WOMEN GOING PUBLIC

*Ideals and conflicts in the representation of
Julio-Claudian women*

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Women Going Public

Ideals and conflicts in the representation of Julio-Claudian women

Een wetenschappelijke proeve op het gebied van de Letteren

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Few such moments of exhilaration can come as that which stands at the threshold of wild travel The gates of the enclosed garden are thrown open, with a wary glance to right and left you step forth, and, behold! the immeasurable world

Gertrude Bell, *The Desert and the Sown*, London, 1907

These words characterize the excitement which explorer and pioneer Gertrude Bell felt before embarking on her journey to Jerusalem in 1905 Looking back on the years that have passed, I cannot help but feel allied to her spirited words During the process of this dissertation, I have often found myself on many thresholds, entering immeasurable worlds of every kind My Belgians friends and family know that moving to the Netherlands is not as easy as it sounds I was prepared for bad food, loud people and a lot of orange Now, almost five years later, I start to smile when I think of the heartwarming welcome my Dutch colleagues and friends gave me, and be but a little surprised to discover that I would like to stay around a little bit longer These pages are dedicated to everyone whom I have met along the way and helped me both with dealing with academic life and adjusting to a new country

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Introduction

The Roman emperor Caligula called his great-grandmother Livia, the first lady of the Augustan principate, “*Ulixem stolatum*”, a Ulysses dressed in a *stola* – at least so Suetonius claims.¹ Regardless of the question whether these words should indeed be attributed to Caligula, the Latin phrase is illustrative of the ambiguous position of Livia in Roman society and the way it was perceived by others. The humour of Caligula’s alleged utterance lies in its apparent contradiction. The Homeric hero notoriously appears in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as a clever, scheming and courageous figure, and was seen by many Romans as an example of male *virtus*. Yet the adjective *stolatus* gives the figure a female cachet. The *stola*, of course, was a long sleeveless dress worn by Roman *matronae*, and served as a symbol of virtuous female behaviour. The Latin phrase indicates that Livia was seen as having both male and female qualities: she combined the intellect of men with the traditional virtues of women. This ambiguous portrayal of Livia resulted from her perceived ambiguous position in social life. As a woman, society assigned to her a role in the private sphere. On the other hand, since Livia was also a member of the ruling imperial family, she gained a position of high visibility stepping into the public domain. The present dissertation focuses on this tension between the public and the private sphere, as it is articulated in the ancient sources, and its impact on the literary as well as non-literary portrayals of Livia and her female relatives. The following research question is central to this study: how did certain ideals of female conduct influence the representation of Julio-Claudian women?

This means that the present dissertation is embedded in the field of ‘Women’s studies’. Though scholars have extensively studied the imperial women of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the inclusion of theoretical notions stemming from gender studies is a recent development.² The concept of gender, referring to “society’s creation of a set of expectations about the appropriate traits of character and forms of behaviour for men and women”, contributes highly to our understanding of the Roman world in general and Roman women in particular.³ Importantly, the ancient understanding of the concepts ‘public’ and ‘private’ has never been included in a study of the representation of imperial women. This dissertation aims to fill that void by concentrating on the women of Rome’s first imperial family.

¹ Suet. *Cal.* 23.

² The merits of using gender as a category of historical analysis have been emphasized by Joan Scott in her very influential study of 1988. On the relevance of gender theory for the field of archaeology, see Boymel Kampen, 2000, pp. 189–204. For a *status quaestionis*, see chapter 1.

³ Wood 2000, p. 78.

A word on the main characters in the underlying study is necessary. This dissertation focuses on the women of the Julio-Claudian dynasty which reigned from the second half of the first century B C to A D 68. As is well-known, the denomination 'Julio-Claudian' refers to the two branches of which the family consists, namely the *gens Julia* and the *gens Claudia*. The term, however, is not without controversy, and not every woman treated in this dissertation is strictly speaking a 'Julio-Claudian'.⁴ The Julio-Claudian family is usually perceived as the descendants of Augustus, through his daughter Julia Maior, and of his wife Livia, through her sons Drusus and Tiberius. Here, I will also include Augustus' mother Atia (of the *gens Atia*) and his sister Octavia (of the *gens Octavia*), for they played an important role in Augustan ideology and contributed to the development of the imperial family's public image.

1. Theoretical framework

Before turning to the sources used in this dissertation and the problems one encounters when dealing with them, it is necessary to take a closer look at the theoretical concepts and models applied in this study. I will first expound the idea of literary and non-literary images as a means to convey messages. To fully comprehend the communicative aspect of the portrayals of Julio-Claudian women, one needs to be familiar with the correlation between image-maker and audience, and with the concepts of ideology and propaganda. Secondly, I will focus on the concept of stereotypes. Since these play an important role in the characterizations of Julio-Claudian women, it is necessary to grasp what is understood by them in this dissertation. Moreover, this introduction will pay attention to a third cornerstone of the present study, namely the public/private dichotomy. Modern research has established that the notions of 'public' and 'private' can denote different things. It is, therefore, essential to elaborate on what meaning they have in studies on the Roman world and how they are used in this dissertation.

1.1 *Images as cultural products*

This dissertation deals with the various ways in which Julio-Claudian women were portrayed in literary and non-literary sources. Though there is a certain relationship between these

⁴ On the problematic nature of the terms 'Julians', 'Claudians' and 'Julio-Claudian' see Levick 1975.

portrayals and 'the real world' – the least we can say is that these women existed – they should not be seen as mere *reflections* of reality and should, therefore, not be taken at face value.⁵ Instead, the portrayals under consideration should be regarded as cultural products. They were crafted deliberately, with an audience and intended result in mind. The maker expected them to be *meaningful*. These portrayals should be considered as representations of Julio-Claudian women.⁶ Members of the same culture share sets of concepts, images and ideas, which enable them to think about the world, and thus to interpret the world, in roughly similar ways.⁷ They share, so to speak, the same 'cultural codes'. Examining the portrayals of Julio-Claudian women within their cultural context can tell us something about that culture and the position of these women in it.

As indicated, the portrayals of Julio-Claudian women were aimed at an audience. The purpose of these portrayals was to communicate messages.⁸ In order to do so, both the image-maker and the viewer needed 'to speak the same language'. In the present study, language is defined broadly as any system that constructs meaning and transmits it.⁹ I will, therefore, include different sorts of language, such as written language, visual language, body language, the language of clothes, etcetera.¹⁰ Obviously, some languages are more difficult to 'read' than others. To interpret visual language, for instance, one needs to know how art was viewed and perceived in society.¹¹ It should be emphasized that the meaning which was attributed to the portrayals under consideration was not static or fixed. The perception of an image could vary according to the viewer or the historical context.¹² Furthermore, it should be noted that an image could have various meanings at the same time. It is, for instance, easy to imagine how imperial images were meant to appeal differently to the various layers of the Roman Empire.¹³

⁵ Hall, 1997, pp. 24-25 Cf. specified on ancient art, Smith, 2002

⁶ In this study, representation is understood as "a symbolic rendering in text or image that can provide an insight into social relations and the ideals, standards and values involved" (Manders, 2007, p. 277)

⁷ Hall, 1997, p. 4

⁸ Pioneering studies on the communicative aspects of images include Zanker, 1987, Holscher, 1987, Hannestad, 1988.

⁹ Hall, 1997, p. 5.

¹⁰ All these 'languages' have received considerable attention in recent research on the Roman world. See, for instance, Sebesta-Bonfante, 1994; Corbeill, 2004; Edmondson, 2008; Olson, 2008.

¹¹ Elsner, 1998, p. 53.

¹² Recent research on ancient art has emphasized the importance of 'the viewer'. See, for instance, Zanker, 1994; Elsner, 1995, Elsner, 1998; Zanker, 2000, Stewart, 2003, pp. 14-15; Elsner, 2007. Smith, 2002, p. 73: "The meaning of ancient images was relative not absolute." Cf. on the same page "The same visual form can mean quite different things in different times and places, so that detailed reconstruction of context – purpose, setting, audience – is essential before reasonable interpretation can begin." A recent example of how the notion of 'the viewer' can be used to study Roman portraiture is the study of van den Hengel (2009), who examines the meanings which ancient viewers might have attached to the emperor's portrait as a gendered body-image.

¹³ Hekster, 2002, p. 9

Strongly connected to the practice of conveying messages is the concept of ideology. Ideology is a disputed concept and has been subject of debate for many decades.¹⁴ In the present study, ideology is understood as a set of beliefs that “serves to establish and sustain structured relations from which some individuals and groups benefit more than others, and which some individuals and groups have an interest in preserving while others may seek to contest.”¹⁵ Every society is permeated by many ideologies, which are constantly liable to change. This also goes for the period under discussion. One can, for instance, distinguish between an imperial ideology, closely connected to the position of the emperor and the imperial court, and ideologies which were, for instance, characteristic of the senatorial order. Chapters one and two will focus on the most important ideologies that lay at the basis of the portrayal of Julio-Claudian women, namely the ideal of female conduct and the dichotomy between the domains of *forum* and *domus*.

When dealing with imperial ideology, one should also take the term ‘propaganda’ into account. Though it is often used in studies on the Roman world, ‘propaganda’ remains for many scholars an uncomfortable concept.¹⁶ The term is a product of modern society and is particularly associated with totalitarian regimes, with lies and deception.¹⁷ This, however, should not be a reason to avoid the concept altogether. If we return to the most common meaning of ‘propaganda’ and strip the concept of its totalitarian connotations, use of the concept in a study of the Roman world can show itself to be very useful. DeRose Evans defines ‘propaganda’ as “the educational efforts or information used by an organized group that is made available to a selected audience, for the specific purpose of making the audience take a particular course of action or conform to a certain attitude desired by the organized group.”¹⁸ One can examine, for instance, how images were used to propagate certain messages, as will be demonstrated in chapters three and four of this dissertation. What is essentially meant by ‘propaganda’ in this study is the dissemination of ideas by people in

¹⁴ On the subject in general, see, for instance, Thompson, 1990. With regard to the ancient world, see e.g. Ando, 2000; Smith, 2006.

¹⁵ Thompson, 1990, p. 294.

¹⁶ For an example of strong opposition against the idea of a propagandistic programme from the part of the emperor, see Veyne, 2002, e.g. p. 6: “Ne parlons pas de programme: un nouvel empereur n’avait pas à exposer de programme au pays, car un chef n’est pas un candidat: il entend être respecté et obéi d’office”.

¹⁷ As does, in a very specific context, Alexandridis, 2004, p. 6: “[Der Begriff ‘Propaganda’] suggeriert im Deutschen jedoch Totalitarismus, Zwang, Lüge und ist deshalb als Erklärung für die lange Erfolgsgeschichte des Imperium Romanum, insbesondere des römischen Kaiserreiches und der kaiserlichen Repräsentation ungeeignet.” Cf. Bergmann, 2000, p. 168.

¹⁸ DeRose Evans, 1992, p. 1. In research on the ancient world, scholars have often found the division between ‘agitation propaganda’ – aimed at changing attitudes of individuals or groups – and ‘integration propaganda’ – aimed at getting individuals or groups to participate in society, reinforcing social order – helpful analytical instruments. The division between ‘agitation propaganda’ and ‘integration propaganda’ is articulated by Ellul, 1973. See DeRose Evans, 1992, pp. 1-16; McHugh, 2004, p. 8; Fowler – Hekster, 2005, pp. 16-17.

power in specific periods, served primarily to create goodwill towards the emperor, rather than to induce any particular behaviour.¹⁹ Stereotypes, among other things, could play an important role in this process.

1.2. Stereotypes

Studies on women in Antiquity are highly influenced by feminist movements of the twentieth century, to which I will return in more detail in chapter one. The present dissertation appropriates theoretical notions that originate from feminist cultural criticism as well. One of these notions is the construction of stereotypes in different media.²⁰ A stereotype can be defined as “a set of beliefs about the characteristics of the occupants of a role, not necessarily based on fact or personal experience, but applied to each role occupant regardless of particular circumstances. In addition, stereotypes are conceived of as having an evaluative component. That is, they are not merely descriptive of expected behaviors, but these expected behaviors are evaluated as good, bad, desirable, and so on.”²¹

The notion of stereotypes found acceptance in studies on ancient women. Scholars recognized the usage of stereotypes by ancient authors as a means of characterization. From the 1990s onwards, studies focused on literary stereotypes such as ‘the wicked stepmother’, ‘the woman in power’ or ‘the witch’.²² Though scholars generally acknowledge that stereotypes played a role in the literary characterization of Julio-Claudian women as well, elaborations on this subject have remained limited.²³ In these studies, the concept of stereotypes is often used without precise definition. In most cases, stereotypes are solely conceived as a literary tool for negative portrayal, as a means for character assassination.²⁴ Furthermore, these studies approach stereotypes as if they were monolithic impositions.

The present dissertation will treat stereotypes as complex fluctuating processes. A stereotype such as ‘the woman in power’, for instance, should not be seen as a static whole, but as composed of different stereotypical aspects which were liable to change. I will, therefore, focus on how the stereotypes that were used in characterizations of Julio-Claudian

¹⁹ Hannestad, 1988, p. 343.

²⁰ For a discussion of the notion’s evolution in media studies in general, see Walters, 1995, pp. 31-44. Cf. Barker, 2008³, pp. 306-307.

²¹ Kessler – MacKenna, 1978, p. 12. I will follow this definition in this dissertation.

²² See esp. Hillard, 1992; Watson, 1995; Stratton, 2007.

²³ The most extensive contribution is the study of Ginsburg, 2006, who dedicates a chapter on the rhetorical stereotypes used by the ancient authors to characterize Agrippina Minor.

²⁴ Ginsburg, 2006, pp. 106-131, for instance, limits her account to the rhetorical stereotypes of the *saeva noverca*, *dux femina*, sexual transgressor and domineering mother.

women adjusted to the historical context. Furthermore, I will consider stereotypes as more than descriptions of expected behaviour, as indicated in the definition above. They evaluate expected behaviour as well, not only negatively, which was the focus of most previous studies, but also positively. However, since it is generally known that literary authors, such as Tacitus, are opposed, if not hostile, to most imperial women, one needs to broaden the research corpus. The present study will, therefore, also include non-literary sources. Here too, a scholar needs to be on guard. Because of the 'panegyric' nature of sources such as imperial coins or cameos, to which I will return below, they tend to be more susceptible to positive stereotypes. Only the combination of negative and positive stereotypes can provide a more complete impression of the representation of Julio-Claudian women in Antiquity.

1.3 Public and private

The distinction between 'public' and 'private' has long served as a point of entry to study key issues of the ancient world.²⁵ The difficulty, however, in applying these concepts as organizing categories is their wide range of meanings and implications. 'Public' when referring to public buildings means something else than when used to denote the public domain of political action. Likewise, private thoughts and private property refer to different degrees of 'private'.²⁶ As put by Weintraub, "the public/private distinction () is not unitary, but protean. It comprises, not a single paired opposition, but a complex family of them, neither mutually reducible nor wholly unrelated."²⁷ It is, therefore, important to consider the discourse in which these concepts are applied to fully grasp their meaning.

In this dissertation, I will focus on 'public' and 'private' as organizing categories to divide social life in, broadly stated, the political community and the realm of the household. Though this division and its application to modern society has been problematized by feminist critics, they are useful categories to study the Roman world, as I will illustrate in more detail in chapter two. The Romans often distinguished between *forum* and *domus* to delineate two spheres of activities. This division of urban space was gendered: the public sphere of the *forum* was considered the domain of men, while the private sphere of the *domus* was a woman's world.²⁸ By extension, all activities pertaining to those spheres were likewise divided along the lines of 'public/men' or 'private/women'. Closely related to this

²⁵ F. g. Kampen 1991, Gazda 1991, Wallace Hadrill 1994b, Milnor 2005, Winterling 2005.

²⁶ On the variety of meanings of 'public' and 'private' see the lucid study of Weintraub 1997.

²⁷ Weintraub 1997, p. 2.

²⁸ For references see chapter 2.

public/private dichotomy are dichotomies such as outside/inside, visible/invisible, powerful/powerless, dominant/subordinate. I will elaborate more on these opposite pairs in chapter two and will discuss them in other chapters where relevant.

One of the main criticisms of the division of public and private spheres in modern societies, and one which also applies to the Roman world, is that the division does not occur along a precise dividing line. Sometimes these spheres overlap. This often leads to conflict situations. The occasions and reasons for this vary and I will touch upon several of these in the course of this study. When studying Julio-Claudian women, we are more than once confronted with this blurred dividing line. Their position in society and their visibility conflicted with the traditional expectations of female conduct which ancient authors and others often had. The present study will focus on this tension and examine how it influenced the representations of these women. The notions of 'public' and 'private' are woven through all five chapters, but receive special attention in chapters two and five.

2. The sources

In most studies on Julio-Claudian women, scholars have given much attention to the ancient writers who assigned specific roles to these women in their literary works. In the early stages of scholarly research, the works of these authors were above all used as sources to retrieve biographical 'facts'.²⁹ Nowadays, it is commonly recognised that literary works were products of their times. Consequently, recent studies approach literary sources as cultural products with their own conventions and traditions. One needs to 'reread' the accounts on Julio-Claudian women and interpret these within their respective contexts. In the following lines, I will indicate the problems one encounters during the process. In addition, as stated above, to obtain a more complete picture of the representation of Julio-Claudian women one also needs to examine the non-literary sources. These too have characteristic problems that render interpretation more difficult. I will indicate which non-literary sources were consulted in this study and touch upon the most important methodological difficulties and considerations.

²⁹ For a *status quaestionis*, see chapter 1.

The lion's share of this study is based on the works of ancient authors. There are three authors, especially, who deal extensively with Julio-Claudian women: Suetonius, Cassius Dio and Tacitus. Other writers refer to them incidentally and more briefly. These authors include, among others, Appian, Ovid, Velleius Paterculus, Valerius Maximus, Seneca, Plutarch and Juvenal. In his biographical studies on Agrippina Minor and Livia, Anthony Barrett offers a clear overview of these sources, presenting both a summary of the authors' lives and of their works.³⁰ The general qualities of these authors as writers have been treated in more detail elsewhere.³¹ Instead of rewriting these accounts, I would rather like to focus on the problems one faces when dealing with these sources in the context of studying imperial women.

The ancient texts that are available to us are often fragmentary or incomplete. With regard to Julio-Claudian women, the lacuna in Tacitus' *Annals* can be considered as an important obstacle. As is well-known, Tacitus wrote an account of the years between the death of Augustus and the suicide of Nero. Parts of books 5, 6 and 11, and all of books 7-10, treating among other things the reigns of Caligula and Claudius, are lost. Obviously, there is no way of knowing how prominent Julio-Claudian women figured in these lost accounts, but it is likely that Tacitus would have paid some attention to Caligula's sisters during his reign and the role of Messalina during the first years of Claudius' reign. An equally important obstacle is the transmission of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*. Encompassing eighty books, Dio described events from the foundation of Rome to A.D. 229. Large parts of Dio's work, however, have only survived through Byzantine epitomes. As Barrett remarks, the term is rather misleading, for "the epitomators tend to excerpt rather than summarise, and often simply omit significant events."³²

A second problem one faces is the lack of contemporary sources. The three main authors – Suetonius, Tacitus and Cassius Dio – wrote considerably later than the events they discussed. It is often difficult to establish to what extent they relied on each other or on other non-surviving sources. Only a small portion of the contemporary accounts of the Julio-Claudian period have survived. Though authors such as Ovid or Valerius Maximus were eyewitnesses of (some of) the events they described, their trustworthiness should equally be examined. Ovid's flattery towards Livia, for instance, has often been ascribed to his attempts

³⁰ Barrett, 1996 pp. 196-214, Barrett 2002 pp. 229-258.

³¹ The list of publications is endless. See for instance: Syme, 1958; Millar, 1964; Syme, 1970; Hurley 1993; Ash 1999; Birley 2000; Swan, 2004.

³² Barrett, 2002 p. 238.

to regain the favour of the imperial family after he was exiled to Tomi in A.D. 8.³³ Likewise, since Valerius Maximus dedicated his *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* to Tiberius, scholars have often assumed an obsequious attitude of the author towards that emperor and his intimates.³⁴ More difficulties arise when the author of a literary work remains unknown. The so-called *Consolatio ad Liviam* claims to have been written to offer consolation to Livia after the death of her son Drusus in 9 B.C.³⁵ Similarities between the style of the poem and the styles of Ovid and Seneca have tempted scholars to attribute the literary work to one of these authors. Every attribution, however, remains highly speculative and the only scholarly consensus seems to be that the poem is not what it claims to be. In much the same way, the authorship of the *Octavia*, a tragedy focusing on the figure of Claudius' daughter Octavia, has been subject of debate.³⁶ The manuscripts in which the play survived attribute the tragedy to Seneca, but textual allusions to events after Seneca's death have led scholars to conclude that a Flavian author is more likely.

The previously mentioned examples of Ovid and Valerius Maximus already hinted at a third problem when dealing with literary sources. No scholar studying the ancient world can circumvent the fact that the ancient authors were extremely biased. The reasons for their prejudices and the manner in which they were expressed differed. For instance, being the son of a senator and a senator himself, Cassius Dio was deeply concerned with anything that affected senatorial power. In general, a characteristic all ancient authors have in common was their objection to powerful women. Chapter one will elaborate on how the Romans' view of women influenced the ancient authors in their writing.

A final problem that I would like to address is the literary preoccupation of the ancient writers. Most literary sources focus on the figure of the emperor. Literary portrayals of Julio-Claudian women are rarely unrelated to the characterizations of the men surrounding them. The example par excellence is probably Suetonius' *Lives*. As a general principle, Suetonius described imperial women only if they added something to the subject of the biography in question.³⁷

The objections to and limitations of the literary sources do not facilitate a study on Julio-Claudian women. While beset by similar problems, I will turn to non-literary sources for an additional perspective on the representation of the women under consideration.

³³ Cf. Johnson, 1997.

³⁴ On this subject, see e.g. Wardle, 2000.

³⁵ See, for instance, Schlegelmilch, 2005.

³⁶ On the *Octavia*, see most recently Boyle, 2008. For further references, see chapter 3.

³⁷ On Suetonius. Riemer, 2000. For a study on the same principle at work in Tacitus' writing, see Spath, 2000.

The non-literary sources under consideration include archaeological remains, coinage, inscriptions, sculpture, and cameos. It is not my intention to offer a complete catalogue of the representation of Julio-Claudian women in these sources or to provide an exhaustive discussion of every surviving example. During the last decade, several excellent catalogues have been published on the representation of imperial women and I will refer to these when necessary.³⁸

In the present study, I will distinguish between imperial and non-imperial images. With imperial images, I indicate those images of which the decision to produce them and the choice of the messages they convey stemmed from the emperor or his entourage. Imperial coins are obvious examples, but state monuments such as the *Ara Pacis* are also considered imperial.³⁹ It is difficult to assess how much the emperor personally interfered with the creation of these images. They can, however, be considered as official expressions of imperial authority and must, therefore, agree with the imperial discourse. This type of sources presents a particular image of the emperor, the imperial family and/or the imperial reign. As a group, these images convey a visual programme (*Bildprogramm*) presenting imperial ideology, as explained above.⁴⁰ Conveying messages is a communicative process between the image-maker and the viewer. It goes, therefore, without saying that the perceptions of an image must have influenced its production. One should always reckon with the dynamic relationship between buyer or patron, figured object and audience.

Non-imperial images are not decided upon by the imperial court. Of course, it is possible that non-imperial images appropriate, or indeed influence, some of the language used by the imperial ideological discourse. Examples of non-imperial images are statues commissioned by private individuals, provincial coins or provincial sculptural monuments. This type of images allows us to study Julio-Claudian women “through the other end of the telescope”, and to see how they are viewed by others.⁴¹ It is of the utmost importance to study both imperial and non-imperial images within their respective contexts. As argued by Smith, “none were images for their own sake. They were all parts of objects or structures with other functions.”⁴²

³⁸ E.g. Hahn, 1994; Mikocki, 1995; Bartman, 1999; Alexandridis, 2004. See also Wood, 1999.

³⁹ Cf. Hekster, 2003.

⁴⁰ On this subject, see still most importantly Zanker, 1987.

⁴¹ Smith, 2002, p. 92.

⁴² Smith, 2002, p. 65.

One category of sources deserves special notice because of its ambiguous nature, namely that of engraved gems or cameos. Reconstructing the social and historical context of cameos is a difficult task and has puzzled scholars for some time. Since they were very expensive to produce, one has often assumed that they were not intended for a wide audience.⁴³ They probably circulated in a small circle, maybe among the members of the imperial court and their intimates. This hypothesis has been drawn from overtly dynastic depictions on gems such as the so-called *Grand Camée de France*, which depicts various generations of the Julio-Claudian family as a continuous entity (fig. 1). An artist seems to have had more freedom to appropriate subjects and symbols in cameo depictions that were not considered suitable in other media. Cameo art was introduced in Rome after contacts with the Hellenistic world had acquainted Romans with the phenomenon. The Greek background was probably one of the reasons why so many Hellenistic symbols found their way in the visual language of cameos.⁴⁴ Our lack of knowledge of cameos and their use in the Roman world complicates any interpretation of them. The variety in size has led to the conclusion that small cameos were probably incorporated in rings or other pieces of jewelry, whilst the larger examples might have been kept as *Prunkstücke*.⁴⁵ Scholars agree that cameos can be considered as a means to spread imperial ideology and they will, with some caution, be treated as such in the course of this dissertation.⁴⁶

3. 'This is the house that Jack built'

Before turning to the main subject, I will provide the reader with a brief overview of the different research questions that lie at the basis of each chapter.

Every study of women in Roman society needs to start with a set of preliminaries. If we want to comprehend the representation of Julio-Claudian women in the ancient sources, we need to understand how Roman society saw women in general. As stated, this dissertation approaches the portrayals of Julio-Claudian women as cultural products, as rooted within social conventions. Different questions need to be asked first. Were women considered as equal to men? How was this equality or inequality articulated in the sources? Chapter one ('The Roman concept of *matrona*') will emphasize the different ways in which ancient

⁴³ Bartman, 1999, p. 12.

⁴⁴ E.g. the double *cornucopia*. Cf. chapter 5.

⁴⁵ On cameos incorporated in rings or other objects, see Plin. *NH* 33.23–41, Plut. *Luc.* 40. See also Platz-Horster, 2009, p. 321, for an example of a cameo of Livia incorporated in a diadem. Cf. Vollenweider, 1966, p. 17; Möbius, 1985, pp. 33–41; Plantzos, 1999, p. 111; Zwierlein-Diehl, 2007, pp. 6–19.

⁴⁶ E.g. Zwierlein-Diehl, 2007, p. 126 ("inoffizielle Propagandamittel").

authors looked at and wrote about women. Central to the Roman perception of women was the concept of *matrona*. Certain ideals of female conduct found expression through this model. What were these and how were they used to evaluate female behaviour? The answers to these questions will provide a framework within which one can consequently interpret the portrayals of Julio-Claudian women.

Chapter two ('Public and private aspects of the *Domus Augusta*') has at its core a second ideological discourse which plays a role in the representation of imperial women, namely the dichotomy between 'public' and 'private'. How is this dichotomy verbalized in the ancient sources? Where, in Roman perception, was the appropriate place of women? This chapter will concentrate on the opposition between *forum* and *domus*, and its impact on the representation of imperial women. Furthermore, the *domus*, which is often perceived as a private *locus* par excellence, will be examined in more detail. How private was a Roman *domus* in general and the imperial *domus* in particular?

A *domus* was incomplete without a *mater familias* and every man, including the emperor, needed to find the most suitable candidate. Chapters three ('Staging the emperor's wife') and four ('Mothers behind the curtains') focus on the most important roles of women within the structure of the *domus*, that of wife and mother. How were these roles perceived and articulated in literary and non-literary sources? When concentrating on imperial women, one needs to wonder how becoming a wife or a mother influenced the status of the woman in question. Did the ideals of female conduct influence the representation of Julio-Claudian women as wives and mothers? And how did the public and private aspects of the imperial *domus* play a role in the characterizations of imperial women?

The fifth and final chapter ('Association with the divine') will concentrate on an important lacuna in modern scholarship, namely the association of Julio-Claudian women with the world of the gods. Research on the portrayals of Julio-Claudian women with the attributes of divinities has remained limited. The same goes for the literary attestations of the involvement of imperial women in religious life. Did the concept of *matrona* play a role in these forms of divine associations?

Chapter 1

The Roman concept of *matrona*

One cannot start a study on Julio-Claudian women without paying attention to Roman women in general, meaning the upper-class women of Rome, for it is with these women that imperial women bore the strongest resemblance with regard to status. This chapter, therefore, serves as an introduction to the topic. For the interpretation of portrayals of Roman women it is important to have an understanding of their place in society, as it is articulated in different types of sources, and, above all, of the ways in which ‘image-makers’ saw these women. Before turning to these issues, however, it is necessary to focus on the state of modern scholarship, in order to comprehend how the present study relates to previous research.

1.1. Roman women in modern research: *status quaestionis*

During the past decades, various feminist waves have influenced both the research focus and methodological approach of scholars of the ancient world. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, so-called first-wave feminists paid considerable attention to women’s right to vote and own property. These topics were also treated at large in academic research on women in ancient Rome.¹ In various studies, research on Roman women was connected to women’s struggle for complete civil rights in England.² The androcentric view of modern research was criticized and as a result two main areas of research developed. On the one hand, scholars concentrated on women’s oppression by men in Antiquity. References in the ancient sources to conspicuous figures such as the Roman empresses made the hypothesis of female subordination in the Roman world hard to maintain. Scholars found more ‘proof’ of women’s oppression in the Greek world, which resulted in an unbalanced research focus on the seclusion of Greek women.³ On the other hand, influenced by the suffragettes’ movement, scholars started to question whether ancient women were indeed powerless or without any form of influence. This question brought both Greece and Rome under attention. The

¹ See, for instance, Corbett, 1930, who focuses on the legal impact on the lives of married women, Adcock 1945, with attention to the emancipation, economic independence and political influence of Roman women, Abbott 1963, with chapters on ‘Women and public affairs under the Roman Republic’, and on ‘Roman women in the trades and professions’.

² Dale, 1894, Flannery, 1920.

³ See, for instance, Haley, 1890 on the seclusion of Greek women as described by Aristophanes, Galt, 1931 on the custom of Greek women to veil their faces when they left their houses, Flacchiere, 1965, with a chapter on the status of Greek women and their place at home.

subjugation of Athenian women was reconsidered and the general assumption of female oppression was nuanced.⁴ Nevertheless, it remained very clear that the position of Greek women differed greatly from that of Roman women. The allusion of ancient authors to influential women in Roman society became a particular point of interest and their lives were studied at length.⁵ Furthermore, scholars started to examine the foundations of the extraordinary position of Roman women. Research on the historicity of matriarchy developed as a reaction against (male) scholars who refused to admit on principle that matriarchy could have existed, for they considered the subjection of women natural, inevitable and eternal.⁶

Feminist movements brought forth other interests than the juridical and political status of Roman women. During the 1960s and 1970s, feminist critics denounced inequalities of their contemporary society on a broad scale. Issues such as the right to work, birth control or equal salaries affected debates. The same topics influenced historical research. The economic position of ancient women in particular became a popular research interest.⁷

Central in the early discussions on ancient women were an uncomplicated view of 'man' and 'woman', and the notion of 'power'. Scholars wrote in terms of a seclusion and domination dichotomy, and the main question was whether ancient women were oppressed by men or not. Perhaps the most influential feminist in this area was Simone De Beauvoir. Her book *La deuxième sexe*, which was first published in 1949, inspired scholars to look at Roman society in terms of 'the other' and 'the same'.⁸ According to De Beauvoir, once men have envisioned themselves as central beings, as alone entitled and empowered to create and control, they define women merely with reference to themselves. A woman is considered as everything a man is not, which she thought to be a current belief in both her own days and in Roman times. When discussing the 'emancipation' of Roman republican women, she states: "C'est au moment où la femme est pratiquement la plus émancipée qu'on proclame l'infériorité de son sexe, ce qui est un remarquable exemple du processus de justification mâle dont j'ai parlé: comme on ne limite plus ses droits en tant que fille, épouse, sœur, c'est en tant que sexe qu'on lui refuse l'égalité avec l'homme; on prétexte pour la brimer «l'imbécillité, la fragilité du sexe»".⁹

⁴ See for instance, Gomme, 1925; Hadas, 1936; Kuenen-Janssens, 1941.

⁵ Ferrero 1912; Assa 1958; Perowne, 1974.

⁶ One of the most influential studies on matriarchy is without a doubt Bachofen's *Das Mutterrecht*, which originally appeared in 1861. For a recent edition, see Bachofen, 1993. Cf. Cantarella, 1987, p. 110; Cantarella 2001, pp. 17-22.

⁷ See for instance, Spano, 1961; Schaps, 1979; Dixon, 1983.

⁸ On 'the other' and 'the same' see, for instance, Claassen, 1981, pp. 71-72; Hallett, 1989, pp. 60-61.

⁹ De Beauvoir 1949, p. 151.

Scholars of the 1980s and 1990s no longer saw ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as uncomplicated concepts, but rather as concepts that were structured by a cultured society. One of the new problems scholars tried to solve was the problem of the evidence. As Rabinowitz puts it, “we find that we have many male representations of women but not much ‘hard’ data about women.”¹⁰ The biased nature of the literary sources was acknowledged and renewed attention was paid to non-literary remains, where the male voice is much less present, though it never completely disappears.¹¹ Furthermore, attempts were made to retrieve the few female voices that did survive, such as the poems of Sulpicia, the letters of Cornelia or the writing tablets of the women in Vindolanda. The authenticity of these female voices, however, remains subject to debate.¹² The portrayals of women in literary sources became subject of scrutiny. Scholars emphasized the narrative purpose of literary authors and their strategic use of female characters.¹³

Scholarship on Julio-Claudian women evolved along the same lines. Until the 1980s and especially the 1990s, modern researchers emphasized the extraordinary position of these women. Scholars focused on how they influenced the emperor in particular and politics in general.¹⁴ These studies were mostly based on literary sources. The ancient authors were often taken at face value, which led to a general distinction between ‘bad imperial women’, such as Livia, Messalina and Agrippina, and ‘good imperial women’, such as Antonia Minor or Octavia. During that same period, studies on the iconography of these women appeared as well. Here too, emphasis lay on one particular type of sources.¹⁵ The portraits of Julio-Claudian women were studied without their historical context. Scholarship in the 1990s proved to be a turning point. An important innovation was the combination of literary and non-literary sources. Both iconographical and historical studies tried to provide a complete image of Julio-Claudian women by taking into account all available evidence and reckoning with the historical context.¹⁶ The latest tendency in scholarship on ancient women, one on which this dissertation builds, treats portrayals of women in Antiquity as cultural products. It is generally acknowledged that literary and non-literary portraits of ancient women should not

¹⁰ Rabinowitz, 1993, p. 9

¹¹ See for instance: Treggiari, 1976; Dörken – Treggiari, 1981; Dixon, 2001, esp. pp. 113-132

¹² See d’Ermo, 1962-1963, and Horsfall, 1987, on the letters of Cornelia; Bowman – Thomas, 2003, on some Vindolanda tablets written by women; Segal, 1993, Churchill, 2002, Plant, 2004, and Greene, 2005, on Sulpicia and in general.

¹³ See for instance: Joshel, 1991, Spath, 1994; Joshel, 1997; Kunst – Riemer, 2000. See, most recently, Milnor, 2009

¹⁴ E.g. Ferrero, 1925; Mullens, 1942; Balsdon, 1962; Perowne, 1974; Bauman, 1992. The notion of ‘power’ plays an important role in these studies, see also Vout, 2007.

¹⁵ E.g. Gross, 1962; Polaschek, 1973.

¹⁶ E.g. Barrett, 1996; Bartman, 1999; Wood, 1999; Barrett, 2002; Kokkinos, 2002.

be taken at face value. One should always reckon with the different factors that influenced these portrayals, on which I will elaborate below. The studies published so far tend to treat Roman women in general, so that detailed studies on the representation of Julio-Claudian women have remained rather limited.¹⁷ This dissertation aims to continue this research approach by treating the literary and non-literary portrayals of Julio-Claudian women as cultural products, and to examine which cultural factors influenced their representation.

1.2. The importance of appearance

As said, literary authors did not write their accounts on Roman women without bias. Every study on ancient women, therefore, should start with an elaboration on what those male prejudices were. Here, I will focus on how Roman men, on the whole, saw Roman women. It will become clear that, over time, Roman society constructed an image of the ideal *matrona*. Based on the general notion of female inferiority, a model of ideal conduct was shaped, a 'blueprint', which women – and others – could use to evaluate their behaviour. The characteristics of the ideal *matrona* found their way into all kinds of sources, both literary and non-literary, and remained essentially unchanged throughout Roman history. In the following, I will concentrate on exemplary literature, funerary inscriptions and statuary, which are perhaps the most explicit types of evidence where these characteristics are visible. Nevertheless, references to the ideal of female conduct are by no means restricted to these genres.

1.2.1 Female inferiority

According to Roman law, every legitimate citizen began life in the power of his or her father.¹⁸ On the father's death, if the child was a boy and had reached a mature age, he became *sui iuris* and was able to inherit, to own property or to make a will. If the boy was too young, he received a guardian to protect him against his own inexperience until he reached puberty. Girls, however, passed from one guardian to another. The ancient sources refer to this guardianship of women as *tutela mulierum*.¹⁹ It is difficult to reconstruct the origins of

¹⁷ The most important are Fischler 1994, and Ginsburg 2006.

¹⁸ If the father was not yet independent, the newborn was placed under the *potestas* of the grandfather. On *Patria Potestas* see Lacey 1986.

¹⁹ The most lucid study on *tutela mulierum* is Dixon, 2001 pp. 73–88, which is an edited version of Dixon, 1984. More generally, see Michel, 1974, Zannini 1979.

this institution. As we shall see, the comments of the ancient authors seem to indicate that the history of the practice was unclear for them as well. The authors of a wide variety of sources – such as papyri, juridical and literary texts – seem to connect *tutela mulierum* to the notion of *infirmitas sexus*. These sources cover a large period ranging from the Roman Republic to late Antiquity, illustrating the persistence of the association.²⁰

Cicero's *Pro Murena* serves as a first example of this association. In 63 B.C., Cicero refers to *tutela mulierum* in his defense of Lucius Licinius Murena, who, among other things, was accused of electoral bribery.²¹

Mulieres omnis propter infirmitatem consilii maiores in tutorum potestate esse voluerunt, huius invenerunt genera tutorum quae potestate mulierum continerentur (Cic. *Pro Mur.* 27)

Our ancestors required all women owing to the instability of their judgement to be under the control of guardians, but these lawyers thought up kinds of guardians to be under the control of women.

Cicero claims that women's intellectual incapacity lay at the origin of the guardianship for women. By the time of Cicero, however, the institution of *tutela mulierum* had little impact on women's exercise of financial or legal activities in daily life. The letters of the orator show that in Cicero's circle of friends and family, women existed who were very much capable of taking care of business.²² In *Pro Murena*, the allusion to *tutela mulierum* functioned as a rhetorical commonplace, a 'court-room joke', with which Cicero tried to divert the jury's attention from his client's charges and undermine the authority of the prosecuting lawyers.²³

In another context, in the second century A.D., the same issue was raised by the jurist Gaius. In a first passage, he explains why the ancients considered it necessary for women to be held under control by a guardian:

Veteres enim voluerunt feminas, etiamsi perfectae aetatis sint, propter animi levitatem in tutela esse (Gaius *Inst.* 1.144)

²⁰ The interrelation between the various types of sources remains unclear. It cannot be ascertained if later authors were aware of or read earlier texts that discussed the issue of *tutela mulierum*. On this problem, see esp. Dixon, 2001, who discusses the evolution of references to female inferiority in texts from different periods.

²¹ Adamietz, 1989, p. 143.

²² E.g. Caecilia: Cic. *Rosc.* 27, Servilia: Cic. *Att.* 15.11.2, Terentia: Cic. *Att.* 11.24.3, Cic. *Fam.* 14.5.2. Cf. Dixon, 2007, pp. 100-117.

²³ Burge, 1974, p. 124; Dixon, 2001, pp. 74-75.

For the early lawyers held that women even of full age should be in *tutela* on account of their instability of judgment.²⁴

In a second passage, he contemplates on the origins of *tutela mulierum*:²⁵

Feminas vero perfectae aetatis in tutela esse fere nulla pretiosa ratio suavis videtur Nam quae vulgo creditur, quia levitate animi plerumque decipiuntur et aequum erat eas tutorum auctoritate regi, magis speciosa videtur quam vera. (Gaius Inst. 1.190)

But hardly any valid argument seems to exist in favour of women of full age being in *tutela*. That which is commonly accepted, namely that they are very liable to be deceived owing to their instability of judgment and that therefore in fairness they should be governed by the *auctoritas* of tutors, seems more specious than true.²⁶

Law and legal changes can tell us something about the society that produces them. As Langlands explains: “To an extent they may reflect the moral structures of a society, and changes in the law may be responses to mainstream shifts in ideology. When laws are viewed as a codification of admonitions emanating from a just and wise authority, they may also work upon the moral sensibilities of members of society and play a role in their ethical development.”²⁷ Juridical opinions on women are, therefore, significant for our understanding of the Roman common opinion on women.²⁸

Another juridical source, Justinian’s *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, containing material dating to the period between the third and sixth century A.D., includes references to the notion of female inadequacy. Three Latin terms are used to mark female weakness: *infirmetas*, *imbecillitas* and *fragilitas*.²⁹ Several of these texts denote female weakness as a reason why men and women received different legal treatment. A man was supposed to be master of legal knowledge, whereas women could be excused. The texts indicate that men must provide women with legal aid because supposedly women had an unstable mind.

²⁴ Trans. De Zulueta, 1946.

²⁵ Evans-Grubbs, 2002, p. 51

²⁶ Trans. De Zulueta, 1946.

²⁷ Langlands, 2006, p. 24

²⁸ Milnor, 2007, p. 8, rightly states that “law is a medium of representation”

²⁹ *Infirmetas*: Dig. 27 10 9, Dig. 22 6 9 pr., Dig. 48 16 1 §10, Dig. 49 14 18 pr., Dig. 16 1 2 §3, Cod. Just. 4.29.5, Cod. Just. 5 35 1, Cod. Theod. 12 1 137 §1 (= Cod. Just. 10 32 44), Cod. Theod. 9 14.3 §2 (= Cod. Just. 9.8 5 §3); *imbecillitas*: Dig. 16.1 2 §2, Cod. Just. 5 4 23 pr., *fragilitas*: Cod. Theod. 4 14 1 §2 (= Cod. Just. 7 39 3 §1a), Cod. Just. 4 29 22 pr., Cod. Just. 5 13 1 §15b, Cod. Just. 8 17 12 §2, Cod. Just. 5 3 20 §1. See also Beaucamp, 1976, pp. 485-508

These sources show that in Cicero's time and indeed much later, the institution of *tutela mulierum* was not based on a firm theoretical proposition. In a study on the practice, Dixon argues convincingly that *tutela mulierum* was instituted, probably as early as the fifth century B.C., to safeguard family property.³⁰ Adult women were subject to it because they were likely to transfer their birth-right to a different family-unit. As clearly indicated by Gaius, popular belief associated the practice with female weakness. One of the reasons could be the similarities with another form of guardianship in Rome's legal system, i.e. the *tutela* of children. The helplessness of the person *in tutela* was considered the central idea behind this kind of guardianship. It is possible that authors such as Cicero anachronistically associated the same helplessness or weakness to the introduction of *tutela mulierum*.³¹

Although the idea of female inadequacy often no longer harmonized with women's daily activities, it remained a recurrent topic in ancient literature and in legal issues. Valerius Maximus, for instance, uses it as a rhetorical stereotype in his *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*:

Sed quid ego de feminis ulterius loquor, quas et imbecillitas mentis et graviorum operum negata adfectatio omne studium ad curiosiorem sui cultum hortatur conferre, (.) (Val. Max. 9.1.3)

But why do I speak further of women, who are encouraged by their mental infirmity and the denial of opportunity for serious work to put all their efforts into the refining of their personal adornment, (...)

In his account on luxury and lust, Valerius Maximus used the notion of *imbecillitas mentis* as an obvious characteristic of the female sex, which needed no further explanation. The author clearly thought that his readers would be familiar with the idea.

Three papyri fragments, dating to different periods, form a notable parallel to Valerius Maximus' literary application of the concept of female inadequacy. The texts belong to the juridical sphere and contain letters of women who refer to themselves as inadequate.³² In a fragment from A.D. 55, a woman made an agreement by which her grandson could serve as

³⁰ Dixon, 2001, pp 73-88.

³¹ Dixon, 2001, pp 76, 84.

³² In their recent study on women's letters from ancient Egypt, Bagnall – Cribiore (2006, pp. 6-8, 56-67) argue that it is reasonable to start from the assumption that in most cases women did not write their letters themselves, either because they were unable to write or because they were rich enough to hire someone to do it for them. In many cases, it is impossible to be sure who wrote the letters. In the examples treated in this chapters, identification of the author is of minor importance, as the emphasis lies on the usage of female inferiority as a stereotypical aspect.

her representation in a legal dispute. She considered herself not capable of appearing in court on account of her female weakness:

[όμοιο]γεῖ Δημητρία (...) οὐ δυναμένη προσκατερῆσαι τῷ κριτηρίῳ διὰ γυναικείαν ἀσθένειαν, συνεστακείναι αὐτὴν τὸν προγεγραμμένον υἱὸν Χα[ιρ]ημονα ἔγδικον ἐπὶ τε πάσης ἐξουσίας καὶ παντὸς κριτηρίου καθὰ καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ συνεστακυῖα Δημητρία παρούση ἐξῆν. (P.Oxy 2.261 ll. 11-17)

Demetria (...) acknowledges (...), since she is unable owing to womanly weakness to remain at the court, that she has appointed her said grandson Chaeremon to appear for her before every authority and every court which would be open to Demetria herself if she were present.¹³

Both other texts, dated much later to ca. A.D. 297 and 303 respectively, are petitions to the prefect from women who were cheated by men. By referring to their female weakness, they tried to attract sympathy from the officials who dealt with their cases:

Ἀμεινον δ' ἐπίστασε, ἡγεμῶν δέσποτα, ὅτι τὸ γυναικεῖον γένος] εὐκαταφρόνητον πέφυκεν διὰ τὸ περὶ ἡμᾶς τῆς φύσεως ἀσθενές. (P. Oxy 34.2713 ll. 8-9)

And you know very well, lord prefect, that the female tribe is by nature easily despised because of the weakness of our nature.¹⁴

Πᾶσι μὲν βοηθεῖς, ἡγεμῶν δέσποτα, καὶ πᾶσι τὰ ἴ[δ]ια ἀπονέμεις [μάλιστα] δὲ γυναιξεῖν διὰ τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀσθενές. (P. Oxy 1.71 col. II, ll. 3-4)

You extend help to all, my lord prefect, and you render to all their due, but especially to women on account of their natural weakness.¹⁵

In all sorts of sources, women were defined as the weaker sex, impulsive and unstable of judgement, easily swayed and discouraged, subject to passions and follies.¹⁶ This view on women remained persistent from the Roman Republic to late Antiquity. With regard to Julio-

¹³ Trans. Grenfell – Hunt, 1899

¹⁴ Trans. Ingrams et al., 1968.

¹⁵ Trans. Grenfell – Hunt, 1898.

¹⁶ Crook, 1986, p. 85, Criniti, 1994, pp. 82-83. On female inferiority in general, see Manning 1973; Snyder, 1976; Said, 1983.

Claudian women, it here suffices to illustrate this argument with one example, since others will follow in the remainder of this dissertation. In his *Annals*, Tacitus describes how the emperor Nero and his mother Agrippina drifted apart. Becoming tired of her interferences, Nero decided to have her killed during their stay at Baiae. Under the pretence of reconciliation, he invited his mother to celebrate the festival of Minerva with him, after which Tacitus states

Illuc matrem elicit, ferendas parentum iracundias et placandum animum dictans, quo rumore reconciliationis efficeret acciperetque Agrippina, facili feminarum credulitate ad gaudia (Tac. Ann. 14.4)

There he lured his mother, insisting that the rages of parents should be borne and tempers calmed – all so that he might produce a rumor of reconciliation which Agrippina might accept, the credulity of females being responsive to joyful news.

Tacitus uses the stereotype of female weakness as a rhetorical instrument to add drama to the entire episode.

1.2.2 Exemplary literature as a guideline for female behaviour

Hoc illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum, omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri, inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias, inde foedum inceptum, foedum exitum quod vitas (Liv. 1 Praef. 10)

What chiefly makes the study of history wholesome and profitable is this, that you behold the lessons of every kind of experience set forth as on a conspicuous monument, from these you may choose for yourself and for your own state what to imitate, from these mark for avoidance what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result.

In this passage, Livy invites his audience to seek *exempla* in his *Ab urbe condita*. Chaplin defines an *exemplum* as “any specific citation of an event or an individual that is intended to serve as a guide to conduct and offers an opportunity to learn from the past.”³⁷ An important aspect of the exemplary tradition in Rome is its emphasis on morality. *Exempla* indicate an

³⁷ Chaplin, 2000, p. 3. On the exemplary tradition, see most recently Roller, 2009.

ideal code of behaviour and include references to both positive and negative behaviour what to do and what not to do³⁸ In that sense, they are very similar, though differences remain, to my definition of 'stereotypes' in the introduction to this dissertation

The use of the past as a source for imitation and emulation took an important place in the education of young Romans Livy's primary target audience would have consisted for the most part of the literate and educated male upper-class³⁹ Yet, some of the *exempla* he describes seem also to have been aimed at women The most famous illustration of this is his account of Lucretia The story of Lucretia is probably one of the most widely referenced narratives from Rome's past Livy's account on the tale is the most detailed⁴⁰ The author marks the story as a pivotal point in Rome's history The narrative, as is well-known, is set in 509 B.C., during the reign of the Etruscan king Tarquinius Superbus During one of their drinking sessions, the king's son, Sextus Tarquinius, and several of his friends held a discussion on whose wife deserved the most praise Tarquinius Collatinus suggested they would pay their wives an unexpected visit to verify each man's claim Thereupon, they discovered the royal wives at extravagant banquets with their friends Later that night, they arrived at the house of Collatinus His wife Lucretia sat amidst her slaves taking care of her domestic tasks Lucretia's beauty and her proven purity aroused the king's son and he returned to the house during Collatinus' absence He forced Lucretia to have sex with him First, he tried to convince her with words he professed his love, begged her, threatened her and pleaded for her consent When she remained loyal to her husband, he told her that he would kill a slave and place his naked body next to hers, after which he would claim that he had caught them during their act of adultery and killed them both Under these threats, Lucretia finally yielded to Tarquinius' demands After he had left the house, she sent a messenger to her relatives She told them what had happened and, although her family assured her that she was not the one to blame, Lucretia killed herself with a knife that she had concealed in her dress Lucretia's relatives took revenge and expelled the king and his family from Rome, which introduced the Roman Republic In his account, Livy puts words in Lucretia's mouth that indicate that she should be treated as an *exemplum* by Roman women

Vos, inquit, videritis, quid illi debeatur ego me etsi peccato absolvo supplicio non libero, nec ulla deinde impudica Lucretiae exemplo vivet (LIV 1.58.10)

³⁸ On the subject of *exempla* as role models see Bell, 2008 pp. 2-6

³⁹ See for some other accounts, Ter. *Ad.* 414-419, Hor. *Ser.* 1.4.105-121, Plin. *Ep.* 8.14.6

⁴⁰ Liv. 1.57-59 Cf. Ov. *Fast.* 2.725-852 See also the detailed study of Donaldson, 1982 and Matthes, 2000

It is for you to determine, she answers, what is due to him; for my own part, though I acquit myself of the sin, I do not absolve myself from punishment; not in time to come shall ever unchaste woman live through the example of Lucretia.

This is probably the best-known female *exemplum* in the Roman literary tradition, but certainly not the only one. To be able to interpret the accounts on Julio-Claudian women, it is important to be aware of the omnipresence of *exempla* in ancient literature. The usage of *exempla* is not confined to specific genres or periods. They appear in the literary works of authors such as Valerius Maximus, but also in the historiographical works of Tacitus. Referring to a mythical or historical past as a means of educating the audience derived from a long tradition going back to the Greeks.⁴¹ Herodotus, though not straightforward in his opinion on history's utility, believed that the past could help us to understand the present and perhaps anticipate the future.⁴² Thucydides believed in the repetitive nature of history, which consequently underlined the importance of knowing the past.⁴³ Xenophon and Ephorus introduced the aspect of exemplary conduct into the narrative.⁴⁴ In the early forms of Roman literature, the influence of the Greeks was considerable. In the third century B.C., for instance, Livius Andronicus made a translation of the *Odyssey* so that the *exempla* of famous Greek men could be followed.⁴⁵ Soon, however, historical rather than mythological examples became more important. As far as we know, the first author in this tradition was Ennius, who, in his *Annals*, provided *exempla* of men who each appropriated a specific aspect of *virtus*.⁴⁶ *Exempla* were also used in rhetorical practice. Cicero, for instance, attached value to examples as a means of persuasion. Through the words of Marcus Antonius, he states:⁴⁷

Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis, qua voce alia, nisi oratoris, immortalitati commendatur? (Cic. *De Or.* 2.36)

And as History, which bears witness to the passing of the ages, sheds light upon reality, gives life to recollection and guidance to human existence, and bring tidings of ancient days, whose voice, but the orator's, can entrust her to immortality?

⁴¹ Skidmore, 1996, pp. 3-81. For a lucid overview and further references, see esp. Chaplin, 2000, pp. 5-16.

⁴² E.g. Hdt. 9. 26.1-28. See Fornara, 1983, pp. 104-120.

⁴³ E.g. Thuc. 1.22.4. Hornblower, 1996, pp. 122-137.

⁴⁴ E.g. Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.6; Diod. 14.1.1-3 (on Ephorus). Dillery, 1995, pp. 123-176.

⁴⁵ On Livius Andronicus, see Erasmi, 1975; Flores, 1989; Livingston, 2004.

⁴⁶ Brooks – Reckford, 1981. See Suerbaum, 2003, with further references.

⁴⁷ Sinkovich, 1974; Robinson, 1986.

As an element of Roman rhetoric, the exemplary tradition survived in literature of the imperial period with, among others, Livy, Valerius Maximus and Tacitus as examples.⁴⁸

Over time, female *exempla* and counter-*exempla* became more frequent in Roman literature, from which women of the elite could derive some general guidelines, a 'blue-print' for preferable female conduct. A woman who managed to adjust her behaviour to these 'rules' was considered an ideal *matrona*. Before expanding on the concept of *matrona*, it is worthwhile to elaborate more on these female *exempla*.

The increase of female examples in Roman literature seems to have been partly connected to the changing position of women in Roman society. We know little about women in archaic Rome. The earliest evidence belongs to a period over four centuries later than the fall of the monarchy, when authors frequently failed to understand the mechanisms of that past society.⁴⁹ As far as can be told from the sources, women's position changed from a position with high status and considerable freedom during Rome's Etruscan period to a position in which they were more subject to male authority. A study of both archaeological remains and literary sources leads to the conclusion that Etruscan women profited from a high level of independence.⁵⁰ The most obvious examples are of course the Etruscan queens, Tanaquil, wife of Tarquinius Priscus, and Tullia, wife of Tarquinius Superbus. Whether the literary portrayals of these women correspond with historical reality is difficult to say.⁵¹ Their literary portraits at the least reveal how ancient authors believed that these queens would have acted. Though writers acknowledged the fact that it was men who ruled, they considered the queens as both influential and powerful.⁵²

Whereas the ancient authors used images of the Etruscan queens to indicate the independent position of women in the monarchic period, the figure of Lucretia served as an example of women's position in the republican period. The rise of the Roman Republic went hand in hand with an increase of patriarchal power.⁵³ Roman authors often considered this period as 'the good old days', when the prominence of women in public life was kept to a minimum. According to the accounts of ancient writers, women's main concern in those days

⁴⁸ Aubrion, 1984, Maslakov, 1984, Ginsburg, 1993, Chaplin, 2000

⁴⁹ See Glinister, 1997, pp. 115-116; for a study on the sources for the archaic period see Cornell, 2005, pp. 47-74, Forsythe, 2005, pp. 59-108.

⁵⁰ On Rome's Etruscan period, see Cornell, 1995, pp. 151-172. On Etruscan women, see Bontante, 1994, p. 244. On the Sabine women, see, for instance, Wardman, 1965, Hemker, 1985, Jannot, 1992, Brown, 1995; Charron, 1997; Vandiver, 1999.

⁵¹ For different ways of understanding the literary descriptions of the Etruscan queens see, for instance, Briquel, 1998, pp. 113-141, Meulder, 2005, pp. 543-557, see also Bellandi, 1976, Hall, 1985, Martin, 1985; Nogger, 2000.

⁵² Glinister, 1997, p. 119.

⁵³ Watson, 1975, pp. 102-103.

was the supervision of a rather small-scale household.⁵⁴ The docile, domesticated woman of the Republic was sometimes called a *domiseda*, since she would spend most of her time at home.⁵⁵

The Punic Wars of the third and second century B.C. changed the position of Roman women. A lot of able-bodied men were sent to the battlefield, while women were left behind to take care of family business. The women of Rome were called upon to respond to various prodigies during the period of war, which gave them a prominent role in the public sphere.⁵⁶ Furthermore, if their husbands or male relatives fell in battle, women gathered considerable financial resources. Several women became less subject to male authority and were able to act independently. Roman women of all social levels could engage in a range of commercial activities suited to their means and status in life.⁵⁷ The literary sources indicate that the wealth of these women and their public visibility evoked unease in many senators. An illustrative example of this is Livy's description of the conservative Cato and his role in the debates on the Lex Oppia. In 215 B.C., the tribune Gaius Oppius instituted a law that restricted women's finery and their use of carriages during wartime. When in 195 B.C. two tribunes made a move to revoke the Lex Oppia, Cato held a speech against its repeal. Though the surviving speeches in *Ab Urbe Condita* are literary creations of Livy, they contain a sentiment towards women of which the author believed that it agreed with the views of Cato⁵⁸:

Quid enim, si hoc expugnaverint, non temptabunt? Recensete omnia muliebria iura quibus licentiam earum adligaverint maiores vestri per quaeque eas subiecerint viris; quibus omnibus constrictas vix tamen continere potestis. Quid? Si carpere singula et extorquere et exaequari ad extremum viris patiemini, tolerabiles vobis eas fore creditis? Extemplo, simul pares esse coeperint, superiores sunt. (Liv. 34.3.1-3)

If they win in this, what will they not attempt? Review all the laws related to women with which your forefathers restrained their licence and made them subject to their husbands; even with all these bonds you can scarcely control them. What of this? If you suffer them to seize these bonds one by one and wrench themselves free and finally to be placed on a parity with

⁵⁴ Women played a significant role in religious life. They were allowed to participate in religious activities at major festivals, and some cults or feasts were exclusively for women (such as the December rites of Bona Dea or the Matronalia). Furthermore, women could be priestesses, of which the most obvious examples were the Vestal Virgins and the *flaminica* Dialis. On women and religion in Rome, see Schultz, 2006; Kraemer, 2004. See also chapter 5.

