89). M. Harlow’s review (“Review of A.T. Croom ‘Roman Clothing and Fashion’ *Britannia* 32 [2001], pp. 407-408) of Croom’s work, however, criticises the lack of investigation into symbolic implications of Roman clothing.

<sup>23</sup> Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 35.

<sup>24</sup> Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 35.

Olson drew this last theory from the earlier work of Elizabeth Bartman, who briefly addressed head covering in her investigation of statuary depictions of Livia in the early imperial period.<sup>25</sup> Bartman had asserted that the “religious and female virtues” implicit in the practice would have often compelled Livia herself to adopt a head covering, even though a great number of her statuary portraits do not depict her with a covered head.<sup>26</sup> Thus in agreeing with Bartman, Olson rejected MacMullen and Levine’s theory that firstly, women of the lower classes routinely covered their heads and secondly, that elite women in the imperial period went with uncovered heads for the sake of following fashion. Olson further suggested that a desire for recognition of their status in public may have influenced the more traditional, and thus more noticeable, clothing choices of elite females.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless Olson emphasised that any moral implications, whether from Livia’s leading by example in her own lifetime or in the literary evidence which followed, may have been prescriptive notions within the sources rather than a reflection of custom.<sup>28</sup> Thus, as Olson’s study considered the topic of clothing of women in its entirety, with Fantham discussing *vittae* and *infulae* in isolation and MacMullen having earlier investigated mainly epigraphic sources, an identifiable gap remained to consider the prescriptive nature of literary evidence in relation to head covering alone.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> E. Bartman, *Portraits of Livia: Imaging the Imperial Woman in Augustan Rome* (New York, 1999), p. 45.

<sup>26</sup> Bartman, *Portraits of Livia*, p. 45.

<sup>27</sup> Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 97.

<sup>28</sup> This notion has been carried further by Judith Hallett (“Women in Augustan Rome” in eds S.L. Jones and S. Dillon, *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World* [Oxford, 2012], p. 384) with regard to evidence for women in Augustan Rome more generally: “... it merits emphasis that the definitions of appropriate female behaviour represented by Augustan legislation and various ideologically motivated writings were prescriptive in nature”.

<sup>29</sup> The prescriptive nature of statuary evidence was addressed briefly by Elizabeth Bartman in her earlier 2001 publication: “... sculpture reproduces real life. There remains a powerful exception to this practice ... Romans were accustomed to seeing “through” multiple levels of visual reality ... . Roman portraits were ideological statements about social status, gender, and cultural values” (“Hair and the Artifice of Roman Female Adornment” *American Journal of Archaeology* 105 [2001], p. 22).

One study which identified the complexity of the problem that remained was the brief publication of J.L. Hilton and L.L.V. Matthews, also from 2008, entitled “Veiled or Unveiled (Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 267B-C)”.<sup>30</sup> Hilton and Matthews discussed the major discrepancy in the ancient literary evidence in our possession on head covering, that being between the accounts of Valerius Maximus and Plutarch on the divorce of a particular Sulpicius Gallus.<sup>31</sup> They interrogated the two accounts in depth, but were unable to resolve the discrepancy.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, they proposed that the “wider problem” of whether Roman women routinely covered their heads could not be addressed in the space of one short paper.<sup>33</sup> In response to Hilton and Matthews’ proposal, this thesis will examine a wider corpus of literary evidence than Hilton and Matthews considered, in order to investigate whether women routinely covered their heads and whether mentions of covering signified representations of ‘ideal’ womanhood.

### *Aphrodite’s Tortoise and the ‘Western’ discourse on head covering*

A few years prior to some of the above mentioned publications, Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones undertook a complete study of head covering in ancient Greece in his book *Aphrodite’s Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* in 2003. In *Aphrodite’s Tortoise*, Llewellyn-

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<sup>30</sup> J.L. Hilton and L.L.V. Matthews, “Veiled or Unveiled (Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 267B-C)” *The Classical Quarterly* 58 (2008), pp. 336-342. Published in the same year as Olson and Fantham, Hilton and Matthews did not have the benefit of these works (see “Veiled or Unveiled”, n. 20ff).

<sup>31</sup> Val. Max. 6.3.10; Plut. *RQ* 14 = *Mor.* 267C. The former states Sulpicius divorced his wife on the grounds that she went with an uncovered head in public, the latter stating instead that she was divorced for the opposite, that she covered herself in public.

<sup>32</sup> Hilton and Matthews, “Veiled or Unveiled”, p. 341, n.22. It is likely that the difference is not resolvable, and as such this case does not warrant in depth examination in the thesis.

<sup>33</sup> Hilton and Matthews, “Veiled or Unveiled”, p. 341, n.22, 342. However, Hilton and Matthews did highlight a minor discrepancy in MacMullen’s work regarding his interpretation of Plutarch referring to Greek women covering their heads, where Plutarch was actually referring to Roman women (n. 19, re: MacMullen “Woman in Public”, p. 208). If Hilton and Matthews are correct in their interpretation of Plutarch on this matter, it can be said they may have supported Olson’s theory on head covering being common amongst the elite.

Jones considered literary and archaeological evidence for head covering in Greece from 900 BC to AD 200, making it the most invaluable contribution to ancient historical studies of head covering to date.<sup>34</sup> The lack of a parallel study with regard to head covering in Rome has been made clear via the lens of Llewellyn-Jones' comprehensive work. It is within the spectrum of this gap and the current prescriptive view on head covering outlined earlier that this thesis seeks to make a contribution to knowledge on the topic.

Within *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, although Llewellyn-Jones focused on the Greek perspective on head covering practices, due to the temporal parameters of his research extending into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, he did provide some minor hypotheses on the practice of Roman head covering. In particular, Llewellyn-Jones asserted that depictions of head covering in Roman statuary art were "obviously a continuation of Greek device".<sup>35</sup> While the evidence he used to come to this conclusion rests outside the bounds of this thesis, his assertion presents a need for current research to address the socio-cultural variability of head covering between Greece and Rome. However, in order for this process to become possible, a definitive study of head covering in Rome is a priority.

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<sup>34</sup> Prior to Llewellyn-Jones, the earliest study of female head covering in Ancient Greece was undertaken by Caroline Galt in 1931. Galt's publication "Veiled Ladies" (*American Journal of Archaeology* 35.4 [1931], pp. 373-393) was an enormously influential paper for Llewellyn-Jones' (*Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 14) main thesis: "... that women in various ancient Greek societies were veiled daily and routinely, at least in public or in front of non-related men ... ."

<sup>35</sup> In this hypothesis, Llewellyn-Jones directly opposed Eve D'Ambra's 1993 work on the Frieze of the *Forum Transitorium* in Rome. D'Ambra had asserted that "as depicted in Attic vase-painting, the gesture of lifting the veil (to reveal the face) may indicate sexual availability ... in Roman art ... the gesture of drawing the veil (to cover the face) usually expresses modesty or chastity." (E. D'Ambra, *Private Lives, Imperial Virtues. The Frieze of the Forum Transitorium in Rome* (Princeton, 1993), p. 57 n. 29). On the basis of his theory concerning the "veil-gesture" in Greek depictions, Llewellyn-Jones asserts that for D'Ambra to propose differentiation between the practice among Greece and Rome is incorrect. However it should be noted that Llewellyn-Jones' opposition to D'Ambra on this issue only concerns one body of evidence. More investigation into alternate source material could yield a more complicated relationship of head covering between Greek and Roman culture.

In undertaking this study, Llewellyn-Jones' methodological and conceptual frameworks require review to determine which ones are appropriate for adaptation into the thesis. Methodologically, Llewellyn-Jones investigated a broad corpus of ancient evidence including archaeological, epigraphic and literary sources. Such an extensive corpus warrants reduction to fit the parameters of this thesis, as will be addressed in the following chapter. Conceptually, as one of the first ancient historical scholars to identify the relevance ancient head covering possesses to contemporary society, Llewellyn-Jones also made one of the first mentions of contemporary 'Islamophobia' as a reason behind the absence of a distinct study on head covering within ancient Greek dress.<sup>36</sup> While Sebesta had drawn attention to the presumptive nature of contemporary 'Western' perceptions of head covering in the 1990s, Llewellyn-Jones' framing of the problem was more direct.<sup>37</sup> However, Llewellyn-Jones' proposed solution to the "constructed ideologies" in the current scholarship was problematic, as although he positioned ancient Greece within the same geographical parameters as the "Oriental Other" he did not acknowledge the limitations of, nor challenges to, this constructed ideology which have been undertaken by the formative scholarship of thinkers such as Edward Said.<sup>38</sup> While he identified that previous scholarship avoided the topic of head covering due to Islamophobic tendencies, Llewellyn-Jones represented Islamic culture in a way which did not contest the presumptions behind

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<sup>36</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Sebesta, "Symbolism in the Costume of the Roman Woman", p. 48: "While to modern women of Western countries, the Middle Eastern custom of veiling women seems to signify social inequality and even inferiority, to modern women of the East it is a symbol of their honour and of the sanctity and privacy of their family life. In Islamic society today, respectable women veil to protect their honour and to signify their respectability". Llewellyn-Jones (*Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 6) however, stated "By acknowledging that Greek women might have been habitually veiled, classical scholarship would have to admit that ... constructed ideologies were increasingly encroaching on similar ideologies located in contemporary veil-societies, especially those of the Arab world".

<sup>38</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 7. Rather than undermining the cultural binary that exists in the prescription of geographical regions to 'East' and 'West', Llewellyn-Jones asserted that Greek culture possessed integrated characteristics of both civic openness and Eastern seclusion.

Islamophobia itself.<sup>39</sup> In Chapter Six, “Veiled and Ashamed”, Llewellyn-Jones stated that a “dread of female sexuality is at the core of Muslim culture where women are seen as having a more rapacious appetite for sex than men and are skilled in luring them away from the path of righteousness”, asserting this as one of the foremost reasons women are *made to* cover their heads in contemporary societies.<sup>40</sup> Similar anthropological and cultural perspectives on contemporary societies which Llewellyn-Jones employed throughout *Aphrodite’s Tortoise* resulted in parallel conclusions about ancient Greek society.<sup>41</sup> Within the conceptual framework of *Aphrodite’s Tortoise* this has led to an ‘othering’ of the ancient subject, relegating the ancient covered woman to what I will refer to in the thesis as a

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<sup>39</sup> A similar contention can be made in relation to the introductory passage of Fantham’s work (“Covering the Head at Rome”, p. 158), where, by using a closing example of Islamic fundamentalism, she limits the reader’s understanding of that culture to a singular presumptive view. More beneficial is the statement of Delaney (“Untangling the meanings of hair in Turkish society”, p. 53): “How quick we are to make inferences and judgements about a person’s morality, sexual orientation, political persuasion, or religious sentiments when we see a particular hairstyle! The meanings of hair are sometimes transcultural, but more often they are culturally specific – and even then they depend on the range of variations that are permitted and expressed in the particular culture. Abstract or general theories about hair are therefore not sufficient to interpret particular hairstyles or practices relating to hair; one must know quite a lot about the culture in order to do so”.

<sup>40</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite’s Tortoise*, p. 157. Haleh Afshar (“Development Studies and Women in the Middle East: The Dilemmas of Research and Development” in ed. H. Afshar, *Women in the Middle East: Perceptions, Realities and Struggles for Liberation* [London, 1993], p. 12.) has presented an alternate view of the reason for head covering in Islamic societies, to which the previously mentioned work by Sebesta is similar in conclusion (see n. 37 in this chapter): “Islam demands that its followers live modest and protected lives ... A curtain of modesty, *hejab*, parts both the women themselves and their spaces, and protects them from the immodest gaze of men ... the supporters of Islam argue that, far from being a symbol of oppression, the veil is liberating and empowering ... by wearing the veil women reclaim the right to become people, rather than sex objects”.

<sup>41</sup> See Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite’s Tortoise*, p. 12, 23-24, 42, 65-66, 110, 141-142 177-178, 301 and 315.

‘doubly in shadow’ representation, a concept which will be explained further in the following chapter.<sup>42</sup>

Post-colonial feminist scholars, namely Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Haleh Afshar and Meyda Yegenoglu have influenced my more critical reading of Llewellyn-Jones. In the 1980s and early 1990s Mohanty and Afshar sought to expose the assumptions relating to the reproduction of power relations that generalise and stereotype specific ways of seeing head coverings.<sup>43</sup> Mohanty, for example, questioned how *purdah* (the segregation of women) and head coverings functioned in ‘Western’ texts as a symbolic representation of the backwardness of ‘the East’ and the control of women.<sup>44</sup> In her 1998 work, *Colonial Fantasies. Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*, Yegenoglu adapted the framework of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* to disrupt ‘Western’ constructions of the other within a feminist framework of post-colonialism. Yegenoglu deconstructed Foucault’s and Bentham’s theoretical panopticon in light of the physical boundary that head coverings present to European categories of thinking.<sup>45</sup> According to Yegenoglu, head coverings simultaneously attract attention because of their difference from ‘Western’ expectations and reject the author’s enquiry because of their existence as a physical boundary between author and

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<sup>42</sup> G. Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in eds C. Nelson and L. Grossberg, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana and Chicago, 1988), p. 288.

<sup>43</sup> Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes”, pp. 74-75; Afshar, “Development Studies”, p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes”, p. 75: “To assume that the mere practice of veiling women in a number of Muslim countries indicates the universal oppression of women through sexual segregation is not only analytically reductive, but also proves to be quite useless when it comes to the elaboration of oppositional political strategy”.

<sup>45</sup> Yegenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies*, p. 41. Head coverings “can be seen as resisting data or tropology of this modern power whose program aims to construct the world in terms of a transparency provided by knowledge as power”. In accordance with this view, Yegenoglu (p. 43) frames her discussion to “consider the European’s immediate object of attention in the horizon of Muslim culture as *his* construct: the veiled woman is not simply an obstacle in the field of visibility and control, but her veiled presence also seems to provide the Western subject with a condition which is the inverse of Bentham’s omnipotent gaze”. See also M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A. Sheridan (New York, 1979), pp. 200-201.

subject.<sup>46</sup> These ideas presented in the likes of Mohanty, Afshar and Yegenoglu's works have not yet been adapted methodologically into the framework of ancient historical analysis concerning head covering. However, the temporal continuity of a topic such as head covering across culture and society presents an important opportunity to involve post-colonial feminist methodologies within the conceptual framework of this study.<sup>47</sup> In an effort to avoid the conceptual errors present in Llewellyn-Jones' work, the following chapter will critically review scholarship which exists within the 'Western' discourse on head covering.<sup>48</sup> The representational (orientalist) practice of scholars will also be reviewed in order to interrogate how they situate ancient female figures as 'other', especially with regard to head covering practices.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Yegenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies*, p. 46-47: "... this is a disturbance and obsession which they also strangely enjoy, leading to a textual dialectic which, with its rhetorical excess, gives rise to the tropology of the veil". This rejection takes on a sexual form in the consideration of Lacanian psychoanalysis and thus the veil is a fantastical '*object petit a*' to the orientalist viewer (p. 46): "Simultaneously attracting and repelling the subject, the veil occupies the place of the *object petit a*, the object causing desire in Lacanian psychoanalysis ... We have seen above how the veiled Oriental woman is given precisely such a status in Orientalist discourse. In Orientalist writing, *discourses of cultural and sexual difference are powerfully mapped onto each other*" (Yegenoglu's emphasis). Cf. J. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. A. Sheridan (New York and London, 1981), p. 105; J. Rose, "Introduction II" in eds J. Mitchell and J. Rose, *Feminine Sexuality, Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne* (London, 1987), pp. 35, 47-48.

<sup>47</sup> A. Richlin, "What We Need to Know Right Now" *Journal of Women's History* 22.4 (2010), p. 269.

<sup>48</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, numerous scholars have posited that there is a discourse on head covering in the 'West', which includes academic scholarship and items from the mainstream Western media from colonial and later eras that encompass the U.S. 'War on Terror'. For example, see Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes", pp. 61-88; M. Kahf, *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque* (Austin, 1999), pp. 1-2; M. Khalid, "Gender, Orientalism and Representations", pp. 15-29; and J. Auchter, "Reimagining the Burqa", *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 14.3 (2012), pp. 370-388.

<sup>49</sup> Afshar, "Development Studies", p. 3: "It is perhaps time to stand back and take a considered look at the available material ... at the writings of Western men, which almost obsessively concentrate on the veil ...".



## Review of terminology

The main term which requires review in this thesis topic is the word 'veil'. The lack of a standardised definition of this term has resulted in each scholar adopting their own meaning, with references to 'veiling', 'face-veiling' and 'head coverings', scattered throughout the modern scholarship. Of these, the term chosen can often refer to anything from covering of the head, to the face, or both without differentiation. Occasionally, scholars have further confused these terms when discussing adornments in addition to head coverings. For example, Fantham used the terms 'head covering', 'veil' and 'headgear' interchangeably while discussing confused usage of the terms *vittae* and *infulae* in the Latin literary evidence.<sup>50</sup> Some scholars including Sebesta and Olson, have used the contextual name of the garment in Latin or Greek (like *palla* [Latin] or *himation* [Greek]), defining when the garment was potentially used to 'veil' the woman in question.<sup>51</sup> In MacMullen's earlier publication, he used the term 'veiled' with a limited explanation of what this action entailed, and with no specification of the type of garment involved.<sup>52</sup> Hilton and Matthews, although careful for the most part to translate the Latin or Greek sources in the literal sense of 'her head covered', in some instances reverted to the terms 'veiled' or 'unveiled', implying that 'covering' and 'veiling' are interchangeable notions.<sup>53</sup> While the two notions of 'covering' and 'veiling' may appear not dissimilar, at times their symbolic implications render different interpretations. The problematic nature of this approach will be addressed in the following chapter.

Some scholars have suggested a definition of 'veil', but even these proposals remain contestable. In *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, Llewellyn-Jones stated that 'veil' should be used "to refer to any garment that covers the head or the face, while 'veiled' can refer to the covering of the head, the covering of the face, or the covering of the head *and* the face"

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<sup>50</sup> Fantham, "Covering the Head at Rome", pp. 158-171.

<sup>51</sup> Sebesta, "Symbolism in the Costume of the Roman Woman", p. 49; Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 35. See also, Goldman, "Reconstructing Roman Clothing", p. 228.

<sup>52</sup> MacMullen, "Woman in Public", p. 208, n.4: "'Veiling meant the head, only in Arabia the face as well'".

<sup>53</sup> Hilton and Matthews, "Veiled or Unveiled", p. 337ff.

noting that he would make “an attempt ... to mark out the differences as individual cases arise”.<sup>54</sup> This definition, however, causes some confusion throughout *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, as occasionally Llewellyn-Jones also adapts the names of modern Muslim garments as a replacement where the contextual name is not available or is confused in the ancient record.<sup>55</sup> Overall then, the lack of agreement within the current literature regarding definitions serves as an indication that terminology within this topic requires more consideration. For the sake of providing a clear methodological approach in the thesis, I have employed the term ‘head covering’ rather than ‘veil’, throughout, a methodological decision which is fully explained in the next chapter.

## Conclusion

This opening chapter has sought to define the parameters of the current scholarship on head coverings within the broader ancient historical discipline. Given the extensive work of Llewellyn-Jones on Greek female head covering, the main gap that can be identified in this scholarship lies within the treatment of Roman head covering practices. Scholars who have considered the topic have disagreed on whether literary sources for head covering were reflections of reality, or prescriptive for female categories. It is anticipated that by approaching this topic with a methodology that is informed by post-colonial feminism and gender studies, this disagreement and gap in the scholarship will be better addressed. An outline of this methodology follows in Chapter Two

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<sup>54</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 8. Douglas L. Cairns (“The Meaning of the Veil in Ancient Greek Culture” in ed. L. Llewellyn-Jones, *Women's Dress in the Ancient Greek World* [London, 2002], p. 73) proposed a similar definition to Llewellyn-Jones stating that ‘veiling’ constitutes a “covering the head, and sometimes also the face, with a garment”.

<sup>55</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 35, 41ff. Susan Olson (“*Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones” *The Classical World* 98.2 [2005], p. 232) has also made this criticism of Llewellyn-Jones, stating that “(he) uses the term “veil” for any sort of head covering, regardless of whether its primary intended purpose was to conceal the face, and his thesis is therefore less surprising than the title”.

## Chapter Two: Approach and methodology: language and the construction of identity

This chapter will outline the strategy of this project in terms of source selection, define key terms integral to the understanding of the thesis, and present the main theoretical frameworks that guide the topic of research. The previous methods scholars have adopted to address head covering have not utilised a uniform approach, so a primary issue within the existing scholarship is a lack of consistency when employing key terms and definitions to discuss 'covering'. It is my contention that these inconsistent definitions of head covering have, unintentionally, produced a variety of orientalist practices that 'other' the ancient woman.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, my methodology uses this basis of critique to establish a clear set of definitions and terms to be used throughout the thesis. Moreover, in using this set of definitions and terms I aim to avoid representation of the ancient covered woman, as has been coined by Spivak, as 'doubly in shadow'.<sup>2</sup> Thus, this chapter will explain the implications of the terms 'gender' and 'veil' in accordance with how certain modern scholars have invoked them, and I will provide my own definitions in response.

### Research strategy and selection of sources

Early imperial Rome (which I define as 31 BC – AD 68) will provide the temporal parameters of analysis for this research project. The early research I undertook for this thesis was primarily aimed at narrowing the timeframe which my research questions would address by seeking the most valuable ancient Roman sources. As the early research indicated the existence of a significantly higher number of linguistic examples referring to the practice of head covering from the early imperial period, the pilot study thus indicated this timeframe as the most appropriate. This period possesses a representational value in gauging the confluence of attitudes within Roman culture and a contextual value as consideration of

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<sup>1</sup> Yegenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies*, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" p. 288.

head covering is well suited against the background of Augustan social legislation, moral symbolism being implicit in both topics. Latin literary evidence from this period will yield a wide selection of interpretations of what formed Roman culture, 'culture' being defined by the "array of social roles, values, and ways of making meaning, which actors employ, depending on the resources and power available to them".<sup>3</sup> Within this definition of culture, those who produce ancient sources will be considered 'actors', who create texts (both visual and literary) which privilege and/or delegitimise 'values and ways of making meaning'.<sup>4</sup> Questioning the influences behind these actors' 'ways of making meaning' will allow the testing of my main hypothesis, namely that female head covering customs appear as socially prescribed within early imperial literature, but that this prescription functions within a broader discourse on attitudes to covering in the early imperial period.

The successful testing of this hypothesis depends on the methodological integrity of source selection within the thesis. In keeping with this aim, firstly, the temporal influences and genre will be considered for works composed in the early imperial period (whose content may concern that time or earlier). I shall use this information where possible to hypothesise about that author's attitude to head coverings. Secondly, with regard to later sources that mention Roman head covering practises (namely Plutarch's *Moralia*), analysis will be focused on the content of such works (the author's own contexts being taken into account prior to drawing conclusions). It should be noted here that sources in the second category will mainly be used for comparative purposes to the early imperial literature. Poetic and prose authors which fall into the first category include the likes of Tibullus, Sulpicia, Horace, Propertius, Virgil, Ovid, Valerius Maximus, Seneca the Elder, Lucan and Seneca the Younger, while references to head covering in the works of Plutarch, Pliny the Younger, Statius, Sextus Pompeius Festus, Servius and Isidore of Seville will be considered within the second.

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<sup>3</sup> Hylen, "Modest, Industrious, and Loyal", p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> J.W. Scott, "Deconstructing Equality-versus-Difference: Or, the Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism", in ed. S. Seidman, *The Postmodern Turn: New Perspectives on Social Theory* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 284. Texts as sources for analysis can be considered both visual and literary; an image, like words, can be 'read' for "utterances of any kind and in any medium, including cultural practices".

Within works of epic poetry, attention will be paid to instances of head covering where I believe the author deploys a female head covering gesture as an indicator of a contextually understood cultural practice or as a device to create emotive imagery. Given the content of early imperial texts, analysis of the corpus will mostly reflect elite classes. While the evidence will be skewed towards elite representations, I contend that careful dissection of the ancient authors' 'ways of making meaning' as part of a poststructural approach will allow for genuine insight into representations of female head covering.

