

Res Novae Feminarum: The Dissonant Roles of Roman Women in the Triumviral Period

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A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2024

Reading Committee:

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Department of Classics

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Abstract

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The actions of Roman women in the chaotic and paradigm-destabilizing civil wars after the assassination of Julius Caesar were a locus of intense interest and anxiety for ancient authors, and, for that reason, narrative engagements with these constricted actions are particularly indicative of the underlying structures and modes of understanding that connected gender performance, power, and morality within elite Roman discourse and thought. By analyzing the representation of Roman women in the triumviral period (44 BCE-30 BCE) across class and status, I argue that, while these representations varied according to each author's context and narrative objectives, they nevertheless demonstrate a consistent concern with how women's actions in this period subverted and revealed the expectations of the cultural frameworks that governed Roman political and social relations. The women recorded in proscription narratives who either saved or betrayed their male relations (husbands, sons, and brothers) operated by either underlining their traditional values or abnegating them. In either case, the stable framework of Roman elite moral norms was delineated and reinforced. Representations of elite women demonstrate how some women were able to situate themselves as political actors in a

way that could be read as consonant with traditional values while at the same time engaging in novel and dissonant interventions. Enslaved women and freedwomen, because of both their status and gender reveal that the performance of elite masculinity depended upon the actions of the most marginalized in Roman society. Within a social crisis that negated the protections that would otherwise preclude the need for women to take on the roles of intermediary or protector, the description of women's actions allowed authors to think through the nature of the crisis and the meaning of Roman values.

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Dedication

For my daughter

Acknowledgments

There are many people whom I must thank for their support throughout the dissertation writing process. First and foremost, I thank my dissertation advisor, Alain Gowing, whose keen insights and feedback have sharpened my own arguments. His office door (or Zoom room) were always open to me throughout my time in the department, and I thank him for his patience, generosity, and good will during this process. My reading committee members, Sarah Levin-Richardson and Stephen Hinds, provided invaluable feedback on this project and have supported and guided me throughout my time in graduate school. I would also like to thank Deborah Kamen and Olga Levaniouk, whose advice and support was invaluable during these years.

My interest in Classics was first sparked by my Latin and Greek teachers at St. Ignatius, Matthew Sparapani and Jay Wood, and I thank them for introducing me to the study of the languages. The Classics Department at the University of Notre Dame supported and encouraged my interest in becoming a classicist, and I especially thank Christopher Baron, David Hernandez, Elizabeth Mazurek, and Tadeusz Mazurek for challenging and deepening my understanding of the ancient world.

I have benefited greatly from the support of the University of Washington Classics Department, and I am deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to work in such a collegial and inspiring department. Many thanks as well to the Department of Classical Studies at Tufts University, where I finished this project.

I would not have been able to complete this project without the love and support of my family and friends. I am endlessly grateful to my parents, Tom and Wendy McNulty, whose unwavering belief in me has always encouraged me. I also thank my sister, Colleen, brother-in-law, Ryan, brother, TJ, and sister-in-law, Taylor, who have all been constant supports to me.

I thank my husband, Matthew, for his support and patience during the time I spent on this project. Thank you for being willing to discuss triumviral politics for over a year.

Lastly, this dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Ruth – my greatest joy in life is you.

Introduction

Quid feminae cum contione? si patrius mos seruetur, nihil: sed ubi domestica quies seditionum agitata fluctibus est, priscae consuetudinis auctoritas conuellitur, plusque ualet quod uiolentia cogit quam quod suadet et praecipit uerecundia.

What is there for a woman with a public meeting? If ancestral custom were being preserved, nothing: but when domestic peace has been agitated by the fluctuating waves of seditions, the authority of old-timey practice is ripped apart, and whatever violence compells is more effective than what a sense of shame urges and advises.
Valerius Maximus 3.8.6¹

As the above quote from Valerius Maximus demonstrates, women's public performance of exemplarity vexed and fascinated Roman authors. This preface directs the audience's reading of the *exemplum* of *constantia* (steadfastness) involving Sempronia, the sister of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, that follows in the text. Although this passage does not concern the triumviral period, the time period with which this dissertation is concerned, Valerius Maximus articulates several key points that are central to my argument. First, he here notes an underlying conceptual linkage between the proper operation of the Roman state and the physical and moral security of Roman women: only when the state is disordered would there be a space for the public display of exemplary virtues – exemplary because, as we will see, many fail to meet the challenge. When the linked realities of the *patrius mos* (ancestral custom) and *domestica quies* (domestic peace) prevail, there is no ambit for performative *virtus* (excellence) in public spaces. Domestic calm allows behavior to be mediated through persuasion and through instruction, but for many people pervasive violence eliminates the guardrails on potential actions and is thus more effective than restraints such as *uerecundia* (modesty). That is, the social constraints work when there is the potential for social condemnation in a functioning society. Second, that elite Roman women

¹ Translation is my own.

occupied a position that was both central and marginal.² As women, they were officially excluded from public office and official venues of power, yet, as members of great families, they were able to negotiate and wield informal influence with the men in their families and wider social circles who could make meaningful political decisions. The women of the triumviral period, however, are a major *locus* of anxiety and interest to ancient authors, including to Valerius Maximus, as we will see, as the chaos of the period allowed these authors to examine the bonds and networks that remained when the official political networks broke down and elite Roman men were no longer exclusive holders of power. The triumviral period offered Roman women precisely the circumstances that Valerius Maximus describes here with striking language – a state agitated by civil discord (*domestica quies seditionum agitata fluctibus est*) with a resulting breakdown in norms (*priscae consuetudinis auctoritas conuellitur*).³

It is in the straits of chaos that women are permitted to act in ways otherwise contrary to Roman norms and expectations and even encouraged. Without Sempronia's bravery and tenacity in the subsequent passage, those who use chaos to their advantage would get ahead, in this case by claiming to be part of the *gens Sempronia* and likely demanding part of the *patrimonium* (inheritance):

Itaque te, Sempronia, Ti. et C. Gracchorum soror, uxor Scipionis Aemiliani, non ut absurde grauissimis uirorum operibus inserentem, maligna relatione comprehendam, sed quia ab tribuno plebei producta ad populum in maxima confusione nihil a tuorum amplitudine degenerasti, honorata memoria prosequar. coacta es eo loci consistere, ubi principum ciuitatis perturbari frons solebat, instabat tibi toruo vultu minas profundens amplissima potestas, clamore imperitae multitudinis obstrepens totum forum acerrimo

² Scholarship by Hallett (1984), Osgood (2014), and Hemelrijk (1999) have all examined the ways in which elite women could wield influence within the domestic unit, which might then be deployed by their male relatives in the political sphere.

³ The verb *convellitur* is particularly striking as it denotes an action of violent rending (OLD s.v. *convello*). *Auctoritas*, a political buzzword, references traditional modes of Roman governance with power residing in the Senate. Balsdon (1960) provides an overview of the word as used in Cicero.

studio nitebatur ut Equitio, cui Semproniae gentis falsum ius quaerebatur, tamquam filio Tiberii fratris tui osculum dares. tu tamen illum, nescio quibus tenebris protractum portentum, execrabili audacia ad usurpandam alienam propinquitatem tendentem reppulisti.

And so, I would not include you in a malignant recounting, Sempronia, sister of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, wife of Scipio Aemilianus, as if inserting yourself discordantly into the most serious works of men, but because - when brought forth by the Tribune of the Plebs to the citizen body in the greatest disorder - you degenerated not at all from the grandeur of your ancestors, I will honor you with a distinguished memory. You were forced to stand in that place, where the forefront of the princes of the state were accustomed to be flustered, the most totalizing power pouring out threats with a vicious face was standing against you, resounding with the shout of the ignorant multitude. The whole forum was striving with the fiercest zeal that you give a kiss to Equitius, for whom a false right of the Sempronian family was being sought, as if the son of your brother Tiberius. You nevertheless repelled him, a monster having been dragged forth from some shadows, with detestable boldness straining in order to usurp another's familial relation.⁴

Here Valerius Maximus deploys multiple terms to excuse and in fact extoll the behavior of a Roman *matrona* in the context of a *contio* and assert that his discussion memorializes her moral excellence: he states that Sempronia is not ridiculously inserting herself into elite male matters (*absurde ... inserentem*), implying that doing so normally would be ridiculous were she not compelled to be there by a Tribune of the Plebs (*ab tribuno plebei producta*), that he did not want to involve her in a malignant recounting (*maligna relatione*), implying that talking about such participation would normally be dishonoring, were the state not in a condition of great upheaval (*maxima confusione*). Valerius Maximus articulates a third key point for my dissertation here which is that women's actions during times of crisis were often highly visible to others, with an audience evaluating it in real-time, which immediately makes clear their virtues, yet also demonstrates the chaos of the period.⁵ The visibility of the actions taken by women

⁴ Translation is my own.

⁵ Roller (2009: 215) breaks down exemplary discourse within Roman historiography, noting its highly visual character. He contends that the first step in exemplary discourse in historiography is that "Someone performs an action in the public eye – that is, before members or representatives of the Roman community, which consists of those who share a particular set of

during the triumviral period suggests that the authors writing these scenes were concerned with how visibility vividly demonstrated the vulnerability of the female body during this period, which points toward the vulnerability and fragility of the state.⁶ Many historians, such as Valerius Maximus and Appian, record tales of women being subject to physical assault in addition to possible verbal assault from a crowd, as Sempronia above, when they approached magistrates in the triumviral period. The *laudatio Turiae* also records a scene in which the wife is subject to bruises when she approaches the tribunal of Lepidus. At the same time, the female body also had the potential to demonstrate the chaotic political situation, as some women use and alter their bodies to acquire what they want. In one vivid example as we will see below, the wife of Septimius has her husband proscribed in order to marry her lover, while Cleopatra tries to alter her body to sway Antony's emotions.

The last key point that I wish to emphasize from Valerius Maximus' passage is that it engages with a critical male anxiety over the role of subordinates within Roman society. The women in the triumviral period, as we will see, had the choice of whether to resist or turn over their proscribed relatives to the soldiers. Sempronia does not dishonor her family's grandeur when pressed (*nihil a tuorum amplitudine degenerasti*), yet the question of a person's loyalties when pushed to the extreme was an anxiety for Roman men that they explore when discussing the triumviral period. As I will argue, the question of loyalty, as Kristina Milnor (2005) and Josiah Osgood (2006) have examined, haunts the Romans. The tension in Roman rhetoric

practices, orientations, and values" with the audience evaluating the deed after the fact. Rodrigues (2022: 99) notes that the visibility of Lucretia's exemplary action is enforced by the body's exposure in the forum in Collatia and transforms into a "political event of public significance."

⁶ Joshel (1992) links the female body with the health of the Roman state in Livy's early narratives.

between women's connection with the private life of the *domus* and their necessary interventions in public life during the triumviral period is a key feature of their representation in the authors who write of this period, as I argue.

The study of women in the triumviral period is not new, yet this dissertation attempts to piece together evidence for not only individual elite women, such as Octavia and Livia, but also the women mentioned in proscription narratives as well as enslaved women to provide a thorough analysis of the varying expectations and discourses surrounding women from this period. In other words, what do the representations of women in this period reveal about the discourse of central anxieties surrounding masculinity and femininity within Roman society writ large?

The two historians who provide the most complete overview of the period, Cassius Dio and Appian, have been overlooked by scholars until very recently. Earlier scholarship on Cassius Dio and Appian focused upon the source question rather than engaging with them as historians who are arguing for their own rhetorical objectives by deploying a carefully chosen subset of existing source materials within the framework of their own idiomatic stylistic and narratological background (e.g. Gabba (1956) and (Millar 1964)). More recent scholarship by Alain Gowing (1992) and Osgood and Baron (2019) has shown that Cassius Dio and Appian both demonstrate sensitivity to the dual historiographic traditions within which they worked, both Greek and Roman.

Newer scholarship on the triumviral period as a whole, informed by feminist methodologies and material evidence has been crucial to my analysis. Josiah Osgood's (2006) monograph on the period provides insightful analysis into the sources for this period, and I am indebted to his approach in this dissertation. Kristina Milnor's (2005) chapter on women in the

triumviral period also provides a model for how I approach the source material. Rohr Vio's (2022) monograph on women's interventions in the late Republic and increasing political provides insightful analysis and demonstrates patterns of women's involvement in public life via their private connections. New biographies of elite women, which have noted that the representations preserved of women are the product of elite, male discourse have shaped my own reading of the evidence including Treggiari's (2019) biography of Servilia and Schultz's (2022) biography of Fulvia, which advises against appropriating the moral frameworks of the ancient authors. Where able, I also incorporate material evidence, such funerary monuments in order to augment the literary evidence.

This dissertation draws upon this new wave of scholarship, weaving together the various strands of evidence to provide a full picture of the discourse of Roman women of this "tangled, hideous, chaotic" period (Syme 1939: 3 n. 2). Although Cleopatra remains an enduring source of fascination, I have restricted my discussion to women working within a Roman discursive framework. The sources I examine span across time, from contemporary accounts in Cicero and the speaker of the *laudatio Turiae*, to Valerius Maximus in the Tiberian period to the Greek historians of the 3rd c. CE, Cassius Dio and Appian in addition to Plutarch. An examination of these sources reveals consistent preoccupations, while at the same time demonstrating the differing cultural and narratological concerns of the authors in crafting their own characterizations of why and what meaning to attach to the events of the triumviral period.

The first chapter examines the portrayal of women in proscription narratives, a genre unique to this period in which women play crucial roles. These stories reveal key anxieties Roman men held about their subordinates, and, as we will see, allow historians to comment on the fundamental difference in this period, as "normal" historical narrative had to be paused.

Appian preserves the largest amount of these narratives, and I argue that his depictions show a persistent interest in the female body as a site of contestation. This concern enters the record early, as an examination of the rhetoric of the body in the *laudatio Turiae* reveals.

In chapter two, I analyze the figure of the elite mother during this period by focusing upon the representation of Servilia, mother of Brutus, Julia, mother of Antony, and Mucia, mother of Pompey. As all were members of distinguished Roman families, all had first hand experience with the instability that characterized Roman politics at the end of the Republic and had the resources and connections to maximize their sons' chances at winning the period. I rely principally upon Cicero, Cassius Dio, Appian, and Plutarch and argue that the depiction of mothers in this period demonstrated deep concern with the failure of male networks, as these women were all involved in key political maneuverings because of the fact that they were excluded from official power networks. This chapter contributes to the growing scholarship on Roman motherhood, examined by Dixon (1988) and more recently by McCauley (2015).

Enslaved women and freedwomen are the focus of Chapter 3, and I focus on the glimpses of enslaved women we get in stories of proscription narratives as well as figures such as Volumnia Cytheris, much maligned by Cicero. By examining the role of status, we shall see that the obligations of enslaved women were enhanced by their status as both women and enslaved.

In my last chapter, I examine Octavia and Livia, who can be considered to have won out in the end, as women attached to the *domus Augusti*. I especially consider the role of Octavian's propaganda in the construction of the discourse around Octavia and Livia. Octavia's highly visible performance of female virtue furthers Plutarch's larger argument that Antony does not understand how to respond to proper female behavior.

While the sources such as Appian and Cassius Dio divide women into binaries of “good” and “bad,” with extraordinary examples of each, remembering that there were no easy choices in this period allows us to see the messy process of discourse formation. For Roman male authors, thinking in terms of “good” and “bad” allowed for neat commenting on the period, articulating anxieties without being forced to examine the difficult moral ambiguities.⁷

The women that I examine in this dissertation are all multi-faceted and the authors who write about them articulate the complexities of Roman moral frameworks and values. As we will see, class, family, and allegiance all contribute to the authors ultimate judgement of the women, from condemnation in the case of Fulvia to admiration in the case of Octavia. The portrayals of these women give us an insight into how authors grappled with the place of women within society and the precarity of the Roman social system.

⁷ See Milnor (2005: 232-234) for a discussion of the proscriptions in Seneca’s *Suasoriae* and *Controversiae* of the 1st c. CE, which reveal that contested loyalty vexed elite Roman men (i.e.: Should a daughter be more loyal to her father or to her husband?)

Chapter 1: Crisis and Opportunity: Roman Women in Proscription Narratives

Este dolor también es mío. Este ayuno.

This sorrow is also mine. This hunger.

Sara Uribe, *Antígona González*

The proscription narratives preserved in authors such as Appian, Cassius Dio, and Valerius Maximus continue to shock modern audiences with their depictions of the gauntlet of outcomes during civil war: harrowing escapes, treachery, and gruesome murders and suicides.⁸ The proscriptions violently upended Roman *mores*, including the hierarchies that traditionally governed Roman families and marriages.⁹ The historians of this period devote considerable attention to the domestic sphere in their narratives, including scenes of wives who either betrayed, saved, or failed to save their husbands. The domestic sphere became a battleground with subordinates having the upper hand. As Milnor formulates it (2005: 190): “The proscriptions were a time when the turmoil consuming the state consumed the home as well: the period marked a crisis in Rome, not simply in political but in domestic life.” In other words, women and enslaved members of the household assumed the *patria potestas* that traditionally was the exclusive role of men.¹⁰ The role of women and enslaved members, who often determined whether a proscribed man would live or die, preoccupy the Roman historians of the time. Writers such as Appian, Cassius Dio, and Valerius Maximus record the shocking and dangerous deeds of women during this period. This chapter focuses on the women present in the proscription narratives preserved in Appian, Cassius Dio, and Valerius Maximus in addition to

⁸ See Hinard (1985: 227-326) for an overview of the proscriptions of this period.

⁹ For an overview of the Roman family see Dixon (1992) and Bradley (1991). For Roman marriage see Treggiari (1991).

¹⁰ See Gardner (1998) for an overview of *patria potestas*.

the *laudatio Turiae*. It argues that the proscription narratives present women assuming novel roles that had not been required before in Roman history, although similar periods of unrest resulted in similarly exceptional behavior.¹¹ That is, there was an established framework out of which elite women operated of which they made use of in novel ways during this period.

Many scholars have examined the actions of elite women such as Livia, Octavia, and Fulvia when discussing this period, but there has been less attention paid to the importance of the roles of women in proscription narratives as an example of the discourse of femininity and the imagination of the breakdown in bodily integrity in male discourse. I draw principally upon the work of Kristina Milnor (2005) and Josiah Osgood (2006) in order to argue that the proscription narratives preserved in the sources encode profound social anxieties and also probe female selfhood and resistance, and, in this way point to something fundamental about the period – that aspects of femininity that made Roman men anxious, such as women’s supposed love of their own jewelry, became what men had to rely upon for survival.¹²

My discussion of the female body is influenced by feminist philosophers of the self, especially Weiss (1999) and Bordo (2003), who emphasize that the body both “reflects cultural norms and can provide a site of resistance to them” (Anderson et al. 2021). As the quote that begins this chapter indicates, women in the triumviral period assumed the danger and peril of the

¹¹ The question of novel roles for women during this period has been taken up most recently by Webb (2022). While I agree that the interventions are not completely different from earlier periods, the discourse of the roles of women during this period emphasize that these interventions were higher stakes and occurred with much greater frequency.

¹² Juvenal (6.457-459) articulates women’s greed for jewelry and the subsequent changes in behavior once they have it: *Nil non permittit mulier sibi, turpe putat nil, / cum viridis gemmas collo circumdedit et cum / auribus extentis magnos commisit elenchos*. (“There’s nothing a woman doesn’t allow herself, nothing she considers disgusting, once she has put an emerald choker around her neck and has fastened giant pearls to her elongated ears”). Trans. Braund.

proscribed at great risk to their own lives.¹³ Ancient authors' utilization of the female body as a site of contestation allowed them to investigate issues of the fragmented male self, specifically by conflating the female body in peril with the lack of normative legal protections of the male body.

In order to fully illuminate how women's roles during the triumviral period were distinct from other periods, I begin my discussion focusing on women's roles during periods of crisis within the city of Rome, and my discussion first centers on literary portrayals of women by examining Livy's portrayal of women in Rome's foundation myths and Lucan's portrayal of women in his dystopic epic world. Roman authors present women as key players in the establishment of peace, yet they also present women whose presence is a disruption and exacerbators of civic discord. In the Roman psyche, women occupied a powerful space during times of disruption, as their moral framework was put to the test against political chaos.¹⁴ I then examine portrayals of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, in order to understand the discourse surrounding historical women in times of crisis.¹⁵

1.1 Women's Role in a Crisis

The question of the ideal response to a crisis, and the rhetorical exercise of imagining the conflicting demands a crisis brings was commonplace in Roman literature.¹⁶ Gendered

¹³ As a rewriting of *Antigone*, the work is set in modern-day Tamaulipas, Mexico. The work centers on the question of the role of the surviving family members in recovering and remembering the disappeared.

¹⁴ According to Kristina Milnor (2006: 233), this is precisely the point of how they are presented in Seneca.

¹⁵ Representations of historical women, however, are still subject to the same processes of discourse formation as literary women. That is, no author represents the truest version of any of his subjects as all are conceived of through the prism of discourse.

¹⁶ Milnor (2006: 231) notes of Seneca's *Controversiae* "We may be struck by the refusal of the speakers to consider it [civil war] in any way other than as a context for the negotiation of personal relationships."

expectations within a culture, however, often dictate that men and women respond and act differently in times of crises and this gendered difference was of interest to Roman authors.¹⁷ The response to crisis in Rome varied, yet the presence of women fills the pages of Roman historians writing about crisis in Rome – both caused by internal discord and external invaders. Rome’s history was certainly filled with episodes in which women intervened at critical points for the better or for the worse. While there existed a separation between the male dominated political sphere and female dominated domestic sphere in Roman historical thought, the boundary became especially porous during moments of crisis (Milnor 2011: 620).¹⁸ The women included in narratives of crisis serve various functions; some, such as the Sabine women and Lucretia underline the ability of the feminine to relieve the tension between men, while others such as Tullia and Tarpeia underline the rapacious desire of women and lack of bodily control of the men.¹⁹ In narrating a crisis, Roman authors usually assigned women to either the ‘good’ or ‘bad’ prototype, with women either restoring the space between the public and private spheres or collapsing the boundary between the two with disastrous results. Livy’s history is illustrative of this phenomenon, as his history is filled with women designed as *exempla* and *anti-exempla*, and while his work is a work of history, the early myths of Rome resemble literary depictions.²⁰ In

¹⁷ Joshel 1992 compares and contrasts gendered narratives of crisis in Rome, Nazi Germany, and contemporary United States. In all of these contexts, there is a concern for the proper role of women and proper male behavior.

¹⁸ Milnor notes that from the Augustan period on, authors include women in political scenes more often. In contrast, Thucydides keeps a firm boundary in his work.

¹⁹ See Claassen (1998) for an overview of women in Livy in the first pentad. Tullia’s interference seems part of the same model of misogyny which portrays women interfering in politics without any necessity, as we will see with Fulvia.

²⁰ The line between history/myth/literature was much fuzzier in Latin literature. Much scholarship has undertaken the question of historiographical methods in both Greece and Rome. Two pieces of recent scholarship, Mialet (2023) and Wiseman (2008), both give overviews of Livy’s early narratives and its connections with myth.

the world of poetry, the epic poet Lucan draws upon conventional representations of women to demonstrate the futility of Republican values in the epic world he has created (Bartsch 1997; Ahl 1976). The violations that are punished in Livy's work go unpunished in Lucan's epic (Bartsch 1997: 14). An analysis of women in crises in these works demonstrate that the female body functions as a locus of male anxiety during political crisis for Roman authors to varying degrees across time and genre.

The Sabine women most vividly and famously demonstrate the success of women's intrusion into the political sphere during a time of crisis. Their successful intervention on the battlefield results in the treaty between the Romans and Sabines and marks the beginning of the successful integration of non-Romans into the Roman state. Kristina Milnor (2009: 284) notes of their success: "feminine domesticity is able to withstand the attack, and, ultimately, to be the solution to civic problems which men have been unable to fix." In other words, the feminine domestic sphere with its connotations of stability and concord can usefully intervene in times of crisis. The depiction of the Sabine women in Livy centers on their ability to negotiate their relationships as both Roman wives and Sabine daughters. I quote the passage in full as I will return to the themes of loyalty and conflicting familial relationships later on in the chapter (*AUC* 1.13.1-5):²¹

Tum Sabinae mulieres, quarum ex iniuria bellum ortum erat, crinibus passis scissaque veste victo malis muliebri pavore ausae se inter tela volantia inferre, ex transverso impetu facto dirimere infestas acies, dirimere iras, hinc patres hinc viros orantes, ne se sanguine nefando soceri generique respergerent, ne parricidio macularent partus suos, nepotum illi, hi liberum progeniem. 'si adfinitatis inter vos, si conubii piget, in nos vertite iras; nos causa belli, nos vulnere ac caedium viris ac parentibus sumus; melius peribimus quam sine alteris vestrum viduae aut orbae vivemus.' movet res cum multitudinem tum duces; silentium et repentina fit

²¹ Text and translation from Loeb edition. All texts and translations from Loeb edition unless otherwise noted.

quies; inde ad foedus faciendum duces prodeunt; nec pacem modo, sed civitatem unam ex duabus faciunt.

Then the Sabine women, whose wrong had given rise to the war, with loosened hair and torn garments, their woman's timidity lost in a sense of their misfortune, dared to go amongst the flying missiles, and rushing in from the side, to part the hostile forces and disarm them of their anger, beseeching their fathers on this side, on that their husbands, that fathers-in-law and sons-in-law should not stain themselves with impious bloodshed, nor pollute with parricide the suppliants' children, grandsons to one party and sons to the other. "If you regret," they continued, "the relationship that unites you, if you regret the marriage-tie, turn your anger against us; we are the cause of war, the cause of wounds, and even death to both our husbands and our parents. It will be better for us to perish than to live, lacking either of you, as widows or as orphans." It was a touching plea, not only to the rank and file, but to their leaders as well. A stillness fell on them, and a sudden hush. Then the leaders came forward to make a truce, and not only did they agree on peace, but they made one people out of the two.

The rhetoric the women use of desiring to assume blame for the conflict allow the men an exit ramp from the violence. As Sandra Joshel has observed (1992: 121) the Sabine women use their bodies to act as a buffer zone between the men, and the women's speech emphasizes their willingness to receive the violence that cannot be contained by the men (*in nos vertite iras*) and their assumption of responsibility for the war (*nos vulnerum ac caedium viris ac parentibus sumus*).²² Additionally, the rather stylized depiction of the women that Livy creates emphasizes their savvy navigation of their relationships. The women appear as matrons in mourning, which Livy underlines through alliteration of 's,' 'v,' and 'm' sounds (*passis scissaque veste victo malis muliebri*). The polyptoton and repetition throughout the speech (*dirimere...dirimere...viduae aut orbae*) allow Livy to emphasize the dual relationships to which the Sabine women are bound. David Konstan (1986: 211) has noted that "the tension of crossed loyalties" recurs regularly in Livy's early history of Rome (Claassen 1998: 84). Livy demonstrates that the Sabine women are

²² "Women function as obstacles or embody spaces, often between and separating men" (Joshel 1992: 121).

able to successfully navigate their roles as Roman wives and Sabine daughters in resolving this crisis. We will see that the issue of contested loyalty is a central issue in the proscription narratives.

In Livy's narration of Lucretia he highlights her possession of all the ideal virtues of a Roman matron: chastity, industry, and skill at weaving. After Tarquin's violent assault, Livy casts Lucretia as an *exemplum* who stoically accepts and manipulates her fate in a time of crisis. Lucretia asserts that she must be an *exemplum* for other women by killing herself: *ego me etsi peccato absolvo, supplicio non libero; nec ulla deinde inpudica Lucretiae exemplo vivet* (For I myself although I am free from blame, I am not free from punishment. Let no other unchaste woman live by the example of Lucretia 1.57.11).²³ Lucretia's dead body becomes the catalyst for the establishment of the Republic, and, as Sandra Joshel (1992: 125) has noted: "Dead, her body can be deployed, and the sight of it enjoyed, by all men." In other words, the dead body allows the Republic to be formed. The violated and murdered bodies of women move Livy's narrative forward and act as catalysts for political change (Joshel 1992: 125).

Tullia Minor is an anti-exemplum in Livy who plots with Tarquin to overthrow the monarchy of Servius Tullius. Livy portrays Tullia as a Clytemnestra type noting: *Tulit enim et Romana regia sceleris tragici exemplum* ("For even the royal house of Rome produced an example of a crime worthy of Greek tragedy," 1.46).²⁴ Tullia Minor instigates the overthrow of Servius and contains characteristics typical of evil women: she goads her husband (*domi uxore Tullia inquietum animum stimulante*, 1.46) and laments his perceived lack of desire and daring (*Angebatur ferox Tullia nihil materiae in viro neque ad cupiditatem neque ad audaciam esse*,

²³ Translation is my own.

²⁴ All translations of Livy from Warrior (2006).

1.46). Furthermore, Tullia Minor assumes the typically masculine characteristic of boldness (*audacia*), which underlines the crisis in the state (*spernere sororem, quod virum nacta muliebri cessaret audacia*). Tullia Minor even initiates the overthrow of Servius Tullius and her interference is another marker of her corrupted femininity (*sed initium turbandi omnia a femina ortum est* 1.46). In Livy's narration of evil women, common characteristics are uncontrolled desire and interference into the political sphere without proper justification via political turbulence. We will see that Fulvia similarly possesses this kind of overbearing, masculine attitude in Plutarch and other authors.

Livy's context as an Augustan writer influences his portrayals of the women of the foundation myths. As Kristina Milnor formulates it (2009: 285): "Livy seems to wrestle with the question of what women might do for, and mean to, the development of the Roman state," while Joshel (1992: 121) notes that Livy's presentation of the Sabine women adheres to Augustus' new order in which domesticity has been fixed and women are restored to their proper places as chaste wives. Livy's women reflect his own position as a writer who grew up during the triumviral period and experienced the transition to one-man rule, which included new prominence for women in the imperial family. The portrayals of the Sabine women, Lucretia, and Tullia accord with models we will see employed by later authors when discussing the triumviral period.

On the other hand, Roman historians also include stories of women whose behavior underscores the extent to which the state has deteriorated with Sallust's depiction of Sempronia being a well-known example. Barbara Boyd (1987) has argued that Sallust crafts a woman to match Catiline in his depiction of Sempronia. Her qualities mirror those of Catiline's and emphasize that the political situation has turned all neutral qualities to bad qualities. Sallust

emphasizes Sempronia's lack of self control in his depiction as she pursues men rather than be pursued (*lubido sic accensa, ut saepius peteret viros quam peteretur*). The female body operates as a locus of political anxiety with Sempronia emphasizes the degradation of the state. We will see Appian use the same technique in his proscription narratives.

Lucan similarly presents Roman women appearing in moments of crisis, and his work gives valuable insight into how literary portrayals of women differ from those that are more historical.²⁵ His portrayal of Republican *matronae* and wives underlines that women's traditional values are no longer able to receive violence and generate something productive from it. Lucan's depiction of Julia, the daughter of Caesar, vividly demonstrates the failure of Republican women to stop civil war. He apostrophizes Julia as the only woman who could have stopped the civil war, explicitly linking her to the Sabine women (1.115-118): *tu sola furem / inde virum poteris atque hinc retinere parentem / armatasque manus excusso iungere ferro, / ut generos soceris mediae iunxere Sabinae* ("Alone you could have here restrained your frenzied father, thrown away their swords and joined their armed hands, as Sabine women in between joined fathers – with their sons-in-law.") In a reversal from Livian women, the dead body of Julia, although she was a model daughter and wife, begins civil war rather than resolves it. As E.V. Mulhern (2017) and Angeline Chiu (2010) have noted, Julia's portrayal emphasizes the failure of Republican values before the outbreak of civil war.

²⁵ See Lintott (2010) for an overview of Lucan's relationship to history. Lintott stresses that although Lucan writes an epic poem rather than a history in verse he does at times demonstrate that he has consulted historical sources, such as when describing military operations.

Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, offers an example of a woman who lived through a period of crisis and whose letters were allegedly preserved by Cornelius Nepos.²⁶ This letter demonstrates how Roman women used the values and moral frameworks from literature when discussing their own role in civil discord. In the letter that Nepos records, Cornelia chastises Gaius for his activities and encourages him to moderate himself. While the letter itself is probably not entirely genuine, it gives insight into how an elite woman was expected to respond when she believed her son to be engaging in incorrect political behavior. As the Sabine women and Lucretia, Cornelia advocates for the suspension of hostilities and promotes making peace for the good of the Republic. I quote part of Fragment 2 here:

Ne id quidem tam breve spatium potest opitulari, quin et mihi adversere et rem publicam profliges? Denique quae pausa erit? ecquando desinet familia nostra insanire? ecquando modus ei rei haberi poterit? ecquando desinemus et habentes et praebentes molestiis insistere? ecquando perpudescet miscenda atque perturbanda re publica? Sed si omnino id fieri non potest, ubi ego mortua ero, petito tribunatum

Cannot even that brief span aid me in preventing you from opposing me and ruining your country? Finally, where will you make an end? Will our family ever cease from madness? Will it ever be possible to observe moderation? Shall we ever cease to insist on causing and suffering trouble? Shall we ever be ashamed of embroiling and harassing our country? But if any change is impossible, sue for the tribunate after I am dead; do whatever you like, so far as I am concerned, when I shall no longer be aware of it.²⁷

Cornelia follows a tradition of women like the mother of Coriolanus who interfere to prevent further violence and chaos in the city.

Taken all together, in moments of crisis Roman women appear either as mediators through whom the conflict is resolved or as representations of the monstrosity of the state.

²⁶ Elite women's writing is hardly ever preserved. Tacitus references Agrippina the Younger's memoirs (*Ann.* 4.53). The very fact that this letter remained in circulation demonstrates how exceptional Cornelia was.

²⁷ Trans. J.C. Rolfe.

The focus on the female body as a site of virtue or a catalyst for political change in Livy finds its inversed counterpart in Lucan. The domestic sphere becomes political for certain periods during times of crisis but quickly reverts back in the story of the Sabine women. As Lucan suggests, during civil war female virtues assume even greater importance.

The triumviral period was a crisis on a different scale than the past. The domestic sphere metamorphosed almost overnight into a threatening and unknown space. The people and structures upon which Roman men relied (enslaved persons and women) became alien. The proscriptions allowed for women to assume the authority of the head of the household. The wives and mothers of the proscribed were presented with the choice to either collaborate or resist the triumvirs. Resisting the triumvirs came with very real risks as the punishment for hiding one of the proscribed was death (*B Civ.* 4.11). The proscriptions allowed all types of resentments to surface, and Appian and Cassius Dio mention women who turned in their husbands. Other women, such as Turia, risked their lives to save their husbands.

1.2 Sources for Proscription Narratives

As recent scholarship has stressed (Milnor 2005, Osgood 2006), the tales of the proscriptions upend certain traditional historical writing practices. The focus on the domestic sphere and the actions of women and enslaved household members strays from traditional historical emphasis on the actions of prominent men. Yet the proscription narratives served various functions for the authors who wrote of them. As Gowing (1992) has noted, for Appian, the proscription narratives demonstrated the superiority of one-man rule to democracy (4.16), while for Cassius Dio they demonstrated important political and economic lessons. The contents of the narratives seem credulous with their emphasis on narrow escapes and sudden reversals of fortunes. Both Appian and Cassius Dio, however, seem to suggest that there were works that

contained compilations of these stories. Appian even notes that he could have included much more material from the sources that he consulted: πολλὰ δὲ ἐστὶ, καὶ πολλοὶ Ῥωμαίων ἐν πολλαῖς βίβλοις αὐτὰ συνέγραψαν ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν (“The subject is large, and many Romans have written about it for themselves in many books,” *B. Civ.* 4.16).²⁸ The existence of this material underlines the continued interest in this period long after the events occurred.²⁹ As Josiah Osgood emphasizes (2006: 66) the theme of loyalty and betrayal present in the narratives allowed the narratives to enter the historical tradition early. The proscriptions allowed the Romans to think through certain relationships that undergirded society. I will begin my discussion with Appian, who preserves the largest number of narratives in his work, and I will focus upon how his presentation focalizes issues of female selfhood and resistance, which gesture toward political anxieties.

1.3 The View from Appian

The historian Appian preserves the largest selection of proscription narratives. The scholarship (Magnino (1998), Gowing (1992), and Bucher (2000)) has noted that of the historians who write about the proscriptions, Appian devotes the most attention to the victims of the triumvirs and includes narratives that center on the actions of non-elites, including women and the enslaved. Appian’s first-hand experience with *stasis* perhaps in part explains his interest in detailing the effects of violence on Romans. A fragment of Appian details his flight from Jews

²⁸ All text and translation of Appian from McGing’s (2020) Loeb edition with light adaptations.

²⁹ The commemoration of this period was not without risks. Cremutius Cordus is the most notable example of a historian who irked the imperial family with his presentation of Brutus. See Tacitus *Annales* 4.23-41. Moreover, the scale of human misery was so large that it was difficult to put the period into words as Velleius Paterculus notes: *huius totius temporis fortunam ne deflere quidem quisquam satis digne potuit, adeo nemo exprimere verbis potest* (“No one has even been able to weep sufficiently for the events of this whole era, let alone find a way to express it in words,” 2.67.1).

in Alexandria, which, as Gowing (1992:14) has noted, demonstrates that Appian had first-hand experience with opposition to Roman rule and political turmoil.³⁰ Appian's purpose for including the proscription narratives in his work is to demonstrate the well-ordered current government, that is, the benefits of one-man rule (4.16): ὀλίγα δὲ ἐγὼ καθ' ἐκάστην ιδέαν, ἐς πίστιν ἐκάστης καὶ ἐς εὐδαιμόνισμα τῶν νῦν παρόντων, ἐπὶ κεφαλαίου διὰ τὸ μῆκος ἀναγράψω. (Because it is a long story, I will write up, in summary, just a few instances of each kind, to give credit to each, and to show the prosperity of our present situation). At the same time, Appian demonstrates a sensitivity to the values of the Republic. Appian's narration examines the stress, anxiety, and fear that this period brought to many Romans and demonstrates an attunement to the suffering that impacted Roman families. Appian's opinion on this period helps to elucidate Roman, male anxieties about women, as he records the most exceptional stories in each case. While Appian worked with source material available to him, the organization of the narratives in addition to his attention throughout to the female body demonstrate that he is trying to make his own argument in the text about the meaning of these narratives, rather than repeating verbatim the information from the sources.

One of Appian's overarching concerns in his narration of the proscriptions is in demonstrating the illegality of the triumvirate (Gowing 1992: 268). The organization of his narrative contrasts the expressed aims of the proscriptions with their reality. Most notable is his inclusion of a Greek translation of the proscription edict.³¹ The proscriptions were part of the *lex Titia*, a law ratified in November of 43 BCE after Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus met to discuss

³⁰ Gowing 1992: 13-15

³¹ While earlier scholarship has questioned the authenticity of the proscription edict, recent scholarship, such as Gowing (1992) and Osgood (2006) has showed that there is no reason to consider it an invention by Appian. Hinard (1985: 228) also argues that the edict is genuine. Appian's own

their plan for the Triumvirate. While the triumvirs claim that they are not proscribing on the basis on wealth or seizing men unawares in the proscription edict, the narrative that Appian constructs contradicts this claim. Appian states that the triumvirs did in fact proscribe men on account of their wealth (ἡ πλοῦτου διαφέροντος, 4.2.5) and that they did seize men unawares after their meeting (δυσώδεκα δὲ ἄνδρας, ἢ, ὡς ἕτεροι λέγουσιν, ἑπτακαίδεκα, τοὺς μάλιστα δυνατούς, ἐν οἷς ἦν καὶ Κικέρων, ἔδοξε προανελεῖν ἐπιπέμψαντας ἄφνω, 4.2.6) (Gowing 1992: 252). The organization of Appian's material underlines the deceitful nature of the triumvirate.³² The family emerges as a site where Appian explores the ramifications of a law that encouraged betrayal.