⁵⁵ *CIL* 6.11602; *CIL* 6.34045.

⁵⁶ Val. Max. 1.1.15.

⁵⁷ Dixon, 2001, pp. 89-112.

⁵⁸ Boyd, 1987, p. 192.

their husbands, do you think that you will be able to endure them? The moment they begin to be your equals, they will be your superiors.

Many Romans saw the Punic Wars as a turning point, after which came a period of degeneration and decadence.⁵⁹ This view found its way in a variety of literary genres. The decline revealed itself in various ways, for instance in the corrupting power of luxury or the increase of foreigners. According to many Roman authors, decadence was especially visible in the conduct of aristocratic women. In their view, women's female inferiority, their intellectual weakness and instability of judgement made them an easy victim to the allurements of newly found wealth. The promiscuous or frivolous behaviour of the contemporary women was more than once compared with the traditional and docile conduct of their female ancestress. Juvenal, for instance, states:

*Praestabat castas humilis fortuna Latinas
quondam, nec vitiis contingi parva sinebant
tectae labor somnique breves et vellere Tusco
vexatae duraeque manus ac proximus urbi
Hannibal et stantes Collina turre mariti.
Nunc patimur longae pacis mala. Saevior armis
luxuria incubuit victumque ulciscitur orbem.* (Juv. Sat. 6.287-293)

In the old days it was their lowly position that kept Latin women pure. What kept the contamination of vice from their tiny homes was hard work, short sleep, hands chafed and hardened from handling Tuscan fleeces, Hannibal close to Rome, and their husbands manning the Colline tower. These days, we are suffering the calamities of long peace. Luxury has settled down on us, crueller than fighting, avenging the world we've conquered.

His near contemporary Columella voiced the same idea in his *De Re Rustica*. While introducing his description of the duties of the *vilica*, he states:

*Nam et apud Graecos, et mox apud Romanos usque in patrum nostrorum memoriam fere
domesticus labor matronalis fuit, tamquam ad requiem forensium exercitationum omni cura
deposita patribusfamilias intra domesticos penates se recipientibus. (...) Nunc vero cum*

⁵⁹ Ancient authors differ in dating the beginning of Roman moral decline. Liv. 39.6.7 (187 B.C.), Plin. *NH* 17.244 (154 B.C.); Sall. *Cat.* 10 (146 B.C.). See Lintott, 1972; Lind, 1979; Boyd, 1987, pp. 186-192; Edwards, 1993, pp. 177-178; Dixon, 2001, pp. 56-59; Skinner, 2005, pp. 197-200.

pleraeque sic luxu et inertia diffluent ut ne lanificii quidem curam suscipere dignentur sed domi confectae vestes fastidio sint perversaeque cupidine maxime placeant quae grandi pecunia et totis paene censibus redimuntur nihil mirum est easdem ruris et instrumentorum agrestium cura gravari sordidissimumque negotium ducere paucorum dierum in villa moram (Colum 12, *Praef* 7-9)

For both amongst the Greeks and afterwards amongst the Romans down to the time which our fathers can remember domestic labour was practically the sphere of the married woman the fathers of families betaking themselves to the family fireside, all care laid aside only to rest from their public activities () Nowadays, however, when most women so abandon themselves to luxury and idleness that they do not deign to undertake even the superintendence of wool-making and there is a distaste for home-made garments and their perverse desire can only be satisfied by clothing purchased for large sums and almost the whole of their husband's income, one cannot be surprised that these same ladies are bored by a country estate and the implements of husbandry and regard a few days' stay at a country house as a most sordid business

We should interpret the increase of female *exempla* in the works of ancient writers against this background of women's changing social positions.⁶⁰ Ancient authors provided an instrument for women of their age to become a better *matrona*. By following the guidelines written down in exemplary literature, they could equal the behaviour of figures such as Lucretia and avoid the pitfalls of their current wealthy society

1.2.3 The ideal matrona

What were the characteristics of ideal behaviour according to Romans? To envision this, Romans turned to the concept of *matrona*. A woman was called *matrona* after she was married. This did not only refer to her status as a wife and (potential) mother, but also to the virtues which she from now on needed to embody.⁶¹ We can find the clearest references to this model of behaviour in funerary epitaphs. As with funerary eulogies today, the text written for a deceased did not necessarily reflect the reality of daily life. One tends to speak or write only good of the dead. These texts show how society expected their departed to have acted or behaved. In female funerary epitaphs, we often recognize the voice of a husband, father or

⁶⁰ On this subject see also Foubert 2009

⁶¹ Hemelrijk 1999 p. 14

son, who wanted to demonstrate to the outer world that the praised woman had lived the life of an ideal *matrona*. An often quoted epitaph from the first century B.C. illustrates ideal behaviour perfectly

Hospes quod deico paullum est, asta ac pellege. Hec est sepulcrum huius pulcrum pulcræ feminae. Nomen parentes nominarunt Claudiam. Suo maritum corde dilexit, suo. Gnatos duos creavit horum: alterum in terra, inquit, alium sub terra locat. Sermone lepido tum autem incessu commodo. Domum servavit, lanam fecit. Dixi, abei. (CIL 6 15346)

Friend, I have not much to say, stop and read it. This tomb, which is not fair, is for a fair woman. Her parents gave her the name Claudia. She loved her husband in her heart. She bore two sons, one of whom she left on earth, the other beneath it. She was pleasant to talk with. She walked with grace. She kept the house. She worked in wool. That is all. You may go.⁶²

This epitaph states which roles were considered the most important for a woman: being a wife and a mother, and taking care of the *domus*.

The primary purpose of a Roman marriage was to produce children who had the potential of becoming Rome's future leaders.⁶³ A woman had a considerable role in the formation of new citizens. In his *Dialogus de oratoribus*, Tacitus elaborates upon this topic. In a dialogue between Aper, a lawyer, Messalla, a young aristocrat, and Maternus, also a lawyer and a senator, the author contemplates on the condition of oratory in his time. Through a speech of Messalla, he discusses the causes of the decline of rhetoric. One of these centres on defective education. In 'the good old days', according to Tacitus, a child was brought up in his mother's lap instead of in the chamber of a nurse.⁶⁴ He adds that

Nam pridem suus cuique filius, ex casta parente natus, non in cellula emptæ nutricis, sed gremio ac sinu matris educabatur, cuius præcipua laus erat tueri domum et inservire liberis (Tac. Dial. 28.4)

In the good old days, every man's son, born in wedlock, was brought up not in the chamber of some hireling nurse, but in his mother's lap, and at her knee. And that mother could have no higher praise than that she managed the house and gave herself to her children.

⁶² Trans. Lefkowitz – Fant, 1992, p. 16, no. 39.

⁶³ See for instance Val. Max. 2.9.1.

⁶⁴ On the characteristics of ideal mothers, see chapter 4.

In Tacitus' days, the unformed mind of a child was being polluted by what he considered the foolish tittle-tattle of a nurse or a serving-maid. To illustrate this, Tacitus refers in *Dialogus de oratoribus* to three exemplary mothers of the past: Atia, the mother of Augustus, Aurelia, the mother of Julius Caesar, and Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi.⁶⁵ These women could serve as *exempla* for the women of Tacitus' society.

Besides taking care of children, Tacitus mentions another element which he associates with a praiseworthy woman, namely taking care of domestic tasks. The same characteristic, "*domum servavit*", appeared in the above cited funerary inscription of Claudia. In its earliest form, every Roman household had to be self-sustaining. After an increase of economic activities during the republican period, some aspects of commercial production which used to belong to the domestic sphere shifted to the public domain. Authors, for instance, describe the mistress of the house of those early days as being occupied with all aspects of home-production. Later, she was only in charge of the main supervision of these tasks.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, an intensive interest in the *domus* remained a characteristic of a devoted wife. The symbol par excellence of a woman's interest in the household was the activity of wool-working. In archaic times, the production of textiles was mainly a female occupation. The *mater familias* was conversant with the techniques of spinning and weaving, and she would either produce clothes for the members of her household herself or maintain supervision of the slaves who did. As the *villae* expanded and Rome's economy grew, textile business became specialized. Workers, mostly belonging to the lower classes, took over the traditional wool-working task, and professions such as *fullones* (fullers), *infectores* (dyers of new textiles) and *lanarii* (with an uncertain meaning, but with a close connection with *lana*) multiplied.⁶⁷ More and more men became familiar with the know-how and textile was no longer a business exclusively for women. Nevertheless, the concept of wool-working remained associated with the image of a Roman *matrona* as a symbol for the devoted wife.

In all sorts of genres, women were related to *lanam facere*.⁶⁸ The above inscription of Claudia serves as a first example.⁶⁹ As a second example, I would like to recall the figure of Lucretia. As stated, when the king's son and his friends found Lucretia in the middle of the

⁶⁵ Tac. *Dial.* 28.5. On Cornelia as exemplary matron, see most recently Dixon, 2007. On the image of Atia as an exemplary mother, see also chapter 4.

⁶⁶ On this subject, see Culham, 2004, pp. 152-153; Specer-Wood, 2007, p. 278.

⁶⁷ Larsson Lovén, 1998, pp. 87-88.

⁶⁸ Other references to *lanificium* include Tib. 1.3.87, Tib. 2.1.9-10, Tib. 2.1.59-66, Ov. *Fast.* 2.741-744, Plut. *Rom.* 15, Plut. *Rom.* 19, Verg. *Aen.* 8.408-413, Suet. *Aug.* 73, Hor. *Carm.* 3.15.13-16, Vitruv. 6.10.2, Hor. *Epod.* 2.39-48, Arnob. *Adv. Nat.* 2.67.

⁶⁹ *CIL* 6.15346.

night, sitting amidst her slaves, she was taking care of her domestic tasks. Livy describes it as follows

Quo cum primis se intendentibus tenebris pervenissent pergunt inde Collatiam ubi Lucretiam haudquamquam ut regias nurus quas in convivio luxuque cum aequalibus viderant tempus terentes sed nocte sera deditam lanae inter lucubrantes ancillas in medio aedium sedentem inveniunt (Liv. 1.57.9)

Arriving there at early dusk, they thence proceeded to Collatia where Lucretia was discovered very differently employed from the daughters-in-law of the king. These they had seen at a luxurious banquet, whiling away the time with their young friends, but Lucretia, though it was late at night, was busily engaged upon her wool, while her maidens toiled about her in the lamplight as she sat in the hall of her house.

The story of Lucretia illustrates the importance of wool-working to the portrayal of a virtuous *matrona*. Instead of spending her time with decadent activities, as the royal women were doing, Lucretia was occupied with the traditional task of *lanam facere*.

The space in which Livy set his account on Lucretia is equally important to our understanding of the representation of ideal women in Roman society. Lucretia was discovered *in medio aedium*, in the middle of the house. Though it cannot be ascertained, it is likely that Livy meant to indicate the front hall of a Roman house. Evidence in Pompeii, predominantly in the form of loom weights, was found in eight front halls, which indicates that the most likely location for cloth production was the front hall.⁷⁰ Since the front hall was also accessible to visitors, Lucretia's location was one with a high degree of visibility.⁷¹

Asconius' commentary of Cicero's *Pro Milone* provides an notable parallel to the notion of the front hall as a place connected with wool-working. Asconius explains how a mob demolished the house of Marcus Lepidus, the appointed *interrex*, after the death of Clodius Pulcher:

Deinde omni vi ianua expugnata et imagines maiorum deiecerunt et lectulum adversum uxoris eius Corneliae cuius castitas pro exemplo habita est fregerunt itemque telas quae ex vetere more in atrio texebantur diruerunt (Ascon. *Pro Mil.* 43C)

⁷⁰ Some cloth production could also occur in the garden whereas less on upper floors or in the service areas. Allison 2004 pp. 69, 147, 148, p. 154.

⁷¹ On the importance of visibility to the reputation of men and women in Roman society see chapter 2.

Then they broke through the gateway with all manner of violence and pulled down his ancestral portraits, broke the symbolic marital couch of his wife Cornelia, a woman whose chastity was considered an example to all, and also vandalized the weaving-operations which in accord with ancient custom were in progress in the entrance-hall⁷²

Asconius wrote his commentary on Cicero's speeches as a learning instrument for the rhetorical training of his sons⁷³ His inclusion of Lepidus' wife and the reference to her chastity and supervision of wool-working indicates that these stereotypical aspects of ideal female behaviour could serve as a rhetorical commonplace

As stated above, the concept of *matrona* referred to more than women's roles as wife and mother It included a range of virtues that each woman needed to embody Cornelia's *castitas* was one of them The *exemplum* of Lucretia provided Livy's female contemporaries with a set of virtues which could be imitated as well Lucretia's example shows that, above all, an ideal *matrona* should be *pudica* Defining what the Romans understood by *pudicitia*, or its converse *impudicitia*, is difficult, since no English word covers all its meanings⁷⁴ Loosely translated it means 'sexual virtue', but it has often been translated as 'chastity', a word which has its roots in a Christian tradition *Pudicitia* is not the only Latin concept pertaining to female virtue Other terms with related and overlapping meaning, including *castitas*, *sanctitas*, *abstinentia*, *continentia*, *verecundia*, *modestia*, are similarly used to denote exemplary women

A final aspect of the representation of ideal women that I would like to address is the matter of a *matrona*'s dress Clothing functioned as a type of language that conveyed messages to the viewer In much the same way as the *toga* did for men, women wore clothes that indicated their social rank, status and moral disposition The basic costume of Roman women was the tunic, which could differ in length and breadth Recently, it has been suggested that women who were rich enough and did not need to engage in manual labor wore their tunic long⁷⁵ A more important distinctive feature was the *stola* (fig 2) The *stola* was a garment with straps over the shoulder, which was worn over the tunic and reached to the ground It was considered important and a token of chastity that a woman's feet were

⁷² Trans Lewis, 2006

⁷³ Lewis, 2006, pp xv xvi

⁷⁴ Langlands, 2006 pp 1-3

⁷⁵ Olson, 2008, p 25

covered.⁷⁶ A plain cord belted the *stola* under the breast. The *stola* was only worn by women married in a *iustum matrimonium*, a legal marriage between two Roman citizens.⁷⁷ It is possible that a coloured border marked the lower edge of the garment, as an indication of the woman's rank, but this is still subject of debate.⁷⁸ Several authors refer to the *stola* as the garment of the chaste *matrona*.⁷⁹ However, the sources suggest that the wearing of the *stola* gradually fell into disuse.⁸⁰ In statuary, the majority of female stolate portraits date to the Julio-Claudian period.⁸¹ A third element of the matronal dress was the *palla*. As a large rectangle of cloth, the *palla* could be pulled over the head and thus function as a sort of veil. Like the *stola*, the garment indicated the social status and sexual virtue of the *matrona*. In his *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, Valerius Maximus states that in the second century B.C. Gaius Sulpicius Gallus divorced his wife because she had left the *domus* with her head uncovered.⁸² Seneca the Elder argues that the veil enabled women to avoid the gaze of soliciting men.⁸³ Ancient authors refer to a fourth element of the matronal dress, namely the so-called *vittae*.⁸⁴ These were woolen fillets with which a woman bound her hair. Both *palla* and *vittae* appear infrequently in Roman art, and when they do it is often in a religious context, when the subject of the statue is performing a sacrifice.⁸⁵ This has led to the conclusion in modern research that the dress of a *matrona* as described in the literary sources – *stola*, *palla* and *vittae* – was above all a guiding principle: it is what an ideal woman should wear, not what women actually wore.⁸⁶ Perhaps these garments were particularly used during important ceremonies, such as religious sacrifices. Nevertheless, daily practice does not exclude an association between this female costume and ideal behaviour.

1.3. Invectives against women

Women who deviated badly from the profile of the ideal *matrona* were criticized. During the implementation of the ideal of female behaviour, a substantial role was reserved for the men

⁷⁶ Ov. *Ars* 1 31-32. Cf. Porph. *Schol. Hor. Sat.* 1 2 19.

⁷⁷ E.g. Festus 112L. Cf. Olsen, 2008, pp. 27-30, with further references.

⁷⁸ The difficulty lies in the vocabulary of the ancient authors. On this discussion, see Olson, 2008, pp. 30-31.

⁷⁹ Ov. *Ars* 1 31-32; Mart. 1.35 8-9; Mart. 10.5 1, Non. 862L. Cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1.2 94-9; Tib. 1 6 7-8; Prop. 4 11.63; Ov. *Pont.* 3.3.51-52.

⁸⁰ E.g. Tert. *Pall.* 4 9.

⁸¹ After A.D. 175, stolate statues appear only rarely. See Scholz, 1992, pp. 33-74; Olson, 2008, pp. 31-32.

⁸² Val. Max. 6 3.10.

⁸³ Sen. *Con.* 2 7 6.

⁸⁴ Tib. 1.6 67; Ov. *Ars* 3.483; Ov. *Pont.* 3.3.51-52; Val. Max. 5 2.1.

⁸⁵ Olson, 2008, pp. 33-39.

⁸⁶ Olson, 2008, pp. 40-41.

surrounding women. It was expected, for instance, of a husband to control his wife's behaviour or of a son to domineer over his mother. If for some reason men failed to live up to these expectations, they too could become victim of social criticism. The literary accounts of Caesar's divorce from Pompeia serve as an illustration of this social mechanism. After the so-called Bona Dea scandal in 62 B.C., during which Clodius Pulcher allegedly intruded into the ceremony dressed as a woman, Caesar divorced his wife.⁸⁷ Rumour had it that Clodius was the paramour of Pompeia, and although Caesar neither confirmed nor denied the allegations, he stated that his wife, like all other members of his family, should be free from suspicion.⁸⁸ Indeed, either Caesar clearly considered the bad reputation of Pompeia a threat to his political career or the literary tradition agreed that female behaviour like Pompeia's constituted enough reason for a statesman to repudiate his wife. According to Valerius Maximus, the most fortunate man in the world had among his other blessings the ideal wife, who is conspicuous in her *pudicitia* and in her fecundity.⁸⁹

As a result of the importance of female repute for a man's status, references to female immorality were often used in rhetorical strategies. The reputation of a woman, whether true or false, was used in legal or political invectives against the men related to her. The example of Sempronia, for instance, which I shall discuss below, shows that Sallust's description of this matron partly served to strengthen his portrait of Catilina. The authors' usage of these women's image serves to characterize the men related to them as immoral, corrupt or wicked.

In his *Bellum Catilinae*, Sallust narrates how Catilina found support for his conspiracy of 63 B.C. among the women of Rome.⁹⁰ One of these women was Sempronia

Sed in eis erat Sempronia quae multa saepe virilis audaciae facinora commiserat. Haec mulier genere atque forma, praeterea viro atque liberis satis fortunata fuit, litteris Graecis et Latinis docta, psallere et saltare elegantius, quam necesse est probae, multa alia, quae instrumenta luxuriae sunt. Sed ei cariora semper omnia quam decus atque pudicitia fuit, pecuniae an famae minus parceret, haud facile discerneres, libido sic accensa, ut saepius peteret viros quam peteretur. Sed ea saepe antehac fidem prodiderat, creditum abiuraverat, caedis conscia fuerat, luxuria atque inopia praeceps abierat. Verum ingenium eius haud absurdum, posse versus facere, iocum movere, sermone uti vel modesto vel molli vel procaci, prorsus multae facetae multusque lepos inerat. (Sall. B.C. 25)

⁸⁷ For more on Bona Dea, see chapter 5.

⁸⁸ Plut. *Caes.* 10, Suet. *Caes.* 10. Cf. Cic. *Ad Att.* 1.13.3.

⁸⁹ Val. Max. 7.1.1.

⁹⁰ Sall. *B.C.* 24.

Now among these women was Sempronia, who had often committed many crimes of masculine daring. In birth and beauty, in her husband also and children, she was abundantly favoured by fortune; well read in the literature of Greece and Rome, able to play the lyre and dance more skilfully than an honest woman need, and having many other accomplishments which minister to voluptuousness. But there was nothing which she held so cheap as modesty and *pudicitia*; you could not easily say whether she was less sparing of her money or her honour; her desires were so ardent that she sought men more often than she was sought by them. Even before the time of the conspiracy she had often broken her word, repudiated her debts, been privy to murder; poverty and extravagance combined had driven her headlong. Nevertheless, she was a woman of no mean endowments; she could write verses, bandy jests, and use language which was modest, or tender, or wanton; in fine, she possessed a high degree of wit and of charm.

The figure of Sempronia has long puzzled scholars.⁹¹ She does not appear in accounts of ancient authors with the exception of this elaborated portrait in Sallust. Furthermore, she only reappears once in Sallust's narrative and then with only the barest of detail.⁹² There is no way of knowing what role the historical Sempronia played during that period. What we are left with is the literary image of a *matrona* gone bad. Sallust portrays Sempronia as possessing all the qualities a Roman woman should have, and many of them resemble the qualities mentioned in the funerary inscription of Claudia cited before. Like Claudia, Sempronia was charming in her conversation and pleasant in her manner. She was educated and blessed by fortune with a husband and children. All in all, according to Roman view, she had everything a woman could wish for. However, Sallust's Sempronia then chose to ignore the ideals of female behaviour and fell into one of the major pitfalls of contemporary society, as indicated above, namely the problem of decadence and *luxuria*. The author describes her merits and capacities as resembling those of a prostitute.

As always, one should interpret this female portrait in the context of Sallust's aim and literary agenda. It has long been agreed upon that the prominence of Sempronia in the *Bellum Catilinae* served as a means to characterize Sallust's main character, Catilina.⁹³ Sempronia functions as Catilina's female counterpart.⁹⁴ Boyd rightly argues that there is an additional dimension to the portrayal of Sempronia. Whereas Sallust presents Catilina with a lack of

⁹¹ On Sallust and Sempronia see Cadoux, 1980, Paul, 1986, and especially Boyd, 1987.

⁹² Sall. *B C.* 40.5. Cf. Boyd, 1987, p. 184.

⁹³ E.g. Syme, 1964, pp. 133-134; Paul, 1985; Boyd, 1987, pp. 184-184. Cf. Cadoux, 1980, pp. 93-122.

⁹⁴ Cf. Sallust's description of Catilina in Sall. *B C.* 5.

male *virtus*, making him effeminate, Sempronia is shown with *virilis audacia*.⁹⁵ Sallust reverses the gender roles, thus demonstrating the total chaos of the Roman state at that time

Sallust's impact on his literary successors should not be underestimated. It has generally been acknowledged that his portrayal of Sempronia inspired Tacitus' characterization of Poppaea.⁹⁶ Though I will return to the representation of Nero's wife in the *Annals*, it is worthwhile to discuss the passage in question in the light of the rhetorical application of the ideal of female behaviour. When introducing Poppaea to the narrative, Tacitus states

Huic mulieri cuncta alia fuere praeter honestum animum quippe mater eius, aetatis suae feminas pulchritudine supergressa, gloriam pariter et formam dederat, opes claritudinis generis sufficebant sermo comis nec absurdum ingenium modestiam praeferre et lascivia uti, rarus in publicum egressus, idque velata parte oris, ne satiaret adspectum vel quia sic decebat famae numquam peperit, maritos et adulteros non distinguens, neque adfectui suo aut alieno obnoxia, unde utilitas ostenderetur, illuc libidinem transferebat (Tac. Ann. 13.45)

This woman had everything else except honorableness. Her mother, outstripping in beauty the ladies of her age, had given her both glory and good looks alike, her wealth sufficed for the brilliancy of her lineage. Her conversation was affable, and her talent not inappropriate. She paraded modestness and practiced recklessness, rarely emerging in public, and then only with part of her face screened by a veil, lest she satisfy people's gaze or because it became her. She never spared her reputation, making no distinction between husbands and adulterers, susceptible to neither her own nor another's emotion, she would transfer her lust wherever advantage showed.

In both structure and contents, the literary portraits of Sempronia and Poppaea are very much alike. Poppaea too was equipped with everything a woman could desire: wealth, beauty, good manners and the talent of conversation. However, similar to Sempronia, she chose not to lead the life of an honorable *matrona*. In a way, Tacitus' Poppaea is worse than Sallust's Sempronia. The future empress not only ignored the traditional guidelines for female behaviour, she seems to mock them as well. Tacitus' Poppaea never left her *domus* without wearing a veil. As stated above, the *palla* was one of the external tokens of a *matrona* and represented her chastity and *modestia*. Poppaea turned that symbol into a piece of adornment,

⁹⁵ Boyd, 1987

⁹⁶ Syme 1958, p. 139, Santoro L'Hoir, 1992, pp. 139-140, Hemelrijk, 1999, p. 278

an object of *luxuria*. In that sense, her characterization matches Tacitus' representation of her decadent future husband, the emperor Nero⁹⁷

1.4. Conclusion

When we consider the Roman view on women, it becomes clear that there was a discrepancy between what Romans expected female behaviour to be and 'real life'. Daily practice had shown that since the Punic Wars women of all social levels were in one way or another involved in public life. Many women were considered capable enough to act more or less independently. Nevertheless, the idea of female inferiority and intellectual incapacity remained a popular instrument to characterize women in all sorts of literary genres. The notion of *infirmitas sexus* persisted from the Republic to late Antiquity. Furthermore, different sources, both literary and non-literary, ascribe characteristics to *matronae* that no longer corresponded to daily practice. Ideal women were envisioned as being occupied with *lanam facere*, but the complaints of ancient writers indicate that this was no longer the case in their contemporary society. Furthermore, literary sources imagined women wearing the *stola*, *palla* and *vittae*, while non-literary sources seem to suggest that these were mere ceremonial. A *matrona* had become a stereotype. The stereotypical behaviour and appearance of a *matrona* served as a powerful rhetorical instrument. It served to evaluate women's behaviour.

⁹⁷ On Poppaea and Nero as imperial couple: see chapter 3.

Chapter 2

Public and private aspects of the *Domus Augusta*

The previous chapter has shown that the characteristics of an ideal *matrona* were strongly connected to women's roles and tasks in the household. The present chapter will focus on the location where ideal female conduct was staged, namely the *domus*. The *domus* had a wide variety of meanings and should not be envisioned as an entirely private space. I will start this chapter, therefore, with a discussion of the Roman understanding of the concepts 'private' and 'public', with regard to Roman women in general and Julio-Claudian women in particular. Central to the second part of this chapter is the *domus* as a physical entity. The role of the house in the representation of Roman women is an understudied topic in scholarly research. This study will show that the house as a *locus* of public life played an essential role in the representation of imperial women. To conclude, the public status of the imperial *domus* as a household will be examined. Contemporary documents of the Augustan and Tiberian period indicate that gradually a new language was formed, which articulated the imperial family as an institution, and recognised the public position of imperial women.

2.1. The conception of 'public' and 'private' in Roman society

Traditionally, Roman society assigned women's roles to the private sphere, the sphere of the *domus*. Men's place, by contrast, was in the public domain, symbolized by the *forum*. Often, the dividing line between the private and public sphere was unclear, as it was always liable to change. As indicated in the previous chapter, over time, the social position of women evolved and their visibility in public life expanded. This exerted pressure on the Roman conception of separated spheres. Here, I will focus on how ancient writers envisioned *domus* and *forum* as gendered spaces, and how they dealt with transgressive behaviour. Furthermore, I will elaborate upon the ambiguous nature of the imperial *domus* and its impact on the representation of Julio-Claudian women in ancient literature.

2.1.1 *Domus and forum as gendered spaces*

In his study of the Roman conception of the family, Saller has established that in the Roman world *domus* was used to mean the physical house, the household including family and slaves,

the broad kinship group including agnates and cognates, ancestors and descendants, and the patrimony. In literary sources, it is often hard to determine which connotation an author intended and in various cases the word could have different meanings at the same time.¹ Each of these meanings had a direct bearing on the reputation and social standing of the individual members of the household.² References to one's *domus* were often used in political debates to praise supporters or discredit opponents.³

The physical house was of the utmost importance in Roman social and political life. As argued by Hales, "the *domus* was a visual architectural construct of the family's identity and a proof of participation in Roman society."⁴ The interior and exterior of a house, and the behaviour of the people living in it all served to emphasize the Roman character of the family to whom the house belonged.⁵ Society expected a *dominus* not to shield himself from the public gaze, but to demonstrate to the wider world that he had nothing to hide.⁶ Visibility, therefore, was a fundamental aspect of the self-representation of Roman aristocrats. A famous episode, recorded by Velleius Paterculus, illustrates the importance of visibility in matters of domestic architecture.⁷ When M. Livius Drusus, tribune in 91 B.C., was building his house on the Palatine, his architect told him he would make his house "completely private and free from being overlooked by anyone." M. Livius Drusus, however, objected and replied: "No, you should apply your skills to arranging my house so that whatever I do should be visible to everyone."⁸ The inability to see behind closed doors caused fear and suspicion. Although it was not unusual to conduct public affairs inside the *domus*, making it too private or concealed stigmatized that activity.⁹

As indicated in the introduction to this dissertation, the dichotomy between visibility and invisibility is closely connected to the dichotomy between public and private. Based on a contemporary understanding of the terms 'public' and 'private', scholars studying the Roman house often associate 'public' with 'outside' and 'private' with 'inside', in terms of a black

¹ For a detailed study of the various meanings of *domus* and its nuances, see Saller, 1984, pp. 342-348.

² For examples of how *domus* was used as a symbol for and a reference to its different meanings, as given by Saller, see e.g. Cic. *Phil.* 2.48, Cic. *De Harusp. Resp.* 16, Val. Max. 5.7.3, Sen. *Ep. Mor.* 41.7; Sen. *Cons. Ad Marciam* 26.2; Plin. *NH* 35.7; Suet. *Nero* 38.2; Plin. *Ep.* 1.14.6; Apul. *Apol.* 76, Tac. *Ann.* 3.30.

³ See, for instance, Cic. *Phil.* 2.48; Cic. *In Pis.* 61.

⁴ Hales, 2003, p. 2, according to whom domestic rituals (such as the worship of the household gods or the decoration of the house during a wedding, after a birth or triumph) in particular contributed to the construction of a family's identity and to its claim of possessing *Romanitas*.

⁵ Hales, 2003, pp. 12-19, on the ways of how a *domus* expressed an owner's *Romanitas*.

⁶ On the importance of visibility and its connection to power, see Heckster, 2005, with further references.

⁷ Vell. Pat. 2.14.3.

⁸ On the same subject, see also Vitruvius 6.5.1-2. For an analysis of Vitruvius' passage see Milnor, 1995, pp. 103-107.

⁹ Sall. *B.C.* 2.13; Liv. 6.22.8-14; Liv. 24.16-17, Tac. *Ann.* 15.51. See also Riggsby, 1997, pp. 43-44, Hales, 2003, pp. 37-39.

and white polarity.¹⁰ Wallace-Hadrill, however, has shown that the Roman conception of the house was more complex than that.¹¹ To call the *domus* a private space would oversimplify matters. An archaeological study of houses on the Italian peninsula shows that there is a spectrum that ranges from the completely private to the completely public. Riggsby compares this situation with the layers of an onion: the outer layers represent public and the inner layers private, but the precise level at which the distinction is made is variable.¹² Romans applied numerous and subtle grades of relative privacy, in which access to rooms that were considered more private often represented a greater intimacy with the owner. This is illustrated in the changes that, according to Seneca, took place in the organisation of the *salutatio* as a result of the actions of C. Sempronius Gracchus and M. Livius Drusus.¹³ Supposedly, in their search for political support, they divided their callers into three groups. Only their intimates were allowed a private audience, while callers of the second rank were kept waiting in the *atrium*, and the common man might not even get past the doorkeeper.¹⁴ However, though the house was permeable, it was still considered private property, meaning that it belonged to an individual.

While it is difficult to make a distinction between public and private aspects of a Roman house, the ancient sources are more outspoken about the application of the concepts 'public' and 'private' as organizing categories to divide social life into two spheres of activities. This dichotomy was expressed in terms of an opposition between *forum* and *domus*.¹⁵ As is well-known, the *forum* was the political centre of the Roman government and was perceived as the public space par excellence. This separation between *forum* and *domus* was gendered. In Roman perception, the *forum* was considered the domain of men, while the *domus* was above all associated with women. Likewise, activities pertaining to these spheres were divided along the same lines. Obviously, the dividing line was not precise or static, and both spheres sometimes overlapped. In those cases, however, the perception of public/male and private/female, remained, which could lead to situations of conflict, as will become clear below. Related to this are the Latin words *publicus* and *privatus*. *Publicus* is an adjectival derivative of *populus* and means 'of or pertaining to the people or community'. *Privatus*, from *privus*, is then defined negatively as anything or anyone not connected to the community as a

¹⁰ On this subject, see, for instance, Wallace-Hadrill, 1994b, Treggiari, 1998, Dixon, 2001, pp. 113-132.

¹¹ Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, p. 17.

¹² Riggsby, 1997, p. 49.

¹³ Sen. *Ben.* 6.34 1-2. On this passage and its context within Seneca's *De Beneficiis*, see Griffin, 2003, p. 97.

¹⁴ Winterling (1999, p. 121) argues that dividing visitors in groups may have been nothing more than a practical solution to organise the *salutatio*. Whether or not the *dominus* intended a ranking, it was clearly perceived as such (cf. Patterson, 2007, pp. 130-131). See also Flower, 1996, p. 219, and Griffin, 2003, p. 97.

¹⁵ See, for instance, Treggiari, 1998, on the opposition between *forum* and *domus* in the works of Cicero.

whole.¹⁶ Both terms could be used in a political context, respectively referring to a politician or someone who did not engage in politics.¹⁷ I do not intend to offer a survey of the wide semantic range of *publicus* and *privatus* and its usage in the Roman world. For the purpose of this study, it suffices to show that the terms are intertwined with political and social life and that they are often used in ancient representations of the *domus* in all its meanings.¹⁸

As stated, there was a close connection between women and their *domus*. The previous chapter has shown that women were ideologically linked with domesticity and the skills needed to run a household. The physical house served as a platform to display virtuous female behaviour.¹⁹ Besides *imagines*, the house also contained looms and a marriage bed, which were probably located in the front hall or *atrium*.²⁰ Since the central courtyard functioned as a meeting place for the *dominus* and his visitors, the *atrium* and everything or everyone it enclosed served as a symbolic marker of the *dominus*' power and status. The literary accounts on Lucretia and Cornelia, wife of M. Aemilius Lepidus, mentioned in the previous chapter, illustrate the symbolic power of making domesticity visible. The prestige of Lucretia's husband was increased because his wife displayed her female virtue in a place where everyone could see her.²¹ It showed, thus, that Collatinus had his entire household under control. Asconius' discussion of an historical episode of 52 B.C., in which the house of the *interrex* M. Aemilius Lepidus was demolished, likewise shows the importance of visible markers of female domesticity.²² As a symbol of their destructive force, the attackers smashed the marriage bed and the looms of Lepidus' wife Cornelia, which were conspicuously located in the *atrium*.²³

Roman society expected women to behave according to traditional standards and limit their activities to the private sphere.²⁴ The previous chapter has shown, however, that, over

¹⁶ Riggsby, 1997, p. 48; Milnor, 2005, pp. 19-27.

¹⁷ Milnor, 2005, pp. 20-25, argues that the meaning of *publicus* and *privatus* gradually changed, and that over time *publicus* was reserved to indicate "the ultimate 'public' role of emperor."

¹⁸ For a more exhaustive study, see Thébert, 1987, pp. 213-237; Wallace-Hadrill, 1996, pp. 104-125; Winterling, 2005.

¹⁹ Cf. Nevett, 1997, p. 282: "The organization of the household space is shaped by the necessity to provide an atmosphere and setting that will facilitate particular patterns of behaviour, and at the same time the spatial structuring of the household in turn acts as an influence on the organization of the activity taking place within."

²⁰ Treggiari, 1994, pp. 316-319; Wallace-Hadrill, 1996, pp. 107-108; Milnor, 2005, pp. 107-108.

²¹ Liv. 1.57-59.

²² Asc. *Pro Mil.* 43C.

²³ Research has shown that there were no gender-specific spaces in Roman houses. There were no women's quarters or men's quarters as was the case in the Greek house according to Cornelius Nepos (*Vitae Praef.* 6-7) and Vitruvius (6.7). It appears, however, that even in Greek houses the segregation was not as strict as was believed by those authors. See, for instance, Walker, 1983, pp. 81-91; Nevett, 1993, pp. 108-110; Wallace-Hadrill, 1996, pp. 104-115.

²⁴ Dixon, 2001, p. 115, argues that women who engaged in commercial activities, which would bring them into the public sphere, were more likely to be commemorated for their family roles than for their job-titles. Some

time, women became more engaged in public life as they became involved in religious and economic activities, among other things. The tensions between the public and private sphere, between *forum* and *domus*, found expression in the literary sources. Before turning to examples concerning Julio-Claudian women, it is worthwhile to start with an example from Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*. In his account on the *Lex Oppia*, Livy structures a speech by Cato Maior along the lines of a public and private dichotomy.²⁵ As stated in the previous chapter, the *Lex Oppia* of 215 B.C. had imposed severe restrictions on women's finery, and its repeal came under discussion during Cato's consulship.²⁶ In his narrative, Livy describes how numerous matrons left their homes and blocked the approaches to the *forum*, speaking to men and trying to convince them to vote in favour of the law's repeal.²⁷

Matronae nulla nec auctoritate nec verecundia nec imperio virorum contineri limine poterant, omnes vias urbis aditusque in forum obsidebant viros descendentes ad forum orantes ut florente re publica, crescente in dies privata omnium fortuna, matronis quoque pristinum ornatum reddi paterentur. (Liv. 34.1.5)

The matrons could not be kept at home by advice or modesty or their husband's orders, but blocked all the streets and approaches to the Forum, begging the men as they came down to the Forum that, in the prosperous condition of the state, when the private fortunes of all men were daily increasing, they should allow the women too to have their former distinctions restored.

In his speech, Cato criticizes the inappropriate behaviour of the matrons and blames them for leaving the *domus* behind and entering the *forum*:

Qui hic mos est in publicum procurrendi et obsidendi vias et viros alienos appellandi? Istud ipsum suos quaeque domi rogare non potuistis? An blandiores in publico quam in privato et alienis quam vestris estis? Quamquam ne domi quidem vos, si sui iuris finibus matronas contineret pudor, quae leges hic rogarentur abrogarenturque, curare decuit. (Liv. 34.2.9-11)

types of work, notably that of child-nurses, midwives and doctors, were valued more than other and considered worth commemorating. It does not come as a surprise that these jobs largely coincided with female domestic tasks.

²⁵ On Cato's speech as a creation by Livy, see Hemelrijk, 1987, pp. 233-234, n. 8, with further references.

²⁶ Liv. 34.2-4. On the *Lex Oppia*, see Culham, 1984, pp. 786-793, and especially Milnor, 2005, pp. 154-185.

²⁷ Cf. Liv. 34.2.2 for similar language.

What sort of practice is this, of running out into the streets and blocking the roads and speaking to other women's husbands? Could you not have made the same requests, each of your own husband, at home? Or are you more attractive outside, and to other women's husbands than to your own? And yet, not even at home, if modesty would keep matrons within the limits of their proper rights, did it become you to concern yourselves with the question of what laws should be adopted in this place or repealed.

Through Cato's speech, Livy presents these women as challenging male authority, the separation of the spheres and the unity of Rome's citizens.²⁸

2.1.2 *The ambiguous nature of the imperial domus*

Women of the Julio-Claudian family, unlike earlier Roman women, were known throughout the entire Roman Empire. Their statues were erected in public places; their images appeared on imperial and provincial coins; their life stories travelled abroad and would make them either popular and loved, or infamous and stigmatized.²⁹ It seems that some women of the family managed to stay in the background, since we barely know more of them than their names, and sometimes even these remain uncertain.³⁰ Most women, however, were forced to play a visible role in daily life. How, then, was it possible to limit themselves to the private sphere? How could they not enter the public sphere, when they grew up in a family in which everything they did was considered public? In fact, according to Suetonius, Augustus forbade his daughter and his granddaughters to do or say anything unless it could be recorded in the *diurni commentarii*.³¹ It remains uncertain who was allowed to read these 'domestic diaries', but they clearly were intended for a wider readership. The literary sources indicate that Augustus expected his female relatives to behave according to traditional standards.

The literary tradition concerning the downfall of Augustus' daughter Julia shows how difficult it was for both Augustus and his relatives to separate the public from the private sphere, at least in the perception of later authors. During the last decades, modern scholars have tried to fully comprehend the reasons behind Julia Maior's exile. Opinions vary on whether Julia was involved in a *coup d'état*. Here, I would like to focus on how this episode

²⁸ Milnor, 2005, pp. 167-168.

²⁹ For fundamental notions on the new public status of Julio-Claudian women, see Purcell, 1986, pp. 78-105; Fischler, 1994, pp. 115-133; Wood, 1999, especially pp. 1-26.

³⁰ It remains, for instance, unclear how many sisters-in-law Agrippina Minor had and what their names were. Ancient sources refer to them as Lepida, Domitia Lepida or Domitia. Generally it is assumed that there were two sisters: Domitia and Lepida. See Barrett, 1996, pp. 45-46, 233, with references.

³¹ Suet. *Aug.* 64

was articulated by the ancient authors with regard to the notion of separated male and female spheres.³²

In 2 B.C., after he inaugurated the Forum of Augustus, Augustus sent a letter to the senators in which he denounced his only (biological) child, Julia Maior. The literary accounts differ in detail about Julia's supposed activities, but they all seem to agree that the formal charge was scandalous sexual activity. Velleius Paterculus, the earliest source, gives a list of Julia's paramours.³³ It included Iullus Antonius, the son of Mark Antony and Fulvia, T. Quinctius Crispinus Sulpicianus, consul in 9 B.C., the otherwise unknown Appius Claudius Pulcher, an unspecified Scipio, and Sempronius Gracchus, a poet.³⁴ According to Velleius, men of less prominence, *equites* as well as senators, were also among her lovers, but the five mentioned above were considered her most important accomplices.

The ancient writers do not agree on the exact circumstances of the announcement of the scandal. Only Dio claims that Augustus knew all along about the inappropriate lifestyle of his daughter, though he refused to believe it.³⁵ According to most authors, however, the news of Julia's behaviour came as a blow to Augustus. Seneca and Suetonius emphasize that his frustration about his ignorance resulted in a sudden and blind rage.³⁶ Suetonius claims that the *princeps* even went into hiding: he made his daughter's offences known to the senators in his absence and refused to see anyone for a long time. Seneca does not mention Augustus' flight from public life, but he does describe how his rage turned into embarrassment, and how Augustus afterwards wished that he had been able to conceal things.

On this last point all sources agree. Making the whole scandal public was an extraordinary thing to do, and probably not, according to most of them, the most preferable course of action. All ancient authors, with the exception of Velleius Paterculus, emphasize the fact that the *princeps* published a scandal that rather belonged to the private sphere.³⁷ Seneca even remarks that doing so also affected the *persona* of Augustus:

Haec tam vindicanda principi quam tacenda, quia quarundam rerum turpitudine etiam ad vindicantem redit, parum potens irae publicaverat. (Sen. *De Ben.* 6.32.2)

³² The question of whether Julia was guilty of treason or not is of secondary importance, and I will refer to the ongoing scholarly debate when necessary. Cf. esp. Merse, 1969, pp. 3-35; Levick, 1972, pp. 779-813; Fantham, 2006, pp. 85-91.

³³ Vell. 2.100. Cf. Woodman, 1977, pp. 120-124; Elefante, 1997, pp. 454-456.

³⁴ On Sempronius Gracchus as a poet: Ov. *Pont.* 4.16.31; Prisc. *Gramm.* 6.15; Non. 202.17.

³⁵ Dio 55.10.13. Pliny, Tacitus and Suetonius maintain that Julia already committed adultery during her marriage with Agrippa, but they do not state that this was known by her father (Plin. *NH* 7.45; Tac. *Ann.* 1.53, Suet. *Tib.* 7).

³⁶ Sen. *De Ben.* 6.32; Suet. *Aug.* 64. For a more general note on Augustus' anger see Dio 55.11-16.

³⁷ Sen. *De Ben.* 6.32; Plin. *NH* 7.149; Plin. *NH* 21.9; Tac. *Ann.* 3.24.3; Suet. *Aug.* 64, Dio 55.11-16.

Carried away by his anger, he divulged all these crimes, which, as emperor, he ought to have punished, and equally to have kept secret, because the foulness of some deeds recoils upon him who punishes them.

Why, then, did Augustus make the scandal of his daughter public? According to Milnor, it corresponded with Augustus' manner of publicizing his private life.³⁸ In shaping his public image through the presentation of himself as being partly a family man who had nothing to hide, Augustus had made it almost impossible to conceal private matters, especially when they were thought to be in contrast with his political ideas and, therefore, with his image as a politician. One could also argue that Augustus' reasons for making Julia's scandal public were related to the precise nature of what had happened. According to most scholars, Julia was involved in a political conspiracy against Augustus who decided to mask the offence as adultery, for which he exiled his daughter and her fellow conspirators.³⁹ Only Iullus Antonius was sentenced to death, according to Tacitus and Dio, or committed suicide, according to Velleius Paterculus.⁴⁰ There are, however, many reasons to doubt this theory and the only thing we can be sure of is that Julia was accused of adultery, that she was considered guilty of this crime and that her father banished her for it.⁴¹ Severy has recently formulated a new hypothesis.⁴² According to her reading of the literary descriptions, Julia was guilty of 'sacrilege and treason', as according to Tacitus the charge was called by Augustus⁴³, because she showed disloyalty towards the propriety of the Augustan family and Augustus himself, who defined himself as a protector of Roman morality and the Roman family. Either way, the fact remains that Julia's offence was presented as an inappropriate sexual activity, which places it, according to the ancient authors, in the domestic sphere.

With his *Lex Julia de adulteriis* from 18-17 B.C., however, Augustus had removed adultery from the sphere of influence of the *pater familias* and had made it a state crime.⁴⁴ The law obliged a husband who had an adulterous wife to prosecute her. If he did not, he himself could be accused of pimping. The wife in question had to be of a certain standing for slaves, freedwomen, brothel keepers, prostitutes and actresses were excluded. The comments

³⁸ Milnor, 2005, pp 80-93 Cf Severy, 2003, p. 183

³⁹ Meise, 1969, pp. 3-35; Levick, 1972, pp 779-813, Lacey, 1980, pp 127-142, Syme, 1984, pp. 912-936, Levick, 1999, pp 26-27; Fantham, 2006, pp. 85-91

⁴⁰ Vell. Pat. 2.100 4; Tac *Ann* 4.44, Dio 55.10.15.

⁴¹ The objections to a conspiracy theory are listed by Ferrill, 1980, pp 332-366 Cf Swan, 2004, pp 109-110

⁴² Severy, 2003, pp 180-184.

⁴³ Tac *Ann* 3 24

⁴⁴ Severy, 2003, pp 50-55, Milnor, 2005, pp. 140-143

of the ancient writers on Augustus' attitude to his daughter's behaviour demonstrates the problematic nature of this law and the tension it generated between what was considered the private and public sphere. Tacitus' reaction to Julia's offence illustrates this perceived tension:

Nam culpam inter viros ac feminas vulgatam gravi nomine laesarum religionum ac violatae maiestatis appellando clementiam maiorum suasque ipse leges egrediebatur. (Tac. Ann. 3.24.3)

For by calling an offence common between men and women by the solemn name of pollution of religion and violation of his majesty he (Augustus) went far beyond the clemency of our ancestors and his own legislation.

The tension between the public and private sphere is reflected in the description of the official charge as given by Seneca.⁴⁵ It cannot be determined with certainty whether Seneca quotes the official statement of Augustus or whether his words are fictitious. Since Seneca's language is ornate and dramatic it may point to a literary creation.⁴⁶ Yet, there are reasons to believe that Seneca was at least inspired by the official statement.⁴⁷ The general tone and major elements of the charge occur in other literary sources as well, and one aspect in particular, the coronation of the statue of Marsyas, appeared in the official letter which Augustus sent to the Senate, if Pliny is to be believed.⁴⁸ Seneca states:

Divus Augustus filiam ultra impudicitiae maledictum impudicam relegavit et flagitia principalis domus in publicam emisit: admissos gregatim adulteros, pererratam nocturnis comissionibus civitatem, forum ipsum ac rostra, ex quibus pater legem de adulteris tulerat, filiae in stupra placuisse, cotidianum ad Marsyam concursus, cum ex adultera in quaestuariam versa ius omnis licentiae sub ignoto adultero peteret. (Sen. De Ben. 6.32.1)

⁴⁵ Sen. *De Ben.* 6.32.

⁴⁶ Syme, 1984, p. 924.

⁴⁷ Swan, 2004, p. 106, argues that the similarities between the accounts of Seneca, Velleius Paterulus and Cassius Dio point at a common source "attuned to the governmental version of events", most likely the *libellus* that Augustus sent to the senators. See also Richlin, 1992, p. 68, who, without giving further arguments, believes that Seneca quoted Augustus' official statement

⁴⁸ Plin. *NH* 21.9.

The deified Augustus banished his daughter, who was shameless beyond the indictment of shamelessness, and made public the scandals of the imperial house – that she had been accessible to scores of paramours, that in nocturnal revels she had roamed about the city, that the very forum and the rostrum, from which her father had proposed a law against adultery, had been chosen by the daughter for her debaucheries, that she had daily resorted to the statue of Marsyas, and, laying aside the role of adulteress, there sold her favours, and sought the right to every indulgence with even an unknown paramour.

Seneca starts by attributing to Julia a negative value of a virtue that was traditionally associated with exemplary women. He calls her *ultra impudicitiae maledictum impudicam*.⁴⁹ By describing how Julia's sexual activities infiltrated the public realm – denoted here by the statue of Marsyas, the *forum* and the *rostra*, three symbols of political government par excellence –, Seneca reveals the belief, at least by Augustus, that similar behaviour could lead to social disorder. The reference to the *rostra* as the place where Augustus' law against adultery was issued, not only adds irony to the anecdote, but also affects the *princeps*' image as a politician.⁵⁰

The (imagined) danger of women who disrupted the separation between the private and public sphere played an important role in the representation of other Julio-Claudian women as well. The ambiguous nature of the imperial *domus* contributed to these portrayals. The reign of Augustus saw the construction of the Palatine Hill as a *locus* of public life.⁵¹ On various occasions, for instance, Augustus summoned the senators to the area of the Palatine, where they would hold meetings, presumably in or around the temple of Apollo.⁵² Not only Senate meetings were held in the area of the imperial palace, but also juridical trials.⁵³ Hearings within the palace were not necessarily sinister and secretive affairs, but could be formal sessions of a semi-public nature, although more than once they aroused suspicion and resentment.⁵⁴ In addition to being a place where politicians met, the imperial palace was, of course, also a residential space, where the emperor lived with his wife, children, and other

⁴⁹ The same thought, though in other words, can also be found in the account of Julia's contemporary Velleius Paterculus (2 100). He describes Augustus' daughter as a woman who 'left untried no disgraceful deed'.

⁵⁰ Cf. Dio's reference to the *rostra*: Dio 55.10 12.

⁵¹ On the Palatine Hill and the Augustan *domus* as a *locus* of public life, see more below. See also Foubert, 2010a.

⁵² See for instance Suet. *Aug.* 29. For meetings on the Palatine under Tiberius and Nero, see Dio 58 9 4, Tac. *Ann.* 13 5 1. See Tamm, 1963, pp. 113-119.

⁵³ Up to Hadrian, many of the emperors gave judgement in public from a tribunal, often in the *forum*, but it appears that in the first century hearings could already have taken place in the palace. From the second century on, there was a special *auditorium* in the imperial residence where the emperors gave justice. On the location of imperial hearings, see Tamm, 1963, pp. 113-188.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of this, see Millar, 1992², pp. 19-21, 229-230. See also below.

close relatives. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the spatial division between public and private was not clear in Roman houses. During the imperial period, this seems to have been equally true for the imperial *domus*.⁵⁵ The fact that women were in a position to come near the centre of politics resulted in a feeling of unease in the descriptions of ancient writers.

This feeling of unease appears more than once in Tacitus' literary descriptions of Julio-Claudian women. In his account of Claudius' reign in the *Annals*, for instance, Tacitus focuses on the trial of the former consul Valerius Asiaticus, which took place 'within the bedroom' of Claudius in AD 47.⁵⁶ According to Tacitus and Cassius Dio, the empress Messalina was responsible for Asiaticus' death.⁵⁷ Allegedly, she craved for his gardens and believed that he had an affair with Poppaea Sabina, her rival for the actor Mnester. By destroying Asiaticus, Messalina would also be able to bring about the downfall of Poppaea.⁵⁸ According to Millar, this is the only attested instance of a trial *intra cubiculum*.⁵⁹ Tacitus states

Neque data senatus copia intra cubiculum auditur, Messalina coram, et Suillio corruptionem militum, quos pecunia et stupro in omne flagitium obstrictos arguebat, exim adulterium Poppaeae, postremum molitum corporis obiectante. Ad quod victo silentio prorupit reus et "Interroga" inquit, "Suilli, filios tuos virum esse me fatebuntur." Ingressusque defensionem, commoto maiorem in modum Claudio, Messalinae quoque lacrimas excivit. Quibus abluendis cubiculo egrediens monet Vitellium ne elabi reum sineret. (Tac. Ann. 11.2)

He was given no chance of the senate: he was heard in a bedroom, before Messalina, and with Suillius hurling at him imputations of corrupting the soldiers (whom, he alleged, had been obligated by money, illicit sex, and every outrage), and then of adultery with Poppaea, and finally of physical softness – at which the accused, conquering his silence, burst out and said "Ask your own sons, Suillius! They will acknowledge that I am a man!" And having embarked on his defense, though he moved Claudius to a greater degree, he drew tears even from Messalina. Leaving the bedroom to wipe them away, she warned Vitellius not to allow the accused to slip off.

⁵⁵ On this problem, see also the case study of the *Domus Aurea* by Moormann, 1998a.

⁵⁶ Tac. Ann. 11.1-3.

⁵⁷ Tac. Ann. 11.1-3, Dio 60.29.4-6.

⁵⁸ Levick, 1990, pp. 61-64, discusses the background of the episode and examines what possibly could have been the real motives behind Asiaticus' trial.

⁵⁹ Millar, 1992, p. 229 n. 10. Levick, 1990, p. 64, however, calls it 'the most notorious *intra cubiculum* hearing of the reign'. See also Tagliafico, 1996, who writes about "i processi *intra cubiculum*", though limits herself to the trial of Valerius Asiaticus. She interprets Tac. Ann. 14.50.2 and Tac. Ann. 14.62.4 as two other examples, but Tacitus does not denote these anecdotes as trials *intra cubiculum* (Tagliafico, 1996, p. 249, n. 2).

Although a *cubiculum* is often understood as a bedroom, in fact sleep was just one of its primary functions. The room was not in itself considered private, since it could also be used as a place for reception of guests and transaction of business.⁶⁰ Most of its functions, however, were considered to be of a private nature.⁶¹ Because of the association with these private matters, all public or semi-public activities conducted in a *cubiculum* could get stigmatized. This is clearly the case in Tacitus' description of Asiaticus' trial. The author stresses the problematic relationship between the public and the private sphere during this event in several ways. Firstly, he points out that there was a public alternative to determine whether the former consul was guilty of the charges. In normal circumstances, Asiaticus should have been heard by the senators, but instead he was immediately sent to the private quarters of the imperial palace. In fact, Tacitus states that the matter was brought before the senators only after Asiaticus was forced to commit suicide.⁶² Secondly, the presence of Messalina, a woman and private citizen, further stigmatized the activity.

Tacitus' description of Nero's speech, which he gave in the Senate after his accession to the throne in A.D. 54, echoes his account of Valerius Asiaticus' trial.

Non enim se negotiorum omnium iudicem fore, ut clausis unam intra domum accusatoribus et reis paucorum potentia grassaretur, nihil in penetribus suis venale aut ambitioni pervium, discretam domum et rem publicam (Tac. Ann. 13.4)

He would not, he said, be the judge of every business, so that, with accusers and defendants shut together in the same house, the powerfulness of a few might spread, nothing at his hearth would be venal or open to canvassing; house and state were separate.

Whether Tacitus included Messalina among these few individuals is impossible to establish with certainty, but it is likely that his audience would have considered her one of the most obvious transgressors. The climax of Nero's speech lies in his reference to the palace; he would keep private and public matters separate. By means of the narrative chronology, Tacitus shows that Nero made empty promises, for he continues his account with the description of a transgressive action by Agrippina Minor.

⁶⁰ Riggsby 1997 pp. 41-42, with references to literary sources.

⁶¹ Besides sleep the room was also associated with rest in general: sexual activity, the display of art to a privileged audience, and death. See Riggsby 1997 pp. 36-43.

⁶² Tac. Ann. 11.4.

Quod quidem adversante Agrippina, tamquam acta Claudii subverterentur, obtinere patres, qui in Palatium ob id vocabantur, ut adstaret additis a tergo foribus velo discreta, quod visum arceret, auditus non adimeret. (Tac. Ann. 13.5)

In fact it was in the face of opposition from Agrippina (on the ground that Claudius' enactments were being overthrown) that the latter was carried by the fathers, who kept being called to the Palatium precisely so that she might attend, separated by a screen at the doorway added at the rear, which would block their vision but not bar her hearing.

Although it was not extraordinary for an emperor to summon the senators to the imperial palace, it was inconsistent with what Nero had promised in his speech. Not only did he bring public affairs to a position in which it would have been hard not to stigmatize his decisions, he also summoned the senators to the palace at his mother's request. Moreover, Tacitus seems to imply that a new door was installed with the intention of allowing Agrippina to hear what was said. In this passage, Tacitus uses the same literary frame to describe an empress' intrusion in public life as in his description of Valerius Asiaticus' trial.⁶¹ A private space (the imperial quarters) was used for public meetings (a trial and Senate meeting). During these public activities a private *persona* (Messalina or Agrippina) transgressed the traditional division between public and private.