### Formal analytical processes

In order to analyse the corpus of evidence outlined above, this project necessitates a formal analytical approach. The basic linguistic data collected and analysed in this thesis will come from word searches in Latin databases such as the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (TLL) for the terms *amictus*, *palla*, *infula*, *vitta*, *mitra* and *flammeum* (and their grammatical derivatives). The data will then be sorted into categories such as references to a garment as a 'plain' object (where its use is unspecified), as a 'significant' object (where the mention of the garment is more than a passing reference within in the evidence) and a 'specific' object (where the use is specified as covering or not covering the head of the protagonist). Once the examples are collected and categorised, the data will be analysed with the aim of identifying possible patterns and/or differences. The conclusions drawn from this data analysis and interpretation will form the body of discussion in the thesis. Within the discussion comparative examples from outside the early imperial period will be drawn in where appropriate to cement or challenge these conclusions. As this thesis considers female head covering explicitly, I will exclude most sources dealing with male head covering from the corpus except where there is need for a direct male/female comparison. Similarly, as the thesis has a categorical focus on literary evidence, I have omitted use of a statuary corpus. I anticipate that the bodies of evidence omitted by these last two selection criteria, that being the literary sources on male head covering, and the hitherto unstudied corpus of statuary evidence, will serve as appropriate areas for the expansion of my research in future projects.

## Key definitions and conceptual frameworks

How I interpret the selection of sources outlined above is a question governed by language; as the evidence is textual, my understanding and conclusions from that evidence will be relayed via textual discussion. Consideration of how language is employed to create identities and privilege or delegitimise ideas in texts as part of representational practice is not uncharted territory for historians.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, this practice must be continuously examined via the available lenses of literary, and in this case, feminist theory and critical enquiry.

Llewellyn-Jones, when discussing head covering in the ancient world, has not offered a consistent definition of 'gender', even though the term is consistently invoked as an explanatory tool for describing socially sanctioned cultural practice.<sup>6</sup> When Llewellyn-Jones employs 'gender' as a descriptive term to discuss head covering, it can most often be read as a synonym for 'women', wherein 'gender' is adopted to legitimise the study of 'women' in a scholarly format, a term which is not as politically volatile as 'women's studies'.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Llewellyn-Jones' implication that a definition of 'gender' is synonymous with 'women', represents socially constructed (often orientalist) identities. These identities prescribe which traits are normative for different gender categories. These 'proper' or 'ideal' gender roles relate to binary categories of 'men' and 'women'. Thus, texts which imply socially constructed identities produce 'women' who embody 'correct' normative

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<sup>5</sup> F. Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. Kaufmann, Walter (London, 1954), p. 458: "There can be no facts, only interpretations."

<sup>6</sup> For example, Llewellyn-Jones (*Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 3) offers the statement "... an understanding of veiling in Greek society can add to our knowledge of Greek social structure and especially to the perceptions of *gender* in Hellenic antiquity". Here, although Llewellyn-Jones is referring to the male perceptions and constructions of the female in antiquity, the word 'gender' in the statement could easily be replaced with the word 'women' to convey the same meaning. Accordingly Llewellyn-Jones' purpose in invoking 'gender' requires clarification, as is discussed within this chapter.

<sup>7</sup> J.W. Scott ("Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" in ed. J.W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* [New York, 1999], p. 31) has elicited this tendency as a problematic one in works of modern history and I extend her critique to the work of Llewellyn-Jones.

processes.<sup>8</sup> Discussions of head covering in ancient societies which retain 'gender' as an explanatory term, would thus benefit from a definition of 'gender' which has been outlined by feminist historians and theorists, where 'gender' is rethought as a category for analysis and defined as "an entire system of relations that may include sex, but is not directly determined by sex nor directly determining sexuality".<sup>9</sup> Thus, I adopt a definition of 'gender' as "a way of talking about systems of social or sexual relations".<sup>10</sup> Rather than assuming that male/female is 'natural' as to masculine/feminine; 'gender', should instead be used as an avenue to explore masculinity and femininity as socially constructed to count as 'man' and 'woman', where this construction gives "meaning to the organisation and perception of historical knowledge".<sup>11</sup>

In this thesis I will not be employing the term 'veil' as a descriptor for head covering. This is because language concerning the 'veil' in previous scholarship, like 'gender', has engaged in prescribing socially constructed meaning. For instance, although Llewellyn-Jones has

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<sup>8</sup> C. Sylvester, *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 4.

With the prescription of traits to socially constructed identities "men and women are the stories (or become the stories) that have been told about 'men' and 'women'"; Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 11: "[g]ender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex; gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which 'sexed nature' or 'a natural sex' is produced and established as 'prediscursive', prior to culture".

<sup>9</sup> Scott, "Gender", p. 32. Lynn Meskell ("Engendering Egypt" *Gender & History* 9.3 [1997], p. 597) has also noted the absence of 'gender' as a more complex category for analysis particularly in the field of Egyptological research concerning women: "... gender is not commensurate with the category *women*: men, children, the aged and so on must all be considered. Age, sex, class, status, sexual orientation, ethnicity, marital status and religion all intersect to produce variability and hierarchies of difference which must be addressed".

<sup>10</sup> Scott, "Gender", p. 41.

<sup>11</sup> Scott, "Gender", p. 31, 41. Penny Griffin ("Sexing the Economy in a Neo-liberal World Order: Neo-liberal Discourse and the (Re)Production of Heteronormative Heterosexuality", *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 9 [2007], pp. 223-224) has also presented the idea that 'gender' as a term should not be conceived as "a sex in any one way" and that the "mimetic relationship between masculinity and men, and femininity and women, is a socially constructed prescriptive norm for the discussion of 'gender' relations.

criticised former scholars who avoided the term 'veil' because of its "socio-political baggage", his own use of 'veil' when assigning a "dread of female sexuality" to the "core of Muslim culture" does little to distance the term from its politically volatile associations.<sup>12</sup> Some scholars have thus employed 'veil' as a term to assign traits to 'non-Western' peoples which confirms a 'Western' ideal of benevolence.<sup>13</sup> Contemporary historians' selection of modern anthropological comparisons, as mentioned in the previous chapter, often privilege 'Western' understandings that claim to definitively represent modern head covering societies. When adapting anthropological comparisons, ancient historians risk privileging the same assumptions within discussions of ancient head covering, effectively 'othering' the ancient subject to a status where it can only be accessed by the historian through a modern comparison, which may not even have cultural ties to an ancient subject.<sup>14</sup> This practice

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<sup>12</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 157.

<sup>13</sup> Yegenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies*, p. 121: "In other words, what the Western audience desires to hear is the native's own voice, the true and authentic story of the situation of women in Muslim societies, as opposed to the negative Orientalist stereotypes. This liberal desire to turn me into a native informant and thereby re-value the weak and the subjugated is the very gesture by which the sovereign Western subject constructs himself/herself as considerate and benevolent." It warrants noting here that by 'Western' I am not referring to a fixed geographical standpoint. More specifically, I employ a definition of 'Western' which is informed by the way texts treat the 'non-Western' subjects they identify. Texts that I consider 'western' embody notions that perpetuate themselves as 'western' by seeking to speak for groups of peoples on a contingent basis of ordered meaning. For example, Llewellyn-Jones (*Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 157) sets the 'veil' in Muslim contexts as a tool which "cultivates shame" reiterating a dichotomy of east equals bad and west equals good, wherein Muslim contexts are represented as facilitating 'bad' Eastern practices such as the oppression of women, reducing the nuanced influences of one culture to easily digestible concepts that fit the mould of accepted 'Western' cultural distinction.

<sup>14</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 157, 259ff. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Llewellyn-Jones' understanding of covering in ancient Greek society is clouded by his assumptions concerning modern head covering societies, which have leached into the conclusions he draws concerning ancient Greece. Llewellyn-Jones (p. 157) explicitly relates the Greek ideal of *aidos* (αἰδώς) with the Muslim notion of *fitna*: "The ancient Greek idea of feminine *aidōs*, the notion of respectful modesty with strong overtones of sexual shame, can be likened to the Bedouin concept of female *hasham* and the widespread Islamic notion of *fitna*, a conception that female sexuality could destabilize society unless successfully controlled and contained, a theme that is



exists in representations of the 'Oriental Other', a formative notion introduced by Edward Said which scholars such as Meyda Yegenoglu have since adapted to a feminist framework.<sup>15</sup> Yegenoglu's *Colonial Fantasies* has formed the basis of my approach in considering texts' (orientalist) construction of peoples and my critical review of modern scholars' 'fantasmatic obsession' with the 'veiled woman'.<sup>16</sup>

Within this review, I contend that historians, rather than choosing to undermine the 'male gaze' of the ancient source tradition, have, on occasion, perpetuated this format of 'looking' at covered women, where the act of 'looking' endows the observer with a sense of command over the covered subject.<sup>17</sup> It is my contention that this re-enactment of the

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particularly apparent in the ancient Greek sources as well". However, the concept of *fitna* in Muslim culture is far more complex than understood by Llewellyn-Jones, having meaning which extends beyond the realms of female sexuality; cf. "Fitna" in, ed. J.E. Campo, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New York, 2009), pp. 241-242. See also the review of Llewellyn-Jones' book by Larissa Bonfante: "But the author's insistence on this comparison, and on the oppression the custom stood for in the Greek world, leads to contradictions and generalizations. He is more eager to see direct parallels between ancient Greece and modern Islamic culture than to examine the various aspects of his stated subject, the veiling of Greek women in antiquity" ("Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 13.2 [2006] p. 287). Notable too, is this statement from Amy Richlin: "Any project involving power can fall into colonialism; we have to be careful not to colonize the past along with the Third World ..." ("Hijacking the Palladion" *Helios* 17.2 [1990], p. 177).

<sup>15</sup> E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1979), p. 2; "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'".

<sup>16</sup> Yegenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies*, p. 39.

<sup>17</sup> Cairns' ("The Meaning of the Veil", p. 73) hypothesis on ancient Greek female head covering practice is relevant here. He purports that "there is a degree of commonality in the diversity of the ways in which veiling may be manifested". Cairns' outlook supposes that male and female head covering behaviour in Greek texts is determined by their identification with the male or female sex, where ancient 'women' are always 'imperfect men' and thus always cover for reasons of shame or propriety (p.77). My critique of Cairns' manner of 'looking' at ancient women is undertaken in light of Richlin's (in ed. A. Richlin, *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome* [New York, 1992], p. xvi) suggestion that "... the very acts of gazing and of speaking are solely in the power of the controlling males, be they the producers, actors, characters, or spectators ... . Again reflecting unequal social dynamics, the gaze and the speech of the subject carry

‘male gaze’ perpetuates the sexual fantasy associated to head coverings, a trend that reached its peak in orientalist travel writing of the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, this fantasmic obsession manifests in some historians’ language when they employ the terms ‘veil’, ‘veiling’, or ‘veiled woman’.<sup>19</sup> The scholars using these terms represent not only the (true) situation of women’s sub-position in the ancient world, but place them at a double remove or, as coined by Spivak, ‘doubly in shadow’.<sup>20</sup> Thus in the thesis I draw attention to the ancient evidence as a means for mapping ‘gender’ as an interrelated structure with ‘culture’ while also avoiding terms such as ‘veil’ in order to represent the covered woman as

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authority, both the power of action and the right to possession ... . The subject enforces acts of nonlooking and nonspeaking upon the object, which then signify submission in the subject's view". In this case, Richlin's "subject" can be understood as the modern scholar who argues that there is a commonality to head covering practices determined strictly by gender, and who does not advocate for the existence of a broader discourse on head covering behaviours in ancient societies. The latter is the preferred approach throughout this thesis. Cf. B. Zweig, "The Mute Nude Female Characters in Aristophanes' Plays" in Richlin, *Pornography*, p. 86.

<sup>18</sup> Yegenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies*, p. 47: "Orientalist travel writing of the nineteenth century reveals that the ethico-political program of the Enlightenment in the East cannot be dissociated from a patriarchal subjectivity disturbed by the presence of the veiled woman, fading under her sign. As we learn from these writers, this is a disturbance and obsession which they also strangely enjoy, leading to a textual dialectic which, with its rhetorical excess, gives rise to the tropology of the veil. Such a rhetoric should be considered as an act of subjective incorporation, a transformation of difference into a manipulable and enjoyable object of discourse, hence providing the European with a sense of the fictive unity and command of his experience." Cf. Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 86.

<sup>19</sup> See for example, Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, pp. 259ff on "Veiling the Polluted Woman". Cf. M. Mehdid, "A Western Invention of Arab Womanhood: The 'Oriental' Female" in ed. H. Afshar, *Women in the Middle East: Perceptions, Realities and Struggles for Liberation* (York, 1993), p. 24: "The veiled female is consequently sexualised and the cultivations of the connotations attached to her sexuality evolves according to the dichotomy of 'femme fatale'/submissive female. To these ideas is added another offensive notion about Eastern degeneracy as expressed by the belief that perverted practices were the norm inside the harem".

<sup>20</sup> Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" p. 288.

a legitimised figure of the ancient record rather than a romanticised oriental ‘other’, who “... could peer from behind her veil. But not too far...”.<sup>21</sup>

Aside from the volatile symbolic implications of the term ‘veil’, this term also possesses a logistical complexity. As discussed in the previous chapter, the multitude of ways ‘veil’ has been employed across scholarship to mean covering of the head, the face, or both without differentiation, causes confusion in the current literature on this topic.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, I will not be using ‘veil’ as a term in the thesis. Garments which did cover the head in Rome (and in Greece) were actually often part of another item of clothing.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, in the thesis I will employ the original Latin terms for those garments and adornments (as outlined above in the formal analysis) such as *amictus*, *palla*, *infula*, *vitta*, *mitra* or *flammeum*, and where possible accompany these with specifications of which part of the body that garment is covering, for example, ‘head covering’ ‘shoulders covering’ and ‘face covering’. This approach will be especially relevant to consideration of references to *capite velato*, as often in the literature the particular garment used to cover the head is not named. The inherent aim of this approach is to adopt a framework of terminology that avoids the terms ‘veiling’ and ‘covered’ becoming confused by eliminating the term ‘veil’ altogether.<sup>24</sup> Usage of the

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<sup>21</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite’s Tortoise*, p. 208. Yegenoglu further identifies the romanticised oriental ‘other’ as a ‘Western’ construction: “Surely, the veiled woman is already other-ed in her own culture, gender-ed in and by a particular form of dressing, but she is other to the Western subject in a way that differs from her position relative to the dominant male subjects of her culture” (*Colonial Fantasies*, p. 41).

<sup>22</sup> Some authors have attempted to resolve the confusion while still using ‘veil’ in their terminology. The nuanced vocabulary adopted by Near Eastern scholar Matitahu Tsevat, who supposes that the head can be “covered ... but not veiled”, is relevant (“The Husband Veils a Wife [Hittite Laws, Sections 197-98]” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 27.4 [1975], p. 238, 238 n. 12). Tsevat’s terminology certainly provides a clearer expression of the differences between kinds of covering. However, in order to avoid the terms ‘veiling’ and ‘covered’ becoming confused, using the standard term of ‘covered’, defining this further as circumstances arise, appears the most appropriate solution.

<sup>23</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite’s Tortoise*, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Of course, there will be instances where modern studies may provide interpretations of the ancient text. These historians, as discussed in the literature review, may already have employed the term ‘veil’ in their work. While they will be quoted accurately in the thesis, I will, however, aim to explain what the scholar

relevant Latin or Greek term will allow us to keep as close to the physical circumstances of 'covering' as possible in any descriptions in the ancient record.

## Conclusion

This chapter has set out the conceptual framework of the thesis and the way in which previous scholarly methodologies have either been critiqued or adapted. A clear definition of 'gender' derived from feminist historians and theorists has drawn attention to the ways in which some modern texts privilege or delegitimise images of women in ancient representations, leading to a concomitant critique of the way some of these texts view covered women with a 'male gaze'. The avoidance of the term 'veil' has been explained for reasons of symbolic and methodological clarity, the usage of original Latin and Greek terms forming the basis of a practical methodological approach. I have chosen the early imperial period to serve as the temporal parameter for the study, as this will allow the interrogation of these terms to consider the moral implications of head covering against the background of the Augustan era. The question of early imperial literature being mainly prescriptive in nature, as outlined in the previous chapter, will be addressed throughout the thesis as I seek to investigate representations of female head covering. As a component to this question, prescriptive literary evidence will be considered as a possible indicator of an 'ideal' woman existing within early imperial Rome. This will assist to interrogate my hypothesis that female head covering customs appear as socially prescribed within early imperial literature, but that this prescription functions within a broader discourse on attitudes to covering in the early imperial period.

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means in these instances when they employ the term 'veil' via the use of footnotes and the use of my own established set of terms used to discuss head covering.

### Chapter Three: Early imperial poetry: the *amictus*, *palla*, and the 'deviant' versus 'ideal' female.

*'... Aut quicquam mihi dulce meorum  
te sine, frater, erit? O quae satis ima dehiscat  
terra mihi Manisque deam demittat ad  
imos?' Tantum effata caput glauco contextit amictu  
multa gemens et se fluvio dea condidit alto.*

"Can anything be sweet to me without you my brother? Oh what deepest earth can gape enough for me, and send me down, a goddess, to the nethermost shades?' So saying she covered her head in mantle of grey, and with many a cry of grief, plunged into the deep river".<sup>1</sup>

Virg. *Aen.* 12.882-886

This chapter will consider representations of head covering gestures amongst Roman elite women and mythological figures within early imperial epic and elegy. As the number of these representations of head covering is limited, the following analysis will make use of a broader sample of evidence that includes sources where garments are mentioned without clarification of how they were worn. For instance, Virgil mentions the *palla* (among other garments) several times in the *Aeneid* as an item of clothing, but often without specifying which parts of the body of a protagonist the garment covered (namely the shoulders, head, or face). These mentions warrant consideration as they often form patterns that provide information about the author's attitude to the garment and by extension, covering

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<sup>1</sup> Amended Loeb translation.

gestures. These patterns will shape the following discussion and allow for focus on portrayals of the ideal and deviant female in the texts.

Special attention will be drawn to the emotional meaning that head covering gestures can sometimes convey. For instance, rather than simply being a display of cultural practice or an indication of a religious rite, Juturna's act of head covering before her suicide (quoted above) has, like some other references to head covering garments in early imperial poetry, an emotional significance.<sup>2</sup> In order to determine the connection between the emotive value of the scene and the head covering gesture, consideration of the author's possible intention regarding the passage alongside the broader historical context is critical. By comparing this scene with instances of head covering gestures across early imperial epic and elegy, insights into the construction of the ideal female in the early imperial period become apparent and allow a socio-cultural analysis. Thus overall, this chapter will analyse the aforementioned patterns concerning covering garments in early imperial poetry in order to facilitate further discussion of head covering gestures. More broadly, this discussion will draw upon literary criticism and systems of gender analysis to interpret the literary evidence.

The completeness of this discussion is, of course, dependent on the sample of authors and works selected for investigation. As Virgil's *Aeneid* possesses the most references to female head covering in early imperial poetry, this text will be the focus of discussion. Of the garments mentioned within the *Aeneid*, those chiefly associated with female head covering are the *amictus* and *palla*, and the headbands (adornments) called *infulae* and *vittae*.<sup>3</sup> In

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<sup>2</sup> And as such, "... it may be right to yield ... to this subjective response, however personal, because the power to evoke such (a) response, often highly personal, is a peculiar virtue of Virgil's poetry" (W.A. Camps, *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid* [London, 1969], p. 7).

<sup>3</sup> Although the Greek *chlamys* is frequently encountered in the *Aeneid*, it is chiefly associated with men and never appears to function as a head covering for either men or women. For this reason the *chlamys* has been excluded from further analysis. Notably, the *chlamys* is mentioned once in the *Aeneid* in relation to the category of women, in the case of the female protagonist Dido (4.137). Francesca Santoro L'Hoir (*Tragedy, Rhetoric, and the Historiography of Tacitus' Annales* [Michigan, 2006], p. 132) has asserted that in this

other early imperial texts, namely the Elder Seneca's *Suasoriae* and Lucan's *Pharsalia*, the *mitra* and *flammeum* are encountered respectively as female head coverings. Accordingly, this chapter will present the literary evidence relevant to these garments and adornments in five separate sections (*infulae* and *vittae* being discussed in one section). As regards the evidence, points for comparison as to how these garments functioned in early imperial poetry will be drawn from works roughly contemporary with the *Aeneid*, namely the works of Tibullus, Propertius, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan, as well as the slightly later Statius.

As poets under patronage in early imperial Rome, the aforementioned works of Tibullus, Propertius, Virgil, Horace, Ovid and Lucan echoed the political and moral climate of the Augustan age and that which followed.<sup>4</sup> Their allusions to, and depictions of, the ideal in the early imperial period provide rich material for historians to engage in gendered analysis. On occasion, the author portrays deviant female protagonists, wherein a character's traits are prescribed as unusual for their gender category. That character's deviation from the 'correct' normative process implies a socially constructed 'ideal' and allows a gender hierarchy to be inferred. The fact that 'deviant' female characters are associated with particular head covering gestures within early imperial epic will be especially relevant to the discussion that follows. Moreover, the prescriptive qualities of the texts identified will be considered in relation to their portrayal of ideal and deviant protagonists, in order to assert that these depictions may be better interpreted as part of a more broad discourse on head

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instance, Virgil uses the *chlamys* to characterise Dido as "his own *dux femina*" (p. 132), wherein the garment is employed to endow Dido with masculine characteristics similar to the manner in which it adorns male warriors in the *Aeneid* and other Latin and Greek texts. Cf. Hor. *Epist.* 1.17.27-32; Ov. *Met.* 5.51; Vir. *Aen.* 3.482-5, 5.250-5, 8.167, 8.585-91, 9.582, 11.774-7; Plin. *HN.* 5.62; Plut. *Per.* 35, *Lys.* 13, *Demet.* 42; Juv. 5.51.

<sup>4</sup> R.O.A.M. Lyne, "Augustan Poetry and Society", in eds J. Boardman, J. Griffin, and O. Murray, *The Oxford History of the Classical World* (Oxford and New York, 1991), p. 594ff.

covering and clothing that “often specified an ideal moral system, (and) not necessarily moral practice”.<sup>5</sup>

### The *amictus*

Varro (*Ling.* 5.132) noted that the *amictus* was a garment “named because it is *ambiectum* ‘thrown about,’ that is, *circumiectum* ‘thrown around’ ...” (... *dictum quod a<m>biectum est, id est circumiectum* ...). He also described the *amictus* as an outer covering garment for women (though not specifically for the head).<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, as Olson argues, *amictus* might be identified as another name for a *palla*, as both terms denote a wrap or outer covering garment.<sup>7</sup> However, as will be outlined in this section and in the following section on the *palla*, there are nuanced differences in the treatment of these two garments within early imperial poetry. These differences are noticeable when two factors are considered, firstly, the gender of the wearer of the garment and secondly, whether or not the garment is represented as covering the protagonist’s head.

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<sup>5</sup> Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 11. Cf. Hylen, “Modest, Industrious, and Loyal”, p. 5. Hylen views prescriptive material as part of a cultural repertoire, a perspective that will be engaged with in more detail in the following chapter.

<sup>6</sup> Var. *Ling.* 5.132: “... that with which women envelop themselves after they are dressed” (... *a quo etiam quo vestitas se involvunt, circumiectui appellant* ...). Festus (26.4L) echoes Varro’s description of the *amictus* in his definition of the *amiculum*: “The *amiculum* is a kind of garment, so called because it wraps round ...” (*Amiculum genus [est] vestimenti, a circumiectu dictum* ...). It might be noted that Festus does not mention the ‘*amictus*’ explicitly. Compared to *amictus*, *amiculum* is a term rarely found in early imperial and republican literature. The garment was commonly associated with prostitutes (Hor. *Epist.* 1.17.3; Liv. 27.4.10, 34.7.3; Val. Max. 5.2.1; Vell. 2.80.4; Suet. *Cal.* 33). Although Varro does not provide a separate definition of *amiculum* in *De Lingua Latina*, he is clearly aware of the term as was Cicero (*De Orat.* 2.240; cf. Var, *Men.* 432, frg. Non. p. 550.1). It is possible that by Festus’ time in the second century AD the association of the term *amiculum* with prostitutes was starting to change as the later Isidore of Seville (*Etym.* 19.25.5) notes that the *amiculum* in his day in Spain served as “a mark of respectability” (*honestatis*). Cf. Cic. *Phil.* 1.18.44; Mart. 2. 39, 10.52; Juv. 2.68; Sebesta, “Symbolism in the Costume of the Roman Woman”, p. 53, n. 50.