Appian emphasizes the importance of the family when he narrates the beginning of the proscriptions and the startling changes in the status of men who now fear their subordinates.³³ Appian notes that this crisis revealed the ugly emotions simmering just below the surface in each family (4.13):

ἐδεδοίκεσαν γὰρ οὐχ ἦσσαν τῶν σφαγέων οἱ μὲν γυναῖκας ἢ παῖδας οὐκ εὐμενῶς σφίσιν ἔχοντας, οἱ δὲ ἐξελευθέρους τε καὶ θεράποντας, οἱ δὲ καὶ δανεισμάτων χρήστας ἢ χωρίων γείτονας ἐπιθυμία τῶν χωρίων. ἐπανάστασις γὰρ δὴ πάντων, ὅσα τέως ὑπούλα ἦν, ἀθρόα τότε ἐγίγνετο καὶ ἀθέμιστος μεταβολὴ βουλευτῶν ἀνδρῶν, ὑπάτων ἢ στρατηγῶν ἢ δημάρχων, ἔτι τάσδε τὰς ἀρχὰς μετιόντων ἢ ἐν αὐταῖς γεγνονότων, ἐς πόδας ἰδίου θεράποντος ῥιπτουμένων σὺν ὀλοφύρσεσι καὶ σωτήρα καὶ κύριον τὸν οἰκέτην τιθεμένων. οἴκτιστον δὲ ἦν, ὅτε καὶ ταῦτα ὑποστάντες οὐκ ἐλεθεῖεν.

For some were no more afraid of the assassins than they were of ill-disposed wives and children; others feared their freedmen and slaves, others their creditors, or neighboring landholders who wanted their land. In fact, all the ill feeling that had up to this point festered under the surface broke out all at once. An improper

³² As Gowing (1992: 265) notes there are parallels in Appian's depiction of the proscriptions and Thucydides' depiction of *stasis* on Corcyra. Another suggestive parallel I see is Thucydides' depiction of the plague following Pericles' funeral oration. The jarring juxtaposition of the plague after the funeral oration problematizes Pericles' statements about the greatness of the city.

³³ See Osgood (2011) for an overview of how the Roman familial structure was constituted and Fagan (2011) for an overview of when and why violence was utilized in Roman social relations.

change occurred in men of senatorial rank, whether consuls, praetors, or tribunes, both those who were about to enter these offices, or who had already held them: they were now throwing themselves sobbing at the feet of their own slaves, calling their slaves saviors and masters. Most pitiable of all was the fact that having endured this, they obtained no mercy.

The image of the senator begging for his life from the enslaved members of his household emphasizes the upheaval of the period. The vulnerable head of the household does not receive *clementia* from the enslaved members of his household and the status that granted him authority vanishes. Appian's depiction of the fear the proscribed had of their families is suggestive of Rossana Reguillo's formulation of the sinister, which she connects to Freud's idea of the uncanny (2021: 128): "Considero que uno de los lenguajes de la violencia y el terror es lo siniestro, que, para Freud, esto (*Das Unheimlich*) significa la transformación de lo familiar en lo opuesto, en algo extraño y amenazante, con potencial destructivo... La angustia frente a lo siniestro se produce porque hay un pacto tácito de reconocimiento de que 'sabíamos' que aquello familiar y conocido podía mutar en su contrario, lo extraño, lo desconocido."³⁴ While Reguillo applies her formulation of the sinister to the contemporary violence of Mexico, her formulation of the sinister mirrors the sudden terror of the proscribed toward their family members. I will return to this idea when discussing Appian's depictions of wives who betrayed their husbands.

At the same time, Appian also notes that wives and sons showed extreme bravery in attempting to save their proscribed relatives and many died with them (4.3.15):³⁵

ἴση δ' ἦν ἐτέρων σπουδὴ καὶ ἀρετὴ, γυναικῶν τε καὶ παιδίων καὶ ἀδελφῶν καὶ
θεραπόντων, περισφζόντων τε καὶ συμμηχανωμένων πολλὰ καὶ
συναποθνησκόντων, ὅτε μὴ τύχοιεν ὧν ἐπενόουν: οἱ δὲ καὶ ἐπανήρουν σφᾶς

³⁴ "I think that one of the languages of violence and terror is the sinister, which, for Freud, this (the uncanny) means the transformation of the familiar to its opposite, to something strange and threatening with destructive potential. Anxiety toward the sinister is produced because there is a tacit pact of recognition that we knew that that familiar and known could change into the opposite, the strange, the unknown."

³⁵ All text and translations from McGing's (2020) Loeb editions with light adaptations.

ἀνηρημένοις. τῶν δὲ ἐκφυγόντων οἱ μὲν ὑπὸ ναυαγίων ἀπώλλυντο, ἐς πάντα σφίσι τῆς τύχης ἐπιβαρούσης, οἱ δὲ ἐπανήχθησαν ἐκ παραλόγων ἐπὶ τε ἀρχὰς τῆς πόλεως καὶ στρατηγίας πολέμων καὶ θριάμβους. οὕτως ὁ καιρὸς ἦν ἐκεῖνος ἐπίδειξις παραδοξολογίας.

An equal degree of devotion and courage was shown by others – wives and children and brothers and slaves – who rescued the proscribed, devised schemes with them and died with them when their plans did not work out. Some even killed themselves over the bodies of the dead. Of those who escaped, some died in shipwrecks, fate weighing heavily on them without respite, while others were restored unexpectedly to magistracies at Rome, to military commands, and triumphs. Such was the display of extraordinary events that this period put on.

The variety of outcomes from the proscriptions emphasize the disorder and chance that ruled in the city. The images of the family members helping the proscribed and in some cases dying with them spotlights the issue of loyalty that is central to the narratives. Appian's narratives largely follow the dichotomy between family members who help their family members and those who betray them to the executioners. In the beginning of Appian's narration, two wives demonstrate extreme loyalty to their husbands and allow Appian to probe the legality of the political situation through the female body.

1.4 Dying with: Arruntius' Wife and Ligarius' Wife

There are two key moments in Appian's narrative in which he highlights women who failed to save their husbands and as a result chose to kill themselves. The stories are illustrative examples of the disorder, chaos, and terror that the proscriptions brought to the Roman *domus*. The placement of these stories, at the beginning of examples of certain 'types' of proscription scenes also mark them out as particularly disruptive and unique.³⁶

³⁶ See Gowing (1992: 259) for an analysis of the organization of Appian's proscription narratives.

Appian's first mention of a woman's death in his proscription narratives closes out his section on examples of fathers and sons who died together. His previous stories focus on betrayal by sons and the death of Cicero.³⁷ His final story details the deaths of Arruntius, his son, and his wife. I quote the passage in full here (*B Civ.* 4.21):

Ἀρρούντιος τὸν υἱόν, οὐχ ὑφιστάμενον φεύγειν χωρὶς αὐτοῦ, μόλις ἔπεισεν ὡς νέον περισφάζειν ἑαυτόν. καὶ τόνδε μὲν ἡ μήτηρ ἐπὶ τὰς πύλας προύπεμψε καὶ ὑπέστρεψεν, ἵνα ἀνηρημένον τὸν ἄνδρα θάψειε: πυθομένη δὲ καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ὑπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης διεφθάρθαι λιμῶ διεχρήσατο ἑαυτήν.

Arruntius with difficulty persuaded his son, who would not agree to flee without him, to save himself as he was a young man. His mother accompanied him to the city gates and returned home to bury her murdered husband. When she learned that her son too had died at sea she starved herself to death.

The death of the mother by starvation harkens back to Appian's statement in his introduction to the proscriptions that some people killed themselves after their family members had died (περισφάζοντων τε καὶ συμμηχανωμένων πολλὰ καὶ συναποθνησκόντων, ὅτε μὴ τύχοιεν ὧν ἐπενόουν, 4.15). In a scene full of pathos and suggestive of a *propemptikon* from epic poetry, the wife accompanies her son to the city gates to flee, full of uncertainty about whether she will see him again, while she also has to return to the city to bury her husband. The human costs of the proscriptions are demonstrated in one sentence.

The death of the mother tragically underlines the annihilation of an entire family unit. The participle *πυθομένη* is suggestive of an *anagnorisis* scene. Nicole Loraux (1987) has noted that wives frequently die by suicide in Greek tragedy in order to 'live with' their husbands in death.³⁸ As a wife and mother, Arruntius' wife was symbolically associated with the health and

³⁷ The first mention of a woman in Appian's proscription narratives comes at 4.4.18 when Turanius tells his daughter not to claim her paternal inheritance in case her brother petitioned Antony for her death too.

³⁸ "To die with: a form in death of *synoikein*, "to live with," which was one of the commonest expressions in Greek to mean marriage." (Loraux 1987: 25).

nourishment of the household. The manner of her death, by starvation, underlines her rejection of her duties to the household as female food refusal also entails a denial of community and sexuality, and thus reproduction (Counihan 1999: 104). Arruntius' wife's starved body demonstrates that the proscriptions entail a profound change from the usual function of the domestic sphere. While we have seen that in Livy the bodies of women furthered the action of the narrative and initiated new political developments, the body of Arruntius' wife more closely mimics the dystopic world of Lucan's epic.

The third woman to appear in Appian's narrative, Ligarius' wife, likewise kills herself by starvation. The story of Ligarius and his wife opens the narratives of 'depraved' women (γυναικῶν πονηρῶν), with Appian noting that he will return to the theme of good wives (4.23). Ligarius' wife fails in her effort to conceal her husband and fails in her effort to be killed by the magistrates for hiding her husband. The story is the first to focus upon the actions of a wife to save her husband (4.23):

Λιγάριον δὲ ἡ γυνὴ κρύπτουσα μίαν ἐς τὸ ἀπόρητον ἐπηγάγετο θεράπειαν, προδοθεῖσα δὲ ὑπ' αὐτῆς εἶπετο τῇ κεφαλῇ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς φερομένη βοῶσα: 'ἐγὼ τοῦτον ὑπεδεξάμην, τὰ δ' ὅμοια τοῖς ὑποδεξαμένοις ἐστὶν ἐπιτίμια.' καὶ οὐδενὸς αὐτὴν οὔτε ἀναιροῦντος οὔτε μηνύοντος, αὐτάγγελος ἐς τοὺς ἄρχοντας ἦλθε καθ' ἑαυτῆς, κάκεινων αὐτὴν διὰ τὴν φιλανδρίαν ὑπεριδόντων, ἑαυτὴν ἀπέκτεινε λιμῶ. καὶ τῆσδε μὲν ἐνθάδε ἐπεμνήσθην, ὅτι τὸν ἄνδρα περισφύζουσα ἀπετύγχανέ τε καὶ συνεξήγαγεν ἑαυτήν: ὅσαι δὲ ἐπέτυχον τῆς φιλανδρίας, ἐν τοῖς περισωθεῖσι τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀναγράψω

Ligarius was hidden by his wife, who let one maidservant into the secret. Betrayed by her, she followed her husband's head as it was being taken away, shouting, "I took this man in; those who do so are liable to the same penalties as the proscribed." As nobody killed her or informed against her, she came to the magistrates and laid an accusation against herself. But when they too ignored her, because of her love for her husband, she starved herself to death. I have mentioned this woman here, because she failed to save her husband and did away with herself to be with him. The women whose love for their husband was successful, I will treat when I write about the husbands who were saved.

Ligarius' wife is an example of what Ronald Cluett (1998) has identified as women's protest and appeal to magistrates as a novel role women took on during this period, and Ligarius' wife is a warped example of this phenomenon: rather than appealing to magistrates on behalf of her husband she appeals to them in order to die. The wife first tests her community by shouting after her husband's head and then the magistrates. Appian thus indicates that there was resistance to informing on those who aided the proscribed. The magistrates refuse to punish her because of her love for her husband (διὰ τὴν φιλανδρίαν) underlining that respect for the bond between husband and wife remained in Roman society. After her failed intervention, Ligarius' wife becomes a living corpse by starving herself to death, preferring to 'live with' her husband in death. The use of the verb συνεξήγαγεν puts emphasis on the wife's decision to live with her husband as this compound does not appear with much frequency in Greek literature.³⁹ Forms of the verb εξαγω are used in Greek literature to refer to suicide (van Hooff 1990: 245), but the addition of the prefix συν to the verb draws attention to her death. Van Hooff (1990: 244) notes that self starvation was always a marked form of suicide in the ancient world and often attracts attention to the grief of the one starving. The depiction of the starved female body at the outset of his narratives about women and the vocabulary he uses points the reader's attention toward the new vulnerability of the female body, which in turn reflects the breakdown in male bodily autonomy.

Moreover, the manner of death for both women is suggestive of political anxieties. As Nancy Gutierrez (2003: 78) has noted the refusal of food is bound up with anxiety about the political order: "female food refusal in itself can challenge established authority and how its presentation is a political paradigm of female selfhood and resistance." While Gutierrez treats

³⁹ The main meaning of this verb is to "carry off together" or "lead out together." *Liddell and Scott* s.v. συνεξάγω.

female food refusal in early modern England, the political instability and revolutionary context map on well to the triumviral period. Extending this argument to Appian's text demonstrates how the starved female body operates as a locus of anxiety. By organizing the beginning of his narrative to include two women who kill themselves by starvation, Appian allows the reader to probe the nature of the proscriptions. Moreover, as Van Hoof (1990: 41) has noted self-starvation was a highly marked form of suicide in the ancient world.

Appian draws attention to the fact that he has mentioned Ligarius' wife in this place, drawing further attention to the placement of the vignette: *καὶ τῆσδε μὲν ἐνθάδε ἐπεμνήσθην, ὅτι τὸν ἄνδρα περισώζουσα ἀπετύγχανέ τε καὶ συνεξήγαγεν ἑαυτήν* ("I have mentioned this woman here, because she failed to save her husband and did away with herself to be with him"). This aside emphasizes that the story does not easily fit in with the material that follows of examples of depraved women. His decision to include this story immediately before his examples of evil women emphasizes the inversion of Roman regal history in that women's sacrifices do not engender change. The inclusion of two women who starved themselves to death allows Appian to comment on both the real impacts of the proscriptions but also on concerns around the relationship between the body politic and the body female.

1.5 Unexpected betrayal: Septimius' wife and Salassus' wife

While the wives above mourned the murders of their family members, some instigated the killing of their husbands. Septimius' wife and Salassus' wife both encourage the executioners to kill their husbands. The two stories, suggestive of Greek tragedy, include the women using the traditional tropes of domestic space as refuge in order to trick their husbands. As Josiah Osgood (2006: 65) has noted the dramatic irony in the tale of Septimius' wife seems purely literary. As scholars such as Osgood (2006) and Milnor (2005) have noted, the issue of loyalty is central to

the proscription narratives. The narrative of Septimius' wife shocks even more after Appian's tale of Ligarius' wife. The placement of the tales after the deaths of Arruntius' wife and Ligarius' wife emphasizes the disorder and chaos of the period. The two narratives of citizen women that Appian narrates include literary references that emphasize the reversal of the household from a familiar to a sinister place. The narrative centers on the wife's out of control desire (4.23):

ἕτεραι δὲ ἀθεμίστως ἐπεβούλευσαν τοῖς ἀνδράσιν. καὶ αὐτῶν ἐστίν, ἡ Σεπτιμίῳ μὲν ἐγεγάμητο, ὑπὸ δὲ τινος Ἀντωνίου φίλου διεφθείρετο: ἐπειγομένη δὲ ἐκ μοιχείας ἐς γάμον ἐδεήθη διὰ τοῦ μοιχεύοντος αὐτὴν Ἀντωνίου, καὶ ὁ Σεπτιμίος αὐτίκα τοῖς πίναξι προσετέθη. καὶ μαθὼν ἐς τῆς γυναικὸς ὑπ' ἀγνοίας τῶν οἴκοι κακῶν ἔφευγεν. ἡ δὲ ὡς φιλοφρονουμένη τὰς θύρας ἐπέκλεισε καὶ ἐτήρει τὸν ἄνδρα, ἕως οἱ σφαγεῖς παρεγένοντο: καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας οἱ μὲν ἐκεῖνον ἀνήρουν, ἡ δὲ ἔθυε γάμους.

Other women plotted in criminal fashion against their husbands. Among these was a woman who had married Septimius, but who had been seduced by an associate of Antony. Eager to move from adultery to marriage, she submitted a request to Antony through her lover, and Septimius was immediately added to the list of the proscribed. When he learned this, he fled to his wife's house, since he was unaware of his domestic woes. Pretending to take care of him, she locked the doors and kept watch on her husband until the executioners arrived; and on the same day they killed him, she celebrated her marriage.

As Josiah Osgood (2006: 65) has noted, the story has a film noir quality to it with the wife pretending to care for her husband. Appian presents the husband as naively trusting his wife in a familiar way in ancient literature. The wife in Lysias 1 also controls the house in an atypical way and locks the husband in his quarters.⁴⁰ The trope, however, of the scheming wife who controls access to the house has a long history typified by Clytemnestra, Euphiletus' wife, and Tanaquil. The motivation for Septimius' wife is her desire for Antony's associate. This story draws upon the trope of women out of control because of desire seen with Tullia Minor in Livy. The house

⁴⁰ See Todd 2008 for a commentary on the speech. He notes (2008: 105) that Euphiletus gives the appearance of naivete in his narrative of events.

metamorphoses into a sinister place in which Septimius has no control. Appian emphasizes this through his use of verbs of knowing/not knowing. Appian’s readers know that Septimius will not survive since he has placed this story in his examples of evil women, yet Septimius, of course, does not. The interplay of μαθὼν...ὕπ’ ἀγνοίας highlights the tension between Septimius’ ignorance and his understanding too late of his wife’s betrayal. The final detail of the vignette, that his wife married her lover on the same day he died ends the story with a flourish. Septimius’ wife uses the proscriptions as an opportunity to get rid of her husband. That her lover is an associate of Antony’s further emphasizes her misdeeds since authors of proscription tales often emphasize Antony’s fault for the proscriptions by including him in proscription narratives. Appian’s inclusion of this tale underlines anxiety about infidelity in Roman society.

Appian’s second proscription tale similarly treats the latent animosity between husband and wife. While the motive is very clear in the case of Septimius’ wife, Appian does not lay out a specific motivation for Salassus’ wife. It may simply be that she hated her husband or that she desired money. The situation that unfolds resembles tropes from Latin love elegy, most notably paraclausythron and the presence of a “crafty” slave. Throughout the tale Salassus responds to inverted elegiac situations (*B Civ.* 4.23):

Σάλασσος δὲ ἐκφυγὼν τε καὶ ἀπορούμενος ἦκε μὲν ἐς πόλιν νυκτός, ὅτε μάλιστα ἔδοξεν ἀμβλύνεσθαι τὸ δεινόν, πεπραμένης δὲ τῆς οἰκίας μόνος αὐτὸν ὁ θυρωρὸς τῇ οἰκίᾳ συμπεπραμένος ἐπέγνω καὶ ἐς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ οἶκημα ὑπεδέχετο καὶ κρύψειν ἐπηγγέλλετο καὶ θρέψειν, ἐξ ὧν ἐδύνατο. ὁ δὲ τὴν γυναῖκα οἱ καλέσαι προσέταξεν ἐκ τῆς ἐκείνης οἰκίας. ἡ δ’ ὑποκριναμένη μὲν ἐλθεῖν ἐπείγεται, δεδιέναι δ’ ὡς ἐν νυκτὶ καὶ θεραπαίνας τὸ ὑποπτον, μεθ’ ἡμέραν ἤξειν ἔφη. καὶ γενομένης ἡμέρας ἡ μὲν τοὺς σφαγέας μετῆει, καὶ ὁ θυρωρὸς αὐτὴν ὡς βραδύνουσαν ἐς τὴν οἰκίαν ἀπέτρεχεν ἐπείξων: ὁ δὲ Σάλασσος, οἰχομένου τοῦ θυρωροῦ δεῖσας ὡς ἐς ἐνέδραν ἀπρόντος, ἐς τὸ τέγος ἀναδραμὼν ἐκαρὰδόκει τὸ γιγνόμενον, ἰδὼν δὲ οὐ τὸν θυρωρόν, ἀλλὰ τὴν γυναῖκα τοῖς σφαγεῦσιν ἡγουμένην ἔρριψεν ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ τέγους.

Being a fugitive and not knowing what to do, Salassus entered Rome at night, when he thought the danger would be markedly lessened. His house had been

sold, and the only person to recognize him was the porter who had been sold along with the house, and who took him into his room and promised to hide him, and feed him as best he could. Salassus told the porter to send for his wife from her own house. She pretended to be very keen to come, but said that she was afraid of causing suspicion even to her maidservants by doing so at night, and said that she would come at dawn. At daybreak she went to collect the executioners, while the porter ran off to her house to hurry her up, in the belief that she was dawdling. With the departure of the porter, Salassus was afraid that he had gone off to set a trap, and rushed up to the roof to observe what was happening, but when he saw, not the porter, but his wife showing the executioners the way, he threw himself off the roof.

The meeting of Salassus and the doorkeeper evokes the stock *paraclausythron* scene from Latin love elegy. The situation, however, is similarly inverted as with Septimius' wife. The doorkeeper freely admits Salassus and promises to take care of him, inverting the usual refusal to allow the lover entrance to the house. Salassus' request that his wife visit him at night furthers the adulterous undertones. The doorkeeper resembles those from Latin love elegy who do not allow their owners' lovers into the house. Salassus misreads the situation, not knowing that he is part of a different genre. While he thinks that the doorkeeper is loyal to him, he in fact resembles more closely the *ianitor* from love elegy. Salassus' suicide resembles a tragic *anagnorisis* scene with his recognition that his wife is the instigator of the executioners. The use of tropes of love elegy in this narrative heighten the drama and suspense to be sure, yet they also point to the surreal nature of this period when familial relationships changed dramatically without awareness.

What Appian does not mention in this narrative is the motive that Salassus' wife had for turning in her husband. Perhaps we are to infer that she too had a lover like Septimius' wife or perhaps it was simply a desire for money. If we are to imagine his wife as an elegiac *puella* then a motive does not need to be stated since the reader can infer from the context that *puellae* are not faithful.

1.6 Maternal Rejection: Atilius' Mother

While most of Appian's depictions of women center on their role as wife, he also includes a narrative with a mother playing a key role. The desire for one's mother in a crisis continues to be common. In contemporary society, mothers are often the figure that children turn to when they are in a crisis. Appian similarly includes a tale of a boy, Atilius, who seeks refuge in his mother's house when he learns he has been proscribed. His plan, however, does not work out (4.30):

Ἀτίλιος δὲ ἄρτι τὴν τῶν τελείων περιθέμενος στολὴν ἦει μὲν, ὡς ἔθος ἐστί, σὺν πομπῇ φίλων ἐπὶ θυσίας ἐς τὰ ἱερά, ἄφνω δὲ ἐγγραφέντος αὐτοῦ τοῖς πίναξιν οἱ φίλοι καὶ οἱ θεράποντες διεδίδρασκον. ὁ δὲ μόνος καὶ ἔρημος ἐκ δαψιλοῦς παραπομπῆς ἐς τὴν μητέρα ἐχώρει: οὐ δεξαμένης δὲ αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἐκείνης ὑπὸ δέους, οὐκ ἀξιώσας ἔτι ἐς πεῖραν ἐλθεῖν ἑτέρου μετὰ μητέρα, ἐς ὄρος ἔφυγεν: ὄθεν ὑπὸ λιμοῦ ἐς τὰ πεδινὰ κατελθὼν ἐλήφθη πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ληστεύειν τοὺς παροδεύοντας καὶ ἐπὶ ἔργῳ καταδεῖν εἰθισμένου. οἷα δὲ παῖς ἐκ τρυφῆς τὸν πόνον οὐκ ἐνεγκὼν ἐς τὴν ἀμαξιτὸν αὐταῖς χοινικίσι διέδρα καὶ παροδεύουσι λοχαγοῖς ἑαυτὸν ἐμήνυσέ τε καὶ ἀνηρέθη.

Atilius, who had just assumed the toga of adulthood, was going, as was the custom, with a band of friends to sacrifice in the temples, when his name was suddenly written up on the proscription lists, and his friends and attendants ran off. All alone and deserted by his large escort, he went to his mother. As even she was too afraid to take him in, he did not think it was worth trying anyone else after his mother, and fled to the mountains. From here he came down to the plain because he was starving, and was seized by a man who was used to robbing passersby, and putting them in chains to work for him. As a boy accustomed to luxury, he was unable to stand the work and made his escape to the main road still in his fetters, identified himself to some passing centurions, and was killed.

The scene poignantly contrasts the hope of youth and its reality during the triumviral period. The scene begins with Atilius following the customs of Roman youths when suddenly his name is on the lists. We can vividly imagine the anxiety and terror that Atilius feels after his friends all desert him. Atilius' decision to visit his mother seems logical in the circumstances. His mother, however, does not let him in to her house. Her refusal vividly emphasizes the danger of the period. The collocation of οὐ/οὐκ with δεξαμένης δὲ αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἐκείνης ὑπὸ δέους, οὐκ ἀξιώσας emphasizes the desperation that Atilius feels. Appian does not pass judgement on his mother, and

we can imagine the mental anguish of the mother turning her son away. The organization of the vignette after including a narrative of mirrors the organization of two ambiguous women and two evil women. This technique allows Appian to comment on the horror of the period, and, if we return to Reguillo's formulation of the uncanny, we can see that the mother's house in Appian's portrayal becomes an unfamiliar space which stands in opposition to rhetoric of the mother as symbolic of home. While we have seen and will see more examples of women entering public spaces to attempt to save their husbands, this vignette from Appian reminds the reader of the fear during this period, although women were not officially proscribed.

1.7 Hortensia's Interlude

Hortensia's speech self-consciously acknowledges the contravention of expected female social performance. It is within Hortensia's speech that Appian explores and articulates the contraventions of expected female behavior of the period, with Hortensia herself noting that she should not be in the public space and should not have to protest. As the triumvirs could not find enough money, they decided upon a proposal to tax 1,400 of the wealthiest women in Rome (*B Civ* 4.32): προύγραφον χιλίας καὶ τετρακοσίας γυναῖκας, αἱ μάλιστα πλούτῳ διέφερον: καὶ αὐτὰς ἔδει, τὰ ὄντα τιμωμένας, ἐσφέρειν ἐς τὰς τοῦ πολέμου χρείας, ὅσον ἐκάστην οἱ τρεῖς δοκιμάσειαν. ἐπέκειτό τε ταῖς ἀποκρυψαμέναις τι τῶν ὄντων, ἢ τιμησαμέναις κακῶς ἐπιτίμια καὶ τοῖς ταῦτα μηνύουσιν ἐλευθέροις τε καὶ δούλοις μήνυτρα. (“They published a list of one thousand four hundred women who were particularly conspicuous for their wealth. These were required to have their property assessed and contribute to the expenses of the war the sum approved by the triumvirs for each individual. Penalties were imposed for women hiding any of their belongings or for making a false return, and rewards were set for informers, both free men and slaves”). Although the women were not proscribed, the language used by Appian of a

publication of names and rewards for informers is eerily similar to the proscription edict. In assimilating the two, Appian demonstrates how the triumvirs are acting completely outside norms of Roman politics, driving women to intervene in public life.

The women, first, however, appealed this decision successfully with Octavia and Julia, the mother of Antony, using traditional methods of approaching female relatives. Fulvia, however, rebuffed them and as a result of this insult they streamed into the forum with Hortensia as their spokeswoman. The language Appian uses of Fulvia's refusal vividly assimilates her behavior to that of the triumvirs' lack of respect for traditional Roman frameworks of how politics is done (4.32): Φουλβίας δέ, τῆς γυναικὸς Ἀντωνίου, τῶν θυρῶν ἀπωθούμεναι χαλεπῶς τὴν ὕβριν ἤνεγκαν, καὶ ἐς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα τῶν ἀρχόντων ὠσάμεναι, δισταμένων τοῦ τε δήμου καὶ τῶν δορυφόρων ("When turned away, however, from the doors of Fulvia, Antony's wife, they were offended by her insulting behavior, and pushing their way to the magistrates' tribunal in the Forum, where the people and the bodyguards stood aside to let them through). Describing Fulvia's behavior in terms of *hubris* further reinforces the reversals of the situation, as she acts almost as another triumvir, repudiating the traditional behavior of a *matrona* and spurning the networks that governed female intervention.⁴¹ Both the triumvirs and Fulvia overstepping their bounds forced the breakdown between the public and private dichotomy that had allowed women to express their discontent in a more traditional way. The language that Appian uses also highlights the body as the women are forcibly turned away from Fulvia's doors and in turn forced into the public space of the forum.

⁴¹ Schultz (2022: 90) expresses the possibility that Fulvia may have agreed with the triumvirs, was trying to promote Antony's interests, or may have taken the opportunity to rebuff women who had previously treated her as a 'second tier' elite. In my view, the likeliest possibility is that Fulvia was working for Antony's interests.

The rhetoric of Hortensia's speech, as Milnor (2005: 223) has noted, emphasizes the complete breakdown between public and private. Hortensia's speech also lays bare the contradictory nature of the triumvirs' project, as the women are outside of the normal framework because of another woman. Moreover, she argues that women's contributions ought to remain in keeping with the traditional Roman framework of feminine intervention: providing jewelry at their discretion, not being forced to part with money, dowry, or property. At one point, she even dares the triumvirs to simply proscribe the women, clarifying the position that they face. The point that Hortensia most strongly argues against is the violence and force being used against the women: first, by Fulvia and then by the triumvirs (*B Civ.* 4.33):

καὶ τότε δὲ ἐσήνεγκαν ἐκοῦσαι, καὶ οὐκ ἀπὸ γῆς ἢ χωρίων ἢ προικὸς ἢ οἰκιῶν, ὧν χωρὶς ἀβιώτων ἐστὶν ἐλευθέραις, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ μόνων τῶν οἴκοι κόσμων, οὐδὲ τούτων τιμωμένων οὐδὲ ὑπὸ μηνυταῖς ἢ κατηγοροῖς οὐδὲ πρὸς ἀνάγκην ἢ βίαν, ἀλλ' ὅσον ἐβούλοντο αὐταί

But on that occasion they contributed voluntarily, not from their land, their country properties, their dowry, or their houses, without which free women have nothing to live on, but only from the jewelry they had at home, and even then not on the basis of an assessment of these items or under threat of informers and accusers, and subject to force and violence, but what they themselves were willing to give.

In other words, women have in the past intervened for the benefit of the state, but only when they deem the intervention necessary. Appian's Hortensia is all the more self-conscious as she articulates the traditional modes of feminine intervention, which are informal and voluntary, while the triumvirs have forced the women into the public.

Hortensia's speech has the desired effect on the triumvirs as they become angered that the women are in the forum at all (*B. Civ.* 4.33):

τοιαῦτα τῆς Ὀρτησίας λεγούσης, οἱ τρεῖς ἠγανάκτουν, εἰ γυναῖκες ἀνδρῶν ἡσυχαζόντων θρασυνοῦνται τε καὶ ἐκκλησιάσουσι, καὶ τὰ δρώμενα τοῖς ἄρχουσιν ἐξετάσουσι, καὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν στρατευομένων αὐταὶ οὐδὲ χρήματα ἐσοίσουσιν: ἐκέλευόν τε τοῖς ὑπηρέταις ἐξωθεῖν αὐτὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ βήματος, μέχρι βοῆς ἐξωθεν

ἐκ τοῦ πλήθους γενομένης οἳ τε ὑπηρέται τὸ ἔργον ἐπέσχον καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες ἔφασαν ἐς τὴν ὑστεραίαν ἀνατίθεσθαι. τῇ δ' ὑστεραία τετρακοσίας μὲν ἀντὶ χιλίων καὶ τετρακοσίων προύγραφον ἀποτιμᾶσθαι τὰ ὄντα,

While Hortensia was delivering the speech, the triumvirs were angry that, at a time when men were being quietly compliant, women were being boldly assertive, attending public meetings, scrutinizing the actions of the magistrates, and refusing even to pay money themselves when the men were serving in the army. They ordered the attendants to push the women away from the tribunal, but eventually there was booing from the crowd outside and the attendants stopped what they were doing; the triumvirs said they were postponing the matter till the next day. On the following day they published a list of four hundred women, instead of one thousand four hundred, required to have their property assessed

Hortensia's speech functions as a quasi-proscription edict, with the content and its reaction revealing the reality of the triumvirs' actions. As with Fulvia, the triumvirs attempt to have the women forcibly removed, yet this action is so against Roman frameworks that the crowd does not allow it. The physical assault on the women's bodies prompts the outcry from the crowd, demonstrating that Roman morality remained intact.

The fact that Hortensia's speech follows examples of bad wives demonstrates that the traditional norms around behavior remained strong in Roman society. Appian makes the argument here that although many wives chose to betray their husbands, it reveals moral failing rather than tragic necessity. If a group of elite women could protest in the forum without repercussion because public opinion was on their side, then betraying one's husband becomes all the more problematic, as Appian argues via Hortensia's speech.

1.8 The Good Wives

After Hortensia's speech, Appian moves to relating tales of those proscribed who survived. In his tales, he emphasizes the risks that subordinate members of the family took in order to save the proscribed. Appian himself notes that he will own recount those that went "beyond the natural order" (ὕπερ φύσιν 4.36), indicating that those he relates can tell the

audience something fundamental about Roman relationships. In other words, these tales especially distil the essential frameworks operating within the period. In relating what the women did during this period, Appian can comment on the ways in which their actions reveal something fundamental about the period – that political stability resulted from personal choices (that personal choices had political ramifications oftentimes unseen or unforeseen for years?).

The first “good wife” that Appian mentions, the wife of Acilius, encapsulates Appian’s statement that wives displayed “extraordinary love” toward their husbands, as she works on his behalf without knowledge of what will come of it. She uses her jewelry as a form of payment to the men who had found her husband and hopes that they will not murder him:

Ἀκίλιος δὲ ἔφευγε μὲν τῆς πόλεως λαθῶν, οἰκέτου δ’ αὐτὸν ἐμφήναντος ὀπλίταις, τοὺς ὀπλίτας ἐπεισεν ἐλπίδι χρημάτων πλεόνων πέμψαι τινὰς ἀπὸ σφῶν πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα μετὰ συμβόλων ὧν αὐτὸς ἐδίδου. ἡ δὲ τοῖς ἐλθοῦσιν τὸν κόσμον αὐτῆς ἅπαντα προθεῖσα ἔφη διδόναι μὲν ὡς ἀντιδώσουσιν, ἃ ὑπέσχοντο, οὐκ εἰδέναι δέ, εἰ ἀντιδώσουσιν. οὐ μὴν ἐψεύσθη τῆς φιλανδρίας: οἱ γὰρ ὀπλίται καὶ ναῦν ἐμίσθωσαν τῷ Ἀκίλιῳ καὶ προύπεμψαν ἐς Σικελίαν.

Acilius escaped from the city without being seen, but a slave pointed him out to the soldiers. He persuaded them, however, by the hope of a larger reward, to send some of their group to his wife with proofs of identity that he gave them. When they arrived she offered them all of her jewelry, saying that she was giving it to them on the understanding that they would fulfill what they promised in return, although, so she said, she was not sure they would. But she was not disappointed in her love of her husband, for the soldiers hired a ship for Acilius and sent him off to Sicily.

The use of τῆς φιλανδρίας reminds us of Appian’s earlier passage in which the magistrates do not put Ligarius’ wife to death because of her love of her husband. If a woman organizes her life according to proper principles of Roman morality, her loyalty can effect the outcomes of events, in contrast to the women who simply use the situation to their own ends. The wife is even more praiseworthy because she does not know if her sacrifice will actually result in her husband’s survival, yet she is still willing to make it.

In two cases, Appian details wives who are willing to travel with their husbands, praising their willingness to share in the danger of the proscribed. They all put their bodily integrity on the line, demonstrating that they still adhere to Roman norms of the proper marital relationship. I quote the passage in full here (*B Civ.* 4.39-40):

Λέντλος δέ, ἀξιούσης αὐτῶ συμφεύγειν τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ ἐς τοῦτο αὐτὸν ἐπιτηρούσης, οὐκ ἐθέλων αὐτὴν συγκινδυνεύειν ἑαυτῶ, λαθῶν ἔφυγεν ἐς Σικελίαν, στρατηγὸς δὲ ἀποδειχθεὶς ὑπὸ Πομπηίου ἐσήμηνεν, ὅτι σφύζοιτο καὶ στρατηγοίη. ἢ δ' ὅποι γῆς ἐστὶν ὁ ἀνὴρ, ἐπιγνοῦσα τὴν μητέρα φυλάσσουσαν ἐξέφυγε καὶ ἦδε σὺν θεράπουσι δύο: μεθ' ὧν ὤδευεν ἐπιμόχθως καὶ εὐτελῶς οἷα θεράπεινα, μέχρι διέπλευσεν ἐς Μεσσήνην ἀπὸ Ῥηγίου περὶ ἐσπέραν. καὶ οὐ δυσχερῶς τὴν στρατηγίδα σκηνήν μαθοῦσα, εὔρε τὸν Λέντλον οὐχ οἷα στρατηγόν, ἀλλ' ἐν χαμευνίῳ καὶ κόμῃ καὶ διαίτῃ πονηρᾷ πόθῳ τῆς γυναικὸς. Ἀπουλιῶ δὲ ἠπειλήσεν ἢ γυνὴ καταμηνύσειν αὐτόν, εἰ μόνος φεύγοι: καὶ ὁ μὲν ἄκων αὐτὴν ἐπήγετο, συνήνεγκε δὲ ἐς τὴν φυγὴν αὐτῶ τὸ ἀνύποπτον, ἅμα γυναικὶ καὶ θεράπουσι καὶ θεραπαίνας ὀδεύοντι φανερῶς. Ἄντιον δὲ ἢ γυνὴ στρωματοδέσμῳ κατείλησε καὶ ἐπέθηκε τοῖς μισθοῦ φέρουσι καὶ διήνεγκεν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας ἐπὶ θάλασσαν, ὅθεν ἔφυγεν ἐς Σικελίαν. Ῥηγῖνον δὲ ἢ γυνὴ νυκτὸς ἐς ὑπόνομον λυμάτων καθῆκεν, ἐς ὃν ἡμέρας οὐχ ὑποστάντων ἐμβῆναι τῶν ὀπλιτῶν διὰ δυσσομίαν, νυκτὸς ἄλλης εἰς ἀνθρακέα ἐσκεύασε καὶ ὄνον ἀνθρακας φέροντα ἐλαύνειν ἔδωκεν: αὐτὴ δὲ ἐκ βραχέος διαστήματος ἠγεῖτο φορεῖα φερομένη. τῶν δὲ ἀμφὶ τὰς πύλας ὀπλιτῶν τινος τὸ φορεῖον ὑπονοήσαντός τε καὶ ἐρευνημένου, δείσας ὁ Ῥηγῖνος ἐπέδραμε καὶ ὡς ὀδῶ χρώμενος ἠξίου τὸν ὀπλίτην φεῖδεσθαι γυναικῶν. ὁ δὲ αὐτόν ὡς ἀνθρακέα μετ' ὀργῆς ἀμειβόμενος ἐγνώρισεν ἑστράτευτο γὰρ ὑπ' αὐτῶ ποτε ἐν Συρίᾳ καὶ ἄπιθι χαίρων,' εἶπεν, 'αὐτοκράτορ: τοῦτο γὰρ μοι προσήκει καὶ νῦν καλεῖν σε.' Κοπώνιον δὲ τὸ γύναιον ἤτησε παρὰ Ἀντωνίου, σῶφρων μὲν οὖσα τέως, ἀτυχήματι δὲ τὸ ἀτύχημα ἰωμένη.