2.2. Women's houses as an indication of social status and influence

In the beginning of this chapter, it was stated that for Romans an upper-class house, though private property, was of a highly public nature. Scholars have widely acknowledged the close relationship between houses and their male owners, and have recognized the upper-class house as a symbol of an owner's public position. This relationship has never been examined for Roman women. Here, I will focus on the *domus* as a physical entity and its role in the representation of Julio-Claudian women. The emphasis will lie on the house as a means of literary characterization.

⁶¹ In his *Annals*, Tacitus aimed at constructing parallels between his descriptions of imperial women. The example of Messalina and Agrippina is the clearest, but it also occurs in his portrayals of, for instance, Agrippina Maior and Livilla. On this subject, see Foubert, 2009

2.2.1. *The domus frequentata*

The *domus* was essential to the social status of a politician. Not only was it a token of his wealth and a legitimization of his position within the elite, it was also a symbol of his *auctoritas*. Cicero, for instance, ridicules Mark Antony because he had no house of his own before Caesar's confiscations, when nearly everyone had his own residence.⁶⁴ Being owner of a house, however, was not enough. The authority of a *pater familias* also depended on his ability to protect his house and household.⁶⁵ According to many Romans, there was a close connection between a politician and his house. Julius Caesar's wife Calpurnia, for instance, dreamt on the night before the ides of March that the roof of their house collapsed, which served as a portent of Caesar's approaching death.⁶⁶

The location of a residence played an important role in its contribution to the owner's prestige. During the Republic, having a house on the Palatine was considered a sign of one's good fortune.⁶⁷ Cicero claimed that his move to the Palatine was a confirmation of his increasing influence and high status in Rome.⁶⁸ Besides location, exterior and interior appearance of a house were of equal importance. An owner who decorated his house too luxuriously was criticized, but being too modest could incur disapproval too, since he always had to maintain his superiority over his social inferiors.⁶⁹

The most obvious references to the close connection between a man and his house can be found in the writings of Cicero. In *De Officiis*, he explains to his son that a politician should have a well appointed house: it should be large enough to accommodate all its visitors, but at the same time not so spacious as to look void.⁷⁰ Cicero states that a house has the capacity to enhance a man's dignity, but cannot secure it. An owner still needed to bring honour to his house, not the house to its owner. In his writing, Cicero often establishes a link between houses of others and their social status, whereby an adversary's decadent lifestyle

⁶⁴ Cic. *Phil* 2 48

⁶⁵ Sen. *De Clem* 1 9 10 Augustus pointed out Cinna's inability to protect his household as a sign that he was hardly capable of seizing imperial power. See also Val. Max. 5 10.2.

⁶⁶ Suet. *Jul* 81 3.

⁶⁷ On the tendency of Roman aristocrats to build houses on the Palatine, see Wiseman, 1987, pp. 393-413; Royo, 1999, pp. 9-117.

⁶⁸ Cic. *Dom* 146

⁶⁹ See, for instance, Cic. *Pro Mur* 76 *Odit populus romanus privatam luxuriam, publicam magnificentiam diligit* ("The Roman people loathe private luxury, but they love public splendour"). On domestic luxury and modesty, see also Sall. *Hist.* 2 fr. 70; Plin. *NH* 36 109-110; Luc. 10.110-111, Cic. *De Off* 140, Cic. *Pro Flacc* 28, Vitruv. *De Arch* 6 5, Sen. *Ep* 86.6, Sen. *Ep* 89 201, Sen. *Ep* 95 8-9, Sen. *Ep* 122.5-8; Suet. *Aug.* 72-73. See also Dickmann, 1999, and Hales, 2003, pp. 29-36.

⁷⁰ Cic. *De Off.* 139.

frequently corresponds with his or her dissolute house.⁷¹ He also elaborates on the close relationship between himself and his houses, the most famous example of this being his speeches on the recovery of his house on the Palatine.⁷² In a letter to his wife Terentia, the orator states that after his return from exile his full restoration to public life depended on the return of his house.⁷³

One of the reasons why a house was so important for a politician was because it served as a meeting place. In its various parts, an owner received morning visitors, held judicial arbitrations and meetings on public or semi-public matters.⁷⁴ In fact, the *auctoritas* of a man was often inferred from the number of visitors he received during the day. The concept of the *domus frequentata* was recurrently used by ancient authors to denote someone's influence in public life. In *De Officiis*, Cicero advises his son on this topic:

Aliter ampla domus dedecori saepe domino fit, si est in ea solitudo, et maxime, si aliquando alio domino solita est frequentari. Odiosum est enim, cum a praetereuntibus dicitur: "O domus antiqua, heu quam dispari dominare domino!" (Cic. *De Off.* 1.139)

If a house is not frequented by visitors, if it has an air of lonesomeness, a spacious palace often becomes a discredit to its owner. This is sure to be the case if at some other time, when it had a different owner, it used to be thronged. For it is unpleasant, when passers-by remark: "O good old house, alas! How different the owner who now owneth thee!"

Though women did not formally obtain a position of influence in Roman society, their houses too became a *locus* of public life. Women were recognized as influential themselves or as intermediaries between clients and patrons, and for that reason their houses were often visited.⁷⁵ Cicero frequently applied the concept of the crowded house of a woman as a rhetorical device. In *Pro Caelio*, he attacked, for instance, the reputation of Clodia Metelli by explaining that her *domus frequentata* illustrated her depraved lifestyle:

⁷¹ E.g. Cic. *Pro Cluentio* 15; Cic. *Phil.* 2 68-69, Cic. *Phil.* 2 48.

⁷² Cicero saw his Tusculan *villa* and his house on the Palatine as manifestations of two different aspects of his identity. The Tusculan *villa* reflected his literary and philosophical interests, while the Palatine house symbolized his career as a statesman. Cic. *Dom.* 146; Cic. *Att.* 1.4.3; Cic. *Att.* 1.8.2; Cic. *Fam.* 7.23.2. See also Treggiari, 1999, pp. 33-56.

⁷³ Cic. *Fam.* 14.2.3 (7): *Quod de domo scribis, hoc est de area, ego vero tum denique mihi videbor restitutus si illa nobis erat restituta* ("As for what you say about the house, or rather the site on which it stood, indeed I shall not feel myself truly restored until that is restored to me"). On Cicero's attempt to retrieve his house, see Berg, 1997, pp. 122-143; Hales, 2000, pp. 44-55.

⁷⁴ See, for instance, Vitruvius 6.5, Sen. *De Clem.* 1.9, Pliny *Pan.* 49.1; Pliny *Pan.* 83.1, Cic. *Ad Q.F.* 1.1.25; Cic. *Verr.* 3.133; Cic. *Phil.* 1.2; Cic. *Lig.* 14. See also Treggiari, 1999, pp. 41-46.

⁷⁵ On the nature and character of female influence, see, for instance, Lefkowitz, 1983, pp. 49-64; Wikander, 1991, pp. 65-71, Hallett, 2004, pp. 26-39.

Si quae non nupta mulier domum suam patefecerit omnium cupiditati palamque sese in meretricia vita collocarit, () cum hac si qui adulescens forte fuerit, utrum hic tibi, L Herenni, adulter an amator? (Cic Pro Cael 49)

If a woman without a husband opens her house to all men's desires, and publicly leads the life of a courtesan, , if a young man should happen to be found with this woman, would you, Lucius Herennius, consider him to be an adulterer or a lover?

In his speeches against Verres, he used the concept of the crowded house to demonstrate the corruption that reigned during Verres' government. Cicero condemned the influence of the governor's mistress, Chelidon, and illustrated this by pointing out the difference between her house and those of the legal experts:

quam inanes domus eorum omnium qui de iure civili consuli solent, quam plena atque referta Chelidonis (Cic Verr 2 1 46 (120))

how empty were the houses of all the experts in civil law whom it is the practice to consult, how densely crowded was the house of Chelidon

Veniunt, ut dico, ad Chelidonem. Domus erat plena, nova iura, nova decreta, nova iudicia petebantur () *Domus erat non meretricio conventu sed praetoria turba referta* (Cic Verr 2 1 52 (137))

They went, as I have said, to see Chelidon. Her house was full – decisions, judgments, methods of procedure – none ever heard of before – were being applied for () The house was filled, not with a courtesan's visitors, but with the crowd that attends a praetor's court.

A crowded house, however, was not always to be considered a symptom of depravity. Plutarch, for instance, admired Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, for having borne her misfortunes in a noble spirit and keeping her house open for friends:

Αυτὴ δὲ περὶ τοὺς καλουμένους Μισθίους διέτριβεν οὐδὲν μεταλλάξασα τῆς συνηθούς διαιτης ἣν δὲ πολυφίλος καὶ δια φιλοξενίαν εὐτραπέζος αἰεὶ μὲν Ἑλλήνων καὶ φιλολογῶν περὶ αὐτὴν οὕτων ἀπαντῶν δὲ τῶν βασιλέων καὶ δεχομένων παρ'αυτῆς δῶρα καὶ πεμποντων (Plut C Grach 19 1-2)

She resided on the promontory called Misenum, and made no change in her customary way of living. She had many friends, and kept a good table that she might show hospitality, for she always had Greeks and other literary men about her, and all the reigning kings interchanged gifts with her.

It is obvious that a crowded house could be positively and negatively valued. The question, however, is where the line was drawn. When were women criticized with their *domus frequentata* and when did they deserve praise for it? Two main concerns lay at the core of the perception of a female *domus frequentata*: of whom did the crowd consist, and what activities took place in the crowded house? Cicero's previously quoted comment on the house of Chelidon reveals the main criterion for a negatively valued *domus frequentata*. The orator emphasizes the fact that Chelidon was a prostitute and that her house could be characterized as a brothel. Likewise, Verres' involvement with Chelidon resulted in the transformation of his own house into a *domus* filled with prostitutes and pimps.

Verres Africani monumentis domum suam plenam stupri, plenam flagiti, plenam dedecoris ornabit (Cic. Verr. 2.4.38 (83))

Shall Verres take the memorials of Scipio of Africa to adorn his own house, a house full of lust and wickedness and foulness?

Cicero repeated his comparison of the *domus frequentata* of a woman with a brothel in his speech *Pro Caelio*. An important aspect of this speech consists of the characterization of Clodia Metelli. She is portrayed as a resentful widow who organized a case against Caelius out of spite because he had ended their relationship. The author presents Clodia's *domus* as a space in which traditional Roman expectations of domestic behaviour were violated.⁷⁶ On several occasions, Cicero refers to the image of the ideal Roman *matrona* and denotes Clodia as a 'matrona gone bad'. He warns his audience, for instance, that if he is wrong about Clodia, which of course in his opinion he is not, he considers himself to have behaved disgracefully for using the name of a *mater familias* in a manner contrary to the respect a *matrona* deserved.⁷⁷ Furthermore, he points out that in her house a *mater familias* in fact lived

⁷⁶ Leen, 2000-2001, p. 142.

⁷⁷ Cic. *Pro Cael.* 32. On Cicero's portrayal of Clodia, see Geffcken, 1973, pp. 27-43.

the life of a *meretrix*.⁷⁸ Clodia's reputation, according to Cicero, was reflected in the reputation of her *domus*. The orator leaves no doubt as to the number of visitors she received, which for men would have been a sign of their influential social position. Yet, his comments on the nature of her *domus frequentata* serve as an illustration of her depraved lifestyle.⁷⁹ He states that her house by the Tiber was used by all young men to bathe and calls her *domus* a refuge for everyone's desires.⁸⁰ At the climax of this rhetorical portrait, he opposes Clodia's *domus* with that of Caelius:

Totum crimen profertur ex inimica, ex infami, ex crudeli, ex facinerosa, ex libidinosa domo; domus autem illa, quae temptata esse scelere isto nefario dicitur, plena est integritatis, dignitatis, officii, religionis. (Cic. *Pro Cael.* 55)

The whole charge arises from a hostile, infamous, merciless, crime-stained, lust-stained house; whereas that house which is said to have been tempted to commit so foul a crime is the home of innocence, of honour, of duty, of piety.

Cicero's comparison between crowded houses of women and brothels was later echoed in literary descriptions of Julio-Claudian women living in the imperial palace. Dio describes how Messalina turned the Palatine complex into a brothel.⁸¹ She allegedly invited men and women of the higher classes to the imperial palace and forced the women to commit adultery while the men were watching. Men who refused to offer their wives for her vicious plans were brought to destruction; those who agreed were rewarded. Dio's passage on the brothel of Messalina followed a description of Messalina's influential position at the court, which she used to sell military commands and governorships to the highest bidder, among other things. The association between Messalina's *domus frequentata* and the brothel is clear.⁸² The deliberate humiliation of upper-class women attendant on the operation of a brothel appears more than once in descriptions of the Julio-Claudian reign. Both Nero and Caligula are said to have forced noble women to prostitute themselves.⁸³ In Caligula's case even other members

⁷⁸ Cic. *Pro Cael.* 57.

⁷⁹ McCoy, 2006, pp. 181-183.

⁸⁰ Cic. *Pro Cael.* 36, 49. See also Cic. *Pro Cael.* 52: *ut tua domus popularis* ("that open house of yours").

⁸¹ Dio 60.18 1-3; Dio 60.31 1.

⁸² Besides Dio, Juvenal also wrote about Messalina's sexual activities, which resembled those of a prostitute (Juv. *Sat.* 6 115-134). The satirist, however, does not place her within the context of the imperial palace, but claims that she went to the city where she hired a room to prostitute herself.

⁸³ Nero: Tac. *Ann.* 15 37, Suet. *Nero* 27; Dio 62 15.3-6. Caligula: Suet. *Cal.* 36; Suet. *Cal.* 41; Dio 59.28.10. See also McGinn, 1998, pp. 104-106.

of the imperial family were involved Suetonius claims that Caligula prostituted his sisters Livilla and Agrippina to his favourites, though both women were married and considered noble *matronae*

A first Julio-Claudian woman who was praised for her crowded house was Octavia In his *Life of Antony*, Plutarch pays special attention to Mark Antony's treatment of his wife Octavia

Ὀκταουίαν δὲ Καῖσαρ ὑβρισθαι δοκοῦσαν, ὥς ἐπανῆλθεν ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν, ἐκέλευσε καθ' αὐτὴν οἰκεῖν Ἡ δὲ οὐκ ἔφη τὸν οἶκον ἀπολείψειν τοῦ ἀνδρός () Καὶ γὰρ ὥκει τὴν οἰκίαν, ὡσπερ αὐτοῦ παροντος ἐκείνου, καὶ τῶν τέκνων οὐ μόνον τῶν ἐξ αὐτῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἐκ Φουλβίας γεγονότων, καλῶς καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς ἐπεμελεῖτο καὶ τοὺς πεμπομένους ἐπὶ ἀρχᾷ τινας ἢ πρᾶγματα τῶν Ἀντωνίου φίλων ὑποδεχομένη συνέπραττεν ὧν παρὰ Καίσαρος δεηθεῖεν (Plut *Ant* 54 1-2)

As for Octavia, she was thought to have been treated with scorn, and when she came back from Athens Caesar ordered her to dwell in her own house But she refused to leave the house of her husband () For she dwelt in her husband's house, just as if he were at home, and she cared for his children, not only those whom she herself, but also those whom Fulvia had borne him, in a noble and magnificent manner, she also received such friends of Antony as were sent to Rome in quest of office or on business, and helped them to obtain from Caesar what they wanted

Plutarch's image of Octavia reminds the reader of the above mentioned portrait of Cornelia in his *Life of C. Gracchus* ⁸⁴ Octavia and Cornelia are praised for opening their houses to others In Cornelia's case, already a widow in Plutarch's anecdote, her house is a centre of intellectual meetings Octavia, at this point still married to Antony, welcomes his friends and gathers all of his children in the house she lives in After her divorce from Antony, Octavia probably moved to the house of Octavian, taking her husband's children with her After Antony's death, she allegedly took care of Antony's children by Cleopatra as well ⁸⁵ The presence of his sister with her children in the *domus* of Octavian, contributed to the representation of the Palatine house as a *domus frequentata* where ideal matronal behaviour was on display, to which I shall return below

⁸⁴ Plut *C. Gracch* 19 1-2

⁸⁵ Plut *Ant* 87 1

The *domus* of imperial women was closely connected to their social status. The idea of a flourishing house often reflected an influential position at the royal court, whilst a person's downfall could go hand in hand with the destruction of his or her house. In the following section, two ways in which this close connection can be seen will be discussed: namely the female *salutationes* and the razing of women's houses.

The *Roman History* of Cassius Dio and the *Annals* of Tacitus both contain references to councils organised by imperial women. After the death of Augustus' grandson Agrippa Postumus, for instance, an informer of the imperial court advised Livia Drusilla not to publish the councils of her friends.⁸⁶ Likewise, her great granddaughter Agrippina Minor is stated to have held meetings with her friends and invited tribunes and centurions to her private quarters.⁸⁷ According to the literary sources, Livia and Agrippina officially held *salutationes*. Dio states that as a token of her elevated status, Livia was allowed to receive senators and whomever wanted to greet her in her house, and that this privilege was even entered in the public records.⁸⁸ The same thing was said about Agrippina.⁸⁹ The description of Agrippina's *salutatio* in Tacitus' *Annals* illustrates the close relationship between the extent of a woman's influence and the idea of her having a flourishing house. Shortly after the beginning of Nero's reign, the influence of Agrippina on her son started to weaken and Nero struggled to become independent of his mother. Tacitus describes how the emperor gradually removed her privileges. The author states:

Ac ne coetu salutantium frequentaretur separat domum matremque transfert in eam quae Antoniae fuerat quotiens ipse illuc veniret saeptus turba centurionum et post breve osculum digrediens Nihil rerum mortalium tam instabile ac fluxum est quam fama potentiae non sua vi nuxae Statim relictum Agrippinae limen nemo solari nemo adire praeter paucas feminas amore an odio incertas (Tac. Ann. 13.18.19)

And to prevent her being mobbed by a throng of well-wishers, he made his house separate and transferred his mother to that which had been Antonia's, surrounding himself whenever he paid a personal visit there, with a crowd of centurions and withdrawing after only a brief kiss. Nothing in mortal affairs is so unstable and fleeting as the fame of a power that relies on

⁸⁶ Tac. Ann. 1.6

⁸⁷ Tac. Ann. 13.18

⁸⁸ Dio 57.12.2

⁸⁹ Dio 60.32.6¹

a strength not its own. Immediately, Agrippina's threshold was deserted: no one consoled her, no one approached her, except a few ladies, whether from love or hate being uncertain.

The empty house of Agrippina did not only show that she had lost her influential position at the imperial court, but also that her previous social status was not legitimate. Apparently, she only received visitors because of her presence at Nero's side.⁹⁰ The same sentiment is expressed in Tacitus' description of Agrippina's final hours. After Nero's failed attempt to kill her, she had retreated to her *villa* in Bauli. One by one her attendants fled and when finally the last waiting-maid got ready to leave, Tacitus' Agrippina said:

Tu quoque me deserts? (Tac. Ann. 14.8)

Are you too deserting me?

A parallel to the lonely end of Agrippina's life can be found in Tacitus' description of Messalina's final hours.⁹¹ In a famous episode, Claudius' matrimonial crisis came to a head. During the absence of Claudius, Messalina decided to marry her lover Silius, although she was still the wife of the emperor. Claudius' freedmen, fearing that their own position would weaken, alarmed him. Rumours were spread that Claudius was furiously headed back to Rome, after which Messalina and her followers fled in panic.⁹² The empress decided to meet with Claudius in Ostia, since she was convinced that he would not be able to be angry with her when she was in his presence. Tacitus' vivid description of Messalina's voyage was intended to illustrate her downfall:

Atque interim, tribus omnino comitantibus – id repente solitudinis erat – spatium urbis pedibus emensa, vehiculo, quo purgamenta hortorum excipiuntur, Ostiensem viam intrat, nulla cuiusquam misericordia, quia flagitiorum deformitas praevalebat. (Tac. Ann. 11.32)

Meanwhile, having covered the length of the City on foot with only three to accompany her (such was her sudden isolation), she started along the Ostian Way in a vehicle by which the clearings from the gardens are carried off – to sympathy from no one, because the grotesque nature of her outrages was having too much effect.

⁹⁰ On the impact of being close to the emperor on a person's status and social position, see Paterson, 2007.

⁹¹ Tac Ann. 11.26-38

⁹² Tac Ann. 11.32

The solitude of Messalina is put to the fore and becomes even clearer when we compare it to her influential position as it was described by Tacitus in a passage at the beginning of the whole episode:

Illa non furtim, sed multo comitatu ventitare domum, egressibus adhaerescere, largiri opes, honores, postremo, velut translata iam fortuna, servi liberti paratus principis apud adulterum visebantur. (Tac. Ann. 11.12)

She for her part – not stealthily but with a sizable escort – frequented [Silius'] home, clung to him when he emerged, and lavished wealth and honors upon him; finally, as if the transference of fortune were already complete, slaves, freedmen, and the trappings of the princeps were to be seen at the adulterer's house.

Before her actual wedding to Silius, Messalina enjoyed considerable influence. Besides the crowds that followed her, she apparently had the power to relocate the *locus* of imperial authority.⁹³ After their downfall, the house of Silius was stripped of its contents, and the surroundings of Messalina emptied as well.⁹⁴

The symbolic value of a house can also be deduced from the attitude of some emperors towards the houses of their female relatives after they were discredited. Two examples come to mind: Augustus' destruction of his granddaughter's *villa* and Caligula's destruction of the *villa* where his mother Agrippina Maior was held by Tiberius.⁹⁵ Though of a different nature, both episodes show how the house was closely connected with the memory of the woman who lived in it.

The destruction of a house was a practice that was deeply rooted in Roman history. When it came into being or when it was applied for the first time cannot be determined with certainty. According to late republican and imperial authors, it had its precedents in the early republican period, though references to it remain vague.⁹⁶ In the Greek world, the same

⁹³ In Tac. Ann. 11.35, Claudius' freedmen show him the house of Messalina's lover to which all the heirlooms of the imperial dynasty had been transferred. The aggressive reaction of Claudius, who is mostly presented as being a passive leader, shows just how transgressive Messalina's act was.

⁹⁴ Other examples of the use of emptied houses in literary descriptions of imperial figures can also be found in the accounts of the deaths of Nero and Vitellius. Tac. Ann. 11.37-38, Tac. Hist. 3.84-85, Suet. Vit. 16, Suet. Nero 47-48.

⁹⁵ Suet. Aug. 72.3, Sen. De Ira 3.21.5

⁹⁶ Cf. Flower, 2006, pp. 44-51

practice was used from the archaic period onwards as a punishment for traitors, murderers and thieves⁹⁷ In the Roman world, the procedure was associated more specifically with the idea of tyranny Suspicions of regal ambitions could lead to the annihilation of the suspect's house Over time, the simple accusation of treason could be enough reason to take such an action⁹⁸ The most famous example of the destruction of a politician's house in Rome is of course Cicero's house on the Palatine, discussed earlier⁹⁹ The tribune Clodius Pulcher indicted Cicero on the charge of the illegal execution of the Catalinarian conspirators and had him expelled from Rome Once Cicero had left, Clodius seized his property, razed his house and built a temple of Liberty on the site The confiscation and destruction of Cicero's residence was not only a fiscal sanction, robbing him of his capital, it was also a *damnatio* of the family *memoria* which Cicero, a *homo novus*, had accumulated over time

Augustus' destruction of Julia Minor's house can be seen in the same light After discussing Augustus' modest taste in domestic architecture, Suetonius claims that the *princeps* disliked large and sumptuous country palaces¹⁰⁰ The author sees an example of this in Augustus' demolition of a *villa* which his granddaughter had built on a lavish scale Though Suetonius, who is our only source for this fact, does not specify the date of the event, it is likely that it is to be associated with Julia's disgrace of A D 8 Between 8 and 28 Julia was exiled, like her mother Julia Maior, the official charge being adultery though some scholars believe that Julia was part of a conspiracy against Augustus¹⁰¹ As a result, a certain number of measures was taken to publicly declare that Julia no longer belonged to the Julio-Claudian family First of all, her daughter, whom she delivered during the first year of her exile, was not recognized by Augustus Secondly, she was not allowed burial in Augustus' *mausoleum* Thirdly, her house was razed to the ground, the implication being that the inhabitants of the house could no longer coexist with the community at large

The second example I would like to discuss is of a different nature, but likewise shows how the image of an imperial woman could be associated with the house she had lived in One of the first things Caligula did after his accession to the throne was to rehabilitate the reputations of his parents and siblings He sailed to Pontia and Pandateria to recover the remains of his mother Agrippina Maior and his brother Nero¹⁰² Tiberius had refused them burial in the *mausoleum* of Augustus, claiming that, like Julia Maior and Julia Minor, they too

⁹⁷ For the Greek world, see Connor 1985 pp 79-102

⁹⁸ For introductory remarks see, Flower, 2006, pp 44-51

⁹⁹ On Cicero's sentiments on his house, see, for instance, Berg, 1997, Hales, 2000

¹⁰⁰ Suet *Aug* 72

¹⁰¹ See above, and for instance Levick 1976 pp 301-339

¹⁰² Suet *Cal* 15.1 Dio 59.3.5

no longer belonged to the family. In a highly public spectacle, Caligula brought the ashes back to Rome and placed them in Augustus' funerary monument. The *villa* at Herculaneum, where Agrippina had been held in imprisonment before her exile, was destroyed.¹⁰³ Caligula's action is described in Seneca's moral essay *De ira*. The author presents several examples of cruel deeds which stemmed from unrestrained anger and absence of all accountability. In each case, rulers endure a perceived affront, insult or indignity and react with excessive and arbitrary retribution. According to Seneca, these should be regarded as examples to be avoided.¹⁰⁴ His final example treats the disgrace of Agrippina:

Hic furor – quid enim aliud voces? – Romanos quoque contigit. C. enim Caesar villam in Herculanensi pulcherrimam, quia mater sua aliquando in illa custodita erat, diruit fecitque eius per hoc notabilem fortunam; stantem enim praevenigabamus, nunc causa dirutae quaeritur. (Sen. *De ira* 3.21 5)

Such madness – for what else can you call it? – has befallen Romans also. For Gaius Caesar destroyed a very beautiful villa near Herculaneum because his mother had once been imprisoned in it, and by his very act gave publicity to her misfortune; for while the villa stood, we used to sail by unconcerned, but now people ask why it was destroyed.

By razing the house, he tried to erase a memory, not of the woman herself, as Augustus' tried to do by razing Julia's house, but of what was done to her during the previous reign.¹⁰⁵

2.2.3. *The domus Augusti on the Palatine*

To conclude this account of the house as an indication of women's status and social position, I would like to shed new light on the house of Augustus on the Palatine. It has been widely agreed upon that part of Augustus' architectural programme was to establish *lieux de mémoire* that were specifically associated with him and his family.¹⁰⁶ Famous examples are of course

¹⁰³ On the dating of Agrippina's imprisonment, see Scott, 1939, pp. 459-462

¹⁰⁴ Sen. *De ira* 3 22.1

¹⁰⁵ With regard to a possible third example, it should be noted that in their recent study on the paintings of the Villa della Farnesina in Rome, Mols and Moormann propose the *damnatio memoriae* of Julia Maior as one of the possible reasons for the abandonment and 'obliteratione intenzionale' of the Villa (Mols – Moormann, 2008, p. 80). The authors, however, emphasize the hypothetical nature of their suggestion.

¹⁰⁶ The concept of *lieu de mémoire* is indebted to Pierre Nora, who defines it as follows: "a *lieu de mémoire* is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community". (Nora, 1996, p. xvii) For the

his *mausoleum* and the *Forum Augustum*¹⁰⁷ The ideological role of his female relatives in this process has remained understudied Here, I will focus on the *Domus Augusti* on the Palatine as another *lieu de mémoire* It has been acknowledged that there was a strong association between Augustus' house as a physical entity and the *persona* of Augustus The association between his female relatives and the house, however, has never been fully studied

The construction of Augustus' Palatine *lieu de mémoire* started in 42 B C¹⁰⁸ After living near the Forum for several years, Octavian moved to the house of Q Hortensius on the Palatine Hill After their marriage in 39 B C, Livia went to live with her husband in his newly purchased house¹⁰⁹ Over the years, he expanded his house by acquiring adjoining sites through his agents¹¹⁰ At some point, possibly in 36 B C, his property was struck by lightning The auspices were taken and Octavian decided to consecrate the damaged area to Apollo by building him a temple and porticoes His own house was replaced at public expense in compensation for his gift to the Roman people¹¹¹ In A D 3, parts of the house together with the temple of Magna Mater had to be rebuilt after destruction by a fire¹¹² In modern scholarship, the house is often solely associated with the figure of Augustus, but the ancient sources make it clear that the residence played an essential role in the representation of both Augustus and Livia, during as well as after their lifetime

Suetonius states that Augustus presented his house as a stage of matronal display, claiming that the clothes he wore were hand-made by Livia and his daughter and granddaughters, thus associating them with one of the activities par excellence of an ideal Roman *matrona*¹¹³ Her role as a supervising *mater familias* in the upbringing of several children who resided with her in the Augustan residence confirmed her role as an exemplary matron One could say that the representation of Livia's *domus frequentata* agreed with what was expected from women's behaviour according to traditional standards It is known that Caligula and Claudius, among others, spent their childhood under Livia's care and that other

application of the concept of *lieux de mémoire* to the study of the Ancient World, see for instance Jung, 2006 Stein-Holkeskamp – Holkeskamp, 2006

¹⁰⁷ Cf Vitruvius 1 praef 3, Strabo 5 3 8 On the Forum of Augustus see also Zanker, 1987 pp 210-215, Spannagel 1999, Geiger, 2008, pp 129-137

¹⁰⁸ See most recently Iacopi 2008, Carandini – Bruno, 2008

¹⁰⁹ Barrett, 2002, p 26 Cf according to Vell 2 95 1, Drusus was born *intra Caesaris penates*

¹¹⁰ Suet Aug 72, Vell 2 81 3 On the formation and character of Augustus' residence see Foubert, 2010, with further references See also Iacopi LTUR s v *Domus Augustus (Palatium)*, pp 46-48

¹¹¹ Suet Aug 29 3, Dio 49 15 5 See also Meyboom, 2006, nn 86-107, Hekster – Rich, 2006, pp 151-152

¹¹² Vell 2 81 3, Suet Aug 72

¹¹³ Suet Aug 64 73 See chapter 1

imperial children had received teachers from Livia's household staff.¹¹⁴ These examples clearly show that until Augustus' death the imperial household deliberately attempted to create a *lieu de mémoire* on the Palatine and that Livia had a prominent role to play during the process.¹¹⁵

The *Domus Augusti* on the Palatine served as a home for other Julio-Claudian women as well. After her divorce from Mark Antony in 32 B.C., Octavian's sister Octavia probably moved to the house of her brother and sister-in-law. Only Plutarch refers to her dwelling, though the meaning of his words are debated.¹¹⁶ The author states that after Octavia had returned from Athens around 35 B.C., where she was humiliated by Antony and sent back to Rome, she remained in the house of her husband. She took care of all Antony's children and received and helped all of his friends. Plutarch emphasizes that she acted as if Antony was at home, even though her brother asked her to come to live with him and Livia, an offer which Octavia declined. In 32 B.C., however, Antony evicted Octavia from his house, after which she moved out, taking all of Antony's children, except his eldest son by Fulvia, with her. We do not know with certainty where Octavia lived after her divorce, but the house of her brother Octavian and his wife Livia seems the most likely choice.¹¹⁷ As stated above, the presence of Octavia and her children in the Augustan residence would have emphasized the symbolic value of the imperial *domus frequentata*. The imperial household centred around Octavia and Livia as *matres familias* strengthened the idea that the imperial residence could be perceived as a place where traditional behaviour was considered of paramount importance. In the literary sources, Livia and Octavia functioned as flag-bearers of the Augustan family-values.

A third female member of the Julio-Claudian family who lived in the Palatine house was Antonia Minor. In his *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*, Valerius Maximus states that after the death of her husband Drusus in 9 B.C., Antonia went to live with her mother-in-law Livia.¹¹⁸ Antonia's presence contributed to the positive representation of the Palatine *domus*. Not only did she share the supervision of the imperial children with Livia, later on in Tiberius' reign she also took care of a circle of young foreign princes and princesses.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ CIL 6 33787, 6 3998, 6 4352; Suet. *Aug.* 48, Suet. *Cal.* 10, Suet. *Tib.* 3. Cf. Kunst, 1998, on the social function of Livia's *domus*.

¹¹⁵ On Livia's role in the continuation of the Palatine Hill as a *lieu de mémoire* after Augustus' death, see chapter 3. See also Foubert, 2010.

¹¹⁶ Plut. *Ant.* 54.1-2 (quoted above), 57.3.

¹¹⁷ Kokkinos, 2002, pp. 147-148.

¹¹⁸ Val. Max. 4.3.3. Cf. Kokkinos, 2002, pp. 16, 148.

¹¹⁹ E.g. Jos. *Ant.* 18 103, 18 143, 18 164-167, Dio 59 24 1, Tac. *Ann.* 6 40. Cf. Braund, 1984, pp. 142-143, Kokkinos, 2002, p. 25.

The final reference to a Julio-Claudian woman living on the Palatine occurs in Tacitus' *Annals*. This passage on the crowded *salutatio* of Agrippina Minor and Nero's reaction to it, quoted earlier in this chapter, illustrates perhaps most clearly the symbolic power of a house and the role it could play in the representation of women.¹²⁰ According to Tacitus, Nero's measure to remove his mother from the palace was one in a series of attempts to reduce her influential position in Roman society.¹²¹ As we saw, the move of Agrippina to Antonia's *domus* had a direct bearing on the number of visitors at her daily *salutatio*. This was not because Antonia's house was further away, as Tacitus makes clear, but because Agrippina was no longer near the emperor, the person who actually mattered.¹²² It is most likely that Agrippina was transferred to the Augustan complex in which Antonia had lived with Livia.¹²³ A remark of Suetonius seems at first sight to contradict this conclusion, but a closer reading will show that in fact both his and Tacitus' passage complement each other. In his *Life of Nero*, Suetonius writes

Matrem facta dictaque sua exquirentem acerbius et corrigentem hactenus primo gravabatur, ut invidia identidem oneraret quasi cessurus imperio Rhodumque abiturus, mox et honore omni et potestate privavit abductaque militum et Germanorum statione contubernio quoque ac Palatio expulit, neque in divexanda quicquam pensi habuit, summissis qui et Romae morantem litibus et in secessu quiescentem per convicia et iocos terra marique praetervehentes inquietarent (Suet. *Nero* 34)

His mother offended him by too strict surveillance and criticism of his words and acts, but at first he confined his resentment to frequent endeavours to bring upon her a burden of unpopularity by pretending that he would abdicate the throne and go off to Rhodes. Then depriving her of all her honours and of her guard of Roman and German soldiers, he even forbade her to live with him and drove her from the Palace. After that he passed all bounds in harrying her, bribing men to annoy her with lawsuits while she remained in the city, and after she had retired to the country, to pass her house by land and sea and break her rest with abuse and mockery.

¹²⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 13.18-19

¹²¹ First, one of Agrippina's influential *liberti*, Pallas, was removed from office (Tac. *Ann.* 13.14); later, Nero also deprived his mother of her guard (Tac. *Ann.* 13.18).

¹²² Paterson, 2007, pp. 128-130.

¹²³ See also Barrett, 1996, p. 173.

Both authors clearly agree on the fact that at first Nero and Agrippina lived in the same palace, which, at this point, would still have been the so-called *Domus Transitoria*. Suetonius, however, states that Agrippina was driven ‘*ac Palatio*’. Some scholars have taken this to mean that she was expelled from the Palatine Hill all together.¹²⁴ However, as Suetonius clearly makes a distinction between a period shortly after her eviction during which she remained in the city and a later period during which she retreated to the coast¹²⁵, one should note that there is no other *domus* of Antonia in Rome attested besides the one on the Palatine Hill.¹²⁶ In addition, Suetonius’ usage of *Palatium* can be explained through the development of the word *Palatium* as a synonym for wherever the emperor lived. Studies of the usage of the Latin words *Palatium*, *Palatia* or *Palatinus* have revealed that over time the meaning of the word *Palatium* shifted.¹²⁷ In the literary works of authors writing in the Augustan period, the word *Palatium* was still solely used to refer to the Palatine Hill.¹²⁸ The meaning of the word started to change with the construction of the palace of Domitian. Authors like Statius, Juvenal and Martial, who wrote during this period, used *Palatium* both to mean the hill and the residence of the emperor.¹²⁹ After this period, however, *Palatium* became established as the building in which the emperor lived and the word was often used anachronistically with regard to the Julio-Claudian period. In Suetonius’ *Lives* in general as well as in his *Life of Nero* in particular, *Palatium* is applied unsystematically: both *Palatium* meaning ‘Palatine Hill’ and *Palatium* meaning ‘imperial residence’ appear.¹³⁰ It is clear, therefore, that the passage of Suetonius does not necessarily indicate Agrippina’s removal from the Palatine Hill

¹²⁴ See, for instance, Winterling, 1999, p. 56 n. 52

¹²⁵ Suetonius probably refers to the *villa maritima* at ancient Bauli, which had previously belonged to Hortensius and which Agrippina Minor had inherited from Antonia Minor. This *villa* is also the location of Agrippina’s murder. Cf. Bicknell, 1963; Katzoff, 1963; Barrett, 1996, pp. 244-246; Kokkinos, 2002, pp. 153-154; D’Arms – Zevi, 2003, pp. 173-175

¹²⁶ Note further that Tacitus too denotes Antonia’s quarters as *domus* (and not as e.g. *villa*), which also hints at a location in the city

¹²⁷ Tamm, 1963, pp. 57-59; Royo, 1999, pp. 157-171, 375-377; Winterling, 1999, pp. 209-217

¹²⁸ One has often seen an exception in Ov. *Met.* 1.175-176, but Winterling, 1999, p. 210, has shown that the Ovidian phrase *Palatia caeli* should be understood as a heavenly equivalent of the Palatine Hill in its entirety and not as a mere residence. See also Tamm, 1963, pp. 58-59

¹²⁹ E.g. Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.34; 4.1.8; 3.4.38, 3.3.85, Juv. *Sat.* 2.106; 4.31, 6.117, Mart. *Epigr.* 4.5.7, 9.91.3. In this context it should be noted that in Pliny’s *Panegyric*, the attribution of *Palatium* to the residence was avoided. Instead Pliny referred to the dwelling of the emperor as *domus*, perhaps as a deliberate attempt to distance Trajan from Domitian (Plin. *Pan.* 47.6, 49.2, 79.6; only once is the palace called *Palatium*, i.e. 23.6, but in this case Pliny verbatim equals it to *domus*). Winterling, 1999, p. 212

¹³⁰ Suet. *Nero* 25.2 (Palatine Hill), Suet. *Nero* 31 (imperial residence), Suet. *Nero* 34 (Palatine Hill). See Winterling, 1999, pp. 213-214, nn. 36-40, for examples in Suetonius’ other *Lives*. Why Winterling, 1999, p. 213, claims that “Suetons Sprachgebrauch ist im Vergleich zu Tacitus weniger systematisch, aber auch weniger anachronistisch; bis zum Nero-Vita benutzt er *Palatium* noch in der alten Bedeutung ‘Palatin’, danach nicht mehr” is puzzling. Especially when one considers not only the usage of *Palatium* in the *Life of Nero*, but also the anachronistic application of the word in the *Life of Caligula* (Suet. *Cal.* 54.2) as Winterling himself indicates

all together and that identification between Agrippina's new residence and the Augustan *domus* remains the strongest possibility.

How this house should be envisioned is more difficult to determine. Opinions diverge on how the Augustan complex was constructed, and recent excavations might indicate that the entire structure was even bigger than what is now believed to be the *Domus Augusti*.¹³¹ Based on the present status of the excavations, however, scholars have come to divide the house of Augustus in a private and a public residence.¹³² The remains that are currently on display belong to an early construction phase of the private quarters, while the public *domus* was first integrated in the Neronian complex and later built over by Domitian. The temple of Apollo stood in between. The so-called *Casa di Livia* was integrated in the *Domus Augusti*.¹³³ Based on the current state of the excavations, it is impossible to determine whether a special part of the Augustan structure was reserved for Livia, and perhaps consequently for the other imperial women living there. In their recent reconstruction of the house of Augustus, Carandini and Bruno tentatively identify two *triclinia* and *cubicula* as the (separated) personal quarters of Augustus and Livia, but there is no solid reason for this.¹³⁴ The assumption, therefore, is that these women lived in the Augustan complex in its broadest sense, though not necessarily in the same quarters.¹³⁵ In any case, for the purpose of this study, the exact determination of their living quarters would not make that much of a difference, since it is hard to imagine that ancient authors would specify the different living arrangements within the same walls in their literary descriptions.

2.3. The public status of the *Domus Augusta*

Epigraphical evidence too testifies to the new public role of imperial women. The death of Germanicus in A.D. 19 resulted in the production of three surviving senatorial documents that shed light on how the imperial family was perceived and presented during the early reign of Tiberius, namely the *Tabula Hebana*, *Tabula Siarensis* and the *Senatus Consultum De Cn.*

¹³¹ In a press release in January 2008, Tomei announced that excavations in the area of the so-called *Domus Tiberiana* revealed a system of *cryptoporticus* which might be dated to the Augustan period. If so, according to Tomei, the *Domus Augusti* might have extended as far as the *Domus Tiberiana*. Nothing on these excavations has been published so far. See Bucci, 2008. Cf. Tomei, 2000, p. 20.

¹³² Tomei, 2000, pp. 28-29; Carandini – Bruno, 2008, pp. 70-72, 77-81, 180-183, 188-198. A parallel of this division can be found in studies on the *Domus Flavia*, which is often divided in public and private quarters.

¹³³ On the *Casa di Livia* and its connection to Livia, see Foubert, 2010.

¹³⁴ Carandini – Bruno, 2008, pp. 53 fig. 23b, 189 fig. 82b, 191

¹³⁵ On the difficulties of assigning rooms to particular persons or groups within the household, see Ellis, 2000, pp. 166-170.

Pisone Patre These documents give insight in the aftermath of Germanicus' death. Before the discovery of these inscriptions, scholars were mainly depending on Tacitus' description of the account. In the *Annals*, Tacitus narrates how Germanicus travelled with his wife Agrippina Maior to the eastern provinces. There, he encountered Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, who was appointed governor by Tiberius in A.D. 17. Germanicus and Piso disagreed sharply, and when Germanicus fell seriously ill and died, there were rumours that he was poisoned by Piso and his wife Plancina. Many posthumous honours were decreed for the deceased Germanicus, of which some are recorded in the surviving inscriptions of the *Tabula Hebana* and *Tabula Siarensis*. After Piso's return to Rome, the senators held hearings for several days to determine the accountability of Piso and his family. During his trial, Piso committed suicide. The *Senatus Consultum De Cn. Pisone Patre* summarizes the findings of the senators.

The inscriptions under discussion provide us with an example of senatorial rhetoric and contemporary ideological discourse, justifying the position of both Tiberius and his family.¹³⁶ The explicit inclusion of imperial women in these senatorial texts is remarkable. Other sources – such as, for instance, imperial coins – indicate that there was some hesitation in verbally or visually expressing the position of imperial women in public media.¹³⁷ Before the reign of Caligula, imperial women were not depicted on imperial coins, at least not with a clear identification.¹³⁸ Caligula introduced a type of *sestertii* that contained the standing figures of his three sisters accompanied by an identifying legend. Thereafter, however, coins with Julio-Claudian women remained limited. When women did appear in imperial coinage, it was only after they had died, as the examples of Agrippina Maior and Antonia Minor show.¹³⁹ Claudius' marriage to Agrippina Minor introduced a change, as she conspicuously appeared on coins of both Claudius and Nero. It is, therefore, remarkable that Julio-Claudian women were referred to as individuals in these Tiberian inscriptions. The public role of these women is acknowledged and praised by the author(s) of the documents. The *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* in particular shows that the tension between the public and private spheres was still felt, as the language appropriates characteristics of the ideal of female conduct.

The *Tabula Siarensis* acknowledges the role of the imperial family at large in choosing the posthumous honours for Germanicus.

¹³⁶ Severy 2000 p. 319. See also Cooley 1998; Millar 2004 pp. 350–359.

¹³⁷ On Julio-Claudian women in imperial coinage, see chapter 4 and 5.

¹³⁸ Some coins from the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius have been identified as bearing portraits of Julia Maior and Livia. On these, see chapter 5.

¹³⁹ On these, see chapter 4.

[*atque ideo placuit uti ageretur de] ea re consilio Ti(beri) Caesaris Aug(usti) prin[cipis nostri atque uti libellus cum] copia sentiarum ipsi fieret atque is, adsu[e]ta sibi [indulgentia, ex omnibus us] honoribus, quos habendos esse censebat senatus, legerit [eos, quos Ti(berius) Caesar Aug(ustus) et] Augusta mater eius et Drusus Caesar materque Germanici Ca[esaris et Agrippina uxore eius] adhibita ab eis et deliberationi, satis apte posse haberi existum[averint]] (Tab. Siar. 1 3-8)*

And therefore it was pleasing that action be taken about this affair through the counsel of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, our *princeps*, and that a booklet with the multitude of senatorial opinions be made for him, and he, with customary indulgence, chose, from all those honors that the senate moved should be taken up, those that Tiberius Caesar Augustus, and his mother, Augusta, and Drusus Caesar, and the mother of Germanicus Caesar, and Agrippina, his wife, invited by them also for consultation, judged sufficient to be taken up ¹⁴⁰

As Severy rightly remarks, “formal recognition of women giving advice to the deliberative body of the senate is unprecedented and reflects dramatic changes in the boundaries between public and private”¹⁴¹ This innovation found a visual expression as well, for a monumental arch was voted to Germanicus

Placere uti Ianus marmoreus extrueretur in circo Flaminio pecunia publica, positus ad eum locum in quo statuae Divo Augusto domique Augu[tae iam dedicatae es]sent ab G(aio) Norbano Flacco () Supraque eum Ianum statua Ger[manici Caesaris po]neretur in curru triumphali et circa latera eius statuae D[rusi Germanici patris eius, naturalis fratris Ti(beri) Caesaris Aug(usti) et Antoniae matris eius et Agrippinae uxoris et Li[viae sororis et Ti(beri) Germanici fratris eius et filiorum et filiarum eius]] (Tab. Siar. 1 9-11, 18-21)

[The senate decrees] that it pleases that a marble arch be constructed in the Circus Flaminius with public funds, placed near where the statues of the Divine Augustus and the Augustan House have already been dedicated by Gaius Norbanus Flaccus () Atop that arch should be placed a statue of Germanicus Caesar in a triumphal chariot, and around the sides of it statues of Drusus Germanicus, his father, the natural brother of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, and of Antonia, his mother, and of Agrippina, his wife, and of Livia, his sister, and of Tiberius Germanicus, his brother, and of his sons and daughters

¹⁴⁰ The translation of the *Tabula Siarenensis* is taken from Severy 2000

¹⁴¹ Severy, 2000, p. 321

Women and children rarely appeared in republican public imagery, but the Augustan and Tiberian period seems to have ushered in an iconographical change. The procession depicted on the *Ara Pacis Augustae* of 13 B.C., for instance, included both women and children.¹⁴² Furthermore, the passage cited from the *Tabula Starensis* refers to a statue group of *Divus Augustus* with the *Domus Augusta* on the Circus Flaminius. No archaeological remains survived of this monument, but based on Ovid's usage of the term *Domus Augusta*, on which more below, Flory suggests that the group included at least a statue of Livia.¹⁴³ The arch of Germanicus constituted a second monument on the Circus Flaminius which emphasized the prominence of imperial women in their family and their role in the continuity of the imperial regime.

The public prominence of imperial women was repeated in the language of the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre*. Here, however, the reference to their public position is accompanied by allusions to traditional female roles and tasks. The inscription openly acknowledges Livia's role in obtaining her friend Plancina's pardon:

Et pro Plancina rogatu matris suae deprecatus sit et quam ob rem [id] mater sua inpetrari vellet iustissimas ab ea causas sibi expositas acceperit senatum arbitrari et Iuliae Augustae optime de r(e) p(ublica) merita non partu tantum modo principis nostri sed etiam multis magnisq(ue) erga cuiusq(ue) ordinis homines beneficiis quae cum iure meritoq(ue) plurimum posset in eo quod a senatu petere deberet parcissime uteretur eo et principis nostri summae erga matrem suam pietati suffragandum indulgendumq(ue) esse remittiq(ue) poenam Plancinae placere (S.C. Pisone Patre 113-120)

And since he interceded for Plancina at his mother's request and received very just reasons made to him by her as to why his mother wanted to obtain these concessions, the Senate deemed that both Julia Augusta, who was most well deserving of the republic not only because she gave birth to our *princeps* but also because of her many and great kindnesses to men of every order – although she rightly and deservedly should have the greatest influence in what she requested from the Senate she used it most sparingly – and the very great devotion of our *princeps* to his mother should be supported and indulged, the senate decreed that it was the Senate's pleasure that the punishment of Plancina be remitted.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Kampen 1991. On the depiction of children in Roman art, see esp. Uzzi 2005.

¹⁴³ Ovid describes a household shrine of the imperial family which included a figurine of Livia (cf. Pont. 2.8.1.10-4.9.105-112). See Flory 1996.

¹⁴⁴ Translations of the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* are taken from Potter – Damon 1999.

It was widely acknowledged in Roman society that women could be influential. The representation of women's *domus frequentata*, as discussed above, clearly illustrates this. Nevertheless, women's actions were always judged according to the traditional standards of female behaviour. Therefore, the context of the manifestation of their influence mattered to a significant degree. Here, Livia's intervention follows from her role as Tiberius' mother. It is important to note that the author(s) of the inscription emphasized the fact that Livia did not approach the senators herself, but operated from within the sphere of the family.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, Livia was praised for the favours she had granted to 'men of each order'. As Severy rightly observes, it is surprising to see a formal recognition of these debts to a woman in a senatorial decree.¹⁴⁶ There seemed to have been a need to compensate for this acknowledgment, for the text emphasizes the fact that even though Livia was influential, she did not abuse her position.¹⁴⁷

Agrippina Maior, Antonia Minor and Livilla were also included in the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre*:

Ceterorum quoq(ue) contingentium Germanicum Caesarem necessitudine magnopere probare: Agrippinae, quam senatui memoriam divi Aug(usti), qu(o)t fuisset probatissima, et viri Germanici, cum quo unica concordia vixisset, et tot pignora edita partu felicissimo eorum, qui superessent, commendare; itemq(ue) Antoniae Germanici Caesaris matris, quae unum matrimonium Drusi Germ(anici) patris experta sanctitate morum dignam se divo Aug(usto) tam arta propinquitate exhibuerit; et Liviae sororis Germ(anici) Caesar(is), de qua optime et avia sua et socer idemq(ue) patruos, princeps noster, iudicaret, quorum iudicis, etiam si non contingere{n}t domum eorum, merito gloriari posset, nedum tam coniunctis necessitudinibus inligata femina: quarum aeq(ue) et dolorem fidelissimum et in dolore moderatione(m) senatum probare. (S.C. Pisone Patre 136-146)

The Senate decrees that also of others connected to Germanicus Caesar by personal ties the Senate had earnest commendation: of Agrippina, whom the Senate says that the memory of the deified Augustus, by whom she had been greatly esteemed, and of her husband Germanicus, with whom she had lived in unique harmony, and the numerous children born by a birth most fortunate for those who survived, recommended; likewise of Antonia, mother of Germanicus Caesar, who, having experienced a single marriage – to Drusus, father of

¹⁴⁵ Compare this, for instance, to the passage from Cato's speech, as written by Livy, cited above (Liv. 34.2 9-11). Cato reproaches the matrons for coming to the *forum*, while they could have made their requests at home

¹⁴⁶ Severy, 2000, p. 331

¹⁴⁷ I will return to the tense relationship between imperial women and the male elite in chapter 3.

Germanicus – has shown by the integrity of her character that she was worthy of such close kinship with the deified Augustus, and of Livia – sister of Germanicus Caesar, of whom both her grandmother and her father-in-law and at the same time paternal uncle, our *princeps*, had a most favorable opinion, persons whose opinions, even if she did not belong to the house, she might deservedly vaunt, and much more so as a woman bound by such close personal ties. The Senate decrees that of these women the Senate commended equally both their loyal grief and their restraint in grief.

Of all three women, the position within the family is emphasized – they are denoted as wife, mother, sister, granddaughter, daughter-in-law and niece. Agrippina Maior and Antonia Minor are singled out as exemplary matrons. The former is praised for her fertility and her contribution to a marriage with *concordia*, while the latter is honoured as a *univira*.¹⁴⁸ Whereas the references to Julio-Claudian women in the *Tabula Siarensis*, even though they were equally placed in a familial context, above all emphasized the public position of these women, the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* explicitly attempts to reconcile their public position with traditional female roles in the private sphere.

The public role which was attributed to the family in the *Tabula Siarensis* as well as the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* suggests that in this period the imperial *domus* was elevated to an extraordinary public status. In fact, other contemporary evidence suggests that the imperial *domus* was increasingly considered as a public institution. In a poem of the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, Ovid refers to the triumph which Tiberius celebrated in AD 12.¹⁴⁹ Rejoicing over the well-being of the imperial family, he refers to them as the *Domus Augusta*. By attaching Augustus' cognomen rather than his gentile – which was the practice in the republican period – to *domus*, Ovid indicated that the *princeps* had founded a household to carry on his name *Augustus*.¹⁵⁰ In the final years before Augustus' death, the dynastic phrase *Domus Augusta* was coined.

2.4. Conclusion

Romans divided social life in a 'private' and 'public' sphere, articulating this opposition in a *domus* and *forum* dichotomy. In the general perception, the *domus* and the activities related to

¹⁴⁸ On these characteristics – see chapter 1.

¹⁴⁹ *Ov. Pont.* 2.2.69–74.

¹⁵⁰ Flory 1996, p. 292. On the term *Domus Augusta* in Ovid's poetry – see Millar 1993, Severy 2003, pp. 214–219.

the *domus* were associated with women and femininity. The *forum* and the activities attached to it were part of the domain of men. The evolving position of women in Roman society and its impact on daily practice went hand in hand with literary expressions of male concerns with regard to the separation of both spheres. The dividing line between the public and private sphere becomes blurred and the public sphere in particular is perceived as contested space. This shows to be even more the case with regard to the imperial family. The perceived proximity of imperial women to sources of power carries additional weight to literary representations of the *domus* and *forum* dichotomy.

The public position of Julio Claudian women is recognised in all sorts of sources and genres. This resulted in the application of literary *topoi*, which were before used in the representation of men but not in that of women. Examples of these are the commonplaces of the *domus frequentata* and the emptied house. The physical house played an essential role in the representation of Julio Claudian women. The house represented the status of imperial women and their position in society. Just like the male residence, the female residence became a place of memory. Augustus' need to destroy the house of his granddaughter Julia Minor illustrates how closely the building was associated with her *persona*. Activities taking place within the house were often evaluated along the lines of the ideal of female conduct. Ultimately, also, the *domus Augusti* deserved praise because it was a stage of matronal display.

Chapter 3

Staging the emperor's wife

While the previous chapter treated the role of the *domus* in the representation of Julio-Claudian women, this chapter focuses on one of the most important roles a woman had within this *domus*, namely the role of *uxor*. A house was incomplete without a *mater familias* and every Roman man, therefore, had to find a suitable wife. Since, in Roman society, the most important aim of a marriage was to provide an heir and constitute continuity, becoming a wife always carried the implication of motherhood. The role of *mater* was therefore equally important and will be at the core of the following chapter.

This chapter will illustrate how the ideals of marriage, as understood in Roman society, were used as a means of characterization. Attention will be paid to how imperial couples were represented in different media and genres. Furthermore, this chapter will treat the mechanisms of literary representation with regard to the characterization of Julio-Claudian women as wives. When becoming the wife of the emperor, the status of a woman changed drastically. As will become clear, this change was perceived as having a large impact on the social structures at the imperial court.

3.1. Marital ideals and imperial representation

A harmonious family life was something all Romans treasured and which they thought worth propagating. Funerary inscriptions, for instance, often refer to *concordia* between husband and wife. It also played a role in the representation of married couples of the imperial family. In the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre*, for instance, Agrippina Maior was praised for her harmonious marriage to Germanicus.¹

In their study on women in the classical world, Elaine Fantham and co-authors state that even though the image of marital concord had earlier models, the Antonine dynasty appears to make the first broad public use of it at an imperial level.² When studying the Julio-Claudian period, however, it shows that marital ideals were an important means of imperial representation from the very beginning of imperial reign. It surfaces in literary representations, cameo art, provincial sculpture and provincial coinage. Yet, it does appear that propagating

¹ *SC Pisone Patre* 136-146. See chapter 2.

² Fantham et al. (eds.), 1994, p. 357

the marital concord of the reigning imperial couple on imperial 'mass media', such as imperial coins, remained rather limited during this period. Before turning to depictions of *concordia*, I will focus on the portrayal of Livia and Augustus as an exemplary pair.

3.1.1. The exemplum of Livia and Augustus

During the reign of Augustus, the ideological power of the ideal of *concordia* was recognized and received an important role in the representation of Augustus and Livia. Marital ideals seemed to have formed an essential part of ideological discourse at an imperial level, which can be deduced from Ovid's poetry in particular. Other sources, such as Tacitus' *Annales* and Claudian coinage, indicate that on various occasions the descendants of Augustus and Livia recalled and imitated the image of the first imperial couple. The *concordia* between Livia and Augustus came to serve as an *exemplum*.

A passage of Ovid's *Fasti* refers to a dedication by Livia of an *Aedes Concordiae* in an unknown year, possibly 7 B.C.³ The poet states that she dedicated this shrine to celebrate her harmonious marriage to Augustus:

*Te quoque magnifica, Concordia, dedicat aede
Livia, quam caro praestitit ipsa viro
Disce tamen, veniens aetas. ubi Livia nunc est
porticus, immensae tecta fuere domus. (Ov. Fast. 6.637-640)*

And Livia on this day dedicated a magnificent shrine to you,
Concordia, that she offered to her dear husband.
Learn this, you age to come: where Livia's Colonnade
now stands, there was once a vast palace.

It is generally known that an evocation of *concordia* could also have political connotations. The history of the state cult of Concordia shows that many of her temples were vowed in an attempt to invoke civic order.⁴ Scholars have therefore often associated the dedication of Livia's shrine with the familial conflicts within the imperial family, in particular the conflict

³ Ov. *Fasti* 6.637-648; See Flory, 1984; Purcell, 1986; Simpson, 1991; Severy, 2003, pp. 131-138; Barrett, 2002, pp. 315-316. This dedication should not be confused with Tiberius' restoration of the Temple of Concordia, which took place in about 7 B.C.