<sup>7</sup> Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 51.



Within the *Aeneid*, two of the twelve mentions of the *amictus* refer to garments of female protagonists. Only one of these instances (quoted at the beginning of this chapter) is linked to a female deity, Juturna, who covers her head with the garment before committing suicide (*Aen.* 12.882-886). In his contribution to Sebesta and Bonfante's edited collection *The World of Roman Costume*, Henry Bender analysed the term *amictus* and the associated suicide of Juturna in comparison to other usages in the *Aeneid*. Bender assigned the *amictus* to a higher level of symbolic significance than the *palla*, as the protagonists associated with this garment in the *Aeneid* possess "high profiles rather than the commonplace roles in the poem".<sup>8</sup> Where the reader expects to see the female protagonists Amata and Juturna wearing the *palla* as a "traditional female" head covering garment, Virgil employs the *amictus*.<sup>9</sup> Female characters are, as Bender argues, thus elevated to a place of prominence in the *Aeneid* via the *amictus* which the *palla* may not have afforded them. This is paralleled in Ovid's description of Circe in *Metamorphoses* (14.261-263), where the sorceress is depicted adorned in both a *palla* and *amictus*, yet the *amictus* rests "above" (*insuper*). In this instance, Ovid indicates that the *amictus* acts as a head covering rather the *palla*.<sup>10</sup> Given the importance of Circe to Ovid's narrative (as the sorceress who transforms Scylla into a monster out of jealousy), it is possible that in this instance the use of the term *amictus* could serve the same purpose of elevating a character as in Virgil's *Aeneid*. However, Ovid's elevation of Circe to a higher profile in *Metamorphoses* has markedly different implications to that of Juturna's emotional scene in the *Aeneid*.<sup>11</sup> Rather than an

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<sup>8</sup> Bender, "De Habitu Vestis", p. 149.

<sup>9</sup> Bender, "De Habitu Vestis", p. 149.

<sup>10</sup> It remains unclear as to how the *palla* is worn in this instance, except to say that it is an outer garment: "She sat in beautiful retreat on her throne of state, clad in a gleaming purple *palla*" (*pulchro sedet illa recessu/sollemni solio pallamque induta nitentem*) (*Ov. Met.* 14.261-262).

<sup>11</sup> Alison Keith (*Engendering Rome. Women in Latin Epic* [Cambridge, 2000], p. 49) has noted of Circe's portrayal in the *Aeneid* that, Circe's "territory offers ... a landscape that hints at the dangerous pleasures of female sexuality". Ovid's depiction of the danger Circe presents to the other male protagonists in his *Metamorphoses* similarly underlines the perils of untamed female sexuality: "Ovid goes to the other extreme: he will give his readers not only the ... eyewitness account of Odysseus's (hitherto unknown) comrade

emphasis of what may be viewed as an idealised female expression of grief, the elevation of Circe's profile within Ovid's narrative vis-à-vis the *amictus* serves as an indication of the danger she represents to male protagonists. Nevertheless, Ovid does not always associate the *amictus* with higher profile protagonists. Throughout the remainder of *Metamorphoses* the garment is linked to named and unnamed characters of varying status. Accordingly, this hypothesis warrants testing within the broader context of Ovid's body of work (for which see pp 43-45 in this chapter).

Nevertheless, accepting that Bender's hypothesis is valid with respect to the *Aeneid*, it should be noted that Bender also proposed that Virgil's mention of the *amictus* in relation to higher profile characters was for the sake of linking three protagonists who die while wearing it, namely Amata, Juturna and Pallas.<sup>12</sup> As an extension to Bender's hypothesis, it should be noted that for two of the characters within this trio (Pallas and Juturna, one male and one female) the garment serves as a head covering. After Pallas' death, Aeneas covered his hair with the *amictus* (11.77)<sup>13</sup>, and Juturna at the news of her brother Turnus' death to come, "... covered her head in mantle of grey, and with many a cry of grief, plunged into the deep river" (*effata caput glauco contextit amictus multa gemens et se fluvio ... condidit alto*; 12.885-86). Given that a head covering gesture was placed at these two climactic moments

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Macareus but also a preliminary piece of sorcery – Circe's metamorphosis of Scylla into the sea monster – and a tailpiece set nearer to Rome." (E. Fantham, *Ovid's Metamorphoses* [Oxford, 2004], p. 10).

<sup>12</sup> Bender, "*De Habitu Vestis*", p. 149: "Amata and Juturna, are characterised as those who are unable to live in a world with Trojans. They die wrapped in the garment which, as it was worn by Aeneas when he first landed in Italy, symbolises the arrival and thus, metaphorically, the birth of Trojans in their world".

<sup>13</sup> There is however, contention with regard to this passage. Although it is clear that Pallas' head was covered, it is not certain whether one garment (the *amictus*) was used for that purpose and another type of robe (*vestis*) for covering his body, or, if the same garment, i.e. the *amictus*, was used to cover both his head and his body. As Gransden has pointed out, although Servius assumes that Aeneas covered Pallas' body in a *vestis* and his head in an *amictus* (Serv. *In. Aen.* 11.76), this is not clear in the Virgilian text (*Virgil Aeneid Book XI* [Cambridge, 1991], p. 77 s.v. 11.76-77); cf. T.E. Page, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Lib. XI* [London, 1927], p. 43, s.v. 77: "One robe was clearly wrapped around the corpse, another laid over it". Thus, although it can be determined that the *amictus* was used to cover the head in this instance, it cannot be said with certainty whether the same garment covered Pallas' body as well.

within the *Aeneid*, not only does the *amictus* appear linked with higher profile characters in the *Aeneid* as Bender posits, but the garment as a head covering seems to be associated with a mortuary theme applicable to both male and female categories.<sup>14</sup> This association is unsurprising in light of Varro's comments (*De Vita in Non.* 869L) that by his time the *ricinium*, a head covering worn by women during "adversity and mourning ..." (*mulieres in adversis ...*) was called an *amictus* (*Ling.* 5.132).<sup>15</sup>

Some commentators have thus maintained that in the context of early imperial poetry, the *amictus* was used as a literary device to denote head covering gestures as universally understood expressions of grief or shame. Llewellyn-Jones and Richard Tarrant have discussed the Greek origins of depictions of the *amictus* (and its Greek equivalent, the *peplos* or *himation*) in visual settings, such as the painted representations of Agamemnon

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<sup>14</sup> R. Tarrant, *Virgil Aeneid Book XII* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 317, s.v. 12.885.

<sup>15</sup> "Those of very long ago called a wrap a *ricinium* 'mantilla'; it was called *ricinium* from *reicere* 'to throw back,' because they wore it doubled, throwing back one half of it over the other" (*Antiquissimi amictui ricinium; id quod eo utebantur duplici, ab eo quod dimidiam partem retrorsum iaciebant, ab reiciendo ricinium dictum*). Cf. Isid. *Etym.* 19.23.4. This association may explain the absence of *ricinium* in early imperial poetry in favour of *amictus*, especially in mourning contexts (i.e. Luc. 9.109). Varro (*In Non.* 882L) also says that other garments could be worn by women in mourning contexts, namely a dark *palla* (*pullis palliis*). Nevertheless it is evident from Varro (*Ling.* 5.130) and Festus (343.9L) that the *ricinium* and the smaller *rica* were head coverings worn explicitly by females and had a distinct association with ritual; *rica* being from *ritus*, "because according to the Roman *ritus*, when women make a sacrifice, they cover their heads" (*quod Romano ritu sacrificium feminae cum faciunt, capita velant*; Varr. *Ling.* 5.130). For the *rica* as part of the costume of the *flaminica Dialis* see J.H. Vanggaard, *The Flamen: A Study in the History and Sociology of Roman Religion* (Copenhagen, 1988), p. 93. It might be noted that as the sizes of either the *rica* or *ricinium* are relatively unknown, how much smaller the *rica* was compared to the *ricinium* is uncertain (Olson, "Dress and the Roman Woman", p. 53). Festus (369.1L) provides a brief description, noting that "the *rica* is a square, fringed, purple garment, which *flaminicae* use as a small coat. Others say the name comes from the fact that it is made of white wool still greasy, and because free-born virgins make it, and it is dyed with a blue colour" (*Rica est vestimentum quadratum, fimbriatum, purpureum, quo flaminicae pro palliolo utebantur. Alii dicunt, quod ex lana fiat sucida alba, quod conficiunt virgines ingenuae, patrimae, matrimae, cives, et inficiatur caeruleo colore*).

covering his head at the sacrifice of Iphigenia.<sup>16</sup> Llewellyn-Jones states that by covering Agamemnon's head, "the artist skilfully ... allowed spectators of the scene to imagine a grief more intense and desperate than could be conveyed by conventional means".<sup>17</sup> The parallels of this visual representation to the emotive literary depiction of Juturna's head covering before her suicide indicate that this kind of gesture, whether visual or literary, may have resonated across audiences of varying cultural and temporal backgrounds.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the Virgilian insertion of the Latin *amictus* in the imagery of Juturna's suicide instead of the Greek *peplos* or *himation* (which may have been expected if Virgil wished to emphasise the connection to Greek practices) might indicate that Juturna's head covering gesture served as a Roman literary adaptation of the visual Greek device.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, pp. 301-303; Tarrant, *Book XII*, p. 317, s.v. 12.885.

<sup>17</sup> *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, pp. 301-303. As noted by Llewellyn-Jones (p. 302), familiarity with this scene from the Roman perspective is evident in a wall painting from the House of the Tragic Poet at Pompeii, where "on the edge of the Roman composition stands Agamemnon, his face and head veiled by a robe". However, it is worth noting that if Juturna's covering gesture echoes Greek grieving practice, it is a quite possibly a male custom. As Llewellyn-Jones has shown, in most of the Greek literary evidence on head coverings, women are referred to as uncovering their heads out of grief, while men are portrayed doing the opposite (*Aphrodite's Tortoise*, pp. 298-307). If Juturna's action echoes a custom familiar to Greek men and this was understood by the Roman audience then one could argue that her *amictus* has been employed to elevate her status to equal that of a man within the epic. Nevertheless, this instance of Juturna's head covering may also be indicative of ideal female grieving practices outside funerary contexts, a notion that will be fully explored in the first section of Chapter Four.

<sup>18</sup> Although it cannot be determined exactly which head covering garment is being displayed in any of the visual representations of Agamemnon at the sacrifice of Iphigenia, if a head covering gesture such as this was familiar to the Romans from earlier Greek contexts, this could have inspired Virgil to include a similar gesture in the *Aeneid*. The same could be said for Livy (4.12.11), who writes concerning the famine during the consulship of Proculus Geganius Macerinus and Lucius Menenius Lanatus "that many of the plebeians lost hope, and sooner than suffer torment by prolonging their existence, covered up their heads and threw themselves into the Tiber" (*multi ex plebe, spe amissa, potius quam ut cruciarentur trahendo animam, capitibus obuolutis se in Tiberim praecipitauerunt*).

<sup>19</sup> Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 302.

A second example of this possible Roman literary adaptation is evident in Ovid's *Fasti* (2.817-820), where Lucretia conceals herself out of shame prior to her suicide:

*utque vident habitum, quae luctus causa, requirunt,  
cui paret exsequias, quove sit icta malo?  
illa diu reticet pudibundaque celat amictu  
ora: fluunt lacrimae more perennis aquae.*

“When they saw her plight, they asked why she mourned, whose obsequies she was preparing, or what ill had befallen her. She was long silent, and for shame hid her face in her robe: her tears flowed like a running stream”.<sup>20</sup>

Given that both Virgil and Ovid depict Juturna and Lucretia as engaging in a head covering gesture wearing the same garment before their respective suicides, the similarities between the two passages cannot be ignored. As Livy does not note any head covering gesture on Lucretia's part in his account of the episode (Liv. 1.57-59), the presence of the gesture in Ovid's depiction may be explained by the artistic nature of his (and Virgil's) poetic genre.<sup>21</sup>

However, in the case of Ovid's depiction of Lucretia, the head covering gesture may also be explained as an example of the “enforced silencing of women”, a device characteristic of

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<sup>20</sup> The Loeb translation of Sir James George Frazer given above (1959 ed.) renders *ora* as ‘face’. While *ora* can be translated as an ‘extremity’ or ‘margin’, applying this term to the body suggests that *ora* should be translated as ‘head’ or ‘face’. Although the sense of concealment is provided by *celat*, whether its meaning here is intended to depict covering of the head or the face, or both, remains somewhat ambiguous within the context of the passage.

<sup>21</sup> This further emphasises the possibility of this gesture serving as a Roman literary adaptation of the Greek visual device. Cf. Llewellyn-Jones (*Aphrodite's Tortoise*, pp. 283-314), who notes Greek ‘conspicuous’ head covering gestures as those which, sometimes as an expression of grief or despair, are made to draw attention to the wearer.

Ovidian narrative.<sup>22</sup> Lucretia's head covering gesture, when viewed within Ovid's description of her rape and suicide more broadly, serves as a literary device that draws attention to her enforced silence and depicts her as a covered 'other'. It should be noted that the perspective given is that of the onlooker while Lucretia's actions are depicted in the third person. As here the readers view the events from the perspective of Lucretia's rapist, they are forced by Ovid to play a role in her silencing vis-à-vis the enactment of a male gaze.<sup>23</sup> The idealisation of Lucretia in Latin literature as the chaste 'ideal' female is notable, and thus in Ovid's account the *amictus* appears to serve a twofold purpose, firstly, denoting the head covering gesture as a literary device for an idealised expression of grief or shame and, secondly, as a manifestation of Ovid's phallogentric silencing of Lucretia before her death.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> P. Keegan, "Feminea Lingua in Ovid's *Fasti*" in ed. G. Herbert-Brown, *Ovid's Fasti: Historical Readings at its Bimillennium* (Oxford, 2002), p. 130. Llewellyn-Jones (*Aphrodite's Tortoise*, pp. 269-274) also asserts that the origins of head covering gestures being used to silence women are found in ancient Greek practices. Notably, his study does not discuss the presence of the male gaze in this silencing, emphasising rather, the use of the physical nature of head coverings to silence women in Greek plays, namely Aristophanes' *Frogs* (908-920) and *Lysistrata* (476-613). Later evidence for this attitude to covering is also present in Paul's letters to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11.2-16).

<sup>23</sup> On this feminist reading of the passage, Peter Keegan ("Feminea Lingua in Ovid's *Fasti*", p. 151) states "By placing Lucretia's thoughts in the third person, and on the cusp of subjunctive will and desire, Ovid affords himself and his audience access to a psychological omniscience – the thoughts and verbal activities of hunter and prey rarely entertained ...". By comparison, in *Pharsalia* (9.51-109), Lucan imagines the lament of Pompey's wife Cornelia, who after the death of her husband, reproaches the goddess Fortuna and covers her head with an *amictus* as an expression of grief. Her speech is lengthy and Lucan takes pains to sympathise with Cornelia's plight, endowing her with the agency to firstly, address a goddess in the first person and, secondly, to cover her head in order to endure darkness: "and, clasping closely to her cruel sorrow, she makes tears her joy and loves her grief in place of her husband" (*Decrevitque pati tenebras ... / Delituit: saevumque arte complexa dolorem/Perfruitur lacrimis, et amat pro coniuge luctum*; 9.110-112). Lucan's representation of Cornelia as the 'ideal' mourning widow in this passage thus stands in stark contrast to Ovid's treatment of Lucretia.

<sup>24</sup> B.S. Spaeth, *The Roman Goddess Ceres* (Austin, 1996) p. 115: "The story was popular throughout the history of Latin literature, further indicating the importance the Romans placed on the virtue of female chastity, at least for women of the upper class". Regarding Lucretia's *pudicitia*, see R. Langlands, *Sexual Morality in*

The latter is consistent with contemporary feminist *re-readings* of Ovid's *Fasti*, where the use of gender as a category of analysis has exposed the sexual and sensual tendencies that are pervasive in this text and in Ovidian narrative more broadly.<sup>25</sup>

As the function of the *amictus* in the Ovidian context is multi-dimensional, so too is the function of the garment in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Considering further the details of Virgil's reference to Juturna, there is an additional significance in his mention of her *amictus* that is relevant to her role as a Roman goddess. The green-grey colour (*glaucus*) of Juturna's *amictus*, which is a customary form of dress for a river goddess, is indicative of Virgil's intention to convey a symbolic link to the river Tiber within Juturna's grieving.<sup>26</sup> There is a parallel in the visual depictions on the Tellus panel of the *Ara Pacis*, which portray goddesses of water with unspecified garments floating above their heads.<sup>27</sup> It is plausible too, that a Roman audience would have understood Virgil's allusion to the river Tiber. This may have provided a significantly more Roman perspective to Juturna's grief. If the audience's familiarity with the allusion to the river Tiber is considered with the emotive value of the scene, the passage more broadly can be interpreted as an expression of grief that employs imagery and symbolism to evoke emotion.<sup>28</sup>

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*Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 276; cf. E. Fantham, "The *Fasti* as a Source for Women's Participation in Roman Cult" in ed. Herbert-Brown, *Ovid's Fasti*, p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> Keegan, "Feminea Lingua in Ovid's *Fasti*", p. 153; cf. A. Keith, "Sexuality and Gender" in ed. P.E. Knox, *A Companion to Ovid* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 355-369; and the collection of papers in *Helios* 17.2 (1990), in particular, Richlin, "Hijacking the Palladion", pp. 175-85; J. Hallett, "Contextualising the text: The Journey to Ovid", pp. 187-195; L. Cahoon, "Let the Muse sing on: Poetry, Criticism, Feminism and the Case of Ovid", pp. 197-211.

<sup>26</sup> R.D. Williams, *The Aeneid of Virgil: Books 7-12* (London, 1973), p. 502, s.v. 12.885; see also Bender, "De *Habitu Vestis*", p. 149: "a similarly grey wrapping ... visually links her to the Tiber". Cf. Stat. *Silv.* 1.3.71.

<sup>27</sup> Tarrant, *Book XII*, p. 317, s.v. 12.885.

<sup>28</sup> This scene is paralleled in Amata's death, where the protagonist commits suicide using her *amictus* as a noose (*Aen.* 12.595-603). Similarities of Juturna's speech before her suicide too, are evident in the earlier actions of Dido in the epic (*Aen.* 4.590ff), where "in each case an irredeemably wronged woman hurls ... imprecations against her lover" (T. Gregory, *From Many Gods To: Divine Action in Renaissance Epic* [London,

However, the use of the *amictus* is not limited to mortuary contexts in early imperial poetry. Among other poetic works, especially those of the elegiac genre, the *amictus* is employed across varying circumstances (although it is not always clear that it covers the head). In his *Elegies* (2.23.13-14), Propertius mentions a female persona who purposefully “walks at large, her cloak cast back from her head, and gladdens the eye, hedged in by no threatening guardian” (*contra, reiecto quae libera vadit amictu/custodum et nullo saepta timore, placet*). Here, a rejection of public morality is evident in Propertius’ statement; when the female is uncovered, the author takes pleasure in the act. This rejection can be explained by the tendency of elegists to express preference for deviant females, in that a transgressive female nature better suited the gaze of the elegiac *amator*.<sup>29</sup> Unlike the *Aeneid* where the *amictus* appears to elevate female protagonists to the status of male counterparts, this mention of the *amictus* by Propertius is explicit in its association with a deviant female presence, namely the elegiac mistress.<sup>30</sup> The male gaze is overpowering in this instance,

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2006], p. 37). However as custom likely dictated that Roman women covered their hair when grieving, except for funerals where it was worn uncovered and loose (as will be discussed fully in Chapter Four), Juturna’s actions hold particular resonance for a Roman audience. See also, n. 17 in this chapter for discussion.

<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, in this instance the unnamed female protagonist is subject to Propertius’ male gaze and thus “lacks agency of her own”, as in a similar instance in 1.3.19-26, where Propertius expresses the control of the *amator* over Cynthia while she sleeps (E. Greene, “Gender and Elegy” in ed. B.K. Gold, *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy* [Oxford, 2012], pp. 359-60). Furthermore, Propertius makes mention of the *amictus* as alternatively “plebeian” or “scarlet” (sc. rich) (2.25.45). Cf. Ronald Musker’s 1972 translation: “One wears peasant dress, one rich vermilion” (*The Poems of Propertius* [London, 1972], s.v. 2.25.45). See also W.A. Camps, *Propertius Elegies Book II* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 175, s.v. 2.25.45-46. The status of the unnamed female protagonist in this instance remains unidentified. However, in epic, namely Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, sometimes the status of male wearers of the *amictus* is made explicit. For instance, it is the garment of a slave in 2.18, 5.538 and 8.240, but in the same text, also the garment of soldiers (9.482). On this point, Roland Mayer (*Lucan Civil War VIII Edited with a Commentary* [Warminster, 1981], p. 117, s.v. 8.239-40) states that in the case of Luc. 8.240 “It was a commonplace that servile or inconspicuous dress preserved the prominent from harm”.

<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, there is only one reference to the *amictus* in Propertius (3.15.3-6) which is linked to a male: “When the modesty of my boyhood’s garb was hidden away, and freedom was given me to know the paths of love, ’twas she, Lycinna, won, ah me! By no gifts of mine, that initiated my innocent soul on those first nights wherein she shared my love” (*ut mihi praetexti pudor est velatus amictus/et data libertas noscere amoris*



where some 'women' are described as inflicting pain upon men, irrespective of their status (2.25.1-48) and others as pleasing due to their submissive qualities (2.23.1-24).<sup>31</sup> Therefore Propertius' use of the *amictus* cannot be seen as a way of elevating the status of female characters as Bender has asserted of Virgil. Propertius appears to sometimes use the garment to denote 'deviant' behaviour, seen in observations like the "girl who goes with her *amictus* thrown back" (2.23.13). Alternatively, when the garment is used as a head covering by the women "whom a closed door delights" (*quos ianua clausa iuvat*) (2.23.12) idealised womanhood is evidently portrayed.

Like those of Propertius, the remainder of Ovid's references to the *amictus* are not limited to mortuary contexts and some can be analysed vis-à-vis a feminist re-reading of the text (as was undertaken in the aforementioned case of Lucretia). Throughout Ovid's works, the *amictus* is employed in varying situations in association with named and unnamed female characters of differing status. For instance, Ovid occasionally describes the *amictus* as transparent or light in order to emphasise the ethereal qualities of a female wearer (*Met.* 4.102-104, 4.311-16).<sup>32</sup> Salmacis thus wears a *perlucens amictus* in her efforts to catch Hermaphroditus (*Met.* 4.311-329). In this instance Salmacis' transparent *amictus* functions as a literary characterisation of her untrustworthy nature, alluding to the danger she presents to male protagonists. This scene is not dissimilar from Ovid's description of Circe's *amictus* (discussed earlier in this section). These two mentions of the *amictus* signify the threat posed to male protagonists by transgressive or 'deviant' females.<sup>33</sup>

However, Ovid also employs the *amictus* in relation to male protagonists, where incidentally, the garment does not appear to serve a gendered function. That is, Ovid's

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*iter/illa rudes animos per noctes conscia primas/imbuit, heu nullis capta Lycinna datis!*). In this instance the term *amictus* may be understood as a reference to the *toga virilis*, which boys adopted at puberty.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Greene, "Gender and Elegy", p. 360.

<sup>32</sup> W.S. Anderson, *Ovid's Metamorphoses Books 1-5* (Norman, 1997), pp. 445-46, s.v. 313-314.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Stat. *Silv.* 2.3.16. Interestingly, the only mention of the *amictus* in Statius' *Silvae* in relation to a female protagonist (with four others associated with male characters) is in reference to an innocent nymph who is saved by Diana.

mentions of the *amictus* in association with male protagonists do not appear to play a prominent role in those protagonists' characterisation as deviant, or even ideal (*Met.* 10.1, 14.165-166).<sup>34</sup> Although the garment is employed as a male head covering among sacrificial and ritual episodes (*Fast.* 3.361-368, 6.617-626), it is predominantly mentioned as a simple robe for males *Ex Ponto* and *Heroides* (*Pont.* 2.5.52, 3.8.7; *Her.* 18.103). Accordingly, if Ovid's references to the *amictus* in relation to the protagonists Lucretia, Circe and Salmacis are viewed in the light of these instances of the garment being associated with male categories across the Ovidian corpus, it is apparent that Ovid may have employed the garment to elevate the profiles of certain female characters (to those of men) on occasion within his works. If this is the case, he may have wanted to emphasise the silencing of a female protagonist like Lucretia in the *Fasti* and the danger such women represented to male protagonists in other situations (as in the cases of Salmacis and Circe in *Metamorphoses*).