When his wife asked to accompany him in flight and was keeping a close eye on him to that end, Lentulus was not prepared for her to share the danger with him, and so fled to Sicily without letting her know. After Pompeius appointed him a general, Lentulus sent her a message to say that he was safe and holding a command. On learning what part of the world he had gone to, and avoiding her mother's surveillance, she too made her escape with two servants. Together with them, she went on the road, living rough and cheaply like a slave woman, until she made the crossing from Rhegium to Messena one evening. She had no difficulty locating the commander's tent, and there she found Lentulus, not looking like an officer, but lying on a camp bed with dirty hair and living a wretched existence, pining for his wife.

In the case of Apuleius, his wife threatened to inform on him if he fled without her. Although he took her with him unwillingly, the fact that he was traveling openly with his wife, and male and female attendants, proved advantageous to his flight. Antius' wife bundled him up in a bag of bedclothes

and paid some porters to carry him from the house to the coast, from where he escaped to Sicily. Rheginus' wife sent him down into underground sewers one night, which the soldiers could not stand to enter during the day because of the foul smell. Another night she disguised him as a charcoal dealer, and gave him a donkey to drive and carry the charcoal. She herself led the way, carried in a litter a short distance in front. One of the soldiers at the city gates was suspicious of her litter and searched it. Frightened by this, Rheginus hurried forward and, as if he were an ordinary traveler, urged the soldier to leave women alone. The soldier, who took him for a charcoal dealer, was replying angrily when he recognized him (for he had once served under him in Syria). And said, "Go on your way without fear, general, for it is proper that I address you as such even now." Coponius' wife, although previously chaste, begged a deal with Antony for her husband's life, thus curing one misfortune with another.

The emphasis in these stories that Appian relates is on the vulnerability of the male body, made even more visible by the control the wives have over their husbands' bodies. Lentulus' wife finds him appearing as a quasi-*amator* from Latin elegiac poetry with his hair dishelved and giving in to his strong emotional impulses (Milnor 2006). Other women hide their husbands in areas where soldiers would not go and transform their bodies into those that resemble the enslaved rather than elite men. The control that women had over the period is emphasized by Appian's inclusion of the detail that Apuleius' wife threatened to inform on him if she was not allowed to travel with him.

The last narrative of a good wife succinctly demonstrates the paradox of the performance of virtue during this period. Coponius' wife has sex with Antony in return for his removal from the proscription list. The wife paradoxically demonstrates her fidelity to the marriage agreement by having sex with another man, demonstrating how civil discord reveals the complex, contested realities of Roman values.

1.9 Turia's Triumviral Period

The wife referred to on the *laudatio Turiae* lived through all the major unprecedented times in late Republican Rome: the war between Caesar and Pompey, the triumviral period, and

the establishment of the Augustan Principate. By an accident of survival, we have first-hand testimony of the turbulent years of civil war during Rome and one woman's experience of it via the voice of her husband. Fragments of the marble funerary inscription were found in 1863 that allowed Theodor Mommsen to provide a commentary on the wife's life.⁴² Six slabs in all were found, beginning in the Renaissance, that, taken together provide much information about the content of the funeral oration. The marble pieces indicate that the husband and wife were part of the elite class, and there are indications in the text that this is so. What is not indicated, however, are the names of the husband or wife. Early scholars, including Mommsen, identified the wife as Turia based on similarities to the story of Turia and her husband, Quintus Lucretius Vespillo, found in Valerius Maximus. There is not enough evidence in the text, however, to indicate that such an identification is true. While the true identity of the husband and wife cannot be reconstructed, the narrative that the inscription provides demonstrates early interest in questions of female agency, bodily autonomy, and male anxiety that then entered into later historical works such as Appian.⁴³

Previous scholarship on the *laudatio Turiae* has emphasized the reversals present in the narrative that the husband gives, which demonstrate his weak and passive state in comparison to the wife's active, agentive state. Emily Hemelrijk (2004: 185) has commented: "In describing her public activities he uses words of action and virtue normally employed for men, even military metaphors." The husband uses language of traditional female virtues in order to justify her remarkable public-facing actions during this period, demonstrating how foregrounding

⁴² See Osgood's (2014) prologue for further information about the reconstruction of the text. There have been many studies of the inscription including Gordon (1977), Horsfall (1983), and Hemelrijk (2004).

⁴³ I will refer to Turia as the wife throughout the rest of the section.

tradition can release anxiety around non-normative activities for women. Other scholarship, such as Osgood (2014) demonstrates the social and historical context of the inscription, foregrounding the activities of other elite women at the time, such as Servilia and Terentia. Still other scholarship focuses upon the legal questions that the inscription brings up around inheritance and marriage in Roman society. My discussion will focus upon the portrayal of the wife's actions during the triumviral period, first noting her actions during the previous civil war between Caesar and Pompey. I argue that the husband's inscription foregrounds Turia's body in his descriptions of her public pleas on her family's behalf in order to comment on the reversals of the period. As Appian does in his own history, the female body becomes a site of contestation where both the virtue of women can be seen and also the disorder of the period.

The husband begins to narrate the wife's public appearances at the beginning of the text, when he discusses the murder of her parents in the chaos of civil unrest. The husband and his brother-in-law were in Macedonia and Africa respectively, places where those opposed to Caesar gathered. The husband states that after the murder of the parents: *Tanta cum industria m[unere es p]ietatis perfuncta eff[flagitando et] vindicando, ut, si praesto fuisset, non amplius praestitisset* "You insistently demanded punishment and you got it, so strenuously performing your familial duty that even if we had been present, we could not have done anything more."⁴⁴ The language the husband uses here is highly visual as *efflagitando* refers to strenuous effort undertaken by the wife, while *vindicando* refers to a core legal concept in the Roman world. Unlike in the contemporary legal system, where prosecutors exist, anything desired in the Roman legal system had to be forced through by the individual. The collocation of values in this passage indicates that the wife had sufficient education and status to push her case through the system

⁴⁴ Text and Translations by Osgood (2014).

successfully. While she would have had to have used a guardian to present her legal case, the fact that she was able to do so indicates her success at maneuvering through spaces not typically conceived of as feminine in the Roman world. This accords with Hemelrijk's (2004: 189-90) observation that the text is full of words more typically used to describe men. This first instance of the wife's devotion sets the stage for further and increasingly high stakes legal and quasi-military actions on her part.

Following the successful trial of her parents' murderers, the wife then guards her father's home before moving in to the fiancé's mother's house. What is most likely is that the wife guards the house along with those enslaved. After successfully guarding the house, the wife must defend her father's will, which alleged clan members of her father's (gentiles) were contesting. Again the wife is characterized as a competent and steadfast. The husband even states that those contesting the will yielded to the wife (25-26): *Cesserunt constantiae tuae neque amplius rem sollicitarunt; quo facto [offici in patrem,] pietatis in sororem, fide[i] in nos patrocinium susceptum sola peregisti.* ("They gave way to your steadfastness and did not pursue the matter further. In having achieved this, you completed the defense that you had undertaken, all on your own, of respect for your father, devotion to your sister, and loyalty to us"). The husband includes here many virtues of women: *constantia*, *pietas*, and *fides*, which indicates that she acts as the ideal Roman should when many others have failed to do so.

At the start of another column, the husband details the wife's efforts to aid him after he fled Rome with the Pompeians. She gave him her jewelry and provided him with money and enslaved people, while also deceiving the enemy guards. Jewelry was a standard way for women to help men in times of crises, as it was a form of wealth that they had ready access to. The inclusion of this detail also indicates that the husband and wife were extremely wealthy. The

wife then pleads on behalf of a pardon for her husband after Pompey's defeat, indicating that she could draw upon the elite networks at the time.

Everything that the wife had achieved was at stake again once the proscriptions lists were posted and the husband found his name on them. The rhetoric the husband utilizes indicates that the news was quite unexpected to him (*repentinis nuntiis ad praesentia et inminentia pericula evoca*, 4). The husband does not indicate where or how the wife hid him, but indicates that she involved her sister and Cluvius, indicating that she had ideal family relations, since they did not give him up to the soldiers. How the wife saved him involves going to the tribunal of Lepidus, at that time left in charge of the city of Rome. The wife's body is subject to beatings and she was carried off as if she were enslaved.

Acerbissimum tamen in vi[ta] mihi accidisse tua vice fatebo[r, reddito me iam] (12) cive patriae beneficio et i[ud]icio apsentis Caesaris Augusti, [quom per te] (13) de restitutione mea M. L[epi]dus conlega praesens interp[ellaretur et ad eius] (14) pedes prostrata humi [n]on modo non adlevata, sed tra[cta et servilem in] (15) modum rapsata, livori[bus c]orporis repleta, firmissimo [animo eum admone-] (16) res edicti Caesaris cum g[r]atula- tione restitutionis me[ae atque vocibus eti-] (17) am contumelio- sis et cr[ud]elibus exceptis volneribus pa[lam ea praeferres,] (18) ut auctor meorum peric[ul]orum notesceret.—Quoi no[cuit mox ea res.]

“Nevertheless I have to say that the most distressing thing to happen to me in life was what happened to you. Thanks to the favorable decision of Caesar Augustus, then away from Rome, I was restored as a citizen of our country. You then confronted his colleague Marcus Lepidus, who was in charge in Rome, about my reinstatement. Prostrate on the ground before his feet, not only were you lifted up, you were also dragged and carried off like a slave. Your body was covered with bruises, but most strenuously you kept reminding him about Caesar's edict with its rejoicing over my restoration, and although you had to endure Lepidus' insulting words and cruel wounds, you kept on putting forward your case in the open so that the person responsible for my trials would be publicly disgraced. It was not long before his behavior brought him to harm.”

The use of the word *livoribus* for bruises indicates that the wife was subject to quite serious physical beatings. The inclusion of this vignette in the *laudatio* emphasizes the breakdown in the

period, with elite, citizen women's bodies subject to violence. The focalization of the wife's body and her steadfastness in the face of violence recalls the story of Porcia and the Ligarius' wife in Appian. The husband's story demonstrates an early interest in the female body as a site of contestation during the period. The almost stoic way that she continues to advocate for her husband recalls Cicero's connection between the word *vir* and *virtus* (*Tusc.* 2.43, Hemelrijk 2004: 188): "For the word *virtus* (courage, manliness) is derived from *vir* (man); indeed, the typical quality of men is fortitude, to which belong the two main duties: contempt of death and of physical pain. These therefore we must display, if we wish to be thought to possess *virtus*, or rather, since the word *virtus* is borrowed from *vir*, if we wish to be men." The wife's actions map on to this definition as she demonstrates contempt for physical pain by continuously pleading the husband's case for a restoration of his citizenship. At the same time, the wife even adheres to propaganda from the Augustan period against Lepidus. The husband comments on this, noting that this vignette offers Augustus the chance to demonstrate his *clementia*, a core virtue of the new Princeps: *Quid hac virtute efficaciu[s], praeberere Caesari clementia[e locum et cum cu] (20) stodia spiritus mei not[a]re inportunam crudelitatem [Lepidi egregia tua] (21) patientia* ("What could have been more effective than this courage of yours, to offer Caesar an opportunity for clemency and, while preserving my life, to brand the ruthless cruelty of Lepidus through your own exceptional willingness to endure hardship?"). The use of the word *patientia* in the *laudation* demonstrates the interest in the female body and what it can endure during this period. Moreover, the husband contrasts *clementia* and *crudelitas*, two buzzwords in Roman political theory, as *clementia* was particularly associated with Julius Caesar and *crudelitas* with the tyrant. The use of the verb *notare* is particularly marked as it can have the meaning of to write or to make a mark, almost implying that the wife proscribed Lepidus by her exemplary behavior while

trying to bring his citizenship back. The portrayal of the wife up to this point taken as a whole all points to her exemplary ability to both speak and act as a Roman man would in times of a functioning government.

After the husband narrates the triumviral period, there is a shift in tone toward a focus on the domestic sphere, as one would expect when peace has been established. The husband discusses their desire for children immediately after noting that Augustus brought peace: *Pacato orbe terrarum, res[stitut]a re publica quieta deinde n[obis et felicia] (26) tempora contigerunt.— Fue[ru]nt optati liberi, quos aliqua[m diu sors nobis invi-] (27) derat.* “War came to an end throughout the world, the republic was re- stored, and we were granted a period of prosperity and peace. We did, it is true, desire children, whom for some time circumstances refused us.” At this point, the female body should be able to resume its childbearing function and the wife is again portrayed as adhering to traditional feminine virtues. The husband’s commentary on the situation provides key evidence that not all married couples were able to adhere to Augustus’ legislation on marriage and the family and that the incentives would not drive men to seek another wife. The husband vehemently claims that he rejected Turia’s willingness to allow him to have children with another woman, even claiming that he lost his mind (*Fatear necesses adeo me exa[rsi]sse ut excesserim mente, 40*). The use of the verb *exarsisse* is extremely vivid and visually striking as it denotes becoming inflamed. As Hemelrijk and Milnor have noted, the language continues the feminizing tone that the husband began earlier in the speech. The wife’s rational attempt to allow her husband to have children of tantamount importance in Roman law results in behavior typical of the elegiac speaker (Osgood 2014: 71). The husband emphatically denies that the wife’s body only has value reproductively and instead emphasizes the bonds that they have outside of that. The husband’s self-presentation throughout the text emphasizes his vulnerability during times of

extreme violence in the Roman world. The body of the wife vividly demonstrates the perils and anxieties of the period, as she experiences violence at the hands of Lepidus' men. The themes that later authors such as Appian, Cassius Dio, and Valerius Maximus can be seen on the *laudatio Turiae*. The wife's body in addition to the vocabulary of her virtues demonstrates that the rhetoric of this period underlines women's subjectivity to violence and their masculine ability to withstand it.

As we have seen in this chapter, proscription narratives allow authors to comment on the fundamental anxieties of the period. Appian's detailed account and insistent attention on the impacts of the violence of the period probe the nature of the Roman social system. Women emerge as key actors whose actions, betrayals, and strategies of resistance reveal to the elite Roman male mind the deep and unsettling connections between domesticity and politics.

Chapter 2

The Old Guard: Servilia, Mucia, and Julia

In Chapter 1, I examined the roles of the wives and mothers of the proscribed, focusing upon how their efforts demonstrated strain to the traditional Roman moral frameworks regarding women and marriage. In this chapter we turn to elite women, specifically the mothers associated with those who were ultimately defeated by Octavian. The women that I consider in this chapter include Servilia, Mucia, and Julia, the mothers of Brutus, Sextus Pompey, and Mark Antony respectively. While each of these women's individual experiences differed during the time period, each shared a determination to advance the causes of their sons, adhering to the Roman practice of women using connections to advance the causes of their *familia*. My aim in this chapter is to uncover how these experiences are depicted in our sources and how these depictions can illuminate the program of each author. The fact that each of these women's sons were at one point or another on the opposing side of the legally sanctioned one at the time will illuminate the ways in which Roman women could use their status as both insider and outsider in order to promote the interests of their sons, as Mucia does when brokering a deal with Antony, as we will see.

If we think of the Roman state outside of the traditional magisterial and legal frameworks of power, we see that there are many alternative sources of authority that continued to work in this period and that were called upon, as the actions of these women attest to. All of these women were older and therefore seasoned veterans of the bloodthirsty nature of Roman politics during the triumviral period, circa forty to fifty-five years old around the time of Julius Caesar's

assassination.⁴⁵ As we will see, their age in addition to their status allowed them a certain degree of autonomy in their interactions.

The life of an elite woman in many ways more closely resembled the lives of elite men rather than women of other social classes (Treggiari 2019). Judith Hallett (1984) has illuminated the paradox of elite Roman women as both outsiders due to their gender and insiders due to their membership in an elite family. All the women in this chapter were born into families that had illustrious backgrounds filled with a mix of consuls, censors, and triumphs.⁴⁶ An elite woman could expect to have an education and to be surrounded by political meetings, not only listening to what was happening but sufficiently educated and knowledgeable to understand the finer details of the conversations.⁴⁷ The line between public and private was much thinner than what elite male discourse reveals and issues raised in the Roman Senate would have probably been raised in the home beforehand (Flower 2018: 254). I follow Susan Treggiari's contention that women had more influence than is indicated in the sources (2019: 219).⁴⁸ The women in this chapter had influence in the political sphere during this period and were expected to use their qualities that they developed in the domestic sphere to impact the political sphere. Previous scholarship has examined the life of Servilia (Treggiari 2019) and the authority that matrons had at the end of the Republic (Rohr Vio 2022), but my focus will be specifically on the triumviral

⁴⁵ Servilia, born c. 100 BCE would have been 53. Mucia would have been around 40 and Julia would have been around 55. Valerius Maximus (8.13.6) tells us that Terentia lived until she was 103, while Junia Tertia reached over 90 years old, according to Cassius Dio (45.16.1) (Treggiari 2019: 215).

⁴⁶ The Roman aristocracy was made up of a relatively small group of families. See Syme (1939: 10-27) for an overview of the *nobiles* at the end of the Republic.

⁴⁷ See Hemelrijk (1999: 17-54) for an overview of what the education of Roman girls comprised.

⁴⁸ The lack of inclusion of women in the sources is due to a variety of reasons according to Treggiari, including "neglect, lack of interest, and ignorance" (2019: 220) on the part of male writers.

period. I follow Webb's (2022) recent analysis of female interventions as a traditional aspect of Roman history, but I depart from his contention that the triumviral period was not distinct in its interventions. I argue that the political instability of the triumviral period made the actions distinct, although not completely dissimilar, to those of the earlier Republic in that they are represented as constitutive elements of the period, necessary interventions allowing the dynasts to continue ruling. In examining the actions of the triumviral period, we will see with more clarity what roles were specific to women within this chaotic and transitional period that did not exist in other periods in the late Republic.

The question of whether any Roman woman ever held "power" continues to vex scholars. Certainly, Roman women held positions of great authority within the household, but the question of power is more elusive. While Roman women were barred from official state-sanctioned, legal channels of power, that is, holding political or military office, they could rely upon private networks in order to enact any sort of change.⁴⁹ The women in this chapter all operated within the Republican framework, which although exclusive did allow them influence in informal ways outside of the traditional frameworks of power, such as through informal discussions and the creation of marriage connections. These alternative channels that women had recourse to could then lead to action being taken by male office holders. In times of political instability, Roman authors often depict women as providing stability or contributing to further instability, depending on their moral character. As the political situation at Rome continued to deteriorate, women assumed more roles that men would traditionally have exclusive access to because of the

⁴⁹ The *ordo matronarum* is described by many ancient authors as effecting change throughout Roman history. Cf. Livy 10.23.10 on the *ordo*'s activities against the *lex Oppia*. Valerius Maximus (8.3.3) names the *ordo* when describing the tax on 1400 women that that triumvirs implemented.

breakdown of the functioning of legitimate political institutions, such as taking on roles within the diplomatic system.

2.1 The Ideal Roman Mother

What made an elite Roman mother a good one in the Roman imagination? This question has bearing on how we understand the role of elite Roman mothers of the triumviral period and whether their actions constituted a significant departure from the norm. One of the mothers most vivid in the Roman imagination was Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, whom we saw above as an example of how Romans might imagine a mother to intervene in her son's political career. Evidence more contemporary to the triumviral period for motherhood comes from the *laudatio Murdiae*, dating to the Augustan period, with praiseworthy behavior pointed out by Murdia's son. Examining two exemplary mothers, one preserved in literary sources, one preserved in an epigraphic source, demonstrates the discourses at play within different generic contexts for the ideal Roman mother in the Republican and early Imperial periods.

Suzanne Dixon (2007: 13-14) has demonstrated that many of the stories preserved about Cornelia developed during the later period of her life possibly due to the intervention of Sempronia, her daughter. The mythology around Cornelia continued to grow after her death and she stands as an example of the values of *severitas ac disciplina*, as the fertile mother of 12 children, as *mater dolorosa* after the deaths of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus.⁵⁰ Yet, as will be seen below there were aspects of Cornelia's life that became part of a mythology and aspects that had the potential to be subversive that were effaced in the Augustan period. Cornelia helps us to

⁵⁰ Dixon (2007) chapter one details the many myths surrounding Cornelia, and the difficulty in separating fact from fiction.

understand both the historical possibilities available to elite mothers and how the subsequent historiographic tradition could adapt her life to suit certain literary and/or political ends.

A brief overview of her actions demonstrates the possibilities allowed to elite mothers and the competing narratives that occur as a result of a woman's connections to elite men. I refer, that is, to her roles as daughter of Scipio Africanus, wife of Tiberius Gracchus, and mother of the Gracchi. Plutarch presents a glowing portrait of Cornelia at the beginning of the *Life of Tiberius Gracchus* (1.4): Κορηλία δὲ ἀναλαβοῦσα τοὺς παῖδας καὶ τὸν οἶκον, οὕτω σόφρονα καὶ φιλότεκνον καὶ μεγαλόψυχον αὐτὴν παρέσχεν ὥστε μὴ κακῶς δόξαι βεβουλεῦθαι τὸν Τιβέριον ἀντὶ τοιαύτης γυναικὸς ἀποθανεῖν ἐλόμενον (“Cornelia took charge both of the children and of her husband's property, and proved herself a woman of such discretion and noble ideals and so devoted a mother that Tiberius was considered to have made no unreasonable choice in electing to die in place of such a wife”).⁵¹ Plutarch here refers to an omen that occurred in which two serpents were discovered on the bed of Cornelia's husband and he elected to kill the male serpent and release the female serpent, although that meant he would die shortly. It is likely that the story about this omen developed later in the historiographic tradition, as many famous Roman men, such as Augustus, had famous stories about their mothers.⁵² Nevertheless, this short elegiac passage gives us a significant amount of information about the ideal wife and mother: she was to be actively involved in the management of her children and household and to impart what it meant to be Roman through the education of children.

⁵¹ All translations of Plutarch from Perrin's (1921) Loeb edition.

⁵² Atia, for example, claimed that she had been bitten by a snake at the sanctuary of Apollo (Suetonius, *Div. Aug.* 94.6 and Cassius Dio 45.1.2). Many exceptional men (e.g. Alexander) from the Greco-Roman world had mothers who claimed such miraculous birth stories.

The education of her children is an aspect of Cornelia that various ancient authors emphasize. Both Cicero and Quintilian, for example, praise her involvement in her sons' education. In the *Brutus* (211) Cicero claims: *legimus epistulas Corneliae matris Gracchorum: apparet filios non tam in gremio educatos quam in sermone matris*. ("We have all read the letters of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi; and are satisfied, that her sons were not so much nurtured in their mother's lap, as in the elegance and purity of her language").⁵³ The involvement of the Roman mother in her children's education is viewed positively by Cicero, and aristocratic Roman mothers often did exercise important influence in the education of their children, and, as we will see, Servilia made provisions for the education of Brutus.⁵⁴

In the political life of her children, Cornelia similarly exerted influence. Plutarch notes that Cornelia interfered to block the passage of a law that would have deprived Octavius of office (*Vit. C. Gracch.* 4.2-3): τὸν δὲ ἕτερον νόμον Γάιος αὐτὸς ἐπανείλετο, φήσας τῇ μητρὶ Κορνηλίᾳ δεηθείσῃ χαρίζεσθαι τὸν Ὀκτάβιον. καὶ ὁ δῆμος ἠγάσθη καὶ συνεχώρησε, τιμῶν τὴν Κορνηλίαν οὐδὲν ἦττον ἀπὸ τῶν παίδων ἢ τοῦ πατρός, ἧς γε καὶ χαλκῆν εἰκόνα στήσας ὕστερον ἐπέγραψε Κορνηλίαν μητέρα Γράγχων. ("but the other law was withdrawn by Gaius himself, who said that he spared Octavius at the request of his mother Cornelia. The people were pleased at this and gave their consent, honoring Cornelia no less on account of her sons than because of her father; indeed, in after times they erected a bronze statue of her, bearing the inscription: "Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi"). That Plutarch was able to find this anecdote indicates that Cornelia did exercise significant influence in her sons' careers, whether or not this specific anecdote reflects

⁵³ All translations from G.L. Hendrickson's Loeb edition. The preservation of women's writing or oratory signifies that the woman writing was exceptional. As we saw above, Hortensia's speech was considered to be exceptional because of the circumstances that engendered it.

⁵⁴ See Hemelrijk (1999: 64-71) on the ideal of educated motherhood.

an actual conversation between Gaius Gracchus and Cornelia. Cornelia harnessed the authority that was granted to Roman mothers in order to impact the political sphere.

Cornelia also famously gathered intellectuals at her villa, demonstrating the influence that she accrued over her career. Plutarch describes her villa (*Vit. C. Gracch* 19.1-2): αὕτη δὲ περὶ τοὺς καλουμένους Μισηνοὺς διέτριβεν, οὐδὲν μεταλλάξασα τῆς συνήθους διαίτης, ἦν δὲ πολύφιλος καὶ διὰ φιλοξενίαν εὐτράπεζος, ἀεὶ μὲν Ἑλλήνων καὶ φιλολόγων περὶ αὐτὴν ὄντων, ἀπάντων δὲ τῶν βασιλέων καὶ δεχομένων παρ' αὐτῆς δῶρα καὶ πεμπόντων (“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”). The villa lifestyle that Plutarch evokes, according to Suzanne Dixon (2007: 44) “gives us the prototype of the unproductive ‘pleasure villa’ as a seat of learning and civilized conversation.” The image of Cornelia as the manager of a literary salon does not accord with her values as a traditional Roman matron, but it demonstrates the authority that a Roman woman could wield. During the Augustan period, Augustus transformed Cornelia into a symbol of maternal excellence and a model of old-fashioned virtue.⁵⁵ Cornelia’s transformation after her death and the various ways she appears in literature demonstrates the malleability of women’s representations in the literature of the period. What can be said is that there were possibilities open to women of the aristocratic class if the circumstances allowed. As we will see, the circumstances of Servilia, to whom we shall turn in the next section, allowed for her to have political clout.

⁵⁵ Hemelrijk (1999: 66-67) describes the statue that Augustus erected of Cornelia in the Portico of Octavia as akin to the statues of the *summi viri* in the Forum of Augustus. The statue also probably was built to emphasize the type of femininity that Augustus was promoting.

The *laudatio Murdiae* (CIL 6.10230) provides illuminating evidence about the ideal Roman wife as it provides us with evidence of what values constituted a good mother around the same time that Servilia lived. The dating of the inscription is not secure, but it is likely that it was composed during the Augustan period.⁵⁶ Only part of the inscription is extant, and the left side has been lost. The *laudator* is Murdia's son from her first marriage, and he mentions the traditional values of women that remain strikingly similar throughout Roman history.⁵⁷ The speaker himself admits that it is tedious to mention all of the virtues that she possessed, but lists them all (27-30): *Eo maiorem laudem omnium carissima mihi mater meruit, quod modestia probitate pudicitia opsequio lanificio diligentia fide par similisque ceteris probeis feminis fuit neque ulli cessit* ("Therefore, my dearest mother earned the greatest praise of all, because in modesty, decency, chastity, obedience, woolworking, diligence, and loyalty she was equal and similar to other good women and she was second to none").⁵⁸ The long list of virtues emphasizes the mother's control over her own sexuality and her usefulness in the household. The *laudator* felt that he must pay lip service to these virtues, since possessing those virtues is critical to a woman's reputation, especially if she appears to have acted in more dynamic and non-traditional ways (Hemelrijk 2004: 194). Murdia, in the section preceding the list of the mother's virtues, demonstrates the economic possibilities afforded to Roman women and demonstrates the agency allowed to elite women.

⁵⁶ See Lindsay (2004: 91-92) for a discussion on the scholarly arguments for dating the inscription to this period.

⁵⁷ Werner Riess (2012: 493) has noted that the seven most common adjectives that describe women on funerary epitaphs are "*dulcissima* (sweetest), *pia* (dutiful) and its derivatives, *bene merens* (well deserving), *sua* (his/her), *carissima* (dearest), *optima* (best), and *sanctissima* (holiest). These seven adjectives characterize most women across all social strata and epochs of Roman history, with minimal variation."

⁵⁸ Translations of the *laudatio Murdiae* by Lindsay 2004.

Murdia divided up her estate fairly, according to her son, and provided him with an additional patrimony from his father (5): *Amor / maternus caritate liberum, aequalitate partium constat*. (“Her motherly love is evident from her devotion to her children and from the equality of their shares”). As Lindsay (2004: 94) has observed the laudator emphasizes Murdia’s actions with regard to her will and that she distinguished herself through her ability to properly weigh the importance of each family member. This section of the epitaph demonstrates that women in the Augustan period could control property and could be praised for it. While it is likely that Murdia was allowed to bequeath property as someone who had received the *ius trium liberorum*, women in the late Republic also were involved in the transactions and events of the household. Murdia is an example of how women could hold authority by virtue of their lip service to traditional values. The elite Roman mother, especially if the father had died, could hold authority over her children and took an active role in their personal and public lives. Let us now turn to an example of a mythological mother.

The story of Coriolanus and Veturia in some ways closely mirrors the situation of the triumviral period. As a successful general considering invading Rome, Coriolanus listened to his mother when she begged him not to do it. The story demonstrates that listening to one’s mother was an important value among the elites. The rhetoric of Coriolanus’ mother as reported in Livy invokes the language of fertility, as Veturia claims, *ergo ego nisi peperissem, Roma non oppugnaretur; nisi filium haberem, libera in libera patria mortua essem*, 2.40.8-9. (“So then, had I not been a mother Rome would not now be besieged! Had I no son I should have died a free woman, in a free land!”). Livy describes Coriolanus as changing his behavior after his mother’s speech and upon the sight of the women in his family in tears and as a result of their embraces. This myth demonstrates how women, especially mothers, could harness the authority that they

held within the household to correct the behavior of the men in their families.⁵⁹ Let us now turn to Servilia and the period which which I am chiefly concerned.

2.2 *Materfamilias*: Servilia

Descendant of the patrician Servilii Caepones on her father's side and the distinguished plebeian Livii Drusi on her mother's side, Servilia was one of the most well-connected women in Rome by the time of her death, yet as Bauman (1992: 73) has observed she "is something of an enigma." My goal in this section is to trace the activities of Servilia after the Ides of March. My approach is indebted to Susan Treggiari's (2019) biography of Servilia, which has illuminated the various possibilities allowed to Servilia after the Ides, and to Rohr Vio's (2022) monograph on Roman matrons of the end of the Republic. I aim to expand on Treggiari's and Rohr Vio's arguments about the role of Servilia as the defender of Brutus' cause in Rome and to contextualize her actions within the framework of Roman ideas of women's political interventions.

Born around 100 BCE, she experienced the collapse of the Republic firsthand and possibly the early years of Augustus' rule.⁶⁰ Servilia's numerous connections to elite men meant that she was present when the most pressing political debates of the period occurred, and she actively contributed to the political events following the ides of March. Her familial and amorous relationships included the most prominent men of the day. There are numerous ways of describing Servilia in terms of her relationships with powerful men: half-sister of Cato the

⁵⁹ Treggiari (2019: 258) notes also that this story was an etiology for the foundation of the Temple to Fortuna Muliebris. The temple served as a physical reminder to those passing by of the intervention of women.

⁶⁰ It is not clear when Servilia died, as the sources do not mention her activities, although we know from Cornelius Nepos that Atticus continued to support her (11.4). Junia Tertia, her daughter, lived until 22 CE and Tacitus mentions her funeral *Ann.* 3.76.

Younger, lover of Caesar, mother of Brutus, and niece of Drusus. In this section, I will argue that Servilia is the culmination of the elite Republican Roman mother, who promoted her family's and her son's interests, while actively shaping the political situation at the time by both directly intervening into the political sphere and by drawing upon her authority in the domestic sphere as a *matrona*. I aim to expand upon Francesca Rohr Vio's (2022: 108) argument that women emerged in this period as political actors due primarily to political instability and to historical developments, such as the trend toward marriage without *manus* and the increasing wealth flowing into the city. Moreover, in Servilia's case, the premature deaths of her male family members allowed her to act as the de facto head of household for her family.

The major sources for Servilia's life include Cicero's letters, Cornelius Nepos' biography of Atticus, Plutarch, Appian, and Suetonius. As we have already seen in chapter one, each author brings his own experiences and emphases to each text he composes. While discussing Servilia's life, I will try to tease out both historical possibilities and the way in which her representation furthers the particular goals of each author. For much of our information about Servilia's actions after the death of Caesar, we must rely upon Cicero's letters. There is much that Cicero's letters omit, and some parts of Servilia's life will never be able to be reconstructed. Some speculation, however, based in what we know to be plausible from other sources, helps to vivify the experiences that Servilia may have encountered.

A biography of Servilia is in order to understand the scope of her connections during the later period of her life when the assassination of Caesar occurred. Servilia, as mentioned above, was born around 100 BCE. Her parents were Livia and Quintus Caepio. Her parents divorced soon after her birth around 95 BCE, and her mother remarried Marcus Porcius Cato. Cato the Younger, born in 95 BCE, was Servilia's half-brother. Treggiari has conjectured that Servilia

must have had an equally forceful and rambunctious personality, as one ancient source claims that Servilia was like a mother to Cato.⁶¹ Servilia was the eldest of her siblings and step-siblings, which Treggiari (2019: 55) conjectures would have made her “protective and bossy.” I concur with Treggiari that Servilia must have always had a spirited personality and the ability to command authority because of her status as an older sibling. Servilia’s uncle Drusus and her father Caepio both died within a year of each other, which left Servilia without a male guardian. Treggiari has observed that women provided continuity in Servilia’s childhood, and when Servilia had to make important life decisions it was probably primarily to women that she turned. Many Roman women did involve themselves in the decisions of their family members, even their male kin, as we will see with Servilia and Brutus.⁶²

Servilia was married for the first time around the early 80s BCE to Marcus Junius Brutus and gave birth to Marcus Junius Brutus, the future assassin. The political turbulence of the time meant that Servilia was married to someone less distinguished than hoped for, although the family claimed to be descended from the Brutus who ended the monarchy.⁶³ The result of the marriage was Marcus Junius Brutus, who was born around 85 BCE. Her husband was later murdered in 77 BCE, and she remarried Decimus Brutus Silanus and had three daughters, one of whom married Cassius (Junia Tertia or Tertulla) and one of whom married Lepidus. Another daughter is attested as married to Publius Servilius Isauricus. Silanus died around 60 BCE, and

⁶¹ Asc. 19C: *ea porro apud Catonem maternam obtinebat auctoritatem* (she furthermore held the authority of a mother over Cato). (Treggiari 2019: 49n9).

⁶² See Rohr Vio, 2022 chapter 1 for an overview of how Roman women both created and discouraged family connections through marriage and divorce.

⁶³ Treggiari (2019: 78) has noted that Julius Caesar’s sister married a new man, M. Atius Balbus. Marriages in the 80s BCE seem to have been difficult to contract.

Servilia never remarried. From this point forward she worked to protect the interests of Brutus, her daughters, and probably Cato (Treggiari 2019: 122).

In 63 BCE, we have evidence from Plutarch that Servilia and Julius Caesar had begun a relationship (Treggiari 2019: 112). In 59 BCE, we have evidence from Suetonius of an extramarital relationship with Julius Caesar, and Suetonius notes that Caesar loved Servilia more than any of his other partners. The proof of this is that Caesar purchased a pearl worth six million sesterces for her.⁶⁴ By the time of Servilia's relationship with Caesar, the male heads of household of her family had died and Servilia had a large family and many relatives she could influence.

Treggiari (2019) has conjectured that Servilia and Brutus had an exceptionally close relationship, since his father died when he was seven years old. Servilia must have made many important decisions in Brutus' life such as his education with Lucius Staberius Eros (Treggiari 2019: 146). She also probably helped him arrange his marriage to Claudia, who came from the Claudian clan, one of the *gentes maiores* of Rome. After the civil war between Pompey and Caesar, Brutus divorced Claudia and remarried Porcia, the daughter of Cato and his half cousin. Cicero indicates that there was some animosity between Servilia and Porcia (*Att.*13.22.4): *de Bruto nostro perodiosum, sed vita fert. mulieres autem vix satis humane quae inimico animo ferant, cum <in> utraque officio pareat.* ("It is very distasteful about Brutus. But these things happen. The women are not acting in a civilized fashion in behaving with hostility, especially as he is following his duty to both"). Treggiari (2019:177) conjectures that Servilia's displeasure

⁶⁴ Suet. *Div. Iul.* 50. *Sed ante alias dilexit Marci Bruti matrem Serviliam, cui et proximo suo consulatu sexagens sesterium margaritam mercatus est* (But beyond all others Caesar loved Servilia, the mother of Marcus Brutus, for whom in his first consulship he bought a pearl costing six million sesterces).

stemmed from the political ramifications of the marriage: Brutus' political future would probably suffer as a result of his marriage connection with an enemy of Caesar. When Caesar was assassinated Servilia was already used to exercising authority within her family and had curated many connections with powerful men, including Atticus and Cicero. She had experienced political instability and violence with the conflict of Marius and Sulla in her childhood and learned how to navigate familial relationships and political rivalries. The beginning of the triumviral period forced Servilia to deploy all her skills that she had developed over the years, and she would ultimately be unsuccessful. When Caesar was assassinated Servilia had already had almost 15 years as the head of her family.

After the assassination of Julius Caesar, the conspirators never had control of the situation. The chaotic aftermath, which included conspirators trying to assure the people with bloody daggers in hand resulted in the conspirators holing up on the Capitoline Hill.⁶⁵ The next day, Brutus gave a speech to try to rouse public opinion, but Cicero remarks that the speech was lacking the rhetorical vim that it required.⁶⁶ Mark Antony quickly took control of the situation and on the 17th at a meeting of the Senate at the Temple of Tellus a compromise was reached: amnesty for the assassins, but Caesar's deeds would stand. A son of Lepidus and Junia and a son of Mark Antony were then sent as hostages to the assassins. Later that night, the assassins had dinner with the Caesarians. Treggiari (2019: 186) suggests the possibility that Servilia might have been present at the dinner, which I think plausible given that the presence of women could aid to emphasize the reconciliation between the two sides. The uneasy agreement, always

⁶⁵ See Dio 44.22 and Appian 2.120.