⁴ Cf. e.g. Camillus' dedication of a temple to Concordia in 367 B.C. (Ov. *Fasti* 1.641-644; Plut. *Cam.* 42.2-3). See also Plin. *NH* 33.19, Liv. 9.46, Liv. 22.33.7-8; App. *B.C.* 1.3.26. Severy, 2003, pp. 132-133.

between Tiberius and Augustus' adoptive sons. It should not be excluded that a Roman audience read a political message in this dedication. In Ovid's poetry, however, Livia's dedication is clearly put in a domestic context, as Flory convincingly shows in her study of the *Aedes Concordiae*.⁵ Ovid, who is our only source on this subject, places the dedication of the *Aedes Concordiae* on 11 June. On that same day, women in Rome also celebrated the *Matralia*, a festival in honour of Mater Matuta, a goddess of growth and childbirth.⁶ The festival rites were concerned with the birth and care of children and were conducted by women only. In Ovid's account, the reference to Livia's dedication of the *Aedes Concordiae* follows his elaboration on the *Matralia*, putting Livia's activities in a female and maternal context. To this argument, I would like to add the importance of the presumed location of the *Aedes Concordiae*. Since Ovid's remark on Livia's dedication of the shrine is followed by a reference to the *Porticus Liviae*, scholars have assumed that both monuments need to be located in the vicinity of each other. No physical traces survived of this *porticus*.⁷ The plan of the building, however, is preserved on the *Forma Urbis Romae* and shows a location on the north slope of the Oppius.⁸ The building assumed the form of a rectangular square surrounded by a double *porticus* enclosing a garden. The Severan Marble Plan shows a large square structure in the space within the portico, which has been identified as the *Aedes Concordiae*.⁹ Between 15 and 7 B.C., Augustus had erected the *Porticus Liviae* in honour of his wife, after which it was dedicated by Tiberius and Livia in 7 B.C.¹⁰ The reciprocal gesture of the dedication of the *Aedes Concordiae* within the structures of her husband's 'gift' would have presented Livia as a grateful and respectful wife. This might have been Ovid's intended message. The poet's phrasing of the dedication as a tribute to Livia's "*caro viro*" evokes intimacy and a harmonious love between husband and wife.

The celebration of the wedding date of Augustus and Livia serves as a second example of the importance of marital concord in imperial ideological discourse. The emphasis which is laid on 17 January after the death of Augustus has never been fully studied. Here, I would like

⁵ Flory, 1984 Cf Purcell, 1986, pp 88-90

⁶ *CIL* 1 320, *Ov. Fast.* 6 478-568; *Varr. Ling.* 5 106; *Plut. Cam.* 5 1-2; *Festus* 297 M.

⁷ Pliny mentioned that a single vine stock was planted in the portico which had spread to cover all the walkways and produced twelve amphorae of wine each year (*Plin. NH* 14.11). Furthermore, the building also housed an art gallery (*Ov. AA* 1 71 72). Cf. *Strabo* 5.3 8

⁸ Cf. Casettoni, 1960, tav. 18.

⁹ There has been some disagreement on whether this square structure suited Ovid's description of *magnifica* (*Ov. Fast.* 6 637-640). See, for instance, Richardson, 1992, pp 99-100, who thinks that the *Porticus Liviae* and the *Aedes Concordiae* are in fact one and the same, and who identifies the square structure as a fountain (p 314). Coarelli, however, noting the resemblance between the plan and the *Ara Pacis*, argues that if the *Aedes* was as richly decorated as the *Ara Pacis*, Ovid's *magnifica* would be justified (Coarelli, 1974, p 206). See also Flory, 1984, pp 313-314, 329, Zanker, 1987, pp. 141-144; Coarelli, 2007, p 190 *LTUR* s.v. *Porticus Liviae*

¹⁰ *Suet. Aug.* 29 4, *Dio* 54 23 5-6, *Dio* 55 8 2 Severy, 2003, p 132; Swan, 2004, p. 74

to argue that the recurrence of different kinds of celebrations on this date contributed to the constitution of Augustus and Livia as an exemplary pair.

Both Tacitus and Cassius Dio state that after the death of her husband, probably already in A.D. 14, Livia organised a private festival on the Palatine in his honour, known as the *Ludi Palatini*.¹¹ Originally lasting three days but soon extending to a longer period, the festival was celebrated by many emperors to come.¹² The festivities started with a sacrifice to Augustus and included various theatrical festivities, for which a theatre made of wood was temporarily constructed in the *area palatina* near the *domus Augusti*, where Livia and Augustus had lived as a married couple.¹³ The first day of these *Ludi Palatini* took place on 17 January.¹⁴ From the *Fasti Verulani*, it appears that this day became a public holiday by senatorial decree.¹⁵

Feriae ex s(enatus) c(onsulto) quod eo die Augusta nupsit divo Aug[us]t[o] (Ilt. 13.2.161)

Holiday by senatorial decree, because on this day Augusta married the divine Augustus.¹⁶

The emphasis on Augustus and Livia's wedding date continued after Livia's death. In A.D. 41, Claudius deified his grandmother on 17 January, after which the Arvals celebrated the event with sacrifices to the divine couple on the Palatine.¹⁷ Claudius put her statue next to that of her husband in an *Augusteion*, which was probably located on the Palatine in the neighbourhood of their domestic living space.¹⁸ It remains uncertain whether this *Augusteion* should be identified with the shrine Pliny visited and of which he states that it was erected by Livia to honour her deified husband.¹⁹ If so, the marital concord between the pair would have

¹¹ Tac. *Ann.* 1.73.3; Dio 56.46.5; Jos. *AJ* 19.70-114. Cf. Swan, 2004, p. 357. On the conflicting dates in the passages of Tacitus and Dio, see Goodyear, 1981, pp. 156-157. See also Taylor, 1937.

¹² The emperor Caligula, for instance, was murdered during the *Ludi Palatini*: Dio 59.29.2; Suet. *Cal.* 56.1, Suet. *Cal.* 58.1, Jos. *Ant.* 19.77. Barrett, 2002, pp. 184-185, pp. 329-330.

¹³ By that time, the *domus* of Augustus had become a *lieu de mémoire*. See Foubert, 2010a. See also chapter 2.

¹⁴ *Fasti Furu Filocali* and *Fasti Polemi Silvi*: Ilt. 13.2.239, 264, 400-401. *Fasti Verulani*: Ilt. 13.2.160-161. See also Royo, 1999, p. 276; Swan, 2004, p. 357.

¹⁵ The entry relating to the marriage in the *Fasti Verulani* has been called into question by Degraffi (Ilt. 13.2.401-402), who suggests that the actual reason for making 17 January a public holiday was not the wedding day of Livia and Augustus (whoever inscribed it as such in the *Fasti* did so in error), but because of Tiberius' dedication of the *Ara Numinis Augusti*, which indeed also took place on a 17 January. Cf. Taylor, 1937; Barrett, 2002, p. 320.

¹⁶ The translation is my own.

¹⁷ *CIL* 6.2032, ll. 15-18; *CFA* 17.1.16-17. Cf. Flory, 1995, pp. 133-134.

¹⁸ Dio 60.5.2. Cf. Cecamore, 2002, pp. 159-164.

¹⁹ Plin. *NH* 12.94; on this passage see Rehak, 1990, pp. 117-125. Different denotations in literary sources for shrines and temples to Divus Augustus have led to some confusion on which shrine is meant by Pliny. Ancient sources make mention of *Sacrarium Divi Augusti*, *Templum Divi Augusti quod est in Palatio*, *Templum Novum*

been emphasized even more strongly. After Livia's death, her divine *persona* was reunited with her deified husband when the cult of the *Diva Augusta* was added to that of the *Divus Augustus*. Claudius advertised the reunion of the imperial pair through a numismatic issue with depictions of both *Divus Augustus* and *Diva Augusta*.²⁰ At the same time, the ruling emperor invoked his descent from the founder of the dynasty and his wife, and promoted his *pietas* towards his ancestors.

3.1.2 The perception of marital concord in cameo art and at the local level

The celebration of imperial couples was a popular theme in cameo art. In the introduction to this dissertation, I elaborated on the ambiguous nature of cameos. In most cases, the context of cameos is unclear, which makes interpreting these objects difficult. The figurative compositions of cameos often appropriate elements of imperial ideology and contribute to the glorification of the emperor, his family and his reign. Various cameos are attested that depict paired images of Julio-Claudian married couples. A famous example of this is the so-called *Gemma Claudia*, which shows the overlapping profiles of the emperor Claudius and his wife Agrippina Minor opposite those of Germanicus and Agrippina Maior, to which I will return below (Fig. 3).²¹

The use of cameos as carriers of visual images as well as the iconographical theme of marital pairs find their origins in the Hellenistic Age.²² The iconography of a husband and wife with overlapping profiles first appeared on Ptolemaic coins. Ptolemy II Philadelphos issued gold octodrachms with jugate portraits of himself and his wife on the obverse, and jugate portraits of the founder of the dynasty Ptolemy I Soter and his wife Berenice I on the reverse (Fig. 4).²³ Initially, the pairing of a royal couple on coins was meant to highlight their divine status, but in later periods the images could also be taken to refer to a form of co-rule.²⁴ During the revival of cameos as objects of art in the Julio-Claudian period, the figurative composition of the married couple was rediscovered.²⁵ Not only the emperor and empress

Divi Augusti, Templum Augusti, Aedes Caesarum, Aedes Divorum. For an overview of the sources and the various modern theories concerning the location of each of these shrines or temples, see Cecamore 2002, pp. 159-164. See also *LTUR* s.v. *Augustus, Divus, Sacra, Aedes*, pp. 143-145.

²⁰ *RIC I* Claudius 86, 86a, 101. On this coin type, see also chapter 5.

²¹ Megow 1987, no. A81.

²² On the origins of cameo art, see Mobius 1964, pp. 13-15; Burn 2004, p. 163. See also the introduction to this dissertation, with further references on the nature of cameos.

²³ Pollitt, p. 272, 293a.

²⁴ Pollitt, pp. 271-4.

²⁵ Cf. Mobius, 1985, pp. 32-88.

were depicted in Hellenistic style; other imperial pairs were also deemed suitable subjects for cameos. Examples exist, for instance, of Drusus Maior and his wife Antonia Minor (Fig. 5), and of Germanicus and Agrippina Maior.²⁶ Besides the Hellenistic type with overlapping portraits, paired portraits with juxtaposed profiles enriched the visual repertory of cameos. As from the reign of Tiberius, Julio-Claudian cameos could also represent non-marital pairs. Jugate portraits of Livia and Tiberius, and possibly of Caligula and his sister Drusilla are examples of these.²⁷ The pairing of two persons aimed at articulating the relationship and concord between them.

Though the notion of *concordia* is always present in these paired compositions, other aspects give meaning to the depictions as well. For instance, various cameos depicting Livia and Augustus emphasize their marital concord as well as Livia's later role as priestess of her divine husband.²⁸ Most cameos contain a dynastic component as well. A famous example is the previously mentioned *Gemma Claudia*. This cameo legitimizes the position of the ruling emperor Claudius within the Julio-Claudian family, through the presence of his wife Agrippina and her parents Germanicus and Agrippina Maior.²⁹ The women constitute Claudius' direct link with the deified Augustus, founder of the dynasty. The pairing of both couples also symbolizes the unity and concord within each marriage and within the family as a whole.

Besides cameos, the expression of marital concord also appears in provincial sculpture. The most illustrative example is a sculptural relief from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias in Caria depicting the emperor Claudius and his wife Agrippina Minor (Fig. 6).³⁰ Through the connection of Aphrodisias' local diety Aphrodite with the *gens Julia*, the city's relationship with Rome was of a special nature. Caesar granted Aphrodisias allied status, making it independent from the province of Asia, which was expanded by Octavian.³¹ The Sebasteion, an architectural complex dedicated to Aphrodite and the Julio-Claudian family, constituted a

²⁶ Drusus Maior and Antonia Minor: Megow, 1987, C10 and C13. Germanicus and Agrippina Maior: Megow, 1987, C26. An example of this type also exists of Julius Caesar and his wife Calpurnia, if the identification is correct; cf. Sas – Thoen, 2002, p. 196, no. 137.

²⁷ Livia and Tiberius: Megow, 1987, A49. Caligula and Drusilla: Megow, 1987, A64. Cf. Caligula and Antonia Minor: Megow, 1987, A65.

²⁸ E.g. Vollenweider, 1966, fig. 86 4-6; Megow, 1987, A22, B15.

²⁹ In this context, note also the importance of paired portraits on the official coins of Claudius, as will be discussed below. The dynastic power of the composition of the *Gemma Claudia* can also be deduced from its imitation during the reign of Septimius Severus. Cf. Megow, 1987, A143: overlapping profiles of Septimius Severus and Julia Domna opposite those of Caracalla and Geta.

³⁰ Smith, 1987, pp. 106-110. See also chapter 5 for a second relief depicting Agrippina Minor.

³¹ See Reynolds, 1982, on the relationship between Aphrodisias and Rome.

visual expression of this relationship.³² The complex consisted of a propylon, two three-storeyed porticoes decorated with large relief panels in the upper two storeys, and a temple dedicated to Aphrodite and the Julio-Claudian emperors (Fig. 7). Two local families undertook the building activities, which started during Tiberius' reign and finished during the reign of Nero. The relief panels depict mythic scenes, members of the imperial family as well as figurations of imperial victories. One of these panels shows the emperor Claudius and his wife Agrippina. In this sculptural composition, three figures are shown: Claudius, who stands in the middle, clasps the hand of Agrippina on the left and is crowned with an oak wreath by a togate personification of the Roman senate or people standing on the right. The gesture of the handshake, the so-called *dextrarum unctio* (or *dexiosis*), was a common motif in Greek and Roman art.³³ It could have different meanings, varying from equality of rank, greeting or parting, political *fides* to marital concord. Often, the precise meaning was not clear and in the eye of the beholder the motif could have different meanings at once. When the subjects of the handshake were husband and wife, as is the case with the Aphrodisias relief, the predominant meaning would probably have been that of marital *concordia*. In much the same way as with some of the compositions on cameos discussed above, this relief depicting the reigning imperial couple also had a strong dynastic connotation. Agrippina carries corn-ears in her left hand, which evokes an association with Ceres-Demeter, to which I will return in chapter five. The reference to the fertility goddess emphasizes Agrippina's own fertility and indicates her role in the continuity of the imperial family. On the whole, the image would probably have evoked the idea of unity, political stability and (a promise of) prosperity.

The motif of *dextrarum unctio* was common in Mediterranean art. Yet, its use seemed to have been mostly limited to the funerary sphere. The relief of Aphrodisias is the only surviving example from the Julio-Claudian period depicting a married couple of the imperial family with clasped hands. Of course, the sculptural motif of *dextrarum unctio* is only one way to depict marital concord. Another was to organise statuary compositions in such a way that the emphasis lay on the marital bond between husband and wife. An example of this can be found in the Metroon at Olympia.³⁴ During excavations at Olympia, seven statues were found that could be attributed to the Metroon, of which Pausanias claims that "no image lies in it of the mother of the gods, but there stand in it statues of the Roman emperors."³⁵ Some of these statues have been identified as images of *Divus Augustus*, Claudius, Agrippina Minor

³² See the extensive study of Smith, 1987.

³³ See esp. Davies, 1985.

³⁴ Rose 1997 no. 80; Boschung, 2002 pp. 100-105.

³⁵ Paus. 5.20.9.

and Titus. Furthermore, a fourth male statue could possibly be identified as Vespasian, while two female statues remain unidentified. The original placement of these statues within the rectangular Metroon could be reconstructed thanks to, among other things, the finding spots of the sculptures. The statue of Augustus, which was the primary focus of the building, was situated against the back wall immediately opposite the entrance, which occupied one of the short sides of the rectangular building (Fig. 8). The other statues were positioned between the engaged columns along the side walls, with the female statues placed against the north wall and the male statues against the south wall. Though the precise order of the statues against these side walls remains subject of debate, it clearly appears that the statue of Claudius was placed opposite that of Agrippina, thus emphasizing their marital bond.³⁶ The other female statues have tentatively been identified as Flavia Domitilla Maior and Minor, the wife and daughter of Vespasian who both died before he became emperor. Hypothetically, the juxtaposition of Vespasian and his deceased wife would have emphasized their marriage in much the same way as it did with Claudius and Agrippina. Since some scholars believe that some of the Flavian statues are reworked images of Julio-Claudian figures, other combinations remain possible, such as, for instance, Germanicus with Agrippina Maior, or Nero with Octavia.³⁷ In any case, the example of Claudius and Agrippina shows that the visualization of marital concord was something that was considered worthy of propagation in the provinces.³⁸

Finally, the depiction of the emperor and his wife also appears in provincial coinage. The discrepancy between the imperial coinage and the provincial coinage is striking. The first images on imperial coins of the ruling emperor together with his wife appear under Claudius. Around A.D. 50, the Roman mint issued *aurei* and *denarii* with on the obverse the laureate head of Claudius and on the reverse a draped bust of Agrippina, who is wearing the *corona spicea*.³⁹ This privilege was not granted to previous empresses: Livia did not appear on imperial coins during Augustus' reign, neither did the wives of Caligula or Claudius' first wife Messalina during the reigns of their husbands. Through the inclusion of Agrippina Minor in his numismatic program, Claudius emphasized the marital concord between the imperial

³⁶ For reconstructions, see Stone, 1985, p. 383; Hitzl, 1991, p. 103; Boschung, 2002, p. 104.

³⁷ Hitzl, 1991, p. 115; Rose, 1997, p. 149. The time in which these statues were erected is unclear and hypotheses range from a Claudian to a Flavian date. Moreover, it is not unlikely that the sculptural composition underwent different phases in which older statues were replaced with new ones in accordance with the historical context.

³⁸ For other examples, see, the Greek city of Acraephia (*IG* 7 1 2713; Rose, 1997, no. 67), Ephesus (Rose, 1997, no. 115) or Leptis Magna (Rose, 1997, no. 125).

³⁹ *RIC* 1² Claudius 80-81. Though the emperor and empress appear on different sides of the coin, the issue should be viewed in its entirety since "each obverse is meant to be seen as interacting with its own reverse (...)" (King, 2002, p. 129).

pair.⁴⁰ In addition, the legend accompanying Agrippina's portrait on these coins denotes the empress as *Augusta*. The fact that Agrippina was the first imperial woman to be granted this title during her husband's lifetime and the fact that it was conspicuously propagated in the imperial coinage evoked a sort of partnership between the emperor and his wife. Later, the only other ruling Julio-Claudian couple that appeared on imperial coins were Nero and his wife, identified either as Poppaea or Statilia Messalina.⁴¹ In *aurei* and *denarii* minted between A.D. 63 and 68, a laureate head of Nero is depicted on the obverse accompanied by the legend *Nero Caesar Augustus*. On the reverse the standing figures of Nero and his wife are shown with Nero holding a *patera* and scepter, and the empress a *patera* and *cornucopia*. The legend on the reverse reads *Augustus Augusta*. The pictorial composition together with the legend on the reverse is clearly meant to highlight the *concordia* between the emperor and his wife, be it Poppaea or Statilia Messalina. Marital *concordia* in imperial coinage, however, was limited to these examples of Claudius and Nero.⁴²

In provincial coinage of the Julio-Claudian period, the propagation of marital concord is more frequently present in a variety of pictorial compositions. Coins with the portrait head of the husband on the obverse and that of the wife on the reverse, with standing figures of both husband and wife on the same coin side or with a double portrait of the couple – like the example of Hellenistic ruler pairs on coins or cameos – appear repeatedly, though seldom in the western provinces.⁴³ The previously mentioned example of Ptolemy II introduced the depiction of married couples on coins in the East, after which it became a common motif. In a Roman context, however, the motif knew its first application in the provinces in the coinage of Mark Antony. Double portraits in a Ptolemaic style are known from Antony with his wives Octavia and Cleopatra.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Claudius' innovative approach and the prominence of Agrippina should also be read in the light of the provocative nature of his marriage and his need to legitimize his position as emperor.

⁴¹ *RIC* I² Nero 44, 56. See also chapter 5

⁴² Note that Claudius also minted coins with the portraits of *Divus Augustus* and *Diva Augusta*, which also bore the connotation of marital *concordia*: *RIC* I², Claudius, no. 101. See also chapter 5

⁴³ E.g. Augustus and Livia: *RPC* 2097, 2449, 2581-5, Julia and Marcellus: *RPC* 5415, Antonia Minor and Drusus: *RPC* 1031, Agrippina Maior and Germanicus: *RPC* 2471 2454-5, Claudius and Agrippina: *RPC* 2322, 2461, 261-4, Octavia and Nero: *RPC* 1005-6, Poppaea and Nero: *RPC* 5465, Nero and Statilia Messalina: *RPC* 2543-5

⁴⁴ Octavia: *RPC* 1453, 1455-6, 1459-62, 1464-5, 1468-70, 2201-2, 4088, 4090-1. Cleopatra: *RPC* 4094-6, 4741-2, 4752, 4771. During his marriage with Fulvia, a coin type was issued in Tripolis depicting both Antony and his wife, though not as a double portrait. Cf. *RPC* 4509

3.2. The impact of marrying an emperor

In his study on the court of the Roman emperor, Paterson defines the imperial court as a series of concentric circles around the emperor, containing groups and individuals who gained power and influence for themselves by their perceived proximity and access to the emperor⁴⁵ These groups included members of the imperial family, close confidants of the emperor, the imperial household (the *familia Caesaris*) and 'friends' (*amici*) The closer one was to the heart of the court, i.e. the emperor, the more power and influence one had Importantly, it rarely mattered what someone's title or position was Influence was to a great extent dependent on what others thought your status was If a person was thought to have access to the emperor, he or she could act as a power-broker in his or her own right As a consequence, the creation of an imperial court could be perceived as subverting Roman social structure, since it enabled slaves, freedmen and women to wield public influence⁴⁶ These notions played an important role in the representation of Julio-Claudian wives Because their public role often conflicted with what was considered excellent female behaviour there was, on the one hand, from within the imperial circles the need to justify their position and on the other an opportunity for adversaries to criticize their position as power-brokers

When a woman married the emperor, her status changed as she was perceived as having more access to power In what follows, I will focus on the repercussions of the position and status of emperors' wives on their relations to others, as described in the literary sources These 'others' consist of various social groups to which imperial women needed to relate themselves, and which, therefore, constituted an important focus of ancient authors As a first group, I will treat the Roman elite Since the standards of behaviour were different for men and women, a division between the male and female elite will be made It will become clear that the literary representation of the relationship between imperial wives and the male elite is mainly constructed along the lines of a power struggle The representation of the relationship between imperial wives and the female elite is characterized by references to the ideal of female conduct and Roman notions of female inadequacy⁴⁷ Next, I will turn to the empresses' relation to the 'common people' through the cases of Poppaea and Octavia. Though it would be worthwhile to differentiate between men and women as well, the nature

⁴⁵ Paterson, 2007, p. 140

⁴⁶ Paterson 2007, p. 143

⁴⁷ See chapter 1

of the sources do not allow such a distinction. Together, these groups form a cross-section of the Roman community at large.⁴⁸

3.2.1. Imperial wives and the male elite: aristocratic competition

Since access to the emperor equalled a certain amount of power, achieving a position of influence was no longer the exclusive domain of men. The arrival of imperial women to the public scene, and the fact that it was often easier for them to have the ear of the emperor, turned them into a threat for the social position of the male elite. Both the recurrent stories about the conflicts between Julio-Claudian women and the male elite, and the development of literary *topoi* relating to this aristocratic competition illustrate the anxiety among men about the power structures in Rome.

Ancient authors frequently used the notion of Roman gardens as contested space to illustrate conflicts between members of the imperial family and the elite.⁴⁹ Literary accounts on the power struggle between emperors and the male aristocracy often concentrate on the occupation of urban space. It is well-known that over the years the imperial family gained the monopoly on public display of various nature at the expense of the elite, such as the erection of monumental architectural structures, the dedication of statues in public places, the appropriation of the Palatine Hill as domestic space and so on.⁵⁰ One could say that “the city of Rome became the emperor’s stage”.⁵¹ Likewise, the occupation of Roman gardens functioned as a symbolic marker of the power differentials between elite and imperial family.⁵²

Accounts on Roman pleasure gardens play a substantial role in Tacitus’ characterizations of Messalina and Agrippina Minor.⁵³ The surviving part of book 11 of Tacitus’ *Annals* opens with an anecdote, situated in circa A.D. 47, in which Messalina plotted to overthrow Valerius Asiaticus.⁵⁴ Tacitus writes:

⁴⁸ Of course, one could also take the relationship between imperial wives and the military into account. On this subject, see forthcoming Foubert, 2010b. Some aspects of the link with the military are also treated in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

⁴⁹ In chapter 2 of this dissertation, one can see the imperial *domus* as another example of contested space, especially in the case of the *intra cubiculum* trial of Valerius Asiaticus.

⁵⁰ Eck, 1984, pp. 129-167; Paterson, 1992, pp. 186-215, esp. 200-204; Moormann, 2003, pp. 385-387

⁵¹ Beard, 1998, p. 24

⁵² Beard, 1998, p. 23

⁵³ See also Foubert 2009

⁵⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 11.1. On this episode see also chapter 2.

Nam Valerium Asiaticum, bis consulem, fuisse quondam adulterum eius credidit, pariterque hortis inhians, quos ille a Lucullo cooptos insigni magnificentia extollebat, Suillum accusandis utrisque immittit. (Tac. Ann. 11.1)

For she believed that Valerius Asiaticus, twice consul, had formerly been her (i.e. Poppaea Sabina's) adulterer; and, at the same time gaping for the gardens begun by Lucullus which the man was developing with distinctive magnificence, she sent in Suillius to accuse them both.

This episode should be seen in a context of elite power struggle as well as a context of sexual immorality and female strife. As a first reason for the actions of the empress, Tacitus names the aristocratic Poppaea Sabina, the mother of Nero's wife of the same name.⁵⁵ According to Tacitus, Messalina was jealous of Poppaea because she had been sexually involved with Mnester, a popular pantomimist and a paramour of Messalina herself. By aiming at Valerius Asiaticus, Messalina could remove her rival, while at the same time securing Mnester against any accusations. As a second reason, Tacitus puts the *horti* of Lucullus to the fore. The gardens, originally owned by the republican general L. Licinius Lucullus and illustriously modified by Asiaticus, were known for their luxurious character.⁵⁶

Messalina chose Suillius and Sosibius, Britannicus' tutor, to accuse the pair. Valerius Asiaticus did not receive a hearing before the senators, but was heard by Claudius in the intimacy of his bedroom in the presence of Messalina.⁵⁷ In the end, both Asiaticus and Poppaea were driven to commit suicide.⁵⁸ Tacitus does not make explicit that Messalina confiscated the gardens of Asiaticus after his death. However, since Messalina's death takes place in these gardens, Tacitus suggests that she did.⁵⁹ The author describes how she retreated to the gardens of Lucullus after her marriage to Silius was revealed to Claudius. There, soldiers who were sent by the freedman Narcissus killed her.

Scholars have recognised that Tacitus' use of the gardens of Asiaticus in his characterization of Messalina served as an instrument for dramatic emphasis.⁶⁰ It has, however, never been fully studied how his literary representation was constructed. Here, I will focus on three implied connotations of the Lucullan garden, namely its association with *luxuria*, the relationship between gardens and women, and its location on the Pincian Hill.

⁵⁵ Cf. *FOS* 645

⁵⁶ Frass, 2006, pp. 298-299, 342-343.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of the bedroom as a contested space, see chapter 2.

⁵⁸ Tac. Ann. 11.2-3. See also Dio 60.27 1-3; 60.29.4-6^b. On this episode, Barrett, 1996, pp. 88-89. Pagan, 2006, pp. 70-72

⁵⁹ Tac Ann. 11.37-38

⁶⁰ E.g. Boatwright, 1998, pp. 77-78.

In the *Annals*, important historical episodes often take place in *horti*, in such a way that the gardens can almost be conceived as a stage and the central figures as performers.⁶¹ In addition, Tacitus' literary *horti*, especially those of Lucullus, functioned as emblematic of luxury.⁶² By referring explicitly to Lucullus, the original owner of the gardens, Tacitus evokes the image and reputation of this enigmatic figure.⁶³ Many ancient writers considered Lucullus responsible for introducing *luxuria* in Rome and blamed him for his personal extravagance.⁶⁴

As a general observation, Roman moralists considered gardens and activities taking place in or around gardens as symptomatic for the moral decline of the Roman society.⁶⁵ The gardens of Lucullus in particular were stigmatized because of their luxurious nature. Plutarch claims that "even now, when luxury has increased so much, the gardens of Lucullus are counted among the most extravagant of the imperial gardens."⁶⁶ An association between gardens and women strengthens the notion of *luxuria*. In Latin literature, authors often describe Roman women as being responsible for the increase of luxury goods.⁶⁷ According to them, their female capricious nature made them especially susceptible for wealth, exoticisms and luxury goods such as gardens.⁶⁸ Allegedly, women were partly to blame for the moral decline. References to women as owners of gardens could, therefore, work as a powerful literary instrument.⁶⁹ Cicero, for instance, depicted a picture of an extravagant Clodia, who,

⁶¹ For gardens as *stage*, see Beard, 1998, p. 32. Santoro L'Hoir, 2006, pp. 222-229, denotes a garden as a 'location for deception and pretense'. On the emperor as a performer on various levels, see Bartsch, 1994 (with an emphasis on Nero).

⁶² Boatwright, 1998, p. 81

⁶³ Note that the author always refers to the gardens as 'the gardens of Lucullus' and not as, for instance, 'the gardens of Valerius Asiaticus'. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 11.1; 11.37. Tacitus could have been sure that Lucullus was known to his audience; on the popularity of this figure with other ancient authors, see Troster, 2008, pp. 66-69. Tacitus uses the same trick in his obituary of Tiberius (*Ann.* 6.50) where he emphasizes that the emperor died in a villa that once had belonged to Lucullus, cf. Gowing, 2005, p. 65. The enigmatic nature of Lucullus lies to a great extent in the treatment of this figure in Plutarch's *Life of Lucullus*, the most extensive source. In this text a dichotomy appears between Lucullus' original sobriety during his campaigns in the East and his subsequent degeneration after his return to Italy. Cf. Troster, 2008, pp. 50-54. On Plutarch's treatment of Lucullus, see Swain, 1992, pp. 307-316.

⁶⁴ See, for instance, Nicolaus of Damascus: *Athen.* 12.543a, *Athen.* 6.274c-f, *Vell.* 2.33.4, Cicero *Cic. De Off.* 1.140, *Cic. De leg.* 3.30-31, Varro *Varr. Rust.* 1.2.10, *Varr. Rust.* 1.13.7, *Varr. Rust.* 3.17.9, Plutarch *Plut. Luc.* 38-42. Troster, 2008, p. 50, however, warns that every critique on Lucullus' *luxuria* "is predominantly anecdotal and largely rests on contemporary propaganda which quickly became fossilised in a rather limited stock of *exempla*". See also Troster, 2005, pp. 303-313.

⁶⁵ Plin. *NH* 19.50. Cf. Sen. *Controv.* 5.5. See Littlewood, 1987, pp. 7-30.

⁶⁶ *Plut. Luc.* 39.2. Troster, 2008, pp. 74-75, states that the luxury of the gardens that Plutarch could observe in his days were in fact not Lucullan, but constructed under the Principate. Be as it may, the fact remains that the gardens of Lucullus were associated with extravagance and wealth. See also Van Ooteghem, 1959, pp. 192-193; Keaveney, 1992, pp. 147-148.

⁶⁷ Hemelryk, 1987, pp. 221-222.

⁶⁸ See, for instance, Frass, 2004, pp. 118-122. See also chapter 1.

⁶⁹ Frass, 2006, p. 379. Note that, ironically, Lucullus had also the reputation of being unable to keep his female relatives under control. His mother Caecilia is introduced by Plutarch as "standing in ill repute for having led an intemperate life" (*Plut. Luc.* 1.1), his first wife Clodia was "a most licentious woman" (*Plut. Luc.* 34.1), while his second wife Servilia is described as exhibiting the same evils as Clodia (*Plut. Luc.* 38.1). See Troster, 2008, p. 52.

according to him, chose the location of her gardens so that she could easily watch young men bathe.⁷⁰ In a Julio-Claudian context, other examples of associations between women and the luxury of horticulture can be found. Pliny, for instance, states that Antonia Minor had an artificial fishpond at her villa in Bauli where she kept her favorite lamprey adorned with earrings.⁷¹ Domitia, Nero's aunt, also had elaborate fishponds for which she was criticized through the words of Agrippina Minor in Tacitus' *Annals*.⁷²

Finally, the location of the gardens on the Pincian Hill would have reminded Tacitus' audience of the forementioned aristocratic strife between the imperial house and the elite for urban space. Besides Lucullus, other great statesmen of the Roman Republic had built gardens at this location including Pompey, C. Sallustius Crispus and M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus.⁷³ The imperial confiscation of the Lucullan gardens after the death of Asiaticus was once again an example of the monopoly the emperor and his family tried to hold at the expense of the elite. In short, the gardens of Lucullus symbolized the decline of republican values and a changing morality in Roman society.⁷⁴

Later in the *Annals*, Tacitus' garden imagery gains force when he describes a similar episode during Claudius' marriage to Agrippina Minor. In A.D. 53, M. Tarquinius Priscus accused T. Statilius Taurus, under whom he had served as a legate in Africa in A.D. 52-53, of extortion and magical practices.⁷⁵ Tacitus states:

At Claudius saevissima quaeque promere adigebatur eiusdem Agrippinae artibus, quae Statilium Taurum opibus inlustrem hortis eius inhians pervertit accusante Tarquintio Prisco.
(Tac. *Ann.* 12.59)

But Claudius was being driven to produce the utmost savagery by the practices of that same Agrippina, who, gazing for the gardens of Statilius Taurus, a man illustrious for his wealth, toppled him on the accusation of Tarquinius Priscus.

⁷⁰ Cic. *Cael.* 36. Also Cic. *Cael.* 49.

⁷¹ Plin. *NH* 9.172. The unnatural love of owners for their fish seems to have been an ancient literary *topos*; see also Varr. *Rust.* 3.17.5-8 (Hortensius), Ael. *De nat. anim.* 8.4 (Crassus), Mart. 4.30.3-7 (Domitian). On the luxurious nature of artificial fishponds, see Higginbotham, 1997. On fish as pets, see Toynbee, 1973, pp. 209-215, and Giebel, 2003, pp. 146-147.

⁷² Tac. *Ann.* 13.21.6. Dio claims that the luxury of her estate in Baiae prompted Nero to kill her (Dio 61.17.2).

⁷³ Grimal, 1969, pp. 120-131; Frass, 2006, pp. 320-322, 344-345; Talamo, 2008, pp. 108-133.

⁷⁴ See also Pagan, 2006, p. 84.

⁷⁵ Vogel-Weidemann, 1982, pp. 154-160. See also Barrett, 1996, pp. 135-136; Ginsburg, 2006, p. 30.

Taurus' fate resembled that of Asiaticus. According to Tacitus, although he was allowed a hearing before the senators, he could not bear the humiliation and false accusations, and killed himself.

The previous passage on Messalina and this one on Agrippina Minor show clear parallels. Through the usage of similar vocabulary (*hortus inhians* and *hortus eius inhians*) and imagery – gardens, wealth and luxury, the oppression of members of the elite – Tacitus implicitly invites the reader to put both episodes next to each other and compare both empresses.⁷⁶

3.2.2 Imperial wives and the female elite: female strife

The destruction of elite women by imperial wives emerges as a literary *topos* in the works of ancient writers. This is most clearly evident in Tacitus' *Annales*, since he makes the broadest use of the commonplace, though it appears in other authors as well.⁷⁷

In Tacitus' account of the year A.D. 47, Messalina is opposed against other aristocratic women. While describing the Secular Games that Claudius held that year, Tacitus states that Agrippina Minor's son Nero, then still called Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, was more popular with the people than Messalina's son Britannicus.⁷⁸ The sympathy of the people was even more aroused because of Messalina's opposition to Agrippina.⁷⁹ Agrippina, however, was not Messalina's most significant victim within the group of the female elite at that time. According to Tacitus, the empress had fallen in love with C. Silius, who was married to Junia Silana.⁸⁰ Messalina manoeuvred Silana out of her marriage and took her place as an adulteress.⁸¹ The author calls Silana a *nobilis femina*, with which he denotes her high rank.⁸²

In much the same way as the subject of gardens, the figure of Junia Silana functions as a literary instrument to parallel the figures of Messalina and Agrippina Minor in Tacitus' *Annals*. In book 13, it becomes clear that over the years Silana and Agrippina had become friends. In A.D. 55, however, a rift arose between them.⁸³ According to Tacitus, Silana had

⁷⁶ Cf. Foubert 2009.

⁷⁷ The same *topos* also appears, for instance, in Cassius Dio's *Roman History*. Cf. e.g. Dio 60.32.4–60.33.2. See also Ginsburg 2006, pp. 33–34.

⁷⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 11.11. Both Nero and Britannicus participated in the circus game called *Troy*, at which young men on horseback commemorated Rome's association with Troy.

⁷⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 11.12.

⁸⁰ *FOS* 474.

⁸¹ Tac. *Ann.* 11.12. Cf. Syme 1986, p. 175.

⁸² Santoro L'Hoir 1992, p. 120. *Mulieres* in general are not being oppressed, but rather Rome's finest *feminae* with all their inherent virtues.

⁸³ Tac. *Ann.* 13.19–22.

hoped to marry Sextius Africanus, but Agrippina, who wanted to inherit the fortune of her childless friend, prevented the marriage by telling Africanus that Silana was immoral (*impudica*) and declining in years. Meditating revenge, Silana sent two of her clients, Iturius and Calvisius, to accuse Agrippina of rebellion, claiming that she wanted to marry Rubellius Plautus, also a descendant of Augustus, and thus remove her son Nero from the throne. The word reached Nero through Atimetus and Paris, two *liberti* of Nero's aunt Domitia.⁸⁴ Of the latter Tacitus states that there was a ferocious rivalry going on between her and Agrippina.⁸⁵ The entire episode has female aristocratic competition as a core theme. Agrippina is opposed to both Junia Silana and her former sister-in-law Domitia. Whereas Silana earlier was called a *nobilis femina*, Tacitus now sounds more negative as he describes her as 'distinguished by her lineage, good looks, and recklessness (*lascivia*)'

Tacitus' most elaborate composition of female strife focuses on Agrippina Minor. Her introduction as the new wife of emperor Claudius is staged along the lines of female aristocratic competition.⁸⁶ Claudius allegedly summoned his most influential *liberti*, Callistus, Narcissus and Pallas. Each of them supported a different woman – Lollia Paulina, Aelia Paetina and Agrippina Minor respectively – and tried to convince the emperor of his choice.⁸⁷ Several scholars have noticed that Tacitus composes this 'choosing of a wife' as a parody of a meeting of an imperial *consilium*.⁸⁸ In fact, the whole scene is likely to be fictitious and seems to be part of a larger critique of Claudius' regime. Claudius is presented as a passive ruler who was dictated by his *liberti*. With a touch of typical Tacitean irony, one of the criteria given by the freedmen of an ideal wife is the absence of *aemulatio*. Lollia Paulina is recommended by Callistus because she did not have children of her own, hence, she would never rival with another woman for favours for her own children.⁸⁹ In this light, staging Claudius' choice of a consort as a contest makes the entire episode ironical.

When Agrippina was firmly established as the emperor's new wife, Tacitus reintroduces the competition between her and Lollia Paulina.⁹⁰ According to him, in A.D. 49, the empress claimed that Lollia had consulted astrologers and had sought information from the oracle of Apollo at Colophon about the marriage of Claudius and Agrippina. Tacitus states

⁸⁴ *FOS* 319

⁸⁵ *Tac. Ann.* 13.19

⁸⁶ *Tac. Ann.* 12.1

⁸⁷ *FOS* 18.504

⁸⁸ Crook, 1955, p. 42; Syme, 1958, pp. 352-356; Vessey, 1971, pp. 401-402; Barrett, 1996, p. 95

⁸⁹ *Tac. Ann.* 12.2. Note that if she became the stepmother of Octavia and Britannicus, the woman she would rival with would be the (image of) the deceased Messalina.

⁹⁰ *Tac. Ann.* 12.22. See Barrett, 1996, pp. 107-108.

Idem consulibus atrox odi Agrippina ac Lolliae infensa quod secum de matrimonio principis certavisset molitur crimina et accusatorem (Tac Ann 12 22)

With the same men as consuls, Agrippina, frightening in her hatred and hostile toward Lollia because she had been her competitor over marrying the *princeps*, engineered charges and an accuser

In this passage, Tacitus recalls the image of Messalina, using the same vocabulary as when he described the rivalry between her and Agrippina Minor during Claudius' Secular Games mentioned before

Et matri Agrippinae miseratio augebatur ob saevitiam Messalinae quae semper infesta et tunc commotior quo minus strueret crimina et accusatores novo et furori proximo amore distinebatur (Tac Ann 11 12)

And their pity for his mother, Agrippina, was augmented owing to the savagery of Messalina, who, always ferocious and at the time particularly volatile, was inhibited from setting up charges and accusers only by a new love which bordered on madness

Both Messalina and Agrippina are presented as savage and aggressive Both are planning charges and accusers According to Tacitus, Claudius supported Agrippina's case and pleaded before the senators, without granting Lollia a hearing, that she was a danger to the state A large part of her wealth was confiscated and Lollia was sent into exile In the end, however, a tribune was sent to drive her to suicide ⁹¹ At the same time, so Tacitus claims, Agrippina also destroyed Calpurnia because Claudius had praised her beauty ⁹² Tacitus denotes Calpurnia as *inlustris femina*, creating the same literary effect as with Junia Silana's *nobilis femina* ⁹³

The ideological power of the concept of female aristocratic competition clearly appears from Nero's actions after the death of his mother To show his own clemency and to legitimate his removal of Agrippina, he tried to nullify her actions by recalling Calpurnia and Junia Calvina, another woman of the elite who was exiled because of Agrippina, from exile ⁹⁴ Nero permitted that the ashes of Lollia Paulina were brought back to Rome and he allowed to

⁹¹ Tac Ann 12 22

⁹² Tac Ann 12 22 Cf FOS 174

⁹³ Santoro L Hoir 1992 p 120

⁹⁴ See Tac Ann 12 8 Cf FOS 469

have a tomb erected for her. Tacitus does not fail to mention Junia Silana either. She was allowed to return from exile as well, but died on her way back a natural death at Tarentum.⁹⁵

3.2.4. Imperial wives and popular support: the case of Octavia and Poppaea

One of the consequences of the public position of the imperial *domus* was the creation of a highly public position for its women. This brought them, much more than their republican predecessors, under the attention of the Roman people at large. In fact, references to manifestations of popular support of Roman women are mainly limited to the imperial period. The uproar with regard to Julia, Caesar's daughter and Pompey's wife, is a rare, if not the only, example dating to the republican period. Plutarch and Dio state that the people of Rome reacted with great intensity to the death of Julia.⁹⁶ Allegedly, Pompey had plans to bury Julia on the grounds of his Alban *villa*. The Roman people, however, took matters in its own hands, seized the body of Julia after a funeral ceremony in the *forum* and carried it to the Campus Martius where it was given a public burial. Here, I would like to focus on the example of the literary representation of Octavia and Poppaea, the wives of Nero, as an illustration of the importance and possible impact of catching the eye of the people.

The literary sources describe how Poppaea Sabina competed with Octavia for the position of empress. Their rivalry occurs in Tacitus' *Annals* as well as in the tragedy *Octavia*. Though both sources are of a different genre, their portrayal of the conflict overlaps to a large extent.⁹⁷ An important element in the representation of Poppaea and Octavia's rivalry is the notion of popular support. In both texts, the actions of the Roman people at large and the women's subordinates in particular function to illustrate Octavia's moral integrity and Poppaea's depravity. Tacitus introduces the support of Octavia's servants in his description of her downfall. In A.D. 62, Nero took steps to divorce his wife Octavia and marry his mistress Poppaea. Tacitus claims that Nero hated Octavia because she was the favourite of the people.⁹⁸ At first, he merely repudiated her on the pretext that she was sterile, but Poppaea allegedly looked for a more definite disposal of Octavia. According to Tacitus, she instigated one of the domestic servants of Octavia to accuse her of a love affair with a slave.⁹⁹ Octavia's

⁹⁵ For all these measures, see Tac. *Ann.* 14.12.

⁹⁶ Plut. *Caes.* 23.5-7; Plut. *Pomp.* 53; Dio 39.64.

⁹⁷ The matter of the date, authorship and sources of *Octavia* is still subject of debate. See Barnes, 1982; Ferri, 2003, pp. 1-30, and Boyle, 2008, pp. xiii-xxiv, with further references. Generally, the *Octavia* is agreed to be post-senecan and post-neronian based on contents and style.

⁹⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 14.59.

⁹⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 14.60.

waiting-maids were all examined under torture, and although Tacitus admits that a few uttered false accusations, stressing thereby that they were in agony, he emphasizes the fact that the greater number maintained the moral excellence of their mistress. One of them yelled at the prefect Tigellinus, who was supervising the examination

Castiora esse muliebria Octaviae quam os eius (Tac. Ann. 14.60)

Octavia's womanly parts were chaster than his mouth

In the end, Octavia was banished to Campania and put under military supervision. Tacitus states that this measure led to protests from the Roman *plebs*, suggesting that, because they had nothing to lose, it was easier for them to express the injustice than for their superiors – who in his implication were feeling the same way. At some point, however, the rumour spread that Nero regretted his decision and had recalled Octavia. The people reacted enthusiastically

Exim laeti Capitolium scandunt deosque tandem venerantur. Effigies Poppaeae proruunt Octaviae imagines gestant umeris, spargunt floribus foroque ac templis statuunt. Itur etiam in principis laudes, † repetitum [certamen] † venerantium. Iamque et Palatium multitudine et clamoribus complebant, cum emissi militum globi verberibus et intento ferro turbatos disiecere. Mutataque quae per seditionem verterant et Poppaeae honos repositus est. (Tac. Ann. 14.61)

Thereupon the people delightedly climbed the Capitol and at last venerated the gods. They felled likenesses of Poppaea, carried Octavia's images on their shoulders, strewed them with flowers, and set them up in the forum and temples. Matters even reached praise for the princeps, and they were already filling the Palatium too with their numbers and their shouting when clusters of soldiers were sent out, who disrupted and scattered them by beatings and by brandishing steel. Everything which had been overthrown in their mutiny was changed, and Poppaea's honor was restored.

The notion of popular support also appears in the tragedy *Octavia*. The author uses two choruses in the tragedy to characterize his *dramatis personae*.¹⁰⁰ One consists of Roman courtiers and supports Poppaea, the other is an assembly of Roman citizens and favours

¹⁰⁰ On the chorus in the *Octavia* see Kragelund 1982 p. 38; Ferri 2004 pp. 64–315–318.

Octavia ¹⁰¹ Both choruses paint verbal pictures of their favourite. The chorus of the Roman *plebs* equals Octavia to legendary figures like Lucretia and Verginia, praising their *castitas* and *puicitia*. ¹⁰² Similar to the words of the servant in Tacitus' account, Octavia's popular support is articulated in terms of female exemplarity. The courtiers, on the other hand, have little to say about the moral character of Poppaea but instead emphasize her beauty and charismatic appearance. ¹⁰³

To fully comprehend the meaning and function of popular support in these accounts, it is necessary to take a closer look at other references to popular support of imperial women. Cassius Dio writes that after the exile of Julia Maior in A.D. 2 to Pandateria, the people protested against Augustus' harsh treatment and asked him to bring her back. ¹⁰⁴ In Dio's account, Augustus first refused to yield to popular demand and responded that fire and water would mix before that happened. The people reacted by throwing blazing torches into the Tiber. In the end, Augustus was unable to withstand the pressure and Julia was transferred from the island of Pandateria to Rhegium on the mainland. Agrippina Maior, Julia's daughter, was the subject of popular support as well. When the news of Germanicus' death reached Rome, the people reacted with intensity, gathering en masse to greet his widow when she returned to Italy with his ashes. ¹⁰⁵ Later, in A.D. 29, when Agrippina Maior and her son Nero were denounced by Tiberius, the people of Rome protested by surrounding the *curia*, where they were held, and carrying the effigies of mother and son as tokens of their support. ¹⁰⁶ Studies on the political role of the Roman crowd and its relationship with the emperor have indicated that the people was a force which a ruler needed to reckon with. ¹⁰⁷ In all these examples the popular support of imperial women at the same time served as an act of protest against the ruling emperor. ¹⁰⁸

In the representation of the rivalry between Octavia and Poppaea in Tacitus' *Annals* and *Octavia*, the authors use the description of the people's support of Octavia as a means to characterize the degenerate nature of Nero's reign. In Tacitus' *Annals*, it appears as a literary *topos*, for he also uses popular support for Agrippina Minor to illustrate the extreme depravity of Nero's character. In his account of Agrippina's final days, the author describes how, on

¹⁰¹ Poppaea *Oci* 762-819. Octavia *Oci* 273-376, 670-689, 877-890, 924-957, 972-982.

¹⁰² *Oci* 290-305.

¹⁰³ *Oci* 762-819.

¹⁰⁴ Dio 55.13.1. Cf. Macr. *Sat.* 2.5.1, 2.5.6. Vell. 2.3, Plin. *NH* 21.3.9.

¹⁰⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 3.1-3. Cf. Yavetz, 1988, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 5.4. Cf. Yavetz, 1988, p. 17; Rowe, 2002, p. 99.

¹⁰⁷ See esp. Yavetz, 1969; Rowe, 2002, pp. 85-101.

¹⁰⁸ Yavetz, 1969, p. 17; Eck, 1995, p. 10.

Nero's command, Anicetus stormed the *villa* of Agrippina near Baiae, where she had retreated after almost drowning during Nero's first attempted murder

Interim vulgato Agrippinae periculo, quasi casu evenisset, ut quisque acceperat decurrere ad litus. Hi molium objectus, hi proximas scaphas scandere, alii, quantum corpus sinebat, vadere in mare, quidam manus protendere, questibus, votis, clamore diversa rogitantium aut incerta respondentium omnis ora compleri, adfluere ingens multitudo cum luminibus, atque ubi incolumem esse pernotuit, ut ad gratandum sese expedire, donec aspectu armati et minitantis agminis distecti sunt. (Tac. Ann. 14.8)

Meanwhile, Agrippina's danger had become public, the assumption being that it had happened by accident, and each person on hearing of it ran down to the shore. Some climbed on the piled breakwaters, some on the closest boats, others waded into the sea as far as their bodies allowed, still others stretched out their hands. The whole beach was filled with the complaints, vows, and shouting of those asking their different questions or answering in uncertain terms. A mighty multitude with lights streamed down, and, when it became known that she had been preserved, they prepared themselves to offer congratulations – until they scattered at the sight of an armed and menacing column.

Everyone scattered: the people who had come to see if she was allright, the domestic slaves who were overrun by the soldiers and the servants who had been standing by Agrippina's side. In Tacitus' account, the final solitude of Agrippina was enforced upon her. Her supporters and subordinates did not flee because they were disloyal to her, but out of fear for the approaching violence, ordered by her son Nero.

The public role and visibility of Julio-Claudian women turned them into a focus of popular attention. The people's support of one woman, or their hatred towards another, could convey a message to the emperor and his entourage of what they desired. For ancient writers it could function as a means to characterize the imperial women in question but also the imperial reign. Descriptions of manifestations of popular support of Julio-Claudian women became a powerful literary tool. The representation of the rivalry between Octavia and Poppaea received an additional layer of meaning, as Tacitus and the author of the tragedy *Octavia* articulated popular support along the lines of female exemplarity.

3.3. Dealing with the other woman: the virtue of *obsequium*

Mistresses of the emperor and especially the ways in which they are staged in the accounts of ancient authors contribute highly to the representation of the emperor himself and of his wife. The reaction of the emperor's wife to the presence of a rival can lead to both a negative and a positive representation. An author may also opt for a deliberate comparison between the mistress and the rightful *uxor*, leading to well-chosen characterizations for both of them. Although mistresses of almost every Julio-Claudian emperor are attested, the examples discussed here will be limited to those that illustrate most clearly how the literary power of a figure such as the mistress functions. Interestingly, though the virtue of *obsequium* has often been recognized as a traditional virtue of exemplary women, it has never yet been included in discussions on imperial wives and mistresses.

The first chapter of the present study offered an overview of the various criteria that constituted the image of the ideal *matrona* according to Roman standards. As stated, the behaviour of Roman women, including that of women of the imperial family, was judged and criticized along the lines of these criteria. When a woman became an *uxor*, she had to reckon with a whole new set of ideals compared to when she was unmarried. The augmented visible status that a woman received after becoming the wife of the emperor or of an imperial prince made sure that her conduct was even more scrutinized. Though a variety of virtues had to be appropriated by a woman to be considered an *exemplum* (such as *castitas*, *pudicitia*, *pietas*), the most prominent virtue in the life of a married woman, and perhaps the most characteristically Roman, was that of *obsequium*.

The precise meaning of *obsequium* remains hard to define as no English concept covers the broad set of meanings it had in ancient Rome. When used in a context of wifely behaviour, modern scholars have often translated it as 'wifely obedience'.¹⁰⁹ Treggiari's examination of the usage of the concept in inscriptions and ancient literature, however, has shown that in a marital context co-operation rather than subordination is the key meaning.¹¹⁰ A wife had to make the life of her husband as easy and as pleasant as possible, which included a lot more than being merely obedient. Incarnating the virtue of *obsequium*, therefore, implied that an *uxor* was also concerned with incarnating other virtues, like *castitas* or the display of

¹⁰⁹ The concept of *obsequium* was also applied to characterize the attitude of an 'inferior' towards his 'superior'. Thus, it could be said from a son towards his parent or a freedman towards his *patronus*. Cf. *CIL* I 1570, 6 27556 *Dig.* 38.2.1.1. Forbis, 1996 pp. 53-55.

¹¹⁰ See Treggiari, 1991 pp. 238-240.

reverence towards her husband.¹¹¹ A literary *topos* in the representation of Julio-Claudian women that clearly illustrates how accommodating a husband contributed to the image of an exemplary wife is the way imperial *uxores* acted when confronted with the “other lover”. Livia, for instance, appears in the literary sources as a wife who showed that she had the virtue of *obsequium* by providing her husband with girls to accommodate his sexual pleasures. Suetonius states:

Circa libidines haesit, postea quoque, ut ferunt, ad vitiandas virgines promptior, quae sibi undique etiam ab uxore conquererentur. (Suet. Aug. 71)

He could not dispose of the charge of lustfulness and they say that even in his later years he was fond of deflowering maidens, who were brought together for him from all quarters, even by his own wife.

Moreover, Dio states that Livia made sure that her own sexual behaviour remained flawless and in keeping with the image of the ideal Roman *matrona*:

Πυθομένου τέ τινος αὐτῆς πῶς καὶ τί δρῶσα οὕτω τοῦ Αὐγούστου κατεκράτησεν, ἀπεκρίνατο ὅτι αὐτὴ τε ἀκριβῶς σωφρονοῦσα, καὶ πάντα τὰ δοκοῦντα αὐτῇ ἡδέως ποιοῦσα, καὶ μήτε ἄλλο τι τῶν ἐκείνου πολυπραγμονοῦσα, καὶ τὰ ἀφροδίσια αὐτοῦ ἀθύρματα μήτε αἰσθάνεσθαι προσποιουμένη. (Dio 58.2.5)

When someone asked her how and by what course of action she had obtained such a commanding influence over Augustus, she answered that it was by being scrupulously chaste herself, doing gladly whatever pleased him, not meddling with any of his affairs, and, in particular, by pretending neither to hear of nor to notice the favourites that were the objects of his passion.

The same association of *obsequens* with chastity also appears in the tragedy *Octavia*. In the first act, Octavia laments the downfall of her family, with the tragic deaths of her father Claudius and brother Britannicus, after which she states that Nero either has to kill her too or

¹¹¹ See for instance the *Laudatio Turiae* (CIL 6 1527), in which the husband lists *obsequium* among the prime domestic virtues a wife should have. On the *Laudatio Turiae*, see most recently Lindsay, 2009 (with further references). For the use of *obsequium* in an imperial context, see Pliny's remarks on Trajan's wife Plotina at *Plin. Pan.* 837

she will avenge her family by killing him¹¹² In her response, Octavia's nurse soothes her while attempting to persuade her that it would be a far better course to try and approach the ideal of wifely behaviour "Conquer your ungentle man with compliance (*obsequendo*)", the nurse advises.¹¹³ By means of a sharp verbal exchange between the nurse and Octavia, the author of the text articulates the different positions the wife of the emperor should have Firstly, the only imperial consort that is to be revered is the legal wife of the emperor, the *uxor* Here, the mistress of Nero, Poppaea, is referred to as *paelex*, a married man's mistress¹¹⁴ Secondly, the empress should also be a *genetrix* The theme of the emperor's consort as the bearer of imperial heirs frequently surfaces in the entire play Of course, when viewed from Octavia's life story, who at first was repudiated because she was barren and thereafter exiled because – according to Nero's official statement – she had aborted their child, the rivalry between Octavia and Poppaea as mothers of future heirs augmented the dramatic content¹¹⁵ With her plea for *obsequium*, the nurse wants to give Octavia an instrument to maintain her position at the court Only an empress who approaches the ideal of female conduct and, thus, fulfils the traditional roles of a (legitimate) *uxor* and *genetrix* will abide forever, so the nurse claims To prove her point, she refers to Nero's other mistress and Octavia's very first rival, Acte The nurse believes that since Acte had to make place for Poppaea, the latter in the end will have to make place for Octavia, the only rightful consort of the emperor

The virtue of *obsequium* knows a variety of connotations and meanings in ancient literature In a marital context, it referred to a wife accomodating her husband, for instance when confronted with his other love interests In *Octavia*, *obsequium* is presented as a guarantee for Octavia to maintain the position of the emperor's wife *Obsequium* would assure Octavia of proximity to the emperor and secure her influential position at the court

¹¹² *Oct* 137-174

¹¹³ *Oct* 177 See the nurse's same advice at *Oct* 84-85 Though *obsequium* in this case may refer to sexual compliance the intended meaning did not necessarily need to have been restricted to that Cf Boyle, 2008 pp 118-136 Note that Tacitus used *obsequium* to denote the obedience of aristocrats to 'bad emperors' (cf Vielberg 1987, pp 128-134), approaching *adulatio* It should not be excluded that this was an intended meaning by the author of *Octavia* as well

¹¹⁴ Cf *Oct* 125-127, where the word *paelex* is attributed to Agrippina Minor *Paelex* is often translated as 'whore' Boyle, 2008, p 125

¹¹⁵ *Tac Ann* 14.60.1, *Tac Ann* 14.63, *Suet Nero* 35.2

3.4. Conclusion

In the Roman world, the emperor and his wife were expected to emerge as an *exemplum* of a harmonious and fertile marriage. The emperor, therefore, needed to find a worthy consort, who could not only guarantee dynastic continuity, but who would also contribute to a positive image of the emperor and the imperial reign. The representation of the marriage of Livia and Augustus shows that they were indeed considered as an example. The emphasis on their wedding anniversary by the imperial entourage confirms this. The representation of imperial couples as *exempla* of marital concord manifested itself in cameo art, provincial sculpture and provincial coinage, leading eventually to a greater public prominence at the imperial level under the Antonines.