In his *Ars Amatoria* (3.179), Ovid describes the *amictus* as a "saffron robe" (*croceo velatur amictu*). Roy Gibson has proposed that although *croceus* is "a traditionally seductive colour appropriate to the reputation of this predatory goddess" (in this instance, Aurora), Ovid's focus on the "'Homeric', rather than explicitly sexual associations" of the garment is indicative of the *amictus* being used as ceremonious dressing for *puellae*.<sup>35</sup> This idea of ceremony may suggest that Ovid employed the garment to afford the *puellae* who he addresses in the *Ars* a greater profile.<sup>36</sup> The *amictus* being capable of affording an elevated

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<sup>34</sup> Ovid (*Met.* 14.165-166) employs the *tegimen* in the same passage as *amictus* somewhat interchangeably, implying that the latter garment serves as a standard adornment of male clothing: "No longer ragged in the clothes he wore and his own master, wearing clothes not tacked with sharp thorns ..." (*iam non hirsutus amictu/iam suus et spinis conserto tegmine nullis ...*).

<sup>35</sup> R.K. Gibson, *Ovid: Ars Amatoria Book 3* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 167, s.v. 179-180. Cf. Hom. *Il.* 8.1, 19.1, 23.227, 24.695 and Tib. 1.3.93f. It is interesting that Gibson (p. 167) asserts that *croceus* is a "traditionally seductive" colour, given the associations of the colour with the bridal *flammeum* (see K.K. Hersch, *The Roman Wedding: Ritual and Meaning in Antiquity* [Cambridge, 2010], p. 96ff as well as n. 111 in this chapter for discussion).

<sup>36</sup> Gibson (*Ovid*, p. 167, s.v. 179-180) asserts that "*amictus* is more elevated than *vestis*". Cf. Ovid's depiction of *vestis* in *Am.* 3.13.26, where the garment is used on the head to bear "sacred offerings" (*tradita ... sacra*).

profile is also evident for mistresses. Ovid (*Ars* 2.294-297) denotes the garment as ‘Tyrian’ (meaning purple) in his description of how a mistress should be allowed to “play the powerful lady” (*partes illa potentis agat*).<sup>37</sup> However, the descriptor ‘Tyrian’ is also employed to characterise Sulpicia’s *palla* by the anonymous author of [Tib.]3.8 [4.2].11. In this instance the reference to the *palla* is reminiscent of a more respectable image of the *matrona* and serves to elevate Sulpicia’s more traditional profile even when she is cast as the elegiac mistress.<sup>38</sup> This latter instance suggests that in some circumstances, a descriptor which characterised the garment (for either the *amictus* or the *palla*) was responsible for elevating the profile of the female protagonist, rather than the garment in of itself. Furthermore, the variation apparent in Ovid’s use of the *amictus* indicates that he may have chosen to qualify the garment and the protagonists wearing it in each individual instance, this being dictated by the content of the passage.<sup>39</sup>

A similar variation in usage can be seen in the references to the *amictus* in Statius’ slightly later work, the *Achilleid*.<sup>40</sup> Although the work is unfinished and therefore cannot be subjected to the same kind of data collection as epics like Virgil’s *Aeneid*, it is worth noting that the three references to the *amictus* in the *Achilleid* denote the garment as feminine,

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<sup>37</sup> Although the reference is incidental, in this instance the *Tyrios amictus* is clearly the desirable attire for a mistress. The term ‘Tyrian’ usually means purple and refers to the dye made in Tyre, which was “one of the finest and most costly” (P. Murgatroyd, *Ovid with Love: Selections from Ars Amatoria I and II: Oxford Text, Commentary, Vocabulary, Introduction* [Wauconda, 1982], p. 167, s.v. 119-120). It is used across poetry to denote purple finery: Tib. 1.2.75; [Tib.]3.8 [4.2].15; Hor. *Epist.* 1.16.18; Ov. *Met.* 11.166, *Ars am.* 3.170.

<sup>38</sup> A. Keith, “Sartorial Elegance and Poetic Finesse in the Sulpician Corpus” in eds Edmondson and Keith, *Roman Dress*, p. 199. This instance will be discussed in full in relation to the anonymous author’s attitudes to covering in Chapter Four.

<sup>39</sup> Notably Ovid (*Fast.* 5.607) also employs ‘Tyrian’ as an adjective for Europa as she wears an *amictus* and clings to a bull’s mane. This depiction is similar to Ovid’s description of her in *Met.* 2.836-875, yet here, the term used to describe Europa’s drapery is the generic *vestis* (2.875). Ovid’s preference for *amictus* in the *Fasti* is therefore unclear. It may have to do with fact that he is using elegiac rather than epic metre. It may also serve as further indication of the interchangeability of terms that denoted clothing or covering.

<sup>40</sup> There are no mentions of the *amictus* in association with female characters in the *Thebaid*. The only references to the garment are in relation to men: *Theb.* 6.835, 7.151, 10.648.

with Statius using the terms *mollis* and *femineus* as descriptors (1.837, 2.35, cf. 1.874).<sup>41</sup> Although none of the instances refer to Achilles covering his head with the *amictus*, two of the mentions occur in the context of Achilles' transvestism while at Scyros, where Thetis periodically hides her son by dressing him in womanly attire (*Ach.* 1.837, 1.874).<sup>42</sup> Monica Cyrino has asserted that when Achilles is depicted in "female garb, he is chiastically compared to the effeminate Bacchus" and thus possesses the "strength of the god himself" in a way that is concealed.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, the descriptors of the *amictus* within the context of Achilles' transvestism serve to characterise Achilles as 'soft' in name only, linking the garment with connotations of deception rather than effeminacy.<sup>44</sup> Statius writes the words of Ulysses (*Ach.* 2.35): "... was it thou whom a crafty mother profaned with feminine robes ..." (*callida femineo genetrix violavit amictu*). This negative association of the *amictus* bears relevancy to the perception of covering gestures as deceptive acts within poetic devices, namely metaphor and imagery (discussed fully in Chapter Four). It is also paralleled in Virgil's use of the *palla* to denote transgressive females in the *Aeneid* (discussed in the

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<sup>41</sup> Although the *amictus* in 1.874 is not qualified by *mollis*, this garment is the same one as that specified in 1.835, thus bearing the same feminine or 'soft' connotations. For full discussion of the historical tradition of Achilles' transvestism within the Scyros episode, which is said to echo Euripides' version quite closely, see M.S. Cyrino, "Heroes in D(u)ress: Transvestism and Power in the Myths of Herakles and Achilles" *Arethusa* 31 (1998), pp. 207-41 and P.J. Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles: Gender and Genre in Statius' Achilleid* (New York, 2005), pp. 237ff.

<sup>42</sup> Notably, when Achilles is finally revealed in Statius' version of the episode, the generic *vestis* is used to describe his costume (*Ach.* 1.878).

<sup>43</sup> Cyrino, "Heroes in D(u)ress", p. 236.

<sup>44</sup> Deceptive connotations are, furthermore, indicative of the broader results of Statius' retelling of Achilles' transvestism, wherein "stories, with their bawdy humour, sex play, and glamorous *couture*, not only disrupt and confuse the categories of gender for the delight of their audience, but, in representing such transactions, ... establish the constructive power of gender categories and so reinforce the sexual hierarchies they evince" (Cyrino, "Heroes in D(u)ress", p. 239).

following section) and speaks to the possibility that on occasion the terms *amictus* and *palla* were in fact interchangeable.<sup>45</sup>

That the *amictus* may have functioned as a type of *palla* in early imperial texts suggests that early imperial authors chose which term to employ. As has been discussed throughout this section, there are pronounced patterns in regard to the use of the *amictus* in certain works of early imperial poetry. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, although the *amictus* does not serve a singular function, it plays a significant role in mortuary contexts and in the elevation of female protagonists to a more central and idealised role. When these patterns are viewed in consideration of the possible existence of an 'ideal' Augustan womanhood, an authorial intent of 'making meaning' can be identified within early imperial poetry. The following section on the *palla* will investigate the socio-cultural nuance of the terminology, providing a basis for comparison between the two garments in the conclusion of this chapter.

### The *palla*

The *palla* is only employed in relation to particular female categories within Virgil's *Aeneid*. These categories will be elaborated upon in this section, but firstly a brief outline of the evidence for the *palla* within early imperial poetry is necessary. Notably, all five references to the *palla* in the *Aeneid* are associated explicitly with females, with only one of these references being associated with a head covering gesture. In comparison, Ovid, Horace and Statius use the *palla* when referring to males, though not always explicitly.<sup>46</sup> Within the elegies attributed to Tibullus, there are four references to the *palla* (though none specify the covering of the head); two of which can be linked to a male protagonist (1.7.46, 3.4.35), and two where a female character is concerned (3.8.11, 3.12.13). Although the two references to the *palla* in Propertius' *Elegies* specify the garment as a female one (4.4.60, 4.9.47), the sample is too small to allow an assertion that Propertius might have engaged in

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<sup>45</sup> This is, of course, a likely possibility. Cf. Olson's hypothesis (*Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 51) that the *amictus* was a type of *palla*.

<sup>46</sup> Hor. *Ars P.* 278; Ov. *Met.* 6.705, 11.167; Stat. *Theb.* 7.658-9, 7.39, 9.690, 11.400, 12.312; *Ach.* 1.262, 2.5.

the same gender categorisation as Virgil. Moreover, Propertius' references to the *palla* stand in stark contrast to Virgil's, as will be discussed later in this section.

As Virgil employs the *palla* only in relation to females in the *Aeneid*, Bender has asserted that the garment is portrayed in this text as a traditional covering which was worn outside by women (where it covered the head as protection from heat or cold).<sup>47</sup> That the garment is only connected to women can be confirmed, as all the references to the *palla* are in association with female protagonists. However, how the garment was worn is not always specified and there is only one instance where the *palla* is referred to as a head covering.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, a consistent pattern can be identified across Virgil's references to the *palla*. The females associated with the garment are better described as deviant rather than prescriptive role models, the *palla* being employed as "an ominous symbol suggesting doom either to its wearer or to those who ... must confront the rage of its wearer".<sup>49</sup> For instance, the Fury Tisiphone and the goddess Discordia both wear a *palla* as a robe which probably hangs from their shoulders, but neither of these protagonists might be linked with the traditional Roman *matrona*; in fact they are described as quite the opposite of that ideal figure in their portrayal as instigators of violence and war (*Aen.* 6.555, 8.702).<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Bender, "*De Habitu Vestis*", p. 149.

<sup>48</sup> This particular reference will be discussed later in the context of this section. It is worth noting that while Dido receives a *palla* in Book 1 as a gift from Aeneas, there is no description of how this might have been worn (1. 648-9, 711-712). Bender ("*De Habitu Vestis*", p. 151) has asserted that Virgil's inclusion of the *palla* here serves as a metaphorical link between Dido and Helen, foreshadowing a tragedy in love and the imminent downfall of Carthage. Dido, however, is also associated with the traditionally masculine Greek *chlamys* (*Aen.* 4.137) which Bender (p. 150) asserts is symbolic of her "role as leader of a nation" (see also p. 34, n. 2 of this chapter). Austin (*Liber Primus*, p. 197, s.v. 1.648ff.) has asserted that Dido's *palla* serves as a symbol for Aeneas' recognition of Dido as an ally.

<sup>49</sup> Bender, "*De Habitu Vestis*", p. 150.

<sup>50</sup> Keith, *Engendering Rome*, p. 69f. R.G. Austin (*P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Sextus* [Oxford, 1986] p. 181, s.v. 6.555) has asserted that Fury Tisiphone's *palla* is bloody in the *Aeneid* because she is prepared "like a huntress, for greater nimbleness in action", which surely means the *palla* would not have covered Tisiphone's head in this instance as this would have been quite cumbersome. Horace's (*Sat.* 1.8.23-25) depiction of the

However, it warrants noting that Tisiphone is also linked to the *palla* within other early imperial epics. Ovid describes Tisiphone's bloody *palla* in his *Metamorphoses* (4.481-484) and Statius uses a similar epithet in his *Thebaid* (1.110).<sup>51</sup> The similarity of these descriptions of Tisiphone and her *palla* across the three works of Virgil, Ovid and Statius indicates a commonality in the representations of Tisiphone within early imperial poetry. Here, a brief interlude to consider the narratological effect of the *palla* will provide a basis for understanding its gendered significance as an epithet. This recurring use of the *palla* to describe Tisiphone may have developed out of a desire on the part of narrators to conjure a commonly understood imagery for the listener or reader.<sup>52</sup> This description of Tisiphone

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loathsome witch Canidia resembles that of Tisiphone, where the *palla* is tucked up and does not cover her hair: "My own eyes have seen Canidia walk with black robe tucked up, her feet bare, her hair dishevelled, shrieking with the elder Sagana" (*vidi egomet nigra succinctam vadere palla/Canidiam pedibus nudis passoque capillo/cum Sagana maiore ululantem*) (See also E. Oliensis, "Canidia, Canicula, and the Decorum of Horace's *Epodes*" *Arethusa* 24.1 [1991], p. 111). That Tisiphone and Canidia share similar descriptors is informative to the hypothesis outlined above concerning other deviant female protagonists, discussed on p. 51ff of this chapter. Regarding such descriptors, it is notable that the phrase *passoque capillo* is also echoed twice by Ovid in describing Medea (*Met.* 7.257; *Epigr.* 6.89), but Gowers (ed., *Horace: Satires Book I. Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics* [Cambridge, New York, 2012], p. 274, s.v. 1.8.24) has made the assertion that Canidia's feet and hair in particular are unrestrained "because in magic someone who binds cannot be bound". Elsewhere, Horace (*Epod.* 5.98) designates Canidia as an *anus*, implying that she is too old to please a lover (Oliensis, "Canidia", p. 110). This characterisation is emphasised by the fact that her name resembles the term used to describe grey hair (*canities*) (L. Watson, *A Commentary on Horace's Epodes* [Oxford, 2003] p. 197, s.v. 5.15). That Canidia's *palla* is black may also be significant to her depiction as an old woman, as is suggested by Gowers (*Horace*, p. 273, s.v. 1.8.23; cf. Oliensis, "Canidia", p. 110).

<sup>51</sup> Ov. *Met.* 4.481-484: "Straightway the fell Tisiphone seized a torch which had been steeped in gore, put on a robe red with dripping blood, girt round her waist a writhing snake, and started forth" (*Nec mora, Tisiphone madefactam sanguine sumit inportuna facem, fluidoque eruore rubentem induitur pallam, tortoque incingitur angue egrediturque domo*); Stat. *Theb.* 1.110-111: "From her shoulders falls a stark and grisly robe, whose dark fastenings meet upon her breast ..." (*riget horrida tergo/palla, et caerulei redeunt in pectora nodi*). Cf. [Tib] 31.3.69-70; D.E. Hill, *Ovid Metamorphoses I-IV* (Warminster, 1985), p. 247, s.v. 4.481; Keith, *Engendering Rome*, pp. 95-97.

<sup>52</sup> Here it is important to note that the agency (in this case meaning an enabled choice) of 'who' uses the *palla* to characterise a female protagonist resides with the author of the text (in this instance, Virgil, Ovid or

enabled the communication of a certain image of her within the narrative, via the repeated presence of her *palla* wherein, firstly, the narrative was not interrupted to provide an extended description and secondly, the *palla* associated Tisiphone with a kind of feminine deviancy particular to her nature as a Fury.

As the author or narrator's association with Tisiphone to the *palla* signalled her aberrant character to the audience, other female protagonists could easily receive the same descriptive treatment by virtue of their shared sex. This is evident in the *Aeneid* (8.702), where Discordia's *palla* serves as a symbol for her maddened delight in the "violent division" she effects, as she, "mad with joy, strides in her rent robe" (*scissa gaudens vadit palla*).<sup>53</sup> Notably, in these instances where the *palla* is described in relation to Tisiphone and Discordia, the garment does not cover their heads. This absence of a head covering gesture may be an indication of these two protagonist's deviance from the image of the traditional Roman woman. The aberrant behaviour on the part of Tisiphone can be juxtaposed with an instance in Statius' *Thebaid* in which Piety covers her eyes with her *palla* at the shame inducing words of Tisiphone (11.492-496). The opposition between the two female protagonists in this scene suggests that Piety's face covering gesture with her *palla* is to be compared with Tisiphone's "stark and grisly robe" (*riget horrida tergo palla*; 1.110). As the peaceful female goddess Piety is the one who covers herself, she is the one who is also easily dominated by the *uncovered* and violent Tisiphone. Therefore, in this instance, Piety's submission is indicative of 'ideal' female behaviour, where although her intentions are for peace, she is no match for the 'deviant' female Fury who embodies characteristics that are more dominant and thus deemed 'masculine'.

This notion of head and face covering gestures being associated with the 'ideal' female is emphasised in Virgil's description of Camilla in the *Aeneid* (11.576). Virgil states that Camilla

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Statius). The three authors that use the *palla* as a descriptor for Tisiphone could only have employed the garment within a narrative characterisation technique if they considered the descriptor already shared with the implied audience or 'reader'. This implies that by the time of composition, there may have already been a shared understanding of the garment's darker connotations in mythological contexts.

<sup>53</sup> P.T. Eden, *A Commentary on Virgil: Aeneid VIII* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 187, s.v. 8.702.



wore a tiger-skin over her head, but that this was “instead of a gold clasp for her hair, and a long trailing robe” (*pro crinali auro, pro longae tegmine pallae*).<sup>54</sup> Here, it can be inferred that the *palla* would have served as a head covering *if* Camilla had chosen to wear the more traditional garment.<sup>55</sup> Virgil’s depiction of Camilla choosing the tiger-skin is significant and has been subject to debate within scholarship. Bender has asserted that the tiger-skin was, in Virgil’s eyes, “an attire more suited to the unwomanly forces of her nature”.<sup>56</sup> Other commentators have understood Camilla’s tiger-skin as a garment that symbolises her transgression of the male/female binary as Virgil does not allow her to adopt the traditional dress of a noblewoman.<sup>57</sup> Camilla’s chosen costume (among her other actions) thus places her outside the normative social construction for Roman women. Transgressively, Camilla adopts characteristics from socially constructed male and female spheres. Although she is not presented as the traditional female, she possesses a ‘woman’s’ weapons (*Aen.* 11.687) and displays ‘feminine’ behaviour on the battlefield (*Aen.* 11.782).<sup>58</sup> These characteristics are primarily ‘deviant’, and culminate in her death from what is termed a ‘feminine’ evil, namely “a woman’s love of booty and spoils” (*femineo praedae et spoliolum ... amore*; 11.782).<sup>59</sup> Camilla’s transgressive preference for a tiger-skin *palla* thus anticipates her death as a justified downfall, because her failure to conform to a socially constructed identity of a ‘woman’ who embodied ‘correct’ normative processes, “authorises the epic hero’s establishment of a normative order imperilled by *her* deviance”.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Gransden (*Book XI*, p. 120, s.v. 11.577) notes that although the “tiger-skin seems to have covered her head as well as her back ... *a vertice* could simply mean ‘down’ ...”.

<sup>55</sup> Williams, *Books 7-12*, p. 418, s.v. 11.576-577; i.e. she wore the tiger-skin so that it covered her head as well as her body.

<sup>56</sup> Bender, “*De Habitu Vestis*”, p. 150.

<sup>57</sup> Page, *Lib. XI*, p. 75, s.v. 11.576; Gransden, *Book XI*, p. 120, s.v. 11.577; Keith, *Engendering Rome*, p. 29. This binary exemplified in the *Aeneid*, as asserted by Keith, exists at the heart of epic poetry’s gendered worldview.

<sup>58</sup> Keith, *Engendering Rome*, p. 28.

<sup>59</sup> Keith, *Engendering Rome*, p. 28.

<sup>60</sup> Keith, *Engendering Rome*, p. 130 (my emphasis).

In this light, the prescriptive value of the text must be taken into account. Given Virgil justifies Camilla's death vis-à-vis her succumbing to 'a woman's spoils', her donning of the tiger-skin rather than the *palla* is instructive to female audiences of the *Aeneid*.<sup>61</sup> As previously mentioned, scholarship has consistently asserted that the evidence on head covering garments in early imperial literature is prescriptive in nature.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, Camilla's death indicates that, for women, the conscious or unconscious adoption of transgressive characteristics was not considered 'correct' behaviour. At the other end of the spectrum, in instances where female protagonists who don the *palla* as a part of the traditional costume of the *matrona* are portrayed favourably, a prescriptive 'ideal' with regards to head covering can be elucidated from the text.<sup>63</sup> For instance, in the works of Horace and Propertius the *palla* is associated with new brides, an association clearly connected to the conservative ideal of Roman womanhood. Propertius (4.4.59-60) writes the lament of Tarpeia: "As your bride I can part the armies locked in battle: make of my wedding-gown a treaty of reconciliation!" (*commissas acies ego possum solvere nupta: uos medium palla foedus inite mea!*). In her lament, Tarpeia mentions the *palla* following an invocation of the rape of the Sabines (4.4.57-58). This structure of components to the text serves to connect the garment with the notion of ideal womanhood by associating it with women who were traditionally portrayed as "at pains to prove themselves good wives as well as good daughters".<sup>64</sup> In this instance, Propertius' association of the *palla* with a normative female

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<sup>61</sup> That women listened to recitals of the *Aeneid* is documented by Donatus (*Vit. Verg.* 31), who writes that Octavia, the sister of Augustus, fainted at a recital of the *Aeneid* given by Virgil. See for discussion: I. Willis, "Tu Marcellus Eris: Nachträglichkeit in *Aeneid* 6" in eds V. Zajko and E. O'Gorman, *Classical Myth and Psychoanalysis: Ancient and Modern Stories of the Self* (Oxford, 2013) p. 148, n. 2f.

<sup>62</sup> Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 11; Fantham, "Covering the head at Rome", p. 168.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Stat. *Theb.* 12.537, where the *palla* is mentioned in relation to the barbarian Hippolyte, who with "all her bosom hidden beneath her robe ... mingles with mighty Athens" (*quod pectora palla tota latent, magnis ... Athenis misceat*).

<sup>64</sup> J. Hallett, *Fathers and Daughters in Roman Society: Women and the Elite Family* (Princeton, 1984), p. 138. The mention of the *palla* follows so closely after the invocation of the Sabine women that this imagery would still be fresh in the mind of the audience/reader of the text. See also in *Fathers and Daughters* (p. 116, 137), Hallett's discussion of Livy's account (1.13.3-4) which concludes that Livy portrays the Sabine women as eager

category, namely brides, is markedly different to the way in which he employs the *amictus* to characterise transgressive protagonists (discussed in the previous section). To this effect, some commentators have inferred that Propertius' use of the *palla* to denote the ideal is evidence for the garment being assumed by women only at the time of marriage.<sup>65</sup>

Horace's earlier works may shed light on the construction of the ideal *matrona* vis-à-vis the function of the *palla* in the texts. For instance, in his *Epodes* (5.65-66), Horace invokes similar violent imagery to Propertius, associating the *palla* with a new bride, notably Creon's daughter: "when the gift of a robe steeped in poisoned blood, engulfed the new-made bride in flames?" (*cum palla, tabo munus imbutum/novam incendio nuptam abstulit?*). In his *Satires* (1.2.94-100), Horace also implies that the *palla* covered the head of the Roman *matrona* as a matter of course:

*matronae praeter faciem nil cernere possis,  
cetera, ni Catia est, demissa veste tegentis.  
si interdicta petes, vallo circumdata (nam te  
hoc facit insanum), multae tibi tum officient res,*

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to "accommodate their male kinfolk" in their preference to die, associating them with an idealised image of the Roman woman. There is a narratological element to the invocation of the rape of the Sabine women that serves to remind the implied audience or 'reader' of a descriptor that is already shared. On this explanation, see n. 52 of this chapter as regards the transgressive characterisation of Tisiphone.