⁶⁶ *Ego tamen si illam causam habuissem, scripsissem ardentius. ὑπόθεσις vides quae sit et persona dicentis.* ("But If I had been handling the material I should have put more fire into it, considering the nature of the theme and the role of the speaker," *Ad Atticum* 15.1a.2). Brutus had sent him a copy of the speech to edit before circulation.

untenable, between the two sides set the stage for future conflict as the assassins were never popular with the people. The people's displeasure with the assassins reached a climax during the funeral of Caesar when a wax effigy was turned around on the stage, displaying his stab wounds.⁶⁷ The spectacle and the oration of Mark Antony firmly set public opinion against them. Servilia's activity after the assassination of Julius Caesar centered on working to ensure that her son had a political future in Rome. Appian (2.125) states that the family members of the assassins ran around the city trying to garner support for them on the night of the assassination. Since it was not safe for the assassins in Rome, Servilia served as the go-between.⁶⁸

In the aftermath of the assassination, Brutus and Cassius fled Rome, but before they left Italy there were various family meetings to chart a path forward. Servilia was a key player in the negotiations that occurred in the aftermath and was essential as a bridge between the Senate and the conspirators. The first mention in Cicero's letters of Servilia after the Ides is when he mentions that she had returned to her villa in Lanuvium (*Att.* 15.6): *Obsignata iam Balbus ad me Serviliam redisse, confirmare non discessuros*. ("My letter was already sealed when I heard from Balbus that Servilia has returned with confirmation that they won't go away").⁶⁹ The letter dates from around June 2, 44 BCE. Servilia traveled around to various villas that the family owned and to Rome. Cicero's letters provide the best account of Servilia's movements after the Ides of March and gives us a glimpse into her actions. Inspired by Josiah Osgood's chapter on Cicero's correspondence (2006: 17-43), I will examine certain letters written by Cicero to Atticus in order to examine how Servilia appears in each.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Following Appian's depiction of the funeral (*B Civ.* 2.143-7).

⁶⁸ After the proscriptions began, it would not be safe for women of the proscribed in the city either.

⁶⁹ All translations of Cicero's letters by Shackleton Bailey (1965) with light adaptations.

⁷⁰ Borrello (2016: 165-193) similarly traces Servilia's actions in Cicero's letters.

2.3 A Family Meeting: *Ad Atticum* 15.10 and 15.11

On June 7-8 of 44 BCE, the families of Brutus and Cassius in addition to trusted friends gathered at Brutus' villa in Antium to have a family meeting. The meeting was to treat the issue of the Senate resolution to give Brutus and Cassius a grain commission in Sicily and Asia, to which Brutus and Cassius took offense as a thinly disguised attempt to remove them from Rome. Cicero agrees with this position in a previous letter to Atticus claiming that it is degrading (*quid turpius?* 15.10.1). Nevertheless, Cicero claims in that previous letter that any advice he has to give to Brutus will not be taken, since he follows his mother's advice: *frustra vero quid ingrediar? matris consilio cum utatur vel etiam precibus, quid me interponam?* ("But why should I step in to no purpose? When he follows his mother's advice, her entreaties even, why should I interfere?" 15.10). Cicero's letters underline the confusion and difficulty of the political situation as he does not know what advice to give Brutus worrying that whatever he tells him will lead to a bad outcome: *prorsus quidem consilia tali in re ne iis quidem tuta sunt qui dant; sed possim id neglegere proficiens* ("Advice in such circumstances is positively unsafe even to the giver - but that I might not mind if I could do any good.").

As we have already seen, Servilia probably had a significant amount of influence in Brutus' life for his entire life. Since his father had died, Servilia probably did act as a father figure in Brutus' life for some time. Nevertheless, Cicero's comment is revealing as it demonstrates the authority that Servilia had in Brutus' life. Nevertheless, Servilia probably had good political instincts, honed over the years by her status as the head of the household.

Cicero describes the scene to Atticus in the first part of his letter (15.11.1):

Antium veni a. d. vi Idus. Bruto iucundus noster adventus. deinde multis audientibus, Servilia, Tertulla, Porcia, quaerere quid placeret. aderat etiam Favonius. ego quod eram meditatus in via suadere ut uteretur Asiatica curatione frumenti; nihil esse iam reliqui quod ageremus nisi ut salvus esset; in eo etiam ipsi rei publicae esse praesidium. quam

orationem cum ingressus essem, Cassius intervenit. ego eadem illa repetivi. hoc loco fortibus sane oculis Cassius (Martem spirare dices) se in Siciliam non iturum. 'egone ut beneficium accepissem contumeliam?' 'quid ergo agis?' inquam. at ille in Achaïam se iturum. 'quid tu' inquam 'Brute?' 'Romam,' inquit 'si tibi videtur.' 'mihi vero minime; tuto enim non eris.' 'quid? si possem esse, placeretne?' 'atque ut omnino neque nunc neque ex praetura in provinciam ires; sed auctor non sum ut te urbi committas.' dicebam ea quae tibi profecto in mentem veniunt cur non esset tuto futurus.

I arrived at Antium before midday. Brutus was glad to see me. Then before a large company, including Servilia, Tertulla, and Porcia, he asked me what I thought he ought to do. Favonius too was present. I gave the advice I had prepared on the way, to accept the Asiatic corn commission. I said his safety was all that concerned us now; it was the bulwark of the Republic itself. I was fairly launched on the theme when Cassius walked in. I repeated what I had already said, whereupon Cassius, looking most valorous I assure you, the picture of a warrior, announced that he had no intention of going to Sicily. 'Should I have taken an insult as though it had been a favour?' 'What do you mean to do then?' I enquired. He replied that he would go to Greece. 'How about you, Brutus?' said I. 'To Rome' he answered, 'if you agree.' 'But I don't agree at all. You won't be safe there.'

In addition to the women of the family, Favonius, a friend of Cato was present to give his advice.

The format of the discussion resembled a Senate meeting in which the senior senator gave his opinion first (Treggiari 2019: 190). Cicero does not report on whether the women of the family gave their opinions, but I think it likely based on Servilia's interruption of Cicero in the subsequent section of the letter that she gave her opinion to everyone and could have acted as the leader of the discussion. After Cicero gives his main points, Servilia interrupts him:

multo inde sermone querebantur atque id quidem Cassius maxime, amissas occasiones Decimumque graviter accusabant. ego negabam oportere praeterita, adsentirebar tamen. quomque ingressus essem dicere quid oportuisset, nec vero quicquam novi sed ea quae cotidie omnes, nec tamen illum locum attingerem, quemquam praeterea oportuisse tangi, sed senatum vocari, populum ardentem studio vehementius incitari, totam suscipi rem publicam, exclamat tua familiaris, 'hoc vero neminem umquam audivi!' ego repressi. sed et Cassius mihi videbatur iturus (etenim Servilia pollicebatur se curaturam ut illa frumenti curatio de senatus consulto tolleretur), et noster cito deiectus est de illo inani sermone velle esse dixerat.

A deal of talk followed, in which they complained, Cassius especially, about the opportunities that had been let slip, and Decimus came in for severe criticism. To that I said it was no use crying over spilt milk, but I agreed all the same. And when I began to give my views on what should have been done (nothing original, only what everyone is

saying all the time), not however touching on the point that someone else ought to have been dealt with, only that they should have summoned the Senate, urged the popular enthusiasm to action with greater vigor, assumed leadership of the whole commonwealth, your lady friend exclaimed ‘Well, upon my word! I never heard the like!’ I held my tongue. Anyway it looked to me as though Cassius would go (Servilia undertook to get the corn commission removed from the decree), and our friend Brutus was soon persuaded to drop his empty talk about wanting to be in Rome.

The interruption from Servilia indicates her frustration with the meandering turn the meeting had taken. While Treggiari conjectures that Servilia was touchy around this topic, it seems more like a reasonable expression of frustration about a topic that had probably been repeated to Servilia *ad nauseam* after the Ides. The striking part of Cicero’s letter is that he did not dare continue speaking after Servilia’s interruption, suggesting her authority over the meeting and perhaps the force of her personality at such meetings. Her interruption perhaps too expresses her frustration with the assassins’ lack of planning for the aftermath of Caesar’s death.

The most striking part of the letter appears in parentheses when Cicero claims that Servilia will be able to remove the grain commission from the Senate decree. I follow Treggiari (2019) who conjectures that the resolution had not yet been officially passed and was pending when Servilia intervened. Other scholars, such as Osgood (2006) and Shackleton Bailey (1965) read this as evidence that Servilia could overturn an already passed Senate resolution. While Treggiari and Bauman express surprise that Cicero does not express this as out of the ordinary, we must remember that by this time Servilia had been active in the political sphere for years, and for Cicero her involvement would not have merited comment. In other words, Servilia was a political insider at this point due to her status.⁷¹ The Senate eventually gave command of Crete

⁷¹ Servilia’s status recalls that of powerful women in criminal organizations. Though these organizations exist with extremely patriarchal frameworks, those married to powerful leaders can and do gain influence without backlash or surprise.

and Cyrene to Brutus and Cassius, although they did not go there. Osgood (2006: 40) suggests that Servilia may have been crucial in supporting this decree. While she did not occupy any political office in Rome, she did exercise her influence in the domestic sphere, which resulted in men making certain decisions.

2.4: The Ludi Apollinares: *Ad Atticum* 15.17

A key moment before Brutus left Italy was the *Ludi Apollinares* of 44 BCE, for which he was responsible as urban praetor. The games were to take place on July 6-13 and required a significant amount of planning and a massive amount of funds. Cicero, in a letter to Atticus on June 14, plainly states that Servilia was representing Brutus' interests in Rome *A* (15.17.2): *Tu vero facies ut omnia quod Serviliae non dees, id est Bruto*. ("It's just like you not to fail Servilia, which is to say Brutus"). Shackleton Bailey (1965: 265) speculates that Brutus had asked his mother to help him with arrangements with the games and that she had approached Atticus. The letter indicates that Servilia, as one of the most well-connected women in Rome, was well placed to represent Brutus who had decided to journey east. By the time that Brutus had fled, Servilia's interventions were such that Cicero could conflate mother and son, something without precedent in sources from the earlier Republic about mothers and sons. Nevertheless, the games were only modestly successful. During the production of *Tereus*, the audience applauded lukewarmly in favor of Brutus.⁷² There was no production of *Brutus*, which perhaps would have helped to turn the audience's sympathies toward Brutus and the assassins, nor was there any other indication that the people were on the assassins' side. After the failure to turn public opinion to their side, Brutus and Cassius departed from Italy. The games that the young Octavian and his family

⁷² This is something that Cicero plays up in his Philippics and makes seem more significant than in his letters (*Phil* 1.36).

financed for the newly deified Julius Caesar were much more successful and eye-catching.

Brutus dawdled before departing on his journey east, but he eventually left for Athens at the end of the summer in 44 BCE.

2.5 After the Departure of Brutus: *Ad Atticum* 15.13

Servilia did not stop working for the interests of her son after Brutus left. She was the main point person who worked for his interests and was able to provide information about him to family associates. Cicero writes to Atticus that he found out information about Brutus, hard to come by now that he was in the east, through Servilia: *de Bruto te nihil scire dicis, sed Servilia venisse M. Scaptium eumque non ꝑꝑuaꝑꝑ pompa, ad se tamen clam venturum sciturumque me omnia; quae ego statim. interea narrat eadem Bassi servum venisse qui nuntiaret legiones Alexandrinas in armis esse, Bassum arcessi, Cassium exspectari* (“You say you know nothing about Brutus. But Servilia says that M. Scaptius has come, not with his usual procession, but he will come to her in secret and I shall know everything – I’ll let you know at once. Meanwhile the same woman says a slave of Bassus had come and announced that the legions at Alexandria are in arms, Bassus is being summoned and they are waiting for Cassius”). Borrello (2016: 177) has observed that Servilia is a trustworthy source of information within a climate of disinformation swirling about at the time. She must have had a network she had cultivated over many years in order to receive news from abroad.

In addition to Brutus, Servilia also had to protect her daughters’ interest. One daughter in particular, Junia Secunda, needed her help after Lepidus, her husband, allied himself with Mark Antony on May 29, 43 BCE. The Senate then decreed that the Lepidus was a public enemy, which made his assets liable to confiscation and threatened to end any chance for his children to have a political career. Servilia and Junia Secunda petitioned Cicero for help, and Brutus and

Cicero exchanged letters on the topic. Cicero claims that he is trying to do his best: *quo tempore cum multa propter eam curam quam pro re publica suscepi graviter ferrem, tum nihil tui gravius quam me non posse matris tuae precibus cedere, non sororis; nam tibi, quod mihi plurimi est, facile me satis facturum arbitrabar.* (“Many things distress me at this time by reason of the care for the commonwealth which I have taken upon myself, but nothing has distressed me more. Than my inability to comply with your mother’s and your sister’s entreaties. As for yourself (which is what matters to me most), I believe I shall have no difficulty in justifying my conduct”). Servilia was apparently successful in her entreaties to Cicero, as Cicero remarks in another letter that he successfully pleaded the children’s cause in the Senate, as Brutus should know from his mother’s letters (*de sororis tuae filiis non exspectavi, Brute, dum scriberes. omnino ipsa tempora (bellum enim ducetur) integram tibi causam reservant. sed ego a principio, cum divinare de belli diuturnitate non possem, ita causam egi puerorum in senatu ut te arbitror e matris litteris potuisse cognoscere; 1.18.6*) (“About your sister’s children, my friend, I did not wait for you to write. To be sure the progress of time is leaving the case uncompromised for you to handle, for the war will be protracted. But from the outset, when I could not prophesy the length of the war, I pleaded the children’s cause in the Senate, as I think you will have been able to learn from your mother’s letters”). Servilia and Brutus continued to call upon their social networks to protect the interests of their family even when Brutus’ own political situation was perilous.

2.6 Servilia in the Letters to Brutus

Servilia appears again in Cicero’s letters to Brutus as promoting the interests of Brutus. In one letter she again hosts a family gathering like the one in 44 BCE about the question of whether to summon Brutus back to Rome:

Cum saepe te litteris hortatus essem ut quam primum rei publicae subvenires in Italiamque exercitum adduceres neque id arbitrarer dubitare tuos necessarios, rogatus sum a prudentissima et diligentissima femina, matre tua, cuius omnes curae ad te referuntur et in te consumuntur ut venirem ad se a. d. VIII Kal. Sextilis. quod ego, ut debui, sine mora feci. Cum autem venissem, Casca aderat et Labeo et Scaptius. at illa rettulit quaesivitque quidnam mihi videretur, arcesseremusne te atque id tibi conducere putarem an tardare et commorari te melius esset. respondi id quod sentiebam, et dignitati et existimationi tuae maxime conducere te primo quoque tempore ferre praesidium labenti et inclinatae paene rei publicae.

I have often urged you by letter to come to the aid of the commonwealth and bring your army over to Italy as soon as possible, and I was under the impression that those close to you were in no doubt on this point. On 25 July that very wise and watchful lady your mother, whose every care begins and ends with you, requested me to visit her. Naturally I did so without delay. On my arrival I found Casca, Labeo, and Scaptius already there. Your mother put the question: What did I think? Should we send for you and did we consider this to be in your best interests, or was it better that you should take your time and hold back? I said in answer what I thought, that it was in the highest degree advantageous to your prestige and reputation that you should lend support to our tottering and almost collapsing commonwealth at the earliest possible moment.

This letter demonstrates that Servilia acted as Brutus' stand in and directly intervened in order to protect his interests. Cicero states here that the invitation came from Servilia and that she opened the meeting, thus strengthening the possibility that she also did the same the year before.

Treggiari (2019: 209) conjectures that women would have been chairing meetings when their husbands or sons were abroad, but I do not think it impossible for women to take the lead on organizing these meetings during very turbulent or critical times when their male relatives were in Rome. Nevertheless, only the ashes of Brutus would return to Rome after the Battle of Philippi.

2.7 After Brutus

Plutarch (*Vit. Brut.* 53.4) and Appian (4.135) tell us that after Brutus' suicide, Antony sent his ashes back to his mother in Rome. Suetonius (*Div. Aug.* 13.1) and Dio (47.49.2) on the other hand tell us that Antony ordered Brutus' head to be cut off, which was then thrown at the foot of Cato's statue or lost at sea. Servilia's grief must have been immense, as the sources

indicate that she had an exceptionally close relationship with Brutus. After his death, Servilia had financial troubles, but Atticus helped her.⁷³ We do not know when Servilia died, and it is possible that she lived into the early or middle years of Augustus' rule. Treggiari (2019: 215) conjectures that Servilia may have tried to reconcile with Augustus through Livia, who was part of her family. Tacitus tells us that Servilia's daughter, Junia Tertia, had an opulent funeral in 22 CE, and the imagines of 20 families were used.

The activities of Servilia during this period emphasize her role as protector and encourager of Brutus and her children. She did everything possible to create a political future for her son in Rome and was able to manage many difficult personalities in the process. What Servilia's life tells us is that elite women at this time period could and did act in the public sphere without censure by utilizing their authority within the domestic sphere and the authority of their illustrious families. While impossible to reconstruct the personality or thoughts of Servilia, what emerges from a study of her life is the ability of women to harness their domestic authority and use it in the political sphere when male relatives were unable to, as Brutus. Let us now turn to Mucia Tertia, the mother of Sextus Pompey, whom, as we will see, also supported her son and attempted to act as a mediator on his behalf.

2.8 Mucia Tertia

As the third wife of Pompey and mother of Sextus Pompey, Mucia dealt firsthand with ultimately failed political undertakings that represented alternatives to the parties that won out (Julius Caesar and Octavian, respectively). After her divorce from Pompey, she remained active working on behalf of her sons, Sextus Pompey and her son Marcus Aemilius Scaurus, as we will

⁷³ Treggiari conjectures that this may have been compounded by the tax that the triumvirs imposed on the 400 richest women in Rome to which Hortensia objected.

see below. According to Cassius Dio (51.2.4-5), she obtained a pardon after Octavian's accession to power for her son, Aemilius Scaurus, demonstrating the authority and respect that Octavian had for her and her family. Born at the beginning of the 1st century BCE, she, like Servilia had dealings with some of the most elite Roman men from her girlhood and saw first-hand the dangerous political game of the late Republic. Daughter of Quintus Mucius Scaevola, a scholar of Roman law and *pontifex maximus*, who was murdered in the Temple of Vesta, Mucia would have had first hand experience of the violence that could during the unstable end of the Republic.⁷⁴ Mucia's presence in the sources narrating the triumviral period suggest that she operated much in the same mold as Servilia, and I will also argue that she demonstrates how Roman authors, particularly Appian, perceived the importance of maternal authority within official political negotiations of the period.

Quintus Mucius Scaevola was consul in 95 BCE and was governor of Asia following his consulship where he received honors and a statue from the local population.⁷⁵ Known as an incorruptible and honest man, Mucia would have seen first-hand how competition was negotiated between elite families and how values could be utilized in service of elite self-fashioning. There is a possibility that Mucia also received a statue as his daughter (Bauman 1998: 78). She would then be among the first to receive honors that would later become typical for Roman women. Whatever the case may be, what is clear is that Mucia had a typical elite

⁷⁴ Scaevola was the author of an important treatise on civil law, divided into 18 books. See Watson: 1974 for an overview of the topics treated and the fragments that remain.

⁷⁵ Cicero mentions a festival created by the citizens of the province of Asia in honor of Mucius, which Mithridates allowed to continue, in contrast to Verres who canceled a festival in honor of the Metelli. *In Verrem* 2.2.51 (*per eosdem istius furtorum iniuriarum uxorumque socios istius imperio Syracusis Marcellia tolluntur maximo gemitu luctuque civitatis, quem illi diem festum cum recentibus beneficiis C. Marcelli debitum reddebant, tum generi nomini familiae Marcellorum maxima voluntate tribuebant. Mithridates in Asia, cum eam provinciam totam occupasset, Mucia non sustulit.*)

upbringing surrounded by highly educated men and women. Cicero remarks in the *Brutus* about her family (211): *Auditus est nobis Laeliae C. f. saepe sermo; ergo illam patris elegantia tinctam vidimus et filias eius Mucias ambas, quarum sermo mihi fuit notus, et neptes Licinias, quas nos quidem ambas, hanc vero Scipionis etiam tu, Brute, credo, aliquando audisti loquentem.* (“It was my good fortune more than once to hear Laelia, the daughter of Gaius, speak, and it was apparent that here careful usage was colored by her father’s habit, and the same was true of her two daughters Muciae, with both of whom I have talked, and of her granddaughters the Liciniae, both of whom I have heard: one, the wife of Scipio, I imagine that you too, Brutus, have sometimes heard speak”). Cicero refers here to the two aunts of Mucia Tertia, who were the daughters of Laelia and Quintus Mucius Scaevola Augur. Laelia, as the daughter of Gaius Laelius, one of the members of the literary Scipionic circle. The approval that Cicero expresses in this passage demonstrates how some elite women acquired authority through the style of their Latin. Mucia would have grown up surrounded by women who were highly educated and skilled in using elite language to gain prestige and authority. Like Servilia, Mucia would have witnessed first-hand the importance of negotiation and persuasion on the part of the women in her family in order to advance causes. The passage from Cicero also underlines that women were involved in language closer to speech-acts than we might imagine. The Latin word *sermo* encompasses conversation and speech (OLD s.v. *sermo*), but points to elite status as well given the associations between elite self-fashioning and educated speech. The fact that Cicero includes this passage in a work on oratory, a genre exclusive to men, demonstrates how women could approximate that authority with their own education. Mucia was surrounded by women who understood how to utilize elite status in service of their families.

Political violence interfered in Mucia's family life when her father was murdered during reprisals against anti-Marian supporters in 82 BCE. Appian narrates the episode (*B. Civ.*

1.88.403-404):

Μάριος δὲ οὐδὲν χρηστὸν ἔτι προσδοκῶν τοὺς ἰδίους ἐχθροὺς ἠπείγετο προανελεῖν καὶ Βρούτῳ στρατηγοῦντι τῆς πόλεως ἐπέστελλε τὴν σύγκλητον ὡς ἐπὶ ἄλλο συναγαγεῖν καὶ κτεῖναι Πόπλιον Ἀντίστιον καὶ Παπίριον Κάρβωνα ἕτερον καὶ Λεύκιον Δομίτιον καὶ Μούκιον Σκαιόλαν, τὸν τὴν μεγίστην Ῥωμαίους ἱερωσύνην ἱερωμένον. οἱ μὲν δὴ δύο τῶνδε ἀνηρέθησαν ἐν τῇ βουλῇ, καθὰ Μάριος προσέταξε, τῶν σφαγέων ἐς τὸ βουλευτήριον ἐσαχθέντων· Δομίτιος δ' ἐκτρέχων παρὰ τὴν ἔξοδον ἀνηρέθη, καὶ μικρὸν πρὸ τοῦ βουλευτηρίου Σκαιόλας. τὰ τε σώματα αὐτῶν ἐς τὸν ποταμὸν ἐρρίφη· ἐπεπόλαζε γὰρ ἤδη μὴ καταθάπτεσθαι τοὺς ἀναιρουμένους.

When Marius saw that he could no longer expect a favorable outcome, he was anxious to kill his personal enemies before he died himself. He wrote to the praetor, Brutus, in Rome, ordering him to summon the senate, supposedly on some other matter, and to kill Publius Antistius and Papirius Carbo (not the consul) and Lucius Domitius and Mucius Scaevola, the Pontifex Maximus. Of these, the first two were indeed murdered in the senate, as Marius had ordered, by assassins brought into the senate house for this purpose. Domitius tried to run out, but was killed at the door, and Scaevola was killed just outside the building. Their bodies were thrown into the Tiber, for it was now common practice not to bury those who had been killed.

The conflict between Marius and Sulla was one of the first periods in which personal enemies became enemies of the state, and Mucia's father's death was a result of this and must have been shocking for Appian's audience to hear – the *pontifex maximus*, chief religious official with an elite background having his body thrown in the Tiber. In times of a functioning Republic, only the bodies of public enemies should be thrown into the Tiber, so Appian's audience would note that this punishment did not accord to the status of the individuals. His death is all the more striking given his reputation for honesty and incorruptibility. Mucia would have been around 18 or so when her father was murdered, and this loss likely shaped how she approached the politics of the triumviral period – knowing that lethal violence was a possibility at any moment.

As with Servilia, Cicero references Mucia in his letters to friends, perhaps unsurprisingly as a supporter of Pompey. In mid-January 62 BCE, Cicero mentions approaching Mucia when he faces the censure of the tribune Metellus Nepos. Nepos was in the process of refusing Cicero's valedictory honors and then tried to summon Pompey from the east to suppress the Catilinarians further (*Ad Familiares* 5.2): *Egi cum Claudia, uxore tua, et cum vestra sorore Mucia, cuius erga me studium pro Cn. Pompei necessitudine multis in rebus perspexeram, ut eum ab illa iniuria deterrerent* ("I approached Claudia, your wife, and your sister Mucia, whose favor towards me because of my connection with Gnaeus Pompey I had experienced in many matters, to deter him from doing me that injury"). We learn later in the letter that Mucia was unsuccessful in her attempt to do so. The detail that Cicero includes here, however, that he had experienced her favor on many occasions suggests that Mucia was used to making these requests, as we should expect from elite Roman women.⁷⁶ Moreover, as Bauman (1994: 79) has noted, Cicero elevates Mucia over Clodia in this letter, emphasizing that in this situation she had more control over the outcome for Cicero. As we have seen with Servilia, women could use their familial networks to intervene informally on behalf of men. While this influence is informal, it tells us that in difficult political situations informal influence by women could be seen as helpful in order to avoid further escalation of the situation.

The marriage between Pompey and Mucia occurred around 80 BCE through the influence of Sulla after the death of his daughter Aemilia, Pompey's second wife. Mucia had connections to the Metelli (Metullus Pulcher and Metellus Nepos being her half-siblings), so the marriage, like all elite Roman marriages, allowed Pompey to make alliances with an extremely important

⁷⁶ The intervention that Cicero expects here demonstrates the importance of women intervening, as it could avert especially perilous political situations.

and illustrious Roman family. The marriage produced three children, Pompey's only children from his five marriages, among them Sextus Pompey, upon whose behalf Mucia would work during the triumviral period. Pompey himself was away for much of the marriage in the east (67-2 BCE), and, upon his return divorced Mucia without providing a reason in the formal notice that he gave her. This created an interest among the elite in discovering the reason why, and Cicero seems to allude to adultery in a letter. This seemingly caused much scandal in Roman society, as many of the elite censured Pompey for his quick marriage to Julia, the daughter of Caesar. The accusation of adultery with Julius Caesar does not speak to the reality of the situation, but rather the political one. Cicero comments on a divorce in a letter to Atticus and seemingly obliquely references the accusations of adultery (*Ad Atticum* 1.12): "*Pompeium nobis amicissimum constat esse. Divortium Muciae vehementer probatur*" ("Pompey remains very friendly to us. The divorce from Mucia is strongly approved.") Another way to read this reference in Cicero would be as a response to the political situation, in which the alliance between Caesar and Pompey was so much preferred to a marriage with Mucia. However it is also possible that Cicero here alludes to some sort of rumor that began about Mucia which implicated her morality. Additionally, the elite during this time period were looking for an explanation for the termination of the marriage. Although legally no reason needed to be provided for the dissolution, the elite networks of the late Republic clearly desired to ascertain the reason. Plutarch notes explicitly that Pompey divorced Mucia on account of infidelity and cites a letter of Cicero's (possibly the one mentioned above) (*Vit. Pomp.* 42): ἐξύβρισε γὰρ ἡ Μουκία παρὰ τὴν ἀποδημίαν αὐτοῦ. καὶ πόρρω μὲν ὄν ὁ Πομπήϊος κατεφρόνει τοῦ λόγου· πλησίον δὲ Ἰταλίας γενόμενος καὶ σχολάζοντι τῷ λογισμῷ μᾶλλον, ὡς ἔοικε, τῆς αἰτίας ἀψάμενος, ἔπεμψεν αὐτῇ τὴν ἄφεσιν, οὔτε τότε γράψας οὔθ' ὕστερον ἐφ' οἷς ἀφῆκεν ἐξειπῶν· ἐν δ' ἐπιστολαῖς Κικέρωνος ἡ αἰτία γέγραπται. ("For Mucia his

wife had played the wanton during his absence. While Pompey was far away, he had treated the report of it with contempt; but when he was nearer Italy and, as it would seem, had examined the charge more at his leisure, he sent her a bill of divorce, although he neither wrote at that time, nor afterwards declared, the grounds on which he put her away; but the reason is stated in Cicero's letters"). Plutarch records here that a discourse emerged after the fact about the cause of the divorce, which reflects the elite's interest in the causes as all marriages were political.

Following her divorce from Pompey she married Aemilius Scaurus with whom she had a son. Evidently, the charges of adultery did not preclude her from the elite networks. The divorce itself had political ramifications as her brother as consul in 62 BCE opposed everything that Pompey wanted to pass. Cassius Dio observes (37.49.1-3):

Καὶ ὁ μὲν καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ῥᾶον ἐκ τούτου προσκατεστρέψατο, Πομπήιος δὲ ἦλθε μὲν ἐς τὴν Ἰταλίαν ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ, καὶ τὸν τε Ἀφράνιον τὸν Λούκιον καὶ τὸν Μέτελλον τὸν Κέλερα ὑπάτους ἀποδειχθῆναι ἐποίησεν, ἐλπίσας δι' αὐτῶν Ζμάτην πάνθ' ὅσα ἐβούλετο καταπράξειν. ἤθελε μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα τε καὶ ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα χώραν τέ τινα τοῖς συνεστρατευμένοις οἱ δοθῆναι καὶ τὰ πεπραγμένα αὐτῷ πάντ' ἐπικυρωθῆναι, διήμαρτε δὲ σφῶν τότε. οἱ τε γὰρ δυνατοί, μηδὲ ἐκ τοῦ πρὶν αὐτῷ ἀρεσκόμενοι, διεκώλυσαν αὐτὰ ψηφισθῆναι· καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ὑπάτων Ἀφράνιος μὲν (ὀρχεῖσθαι γὰρ βέλτιον ἢ τι διαπράσσειν ἠπίστατο) πρὸς οὐδὲν αὐτῷ συνήρατο, Μέτελλος δὲ ὀργῇ, ὅτι τὴν ἀδελφὴν αὐτοῦ, καίτοι παῖδας ἐξ αὐτῆς ἔχων, ἀπεπέπεμτο, καὶ πάνυ πρὸς πάντα ἀντέπραξεν.

At this time Pompey entered Italy and had Lucius Afranius and Metellus Celer appointed consuls, vainly hoping that through them he could effect whatever he desired. He wished in particular to have some land given to his soldiers and to have all his acts approved; but he failed of these objects at that time. For, in the first place, the optimates, who even before this had not been pleased with him, prevented the questions from being brought to vote. And as for the consuls themselves, Afranius, who understood how to dance better than to transact any business, did not assist him at all, and Metellus, in anger that Pompey had divorced his sister in spite of having had children by her, vigorously opposed him in everything.

While Metellus had other reasons to oppose Pompey, the discourse that emerged that connected his opposition to his anger about Pompey's divorce is revealing about elite attitudes concerning

the influence of family in the political arena. The actions of Pompey and Metellus were reinterpreted as corresponding to a dispute over personal affairs rather than political differences. Throughout the Roman Republic, political disputes could and did become worse because of and around familial disputes. The political was deeply personal in Roman society as we have seen so far.

Asconius in his commentary on the *Pro Scauro* comments on the underlying thought processes that reveal the complex constellation of family relationships and obligations in Roman society, which include women who have significant roles in mediating with men (19-20):

Scaurus summam fiduciam in paterni nominis dignitate, magnam in necessitudine Cn. Pompeii Magni reponerat. Habebat enim filium liberorum Cn. Pompeii fratrem: nam Tertiam, Scaevolae filiam, dimissam a Pompeio in matrimonium duxerat. M. Catonem autem qui id iudicium, ut diximus, exercebat metuebat admodum propter amicitiam quae erat illi cum Triario: nam Flaminia, Triarii mater, et ipse Triarius sororem Catonis Serviliam, quae mater M. Bruti fuit, familiariter diligebat; ea porro apud Catonem maternam obtinebat auctoritatem. Sed in eo iudicio neque Pompeius propensum adiutorium praebet - videbatur enim apud animum [20] eius non minus offensionis contraxisse, quod iudicium eius in Muciam crimine impudicitiae ab eo dimissam levius fecisse existimaretur, cum eam ipse probasset, quam gratiae adquisisse necessitudinis iure, quod ex eadem uterque liberos haberet - neque Cato ab aequitate ea quae et vitam eius et magistratum illum decebat quoquam deflexit.

Scaurus placed the highest confidence in the status of his paternal name and great confidence in the intimate connection with Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus. For he had a son who was the brother of the free-born sons of Gnaeus Pompeius. For he had led Tertia, the daughter of Scaevola, who had been divorced by Pompey into marriage. However he was fearing Marcus Cato, who was overseeing the judicial case, as I mentioned, to such an extent because of the friendship that there was that man with Triarius. For Flaminia, the mother of Triarius, and Triarius himself esteemed like a member of their *familia* the sister of Cato, Servilia, who was the mother of Marcus Brutus. She furthermore obtained maternal authority in Cato's household.

But in that legal case neither did Pompey offer a helpful inclination - for it seemed that in his (Pompeius') emotional outlook had contracted no less of an offense, because - when that same man (Scaurus) was putting her (Mucia) to the test - he (Scaurus) was being estimated to have performed his (Pompeius') legal case against Mucia on the charge of unchastity more unseriously than to have

sought out favor according to the right of their close bond, because either man had free-born sons from the same woman - nor did Cato turn aside from that fairness which befitted both his own life and that magistracy.

Asconius, writing in the 1st c. CE identifies family connections as a major part of Scaurus' thinking of how he will defeat the case. Asconius uses two rather loaded Latin terms when describing Scaurus' thinking: *dignitate* and *necessitudine*. The former describes the state of reverence or respect Romans held, while the latter indicates a close familial, intimate relationship. The fact that Asconius does not go into great detail in explanation as to why he would feel justified in feeling thusly demonstrates how ingrained the concepts were into his 1st c. CE audience's mind. Asconius measures up Scaurus' *gens* and his connection with Pompey against his animosity with Cato. Scaurus' son with Mucia, a half-brother to her children with Pompey, is evidently sufficient reason for him to believe in Pompey's help with this case. Yet Scaurus has to weigh this against the familial bonds on the other side, that of Triarius' mother and Servilia, the half-sibling of Cato. Quite strikingly in this passage Asconius refers to Servilia as having attained *maternam... auctoritatem* underlining the amount of authority that Servilia had over Cato while they were growing up together. While women did not have *potestas* in the Roman world and could not enforce their will through the use of physical violence, they could still persuade and exert authority over political decisions that their family members made. Scaurus evidently incorrectly surmised that Pompey would favor his side in the case, as Asconius notes that the previous trial he had during his divorce with Mucia factored into his decision not to interfere. Pompey's motivations according to Asconius for favoring or not favoring a certain political position are deeply intertwined with familial connections. Mucia's early life demonstrates the ways in which political decisions were deeply intertwined with

familial matters. The two could not often be separated due to the importance of family connections and alliances.

During the triumviral period, Mucia appears in Appian at significant moments when tensions between men threaten to break out although they are nominally bound by a peace treaty. The year 39 BCE was a very tense one in the Roman imagination, as tensions were close to boiling over between Antony and Octavian after the war between Fulvia and Octavian in Perugia. Fulvia's death at Sicion opened the way for rapprochement between the two sides. Affairs at Rome during this time were more tumultuous than usual as Appian describes the population bristling because of famine and arrogance on the part of the triumvirs. For Appian the people blamed the triumvirs wholly for this and not Pompey for his blockade. Things became so serious that Octavian was almost stoned to death by the people, and Mark Antony had to publicly rescue him. It is into this discord that the people drew Mucia after Sextus had sent Mucia to Octavian to make a marriage alliance between him and Scribonia, who was the sister of Pompey's father-in-law Lucius Libo. Women had always been key negotiators for the creation of marriage alliances, but the stakes were even higher here: this was not simply a marriage alliance between two competing families but rather a delicate diplomatic situation. Mucia's skills were needed in order to defuse the tension, yet also bring about results. Like we saw above with Brutus, Servilia also intervened on Brutus' behalf at politically tense moments. Appian's detail that the people forced Mucia to go indicates that for diplomatic negotiations of this time, *matronae* could be called upon as familial members for whom there was authority, with a tradition of intervening in politically fraught moments in certain circumstances. Additionally, it was custom for Roman men to listen to their mothers from childhood through adulthood, while listening to one's wife could lead to accusations of lack of manliness. Handling such a

negotiation would have required a certain amount of skill and tact. The alliance broke down and the people forced Mucia to bring about a new settlement or they would burn her house down. The people's emotions were running high at this point, and they discharged their anger onto Mucia, as someone who had the ability to broker peace: ὁ δὲ δῆμος καὶ Μουκίαν, τὴν μητέρα τοῦ Πομπηίου, καταπρήσειν ἀπειλοῦντες, ἐξέπεμπον ἐργασομένην διαλύσεις. ("The people also, threatening to burn Mucia, the mother of Pompeius, with her house, sent her to communicate with her son in the interest of peace") (*B Civ.* 5.69). Before this, however, the people entreat Octavian with tears to negotiate with Libo. For Appian, women were associated with marriage alliances and could find space to negotiate where men could not. Women were not political agents in the Roman imagination, and it was therefore so beyond the Roman conception for a woman to be killed in the process of negotiation. Mucia could deploy her skills in ways that brought about results because the political relations between men were so strained that negotiations could easily end up turning violent. Mucia could also travel to Sicily without much fear of being killed on the way. During this period, mothers became diplomatic negotiators in a much more public way than before. The result of the negotiations was the pact of Misenum, when Pompey agreed to lift his blockade and Antony agreed to marry Octavia. Appian notes that Mucia and either Julia, the mother of Antony, or Scribonia urged Pompey on to make negotiations. While Kathryn Welch (2012) links the story of Mucia to Veturia, the mother of Coriolanus, I think it more probable that Mucia did not attend the meeting, as Appian only mentions that Mucia urged Pompey on. It is more likely that Mucia's influence led to Pompey's willingness to negotiate with the other triumvirs. Women would not likely be at an official meeting between triumvirs, although I do not disagree with Welch's claim that this story links Mucia with Veturia as part of Pompey's propaganda.