The public position of imperial wives resulted in literary *topoi* and forms of representation that are characteristic for descriptions of the imperial reign. The portrayal of conflicts between imperial women and members of the elite, and of popular support for imperial women were a distinct feature of their public position, which differed greatly from that of their republican predecessors. Yet, even though the public position of Julio-Claudian women was acknowledged, ancient authors often fell back on the ideal of female conduct as a means of characterization. The virtue of *obsequium* serves as an illustration of this.

Chapter 4

Mothers behind the curtains

In the previous chapters, the importance of becoming a mother to the status and social position of Roman women has been emphasized more than once. The perception of a woman's qualities as a mother contributed to her reputation. Mothers had to find the right balance between supporting their children and plain interference. The reference in Tacitus' *Annals* to Agrippina Minor who sat behind the curtains and listened to her son's meeting with the senators, to which I referred in chapter 2, illustrates the example of a 'mother gone bad'. This chapter will focus on the characteristics of exemplary motherhood and the ideal relationship between mothers and sons, as perceived in the literary sources. After some preliminary remarks, I will continue with an examination of the role of mothers in imperial *propaganda*.¹ How did the imperial court advertise motherhood?

4.1. Stereotypes of mothers and stepmothers

In Roman society, a marriage was contracted for the purpose of having children.² As in many societies, the continuity of the Roman state was perceived as depending to a large extent on the continuous presence of new citizens. Romans always had a significant appreciation for the role of women in this process. Motherhood enhanced a woman's status. However, the mere fact of becoming a mother was not enough to safeguard a woman's reputation. Much depended on how her maternal qualities were perceived by others. In the following, I will discuss the behaviour that a mother needed to display according to Roman standards. Because of the close association between mothers and stepmothers, and because of the prominence of stepmothers in the representation of Julio-Claudian women, I will also focus on the stereotype of the *saeva noverca* or wicked stepmother. Furthermore, it will appear that the standards of ideal motherly behaviour played a role in the literary portrayals of Julio-Claudian women. I will concentrate on the descriptions of the relationship between imperial women and their children, and examine whether these are influenced by ideal behavioural patterns.

¹ On the term 'propaganda', see the introduction to this dissertation

² Aul. Gell. 4.3.2; Aul. Gell. 17.21 44, Suet. *Jul.* 52 3, Dion. 2.25.7.

The virtues which Roman women needed to embody in their capacity of mother were less defined or concrete than the virtues they needed to appropriate as a wife, such as *castitas* or *pudicitia*.³ Instead, the emphasis lay on how she practiced her role as mother. Though it could be considered as the norm in daily practice, entrusting children to the care of a nurse provoked criticism.⁴ The involvement of a mother in the early years of a child's life was considered as a traditional female task and associated with exemplary behaviour. In Roman opinion, a young child was susceptible to all kinds of exterior influences, and being in close contact with an uneducated servant or a common nurse could have a corruptive effect on his or her future development.⁵ It was a mother's task to provide her children with moral and intellectual standards.⁶ It goes without saying that fathers played a central role in the educational development of their children, but mothers were involved for a substantial part of it as well.⁷ In his *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, Tacitus, through the words of Messalla, praises the vigilance of famous historical mothers as the basis of their sons' singlemindedness and skills as orators.⁸

Nam pridem suus cuique filius, ex casta parente natus, non in cellula emptae nutricis, sed gremio ac sinu matris educabatur, cuius praecipua laus erat tueri domum et inservire liberis. Eligebatur autem maior aliqua natu propinqua, cuius probatis spectatisque moribus omnis eiusdem familiae suboles committeretur, coram qua neque dicere fas erat quod turpe dictu, neque facere quod inhonestum factu videretur. Ac non studia modo curasque sed remissiones etiam lususque puerorum sanctitate quadam ac verecundia temperabat. Sic Corneliam Gracchorum, sic Aureliam Caesaris, sic Atiam Augusti [matrem] praefuisse educationibus ac produxisse principes liberos accepimus. (Tac. *Dial.* 28)

In the good old days, every man's son, born in wedlock, was brought up not in the chamber of some hireling nurse, but in his mother's lap, and at her knee. And that mother could have no

³ See chapters 1 and 3.

⁴ Dixon 1988 p. 120.

⁵ E.g. Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 3.12; Cic. *Brutus* 210; Sen. *Ep. Mor.* 99.14; Aul. Gell. 12.1.17; Tac. *Dial.* 29.1. See Dixon 1988 pp. 120-129.

⁶ It is important to note that at the stage of adolescence the education of upper class girls and boys differed. At the age when girls got married, boys continued their intellectual development. See Dixon 1988 p. 170.

⁷ Quint. 1.1.6: *In parentibus vero quam plurimum esse eruditionis optaverim, nec de patribus tantum loquor* ('As regards parents, I should like to see them as highly educated as possible, and I do not speak only of fathers'). Cf. Cic. *Brut.* 210. See Hemelrijk 1999, p. 69, on the involvement of mothers and fathers alike in their children's education.

⁸ On this passage, see also chapter 1.

higher praise than that she managed the house and gave herself to her children. Again, some elderly relative would be selected in order that to her as a person who had been tried and never found wanting, might be entrusted the care of all the youthful scions of the same house; in her presence no base word could be uttered without grave offence, and no wrong deed done. With scrupulous piety and modesty she regulated not only the boy's studies and occupations, but even his recreations and games. Thus it was, as tradition says, that the mothers of the Gracchi, of Caesar, of Augustus, Cornelia, Aurelia, Atia, directed their children's education and reared the greatest of sons.

Tacitus stages Cornelia, Aurelia and Atia as exemplary mothers. The figure of Cornelia in particular became a paragon of educated motherhood.⁹ The sources state that she was eloquent in both Greek and Latin, chose Greek tutors for her sons and supervised their education in Greek literature.¹⁰

The involvement of a mother in her children's life did not end with their education. Several mothers are said to have taken an active part in the search for a husband or a wife for their sons and daughters. The most famous example probably is the engagement of Tullia to Dolabella, which was arranged by Tullia and her mother Terentia while Cicero was abroad.¹¹ Prosperous women could also financially support their children. They could contribute to the dowry of their daughters or to the political career of their sons.¹² Furthermore, daughters could turn to their mothers for advice on married life, childbirth or motherhood, whilst sons could discuss their career with them.¹³ It was expected that mothers supported their children at different stages of the latter's life. Likewise, children were supposed to pay regular visits to their mother.¹⁴ Neglecting this could be interpreted as a sign of estrangement between a mother and her children, which would make both parties vulnerable for social criticism. The demonstration of *pietas* toward parents was a crucial aspect of a person's reputation.¹⁵

Up to a certain point, a mother was expected to both aid and dictate her children. When her children reached adulthood, however, she had to draw a sharp distinction between support and interference, especially in the case of adult sons. Obviously, there were no formally established rules and sometimes a mother could exercise considerable control over

⁹ Hemelrijk, 1999, pp 64-71. See most recently, Dixon, 2007.

¹⁰ Cic. *Brut.* 100; Cic. *Brut.* 104; Cic. *Brut.* 211; Plut. *G. Gracch.* 19; Quint. 1.1.6.

¹¹ Cic. *Att.* 5.4.1; Cic. *Att.* 5.13.3; Cic. *Att.* 5.14.3; Cic. *Fam.* 3.12.2, 8.6.2. For other examples see Plut. *Pomp.* 9; Cic. *Clu.* 12-14; Statius 3.5. See most recently, Treggiari, 2007, pp. 83-99.

¹² E.g. Pol. 31.27; Cic. *Att.* 11.2.2; Cic. *Fam.* 14.6.

¹³ See, for instance, Tac. *Ann.* 4.60; Sen. *ad Marc.* 24.3.

¹⁴ Dixon, 1988, pp 192-193; 221-223. Sen. *ad Marc.* 3.4, 5.4; Sen. *ad Helv.* 15.1.

¹⁵ Dixon, 1988, pp 169-170.

her son's activities. According to social expectations, however, a son should always have the last say.¹⁶ The disturbed balance between support and interference plays an important role in the representation of the relationship between Livia and Tiberius, and Agrippina and Nero, as will become clear below.

Before turning to these examples, however, a word should be said about the negative counterpart of the Roman mother: the wicked stepmother. The stereotype of the *saeva noverca* frequently appears in Latin literature and Roman declamation.¹⁷ The belief was commonly held that malevolence on the part of the stepmother was a logical consequence of the steprelationship.¹⁸ It was thought that remarriage posed a threat to the children of the first marriage.¹⁹ Yet, remarriage after the death of a first wife or a divorce was common among upper-classes. Since custody of the children seems to have been normally with the father, new wives were often charged with the upbringing of stepchildren. Jealousy on the part of the stepmother because another woman's son would become her husband's heir is often given as the reason behind stepmotherly hatred.²⁰ The characterization of Livia and Agrippina Minor as wicked stepmothers are well-known examples. Obviously, there were also good stepmothers, who behaved kindly toward their stepchildren. They were, however, considered a rarity and deserved special praise for behaving contrary to expectation.²¹ Plutarch's characterization of Octavia, discussed below, is an illustration of this.

4.1.2 The literary portrayal of Julio-Claudian mothers

The representation of several Julio-Claudian women shows that the standards for ideal maternal behaviour played a significant role in their literary portrayals. Ideal mothers were those who protected and supported their children, whilst never losing sight of what was socially accepted. We can refer to Scribonia, mother of Julia Maior, and Domitia, mother of Messalina, for extreme manifestations of this view. The literary sources have little to say about these women and almost reduce their historical significance to their role as mothers. In

¹⁶ Dixon 1988 pp. 179–187.

¹⁷ For a general study on the stereotype of the *saeva noverca* and its origins, see Watson 1995.

¹⁸ An illustration of this view can be found in Sen. *Contr.* 4.6. According to the tale a father sent his two sons, by two different wives, to be raised in the country. A couple of years later the boys returned to their father's home. Since they were close in age and took after their father, it was impossible to distinguish them by their appearance. The second wife begged her husband to tell her which boy was hers. The father, however, refused, claiming that she would start to see the other boy through stepmotherly eyes.

¹⁹ See, for instance, Ov. *Ep.* 12, 187–188.

²⁰ Watson 1995 pp. 1–19.

²¹ Ov. *Ep.* 4, 140; Sen. *Hel.* 2.4.

40 B.C., Scribonia married Octavian to whom she stayed married for one year. According to the sources, Octavian divorced Scribonia on the same day that she gave birth to their daughter Julia.²² Scribonia's reaction to her daughter's misfortune more than anything else made her memorable, as the following citation from Bengtson shows: "Wir wissen zu wenig von ihrer Persönlichkeit, die Quellen sind zugunsten des jungen Caesar gefärbt, so daß man über den wahren Charakter Scribonias nichts aussagen kann. Zweifellos ist sie eine gute Mutter gewesen, sie hat auch zu Julia gehalten, als sich diese im Unglück befand."²³ In 2 B.C., Augustus exiled his daughter to the island of Pandateria. Both Velleius Paterculus and Dio state that Scribonia voluntarily accompanied her youngest daughter, and it seems that she stayed with her until Julia's death in A.D. 14.²⁴ Likewise, Domitia was remembered for her presence at Messalina's side during the latter's fall. Tacitus describes how one of the imperial freedmen hurried to the gardens of Lucullus, where Messalina had retreated after her failed attempt to reconcile with Claudius:²⁵

Isque raptim in hortos praegressus repperit fusam humi, adsidente matre Lepida, quae florenti filiae haud concors supremis eius necessitatibus ad miserationem evicta erat suadebatque, ne percussorem opperiretur: transisse vitam neque aliud quam morti decus quarendum. (Tac. Ann. 11.37)

And, hurriedly going ahead into the gardens, he discovered her stretched on the ground, her mother, Lepida, sitting alongside – who, without affection for her daughter when she flourished, had been won over to pity by her final crisis and was urging her not to wait for her assailant: her life had passed, she said, and there was nothing to be sought except glory in her death.

Domitia Lepida not only deserved praise because she stood by her daughter, but in Tacitus' reconstruction of the event she also excelled her daughter in moral judgement.²⁶ Domitia symbolizes the courage that Messalina lacked.

Tacitus' representation of Agrippina Maior is also characterized by references to her role as mother. Several scholars consider his portrayal of Agrippina Maior, in much the same

²² On the marriage between Octavian and Scribonia: App. *B.C.* 5 53, Dio 48 16 3; Dio 48.34 3, Suet. *Aug.* 69, *Aur. Vict.* 1.23

²³ Bengtson, 1981, pp. 117-118.

²⁴ Vell. 2 100 5; Dio 55 10 14 Cf. Leon, 1951, pp. 168-175; Swan, 2004, pp. 108-109

²⁵ On Messalina's fall, see also chapters 2 and 3.

²⁶ Cf. Mastellone, 2004, p. 541

way as that of Germanicus, enigmatic.²⁷ The question often arises whether Tacitus created a positive or a negative image of her. He portrays her as a headstrong and tempered woman, though at the same time she is presented as a loyal wife and above all a caring mother. On several occasions, Tacitus praises Agrippina for her *fecunditas*, dramatizing his account by stating that that very *fecunditas* together with the love for her children contributed to her misfortune.²⁸ Tacitus states that Agrippina's exemplary behaviour provided the strongest protection for her children against the scheming of Sejanus and his agents:

Neque spargi venenum in tres poterat, egregia custodum fide et pudicitia Agrippinae impenetrabili. (Tac. Ann. 4.12)

Poison could not be dispensed against the three of them, given the exceptional loyalty of their guards and Agrippina's unbreachable morality

Tacitus' description of Agrippina Maior's role as a mother focuses on how she supported her children. His accounts on Livia and Agrippina Minor are constructed differently and aim at illustrating the disrupted relationship between both mothers and their sons. The problematic relationship between Livia and Tiberius, and between Agrippina Minor and Nero appears in other sources as well. Of both women it is said that they sacrificed everything to designate their sons as heirs to the throne.²⁹ At the same time, being indebted to their mother put a strain on Tiberius as well as Nero.³⁰ Often, the literary sources emphasize how the balance between the mothers' support and interference was disrupted. Suetonius, for instance, states:

Matrem Liviam gravatus velut partes sibi aequas potentiae vindicantem, et congressum eius assiduum vitavit et longiores secretioresque sermones, ne consilium, quibus tamen interdum et egere et uti solebat, regi videretur. (Suet. Tib. 50.2)

Vexed at his mother Livia, alleging that she claimed an equal share in the rule, he shunned frequent meetings with her and long and confidential conversations, to avoid the appearance of being guided by her advice; tough in point of fact he was wont every now and then to need and to follow it.

²⁷ On Agrippina Maior in Tacitus' *Annals*, see McDougall, 1981, pp 104-108; Shotter, 2000, pp 341-357; Burns, 2007, pp 41-57.

²⁸ Tac. Ann. 1 41, Tac Ann. 2.43; Tac Ann. 2 75. See also Foubert 2009.

²⁹ E.g. Tac. Ann. 1 3 3-4, Tac Ann. 1 5, Tac Ann. 12 3 2, Tac Ann. 12 25 1, Dio 55 10a 10, Dio 56.30.1-2.

³⁰ E.g. Tac Ann. 4 57 3, Tac Ann. 5 3 1, Tac Ann. 13 13 5-6, Dio 57 3 3

Suetonius states that outer appearance was important to Tiberius: he wanted to pretend that his mother's role did not exceed the limits of support.³¹ The ancient authors connect the disrupted relationship between both mothers and their respective sons with the lack of *pietas* on the part of Tiberius as well as Nero. In Tiberius' case, his *impietas* became most clear through his behaviour during Livia's funeral. Nero's lack of reverence towards his mother was of course more extreme, for he commanded her murder and refused to give her an appropriate burial.³²

As stated above, the *exemplum* of the caring mother was associated with its negative counterpart of the *saeva noverca*. In the ancient literature on the Julio-Claudian period, three imperial women are characterized, both positively and negatively, by references to their stepmotherly behaviour: Octavia, Livia and Agrippina Minor. I have touched upon the representation of Octavia in Plutarch's *Life of Antony* in a previous chapter.³³ Octavia had one son and four daughters of her own, of whom she took care after her divorce from Mark Antony.³⁴ After his death, she also looked after at least two of his other children, namely his son by Fulvia, Iullus Antonius, and his daughter by Cleopatra, Cleopatra Selene.³⁵ Plutarch describes how Octavia loyally undertook her role as a wife and a mother even after Antony had refused to meet her in Athens.³⁶ Other passages in which Plutarch refers to Octavia's role as mother and stepmother agree with the Roman standards for exemplary behaviour.³⁷ In Plutarch's work the *persona* of Octavia served as a foil to that of Cleopatra. For maximum impact, she had to be presented as the opposite and a worthy rival of the Egyptian queen.³⁸ This does not preclude the possibility that Octavia in fact was a kind stepmother, but by emphasizing her qualities as *matrona* and the fact that she did not act in accordance with the behaviour expected of a stepmother Plutarch turned her into an example of female rectitude.

A second example of a woman of the Julio-Claudian dynasty who is presented as a stepmother is Livia. Scholarly research has reached a consensus that the portrayal of Livia as a wicked stepmother is to a large extent a literary creation. Her image as a treacherous and

³¹ Other sources that emphasize the disrupted balance between interference and support include Tac. *Ann.* 5.1 1-4; Tac. *Ann.* 5.2 1-2; Suet. *Tib.* 51 1-2; Suet. *Nero* 34.1; Dio 56.17.1; Dio 57.12.1-6; Dio 61.3.2.

³² See below.

³³ See chapter 2.

³⁴ Plut. *Ant.* 54.3

³⁵ The fate of some of Antony's other children remains uncertain. His two sons by Cleopatra, Alexander Helios and Ptolemy, were spared at least until after Octavian's triumph. His eldest son by Fulvia, Antonius Antyllus, was killed by Octavian. For an overview and discussion, see Watson, 1995, pp. 197-204

³⁶ Plut. *Ant.* 54. The passage is cited in chapter 2.

³⁷ Plut. *Ant.* 35.2, 35.8, 87.2

³⁸ Pelling, 1988, p. 202; Watson, 1995, p. 200

poisoning stepmother, as we know it, came down to us via the *Annals* of Tacitus.³⁹ The author presents Livia as a mother who promoted the interests of her son by destroying all his rivals.⁴⁰ Tacitus' account, however, is mainly based on gossip, rumours and innuendo.⁴¹ Noy suggests that, since mothers and stepmothers were closely associated, her reputation as a caring mother and model wife may have contributed to her bad reputation as a stepmother.⁴²

Whereas scholars doubt Livia's portrayal as a wicked stepmother, more credence is generally attached to Tacitus' portrayal of Agrippina Minor as *saeva noverca*. Her characterization runs to a great extent parallel with that of Livia, which may suggest that this was Tacitus' intention. Agrippina too tries to promote the interests of her son Nero, at the expense of Britannicus.⁴³ Occasionally, however, Tacitus' anecdotes seem contradictory. It appears that there was a tradition, either contemporary or later, according to which Agrippina's actual behaviour deviated from her alleged stepmotherly behaviour.⁴⁴ Tacitus writes, for instance:

Illa spe ultionis oblata parat accusatores ex clientibus suis Iturium et Calvisium, non vetera et saepius iam audita deferens, quod Britannici mortem lugeret aut Octaviae iniurias evulgaret, (...) (Tac. Ann. 13.19)

Now that the prospect of vengeance was offered, Silana procured Iturius and Calvisius, two of her own clients, as accusers, hers being not the old and now hackneyed denouncement that Agrippina was grieving for the death of Britannicus or publicizing the wrongs to Octavia, (...)

Tacitus turns this positive tradition to his own advantage by exposing Agrippina's 'true' behaviour. The most explicit examples refer to Agrippina's attitude toward Britannicus at the time of Nero's adoption as well as after Claudius' death:

Desolatus paulatim etiam servilibus ministeriis perintempestiva novercae officia in ludibrium vertebat, intellegens falsi. (Tac. Ann. 12.26)

³⁹ Most scholars believe that Tacitus leant on a hostile tradition which started early. see Watson, 1995, p. 177, n. 6, for a discussion and further references. Barrett, 2001, pp. 174-175, suggests a letter possibly from Agrippa Postumus as a historical source for Livia's characterization as *saeva noverca*.

⁴⁰ Her alleged victims, sprung from stepmotherly hatred, include Gaius and Lucius Caesar, Agrippa Postumus, Marcellus, Germanicus and Augustus himself. Cf. Watson, 1995, pp. 176-192.

⁴¹ Livia is presented as a *saeva noverca* in Tac. Ann. 1.3-5, Tac. Ann. 1.7, Tac. Ann. 1.10, Tac. Ann. 1.33, Tac. Ann. 2.43, Tac. Ann. 4.12, Tac. Ann. 5.1. Cf. Dio 53.33.4; Dio 55.10a.10; Dio 56.30.1, Ps. Vict. Ept. 1.27. On Tacitus' technique in this particular case, see Watson, 1995, pp. 178-192.

⁴² Noy, 1991, p. 354. Cf. Watson, 1995, p. 192, n. 54-55.

⁴³ Agrippina is presented as a *saeva noverca* in Tac. Ann. 12.2, 12.25-26, 12.41-42, 12.65, 12.68.

⁴⁴ See Tac. Ann. 13.19.

Gradually forsaken even by his slaves and their services, he turned his stepmother's quite unseasonable dutifulness into mockery, understanding its falsity.

Iam primum Agrippina, velut dolore victa et solacia conquirens, tenere amplexu Britannicum, veram paterni oris effigiem appellare ac variis artibus demorari, ne cubiculo egrederetur. Antoniam quoque et Octaviam sorores eius attinuit. (Tac. Ann. 12.68)

First of all Agrippina, as if overcome by pain and searching for comfort, held Britannicus in an embrace, called his face the true likeness of his father's, and by various means, delayed his emerging from the bedroom. She detained Antonia and Octavia too, his sisters.

In both passages there is a hint of genuine warm feelings on the part of Agrippina, explained by Tacitus as hypocrisy and fake. Allusions to this positive tradition can also be found in Tacitus' version of Agrippina's speech, shortly before Britannicus' death, in which she expresses gratitude because her stepson was still alive and able to play a dynastic role.⁴⁵ Furthermore, after Britannicus' death, Agrippina is said to have been devoted to her stepdaughter Octavia.⁴⁶

4.2. Advertising mothers in imperial propaganda

The continuity of the imperial reign depended on the birth of male heirs. Human fertility, therefore, constituted one of the main concerns of the imperial family. Imperial women in general and the emperor's wife in particular formed a focus of attention as potential bearers of future emperors. In the following, I will first examine how the issue of human fertility shaped the representation of the imperial court in the literary sources. The focus will lie on how the attitude of emperors towards the procreative capacities of the women in their family was perceived by ancient authors. Secondly, this chapter will pay attention to the advertisement of mothers and motherhood in means of imperial propaganda. Modern scholarship has often assumed that the bestowal of the title *Augusta* to an imperial woman was meant to denote that woman as the mother of the designated successor. However, when reconsidering the sources,

⁴⁵ Tac. Ann. 13.14-15.

⁴⁶ Tac Ann 13 18-19. Note that Octavia also evoked the name of Agrippina when she was surrounded by soldiers at the end of her life (Tac Ann 14 64).

it will show that more nuance is necessary. Likewise, the appearance of the emperor's mother in imperial coinage has often been interpreted as the emperor's way to single out his mother and honour her for her maternal role. Here too, one needs to be more careful, as will become clear.

4.2.1 *Dynastic fertility*

Before the Julio-Claudian family was seen as a *Domus Augusta*, the importance of lineage and the role of mothers in continuing the *gens* was expressed by Julius Caesar.⁴⁷ In 69 B.C., he delivered a eulogy of his aunt Julia in which he reconstructed her lineage back to the goddess Venus.⁴⁸ Caesar referred frequently to his divine ancestor which culminated in the dedication of a temple to Venus Genetrix in the Forum of Caesar.⁴⁹ The goddess was celebrated both as mother to the Romans, through her son Aeneas, and as mother to the Julian *gens*.⁵⁰ Though Venus Genetrix was closely associated with the *Julii* under Caesar, it was Augustus who firmly linked her with the continuance of his family. By emphasizing her protective and fertile nature, she became the patroness of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and of the imperial women in particular. This translated into a new visual language for the representation of Julio-Claudian women. In their statues, for instance, they appeared in the guise of Venus Genetrix, accompanied by a small Eros, revealing a bare shoulder or with other divine attributes that referred to the goddess.⁵¹

Augustus' legislative policy of 18/17 B.C. emphasized the importance of mothers for the well-being of the Roman state in general and the imperial family in particular. He issued a series of Julian laws in an attempt to assert social order. Augustus' new laws regulated some aspects of life which previously belonged to the realm of the *pater familias*. In view of the purpose of this chapter, one specific aspect of legislation merits special attention, namely the *Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus*, passed in 18 B.C. This particular *lex* created a system of legal rewards for married parents and penalties for the unwed and childless.⁵² The law tried to strengthen class lines by prohibiting members of the senatorial rank to marry beneath their class. Free-born citizens in general were forbidden to marry 'infamous' people such as pimps,

⁴⁷ On the creation of the first imperial dynasty see Corbier 1991 pp. 127-144; Corbier 1995 pp. 178-193; Severy 2003 pp. 62-78. On the view of the *Domus Augusta* as an institution see chapter 2.

⁴⁸ Suet. *Jul.* 6.

⁴⁹ App. *B.C.* 2.102; Dio 43.22.1-2; *LTUR* s.v. *forum Iulium*.

⁵⁰ Schilling 1954 p. 316. In general see Ulrich 1984.

⁵¹ For examples of the association with Venus/Aphrodite see chapter 5.

⁵² Treggiari 1991 pp. 60-80; Severy 2003 pp. 50-56 with further references.

prostitutes, actresses and women convicted of adultery. In other words, Roman citizens should safeguard their moral excellence. Women were obliged to remarry within a year after a former husband's death or within six months after a divorce. Not only marriage, but also the number of children in a household became part of one's legal status. Magistrates with many children were rewarded or took precedence over those with less or no children at all. A free woman who had three children or a freed woman who had four children was exempted for lifelong guardianship. Motherhood was rewarded and became a public concern.

References to motherhood and fertility also became part of Augustus' new visual language. Since there are numerous examples of this, it suffices here to name the most well-known, namely the reliefs of the Ara Pacis. The presence of women and children on these reliefs was remarkable and contrary to republican practice (Fig. 9).⁵³ This innovative practice reinforced Augustus' message of family values, emphasized the maternal qualities of the imperial women and underlined the fertile character of the Julio-Claudian family.⁵⁴ The message of these family reliefs was enhanced by the Ara Pacis' so-called Tellus relief (Fig. 10). A female deity holds in her arms two babies who reach for her breast, while her lap is filled with fruit and her hair adorned with a wreath of grain and poppies. Beneath her seat are presented an ox at rest and a grazing sheep, while she is flanked by twin embodiments of the winds on land and sea. The identification of the deity has been debated, since various goddesses are qualified. An association with Venus, on account of the naked shoulder, is likely, as is an association with Ceres on account of the fruit and stalks of grain. The earth goddess Tellus has been proposed because of the landscape and the general bucolic scenery. It is possible that the relief was intended to invoke different associations at the same time, although it is obvious that the general emphasis lay on growth and fertility.⁵⁵

Since the emperor was presented as the protector of Roman social and family life, he had a key exemplary role. All emperors ostentatiously encouraged childbearing within their family and made every stroke of fortune public. Imperial men did not hesitate to display the infants of their family or to emphasize the maternal qualities of their female relatives. Barrenness, on the other hand, became a valid reason for divorce or to repudiate a wife. This could lead to extreme measures for which emperors could become subject of criticism by

⁵³ An article by Diana Kleiner (1978, pp. 753-785) on these family reliefs argues that the unusual presence of women and children along with male members of the court and the senate is meant to signal ideal sexual and familial responsibility. See also Kampen, 1991, pp. 226-227, Uzzl, 2005

⁵⁴ Note also that the *Ara Pacis* was dedicated on 30 January 9 B.C., which was also the birthday of Livia (*Ov. Fasti* 1.711), thus highlighting the prominent position of the *princeps'* wife. See also McHugh, 2004, p. 124.

⁵⁵ Gallinsky, 1992, pp. 457-475. On the so-called Tellus relief, see Zanker, 1987, pp. 177-184; Spaeth, 1994, pp. 65-100

literary authors Nero, for instance, had ejected his wife Octavia on the pretext of sterility before marrying Poppaea Sabina⁵⁶ Later on, however, the emperor announced by edict that Octavia had seduced the prefect Anicetus after which she had procured abortion This act elicited the following dry remark from Tacitus

et incusatae paulo ante sterilitatis oblitus, (Tac Ann 14 63)

quite forgetting his accusation of sterility a while before,

Caligula was also mocked because of his attitude towards his wives Suetonius states that it was not easy to decide whether the emperor acted more basely (*turpius*) in contracting his marriages, in annulling them, or as a husband⁵⁷ Caligula was successively married to four women Junia Claudilla, a woman called either Cornelia Orestina or Livia Orestilla, Lollia Paulina and Milonia Caesonia His attitude toward all four wives partly reveals his concern about their fertility and their capacity of providing him with an heir His first wife died while giving birth to Caligula's first, yet stillborn, child⁵⁸ He divorced his second wife because she allegedly maintained a relationship with her former husband⁵⁹ His third wife Lollia Paulina was repudiated because she was barren⁶⁰ And, finally, according to Suetonius, Caligula did not grant Caesonia the *nomen* of wife until she had born him a daughter⁶¹ The fact that he became a father after only one month of marriage made Dio ridicule the situation

Καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ὕστερον ἐγένετο τότε δὲ ἐκβαλὼν τὴν Παυλίαν, προφασί μὲν ὥς μὴ τίκτουσαν, τὸ δ' ἀληθές ὅτι διακορῆς αὐτῆς ἐγεγόνει, Μιλωνίαν Καίσιωνίαν ἐγημεν, ἣν πρότερον μὲν ἐμοίχευε, τότε δὲ καὶ γαμετὴν ποιήσασθαι ἠθέλησεν, ἐπειδὴ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐσχευ, ἢ αὐτῷ παιδίον πριακονθημερον τέκη (Dio 59 23 7)

Gaius now divorced Paulina, on the pretext that she was barren, but really because he got tired of her, and married Milonia Caesonia This woman had formerly been his mistress, but now, since she was pregnant, he desired to make her his wife, so that she should bear him a one-month's child

⁵⁶ Tac Ann 14 60

⁵⁷ Suet Cal 25

⁵⁸ Suet Cal 12 1-2 Tac Ann 6 45 3

⁵⁹ Dio 59 8 7 Suet Cal 25

⁶⁰ Dio 59 23 7 Cf Tac Ann 12 2 2

⁶¹ Suet Cal 25

Ἐπειδὴ τε ἡ Καισωνία θυγατρὶν μετὰ τριακοντα ἡμέρας τῶν γάμων ἔτεκε, τοῦτό τε αὐτὸ δαιμονίως προσποιεῖτο, σεμνυνομένος ὅτι ἐν τοσαύταις ἡμέραις καὶ ἀνὴρ καὶ πατὴρ ἐγεγόνει (Dio 59 28 7)

When Caesonia bore a daughter only a month after her marriage, he pretended that this had come about through supernatural means, and gave himself airs over the fact that in so few days after becoming a husband he was now a father

Ironically, in spite of his exemplary function, Augustus himself turned out to be not very successful in the reproductive area. His marriage to Scribonia only provided him with a daughter, while his marriage to Livia did not result in any children. According to the sources, Livia did carry Augustus' child at least once, but the pregnancy ended in a miscarriage.⁶² Nevertheless, the *princeps* found a way to compensate his own lack of procreative potency. In a previous chapter, I treated the subject of the crowded house of Augustus on the Palatine.⁶³ There are reasons to assume that Octavia, Livia and Antonia Minor gathered the infants of their family in the house of Augustus, thus presenting themselves as exemplary mothers or *surrogate* mothers. Augustus himself was fond of the children of his daughter Julia, whose oldest sons he adopted, and allowed them on several occasions to accompany him in public.⁶⁴ His public pride, however, extended beyond his own household. When in A.D. 9 the equestrians protested against the marriage laws during a public spectacle, Augustus answered with a gesture of familial display:

accitos Germanici liberos receptosque partim ad se partim in patris gremium ostentavit manu vultuque significans ne gravarentur imitari iuvenis exemplum (Suet. Aug. 34)

, he sent for the children of Germanicus and exhibited them, some in his own lap and some in their father's, intimating with gestures and expression that they should not refuse to follow that young man's example

The literary sources suggest that this display of dynastic fertility continued after Augustus. Germanicus introduced an innovation by letting both his sons and daughters ride with him in his carriage during his triumph in A.D. 17.⁶⁵ After his death, he was awarded an arch on the

⁶² Suet. Aug. 63

⁶³ See chapter 2

⁶⁴ Suet. Aug. 45, Suet. Cal. 64

⁶⁵ Tac. Ann. 2.41. Cf. Tac. Ann. 1.55, 2.5, 2.26, Suet. Cal. 1.1, Vell. Pat. 2.129.2. See Flory, 1998b, pp. 491-492

Circus Flaminius which had on top statues of all his children among other relatives.⁶⁶ In A.D. 19, Germanicus' sister Livilla gave birth to twin sons, named Tiberius and Germanicus. The emperor Tiberius allegedly boasted to the senate that 'never before twins had been born from the same eminence'.⁶⁷ A couple of years later, he honoured his grandsons in a series of bronze coins featuring a winged caduceus flanked by two *cornucopiae* with busts of the twins (Fig. 11).⁶⁸ When Britannicus, the heir of Claudius was born, the emperor followed the example of Augustus. Suetonius writes:

Natum sibi parvulum etiam tum, et militi pro contione manibus suis gestans et plebi per spectacula gremio aut ante se retinens assidue commendabat faustisque omnibus cum adclamantium turba prosequabantur. (Suet. Claud. 27)

When he was still very small, Claudius would often take him in his arms and commend him to the assembled soldiers, and to the people at the games, holding him in his lap or in his outstretched hands, and he would wish him happy auspices, joined by the applauding throng.

To conclude, another example of the display of children to emphasize the imperial fertility can be found in the glass *phalerae*, found mainly near the Rhine. These small circular plates were used as military decorations to reward soldiers' bravery and acts of courage.⁶⁹ Boschung has drawn attention to the use of these medaillons as a means to strengthen the ties between the emperor and his army.⁷⁰ Imperial fertility, dynastic continuity and stability figured prominently as decorative themes on these glass images. *Phalerae* featuring an imperial prince or an emperor with his sons were distributed in the army.⁷¹ During the reign of Caligula, a portrait of his mother Agrippina Maior was used besides portraits of the emperor himself and of his father Germanicus.⁷² A scabbard ornament depicting Gaius and Lucius Caesar in military garment with their mother Julia illustrates the power of this sort of imagery among soldiers.⁷³

⁶⁶ Severy, 2000, pp. 323-324 See chapter 2 for further references

⁶⁷ Tac. Ann. 2.84

⁶⁸ RIC I², Tiberius, no. 42

⁶⁹ On these *phalerae*, see also chapter 5. I will turn to this subject in a forthcoming article, titled "Crossing the female borders: The limits of the *dux femina* model in the early principate", which I presented in abbreviated form at the conference *Impact of Empire 9* (Durham, 16-19 April 2009)

⁷⁰ Boschung, 1987, pp. 193-258

⁷¹ The identification of some of the portraits are uncertain. Boschung names Tiberius with his sons Drusus and Germanicus on one medaillon type, and Claudius with his three children on another. Boschung, 1987, pp. 234, 248.

⁷² Boschung, 1987, pp. 229, 243-247 Boschung believes that these should be considered as an intentional series

⁷³ Zanker, 1987, pp. 162-163, 220-222

Augustus specified in his will that his wife Livia was to be adopted into the Julian *gens*. She was also to assume the *cognomen Augusta*.⁷⁴ These provisions created a precedent and influenced the status of future imperial women. The intended meaning of *Augusta* has been a much debated subject. Since being an *Augusta* added greatly to the status of imperial women, it is worthwhile to elaborate on the range of implications that stem from this conferral. Some scholars believe that there was a close association between the title *Augusta* and motherhood, while others connect it with being the emperor's wife.⁷⁵ The most in-depth study on the meaning of the title *Augusta* is offered by Flory. She argues that the conferral of the *cognomen Augusta* reveals a pattern that illuminates how the imperial court qualified the women who were *Augusta*.⁷⁶ She concludes that the *cognomen* was originally intended for the mothers (or surrogate mothers) of emperors once their sons had succeeded to the throne. Later, this limitation was gradually loosened, so that the name could also be conferred to the wife of an emperor. Basically, *Augustae* were imperial women who transmitted dynastic power.

During the Julio-Claudian period, the title was awarded to Livia, Antonia Minor, Agrippina Minor, Poppaea and her daughter Claudia.⁷⁷ The weakness of Flory's hypothesis lies in the deviations of the pattern. Indeed, Livia received the *cognomen* at the same time Tiberius became emperor, but this is the only straightforward case that supports Flory's theory. It remains unclear when the title was officially bestowed on Antonia Minor. Within the first month of his rule, Caligula gave his grandmother the *cognomen Augusta*, which, according to an emended passage from Suetonius' *Life of Claudius*, she refused.⁷⁸ The first official recognition of Antonia as *Augusta* appears on a series of coins minted in the first year of Claudius' reign, after he bestowed the title on her by senatorial decree.⁷⁹ Whether Claudius awarded the *cognomen* to her for the very first time or merely reconfirmed one of the previous

⁷⁴ Vell. 2.75.3, Tac. *Ann.* 1.8.1, Suet. *Aug.* 101.2, Dio 56.46.1. On the consequences of Livia's adoption, see Barrett, 2002, pp. 148-150.

⁷⁵ See, among others, Ritter, 1972; Temporini, 1978; Flory, 1998a; Saunders, 1994; Barrett, 2002, pp. 322-323, 324-325.

⁷⁶ Flory, 1998a, p. 113.

⁷⁷ In the past, some scholars have claimed that Drusilla and Messalina were *Augustae* as well. This hypothesis, however, does not find support in the sources. Note that the Greek *Sebaste* was also used for women who were not officially recognised as *Augusta* in Rome. See Temporini, 1978, pp. 27-31; Saunders, 1994, pp. 356-363.

⁷⁸ Suet. *Cal.* 15; Suet. *Claud.* 11, Dio 59.3.4. The passage in Suetonius' *Life of Claudius* states that Claudius had the *cognomen Augusta* bestowed by senatorial decree on Antonia "since it had been refused by his grandmother" (*ab avia recusatum*). Because Antonia was Claudius' mother and not his grandmother, Lipsius emended the passage to read "refused while she was living" (*ab viva recusatum*). See also Flory, 1998a, p. 123.

⁷⁹ *RIC* 1², Claudius, nos. 65-68, 92. Suet. *Claud.* 11.

acts of his predecessor is unclear⁸⁰ Flory believes that Caligula was the original initiator, though she considers it likely that he conferred the title only posthumously⁸¹ If that is true, one could wonder why his actual mother, Agrippina Maior, was not a candidate According to Flory's reasoning, by analogy with Antonia Minor, it did not pose a problem that she was deceased However, Antonia was chosen as a surrogate mother because "Agrippina died in disgrace and in circumstances that Caligula, for all his *pietas*, may have preferred to leave unnoticed"⁸² When taking into account all Caligula's actions at the beginning of his reign to rehabilitate his mother, this argument does not seem convincing It clearly appears that the emperor did not try to obscure his mother's fate, but, on the contrary, drew attention to what had happened to her, thus trying to vindicate her All in all, Livia's elevation to *Augusta* and Claudius' conferral or reconfirmation of Antonia's title are the only examples that link the bestowal of the *cognomen* with being a mother of the new emperor

The first *Augusta* after Antonia was Agrippina Minor She received the *cognomen* during her marriage with Claudius and became the first living wife of a ruling emperor to be honoured this way Based on a passage from Tacitus' *Annals*, Flory links the bestowal of the title with the adoption of Nero⁸³ Indeed, Tacitus places both among the events occurring during the year A D 50 His vocabulary, however, does not indicate them univocally as cause and effect In Poppaea Sabina's case, an association with motherhood does seem clear

Natam sibi ex Poppaea filiam Nero ultra mortale gaudium accepit appellavitque Augustam dato et Poppaeae eodem cognomento (Tac *Ann* 15 23)

Nero greeted a daughter presented to him by Poppaea with more than human joy named the child *Augusta* and bestowed the same title on Poppaea

In the same passage, Tacitus further states that the senate undertook several actions to celebrate the birth of Claudia as well as Poppaea's fecundity, such as the decree of a temple of Fertility Poppaea's newborn daughter was also named *Augusta* According to Flory, it was Nero's intention to denote her as a future bearer of emperors Additionally, the case of Messalina lends weight to the association between motherhood and becoming an *Augusta* Within the first months of Claudius' rule, Messalina gave birth to Britannicus According to

⁸⁰ Barrett 2002 pp 324 325

⁸¹ Flory 1998a p 123 Antonia died six months after Caligula's accession

⁸² Flory 1998a p 123

⁸³ Tac *Ann* 12 26 f Flory 1998a p 125

Dio, the senate offered to give the empress the *cognomen Augusta* and to name the child *Augustus*, which Claudius refused⁸⁴ It seems that becoming a mother to a male heir was perceived as constituting sufficient reason to consider the bestowal of *Augusta*

Flory's hypothesis that *Augusta* was bestowed on the emperor's mother (or surrogate mother) once he succeeded the throne does not apply in all cases Yet, it can be argued that female fertility was taken into account as one of the criteria to confer the title The principate was a period of trial and error in many aspects, including the conferral of the *cognomen Augusta* It is, therefore, not possible or even desirable to search for a universally valid application scheme The concept of *Augusta* probably had a fluctuating meaning of which motherhood was just one aspect

4.2.3 Motherhood in imperial coinage

The attention paid to mothers in imperial coinage remained rather limited during the Julio-Claudian period Women in general rarely appeared on imperial coins⁸⁵ When they did, it was after their death⁸⁶ Some scholars interpret a series of coins minted during the reign of Tiberius as an official means to commemorate the recovery of his mother Livia in A.D. 22-23 One series of *sesterti* and three series of *dupondi* were minted which might be related to Tiberius' mother The obverse of the type of *sesterti* features a *carpentum*, drawn by mules, with a legend containing Livia's name (Fig. 12)⁸⁷ This series may have alluded to the *supplicatio* which the senate decreed in A.D. 22 in honour of Livia's recovery after a serious illness⁸⁸ One series of *dupondi* might refer to Livia's recovery as well A female portrait accompanied by the legend *Salus Augusta* is often identified as Livia (Fig. 13)⁸⁹ Caution, however, is necessary, for the legend does not explicitly name Livia⁹⁰

Tiberius' successor attributed a more prominent role to his relatives in imperial coinage To commemorate Agrippina Maior, Caligula issued gold, silver and bronze coins emphasizing her rehabilitation after her disgrace during Tiberius' reign, to which I shall return in more detail The coin type in precious metal contains a portrait of Caligula on the obverse and a draped bust of Agrippina on the reverse denoting her as the mother of the emperor (Fig.

⁸⁴ Dio 60.12.5

⁸⁵ For Julio-Claudian women in imperial coinage see esp. chapter 5

⁸⁶ The first depictions of living imperial women occur during the reign of Caligula who issued a type of *sesterti* with the portraits of his sisters *RIC I*² Caligula 33-41

⁸⁷ *RIC I*² Tiberius nos. 50-51

⁸⁸ *Tac. Ann.* 3.64.3

⁸⁹ *RIC I*² Tiberius no. 47 Cf. Ginsburg 2006 pp. 60-61

⁹⁰ On the doubtful identification of these and other Tiberian coins as figurations of Livia see chapter 5

14).⁹¹ The bronze type has Agrippina on the obverse and, similar to Tiberius' coin of Livia, a *carpentum* drawn by mules on the reverse with a legend stating SPQR MEMORIAE AGRIPPINAE (Fig. 15).⁹² This coin commemorated the games which the emperor organised in her honour and the *carpentum* used in the circus procession.⁹³

Caligula created a precedent by depicting his mother on imperial coins, which was later followed by his successor Claudius. Claudius issued a series of commemorative coins in bronze, silver and gold. It is possible to reduce these issues to conjugal pairs: coins were struck honouring Augustus and Livia (*dupondii*), Germanicus and Agrippina Maior (*sestertii*), and Drusus and Antonia Minor (*aurei* and *denarii*). Dixon suggests that, by paying special attention to Antonia in his coinage, Claudius wanted to emphasize his ancestry of Augustus through the maternal side.⁹⁴ Considering the composition of the series, however, there is no reason to believe that Antonia played a more prominent role in Claudius' numismatic program than for instance her husband Drusus. It seems as if the coins were explicitly imagined in pairs. This does not mean, of course, that Claudius' kinship to Augustus was not emphasized in other ways or that Antonia's procreative qualities were not celebrated at all.⁹⁵

Antonia appears on three different coin types, two of which were struck in gold and silver, the third only in bronze. A first type in precious metal shows on the obverse a bust of Antonia crowned with corn-ears accompanied by the legend ANTONIA AUGUSTA (Fig. 16).⁹⁶ The reverse contains an image of a standing Constantia holding a *cornucopia* and a torch. The legend reads CONSTANTIAE AUGUSTI. A second type in precious metal has a different reverse image. Two lighted torches, joined with festoon and garlands, accompany the legend SACERDOS DIVI AUGUSTI (Fig. 17).⁹⁷ The bronze *dupondius* stands somewhat apart, with regard to material as well as imagery.⁹⁸ The obverse again shows a bust of Antonia, although this time without a crown, whereas the reverse has a veiled Claudius holding a *simpulum* in his right hand (Fig. 18).

⁹¹ RIC I², Caligula, no 7-8, 13-14

⁹² RIC I², Caligula, no 55

⁹³ On this coin type, see Jucker, 1980, pp 205-217; Wood, 1988, p 410. Cf Trillmich, 1978, pp 25-48; Flower, 2006, pp 138-143.

⁹⁴ Dixon, 1988, p. 79.

⁹⁵ The *dupondii* honouring *Divus Augustus* and *Diva Augusta*, for instance, directly refer to the founder of the dynasty, whilst it has been established that most of Claudius' coin types repeat those of Augustus with the obvious purpose of relating the new emperor to the *princeps*. See Ramage, 1983, p 202

⁹⁶ RIC I², Claudius, no 65-66. See also chapter 5.

⁹⁷ RIC I², Claudius, no 67.

⁹⁸ RIC I², Claudius, no 92

The so-called *Constantia* coin type has been subject of intensive scholarly debate.⁹⁹ One of the reasons is its innovative character. First of all, these coins are the first official reference to Antonia Minor as *Augusta*. Secondly, Claudius is the first and last emperor who used the virtue of *constantia* in his visual representation.¹⁰⁰ Thirdly, it needs to be noted that not the adjective *Augusta* is attributed to the personification, as was the sole practice up until the reign of Claudius, but the genitive singular masculine *Augusti*. *Constantia Augusta* would have related to the office of the emperor, while *Constantia Augusti* is to be connected to Claudius himself. The quality which the specific virtue represents is, for the first time, thought of as belonging to the emperor.¹⁰¹ The case of the legend makes it impossible to identify the personification of *constantia* with Antonia herself. In spite of this, however, Mikocki tries to put the imagery of Antonia's *constantia* coin type within a broader visual tradition.¹⁰² He considers a statue from Falerii and one from Cemenelum to be parallels to the numismatic images. The statue from Falerii carries a *cornucopia* in its left hand and seems to have had an attribute like a torch or scepter in the other hand. The identification with Antonia Minor, however, is uncertain.¹⁰³ The statue from Cemenelum, of which the identification with Antonia is debated as well, misses both arms and any possible attributes.¹⁰⁴ The many uncertainties regarding the statues combined with the case of *Constantia Augusti* makes Mikocki's hypothesis disputable.

The unique character of this coin type makes it harder to interpret the symbolic meaning of the imagery. The meaning of *constantia* is not univocal and I would like to argue that the minters took advantage of the ambiguous nature of the virtue. In the whole of Claudius' early coinage, *constantia* appears three times: once in combination with Antonia's portrait and twice with Claudius' bust. It seems likely that all three types represent different aspects of the virtue. The reverses associated with Claudius show *constantia* on *aurei* and *denarii*, sitting on a curule chair making a gesture with her hand toward her mouth, and on asses standing helmeted with a spear in her hand. These two variants mirror *Constantia*'s

⁹⁹ Besides the *Constantia* coin type, Antonia also appeared on *aurei* and *denarii* as *sacerdos Divi Augusti*, and on *dupondi* in combination with Claudius as a priest. Since these types in essence do not refer to Antonia's motherhood, but rather to her capacity as priestess of the imperial cult, they will not be studied here. On the subject of Julio-Claudian women and the religious sphere, see chapter 5.

¹⁰⁰ Ramage, 1983, pp. 204-205; Von Kaenel, 1994, 65; Schmidt-Dick, 2003, p. 39. The type reappears only once in Titus' *restituta* series (*RIC* I², Titus, nos. 218-219).

¹⁰¹ Grant, 1972, pp. 166-169; Ramage, 1983, p. 204; Schmidt-Dick, 2003, p. 39. Mikocki, 1995, p. 95, believes that Antonia herself is to be identified with *Constantia*. Wood, 1999, p. 152, 156, does not identify Antonia with *constantia*, but believes that the underlying message was that Claudius had inherited the virtue of his mother.

¹⁰² Mikocki, 1995, p. 95.

¹⁰³ Alexandridis, 2004, pp. 170-171, no. 138. Livia is another likely candidate.

¹⁰⁴ Alexandridis, 2004, p. 140, no. 57. Wood, 1999, p. 161, argues that the statue from Cemenelum represents an unknown local aristocratic lady. Cf. Wood, 1996-1997, pp. 1-19.

civilian and military aspects. Claudius promises resolution and tenacity in these dimensions of public life.¹⁰⁵ The meaning of the coin type associating *Constantia* with Antonia can be deduced from the attributes that appear on both the obverse and the reverse. *Constantia* herself is carrying a torch and *cornucopia*, which were generally associated with fertility goddesses, in particular the goddess Ceres.¹⁰⁶ The figure of Antonia is also wearing an attribute of Ceres, namely the corn-wreath. On a first level, the symbolism of these coins possibly called attention to Claudius' immediate measures designed to alleviate the corn shortage.¹⁰⁷ But the imagery contains other connotations as well. Grant associates the *constantia* of Claudius with the honours that the emperor bestowed on his mother after his accession, thereby showing his *pietas*. Perseverance was needed to make piety effective.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, associating Antonia with fertility emphasizes her procreative qualities. Being the mother of Rome's new emperor credits her to a certain degree with the continuity and stability of the reign. Attributing the virtue of resolution to Claudius could evoke the hope that he himself may perhaps continue the procreative force of his mother.

The depictions of Antonia Minor in imperial coinage still contained references to the traditional standards for female conduct. The allusion to her fertility, through the attribute of the corn-ear crown, and its place in Claudius' broader numismatic program, in which he honoured his deceased relatives as a group, placed Antonia Minor in a familial context. This manifestation of the emperor's concern with female exemplarity changed with the accession of Nero. During the first months of his reign, *aurei* and *denarii* were issued, which broke entirely with tradition.¹⁰⁹ The obverse of these coins contained the jugate portraits of Nero and Agrippina accompanied by the titulature of Agrippina, who was identified as the wife of *Divus Claudius* and mother of the emperor Nero (Fig. 19). The reverse had a crown of oak together with the titulature of Nero. For the first time, a portrait of a living imperial woman was clearly identified and placed next to that of the reigning emperor on the obverse. A couple of months later, adjustments were made to this visual language and a new series of *aurei* and *denarii* were minted (Fig. 20). This time, accompanied by his titles, Nero's head covered his mother's on the obverse, while the reverse contained the titulature of Agrippina

¹⁰⁵ Sutherland, 1951, pp. 125-126. Grant, 1972, pp. 170-172.

¹⁰⁶ Grant, 1972, p. 169. Spaeth, 1996, p. 25. Cf. Schmidt-Dick, 2003, p. 39. See also chapter 5.

¹⁰⁷ Hannestad, 1986, p. 103. For more on this, see chapter 5.

¹⁰⁸ Grant, 1972, p. 169.

¹⁰⁹ *RIC* I², Nero, nos. 1-3.

with the images of *Divus Claudius* and *Divus Augustus* seated on a car and drawn by four elephants.¹¹⁰

The prominence of Agrippina on the first series of coins made several scholars interpret this as a confirmation of the influence attributed to her in Tacitus' *Annals*. Consequently, the alterations in the second series illustrated the beginning of her loss of political influence.¹¹¹ Though this hypothesis cannot be excluded, especially since Agrippina does not appear on Neronian coins after these series, the revision of the imagery may also reflect the process of trial and error in the visualization of a balanced relationship between mother and son.¹¹² Remarkable in this context is the difference between these coins and the Claudian examples that paired mother and son. Between A.D. 51 and 54, Claudius issued a series of *denarii* celebrating Agrippina's motherhood to Nero. A portrait of a young Nero is accompanied by that of his mother on the reverse.¹¹³ The Claudian entourage repeated some of the visual markers used earlier in the depiction of the emperor's own mother Antonia. Besides putting her son next to her, Agrippina is also associated with the fertility goddess Ceres through the crown of corn-ears on her head. In the Neronian imagery, all these traditional associations with fecundity have disappeared.

4.3. Representing the emperor and his mother: the virtue of *pietas*

In the last part of this chapter, I will focus on the perception of the display of *pietas* by emperors towards their mother. The practice to associate exemplary citizens with a set of traditional virtues – such as *virtus*, *iustitia* or *clementia* – began in the late Republic and became routine by the time of Vespasian's accession.¹¹⁴ The emperor was associated with these virtues as well, thus conveying the message that he incarnated the qualities which those virtues represent. However, scholarly research has shown that a 'canon' of imperial virtues was absent. Virtues were selected for advertisement because they sent a specific message

¹¹⁰ *RIC* I², Nero, nos. 6-7.

¹¹¹ E.g. Barrett, 1996, p. 167; Wood, 1999, pp. 293-294; Ginsburg, 2006, pp. 72-73.

¹¹² The prominence of Agrippina in Nero's ideological *discourse* can also be deduced from the imperial titulature. An examination of the structure of Nero's inscriptions reveals the introduction of a new titular formula. The inscriptions of his predecessors had dealt exclusively with patrilineal descent, whereas Nero also stressed his matrilineal lineage. This usage of Agrippina's family to establish a link between the reigning emperor and the founder of the Julio-Claudian dynasty *Divus Augustus* led Rose to the conclusion that Nero used it himself in his official letters after which it was followed throughout the Mediterranean (Rose, 1997, p. 47). Cf. Ginsburg, 2007, p. 74.

¹¹³ *RIC* I², Claudius, no. 75. Note, however, that von Kaenel, 1986, pp. 18-19, 80-81, doubts the authenticity of many examples of this issue.

¹¹⁴ Noreña, 1991, p. 152. On virtues and the emperors in general, see Fears, 1981a; Wallace-Hadrill, 1981.

about what it was that a specific emperor wanted his subjects to think of him.¹¹⁵ One of the most common imperial virtues was *pietas*.¹¹⁶ Generally, *pietas* can be described as a demeanour characterized by a sense of duty, devotion, and piety which could be addressed to gods, people (mainly family), homeland, and, during the Empire, the emperor.¹¹⁷ The exact meaning of the concept of *pietas* when associated with the emperor is, because of the versatile character of the virtue, debatable.¹¹⁸ Here, references to the familial *pietas*, more specifically to the *pietas* from a son addressed to his mother, will be discussed.¹¹⁹ An elaboration on the representation of the Julio-Claudian concern with filial piety will shed light on the importance of presenting the relationship between emperors and their mothers as ideal and exemplary.

4.3.1. Octavian and Atia

In the passage of Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, cited at the beginning of this chapter, Octavian's mother Atia was listed as an exemplary mother. The most extensive source on Atia and her relationship with her son is Nicolaus of Damascus' *Life of Augustus*.¹²⁰ Nicolaus of Damascus was a contemporary of Augustus and closely related to the imperial court. He is attested as a teacher of the children of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, and came into contact with Augustus through his role as advisor of Herod the Great.¹²¹ After Herod's death in 4 B.C., Nicolaus stayed in Rome for a long period, probably until his death. The surviving fragments of his biography of Augustus treat the youth, education and early career of Octavian, and are characterized by a panegyrical tone. According to Nicolaus' biography, Atia was highly involved in Octavian's educational development. She is said to have inquired each day from instructors and curators what her son had accomplished, how far he had advanced, how he had spent the day and with whom he associated. She taught him how to lead a moderate life by not letting him change his way of living even after he had come of age. Octavian slept in the same apartment as before and did not change the fashion of his

¹¹⁵ Potter, 1999, p. 71; Noreña, 1991, pp. 152-153.

¹¹⁶ On *pietas* and the emperor, see Ulrich, 1930; Charlesworth, 1943.

¹¹⁷ Manders, 2008, pp. 118-119.

¹¹⁸ Noreña, 1991, p. 158, denotes three main aspects of imperial *pietas*: the religious, the dynastic and the paternalistic.

¹¹⁹ Saller, 1988, p. 399, notes that the Romans associated *pietas* in the context of the family not so much with submission to a higher authority as with reciprocal affection and obligations shared by all family members. The legend surrounding the instalment of the cult for *Pietas* in 181 B.C. in Rome has a mother and her daughter as central figures. See Val. Max. 5.4.7; Plin. *NH* 7.121. Cf. the still valuable comments on the subject by Ulrich, 1930, pp. 5-7. See also Bannon, 1997, on fraternal *pietas*.