<sup>65</sup> H.E. Butler and E.A. Barber, *The Elegies of Propertius* (Hildesheim and New York, 1969), p. 348 s.v. 4.4.60. Butler and Barber note that the *palla* is also employed as a "cloak assumed at marriage" in Ovid's *Heroides*, but this instance concerns men and does not refer to marriage rites (*Her.* 21.162). The notion that the *palla* was "assumed at marriage" is tendered by Sebesta in her description of the costume of the Roman *matrona* ("Symbolism in the Costume of the Roman Woman", pp. 48-49). Sebesta had based part of this conclusion on the later evidence of Isidore of Seville (*Etym.* 19.25.4), who wrote that "For man is the head of woman, whence this garment is worn over a woman's head" (*Caput enim mulieris vir est, inde et super caput mulieris est*) (trans. S.A. Barney et al., *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* [Cambridge, 2006], p. 387). However, Isidore was actually referring to the *stola* and the *ricinium* as head covering garments in this passage, and thus whether he viewed the *palla* as a head covering garment is ambiguous. Sebesta's suggestion that the *palla* could be the traditional head covering of a Roman *matrona* thus warrants further investigation.

*custodes, lectica, ciniflones, parasitae,  
ad talos stola demissa et circumdata palla,  
plurima quae invideant pure adparere tibi rem.*

“In a matron one can see only her face, for unless she be a Catia, her long robe conceals all else. But if you seek forbidden charms that are invested with a rampart—for this it is that drives you crazy—many obstacles will then be in your way—attendants, the sedan, hairdressers, parasites, the robe dropping to the ankles, and, covered with a wrap, a thousand things which hinder you from a clear view”.

Although the generic *vestis* is employed here to describe the robe that conceals all except the face of the *matrona*, towards the end of the passage the *palla* is identified as the covering garment (1.2.99).<sup>66</sup> Given the passage does not refer to a specific protagonist and discusses the *matrona* as a category in itself, Horace thus provides the clearest indication that a *palla* could have served as a head covering garment for the respectable Roman woman.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, the passage is indicative of the representation of the idealised *matrona*, supporting the aforementioned hypothesis of Sebesta that a *matrona* would have routinely worn the *palla* over her head as a sign of modesty. A differentiation can therefore be identified in the way the *palla* is employed in the works of Horace and Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Overall, significantly more traditional associations of the *palla* can be identified in the works

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<sup>66</sup> Gowers (*Horace*, pp. 110–111, s.v. 95–100) puts forward that, in this instance, as *circumdata palla* echoes *vallo circumdata*, the *palla* corresponds to the “outer palisade of a camp” and signals the “unavailability” of the respectable *matrona* for (male) viewing. Cf. Levine, “Gendered Grammar”, p. 103.

<sup>67</sup> Gowers (*Horace*, p. 110, s.v. 95) proposes that the passage is written “at the expense of an unknown matron” who Porphyrio (1.2.94) notes was a “loose woman”. Notably, the male gaze underlies Horace’s description of the *matrona*, as although he describes what the *matrona* should wear he still casts her as “forbidden fruit” (Gowers, *Horace*, p. 111, s.v. 96–97). Statius has a less phallocentric depiction of the respect women could gain from covering in *Theb.* 12.469, where he depicts Juno teaching the mourning Phoronean women to “... hide their faces in their robes ...” (... *obtenta submittere lumina palla* ...).

of Horace and Propertius, whereas Virgil in the *Aeneid* connects the *palla* to deviant female protagonists.<sup>68</sup>

The *Aeneid* is the only text in this study which depicts the *palla* as an explicitly female head covering garment. Ovid (*Met.* 14.254-63) has the *amictus* covering Circe's head, while her *palla* served as a simple purple robe. More broadly, Ovid links the *palla* to male and female protagonists and depicts the item as a coloured cloak or robe which does not cover the head.<sup>69</sup> In Ovid's *Amores* (3.13.26), the *palla* is noted simply as covering the feet of "youths and timid maidens" (*iuvenes timidaeque puellae*), while the more generic *vestis* occupies the "ceremonious" position for female figures in the text.<sup>70</sup> The *vestis* is also noted as a (possible) head covering, with Ovid (*Am.* 3.13.27) describing maidens "... covered in white clothes in the ancient Greek custom" (... *more patrum Graio velatae vestibis albis*).<sup>71</sup> Notably, although this passage does not refer to the *palla* as a head covering garment, Ovid identifies the covering gesture (*velo*) as equivalent to Greek practice, indicating that he may have viewed ritual head covering as a Roman continuation of a Greek socio-cultural custom.<sup>72</sup> While this possibility cannot be confirmed within a discussion limited to the temporal parameters of the early imperial period, it should be noted that in this passage the girls walking before the goddess are presented as traditional figures, indicating that Ovid

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<sup>68</sup> Cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1.8.23-25 (see n. 50 in this chapter).

<sup>69</sup> *Fast.* 2.107; *Amor.* 1.8.59, 2.18.15; *Her.* 21.162-168; *Met.* 2.670-675, 3.163-168, 6.705-707, 11.166; cf. *Amor.* 3.1.12

<sup>70</sup> This is contrary to the aforementioned instance of the *amictus* serving "as ceremonious dressing" for *puellae* in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (3.178-179); cf. Gibson, *Ovid*, p. 167, s.v. 179-180.

<sup>71</sup> The Loeb translation of Grant Showerman (1947 ed.) reads "in the manner of their Grecian sires of yore, veiled in white vestments ...". Above, I have provided my own translation for this phrase, in keeping with the need to avoid the term 'veil' for purposes of methodological clarity. As in this case, it is not clear what the white clothes are covering, my translation aims to preserve the grammatical ambiguity of the Latin text.

<sup>72</sup> This hypothesis has been put forward in the modern scholarship on head covering, though it is yet to be confirmed, cf. Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, p. 3; Galt, "Veiled Ladies", pp. 391-394.

himself may have seen the practice as customary.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, it is difficult to draw a conclusion regarding the implications of this scene for Ovid's use of the *palla*, as he omits the *palla* from the majority of his references to female head covering gestures within his works, employing the *amictus* instead (*Met.* 14.261-263; *Fast.* 2.817-822).

Accordingly, in Virgil's *Aeneid* and the works of Propertius, Horace and Ovid, significant variation is evident in terms of how the *palla* was employed to characterise female protagonists. The initial hypothesis of Bender (outlined at the beginning of this section) that the *palla* was a traditional covering worn outside by women is only explicitly supported by the description of the *matrona* presented by Horace in his *Satires*. Otherwise, Virgil (among others) uses the *palla* to signify the transgressive characteristics of female protagonists, namely Camilla, Discordia and Tisiphone. This is markedly different to Virgil's use of the *amictus* to indicate a female protagonist's elevation to a higher profile within his narrative. Comparing the ways in which Virgil employs the *amictus* and *palla* in the *Aeneid* thus allows a prescriptive female ideal to be inferred from the text more broadly. In the following section on the adornments *infulae* and *vittae*, this prescriptive female ideal will be addressed further with a view to extrapolating which 'correct' normative processes were prescribed to female categories with regard to head covering and the adornment of the *matrona*.

### *Infulae and Vittae*

Although the woollen adornments *infulae* and *vittae* are not explicitly head covering garments, their consistent mention within works of early imperial poetry gives cause to include them in any analysis of practices concerning the female head. As to their

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<sup>73</sup> In his *Ars Amatoria* (1.733–734) Ovid employs a derivative of the *palla*, the *palliolum*, to describe an instance of head covering; "Let leanness also prove your feelings; nor deem it base to set a hood on your bright locks" (*Arguat et macies animum: nec turpe putaris/palliolum nitidis inposuisse comis*). In this instance the female addressee is evidently unmarried. If this is considered in conjunction with the *puellae* of *Amores* 3.13.27 mentioned above, it could indicate that Ovid thought that the *palla* was unsuitable for unwed female protagonists, believing that the garment was only worn by Roman *matronae*.

appearance, later sources provide the clearest descriptions and details to help analyse the poetic material. For instance, regarding *infulae*, Servius (*in Aen.* 10.538) notes that they covered most of the brow in “a band similar to a diadem ...” (*fascia in modum diadematis* ...).<sup>74</sup> Servius (*In Aen.* 10. 538) also has *vittae* as a part of the *infulae*, stating that *vittae* hang from either side of the *infulae* and are “generally broad and twisted (or braided) from white and scarlet threads” (*quae plerumque lata est, plerumque tortilis ex albo et cocco*).<sup>75</sup> As *infulae* appear to have incorporated *vittae*, the two adornments will be discussed together in this section.

Regarding the ritual significance of these adornments, prose authors Seneca and Pliny the Elder describe *infulae* as possessing inviolable qualities (Sen. *Ep.* 14.11; Plin. *HN.* 29.30) and indicate that they may have functioned as a kind of spiritual protection of virginal chastity.<sup>76</sup> To that effect, La Follette, Olson and Fantham have asserted that *infulae* adorned the female head in ritual circumstances and were also routinely worn by Vestal Virgins.<sup>77</sup> Yet by

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<sup>74</sup> Trans. Fantham in “Covering the Head at Rome”, p. 163.

<sup>75</sup> Trans. Fantham in “Covering the Head at Rome”, p. 163. Cf. Isid. *Etym.* 19.30.4, 19.31.6.

<sup>76</sup> La Follette, “The Costume of the Roman Bride”, p. 57, n. 36; Fantham “Covering the Head at Rome”, p. 163.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Luc. 1.597. In making this assertion, Olson and La Follette drew attention to a discrepancy apparent in Festus’ description of the headdress of the Vestal Virgins. Instead of describing the Vestal’s *infulae*, Festus (454.25L) likens their headdress to the *sex crines/seni crines* of the Roman bride: “Certain people (relate) that the Vestal Virgins are adorned with it, whose chastity for their husbands ... by some ...” (*Quidam quod eo Vestales virgines ormentur, quarum castitatem viris suis t̄sponoe \* \* \* a ceteris*). Cf. Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 23 and Hersch, *The Roman Wedding*, p. 74, who concludes on her own translation of Festus, that “both brides and Vestals are adorned with the *sex crines*, and one cannot know which (type of) woman wore the hairstyle first”. However, La Follette (“The Costume of the Roman Bride”, p. 57) also emphasised the correct explanation of Festus (475.4L) regarding the *suffibulum*, a short white head covering, which Vestals wore during sacrifice that was fastened with a *fibula*. Although Festus (475.4L) does not mention the *infulae* that would have been fastened to the brow in front of the *suffibulum*, this latter source shows that Festus was aware of the general style (cf. Varr. *Ling.* 6.21; Plin. *HN.* 16.235). Festus’ annotation on the *sex crines/seni crines* thus appears to reflect an earlier unnamed source, which, although an incorrect description of the adornments of the Vestal Virgins, indicates that adornment of the female head was perceived as playing an important role in the preservation of virginal chastity (even after marriage).

no means were *infulae* or *vittae* exclusive to females. Varro (*Ling.* 7.24) notes that sacrificial victims were called *infulatae* because of the *infulae* which decorated them, and Festus (100.7L) states that they were "... strips of wool with which priests, their sacrificial victims, and temples are adorned" (... *filamenta lanea, quibus sacerdotes et hostiae templaque velantur*).<sup>78</sup> Regarding both *infulae* and *vittae*, Statius (*Theb.* 2.96) describes Laius' adoption of the "well-known woollen bands" (*vellera nota*) when appearing in Eteocles' vision (*Theb.* 2.95-100), indicating that the association of these adornments with males was not altogether uncommon.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, Varro (*Ling.* 7.44) and Valerius Maximus (5.2.1a) underline their significance for *matronae* and by the early imperial period, *vittae* appear in poetic and prosaic literature as an archaic epithet for female morality, wherein, to indicate the chastity of a *matrona*, the author could state that she wore *vittae*.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Notably, when used during weddings *infulae* were associated with females, but rather as adornments at the house of the Roman bride than the bride herself, cf. Plin. *HN.* 29.30; Luc. 2.355; Hersch, *The Roman Wedding*, p. 89.

<sup>79</sup> See Statius' references to *infulae* in relation to males in the *Thebaid* (3.667, 4.218, 6.331, 7.717, 9.764); cf. *Thebaid* (3.467, 3.566, 4.580, 4.602, 5.668, 6.31, 7.735, 8.89, 10.190, 10.606, 12.65), *Silvae* (2.1.26, 4.4.92, 4.6.98, 5.5.29) and the *Achilleid* (1.11, 1.511, 1.611) on males wearing *vittae*. The depiction of *infulae* and *vittae* in the *Thebaid* at 2.98-100 confirms Servius' view that *vittae* are attached to the *infulae*: "... but through his locks there runs the feigned circlet, and the sacred fillets entwined with the grey olive are plain to view" (*sed falsa cucurrit/infula per crines, glaucaeque innexus olivae/ vittarum provenit honos*; 2.98-100). Cf. Luc. 5.141-44.

<sup>80</sup> Varro (*Ling.* 7.44) notes *vittae* as an adornment of Roman matrons as a matter of course within his description of the *tutulus*, an explanation which is echoed by Festus (485.12L). Valerius Maximus (5.2.1a) states that it was in the honour of Coriolanus' mother Veturia and his wife Volumnia in the fifth century BC that "the new distinction of a headband" (*insignibus novum vittae discrimen*) was added to the traditional one of earrings for the *matrona*. As Valerius accords this honour among his *exempla de gratis*, it is evident that by Valerius' time the *vittae* were emblematic of the *matrona* (cf. Ov. *Ars am.* 1.31; *Trist.* 2.247, 2.252; *Fast.* 4.134). Plautus (*Mil.* 790-791) states that the *vittae* were a part of the dress of the *matrona*. Statius (*Theb.* 10.645) notes that the goddess is more pleasing in her human form with a robe and *vittae* and depicts Juno giving the Argive women *vittae* as part of a mourning custom (*Theb.* 12.468; cf. Plut. *RQ* 26 = *Mor.* 270D-E). Servius (*In Aen.* 7.403) says simply that *vittae* would not be worn by prostitutes (*meretrices*), a clear indication of their association with 'respectable' womanhood. Cf. Williams, *Books 7-12*, p. 198, s.v. 7.403.



Given this association of *infulae* with virginal chastity and that of *vittae* with the image of the ideal *matrona*, it is unsurprising that in early imperial poetry a substantial number of references to *vittae* and *infulae* are present. Of the eighteen references to *vittae* in the *Aeneid*, seven are associated with women and five of these describe the binding or unbinding of the female protagonist's hair (*Aen.* 3.63-65, 4.630-40, 6.278-281, 7.401-403, 7.415-420). *Vittae* are mentioned more frequently than *infulae*, which only receive two explicit mentions, both in association with male categories (*Aen.* 2.428-430, 10.537-542). Fantham has contended that, in some instances, mentions of *vittae* in early imperial poetry would be more correctly interpreted as *infulae* (namely at Hor. *Carm.* 3.14.8; Vir. *Aen.* 7.415-420; Ov. *Trist.* 4.4.78). As *vittae* more regularly suit the dactylic verse (rather than *infulae*, where only the nominative singular, *infula*, would have fitted) *vittae* are present in scenes where the more sacred *infulae* are expected.<sup>81</sup> Due to the completeness of Fantham's investigation on the topic in relation to the works of Virgil and Ovid, the following part of this section will test her hypothesis by investigating a comparative source in Statius's *Silvae*.

Statius' body of work actually provides a substantially higher number of references to *infulae* and *vittae* than we have in the Virgilian and Ovidian corpora. Of the forty-one references in Statius' collective works, thirty-three are to *vittae* and eight to *infulae*.<sup>82</sup> In consideration of Fantham's work on *vittae* and *infulae* in Virgil and Ovid, there is an instance in Statius' *Silvae* (4.8.1) where the context in which the term *vittae* is employed suggests that the term might be better understood as *infulae*. In this passage (4.8.1-3), Statius

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<sup>81</sup> Fantham, "Covering the Head at Rome", p. 164. In Lucretius (1.82-88) *infulae* can also be interpreted as referring to *sex crines/seni crines* (cf. Hersch, *The Roman Wedding*, p. 88). Notably, of the seventeen references to *vittae* and *infulae* in the works of Ovid, ten are linked to female characters, including one mention of *infulae* (*Pont.* 3.2.74). Regarding the latter, Fantham has asserted that the replacement of *infulae* in line 74 with *vittae* in line 75 furthers the argument that, on occasion, *vittae* stood for *infulae*, as in this instance it is clear that the metre would not have allowed for the latter term ("Covering the Head at Rome", p. 164).

<sup>82</sup> Most references to *infulae* in Statius are in relation to males, with only one identifiable instance where the adornment is worn by a woman (*Silv.* 4.3.116).

mentions that *vittae* adorned a shrine: “Fling wide the thresholds of the gods, Parthenope, and fill the chaplet-hung shrines with clouds of Sheba's incense and the breathing entrails of victims!” (*Pande fores superum vittataque templa Sabaeis nubibus et pecudum fibris spirantibus imple, Parthenope*). Festus (100.7L), as stated earlier, notes that those adornments which decorated temples are termed *infulae*. Accordingly, the *vittata* of the passage may be better understood as standing for the term more appropriate to ritual: *infulata*, which at any rate would not have fitted the hexameter of the poem.<sup>83</sup> However, in the same work (but a different poem), Statius (*Silv.* 4.4.93) demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the difference between the two terms, noting that a votive tree was decorated with *vittae*, while “another band new twined encircles my (Statius’) vacant locks” (*vacuos crines alio subit infula nexu*).<sup>84</sup> Although this instance in Statius’ *Silvae* is minimal compared to the number of examples Fantham explored, it shows that the term *vittae* was used instead of *infulae* by a poet other than Virgil and Ovid, serving to broaden the parameters to which Fantham’s hypothesis can be applied.

As another component to her hypothesis on *infulae* and *vittae*, Fantham also suggested that “the epic and tragic women of myth wore *vittae* because this was what they ought to have worn”.<sup>85</sup> Further, she argues that societal expectations of the *matrona* required that she adopt *vittae* as a part of her costume, but that women of this period did not necessarily do so. If the elegies of Propertius are considered in relation to this notion, it is telling that Propertius’ two references to *vittae* in regards to women associate *vittae* with chaste female behaviour or *pudicitia* (4.3.16, 4.11.34).<sup>86</sup> It was important that *vittae* were put

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. Stat. *Theb.* 12.227.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Stat. *Theb.* 2. 738, 12.492; *Ach.* 2.15, where *vittae* adorn a tree and a cow respectively and *Theb.* 8.127, 175, where *vittae* decorate chariots as a kind of insignia within battle contexts. Notably in *Silv.* 4.4.93, the nominative singular *infula* is used. Cf. Fantham, “Covering the Head at Rome”, p. 164.

<sup>85</sup> Fantham, “Covering the Head at Rome”, p. 168.

<sup>86</sup> Butler and Barber, *The Elegies*, p. 339, s.v. 4.3.16, 381, s.v. 4.11.34; Levine, “Gendered Grammar”, p. 100.

Note that the references in Levine have become slightly confused; those which refer to Book ‘Five’ of Propertius can be found in Book Four. Camps (*Propertius Elegies Book IV* [New York, 1979], p. 79, s.v. 4.3.13-

properly on the bride; incorrect placement represented an ominous sign: “Hymen was not with me when I wedded” (*nupsi non comitante deo*) (Prop. 4.3.16).<sup>87</sup> Hersch has considered these references to *vittae* in her work on the Roman wedding, concluding that when worn by women, *vittae* “signified virginal chastity or wifely fidelity”.<sup>88</sup> The use of *vittae* as a signifier of female chastity is echoed in the elegies attributed to Tibullus (1.6.67-68), where the adornment is mentioned in association with the *stola*: “Teach her to be chaste, though no headband tied there constrains her hair, nor a long robe her feet” (*Sit modo casta, doce, quamvis non vitta ligatos/impediat crines nec stola longa pedes*).<sup>89</sup> Fantham’s proposal that *vittae* were employed in early imperial epic because this is what women “ought to have worn” serves as a valid explanation for the consistent association of chaste women to *vittae* within the genre of elegy.

In agreement with Fantham, I contend that the adornments of *vittae* and *infulae* served a largely prescriptive purpose within early imperial poetry. If this contention is viewed concomitantly with the prescriptive female ‘ideal’ apparent in relation to the wearing of the *amictus* and the *palla* discussed earlier, a number of head covering traits that characterised ‘correct’ normative processes for females can begin to be isolated. The following two sections on the *mitra* and *flammeum* will present a more complete picture of these traits with a view to addressing the corpus more broadly in the conclusion to this chapter.

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16; p. 159, s.v. 4.11.34) asserts that the *vittae* were “features of the marriage ritual”. Cf. Hersch, *The Roman Wedding*, p. 84ff.

<sup>87</sup> Hersch (*The Roman Wedding*, p. 85) has also drawn attention to this passage as evidence that *vittae* were “a sign of a matron’s purity”.

<sup>88</sup> Hersch, *The Roman Wedding*, p. 88. Although Fantham and Hersch agree that the *vittae* signified the chastity of the female wearer, Hersch differs from Fantham’s hypothesis that while they were required, women didn’t necessarily wear the adornments. Instead, Hersch (p. 88) concluded that “... respectable women at all stages of life (probably for special occasions)” would have worn *vittae*. Cf. Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 41.

<sup>89</sup> G. Lee, *Tibullus: Elegies* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 132, s.v. 1.6.67-68. Given these references to *vittae* in Propertius and Tibullus do not refer to more sacred practices, it is unlikely that *infulae* would be the expected term in those cases.

## The *mitra*

Generally translated as ‘turban’, Varro (*Ling.* 5.130) notes that the *mitra* was a head covering of Greek importation, a type of cap which was tied underneath the chin with straps.<sup>90</sup> The *mitra* appears to be almost always worn by females, however its exact appearance and the context in which it was usually worn remains ambiguous.<sup>91</sup> When men are depicted as wearing the *mitra*, especially in early imperial epic and elegy, the author often endows the male wearer with a degree of effeminacy.<sup>92</sup> This is particularly true of Virgil’s use of the garment to denote the effeminacy of Paris, and the Trojans more broadly in the *Aeneid* (4.215-218; 9.614-617).<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, as Bender has asserted, Virgil limits his

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<sup>90</sup> Cf. Varr. *Men.* 433 in Non. 866L: “... others a *mitra* resembling a *rica* or a Maltese *mitra*” (... *aliae mitram ricinam aut mitram Melitensem*); Bender, “*De Habitu Vestis*”, p. 147.

<sup>91</sup> Prosaic sources attesting to the fact that it was worn by females precede the early imperial period, with Lucilius (71, in Non. 865L) listing the *mitra* among items of female clothing. Regarding its appearance, Llewellyn-Jones (*Aphrodite’s Tortoise*, p. 26) notes that “What was termed a *mitra* could easily be called a ‘fillet’ or even a ‘head cloth’ since the nature of this head covering (in Greece) was ... simply a length of fabric wrapped around the head to create different shapes.”

<sup>92</sup> This is also true of certain prose sources preceding the early imperial period. For instance, Cicero (*Har. Resp.* 44) notes that the *mitra* was one of the garments of disguise worn by Publius Clodius when he impiously entered the Bona Dea festival held in Caesar’s house in December 62 BC. Julia Heskel (“Cicero as Evidence for Attitudes to Dress in the Late Republic” in eds. Sebesta and Bonfante, *The World of Roman Costume*, p. 140) has noted that in this particular description of the event, Cicero does not make a judgement on Clodius’ transvestism “because he wants to allude to his opponent’s well known *strupum*”. Elsewhere, particularly in his treatise *In P. Clodium et C. Curionem*, Cicero is not so restrained, making clear the ‘charge of effeminacy’ for Clodius’ dress in the *mitra* (F. Schoell, ed., *M. Tulli Ciceronis Scripta quae manserunt Omnia* [Lepzig, 1918], vol. 8, xv. frg. 22, 24). Katherine Geffcken (*Comedy in the Pro Caelio: With an Appendix on the In Clodium Et Curionem* [Wauconda, 1995], p. 79ff) notes Cicero’s ‘charge of effeminacy’ as a part of an almost Freudian ‘unmasking’ that aimed to degrade Clodius.