The sources are silent about Mucia until she returns to obtain a pardon for her son with Scaurus, who had sided with Mark Antony. Octavian was alleged to have continued to show public respect to Mucia and Julia, the mother of Mark Antony after the Battle of Actium. Cassius Dio mentions that Octavian pardoned Marcus Scaurus, Mucia's son with her second husband on her behalf (καὶ Μᾶρκός τις Σκαῦρος: ἀδελφός τε γὰρ τοῦ Σέξτου ὁμομήτριος ὄν καὶ θανατωθῆναι κελευσθεὶς εἶτα διὰ τὴν μητέρα τὴν Μουκίαν ἀφείθη, 51.2.5) ("Likewise one Marcus Scaurus, a half-brother of Sextus on his mother's side, had been condemned to death, but was later released for the sake of his mother Mucia"). After Sextus' defeat, Mucia continued to lobby on behalf of her children and her standing and connections allowed her to obtain a pardon from Octavian, demonstrating the authority that elite Roman women had through their familial connections and diplomacy. The sources do not tell us about the death of Mucia, yet she might have lived into the solidification of the Principate and seen a great part of Octavian's rule. Mucia's life, like Servilia's, was marked by violence and instability, but her connections and status allowed her to be involved in key diplomatic negotiations. Mucia's life is a window into the interconnected nature of family and politics in Roman society and the ways in which women were encouraged to act in order to bring about resolutions.

2.9 Julia: *Mater Antonii*

Julia knew the perils of Republican politics as well as Servilia and Mucia. Daughter of Lucius Julius Caesar, who was consul in 90 BCE and Fulvia, she too would have been exposed to politics and the dangerous political machinations of the late Republic at a young age.⁷⁷ She married Marcus Antonius Creticus, famous for exploits against pirates, with whom she had Mark

⁷⁷ She was third cousins of Julius Caesar, and, because of their familial connections, Julius Caesar took an interest in the careers of her sons.

Antony. According to Plutarch (*Vit Ant.* 1), Creticus' father, the orator Antonius, was killed by Marius during the turbulent years of the struggle for supremacy with Sulla.⁷⁸ Julia would have also had first-hand experience with the violence and instability of those years as the Julian clan backed Marius, whose civil wars with Sulla left many Romans dead.

In order to examine the ideology around women in the Julian clan, it is useful to take a look at Caesar's *laudatio funebris* for his aunt Julia, as this provides us with a framework for . Suetonius records the following excerpt (*Life of Caesar* 6.1): "*Amitae meae Iuliae maternum genus ab regibus ortum, paternum cum diis immortalibus coniunctum est. nam ab Anco Marcio sunt Marcii Reges, quo nomine fuit mater; a Venere Iulii, cuius gentis familia est nostra. est ergo in genere et sanctitas regum, qui plurimum inter homines pollent, et caerimonia deorum, quorum ipsi in potestate sunt reges.*" ("The family of my aunt Julia is descended by her mother from the kings, and on her father's side is akin to the immortal Gods; for the Marcii Reges go back to Ancus Marcius, and the Iulii, the family of which ours is a branch, to Venus. Our stock therefore has at once the sanctity of kings, whose power is supreme among mortal men, and the claim to reverence which attaches to the Gods, who hold sway over kings themselves.") The rhetoric that Caesar uses here of the right of the Julian family to rule demonstrates the importance of women in elite self-fashioning.⁷⁹ The excerpt Suetonius includes of the funeral oration is not so much about Caesar's aunt as it is about articulating status and identity. The speech demonstrates rhetoric that would have been used by male members of the Julian clan and women would also have been expected to uphold. Julia, the mother of Antony, would have been raised with rhetoric

⁷⁸ Ἀντωνίου πάππος μὲν ἦν ὁ ῥήτωρ Ἀντώνιος, ὃν τῆς Σύλλα γενόμενον στάσεως Μάριος ἀπέκτεινε ("Antony's grandfather was the orator Antonius, who joined the party of Sulla and was put to death by Marius"). Trans. Perrin.

⁷⁹ See Osgood (2014: 108-109) for details on the rhetoric of family in the excerpt from Caesar's speech and other *laudationes* for women.

and expectations around maintaining the dignity of the family. We will see later in an anecdote from Plutarch that she does indeed uphold the ideal values of a Roman matron.

Plutarch includes further details about the spectacle of the funeral (*Life of Caesar* 5.2):

δευτέραν δὲ καὶ καταφανεστέραν ὅτε, τῆς Μαρίου γυναικὸς Ἰουλίας ἀποθανούσης, ἀδελφιδοῦς ὧν αὐτῆς ἐγκώμιόν τε λαμπρὸν ἐν ἀγορᾷ διῆλθε, καὶ περὶ τὴν ἐκφορὰν ἐτόλμησεν εἰκόνας Μαρίου προθέσθαι, τότε πρῶτον ὀφθείσας μετὰ τὴν ἐπὶ Σύλλα πολιτείαν, πολεμίων τῶν ἀνδρῶν κριθέντων.

“A second and more conspicuous proof he received when, as nephew of Julia the deceased wife of Marius, he pronounced a splendid encomium upon her in the forum, and in her funeral procession ventured to display images of Marius, which were then seen for the first time since the administration of Sulla, because Marius and his friends had been pronounced public enemies.”

The spectacle and speech articulate a vision of the Julian clan that is sanctioned by both divine right and tradition to be the foremost at Rome. Women in the Julian clan are a way through which to mediate that identity and make connections, which we see Caesar participating in here.⁸⁰

After Creticus' death, she married Publius Lentulus Sura in 74 BCE who was involved in the Catilinarian conspiracy and executed without trial. Stories then circulated that Cicero's treatment of the body was the root of the enmity between him and Mark Antony, with Plutarch noting (*Vit. Ant.* 2), ὑπὸ ταύτης ὁ υἱὸς Ἀντώνιος ἐτράφη μετὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς τελευτὴν Κορνηλίῳ Λέντλῳ γαμηθείσης, ὃν Κικέρων ἀπέκτεινε τῶν Κατιλίνα συνωμοτῶν γενόμενον. αὕτη δοκεῖ τῆς σφοδρᾶς ἔχθρας Ἀντωνίῳ πρὸς Κικέρωνα πρόφασις καὶ ἀρχὴ γενέσθαι. “This would seem to have been the origin and ground of the violent hatred which Antony felt towards Cicero. At any rate, Antony says that not even the dead body of Lentulus was given up to them

⁸⁰ We can imagine that the reaction to the images of Marius would have varied, yet this venue may have been the ideal place for it as the funeral of Caesar's aunt, an occasion supposedly without the full weight of political implications as for a man.

until his mother had begged it from the wife of Cicero. This, however, is admittedly false; for no one of those who were punished at that time by Cicero was deprived of burial.” The creation of these stories indicates the importance of family relations in shaping political relations. That people would look to more private matters demonstrates how integrated familial politics were in traditional politics. Plutarch evidently believes that Antony fabricated this story about Cicero in order to smear him, and Antony clearly believed that using a story like this about family would initiate public sentiment against Cicero. The detail of Julia having to appeal to Terentia indicates that women had networks they could draw upon in these situations, and specific ways of approaching each other, yet it also casts Cicero in a worse light since Julia has to appeal to his wife rather than him. Appealing to the sympathy of the mother and slights against her was a powerful way to shape public opinion. Cicero himself uses the same tactics in his *Philippics* when he accuses Antony of allowing Cytheris to precede Julia in a procession.

Plutarch describes Julia as an ideal Roman matron, stern and no-nonsense in her running of the household. To illustrate this, he includes the following vignette (*Vit. Ant.* 1):

πατήρ δὲ ὁ Κρητικὸς ἐπικληθεὶς Ἀντώνιος, οὐχ οὕτω μὲν εὐδόκιμος ἐν τοῖς πολιτικοῖς ἀνὴρ οὐδὲ λαμπρὸς, εὐγνώμων δὲ καὶ χρηστός, ἄλλως τε καὶ πρὸς τὰς μεταδόσεις ἐλευθέριος, ὡς ἀφ’ ἑνὸς ἂν τις ἔργου καταμάθοι. κεκτημένος γὰρ οὐ πολλὰ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τῇ φιλανθρωπία χρησθαι κωλυόμενος ὑπὸ τῆς γυναικός, ἐπεὶ τις ἀφίκετο τῶν συνήθων πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀργυρίου δεόμενος, ἀργύριον μὲν οὐκ εἶχε, παιδαρίῳ δὲ προσέταξεν εἰς ἀργυροῦν σκύφον ὕδωρ ἐμβαλόντι κομίσαι· καὶ κομίσαντος, ὡς ξύρεσθαι μέλλων κατέβρεχε τὰ γένηα. τοῦ δὲ παιδαρίου καθ’ ἐτέραν πρόφασιν ἐκποδῶν γενομένου, τὸν μὲν σκύφον ἔδωκε τῷ φίλῳ χρησθαι κελεύσας, ζητήσεως δὲ πολλῆς ἐν τοῖς οἰκέταις οὔσης ὁρῶν χαλεπαίνουσαν τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ βουλομένην καθ’ ἕκαστον ἐξετάζειν ὠμολόγησε, συγγνώμην ἔχειν δεηθείς.

His father was Antonius surnamed Creticus, a man of no great repute in public life, nor illustrious, but kindly and honest, and particularly a liberal giver, as one may see from a single instance. He had not much property himself, and therefore was prevented by his wife from indulging his kindly feelings. When, accordingly, one of his intimates came to him with a request for money, money he had not, but he ordered a young slave to put water into a silver bowl and bring it to him, and when it was brought, he moistened his chin, as though about to shave. The slave was then sent away on another errand

improvised for the occasion, whereupon Antonius gave the bowl to his friend and bade him dispose of it. Later, when a careful search for it was made for it among the slaves, seeing that his wife was angry and proposed to put them to the torture one by one, Antonius confessed what he had done, and by his entreaties gained her pardon.

The character of Antony's parents is encapsulated in one story. Raised by a father with good instincts, yet lacking the necessary means to engage in such pursuits, he is checked by a mother who like the ideal Roman matron runs a tight ship in the household. This accords with later stories about Julia during the triumviral period: that she was unafraid to use force to obtain the outcome she desired. Plutarch also illuminates an ideology of domestic relations in which women's authority in the house allowed them to showcase their qualities regardless of the qualities of their husbands. While her husband may have been lacking proper qualities, Julia continued to display proper behavior and ideal matronly qualities. Additionally, this passage demonstrates that she is keenly aware of the importance of the *patrimonium* to her sons' careers and will not allow her husband to waste any of it.

Plutarch continues to describe Julia following this story (*Vit. Ant. 2*): ἦν δὲ αὐτῷ γυνὴ Ἰουλία τοῦ Καισάρων οἴκου, ταῖς ἀρίσταις τότε καὶ σωφρονεστάταις ἐνάμιλλος “His wife was Julia, of the house of the Caesars, and she could vie with the noblest and most discreet women of her time.” The connection to Julius Caesar's family (Plutarch is probably also referencing the imperial family here) is probably one of the reasons that Plutarch praises her, as well as her connections as an elite woman. The use of the word ἐνάμιλλος meaning “engaged in an equal contest with” opens a quasi-athletic metaphor. The adjectives ἀρίσταις and σωφρονεστάταις situate Julia firmly within Greek ideas of feminine virtue. The stories that circulated about Julia emphasized her ability as an elite matron of the time. As someone connected to Mark Antony, there was potential for his legacy to cast a shadow over her, yet like Octavia, also cast as an ideal Roman matron, her connection to the Julian clan and her actions on behalf of her family during

the triumviral period cast her as the ideal mother figure whose values and world view Antony ultimately strayed from. She acts like the ideal Roman mother constantly, yet Antony does not act as the ideal Roman man. The character of Antony's mother casts him as an even more disreputable figure.

Cicero uses Julia in his invective against Antony in order to capture him in the worst light possible. Antony's disordered relations with women is part of this invective. In a highly emotional passage he describes Antony's behavior in 49 BCE (*Philippics* 2.58):

vehebatur in essedo tribunus plebis; lictores laureati antecedeabant, inter quos aperta lectica mima portabatur, quam ex oppidis municipales homines honesti, obviam necessario prodeuntes, non noto illo et mimico nomine, sed Volumniam consalutabant. sequebatur raeda cum lenonibus, comites nequissimi; reiecta mater amicam impuri filii tamquam nurum sequebatur. O miserae mulieris fecunditatem calamitosam! Horum flagitiorum iste vestigiis omnia municipia, praefecturas, colonias, totam denique Italiam impressit.

The tribune of the people was borne along in a chariot, lictors crowned with laurel preceded him; among whom, on an open litter, was carried an actress; whom honorable men, citizens of the different municipalities, coming out from their towns under compulsion to meet him, saluted not by the name by which she was well known on the stage, but by that of Volumnia. A car followed full of pimps; then a lot of debauched companions; and then his mother, utterly neglected, followed the mistress of her profligate son, as if she had been her daughter-in-law. O the disastrous fecundity of that miserable woman! With the marks of such wickedness as this did that fellow stamp every municipality, and prefecture, and colony, and, in short, the whole of Italy.

Alison Keith (2011: 43) notes that Cicero's portrayal of Antony embeds in the fraying bonds of the late Republic, as he assumes the illegitimate authority of the lictors under the illegitimate authority of Julius Caesar. Volumnia Cytheris' profession as a mime actress fits perfectly within this scene of gaudy, distasteful performance. The image of his mother following behind, completely out of place with her status, cements Antony's disgraceful conduct. Cicero goes even further by exclaiming that it would have been better had Julia not had Antony at all, thereby completely inverting the traditional moral framework around fertility and the benefits that having

children brings to each *familia*.⁸¹ As invective, the contrast between Volumnia Cytheris and Julia draws upon moral frameworks to underline how completely Antony was corrupted in his personal and therefore public morality. The passage also seems to indicate that Antony and his mother did have a close bond that he corrupted with his behavior. The juxtaposition between Julia, described in our sources as a formidable *matrona*, and the profligate behavior of Antony underscores even further his deviance from the traditional Roman moral framework of politician and statesmen. Even with the ideal mother shaping him, he cannot stop his reprehensible behavior.⁸²

Julia, who had already seen and experienced the political violence of 63 BCE, suddenly found herself at the center of a perilous situation yet again: her brother, Lucius Julius Caesar had wound up on the list of the proscribed. Appian, Cassius Dio, and Plutarch all report that the triumvirs traded close personal associates when creating the lists (Appian 4.12):

πρῶτος δ' ἦν ἐν τοῖς προγράφοισι Λέπιδος, καὶ πρῶτος ἐν τοῖς προγραφομένοις ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ Λεπίδου Παῦλος, καὶ δεύτερος ἦν τῶν προγραφόντων Ἀντώνιος καὶ δεύτερος τῶν προγραφομένων ὁ θεῖος ὁ Ἀντωνίου Λεύκιος, οἶδε μὲν, ὅτι πρῶτοι πολεμίους αὐτοὺς ἐψηφίσαντο. τρίτος δὲ καὶ τέταρτος ἦν τῶν ἐν ἑτέρῳ πίνακι προκειμένων ἐς τὸ μέλλον ὑπάτων Πλάγκου μὲν ὁ ἀδελφὸς Πλώτιος, Ἀσινίου δὲ ὁ πενθερὸς Κοῖντιος. καὶ οὐ κατ' ἀξίωσιν ἄρα μόνην οἶδε τῶν ἄλλων προύκειντο μᾶλλον ἢ ἐς θάμβος καὶ δυσελεπιστίαν, μηδένα ῥύσεσθαί τινα προσδοκᾶν. ἦν δὲ καὶ Θωράνιος ἐν τοῖς προγεγραμμένοις, λεγόμενος ὑπὸ τινῶν ἐπιτροπεῦσαι Καίσαρος.

“Lepidus was the first to begin the work of proscription, and his brother Paulus was the first on the list of the proscribed. Antony came next, and the second name on the list was that of his uncle, Lucius Caesar. These two men had been the first to vote Lepidus and Antony public enemies. The third and fourth victims were relatives of the consuls-elect for the coming year, namely, Plotius, the brother of Plancus, and Quintus, the father-in-law of Asinius. These four were placed at the

⁸¹ See Dixon (1988: Chapter 4) for an overview of the encouragement of fertility in Roman society. Earlier we saw Veturia express a similar sentiment when imploring Coriolanus to not invade Rome.

⁸² The Romans believed there were traits shared across generations. See Treggiari 2003 for this idea in Cicero.

head of the list, not only on account of their dignity as to produce terror and despair, so that none of the proscribed might hope to escape. Among the proscribed was Thoranius, who was said by some to have been a tutor of Octavius.”

Appian’s pessimistic reading emphasizes that the triumvirs goals for the proscription were base and designed to induce terror. Lucius Caesar had at first tried to conciliate between the Senatorial faction and Antony’s faction without success. After Mutina, he had been among the first to vote Antony a public enemy. He had obviously calculated via his connections that the senatorial order would be able to rein in the triumvirs, which under ordinary circumstances may have been possible. Given the division in Rome, however, and the lack of belief that the order would be willing to take casualties in order to defeat the triumvirs, the faction fell apart. Lucius Caesar’s sister, however, was able to come to his rescue.

Julia would not allow the soldiers to kill her brother. And the soldiers would not kill the mother of a triumvir. Lucius Caesar’s life was preserved. Julia used her position as mother to her advantage. Plutarch describes the scene (*Vit. Ant.* 20.3): “His uncle, Lucius Caesar, being sought for and pursued, took refuge with his sister. She, when the executioners were at hand and trying to force their way into her chamber, stood in the doorway, spread out her arms, and cried repeatedly: ‘Ye shall not slay Lucius Caesar unless ye first slay me, the mother of your emperor.’ By such behavior, then, she got her brother out of the way and saved his life.”

Appian describes an even more dramatic scene with Julia publicly upbraiding Antony (4.37):

Λεύκιον δέ, τὸν Ἀντωνίου θεῖον, ἢ Ἀντωνίου μήτηρ ἀδελφὸν ὄντα εἶχεν οὐδ’ ἐπικρύπτουσα, αἰδουμένων ἐς πολὺ καὶ τήνδε τῶν λοχαγῶν ὡς μητέρα αὐτοκράτορος. βιαζομένων δ’ ὕστερον ἐξέθορεν ἐς τὴν ἀγορὰν καὶ προκαθημένῳ τῷ Ἀντωνίῳ μετὰ τῶν συνάρχων ἔφη: ‘ἐμαυτὴν, ᾧ αὐτοκράτορ, μηνύω σοι Λεύκιον ὑποδεδέχθαι τε καὶ ἔχειν ἔτι καὶ ἔξειν, ἕως ἂν ἡμᾶς ὁμοῦ κατακάνης: τὰ γὰρ ὅμοια καὶ τοῖς ὑποδεδεγμένοις ἐπικεκήρυκται.’ ὁ δὲ αὐτὴν ἐπιμεμψάμενος ὡς ἀδελφὴν μὲν ἀγαθὴν, μητέρα δὲ οὐκ εὐγνώμονα ‘οὐ γὰρ νῦν χρῆναι περισφάζειν Λεύκιον, ἀλλὰ κωλύειν. ὅτε σου τὸν υἱὸν εἶναι πολέμιον ἐψηφίζετο, παρεσκεύασεν ὅμως Πλάγκον ὑπατεύοντα κάθοδον τῷ Λευκίῳ ψηφίσασθαι.

The mother of Antony gave shelter to her brother Lucius, Antony's uncle, without concealment, and the centurions had respect for her for a long time as the mother of a triumvir. When, later, they attempted to take him by force, she hurried into the forum where Antony was seated with his colleagues, and exclaimed, "I denounce myself to you, triumvir, for having received Lucius under my roof and for still keeping him, and I shall keep him till you kill us both together, for it is decreed that those who give shelter shall suffer the same punishment." Antony reproached her for being an unreasonable mother, although a good sister, saying that she ought to have prevented Lucius in the first place from voting her son a public enemy instead of seeking to save him now. Nevertheless, he procured from the consul Plancus a decree restoring Lucius to citizenship."

In both scenarios, Julia knows that she has leverage in this situation as the mother of a triumvir. Her intervention demonstrates that although legal and political force dictated that the soldiers kill her along with Lucius, *aidos* (αἰδοῦμένων ἐς πολὺ), a buzzword in Greek ethics, held them back for a long time. Appian thus shows the relational structures that governed Roman society which continued to be operational during this period. The fact that the soldiers grew impatient and eventually did try to kill Lucius demonstrates Appian's point about the soldiers committing atrocities during this period. Julia's subsequent foray to the forum reflects an earlier proscription narrative discussed in Chapter 1 in which a wife informs on herself to the magistrates after her husband's murder. Here, Julia embarrasses Antony in front of the other magistrates and dares him to do anything about it, knowing that harming his mother is beyond the pale for Romans. Julia's remarks include rather stylized language including the verb κατακάνης, one which is usually reserved for tragedy. The use of the verb highlights the performative aspect of Julia's remarks and heightens the drama of the moment. Antony's response details the dueling familial bonds that Julia had to grapple with during this period as sister to Lucius and as mother to Antony. Antony judges her as a good sister but an inconsiderate mother (οὐκ εὐγνώμονα). The choice of the adjective implies that Antony judges her as not having thought through her obligations to him and not having tried to avoid the conflict in the first place. Earlier in Appian's

narrative, however, Julia does canvas supporters in 43 BCE for her son (*B Civ.* 3.51): Ἀντωνίου δὲ ἡ μήτηρ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ καὶ παῖς ἔτι μειράκιον οἷ τε ἄλλοι οἰκεῖοι καὶ φίλοι δι' ὅλης τῆς νυκτὸς ἐς τὰς τῶν δυνατῶν οἰκίας διέθεον ἰκετεύοντες καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν ἐς τὸ βουλευτήριον ἰόντας ἠνώγλουν “The mother, the wife, and the son of Antony (who was still a young man), and his other relatives and friends went around the whole night visiting the houses of influential men and beseeching them.” Julia did perform as the ideal grieving mother, in the style of a quasi Veturia, in order to change public sentiment for Antony. The dance between Julia and Antony reveals how the unspoken norms around elite mothers and their relations to their sons operated in this period. Julia’s success demonstrates that women could harness their authority to save their relatives.

As seen with Mucia above, the year 39 BCE was a year of reshuffling for the Triumvirate. Julia, like Mucia, was involved in diplomacy during this time. Plutarch mentions that Julia traveled to Sextus Pompey’s base on Sicily with the likely intention of creating an alliance between the two. The passage is revealing for its articulation of the ideology of female involvement in triumviral politics. Plutarch notes (*Vit. Ant.* 32.1): “Now, Sextus Pompeius was holding Sicily, was ravaging Italy, and, with his numerous piratical ships under the command of Menas the corsair and Menecrates, had made the sea unsafe for sailors. But he was thought to be kindly disposed to Antony, since he had given refuge to Antony's mother when she fled from Rome with Fulvia, and so it was decided to make terms with him.” Plutarch interprets Julia’s visit to Sextus Pompey as proof that the two sides are close to making agreements with each other. At the time, it is likely that the mother of a triumvir traveling to another dynast meant that diplomatic negotiations were close to taking shape, and Julia must have known that doing so would start conversations about her presence there. A mother would likely not want there to be

unfounded rumors of this kind, so it is likely that Julia traveled there knowing that people would think she was trying to make terms and probably actively trying to do so. Like we saw above with Mucia, mothers were crucially important in diplomatic situations in the triumviral period, because the bond between mother and son still existed and functioned and elite women's ability to negotiate continued unabated. The fact that Julia was not a *legatus* was what allowed her to perform this role, as her unofficial status granted her the ability to travel safely to the camp and to speak with Sextus Pompey without any threat of violence against her. Following Julia's visit, Plutarch states that the men negotiated at Misenum. Julia's connections and status as an elite woman created the space necessary for the negotiations at Misenum, according to Plutarch.

Cassius Dio also mentions Julia's travels to Sicily and ability to negotiate with Sextus Pompey (48.15.1-2): Ἐκείνης δ' οὖν ἐπὶ τε Γναίου Καλουίνου δεύτερον καὶ ἐπ' Ἀσινίου Πωλίωνος ὑπάτων ἀλούσης καὶ ἄλλα τὰ ἐν τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ, τὰ μὲν βία τὰ δὲ ἐθελοντί, τῷ Καίσαρι προσεχώρησε· καὶ διὰ τοῦθ' ἦ τε Φουλουία πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα μετὰ τῶν Στέκνων ἀπέδρα, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν πρώτων συχνοὶ οἱ μὲν πρὸς ἐκεῖνον οἱ δὲ καὶ πρὸς τὸν Σέξτον ἐς τὴν Σικελίαν ἀπεχώρησαν. ἦ τε Ἰουλία ἢ τῶν Ἀντωνίων μήτηρ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἐνταῦθα ἦλθε, καὶ πάνυ φιλικῶς ὑπὸ τοῦ Σέξτου ὑπεδέχθη, ἔπειτα δὲ πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν τὸν Μάρκον ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐπέμφθη, λόγους τέ οἱ ὑπὲρ φιλίας καὶ πρέσβεις ἄγουσα. ("After the capture of Perugia in the consulship of Gnaeus Calvinus (who was serving for the second time) and Asinius Pollio, the other places in Italy also went over to Caesar, partly as the result of force and partly of their own accord. For this reason Fulvia fled with her children to her husband, and many of the foremost men made their way partly to him and partly to Sextus in Sicily. Julia, the mother of the Antonii, went there at first and was received by Sextus with extreme kindness; later she was sent by him to her son Marcus, carrying proposals of friendship to him and taking along envoys." The detail that Cassius Dio

includes here that Plutarch does not of Julia leading envoys reveals details about how dynasts of the period thought about diplomacy. The act of Julia leading envoys is an argument via soft power from Sextus Pompey to Antony to not harm his envoys. While envoys in the ancient world had immunity and were not to be assassinated by the other party, the triumviral period saw the increase in dynasts rather than states. Along with that, the traditional rules of diplomacy changed so that dynasts could not necessarily trust other dynasts to respect the rules that pertained to states. Being accompanied by Julia was a gesture from Pompey designed to show goodwill and persuade Antony of his willingness to make terms with him in a unprecedented diplomatic landscape.

Julia's background as a member of the Julian clan allowed to her be involved with negotiations with Octavian as well. Appian describes Julia as a key factor in the lead up to the pact of Brundisium which reconciled Octavian and Antony after the Perusine War. Appian emphasizes that the soldiers were eagerly awaiting a peace agreement between the two sides once they discovered that Cocceius Nerva was acting as a negotiator.⁸³ Yet even he could not convince Octavian to write something to Antony (5.63):

Οὕτω καθομιλῶν τὸν Καίσαρα ὁ Κοκκήσιος ἐκείνην τε τὴν ἡμέραν ἐξενίζετο παρ' αὐτῶ καὶ ἐδεῖτο ἐπιστεῖλαι τι τῷ Ἀντωνίῳ, νεώτερον ὄντα πρεσβυτέρῳ. ὁ δὲ πολεμοῦντι μὲν ἔτι οὐκ ἔφη γράψαι· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκείνον· μέμψεσθαι δ' αὐτοῦ τῇ μητρὶ, ὅτι συγγενῆς οὐσα καὶ προτιμηθεῖσα ἐκ πάντων ὑφ' αὐτοῦ, φύγοι τὴν Ἰταλίαν καθάπερ οὐ τευξομένη πάντων ὡς παρ' υἱοῦ. 268^ωδε μὲν καὶ ὁ Καῖσαρ ἐτέχναζε καὶ ἐπέστελλε τῇ Ἰουλίᾳ. ἐξιώντι δὲ τοῦ στρατοπέδου τῷ Κοκκηίῳ πολλοὶ τῶν ταξίαρχων τὴν γνώμην ἐξέφερον τοῦ στρατοῦ. ὁ δὲ καὶ ἄλλα καὶ τότε αὐτὸ τῷ Ἀντωνίῳ μετέφερον, ἵνα εἰδείη πολεμήσοντασ οὐ συντιθεμένῳ. συνεβούλευεν οὖν Πομπήσιον μὲν ἐς Σικελίαν ἐξ ὧν ἐπόρθει μετακαλεῖν, Ἀηνόβαρβον δὲ ποι πέμπειν, ἕως αἱ συνθῆκαι γένοιτο. Οπαρακαλούσης δὲ καὶ τῆς μητρὸς ἐς ταῦτα τὸν Ἀντωνίον (γένει γὰρ ἦν ἐκ τῶν Ἰουλίῳν), ἠσχύνετο Ἀντωνίος, εἰ μὴ γενομένων τῶν συμβάσεων τὸν Πομπήσιον αἰθὶς ἐς συμμαχίαν καλοίη. τῆς δὲ μητρὸς οὐκ ἀπελιζούσης αὐτὰς ἔσεσθαι καὶ Κοκκηίου ἰσχυριζομένου τε περὶ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐλπίζομένου τι πλέον εἰδέναι, ὁ Ἀντωνίος ἐνεδίδου καὶ τὸν Πομπήσιον

⁸³ See also sections 5.57 and 5.39 for the soldiers' attitudes toward peace.

ἀναχωρεῖν ἐκέλευεν ἐς Σικελίαν, ὡς ἐπιμελησόμενος τῶν συγκειμένων, καὶ Ἀηνόβαρβον ἔπεμπεν ἡγεῖσθαι Βιθυνίας.

Octavian said that he would not write to one who was still waging war against him, because Antony had not written to him, but that he would make complaint to Antony's mother, because, although a relative and held in the highest honor by Octavian, she had fled from Italy, as though she could not have obtained everything from him as from her own son. This was his device also for opening a correspondence by writing to Julia. As Cocceius was going away from the camp many of the higher officers advised him of the purpose of the army, and he communicated this and other things he had learned to Antony, so that he might know that they would fight against him because he did not come to an agreement. So he advised Antony that Pompeius should be called back from his ravaging to Sicily, and that Ahenobarbus should be sent somewhither until the treaty of peace should be made. Antony's mother besought him to the same purpose, for she belonged to the Julian clan. Antony apprehended that if the negotiations should fail he would be put to the shame of calling on Pompeius for assistance again, but his mother encouraged him to believe that they would not fail, and Cocceius informed her, intimating that he knew more than he had told. So Antony yielded, and ordered Pompeius back to Sicily, implying that he would take care of their mutual concerns, and sent Ahenobarbus away as governor of Bithynia.

Julia emerges as a buffer for Antony and Octavian both to rely upon when negotiations became thorny. For Octavian, diplomatic rapprochement with Antony would entail a loss of face, but communicating with Julia allows him to open a back channel with someone with whom he does not have direct conflict due to her exclusion from politics. Writing to a relative allows him to bring about a diplomatic solution without any challenge to his authority. We see that the obligations owed to family members opens up avenues for diplomacy in this period and that Julia's presence allowed for a diplomatic solution.

The sources are silent regarding Julia following this point, yet her status as a member of the Julian clan must have held some currency with Octavian. Her death, along with those of Mucia and Servilia, would have marked the end of an era, and her actions as represented in the sources demonstrate how writers of the 2nd c. CE interpreted women's actions of the period. Her connections as a member of the Julian clan and marriages with other members of the elite meant that she could draw upon networks of other elites in order to engage in untraditional diplomacy,

mandated by the times. Her actions demonstrate that mothers were a powerful force in triumviral diplomacy due to the fact that the bonds that existed between mothers and sons and between elite women and their connections continued during this time period.

2.10 Conclusions

The Roman mother was a figure that could be called upon in Roman literature during times of crisis, and she emerges in literature about the triumviral period as a figure able to create connections and engage successfully in diplomacy because of her exclusion from official political life. The complex familial relations that shaped the Roman Republic could still be carried out by Roman women, as Servilia, Mucia, and Julia demonstrate. As mothers of those that were defeated during the period, they demonstrate both the strengths and limitations of this kind of diplomacy. They forged connections and agreements, yet could go no further than that because of their exclusion from politics. What we see as distinct in this period from elite mothers is their engagement within a traditional system in a very untraditional time. The rules of diplomacy were shifting as dynasts dealt with each other rather than other states. Elite mothers responded by engaging in this new type of diplomacy and still working to promote the interests of their sons, as was traditional during the Roman Republic. In earlier myths about the Republic, matrons could and did intervene when necessary, but their roles took on new life during the triumviral period as diplomacy could not be conducted in the traditional ways. Elite mothers could act as the conduit between dynasts and between traditional modes of elite connections. Mothers could also mediate between different members of their families as Julia did and capitalize on the unspoken rules that governed Roman morality, such as not killing one's mother. Mothers emerge as figures who could and did influence the outcomes of their sons' political

machinations. The triumviral period involved a reimagination of traditional roles that could be harnessed in order to engage in non-traditional diplomatic activities.

Chapter 3

***Consciae*: Enslaved Women and Freedwomen in the Triumviral Period**

The institutional framework of Roman slavery was not left untouched by the violence and upheaval of the triumviral period. Much like the anxiety we have seen enmeshed with elite, free women, Roman men had similar and singular anxieties about the enslaved members of their households, and enslaved women in particular had to contend with the anxieties of both the male and female head of household (*materfamilias*). As a social institution, Roman slavery involved a complicated network of relationships, characterized by ever-shifting power dynamics and social bonds.⁸⁴ Fitzgerald (2000:11) describes the “peculiar position” and “ambiguous status” of the enslaved as both members of the *familia* and yet at the same time legally and socially excluded from Roman society, as their lack of bodily integrity and person freedom reinforced.⁸⁵ The common practice of manumission made the status of the enslaved one that could be changed, with the status of freedman bringing its own set of preoccupations for the elite male authors. There was a constant tension between the status of the enslaved as being at times confidant and advisor and yet also subordinate and never to be completely trusted.

It is no surprise, therefore, that enslaved men and women were a key locus of anxiety during the triumviral period, as they held the option to either help their enslaver or betray them. A similar anxiety is expressed about freedpeople during this period, as they were expected to continue to promote the interests of their former enslaver, yet the overall discourse paints a

⁸⁴ Numerous studies on Roman enslavement have been published in recent years. Bradley (1992) and Joshel (2005) provide overviews of the experience of being enslaved and the ideology of enslavement in Roman society. Fitzgerald (2000) provides an overview of slavery in the Roman literary imagination.

⁸⁵ Subject to torture, beatings, and brandings, the markings on enslaved people’s bodies were a theme explored in Roman literature. Fitzgerald (2000) chapter 2 remarks upon this anxiety in Roman authors.

picture of freedpeople as fickle and disloyal. Enslaved women, as I will argue in this chapter, due to their gender and status uniquely faced the perils of this period as they wound their ways through the complex relationships and obligations in their lives. The anxieties present in the sources demonstrate how these women faced the doubly stigmatization of being both female and enslaved.

The experience of enslaved women during the triumviral period remains difficult to access, because few sources give us information about their actions during the period of proscriptions. A few references in Valerius Maximus and Appian make clear that enslaved women could be crucial partners to the wives of the proscribed or could be the one to betray the husband, as we will see. Arguably, the knowledge that the usual checks on the actions of freedwomen and enslaved women did not exist during the crisis leads to this intense anxiety in the sources about their normally obfuscated feelings toward their enslavers. The discourse around enslaved women in the few stories that survive tell us that the anxieties around enslavement that existed in Roman society were heightened during the triumviral period, as Appian mentions that enslavers feared those they enslaved and that even well-disposed enslaved people feared to intervene (ὁ δὲ πιστὸς ἢ εὖνους ἐδεδίει βοηθεῖν ἢ κρύπτειν ἢ συνειδέναί δι' ὁμοιότητα τῶν ἐπιτιμίων, “Those who remained faithful and well-disposed were afraid to help or hide or abet the victims in view of their liability to the same penalties” 4.14). The relationship, however, that this chapter focus upon is that between *domina* and *ancilla*, one which Roman authors do not explore as much as that between *dominus* and *servus*.⁸⁶ A gendered examination of the relationships between the enslavers and the enslaved demonstrates that enslaved women

⁸⁶ Many studies exist on the relationship between the *dominus* and *servus* such as Joshel (2005) and Bradley (1992). Elite Roman men debate enslaved women’s sexuality, but do not give us information about the *domina* and *ancilla* unless it pertains to a specific anxiety they had.

navigated different, continually-evolving sets of expectations and perils when dealing with both a proscribed enslaver and with the female head of household.⁸⁷

The potential choices of enslaved women were far more circumscribed than those of free women, as their activity and movement was controlled by their enslavers.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the sources indicate that enslaved women successfully helped their female head of households, sometimes even traveling outside of Rome with them, as is the case below with the *ancilla* who traveled with Turia. There is a throughline of anxiety that runs through these stories, since proscribed men relied upon free women who in turn relied upon their enslaved women in order to be rescued. This delineation of the social networks that protected elite men emphasizes that ties between free and enslaved women could be the difference between life and death. The relationship between free and enslaved women is one that authors such as Juvenal and Ovid ridicule, as being frivolous and inappropriate as we will see below. Yet at the same time in other authors the relationship between the female head of household and the enslaved women under their control reinforces the virtues that the authors ascribe to the wives, since their unusual virtue is asserted by the fact that their enslaved women are loyal to them. In this chapter, I argue that the discourse surrounding enslaved women, as preserved in the extant sources, hints toward both the centrality of enslaved women at the same time as it effaces their presence by focusing instead upon the actions of free men. This relative lack of attention to enslaved women accords with Appian's pronouncement that he will focus upon the most remarkable of the stories that he

⁸⁷ Juvenal and Martial both joke about *dominae* who have sex with enslaved men, but this must have been a fairly uncommon practice, as women faced severe legal punishments for doing so (Fitzgerald 2000: 52).

⁸⁸ See Joshel (2013) for an analysis of the ways in which enslavers attempted to control enslaved people's movements and their possible strategies of resistance to this.

encountered, especially those with twists of fate (*B Civ.* 4.15).⁸⁹ Valerius Maximus and Appian both include certain stories with enslaved men and women in order to comment on the anxieties and concerns of freeborn men and women, yet by probing the anxieties we will also see some of the strategies that enslaved women and freedwomen employed that give a glimpse of their agency within a system that granted them little personal choice or rights outside of a crisis situation.

3.1 The Ideal Enslaved Man and Woman in the Elite Roman Male's Imagination

Before investigating the stories of the enslaved in the triumviral period, an examination of the ideal enslaved man or woman will be illustrative in understanding the anxieties of Roman elite men and the moral questions they probed using discussion of enslavement. In Roman thought, the household was a mini-state, with the *paterfamilias* as ruler and the other members of his household subordinates.⁹⁰ The female head of household (*materfamilias*) still held powerful sway over her family members, although she did not have official legal authority vested in her as the *paterfamilias* did under the social rules of *patria potestas*. The treatment of the enslaved women associated with the *materfamilias* could and did reflect back on the *paterfamilias*. An illustrative example is found within the story of the rape of Lucretia, who is found with her *ancillae* weaving into the early hours of the morning (1.57): *pergunt inde Collatiam, ubi*

⁸⁹ ὧν τὰ λαμπρὰ καὶ τὰ χεῖρω γενόμενα ἐν μνήμῃ τε μᾶλλον ὄντα, ὅτι καὶ τελευταῖα γέγονεν, ἐπελεύσομαι νῦν, οὐ πάντα (οὐ γὰρ ἀξιαφήγητον ἀναίρεσις ἀπλή καὶ φυγὴ ἢ τῶν τριῶν ἀνδρῶν τισι συγγόντων ὕστερον ἐπάνοδος ἢ ἐπανελθόντων ἀφανῆς καταβίωσις), ἀλλ' ὅσα παραλογώτατα ὄντα μάλιστα ἂν ἐκπλήξῃ καὶ πιστεύειν ποιήσῃ τοῖς προλεγόμενοις. I will now describe the most brilliant and the worst of these events, which have remained particularly memorable because they were the last. I will not be dealing with everything—for it is not worth recording mere killing, or exile, or the later return to Rome of some pardoned by the triumvirs, or their unexceptional life after returning—but only the most extraordinary things which would cause particular astonishment and give credibility to what I have said before.