¹²⁰ On Nicolaus of Damascus and his *Life of Augustus*, see Dobesch, 1978, pp. 91-174; Milnor, 2005, pp. 89-72.

¹²¹ *F Gr Hist.* 90 T. 2; *F Gr Hist.* 90 F. 135-136.

clothes.¹²² Allegedly, Atia also guarded his moral conduct. Nicolaus writes that the young Octavian attracted many women by his looks and high lineage.¹²³ Yet, he was never enticed. The biographer attributes Octavian's restraint to the care and education of Atia, who protected him and urged him not to wander about.

Characterizing for the representation of Atia in Nicolaus' biography is the opposition between the private and the public sphere. Atia provided a safe domestic environment for her son which contrasted sharply with the depraved lifestyle of the public realm, illustrated here by the conduct of soliciting matrons.¹²⁴ Obviously, Atia did not confine herself solely to domestic affairs. Various anecdotes in the biography indicate that Atia wrote letters to her son in which she informed him on the political climate or gave him advice as to how to position himself in the public field.¹²⁵ Nicolaus, however, makes it clear that, although Octavian appreciated the efforts of his mother, he made his own decisions, even when those deviated from his mother's opinion.¹²⁶ The author adds that when Octavian had made his decision Atia reconciled herself to the situation.¹²⁷ Atia is presented as a mother who knew how to keep the balance between support and interference.

Not only was Atia an ideal mother, Octavian was also a model son. He showed sufficient *pietas* toward his mother, which was translated by regular visits and a lively correspondence. Another form of filial piety addressed to his mother is mentioned by Suetonius and Dio.¹²⁸ In 43 B.C. Atia died, after which Octavian bestowed on her a public funeral.¹²⁹ As from 102 B.C., women too were entitled to a funeral procession and eulogy.¹³⁰ The practice of granting a funeral to Roman citizens at public expense probably dated from about 78 B.C.¹³¹ Julius Caesar publicly celebrated the memory of his aunt, wife, daughter and sister, though the sources do not make explicit that this happened at public expense.¹³² If Dio

¹²² Nic. Dam 4-5 (10-12).

¹²³ Nic. Dam. 5 (12).

¹²⁴ The safety of Atia's home is also referred to in Nic. Dam 18 (52) On the dichotomy between public and private, see chapter 2.

¹²⁵ Nic. Dam 16 (38-39), 18 (52)

¹²⁶ Nic. Dam. 6 (14): the young Octavian is said to have remained at home instead of joining Caesar during one of his campaigns not because Atia was opposed but because Caesar thought it better for Octavian's health.

¹²⁷ Nic. Dam. 18 (54).

¹²⁸ Suet. *Aug* 61, Dio 47 17 6

¹²⁹ Only Dio states explicitly that the funeral was commissioned at public expense (Dio 47.17.6)

¹³⁰ The first woman who is firmly attested as having received this honour is Popilia, who was publicly eulogized by her son in 102 B.C. (Cic. *De Or* 2 225) Livy, however, dates the right for women to have a *laudatio funebris* in 390 B.C. (Liv. 5 50 7) Cf Flower, 1996, pp. 122-125; Hillard, 2001, pp. 45-63, Levison – Ewald, 2005, pp. 635-645.

¹³¹ App. *B.C.* 1 105 On public funerals, see Wesch-Klein, 1993.

¹³² Plut. *Caes.* 5; Plut. *Caes* 55 3; Suet. *Jul* 26; Suet. *Aug* 8.1, Quint 12 6 1.

is to be believed, Atia's funeral was the first funeral for a woman to be held at public expense. If so, Octavian marked out his mother for privileged treatment.¹³³

One could wonder whether this balanced relationship between mother and son was based on true stories or invented by Nicolaus of Damascus. Scholarly debate has tried to resolve the question of Nicolaus' sources. Generally, it is assumed that the author had access to the autobiography of Augustus, though the manner in which he used it is still under discussion.¹³⁴ Based on surviving fragments of the autobiography, scholars have determined that the work consisted of thirteen books of which the first one presumably treated the youth of Octavian until Caesar's death.¹³⁵ Since the surviving fragments of Nicolaus' biography mainly treat Octavian's life when he was a boy, it is believed that the author based his account to a great extent on the first book of Augustus' memoirs.¹³⁶ Considering the themes which Nicolaus treats and the atmosphere he creates, it takes little effort to imagine an Augustan influence. Ideal female behaviour and exemplary motherhood was one of his main ideological concerns.

It should, furthermore, not come as a surprise if the representation of Atia did constitute one of the subjects of Augustus' autobiography. Atia played an important role in Augustus' link to and relationship with his tutelary deity Apollo. Both Suetonius and Dio write about a legend that circulated, according to which a snake 'visited' Atia during a night at the temple of Apollo.¹³⁷ Ten months later, her son was born, which allegedly elicited the remark from Atia that he was the son of Apollo. It should also be noted that Augustus' memoirs are unique in the autobiographic tradition since it is the only known work written by a statesman before his retirement from public life. This could suggest that Augustus wrote his memoirs to legitimize his position after Actium and to refute propaganda spread by his

¹³³ On the social and political importance of funeral rites, see, for instance, Kiedorf, 1980, Deschamps, 1995, pp. 171-180; Flower, 1996; D'Ambra, 2002, pp. 223-246; Flaig, 2003, pp. 49-68.

¹³⁴ Toher, 1985, pp. 136-139, argues that Nicolaus read the autobiography but wrote his *Life of Augustus* independent of it. Most other scholars, however, do believe that Augustus' text was one of Nicolaus' main sources. See, for instance, Dobesch, 1978, pp. 91-174; Scardigli, 1983, pp. 121-123; Malitz, 2003, pp. 10-12; Milnor, 2005, pp. 89-91.

¹³⁵ Toher, 1985, p. 135; Cf. Suet. *Aug.* 85. For surviving fragments of the autobiography, see Malcovati, 1967, and more recently Bringmann-Wiegandt, 2008, pp. 191-215.

¹³⁶ Note that Milnor, 2005, pp. 89-91, leaves little room for caution and nuance treating Nicolaus' biography and Augustus' autobiography as one and the same. One should also bear in mind that Nicolaus worked as a tutor to king Herod's children and, probably, to the children of Antony and Cleopatra, which could provide an explanation for his interest in educational development. Cf. Toher, 1985, pp. 11-12.

¹³⁷ Suet. *Aug.* 94; Dio, 45.1.2.

enemies.¹³⁸ In fact, it appears from Cicero's *Philippics* that the familial background of Octavian was used as an instrument of propaganda during his rivalry with Mark Antony.¹³⁹

Unfortunately, Atia does not appear outside the literary sources. It may seem remarkable that Atia's image as an ideal mother did not find a visual translation, especially since references to fertility and motherhood constituted an important part of Augustus' visual *discours*. Atia's relatively early death in 43 B.C. might offer an explanation for this lacuna.

4.3.2. Tiberius and Livia

Examining the presence of *pietas* in the relationship between Tiberius and his mother Livia is no sinecure. According to the literary sources, their relationship deteriorated as soon as Tiberius became emperor.¹⁴⁰ In a passage cited above, Suetonius states that Tiberius deliberately evaded his mother.¹⁴¹ He wanted to avoid the appearance that he needed her advice, since according to him Livia claimed an equal share in the rule. Dio follows the same tradition adding that Livia wanted to take precedence over Tiberius.¹⁴² Both authors claim that the bad relationship between mother and son ended in Tiberius' retirement from Rome to the island of Capri.¹⁴³

If the literary sources are to be believed, the emperor's main concern lay with Livia's image as exemplary *matrona*.¹⁴⁴ He refused all extravagant honours bestowed on her because he considered it unfitting for a woman, and required that she would follow his example. The senators, however, seemed to have chosen the opposite path. Calling it 'senatorial adulation', Tacitus gives a list of all honours they wanted to confer on her. Both the titles *parens patriae* and *mater patriae* were suggested, and the qualification *Iuliae filius* was to be added to the name of Tiberius. Furthermore, the grant of a lictor and the decree of an Altar of Adoption were proposed.¹⁴⁵ The sources indicate that the senators believed that Livia deserved some kind of official recognition for her role as mother of Tiberius.

¹³⁸ Toher, 1985, p. 135

¹³⁹ Cic. *Phil.* 3 15-17. In this passage, Cicero defends Atia's origins after they were attacked by Mark Antony.

¹⁴⁰ Traces of the *concordia* between them before that date can be deduced from, for instance, Livia's involvement during Tiberius' stay at Rhodes. He was given the title of *legatus* and owed his recall to the petitions of his mother. Suet. *Tib.* 11-13; cf. Levick, 1999, pp. 39-45

¹⁴¹ Suet. *Tib.* 50.

¹⁴² Dio 57 12 3. Cf. Dio 57.3 3.

¹⁴³ Suet. *Tib.* 51; Dio 57.12.6

¹⁴⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 1 14; Suet. *Tib.* 50; Dio 57.12.1, 5

¹⁴⁵ The same list can also be found in Suet. *Tib.* 50, who adds *Augusti filius*, and in Dio 57 12 4.

In relation to these senatorial sentiments, Barrett draws attention to an inscription from the Claudian period as another example of how the senate might have wanted to honour the status of Livia as mother of the emperor.¹⁴⁶ In A.D. 43, Claudius dedicated an unidentified architectural structure to *Pietas Augusta*, of which the decree dated twenty years earlier. Scholars generally refer to this structure as the Altar of *Pietas Augusta*, though there is no evidence as to what it contained exactly.¹⁴⁷ Since the initial *senatus consultum* was passed in A.D. 22, the year of Livia's first serious illness, Barrett sees it as a senatorial instrument to emphasize Tiberius' filial piety. Tacitus narrates that Livia fell seriously ill, which made Tiberius rush back from Campania, to where he had retreated, to be at his mother's side.¹⁴⁸ After her recovery, the senators decreed *supplicia* and *ludi magni* to celebrate. Tacitus, however, shows himself a sceptic by stating that it was not clear whether Tiberius returned either because there was still *concordia* between mother and son, or because he wanted to conceal the hatred between them. In any case, the text of the inscription does not allow a secure connection between the dedication to *Pietas Augusta* and Livia.

The literary sources show that there was some kind of social expectation as to how a son should treat his mother. The disrupted relationship between Livia and Tiberius and the lack of pietas from the part of the latter manifested itself most clearly in the literary accounts on Livia's death. The most illustrative account is given by Suetonius:

Toto quidem triennio, quo uiuente matre afuit, semel omnino eam nec amplius quam uno die paucissimis uidit horis; ac mox neque aegrae adesse curauit defunctamque et, dum aduentus sui spem facit, complurium dierum mora corrupto demum et tabido corpore funeratam prohibuit consecrari, quasi id ipsa mandasset. testamentum quoque eius pro irrito habuit omnisque amicitias et familiaritates, etiam quibus ea funeri sui curam moriens demandauerat,... (Suet. Tib. 51.2)

At all events, during all the three years that she lived after he left Rome he saw her but once, and then only one day, for a very few hours; and when shortly after she fell ill, he took no trouble to visit her. When she died, and after a delay of several days, during which he held out hope of his coming, had at last been buried because the putrefication of the corpse made it necessary, he forbade her deification, alleging that he was acting according to her own

¹⁴⁶ Barrett, 2002, p. 94

¹⁴⁷ CIL. 6.562. *Pietati Augustae / ex s(enatus) c(onsulto) quod factum est D(ecimo) Haterio / Agrippa C(aio) Sulpicio Galba co(n)s(ulibus) / Ti(berius) Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus / pontif(ex) max(imus) trib(unica) pot(estate) III co(n)s(ul) III imp(erator) III p(ater) p(atricae) / dedicavit* The stone itself is missing and the inscription only survived through a transcription

¹⁴⁸ Tac. Ann. 3.64.

instructions. He further disregarded the provisions of her will, and within a short time caused the downfall of all her friends and intimates, even of those to whom she had on her deathbed entrusted the care of her funeral arrangements,

Tacitus adds that Tiberius excused himself by letter in which he claimed that he could not forsake his daily duties.¹⁴⁹ Dio, furthermore, states that the funerary honours, which her son the emperor should have taken care off, were actually carried out by the senators.¹⁵⁰ The emphasis of the ancient authors on Tiberius' absence and behaviour during Livia's funeral stands in great contrast with the description of Octavian's efforts after his mother died

4.3.3 Caligula and Agrippina Maior

The conduct of Caligula toward his mother Agrippina Maior, as it is recorded in the literary sources, was much more straight-forward. After his accession, Caligula started his reign by distancing himself from his predecessor and rehabilitating those relatives who were disgraced during the previous reign.¹⁵¹ His early coinage featured portrayals of his parents, brothers and sisters, a practice that deviated from earlier imperial custom and introduced a new way of dynastic propaganda. The magnitude of Caligula's display of filial piety was unprecedented. His gold and silver coins placed his portrait against those of Divus Augustus, Germanicus and Agrippina.¹⁵² The bronze issues featured his three sisters and two brothers.¹⁵³ The *pietas* addressed to his mother was, therefore, integrated in a broader dynastic policy.

During Agrippina's exile and death, Caligula was living with Tiberius on Capri and in no position to secure her release or mourn her death too publicly.¹⁵⁴ As soon as he became emperor he made up for this neglect. In a highly public spectacle Caligula went to retrieve the remains of his mother.¹⁵⁵ Suetonius writes

confestum Pandateriam et Pontias ad transferendos matris fratrisque cineres festinauit, tempestate turbida, quo magis pietas emineret, aditque uenerabundus ac per semet in urnas condidit, nec minore scaena Ostiam praefixo in biremis puppe uexillo et inde Romam Tiberi subuectos per splendidissimum quemque equestris ordinis medio ac frequenti die duobus

¹⁴⁹ Tac. Ann. 5.2

¹⁵⁰ Dio 58.2.1

¹⁵¹ Wood, 1988, p. 410

¹⁵² RIC I² Caligula nos. 9-22. The coins featuring Agrippina Maior have been discussed earlier in this chapter.

¹⁵³ RIC I² Caligula, nos. 26, 43

¹⁵⁴ Tac. Ann. 6.20.1

¹⁵⁵ Suet. Cal. 15. Dio 59.3.5. Hurley, 1993, p. 45

ferculis Mausoleo intulit, inferiasque is annua religione publice instituit, et eo amplius matri circenses carpentumque quo in pompa traduceretur. (Suet. Cal. 15)

...he at once hurried off to Pandateria and the Pontian Islands, to remove the ashes of his mother and brother to Rome; and in stormy weather too, to make his filial piety the more conspicuous. He approached them with reverence and placed them in the urns with his own hands. With no less theatrical effect he brought them to Ostia in a bireme with a banner set in the stern, and from there up to the Tiber to Rome, where he had them carried to the Mausoleum on two biers by the most distinguished men of the order of knights, in the middle of day, when the streets were crowded. He appointed funeral sacrifices, too, to be offered each year with due ceremony, as well as games in the Circus in honour of his mother, providing a carriage to carry her image in the procession.

Caligula's restoration of Agrippina's memory also included the demolition of the *villa* in Herculaneum where she was held prisoner before her exile.¹⁵⁶ Tokens of honour followed for Germanicus, Antonia, Claudius, his sisters and Tiberius Gemellus. Caligula tried to get the most out of his display of *pietas*.

Caligula's attitude towards the death of his mother stood in great contrast to his attitude towards the death of Antonia Minor, his grandmother or, as she is called by Flory, his surrogate mother.¹⁵⁷ Suetonius states:

Auia Antoniae secretum petenti denegauit, nisi ut interueniret Macro praefectus, ac per istius modi indignitates et taedia causa extitit mortis, dato tamen, ut quidam putant, et ueneno; nec defunctae ullum honorem habuit prospexitque e triclinio ardentem rogam. (Suet. Cal. 23.2)

When his grandmother Antonia asked for a private interview, he refused it except in the presence of the praefect Macro, and by such indignities and annoyances he caused her death; although some think that he also gave her poison. After she was dead, he paid her no honour, but viewed her burning pyre from his dining-room.

The *pietas* that Caligula displayed towards Agrippina Maior was nowhere to be found at the time of Antonia's death.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ See chapter 2.

¹⁵⁷ Flory, 1998a, pp. 113, 123.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Dio 59.3.4.

The predominant representation of Antonia Minor is one of exemplarity. She is remembered as a virtuous woman and a loyal wife. After the death of her husband Drusus, Antonia refused to remarry and stayed in the house of her mother-in-law. Besides being the mother of the legendary Germanicus, she was also the mother of Claudius. As is well-known, Claudius suffered from some type of disability, because of which he was partly excluded from public life, and frequently became the laughing stock of the family. Suetonius claims that Antonia used to express sneering comments regarding her son:

Mater Antonia portentum eum hominis dictitabat, nec absolutum a natura, sed tantum inchoatum, ac si quem socordiae argueret, stultiores aiebat filio suo Claudio (Suet. *Claud.* 32.2)

His mother Antonia used to call him a human freak, only begun by nature and not properly finished, and if she was accusing anyone of stupidity she would say he was sillier than her son Claudius.

Notwithstanding her alleged spiteful remarks, Claudius showed exemplary filial behaviour at the beginning of his reign. On several occasions, he honoured the memory of his family in general and of his parents in particular. He evoked the image of Augustus in his oaths and bestowed divine honours on his grandmother Livia.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, he ordered to make public offerings to Drusus and Antonia.¹⁶⁰ He honoured his father's birthday with annual games in the Circus and voted a *carpentum* to bear the image of Antonia through the Circus. As discussed above, Antonia also received, or was reconfirmed, the title of *Augusta*.

Caligula created a precedent by paying extraordinary attention to deceased family members at the time of his accession. Claudius' situation, on the other hand, was extraordinary in its own right. He was not treated as a potential heir to the throne by his predecessor, but was, as is well-known, called to the throne by the praetorians, who allegedly found him hiding in the palace.¹⁶¹ By focusing on his family nonetheless, Claudius positioned himself firmly within the Julio-Claudian dynasty and legitimized his claim to the family's *auctoritas*. The clearest illustration of this can be found in the coins he issued in the first year

¹⁵⁹ Dio 60.5.1-2.

¹⁶⁰ Suet. *Claud.* 11.2.

¹⁶¹ Suet. *Claud.* 10.2.

of his reign, to which I referred above Claudius wasted no time in trying to create a positive image for himself

4.3.5 Nero and Agrippina Minor

In many respects, the representation of the relationship between Nero and Agrippina differs from the ones I have discussed so far. At the beginning of his reign, the emperor gave his mother, who – contrary to the cases of Caligula and Claudius – was still alive at the time, a prominent place in the imperial *discourse*. Above, I have already discussed Agrippina's presence on the imperial coins of Nero's reign.

Brief references in Tacitus' *Annals* also refer to the widely publicized relationship between the emperor and his mother. Tacitus states that all honours, without specifying which, were heaped on Agrippina. In addition, when the tribune requested a password, Nero notoriously issued *optima mater*.¹⁶² An unpleasant incident occurring in Nero's early reign, furthermore, illustrates how a display of filial piety was not uncommon and even expected.¹⁶³ At the same time, the incident precludes the future disrupted relationship between mother and son. During a meeting with an Armenian embassy, Agrippina got ready to join her son and stand by his side. To avoid this inappropriate behaviour, Nero was told to step down and greet his advancing mother, thus turning it into an act of filial *pietas*.

The anecdote is illustrative for the deterioration of their relationship. As is well-known, the literary sources state that Nero tried to distance himself from the influence of his mother. He considered himself capable of ruling without her counsel and gradually removed her from his circle of advisers.¹⁶⁴ The downward spiral reached its climax in the death of Agrippina.¹⁶⁵ Obviously, killing his own mother nullified Nero's previous attempts to present himself as a pious son.¹⁶⁶ His conduct with regard to Agrippina's funeral solemnities as stated by Tacitus, however, made the matters even worse:

Haec consensu produntur aspexerint matrem exanimem Nero et formam corporis eius laudaverit, sunt qui tradiderint sunt qui abnuant cremata est nocte eadem convivali lecto et

¹⁶² Tac. *Ann.* 13.2.3

¹⁶³ Tac. *Ann.* 13.5.2. Cf. Dio 61.3.3-4. Barrett, p. 1996 pp. 164-165

¹⁶⁴ See chapter 2 on the emptying of Agrippina's former *domus frequentata*

¹⁶⁵ On the death of Agrippina see Barrett, 1996, pp. 181-195. Baltussen 2002 pp. 30-40. Piecha 2003 pp. 120-

135. Ferone 2004 pp. 80-87, with further references

¹⁶⁶ Nero's matricide had a serious impact on his later reputation see e.g. Croisille 1994. Champlin, 2003 pp. 84-103

exequiis vilibus; neque, dum Nero rerum potiebatur, congesta est aut clausa humus. Mox domesticorum cura levem tumulum accepit, viam Miseni propter et villam Caesaris dictatoris, quae subiectos sinus editissima prospectat. Accenso rogo libertus eius cognomento Mnester [se] ipse ferro transegit, incertum caritate in patronam an metu exitii. (Tac. Ann. 14.9)

On these matters the tradition is in agreement; but, as to whether Nero gazed at his lifeless mother and praised the look of her body, there are those who have transmitted it and there are those who deny it. She was cremated the same night, on a party couch and with cheap obsequies. Nor, while Nero was in charge of affairs, was the earth piled up or encased; later, through the concern of her domestics, she received an insignificant tomb alongside the road to Misenum and the *villa* of the dictator Caesar, which enjoys an elevated prospect of the bays beneath. With the pyre lit, a freedman of hers with the nomenclature Mnester pierced himself with a sword, whether through affection for his patron or dread of extermination being uncertain.

Striking in Tacitus' account is the fact that the display of *pietas* was not conducted by Agrippina's son but by her servants and freedmen. The hasty internment of Agrippina recalls the death of her brother Caligula years before. On the evening of the assassination, Caligula's remains were removed to the gardens of the Lamii. A hasty cremation was prepared and the ashes were placed under a light covering of turf. Since then, rumour had it that the ghost of Caligula haunted the Lamian gardens, which only ended after he was given a proper burial by his sisters Livilla and Agrippina.¹⁶⁷ Likewise, the ancient sources state that Nero was haunted by the ghost of his mother.¹⁶⁸ He could hear trumpets calling and lamentations at his mother's grave.

4.4. Conclusion

In the ancient sources, the balance between maternal support and interference is perceived as one of the most important characteristics of an ideal relationship between a mother and her children, her sons in particular. The manifestation of *pietas* from the part of the children was considered as an obligation. In the republican period, authors used references to the nature of the relationship between a mother and a son as a means of characterization. This practice continued in the imperial period and played an important role in the representation of Julio-

¹⁶⁷ Suet. *Cal.* 59.

¹⁶⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 14.10; Suet. *Nero* 34; Dio 61.14.

Claudian emperors and their mothers The attitude of the emperor towards the death of his mother recurs as a literary theme to illustrate the character of both the emperor and his mother

Human fertility was an important concern in the imperial family The role of women in the continuation of the dynasty was acknowledged during the entire Julio-Claudian period and received a visual expression The most illustrative example is perhaps the depiction of women and children on the *Ara Pacis Augustae* In imperial coinage, women gained recognition for their maternal role, insofar that during the reign of every emperor, with the exception of Augustus, coins were issued which contained the name or image of the ruling emperor's mother Yet, these numismatic issues were not isolated and often appeared in a broader propagandistic programme, which centred on the dynasty as a whole

Chapter 5

Association with the divine

The last chapter of this dissertation examines the practice of what I call ‘divine association’ with regard to the representation of Julio-Claudian women. It has generally been agreed upon that the imperial women of the Julio-Claudian dynasty played an important role in Roman religious life. This role could take various forms: as participants in cult life – that is to say, as worshippers or priestesses –, as objects of cult, or through association with the divine. In spite of the large number of publications on Julio-Claudian women and a continuous interest in Roman religious life, scholarly research on these religious roles has been surprisingly scarce. The catalogues by Ulrike Hahn on the veneration of imperial women in the Greek East and by Thomasz Mikocki on imperial women *sub specie deae*, which both appeared in the 1990’s, constitute important aids for the study on imperial women and religion but have received little imitation or in-depth study.¹ This chapter aims to fill only part of this lacuna. Since a study of the role of Julio-Claudian women in Roman religion in its entirety goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, the focus will lie on the negotiation between the representation of Julio-Claudian women and the ideal of female behaviour within the context of Roman religion.²

5.1. The practice of divine association

Before turning to the practice of divine association, it is necessary to take a closer look at the term itself and what is understood by it in this study. With ‘divine association’ all forms of representation are meant connecting persons, in this case Julio-Claudian women, with the gods or the divine.³ Divine association could take different forms. The most important were

¹ Hahn, 1994, Mikocki, 1995 Both studies, however, have limitations. Hahn, for instance, concentrates solely on the Greek East and confines herself to numismatic and epigraphic sources, while Mikocki’s catalogue contains little analysis of the sources he lists. On Mikocki’s study, see also below.

² The role of Julio-Claudian women as participants in cult life and as objects of cult will not be treated here, since the subjects are too substantial to insert in this dissertation. The subject of empresses as objects of cult has been treated by Emily Hemelrijk (2005, 2006, 2007) and is part of a current research project (*Hidden lives – public personae. Women in the urban texture of the Roman Empire*, University of Amsterdam). I hope to return to some of these subjects in future research.

³ In studies on Roman religion, scholars often make use of the concepts ‘association’, ‘assimilation’ and ‘identification’, denoting them as three stages of a person’s relationship to a certain god (e.g. Mikocki, 1995, p. 7; Spaeth, 1996, pp. 119-121; Hekster, 2002, pp. 11-12). Because of the distinctive nature of the ancient sources, finding a conclusive definition of these terms is difficult and perhaps even impossible. ‘Identification’ occurs when one manifestly tries to go beyond mere comparison and presents oneself as the new incarnation of a particular divinity. (Cf. Hekster, 2002, p. 12) Examples of this are rare in the Roman world and for Julio-

association through well-chosen actions, association with specific deities, and deification. One way to associate a woman with the divine is by performing specific actions that emphasized that woman's *pietas*. Through the restoration of well-chosen cults or by building temples to well-chosen divinities, imperial women could be presented as intermediaries between the world of the humans and that of the gods. These associations showed that the imperial women supported the range of ideas that was characteristic to the divinity they had chosen and could even be perceived as appropriating some of that divinity's qualities. As will become clear, this method of divine association became particularly customary in the Augustan period. A second way to connect a woman to the divine is by associating that woman with a specific divinity. The most obvious way to trace this is through iconography. In coinage, sculpture and cameo art, women were often depicted carrying divine attributes, ranging from Ceres' corn-ear crown to the Eros figure accompanying Venus. On occasion, women could be depicted with attributes of several divinities at once. In this case, one can argue, the attributes are used to allude to specific qualities or achievements at the same time.⁴ This often complicates the identification of portraits, as will be shown in more detail below.⁵ It frequently happens that statues are missing and only inscriptions survive, but here too women were associated with divinities. They sometimes received the epithet of a deity (e.g. *karpophoros* or 'fruit bearing') or were designated as a new form of a goddess (e.g. 'Nea Aphrodite').⁶

Though of a wholly different nature than the previous forms of divine association, women could also be associated with the world of the gods through deification. The literary sources, to which I will return below, show that the deification of Roman women was no uncomplicated matter.⁷ During the Julio-Claudian period, four women were officially deified, namely Drusilla, Livia, Poppaea and her daughter Claudia. These women were called *Divae* and together with the deified emperors constituted the *Divi Augusti*.⁸ In this respect, it is important to note that the Greek East differed greatly from Rome. In Rome it was clearly

Claudian women, no examples of identification with divinities can be found. Defining 'assimilation' is more difficult, as it denotes intermediary stages between mere association and identification. The scarcity of the sources prohibits to distinguish between these terms, and I will therefore use the term 'association' to indicate the act of connecting a person to the world of the divine.

⁴ Bergmann, 1998, pp. 26-33; Hallett, 2005, pp. 236-237.

⁵ See, for instance, the examples below with regard to Minerva and Dea Roma, or Fortuna and Ceres.

⁶ One could wonder whether the denotation of imperial women as 'Nea Aphrodite' implies that the people or instance that gave them this name saw these imperial women as a proper incarnation of this deity and, consequently, whether the term 'identification' applies in these examples. With regard to the divine representation of Hellenistic rulers, Marianne Bergmann has shown that denominations such as "Neos Dionysos" or "son of Dionysos" are above all intended to draw the comparison between the person in question and the god, and not necessarily to consider that person a deity himself (1998, pp. 23-26). It remains difficult, and in most cases impossible, to reconstruct the true motives behind this sort of divine association.

⁷ Cf. Flory, 1995.

⁸ Lozano, 2007, p. 141.

established who was a *diva* and who was *Augusta*⁹ In the Greek East, the terminology was less strict Imperial women were often called *Sebaste* before they received the title of *Augusta* in Rome, if they ever did, or *Thea* before they were officially consecrated The *Theoi Sebastoi* included, besides the officially consecrated *divae*, Julia Minor, Antonia Minor, Livilla, Agrippina Maior, Messalina, Agrippina Minor, Octavia and Statilia Messalina¹⁰

All these instances of divine association form the core of this chapter It aims to show that the influence of the ideal of female behaviour appears most clearly in association with the divine through specific actions and depictions of women with the attributes of divinities, although the Roman practice of deification also seems to have had eye for the traditional standards of womanhood. Before turning to these subjects, however, attention first will be paid to the general practice of divine association with regard to imperial women As stated, scholarship on this subject has remained rather limited and it is worthwhile to outline the available information before turning to some specific examples

The practice of divine association of women, perhaps more than any other female practice, is closely related to that of men However, an account of the latter or of imperial worship in general would exceed the limits of this dissertation Here it suffices to state that, *the imperial cult*, as a homogeneous concept, does not exist¹¹ Differences existed between the ways in which members of the imperial family were worshipped in the western and eastern provinces of the Roman Empire¹² The same applies to divine association, as will become clear below During the Julio-Claudian period, first initiatives occurred to connect emperors to specific gods, with the divinity often in the capacity of the emperor's *comes* or guardian¹³ Nonetheless, the clearest forms of this practice and examples on a much broader scale appear later, of which the most extreme example probably is the representation of the emperor Commodus as the incarnation of Hercules¹⁴ Research on the subject of divine association, such as the influential study of Wrede on *consecratio in formam deorum*, has shown that association with the divine occurred for men as well as women¹⁵

⁹ As Fishwick (1991, p. 275) stated: "Though all *divi* are *Augusti*, not all *Augusti* are *divi*"

¹⁰ On the differences between Rome and the Greek East, see most recently Lozano, 2007 Lozano (p. 146) defines *Sebastoi* as "the group of members of the imperial family, male and female, whose divine worship has been approved by the competent institution of a particular political entity, city or league" For a list of Julio-Claudian women who were denoted *Thea* or *Sebaste* with further references, see Hahn, 1994

¹¹ See Price, 1984; Beard – North – Price, 1998, pp. 348–363; Gradel, 2002

¹² Note that Gradel, 2002 (esp. pp. 27–53) has nuanced the religious gap which scholars often assumed to have existed between religious practice in the East and West

¹³ On the divinity as *comes*, see Nock, 1947; Possenti, 1995 On the Julio-Claudian period, see, for instance, Champlin, 2003, pp. 112–144

¹⁴ On Commodus, see Hekster, 2002, pp. 117–129

¹⁵ Wrede, 1981

As stated in the previous chapters, references to a blurring line between the private and public sphere can clearly be detected in the representation of Julio-Claudian women. Divine association is another illustration of this. The dynastic importance of imperial women and their expanding role in public society gave way to increasing manifestations of imagery with religious connotations. The presence of women in a public religious context should not be a surprise. Already during the republican period, women of different social standings contributed to religious rituals and public ceremonies, as participants or as priestesses.¹⁶ Imperial women continued this practice, but their role in religious life evolved from that of their republican predecessors.

In her influential study on the significance of divine attributes in the portraiture of rulers, Marianne Bergmann has shown that divine association was a common practice in imperial representation. Portraits of emperors were furnished with divine attributes in order to make a comparison with the specific god (or gods) whose attributes they had been given. The meaning of these attributes is not, on the whole, a statement that the ruler *is* a god, rather that he is *like* a god.¹⁷ There is no reason to assume that this functioned otherwise when dealing with imperial women. In fact, it seems to have been more common to draw comparisons to the divine world when women (and children) were involved, than when the subject was a man.¹⁸ Women did not obtain offices or public functions and there could, therefore, be no misunderstanding as to the intentions behind divine association. In their case, it was clear that a comparison to a certain divinity had a metaphorical aim.¹⁹ Through divine association, a person was praised for certain positive qualities, either actual or wishful.²⁰

In modern studies, discussions of the process of divine association of women have often remained limited to some casual remarks. A profound study of this subject, with special attention to the influence of Hellenistic models and precedents, and the dynamics between Rome and its periphery, is still missing.²¹ Here, I will sketch general outlines of this process as a context for the discussion that follows, though I am well aware of the fact that the subject has much more to it than what is provided here. The practice of visually associating mortal

¹⁶ On the nature of religious activities of women during the Roman Republic, see most recently Schultz, 2006

¹⁷ Bergmann, 1998, p. 38 "Die Kaiserstatuen im Jupitertypus entsprechen () dass der Herrscher ist wie Jupiter, nicht aber, dass er Jupiter ist."

¹⁸ Established by Wrede, 1981, p. 105

¹⁹ Hekster, 2002, p. 11, Alexandridis, 2004, p. 82; Hallett, 2005, pp. 231, 237

²⁰ Cf. Wrede, 1981, p. 105, on private apotheoses "Die mythologische Ikonographie mit ihren archetypischen Exempla bot die Möglichkeit, Tugenden und vor allem die besonderen Charakteristika von Frau und Kind im privaten Bereich gemeinverständlich vorzuführen."

²¹ The most detailed study is the unpublished dissertation of Mary R. McHugh (2004), who examines the influence of Hellenistic models on the representation of Octavia, Livia, Agrippina Maior and Agrippina Minor

women with deities can be traced back to the Hellenistic period²² According to the ancient sources, Alexander the Great's treasurer Harpalos built a temple to honour his deceased mistress Pythionike, worshipping her as Pythionike Aphrodite²³ Likewise, the *hetaerae* of Demetrios Poliorketes received shrines from the Athenians and were celebrated as Leaina Aphrodite and Lamia Aphrodite²⁴ The divine association of these and other royal *hetaerae* was limited to Aphrodite, which should not surprise since she was the patroness of courtesans²⁵ The Ptolemies introduced the custom to associate queens and princesses with goddesses on a wider scale They were elevated to divine status and shared in the ruler cult²⁶ It is important to note that the position and status of Hellenistic women at the royal court differed greatly from that of imperial women in Rome and that any comparison of the practice of divine association needs to take this difference into account Until the Claudian period, divine association largely remained a prerogative of the imperial family²⁷ Some types of associations were adopted from Hellenistic models, though others, such as the association with deified personifications, were typically Roman²⁸ After the reign of Claudius, private persons were frequently presented in figurative art in the guise of gods and goddesses The most illustrative example of how this practice could be applied to women are probably the so called Venus portraits of the late first and second centuries A D, showing realistic portrait heads combined with idealised nude bodies (Fig 21)²⁹

To conclude these introductory remarks, it should be noticed that every study of divine association needs to reckon with some areas of tension First of all, from the sources it clearly appears that the Romans considered it a different matter to associate a dead person to a divinity than someone who was still alive The above mentioned study of Wrede on so-called 'private apotheoses' has shown that association with the divine was common in Roman funerary art Likewise, imperial coinage shows that it was a lot easier to associate a deceased woman with a goddess than a living family member The first association with Ceres on an imperial coin, for instance, occurs during the reign of Claudius, who minted coins with the

²² Already as early as Homer references can be found in classical literature that compare women to goddesses In the *Iliad* (19 282–24 699) Briseis and Cassandra are both likened to Aphrodite the golden For other examples see Havelock 1995 pp 126–131 On the evolution of a Hellenistic precedent of divine association of women see Carney 2000

²³ Theopompos *FGH Hist* 115 F253 = Athen 13 595c See Dillon 2001 pp 196–197

²⁴ Demochares *FGH Hist* 75 F1 = Athen 6 253a b Cf Wrede 1981 pp 19–20

²⁵ Dillon 2001 pp 189–190

²⁶ On this subject see Pomeroy 1984 pp 28–40 Smith 1994 Ashton 2003 pp 115–142

²⁷ Wrede 1981 p 159 Alexandridis 2004 p 82

²⁸ Mikocki 1995 pp 121–123 Cf Stepper 2000 p 63 On worshipping virtues see also Stafford 2001 who focuses on the Greek world

²⁹ D Ambra 1996 pp 219–232 Zanker 1999 pp 119–131 D Ambra 2000 pp 101–114 Stewart 2003 pp 51–53

portrait of his deceased mother with a corn-ear crown. This can be considered a relatively late development, since references to Ceres seemed to have already been a standard component in the practice of divine association of imperial women in the provinces or in private art, as will be discussed in more detail later. Secondly, when studying divine association, one should always reckon with the genre or medium. It goes without saying that ancient poetry, for instance, was perceived differently than state monuments.³⁰ When Ovid equals Livia in his exile poetry to Vesta, it does not necessarily mean that an association with Vesta constitutes a standard component of her self-representation.³¹ A third and final area of tension to mention is the distinction between local initiatives and central policy. The manner in which imperial women were associated with the divine was not always and everywhere the same. How the practice at the centre was related to the local level will be treated in more detail in the third part of this chapter.

5.2. Imperial policy with regard to divine association

In the second part of this chapter, I will examine imperial policy. How did the imperial court present imperial women in relation with the divine? Did the ideal of female conduct play a role and if so, how? Different manifestations of divine association will be treated. Firstly, I will examine whether imperial women were associated with the divine through their actions with regard to religious life, such as the restoration or construction of shrines and temples. Secondly, the practice of depicting female members of the imperial family with divine attributes in imperial coinage will be discussed. As stated above, the practice of deification was another way to associate a person with the world of the gods. The development of the deification of women in the Julio-Claudian period is a third subject on which I will elaborate. Finally, the alleged association of Julio-Claudian women with Vesta and the Vestal virgins needs to be reconsidered. Scholars often assume an active involvement of imperial women in the cult of Vesta, but it seems that many assumptions are based on so-called ‘factoids’.

5.2.1 *Imperial involvement in religious life*

By performing specific actions imperial women could establish a connection between themselves and the divinities at whom these actions were aimed. This could take different

³⁰ Grether 1946, pp. 228-229.

³¹ Ov. *Ex Ponto* 4.13.29. On the association with Vesta, see below.

forms. For instance, women could openly support a specific cult by restoring a shrine or temple connected to that cult, or by dedicating a statue to the divinity of that cult. In doing so, the imperial woman in question associated herself with the chosen divinity. The ancient sources show that these sorts of well-chosen actions formed a significant part of the imperial policy during the reign of Augustus. Livia was involved in cults of several divinities, which served to characterize her, her husband and his reign. Ovid states, for instance, without specifying the precise date, that Livia restored the temple of Bona Dea:

*Livia restituit, ne non imitata maritum
esset et ex omni parte secuta suum.* (Ov. *Fasti* 5.157-158)

Livia restored it, that she might imitate her husband and follow him in everything.

Ovid puts her action in the context of Augustus' restoration policy, characterizing her as a loyal, obedient and pious wife.³² Livia's gesture associated her with the world of the gods. Bona Dea was a Roman goddess of fertility and healing, who had a festival in May in remembrance of the foundation of her temple on the Aventine and one in December. The latter festival was in the house of a magistrate with *imperium*, led by his wife and the Vestal Virgins with only elite women present.³³ In Antiquity, many different stories circulated about her descent and the confusion shows that the secrecy with which the cult was surrounded has led male writers to keep wondering who or what exactly women were worshipping.³⁴ Varro, for instance, claims that she was the daughter of Faunus.³⁵ He adds that she never left the women's quarters of her father's house, that her name was never heard in public and that she never saw or was seen by a man. Varro explains that because of her *pudicitia*, no man was ever allowed in her temple.³⁶ Ovid states that the temple of Bona Dea stood on the Aventine

³² As is well-known, Augustus made it his core business to present himself as the restorer of the *res publica*, which included renewed attention to traditional cults. E.g. *RG* 19; Suet. *Aug.* 31; Dio 55.10.2. See most recently e.g. Scheid, 2005; Orlin, 2007.

³³ Takács, 2008, pp. 98-111. On Bona Dea, see esp. Brouwer, 1989. See also Herrmann, 1975, who argues that Livia's involvement in the cult of Bona Dea may have gone further than the mere restoration of the temple and that she may also have hosted the December rites in her house.

³⁴ The existing stories are summarized by Macrobius: *Macr. Sat.* 1.12.20-29. See Herbert-Brown, 1994, pp. 132-134.

³⁵ *Macr. Sat.* 1.12.27 (who names Varro as his source).

³⁶ Herbert-Brown, 1994, p. 134, argues that one essential feature of the cult, i.e. the exclusion of men from the ceremony, has incited male authors to "sometimes unsympathetic aetiological rationalizations from the external features with which they were familiar". However, though the December festival was indeed limited to elite women, inscriptions show that men were involved in other cultic actions (e.g. *CIL* 14.4057, male dedicator; *IG* 14.1449, male priest). Cf. Takács, 2008, pp. 108-109.

on a location called *Saxum*, which gave the goddess the name of Bona Dea Subsaxana.³⁷ This was the temple that Livia restored. In doing so, she associated herself with the goddess and her most important characteristics: chastity and fertility.³⁸

A second example of divine association through well-chosen actions has already been treated extensively in a previous chapter, namely Livia's dedication of a shrine to Concordia.³⁹ As stated, in an unknown year, Livia dedicated an *Aedes Concordiae* to celebrate her marriage to Augustus.⁴⁰ In doing so, Livia was presented as a worthy consort of Augustus, while at the same time she was associated with the divine personification of Concordia.

An inscription found in 1831 suggests that Livia was involved in a third cult, namely that of the divinity Fortuna Muliebris. It was retrieved at the fourth milestone on the Via Latina, in an area with architectural remains identified as the temple of Fortuna Muliebris.⁴¹ According to Roman tradition, the temple was erected to commemorate the bravery of the women of Rome during the siege on the city by Coriolanus in the early fifth century B.C.⁴² After being banished from the city for his supposedly tyrannical behaviour, Coriolanus became commander of an army of Volscians and marched against Rome. A delegation of senatorial women, including Coriolanus' mother Veturia and his wife Volumnia, was sent to him and dissuaded him to proceed. Tradition has it that the temple of Fortuna Muliebris was built in 493 B.C. on the exact spot where Coriolanus turned back. If the identification with the temple of Fortuna Muliebris is correct, the inscription, though lacunal, indicates that first Livia and later the emperor Septimius Severus, his wife Julia Domna and their sons restored the temple.⁴³

Livia [D]rux f uxor [Caesaris Augusti ---] / Imp[er] C[ae]s[ar]is Severus et Anto[n]inus Aug[ustinus] et Geta nobilissimus Caesar / et [Julia] Aug[ustina] mater Aug[ustinus] --- restituerunt (CIL 6.883)

³⁷ Ov. *Fasti* 5 147-152. See *LTUR*, s.v. Bona Dea Subsaxana.

³⁸ Herbert-Brown, 1994, pp. 144-145, gives an additional motive for Livia's restoration. Livia's Claudian background would have counteracted the sacrilege of P. Clodius Pulcher, who dressed as a woman and intruded the secret rites of Bona Dea in 62 B.C.

³⁹ See chapter 3.

⁴⁰ Ov. *Fasti* 6.637-648.

⁴¹ On the location: Val. Max. 1 8.4, Festus 282L, Aur. Vict. *Vit.* III 19. Cf. *LTUR*, *suburbium*, s.v. *Fortunae Muliebris aedes, templum*.

⁴² Liv. 2 40 1-12; Dion. Hal. 8 39-56, Val. Max. 1 8.4.

⁴³ Quilici Gighi, 1981, pp. 553-556.

Livia, daughter of Drusus, wife of Caesar Augustus / Imperatores Caesares Severus and Antoninus, Augusti, and the most noble Geta Caesar / and Julia Augusta mother of the Augusti have restored this

The original inscription from the Augustan period was probably located on the frieze, while the Severan text was added on the fascia in two rows⁴⁴ The temple had a long history and, like the restoration of the temple of Bona Dea, Livia's act would have contributed to the image of Augustus' reign as one of religious restoration The cult of Fortuna Muliebris was above all associated with women only newly married women or *univirae* were allowed to touch or crown the cult statue with garlands⁴⁵ By attaching her name to the cult of Fortuna Muliebris, Livia associated herself with the women of Rome She showed that like the mother and wife of Coriolanus she too was concerned with the well-being of the City and its inhabitants Livia's involvement emphasized her marriage to Augustus and her image as a virtuous wife, an ideological message that Julia Domna and Severus later sought to imitate⁴⁶

There is some debate in modern scholarship on whether Livia acted independently in her restoration of the temple of Fortuna Muliebris or whether she acted within the context of her family With regard to Livia's nomenclature on the inscription, Barrett remarks "It is striking that in the inscription she identifies herself by her father as well as by her husband, perhaps showing that her contribution was to be seen as an independent act, carried out in her own right"⁴⁷ The fact that the inscription uses Livia's filiation before mentioning her husband and the difference with Julia Domna, who is denoted as wife and mother, has led several scholars to conclude that whoever ordered the text intended to emphasize Livia's independence and self-importance, while Julia Domna is presented as acting within the context of the family⁴⁸

Severy's conclusion reaches even further as she states that the choice for the temple of Fortuna Muliebris, which was known as a commemoration of a political act of a group of senatorial women, was inspired by the need to provide Livia with "a precedent and model for political participation by a woman"⁴⁹ However, several objections could be made against these arguments The erection of the temple of Fortuna Muliebris should not be seen merely as a celebration of a political act by women, for although they appeared in a public context,

⁴⁴ Quilici Gighi 1981, p. 556

⁴⁵ Dion Hal. 8.56.4

⁴⁶ Kleiner, 1996, p. 33; Gorrie, 2004, pp. 68-71

⁴⁷ Barrett, 2002, p. 205

⁴⁸ Purcell 1986, p. 88; Boatwright, 1991 pp. 518, 520; Gorrie 2004, p. 71

⁴⁹ Severy 2003, p. 136

the senatorial women of Rome acted within the context of the household. Volumnia and Veturia were called upon in their capacity of wife and mother. In addition, the delegation of senatorial women that met with Coriolanus did not act autonomously, but with the approval of the senators.⁵⁰ In the inscription, Livia too is denoted in accordance with her traditional roles within the family: she is designated as a daughter and a wife. Furthermore, when comparing Livia's nomenclature in the inscription of the temple of Fortuna Muliebris with other inscriptions, it shows that it was not unusual to denote her first as the daughter of Drusus before mentioning Augustus, or Tiberius for that matter.⁵¹ The use, therefore, of Livia's filiation does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that she acted independently in the restoration of the temple.⁵² For the purpose of this study, this question is ultimately of little importance. Whether Livia acted independently or not, connecting her to the cult of Fortuna Muliebris would have contributed to her image as dutiful *matrona*.

Finally, the cult of Pudicitia Plebeia should be mentioned, for it has received a lot of attention in modern studies. Livia's involvement in the restoration of a shrine of Pudicitia Plebeia has been suggested by Palmer in 1974.⁵³ In recent research, scholars have often considered Livia's role in this restoration a historical fact, but the indications are, at best, circumstantial.⁵⁴ In a poem, Propertius refers to the temples of Pudicitia, asking "what is the use of girls having founded temples of Pudicitia, if any bride is permitted to behave as she pleases?"⁵⁵ Palmer states that "this allusion can refer to nothing but the restoration of the shrines of the two Chastities", referring to Pudicitia Plebeia and Pudicitia Patricia.⁵⁶ Combining this with the statement of Suetonius that Augustus reviewed the laws on *pudicitia*, Palmer takes it to mean that the restoration of the shrines of Pudicitia was part of Augustus' restoration policy.⁵⁷ Finally, the presence of a fifth century Basilica Libiana in the area which, according to Palmer, coincides with the location of the shrine of Pudicitia Plebeia, could only mean, in Palmer's opinion, that Livia took the responsibility of the restoration.⁵⁸ It is clear

⁵⁰ Dion Hal 8 43

⁵¹ E.g. *CIL* 5 6416; *CIL* 9.3304; *CIL* 9 4514, *CIL* 11 7552, *ILS* 122

⁵² The nominative of *Livia*, however, carries more weight to the argument, as it indicates Livia as the main dedicator

⁵³ Palmer, 1974.

⁵⁴ See, for instance, Kleiner – Matheson, 2000, p. 5; Barrett, 2002, pp. 202-203; Severy, 2003, p. 135, Kunst, 2008, p. 281

⁵⁵ Prop. 2.6.25-26

⁵⁶ Palmer, 1974, p. 138

⁵⁷ Suet. *Aug.* 34.1.

⁵⁸ For the location of the shrine. Liv. 10.23.1-10. Cf. Palmer, 1974, p. 139. See also Barrett, 2002, p. 203; Clark, 2007, p. 44

that based on this meagre evidence, Livia's involvement in the restoration of the shrine of Pudicitia Plebeia remains extremely speculative.⁵⁹

5.2.2. Divine association in imperial coinage

Besides involvement in cult life, the imperial court could also establish divine association through imperial coinage. The first secure example of divine association of imperial women on imperial coins occurs during the reign of Caligula, who issued a coin depicting his sisters with divine attributes.⁶⁰ Before, however, during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, coins were issued that contained portraits of female divinities with rather personalized features, but without clear identification in the legend, which has made scholars wonder whether these divinities need to be interpreted as imperial women. Before turning to the practice of divine association in the coinage of Caligula, Claudius and Nero, I will, therefore, turn to these ambiguous portraits and indicate the problems and debates concerning these coins.

A first example of ambiguous divine association of an imperial woman is a type of *denarii* minted in circa 13-12 B.C. by one of the *tresviri monetales*, Gaius Marius Tro[---].⁶¹ The obverse of the coin contains a portrait of Augustus with behind his head the *lituus*, while the reverse shows the head of the goddess Diana, identifiable by the quiver slung over her back (Fig. 22). The legends read AUGUSTUS on the obverse and C. MARIUS TRO III VIR on the reverse. The features of Diana – with a slightly arched nose, thin lips and a small chin – differ from the idealistical type and have made scholars conclude that she is to be identified with one of the imperial women in Augustus' family. Because the divinity shows resemblance to Augustus, the conclusion of many is that it must be his daughter Julia.⁶²

This identification has been convincingly rejected by others for several reasons. First of all, the portrait of Diana shows little resemblance to Julia herself, although I would like to add to this argument that the portraits we have of her are few in number, contested and often of bad quality.⁶³ Furthermore, the haircut is not the so-called *nodus* haircut, which was typical

⁵⁹ Palmer, 1974, p. 140, suggests without clear explanation that the shrine of Pudicitia Patriciana "may have been rebuilt by his daughter Julia, whose subsequent disgrace has effaced all memory of her public acts, or by some other patrician woman"

⁶⁰ *RIC* I², Caligula, nos. 33, 41

⁶¹ *RIC* I², Augustus, no. 404. Whether his name should read Gaius Marius Tromentina or Trogius remains uncertain. Julia Maior probably appears on another type, minted by the same Gaius Marius Tro., with Augustus on the obverse and a female head flanked by two male heads, probably illustrating Julia and her two sons Gaius and Lucius Caesar.

⁶² E.g. Fullerton, 1985, pp. 476-477, Green, 2007, p. 41.

⁶³ For the available portraits of Julia in sculpture and coinage, see Winkes, 1995, pp. 220-223, Wood, 1999, pp. 63-74. Cf. Pollini, 1990, p. 354.

for Augustan women. Instead Diana wears her hair drawn down alongside her face, after which it is pulled back into a small bun. The ornament on her forehead is not a *nodus*, but some sort of jewel or flower attached to her diadem.⁶⁴ Secondly, it is difficult to find a reason why the moneyer would have chosen the figure of Diana for association with Julia. Fullerton argues that it should be understood as a reference to the battle of Naulochus, of which Agrippa, Julia's husband, and Octavian claimed to have been protected by Diana.⁶⁵ Pollini, however, offers another explanation for the personalized features of Diana.⁶⁶ The resemblance to Augustus is not a reference to his daughter but serves to denote Diana as an Augustan divinity, *Diana Augusta*, and, following Fullerton in this aspect, recalls her past aid to Augustus.⁶⁷ I agree with Pollini that the coin type of this moneyer should, therefore, not be seen as an example of presenting an imperial woman in the guise of a goddess.

A series of *dupondii* minted during the reign of Tiberius serves as a second example of uncertain divine association on imperial coins. The series consists of three coin types of which each bears a portrait of a female personification on the obverse and an inscription with names and titles on the reverse. One coin reads TI CAESAR DIVI AUG F AUG PM TR POT XXIII around SC on the reverse and has a female portrait together with the legend SALUS AUGUSTA on the obverse (Fig. 13).⁶⁸ A second coin has a female portrait wearing a *stephane* decorated with floral ornaments with the legend IUSTITIA on the obverse, and again TI CAESAR DIVI AUG F AUG P M TR POT XXIII around SC on the reverse (Fig. 23).⁶⁹ Finally, a third coin shows a veiled female head wearing a diadem with the legend PIETAS on the obverse and reads DRUSUS CAESAR TI AUGUSTI F TR POT ITER around SC on the reverse (Fig. 24).⁷⁰ Various efforts have been made to identify these three female divinities as imperial women. The coins were struck between A.D. July 22 and July 23 Tacitus says that during this period Livia suffered from a serious illness, which made Tiberius rush back from Campania to be at her side.⁷¹ Livia recovered after which the senators decreed

⁶⁴ Wood, 1999, pp 67-68.

⁶⁵ Fullerton, 1985, p. 476. The proximity of the sanctuary of Artemis to the battle was the basis for the association of Diana/Artemis with the victory of Octavian. See App. B.C. 5.116, Dio 49.8.1.3. References to Diana's role can also be traced in Augustus' coinage: *RIC I*², Augustus, nos. 172-3, 181-3, 194-7, 204, 273. Cf. Hekster-Rich, 2006, pp. 154-155, with further references.

⁶⁶ Pollini, 1990, pp. 353-355.

⁶⁷ Pollini, 1990, p. 355. In a recent study, Varner, 2008, p. 185, shows that "assimilative images of deities imbued with individualized imperial physiognomy are not gender specific." It should, therefore, not be considered problematic that a female deity is assimilated to Augustus. Cf. Severy, 2003, p. 76; Ginsburg, 2006, p. 58.

⁶⁸ *RIC I*², Tiberius, no. 47.

⁶⁹ *RIC I*², Tiberius, no. 46.

⁷⁰ *RIC I*², Tiberius, no. 43.

⁷¹ Tac. *Ann.* 3.64.1. See also chapter 4.

supplicia to the gods and *ludi magni* to celebrate her recovery⁷² Since the female portrait on the *dupondius* denoting Salus Augusta has less idealized features than the female portraits on the other two coins, scholars have come to believe that this female portrait refers to a historical figure and is to be identified with Livia According to this reasoning, the coin was issued to commemorate Livia's recovery⁷³ One should bear in mind, however, that Livia is not identified by name on the coin⁷⁴ Any identification, therefore, remains tentative Scholars have attempted to identify the Pietas and Iustitia figures with imperial women as well Some have suggested that these female portraits also represent Livia, though current consensus is that that is not the case⁷⁵ Other suggestions are associations of Livilla with Iustitia and of Antonia Minor with Pietas Whatever the case may be, the coins of A D 22-23 do not openly associate imperial women with divinities

Before turning to a more secure example of divine association on imperial coinage, it is worthwhile to look at a series of coins minted during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, both in Rome and at Lugdunum, featuring the figure of a seated female This is important as these coins show how the reuse of numismatic motifs by provincial cities or later emperors can complicate the interpretation of earlier issues During the reign of Augustus, types of *aurei* and *denarii* were minted that showed a seated female on the reverse⁷⁶ The female figure is seated on a low-backed chair, holding a sceptre in her right hand and an object in her other, which looks, on some coins, like ears of wheat and, on others, like a branch⁷⁷ After the accession of Tiberius, this motif was repeated and the same female figure appears in his coinage⁷⁸ If the object in the woman's hand can be denoted as a bundle of corn-ears, she probably represents the goddess Ceres, if it is a branch, identification with Pax is more likely⁷⁹ The female figure, however, is neither on the Augustan coins nor on the Tiberian coins identified by legend, which merely says PONTIF MAXIM (Fig 25) Because the motif was later reused by Claudius, who issued a type of *dupondii* with the same seated female to

⁷² Tac *Ann* 3 64 3

⁷³ E g Bartman, 1999, pp 112, 114-116, Wood, 1999, pp 82, 109, Winkes 1995, p 22, Barrett 2001, pp 92-93 Ginsburg, 2006, pp 60-61

⁷⁴ Salus Augusta does not refer to Livia's name after the death of Augustus, as Kleiner seems to believe (Kleiner – Matheson 1996, p 60) but refers to a more general "Augustan well being" Cf Bartman, 1999 p 112, Barrett 2001, p 93, Ginsburg, 2006 p 60

⁷⁵ For identification with Livia Kleiner – Matheson 1996, pp 60-61, Mikocki 1995 pp 25-28, no 94, 109 Stepper, 2000, p 63 Contra Wood, 1999, p 109

⁷⁶ RIC I², Augustus, nos 219-220

⁷⁷ Wood, 1999, p 88

⁷⁸ RIC I² Tiberius nos 25-30

⁷⁹ Schmidt-Dick, 2002, pp 138 167-168 Cf Schmidt Dick, 2002 pp 30-33 82-86, where she makes no difference between a bundle of corn ears and a branch Instead, she interpretes the object as a branch and thus as an attribute of Pax

commemorate the deification of Livia, and because on these coins the female figure was identified with the legend DIVA AUGUSTA, scholars have often assumed that the female figure on the Augustan and Tiberian coins represents Livia as well.⁸⁰ However, the absence of an explanatory legend, the small size of the facial features and the generalized nature of the hairstyle do not permit a positive identification with Livia.⁸¹

As stated above, the first certain example of divine association of imperial women in imperial coinage is a *sestertius* issued during Caligula's reign in 37-38 and again in 39 (Fig. 26).⁸² The obverse shows a laureate head of the emperor with the legend C CAESAR AUG GERMANICUS PON M TR POT, while the reverse contains the standing figures of Agrippina Minor, Drusilla and Livilla. The three women are identified in the legend, which states AGRIPPINA DRUSILLA IULIA SC. For the first time, living imperial women were named on imperial coins.⁸³

Agrippina, who is standing left, looks towards Drusilla, while her left hand is on her sister's shoulder. Her right elbow leans on a column and she holds a *cornucopia* in her hand. Drusilla's head is turned to the left, facing her sister Agrippina. She holds a *patera* in her right hand and a *cornucopia* in her left. Finally, Livilla is standing right with her head turned towards her sisters. She carries a rudder in her right hand and, like her sisters, a *cornucopia* in the other. Through their attributes, the three women are associated with divinities. In Livilla's case, the rudder in combination with a *cornucopia* strongly suggests association with Fortuna.⁸⁴ The identification of the divinities with which Agrippina and Drusilla are associated is harder to define. Traditionally, scholars have accepted Agrippina as being associated with Securitas, and Drusilla with Concordia. Yet, their attributes are not specific enough to allude to these or other divinities.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, it appears that for the first time

⁸⁰ E.g. Grether, 1946, p. 227, Rickman, 1980, p. 260, Chirassi-Colombo, 1981, p. 427, Mikocki, 1995, nos. 11, 15, 16. The same line of thinking is often applied to the series of *dupondi* issued by Tiberius in 15-16, depicting a seated female with a sceptre and *patera* without explanatory legend. The female figure of these coins, because of the similarities with the seated female of the Pax refigurations and the Diva Augusta of the Claudian coins, is also identified with Livia. See Kleiner – Matheson, 1996, pp. 58-59.