<sup>93</sup> “And now that Paris with his eunuch train, a Maeonian band propping his chin and essenced locks, grasps the spoil; while we bring offerings to thy temples, thine forsooth, and cherish an idle story” (... *Et nunc ille Paris cum semiviro comitatu/Maeonia mentum mitra crinemque madentem/subnexus, raptu potitur: nos munera templis/quippe tuis ferimus, famamque fovemus inanem*; 4.215-218); “But ye are clothed in

references to the garment to these two instances in order to “portray exclusively the barbarian aspects of Greeks or Near Easterners”.<sup>94</sup> Given the Greek origins of the garment, Virgil’s use of the *mitra* in this way is unsurprising. Notably though, Gail Tatham has posited that the garment is used in Latin literature to signify the Bacchic followers of Dionysus. Regarding Ariadne’s *mitra* in a poem of Catullus (64.61-4), she states that “While the word came to be used by Latin writers, it seems to have retained its specifically Greek associations”.<sup>95</sup> This Bacchic association of the *mitra* is also evident in the way Propertius employs the garment for a male protagonist at 4.2.29-32, as well as in Statius’ *Thebaid* (9.795) and *Achilleid* (1.617, 1.714-717).<sup>96</sup> Regarding these Greek origins, Pliny the Elder

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embroidered saffron and gleaming purple; sloth is your joy, your delight is to indulge the dance; your tunics have sleeves and your turbans ribbons. O ye Phrygian women indeed! – for Phrygian men are ye not” (*Vobis picta croco et fulgenti murice vestis/desidia cordi, iuvat indulgere choreis/et tunicae manicas et habent redimicula mitrae/O vere Phrygiae, neque enim Phryges*; 9.614-617). Regarding Virgil’s reference to the *mitra* here, Servius draws a comparison to the *calautica*, a term otherwise rarely encountered in the ancient literary evidence. He notes (*In Aen.* 9.613) that a woman’s *mitra* was also called a *calautica*: “For they are felt caps of men, the woman’s *mitra*, which they call *calauticas*” (*nam pillea virorum sunt, mitrae feminarum, quas calauticas dicunt*) (my translation). Cicero also appears to use the terms *mitra* and *calautica* interchangeably. As mentioned in the note above (n. 92), Cicero notes that Clodius wore a *mitra* as his disguise into the *Bona Dea* festival (*Har. Resp.* 44). However, in the fragments of his speech against Clodius, he notes that Clodius “... draped a *calautica* around his head” (*calautica captii accommodaretur*) (Schoell, *M. Tulli Ciceronis* vol. 8, xv. frg. 24, trans. H.H.J. Brouwer in *Bona Dea: The Sources and Description of a Cult* [Leiden, 1989], p. 156). Heskel (“Cicero as Evidence”, p. 140) proposes that the *calautica* was also used by Cicero to charge Clodius with effeminacy but does not draw attention to the potential interchangeability of the two terms. The possibility that *mitra* and *calautica* were alternative terms denoting the same garment is suggested by some of the extant sources; cf. Non. p. 537; Afran. *Com.* 37; Auson. 449.3; Arnob. *Nat.* 2.23; Ulp. *Dig.* 34.2.25.10. Nevertheless, *mitra* appears to be the favoured name for the garment within early imperial poetry and thus serves as the appropriate term for analysis for the remainder of this section.

<sup>94</sup> Bender, “*De Habitu Vestis*”, p. 147.

<sup>95</sup> G. Tatham, “Ariadne’s *Mitra*: A Note on Catullus 64.61-4” *Classical Quarterly* (1990), p. 560; cf. Sen. *Oed.* 414; *Phaed.* 756.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Prop. 3.17.29-30; Sen. *Oed.* 414, *Phaed.* 756.

(HN. 35.58) provides insight, noting the *mitra* as a distinguishing feature of Greek women in the paintings by Polygnotos of Thasos.<sup>97</sup>

The garment is also linked to prostitutes by some authors, namely Juvenal (3.66, 6.114-119) and Lucretius (4.1129). This association is also evident in Propertius (4.5.72), who notes the *mitra* as part of the costume of a *lena*.<sup>98</sup> It is notable that in this passage Propertius (4.5.67-72) has the *lena* and her *mitra* as considerably aged, the poem itself concerning her funeral: "I have lived to see ... her sagging shack shivered with its fire gone out. For her funeral she had ... a cap that had lost its colour through foul neglect" (*vidi ego/ ... horruit argenti pergula curva foco/exsequiae fuerunt ... immundo pallida mitra situ*). Propertius' description in this instance has caused commentators to infer that the *mitra* was "characteristic of old woman's wear".<sup>99</sup> Seneca (*Suas.* 2.21-22), though mentioning the garment in relation to young *matronae*, implies that it was not considered respectable dress for young women.<sup>100</sup> Citing a line from a certain *controversia* of the Augustan period, concerning a woman who was trying to persuade a group of *matronae* that children should be abandoned at birth, he states: "this line raised a laugh: 'Among the *pyxides* and *medicamina* ... there stood the turbaned assembly'" (*sententia eius haec ridebatur: inter pyxides et ... medicamina constitit mitrata contio*).<sup>101</sup> That the *mitra* was not necessarily appropriate for respectable *matronae* is further emphasised by Propertius (2.29a.15, 4.7.62) in his association of the garment with

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<sup>97</sup> Tatham, "Ariadne's *Mitra*", p. 560.

<sup>98</sup> S. Bailey, *Propertiana* (Cambridge, 1956), p. 244, s.v. 4.5.71.

<sup>99</sup> G. Hutchinson, ed., *Propertius: Elegies, Book 4* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 151, s.v. 4.6.72; cf. *Ov. Fast.* 3.669, 4.517; *Met.* 14.654-656.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Ulpian (*Dig.* 34.2.23.2), who clearly designates the *mitra* as a garment for women, indicating that by his time, the purpose of the *mitra* was simply for protection of the head rather than a signal of transgressive behaviour.

<sup>101</sup> Trans. A. Richlin, "Making up a Woman: The Face of Roman Gender" in eds. Eilberg-Schwartz and Doniger, *Off with Her Head!*, p. 192. Richlin (p. 192) states "What is notable here is the representation of a convocation of women of the respectable class as a 'turbaned assembly', i.e., with headgear also Asiatic and foreign, and surrounded even in public with their pots of makeup".

other elegiac mistresses.<sup>102</sup> On the former instance (2.29a.15), Shackleton Bailey has proposed that “perhaps the evidence may be taken to suggest that this head-dress was publically worn only ‘*a uilioribus uetulisque mulieribus*’ ... but quite generally in private”.<sup>103</sup>

Although its exact appearance cannot be determined, the *mitra* can, in light of the preceding analysis, be understood primarily as a female head covering garment that Roman Latin authors associated with the Greek East. In some cases this association translated to an unfavourable view of male protagonists, where mention of the *mitra* signalled the effeminacy or ‘barbaric’ nature of the male wearer. Notably, the *mitra* appears to be the only garment that was consistently employed to characterise male protagonists as effeminate.<sup>104</sup> Its usage in relation to female protagonists is more varied, as it is linked to aging women as well as prostitutes. The fact that it was used to characterise these kinds of females indicates that the garment was not suitable attire for respectable *matronae*.

### The *flammeum*

The *flammeum* has been studied extensively by La Follette, Sebesta, Olson and Hersch within the context of the costume of the Roman bride.<sup>105</sup> As a result, this section will not seek to address that which has already been debated with regards to the appearance of the garment. However, it should be noted firstly, that as the *flammeum* is most often described as a bridal head covering, its use appears strictly limited to females. Furthermore, as Hersch has asserted, the majority of sources appear to identify the garment as a symbol for the attainment of “matronhood”, and therefore, it holds particular significance for the interpretation of what was perceived as ‘ideal’ female behaviour in Roman culture.<sup>106</sup> That being said, one of the only early imperial sources for the *flammeum* links the garment with

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 53.

<sup>103</sup> Bailey, *Propertiana*, p. 122 s.v. 2.29.15.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Stat. *Ach.* 1.837, 1.874.

<sup>105</sup> La Follette, “The Costume of the Roman Bride”, pp. 55-56; Sebesta, “Symbolism in the Costume of the Roman Woman”, p. 48; Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, pp. 21-25; Hersch, *The Roman Wedding*, pp. 94-106.

<sup>106</sup> Hersch, *The Roman Wedding*, p. 103.

extravagance, where for the sake of performing “... the rite without useless display” at Marcia’s marriage to Cato, “... no *flammeum*, intended lightly to screen the bride’s shy blushes, hid the downcast face” (... *vanaque carentia pompa/ ... non timidum nuptae leviter tectura pudorem/lutea demissos velarunt flammea voltus*; Luc. 2.352-361).<sup>107</sup> From this passing remark that the *flammeum* would have hidden the bride’s face (*voltus*) it can be inferred that this garment traditionally covered both the head and the face of the bride. To what degree though is uncertain, as artistic representations do not often reflect the transparency of the garment noted by Lucan.<sup>108</sup>

Interestingly, no scholar has addressed the nature of the literary evidence on this particular garment. While the term *flammeum* was employed by early imperial poets, it was most often used to denote objects of a flame-like or fiery appearance.<sup>109</sup> There is only one identifiable instance in early imperial poetry where *flammeum* denotes a bridal head covering, namely in the aforementioned passage from Lucan’s *Pharsalia* (2.352-361). Although Statius (*Theb.* 2.341) uses the term in the context of a passage concerning marriage, in this instance “*flammea*” refers to the “first glow of passion” (in a marriage), rather than a specific garment.<sup>110</sup> Most evidence for the *flammeum* comes from prosaic sources concerned with historical *realien*, namely Pliny the Elder, Tacitus, Suetonius, Festus and Nonius Marcellinus.<sup>111</sup> This absence of references to the *flammeum* as a bridal head

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<sup>107</sup> Amended Loeb translation.

<sup>108</sup> Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, pp. 21-22. Hersch (*The Roman Wedding*, p. 99) notes that on this matter, “there are ... issues at work that are not entirely compatible”.

<sup>109</sup> Vir. *Aen.* 7.448; Ov. *Fast.* 6.636; Stat. *Silv.* 1.6.87, 3.1.132, 3.5.72, 4.3.156; *Theb.* 2.341, 2.532; Sen. *Med.* 468; *Herc. O.* 1022, 1439; *Herc. F.* 87; *Thy.* 1089; *Oed.* 185. Cf. Lucr. 2.215, 5.525, 6.642, 6.208. Prosaic sources also employ *flammeum* in this way; see e.g., Varr. *Rust.* 1.2.5; Plin. *HN.* 18.349, 21.64, 21.171, 35.39, 37.95, 37.149; Sen. *Nat.* 1.3.4, 2.40.1, 2.40.3.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 22 n. 49. The only other poetic reference to the *flammeum* as a bridal face covering comes from Martial (*Ep.* 12.42.1-6, cf. Tac. *Ann.* 15.37.4).

<sup>111</sup> Suetonius refers to the *flammeum* in his Life of Nero (28.1): “He castrated the boy Sporus and actually tried to make a woman of him; and he married him with all the usual ceremonies, including a dowry and bridal covering ...” (*Puerum Sporum exsectis testibus etiam in muliebrem naturam transfigurare conatus cum dote et*



covering in early imperial poetry lends weight to La Follette's statement that the *flammeum* "has ... been the most misunderstood" element of Roman bridal costume.<sup>112</sup> In a similar vein, Hersch notes that the prosaic sources for the *flammeum* often present incompatible evidence.<sup>113</sup>

However, the absence of the *flammeum* within early imperial poetry can be explained to some extent. It is important to note that as early imperial epic primarily described the actions of Roman gods and goddesses, who, of course, existed outside the confines of traditional societal customs, marriage practices do not feature greatly in the corpus. When they do (as in Aeneas' 'marriage' to Dido in Book Four of the *Aeneid*), there is no need in the context of the narrative for the garments worn by the protagonists to be described.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, as elegists were concerned with constructing *dominae* and creating subverted conventions of Roman masculinity, wedding scenes are not to be expected to feature prominently in their texts.<sup>115</sup>

An alternate reason for the absence of the *flammeum* in early imperial poetry is the archaic meaning of the term. Festus (82.6L) states that it used to be worn by the Flaminica Dialis,

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*flammeo per sollemnia*) (amended Loeb translation). Pliny (*HN*. 21.46) describes the colour of the garment, noting that, "... yellow ... was granted as an exclusive privilege to women for their bridal coverings ... (*lutei ... in nuptialibus flammeis totum feminis concessum*) (amended Loeb translation); cf. Varr. in *frg.* Non. 869 L; Tac. *Ann.* 15.37.4; Fest. 79.23L, 174.24L. These sources have been frequently drawn upon in debates on the colour of the *flammeum*. These discussions remain, for the most part, inconclusive given the variety of meanings assigned to *luteus*. Hersch (*The Roman Wedding*, p. 97), for example, notes that "our interpretation of Festus' claim (regarding the colour of the garment) rests on the elusive *fulmen* (lightning)". Furthermore, Hersch (p. 98) expresses caution, concluding that there is need for a full study of the remaining artistic evidence (where the *flammeum* appears to be yellow in colour). Cf. La Follette, "The Costume of the Roman Bride", p. 55; Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 22.

<sup>112</sup> "The Costume of the Roman Bride", p. 55.

<sup>113</sup> Hersch, *The Roman Wedding*, p. 99.

<sup>114</sup> P. Hardie, *The Last Trojan Hero: A Cultural History of Virgil's Aeneid* (New York, 2014) pp. 65-69.

<sup>115</sup> Greene, "Gender and Elegy", p. 357.

but Hersch notes this as a potentially false etymology.<sup>116</sup> As is evidenced by their preference for the term to describe other objects, the case could be made that Horace, Propertius, Virgil and Ovid were not aware of the term being used to describe bridal head coverings in their time. However, it is more likely that the absence of references to the *flammeum* as a head covering is due to the nature of early imperial poetry. As the early imperial poets often chose to employ the *flammeum* as a far more general term, it is difficult to ascertain how they viewed the garment with respect to Roman womanhood. However, if Lucan's use of the garment in his *Pharsalia* (2.352-361) is taken into account along with its use in prosaic Latin sources, it is evident that the *flammeum* was significant in terms of perceptions of Roman womanhood.

### Conclusion:

The costume of female protagonists in early imperial poetry, particularly with regards to their head covering garments and adornments, was significant to their characterisation as ideal and deviant figures within the text. On the basis of identifiable patterns of use of the garments in early imperial poetry, it is clear that poets chose which term to use and how it was qualified. These patterns allow us to deduce that early imperial poets employed socially constructed identities within their texts to engage in a process of 'making meaning'.<sup>117</sup>

Ovid's and Propertius' use of the *amictus* is telling for this process in terms of how covered women are 'other-ed' by the male gaze, vis-à-vis the author's silencing of the female protagonist in the depiction of her covering gestures. Virgil's use of the *amictus* to elevate some female protagonists to a higher profile and his preference for the *palla* to characterise other female protagonists as transgressive is also informative. With particular respect to the *palla*, the modern contention that the garment was an identifier for traditional *matronae* requires minor revision. This is in light of the fact that it is used to signify transgressive characteristics of Fury Tisiphone by more than one author. The *mitra* being used to characterise categories of women such as prostitutes and charge male protagonists with

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<sup>116</sup> Hersch, *The Roman Wedding*, p. 96; Cf. S. Treggiari, *Roman marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the time of Cicero to the time of Ulpian* (Oxford, 1991), p. 63.

<sup>117</sup> Hylen, "Modest, Industrious, and Loyal", p. 4.

effeminacy is particularly telling for the identification of socially constructed identities that base their assumptions on the mainstream understanding of gender roles. In this respect, the adornments *infulae* and *vittae*, too, play a role in marking respectable characteristics for *matronae*. The *flammeum* functions similarly to *infulae* and *vittae*, despite the fact that it is mostly absent from the early imperial poetic corpus.



## Chapter Four: The early imperial discourse on covering: custom, metaphor and gender.

Διὰ τί τοὺς γονεῖς ἐκκομίζουσιν οἱ μὲν υἱοὶ συγκεκαλυμμένοι, αἱ δὲ θυγατέρες  
γυμναῖς ταῖς κεφαλαῖς καὶ ταῖς κόμαις λελυμέναις; ... Ἡ πένθους, μὲν οἰκεῖον τὸ μὴ  
σύνηθες, συνηθέστερον δὲ ταῖς μὲν γυναῖξιν ἐγκεκαλυμμέναις, τοῖς δ' ἀνδράσιν  
ἀκαλύπτουσιν τὸ δημόσιον προῖέναι;

“Why do sons cover their heads, when they escort their parents to the grave, while daughters go with uncovered heads and hair unbound? ... is it that the unusual is proper in mourning, and it is more usual for women to go forth in public with their heads covered and men with their heads uncovered?”

Plut. RQ 14 = Mor. 267C.

Plutarch's question is indicative of the breadth and complexity of head covering practices in the Roman world. While the previous chapter analysed the ancient material with a view to understanding how early imperial poets employed particular head covering garments to characterise female protagonists as deviant or ideal, there is still a need to consider more broadly the perceptions of head covering practices and customs that are conveyed within these early imperial texts. There are three main circumstances in which ancient authors convey their perceptions of head covering; firstly, in passing remarks on funeral customs; secondly, in the use of covering language within poetic devices and thirdly, through value judgements or morally infused statements. In this chapter these circumstances will be discussed in three brief sections and then drawn together with a concluding discussion.

To undertake this broader analysis of language, however, the early imperial poetic corpus of evidence must be considered together with prosaic sources concerned with historical *realien*. Thus in this chapter, the works of Tibullus, Horace, Propertius, Virgil and Ovid will be considered alongside passages from Plutarch's *Quaestiones Romanae*, Valerius Maximus' *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* and Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae*. In the final section, the poems attributed to Sulpicia will be considered in detail with regard to the covering

language that she employs, namely with reference to the verbs *tego* and *nudo*. Sulpicia's elegies are of particular relevance to undertaking a gendered analysis, as she intentionally contravenes "public morality ... by declaring her secret passions", thus presenting herself as a transgressive protagonist within her own work.<sup>1</sup> The analysis of this corpus of evidence will allow for a deeper consideration of the 'making meaning' process that ancient authors engaged in as producers and products of their culture.<sup>2</sup> The discussion will then turn towards the final conclusions of the thesis, in particular, to a final assessment as to how head covering practices played a role within the construction or prescription of an 'ideal' womanhood in early imperial Roman poetry.

### Uncovered and loose hair at funeral events

As evidenced by the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, Plutarch is one of the few ancient authors who definitively describes the practice of uncovering the hair for females. Plutarch often frames his *Quaestiones* in terms of 'why' (διὰ). Accordingly, his inquiries provide incidental information, where the practice or custom being examined is taken for granted as having occurred. Thus the very nature of Plutarch's work yields insight into the commonality of knowledge at the time he wrote. Although Plutarch, of course, wrote a little after the period under focus, the perspectives he offers on the more ritual aspects of head covering, particularly with regard to the uncovering of female hair at funerals, lend insight into how the custom developed and was understood. Accordingly, his *Quaestiones Romanae* will provide a basis for the following discussion.

Fantham has analysed Plutarch's references to head covering in his *Quaestiones Romanae* in some detail and puts forward the interpretation that Plutarch's approach is "gender

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<sup>1</sup> I. Plant, "Sulpicia" in ed. I. Plant, *Women Writers of Ancient Greece and Rome: An Anthology* (London, 2004), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Hylen, "Modest, Industrious and Loyal", p. 5

conscious to the neglect of other gender-free issues”.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, this consciousness is to the fore in the *Quaestiones Romanae* with Plutarch consistently presenting his interpretation of customs in the context of his subjects’ shared sex.<sup>4</sup> Fantham used this prominent gender focus in Plutarch’s *Quaestiones Romanae* to briefly investigate male head covering practices, comparing the references in Plutarch to the extant material in Livy and Virgil.<sup>5</sup> However, Fantham did not consider the head covering practices that Plutarch assigned to Roman females in a broader sense, focusing instead on simple adornment of the female head.

Nevertheless, the prominent gender focus in Plutarch’s *Quaestiones Romanae* allows for a closer analysis of the head covering practices he customarily assigns to females. Within these instances there are some apparent discrepancies. In *RQ* 14 (= *Mor.* 267A-C) Plutarch notes that women go with their heads uncovered and hair unbound when taking part in funeral processions, namely when “escort(ing) ... parents to the grave” (γονεῖς ἐκκομίζουσιν). Yet, in *RQ* 26 (= *Mor.* 270D) he asks why women wear white headdresses while in mourning.<sup>6</sup> This difference may be resolved by viewing the first instance as Plutarch’s description of a specific funeral event and the second as a broader reference to

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<sup>3</sup> Fantham, “Covering the head at Rome”, p. 159; cf. H.J. Rose, *The Roman Questions of Plutarch: A New Translation, with Introductory Essays & a Running Commentary* (Oxford, 1924), p. 174, s.v. 14.4.

<sup>4</sup> *RQ* 10 = *Mor.* 266C; 11 = 266E; 14 = 267A-C; 26 = 270E.

<sup>5</sup> Liv. 1.18, 32, 36, 2.39.12; Vir. *Aen.* 3.403-407, 545-547 cited in Fantham, “Covering the Head at Rome”, pp. 161-162.

<sup>6</sup> Although Plutarch labels the white headdress here as a Greek himation he may be referring to the *suffibulum*, which was a short white head covering (Fest. 475.4L); cf. Varr. *Ling.* 6.21; La Follette, “The Costume of the Roman Bride”, p. 57; (see also, n. 76 in the previous chapter). Jerzy Linderski (Roman Questions II [Steiner, 2007], pp. 98-99) proposes that the *suffibulum* was also worn by the *pontifex maximus* and views the garment as similar to the *toga praetexta*. Festus (475.4L), however, only notes that the garment was worn by the Vestal Virgins during sacrifice. Perhaps it is more likely that ἱμάτια here may refer to an undyed *amictus* or *ricinium* (see n. 15 in Chapter Three for the *amictus* and its association with mourning contexts); cf. Rose, *The Roman Questions of Plutarch*, p.32.

public grieving practice (that was in effect before or after a funerary event).<sup>7</sup> The differentiation within Plutarch's observations suggest his familiarity with female head covering in the context of Roman mourning and will serve as a basis for comparison to the incidental mentions of the practice in early imperial poetry.

Just as Plutarch (RQ 14 = *Mor.* 267A) notes that “daughters go with uncovered heads and hair unbound” (... θυγατέρες γυμναῖς ταῖς κεφαλαῖς καὶ ταῖς), Virgil (*Aen.* 11.34-35, cf. 3.65) describes Aeneas passing by female mourners who “with the Ilian woman, (have) their hair unloosed for mourning in wonted wise” (*turba/et maestum Iliades crinem de more solutae*).<sup>8</sup> This instance described by Virgil is but one of a broader sample of passages that can be drawn from the *Aeneid*, where Trojan women are described as loosening their hair or *vittae* (headbands) during religious rites and especially funerary contexts.<sup>9</sup> It is notable that although Virgil claims to describe Trojan practice in these depictions, the scenes often culminate in a passing remark such as ‘as is the custom’ (as at *Aen.* 3.65). It is possible that this passing remark indicates a contextual relevance to practices in the early imperial period. For example, at Pallas’ funeral, Virgil (*Aen.* 1.479-481) states that the Trojan women “with loose hair, walked to unjust Pallas’s temple carrying the sacred robe, mourning humbly ...” (*Interea ad templum non aequae Palladis ibant/crinibus Iliades passis peplumque ferebant/suppliciter tristes*). Virgil’s description of the women taking the *peplum* (a Greek robe) as an offering appears to be a Virgilian adaptation from a similar passage in Homer’s *Iliad* (6.297).<sup>10</sup> However, Virgil appears to have inserted the reference to the unbound hair of these women. The insertion likely reflects Virgil’s own understanding of how hair was

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<sup>7</sup> Compare ἐκκομίζω meaning to ‘carry to a grave’ or ‘bury’ (RQ 14 = *Mor.* 267A) with πένθος meaning ‘grief’ or ‘public mourning’ (RQ 26 = *Mor.* 270D).

<sup>8</sup> Fantham (“Covering the Head at Rome”, p. 162), though not primarily focusing on the evidence for female head covering practices, astutely notes that “not only the daughter but the also the whole crowd of women mourners would unbind their hair by casting off headbands, the woollen *vittae* ...”

<sup>9</sup> 1.480, 3.65-68, 7.403, 11.34-35, cf. 4.630-640.

<sup>10</sup> Williams, *The Aeneid of Virgil: Books 1-6* (London, 1972), pp. 197-198, s.v. 1.479; R. G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Primus* (Oxford, 1971), p. 162, s.v. 1.480.



worn during funerary contexts.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, there is a similarity between Virgil's depiction of the custom and Plutarch's explanation in *RQ* 14 (= *Mor.* 267A-B). Furthermore, it stands to reason that both authors perceived differences between the Roman and the Greek custom, as Plutarch (*RQ* 14 = *Mor.* 267B) states that "... whenever any misfortune comes, the (Greek) women cut off their hair ..." (*κείρονται μὲν αἱ γυναῖκες*).