⁹⁰ Fitzgerald (2000) chapter 3 examines the tensions that this formulation entailed. Seneca, for example, does use *domus* to include enslaved people of the household in *De Ira* 3.35.1.

Lucretiam haudquaquam 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. (“Then they proceed to Collatia, where they find Lucretia hardly like the regal daughters-in-law, whom they had seen wearing away the time in banqueting and luxury with their agemates, but late at night given over to wool making sitting in the middle of the house among enslaved girls working by lamplight”).⁹¹ As Katherine Huemoeller (2023) has noted, Lucretia’s control over her *ancillae* further reinforces her status as a paragon of female virtue and places her in opposition to the other women who ignore their duties to spend time with each other drinking. Lucretia takes seriously her duties as a *matrona* who should be involved in domestic affairs. This aspect of Lucretia’s character demonstrates how free women were expected to display their character via their relationships with enslaved women. This treatment, in turn, demonstrated that the male head of household had proper control of the *domus*.

The idea that moral character is revealed through the treatment and management of enslaved people is found in other texts, mainly focusing upon male enslavers. Among the Roman elites, being an ideal enslaver was one way in which other elite could read each other’s character. In Letter 47, Seneca expands upon this idea, noting that rather than simply being *servi* they are human beings, housemates, and humble friends (47.1). The letter begins: *Libenter ex iis qui a te veniunt cognovi familiariter te cum servis tuis vivere: hoc prudentiam tuam, hoc eruditionem decet. 'Servi sunt.' Immo homines. 'Servi sunt.' Immo contubernales. 'Servi sunt.' Immo humiles amici. 'Servi sunt.' Immo conservi, si cogitaveris tantundem in utrosque licere fortunae.* (“Gladly I have learned from those who come from you that you live familiarly with your slaves: This befits your prudence, this befits your learning. ‘They are slaves.’ But rather they are human

⁹¹ Translation my own.

beings. ‘They are slaves’ but rather they are housemates. ‘They are slaves’ but rather they are low friends. ‘They are slaves.’ but rather fellow slaves, if you will have considered that it is permitted just as much to fortune among both”). Seneca does not write this without self-serving reasons, for he goes on to say that in treating slaves well they will be more likely to look out for their enslavers’ interests if they face torture, as the enslaved in the past did (*in conviviiis loquebantur, sed in tormentis tacebant*. 47.4). The letter repudiates the saying that enslaved people are always potential enemies, and Seneca claims that elite conduct can make them so (47.5): *Deinde eiusdem arrogantiae proverbium iactatur, totidem hostes esse quot servos: non habemus illos hostes sed facimus*. (“Next the proverb of the very same arrogance is thrown out, that there are as many enemies as there are slaves: we do not have them as enemies but we make them enemies”). Seneca then claims that even freeborn men are slaves to something (47.17), another reason which justifies the importance of avoiding the use of extreme punishments on the enslaved. For Seneca, the mistreatment of the enslaved reflected back on the bad moral character of the enslaver.⁹²

Pliny, coming from the opposing side of this discourse, in a letter on the murder of a cruel *dominus* by his *servi* notes that even those who are “good” need to be on the watch (3.14): *Vides quot periculis quot contumeliis quot ludibriis simus obnoxii; nec est quod quisquam possit esse securus, quia sit remissus et mitis; non enim iudicio domini sed scelere perimuntur*. (“There you see the dangers, outrages and insults to which we are exposed. No master can feel safe because he is kind and considerate; for it is their brutality, not their reasoning capacity, which leads slaves to murder masters”). For the Roman elite, then, there was a tension between

⁹² He expands on this in his letter (47.5) by saying that those who have enslaved men clean the food thrown on the floor during dinner parties or keep an enslaved man to have a sexual relationship with are mistreating them.

believing that personal behavior could impact how the enslaved behaved and the anxiety that the enslaved would never fully be loyal, even with the “best” *dominus*. This tension comes to the fore during the triumviral period, when at times the enslaved would randomly betray their enslavers out of greed, according to Appian (4.14): οὐδὲν μὲν αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ στάσει δεδιότας σφίσι δὲ αὐτίκα γιγνομένους ἐξ οἰκείων πολεμίους, ἢ δι’ ὑπουλον ἔχθραν ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπικεκηρυγμένων σφίσι γερῶν ἢ διὰ τὸν ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις χρυσὸν τε καὶ ἄργυρον (“They were not afraid of them as they would be of men in war or civil discord, but because they had suddenly changed from being members of their households into enemies, either from some festering hatred, or under the influence of the advertised rewards, or because of the gold and silver in their houses”).

A brief overview of some of the more remarkable proscription narratives concerning free men and their enslaved men will demonstrate some of the particular concerns Romans had about the enslaved within the household and, in some cases, as freedmen. In Appian’s narratives, he mentions enslaved men betraying their enslavers, but does not provide reasons apart from greed and general discontent.⁹³ The fear of revolts from enslaved people permeated Roman society, and the stories that Appian includes reveal that anxiety. For example, he writes (4.26) Νάσων δὲ ὑπὸ ἐξελευθένου, παιδικῶν οἱ γενομένου, προδοθεὶς ἤρπασε παρά του τῶν στρατιωτῶν ξίφος καὶ τὸν προδότην μόνον ἀποκτείνας ἑαυτὸν τοῖς σφαγεῦσιν ὑπέσχε. (“Naso, having been betrayed by a freedman who had been a favorite of his, snatched a sword from one of the soldiers, and, having killed only the man who betrayed him, surrendered himself to the

⁹³ Arguably, the author is revealing his personal positioning within the discourse discussed above, namely that he adhered more to the idea that betrayal originated typically from the wicked motives of the enslaved in the absence of some inappropriate behavior on the part of the enslavers.

executioners”). The violent repercussions of the freedman’s betrayal ultimately demonstrate that the worldview of the Roman elite man was upheld, yet also underlines the importance of maintaining a proper relationship with the enslaved and former enslaved. The Greek παιδικῶν, the equivalent of *deliciae* in Latin, indicates that this freedman had a sexual relationship with Naso before he had been freed, adding a further layer of complexity to the relationship.⁹⁴ Appian does not pass judgement on Naso, and the betrayal seems to reflect Appian’s earlier point that every free man feared his subordinates during this period. In a similar tale the freedmen of Lucius betray him for money (4.26): Λεύκιος δὲ δύο πιστοτάτοις ἀπελευθέροις χρυσίον δοὺς ἐπὶ θάλασσαν ἦει, διαδράντων δὲ ἐκείνων ὑπέστρεψε καταγινώσκων τοῦ βίου καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἐμήνυσε τοῖς σφαγεῦσι. (“Lucius put money in the hands of his two most faithful freedmen and started for the sea-shore. They ran away with it, and he turned around, despairing of his life, and gave himself up to the murderers”). The implication here is that the expectation is that freedmen will be loyal to the patron because they have been freed and are still bound to their former enslaver. The fact that Appian labels them as the “most faithful” underlines that the appearance and reality of the formerly enslaved could be radically different. The choice to write the story, moreover, demonstrates that this behavior was not to be expected from freedmen.

Appian more often describes enslaved men who end up dying for their enslavers. For example, he describes an enslaved man who kills himself after seeing his enslaver killed (4.26): φιλοδέσποτος δὲ οἰκέτης τὸν κεκτημένον ἐπὶ λόφου ἐκάθισε καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ θάλασσαν ἦει μισθωσόμενος αὐτῷ σκάφος. ἐπανιῶν δὲ κτεινόμενόν τε εἶδε τὸν δεσπότην καὶ ἀποψύχοντος ἤδη μέγα βοῶν ‘ἐπίμεινον ἐς βραχὺ, ὦ δέσποτα,’ εἶπε καὶ κτείνει τὸν λοχαγὸν ἐμπεσῶν ἄφνω. μετὰ

⁹⁴ We will see below that the sexuality of enslaved people was of concern to elite male Roman authors.

δὲ ἐκεῖνον ἑαυτὸν ἐπαναιρῶν εἶπε τῷ δεσπότη: ‘παραμύθιον ἔχεις. (“A slave who was devoted to his master left the latter on a hill while he went to the sea-shore to hire a boat. On his return he saw his master being killed, and while he was breathing his last the slave called out to him, ‘Wait a moment, my master,’ whereupon he fell suddenly upon the centurion and slew him. Then he killed himself, saying to his master, ‘Now you have consolation.’”) The scene appears as though scripted by an elite man designed to assuage his anxiety about how his enslaved men would treat him. Killing a Roman centurion would be very difficult, so this story demonstrates the lengths that subordinates would go in order to save or at least console their enslavers. The stories speak to anxieties that elite Romans had about appearance versus reality and about the ramifications of the treatment of enslaved individuals and the question of whether the behavior of the enslaver could reliably influence the loyalty of the enslaved.

When discussing enslaved women, authors tend to focus upon the elements of the relationship that either related to a broader moral question or to an anxiety that they felt. One of the primary concerns of male authors with enslaved women was the question of whether or not to have sexual relations with them; poets such as Martial and Horace tap into elite male anxiety surrounding sex with enslaved women. Martial ranks a freeborn woman above an enslaved woman (3.33): *Ingenuam malo, sed si tamen illa negetur, / libertina mihi proxima condicio est: / extremo est ancilla loco: sed vincet utramque, / si facie, nobis haec erit ingenua.* (I prefer a freeborn woman, but nevertheless if that should be denied a freedwoman is the next proposition for me. An *ancilla* is in the last place. But if she will conquer each one in appearance, she will be freeborn to me).⁹⁵ The twist at the end of the poem, that physical appearance is the most important factor to the speaker, nevertheless, in the formulation of Perry (2007: 21) “reinforced a

⁹⁵ Translation is my own.

hierarchy of sexual value.” Horace demonstrates a similar anxiety about relative value of sexual partners in his poetry when he claims that he does not reject sex with enslaved women (1.2.114-119):

Num, tibi cum fauces urit sitis, aurea quaeris
pocula? Num esuriens fastidis omnia praeter
pavonem rhombumque? Tument tibi cum inguina, num, si
ancilla aut verna est praesto puer, impetus in quem
continuo fiat, malis tentigine rumpi?
Non ego: namque parabilem amo Venerem facilemque.

When thirst burns your throat, you do not seek a golden cup do you? Hungering you do not disdain everything except peacock and turbot? When your loins burn, you don't, if an *ancilla* or *verna* or a boy is at hand, toward whom an urge suddenly arises, prefer to be torn apart by your lust do you? Not I: For I love easy and at-hand sex.

The speaker of the *Satire* here pokes fun at elite Romans' desire for novelty and luxury by contrasting the blandness of enslaved women or boys with luxury food items. For the speaker, indulging desires is an acceptable reason for having sex, and there is no need for luxuriousness, much as those things may be sought after. Note that Horace here is in agreement with the view expressed in Martial that greater freedom of the female object equates to greater satisfaction for the male agent, all other factors being equal. The question of sex with enslaved women did not have a straightforward answer in Roman texts, as our sources use humor to diffuse the anxiety of the elite male toward sexual relations with enslaved women as a potential source of conflict within the household. Within the household, an enslaved woman had to navigate the reality that her sexual services might be called upon by the head of the household. As we will see below, the discourse elides the reality that funerary epitaphs tell us that free men did marry their formerly enslaved women and that this was one path to freedom.

3.2 Enslaved Women and the Female Head of Household

While we have seen that enslaved women would have had to navigate relationships with the *paterfamilias* and other men in the household, less is known about the relationship between enslaved women and the female head of household. Male authors express their own anxieties through their representations of enslaved women and the female head of household. In authors such as Juvenal and Ovid, writing in genres that are highly constructed and engage with Roman moral and legal systems both real and imagined, the relationship is characterized by a vain, frivolous *domina* and an *ancilla* that must yield to her whims. Nevertheless, both authors present elite Roman women in their texts as only just holding their wrath and ugly side beneath the surface – it is always boiling and on the brink of explosion unless the men in their lives act as they wish. The anger in both texts is then displaced onto their *ancillae*, who are described as having their bodies physically marked by anger.⁹⁶

In *Amores* 1.14, a poem discussing the merits of the *puella* not dyeing her hair, the speaker mentions that the *ornatrix* was never injured (16-18): *ornatrix tuto corpore semper erat; / ante meos saepe est oculos ornata nec umquam / bracchia derepta saucia fecit acu*. (“The maid doing your hair kept her skin whole; often in front of my eyes, no, never a pin tore your maid’s arm with a wound.”) While the poem is a highly constructed reality, in the imaginations of the Roman male author, out of unhappiness with her own appearance or with her relationships with her husband or lover a free woman could potentially behave very harshly with the enslaved woman who did her hair. Juvenal takes this suggestion of elite women abusing their enslaved women one step further and in an over-the-top scene describes a woman violently threatening an enslaved woman with a beating if her hair is not done to her liking. Earlier (6.480), this same

⁹⁶ The issue of “reading the body” for evidence of enslavement as Fitzgerald (2000: 33) analyzes in Latin literature is clear in proscription narratives about enslaved men and their enslavers.

woman kept slave-torturers (*tortoribus*) on annual retainer in order to displace her anger at her husband for not having sex with her the night before. I quote the passage in full here (6.491-507):

nuda umeros Psecas infelix nudisque mamillis.
'altior hic quare cincinnus?' taurea punit
continuo flexi crimen facinusque capilli.
quid Psecas admisit? quaenam est hic culpa puellae,
si tibi displicuit nasus tuus? altera laeuum 495
extendit pectitque comas et uoluit in orbem.
est in consilio materna admotaque lanis
emerita quae cessat acu; sententia prima
huius erit, post hanc aetate atque arte minores
censebunt, tamquam famae discrimen agatur 500
aut animae: tanta est quaerendi cura decoris.
tot premit ordinibus, tot adhuc conpagibus altum
aedificat caput: Andromachen a fronte uidebis,
post minor est, credas aliam. cedo si breue parui
sortita est lateris spatium breuiorque uidetur 505
uirgine Pygmaea nullis adiuta coturnis
et leuis erecta consurgit ad oscula planta.

Unlucky Psecas, the slave-girl, will be doing her mistress's hair,
With her own scalp torn, and her breasts and shoulders bared,
'Why's this curl sticking out?' and the bull-hide strap is ready
To exact a swift penalty for the foul crime of a twisted ringlet.
Why is it Psecas' fault? How can it be the slave-girl's fault if
Your own nose displeases you? Meanwhile another slave on
Her left, draws out and combs the hair, and coils it into a bun.
She'll seek the advice of a slave of her mother's promoted to
Spinning wool, after long service at hairpins; it's her opinion
That's sought first, then her inferiors in age and skill will give
Their views, as if their mistress's reputation were at stake, as if
Life itself were at stake: with so much anxiety, is beauty sought.
Her head is weighed down with layer on layer, tier after tier,
Piled high: it's an Andromache you'll see from the front, from
Behind someone altogether shorter. See, if you will, if she
Hasn't been granted, sadly, hips and thighs of meagre extent,
And, without high-heeled boots, is as short as a Pygmy maiden,
See is she hasn't to rise up on tiptoe to be able to plant a kiss.

The hyperbolic imagery is high at every point in this excerpt, yet, in the imagined reality of the speaker, elite women both viciously punished and relied upon their enslaved women for advice.

The dual reality that Juvenal points out here gestures toward a male anxiety about the proper role of women and the proper role of enslaved women. Juvenal criticizes elite women for their obsession with sex and beauty, which leads on the one hand to excessive violence, yet it also can lead to inappropriate reliance on enslaved women for advice, as Juvenal describes this elite woman as having enslaved women as part of her *concilium*, a word that would have made elite men think of their own *concilia* of *amici* of the same status. In these two brief examples, we can see that the relationship between enslaved women and enslaver was imagined by men to sometimes be very perilous based upon assumptions about insatiable female sexuality and lack of emotional self-control. We can also imagine that enslaved women with wounds from their enslavers would have appeared in the *Forum* and in other public places and that these marks could be ‘read’ as those resulting from anger over appearance.

Within these same genres, authors such as Ovid and Propertius also indicate that enslaved women could have influence over the *domina*, as, for example, acting as the go-between in affairs.⁹⁷ In Ovid’s poetry the speaker makes clear that although he may use words, there is violence that lies underneath the wheedling. In *Amores* 1.12 he begins by flattering Nape as an exceptional hairdresser for Corinna.⁹⁸

Colligere incertos et in ordine ponere crines
docta neque ancillas inter habenda Nape,
inque ministeriis furtivae cognita noctis
utilis et dandis ingeniosa notis
saepe venire ad me dubitantem hortata Corinnam,
saepe laboranti fida reperta mihi—

Skilled at gathering unruly hair and setting it in place
Nape’s not just an ordinary lady’s maid,
she’s known to be useful in the secret service

⁹⁷ See in Greek literature, the trope of the nurse in tragedy and Eurycleia in the *Odyssey*. See Karydas (1998) for an overview of female figures who have authority in Greek poetry.

⁹⁸ Pandey (2018) has noted the significance of hair and symbolic domination in Ovid.

of night: clever at carrying messages between us:
often exhorting a hesitant Corinna to come:
often faithfully laboring to find things out for me –
here take these wax tablets by hand to my lady
and be sure to avoid obstructions and delay!

In Ovid's formulation it is Nape's ability to move around and influence Corinna that help him in his quest for sex. The poem is a reminder that relationships between the free would often be mediated through enslaved people.

In Latin prose, there are certain episodes in which *ancillae* come to the rescue of the state. Macrobius preserves a story of the reason why enslaved women celebrate the festival of Juno Caprotina on July 7, which he connects to the Gallic sack of Rome in 390 BCE. The story draws upon many of the same tropes that are present in the triumviral period, such as the reversals characteristic of a city in crisis. I quote the passage in full here (*Saturnalia* 1.11.36-40):

Nonis Iuliis diem festum esse ancillarum tam vulgo notum est ut nec origo et causa celebritatis ignota sit. Iunoni enim Caprotinae die illo liberae pariter ancillaeque sacrificant sub arbore caprifico in memoriam benignae virtutis, quae in ancillarum animis pro conservatione publicae dignitatis apparuit. nam post urbem captam cum sedatus esset Gallicus motus, res publica vero esset ad tenue deducta, finitimi opportunitatem invadendi Romani nominis aucupati praefecerunt sibi Postumium Livium, Fidenatium dictatorem, qui mandatis ad senatum missis postulavit ut si vellent reliquias suae civitatis manere, matres familiae sibi et virgines dederentur. cumque patres essent in ancipiti deliberatione suspensi, ancilla nomine Tutela seu Philotis pollicita est se cum ceteris ancillis sub nomine dominarum ad hostes ituram, habituque matrum familias et virginum sumpto hostibus cum prosequentium lacrimis ad fidem doloris ingestae sunt. quae cum a Livio in castris distributae fuissent, viros plurimo vino provocaverunt, diem festum apud se esse simulantes. quibus soporatis ex arbore caprifico quae castris erat proxima signum Romanis dederunt. qui cum repentina incursione superassent, memor beneficii senatus omnes ancillas manu iussit emitti dotemque iis ex publico fecit et ornatum quo tunc erant usae gestare concessit

It is well known that the Nones of July is the festival of female slaves, and both the origin and the reason for the celebration are common knowledge. For on that day free women and female slaves both sacrifice to Juno Caprotina under a wild fig tree in commemoration of the generous spirit which was displayed by female slaves in preserving Rome's public honor. For, after the city had been captured and the Gallic onslaught had subsided, the state was reduced to such weakness

that her neighbors were on the watch for the chance to attack Rome; they appointed as their leader Postumius Livius, the chief magistrate of Fidenae, and he sent instructions to the senate demanding that, if they wished the remnants of their state to survive, they should hand over to him their married women and unmarried girls: when the senators were wavering in anxious debate, a female slave named Tutela, or Philotis, promised that she and the other slaves would go to the enemy under the names of their mistresses, and in the dress of married women and girls they were handed over to the enemy with the tears of those accompanying them as proof of their grief. When they had been allocated in the camp by Livius, they tempted the men with copious wine, pretending it was a festival day at Rome, and after making them drowsy they gave a signal to the Romans from a wild fig tree near the camp. These were victorious in their sudden attack, and the Senate, grateful for the service, ordered all the female slaves to be manumitted, gave them dowries from the treasury and permitted them to wear the type of dress they had assumed.

The story is reminiscent of free women's interventions at the beginnings of the Republic, such as Cloelia or the Sabine women, and the Senate recognizes that this behavior is uncharacteristic for their status. As we will see in the proscription narratives concerning enslaved people, one such tactic for heading off the executioners was for the enslaved person to pretend to be the *dominus*. The result of their actions indicates the scale of their achievements, as the Senate grants them not only manumission, but the ability to wear the garments of *matronae*, essentially offering them free status. Within the Roman framework, it was not outside of the imagination for enslaved women to act with bravery to save the state. Yet as is made clear from the story, the only time that this was deemed appropriate was during a crisis.

Additionally, *ancillae* appear as witnesses to events in historiography, such as in Tacitus' account of Agrippina's death when a single *ancilla* is present when the executioners arrive to murder Agrippina (*Ann.* 14.8): (*Anicetus villam statione circumdat refractaque ianua obvios servorum abripit, donec ad fores cubiculi veniret; cui pauci adstabant, ceteris terrore inrumpentium exterritis. Cubiculo modicum lumen inerat et ancillarum una, magis ac magis anxia Agrippina*) ("Anicetus surrounded her villa with pickets and, breaking down the entrance,

seized any slaves he encountered until he came to the doors of the bedroom, where a few still stood fast, the rest having been terrified away in terror of the onrushers. In the bedroom there was only a modest light and one of the maids, while Agrippina was more and more tense that no one, not even Agermus, arrived from her son”). Tacitus makes no other mention of this *ancilla* after Agrippina is murdered, presumably as he uses her as a witness to what had happened, but we can imagine that Agrippina would have had many in her retinue.

The literary sources emphasize that enslaved women occupied a space both at the center and on the margins of society. They were central in negotiating relationships between free individuals, as well as performing labor for free women. They had to manage relationships in the household with both the *dominus*, who might have expected sexual relations, as well as with the *domina*, who could take her anger out on them. In the triumviral period, enslaved women would have had to navigate a complex web of priorities and relationships with both the male heads of household and female heads of household, while considering their own moral and material interests.

3.3 Enslaved Women in the Triumviral Period

In two vignettes designed to show wives' fidelity to their husbands, Valerius Maximus notes that enslaved women were crucial for the success of the wives' plots. In the first, one enslaved girl is told about the plan to hide Quintus Lucretius (6.7.2): *Q. Lucretium proscriptum a triumviris uxor Turia inter cameram et tectum cubiculi abditum una conscia ancillula ab imminente exitio non sine magno periculo suo tutum praestitit singularique fide id egit, ut, cum ceteri proscripti in alienis et hostilibus regionibus per summos corporis et animi cruciatus uix euaderent, ille in cubiculo et in coniugis sinu salutem retineret.* (“Proscribed by the Triumvirs, Q. Lucretius was hidden by his wife Turia between the ceiling and the roof of their bedroom. So

with one slave girl for accomplice she kept him safe from imminent death not without great risk to herself. When others of the proscribed barely escaped in alien and hostile regions at the price of cruel tortures of body and mind, he, thanks to her extraordinary fidelity, kept his life in his bedroom and the bosom of his spouse”). As Kristina Milnor (2005:197) has observed, the image of the husband in the arms of his wife evokes scenes of adulterers caught in the act. For Valerius Maximus, the time period was full of reversals and scenes of husbands and wives that in normal times would evoke comedy or censure from other Roman men. The point of the story is to emphasize the *fides* shown from wife to husband, yet there is also a point made about the *fides* shown between the *ancillula* and the wife. The plot hinged on the *ancillula*’s silence about the plan, and as seen above, there were many stories about slaves betraying their enslavers during the proscriptions. Not only is Vespillo safe due to his more feminine actions of staying in the house in the arms of his wife, he is safe because his wife’s *ancilla* did not betray their secrets. The inclusion of the detail about the *ancilla* is significant for Valerius Maximus’ narrative because it allows him to make the further point that relationships between female enslavers and their slaves were crucial to the survival of the proscribed members of the family. The vignette preserved by Valerius Maximus also demonstrates the anxiety concerning the relationship between the female head of household and her enslaved women that Juvenal points to in *Satire 6* that women and their slaves might be closer than ideal in the Roman male imagination, yet the behavior of the head of household, controlled by her husband in an ideal way, also leads to better relationships with the enslaved women in the house.⁹⁹ Turia also displays good judgment in the story as she only tells one *ancilla*, rather than entrusting her plan to multiple enslaved women.

⁹⁹ Based upon anxieties in Latin literature, it is possible that the husband Lucretius was having a sexual relationship with the *ancillula*.

The fact that this plan hinges upon an enslaved woman's silence both emphasizes the reversals of domestic power characteristic of this period but also hints towards male anxiety about female relationships within the household. Appian presents a similar story with a man named Lucretius who relies upon the enslaved in order to be rescued. I quote the passage in full here (*B Civ* 4.):

Λουκρήτιος ἀλώμενος σὺν δυσὶ θεράπουσιν ἀγαθοῖς ὑπὸ ἀπορίας τῶν τροφῶν ἦει πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα, φορεῖα φερόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν οἰκετῶν οἷά τις ἄρρωστος, ἐς τὴν πόλιν. ἐνὸς δὲ τῶν φερόντων τὸ σκέλος συντριβέντος τῷ ἐτέρῳ τὴν χεῖρα ἐπιθείς ἦει. παρὰ δὲ ταῖς πύλαις γενόμενος, ἔνθα αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ὑπὸ Σύλλα προγραφεῖς ἐαλώκει, εἶδε λόχον ὀπλιτῶν ἐκτρέχοντα καὶ πρὸς τὸ συγκύρημα τοῦ τόπου καταπλαγεῖς συνεκρύφθη μετὰ τοῦ θεράποντος ἐν τάφῳ. τυμβωρύχων δὲ τοὺς τάφους ἐρευνωμένων, ὁ θεράπων ἑαυτὸν τοῖς τυμβωρύχοις παρέσχε περιδύειν, μέχρι Λουκρήτιον ἐπὶ τὰς πύλας διαφυγεῖν. ἐκεῖ δὲ αὐτὸν ὁ Λουκρήτιος περιμείνας τε καὶ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ μερισάμενος ἐσθῆτος, ἦκε πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἐκρύπτετο ἐπὶ διπλῆς ὀροφῆς μεταξὺ, μέχρι τινὲς αὐτὸν ἐρρύσαντο παρὰ τῶν προγραψάντων. καὶ ὕστερον ἐπὶ εἰρήνης ὑπάτευσεν.

Lucretius, who had been wandering around as an outcast with two faithful slaves, was forced by lack of supplies to go to his wife, and was carried to Rome by the two slaves in a litter as he was a sick man. One of the bearers broke his leg, so Lucretius went on by foot, leaning on the other slave. When they reached the gates where his father had been arrested—he too had been proscribed, by Sulla—Lucretius saw a cohort of soldiers coming out of the city on the double. Unnerved by the coincidence of being in the same place, he hid with the slave in a tomb. When tomb robbers came to investigate the tombs, the slave allowed himself to be stripped by them until Lucretius could escape to the gates. There Lucretius waited for him, shared his clothing with him, and having made his way to his wife, was hidden by her in the space between a double ceiling, until some friends got him pardoned by the proscribers. Later, with the return of peace, he held the consulship.

The emphasis in Appian's story lies in the figure of Lucretius and the remarkable turn of events that lead to his consulship after the fact. The abnormality of the story rests in the re-enactment of the death of Lucretius' father. The story emphasizes here Lucretius' morality in being able to control his enslaved men, and they are described as ἀγαθοῖς by Appian. Lucretius approaches his house as an enslaved man, reversing the normal anxiety expressed by elite men of women having sexual relationships with those of a lower status. The emphases in both texts, however, remain

the control that Lucretius and his wife have over the enslaved men and women. They are critical actors in the plans that allow Lucretius to survive and eventually become consul. The inclusion of details about the enslaved demonstrate the connection within the Roman moral framework between proper control over enslaved members of the household and the goodness of the freeborn. Both the husband and wife through what Appian intimates as their virtuous character before the proscriptions are able to survive. The anxiety that this story expresses about enslavers and their relationship to the enslaved is ultimately resolved by the good character of Lucretius and Turia.

Valerius Maximus also relates a tale with similar anxieties and resolutions about Sulpicia's secret flight to Sicily to be with her husband (6.7.3):

Sulpicia autem, cum a matre Iulia diligentissime custodiretur, ne Lentulum Cruscellionem, uirum suum proscriptum a triumviris in Siciliam persequeretur, nihilo minus famulari ueste sumpta cum duabus ancillis totidemque seruis ad eum clandestina fuga peruenit nec recusauit se ipsam proscribere, ut ei fides sua in coniuge proscripto constaret.

Sulpicia was being guarded very diligently by her mother Julia, lest she follow her husband Lentulus Cruscilio, who had been proscribed by the triumvirs, into Sicily. Nevertheless she arrived to him by clandestine flight having assumed the clothing of a slave, and with two female slaves and two male slaves. She did not decline to proscribe herself, so that her own loyalty toward him correspond in a proscribed spouse.

This vignette contains a number of reversals, with the wife taking on the garment of a family enslaved individual accompanied by her supposed peers. The point of this story is to emphasize the *fides* of the wife, but yet again her plan is contingent upon the enslaved men and women.

Valerius Maximus' pithy statement at the end with a wordplay on *proscribere* neatly ties in with her play acting as an enslaved woman. Appearance and reality are mixed up, yet with good results.

3.4 Freedwomen in the Triumviral Imagination

Freedwomen occupied a liminal place in Roman society, as they were marginalized by their former enslaved status, yet could come to a place of integration into Roman society after their manumission, although their choices were limited by the obligations they retained toward their former enslavers and the limitations upon acceptable roles for women with Roman society. As Perry (2007:167) has observed, freedwomen were expected to maintain bonds with their enslaver after their freedom and that “the on-going relationship between female slave/freedwoman and master/patron was a real bond with significant social meaning.” A tension existed in Roman law between the obligations due to the former enslaver and the desire to ensure that a Roman freedwoman did not lose status or honor due to her former enslaver.

The freedwomen examined here all had a sexual relationship with their former enslaver, and, in the case of Appian’s proscription narrative, expected marriage as a result. The story and tombstones demonstrate that sexual relationships with the enslaver could be one path to freedom for these women as a reward for the affection and bonds shown in the sexual relationship (Perry 2007:95).¹⁰⁰ As Katharine Huemoeller has noted (2020), the freedom gained through marriage was restrictive, as women were restricted from entering and exiting the marriage at will and their property was separated.¹⁰¹ This section expands on Perry and Huemoeller’s work and investigates two funerary epitaphs of women who married their former enslaver in the 1st c. BCE – 1st c. CE, before examining a story in Appian’s proscription narrative about a freedwoman who betrayed her former enslaver. Aside from manumission for the purposes of marriage, enslaved

¹⁰⁰ Perry also notes the story of the wife of Scipio Africanus who gave his slave mistress in marriage to a freedman as a reward for her affection and devotion to him.

¹⁰¹ She considers CIL 6.20905, a remarkable funeral epitaph which contains a *damnatio memoriae* and on a curse on the reverse of the original funerary epitaph. She contends that the freedwoman cursed on the reverse, Acte, was the wife of the patron commemorated on the epitaph and that she abandoned him. The inscription demonstrates the complex dynamics created by marriage between a *dominus* and his formerly enslaved.

women could make money from either prostitution or acting, both professions that were looked down upon in Roman society as they carried *infamia*. I examine the discourse surrounding Cytheris Volumnia, a freedwoman who had sexual relationships with various elite men during the triumviral period, and who did make her living as a mime-actress according to our sources. By examining Cicero's interpretation of her, we will see how sexuality and status combined as a mechanism to attack Mark Antony.

Two inscriptions are illustrative of the social customs of the period and allow us a glimpse of how freedwomen and their husbands chose to represent themselves. In the late 1st c. BCE to the early 1st c. CE, Publius Gessus Primus died young, and his funerary epitaph (MFA 37.100) displays his parents next to him: Publius Gessus and Gessia Fausta. Now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the inscription in the monument describes their relationships:

(b.) GESSIA.P.L.FAVSTA.P.GESSIVS.P.F.ROM.P.GESSIVS.P.L.PRIMVS
(at left) EX.TESTAM/P.GESSI.P.L./PRIMI
(at right) ARBIT[RATU]/GESSIA[E]/FAUSTA[E]

(at bottom) Gessia Fausta, freedwoman of Publius, Publius Gessius, son of Publius of the Romilian tribe, Publius Gessius Primus, freedman of Publius
(at left) From the will of Publius Gessius Primus, freedman of Publius
(at right) Under the direction of Gessia Fausta.¹⁰²

The family history probably follows the following trajectory: Gessia Fausta and Publius Gessius had a sexual relationship while she was enslaved by him which resulted in the birth of Publius Gessius Primus. For reasons probably having to do with inheritance, Publius Gessius did not free her before the birth.¹⁰³ It is possible that after manumission Gessia Fausta became his wife, and

¹⁰² Gessia Fausta was the legal arbiter of the will of her son, who must have been given significant wealth at manumission, since this sculptural element was part of a larger funerary monument occupying a plot of land.

¹⁰³ If Gessia Fausta had been manumitted prior to the birth, P. Gessius Primus would have been born as a Roman citizen instead of an enslaved person who then had to undergo manumission to become a freedman.

this supposition is supported by the fact that she is dressed and portrayed as a respectable Roman wife and her son is portrayed with a tunic and toga, as is usual for young Roman men. The family dynamics in this funerary monument demonstrate the complexity of identity in this period, as the mother has decided (as arbiter of her son's will) that this is the way that she would like her son to be remembered: i.e. as the son of her former enslaver.

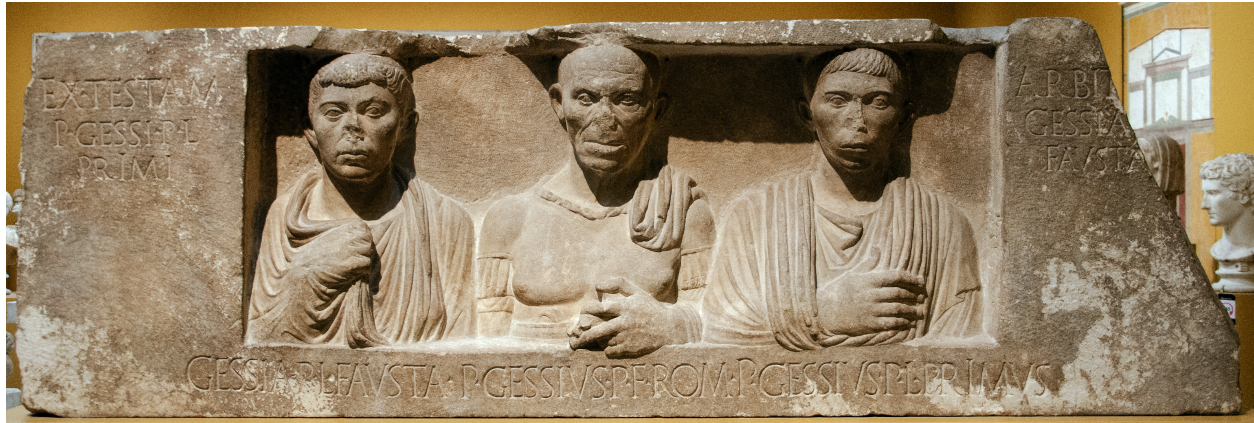


Figure 1 – Tomb Relief of Publius Gessius Family (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). Photo by J. Matthew Harrington used with permission.

A relief in the British Museum (BM 1858,0819.2) shows a married couple Lucius Antistius Sarculo and his wife Antistia Plutia, his freedwoman, on a funerary epitaph dedicated by their two freedmen, Rufus and Anthus. Antistia Plutia is portrayed with a typical *nodus* hairstyle displayed as a typical Roman matron of that time – late 1st c. BCE; Lucius Antistius Sarculo is portrayed in the veristic style, emphasizing his *gravitas* and overall respectability. The inscription on the relief notes (*CIL* VI, 2170):

(at left) *L(ucius) Antistius Cn(aei) f(ilius) Hor(atia) Sarculo / Salius Albanus, idem Mag(ister) Saliorum*

(at right) *Antistia / L(ucii) l(iberta) Plutia*

(at bottom) *Rufus l(ibertus), Anthus l(ibertus), imagines de suo fecerunt patrono et patronae, pro meritis / eorum*

(at left) Lucius Antistius Sarculo, son of Gnaeus, of the Horatian voting-tribe, priest of the Alban Salian Order, as well as Master of the Salian priests.

(at right) Antistia Plutia, freedwoman of Lucius.
(at bottom) Rufus, (their) freedman, (and) Anthus, (their) freedman, had these portraits made on behalf of their merits.

Lucius Antistius Sarculo is free born, as indicated by the use of *filius* instead of *libertus* and the noting of his voting tribe. Further, Antistius is marked out as particularly worthy of respect due to not just being made an Alban Salian priest, but the leader of the *collegium*. It is not clear why the couple's freedmen were involved in the setting up of the monument, but the monument demonstrates the importance of their relationship and depicts them as upstanding Romans.



Figure 2 – Antistia Plutia and Lucius Antistius Sarculo (British Museum, London). Photo is my own work.

The dynamics that we have seen with these two epitaphs indicate that there were complex networks that had to be navigated when dealing with a family structure and free/freed/enslaved status. Appian's proscription narratives include a tale that taps into the elite male anxieties surrounding sexual relationships that might result in marriage. The freedwoman in this tale turns

her former enslaver in to the executioners (4.24): Φούλβιον δὲ ἐς θεραπαίνης φυγόντα παλλακευθείσης τε αὐτῷ καὶ ἀπηλευθερωμένης καὶ προῖκα ἐς γάμον ἐπιλαβούσης, ἣ τοσάδε εὖ παθοῦσα προὔδωκε ζηλοτυπία τῆς μεθ' ἑαυτὴν τῷ Φουλβίῳ γεγαμημένης. Τοσάδε μὲν δὴ καὶ γυναικῶν πονηρῶν ὑποδείγματα γεγράφθω· (“Fulvius fled to the house of a female servant, who had been his mistress, and to whom he had given freedom and a dowry on her marriage.

Although she had been so well treated by him she betrayed him on account of jealousy of the woman whom Fulvius had married after his relations with her. Let these serve as examples of depraved women”). The freedwoman in this tale clearly holds a lethal grudge because she expected that Fulvius would marry her as a result of her relationship, and instead of being placated by her manumission and wedding gifts retains this hatred because she is exemplary of γυναικῶν πονηρῶν. The story is a vivid encapsulation of the various anxieties that Roman men had about enslaved women’s sexuality and the repercussions that could follow if they did not anticipate the behavior of freedwomen, here stereotypically vengeful.