⁸¹ Pollini, 1990, p. 350. Cf. Spaeth, 1996, p. 171.

⁸² *RIC I*², Caligula, nos. 33 (37-38 A.D.), 41 (39 A.D.). Cf. Trillmich, 1978, p. 39.

⁸³ Note that *aurei* and *denari* had already appeared with the portrait of his deceased mother Agrippina Maior, who was also identified by name. *RIC I*², Caligula, no. 7-8, 13-14. Cf. chapter 4.

⁸⁴ By the second century B.C., the *cornucopia* had become the most common iconographical feature of Fortuna, although it continued to be a standard element for other fertility goddesses too, such as Demeter or Isis. The combination of the *cornucopia* with the rudder as an iconographical motif also dates to the second century B.C. Cf. Arya, 2002, pp. 73, 78. On Fortuna, see also below.

⁸⁵ E.g. Grant, 1954, p. 43, thinks that Agrippina might be associated with Salus. See also Wood, 1995, p. 461, Wood, 1999, p. 210, Schmidt-Dick, 2002, pp. 29-30, Ginsburg, 2006, p. 65. The argument that Drusilla is likened to Concordia because she was Caligula's favourite and acted as his wife rather than as his sister is read in the light of the literary accounts of the emperor's improper relationship with his sisters. See, for instance, Kleiner – Matheson, 1996, pp. 64-65 ('Stories circulated that Caligula had incestuous relations with Drusilla and that he

the imperial court took the initiative to openly associate women with the divine on imperial coins

The significance of Caligula's *sestertius* should be seen in a broad context of rehabilitation, legitimization and promises of a prospective reign. Clearly, at the beginning of his reign, Caligula invested some time in rehabilitating his family.⁸⁶ One of his measures was to honour them through coins. He issued, besides the *sestertii* with his three sisters, *dupondii* with his brothers on horseback, asses with the portrait of Germanicus and *sestertii* with the portrait of his mother Agrippina Maior.⁸⁷ The *sestertius* with Caligula on the obverse and Agrippina, Livilla and Drusilla on the reverse presented the living members of Germanicus' family as a unity. At the same time, it served to legitimize Caligula's claim on the throne. He and his siblings were, through their mother Agrippina Maior, direct descendants of the divine Augustus. By emphasizing that blood relationship, the emperor advertised his claim to rule. Thirdly, and here the divine association serves its main purpose, the *sestertius* advertised the prospect of Caligula's reign. The *cornucopia* that all three sisters carry appeals to a general message of prosperity. The connotation of fertility applies to the sisters, in their capacity of future mothers, as well as to the future of Rome.⁸⁸ The association of these women with these divinities alludes to an imperial promise of prosperity and general well-being.⁸⁹ It should not be excluded that the prominence of the sisters reflected a dynastic program. As Ginsburg states, "the aim of such dynastic propaganda was to prepare the way for public acceptance of a child of any of the four siblings as Gaius' heir – an expedient necessitated by the fact that for most of the time Gaius's three sisters were in favor, he was unmarried and still childless."⁹⁰

One could say that Caligula started the tradition of associating imperial women with divinities in imperial coinage, but the Julio-Claudian emperor who made the most extensive use of it was without doubt Claudius. In 50, or shortly thereafter, *aurei* and *denarii* were issued that figured the emperor Claudius and his third wife Agrippina Minor.⁹¹ The obverse shows the laureate head of Claudius with the legend TI CLAUD CAESAR AUG GERM P M TRIB POT P P, while the reverse displays the draped bust of Agrippina with the legend

had decided to marry her – hence the appropriateness of depicting her, rather than one of the others, as Concordia")

⁸⁶ See chapter 4

⁸⁷ Drusus and Nero *RIC* I³, Caligula, no. 34. Germanicus *RIC* I², Caligula, no. 35, Agrippina Maior *RIC* I², Caligula, no. 55

⁸⁸ On the dynastic plans of Caligula and their reflection in his visual programme see Wood, 1995

⁸⁹ Ginsburg, 2006, pp. 65-69

⁹⁰ Ginsburg, 2006, p. 68. Cf. Wood, 1995, p. 459

⁹¹ *RIC* I², Claudius nos. 80-81

AGRIPPINAE AUGUSTAE (Fig. 27). Her hair is parted in the middle and bound together in a long plait, with two strands loose at the sides of her neck. On her head she wears the *corona spicea*, a characteristic attribute of the fertility goddess Ceres. Agrippina Minor is the first living wife of a ruling emperor who received the honour of having her portrait on imperial coins. Her numismatic image seems to have been modelled on the image of Antonia Minor, who appeared earlier in Claudius' reign on imperial coins. As stated in the previous chapter, Claudius assigned a prominent role to his deceased mother in his coinage. At the beginning of his reign, Claudius minted *aurei*, *denarii* and *dupondii* with the portrait of Antonia Minor.⁹² While the reverses of these coins differ, the obverses of the *aurei* and *denarii* contain a portrait of Antonia wearing the *corona spicea* of Ceres with the legend ANTONIA AUGUSTA (Fig. 17 and Fig. 28).

The association with Ceres was repeated in a numismatic issue commemorating Claudius' deification of Livia early in his reign, as mentioned above.⁹³ The *dupondii* show the head of Augustus wearing a radiate crown with the legend DIVUS AUGUSTUS SC on the obverse, and a seated female figure, probably representing Livia, with the legend DIVA AUGUSTA on the reverse (Fig. 29).⁹⁴ On these coins, Livia wears the *corona spicea* of Ceres, while she holds wheat stalks in her right hand and a long torch in her left. Some scholars have argued that this image of Livia represented her cult statue which Claudius dedicated in the temple of her divine consort.⁹⁵ However, as stated above, similar motifs had earlier appeared on coins during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, which makes this hypothesis unlikely.⁹⁶

The choice to associate Antonia, Livia and Agrippina with Ceres on imperial coins is remarkable. The motives behind this could be found in the context of Claudius' policy with regard to the grain supply. Among the many difficulties that Claudius faced upon his accession to the throne in 41 was a shortage of grain in the capital.⁹⁷ References to the grain production in general and to the fertility goddess Ceres in particular on imperial coins were probably aimed at reassuring the people of Rome that their emperor was right on top of things. During his reign, Claudius made an effort to facilitate the grain transport, including the

⁹² *RIC* I², Claudius, nos. 65-68, 92. The precise dating of these coins remains uncertain: *BMCRE* I, p. cli (A.D. 41-45); *RIC* I², Claudius, nos. 65-68 (A.D. 41-45), von Kaenel, 1986, pp. 245-246 (A.D. 41-42), von Kaenel, 1994, p. 53 (A.D. 41-42), Trillmich, 1978, pp. 72-77 (A.D. 41-51/52).

⁹³ Wood, 1999, p. 154. On the chronology of the coins with portraits of Antonia and *Diva Augusta*, see Ginsburg, 2006, p. 63, n. 31.

⁹⁴ *RIC* I², Claudius, no. 101.

⁹⁵ Rose, 1997, pp. 40, 118. Contra: Bartman, 1999, p. 131. On the deification of Livia, see also chapter 3.

⁹⁶ Bartman, 1999, pp. 103, 131.

⁹⁷ Sen. *De Brevit. Vitae* 18.5.

construction of the harbour of Ostia and awarding privileges to those who invested in the corn trade.⁹⁸ Antonia and Livia's association with Ceres contributed to the visualisation of Claudius' concern for his people, in much the same way as the imperial coins depicting a *modius* (grain measure) or the actual figure of Ceres on the obverse that were minted during his reign.⁹⁹ The portrayal of Agrippina Minor with the crown of Ceres can be read in the same light. From the ancient sources, it clearly appears that even by the time Claudius married Agrippina, the problematic nature of the grain supply was still one of the emperor's concerns.¹⁰⁰ In addition, as in the case of Caligula's *sestertius* depicting his three sisters, the reference to a fertility goddess also highlighted Agrippina's own fertility. Through this type of coins, Claudius designated his new wife as mother or future mother of potential heirs.¹⁰¹

The prominence of divine association in imperial coinage was not imitated by Claudius' successor Nero. On the coins that appeared in the beginning of his reign, Agrippina was no longer depicted with the attributes of Ceres.¹⁰² The other women in his family rarely figured on imperial coins. Only one type shows the emperor with his wife, though it remains uncertain whether Poppaea Sabina or Statilia Messalina is depicted.¹⁰³ The imperial pair is shown on the reverse as standing together with the accompanying legend AUGUSTUS AUGUSTA (Fig. 30). The empress is carrying a *patera* in her right hand and a *cornucopia* in the other. The *cornucopia* points at a general association with fertility, but it is impossible to recognize an allusion to any specific fertility goddess.¹⁰⁴

5.2.3. Deification practices

A third way in which one can detect the concern of the imperial court for the standards of womanhood and its impact on divine association is through the practice of deification of imperial women. When Livia died in A.D. 29, opinions differed on the question whether Livia should be deified or not. According to the literary sources, Tiberius was very clear on this

⁹⁸ Suet. *Claud.* 18-20; Dio 60.11.1-3; Gaius *Inst.* 1 32C; Ulp 3 6 Cf. Rickman, 1980, pp. 74-75, Ramage, 1983, p. 204

⁹⁹ *RIC I*², Claudius, nos. 74, 94. Note that the representation of Ceres, a seated veiled figure with two corn-cars in her right hand and a long torch in the other, looks very similar to Claudius' depiction of Diva Augusta. Only the orientation of the torch is different. See, in this context, also the depiction of the harbour of Ostia in Claudius' coinage (*RIC I*², Claudius, nos. 178-183)

¹⁰⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 12 43, Suet. *Claud.* 18.

¹⁰¹ Ginsburg, 2006, pp. 69-71.

¹⁰² *RIC I*², Nero, nos. 1-3, 6-7. On these coins, see chapter 4.

¹⁰³ *RIC I*², Nero, nos. 44, 56. On this coin type, see chapter 3.

¹⁰⁴ Mikocki, 1995, no. 255, thinks of Fortuna because of the *cornucopia* or Concordia because of the overall image of marital bliss. On this type and the message of *concordia*, see chapter 3.

subject and forbade the senators to undertake any initiative.¹⁰⁵ Suetonius and Tacitus state that Tiberius added to this that this was the request of both him and Livia, implying that it was already considered by the imperial court before Livia's death.¹⁰⁶ From the account of Dio, it clearly appears that the acts of commemoration that the senators wanted to initiate, and the tributes that Tiberius was in fact ready to authorize, went to the heart of the problematic nature of distinguishing the public from the private sphere as to the position of imperial women. Tiberius agreed to confer a public funeral to his mother, as had been the case for Atia and Octavia.¹⁰⁷ Other measures he allegedly wanted to confine to a minimum.¹⁰⁸ Many senators, however, seemed to have felt that Livia merited more than what Tiberius had arranged.¹⁰⁹ After all, Livia had been known to help senators rear their children or to pay their daughters' dowries and had even saved the lives of some of them, so Dio clarifies.¹¹⁰ Therefore, they voted for mourning during an entire year on the part of the women of Rome and the erection of an arch. The latter was an honour that had never before been bestowed on a woman.¹¹¹ Dio states that Tiberius maintained his objections and managed to tone down the honours. He requested, for instance, that the conducting of public business should not be abandoned, to which the senators subsided.¹¹² In addition, he did not want the arch to be built at public expense and instead proposed to finance it himself. Dio adds, however, that this was merely a trick, since Tiberius hesitated to refuse the honour all together and turned it into an empty promise instead, for the arch was never built.¹¹³

The first Julio-Claudian woman who was officially consecrated was Drusilla, Caligula's sister. In A.D. 38, Drusilla died from an unknown cause at the age of 22. According to the sources, Caligula was devastated. Suetonius states that the emperor was so grief-stricken that he suddenly fled the city, headed for Syracuse and returned from there without cutting his hair or shaving his beard.¹¹⁴ Dio states that Drusilla received all the honours Livia had received after her death. Caligula's sister was awarded a public funeral,

¹⁰⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 5 2.1; Dio 58.2.1, Suet. *Tib.* 51.2

¹⁰⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 5 2 1, Suet. *Tib.* 51 2

¹⁰⁷ On public funerals for imperial women in general and the case of Atia in particular, see chapter 4

¹⁰⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 5 2

¹⁰⁹ Dio 58 2 1

¹¹⁰ Flory, 1995, p. 133, argues that the senators wanted Livia's deification and other honours because of her merits, not because of her status as mother of the emperor or widow of the deified Augustus. Both aspects, however, seem difficult to separate since it was Livia's status, among other things, that enabled her to do the things she did

¹¹¹ Kleiner, 1990, pp 508-514 Cf Flory, 1995, p 132, suggests that the arch might have served as a substitute for deification, since "no arches existed for mortal women, but there were arches that contained statues of goddesses and were votive offering to female deities"

¹¹² Dio 58 2 1.

¹¹³ Dio 58.2 6.

¹¹⁴ Suet. *Cal.* 24.2

during which her husband Marcus Lepidus delivered the eulogy ¹¹⁵ The cortege of her obsequies consisted of praetorians and members of the equestrian order, among others. Boys of noble birth performed the equestrian exercise called *Troy* ¹¹⁶ Suetonius adds that Caligula proclaimed a period of public mourning, during which it was a capital offence to laugh, bathe or dine in the company of one's parents, wife or children ¹¹⁷ Beside these proclamations, which in nature remained within the limits of Roman custom, though, one could argue, going to extremes, Caligula deified his sister and gave her the name Panthea, "Universal Goddess" ¹¹⁸ He ordered a golden effigy to be put in the *curia* and another statue to be placed in the temple of Venus in the Forum Iulium ¹¹⁹ He put her cult in the hands of twenty priests, men as well as women Furthermore, whenever women offered testimony, they should swear by her name He himself refused to swear an oath unless it was by the name of his sister goddess. ¹²⁰ Dio states that her birthday was elevated to the status of a public holiday, during which games equal to the ones offered to the people during the *Ludi Megalenses* should be celebrated In addition, banquets had to be organised for the senators and the *equites*. ¹²¹ Dio further emphasizes that, unlike Tiberius, Caligula allowed the death of his sister to disrupt the public order

Τούτοις τε οὖν αὐτὴν ὁ Γάιος ἐτίμησε, καὶ τῷ τὰς πανηγύρεις τὰς τότε ὀφειλούσας γενέσθαι μητε ἐν τῷ νενομισμένῳ χρόνῳ, πλὴν τῆς ὅσιας ἐνεκα, μητ' αὐτὴς ποτε ποιηθῆναι Αἰτίαν τε πάντες ὁμοίως εἶχον. εἴτ' ἤχθησθσαν ἐπὶ τινὶ ὡς λυπουμενοὶ, εἴτε καὶ ὡς χαίροντες ἐπραξαν ἡ γὰρ μὴ πενθεῖν αὐτὴν ὡς ἀνθρώπου ἢ θρηγεῖν ὡς θεὸν ἐνεκαλοῦντο (Dio 59 11 5)

Gaius would not permit the festivals which were then due to take place, to be celebrated either at their appointed time, except as mere formalities, or at any later date All persons incurred censure equally whether they took offence at anything, as being grieved, or behaved as if they were glad, for they were accused either of failing to mourn her as a mortal or of bewailing her as a goddess

Nevertheless, it seems that regardless of his grief Caligula did have eye for Roman traditions

¹¹⁵ Dio 59 11 1

¹¹⁶ Dio 59 11 2

¹¹⁷ Suet *Cal* 24 2

¹¹⁸ Dio 59 11 3

¹¹⁹ On the location, see below

¹²⁰ Dio 59 11 3, Suet *Cal* 24 2

¹²¹ Dio 59 11 3

There has been a tendency in modern research to ascribe the organisation of Drusilla's cult to Caligula's Hellenistic sympathies.¹²² Flory, for instance, states that "Caligula, ignoring past history and influenced by the practices of the Hellenistic East, established a cult for his sister, which showed no attempt to integrate the cult into Roman traditions or to even provide a rationale."¹²³ It is quite possible that Caligula was influenced by Hellenistic precedents, for there was no Roman precedent for the deification of a woman, but Dio's description of the particularities of the cult shows that the emperor complied with precedents from the Roman past.¹²⁴ Dio explicitly states that the honours after Livia's death served as an example, and in several cases one could even argue that the funeral of Divus Augustus served as a precedent.¹²⁵ If the generally accepted restoration of the text of the Arval records is correct, Drusilla's consecration even took place on Augustus' birthday, i.e. 23 September.¹²⁶

By placing Drusilla's statue in the temple of Venus, Caligula placed both himself and his deceased sister in their family's history. The temple mentioned here is probably that of Venus Genetrix, the divine ancestress of the *gens Iulia*, in the Forum of Iulius Caesar.¹²⁷ Placing the statue of a deceased family member in a temple of Venus was not an unusual gesture. It is known that Livia dedicated a statue of her deceased grandson, a son of Germanicus, in the guise of Cupid in the temple of Venus Erycina.¹²⁸ This temple was located on the Capitol and like the temple of Venus Genetrix it had a link with the *gens Iulia*. The Capitoline Venus was most closely associated with the Trojan myth and the gesture of Livia, therefore, was consistent with the claim that the *gens Iulia* descended from Venus through the Trojan Aeneas.¹²⁹ By placing Drusilla's statue in the temple of Venus Genetrix, the emperor linked his sister with the divine ancestress of the family and denoted her as a protective patron goddess herself.¹³⁰

¹²² For a recent discussion on the Hellenistic aspects of Caligula's reign, see e.g. Adams, 2007, with further references.

¹²³ Flory, 1995, p. 133. See also Koberlein, 1962, p. 62.

¹²⁴ On this subject, see esp. Herz, 1981.

¹²⁵ Dio 59.11.1. See Herz, 1981, pp. 325, 328, 333, with regard to the cult of Divus Augustus as an example for the priests of Drusilla's cult and the celebration of her birthday.

¹²⁶ *AFA* xlin 7 (Smallwood 3.7). See Barrett, Caligula, pp. 87-89.

¹²⁷ *LTUR*, s.v. Forum Iulium: Venus Genetrix, acdes.

¹²⁸ *Suet. Cal.* 7.

¹²⁹ On Aeneas' visit to the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Eryx, see Diod. 4.83.4-7. See also Schilling, 1954, pp. 233-266; Hurley, 1993, p. 17; Staples, 1998, p. 121; Erskine, 2001, pp. 198-205.

¹³⁰ Caligula's relationship with his sisters and his reaction to Drusilla's death have often been interpreted in a dynastic context. See esp. Wood, 1995; Winterling, 2003, pp. 79-82. In this context, see also the coin type depicting Drusilla, Livilla and Agrippina Minor discussed earlier in this chapter (*RIC* I², Caligula, nos. 33, 41). In her study on the portraiture of Drusilla and her sisters, Wood (1995, p. 460) interprets Caligula's gesture of placing Drusilla's statue in the temple of Venus as "an effort to salvage a bad situation by allowing Drusilla to continue to appear as part of the imperial family in visual and verbal representations."

Despite Caligula's attempt to place the deification of his sister within the limits of Roman custom, the practice did not find approval by everyone. Seneca, for instance, looks upon the deification of Drusilla as an excessive product of Caligula's grief:

Pro pudor imperii! Principis Romani lugentis sororem alea solacium fuit! Idem ille Gaius furiosa inconstantia modo barbam capillumque summittens modo tondens Italiae ac Siciliae oras errabundus permetiens et numquam satis certus, utrum lugeri vellet an coli sororem, eodem omni tempore, quo templa illi constituebat ac pulvinaria, eos qui parum maesti fuerant, crudelissima adficiebat animadversione. (Sen. Ad Pol. 17.4-5)

What a disgrace to the empire! Gambling was the solace of a Roman prince mourning for his sister! And this same Gaius with mad caprice, sometimes allowing his beard and hair to grow, sometimes shearing them close, wandering aimlessly along the coast of Italy and Sicily, and never quite sure whether he wished his sister to be lamented or worshipped, during the whole time that he was rearing temples and shrines to her memory would inflict the most cruel punishment upon those who had not shown sufficient sorrow.

Obviously, Seneca's passage should also be seen in the context of the author's representation of the emperor, who is above all criticized for his frenzied inconsistency in every aspect of life.¹³¹ Nevertheless, the deification of Drusilla was an important step in the evolution of the practice and some of Caligula's measures were imitated by future emperors.

Placing the practice of deification into the context of the family and womanhood continues under Claudius, who deified his grandmother Livia on 17 January 42. Legitimizing the deification of Livia was probably easier for Claudius than Drusilla's deification had been for Caligula. Not only was there a precedent by now, Livia was also the widow of a deified emperor, which provided Claudius with a context into which to place and to organize her cult. In some aspects, he followed Caligula's example. Women, for instance, were ordered to swear by Diva Augusta's name when taking an oath.¹³² Alternatively, Claudius placed her cult in a marital context, making sure that the Diva Augusta was strongly connected to the Divus Augustus. First of all, the day of Livia's consecration concurred with her wedding anniversary.¹³³ Secondly, he joined her cult with that of her husband by placing her statue

¹³¹ On Seneca's representation of Caligula, see Wilcox, 2008, with pp. 457-458 on the cited passage. See also Winterling, 2003, pp. 79-80.

¹³² Dio 60.5.2

¹³³ CIL 6 2032, ll. 15-18; CFA 17.1 16-17. See Flory, 1995, pp. 133-134; Barrett, 2002, p. 222

next to his in a Roman *Augusteion* ¹³⁴ In addition, to commemorate this event, Claudius minted the fore-mentioned coin depicting the portrait bust of Augustus with the legend DIVUS AUGUSTUS SC on the obverse and the seated figure of Livia with attributes of Ceres with the legend DIVA AUGUSTA on the reverse The deification of Livia was clearly shaped to emphasize her role as wife and *materfamilias* and to present the Julio-Claudian family as one where traditional values were held high Unlike Caligula, Claudius did not choose male and female priests to tend to Livia's cult, but instead placed the responsibility in the hands of the Vestal Virgins ¹³⁵ The exact nature of the role of the Vestal Virgins remains unclear since the sources do not elaborate on this subject Like Claudius' other measures, the choice for the Vestals would have contributed to Livia's image as a chaste matron and a loyal and virtuous wife It seems that the involvement of the priestesses in the cult of imperial women remained limited to Claudius' measure ¹³⁶

After Claudius' reign, two more female members of the Julio-Claudian family were deified In January 63 A D , Poppaea gave birth to a daughter named Claudia, but the infant died after a few months ¹³⁷ Tacitus criticizes both the attitude of Nero and the sycophancy of the senators during this period, stating that the initial joy and the grief afterwards were characterized by extremes ¹³⁸ Tacitus' list of the honours voted to Poppaea and her child is long They were both granted the title of Augusta The succesful delivery was ascribed to divine intervention and public vows were formulated A temple was dedicated to Fecunditas and images of the *Fortunae* were set up in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus These statues probably referred to the *Fortunae Antuates*, Fortuna Victrix and Fortuna Felix, who were worshipped in Antium, the birthplace of both Nero and his new-born child Claudia ¹³⁹ In addition, public games were organised at Rome and a chariot race took place in Antium to honour the Claudian and Domitian families

When the child died four months later, the flattery of the senators continued, so Tacitus argues Claudia was deified and received a shrine, temple and priest Two years later,

¹³⁴ Dio 60 5 2 It remains unclear which *Augusteion* is meant by Dio on the different possibilities, see Cecamore, 2002, pp 159-164 On the symbolic importance of Livia's wedding anniversary and its role in her representation on the Palatine Hill, see Foubert, 2010 (forthcoming)

¹³⁵ Dio 60 5 2

¹³⁶ Mekacher 2006, p 76

¹³⁷ Tac *Ann* 15 23

¹³⁸ Tac *Ann* 15 23

¹³⁹ Suet *Nero* 6 On the cult of Fortuna in Antium see Kajanto, 1981 p 505

Poppaea was again pregnant¹⁴⁰ According to the ancient authors, she died after Nero kicked her in the stomach during an outburst of rage.¹⁴¹

Unlike Caligula's attempt to remain within the limits of Roman custom, Nero turned to foreign practice when he decided to embalm Poppaea's body¹⁴² Like other imperial women before her, she received a public funeral and her body was placed in the mausoleum of Augustus In his eulogy he praised her beauty and her capacity as a mother Dio states that Nero dedicated a temple to 'Sabina Venus' and gave it an inscription which said that the building was constructed by the women of Rome¹⁴³ The accounts of Tacitus and Dio show that, even though Nero went to extremes in his commemoration of Poppaea, the emperor still attempted to put her deification in a context of womanly behaviour He emphasized her role as a mother by connecting her cult to that of Venus, the divine ancestress of the Roman people and of the *gens Julia*, in a similar way as Caligula had done for his sister Drusilla¹⁴⁴

5.2.4 *Fact or fiction: divine association with Vesta*

A fourth example of divine association on imperial level that should be treated here is the association with the goddess Vesta The precise nature of the relationship between the cult of Vesta and its priestesses on the one hand and the imperial women on the other remains subject of debate¹⁴⁵ In a recent study, Mekacher states that there was no 'personliche Freundschaft' between them "Die Vestalinnen scheinen eher am Rande des persönlichen Interesses des Kaiserhauses zu stehen"¹⁴⁶ In her study on the portraits of Livia, Bartman, however, takes up the opposite position and attributes a strong connection between the imperial house and the cult of Vesta She states that "the allusions to Vesta () are the most potent in Livia's iconographic arsenal"¹⁴⁷ Any interpretation of the relationship between Vesta and the imperial family is complicated by both the nature of the ancient sources and modern scholarship As in so many cases, references to imperial involvement in the cult of Vesta are few and rarely straight-forward In this particular case, modern research does not facilitate things either

¹⁴⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 16.6

¹⁴¹ Tac. *Ann.* 16.6; Dio 63.26.3; Suet. *Nero* 35. See Champlin, 2003, pp. 104-105

¹⁴² Tac. *Ann.* 16.6

¹⁴³ Dio 63.26.3

¹⁴⁴ On divine association between Venus and imperial women, see below

¹⁴⁵ On the Vestal Virgins, see the influential studies of Beard, 1980, and Beard, 1995. See also most recently Mekacher, 2006, and Wildfang, 2006

¹⁴⁶ Mekacher, 2006, p. 194

¹⁴⁷ Bartman, 1999, p. 94

As is well-known, it sometimes happens that hypotheses, after being repeated over and over again, become so-called ‘factoids’.¹⁴⁸ This seems to be the case with the association of Julio-Claudian women with Vesta. Although it appears from the sources that at certain moments there was a clear connection between the cult and the imperial house, scholars have more than once assumed that this must have meant that the imperial women were actively involved. Specific examples will be discussed below, but for now it suffices to say that the involvement of Julio-Claudian women should not be taken for granted and that some conclusions with regard to their role in the cult of Vesta need to be reconsidered.

It has been well established that Augustus deliberately tried to intertwine the cult of Vesta with his family. When he became Pontifex Maximus in 12 B.C., one of his many tasks was to oversee the state cult of Vesta and its priestesses.¹⁴⁹ Ordinarily, the Pontifex Maximus lived in a *domus publica* which stood in the Forum adjacent to the precinct of the Vestal Virgins. Augustus, however, did not move to this house, but instead made it part of his Palatine house *publicus* and dedicated a statue and a shrine to Vesta in his residence.¹⁵⁰ In doing so, he propagated himself and his family as safekeepers of the cult of Vesta and, by extension, the safety and prosperity of Rome. What the role of Livia or the other imperial women was cannot be retrieved from the sources. Flory states that “the cult of the Palatine Vesta appears to have been delegated to her” (i.e. Livia), but the sources make no mention of Livia’s alleged responsibility.¹⁵¹

Scholars often refer to the privileges that were attributed to Livia to prove that Augustus aimed at associating his wife with Vesta.¹⁵² Over time, Livia came to share several privileges with the Vestal Virgins, but whether there was intended parallelism behind it is doubtful. In 35 B.C., Livia received, together with Octavia, a first set of privileges, including *sacrosanctitas*, the erection of statues, and freedom of tutelage.¹⁵³ Although these privileges

¹⁴⁸ Yoffee, 2005, p. 7: “A factoid is a speculation or guess that has been repeated so often it is eventually taken for hard fact.”

¹⁴⁹ *Res Gestae* 10, *Ov. Fast.* 3.419-420. Severy, 2003, pp. 99-104.

¹⁵⁰ *Fasti Caeretani* (CIL I², p. 213) *Fer(iae) q(uod) e(o) d(ie) sig(num)/ Vest(ae) in domo P(alatina) dedic(atum)*, *Fasti Praenestini* (CIL I², p. 236): *Fer(iae) ex s(enatus) c(onsulto) quod eo di(e) aedicul(a) et [ara] Vest(ae) in domo Imp(eratoris) Caesaris Aug(usti) po(n)tif(ici)s ma(x)imu(m)/ dedic(at) Quirino et Valgio co(n)s(ul)ib(us)*, or *quod eo di(e) signum et [ara] Vest(ae)* (according to the reading of Fishwick, 1993); Dio 54.27.2-3. Cf. Cecamore, 1994-1995, pp. 9-32, with further references.

¹⁵¹ Flory, 1984, p. 321. Flory does not provide arguments to found her hypothesis. Cf. Severy, 2003, p. 135: “The Vestals tended the sacred hearth of the community of Rome, which Livia now did in her own home.” Severy does not provide arguments either for Livia’s appointment as ‘guardian’ of the cult of Vesta. See also Stepper, 2000, p. 64.

¹⁵² Flory, 1984, pp. 320-321; Schrombges, 1986, p. 202; Flory, 1995, p. 59 n. 53; Bartman, 1999, p. 94. Contra Frei-Stolba, 1998; Barrett, 2002, pp. 143-145; Mekacher, 2006, pp. 50-52, 194-195; Kunst, 2008, pp. 201-202.

¹⁵³ Dio 49.38.1. Cf. Bauman, 1981, on Dio’s treatment of the conferral of *sacrosanctity* to Caesar in 44 B.C., Octavian in 36 B.C., and Octavia and Livia in 35 B.C. See also Scardigli, 1982.

gave Livia and Octavia a public position similar to that of the Vestal Virgins, who until then were without a doubt the most visible women in Roman society, their accordance was rather caused because of political necessity: the tense situation with Mark Antony asked for certain protective measures.¹⁵⁴ After the death of her son Drusus in 9 B.C., Livia received a second set of privileges, including more statues and the *ius trium liberorum*.¹⁵⁵ The parallel with the Vestal Virgins did not occur until A.D. 9, when Augustus attributed them the *ius trium liberorum*.¹⁵⁶ In this case at least, it seems incorrect to think of the privilege as being a parallel with the Vestal Virgins. Augustus' marriage legislation (18-9 B.C.) had made it possible for every free woman who had three children and freedwoman with four children to acquire the *ius liberorum*.¹⁵⁷ Livia was rather paralleled with these women. Why Augustus decided to grant the privilege to the Vestal Virgins, even though they already possessed the juridical rights that came with it, is unclear. Perhaps he did not want to negatively affect the position of the Vestal Virgins by giving the impression that they, as women with no children, fell under the limitations of the new law.¹⁵⁸ None of the privileges granted to Livia during Augustus' reign suggest that he aimed at constructing a 'Vestal image' for his wife.¹⁵⁹

Livia received two more privileges that resembled those of the Vestal Virgins after the death of Augustus. In A.D. 14, she obtained the right to use a lictor during her religious duties.¹⁶⁰ This privilege, however, was a direct result of her appointment as *sacerdos* of *Divus Augustus* and not intended to equal her position to that of the Vestals as such.¹⁶¹ Secondly, in A.D. 23 she was allowed to take place among the Vestals in the theatre.¹⁶² In one of his

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Bauman, 1981, pp. 166-183; Scardigli, 1982, pp. 61-64; Frei-Stolba, 1998, pp. 72-76. Note in this context that Dio (49.38.1) explains *sacrosanctitas* as being similar to that of a tribune and not to that of a Vestal Virgin. Frei-Stolba (1998, pp. 73-74, n. 28) adds to this that the Vestal Virgins were not called *sacrosanctae* but *sanctae*.

¹⁵⁵ Dio 55.2.5-7. *Cons. Liv.* 81-82 may also allude to this. On the juridical consequences of the *ius trium liberorum*, see Gardner, 1990, pp. 20, 28, 196-198. Cf. Swan, 2004, pp. 50-51.

¹⁵⁶ Most scholars who assume an intended association with Vesta ignore the chronology of the *ius trium liberorum* grant. Cf. Schrombges, 1986, p. 202; Severy, 2003, p. 135.

¹⁵⁷ Treggiari, 1991, pp. 79-80; Grubbs, 2002, pp. 37-43, 83-84, with further references.

¹⁵⁸ Gardner, 1986, p. 24; Swan, 2004, p. 235; Wildfang, 2006, p. 107, n. 34.

¹⁵⁹ Nor that Livia did so herself, as Severy (2003, p. 135) seems to believe: "Livia thus established herself as the fertile counterpart of the Vestal Virgins, and thereby shaped a public role for herself as a matron with the responsibility for the well-being of the state."

¹⁶⁰ Dio 56.46.2. Tac. *Ann.* 1.14.2 seems to suggest the opposite by stating that Tiberius refused his mother this privilege. However, Dio's explicit remark that Livia was granted a lictor 'during her religious duties' might indicate that Tiberius was opposed to a general use of the lictor. Cf. Swan, 2004, p. 353.

¹⁶¹ Barrett, 2002, pp. 160-161. Whether Livia's priesthood was modelled on the priesthood of the Vestals or perhaps that of the *Flaminica Dialis* is difficult to say. Research on the empress as *sacerdos* has remained limited (see most importantly, Hemelrijk, 2007) and an elaboration of this subject goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. I plan to return to this subject in future research.

¹⁶² Tac. *Ann.* 4.16.6

reforms, Augustus had relegated women to the highest seats in the theatre.¹⁶³ Only the Vestal Virgins were allowed decent seating, opposite the dais of the praetor. This is perhaps the only instance in which the imperial court is seen to deliberately associate imperial women with the Vestal Virgins. Tacitus writes:

Utque glisceret dignatio sacerdotum atque ipsis promptior animus foret ad capessendas caerimonias, decretum Corneliae virgini, quae in locum Scantiae capiebatur, sestertium viciens, et quotiens Augusta theatrum introisset, ut sedes inter Vestalium consideret. (Tac Ann. 4 16.4)

And, in order that esteem for the priests should swell and they themselves have a readier inclination to undertake the ceremonial offices, a decree was passed of two million sesterces to Cornelia, the Virgin who was appointed in place of Scantia, and that, whenever Augusta entered the theater, she should sit among the seats of the Vestals.

While most traditional priesthoods retained their prestige during the early Empire, the priesthood of the Vestal Virgins seemed to have encountered some problems.¹⁶⁴ When at one point a Vestal Virgin died and Augustus needed to replace her, he rebuked the senators because they were reluctant to put forward one of their daughters, stating that if he had had a granddaughter who was eligible he would not have hesitated to offer her.¹⁶⁵ Tiberius tried to solve this problem by admitting his mother in their midst in the theatre, hoping that this would make the Vestal office more popular.¹⁶⁶ Whether these measures were successful remains unclear.¹⁶⁷ Besides Tiberius' measure, there is no reason to believe that the imperial court wanted to establish an association between Livia and Vesta. Frei-Stolba is right when she states: "Il semble donc audacieux de tirer des derniers privilèges accordés à Livie (une place parmi les Vestales) des conclusions sur les premiers honneurs octroyés à cette femme."¹⁶⁸

One could argue that Claudius made a final attempt to establish a link between the Vestal Virgins and Livia by making the Vestal Virgins responsible for the cult of the *Diva*

¹⁶³ Suet *Aug* 44, Dio 53 25 1, Dio 56 10 2. The *lex Iulia theatralis* made social hierarchy visible by separating social groups and giving them prearranged seats in the theatre. Cf. Clavel-Léveque, 1986, Rawson, 1987, Schnurr, 1992.

¹⁶⁴ Dio 55 22 5. Cf. Swan, 2004, p. 157.

¹⁶⁵ Suet *Aug* 31.

¹⁶⁶ Kunst, 2008, p. 202. "Die Platzierung der Livia unter den Vestalinnen trug somit zur Aufwertung dieses Priesterinnenkollegiums bei und nicht umgekehrt."

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Beard – North – Price, 1998, p. 194, who refer to an anecdote in Tacitus' *Annals* (2 86) of two senators vying with each other to have their daughters chosen as Vestal Virgins.

¹⁶⁸ Frei-Stolba, 1998, p. 73.

Augusta after Livia's deification, as stated above. The nature of the Vestals' involvement in the cult, however, remains unclear and it seems that their role in the worship of *Divae* was not continued after the reign of Claudius.¹⁶⁹

Even though the similarities between Livia's privileges and those of the Vestals did not occur according to a premeditated plan in order to establish a divine association, it seems that after a while it became common to think of this accumulation of privileges as so-called "Vestal rights". Cassius Dio states that Caligula accorded 'Vestal privileges' to both his grandmother Antonia and his sisters:

Ταύτην τε γὰρ Αὐγουστάν τε εὐθὺς καὶ ἱέρειαν τοῦ Αὐγούστου ἀποδείξας πάντα αὐτῇ καθάπαξ, ὅσα ταῖς ἀειπαρθένοις ὑπάρχει, ἔδωκε, καὶ ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς ταῦτά τε τὰ τῶν ἀειπαρθένων καὶ τὸ τὰς ἵπποδρομίας οἱ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ προεδρίᾳ συνθεᾶσθαι, τό τε τὰς τε εὐχὰς τὰς κατ' ἔτος ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχόντων καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἱερέων ὑπὲρ τε ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ δημοσίου ποιουμένας καὶ τοὺς ὅρκους τοὺς ἐς τὴν ἀρχὴν αἰτοῦ φέροντας καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐκείνων ὁμοίως γίγνεσθαι ἔνειμε. (Dio 59.3.4)

His grandmother he immediately saluted as *Augusta*, and appointed her to be priestess of *Augustus*, granting to her at once all the privileges of the Vestal Virgins. To his sisters he assigned these privileges of the Vestal Virgins, also that of witnessing the games in the Circus with him from the imperial seats, and the right to have uttered in their behalf, also, not only the prayers annually offered by the magistrates and priests for his welfare and that of the State, but also the oaths of allegiance that were sworn to his rule.

Nevertheless, Dio's choice of words does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that Caligula intended to equal his female relatives to the Vestals or make them 'honorary Vestals', as some scholars have come to call them.¹⁷⁰ Dio emphasizes the fact that these women received their privileges all at once, and not, as in Livia's case, over time. Lacking any other way of denoting these privileges, Dio summarized and simplified them with "privileges of the Vestals".¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Mekacher, 2006, p. 194.

¹⁷⁰ E.g. Griffin, 2000, p. 26; Stepper, 2000, p. 66; Wood, 2000, p. 82; Shotter, 2005, p. 11. Kokkinos, 1992, p. 96, takes it one step further and assumes that Antonia was granted *all* the privileges of the Vestal Virgins, such as being maintained at public cost, being allowed to release any prisoner or put anyone to death.

¹⁷¹ On the general inavailability of language to describe female civic honour, see Milnor, 2005, p. 153. See also Mekacher, 2006, pp. 51-52.

The privilege of using front seats in the theatre was later also awarded to Messalina, though in her case, Dio's account does not make mention of so-called "Vestal rights". Instead, he uses Livia as a point of reference:¹⁷²

Καὶ τῇ Μεσσαλίῃ τὴν προεδρίαν ἦν καὶ ἡ Λιουία ἐσχέκει καὶ τὸ καρπέντω χρῆσθαι ἔδοσαν. (Dio 60.22.2)

Messalina was granted the same privilege of occupying front seats that Livia had enjoyed and also that of using the *carpentum*.

When reconsidering the sources, one can only conclude that there is no reason to believe that the imperial court tried to establish an explicit divine association between Vesta and the imperial women.¹⁷³ During Augustus' reign, only an association between the goddess and his family at large can be observed. While searching for an acceptable public position, the imperial court borrowed privileges that were already present in Roman society and that were, in most cases, at least once applied to women. Frei-Stolba is probably right when she states that the similarities between the privileges of the imperial women and those of the Vestals need to be considered "l'aboutissement d'une évolution".¹⁷⁴

5.3. Visualising divine association

The final part of this chapter will focus on the expression of divine association of Julio-Claudian women in non-literary imagery. Since an exhaustive treatment of the iconography of Julio-Claudian women would widely exceed the purposes of this dissertation, choices have to be made. I will concentrate my discussion on two sorts of images, in the meantime basing myself on existing iconographical studies and catalogues. Firstly, depictions of Julio-Claudian women with the attributes of divinities who are above all associated with womanhood – such

¹⁷² Dio 60 22 2

¹⁷³ Note that the imperial policy on divine association with Vesta changes over time. In the third century A.D. for instance, imperial coins were minted that had a portrait of an imperial woman on the obverse and a reference to Vesta on the reverse. This might have influenced Dio's perception on events. Eg. *RIC* IV.1, Septimius Severus, 538, 582, 583-587, 648, 843, 867-868-869, 891, 892a, 893a, 894, *RIC* IV 1, Caracalla, nos. 390-392, 593-594b, 606-607 (Julia Domna), *RIC* IV 2, 231 (Aquila Severa, a Vestal Virgin herself), 276 (Julia Maesa), 224 (Julia Paula), 246-248 (Julia Soaemias), *RIC* IV 2, Severus Alexander, nos. 359-364, 708-711 (Julia Mamaea), *RIC* IV.3, Aemilianus, nos. 30, 36 (Cornelia Supera); *RIC* V.1, Gallienus joint reign, nos. 9, 14, 39-39, 43, 69-71 (Salonina); *RIC* V 1, Gallienus sole reign, nos. 32, 45, 48, 55-56, 68-69. Cf. Mekacher, 2006, pp. 255-258.

¹⁷⁴ Frei-Stolba, 1998, p. 73 n. 28

as Ceres, Fortuna and Venus – will be discussed. Secondly, I will treat divine association situated on the other end of the gendered spectrum and discuss images of Julio-Claudian women carrying or wearing attributes of military divinities – such as Minerva or Dea Roma –, which placed the depicted women in a masculine context.

5.3.1. Association with ‘womanly divinities’

In 1995, Mikocki has published a study in which he aims at cataloguing the available material and literary evidence on the subject of divine association of imperial women from the time of Augustus to Constantine. Although Mikocki’s methodology leaves several things to be desired, one can deduct some general tendencies about the practice of divine association from his results.¹⁷⁵ Mikocki’s chart, which shows the wide range of divinities with whom imperial women were associated, reveals that there was a preference for some divinities over others.¹⁷⁶ During the Julio-Claudian period, for instance, associations with the goddesses Ceres and Venus are attested for most imperial women. Though on a slightly smaller scale, association with Fortuna seems to have enjoyed a certain preference as well.

From Livia to Poppaea, association with the goddess Ceres, or her Greek counterpart Demeter, was a standard element in the divine representation of imperial women.¹⁷⁷ Mikocki’s chart shows that examples are attested for almost every Julio-Claudian woman, with the exceptions of Drusilla, Drusus’ wife Livilla, Caesonia and Claudius’ daughter Claudia Antonia. Considering the almost even spread of associations with Ceres after the Julio-Claudian period, these exceptions should perhaps rather be ascribed to a general lack of sources for these women than to a break in the iconographical tradition.

Ceres was seen as the goddess who produced living things and caused them to grow.¹⁷⁸ In figurative art, Ceres is depicted with a variety of attributes.¹⁷⁹ Common symbols

¹⁷⁵ One could object, for instance, to Mikocki’s selection of sources, since he does not present any criteria for the selection and inclusion of material in the catalogue. The catalogue includes works of questionable attributions and the (limited) literary and numismatic entries seem to have been random choices, which might distort the general picture. Even though Mikocki (1995, p. 9) announces an “analyse précise de chaque monument”, he fails to live up to the promise. For these and other objections, see esp. Lundgreen, 1998, pp. 438-440; Alexandridis, 1999, pp. 704-708; Moormann, 1999, pp. 197-198.

¹⁷⁶ Mikocki, 1995, p. 125. One should note that the chart only shows general tendencies. Lundgreen, 1998, p. 440, rightly remarks that if read out of context the chart elevates uncertain identifications to secure ones. In addition, the chart only shows two categories: a small diamond shape for one entry and a large one for two or more entries. This equates two examples to, for instance, twenty.

¹⁷⁷ Mikocki, 1995, p. 125.

¹⁷⁸ The earliest attestations to Ceres date to the sixth century B.C.: Spaeth, 1996, pp. 1-4. Cf. Mikocki, 1995, pp. 90-91.

of fertility, such as baskets or plates of fruit, flowers or a *cornucopia*, indicate her fertile aspect in general. Often, specific symbols illustrate her role in the cultivation of grain, such as the *corona spicea* – a crown of wheat or wheat and poppies – or stalks of wheat. As is often the case with agricultural deities, Ceres also had a liminal association, which, for instance, appears from the opening of the *mundus Cereris*, allowing the spirits of the dead to wander into the world of the living.¹⁸⁰ This liminal aspect played a role in the assimilation process of Ceres to the Greek fertility goddess Demeter. During the early Republic, the iconography of Ceres was strongly influenced by Greek mythology and some of the main attributes of Ceres, such as the *corona spicea*, were probably borrowed from the iconography of Demeter.¹⁸¹ During this period, Ceres was also connected to groups in the margin of society, namely women and the plebs.¹⁸² The different associations of Ceres – fertility, liminality, women and the plebs – prevail during the Republic, the Augustan period, and the early Empire, though with a slightly diminishing prominence of the association with the plebs and a focalization on the aspect of women and fertility.

During the Julio-Claudian period, Livia and Agrippina Minor are associated with Ceres most frequently.¹⁸³ The subject of the association of imperial women with Ceres-Demeter has been studied intensively.¹⁸⁴ It suffices, therefore, to refer to these studies and recapitulate the general conclusions on the significance of these associations for the representation of Julio-Claudian women. As a general notion, one could say that from the reign of Augustus onwards, emperors were eager to associate themselves and their reign with the goddess Ceres.¹⁸⁵ Symbolizing fertility, abundance and prosperity, Ceres was an appropriate symbol for every emperor's reign. Above, some examples of representations of Ceres in imperial coinage have been discussed, but it seems that emperors wanted to associate themselves with the goddess in other ways as well. Augustus, for instance, dedicated an altar to Ceres and restored her temple, which was dedicated by Tiberius after his death.¹⁸⁶ Several of these imperial actions were probably connected to agrarian crises, as seems to have been

¹⁷⁹ Mikocki, 1995, pp 91-92, distinguishes between various types of depictions of Ceres, such as a head with the *corona spicea*, a standing figure with stalks of wheat in her hand, etc. For the purpose of the present study, however, it is not necessary to make such a distinction. Cf. LIMC, s.v. Demeter/Ceres.

¹⁸⁰ The opening of the *mundus Cereris* occurred three times a year (24 August, 5 October, 8 November). Festus, s.v. *mundus*, 54 and 142 (ed. Müller).

¹⁸¹ Spaeth, 1995, p. 11. Cf. the terracotta bust from a sanctuary at Ariccia, dated to circa 300 B.C., depicting Ceres with the *corona spicea*, a diadem and a necklace with two ends in the form of snake heads (Spaeth, 1995, fig. 2).

¹⁸² Spaeth, 1996, pp. 6-16.

¹⁸³ Mikocki, 1995, lists 45 entries for Livia and 21 for Agrippina Minor.

¹⁸⁴ See most recently Mikocki, 1995, pp. 90-94, Spaeth, 1996, pp. 119-123, Ginsburg, 2006, pp. 97-105.

¹⁸⁵ Ginsburg, 2006, pp. 101-102.

¹⁸⁶ Altar to Ceres Mater. Dio 55.31.3-4, temple of Ceres, Liber and Libera. Dio 50.10.3, Tac. *Ann.* 2.49.

the case for the refigurations of Ceres on Claudius' coins during a severe shortage of grain, as mentioned above. Depicting imperial women in the guise of Ceres cohered to this policy. Besides supporting the emperor's claim or hope for a general well-being, the depiction of imperial women with the attributes of Ceres could convey other messages too. Ceres symbolized several female rites of passage, such as marriage and motherhood.¹⁸⁷ Divine association with Ceres, therefore, could emphasize the position of the women in question, either actual or wishful. When viewed in a dynastic context, imperial women who were depicted with the attributes of Ceres could be viewed as carrying on the imperial dynasty or at least as having the ability to do so.¹⁸⁸

The association of imperial women with Ceres was long attested in the provinces before it became a form of representation in state media. In imperial coinage, the first associations with Ceres occurred during the reign of Claudius, who pictured Antonia Minor, Diva Augusta and Agrippina Minor with the attributes of Ceres.¹⁸⁹ In provincial art and coinage, however, associations with Ceres are attested for pre-Claudian representations of Livia, Agrippina Maior and Drusilla.¹⁹⁰ It seems to have been a favourite composition in pre-Claudian cameo art too, although – as always – these refigurations are difficult to identify and interpret because of the problematic nature of the medium.¹⁹¹

The characteristics of the goddess Ceres closely resemble those of Fortuna. Because of the similarities in the iconography of both divinities, scholars often have difficulties to attribute divine association of imperial women to one or the other. Like Ceres, Fortuna was originally worshipped as a fertility goddess. Over time, she became assimilated to the Greek divinity Tyche, making her also a goddess of fate, chance and luck.¹⁹² By the second century B.C., the *cornucopia* becomes the most common iconographical feature of Fortuna-Tyche, an attribute she shares with many other fertility goddesses, such as Ceres.¹⁹³ As is well-known, the horn of plenty signifies fertility, abundance and food. By extension, Fortuna could also refer to the transport of these goods and was, thus, frequently associated with trade and commerce. The iconographical feature of the double *cornucopia*, which dates to the Ptolemaic

¹⁸⁷ Spaeth 1996, pp. 116-119.

¹⁸⁸ Spaeth 1996, pp. 119-123.

¹⁸⁹ See above.

¹⁹⁰ *RPC* I 643, *RPC* I 2347, *RPC* I 2454-2455, *RPC* I 2472. E.g. Mikocki, 1995, nos. 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 171, 172, 173, 177, 223. Cf. Spaeth, 1996, appendix 2.

¹⁹¹ On the problematic nature of cameos, see introduction. Examples of cameos depicting women with the attributes of Ceres include Mikocki, 1995, nos. 134-135, 161-164.

¹⁹² Champeaux, 1982, pp. 455-459; Fears, 1981a, p. 848; Kajanto, 1981, pp. 503-509.

¹⁹³ On the attributes of Fortuna-Tyche, see Mikocki, 1995, pp. 98-99; Arya 2002, pp. 68-89; Schmidt Dick, 2003, pp. 55-60. Cf. *LIMC* s.v. Fortuna.

period, was often used to denote human fertility and applied in a context of procreation and succession during the Roman period.¹⁹⁴ Another feature of Fortuna-Tyche was the mural crown. Though during the republican period the usage of the crown was mostly limited to refigurations of Magna Mater, the mural crown became a common feature for Fortuna-Tyche in the imperial period.¹⁹⁵ Illustrating city walls, the mural crown had a general meaning of protection.¹⁹⁶ Fortuna-Tyche is more recognisable by her attribute of the rudder, as, for example, in the *sestertius* Caligula minted depicting his sisters with divine attributes, among which those of Fortuna.¹⁹⁷ On the one hand, the rudder refers to shipping, commerce and the transport of goods, but on the other hand, it also serves to symbolize Fortuna as steering the lives of men.¹⁹⁸ The latter aspect of Fortuna-Tyche can also be referred to through the depiction of a globe, symbolizing the *orbis terrarum* and the globe of heaven and stars, which are all connected with fate. A final characteristic feature of Fortuna-Tyche is the wheel, which illustrates the cycle of life and bears a reference to the fickle nature of Fortuna-Tyche.¹⁹⁹

When imperial women are depicted with the attributes of Fortuna - during the Julio-Claudian period mostly the *cornucopia* and the mural crown – the message could convey various meanings, depending on context. Often, however, this context is missing, which makes interpreting these images difficult, if not impossible. Most examples of association with Fortuna have been identified as such because of the presence of the *cornucopia* in the figurative composition.²⁰⁰ However, since the *cornucopia* can refer to almost any fertility goddess, it is often difficult to provide a conclusive identification.

An example of this complexity can be found in a statue of Livia from Leptis Magna (Fig. 31).²⁰¹ The colossal statue was found in the theatre, broken into several pieces, and can probably be identified as the cult statue of a small temple in the *summa cavea*.²⁰² In the vicinity of the sculptural remains an inscription was found which states that the proconsul C. Rubellius Blandus dedicated the shrine to Ceres Augusta after a woman named Suphunibal, wife of Annobal Ruso, had erected it at her own expense.²⁰³ The statue stands 3.10 meters tall

¹⁹⁴ The double *cornucopia* appeared, for instance, in the coinage of Tiberius, who issued coins to commemorate the birth of his grandsons (*RIC* I¹, Tiberius, no. 42). On the Hellenistic background, see McHugh, 2004, pp. 47-48.

¹⁹⁵ On Fortuna-Tyche's connection to Magna Mater-Cybele, see Sande, 1985, Matheson, 1994, pp. 23-24.

¹⁹⁶ Arya, 2002, p. 6.

¹⁹⁷ *RIC* I², Caligula, nos. 33, 41.

¹⁹⁸ Arya, 2002, pp. 77-80.

¹⁹⁹ Arya, 2002, pp. 84-88.

²⁰⁰ E.g. Mikocki, 1995, nos. 240, 245, 246, 247, 255, 256.

²⁰¹ Winkes, 1995, no. 107, Bartman, 1999, no. 74; Alexandridis, 2004, no. 37.

²⁰² Wood, 1999, pp. 121-122. Cf. Sande, 1985, pp. 155-158.

²⁰³ *IRT* 269. Cf. Alexandridis, 2004, p. 131.

and represents Livia in the guise of a fertility goddess. She wears the mural crown of Fortuna-Tyche together with the corn-ear crown of Ceres. Here, the two divinities merge and Livia's divine portrayal conveys several messages at the same time. Her statue radiates prosperity and fertility, but at the same time, as her image oversees the crowd in the theatre, she is presented as a protector and benefactor of the city.

Besides the fertility divinities Ceres and Fortuna, the goddess Venus played an important role in the divine representation of imperial women. Originally, Venus presided over the fertility of plants, fruits and flowers, but gradually she was more seen as the goddess of beauty, desire and love.²⁰⁴ At an early stage, she became assimilated to the Greek Aphrodite, taking over some of her characteristics and mythology. As is well-known, she became the legendary forebear of the Romans through her son Aeneas. Venus was worshipped under various epithets – such as *Caelestis*, *Genetrix*, *Victrix*, *Obsequens*, etcetera – which did not occur with her Greek counterpart Aphrodite. The iconography of Venus changed frequently over time and her attributes included the pomegranate, a small Cupid figure, the armour of her consort Mars or a palm in her capacity of Venus *Victrix*.²⁰⁵ Often she can be recognized from her posture, especially when represented seminude or with bare shoulders.

During the Julio-Claudian period, most portrayals in the guise of Venus-Aphrodite are attested for Livia and Drusilla.²⁰⁶ The association of Livia with Venus is closely connected to the role of Venus as divine ancestress of Augustus and the prominent role the goddess received in Augustan propaganda.²⁰⁷ By associating Livia with Venus *Genetrix*, her own role in the continuity of the dynasty was highlighted. For instance, the previously mentioned turquoise cameo from the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts shows Livia in the guise of Venus, with one bare shoulder, together with her son Tiberius (Fig. 32).²⁰⁸ Here, the divine association emphasizes Livia's procreative power and celebrates her role as mother. An inscription from Anticaria (Hispania Baetica) serves as a second example of this.²⁰⁹ The inscription, dating to the reign of Tiberius, reads

²⁰⁴ The most complete study on Venus is still Schilling, 1954.

²⁰⁵ Schmidt-Dick, 2002, p. 113. Cf. *LIMC*, s.v. Venus.

²⁰⁶ Livia: Mikocki, 1995, nos. 120-130. Drusilla: Mikocki, 1995, nos. 228-233. Whereas most of Livia's associations with the goddess are situated in the western provinces, the surviving attestations for Drusilla occur in the Greek East.

²⁰⁷ Mikocki, 1995, p. 113.

²⁰⁸ It is often thought that the cult statue of the temple of Venus *Genetrix* in the Forum of Caesar, made by Arkesilaos, showed Venus with one bare shoulder, basing itself on a Greek work attributed to Kallimachos in the late fifth century B.C. Plin. *NH* 34.92, Plin. *NH* 35.155, Paus. 1.26.7. Cf. D'Ambra, 2000, p. 107. See also chapter 4.

²⁰⁹ *CIL* 2.2038. Cf. Bartman, 1999, FigCat. 31.

Marcus Cornelius Proclus, pontifex of the Caesars, (dedicates this) to Julia Augusta, daughter of Drusus, wife of Divus Augustus, mother of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, princeps and conservator, and of Drusus Germanicus, *genetrix* of the world.