Aside from the Trojan women, other female protagonists are depicted loosening their hair in funerary contexts in early imperial poetry. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (11.682-683), at the news of her husband's death, Alcyone "... stayed not to loose her hair, but rent it" (... *nec crines solvere curat: scindit et altrici*). Notably, Alcyone's hair loosening gesture is portrayed as rather emotionally charged, so it does not obviously denote a hair related custom as with the references to the Trojan women of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Earlier in the scene during Alcyone's dream (*Met.* 11.669), Morpheus (posing as Alcyone's husband Ceyx), in a passing remark, tells Alcyone to "put on ... mourning garments" (*lugubriaque indue*). As a funeral is not mentioned in this passage, it is difficult to reconcile the actions of Alcyone with the difference in head covering practices that Plutarch describes between funerary and mourning contexts. Nevertheless, elsewhere in *Metamorphoses* (3.506), the Naiads let their hair down when mourning their brother before the preparation of a funeral pyre and women are noted as loosening their hair as a matter of importance in the Bacchic rites (4.6-7). Comparatively, in his *Elegies*, Tibullus (1.1.67-68) alludes to Delia returning from a funeral with "loosened hair" (*solutis crinibus*).<sup>12</sup> Thus with the majority of instances in these

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<sup>11</sup> Williams, *Books 1-6*, p. 303, s.v. 3.405: "Virgil is very fond of this sort of aetiological reference to the origins of customs familiar in his time". While Williams is referring to men covering their heads during sacrifice (which appears to be rather different to the female custom of loosening the hair) this hypothesis may be relevant to female customs regarding the hair as well.

<sup>12</sup> In Lucan and Statius there are indications that an unbinding or loosening of the hair demonstrated a female protagonist's general distress. This phenomenon is not limited to mortuary contexts. Lucan (5.170) refers to a priestess of Delphi whose "fillets" (*vittae*) were "dislodged by her bristling hair" (*serta erectis discussa comis*) as she was possessed by Apollo. Statius (*Theb.* 11.460-461) describes the *vittae* as stripped from Piety's hair while she laments the "fraternal strife, as though a hapless sister or anxious mother of the fighters" (*fraternaue bella/ceu soror infelix pugnantum aut anxia mater*).

works indicating that loosening the hair was customary for females in funerary and ritual contexts, Plutarch's incidental description of the practice in *RQ* 14 (= *Mor.* 267A-C) can be somewhat confirmed.

At first glance, some other references within the corpus of early imperial poetry appear to challenge the hypothesis that women uncovered and loosened their hair in funerary contexts. For instance, Virgil's depiction of Juturna's head covering gesture with a grey *amictus* before her suicide (12.885) initially appears to challenge the practice outlined by Plutarch in *RQ* 14 (= *Mor.* 267A-C). Yet, at closer inspection her actions can be linked with the custom Plutarch outlines in *RQ* 26 (= *Mor.* 270D) where women cover as an expression of mourning.<sup>13</sup> Although Juturna's *amictus* is grey (*glaucus*) in the *Aeneid* rather than white as Plutarch describes mourning garments, the colour Virgil employs is most likely a device for creating a resonance between Juturna and the Roman audience (as previously discussed).<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, Plutarch's perception that females covered their hair in mourning contexts reflects a recurring difference between the actions of women during funeral events and expressions of grief more broadly in early imperial poetry.

Plutarch's *Quaestiones Romanae* has thus provided a basis against which to judge the differing depictions of females in early imperial poetry in mourning contexts. It is evident that in actual funeral ceremonies, females are customarily depicted uncovering and loosening their hair. The incidental nature of the occasions where the loosening gesture is

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<sup>13</sup> This is also evident in a passage of the *Thebaid* (12.464-470), where Statius describes Juno teaching the Argive women correct mourning practices: "But far away Juno leads the distraught Phoronean dames—herself no less distraught—to the walls of Athens, having gained at last the goodwill of Pallas, and goes before them on the road; she gives the train of mourners favour in the people's sight and inspires reverence for their tears. With her own hand she gives them boughs of olive and supplicating fillets, and teaches them to hide their faces in their robes and bear before them urns untenanted by the dead" (*At procul Actaeis dextra iam Pallade muris/luno Phoroneas inducit praevia matres/attonitas, non ipsa minus, coetumque gementem/conciliat populis et fletibus addit honorem/ipsa manu ramosque oleae vittasque precantes/tradit, et obtenta submittere lumina palla/et praeferre docet vacuas sine manibus urnas*). Notably, the scene depicts mourning and not a funeral, and is thus in line with Plutarch's assumption in *RQ* 26 (= *Mor.* 270D-E).

<sup>14</sup> See pp. 43-44 and n. 28 of Chapter Three for further discussion of this scene in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

mentioned adds validity to this hypothesis and provides rare insight into the normative practices undertaken during mortuary contexts. In expressions of grief outside of ritual, covering gestures are more obvious and emotive, especially with respect to Virgil and Ovid's descriptions of Juturna and Lucretia's respective suicides. Compared to the passing remarks on female mourners in funerary contexts, emotional covering gestures are presented with symbolic and metaphoric possibility, indicating that they may be better interpreted as an emulation of a traditional kind of modesty rather than a reflection of funerary custom. This latter suggestion will underlie the following discussion with regard to the value of the language of covering for conveying metaphor and imagery in early imperial poetry.

### Garments and gestures in the metaphors and imagery of covering

In the previous chapter the way in which Virgil employed the *amictus* to convey the emotionally charged nature of Juturna's head covering gesture was discussed. This section will move to discuss the ways in which the early imperial poets employed covering garments to express tone and emotion within poetic devices such as in metaphor and imagery. While explicit head covering gestures are not a common feature of metaphors which involve covering, analysing the manner in which the terms that denote covering are employed (namely through an examination of the verbs *tego*, *nudo* and *velo* as well as the nouns *amictus* and *palla*) allows insight into early imperial perceptions of covering as an action and as a concept. The ways these terms are employed also provide grounds for a foray into a more gendered analysis, as will be undertaken in the following section on attitudes to covering.

Before considering the implications of the term *amictus* within covering language, it is important to note that in poetic works the term was occasionally employed to refer to metaphoric coverings other than an actual garment. In *Res Rustica*, Columella (10.70) invokes a violent image of ploughing, referring to vegetation as the *amictus* worn by the earth: "Tear earth's green hair, and rend the robe she wears" (*Iam virides lacerate comas, iam scindite amictus*). The image of the earth being assaulted in this way is striking, as

Columella invokes *scindo* as a metaphorical term for the violent penetration of the earth's *amictus*.<sup>15</sup> Lucretius (6.1134) refers to an *amictus* in relation to the sky (*caeli mutemus amictum*).<sup>16</sup> These usages are indicative of the term's versatility within poetic devices. Other poets associated the *amictus* with 'cloud' or 'mist'. This association appears to have been inspired by a Homeric motif as in the *Odyssey* (7.14-15, cf. *Od.* 13.189; *Il.* 15.308) Athena

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<sup>15</sup> For *scindo* as an equivalent for *futuo* and *pedico* (i.e., the act of penetrating the vagina and the anus respectively), see J.N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore, 1982), p. 150, 183. Adams doesn't seem to include this telling turn of phrase in Columella, even though in the scene the earth is cast as female (*Rust.* 10.70-71). The scene is reminiscent of imagery where ploughing is understood as a sexual act (cf. *Ov. Met.* 2.285-287). On 'ploughing' as a metaphor for the sexual act, see Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, p. 154. Columella (*Rust.* 10.58) claims that the violent penetration of earth in this way is not impious, as she is really "stepmother earth" (D. Lowe, "The Symbolic Value of Grafting in Ancient Rome" *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 140.2 [2010], p. 468, n. 18). In this instance the *amictus* is endowed with a protective quality much like the metaphoric uses discussed fully in this section (p. 81). Notably though, when cast as a protective boundary for the earth as a female entity, the *amictus* is easily destroyed and cannot provide protection from the male gaze, in much the same way Lucretia's *amictus* cannot protect her from rape and is instead used in her silencing.

<sup>16</sup> Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, trans. R. Melville (Oxford and New York, 1997), p. 212; translating *caeli ... amictus* as "cloak of sky". Cf. C. Bailey, ed., *Lucretius. De Rerum Natura III. Commentary IV-VI* (Oxford, 1947), p. 1722, s.v. 6.1134 where it is "the vesture of the sky". Bailey (p. 1722) describes the phrase as "a bold metaphor, to be compared with 6.954 *caeli lorica*; "the sky is a garment which wraps us round". Propertius also mentions an *amictus* in his *Elegies* (2.29.21) where the term may either refer to a mistress' shelter or a man's cloak (Cf. W.A. Camps, *Elegies Book II* [Cambridge, 1967], p. 196 s.v. 2.29.21). The translation depends on the rendering of the Latin MSS. Although there is no question concerning *amictu* (N F L), a problem arises regarding "*mi iniecto dixerunt*" (which the OCT endorses), taking up "*dixerunt*" from F1 of codex F, whilst admitting that N F4 L P and Delta codices all have *duxerunt*. The Loeb follows a certain Fischer, rendering the phrase as "*me in tectum*" (introducing the idea that Propertius was being led into a house) "*duxerunt rursus amicae*" (and that the house was that of his mistress). Accordingly, the text is too disputed to confirm the meaning of *amictus* in this context. However, Camps (*Elegies Book II*, p. 196 s.v. 2.29.21) asserts that the band of police-Cupids "had stripped him (Propertius) of his cloak when arresting him", noting also that "Nothing was said earlier to this effect; but it may have been normal police procedure and as such here assumed".

hides Odysseus in a thick mist so as to make him invisible.<sup>17</sup> Virgil (*Aen.* 1.412-413) employs this motif when Venus covers Aeneas and Achates with “a thick mantle of cloud, that none might see or touch them, none delay or seek the cause of their coming” (*multo nebulae circum dea fudit amictu/cernere ne quis eos neu quis contingere posset*).<sup>18</sup> Horace (*Carm.* 1.2.31-32) has an even more visual metaphor involving the *amictus* as a cloud: “We pray you, come, cloud covering your bright shoulders, far-sighted Apollo” (*Tandem uenias precamur/nube candentis umeros amictus/augur Apollo*). Statius (*Theb.* 3.415-416) casts the *amictus* as the wrap of night which lays “to rest the cares of men and the prowlings of wild beasts” (*nox subiit curasque hominum motusque ferarum*). In these few instances, the *amictus* holds positive connotations for the protagonists, as it serves as a form of protection, concealing them from danger.

However, in other instances where the *amictus* is used as part of a metaphor for the cover of night, the term signifies impending danger. Silius Italicus (12.613) casts the *amictus* as “a robe of night” (*nox ... amictu*) within the description of Jupiter’s actions signifying the imminent danger for Hannibal’s army: “... earth was hidden ... The enemy were blinded by the storm ...” (*... terras caeco ... condit ... instat tempestas oculis, hostique*; 12.613-614). Statius uses the *amictus* to signal increased violence in his *Thebaid*. In Adrastus’ telling of the story of Linus and Coroebus, he (*Theb.* 1.629-631) closely echoes the Virgilian motif of casting *amictus* as a cloud (described above), noting that “Parnassus with relentless bow ...

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<sup>17</sup> Hom. *Od.* 7.14-15; “Athena/with kindly purpose cast about him a thick mist” (*Ἀθήνη/πολλήν ἡέρα χεῦε φίλα φρονέουσ’*); Williams, *Books 1-6*, p. 191, s.v. 411ff; Austin, *Liber Primus*, p. 144, s.v. 1.412.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Vir. *Aen.* 1.516; Bender, “De Habitu Vestis”, p. 151; “This covering is metaphorically linked to the image of a cloak, an *amictus* made of *nebulae*, which hides the pair throughout their passage from the forest to the palace in Carthage”. Austin (*Liber Primus*, p. 170, s.v. 1. 516) comments that this is also a cloak “*dissimulare* (to pretend that something is not happening when it really is)” and asserts furthermore, that “the object is inferred from the context. In fact they had no other choice, for it was not in their power to part the divine mist (which enshrouds them til 586)”. The protagonist’s inability to part the mist strengthens the meaning of *amictus* in this setting as part of a metaphor conveying impenetrable protection. Cf. Columella, *Rust.* 10.70 where the *amictus* of the earth is destroyed (see n. 15 of this chapter for discussion).

withers beneath a misty shroud the fields and dwellings of the Cyclopes” (*Parnassi ... arcu ... iniquo ... camposque et celsa Cyclopum tecta superiecto nebularum incendit amictu*).

This association of the *amictus* with a forewarning of danger is more pronounced in instances where the *palla* is featured instead, especially in the works of Ovid and again, Statius. Ovid’s initial adaptation of the Homeric imagery resembles the *Odyssey* more closely as, alternatively to Virgil, he (*Met.* 5.621-4) employs the verb *tego* to express the covering action of the mist without reference to the term *amictus*.<sup>19</sup> Yet, following this instance Ovid (*Met.* 6.705-707) adapts this motif to present the *palla* as an entity capable of “wrapping” the land in darkness:

*pulvereamque trahens per summa cacumina pallam  
verrit humum pavidamque metu caligine tectus  
Orithyian amans fulvis amplexitur alis.*

“And trailing along his dusty mantle over the mountaintops, he swept the land; and wrapped in darkness, the lover embraced with his tawny wings his Orithyia, who was trembling sore with fear”.

Statius (*Theb.* 2.527-528) also employs the *palla* as a bringer of darkness: “Night had begun to shroud the sunlight in her dewy pall, and had cast over the earth her dark shadow” (*Coeperat umentis Phoebuni subtexere palla/Nox et caeruleam terris infuderat umbram*). In this instance, Statius’ use of the *palla* signifies the danger to come and is reminiscent of the way in which he uses the garment to characterise Tisiphone’s aberrant character in the *Thebaid* (1.110).<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, the terms *amictus* and *palla*, when employed in the context

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<sup>19</sup> “The goddess heard, and threw an impenetrable cloud of mist about me. The river-god circled around me, wrapped in the darkness, and at fault quested about the hollow mist ...” (*mota dea est spissisque ferens e nubibus unam/me super iniecit: lustrat caligine tectam/amnis et ignarus circum cava nubila quaerit/bisque locum ...* ).

<sup>20</sup> K. Gervais, *Statius, Thebaid 2: Edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford, under contract for 2017), s.v. 2.527f: “Two intratexts suggest the danger to come this night. First, the sunset before the storm that catches Polynices: 1.343ff. ‘*nec rarescentibus [codd. : crebrescentibus Imhof] umbris/longa*

of covering language, could serve as part of the imagery of concealment from danger or signifiers of impending danger.

If the parameters of this discussion are expanded to include elegiac texts, the symbolic implications of the *amictus* in covering imagery and metaphor in early imperial literature can be further elucidated. In the third book attributed to Tibullus (3.4.55-56), the *amictus* of Somnus (Sleep) is portrayed as a cloak of deception: “and who, when Sleep has wrapped you in his dark mantle, deceives your vanity with nightly imaginings” (*et, cum te fusco Somnus uelauit amictu/uanum nocturnis fallit imaginibus*). In this instance, a metaphorical *amictus* is enabled with the ability to deceive its wearer, linking the garment with a more devious tone of concealment than the references considered thus far from Horace, Virgil and Ovid. Ovid (*Am.* 1.4.41-50) associates the *pallia* (a little cloth) with deception and concealment in his depiction of two lovers hiding their affections under a table.<sup>21</sup>

Duplicity and concealment are also evident in Lucan’s depiction of the infamous Erichtho’s head covering gesture (6.625-626): “with her gruesome head covered in a hideous mist, she moved here and there among the bodies of the slain that were thrown out and denied burial” (*Maestum tecta caput squalenti nube pererrat/Corpora caesorum tumultis proiecta negatis*).<sup>22</sup> Given Erichtho’s actions that follow, where she purposefully mistreats the bodies of the dead, her covering gesture echoes the aforementioned instances where the *amictus*

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*repercusso nituere crepuscula Phoebos/densior a terris et nulli peruia flammae/subtexit Nox atra polos’.*

Second, the cloak of Tisiphone when she is summoned to Thebes (the sole previous instance of *palla* in the epic): 1.109f. ‘*riget horrida tergo/palla, et caerulei redeunt in pectora nodi*’ ... So here Night does not merely follow day, but actually blocks out the sun with her *palla*”. My sincere thanks to Dr Kyle Gervais for allowing me to cite his forthcoming work.

<sup>21</sup> “Yet these offences I shall see, but those that the robe well hides will rouse in me blind fears ... . Oft have my lady-love and I stolen in haste our sweet delights with her robe to cover us. This you will not do; but lest you be thought to have done it. Remove from your shoulders the conspiring mantle. (*Haec tamen adspiciam, sed quae bene pallia celant/illa mihi caeci causa timoris erunt/... saepe mihi dominaeque meae properata voluptas/veste sub iniecta dulce peregit opus/hoc tu non facies; sed, ne fecisse puteris/conscia de tergo pallia deme tuo*).

<sup>22</sup> Amended Loeb translation.

is used as a metaphor for a cloud or mist to signify impending danger. Although Lucan does not employ a covering garment in the description, instead noting the covering as a hideous mist, the fact that he has Erictho covered at all is significant as it is unprecedented for a witch to be portrayed as wrapped in this way.<sup>23</sup> On this circumstance, commentators have proposed that Erictho's head is covered in the mist due to the need for "secrecy in magic", especially as she carries out wrongdoings.<sup>24</sup> This possibility is informative in terms of the perception of covering as metaphor more broadly. As the mist explicitly covers Erictho's head with the purpose of deceiving others this image reinforces the notion that covering gestures could be viewed as acts of trickery or deception.

Given the variation in style of the passages discussed in this section, it is notable that three distinct symbolic implications of covering language can be elucidated, with covering garments and gestures being deployed as metaphorical cloaks of protection, danger or deception. Collectively, the use of covering garments such as the *amictus* and the *palla* within covering language endows these terms with a broader meaning of envelopment rather than just a physical covering of the body. In elegiac poetry this broader meaning often conveys the notion of deception and may relate to the author's implied understandings of gender roles. As such, these instances bear direct relevance to early imperial attitudes to covering and will be discussed in the following section.

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<sup>23</sup> C.A. Tesoriero, *A Commentary on Lucan Bellum Civile 6.333-830*, Ph.D. thesis (University of Sydney, 2000), p. 170, s.v. 6.625; C.A. Martindale, "Three Notes on Lucan VI" *Mnemosyne* 30 (1977) p. 380. Cf. Gowers (*Horace*, p. 274, s.v. 1.8.24), who notes regarding Horace's description of Canidia that witches do not usually have their hair bound. However, this is not to say that because witches (a transgressive female category) had their hair unbound that traditional *matronae* did.

<sup>24</sup> Martindale, "Three Notes", p. 381; cf. Ov. *Met.* 11.591. Martindale (p. 381f) suggests a twofold purpose behind the scene, noting this deceptive connotation and proposing that Erictho may represent a "grotesque" that parodies the "traditional features of the epiphany of a god". Martindale makes this suggestion on the basis of similarities between Luc. 6.625-626 and Ov. *Met.* 2.790-794. He notes, as has been discussed, that Gods are often surrounded by clouds: cf. Hor. *Carm.* 1.2.30-32; Vir. *Aen.* 2.616; 12.416 (*circumdata nimbo*); Serv. in *Aen.* 3.587.



### Attitudes to covering: perspectives from Sulpicia and Valerius Maximus

The works of Sulpicia and Valerius Maximus have been subject to a minimal amount of analysis so far, receiving passing reference in relation to specific covering garments. Yet, both authors preserve attitudes to head covering in their works which require discussion. It is unsurprising that a concomitant study of these two authors' attitudes to covering practice has not been undertaken because they are obviously so different.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, scrutiny of both sources together will prove a worthwhile exercise. Although the two authors worked within very different genres, they were almost contemporary with one another and this allows for a comparative approach and a gendered analysis. Furthermore, both sources reveal a complex number of attitudes towards covering practice in early imperial Rome. The section that follows will isolate the instances of head covering or covering language within the two authors' works and discuss these instances as gendered products of the Augustan era.

Valerius Maximus' account of the divorce of Sulpicius Gallus (6.3.10) relays that Gallus abruptly divorced his wife on the grounds that she uncovered her hair in public.<sup>26</sup> Although Valerius Maximus reports on a figure of the Republican period, his account can be investigated for the varying attitudes to women covering their heads in early imperial

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<sup>25</sup> This is not to say that the implications of Valerius' prose have not been considered in relation to Sulpicia's poetry at all. Barbara L. Flaschenriem ("Sulpicia and the Rhetoric of Disclosure" *Classical Philology* 94.1 [1999], p. 37) engaged with the two author's views on covering briefly: "As a norm of conduct, then, Valerius' *verecundia stolae* signifies a socially approved aversion to public display, whether of the body or through the act of asserting oneself in speech ... Hence when the elegiac poet Sulpicia uses an image of disrobing to describe the act of writing her love poetry ([*amorem*] *nudasse*, 3.13.2), the verbal gesture is both daring and rich in implication". Cf. J. Hallett, "Women as *Same* and *Other* in Classical Roman Elite" *Helios* 16.1 (1989), p. 66ff.

<sup>26</sup> As mentioned in n. 32 of Chapter 1, Hilton and Matthews ("Veiled or Unveiled", pp. 336-342) have undertaken a thorough investigation into this episode recorded by Valerius. Comparing Valerius Maximus' account with that of Plutarch (*RQ* 14 = *Mor.* 267C), who states that Gallus divorced his wife because she went in public with her hair *covered*, they have highlighted the complexities of determining which account reflects the practice of the time, and have rightly (in my view) concluded that the discrepancy is not resolvable.

Rome.<sup>27</sup> As he describes the incident in his section *de Severitate*, it is possible that the reason for divorce would have been found abrupt by the general *populus* at Valerius Maximus' time of writing. This could indicate that women during the early imperial period went out of doors uncovered on a regular basis (cf. Plut. *RQ* 14 = *Mor.* 267C). However, whether this was accepted as part of the traditional self-presentation of *matronae* in the Augustan era is not certain from the account, as Valerius Maximus himself emphatically justifies Gallus' decision to divorce his wife. He claims that Gallus' actions were in keeping with the law, as his wife's beauty should be limited to his eyes only. He (6.3.10) places the words in Gallus' mouth:

*his decoris instrumenta compara, his esto speciosa,  
horum te citeriori crede notitiae. ulterior tui conspectus  
supervacua irritatione arcessitus in suspicione et  
crimine haereat necesse est.*

"For them assemble the tools of beauty, for them look your best, trust to their closest familiarity. Any further sight of you, summoned by needless incitement, has to be mired in suspicion and crimination".

As Hilton and Matthews have noted, the vocabulary Valerius employs for Gallus' words is post-Augustan and "... the sentiments are those of the moralist Valerius himself ...".<sup>28</sup> This tendency of Valerius Maximus to put forward his own sentiments under the guise of historical recount may also be evident in his section *de Gratis* (5.2.1) where he discusses the appearance of *matronae*. He (5.2.1.) notes that "the new distinction of a headband" (*insignibus nouum uitae discrimen*) was added to the traditional adornments of earrings of

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<sup>27</sup> "Rugged too was the marital brow of C. Sulpicius Gallus. He divorced his wife because he learned that she had walked abroad with her head uncovered" (*Horridum C. quoque Sulpicii Galli maritale supercilium: nam uxorem dimisit, quod eam capite aperto foris uersatam cognouerat*).

<sup>28</sup> "Veiled or Unveiled", p. 340; cf. M. Bloomer, *Valerius Maximus and the Rhetoric of the New Nobility* (Chapel Hill, 1992), p. 68, 239.

the *matrona* in the fifth century BC in honour of Vetruria and Volumnia.<sup>29</sup> Irrespective of their factual validity in terms of past practices, these two *exempla* from Valerius Maximus present clear judgements concerning the ‘correct’ manner in which females should present themselves to the public eye in early imperial society.<sup>30</sup> Notably, the public eye in these cases is phallogentric, as Valerius’ male gaze exemplifies what constitutes the female ideal and his attitude makes clear which transgressive female characteristics attract male disapproval.<sup>31</sup> In this context, head covering gestures and adornments are depicted as constituting the ideal for females, vis-à-vis Valerius’ encouragement of women’s self-presentation as submissive to men.<sup>32</sup> He goes so far (8.3.1) as to characterise this submissiveness as a “cloak of modesty” (*verecundia stolae*), linking an explicitly female garment, the *stola*, with the expected condition of female subordination.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See n. 80 in Chapter Three for discussion of this anecdote in relation to the adornments.