The collision of vitriol and anxiety around the sexuality of a freedwoman is also present when considering Volumnia Cytheris, a freedwoman and mime actress who allegedly had relationships with many elite men, most notoriously Mark Antony. As Alison Keith (2011:38) has noted, Volumnia’s patron Volumnius may have allowed other men to have sex with her in order to strengthen homosocial bonding. In the letters from Cicero we get a picture of Cytheris as someone through whom men strengthen their own bonds. Specifically, in *Philippics 2*, Cicero uses a series of dazzling accusations to portray Antony as the antithesis of a Roman statesman. Part of his attack involves accusing Antony of prioritizing his relationship with Cytheris over that with his mother Julia. Cicero emphasizes the disgraceful characters with whom Antony interacts (2.58):

uehebatur in essedo tribunus plebis; lictores laureati antecedeabant, inter quos aperta lectica mima portabatur, quam ex oppidis municipales homines honesti, obuiam necessario prodeuntes, non noto illo et mimico nomine, sed Volumniam consalutabant. sequebatur raeda cum lenonibus, comites nequissimi; reiecta mater amicam impuri filii tamquam nurum sequebatur.

[Antony, although] a tribune of the people [and therefore not legally entitled to lictors,] was riding in a luxurious chariot; before him walked laurel-bearing lictors, between whom was conveyed in an open litter the mime-actress – whom local aristocrats and prominent citizens from the towns met, by necessity, as they advanced, and greeted not by her well known stage-name [Cytheris] but by the name of Volumnia. Another car followed with pimps, the most worthless of companions! His mother, relegated behind, followed her disgraceful son's girlfriend, as if (Cytheris) were her daughter-in-law.¹⁰⁴

Cicero emphasizes that Antony is treating the customs and morals of the *Res Publica* recklessly by using lictors and by displaying Cytheris as more respectable than she appeared by using the name Volumnia. This scene perfectly encapsulates the connection between freedwomen's sexuality and elite male anxiety about proper behavior. The Romans' closely connected a freedwoman's sexuality with her freed status, as Perry has demonstrated (2007:95). This connection allowed Cicero to attack Antony as someone who repudiated the norms of respectable Roman society in favor of his insatiable desires. The expectations of freedwomen during this period demonstrate that elite Romans continued to grapple with the "correct" treatment of non-freeborn women.

3.5 Conclusions

Status was a key element of in the anxieties concerning the proscriptions, and the glimpses we get in the sources demonstrate that enslaved and freedwomen had key roles in the safety or death of the proscribed. The discourse of enslaved and freedwomen often points towards the morals of the enslavers, and the narratives emphasize that correct behavior as a

¹⁰⁴ Translation by Keith (2010).

dominus/domina can lead to better outcomes, although other authors claim that no behavior can account for the disloyalty of enslaved people. Freedwomen, both imagined by Appian and as reflected in ideas around the life of Cytheris had restricted choices, and the sources both emphasize their sexuality as a potential threat. Though they had critical roles, the silence of the sources does not allow us to view in their entirety the actions and strategies of resistance that they used. Examining the pieces of evidence that mention enslaved women and freedwomen allow us to more fully appreciate how enslavement worked as a social institution with its own set of expectations. As people without official legal power, we can see how unofficial channels and sets of relationships and expectations functioned within a profoundly unstable period in Roman history.

Chapter 4

Domus Octaviani: Octavia and Livia in the Triumviral Period

The success of the triumvir Octavian at Actium and his subsequent transformation into the *princeps* Augustus was due in part to his ability to craft a narrative around normative domesticity, which obscures more than it reveals the reality of his family life.¹⁰⁵ Octavia and Livia come down to us as cyphers, with the sources revealing more about their own preoccupations rather than reflections of any “real” women. For this reason, paradoxically, Octavia and Livia are perhaps the ideal women to study in order to understand how the discourse of feminine domesticity (and its masculine political context) is formed and works within historiographical traditions. That is, while some sources can appear to give us information about the real experiences of women, (Cicero writing letters about Servilia, for example) the sources on Octavia and Livia clearly reflect the propaganda and contested narratives of the triumviral and Augustan periods. Arguably, there is no information about them completely separate from the filter of Augustus.¹⁰⁶ What we are left with when we encounter Octavia and Livia is key information about expectations of femininity, marriage, and family life mapped across the Roman world during this period. In this chapter, I examine the discourse of Octavia and Livia in the triumviral period, focusing upon what that discourse reveals about the assumptions and propaganda of the period, in addition to revealing preoccupations of the sources’ own time periods and the personal agendas in their respective works. Along the way, I will also note conservatively what are possible plausible reconstructions for the lived experience of each,

¹⁰⁵ For an overview of the transformation of the discourse of domesticity in the Augustan period, see Milnor (2005), Fertik (2019), and Severy Hoven (2003).

¹⁰⁶ See Milnor (2005) for a study of Augustus’ creation of the myth of the ideal family and Fertik (2019) for anxieties concerning the visibility of the ruling house.

trying to glimpse the expectations that each might have weighed before they undertook particular actions.

Previous scholarship on Octavia and Livia focuses more upon their roles and actions following the establishment of the Principate by Octavian, as there is more evidence for their roles within the Augustan period. For example, Anthony Barrett's (2002) biography of Livia discusses the early part of her life for only a short chapter before moving on to her role during the Principate. Part of this trend is due to the relative paucity of material in the sources that discuss this period and the fact that her literary representation, in Tacitus most especially, of a meddling, sinister widow is much more vivid than any earlier incarnation. Octavia, on the other hand, does feature heavily in narratives of the triumviral period, and more recent research by Katrina Moore (2017) and Lien van Geel (2022) traces Octavia's various representations in the sources, integrating literary and material culture and demonstrating how she wielded her understanding of Roman ideas of femininity and virtue to her own advantage, and I take a similar approach in this chapter. Octavia has also featured in biographies of other women from the late Republican period, such as Schultz's (2021) work on Fulvia and Treggiari's (2019) work on Servilia. Osgood (2006 and 2014) has incorporated accounts of Octavia and Livia in his works on the triumviral period along with Turia, emphasizing that both exemplify the increased intertwinement between domesticity and politics characteristic of this period.¹⁰⁷ Working from the idea that Octavia and Livia were key factors in the propaganda war between Antony and Octavian, I argue that their representations reveal anxieties surrounding the political reversals of the triumviral period. My discussion of Octavia focuses especially on her representation in

¹⁰⁷ See Osgood (2014: 126) for discussion of Octavia as an example of bravery during civil strife and Osgood (2014: 71-77) for an overview of Livia in this period.

Plutarch, our best source for Octavia. Plutarch's narrative objectives were primarily to reveal character in his *Lives* and I argue that Plutarch emphasizes Octavia and spends time in developing her character in order to underline Antony's moral failure to respond correctly to feminine virtue. I map her representation chronologically in Plutarch, demonstrating the increase in the stakes of each episode where she features, as the relationship between Antony and Octavian progresses further toward civil war. Appian and Cassius Dio are part of my discussion as well, but they do not view her as significant as Plutarch views her for their own narrative objectives. My discussion of Livia focuses on the representation of her pregnancy and quick marriage to Octavian, underlining the anxieties that her pregnancy with Tiberius Nero's child caused as it resulted in accusations of adultery with ancient authors speculating about the beginning of the relationship in addition to Mark Antony referencing it directly in his propaganda against Octavian. The ways in which the various ancient authors make use of Octavia and Livia demonstrate key elements of the discourse of Roman womanhood and how the discourse was transmitted through the centuries as each were paradigm setting for future imperial women.

4.1 Octavia's Entry onto the Scene

As the sister of Octavian, much discourse surrounds Octavia due to her brother's masterful use of propaganda during the triumviral period. In other words, she is a massive figure in Roman discourse because Augustus chose to make her into one.¹⁰⁸ Reconstructing her life and identifying how she may have thought about herself is even more difficult to access since so much of the extant evidence has been filtered through the propaganda of Octavian. Nevertheless,

¹⁰⁸ For an overview of Octavia's life see van Geel (2022: 4-9) for a brief biography. See Bauman (1992: 92-98) for an overview of Octavia's actions during the triumviral period.

there will be moments in which we can attempt to make sense of what Octavia would have thought and how she would have strategized, making her own choices for her life, not simply following through with her brother's orders. In sum, Octavia's actions were likely a result not only of her brother's wishes but also of her own education as a member of an elite family within the Roman social framework.

Let us begin with an overview of Octavia's life before she emerges onto the triumviral scene. Born to Atia and Gaius Octavius (the same parents as Octavian) she was six years older than Octavian.¹⁰⁹ She married Gaius Claudius Marcellus probably around the age of fifteen, although this did not stop Julius Caesar from offering her in marriage to Pompey in order to maintain their bond, according to Suetonius (*Div. Jul. 27*): *Ad retinendam autem Pompei necessitudinem ac voluntatem Octaviam sororis suae neptem, quae Gaiio Marcello nupta erat, condicionem ei detulit sibi que filiam eius in matrimonium petit Fausto Sullae destinatam* ("Moreover, to retain his relationship and friendship with Pompey, Caesar offered him his sister's granddaughter Octavia in marriage, although she was already the wife of Gaius Marcellus, and asked for the hand of Pompey's daughter, who was promised to Faustus Sulla").¹¹⁰ The thinking that Suetonius relates here indicates that marriage to Octavia would be advantageous for Caesar's relationship with Pompey, meaning that the ties of family create channels of communication and obligation that have the potential to defuse tension between men. The use of the word *necessitudinem* is particularly vivid as the word indicates a close reciprocal

¹⁰⁹ Moore (2019:14-17) argues for a reassessment of Octavia's age by three years. Arguing that her supposed age upon giving birth to her first child, 27, is rather high for Roman standards and that Julius Caesar's willingness to give her to Pompey in marriage (Suetonius *Div. Jul. 27*) would make more sense if she were twelve and the marriage had not been consummated. I do not see the need to adjust the date of Octavia's birth and accept the estimate given of 69 BCE.

¹¹⁰ Translation is my own.

social bond (OLD s.v. *necessitudo*). Octavia's life would, like the other women we have encountered, be defined by her marriages. Coming after the death of her husband Gaius Claudius Marcellus in 40 BCE, Octavia's profile rises after her marriage with Mark Antony, as its failure accelerated the war between Antony and Octavian, and the ancient authors emphasize that this marriage was critical to the success or failure of the tenuous alliance between Antony and Octavian.

Octavia emerges as a key figure in Plutarch's *Life* as she first appears on the scene to marry Antony in what everyone hopes will be a union that brings peace to the Mediterranean. What follows is the breakdown of the marriage with Octavia appearing pointedly blameless and cast as the ideal Roman woman in contrast to an emotionally out-of-control and questionably Roman man. The entire progression of the relationship between Antony and Octavia is used to reveal the character of Mark Antony, impressing upon the reader moral qualities already mentioned by Plutarch at the beginning of his work, when discussing Antony's childhood. While van Geel (2022) argues that Plutarch writes a mini *Life* of Octavia within his *Vit. Ant.* with Cleopatra as her foil, I would argue that Plutarch's interest is less in developing the characters of these two women for their own sake, but rather examining Antony's character through them. Octavia, as I will argue, emerges as an embodiment of female virtue within Roman society that Antony fails to respond to correctly, while Cleopatra understands that Antony will respond to displays of emotion and emotional appeals (something no Roman man should do) and is able to bend Antony to her will to a much greater extent than previous women (Fulvia, for example). The visuality of the episodes within which Plutarch includes her in harken back to stories from Roman foundation myths about the ability of the sight and admonition of women to change male behavior during times of crisis. This portrayal of Octavia accords with Plutarch's point about

Antony's character that he cannot control his impulses. While Plutarch's version of Octavia is highly rhetorical, we will pause to examine how Octavia – as a member of the *familia* of Octavian – may have attempted to fashion herself according to her own calculations of the ideal way to conduct herself for the best social and political outcomes.

Plutarch's opening comments on Octavia cement her role in his text as exemplary wife and mother. He notes (*Vit. Ant.* 31.1): ταῦτα ἔχειν καλῶς δοκοῦντα πίστεως ἐδεῖτο σφοδρότερας, ἦν ἢ τύχη παρέσχεν. Ὀκταουία γὰρ ἦν ἀδελφὴ πρεσβυτέρα μὲν, οὐχ ὁμομητρία δὲ Καίσαρι: ἐγεγόνει γὰρ ἐξ Ἀγχαρίας, ὁ δὲ ὕστερον ἐξ Ἀτίας. ἔστεργε δ' ὑπερφυῶς τὴν ἀδελφὴν, χρῆμα θαυμαστόν, ὡς λέγεται, γυναικὸς γενομένην. (“These arrangements were thought to be fair, but they needed a stronger security, and this security Fortune offered. Octavia was a sister of Caesar, older than he, though not by the same mother; for she was the child of Ancharia, but he, by a later marriage, of Atia. Caesar was exceedingly fond of his sister, who was, as the saying is, a wonder of a woman”).¹¹¹ Like Mark Antony's mother Julia, whom Plutarch described as among the most excellent and wise women as we saw above (ταῖς ἀρίσταις τότε καὶ σωφρονεστάταις ἐνάμιλλος, *Vit. Ant.* 2.1), Octavia likewise is particularly noteworthy with regard to her moral character, and the inclusion of χρῆμα, here intensifies his assertion that Octavia is θαυμαστόν, worthy of admiration or wonder. As a man surrounded by women related to Julius Caesar, Antony should have responded by revealing a good moral character.¹¹² Instead, the viewing of virtue does not move him, emphasizing his broken moral character. Octavian, on the other hand, has devotion to his sister, following proper Roman familial ideals.

¹¹¹ Plutarch confuses Octavia Maior and Octavia Minor. Octavia Maior was born to Ancharia and later married Sextus Appuleius. Translations from Loeb additions with slight adaptations.

¹¹² The story at the beginning of *The Vit. Ant.* (2) designed to exhibit Julia's good character at the same time demonstrates that the Antonii are fundamentally weak, although Antony's father had the fortune of being married to a good woman *and* the ability to correctly yield to her virtue.

4.2 Octavia in Contrast to Fulvia

While Plutarch devotes much attention to how Octavia contrasts with Cleopatra, he also emphasizes that Octavia was the opposite of Fulvia, whose lack of moral virtue and performance of ideal femininity first captured Antony.¹¹³ As we have seen in Chapter 2, Fulvia appears in proscription narratives as a ruthless, ambitious supporter of the proscriptions.¹¹⁴ Plutarch claims (*Vit. Ant.* 10):

ἀπαλλαγείς γὰρ ἐκείνου τοῦ βίου γάμῳ προσέσχε, Φουλβίαν ἀγαγόμενος τὴν Κλωδίῳ τῷ δημαγωγῷ συνοικήσασαν, οὐ ταλασίαν οὐδὲ οἰκουρίαν φρονοῦν γύναιον, οὐδὲ ἀνδρὸς ιδιώτου κρατεῖν ἀξιοῦν, ἀλλ' ἄρχοντος ἄρχειν καὶ στρατηγοῦντος στρατηγεῖν βουλόμενον, ὥστε Κλεοπάτραν διδασκάλια Φουλβία τῆς Ἀντωνίου γυναικοκρατίας ὀφείλειν, πάνυ χειροήθη καὶ πεπαιδαγωγημένον ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἀκροᾶσθαι γυναικῶν παραλαβοῦσαν αὐτόν.

For Antony put away his reprehensible way of living, and turned his thoughts to marriage, taking to wife Fulvia, the widow of Clodius the demagogue. She was a woman who took no thought for spinning or housekeeping, nor would she deign to bear sway over a man of private station, but she wished to rule a ruler and command a commander. Therefore Cleopatra was indebted to Fulvia for teaching Antony to endure a woman's sway, since she took him over quite tamed, and schooled at the outset to obey women.

Fulvia's monstrous performance of masculinity tames Antony, underlining that he is unable to control his wife, a core aspect elite Roman masculinity. The use of *χειροήθη* is particularly striking as it is a word that is commonly applied to animals (*Liddell and Scott* s.v. *χειροήθης*). Although Antony applied some effort to change his mode of life, he was not able to have proper authority over his household and thus would not be an effective political leader. This description of their marriage indicates that Antony would not be able to control Fulvia even from starting a

¹¹³ Much scholarship has been written about Fulvia including Delia (1991), Hallett (1977, 2015), and Schultz (2022).

¹¹⁴ Cassius Dio (47.8) describes her abusing the head of Cicero and putting a pin in his tongue, while Appian notes that she had a man named Rufus proscribed in order to access his villa (*B. Civ* 4.29).

war without him knowing. For Plutarch, Antony's lack of moral character and lethargy results in his inability to perform elite masculinity.

Antony's relationship with Cleopatra distracts him from geopolitical concerns to such an extent that for a time he ignores the situation in Perusina in 41-40 BCE (*Vit. Ant.* 28): Οὕτω δ' οὖν τὸν Ἀντώνιον ἤρπασεν ὥστε, πολεμούσης μὲν ἐν Ῥώμῃ Καίσαρι Φουλβίας τῆς γυναικὸς ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκείνου πραγμάτων, αἰωρουμένης δὲ Παρθικῆς στρατιᾶς περὶ τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν, ἧς Λαβηνὸν οἱ βασιλέως στρατηγοὶ Παρθικὸν ἀναγορεύσαντες αὐτοκράτορα Συρίας ἐπιβατεύσειν ἔμελλον, οἴχεσθαι φερόμενον ὑπ' αὐτῆς εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν (Accordingly, she made such booty of Antony that, while Fulvia his wife was carrying on war at Rome with Caesar in defense of her husband's interests, and while a Parthian army was hovering about Mesopotamia (over this country the generals of the king had appointed Labienus Parthian commander-in-chief, and were about to invade Syria), he suffered her to hurry him off to Alexandria). At this point, Antony wastes time in Alexandria, allowing others to control the political situation. Antony's moral character is ultimately to blame for Fulvia's ability to lead a war against Octavian.

During the war in Perusina, *glandes* (slingstones) were used on both sides. The *glandes* had sexual messages inscribed onto them that reference Fulvia as a target. On one slingshot the message inscribed includes an obscene reference to Fulvia: *peto landicam Fulviae* (I seek Fulvia's clitoris). As Hallett (2015: 250) has noted, the *glandes* portray Fulvia as an assertive and antagonistic woman, operating outside the norm of traditional femininity. The sling bullet also references her performance of monstrous masculinity as the word *landicam* is associated with the phallus elsewhere in Latin literature (Hallett 2015: 251).

While it is unclear whether Octavian ordered the messages on the sling bullets, he was allegedly involved in propaganda of this type at the time.¹¹⁵ Martial (11.20) records six lines of a poem allegedly composed by Octavian:¹¹⁶

Caesaris Augusti lascivos, livide, versus
Sex lege, qui tristis verba latina legis:
'Quod futuit Glaphyran Antonius, hanc mihi poenam
Fulvia constituit, se quoque uti futuam.
Fulviam ego ut futuam? quid si me Manius oret
Pedicem, faciam? non puto, si sapiam.
"Aut futue, aut pugnemus" ait. Quid, quod mihi vita
Carior est ipsa mentula? Signa canant!
Absolvis lepidos nimirum, Auguste, libellos,
Qui scis Romana simplicitate loqui.

You, envious person, who reads Latin words, read the six lewd verses of Caesar Augustus. 'Because Antonius fucked Glaphyra, Fulvia decided that this should be my punishment, that I should fuck her. That I should fuck her? What if Manius begged me to fuck him up the ass? Would I do it? I don't think so, if I were wise. "Fuck or let's fight," she says. But don't you know my cock is dearer to me than my life? Let the war trumpets sound!' Augustus, you truly release charming books you who know how to speak with Roman directness.

The use of such explicit language demonstrates that Fulvia is acting in a way associated with Roman men, as she takes the initiative (Hallett 2015: 252). Hallett's argument that these verses were used to counter the messages on the *glandes* that questioned Octavian's masculinity illuminates the ways in which performance of gender was key to gaining the upper hand in the court of public opinion.

Fulvia's connections to Mark Antony coupled with the fact that she lost the Perusine War mean that the sources are inherently hostile toward her, yet we should remember the fact that she must have had as much political facility as Servilia or Mucia as she gained a significant amount

¹¹⁵ Schultz (2022: 99) indicates that it is entirely possible that Octavian ordered the insults be written on the *glandes*. In my view, it is something that likely did not originate from an order from Octavian but was not discouraged by him.

¹¹⁶ Lines 3-8 translated by Schultz (2022). Lines 1, 2, 9, 10 are my own translation.

of followers in her conducting of the war.¹¹⁷ The discourse surrounding Fulvia demonstrates that elite women were expected to effect interventions via methods that were consonant with the Republican past rather than assertive and ambitious attempts to promote her husband's interests that resulted in war. The sources view her death after her flight from Italy as advantageous to the potential for Antony and Octavian to patch things up.

4.3 Octavia as Peace Maker: Brundisium and Tarentum

The ancient sources depict the wedding between Antony and Octavia in 40 BCE as almost salvific in nature, potentially bringing lasting peace to a war-wearied Mediterranean. Many scholars read the child referred to in Virgil's *Eclogue* 4 as the child to be born to Antony and Octavia.¹¹⁸ Virgil refers to this child as one who will bring about a Saturnian, Golden Age and end the contemporary sufferings.¹¹⁹ Octavia's exemplary character as noted in various ancient authors made it seem as though the marriage would be able to survive, although Plutarch emphasizes only because of Octavia (*Vit. Ant.* 31): τοῦτον ἅπαντες εἰσηγοῦντο τὸν γάμον, ἐλπίζοντες τὴν Ὀκταουίαν ἐπὶ κάλλει τοσοῦτω σεμνότητι καὶ νοῦν ἔχουσαν, εἰς ταῦτόν τῳ Ἀντωνίῳ παραγενομένην καὶ στερχθεῖσαν, ὡς εἰκὸς τοιαύτην γυναῖκα, πάντων πραγμάτων αὐτοῖς σωτηρίαν ἔσσεσθαι καὶ σύγκρασιν. ("Everybody tried to bring about this marriage. For they hoped that Octavia, who, besides her great beauty, had intelligence and dignity, when united to Antony and beloved by him, as such a woman naturally must be, would restore harmony and

¹¹⁷ Schultz (2022: 100) observes that Fulvia conducted the war with "remarkable independence and initiative, drawing upon her own social network to advance Antonius' interests."

¹¹⁸ Much has been written about *Eclogue* 4. Nisbet (1978) and Osgood (2006: 193-200) provide an overview of the significance of this poem for the history of the period.

¹¹⁹ In lines 8-10 he addresses Lucina, who will bring the child safely into the world: tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum/ desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo, / casta fave Lucina. ("Only do you, pure Lucina, smile on the birth of the child, under whom the iron brood shall at last cease and a golden race spring up throughout the world!")

be their complete salvation”). The language that Plutarch uses emphasizes that Octavia’s character makes it inconceivable that Antony would not come to see her as someone who should be treated properly and with respect, as σεμνότητα and the phrase νοῦν ἔχουσιν indicate that she is morally and intellectually superior and has the exact opposite qualities as Antony. As seen in an earlier episode with his mother, Plutarch has already shown that Antony does not respond to women’s virtuous character. The reader already knows that this marriage will not work as a result of Antony’s inability to be moved by female virtue.¹²⁰ Octavia’s character is part of a larger point that Plutarch is making about moral character within Roman society. Plutarch fashions her as a character test for both Octavian and Antony, with Octavian responding correctly and Antony incorrectly according to Roman moral frameworks. Plutarch himself emphasizes the centrality of this moral failure in his comparison of Demetrius and Antony by emphasizing that marriage brought Antony to ruin (*Comparison* 4.1): Ἀντώνιος δὲ πρῶτον μὲν ὁμοῦ δύο γυναῖκας ἡγάγετο, πρᾶγμα μηδενὶ Ῥωμαίῳ τετολμημένον, ἔπειτα τὴν ἀστὴν καὶ δικαίως γαμηθεῖσαν ἐξήλασε τῇ ξένη καὶ μὴ κατὰ νόμους συνούση χαριζόμενος: ὅθεν ἐκ γάμου τῷ μὲν οὐθέν, τῷ δὲ τὰ μέγιστα τῶν κακῶν ἀπήνησεν. (“But Antony first married two women at the same time, a deed having been dared by not one Roman, then he drove out his citizen and justly married wife gratifying the foreign wife living together with him not according to the laws whence from marriage nothing happened to the former (Demetrius), to the other (Antony) the greatest of evils”). In other words, for Plutarch Antony’s contravention of established *mores* in his personal life most exposed his weaknesses and was the proximate cause for his ruin.

¹²⁰ Contrast Antony with Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, both of whom attentively listened to their mother in Plutarch’s *Lives*.

Having established the character of each subject, what follows in Plutarch supports his initial claim. Antony falls further under the influence of Cleopatra, a pattern that Antony first began to narrate with his relationship with Curio, while Octavia continues to distinguish herself as ideal mother and wife. After the newlyweds wintered in Greece, Antony sent Octavia back to Rome by herself while she was pregnant with their third child (*Vit. Ant.* 35): ἐνταῦθα τὴν Ὀκταουίαν ἔσπευεν ἀποπέμψαι ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος αὐτῆς δεηθεῖσαν ἀποπέμψει πρὸς τὸν ἀδελφόν, ἔγκυον μὲν οὖσαν, ἤδη δὲ καὶ δεύτερον ἐξ αὐτοῦ θυγάτριον ἔχουσαν (“Then he sent Octavia, who had sailed with him from Greece, at her own request, to her brother. She was with child, and had already borne Antony two daughters”).¹²¹ The image visually reinforces the character differences that Plutarch has created between Cleopatra and Octavia, a model Roman wife, visibly pregnant, and thus fulfilling her role, while her husband continues to act in ways contrary to normative masculine expectations in his lack of self control. Octavia uses this moment at Tarentum to bring peace between Antony and Octavian, harkening back to other episodes in early Roman history in which women’s intervention resolved political violence, most famously the Sabine women. Additionally, Octavia’s intervention demonstrates that Octavian correctly receives moral correction from a woman when it is given, following in the tradition of legendary Romans such as Coriolanus. After first winning over Agrippa and Maecenas, a feat which underlines her ability to persuade through her moral character, she then enjoins Octavian with a speech reminiscent of women of Rome’s mythical past (*Vit. Ant.* 35.2-3): ἐνετύγχανε πολλὰ ποτνωμένη καὶ πολλὰ δεομένη μὴ περιῖδειν αὐτὴν ἐκ μακαριωτάτης γυναικὸς ἀθλιωτάτην γενομένην. νῦν μὲν γὰρ ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς αὐτὴν ἀποβλέπειν αὐτοκρατόρων δυεῖν, τοῦ μὲν

¹²¹ Plutarch 33.3 and Appian 5.76 both note that Octavia and Antony seem to have gotten along during this period as Antony was away from Cleopatra.

γυναῖκα, τοῦ δὲ ἀδελφὴν οὖσαν: ‘εἰ δὲ τὰ χεῖρω κρατήσειεν,’ ἔφη, ‘καὶ γένοιτο πόλεμος, ὑμῶν μὲν ἄδηλον ὅτω κρατεῖν ἢ κρατεῖσθαι πέπρωται, τὰ ἐμὰ δ’ ἀμφοτέρως ἄθλια.’ τούτοις ἐπικλασθεὶς ὁ Καῖσαρ ἤκεν εἰρηρικῶς εἰς Τάραντα, (“Octavia urged him with many prayers and many entreaties not to permit her, after being a most happy, to become the most wretched woman. For now, she said, the eyes of all men were drawn to her as the wife of one imperator and the sister of another: ‘But if,’ she said, ‘the worse should prevail and there should be war between you, one of you, it is uncertain which, is destined to conquer, and one to be conquered, but my lot in either case will be one of misery.’ Caesar was overcome by these words, and came in a peaceful manner to Tarentum”). Plutarch’s version of events at Tarentum emphasizes that Octavia understands her role as one who is responsible for negotiations between men when traditional methods of diplomacy break down, and we have seen public address to male relatives as one tactic characteristic of women from this period. In Livy, the Sabine women express a similar sentiment (1.13.3-4): *‘si adfinitatis inter uos, si conubii piget, in nos vertite iras; nos causa belli, nos vulnerum ac caedium viris ac parentibus sumus; melius peribimus quam sine alteris vestrum viduae aut orbae vivemus.’ movet res cum multitudinem tum duces; silentium et repentina fit quies; inde ad foedus faciendum duces prodeunt. nec pacem modo sed ciuitatem unam ex duabus faciunt.* (“ ‘If you repent of the marriage ties between you, if you repent of the right to intermarriage, turn your wrath against us; we are the cause of the war, we are the cause of the wounds and slaughter for our husbands and our parents. Better we will perish than live as your widows or orphans.’ The situation moves not only the crowd but also the leaders. There is silence and sudden quiet. Then the leaders approach to make a treaty. They make not only peace but one state from two”). The argument that the women make is rather similar to Octavia’s argument that she is in a difficult position as both wife and sister to two triumvirs. Pelling (1988:

215) notes that Octavia's speech is similar to Porcia, Volumnia, and Chlonis, all virtuous women who are exemplars of correct behavior within a crisis.¹²² Plutarch fashions Octavia in the same vein as virtuous Greek and Roman women whose performance of virtue urges their male relatives to correct action. Octavia is the embodiment of virtue with the potential to influence the behavior of Antony.

Plutarch contrasts this scene of harmony with Antony's immediate departure into Asia, which reawakes his passion for Cleopatra. The language that Plutarch uses emphasizes Antony's lack of control and lack of will (*Vit. Ant.* 36.1): εὔδουσα δ' ἡ δεινὴ συμφορὰ χρόνον πολὺν, ὁ Κλεοπάτρας ἔρωσ, δοκῶν κατευνάσθαι καὶ κατακεκληῖσθαι τοῖς βελτίοσι λογισμοῖς, αὐθις ἀνέλαμπε καὶ ἀνεθάρρει Συρία πλησιάζοντος αὐτοῦ. ("But the dire evil which had been slumbering for a long time, namely, his passion for Cleopatra, which men thought had been charmed away and lulled to rest by better considerations, blazed up again with renewed power as he drew near to Syria"). There is no indication in Plutarch's language that any act of will was involved in Antony's love dying out while he was in Greece and Italy rather than he simply forgot among other cares. The choice of the word λογισμοῖς indicates that although he seemed capable of rational action designed to curb his desires, Antony actually only curbed his desires because he was distracted by other pursuits (living a Greek type of life, according to Plutarch). The positioning of this detail immediately after describing how Octavian correctly responded to his sister's entreaty to not begin war with Antony further cements Plutarch's characterization of Antony as unable to control his impulses and his body.

¹²² Porcia (*Vit. Brut.* 13) demonstrates the ability to withstand physical pain, while Volumnia persuades Coriolanus against invading Rome and Chlonis in the *Life of Pyrrhus* wears a noose in case Sparta falls to Pyrrhus. All three of the women visibly perform extreme virtue.

The marital drama reaches its zenith when Octavia asks to sail to Antony while he is on campaign in the east in 35 BCE.¹²³ Plutarch includes the detail that many say that Octavian only did this in order to have a pretext for civil war. In any case, Octavia plays her part perfectly and is seen as the ideal Roman wife, exhibiting proper behavior. Plutarch emphasizes the visuality of the scene by listing everything that Octavia had brought with her to aid Antony. I quote the passage in full here (*Vit. Ant.* 53):

ἐν δὲ Ῥώμῃ βουλομένης Ὀκταουίας πλεῦσαι πρὸς Ἀντώνιον, ἐπέτρεψε Καῖσαρ, ὡς οἱ πλείους λέγουσιν, οὐκ ἐκείνη χαριζόμενος, ἀλλ' ὅπως περιωβρισθεῖσα καὶ καταμεληθεῖσα πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον αἰτίαν εὐπρεπῆ παράσχοι. γενομένη δὲ ἐν Ἀθήναις ἐδέξατο γράμματα παρὰ Ἀντωνίου κελεύοντος αὐτόθι προσμένειν καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν ἀνάβασιν δηλοῦντος. ἡ δέ, καίπερ ἀχθομένη καὶ νοοῦσα τὴν πρόφασιν, ὁμῶς ἔγραψε πυνθανομένη ποῖ κελεύει πεμφθῆναι τὰ κομιζόμενα πρὸς αὐτόν. ἐκόμιξε δὲ **πολλὴν** μὲν ἐσθῆτα στρατιωτικὴν, **πολλὰ** δὲ ὑποζύγια καὶ χρήματα καὶ δῶρα τοῖς περὶ αὐτὸν ἡγεμόσι καὶ φίλοις; ἐκτὸς δὲ τούτων στρατιώτας ἐπιλέκτους δισχιλίους εἰς στρατηγικὰς σπεύρας κεκοσμημένους ἐκπρεπέσι πανοπλίαις. ταῦτα Νίγρος τις Ἀντωνίου φίλος ἀποσταλεὶς παρ' αὐτῆς ἔφραζε, καὶ προσετίθει τοὺς ἀξίους καὶ πρέποντας ἐπαίνους.

But at Rome Octavia was desirous of sailing to Antony, and Caesar gave her permission to do so, as the majority say, not as a favor to her, but in order that, in case she were neglected and treated with scorn, he might have plausible ground for war. When Octavia arrived at Athens, she received letters from Antony in which he bade her remain there and told her of his expedition. Octavia, although she saw through the pretext and was distressed, nevertheless wrote Antony asking whither he would have the things sent which she was bringing to him. For she was bringing a **great** quantity of clothing for his soldiers, **many** beasts of burden, and money and gifts for the officers and friends about him; and besides this, two thousand picked soldiers equipped as praetorian cohorts with splendid armor. These things were announced to Antony by a certain Niger, a friend of his who had been sent from Octavia, and he added such praises of her as was fitting and deserved.

The anaphora of *πολλὴν* and *πολλὰ* emphasizes the amount that Octavia has brought in addition to the polyptoton of *καὶ*. The sight of Octavia stranded in Athens with invaluable

¹²³ Immediately before this (*Vit. Ant.* 51), Plutarch notes that Antony was pining for Cleopatra even while on campaign, demonstrating that he cannot be trusted with matters of political and military importance.

material for Antony reinforces her status as a model Roman wife who visibly displays her virtue at the same time as undercutting any claim that Antony had to masculinity. The detail that Antony commanded her to remain in Athens is one unique to Plutarch, while Appian (5.69) reports that Antony had sent her away. Plutarch keeps her in a type of limbo by narrating that Antony told her to stay, and it is not until Cleopatra's performance of dejectedness that Antony makes the irrevocable decision to shun Octavia. His characterization of Octavian indicates that Octavian already has the ability to judge how Antony would react at this point. Octavian anticipates that Cleopatra will completely blind Antony to how he should act and that war will begin because of this failure. Plutarch also emphasizes that Octavian understands the force of public opinion and is willing to utilize it against Antony.

Octavia's autonomous decision to sail also hints at women's role as mediators between families. Roman mythology valorized this role in stories such as the Sabine women, and, in my view, it is likely that Octavia herself, as a member of an elite family, received an education in proper female values and would have felt a sense of duty to averting civil war, while advancing the fortunes of her own *familia*.¹²⁴

Appian and Cassius Dio mention Octavia's role at Tarentum, but neither give her a speech as Plutarch does. In Appian's narrative, Octavia and Octavian have a conversation in which she proves that those issues have been resolved. The inclusion of Octavia in this role allows Appian to emphasize her ability to excel as a Roman woman in mediating between her two family members. I quote the passage in full here (5.93):

Ὀκταουία οὖν ἐχώρει πρὸς Καίσαρα διαιτήσουσα αὐτοῖς, καὶ ὁ μὲν ἐγκαταλελειφθαι τοῖς κινδύνοις ἔλεγε τοῖς ἐν πορθμῶ καταλαβοῦσιν, ἡ δὲ ἐκλελύσθαι τοῦτο διὰ Μαικῆνα. ὁ δὲ τὸν Ἀντώνιον ἔφη καὶ Καλλίαν ἀπελεύθερον

¹²⁴ See Hemelrijk 1999 for an overview of women's education and the values that such an education instilled.

ἐς Λέπιδον ἐκπέμψαι, συντιθέμενον τῷ Λεπίδῳ κατὰ Καίσαρος, ἣ δὲ συνειδέναί Καλλίαν περὶ γάμων ἀπεσταλμένον: βουληθῆναι γὰρ Ἀντώνιον πρὸ τῶν Παρθυικῶν ἐκδεδόσθαι τὴν θυγατέρα τῷ παιδί Λεπίδου, καθάπερ ὠμολόγητο. καὶ τάδε μὲν ἡ Ὀκταουία, Ἀντώνιος δὲ καὶ τὸν Καλλίαν ἔπεμπεν, ἐς βάσανον τῷ Καίσαρι διδούς: ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἐδέξατο μὲν, ἀφίξεσθαι δὲ ἔφη καὶ συμμίξειν Ἀντωνίῳ μεταξύ Μεταποντίου καὶ Τάραντος, μέσον ἔχων ποταμὸν τὸν ἐπώνυμον.

Octavia therefore went to Octavian to act as mediator between them. He said that he had been abandoned while in the middle of the dangers that overtook him in the straits, but she replied that this matter had been resolved through the intervention of Maecenas. Octavian then said that Antony also sent a freedman to Lepidus named Callias, who was in the process of making an agreement with him against Octavian, but she replied that she knew that Callias had been sent to arrange a marriage, because Antony wanted his daughter to be betrothed to Lepidus' son before the Parthian war, as had been agreed. So much for Octavia's role. As for Antony, he sent Callias with permission for Octavian to question him under torture. But Octavian refused, and said that he would come and meet with Antony between Metapontum and Tarentum, with the river from which Tarentum gets its name between them.

The use of the participle *διαιτήσουσα* is a rather legalistic word for Appian to employ, conjuring up the image of Octavia as a judge between the two men who are cast as quasi litigants. Octavia is also able to recast an allegation that Lepidus is trying to make an alliance against Octavian as a matter concerning a marriage alliance, something which Octavia would understand well about as a woman involved in the creation of alliances.¹²⁵ Rather than dramatize the scene with a speech, Appian chooses to emphasize Octavia's ability as an arbiter, according with his earlier portrayals of women such as Julia, the mother of Antony, and Mucia. These women accord with traditional feminine virtues and use arguments grounded in what they would have known at the time to bring about resolution. Cassius Dio makes little mention of Octavia at Tarentum, only noting that it was chiefly through her intervention that peace was able to be made.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ See Rohr Vio (2022: 19-32) for discussion of women's role in creating family ties and marriages.