In the inscription, Livia is accorded her place within the imperial family: as a daughter and wife, but more importantly as mother of both Tiberius and Drusus. The reference to *genetrix orbis* evokes the association with Venus Genetrix.²¹⁰

The sources on Drusilla are scarce and it is, therefore, striking that most surviving Greek inscriptions refer to her as *Nea Aphrodite*.²¹¹ When trying to explain the predominance of Aphrodite in the divine representation of Drusilla, Mikocki states that “les raisons de l’assimilation à Drusille sont plus traditionnelles: l’éloge de sa beauté.”²¹² This argument, however, is insufficient. As far as can be told from the sources, the first association between Drusilla and Venus was made by Caligula, who put a statue of his deified sibling in the temple of Venus Genetrix in Rome. As mentioned above, it is difficult to assess in what manner Caligula was influenced by Hellenistic precedents. The previously mentioned examples of the *hetaerae* from Demetrios Poliorketes have shown that the practice of associating women with Aphrodite already existed in the Hellenistic period. This could have served as a model for Caligula, though it cannot be ascertained. At the same time, the existing practice may have facilitated the distribution of Drusilla’s representation in the Greek East.

In this respect, it is surprising that there are no examples of Poppaea Sabina in the guise of Venus-Aphrodite or references to her as *Nea Aphrodite*. It is well-known that an association between Poppaea and Venus was sought by the imperial court. As stated above, in much the same way as Caligula, Nero attached the cult of the deified Poppaea to Venus by dedicating a temple to “Sabina Venus” in Rome.²¹³ Poppaea seems to have associated herself with the cult of Venus before her death as well. Two Pompeian graffiti found in the house of Julius Polybius seem to record the bestowal of expensive gifts to Venus, patron goddess of

²¹⁰ Mikocki lists two other written references to an imperial *genetrix*, both of which refer to Livia *RPC* 1 73; Dio 57 12.4 See Temporini, 1979, pp. 72-73; Wood, 2000, p. 90

²¹¹ *SEG* 34.180 (Athens), *ILS* 8789 (Lesbos), *Silloge* 467 (Cos, Ionia); *I Magnesia* 156 (Ionia).

²¹² Mikocki, 1995, p. 113

²¹³ Dio 63 26 3-4

Pompeii, by the emperor Nero and his wife Poppaea.²¹⁴ It is often suggested that Poppaea originated from Pompeii or its surroundings and that her personal gift to the Pompeian Venus was meant to present herself as the benefactress of her home town.²¹⁵ Whatever the truth about her origins, Poppaea's gesture would have associated her closely with the divine ancestress of the Julio-Claudian family. Considering these forms of association, it is surprising that so little visual images of 'Sabina Aphrodite' survived.²¹⁶ The only example is a bronze coin from Laodicea depicting the bust of Poppaea Sabina with the legend ΠΟΠΠΑΙΑ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΗ on the obverse and the standing figure of Aphrodite on the reverse with the legend ΙΟΥΛΙΑ ΖΗΝΩΝΙΣ ΛΑΟΔΙΚΕΩΝ (Fig. 33).²¹⁷

A clear example in which the divine attributes of the discussed divinities come together is a cameo from the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (Fig. 34).²¹⁸ On this cameo, Livia is shown enthroned and facing left. She looks at a small bust of a radiate Augustus, which she holds in her right hand. In her left hand, she holds stalks of wheat and poppies as an allusion to Ceres-Demeter, while her elbow leans on a lion-decorated shield. On her head, she wears a diadem combined with a mural crown and a veil. Though the crown is often an allusion to Fortuna-Tyche, the combination with the lion, Cybele's mascot, might suggest an association with Magna Mater-Cybele.²¹⁹ Her left shoulder is bare, evoking the goddess Venus-Aphrodite. In a rather limited space, the artist was able to represent Livia's various positions within the imperial family through the various attributes she carries. She is presented as a priestess of her divine husband, mother of Tiberius, continuator of the dynasty and protectress of the Roman people.

²¹⁴ *AE* (1985) nos 283-284. Cf. Cooley, 2004, p. 90

²¹⁵ On this subject, see the still valuable study of Van Buren, 1952. See also Franklin, 2001, pp 104-105, 119-120, De Caro, 2006, pp. 79-101.

²¹⁶ One should keep in mind that Poppaea's images suffered from *damnatio memoriae*. See Varner, 2001, pp. 45-48, Varner, 2004, pp. 83-84

²¹⁷ *RPC* I 2924. In the coinage of Laodicea, refigurations of Aphrodite are rare. Two examples date to Tiberius' reign and are accompanied by depictions of a wolf on the obverse (*RPC* I.2904, 2925). A third example is issued by the same moneyer as the coins featuring Poppaea's image, Julia Zenonis, and is accompanied by the figure of the Laodicean Tyche (*RPC* I 2925). The editors of *RPC* consider the coins of Julia Zenonis as complementary to the coins of Julius Andronikos, possibly her husband, depicting the emperor Nero on the obverse and a refiguration of a standing Zeus on the reverse (*RPC* I 2922-2923).

²¹⁸ Megow, 1987, no B15; Bartman, 1999, no. 110; Alexandridis, 2004, no 50. On this cameo, see most recently Kampen, 2009. Other examples in which associations with several divinities are incorporated in one composition include, e.g. Mikocki, 1995, nos 146, 198, 210, 214, 258, 260.

²¹⁹ Smith, 1994, p. 95. Cf. Sande, 1985, pp. 151-154

5.3.2. Association with 'military divinities'

From Mikocki's study, it appears that besides traditional womanly divinities such as Ceres, Venus and Fortuna, 'manlier' divinities also constituted an important part of the divine representation of Julio-Claudian women. Among these divinities are Minerva-Athena, Dea Roma and Victoria-Nike.²²⁰ Much in the same way as with fertility goddesses, attributing divine association to a specific divinity is difficult since they have several of their attributes in common. These attributes connect all three divinities to the military sphere. Minerva was an Italic deity and at an early stage likened to the Greek Athena. She assumed a martial aspect, but was also considered a goddess of crafts and trade guilds. Her attributes include the helmet, aegis, spear and shield.²²¹ The deity who resembles Minerva the most is the figure of Dea Roma. The Greek background of Dea Roma lies at the origins of this resemblance. Not the citizens of Rome but the inhabitants of the Greek world first invented Dea Roma as a personification of the Roman state.²²² From the very beginning, the Greeks portrayed her as a martial goddess, giving her military attributes that often resembled those of Athena.²²³ Dea Roma mostly appears helmeted, carrying a piece of armour, like for instance a spear.²²⁴ A final divinity situated in the military sphere to whom Julio-Claudian women are assimilated is Victoria-Nike. She is easier to recognize, as she often appears winged and carries a victory palm or crown.²²⁵

When considering the examples of depictions of women carrying one of these divinities and their treatment in modern research, it appears that scholars seem to focus on the problem of identification. They try to find a suitable context for these figurative compositions and attempt to determine whether association with Minerva-Athena, Dea Roma or other similar divinities was meant. Almost every attempt remains tentative and the scholar in question is left puzzled, as it is the case with Mikocki: "il est difficile de trouver un contexte

²²⁰ In Mikocki's list (1995, p. 125), Minerva-Athena is attested for Livia, Agrippina Maior, Agrippina Minor, Drusus' wife Livilla, Octavia and Poppaea. Association with Dea Roma is attested for Agrippina Maior, Drusilla, Claudia Antonia and Octavia. Association with Victoria-Nike is attested for Antonia Minor, Agrippina Minor and Poppaea.

²²¹ Schmidt-Dick, 2002, pp. 73-74. See also Girard, 1981, Cf. *LIMC*, s.v. Athena/Minerva.

²²² Mellor, 1981, pp. 954-956. On the representation of Dea Roma on Greek coins, see Fayer, 1975.

²²³ Mellor, 1981, pp. 962-963. Cf. *LIMC*, s.v. Roma.

²²⁴ Schmidt-Dick, 2002, p. 96. In addition, without an identifying legend or a clarifying context, Dea Roma is almost impossible to distinguish from the personification Virtus, who is also depicted wearing a helmet and armour. Mellor, 1981a, p. 1012, notes that identification with a specific goddess can only be certain where the context demands the presence of that goddess. On the attributes of Virtus, see Schmidt-Dick, 2002, p. 133.

²²⁵ Schmidt-Dick, 2002, p. 121. On Victoria, see also Fears, 1981b. Cf. *LIMC*, s.v. Victoria.

en lequel l'impératrice pouvait être assimilée à Roma".²²⁶ I would like to argue that the question of identification, though not without merits, is impossible to answer without a clarifying context and is, therefore, perhaps also the wrong question to ask. One should rather take one step back, and question the aspect which all these divinities have in common, namely their connection to the military.

From Mikocki's overview it appears that depictions of imperial women with the attributes of these 'military divinities' were mostly limited to the Julio-Claudian period. Some divine attributes are later also attested in the representation of Julia Domna, which should not surprise as most divine associations attested under the Julio-Claudians knew a revival in the representation of the Severan empress.²²⁷ Depictions of imperial women with the attributes of Victoria first occurred during the Julio-Claudian period, but these examples remained limited. Portrayals of imperial women in the guise of Victoria, however, gained in popularity in the second century A.D.²²⁸ The Julio-Claudian period is generally known as a period of trial and error in many aspects and more than likely this also applies to the association of imperial women with 'military divinities'.

The example of the representation of Agrippina Maior is probably the most illustrative. As stated earlier in this study, the imagery on the well-known Gemma Claudia communicates a message of dynastic continuity (Fig. 3).²²⁹ Often interpreted as a wedding gift to Claudius and Agrippina Minor, the cameo shows the overlapping busts of the emperor and his new wife facing right and the busts of Germanicus and Agrippina Maior facing left. The composition contains both feminine and masculine connotations. Agrippina Minor, for instance, wears the corn-ear crown of Ceres together with the mural crown of Fortuna-Tyche, conveying a message of fertility and prosperity.²³⁰ Furthermore, the paired busts emerge from a set of double *cornucopias*. These symbolized human fertility and emphasized Fortuna's gift to the emperor and his family of dynastic continuity.²³¹

The Gemma Claudia also has a strong military connotation. The entire composition rests on a collection of captured armour, referring to the spoils of victory of Claudius' military

²²⁶ Mikocki, 1995, p. 110

²²⁷ Mikocki, 1995, p. 125. On Julia Domna, see most recently Levick, 2007.

²²⁸ Alexandridis, 2004, p. 91, generalizes too much when she states that depictions of imperial women with the attributes of military divinities did not occur before the second century A.D., for she heavily concentrates on the attributes of Victoria and does not take the attributes of Minerva or Dea Roma into account

²²⁹ Megow, 1987, no. A81, Mikocki, 1995, no. 214; Alexandridis, 2004, nos. 74, 123. On the Gemma Claudia, see also chapter 3.

²³⁰ As stated, the mural crown can also refer to Magna Mater, cf. Smith, 1994, p. 97. Wood, 1999, p. 307, interprets the divine association as a syncretic Cybele-Ceres

²³¹ See above.

campaign in Britain and Germanicus' campaign in Germania.²³² Claudius wears an oak crown and the aegis of Jupiter, while Germanicus wears a laurel wreath and a military *paludamentum*. All these symbolic references follow the traditional patterns of male and female representations. The representation of Agrippina Maior, however, seems to deviate from this scheme. She wears a laurel wreath, like her husband, combined with a crested helmet. These manly attributes astonish Wood, who states that "the most obvious association is with Minerva, but here as in so many other cases, the identification of the virgin goddess with the mother of nine children makes an awkward fit."²³³ Wood does not find a conclusive context for an association with Minerva because she focuses on the aspect of the virginity of the goddess. However, the imagery bears above all a military connotation, and, therefore, it seems more fitting to focus on the martial aspect of the attributes.

In the literary sources, Agrippina Maior was often connected to the military.²³⁴ The ancient authors state that she frequently accompanied her husband Germanicus during his military campaigns, both in the western and the eastern provinces.²³⁵ As is well-known, their children had a history with the military as well. Caligula spent a part of his childhood amidst soldiers and received his nickname from them.²³⁶ Furthermore, their daughters Drusilla, Agrippina Minor and Livilla were all born during their parents' travels.²³⁷ An anecdote in Tacitus' *Annals* shows that Agrippina Maior was also actively involved in the military campaigns of Germanicus.²³⁸ Allegedly, Agrippina stood at the head of the bridge over the Rhine at Vetera, preventing it from being destroyed by panicky Roman soldiers and thus allowing her husband and his troops to safely cross over.

Her presence in the provinces and her fame with the soldiers led to the development of Agrippina Maior's portrait in a military context. During Caligula's reign, for instance, glass *phalerae* with the portrait of Agrippina were issued, which were given as a reward to deserving soldiers (Fig. 35).²³⁹ These *phalerae* were found in the German regions, where Agrippina had stayed with Germanicus. It is unclear who decided on the subject for these medaillons, but whoever it was thought that the portrait of Agrippina had a certain symbolic

²³² Wood, 1999, p. 306

²³³ Wood, 1999, p. 307

²³⁴ See forthcoming, Foubert, 2010b.

²³⁵ E.g. Tac. *Ann* 1 40.3, 1 44 1, 2 54, 2 75, 12 27 1, Suet. *Cal* 8 3, Dio 57.5 6

²³⁶ Suet. *Cal* 8

²³⁷ Tac. *Ann* 1 44, 12 27.1, Suet. *Cal* 8 Cf. Barrett, 1996, pp. 230-232, with further references

²³⁸ Tac. *Ann* 1 69 1-2

²³⁹ Other surviving *phalerae* can be divided in three sets: a Tiberian set with images of Tiberius with Drusus and Germanicus, a Caligulan set with portraits of Agrippina Maior, Caligula and Germanicus, and thirdly a Claudian set with images of Claudius and his children. The most extensive treatment of these *phalerae* is Boschung, 1987. See also, Stacker, 2003, pp. 153-169.

value and that it would be appreciated by the recipient of the gift. The depiction of Agrippina with military attributes on the Gemma Claudia should be seen in the light of Agrippina's military background. Depicting her in a military outfit tallied with the reputation of Agrippina and presented her as a worthy consort of Germanicus.

Two other cameos, resembling each other in style and subject, might also contain depictions of Agrippina Maior in a military context. However, since the facial features and hair styles are highly idealized, it is almost impossible to provide a conclusive identification of the women in question. Nevertheless, consensus in scholarly research is that these cameos depict women of the Julio-Claudian family. It is, therefore, worthwhile to include them in this study as examples of a new sort of figurative composition, i.e. representations with a military character. A first cameo in the British Museum shows overlapping portraits of two women (Fig. 36).²⁴⁰ The woman in the foreground wears an Attic helmet, a *paludamentum* held together on the right shoulder with a *fibula*, and an aegis. Because of these attributes, the woman is often considered as being assimilated to Minerva.²⁴¹ The draped woman in the background only wears a diadem in her hair. The pair has been identified as Agrippina Maior with her daughter Agrippina Minor, though there is no consensus on who is who.²⁴² A second cameo from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris looks very similar (Fig. 37). Two women, identified as Agrippina Maior and Agrippina Minor, are depicted with overlapping profiles.²⁴³ Contrary to the previous cameo, this composition shows both women helmeted. The idealised features, however, do not allow a secure identification or distinction between mother and daughter. Nevertheless, scholarly opinions agree on a Julio-Claudian date for these cameos and a general identification with women of the imperial court.

Other sources – inscriptions, cameos, coins as well as sculptural art – might represent Julio-Claudian women with military attributes or associate them with military deities as well. In most cases, however, the identification of these women is uncertain. For instance, the figure of Dea Roma on a cameo depicting an enthroned Caligula who faces the goddess has often been identified as his sister Drusilla (Fig. 38).²⁴⁴ Two images with a military connotation have been attributed to Claudius' daughter Octavia. The first of these is a sardonyx cameo in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and shows a young girl wearing a

²⁴⁰ Megow, 1987, no. B27, Mikocki, 1995, no. 182.

²⁴¹ Megow, 1987, no. B27, Mikocki, 1995, no. 182.

²⁴² Megow, 1987, p. 260, dates the cameo on stylistical grounds to the Claudian period and concludes that the front figure can only be the ruling empress. Mikocki, 1995, p. 177, however, identifies the front figure as Agrippina Maior.

²⁴³ For the identification see Megow, 1987, no. B26, Mikocki, 1995, no. 183.

²⁴⁴ Megow, 1987, no. A60, Mikocki, 1995, no. 226. Cf. Varner, 2004, p. 40.

helmet and an aegis (Fig. 39).²⁴⁵ The facial features are not specific and the helmet covers the coiffure, which makes the identification more difficult and tentative.²⁴⁶ The second is a highly damaged head in the Museo Chiaramonti which has often been considered as a representation of Octavia. The head shows a young woman wearing a helmet combined with a mural crown and a laurel wreath (Fig. 40).²⁴⁷

Association of imperial women with Victoria or her Greek counterpart Nike appeared in some examples during the Julio-Claudian period, though it would become more popular as a means of representation in the second century and after. Poppaea, for instance, is associated with Nike on a coin from Smyrna (Fig. 41).²⁴⁸ The obverse shows the head of Nero with the legend ΝΕΡΩΝΑ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΝ, while the reverse shows the standing figure of a winged Nike with the legend ΖΜΥΡ ΝΕΙΚΗ ΠΟΠΑΙΑ. The Nike figure carries stalks of wheat in her right hand and a cornucopia in her left. On her head she wears a mural crown. A clearer example is the image of Agrippina Minor on a relief in the Sebasteion of Aphrodisias. As stated before, Agrippina figured on two relief panels in the Sebasteion.²⁴⁹ One shows her with her husband Claudius in a position of *dextrarum iunctio*, while a second depicts Agrippina with her son Nero (Fig. 42). On the latter, Agrippina is shown crowning her son with a laurel wreath.²⁵⁰ In her left hand, she carries a *cornucopia*, which evokes the association with a fertility goddess and emphasizes her role as a mother. Nero is depicted in a cuirass with a helmet lying at his feet.

The depiction of the emperor with his mother seems to have been modeled on the cult statues of Augustus and Dea Roma of their temple in Pergamum. Cistophori minted during the reign of Claudius show these statues within the frame of the temple (Fig. 43).²⁵¹ The dress, pose and attributes of Augustus and the goddess strongly resemble those of Nero and Agrippina.²⁵² The imagery reappears to a great extent in a cameo of the *Dreikönigsschrein* in the cathedral of Cologne (Fig. 44).²⁵³ Here, Nero is depicted enthroned, while his mother is standing besides him. As on the relief of Aphrodisias, Agrippina reaches out to crown her son

²⁴⁵ Mikocki, 1995, no. 251

²⁴⁶ Wood, 1999, p. 288. Varner, 2004, p. 101, n. 155

²⁴⁷ Wood, 1999, pp. 286-288. See, however, Wood, 1988, p. 423, where identification with Messalina is thought more likely, and Wrede, 1981, no. 290, where the portrait is identified with the deceased infant daughter of Nero

²⁴⁸ *RPC* I 2486. See Mikocki, 1995, no. 262

²⁴⁹ See chapter 3

²⁵⁰ Rose, 1997, no. 105. Alexandridis, 2004, no. 105. Cf. Smith, 1987, no. 11. Barrett, 1996, pp. 152-153. Wood, 1999, pp. 301-302

²⁵¹ *RPC* I 2221

²⁵² Rose, 1997, p. 47

²⁵³ Megow, 1987, no. A 98. Mikocki, 1993, no. 213. Alexandridis, 2004, no. 119. Cf. Eck, 1993, p. 34. Zwiernlein-Diehl, 2007, pp. 168-169

with a laurel wreath. In her left hand she carries a *cornucopia*. Her head is crowned with laurel on which stalks of wheat are attached. The figurative composition of the crowning imperial woman evokes the image of the divine Victoria acknowledging the military capacities and authority of the person being crowned.²⁵⁴ In these images, a feminine aspect, emphasizing Agrippina's maternal qualities, is combined with a manly aspect evoking a military context. Whether the divine association aims at Dea Roma or Victoria is of secondary importance.

In his discussion on divine assimilation to Dea Roma, Mikocki reflects on the possible motives of including a military aspect in the representation of imperial women. He argues that association with Dea Roma occurred rarely, "peut-être une conséquence de la sphere d'activité guerrière, nettement 'masculine' de la déesse."²⁵⁵ Dea Roma accompanies the emperor during his military campaigns and welcomes him when he returns. In Mikocki's view, since the empress rarely accompanies the emperor during his campaigns she cannot easily be associated with the goddess, adding that the empress was at the most "inspiratrice des victoires", in her capacity of mother or wife of the emperor, or a "moteur de prospérité" after peace was established.²⁵⁶ However, during the Julio-Claudian period, it was customary for imperial women to join their husband during parts of their travels. The sources attest that Livia, Antonia Minor, Julia Maior, Agrippina Maior and Statilia Messalina accompanied their husbands during diplomatic or military campaigns.²⁵⁷ These travels gave the women of the imperial court a high degree of visibility and put them in a military and male orientated context. Though it is difficult to trace the origins of the development of a new visual language that depicted imperial women with military attributes or in a military context, it is likely that the artists considered it a translation of the public position of these women. As is well-known, over time, the imperial women's connection to the military became more explicit. The attribution of the title *mater castrorum* to Faustina Minor and Julia Domna went hand in hand with an increase of images of imperial women with military attributes.²⁵⁸ The fundamentals for these figurative compositions, however, can already be dated to the Julio-Claudian period.

²⁵⁴ The same figurative composition is also attested for Julia Domna. Mikocki, 1995, nos. 440, 445, 447, 448.

²⁵⁵ Mikocki, 1995, p. 110.

²⁵⁶ Mikocki, 1995, p. 110.

²⁵⁷ *AFA* 84, *Sen. De Clem.* 1.9, *Sen. Apocol.* 6, *Tac. Ann.* 3.34, *Suet. Tib.* 7.3, *Suet. Claud.* 2.1.

²⁵⁸ *Dio* 71.10.5, *HA Aur.* 26.8. See Boatwright, 2003; Alexandridis, 2004, pp. 91-92.

5.4. Conclusion

The practice of divine association had the capacity to highlight certain qualities which an ideal *matrona* incarnated. During the reign of Augustus, the imperial entourage seems to have recognised this, for Livia's actions with regard to religious life in Rome associated her with several divinities – such as Bona Dea and Fortuna Muliebris – thus emphasizing her maternal qualities. Ovid's comments show that Livia's involvement was interpreted in the light of Augustus' restoration policy. A similar involvement in religious life is not attested for other women. During Claudius' reign, divine association was mainly practiced through the representation of imperial women in imperial coinage. Livia, Antonia Minor and Agrippina Minor are depicted with the attributes of Ceres. Here too, one needs to take a broad context into account, for the association with Ceres is in coherence with attestations of Claudius' general concern with the grain supply. The deification of Julio-Claudian women aimed at maintaining a connection to womanhood and family as well, though it was considered an inappropriate innovation in the Roman world by some ancient writers nonetheless. The prominence of Venus in the organisation of the cult of *Diva Drusilla* and *Diva Poppaea* suggests that these women were placed in their family's history. The divine association with the cult of Vesta, on the other hand, was not part of a deliberate and premeditated imperial policy, contrary to what is generally assumed in modern scholarship.

In non-literary images, association with the divine is widely spread. Representations of Julio-Claudian women with the attributes of 'womanly deities' – such as Ceres-Demeter, Fortuna-Tyche or Venus-Aphrodite – enjoyed a certain preference. The association with 'military divinities' – such as Minerva-Athena, Dea Roma or Victoria-Nike – is a new development in the Julio-Claudian period. It is difficult to ascertain the origins of this new visual language, but it may well be an artistic translation of their new public position.

Conclusion

The Julio-Claudian period was in many aspects a period of trial and error. The end of the first century B.C. introduced a profound transformation of the Roman political system, which ultimately led to the public prominence of Augustus and his relatives. The women in Augustus' family attained a position of high visibility. They were designated to guarantee the family's continuity and contributed to the creation of a public image of the *princeps* and his reign. This public prominence did not cease to exist after Augustus' reign. The imperial women of the Julio-Claudian dynasty remained important contributors to imperial ideology until the reign of Nero. Over the years, ancient authors and image-makers came up with different ways to translate the position of imperial women. This process took place on various social levels, both at the centre and in the periphery of the Roman Empire. Some of these forms of representation were persistent and became part of a set of possible idioms, others were never repeated again.

This dissertation approaches the issue of the representation of Julio-Claudian women from two main perspectives. Firstly, within the context of the Roman perception of female behaviour. To fully comprehend the mechanisms of literary and non-literary representation of imperial women in particular, one needs to be aware of how Romans thought about women in general. Secondly, the impact of the public prominence of Julio-Claudian women on their imagery was taken into account. The social position of the emperor's female relatives was not without controversy. Viewing the representation of Julio-Claudian women from the light of the opposition between the public and the private sphere, has uncovered literary *topoi*, instruments of literary characterization and ways of portraying, which had remained unnoticed in modern scholarship until now.

It has become clear that the literary portrayals of imperial women should not be taken at face value. The public position of Julio-Claudian women was to a certain degree at odds with how women were seen during the Roman Republic. The works of republican writers such as Cicero or Sallust indicate that Roman society applied certain rules with regard to female conduct. They attest to the existence of an ideal, which was articulated through the concept of the *matrona*. *Matrona* referred to an upper-class woman's status as a wife and a (potential) mother, but also to the virtues which she needed to embody, such as *pudicitia*, *castitas* and *obsequium*. The concept served to describe expected behaviour, which manifested itself in exemplary literature, of which *Facta et dicta memorabilia* of Valerius

Maximus serves as an example. At the same time, the concept of *matrona* functioned to evaluate women's behaviour. Cicero integrated references to the ideal of female conduct in his characterization of Clodia Metelli to illustrate her as a '*matrona* gone bad'. The same literary mechanism occurs in Sallust's description of Sempronia. Non literary sources attest to this ideal as well. Funerary inscriptions, for instance, often include references to the occupation of *lanam facere*, which was considered as a symbol of virtuous maternal behaviour. The concept of *matrona* served as a frame of reference against which female actions could be interpreted. We see this taking shape in sources from the republican as well as the imperial period.

The ideal of female behaviour conflicted with the public prominence of Julio-Claudian women, because traditional standards assigned to women a place in the private sphere. Though the separation of a public and a private sphere is a modern notion, the ancient sources clearly suggest that the Romans equally thought in terms of a dichotomy between *forum* and *domus*. The *forum* was considered as the domain of men. By extension, the activities that were perceived as taking place in the *forum* were regarded as typically male. Likewise, the *domus* was above all associated with women. Activities that took place in the *domus* – such as childcare or taking care of the household – were seen as appropriate female tasks. The literary sources often verbalize the prominence of imperial women in the public sphere as an intrusion. For instance, Tacitus' description of Messalina who attended the trial of Valerius Asiaticus in the imperial palace (*intra cubiculum*), or of Agrippina Minor who eavesdropped on Nero's meeting with the senators behind curtains illustrated the author's perception of the position of Julio-Claudian women as transgressive. After studying the literary accounts, we can conclude that both the *domus* and the *forum* were considered to have been contested spaces. The Roman *domus* in general contained both public and private aspects. This applied to the imperial *domus* as well. Since a prominent position in the imperial *domus* often went hand in hand with a position of power, the ambiguous nature of the *domus*, the unclear position of women in it, and the blurring line between public and private were perceived as extra threatening for the social order.

The preoccupation of the literary authors with the public prominence of imperial women resulted in their application of certain literary *topoi* which were before predominantly used in portrayals of men, as a means to characterize women. The *domus* in its meaning as physical house, for instance, played an important role in the representation of Julio-Claudian women. The house was seen as a *locus* of public life and could be understood as a symbol of the status of its male owner. The influential position of women at the imperial court made this

equally true for their houses, or at least the space that was perceived by ancient authors as theirs. The *domus frequentata* of a woman represented her status and influence. The nature of her crowded house – i.e. the reputation of her visitors and the activities that took place within the house – contributed to a positive or negative evaluation of her *domus frequentata*. Likewise, the emptied house could be seen as illustrative for a woman's downfall, as the example of Tacitus' account of Agrippina Minor's solitude during her daily *salutatio* has shown. The importance of these literary *topoi* has been underestimated in modern scholarship so far. The example of the Julio-Claudian women shows that the female house could be just as much a *lieu de memoire* as the male house. Augustus' destruction of Julia Minor's *villa* clearly illustrates this. Importantly, references to the *topos* of the female *domus frequentata* or of a woman's emptied house remained limited in republican writings. Its usage by ancient writers could be seen as a literary reaction to the position of imperial women, which differed greatly from that of their republican predecessors.

The perception of the public sphere as a contested space also appeared from the literary descriptions of conflicts between the male and female elite of Rome. Tacitus, for instance, uses Messalina's desire for the gardens of Valerius Asiaticus and Agrippina's desire for the gardens of Statilius Taurus to symbolize the increasing monopoly of the imperial family on urban space. The fact that in these examples the power struggle was won by women emphasizes the depravity of the social order, at least in Tacitus' view.

The Julio-Claudian women's position of public visibility had a large impact on their non-literary representation as well. The inclusion of their images in imperial coinage illustrates that the emperor and his entourage thought that they could contribute significantly to the imperial message. Furthermore, it has become clear that imperial policy was not blind to the ideals of female behaviour. The emphasis on the procreative capacities of imperial women – through, for instance, association with the goddesses Ceres or Venus – affirms the traditional role of women as wives and mothers. The images at the central level did not present these women in isolation. They always appeared in a broader visual programme and were placed in the context of the family. The prominence of women in imperial imagery, however, was a sensitive subject. The first coin type depicting living women with clear identifications was issued during Caligula's reign, who minted *sesterti* with the standing figures of his sisters. The facial features of these women, however, were not discernible, and it took until the reign of Claudius before a living woman, i.e. Agrippina Minor, appeared with distinctive features on imperial coins. The coinage of Nero's early reign also illustrates how important it was to join in with traditional standards. In a first series of coins, Agrippina

Minor was depicted more prominently than her son Nero. This transgressive act was soon rectified as a second coin type was issued which showed Agrippina slightly less prominent. These examples indicate that it was considered important to find the right balance between agreeing with traditional standards which were characteristic of the private sphere and the extraordinary public position of imperial women.

The iconographical messages in the imperial numismatic and sculptural programme refer to the same set of stereotypes as do the ancient writers in their portrayals of Julio-Claudian women. They shared the same 'cultural codes' and used a similar vocabulary to shape the image of imperial women. This suggests at least some sort of correlation between the image-maker at the imperial level and the ancient authors as recipients. We see this confirmed when we look at non-imperial imagery. Different sorts of images, such as sculpture or cameos, depict Julio-Claudian women with the attributes of divinities. Portrayals of women with the attributes of Ceres-Demeter or Fortuna-Tyche, or in the guise of Venus-Aphrodite emphasized the maternal qualities of the women in question. The *cornucopia* or the corn-ear crown of Ceres in sculptural refigurations, for instance, alluded to women's fertility, in much the same way as did the portrayals of Livia, Antonia and Agrippina Minor with the attributes of Ceres in the coinage of Claudius. The practice of divine association suggests a relation of reciprocity between the central level and the periphery.

Clearly, however, the correlation between image-maker and ancient authors was not absolute. For instance, modern scholars, basing themselves heavily on references from (the much later) Cassius Dio, have often presupposed a connection between imperial women and the cult of Vesta. According to this view, the active involvement of Julio-Claudian women in the cult coheres with the association of the goddess and her priestesses with chastity, protection and womanhood. When reconsidering the sources, however, one can only conclude that there is no reason to believe that the imperial court tried to establish an explicit divine association between Vesta and the imperial women. The centre presented the imperial women with traditional female virtues, which Dio (with later practice in mind) read as being linked to the goddess.

Clearly, then, sharing 'cultural codes' does not make images straight-forward. In particular when dealing with a situation of conflict, such as the dichotomy between the public and the private sphere, there seems to have been some space for manoeuvring and ambiguities. This can easily lead to (modern) misunderstandings. Only combining the different types of available sources can help in creating some clarity. Even then ambiguity remains. The association of imperial women with so-called military divinities, such as Minerva-Athena or

Dea Roma, has left many scholars puzzled, because portraying women with the attributes of these divinities gave the figurative composition a manly character. Even though it is difficult to trace the origins of this visual language, it might as well indicate an artistic translation of the public position of these women.

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Abbreviations

AC	L'Antiquite Classique Revue interuniversitaire d'etudes classiques
AClass	Acta Classica Journal of the Classical Association of South Africa
AFLM	Annali della facolta di lettere e filosofia dell'universita di Macerata
AFLN	Annali della facolta di lettere e filosofia dell'universita di Napoli
AFLS	Annali della facolta di lettere e filosofia dell'universita degli studi di Siena
AHB	Ancient History Bulletin
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology The Journal of the Archaeological Institute of America
AJAH	American Journal of Ancient History
AJPh	American Journal of Philology
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der romischen Welt Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung
ArchLaz	Archeologia Laziale
ArchN	Archaeological News
AugAge	Augustan Age
BABesch	Bulletin Antieke Beschaving
BJ	Bonner Jahrbucher des Rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn und des Vereins fur Altertumsfreunden im Rheinlande
BStudLat	Bollettino di studi latini periodico quadrimestrale d'informazione bibliografica
BCAR	Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma
CB	Classical Bulletin
CEA	Cahiers des etudes anciennes
CJ	Classical Journal
C&M	Classica et Mediaevalia Revue danoise de philologie et d'histoire
CPh	Classical Philology A quarterly journal devoted to research in the languages, literatures, history and life of classical antiquity
CQ	Classical Quarterly
CR	Classical Review
CW	Classical World

EMC	Echos du monde classique
FOS	Raepsaet-Charlier, 1987
G&R	Greece & Rome
GB	Grazer Beitrage Zeitschrift für die klassische Altertumswissenschaft
HA	Historische Anthropologie
HSCPh	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
JFH	Journal of Family History Studies in Family, Kinship and Demography
JRA	Journal of Roman Archaeology an international journal
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
LCM	Liverpool Classical Monthly
LM	La mémoire du droit
MAAR	Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome
MDAI(A)	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athener Mitteilungen
MDAI(R)	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung
MEFRA	Mélanges de l'École française de Rome Antiquite
MH	Museum Helveticum Schweizerische Zeitschrift für klassische Altertumswissenschaft
PBSR	Papers of the British School at Rome
PCPhS	Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society
PP	La parola del passato
RA	Revue archeologique
RAAN	Rendiconti dell'accademia di archeologia, lettere e belle arti di Napoli
RÉA	Revue des études anciennes
RendPontAcc	Atti della Pontificia Accademia romana di archeologia Rendiconti
RH	Revue historique
RD	Revue historique de droit français et étranger
RhM	Rheinisches Museum für Philologie
RSA	Rivista storica dell'antichità
RSC	Rivista di studi classici
TAPhA	Transactions of the American Philological Association
RHD	Revue d'histoire du droit
Westminster Review	The Westminster Review

Translations are either taken from *Loeb Classical Library* (where available), or my own, unless stated otherwise. The numbering of Dio's *Roman History* follows the *Loeb Classical Library* edition. Translations from Tacitus' *Annals* are taken from Woodman, 2004.

Illustrations

Fig. 1. The so-called *Grand Camée de France*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cabinet des Médailles.

(From: Megow, 1987)

Fig. 2. Statue of Antonia Minor in a *stola* and *palla* from Leptis Magna. Tripolis, Archäologisches Museum.

(From: Boschung, 2002)

Fig. 3. The so-called *Gemma Claudia*. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

(From: Megow, 1987)

Fig. 4. Coin with overlapping profiles of Ptolemy II Philadelphos and Arsinoe II on the obverse, and Ptolemy I and Berenice I on the reverse.

(From: Rose, 1997)

Fig. 5. Cameo depicting Drusus Maior and Antonia Minor. Leningrad, Ermitage.

(From: Megow, 1987)

Fig. 6. Relief depicting Claudius and Agrippina Minor. Aphrodisias, Sebasteion.

(From: Smith, 1987)

Fig. 7. The Sebasteion at Aphrodisias.

(From: Smith, 1987)

Fig. 8. The Metroon at Olym pia. 1 = Augustus, 2 = Claudius, 3 = Titus, 4 = unknown male, 5 = Agrippina Minor, 6 = unknown female, 7 = unknown female.

(From: Boschung, 2002)

Fig. 9. A relief panel from the *Ara Pacis* depicting women as well as children. Rome, Museo dell' Ara Pacis.

(From: Rossini, 2006)

Fig. 10. The so-called Tellus relief from the *Ara Pacis*. Rome, Museo dell' Ara Pacis.

(From: Rossini, 2006)

Fig. 11. *RIC I*², Tiberius, no. 42.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 12. *RIC I*², Tiberius, nos. 50-51.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 13. *RIC I*², Tiberius, no. 47.

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Fig. 14. *RIC I*², Caligula, no. 7-8, 13-14.

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Fig. 16. *RIC I*², Claudius, no. 65-66.

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Fig. 20. *RIC I*², Nero, nos. 6-7.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 21. A Roman *matrona* in the guise of Venus, second century A.D. Rome, Musei Capitolini.

Fig. 22. *RIC I*², Augustus, no. 404.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 23. *RIC I*², Tiberius, no. 46.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 24. *RIC I*², Tiberius, no. 43.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 25. *RIC I*², Augustus, nos. 219-220.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 26. *RIC I*², Caligula, no. 7-8, 13-14.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 27. *RIC I*², Claudius, nos. 80-81.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 28. *RIC I*², Claudius, nos. 92.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 29. *RIC I*², Claudius, no. 101.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 30. *RIC I*², Nero, nos. 44, 56.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 31. Statue from Leptis Magna showing Livia with the attributes of fertility goddesses. Tripolis, Archäologisches Museum.

(From: Boschung, 2002)

Fig. 32. Cameo with portraits of Livia in the guise of Venus and Tiberius. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.

(From: Megow, 1987)

Fig. 33. *RPC* 1.2924.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 34. Cameo showing Livia with a bust of Augustus. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

(From: Megow, 1987)

Fig. 35. Glass *phalera* with a portrait of Agrippina Maior. Bonn, LVR-Landesmuseum.

(From: Boschung, 1987)

Fig. 36. Cameo with possibly depictions of Agrippina Maior and Agrippina Minor. London, British Museum.

(From: Mikocki, 1995)

Fig. 37. Cameo with possibly depictions of Agrippina Maior and Agrippina Minor. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cabinet des Médailles.

(From: Mikocki, 1995)

Fig. 38. Cameo depicting Caligula and Dea Roma. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

(From: Megow, 1987)

Fig. 39. Cameo with a portrait of a young (Julio-Claudian) girl. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cabinet des Médailles.

(From: Mikocki, 1995)

Fig. 40. Portrait head of an unknown girl. Dresden, Staatliche Skulpturensammlung.

(From: Wood, 1992)

Fig. 41. *RPC* 1.2486.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 42. Relief depicting Nero and Agrippina Minor. Aphrodisias, Sebasteion.

(From: Smith, 1987)

Fig. 43. *RPC* 1.2221.

(From: www.britishmuseum.org)

Fig. 44. A cameo depicting Nero and Agrippina Minor. Cologne, *Dreikönigsschrein*.

(From, Megow, 1987)

Samenvatting

Volgens de Latijnse auteur Suetonius noemde keizer Caligula zijn grootmoeder Livia een *Ulixem stolatum*, een Odysseus in een *stola*. Hoewel we niet met zekerheid kunnen stellen dat Caligula deze schertsende opmerking werkelijk heeft gemaakt, zijn de woorden illustratief voor hoe men Livia's ambigue positie in de samenleving percipieerde. De humor van Caligula's woorden ligt in de ogenschijnlijke tegenstelling. In Homerus' *Ilias* en *Odysee* komt Odysseus ten tonele als een sluwe en intelligente held. Daardoor zagen veel Romeinen hem als een voorbeeld van mannelijke *virtus*. De verwijzing naar de *stola* geeft de beeldspraak echter ook een vrouwelijke connotatie. De *stola* was immers een lange mouwloze jurk en gold als een typisch uiterlijk kenmerk voor de Romeinse matrone. Deze karakterisering van Livia als een figuur met zowel mannelijke als vrouwelijke kenmerken hangt nauw samen met de gecompliceerde positie die ze in de samenleving innam. Op grond van haar seksuele kende de Romeinse samenleving haar een rol in de private sfeer toe. Als lid van de heersende keizerlijke familie verwierf Livia echter ook een uiterst zichtbare rol in de samenleving waardoor ze het publieke domein betrad. Dit proefschrift belicht het spanningsveld tussen de publieke en private sfeer en onderzoekt in welke mate dit invloed had op de beeldvorming van de vrouwen uit de Julisch-Claudische familie, de eerste keizerlijke dynastie in Rome in de eerste eeuw na Christus.

Om tot een goed begrip van de verschillende onderzoeksresultaten te komen, is het belangrijk een idee te hebben van de methodologische kaders die een rol hebben gespeeld in deze studie en de manier waarop dit proefschrift is ingedeeld. Vervolgens zullen de overkoepelende conclusies zoals die uit de afzonderlijke hoofdstukken zijn af te leiden worden gepresenteerd. Zoals eerder aangestipt staat de beeldvorming van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen centraal, waarbij 'beeld' zowel literaire als niet-literaire portretten behelst. Beelden worden benaderd als culturele producten: ze zijn weloverwogen gefabriceerd, dragen een boodschap met zich mee en hebben een specifieke doelgroep in gedachten. Deze beelden krijgen enkel betekenis binnen hun culturele context. Ze dienen dus te worden getoetst aan de culturele codes die in een specifieke historische context van kracht waren.

De literaire en niet-literaire beelden van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen worden aan de hand van twee belangrijke ideologische discoursen geevalueerd. Allereerst dient de vraag naar de betekenis van 'vrouwelijkheid' in de Romeinse samenleving beantwoord te worden. Om de

verschillende mechanismen die een rol spelen in de representatie van keizerlijke vrouwen te kunnen interpreteren, moeten we weten hoe men in de Oudheid over Romeinse vrouwen als sociale groep dacht. Deze vraagstelling vormt het uitgangspunt van hoofdstuk 1 (*The Roman concept of matrona*). Ten tweede worden in deze studie de moderne concepten ‘publiek’ en ‘privaat’ toegepast op de antieke wereld. Hoewel de scheiding tussen de private en publieke sfeer een moderne conceptie is, blijkt dit tot op zeker hoogte ook een rol te hebben gespeeld in de Romeinse wereld. De antieke bronnen maken meermaals een onderscheid tussen de wereld van de *domus* – een term die zowel naar het huishouden als naar het huis kon verwijzen – en die van het *forum*, waarbij de *domus* vooral werd gezien als het domein van de vrouw terwijl het *forum* een mannelijke connotatie kreeg. In hoofdstuk 2 (*Public and private aspects of the Domus Augusta*) worden deze concepten met hun verschillende connotaties uiteengezet en toegepast in een analyse van de representatie van de *domus* van de keizerlijke familie.

In het resterende gedeelte van dit proefschrift worden deze kaders gebruikt om verschillende stereotypes te onderzoeken die veelvuldig voorkomen in de beeldvorming van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen. Hoofdstuk 3 (*Staging the emperor's wife*) gaat dieper in op de stereotypering van de ideale echtgenote, terwijl hoofdstuk 4 (*Mothers behind the curtain*) de stereotypering van moeders en stiefmoeders in de keizerlijke familie belicht. In beide hoofdstukken wordt de vraag gesteld of er een ideaalbeeld bestaat en hoe dit invloed uitoefende op de literaire en niet-literaire portretten van keizerlijke vrouwen. Daarnaast wordt telkens aandacht besteed aan het spanningsveld tussen de verwachtingen die men koesterde met betrekking tot het traditionele rollenpatroon en de gepercipieerde realiteit. Op welke manier botsen de private en de publieke sfeer met elkaar in de beeldvorming van deze vrouwen? Hoofdstuk 5 (*Association with the divine*), ten slotte, behandelt een aspect van de beeldvorming dat nauw verbonden is met de dynastieke rol van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen en hun publieke positie in de samenleving. In dit hoofdstuk staan associaties met de godenwereld centraal, waarbij de nadruk ligt op de manier waarop Julisch-Claudische vrouwen geassocieerd worden met godinnen zoals Venus of Ceres en de verschillende betekenissen die hiervan uitgaan.

Welke conclusies kunnen nu getrokken worden uit deze vraagstellingen? De Julisch-Claudische periode was in verschillende aspecten een oefening in het zoeken naar het juiste evenwicht. Het einde van de eerste eeuw voor Christus kondigde een transformatie in het politieke systeem aan. Augustus en zijn familie namen hierbij een uitzonderlijke positie in en

de vrouwen van de familie speelden een steeds groter wordende publieke rol. Hun bijdrage aan het centrale ideologische discours was cruciaal voor de legitimiteit en de voortzetting van de keizerlijke macht. Gedurende de hele dynastie probeerden literaire auteurs en kunstenaars de publieke positie van de keizerlijke vrouwen te vertalen in beelden. Dit proces speelde zich af op verschillende niveaus in de samenleving, zowel in het centrum als in de periferie van het Romeinse rijk.

Dit proefschrift heeft nogmaals aangetoond dat de literaire portretten van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen niet kritiekloos aanvaard mogen worden. Op basis van de werken van republikeinse auteurs zoals Cicero en Sallustius kunnen we concluderen dat de Romeinse samenleving een aantal gedragsregels in stand hield die werden gebruikt om het handelen van vrouwen te evalueren. Het concept *matrona* gold als een articulatie van een ideaalbeeld. *Matrona* verwees naar de status van een vrouw uit de hoge klasse en gaf aan dat zij een echtgenote en (potentiele) moeder was. Tegelijk hield *matrona* ook een indicatie in van de verzameling deugden die elke vrouw zich eigen diende te maken, zoals bijvoorbeeld *pudicitia*, *castitas* en *obsequium*. Auteurs zoals Valerius Maximus gebruikten het concept *matrona* om wenselijk vrouwelijk gedrag voor te schrijven: wie zich aan de regels hield werd geprezen, wie van het pad afweek bekritiseerd. Cicero's beschrijving van Clodia Metelli en Sallustius' portret van Sempronia zijn duidelijke voorbeelden van dit soort kritiek. Van de Republiek tot de late Oudheid ontwikkelen karakterisering van vrouwen, zowel in geschreven bronnen als in opschriften, zich vaak binnen het referentiekader van het concept *matrona*. Hetzelfde mechanisme zien we ook aan het werk in de literaire beeldvorming van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen. Een auteur zoals Tacitus greep met regelmaat terug naar kenmerken die karakteristiek zijn voor het beeld van de ideale *matrona*. Zijn introductie van Poppaea Sabina in de *Annales*, een intertekstuele verwijzing naar de eerder genoemde Sempronia van Sallustius, is hiervan een heldere illustratie.

Ook in de niet-literaire beeldvorming van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen vinden we referenties naar dit ideaalbeeld terug. Op basis van onder andere de rijksmunten, die als dragers van de keizerlijke ideologie kunnen worden beschouwd, kan geconcludeerd worden dat het keizerlijke hof oog had voor wat de verwachtingen waren met betrekking tot het traditionele rollenpatroon. Visuele associaties met de vruchtbaarheidsgodinnen Ceres of Venus bevestigden de keizerlijke vrouwen in hun rol als echtgenote of moeder. Hun beelden verschenen bovendien nooit geïsoleerd, maar telkens in een brede dynastieke context. Zo benadrukte men hun plaats binnen de familie en bleven zij in een ondergeschikte rol. De voorzichtigheid die gepaard ging met het afbeelden van vrouwen op rijksmunten duidt

eveneens op een zekere alertheid. De eerste munten waarop levende keizerlijke vrouwen duidelijk geïdentificeerd werden, verschenen pas tijdens de regering van keizer Caligula. In een reeks *sesterti* liet hij de staande figuren van zijn drie zussen afbeelden. De gelaatsstreken van de vrouwen bleven echter vaag en zijn niet van elkaar te onderscheiden. Het was pas tijdens de regering van Claudius dat een levende vrouw met een duidelijk portret op een rijksmunt verscheen, namelijk Agrippina Minor. De muntslag van Nero illustreert op gelijke wijze hoe belangrijk het was om rekening te houden met sociale verwachtingen. Nadat een reeks munten was geslagen waarin het portret van zijn moeder een belangrijker plaats innam dan dat van de keizer, zag Nero zich genoodzaakt om een tweede, corrigerende, reeks te slaan waarin het machtsverwicht werd hersteld.

De iconografie van de rijksmunten verwijst naar eenzelfde verzameling stereotypes als de beschrijvingen van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen in de antieke literatuur. De makers van beide media gebruikten dezelfde culturele codes en een vergelijkbare woordenschat om beelden van deze vrouwen te creëren. Dit suggereert dat er wellicht een zekere correlatie was tussen de producenten op het centrale niveau en de antieke auteurs als ontvangers. Het mag echter duidelijk zijn dat deze correlatie niet absoluut was en dat voorzichtigheid geboden is. Een treffende illustratie hiervan is een stelling die in het wetenschappelijke onderzoek vaak geponcerd wordt, namelijk dat de Julisch-Claudische vrouwen actief betrokken waren in de cultus van de godin Vesta. Hierbij baseert men zich te vaak op de beschrijvingen van de veel latere auteur Cassius Dio. Deze dissertatie suggereert dat er op basis van de bronnen geen reden te vinden is om aan te nemen dat het keizerlijke hof een beleid had om de vrouwen in de familie met Vesta te associëren. Julisch-Claudische vrouwen werden door het hof weliswaar als ideale vrouwen gepresenteerd, maar het lijkt alsof de associatie met Vesta door Cassius Dio als zodanig is geïnterpreteerd. Waarschijnlijk werd hij hierbij beïnvloed door de connotaties van deugdzaamheid en vrouwelijkheid die met de cultus van Vesta gepaard gingen en vooral door de keizerlijke praktijk uit zijn eigen tijd, waarin er op rijksmunten wel een duidelijke associatie met Vesta gezocht werd.

Het ideaalbeeld van de Romeinse *matrona* speelt zich grotendeels af in de private sfeer. Door het bronnenmateriaal te benaderen vanuit de daartoe zelden gebruikte noties ‘publiek’ en ‘privaat’ kon een aantal literaire gemeenplaatsen blootgelegd worden die tot nu toe in het moderne onderzoek weinig tot geen aandacht hebben gekregen. Antieke auteurs kenmerken *domus* en *forum* in hun beschrijvingen van de Julisch-Claudische periode als ambigue ruimtes waar meermaals een omkering van de sociale verhoudingen plaatsvond. Duidelijke

voorbeelden hiervan die in dit proefschrift behandeld werden zijn de aanwezigheid van Messalina tijdens het proces van Asiaticus in de privé-vertrekken van keizer Claudius of de anekdote waarin gewag wordt gemaakt van Agrippina Minor die verscholen achter een gordijn een bijeenkomst van de senatoren met haar zoon Nero in het paleis bijwoonde. In beide gevallen vloeien publieke en private aspecten in elkaar over. De grenzen tussen publiek en privaat waren binnen elke Romeinse *domus* moeilijk te bepalen. Dit gold eveneens voor de keizerlijke *domus*, maar aangezien een invloedrijke positie binnen de *domus* van de keizer vaak hand in hand ging met een positie van macht percipieerde men de onduidelijke positie van de keizerlijke vrouwen en hun nabijheid tot het centrum van de publieke sfeer als extra bedreigend voor de sociale orde.

De aandacht van de antieke auteurs voor de publieke rol van keizerlijke vrouwen resulteerde in een verschuiving in de literaire praktijk. *Topoi* die eerder waren voorbehouden voor de karakterisering van mannen werden nu ook toegepast in portretten van vrouwen. Verwijzingen naar de *domus* als huis, bijvoorbeeld, speelden een belangrijke rol in de beeldvorming van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen, terwijl die tevoren nauwelijks voorkwamen in literaire portretten van *matronae*. De Romeinse samenleving beschouwde een huis als het uithangbord van de sociale positie van de eigenaar. Wie belangrijk was in de samenleving kon rekenen op een menigte bezoekers tijdens de dagelijkse *salutatio*. Allen wilden immers bij hem in de gunst komen. De invloedrijke positie van keizerlijke vrouwen zorgde ervoor dat ook hun huis, of de woning die bij uitstek met hen werd geassocieerd, een *lieu de mémoire* werd. Antieke auteurs wendden de *topos* van de *domus frequentata* ('het druk bezochte huis') aan om de status en invloed van een vrouw te illustreren. De aard van deze *domus frequentata* of van de activiteiten die in het huis plaatsvonden kon eveneens bijdragen aan een positieve of negatieve karakterisering. Andersom alludeerde een verwijzing naar een leeg huis vaak op de ondergang van een vrouw. Ook de manier waarop men met de huizen van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen omging wijst op het gepercipieerde belang ervan. Zowel Augustus als Caligula lieten *villae* van vrouwelijke familieleden vernietigen in een poging de herinneringen die ermee gepaard gingen uit te wissen. De rol van Livia in de bewaring en constructie van het huis op de Palatijn als een *lieu de mémoire* is een laatste illustratie van deze ontwikkeling.

Onderzoek naar de betekenis van associaties met de wereld van de goden in de literaire en niet-literaire beeldvorming van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen toont aan dat het spanningsveld tussen publiek en privaat ook hier een belangrijke rol speelt. Wanneer we kijken naar beelden die niet rechtstreeks door het keizerlijke hof zijn geautoriseerd, zoals bijvoorbeeld cameeen of beelden uit de provincies, kunnen we concluderen dat het

ideaalbeeld ook hier invloed uitoefende. Keizerlijke vrouwen werden met regelmaat afgebeeld met de goddelijke attributen van Ceres-Demeter, Fortuna-Tyche of Venus-Aphrodite waardoor hun vrouwelijke eigenschappen werden benadrukt. Desalniettemin blijkt er ruimte te zijn geweest voor ambiguitet. De associatie van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen met zogenoemde militaire godheden, zoals Minerva-Athena of Dea Roma, hebben een bevreemdend karakter aangezien ze de vrouwelijke voorstelling een mannelijke connotatie geven. Mogelijk probeerden de kunstenaars op deze manier een artistieke vertaling te vinden voor de uitzonderlijke publieke positie van deze vrouwen.

De noodzaak om literaire met niet-literaire bronnen te combineren blijkt eens te meer uit dit proefschrift. Desondanks blijft het moeilijk, misschien zelfs onmogelijk, om een volledig beeld te krijgen van de Julisch-Claudische vrouwen. De toepassing van moderne concepten zoals 'publiek' en 'privaat' laat ons echter toe om nieuw licht te werpen op de representatie van deze vrouwen en beter inzicht te krijgen in de verschillende mechanismen die aan het werk zijn in de bronnen.

Curriculum vitae

Lien Foubert was born on July 2, 1982 in Ninove (Belgium) and grew up in the small village of Nederhasselt in Oost-Vlaanderen. She completed her secondary school in 2000 at the Sint-Aloysiuscollege in Ninove, after which she went to the Catholic University of Louvain to study Ancient History. In 2002 she travelled as an Erasmus student to Bologna, where she studied for one year at the department of Storia Antica. After graduating *cum laude* in 2004, she continued her studies in Louvain with a master in Cultural Studies, which she completed in 2005. In that same year she moved to Nijmegen to start her PhD project on the representation of Julio-Claudian women at the department of History. During her time as a junior researcher, she stayed at the University of Oxford, the University of Nottingham and the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome for short research periods. As from December 2009 she is a fixed-term lecturer at the department of Comparative Arts and Cultural Studies of the Radboud University Nijmegen.

Stellingen

1. Antieke auteurs gebruikten in hun teksten het beeld van de ideale *matrona* als een referentiekader om vrouwelijk gedrag te evalueren en te bekrutseren.
2. De dichotomie tussen de publieke en de private sfeer werd in de Romeinse wereld voornamelijk gearticuleerd als een dichotomie tussen *forum* en *domus*.
3. De uitzonderlijke publieke positie van Julisch-Claudische vrouwen zorgde ervoor dat huizen die met hen werden geassocieerd als *lieux de mémoire* werden gezien. Het verwoesten van deze huizen kon daardoor ingezet worden als een ideologisch machtsmiddel.
4. De representatie van de *domus Augusti* op de Palatijn als de woonplaats van verschillende generaties Julisch-Claudische *matres familias* geeft aan dat het huis van Augustus als herinneringsplaats ook een belangrijke vrouwelijke connotatie had.
5. Het belang van de huwelijksdatum van Livia en Augustus voor de keizerlijke ideologie suggereert dat het echtpaar als een *exemplum* van *concordia* werd gepercipieerd.
6. Op basis van de antieke bronnen kunnen we niet spreken van een bewust keizerlijk beleid om Julisch-Claudische vrouwen te associëren met de godin Vesta.
Contra: R. Stepper, 'Zur Rolle der römischen Kaiserin im Kultleben', in C. Kunst – U. Riemer (eds.), *Grenzen der Macht. Zur Rolle der römischen Kaiserfrauen* (Stuttgart, 2000), p. 64 en B. Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (New York – London, 2003), p. 135.
7. De visuele associatie van keizerlijke vrouwen met militaire godheden vindt haar oorsprong grotendeels in de Julisch-Claudische periode en moet gekoppeld worden aan de zichtbare positie van deze vrouwen in de samenleving.
8. In de *Annales* maakt Tacitus gebruik van 'parallele levens' als retorisch instrument om Julisch-Claudische vrouwen te karakteriseren.
9. Het hebben van bereidwillige en empathische collega's is essentieel bij het inburgeren van onderzoekers in een nieuw academisch milieu.

10 Historische omstandigheden hebben ertoe geleid dat de gemiddelde Belg opgroeit met het stereotiepe beeld van 'de Hollander'. Dit beeld kan door persoonlijke ervaringen worden gecorrigeerd, maar herleeft des te meer tijdens sportmanifestaties

The Julio-Claudian period was in many aspects a period of trial and error. The end of the first century B.C. saw a profound transformation of the Roman political system, which ultimately led to the public prominence of Augustus and his relatives. The women in Augustus' family attained a position of high visibility. They were designated to guarantee the family's continuity and contributed to the creation of a public image of the princeps and his reign. This public prominence did not cease to exist after Augustus' reign. The imperial women of the Julio-Claudian dynasty remained important contributors to imperial ideology until the reign of Nero. Over the years, ancient authors and image-makers came up with different ways to translate the position of imperial women. This dissertation discusses these images from two main perspectives: firstly, within the context of the Roman perception of female behaviour, and, secondly, within the framework of the Roman articulation of the separation of the spheres.