<sup>30</sup> There is debate concerning the identity of the Gallus to whom Valerius Maximus refers in 6.3.10 (and consequently the temporal placement of the *exemplum*). Candidates include the consul of 166 BC or perhaps the earlier consul of 243 BC. Plutarch’s account (RQ 14 = *Mor.* 267 B-C) places the divorce in between the accounts of “Rome’s ‘first’ divorce instituted by Sp. Carvilius and that instituted by P. Sempronius Sophus who was consul in 268 BC” (T. Hillard and J.L. Beness, *The Macquarie Dictionary of Roman Biography, 168-111 BC*, s.v. C. Sulpicius C.f. C.n. Gal(l)us [forthcoming]). Cf. Hilton and Matthews, “Veiled or Unveiled”, pp. 337-339; MacMullen “Woman in Public”, p. 208 n. 3). My sincere thanks to Dr Beness and Assoc. Prof. Hillard for allowing me to cite their forthcoming work.

<sup>31</sup> Pliny the Younger (*Ep.* 4.19.3) also indicates that females should be concealed in a public context as in the same passage where he praises his wife’s virtue, he also notes that while he gave readings she stayed “behind a curtain nearby” (*in proximo discrete velo sedet*).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Bloomer, *Valerius Maximus*, p. 56: “The ideologically correct behaviour of a society’s subordinate members is an increasing concern of a society undergoing not revolution but accommodation to a new order ... the obvious function of anecdotes about old-time Roman women ... remains the commemoration of behaviour deemed ideal”.

<sup>33</sup> It is important to note here that Valerius Maximus should not be viewed as exemplifying an ideal as an agent of “coherent force scripting human action” (Hylan, “Modest, Industrious, and Loyal”, p. 5). Rather, his attitude to head covering should be viewed as functioning within a cultural repertoire (Swidler, *Talk of Love*, p. 24), wherein Valerius serves as an ‘actor’ engaging in a process of making meaning that employs constructed

A similar, more explicit, indication of this ideal of female submissiveness as characterised by male observers is present in a passage of the Elder Seneca's *Controversiae* (2.7.6), where Seneca delivers the imagined words of a husband charging his wife with adultery:

*Totiens sollicitata non <iram> istam faciem qua placere poteras conuestisti? Non omne ornamentum ueluti causam talis iniuriae exsecrata es? Quod proximum est a promittente, rogata stuprum tacet.*

"If you were so often pestered, did you not cover that face which could give the beholder such pleasure? Did you not loathe every ornament as the motive for such an outrage? Asked for sex, she keeps silent - the next thing to promising it".<sup>34</sup>

The female subject (*uxor*) is accused of adultery on the basis of an admirer calling attention, ironically, to her *pudicitia*.<sup>35</sup> In this instance, Seneca's depiction of a face covering gesture

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or perceived 'ideal' social roles. The value of adopting this poststructuralist approach to ancient authors will become apparent in the following analysis of Sulpicia's attitudes to covering.

<sup>34</sup> Amended Loeb translation. I cite here the text as provided in the Teubner edition of L. Håkanson, *L. Annaeus Seneca Maior. Oratorum et rhetorum sententiae divisiones colores* (Leipzig, 1989). The TLL, s.v. *conuestio*, informs us (4.0.870.20) that the codices supply *convertisti*; corrected to *conuestisti* by A. Kiessling (Leipzig 1872), and this emendation seems to me to be generally accepted. Håkanson's apparatus records no contention at this point. On the other hand, see Langlands, who supplies *convertisti* in *Sexual Morality* (p. 277) as well as her own markedly different translation of the passage.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Quint. *Decl.* 325, 330, 363; Langlands, *Sexual Morality*, p. 275: "The appealing irony of this story is that it is the very phenomenon of another man describing his wife as *pudica* that calls her status as *pudica* into question". Notably, the opposing side to this declamation (which survives only in excerpts) concludes that the man who propositioned the wife was at fault, resulting in her claim to *pudicitia* being upheld (Langlands, *Sexual Morality*, p. 279). That Seneca presented both hypothetical arguments in his original account is telling for the complexities of the discourse on covering, the discussion of which takes place on p. 87ff. It remains, however, that the declamation outlined above is an example of a recurring motif which "embodies a common Roman anxiety about marital relations and the husband's lack of control over his wife ..." (Langlands, *Sexual Morality*, p. 275). For discussion of the broader existence of a "male anxiety at any increased freedom of

for the sake of hiding the female subject's tempting appearance implies that the female subject in question was engaging in an act that did not conform to the male expectations of performing femininity.<sup>36</sup> As Seneca identifies the face covering gesture as the action the wife *should* have taken to preserve her *pudicitia*, in this declamation, covering denotes silence and submissiveness of the female subject.<sup>37</sup> Much like the previously discussed episodes relayed by Valerius Maximus, Seneca employs the imagined persona of a male figure to denote head or face covering as a signifier for that figure's control over a female category, which in this case is the Roman wife (*uxor*). From the two passages found in Valerius Maximus and Seneca the Elder hints of a discourse on head covering might be identified within early imperial male-generated prosaic literature. The ancient authors within this discourse based their perceptions of female covering on assumptions relating to the dominant male/submissive female understanding of gender roles.

The complexity of this discourse is revealed through the poems attributed to Sulpicia. Sulpicia's poems complicate the mainstream understandings of agency vis-à-vis covering language.<sup>38</sup> This covering language consists of the verbs Sulpicia employs that are related to covering and uncovering, namely *nudo* and *tego*. Sulpicia uses these terms not in reference to explicit covering gestures, but in order to create the sexually charged tone that is pervasive in her poetry.<sup>39</sup> Her poems possess a direct relevance to understanding the 'ideal'

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women" and its place within the Augustan era see M. Johnson and T. Ryan, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Society and Literature: A Sourcebook* (New York, 2006), p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> Langlands, *Sexual Morality*, p. 276.

<sup>37</sup> Notably, however, there appears to be no way for the female subject to say "... 'no' to someone's sexual advances without implicating (herself). One must neither speak, nor remain silent, nor ignore the proposition, nor resist ... all these responses draw criticism" (Langlands, *Sexual Morality*, p. 280).

<sup>38</sup> M. Skoie, "Reading Sulpicia: (Em)plotting Love" in ed. I. Nilsson, *Plotting with Eros: Essays on the Poetics of Love and the Erotics of Reading* (Copenhagen, 2005), p. 62: Sulpicia serves not only as a "female intrusion on a male dominated world of Roman elegy", but more broadly, as an intrusion on the male dominated world of early imperial literature.

<sup>39</sup> The "gender-bending" common to the elegiac genre is notable here, wherein Sulpicia's sexual expressiveness may be seen as the "reversal of the elegiac norm, where it is the woman who is usually

female in relation to perceptions of covering via her insights into how some female sexual actions were perceived as deviant within early imperial Rome.

The first lines of [Tib.] 3.13 make vibrant use of the aforementioned *tego* and *nudo* (3.13 [4.7].1-2):<sup>40</sup>

*Tandem venit amor, qualem texisse pudori  
quam nudasse alicui sit mihi fama magis.*

“Love has come at last – a kind that it would be more of a scandal for me to cover up through modesty, than to bare to anyone”.<sup>41</sup>

Alison Keith, among other scholars, has asserted that this couplet is indicative of the way Sulpicia positions her own literary narrative to embody a transgressive representation of the ideal female.<sup>42</sup> Sulpicia achieves this by contravening the traditional understanding of *pudor*, suggesting that there would be as much shame in concealing her feelings than exposing them ([Tib.] 3.13 [4.7].1). This implies that *pudor* would involve a certain deception on the part of the female protagonist.<sup>43</sup> Further to Keith, Barbara Flaschenriem

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indifferent and the man who is frustrated” (C. U. Merriam, “Sulpicia: Just Another Roman Poet” *The Classical World* 100.1 [2006], p. 14).

<sup>40</sup> The lines are echoed in a later poem ([Tib.] 3.11 [4.5].19-20). Though not as strong in sentiment, the language of covering or concealment is still present: “But Birthday, as a god you know everything, nod assent. What does it matter if he asks openly of secretly?” (*At tu, Natalis, quoniam deus omnia sentis, adhuc: quid refert, clamne palamne roget?*).

<sup>41</sup> Trans. Plant, “Sulpicia”, p. 107ff. All translations of the Sulpician corpus are from Plant’s edition.

<sup>42</sup> Keith, “*Tandem Venit Amor*”, p. 301. Cf. I. Plant, “Sulpicia”, p. 106: “... the flouting of public morality by a woman in declaring her secret passions is extraordinary”; Hallett, “Women as *Same* and *Other*”, p. 69ff; Flaschenriem, “Sulpicia”, pp. 36-54; K. Milnor, “Sulpicia’s (Corpo)reality: Elegy, Authorship, and the Body in [Tibullus]” *Classical Antiquity* 21.2 (2002), pp. 259-282.

<sup>43</sup> C.A. Barton, “The Roman Blush: The Delicate Matter of Self-Control” in ed. J. I. Porter, *Constructions of the Classical Body* (Michigan, 2002), p. 222: “The extreme of autonomy and self-mastery was the deliberate blush. For the shameless the blush, the sign of shame, could, paradoxically, act as a ‘hide’”.

has termed this use of covering language as a kind of polyvalent “disrobing”, noting that Sulpicia uses the verbal gesture to publicise her love in a way that is both “daring and rich in implication” and that her self-presentation as the narrator, insists that she be “... ‘seen’ and heard, on making visible the passion that she presents as her own”.<sup>44</sup> In this instance, Sulpicia implies that covering can be a deceptive action, presenting substantially different implications for attitudes to covering than are evident from the phallogentric notions in Valerius Maximus and the Elder Seneca’s prose.<sup>45</sup>

Sulpicia ([Tib.] 3.9 [4.3].9, 21) also refers to the deceptive behaviour of female protagonists more broadly, noting the stealth (*furtim*) of the others who woo Cerinthus’.<sup>46</sup> This willingness to equip female subjects with deviant characteristics is indicative of Sulpicia’s reversal of roles common to the elegiac genre, wherein her female protagonists are cast as the frustrated poet-lovers and male categories are depicted as “indifferent”.<sup>47</sup> In view of

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<sup>44</sup> Flaschenriem, “Sulpicia”, p. 37, 38; cf. Milnor, “Sulpicia’s (Corpo)reality”, p. 263.

<sup>45</sup> Flaschenriem, “Sulpicia”, p. 38: “Her assertion of candour deftly reworks a recurrent structuring image in Roman elegy, that of the partially or provocatively clothed woman”; cf. Keith, “Sartorial Elegance”, pp. 192-193.

<sup>46</sup> On the recent assertion of Holt Parker, the poem cited here, while usually included in the Garland of Sulpicia, should in fact be attributed to Sulpicia. This is on the basis of the expectation that a reader of subjective lyric love poetry would expect the “named speaker” to be the poet (“Sulpicia, the *Auctor de Sulpicia*, and the authorship of 3.9 and 3.11 of the *Corpus Tibullianum*” *Helios* 21.1 [1994], pp. 39-62, 55, n.2). In the case of two poems in the Garland of Sulpicia ([Tib.] 3.9 [4.3] and 3.11 [4.5]), the named speaker is Sulpicia and their separation from the Tibullan corpus is thus warranted. Furthermore, the two poems do not appear to view the female subject with the male gaze that is characteristic to the rest of the corpus, especially [Tib.] 3.8 [4.2].5-8: “When he wants to burn the gods from her eyes, fierce Love lights twin torches. Whatever she does, wherever she places her footprints, beauty follows her stealthily (*Illius ex oculis, cum uult exurere diuos/accendit geminas lampadas acer Amor/Illam, quidquid agit, quoquo vestigia movit/componit furtim subsequiturque Decor*).” Cf. Parker “Sulpicia, the *Auctor de Sulpicia*”, pp. 39-62; A. Keith, “Critical Trends in Interpreting Sulpicia” *The Classical World* 100.1 (2006), p.5; J. Hallett, “Sulpicia and Her “Fama”: An Intertextual Approach to Recovering Her Latin Literary Image” *The Classical World* 100.1 (2006), p. 39; I. Plant, “Sulpicia”, p. 106; Keith “Sartorial Elegance”, p. 196.

<sup>47</sup> Merriam, “Sulpicia”, p. 14; Hallett, “Women as Same and Other”, p. 71; Flaschenriem, “Sulpicia”, p. 39ff. (regarding Sulpicia’s inversion of elegiac convention compared to Propertius vis-à-vis her treatment of *amor*);

this reversal, Sulpicia's use of covering (*texisse*) as a metaphor for deception can be, like her contentious use of *pudor*, viewed as a potential rejection of a more conventional meaning of the term. Furthermore, it can be posited that conventionally, *tego* may have held more positive connotations in terms of the purpose of covering gestures. Considering Sulpicia's rejection of conventional approaches to language throughout her elegies, it could be inferred that what she rejects is what constitutes the 'ideal'.<sup>48</sup> Thus Sulpicia creates her own 'ideal' narrative by reinscribing the traditional associations of covering language.

The effect is perplexing for the interpretation of Sulpicia's poems against the previously discussed prose of Valerius Maximus and Seneca the Elder. As Sulpicia in her poetry appears to present a view of covering that associates it with deception, she complicates the phallocentric perspective of covering gestures as being warranted merely for the sake of dominant male categories expressing control over submissive female ones.<sup>49</sup> Her use of the deeply embedded conventions of elegy to do so indicates that her poems, however, do not serve as a simple 'rejection of cultural norms'.<sup>50</sup> She rather 'acts' within a cultural repertoire and "employs an array of social roles, values, and ways of making meaning" in order to complicate mainstream understandings of female categories within her own time.<sup>51</sup>

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Keith, "*Tandem Venit Amor*", p. 300: "In Sulpicia's poem ... the constraints of *pudor* ... are closely associated with the maintenance of her reputation ... as is particularly clear in the reference to composing a mask for rumour ... . But Sulpicia, as the author of "Sulpicia's" literary destiny, can both contest Roman suspicion of female sexuality and redefine terms of moral judgement".

<sup>48</sup> As is implied even by Thomas Hubbard who contests the attribution of Sulpicia's authorship ("The Invention of Sulpicia" *The Classical Journal* 100.2 [2005], p. 178). Cf. Keith, "Critical Trends", p. 9: "On Hubbard's reading, Sulpicia can only be an elegiac *puella*, not the author herself of elegiac verse" (as this would most certainly be deviating from the male expectation of feminine performativity and thus is not conceivable).

<sup>49</sup> Keith, "Sartorial Elegance", p. 196: "In 3.13 ... Sulpicia complicates the androcentric gender plot ... for Sulpicia is both the desiring poet-lover and the desirable possessor of the fold into which Venus and the Camenae introduce her beloved".

<sup>50</sup> Flaschenriem, "Sulpicia", p. 38. Flaschenriem contends that Sulpicia's choice of covering metaphor is in fact "at least partially determined by the conventions of genre".

<sup>51</sup> Hylan, "Modest, Industrious and Loyal", p. 5.



Considering Sulpicia's attitudes to covering in comparison to those evident in the Tibullan corpus will further elucidate her complication of the mainstream understandings of agency within the early imperial discourse on covering. In the Garland of Sulpicia, Sulpicia is described in the third person and presented as an appealing figure to the male onlooker irrespective of which characteristics she possesses. This reinstates the female figure as the cause for the (anonymous) male poet-lover's frustration within the elegiac verse ([Tib.] 3.8 [4.2].9-12):

*Seu soluit crines, fuis decet esse capillis:*

*Seu composit, comptis est ueneranda comis.*

*Vrit, seu Tyria uoluit procedere palla:*

*Vrit, seu niuea candida ueste uenit.*

"If she undoes her hair, flowing locks suit her; if she styles her hair, she has to be admired for her hair style. She burns, if she wants to go out in a Tyrian dress; she burns, if she comes in a dress of snowy white".<sup>52</sup>

This and the remaining poems in the Garland of Sulpicia project a distinctly male gaze onto Sulpicia as a subject for viewing.<sup>53</sup> Within this projection, the author depicts Sulpicia's uncovered hair as one of her prominent and attracting features ([Tib] 3.8 [4.2].9-10). In the following line Sulpicia's *palla* is reminiscent of a more respectable image of the Roman *matrona*, similar to that described in [Tib] 3.12 [4.6].<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, the imagery is phallogentric as the author "attributes Sulpicia's finery ... to her unacknowledged desire to attract male attention".<sup>55</sup> Although the poet-lover's invocation of *amor* ([Tib.] 3.8 [4.2].6-14) can be identified as indicating his subservience to the female subject, in Tibullus' other

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<sup>52</sup> Translation amended from 'Syrian' to 'Tyrian' (see Plant, "Sulpicia", p. 107ff).

<sup>53</sup> Keith, "Sartorial Elegance", p. 192.

<sup>54</sup> Keith, "Sartorial Elegance", p. 199.

<sup>55</sup> Keith, "Sartorial Elegance", p. 199.

poems, the male elegist notes that he is the one who endows the female mistress with her domineering qualities.<sup>56</sup> Considering this tendency as one prevalent to the elegiac genre, it can be inferred that in the Garland of Sulpicia and the remaining poems of the Tibullan corpus, Sulpicia is rendered voiceless and thus constructed as a body without agency. Sulpicia's own invocation of *amor* ([Tib.] 3.13 [4.7].1-2) thus stands to complicate this view, as she "proclaims the object of her passion – and hence the passion itself – as worthy of herself and her poetry".<sup>57</sup>

Ultimately, when Sulpicia's poems are viewed concomitantly with the prose of Valerius Maximus and Seneca the Elder as well as the poems attributed to Tibullus, they serve to reveal assumptions that are reproduced in the early imperial discourse on covering. These assumptions are related to a view of the dominant male/submissive female understanding of gender roles. Sulpicia's poems complicate the conventional understandings of agency within these assumptions and reveal the complexity of this discourse, indicating that there was more than one perspective on covering in the early imperial period. Rather than transgressing or rejecting the discourse on covering altogether, Sulpicia's poetry allows for the identification of female agency within attitudes to covering. Therefore, the divergent attitudes to covering can be positioned within a collective "cultural repertoire" that authors (as actors of 'culture') could draw on to make meaning within their texts.<sup>58</sup>

## Conclusion

The preceding three sections, although dealing with very different issues, can be drawn together to yield a nuanced understanding of how covering was perceived in early imperial Rome. The views of covering expressed by early imperial authors in their depictions of funerals, use of poetic devices and discussion of gender roles, allow us to draw the conclusion that there was a complex early imperial discourse on covering. The passing

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. Greene's analysis of [Tib.] 1.6.9, 15, 23, 28, 55-56, 85-86 and Prop. 1.3.19-26 in "Gender and Elegy", pp. 358-371.

<sup>57</sup> Flaschenriem, "Sulpicia", p. 39.

<sup>58</sup> Hylan, "Modest, Industrious and Loyal", p. 5.

remarks of Virgil, Ovid and Plutarch indicate that there were set normative practices for female costume in funerary contexts. Yet, covering garments were also used by Virgil and Ovid, among other poets, to convey emotive gestures as well as transgressive notions of danger and deception. The attitudes to covering expressed by Valerius Maximus and Seneca the Elder present a phallogentric view of women, but are complicated by Sulpicia's use of sexually charged language within her treatment of covering and uncovering. In light of these varying stances on covering garments and gestures, Kelly Olson's proposal that "much of what we read in the ancient literature about women's clothing ... is very much *prescriptive*" (my emphasis) requires review, especially in relation to attitudes to female head covering.<sup>59</sup> Overall, early imperial attitudes to female covering were not beholden to a single perspective and moreover, contributed to a broad array of social roles within early imperial Roman culture.

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<sup>59</sup> Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 41.



## Conclusion and Opportunities for further research.

“Specifically, we could better understand important long-range continuities and differences... . An example: veiling. Western women stopped covering their hair in public only very recently—many still do cover their hair during religious worship; this long predates St. Paul ... . Wouldn’t this be a useful thing to be able to remind people of?”

Amy Richlin, “What We Need to Know Right Now”, p. 269

This thesis has identified a complex discourse around the use of covering garments, adornments and language to characterise female protagonists by early Roman imperial poets. Women’s performances of gender within this discourse are cast as ideal or deviant through the characterisation of their head covering garments. For example, the *palla* is used to associate Fury Tisiphone with a deviant femininity across multiple epics and the *amictus* plays a fundamental role in the characterisation of Juturna as reflecting the traditional Roman *matrona* in Virgil’s *Aeneid*.

That head covering garments held significance for these ideal and deviant characterisations illustrates a link between the authorial intent that is evident within the discourse on female covering and the Augustan moral imperatives for women that existed during the time of composition. However, the complexities within the discourse itself lead to an ambiguous picture for authorial composition of an Augustan ‘ideal’ womanhood. Poets often chose which specific garment or adornment to reference, in some cases to meet metrical requirements, and determined how exactly the meaning of the garment was qualified. This results in numerous possible outcomes for the meaning of womanhood in relation to head covering garments within the texts discussed. Although the adornments *infulae* and *vittae* are consistently used as an epithet for the traditional *matrona*, the substantial variation in the use of the *palla* and *amictus* in early imperial poetry to characterise different kinds of women indicates a polyvalent attitude to womanhood in these texts. While the *flammeum* has explicit links to ‘matronhood’, it is rarely encountered in early imperial poetry, so

whether poets viewed the garment as characteristic to Augustan 'ideal' womanhood is difficult to ascertain.<sup>1</sup> Passing references to females uncovering and unbinding their hair during funerals, as well as the use of poetic devices to denote female covering as a dangerous or deceptive act, also indicate a complex variety of meanings that head covering gestures possess in this discourse. Moreover, the attitudes to covering expressed in the poems attributed to Sulpicia show that female agency can be identified in a seemingly phallocentric circle of male authorship and serve to complicate conventional understandings of gender roles. The poetic sources on female head covering should, therefore, be viewed as contributing meaning to an array of social roles and values to do with Augustan womanhood, rather than assumed to convey a prescriptive 'ideal'.<sup>2</sup>

The complexity and variety of these poetic sources that contribute to the early imperial discourse on covering have implications for the treatment of head coverings in research on modern societies more broadly. To this effect, the research and analysis undertaken in this thesis challenges the neutrality of modern discourse on head covering and dominant binary understandings of 'Western self' and 'Eastern other'. As Amy Richlin argues, undertaking research on ancient head covering practices has very important implications for modern scholarship. In this respect, the areas addressed in this thesis warrant further research in order to enable a decisive refutation of the current 'Western' discourse on head coverings and to contribute to a more nuanced debate on the topic. This further research would involve expanding the temporal parameters of research on female head coverings in the ancient Roman world, taking into account other literature from imperial Rome and the Early Christian era. Given the establishment of gender as a useful category for analysis with regards to head coverings in this thesis, it is logical to continue the use of this conceptual framework in an expansion of the corpus more broadly to include instances of male head covering.

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<sup>1</sup> Hersch, *The Roman Wedding*, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the work of Olson (*Dress and the Roman Woman*, p. 41) and Fantham ("Covering the Head at Rome", p. 168).

Moreover, as head coverings possess a visual symbolism that is hitherto under-researched within ancient historical scholarship, visual evidence including statuary and iconographic corpora should form a basis for future research. Jennifer Trimble has laid the groundwork for this kind of investigation to involve a poststructural gendered analysis in her application of Judith Butler's performativity theory to the Herculaneum women statue types.<sup>3</sup> Any future research that makes use of statuary and iconographic evidence for head covering would find the methodology of Trimble useful for adaptation, especially when considering the attitudes to covering of sculptors and their audiences. The continued use of poststructural conceptual frameworks to study the ancient discourse on covering will assist in identifying female agency within modern discourses on the same issue. Moreover, this identification will allow for further investigation of the long-range continuities and differences in head covering practices across ancient and modern cultures, encouraging Richlin's vision to be fully realised.

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<sup>3</sup> Trimble, *Women and Replication*, pp. 150-205.





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