¹²⁶ Dio (48.54.3) states: *πρὶν δὲ ἢ ἀποπλεῖν αὐτὸν ἠτιάσαντο ἀλλήλους, πρότερον μὲν διὰ τῶν ἐταίρων, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ δι' ἑαυτῶν· καὶ οὐ γὰρ πω σχολὴν πολεμῆσαι σφισιν ἦγον, συνηλλάγησαν τρόπον τινά, τῆς Ὀκταουίας ὅτι μάλιστα τοῦτο προσσούσης.* "Before he left, they presented to

4.4 Cleopatra's Response

Cleopatra, like Octavian, seems to be able to anticipate Antony's behavior as she feigns signs of love and dejectedness so that Antony will respond to her. Plutarch fashions Cleopatra as responding to the visuality of Octavia's visit with her own display, designed to elicit the maximum response out of Antony. I quote the passage in full here (*Vit. Ant.* 53):

αἰσθομένη δὲ ἡ Κλεοπάτρα τὴν Ὀκταουίαν ὁμόσε χωροῦσαν αὐτῇ, καὶ φοβηθεῖσα μὴ τοῦ τρόπου τῆ σεμνότητι καὶ τῆ Καίσαρος δυνάμει προσκτησαμένη τὸ καθ' ἡδονὴν ὁμιλεῖν καὶ θεραπεύειν Ἀντώνιον ἄμαχος γένηται καὶ κρατήση παντάπασι τοῦ ἀνδρός, ἐρᾶν αὐτῇ προσεποιεῖτο τοῦ Ἀντωνίου, καὶ τὸ σῶμα λεπταῖς καθήρει διαίταις; τὸ δὲ βλέμμα προσιόντος ἐκπεπληγμένον, ἀπερχομένου δὲ τηκόμενον καὶ ταπεινούμενον ὑπεφαίνετο. πραγματευομένη δὲ πολλάκις ὀφθῆναι δακρύουσα ταχὺ τῶν δακρύων ἀφήρει καὶ ἀπέκρυπτεν, ὡς δὴ βουλομένη λανθάνειν ἐκεῖνον. ἐπράττετο δὲ ταῦτα μέλλοντος τοῦ ἀνδρός ἐκ Συρίας ἀναβαίνειν πρὸς τὸν Μῆδον. οἱ δὲ κόλακες σπουδάζοντες ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς ἐλοιδόρουν τὸν Ἀντώνιον ὡς σκληρὸν καὶ ἀπαθῆ καὶ παραπολλύντα γυναῖον εἰς ἓνα καὶ μόνον ἐκεῖνον ἀνηρτημένον. Ὀκταουίαν μὲν γὰρ πραγμάτων ἕνεκα διὰ τὸν ἀδελφὸν συνελθεῖν καὶ τὸ τῆς γαμετῆς ὄνομα καρποῦσθαι: Κλεοπάτραν δὲ τοσοῦτων ἀνθρώπων βασιλεύουσιν ἐρωμένην Ἀντωνίου καλεῖσθαι, καὶ τοῦνομα τοῦτο μὴ φεύγειν μηδ' ἀπαξιοῦν, ἕως ὅρᾳν ἐκεῖνον ἔξεστι καὶ συζῆν: ἀπελαυνομένην δὲ τούτου μὴ περιβιώσεσθαι. τέλος δ' οὖν οὕτω τὸν ἀνθρωπὸν ἐξέτηξαν καὶ ἀπεθήλυναν, ὥστε δεῖσαντα μὴ Κλεοπάτρα πρόηται τὸν βίον, εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ἐπανελθεῖν, τὸν δὲ Μῆδον εἰς ὥραν ἔτους ἀναβαλέσθαι, καίπερ ἐν στάσει τῶν Παρθικῶν εἶναι λεγομένων. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τοῦτον μὲν ἀναβάς αὐθις εἰς φιλίαν προσηγάγετο, καὶ λαβὼν ἐνὶ τῶν ἐκ Κλεοπάτρας υἱῶν γυναῖκα μίαν αὐτοῦ τῶν θυγατέρων ἔτι μικρὰν οὖσαν ἐγγυήσας ἐπανῆλθεν, ἥδη πρὸς τὸν ἐμφύλιον πόλεμον τετραμμένος.

But Cleopatra perceived that Octavia was coming into a contest at close quarters with her, and feared lest, if she added to the dignity of her character and the power of Caesar her pleasurable society and her assiduous attentions to Antony, she would become invincible and get complete control over her husband. She therefore pretended to be passionately in love with Antony herself, and reduced her body by slender diet; she put on a look of rapture when Antony drew near, and one of faintness and melancholy when he went away. She would contrive to be often seen in tears, and then would quickly wipe the tears away and try to hide them, as if she would not have Antony notice them. And she practiced these arts while Antony was intending to go up from Syria to join the Mede. Her flatterers,

each other their mutual grievances, at first through their friends and then personally; and since they had as yet no leisure for war with each other, they became reconciled in a way, chiefly through the instrumentality of Octavia.”

too, were industrious in her behalf, and used to revile Antony as hard-hearted and unfeeling, and as the destroyer of a mistress who was devoted to him and him alone. For Octavia, they said, had married him as a matter of public policy and for the sake of her brother, and enjoyed the name of wedded wife; but Cleopatra, who was queen of so many people, was called Antony's beloved, and she did not shun this name nor disdain it, as long as she could see him and live with him; but if she were driven away from him she would not survive it. At last, then, they so melted and enervated the man that he became fearful lest Cleopatra should throw away her life, and went back to Alexandria, putting off the Mede until the summer season, although Parthia was said to be suffering from internal dissensions. However, he went up and brought the king once more into friendly relations, and after betrothing to one of his sons by Cleopatra one of the king's daughters who was still small, he returned, his thoughts being now directed towards the civil war.

The actions that Cleopatra undertakes are reminiscent of tropes in love elegy of the body wasting away as Pelling (1988) has noted. Cleopatra understands what sort of alterations to her body and looks she needs to give in order to elicit the desired but shameful response from Antony. Her ability to make Antony come back to her demonstrates Antony's lack of moral consistency, as he will respond incorrectly to the sight of Cleopatra's false affections, as he responded incorrectly to reports of the sight of Octavia acting as the ideal wife. Octavia's virtue does emerge at least as a contender here, with the need for flatterers demonstrating that this was a crisis point for Antony's morals, and he failed yet again. The contrast in display of Cleopatra and Octavia vividly demonstrates their ability to influence Antony, yet it is Cleopatra's false show that defeats Octavia's true show. After this point, Octavia continues to behave and be seen as the ideal wife and mother, with Plutarch noting that she continued to live in Antony's house and to take care of his children, both with her and with Fulvia. It is at this point that the propaganda war was at its height and the sight of Octavia at her house watching after the children was a powerful one.¹²⁷ Throughout the text, Plutarch emphasizes the visuality of both Octavia and Cleopatra in

¹²⁷ Octavian's later insistence that Livia and Julia be seen to be weaving (Suetonius *Div. Aug.* 64) could demonstrate that even during this period he made sure women were seen virtuously at home.

order to comment on the nature of Antony's character. The dramatization of Octavia reveals Antony's inability to respond correctly to women's appeals. Octavian takes advantage of this in his propaganda war.

Appian, on the other hand, does not elaborate the character of Octavia as Plutarch does. She works in his narratives as an explanation for events, but Appian does not focus upon revealing character through women in the same way as Plutarch. In his narrative on the treaty at Tarentum, Octavia is portrayed as the mediator of events with the ability to assuage both Octavian and Antony.¹²⁸ Charges are brought forth and Octavia acts as a judge, seamlessly resolving insults between the two (5.10.93): "Accordingly, Octavia betook herself to her brother to act as mediator between them. Octavian complained that he had been abandoned by Antony when he was overtaken by danger in the straits; she replied that that had been explained through Maecenas. Octavian said that Antony had sent his freedman Callias to Lepidus in Africa to induce the latter to make an alliance against him; she replied that she knew that Callias had been sent to make arrangements about a marriage, because Antony desired, before setting out on his Parthian expedition, to marry his daughter to the son of Lepidus, as had been agreed. After Octavian had made this statement Antony sent Callias to Octavian with permission to put him to the question. Octavian would not receive him, but said that he would go and have an interview with Antony between Metapontum and Tarentum, at a place where there is the river whence the town is named between them." The charge that Callias went to Africa in order to make an alliance against him is swiftly shut down by Octavia, who as a woman can comment more on the importance of marriage alliances. Her female networks and connection to Antony allow her to resolve the arguments between the two. What Appian emphasizes in his description of Octavia

¹²⁸ Similarly to how Julia, the daughter of Caesar, kept the peace between Caesar and Pompey.

concord with his larger agenda of examining the social and economic impacts of events.

Octavia's mediation allows her to be a bridge between the two dynasts – if she were not there, then she could not act as a buffer between the men. In this way Octavia is fashioned similarly to women such as Lucretia and Verginia, whom Sandra Joshel has identified as occupying space which is required to be deadened to male desire. Octavia acts here as a buffer between the two, although uncomfortable, as she almost cannot overcome the conflicts between the men. By transferring the issues from diplomatic to personal, it is easier to overcome them – for a time.

4.4 Octavia in the Propaganda War

War is about belief, and propaganda is thus crucial for securing victory. Octavian understood this, as well as Octavia. Plutarch uses Octavia to investigate the performance of female virtue in describing the aftermath of Antony's refusal to see Octavia when she sailed to him with provisions. After returning to Rome, Plutarch narrates Octavia's virtuous display of feminine ideals (*Vit. Ant.* 54.1-2):

Ὀκταουίαν δὲ Καῖσαρ ὑβρίσθαι δοκοῦσαν, ὡς ἐπανῆλθεν ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν, ἐκέλευσε καθ' ἑαυτὴν οἰκεῖν. ἡ δὲ οὐκ ἔφη τὸν οἶκον ἀπολείπειν τοῦ ἀνδρός, ἀλλὰ κάκεινον αὐτόν, εἰ μὴ δι' ἑτέρας αἰτίας ἔγνωκε πολεμεῖν Ἀντωνίῳ, παρεκάλει τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἔαν, ὡς οὐδὲ ἀκοῦσαι καλόν, εἰ τῶν μεγίστων αὐτοκρατόρων ὁ μὲν δι' ἔρωτα γυναικός, ὁ δὲ διὰ ζηλοτυπίαν εἰς ἐμφύλιον πόλεμον Ῥωμαίους κατέστησε. ταῦτα δὲ λέγουσα μᾶλλον ἐβεβαίῳ δι' ἔργων. καὶ γὰρ ὄκει τὴν οἰκίαν, ὥσπερ αὐτοῦ παρόντος ἐκείνου, καὶ τῶν τέκνων οὐ μόνον τῶν ἐξ ἑαυτῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἐκ Φουλβίας γεγονότων, καλῶς καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς ἐπεμελεῖτο: καὶ τοὺς πεμπομένους ἐπὶ ἀρχάς τινας ἢ πράγματα τῶν Ἀντωνίου φίλων ὑποδεχομένη συνέπραττεν ὧν παρὰ Καίσαρος δεηθεῖεν. ἄκουσα δὲ ἔβλαπτε διὰ τούτων Ἀντώνιον: ἐμισεῖτο γὰρ ἀδικῶν γυναῖκα τοιαύτην.

Caesar commanded Octavia seeming to have been treated with outrage, as she returned from Athens, to dwell in her own house. But she said that she would not leave the house of her husband, but begged that one himself, to allow these things towards her, if he did not discern other causes to war with Antony, it not being a fair thing to hear of, if of the greatest imperatores, the one because of love of his wife, the other because of rivalry bring the Romans into civil war. Having said these things she confirmed them rather through her deeds. For she dwelling in her house, as though he himself were present, and she cared for the children not only

her own, but also those born of Fulvia, well and magnificently. And she receiving those sent of Antony's friends for some honors or business she worked together with them to obtain from Octavian what they needed. Having heard she harmed Antony on account of these things. For he was hated for treating such a woman contrary to justice.

Plutarch goes on to say after describing the donations of Alexandria that during this period (35-34 BCE), both Antony and Octavian were slandering each other via propaganda.¹²⁹ Octavia acts of her own accord according to Plutarch and spectacularizes female virtue to such an extent that acting as if she is vehemently opposed to civil war is what actually brings it about. There is no possibility of discovering Octavia's motives for her actions during this time period, but it is clear in understanding aristocratic Roman social dynamics that elite Romans would have seen Octavia performing her marital duties and that when she chose to do this she would have known that.

After first performing her role well in accordance with myths such as the Sabine women, Octavia now acts as a type of Cornelia, looking out for her children's interests and working on behalf of her husband's career. Cleopatra, Plutarch writes, again understands the potential ramifications of Octavia's actions before Antony, stressing Antony's ability to be influenced by women and his reactive nature, rather than proactive: (56.2-3):

ἡ δὲ φοβουμένη τὰς δι' Ὀκταουίας πάλιν αὐτοῦ διαλύσεις ἔπεισε πολλοῖς Κανίδιον χρήμασιν Ἀντωνίῳ διαλεχθῆναι περὶ αὐτῆς, ὡς οὔτε δίκαιον ἀπελαύνεσθαι τοῦ πολέμου γυναῖκα συμβολὰς τηλικαύτας διδοῦσαν, οὔτε συμφέρον ἀθυμοτέρους ποιεῖν τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους μέγα μέρος τῆς ναυτικῆς δυνάμεως ὄντας· ἄλλως δὲ μηδὲ ὄρᾶν οὔτινος τῶν συστρατευόντων βασιλέων ἀπολείποιο τὸ φρονεῖν Κλεοπάτρα, πολὺν μὲν χρόνον δι' αὐτῆς κυβερνώσα βασιλείαν τοσαύτην, πολὺν δὲ ἐκείνῳ συνοῦσα καὶ μανθάνουσα χρῆσθαι πράγμασι μεγάλοις.

“Cleopatra, however, fearing that Octavia would again succeed in putting a stop to the war, persuaded Canidius by large bribes to plead her cause with Antony, and to say that it was neither just to drive away from the war a woman whose contributions to it were so large, nor was it for the interest of Antony to dispirit

¹²⁹ See Scott (1929, 1933) for an overview of the propaganda of the period and Antony's response.

the Egyptians, who formed a large part of his naval force; and besides, it was not easy to see how Cleopatra was inferior in intelligence to anyone of the princes who took part in the expedition, she who for a long time had governed so large a kingdom by herself, and by long association with Antony had learned to manage large affairs. These arguments (since it was destined that everything should come into Caesar's hands) prevailed; and with united forces they sailed to Samos and there made merry.”

While Pelling (1988) notes that Plutarch “credulously” includes the detail that Canidius was bribed, the detail accords with Plutarch’s moral points about Cleopatra and Antony: that Cleopatra would be the type of person to need to bribe her lover and that Antony is the sort of person to fall for it. Cleopatra exhibits a type of intelligence, as she understands how Romans seeing Octavia’s performance of virtue would result in pressure placed on Antony to react by performing the ideal Roman husband. She also knows that Antony is easily swayed by this type of pressure by a woman and knows how to exert her own, and this is Antony’s downfall. The bribery on the part of Cleopatra ultimately leads to his divorce from Octavia between May and June of 32 BCE, according to Eusebius (*Chron.* 2.140). Plutarch narrates Octavia leaving Antony’s house in tears, again performing her feminine virtue correctly. The Romans’ reaction to this demonstrate that for them it is almost as if Antony has died, as Plutarch uses the verb ὄκτειρον, which has the semantic range of ‘have pity upon’ or ‘mourn.’ The last sentence of the passage characterizes Cleopatra as a bad moral actor, who does not have youth or beauty to make up for her lack of morals.

Following the divorce, war became inevitable between Antony and Octavian. As the two sides prepared for war, Cleopatra once more demonstrated suspicion of Octavia’s influence over Antony via Geminius, one of Antony’s former friends who alerted Octavian to the existence of the contents of Antony’s will (59.2): “Γεμίνιος δὲ πλεύσας εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα Κλεοπάτρα μὲν ἦν ὕποπτος, ὡς ὑπὲρ Ὀκταουίας πράττων” (But Geminius having sailed to Greece was suspicious to

Cleopatra, on the grounds that he was acting on behalf of Octavia). Geminius had come to Antony because of Octavian's friends' attacks against Antony which were false about his relationship with Cleopatra, such as that he wrote her love letters on onyx or crystal (58.6) and that he left a Roman court case to run after her litter (58.6). Geminius' presence hurts Cleopatra's cause as she attempts to eliminate all rational decision making from Antony. As Pelling (1988: 263) Plutarch's Cleopatra continues to view things "in stark personal terms" rather than consider other motivations. It is entirely possible that Octavian or Octavia had asked Geminius to work on behalf of their interests when he was treating with Antony, yet it is also possible that Geminius had no such motivations or dealings with Octavian. The fact that Plutarch includes this detail indicates that Cleopatra continues to think as a Hellenistic monarch, as many geopolitical decisions since the death of Alexander were made as a result of personal motivations, and the historians of the triumviral period emphasize the personal decisions responsible for major events as the Roman political system broke down.

The last scene of Plutarch's *Life* includes details of Octavia's involvement in various marriages within the Julio-Claudian family, including that of Julia and Agrippa. Pelling (1988: 325) observes that Plutarch elaborates Octavia's role, yet I would argue that she continues to serve Plutarch's purpose and further his argument that Octavia was a competent and ideal Roman woman. Even after the death of Antony, she continues to promote his children, although this was not expected of her within traditional Roman norms. The image we are left with at the end of Plutarch's *Life* is Octavia as a creator of bonds of between members of the Julio-Claudian family and as a key adviser to her brother Octavian. Octavia's character throughout Plutarch's text has consistently adhered to the values of the ideal Roman woman: working on behalf of her family in order to avert disaster. Along the way, she goes above and beyond her duty in her marriage to

Mark Antony in extremely visible ways, recalling the visuality of exemplary women in early Roman myths. As Jeffrey Beneker (2020: 200) has noted, women's continued devotion to their husband's after their deaths via the continued raising of their children is one way to mark these women as especially exhibiting *sophrosyne*. The portrait of Octavia at the end of Antony's *Life* reinforces his argument he has made throughout the text that Octavia had the morality and beauty to curb Antony's worst instincts, but Cleopatra was able to counter this via displays of emotions. This visuality strengthens Plutarch's argument in the text that Octavia reveals Antony's inability to respond correctly to corrective behavior by women. He is swayed not by displays of virtue, but by Cleopatra's displays of emotion, a common trope used against one's enemies.

4.5 Before *Augusta*: Livia in the Triumviral Period

Livia's life exemplifies the twists of fate that occurred in the triumviral period – she went from the wife of a proscribed man to the wife of the first emperor of Rome. As a member of both the Claudii and Livii Drusi families, Livia was member of two of the most elite families of Rome.¹³⁰ Her father, Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus was adopted into the Livii Drusi family but was born as part of the Claudii Pulchri and upon the death of his adoptive father received a very large *patrimonium* and was one of the wealthiest men in Rome, according to Diodorus Siculus (37.10). Livia's mother's family, the Alfidii, benefited from such a connection.¹³¹ During Julius Caesar's hegemony over Rome, he was firmly on the side of the senatorial elite and supported his assassination. He fought alongside Brutus and Cassius at the Battle of Philippi and

¹³⁰ See Barrett (2002: 3-18) and Wiseman (1970) for an overview of Livia's family connections. Tacitus claims that the Claudii possessed *superbia* or arrogance, and Roman history is full of episodes in which a member of the Claudii acts in either an exemplary or reprehensible way.

¹³¹ Ancient authors do not discuss Livia's mother, but we must presume that her family welcomed her marriage with one of the wealthiest and most noble Romans.

died by suicide following defeat. His suicide indicates that he knew he would be executed by Octavian and had no chance of a pardon. During this chaotic period, Livia was married around 42 BCE to her cousin Tiberius Claudius Nero and shortly thereafter gave birth to two sons, Tiberius and Drusus. Her life was transformed after meeting Octavian while pregnant with Drusus. The discourse surrounding their sudden marriage reveals the strangeness of Octavian's decision. While some scholars, such as Marleen Flory (1988) have attempted to identify rational reasons for the match, including Octavian's desire to shore up support among patrician elite families, the fact that Livia was pregnant indicates that this was more an emotional choice rather than a rational one.¹³² Before his marriage with Livia, Octavian had married for political ties, as Suetonius neatly summarizes (*Div. Aug.* 62):

Sponsam habuerat adulescens P. Servili Isaurici filiam, sed reconciliatus post primam discordiam Antonio, expostulantibus utriusque militibus ut et necessitudine aliqua iungerentur, privignam eius Claudiam, Fulviae ex P. Clodio filiam, duxit uxorem vixdum nubilem ac simultate cum Fulvia socru orta dimisit intactam adhuc et virginem. Mox Scriboniam in matrimonium accepit nuptam ante duobus consularibus, ex altero etiam matrem. Cum hac quoque divortium fecit, "pertaesus," ut scribit, "morum perversitatem eius," ac statim Liviam Drusillam matrimonio Tiberi Neronis et quidem praegnantem abduxit dilexitque et probavit unice ac perseveranter.

In his youth he was betrothed to the daughter of Publius Servilius Isauricus, but when he became reconciled with Antony after their first quarrel, and their troops begged that the rivals be further united by some tie of kinship, he took to wife Antony's stepdaughter Claudia, daughter of Fulvia by Publius Clodius, although she was barely of marriageable age; but because of a falling out with his mother-in-law Fulvia, he divorced her before they had begun to live together. Shortly after that he married Scribonia, who had been wedded before to two ex-consuls, and was a mother by one of them. He divorced her also, "unable to put up with her shrewish disposition," as he himself writes, and at once took Livia Drusilla from her husband Tiberius Nero, although she was with child at the time; and he loved and esteemed her to the end without a rival.

¹³² Syme puts it succinctly (1939: 229): "For once in his life he surrendered to emotion: it was with political advantage."

Suetonius' description alludes to Octavian's unhappiness with his politically motivated marriages and underlines his happiness with Livia whom he did not marry to create political connections. This hints toward two-pronged propaganda that Octavian could have used: the morals of the triumviral period were so degraded that he could not have a happy marriage with those he married and that the women who were involved in contracting these agreements were corrupt, such as Fulvia. In other words, the propaganda that Augustus used of his family life likely insinuated that his own personal choice of a wife led to the greatest amount of happiness, as there was no one else who could have contracted a marriage who could be relied upon to be honest.

Livia's presence in the sources indicates that Octavian probably viewed her more as a liability for him if she were to be promoted in public rather than an asset. The stories surrounding their marriage indicate that jests were to be expected and Antony took advantage of this in his own propaganda against Augustus. The attacks made by Antony and his partisans against Octavian's marriage reveal the ways in which the elites thought of marriage. Most of the sources, such as Suetonius, Dio, and Tacitus mention that this marriage was unusual and unconventional, given that Livia was pregnant at the time. Some sources, such as Suetonius and Dio attempt to downplay that irregularity by emphasizing that Tiberius Nero gave her away at her wedding. I quote in full Dio's description of their marriage (48.44):

Λιουίαν ἔγημεν. ἦν δὲ θυγάτηρ μὲν Λιουίου Δρούσου, ὃς ἔν τε τοῖς ἐκτεθεισῶν ἐν τῷ λευκώματι ἐγεγόνει καὶ ἑαυτὸν μετὰ τὴν ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ ἦτταν κατεκέχητο, γυνὴ δὲ τοῦ Νέρωνος, μεθ' οὗ συνδιέφυγεν, ὥσπερ εἴρηται· καὶ ἐκύει γε ἐξ αὐτοῦ μῆνα ἕκτον. διστάζοντος γοῦν τοῦ Καίσαρος, καὶ πυθομένου τῶν ποντιφίκων εἴ οἱ ὄσιον ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσιν αὐτὴν ἀγαγέσθαι εἶη, ἀπεκρίναντο ὅτι εἰ μὲν ἐν ἀμφιβόλῳ τὸ κῆμα ἦν, ἀναβληθῆναι τὸν γάμον ἐχρήν, ὁμολογουμένου δὲ αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν κωλύει ἤδη αὐτὸν γενέσθαι, τάχα μὲν που καὶ ὄντως ἐν τοῖς πατρίοις τοῦτο εὐρόντες, πάντως δ' ἄν, εἰ καὶ μὴ εὖρον αὐτό, εἰπόντες. ἐξέδωκε δὲ αὐτὴν αὐτὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ ὥσπερ τις πατήρ. καὶ τι καὶ τοιοῦτον ἐν τῇ ἐστίασει σφῶν συνηνέχθη· παιδίον τι τῶν ψιθύρων, οἷα αἱ γυναῖκες γυμνὰ ὡς πλήθει ἀθύρουσαι τρέφουσιν,

ιδὸν χωρὶς μὲν τὴν Λιουίαν μετὰ τοῦ Καίσαρος χωρὶς δὲ τὸν Νέρωνα μεθ' ἑτέρου τινὸς κατακείμενον, προσῆλθέ τε αὐτῇ καὶ ἔφη, 'τί ποιεῖς ἐνταῦθα, κυρία; ὁ γὰρ ἀνὴρ σου,' δείξας αὐτόν, 'ἐκεῖ κατάκειται.' ταῦτα μὲν οὖν οὕτως ἐπράχθη, συνοικοῦσα δὲ ἤδη ἡ γυνὴ τῷ Καίσαρι τίκει Κλαύδιον Δρουσον Νέρωνα. καὶ αὐτὸν ὁ Καῖσαρ καὶ ἀνείλετο καὶ τῷ πατρὶ ἐπεμψεν, αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐς τὰ ὑπομνήματα ἐγγράψας, ὅτι Καῖσαρ τὸ γεννηθὲν Λιουία τῇ ἑαυτοῦ γυναικὶ παιδίον Νέρωνι τῷ πατρὶ ἀπέδωκε. καὶ ἐκεῖνος τελευτῶν οὐ πολλῶ ὕστερον ἐπίτροπον καὶ τούτῳ καὶ τῷ Τιβερίῳ αὐτὸν τὸν Καίσαρα κατέλιπεν. ὁ δ' οὖν ὄμιλος ἄλλα τε ἐπὶ τούτῳ πολλὰ διεθρύλει, καὶ τοῖς εὐτυχοῦσι τρίμηνα παιδία γεννᾶσθαι ἔλεγεν, ὥστε καὶ ἐς παροιμίαν τὸ ἔπος προχωρήσει.

Besides these occurrences at that time, Caesar married Livia. She was the daughter of Livius Drusus, who had been among those proscribed on the tablet and had committed suicide after the defeat in Macedonia, and the wife of Nero, whom she had accompanied in his flight, as has been related. And it seems that she was in the sixth month with child by him. At any rate, when Caesar was in doubt and enquired of the pontifices whether it was permissible to wed her while pregnant, they answered that if there was any doubt whether conception had taken place the marriage should be put off, but if this was admitted, there was nothing to prevent its taking place immediately. Perhaps they really found this among the ordinances of the forefathers, but certainly they would have said so, even had they not found it. Her husband himself gave the woman in marriage just as a father would; and the following incident occurred at the marriage feast. One of the prattling boys, such as the women keep about them for their amusement, naked as a rule, on seeing Livia reclining in one place with Caesar, and Nero in another with a man, went up to her and said: "What are you doing here, mistress? For your husband," pointing him out, "is reclining over there." So much then, for this. Later, when the woman was now living with Caesar, she gave birth to Claudius Drusus Nero. Caesar both acknowledged him and sent him to his real father, making his entry in his memoranda: "Caesar returned to its father Nero the child borne by Livia, his wife." Nero died not long afterward and left Caesar himself as guardian to the boy and to Tiberius. Now the populace gossiped a great deal about this and said, among other things, "The lucky have children in three months"; and this saying passed into a proverb.

The details that Dio includes, of the consultation of the *pontifices* and the marriage feast point toward the marriage's irregularity and almost unacceptability among the elite. While Barrett (2002: 25) points out that the jest of the enslaved boy indicates that Tiberius Nero and Octavian may have in fact had a cordial relationship at this time, I would argue that it rather emphasizes that Tiberius Nero could not do anything about this situation and was completely powerless to Octavian's whims. Cassius Dio imagines the Roman people deeply interested in this unusual

marriage, which again emphasizes that it did not benefit him in the first years. Earlier, Dio even mentions that Octavian divorced Scribonia on the very day that she gave birth to their daughter Julia.

The fact of Livia's pregnancy makes the marriage all the more almost unpalatable to the Romans and hints toward the ideology around divorce among the elites. While in Roman law, what we might term "no-fault" divorce was permissible, a cause was sought in almost every case of divorce and gave the elites a rationale as to why the relationship broke down. As we have seen earlier, Pompey used adultery as his reason for divorcing Mucia rather than not mentioning one at all. Our sources, such as Dio, seem to indicate that Octavian did have a relationship with Livia before her divorce from Nero (48.34), which indicates the cause for the divorce. The relationship was so unconventional that motives for a divorce were difficult to assign, but the ancient writers insinuate that it was adultery. The fact that people believed it was *adulterium* would have been a significant risk to Octavian, as *adulterium* was a serious crime in Roman law. Nevertheless, Octavian was able to get away with this marriage, but Livia's non-appearance indicates his knowledge that this marriage only gave Antony more ability to attack him.

One story that probably has its origins with Antony is in the famous dinner of the twelve gods that Octavian and Livia allegedly threw. Suetonius is the only one of the sources to mention this, and he also quotes what Antony allegedly slanders Octavian with before narrating the dinner (*Div. Aug* 69):

Adulteria quidem exercuisse ne amici quidem negant, excusantes sane non libidine, sed ratione commissa, quo facilius consilia adversariorum per cuiusque mulieres exquireret. M. Antonius super festinatas Liviae nuptias obiecit et feminam consularem e triclinio viri coram in cubiculum abductam, rursus in convivium rubentibus auriculis incomptiore capillo reductam; dimissam Scriboniam, quia liberius doluisset nimiam potentiam paelicis; condiciones quaesitas per amicos, qui matres familias et adultas aetate virgines denudarent atque perspicerent, tamquam Toranio mangone vendente. Scribit etiam ad ipsum

haec familiariter adhuc necdum plane inimicus aut hostis: "Quid te mutavit? Quod reginam in eo? Uxor mea est. Nunc coepi an abhinc annos novem? Tu deinde solam Drusillam inis? Ita valeas, uti tu, hanc epistulam cum leges, non inieris Tertullam aut Terentillam aut Rufillam aut Salviam Titiseniam aut omnes. An refert, ubi et in qua arrigas? "

“Mark Antony charged him, besides his hasty marriage with Livia, with taking the wife of an ex-consul from her husband's dining-room before his very eyes into a bed-chamber, and bringing her back to the table with her hair in disorder and her ears glowing; that Scribonia was divorced because she expressed her resentment too freely at the excessive influence of a rival; that his friends acted as his panders, and stripped and inspected matrons and well-grown girls, as if Toranius the slave-dealer were putting them up for sale. Antony also writes to Augustus himself in the following familiar terms, when he had not yet wholly broken with him privately or publicly: "What has made such a change in you? Because I lie with the queen? She is my wife. Am I just beginning this, or was it nine years ago? What then of you — do you lie only with Drusilla? Good luck to you if when you read this letter you have not been with Tertulla or Terentilla or Rufilla or Salvia Titisenia, or all of them. Does it matter where or with whom you take your pleasure?"

Antony's attacks center around Octavian's infidelity, trying to prove that he is not in control of his body. In other words, while Antony is having an affair with Cleopatra, she is his wife and he has been with her for nine years, while Octavian messes around with anyone on any night. This rhetoric from Antony demonstrates that these attacks could be effective for Antony. The names Tertulla, Terentilla, Rufilla are all those that could belong to upper class Roman women, again insinuating that Octavian's misdeeds are worse because they fall under the crime of adulterium, while his relationship with Cleopatra, although also not without fierce criticism as we have seen above does not put him in peril with the law.

The dinner itself caused controversy for both Livia and Octavian as Suetonius relates

(Div. Aug. 70):

Cena quoque eius secretior in fabulis fuit, quae vulgo δωδεκάθεος vocabatur; in qua deorum dearumque habitu discubuisse convivas et ipsum pro Apolline ornatum non Antoni modo epistulae singulorum nomina amarissime enumerantis exprobrant, sed et sine auctore notissimi versus:

Cum primum istorum conduxit mensa choragum,
Sexque deos vidit Mallia sexque deas,
Impia dum Phoebi Caesar mendacia ludit,
Dum nova divorum cenat adulteria:
Omnia se a terris tunc numina declinarunt,
Fugit et auratos Iuppiter ipse thronos.

Auxit cenae rumorem summa tunc in civitate penuria ac fames, adclamatumque est postridie omne frumentum deos comedisse et Caesarem esse plane Apollinem, sed Tortorem, quo cognomine is deus quadam in parte urbis colebatur.

There was besides a private dinner of his, commonly called that of the "twelve gods," which was the subject of gossip. At this the guests appeared in the guise of gods and goddesses, while he himself was made up to represent Apollo, as was charged not merely in letters of Antony, who spitefully gives the names of all the guests, but also in these anonymous lines, which everyone knows: "As soon as that table of rascals had secured a choragus and Mallia saw six gods and six goddesses, while Caesar impiously plays the false role of Apollo and feasts amid novel debaucheries of the gods; then all the deities turned their faces from the earth and Jupiter himself fled from his golden throne." 2 The scandal of this banquet was the greater because of dearth and famine in the land at the time, and on the following day there was an outcry that the gods had eaten all the grain and that Caesar was in truth Apollo, but Apollo the Tormentor, a surname under which the god was worshipped in one part of the city.

The dinner toes the line of sacrilegious behavior on the part of Octavian. In addition to tyrannical behavior being pointed toward in his marriage with Livia, the behavior at this dinner is also characteristic of a tyrant, acting without proper respect for the norms of Roman dining culture. The people also believed at this time that the famine was particularly bad, which makes the behavior at this dinner party even more worthy of comment.

The picture one gets of Livia in the sources after her marriage to Octavian is of a woman whom the sources mainly paint as a liability and the source of many jokes that Octavian must have felt as threatening to his position. At this time he and Antony were in the midst of a propaganda war and his hasty marriage to a pregnant woman left him open to attacks on his ability to control himself. Because of the circumstances of his marriage, Livia remains in the background during this period, but begins to emerge more in the later 30s BCE.

4.6 *Sacrosanctitas* and the Honors of 35 BCE

Livia begins to appear more prominently in the 30s BCE, and the first major step is the grant of *sacrosanctitas* that Octavian grants to both Livia and Octavia in 35 BCE. While Dio (49.38) describes the grant as similar to that of the tribunes, I contend that Dio is attempting to explain this grant to a non-Roman audience in terms that they will understand. While Bauman (1992: 93) contends that Dio's description effectively means that they were granted tribunician sacrosanctity, I would argue that Dio is attempting to explain that they were given *sacrosanctitas*, with the tribunes being an example of a group that possessed it. What is more likely is that Octavian was attempting to fashion Livia and Octavia into quasi-Vestal Virgins.¹³³ In doing so, as Barrett (2002: 32) has noted, he added an extra layer to his propaganda war with Antony. If Antony insulted Octavia, the insult would be felt all the more gravely as a result of this law. Moreover, criticism could be leveled against Octavian because of his marriage and was by Antony. The inclusion of Livia in this pronouncement allowed Octavian to stave off those attacks and give the appearance of propriety to Livia. Both the wives of the triumvirs were elevated in status with these honors, yet Dio's formulation indicates that Octavian was attempting to fashion their honors in a way that would make sense to a Roman.

After 35 BCE, Livia remains relatively low-profile. Her former husband, Tiberius Claudius Nero died in 33/32 BCE with Tiberius and Drusus being placed into Octavian's protection. After the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE, Plutarch reports that Cleopatra informs Octavian of her desire to give gifts to Octavia and Livia (*Vit.Ant.* 83): "But is it not a monstrous thing, O Caesar, that when you have deigned to come to me and speak to me though I am in this

¹³³ Van Geel (2023:72) also notes that Octavian was probably trying to emphasize their role as Vestal Virgins.

wretched plight, my slaves denounce me for reserving some women's adornments, — not for myself, indeed, unhappy woman that I am, — but that I may make trifling gifts to Octavia and thy Livia, and through their intercession find thee merci-ful and more gentle?" 5 Caesar was pleased with this speech, being altogether of the opinion that she desired to live." Cleopatra insinuates that the intercession of Octavia and Livia will help mitigate the treatment that she receives at the hands of Octavian, yet this is an act before her suicide.

Livia's tenure in the triumviral period receives relatively little attention compared to her figure during the Augustan period, yet what the sources do say indicate that there was anxiety caused by her marriage to Octavian, as it opens him to accusations of *adulterium* and was done out of emotion, something inherently suspect in the Roman imagination. Decision making based on emotion was something that Plutarch and other sources assign to Antony, and this marriage called into question Octavian's performance of ideal Roman manhood. Once Octavian became Augustus and refashioned the narrative of the triumviral period to fit his needs, Livia became elevated to a much greater degree and eventually becomes referred to as *Ulixes stolata* (Ulysses in a stola). The first part of her life, shrouded much more in mystery, reveals the ways in which women could be deployed or not by Roman men in the period to suit their needs.

Conclusion

A Revolution of Women?

The women of the triumviral period offered authors across time and genre the ability to reflect upon the complex and often interwoven nature of domesticity and politics at a time when the boundary between the two had essentially disintegrated. This period offered a unique window into the unarticulated substratum between women and authority and was thus a source of fascination and a locus of anxiety for Roman authors, especially as many of them were writing at a chronological remove. Their depictions of the actions of women allowed them to further their narratives and establish causality in different ways, as we have seen. The actions of women could underline or challenge the notion of the moral degradation of Roman society or demonstrate the shift in Roman political/social norms, in which elite mothers were able to negotiate on behalf of their sons precisely because they were conceived of as outside of the official channels of power, as we have seen. Whether employed by authors as “good” or “bad” *exempla*, the women of the period profoundly shaped the later discourse of domesticity and the later imagination of the early Principate. For every Octavia or Turia, there was also a wife or mother willing to sacrifice a husband or son, pointing toward the persistent anxiety for Roman men about the loyalty of those subservient to them.

While the chaos of the period revealed women’s characters, it also solidified the importance of traditional values within relationships with unequal power dynamics such as husband and wife and enslaver and enslaved. The actions of women within proscription narratives are a vivid admonition for men to embody traditional values so as to ensure the loyalty of their subordinates, as we have seen. At the same time, the period caused profound anxiety as it showed that citizen male bodily integrity was never as ironclad a premise as they wished for it to

be. Explaining the demise of some of the proscribed as ultimately caused by a disloyal, immoral wife or enslaved person offered a convenient solution to this anxiety about bodily integrity.

As the title of this dissertation suggests, the discourse surrounding women of this period suggests that they too participated in revolution by supporting their family members and struggling to establish a new political and domestic order. Looking back, authors craft a narrative to make sense of this transition and women of necessity were part of it as the politics of this period destabilized the domestic sphere as well. As we have seen in ancient authors' portrayal of the various women of the triumviral period, there was no set paradigm for explaining their roles. That is, the concerns and contexts of the various authors dictated the narratives of women. The violent and paradigm-destabilizing genesis of the Principate engaged many authors, who provide invaluable insights into the process of narrative creation in their depictions of Roman women. As holders of agency straddling the line between insider and outsider statuses, the women of the Triumviral period reveal the fundamental values and anxieties at the heart of Roman social and political relations.

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